



Faculty and Course Evaluations FAQs

What are Course Evaluations and Surveys by Watermark?

Watermark Course Evaluations and Surveys (Watermark) is a system designed for sending course evaluations electronically to students. At SRSU, Watermark will be used for end of term Faculty and Course Evaluations.

Why did we change evaluation systems?

Previously, the end of term Faculty and Course Evaluation was administered with a tool in Blackboard. Unfortunately, Blackboard Ultra does not support that course evaluation tool, so it was imperative to find a method that was simple and anonymous. Watermark is an easy-to-use course evaluation system that integrates directly with Blackboard.

Will instructors be able to see student names associated with responses?

No, student responses are always anonymous, and instructors cannot view a list of students who have responded, nor see names associated with responses. Further, faculty will not be given access to their evaluation results until after the semester survey window closes.

What are some ways to increase student response rates for the Faculty and Course Evaluation?

In addition to the pop-up reminders for students in Blackboard, here are more suggestions you may use to motivate students to complete their evaluations, improve your response rates, and to obtain useful, constructive feedback from students:

- Consider designating time in class for students to complete evaluations.
- Consider discussing course evaluations with your students:
 - Let students know that you value their honest and constructive feedback, and that you use their feedback to make improvements to your courses. Consider sharing some examples of how you have changed your courses as a result of student feedback.
 - Share that you're interested in both positive and negative feedback on the course. What aspects of the course and/or instruction helped them learn? What aspects might be changed to help future students learn more effectively?
 - Describe the kind of feedback you find most useful. In most cases, specific feedback with examples is more useful than general statements.
 - Remind students that evaluations are completely anonymous, and instructors do not see this feedback until after final grades have been submitted. This is important, as many students don't realize these facts.
 - Share that you are the primary audience for their feedback, but that others may read their evaluations, including department and school administrators.
- Consider including language in your syllabus that addresses student evaluations. This alerts students to the fact that they should also pay attention to their learning

experiences throughout the term and makes them more mindful of their responses in the course evaluations.

- Consider offering extra credit for proof of survey response (students will receive a confirmation email of survey completion without responses attached, and this could serve as "proof" for you).

Can I incentivize my course evaluations, like giving extra points for completion?

Yes, if you would like to. Student responses must remain anonymous. However, students may submit proof to you of survey completion for extra credit. All students receive an email after submitting their evaluation. The completion email will include the course name, instructor name, student name, and time stamp.

Who will the Faculty and Course Evaluation emails be sent by?

Course evaluation notification emails will be sent from provost@sulross.edu, but these emails are generated through the Watermark system.

Course evaluation result emails and student course completion emails will be sent from ie@sulross.edu, and these emails are also generated through the Watermark system.

How will faculty know when the survey is open and closed?

Faculty will receive an email 3 days prior to the survey window opening, as well as an email halfway through the window that shows the percentage of responses for each course. Finally, faculty will receive an email the day after grades are due with a link and instructions on how to access the evaluation.

How will students know when and how to evaluate their courses?

Faculty and Course Evaluations will be available to students in their Blackboard environment, where a pop-up message displays on the student's screen upon logging in during the open survey window. This pop up contains a message and buttons to complete the evaluation. A widget will also appear on the student's Blackboard Dashboard with a list of all available evaluations.

If a student made a mistake on an evaluation is submitted, can they edit it?

You cannot edit an evaluation once it has been submitted.

Who has access to reports?

Faculty, chairs, deans, and designated Report Administrators have access to reports, as they previously did. This gives departments the flexibility to run reports in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons.

A few selected results from evaluations, not including comments, will still be posted to the HB2504 site, per state law.

Will I still be able to access my older Faculty and Course Evaluations?

Yes. Instructions on how to access the previous Blackboard Faculty Evaluation Survey can be found [here](#).

Will the reports be available in real time?

Status reports (for example, the response rates) will be available in real time, and results reports will be available a day after all final grades are submitted.

Can reports be customized?

There are several standard report types, as well as the Report Builder which allows you to customize your report output, including creating aggregate scores and more:

- Response Rate Tracker Report- Overview of the response rates for all courses that are available to each user separated into projects.
- Project Results Report- Response data from a specific project or the department and courses within the project.
- Instructor Results Report- Longitudinal data for one or more individuals/instructors. Compare Instructor data for each course.
- Report Builder- Start a report from scratch by selecting your own data sets and filters.

Guides on how to navigate all report options are available [here](#).

Who do I contact if I have questions about how Watermark works or about Faculty and Course Evaluations in general?

Contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, ie@sulross.edu or 432-837-8224.