

# Course Evaluation at Brock University

A Discussion Paper

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## A: INTRODUCTION

Brock University, particularly the Teaching and Learning Policy Committee of Senate, has discussed student evaluation of teaching in various committees and forums for the past two decades. However, little has changed in terms of any formal policies or recommendations with respect to how the university carries out the student evaluation of teaching. As in many other institutions, the effectiveness of student evaluation of teaching (or SETs) is a contentious issue at Brock University. According to research (Gravestock & Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008), the result of such tension with respect to this issue is that faculty have little faith in the system or the data generated, the administration requires some data for the purposes of performance evaluation such as promotion and tenure, and the students are ambiguous as to its purpose or any direct benefits to them. The result is that we continue to operate with a system that is problematic on all fronts, but we have done little to encourage an open institutional debate of how we, the university community, can better realize the fruits of our labour. Significant effort is placed into collecting data from students each term, ostensibly for the purposes of instructional development, but there is little evidence to suggest that these data are used in any way that is helpful to the student experience, the faculty, or the institution.

That course evaluation is carried out is a customary practice in almost all Ontario universities (Wright, 2014). At Brock, the only institutional policies that govern the use of student evaluation of teaching lies in the Collective Agreement between the University and the Faculty Association (BUFA). In fact, the requirement to carry out course evaluation in all courses with greater than 5 students, along with stipulations as to who owns the data, is clearly outlined in the collective agreement. However, much has changed in recent years with respect to the ways in which universities are accountable to students, faculty, part time instructors and government bodies. In addition, the role of technology has changed significantly, not only in terms of the increasing number of online courses, but also its potential role in carrying out standardized administrative tasks to streamline processes. All these factors are increasingly driving conversations about the current state of course evaluation practices, and what can be changed and by whom.

### **Purpose of the report:**

The purpose of this report on course evaluation at Brock University is threefold:

- 1) To provide the background, context, and other relevant information regarding course evaluation at Brock University, including current practices in online evaluation.
- 2) To provide general information from the literature pertaining to the challenges and opportunities of student evaluation of teaching, including considerations for

online evaluation.

- 3) To review best practices and provide draft recommendations regarding the improvement of course evaluation, in preparation for a full discussion at Senate, including specific recommendations related to the requirement for aggregate data for institutional reporting.

## B: CHALLENGES IN COURSE EVALUATION: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### **Role and purpose of course evaluation**

The literature on course evaluation is vast, multifaceted, and often contradictory, underscoring the complexity of attempting to evaluate teaching. However, a number of factors have converged of late, particularly with respect to greater accountability to governments and other stakeholders, to call attention to its uses and abuses. As a result, this topic appears to be in full debate at many Ontario campuses. Canadian researchers have published a number of interesting documents containing extensive literature reviews and best practices. Readers should consult the HEQCO document [Student Course Evaluations: Research Models and Trends \(2008\)](#), the [Ontario Universities' Teaching Evaluation Toolkit \(2014\)](#), COU's discussion paper [Student Evaluations of Teaching Effectiveness: Considerations for Ontario Universities \(2012\)](#), OCUFA's recent briefing note [Student Questionnaires on Courses and Teaching \(2017\)](#) and the excellent work of Winer et al (2016) on dispelling prevailing myths in course evaluation. What follows here is a brief overview of the prevalent issues and concerns that may inform a more comprehensive discussion on this issue at Brock University.

It is essential to recognize that student evaluation of teaching is problematic if used as the only indicator of teaching effectiveness. Student evaluations are not a comprehensive measure of teaching quality; they are one source of information which needs to be carefully analyzed in context with a number of other factors, many of which are outside an instructor's control. Evidence linking course evaluation data to student learning is weak (COU, 2012). However, many researchers agree that course evaluations can be useful as a way of examining the instructional behaviours that contribute to teaching effectiveness (Gravestock and Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008).

In a comprehensive literature review of course evaluation and an environmental scan of Ontario universities, Gravestock and Gregor-Greenleaf (2008) noted that course evaluations in this province are primarily used for summative as opposed to formative purposes. The data and, in particular, qualitative comments, are also used by instructors for teaching and course improvement. The use of course evaluation for these different purposes results in a positive administrative view of course evaluations, a negative faculty view, and an ambivalent student view (Gravestock and Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008).

### **The complexity of course evaluation instruments**

Instructors appear to have very disparate views on the reliability and accuracy of course evaluation data. This disparity is also fuelled by research studies which are contradictory in their findings. We know that teaching is complex and contextual. A number of studies underscore the limitations of course evaluations with respect to their use and to the various factors that potentially impact their usefulness. For example, some research suggests large classes tend to have lower scores than smaller ones (Kelly, 2012 citing Bedard and Kuhn, 2008), but others dispute this, stating that the correlation between class size and ratings is statistically insignificant and therefore does not impact validity

(Winer, 2016 citing d'Apollonia & Abrami, 1997; Gravestock & Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008). Other challenges concern student bias with respect to the instructors' gender and race, negative evaluations arising from grade expectations, the level of the courses being evaluated, the motivation levels of students, and mandatory versus elective classes, to name a few. Each of these factors should be considered carefully in any use or analysis of course evaluation data but should not be used to dismiss them in their entirety.

### **Formative feedback**

Students are important stakeholders in the teaching and learning process and are capable of making informed judgments about their perceptions of teaching behavior that help them learn. Research also suggests that when formative feedback is used throughout the course, students feel as if they are being heard. In fact, Kelly (2012) asserts that "instructors who offer midterm evaluations perform better" on course evaluations (p. 4). Many agree that students need to be educated on the role and purpose of course evaluations in order to provide constructive feedback and have a greater investment in the process.

### **Online versus paper based evaluation**

Current literature on the debate between online and pencil and paper evaluation appears to support the overall benefits of conducting course evaluation online. There is general consensus that participation scores or response rates are lower when conducted online (Gravestock and Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008; Kelly, 2012; Winer, DiGenova, Costopoulos, & Cardoso, 2016). However, a 2012 COU document (Kelly, 2012) cited studies that claim greater participation does not change overall evaluation. A review of research in that document suggested there was no significant difference in scores between pen and paper evaluations and those administered online. Winer et al (2016) also cite a study "which found no significant differences in sex, class standing, or expected grade between online and paper respondents (Stowell, Addison, & Smith, 2012), supporting the idea that, although online rating forms have lower response rates, the rates are high enough to be adequately representative of the class as a whole" (p.117).

Although response rates are lower in many institutional uses of online evaluation, it is agreed that rates can be improved through several mechanisms. According to the University of Saskatchewan, "empirical evidence shows technology alone does not determine response rates, and the engagement of academic leaders and instructors can have a significant impact on students' participation" (See [https://teaching.usask.ca/documents/seeq/online\\_course\\_evals.pdf](https://teaching.usask.ca/documents/seeq/online_course_evals.pdf)). Some of the suggestions cited from the literature include, using formative or midterm feedback, giving students access to the results, persuading respondents that their feedback is valued, providing time in class to complete the evaluation as well as time outside the class, noting the course evaluation period on the course outline, providing frequent reminders, and making it easy for student to access the evaluations.

Some research indicates that online evaluations tend to garner more detailed feedback. For this reason, Kelly (2012), citing Venette, Sellnow and McIntyre (2010), states that when “administered effectively, collecting student rating messages online may be better than doing so in the traditional pencil and paper format” (p. 2).

Using a robust online system potentially gives faculty access to tools for data analysis that in paper and pencil models is time consuming to parse and interpret. Reports that present information in a more accessible graphical form or as a visualization are easier to include in annual reports, teaching dossiers and promotion and tenure applications. Wright et al (2014) maintain that, as it is challenging to identify patterns from raw scores on course evaluations, using tools such as visualizations of data “can be of real value to faculty, both in formulating specific arguments about the nature and quality of their teaching for various kinds of performance review, and as the basis for ongoing critical inquiry into practice, growth and areas for further development” (p. 61). For example, it is helpful to look at an individual item score across all courses to identify patterns, or compare ratings in repeated courses over time. Although it is possible to compile and compare these data presently, it is most frequently done by individual instructors who are preparing teaching dossiers and who are comfortable with this type of analysis. Needless to say, it is time consuming.

In addition, an online system of evaluation allows access to aggregate data, institutionally and within the department that could be used for program planning. Wright et al (2014) point out that “departments can use the data in more varied and comprehensive ways, for example, to draw out patterns and commonalities that might inform decision making (AGO, 2012), enable more targeted instructional development intervention, and potentially inform curriculum and course re-design efforts (Joughlin and Winer, 2014).” Examples cited include the ability of a department to study the student response patterns by item in all first-year courses to identify areas of practice for collective inquiry and action or have instructors who all teach the same course analyze aggregate data to identify possible areas for course improvement (p. 61).

## C: STATUS OF COURSE EVALUATION AT BROCK

### History

Brock University has made several attempts to review its policies and practices with respect to course evaluation for many years. In 2000, the VP Academic commissioned a report on course evaluation to determine if the institution could move to a standardized system; samples of course evaluation instruments were collected from across the institution and analyzed. At that time, numerous departments employed multiple instruments; only Psychology employed a departmental instrument (SEEQ). From 2000 to 2015, the Teaching and Learning Policy Committee struck 8 sub committees to examine the use of a standardized set of evaluation questions to be used institutionally but, in each case, it was difficult to reach consensus or obtain Senate approval.

In 2012, the Office of the Auditor General on University Undergraduate Teaching Quality audited Brock University and made this recommendation:

To help ensure that administrators and students have sufficient information to make informed decisions, and that all faculty members receive the necessary feedback to maintain or enhance teaching quality, universities should consider means to aggregate student course evaluation information at the university, faculty and department levels...

In 2014, the follow up report to the Auditor General indicated that no action had been taken on the above recommendation (See Appendix B).

In 2015, following an eighteen month consultative process, Brock University (through the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation) purchased a tool (Explorance Blue) to conduct course evaluations online. This was in response to the need to evaluate courses in the modality in which they were being delivered, namely in the online environment. However, this tool was and is increasingly requested by departments to administer their course evaluation processes in both face to face and online courses. The processes for administering the evaluation varies across the institution considerably in an effort to match departmental guidelines. Processes may differ for faculty as opposed to sessional instructors within each department and reports are accessed directly by course instructors or by departmental designates (see Appendix C on current Brock usage of eXplorance Blue).

The 2016 TLPC report to Senate stated that *“the online tool could also be employed to collect and aggregate course evaluation information at the university, faculty and departmental levels, as has been recommended by the Auditor General of Ontario. There are provisions in the BUFA Collective Agreement regarding student evaluation of teaching, but no other policies, practices or guidelines at Brock have been established. In the past, Brock’s Teaching and Learning Policy Committee has struck sub committees to investigate the student evaluation of teaching and the use of institutional evaluation*



*questions, and it may be timely for the Committee to consider this matter again”.*

In 2016-17, the Teaching and Learning Policy Committee again discussed course evaluations with respect to the introduction of some institutional wide questions and best practices in the use of course evaluation data. As it was a bargaining year for the collective agreement, it was suggested that a discussion regarding the auditor general’s recommendations could be included and the TLPC might wait till the following year to make any recommendations.

In 2016, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts again asked for an update with respect to the Auditor’s General’s recommendations, reporting that little or no progress had occurred. The University’s draft strategic plan (2017) also cited course evaluation as an area requiring attention.

### **Current practice**

Course evaluation at Brock University is typically carried out in the Department utilizing a departmentally approved course evaluation form. Rating scales vary across the institution with most using a 5 point Lykert scale; in some departments the scale is reversed. The Goodman School of Business employs a 7 point rating scale and is the only Faculty that uses a Faculty wide instrument.

To our knowledge, none of the instruments being employed have been tested for reliability or validity with the exception of the SEEQ (Student Evaluation of Educational Quality) which has been used by Psychology for many years. Brock University does not have a set of core institutional questions.

Some courses employ a Scantron form for machine-readable results; other courses employ pencil and paper evaluation forms. A few departments aggregate course evaluation data across the department so that individual instructors can include departmental averages in their teaching dossier (this is often required for external teaching awards). Although some Departments assign the task of transcribing qualitative data to administrative support personnel, in other cases course evaluation data are manually transcribed by individual instructors. These data are used for the purpose of Tenure and Promotion, the Annual Report, and the compilation of teaching dossiers.

The university is very clear that ownership of data resulting from course evaluation belongs to the faculty member. Article 12.07(d) of the Collective Agreement states:

“the Parties agree that student course evaluations are not public documents and are the property of the instructor. The Parties further agree that the results of student course evaluations shall be made available by members to their Deans during the Annual Review process and other processes as provided for in this Agreement as a source of information about teaching quality and effectiveness.”

## Challenges

### *a) Varying interpretations of course evaluation use*

While it is clear that ownership resides with the faculty under the Collective Agreement, it is less clear for sessional and part time instructors covered under CUPE 4207. Many receive their course evaluation data from the department, after grades are in and the summary is reviewed by the chair. However, this is not a consistent practice. In other cases, a centrally appointed person in the department such as an administrative assistant manages the process of course evaluation and disseminates the reports, but the evaluation data are not seen by individuals other than the sessional instructor.

The primary challenge under our current practice is that there is broad interpretation of what the university practices are, which clearly vary across departments. The departments themselves are responsible for establishing the procedures for course evaluation as outlined in article 16.03 (g) of the Collective Agreement:

“The Departmental Committee, after consulting with the Dean, shall establish procedures for the format, content, and collection of student evaluations of all departmental courses with enrollments of five (5) or more students. In addition to student evaluations, other methods of evaluation may also be practiced... These procedures are subject to annual review and approval as part of the Departmental Rules.”

Because each department operates according to its own set of guidelines and interpretations, practices around the collection, interpretation and dissemination of data are varied.

### *b) Using a standardized online system for an individualized process*

At this juncture in Brock’s course evaluation history, moving these broadly varying practices and instruments online at the request of the department has proven to be highly challenging, as it requires the technology to replicate highly individualized processes, including different instruments, question sets and scales, varied reporting lines (depending on the employment status of the instructor), and even concerns regarding who has the authority to speak on behalf of the department in making requests to move online.

### *c) Lack of student buy in*

A significant challenge concerns the ambivalence with which students view course evaluations (Gravestock and Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008)). Completing summative forms for each course over a week or two at the end of term can mean that students experience evaluation burnout and are not invested in the process. The accuracy of evaluation results potentially becomes compromised when students are required to complete course evaluations using different scales. In addition, students do not necessarily fully understand the uses of course evaluation, nor do they see the results of their input. As OUSA (2015) maintains “students do not recognize the value of SETs and will give unhelpful or trivial responses (if they respond at all), and faculty become convinced that

students are incapable of giving fair or high quality assessments, and so resist SETs for fear of being judged according to unreliable or vindictive feedback” (p. 18).

OUSA (2015), as well as the Auditor General of Ontario (2014), has recommended that course evaluation data be made available to students to both increase participation in the process and for the purposes of course selection. At Brock University, BUSU has, in the past, raised concerns about lack of access to the data arising from the course evaluation process and has expressed an interest in establishing a mechanism by which students can view previous course results. Clearly this issue is fraught with numerous challenges and concerns which would require significant debate before any implementation.

*d) TAs having access to seminar evaluation data*

Although it is widely agreed that Brock graduate students are fortunate to have access to teaching experience, not all are able to receive student feedback. TAs have reported that they do not get evaluated by students in their TA work and, those that do, do not always get access to the data. On some forms, questions about the TA and seminar are part of the departmental instrument and are therefore difficult to separate out from questions about the course or the professor. TAs frequently state they would like access to course evaluations for their component of the course as this information can be used for professional growth and to show evidence of teaching experience in job search activities.

## D: OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Improve current practices**

Given the steadily increasing departmental uptake of the online course evaluation tool, and the growing need for guidelines around the effective use of online course evaluations, such as mechanisms for increasing student participation, the opportunity exists for the university to draft a set of recommendations pertaining to ways for the university community to collect, analyze and report course evaluation data. A Senate endorsed committee comprised of stakeholders from across the institution including senators, administrators, faculty, sessionals, and graduate and undergraduate students can review existing practices as well as best practices and make recommendations for moving forward.

### **Consider the development of institutional wide questions**

The development and inclusion of institutional-wide or global questions on each departmental form would allow departments and the university to collect anonymous aggregate data for institutional reporting purposes and for program planning purposes. However, collecting data through an institutional wide system (not instrument) would be challenging without the wide scale adoption of an online system, as aggregate data from a percentage of the university who use the online tool is of little help.

### **Consider moving all course evaluation to an online system**

Having a standardized technological process for administering evaluations allows for an institutional reporting template to be adopted and implemented by instructors and faculty who may require such data for job search, award compilation, or promotion and tenure. The online modality complements the technological expertise of most undergraduate and graduate students and would allow them to use their existing mobile devices to complete the student evaluation process. Adopting an online system reduces the cost and use of paper evaluation and reinforces Brock University's commitment to sustainability. The opportunity also exists to implement practices that potentially bolster student response rates in the online environment.

### **Encourage formative feedback strategies**

Given the limitations of summative evaluation and the ennui with which students view the course evaluation process, serious consideration should be given to implementing a process of formative or midterm feedback for the purposes of improving the student experience. The research is clear (Jeffs & Piera, 2016) in citing the benefits to students and to instructors with respect to its use and can have the added benefit of positively influencing the summative scores (Kelly, 2012). In other words, if regular feedback on the teaching and the learning experience is encouraged, there should be fewer surprises on the summative forms.

A simple stop/start/continue activity a few weeks into a course can elicit helpful feedback that allows instructors to make simple changes to the course in situ. This

allows students to see that instructors are invested in their learning. Talking about what changes can be made (and which changes cannot) closes the feedback loop and provides students with an opportunity to check their own experiences of the course to those of their peers to gain a more accurate picture of their own learning. The Ontario University Student Alliance also strongly supports the use of formative feedback on teaching stating “The government should investigate and encourage best practices in the design and implementation of SETs using the “stop, start, continue” survey model” (OUSA, 2015).

Brock University’s current online tool also has the capabilities to administer formative feedback at any time during the course via a tool called Bluepulse. Student responses to instructor questions are anonymous but the tool also allows instructors to reach out to individual students (anonymously) who express confusion or concern about the course experience. Instructors can then send resource links, follow up information, or an invitation to contact the instructor non-anonymously. This has implications for student retention in classes as it allows students to have greater investment in the process, and potentially improve their course experience.

## E: SUMMARY OF DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop policy, approved by Senate, relating to the purposes and administrative use of course evaluations for faculty, sessional and TAs, taking into consideration the different needs and purposes for these distinct employee groups.
2. Create a Brock University course evaluation instrument that includes a standardized rating scale and the following categories:
  - a. Global questions: A small set of global questions (to be used across the institution) to contribute to aggregate data for institutional reporting.
  - b. Faculty specific questions: These questions could reflect Faculty specific interests and outcomes.
  - c. Departmental /program questions: Review current departmental questions in light of the above inclusions and streamline.
  - d. Instructor questions: Provide an opportunity for instructors to include a limited number of course specific questions.
3. Move course evaluation collection practices online for greater consistency, efficiency and institutional tracking. Use of an online course evaluation system across the institution would streamline the process, simplify administration, enhance security and allow instructors to receive more sophisticated analytics.
  - a. Include a small set of global questions on each instrument to allow data to be aggregated across the institution for the purposes of institutional reporting. (see # 2 above)
  - b. Consider the aggregation and reporting of data at the Faculty and departmental levels to help inform decisions around teaching practices and instructional development.
  - c. Launch an institutional campaign to encourage students to participate (incentive programs, providing time in face to face to classes for evaluation using mobile devices; advertising a three week course evaluation period at the end of each term; discussing with students the importance of evaluation and how the data are used)
  - d. Consider ways in which the data from student evaluations could be integrated into faculty annual reports.
  - e. Consider how the online tool can facilitate the sharing of sessional instructor (non BUFA) reports with appropriate bodies (ie chairs).
  - f. Consider how the online tool can be deployed for the purposes of TA evaluation and instructional development, with reports being accessed by both TAs and supervising instructors.
4. Explore mechanisms that would allow students access to the summarized results of student course evaluations. Summarized and publicly available course evaluation data would allow for student education around the purpose of course

evaluation, facilitate course selection, and demonstrate that their feedback is important and valued.

5. Develop institutional policy pertaining to the removal of course evaluation comments that could be deemed discriminatory, hateful or contrary to the university policy on respectful work and learning. Policy could also govern the removal of student remarks made at the student request (ie if there had been misinterpretation of the scale used).
6. Maintain an ongoing education campaign for students and the university community as to the role and limitations of the student evaluation of teaching.
  - a. Provide resources for faculty on how to interpret end of course evaluation results
  - b. Encourage the adoption of formative feedback in courses to both demonstrate respect for the student voice and to model a continuous improvement process (ie Start/Stop/Continue)
  - c. Introduce an online mechanism for instructors to obtain formative feedback throughout the course.
7. Explore ways to reinforce that student evaluation of teaching is only one source of information on teaching and encourage the adoption of other forms of evidence.
  - a. i.e. Formalize the institutional adoption of a teaching dossier to contextualize disciplinary contributions to teaching such as peer observations, contributions to curriculum, course outlines, professional development in teaching, research on teaching, mentoring, etc.
  - b. Encourage departments to consider ways to examine aggregate data for the purposes of program planning and improvement.

## F: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Brock University currently has the opportunity to make changes to its existing practices and procedures in order to improve the course evaluation experience and data reporting for all stakeholders. To do so requires a willingness to review our current culture and practices and to enter into a discussion about how we can create a system that reflects the needs and requirements of our university as it is today, using the tools that are available to us.

We must continue to recognize the limitations of course evaluation, what it can accomplish and what it cannot, how it can best be used, and the ways in which gender and racial bias can potentially impact results. We need to acknowledge that course evaluations do not measure learning and that students cannot comment on the relevance of course content or outcomes; they can, however, provide comment on their own experience of how the course was delivered and their perception of how much they learned. Lastly, we must recognize that course evaluation data are limited taken in isolation and that evidence of quality teaching is best contextualized with multiple sources of information over time.

With this acknowledged, we can work collaboratively towards establishing consensus on the ways in which the current Brock course evaluation system could be improved.



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## Appendix A: Current Collective Agreement Articles Re: Course Evaluations

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- Article 12.07(c) of the Collective Agreement (2014-17) states: “when reporting on teaching, faculty members shall provide information about their teaching during the evaluation period by means of student evaluations and, if desired by the member, additional information as described in Article 21.06(a).”
  - Article 12.07(d) states: “student course evaluations are not public documents and are the property of the instructor. The results of student course evaluations shall be made available by members to their Deans during the Annual Review process and other processes as provided for in this Agreement as a source of information about teaching quality and effectiveness.”
  - Article 16.02(f) states: “The Departmental or Centre Committee is responsible, *inter alia*, for academic and long-term planning and student evaluations.”
  - Article 16.03(g) states: “The Departmental Committee, after consulting with the Dean, shall establish procedures for the format, content, and collection of student evaluations of all departmental courses with enrollments of five (5) or more students. In addition to student evaluations, other methods of evaluation may also be practiced... These procedures are subject to annual review and approval as part of the Departmental Rules.”
  - Article 21.06(a) states: “student course evaluations for all courses with five (5) or more students taught by the candidate since the date of last promotion or appointment must be included.”

## Appendix B: Summary of the Reports from the Auditor General of Ontario

In October 2012, Brock University was one of three universities selected for a “Teaching Quality Audit” by the Auditor General of Ontario. The Auditor General issued a report in which several recommendations were made pertaining to teaching quality.

[http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/reports\\_en/en12/312en12.pdf](http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/reports_en/en12/312en12.pdf)

The Report identified three areas specific to course evaluations:

Recommendation 1a: “consider means to aggregate student course evaluation information at the university, faculty and departmental levels”

Recommendation 1b: “develop a core set of student course evaluation questions to be used throughout the university”

Recommendation 1c: “provide students with the summarized results of student course evaluations”

Of the two other Universities that were audited, one reported it had “introduced an online course evaluation system designed to enable information aggregation, facilitate comparisons, and identify remedial need.” The system also “incorporates institution-wide, divisional and departmental questions and provides the option of instructor specific questions.” In addition, this university has introduced “a new policy on the student evaluation of teaching which requires that results of course evaluations be shared with students.”

The second university reported it has used “a standardized university-wide course evaluation since 2003... The aggregate data collected annually through these evaluations supports curriculum review and tenure and promotion processes.”

In 2014, the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario requested a progress report from Brock University on the status of the 2012 recommendations. It was reported that recommendations from the Auditor cannot be implemented according to the terms of the current Collective Agreement. See

<http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en14/411en14.pdf>

In April of 2016 the Standing Committee on Public Accounts again requested updated information on the status of the recommendations. With respect to Recommendations 1a b c cited above, the committee reported that “little or no progress” had been made. See

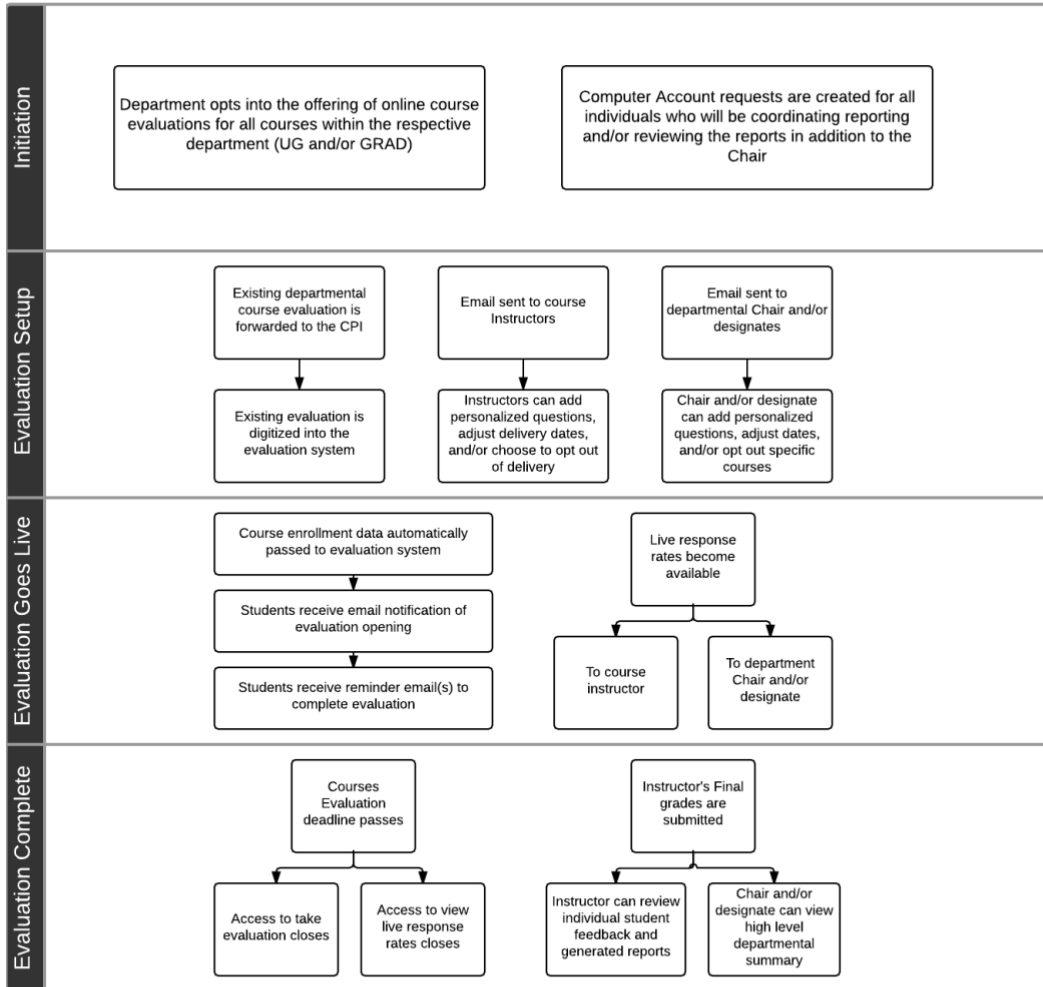
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The university is required to report on the status of these recommendations each time the Ministry requests an update.

Appendix C: Brock's Use of EXplorance Blue (online course evaluation tool)

This document outlines Brock University's process of online evaluation with eXplorance Blue. If you have any questions related to this information, please contact the [CPI](mailto:CPI@brocku.ca) at [edtech@brocku.ca](mailto:edtech@brocku.ca) or extension 4734 while on campus.

Process for Departmental Adoption of Blue Online Course Evaluations



Course Evaluation Processes [Accessible PDF Version](#)

### Requirements gathering

- Departments across campus optionally opt into the offering of online course evaluations for all courses within the respective department.
- Courses which use a fully online delivery format or for which traditional course evaluation is impractical may automatically be eligible for online evaluation.
- Chair and Dean (current HR L1 & L2 roles) approve Computer Account requests for all individuals who should be coordinating reports and possibly reviewing the reports in addition to the Chair. The request should include in the following details within the **Notes** section: "Assign Course Evaluation Supervisor to <insert name here> for department <identify department here>."

### Several weeks prior to online evaluation

- With input from specific academic departments and support from CPI, departmental course evaluation forms are converted to a digital format for online delivery. This process involves reviewing best practices at Brock University and possible common questions, identifying questions that apply to the course or the instructor, and preparing samples for departmental review.
- A message is sent to instructors of courses that are to receive online evaluation which provides access to eXplorance Blue. Instructors are provided with features to add personalized questions, adjust evaluation delivery dates, or opt out of online evaluation.
- A similar message is sent to departmental Chairs or selected designates of departments that have opted in, informing them that online evaluations are to take place for specified courses. As appropriate in some cases, point people for course evaluations are established by departments which require technical permissions to add personalized questions, adjust dates, or opt specific courses out of the evaluation process.

### Online evaluation begins

- Brock student enrollment data are passed to the online evaluation platform
- Students within courses receiving online evaluation are sent a notification via Brock email that evaluation is open. This message will provide a link to where evaluation can be accessed.
- Students can optionally access all available online evaluations via a tool within selected Isaak-Sakai course sites.
- Instructors can choose to view response rates for evaluations of their courses during evaluation period.
- Departmental Chairs or designates can choose to view response rates during evaluation period.

- Students that have not submitted receive several reminders messages via Brock email

#### Online evaluation completes

- After deadline for submission of final grades passes for each specific course, instructors gain access to evaluation reports via same eXplorance Blue access point that was used to add custom questions, adjust dates, or opt their course out of online evaluation.
- Departmental Chairs (or designates) can choose to access high level reports after deadline for submission of final grades passes for each specific course. This feature is available via the same access point as previous and can be disabled if preferred by the department.
- Results of course evaluations are not reported beyond the course's immediate department, and, according to BUFA agreement section 1 12.7d, remain the property of the instructor.