Student Feedback
Persistent Themes & Responses
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Introduction

Purpose

The following report is provided:
1. To be used as a basis in developing a communication plan to “close the loop” on student feedback and inform students of actions taken to address their concerns.
2. To analyse recent feedback, determine priority issues and make recommendations to VCE on how these might be addressed.
3. To update Academic Board on the University wide service level responses taken to address issues identified through student feedback.¹
4. This report also suggests work for Semester 1, 2008 to improve the dissemination and use of, as well as responsiveness to student feedback.

Background

In 2006 a detailed analysis of student feedback was undertaken to inform development of the Strategic Plan. The scope of the analysis incorporated quantitative and qualitative survey results (predominantly Student Experience Survey (SES) results and its previous incarnations, but also Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and Student Outcome Survey (SOS) qualitative comments) from 1999-2005. The review identified four persistent themes of student concern:
• Teaching staff and quality
• Program structure and course content
• The ‘networked student’ (relationship between the academic, social and technological environments)
• Learning environments, administration and resources.

The summary of this analysis and information regarding each of these themes can be found at Appendix A.

This report builds on this previous analysis incorporating recent SES (2006 and Semester 1, 2007) results. Qualitative comments from the 2006 CEQ (Higher Education) and the 2006 SOS (TAFE) have also been reviewed. Trends from 2004 to 2007 have been examined to determine shifts in satisfaction and qualitative comments reviewed to determine consistency with the persistent themes and any emerging issues not previously identified. In Semester 1, 2007 two student discussion groups were also held, with international and postgraduate students, some reference is made to these discussions in the summary of key trends (section 1) where these discussions were perceived to add further context. Further student discussions are planned for Semester 2, 2007.

Structure of the Report

Section 1 Summary of the key findings synthesised from the body of the report, responses taken to address issues identified through student feedback and recommendations.

Section 2 Higher Education: analysis of historical SES results and shifts in satisfaction in relation to the persistent themes. Shifts in key scales (e.g. Good Teaching Scale) are also mapped across selected surveys (SES, CEQ and CES).

Section 3 TAFE: analysis of historical SES results and shifts in satisfaction in relation to the persistent themes. Shifts in key scales (e.g. Good Teaching Scale) are also mapped across selected surveys (SES, SOS and CES).

¹ Only those responses taken at a University wide service level have been captured in this report. Much work is undertaken at a School, Program and Course level in direct response to issues identified at a local level through disaggregated CES and SES results. These responses are generally captured through other reporting mechanisms such as local workplans and Program Annual Review reports. Key initiatives are also shared with the University community through sources such as the Teaching and Learning "Ed" magazine. The possibility of summarising some of the key School and Portfolio initiatives will be discussed with Academic Portfolios and included in future reports if it is perceived to add value and not duplicate existing reporting requirements.
Section 4  Sources of student feedback and the responses taken by central service areas to address issues identified.

Appendix A  Summary of Persistent Themes 1999 - 2005.
Appendix B  SES Semester 1, 2007 - Higher Education and TAFE reports.

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Section 1: Executive Summary

Summary of key trends – SES 2004 to 2007

Student Experience Survey (SES) results indicate improved satisfaction for both Higher Education and TAFE students from 2004 to 2007. Students appear to be generally more satisfied with teaching staff, program quality as well as general learning facilities and administration. Although there has been a fairly consistent upward trend in satisfaction, there are still areas where satisfaction is relatively low and dissatisfaction relatively high. Following are some of the key observations from an analysis of SES trends as well as CEQ and SOS qualitative comments:

- **Online Course Materials and Activities**: Although a significant number of both Higher Education and TAFE students access the online materials and activities provided by their program on a weekly basis, there has been declining satisfaction with these resources from 2004, not necessarily due to declining quality but more likely a result of increasing student expectations in this area. TAFE student satisfaction with these resources is lower than Higher Education student satisfaction which is of note as TAFE students generally respond more favourably to SES questions.

- **Communication**: Students point to a desire for clear and consistent communications, in regards to expectations, assessment and feedback. It would appear that initiatives to improve satisfaction with feedback across the University are gaining traction, with significant improvements in both Higher Education and TAFE. However, in 2007 only approximately half of students agree that they receive useful/helpful feedback and a significant number still disagree. An analysis of qualitative 2006 Course Experience Questionnaire and Student Outcomes Survey comments indicates students continue to experience inconsistencies in this area.

- **Administration**: Although satisfaction with administration has improved, less than half of students agree that RMIT effectively resolves their administration issues and almost one third of Higher Education students and one fifth of TAFE students disagree with this statement. Qualitative comments also point to administration issues, with a significant number of comments suggesting that administrative difficulties have had quite negative impacts on student experience. Students point to issues such as out of date and inconsistent information, difficulty in accessing information, unclear processes, lack of communication about changes to program requirements or assignment due dates and disorganisation such as misplaced documents.

- **Workloads**: Balancing workloads appears to be an issue as we see relatively high (and a slight increase in) agreement that “the workload is too heavy” (Higher Education students). This may in part be attributed to increasing numbers of Higher Education SES respondents indicating that they were involved in full-time employment, making the juggle between study and work more difficult for some students. Further investigation is required to determine drivers of this apparent stress and at what point interventions need to be made: Whether through more flexible curriculum options, reviews of program assessment requirements and scheduling and/or whether further general skill development is required to complement the student’s academic program e.g. time management, work-study-life balance, financial management and/or building more effective study skills workshops.

- **Learning facilities**: It would appear that investments in the Library and lecture theatre upgrades are having an impact on student satisfaction, with significant improvements in these areas. However, only approximately half of students indicate that they are satisfied with computing facilities, and a significant number of comments request access to more up-to-date facilities and equipment, not necessarily just computer labs, but access to the latest industry technologies and equipment relevant to their discipline.

- **Career planning and advice**: A significant number of both Higher Education and TAFE students indicate that career planning and advice is important to them. However, satisfaction in this area is relatively low, with 30% of Higher Education students and 20% of TAFE students indicating they were dissatisfied with support from the University in this area. This was also identified as an emerging theme from an analysis of CEQ and SOS.
qualitative comments, with comments requesting more support to assist transition from university to work, especially work that is relevant to their discipline.

- **Work relevant learning:** Associated with career planning is the consistent message from students, particularly through qualitative comments of their desire for the opportunity to engage in work integrated learning and their appreciation of this when it is embedded in program structures. Students comment on their desire for clear communications about the opportunities available and assistance in finding appropriate placements.

- **Social interaction:** Students appear to want more opportunities for social interaction outside of their program, with very high levels of disagreement from students in both Higher Education and TAFE that they have enough contact with students from other programs. Discussions with students have confirmed this desire to be part of a university community with access to both physical (general student areas) and virtual (online communities) infrastructure to promote student interaction.

**Summary of responses to student feedback**

The following outlines some of the initiatives that have been undertaken, university wide, in response to feedback, not just from the SES but also from the various local feedback sources used to obtain further information on issues (e.g. issue specific surveys, focus groups etc. - section 4 provides further details of the feedback sources used by various service areas).

**Issue:** Improving e-learning

**Responses:**

Considerable work has been undertaken to improve both utilisation of and staff capability in e-learning, such as:

- A minimum online presence has been implemented for all onshore courses.
- Over 600 staff undertook formal Blackboard and online learning professional development programs in 2007.
- Five videoconferencing locations are now operational across Bundoora, Hamilton and Sale with a further eleven being implemented in second semester.
- Web access to recorded lectures is being enabled via an automated web-based lecture recording system (Lectopia) in 26 priority teaching spaces. A further 30 venues are planned for implementation prior to commencement of Semester 1, 2008.
- Collaboration with the MIT iCampus initiative “iLabs” has seen the establishment and trial of virtual labs in the SET Portfolio enabling students to run real experiments via the internet 24x7 and access other iLabs around the Globe. Additional iLabs experiments are planned for 2008.
- A streaming media service will be available on-campus by September 2007 and off campus in early 2008.
- Enhanced Blackboard functionality (including Blogs, Wikis and ePortfolio) is being trialled in dozens of courses as part of a Learning Teaching Investment Fund (LTIF) e-learning project. The trial will inform good practice and further implementation across RMIT.
- The RMIT Library is overseeing a trial of an Academic Content Management System that will assist with the systematic management and sharing of the rapidly increasing quantum of learning and teaching digital content.

**Issue:** Improving satisfaction with administration

**Responses:**

- Phase two of enrolment online (EOL) has been implemented enabling commencing undergraduate, TAFE and research students to use EOL. Academic Registrar’s Group in conjunction with Information Technology Services conducted two surveys of students regarding their EOL experience with results from each used to inform the next phase of development.
- Enquiries through the student administration telephone support line are analysed periodically. Results from this analysis suggested that further amendments were required to EOL to better cater to the needs of research students. It was established that ‘repeat rules’ built into EOL created significant issues for research students who essentially re-enrol in the same course each year, after consultation a decision was made to ‘turn-off’
the repeat rules functionality. Research students have also been provided with extensive ‘walk-through’ support by the Student Administration Support Line.

- As a result of the ongoing monitoring of feedback received through complaints and appeals processes, improvements were made to communications in semester 1, 2007 regarding census date and cancellation of enrolment. Communication improvements included one letter and two reminder emails, as well as a substantial number of follow-up calls (where there were discrepancies or omissions in enrolment information) prior to census date.

**Issue:** Improving satisfaction with computing facilities and helpdesk service

**Responses:**
- To improve satisfaction with access to computers and specialist software a review of PC labs was undertaken in the first semester of 2007. Recommendations included:
  - the establishment of a regular student survey (the first of these is planned for October 2007);
  - development of a lab access website with clear and accurate information to assist students easily locate available facilities and the specialist software they might require (the lab access website will form part of the new Student Portal); and
  - implementation of a common printing solution across the University (some investigation has occurred around what a common printing solution might look like e.g. consistent pricing across Portfolios and campuses, common payment methods, and will be progressed in Semester 2, 2007 and 2008).

- To improve helpdesk customer service satisfaction, a survey was conducted of both staff and students in late 2006. The results of this survey have been used to inform process improvements such as the way in which Helpdesk calls are prioritised. Customer service training has also been provided to all Helpdesk and on-site support staff.

**Issue:** Improving satisfaction with Library facilities and opening hours

**Responses:**
- To improve satisfaction with general library facilities, stage 2 of the Library upgrade was completed on the City Campus and Building 108, Level 5 Business Library during 2006 and 2007. Spaces have been reconfigured, with new group meeting rooms created. Equipment has also been upgraded with furniture and carpets replaced.
- Further improvements have been made to library collections, with additional funding provided by the University on top of the usual allocation for this purpose in 2006. Expenditure focussed on areas of known dissatisfaction, particularly e-resources.
- Student focus groups were held at the end of 2006 to obtain feedback on the Library’s website. As a result of this some redesign has occurred in 2007 and included more meaningful link descriptions and better organisation of link hierarchy, less pathway duplication, and added functionality such as quick search and quick links. Further improvements are planned in line with the University’s overall web redesign.
- A survey was conducted in October 2006 to obtain feedback from students on the Library’s opening hours. As a result of this survey changes have been implemented from 2007 and include: earlier opening times; more weekend hours; and extended opening hours during exam and study periods.

**Issue:** Improving satisfaction with the general learning environment, buildings & facilities

**Responses:**
- Improvements to Teaching and Learning facilities are in progress, with works scheduled for mid-semester and end of year breaks. During the mid-semester break a new 90 seat lecture theatre and 40 seat classroom were completed in Building 56. Furniture has also been replaced in general teaching spaces. At the end of semester two, work will commence on a new 130 seat lecture theatre and 3 x 40 seat classrooms, ready for Semester 1, 2008.
- An overall plan for improvement to and consolidation of student spaces, including provision for improved access to student services has been prepared, with consultation currently being undertaken with the various stakeholder groups. Improvement plans encompass the City (including Building 108), Bundoora and Brunswick Campuses.
Issue: Improving satisfaction with student support services, transition and social integration

Responses:
- To support knowledge of and access to student support services, plans are currently in progress to co-locate key services on each campus, with the Hub to be used as a point of service referral. The Orientation campus tours now also include visits to each service area to reinforce their availability and location in student’s minds.
- Focus Groups were held in 2006 with international students to determine the transition issues they face and how best to inform them of support services. As a result of these focus groups Student Services Group web based and print materials were improved. A new initiative ‘MATES’ was also piloted in 2007 and involved matching international students while still in their home country with a local mentor. Initial evaluation has been positive, with feedback indicating international students felt more prepared on their arrival.
- To improve social and academic transition further support for and expansion of the RMIT leadership program ‘LEAD’ is occurring. Potential for new LEAD mentoring programs for 2008 are currently being discussed with various schools and units. LEAD will also be implementing a three layered program in 2008, which will include specialised training, voluntary activities and outdoor adventure training.
- Volunteer programs have proved a useful means of promoting student socialisation. International students in particular appear to use these opportunities to connect with other students and the local community. Further expansion and evaluation of these programs is planned to target higher levels of local student involvement and to better gauge the extent to which these programs do impact on student social connectivity and engagement throughout their student life.

Recommendations
1. That the issues raised in the analysis of SES data be referred to Portfolios and Schools for consideration and action in work-planning.
2. That the report be submitted to Academic Board for information.

Next Steps
1. A communication plan is being developed in consultation with Media and Communications to inform both staff and students of improvement activities generated in response to student feedback and promote further engagement by students in feedback activities.
2. Further disaggregation and analysis of the 2007 SES data by cohort (postgraduate and international onshore) to occur, with results to be posted on the Policy and Planning website (http://www.rmit.edu.au/planning-group).
3. Student discussions are being organised for semester 2, 2007, to obtain further qualitative information around the persistent themes.
4. Policy and Planning Group will work with service areas and portfolios from semester 1, 2008 to:
   - Confirm how the various feedback channels are used to “feed up” and “feed down” student issues so that they are dealt with at an appropriate level within the University, either locally or centrally;
   - Make recommendations on how these might be better utilised, consolidated and supported to improve responsiveness to identified student issues; and
   - Make recommendations on how responses taken at a local and/or central level might better be communicated to both staff and students.
Section 2: SES trends - Higher Education

In Semester 1, 2007 163 programs were surveyed (114 in Higher Education and 49 in TAFE) between May and June. A total of 4,457 responses were received (2806 from Higher Education and 1651 from TAFE). In second semester 10,281 forms have been sent to schools for 144 programs. Schools determine which programs are to be surveyed in any particular round. The Survey Services Centre advises that at least 20% of students in a program should be surveyed.

The following section has been structured around the four persistent themes. Under each theme a snapshot of shifts in agreement in relation to individual questions pertaining to that theme are shown from 2004 to 2007.

Following this snapshot the distribution shift from 2004 to 2007 for selected questions are shown where a material shift has been observed. These graphs have been provided to show the relative shifts in satisfaction, dissatisfaction and neutrality levels.

Teaching staff and teaching quality

- Satisfaction with teaching staff and quality has shown significant improvement when comparing 2007 with 2004 Higher Education SES results. Students are more likely to agree to all positively worded questions and less likely to agree to negatively worded questions relating to teaching staff (Figure 2.1).
- In 2007 students are most likely to agree that teaching staff work hard to make their courses interesting (up 9% to 63% agreement) and that teaching staff motivate them to do their best work (up 9% to 62% agreement).
- Although significant improvements are observed in relation to feedback, agreement is still relatively low and the results would indicate that further concentrated effort is required to improve satisfaction in this area. Results suggest that work is required in improving communication of expectations, student progress against these expectations and student awareness of the communication channels available to them to contact teaching staff.

![Figure 2.1](image)

Higher Education - SES responses - % Agree/Strongly Agree - Teaching Staff

(*) indicates negatively framed question where in contrast to other questions decreasing agreement indicates a positive shift in perceptions

Note: Percentages at the bottom of the graph indicate the percentage difference between 2007 and 2004 agreement.

2 Note: Results reported in this section include both semester 1 and 2, 2006. There may also be small variations between the percentages reported here and those reported elsewhere due to rounding.
Initiatives to improve feedback to students appear to be having an impact, as we observe a significant positive distribution shift (13% increase in agreement from 2004), driven predominantly by decreasing neutrality but also by decreasing disagreement. However, it would appear that further work is required to improve satisfaction in this area, as a significant number of students still disagree that teaching staff normally give helpful feedback (20% disagreement) (Figure 2.2).

Significant positive distribution shifts have also been observed in relation to student perceptions that staff put a lot of time into commenting on their work (16% increase in agreement from 2004). However, again a significant number of students still disagree with this statement in 2007 (25% disagreement) (Figure 2.3).

**Figure 2.2**

The teaching staff normally give me helpful feedback on how I am going

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.3**

The staff put a lot of time into commenting on my work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All questions relating to teaching staff showed a positive distribution shift with the exception of responses to the negatively framed statement “Too many staff ask me questions just about facts”, where students indicated a slight increase in agreement (up 2% to 15% in 2007) but as Figure 2.4 illustrates the distribution in response to this question was towards more disagreement also (up 5% to 55% disagreement in 2007).

![Figure 2.4](image)

Although we observe a moderate positive distribution shift in relation to the statement that teaching staff can be hard to contact (6% decrease in agreement from 2004), almost one third of students still agree/strongly agree with this statement (Figure 2.5).

![Figure 2.5](image)

Furthermore as observed in the social affinity/networked student section of this report, 22% of students disagree that they have enough opportunities to discuss their academic work with teaching staff (Figure 2.16, page 17).

(*) indicates negatively framed question where in contrast to other questions decreasing agreement indicates a positive shift in perceptions
Program structure and course content

- Similar to satisfaction with teaching staff and quality, satisfaction in relation to various questions relating to program structure and experience has improved markedly (Figure 2.6 and 2.7). However, satisfaction in relation to online course materials and activities has shown a significant decline (Figure 2.9).
- Students agree most that they are satisfied with the overall quality of their program at 69% agreement and that the program develops their problem solving and analytic skills at 68% agreement.
- There appear to be issues in regards to workload, with 41% of students agreeing that the workload is too heavy. The results would also indicate that further work is required to ensure that students are fully aware of the expectations of their program. Qualitative comments point to a desire for clear and consistent messages from the different sources of program information, from teaching, tutorial and administrative staff within the program, to supporting course and program materials.

Figure 2.6

Higher Education - SES Responses - % Agree/Strongly Agree - Program Experience

Figure 2.7

Higher Education - SES Responses - % Agree/Strongly Agree - Program Experience

(*) indicates negatively framed question where decreasing agreement indicates a positive shift in perceptions.

Note: Percentages at the bottom of the graph indicate the percentage difference between 2007 and 2004 agreement.
Even though 91% of students indicated that they used the online resources provided by their program on a weekly basis (Figure 2.8), there has been a significant negative shift in student satisfaction with their online course materials (down 16% from 2004) and activities (down 14% from 2004) (Figure 2.9).

This shift is of concern, however, it may not be a reflection of declining quality but instead of increasing student expectations in regards to these learning resources.

Figure 2.8

Higher Education - SES 2007 - During semester how often do you access online activities or materials provided by your program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 2-3 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort-nightly</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.9

Higher Education - SES - I am satisfied with...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Area</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My online course materials</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My online course activities</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There have been contradictory movements in relation to satisfaction with online course materials and activities with decreases in the percentage of students who “agree”, redistributed predominantly to disagreement and neutrality. However, there have also been slight increases in the percentage of students who “strongly agree” (Figure 2.10 and Figure 2.11).

Figure 2.10

Higher Education - SES - I am satisfied with my online course materials

![Chart showing satisfaction with online course materials]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some of the negative movement may be attributed to slightly different wording in 2007:

- **2004 – 2006 SES**
  - "Were you satisfied with the standard of online materials/activities you accessed" – Response range: Very dissatisfied to Very satisfied
- **2007 SES**
  - "I am satisfied with my online course materials/activities" – Response range: Strongly disagree to Strongly agree

Figure 2.11

Higher Education - SES - I am satisfied with my online course activities

![Chart showing satisfaction with online course activities]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students appear to be struggling with workloads with over half (at 51% of students) indicating that there is lot of pressure on them in their program (Figure 2.12) and 40% indicating that the workload is too heavy (Figure 2.13).

Figure 2.12 - There has been relatively no change in total agreement from 2004 to 2007. However, there has been a redistribution of strongly agree responses to agree and a redistribution of neutral responses to disagreement.

Figure 2.13 – Contradictory redistribution, with neutral responses being redistributed to both increasing agreement and disagreement.

(*) indicates negatively framed question where in contrast to other questions decreasing agreement indicates a positive shift in perceptions
There has been a moderate predominantly positive distribution shift in student perceptions that it was easy to know the standard of work expected (9% increase in agreement from 2004). This trend has been driven by decreasing neutrality rather than decreasing disagreement and a significant number of students still disagree with this statement in 2007 (20% disagreement) (Figure 2.14).

Furthermore, we see almost one third of students agreeing that it was often hard to discover what is expected of them in their program and only 38% of students disagreeing with this statement (Figure 2.15).

Figure 2.14

**It was always easy to know the standard of work expected**

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Figure 2.15

**It was often hard to discover what is expected of me in this program (*)**

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

(*) indicates negatively framed question where decreasing agreement indicates a positive shift in perceptions.
Social affinity/networked student

- Students generally appear to be relatively satisfied with the amount of contact that they have with students within their program. However, it would appear that they would like more interdisciplinary interaction, with 38% of students disagreeing that they had enough contact with students from other programs (Figure 2.16).
- A significant number of students indicate that they find the online environment useful to communicate with their teachers outside of class (59% agreement, 18% disagreement). They are less inclined to agree that this environment is useful in enabling them to work with other students on group assignments (47% agreement, 26% disagreement) (Figure 2.17).

Figure 2.16

Higher Education - 2007 SES responses - I have enough...

Figure 2.17

I find the online environment...
The Hub appears to have established itself as a vital service for students, with 92% of students indicating that it was important to them. A majority of students also appear to rank advocacy of student interests to the University as an important service, along with career planning and advice (Figure 2.18).

### Figure 2.18

**Higher Education - SES 2007 - This service is important to me...**

- The Hub: Yes (92%), No (8%)
- Advice and support if I had a problem with the University: Yes (33%), No (67%)
- Career planning and advice: Yes (34%), No (66%)
- Campaigns, information and resources to improve conditions for students: Yes (36%), No (64%)
- Representation of student interests to the University: Yes (39%), No (61%)
- Scholarship and financial advice: Yes (42%), No (58%)
- Orientation: Yes (45%), No (55%)
- Health advice and treatment: Yes (55%), No (45%)
- Social activities, bands and competitions: Yes (52%), No (48%)
- Sport programs, sport clubs and recreation activities: Yes (53%), No (47%)
- Visual arts, performing arts and gallery activities: Yes (53%), No (47%)
- Clubs and collectives: Yes (54%), No (46%)
- Counselling services: Yes (51%), No (49%)
- Student Telephone Helpline: Yes (53%), No (47%)
- Student media, such as Catalyst and RMITV: Yes (53%), No (47%)
- Legal Advice: Yes (56%), No (44%)
- Housing advice and assistance: Yes (62%), No (38%)
- International student advisory services: Yes (63%), No (37%)
- RMIT LEAD (student leadership program): Yes (67%), No (33%)
- Disability support: Yes (68%), No (32%)
- Chaplaincy/religious/spiritual services: Yes (76%), No (24%)
Although career planning and advice is important to students, 30% of students have indicated that they are not satisfied with support from the University in this area and only 35% agree that they are satisfied (Figure 2.19).

**Note**

2.1 Career transition is being addressed within the ambit of the Supporting Students and Graduates Business Plan Project.

The Library commenced a Graduate Support Program pilot in early 2007, providing career advice and support to graduating students. Outcomes from this pilot may inform future service development in this area.

![Figure 2.19](image-url)
Learning environments, administration and resources

- Increased satisfaction has been observed regarding various questions related to the general learning environment (Figure 2.20).
- Students have indicated increased satisfaction with study support, though satisfaction is still quite low at 44%. This is however due to high levels of neutrality (40%) rather than very high levels of dissatisfaction (16%). The same trend is observed in relation to language support.
- Satisfaction with timetabling/room bookings and resolution of administrative issues has increased significantly. However, satisfaction in these areas is still relatively low and only 41% of students agree that RMIT effectively resolves any student administrations they might have (27% disagree) (Figure 2.21).
- Of concern is the decline in agreement that RMIT is friendly to people from all backgrounds (down 7% from 2004) and that students feel personally safe on campus (down 2%). A similar trend is observed in TAFE.

Figure 2.20

Higher Education - SES Responses - Learning Environment

(*) indicates negatively framed question where decreasing agreement indicates a positive shift in perceptions
Note: Percentages at the bottom of the graph indicate the percentage difference between 2007 and 2004 agreement.
Although there has been a significant positive shift in student perceptions related to administration, there are a still a significant number of students that disagree that RMIT effectively resolves any administration issues they might have (27% disagreement) (Figure 2.21).

**Note**

2.2 Improving student administration is being addressed within the ambit of the Supporting Students and Graduates Business Plan Project.

Figure 2.21

RMIT effectively resolves any student administration issue I might have

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The decline in agreement that RMIT is friendly to people from all backgrounds has predominantly been driven by a redistribution of agreement (down 7% from 2004) to disagreement (up 5% to 12% disagreement) (Figure 2.22).

A similar negative trend has also been observed in relation to the statement that students feel personally safe on campus.

Figure 2.22

RMIT is friendly to people from all backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although there has been a moderate positive distribution shift in relation to student perceptions that the RMIT campus is a good place to spend time outside of class (8% increase in agreement), this shift has been driven predominantly by a redistribution of neutral responses rather than decreasing disagreement and more students disagree with this statement than agree (43% disagreement, 33% agreement) (Figure 2.23).

Figure 2.23

The RMIT campus is a good place to spend time outside of class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student satisfaction with Library resources has improved significantly (Figure 2.24). Students are most satisfied with the quality of service provided by Library staff (68% agreement, 9% disagreement).

Although a significant positive distribution shift has been observed in relation to satisfaction with the Library’s book collections (15% increase in agreement from 2004), driven predominantly by decreasing disagreement but also decreasing neutrality, students are still less satisfied with these facilities than the other Library facilities and 19% of students indicate that they are dissatisfied (Figure 2.25) compared with 16% of students who are dissatisfied with the Library’s e-resources.

Note 2.3 SES results have been referred to the Library for action.
Satisfaction with computing facilities has improved from 2004, though approximately only half of students have indicated that they are satisfied (Figure 2.26). In 2007 students were most satisfied with access to specialist software (51% agreement, 23% disagreement).

Although a moderate positive distribution shift is observed in relation to satisfaction with computer printing facilities (8% increase in agreement from 2004), less than half of students agree that they are satisfied and almost one third have indicated that they are dissatisfied with these facilities at the University (47% agreement, 31% disagreement) (Figure 2.27).

Note: Percentages at the bottom of the graph indicate the percentage difference between 2007 and 2004 agreement.

Note(656,493),(992,537) 2.4 SES results have been referred to ITS for action. Further, a common printing solution project will be progressed in Semester 2, 2007 and 2008.
Satisfaction with buildings and facilities quality has also shown improvement from 2004 (Figure 2.28). A significant increase in satisfaction with the maintenance of lecture theatres has been observed (up 13% to 66% agreement, 13% disagreement).

Figure 2.28

Note: Percentages at the bottom of the graph indicate the percentage difference between 2007 and 2004 agreement.

Although a slight positive distribution shift has been observed in relation to satisfaction with the maintenance of classrooms from 2004 (significant improvement on 2006), a significant proportion of students still disagree in 2007 that these areas are well maintained (54% agreement, 22% disagreement) (Figure 2.29).

Note
2.5 SES results have been referred to Property Services for action.

Figure 2.29
Changes to major scales – SES, CEQ and CES – Higher Education

- When we conduct a comparison of key Student Experience Survey scales, we see that generally these have been moving positively from 2004 (Figure 2.30).
- When we compare the Good Teaching Scale and Overall Program Satisfaction movements across various surveys (Student Experience Survey, Course Experience Questionnaire and Course Experience Survey) we observe some comparable shifts between these surveys (Good Teaching Scale comparison - Figures 2.31 and 2.32) (Overall Program Satisfaction comparison - Figures 2.33 and 2.34).

All SES scales have moved positively from 2004, with the largest increase observed in relation to the Good Teaching Scale. Of concern is the particularly low score for the Appropriate Workload Scale (Figure 2.30).

Figure 2.30

![Higher Education - Scale Changes - SES](image)

Note: Percentages at the bottom of the graph indicate the percentage difference between 2007 and 2004 agreement.
When considering shifts in the Good Teaching Scale across a range of surveys both the Student Experience Survey (SES) and the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) show a similar upward trend (Figure 2.31).

Figure 2.31

The Course Experience Survey (CES) Good Teaching Scale when disaggregated to the Portfolio level shows a little more variation but is still trending upwards, this is more evident if we disregard 2005 CES results (as fewer courses participated in 2005 and 2006 results provide a better base year for comparisons) (Figure 2.32).

Figure 2.32

Note: 2006 CES scores provide a better baseline to measure future overall portfolio performance, as fewer courses participated in the 2005 survey.
Similar to the Good Teaching Scale, an upward trend is also observed across a range of surveys in relation to Overall Program Satisfaction (Figures 2.33 and 2.34).

**Figure 2.33**

*Overall Program Satisfaction - Higher Education - SES & CEQ Comparison - 2004 to 2007*

- 2004: 61.1%
- 2005: 62.6%
- 2006: 64.7%
- 2007: 69.4%

**Figure 2.34**

*Overall Program Satisfaction - Higher Education CES - by Portfolio*

- DSC - CES: 67, 64, 69%
- Bus - CES: 61, 56, 58%
- SET - CES: 66, 60, 55%

Note: 2006 CES scores provide a better baseline to measure future overall portfolio performance as fewer courses participated in the 2005 survey.
Section 3: SES trends – TAFE

In Semester 1, 2007 163 programs were surveyed (114 in Higher Education and 49 in TAFE) between May and June. A total of 4,457 responses were received (2806 from Higher Education and 1651 from TAFE). In second semester 10,281 forms have been sent to schools for 144 programs. Schools determine which programs are to be surveyed in any particular round. The Survey Services Centre advises that at least 20% of students in a program should be surveyed.

The following section has been structured around the four persistent themes. Under each theme a snapshot of shifts in agreement in relation to individual questions pertaining to that theme are shown from 2004 to 2007.

Following this snapshot the distribution shift from 2004 to 2007 for selected questions are shown where a material shift has been observed. These graphs were provided to show the relative shifts in satisfaction, dissatisfaction and neutrality levels.

Teaching staff and teaching quality

- Similar to Higher Education, when comparing 2004 and 2007 TAFE SES results students have indicated increased satisfaction with teaching staff and teaching quality (Figure 3.1).
- Students are most likely to agree that their instructors have a thorough knowledge of the course content and provide opportunities to ask questions, with 80% agreement to each of these questions in 2007.

Figure 3.1

Note: Percentages at the bottom of the graph indicate the percentage difference between 2007 and 2004 agreement.
It is likely that a “ceiling effect” has been reached for some questions, particularly in relation to the statements “my instructors have a thorough knowledge of the course content” and “my instructors provide opportunities to ask questions”.

As is demonstrated by Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3 only 4% of students disagreed with these statements and only 16% of students were neutral, providing limited scope for further improvements to be made.

Figure 3.2

My instructors have a thorough knowledge of the course content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.3

My instructors provide opportunities to ask questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Initiatives in TAFE to improve feedback to students appear to be having an impact, as we observe a significant positive shift in satisfaction (13% increase in agreement from 2004), this improvement has been driven by decreasing disagreement. Although significant improvements have been observed the percentage of students who agree is still quite low (at 54% agreement, 14% disagreement) (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4

I receive useful feedback on my assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program structure and course content

- Program related questions have shown improvement in TAFE from 2004 to 2007 (Figure 3.5 and 3.6). However, similar to Higher Education, satisfaction in relation to online materials and activities appears to have declined significantly from 2004 (Figure 3.8).

- In 2007, students agree most that their training helps them think about new opportunities in life at 70% agreement and that as a result of their training they are positive about achieving their goals at 68% agreement.

- 68% of students also indicated that they were satisfied with the overall quality of their training (up 6% from 2004).

Figure 3.5
TAFE - SES responses - Program Experience

Figure 3.6
TAFE - SES responses - Program Experience

Note: Percentages at the bottom of the graph indicate the percentage difference between 2007 and 2004 agreement.
Similar to Higher Education, even though 82% of students indicated that they accessed their online resources (Figure 3.7) only 54% indicated they were satisfied with their online materials (down 17% from 2004) and only 49% were satisfied with their online activities (down 14% from 2004) (Figure 3.8).

This shift is of concern and may not be a reflection of declining quality but of increasing student expectations in regards to these learning resources.

Figure 3.7

TAFE - SES 2007 - During semester how often do you access online activities or materials provided by your program?

![Graph showing access frequency](image)

Figure 3.8

TAFE - SES - I am satisfied with...

![Graph showing satisfaction levels](image)
There have been contradictory movements in relation to satisfaction with online course materials and activities with decreases in the percentage of students who “agree”, redistributed predominantly to disagreement and neutrality. However, there have also been slight increases in the percentage of students who “strongly agree” (Figure 3.9 and Figure 3.10).

Figure 3.9

**TAFE - SES - I am satisfied with my online course materials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some of the negative movement may be attributed to slightly different wording in 2007:

2004 – 2006 SES  
“Were you satisfied with the standard of online materials/activities you accessed” – Response range: Very dissatisfied to Very satisfied

2007 SES  
“I am satisfied with my online course materials/activities” – Response range: Strongly disagree to Strongly Agree
When comparing program related questions TAFE students tend to agree least that their training improves their written communication skills at 52% agreement. There has been a moderate positive distribution shift from 2004 (5% increase in agreement), driven predominantly by decreases in disagreement (Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11

My training improves my skills in written communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TAFE students also tend not to agree as strongly that they are assessed at appropriate intervals, when comparing this response to other questions related to the program structure. However, disagreement is not particularly strong either and the distribution skew is predominantly towards agreement (9% disagreement, 60% agreement) (Figure 3.12).

Figure 3.12

I am assessed at appropriate intervals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Social affinity/networked student**

- Mirroring the trend in Higher Education, TAFE students also appear to be relatively satisfied with the amount of contact they have with students within their program. However, it would appear that they also would like more contact with students in other programs with only 36% agreeing that they had enough and 35% disagreeing with this statement (Figure 3.13).

- 54% of TAFE students have indicated that they find the online environment useful to communicate with their teachers outside of class (16% disagree). Students are less inclined to agree that this environment is useful in enabling them to work with other students on group assignments (47% agreement) (Figure 3.14).

**Figure 3.13**

**TAFE - 2007 SES responses - I have enough...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>opportunities to discuss my academic work with teaching staff</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunities to work with other students in my program</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contact with students in other programs</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.14**

**TAFE - SES 2007 - I find the online environment useful to...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>communicate with my teachers outside of class</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work with other students on group assignments outside of class</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After the Hub, Career Planning and Advice and Orientation services appear to be the most important to a majority of TAFE students (Figure 3.15).

Figure 3.15

**TAFE - SES 2007 - This service is important to me...**

- The Hub: 90%
- Career planning and advice: 67%
- Orientation: 62%
- Advice and support if I had a problem with the University: 59%
- Campaigns, information and resources to improve condition for students: 57%
- Health Advice and treatment: 52%
- Representation of student interests to the University: 52%
- Visual arts, performing arts and gallery activities: 52%
- Social activities, bands and competitions: 54%
- Student Telephone Helpline: 55%
- Counselling services: 56%
- Sport programs, sport clubs and recreation activities: 57%
- Legal advice: 57%
- Clubs and collectives: 59%
- Student media, such as Catalyst and RMITV: 62%
- Housing advice and assistance: 64%
- International student advisory services: 67%
- RMIT LEAD (student leadership program): 69%
- Disability support: 72%
- Chaplaincy/religious/spiritual services: 76%
Similar to Higher Education, although a significant number of TAFE students indicated that career planning and advice is important to them, only 40% of students indicate that they are satisfied with support from the University in this area and 20% disagree (Figure 3.16).

**Note**

3.1 Career transition is being addressed within the ambit of the Supporting Students and Graduates Business Plan Project.

**Figure 3.16**

TAFE - SES 2007 - I am satisfied with...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hub service</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>career planning and advice</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Environment, Administration and Resources

- Increased satisfaction has been observed regarding various questions related to the general learning environment when comparing 2007 with 2004 (Figure 3.17). However, increases have not been consistently upwards from 2004 and in a number of instances the gains made in 2005 and 2006 have declined slightly in 2007.
- Students have indicated slight increases in satisfaction with study support from 2004, though satisfaction is still quite low at 47%. However, similar to Higher Education this is due to high levels of neutrality (40%) rather than very high levels of dissatisfaction (13%). The same trend is observed in relation to language support.
- Similar to Higher Education, there have been moderate declines observed in relation to TAFE student perceptions of their safety on campus (down 8% from 2005 (which is the first year this questions was asked)) and that RMIT is friendly to people from all backgrounds (down 10% from 2005).

Figure 3.17

TAFE - SES responses - Learning Environment

Note: Percentages at the bottom of the graph indicate the percentage difference between 2007 and 2004 agreement.
Satisfaction with timetabling/room bookings and resolution of administrative issues has increased significantly. However, satisfaction in these areas is still relatively low and in 2007 only 44% of students agree that RMIT effectively resolves any student administrations they might have (20% disagree) (Figure 3.18).

**Note**
3.2 Improving student administration is being addressed within the ambit of the Supporting Students and Graduates Business Plan Project.

**Figure 3.18**

RMIT effectively resolves any student administration issues I might have

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student perceptions that RMIT is friendly to people from all backgrounds has shown a fairly significant decrease in agreement (down 10% from 2005). The distribution has shifted predominantly towards more neutrality but there has also been a slight increase in disagreement (up 3% to 8% disagreement) (Figure 3.19). A similar negative trend has also been observed in relation to student perceptions of their safety on campus.

**Figure 3.19**

RMIT is friendly to people from all backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similar to Higher Education students, a significant proportion of TAFE students tend to
disagree that the RMIT campus is a good place to spend time outside of classes. However,
unlike Higher Education, more TAFE students agree with this statement than disagree (40% agreement, 29% disagreement) (Figure 3.20).

**Figure 3.20**

The RMIT campus is a good place to spend time outside classes
Satisfaction with library resources and the service of library staff has improved from 2004 (Figure 3.21).

Figure 3.21

![TAFE - SES responses - Library](image)

Note: Percentages at the bottom of the graph indicate the percentage difference between 2007 and 2004 agreement.

Although satisfaction with the Library’s e-resources collection has improved slightly from 2004 (up 2% to 58% agreement), there has been a steady decline in satisfaction from 2005. When we look at the distribution shift from 2005 therefore instead of 2004, we see that the decreasing agreement has been redistributed to neutrality rather than increasing disagreement (Figure 3.22).

**Note**

3.3 SES results have been referred to the Library for action.

Figure 3.22

![I am satisfied with the Library’s e-resources collection](image)
TAFE student satisfaction with computer facilities has fluctuated over the past few years but generally shown improvement from 2004 (Figure 3.23).

**Figure 3.23**

![TAFE - SES responses - Computing Facilities](image)

Note: Percentages at the bottom of the graph indicate the percentage difference between 2007 and 2004 agreement.

Although we observe a slight increase in satisfaction with the availability of computer printing facilities, less than half of TAFE students are satisfied with these (50% agreement, 21% disagreement) (Figure 3.24).

**Note**

3.4 SES results have been referred to ITS for action. Further, a common printing solution project will be progressed in Semester 2, 2007 and 2008.

**Figure 3.24**

![I am satisfied with the availability of computer printing facilities](image)
Section 3: SES TRENDS - TAFE

There has been a generally positive trend since 2004 regarding satisfaction with buildings and facilities, with increased agreement that classrooms and lecture theatres in particular are well maintained (Figure 3.25).

When comparing TAFE student satisfaction with laboratories and general access computer labs, we observe that students are more likely to both agree and disagree that general access computer labs are well maintained. This would suggest that there is a larger degree of variability in the quality of these facilities than others (Figure 3.26).

Note

3.5 SES results have been referred to Property Services for action.

Figure 3.26
Changes to major scales - SES, SOS and CES - TAFE

- When we conduct a comparison of key Student Experience Survey scales, we see that generally these have been trending upwards from 2004 (Figure 3.27).
- When we compare movement in the Good Teaching Scale across various surveys (Student Experience Survey (SES), Student Outcomes Survey (SOS) and Course Experience Survey (CES)) we observe comparable shifts between the SES and SOS and a slightly flatter trend in relation to the CES (Figures 3.28 and 3.29). However, there is only limited longitudinal CES data available at present.

All SES scales have moved positively from 2004, with the largest increase observed in relation to the Good Teaching Scale and Appropriate Assessment Scale (Figure 3.27).

Figure 3.27

TAFE - scale changes - SES

Note: Percentages at the bottom of the graph indicate the percentage difference between 2007 and 2004 agreement.
When considering shifts in the Good Teaching Scale (GTS) across a range of surveys both the Student Experience Survey (SES) and the Student Outcomes Survey (SOS) show a similar upward trend (Figure 3.28).

Interestingly, in contradiction to the externally run Higher Education Course Experience Questionnaire, which traditionally has returned lower GTS scores than the internally run SES, the externally run TAFE SOS has traditionally returned higher GTS scores than the internally run SES.

Figure 3.28

The Course Experience Survey (CES) Good Teaching Scale when disaggregated to the Portfolio level shows a little more variation and a relatively flat trend line to date (Figure 3.29).

Figure 3.29

Note: 2006 CES scores provide a better baseline to measure future overall portfolio performance as fewer courses participated in the 2005 survey.
Section 4: Responses to Student Feedback

In 2005, 2006 and 2007 a top-ten report was not produced as has been the practice in previous years. Instead University-wide summaries were published for VCE and detailed performance reports made direct to relevant areas. The following outlines some of the initiatives that have been undertaken from a university wide service level in response to feedback not just from the SES but from a range of sources service areas utilise to obtain student feedback.

Students Portfolio (including Academic Registrar’s Group & Student Services Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback sources:</th>
<th>Issues identified</th>
<th>Responses initiated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• SES</td>
<td>Further rollout of EOL has occurred with commencing undergraduate, TAFE and research students now able to use EOL.</td>
<td>- Two surveys of student using EOL were conducted through ITS with results from each informing the next phase of development (2006 – 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• EOL online survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student Advisory Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student Administration telephone support line (analysis of calls received is conducted periodically)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Local service area surveys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Focus Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Informal feedback mechanisms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Complaints</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enrolment online (EOL)

- As a result of feedback received through the student administration support line, improvements were made to EOL for research students, in consultation with the Higher Degrees Unit (mid 2006).
- Research students had difficulty re-enrolling due to ‘repeat rules’. After consultation this functionality was ‘turned-off’.
- Research students have also been provided with extensive telephone support to guide them through the reenrolment process, some of these calls were more than 30 minutes in duration.

Policy Developments / Reviews

- The Student Advisory Committee was established by the Vice-Chancellor in mid-2006 with student representatives from the Academic Portfolios and the Student Union. This Committee is consulted about new policy developments and policy reviews (ongoing).
- Feedback is received through complaints and the appeals process and is used to identify process/policy issues (ongoing). As a result of complaints and appeals:
  - Improvements were made to communications regarding census date and cancellation of enrolment. Communication improvements included one letter and two reminder emails. A substantial number of follow-up telephone calls were also made where there were identified discrepancies or omissions in enrolment information (2006-2007).
  - The Academic Progress Policy was reviewed (2006-2007).

Campus Life and Learning Support

- To improve student social and academic transition further support for and expansion of the RMIT leadership program ‘LEAD’ is occurring. Potential for new LEAD mentoring programs are currently being discussed with various schools and units, such as:
  - School of Architecture and Design
  - School of Electrical and Computing Engineering
  - School of Medical Sciences
  - ATSI Unit
  - DLU
  - Study and Learning
Section 4: Responses to Student Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Services usage</th>
<th>Enrolments and Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chaplaincy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RMIT Union Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biospatial Workshop Program (toxology survey)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEAD will be implementing a three layered program in 2008 which will include: specialised training, voluntary activities and outdoor adventure training.

- Student focus groups were held in August 2006 to determine the transition issues faced by international students and how best to inform them of the support services available. As a result of these focus groups, web based and print materials were improved and a new initiative ‘MATES’ was piloted in 2007 which involved matching international students while still in their home country with a local mentor. Initial feedback from students involved in this pilot has been positive, with students indicating they felt more prepared upon their arrival in Australia.

- Learning support was transferred to Student Services Group in January 2007 providing further consolidation of student services.

- Library learning support ‘drop in’ sessions were piloted in March 2007.

- Academic Portfolio Transition Projects were facilitated in June 2006 and included:
  - Student leadership;
  - TAFE articulant issues; and
  - Common test for key student issues

- A services communication plan was developed in January 2007 and recommendations are being implemented, including:
  - Key notifications of student events and activities are advertised in ‘The Fly’ (ongoing)
  - Student Services website revamped
  - Student Essentials web page revamped (Jun 2007)
  - Orientation Program co-ordination transferred to Student Services. Campus tours now include visits to each service area (Feb 2007).

- Volunteer programs have proved a useful means of promoting student socialisation. International students in particular appear to use these opportunities to connect with other students and the local community. Further expansion and evaluation of these program is planned to target higher levels of local student involvement and to better gauge the extent to which these programs do impact on student social connectivity and engagement throughout their student life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITS Feedback sources:</th>
<th>SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director’s Advisory Group (DAG) – one meeting held per year where students are invited to attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal to RMIT survey (issue specific – Helpdesk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student representatives are sought for particular projects (e.g. student portal – student representatives form part of the working parties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing random surveys on closure of Helpdesk calls (commencing Sept 2007)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issues identified**

**Responses initiated**
### Section 4: Responses to Student Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to Computers and specialist software</th>
<th>Recommendations included:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review of PC labs was undertaken in first semester of 2007.</td>
<td>o the establishment of a regular student survey (the first of these is planned for October 2007);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o development of a lab access website with clear and accurate information to assist students easily locate available facilities and the specialist software they might require (the lab access website will form part of the new Student Portal); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o implementation of a common printing solution across the University (some investigation has occurred around what a common printing solution might look like e.g. consistent pricing across Portfolios and campuses, common payment methods and will be progressed in Semester 2, 2007 and 2008).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wireless access points are being expanded on the city campus and to other campuses (ongoing through 2007 and 2008).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to printing facilities</th>
<th>See above recommendation from PC labs review.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Issues are often fed up from student-staff consultative committees through Portfolio IT managers to ITS. As a result of consultations with IT managers, improvements to printing facilities have been made (identified as a particular issue in DSC) (ongoing).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Service - Helpdesk</th>
<th>A Helpdesk survey was conducted of both staff and students (Nov. 2006). As a result of this survey process improvements have been made such as the way in which Help desk calls are priorities (the survey is to be conducted every two years).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing random surveys on closure of Helpdesk calls to be commenced (Sept 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customer service training has also been provided to all Helpdesk and on-site support staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Feedback sources:</th>
<th>SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LibQual survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rodski survey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Focus groups (3 held)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal survey (issue specific – opening hours)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program Annual Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal – captured through feedback register</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues identified</th>
<th>Responses initiated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening hours</td>
<td>Internal survey conducted (Oct 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improvements implemented in 2007 including earlier opening times, more weekend hours and extended opening during exam study periods (2007 – ongoing).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Liaison librarians work with Portfolios to identify program requirements to ensure library resources meet student needs. Feedback from Student-Staff Consultative Committees are passed on through these contacts (ongoing).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improvements to library collections have been undertaken, with increased university funding ($1m additional to $5mil usual allocation) (2005 &amp; 2006). Expenditure focused on known areas of deficiency - increased expenditure on electronic resources to support access anywhere at anytime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to electronic resources appears to be an emerging issue (identified from various feedback sources in 2007) and will be monitored. Extra training sessions have been offered in this area (ongoing).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Space configuration | Library spaces have been reconfigured to better meet student needs ($3.5 million across the 3 libraries). Improvements included new group meeting rooms and equipment upgrades with furniture and carpets |
replaced. Informal feedback has been very positive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Focus groups were held to obtain information on the Library’s website (Sept/Oct 2006). As a result of this some redesign has occurred including more meaningful link descriptions, improved, more intuitive link hierarchy, less pathway duplication and added functionality. Further improvements are planned in line with the overall University web redesign (ongoing).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Property Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback sources:</th>
<th>SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Advisory Committee – property services issues to be a standing item on the agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Property Services client relations managers seek student feedback through portfolio contacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complaints</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Issues identified | Responses initiated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General student spaces</th>
<th>An overall plan for improvement to and consolidation of student spaces, including provision for improved access to student services has been prepared, with consultation currently being undertaken with various stakeholder groups. Improvement plans encompass the City (including Building 108), Bundoora and Brunswick campuses.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Library upgrade stage 2 completed. Spaces have been reconfigured and new furnishings purchased (ongoing through 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture theatre upgrades</td>
<td>Lecture theatre upgrades were made during mid-semester break and are scheduled for end of semester. Upgrades include improved audiovisual equipment, replacement of furniture in general teaching spaces, as well as new classrooms and lecture theatres (2007-2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to information</td>
<td>‘Info Corner’ complete and opened as a source of information for students (April 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback to students</td>
<td>Communication with students conducted through The Fly (ongoing).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A: Summary of persistent themes – 1999-2005

Analysis of recent reports on the Top-ten student concerns points to some priority issues influencing students’ satisfaction. These issues were established by analysing qualitative and quantitative responses to surveys.

Four clusters of persistent issues have been identified.

1. **Teaching staff and teaching quality**

Analysis of student feedback results shows that student satisfaction with teaching is a leading determinant of student satisfaction with program experience. Where their experience is good, students value good teaching highly; where it is poor, it has a significantly negative influence on their overall program experience. Students’ experiences range across program areas (and within programs) from poor through to excellent, suggesting an inconsistent experience across an area of very high importance.

Students wish for teaching to be characterised by responsiveness and ‘high quality’ and to learn from academics who:

- treat them with respect
- are an expert in their field
- are connected to industry/ the world of work
- who are interested in students’ learning
- are good communicators (enthusiastic and responsive)
- give timely and meaningful feedback
- provide them with challenging academic environment.

2. **Program Structure and Course Content**

Analysis of student feedback shows that program structure and content is, along with ‘good teaching’, a leading determinant in student satisfaction. Where students experience well defined and clearly communicated program structure and course content it is highly valued. Where it is poorly defined or communicated they note it as a significant source of dissatisfaction. Effective communication is very important in relation to this area of student satisfaction.

Students want program content and course structures to be clearly and consistently communicated (i.e. set expectations and meet them, course guides available), and:

- Assessment to be clearly defined, scheduled in consideration of the total workload and not changed at short notice
- Challenging program content
- Well structured, yet flexible program design
- A blend of theory and practice through work integrated learning, fieldwork
- Underpinned by discipline and cohort appropriate teaching methods and assessment
- Improved communication of opportunities for work integrated learning.

---


5 These issues are drawn from analysis of the Student Experience Survey (and its previous incarnations the University Experience Survey and the Program Experience Survey) and Course Experience Questionnaire Qualitative Comments.
3. **Social affinity/networked student**

Students’ experiences of connectedness to their discipline and/or social communities represent another key contributor to student satisfaction. Unlike teaching and program structure, this does not feature as a leading area of dissatisfaction. However, analysis shows that where this connectedness is present it is highly valued by students and makes a significant contribution to student satisfaction with their program.

Students want their experience to be characterised by connectedness and:

- A diverse and friendly environment in which they are treated with respect and valued
- Links to a discipline community related to their program of study
- Links to opportunities for future work and study
- To connect with students outside their program area (social community)
- Integrated communications to make clear to students the opportunities for connection within their discipline
- Readily accessible information regarding further study abroad and work opportunities.

4. **Learning environment, administration & resources**

Analysis of student feedback highlights that student satisfaction with the physical environment, administration and information and communication technology influences program satisfaction. However, in contrast to the social affinity issues set out above, students want their expectations for quality, function and professional systems and services to be met and do not particularly value or applaud these when satisfied. However, when these expectations go unsatisfied/unmet, these issues significantly contribute to overall dissatisfaction.

Students expect the learning and physical infrastructure and systems to be functional, up to date, professional and clean. They want appropriate and well maintained:

- Learning spaces, appropriate to the life stage of learners (i.e. post-graduate mid-career students)
- Communal spaces
- Information and communication technology
- Library resources
- Professional and respectful student administrative staff
- Clear and flexible student administrative processes (beyond face-to-face).
Appendix B: 2007 Student Experience Survey Results – TAFE and Higher Education

Accompanying this paper are the following reports:

1. 2007 SES Results – Higher Education
2. 2007 SES Results - TAFE