



Transitioning to Online SOCIs – Handbook Change

RES 252620

FAC

- RESOLVED:** The Academic Senate approves revisions to the University Handbook regarding the administration of student opinions of curriculum and instruction (SOCIs). Deletions are in ~~striketrough~~, and additions are in **bold and underlined**.
- RESOLVED:** The Academic Senate shall review the effectiveness of this transition after a period of five years, including analysis of response rates, student feedback, and faculty feedback.

305.4.4 Student Role in the Performance Review Process for Instructional Faculty

Student opinion of teaching by faculty is a required component of the performance review process. The Student Opinion on Curriculum and Instruction (SOCI) shall be the primary instrument used to collect student opinions of teaching.

Although this handbook currently identifies the Student Opinion on Curriculum and Instruction (SOCI) as the primary instrument used to collect student opinions of teaching, this tool is to be considered as only one of many measures used to evaluate teaching; SOCIs should not be given more consideration than the other measures of teaching performance outlined in section 305.4.2.6 (Evaluation of Teaching Performance). Further, the trends in student responses should be the focus of the evaluation of SOCIs as a measure of teaching performance.

The quantitative and qualitative (i.e., open-ended) items included on the instruments to gather student opinions shall be reviewed and open for potential revision every 10 years, or more frequently. More frequent reviews and revisions are at the discretion of the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate. Any revision process shall include broad consultation from faculty.

Except as limited below, faculty members will administer SOCIs in all sections and place the results of all SOCIs in the RTP (WPAF) File for use by all levels of review.

The requirement for collection of SOCI's may be waived in the following cases.

- A. The requirement for collection of SOCI's may be waived for sections with enrollments of fewer than 6 students or similar situations in which the anonymity of respondents would be compromised and sections in which the primary mode of instruction or the SOCI would not reasonably correlate with instructional methods.
- B. The requirement for collection of SOCI's may be waived for sections in which a faculty member went on leave and was replaced by another faculty member.
 - a. This request shall be honored at the discretion of the replacement faculty member.
 - b. The faculty member on leave shall not be subject to student opinions.

Within these guidelines, department chairs in consultation with their department shall determine which sections are eligible for waiver. Documentation of the department decision to grant a waiver shall be included in each section of the file for which SOCI's are waived.

The SOCI shall be anonymous and identified only by course and/or section. The format of the SOCI provides both quantitative information (ratings of course and instructor attributes) and qualitative information (comments about the course and instructor).

Faculty shall be provided course and/or section summaries of quantitative data. Means and standard deviations shall be provided for individual questions as well as the overall SOCI. Quantitative and qualitative data shall be linked in both online and physical SOCI's. SOCI reports shall be clear such that faculty can associate individual-student comments with individual-student quantitative responses. **Faculty shall also receive a SOCI report even when there are no completed student responses. SOCI reports shall be available to faculty teaching in all terms (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer). SOCI reports shall be provided to the individual faculty instructors, department chairs, and college deans.**

Some bias in student opinions may be present. Since SOCI's are used in conjunction with other measures to evaluate teaching, the College Dean (or designee) should arrange for training for Unit RTP Committee members to be undertaken before the start of a faculty review. The training should include the following: (1) the purpose of the RTP review process and the responsibilities of Unit Committee members, (2) the identification of possible biases in student responses, and (3) the process to remove biased SOCI's from an evaluation of teaching.

Faculty under review may request that the AVP for Faculty Affairs (or their designee) reviews and removes the SOCI(s) with discriminatory comments and quantitative responses. SOCI(s)

that are received within the prior academic calendar year are eligible for consideration for removal. Requests to remove SOCI(s) must be made 21 days prior to the deadline to submit the Working Personnel Action File (WPAF, commonly called the RTP File) for the next review cycle.

The AVP for Faculty Affairs (or their designee) shall consider the merit of such requests based on many factors, including (but not limited to) the human dignity of the faculty member, the student's role in the performance review process, and the added pedagogical value and relevance of the comments. Regardless of the decision of the AVP for Faculty Affairs (or their designee), the faculty member is encouraged to reflect upon feedback and may submit rebuttals to SOCI comments as part of the performance review process. In all cases, the Unit Review Committee, Department Chair (if applicable), College Dean, University Review Committee, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and President (or their designee) are expected to approach the evaluation of faculty and interpretation of SOCIs with care and professionalism. Ultimately, SOCIs are one component of a broad assessment of teaching performance.

305.4.5 SOCI Distribution Completion Period

The SOCI ~~Distribution~~ Completion Period shall be designated on the Academic Calendar, not to include the examination period. The timeframe for SOCI ~~distribution~~ Completion shall be the same regardless of course modality (e.g., face-to-face, hybrid, online).

In the Fall and Spring semesters, SOCIs ~~distributed~~ completed online shall be available for 10 weekdays. SOCIs ~~distributed in person shall be distributed during one class meeting in the two-week SOCI Distribution Period;~~ SOCIs shall be ~~distributed~~ completed between 14 and 21 days prior to the Last Day of Classes.

In the Summer and Winter sessions, SOCIs ~~distributed~~ completed online shall be available for 5 weekdays. SOCIs ~~distributed in person shall be distributed during one class meeting in the penultimate week of classes.~~ SOCIs ~~distributed~~ completed online shall be ~~distributed~~ completed during the penultimate week of classes.

For face-to-face courses, instructors shall provide a minimum of 30 minutes of scheduled class time for SOCI completion during the designated SOCI completed period. Instructors of face-to-face courses shall leave the classroom during this time in order to promote student privacy and reduce perceived pressure or response bias.

The University shall provide clear guidance and technical support to faculty and students to ensure consistent implementation and accessibility of online SOCIs. The

AVP for Faculty Affairs shall ensure that faculty receive directions on how to access online SOCI via the Learning Management System so that faculty can encourage student participation. Faculty may encourage their students to complete SOCIs. Faculty members shall administer SOCIs in Accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

RATIONALE: Referral 2025–2026 35 highlights the increasing and unsustainable cost associated with the continued use of paper-based Student Opinions of Curriculum and Instruction (SOCIs). Transitioning to an exclusively online SOCI system represents a fiscally responsible and environmentally sustainable alternative. Online SOCIs are currently available as an option for face-to-face classes, or requirement for online classes, and so online SOCIs are already part of currently accepted practices.

This resolution further seeks to preserve the integrity and effectiveness of SOCI data during the transition to an online modality. A primary concern associated with online SOCIs is reduced student participation when surveys are completed outside of class. By requiring instructors of face-to-face courses to provide structured in-class time and leave the classroom during SOCI administration for at least 30 minutes, this resolution maintains continuity with current paper-based procedures and reinforces established norms that protect student anonymity, minimize perceived pressure, and promote higher response rates.

Additionally, this resolution formalizes the expectation that SOCI reports will be generated and distributed for all instructional terms, including cases in which no student responses are submitted. Providing reports in all circumstances ensures consistent documentation for faculty and prevents gaps in official records. The distribution of SOCI reports to individual faculty, department chairs, and college deans supports transparent and efficient faculty evaluation processes, facilitates completion of Working Personnel Action Files (WPAFs) and periodic evaluations, and ensures that backup records are available when needed.

Collectively, these changes advance institutional efficiency, protect the validity of student feedback, and strengthen the reliability and accessibility of SOCI data for personnel review and continuous improvement.

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