

Complete Policy Title:  
**Policy on the Public Release of Students'  
Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness**

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by:  
**Senate**

Date of Most Recent Approval:  
**November 13, 2013**

Date of Original Approval(s):  
**May 12, 1997**

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated:  
**May 12, 1997**

Responsible Executive:  
**Provost and Vice-President (Academic)**

Enquiries:  
[University Secretariat](#)

***DISCLAIMER:** If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails*

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1. Each Faculty shall release a summary of the responses to a single summative question contained in the Faculty's ratings form for each of the undergraduate courses offered during the preceding academic term. The information released shall be the number of students selecting each response, the mean and median of all responses, the number of students responding, the number of students registered in the course, the text of the question, and the identity of the course and instructor. The results shall be organized by Department, School or Program. If the number of students responding in a particular course is less than five, the course shall be listed with the notation "Fewer than five students; results are not available." In this case, the summary of responses shall be omitted, but not the information on the identity of the course and instructor, the number of responses, and the number of students registered in the course. The foregoing information shall be released only to persons with a valid Student or Employee MAC ID. Course instructors shall have a reliable method for verifying their own information. Once posted, the summary of responses for any course will remain online for a period of five years and then be removed.
2. Course instructors shall have the opportunity to approve, in writing, the release to persons with a valid Student or Employee MAC ID of the summaries of the students' responses to the summative question. Department Chairs (or their equivalent) shall invite that approval by distributing a University-wide form before the beginning of the first term in which this revised policy comes into effect (or the first term of teaching in the case of those hired after the policy is implemented). Approval shall extend to all courses an individual offers and be given for an indefinite period, but may be retracted before the beginning of any teaching term. Individuals who decline to give their consent shall be given the opportunity, on an annual basis, to reconsider this decision. Those who elect not to opt in to the release to persons with a valid Student or Employee MAC ID shall have their courses listed with the notation "Instructor declined to give permission for

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release of data; results are not available." In this case, the summary of responses shall be omitted, but not the information on the identity of the course and instructor, the number of responses, and the number of students registered in the course. Electing not to opt in shall not be taken into account for purposes of determining merit increments, or in decisions affecting contract renewal, tenure, permanence or promotion.

3. Each Faculty Dean shall ensure that all course evaluation results are made available to the person or office responsible for posting summaries of the students' responses to the summative question online. This shall be done by January 31 in the case of Term I courses, by May 31 in the case of Term II and full-year courses, and by September 30 in the case of spring and summer courses. All McMaster student organizations will be encouraged to publicize the availability of the evaluations after they are published online.
4. This policy applies equally to all categories of course instructors

The following is the release form to be provided to all instructors as outlined in Section 2 above: (*see next page*)

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## Release of Students' Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness

It is the policy of McMaster University to release to persons with a valid Student or Employee MAC ID a summary of students' responses to the summative question on the student course rating form. The purpose of the policy is to provide students with information that may help them to choose their courses. The policy applies to every undergraduate course in which five students or more have provided responses to the summative question and in which release of such information is not prohibited by an over-riding collective agreement.

Application of the policy also requires that an instructor grant permission for release of the summaries of students' responses. An instructor's permission, once granted, covers all courses taught by that instructor, until and unless this permission is withdrawn.

The summary of students' responses to the summative question consists of the number of students selecting each possible response, and the mean and median of all responses. This is accompanied by the number of students responding, the number of students registered in the course, the text of the summative question, and the identity of the course and instructor.

The summary will not be released if any of the following conditions apply:

- a. the instructor has declined to grant permission to release the data (by individual choice or through a collective bargaining process);
- b. the course was one in which fewer than five students responded;

When a summary is not released, the number of students responding, the number of students registered in the course, the text of the summative question, and the identity of the course and instructor will be provided to the Faculty responsible for posting, together with a notation indicating which of the above conditions applies that the results are not available.

Responsibility for administering the opt-in procedure rests with the Department Chairs (or equivalent), who are required to distribute this brief statement of policy, together with the attached permission form, to all course instructors. The form, if completed, signed, and returned, grants permission to the University to release a summary of students' responses to the summative question on the student course rating form, for each course taught by the instructor for which evaluations are available. Electing not to opt in shall not be taken into account for purposes of determining merit increments, or in decisions affecting renewal, tenure, permanence or promotion.

By granting permission to McMaster University to release to persons with a valid Student or Employee MAC ID a summary of students' responses to the summative question on the student course rating form, I understand that:

- a. the summary consists of the number of students selecting each response and the mean and median of all responses;

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- b. the information will be disseminated without editorial comment or recommendation;
  - c. my permission covers any future courses taught by me for which evaluations are conducted;
  - d. I can withdraw this permission at any time by notifying my Department Chair (or equivalent), and such withdrawal will take effect with regard to all future courses taught by me, until and unless I grant permission once again;
  - e. should I exercise my right to withdraw, I shall be given an annual opportunity to grant permission once again;
  - f. should I exercise my right to withdraw, the information provided online will indicate, for each course I teach, the number of students responding, the number of students registered in the course, the text of the summative question, and the identity of the course and instructor, together with a notation stating that the Instructor declined to give permission for release of data and results are not available;
  - g. if release of this information is restricted by a collective agreement under which I teach the course, the information provided online will indicate, for each course I teach, the number of students responding, the number of students registered in the course, the text of the summative question, and the identity of the course and instructor, together with a notation stating that the Instructor declined to give permission for release of data and results are not available;
  - h. I shall be provided with a reliable method for verifying my own information;
  - i. once posted, the summary of responses for any course will remain online for a period of five years and then be removed.

I grant / do not grant (circle whichever applies or delete whichever does not apply) permission for the release of a summary of students' responses to the summative question on the student course rating form.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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(NB If this form is not returned, it will be presumed that the instructor has declined permission for the release.)

*Distribution: one copy to be retained by the signatory; one to be retained by the signatory's Department Chair (or equivalent); one to be retained by the signatory's Faculty Dean.*

*Agreed to by Joint Committee: October 15, 2013  
Approved by Senate: November 13, 2013*