

# Administering Student Evaluations of Faculty (SEF) Online: *Best Practices and FAQ*

## Background

In Spring 2017, the CSUN Faculty Senate passed a resolution in support of a fully online process for student evaluations of faculty (SEFs), to begin Fall 2017. All courses being evaluated will therefore now utilize an online survey process (via CourseEval), and summary reports will be delivered to faculty in digital form. **This is only a change in the mode of delivery;** survey questions will remain the same and the policies surrounding the choice of classes to have evaluated have not changed.

## Accessing the SEF

Students and Faculty need to go to <http://www.csun.edu/sef> where they can log in with their CSUN credentials to access the online SEF survey. *You may want to write this URL on the white board in your class when administering SEFs.*

The link to SEF surveys will also be available in the Student Portal, under the Academics tab (look for "Evaluate My Classes").

## Best Practices

In order to encourage high levels of student participation in the online SEFs for your course, we recommend that faculty:

- 1. GIVE STUDENTS TIME IN CLASS TO COMPLETE THE SEF** (as you would with paper SEFs).
  - ✓ Make sure to assign a student to proctor and leave the room as you would with paper SEFs.
  - ✓ The experience of faculty who have piloted online SEFs indicates that giving time in class to complete the SEF is critical for:
    - maintaining high response rates (which, in turn, results in ratings that are comparable to ratings on paper surveys)
    - encouraging students to respond to the open-ended section of the SEF.
2. Let students know in advance when the window of time for completing the SEF has begun and when you plan to give them time in class to complete the SEF.
3. Remind students that they will need an internet-capable device (surveys can be completed on a smartphone, tablet, or laptop).
4. Have students complete the SEF at the beginning of class.
  - ✓ Consider allowing students to come to class a little late (e.g., 10 minutes) on the day that SEFs will be completed if they complete theirs at home in case they don't have an internet-capable device to bring to class.
5. Even if some students say that they already completed the SEF at home, it is worthwhile to still provide the time in class. The experience of faculty in the pilot project was that even if some students indicated that they had completed the survey at home, most students had not done so.

*Please see other side for FAQs*

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. Am I required to use the online SEF surveys?**

A. Yes. As of Fall 2017, this is the only option.

**Q. What are the advantages of moving to online SEFs?**

A. Providing SEFs online allows for a wider window of opportunity for students to complete them. Paper SEFs must be completed in class so only those students who attend class on the day of administration have access. Online SEFs will be available for a longer time, allowing students to complete them on their own time if desired. Online SEFs also save money and are more environmentally friendly than paper SEFs. CSUN has been using over 2000 lbs of paper a year on SEF forms; since these forms are coded for each class section, they are not reusable so many blank forms go to waste. We will also save on staff time spent on processing the paper forms; a process which is automated with online SEFs.

**Q. Do students need a computer or laptop to complete the SEF survey?**

A. The SEF survey can be completed on any internet-capable device, including a smartphone, tablet, laptop, or other computer. We recommend that you let students know in advance that evaluations will be completed in class so that they remember to bring a device with them that day.

**Q. Does this mean that students who are not in class can complete an SEF for my course?**

A. *By default, yes, but instructors can change this (see next question).*

**Q. What if I only want students to complete the SEF during the class time allotted?**

A. By default, SEF surveys will be available for all students the last ~ 4 weeks of the regular Fall and Spring semester. Summer Sessions and accelerated courses will be the last 2-3 weeks of their class meetings.

However, if an instructor would like to change that window to include only the time in class that will be provided (or any other window of time, within the larger, default window), they will be able to do so by going into the CourseEval faculty dashboard and changing the open and close dates/times for the survey. Instructions are available at: [<https://www.csun.edu/institutional-research/sef-resources>].

**Q. Will students be notified when evaluations begin?**

A. No. Because some faculty will be changing their evaluation window, we thought it would be confusing for students to receive a general email notification. You will therefore need to let students know, and give them the link ([www.csun.edu/sef](http://www.csun.edu/sef)).  
NOTE: students will receive a reminder notification a week before the end of classes to remind them complete their SEF surveys. This notification will only go to students who have open surveys.

**Q. Who can I contact with questions or if I'm having technical issues?**

A. Please contact the Office of Institutional Research and we will route you to the appropriate person.

Phone: 818.677.3277

Email: [ir@csun.edu](mailto:ir@csun.edu)