

Priority Grade Access
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – Faculty

1. What is Priority Grade Access, and how does it work?

UofL has employed many “best practices” to increase and sustain the response rates to course evaluations including:

- make students aware of course evaluation availability
- inform students about the specifics of the evaluation process
- engage faculty in the evaluation process
- make the evaluations easy to access via mobile phone compatibility
- provide incentives to faculty and students
- marketing the evaluation process through print and electronic media

UofL’s overall response rate remains at approximately 53% to 55% despite using the combination of the practices listed above. In order to increase this rate, UofL’s Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) conducted research on the current practices at other peer institutions. The one emerging practice that UofL has not yet operationalized is providing students, who complete all of their evaluations, priority access to view their grades. IRP worked with UofL’s IT department and the vendor of the course evaluation software to develop this functionality within PeopleSoft.

The functionality was tested in production using five courses in fall 2015 and 65 courses in spring 2016. Students were given the chance to “opt-out” of completing the evaluation by clicking on an opt-out question. Students who proactively “opted out” were allowed priority access to their grades. Both pilot projects showed a marked increase in the response rates for those courses that were part of the pilot projects. The executive committee of Faculty Senate has also been provided information. This initiative has the support of SGA.

Increasing the number of students participating in the course evaluation process improves the culture of assessment for the university. It was recommended that UofL implement the priority grade access functionality university-wide during the fall 2016 semester. This recommendation was approved by then acting provost Neville Pinto, reviewed with the chief academic officers who expressed their approval, and subsequently re-affirmed by acting provost Dale Billingsley.

EFFECTIVE Fall 2016: In an effort to encourage student feedback regarding faculty and courses, students who complete or opt-out of their course evaluations will be granted “priority access” to view their semester grades as soon as they are posted in PeopleSoft. Students who take no action (i.e. do not complete all of their evaluations or do not digitally opt-out of each evaluation) will not be able to access their final grades or transcripts (official or unofficial) until 48 hours after the last scheduled university final.

2. When are evaluations open?

Most evaluations open on November 16 and close on December 16 (actual release dates may vary).

3. How can I view response rates for my courses?

You can view your response rates by logging into www.yourwordisheard.com

4. Should I post final grades in Blackboard?

No. Access to grades is blocked when recorded in PeopleSoft only. We ask that faculty delay posting their final course grades in Blackboard until 48 hours after the last day of finals.

5. When will students be able to see their final grades?

Students who complete all of their course evaluations (or digitally opt-out) will have access to their final grades as soon as they are posted in PeopleSoft.

6. Will grades still be accessible to academic advisors?

Yes, academic advisors will continue to have immediate access to all student grades and transcripts for advising purposes, regardless of whether a student has completed their course evaluations.

7. What happens if students do not complete any course evaluations and do not opt-out?

Students who take no action (i.e. do not complete all of their evaluations or do not digitally opt-out of each evaluation) will not be able to access their final grades or transcripts (official or unofficial) until 48 hours after the last scheduled university final (December 14 is the last day of university finals).

8. What happens if students opt out from doing their course evaluations?

Students who digitally opt-out from their evaluations will have access to their final grades as soon as they are posted in PeopleSoft.

9. A student contacted me saying there is no evaluation for my course. What should I do?

Either you or the student should contact the Office of Institutional Research and Planning through irsurvey@louisville.edu. This service account is closely monitored while course evaluations are live.

10. I can log in to the course evaluation portal but cannot view my response rates. What can I do?

Try using a different browser. The course evaluations system works well on Mozilla Firefox, Safari, Google Chrome, and Internet Explorer. If the issue persists, please contact the Office of Institutional Research and Planning through irsurvey@louisville.edu.

11. How can I help to get my response rates higher?

- Post announcements on Blackboard
- Designate a time during class to complete the evaluations via laptops, tablets, mobile devices
- Reassure students that results are confidential
- Let students know that you value their feedback and describe how their feedback has led to improvements in the course

12. What if I have more questions?

Please contact the Office of Institutional Research and Planning through irsurvey@louisville.edu with any questions or concerns.