



2016 Short Course Student Feedback

Executive Summary- April 2017

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During 2016 written feedback was sought from students in the 38 new courses in the short course program. Members were electronically surveyed, with 413 students providing feedback, representing 77% of all enrolled students with email. As in previous years the feedback was very positive about the running of their course and the benefits derived.

Students indicated that they enrolled in the particular course predominantly because they had a general interest in the topic area (77%), wanted to deepen their skills and knowledge in that area (54%), tutor's reputation (22%), the day/time particularly suited them (20%) or it was relevant to a specific plan they had (17%). For the vast majority the course very well met or exceeded their expectations (84%).

Students reported significant benefits from their participation in the courses. With few exceptions, students (88%) nominated the knowledge gained in the subject areas as the most important outcome, with 31% also identifying skills acquired. Motivation/inspiration was noted by just over half (51%) as a significant benefit. Companionship derived from course participation was specified by 30%, improved health and wellbeing was reported by 22% and improved confidence by 18%.

These benefits to students clearly stemmed from the quality of the programs delivered by individual tutors. Across many questions in the survey students commented on the knowledge, passion and professionalism of their tutor which they greatly appreciated, evidenced by 95% strongly endorsing the tutors knowledge and enthusiasm when specifically rated.

In rating other specific aspects of course delivery, students strongly endorsed the tutor's providing a supportive and friendly atmosphere for learning (89%), and relevant course content (89%) that was presented in a clear and interesting way (87%). They highly rated sessions as well-organised (86%), with student participation encouraged (73%) and useful activities and resources included (65%) which enhanced learning and enabled research and study during and after the courses.

There was general agreement about the course length, with 70% strongly agreeing and 20% somewhat agreeing, that the course length was the right length. Some indicated, (6%), a preference for a longer course to further explore the topic or consolidate the skills involved.

Students who dropped out of the course before the end comprised 10% of respondents overall. While there was some suggestion that their expectations were less well met, and they were less satisfied with certain aspects of course delivery, this was not given as the reason for their not completing the course. Health issues, unexpected or other competing commitments accounted for the vast majority (80%) of reasons given by members for dropping out. Only five students cited dissatisfaction with the course as a reason for dropping out.

As such, we can conclude that the new 2016 short courses were well run along lines that support learning for mature age students. The educational and social goals of the program were demonstrably well met and the provision of short courses is highly valued by members. Various suggestions were made about new topics or extending existing courses, thereby providing guidance to the Course Coordination Team in further development of the program.