

Frequently Asked Questions (Online FAQ) Online SOTE/SOLATE

STUDENTS

Why evaluate my instructors?

SJSU values students' opinions about their experiences in the classes they take. The university strives to provide feedback to instructors to assist them in providing the best possible instruction. Your comments are important to that process.

Will my evaluation affect my instructor's job?

It may, because SJSU conducts periodic reviews of instructors to ensure that the students are getting a quality education. Teaching evaluations are among the items submitted, and they play a major role in the outcomes of reviews. Teaching evaluations may affect which courses instructors are assigned, and even whether the instructor is retained, tenured, or promoted.

Will my instructor be able to identify my responses?

No. The survey process has been set up so that your comments will be completely anonymous—no student IDs, no IP addresses, and certainly no facial recognition data. Your instructor will receive a summary of the ratings provided by students AFTER he or she has submitted grades for the course.

Can my choice to participate affect my grade or my standing in a class?

No. Opting not to participate counts as evaluating the class. Your grade and your standing in the class will not be affected in any way by your decision to evaluate, or by your responses. There is no way that your instructor or anyone else will know your choice or ratings unless you tell them.

When and where should I complete these evaluations?

The evaluations will be online for a 15 day window ending on the last day of instruction before the final. You may complete the surveys anywhere you have access to your MySJSU page. A link to each course will appear during the time window. Each link will disappear after successful submission of that instructor's evaluation.

Should I complete a different evaluation for each class I am taking?

Yes.

Will I get to see the ratings my instructors receive?

No.

Must I evaluate instructors in all of my classes to get early access to my grades?

You must evaluate all of your courses to see grades early. Otherwise, you must wait for 2 more weeks to see your grades. Please note that there is an option to opt out at the end of each teaching evaluation. Opting out counts as completing the evaluation. While we do not

encourage opting out, there are times where that is legitimate. We prefer accurate evaluations over those that are “made up.”

Should I evaluate my instructor if I dropped my class or am withdrawing from it?

No. You should not evaluate the instructor. However, you should enter the evaluation and answer the final question that allows you to opt out for that class. There you may report why you feel that you should not evaluate that instructor.

FACULTY

Is there an option to collect evaluations using pencil-and-paper as before?

No. The new policy states that all evaluations will be collected online. The benefits of using the online method are numerous, including saving money, natural resources, storage space, and staff, faculty, and administration’s time. The new system will allow several offices to keep better records, and they will even take SJSU one step closer to electronic dossiers.

Will the SOTE/SOLATE data be secure?

Yes. These data will be as secure as any other on campus. As they are considered an extension of the personnel file, not only is IEA committed to their secure storage, the Office of Faculty Affairs is also invested protecting them.

Will students be allowed to evaluate me after seeing their grades?

No. The policy prohibits collecting SOTE/SOLATE data after grades are submitted. The students’ MySJSU links to evaluations will be deactivated as soon as the ratings period ends.

Isn’t this like RateMyProfessor.com?

Not really. That website is open to comments from anyone at any time. The SOTE/SOLATE has a rigidly defined invitation to evaluate (by class) and timeframe during which rating may be made. That website is also public, whereas SOTE/SOLATE results are not. Finally, that website distributes chili peppers, but ours does not.

How may I select which courses are evaluated?

You do not have to select any more. All courses must be evaluated, with the following exceptions:

- supervision courses
- courses taught by a non-faculty union member (administrator, student, etc.) are optional
- special courses upon department request

At the request of the instructor, these may be evaluated as well.

I teach an excluded class, how do I request that it be evaluated?

You may contact IEA and request that the course be included in the evaluation system. Such requests must be made in the first half of the semester.

Do you mean to tell me that I have to report evaluations for all classes in my department review files or dossier?

No. There are exceptions to the rule that all classes be evaluated. These are exempted unless the instructor requests that they be included:

- supervision courses
- courses taught by a non-faculty union member (administrator, student, etc.) are optional
- special courses upon department request

You may occasionally exclude evaluations for 1 class per academic year (AY) in which you taught more than 15 units.

How does the online system affect the reports returned to departments and instructors?

Ratings will be available to departments and faculty electronically. They will be accessed via MySJSU. All items previously reported will remain the same. However, there will be some enhancements:

- Ratings by expected grade will be reported
- Less than 50% participation in a class will be flagged on reports in the same way that having fewer than 10 participating students is flagged
- Written comments will now be reported as a few lines of text instead of photocopies of handwritten work.