

Note!

The course evaluation system **will not** allow you to see which students in your class completed an evaluation; it will only allow you to see how many students have completed an evaluation. As such, if you want to award individual level credit, they will have to forward you the emails receipts they receive after filling out the evaluation.

Tips on Using Incentives

Incentives are used in survey research to increase response rates and provide responders with some small compensation for their time (Dillman, Smyth, & Melani Christian, 2014). They work the same to encourage students taking course evaluations.

Research has shown that even very small incentives, like one-quarter of 1% added to a final grade, can be very effective in improving response rates in course evaluations (Donmeyer, Baum, Hanna, & Chapman, 2004; Wode & Keiser, 2011). Gains in response rates of 15% to 20% when using incentives are common (Wode & Keiser, 2011).

Incentives **do not** have to involve points to be effective. Research at Boise State demonstrated that non-point incentives were found to work as well or better than point-based (Goodman, Anson, & Belcheir, 2015). The same research showed that class-wide incentives are the easiest to administer and are most effective when the class is challenged to reach at least 85% or 90% response.

A good plan for achieving a high response rate includes setting a high threshold for responses, requiring 85% or 90% response from the class, in order to receive a class-wide incentive. Announcing the response rate to the class once or twice during the evaluation period will help encourage responses as well.

About Incentives, In the Faculty's Own Words

"If 98% completed the evaluations, everyone would receive 5 extra credit points. (The class has 1,000 points possible, so this incentive is only 1/2 of 1%, but students really encouraged each other to get it.)"

"I gave my writing classes a day off from class to work on their portfolios or to meet one-on-one with me to discuss their portfolios in progress."

"If 85% of the class responded, students received one point for every non-zero quiz score during the semester. Therefore, if the student took 8 quizzes, they could get up to 8 points, but if the student skipped a lot of classes and took only 4 quizzes, they could get up to 4 points. I felt this incentive approach worked well in that it a) encouraged feedback from the class, b) promoted feedback from those in the best position to give it (i.e., those who attended class) and c) did not unfairly reward those who did not attend class."

"If the students achieved a certain %, they could use a note card during the final."

"I planned the final portfolio submission deadline for the last day of class and offered to extend the deadline to the following Tuesday if (and only if) we had 100% participation on the evaluation. I showed the percentage of participation every day on the overhead for the class to see during the last 3-4 days of class."

References

- Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Melani Christian, L. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The Tailored Design Method, 4th edition*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Dommeyer, C. J., Baum, P., Hanna, R. W., & Chapman, K. S. (2004). Gathering faculty teaching evaluations by in-class and online surveys: their effects on response rates and evaluations. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 29*(5), 611-623.
- Goodman, J., Anson, R., & Belcheir, M. (2014). The effect of incentives and other instructor-driven strategies to increase online student evaluation response rates. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 1-13*, doi:10.1080/02602938.2014.960364
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