

## **Student Course Experience Survey (“course evals”): Required Enrollment Thresholds for Generating a Report**

Office of Assessment

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Safeguarding the confidentiality of responses / anonymity of respondents is crucial to the integrity of the student course experience survey (evaluation of courses and instructors). We cannot, of course, control identifiable information that students may introduce in open-ended comments. In order to be responsible about what we can control, we set certain thresholds below which students might be identifiable and do not generate individual reports when the thresholds are not met.

The eXplorance Blue system allows us to set either response thresholds or class-enrollment thresholds. We have determined that, although response thresholds have in the past been set in our evaluation system, class-enrollment thresholds make much more sense. Here is the reasoning: if I have a class with 25 students enrolled and only five of them respond to the evaluation survey, that small response will not break the confidentiality / anonymity promise. If, however, I have a class with five or fewer students enrolled, it will be difficult to maintain confidentiality/anonymity because the number of possible respondents is so small. We now use a class-enrollment threshold of six, meaning that individual reports are not generated for courses with five or fewer students enrolled. (That being said, a response threshold of at least one avoids the creation of blank reports.)

Note that responses from students in even the smallest courses will be included in aggregate reports for departments and colleges when we begin generating those aggregate reports and are reflected in department and college averages currently reported (for comparison) in individual instructor reports.

To ensure that all reports from the eXplorance Blue system are compliant with the threshold decisions described above, AY 2017–2018 reports have been updated with the new settings.