Bowdoin College

Senior Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 18, 2022
TO: Faculty and Lab Instructors
FROM: Jen Scanlon, Senior Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs, and Steve Perkinson, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
RE: Spring 2022 Bowdoin Course Questionnaires

All courses and labs taught this semester will use the online Bowdoin Course Questionnaires or BCQs to collect student feedback on courses and instructors. Students will access the BCQs for all their courses through Blackboard. BCQs will be available to students from 7:30 am on Monday, May 2 through 5:00 pm Sunday, May 15, the last day of Reading Period.

We have found that the single most effective method for ensuring strong response rates is to designate in-class time for students to fill out their BCQs, so we urge you to plan for this. We recommend you leave the room during the assigned time.

You will have live response rate data (the number of students who have submitted a BCQ for your course) during the student fill-out period (May 2-15); please check BB and encourage your students to respond. We have also enlisted the help of Bowdoin Student Government (BSG) in encouraging students to fill out their BCQs. To increase response rates, BSG suggested that faculty share with students that feedback from BCQS is typically used to inform course design, pedagogy, and future iterations for courses.

We have also collaborated with BSG to arrive at language raise students’ awareness of racial and gender bias in BCQs; you will find this addition in the message to students below.

Procedure for Administering Bowdoin Course Questionnaires, Spring 2022

On May 2nd, all students will receive an automated email from the dean (with sender name “Dean Scanlon”) explaining the importance of their feedback through the Bowdoin Course Questionnaires and informing them how to access their BCQs through Blackboard at the time designated by their instructor. A copy of this email to students may be seen below, for your reference.

Students will find the BCQs for each of their courses after they log into Blackboard and click the BCQs tab. There, in a box called “Bowdoin Course Questionnaires,” students will see a link to the BCQ for each of their current courses. Even if you do not use Blackboard in your course, students will use Blackboard to access their BCQs.

Although students may access their BCQs through Blackboard at any time during the fill-out period of May 2-May 15, faculty and lab instructors are urged to communicate with their students in advance and schedule at least 15 minutes of class time for them to log in and work on their BCQs.

During Reading Period, automated reminders will go to each student who has not yet completed one or more of their BCQs. The reminder email will specify the course(s) for which there is an outstanding BCQ.
In addition to these automated reminders, you may remind your students in any way you choose. To help you determine whether your students need another reminder about their BCQs, you will have access to the BCQ response rates for each of your courses during the fill-out period (May 2-May 14). This response rate information can be found in the BCQs tab in Blackboard within the box, “Bowdoin Course Questionnaires: Faculty.”

Results and Reports. Instructors will have access to their individual BCQ results and reports after the deadline for grade submission, which is May 31, 2022. An email will notify you when these are available. This semester’s reports will be added to your BCQs tab in Blackboard as soon as they are available and will remain in Blackboard while you are employed at Bowdoin. Department chairs and program directors will receive (also through Blackboard) departmental reports for courses offered in or cross-listed in their department/program, as well as the Question and Course Report on individual faculty whose courses were taught in or cross-listed in their department/program, to support their responsibility for faculty mentoring. For courses with associated labs, the faculty instructing the course will receive access to the lab instructor reports. We will also share a worksheet for processing BCQs for faculty to use if they wish.

Support for Faculty

* Frequently Asked Questions on the web at [BCQs Info Page](mailto:BCQs%20Info%20Page)
* Jeanne Bamforth, Assistant to the Dean for Academic Affairs ([jbamfort@bowdoin.edu](mailto:jbamfort@bowdoin.edu))
* Steve Perkinson, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs ([sperkins@bowdoin.edu](mailto:sperkins@bowdoin.edu))

Message to Students on BCQs

To: Students  
From: Blue (first page of form during FOP)

Bowdoin places great emphasis on teaching excellence, and student feedback on our courses provides important information for the evaluation of faculty and curricular effectiveness. Your responses to this questionnaire are of particular value to individual faculty members as they look to make improvements to the learning opportunities they offer in their courses. We also view the questionnaire as an opportunity for you to reflect on your role in advancing your learning.

Your responses are completely confidential and will be available to the instructor only after final grades have been submitted to the Registrar. We appreciate your taking the time to offer candid and substantive feedback; we ask that you do so in a constructive and respectful manner.

Our review of BCQs suggests that Bowdoin students typically provide thoughtful, relevant feedback. That said, it’s always good to consider the potential for unconscious bias, because several studies note that women and faculty of color receive more negative comments about attributes unrelated to teaching and learning, such as personality traits, appearance, mannerisms, competence and professionalism. We appreciate your taking the time to offer candid and substantive feedback in a constructive and respectful manner.

Please click “NEXT” to begin your Bowdoin Course Questionnaire (BCQ). If you are unable to complete the questionnaire in one session, make sure to save your work by clicking the “SAVE” button so you can return through Blackboard and submit your BCQ at another time. Please note that your BCQ is not complete until you have clicked the “SUBMIT” button. If you have questions, please contact Jeanne Bamforth ([jbamfort@bowdoin.edu](mailto:jbamfort@bowdoin.edu)).

Thank you,

Jennifer Scanlon  
Senior Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs