Production of scores in the Student Experience Survey (SES)

The reporting metric for the Student Experience Survey (SES) focus areas is the percentage of students that rated their experience positively, so calculated variables must be created for each focus area. A series of steps are taken to produce the focus area percentage positive results and individual focus area item scores used in this document. Descriptions of how focus area-level and item-level metrics are produced, as well as an example of a scored record and a selection of the SPSS syntax used to produce these scores, are presented below.

Extensive consultation with the higher education sector indicated a near-universal preference for the reporting of percentage positive results over focus area average scores. Percentage positive results were seen as being a more understandable measure, especially for less expert users of the SES data, and are straightforward for institutions to replicate and benchmark against. As such, percentage positive results are presented throughout this document. One consequence of this is that the results presented in the 2013 and 2014 University Experience Survey (UES) reports and the 2015–2022 SES reports are not directly comparable to those presented in the 2011 and 2012 reports.

1.1. Focus area-level scores

To begin focus-area level calculations, all underlying items are rescaled into values from 0 to 100.

- Four-point scale responses are recoded to 0, 33.33, 66.66 and 100.
- Five-point scale responses are recoded to 0, 25, 50, 75 and 100.

Columns B and C of **Table 1** show an example of this initial rescaling of values.

Table 1 Example of Teaching Quality and Engagement focus area scoring for one SES respondent

COLUMN A	COLUMN B	COLUMN C	COLUMN D	COLUMN E	COLUMN F
Survey Variable	**Raw Value**	**Rescaled Value**	**Item-Level Binary Score**	**Focus Area Score (TEACH)**	**Binary Focus Area Score (TEACHSAT)**
OVERALL	3	66.66	1	63.64	1
QLTEACH	2	33.33	0		
STDSTRUC	4	75	1		
STDRELEV	5	100	1		
TCHACTIV	4	75	1		
TCHCONLR	3	50	0		
TCHCLEXP	3	50	0		
TCHSTIMI	3	50	0		
TCHFEEDB	4	75	1		
TCHHELP	4	75	1		
TCHASSCH	3	50	0		

An example of the SPSS syntax to recode the SEQ items into the 0 to 100 scale is shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1 Example of how to use SPSS syntax to rescale SEQ items

```
RECODE STDSTRUC STDRELEV TCHACTIV TCHCONLR TCHCLEXP TCHSTIMI TCHFEEDB TCHHELP
TCHASSCH
(1=0) (2=25) (3=50) (4=75) (5=100) INTO
STDSTRUCr STDRELEVr TCHACTIVr TCHCONLRr TCHCLEXPr TCHSTIMIr TCHFEEDBr TCHHELPr TCHASSCHr
```

```
RECODE QLTEACH OVERALL
(1=0) (2=33.33) (3=66.66) (4=100) INTO
QLTEACHr OVERALLr.
```

Note: Rescaled variables are denoted with an 'r' suffix in the SPSS syntax.

Next, scores for each focus area are computed as the mean of the constituent items' rescaled values.

A focus area score is only computed for respondents who have a valid item value for at least six Skills Development items, four Peer Engagement items, eight Teaching Quality items, five Student Support and Services items and five Learning Resources items, respectively.

Column E of **Table 1** displays the focus area score (i.e., the mean of the rescaled values in Column C) for the example respondent.

An example of the SPSS syntax used to generate focus area scores is shown in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2 Example of how to use SPSS syntax to compute SES focus area scores

```
COMPUTE TEACH = MEAN.8(STDSTRUCr, STDRELEVr, TCHACTIVr, TCHCONLRr, TCHCLEXPr, TCHSTIMIr,
TCHFEEDBr, TCHHELPr, TCHASSCHr, QLTEACHr, OVERALLr).
```

Note: Rescaled variables are denoted with an 'r' suffix in the SPSS syntax.

A positive response for the focus area is represented by a binary variable taking the value of '1' if the student gives a positive response across a particular facet of their higher education experience (defined as an average of 55 or greater) and '0' otherwise. These derived variables are denoted with the 'SAT' suffix.

The percentage positive score, which represents the percentage of students who rated their experience positively, reflects the proportion of students who achieved a focus area score of 55 or greater.

Table 1 depicts the calculation of the binary focus area score for the example respondent: since the respondent's focus area score (Column E) is greater than 55, the binary focus area score (Column F) is assigned a value of 1.

An example of the SPSS syntax used to generate these variables is presented in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3 Example of how to use SPSS syntax to compute SES binary focus area scores

```
IF NOT MISSING(TEACH) TEACHING_SAT = 0.
IF TEACH GE 55 TEACHSAT = 1.
```

Further information on the SPSS syntax for generating the score for each focus area in the SEQ can be found in the SES Data Dictionary, available from the Social Research Centre (SRC) on request.

1.2. Item-level scores

At the individual questionnaire item level, a positive rating reflects a response in the top two categories of the response scale in both the four-point and five-point scales.

A positive rating within a particular SEQ item is represented by a binary variable taking the value of '1' if the student provides a positive response to the item and '0' otherwise.

Item-level percentage positive scores, which represent the percentage of students who rated the specific item positively, reflect the number of students who selected one of the top two options in the response scale divided by the number of students who selected a valid response for the item (i.e., a response other than 'Not applicable').

Column D of **Table 1** displays the item-level binary scores for the example respondent.

An example of the SPSS syntax used to generate these item variables is presented in **Figure 4**.

Figure 4 Example of how to use SPSS syntax to compute item-level scores

```
RECODE TCHACTIV (1=0) (2=0) (3=0) (4=1) (5=1) (ELSE=SYSMIS) INTO TCHACTIV_SAT.
```

1.3. Freedom of Expression scores

Freedom of expression scores are calculated similarly to focus area scores.

Example syntax for the overall freedom of expression score calculation is displayed in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5 Example of how to use SPSS syntax to compute the SES freedom of expression score

```
RECODE FOEXA FOEXB FOEXC (1=0) (2=25) (3=50) (4=75) (5=100) INTO FOEXAr FOEXBr FOEXCr

COMPUTE FOEX = MEAN.2(FOEXAr FOEXBr FOEXCr).

IF NOT MISSING(FOEX) FOEXSAT = 0. IF FOEX GE 55 FOEXSAT = 1.
```

Example syntax for item-level freedom of expression scores is displayed in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6 Example of how to use SPSS syntax to compute item-level freedom of expression scores

```
RECODE FOEXA (1=0) (2=0) (3=0) (4=1) (5=1) (ELSE=SYSMIS) INTO FOEXA_SAT.
```