Course Evaluations Faculty Handbook

Contents

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of this handbook is to provide Bellarmine University faculty with essential information and straight-forward instructions on how to complete the tasks that are assigned to them for the university's online course evaluations. Through this guide, each faculty member will be able to:

1. Enter questions to assess the student learning outcomes addressed in each course (**if required**)
2. Monitor response rates and re-send invitation emails to students
3. Change the timing of the course evaluations from scheduled to manual

The online course evaluations are managed by the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness. Questions or concerns regarding the course evaluations should be directed to the Bellarmine University Course Evaluations Email account: course.evals@bellarmine.edu

You can also reach out to Emily Brock in the Office of IR&E at ebrock@bellarmine.edu

Faculty can always access Blue at https://bellarmine.bluera.com/. Log in using your regular Bellarmine credentials. If prompted, select *Current Employees* and re-enter your password. From the Dashboard page you can find any of your courses that will be evaluated this semester.

SECTION II: OVERVIEW OF EXPLORANCE BLUE ONLINE EVALUATIONS COURSES

Blue online course evaluations are to be utilized in all undergraduate and graduate courses, EXCEPT for the following types of courses:

- Contract
- Internship
- Independent study
- Field-placement
- Final Exam
- Research
- Student Teaching
- Thesis

All other courses will be included in the evaluations unless a prior arrangement has been made with the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness or Academic Affairs. Departments are strongly encouraged to check the online schedule of classes (https://catalog.bellarmine.edu/) to determine if any other courses should be excluded. Please note that the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness does not take responsibility for determining which courses should be excluded from the evaluations.

Any changes that need to be made to a course or the instructor(s) should be made through the Registrar's Office (ext. 8133). Departments are strongly encouraged to verify that each course has an instructor of record and that the instructor information is accurate as well as course delivery type.

DELIVERY

Method

Faculty are given the flexibility to choose from two possible methods of delivery:

1. *Out-of-Class Delivery:* students can be permitted to complete the evaluations on their own time, outside of the classroom setting.

2. *In-Class Delivery:* students can be asked to complete the evaluations in class using their mobile devices or laptop computers.

Email Invitation to Students

Students are provided access to theonline course evaluations through a secure email invitation from the Explorance *Blue* system. They are able to access the evaluations through Moodle, the secure email invitation or the Explorance homepage. Each student will receive an email invitation whenever a new evaluation is assigned to him or her and can receive up to two automatic reminders. Reminders are only sent to students who have not completed the evaluations.

Once a student has clicked the link in the email from *Blue*, they will be able to access all evaluations they are responsible for completing that are open for evaluation. Since the email sent to each student contains a unique link, the email should never be forwarded to other students. Students who have mistakenly deleted or misplaced an evaluation invitation can also log in to *Blue* at the following location:

https://bellarmine.bluera.com/

EVALUATION PERIOD

Blue uses a dynamic dates process to determine the evaluation period for each course since not all courses follow the traditional academic calendar. The course evaluation period is determined to be the final 20% of the course not including the week of final exams for undergraduate courses. This translates to the final three weeks of the course for those courses on the traditional 15-week schedule.   For graduate courses that do not have a final exam the course evaluation period ends five days after the date of the last scheduled class.

Manual Timing

Faculty members can change the timing of the evaluations for their courses from scheduled to manual, if desired. Manual timing does not allow new start and end dates to be entered, only for the evaluations to be opened or closed via manual start and stop buttons. Manual timing can be an ideal option for faculty who plan to deliver the evaluations in class, but faculty who plan to utilize the out-of-class option are strongly

encouraged to stay with the scheduled timing. Decreasing the time during which students can complete the evaluations is likely to decrease response rates.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is the same for all undergraduate courses. Graduate courses will use the instruments provided to the Office of Academic Affairs. Once the instruments are in place, each department or school will be able to maintain an additional set of questions that are discipline specific if desired.

<u>Format of the Evaluation</u>

The evaluation form is highly flexible and allows students to move freely throughout the evaluation without losing any information. Additionally, students can also begin an evaluation, save their progress, and return to it at a later time to complete and submit. After completing the final page of the evaluation, students will be presented with a summary page to verify their answers before submitting. Once a student clicks the "submit" button, responses to the evaluation will be locked and s/he will no longer be able to add or edit any responses. In the event a student partially or fully completes an evaluation but neglects to click the "submit" button, responses will still be saved and included in the aggregate data of the evaluation reports.

SECTION III: INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACULTY

SUBJECT VIEW MANAGEMENT

1. Once you click on your initial Subject View Management email you'll see a block like this for each of your courses that are ready to be managed.
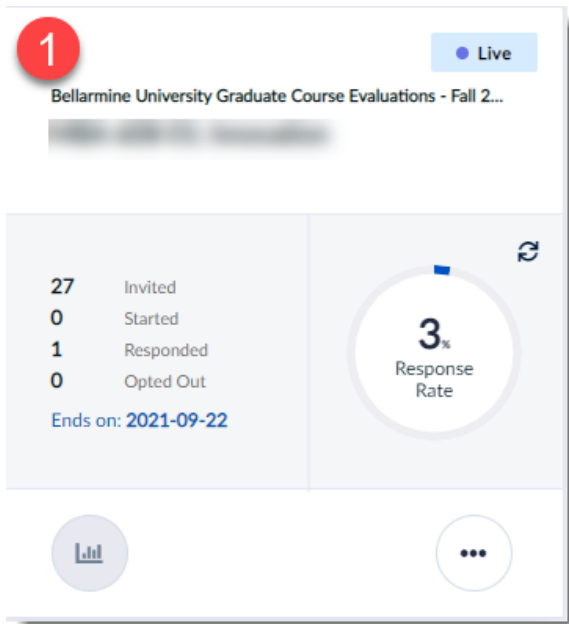
2. In order to reach information about your course timing and the question personalization task you'll want to click on the 3 dots in the lower right hand corner.
3. You'll then click 'Manage Settings'.
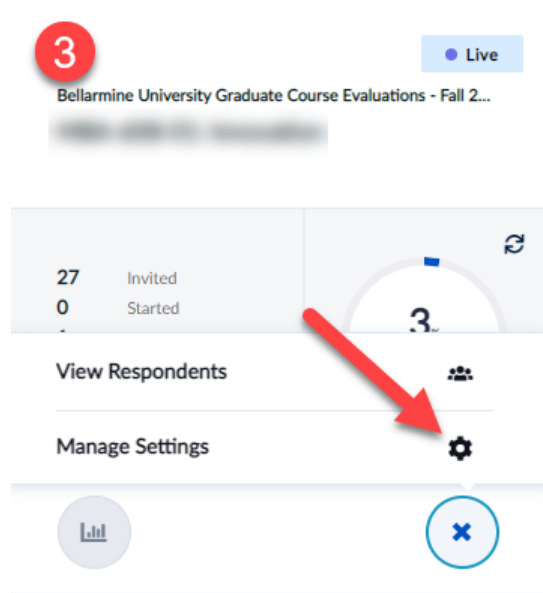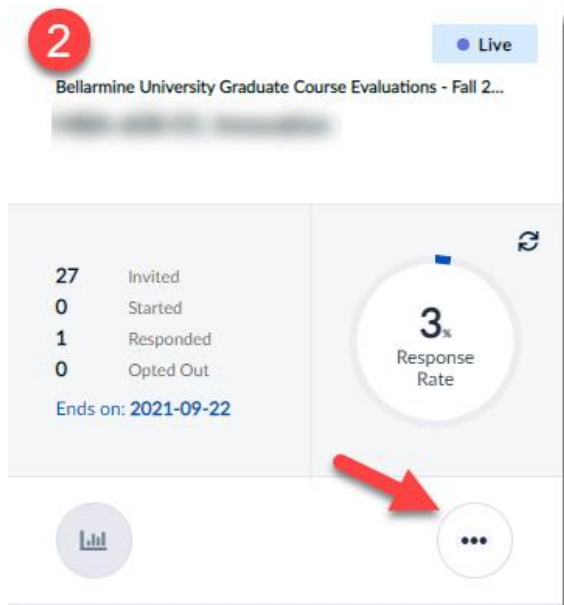
From this page you'll be able to update your objectives questions and set the timing of the course evaluation as well as opt out of further communications.

4. Click here to reach the question personalization page (instructions on how to update the questions are below).
5. Choose the timing of your course evaluation. Manual timing can be an ideal option for faculty who plan to deliver the evaluations in class, but faculty who plan to utilize the out-of-class option are strongly

encouraged to stay with the scheduled timing. Decreasing the time during which students can complete the evaluations is likely to decrease response rates.

6. Click here to opt out of reminder emails if you've completed your question personalization task and you're happy with the timing of the evaluation.
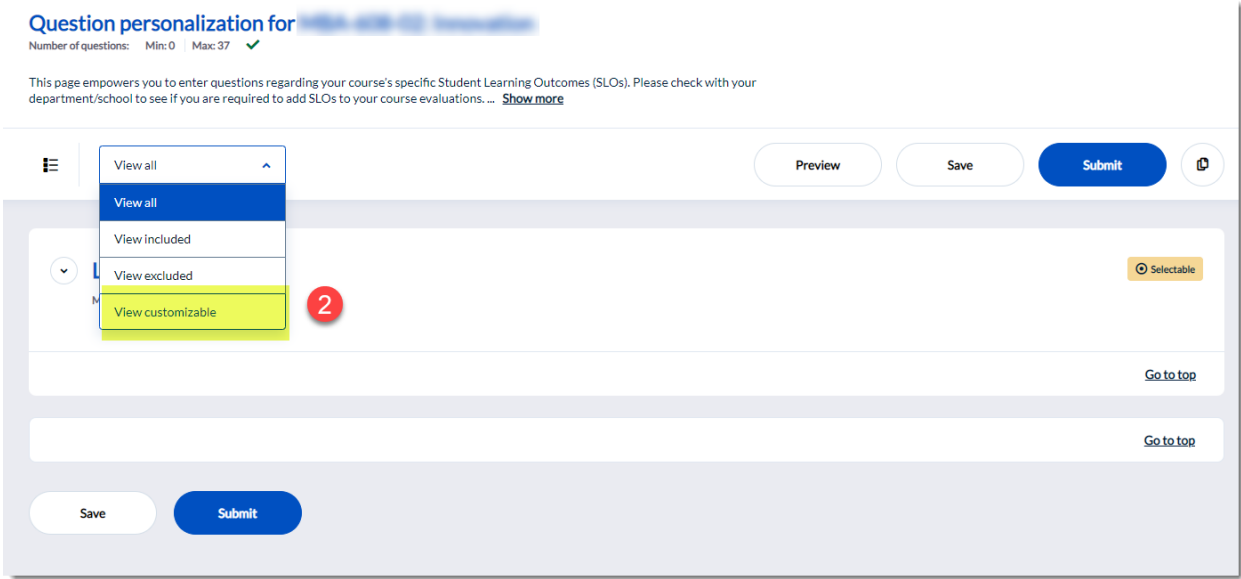7. Click update to process all the changes.

QUESTION PERSONALIZATION

1. When you click on the question personalization tab (step 4 above) you'll be taken to this screen.
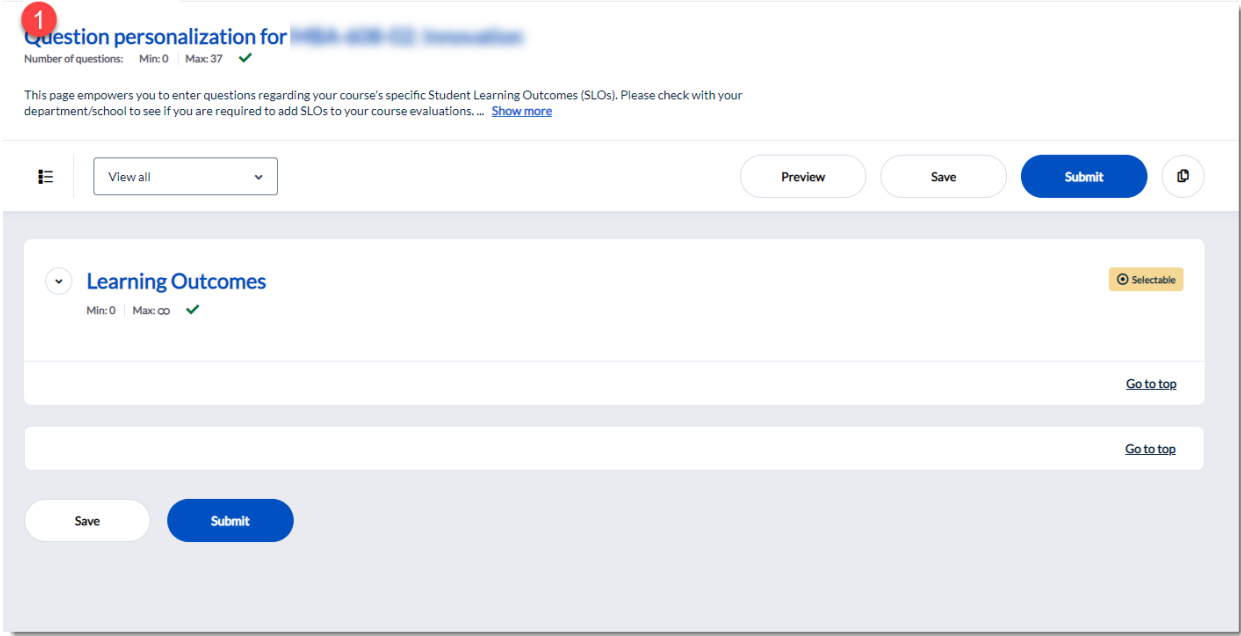
2. From this screen you'll choose 'View Customizable' from the drop down menu

3. On this page you'll see a list of customizable questions. Click on 'Customize' to begin the updating process.

4. Input your customized content here.
5. Click the 'X' when you're finished making your updates.

6. Your updated questions will now be 'Included'. (If you decide at a later time that you'd like to remove that updated question just click the 'Exclude' button and the question will be removed from your evaluation.
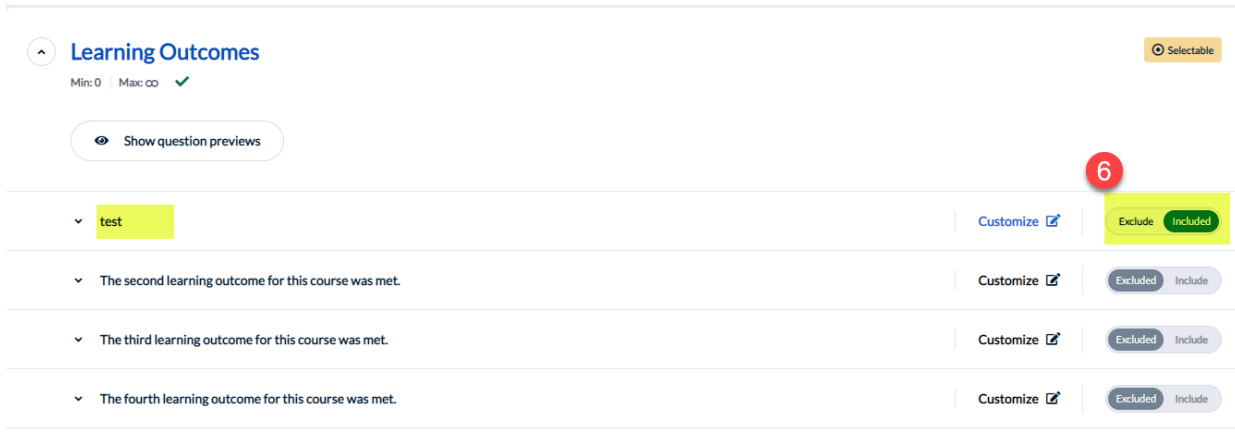
7. Click submit at the bottom left hand corner of the page or on the right hand side of the page.
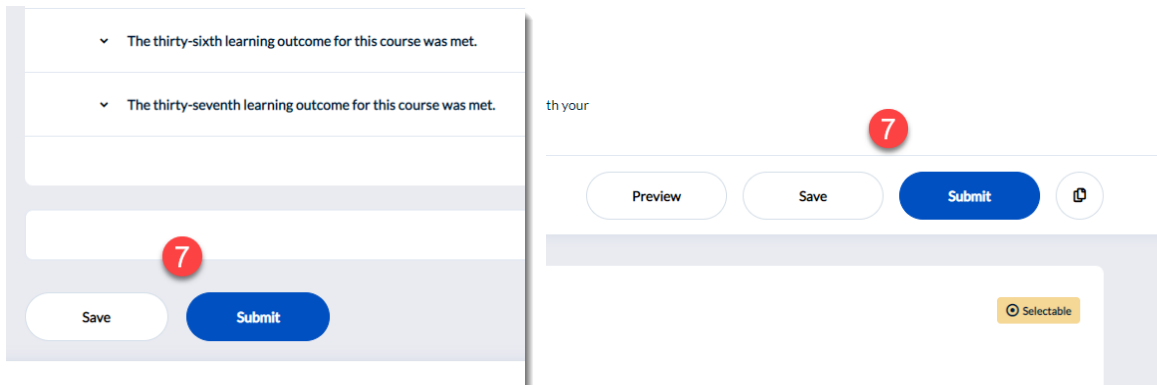
SECTION V: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What if I misplaced the email invitation I received from Institutional Research & Effectiveness to be able to enter my learning objective questions?

A: You may send an email to the Course Evaluation Team (course.evals@bellarmine.edu) to request that the invite be re-sent or log in to the course evaluation system directly at https://bellarmine.bluera.com/. Your Bellarmine credentials that you typically provide to log in to a campus computer will provide access. Select *'Current Employees'* if prompted – this will be required for Deans and Chairs if you are teaching this semester.

Q: When will I receive the summary report of my course evaluations?

A: You can expect to receive your evaluation summaries within two weeks of the due date for final grade submissions to the Registrar's Office. Even though the reports can be generated earlier, reports cannot be distributed prior to the release of final grades for the protection of students.

Q: Is there a minimum enrollment a course must have to be evaluated?

A: Yes. A threshold of two enrollees must be crossed in order for a course to be evaluated, in order to protect the identity of students in the course.

Q: Can my course be excluded from course evaluations? We typically do not assess it in our department.

A: Certain courses are already excluded based on instructional method (see p. 2). If you wish to exclude a course that does not fall under the list on p. 2, please contact the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness.

Q: Will my course be evaluated even though I forgot to enter my learning objective questions?

A: Yes. The standard instrument will still be sent to your students; however, specific learning objective questions will not be included.

Q: I am having difficulty entering my learning objective questions. Can someone provide assistance?

A: Yes. Please contact the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness and someone will be happy to provide assistance or training.

Q: Are the evaluations confidential?

A: Yes. The course evaluation system tracks who has and has not responded, which allows reminders to be sent specifically to non-respondents, but the identities of students are never revealed to faculty or staff.

Q: Can I change the actual dates of the evaluation period for my course(s)?

A: No, this is not an available option in eXplorance *Blue* as of today. You are able to change the timing from *scheduled* to *manual*, however, which allows you to start and stop the evaluations (see p. 9-10).

Q: How do I increase response rate?

A: The literature shows that faculty are the single most important factor in increasing response rates. Simply asking students directly to complete their evaluations while at the same time explaining why student evaluations are so important can go a long way to boosting response rates. Remember to couch your explanation in terms of benefits to the student. Saying that course evaluations will help with rank and tenure decisions won't motivate your typical student. Using small incentives (extra credit, doughnuts for 100% response rates, etc.) have also proven to be helpful!

Q: How do I find course evaluation reports from prior semesters?

A: For evaluation reports from semesters prior to Spring 2018 Log into https://bellarmine.bluera.com/ and use your regular Bellarmine credentials and select 'Current Instructors' For evaluation reports from the Spring 2018 semester and beyond log into https://bellarmine.bluera.com/and use your regular Bellarmine credentials and select 'Current Employees'