MoCAT User Guide
For University of Missouri Instructors

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Additional resources available at http://etatmo.missouri.edu

This manual provided by Educational Technologies at Missouri. University of Missouri.
130 Heinkel Building. Columbia, MO 65211. (573) 882-3303. EThelp@missouri.edu
Introducing MoCAT (Missouri Cares About Teaching)

MoCAT is software that will allow faculty to conduct mid-semester evaluations. It is password-protected and allows anonymous student input on default or custom-created surveys. Each student in your course is only allowed to complete the survey one time. Survey results are automatically compiled and viewable via the web – plus the data is downloadable to keep long-term. Results also include feedback that is linked to tips in an online teaching guidebook.

Why should I use MoCAT? Research has shown that mid-semester evaluations may:

- Improve teaching and learning
- Improve communication with students
- Increase student motivation
- Help tailor current class to students’ needs
- Improve end-of-semester course evaluation. (Mid-semester feedback with a follow-up consultation or feedback has proven to be the single-best way to improve an end-of-semester score.)

How do I start?

1. Request an account. MU faculty may request an account via e-mail to mocat@missouri.edu.

2. Login at http://mocat.missouri.edu by entering your campus ID and password; click the login button.

3. Decide whether to either send a basic (default) evaluation or to create a custom evaluation.

How do I send a basic evaluation?

After 8 quick steps, you’ll be ready to send an evaluation to the students in your course. As an added resource to help with those steps, check out the “Help” links available in the upper right corner of each MoCAT Web page.

1. Click “Send Basic Evaluation” on the Main Menu. A basic evaluation is the MoCAT default survey with 18 questions covering teaching issues identified as important to students. To review the survey items, click the “Preview” link on the next page.

2. Type your course’s reference number into the
“Reference Number” box (or click on the “Look Up Reference Number” link, select a curriculum link, in the drop-down box click the “Select” link next to your course - this places that reference number in the “Reference Number” box).

3. Click the “Create Survey” button.

4. Type “Yes” in the resulting box to confirm you are the instructor of record, and click the “Confirm” button. If you are not the instructor for this course, then click on “Cancel.”

5. Quickly check the names of the students on the resulting page to make sure they are students in your class. If you would like to use the same survey for additional sections of this course, click on the “Add” link under the section “Add Additional Sections.”

6. Decide when you would like the survey to be deployed (by default the current date will appear in the Deployment Date window). Click on the calendar icon beside the window to select a different date for deployment.

7. Decide when you would like the survey to end and enter the date in the Closing Date window. One to two weeks from the deployment date is the recommended period for most surveys. The calendar icon beside the window is another way to identify the date you want.

8. Click the Deploy button to activate your survey. An e-mail containing a link to the web survey will be sent to your students on the deployment date. Each student will only be able to complete the survey one time. Surveys will no longer be accepted after the closing date.

Additional Tips:

A. If you wish to send the survey to additional students...
   • From the Main Menu, Click on “View Results or Manage Surveys”
   • Click on the reference number of the deployed survey you wish to send to additional
students
• MoCAT will present you with Survey Information containing links and a blank survey. Select “Deploy This Survey to Additional Students.” You can then enter individual e-mail addresses or use a comma separated text file (CSV) to deploy the survey to multiple e-mail addresses

B. Follow up to ensure student participation:
• Prepare your students – encourage them to watch for the survey e-mail and complete the survey as soon as possible. Instructors who explain why they are using midterm evaluations and how they plan to use the data, find that they have a greater number of surveys returned

Note: If any students have problems with accessing the evaluation, their e-mail program may not be displaying the full path of the web address as a clickable link. Instruct these students to copy and paste the entire web address into a browser instead of clicking on the link created in the e-mail message. This should resolve the problem.

• MoCAT will e-mail you a reminder when your survey has closed and the data are ready to review

How do I view the results for my MoCAT survey?

To access your survey results, follow these simple steps:

1. Log into MoCAT with your campus ID and Password at http://mocat.missouri.edu

2. Select the “View Results or Manage Surveys” option on the Main Menu.

3. In the “My MoCAT Surveys” section, click on the reference number of the survey you wish to review. This window will let you know the status of the survey – whether it has been deployed, or if it is completed.

4. MoCAT will present you with a blank survey, which shows you the questions you asked students. If the survey has been deployed to students, you will also see a “View Results” link – click on this to access results for that survey.

5. When you view results, MoCAT presents you with a graphical summary of the survey results.
6. On the results page, there are links below the results for the objective survey questions. These resources are for instructors who would like ideas on improving those areas of teaching and learning.

7. On the results page, you also have the option of downloading those results to a spreadsheet. Once downloaded, you may choose to do your own more sophisticated data analysis, if desired.

8. Besides saving data to a spreadsheet, survey results may also be used for your teaching portfolios by printing or saving the page on your hard drive as an HTML document or a PDF document (if you have PDF writer software).

**NOTE**: Survey results will be deleted at the end of each semester.

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**How do I create a custom evaluation with my own questions?**

Instead of sending a basic survey, you can create a custom survey with personalized instructions for students and with your own questions. As an added resource to help with those steps, check out the Help links available in the upper right corner of each MoCAT section.

1. Log in to MoCAT with your ID and Password.

2. Click “Create Custom Evaluation” on the Main Menu. The result will be your personal My MoCAT Course Surveys page.

3. Type your course’s reference number into the “Reference Number” box (OR click on the “Look Up Reference Number” link, select a curriculum link, in the drop-down box click the “Select” link next to your course - this places your reference number in the “Reference Number” box).

4. Click the “Add Survey” button.

5. Type “Yes” in the resulting box to confirm you are the instructor of record, and click the “Confirm” button. If you are not the instructor for this course, then click the “Cancel” button.

6. You will be provided with a list of various custom survey questions based on possible course characteristics (e.g. writing intensive, Honors College, reading and discussion-based, online
or classroom technologies). Each includes up to 12 default questions; click on Preview to review the questions.

7. Select the course characteristics which apply to your course. Click on the Finish Adding button.

8. The copy of your customized survey will appear – ready for any additional changes you may wish to make. You will then have the option to view, edit, or delete any of the pre-selected questions, as well as add new questions that you write.

In the section Survey Information, you will have the following options:

- Type in a different Survey Name
- Type an “Optional Message to Students,” if desired

**Important note:** If you use the above options, be sure to click on the “Save and Continue link” to save additions/revisions and continue modifying the survey.

9. Other options in this first Survey Information section include –

- “Scroll Down to Customize” – scrolls you lower on the page where you can “Customize Your MoCAT Survey Questions”
- “Proceed to Deploy Survey” – distributes the completed survey to your class (once this step is completed, the survey can no longer be modified)

10. If you want to make additional changes to the survey, proceed to the section “Customize Your MoCAT Survey Questions”. You will be given the option to make additions (new questions or section headings), edit current questions, remove current questions, set a question default type, or change the order of questions.

11. To add a question...

- Click on the “Add New Question or Section Heading” link. Select the type of question you want - radio buttons, Likert scale, listmenu, checkbox, textarea, or textbox
- Type your new question in the larger question box
- For Radio buttons, Likert scale, Listmenu, & Checkbox questions, perform steps a through c below
  a. Type one answer in the smaller box
  b. Click the “Add” button
c. Repeat steps 3 and 4 above, as needed
   • For Textarea questions, specify the size of the box in number of rows and columns (i.e., characters)
   • For Textbox questions, specify the size of the box in number of characters
   • Click the “Save” button*

   * You can find tips about creating successful online survey questions in the appendix at the very end of this guide.

12. To add a new section heading...
   • Click on the “Section Heading” link
   • Type the desired Section Title in the first box
   • Type the desired Section Description in the second box
   • Click the “Save” button

13. To change the order of headings or questions...
   • Decide where you would like the heading or question to appear
   • Click on the number drop-down box to the left of the heading or question
   • Select the number you wish. The list will automatically re-order

   **Important note:** Be sure to click on the “Save and Continue link” to save additions/revisions and continue modifying the survey.

14. To use the list of links appearing to the right of each section (heading) or question...
   • Edit - this selection allows you to modify this section or question. The area you can modify is in the section entitled “Add/Edit a Question” You can change the text of the question or edit, move, or delete the options. Click the “Save” button, once you have completed making changes
   • Remove – Use this selection with caution as clicking on “Remove” will automatically delete the question
   • Set As Default - For section headings, use this selection to automatically set a description as the default for all new section headings/dividers. For questions, this selection sets format arrangements for all new similar types of questions, i.e., Likert scale, Listmenu, Checkbox, Textarea, or Textbox

15. Once all the additions and revisions have been made to your survey, click on the link “Proceed
to Deploy Survey."

16. Quickly check the names of the students on the resulting page to make sure they are students in your class. If you would like to use the same survey for additional sections of this course, click on the “Add” link located under the section “Add Additional Sections.”

17. Decide when you would like the survey to be deployed (by default the current date will appear in the Deployment Date window). Click on the calendar icon beside the window to select a different date for deployment.

18. Decide when you would like the survey to end and enter the date in the Closing Date window. 1 to 2 weeks from the deployment date is the recommended period for most surveys. The calendar icon beside the window is another way to identify the date you want.

19. Click the Deploy button to activate your survey. An e-mail containing a link to the web survey will be sent to your students on the deployment date. Each student will only be able to complete the survey one time. Surveys will no longer be accepted after the closing date.

20. Follow up to ensure student participation:
   • Prepare your students – encourage them to watch for the survey e-mail and complete the survey as soon as possible. Instructors who explain why they are using midterm evaluations...
and how they plan to discuss the data, find that they have a greater number of surveys returned

**Note:** If any students have problems with accessing the evaluation, their e-mail program may not be displaying the full path of the web address as a clickable link. Instruct these students to copy and paste the entire web address into a browser instead of clicking on the link created in the e-mail message. This should resolve the problem.

- Make a note on your calendar to check survey results and to follow through with your class on the survey information. Check the previous section for easy steps for accessing your survey results

**How can I manage my custom surveys so I can use them for other, or future, courses?**

You have the option to copy your survey – to use in another course or to save for future use.

**How do I copy a survey between my courses?**

1. Log in and access the main menu.

2. Select the link View Results or Manage Surveys.

3. In your list of surveys on the My MoCAT page, find the survey you wish to copy. Click the “Copy” link (located in the far right hand column).

4. A colored box will appear at the top of the page; select “Copy to another course.”

5. In the appropriate text box, type in the reference number of the course to which you want this survey copied.

6. Click the “Submit” button.

7. Type “Yes” in the resulting box to confirm you are the instructor of record, and click the “Confirm” button.

8. Click the “Submit” button.

9. You will see a new survey listed under “My MoCAT Course Surveys”. You can proceed with modifying or deploying this survey to students in the second course.
How do I save a survey so I can use it in the future?

If you have created a custom survey and you would like to re-use it in the future, you can copy it to a template. Templates will stay in your account for future semesters; they are not purged at the end of semesters. To use a template later on, simply copy it to a current course reference number when the time comes.

1. In your list of surveys on the My MoCAT page, click “copy” in the far right hand column of the survey from which you want to copy.

2. Select “Copy to a Template.”

3. Type a name for this new template.

4. Click the “Submit” button.

5. Scroll down to see your new template in the “Templates” section.

How do I copy a template so it can be used in an upcoming course?

1. Locate the desired template in the “Templates” section on the My MoCAT page.

2. Click the “Copy” link to the right of the template name.

3. In the appropriate text box, type in the reference number of the course to which you want this template survey copied.

4. Click the “Submit” button.

5. Type “Yes” in the resulting box to confirm you are the instructor of record, and click the “Submit” button.

6. You will see a new survey listed under “My MoCAT Course Surveys”. You can proceed with modifying or deploying this survey to students.
Appendix: Tips for Creating Effective Survey Questions


Your biggest task is to get respondents to focus in on what you want to know—and for each to focus in the same way. Here is a common question that could be asked on an evaluation form:

When I had a question about the material, or became confused, I contacted the instructor:
1. Rarely or never
2. Sometimes
3. Often
4. Always

In this particular example, we have to assume each participant defines “rarely,” “sometimes,” “often,” and “always” the same way. We use these terms often in our everyday life, and of course everyone knows that they mean! As a matter of fact, a researcher (McCall & Walters, 1998) from Pepperdine University did some investigating among graduate students and faculty as to their “common understanding” of such terms. Here are some examples of his findings when he asked respondents, on a scale of 0-100 to define:

- **“A Few”** Response range of 0 to 80
- **“A couple”** Response range of 2 to 100
- **“Almost all”** Response range of 5 to 100
- **“Not very many”** Response range of 0 to 90
- **“Virtually all”** Response range from 0 to 100
- **“Almost none”** Response range from 0 to 90

As you can see, people are capable of internally-assigning any value to your seemingly straight-forward phrase-choices. A stronger way of asking the above evaluation question might be:

When I had a question about the material, or became confused, I contacted the instructor:
1. Rarely or never (0 to 25% of the time)
2. Sometimes (26 to 50% of the time)
3. Often (51-75% of the time)
4. Almost always (76 to 100% of the time)

While this question, like all questions, is not perfect, it does focus the respondent on what you
mean by “rarely,” “often,” and so on.

Here’s another example of an innocent question that can lead to reliability problems. Let’s say you want to ask an open ended question about offline work habits:

I find that I become frustrated and stop working on class assignments when:

Now, the purpose of this question was meant to solicit feedback about topics or assignments that were problematic to the point of frustration or shutting down. So, anticipated responses would follow the scheme of “when the material doesn’t follow the text;” or “when I can’t reach the instructor for clarification;” or “when I have not done the background reading and am not prepared.”

Instead, what we got mixed in were comments like: “It’s Friday night and I’ve had a busy week;” or “when the baby is sick and needs a lot of attention;” and “when my husband [wife] is on my case about something.”

The problem with this question is the innocent word “when.” It was being interpreted two different ways by respondents and, thus, was a threat to the instrument’s reliability.

An improved question might be: “Were there any times in the course when you felt frustrated and stopped working on class assignments, or felt like giving up? What was it about that course that created this frustration and how did you cope with it? Is there anything that the instructor or sponsors could have done to help you?”

Again, while not perfect, this does focus the respondent on what it is you really want to know, yet does not focus them too much with choice answers. You will get their original thoughts in their own words.

Be careful of other common mistakes in constructing evaluation items, such as giving people an unrealistic continuum on which to answer a question:

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate this instructor:

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<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
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<tr>
<td>Awful</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
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The vague terms “awful,” “good,” and “exceptional” notwithstanding, the real problem with this type of question is the large 0-10 continuum. For example, try to explain to someone the difference between a ranking of a 3 vs. 4; or 7 vs. 8. You probably can’t. Neither can the respondents. Thus, two people feeling basically the same way about the instructor could easily circle two different numbers. This, then, is another threat to reliability.

Avoid asking double-questions, such as:

I found this course to be at a convenient time and place.

A. True
B. False

It could be, of course, that either the time or the price was convenient, but a “true” response does not let you know which. Or, it could be both were. A “false” response could mean neither was or just one was. You don’t know.

Avoid presuming questions, such as:

Did we make adequate provisions to assist you in using the technology needed for this course?

On the surface, this seems like a straight-forward and innocent question. However, it really is a presuming one. The presumption lies in that the fact that it is believed that the university should be providing such assistance. Let’s say that no provisions to assist in using technology were provided. And, I didn’t need any provisions or didn’t feel it was anyone’s responsibility but my own. In such a case, I would say answer “yes” in that none were provided and none were needed. Or, I could answer “no” because I knew none were provided, even if I didn’t need them anyway.

Instead of presuming, this question could be strengthened by dividing it into two questions: 1.) Do you feel you needed assistance in using the technology before the class? And 2) If so, was the assistance available sufficient?

Avoid leading questions. In general, any question that begins with:

“Do you not agree that....” or “Would you agree that....”

There are countless other examples of well-intended questions that failed to achieve the task of asking what we really wanted to know. Testing evaluation instruments on a live class and refining it is the best way to achieve an optimum form. Having colleagues and course stakeholders look at it also helps insure comprehensiveness and straight-forward grammar.

Lastly, examine your evaluation instrument and system against your assessment and evaluation philosophy. Do they match? Are you asking what you really want to know—and are you really willing to respect the feedback you are given?