

FAQs for Template Summarizing Grade Distributions and SIEs

1) Why is it necessary to fill out this form?

First, for better or worse, whether you like it or not, we are all pressed for time. The data in this table provide the first bit of evidence of teaching effectiveness or a lack thereof, in a very brief format. We all know that such data ought never stand alone when making a full assessment (positive or negative) of teaching effectiveness, but they can often help reviewers or evaluators zero in on areas of strength or weakness, or know what questions are worth asking – for example, unusually high or low scores or skewed distributions often form the basis of more specific inquiries into teaching performance. Furthermore, any single data point might prove meaningful or relatively meaningless for different faculty. So usually this is a starting point for a decision as to how much further to look.

Second, without this template, most faculty provide some data in some ways but are not sure what to keep in or leave out, and some faculty provide very little such information. A consistent format guides faculty to precisely what to put in (and what to leave out) and ensures that all meet this minimum level of transparency and clarity.

On the other hand, we look forward to a day when UAH has the software to populate this table for you, automatically, with a few clicks. We are not there yet, so will do it the hard way for now.

2) Do I have to understand some of the rudiments of Excel in order to do this properly?

Not if you don't mess with the tables and cells. It may help you if there are glitches, but you can probably get by without them. (Still that is no excuse for not learning these skills if you have not. Both word processing and use of spreadsheet software are as normal a part of the workplace these days as writing and arithmetic were a few short decades ago.)

3) Why are there grades already inserted?

Probably because you are looking at the EXAMPLE sheet in the Excel file.
Tab over to the Blank Template sheet to begin. Use the SAMPLE as a guide if it helps.

4) Do I summarize each semester or each course?

Each course – there should be one row for each course you have taught for the past three years or longer.

5) Where do I get the information on Grade Distributions?

Ideally from both your own gradebook as well as Banner. Banner will often have information that you do not have in your own gradebook, such as Withdrawals or Fs for students you may never have seen. If your gradebook is already in Excel, you may have already calculated the distribution.

6) In the column “# of Students Graded,” what does “auto-add” mean?

That you do not need to put anything in there – once you input the As through Fs that should automatically be correct.

7) What is the “SIE Response Ratio” and how do I find it, and what does it mean?

It is the proportion of all students registered in your course who completed the SIE. It is always found on the first page of the SIE report, about the fourth line down, as in the example that follows:



**Copy of FA 15 Individual Report for HY-104-02 WORLD HISTORY SINCE 1500
(Molly Johnson)**

eXp Copy of UAH SIE Fall 2015

Project Audience 31

Responses Received 23

Response Ratio 74.19%

Report Comments

8) So, is 74% a high or low response ratio and why does it matter?

It is hard to know how to interpret this number but this is one aging person’s take:

Yes, it is very good for this fairly average-size class.

In the “old days,” when we did paper and pencil SIEs in the second-to-last class of the semester, 50%-60% was a normal response because attendance tends to be low at the end of the semester (unless you require attendance or have some quiz going on that is worth points). With the online SIEs we seem to be able to get to 50% or more by providing students 10 minutes to

fill it out in class on their phones, tablets, or computers. Extra encouragement via email or other means can get you higher.

Does it matter? Not too much, mostly because SIE scores seem to be fairly robust (faculty who tend toward higher scores tend to do well no matter the method or sample, and vice-versa). But an extremely low ratio (for class sizes of 10 or more) makes it hard to feel confident that the data approach a reasonable standard reliability, and may be a wake-up call to faculty that they are not adequately encouraging, or not giving adequate opportunity to their students to get it done in class.

9) What are the “SIE AHS Questions Mean” and the “SIE Core Questions Mean,” how do I find them, what does it matter?

The mean is basically statisticians’ jargon for the “average,” as we learned it in middle school. These means will be found in the “Summary Table” near the end of your SIE report. The Summary Table appears just prior to the section on Student Feedback – Comments, which is the last thing in the report. It looks like this, and here the overall Mean is highlighted:

NOTE Changes in Fall 2016:

- (1) Until Fall 2016 there was no AHS Table. This is NEW so you will have nothing to put there for any semester prior to Fall 2016.
- (2) Until Fall 2016 all questions, and all summary means, were numbers between 1 and 4. For Fall 2016 this was changed to numbers between 1 and 5.

ADDED IN FALL 2016

Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Instructors: Summary Table

Question	Course	Department (English)	College (Arts, Humanities & Social Scie)
	Mean	Mean	Mean
The instructor made clear what students needed to do in order to perform well in this course.	4.67	4.52	4.56
The instructor stimulated interest in the subject.	4.53	4.46	4.58
I would recommend this instructor to another student.	4.40	4.37	4.46
Overall	4.53	4.45	4.53

Changed from 1-4 to 1-5 scale, beginning Fall 2016

Core Questions: Summary Table

Question	Course	Department (Art, Art History & Design)	College (Arts, Humanities & Social Scie)	University
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
The instructor organized the course according to a syllabus.	4.83	4.39	4.64	4.52
The instructor followed a clear method of grading and evaluation.	4.78	4.30	4.42	4.35
Other course policies and procedures were clearly defined and followed.	4.78	4.50	4.58	4.49
The instructor effectively presented course content.	4.72	4.47	4.48	4.27
The instructor's teaching styles and methods promoted learning.	4.56	4.43	4.43	4.24
The instructor stimulated learning through questions, assignments or exercises relevant to the course.	4.33	4.49	4.52	4.36
The instructor's approach made the students feel free to ask questions.	4.50	4.62	4.58	4.43
The instructor was available for consultation outside of class.	4.53	4.42	4.53	4.43
At the end of this semester, the course objectives as described in the syllabus had been accomplished.	4.72	4.41	4.57	4.47
The instructor graded and returned material submitted for evaluation when they said they would.	4.83	4.35	4.46	4.41
The instructor showed interest in student learning.	4.78	4.65	4.62	4.48
The instructor responded in an effective and professional manner to student comments and questions.	4.78	4.63	4.61	4.49
Overall	4.68	4.47	4.54	4.41

Interpreting the numbers out of 4 or 5:

For those of you who were around with the old paper and pencil SIEs, interpreting this number is not all that different from interpreting the summary number(s) then. The main difference is that in the old system we were given summary numbers out of 100, and we had long experience with them as well. Thus, interpretation was fairly straightforward: Roughly, anything above 90 was usually interpreted as very good to excellent, anything between 80-90 was usually taken to be OK, and scores under 70 were only acceptable if they were fairly rare. For most of our top instructors, scores in the low- to mid-90s were the norm. With the very limited experience we have so far, it appears reasonable to interpret the new means similarly.

Very Good to Excellent	Ok to Good	Acceptable if unusual
>90	80-89.9	70-79.0
>3.6	3.20-3.59	2.80-3.19
>4.5	4.00-4.49	3.50-3.99