

WHAT EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COACHE DATA

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WHAT IS IT?

The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey records self-reported measures of faculty satisfaction with campus climate. Started at Harvard in 2003, the survey was first sent to tenured faculty at participating institutions. In 2010, the survey was adapted to include tenure-track faculty and a new version of the survey was created for adjuncts. In 2012, a version of the survey was developed for use in community colleges.

WHAT DOES IT CONSIST OF?

To participate in the COACHE survey, an institution pays a fee and agrees to send at least one representative to training sessions each year over a three-year period. As of 2018, COACHE has 250+ participating institutions. Fees vary by size and institutional type, but the base fee for research and comprehensive institutions is \$35,000 over 3 years. The primary survey consists of between 200 and 225 questions, the majority of which are multiple-choice. There are variations of the survey available for tenure-track, adjunct, and clinical faculty. Institutions can add supplementary blocks of five custom questions for an additional fee of \$500 per block. There is an existing supplemental module for interdisciplinary work and a planned supplemental module for faculty development (in partnership with the POD Network).

The COACHE survey covers the following primary themes:

- Nature of Work: Research
- Nature of Work: Teaching
- Nature of Work: Service
- Resources & Support
- Interdisciplinary Work, Collaboration, & Mentoring
- Tenure & Promotion
- Institutional Leadership
- Shared Governance
- Department Engagement, Quality, & Collegiality
- Appreciation & Recognition
- Retention & Negotiation

Please see Appendix I for a list of questions specifically related to teaching and learning from the current version of the COACHE survey.

HOW CAN IT BE USED?

Participating institutions receive COACHE data reports and have access to data dashboards. In addition to their aggregate scores in each of the categories, COACHE also provides benchmarking reports (with self-identified peer institutions) and longitudinal comparisons. Institutions may use COACHE data to guide policies and practices designed to enhance targeted areas of faculty satisfaction.

It should be noted that at the institutional level, COACHE data is “a census, not a sample...[with] ...near-complete representation of every pre-tenure and/or tenured faculty member at participating institutions.” Because of this, researchers using COACHE data have done extensive quantitative studies looking at the correlations between demographic factors (age, gender, race) and faculty satisfaction. Each of these has been found to be statistically significant variables. Recent studies have focused on elements of faculty well-being. You can read these reports on the COACHE website (<https://coache.gse.harvard.edu/>).

Other researchers have continued these questions; often focused on specific contexts or populations.

Example 1: Mamiseishvili, K., & Lee, D. (2018). International Faculty Perceptions of Departmental Climate and Workplace Satisfaction. *Innovative Higher Education*, 1-16.

Example 2: Denson, N., Szelényi, K., & Bresonis, K. (2018). Correlates of work-life balance for faculty across racial/ethnic groups. *Research in Higher Education*, 59(2), 226-247.

Example 3: Lee, P., Miller, M. T., Kippenbrock, T. A., Rosen, C., & Emory, J. (2017). College nursing faculty job satisfaction and retention: A national perspective. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 33(4), 261-266.

Example 4: In 2014, the Executive Director of COACHE, Kiernan Matthews, was awarded the POD Network Menges award for his research into what kind of faculty do not respond to surveys such as COACHE; including suggested strategies for interpreting current data and improving participation. Mathews, K. (2014). The faculty you don't know: Characters of faculty survey nonresponse. *The Robert J. Menges Award for Outstanding Research in Educational Development*. 39th Annual POD Conference 2014, Dallas. <https://podnetwork.org/resources/grants-and-awards/robert-j-menges-award/>

WHAT ARE ITS LIMITATIONS?

COACHE survey data is only collected at schools that choose to participate. There is some over-representation of large doctoral-granting schools, especially in the early data sets. Since that time, the organization has made intentional and ongoing efforts to expand to other institutional types.

In its earlier years, the COACHE survey focused primarily on pre-tenure faculty, so non-tenure track faculty are not represented in the longitudinal data. Only full-time faculty are included in the populations as well so the data cannot speak to the experiences of adjunct or part-time faculty.

As of 2018, the COACHE survey has been administered only in the United States and at two Canadian institutions.

The COACHE survey is self-reported data from a large-scale survey and so carries with it the standard limitations and qualifications that go along with large-scale surveys and self-reported or perception data.

To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, the COACHE organization provides data on identified institutions only to that institution. In other words, you cannot look at satisfaction levels at named institutions unless you get the data directly from that institution. Some schools do make their COACHE data reports publicly available.

HOW DO I GET ACCESS?

COACHE data is proprietary and confidential, so the organization safeguards its database by requiring researchers to apply for access. To apply, you will need to apply for pre-qualification, then, if approved, obtain IRB approval for your study from your home institution; complete a data security plan, and write a justification for access that includes specific information about what data you will need to have pulled. The review process can take several weeks, though it is frequently faster. Once approved, you will receive a spreadsheet containing the data that you requested, with identifying information removed.

For more information on how to apply, visit <https://coache.gse.harvard.edu/data-requests>.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

The COACHE website (<https://coache.gse.harvard.edu>) is the best source for information about the survey.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF COACHE SURVEY QUESTIONS RELATED TO TEACHING/SUPPORT FOR TEACHING

- Q45** Satisfaction with time spent on teaching [as part of overall load]
- Q50** Follow-up to Q45: If dissatisfied, indicate if teaching too much or too little.
- Q70** Satisfaction with multiple aspects of teaching
- A. The number of courses you teach
 - B. The level of courses you teach
 - C. The discretion you have over the content of the courses you teach
 - D. The number of students in the classes you teach, on average
 - E. The quality of students you teach, on average
 - F. The support your institution has offered you for improving your teaching
 - H. How equitably the teaching workload is distributed across faculty in your department
- [Additional questions for universities with graduate programs and community colleges]
- Q190** How often do you engage with faculty in your department in conversations about....
- C. Effective teaching practices
- Q215** How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive for your...
- A. Teaching efforts
- Q267A** Please check the two (and only two) best aspects about working at your institution.
- Q267B** Please check the two (and only two) worst aspects about working at your institution.
- 8.** Support for teaching (out of 36 options, including “other”)

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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