

How to Read the Profiles

- The four profile lines connect the means for each question for visual comparison. One line is for your course section, one for the course (if multiple sections are offered that semester), one for the course prefix, and one for the all college.
- Additional statistics are presented to the right: **n**, **av.**, **md**, and **dev**. For each question, descriptive statistics are provided to the right and are color-coded to correspond to the profile line (e.g., your course section is shown on the top line in red, and aggregated statistics for the course, course prefix, and all college are found below that).

Your course section results comparison overall ('Profile - Summary,' page 6)

- Contains a summary of profile line comparisons for 5 items:
 1. The Course... (mean of responses to questions #1.1 to #1.9)
 2. Course Overall (question #2.1)
 3. The Instructor... (mean of responses to questions #3.1 to #3.10)
 4. Instructor Overall (question #4.1)
 5. Learning Overall (question #5.1)
- As in the 'Profile - Questions' section (above), you can compare your **course section** results (mean) to the results for the following:
 - course** (orange) - all section offerings of the same course that semester (e.g., all sections of EN105 for the term).
Note: if only one section of a course is offered, only the red course section mean profile line will appear as it 'overlaps' the orange course mean line.
 - course prefix** (green) - all of the course sections offered that semester within the same course prefix (e.g., all EN courses for the term).
 - all-college** (blue) – all course section offerings at the College for the semester
- Three of these items ('2. Course Overall,' '4. Instructor Overall,' and '5. Learning Overall') are single questions asked directly to students and are simply repeated from the profile section on pages 4 and 5.
- Two of these items '1. The Course...' and '3. The Instructor...' are indicators or constructs calculated from all the questions in the respective section.

Appendix A: Calculation and Meaning of Statistics

- **Mean (av.)**

- The arithmetic mean is the average of a series of measurements. It is calculated by adding up the individual values and then dividing this sum by the number of values.

- Example Calculation:

The arithmetic mean for a series of measurements of 8 responses to a survey question with 5 answer options is calculated as follows:

- 1. Sum up values of responses: $3 + 1 + 5 + 4 + 4 + 3 + 4 + 5 = 29$
- 2. Divide sum by number of responses: $29 / 8 = 3.63$

- **Median (md)**

- The median divides a distribution into two halves, i.e., it is the value which is exactly in the middle of the set of values.

- This means that in 50% of cases a response value that was higher or exactly equal to this value was given. The remaining 50% of values are either lower than this value or again equal to it. Compared to the mean, the median is less likely to be influenced by few extremely high or low response values. The

- 3. Take the square root from 1.696
 - 4. The standard deviation is 1.30
- It is important to note that, often times, small differences between your score and the mean are not statistically meaningful or “significant”. The standard deviation can provide a useful comparison measure here. To know if a particular score is meaningfully different than the mean, it is essential to compare not only the means, but also the standard deviations. Such comparisons are best done with relatively large class sizes. Similar means are more statistically distinguishable with more student responses. Determining if a given score is significantly different from the average is more difficult for small classes and small course prefix groups.

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