



Representative survey respondents' comments: Teaching and learning at UBC Science

“We are leaders in incorporating modern teaching approaches and active/experiential learning into our courses. We have outstanding EL faculty. In talking to faculty members from other institutions, we are way ahead in these regards.”

— Faculty, Educational Leadership

“We are a leader in North America for evidence-based, scholarly teaching.”

— Faculty, Educational Leadership

“Widespread deployment of active learning strategies and a willingness to experiment in teaching.”

— Faculty, Research

“Resources to support excellence in teaching and translate best practices to the classroom, including the pair teaching program.”

— Faculty, Research

“Our educational leadership stream is unique and our longstanding commitment to using data to drive changes in our program is valuable.”

— Faculty, Research

“Enthusiastic, dedicated faculty who really care about teaching. The talented team at Skylight is very helpful in supporting good teaching, as are the embedded departmental Science Education Specialists.”

— Faculty, Research

“Commitment to EL positions; Science Education Specialists (the SES assigned to my department is an incredible asset).”

— Faculty, Educational Leadership

“Weiman initiative has created a cadre of outstanding SOTL scholars and it rubs off on the rest of us.”

— Faculty, Research

“I think we really have how to teach first year science figured out. It's not being taught in a coherent way across the departments (the material doesn't line up at all) but we know how to teach it effectively.”

— Faculty, Lecturer/Sessional

“Very good pedagogy at the individual class level. The UPER program is helping with the program level, but it's not yet a strength.”

— Faculty, Research

“Being a leader in science education that is influencing and inspiring work at many other institutions, strong support for teaching and learning of our own students, and a strong excellent research - all of these because of the great people working here.”

— Staff

“Recent years have seen clear shifts in the interests of undergraduate students in Science. Subjects that were traditionally quite popular have become less so, other areas have emerged as appealing. Somehow Science has to address these changes. Moreover, students are entering UBC with diverse backgrounds, and more efforts need to be made on how best to support the students in their learning.”

— Faculty, Educational Leadership

“Support faculty, particularly new faculty, in their adoption of evidence-based pedagogy.”

— Faculty, Educational Leadership

“Providing more connection and training for students with respect to emerging fields of study (data science; experiential learning).”

— Staff

“Increasing the ability for students to engage in experiences that will help build off of their studies to effectively enable them to leave UBC with career prospects (extra-curriculars, co-op, research opportunities for undergraduates, etc.).”

— Staff

“Figure out ways to decolonize and Indigenize [at least parts of] the undergraduate curriculum, and implement them.”

— Faculty, Educational Leadership

“UBC Science became a leader in science education and is well respected nationally and internationally. ... I feel optimistic what the future holds for our students and appreciate the important role played by educational leadership stream faculty. I hope they are recognized for their extraordinary efforts.”

— Staff



“Undergraduate enrollment keeps increasing, students come in less well-prepared, and more "magic cures" are expected from faculty teaching them. More expectations for "evidence based teaching" and innovative teaching, but way less financial support/TA support for that mission. Feeling of our collective effort, as faculty, being undervalued in FoS.”

— Faculty, Research

“The shift towards research-informed teaching practices over the last 10-12 years has been incredible and has made us a model for change at other institutions. The teaching cultures in most departments have improved substantially in that time, to being more student-centered in design/planning, to being more aware of and accepting of meaningful evidence related to teaching, ... However, faculty and staff time as well as physical space are strained due to the large increase in undergraduate enrollment. This affects everyone's health and the quality of their work.”

— Staff

“There has been more emphasis on the equity, diversity and inclusion among the people of Science: hiring faculty and in the student population. I think this is a good thing but caution that we may be looking for filling quotas where there might not be. The focus on wellness of students has increased and I think this is important. This is UBC-wide but Science is very involved in improving student wellness.”

— Staff

“Let faculty cross-teach, e.g. ask botanist to contribute to a physics class.”

— Emeriti

“I have been passionate for supporting undergraduate research in my teaching lab. A lack of consistent funding for the development of new projects, and equipment, and adequate technical support have been the main impediment in accomplishing this UBC-mandated task.”

— Faculty, Educational Leadership

“I am unable to connect with students when I teach because class sizes are so large. We need more resources to reduce class sizes to improve the quality of education we can give our students. Smaller classes means less administrative overhead for faculty which, in turn, means more time for research.”

— Faculty, Research

“I would like to move to the industry and apply my skills towards sustainability, climate change, etc. Being able to meet companies through career fairs and have some industry experience through internships and coop programs could be made easier for PhD students.”

— Graduate student

“Stronger engagement with industry.”

— Graduate student

“There's more resources than before to help grad students maintain a good mental health while they are completing their PhD. We appreciate UBC's efforts to provide this for us. It's great to give resources to help students cope with the challenges of grad school, however, it would be even better to try to address the conditions in grad school that are causing students to have mental health issues.”

— Graduate student

“The quality of faculty, especially in regards to teaching quality in upper level courses and the quality of faculty research. Also the Science Co-Op program is a huge strength, given the quality of science research positions available at UBC.”

— Alumni

“It is a diverse faculty but offer programs such as CSP, ScienceOne, and other Majors/Honours programs which are small enough to foster connections between students and a feeling of community, despite the size of the faculty.”

“Outstanding and dedicated faculty members, broad knowledge base expected of students, good training in critical thinking, high expectation for students' academic strength, good co-op programme.”

— Alumni

“Its ability to develop insight on topics that will continue to benefit society on a regional and global basis. To educate generations of students to bring critical thinking into whatever role they choose, including, but not restricted to research.”

— Alumni

“Diversity of programs and courses; long standing history of providing quality education/history of recognition for education quality; proximity to excellent opportunities for research (zoology/biology); high quality faculty; excellent on-campus services; recognition of courses by other universities allowing a student to move from UBC to other locations for enrichment.”

— Alumni



“To provide a highly trained future employee for the work force - and to achieve this, enhance laboratory and hands-on experience instead of the current cutting back. As a staff that hires work learn student to help in a laboratory setting, i can totally see that the cutting back on laboratory experience highly impacts the student's ability to execute simple lab skills. Pushing this burden to co-op and work learn opportunities basically burdens the respective companies and research laboratories to train students with the basic lab skills.”

— Alumni

“We need to connect students at UBC Science with their options after university - a WIDE range. Not everyone is going to become a doctor, microbiologist, or researcher. Many of those kids are going to go into corporate desk jobs just like everyone else. We need to bring all these options to the TABLE early, with real examples, and have them doing co-ops for any type of company.”

— Alumni

“Have a culture that supports real, tangible industrial collaborations like Stanford, UC Berkeley, ... The Canadian and US systems are set up to graduate many more PhD graduates than faculty openings (which is fine). However, most Professors in my department had little interest in helping students prepare for careers other than academic professorships.”

— Alumni

“Offer insights for its students into the social and humane interfaces between their scientific discipline and their culture as a whole. That attitude will govern behaviour of graduates their whole lives, in every sphere.”

— Alumni