

This guide contains information on how to use the Ministerial Policy Satisfaction Survey including:

- setting an optional performance target
- conducting the survey with your minister
- developing a score based on the results
- using the results for improving performance.

What is the Ministerial Policy Satisfaction Survey?

The Ministerial Policy Satisfaction Survey is used by agencies to assess their minister's satisfaction with the services provided by the policy function. The survey is used for:

- external accountability – agencies with a policy appropriation are required to include in their Estimates a ministerial satisfaction score and report their actual performance in their next Annual Report, using the Ministerial Policy Satisfaction Survey
- performance improvement – agencies use the results of the survey to improve the way they engage with their minister.

The Minister's responses to the survey are subject to the *Official Information Act 1982*.

1 Setting an optional performance target

Agencies with a separate policy appropriation or policy category within a multi-category appropriation, are required to include performance information in their Estimates on the satisfaction of the Minister with the policy advice function. As part of this reporting, agencies may choose to include an optional performance target for ministerial satisfaction.

There is no public service-wide target, and if agencies choose to include a target they should include one that is appropriate for their context (as a score out of five).

2 Conducting the survey

Agencies should enter the relevant information in the survey, including their agency's name or business unit name, before printing for the Minister. There is no central agency requirement for the survey to be done at a particular time of year, or to be run in a certain way. What works best will depend on the preferences of your minister.

Who? The survey should be completed by the portfolio Minister. Your agency can also choose to survey associate ministers.

When? The survey results should cover the financial year and be completed in time for the ministerial satisfaction score to be reported in the agency's annual report.

Your agency can choose how often to conduct the survey throughout the year. If it is administered multiple times throughout the year (e.g. every four or six months) you can use the results to drive continuous improvement and even out the impact of any external factors. It can also be useful to conduct the survey after a significant policy project has been delivered. This can provide more specific feedback on a particular project and enables satisfaction across multiple projects to be compared.

How? Your agency can choose whether to send the survey with a covering brief to the Minister, or to meet with the Minister for them to complete the survey in front of officials. It can be useful to remind the Minister of the policy advice supplied during the time period the survey is referring to.

Agencies are required to include in their annual report a ministerial satisfaction score out of five against each policy appropriation or policy category within a multi-category appropriation.

The scoring system

The survey asks the Minister to rate various aspects of their experience (questions 1, 3, 5 and 6). It also includes questions seeking written comments. The rating questions use the scale in the table below.

Rating	Score
Never	1
Some of the time	2
About half the time	3
Most of the time	4
Always	5

To calculate the ministerial satisfaction score:

- 1) calculate the average score for question 1 and the average score for question 3. These questions contain multiple parts and the average for each question can be calculated by adding the scores for each part and dividing by the total number of parts answered (e.g. if all parts are answered for question 1, divide by 6)
- 2) calculate the average score for the answers to questions 1, 3, 5 and 6. Add the average score for question 1 and the average score for question 3 to the scores for question 5 and question 6, then divide by the total number of questions answered (e.g. if all questions are answered, divide by 4).

The score to be reported in the Annual Report

If you have surveyed the Minister multiple times, calculate an average score each time you conduct the survey, then at the end of the year calculate the average of the average scores for all the surveys conducted in that financial year.

Some agencies will report multiple ministerial satisfaction scores that correspond to different policy advice categories reported in the Estimates. Other agencies may need to calculate an average ministerial satisfaction score across multiple ministers to report against a single policy advice category.

You can pinpoint areas for improvement by looking beyond the score and into the responses to individual questions and comments. Note that comparing scores across ministers is of limited value due to differing expectations and standards. Ideas for ways to use the results to improve your engagement with the Minister include:

Compare scores and responses from the same Minister across different portfolios, or different policy projects, to learn from how others are engaging with the Minister.

Compare your scores and responses from the same Minister over time to see if changes in your engagement approach are working.

Share the survey results with policy teams across the agency. Key messages with links to resources can help drive improvements.

Consider the survey results along with other information on the performance of the policy function for a complete picture. For example, the trends in quality of policy advice using the [Policy Quality Framework](#), the policy function's capability using the [Policy Capability Framework](#), and the skills of the policy team using the [Policy Skills Framework](#).

In areas for improvement, agencies may include the relevant questions from the survey on individual policy advice papers to receive regular and specific feedback from your minister. Whether this option works will depend on the preferences of your minister.