

Guide to the Ministerial Policy Satisfaction Survey

This guide explains 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 advice 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 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 and as a **score out of 5**.

2. Conducting the survey

Agencies should enter the relevant identifying information in the survey, including their agency's name, portfolio and time period covered, before providing to the minister. There's no requirement for the survey to be done at a particular time of year or run in a certain way. What works best will depend on your minister's preferences. It can be helpful to engage with the minister's office early so they can find time for the minister to complete the survey.

WHO	WHEN	HOW
The survey should be completed by the portfolio minister. Your agency can also choose to survey associate ministers or parliamentary under-secretaries.	<p>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.</p> <p>Your agency can choose how often to conduct the survey throughout the year. If it's 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.</p>	<p>The survey can be sent to the minister by email for completing electronically, or in hard copy for filling in by hand. Find out your minister's preferences first.</p> <p>You can send the survey with a covering brief, ask the minister to complete the survey during a meeting with officials, or liaise with the private secretary to arrange for the minister to complete the survey. It can be useful to remind the minister of the policy advice supplied during the survey's time period.</p>



3. Scoring the survey

Agencies are required to include in their annual report a ministerial satisfaction score out of 5 against each policy appropriation or policy category within a multi-category appropriation.

The scoring system

The survey includes questions with rating scales as well as free text questions. Only the rating scales are used to calculate the ministerial satisfaction score.

ratings				
Never	Some of the time	About half the time	Most of the time	Always
1	2	3	4	5
scores				

Calculating the ministerial satisfaction score

- 1) For each of the rating scale questions in each part, allocate a score out of 5.
- 2) Calculate the average score for *Part 1 – General satisfaction* and then calculate the average score for *Part 2 – Quality of policy advice*. Do this by adding up the scores for each part and divide them by the number of ratings questions answered in that part. This will be a score out of 5.
- 3) Calculate the weighted average:

$$\frac{\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{The average for} \\ \text{Part 1 – General} \\ \text{satisfaction} \end{array} \right) + \left(\begin{array}{c} \text{The average for} \\ \text{Part 2 – Quality} \\ \text{of policy advice} \end{array} \right) + \left(\begin{array}{c} \text{The score for} \\ \text{Part 3 –} \\ \text{Overall trust} \end{array} \right) + \left(\begin{array}{c} \text{The score for} \\ \text{Part 4 – Overall} \\ \text{confidence} \end{array} \right)}{4}$$

- 4) This weighted average is your ministerial policy satisfaction score.

The score to be reported in the annual report

If you've 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 or across the minister and associate minister and/or parliamentary under-secretary to report against a single policy advice category.

If you've been unable to survey the minister or associate minister or parliamentary under-secretary, note in the annual report that "The Ministerial Policy Satisfaction Survey results are unavailable".

4. Adding extra questions to the survey

Some agencies may wish to add extra questions to the Ministerial Policy Satisfaction Survey on matters particularly relevant to their agency's policy advice function. Agencies may also wish to add questions related to the minister's satisfaction with other functional areas, such as ministerial support services, to provide one survey for ease of use.

The Ministerial Policy Satisfaction Survey is provided in Word format so you can add extra questions if required. The questions with rating scales are collected in tables that can be copied and pasted to the end of the document, then modified. You can add questions with rating scales or free-text responses, as necessary.

However, if you've added extra questions to the survey, don't use these to calculate the Ministerial Policy Satisfaction Score. Only use the original questions that are provided in the survey. That way, all agencies with a policy appropriation are applying a common performance standard.

5. Using the results

You can pinpoint areas for improvement by looking beyond the score and into the responses to individual and free-text questions. Note that comparing scores across ministers is of limited value due to differing expectations and standards.

To receive more regular feedback from the minister, selected questions and their rating scales from the survey can be included on individual policy advice papers, so the minister can provide feedback on that specific paper. Whether this option works will depend on your minister's preferences.

Ideas for ways to use the results to improve your engagement with the minister include the following.

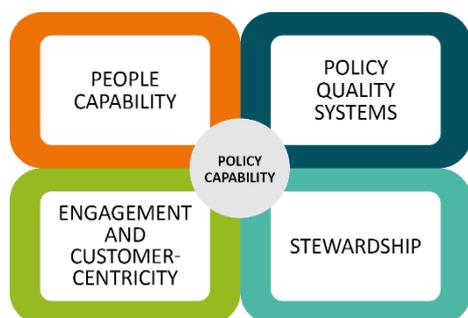
Compare your scores and responses from the same minister over time to see if changes in your engagement approach are working

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.

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

For a more complete picture, consider the survey results along with the other sources of information on the performance of the policy advice function such as those below.

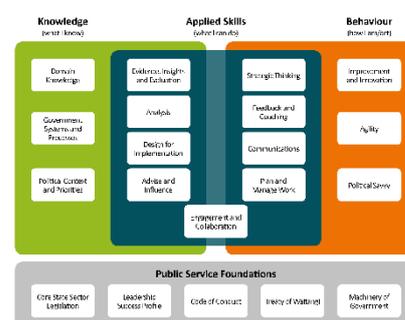
The policy advice function's capability using the **Policy Capability Framework**



The trends in quality of policy advice using the **Policy Quality Framework**



The skills of the policy team using the **Policy Skills Framework**



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