

# Student's Guide to Course Evaluations

Office of Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research  
Office of the Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor

As a student, your feedback is crucial to the teaching success of UAF. We rely on students completing course evaluations and providing honest feedback to make course improvement decisions. UAF uses a software program called Explorance Blue (also known as Blue) to conduct course evaluations. In this document, you will learn **how to log into Blue** and **complete a survey**, **tips on answering open-ended/comment questions**, and **where to ask for help** if you need it. The following topics are addressed in this Guide:

[Course Evaluation Confidentiality](#)

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[Tips on Answering Comment Questions](#)

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## Course Evaluation Confidentiality

Any information you provide in the surveys is kept strictly confidential. Professors are not able to see or know who has or hasn't submitted a course survey. When less than three students submit a survey for a specific course, the results are withheld to ensure anonymity. Professors are not allowed to ask for proof that you submitted the survey, doing so is a breach of confidentiality. The only person who is able to see if you submitted a survey is the UAF Survey Administrator, who is bound by confidentiality laws. Anonymity on course surveys is taken very seriously. If you have concerns or questions about survey anonymity, please email the Survey Administrator at [UAF-course-evals@alaska.edu](mailto:UAF-course-evals@alaska.edu).

After grades for the course are released, evaluation results are **anonymously** available to the public. You can view the historical course survey results [here](#).

## How to Log Into Blue

Blue is an online software program you can access through your browser (Chrome, Safari, Edge). To log into Blue, you need your UAF ID and password.

Go to <https://my-uaf.bluera.com> and log in using your UAF ID and password.

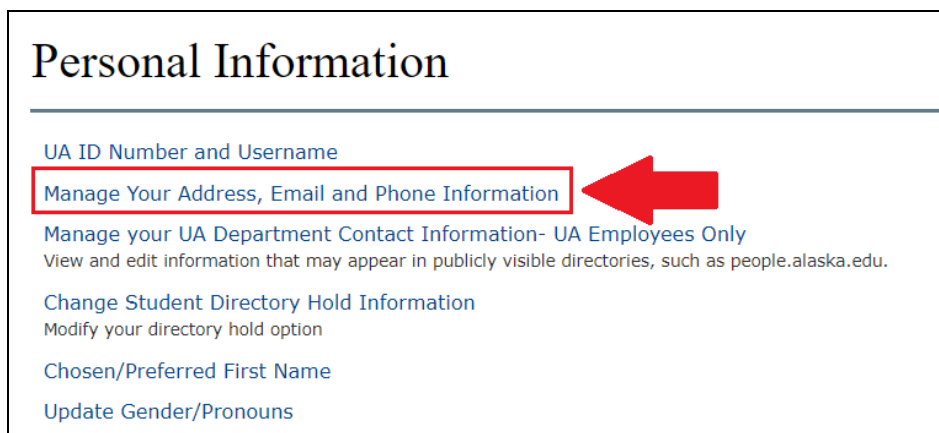
**\*\* If you forgot your UAF ID and/or password, [follow these instructions](#). \*\***

## Email Notifications

When the evaluation period for a course you are taking opens, you will receive automatic email notifications from [uaf-course-evals@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-course-evals@alaska.edu). This means that you can now fill out and submit a course evaluation survey. The email will contain the name of the course(s) that the survey is open for, and a link that takes you to the survey. If you have any questions or issues with the survey, you can reply to this email and we will help you.

**\*\*\*NOTE that email notifications are sent to your “preferred email address” as it is listed in UAOnline. If you have not changed your preferred email address, notifications will be sent to your @alaska.edu email address. If you are not receiving course evaluation email notifications from [uaf-course-evals@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-course-evals@alaska.edu), it is likely that the email set as your “preferred email address” is incorrect. If this occurs, follow these steps:**

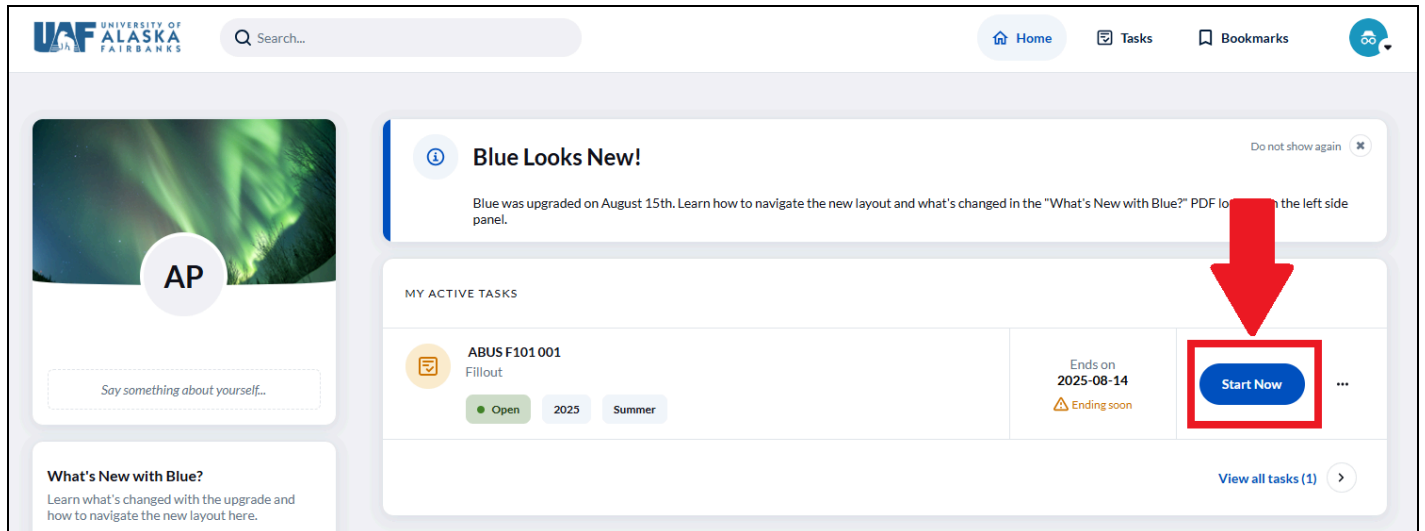
1. Log into [UAOnline](#). You will need your UAF ID and password to log in. If you forgot either of these, [follow these instructions](#).
2. On the homepage, Click on **“Manage Your Address, Email, and Phone Information”**.



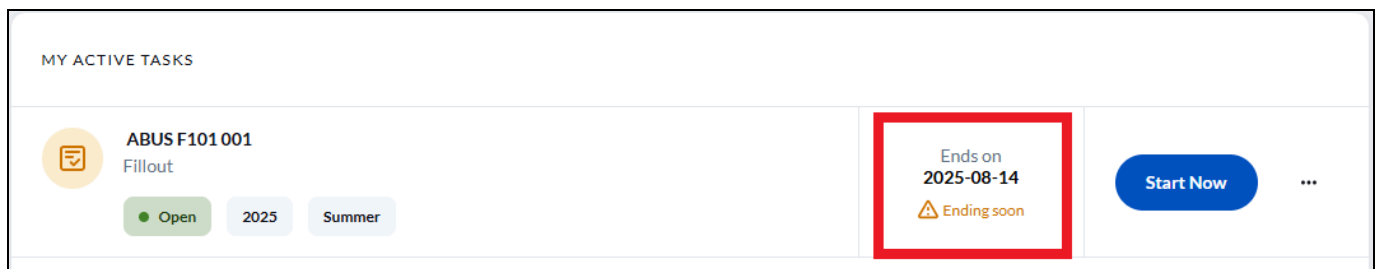
3. Check that the email listed under **“Student Preferred Email”** is correct. If you want to change this to a different email address, Click **“Change”** and enter the correct email.
  - a. If the email address listed is correct, log into that email and check the Spam folder. If you still do not see any course evaluation survey emails, send an email to [uaf-course-evals@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-course-evals@alaska.edu).

## How to Fill Out a Survey

1. [Log into Blue](#) (Or click the link in the email sent to you).
2. Once you enter your Blue Homepage, you will see a list of open tasks. Each one of these is a survey for you to fill out and submit. Surveys will be listed with the soonest-to-expire survey at the top.



3. To start filling out a survey, click the blue "Start Now" button next to it. If you have multiple open surveys, we recommend beginning with the one that expires the soonest. The expiration date of each survey can be found here:



4. After you open a survey, you will see questions pertaining to the course and the instructor(s). Answer each question thoroughly and honestly. If you don't want to answer a certain question, skip it. Every question on the survey is NOT mandatory, meaning you can leave answers blank and still submit the survey. At the end of each page, click **Next** to go to the next page of questions. If you exit the survey before submitting, your answers will be saved for the next time you open the survey.
5. On the last page of the survey, click on the **Submit button**. If you do not click **Submit**, your survey answers will not be counted. After submitting the survey, you will see a thank you message that confirms the survey submission. You may now close the survey window. Shortly after completing the survey, you will receive an email confirming the submission. If you do not receive this email, please log into Blue and click the **Submit button**.

## Tips on Answering Comment Questions

Answering open-ended comment questions can be difficult, but your written input gives UAF the best insight for improving course content and instruction. When writing answers, be as specific as possible. Specificity helps your instructor identify targeted areas they do well in or should consider improving. Below are the **Do's** and **Don'ts** of answering comment questions.

### Do's and Don'ts

- **DO Include instructional content details** like the unit within the course you are referring to or assignment names.

#### Instead of

"I enjoyed this class"

#### Do this

"I enjoyed this class, especially the unit on Yup'ik history. The group discussions helped me understand the lesson."

- **DO Include examples** of what you would have liked instead. Don't be afraid to ask for changes!

#### Instead of

"This class was boring"

#### Do this

"This class was boring. It would be less boring if the lessons were more interactive, or included more group projects."

#### Instead of

"Discussion board responses always got off-topic."

#### Do this

"Other students in the course always got off-topic on the discussion boards, but my professor didn't seem to notice. Please monitor the responses so the discussions don't get too off-topic and derail the entire course."

- **DON'T give one sentence answers.** Add more information or expand on your thoughts as much as you can.

Instead of

"You're a great professor!"

Do this

"You're a great professor! You kept my attention throughout lectures, and I felt inspired to complete assignments."

- **DON'T leave out how the feedback you're giving has impacted you.** Good or bad!

Instead of

"I liked the lecture slides"

Do this

"Professor Smith's use of slides was very effective. I learned much more because the slides had a combination of bullet points and visual flowcharts."

Instead of

"This class had too many homework assignments"

Do this

"I feel like this class had way too many homework assignments. I spent most of my time doing assignments for this class, and missed deadlines for other classes because of that."

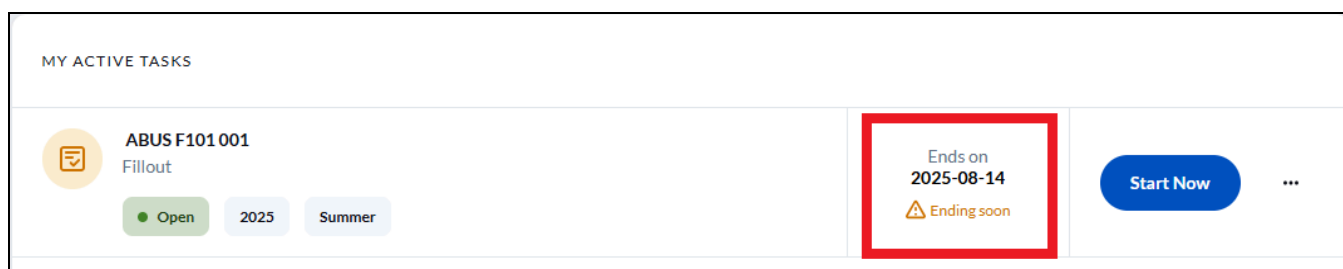
## FAQs

### Can I leave the survey and come back to it later?

Yes. If you open a survey and don't submit it, Blue will remember your answers the next time you open the survey. When you're confident in your answers, don't forget to hit 'Submit' on the last page of the survey.

### How long do I have to submit surveys?

This depends on how long the course lasts. For shorter duration courses (like week-long courses), you will have **at least 4 days** to complete and submit the survey. Longer courses have **up to two weeks** to complete the survey. You can see when each survey closes in your Blue Dashboard.



### I'm having trouble filling out the survey. What should I do?

Email [uaf-course-evals@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-course-evals@alaska.edu) for help! We are here to answer any questions you have and are happy to help you navigate or complete surveys.

### Why should I do these surveys???

#### It helps YOU.

Filling out course surveys gives you a chance to reflect on the progress you've made throughout the course. Looking back on what you've learned or how far you've come can give you insight into the growth you've made during the term. Reflection can also help you when deciding which courses to take next term, or when exploring options for a major.

#### It helps your professors.

Thoughtful survey answers help professors identify what is working, and more importantly, what isn't. Professors use survey answers to restructure and refine future iterations of the course. If you're curious about how your instructor has used survey feedback, ask them about what changes they've made based on survey feedback.

#### It helps your fellow UAF students

Although you may not take the same course again, students following in your footsteps might be able to get a better understanding of material and overall course experience thanks to the course improvements your feedback has driven. Since survey results are publicly available, your answers may also help your peers in deciding which courses to take.