

Learning and Teaching Support Network

Collecting and using student feedback

A guide to good practice

By John Brennan and Ruth Williams

This Guide is based on a HEFCE-funded project undertaken by the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, Segal Quince Wicksteed Limited and National Opinion Polls on the collection and use of student feedback on quality and standards of learning and teaching in higher education. (See Brennan J, Williams R, [in collaboration with SQW Ltd and NOP], Collecting and Using Student Feedback on Quality and Standards of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. A report to HEFCE. The report can be found at http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/2003/rd08_03/). It uses information on the policies and practices in the universities and colleges who responded to a consultation and visits to 20 of these. Use has also been made of other material we have come across or have been made aware of during the course of the project. The Guide also draws on the discussions of a seminar held in March 2003 with practitioners and others with an interest and expertise in student feedback (Annex A lists the participants of the seminar). We are grateful to the institutions, the seminar participants and others in helping us to produce this Guide.

About the Authors

John Brennan is professor of higher education research at the Open University and director of the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information. He has directed many projects in the areas of quality assurance in higher education and the experiences of graduates. His books include 'Managing Quality in Higher Education' (with Shah) and 'Courses, Students and Jobs' (with McGeevor, Lyon and Murray). He has also written many reports and articles on higher education policy topics, within UK and international contexts. Originally a sociologist, Professor Brennan is currently active in many international higher education research and policy networks. From 1 January 2004, he will be directing a major new four year research project entitled 'What is learned at university. The social and organisational mediation of university learning', part of the ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme.

Ruth Williams is a projects and development officer with the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information of the Open University. She graduated in politics and international relations and has a masters degree in higher and further education from the University of London. Her work in the Centre includes research on issues concerning quality assurance. This publication is based on research she undertook for the Higher Education Funding Council for England looking at the ways in which UK higher education institutions collect and use feedback from students on the quality and standards of their programmes of study. She is undertaking similar research in Scotland.

Contents

Introduction	4
Section one: Purposes	11
1.1 A range of purposes	11
1.2 A range of uses and users	12
1.3 The need for discussion	12
1.4 Level	12
1.5 Use at other levels?	13
1.6 Timing	13
1.7 Standardisation	13
1.8 Clarity of purpose	14
Section two: Choice of mechanisms	17
2.1 Types of mechanisms	17
2.2 A combination of mechanisms	17
2.3 Additional mechanisms	18
2.4 Purpose and other issues	18
2.5 Benefits and support	19
Section three: Student feedback questionnaires	23
3.1 Use	23
3.2 Level and frequency	25
3.3 Questions asked	26
3.4 Robustness	30
3.5 Timing	30
3.6 Administration	31
3.7 Response rates	32
3.8 Analysis, interpretation and presentation	33
3.9 Standardisation and centralisation	35
3.10 Online systems	40

Section four: Student representation and other methods	43
4.1 Student representation	43
4.2 Staff student liaison committees	45
4.3 Discussion groups	46
Section five: Actions and decision-making	49
5.1 Processes	49
5.2 Actions taken outside committee	50
5.3 Student input to strategy	50
5.4 Data for other users and uses	51
5.5 Other sources of information	51
Section six: Publication and dissemination	53
6.1 The importance of feeding back to students	53
6.2 What should be published?	53
6.3 How should it be published?	54
6.4 The need for improvement	55
Section seven: Conclusions	57
Annexes	
Annex A Good practice in student feedback seminar	i
Annex B Suggested further reading	ii
Annex C University of Essex, Student Assessment of Teaching Questionnaire: Spring 1999-2000	iii
University of Ulster, Assessment of Teaching Student Questionnaire: 2002-2003	iv
University of Hertfordshire, Student Feedback: 2002-2003, Staff and Module Questionnaire	viii

Annex D	University of Gloucestershire, Student Evaluation Form, Field of English Studies, Field of Creative and Contemporary Writing	x
	University of Salford, Module Evaluation Questionnaire	xi
	Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies, Unit Evaluation Questionnaire	xii
Annex E	Bolton Institute, Student Satisfaction Questionnaire: 2002-2003	xiii
	Coventry University, Course Feedback Questionnaire	xvii
Annex F	University of Central England in Birmingham, Centre for Research into Quality, Extract from the 2002 Report on the Student Experience at UCE	xviii
Annex G	Cost drivers for the centralised system run by one institution	xxvi
Annex H	Cost drivers for the online system run by one institution, including the transition from the paper-based system	xxvii
Annex I	University of Wolverhampton, School of Art and Design, Extract from the Module Guide (DS2019: Developing Personal and Professional Skills Through Student Representation)	xxviii
Annex J	University of Gloucestershire, Student representative job description	xxx
Annex K	University of Central Lancashire, Student liaison officer job description	xxxi
Annex L	University of Reading, Director's Handbook for the Course Representatives Scheme	xxxii
Annex M	Nottingham Trent University, Mid-year Review Questionnaire: Full-time	xliv
Annex N	Chelsea College of Art and Design, School of Design, Extract from the Yearly Course Review Process	xlv
Annex O	University of Ulster, Module Evaluation – Agenda for a Module Forum	xlvi
Annex P	University of Hertfordshire, What Students Think of UH, Questionnaire Results 2001-2002	xlvii
Annex Q	Sheffield Hallam University, 'You Talk We Listen!', Action from the Student Experience Survey	xlviii
Annex R	Loughborough University, School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Extract from the Module Handbook (O2PEC102: Applied Sports Science – Year 3 Cricket)	li

Purpose and audience

Purpose of the Guide

The purpose of this Guide is to help higher education institutions make the best use of their student feedback.

All institutions collect feedback from their students and in many different forms. They use it to improve the quality of the education they provide. In recent years, there has been a shift in the balance between informal and formal types of student feedback with a greater emphasis on the latter. Now, new devolved forms of national quality assurance promise to give an important role to students and there is also an expectation that information from student feedback will be used to inform the choices of students when applying to higher education. Thus, as the importance attached to student feedback increases, ensuring that feedback is collected effectively and used wisely becomes an increasing priority for higher education institutions.

This Guide draws on the experiences of the sector to highlight some of the good practices that exist as well as some of the problems that institutions are experiencing in using student feedback. Its focus is upon the use of student feedback for the purpose of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Other purposes are acknowledged but are not the main emphasis of this publication.

Audience

The intended audience for this Guide is all those in higher education institutions whose jobs include responsibilities for the collection, analysis and use of student feedback in any of its varied forms. The emphasis is upon institutional policies and the activities which flow from them.

However, it is not intended to be a guide to 'data analysis for beginners' or on 'how to run a focus group'. There are all sorts of professional skills needed if student feedback is going to be put to good use. A relatively brief and simple guide such as this cannot attempt to provide them but it is hoped that it will stimulate institutions to ensure that the necessary skills – as well as the policies and procedures – are put in place so that the best use is made of feedback from students.

How to use this Guide

The Guide discusses the issues involved and the choices that need to be made. We recognise that some readers will be interested less in discussion and more in the practicalities of action. Such readers are recommended to go directly to the summaries at the end of each section and only to delve into the main text if they need clarification or justification of points made in the summaries. We hope that other readers will find it worthwhile to read the Guide in more detail and, in particular, to consider how it compares with their own experiences and institutional practices.

Limitations

The Guide records the things that people in institutions have told us work. It does not mean they will work in the reader's own context. Nor does it mean that there is necessarily 'hard' evidence that they actually do work, in terms of enhancing the quality of higher education. But the experiences of large numbers of practitioners should not be discounted. At any rate, it is on these experiences that this Guide is mainly based. Further readings are suggested in **Annex B** and it is to these that readers who are interested in the relevant research literature are directed.

Structure of the Guide

The Guide is organised in terms of six main sections which follow the 'student feedback cycle' set out in the diagram below:

1. Purposes
2. Choice of mechanisms
3. Student feedback questionnaires
4. Student representation and other methods
5. Actions and decision-making
6. Publication and dissemination.

Section three and *Section four* focus on the most commonly used feedback mechanisms: questionnaires, student representation on committees and staff student liaison committees (or their equivalent). *Section four* also looks at the use of discussion groups.

We have used examples throughout the Guide to help illustrate some of the points made. These examples are drawn from the information supplied to us by the

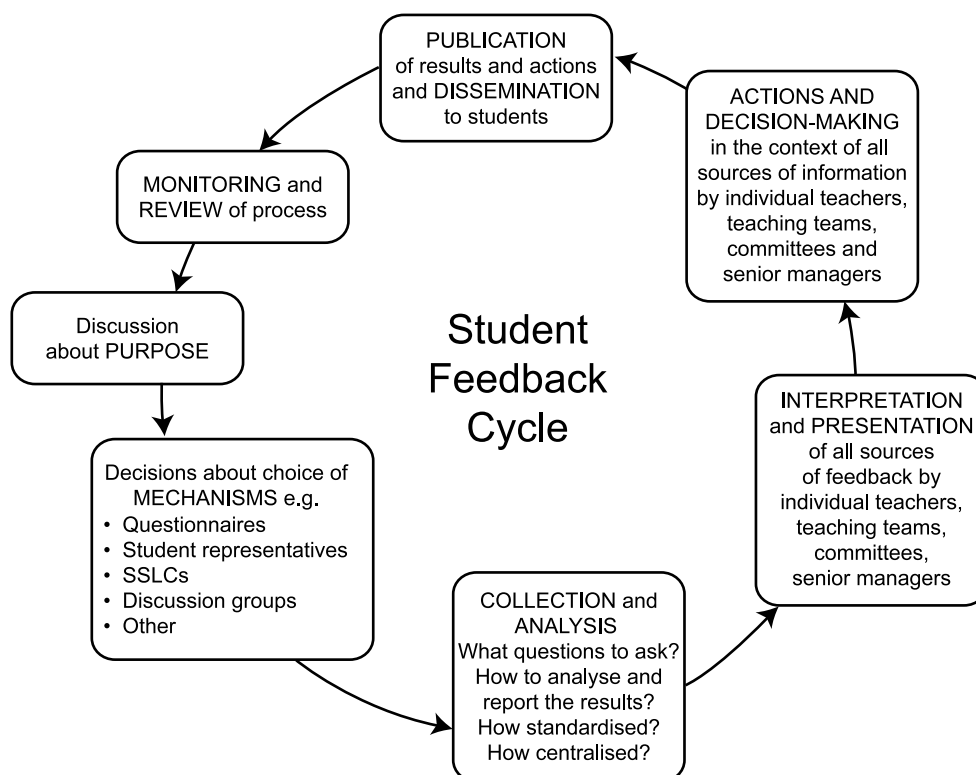
universities and colleges consulted and visited in the HEFCE-funded project, and elsewhere. As noted above, it is important to bear in mind that the examples used are specific to a particular institutional or departmental context and purpose, and as such may not always translate well to other contexts and purposes. In drawing on these particular examples, we recognise that many other institutions will have established similar procedures and initiatives.

But before we move into the sections, we first include a discussion about the changing context within which student feedback is now collected and used.

A changing context

New methods of quality assurance

The new methods of quality assurance in higher education in England and Northern Ireland, as described in the consultation document, *Quality assurance in higher education* (HEFCE 01/45) promise a 'lightness of touch', a greater recognition of the responsibilities of individual higher education institutions for setting, maintaining and reviewing quality and standards, and meeting public information needs.



The new arrangements replace processes of external subject review with a greater reliance on and utilisation of the processes and outcomes of institutions' own quality assurance procedures. In most institutions, these latter have developed substantially over the last ten years, responding in part to the requirements of the external quality assurance procedures operated variously by the higher education funding councils, the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

Among the pieces of information arising out of the operation of institutional quality assurance arrangements, the Final Report of the Task Group on Information on Quality and Standards in Higher Education² recommended that the following *should be available in all HEIs*:

- information on institutional context
- information on student admission, progression and completion
- information on the HEI's internal procedures for assuring academic quality and standards.

Among the latter would be 'information on student satisfaction with their higher education experience, covering the views of students on:

- arrangements for academic and tutorial guidance, support and supervision
- library services and IT support
- suitability of accommodation, equipment and facilities for teaching and learning
- perceptions of the quality of teaching and the range of teaching and learning methods
- assessment arrangements
- quality of pastoral care' (p 7-8).

Moreover, the Task Group went on to recommend that some aspects of information on the quality and standards of teaching and learning should be published. The two elements of such information relevant to the project and this Guide are:

- feedback from recent graduates, disaggregated by institution, collected through a national survey
- feedback from current students collected through HEI's own surveys, undertaken on a more consistent basis than now.

However, whilst the former has been confirmed by the White Paper³, the project has recommended that institutions should not be required to publish the results of internal feedback, although such publication may well occur where institutions deem it appropriate.

The Task Group's recommendations are also detailed in the annexes of the QAA's Handbook for Institutional Audit⁴ (**Annex E**) as 'information sets'. These are referred to as Part A (information which should be available in HEIs) and Part B (information which should be published). The Handbook states the following:

The audit team will routinely require access to all items in Part B of the information sets. It will also need access to some of the material in Part A, according to the precise nature of its enquiries.

Furthermore, and of relevance to this Guide, the Handbook advises institutions to consult with students about the contents of the institution's self-evaluation document, which is submitted prior to the audit team's visit. In addition, the Agency invites students, through their representative body, to make their own written submission to the audit team. Within the guidance offered in the Handbook regarding the content

² A Task Group was set up to produce recommendations on 'the categories of data, information and judgements about quality and standards of teaching and learning that should be available within higher education institutions (HEIs) and those which should be published' (Information on quality and standards in higher education. Final Report of the Task Group, HEFCE 02/15).

³ Cm 5735 (2003), The future of higher education. London: HMSO.

of the submission by students, a number of areas students might wish to address are proposed. One of these is:

The opportunity for students to participate in the management of quality of standards within the institution (this might include opportunities for committee representation at institutional and programme level and other means of providing feedback to staff)⁵.

Implications for student feedback

Feedback from students has always played an important role in the maintenance of quality and standards in higher education. As quality assurance arrangements have themselves become more formalised, so too have the arrangements for the collection, analysis and use of student feedback. However, there are a number of other contextual changes that have influenced these arrangements.

The expansion and differentiation of UK higher education has had major implications for the inner workings of higher education institutions and for the people who work and study in them. A steady decline in student/staff ratios has meant that the traditionally close relationships between teachers and taught have all but disappeared in most institutions, with the possible exceptions of programmes⁶ in laboratory or studio-based subjects. Thus, informal means of communication between students and their teachers have become less effective in securing reliable feedback. In many institutions, modular forms of course organisation have, whatever their other merits, added to the anonymity of the student experience and a further decline in the opportunities for informal interaction and communication. Other forms of pressure on academic staff including the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and, ironically, the pressures of external quality assurance of teaching, have also

reduced the time available for informal face-to-face meetings between staff and students. All of these trends have led to the gradual replacement of the informal with the formal, of which the widespread introduction of student feedback surveys has been a conspicuous part. These and other feedback mechanisms have also had to take account, in many institutions, of a more diverse student body among which traditional and homogeneous expectations and attitudes cannot be assumed. There becomes a need, therefore, to examine whether programmes are serving all types of students equally well.

Other changes in higher education have mirrored changes in the wider society. What has been called the 'new public sector management' has gained ground in most parts of the public sector. Some have argued that this has entailed the replacement of 'trust' with 'accountability' within public sector organisations. There has certainly been a strong trend towards increasing consumer choice through the publication of information about service standards in different institutions. This has heralded a growth in the use of performance indicators, the construction of 'league tables' and a growth and strengthening of management cadres within public sector organisations of all kinds. So too within universities and colleges, new management positions, administrative units, procedures and codes of practice have been introduced. These have brought a measure of standardisation and centralisation into institutions that had traditionally been marked by decentralisation and the professional freedoms of their staff. Competition between institutions – whether in the recruitment of students or for RAE grades – has been a further aspect of the growth of a new entrepreneurial and accountable world in higher education.

⁴ QAA (2002), Handbook for institutional audit: England. Gloucester: QAA.

⁵ Ibid, Annex D, p 22.

⁶ The term 'programme' is used to cover the units, modules or courses that lead to an award. It is recognised that many students will be combining modules into programmes that lead to joint degrees.

The new national survey of graduates may primarily be about providing information to inform student choice but its existence will also need to be taken into account by institutions in developing their internal systems of feedback. Depending on the final decisions about the timing of the national survey, institutions will need to avoid duplication in the collection of feedback at the end of the final year. More positively, the national survey will provide institutions with comparative data and the means of benchmarking. The national survey may throw up questions for institutions that will need to be explored further through internal feedback.

The twin processes of institutional audit and subject review have clearly done much to build up quite extensive formal procedures of quality assurance in most higher education institutions. Yet, as much of the literature on the subject emphasises, quality assurance has to achieve a balance between accountability and improvement and it has been suggested that reactions to some aspects of quality assurance have been marked by compliance rather than commitment, at least in some departments and institutions. In particular, that which is imposed from outside the unit or institution in question may be viewed with some suspicion by those within. Sensitive to these features of academic culture, many institutions have allowed considerable variation in the implementation of quality assurance procedures, partly to reflect subject differences and partly to maximise the commitment of staff. Devolved procedures to strengthen staff commitment and to achieve the improvement functions of quality assurance may limit the consistency of approach between and within institutions and the comparability of the information that is generated by such procedures.

In summary then, the context for the use of student feedback includes the following:

- a considerable growth in formal institutional arrangements for quality assurance in recent years, in which student feedback surveys play an important part
- variation between institutions and between departments in the details of these arrangements, to reflect the growing diversity of higher education and its students and to achieve ownership and commitment by staff
- increasing pressures on staff as a result of worsening staff student ratios, RAE etc
- the existence of a lot of institutional information about quality and standards but a lack of consistency and comparability in much of it
- a growing emphasis in public policy on consumer choice and competition between institutions – creating new needs for information on quality and standards
- a new national survey of final year students
- a possible tension between quality assurance and quality enhancement.

With new demands arising from changes in context, feedback arrangements have tended to expand to accommodate them. Which brings us to a final contextual point: the need to ensure 'value for money'. In student feedback as in everything else, questions of what is needed must be balanced by questions of what can be afforded. Thus, in considering making changes to student feedback arrangements, institutions will have very real cost considerations to take into account.

Section one

Purposes

This section focuses on the purpose of collecting and using student feedback. The issues discussed include purposes as identified by institutions, the range of different users and purposes, the value of discussion about purposes, and the implications for level, timing and standardisation of feedback processes.

It is perhaps a rather obvious point to stress the importance of clarity about the purposes of an activity. Yet we found in our project some ambiguity within institutions about the purposes of student feedback and this seemed often to be associated with a lack of commitment on the parts of both staff and students to both the collection and use of feedback data.

1.1 A range of purposes

In responding to the consultation exercise, institutions referred to the main purposes of student feedback as:

- enhancing the students' experience of learning and teaching
- contributing to monitoring and review of quality and standards.

Other purposes cited included:

- ensuring the effectiveness of course design and delivery
- enabling a dialogue with students
- helping students reflect upon their experiences
- as part of the teaching and learning process
- identifying good practice
- measuring student satisfaction
- contributing to staff development.

Although overwhelmingly concerned with a notion of quality enhancement, purposes nevertheless differed in emphasis: for example according to whether student feedback was considered to be a part of the student learning process or rather a commentary on that process; according to whether it was seen as being primarily about whether programme objectives were being achieved or providing an opportunity to critique those objectives.

Underlying these differences of emphasis could be different conceptions of student feedback. While some people equated student feedback with student satisfaction, this view was by no means universal. Student feedback could be accounts by students of their learning styles and study methods – clearly potentially valuable to their teachers but not calling for evaluation or opinion from the students. Student feedback could be student views about whether *their* objectives had been met. While such information is clearly related to 'satisfaction' it is not necessarily the same as feedback on satisfaction with the teaching and learning processes of specific programmes, modules⁷ or services.

Alongside the majority view of the purposes of student feedback as being concerned with quality enhancement, some people noted the role of student feedback in staff appraisals and promotions; this is discussed further in *Section three*. We might also note possible new purposes – emphasised by Government and part of the new external quality regime – of feedback to inform intending students about the quality and standards of higher education programmes. Relatedly, student feedback on particular modules might well be used to inform module choice by students within an institution. Whatever its stated purpose – or combination of purposes - the collection of student feedback must take account of its intended uses and the nature of the institutional quality assurance and enhancement procedures.

⁷ The term 'module' is used to refer to the components or units of curricula structures that are unitised or modularised.

1.2 A range of uses and users

It is of course likely that different users will have different purposes for student feedback. The class teacher will look to feedback hopefully for endorsement of his or her teaching approach but also for guidance on what worked and what did not and ways in which it might be improved next time. The class teacher might also be more interested to know how far the students understood what was being taught than whether they liked it or were satisfied. A course or programme team might be looking to student feedback for evidence that learning objectives had been met, that the programme as a whole cohered. Departmental or other committees might be looking at student feedback alongside a range of quality indicators as part of institutional quality assurance arrangements. They might be particularly interested in trend data or comparisons between programmes or in using feedback to understand better the implications of data from other sources, for example a higher than expected drop-out rate or some particular criticisms by an external examiner. For current students, the purpose might simply be to express a view, positive or negative. For students considering taking a programme or module, feedback from previous cohorts of students could aid module choice.

1.3 The need for discussion

To this range of perfectly legitimate purposes of different uses and users of feedback data is the possibility that the purposes of the exercise have been lost in time, that it has become just another of the institution's rituals, that engagement with the activity has become largely an act of compliance, that feedback is collected but little is done with it, and that those involved in the process see little point in it, have few expectations that change will occur as a result of it. Where such a situation occurs, there is of course little point in collecting feedback data at all.

Thus, we would emphasise the value of discussion about the purposes of student feedback – and discussion at suitable intervals to check that purposes have not changed. This should include all who are involved, whether providing data, analysing and interpreting data, or using data. The purposes of the users will have primacy and discussion will reveal whether different users have different purposes, whether they are compatible with each other, whether they can be achieved in relation to the time and resources available, including the time required of the data providers – the students themselves. Where institutions wish to have clarity and consistency about purposes across the whole institution, the need to obtain wide understanding and agreement will be essential. More devolved arrangements are probably easier to achieve and more likely to generate local ownership and commitment but there may be costs in terms of efficiency and a loss of comparability and analytic capacity.

1.4 Level

In discussing the purposes of student feedback, a crucial issue is that of level. Levels include:

- An individual lecturer or class
- A module or unit
- A semester or year of study
- A programme of study
- A subject
- A department
- A faculty
- An institution.

As we have already noted, different users will require feedback at different levels and for different purposes. These may or may not be compatible. The purposes of users at the 'higher' levels of institutions are likely to require a degree of

standardisation of data – both in regard to what is collected, how it is analysed and how it is presented (see below). Users closer to the ‘chalk-face’ have little need of standardisation and it may be in conflict with their needs. This might imply different data collections to meet the purposes of users at different levels, or perhaps reliance on some mechanisms rather than others to achieve certain purposes (for example, student representatives rather than feedback questionnaires).

1.5 Use at other levels?

Recognition that purposes differ, especially at different levels within an institution, could of course result in a proliferation of feedback activity as every user emphasised the unique nature of his or her needs for feedback. In such situations, the question inevitably arises as to whether data collected at one level for one purpose can also be used at other levels for other purposes. Can data be aggregated or, for that matter disaggregated, to serve different purposes? It is certainly the case that aggregating module feedback does not convert it into feedback on the student experience of the programme as a whole. It does, however, provide some information on the module ‘set’ that constitutes the programme and this is likely to be of interest to those with responsibilities at this level. Module level feedback can be of use at the programme level in conjunction with other relevant data, for example student profiles, progression data, external examiner reports. Nevertheless, if feedback is to be obtained about the student experience of a whole programme of study, this is likely to require feedback obtained at that level. This might be achievable through a one-off exercise during a 3 or 4 year programme and so does not represent a large additional load upon staff and students, who may also be obtaining feedback on each separate module. It is also likely that data obtained by the new national survey of graduates will provide institutions with some valuable information on the student experience at the broad subject level.

1.6 Timing

Another discussion point should be that of timing. When should feedback data be collected? When will it be needed? When can it be used to best effect? End of module questionnaires are common but they cannot provide information to improve the learning experiences of the particular group of students taking the module. Maybe that is not important, as long as there are sufficient opportunities for informal exchange between students and teachers to render the use of formal mechanisms redundant. But this may not always be the case. A mid-point feedback questionnaire might be useful on large enrolment programmes but, if this is followed by an end of module questionnaire, it may be seen as overkill by students and staff alike, especially if the module is semester length.

A further point about timing of feedback concerns its links to action and change. At higher levels within institutions, ensuring that feedback is available to meet the timetable of committees may be essential if it is going to affect decision-making and action. Thus, it may be necessary to work back from the committee timetable to determine when feedback should be obtained.

1.7 Standardisation

A further discussion point is whether the purposes require feedback arrangements to be standardised. As indicated above, for some purposes this will undoubtedly be helpful. For other purposes, not only will standardised arrangements be unhelpful but a bespoke, one-off exercise might be called for. Thus, if the effects of a particular programme innovation are to be assessed, specific feedback on that innovation will need to be obtained. It is by no means clear that standardised arrangements would achieve the purpose. Or to take another example, the purposes of collecting feedback from students on an entirely new degree programme may differ from the purposes of collecting it on

an established, long-running degree. Standardisation, along with centralisation, is discussed further in *Section three*.

1.8 Clarity of purpose

The main point we would emphasise, however, is that the purposes of student feedback should be clear to all involved – especially students – if their commitment to the process is to be maximised. Ten years ago, Pat Partington and colleagues produced a CVCP document which advocated that students should be made aware that (i) they will not suffer for their feedback, (ii) they are being listened to, (iii) the process is being taken seriously, (iv) something will be done because of it,

and (v) they are actively involved as partners in the process⁸. We would endorse all those points today.

We found a number of examples where purpose was stated explicitly – especially in the use of questionnaires. It is also important to state how feedback will be used and how results/actions will be disseminated to students. Such information is often stated in guidelines to staff and students. However, we believe it is especially important to state purpose and use, and how results and actions will be reported at the point when feedback is being requested. A number of institutions indicate how this will be done on the questionnaires they use, as illustrated by the following examples.

Box 1: Some examples of purpose statements and how results/actions will subsequently be reported on questionnaires

“You are asked to complete this form to assist the university in its procedures for the maintenance of academic standards and to enable staff teaching this course to assess and make appropriate modifications as needed. The results of this evaluation exercise will be displayed on appropriate departmental notice boards.” (*Manchester Metropolitan University*)

“The University continually seeks to review and improve the quality of its teaching and learning. The purpose of this questionnaire is to enable staff to use student opinion in their review of this module. Your responses are highly valued and the questionnaire should only take a few minutes to complete. Notes of guidance are available. No individual responses will be identified and your contribution will be aggregated with all others. Comments should be constructive and truthful. They might cover such aspects as the subject matter, the style and delivery of the lecturer, classes or any other part of the module. The aggregated responses will be considered by your School’s Staff-Student Committee, and other committees where necessary, and feedback will be given to you.” (*University of Salford*)

“In reflecting upon your learning, it would be helpful to have your views on the unit of study/module just completed. The information will be considered by your tutor and the module team and a response to issues raised will be posted publicly. You may give your views anonymously. Please complete as much of the form as possible within the time allotted.” (*University of Brighton*)

“Your Programme Team and the Institute are committed to continuously improving your experience of the education we offer. The responses you make to the following statements will be taken seriously and acted upon. You will be made aware of any action to be taken, or where it is not possible to respond positively at present, reasons will be provided.” (*Bolton Institute*)

⁸ Partington P (ed) (1993), *Student feedback – context, issues and practice*. Sheffield: CVCP.

“This Student Feedback Survey seeks to gather feedback from all undergraduates and taught postgraduate students about their experiences at John Moores University (JMU). The survey is one mechanism by which students may influence University policy. Results of this will be made easily available to both students and staff via the Campus Wide Information System (CWIS) and the LRCs by”
(*Liverpool John Moores University*)

Discussion about the purposes of student feedback inevitably leads on to discussion about the various mechanisms that can be used. For example, the existence of a well-publicised complaints procedure or a discussion during class may provide more effective ways of checking that a module or programme is going well than obtaining feedback through a questionnaire. The role of different kinds of feedback mechanisms is the subject of the next section.

Purposes: section summary

In summary, we believe that in many institutions there would be value in reviewing the purposes of student feedback and in ascertaining whether these are shared and understood across the whole institution. This might involve asking the following questions:

- Have the purposes of collecting and using student feedback been discussed sufficiently and do they take account of the needs of different users?
- Is feedback required on student satisfaction, on learning processes (study methods) or on student objectives and their achievement? Is it possible to combine them and if so, has this been done?
- Have the needs of users at different levels of the institution been clarified and has consideration been given to whether these can be met by a single set of feedback arrangements?
- Can different purposes and the needs of different users be accommodated? (For example, between quality enhancement, staff appraisal and informing student choice.)
- Have the implications for the timing of the collection, analysis and presentation of feedback been considered in relation to the different uses of feedback?
- Do the purposes of different users allow the possibility of standardised feedback arrangements? Has discussion taken account of both the advantages and disadvantages of standardisation (see Section three)?
- Has discussion taken account of the extent to which feedback data might be aggregated from module level to serve the needs of users at other institutional levels?
- Are the purposes of collecting and using student feedback clear to all involved in the process? Do they explicitly state how, when and where results and actions taken will be disseminated to students?
- Has discussion taken account of the most effective mechanisms for gathering student feedback?
- Has discussion taken account of QAA's expectations in seeking the views of students?



Section two

Choice of mechanisms

This section considers the types of mechanisms that exist for collecting student feedback and those which are most commonly used by institutions. Each has implications for collecting students' views, analysing and interpreting the results, and feeding back the results and actions taken to students. Thus, we have also included at the end of this section a basic summary of the advantages and disadvantages of the different mechanisms.

2.1 Types of mechanisms

Institutions use many mechanisms to collect student feedback, both qualitative and quantitative. They include:

- Questionnaires
- Student representation on local and institutional committees
- Staff student liaison committees (or their equivalent)
- The lecture or seminar
- The tutorial
- Discussion groups (for example, focus groups, structured group discussions, nominal group technique and so on)
- Other informal mechanisms.

2.2 A combination of mechanisms

Any single mechanism has its drawbacks. Feedback through questionnaires is generally considered to be relative or indicative rather than absolute. It may for example be affected by factors such as the timing of the distribution of the questionnaire and whether it is distributed 'in-class' or by some other means. Student representation on the other hand cannot be relied upon to be truly representative of the student body. In recognition of the limitations of any single mechanism, all institutions use a range of mechanisms, generally ensuring a mix of qualitative and quantitative feedback. Quantitative

feedback (for example, through questionnaires) can be used to provide 'evidence' that something is going well or not so well and such evidence will normally be required for quality assurance purposes. Qualitative information (for example, through open-ended response sections of questionnaires and from student representatives) can help explain *why* something is going well or not so well.

Thus, while questionnaires are by far the most commonly used mechanism, we found few situations where complete reliance was placed upon them, or indeed upon any one mechanism. Most institutions use a combination of formal mechanisms – normally questionnaires, student representation and staff student liaison committees – although informal channels of feedback are also highly valued.

Indeed, a number of institutions require or encourage departments to use a combination of mechanisms. *Nottingham Trent University's* Staff Resource Pack⁹ on student feedback provides details of a number of techniques, including the following:

- Structured feedback sessions
- Focus groups
- Self research
- Log books
- Tutorials
- Questionnaires and surveys
- Shadowing
- Course representatives
- Informal chats
- One minute methods
- Student diaries
- Suggestion boxes/books.

In addition to outlining the purpose, structure and outcomes of each technique, including the ideal group size, it describes the pros and cons of each mechanism.

⁹ The NTU Centre for Learning and Teaching (1998), Student feedback: a staff resource pack (part of a HEFCE-funded Sharing Excellence Project).

2.3 Additional mechanisms

A combination of questionnaires, student representation and staff student liaison committees represents common practice in most institutions. Many individual teachers will employ additional mechanisms, for example by holding class discussions mid-way through a module.

Some institutions supplement the main mechanisms of gathering student feedback by using discussion groups. For the purposes of this Guide, the term 'discussion group' is used generically; however, discussion groups can take various forms, as exemplified by the list outlined above in Nottingham Trent University's Staff Resource Pack.

Discussion groups are less commonly used in institutions because they can be resource intensive and require specialist training of staff to be effective. They provide an alternative to questionnaires and student representation (although not necessarily a replacement) and can be a rich source of information. Indeed, some institutions use these mechanisms in order to find out what students think about the use of a particular mechanisms for gathering student feedback (for example, the London School of Economics has used focus groups to investigate students' views about the issues surrounding an online questionnaire) or what questions students believe should be part of a questionnaire survey (as used for the University of Central England's student satisfaction survey). We believe that the use of discussion groups in certain specific circumstances should be considered and Section four of this Guide includes a discussion of these techniques.

2.4 Purpose and other issues

As we noted in the previous section, whatever mechanisms are chosen, those used should take account of purpose, level and context. Indeed different mechanisms may be needed for different purposes, levels and contexts. For example, institution-wide questionnaires are best used for the purposes of gathering information related to student satisfaction with facilities and services, and to provide an overview of the learning and teaching experience. However, at the module level, if the purpose is to improve the learning and teaching process, a number of mechanisms can be used depending on context, which may need to take account of the form of curriculum organisation, including the numbers of students enrolled on modules, programmes, in departments, and the type of learning experience (for example, studio-based or distance learning).

At module level, it is common practice for questionnaires to be used to gain feedback from students. (Issues of timing, frequency of administration, and the need to take into account other forms of feedback, will all need to be considered; these issues are discussed in the next section). However, other techniques can sometimes provide more effective and informative sources of information, not least simply talking with students to find out how things have gone. Whatever techniques are used, they should not be used ritualistically without a clear understanding of the purposes by all involved.

2.5 Benefits and support

Whatever mechanisms are used, all involved in the process – staff, managers and the students providing the feedback – need to be convinced of the benefits of gathering feedback and the processes involved. This is most effectively achieved if students and staff find that they are making use of the results of feedback, for example, students in choosing their options, staff in revising their modules/programmes, departments in planning new programmes, and marketing departments in promoting their institutions.

Many institutions have policies and codes of practice on collecting and using student feedback, although how often they are consulted is a matter of speculation. We recognise that support to staff in the collection and use of student feedback goes much further than written policy statements. Other types of support are as follows:

- Induction processes to emphasise the importance and benefits of feedback from students
- Appraisal and development processes to review how staff collect and use student feedback and what further support they might require to make it more effective
- Support at departmental and/or institutional levels and the provision of training regarding what mechanisms are most effective for what purposes, types of analyses of questionnaire data, how to handle abusive or negative comments, how to act upon feedback, and how to feed back results/actions to students.

None of these support processes are without resource implications and institutions will need to weigh up the costs alongside the benefits of the different mechanisms for collecting and using student feedback.

The table overleaf is a brief and basic summary of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the mechanisms mentioned above as reported to us in the project. We recognise that these will be very familiar to many readers of this Guide, although not so familiar to others. For a fuller description of the advantages and disadvantages, readers may wish to consult the list of further readings in **Annex B**.

Table 1: A summary of some of the advantages and disadvantages of mechanisms used to gather student feedback

Mechanism	Advantages	Disadvantages
Questionnaires	<p>Useful for gathering responses on many issues at various levels</p> <p>Inclusive (assuming a census and a good response rate)</p> <p>Can provide quantitative and qualitative information</p> <p>Depending on the degree of standardisation, can provide comparisons and trends</p> <p>Does not require a great deal of time commitment from individual students</p>	<p>Need for some specialist skills (e.g. in questionnaire design and analysis)</p> <p>Tend to be 'ex post'</p> <p>Frequency and number may induce questionnaire fatigue</p> <p>Response rates may be low</p> <p>May be costly in terms of time spent on analysis</p> <p>Students may not get information on results and any actions taken</p> <p>Actions may not get taken</p> <p>Can become ritualistic</p>
Student representatives/staff student liaison committees	<p>Provides a means of on-going formal dialogue between staff and students</p> <p>Can provide student input of a 'feed forward' nature</p> <p>Good opportunities for dialogue and testing out ideas</p> <p>Actions can be taken immediately or relatively quickly</p> <p>Provides personal development opportunities for students</p>	<p>Possible lack of motivation and participation by students</p> <p>Representatives may be unrepresentative</p> <p>Representatives may not be visible to the student population they represent</p> <p>Lack of opportunity for representatives to communicate with the student population</p> <p>Time taken to ensure that representatives are effectively trained in the necessary skills</p>

Mechanism	Advantages	Disadvantages
Discussion groups	<p>Useful for engaging students in dialogue and highlighting issues of concern</p> <p>Can provide a rich source of information</p> <p>Good opportunities for dialogue and testing out ideas</p> <p>Enables exploration of an issue(s) in depth</p> <p>Facilitator can be neutral</p>	<p>May be resource intensive (in terms of student/staff time, analysis and interpretation of results)</p> <p>The student group may not be representative of the student population</p> <p>May be intimidating for some students</p> <p>Vocal students may dominate discussion</p> <p>Compromises student anonymity and confidentiality</p> <p>Requires specialist input to secure effective facilitation and discussion</p>
Lecture/seminar	<p>Can find out immediately how things are going</p> <p>(Some) problems can be dealt with immediately</p>	<p>May be intimidating for some students</p> <p>Vocal students may dominate discussion</p> <p>Compromises student anonymity and confidentiality</p>
Tutorial	<p>Useful for more personal exchanges of views on the student's experience</p> <p>Can find out immediately how things are going</p> <p>(Some) problems can be dealt with immediately</p> <p>Sensitive issues can be discussed confidentially</p>	<p>Anecdotal – does not provide hard data</p> <p>Resource intensive</p>
Informal	<p>Useful for more personal exchanges of views on the student's experience</p> <p>Can find out immediately how things are going</p> <p>(Some) problems can be dealt with immediately</p> <p>Sensitive issues can be discussed confidentially</p> <p>Provides a means of on-going informal dialogue between staff and students</p>	<p>Anecdotal</p>

Choice of mechanisms: section summary

- Use of a combination of mechanisms will be more effective than reliance on a single one.
- Choice of mechanisms should be determined by the purpose, level and context of gathering and using student feedback.
- Issues of timing and frequency should be taken into account, especially with regard to the intended uses of the data.
- All involved, including students, should understand the purposes and the potential benefits of taking part in the process.
- Staff may require support (including training) in order to make the most of some mechanisms.



Section three

Student feedback questionnaires

This section focuses specifically on questionnaires. It examines their uses, the levels and the frequency with which they are used, questions asked, robustness, timing, administration and response rates. We also consider the extent to which questionnaires need to be standardised and their results analysed, interpreted and presented centrally within institutions. The considerable space devoted to questionnaires should not be interpreted as reflecting their importance compared with other mechanisms.

3.1 Use

There seems to be a consensus that questionnaire feedback – especially at module and programme level – should not be used in isolation, but should be used in combination with other forms of feedback. There are many reasons why. First, questionnaire feedback by itself may not be representative of the student body as a whole and therefore will not be reliable. And many institutions struggle to obtain adequate response rates. Second, questionnaires are not always popular with students, especially if they believe nothing will happen to their comments; as a consequence responses will be mechanistic or ritualistic. Third, questionnaires are limited in the breadth and depth of information they can provide. While a questionnaire may show that something is wrong, it will not necessarily show why. Other mechanisms may be

needed to uncover the reasons for problems and to suggest ways in which they can be resolved. These are not reasons for not using questionnaires (see the advantages listed in the previous section) but they are reasons for treating their results with some caution and relating them to other types of information.

We found that in most institutions questionnaire feedback is an important part of the monitoring and review processes. It is recognised as a major source of information for review exercises and for regular monitoring although it always needs to be interpreted in context and used with other sources of information such as progression data, external examiners' reports, the views of student representatives.

In many countries, student feedback is used to evaluate teaching staff. While the evaluation of teacher performance by students is common practice in the USA, it is less common in the UK. However, in some institutions, module questionnaires are used to evaluate teacher performance and the teaching process alongside the students' learning experience (see, for example, the *University of Hertfordshire's* questionnaire in **Annex C** which separates course and teacher questions). Where this is done, it is advisable to keep the different aspects separate and to state how the information is to be used¹⁰. The example below demonstrates how one university uses student feedback on teaching.

Box 2: Extract from Loughborough University's code of practice on student feedback questionnaires

"Feedback which relates to individual members of staff will be used as part of the underpinning of their personal career development programmes: to facilitate this, the statistical data will be made available, via the Head of Department, to appraisers and to probationary supervisors. Members of staff may themselves, if they wish, use student feedback in Teaching folders/Portfolios as part of their submission for confirmation of probation, for progression from Lecturer A to Lecturer B, and for promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer."

¹⁰ Briefing Paper 8 of the HEFCE Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning project 'Teaching quality systems in business and management studies: the student interface', led by the Business School at Loughborough University.

Students may feel unhappy about rating teacher performance, especially if they fear it might subsequently be used against them. Institutions should consider how students can be reassured about issues concerning anonymity (for example, using an independent person or a student to distribute and collect the questionnaires; analysing the results centrally and treating the results of teacher performance confidentially), as the example below demonstrates.

Box 3: Example of the use of student feedback for staff review and promotions at the London School of Economics

For about a decade or more, the LSE has used student feedback at course level for the purposes of staff review and promotion, as well as a means of providing feedback to teachers and course teams, quality assurance for departments and the School as a whole, and feedback to students on the quality of teaching across the School.

The process is now online and questionnaires are sent directly to students via email. Completed questionnaires are returned through the web and confidentiality of students' returns is ensured by the Teaching Quality Assurance and Review Office. Each teacher receives his/her results with any qualitative comments. Aggregated data on all teachers in a department is sent to the relevant departmental manager.

The School's Questionnaire Policy Document makes it clear that "where teachers are being considered for review/promotions purposes, the student questionnaire data should be only one of a selection of evidence to be considered ... questionnaires cannot be the only technique relied upon when evaluating the quality of teaching delivered by individuals. Teaching is a multifaceted process, which requires a range of methods of evaluation in order to reach valid conclusions".

If feedback is going to be obtained on individual teachers, strategies need to be developed to help 'weak' teachers improve their performance. The following example shows how an Australian University has developed a tool to link the results of student perceptions of teaching (SPOT) to staff development.



Box 4: Example of the use of 'Student Perceptions of Teaching' (SPOT) at the University of Western Australia (www.csd.uwa.edu.au/spot/)

The University of Western Australia encourages its staff to use the SPOT service provided by its Evaluation of Teaching Unit (ETU) as a voluntary and confidential service to individual academic staff to confirm and/or improve teaching, where it is required.

The system provides a valid and reliable format that allows a questionnaire to be customised from an item bank to address an individual teacher's situation and requirements.

Individual staff are responsible for initiating their own request for tailored questionnaires. Confidential reports are only provided to those making the request, unless otherwise directed by that member of staff.

The ETU advises that the questionnaires should be administered by another teacher or a student of the course, the teacher should leave the room while students are completing the questionnaire, and that response forms should not be reviewed before they are sent to ETU for processing. Written comments are either typed and forwarded or the original questionnaires returned after the exam period so that the comments can be read.

The ETU provides assistance in interpreting SPOT results and in addressing individual teacher development needs as a result of SPOT reports.

Some examples of student evaluations of teaching questionnaires are presented in **Annex C** from the universities of *Essex, Ulster and Hertfordshire*.

3.2 Level and frequency

Our project found that the module was the most common level for collecting questionnaire feedback. The justification for this is that the module is closest to the student experience and a focus on the module is more likely to ensure relatively rapid improvements. However, students take many modules in the course of a year. And in some cases, end of module questionnaires are supplemented by early or mid-module feedback questionnaires, especially if the module or unit runs for a whole year. While this may be beneficial and provides the possibility of responding to concerns expressed by current students taking the module, the dangers of overload are clear. Decisions will need to be taken about how often students are required to complete questionnaires, depending on the numbers of modules

taken each semester or term. Is it necessary to distribute questionnaires at the end of every module to every student? The dangers are questionnaire fatigue on students, and maybe on staff - especially if they are expected to do something with the information (and if not, then questions need to be asked about the purpose of collecting it).

Some institutions expect module questionnaires to be administered on a biennial or even a triennial basis, unless the module is new or significant changes have been introduced. If more regular feedback is thought to be necessary, use can be made of a simpler questionnaire or one that gathers information of a more qualitative nature (for example, what were the three best/worst things about this module) or consider the use of other mechanisms (for example, discussion groups). Some examples are provided in **Annex D** from the universities of *Gloucestershire and Salford and Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies*.

Feedback on individual modules does not, however, provide a full picture of the student experience. Many institutions also collect feedback at the programme or equivalent level. The examples of programme level questionnaires presented in **Annex E** from *Bolton Institute* and *Coventry University* demonstrate the type of information sought at this level. Institutions that undertake institution-wide surveys (sometimes disaggregated to programme level) often do so biennially or, triennially. Some sample the student population either randomly or through other means (for example, a different campus each year). In considering future approaches to questionnaire feedback at this level, institutions will need to take account of the new national survey of students. This will provide information on the broad subject and institutional levels.

3.3 Questions asked

Whatever the level at which questionnaires are administered, the questions will need to relate to the purpose for which the information is being collected and used. Some issues to bear in mind therefore include the following:

- Is the purpose(s), and the use to which the information will be put and how results are reported back clearly stated?
- Are the questions unambiguous?
- Are the questions answerable by the respondent? (For example, a question that asks students whether they feel their lecturer had a good knowledge of the subject is not easy to answer from the students' perspective.)
- Are questions phrased in a way that is easily understood by the student?
- Are there some open-ended questions?

- Are fixed choice elements answerable on an ordinal scale for the purposes of analysis (and are these consistently applied)?
- How many questions are being asked and what is the overall length of the questionnaire?

As demonstrated in annexes D and E, questions asked tend to revolve around the following themes:

At module level:

- Overall evaluation of the module/programme
- What worked well and what did not
- Aims and whether these were met
- Information about the module/programme and its usefulness
- Organisation and structure
- Assessment and workload
- Skills and knowledge acquisition
- Use of learning resources and other specialist facilities
- Attendance at and participation in lectures/seminars
- Support from teaching staff.

Additionally at programme (and institutional) level:

- Advice about module choice
- Overall coherence of the programme as a whole
- Use of other institutional facilities (including the students' union).

The example below is taken from the *University of Reading's Guide to Policy and Procedures for Teaching and Learning*, and contains suggestions about what to ask and what **not** to ask.

Box 5: Extract from the *University of Reading's Guide to Policy and Procedures for Teaching and Learning*

"As part of this strategy (programme evaluation), Boards of Studies should seek to take into account the views of the students on the relevant programme of study. There is, however, a major problem in discussing 'student evaluation' which deserves attention. To many it means only one thing – a questionnaire for comment on the teaching of a session or module. While it cannot be said that such a questionnaire has no value, it has to be emphasised that it is of limited value.

First, it is NOT an objectively valid method of evaluating important aspects of teaching. For example, students are simply not in a position to comment authoritatively on the following kinds of things:

- Subjects not covered which they thought should have been
- Teaching methods used
- Relevance
- How complete were the resources, e.g. library books
- Pitched at the right level
- Inter-relation of the material with other aspects of the programme (particularly those which have not yet happened)
- Whether the learning outcomes were achieved

Students can tell you how they feel about sessions and make comments on such things as:

- Pace
- Clarity of explanation
- Too much/too little information in the time
- Did they understand the English
- Was the feedback on the coursework satisfactory
- Usefulness of the handouts
- Was it intellectually stimulating
- Enjoyable
- Audibility

With the exception of the last three, however, their answers will be relative and heavily context dependent (the same lecture will be evaluated differently depending on whether it is compulsory or optional, early or late in the programme and so on).

Secondly, because such evaluations take place during the programme they are often confused with formative evaluation, but for the student they are usually summative – they are asked to comment on the teaching when it is over for them and the teaching they receive will not be influenced at all.

Consequently, an end of module student questionnaire is more a measure of students' transient satisfaction than of the teaching and learning. Student satisfaction is of importance, but we should not confuse its measurement with the evaluation of teaching and we should not overemphasise it at the expense of the many other aspects of a programme which should be evaluated."

Feedback data will be more useful if they contain or can be related to student profile data (for example, age, gender, mode of study, ethnic background). This is an important issue to consider at institution and programme levels and for modules with large and diverse student groups. Profiling data will provide a check on how far views and experiences vary between types of students and, in cases where response rates are low, whether the

responses are representative of the rest of the student body. Some students may worry that by giving these data, their responses may be attributed to them. While anonymity may be compromised, reassurances of confidentiality can be emphasised by clearly stating the way the data are to be collected and analysed, and the intended purpose and use, as the following example shows.

Box 6: Extracts from *Bolton Institute's* programme questionnaire and *The Open University's* courses survey

Bolton Institute in its programme questionnaire asks for information on age, gender, ethnicity, disability, year of programme, mode amongst other things. The questionnaire states the reasons for asking for this information as follows:

"We ask these questions for no other reason than to establish whether the Institute is serving the needs and is representative of our community as a whole."

Among the information students are asked to provide in *The Open University's* annual courses survey is the student's personal identifier, which links to the student information record. Students are provided with the following reasons and assurances:

"The personal identifier allows us to analyse data by group characteristics, which provides a much better picture about how well courses are received by particular groups of students. Your comments will never become part of your student record or used in a way that identifies you."

We have also suggested above that open-ended questions should be included in questionnaires to provide students with opportunities to expand on issues raised, or to raise new issues not covered by the tick box questions. The majority of questionnaires supplied to us included both types of question. However, costs of analysis have to be borne in mind. If students are asked to provide these comments,

their answers should at least be read by teaching staff, if not processed and analysed. Again, students will need to be assured that their comments will be treated confidentially. With open-ended comments there is always the danger that a student will be identified. The following example demonstrates the way in which one university has tackled this issue.

Box 7: Extract from the *London School of Economics*' FAQs (frequently asked questions) available to students regarding its online student survey

"Will my identity be known to my teacher?"

No. We take confidentiality issues very seriously and would never identify respondents to anyone unless we have been asked, in writing **by you** to do so.

You should note however that any free comments which you type into the survey where prompted to do so are returned to your teacher, or to the teacher responsible for the course, and if you make comments which by their nature would enable your teacher to guess your identity, that is considered to be your choice ..."

3.4 Robustness

Before a questionnaire is introduced for the first time, it should be piloted with a group of students in order to check the following:

- how long does it take to complete?
- are the instructions clear?
- are the questions understandable and unambiguous?
- are the questions relevant?
- has anything been omitted?
- is the layout user-friendly?
- are there any other problems or difficulties in completing it?

Consideration should also be given to questions of *reliability and validity*. Reliability is the extent to which similar results are produced under constant conditions. One means of testing for reliability would be through 'test-retest' with a group of students where the same questionnaire is administered on two separate occasions and the results compared. Validity is a more complex concept; if something is valid, it measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe. Given that questionnaires are just one source of information in the quality assurance and improvement processes, it is not really necessary to expect a questionnaire to undergo complex statistical testing and measurement. A simple validity check is to explain to colleagues and students at the pilot stage what the questionnaire is meant to find out and ask them whether the questions being asked are likely to do the job. (A fuller description of reliability and validity is provided in the project report in Chapter 3 – www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/2003/rd08_03)

Questionnaires need to be reassessed from time to time to check that they are fulfilling the purpose for which they have

been designed, whether they need improvement, and whether they need to be modified to reflect changes to the curriculum and its delivery¹¹.

3.5 Timing

Decisions have to be taken about when to administer a questionnaire. Once again, decisions will have to take account of purpose(s) and uses. If the purpose is to evaluate the module or programme as a whole, information will need to be collected towards the end of a module or programme. Feedback collected at this stage will provide information on the complete experience of the module or programme. However, while feedback will have a formative use for staff, it will be seen as a summative experience for students because such timing is too late to remedy any problems being experienced by current students. One might expect that any serious problems would have become known through means other than questionnaire feedback (i.e., teachers talking to their students and vice versa) although in large enrolment programmes, this might be an unwarranted assumption. In the case of modules or programme units that are taught over a whole year, it is not uncommon to administer a mid-programme questionnaire – although this practice seems to be associated with low response rates.

The timing of institution-wide surveys will again depend on purpose. If the purpose is to obtain student satisfaction about facilities, services and resources, then any time, except revision, exam and vacation periods, is probably a good time. If a survey also seeks information on the general learning experience (i.e., it is linked with programme level feedback), timing will need to be more focused on the end of year. A number of institutions conduct institution-wide surveys and timings vary from institution to institution, but most tend to be undertaken between March and May with some variations. The effects of the planned introduction of a

¹¹ Briefing Paper 10 of the Loughborough University Business School-led FDTL project.

national student survey will need to be considered in respect of end-of-course or graduate questionnaires.

3.6 Administration

In deciding how to administer questionnaires, a balance has to be struck between maximising response rates, ensuring validity, encouraging commitment and maintaining confidentiality.

If students are to provide considered responses to questionnaires, sufficient time in which to do so should be allowed, especially for those administered in-class. Also validity is more likely to be achieved and particularly if students believe that it is worthwhile to complete the questionnaire. It can be worthwhile informing students that a questionnaire is to be distributed so that they can reflect on their experience¹² in advance of completing the questionnaire. Additionally and as already mentioned, purpose and use should be fully explained, and students made to believe that their feedback is important and welcome.

In-class completion is generally associated with good response rates although the representativeness and the validity of the responses are sometimes questioned. Where questionnaires are administered in-class, efforts should be made to obtain responses from those students who are not present. One way in which this can be attempted is by asking those attending to pass on questionnaires to their missing colleagues.

Institutions might wish to consider using students in the process of distributing and collecting questionnaires in-class. This can help to emphasise independence and confidentiality and protect against manipulation and distortion of results. However, additional consideration will need to be given to other issues, for example, who will do the analysis and where will it be done – it is no good a student collecting completed questionnaires for the package to end up with the class teacher.

Although we were informed of a number of cases where results were manipulated and distorted by the teaching staff concerned, we believe that these are exceptional. Indeed, an alternative view has been presented to us that by removing teaching staff from distributing, collecting and preparing completed questionnaires, staff are likely to feel disengaged from the system and that it is less likely that they will respond positively to feedback¹³. We have some sympathy with this view, but believe that if students are to have confidence in the system, teaching staff should have some distance from certain aspects of the process, while retaining responsibility for promoting the benefits, interpreting the results and discussing the outcomes of feedback with colleagues and students (see *Section five*). Decisions on administration of questions should, like much else, be based on the purposes of the feedback exercise.

We found many examples where institutions used someone other than the teaching staff associated with the module or programme to administer questionnaires. For example, the *University of Westminster* operates a student-led system at module level where completed questionnaires are collected by students and sealed in an envelope before sending to a central unit for processing. The *Arts Institute at Bournemouth* uses the student counsellor and a representative of the Student Union to explain the purpose of the questionnaire and to handle its distribution and collection. Completed questionnaires are analysed by an external agency. *Bolton Institute* advises that administrative staff should distribute and collect questionnaires rather than the relevant teaching staff. Analysis is undertaken centrally.

¹² Briefing Paper 15 of the Loughborough University Business School-led FDTL project.

¹³ Briefing Paper 8 of the Loughborough University Business School-led FDTL project.

3.7 Response rates

How important are response rates?

A range of views was expressed to us on this during the consultation exercise. On the one hand, there was the 'something is better than nothing' view. This would suggest that virtually any rate of response might be acceptable. It is certainly the case that where feedback questionnaires are but one of many available sources of student feedback, information based on relatively low response rates may add something and it can be discounted if it runs counter to the prevailing picture provided by other information sources. This, however, would seem to be a rather small benefit and if a reasonable response rate cannot be obtained, we are inclined to ask 'why bother?' with a survey at all. The results are likely to be ignored or, worse, to mislead. At the other extreme of views expressed to us was a belief that only high response rates – 80–100% – gave any guarantee of reliability in the resultant data.

What would be a reasonable response rate? It is very difficult to give a definitive answer to this question. It depends on what other information sources are available to 'test' the accuracy of the survey data. It depends on the absolute number of questionnaires obtained. A 50% response from a class of 100 provides more useful information than a 50% response from a class of four.

Most institutions reported that questionnaires handed out for completion in-class obtained the best response rates. This is not surprising in that the students *who turn up for class* are a captive audience. While students miss classes for all sorts of reasons, it seems reasonable to suggest that those missing may differ systematically from those present in certain respects, for example in the value they assign to attending the class.

Whatever the response rate, it is important to know something about the non-respondents – whether they differ in any important respects from the respondents. If questionnaires are completely anonymised, this may be difficult to discover. The collection of a small amount of profiling information – gender, age – can provide a rough indication of representativeness.

A number of things can be done to try to achieve a high response rate. Among the most important are:

- Making students believe that 'it matters' – that their responses will be read and acted upon
- Making some attempt to follow-up non-respondents – for example, asking class attendees to take questionnaires for their missing colleagues
- Sending out reminders with electronic or posted questionnaires (but if responses are anonymous, then all students will need to be sent reminders)
- Using a well-designed (and reasonably short) questionnaire
- Providing adequate class time for their completion
- Keeping the number of questionnaires to the minimum necessary to achieve their purposes – i.e. in order to avoid questionnaire fatigue.

A reasonable response rate partly depends on the purpose of the questionnaire – it would not be a good idea to close a module or programme down on the views expressed on a 20% response rate. And, as we have already indicated, a lot depends on what other sources of information are available to complement the information obtained through the questionnaires. All of that said, it seems to us that a 60% response rate would be

something to aim for and below 30% the survey results will need to be treated with extreme care. The number of respondents and knowledge of their representativeness are, as we have argued above, important considerations in deciding what to do with low response rates.

3.8 Analysis, interpretation and presentation

Examples of analyses vary from very simple tabulations to more complex statistical presentation of data, although the latter are very much in the minority. The majority of questionnaires use ordinal or Likert scales which establish order or rank on a numerical rating scale (for example, strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). These are normally summarised as frequencies and percentages. Sometimes the mean is also reported as a score of the average rating for each question asked. Care needs to be taken here as the mean assumes that one response category is *x* times better than the other. Moreover, reporting an average by itself does not tell the reader the extent to which the responses are dispersed along the scale. Where the mean is used, therefore, a 'measure of dispersion' (for example, standard deviation) should also be reported. More simply, scales comprising 4 or 5 items can easily be scanned by eye to measure the dispersion of responses. It is quite common to group two positive points on a scale (say 'strongly agree' and 'agree') as a simple way to present data, especially where comparisons between groups or between questions are needed. We would endorse the following advice.

Usually the data will not bear this level of statistical treatment (i.e., use of means). Such an approach would require the assumption that a 5 is 5 times better than a 1. It is hard to believe that this makes sense. It is much more satisfactory, therefore, if fairly crude methods of analysis are used, and if scepticism is maintained at all times¹⁴.


*When **interpreting** the evidence of student feedback, **some scepticism is called for**. It is unwise to act on the basis of a few extreme responses from dissatisfied students. You will probably require more evidence than a single questionnaire before making substantial changes. It is best to integrate responses to the same questionnaire over a number of years¹⁵.*

Only a few institutions seem to be relating feedback data to other institutional sources of student data. Anonymity of student responses may be a barrier to relating feedback to general student record systems. But, even if it means adding additional questions to the feedback questionnaire, there is a lot of added value to be gained from being able to relate feedback to such factors as entry qualifications, examination and coursework results, the module set taken by the student, the students' objectives and expectations as well as to factors such as age and gender. In a context of increasing diversity of student intakes, it becomes important to ask whether teaching arrangements are meeting the needs of all types of students.

Where – as is generally the case – open-ended questions are asked, it is frequently possible to do little more than record the comments made and ensure that they are returned to the teacher or programme team. But it is important that someone – exactly who will depend on the purposes of the feedback and the organisational arrangements for its collection and analysis – reads all the comments systematically and is alert for patterns and common issues being identified. Open-ended questions can provide a unique opportunity for students to make their own points independently. They deserve to be taken seriously. And where issues of concern are raised in the tick box sections, a more robust analysis of any open-ended comments should be undertaken.

¹⁴ Partington (1993), p 68.

¹⁵ University of Newcastle Questionnaire Service (1997), A brief guide to using the service.



While analysis can be undertaken centrally or locally depending on institutional circumstances, if feedback is to inform and improve the teaching and learning process, interpretation should reside with the teaching staff responsible (but see the examples below). It is they who are most likely to understand what lies behind the data, they who can relate it to other sources of information and to any programme developments or changes that might recently have taken place. Such staff might reasonably be expected to present the results by summarising and commenting on the feedback data for use elsewhere in the institution. If actions are to be taken on the results of student feedback questionnaires, it is not enough to collect, analyse and interpret the data – it needs to be presented and summarised in such a way that the messages are clearly highlighted. While these messages will need to be owned by the teaching staff, some specialist expertise may be required as the examples below

demonstrate, especially at the programme/institutional levels. Institutions might also consider setting guidance and criteria for such summaries (see also *Section four*).

The ability of teaching staff to interpret data from their own students will be assisted immeasurably if they are also provided with comparative or benchmark data from elsewhere, either from within the institution or from similar programmes elsewhere. Several LTSN subject centres have undertaken projects to provide such comparative data (i.e., Economics LTSN and LTSN Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism) and we believe this to be an extremely valuable development.

In addition, the examples below demonstrate how a central unit responsible for analysing feedback data works with academic units and senior managers to help with the interpretation and presentation of the data.

Box 8: The *Open University*'s Student Statistics Team in the Institute of Educational Technology and the Centre for Research into Quality at the *University of Central England* in Birmingham

At The *Open University*, analysis of the results of student feedback questionnaires is undertaken as a joint activity with the University's central academic units (CAUs). The University believes that information specialists are often best placed to summarise and present results in a way that facilitates commentary by teaching staff, whilst ensuring that teaching staff own any proposed actions. Before the central unit meets with CAUs, the Statistics Team will analyse the results and draw CAU attention to courses/issues where the results suggest follow-up activities might be undertaken and courses/areas where the results suggest there may be good practice that could be shared across CAUs. During discussion with CAUs, however, priorities may change because of further information and contextualisation that is brought to the discussion by CAUs. One of the advantages of this arrangement is that by doing this initial analysis, the central unit is able to offer an overview of all results for all CAUs which helps individual CAUs set their results in context.

The *University of Central England* in Birmingham has undertaken a Student Satisfaction Survey for the last 15 years. The results of the feedback from students are analysed centrally, by the Centre for Research into Quality, and the results discussed by senior managers 'to design strategies to improve areas of dissatisfaction'. The results are then published with a commentary which focuses on the highlights. **Annex F** provides an extract of the published report and demonstrates how the commentary and results are presented.

3.9 Standardisation and centralisation

Institutions need to decide how far questionnaires at various levels should be standardised and how far administration and analysis should be centralised.

Reasons for standardisation include:

- Contributing towards an effective quality assurance system
- Ensuring high standards and competent levels of questionnaire design and analysis
- Allowing comparisons between programmes and subjects
- Allowing linkages to other institutional data sets
- Reducing analysis costs.

Reasons against include:


- Different purposes of feedback
- Different types of provision, delivery and mode of study
- Different types of students
- Different learning experiences.

Furthermore, it has been argued to us that top-down and imposed standardisation can undermine local ownership and commitment to student feedback processes and be incompatible with traditional governance structures in devolved institutions.

Once again, the extent of standardisation will depend on purpose(s). Standardisation is necessary at the institutional (and programme) level if they are to be used in decisions about services, facilities and the students' general learning experience. If information is collected and disaggregated to programme level, opportunity can be provided for additional questions to reflect different purposes and contexts.

Questionnaires at module level tend to be less standardised (or completely non-standardised) than at other levels; the main purpose at this level is to improve the teaching and learning process and the students' immediate experiences of that particular module and therefore the questions asked will be appropriate to that module. Some institutions have adopted standardised questionnaires and many others specify a core and allow for the addition of extra questions to reflect local purposes and contexts. While departmental staff often display a loyalty to the locally developed questionnaire, we did not find sufficiently large variations in the kinds of questions being asked to undermine the advantages of standardised questionnaires. The important exception is where a questionnaire has been designed for a special – possibly one-off – purpose, such as to explore a particular feature of a programme or to investigate the effects of some recent changes.

In addition, institutions need to consider whether to adopt centralised or devolved systems for the analysis of student feedback data. In general, we see definite advantages to the former in terms of professionalism, costs and confidentiality. However, a centralised system for processing questionnaires does not necessarily imply a completely standardised approach to questionnaire feedback, although there are costs associated with alternatives. (While the balance of advantage with regard to analysis probably lies with centralisation, interpretation of data almost certainly is better handled locally or jointly. See above.) Other advantages of a central unit are that it can provide a source of technical expertise and advice across the institution; it can also provide a capacity to undertake more sophisticated (especially comparative) analyses, and it can help to meet the needs of an institution's central authorities on matters of quality and standards.



Whatever system is decided upon for the analysis of student feedback data, the burden on teaching and administrative staff and the costs of introducing technical systems and their maintenance (for example, optical mark readers, online systems) need to be borne in mind. (Estimates of the cost drivers associated with the centralised systems run by one institution are outlined in **Annex G**.) Of course, not all institutions will have the capacity to provide a central resource and will 'buy-in' the service. We came across a number of institutions that use such a service (for example, the *Arts Institute at Bournemouth*, *Bolton Institute* and the *Royal College of Nursing Institute*). However, the use of a buy-in service by these institutions is not just a question of size and capacity, but one of independence and impartiality. By using a commercial company, external objectivity is assured, which sends a message to both students and staff that the student feedback process is important. Furthermore, commercial companies are obliged to maintain and enhance their service levels, by updating their technology and providing a flexible service for users' needs.

Whether the analysis is undertaken centrally or locally, those doing the analysis must be informed about the needs of the users of the data and the purposes of collecting it. Some further examples of centralised processes are provided below.

Table 2 demonstrates the extent to which a central unit (CU) might be involved in student feedback questionnaires at various levels in an institution and what that involvement might be in terms of standardised or non-standardised questionnaires. A central unit in this context can mean a unit with central responsibility for aspects other than student feedback, for example, institutional policy and procedures for internal quality and standards. In addition, such a unit may not take all responsibility for student feedback, but can take the lead in helping decide policy and procedures with users and other units (for example, data processing and the staff development unit). Table 2 represents some of the tasks required and suggests who might take lead responsibility, depending on the level(s) at which student questionnaires are to be administered, and whether or not these questionnaires are standardised across an institution.

NB: The actions and tasks outlined in each of the cells of a particular column are not necessarily meant to be taken sequentially or separately. In setting up a centralised system, it will be important to address as many of the issues raised in all the cells at the same time, and especially in terms of the level and amount of expertise and support that will be required.

Box 9: Some examples of centralised processes

The *University of Sunderland*, whilst requiring formal student feedback on all modules and programmes, does not prescribe the form it should take. However, the University's Data Capture Bureau works with staff to design questionnaires at module, programme, university or service level. These will be tailored to the users' needs and the data presented back in an agreed format. However, further analysis and interpretation rest with the user.

The *University of Newcastle* provides a Questionnaire Service. There is no University policy that requires it to be used but it is offered as "a centralised service which reduces the administrative load in designing, printing and processing questionnaire forms". The service is costed through departments and subsidised by the University.

Table 2: The central unit and the responsibilities it might take on at various levels in an institution

	Level at which questionnaires are administered		
	Institution (and programme)	Programme and/or module	Non-standard questionnaires
Developing policy and procedures	CU to help identify users' needs (institutional managers, service managers, HoDs/deans, programme leaders, students) CU/users to decide on any allowance for tailored questions at service and programme levels CU to decide on level and amount of expertise and support required to run a service (e.g. design of questionnaires, data processing, data analysis, software and hardware competencies)	CU to help identify users' needs (programme/module leaders and teams) CU/users to establish standards for the design, analysis and presentation of results CU/users to decide on the extent to which tailored questions are allowed CU to decide on level of expertise and support required to run a service (e.g. design of questionnaires, data processing, data analysis, software and hardware competencies)	CU to identify level of use of a central service within the institution CU/users to identify the type and level of service required, areas of responsibility, users' needs and costs CU to decide on level of expertise and support required to run a service (e.g. design of questionnaires, data processing, data analysis, software and hardware competencies)
Developing the questionnaire(s)	CU to consult with users about needs and types of analyses required CU to decide on level of expertise required	CU to consult with users about needs and types of analyses required CU to decide on level of expertise required	CU/users to decide on needs in terms of specialist advice and support
Piloting the questionnaire(s)	CU/users to identify the student group Questionnaire piloted Results analysed	CU/users to agree the process of identifying student groups (centrally-run or via departments) Questionnaire(s) piloted Results analysed	CU/users to decide on needs in terms of specialist advice and support



Table 2: The central unit and the responsibilities it might take on at various levels in an institution

	Level at which questionnaires are administered		
	Institution (and programme)	Programme and/or module	
		Standard questionnaire(s)	Non-standard questionnaires
Further development of the questionnaire(s)	Pilot results analysed CU/users to identify areas for further development	Pilot results analysed CU/users to identify areas for further development	CU/users to decide on needs in terms of specialist advice and support
Administering the questionnaire(s)	CU/users to decide when it will be distributed, how it will be distributed and collected (internal/external post, in-class, email, online), and whether sample or census CU to decide on print run if paper-based CU/users to raise awareness with staff and students (taking into account issues of anonymity and confidentiality) CU/users to decide what action to take on the follow-up of non-respondents – targeted or blanket, email/letter or via departments	CU/users to decide when it will be distributed, how it will be distributed and collected (internal/external post, in-class, email, online), and frequency (if module level) CU/ to decide on print run if paper-based CU/users to raise awareness with staff and students (taking into account issues of anonymity and confidentiality) CU/users to decide what action to take on the follow-up of non-respondents – targeted or blanket, email/letter or via departments	Users to take responsibility but to consult with CU depending on type and level of service agreed
Processing	(Use of scanner/OMR for processing and computer software for statistical analysis assumed) CU to decide on the level and amount of expertise and support (depending on number being processed, when – troughs and peaks – and types of analysis required by users)	(Use of scanner/OMR for processing and computer software for statistical analysis assumed) CU to decide on the level and amount of expertise and support (depending on number being processed, when – troughs and peaks – and types of analysis required by users)	Users to inform CU regarding numbers and timing for processing depending on type and level of service agreed

Table 2: The central unit and the responsibilities it might take on at various levels in an institution

	Level at which questionnaires are administered		
	Institution (and programme)	Programme and/or module	Non-standard questionnaires
Analysis	CU/users to decide the time frame between processing and analysis, depending on users' needs	CU/users to decide the time frame between processing and analysis, depending on users' needs	Users to inform CU of types of analyses required depending on type and level of service agreed
Publication	CU/users to decide how, where and to whom (i.e. users, committees, students) results and any actions on results will be published	CU/users to decide how, where and to whom (i.e. users, committees, students) results and any actions on results will be published	Users to comply with institutional policy
Review process	CU/users to review lessons learned and improvements required	CU/users to review lessons learned and improvements required	CU/users to review lessons learned and improvements required
Dissemination of good practice	CU to take the lead with other units and users	CU to take the lead with other units and users	CU to take the lead with other units and use

3.10 Online systems

A number of institutions have established or are experimenting with online systems to collect and analyse feedback data (for example, *Bradford University, London School of Economics, The London Institute, Liverpool John Moores University*). When considering the introduction of online systems a number of issues will need to be examined.

Development costs

Costs should not be underestimated in terms of i) setting up the system technically and ii) developing and establishing the procedures for its use, and disseminating these procedures and getting understanding (and acceptance) from all involved in the process. Costs can be considerable during the transition from a paper-based to an online system. However, once a steady state has been reached savings will be made on printing and labour costs, analyses can be emailed almost instantaneously to staff and the timing of questionnaires will become much more flexible. (**Annex H** outlines the cost drivers associated with one institution's transition from a paper-based to an online system.)

Acceptance

Getting acceptance of the new system from teaching staff and students will be a major challenge. The selling point to teaching staff will be the reduced administrative burden of collecting and distributing questionnaires. Other benefits to staff include the immediate processing of results and the quicker analyses. The main disadvantage to teaching staff is that online systems currently seem to result in lower response rates (see below) because the student body is no longer the captive audience it was in the classroom.

Motivation and access

In contrast to in-class administration of paper questionnaires, students will need to be motivated to complete a questionnaire online (and those that are may not be typical of the student body).

The introduction of virtual learning environments (VLEs) and their mainstream use will help familiarise students with filling out questionnaires online. However, in some contexts access to computer terminals may be problematic and may disadvantage some types of students (part-timers, distance learners ...) who don't have ready access to a computer.

Response rates

Some people responsible for online surveys take the view that access to the VLE should be barred until the questionnaire has been completed. This approach makes others uneasy: students should be given the option of completing a questionnaire, not forced into it. In any event, an attitude of compliance is not likely to be associated with high quality data. Other approaches we came across to increase response rates were the use of 'pop-up' windows as students log on to the system to remind them to complete the questionnaires. As discussed earlier, students are likely to be motivated to participate if the results are published and actions are seen to be taken. Compulsion may be counter-productive.

Anonymity

Students may be concerned about the anonymity of their responses, even if the system ensures that responses are anonymous. Anonymity is difficult to demonstrate. In many online systems, the fact that students may be asked for their username and password can make the whole process look suspicious. Assurances may need to be given.

Administration

The system will need to be constantly administered, technically supported, and its use reviewed in order to identify new developments and improvements from time to time. The example below outlines the processes used to support one institution's online survey and how the above issues have been tackled.

Box 10: The online survey at the *London School of Economics*

In 2002, the survey received a 42% response rate. The survey, as part of the evidence used for staff review and promotion, has been in operation for about a decade (but has only gone online in the last couple of years) and is therefore accepted institutional practice.

Reasons why students are motivated to take part in the survey are probably connected to the fact that the majority of the School's students are fee paying, international postgraduates. Students are also told that, if they complete the survey, they will automatically be entered in to a prize draw, which for 2003 is a £250 travel voucher or one of several other prizes. In addition, students are able to access the survey from any terminal either internally or externally with access to the internet and their School's email account.

Students are sent a personalised email explaining the purpose of the survey and how to complete it. Non-respondents are reminded weekly until the survey is taken down (normally the survey remains active for about four weeks).

Information about the survey is publicised across the School (through posters, text box reminders on login, and email messages to both students and departments). Relevant teaching staff are sent an OHP to use in teaching sessions to inform their students about the purpose of the survey and to urge them to participate in it. Departments are encouraged to send out their own personalised message to their students.

On completing the survey, students have the choice of whether they wish to provide ratings of all, some or none of the academic staff that have taught them. Anonymity is assured through the Teaching Quality Assurance and Review Office (see section 3.1 and Box 3).

Advantages of the system are that it:

- Saves paper
- Saves time (in terms of distribution and analysis of results)
- Is more secure
- Is more flexible, with opportunity for tailoring to particular requirements
- Does not use up teaching time (the paper-based version was completed in-class)
- Produces better quality qualitative responses

Disadvantages are that it:

- Is expensive to develop
- Is more reliant on third party data sources (i.e. centrally-held data on which teacher teaches on which course, and which student is registered on which course, as well as on student email addresses)
- Is vulnerable to technical problems
- Produces lower response rates (paper-based version was on average around 60%).

Student feedback questionnaires: section summary

- The purposes and uses to which questionnaire feedback is to be put should be clearly stated and understood by all concerned.
- There needs to be clarity as to the level and frequency with which feedback is sought.
- Questions asked should reflect the purpose for which the feedback is being collected.
- If students are to be asked about teacher performance, they should be assured about anonymity.
- Questionnaires should have a balance of tick boxes and open-ended elements.
- Questionnaires should be piloted and tested for reliability and validity.
- The timing of administering questionnaires should take account of the purpose of collecting and using the data.
- The needs of the users should be explored and discussed before determining the kinds of analysis that will be required.
- Comparative or benchmark data should be made available to assist interpretation.
- Feedback data should be related to other student data to assist their interpretation.
- Analysis should take account of the diversity of student intakes and the possibility that teaching is meeting the needs of some students more than others.
- Comments made by students in response to open-ended questions should be at least read and preferably analysed.
- Interpretations of the data made by teaching staff should be recorded and made available at other levels in the institution.
- Consideration will need to be given to all of the following points:
 - How will the questionnaire be administered (paper, online: confidentiality and anonymity issues) and what are the costs involved?
 - Who will administer the questionnaire?
 - How might response rates be maximised?
 - How far do questionnaires (at module and programme levels) need to be standardised?

Have the pros and cons been fully explored with all involved?

- To what extent will distribution and analysis be centralised?
- What are the costs involved and the savings incurred?

Section four

Student representation and other methods

This section considers student representation on institutional committees and boards and the role of staff student liaison committees or their equivalent. In particular, we look at the issues that affect their effectiveness and at what institutions are doing in order to get the most benefit from their representatives and committees. This section also looks at 'discussion groups' – the types of arrangements covered by this generic heading and how they might be used.

4.1 Student representation

Student representatives sit on most university and college committees, providing potentially an important channel of communication between staff and students. We found, however, that this was not always working very effectively. Issues that arose related to the recruitment and training of student representatives, their participation in the system, the extent to which they were representative of the rest of the students, and their visibility to the rest of the student body. Behind most of these and other issues was a not uncommon perception among students that the staff did not value the role.

Benefits of the role

The communication channels provided by student representatives have some important advantages over some of the other forms of student feedback. First, they can provide a direct student input into decision-making. Second, they can provide a student view about the 'future' rather than the past – by commenting on proposals and plans for programme development. Third, communication is two-way and interactive and is not

constrained by pre-set questions. Fourth, as far as the institution is concerned, it is cheap – few if any additional meetings, special papers to write or to read, data to collect and process. Fifth, the role provides opportunities for the personal development of those students who fill it – it looks good on their CVs, it can build confidence and develop skills.

Accordingly, we found that many students were keen to perform the role and would not be opposed to expanding it.

Training for the role

Many institutions have been providing support for the role, often working with the students' unions (who themselves have received training and support through the National Union of Students). Many unions provide training for representatives, help in their selection and in raising general awareness about the role. Support within the institution for this training from both senior managers and staff at all levels is vital to ensure that students take full advantage of it and that the most is made of students' input. Normally training covers the following topics¹⁶:

- The role and functions of a representative
- The representation structure
- Preparing for meetings
- Managing your time
- Further committee skills
- Teamwork
- Dealing with stress
- Problem solving
- Lobbying and advanced meeting skills.

¹⁶ Taken from the NUS's National Student Learning Programme (Volume 4) 'Being an effective course representative'. London: NUS.

Recognising the role

In addition, the provision of quite small things by the institution – a specific notice board, use of a dedicated web page, timetabled opportunities to communicate with other students – can be vital in enabling the representative to do his or her job. These are all part of valuing the role. At least one university – *Wolverhampton* – offers students the opportunity to be awarded academic credit for fulfilling, documenting and evaluating their role, thus giving concrete recognition both to its importance to the institution and to the opportunities it provides to the student for personal development. (A description of the learning and teaching methods and the learning outcomes of the module are included as **Annex I.**)

Making the most of the role

In general, those institutions that appear to be getting the most benefit out of their student representatives are doing many of the following:

- Ensuring that the importance of the student representative role is recognised by staff at all levels (i.e. not just senior management) and by all students
- Ensuring effective and open systems for selecting and recruiting student representatives
- Providing adequate briefing and training for student representatives (perhaps in collaboration with the students' union) and ensuring that students are able to take advantage of the training
- Treating student representatives as equal members of committees and not limiting their involvement to 'student business' at the end of agendas
- Ensuring that 'student business' is not the last item on the agenda

- Ensuring that agendas and other papers are made available to student representatives in advance of meetings
- Holding briefing sessions before the meetings to discuss issues to be raised
- Ensuring that representatives receive copies of minutes of meetings and are informed of relevant actions taken outside of meetings
- Ensuring that time is made available to enable representatives to both gather and feed back issues to the rest of the student body
- Rotating the role between students to share and broaden the experience.

Enhancing the role

However, in addition, we heard – especially from students – a number of interesting ideas of ways in which the role could be enhanced. These involved a greater integration of the student representative role with other processes of student feedback. For example:

Administering feedback questionnaires.

Giving the job to the student representative could have a number of advantages: (i) helping demonstrate the independence and confidentiality of the feedback system, (ii) showing the students who their representative is, (iii) representatives may have better persuasive powers over other students and can help achieve good response rates.

Interpreting feedback from questionnaires.

Representatives might be given the opportunity to produce a written commentary on the results of feedback questionnaires before they are seen by committees. They would also be well-placed to interpret the results and to help staff to understand the factors that lay behind them. At the same time,

there may be issues of confidentiality and anonymity to be addressed. Much will depend on the context and purpose of the commentary, but we believe that with appropriate guidance and some training, in many situations this would both enhance the role of the student representative and improve the use made of questionnaire feedback.

Contributing to published information from feedback. Where institutions decide to use the results of student feedback in internal and external publications, the student representatives, along with the students' union, might have a part in preparing them.

4.2 Staff student liaison committees

Other useful and effective formal mechanisms of staff/student dialogue which have been established in the majority of institutions are staff student liaison committees (SSLCs) or their

equivalent. SSLCs are 'a forum which is dedicated to the formal discussion by students and relevant staff of views and issues as they relate to the quality of the learning experience, mostly at departmental level'¹⁷. Often meetings are held at least once a semester/term and in some institutions more frequently. Decisions will need to be taken in connection with the numbers of students who are going to be involved: some SSLCs may involve student representatives from all years and all programmes in a department, but with larger student cohorts, meetings may have to be held separately with representatives of each year and programme. Many of the issues institutions will need to consider in making the most effective use of these forums have already been outlined above.

The examples below describe some initiatives that a number of institutions have taken in relation to student representation.

Box 11: Some examples of institutional initiatives relating to student representation

The *University of Gloucestershire* has produced a handbook for student representatives, which includes a 'job description' for student representatives (**Annex J** reproduces this job description).

The *University of Central Lancashire* in collaboration with its students' union has established paid full-time fixed term student liaison officer (SLO) roles in all faculties. The officers are employed by the University to assist students with queries. They are recent graduates or students on sabbatical leave who are experienced in the life of the University. (**Annex K** reproduces the job description of one faculty SLO.)

The students' union of the *University of Reading* has produced a 'Directors Handbook' for the university's course representatives' scheme, which includes responsibilities of the representatives, the students' union and the directors – who are responsible for overseeing the running of departmental staff-student committees (**see Annex L**).

The *University of Warwick* has produced a Staff Student Liaison Committee handbook for its students. It includes information about training, how the SSLC system works, topics that are discussed in meetings, roles of the chair, secretary, academic convenor, and the SSLC representative, along with skills acquired by representatives and how they can be used as evidence for the Warwick Skills Certificate. These details and other information are presented on the University's website (www.warwick.ac.uk/info/sslc/).

The students' union of *Leeds Metropolitan University* provides advice to course representatives about how they can use web pages to improve communication between the representative and other members of his/her course. The advice includes how to set up a home page to include lists of events such as committee meetings, news updates to colleagues on the course, obtaining feedback and initiating discussions with course colleagues.

¹⁷ Briefing Paper 13 of the Loughborough University Business School-led FDTL project.

4.3 Discussion groups

Discussion groups are presently used by only a small minority of institutions to gather student feedback. The term 'discussion group' is used in this context to refer to certain other forms of qualitative feedback from students. We are aware of a number of techniques that some institutions use or advocate to gather qualitative student feedback and these have already been mentioned in Section two on mechanisms. The forms of feedback we discuss here are restricted to those reported to us by institutions, albeit a minority. These are:

- structured group discussion
- nominal group technique
- focus groups.

A common feature of them in most of their forms is that they involve student discussions of their programmes and their teaching *without the presence of their teaching staff*.

Structured group discussion

A structured group discussion can be used with large numbers of students. It involves

a group of students working first on their own and then in groups of increasing size (pairs – fours – eights), until the whole class re-assembles in a plenary meeting ... The trick is to make the various activities along the way sequential so that the task is not too repetitive and offers different challenges at different stages of the meeting¹⁸.

How it works is that individually students could be asked to write down the three best and worst things of their programme of study. In groups, the main good and bad aspects are recorded and further refined as the groups get larger. At the final stages, groups might be asked to produce posters for the whole group to view and then each group is invited to explain its lists to the plenary group.

Nominal group technique

Nominal group technique usually involves a small group of students (say around 10-12 or sub-groups of this size) and involves a facilitator presenting a task, question or issue to the group¹⁹. Each member of the group writes down their own thoughts in response to the task. Each member is then asked to contribute one of these thoughts to be viewed by the whole group (for example, flip chart, overhead transparency). The final list is checked for sense and items may be queried and clarified, but it is not allowed to query whether or not something should be on the list at this stage. The group is then allowed to evaluate the list in terms of importance and a consensus is achieved by voting or using a rating scale for each item on the list.

Focus groups

Focus groups will comprise a selected group of students (say 6-10) to gather information on their views and experiences of a selected topic(s). Normally focus groups will be run by a facilitator independent of the teaching staff. Students may be selected by asking for volunteers, or they may be approached individually either on a random basis or on a selective basis to ensure that the group is representative of the student body.

Pros and cons

These techniques are particularly useful when the purpose is to explore whether there is consensus on a particular topic. However, their lack of use by institutions is probably due to the resource demands (for example, the use of good and independent facilitators, ensuring groups are representative of the student body, time taken to obtain, analyse and interpret the results). Furthermore, groups of students may not be representative and they may be intimidating for less articulate and self-effacing individuals. Moreover, by their very nature, confidentiality and anonymity cannot be ensured.

¹⁸ Partington (1993), p 56.

¹⁹ Ibid, p 58.

Role of facilitator

The role of facilitator is critical to their success. Particularly in focus groups, he/she needs to be able to communicate effectively, facilitate discussion, make people feel at ease, challenge group members, tease out differences in views and meanings. The challenges of the role, together with the resource intensity, are probably some of the main reasons why these forms of feedback are not common. There is also the question of how the outcomes of such group work are to be communicated effectively to teaching staff, either individually or to committees/departments. This is another aspect where the role of the facilitator is key, although one must question whether facilitators will necessarily possess enough knowledge of the immediate teaching and learning context to play the part of communicators between students and staff effectively.

However, discussion groups can provide a rich source of information and their use in certain circumstances should be considered. They may have a 'one-off'

value, for example to discuss some proposed changes or to investigate the nature of a problem already identified by other means. And focus groups have been used effectively to help determine the types of questions or themes for inclusion in questionnaires.

Diversity of methods

A small number of institutions promote the types of discussion groups mentioned above, through institutional guidelines and policies. However, we have no evidence to indicate the extent to which these methods are used or how effective they are. We did find a number of institutions that were using 'discussion groups' as an alternative or a supplement to questionnaires and student representation, although they may not accurately fit the descriptions above because of the involvement of teaching staff. Nevertheless, we believe that it is useful to highlight the examples below because they offer an alternative to much of the practice in many institutions.

Box 12: Examples of the use of discussion groups

Nottingham Trent University uses the mid-year point to review certain issues at a meeting of course representatives, the course leader, a member of the course team and chaired by the courses manager. The types of issues that are discussed are listed in **Annex M**.

As part of its annual course monitoring and review process, *Chelsea College of Art and Design* (part of The London Institute) involves students. Students on a particular course are asked to divide into discussion groups and to consider a number of topics (as outlined in **Annex N**). A student is elected to chair the discussion and another takes notes. Discussions last about 45 minutes and students' comments are formulated into strengths of the course and areas that need further development. The groups come together and discuss their findings with staff. Minutes are recorded and incorporated into annual course monitoring reports.

The *University of Ulster* operates a number of alternative methods for the evaluation of modules by students, including a module forum²⁰. The University has devised an agenda and it expects all items to be discussed with students (**see Annex O**), although the sub-headings are for guidance only.

²⁰ This arrangement is currently under review.

Student representation and other methods: section summary

- The role and importance of the student representative need to be supported by all staff at all levels.
- Election processes should be effective and open.
- Effective training should be provided for student representatives.
- Student representatives need to be provided with sufficient and effective means of communicating with their student colleagues.
- Student representatives should be treated as equal members of committees.
- There should be effective procedures for making papers available in advance of meetings, sending minutes of meetings, and keeping student representatives up to date with follow-up developments.
- Consideration should be given to the following:
 - Are the skills developed through student representation recognised and credited by the institution?
 - Are student representatives briefed before committee meetings take place?
 - Are there other ways in which student representatives might be engaged in the student feedback process?
 - Are staff student liaison committees established?
 - How is their membership established?
 - Are staff and students clear about their role?
- In considering the use of **discussion groups** the following points will need to be borne in mind:
 - How will these add value to other feedback mechanisms?
 - Who should run such sessions and what kind of training will they need?
 - How will the results be communicated to teaching staff (if not involved directly) and others in the institution?



Section five

Actions and decision-making

Once student feedback has been collected and analysed, it seems reasonable to expect that something will be done with it. However, the extent to which action on student feedback is taken appropriately and effectively is not always clear. This lack of action and decision-making has been well-researched and discussed in the literature²¹.

5.1 Processes

The majority of institutions use the monitoring and review process and committee cycles as the main means for following up results of student feedback, deciding what action to take, checking whether action is actually taken, and monitoring the effect it has. Many have student feedback issues as a standing item on committee agendas. However, the extent to which these processes are evaluated to check that appropriate action is taken is unclear. Furthermore, there is a belief among many students and some staff that committees represent a 'black hole' into which issues disappear rather than providing a mechanism for taking action.

There are a number of fairly basic things that institutions need to do to help ensure that actions are taken in response to feedback. Some readers may feel that these are almost statements of the obvious, to which we can only respond that the obvious seems not always to be put into practice. For example, feedback information should be provided to committee members in an accessible and digestible way, secretaries and chairs may need to be briefed in advance about any important issues arising from the data, decisions should be recorded accurately and implemented, and the effects of the resultant actions monitored. We have already noted in the previous section the value of relating feedback to benchmark and to student profile data and to ensuring that preliminary interpretations and commentaries are provided by the relevant teaching staff.


We came across a number of examples in institutions where systematic efforts were being made to respond to student feedback.

Box 13: Some examples of institutional policies relating to action taken on student feedback

Bolton Institute's 'Best Practice Guidelines for Administration' of questionnaires advises staff to "Develop an action plan to address substantial dissatisfaction. The plan should contain objectives, which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-related (SMART). The plan should also be monitored and reviewed from time to time as further feedback from students is obtained. It should be fed back to students so that each one is aware that they have access to the resulting action plan."

The Business School of *Loughborough University* issues a memorandum with each batch of module feedback questionnaires together with a summary of the analysis of results. The memorandum outlines the steps that module leaders are required to take, including considering the summaries, reflecting on the qualitative written comments, discussing the summary with the immediate manager, and writing a report on proposed action.

²¹ The NTU Centre for Learning and Teaching (1998), Student feedback: a staff resource pack (part of a HEFCE-funded Sharing Excellence Project).



The *University of Salford*'s guidance notes to staff and students on 'student evaluative questionnaires' states that "It is the responsibility of the Staff-Student Committee of each School to oversee the system and ensure that: a) the results of the questionnaires are actively considered within the School; and b) the students feel that their views are an important input to the teaching and learning process." Guidance notes to staff include advice on how to prepare and present the summary report including an analysis of students' responses and an action plan.

Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies requires that each programme of study regularly reviews itself and the way it operates, which is done through Continual Quality Review (CQR). CQR is an important resource for all programme staff and especially those new to a programme team. Purposes include staff and programme development and internal and external accountability – "it is integral to the effective administration of the programme". In relation to student feedback, the CQR requires comments on the results, what action needs to be taken, when and by whom, confirmation that the results and a response from the programme team have been displayed on the notice board, confirmation that the results have been reported to the programme board, and examples of where feedback has led to change and improvement in the programme.

The *Open University* (like many other institutions) requires course reports to be completed on an annual basis as part of the University's internal review strategy for teaching and learning. An electronic version has been introduced and comprises student data pre-completed electronically from centrally-held data. Other sections are blank allowing for qualitative information to be completed by academic units, part of which requires commentary on feedback that has been received, including that from students.

5.2 Actions taken outside committee

Of course, not all actions need the endorsement or decision of a committee. Individual teachers can rectify many problems when they occur and are identified. Their response to feedback is especially important in that it will convey to students the sense that their feedback is valued by the institution as a whole. Departmental heads and programme/subject leaders have a role to ensure that individual teachers are properly responsive to feedback from students.

5.3 Student input to strategy

At other levels in the institution, student contributions to strategic decisions on many issues are also important and these include academic review and planning. For example, *Liverpool John Moores* and *Nottingham Trent* universities both invite students to produce their own reports for programme committees to support the monitoring and review process. Institutions will also be aware of the new feature of QAA institutional audit that requires students' unions to submit their own reports to institutional review visits. It seems likely that this practice will increase the attention given by institutions to the use of student feedback at institutional and strategic levels.

5.4 Data for other users and uses

It is not necessarily the case that the monitoring and review cycles of committees will ensure the use of student feedback for other purposes within the institution, whether centrally or locally within faculties. Data may need to be provided in other forms to reflect other purposes and users' needs. This is where a central unit can be valuable in having the resource and the expertise to meet a variety of possibly 'one-off' needs and to go beyond routine data processing. This is also true of qualitative feedback as recorded in committee minutes and reports. There is a danger that such information can be 'lost' to the decision-making process if not analysed, brought together and placed in context.

5.5 Other sources of information

As we recorded at the outset of this Guide, however, student feedback is rarely used in isolation. There are usually other sources of information or other considerations to take into account alongside the views of students. For this reason, it is unrealistic to expect a direct link between student feedback and action and decision-making. Feedback is but one factor among many that determines institutional policy and practice. There is, however, a danger that this fact can be used to override the messages of student feedback whenever they are inconvenient to the institution or to a particular group of staff. In general, it seems to us desirable that any reasons for not acting upon student feedback should be made explicit and be conveyed to the affected students. And if the students are not convinced, then perhaps the institution should give more consideration to their concerns.

Actions and decision-making: section summary

- The processes for taking action on student feedback should be clear to all concerned, including students.
- Consideration may need to be given to how committees receive student feedback data. Is it accessible and digestible? Does it need to be provided in different ways for different purposes?
- It is generally useful to provide a commentary. A decision will have to be made as to who should write it.
- Decisions by committees and by individuals should be recorded and implemented and the effects monitored.
- The processes for taking action on student feedback should be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.
- When the institution chooses not to take action in response to student feedback, the reason should be made explicit and conveyed to the students affected.



Section six

Publication and dissemination

We found that most institutions published internally the results and/or actions arising from student feedback. This usually took the form of reports or minutes posted on departmental notice boards or on the intranet/email or through posters.

The examples below demonstrate just a few of the ways in which institutions publish results of and actions taken on student feedback.

6.1 The importance of feeding back to students

We believe that feedback to students is just as important as feedback from students. This includes feedback both on results and on actions. It also includes information on when actions cannot be taken, in which case the reasons should be conveyed to students and, if possible, their further reactions obtained. We have already suggested in *Section one* that, as well as making it clear what the purpose is and how the data will be used, it should be made clear to students (and staff) how the results are to be disseminated. We provided a number of examples in Box 1 in *Section one* on how some institutions do this. The main mechanisms tend to be through student representatives, staff student liaison committees or other committees, and as mentioned above notice boards, email and the intranet.

6.2 What should be published?

A major consideration is to decide what should be published, especially in relation to questionnaire surveys. Should it be the results and/or actions? If it is results, should it be the frequencies of student responses to each question? Should it be the main issues or a summary? Should results for different programmes or modules be published together, thus facilitating comparison (and even league tables!). If it is results and/or actions that are to be published, the timing of feedback (i.e. collection, reporting and discussion in the committee cycles) will need to be considered if feedback to students is to include information on actions taken. If there are no actions or changes taken as a result of the feedback, this of course raises issues about whether there is any point in collecting feedback. It might be that the purpose needs to be reviewed; for example, is the questionnaire doing the job it is meant to be doing? Or, would another mechanism be more effective in finding out what students think?

Further considerations about the publication of feedback data will depend on the purpose of collecting it and the level at which it is collected; for example, if the purpose is to evaluate teacher performance at module level, should this data be available for anyone to see or should it remain confidential? (The institutions in our survey that collected student feedback for the purposes of measuring teacher performance all kept the data confidential to the person concerned and sometimes their line manager.)

Box 14: Some examples of publication

The *University of Hertfordshire* produces a poster of the results of its university survey and compares it with the previous year (see **Annex P**). A full set of results is made available in faculty offices and the students' union.

Sheffield Hallam University produces a poster of its student experience survey outlining the actions that have been taken – 'You Talk – We Listen!' (see **Annex Q**).

Should data with low response rates be published? At the very least, readers should be provided with information on response rates, reliability and validity and when the information had been collected. The chief consideration should be to ensure that information is meaningful to the reader and is not ambiguous or misleading.

6.3 How should it be published?

We have already noted that much of the reporting back to students about results and actions is done through the student representative. There are a number of ways in which this form of reporting back to students can be made more efficient. For example:

- Student representatives should be given opportunity in teaching time to report back issues to the students they represent
- Student representatives should be provided with action sheets from meetings identifying who is responsible for following through actions. Student representatives should also be updated on progress at regular intervals.

Many institutions recognise that they are weak in feeding back results and actions to students. This is often due to the timing of publication: students have moved on, especially at module level, and never find out the results of the feedback, let alone any actions or changes that were taken as a result of it. We believe that it is important to do as much as possible to get information back to students; the more that is done, the more students (and staff) will take the student feedback system seriously. We found a number of examples where teaching staff were seeking to improve ways of feeding back information to students:

- Some staff present the results or highlights of student feedback questionnaires to the student group. (This means that collecting feedback cannot be left until the final or penultimate lecture/seminar.)
- Some institutions print results and actions of previous feedback in module handbooks or discuss them with the new student group at the start of a module.

Box 15: Some examples of dissemination practices

Bolton Institute in its 'Best Practice Guidelines for Administration' of its questionnaire recommends that teaching staff discuss the results with students. The Guidelines state that "The questionnaires are only a tool used to identify issues, which warrant further exploration with students. Discussion of the results can help to clarify the underlying causes of any dissatisfaction expressed (sometimes these are different for different students), to correct any misunderstandings (on either 'side'), and to aid in the development of an action plan."

Guidelines issued by the *University of Bristol* state that "Providing students with feedback as a result of completion of questionnaires is essential. Not only does this fulfil the department's part of the questionnaire 'contract', it offers an incentive to students for completing the questionnaire and also very importantly provides evidence that feedback has been sought and that issues raised are being pursued."

The School of Sport and Exercise Sciences at *Loughborough University* includes in its module handbooks the changes that have been made since the module was last presented as a result of student feedback (see **Annex R** for an extract from the Module Handbook for Applied Sports Science – Year 3 Cricket).

6.4 The need for improvement

In general, we found that feedback to students was a weakness in many institutions. Some students reported that it was very rare to hear anything further after having made their comments, whether through questionnaires or by some other means. It was significant how much students appreciated simply being thanked for their contributions or, even better, receiving some indication that someone had at least looked at them. Even if results and actions arising from feedback cannot, for whatever reason, be conveyed to students, there seems to be no excuse for ignoring such basic courtesies as showing thanks and appreciation.

However, rather more than thanks and appreciation is recommended. We were surprised at how rarely student feedback on modules is made available in a form that allows it to be taken into account by other students in their choices of modules. Of course, student views about their different teachers and their programmes are always known through informal means. But such 'rumours' may be far from accurate and in the case of large modular programmes the student experience may be too anonymous and isolated to rely on informal means of communication. Information on the results of and/or actions from student feedback to support module choice would be a practical way of using feedback data and would provide one illustration to students that their views and comments were being made use of.

Publication and dissemination: section summary

- Students should be informed about the results of feedback and of actions taken in consequence of it.
- There should be clarity about what will be published, how and when.
- It may sometimes be necessary to publish feedback in different forms for different audiences.
- Audiences might include intending as well as existing students.
- It will often be useful to provide commentaries on feedback data to explain their context and significance. (Again, the commentaries may be different for different audiences, e.g. institutional committees, intending students.)
- The efficiency of student representatives in reporting back discussions, results and actions should be monitored and consideration given to whether the representatives need support in this task.



Section seven

Conclusions

Feedback from students is an integral part of the educational process. All teachers use it – even if it is nothing more than noting the bored expressions in the eyes of the class in front of you! But the contexts of learning within higher education are changing radically and with them the role that student feedback performs. Expansion, increased diversity, accountability, managerialism, these are all part of the changing contexts of higher education that impact on student feedback. They affect the purposes for which and the mechanisms through which feedback is collected, the ways in which it is analysed, the forms in which it is presented and published and the uses to which it is put.

For a number of years now, there have been shifts within most institutions towards the greater formalisation and standardisation of feedback processes and we would expect these trends to continue. They reflect the changing contexts of its use and the needs for greater professionalism and cost effectiveness in all aspects of institutional life. At the same time there are dangers – that standardisation encourages ritualism, that essentially educational processes become transformed into administrative ones, and even worse, that trust is undermined and relationships damaged.



For all of these reasons, one of the central recommendations of this Guide is that it may be time in many institutions to review policies and practices with regard to student feedback. Such review is likely to need to consider whether purposes are clear and continue to be appropriate, whether they are being achieved and whether they might be achieved more effectively and efficiently. It will certainly need to take account of the enhanced role given to students in quality assurance procedures, not least in respect of institutional audit, the new national student survey and the Cooke recommendations on the publication

of institutional data. But it would surely be a pity if such external considerations dominated institutional thinking on student feedback. Ultimately, feedback lies at the heart of the relationship between student and teacher and other uses and functions should surely be secondary to that role.

The research within institutions on which this Guide is largely based suggests that in many places it might be useful to review the balance of effort being given to collecting feedback data and to using it. More attention to the latter may be called for in many places. And, in addition to looking at the 'balance' of effort, attention needs to be given to the overall amount of effort and time devoted to feedback. Asserting its importance is not to ignore the pressures that both staff and students face. Doing something better does not necessarily imply spending more time on it.

Of fundamental importance is the commitment of students and teaching staff to feedback processes. In many places, we believe this is quite limited and that some cynicism exists about its purposes and uses. This is one of the reasons why we have emphasised the importance of ensuring good feedback to students, not just on what the messages from feedback are, but on what is being done about them. And this feedback to students probably comes best from the students' own teachers, if only because this demonstrates that *they* are listening and attach importance to what their students are saying. Most institutions address the use of student feedback in the induction and training arrangements for new members of staff, but there may also be some staff development needs for existing staff members.

The attitudes to student feedback will vary, among other things, according to the subject affiliations of staff. Social scientists experienced in data collection and analysis in many other contexts will approach feedback differently from teachers in the humanities, for example. Some staff will be looking for significance



tests and factor analysis while others struggle with quite simple tables of data. For these reasons, we suspect that some sort of central resource is necessary to ensure minimum standards of effective practice, not just in collecting and analysing data but in interpreting and using it. And this is not just a matter concerning quantitative data. There can also be technical issues to address in recording and analysing qualitative forms of feedback. However, we would strongly recommend that such a central resource is seen as a support to academic departments and teaching staff and not in any sense a challenge to their responsibilities and authority.

The same goes for questions of standardisation. It is remarkable how strong are the feelings that exist about how to ask a question or how to record a response. There *is* good practice on this but there is also a wide range of it and many different but equally legitimate views about what it consists of. For these reasons, we suggest that central units responsible for feedback should not be unduly prescriptive in their policies and practices. If individual departments want to deviate from the norm, it is probably safer to let them do so rather than risk producing attitudes of compliance and cynicism. We have some support for the view that in the long run good practice tends to drive out bad practice by informal processes of imitation and reputation. In many cases it may be safer to wait for the long run than to risk damage in the short run.

Where there is probably need for rather greater central steer, however, is in the areas of action and impact. These need to be tracked and monitored, recognising that some actions may take time to implement and that impact will take even longer to materialise. This is all the more reason why they should be monitored and the results of the monitoring fed back to the individuals and groups concerned. Busy people need reminding from time

to time that certain problems have still not been addressed. This is a service that administrative units can provide and it should not be left to chance.

In the same way as we believe that institutions should not be over-prescriptive in their requirements of individual departments, we do not believe that it is desirable – or indeed possible – to be prescriptive from the centre, whether from the funding councils or the QAA. Some readers may have sought rather greater prescription in this Guide. But to have attempted to provide it would have been to fail to reflect the diversity of both context and practice in higher education today. Solutions must be grounded in context and the best people to understand that context are almost certainly the people who are closest to it. None of this is to deny that local practice needs to be supported and monitored and, in particular, that practice needs to be shared (and the new Academy for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching may have a useful role to play in this respect). But ultimately, good practice in the collection and use of student feedback will be achieved not through simple checklists but through thought and discussion by all of those involved.

Good Practice in Student Feedback Seminar

18 March 2003

List of participants

David Allen

School of Art & Design Learning &
Teaching Co-ordinator and Project
Director, HEFCE FDTL 3-funded project
Nottingham Trent University

Katherine Andrews

Higher Education Adviser – South West
Region
Higher Education Funding Council for England

Janet Bohrer

Development Officer
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Brian Denton

Academic Enhancement Manager
Liverpool John Moores University

Lee Harvey

Director, Centre for Research and
Evaluation
Sheffield Hallam University

Kity Kelly

Assistant Registrar, Teaching Support
Bristol University

Malcolm King

Professor of Management Sciences
Undergraduate Programmes Director
Loughborough University

Colin Mason

Director of Learning and Teaching
Development
University of St Andrews

Kate Murray

Regional Consultant
Higher Education Funding Council for England

Jon Owen

Assistant Registrar
University of Bradford

John Richardson

Deputy Director (Research)
Institute of Educational Technology
The Open University

Brenda Smith

Head
LTSN Generic Centre

Suggested further reading

- Cohen L, Manion L and Morrison K (2000), *Research methods in education* (5th edition). London: RoutledgeFalmer. (Reprinted 2003).
- Day K, Grant R and Hounsell D (1998), *Reviewing your teaching*. Edinburgh: Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment in association with the Universities' and Colleges' Staff Development Agency.
- Harvey L, with Plimmer L, Moon S and Geall V (1997), *Student satisfaction manual*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.
- Harvey L (2001), *Student feedback. A report to the Higher Education Funding Council for England*. Birmingham: Centre for Research into Quality.
- Hounsell D, Tait H and Day K (1997), *Feedback on courses and programmes of study*. Edinburgh: Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment.
- Kember D, Leung D and Kwan K (2002), Does the use of student feedback questionnaires improve the overall quality of teaching? in *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, Vol 27, No 5.
- Krueger R A (1988), *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Leckey J and Neill N (2001), Quantifying quality: the importance of student feedback in *Quality in Higher Education*, Vol 7, No 1.
- Morgan D L (1988), *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Moster C A and Kalton G (1971), *Survey methods in social investigation* (2nd edition). Aldershot: Ashgate. (Reprinted 2001).
- Oppenheim A N (1992), *Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement*. London: Pinter.
- Partington P (ed) (1993), *Student feedback – context, issues and practice*. Sheffield: CVCP.
- Powney J and Hall S (1998), *Closing the loop: The impact of student feedback on students' subsequent learning* (Research Report). Glasgow: The SCRE Centre.
- Ramsden P (1992), *Learning to teach in higher education*. London: Routledge.
- Stewart D W and Shamdasani P N (1990), *Focus groups: Theory and practice*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Sudman S and Bradburn N M (1982), *Asking questions: A practical guide to questionnaire design*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- de Vaus D A (2002), *Surveys in social research*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Webb J R (2002), *Understanding and designing market research* (2nd edition). London: Thomson Learning.

University of Essex

STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING QUESTIONNAIRE - SPRING 1999-2000

Teacher's Name:		Dept/ Course Code:		
Teacher's Code:		Course Size:		
Teaching Room No:		Type of Tuition:		
Event Number:				

Please answer all questions, using a 5 point scale, where 5 is the highest score and 1 the lowest, e.g.

5 = Very Good, 4 = Good, 3 = Satisfactory, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor

Please mark one square per question with a cross, like this X

If a statement does not apply to this teacher or course, please mark the square headed n/a, which means 'not applicable'.

SECTION A - The Teacher

	Very Good...	Very Poor			
	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
1 How good is the teacher at stimulating your interest in the subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 How good is the teacher at explaining the subject matter or ideas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 How good (e.g. sympathetic, responsive) is the teacher's approach to students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 How good is the teacher's coverage of the syllabus?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 How good is the teacher's presentation, e.g. is it clear, audible and easy to understand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Overall, how good is the teacher?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Very.....	Not At All			
	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
7 How appropriate are the materials, (e.g. books, articles), recommended by the teacher?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 How appropriate is the pace at which the teacher has covered the course material?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION B - The Course

If you have already completed Section B for this course please do not complete this section again.

	Very.....	Not At All			
	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
9 How interesting is the course?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 How good is the course documentation, e.g. handouts, audio-visual materials, Web-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 How good is the co-ordination of the course, e.g. lectures, classes, labs/practicals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 Overall, how good is the course?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please write any additional comments you wish to make about the teacher or the course on the reverse of this questionnaire. Questionnaires are returned to the Head of Department and the individual teacher after the data have been processed.

ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

2002-2003

The accompanying questionnaire is intended to be used as part of the University's quality assurance procedures to improve the quality of teaching in the University.

As participants in the process of teaching and learning, your contribution to this exercise is vital.

Guidance to staff for administering the questionnaire

When conducting the student evaluation of teaching effectiveness exercise, you must have a colleague administer the questionnaires for you.

It is recommended that the exercise takes place either during or after week 10 of the term. This is suggested in order to increase the likelihood that students will also be able to evaluate their satisfaction with the manner in which coursework of the module was handled. Nonetheless, it is recognised that due to different teaching arrangements and module structures, this method may not always be possible or practical.

Guidance to students for completing the questionnaire

Within the questionnaire you are being asked to comment upon the teaching performance of an individual lecturer and all teaching activities carried out by him/her **within a particular module**. This includes lectures, seminars, tutorials, small group sessions, studio practice, practicals and language classes. You may be asked to complete an additional questionnaire organised directly through your faculty.

Your responses will be **anonymous and no signature is required**. Once the responses have been analysed, the member of staff and his/her Head of School will be provided with qualitative and quantitative feedback.

Please read all the following guidelines when making your responses.

Qs 1-8 Basic questions about the name of your lecturer, the module number, the week of term in which this assessment is taking place, your sex, the sex of the lecturer, your age, your course type and your mode of study.

Q9 Type of Teaching:

☐ You are being asked to focus on the type of teaching organised/provided by the lecturer being assessed.

Q10 & Q11 Structure and Organisation of Teaching:

- ☐ The aims, objectives and learning outcomes were clearly stated at the outset.
- ☐ Clear links were made to outside resources and to other relevant areas within and across modules.
- ☐ The topics were presented in a logical sequence.
- ☐ Key points were stressed and linked to literature.
- ☐ Topics were related to academic, professions or social issues.
- ☐ A variety of teaching techniques were planned and used to aid the learning process.
- ☐ The teaching activity was kept to schedule and any changes were notified in advance.
- ☐ Teaching aids were in place and working prior to the activity.

Q12 & Q13 Characteristics of the Member of Teaching Staff:

- ☐ The member of teaching staff displayed a variety of speech patterns e.g. tone of voice, rate of speech, varied pitch.
- ☐ The member of staff maintained eye contact with the whole class.
- ☐ Where appropriate, the member of staff moved easily about the "classroom".
- ☐ The member of staff displayed appropriate sense of humour without causing offence.

Q14 & Q15 Subject Knowledge and References:

- ☐ The member of staff quoted current research.
- ☐ He/She gave recent and relevant examples to illustrate concepts and ideas.
- ☐ He/She was able to satisfactorily answer questions posed or provided students with appropriate sources where information could be found.

Q16 Student Participation:

- Ø The lecturer posed relevant and challenged questions.
- Ø The lecturer encouraged students to develop ideas and viewpoints, to interact and to be actively involved where appropriate.
- Ø The lecturer directed questions on occasions to involved as many students as possible (even shy students)

Q17 & Q18 Care and Concern for Students:

- Ø The lecturer avoided sexist and racist language.
- Ø The lecturer attempted to solve problems and issues within the student group as they arose, and responded in a constructive manner.
- Ø The lecturer welcomed suggestions and criticisms for students in a helpful way.
- Ø The lecturer listened to student feedback.
- Ø The lecturer encouraged interruptions of presentations if points of clarification were needed.
- Ø The lecturer recognised group or individual problems and adapted the teaching activity to suit.

Q19-Q21 Presentations Skills:

- Ø The lecturer was clearly audible.
- Ø The pace of material was suitable.
- Ø Good use was made of examples, case studies, illustrations etc.
- Ø Key points were emphasised to assist the learning.
- Ø Periodic summaries were provided throughout.
- Ø Brief definitions accompanied new terminology used.
- Ø New topics were related to your existing knowledge.

Q22 Overall Assessment:

- Ø You should attempt to provide an overall impression of the teaching you have received.

Q23-Q26 Assignment/Project Setting:

- Ø Any dates set by the lecturer for the return of marked assignments were met or reasons were given for the delay.
- Ø Feedback consisted of more than grades and marks.
- Ø Comments drew attention to strengths and weaknesses in the assignment and promoted further learning.

Q27 & Q28 Constructive comments on the most and least satisfactory aspects of this lecturers' teaching.

Once you have completed the questionnaire, please hand it back to the member of staff responsible for administering the process.

Thank you.

University of Ulster

ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

2002-2003

Q1 Name of lecturer:

Office use only

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2 Module Number: (use UPPERCASE letters)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Q3 Week of term in which assessment is taking place:

☐ ☐

Please respond to the statements below by placing a cross in the appropriate box.
For each question, please mark one box only.

Q4 Your sex:

Male ☐

Female ☐

Q5 Sex of the lecturer:

Male ☐

Female ☐

Q6 Your age:

☐ ☐

Q7 Course type: Undergraduate ☐

Postgraduate: ☐

Q8 Mode of study: Full-time ☐

Part-time ☐

Q9 Type of teaching referred to in responses: (For this question, you may tick more than one box)

Lectures

☐

Small group sessions

☐

Practicals

☐

Studio practice

☐

Seminars

☐

Language classes

☐

Fieldwork

☐

The abbreviations for the responses to the following questions are:

SD = Strongly disagree

D = Disagree

A = Agree

SA = Strongly agree

NA = Not applicable

Q10 The aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the teaching were
clearly stated and followed.

SD

D

A

SA

NA

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Q11 The teaching was well organised and delivered in a logical sequence.

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Q12 The lecturer made the sessions interesting and informative.

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Q13 The lecturer displayed interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Q14 The lecturer had a comprehensive knowledge of the subject.

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Q15 References and key texts were relevant.

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Q16 The lecturer encouraged students to participate in class
discussion/debate.

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

		SD	D	A	SA	NA
Q17	The lecturer was always fair and impartial.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q18	The lecturer was responsive to different ability levels with the student group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q19	When used, visual aids were easily read.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q20	The lecturers delivery was clearly audible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q21	The lecturer ensured that all topics were easily understood.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q22 What was your overall assessment of the teaching of this lecturer?					
Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Average	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outstanding	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following questions are concerned with assignments and projects.
Only respond to these questions if the lecturer concerned gave one or more assignment/project(s).

		SD	D	A	SA	NA
Q23	Students were given assignment topic(s) in sufficient time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q24	Assignment/Project topic(s) was/were appropriate to the objectives of the module.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q25	Comments on assignments were useful – feedback more than just a grade.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q26	Assignment/Project(s) were returned by date promised, or a reason for any delay was given.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In this section, please provide constructive comments on what you considered were the most and least satisfactory aspects of this lecturers teaching.

Q27 Most satisfactory:	
------------------------	--

Q28 Least satisfactory:	
-------------------------	--

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.



STUDENT FEEDBACK 2002/2003

Staff and Module Questionnaire

Module Code and Title:

Module Learning Outcomes:

SECTION A Questions about the Module

(Note: Students will be asked to answer questions 1 to 3 using a scale of "A" to "E" to indicate "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".)

1. The module provided a learning experience which enabled the above outcomes to be achieved. A B C D E
2. The module was well organised. A B C D E
3. Independent learning was encouraged. A B C D E
4. Choose the **one** factor from the following which would most improve your learning experience from the module:

- (A) Improved resources to support the learning (eg. laboratory equipment, local provision of computers with appropriate software);
- (B) Improved module information and materials;
- (C) More opportunity for communication with staff teaching the module;
- (D) A greater range of learning experiences;
- (E) Improved teaching accommodation.

5. Choose the **one** factor from the following which would most improve the assessment process:

- (A) Clearer guidelines for undertaking assignments;
- (B) A greater variety of types of assessment;
- (C) More useful feedback;
- (D) Improving the timing of assignments within the module;
- (E) A change in the balance between examinations and coursework.

(Note: A 'no response' to questions 4 and 5 will be interpreted as meaning that your learning experience and/or the assessment process need no improvement in the areas suggested by A to E. Use section C to add any additional constructive comments you would like to make about the module.)

SECTION B Questions about your Lecturers

↓ Name of each Lecturer, followed by these questions:

(Note: Students will be asked to answer questions 6 to 8 using a scale of "A" to "E" to indicate "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".)

6. He/she is clear in his/her explanations. A B C D E
7. I find his/her approach to teaching helps to motivate me. A B C D E
8. He/she encourages me to learn effectively. A B C D E
9. Which **one** of the following is the strongest aspect of his/her teaching:
 - (A) The quality of the module materials used;
 - (B) The amount of interaction and participation s/he generated in classes;
 - (C) His/her presentation skills;

- (D) His/her organisation of the teaching;
- (E) The quality of his/her feedback.

10. Which **one** of the following areas could best be developed:

- (A) The quality of the module materials used;
- (B) The amount of interaction and participation s/he generated in classes;
- (C) His/her presentation skills;
- (D) His/her organisation of the teaching;
- (E) The quality of his/her feedback.

SECTION C:

Please put any additional comments you would like to make **about the module** here, for example to clarify your responses to questions 1 to 5:

University of Gloucestershire
Field of English Studies
Field of Creative and Contemporary Writing
Student Evaluation Form

Module Number:**Module Title:****Semester:****Academic year:**

Please answer the following by ticking in the appropriate box. If you wish to offer more detailed comments, please use the space provided. If responding negatively to the question about resources, please give further detail in the box provided.

A = strongly agree B = agree C = mixed response D = disagree E = strongly disagree

COMMENTS

	A	B	C	D	E
1	The module has been well organised.				
2	Information about sessions/assessment has been clearly published or easily available.				
3	Overall, the module has been interesting.				
4	Assessment methods are appropriate and fair.				
5	Lectures have been helpful.				
6	Seminars/tutorials have provided a useful forum for discussion.				
7	The module has enhanced my understanding of the subject.				
8	The module has developed intellectual and analytical skills.				
9	The module is supported by adequate library resources.				
10	I have attended lectures regularly.				
11	I have participated actively in seminar/tutorial discussions.				
12	I have spent sufficient time reading/researching in order to fulfil the module's academic requirements.				
13	I would recommend others to take this module.				



MODULE EVALUATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

Module Title:	Today's Date:							
Degree/Diploma/Certificate Title:	Your current year of study (1,2,3 or 4):							
<p>The University continually seeks to review and improve the quality of its teaching and learning. The purpose of this questionnaire is to enable staff to use student opinion in their review of this module. Your responses are highly valued and the questionnaire should only take a few minutes to complete. Notes of guidance are available. No individual responses will be identified and your contribution will be aggregated with other others. Comments should be constructive and truthful. They might cover such aspects as the subject matter, the style and delivery of the lecturer, classes or any other parts of the module. The aggregated responses will be considered by your School's Staff-Student Committee, and other committees where necessary, and feedback will be given to you.</p>								
<p><i>For questions 1 and 2, tick the box which best describes your response and for questions 3 and 4 please write your responses.</i></p>								
<p>1. Overall, how satisfied were you with this module?</p> <table><tr><td>Extremely satisfied</td><td>Very satisfied</td><td>Satisfied</td><td>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</td><td>Dissatisfied</td><td>Very dissatisfied</td><td>Extremely dissatisfied</td></tr></table>		Extremely satisfied	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Extremely satisfied	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied		
<p>2. In response to the statement: 'I would recommend this module to a friend who was interested in the programme' Do you:</p> <table><tr><td>Very strongly agree</td><td>Strongly agree</td><td>Agree</td><td>Neither agree nor disagree</td><td>Disagree</td><td>Strongly disagree</td><td>Very strongly disagree</td></tr></table>		Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree		
<p>3. Please comment on up to three aspects of the module which you LIKE:</p> <p>Comment 1)</p>								
<p>Comment 2)</p>								
<p>Comment 3)</p>								
<p>4. Please comment on up to three aspects of the module which you DISLIKE (suggestions for improvement would be welcomed):</p> <p>Comment 1)</p>								
<p>Comment 2)</p>								
<p>Comment 3)</p>								

Thank you for your contribution

Unit Evaluation Questionnaire

Unit Title: _____ Programme: _____

Please shade circles like this: ● Do NOT tick the circles. Thank you for your cooperation

This questionnaire will provide us with valuable information on the quality of the individual Units of your programme. Please take a few minutes to help us develop our programme content and delivery.

1. List 3 things you liked best about this unit

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2. At the start of the unit, the information given about the syllabus was appropriate	,	,	,	,	,
3. The unit was clearly structured	,	,	,	,	,
4. The assessment was appropriate	,	,	,	,	,
5. The comments on the assessment feedback were helpful	,	,	,	,	,
6. The unit was interesting	,	,	,	,	,
7. The unit deepened my understanding of the subject matter	,	,	,	,	,
8. The unit utilised relevant industrial examples	,	,	,	,	,
9. The unit is relevant to my studies	,	,	,	,	,
10. The teaching methods were appropriate	,	,	,	,	,
11. The unit was well organised	,	,	,	,	,

	All	Most	Some	'A Few'	
12. I attended	,	,	,	,	of the Unit lectures
13. I participated in	,	,	,	,	of the Unit lectures/practical sessions
14. I attended	,	,	,	,	of the Unit seminars
15. I participated	,	,	,	,	of the Unit seminars

16. I attended workshops , Yes , No

17. Additional comments:



STUDENT SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE 2002-2003

Your Programme Team and the Institute are committed to continuously improving your experience of the education we offer. The responses you make to the following statements will be taken seriously and acted upon. You will be made aware of any action to be taken, or where it is not possible to respond positively at present, reasons will be provided.

Please ring the response which you think the most appropriate as far as you are concerned.

NOTE: The word 'programme' in the statements which follow refers to the programme of studies which you are following in the subject or subjects you are asked to consider by the person administering this questionnaire. If any item does not apply or you do not wish to answer then please leave it blank. Please note that your anonymity will be protected. Thank you.

Please circle the number which best describes how much you agree with the following statements: 1 – Strongly Agree; 2 – Agree; 3 – Disagree; 4 – Strongly Disagree. n/a – Not Applicable

Office Use Only	<u>Programme Information</u>						
(197)	1	The programme information I received on enrolment this year was good.	1	2	3	4	n/a
	2	The programme information I received during this year has been good.	1	2	3	4	n/a
(69)	3	The aims of my programme are clear to me.	1	2	3	4	n/a
Office Use Only	<u>Learning and Teaching</u>						
(65)	4	My programme is helping me to develop skills relevant to a variety of life-situations.	1	2	3	4	n/a
(39)	5	The teaching on my programme encourages me to participate actively.	1	2	3	4	n/a
(43)	6	My programme is helping me to develop subject-specific skills.	1	2	3	4	n/a
(45)	7	My programme is helping me to develop my ability to work with others.	1	2	3	4	n/a
(42)	8	My programme is helping me to develop skills in working independently.	1	2	3	4	n/a
(35)	9	My programme is well-taught.	1	2	3	4	n/a
Office Use Only	<u>Assessment</u>						
(83)	10	The way in which programme assessments (assignments, etc) are scheduled is satisfactory.	1	2	3	4	n/a
(90)	11	The feedback that I receive on my assignments is informative.	1	2	3	4	n/a
(88)	12	I am satisfied with the speed of return of my assignments.	1	2	3	4	n/a
(91)	13	I understand what the assessments (assignments, examinations) on my programme expect of me.	1	2	3	4	n/a
Office Use Only	<u>Student Support</u>						
(70)	14	I feel that I belong to an academic department within the institution.	1	2	3	4	n/a
(38)	15	The staff teaching on my programme are committed to the students.	1	2	3	4	n/a
(116)	16	My programme is encouraging my personal development.	1	2	3	4	n/a
(127)	17	The provision of guidance regarding academic choices within my programme is adequate for my needs.	1	2	3	4	n/a

(please continue over the page)

Please circle the number which best describes how much you agree with the following statements:
1 –Strongly Agree; 2 – Agree; 3 – Disagree; 4 – Strongly Disagree. n/a – Not Applicable

Office Use Only	<u>Student Support (contd)</u>					
(145)	18	I was satisfied with my placement in a work environment.	1	2	3	4 n/a
(110)	19	The student support services have given me the support I need.	1	2	3	4 n/a

Office Use Only	<u>Programme Organisation</u>					
(66)	20	I am satisfied with the amount of choice within my programme.	1	2	3	4 n/a
(68)	21	I am satisfied with the way in which the components (modules/units) of my programme fit together.	1	2	3	4 n/a
(47)	22	The workload on my programme is at the right level.	1	2	3	4 n/a
(94)	23	My programme is well-organised.	1	2	3	4 n/a

Office Use Only	<u>Learning Resources</u>					
(157)	24	The teaching rooms for my programme are good.	1	2	3	4 n/a
	25	There is good availability of library materials.	1	2	3	4 n/a
(162)	26	The computing facilities are good.	1	2	3	4 n/a
(42)	27	The facilities within the institution for working on one's own are good.	1	2	3	4 n/a
(62)	28	On my programme the facilities for practical activities are good.	1	2	3	4 n/a

Office Use Only	<u>General Satisfaction</u>					
(55)	29	I find my programme stimulating.	1	2	3	4 n/a
(183)	30	I would recommend this programme to my friends.	1	2	3	4 n/a

(please continue over the page)

Please circle the number which best describes how much you agree with the following statements:
1 –Strongly Agree; 2 – Agree; 3 – Disagree; 4 – Strongly Disagree. n/a – Not Applicable

About You

We ask these questions for no other reason than to establish whether the College is serving the needs and is representative of our community as a whole.

Age:	18-21	<input type="text"/>	¹	22-24	<input type="text"/>	²	25-29	<input type="text"/>	³
	30-39	<input type="text"/>	⁴	40-49	<input type="text"/>	⁵	50+	<input type="text"/>	⁶
Gender:	Male	<input type="text"/>	¹	Female	<input type="text"/>	²			
Ethnicity:	Prefer Not to Answer	<input type="text"/>	¹	Black African	<input type="text"/>	²	Black Caribbean	<input type="text"/>	³
	Black other	<input type="text"/>	⁴	Bangladeshi	<input type="text"/>	⁵	Chinese	<input type="text"/>	⁶
	Indian	<input type="text"/>	⁷	Pakistani	<input type="text"/>	⁸	White	<input type="text"/>	⁹
	Other	<input type="text"/>	¹⁰						
Do you have a Disability?	Yes	<input type="text"/>	¹	No	<input type="text"/>	²			
The year of the programme I am currently in is:	1 st	<input type="text"/>	¹	2 nd	<input type="text"/>	²	3 rd	<input type="text"/>	³
	4 th	<input type="text"/>	⁴	5 th	<input type="text"/>	⁵	6 th	<input type="text"/>	⁶
	7 th	<input type="text"/>	⁷						
I am currently Studying:	F/T	<input type="text"/>	¹	P/T	<input type="text"/>	²	Sandwich	<input type="text"/>	³
	Year Out	<input type="text"/>	⁴	By DL	<input type="text"/>	⁵			
I originally joined this programme in:	Sept/Oct	<input type="text"/>	¹	Jan/Feb	<input type="text"/>	²	Other (Please Specify)	<input type="text"/>	³
I am currently following this programme at another College/university:	Yes	<input type="text"/>	¹	No	<input type="text"/>	²			
Please give name of institution if not Bolton Institute:									
My programme of study is:	Single Subject	<input type="text"/>	¹	Combined Subjects (eg joint or major/minor)	<input type="text"/>	²			

(please continue over the page)

Comments

Have you any other comments you wish to make?

We are particularly interested in what you consider to be good about your programme and what could be improved. Please use the relevant heading below for your response.

What's good about your programme?

What could be improved?

Any Other comments?

**Thank you very much for all your help
Please return this completed questionnaire as requested**

Course Feedback Questionnaire

Course title

Course code

Please spend a few minutes completing this questionnaire. The results will be used to make improvements to the quality of future occurrences of the course.

Please use a thick horizontal line like this to indicate your response. Do not use red ink.

Student - Please would you indicate your gender, mode of study and age.

Male	(1)	Full time	(1)	Under 25	(1)
Female	(2)	Part time	(2)	25 & over	(2)

(1) = strongly disagree (2) = disagree (3) = no opinion (4) = agree (5) = strongly agree

Course - Please mark on a scale of 1 to 5. **Leave blank if not applicable.**

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. | I have received clear information about the course structure and alternative routes. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 2. | I have been given clear advice about my choice of optional and/or free-choice modules. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 3. | The course has been administered efficiently. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 4. | The timetable has enabled me to take the modules I wished to study. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 5. | The level of difficulty of work has increased from stage to stage. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 6. | The overall workload including assessment has been about right. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 7. | There has been a reasonable balance of the total workload between modules. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 8. | The academic content of my modules has linked together well (where appropriate). | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 9. | Project work has enhanced my learning experience. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 10. | On-line learning and support has enhanced my studies. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 11. | The use of Library resources has enhanced my studies. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 12. | I have been helped and encouraged to manage my own learning and development. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 13. | Notice of assessments has given me opportunities to manage my time effectively. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 14. | The course has helped me to develop self-confidence. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 15. | I have had the opportunity and encouragement to develop my skills. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 16. | I have been able to contact my course/year tutor easily. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 17. | Effective personal support has been available. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 18. | The Course Consultative Committee has provided an effective mechanism for raising issues. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 19. | Student views about the course have been acted upon by staff. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 20. | Relevant careers information has been provided. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 21. | Relationships between students and staff have been generally good. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 22. | I have been made to feel welcome at the University. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 23. | I am pleased I chose this course. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 24. | Overall I am satisfied with this course. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |
| 25. | Overall I am satisfied with my experience at Coventry University. | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) |

Comments - Please use the space below (and the back of this questionnaire if necessary) to comment on this course, indicating what you thought were its particular strengths and weaknesses. If there were any modules that gave you particular problems would you please identify them and explain why.

**University of Central England in Birmingham
Centre for Research into Quality**

Extract from the 2002 Report on the Student Experience at UCE

CHAPTER 4 LEARNING AND TEACHING

Respondents consider most aspects of learning and teaching at UCE as either satisfactory or *very* satisfactory. However, since 2000 the main areas of concern are those related to work experience and *the amount of formal individual tuition*.

Figure 4.1: Student perceptions of learning and teaching by faculty

	<i>BIAD</i>	<i>BE</i>	<i>BS</i>	<i>CIE</i>	<i>Con</i>	<i>Ed</i>	<i>tic</i>	<i>HCC</i>	<i>LSS</i>	<i>UCE</i>	<i>N</i>
Learning											
The course has developed your subject knowledge	B	A	A	B	B	A	B	A	A	A	2461
The course has developed your self-confidence	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	B	B	2405
You are learning what you expected to learn	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	B	B	B	2426
The extent to which teaching staff encourage students to learn effectively	B	B	B	B	B	A	C	B	B	B	2431
There are sufficient opportunities to learn from others	B	B	b	b	A	A	b	B	b	B	2405
Your course content is relevant to your future employment	B	A	A	B	B	A	B	A	A	A	2372
Opportunities to go on work experience	C	D	B	D	D	A	C	A	D	B	1714
Opportunities to make links with professionals	C	C	B	D	B	A	C	A	D	B	1994
Suitability of work experience	B	C	B	C	B	A	C	A	C	B	1338
Organisation of work experience	C	C	B	D	D	A	D	A	C	B	1295
Development of skills and abilities required for your future employment	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	B	B	2235
Development of your problem-solving skills	B	B	B	B	C	A	B	B	B	B	2315
Development of your interpersonal skills	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	B	B	2323
Development of your team-working skills	B	B	A	B	B	A	B	A	B	B	2330
Development of your communication skills	B	B	A	B	B	A	B	A	B	A	2367
Development of your practical skills	B	B	B	B	A	A	B	A	B	B	2330
Development of your analytical ability	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	B	B	2381
Development of your critical ability	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	A	B	2377
Practical sessions (labs/studios/workshops/masterclass)											
Amount of practical sessions on your course	B	C	B	B	A	B	C	B	B	B	1986
Usefulness of practical sessions	B	C	B	B	A	A	B	A	B	B	1936
Helpfulness of technical and support staff	B	C	B	C	B	A	B	A	B	B	1894
Availability of equipment	C	D	C	C	B	A	C	B	C	B	1907

Reliability of equipment	C	C	B	C	B	A	C	A	C	B	1866
Teaching											
Amount of formal individual tuition	C	D	C	D	A	B	C	B	C	C	2224
Quality of formal individual tuition	B	C	B	C	A	B	C	B	B	B	2100
Opportunities for informal discussion with staff	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	B	B	B	2389
The extent to which teaching staff are sympathetic and supportive to the needs of students	B	B	B	B	B	A	C	B	B	B	2401
The extent to which teaching staff treat students as mature individuals	A	A	A	B	A	A	B	A	B	A	2432
General reliability of teaching staff i.e., keep time/don't cancel classes	A	B	A	A	A	A	B	B	A	A	2441
Maximum number of respondents	450	190	326	203	100	175	343	535	202	2524	
Minimum number of respondents	231	60	144	80	40	122	132	414	100	1714	

All areas of learning and teaching are considered to be *very* important to students.

Generally, respondents studying at UCE on a full-time basis are more satisfied with learning and teaching than part-time students. With the exception of the *amount of formal individual tuition*, full-time students are either *very* satisfied or satisfied with all aspects of learning and teaching (Figure 4.2).

Overall, both men and women are satisfied or *very* satisfied with most aspects of learning and teaching. However, women under 25 are barely satisfied with those areas related to work experience (Figure 4.3).

Respondents from all ethnic backgrounds, except Chinese students, are satisfied or *very* satisfied with most aspects of learning and teaching (Figure 4.4).

With the exception of students with physical disabilities, respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the course has developed your subject knowledge, the course has developed your self-confidence, you are learning what you expected to learn (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.2: Student perceptions of learning and teaching by level and mode of study

	<i>Found. FT/Sand</i>	<i>Found. PT</i>	<i>Degree FT Year 1</i>	<i>Degree FT Year 2+</i>	<i>Degree Sand.</i>	<i>Degree PT Yr1/2</i>	<i>Degree PT Yr3+</i>	<i>PGT FT/Sand</i>	<i>PCT PT</i>	<i>Prof FT/Sand /PT</i>	<i>N</i>
Learning											
The course has developed your subject knowledge	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	2474
The course has developed your self-confidence	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	2418
You are learning what you expected to learn	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	A	2439
The extent to which teaching staff encourage students to learn effectively	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	2444
There are sufficient opportunities to learn from others	B	B	B	B	b	b	b	B	B	b	2418
Your course content is relevant to your future employment	A	A	A	B	A	A	B	A	A	A	2385
Opportunities to go on work experience	A	D	B	B	A	B	D	B	c	b	1723

Opportunities to make links with professionals	A	B	B	C	B	B	C	B	B	B	2002
Suitability of work experience	A	D	B	B	A	B	C	B	b	B	1344
Organisation of work experience	B	D	B	B	A	B	C	B	b	b	1299
Development of skills and abilities required for your future employment	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	2247
Development of your problem-solving skills	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	2327
Development of your interpersonal skills	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	b	2335
Development of your team-working skills	B	B	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2342
Development of your communication skills	A	B	A	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	2379
Development of your practical skills	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	2342
Development of your analytical ability	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	2393
Development of your critical ability	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	2389
Practical sessions (labs/studios/workshops/masterclass)											
Amount of practical sessions on your course	B	B	B	B	B	C	D	B	B	B	1998
Usefulness of practical sessions	B	B	B	B	C	B	C	B	B	B	1949
Helpfulness of technical and support staff	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1906
Availability of equipment	B	C	B	C	C	C	D	B	B	A	1918
Reliability of equipment	B	B	B	C	C	C	C	B	B	A	1877
Teaching											
Amount of formal individual tuition	D	B	C	C	D	C	D	B	B	B	2235
Quality of formal individual tuition	B	B	B	B	B	B	C	B	B	B	2110
Opportunities for informal discussion with staff	B	B	B	B	B	B	C	B	B	B	2401
The extent to which teaching staff are sympathetic and supportive to the needs of students	B	A	B	B	B	B	C	B	B	B	2414
The extent to which teaching staff treat students as mature individuals	B	A	A	B	A	A	B	A	A	A	2445
General reliability of teaching staff i.e., keep time/don't cancel classes	B	A	A	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	2454
Maximum number of respondents	275	105	481	768	42	197	135	145	291	98	
Minimum number of respondents	208	29	255	497	31	54	29	102	60	34	

Figure 4.3: Student perceptions of learning and teaching by gender and age

	men <25	men 25+	women <25	women 25+	N
Learning					
The course has developed your subject knowledge	A	A	B	A	2461
The course has developed your self-confidence	B	B	B	B	2405
You are learning what you expected to learn	B	B	B	B	2426
The extent to which teaching staff encourage students to learn effectively	B	B	B	B	2431
There are sufficient opportunities to learn from others	B	B	b	B	2405
Your course content is relevant to your future employment	A	A	B	A	2372
Opportunities to go on work experience	B	B	C	B	1714
Opportunities to make links with professionals	B	B	C	B	1994
Suitability of work experience	B	B	C	B	1338
Organisation of work experience	B	B	C	B	1295
Development of skills and abilities required for your future employment	B	A	B	B	2235
Development of your problem-solving skills	B	B	B	B	2315
Development of your interpersonal skills	B	B	B	B	2323
Development of your team-working skills	A	B	B	B	2330
Development of your communication skills	A	A	B	B	2367
Development of your practical skills	A	B	B	B	2330
Development of your analytical ability	B	B	B	B	2381
Development of your critical ability	B	B	B	B	2377
Practical sessions (labs/studios/workshops/masterclass)					
Amount of practical sessions on your course	B	B	C	B	1986
Usefulness of practical sessions	B	B	B	B	1936
Helpfulness of technical and support staff	B	B	B	B	1894
Availability of equipment	B	B	C	C	1907
Reliability of equipment	B	B	C	B	1866
Teaching					
Amount of formal individual tuition	C	C	C	C	2224
Quality of formal individual tuition	B	B	B	B	2100
Opportunities for informal discussion with staff	B	B	B	B	2389
The extent to which teaching staff are sympathetic and supportive to the needs of students	B	B	B	B	2401
The extent to which teaching staff treat students as mature individuals	B	A	B	A	2432
General reliability of teaching staff i.e., keep time/don't cancel classes	A	A	B	B	2441
Maximum number of respondents	962	689	500	373	
Minimum number of respondents	589	346	225	135	

The extent to which teaching staff encourage students to learn effectively is generally satisfactory. **Education** respondents are *very* satisfied and **tic** respondents consider it adequate (Figure 4.1).

Respondents are generally satisfied with *the opportunities to learn from others*. However, in some faculties students did not consider this aspect to be *very* important (Figure 4.1).

Overall, students are satisfied with *your course content is relevant to your future employment* (Figure 4.1).

Respondents in **Computing, Information and English**, the **Conservatoire**, **Built Environment** and **Law and Social Science** are dissatisfied with the *opportunities to go on work experience* and those from **Business School**, **Education** and **Health and Community Care** are *very* satisfied or satisfied. Students in **BIAD** and **tic** are barely satisfied (Figure 4.1). Part-time

foundation and degree students are less satisfied with those areas of work experience than full-time students (Figure 4.2). Overseas and European Union students are less satisfied than Home students (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.4: Student perceptions of learning and teaching by ethnicity

	White	Asian	Black	Chinese	Not known/refused	N
Learning						
The course has developed your subject knowledge	A	B	A	B	A	2475
The course has developed your self-confidence	B	B	B	B	B	2419
You are learning what you expected to learn	B	B	B	B	B	2440
The extent to which teaching staff encourage students to learn effectively	B	B	B	B	B	2445
There are sufficient opportunities to learn from others	B	B	B	C	B	2419
Your course content is relevant to your future employment	A	B	A	B	A	2386
Opportunities to go on work experience	B	B	B	D	B	1724
Opportunities to make links with professionals	B	C	B	C	B	2003
Suitability of work experience	B	C	B	C	B	1345
Organisation of work experience	B	C	B	D	B	1300
Development of skills and abilities required for your future employment	B	B	B	B	B	2248
Development of your problem-solving skills	B	B	B	B	B	2328
Development of your interpersonal skills	B	B	B	B	B	2336
Development of your team-working skills	B	B	B	B	B	2343
Development of your communication skills	A	B	A	B	A	2380
Development of your practical skills	B	B	B	B	B	2343
Development of your analytical ability	B	B	B	B	B	2394
Development of your critical ability	B	B	B	B	B	2390
Practical sessions (labs/studios/workshops/masterclass)						
Amount of practical sessions on your course	B	B	C	B	B	1998
Usefulness of practical sessions	B	B	B	B	B	1949
Helpfulness of technical and support staff	B	B	B	B	B	1906
Availability of equipment	C	C	B	C	B	1918
Reliability of equipment	B	B	B	C	B	1877
Teaching						
Amount of formal individual tuition	C	C	C	B	B	2236
Quality of formal individual tuition	B	C	B	C	B	2111
Opportunities for informal discussion with staff	B	B	B	B	B	2402
The extent to which teaching staff are sympathetic and supportive to the needs of students	B	C	B	B	B	2415
The extent to which teaching staff treat students as mature individuals	A	B	A	B	A	2446
General reliability of teaching staff i.e., keep time/don't cancel classes	A	B	A	B	A	2455
Maximum number of respondents	1791	366	184	74	115	
Minimum number of respondents	854	229	101	53	60	

Generally, most faculties consider the *opportunities to make links with professionals* as unsatisfactory or adequate. Respondents in **Computing, Information and English** and **Law and Social Science** are dissatisfied with this aspect of learning and teaching. Similarly, students in **Computing, Information and English, Conservatoire** and **tic** are dissatisfied with the *organisation of work experience* (Figure 4.1).

All respondents are satisfied or *very* satisfied with *the development of skills and abilities required for your future employment*.

Most students are satisfied or *very* satisfied with *the development of your problem solving interpersonal, team-working communication and practical skills* (Figure 4.1). However, students with physical disabilities consider *the development of your problem-solving skills* as unsatisfactory and *very* important (Figure 4.5).

Most faculties are satisfied or *very* satisfied with *the development of your analytical and critical ability* (Figure 4.1).

Overall, most respondents considered *the amount of practical sessions on your course* as satisfactory and *very* important (Figure 4.1). However, students with physical disabilities and part-time third-year students are not satisfied (Figure 4.5, 4.2).

Most respondents are satisfied with *the usefulness of practical sessions* (Figure 4.1).

Most faculties regarded the *helpfulness of technical and support staff* as satisfactory or *very* satisfactory. **Built Environment and Computing, Information and English** consider this aspect as only adequate (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.5: Student perceptions of learning and teaching by disability

	physical disabilities	dyslexia	other special needs	diabetes/epilepsy/asthma	N
Learning					
The course has developed your subject knowledge	B	A	B	B	218
The course has developed your self-confidence	C	B	B	B	214
You are learning what you expected to learn	C	B	B	B	215
The extent to which teaching staff encourage students to learn effectively	C	B	C	B	216
There are sufficient opportunities to learn from others	B	B	B	B	212
Your course content is relevant to your future employment	B	B	B	A	212
Opportunities to go on work experience	B	B	C	B	159
Opportunities to make links with professionals	B	B	B	B	183
Suitability of work experience	**	B	C	B	119
Organisation of work experience	**	C	B	B	122
Development of skills and abilities required for your future employment	B	B	B	B	204
Development of your problem-solving skills	D	B	B	B	208
Development of your interpersonal skills	C	B	B	B	206
Development of your team-working skills	B	B	B	B	207
Development of your communication skills	B	A	A	A	207
Development of your practical skills	B	B	B	B	209
Development of your analytical ability	B	B	A	B	211
Development of your critical ability	C	B	A	B	210
Practical sessions (labs/studios/workshops/masterclass)					
Amount of practical sessions on your course	D	B	C	B	189
Usefulness of practical sessions	D	B	A	B	186

Helpfulness of technical and support staff	B	B	B	B	181
Availability of equipment	D	C	B	C	187
Reliability of equipment	D	C	D	B	182
Teaching					
Amount of formal individual tuition	D	C	C	C	199
Quality of formal individual tuition	C	B	B	B	189
Opportunities for informal discussion with staff	C	B	B	B	209
The extent to which teaching staff are sympathetic and supportive to the needs of students	B	B	C	B	214
The extent to which teaching staff treat students as mature individuals	B	A	B	B	213
General reliability of teaching staff i.e., keep time/don't cancel classes	B	A	B	A	213
Maximum number of respondents	17	64	20	122	
Minimum number of respondents	8	29	12	66	

Figure 4.6: Student perceptions of learning and teaching by fee status

	<i>Home</i>	<i>EU</i>	<i>O'seas</i>	<i>N</i>
Learning				
The course has developed your subject knowledge	A	B	B	2461
The course has developed your self-confidence	B	B	B	2405
You are learning what you expected to learn	B	B	B	2426
The extent to which teaching staff encourage students to learn effectively	B	B	B	2431
There are sufficient opportunities to learn from others	B	b	B	2405
Your course content is relevant to your future employment	A	B	B	2372
Opportunities to go on work experience	B	C	C	1714
Opportunities to make links with professionals	B	C	C	1994
Suitability of work experience	B	B	C	1338
Organisation of work experience	B	C	C	1295
Development of skills and abilities required for your future employment	B	B	B	2235
Development of your problem-solving skills	B	B	B	2315
Development of your interpersonal skills	B	B	B	2323
Development of your team-working skills	B	B	B	2330
Development of your communication skills	A	B	B	2367
Development of your practical skills	B	B	B	2330
Development of your analytical ability	B	B	B	2381
Development of your critical ability	B	B	B	2377
Practical sessions (labs/studios/workshops/masterclass)				
Amount of practical sessions on your course	B	B	B	1986
Usefulness of practical sessions	B	B	B	1936
Helpfulness of technical and support staff	B	C	B	1894
Availability of equipment	B	D	C	1907
Reliability of equipment	B	D	C	1866
Teaching				
Amount of formal individual tuition	C	B	B	2224
Quality of formal individual tuition	B	B	B	2100
Opportunities for informal discussion with staff	B	B	B	2389
The extent to which teaching staff are sympathetic and supportive to the needs of students	B	B	B	2401
The extent to which teaching staff treat students as mature individuals	A	B	B	2432

General reliability of teaching staff i.e., keep time/don't cancel classes	A	A	B	2441
Maximum number of respondents	2372	27	125	
Minimum number of respondents	1187	21	87	

Most faculties are barely satisfied with *the availability and reliability of equipment*. Respondents in **Built Environment**, part-time degree students and European Union and physically disabled students are dissatisfied. Overseas students consider it adequate (Figure 4.1, 4.2, 4.6).

The amount of formal individual tuition is one of the main areas of concern for almost all students at UCE. Respondents in **Built Environment** and in **Computing, Information and English** are dissatisfied. Students in **BIAD**, the **Business School, tic** and **Law and Social Science** are barely satisfied (Figure 4.1). Home students are less satisfied than EU and overseas students (Figure 4.6). There is a general satisfaction with *the quality of formal individual tuition* (Figure 4.1).

Overall, faculties regard *the opportunities for informal discussion with staff* as satisfactory (Figure 4.1). Only part-time degree students are barely satisfied with this aspect of learning and teaching (Figure 4.2).

There is a general satisfaction with *the extent to which teaching staff are sympathetic and supportive to the needs of students*. However, respondents in **tic** rate this as only adequate (Figure 4.1).

Overall, respondents are *very* satisfied with both *the extent to which teaching staff treat students as mature individuals* and the *general reliability of teaching staff* (Figure 4.1).

Cost drivers for the centralised system run by one institution

Initial setting-up costs

- € OMR Machine
- € Software for analysis and result production – we have upgraded the software this year at a cost of approximately £1,600
- € Programming by Corporate Information Services and production of a User Guide for each Department.
- € Annual Maintenance of OMR (approximately £1,600 per year).

Feedback stationery

- € The University's printing costs per year for the stationery required is approximately £3,500.
- € All departments advise the Quality Enhancement (QE) office of their yearly stationery requirements and forms are distributed directly from Media Services – cost approximately £120.
- € Standard questions relating to Central Services on forms remain the same.
- € Departments would normally utilise the same questions each year (although this varies from department to department), which then have to be added to the printed forms using a template we have set up and then photo-copy the questions onto the printed forms.
- € It is normally the Departmental Executive Officer who is involved in preparing the forms for distribution to lecturers and collecting completed forms.

Processing of forms

- € Completed feedback forms are delivered to the QE office for processing.
- € QE process the forms through the OMR and data is then downloaded onto CIS for Departments to access. (QE are unable to access this data.)
- € Processed forms are collected by Departments. Any comments written on the reverse of the forms are very valuable to Departments and need to be analysed.
- € Departments interpret results.

Central Services feedback

- € Data on all feedback forms relating to Central Services is accessible by QE. QE analyse data and hi-light any areas with a mean score of { 3. Information is forwarded to each section – Library, Computing Services, Media Services for their comments, which are reported to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Cost drivers for the online system run by one institution, including the transition from the paper-based system

Institution Size: Small
Location: City centre, single-site

All figures shown below are approximate annual cost considerations. In some cases we have included actual costs where this may be helpful to colleagues elsewhere in the sector; in other cases, we have simply put the item of expenditure.

Paper survey

Permanent Staff: 1 x Administrative Officer AR2 0.2 fte
2 x Administrative Assistants CRA5, both full-time

Temporary staff for mailing and scanning questionnaires: 70 person-days.
IT support (for extracting information from School sources and processing of data):
1 x Administrative Officer AR2 (IT specialist) x 0.1fte
Paper and photocopying: 250,000 approx A4 sheets (includes questionnaires, instruction sheets and supporting documentation).
Envelopes for mailing out questionnaires: 3,000.
Paper for mailing out results and cover sheet: 5,700 approx A4 sheets.
Envelopes for mailing out results: 1,700.
Hardware and software maintenance and licence costs for scanner (c. £2,500)
Office space required for storing and processing questionnaires.
Teaching time required for completion of questionnaires.

Transition to online survey

Permanent Staff: 1 x Assistant Registrar AR5 0.1 fte
1 x Administrative Officer AR2 0.5
2 x Administrative Assistants CRA5 both full-time
use of academic consultant

Committee Time: 3 lengthy meetings of working group and 2 major discussions at committee.
Focus Groups: Payment to external facilitator and to participants (approx. cost £4,500).
Technical support: 1 x Administrative Officer AR2 (IT specialist) 0.4 fte, plus ad-hoc support and on-call support whilst surveys are 'live'.
Technical training (internal and external providers) for Administrative Assistant(s).
Proportionate paper/copying/temp staff/space costs for running 'in tandem' paper survey.
Copying of OHPs/memos for teachers involved in courses being surveyed online.
Paper and envelopes for mailing out results, as above.

Full online survey (system still subject to ongoing enhancement)

Permanent Staff: 1 x Administrative Officer AR2, full-time
Technical Support: 1 x Administrative Officer AR3 (IT specialist) 30 days
Paper/copying costs: 1,300 sheets of A4 plus 1,300 OHP transparencies.
Envelopes for mailing of above: 1,300
Temporary staff for mailing of above: 2 person-days
Paper and envelopes for mailing out results, as above.
Prizes – budget for year £2,500.

University of Wolverhampton

School of Art and Design

Extract from the Module Guide (DS2019: Developing Personal and Professional Skills through Student Representation)

Brief Summary of Module

This module has been designed to enable those students who have an interest in 'student representation' to reflect on and evaluate the communication processes involved. The module provides the context for you to acquire and develop the knowledge and skills to underpin your role within the University and Students' Union. An interest in student matters and attendance at taught sessions and on agreed committees is essential for the successful completion of this module.

Learning and Teaching Methods

You will be introduced to a number of theoretical models as an aid to understanding organisational, interpersonal and group communications via a small number of lectures and workshops. You will then be asked to reflect on how these models, and any others you yourself identify through further reading, might help us understand how people function in organisations and how you in particular can develop your own communication and negotiation skills in the role. Workshops provide the opportunity for you to exchange ideas with other representatives. Throughout the module, in your own time, you will be asked to keep a detailed Learning Log which will form the basis of the evidence you will use in your main piece of assessed work – the evaluative report. Towards the end of the module (week 7) you will be introduced to the conventions of report writing. Many of the skills you develop in this module will be useful both in further study and employment.

Learning Outcomes for the Module

By successful completion of the module you will be able to:

Subject Specific Outcomes

Learning Outcome	Context and Scope	Assessment
i) To understand the purpose and function of committees in relation to the monitoring and development of different organisations	Selected reference to theories of organisational communication, School, University and Students' Union Committee structure	1 & 2 Learning Log & Evaluative Report
ii) To utilise consultation and negotiation skills in gathering and prioritising the views of students and representing these views to the organisations through committee participation and other forms of formal and informal contact	Selected reference to communication theory including Belbin and Adair. Presentation skills	1 & 2 Learning Log & Evaluative Report
iii) To gain an understanding of how policy and regulatory frameworks functions within organisations and apply this knowledge to the student representational role	University and Students' Union policy and regulations; reflection on communications within organisations	1 & 2 Learning Log & Evaluative Report

iv) To be able to critically reflect on the effectiveness of collective and individual roles in committee and other fora. With particular reference to own role, as nominated student representative	Select reference to communications theory and theory of learning (Kolb)	1 & 2 Learning Log & Evaluative Report
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------

Generic Academic Outcomes

Learning Outcome	Context and Scope	Assessment
OUTCOME B: Evaluative: Question and challenge received values and criteria	Examine and challenge the concepts taught in the module from a number of perspectives	1 & 2
OUTCOME C: Present and relate: make and articulate judgements on presentational methods	Select and use a variety of: formal and informal presentation methods, appropriate to the given audience (written, oral and visual)	1 & 2

Personal Skills

Learning Outcome	Context and Scope	Assessment
1 Communicate effectively	Develop a range of oral and written formal and informal applied communication skills. Prepare agenda items for meetings	1 & 2
2 Organise	Initiate meetings with students and staff. Meet deadlines, e.g. the preparation of agenda items for meetings	1 & 2
3 Gather information	Access documentary and live information in relation to the role of student representation	1 & 2
4 Act independently	Manage own time and use initiative in preparing the views of students for representation to School University, Students' Union Committees and other fora	1 & 2
5 Work in Teams	Demonstrate the ability to contribute to group decision-making	1 & 2

University of Gloucestershire

Job Description

Title:	Student Representative
Purpose:	<p>To provide representation for students at field boards.</p> <p>To keep students informed of any major changes of which they should be aware.</p> <p>To keep the Field Chair, other teaching staff and the University in general informed of relevant student views.</p>
Main Responsibilities:	<p>To attend field board meetings and raise any relevant student issues.</p> <p>To liaise with the Field Chair.</p> <p>To liaise with student representatives at other levels within the field.</p> <p>To feed back to other students any relevant information from Field Board meetings, particularly the results of student input.</p>
Skills:	<p>Must have a willingness to develop the following skills:</p> <p>Active listening</p> <p>Diplomacy</p> <p>Putting views across clearly</p> <p>Presentation skills</p> <p>Ability to remain unbiased in all situations.</p>
Time Commitment:	<p>Attend a minimum of three field board meetings.</p> <p>Attend student representative training.</p>
Training:	<p>Student representative training is highly recommended as a workshop module or can be taken independently. Sessions include communication skills, listening skills, meeting skills, evaluation methods. It is a good opportunity to meet other student representatives from across the University and discuss mutual problems. Sessions are informal and fun.</p>
Benefits:	<p>Useful for your CV.</p> <p>References from Field/FASC Chairs.</p> <p>Accredited (workshops module) training sessions.</p> <p>Developing your transferable skills.</p> <p>Getting behind the scenes of your course and making a difference to your University.</p>

University of Central Lancashire

Job Description

Job Title: Student Liaison Officer – Fixed Term for 1 Year
 Faculty/Service/Department: Faculty X
 Grade: £11,456 per annum
 Responsible to: Dean of Faculty/Head of Faculty Support Services

Job Purpose: To support the student body within the Faculty by developing strong links between Staff, Students and the Students' Union. To initiate, develop and co-ordinate a liaison service between key stakeholders on all aspects of student support.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- 1 To aid the Students' Union Academic Affairs Officer to establish effective systems for the election of, and liaison with, course representatives.
- 2 To help in the induction of new students to the Faculty, including the organisation of social events.
- 3 To support course representatives in helping to rectify course problems occurring within the Faculty, and in direct work with students.
- 4 To refer a student issue to the Students' Union Academic Affairs Officer and/or University staff when it affects students across the University.
- 5 To aid the Students' Union Academic Affairs Officer in the training and support of course representatives.
- 6 To be accessible to students and to act as a referral point to enable students to access impartial and independent advice.
- 7 To help to encourage attendance of students at Students' Council, Course Representative training and Annual General meetings of the Students' Union, as directed to the Students' Union.
- 8 To set a Faculty Committee for Course Representatives. To undertake all associated publicity and administration.
- 9 To help in the promotion of the Faculty including participation at Visit and Open Days.
- 10 To liaise with external bodies, as requested by the Dean/Head of Faculty Support Services in order to collate information about Open Days, Careers Fairs and job opportunities.
- 11 To carry out other duties and responsibilities commensurate with the post on the direct of the Dean/Head of Faculty Support Services.

24th June 2002

Directors Handbook

for the
Course Representatives
Scheme

WORKING TOGETHER:



Volume 2: August 2002

Contents

Introduction

Foreword.....	3
Why Have Course Representatives?.....	4

Representation, Roles and Responsibilities

The Representation Structure Throughout The University..	5
Course Representatives Job Role.....	6
The Scope Of Course Representatives.....	6
Responsibility And Accountability.....	7

Timescale

The Importance Of Timings.....	9
--------------------------------	---

Elections

The Election System.....	10
Promotion.....	10
Nominations.....	10
Hustings.....	10
Election.....	11
Count.....	11
Publicity.....	11

Contact details

Hotline, Email and Executive Officers.....	12
--------------------------------------------	----

Foreword

The decision to set up a Course Representative scheme in partnership between the University and the Students' Union provides students and staff with an unrivalled opportunity to work together for mutual benefit. Improving the quality of education provided by the University not only benefits students but also departments, faculties and the institution as a whole. By uniting departmental representation systems through the scheme, ideas can be shared more easily and wider problems identified more quickly.

This year sees the scheme widen to include both taught postgraduate and research students. Though smaller in numbers, these students are often more involved with the departments they work in, yet in many cases they have no formal representation. This year we hope we can work together to set up or enhance representative systems that best suit the number and type of postgraduates in each department.

The rest of this handbook contains all the information you need to implement the scheme in your department. If we may recycle an old slogan; "Together we're stronger."

The RUSU Executive Committee

introduction

This handbook is your guide to making the course representatives scheme work for your department. It tells you:

-] Why Course Representatives are necessary and beneficial
-] How they fit into the representative structure of the University
-] Their Role and Scope
-] The responsibilities of the people involved in the scheme
-] The planned timescale for this year
-] How to run elections
-] The Hotline and other contact details

If you need any more information about course reps, or if you have any feedback on this handbook, please get in touch using the contact details on the last page.

Why Have Course Representatives?

Course Representatives have a lot to offer...

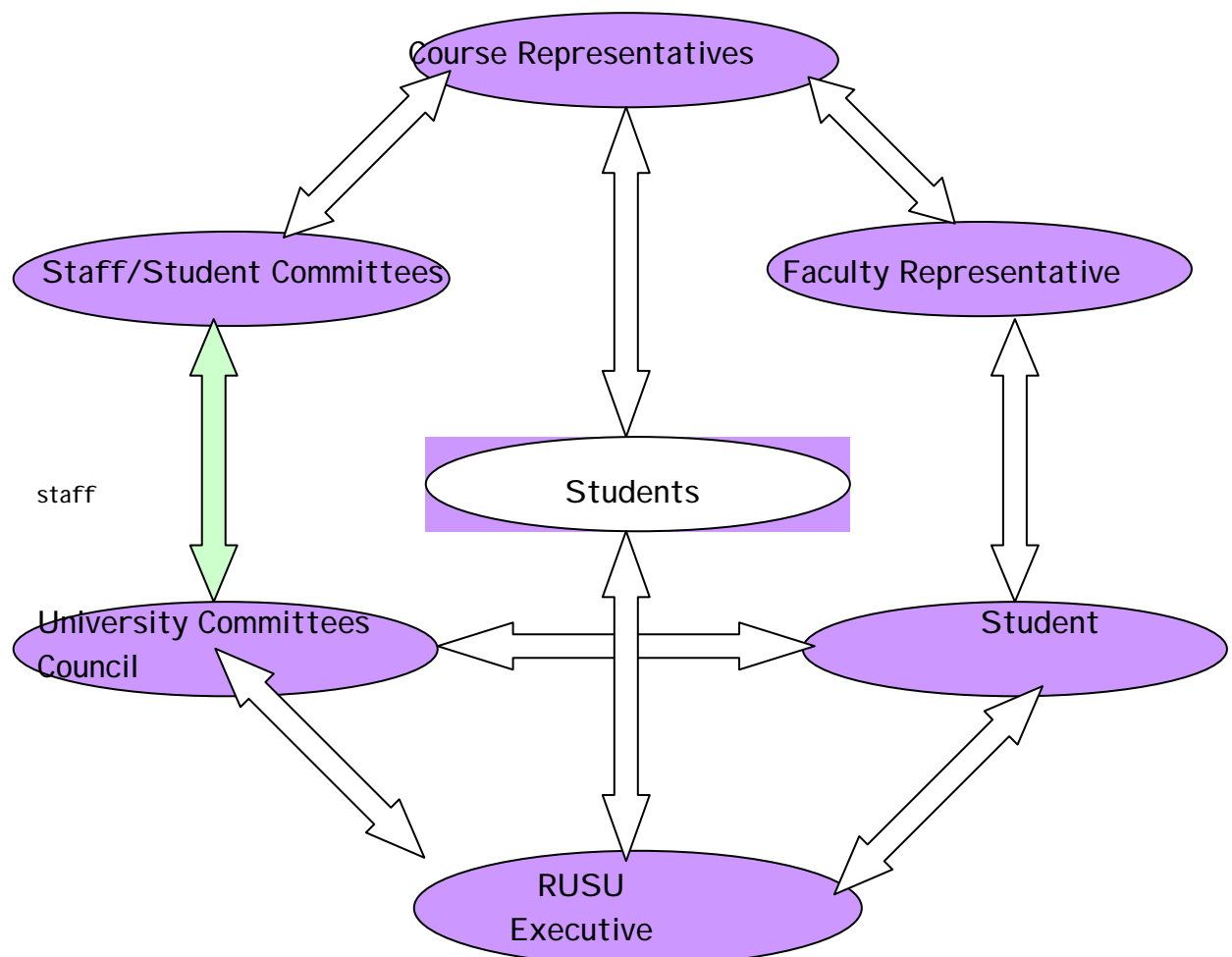
BENEFITS...BENEFITS...BENEFITS...BENEFITS

- € They will provide students with a sense of ownership and opportunity to comment on their academic experience
- € They will provide valuable informed feedback, on a regular basis, on the courses run by your Department
- € They will help to improve the quality of courses throughout the University Of Reading
- € They will promote the concept of partnership between students, staff and Reading University Students' Union (RUSU) and improve staff-student relations
- € The scheme will develop students transferable skills and help to improve the job prospects of those who become representatives
- € The scheme will diffuse tensions by providing a less formal complaints procedure
- € The scheme will embed students views in the University's decision-making processes
- € The scheme will raise the profile of student representation as a whole

BENEFITS...BENEFITS...BENEFITS...BENEFITS

The Structure of Student Representation throughout the University OF READING

Students are the heart of representation at Reading. Once elected, they can be involved in major university decisions in a number of ways. Course Representatives will have a faculty committee at which they will nominate students to become Faculty Representatives who can sit on Student Council. Student Councillors may be elected or co-opted to sit on the higher level university committees such as Senate and University Joint Council.



Course Representatives Job Role

- ➡ Make themselves known to everyone (staff, students, RUSU) and publicise their role
- ➡ Attend Course Representatives training
- ➡ Be approachable, friendly, available and well informed
- ➡ Consult students and gather information on their issues and needs
- ➡ Refer students to other organisations where appropriate
- ➡ Represent the views of students on the courses of your department
- ➡ Attend – and be involved in – meetings of relevant committees
- ➡ Liaise, provide feedback and raise awareness of issues to everyone (staff, students, RUSU)
- ➡ Work with other representatives where needed, e.g. for campaigns, lobbying, surveys

The role is highly interactive and involves giving positive feedback to staff and students, as well as constructive criticism.

Scope of Course Representatives

Course Representatives can help with:

Problems with courses; they will bring to your attention a range of issues which may include: timetable clashes ² inconsistent assignment marking ² long turnaround times ² poor lecturing ² out-of-date course content ² lack of support ² deadline changes at short notice ² lack of resources ² hidden course costs e.g. photocopying or book costs ² discriminatory practices ² concerns with the working environment ² concerns about recycling.

Course Representatives should not try to help with:

Students' personal problems ² accommodation issues ² financial issues ² immigration issues. They will be trained to refer on to the relevant agencies, e.g. the Membership Services Centre, Executive Officers in the Students' Union, The University Counselling Service.

Responsibilities

	YOUR Responsibilities	RUSUs Responsibilities	Course Representatives Responsibilities
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You need to provide information on all the courses held in your department - You need to keep RUSU informed of any changes - You need to provide minutes and relevant information on past staff/student committee meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RUSU will provide Course Representatives Handbook, Faculty Representatives Handbook, Directors Handbook - RUSU will publicise newsletters on a regular basis to keep everyone up-to-date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Course Representative will need to give up-to-date contact details to RUSU and to Course Directors
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You need to display all promotion materials prominently within your Department - You need to stress the benefits of representation to students - You need to make sure all students know where to go if they have a problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RUSU will provide all the marketing and promotion materials (for information about the role, elections, and afterwards) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once elected, Course Representatives need to ensure their contact details are well publicised
	YOUR Responsibilities	RUSUs Responsibilities	Course Representatives Responsibilities

e- lection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You need to run and oversee the elections with the materials provided to you - you need to publicise the role and opportunity of Course Representatives - you need to encourage hustings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RUSU will provide you with all the materials you need to run fair elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course Representatives need to get nominated, do hustings, and get elected
i nter ac tion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You will provide adequate notice and convenient times for staff/student committee meetings and be prepared to discuss and resolve students concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RUSU will hold Course Representatives Events - RUSU will keep everyone informed - RUSU will be monitoring the Course Representative scheme on an ongoing basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Course Representative will come to meetings prepared to discuss and resolve students concerns
s up p o r t	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You need to encourage and support all Course Representatives in your Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RUSU will provide a support hotline and email address for use by anyone with any query about student representation. - RUSU will provide training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course Representatives will support or refer any students who go to them with a problem or concern

Timescale

As Course Representatives training will only be provided twice a year it is *vital* you use the timescale shown below. If you have any problems with this please let the Student Development Advisor know via the hotline or email.

November [RUSU meetings with Course Directors](#)

December [FURTHER DATES TO BE CONFIRMED](#)

January '03

February

March

April

May

June

elections

One of the most important aspects of any representative system is the election process. This will take some organisation and preparation time but the results are worth it!

The higher the profile of your course representative elections, the more beneficial they will be. As well as raising general awareness, students who feel actively involved in decision-making processes are more likely to support and use the Course Representative system.

The election system follows this procedure:

Promotion

3

RUSU will provide you with election materials, please display these prominently. Explain why Course Representatives are needed, their importance and the benefits of being one. Encourage students to stand for election and provide information on their job role.

Nominations

3

Make sure that interested students receive nomination forms (provided by RUSU) and return them by the specified date. Allow a minimum of one week for the Nominations deadline.

Hustings

3

Once nominations time has closed, allow the nominated candidates time to 'hust' – that is, explain who they are and why students should vote for them. They needn't say much. It would be best if hustings took place at the beginning of a lecture of that course. It may be that several hustings happen in future years.

Election

3

Ensure elections are conducted fairly. Ballot papers are provided by RUSU and adequate numbers should be printed off on coloured paper (to help reduce the chance of forgery). There should be plenty of opportunity for students to vote – keep encouraging them to vote. Voting will be using the Alternative Vote/Single Transferable Vote system. Each voter should indicate candidates by order of preference.

If there are no candidates they wish to elect, they should choose R.O.N. (Re-Open Nominations). If R.O.N. is elected, the whole election process is re-started with new nominations. An example of the system is shown below but more information will be provided to Course Directors nearer the time.

Name of candidate	Preference
Jo	3
Mary	1
Ken	2
R.O.N.	4

Count

3

Ballot papers should be counted promptly after voting has finished. Candidates are permitted to send an observer to watch the count take place.

Publicity of results

3

Inform all students of the result and display representatives' details around the department. Notify the representatives of dates of meetings and other relevant information about your department, e.g. who updates the notice-boards etc.

Contact details

For any queries
about the Course Representatives Scheme:

HOTLINE **fi**
(0118) 986 5119

EMAIL
volunteer@rdg.ac.uk

Additional Contacts within RUSU:

Sue Breakwell: Student Development Advisor
986 5119 s.breakwell@rdg.ac.uk

Raymond Lashley: VP Education & Representation
986 5130 r.k.lashley@rdg.ac.uk

Amy Higgins: Academic Affairs Officer
986 5135

Nottingham Trent University

Mid-Year Review Questionnaire: Full-Time

Meeting with student representatives for every course, course leader, member of the course team and chaired by the courses manager.

- 1 Do you think the Induction week actually helped you to settle into your coursework quickly?
- 2 Now you are halfway through your year is there anything that you think should have been included to help you improve your progress:
 - (a) before you started your course?
 - (b) during induction?
 - (c) at the end of semester 1?
- 3 What has been the most helpful aspect of:
 - (a) the Student Handbook?
 - (b) your course handbook?
 - (c) your module pack (where applicable)?
- 4 Is there anything else you think should be included in those documents?
- 5
 - (a) are you aware of the Student Charter?
 - (b) do you think this is helpful to you?
 - (c) is there anything else you think should be included?
- 6 To what extent has the tutorial process been valuable so far in:
 - (a) identifying your needs on the course?
 - (b) identifying any further help you need in terms of Learning Support and/or Study Skills?
 - (c) tracking your progress on your course?
 - (d) helping with personal problems?
 - (e) developing your own targets through the Individual Action Plans?
 - (f) developing you as a person?
 - (g) other?
- 7 To what extent have Learning Support and Study Skills had impact on your progress with your coursework?
- 8 To what extent have the library and information technology resources had impact on your progress?
- 9 Have you been aware of any equal opportunities issues since starting your course?
- 10 What helps your progress the most?
- 11 Does anything impede your progress?
- 12 What challenges you the most in your course?

Chelsea College of Art & Design

School of Design

Extract from the Yearly Course Review Process

Please concentrate on the issues that you feel are of most concern to you, at this stage of your progress on the course and also feel free to add anything you think is not sufficiently covered in this framework:

- € **Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation**
Consider the structure of the programme in relation to the subject; What is taught in terms of subject matter – including the Theory programme and the way it is organised.
- € **Teaching Learning and Assessment**
Comment on the way in which the programme is taught, the tutorial structure, your opportunities to learn and the way in which your work has been assessed.
- € **Student Progression and Achievement**
Comment on opportunities for development since last assessment
- € **Student Support**
e.g. – student services, help with language, dyslexia and pastoral support, e.g. career guidance, counselling etc
- € **Library/Learning Resources**
Library stock, facilities, support, course equipment, computers, media, workshops, etc
- € **Quality Management and Assessment**
Comment on the way in which you feel the academic quality of the programme is maintained and improved, e.g. through exercises such as this one and through representation at Subject Committee, Course Committee and Board of Studies level.

We are asking you to divide into discussion groups of equal size, to consider the above topics. Please elect someone to chair the discussion and someone to take notes. After ¾ hour discussion we will be asking you to formulate your considerations into a set of comments indicating both the strengths of the course and those areas that need further development. The groups will then come together and meet with staff to discuss your thoughts which will then be recorded and acted upon whenever possible and appropriate.

The completed forms are compiled and analysed and incorporated into the Annual Course Monitoring Reports. These are submitted to Course Boards of studies and the College Academic Board for consideration and are then sent to the London Institute Academic Standards office. Issues that require action are registered on the Course Monitoring Log in order that they may be dealt with wherever possible.

University of Ulster

Module Evaluation – Agenda for a Module Forum

Module Code:	Module Title:
Module Level:	Module Status:
Module Co-ordinator(s)	Date:
Course(s):	

In supplying this generic module forum agenda, we believe that the main headings (A to G) apply to ALL modules: the details of what is discussed under each heading may vary widely and the sub-headings should be taken as no more than a set of guidelines. Staff should develop their own appropriate approach.

A. Module Literature

Module handout

Study packs – usefulness, improvements

Adequacy/availability of set book(s)

B. Module Content

Logically organised

Relevance to course of study and other modules

C. Delivery of Module Content

Lecture delivery – objectives clearly stated, clear and concise explanations

Lectures – use of presentational materials, handouts, etc

Student participation in classes

Practicals – quality of demonstrating, group working

Seminar/tutorial sessions – usefulness, availability of reading matter, etc

The level (too much/too little) of independent learning expected

D. Educational Resources and Support

Lecture Rooms

Lighting/heating/equipment (projectors, black and white boards, etc)

Laboratory

Instructions/handouts

Provision of equipment

Lecturer/Demonstrator/Technical support

Computing Resources

Availability of hardware and software

Lecturer/Demonstrator/Technical support

Library Resources

Availability

E. Assessment Procedures

Relationship to module outcome

Range, style and number of pieces of assessment

Weighting – coursework v examination and the various components of the coursework

Setting and handing in dates

Return of assignments

F. Feedback to Students

Timing and adequacy of feedback

G. Timetable

Number of formal contact hours (too many/too few)

Balance between lectures/practicals/seminar/tutorials



What Students Think of UH Questionnaire Results 2001/2002



Each year the University surveys student opinion about their courses and the facilities on offer.

Here are some of the results with last years in brackets.

Asked to respond on a five-point scale, students gave a "c" or better in the following numbers:

	2001/2002	
/ My lecturer is clear in his/her explanations.....	90%	(90%)
/ I find his/her approach to teaching helps to motivate me.....	86%	(85%)
/ S/he encourages me to learn effectively.....	88%	(87%)
/ My course provided a learning experience which enabled the outcomes to be achieved.....	93%	(94%)
/ My course was well organised.....	89%	(87%)
/ Independent learning was encouraged.....	93%	(93%)
/ I have learned a lot this year.....	93%	(94%)
/ The quality of the teaching was generally good.....	93%	(93%)
/ The teaching facilities were generally good.....	86%	(88%)
/ The administrative staff were generally supportive.....	87%	(92%)
/ Overall my programme of studies met my expectations.....	87%	(90%)
/ On the whole I would recommend the University to a friend.....	85%	(87%)
/ The opening hours of the LRC met my needs.....	91%	(93%)
/ The range of information resources in the LRC was generally good.....	85%	(85%)
/ The LIS staff were generally helpful.....	87%	(88%)
/ My university residential accommodation was generally good.....	76%	(82%)
/ The careers support, financial, counselling, & health centre services were generally good.....	81-87%	(85%)
/ The nursery, chaplaincy and disability support services were generally good.....	85-88%	(89%)
/ Sports/recreational services were generally good.....	85%	(86%)
/ Student Union facilities were generally good.....	75%	(75%)
/ University catering facilities were generally good.....	76%	(78%)
/ The services provided by Universitybus were generally good.....	70%	(61%)
/ The parking arrangements are acceptable.....	56%	(57%)
/ I felt safe and secure on campus.....	88%	(91%)

Thank you for your input. These results are taken very seriously by the University and help us to focus on continuous improvement of the services we offer to students

A full set of results is available in faculty offices and the SU office

Sheffield Hallam University

You talk - we listen!

Action from the ^{student} experience Survey

- **You** said you wanted to research your assignments at 3 o'clock in the morning

We listened - and we opened our Learning Centres 24 hours a day

- **You** said you wanted to use a computer without having to wait

We listened - and we installed 150 new PCs this year

- **You** said you wanted us to let you know about how we could help you get more money

We listened - and we wrote directly to hundreds of you telling you what you were entitled to

- **You** said you wanted better quality information about our courses

We listened - and we took on a member of staff dedicated to making sure the prospectuses meet your needs

- **You** said you didn't want to have to eat in your hall of residence just because you live there

We listened - and now students in catered accommodation can take their pick from the University's restaurants

- **You** said you wanted a cash machine at City Campus

We listened - and although we can't put one in right away, we are introducing a cashback facility

These are just a few of the many things you told us about in the last Student Experience Survey - an annual piece of work aimed at making sure we provide the best possible services to our students.



Sheffield Hallam University - listening to you!




Loughborough University
School of Sport and Exercise Sciences

Extract from the Module Handbook (O2PEC102: Applied Sports Science – Year 3 Cricket)

MODULE EVALUATION

As a result of student feedback, and discussion with teaching staff, the following changes have been made to the module from last year:

- ∉ To deliver the module content in ONE double period rather than TWO single periods.
- ∉ To change the coursework assessment by increasing the word limit (albeit only marginally) for the 'project' assignment.
- ∉ The small group presentation to be assessed and carry a 10% weighted mark.



Published by
Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN)
The Network Centre, Innovation Close,
York Science Park, York, YO10 5ZF

For more information, contact the
LTSN at the above address or
Tel: 01904 754500 Fax: 01904 754 599
Email: enquiries@ltsn.ac.uk
www.ltsn.ac.uk

Collecting and using
student feedback

A guide to good practice
ISBN 1-904190-55-3
£22.00

© LTSN, January 2004

All rights reserved. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, criticism or review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any other means, graphic, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, taping or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing of the publishers.