

## SECTION 12: STUDENT FEEDBACK

### 12.0 Student Evaluation of Teaching

See also Centre for Educational Development sections on Student Feedback, National Student Survey and First Year Experience Survey and for information on postgraduate experience surveys go to:

<http://www.gub.ac.uk/sites/PostgraduateCentre/PostgraduateCommunity/HaveYourSay/PostgraduateExperienceSurveys/>

#### (i) Aims and Objectives

It is a University requirement that every School and Institute must have procedures in place for collecting student views on both teaching and modules. The student evaluation of teaching consists of two key areas; the evaluation of the module and the evaluation of the lecturer or tutor. Schools are required to ensure that students are clear when they are evaluating the module and how it is delivered and when they are evaluating the lecturer or tutor's approach to teaching. The student evaluation of teaching is to be conducted each time a module is run.

These procedures should:

- (a) meet the requirements of the University's academic quality assurance framework (see section 4);
- (b) give students an opportunity to comment on:
  - the quality of teaching provided by individual teachers
  - the design and content of modules, their aims and learning outcomes and whether or not these were achieved
  - the organisation and methods of teaching
  - learning resources for the module
  - methods of assessment
  - the student's own assessment of his or her progress and mastery of the subject; and
- (c) provide both teaching staff and managers with meaningful and useful information.

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that the School's procedures are followed.

#### (ii) Format of questionnaires

There is no standard University-wide format for questionnaires, because circumstances and needs vary between disciplines. Schools are therefore responsible for designing their own questionnaires. However, there are certain core questions which should be included:

##### (i) The evaluation of the lecturer/tutor (Appendix 29):

The proposed questions for the evaluation of the lecturer cover the following areas:

- a. Preparation and organisation
- b. Explanation of terms and concepts
- c. Provision of advice and support to students
- d. Overall satisfaction

##### (ii) The evaluation of the module (Appendix 30):

The proposed questions for the evaluation of the module cover the following areas:

- a. Preparation and organisation
- b. Handouts and learning resources
- c. Assessment and feedback
- d. Overall satisfaction

In addition to the core questions, Schools will probably wish to ask some more subject-specific questions on, for example, project work, presentation skills, field or practical work or group activities as appropriate to the individual context.

Questions should be kept simple, each involving one clear idea, and should be answerable on the basis of the student's observation.

It is for Schools to decide whether to use the same form for both teacher and module evaluation, or whether to have two separate forms. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to use a series of questionnaires, dealing separately with lectures, tutorials and modules.

Educational Development can help Schools devise suitable questionnaires, if required, and can provide further guidance on the core questions.

Schools are recommended to review the format of their questionnaires at least once every five years, in consultation with Educational Development.

(iii) Conducting the student evaluation of teaching

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for distributing and collecting questionnaires. Care should be taken to ensure that students' anonymity is protected. Members or staff who deliver or teach the module should not play an active role in the evaluation process. They should however be aware of the questions which are to be used in the student evaluation of teaching and they should be fully engaged with the process.

Ideally, all students taking a module (or at least attending the class at which the questionnaires are distributed) should be invited to complete a questionnaire. A sample survey may be conducted in very large classes, provided that, if there are more than 30 students in the class, at least 30 students are surveyed. If only a sample of students in the class is being surveyed, students not included in the sample are entitled to ask for the opportunity to complete a questionnaire. If machine-readable questionnaires are being used, the survey should be a comprehensive one.

(iv) Distribution of results

The Head of School and the Directors of Education have the right to see all evaluation questionnaires and the analysis of them. Individual members of staff should have access to their results. School staff and the School Education Committee should have access to summary module evaluation data and anonymised teacher evaluation data. Members of staff who are responsible for appraisals should have access to lecturer student evaluation data for those staff whom they appraise.

The teacher evaluation element may be used as part of the appraisal process.

The analysis of teaching evaluation questionnaires is an important part of the evidence required for module review (See Section 4), and must be fed into the module review process.

(v) Responding to the data

Individual Schools and subject areas should clearly identify who is responsible for acting on any issues or concerns emerging from the student evaluation of teaching. This includes clearly outlining ways in which student evaluation of teaching data can be acted upon. Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that any actions arising from the evaluation of teaching are properly addressed. Directors of Education are responsible for policy and practice development associated with the Student Evaluation of Teaching. The School Education Committee will support the Head of School and Director of Education to identify and implement actions emerging from the student evaluation of teaching.

(v) Frequency and timing

Under the academic quality assurance framework (see Section 4), a module must be evaluated every time it is taught.

If teacher evaluation is to be conducted as a separate exercise, the Head of School will decide how often it is to be carried out.

The timing of the exercise is a matter for the School to decide: questionnaires may be distributed at the final lecture or part-way through the module, for example.

(vi) Service and access teaching

Where staff from one School provide teaching elsewhere in the University, the Head of the "host" School may require that student evaluation of the teaching be carried out and that the results be made available to him or her.

Where staff from a School provide teaching of a franchised module or access course, the Head of School may require student evaluation of the teaching to be carried out and the results to be made available to him or her.

(vii) Feedback

Students should be provided with timely information regarding the student evaluation of teaching. At the level of the module, students should have access to summary data, and details of any issues arising from and outcomes of module evaluation. With respect to the evaluation of the teacher, students should be provided with timely anonymised, aggregated data which is presented in a manner which allows the student to ascertain how teaching staff have been evaluated within their subject area.

**12.1 Staff/Student Consultative Committees****A. Function and purpose**

1. It is a University requirement that every School and Institute must establish at least one Staff/Student Consultative Committee (SSCC). Multi-subject Schools may, if appropriate, establish separate subject-based SSCCs.
2. The effective operation of SSCCs across the University shall be the joint responsibility of the relevant Heads of School, the Students' Union and the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs. The Head of School shall be responsible for ensuring the effective operation of all SSCCs within their School.
3. The purpose of SSCCs is:
  - (i) To ensure that Schools and Institutes receive evaluation and feedback from students on the quality of their academic provision and associated activities.
  - (ii) To provide a mechanism whereby Heads of Schools and Institutes can seek the views of students on matters of policy related to course development and review.
  - (iii) To enable discussion of areas of concern for students in terms of academic provision and related activities.
4. The competence of an SSCC relates to the quality of academic provision in the relevant school or institute. This includes curriculum, teaching and learning, as well as associated matters and activities within a School such as guidance, resources, feedback, accommodation and School communities.

5. The Head of School (or nominee) is responsible for ensuring that any matter arising from an SSCC which requires more general consideration within the University or action outside the School's remit is forwarded to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. The Director will bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate officer or body and will monitor the action that is taken to deal with it.
6. It is expected that Schools should involve their SSCCs in curriculum review (see Section 4) where possible: student representatives on module and programme review groups, for example, should ideally be members of a relevant SSCC. Written feedback from an SSCC can be part of the evidence used in curriculum review.

B. Membership

1. An SSCC will be made up of equal numbers of the academic staff and students of the School. 'Students' in this context means registered part-time and full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students of the University, including students in the University Colleges and in the Institutes of Theology and Professional Legal Studies.
2. The academic staff membership of the SSCC will include the Head of School or nominee.
3. Student representatives – who should include undergraduate and postgraduate students - will be elected by their peers. Heads of Schools are responsible for ensuring that elections are conducted in a fair and representational manner, and according to the election procedures of the Students' Union Constitution.
4. Heads of Schools must ensure that elections take place as early as possible in the first semester, and normally no later than the end of the third week of term.
5. Elections for student members should be operated in partnership with the Students' Union. The Union should be informed, in advance of the beginning of term, of all relevant dates relating to the opening and closure of nominations and the staging of elections.
6. The Students' Union, in partnership with Academic and Student Affairs and the Schools, shall run a promotional campaign at the beginning of each academic year, encouraging students to run for election to their SSCC.
7. Students elected to SSCCs will be known as Course Representatives.
8. The Head of School must ensure that, insofar as it is possible, all students within the School are represented at SSCC level (including, but not limited to, undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research and international students).
9. Schools should, where possible, ensure that any societies based within the School are represented on the SSCC. A list of School-based societies is available from the Vice President Clubs and Societies of the Students' Union.
10. An SSCC may co-opt further students, in addition to the elected ones, to ensure that all areas of work are covered.
11. An SSCC can invite additional students or staff to be in regular attendance at its meetings, if appropriate, and can invite any member of the University to a specific meeting if it thinks he or she can make a useful contribution to a particular discussion. This includes, but is not limited to the Academic and Student Affairs, Estates, Information Services and Student Plus Directorates.
12. The Students' Union President and the Vice President Education shall be ex-officio members of all SSCCs.

C. Role of the School Representative

1. The students of each School shall elect a 'School Representative', who shall act as the student chair or co-chair of their SSCC.
2. The School Representative's primary role will be to channel communication from the School's students to the SSCC and the Students' Union, and vice versa.
3. The School Representative shall be a member of the Students' Union Council.
4. School Representative elections shall be managed by the Students' Union, in line with the Students' Union's Constitution.
5. The School Representative (or nominee) shall also represent the students of the School on the School Board, the School Education Committee and Academic Board. The SSCC may select other representatives to sit on these committees if the School Representative is unable to do so for any reason.
6. The School Representative shall normally organise meetings with the other chair(s) or co-chair(s) of SSCCs and, where appropriate, any societies within the School, in advance of any of the above meetings.

D. Conduct of meetings

1. The School Representative shall normally serve as the chair or co-chair of the SSCC. In Schools with more than one SSCC, the student chair or co-chair shall be appointed at the first meeting each year; the student chair (or nominee) will also sit on the corresponding Education Committee within the School.
2. It is a requirement that every SSCC must meet at least twice in each semester. Dates of meetings should be set as far in advance as possible and notified to all members. Meetings should normally take place in the four weeks preceding meetings of the Academic Board. Dates for meetings of the Academic Board are available from the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs.
3. Each SSCC will agree its own procedures for calling additional meetings.
4. A written agenda will normally be issued seven days before each meeting to members of the SSCC and the Students' Union. Any member may have items included on the agenda, providing they are within the committee's competence.

Each SSCC should agree its own procedures and deadlines for submission of items for the agenda and for circulating the agenda to members. Students must be notified about the meeting before the agenda is drafted, to enable any relevant items they wish to raise to be included.

5. The School shall facilitate the circulation of an email to all students on behalf of the course representative, in order to gather feedback regarding issues of concern to students.
6. The School Representative or student chair shall be responsible for liaising with the other course representatives and the Head of School (or nominee) in the preparation of the agenda for each meeting.
7. There will be, normally in written form, reports to each meeting of any relevant matters which have arisen since a previous meeting.
8. The School should ensure that student input is requested through the SSCC into draft policies or changes to procedures, prior to approval by the School and / or the University. It is also expected that Schools will facilitate regular discussion regarding the other forms of feedback that the School receives, including the National Student Survey and other relevant surveys,

External Examiner reports, the Annual Programme Review and Educational Enhancement Process reports.

E. Reporting mechanisms

1. The Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs and the Students' Union is responsible for monitoring the functioning of SSCCs, and for managing the database of members.
2. Each School must return the following information to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs and the Vice President Education of the Students' Union, normally by the end of the fourth week of term:
  - The names, contact details and constituency of student members of SSCCs;
  - Schools should indicate how student members have been selected, i.e. those elected in competition, those elected unopposed, those co-opted by the SSCC or those selected by the School;
  - The name and contact details for the SSCC liaison officer;
  - The name and contact details for staff members of the SSCC;
  - The date of the first meeting.

This information should be updated throughout the year if the membership changes.

3. The School shall ensure that the work and outcomes of the SSCC are promoted as widely as possible, including, but not limited to, sections in module and programme handbooks and the School's intranet and internet sites.
4. Minutes of all SSCC meetings must be kept, and should identify any actions that have arisen as a result of the discussions. The School will ensure that SSCC minutes are normally made available within two weeks of the meeting.

These minutes (or a summary, where appropriate) should be communicated to all students and staff within the School. The School must also ensure that the minutes are communicated to the Vice-President Education of the Students' Union and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. Students in the School or Institute are entitled to have access to the minutes through the School website.

5. The Students' Union President will make a summary report to each meeting of Academic Board on the operation of, and matters arising from, SSCCs.
6. The Head of School should inform the SSCC at the earliest possible opportunity of any decisions taken within the School relating to academic provision.
7. The SSCC shall have the power to request the addition of an agenda item to a meeting of the School Management Board. The School Representative or student chair (or nominees) shall be entitled to attend the meeting for this item.
8. The School Representative (and student chairs, where applicable) shall provide a report, each semester, to the School Management Board regarding the work of the SSCC.
9. As far as possible, the School must ensure that students are represented on other school committees including School Boards and Education and Teaching and Learning Committees.
10. School committees with student members shall have the ability to have 'reserved business items' to discuss issues that relate to a individual or identifiable group of students and/or staff.

F. Support

1. The School shall provide an SSCC section on the School's website. This will include an archive of minutes and contact details for all representatives within the School, as well as relevant contact details for Students' Union representatives.

2. A notice-board must be dedicated to SSCCs within each School to enable communication of matters such as the provision of details of forthcoming meetings and the highlighting of issues of relevance.
  3. The names of course representatives and their specific e-mail addresses should be prominently displayed on appropriate School noticeboards and websites, in order that students know who their representatives are.
  4. Course representatives will be supported in order to enable the gathering of feedback from students within the School; this shall include the provision of access to 'all-student email' facilities and authorisation to address students at the beginning of lectures, tutorials and other classes.
  5. Where possible, the School shall provide an online discussion forum to facilitate discussion of issues of relevance amongst course representatives and other students within the School.
  6. Where possible, course representatives will have a dedicated, generic e-mail address for the purposes of SSCC work.
  7. Each SSCC will have a secretary assigned by the Head of School.
  8. The Head of School will appoint a student liaison officer from academic staff to provide advice and guidance with SSCC procedures and other related issues assigned by the Head of School.
  9. The Students' Union, in partnership with the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs, will produce a handbook and will organise training sessions each year for course representatives. The date(s) of this session will be communicated to Schools in advance of the beginning of term.  
  
The Students' Union will also develop a programme of continuous training for course representatives, based upon an annual needs analysis. The Vice President Education will provide further information about these sessions, as required.
  10. The Students' Union shall deliver, at least once per semester, a Course Representatives' Conference, to bring together representatives from across the University, to discuss issues affecting the institution as a whole. The Students' Union shall report the outcomes of these Conferences to the Academic Board.
  11. The Students' Union shall produce a monthly bulletin regarding issues of interest to course representatives; this bulletin shall also include further information regarding new or proposed changes to University policies.
  12. The Students' Union, in partnership with the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs, shall produce an online resource centre for course representatives, including information regarding University policies and departments.
  13. The Students' Union, in partnership with the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs and the Directorate of Information Services, will provide support to course representatives with regard to preparing for SSCC meetings, accessing appropriate University papers and the use of online survey software in order to gain student feedback.
- G. Resolving disputes
1. A Head of School who acts contrary to the advice of an SSCC must inform the SSCC of the action. Where appropriate the Head of School may inform the SSCC about the reasons behind this. It is good practice for Schools to seek the views of SSCCs on any major issues with implications for students before a decision is taken.

2. If there is a disagreement which cannot be resolved within an SSCC, it may appeal to the School Board and seek the assistance of the Vice-President (Education) of the Students' Union.
3. If the School Board is unable to resolve the matter, the SSCC may appeal to a special appeal panel consisting of a Dean, the Students' Union President and Vice-President (Education) and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. The panel may seek any specialist advice, including from an external subject specialist, if required. The panel's decision will be final.

## **12.2 Academic Board**

Academic Board functions as a central University Staff/Student Consultative Committee. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss issues, especially those related to learning and teaching, which relate to central University provision or policy.

It is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students), and membership consists of student representatives and staff members. It reports to the Education Committee.

## **12.3 Postgraduate Forum**

The Postgraduate Forum is a central University Staff/Student Consultative Committee which enables discussion, evaluation and feedback on postgraduate taught and research provision, student experience, and associated activities related to postgraduate students.

It is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduates), and membership includes student representatives from postgraduate taught and research programmes. It reports to the Academic Board.