

ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SESSION 2010-11

School: Classics

Faculty: Arts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY																		
Aspect	National Student Survey						Undergraduate Programme Experience Survey						Postgraduate Programme Experience Survey					
	2010-11		2009-10		2008-09		2010-11		2009-10		2008-09		2010-11		2009-10		2008-09	
	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni
Overall satisfaction	90	86	84	82	87	84	87	83	95	84	84	82	100	82	75	78	75	80
Teaching	97	88	82	85	84	86	88	83	93	83	87	82	83	84	92	81	92	81
Assessment & feedback	79	65	58	61	56	61	59	56	64	57	59	54	97	68	80	63	70	62
Academic support	91	77	78	74	77	75	70	68	83	68	71	66	94	79	75	76	92	76
Organisation & management	89	82	90	79	83	79	76	83	81	73	78	70	100	77	67	73	58	75
Learning resources	87	87	77	85	78	86	75	77	66	76	74	77	94	82	91	81	91	82
Personal development	83	78	58	76	57	78	60	65	64	63	60	62	100	70	67	68	50	67

Scores in each category are expressed as a percentage of the number of respondents who mostly or definitely agreed with a range of statements (score 4 or 5)

Impact of 2009-10 actions	Our NSS results for 2010-11 show a considerable improvement on 2009-10, with increases of 20 or more percentile points in the areas of Assessment and Feedback and Personal development. These were identified as areas of weakness in the NSS results from the previous two years, and the department has been placing special emphasis on initiatives designed to improve performance in these areas: e.g. the introduction of a five-week marking return pledge and exam feedback slips; methods of assessment and outreach opportunities designed to help students develop enhanced self-confidence and employability skills; and a series of career development events for level 3 students. The overall improvement in satisfaction appears to reflect the results of these actions.
Achievements in 2010-11	NSS scores which placed Classics first in the University for Teaching and Academic support, and also first in the Faculty of Arts for Personal development and Learning resources. Successful implementation of new initiatives in the areas of Assessment and feedback and Personal development (see table overleaf for details). Successful introduction of a 40-credit dissertation module. Extremely positive comments from External Examiners on the quality of our provision in teaching and assessment in general, and in particular on our use of innovative forms of assessment and the introduction of exam feedback slips.
Main actions for 2011-12	Build on NSS success by continuing to promote and develop initiatives in Assessment and feedback and Personal development. Introduce a three-week marking return pledge in place of last year's five-week pledge. Explore more effective ways of returning exam feedback – e.g. via the VLE rather than paper slips. Ensure that the benefits of the skills strand now embedded at the heart of our Classical Civilisation programme are also extended to language students by 1) enrolling all level 2 language student on our skills module, CLAS 2800 Evidence and Enquiry in Classics and 2) developing a suitable independent research module for these students to move on to at level 3. Achieve further integration between language and Classical Civilisation programmes and better support for the scholarly development of language students, by establishing linguistic pathways within existing Classical Civilisation modules.

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Aspect	Progress with actions in response to 2009-10 feedback and indication of impact	Issues raised in 2010-11 feedback	Planned response in 2011-12
Overall satisfaction	<p>Feedback from 2009-10 showed a need to improve in the areas of Assessment and feedback and Personal development, with particular concerns at level 3 reflected in our NSS results. We therefore undertook the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced a departmental pledge to return assessed work within a five-week time-frame. • Introduced exam feedback slips. • Introduced ERIK (Employability, Research, Impact and Knowledge), designed to articulate and enhance provision of personal skills development and employability. • Held a series of dedicated sessions for level 3 students to enhance awareness of skills developed at Leeds and relate these to employment opportunities. • Continued innovative forms of assessment. 	<p>Our NSS results for 2010-11 show a considerable improvement on 2009-10, with increases of 20 or more percentile points in the areas of Assessment and Feedback and Personal support. This suggests that our efforts in these areas have been successful, and should be continued or increased. However, our UGPS results have fallen slightly on 2009-10. This is partly a consequence of having scored exceptionally well on this survey in the previous year, but also partly the result of difficulties affecting return of work by a particular member of staff. The ability of staff to deliver an exceptional student experience was clearly compromised in 2010-11 by the ongoing uncertainty over the future of the department and a Student: Staff ratio of over 30:1.</p>	<p>We will seek to sustain our success in the 2010-11 NSS via the following further improvements to our Assessment and feedback procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A three-week marking return pledge in place of last year's five-week pledge. • Exploration of more effective ways of returning exam feedback – e.g. via the VLE. <p>We will also enhance students' experience of Personal development by extending the skills development strand now embedded at the heart of our Classical Civilisation programme to language students. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrol all level 2 language students on our skills module, CLAS 2800 Evidence and Enquiry in Classics • Develop an independent research module for these students to move on to at level 3.
Teaching	<p>ERIK initiative successfully implemented, providing students on CLAS2600 Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i> with the opportunity to present their work in schools. This has enhanced personal development, especially in presenting skills, and developed students' sense of the value of their work to a wider audience. External examiners noted that new language modules have 'bedded down' very successfully.</p>	<p>The quality of the department's teaching and its close links with staff research interests were both praised by external examiners. NSS and UGPS results are both excellent in this area, suggesting that students share this perception. The effects of 'under-resourcing and over-stretching' were noted by one examiner, who praised the department for minimising its impact on students, but hoped that it could be properly addressed by the appointment of more staff with University support.</p>	<p>ERIK initiative will this year be extended to offer the same presentation opportunities to students on and CLAS2700 Homer's <i>Iliad</i>. Resourcing issues are being addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of new teaching fellows. • Staff training and development. <p>We will also aim in 2011-12 to achieve better support for the scholarly development of language students by establishing linguistic pathways within existing Classical Civilisation modules.</p>
Assessment and feedback	<p>Five-week return pledge on assessed work and use of exam feedback slips were both implemented successfully, and their impact is reflected in our greatly improved NSS results. Where work was not returned during the agreed time frame, this was the result of personal difficulties experienced by members of staff, exacerbated by a high SSF. These issues are now being resolved via close monitoring of the</p>	<p>The department's standards of assessment were consistently described by our external examiners as appropriate to the awards granted and in line with other UK HEIs. Our use of innovative assessment methods was described as 'in the vanguard of national practice'. The quality of our written feedback was praised, and the new exam feedback forms described as an 'excellent innovation'. Students in TSEC and SSF have also expressed</p>	<p>Our main actions to improve the quality of our Assessment and feedback in 2011-12 will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A three-week marking return pledge in place of last year's five-week pledge. • Exploration of more effective ways of returning exam feedback – e.g. via the VLE. <p>We have also adjusted the feedback forms used for exams, essays and dissertations to help make the rationale behind marks awarded and the</p>

	staff concerned and appointment of new staff.	appreciation for the new exam feedback forms.	process of moderation clearer to students.
Academic support	Use of the Leeds for Life system is now fully implemented in the department, supported by our compulsory first-year skills module, CLAS 1025. This is instilling a culture of LfL webform use throughout our undergraduate cohort, ensuring that personal tutor meetings are more targeted and effective. We have also introduced dedicated module advice sessions to help students make sensible module choices for level 2 and level 3.	NSS results show considerable improvement in the area of academic support, suggesting that our initiatives in this area have been successful. UGPS results show a decline, however, especially in the area of advice regarding module choices. This suggests that we could enhance our provision in this area for level 1 students when they arrive, and when they make the transition into level 2.	A significant change for 2011-12 includes extending our personal tutoring arrangements to provide full parenting for all Classics JH students. This appears to have been implemented successfully. We are also seeking to enhance our provision of study and research skills for language students by ensuring that they get the benefits of the skills development strand now embedded at the heart of our Classical Civilisation programme.
Organisation and management	We hoped to be able to implement a fully developed Attendance Monitoring system in 2010-11, but were unable to do this due to uncertainty over which School Classics would become part of in the long term. Organisation and management were also affected more generally in 2010-11 by a temporary move to a different building for the summer term.	NSS results are strong and stable in this area, in spite of disruptions (see box, left, for details). This is a testament to the commitment of both administrative and academic staff to providing the best possible student experience in difficult circumstances. UGPS results are somewhat weaker, showing some dissatisfaction with the communication of change – e.g. lecture cancellations or room changes.	A shift from a departmental office to a School office (currently Humanities) is allowing some improvements to provision – e.g. longer office hours, better monitoring of attendance data, sending letters to students with poor attendance. Administrative and academic staff are also making fuller and more effective use of the VLE to communicate changes to class times or assessment hand-in arrangements.
Learning resources	Staff are now making greater use of the University library's online course readings service in the VLE, with proactive support from the library. We continue to ensure that students are aware of the library resources available to them via training in CLAS 1025 Academic Skills and CLAS 2800 Evidence and Enquiry. The department's library continues to be widely used and appreciated by students.	NSS results show considerable improvement in all areas of learning resources provision, suggesting that growing use of the VLE and dedicated library training has been effective. UGPS results also show improved satisfaction with learning resources, although with some room for further enhancement.	We will continue to develop use of the online course readings service. This is a cumulative exercise, with most modules building up a growing stock of scanned reading materials year on year, which can be rolled over for future use. We will also continue to ensure appropriate library training through our skills modules, and further extend this training to our language students via enrolment on CLAS 2800 Evidence and Enquiry.
Personal development	Major initiatives in this area in 2010-11 were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced ERIK (Employability, Research, Impact and Knowledge), designed to articulate and enhance provision of personal skills development and employability. Held a series of dedicated sessions for level 3 students to enhance awareness of skills developed at Leeds and relate these to employment opportunities. We also supported the development of individual students via our personal tutoring system, and participated in the Faculty of Arts' Undergraduate Research Scholarship scheme.	NSS results show enormous improvement in student satisfaction in the area of Personal development. Students on the modules CLAS2600 Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i> and CLAS2700 Homer's <i>Iliad</i> took up the opportunity offered by the ERIK initiative to present their work in local schools. The level 3 development and employability sessions were well attended, and students reported that they had found them very enjoyable and helpful. UGPS results are again weaker, suggesting that further improvement could be made here.	Both the ERIK initiative and our successful level 3 development and employability sessions will now become a regular feature of our provision. Our plans to extend our established skills development strand to language students as well as Classical Civilisation students will ensure that our full cohort of students are able to see the improvements in their personal skills as they progress through their degrees. More effective use of our personal tutoring system, now that it is fully integrated with Leeds for Life, should help to ensure that level 2 students are able to recognise developments in their personal skills.

<p>Postgraduate provision</p>	<p>A fuller and more formalised induction programme was introduced, and the expected schedule for the production of written work was spelt out in greater detail in the programme documentation. PG students also benefited from the department's wider efforts to return assessed work within a shorter timeframe. The department increased the opportunities available for PG students to take an active role within the life of the department – e.g. by offering more opportunities to take on teaching or to participate in outreach and EKT activities, and fuller training to support this. In response to previous PGPS scores showing concerns around personal development and improved confidence, the department introduced a tailored personal tutoring system for its PG students.</p>	<p>Programme survey results for PG students were excellent, with scores of 83% or above on all questions and an overall satisfaction rating of 100%. The sample size of six responses means that the results must be treated with some caution, as must any comparisons with previous results. But huge improvements in satisfaction with feedback, organisation and personal development seem notable enough to be afforded real significance. These also match up with areas in which the department has made particular efforts to improve provision. The aim for 2011-12 will therefore be to build on and enhance a successful established trajectory for PG provision.</p>	<p>Enhancements to the system of personal tutor meetings for PG students this year include a new schedule for the sessions which better reflects PG needs, and automatic reminders to PTs to hold the sessions. PG students have also now been integrated into the Leeds for Life system, already used across the department for undergraduates. Training for PGs involved in teaching has been improved, and now dovetails with University-provided training. We will also be consulting directly with PG students on the relationship between their own research and the research identity of the department as a whole, with the aim of helping students to understand and articulate their role as active contributors to a dynamic research community.</p>
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