

ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SESSION 2013-14

Faculty of Arts: School of English

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY																		
Aspect	National Student Survey						Undergraduate Programme Experience Survey						Postgraduate Programme Experience Survey					
	2012-13		2011-12		2010-11		2012-13		2011-12		2010-11		2012-13		2011-12		2010-11	
	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni
Overall satisfaction	85	87	92	87	94	86	85	85	86	85	89	83	91	87	90	84	82	82
Teaching	91	89	95	90	97	88	90	85	88	84	93	83	96	87	95	85	85	84
Assessment & feedback	67	71	74	69	76	65	62	59	65	61	57	56	81	75	77	69	74	68
Academic support	76	81	75	80	80	77	65	72	65	72	62	68	87	85	88	80	79	79
Organisation & management	90	84	92	83	93	82	77	73	85	74	79	83	88	85	85	80	80	77
Learning resources	88	90	88	88	84	87	78	81	77	78	72	77	89	86	88	83	86	82
Personal development	76	81	73	81	82	78	53	69	53	68	50	65	85	77	74	71	74	70
Sector position		57/147	35/109	51/150	24/103	46/151												

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)

<p>Impact of 2011-12 actions</p>	<p>The 2012-13 NSS saw a drop in overall satisfaction from 92 in 2011-12 to 85 in 2012-13 (these percentage figures group our three SH Programmes together and they measure how many students either strongly agree or agree with the questions they're asked); marked dissatisfaction within SH English Language (with a disappointing overall satisfaction of 42) contributed to the decreases in most categories when the statistics are aggregated. Disaggregated, overall satisfaction for our SH English Language and Literature Programme is still high at 90, overall satisfaction for English Literature and Theatre Studies is still high at 92. A modest increase from 73 to 76 for Personal Development perhaps testifies to renewed attention to Personal Tutoring and LeedsforLife but this is nonetheless an area that still requires pressing attention alongside assessment and feedback (67% levels of satisfaction) and academic support (76% levels of satisfaction). Undergraduate Programme Surveys (completed by students at Levels 1 and 2) have stayed more or less consistent with last year's results. Level 1 students recorded 96% satisfaction, Level 2 recorded 86% satisfaction in 2012-13. Levels of satisfaction with marking criteria, assessment and feedback are again disappointing even though overall satisfaction with both Single and Joint Honours Programmes is high (92% for SH Level 1, 91 for JH Level 1, a disappointing 80 for Level 2 and 100% for Level 2 JH students in the Undergraduate Programme Surveys).</p> <p>Postgraduate Programme Surveys reveals increased levels of satisfaction across all our MA Programmes and with an overall satisfaction of 91% including 96% for teaching. In terms of Undergraduate Programme Surveys and National Student Surveys the responses to assessment, feedback, personal and academic support indicate the need to find alternative ways of addressing and re-evaluating delivery, perceptions and understanding of the function of feedback from both staff and student perspectives.</p>
<p>Achievements in 2012-13</p>	<p>Undergraduate</p> <p>Our new and revised undergraduate programmes (English Language and Literature (Q300), English Literature (Q306), and English Language and Linguistics (Q1Q3) all recruited to target with AAA entry requirements; these revisions to SH and JH programmes help us to maintain our commitment to English Language provision and to increased student choice and specialization for students wishing to study literature alone. We implemented the shift from 100% exam assessment to our literature core modules to a mixed essay/exam assessment in response to student discussion and dissatisfaction (Student Staff Forum, module questionnaires, Programme and National Student Surveys); these changes are subject to ongoing review in discussion with both students and staff. Post-National Student Survey 2012-13, we undertook a rigorous and supportive review of English Language and we have implemented a number of changes and revisions relating to the provision and planning of teaching, dissertations, feedback, and personal tutoring to ensure clearer communication between members of staff and students. In September we appointed six new interns to support the Student Staff Forum (covering Peer Mentoring, Leeds for Life, Student-led Change, Widening Participation) and to help liaise with staff and students.</p> <p>Postgraduate</p> <p>We revised the number of option modules offered in order to support module recruitment. We dropped core modules for the majority of schemes and replaced them with a substantially enhanced Research Methods module. This provided improved structure for the Dissertation schedule and 'Impact' and employability/careers are now embedded within it. Electronic submission for Research Methods assignments was introduced. Programme Co-ordinators are more involved in the delivery of the module to help distribute workload more evenly. The end-of-year Symposium was established as a compulsory element of the module. The Excellence Scholarship was introduced alongside the new University-wide Alumni Bursary. The Charles Barber Award was introduced for the best MA Dissertation from an International student. Scholarship application advice was made available at Open Days. A PG Events page was created on the VLE.</p>

<p>Main actions for 2013-14</p>	<p>At UG Level: (1) In response to concerns raised in the 2013-13 National Student Survey, we will, in discussion with students, Student Staff Forum and Student Interns, focus on improving the visibility of marking criteria, clarity of assessment, feedback, personal development and academic support through the development of online resources (examples of essays, dissertations, examinations to support marking criteria), one to one writing workshops, ensuring information about learning resources and support across Faculty and University is clearly communicated.</p> <p>(2) We would like to ensure and maintain clear and regular communication with the whole student body through SSF and Student Interns and continue to embed the principles of the University's Partnership Agreement. Enhanced communication will include additional Welcome Back meetings for all year groups in Semester 2 with tailored advice for semester 2, the Summer and planning ahead to Semester 1 - or graduation. These meetings will include: advice about module choice planning, ensuring that LfL volunteering, internships and work opportunities are clearly accessible; advice about the specific function of Personal Tutor meetings for Semester 2 at Levels 1, 2, 3. We will continue to work to establish the clearest avenues of communication: the School's Web and IT Working Group will continue to work with Interns, with the English Society and with the Student Staff Forum on web-based communications and to investigate management and uses of Twitter and Facebook in addition to email/VLE and notice boards and plasma screens in the School itself to ensure the clearest and most comprehensive communication.</p> <p>(3) Further embedding of employability in relation to developing critical and intellectual skills in the curriculum. These will include the introduction of the 'Students into Schools' module and we will increase supportive advice for students choosing to undertake a Final Year Project; we will further embed support for module choices, including advice about the new range of 'Discovery Theme' modules, opportunities for Study Abroad or Work Placement in the broadening of your degree.</p> <p>(4) To discuss contact hours. Working with the Intern for Student-led change, the School Rep and Student Staff Forum, we will solicit views from the student body and from Schools across the University about peer assisted learning and peer-led 'pre-seminar seminars' with a view to implementation in 2014-15.</p> <p>At PGT Level: Programme Surveys indicate high levels of student satisfaction but timely return of assessed work will need to be looked at. We plan to consider provision changes for 2015-16 (marketing materials and approval processes to be undertaken this year). We will be introducing another PGT Scholarship. Planned further integration of Theatre Programme into the structure of the Literature Programme will take place in readiness for next session and agreement has been secured to integrate Theatre Studies programme into Research Methods. We continue to investigate additions to Dissertation provision, to increase their flexibility and range. We plan enhancement of marking criteria in discussion with Student Reps. Examples of students' essays/dissertations to be uploaded to VLE as online resource to exemplify marking criteria.</p>
<p>Summary of student involvement in the production of this Action Plan</p>	<p>We had preliminary discussions via Inductions for our six Interns and one-to-one meetings with our Student Rep and various Interns in September to outline concerns about NSS and Programme Surveys about marking criteria, assessment and feedback and Personal Tutoring via LeedsForLife. The Action Plan was discussed with the School Rep, with student reps and with the Student-led change Intern and the concerns of NSS and Programme Surveys were discussed at an Induction for Student Staff Forum. The Action Plan was written, sent to the School Rep, members of Student Staff Forum, was sent to the School Rep and the Student Staff Forum for any further discussion in the December meeting. It was then seen by the Faculty Taught Student Education Committee, a sub-group of the Taught Student Education Board, discussed at the School's Annual Health Check with the School Rep and was re-sent to the School Rep for final clarifications.</p>

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School:

Faculty:

Aspect	Progress with actions in response to 2011-12 feedback and indication of impact	Issues raised in 2012-13 feedback	Planned response in 2013-14
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<p style="text-align: center;">Overall satisfaction</p>	<p>We noted a drop in overall satisfaction for English Literature and Theatre Studies from 100% to 92% - dissatisfactions with assessment and feedback as well as relatively modest returns (only half the cohort attended to NSS) were responsible but we don't have enough comments in NSS to explain why. In spite of efforts to address issues in English Language we saw a vertiginous drop in overall satisfaction for that Programme.</p> <p>Tutor consultations and introduction of tailored talks to support module choice has had little impact as yet although take up for the talks was minimal.</p> <p>Overall satisfaction remains more or less the same in Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programme Surveys. The UG Programme Survey, in line with National Student Survey dips with regard to marking, assessments and feedback in particular. The Partnership Agreement exists in principle but consciousness raising remains a challenge!</p> <p>JH Programmes at National Student Survey were particularly positive (100% for English-French, English-Linguistics).</p> <p>A modest increase for personal development indicates a good if slow move in right direction and as a result of dedicated efforts of the Director for Personal Tutoring.</p>	<p>National Student Survey. We saw a disappointing drop in Overall Satisfaction from 92 to 85 (these are aggregated figures with statistics for all three programmes added together). Disaggregated, we get a clearer picture. Overall Satisfaction for SH English Language was at 42%, for English Language and Literature was at 90, and for English Literature and Theatre Studies was at 92. We noted some extremely high levels of overall satisfaction for several of our JH Programmes (History, French, Linguistics).</p> <p>In the Undergraduate Programme Survey, we saw a slight drop in overall satisfaction from 86 to 85 (aggregated figures). Whilst responses to quality of teaching, resources and organization, remain high, assessment and feedback, academic support and personal development are disappointing and they remain lower than we would like.</p> <p>The Postgraduate Programme Survey saw a small rise in overall satisfaction from 90 to 91: timeliness of essay return arose as an issue.</p> <p>In their comments on the National Student Survey, students respond warmly to specialist and excellent teaching, enthusiasm, commitment, approachability, flexibility, sense of working in partnership, small group teaching, opportunity to pursue independent research, ample support with careers advice, work opportunities. Negative responses are constellated around inconsistencies in marking, clarity of feedback, personal and general academic support and the relationship between fees and contact hours.</p>	<p>We'll ensure increased visibility of marking criteria online (eg sending emails to students with links to the online handbook, placing the criteria in different locations on the VLE). Discussions have been underway since the start of the academic year with Student Staff Forum, Student Interns, with cohorts of students on individual programmes about perceptions of feedback and marking criteria. A new resource on the VLE is under development with examples of sample essays, exams, dissertations and feedback for both UG and PG Programmes. This will be in development across the year: feedback from students directly and via SSF or Interns will help make this as effective a resource as possible. We will continue to work with the Director for Personal Tutoring and the Leeds for Life Student Interns to ensure the most effective use of this site for personal and professional development. A supportive and rigorous review of English Language has been underway since August involving both staff and students, addressing in detail teaching, assessment, feedback, planning, support. A new Professor and a new Associate Professor take up posts this year. We appointed a new JH link tutor in September and that role is under development, particularly in Semester 2 to help maintain and to improve overall levels of JH support and satisfaction. Discussions are underway to improve and further support module choice with re-organisation of handbooks, including clear links to examples of Core Programme Threads, Discovery Themes and guidance for Final Year Project topics. We maintain good communication with Student Staff Forum, with Student Interns, including regular informal meetings with HoS, DSE. In 2013 we re-introduced the School Induction for SSF to help underpin the University's belief in Partnership and to explore Frequently Asked Questions. 'Light touch' mid-semester reviews are under discussion for possible immediate implementation in Semester 2, subject to full discussion for BA and MA Programmes. A proposal for pre-seminar peer-led discussion groups is led by the Intern for student-led change and due for further discussion at SSF, with a view to the possibility of piloting these in Semester 2 as a means of increasing student-student contact time.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching</p>	<p>The issues of Postgraduate Tutors remains an issue in National Student Survey responses, though it is a mixed one with both positive and critical responses. The School continues to manage Postgraduate training and teaching via Staff Departmental Development workshops, School Inductions and a robust system of Peer Mentoring.</p> <p>Contact hours remain contentious in relation to perceptions about fees but we note that even with these cautions in place, response to quality of teaching remains high.</p>	<p>National Student Survey. We saw a drop in overall satisfaction from 95 to 91 (these are the aggregated figures). Disaggregated, for English Language it is 57, English Language and Literature 96, and English Literature and Theatre Studies 94.</p> <p>The Undergraduate Programme Survey saw a small rise in satisfaction from 88 to 90</p> <p>The Postgraduate Programme Survey saw a small rise but maintained levels of satisfaction from 90 in 2011-12 to 91 in 2012-13</p> <p>Students are warmly responsive to the quality of teaching in the School. We note some negative responses to being taught by PGTs and negative responses to some lecture delivery.</p>	<p>To acknowledge - in order to maintain - areas of excellence.</p> <p>All Postgraduate Tutors attend compulsory Induction (or re-Induction) to teaching and to the culture of the School and the culture of the University; they have additional sessions on marking and feedback at a mid-point in semester. Through Student Staff Forum we should help to manage and address expectations about postgraduate tutors and through module delivery remind students about the function of lectures and mutual responsibility in lectures and seminars.</p> <p>Involvement with the University's new Teaching Enhancement Scheme will help address teaching issues (including lecturing, marking, feedback) in structured, targeted and supportive ways. Wider dissemination of examples of 'good practice' will be clearly communicated to all academic staff following discussions arising from the Teaching Enhancement Scheme and from regular discussions about module questionnaire reviews (held once a semester).</p> <p>Discussions with Level 1 and 2 Core Module co-ordinators are ongoing to ensure clearer developmental links across years to ensure appropriate developments in the delivery of the curriculum and for the students' learning and teaching experience.</p>
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<p>Assessment and feedback</p>	<p>This remains disappointing in relation to the concerted effort that goes into marking, including exam feedback and one-to-one feedback. The planned change to the core module assessment was implemented last session and came into practice this year, so responses on National Student Survey and Undergraduate Programme Surveys were likely to remain the same this year. The two-week turnaround time mentioned in last year's plan was unsustainable and ambitious in relation to overall staff workloads. 'Interim' feedback exists in formative assessment and is usually well received in module reviews. We did not pursue generic feedback in line with Faculty advice since this has tended not to be well received by students.</p>	<p>National Student Survey. We saw a drop from 74 in 2011-12 to 67 in 2012-13 (aggregated figures) Disaggregated, for English Language a very disappointing 25, for English Language and Literature 74, and for English Literature and Theatre Studies a disappointing 55 though we note that only half the cohort completed the survey in 2012-13.</p> <p>The Undergraduate Programme Survey (aggregated figures) produced a small drop in satisfaction from 65 in 2011-12 to 62 in 2012-13</p> <p>The Postgraduate Programme Survey saw rise in overall satisfaction from 77 to 81.</p> <p>Dissatisfaction with 100% exam, with timeliness of return of work, confusion about effort to achievement, not understanding criteria by which work is marked, comments also noted on the tone of feedback and the need for constructive feedback have all been noted and the subject of ongoing and rigorous review.</p>	<p>The change in assessment of Undergraduate core modules to mixed essay/exam mode took place this academic year and is one example of Student-led change. We will monitor and continue to monitor the effects of these changes with regard to both staff and student experience and workload.</p> <p>Assessment and feedback were two of the topics for discussion at the School's November Away Day in 2013 and implementation of suggestions as well as managing expectations about what constitutes 'timely return' will be ongoing around the examination and assessment periods.</p> <p>We have had discussions with cohorts of Undergraduate students on individual programmes (particularly English Literature and Theatre Studies and English Language) as well as with Student Staff Forum to ascertain perceptions about assessment and feedback and have relayed/will be relaying that information back to staff and to students to address and redress issues. Mid-year meetings with MA students might be advisable to help clarify criteria, assessment and feedback. Light touch mid-semester questionnaires will be implemented in Semester 2 2014 to keep communication about experience/possibility for small modifications open.</p> <p>Sample essays with feedback alongside marking criteria have been uploaded to the VLE to help clarify descriptions of classifications in marking criteria.</p> <p>Online marking was piloted in a sample range of undergraduate modules this year. We will discuss wider implementation depending on student and staff responses.</p>
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<p>Academic support</p>	<p>Module guidance talks were introduced but impact, if any, was too soon to register on National Student Survey. Even so, this made no difference on the Undergraduate Programme Survey and indicates that different measures will need to be adopted for significant impact and usefulness to be felt. One colleague produced a podcast to help inform student choice but English has not (at least yet) embraced this wholesale. The role of the Personal Tutor in advising with module choice also appears to have had little impact.</p>	<p>National Student Survey. This stayed more or less even from 75 in 2011-12 to 76 in 2012-13. Undergraduate Programme Survey - this remained the same at 65. Postgraduate Programme Survey - this remained more or less the same at 87, down a point from last year. Negative comments from National Student Survey indicate dissatisfaction with personal tutors and a feeling that there is not enough support outside of actual teaching time.</p>	<p>Welcome and welcome back talks in September outlined and reminded students at Levels 1, 2 and 3 about the considerable range of academic and pastoral support that is available in the School, Faculty and University - given the range, details were collected on one page and uploaded to the VLE for ease of reference. We will be adding second welcome back talks at the beginning of Semester 2 to further reinforce this range, from websites to one-to-one support and will consider a mid-year informal welcome back for MA students.</p> <p>The Director for Personal Tutoring has been working alongside our three Leeds for Life Interns who continue to raise the profile and visibility of Personal Tutoring. We will be looking at the possibility of further enhancing the role and the allocations of the Personal Tutor, placing renewed emphasis on academic support that addresses the needs and stages of each particular year group.</p> <p>Additional support this year includes/will include a Writing Mentor's Scheme offering one to one advice on essay writing, additional session on writing for UG dissertation students, additional sessions for Level 2 students to help support finding topics/writing proposals.</p> <p>All non-English parented JH students will be contacted in Semester 2 to outline areas of support and give contact details of relevant members of staff.</p>
<p>Organisation and management</p>	<p>This remains a strong point in the School and last year's actions of continued vigilance with module/programme management, embedding of roles of Programme Leaders, Academic Integrity and Exams Officer and successful implementation of new School management structure has produced a highly effective team. Issues raised about impact of the Final Year Project on the curriculum will carry over to this and next year.</p>	<p>National Student Survey. This is relatively consistent and levels of satisfaction remain high at 90.</p>	<p>We will continue to manage module/programme review and maintain (we are always also looking to improve) clear channels of communication with students in relation to all aspects of academic, professional and pastoral support. Development of the JH Link Tutor will help with the overall management of JH Programmes. The new School Management structures are fully operational and highly effective.</p>

<p>Learning resources</p>	<p>Actions from last year maintain but don't increase reasonably high levels of satisfaction: continued development and use of flexible learning spaces, 100% of staff now use the VLE to support modules.</p>	<p>National Student Survey. This has stayed the same at 88, more or less the same for Undergraduate Programme Survey at 78 and more or less the same for Postgraduate Programme Survey at 89. Main points of criticism are library resources - not enough books in library and that the books are too old!</p>	<p>We will continue to remind and/or alert students about the availability of online learning resources, electronic resources via library catalogues (eg databases, online journals, e-books), encourage appropriate use of module VLE provision with electronic resources (links to various web resources as well as ensuring high demand essays/book chapters are placed in High Demand in the library and digitized and placed in the VLE where appropriate). Where appropriate the School recommends purchase of multiple copies of texts. The School does have a budget for library books and we regularly and routinely order new books as we update and revise reading lists. We will also need to explore more blended learning to address issues of academic support and contact time - this will be supported not only by the Faculty's new Blended and Digital Learning Committee but also by a sub-group of the School's Taught Student Education Committee which will be dedicated to looking at appropriate uses of technologies in teaching and in module design.</p>
<p>Personal development</p>	<p>Varied impact on programmes this year: increased attention to Personal Tutoring and LfL has had some impact. Supportive review for English Language had no impact in the short term. Investment in Interns is proving to be an excellent move. Alumni talks and the alumni programme continues.</p>	<p>National Student Survey. There is a modest increase in levels of satisfaction with Personal Development, up to 76 from 73. The Undergraduate Programme Survey is low, though, at a stagnant 53 whilst Postgraduate Programme Survey is higher at 85, pleasingly up from 74 last year. Negative comments relate to changes in Personal Tutor (these tend to be unavoidable and we do minimize where possible).</p>	<p>The Director for Personal Tutoring devised a template email for all staff to use (and amend) to ensure parity of communication and outline the function of the Personal Tutor for different levels and across different semesters. LfL interns have been working with the Director for Personal Tutoring to enhance the profile of LeedsforLife and to encourage greater involvement with the many opportunities it offers - volunteering and internships to funding for projects through the LeedsforLife Foundation. We also need to ensure clearer communication about the Careers Centre and the range of services it offers, the drop in service offered by the Careers Centre on a weekly basis in the School itself and to ensure clearer communication about Faculty initiatives that support employability.</p>

