

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

Faculty of Arts: School of History

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	92	87	93	87	91	86	88	85	88	85	92	83	85	87	100	84	100	82
Teaching	95	89	96	90	93	88	91	85	92	84	93	83	95	87	94	85	94	84
Assessment & feedback	84	71	82	69	81	65	72	59	75	61	73	56	77	75	83	69	78	68
Academic support	78	81	76	80	80	77	67	72	73	72	72	68	82	85	90	80	87	79
Organisation & management	88	84	89	83	91	82	78	73	80	74	82	83	92	85	82	80	70	77
Learning resources	89	90	82	88	86	87	75	81	71	78	71	77	95	86	85	83	87	82
Personal development	82	81	81	81	77	78	63	69	68	68	64	65	67	77	57	71	73	70
Sector position	66/98	57/147	52/94	51/150	64/86	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)

Impact of 2011-12 actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact hours increased at level 3 (within special subjects). • Several new modules, covering a broad range of periods and events, introduced by new and existing staff, including a number of IHP options and specials. • Postgraduate tutor recruitment and training streamlined in tandem with University policy. • Several undergraduate and postgraduate administrative procedures harmonised, particularly in relation to assessment and module evaluation. • Programme catalogues updated to ensure regulations are clear and long-term inactive modules are not displayed. • Enhancement and/or refreshment of online resources such as Skills@Library material and Leeds History First.
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<p>Achievements in 2012-13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in NSS scores for Learning Resources, Assessment and Feedback and Personal Development. • Significant improvement in overall satisfaction scores for level 2 SS History in the Undergraduate Programme Survey. • Significant improvement in most areas of the level 2 JH History Undergraduate Programme Survey results.
<p>Main actions for 2013-14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review overall joint honours provision with the aim of improving student satisfaction and integration. • Promote and enhance the role of the Director of Joint Honours programmes. • Establish and embed practice of delivering examination feedback to non-parented joint honours students via module tutors. • Consider further modifications to the structure of the IHP programme with the aim of enhancing student choice and satisfaction. • Publicise level 3 module evaluation data in order to emphasise the quality of teaching and encourage students to broaden their module choices. • Utilise existing social media channels to promote key academic events throughout the year. • Review the use of OLE (online enrolment) for special subjects in response to repeated technical failures.
<p>Summary of student involvement in the production of this Action Plan</p>	<p>A draft version of the Action Plan was presented to the Student:Staff Committee. Comments and suggestions were acknowledged and, where appropriate, incorporated into the final document. In addition, the School considered the findings and recommendations of a recent student communications report (devised by a current student intern) in its production of the Plan. Following endorsement and approval by the relevant University committees, this document will be uploaded to the VLE.</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
<p>Overall satisfaction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Peer Mentoring scheme is fully embedded as an additional layer of pastoral support at level 1 with an increased level of take-up.</i> • <i>The role of Student Support Officer, operating within unequivocal boundaries and promoted via all communication mediums, is now an integral part of the School of History and actively utilised by</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In the NSS, student satisfaction dropped by only 1%, meaning the School of History continues to rank highly alongside peer institutions in the Russell Group. However, the School is not complacent and fully intends to ensure that it regains the small ground it has lost and that, in future years, scores continue their hitherto upward trajectory.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We will continue to review joint honours provision, establishing a working group to propose, discuss, formulate and execute tangible and achievable policies and practices with the overall aim of enhancing student confidence and satisfaction. The Director of Joint Honours role will be more widely promoted, and we will seek to establish strong working relationships with co-teaching schools,</i>

	<p>students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a notable increase in the number of joint honours students attending school events – peer mentoring, induction, career talks, &c. • The School has expanded its social media presence in order to connect with students more readily, and keep them informed of relevant events and deadlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the UGPS, satisfaction scores remain inconsistent with some decline at level 1 and a sizeable increase at level 2. It is particularly disappointing that scores for the IHP and Joint Honours programmes have fallen, although it is fully expected that the implementation of several new initiatives and policies will lead to improved scores in subsequent years. • While scores for the PGPS have dropped, the School is already aware of, and working on, a broad range of initiatives that we anticipate will significantly improve the experience of current and future students. 	<p>considering programme adjustments (in line with Curriculum Enhancement Project recommendations) where they would enhance choice and foster cohesion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School of History will consider extending the Peer Mentoring programme for students at all levels and across all degree schemes in order to ensure our aims of student integration and identity are fully realised.
Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of postgraduate teaching has been reviewed in a number of ways – a pre-application information session organised; the application process has been modified to include supervisor endorsement; induction, training, peer observation and ongoing support have been refined &c. • Several new appointments have resulted in an expansion of historical expertise and the creation of new modules and research collaboration opportunities. • New modules, spanning broad timelines and themes, have been successfully introduced at all levels (including two 'group C' skills and employability modules). • The IHP programme has been revised at level 2 to enhance student choice. • At level 3, the number and spread of special subjects has been expanded. • Contact hours have been increased at level 3 (within special subjects). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scores remain comparatively high and are embellished with extremely positive comments about the enthusiasm and dedication of teaching staff. • Many of the negative comments appear to relate to contact hours – the School has put in place, and continues to seek ways of applying, measures to address this recurrent issue, although this needs to be balanced with teaching quality, the emphasis on independent learning and other staff commitments. It is expected that the current student cohort, who will have the opportunity to benefit from these recent changes, will respond positively to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is expected that the IHP programme will continue to be revised, with changes extending into level 1. • The increase in level 3 contact hours, and their manifestation as additional special subject sessions, will be clarified and refined in response to student and staff feedback. • Staff website profiles are being refreshed to ensure expertise and research interests/activity are clearly documented and promoted to current and potential students. • The School Student Representative will investigate the possibility of developing student-led seminars at level 1. • The provision of level 3 contact hours will continue to be reviewed to ensure equity across modules.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New skills modules, with varied and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School continues to perform well in this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School will establish and promote a

<p>and feedback</p>	<p><i>innovative forms of assessment, have been introduced.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In line with University requirements, the Code of Practice on Assessment has been modified to make it relevant and accessible to a student audience, and uploaded to the VLE.</i> 	<p><i>category of the NSS, although the results of the UGPS indicate that there is room for improvement. Any practical changes need to be considered in conjunction with the responsibility, of the School and the University, to manage student expectations.</i></p>	<p><i>system whereby non-parented joint honours students are able to access their examination feedback via their module tutors.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The School will consider the implementation of a formal policy in relation to essay guidance to ensure equity and consistency.</i> <i>Staff will be advised to remind students, at appropriate points in the semester, to familiarise themselves with the marking criteria, and will continue to deliver constructive and valuable feedback. Students will be encouraged to exploit and engage with the resources available to them.</i> <i>The grade criteria is already heavily publicised, but the School will continue to promote it – by uploading an example of the examination feedback sheet to the VLE – to ensure it is made clearer still.</i>
<p>Academic support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The role of Dissertation Tutor, with responsibility for oversight, guidance and co-ordination of final year projects, has been created.</i> <i>Programme and module catalogues have been refreshed to ensure the information within them is accurate, consistent and unambiguous.</i> <i>Attendance at the annual Module Fair and Module Choice lectures has increased significantly and student feedback has been highly positive.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Although the School has only experienced a slight drop in the overall score for this category, the response to the question ‘good advice was available when I needed to make study choices’ continues to fare badly, and the corresponding comments strongly indicate that this is in large part due to the ongoing technical failures of the module enrolment system. The School has done, and will continue to do, everything within its power to encourage the University to address this problem. We will also be considering a number of internal measures in recognition that this is a particularly resonant issue.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The History Society has appointed an academic representative, who will be trialling a series of initiatives to enhance student participation in School events, including a bi-weekly e-newsletter and lecture shout outs.</i> <i>In line with the requirements of the Curriculum Enhancement Project, the School will communicate evidence of research-based learning and discovery themes within module documentation.</i> <i>A working group will be set up to review the module enrolment process for special subjects at level 3.</i> <i>Special subject module evaluation data will be circulated to students ahead of module enrolment to ensure the quality of our teaching is highlighted and to</i>

			<p><i>encourage them to widen their study options.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The School will build on the success of the Module Fair and Module Choice lectures by targeting and promoting these more explicitly, and encouraging students to exploit the resources available to them to make informed study choices.</i> <i>The School will be actively involved in the Faculty of Arts review of the personal tutoring system.</i>
Organisation and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Student Education Service office opening hours have been extended to and the functions and roles of administrative staff have been widely promoted via school documentation and social media.</i> <i>Various undergraduate and postgraduate administrative procedures have been harmonised, particularly in relation to assessment and module review, to ensure consistency and equity for students.</i> <i>A working group has been set up to review and revise existing MA provision.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Comments in this category are generally positive, and it is clear that the majority of respondents are satisfied with the structure and organisation of their programmes. As with academic support, where scores have declined, this mainly appears to be in relation to module enrolment.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Taught postgraduate provision will continue to be reviewed, and several initiatives, including a new programme, are currently in the pipeline.</i>
Learning resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Postgraduate tutors have been informed of the digitisation service and are actively utilising it to its fullest potential.</i> <i>Several areas of the VLE have been refreshed and updated.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The School has generally performed well in this category, although there are some isolated comments relating to library opening hours and availability of materials, which are largely beyond the control of the School.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The School will continue to use the digitisation service productively.</i> <i>The VLE will continue to be updated to ensure dead links are removed and information is consistent and easily accessible.</i>
Personal development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The delivery of bespoke employability sessions to postgraduate students was successful in 2012-13 and is now a part of the annual structure of postgraduate provision.</i> <i>The History internship scheme continues to prosper and has acted as a model for other Schools and departments across</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The School improved on this overall score in the NSS, and there are some explicitly positive comments about careers advice and opportunities.</i> <i>However, scores are much more inconsistent in the UGPS and the area for particular improvement is the question around 'confidence'.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The School will engage more dynamically with external opportunities for history students: we have had enquiries from institutions including the National Railway Museum, Tetley Project Space, Yorkshire Building Society and Leeds Industrial Museum.</i> <i>At level 3 'welcome back' and 'final</i>

	<p><i>the University who are implementing similar schemes.</i></p>		<p><i>semester' lectures, we will articulate more explicitly the way History skills are adaptable to the contexts of graduate and professional success.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• The School's Student Development Officer has been appointed to the role of 'Personal and Professional Development' theme leader within the Curriculum Enhancement Project, and will be exploring the development of University-wide modules and initiatives (for example in Digital Literacy), and highlighting these projects to students within the School.</i><i>• Efforts to increase enrolment in the CSER8000 work placement year continue, with the assistance of students who have recently participated. The Student Development Officer is supervising the design of a 'post-placement' module which will allow students to make the most of their placement / study abroad experience.</i>
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