

ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SESSION 2012-13

School of Modern Languages and Cultures (Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies)

Faculty of Arts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY																		
Aspect	National Student Survey						Undergraduate Programme Experience Survey						Postgraduate Programme Experience Survey					
	2011-12		2010-11		2009-10		2011-12		2010-11		2009-10		2011-12		2010-11		2009-10	
	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni
Overall satisfaction	87	87	91	86	80	82	86	85	86	83	89	84	75	84	85	82	80	78
Teaching	90	90	93	88	86	85	87	84	87	83	87	83	79	85	85	84	84	81
Assessment & feedback	71	69	81	65	67	61	64	61	64	56	66	57	63	69	67	68	62	63
Academic support	78	80	80	77	75	74	69	72	68	68	73	68	70	80	81	79	75	76
Organisation & management	84	83	91	82	81	79	79	74	79	83	80	73	69	80	79	77	73	73
Learning resources	89	88	86	87	84	85	76	78	81	77	78	76	79	83	87	82	78	81
Personal development	83	81	77	78	77	76	62	68	62	65	60	63	66	71	67	70	64	68
Sector position (School position)	14/27 (21/34)	51/150	7/25	46/151	11/23	75/154												

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 2010-11 actions	The actions agreed upon in response to issues raised the previous session have now been implemented. The generally positive overall results obtained in recent surveys attest to the success of such actions. Nevertheless, assessment – in particular feedback on assessed work – continues to be an area of the student experience in which there are relatively low levels of satisfaction.
Achievements in 2011-12	We now have a much more coherent curriculum, which commences with a 'foundation' year at Level 1, builds on the essential skills and knowledge thus acquired in broader Level 2 modules, and finishes with more specific modules at Level 3. All stages of study in SPLAS now contain a significant amount of language-related elements in our content modules (as the language of instruction and/or assessment). Many of the actions taken in 2011-2012 have had a positive impact on satisfaction levels among first- and second-year students. The fall in levels of satisfaction among finalists, however, indicates that regular communication needs to be made prior to their return from their Residence Abroad in order to manage finalists' expectations effectively. The question of what students understand by feedback was discussed in early Staff:Student Committee meetings, and led to a modified Feedback Sheet to accompany marked work as from 2012-13.
Main actions for 2012-13	To focus on providing quality formative and summative feedback on assessed work, making best use of the new Feedback Sheet and Feedback Week in January 2013. To run a focus group on the subject of feedback to ensure student involvement in the management and review of this aspect of learning and teaching in SPLAS. To complete those modifications to the curriculum at Level 2, and to make explicit those Core Programme Threads and Broadening Strands in our curriculum as a whole. To consolidate the reform of the Spanish Language Curriculum. To invest in extra-curricular and research activities organised by members of staff to enable students to participate and thus develop their knowledge of the various languages and cultures studied in SPLAS.

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Aspect	Progress with actions in response to 2010-11 feedback and indication of impact	Issues raised in 2011-12 feedback	Planned response in 2012-13
Overall satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and students discussed matters evaluated by means of the NSS and PS, and the SPLAS Action Plan, in October 2010.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NSS survey 2012 reported 82% overall satisfaction as compared to 89% in 2011; this result was, nevertheless, an improvement on 2010, which recorded 74%. Principal issues raised in feedback concern language teaching, assessment and feedback, and course management. Many of these issues were dealt with immediately. In other cases, action was taken for 2012-2013, such as the lowering of class size in Spanish grammar lectures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make greater use of VLE and email announcements to ensure regular provision of essential course information. To undertake an extensive Curriculum Review last academic year. Feedback and quality assurance processes given particular attention. Special attention paid to the transition from Level 1 through to 3 and the language-learning experience across the curriculum. Recent SPLAS meetings have focused on sharing good practice on assessment and in ensuring appropriate monitoring of student development by means of the Personal Tutee system. Continued attention being paid to feedback being prompt through the Staff: Student committee and Feedback Week planned between Semesters 1 and 2.
Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results obtained in the area of teaching continue to be encouragingly high and this is clearly one of SPLAS' many strengths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Level 1 Spanish core module underwent comprehensive revision in light of student feedback, and was renamed SPPO1180. This module now ensures students progress from Level 1 with the basic skills necessary for the study of history, politics and cultural production at Level 2. On account of student demand, the cap on our Level 2 and 3 translation modules was raised. One member of staff appointed to a FT Teaching Fellowship, and smaller class sizes have been introduced in accordance with student feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New modules have been designed, based on current research of members of staff, including Modern Spain, 1868-1975. Increased amount of target language is now used in class and assessment. Consistently high scores recorded in the Programme Surveys.
Assessment and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A gradual upward trend in satisfaction levels bodes well for the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant increase in satisfaction as regards Assessment Arrangements and Fairness of Marking. Satisfaction in other areas remains the same at Level 3 (NSS), although it has dropped at Level 1 (PS). Concern was expressed at Feedback Week at the end of Semester 1. Some remarked that assessment was not always equal across both semesters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To set up a SPLAS focus group to analyse in detail student expectations as regards Assessment and Feedback. To inform students regularly about assessment and feedback arrangements. To make full use of Grademark and the margins of hard copies to flag strong and weak points of assessed work. To produce and share marking criteria sheets specific to our modules.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To facilitate provision of feedback submitted at the end of the academic year. To remind students more clearly of their side of the University Partnership agreement, and encourage them to make best use of the various means by which we provide them with feedback.
Academic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to assist students in this respect appear not to have had the desired effect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High satisfaction among Level 1 students regarding help choosing modules attests to the success of our Module Fair at Easter. Staff are praised for making themselves available to see students on a regular basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to make detailed information on module choices available to students on-line and at our Module Fair. To pursue solutions at Faculty and University levels regarding enrolment abroad. To continue to provide students with all relevant information regarding School and subject area matters electronically.
Organisation and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student satisfaction levels in 2010-2011 were encouragingly high. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop in satisfaction with regards NSS questions 13, 14 and 15 (timetabling, communication, course management). Re-structuring of SMLC a possible cause. The successful start to 2012-2013 suggests these problems now been solved. Students possibly unaware of the benefits of Feedback Week at the end of Semester 1. Issue of unexpected timetable alterations. As above, current academic year has begun these problems re-emerging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make full use of VLE and email to ensure students are fully aware of rationale and organisation of Reading and Feedback Weeks. Try to ensure assessed work returned to the students within the stated period of time (while ensuring that students are aware of the time pressures that marking involves).
Learning resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various members of staff were awarded national fellowships in this area, which has allowed them to develop practical expertise and theoretical ideas concerning this area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a significant increase in satisfaction regarding NSS question 17 (Access to IT resources). 18 remained unchanged (Access to equipment and facilities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase student awareness of resources available in the university (especially the revamped library website, increased range of Skills@Library sessions and the newly completed Final Project resource) to make full use of the VLE and to make sure that students are fully aware of the variety of materials made available.
Personal development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact hours raised significantly at levels 1 and 2. Greater integration of language into content modules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a significant rise in answer to question 21 (confidence tackling unfamiliar problems). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure students are aware of the breadth of content modules available in final year in comparison to other UK SPLAS sections. A careers session has been arranged with Skills@Library for the end of Feedback Week.