

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

School: Undergraduate

Faculty: Biological Sciences

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	89	86	89	82	93	84	83	83	87	84	87	82			71	78	73	80
Teaching	89	88	89	85	91	86	82	83	83	83	83	82			80	81	77	81
Assessment & feedback	62	65	59	61	58	61	52	56	50	57	53	54			51	63	47	62
Academic support	80	77	81	74	82	75	68	68	67	68	71	66			70	76	78	76
Organisation & management	83	82	82	79	86	79	69	83	68	73	74	70			67	73	69	75
Learning resources	91	87	91	85	92	86	79	77	79	76	81	77			87	81	88	82
Personal development	83	78	81	76	84	78	62	65	64	63	70	62			68	68	64	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	The School continues to provide academic support for students via the use of LeedsforLife webforms as standard practice for personal tutorials, allowing students to reflect on their achievements. The School engages students with careers planning via a weekly careers workshop and drop-in sessions for all students and better promotion of placement and research opportunities, such as the introduction of the Level 1 Research Placement scheme across all areas. Timeliness of feedback to students has increased with over 90% of coursework being returned on time.
Achievements in 2010-11	The School has improved the quality and timeliness of feedback given to students during 2010-11 by introducing an informal monitoring of coursework system and this has been reflected positively in the NSS data. There has been significant improvement in providing better module choice information, expanding online learning resources (e.g. podcasts of lecture content). In addition, quality of feedback and exam surgery organisation has improved. The School has also introduced an extended programme of induction and study skills support for first year students from Widening Participation backgrounds.
Main actions for 2011-12	The main actions for 2011-12 will focus on encouraging staff and students to provide quality feedback both in terms of assessment and module survey responses. The School aims to improve its assessment processes by reviewing marking criteria, amending second marking regulations (moderate all failed scripts), monitoring script annotations, implementing a formal monitoring system of coursework return to students and reviewing assessment deadlines to ensure they are spread more equitably. In addition the School will seek to provide more cohesive information for students when making module choices by involving student reps at module choice meetings and providing more online resources such as MCQ question banks. The School aims to encourage more teaching staff to employ supplementary learning strategies for students such as lecture podcasting and interactive learning via the use of eVoting handsets. A key priority for the School will also be to work towards embedding employability skills and opportunities into the curricula via such as providing more support for CV development and interview technique via tutorials, developing optional careers modules and increasing the availability of internships.

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Aspect	<i>Progress with actions in response to 2009-10 feedback and indication of impact</i>	Issues raised in 2010-11 feedback	Planned response in 2011-12
Overall satisfaction	<p>The majority of actions described in the 09-10 action plan have been completed successfully which will have helped maintain overall satisfaction above 83% across all years of study and improved student satisfaction with assessment and feedback. The Faculty continues to make good use of the VLE and LeedsforLife (LfL) to support student education.</p>	<p>The NSS results show that overall satisfaction has remained static at 89%, a value 3 points above the University average, an achievement given the turbulent restructuring the Faculty has faced.</p> <p>Programme survey results show a decrease from 87% to 83% suggesting that the impact of the Faculty review was more marked among Level 1 and 2 students who felt that module/programme changes had detrimentally affected the quality and organisation of their programme.</p>	<p><i>We aim to concentrate efforts on enhancing student support specifically:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Create a feedback booklet to help manage student expectations of type and timeliness of feedback</i> • <i>Publicise feedback actions through the VLE and via posters</i> • <i>Continue to improve the quality of feedback and introduce initiatives to make sure students engage with feedback</i> • <i>Via the Partnership define expectations for all at a programme group level</i> • <i>Encourage staff to use e-Voting handsets and provide more resources to support and enhance student learning.</i> • <i>Use LfL ambassadors to enhance student engagement with this resource</i> • <i>Create employability-based modules (levels 1 and 2) and other resources (e.g. iDecide website) available to all students.</i>
Teaching	<p>As a result of Faculty restructuring, Peer Review of teaching was suspended and will be reintroduced in the 2012 according to University guidelines. The Faculty continues to make use of supplementary learning technologies (e.g. eVoting handsets) for interactive teaching, audio recordings of teaching sessions, screen-casting and uploading slides onto the VLE ahead of lectures and these initiatives are being increasingly adopted across the School. There is currently a project underway exploring the use and benefits of podcasting of lectures.</p>	<p>The NSS results show a static result of 89% whereas at programme level there has been a slight decrease of 1%. Issues primarily relate to teacher engagement with the class; quality of teaching, and insufficient availability of supplementary teaching materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continue to encourage use of 'clickers', podcasting and other tools to supplement and enhance the learner experience and aid/support learning strategies</i> • <i>Encourage staff to use the VLE to provide additional resources (e.g. MCQ banks, exemplars) to support and enhance student learning and understanding</i> • <i>Encourage staff to respond to student enquiries in a timely manner</i>

<p>Assessment and feedback</p>	<p>Marking criteria have been made available to students for all assignments which will be refreshed in the coming year in order to provide greater clarity for students and markers.</p> <p>Major work has been undertaken in improving the timeliness and quality of feedback. Coursework turnaround is now monitored on a semester basis and statistics communicated to students and staff.</p> <p>Although almost all staff now comply with providing comments on exams and coursework, more work needs to be done in enhancing the quality and benefit of those comments to students.</p>	<p>Both the NSS and Programme Survey results have shown an increase in satisfaction (+3 and +2%, respectively) which is driven primarily by better timeliness of feedback. Although the Faculty is monitoring feedback turnaround more robustly, the results point to a recurrent issue of quality of feedback provided (i.e marker comments).</p> <p>In addition, comments suggested that students felt assessment criteria were unclear and that there was an issue with regards to variance of marking in some modules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The School will implement a formal mechanism for monitoring coursework and referring staff who fail to comply to their line managers.</i> • <i>Marking criteria will be reviewed with the aim of providing greater clarity for markers as well as guiding students as to what they need to achieve at each mark threshold.</i> • <i>Staff will be encouraged to provide better script annotation (c/w and exam) and this will be monitored at an informal level with a view to identifying areas of good/bad practice.</i> • <i>Use tutorials to reinforce and engage students with the feedback they have received</i> • <i>Revisit moderation guidelines to make this process more robust including the moderation of all failed examination scripts</i>
<p>Academic support</p>	<p>The School continues to employ the LfL webforms and has worked towards heightening the value of LfL amongst students by inviting student ambassadors to compulsory Level 1 lectures.</p> <p>Personal tutors are now encouraged to discuss and engage students with the feedback they have received. In addition work has been undertaken in developing and embedding academic skills modules in each programme.</p>	<p>The NSS results show a slight decrease in satisfaction in this area. Concerns and issues relate to communication and accessibility of academic staff / tutors and support provided at personal tutorials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The School will continue to use the LfL webforms as part of the Personal Tutorial system and will invite LfL ambassadors to compulsory Level 1 & 2 lectures to raise awareness of the opportunities and benefits of engaging with LFL.</i> • <i>We will review how personal tutorials and exam feedback sessions are organised.</i> • <i>The School aims to develop and embed career planning at an earlier stage in the curriculum to enhance student employability.</i> • <i>We are currently developing 2 optional modules aimed at increasing employability skills for level 1 and 2 students</i> • <i>Encourage staff to respond to student enquiries in a timely manner</i>

<p>Organisation and management</p>	<p>Module choice has improved with more cohesive information being made available to students via module choice meetings.</p> <p>There have been mid-module reviews and the development of FAQ pages on the VLE to help inform choice.</p>	<p>There has been an increase in satisfaction across both NSS and Programme Survey results but some improvements could be made in module structure, staff engagement, timing of assessments are guidance for students on assessments. Module choice advice generally appears to have improved from previous years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To develop better/more informative module choice meetings supported by module synopsis. We will also invite students reps from the year above (where possible) to help and advise students with their choices.</i> • <i>The School will review the timing of assessments across and within modules to reduce bunching of deadlines.</i>
<p>Learning resources</p>	<p>The School has continued to work with the Library to improve/enhance accessibility and availability of resources.</p>	<p>Student satisfaction remains constant at 91% (NSS) and 79% (PS), however, feedback suggests that availability of comprehensive module resources to assist learning, better/more use of learning technologies, better VLE organisation and more library resources would be welcomed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The School will continue to encourage staff to provide better access to learning resources (VLE) and will work with the Library services to improve availability of journals/texts for students.</i>
<p>Personal development</p>	<p>The School has worked with the Careers Service to improve the relevance, quality and accessibility of careers information. There is now a regular Careers 'drop-in' session which is based in the UG Office and careers skills are increasingly being highlighted within modules/induction events.</p> <p>UG research placement opportunities have been promoted and the quality of information and number of opportunities relating to Industrial and International placements has continued to improve.</p>	<p>There has been an increase in satisfaction from 81% to 83% in the NSS results compared to a decrease from 64% to 62% in the programme survey data. Feedback suggests that students would benefit from more structured and informative career skills modules, more information on opportunities outside of a typically science/research related career and more information/opportunities on internships and job applications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continue to work more closely with the Careers service and maintain a programme of promoting internships, research placements, Industrial and International years.</i> • <i>To embed employability skills and opportunities into curricula by developing careers modules, promoting the bespoke Biosciences careers programme and the weekly drop in sessions in the undergraduate school office.</i> • <i>To review the opportunities on Leeds for Life and to raise awareness of the value of the 'living CV'.</i> • <i>To convene and work closely with an Industrial Advisory Board to identify gaps in provision and help refresh curricula for the future to enhance graduate employability.</i> • <i>To enhance career decision making resources via the iDecide project.</i>