

ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SESSION 2014-15

School of Biology - Faculty of Biological Sciences

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY																		
Aspect	National Student Survey						Undergraduate Programme Experience Survey						Postgraduate Programme Experience Survey					
	2013-14		2012-13		2011-12		2013-14		2012-13		2011-12		2013-14		2012-13		2011-12	
	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni
Overall satisfaction	87	88	92	87	90	87	83	85	82	85	84	85	91	85	79	87	69	84
Teaching	87	90	91	89	91	90	85	85	82	85	86	84	88	86	84	87	76	85
Assessment & feedback	64	71	62	71	57	69	49	62	49	59	52	61	66	71	48	75	38	69
Academic support	79	82	81	81	75	80	65	73	67	72	75	72	89	82	82	85	72	80
Organisation & management	84	85	87	84	80	83	66	75	72	73	72	74	77	81	64	85	57	80
Learning resources	93	91	93	90	84	88	85	83	80	81	75	78	87	85	90	86	72	83
Personal development	85	82	79	81	77	81	70	72	67	69	58	68	79	77	66	77	55	71
Sector position		50/146		57/147		51/150												

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)

Headline achievement in 2013-14	Provide a single headline for the School from 13-14 – to be included on the poster produced for each School Significant improvement in personal development at undergraduate level and significant improvement in all areas at postgraduate level.
Main actions for 2014-15	List 3 actions – to be included on the posters to be produced for each School Action 1. Enhance the use of employability activities within at the School, Faculty and University at all levels. Action 2. Build upon and enhance communication between all students, their programme and School reps and staff. Action 3. Continue monitoring the timeliness and quality of appropriate feedback and exploring how students can make the most of feedback.

<p>Summary of student involvement in the production of this Action Plan</p>	<p>A brief discussion about the Action Plan and NSS was held at the staff:student forum in Nov 2014. The draft Action Plan was circulated to the UG and PG programme reps for input and a follow-up meeting with the School rep and representatives of each programme was held with the DSE in Dec 2014.</p>
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AGREED ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SESSION 2014-15

School: Biology Faculty: Biological Sciences

Aspect	Progress with 2013-2014 actions and indication of impact	Agreed Issues/Actions for 2014-2015	Responsibility/Expected completion date
<p>Overall satisfaction</p>	<p><i>Graduate employability prospects have been developed by incorporating more employability and employment application skills into the curricula.</i> <i>Student input into the student:staff fora and feedback via tutors will continue to be encouraged and more widely disseminated.</i> <i>Improving feedback scores in the NSS is an objective. Further efforts will be made to improve the depth of feedback provided and students will be engaged in discussions as to what can be expected from feedback at university.</i></p>	<p><u>ACTION</u> <i>Use of wide-ranging existing employability skills development (including careers fairs and industry-led workshops) will be encouraged more widely. More frequent informal meetings between student reps and DSE to facilitate more rapid responses to student inputs. Further engage postgraduate students. Greater student engagement across all aspects of their experience will be encouraged as this will feed into other Actions (e.g. feedback, employability, personal development). The key role of the School and Programme student reps at student:staff fora will be enhanced by timely contribution of all students and a reminder of the need to communicate with reps beforehand. Students will be reminded that interactions with their tutors, the Programme Leaders and DSE need not be limited to the fora. The DSE will encourage opportunities for less formal discussions with reps. Further engagement with module and programme questionnaires will also be encouraged.</i></p>	<p><i>DSE, Programme Leaders, School and programme student reps. Module managers and employability officer as appropriate.</i> <i>On-going.</i></p>
<p>Teaching</p>	<p><i>A slight drop at UG level compared to previous years in the NSS scores, but by and large consistent. New staff appointments have been bedded in successfully over the last year. Ad hoc lecture capture has been widely adopted for most staff in Biology with positive responses from both staff and students.</i></p>	<p><i>100% uptake of ad hoc lecture capture is the target. Staff Away Days will reinforce the value of doing this.</i></p>	<p><i>Individual staff, module managers, DSE.</i> <i>On-going.</i></p>

<p>Assessment and feedback</p>	<p>Further engagement by staff and the monitoring of coursework and examination marking has led to year on year incremental increases in NSS scores. Tutors were encouraged to engage students in tutorials with the feedback they have received and to challenge students to reflect on how they have interacted with the feedback and feed-forward.</p> <p>Module managers have been encouraged to consider the number and type of assessments in their modules. Staff and students are keen to reduce the amount of assessment, while maintaining high academic standards.</p> <p>A review of assessments in the postgraduate programmes, including assessment types and number, distribution of assessment deadlines, guidelines provided to students, has contributed to the large increase in PGS scores.</p>	<p>ACTION</p> <p>The NSS scores in this category are still influenced strongly by around 20% of students not having an opinion. Further improvement could be obtained simply with more finely tuned responses to the NSS. Engagement of the wider student body by the DSE and student reps may lead to further improvements.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor timeliness and quality of feedback. We will continue to monitor the amount and form of assessment at the module level, which will likely yield benefits for students and staff. At the programme level the range of assessments will be considered to ensure that students are assessed using a broad range of skill sets, thereby building upon generic skills and so will feed into Actions (1) and (2).</p> <p>Disruption that affects course content, timetabling, or feedback (e.g. strike action) should be communicated to students and clarified at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>DSE, student reps, programme leaders, module managers.</p> <p>On-going.</p>
<p>Academic support</p>	<p>Programme leaders are to consider the balance of employability skills taken by their students (including optional and Discovery Theme modules where possible).</p> <p>BIOL2223 Employment, Career planning and Professional Development for Life Scientists will continue to be offered.</p> <p>The appointment of new lecturers appointed in the past year will lead to improved support once they have bedded in.</p> <p>The School continued to use Leeds for Life as part of the Personal Tutorial system.</p>	<p>Continued use of Leeds for Life, but aim to encourage and increase engagement.</p> <p>Additionally, the School will seek to develop and career planning at an early stage to enhance student employability.</p> <p>Encourage staff to respond to student enquiries in a timely manner.</p> <p>Greater support will be provided for industrial placement students at the School admin level and via the academic tutor. The study site visit is considered to be very important for the placement students and delays/problems with this occurring need to be better communicated. Placement students want to feel more engaged with University life. This could be in the form of improved/regular communications from the School.</p> <p>Expand to further include PG level.</p>	<p>DSE, programme leaders, employability officer as appropriate.</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Organisation</p>	<p>Communication between academics, the administrative staff and students has been</p>	<p>Communications between academics, the administrative staff and students will continue to</p>	<p>DSE, appropriate admin staff.</p> <p>On-going.</p>

and management	<i>monitored in order to increase accuracy and timeliness. However, academic and admin staff shortages at UG and PG level will have played a large part in disrupting efficient communications and we hope that this will not be a big issue in future.</i>	<i>be monitored. Stability in admin and academic positions at UG and PG level will be a target.</i>	
Learning resources	<i>Ad hoc lecture capture has been widely adopted for most staff with positive responses from both staff and students. The School's Blended Learning Champion gives regular presentations at academic staff meetings to further develop use of blended learning in our modules.</i>	<i>100% uptake of ad hoc lecture capture is the target. Continue to work with Library services to improve availability of journals/texts for students, in particular online access to papers.</i>	<i>DSE via staff away days.</i>
Personal development	<i>Graduate level employability (DLHE 2012-2013) is lower than we would like. This may reflect the nature of the career paths pursued by many of our graduates in the ecology / conservation area which typically involves extensive periods of voluntary or low paid work. It may also be because the recent development of employability-related initiatives has yet to filter through and have the full potential impact. Careers fairs and the regular employability newsletter have proven excellent vehicles for communicating employment opportunities. Mock interviews have been incorporated into the tutorial modules to improve performance in employment application success. Staff have been encouraged to emphasize where employability skills are evident in their teaching. Aspects of personal development have been incorporated into the Discovery Theme modules.</i>	<u>ACTION</u> <i>Personal Development and Employability Skills training will be further developed to better prepare students for graduate positions after Leeds. This will include emphasizing where these training aspects are present within modules (e.g. Employment, Career planning and Professional Development for Life Scientists and mock job interviews). Aim to make personal development part of curriculum enhancement. Engage students with Leeds for Life and other employment-related opportunities within the school (mock interviews, employability newsletter) and wider University (careers fairs). Some of these opportunities suffer from poor uptake and greater engagement will be sought (see also student engagement action). Continue to engage with the Industrial Advisory Board as it seeks to improve graduate employability and encourage incorporation of employment skills in teaching. Where possible seek to develop awareness of employment opportunities particularly for zoologists/ecologists, as most career centre/employability opportunities are aimed at cellular/genetics lab work. Expand to engage more with postgraduate students.</i>	<i>DSE, Programme Leaders, employability office as appropriate, school and programme student reps. On-going.</i>