

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

School: Mechanical Engineering

Faculty: Engineering

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	89	87	91	86	85	82	87	85	78	83	78	84	88	84	89	82	88	78
Teaching	92	90	85	88	84	85	83	84	79	83	69	83	84	85	89	84	95	81
Assessment & feedback	82	69	73	65	61	61	63	61	57	56	47	57	70	69	75	68	82	63
Academic support	89	80	84	77	75	74	73	72	63	68	62	68	87	80	82	79	84	76
Organisation & management	91	83	84	82	73	79	82	74	73	83	73	73	84	80	84	77	82	73
Learning resources	88	88	88	87	77	85	72	78	74	77	67	76	89	83	90	82	88	81
Personal development	94	81	84	78	85	76	76	68	70	65	59	63	78	71	76	70	82	68
Sector position	-	51/150	-	46/151	-	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	<p>Our focus on Assessment and Feedback and Organisation and Management has shown real impact on our scores in these areas, Particularly noticeable within the NSS Data</p> <p>Significant investment in laboratory space infrastructure and new teaching equipment has been made but is only now being commissioned for use in 2012-13, hence its impact has yet to be felt. However, improvements in our prototyping area mean this is now extremely popular and here meeting demand for time in the area has become an issue</p> <p>New hands on teaching activities particularly in the area of electronics and computing have seen significant improvements in module feedback and has been much appreciated by students.</p>
Achievements in 2011-12	<p>Our school is extremely proud of its achievements in student satisfaction surveys particularly in the NSS where we are pleased to note we are perhaps the only school to achieve green lights across all categories including the new category related to the Student Union. There have been significant year on year improvements in Assessment and Feedback, Teaching, Organisation and Management and Personal development .</p> <p>Of equal importance are the additional NSS questions in particular those which show how much the students appreciate our approach of engagement and improvement "Feedback from my year group has been taken on board" "The department is improving vastly" "the course is improving with each starting year" "Student feedback is acted upon quickly"</p>

	<p>Success in NSS has resulted in improved rankings in all of the major league tables and in the most recent Sunday Times league table ranks us as the top school in the university and number one within the Russell Group for teaching excellence for the second year running.</p> <p>Our students continue to excel and become more engaged in extra curricula activities. This summer 3 of our level 4 students won an industry sponsored Global Design Competition and presented their work in front of thousands of engineers and scientists in Austin, Texas.</p> <p>We have invested a significant amount in teaching space and now have an excellent thermo fluids teaching laboratory</p>
Main actions for 2012-13	<p>We will continue to invest in learning laboratory equipment and space.</p> <p>We will increase the provision of high specification computers within the school and work with ISS to try and improve access to general computing.</p> <p>We will establish a theme team (small group of staff) to investigate innovative ways to improve access to computing resources within the school.</p> <p>We will look at ways of increasing the space available for Hands on Learning within the prototyping area</p>

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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	<p>We examined the possibility of allocating an annual budget that the SSF and identified funding for this. The SSF were divided over whether this was appropriate however. A survey of the student body revealed students would prefer academics alone to be in control of budgets with SSF focussed on identifying areas for improvement.</p> <p>We have established a mechanisms to enable greater input from students and student reps in both the allocation of deadlines and the monitoring of the delivery of feedback from staff.</p>	<p>Overall the school is extremely proud of its achievements in 2011-12. Though the response to the NSS "Overall" question was slightly lower than last year it remains above the university and sector average. All other categories have either remained high or have improved on last year's excellent results. This has lead to extremely high rankings in major league tables, particularly for teaching excellence. As a school we have now been ranked No 1 for "teaching excellence" within the Russell Group for 2 years in a row by the Sunday Times and the same league table places the school No 1 within the University.</p>	<p>We will continue to work with the SSF and broader student body to prioritise areas for future improvement.</p> <p>We will look at encouraging greater participation by our students in activities within the school and extra curricula activities associated with our school.</p> <p>We will work hard to publicise the achievements of the school (both staff and students) and promote it to the wider community</p>
Teaching	<p>We significantly changed the way in which we deliver the teaching of electronics, within product design, introducing more hands-on and project based work at levels 1 and 2.</p> <p>We have develop new software engineering teaching material at level 1, linking it with new</p>	<p>Our NSS score for teaching has improved significantly and for the first time is above the university average. NSS Comments: "<i>Excellent staff</i>", "<i>Lecturers show enthusiasm for their subjects</i>", "<i>staff really enjoy teaching us</i>" however comments show this is not yet universal. The UPES</p>	<p>We will continue to monitor teaching performance through module review ensuring questions asked map well onto survey questions and intervene as necessary.</p> <p>We will look at mechanism to allow those of our students who wish support teaching to do so while</p>

	<p>“hands on”, “problem based” activities.</p> <p>Both of these developments resulted in huge increases in student satisfaction at a module level.</p>	<p>and PPES remain in line with the university average and again though there is plenty of praise for teaching UPES Comment “<i>Excellent standards of teaching on my course</i>” there are also areas we could improve.</p>	<p>giving careful regard to quality assurance.</p> <p>We will continue to encourage innovation in teaching and development of staff.</p>
Assessment and feedback	<p>A new Theme Team (a small working group of academics with a particular interest in a specific area), focussed on improving feedback, Survey results show a continuation of our improvement in Assessment and Feedback.</p>	<p>NSS and UPES data show a continuation of our year on year improvement aided by our non-negotiables and our focussed theme team. Our scores place us top of the Russell Group for mechanical and aero subject areas and at 82% our score is well above the university average. NSS comment: “<i>Continual improvements have been made to the response time and details of coursework feedback</i>” PG modules are shared with final year students and hence there appears to be a discrepancy within the PPES which could be a result of unrealistic expectations of new students.</p>	<p>The work of the Assessment and Feedback theme team will continue despite the temporary loss of its leader due to maternity leave.</p> <p>We will work with the SSF to prioritise areas where further improvement can be made.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor Feedback given to students to ensure its timely delivery.</p> <p>We will continue to assess the effectiveness of our key non-negotiable on timeliness of feedback.</p>
Academic support	<p>Mechanisms for improving the availability of information and teaching support for key software have been developed and delivered via the use of organisation within the VLE</p>	<p>Like Assessment and feedback, Academic support has shown continual improvement in all surveys. Our scores in all surveys also show us to be above the university average. NSS Comment: “<i>Excellent academic supervision and support</i>” “<i>The support and feedback on the course has been fantastic</i>”</p>	<p>We will continue to investigate how support can be provided in areas such as software usage via the VLE for example.</p> <p>WE will create a new theme team focussing on how we can better provide support for high performance computer users.</p> <p>We will continue to encourage activities aimed at improving student staff interaction.</p>
Organisation and management	<p>A new mechanism for managing, coordinating and communicating deadlines (both submission and feedback) has been implemented. We consult SSF to regarding requests from staff for changes to the teaching timetable.</p>	<p>This was one of our key target areas. NSS and UPES have shown significant year on year improvement. All surveys show us to be above the university average. NSS Comment: “<i>very well organised department</i>”. “<i>Lectures and schedules well planned out and organised.</i>” “<i>Team projects are organised and managed well</i>”. Work on managing and communicating deadlines appears much appreciated. “<i>timings chosen to not conflict with other modules were possible</i>”</p>	<p>We will continue to monitor and develop our policy on allowing changes and communicating changes to timetables and coursework deadlines.</p> <p>We will continue to manage the spread of deadlines and further improve the process by looking at deadline clusters that could create high peak demands on scarce resource.</p>
Learning resources	<p>We have refurbished the dynamics and control lab with new benching and the thermodynamics lab has undergone a significant rebuild to improve size and quality of the space. During the refurbishment however access to the lab has</p>	<p>Though our scores for “Learning resources” remain good and in line with the university average. They have not shown improvement despite considerable investment. This is a result of three key issues</p> <p>1) Building the new thermo fluids lab had required</p>	<p>The removal of the ISS cluster from Mechanical Engineering will make this year a challenging one particularly given last year’s feedback. We will work as closely as possible with ISS to look at how some replacement provision can be</p>

	<p>been severely restricted.</p> <p>We have improved the prototyping area facilities to improve our ability to deliver more hands-on problem based activities. However the space is now extremely heavily used and hence access to it at peak times has to be restricted.</p> <p>Significant new lab equipment for teaching thermodynamics has been purchased and is being commissioned for 2012-13 teaching.</p>	<p>the lab to be removed from use for a considerable proportion of the year and new equipment is being commissioned for 2012-13.</p> <p>2) The Improved prototyping area has been a victim of its own success with student demand outstripping time available.</p> <p>3) Improvements in module content, greater commitment from students and restricted access to laboratory space for projects in 2011-12 placed a significantly higher than expected demand for computers at peak times (particularly at the point surveys were being completed). Demand has outstripped our ability to provide year on year improvement in the availability of high performance computing.</p>	<p>accommodated within the school.</p> <p>We will continue to commission new laboratory equipment in our new thermo fluids teaching area and integrate this into teaching.</p> <p>We will look to increase the number of high specification workstations on level 5, while recognising this is valued team working space</p> <p>Extra high performance computing will be purchased and installed in areas away from our 5 floor cluster, such as our teaching laboratories.</p>
<p>Personal development</p>	<p>Professor Priest has been appointed as director of external affairs to improve our student's preparation for employment.</p>	<p>Scores for personal development have shown improvement across all surveys and are significantly higher than the university average. Our drive to develop more and better supported hands on activities has paid dividends but has required huge effort from key staff. NSS comments. <i>"Wide ranging set of skills useful for CV's and for personal development, you don't realise the benefit until you have to apply for jobs", "Course content is relevant when applying for jobs". "Seems to be what employers require" "Course promotes group working, which helps share Skillset"</i></p>	<p>We will work with the employability team to improve awareness of opportunities for personal and career development at all levels.</p> <p>We will investigate how to increase the capacity of the LabVIEW academy and promote participation in externally accredited certification.</p>