

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

School: Physics & Astronomy

Faculty: Mathematics and Physical 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	94	86	84	82	86	84	85	83	87	84	85	82	100	82	100	78	-	80
Teaching	90	88	90	85	85	86	87	83	84	83	83	82	78	84	100	81	-	81
Assessment & feedback	78	65	75	61	61	61	51	56	44	57	46	54	27	68	70	63	-	62
Academic support	88	77	79	74	75	75	68	68	68	68	68	66	100	79	100	76	-	76
Organisation & management	90	82	85	79	81	79	73	83	72	73	73	70	44	77	100	73	-	75
Learning resources	95	87	94	85	88	86	79	77	82	76	85	77	89	82	100	81	-	82
Personal development	84	78	80	76	77	78	61	65	54	63	51	62	67	70	100	68	-	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of NSS style questions for internal module and programme reviews has paid dividends. Students in all years are now able to discuss and share ideas about a wide range of educational aspects with the staff, to reach pragmatic and academically beneficial solutions. It has also aided staff to see how attitudes develop as students progress through the levels.
Achievements in 2010-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our improved scores, in particular the overall satisfaction score of 94%, has resulted in the School of Physics and Astronomy being ranked the 3rd highest School at Leeds, the 12th highest Physics Department in the country, and the 3rd highest Physics Department in the Russell Group.
Main actions for 2011-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership with our students we will be holding discussions to enhance various processes within the school such as providing clarity over marking criteria and feedback on how these are applied to assessed work. This will involve enhanced training / monitoring of PGs used in laboratory teaching, and introduction of some new methods of academic support for core Physics. The embedding of a more consistent programme of key employability skills within the curriculum will be developed along with ways to engage students in being able to articulate these skills and plan for employment.

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Aspect	Progress with actions in response to 2009-10 feedback and indication of impact	Issues raised in 2010-11 feedback	Planned response in 2011-12
Overall satisfaction	We have really seen the benefit of using NSS style questions in the internal module and programme reviews, and subsequently having discussions with each cohort about the meaning of various terminology, and how we can improve different aspects for our students.	Using the NSS style questions in internal reviews allows us to focus on areas that need more attention. This has highlighted the need for clarity in marking criteria and the full range of feedback mechanisms.	We are in the process of working in partnership with a group of students to develop a set of generalised marking criteria for the main types of assessment used in the school. These will be displayed on our website for all to refer to. A similar document detailing the variety of feedback given to students will also be created. These documents will be discussed and approved at STSEC (where there is student representation) and in this way all the students and staff will be united in common practice.
Teaching	Teaching scores are again high reflecting the high commitment shown by the staff.	Minor comments about specific modules are always investigated and discussion between students and staff used to find a mutually beneficial solution. Our practice of surveying every module in week 5 of each semester is appreciated by students and is a crucial mechanism for early detection of points that may need discussion, allowing any necessary modifications to be effected during the semester. This has been particularly useful in relation to systems for returning marked coursework on big core modules.	We will continue to maintain a dialogue between staff and students over all our teaching. Key points being in week 5 of each semester and at the end of semester 2 where we survey our students and discuss/resolve any issues raised.
Assessment and feedback	In response to student comments about feedback we have worked with our student reps to determine ways in which we can enhance the usefulness of feedback to them. This discussion led to changes in our marking of weekly coursework. We now highlight the point in each student's work where they have made any error in maths or physics, allowing them to relate their working to that of the model answer more specifically. The system for returning this weekly coursework has also been tightened up to the satisfaction of the students.	Comments this year about demonstrators in laboratories have highlighted the need to monitor in more detail the performance of postgraduates involved in teaching activities. Although some natural variation between the marking of different individuals is accepted by staff and students alike, it is agreed that more consistency could be achieved.	A working group will be established to look in more detail at the internal and external training given to our PGs who demonstrate in laboratories, and ways devised to monitor in more detail, and more consistently, the way in which they carry out their duties. Another new process to be instigated in response to students comments is that 1 st year students will now have a chance to view their marked physics scripts in after the semester 1 exams. These will be discussed on a one to one basis with the personal tutor to help students understand in more detail how marks are gained in examinations.

Academic support	We continue to enhance the training given to personal tutors before the start of each session, so that excellent academic support can be given to students.	Students are full of praise for our system of weekly small group tutorials throughout first year, and have suggested that some form of small group sessions in 2 nd year would also be appreciated.	We are currently working with staff and students to consider ways in which we could introduce small groups work for the core subjects taught in 2 nd year. Further discussions are also underway to consider the possibility of introducing the Peer Assisted Learning system used in the School of Maths.
Organisation and management	We have yet again seen an improvement in our scores for this category.	The high level of contact hours in the subject allows for regular communication between staff and students, and the VLE has provided an excellent route of written communication.	We will continue to monitor all our processes to maintain a high quality service.
Learning resources	We have created some small study areas across the school, with tables, chairs, whiteboards, and attractive décor, to allow students to find a quiet corner for private or group study.	The high standard of university teaching space and the facilities the school provides for our students in terms of laboratories, computers and study space has resulted in high NSS scores. However we are regularly in discussion with our students on how we can improve things.	In response to discussions with students we are investing in refurbishing the student study room, with new furniture, décor, and the provision of whiteboards to allow students to work independently or discuss topics in groups.
Personal development	The need for developing employability skills is being discussed with our students with increasing frequency and depth. However we can always do more in this area.	Issues in this area are more likely to be raised by staff than students. In the current employment climate we are aware of the need for students to develop and be able to evidence a variety of skills, and are discussing ways to embed this more in the curriculum.	We are increasing our partnership with Careers staff to deliver a consistent programme of activities embedded in our curriculum, that build in intensity as students progress through levels 1, 2 and 3. The best time and method to introduce all the facilities of Leeds for Life is being discussed in partnership with our students. Staff in the school are involved in the Employment Working Group and are able to bring new ideas into the school, and ways to enhance and expand our Year in Industry programme are being discussed. On a more personal level, two of our students were successful in being awarded Alumni-funded faculty research placement and leadership scholarships, and these students are working within the school on a variety of events to enhance their own personal skills and those of other students and visitors (namely UCAS applicants) with whom they interact.