

ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SESSION 2013-14

Faculty of Performance, Visual Arts and Communications – School of Design

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY																		
Aspect	National Student Survey						Undergraduate Programme Experience Survey						Postgraduate Programme Experience Survey					
	2012-13		2011-12		2010-11		2012-13		2011-12		2010-11		2012-13		2011-12		2010-11	
	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni
Overall satisfaction	76	87	77	87	67	86	83	85	81	85	68	83	86	87	72	84	92	82
Teaching	79	89	82	90	75	88	87	85	81	84	74	83	79	87	72	85	88	84
Assessment & feedback	68	71	76	69	63	65	66	59	63	61	47	56	62	75	64	69	70	68
Academic support	75	81	78	80	66	77	67	72	68	72	62	68	81	85	68	80	83	79
Organisation & management	80	84	80	83	70	82	78	73	79	74	68	83	70	85	60	80	80	77
Learning resources	87	90	83	88	79	87	80	81	76	78	75	77	85	86	68	83	76	82
Personal development	77	81	81	81	75	78	75	69	63	68	61	65	77	77	66	71	81	70

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 2011-12 actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The School saw a 1% reduction in its overall NSS score from last year and some inconsistency between its programmes. ▪ There has been on-going development of staff-student dialogue, particularly through the Student-Staff Forum. ▪ Discussions have begun with taught postgraduate students over PES.
Achievements in 2012-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The introduction of a flexible, student-led network for information and support (the “buddy” system). ▪ A new Research Methods module which aims to address a key gap within skills development and will ensure better preparation for the dissertation. ▪ There have been some focused points of success within NSS – particularly in Textiles – but the overall picture still disappointing.

Main actions for 2013-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The School is working on the refurbishment of facilities and investing in learning resources. ▪ We will identify and address the key issues around assessment and feedback, through dialogue and sharing of best practice. ▪ We will continue to review our modules, taking input from students where appropriate. ▪ A series of careers events is planned and we anticipate a real focus on employability during the coming year. ▪ We will strive to match turnout and to improve a deeper understanding of NSS context and questions.
Summary of student involvement in the production of this Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There has been positive discussion and dissemination at first Student-Staff Forum. ▪ We are receiving ongoing feedback from student representatives. ▪ A draft version of the action plan was shared at second forum for more detailed feedback.

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Aspect	Progress with actions in response to 2011-12 feedback and indication of impact	Issues raised in 2012-13 feedback	Planned response in 2013-14
Overall satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing dialogue between staff and students was at the centre of initiatives within the School. This has enabled changes to be communicated and developed together. Two key initiatives include the creation of a “buddy system” (peer mentoring aimed at freshers) and the School newsletter. ▪ NSS response meetings and a small number of PES meetings for PG have helped increase the response rate but have not helped improve our rating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Despite being one school, student satisfaction is not consistent across our programmes. ▪ There is evidence that students do not understand some questions on NSS or how they relate to their experience. ▪ One particular example “the course has helped me to present myself with confidence” scored poorly even though there are numerous opportunities for presentation, culminating in the final degree show. We are uncertain as to whether this might mean a less formal type of presentation or that the situations when students present themselves. In either case, they aren’t left feeling confident (negative feedback). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We will make the student-staff forum more effective by improving staff involvement and recruiting deputy student representatives. ▪ Communication will be enhanced through other channels – reinstate “The Big Ear”. ▪ We are involving students in initiatives such as developing the School common room. ▪ Moving PMF into STSEC has not been effective. It is now transferring to SMT where engagement and the sharing of good practice by programme leaders should be more formal and better managed. ▪ We will further improve sharing of good practice by teaching staff through engagement with the new Teaching Enhancement Scheme. ▪ The NSS survey and its questions have been discussed in general as part of the Staff-Student Forum. This will be followed up by programme-specific sessions with all students nearer to the launch of the 2014 survey.

<p>Teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research and scholarship continues to be embedded in the curriculum and has been enhanced by the development of a new research methods module. ▪ Programme leaders have continued tracking skills (both practical as well as intellectual) across their modules in order to identify gaps and make improvements. ▪ Optional modules have only received limited attention so far, with changes largely being as a response to staffing changes. ▪ Some school-wide modules have undergone a review and enhancement. For example, all of the practical exercises have been completely redeveloped and more closely linked to the lectures for level one Fundamentals of Imaging. ▪ Initiatives such as visiting lecturers and drop-in sessions for programmes (especially Fashion and Graphics) have been introduced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is some sign that subjects don't appear to be being made interesting. ▪ In some cases, staff enthusiasm for their subject is not coming across. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As part of the Curriculum Enhancement Project, learning outcomes for both programmes and modules will be reviewed, and the link between module and programme LOs established. ▪ We are continuing to review optional modules, and are looking for new opportunities to remove unpopular ones, thereby creating space for new threads. ▪ We will continue to review to relevance and content of school-wide modules. ▪ Textiles staff are to develop the use of lectures more clearly within their programme.
<p>Assessment and feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The paperwork for Textile Design, in particular, has been rewritten leading to a significant rise in NSS for that programme. This has emphasised the importance of regular review. ▪ New methods for faster (digital) feedback have been trialled in the final-year dissertation module and throughout Graphics. ▪ A new Student Experience Questionnaire form has been rolled out in order to improve the consistency and coherency of how we ask for feedback. ▪ Thorough briefing for assessment has been done for some modules, however its success was limited because it was perceived to be repetitive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment and feedback need to be more detailed, clearly identifying what should be improved. Although little has changed in terms of the feedback process, there has been a 14% drop which suggests another underlying cause. This could suggest that we need to look more specifically at ensuring students understand the feedback we're giving them. ▪ Feedback is sometimes slow. ▪ Perceived lack of fairness or subjectivity in marking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The second stage of the Curriculum Enhancement Project will involve mapping assessment and feedback for programmes. We will use this to demonstrate the relevance of assessment activity to learning outcomes. ▪ Particular effort has recently been made to develop clear assessment criteria for the final-year dissertation module and also across much of Graphics. This will continue into other areas as needed. ▪ We are looking for opportunities to streamline the feedback process either through technology or by other means. ▪ Greater student involvement will be sought in developing and/or explaining assessment criteria. This was very evident in the work recently done for the dissertation module.
<p>Academic support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with the Careers Centre to develop opportunities has been ongoing, but more effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students need more help and advice in choosing optional modules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A new Digital Skills "virtual module" is being developed. This is targeted at all second-year

	<p>is needed to make this a success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Career plans were surveyed for Graphics students, with some success. ▪ Volunteer peer mentors have been recruited and the “buddy system” will be rolled out during the 2013-14 session. ▪ Very limited progress in developing refresher workshops for returning students (mainly for the final-year dissertation module). ▪ An ongoing network between students in the School has been developed, as evidenced by the degree show and end-of-semester shows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students require more support in making career choices. ▪ Advice isn’t being given at key times (i.e. end of the semester or the end of the year). 	<p>students to help them practice Adobe software.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We are considering rolling out surveying careers plans across other programmes. ▪ We will continue to support and monitor the effectiveness of peer mentoring. ▪ Greater use of alumni will be made both within programmes and School-wide to better inform current students of potential directions. ▪ Further effort is to be given on developing workshops for returning students in areas where there a demand has been identified. ▪ We will encourage students from different programmes to work together both socially and in the curriculum (e.g. school-wide modules). ▪ We are seeking opportunities to enhance support for study choices.
Organisation and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring that workloads are uniformly spread across the working week has proven to be far more challenging than anticipated due to timetabling constraints. It is currently unclear as to how much of a priority this should be. ▪ Social networking sites have been successfully introduced. Where used, this has led to a greater sense of cohesion and an efficient means of communicating with groups of students. ▪ The involvement of student reps is ongoing, but we need to do more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Although this has aspect has continued to improve at a School level, some programmes are not perceived as running smoothly. ▪ Communication of changes has been highlighted as a particular problem for DTM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The School will make more effective use of its student reps. ▪ There will be greater involvement of students in communicating and managing change. ▪ We will make better use of other communication channels (e.g. social networking, the Big Ear) to identify and deal with problems when they arise. ▪ To ensure closer alignment of expectations, we need to be clearer from the outset why activities are structured in the way they are.
Learning resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The School has extended its opening hours to 8pm during the busiest periods of each semester. ▪ There has been a recent investment in resources – particularly printing – which has led 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to resources in Textiles and Fashion should be improved. ▪ We are happy to see that the changes we have been making over the past two years are beginning to be recognised and acknowledged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We will continue to enhance the School’s facilities through the coordination of a new resource committee. ▪ A list of resources will be made available to students in order to identify what is available

	<p>to a general improvement in satisfaction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No progress on re-establishing resources committee 	<p>by our students. We aim to continue this with ongoing dialogue to highlight areas for specific improvement.</p>	<p>and how it may be accessed.</p>
<p>Personal development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have continued to try to engage as many students as possible with opportunities such as the end-of-year show. The year-in-industry / year-abroad options continue to be very popular amongst students and attract a far greater participation than the University as a whole. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not always evident to students where personal development is taking place, even though it is embedded in the programmes. Some students do not feel confident either to present themselves or to tackle unfamiliar problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the School and Faculty are planning various initiatives on the theme of employability including bringing in external industrial speakers. Our programme and module staff will clearly signpost personal development activities and opportunities when they arise. We will bring in more visiting speakers to programmes such as DTM where this has not previously happened.