

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

School: Humanities/Philosophy

Faculty: Arts

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	87	86	82	82	85	84	90	83	91	84	84	82	75	82	75	78	82	80
Teaching	89	88	86	85	86	86	90	83	92	83	88	82	100	84	75	81	94	81
Assessment & feedback	70	65	56	61	55	61	60	56	65	57	56	54	48	68	58	63	69	62
Academic support	68	77	73	74	74	75	63	68	76	68	67	66	70	79	70	76	88	76
Organisation & management	86	82	80	79	82	79	79	83	76	73	71	70	70	77	71	73	61	75
Learning resources	80	87	85	85	82	86	70	77	74	76	74	77	90	82	83	81	93	82
Personal development	69	78	72	76	68	78	64	65	52	63	59	62	58	70	84	68	55	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"> <li>• Improvement in teaching score (+3) may reflect some of the syllabus changes which were undertaken last year with a view to developing our range of provision.</li> <li>• Much effort was focused in 2009-10 on improving an unacceptably low assessment and feedback score. A 3 week norm for return of feedback was introduced; module changes to ensure mid-semester formative assessment on all modules came into effect; a standardised feedback sheet was introduced; use of Grademark was increased; rapid distribution of feedback via VLE expanded. Impact very positive: there has been a jump of +14 points on the NSS Assessment and Feedback score – though there is clearly still more work to do. But it should also be noted that the Programme Survey results in this category are worse than last year (down -5), and the Postgraduate results in this category give cause for concern – though there is a known special explanation of the very poor score here (see below).</li> <li>• Efforts to improve module advice by organising module advice sessions have apparently had no impact (score on the relevant question is lower).</li> <li>• Further embedding of VLE use for efficient and rapid communication with students seems to have been effective – the organisation and management score has improved (+6).</li> </ul>
---------------------------	--

<p><b>Achievements in 2010-11</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radical overhaul of curriculum (especially in HPS) undertaken successfully. New module in Continental Philosophy to be introduced from 2011 to meet strong student demand.</li> <li>• Leeds for Life becoming much more fully embedded both into staff and student expectations concerning personal tutoring.</li> <li>• HEA focus group organised and results disseminated to staff.</li> <li>• Significant improvements in speed, frequency and detail of feedback provision.</li> <li>• A greater focus on employability has been achieved with in-house careers talks organised for our students.</li> <li>• Overall satisfaction level in NSS has improved +5 since last year; and though the level of satisfaction at levels 1 and 2 as measured by the programme survey has fallen by -1, the absolute level remains reasonably high, at 90%.</li> <li>• Teaching scores remain reasonably good in philosophy this year – and at PGT level reached a 100% satisfaction rating.</li> <li>• Most pleasing result was the above-mentioned increase of +14 in the assessment and feedback score on the NSS – an area to which a substantial amount of effort had been devoted.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b>Main actions . for 2011-12</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the programme structure, modes of assessment and module choice at level 2, where comments suggest most student dissatisfaction with the BA programme in Philosophy is centred.</li> <li>• Increase use of tutorial performance as a mode of assessment, in an effort to improve quality of tutorials for all students.</li> <li>• Increase use of modes of assessment other than essay/examination to encourage the development of skills that students feel they ought to obtain from a philosophy degree, but don't always feel they do obtain (e.g. presentational skills, debating skills, etc).</li> <li>• Introduce timetabled student discussion sessions to increase discussion time on appropriate modules.</li> <li>• Begin provision of module information by means of short video presentations stored on the VLE, in addition to module advice meetings.</li> <li>• Provision of regular 'welcome back' meetings for all students at beginning of each semester to improve efficiency of communication and engender more of a sense of identification with the School.</li> <li>• Further streamline attendance monitoring processes.</li> <li>• Continue actions around the employability agenda liaising with Careers team, introducing CSER 8000 module, increasing provision to students of information relating to skills they can claim to have gained from the study of Philosophy.</li> </ul>

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

**School: Humanities/Philosophy**

**Faculty: Arts**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Progress with actions in response to 2009-10 feedback and indication of impact</b>	<b>Issues raised in 2010-11 feedback</b>	<b>Planned response in 2011-12</b>
<b>Overall satisfaction</b>	<p>The overall satisfaction score (NSS) has increased (+5) but so did those of many other philosophy depts., so we remain ranked only 28<sup>th</sup> out of 36. To put us in the top half of the table we need to increase our rating to at least 92-93% satisfaction.</p> <p>Impact of actions in relation to Teaching, Assessment and Feedback and Organisation and Management has been positive so far as NSS results are concerned, but Programme Survey results are less good.</p> <p>Results in the categories relating to Academic Support, Learning Resources and Personal Development are less good than last year (NSS), though Programme Survey results show quite a considerable increase (+12) in the personal development category, perhaps indicating that efforts surrounding the employability agenda have paid off.</p>	<p>Weakest areas in 2010-11 NSS are <i>Academic Support</i> (68%), <i>Personal Development</i> (69%) and <i>Assessment and Feedback</i> (70%).</p> <p>Weakest areas in 2010-11 Programme Survey are <i>Assessment and Feedback</i> (60%), <i>Academic Support</i> (63%) and <i>Personal Development</i> (64%). Generally lower scores here than on NSS may reflect the dissatisfaction (evident in comments) with Level 2 of the programme.</p> <p>Weakest areas at postgraduate level are <i>Assessment and Feedback</i> and <i>Personal Development</i>.</p>	<p>To increase facilitation of effective personal tutoring via further embedding of Leeds for Life; to use VLE technology to improve module advice; to enable fuller and more detailed feedback and personal contact, particularly at Level 2, by reducing SSRs on some centrally important modules; to develop VLE area to aid with careers advice and development and characterisation of employability skills; to ensure smooth incorporation of Joint Honours students into the support systems of the School; to introduce modes of assessment into our programmes which will help foster students' confidence that they have gained employment-related skills; to create VLE document which explains to students which skills they may legitimately claim to have been provided with by a philosophy degree – and provides guidelines on how to evidence this.</p> <p>We expect the incorporation of joint honours students into the structures and processes of our School this year to have beneficial effects. Detailed examination of NSS results shows that JH students have been in general amongst the least satisfied of our students in the past – and we expect that recent changes will help them to feel much better integrated into the School.</p>

<p><b>Teaching</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L3 students were invited to research seminars –but there was variable uptake of this opportunity.</li> <li>• The Students as Scholars scheme appears to remain effective for a small number of specially targeted students.</li> <li>• The syllabus has now been substantially overhauled. A new module in continental philosophy has been introduced, some low-recruiting HPS modules scrapped and staff redeployed to better-recruiting Philosophy modules.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some dissatisfaction with quality of tutorials. Many students complain of the lack of preparedness and unwillingness to contribute of fellow students.</li> <li>• Some dissatisfaction with size of tutorials.</li> <li>• Some students think there is not enough contact time.</li> <li>• Interactive lecture format not popular with some students because of perceived lack of discussion time or difficulties some students felt contributing to discussion within a large group.</li> <li>• Some complaints about lack of audio-visual aids in some lectures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce more assessment of tutorial performance to improve student contribution and preparation (a suggestion of the Student-Led Change initiative).</li> <li>• Use discussion of Partnership in welcome back meetings to stress obligations students have to one another.</li> <li>• Reinforce current policy of strict maximum on numbers in a given tutorial (with academic staff and timetablers).</li> <li>• Possibilities here are currently limited by high SSRs but new appointments may make it possible to improve matters in the near future.</li> <li>• Timetabled small-group student discussion sessions to be piloted for levels 2 and 3, modelled loosely on the popular Level 1 proctorial system.</li> <li>• Review use of the interactive lecture format , so as to ensure that student experience is not unduly dominated by this mode of provision.</li> <li>• Tutors to be asked about use of audio-visual aids.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment and feedback</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of mid-semester feedback appears to have been popular.</li> <li>• Introduction of 3 week norm for return of feedback has proved largely workable.</li> <li>• Reading weeks have been introduced into the structure of a number of modules. These have been popular with students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our lowest score remains on the question 'feedback has helped me clarify things I did not understand'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This seems likely to be due to the fact that many staff conceive of the purpose of feedback as aiding in the development of general philosophical skills – such as structuring essays, arguing clearly, writing effectively and persuasively, etc. – and gear their formal written feedback to this end. Staff to be asked to consider whether there is more scope for provision</li> </ul>

	<p>and staff alike and have helped staff provide prompt and detailed mid-semester feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It has not yet proved possible to find an easy means of providing exam feedback to large numbers of individual students by email – though the VLE has been used by some staff for more generic exam feedback to good effect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Also relatively low score on question concerning detail of feedback.</li> <li>Very low score in this category at postgraduate level thought to be due to very late return of essays on a single compulsory module in the MA Philosophy programme.</li> </ul>	<p>of content-related, clarificatory comments in written feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many staff provide this kind of clarificatory feedback in oral form (e.g. when discussing essay plans and drafts, in office hours, etc.). Rebranding of office hours as feedback hours may help students realise that oral feedback also counts.</li> <li>Review of level 2 provision will address this issue. It is at level 2 that students receive least in the way of detailed feedback on their work, because modules are large and dominated by examination-only modes of summative assessment. Possible actions here include restructuring to reduce SSRs on these large modules; an end to examination-only assessment; capping of numbers on modules.</li> <li>Renew attempts to find a technical solution to the difficulties of providing swift individualised feedback on examinations by email.</li> <li>MA Director to ensure all assessment returned promptly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Academic support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Module advice sessions were well advertised again – but only poorly attended.</li> <li>Welcome back meetings only introduced in 2011, so no opportunity yet to judge their effectiveness. Attendance was, however, disappointing, despite the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is clear that we are still not succeeding in satisfying our students in the advice we offer on modules, despite the introduction of module advice meetings and increased focus on module advice as part of the personal tutor's role.</li> <li>The 'advice and support' question also</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide module advice by way of short videos on the VLE in which staff outline module content and explain what sorts of questions are covered by the module.</li> <li>Keep focused on personal tutoring with</li> </ul>

	meetings being widely advertised.	attracts a lower score than is desirable.	reminders to staff at the relevant times about what they are supposed to cover in the personal tutorial sessions. Further encourage use by all staff and students of Leeds for Life.
<b>Organisation and management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New School structure developed in order to streamline provision of services to students after the reorganisation of Humanities.</li> <li>• Increased use of VLE for prompt and efficient communication with students.</li> <li>• Provision of information to students by text not yet in use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Except at PG level, where there has been a small fall, we are doing better in this category.</li> <li>• Some students expressed disappointment that module handbooks were no longer being produced in paper form.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to keep focused on prompt and efficient communication with students.</li> <li>• For environmental reasons, we do not propose resurrecting paper handbooks but will continue to ensure that all handbooks are readily available at an early stage on the VLE.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of library digitisation service further publicised and increased.</li> <li>• Use of VLE reading list tool increased.</li> <li>• Module leaders have continued to review library provision of key texts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been small falls here both in NSS and Programme Survey scores. The percentage of students agreeing that library resources and services are good enough for their needs has fallen by 10%.</li> <li>• There is however an improved score (+7) at postgraduate level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to encourage staff to use the digitisation services provided by the library to minimise competition over books.</li> <li>• Encourage and remind staff to communicate their needs to the library in a timely and efficient fashion via the reading list tool.</li> </ul>
<b>Personal development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are liaising much more effectively now with Careers Centre, Faculty of Arts, etc. over employability initiatives which may explain the big improvement in Programme Survey results.</li> <li>• Little change was made, though, in use of other forms of assessment which might increase students' perception that they</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small fall in the NSS score balanced by large rise in the Programme Survey score.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue current initiatives around employability themes – e.g. meetings with Careers staff in foyer, Careers talks at welcome back meetings (including L1), introduction of CSER8000 industrial placement module.</li> <li>• Encourage staff to include more varied modes of assessment, including presentations, seminar contribution, etc. and to help students understand how to</li> </ul>

	<p>are developing useful skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very low PGT score in this category (though based on a very low return of 21%).</li> </ul>	<p>explain and articulate which skills they are obtaining from a given module.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of VLE document helping students to describe the skills offered by a Philosophy degree.</li> <li>• Particular attention needs to be paid to PGTs though the overall low score conceals considerable variation amongst the questions. 'I have received support to enhance my personal development' attracts a score of only 50%. Careers initiatives will be extended to postgraduate students and personal tutoring of postgraduate students improved.</li> </ul>
--	--------------------------------------	---	---