

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

School: Humanities/Theology & Religious Studies

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	88	86	91	82	71	84	78	83	82	84	94	82	100	82	100	78	92	80
Teaching	86	88	91	85	90	86	81	83	86	83	91	82	96	84	100	81	94	81
Assessment & feedback	61	65	68	61	56	61	62	56	69	57	64	54	87	68	100	63	83	62
Academic support	75	77	76	74	63	75	70	68	69	68	75	66	100	79	83	76	88	76
Organisation & management	86	82	89	79	78	79	82	83	78	73	85	70	100	77	100	73	91	75
Learning resources	66	87	69	85	74	86	63	77	68	76	69	77	96	82	100	81	74	82
Personal development	70	78	64	76	63	78	58	65	53	63	60	62	81	70	63	68	67	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	<p>This year's scores are, on the whole, disappointing. NSS scores have fallen in every category except personal development; programme survey results show a similar pattern. The fall in scores is in no case very large in the case of NSS, but there are more serious plunges in the Programme Survey results, especially amongst level 2 students in the areas of assessment and feedback and learning resources. It is hard not to conclude that some of the 2009-10 actions have either not been very effective, or else require more time to take effect. Some of the most significant problems related to modules on which it had proved necessary to bring in external tutors, there being no suitably qualified staff within TRS. On the positive side, it appears that attempts by the School to improve liaison with the Careers Service and to promote Arts Faculty initiatives may have borne fruit in the area of personal development, where the score has increased at every level.</p>
Achievements in 2010-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though its score is not so high as last year, TRS has maintained an overall satisfaction score of 88, above the University average. • There is an improved 'personal development' score, both in NSS and in the Programme Survey –and a very large rise (+18) at postgraduate level - which is very encouraging, though clearly there is much work still to do. • Postgraduate levels of satisfaction remain generally very high (and well above university average) in all categories – though survey numbers are admittedly small. • External examiners report very favourably on the TRS programmes, both at BA and MA level. • Some feedback issues were successfully addressed, with feedback now standardly produced in word processed form to solve legibility problems. • TRS society reinvigorated, and newsletters produced to enhance student identification and sense of belonging. • 'Students into Schools' module successfully introduced to help with employability issues.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much progress made with the employability agenda, with regular careers talks to students and several TRS-specific initiatives.
Main actions for 2011-12	<p>Two categories stand out as requiring urgent attention: assessment and feedback and learning resources. This is where we will be focusing most attention over the next 12 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointments to be made in order to improve Staff-Student ratios and decrease reliance on external tutors. • TRS Programme Team to address various assessment issues, including possibilities for increased use of Grademark, return of scripts with feedback sheets, possibilities for increased provision of mid-semester feedback, rebranding of some office hours as 'feedback sessions'. • Investigation of technical means for distributing individualised feedback on examination performance swiftly by email. • Gaps in Biblical Studies provision in the library to be filled, in consultation with relevant TRS staff. • All staff to be instructed to use VLE reading tool to supply reading lists to the library in good time. Library rep and TRS programme manager to follow up on missing lists. • Staff to be encouraged to use library digitalisation service to help reduce competition for books. • Introduction of External Placement module (from 2012-13) to enable students to gain experience of working in a non-academic environment to which their TRS degree is specifically relevant and thereby enhance employability • Introduction of CSER 8000 (from 2012-13) industrial placement module to attract applicants and further employability agenda. • Introduce timetabled discussion sessions on certain modules from 2012-13, including Religion in Modern Britain, modelled on the proctorial system in philosophy, to meet student demand for more discussion, especially at level 1. • Introduction of new Level 2 Core Module, 'Studying Religion in Context,' from 2012-13, designed to increase coherence of and performance in TRS SH and JH BA Programme, through provision of skills-oriented curriculum content,

The School's full action plan may be accessed via the following link: www.lts.leeds.ac.uk/respondingtoyourfeedback/school.html

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School:

Faculty:

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	<p>The overall satisfaction score in TRS has fallen from 91 to 88 this year. This fall was unfortunately sufficient to move TRS from a potential 11th place in the national league table to 18th (out of 26).</p> <p>TRS faced a difficult situation last year, when its inability to make new appointments during the review process meant that crucial modules had to be taught by external staff based primarily at other institutions. It is virtually impossible to ensure that</p>	<p>Weakest areas in 2010-11 NSS are <i>Assessment and Feedback</i> (61%), <i>Learning Resources</i> (66%) and <i>Personal Development</i> (70%).</p> <p>Weakest areas in 2010-11 Programme Survey are <i>Personal Development</i> (58%), <i>Assessment and Feedback</i> (62%) and <i>Learning Resources</i> (63%).</p>	<p>To improve Staff-Student ratios thereby laying groundwork for measures to improve feedback provision, personal tutoring and smooth incorporation of Joint Honours students into the processes and structures of the School; to increase facilitation of effective personal tutoring by further embedding of Leeds for Life; to use VLE technology to improve module advice; to develop VLE area to aid with careers advice and development and characterisation of</p>

	such staff properly comply with our departmental norms and rules on such matters as timely return of feedback - and they are also less available for personal advice and support , to provide advice on library purchases, and so on. It seems highly likely that the positive impact of the actions introduced last year was unfortunately outweighed by the issues introduced as a result of overreliance on external tutors.	Weakest areas at postgraduate level are <i>Personal Development</i> (81%) and <i>Assessment and Feedback</i> (87%) – though levels of satisfaction at this level are generally higher.	employability skills; to introduce CSER 8000 industrial placement module and TRS's own external placement module to increase employability skills; to review assessment and feedback procedures with Programme Team; to fill serious gaps in library provision; to monitor supply of reading lists to library and chase up where these are not being provided.
Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students into Schools module was successfully introduced. • HEA focus group praised flexibility and choice on programme and wide range of staff specialisations. • 100% overall satisfaction achieved at postgraduate level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most serious problems are at level 1, where programme survey results have slipped by 15 points. This appears to be due largely to the use of external tuition on central modules. • Many students expressed dissatisfaction with lack of opportunity for discussion on large, lecture-only modules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make appointments to reduce reliance on external tutors. • Pilot roll-out of a suitably adapted version of the proctorial system in TRS. It is thought this could be used to good effect particularly on the core 'Religion in Modern Britain' module at L1.
Assessment and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal tutors have continued to discuss post-assessment feedback and marks breakdown with students. • Encouragement of pre-assessment , mid-semester feedback was continued. • Statements on feedback incorporated in module and programme handbooks in order to clarify to students what they might reasonably expect in the way of feedback. • Many creative modes of assessment continue to be used throughout TRS which are liked by students – e.g. peer assessment of performance, group work, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback scores have slipped quite severely, especially in the programme survey, where there are very low scores (especially at level 2) for the question about detail in comments and feedback helping to clarify what has not been understood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make appointments to reduce reliance on external tutors and decrease Staff-Student ratios across a range of modules to permit more meaningful, detailed and rapid feedback. • TRS Programme Team to consider various possibilities for further enhancing what is offered in the way of feedback – e.g. more mid-semester feedback on modules which are summatively assessed only at the end, more use of Grademark. • School to investigate further the technical means of providing individualised examination feedback via email. • Rebranding of some office hours as 'feedback sessions' may help students

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many students are unhappy with non-return of essays and scripts. 	<p>realise that oral feedback also counts!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pedagogical justifications for the current policy to be reviewed – and if retained, it will be crucial fully to explain them more effectively to students.
Academic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library skills training is now offered as part of induction programme. Extra Personal Tutor meeting was arranged in May to help with module advice. Library dissertation session was introduced. TRS is now doing much better on some of the questions in this category – e.g. the ‘advice and support with my studies’ score has increased by 8 points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Though still quite high, at 83, there has been a fall of 8 points in the score relating to ability to contact staff. This may very well be due to the problems created by reliance on external tutors. Scores are generally low for study advice. It is thought that one problem may be that module advice is delivered by way of module advice meetings and that student attendance can be patchy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New appointments should reduce reliance on external tutors and improve accessibility of staff. Introduce module advice offered via audio-visual files on the VLE to supplement module advice meetings. By further embedding Leeds for Life and the associated model of personal tutoring, improve the module and study advice function of personal tutor meetings.
Organisation and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much effort devoted to design of structures and processes to be used within new arrangements for the School of Humanities. Changes made to procedures for ensuring ethics requirements for fieldwork are complied with. Administrative changes to dissertation policy to ensure that students enrol initially only for 20 credit dissertation and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small falls in this category in NSS, but a rise in the Programme Survey results and 100% satisfaction rating for PGT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue attempts to communicate changes promptly to students. Increased use of VLE for this purpose to be encouraged. Continuing efforts to be made to see that new School student support systems are functioning properly, especially in light of the fact that these are now centred geographically in a different building from that which TRS students and staff are used to thinking of as their home.

	<p>may only enrol for 40 credit dissertation if sufficient summer work has been completed.</p>		
<p>Learning resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of digitised resources was extensively promoted. • Library skills training was offered at level 2 as well as at induction level, to help students make best use of library resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The library is the source of serious dissatisfaction for TRS students. • Opening times are mentioned as one source of dissatisfaction in last year's TRS focus group study, but the main problem appears to be crucial gaps in provision and insufficient copies of books on large modules. • Some students complain that reading lists are not available via the library. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with TRS staff and library rep to identify sources of library problems. Appointments to decrease reliance on external tutors will help increase effectiveness of liaison between library and academic staff. • Particular gaps in library provision to be filled (e.g. Biblical Studies). • Where book buying is not practicable, to investigate and exploit the opportunities for digitisation, coursepack production, etc.. • Staff to be instructed about use of reading list tool and reminded as library deadlines approach. • Receipt of reading lists to be monitored and staff who have not provided their lists to the library to be chased up.
<p>Personal development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion has continued of Arts Faculty initiatives. • Promotion has continued of Leeds for Life where uptake is increasing. • Careers talks have been offered in the dept. • A newsletter was produced with level 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scores have improved in this category at all levels, which suggests the initiatives taken are paying off. However, scores remain unacceptably low, especially in the programme survey (58%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External placement module to be introduced to increase student experience of employment in workplaces to which a TRS degree is especially relevant, • CSER 8000 module to be introduced to enhance employability-related skills and

	<p>students to increase student identification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students into Schools module introduced.		<p>enhance student confidence in the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current initiatives to liaise closely with Careers Service, Arts initiatives, etc. to continue.
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