

ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SESSION 2015-16

School of Molecular and Cellular Biology - Faculty of Biological Sciences

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY																			
Aspect	National Student Survey						Undergraduate Programme Experience Survey						Postgraduate Programme Experience Survey						
	2014-15		2013-14		2012-13		2014-15		2013-14		2012-13		2014-15		2013-14		2012-13		
	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School	Uni	School
Overall satisfaction	96	90	89	88	79	87	83	87	84	85	83	85	90	85	89	85	83	87	
Teaching	96	92	91	90	83	89	83	86	83	85	86	85	84	85	87	86	94	87	
Assessment & feedback	73	74	71	71	72	71	54	63	58	62	61	59	54	71	52	71	81	75	
Academic support	82	85	86	82	78	81	68	74	72	73	73	72	79	82	80	82	81	85	
Organisation & management	78	85	70	85	63	84	64	76	64	75	56	73	73	82	83	81	87	85	
Learning resources	96	92	96	91	91	90	89	84	86	83	87	81	98	87	88	85	92	86	
Personal development	86	85	82	82	78	81	68	72	73	72	69	69	76	76	80	77	89	77	
Sector position		21/145		50/146		57/147													

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)

Headline achievement in 2014-15	Overall student satisfaction and graduate employability have risen to their highest levels for the last three years.
Main actions for 2015-16	<p><i>List 3 actions – to be included on the posters to be produced for each School</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Increase the availability and range of on-line resources.</i> <i>2. Review student perception of the timeliness and quality of feedback and introduce measures to deal with the issues.</i> <i>3. Increase the dialogue between students and staff, predominantly via the school and course reps.</i>

<p>Good practice examples from 2014-15</p>	<p><i>List examples of innovative practice and developments which are of wider interest across the University.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For biochemistry students, there has been development of on-line, interactive lectures and revision packages, correlating with an increase in module marks. 2. The development of a professional on-line learning community and transition tool for M-level bioscience students 3 For students across the school (and faculty), there has been development of a mobile digital resource to support Personal tutorials
<p>Summary of student involvement in the production of this Action Plan</p>	<p>A pre-action plan meeting was held with UG and PGT course and school reps to discuss the outcomes of the NSS, UG and PGT programme experience surveys. In addition, analysis of the open comments made available from the surveys and feedback from student-staff fora contributed to the action plan. The draft plan was circulated to all students and course reps inviting feedback.</p>

AGREED ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SESSION 2015-16

Aspect	Progress with 2014-2015 actions and indication of impact	Agreed Issues/Actions for 2015-2016	Responsibility/Expected completion date
<p>Overall satisfaction</p>	<p>It is pleasing to see our continued efforts to improve the student experience are reflected in a rise in NSS 'overall satisfaction' of 7% (89% to 96%). This mirrors a rise in satisfaction levels of the biochemistry cohort from 82% to 93% (11%) and a score of 100% for the MBiol biochemistry programme, which is particularly welcome, given this is the first cohort to graduate from the programme. Biological sciences and microbiology continue to perform strongly with overall satisfaction scores of 95% and 100% respectively.</p> <p>The overall satisfaction score for the PPES has also risen slightly to 90%, whilst the score for the UPES remains in line with the previous two years at 83%.</p> <p>It is interesting to note that for the Biochemistry cohort (2012-15) the scores for each NSS category are higher than for the corresponding UPES category at both levels 1 & 2. This indicates an overall rise in satisfaction for these categories of provision as students move from levels 1 to 3. A similar picture emerges for the Biological Sciences programme with the exception of assessment and</p>	<p>Despite the introduction of a briefing session to biochemists about the rationale for using a 60 credit, level 2 module, there were still student concerns about the lack of semester 1 examinations for this module. This has led to changes to the assessment. Whilst the module remains a 60 credit module, this year students will sit an examination paper in January (which contributes 20% to the module) as well as a coursework component (25%) and final examination paper in May (55%).</p> <p>To understand and respond to issues that arise we need to increase the level of communication between students and staff through</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Informal meetings between course and school reps and the DSE/PLs at both UG and PGT levels. A suggestion is 2/semester for UG; 1/semester with PGT reps. Frequency and timing of these meetings is to be agreed with reps. 2. Use of a drop box for suggestions, located at the SE reception desk. 3. Continue the use of a programme level specific lecture slide for staff to include in lectures providing contact details of course/school reps. 	<p>Module manager (Dr J Boyes) & DSE/ June 2016</p> <p>DSE & PLs/ On-going throughout the year DSE & SE office / On-going</p> <p>SE office; PLs & programme teams / Jan 2016</p>

	<p>feedback, academic support and overall satisfaction which drop <5% in comparison to the earlier years.</p> <p>The underlying data of the UPES masks a 22% downturn in overall satisfaction for year 2+ biological science students (97% to 75%), although there is a rise of 18% for the year 1 biological science students.</p>	<p>The programme leader for biological sciences will meet with the year 3 students during induction to discuss the data and gather feedback and will then continue to work closely with the course reps throughout the year to resolve any issues that arise.</p>	<p>PL & DSE/ May 2016</p>
<p>Teaching</p>	<p>Teaching scores for NSS have risen to a 3 year high of 96%, which is excellent. None of the 103 NSS participants disagreed with the statements in this section.</p> <p>Lecture capture is routinely used across the School and is highly valued by students to support their learning and exam preparation. Indeed, on the odd occasion, when recording facilities are unavailable or not used, students and reps raise it as a concern.</p> <p>It is a requirement that all new members of staff (including UAFs) will complete a recognised CPD programme (ULTRA/ HEA fellow or UAF training programme) to support them in delivering high quality student education. In our continued efforts to address the staff to student ratio, a new teaching fellow and 6 UAFs have been recruited this year.</p> <p>The UPES score is the same as last year at 83% whilst the PPES score has fallen slightly by 3% to 84%.</p>	<p>Continue to respond positively and to integrate digital learning technologies which are appropriate for the School</p> <p>The School will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trial the use of e-submission and e-marking for a number of coursework elements. Evaluation of this will be coupled to the outcome of a discussion with reps which will include student perception of this technology. 2. Move towards the use of automated lecture capture, rather than the ad-hoc recording facility currently in use and development of accurate personalised staff timetables. 3. Disseminate the findings of an evaluation of on-line interactive lectures and revision packages to encourage possible uptake by other programmes. 4. Negotiate with publishers the use of digital learning resources to support biological sciences/BTE. 5. Consider piloting the use of a 5 credit digital learning module for all students in the School. <p>The School will also engage with the TES to identify and disseminate examples of innovative teaching practice.</p>	<p>All staff involved in these modules & FDSE/July 2016</p> <p>DSE/ Dec 2016</p> <p>DSE & level 1 & 2 bioc staff May 2016</p> <p>PL & DSE June 2016</p> <p>PLs & Dr N Phillips & DSE/ Apr 2016</p> <p>DSE, FDSE & All staff/July 2016</p>
<p>Assessment and feedback</p>	<p>As in previous years, one of the main areas for improvement is assessment and feedback. Despite various measures to improve the student experience in this respect and counteract the invariably lower scores given in response to these questions, it remains an intractably difficult problem to solve.</p>	<p>Despite on-going efforts to improve the clarity and transparency of assessment and to improve the format and depth of feedback there is still work to be done.</p> <p>We need to better understand students expectations of what constitutes effective, prompt feedback, and when and how it should be delivered. This information needs to be considered by staff and then guidelines and outcomes clearly articulated to staff and students. To this end we will</p>	<p>School rep & DSE/ Feb 2016</p>

	<p>This category remains the lowest score for both the UPES and PPES at 54%.</p>	<p>engage with the student reps and student body to gather this information.</p> <p>Assessment criteria used by staff to mark course work and exam essays are available on the VLE but to increase transparency additional links to the CoPA will be made available in areas routinely used by students.</p> <p>In response to student feedback, there will be a review of the criteria used for marking 'other' types of level 3 projects (excluding lab and literature projects).</p> <p>How to communicate assessment feedback deadlines will be explored, possibly inclusion in module outlines.</p> <p>To help students prepare for writing ATU essays an additional workshop/resources which runs in semester 1 will be rolled-out across the School. Additional exemplar essays will be made available on the VLE.</p> <p>Course reps for the 2015-16 cohort of MSc students stated at a recent meeting that the M-level students were particularly pleased with the individual/small group feedback they had received on their first piece of coursework. This needs to be fed back to the course team and considered in light of other pieces of assessed work. For 2015-16, all M-level Bioscience modules now have a one hour feedback session scheduled at the end of the module. The purpose is to provide feedback to students on assessed work and gather feedback from students on the module.</p>	<p>DSE & VLE staff/ Jan 2016</p> <p>Module manager (Dr E Paci) & relevant staff/May Apr 2016</p> <p>All staff/ July 2016</p> <p>PLs, DSE, Module manager (Dr Paci) Nov 2015</p> <p>Prog leader (Prof Baker)/Feb 2016</p>
<p>Academic support</p>	<p>There is a small drop of 4% in the NSS score (to 82%) and UPES score (to 68%) whilst the PPES score of 79% is in-line with the previous 2 years. Scores for 2 of the 3 questions which comprise this section showed little change but the third question, "good advice was available when I needed to make study choices" dropped by 10%, the largest change of any question at School level.</p>	<p>Staff will be asked to provide a weekly 'consultation hour' or to offer an alternative time when their tutees or other students can see them. This should increase the opportunities students have to ask for advice at a time when they need it.</p> <p>Despite the efforts of the Student Education management team to ensure SMCB have a fully staffed and functioning administrative support team, there are on-going issues with staff secondments and illness. Due to the foresight and conscientious nature of the staff supporting SMCB programmes the potential impact has been ameliorated but a stable, experienced team would be very welcome to provide on-going, high quality advise.</p>	<p>All staff/ Feb 2016</p> <p>DSE/ Dec 2015</p>

	<p>We have initiated a PASS scheme for biological science students which is working well. We have also set up a PASS scheme for biochemists in response to feedback we received at the start of this semester.</p> <p>Evaluation of the M-level professional learning site indicated the site is useful for preparing students to come to Leeds and the site allows students to post questions and receive feedback in an interactive form.</p>	<p>The role and value of Personal tutorials in regard to supporting academic choices (and development of employability skills) will be reinforced on circulation of a new digital resource for students.</p> <p>Evaluate the effectiveness of the PASS schemes implemented this year and the use of both second and third years as PASS tutors.</p> <p>The Professional learning site will continue for 2016 entry and will be enhanced taking into account student feedback that has been collated.</p>	<p>PLs & Dr N Phillips/July 2016</p> <p>Dr Divan & V Volz/ July 2016</p>
Organisation and management	<p>Also pleasing is an upturn in response to NSS questions related to organisation and management which have improved such that this section has risen 8% to 78%.</p> <p>Nonetheless, for UPES the score for organisation and management has remained at 64% and for PPES it has dropped by 10% to 73%.</p>	<p>It is difficult to identify a reason for the drop in the PPES score for this category as no specific issues were raised with regard to organisational and management issues. There have been a number of changes to the administrative staff working in this area but we now have an established, experienced team. This situation will be monitored.</p>	<p>PL (Prof Baker) & DSE</p>
Learning resources	<p>At School level, the NSS, UPES and PPES scores remain high for this category.</p> <p>Ad-hoc lecture capture has been adopted by School staff.</p> <p>We have secured a number of essential pieces of lab equipment, including spectrophotometers but a rolling programme of replacement of both spectrophotometers and microscopes needs to be implemented.</p> <p>Thanks to the sterling work of Chris Jones (MCB Teaching Lab Manager) and his team, refurbishment and reconfiguration to parts of Lab C and the staff preparatory area took place over the summer (2015). As a result we have a dedicated space for MBiol students which can accommodate</p>	<p>We will engage with the Faculty to introduce automated lecture capture for the start of the next academic cycle (2016-17).</p> <p>We will continue to negotiate for increased investment in new laboratory equipment which is vital to enhance the student experience</p> <p>School staff will work with Faculty to support the design of an appropriate space which will deliver modern, facility-rich laboratories to enhance the student experience and provide staff with high quality research space.</p>	<p>All staff/ Sep 2016</p> <p>DSE, teaching lab manager/ Apr 2016</p> <p>All staff/ Apr 2016</p>

	<p>10 more students and a more effective working space for the technical staff, including a work area in the main body of the lab which helps when classes are running.</p>	<p>We will use the TES to identify innovative learning resources and disseminate them across other programmes within the School.</p> <p>Each programme area has an adopted core text. The biochemistry programme team has made effective use of the e-resources provided by publishers of the core text. This year, we (in consultation with our students) will review the e-support materials that accompany the core text for the biological sciences and decide on how best it could be used.</p>	<p>DSE/ July 2016</p> <p>PL; DSE & students/ June 2016</p>
<p>Personal development</p>	<p>Due to the excellent work of the Employability Officer, Tim Goodall, and SMCB staff, work is ongoing to embed employability skills development into the curriculum.</p> <p>At School level there has been an upturn of 4% in NSS scores for the second consecutive year (now at 86%). Nonetheless, this masks a downturn of 10% (to 76%) for BSc Biochemistry students, considerably lower than for the MBiol Biochemists (97%) and biological scientists (92%).</p>	<p>Production of CVs, a cover letter and mock interviews will be compulsory for the level 2 biochemists. This element seems to be working well for the biological science and microbiology students although the format will be reviewed this year.</p> <p>All M-level students (MBIOL and PGT) will continue to have mock interviews scheduled as part of their skills module (MBIOL) or career development programme (PGT).</p> <p>Review the impact employability initiatives have on student perception of their readiness for work and their career management.</p>	<p>Module manager (Dr A Zhuravleva) / Dec 2015 PLs (Drs Whittle and Hewitt) / July 2016</p> <p>Drs McBurney & Divan (September 2016)</p>