

**ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SESSION 2016-17**

**School of Molecular and Cellular Biology - Faculty of Biological Sciences**

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>																		
<b>Aspect</b>	<b>National Student Survey</b>						<b>Undergraduate Programme Experience Survey</b>						<b>Postgraduate Programme Experience Survey</b>					
	<b>2015-16</b>		<b>2014-15</b>		<b>2013-14</b>		<b>2015-16</b>		<b>2014-15</b>		<b>2013-14</b>		<b>2015-16</b>		<b>2014-15</b>		<b>2013-14</b>	
	<b>School</b>	<b>Uni</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Uni</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Uni</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Uni</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Uni</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Uni</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Uni</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Uni</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Uni</b>
<b>Overall satisfaction</b>	90	90	96	90	89	88	89	87	83	87	84	85	82	86	90	85	89	85
<b>Teaching</b>	93	91	96	92	91	90	87	87	83	86	83	85	82	86	84	85	87	86
<b>Assessment &amp; feedback</b>	65	73	73	74	71	71	58	63	54	63	58	62	45	73	54	71	52	71
<b>Academic support</b>	84	84	82	85	86	82	71	75	68	74	72	73	72	84	79	82	80	82
<b>Organisation &amp; management</b>	77	85	78	85	70	85	78	78	64	76	64	75	59	82	73	82	83	81
<b>Learning resources</b>	95	91	96	92	96	91	85	84	89	84	86	83	90	87	98	87	88	85
<b>Personal development</b>	86	85	86	85	82	82	73	73	68	72	73	72	70	77	76	76	80	77
<b>Sector position</b>		20/146		21/145		50/146												

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)

<b>Headline achievement from 2015-16</b>	<i>Intellectually stimulating programmes, delivered by enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff underpin our continued excellent satisfaction scores.</i>
<b>Main actions for 2016-17</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Evaluate the student perspective and expectations of assessment and feedback and improve communication with students in this area.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Review in-course assessment with multiple markers to ensure best practice is applied consistently</i></li> <li>3. <i>Continue to expand use of 'revision packs'</i></li> </ol>

<p><b>Good practice examples from 2015-16</b></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"> <li>1. <i>Evaluation of the impact of embedded employability activities.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Wide range of learning activities which have been audited</i></li> <li>3. <i>Introduction and evaluation of 'Studying in a Digital Age' as a cross faculty initiative to support the development of digital literacy</i></li> </ol>
<p><b>Summary of student involvement in the production of this Action Plan</b></p>	<p>School and programme level data was circulated to UG and PGT school and course reps ahead of a pre-action plan meeting. The meeting focussed on a discussion of the NSS, UG and PGT programme experience surveys. The draft plan was circulated to all students and course reps inviting feedback. Analysis of the open comments derived from the surveys and feedback from student-staff partnership meetings also contributed to the plan.</p>

**AGREED ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SESSION 2016-17**

**School:**

**Faculty:**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Progress with 2015-2016 actions and indication of impact</b>	<b>Agreed Issues/Actions for 2016-2017</b>	<b>Responsibility/Expected completion date</b>
<p><b>Overall satisfaction</b></p>	<p>At undergraduate level it is pleasing to see overall satisfaction levels remain high at 90%, with microbiology at 96% and biochemistry 93%. Whilst Biological Sciences has decreased by 7% to 88%, the UPES data indicates another rise in overall satisfaction at level 1 (+9%) and level 2 (5%) for this programme.</p> <p>The UPES data for the School as a whole has risen from 83% to 89% which is, in part, a consequence of the strong uplift in overall satisfaction at level 1 for the biochemistry programmes.</p> <p>The overall satisfaction score for the PPES has decreased by 8% to 82%, which is a little below the university average of 86%. Of more concern is that over the past 3 years there has been a decrease in all categories at MSc level, except for questions on learning resources.</p> <p>To understand and respond quickly to issues that arise we increased the level of communication between students and staff through informal meetings (partnership events and between reps and DSE/PLs at both UG and PGT levels). As a consequence a number of changes</p>	<p>Whilst there has been a minor downturn in the overall satisfaction rate at school level (-6%) it is difficult to identify the reason for this. The score for assessment and feedback (A&amp;F), which has seen the largest decrease of 8% may be influential but the other 5 categories all show only very minor changes (&lt;±3%). Furthermore, a reduced overall satisfaction score for Biological Sciences was not unexpected as responses from this cohort have been consistently lower than equivalent cohorts, despite the PL and DSE working closely with course reps and individual students to resolve any issues. This will be monitored and reviewed next year.</p> <p>Further discussion between the PL, sub theme leaders, DSE and course reps needs to take place to identify any concerns that might explain the PPES data trends. Tackling the issue of A&amp;F is a strategic priority (see section below).</p> <p>These meetings will continue. They provide the means to discuss strategic issues, for example the response to the NSS/UPES/PPES survey data, as well as the course and year specific issues raised by each of the reps.</p>	<p>PL/DSE (September 2017)</p> <p>MSc PL/sub-theme leaders/DSE/reps (Jan 2017)</p> <p>DSE/PLs/course reps (ongoing throughout the year)</p>

	<p>were made last year in a timely fashion across all programmes. Positive comments about the impact of these meetings were made by the reps and via the comments in the NSS.</p>	<p>Continue the use of a programme level specific lecture slide for staff to include in lectures providing contact details of course/school reps.</p>	<p>DSE/SE office (Nov 2016)</p>
<p><b>Teaching</b></p>	<p>Teaching scores for NSS remain high at 93% (UoL 91%; sector average 87%). There are several comments which relate to the enthusiasm, interest, expertise and engagement displayed by the lecturing staff.</p> <p>UPES scores have risen slightly by 4% to 87%, in line with the UoL average.</p> <p>A further 3 UAFs have been recruited this year, bringing the total over the last 2 years to 9. This is starting to have a positive impact on student education as they become more involved in delivering teaching and provide us with the opportunity to teach new areas that align with cutting edge science.</p> <p>It is a requirement that all new members of staff (including UAFs) will complete a recognised CPD programme and gain fellowship of the HEA. This is to support the delivery of high quality teaching. This is a strategic priority.</p> <p>The impact of actions related to digital learning technologies (2015-16 action plan) has been variable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of e-submission and e-marking for a number of coursework elements was trialled (in a limited way).</li> <li>• Lecture capture is now automatic and lectures are uploaded automatically within 72 hours.</li> <li>• Evaluation of on-line interactive lectures and revision packages has been disseminated at a number of meetings.</li> <li>• Whilst the on-line resources of several publishers have been reviewed (JoVE, Labster, none were considered targeted and sufficiently useful to employ. Further work on this needs to be done.</li> </ul>	<p>Comments to be fed back to staff to ensure they understand what has a positive and negative impact on the student experience.</p> <p>Devise/refine an incremental programme of engagement with student education to meet UAF development needs and that of the School.</p> <p>Track, monitor and support all new (and existing) staff who have not got a recognised teaching qualification to submit and complete HEA fellowship application.</p> <p>Further use is restricted by the technology, and so this is being reviewed.</p> <p>Work with the Blended learning group to identify the most effective interactive lecture based quiz technologies. Trial, evaluate and disseminate the information to colleagues.</p> <p>Continue to review knowledge, problem and lab-based commercial, on-line materials for school programmes</p>	<p>DSE (Oct 2016) staff meeting</p> <p>DSE (Jan 2017)</p> <p>HoS/HR/DSE (Sep 2016-ongoing)</p> <p>Central IT (July 2017)</p> <p>PLs (Jan- Aug 2017)</p> <p>PLs (Jan- Aug 2017)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 5 credit digital learning module, studying in a digital age, was introduced for all students.</li> </ul> <p>The PPES has decreased slightly by 2% to 82%, this is a 5% decrease since 2013-14.</p>	<p>A full evaluation of implementing the 5 credit digital learning module, studying in a digital age will be undertaken by the module manager, DSE and SES representative.</p>	<p>Dr Murphy/DSE/SES office rep (July 2017)</p>
<p><b>Assessment and feedback</b></p>	<p>The overall score for A&amp;F has dropped by 8% to a three year low of 65% in the NSS (73% UoL). This is the lowest score of all categories. There are some variations between programme scores but at school level Q6, 'assessment arrangements and marking have been fair' and Q9 'feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand' saw the largest decrease of any question at -14% and -10% respectively. This is despite an initial dialogue with students about their views on this. This needs a more robust and rigorous approach to understand why students score these questions so low.</p> <p>The UPES score is also low at 58%, although a small increase of 4% on the previous year (63% UoL) and a score of only 45% for the PPES (73% UoL).</p> <p>Changes to the assessment of the lecture-based 60 credit, level 2 biochemistry module were introduced. Students sit an examination paper in January as well as a coursework component and the final examination paper in May. This was very well received with the satisfaction rate for the module rising to 97% (strongly agree/agree).</p> <p>The issue of timetabling compulsory modules on a Wednesday afternoon was raised.</p> <p>The consistency of information-giving and marking for modules with demonstrators/multiple markers has been raised via comments in the NSS and UPES.</p>	<p>Aim to identify through discussion with reps/students the programme specific differences in student perspective that exist for this category (Biological sciences lowest, Bioc and Med Bioc differences).</p> <p>Link this into an A&amp;F project which aims to understand the student perspective and expectations on assessment and to align the work with the strategic document on A&amp;F produced by the A&amp;F working group.</p> <p>The SMCB MSc course reps will gather feedback on the course but ask questions specifically on A&amp;Fand Org &amp; management before the next NSS.</p> <p>The changed assessment model will be monitored but in all likelihood the change will remain.</p> <p>Checks will be made to see if there is any alternative time for these sessions.</p> <p>Review the training of demonstrators Disseminate information on best practice for marking work with multiple markers</p> <p>Module managers, assessment leads to more clearly articulate/inform students where to find the relevant assessment criteria.</p>	<p>DSE/PLs (Nov 2016 – Aug 2017)</p> <p>SMcB/SRW/student interns (Jan 2017 – Jan 2018)</p> <p>DSE/MSc course reps (Mar 2017)</p> <p>Module manager/DSE (Feb-Aug 2017)</p> <p>Module managers/timetabling (Jan 2017)</p> <p>DSE (Jan 2017) DSE/module managers (June 2017)</p> <p>DSE/MMs, assessment leads Staff meeting (Ongoing – Aug 2017)</p>

<p><b>Academic support</b></p>	<p>This category remains relatively unchanged and in line with the university average for both the NSS and UPES. However it has decreased by 7% to 72% in the PPES.</p> <p>There has been an increase in the number of staff offering an office hour but awareness/number of students who make use of these remains low?</p> <p>Changes to the student education support team have led to the creation of a 'super team'. This is working well and there are clear areas of responsibility. Nonetheless, staff turnover is an ongoing issue.</p>	<p>Advertise office hours in module outline and on VLE</p> <p>Continue to work closely with SES colleagues to ensure we have an effective team in place to support students and staff and changes are communicated promptly.</p>	<p>SES office/DSE (Jan 2017)</p> <p>DSE/SES office (July 2017)</p>
<p><b>Organisation and management</b></p>	<p>At school level the NSS score remains relatively stable at 77% although lower than the UoL score of 85%, with an increase of 14% in the UPES score to 78%. The PPES score has dropped again this year, by 14% to 59%.</p> <p>Implementation of the automated attendance monitoring system is causing widespread frustration and consternation amongst many students (not working, lack of phone memory, draining battery, issues with optional timetabled activities, time to register via clusters, 'like being at school' but potentially some increase in attendance as a reminder).</p> <p>Assessment bunching is an on-going organisational issue.</p>	<p>The SMCB MSc course reps will ask questions specifically on Org &amp; management before the next NSS.</p> <p>MCB/FBS are using paper-based systems to maintain accurate attendance records. This will be maintained until there is confidence in the data generated from the automatic monitoring system.</p> <p>Feedback reps comments to SES and central teams responsible for system</p> <p>Review assessment calendars (at all levels) to ensure optimum timing of assessments.</p> <p>Work with the SES office to improve communication of any changes to teaching e.g. feed into "lean" project.</p>	<p>MSc reps/PL (Mar 2017)</p> <p>DSE/FSEM (Jan 2017)</p> <p>DSE/FSEM (Nov 2016)</p> <p>PLs (Jan 2017)</p> <p>SES office/PLs/DSE (Jan 2017)</p>
<p><b>Learning resources</b></p>	<p>At School and programme level the NSS, UPES and PPES scores remain high in this category.</p> <p>Whilst ad-hoc lecture capture proved successful, automated lecture capture has been introduced this year. Feedback from students has been positive.</p> <p>Additional learning resources 95% say revision packs are useful.</p>	<p>Review uptake, use and any issues associated with use of lecture capture this year.</p> <p>PLs to work with selected module managers and the blended learning team to identify activities which would lead to an</p>	<p>DSE/SES office (Aug 2017)</p> <p>PLs/MMs/Blended learning team/PLs (Mar 2017)</p>

	<p>The Teaching Laboratory Manager, Chris Jones and his team have provided a superb service again this year. The reconfigured and refurbished space for the MBiol students and technical staff have worked well, accommodating 10 more students.</p> <p>An order to replace some spectrophotometers is out to tender (part of the rolling programme) but only irreparable microscopes are being replaced.</p>	<p>incremental rise in the use of blended learning and digital resources.</p> <p>The TLM, and relevant school staff will continue to work with Faculty to support the design of an appropriate space(s) which will deliver modern, facility-rich laboratories to enhance the student experience.</p> <p>New on-going rolling programme of replacing fundamental lab equipment is underway e.g. pipettes, microfuges. Continue to check requirements.</p>	<p>TLM/FDSE/DSE/relevant school staff (Aug 2017)</p> <p>TLM/DSE (Aug 2017)</p>
<b>Personal development</b>	<p>At School level the NSS score remains the same as last year at 86%, there is a rise of 5% for the UPES and a fall of 6% for the PPES.</p> <p>Production of a CV, cover letter and undertaking a mock interview are now embedded as compulsory activities in all programmes. These are working well with positive feedback received from the reps.</p> <p>The impact a number of employability initiatives (IPY,SYA, MBiol and Prof dev modules) have on student perception of their readiness for work and their career management has been reported .</p>	<p>In the mock interview, some students can struggle to provide an example / examples of when they have communicated their science effectively. Work will be undertaken to ensure these opportunities are highlighted and sufficient to better equip students to do this.</p> <p>As a consequence, further work will be undertaken to understand the motivation and career management of students who do not undertake any such activities.</p>	<p>Employability Officer, Dr Tim Goodall (July 2017)</p> <p>Drs Divan &amp; McBurney (Aug 2017)</p>
<b>Summary</b>	80% (24/30) of the actions in the 2015-16 action plan have been completed. In the main, those outstanding actions are ongoing and will be carried forward.		