

ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SESSION 2017-18

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND CULTURES

executive summary								
	<i>Undergraduate Programme Experience Survey</i>				<i>National Student Survey</i>		<i>Postgraduate Programme Experience Survey</i>	
	2017-18				2017-18		2017-18	
<i>Aspect</i>	School		University					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	School	University	School	University
Overall Satisfaction	85%	87%	89%	86%	91%	89%	82%	88%
The teaching on my course	85%	89%	84%	84%	90%	89%	86%	85%
Learning opportunities	71%	77%	79%	80%	83%	84%	85%	86%
Assessment and feedback	74%	64%	72%	65%	70%	75%	76%	79%
Academic support	68%	76%	78%	77%	79%	82%	80%	85%
Organisation and management	76%	87%	80%	78%	86%	82%	75%	82%
Learning resources	80%	87%	86%	86%	88%	91%	86%	90%
Learning community	48%	55%	76%	75%	67%	79%	67%	83%
Student voice	50%	61%	67%	68%	70%	75%	63%	77%

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 from 2016-17	For the second year in a row, overall student satisfaction in the NSS has risen, now standing at 91%.
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<p>Key strategic actions for 2017-18</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance the quality and delivery of feedback on student's work (involving the clear communication of the School's marking criteria and the assessment process more generally). 2. Maintain focus on enhancing student study skills and independent learning (through induction, transition and progression support and additional workshops). 3. Create a stronger sense of community for all students studying within the School of English.
<p>Evaluation of main actions from 2016-17</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supported by the School's student interns, the programme of study skills workshops for undergraduate students was maintained throughout the academic year. Workshops focussed on general essay-writing technique as well as specialist research-based sessions for students on the Final Year Project module. 2. Work has continued to take place on the structure and content of the Final Year Project module, with further consideration of how best to prepare students throughout levels one and two. 3. The School's employability activities were successfully maintained: employability is integrated into modules such as 'Students into Schools'; workshops are scheduled for students interested in undertaking a work placement; work has been undertaken on new programmes which emphasise employability (such as the BA English and Enterprise, due to run in 2018/2019); staff from the Careers Centre have been invited to speak at the Welcome Back meetings at the start of each semester.
<p>Good practice examples from 2016-17</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The School significantly enhanced the support it provides to students at induction and level progression through a coordinated series of induction and welcome back talks and additional study skills workshops. 2. The School produced a mini-handbook, providing a digest of key information (including marking criteria and guidance on presentation of written work). Paper and electronic copies were made available to students. 3. The School's Student Interns for Employability produced a booklet detailing the activities they undertook throughout the academic year. This provides a clear foundation for future interns to follow and develop.

Aspect	Progress with 2016-2017 actions and indication of impact	Agreed Issues/Actions for 2017-2018 (from where did the action arise, i.e. NSS, module evaluation, programme review?)	Responsibility/Expected completion date
Overall satisfaction	<p>Overall satisfaction in the NSS for 2016-2017 was 91% - up from 89% in 2015-2016. This figure is higher than the equivalent score in the UPES (year one = 85%; year two = 87%) and the PPES (82%). While it is difficult to compare different year groups, these figures could suggest that it can take students time to settle into their studies, but that their sense of satisfaction increases as they grow familiar with the university environment. It also suggests that the actions listed in this section of last year's action plan were successful; more substantive comments on them are offered in the sections below.</p>	<p>Overall satisfaction is up, but there is room for improvement. In the NSS, students offered positive comments on a range of topics, including: the excellent and stimulating tuition they received; the passion and dedication of staff; the breadth and variety of modules open to them; the friendliness and approachability of staff; the quality of communication between staff and students.</p> <p>Assessment and Feedback Dissatisfaction is expressed in relation to the marking of, and feedback on, work. The concerned both the clarity of and timeliness of feedback. Specific responses are detailed in 'Assessment and Feedback' below).</p> <p>Learning Community and Student Voice The School also experienced disappointing scores in relation to 'Learning community' and Student Voice'. The School will work on ways in which staff can be more visible and responsive to students (see the relevant entries below).</p> <p>Curriculum Enhancement The School continues to work on developing its curriculum: this incorporates the formation of a new level one module and the enhancement of the 'Final Year Project' module (see 'Learning Opportunities', below).</p> <p>Employability / Student Interns The School also continues to embed opportunities for employability and personal development into its activities. This year has seen the appointment of new UG Student Interns (with responsibilities including employability, personal tutoring, and peer mentoring) and – for the first time – a PGT Student Intern.</p>	<p>Responsibility and completion dates are provided in the following sections.</p>

<p>The Teaching on my Course</p>	<p>The level of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching has dipped from previous years (in the NSS, UPES and PPES). On the NSS, for instance, it is now 91%; down from 95% last year. This is despite the School maintaining and developing the elements of good practice mentioned on last year's action plan (including the optional use of mid-semester review questionnaires and induction and training sessions for all new academic staff and new PGR tutors [all of whom are mentored and peer-observed within 3/4 weeks of beginning teaching]. The School also remains committed to small-group teaching).</p>	<p>Lecture Capture The NSS, end-of-module questionnaires, and student representatives on Student Staff Forum make a clear connection between student dissatisfaction and the School's use of lecture capture. As it stands, staff are free to choose whether or not to use lecture capture. This can lead to inconsistency across – and even within – modules. Students see this inconsistency as unfair, and feel that it may disadvantage them. Staff who choose not to be recorded typically have valid pedagogic motivations, and this needs to be communicated to students. When this is done, students appear to be far more understanding of the situation. However, it appears that the inconsistency of staff practices will continue to be a source of dissatisfaction, especially when compared with students' perceptions that the School's approach to lecture capture is out of synch with other Schools across the faculty. As a School, we must retain open communication with students about our pedagogic decisions.</p> <p>Module Questionnaire Review The School will review the way in which we process and respond to the feedback that students provide in end of module questionnaires. We will be switching to electronic rather than paper questionnaires (aligning us with other Schools within the university). Plans are in place to streamline the review process, enabling us to focus in more detail on those modules that require further consideration. Following the review process, an overview / report highlighting good practice and ways in which we will respond to student feedback will be produced. This document will be made available to students (thus tying in with the actions under taken in relation to 'Student Voice', below).</p> <p>Inclusivity and Diversity The School is also responding to student concerns concerning the diversity of the curriculum, which have arisen in the broader context of 'Why is My Curriculum</p>	<p>This is an ongoing issue, to be communicated to students by module convenors and individual lecturers.</p> <p>To be refined through STSEC and implemented by the DSE and Deputy DSE, with effect from the end of semester 2, 2018.</p> <p>Individual members of staff and STSEC: ongoing</p>
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<p>Learning opportunities</p>	<p>New NSS category</p>	<p>New Level One Module: Foundations of English Studies The School will run a new level one module in the place of 'Writing Critically'. 'Foundations of English Studies' will introduce students to the fundamentals of studying English at university, helping them to adapt to the new demands they encounter as they begin their degree. In the longer term, it is hoped that this module will provide a clearer pathway from level one to level three. It will signal clearly to students ways in which they will be able to accumulate and apply knowledge <i>across</i> modules for the duration of their studies. Similarly, the module will embed a clear route towards the Final Year Project module at level three. This module will be compulsory for students on Q300, Q306, QW34, JH programmes with English <i>except</i> Q3Q1, and BA Liberal Arts with English major. It should also be seen in the wider context of curriculum reform, which remains ongoing within the School.</p> <p>Amendments to the FYP Module New plans are now in place for the FYP module. The schedule will now enable students to submit a proposal at a later date, to 'allow students to apply what [they] have learnt' (NSS Q.7). The School will also provide students with more accessible information about possible topics at level 2, enabling them to be able to make a more informed choice about the topic of their FYP. This will necessitate other changes to the structure of the module, with an emphasis to be placed upon supervision meetings based upon written work.</p>	<p>The module has undergone development through a committee led by the module convenor (Dr Jeremy Davies). To be submitted for approval by STSEC in February 2018.</p> <p>Developments to the module have been led by the convenor (Dr Katy Mullin) in conjunction with broader staff discussion. Revisions should be in place by Easter 2018.</p>

<p>Assessment and feedback</p>	<p>The scores for assessment and feedback are marginally lower than last year, but comparable with previous years:</p> <p>NSS this year: 70% (previously 73%, 71%, 72%). UPE this year (average): 68% (previously 71%, 67%, 66%). PPE this year: 76% (previously 78%, 69%, 66%).</p> <p>This consistency does not obscure the fact that this is a relatively low-scoring category (in the School and across the University). Last year, the School took some important steps in relation to this category:</p> <p>A mini-handbook was produced. This contained information about the marking criteria and links to relevant support resources.</p> <p>UG and PGT students continue to have access to one-to-one meetings after assessments with both their academic and personal tutors. These sessions can be used to provide a breakdown and/or explanation of feedback where required.</p>	<p>The majority of the negative comments on the 2016/2017 NSS relate to assessment and feedback. In addition to maintaining previous good practice, we will introduce the following measures:</p> <p>New Feedback Form In response to student comments on the lack of clarity in the feedback they receive, the School has designed a new feedback form for use at UG and PGT levels. It will break feedback down into discrete sections and place an emphasis on providing comments that students can apply across different modules.</p> <p>Standardised Dates for the Return of Work Currently, work is returned by each member of staff when they have finished marking it. This leads to a sense of inconsistency and unfairness amongst students. The School will put into a place a coordinated system for returning work, in which all work for particular modules is returned on a standardised date, ensuring consistency for students.</p> <p>New Grade Scale The School has successfully adopted the standardized grade scale being employed across the university. The School has also revised its marking criteria for the 2017/2018 session: information about these changes were communicated to students in the induction sessions at the beginning of the academic year and have been introduced with no disruption.</p> <p>Provision of One-to-One Feedback Meetings The School already offers one-to-one meetings, but it is clear that the level of take-up from students is variable. We will take further steps to ensure that both staff and students are aware – and making use – of these opportunities.</p>	<p>Deputy DSE: to be trialled in semester 1 of 2017/2018, and rolled out in semester 2 2017/2018.</p> <p>Changes to be introduced in semester 1 of the 2018/2019 year: led by the SESM.</p> <p>DSE: to be introduced at the beginning of the 2017/2018 year.</p> <p>DSE and Deputy DSE to promote these meetings to staff and students: an ongoing concern.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Academic support</p>	<p>Scoring 85% in the NSS, this is the highest this figure has been for several years. A similar increase is visible on the UPES, although the PPES sees a dip of 8% (to 76%). The increase at UG level can be attributed to the actions detailed on last year's action plan, including:</p> <p>The excellent work undertaken by our Student Support Officer and the School's SES team. This has meant that any problems experienced by students are promptly raised with relevant staff within a supportive and confidential context.</p> <p>Support on progression. The School has delivered sessions for students progressing into levels 2 and 3, which offer advice and support on module choice.</p> <p>Writing Mentors. The School's Writing Mentors scheme provides students with another point of call at which they can gain detailed and personalised assistance in discussing their work and feedback.</p> <p>Writing workshops. Workshops on essay writing skills, examination revision and writing techniques were made available to all undergraduate students. Additional study skills sessions are also ran for FYP students.</p>	<p>The School will continue to develop the activities laid out in the previous action plan (detailed in the column to the left). Other relevant actions include:</p> <p>Academic Year Planner The planned production of a timeline/map of the University year: this document will collate various deadlines, key dates and potential points of pressure within the academic year. It will enable staff to plan ahead and to identify points at which they may need to set aside time for students (for Personal Tutoring, for module enrolment, for the discussion of assessed work, etc.).</p> <p>Personal Tutoring The School's Personal Tutoring system remains a source of academic, as well as pastoral, support. The School has recently changed its system, so that staff on research leave are exempt from Tutoring. The School will work to ensure that this has no adverse effect on students, and will remind staff of their responsibilities to their tutees.</p> <p>Attendance Seminar attendance remains an ongoing concern within the School (as discussed in previous action plans). High rates of absenteeism can be linked to two areas of concern: 1) the increase of student anxiety and/or mental health issues; 2) the pressures placed upon students when several deadlines fall in a short space of time. In response, all staff will be reminded regularly of the need to be aware of the challenges that our students face. Information about mental health and wellbeing will be disseminated amongst staff, with an emphasis on the ways in which Personal Tutors can support students. The scheduling of deadlines across different modules will continue to be discussed in the appropriate forums. This will be in the broader context of ongoing discussions about ways in which we can diversify and reduce the amount of assessment we are setting.</p>	<p>Deputy HoS and SES staff: by necessity, this will be an ongoing document, with an aim to introduce it in its first iteration by semester 1 of 2017/2018.</p> <p>Deputy DSE and SES staff: March 2018.</p> <p>SESM and Deputy DSE: January 2018.</p> <p>DSE and STSEC: Ongoing.</p>
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<p>Organisation and management</p>	<p>This score has experienced a marginal dip across the NSS, UPES and PPES, but is broadly in line with previous years.</p> <p>Last year's action plan emphasised the importance of ensuring that our systems for supporting the various year levels of BA and MA students, and both SH and JH students, are clear and accessible to students.</p>	<p>The creation of Deputy Roles The School has created two new SMT roles for the 2017-2018 year: Deputy Head of School and Deputy Director of Student Education. These appointments will take on responsibility for ensuring the smooth running of the School, taking on specific projects and allowing the HoS and DSE to delegate more effectively.</p> <p>SESM The School has a new Student Education Services Manager, who brings valuable experience from her work in PRHS and the opportunity to review practices.</p>	<p>Posts commenced prior to semester one 2017/2018.</p>
<p>Learning resources</p>	<p>The School's scores for this category are up from last year, with the exception of the PPES (which is down by 1%).</p> <p>Last year's action plan referred to the importance of: publicizing the resources in the University Library; ensuring that our students are inducted into and confident in utilizing library catalogues and databases; encouraging module convenors and tutors to place materials central to their modules on Minerva and to remind students of the ready accessibility of these resources.</p>	<p>The actions referred to in last year's action plan have clearly been effective. The School will also:</p> <p>Maintain commitment to working with Special Collections Currently, the level one module 'Poetry: Reading and Interpretation' requires students to visit the Brotherton's Special Collections. Special Collections also plays a key role in the Final Year Project module. This is something to which the School will seek to maintain and develop, particularly in relation to broader curriculum development.</p> <p>Provision of Information on Minerva The student area of Minerva currently holds a lot of information, not all of which is easy to find or up to date. We will look at how we could rationalise the content, making it more clearly and easily accessible for students.</p>	<p>Ongoing, in conjunction with the development of various modules.</p> <p>DSE, Deputy DSE and SESM: Easter 2018.</p>
<p>Learning Community</p>	<p>New NSS category</p>	<p>The School has scored below the University average in this new NSS category – particularly at level one (48% in the UPES). In response, we will explore the following actions:</p> <p>Peer Mentoring The School's peer mentoring system is well established, but in light of the poor return on this category at level one,</p>	<p>Deputy DSE to work with Student Interns and</p>

		<p>we will review our processes to see if we can do more to create a cohesive sense of community from level one.</p> <p>Visibility of Staff / English Society We will work with the English Society to make staff a more visible presence in the School outside of seminars and lectures: this might incorporate activities such as staff presentations on research as well as participation in more sociable activities where appropriate.</p> <p>Alumni Room The NSS saw several students commenting on a lack of physical space for developing a community. Although we have the Foyer in the School of English, we will publicise the existence of the School's Alumni Room, with the aim of transforming it into another sociable space within the School.</p> <p>The work undertaken in relation to Personal Tutoring (as detailed in 'Academic Support', above) should also have some bearing on fostering a sense of community within the School.</p>	<p>Reps: March 2018.</p> <p>Various staff working with the President of the English Society: ongoing.</p> <p>SES staff to assist with publicising / ensuring the room is free: with immediate effect.</p>
<p>Student voice</p>	<p>New NSS category</p>	<p>As with 'Learning Community' the School has scored below the University average in this category. There are several measures that we can take to improve in this area:</p> <p>Student Staff Forum Last year the Student Staff Forum had fallen into abeyance, and the School struggled to recruit enough student representatives. This year we have made a more concerted effort to recruit reps from across a range of programmes. This has revitalised the Student Staff Forum and made it into a crucial point of contact between students and staff.</p> <p>Student Presence at Staff Away Days For the first time student representatives and student</p>	<p>Deputy HoS, DSE, Deputy DSE, SESM and SES staff: with immediate effect.</p> <p>Deputy HoS and Deputy</p>

		<p>interns were invited to the staff away day to facilitate a greater level of dialogue between students and staff. It is hoped that this could develop into a regular feature.</p> <p>Module Review Process As mentioned above (in 'The Teaching on my Course'), an overview of the outcomes following module questionnaire reviews will be made available to students, to demonstrate the ways staff respond to student feedback.</p>	<p>DSE: the first away day took place in November 2017.</p> <p>DSE and Deputy DSE: May 2018.</p>
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