

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

FACULTY OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES – SCHOOL OF MOLECULAR AND CELLULAR BIOLOGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY								
Aspect	Undergraduate Programme Experience Survey				National Student Survey		Postgraduate Programme Experience Survey	
	2017-18				2017-18		2017-18	
	School		University		School	University	School	University
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2				
Overall Satisfaction	85%	85%	89%	86%	91%	89%	82%	88%
The teaching on my course	77%	87%	84%	84%	89%	89%	86%	85%
Learning opportunities	77%	82%	79%	80%	81%	84%	75%	86%
Assessment and feedback	68%	57%	72%	65%	68%	75%	66%	79%
Academic support	76%	71%	78%	77%	78%	82%	86%	85%
Organisation and management	75%	79%	80%	78%	77%	82%	78%	82%
Learning resources	86%	85%	86%	86%	89%	91%	90%	90%
Learning community	78%	78%	76%	75%	78%	79%	88%	83%
Student voice	62%	70%	67%	68%	75%	75%	71%	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	<p><i>Provide a single, concise headline achievement for the School from 16-17 which can be included in further communication to students.</i></p> <p><i>Cutting-edge teaching and research that is well regarded by students and prepares them for future employment</i></p>
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<p>Key strategic actions for 2017-18</p>	<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"> 1. <i>Update and extend the curriculum to broaden the first year base, provide more medically-related teaching in later years.</i> 2. <i>Enhance practical classes using state-of-the art experiments and equipment that is relevant to current research/industrial practice.</i> 3. <i>Work with students to help their understanding of how actions are taken on feedback.</i>
<p>Evaluation of main actions from 2016-17</p>	<p><i>Brief update on the 3 main actions identified from the previous session</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Evaluate the student perspective and expectations of assessment and feedback and improve communication with students in this area.</i> <i>Update: This was the subject of a research project conducted By Dr McBurney and Whittle. Interim conclusions and recommendations were disseminated and discussed by the staff. The major recommendations will be implemented during 207-18.</i> 2. <i>Review in-course assessment with multiple markers to ensure best practice is applied consistently</i> <i>Update: This is ongoing.</i> 3. <i>Continue to expand use of ‘revision packs’</i> <i>Update: These packs were developed in response to perceived lower performance in one of our programmes. There has been no wish or necessity on the part of the other programme teams to extend their use.</i>
<p>Good practice examples from 2016-17</p>	<p><i>Innovative practice and developments, of wider interest across the University</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Flexible system of final year advanced topics that takes students to the leading edge of research in key areas of their subject.</i> 2. <i>Cross-faculty collaboration with Medicine and Health to share final year research project teaching.</i> 3. <i>Reviewing the provision of common teaching in statistics and bioinformatics that is used across all programmes.</i>

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>It is encouraging to note that overall satisfaction in the NSS remains high at 91% (cf. 90% in 15-16), with Medical Biochemistry reaching 100%.</p> <p>The UPES satisfaction score is 85% at both levels 1 and 2 which is a slight decline on the previous survey (89%).</p> <p>The PPES satisfaction remains unchanged at 82%.</p> <p>The actions from 16-17 in this category centred on improving assessment and feedback, the lowest scoring area in all three surveys. This involved closer interaction between DSE, PLs and students to identify and act on concerns. There is evidence that this approach has stabilised overall satisfaction although more clearly needs to be done.</p>	<p>Efforts to promote regular interactions between DSE, PLs and student course reps will continue.</p> <p>Work will be done to implement the finding of research by School staff into expectations and delivery of assessed work and feedback.</p>	<p>DSE/PLs June 2018</p> <p>DSE/PLs June 2018</p>
The Teaching on my Course	<p>Teaching continues to be highly rated at 89% in NSS (although slightly lower than 15-16, 93%).</p> <p>In UPES, scores of 77% and 84% were returned in levels 1 and 2, slightly lower than 15-16 (87% overall).</p> <p>In PPES, satisfaction in this area has increased to 86% (82% in 15-16)</p> <p>The actions from 15-16 included: Engaging with UAFs and involving them in teaching in a structured manner. This is ongoing with a programme of expected targets for take-up of teaching. The response of the UAFs has been very positive.</p>	<p>Ongoing engagement with UAFs and new staff in engagement with teaching.</p> <p>Formal and informal engagement with student course reps and students in general as to what works well in teaching and improvements</p>	<p>DSE/PLs June 2018</p> <p>DSE June 2018</p>

	<p>Tracking and monitoring of staff for HEA fellowship acquisition is ongoing.</p> <p>Regarding online teaching, Dr Murphy performed an excellent analysis of student and staff feedback on Study in a Digital Age that led to the discontinuation of use of this module but the request for an online resource.</p> <p>Lecture capture: 95% of academic staff capture their lectures and the automatic capture system works well.</p>		
Learning opportunities	<p>81% of students in NSS showed high appreciation of the learning opportunities offered. There seems to be a lower level of appreciation of opportunities to apply knowledge gained (e.g. 56% in Biological Sciences).</p> <p>Similar levels of approval were evident in the UPES survey and a slightly lower score was returned in PPES (75%).</p> <p>There were no actions (and no category) in 15-16.</p>	<p>More needs to be done to disseminate and emphasise applications of knowledge gained in lectures and practical classes.</p>	<p>DSE/PLs/Module Managers June 2018</p>
Assessment and feedback	<p>This is the category in which all programmes score least well, at 68% in NSS (but slightly increased cf 15-16 at 65%). Scores in UPES and PPES were increased cf 15-16, considerably so in PPES (66% vs 45% in 15-16).</p> <p>The actions from 15-16 and responses are: Work on a project to identify problems with A&F from a student perspective (see Overall Satisfaction section above) Work with MSc student reps to gather feedback on A&F. The considerable increase in score in this area in PPES suggests that this has raised awareness and acknowledgement of the efforts that academic and administrative staff have put in to improve timeliness of feedback.</p>	<p>Review demonstrator training.</p> <p>Clarify criteria for assessment.</p> <p>Clarify criteria for marking of pieces of coursework by multiple markers and address "fairness" of such marking.</p>	<p>DSE/PLs/Module Managers/Student course reps. June 2018</p>

	<p>Review demonstrator training. This is ongoing. Clarify criteria for assessment. Ongoing. Clarify criteria for marking of pieces of coursework by multiple markers and address “fairness” of such marking. Ongoing.</p>		
Academic support	<p>Academic support scores have declined somewhat in in NSS (76% vs 84% in 15-16) but have increased in UPES and PPES which is encouraging for the future.</p> <p>Actions from 15-16 were: Advertise office hours in module outline and VLE. This has been done for module managers although it must be said that probably most staff prefer an “open door” policy. Building a super team in SES. This has been problematic as we have been highly affected by staff turnover which has impacted on effectiveness.</p>	Work with SES staff to build a better and more effective administrative team.	DSE Ongoing
Organisation and management	<p>Scores in this area remain unchanged in NSS and UPES of 15-16 (ca. 77%), however there was a considerable increase in approval in PPES (78% of 59% in 15-16). Overall this seems a good basis for further improvement, particularly when SES problems are resolved.</p> <p>Actions from 15-16 were: Use of paper-based attendance monitoring until a reliable electronic system is in place. This has been implemented for all scheduled non-lecture sessions and is ongoing. Review assessment calendars and eliminate assessment deadline “bunching”. This has been done and communicated at Student Forums.</p>	Monitoring assessment deadlines and “bunching”.	DSE, PLs and Module Managers Ongoing
Learning resources	<p>Scores in this category remain high at around 90% in all surveys, similar to 15-16.</p> <p>Actions from 15-16 were:</p>	Continue to work with TLMs and staff on planning new Teaching Laboratories.	DSE/PLs/TLM and staff/Building staff September 2018

	<p>Review uptake, use and any matters associated with lecture capture. Approx. 95% of academic staff capture lectures and the automated system seems to be working well.</p> <p>Use of blended learning. Ongoing.</p> <p>Teaching laboratory matters. The TLM and staff continue to provide excellent service, against a background of change and re-organisation</p> <p>Laboratory equipment purchases went ahead, spectrophotometers and fluorescence microscopes were purchased.</p> <p>New Teaching Laboratories were planned</p>	<p>Acquire/install new microscopy imaging equipment and develop new lab cell biology practical classes to provide cutting-edge experiments in cell biology to undergraduate students</p>	<p>DSE/Module Manager/Staff members/TLMs. June 2018.</p>
Learning Community	<p>Scores in this category were very comparable with those in the University, at 78% in NSS (cf 79% University) and similar scores in UPES and PPES. This suggests that students in SMCB feel part of a community and interact well with other students.</p> <p>Actions from 2015-16: This category or combination of questions did not seem to appear in the 2015-16 plan.</p>	<p>Maintain student engagement.</p> <p>While NSS scores overall were good, they were lower in Biochemistry therefore work need to be done in this programme to improve the student feeling</p>	<p>DSE/PLs/student reps June 2018</p>
Student voice	<p>Scores in this category were broadly similar to those of the University, with 75% approval in NSS (the same as the University), 62-67% in UPES (cf 68-70% in the University). In PPES, scores were lower than the University (71% vs 77%); in particular only 29% of PG students considered that feedback had been acted upon. In a one year programme this may be difficult to effect but more work needs to be done on this.</p> <p>Actions for 2015-16: This category or combination of questions did not seem to appear in the 2015-16 plan.</p>	<p>It seems that both PG and UG students are not clear on how feedback is acted upon. This needs to be addressed.</p>	<p>DSE/PLs/student reps. June 2018</p>
Personal Development	<p>This was a category on the 2015-16 plan but does not appear as such in the current Action Plan.</p> <p>Actions for 2015-16 Ability of students to explain science in mock interview. This has been addressed in a lecture</p>		

	given by Tim Goodall prior to mock (and actual placement) interviews. Completed Understanding career motivation and management. This is a research project being conducted by Drs Divan and McBurney and is ongoing.		
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