

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

FACULTY OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES – SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

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	97%	86%	89%	86%	96%	89%	na	88%
The teaching on my course	88%	89%	84%	84%	95%	89%	na	85%
Learning opportunities	74%	85%	79%	80%	88%	84%	na	86%
Assessment and feedback	61%	54%	72%	65%	73%	75%	na	79%
Academic support	70%	78%	78%	77%	85%	82%	na	85%
Organisation and management	78%	85%	80%	78%	92%	82%	na	82%
Learning resources	89%	89%	86%	86%	94%	91%	na	90%
Learning community	77%	84%	76%	75%	83%	79%	na	83%
Student voice	66%	69%	67%	68%	75%	75%	na	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	Enhanced use of online teaching and assessment to improve learning and feedback for students
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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. Review content and presentation of the first year course, to facilitate flexibility in subsequent student study options 2. Encourage student feedback to help identify potential areas of improvement robustly 3. Continue to develop and enhance online preparatory and support material for practical sessions and lectures
<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. Review and enhance the usability of feedback. <i>First year marking and feedback on coursework now done online, increasing the scope for detailed comments, and providing students with an easily-reviewed portfolio of feedback. Some modules (such as BMSC3101 and BMSC3140) have introduced generic feedback from tutors for their groups, to capture broader issues. These are available through the VLE.</i> 2. Continue to improve practicals, with better preparatory material. <i>Progress has been made in the use of ADI equipment and the Kuracloud environment, which is now being used for general pedagogic support as well as in relation to practicals. Progress with this is being limited by the loss of two key members of staff with expertise in this area, but we will seek to identify others to help keep up the momentum of this project.</i> 3. Maintain standards of practical work despite temporary rearrangements pending improved facilities being built <i>So far this has proved generally possible. The arrival of new equipment (such as a matched set of new microscopes) has improved the experience in some practicals.</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. Use of Kuracloud for automation of data collection in practicals, and to provide pre-class preparation. 2. Provision of generic as well as specific feedback on coursework. 3. “Advanced topics” style of final year teaching commended by several external examiners

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	Satisfaction remains high, with the same average (97%) as last year, though slight differences from programme to programme. DLHE data has improved over several years now. No specific actions were identified last year, beyond those noted in separate sections below.	No specific actions, though actions noted below should contribute to overall satisfaction.	See below
The Teaching on my Course	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Roll out ADI /Kuracloud: this has been done to a significant extent, both in the context of practicals, and to support learning in other contexts. 2) Use lecture capture etc to support more use of flipped classroom approaches 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) There is significant progress still to be made in this area. It may also be valuable in terms of outreach opportunities. This development faces the challenge that two key members of staff have left, and new leaders need to be identified. 2) Some use has been made of these approaches, notably by DIL, CH, DD and DDRM. Student engagement and feedback on these sessions has been mixed, and tends to be best with the strongest students, which risks widening rather than narrowing the performance gap between the best and the least good. 3) We are looking at aligning teaching in first semester between a wider range of FBS programmes, to enhance the opportunities for students to switch between courses (giving a more flexible application route), and to broaden the academic base of our students. This will involve the development of a new "introduction to physiology" module (based broadly on BMSC1110) and an "introduction to cell and molecular biology" module (based broadly on FOBS1135), which will be shared by a range of programmes across the faculty. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) DSE to identify people to engage with ongoing development. Ongoing. 2) ULBERG: other interested staff. Ongoing 3) Mike Harrison, Ian Wood, and associated workgroups. Ideally for implementation in 2018/19 academic year.
Learning opportunities	No separate section on this last year to provide an update on.	Current additional learning opportunities come from: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) online resources linked to individual modules 	Module managers; Programme leaders; students.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Research seminars (timetabled for Level 3 & 5 students, but advertised via posters/screens to all) 3) Membership of a relevant learned society is offered to all UG students. This gives access to their associated educational materials, and often to meetings and/or travel grants. 4) Students have access to a wide range of resources through the library and associated websites. 5) Of some note, attendance at academic tutorials has also been poor (often <50%) over the last year. These sessions are academically very "expensive": if they are not valued, should they be withdrawn and replaced with other forms of learning? Should there be some greater incentive to encourage attendance (or consequences for non-attendance)? 	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Student reps By annual review meeting</p>
Assessment and feedback	<p>Last year's SSF and annual reviews noted some bunching of coursework submission deadlines, especially in level 2. A review of this is taking place, and despite some changes there was some close deadlines again this year.</p> <p>Last year we noted the University plan on assessment, with one theme being "less but better". There has been limited progress on this plan, and some feeling from student feedback that we already have relatively few assessments, and that reducing the number would make them higher-stakes, which is not desirable.</p>	<p>A full review of all assessment is underway (and almost complete), to allow us to identify (i) pinchpoints for particular staff in marking, which can affect the amount and timing of feedback, and (ii) clustering of hand-in deadlines, which can place unnecessary stress on students.</p> <p>As noted above, there is increased use of online marking and feedback at level 1, and the introduction of generic, as well as specific, feedback for higher-level assessments. The generic feedback focusses on more general advice, which should be very transferrable to other pieces of work. Since it is delivered through the VLE, it should be easily findable by students at a later date.</p> <p>Many submission sheets now ask students to specify how they have changed their approach in the light of previous feedback.</p>	<p>DSE: before annual review, and to allow changes to deadlines etc in time for next academic year.</p> <p>Leaders of tutorial groups and the relevant module managers. Ongoing.</p>
Academic support	A clearer way of letting students know when staff were available (i.e. a weekly "office hour" or	We would welcome suggestions from students about how the reticence of their peers to seek help could be	Student reps, coordinated by School rep. By the end

<p>(now including personal development)</p>	<p>equivalent) was sought. Identifying specific hours from week to week is difficult for many staff, so they typically offer to respond by email, and to arrange a meeting within a few days if requested by email.</p> <p>Some students have said they feel intimidated from approaching academic staff, without a formal time to do this.</p> <p>We noted that attendance of students at personal tutorials, especially at level 2, was limited, and student reps agreed to emphasise the importance of these to their cohorts.</p>	<p>overcome. Email contact with staff is frequent from some students: how can others be encouraged to use this approach to seek help either directly or by arranging a meeting?</p> <p>Attendance at personal tutorials remains quite limited, which is a problem since this is a major opportunity for students to get feedback on both work and career development plans.</p>	<p>of the academic year (ideally before annual school review).</p> <p>More formal logging of personal tutorials, with failure to attend one registered as an absence? Encouragement via student reps?</p>
<p>Organisation and management</p>	<p>Last year we noted the appointment of several new programme/committee leaders, and that the School rep would now chair the SSF. This has worked well.</p> <p>We also noted the University's new attendance monitoring system, which had a rather poor first year, and we had to rely on paper registers.</p>	<p>A couple of external examiners have finished their term: we'd like to record our thanks for the great service they have provided. Replacements have been appointed, and started their work, for example checking exam papers.</p> <p>The attendance monitoring system remains problematic, so we anticipate needing to use paper registers for the rest of this year.</p>	<p>PLs: complete</p>
<p>Learning resources</p>		<p>See sections on teaching and learning opportunities above</p>	
<p>Learning Community</p>	<p>No separate section on this last year to provide an update on.</p>	<p>The Faculty introduced a set of awards and an associated ceremony to recognise outstanding contributions of both staff and students to the faculty, in both curricular and extracurricular activities. This was a great success last year, and will run again this year.</p> <p>We have been pushing hard for some informal study areas etc for our students, to help foster a sense of identity for programmes. This is being considered as part of the ongoing redevelopment of the Faculty space.</p>	<p>SES Team Ongoing</p> <p>Faculty Space group</p>

		Several programmes have arranged social events to foster a good sense of community: these are part-funded by the Faculty, and have generally been well received.	Programme reps Ongoing
Student voice	No separate section on this last year to provide an update on.	<i>This reflects a new section of questions on the NSS/programme survey. Some scores are disappointing – particularly with regard to a sense of community (see section above) and awareness of how feedback is acted on. – though the SSF forum spends quite a bit of time on this, and module outlines contain a section spelling out changes. Ideas would be welcomed about how to publicise the responses to feedback more clearly.</i>	<i>Student reps In time for annual review.</i>