

SEN12-P23
9th March 2012

Senate

**Subject:** Revisions to Appendix 13 of the Academic Quality Procedures Handbook: The Code of Practice on Student Feedback Questionnaires

**Origin:** Learning and Teaching Committee

**Executive Summary:**

In response to discussions last calendar year concerning the University’s quality cycle, a group including the PVC(T), representatives from the Students’ Union and the University and College Union (UCU) have been reviewing the student module feedback questionnaire process and the use made of the data generated, as governed by Appendix 13 of the Academic Quality Procedures Handbook.

Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) considered revisions to Appendix 13 at its meeting on 16 February 2012 and makes the recommendations below.

**Senate Action Required:**

Senate is asked to **approve** revisions to Appendix 13 and to **delegate authority to LTC** to oversee revisions to the questions.

Senate is asked to **approve** the implementation of the revised Appendix and questions for the 2011/12 Semester 2 module feedback process.

1. **Rationale for revising the current Code of Practice**

Current policy and procedure for the distribution, processing and reporting of student module feedback questionnaires is detailed in Appendix 13 of the Academic Quality Procedures Handbook.

It has become apparent in discussions with the Students’ Union and UCU that Appendix 13 would benefit from review due to the potential for variation in practice across the University, particularly in regard to point 12 of the Appendix which states:

12. Heads of Department will report to the appropriate Staff-Student Committee on the quantitative outcome of student feedback questionnaires.

In addition, the discussions have highlighted that the questions used in the questionnaires would benefit from review. At present the module feedback form is comprised of three sections:

1. Questions about the module (Questions 1-12)
2. Questions about the lecturer (Questions 13-18)
3. Space for students to provide comments about the module.

The discussions highlighted a potential ambiguity and overlap in some of the questions currently used in 1 and 2 above.

1. **Proposed revisions**

LTC proposes revisions to **Appendix 13** to clarify the expectations on staff and students. These proposed revisions are presented as Appendix 1. The current Appendix 13 is included as Appendix 2.

In summary the revisions aim to:

* Provide greater guidance to students when completing the forms.
* Clarify that there should be a designated person within the School/Department with responsibility for receipt and processing of completed forms.
* Clarify that the quantitative outcomes of questions relating to the module (currently 1-12), and actions taken, should be shared with students at the Staff-Student Liaison Committee at least on an annual basis.
* Clarify that the quantitative outcomes of questions relating to the lecturer (currently 13-18) would be available to a limited range of staff only, and that they should be used to inform the continuing professional development of the staff concerned and the quality of the module as a whole.

LTC also proposes revisions to the **questions** asked of students. It is felt that this is necessary to ensure that the questions continue to be robust, to remove duplication, and to distinguish clearly between questions about the module and questions about the lecturer.

At its meeting on 16 February LTC notedthe sensitivity of the disclosure of this data and agreed that the policy would be revisited if any concerns were raised about misuse of the data. As part of the University’s quality cycle the student module feedback process would be evaluated annually through Annual Programme Review.

LTC requested that the Director of IT Services, who is a member of LTC, should investigate the possibility of sharing electronically on a secure site, a report (as detailed in point 14 of the revised Appendix 13) on the outcomes of the questionnaire analysis with students beyond those who are members of SSLCs. He would report back to LTC and a further recommendation might be made to Senate.

1. **Action for Senate**

Senate is asked to **approve** revisions to Appendix 13, as detailed in Appendix 1.

Senate is asked to **delegate authority to LTC** to oversee revisions to the questions, which is a timely exercise.

Senate is asked to **approve** the implementation of the revised Appendix and questions for the 2011/12 Semester 2 module feedback process.

**Appendix 1**

**AQPH Appendix 13 - Student Module Feedback Questionnaires - Code of Practice**

1. Schools/Departments are required to elicit feedback from students by, inter alia, the use of questionnaires called Module Feedback Forms which are read by Optical Character Recognition (OCR). Questionnaires are processed by IT Services and Design and Print Services, which ensure the maintenance of appropriate confidentiality. The Teaching Centre is responsible for reviewing the operation of the module feedback process with a particular focus on ensuring that the forms remain fit for purpose.

2. All modules shall be the subject of student feedback questionnaires on a regular cycle, and all undergraduate programmes annually via the [National Student Survey](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/general/nss/).

3. About one third of modules in each School/Department should be assessed per year, with each module being assessed at least every 3 years. New modules or modules that have undergone major revision should be assessed in their first year of operation (for example, in cases where there have been changes to one-third or more of the module content or to the mode of assessment). Outside this arrangement, assessment can be instigated where a particular need is identified or where areas of concern are highlighted.

4. A number of questions relating to University support for all modules will be standard to all questionnaires. These will be analysed by the relevant support service. A summary report will be compiled by the Teaching Centre on behalf of the University, and presented to Learning and Teaching Committee for consideration. Outcomes will be reported back to the Schools/Departments concerned by the AD(T)s.

5. Schools/Departments are also required to choose their own questions from a bank of Optional Questions, giving the opportunity to invite feedback on particular aspects of modules. Responses to these questions will be available directly to the Dean of School/Head of Department or their nominee via IT Services.

6. Students are also invited to write comments in the box provided on the questionnaire form.

7. When distributing the forms, students should be advised that:

* Participating in module feedback is a valuable opportunity for them to provide feedback in order that a consistently high quality of teaching and learning can be assured for all students. This advice should be reinforced by student reps.
* Their views are confidential and that the data is processed centrally, anonymised and aggregated before it is used by the University.
* Students writing comments on the questionnaire form are invited to enter their student I.D. number or name in the box provided. These comments would available to a limited range of staff only.

8. Upon completion, all forms will be collected by a nominated student, who will be invited to place them in an envelope, seal the envelope and put their signature across the seal. The envelope will be returned by the staff member to a single designated person within each School / Department for inspection (i.e. to the Dean of School/Head of Department or their nominee). S/he will remove and destroy any forms containing offensive comments. Such forms will not form part of the statistical survey. S/he will send all other forms to the Print Unit for OCR processing.

**USE OF STUDENT FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRES**

9. Student feedback questionnaires are part of the University's continuing process of evaluating and improving the quality of its programmes. Responses are used in conjunction with information derived from other sources (e.g. External Examiner reports; the National Student Survey; the outcomes of internal and external reviews) to monitor and enhance programme structures, curriculum content, teaching and assessment. They should be seen in this context. Feedback, together with information from other sources, is used in Annual and Periodic Programme Reviews in accordance with the University's Academic Quality Procedures. It is therefore an important part of the Academic Quality Cycle.

10. The responses to University-level questions will be used by the Dean of School/Head of Department or their nominee to monitor and enhance the provision of central services by the Library, IT Services and Facilities Management.

12. The data for questions 13-18 and any written comments from students which relates to individual members of staff will be made available, via the Dean of School/Head of Department or their nominee, to the staff member, appraisers and/or to probationary supervisors. Where appropriate, it will be used to identify continuing professional development needs and inform the planning of provision to meet those needs.

13. Members of staff may draw on student feedback as part of the evidence base for meeting probationary requirements and to support applications for promotion.

14. Deans of School/Heads of Department or their nominee will make a written report to the appropriate Staff-Student Liaison Committee on the quantitative outcome of questions 1-12, taking account of module tutor responses. As a minimum, this report should be submitted annually and will present the scores per module for questions 1–12 and any actions taken in response to low scores. Where no actions have been taken in response to student feedback, for example where the response rate is too low to be statistically meaningful, this should be made clear in the report.

15. Deans of School/Heads of Department or their nominee will make the written report available to Teaching Coordinators/Programme Directors from other Schools/Departments that take the module. The report should also be sent to the Students’ Union VP Education who participates in Annual and Periodic Programme Reviews and in University learning and teaching governance.

16. Student representatives will be apprised of the pedagogic purpose of sharing quantitative data and that the improper use of such data would be a University disciplinary matter.

17. Whilst it would be inappropriate to share with students the scores for questions relating to individual staff, open and constructive dialogue about programmes and modules should be a central feature of SSLCs in order that the maintenance and enhancement of quality in teaching and learning can be assured.

18. The timing of handing out and collection of questionnaires is for Schools, subject to the constraint that all completed questionnaires must be made available by Schools for collection by the Print Unit no later than one week after the end of the semester in question. Results for a given module will be available on-line (to those with permission to view) within one week of completed questionnaires being collected by the Print Unit.

**Appendix 2**

Current Code of Practice, available at: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/policy/aqp/appendix/13/index.htm>

# Appendix 13 - Student Feedback Questionnaires - Code of Practice

1. Departments are required to elicit feedback from students by, inter alia, the use of the machine readable questionnaires. Questionnaires are processed by the Teaching Centre which ensures the maintenance of appropriate confidentiality.

2. All modules shall be the subject of student feedback questionnaires at least once every three years, and all programmes annually.

3. A number of statements will be standard to all questionnaires, and the responses to these will be analysed by the Teaching Centre on behalf of the University, with results being reported to the Learning and Teaching Committee for consideration. Outcomes will be reported back to the departments concerned by the AD(T)s.

4. Departments may also design their own questions, giving the opportunity to invite feedback on particular aspects of modules. Responses to these questions will be available directly to the Head of Department or his/her nominee, and will not be received by the Teaching Centre.

5. Students are also invited to write additional comments on the rear of the questionnaire.

6. Upon completion, ALL forms will be placed in an envelope, sealed and returned to the Head of Department or the Head of Department's nominee for inspection. S/HE WILL REMOVE AND DESTROY ANY FORMS CONTAINING OFFENSIVE COMMENTS. Such forms will not form part of the statistical survey. All other forms will be sent to the Teaching Centre, with a completed batch header sheet, for OMR processing.

## USE OF FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRES

7. Student feedback questionnaires are part of the University's continuing process of evaluating and improving the quality of its programmes. Feedback is used in programme reviews in accordance with the University's Academic Quality Procedures.

8. The responses to University-level questions will be used to monitor and enhance the provision of central services, in conjunction with other data derived from such sources as External Examiners' reports.

9. Departmental questions will be used by the Head of Department to monitor and enhance programme structures, curriculum content, teaching and assessment. Feedback which relates to individual members of staff will be used as part of the underpinning of their personal career development programmes: to facilitate this, the statistical data will be made available, via the Head of Department, to appraisers and to probationary supervisors.

10. Members of staff may themselves, if they wish, use student feedback in Teaching folders/Portfolios as part of their submission for confirmation of probation, for progression from Lecturer A to Lecturer B, and for promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer.

11. Written comments on the back of the questionnaire form will be available to the individual member of staff concerned, and the Head of Department. Students writing comments on the back of the form are invited to enter their student I.D. number or name in the box provided. Any offensive comments will be disregarded and the form destroyed.

12. Heads of Department will report to the appropriate Staff-Student Committee on the quantitative outcome of student feedback questionnaires.