

E-ASEC Summary: 30 August – 8 September 2023

Summary of responses by the committee

Paper	Summary	Chair's View
ARPP 5B	ARPP5B: Interim arrangements / feedback mechanisms for Student Engagement and Feedback: Policy and Procedure	Comments about comms noted, but otherwise see either approval or approved in principle with suggestions so will approve.
Comments		
Approved		Mandi Barron
Update 27/10/23 Approved Whilst I do not disagree with a new approach, I am concerned re how our PL's will take this new approach as time for implementation is already tight. Where is the PL preparation prior to arrivals please and where is the feedback FROM PL's, DHOD's / HOD's re the new approach. <i>Response from Jo Thurston:</i> <i>We were unable to fully brief PLs on the new approach as we needed approval from eASEC in order to know we could implement the approach. We had however (Ros Ashcroft and I) run a Programme Leader Workstream Update session for each Faculty earlier in the summer (including HoDs and DHoDs) in which I presented the planned approach and the feedback was wholly positive. We also held the Workstream Launch drop in session last week, at both Talbot and Lansdowne sites. ADSEs have been briefed on the approach and where they feel they want me to speak to PLs directly, I am doing so, to support understanding of the intent behind the approach and answer any questions around implementation. The ADSEs have distributed the Sharepoint link to all their PLs prior to term starting and reinforced the message that Student Voice activity 1 is mid-October and Sharepoint has resources to support PLs in this activity (Student Staff Forum 1 – so these have been part of the PL role for a number of years now). The only change to Student Staff Fora is a reiteration of policy that only two fora are needed each semester, and where programme student voice feedback is to be collated in one place.</i>		Sara White
Approved		Philip Sewell
Approved. I appreciate the creative ideas and look forward to witnessing their impact. The shift in language alone could be transformative. Building upon Sara's feedback, this might be an opportune moment to ensure alignment with clear and consistent role descriptions and expectations for Programme Leaders (PLs) and Level Tutors across the university. Implementation, especially for PLs overseeing large programs, and addressing the inconsistencies in the engagement and role of Level Tutors within program leadership teams, is crucial. To be continued.		Carly Stewart
Noted, but would like some further details please. I would echo comments above about the need for clear comms on this. The plans 'feel' more complex than what we had previously so some form of simple overview would help. Can the paper please provide more information on the surveys, how have been developed, including what quantitative analysis will be available on these and when, where this will go, how will be responded to etc. There is no mention of data continuity through a TEF lens. 23/24 is already Yr 2 of the next TEF and we will not have data continuity with the approach in 22/23. Can this paper please consider this and the implications and how this new approach will address. In particular, how will these mechanisms assess learning gain? We set out an approach to this in our TEF narrative and need to be able to explain what we are doing in this regard in 23/24 if not a continuation of the 22/23 approach. Suggest review the TEF narrative sections and consider what we would have to say about our approach if writing this now.		Jacky Mack

Response from Jo Thurston: <i>The plans are a hugely simplified version of what Programmes should have been doing to align their practice with ARPP 5B. The approach is simply 2 student staff for a each semester and an end of semester sessions with all students to get feedback for units and programmes.</i> <i>To gain feedback on our central services (Supporting You @ BU) surveys we will take key (non-programme related) questions from the already approved My Course Survey. These were devised in a working group last academic year, led by the Head of Academic Operations, with all ADSEs, M&C and FLIE representatives as working group members. M&C will send this out centrally to all students via email. Brightspace announcements will be sent out by Faculty ADSEs. PRIME are collating the data and running the reporting and have this in their workplan for this year. Reports will be sent out – as per the My Course Survey last year ie data dashboards with pie charts to easy interpretation. These will be viewed centrally, distributed to Heads of central services, Faculty Executive Committee members and should any programme related detail come through, ADSEs will pass this on the Programme leaders.</i> <i>Re the TEF. Data continuity is only important if the original data represented a true meaningful account of our position with students. With the response rates to the surveys mentioned in the last TEF submission being so low, we are potentially presenting a false narrative if we continue along that road. We can acknowledge in our next TEF submission, the trial of new approaches to capture a wider number of student experiences etc. I have already met with the Registrar and have agreed to draft a narrative as to how we move our position from one of survey data, to one with a more qualitative stance. There was an attempt to address learning gain in the My Course Survey last year, but again the response rates were incredibly low. The OfS information on learning gain shows that a number of mixed method approaches are needed to try to capture and quantify the concept. It will be interesting to see the TEF submissions of other universities to see what approaches have been taken. Learning gain in the My Course Survey was a self-reported perception of learning gain exercise. This year we will again have a self-reported measure as part of this broader picture that OfS recommend as being used to report on Learning Gain. Mentimeter self-rating against the four key domains of learning gain as listed by the OfS (knowledge, skills, work-readiness and personal development) is being completed by all levels in the first half of this semester and will be repeated at the end of the academic year so that we can compare ratings from the start to end of the academic year.</i>	
Approved Agree there's good discussion and feedback here to ensure implementation and buy-in for the immediate and longer term, as well as ensuring we meet our obligations under TEF. We can ensure the communication and implementation plans from the Student Voice Workstream address the feedback above for the student voice elements, especially sufficient time/space for PLs and department leaders to get the information and support needed. We can also use the workstream's engagement and outputs from the last few months as a basis for drafting some initial narrative about how we are and will ensure appropriate connection between what we have done in the past and what we determine is the best course of action to meaningfully and robustly address TEF metrics (e.g., learning gain).	Shelley Thompson
27/10 23 Update: Approved An overall interesting read. This proposal was written with great good intention to improve our understanding of students feedback in a more qualitative, and not just quantitative, and their academic engagements. Nonetheless, the main concern will be the added workloads across staff+students to generate the information across multiple recipients. The allocated times of for a (staff+students) in addition to PLs reporting in each semester need to be assessed carefully, while there is a need to the deployment of electronic systems	Zoheir Sabeur

for assuring the synchronisation of gathered information for further use and decision making against issues to resolve with good critical timing.

Response from Jo Thurston:

Student Staff Forums have been a requirement within the existing BU ARPP5B since its inception and did not change in the latest review in August 2022 (prior to the current workstream activity). Programme Leaders are listed in the quorum membership for these fora and therefore this is a pre-allocated element of the WLP hours for Programme Leadership already. The Interim Measures introduced for 23-24 have slimmed down the previous approach to Student Voice (which involved Student Staff Fora and implementation and analysis of My Unit Surveys and My Course Surveys across all levels of programmes).

The interim arrangements have reinforced the requirement to only have 2-3 Student Staff Fora per semester...This clear guidance was to support programme leaders, where we have pockets of practice where programme leaders are conducting these sessions monthly. The aim of the interim measures is to explicitly remind PLs they can reduce this time burden significantly by following policy and procedure.

Previous practice has demonstrated that Programme Leaders feel overwhelmed with feedback coming in from emails, conversation, SimOn, reps etc. The interim measures have made it clear that all students should be encouraged to feedback back on their BU experience via the SUBU online tool SimOn. A link to this tool is now embedded in Brightspace to support ease of implementation. Student reps then (twice a semester) download this feedback and discuss it with the Student Staff Forum membership. The feedback is logged on the Student Voice Log for the programme (rather than on word documents, diaries, notepads (as is current practice) to ensure we have a central, visible and transparent area where students can see how their feedback is being addressed. The student voice log should be completed in the Student Staff Forum in partnership with the reps.

With all programme Student Voice feedback being collected on the Student Voice logs, there is no further time requirement to synchronise multiple sources of feedback. Once a month, PLs have a meeting with their ADSE already. Part of this meeting is to speak about any emerging issues that are coming through so that the ADSE can note them and escalate to FASEC, SVEC if necessary. Deeper triangulation will be at ADSE level and above, working closely with SUBU to triangulate between our BU feedback and broader feedback mechanisms such as Speak Week etc.

Zoheir Sabeur feedback references 1.8/ 1.9 – This approach may have a risk of not synchronizing information between various feedback recipients. How can you assure that this is automated and well synchronised in time?

Response from Jo Thurston:

With the interim (and in fact previous) arrangements, feedback is gathered through the student/student rep use of SimOn. One a month the ADSE gets the raw data from this system and can share with PLs if they wish. The role of the student rep is to download the feedback and bring it to a Student Staff Forum to discuss with the quorate membership. (Please note, this should have been current practice for a number of years as the process is an unchanged feature of ARPP 5B – however not universally applied). The change is that the two faculties who do not currently use student voice logs will be asked to adopt this

successful practice as a mechanism through which student feedback will be recorded for all students to see, on the Student Voice Log, that is visible through Brightspace. We also know that students feed back via email, corridor conversation etc, so the wider spread adoption of a Student Voice log that is already used successfully in two faculties, supports the synchronisation/central recording of Student Voice Feedback, in one place, that is visible to students and therefore addressing the key message in our student feedback that students currently do not know what happens to their feedback once it has been submitted. The Student Voice Logs have clear areas for initial responses to feedback, actions and updates to support transparency. The student voice logs are live documents on Sharepoint but embedded into Brightspace so updates show up instantly for students to read.

Zoheir Sabeur feedback (Section 2 of report): “Dehumanises”. This is a too strong wording here? “Depersonalises” is fine though

Response from Jo Thurston:

If you look at the dimensions of humanisation (Todres 2009) which is the framework that underpins the work of our Service Excellence Colleagues and how we should approach our work in Higher Education, to ‘dehumanise’ encompasses the dimensions of insiderness, agency, uniqueness, togetherness, sense-making, personal journey, sense of place and embodiment. To use quantitative means to try and capture the subjective experience, is to reduce the individual to a homogenous group and a number – which by definition is to take away the students’ insiderness, agency and uniqueness etc and is therefore the essence of dehumanisation.

Zoheir Sabeur feedback (Section 4.2): Is this going to be realistically ready for the academic year 2023/24? The feedback yes, but the recording mechanisms and their synchronisation in the system....I am not sure? But again it is worth to do this as a pilot for this academic year first!

Response from Jo Thurston:

The interim measures have always been articulated as ‘interim’ thus implying a staged process/pilot prior to full implementation. As the paper to eASEC indicated (see points 1.1-1.5) this approach is an interim arrangement while BU undertakes a deep dive research project into how our students want to feed back to us and about what topics. The interim arrangements are then being evaluated against success criteria (student and staff feedback/increased engagement levels etc), alongside the findings of the research project, to complete a full rewrite of ARPP 5B next Spring/Summer. The intent behind the interim arrangements is to strip back the current ARPP 5B to its basic components to support colleagues in not overcomplicating student feedback thus reducing the time burden on PLs and resetting expectations on feedback for students. I have explained the approach to colleagues in the video on the Student Voice Sharepoint page: [Student Voice Sharepoint](#) and programme voice logs – for the two faculties not already using them – will be uploaded to Brightspace by the end of the month, ready for the first Student Staff Fora in October.

Zoheir Sabeur feedback (section 4.3 & 4.4) – Have you evaluated the added workload on PLs and those involved in the necessary synchronisation of feedback information recipients altogether? If so please provide calculated estimates of these added workloads.

Response from Jo Thurston:

There is no increase in workload for Programme Leaders as the Student Staff Fora have been a feature of this policy since its inception and are a key part of our relationship with SUBU. They would have therefore been factored in to previous WLP discussion and time allocations for the PL role. The aim of the interim arrangements is to reduce the burden on PLs by removing both the course and programme surveys, that added a huge increase in workload just before Winter Break and in the Spring last academic year. All PLs now need to do is complete 2 x 1hr Student Staff Forums per semester, and a max 1 hr End of Semester Review at the end of Sem 1 and Sem 2. Discussion of issues, actions and responses etc will be within those sessions, and a natural part of Programme Team meetings and updates to the ADSE (standard practice).

Zoheir Sabeur feedback: Please evaluate estimates of practical person hours required from PLs, student reps and others for proceeding onto this proposed working paths for collecting feedback and closing it on time.

This is the toughest and challenging period of time in the academic year. How can you assure there is not impact of exacerbation of workload on students in the middle of their assignments deliveries, final year projects and more during this period.

Response from Jo Thurston:

The interim arrangements have not changed the requirements on Reps or PLs to complete Student Staff Fora (other than reinforcing that PLs only need to complete two per semester thus reducing their workload). The Rep role is covered by SUBU and their training is to prepare them for the twice a semester Student Staff Fora and shows them how to download a report of the SimOn feedback. This takes the time to send an email only. Student Staff Fora are traditionally 1 hour and Reps have always been briefed on this component of their role, as should have programme leaders. Student Staff Fora are not a new component of these interim arrangements.....Universal implementation of policy and procedure however, is the requirement for this year.

We have actually reduced the burden on reps and PLs this year by working with SUBU to have a link to SimOn directly on Brightspace, so that individual students know that if they have feedback they can upload feedback directly and twice a semester the rep will download that feedback and discuss it in a Student Staff Forum. By having clear feedback points (ie the student staff fora twice per semester) there is space to consider actions and responses rather than the feeling of constant firefighting which has been a reported feature of managing student feedback over the last 5 years. Clear messaging from Programme Teams to students that feedback goes in the 'Want to give us some feedback?' box on Brightspace and will be looked at twice a semester, sets expectations and allows breathing space for programme team.

The intent behind the whole Student Voice strategy is to empower Programme Teams to own student feedback locally. If a PL feels that early May is too burdensome for their group, it is within their gift to move this session to slightly earlier or later to gain meaningful feedback on Semester 2. It is important to have a 'closing off' of semester 2, otherwise students drift into summer break leaving the semester feeling unfinished. We also know students struggle to understand their results letters etc so the review is a great chance to talk with students about that / what to prep over the summer / placements etc before they leave us for their summer break. PLs will be supported by their ADSEs to run the review at a time that fits appropriately.

Approved. I agree with the general principles of reviewing student feedback and loop closing to gain more efficient approaches and impactful outcomes on student experience. I echo my initial comments about the consistency of data and the comparability of data in student voice to inform and lead development of education enhancement plans and crucially in the context of TEF. The previous unit feedback questions were designed with TEF educational gain in mind and findings may be helpful to inform new feedback mechanism.	Gelareh Roushan
Approved. A significant and innovative shift from how we've considered student voice/feedback previously - it certainly follows the direction (my) PLs have been asking us to take. Thank you for engaging with PLs through the workstream and listening to their experience. Implementation of this first stage is going to be key to make a transformational step change. I'd welcome training for colleagues on how to create/respond re. a suitable student-facing log book. We would not want to share our previous logbook of actions to student concerns- these repeatedly needed to be rewritten/reframed (academic audience). At Faculty/Department level we can use the AMER update to embed this approach into team actions. Next step seems to be urgent comms to teams to meet milestones	Katharine Cox
Approved. Thanks! No problems from SUBU's side of things and it seems all correct. The implementations will hopefully bring a good amount of power to student reps as long as implemented correctly and will hopefully achieve closing the feedback loop like students want/need.	Norah Deka
I'm happy to support this. I agree that we need a new approach and this will hopefully achieve greater student engagement.	Jane Wakefield