School of Health & Human Sciences (SHHS)  
Response to the Student Satisfaction Surveys 2015

Survey Overview and Background

Each year, the University conducts a survey of its students to establish how satisfied they are with the programmes they are studying. There are three such surveys. For undergraduates there are the Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS), completed by 1st and 2nd year students, and the National Student Survey (NSS) completed by final year students and SSS for postgraduates (taught). Areas covered include quality of the teaching on the programme, the assessment and feedback arrangements, academic support, organisation and management, learning resources and personal development. There are questions around employability issues.

We currently use the Times Good University Guide (TGUG). This is calculated based on four indicators: research quality, entry standards, graduate prospects and student satisfaction. All indicators have equal weighting.

When considering our Unistats satisfaction results in comparison to other providers around Great Britain; SHHS shows a high satisfaction rating. The Unistats Comparison of Official Course Data from universities and colleges shows us to be in the upper quartile of Universities offering Nursing as a BSc Programme, with an overall satisfaction rate of 97%. This places us favourably for BSc Nursing and we are first (with a satisfaction rate of 97%) for Overall Satisfaction when reviewing rates for other Universities across Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

Response

This has been a positive year for the School of Health & Human Sciences in relation to the results of the student satisfaction surveys. This is particularly important to us as teaching and learning, and thereby the student experience is the core business of our School. We are a diverse school that operates a wide range of pre-professional, post registration, undergraduate, postgraduate, part-time, full-time and different locality based courses. This makes general statements about the courses we offer difficult, and has been reflected in the responses in this year’s surveys. There were a few noticeable differences between the responses given for Colchester campus as compared to Southend Campus. This is likely to reflect the different courses that operate in each campus, and the specific developments made or infrastructure offered in the two locations.

Survey Response Rates

NSS

The response rate from SHHS students for this year’s survey continued the trend for higher response rates than the university average and increased on last year’s survey. This is likely to be due to action taken to improve allocation and recruitment of students to the appropriate
surveys during 2014. The response rate has improved from students at Southend Campus overall and less so with Colchester.

An improved response number to placement based questions is noted across both Campuses Colchester 32 vs 28 last year, Southend 76 vs.70 last year. We will continue to focus on improving this number of responses further in next year’s survey.

SSS
Number of responses to this survey remains low, with only 56 responding this year as opposed to 71 in 2014. The majority of these students will also have been asked to complete other surveys, which may make them less likely to complete this survey. It is known that students are more likely under these circumstances to a) not respond, or b) not complete the survey sufficiently for it to be counted as a response. A marked difference between Colchester and Southend responses is noted and an area for the School to address.

Review of overall satisfaction in survey responses – Undergraduate
NSS
The % scores were variable with improvements up to 16.5% on last year’s results but a lowering of some areas to -8.4:

Teaching on course up 16.5%
Assessment & feedback up 16.5%
Personal Development up 16.5%
Overall Satisfaction up 16.5%

However, the less positive responses were for the following areas:
Careers down 8.4%
Feedback from students down 8.4%
Assessment down 8.4%
Social Opportunities 8.4%
Course delivery down 8.4%

SSS
We saw a variation of responses in all areas of the survey.
Teaching of my degree remained static at 94%
Academic Support remained static at 90%
Learning Resources down 1%
Personal Development up 8%
Quality of my degree up 2%
Overall satisfaction up 3%

In all areas but two, we have maintained a higher than University average. The only areas where we were lower than the University average were: as with previous years, learning resources in general by 3% and overall satisfaction by 3%. There is significant improvement with overall satisfaction at Colchester, however, Southend has decreased by 2%.

Detail of key areas of the surveys

Assessment & Feedback
Although we have continued to improve in relation to Assessment & Feedback, further work on this area has been a priority for us both as a University, but also at a School and programme level.
- The turnaround time of 4 weeks for standard student feedback has continued to be noted as an area requiring further work as there is a reduction across both SSS and NSS.
• Use of a standardised module guide stating specific draft, summative deadlines and return of feedback dates has continued to be offered to all students via the relevant Moodle site.
• Standard marking grids and feedback sheets are now in common usage across the School with clear detail of the tasks student need to undertake and build upon. These continue to be reviewed as required by alterations to assessment requirements.

NSS-Specific

Employability Related
The optional section provides information on how well students believe the course has improved career prospects. We maintain a higher than University rating for this where the university rating is 85% and SHHS is 98%. Colchester Campus has improved 4% and Southend Campus has remained the same at 100% agreement. Historically SHHS students undertake professional programmes which lead to the qualification for employment and as such we are likely to have high rating for this. The fact that this has improved again however is likely due to the work around employability (workshops, designated Moodle site) which has been actively included across all programmes this year.

Learning Resources
There has been an increase in the overall satisfaction in relation to learning resources by 4%. Satisfaction increased again this year in Colchester by 10% overall and by 1% in Southend.

Placements
Under the placement questions, have decreased by 3% overall. Students responded positively to the questions regarding allocation of placements by 9% in Colchester but by Southend decreased by 5%. An increase by 2% was the descriptor “i was given opportunities to meet my required practice learning outcomes competences”. However there was a decrease in satisfaction of supervision during placements (overall 3%: Colchester 9% and Southend 1%) and the value of contribution as a team member reduced by 6% overall.

Social Opportunities & Facilities
The ‘Social Opportunities’ section of the surveys presents difficulties for us. This is likely to be influenced by the fact that a high proportion of our students are undertaking full time work alongside various stages of their studies as part of their placements (which are a requirement of the course). This limits their opportunity to participate in the clubs, societies and events, of which students did criticise the range of opportunities available which has a reduced response rate by 7% overall. There is still an identification of the issue of students having opportunity and facility to liaise with other students within the university, through clubs, societies or other forms of entertainment.

Teaching & Academic Support
This is an area we continue to receive praise for across many areas of the surveys. The External Examiners’ reports this year as in previous years have continued to highlight several examples of good practice in relation to teaching. With the specific teaching methods the responses from the Colchester cohorts have increased, however the Southend campus shows a decline in positive response. In relation to assessment, there has been a maintenance in response of 94% overall. However, this includes an increase of Colchester and a decrease for Southend. In relation to academic support, students responded less positively to this criterion, 3% less satisfied overall with Southend showing a 6% decrease (Colchester increasing by 6%). The response regarding contact of staff in particular decreased overall, with Southend being noticeably reduced as a positive response.
SSS: A Selection of Free-Text Comments – Postgraduate (Taught)

Positive Responses

“The staff who teach us are all really helpful and supportive. We have ample chance to provide feedback and evidence that our feedback makes a difference to the next cohort”

“The amount of support which is provided by the teaching staff, they are willing to help anyone with any problem! I also feel that the course content has provided me with good practical skills – for example EBL sessions where we take time to discuss a client and talk about what we would do – I feel this is one example of beneficial practice for skills rather than knowledge!”

“The degree programme is accelerated and there is not enough break, especially after practice and before the next module. However, lecturers are supportive”

“It is an amazing university with many opportunities and facilities. I am very happy to be here”

“I have noticed that due to feedback from previous years, the structures of the assessments have changed positively”

“The Student’s Union offer crisis loans which were very useful when in need. It was prompt and simple to arrange. The Student Support Service have supported me through pregnancy and ensuring that I am treated well by the university/School. They have put my needs before that of the university”

Areas requiring further development

“Variation between markers of coursework – feels like the mark you get depends on which marker you have at times”

The limited space for group work particularly around a computer. There are very few areas (only two I can think of with a total of maybe 16 spaces??) on the whole campus. It is vital on our course to have a space in which we can have group discussions (which is not too noisy or over-crowded) and also have a computer to work off. I think the university needs to improve on this issue”

“Sometimes the assessment doesn’t match the course content e.g. we are only taught things that would aid or contribute to the assessment after we have submitted it. The teaching standards are not the same with every teacher and more support and constructive criticism needs to be offered to junior teachers. One module on my course is compulsory for all Masters students in my School. The teachers don’t seem to have grasped the enormous difference in our backgrounds and have made incorrect assumptions about our previous learning. This has made the particular module very difficult”.

“Library opening hours over Christmas not particularly helpful, especially for postgraduate students who return sooner than undergraduates.”

“There is minimal socialising/eating space or facilities in the School of Health and Human Sciences. It would be helpful to have an area with basic facilities such as kettle and microwave (like some other Schools have).”
**Actions taken in response to 2014 Survey Action Points**

1. It is clear to me how students’ comments on the course have been acted on  
   **Action Taken:** Comments were forwarded to the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Committee (TLQE) regarding changes to module content, structure, assessment and where necessary, approaches. Programme Leaders presented details within their module evaluations and were required to place the response/actions from student feedback onto an appropriate Moodle site.

2. Facilities at both campuses regarding catering and accommodation  
   **Action Taken:** New facilities are planned at Southend and Colchester and will be available for the academic year 2015.

3. Opportunities for personal development, including self-confidence  
   **Action Taken:** The university-wide personal tutor system is now in operation, where students are encouraged to discuss personal development in relation to academic and other areas which impact on performance. The School tutorial system fits within this university-wide process and provides a safety net for those requiring ‘extra’ support.

4. Learning resources are good enough for my needs  
   **Action Taken:** New resources are planned for both campuses and the Forum in Southend is fully operational as from 2013. The Silberrad Student Centre in Colchester opens before the start of the academic year 2015 and will provide access to further support and learning activities such as The Talent development Centre. Further links to literature and learning resources are being developed through a project called ‘Talis’ which will link modules directly to the library resource for each module on the Colchester campus. This is rolling out for 2015.

**Action Points from 2015 NSS Survey**

As the greatest number of responses pertain to the Southend campus, the majority of the actions will relate to this area of provision:

1. Satisfied that my course has included sufficient online course materials and e-learning support  
   **Action:** To review provision of online resources and e-learning support, possibly identifying student expectations regarding provision. With a TEL Champion within the School, Programme Leads are encouraged to liaise with her to develop modules where online resources could be developed further. Staff also have development opportunities in relation to online Moodle-based courses to upskill in these areas.

2. Received sufficient preparatory information prior to my placement  
   **Action:** To consider ways to improve communication with placement providers and understanding of expectations and the log book requirements. Placement teams should
be the point of contact for such discussions – between students and the programme teams.

3. Satisfaction with range of entertainment and social events on offer

**Action:** To seek to identify student expectations of social opportunities (clubs and societies, entertainment and social events etc.) in collaboration with the SU. This issue can be brought up at Programme Committees or through SSLC by student representatives.

4. Improvements to timetabling, late timetable changes and issues with sufficient notification

**Action:** To review and improve the way in which the timetable is structured and changes communicated. New resources are being embedded within the university to ensure changes, cancellations and timetabled events are communicated through the attendance monitoring system for example, sending out emails if events are cancelled. This should assist with issues previously highlighted.

5. Assessment feedback: timeframe, clarity and internal consistency between markers

**Action:** To ensure students are fully aware and understand expectations and requirements associated with assessments (i.e. feedback response time, criteria, detail). Alterations to assessment details should be monitored through our School Teaching and Learning Enhancement Committee. Where there are issues, these will be picked up and the reasons for these issues will need to be addressed.

Dr. Mark Francis-Wright

Director of Education

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