Policy on Module Evaluation

Introduction

This Policy sets out the minimum requirements which must be met in conducting student evaluation of modules. The Policy enables local control and management over student evaluation of modules using a framework which is approved by the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee against a clear set of requirements and the following principles:

(i) The purpose of student module evaluation is to support the enhancement of future provision.

(ii) Staff and students should work together in partnership to use evaluation results in a positive and constructive manner.

(iii) Students should have a clear understanding of the evaluation processes.

(iv) Students should have confidence that their evaluation will be treated with respect and valued, that their comments will be acted upon where possible, and that they will receive a collective response.

(v) Students should complete module evaluations honestly and with consideration and respect for the teaching and support staff for each module.

(vi) Students’ evaluation should be anonymous where this is possible.

Student module evaluation, as set out in this Policy, is a method for identifying areas of good practice and areas where there could be improvement. The core rateable questions required in this Policy serve well as indicators of quality, but it is important that they are not used or viewed in isolation; they should be used to inform and support other quality assurance processes and to lead to constructive dialogue with students and between colleagues about curricula developments and enhancement of the student experience.

In this Policy, the following definitions should be noted:

Evaluation(s): surveys and questionnaires which students complete to assess and rate their academic studies and the quality of teaching, principally at module/course level but also at year and programme level.

Module: a credit-bearing unit in a programme of study.

Component: a discrete element or specific part of a non-modular clinical programme

Course: a credit-bearing standalone course, such as a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) course.
MODULE EVALUATION

In this Policy, references to ‘modules’ should be read to include components and courses (as defined above), unless indicated otherwise.

1. Requirements

1.1 All modules should be evaluated every time they are delivered.

1.2 All module evaluations should ideally be completed at the end of the module, after all learning, teaching and assessments have been completed but before the results have been published, in order to provide students with a full perspective from which to assess and appraise the module. Notwithstanding this, it is recognised that in some areas it may be deemed more suitable to evaluate a module towards the end of the learning and teaching period, but before some or all of the assessments have been completed. Each Faculty should set out a policy on this, approved by AQSC, which should be clearly articulated and made available for students and staff.

1.3 The format of surveys may be paper-based or online, or provided to students in both formats. Generally the format used should encourage the maximum number of students to complete the questionnaire, but the choice of format must not exclude any student from completing it.

1.4 Each Faculty should set out its operational procedures, approved by AQSC, for ensuring that the student evaluations are undertaken using an appropriate format, and setting out the requirements for using online and paper questionnaires. Through its procedures each Faculty may devolve authority as it sees fit in relation to decisions about the most appropriate type of format for each module evaluation.

1.5 Surveys should be designed to protect student anonymity and the method for returning completed forms must maintain anonymity.

1.6 All module evaluation questionnaires should include the ‘core’ evaluative statements set out in Appendix A.

1.7 In addition to the ‘core’ evaluative statements, bespoke questions may be set as appropriate.

2. Conducting Students’ Evaluations

2.1 When a survey is sent out or made available to students it should include clear instructions about how students access it, and the date by which they should complete it.

2.2 The Faculties should each set out a policy, approved by AQSC, on the timescale by which module evaluations should be completed by students. Through its policy each Faculty may delegate authority to set the deadlines for completing module evaluations to the level they think most appropriate.

2.3 The instructions should include confirmation that students will complete the survey anonymously and that this anonymity will be preserved throughout the evaluation process.
2.4 The method of returning completed surveys should ensure the students’ anonymity is preserved, and is seen to be preserved.

2.5 Surveys should include information about how and when the results will be made available to students and how and where responses to those results will be made available, i.e. what will be done in light of the results.

2.6 Each Faculty is responsible for deciding the policy and requirements for setting the timescales for publishing results and responses to evaluations, and the requirements for communicating these to students. Each Faculty’s policy on this should be approved by AQSC.

3. Results of Students’ Module Evaluations

Results from the core evaluative statements:

3.1 The Head of School, or other designate person, will have access to the results from the core evaluative statements (Appendix A) for the evaluation of module(s), including any associated free text comments.

3.2 The Head of School should make arrangements for the core evaluative statement results, including any free text comments, to be made available to the relevant Board of Studies (or equivalent body) and Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) in a form and style that are sensitive to staff, such that offensive or inappropriate comments are removed whilst also keeping the overall balance of student feedback. This is particularly important with regard to any free text comments. The BoS and SSLC should also be provided with a response and action plan for promoting any good practice identified and for addressing any issues raised. Results may also be accompanied by explanatory notes that provide context to the results, as appropriate.

3.3 The Faculties shall be responsible for determining the processes and protocols for making these results available as required above, including decisions about other student forums or discussion groups that should receive or have access to the results. The processes and protocols should be approved by AQSC.

3.4 The Faculties should also set out how the results from the core evaluative statements above should be considered and discussed beyond the relevant Boards of Studies and SSLCs, and how action plans should be developed to further explore results which indicate areas of good practice and areas where further development or enhancement are required.

Results from bespoke questions:

3.5 The results from bespoke questions that may be set in a module evaluation should be available to the relevant module leader.

3.6 The results from bespoke questions should be available to the relevant Board of Studies and SSLC in accordance to requirements set out by or agreed with each Faculty and approved by AQSC. Such results should be made available in a form and style that are sensitive to staff, such that offensive or inappropriate comments are removed. This is particularly important with regard to free text comments. Results may also be accompanied by explanatory notes that provide context to the results, as appropriate.
Use of results in Annual Subject Review and Periodic Review:

3.7 The full results from all surveys from each academic session should be available for reference for producing the Annual Subject Review report for the reporting unit responsible for the module. Similarly, survey results, but excluding free text comments, should be available for reference and scrutiny within the Periodic Review process, these should be the results from the preceding and concurrent year to the periodic review and relevant to the area undergoing Periodic Review.

4. Responsibilities of Faculties

4.1 The EPVC for each Faculty shall allocate responsibility for meeting the requirements of this Policy to either the Faculty Education Committee or the Faculty Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

4.2 The Faculty Committee selected by the EPVC shall develop the Faculty’s operational procedures for student evaluation that covers the following:

(i) The criteria for determining the timing for module evaluation. The Faculty procedures should set out the circumstances and criteria to be considered when deciding on the optimum timing for module evaluation. The Faculty procedures should be clear about how and where decisions on this are made.

(ii) The format for student surveys. The Faculty procedures may stipulate a Faculty-wide requirement for a particular format (e.g. all online, or all paper surveys), or it may set out the criteria for selecting an appropriate format. The Faculty procedures should be clear about how and where decisions are made about the format to use.

(iii) The requirements and criteria for setting bespoke questions for use in a survey. The Faculty procedures may set out bespoke questions set at Faculty level, or Level 1 or 2; or the Faculty procedures may allow bespoke questions at module, programme or subject level. The decision-making process for setting and approving bespoke questions should be clearly set out in the Faculty procedures.

(iv) The timescale for completing student evaluations. The Faculty procedures may set a Faculty-wide timescale by which student evaluations must be provided to students, completed and returned; or the Faculty procedures may allow the timescale to be determined at a more local level. The procedures should be clear what the timescale requirements are where these are set by the Faculty. Where decisions are devolved below the Faculty, the Faculty procedures should set out a range of timescales within which to set the completion times for evaluations, and the Faculty procedures should be clear about the criteria for setting timescales and the decision-making process for setting and approving them.

(vi) The timescale for publishing results and responses to evaluations and for communicating these to students. The Faculty procedures should set out the timescales for publishing results to students, the format for publishing results and how they will be communicated to students. NB: the Faculty procedures should ensure that the publication of results is managed in a
way that is sensitive to individual staff and meaningful to students. In addition, the Faculty procedures should set out the timescale, format and communication requirements for informing students about how the relevant area is responding to the evaluation results. Where the Faculty wishes to devolve decisions on some of these matters to more local levels, the Faculty procedures should be clear on the criteria for making such decisions and where the authority lies to make them.

(vi) The protocols and requirements for providing evaluation results to Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC) and other forums. The Faculty should set out the procedures for providing evaluation results to SSLCs, the format in which the results should be provided, and state which SSLC in the academic session should receive the results. The Faculty procedures should also identify any other boards, committees or groups that should receive the evaluation results, and in each case state the purpose for them receiving the results, who is responsible for providing the results, and the formatting requirements for the results.

4.3 The Faculty Committee shall submit the Faculty operational procedures for student evaluation to AQSC for approval, and shall submit any subsequent changes to the procedures to AQSC for approval.

4.4 The Faculty Committee shall make the approved Faculty procedures available to students and staff.
Appendix A – Core Module Questions

Teaching and Organisation

1. The module was well taught.
   (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly Agree.

2. I received the academic support I needed for this module.
   (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly Agree.

3. The module gave me a good understanding of the subject.
   (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly Agree.

4. The module was well organised and ran smoothly.
   (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly Agree.

5. I had access to essential resources when I needed them for the module.
   (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly Agree.

Assessments

6. Have you had an assessment on this module?
   (1) Yes; (2) No; (3) Not sure.

7. The module assessments were a fair test of my knowledge and ability.
   (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly Agree; (6) Not Applicable.

Feedback

'Feedback' is when students receive written or verbal comments on their work; in light of this definition please indicate the following:

8. I received feedback during the course of the module.
   (1) Yes; (2) No; (3) Not sure.

9. The feedback I have received was useful.
   (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly Agree.

Additional Comments (Open Questions)

10. Please list up to three particular strengths of this module. You may expand on any of your answers above. Please be as concise as possible.

11. Please list up to three ways in which the module could be improved.