



## University of Brighton

### THE STUDENT VOICE – getting your feedback about your academic experience

The University values the views and contributions of its students to help monitor and enhance the quality of the student experience. Student feedback helps the University recognise excellence in teaching and learning.

#### How you can tell us about your experience

There are many opportunities for students to tell us about their academic experience whilst studying at the University, including your experience of a course and our support services. The main formal ways in which student feedback is collected and responded to is detailed below.

There are also many less formal ways for students to provide feedback, such as at School Open meetings, student/staff forums, Course Leader meetings with course reps, completion of comment forms, or simply through the day-to-day interaction between students and staff. Students are always encouraged to talk to their tutors as soon as concerns arise.

#### Student surveys

Whilst at the University, students are asked to complete a number of surveys to provide evaluation and feedback about their course, modules and their experience of the University's Support Services. These include:

<i>National Student Survey (NSS)</i>	This annual sector-wide survey is for final year undergraduate students to provide feedback about their experience of the course overall. It is completed on-line during January-April
<i>Brighton Student Survey (BSS)</i>	This annual internal course survey is for all undergraduate students not in their final year to provide feedback about their experience so far on their course. It is completed on-line during January and February
<i>Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)</i>	This annual sector-wide survey is for all postgraduate students to provide feedback about their experience on their course. It is completed on-line during May and June
<i>Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)</i>	This biennial sector-wide survey is for all postgraduate research students to provide feedback about their experience, including their supervision experience. It is completed on-line during March and April
<i>Module Surveys</i>	Feedback is collected by the School from all students taking a module, following completion of the module. This is either at the end of the term or semester and can include placements

Course and module surveys ask students for their views about the teaching, assessment and feedback, academic support and organisation and management of the course as well as overall how satisfied they were with the quality of the course. There is an opportunity for students to provide free text comments about any aspect of their course/module.

Information and promotion of surveys is through Studentcentral, posters, emails and from your tutors. Course and School Academic reps provide encouragement to their peers to complete surveys and the Students' Union promote surveys through campus roadshows and information on their webpage.

### Student representation

Student representation is coordinated by the Students' Union in partnership with the University of Brighton. It is an important way of fostering the student voice at the University. Undergraduate and postgraduate student representatives (student reps) are elected by students to represent the views and concerns of the students on their course and in their School. As members of Course Boards and School Boards of Study, student reps contribute to discussion about both the academic provision and the student experience on courses. Each School has a member of staff designated as the Student Engagement Champion who supports Course reps and School Academic reps in their School and works in partnership with them to develop student engagement activities and encourage students to share their views and ideas.

*Course representatives* are elected by their peers, usually in March or at the beginning of the academic year, for each year of a course. There are currently over 950 course reps working across the University. Students can then raise issues affecting their studies and experience on the course through their Course rep who attends the Course Board (or Staff-Student Consultative Committee) and provides feedback (including what works well) to the course team. Course reps should then provide feedback to students in their cohort on the outcomes of issues raised on their behalf and it is recommended that Course Board minutes are available on Studentcentral (see course area). Course reps provide a key contact point for teaching staff to communicate with students and increasingly discuss the outcomes of student surveys with Course Leaders and support the development of Course and School Action Plans.

Each School has a number of elected *School Academic representatives* (at least one undergraduate and one postgraduate academic rep) who are members of the School Board of Study and responsible for the representation of students on issues relating to their academic experience within the School. There is a standing item on the School Board of Study agenda to consider student engagement and experience and an opportunity for School academic reps to provide feedback. School academic reps also attend the Academic Zone Committee SU meetings and help make SU policy.

Students are also represented on the major University committees, including Academic Board, Academic Standards Committee, Learning and Teaching Committee and Doctoral College Board through *Brighton Students' Union elected Leadership Team Officers*. Committees have the authority to make decisions on academic issues, and student reps as members of the committees have a voice in the formal decision-making process of the University. Students are also part of Campus Action Teams which have responsibility for decisions to improve the quality of the student experience on each campus.

Further information about current student reps and sabbatical officers can be found on the [Brighton Students' Union](#) webpages. You will also find information about the election process and training for student reps. Being a student rep can provide an opportunity to acquire employability skills to include on your CV.

### Student participation in course review

The views and contributions of students are an important element in the University's quality assurance processes for the annual monitoring of courses (known as '*Academic Health*') and review of courses. Students/student reps have opportunities to:

- participate in meetings held to consider annual *Academic Health* Course reports and School Monitoring reports. This ensures that students are able to scrutinise the actions that the Course and School has taken or proposes to take in response to student evaluation and feedback;
- meet with the panel at a *periodic review* of a course. This ensures that the views and experience of students currently studying on a course are taken into consideration and can lead to enhancement of the course for current and future students;
- be members of *validation or periodic review panels*. This ensures that proposals for new courses or reviews of existing courses are critically appraised by students from the student perspective.

### Staff-student collaboration

Students and staff can work collaboratively in a number of ways so that the views and contributions of students are taken into account, including:

- *focus/consultation groups*, where students help develop *action plans* from the outcomes of student surveys and are partners in 'problem solving', suggesting solutions and working constructively with staff to help bring about change;
- *working groups*, where students help develop University/School proposals and Policy and ensure that the student perspective has been taken into account.

### **How your feedback is used**

Student feedback gathered through student surveys, discussions in meetings with students and other means is considered carefully by tutors, subject groups and course teams in order to improve the quality of courses.

The module leader and course leader comment on the outcomes of student evaluation and feedback when completing their annual Module and Course reports which are a key part of the University's annual *Academic Health* process. Course reports include changes made and actions planned in response to student feedback and are shared with course reps at Course Boards (or Staff-student Consultative Committee).

Following the publication of the Brighton Student Survey (BSS) outcomes, Schools hold briefing and feedback sessions with students/student reps to discuss the results and help develop actions plans. You can support the implementation of actions by attending briefing meetings, forums or being part of a focus/consultation group. BSS outcomes are considered at Course Boards (or Staff-student Consultative Committee) with student representation and the progress of action plans is regularly reviewed during the year. When courses are periodically reviewed, panels consider how the feedback from students has led to developmental action to enhance courses. Action plans are also prepared by Schools and Professional Support Services following the outcomes of the BSS and NSS and these are regularly reviewed during the year at School Boards of Study, which include student representatives, and Department meetings.

Student feedback provided by the NSS is one of a number of key sources of data from which HEFCE will form a view about the quality of the academic experience provided by the University.

### **How we tell you about how your feedback is used**

Student feedback informs change and improvements to courses. Information about the actions and improvements taken or being planned by the University and by Schools in response to student feedback is available through a number of channels, including:

- **Your Voice Matters** blog (link emailed to students), posters and plasma screens in Schools and around the University;
- **Student briefing and feedback sessions** such as 'Town Hall' meetings, focus groups, forums and Course Leader feedback to students;
- **Studentcentral** module and course areas. The 'You said We did' section includes information about changes made and actions planned;
- **Course Boards** (or Staff-student Consultative Committees) and **School Boards of Study** are attended by student reps and discuss the outcomes of student surveys and review progress on *action plans*;
- **Student reps** provide feedback to their student cohort from their meetings with Course Leaders and from attending Course Boards and School Boards of Study.