Student Written Submission

Our contribution to the November 2011 QAA Institutional Review
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Preface

Since taking office in July I have been actively involved in the QAA process. The Institutional Review is a great opportunity to reflect on the student experience here at Leeds and how we can work with our partners in the University to create positive changes for our members and stakeholders.

Leeds continues to be an increasingly popular destination offering an overwhelmingly positive experience for its students. This applies not only to academic life but also to the availability of co-curricular opportunities – including skills development, leisure and social activities. Leeds University Union is at the heart of campus and plays a key role in students’ lives, working to ensure they love their time at Leeds.

In recent years we have vastly improved student representation to the University through our Course and School Rep system, and developed new deliberative forums for the consideration of students’ ideas to make the Union, their University or the city of Leeds better for other students.

Together, our academic reps and the Better University forum are invaluable in connecting me with the experiences of our students and supporting the coordination and communication of ideas for change across the University.

We know that while students value their time at Leeds there is still work to be done to ensure a positive experience for all. In this student written submission, we emphasise the potential for good practice in some areas to be shared to benefit students more widely across the institution. This is particularly true for personal tutoring, assessment and feedback, and access to learning resources; as well as the achieved and planned improvements for postgraduate research (PGR) students.

At any substantial research-intensive university some variation in practice across the organisation is likely to exist, but we know that the University is seeking to standardise experience and we look forward to working in partnership with them to help make this happen.

This submission is a constructive opportunity for us to further our objectives, and we welcome the chance to contribute to the Institutional Review. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Kath Owen from our Advice Centre for her contribution to this process.

On behalf of Leeds University Union, I welcome the opportunities that the Institutional Review presents and look forward to reading its conclusions.

Ben Jackson
Education Officer 2011-12
Introduction

For this round of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) assessments, Institutional Review (IRENI) has replaced the previous process of Institutional Audit.

One main change is that reporting is more streamlined with judgements in language which can be easily understood by a wider audience; we consider this to be useful for the student, prospective student and parent audiences. Correspondingly, the Student Written Submission is required to be a lighter document than for previous assessments.

In preparing for the IRENI it is useful to reflect on the recommendations from the last Institutional Audit which occurred in 2008.

In 2008, QAA stated that the following actions would be desirable:

“- where, to reflect disciplinary differences, it permits variation in practice in personal supervision, check that variation in order to ensure that it is still within the University's expectations, and in order to facilitate the spread of good practice.”\(^\text{10}\)

While variability has been reduced through the Leeds for Life tutoring model, there are still pockets of the institution where the student experience needs to be improved.

Additionally, at the previous Audit, it was recognised as desirable for the institution to:

“- enhance, through greater provision of study space and facilitation of shared training across faculties, opportunities for research students to meet other postgraduate research students in their own and other disciplines.”\(^\text{11}\)

While we recognise that the package for PGR students has vastly improved, work is needed to ensure an excellent experience for all.

In both these areas LUU is working closely with the University to help deliver improvements for students by means of the Partnership.

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\(^\text{10}\) Institutional audit: England and Northern Ireland, QAA, 2008

\(^\text{11}\) ibid
Methodology & Authorship

This submission was written by the Advice Centre’s Academic Specialist and the LUU Education Officer. It draws on existing data and documents internal to the University and Students’ Union. The submission refers to all students at the institution but focuses on issues that are particular to international and postgraduate students (both taught and research).

Leeds University Union’s method of sharing information with the student body is via its democratic deliberative forums. Institutional matters relating to learning, teaching, research and the student experience are considered by the Better University Forum.¹²

In October 2011, a map of the Student Written Submission was submitted by the Education Officer and endorsed by the randomly selected, representative group of students who made up the panel.

As a majority supported the proposal, no further votes were required of the wider student body. This would not have been the case if the idea had proved contentious. The LUU Student Executive have also signed off the key components of this submission.

The IRENI requires the SWS to assess how the University:

1. sets and maintains the threshold standards of its academic awards
2. maintains the quality of students’ learning opportunities
3. manages the quality of public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants
4. plans to enhance the quality of students’ learning opportunities

The following section of the report will address each of these in turn.

¹² http://www.leedsuniversityunion.org.uk/yourideas/
**Academic standards**

Through the work of the Student Advice Centre, LUU has an understanding of the problems students face in the determination of final degree classifications, coping with mitigating circumstances and the consequences of academic misconduct. In recent months we have been pleased to see improvements for students in the way these processes are dealt with. Whilst these processes affect a relatively small percentage of the student population, they nevertheless can have a significant impact for those individuals.

**Plagiarism**

For some time the casework at the Advice Centre had raised concerns about inconsistency of approach within the University, with different Schools making their own interpretation of the plagiarism regulations, and variability in reporting to the central University authorities. It appeared that certain groups of students were more susceptible to falling foul of the regulations, with taught Master’s students new to the University, being particularly over represented. International students without previous educational experience in the UK were also over represented in the caseload. There was a lack of preventative support for these students.

In 2010-11 a new approach was taken which saw a cross-University group take action on the problems around plagiarism. The group reported to the Taught Student Education Board (TSEB) in November 2010\(^{13}\) with a series of recommendations which will see support for students increase and better co-ordination of the application of regulations. We welcomed this report and anticipate that the improvement in processes will be beneficial for students.

**Complaints & Appeals**

We work well with the institution in seeking to resolve student complaints as amicably and early on as possible. Where students require support in making formal complaints about services or Schools, this is provided by the LUU Student Advice Centre. By developing a positive relationship between Complaints and LUU, trends can be spotted early on and potential problems headed off. Staff meet on a quarterly basis and find this mutually beneficial. This is an excellent example of partnership working for the benefit of students.

Prior to 2009 we had a number of concerns about the experience of students seeking academic appeal. Our casework figures in 2009 showed that, for example, 33% of students we supported had waited longer than the regulation 6 weeks for their School to respond to the appeal submission.\(^{14}\) By developing improved relationships between the Student Advice Centre and the Office of Academic Appeals & Regulation (OAAR), many of these concerns have been remedied. This has included the communication between the offices and with the students.

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\(^{13}\) Report of the Plagiarism Group, November 2010, Learning & Teaching Board

\(^{14}\) Student Advice Centre, casework reporting, August 2009
Increased staffing resource in OAAR has been key to this success. In June 2011 OAAR made a report of case studies and trends to TSEB\textsuperscript{15} which was welcomed by LUU as a useful tool in de-mystifying the processes and sharing good practice. Whilst there remain concerns about resolution times which are detrimental to individual students, the central reporting to TSEB is a productive step.

\textsuperscript{15} Academic Appeals and Regulation TSEB/10-101, June 2011
Quality of learning opportunities

Module Choices

Module choices and administration are an area where students raise concerns and in May 2011 this was brought into focus by problems with the module enrolment system (the Portal). Due to high demand, the system went down for a period on selection day which resulted in some students missing out on their preferred choices. An apology was issued from the University and preparations will be made to avoid this problem in future. Students raise concerns about module availability and choice in general which will be a contributing factor to pressure at the time of enrolment.

A selection of comments from the NSS results of 2011\(^\text{16}\) illustrate this problem:

- “Not enough spaces on some of optional modules so not always free to do the modules of your choice.” English
- “The compulsory module choices. The online system for choosing your modules online is unfair and ridiculous and has resulted in many people doing modules they didn’t want to do.” French
- “Modules are capped so can’t always do what you want to do, should be able to do what you are interested in and are more likely to do well in.” History
- “I wasn’t able to get on to a couple of modules I would have liked to, and was therefore forced to do a couple of modules that I had absolutely no interest in at all.” Linguistics
- “module selection very confusing and unorganised.” Biological Sciences
- “Module choices can be difficult as there is not a wide range of choice... due to prerequisites, co-requisites, mutually exclusive factors and balancing the workload. ...difficult to change modules due to the limited number of spaces available on each module.” Business School
- “Due to rules I disagree with I had to take some modules I particularly didn’t want to.” Civil Engineering
- “Not all modules were offered in third year (that were on the module catalogue).” Geography
- “A module has been cancelled assuring term time and I was appalled at the way the situation was handled. After a lot of work, I find receiving an email quite late at night to inform me I must bid for other modules completely unprofessional.” Psychology
- “Information on prerequisites for following year module options need to be highlighted more.” Mathematics
- “Lack of module choice.” Sociology & Social Policy

“Module enrolment in the Fine Art Department really needs to be sorted out. The whole process was a shamble.” Fine Art

It seems that student expectation about module choices could be managed better in a range of Schools across the institution. Improved organisation and increased availability of the most popular courses could remedy this problem.

Libraries and learning resources

The libraries at the University of Leeds are committed to providing a world-class support service, and they attract students and academics from across the world. Split across a number of locations, each library boasts an extensive and diverse variety of print and manuscript collections. The University also includes an impressive Special Collections section and The Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery which showcases some of the rich art collections held at the University. These should be explored by and promoted to students further, especially in supporting access and community engagement and current students studying at the University. This would enable all students to take full advantage of the facilities which are available to them.

Over the past four years the score for Q16 of the NSS has stayed relatively steady at 89.25% average with last year seeing this rise again to 90%, 8% above the RLUK average. This high score illustrates the dedication of the libraries to providing students, researchers and staff alike the best service they possibly can.

However, there are mixed views on whether the University Libraries are investing in the correct areas of their services. In 2012 students will undoubtedly be expecting an increasing level of support and resources. The libraries, in particular the availability of hard copies and the Library opening hours, are often included in negative comments written by students in the NSS. Many of the issues students face occur annually. Three of the major problems that students face are:

1) Some comments referred to a lack of core texts:

“Some core reading books in the library don’t have enough copies, especially during the peak times.”

“I find it difficult to get the books I need from the library when I need them. There don’t seem to be enough to go around. The arrangements for recalling books are not in favour of part time students.”

“The library resources, such as the amount of books, are not sufficient for the number of students.”

2) Some suggested that opening hours and provision during exam periods is not always adequate:

“Library closed close to exam weeks. Library not open 24-hours.”

“At other universities 24 hour-access to their libraries is standard practice, why should Leeds, one of the largest universities in the UK, not have this as well. Future students who will pay £9,000 a year should at least be given the option to go into their library at any time they want.”

3) Some indicated a shortage of online, digitised texts:

“Resources in the Library are not extensive enough. Online reading would be more helpful and sometimes I feel like my course is self-taught. They haven’t helped with writing skills so I haven’t practised these since school. I’m disappointed.”

“Library resources are insufficient; I believe all course essential reading should be available electronically.”

Although library resources are excellent, the current inconsistency must be addressed. A lack of online texts is an issue for some faculties but not others. The library opening hours and support services for some students seems to be adequate but for others not so. A significant number of Healthcare students using the Health Sciences library have commented on the inappropriate library opening hours as their term and exam dates differ to other students. Communication between the Libraries and academics must be improved as one reason specific book chapters cannot be digitised is because there is no consistent method for academic staff to follow to upload content to the VLE. Other issues students have highlighted include the relatively high fining fees and lack of support services that are open at appropriate times such as catering facilities for Healthcare students.

There is a very varied mix of comments and although many students believe that the library resources are unacceptable, others find them insufficient:

“Library resources are fantastic and cater for the majority of students.”

“Extensive library and IT services.”

Clearly some students are getting a good service and it would be better if this good service could be available to all.

Many problems that students seem to have faced in the past are improving hugely. The key service, ‘Skills@Library’ provides support, skills and advice for students, staff and researchers. This enables students to engage in skills which compliment their degree and help plan for their future. Library staff are often praised for their knowledge and helpfulness:

“The library facilities were good and the staff were friendly and supportive.”

“Staff are always willing to help.”
At the start of this year the Libraries also extended the opening hours on Saturday evening until 12 midnight and at longer periods during exam times. This is a positive move and the Libraries must be commended for this. If they were to open until 2am, the issue of opening hours would be hugely minimised. This should be a realistic aspiration for the near future and a serious consideration for the University to improve students’ experience of the Library service.

Many of these problems may be managed more carefully if the Library increased their effectiveness of communicating with students. A problem increasingly faced is the cleanliness of the libraries, in particular the Edward Boyle Library. Students report that large amounts of rubbish around work areas and toilets, peaking during exam times take their toll on the finances and people power of the libraries. If this can be better managed, greater resources could be released to spend on other resources. The Union is looking into ways that we can work in partnership with the libraries to improve this.

Student opinion finds the library services ‘over satisfactory’ but not ‘meeting their expectations’, a view mimicked in the Libqual Library Survey which runs every two years (previously running annually). Respondents give a minimum acceptable standard and a perceived standard, where they believe the service currently sits. This produces an adequacy score and a superiority score for each criterion. The adequacy score is the amount by which the current service they feel is either above or below the minimum. The superiority score is the amount by which the current service they feel is above or below what they would desire it to be.

Below is a sample of scores which illustrate how students believe the libraries cater for them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adequacy</td>
<td>Superiority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed materials needed for my work</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening hours are adequate for my needs</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space that inspires learning and studying</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each case the score is above the minimum level but below what students desire.

18 [http://www.libqual.org/Login.aspx](http://www.libqual.org/Login.aspx)
the service to offer them. These scores aren’t indicative of the NSS, with 90% implying the libraries are providing a high level service. Clearly, an excellent service is being provided but some students perceive improvements could be made and it is this inconsistency that appears across campus and must be improved upon.

We believe that there a number of key areas the Libraries must focus their attention on over the coming year to improve the student experience and to see this illustrated in the NSS scores. Developing and expanding the Library learning spaces is an important step forward in providing students with the resources needed and this is something the Library is planning on doing in terms of a refurbishment and potential new build. In line with The Partnership, we would recommend an area where students (including research students), staff and academics can work together on collaborative projects. Communicating with academic staff across the University to facilitate the upkeep of online reading materials and to promote a formal structure to do this will help to improve the number of digitised course texts. Although some students rate opening hours fairly low compared to other issues, increasing them to 2am and staggering the opening times in the Health Sciences library to better accommodate the needs of this cohort of students and nurses is crucial.

**Personal Tutoring**

The University operates a personal tutoring model via Leeds for Life. This has been successful at communicating models of good practice across the institution. However, NSS returns this year demonstrate that student perception of poor practice is still felt.

Problems have arisen from changes in personnel of the tutor:

“I don’t feel that the personal tutor system is very effective. I have had a different tutor every year for the last four years of my course and this means that they cannot and do not get to know me or my study progress very well. I think that students should be able to have the same tutor for the duration of their course, with monthly meetings to discuss progress. This would make the departments more personal and easier to feel a part of with a sense of belonging, which perhaps is lacking now.”

“I also felt that having a personal tutor who was different each year has been detrimental and would have liked the university to have helped me with the transition between these tutors.”

“Personal tutors allocated but were changed every year therefore didn’t feel as supported this way as tutor have a busy timetable as well.”

Some students remain concerned about their anonymity:

“I feel the contact of student to lecturers or personal tutors is minimal and I have often felt like all I am known as is a student number. I feel that when I have needed help or wanted to see someone about the course that the help is not there or that people are not approachable enough as they do not know me.”

“It has come to my third year and I do not feel that any of staff know me well enough to provide a reference for me. I think this is due to lack of contact with one person such as a personal tutor. My personal tutor was a child nurse lecturer so I have never seen her! Nobody seems to know us as a cohort and I despair at the amount of time I have to retell a teacher I have had for 3 years intermittently my name!”

“Because there are so many students it is easy for people to get lost if you do not have the confidence to go up to tutors that you do not know very well on your own. I have not seemed my original tutor from first year since the very first week of inductions.”

Some feel there to be an apparent lack of interest from staff:

“Staff seems more involved in their own research projects than students. Do not know my personal tutor, even though I have made attempts to meet her.”

“Would like more one to one time feels that when I ask for time with my personal tutor it is inconveniencing her.”

“Not enough contact with the personal tutor, I don't think he would even know who I was.”

“The whole time I've been there, I've never seen a personal tutor and I don’t feel anyone cares about my future.”

These areas of poor practice are disappointing to hear about when so many other students are having a positive experience, which LUU has been keen to celebrate.

**Student Choice Awards**

The students’ union has for two years run an award programme to celebrate the good practice in personal tutoring, in 2010 ‘I Love My Personal Tutor’ and in 2011 ‘Student Choice Awards’ where the nominations were broadened out to include lecturers, demonstrators and research degree supervisors amongst others. Two awards are made to students for their work as School Reps. The awards are useful for recognising and sharing the extraordinary people, achievements and innovations across campus.

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In 2010 we received a staggering 900 nominations which we hope to build on significantly in 2011-12. Schools and Departments have risen to the challenge of the competition and LUU hopes that this has contributed to a driving up of standards. The quality of the individuals shines through in the nominations:

- **Feedback champion**
  “In all my time at Leeds I have never had a module leader so committed to providing us with such informative, in-depth and ultimately personal feedback.”

- **Unsung hero**
  “This man doesn’t just deserve a PhD, he deserves an OBE.”

- **Best Rep**
  “He seems to put almost as much time into his work as a School Rep as he does into his degree and the latter certainly does not lack attention. His act will be a hard one to follow.”

- **PG teacher**
  “Thumbs up to him for making Medieval Latin an exciting subject for it is not an easy job.”

- **Best teacher**
  “As he was retiring at the end of the year, the entire lecture theatre stood and applauded.”

- **Inspirational teaching**
  “I felt as if we were really a part of the research being taught, rather than just recipients of the research.”

The confidence of students in their staff at Leeds is a tribute to those staff and the support structures which enable this excellence.

Over the past few months the NUS have recognised Student-Led Teaching Awards to be of national importance and they are encouraging students’ unions to share best practice which our Executive are contributing to. Both NUS and LUU recognise that the awards go further than rewarding students and staff who have contributed a great deal to the University community in one way or another; the nominations will also help to ensure good practices are shared between Schools in the form of an LUU ‘best practice’ report as well as between universities around the country through the NUS.

This year, alongside the launch of The Partnership, we are looking to award behaviours rather than base the awards around specific roles or jobs. For example, the Critical and Independent Thinker award may be awarded to any member of the University community, removing the idea that certain skills are particular to specific positions.

We feel that these positive messages about teaching across campus can be as powerful a driver for increasing quality as survey returns.
Assessment feedback

LUU has been concerned for some time with the consistency of assessment feedback standards across the institution. In June 2010, we were successful in securing the support of the Learning & Teaching Board (LTB) for a set of minimum standards for feedback. Standards refer to timeliness, usefulness and presentation. Whilst we are confident of institutional level support, (as evidenced by ‘Actions in Response to Student Feedback’) we are aware that specific problems continue in certain Schools.

The percentage of students indicating overall satisfaction for Assessment & Feedback from the 2011 NSS scores show some areas falling short:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Science</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentistry</td>
<td>41%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Looking in further detail at the NSS responses, a more detailed picture of required improvements emerges.

Timeliness

“Feedback is very slow on some pieces of work. Means that do not really know where you are up to and what you are aiming for.” Classics

“Slow feedback on exams and other work.” Dentistry

“Length of time to receive feedback often at the handing in point of the next set of coursework before any feedback given, and that is too late.” Food Science

“Feedback for practical exercises sometimes was not given back until after the next one was handed in, meaning that it was difficult to know where you needed to improve from the previous practical.” Geography

“Feedback on exam results and essays it is supposed to take 4 weeks to get your exam results however some modules took as long as 6 weeks, which is not fair. We get penalised for late submission yet the markers don’t give us extra marks for late results. Just something to think about.” Healthcare

“Long waits for feedback following essays, exams. One module failed to provide feedback from our essays (handed in November) prior to our exams (at the end of January) therefore we were unaware of mistakes that we had made previously.” Joint Honours Arts

“We did receive feedback, but would have been great to receive it after each project so we could use it to improve for the next brief.” Textiles

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21 Student Expectations on Academic Feedback LTB/09-63, June 2010
22 Action in response to student feedback, TSEB 10-21, December 2010
Quality/utility of feedback

Across the whole institution, the percentage of students agreeing that “Feedback on my work has helped me clarify the things I did not understand” stands at 56%. Looking in further detail shows areas where satisfaction is lower (percentages of students agreeing with the statement).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative responses also indicate improvements could be made in efficacy of feedback:

“Feedback from work has included comments such as ‘no’ which I do not find constructive or helpful for improvement.” Psychology

“Some staff provides little or no feedback on work, meaning you may make the same mistakes in future essays.” Linguistics

“Lack of detail of feedback in essays does not say how you can achieve the next level up.” Sociology

Students raise concerns that marking criteria aren’t clear, or that different tutors have different expectations from the same assessments, which students view as unfair:

“Not much feedback. Some deadlines did not have mark schemes available beforehand so it was hard to understand what was covered.” Geography

“Comments and feedback on assessments can be quite brief. It is not always clear why you received the mark you did.” Joint Honours Modern Languages

“Not enough feedback overall, marking does not seem to correspond with assessment criteria. Feedback during the course does not match final grades (i.e. is misleading about how well you are doing, compared the grade you get). Tutors do not make it clear what they’re looking for when marking the work. Different tutors have very different ways of working making it very hard to know who to please/which way to work in.” Textiles

Students express the desire for more personalised feedback, from staff with whom they have worked most closely and know their work:

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“More individual feedback needed, and not from personal tutors who don’t know how we perform clinically.”

Some students, who are clearly receiving their feedback, complain that standards are minimal and ask for improvements in quality.

“I have also had, on occasion, some very unsatisfactory exam feedback, with the same comments copied and pasted on to each student's feedback form” English

“The course managers seem to focus on adding more opportunity to get feedback but what we need is quality feedback. Often it is rushed and poor.” Medicine

“[Feedback] is often sparse or even occasionally illegible due to poor or rushed handwriting.” POLIS

“Feedback from some pieces of work/reports has been poor; this has hindered my learning and quality of work in some instances, as I haven’t been given the opportunity to learn from previous mistakes.” Mechanical Engineering

Students in some Schools replied to the NSS survey with the brevity which perhaps reflected their own assessments’ feedback.

“Lack of feedback”. Business School

“Feedback needs to be drastically improved!” Biological Sciences

LUU will continue to work with the University to find ways to ensure the good practice most students receive is replicated across the board, so that students in all Schools and Faculties can benefit from useful and timely feedback.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

The VLE is a useful and relatively innovative tool for students. It provides students with a wealth of information on their studies, modules, Library resources and access to the Skills Centre and grades. Below are some positive comments about the VLE from students from the NSS survey24:

“The Virtual Learning Environment is an amazing online bank of information in relation to the course. It’s easy to understand but still full of detail.”

“I thought the VLE was really good, and many of the staff were good at putting online readings up, which made it very useful when the books in the library were taken.”

During summer 2011 the VLE underwent an upgrade to improve the interface, the usability and the reliability of the system. Although the cleaner and more colourful interface is welcomed, the important addition to the VLE is the ability for students to create discussion and file exchange groups. In this new area students and staff can share learning resources, issues or ideas when working on a piece of work or a project. This is an excellent improvement and this should be further developed with the opportunity to upload lecture recordings and lecture slides easily (see comment below).

“Lecture notes and recordings on the VLE are very useful as they help you understand the module more and this is a good way to initiate further reading.”

Again, the consistency of this varies across campus, with some Schools providing excellent resources with up-to-date lecture slides, readings lists and an effective discussion group with others sometimes lacking all three. For this to occur, communication between the students in that School, library staff and other academics within the School must be succinct and effective.

“Many lecturers fail to appreciate the utility of providing resources on the VLE. Lecture slides that are uninformative or absent, make revising for exams extremely difficult.”

“Not all lectures go on the VLE.”

“Some of the more difficult modules went over material too fast and too much was in one session, which was made even harder as the lecture slides were not put up on the VLE.”

The system should also be utilised more as a feedback tool. In some Schools this operates well, but in others it could largely decrease problems regarding quick and effective feedback.

“Examination feedback is very useful and given through the VLE service made it particularly effective.”

This example once again highlights where the University falls down in its inability to produce consistent mechanisms for a number of key issues.

The reliability of both the VLE and Portal are something that seems to be variable. Downtime for maintenance of these systems is usually scheduled by the University for times when user numbers are down, such as during holidays or at weekends.
Although this is sometimes satisfactory, over the past couple of years (and the first week of the 2011 term after the new upgrade) there has been unexpected downtime during term time. With an increasing number of VLE users, this is obviously a serious problem and it prevents students from accessing the entire system.

“After the VLE went down there was only one week’s worth of lecture slides for one module online.”

There have also been comments from students questioning the possibility of merging the VLE and Portal into one system that is user friendly and has all the necessary requirements in one space. Combining two complex and quite different systems would be an understandably difficult task but perhaps the root of the problem is the understanding of which system provides what and how well it provides this service to students.

On the whole the VLE provides students with a very good tool for accessing and sharing information, research and skills. The University have made efforts to improve the service to students but these are not consistent and standardised. This is something which the University should look at in order to improve the system for all students, not just those in select Schools.
Quality of information

The changing landscape of higher education funding has been challenging to navigate. LUU whilst opposing the differential fee system have appreciated the spirit of partnership with which the University has facilitated in order that we can prepare together for the 2012 intake.

Student support systems have been enhanced in 2011-12 with the launch of Help@Leeds, a website which is designed to be problem focussed rather than service focussed. This will result in students having access to better and more coordinated information of campus support services.

Additional costs

There is concern amongst students that all costs of their degree programme are taken into account and communicated effectively. If this does not happen, ‘hidden' course costs result which for some students can cause inconvenience or even hardship. Courses which require study abroad or professional placement often result in students’ committing to two sets of accommodation. Practical based courses have the additional cost of material and equipment whilst field trips for essential data gathering can present unexpected costs.

Students raised the following comments about such ‘hidden' course costs in the 2011 NSS return 25:

“Bearing in materials for art are a serious extra on top of this.” Fine Art

“Expensive field trips.” Geography

“Had to move away to go on placements therefore had two accommodations.” Healthcare

“It was also difficult for me financially as we had to buy new food every time and the cost of travelling to Hull was expensive which left me very tight every month.” Healthcare

“The term abroad at the end of second year is very expensive, as most people have to pay a lot of money to rent in France on top of the house they are renting in England.” Joint Honours Modern Languages

“Nearly all equipment and materials must be bought be the student, and for a design subjects this can be very expensive with items such as sketchbooks, mount boards, fabrics and yarns.” Textiles

Whilst many students will anticipate that additional costs may be incurred, some are not getting the right information or the right support in order that they manage these costs. As students take on increased costs for their

education it will be important that the institution ensures this information and support is as full and available as possible.

**Student expectations about contact time**

Through LUU’s work with students about academic feedback it is clear that an important aspect for students is the time spent with staff. The opportunity to discuss work with field experts is valuable and certainly the University promote this opportunity to prospective students. Many students are able to take full advantage of this aspect of learning and teaching but NSS returns show that some remain dissatisfied with the access and availability of staff. This dissatisfaction is often linked to the desire for increased contact hours in the arts and social sciences.

Students have said the following about contact hours:

“There is very little contact time. We are on a full time course and paying full time fees but not enough time in the university.” Education

“Not enough contact time…. I don’t feel I am known by my tutors.” English

“We pay the same amount of money to attend university as any course, yet at most I have only had a maximum of 6 hrs of contact time a week!” Fine Art

“There should be more contact time for the language module on the course.” French

“There's not enough contact time. For each 20-credit module I'm only in one hour a week, or 2 if there's an extra seminar on. There's not the chance to speak to staff to make sure you're on the right track.” Geography

“There wasn't enough contact time with the staff or students.” History

“£3000 is a lot of money to spend on 4 hours of contact time a week.” Joint Honours (Arts)

“Not enough contact time would like to benefit more from the excellent teaching of my module leaders.” Joint Honours (Arts)

“Amount of contact time for arts students in proportion to the fees paid is definitely not fair.” Joint Honours (Modern Languages)

“The situation for me as a 3rd year now is I have this semester between 46 hours of contact time, I am paying £3290 for it and the jobs market is now worse than this time last year.” Law

“Contact time with tutors. In my final year I have five hours a week. I do not think this is sufficient... For the amount of money I pay I would appreciate more contact hours whether this be lectures or seminars.” Linguistics

“Little contact time with lectures to be able to discuss the topic.” Membrane & Systems Biology

“More contact time - lectures, tutorials - more hours during the week.” Music

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“Not as much contact time as needed. We are not encouraged to approach our tutors and lecturers from day one as we should be. The result of this is not feeling you can approach them.” Philosophy

“Not enough contact time. Involves a great deal of independent work which can sometimes feel like I’m teaching myself.” Theology

“Could use more timetabled teaching hours. Why does my course cost the same as Chemistry or Medicine, when I use no resources except the libraries and have only 6 hours contact time per week?” POLIS

“Very poor value for money. Staff lack time to see individual students for time necessary.” Psychology

“I feel that throughout the duration of the course, the contact time has been insufficient. I feel I would have benefited from more contact time both socially … and also academically.” Sociology & Social Policy

“2 hours contact time per week: £3000. You work it out.” Textiles

There is a perception that contact hours are the key to successful course of study. The University has a responsibility therefore to communicate to students the value of the other learning resources available and the value of independent study. This message will become of greater importance when the tuition fee increases for the 2012 intake in order that increased expectations of students can be managed and met.
Enhancement of student learning opportunities

We would like to focus here on the enhancements provided to PGR students. LUU’s own survey in 2010 highlighted a range of experience for this section of students, in the areas of social and research spaces, social opportunities and support and conditions for teaching.

For example, there was variability around the training offered to students embarking on teaching. Almost 20% of PGRs responded to ‘Were you offered training?’ in the negative, with the same number answering that training was compulsory, and 51% of respondents responding that they were offered training.

Following a decision by the Better University forum in February 2011, LUU has developed a campaign to work for greater parity for PGRs. This has included working with the University for equity of application of the Code of Practice for PGR Students Engaged in Teaching, increased resource to support the representation of PGRs and a programme designed to increase PGR engagement with their students’ union. Initial steps in this work in the autumn term of 2011 have been successful.

Experience of First Year Students

LUU collates its own data on the experience of new students in ‘Intro Week’ which ensures continual development and improvement. Results from 2010 show that students are happy with the welcome they receive and the union is a positive contributor to their experience. This data is collected by online surveying and ensures the inclusion of part-time, mature and international students.

First impressions are generally positive, 85% of students agreed they had a fantastic welcome to Leeds. Students from different backgrounds are welcomed.

“As an international student, the adjustment is quite daunting but I was welcomed to Leeds Uni right from the start.”

The Welcome Weeks will continue to be developed in response to student need and in collaboration with the University to ensure that all students are catered for. Whether it is organising evening events around induction timetables or weekend provision for international arrivals, students will continue to receive the best welcome possible to get their student experience off to an excellent start.

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27 PGR Student Survey: PGRs who teach, Leeds University Union, June 2011
28 PGR Student Survey: PGRs who teach, Leeds University Union, June 2011
29 First Impressions overview Leeds University Union November 2010
Conclusions and Recommendations

It was acknowledged in our introductory sections that good policy and practice exists at the University of Leeds and this is of benefit to students. We have highlighted that there remain improvements to ensure consistency across the institution in a number of specific areas:

- Personal tutoring,
- Assessment and feedback,
- Access to learning resources,
- Support for postgraduate research (PGR) students.

We are confident that these areas of improvement can be achieved through our partnership working. We will continue to work with the University through the mechanisms which have been agreed to ensure the student voice is heard in the process.
Glossary of terms

Leeds for Life University facility enabling students to get the most from their time at Leeds incorporating: employability and skills development, living CV and personal tutoring model

https://leedsforlife.leeds.ac.uk

LUU Leeds University Union www.leedsuniversityunion.org.uk

Institutional Audit Form of QAA assessment used from September 2011 onwards.


OAAR Office of Academic Appeals and Regulation. Department which deals with academic appeals, academic misconduct and student discipline

Partnership The partnership agreement and practice between all members of the community on campus, articulated through the University and LUU http://partnership.leeds.ac.uk

Portal Online systems enabling students to access information and their own records http://www.leeds.ac.uk/portal-service/

QAA Quality Assurance Agency www.qaa.ac.uk

Skills@Library Academic skills support service attached to the Library http://skills.library.leeds.ac.uk/index.php

SWS Student Written Submission. The opportunity for students to formally input into an Institutional Review.

University/UoL University of Leeds www.leeds.ac.uk

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank John Puddephatt (LUU Marketing) for his support in the production of the final document. We have been pleased to work alongside University colleagues who have supported us in this process, thanks especially to Kath Hodgson (LTSO) for her assistance.
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Academic Appeals and Regulation TSEB/10-101, June 2011

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Action in response to student feedback, TSEB 10-21, December 2010

PGR Student Survey: PGRs who teach, Leeds University Union, June 2011

Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students Engaged in Teaching

First Impressions overview, Leeds University Union, November 2010
Background

1. A Group of the Learning and Teaching Board was formed in May 2010 to consider the University’s arrangements for dealing with student plagiarism. The Group’s terms of reference were:
   • to consider current practice within the University and good practice identified externally;
   • to develop an agreed process for the handling of all cases of plagiarism at all levels;
   • to develop a policy for the use of Turnitin both as a deterrent and as a learning tool;
   • to consider the changes necessary to existing policy and practice;
   • to provide guidance for staff and students to raise awareness regarding plagiarism.

2. The Group met four times between May and October and had the following membership:
   Norma Martin Clement (Chair) Pro Dean Learning and Teaching ESSL
   Martin Purvis Pro Dean Learning and Teaching Environment
   Geoff Barker-Read Academic Quality and Standards Team
   Andrew Brooks Office of Academic Appeals and Regulation
   Jane O’Neill Staff and Departmental Development Unit
   Neil Morris Faculty of Biological Sciences
   Jenny Tyrrell Leeds University Business School
   Kath Owen Leeds University Union
   Edward Spiers School of History (Graduate Board representative)
   Laura Cunliffe (Secretary) Academic Quality and Standards Team
   (Simon Baines and Adrian Slater also attended one meeting of the Group)

3. The Group considered a range of information including an audit of current practice across the University, University policy relating to plagiarism, findings of relevant Faculty projects, practice at other universities, and external publications. The internal audit of activity was carried out in June 2010 and involved a questionnaire sent out to all School Directors of Learning and Teaching. This sought information on the support available to students to develop good practice in academic writing, processes for dealing with plagiarism cases, experiences of using Turnitin for plagiarism detection and experiences of applying the penalties for plagiarism. There was a good response rate with 22 Directors of Learning and Teaching responding out of a possible 34 and with all faculties represented.

Summary of Findings

4. The Group found that many Schools embed advice regarding referencing/plagiarism education formally within modules at undergraduate level. Although this is more variable at postgraduate taught level, some examples of good practice were highlighted. Schools commented that the introduction of mechanisms to increase plagiarism awareness amongst students have impacted positively to reduce the number of plagiarism cases. 2
5. In relation to the current schedule of penalties for plagiarism some schools felt that the range of penalties applicable to postgraduate students, and to undergraduate students beyond level one, are too severe and not always proportionate to the extent of plagiarism involved. Some schools noted that this is particularly the case for international students who may be new to UK higher education and who may be penalised severely for unintentional plagiarism. The Committee on Applications has recently agreed amendments to the schedule of penalties to allow greater flexibility and the Group welcomed the revised schedule (see appendix 1). The Group also welcomed the intention to produce a commentary specifically for staff, providing additional guidance on the processes and penalties relating to plagiarism.

6. Some schools requested clearer University guidance on the use of Turnitin and electronic submission of work and others suggested a need for greater emphasis on awareness-raising of plagiarism and the promotion of good practice in academic writing rather than plagiarism detection. A need for greater consistency across the University of processes relating to plagiarism and the information provided to students was also identified by the Group.

7. A review of other universities revealed that some institutions have introduced new practices in relation to plagiarism, such as new roles for individual members of staff relating to plagiarism and academic conduct. Most notable is the University of York’s introduction of a compulsory online plagiarism tutorial, which all students are required to complete during their first semester and is a requirement for progression/award. Feedback from the University of York on the impact of the introduction of this new requirement is positive. Some universities have also developed short online video clips to aid students’ understanding of plagiarism.

**Good Practice Identified**

8. The internal audit identified examples of good practice taking place in schools/faculties in relation to plagiarism. Some of these are listed below:

- LUBS Assignment Submission and Referencing Guidelines (Little Red Book);
- the use of Turnitin as a learning tool (some schools provide students with the opportunity in their first semester to submit a practice essay to Turnitin and receive feedback from tutors on the originality report) (Geography, Psychology);
- an initial assessment of students’ understanding via a plagiarism quiz with generic feedback and a specific workshop-based support offered to students identified as ‘at risk’ (LUBS);
- a compulsory interactive workshop for students on referencing and avoiding plagiarism (Law);
- a presentation specifically aimed to support international students on academic writing (PCI);
- a requirement for postgraduate students to complete a plagiarism test in their first week, which has lowered incidences of plagiarism considerably (FBS);
- the introduction of a compulsory study skills module for all single honours students, which has reduced the number of plagiarism cases (SSP);
- an increase of study skills and plagiarism awareness through a first year module, which has resulted in a fall in the rate of plagiarism cases at level one (Healthcare);
- clear and transparent processes for dealing with suspected cases of plagiarism and the development of standard correspondence and materials (LUBS, FBS, POLIS, Law, Healthcare).

**Recommendations**

9. In emphasising the need for a holistic approach to plagiarism, the Group proposes recommendations relating to both the processes for dealing with plagiarism cases and mechanisms to
help prevent plagiarism by raising awareness amongst students and promoting good practice in academic writing. The need for greater consistency both in relation to plagiarism education and processes for dealing with plagiarism cases is considered to be an important aspect and informed the development of the recommendations.

10. The Group recommends:

1. **The introduction of a generic online plagiarism tutorial, compulsory for all students (new to the University) to complete within four weeks of initial registration.**

   In order to ensure greater consistency of the information provided to students about plagiarism the Group recommends that a generic online tutorial be developed centrally. This should be completed by all taught students (including Erasmus, JYA and direct entrants) and satisfactory completion of the tutorial recorded automatically on a central system. The requirement should only apply to students who are new to the University or have not completed the tutorial previously; therefore postgraduate taught students would be exempt from the requirement where they have already completed the tutorial as part of an undergraduate programme. The Group proposes that students should be required to complete the tutorial within four weeks of initial registration or prior to the submission of an assessed piece of work if this is required earlier.

   The Group recommends that a small team be formed (comprising a member of the group, an individual from Skills@Library and a learning technologist) to create the format and content of the tutorial. The tutorial would be designed to ensure systematic and universal student engagement with the existing material available from the Skills@Library website, within a structure derived from additional papers developed by the Group (see appendices 2 and 3). A test should be included at the end of the tutorial using the exercises and questions detailed in appendix 2; these exercises should be completed again by any student who has been found guilty of plagiarising.

   It is suggested that an ‘Academic Integrity Organisation’ be created on the VLE to consolidate the range of information currently available on various different websites across the University and to act as a gateway to access the tutorial and penalty exercises.

   The Group recommends that the tutorial include:
   - information about academic integrity;
   - general study skills and tips for academic writing;
   - information about plagiarism and ways of referencing correctly;
   - brief information about different forms of plagiarism (i.e. extending beyond written assignments and including for example plagiarism in relation to performance or visual work);
   - information about collusion, particularly in relation to group work;
   - information about plagiarism detection and the use of the Turnitin software;
   - video case studies about plagiarism;
   - a quiz at the end of the tutorial to test the students and confirm completion of the tutorial;
   - the option to include discipline-specific information by schools if required.

   The Group also recommends that a separate tutorial be developed aimed specifically at postgraduate research students and included as part of postgraduate research students’ training plans. The Group suggests that the University’s Graduate Board consider this recommendation further.

2. **The requirement for all taught programmes to explicitly include plagiarism education to supplement the generic online tutorial**
The Group recommends that all taught programmes should include specific advice regarding plagiarism and good practice in academic writing; the Group recognises that many schools are already fulfilling this requirement and expects that this recommendation will be further strengthened by the Curriculum Enhancement Project.

Schools may wish to consider using Turnitin as a learning tool during students’ first semester, for example by tutors and students discussing Turnitin originality reports based on a formative assignment. The Group also recommends that, at a minimum, schools/faculties should be checking for plagiarism using the Turnitin software for at least one assignment per student each semester for the duration of their programme. This should be considered a minimum requirement with an expectation that all schools will undertake additional plagiarism checks and move towards the implementation of electronic submission for all assignments where possible.

3. **That each school/faculty appoint an Academic Integrity Officer**

In recognising the need for consistency in schools in relation to how plagiarism cases are dealt with to ensure equity of treatment of students, the Group recommends that each school/faculty nominate an academic member of staff to act as an Academic Integrity Officer. This AIO would be responsible for:

- overseeing the investigation of suspected cases of plagiarism including involvement in any University-led investigations;
- ensuring consistent procedures and practice across the school;
- working with tutors to raise awareness of plagiarism issues;
- actively promoting the use of Turnitin within the school/faculty and developing standard practices in consultation with colleagues;
- promoting good practice in academic writing and sharing best practice with other schools;
- providing discipline-specific content for the generic online tutorial if required;
- ensuring that all students in the school/faculty complete the on-line plagiarism tutorial.

Schools/faculties would need to ensure that the role is recognised within staff workload models.

4. **Schools/faculties should engage in internal debate (led by the AIO) to ensure consistency in the way that the school applies the definition of plagiarism to ensure equal treatment of students**

During the Group’s deliberations members discussed the difficulties associated with differentiating between plagiarism and poor scholarship and achieving consistency across the University in how cases are treated. Members suggested that there is currently huge variability both within schools, and across schools, in applying the definition of plagiarism and agreed that there should be greater consistency to ensure equitable treatment of students.

5. **Greater standardization of the information provided to students suspected of plagiarism to ensure greater consistency**

The Group feels that greater consistency is needed in relation to the information provided to students suspected of plagiarism; for example emphasising to students that a second offence can lead to serious consequences, potentially losing their place at the University, and the provision of consistent advice within letters about the support services available to students. The Group welcomes the production of standard letters currently being produced by the Office of Academic Appeals and Regulation, which are to be disseminated to colleagues in schools/faculties to assist them in corresponding with students and ensuring the inclusion of 5
6. That schools consider the guidance provided to students for group work (where an individual piece of work is expected) and develop processes for dealing with suspected cases of collusion

The Group recommends that relevant schools and disciplines implement good practice in relation to group work instruction (led by the AIO) and agree standard processes for dealing with suspected cases of collusion.

7. The development of an online plagiarism test for students to complete as part of the penalty for plagiarising

The Group proposes that plagiarism exercises be available to students to complete online as part of the penalty for plagiarising. The online test should be developed centrally. The Group has refreshed the content of the current University plagiarism penalty exercises to be used for this purpose (see appendix 2), along with information and advice to be provided to students who have received a penalty for plagiarism (see appendix 3).

Schools should be aware that where a student is suspected of plagiarism, all of the student’s previous work must also be checked for plagiarism. This is not intended as a punitive measure but is necessary to assess the full extent to which a student has plagiarised in order to address the matter with the individual and provide guidance to prevent further instances of plagiarism.

8. The development of a University policy in relation to electronic submission and electronic archiving of student work as a matter of urgency

The Group recommends that a policy on electronic submission and electronic archiving of work be developed as soon as possible, taking into account the findings of the ADF-funded project involving the faculties of Arts and PVAC. The Group proposes a move towards treating electronic submission of work as the standard mode of submission across the University, although the need to ensure the development of robust, fit for purpose systems/technology to support electronic submission and archiving is emphasised. The importance of greater use of electronic submission towards improving assessment and feedback processes was highlighted.

LTB Plagiarism Group
November 2010 APPENDIX 1
NOTES ON PENALTIES
Before attempting to apply penalties it is important to read the following:
The approach to plagiarism taken by the University of Leeds is based on the following principles:
1. Plagiarism, including fraudulent or fabricated coursework or academic malpractice (hereinafter referred to as plagiarism), is an offence against the University.

2. No plagiarised work will receive a mark or credit. A submission that is plagiarised in whole or in part will count as one of the attempts permitted within the relevant Ordinance.

3. All cases in which plagiarism is suspected must be investigated further and must be pursued according to the procedures set out in “Cheating, plagiarism, fraudulent or fabricated coursework and malpractice in university examinations and assessments” published at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/AAandR/cpff.htm.

4. Work that is identified as plagiarised in whole or in part must be expunged before the mark for the assessment and for the module can be released, or credits be awarded or any award of the University be made. The plagiarism can only be expunged by the submission of a completely new piece of work and shall be on a new topic and/or employ a new title wherever practicable.

1 Where feasible, coursework, laboratory work or fieldwork that was subject to plagiarism should be repeated in the same format in which it was originally set. If this is not possible the School must seek the advice of the Office where consideration will be given to any alternative assessment (e.g. essays, formal examinations) proposed by the School on grounds that the repeat assessment in its original format is impracticable, disproportionately costly or would introduce an unreasonable delay. It will be the responsibility of the School to ensure that such alternatives are academically sound and are consistent with the learning outcomes for the module.

2 The pass mark for undergraduate modules (Level 0-3) is 40. The pass mark for postgraduate Level M modules is 50. There will be need for local interpretation in Medicine and Dentistry (non-modular environment) where the pass mark is different from the remainder of the University.

3 For the avoidance of doubt, a student cannot take a replacement module to substitute for a module in which plagiarism has been identified.

4 c.f. failing a compulsory (pfp) final examination/assessment at the final attempt.

5. A student will have a single opportunity to redo the work and the new piece of work must reach pass standard. The requirement to pass becomes an absolute condition of graduation irrespective of the status of the assessment in the module or the programme.

6. A student cannot transfer from or be admitted or re-admitted to a programme while a penalty remains undischarged.

7. Students who complete the degree programme with penalty marks in the profile will be classified as specified in the Rules for Award, with the penalty grade(s) being used in the classification calculation. Such students will not be eligible for academic discretion (Rules for Award VII.d(i)) if the penalty mark is in the year(s) which contribute to the student’s classification.

8. Students who fail to expunge plagiarism, either through non-submission or where the submission is not of pass standard, at the time specified, will have failed irrevocably and will be required to leave the University with no award.
9. Students whose resubmission is identified as plagiarised in whole or in part will first be investigated at School level in accordance with normal procedure. If plagiarism is confirmed by the School Panel the case will be referred to the Committee on Applications again in accordance with normal procedure as a second offence, noting that the student has thereby failed to discharge the earlier offence (see 5 above and 13 NB below).

Imposition of Penalties:

10. Penalties comprise two components: an academic penalty, as set out in the table below, and an exercise available at http://skills.library.leeds.ac.uk/plagiarism/aqm/youbethejudge/quiz.html, the purpose of which is to ensure that the student is aware of the nature of plagiarism, that he/she has a basic understanding of good practice in referencing the work of others and that the normal penalty for an egregious, aggravated or second offence is exclusion. Students return the completed exercise to the School within a month. A tutor in the School checks that the work has been completed appropriately. If the work is not completed satisfactorily, a tutor should follow up with the student to try to clear up their misunderstandings. The paperwork will be kept in the student’s file in the School.

5 The Committee may apply any listed penalty, but will not be constrained from making particular and specific decisions including the application of other penalties in individual cases (e.g. a Bachelors degree without Honours, a degree without Merit or Distinction, restricted to a subsidiary qualification).

6 An offence will be deemed to be second or subsequent only when the work is submitted after the first or earlier offence has been considered by the School or Committee and the penalty has been issued.

II. The application of penalties by either the School or the Committee will be made in the awareness of any mitigating circumstances that the student chooses to disclose in advance of the penalty being set. A distinction shall be made between mitigation that could allow for underperformance but that will not excuse academic transgressions, the latter being more in the range of life changing events that place the student’s ability to reason in question.

12. Penalties will be increasingly severe for students who are in second or later years of study.

13. The penalties which can be imposed at School level range from a Written Warning to a mark of zero for the whole module. [The penalties of loss of credit, temporary suspension or permanent exclusion from studies can only be applied by the Committee on Applications.]

NB. Where the plagiarism has occurred in the student’s final attempt in accordance with the normal academic regulations pertaining to the number of attempts the School must seek the advice of the Office. This is to ensure both that the student is not treated more favourably than a student who has failed honestly at the final attempt and that the regulations are not breached.

14. The effect of applying a penalty should be compared with that of an ‘honest fail’ for the same piece of work, and the consequences of plagiarism should be more severe.

15. A second offence or an egregious or aggravated offence will be treated as serious. The case will be referred to the Committee on Applications where the student is likely to be excluded permanently from the University with no award.

APPENDIX 1
Range of Penalties – School Level
After determining that a penalty can be issued at School level, the School Panel should begin with the most severe penalty that it can impose. This is zero for the module (irrespective of marks awarded for other components in the module) with the requirement to do a completely new piece of work, which must be of pass standard (40 – Undergraduate and 50 – Postgraduate) on a single occasion only. The consequences of plagiarism shall be more severe than those for an ‘honest fail’. Therefore, a penalty that caps the element of module at the pass mark, 40/50, the same as that given to a student for an ‘honest fail’, should only be applied where the offence is judged sufficiently minor and/or where there is significant mitigation to warrant such leniency. When determining the penalty the School Panel should consider the following points:

Where leniency is exercised, the student must not expect such leniency should he/she be found guilty of a further offence when the student’s place will be in question.

Intention is not part of the definition and therefore this cannot be accepted as mitigation.

Mitigation may lessen the penalty but it does not excuse the offence. In addition, it would be expected that the student would have submitted mitigation in accordance with normal requirements.

Although the aggregate module mark may be below the pass mark, subject to all other module components having been completed to at least pass standard (after any resits if applicable) and the student having demonstrated the learning outcomes for the module, the credits will be awarded.

- Level and experience of the student
- Percentage contribution of the assignment to the overall module mark and the severity of the offence
- The student’s explanation and response to the allegation
- Any mitigation
- Assessment requirements for the module (e.g. required to pass both components or compensation allowed between them)
- Comparison with a student who has failed ‘honestly’
- See Notes on Penalties (13) - where plagiarism has occurred in the student’s final attempt

Written Warning

**REQUIRED to submit a new piece of work for the Element to pass standard on a single occasion only for a capped element mark**

The non-plagiariised work will be marked with the resultant mark being aggregated with the marks for the remaining components of the module.

Normal resit opportunities will be retained **For an ELEMENT MARK of ZERO, 20, 30 or the appropriate pass mark [40/50]**

Subject to the student submitting a new piece of work for the element and the submission reaching pass standard, the capped element mark (zero, 20, 30, 40/50), as determined by the Panel, will be aggregated with the marks for the remaining components of the module.

Where all other module assessment requirements have been satisfied, the credits will be awarded.

**REQUIRED to submit a new piece of work for the Element to pass standard on a single occasion only for a capped module mark**

For a CAPPED MODULE MARK of ZERO, 20, 30 or the appropriate pass mark [40/50]

Subject to the student submitting a new piece of work for the element and the submission reaching pass standard, irrespective of the marks awarded for other components of the module the capped module mark (zero, 20, 30, 40/50), as determined by the Panel, will be recorded for the module.
Leeds University Union
Student Expectations on Academic Feedback
Report for Learning and Teaching Board, June 2010
Mike Gladstone, Education Officer, m.e.gladstone@luu.leeds.ac.uk

Introduction
The vision of the University of Leeds is for it to be ranked within the top 50 universities in the world by 2015. One of the measures of success under the 'Inspire Our Students' theme of this strategy is for the quality of assessment and feedback, as measured by the National Student Survey (NSS), to be within the sector's top quartile. In addition to this aim, the University has declared that one of its learning and teaching strategic priorities, endorsed by the Learning and Teaching Board, is to refine assessment practice and improve academic feedback, and it has funded two major projects: the MARK project ('Making Assessment Relationships Known'), led by Dr Mitch Waterman and involving schools across the institution; and a joint PVAC/Arts project on electronic submission and return of assessed work.

The feedback scores in the NSS nevertheless remain disappointingly below the sector average with high satisfaction levels in some areas let down by woefully inadequate scores in others. With only incremental rises in recent years, step change is needed if we are to come near to meeting the strategy target and, more importantly, provide the high-quality and satisfactory feedback which students need to develop and improve.

This paper attempts to go some way to addressing this issue. It intends to build on the strong foundations laid by the Learning and Teaching Partnership Agreement which outlines responsibilities between the University, Schools, and Students. LUU values the Partnership Agreement but believes there to be room for improvement in some areas, particularly given the need to radically increase feedback satisfaction rates. The strategy–map definitions recognise the ‘value of feedback on assessed work’; LUU also recognises the benefit of an institution where students are encouraged to continually improve their performance and believe this to be of value to the academic community as a whole as well as to individual students. LUU further recognises that useful feedback is a two-way process in which students must play their part and engage with learning and teaching provision. We expect that students will take up opportunities to collect, reflect and act on feedback, including the recognition that feedback on one module can often be applicable to others.

The focus for this paper is a set of principles which are deemed acceptable and applicable across the University.

Current Guidelines
The current Code of Practice on Assessment for Students on Taught Programmes includes the following points:
9) Schools will clearly notify students of the deadlines for return of assessed work and feedback.
10) Schools will provide opportunities, within an appropriate timescale, for written and/or oral feedback on all assessed course work.
11) Schools will provide the opportunity for students to receive oral feedback, online feedback, model answers or some other appropriate mechanism on performance in examination.

Student Expectations
The following principles apply to feedback students receive on major pieces of assessed work.
A) Efficacy of feedback
Feedback must be personal to a student and their work, be constructive and related to the assessment criteria, and include guidance on how to improve for future assignments as well as critiquing the current work.

B) Type of feedback
Feedback must be in a retainable form, e.g. written. Where written, it must be clear and legible, and word-processed where possible. Assignment scripts must be returned with annotated comments and/or with a supplementary comment sheet that refers to the script where
appropriate. Feedback should be in a form appropriate to the type of assessment and should also include information on common themes related to the performance of an assessment group as a whole.

C) Timings of feedback
Students must be told how much time will be required before receiving feedback, and the feedback must comply with a deadline which is published and adhered to. Subject to the conditions outlined in Section E below feedback must be provided before the next assessment for the module is due and normally no later than three working weeks after submission of the piece of work. Exceptions should be approved by the Pro Dean for Learning and Teaching when, due to the type of assessment; this would be impractical or pedagogically undesirable.

Students would prefer feedback sooner but recognise that it takes time to produce feedback of a high standard.

D) Meetings and opportunities for verbal feedback
Students should expect to be offered timely opportunities for meetings with module tutors, personal tutor, or another relevant academic to discuss feedback in greater detail. These guidelines do not preclude verbal feedback to individuals and groups of students. Where this is provided it should be clearly designated as an opportunity for feedback.

E) Flexibility for different types of assessment
These guidelines recognise that due to assessment design and quantity, or where a number of assessments occur closely together, there may not always be feasible opportunity to provide feedback before the next examination/submission. Therefore, there must be clear and ongoing communication to students about what feedback can be expected and when. Feedback must be provided on exams as well as assessed coursework, with opportunities, where needed, to discuss examination performance with tutors, with reference to marked scripts. Where it is essential that a School add their own nuance to these principles of feedback, this can be included in the School Code of Practice on Assessment. However, this provision is not intended as an alternative to the core expectations.

F) Role of students
Whilst already outlined in the main Partnership Agreement, it is worth reiterating that students are expected to make appropriate use of the range of opportunities for support and guidance offered to them. They must take up the opportunities available for diagnostic and formative assessment and play an active role in obtaining, reflecting and acting upon the feedback provided on assessed work.

Recommendations
There is an urgent need to improve feedback scores and LUU believes that the principles above, if adopted in full, will go some way to achieving progress. LUU recommends that this paper be adopted in the spirit it is intended; as a tool to improve current agreements, clarify the expectations of students and staff, and encourage and enable students to improve and develop. We therefore request that these principles be adopted as University policy without further delay and the Code of Practice on Assessment be amended accordingly.

Mike Gladstone
Education Officer
June 2010
Actions in response to student feedback

Members are invited to comment on the proposed actions to be taken in response to student feedback and to submit suggestions for taking forward the medium term activity.

It is important that we continue to review our arrangements for responding to student feedback on all aspects of their experience. We need to ensure that our processes are nimble enough to deal with issues as they arise and to ensure that any action planning is a responsive and agile activity which can respond to rapidly changing circumstances. The processes need to make clear the importance of communication and engagement with students and to ensure energies are focused on the actual action being taken rather than simply the development of the plan.

The following proposals should be seen against a background of work which is already going on in most schools, faculties and services.

Short term actions

i. Schools should continue the discussions with students about the feedback on the programme survey and their proposed actions.

ii. The action plans, for submission to TSEB and uploading onto the website, should be streamlined to no more than 2 sides of A4. The plans should make clear the key issues identified by students and the priority actions being taken. Some Schools may wish to continue to develop their more detailed action plans for local use.

iii. Opportunities to communicate with students on the positive activity taking place in schools should be taken.

Medium term actions

A small group has been established to bring forward more detailed medium term proposals. The group will be chaired by the PVC Student Education and include two Pro Deans Learning and Teaching (D Platten, K Tapley) and the Student Education Officer (E Jebreel). The group will consider the following areas

a. the format and mechanisms used to collect module feedback. Views are sought on:
   - the core questions used in all module surveys;
   - the possibility of providing a more centralised service for the collation of module feedback;
   - accountability for following up on actions.

b. the school action planning process. Views are sought on how greater emphasis might be placed on the diagnostic element and on ensuring priority actions are clear.
c. developing new, flexible feedback methods. Views are sought on, for example, exploring the possibility of light touch sampling of student views on particular issues.

d. refreshing the feedback website for students;

e. developing minimum expected standards for learning and teaching;

f. improving communication about learning and teaching.

Consideration will also be given to the quality assurance processes relating to reviews with a view to bringing proposals to the next TSEB. In reviewing the current processes regard will be given as to how they might best combine minimum bureaucracy, compliance with QAA requirements and a focus on Leeds strategic priorities and therefore be made more fit for purpose, as well as considering how variability between schools might be addressed.
Introduction
In February 2011, policy was passed through LUU’s democratic system, mandating a survey to be conducted regarding the pay of Postgraduate Research students who teach. Questions that were mandated were around pay for demonstrating, ‘off the books’ work, preparation and marking. Building on this mandate we conducted a wider survey, taking into account other areas of the relevant Code of Practice (CoP) for Postgraduate Students Engaged in Teaching.

The importance of PGR students being able to engage in teaching for their career development is evident with 55% answering ‘yes’ to ‘Do you feel you will be disadvantaged in getting a job in future if you do not take on teaching work now?’ with open comments further highlighting the importance to their academic career, such as ‘I want to work in academia as a lecturer and as such need experience before I can undertake this path’.

Respondents
We had 192 PGRs fill out the survey out of a total student body of 2,186 (registered at 1st December 2010), which is a response rate of just under 10%.

Response rate broken down by faculty, showing the variation in distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Number of students who completed the survey</th>
<th>Number of students in the Faculty</th>
<th>Response rate by Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESSL</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAPS</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Health</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVAC</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Breakdown of respondents by year of PhD:

What year of your PhD are you in?

1: 54  2: 75  3: 41  4: 19  5: 1  6: 1  7+: 1
Within this section we asked if PGRs had undertaken teaching work, to which level, whether PhD funding is conditional on undertaking teaching work and how much contact time PGRs have contact with students through teaching.

The vast majority, 87% of PGRs responded to the question ‘Have you ever undertaken demonstrating, marking or teaching assistant/tutorial/seminar work?’ in the affirmative. The majority, 65%, have taught first year undergraduate material, whilst many have also taught up to Masters level material. The full break down, by faculty, is as follows:

The amount of contact time PGR students have with taught students through TAing and/or demonstrating ranges from 1 – 14 hours per week, with the majority staying within 1 – 6 hours a week. The full break down, by faculty, is as follows:
One of the key areas within the CoP (Section 9) and an area of concern for students is the training they receive to teach. Unfortunately, almost 20% of PGRs responded to ‘Were you offered training?’ in the negative, with the same number answering that training was compulsory, and 51% of respondents responding that they were offered training. Unfortunately, only 60% of students, when answering ‘Do you feel your training was appropriate?’ responded that it was, with 28% feeling that it was not. Comments included ‘I wanted the option to do more’ ‘We weren’t offered training, and I don’t think this is appropriate. I think we should be provided with some basic training’ and ‘Training course was a little generic and very short’.

Looking at the responses for ‘What were you paid for your training?’, it is extremely unfortunate that 60% of PGRs who teach answered that they received no pay for training, whilst 20% received a half rate of pay (as prescribed by the CoP), with 8% of students receiving the full rate of pay for their training. These discrepancies for an expectation clearly outlined in the CoP are of concern to LUU.

**Preparation Time**

When asked if they receive pay for preparing for their teaching responsibilities, 19% answered that they received full rate of pay, 2% half rate of pay, and the majority at 79% receiving no pay. Taking into account the CoP, the wide variations are worrying. Open comments ranged from ‘TAs who complain that they should have their preparation time paid have not been confirmed for next year. So some of us don’t mention this issue, as they don’t wanna [sic] lose their jobs’ ‘the hourly rate of £14.10 that we are paid for each hour of contact time is supposed to include one hour of preparation. i.e. we are paid £7.05 for an hour for preparation alongside £7.05 for an hour of teaching’ and ‘Depends on the module. Most ***** ones we get no pay for preparation time, although I’m doing one at the moment where we do’. Taking into account the variation within the open comments, it is clear that there is little common practice on the ground.

When asked ‘How much preparation time are you expected by staff to allocate per hour of contact time?’, 24% responded that they required no time, 27% required up to half an hour and 26% between half an hour to an hour.

![How much preparation time is expected by staff vs actual preparation time taken by PGR students.](chart.png)

The above chart is further corroborated by the next question of the survey which asks ‘Do
you regularly find that you require more time to prepare than is formally allocated?” in which 56% of respondents answered that they do regularly require more time to prepare than is formally allocated.

**Marking**

Within the CoP (Section 11) there are clear guidelines that schools should be following in relation to PRG students and the work that they are allowed to mark. Taking this into account we asked ‘Are there restrictions to what work you are allowed to mark?’ The majority of students, 36%, responded that they were unsure as to whether or not restrictions are in place. 34% responded that they are aware of restrictions, whilst 21% said they were unaware if there are. This confusion is further highlighted in the open comments, such as ‘Only meant to mark 1st year work, but these restrictions are not strictly followed. And module coordinators expect marking of 3rd year UG and Masters Course work’ ‘I think there officially are (we are only allowed to mark first years' work), but we are still requested to do other marking as well’ and ‘I assume I wouldn’t be asked to mark things I wasn’t eligible to mark’.

The next questions we asked focused on pay for marking. The majority answered ‘Do you get paid for marking?’ with 54% responding yes, and the minority, at 35% no. On further probing, it was made clear that there is not one standard across the board for level of pay for marking. 86% of the respondents who responded that they receive pay for marking receive full pay whilst the rest receive half pay. However, when looking at the open comments it is evident that there is vast variation in practice for pay. Comments include ‘Do not know’ ‘£3/paper’ ‘£6/script’ ‘full pay but limited to 10 minutes per script marked’ ‘£5 per essay/exam paper’ ‘£8/h’ ‘£10.53 per hour’ and ‘£5 per 3,000 word essay. Bearing in mind that it takes a good 40-60 minutes or more to read the essay, comment on it and do the paperwork around it, BEFORE we get onto the face-to-face feedback which doesn’t fit into the single paid office hour per week (if I want to see all my students), it isn’t much really.’

The affect on the taught student experience related to this is of concern to LUU.

**Support**

To ensure the best possible experience for both Postgraduate Research students who are teaching, and a high standard of teaching received by their students, it is important for PGRs engaged in teaching to be supported through their teaching responsibilities and that there is regular review (Sections 9, 10, 13 and 14 of the CoP).

When asked, ‘Do you feel you are given adequate support in your teaching responsibilities?’ 60% of students responded in the positive, whilst 31% responded that they did not. However, when delving further, it is evident that the support is not fully in place across the whole institution. 58% of respondents answered ‘no’ to the question ‘Is there a clear evaluation/review process of your teaching?’ whilst 32% said that there was.

When looking at PGR involvement in module review, it is evident that there is, yet again, wide variation in practice. When asked ‘Are you involved in the review of the modules you teach on?’ 64% of PGRs said they did not, whilst 14% did on some, but not all, of the modules they teach on, with only 10% responding in the affirmative.

**Terms and Conditions of Work**

A direct request of the policy passed by our democratic process was to gather information about PGR students who are undertaking work outside of their agreed
contract. One of the many concerns is that this can push students above the accepted 250 hour limit of teaching related activity (Section 5 of the CoP).

When asked ‘Have you ever performed teaching work “off the books” i.e. outside of your agreed contract?’ 70% of students responded that they had. The number of hours of work performed outside of their contract is displayed below:

The majority of the work done outside of contract was not paid with, 77% responding that this was the case.

**Personal Impact**

One of the key areas of the research was into the impact teaching has on PGR students, especially as the Code of Practice seeks to minimise any negative impact.

One issue highlighted by PGR students is the uncertainty around their commitments. This is further exacerbated by many of them not having a defined contract. When asked ‘Do you have a contract for your teaching work?’ 55% of respondents replied ‘no’, 33% ‘yes’ and 3% ‘part but not all of my teaching work’.

As discussed above, 55% of PGRs who teach do so to advance their academic career. However, when asked ‘How financially reliant are you on teaching work?’ only 28% responded that they are ‘not at all reliant’. The full breakdown of results are below:
When asked ‘Has demonstrating/TAing had any negative impacts on either your PhD or your personal life?’ 58% responded that it has not, whilst a sizeable percentage at 35% said that it had. A selection of the open comments are ‘Has improved my PhD I think by broadening my areas of expertise. Has also been detrimental at times where pressures to teach take priority and take resources away from working.’ ‘Preparation can be time consuming and you are not financially compensated’ ‘Yes but not profoundly. I sometimes have had to miss PhD deadlines to fulfil TA deadlines (such as marking), but because PhD deadlines are more flexible there’s less of a hit-back because of it.’ ‘Has delayed my PhD hand-in’ and ‘Difficulty allocating sufficient time to PhD’. LUU is concerned that some students are being allowed to sacrifice their own academic progress for what is supposed to be additional rather than core work.

**Code of Practice**
The final question of the survey was ‘Are you aware of the University of Leeds Code of Practice for Postgraduate students engaged in teaching?’ Just over half of the respondents, 53% responded that they did not, whereas 47% are aware of its existence.

**Conclusion**
The variance of practice demonstrated by these results indicates there is much work to do in delivering an equitable system for PGRs at Leeds. Whilst some differences could be due to discipline requirements, issues around contracts, pay and training should be standardised across the institution.

LUU, through the Education Officer and PGR students, will be working with the relevant bodies and VCEG members to ensure that the issues that have arisen from the research are addressed, and that ultimately Postgraduate Research students who teach at the University of Leeds have the support they require.
Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students Engaged in Teaching

With effect from 2009/10

1. **Background**

This Code of Practice applies to Postgraduate Research Students who are engaged in teaching at the University and paid on an hourly rate.

The University recognises that postgraduates are a valuable asset to University teaching, to which they can bring their specialist knowledge, research training and recent experience of undergraduate learning. Research Councils and the National Postgraduate Committee recommend teaching experience for postgraduates provided that it is subject to reasonable limits on workload. For the students themselves teaching can provide valuable experience and career development in addition to financial benefits.

It must be emphasised, however, that the scope for such teaching provision varies between different schools/faculties and students should not assume teaching opportunities will always be available. Decisions on the allocation of available teaching duties will be made based on the qualifications, experience, aptitude and skills of each individual and will not be influenced by gender, disability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion or belief (or non-belief) or age.

2. **Status**

Registered full-time postgraduate research students may be paid at hourly rates for teaching responsibilities subject to the limits set out below, but are not employees of the University. Part-time postgraduate research degree candidates, who are not employees of the University, may also be paid at an hourly rate for teaching responsibilities. Part-time students are not subject to restrictions on the number of hours of paid activity undertaken.

The University recognises its responsibility for the welfare and personal development of postgraduate research students engaged in teaching, and in order fully to meet their needs in terms of general conditions, training and reward systems the following framework has been introduced to which schools/faculties are required to adhere.

Duties undertaken by postgraduate research students engaged in teaching at the University include:

- Teaching Assistance
- Demonstrating
- Tutorials/Seminars
3. **Responsibilities**

Students engaged in teaching are required to operate in accordance with relevant University policies and procedures. Particular attention is drawn to the University’s Equality and Diversity Policy (http://www.equality.leeds.ac.uk/ed/policy/equality-and-diversity-policy.doc) and Student Mental Health Policy (http://www.equality.leeds.ac.uk/ed/policy/student-mental-health-policy.doc) and the University’s Health and Safety Policy http://www.leeds.ac.uk/safety/
4. Payment

The University has standard hourly rates of pay for postgraduate research students engaged in teaching. Payments will normally be made on a monthly basis. The payment rates are displayed on the HR website at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/hr/progression/index.htm.

The rates are payable for each contact hour and take account of any necessary time for preparation and assessment. Schools/Faculties are required to pay postgraduate research students, who are participating in training that is identified by the Faculty/School as necessary, at half the hourly rate for demonstrating and tutorial assistance.

Generic job descriptions and person specifications are available from Human Resources.

5. Hours of work

All full-time postgraduate students at the University are subject to a limit of 250 hours of paid activities per session associated with teaching or the equivalent in professional practice. A session is a period of 12 months from 01 September – 31 August. The limit of 250 hours includes preparation, marking, and other paid activity directly related to their training or related professional activity. It is felt that further commitments would interfere with an individual’s studies. The University, within the 250 hours of paid activity per session, will include the other paid duties undertaken by postgraduate research students described in section 2 above.

(i) It is recognised that some full-time students may need to work in order to survive financially and a more flexible approach may be considered in these cases.

(ii) Full-time students who wish to undertake paid activities beyond 250 hours should discuss with their supervisor whether any teaching or other work undertaken will adversely affect the time available for the conduct of the research. The Dean of the Faculty/Head of School is responsible for considering and granting approval for such cases. He or she must also ensure that the decision is recorded and that the situation is closely monitored to ensure that there is no adverse academic impact on the progress of the student’s research degree studies.

Students should note, however, that some sponsoring bodies (including Research Councils, Charities and other Sponsors) may impose a lower limit for paid activities per session. All students funded by such bodies are required to observe the limits imposed.

Part-time students are not subject to restrictions imposed by the University on the number of hours of paid work undertaken but the Dean of the Faculty/Head of School has responsibility for ensuring guidance is given on the amount of time that should be devoted to their research degree studies.
6. Notification of Terms of Engagement and Payment Arrangements

6.1 All postgraduates involved in demonstrating and tutorial assistance will be asked by the Faculty/School in which they will provide these duties to complete a document (currently called the ‘Registration form and statement of the terms under which Demonstrating and Tutorial Assistance is to be provided’). Students may register to undertake demonstrating and tutorial assistance for an initial period of three years. The form asks for personal details, which form the basis of their record on the payroll. The Dean of the Faculty/Head of School completes details of the type and level of teaching or demonstrating, the rate of pay and the maximum numbers of hours that the student has been allocated during the academic year. The form is returned to the student as a record for him/her to keep. Payment will be made after the Faculty/School in which the teaching is carried out provides the Payroll Office with details of the exact number of hours to be paid. Payments will be made on a monthly basis.

6.2 Postgraduate students providing teaching assistance should complete the ‘Registration form and statement of the terms of reference under which teaching assistance is provided’. Students may only register for teaching assistance for the periods in which such duties have been allocated by the relevant Faculty/School.

6.3 The Registration Forms set out the terms and conditions under which the postgraduate research student will provide teaching.

7. International (Non-EEA) Students

Nationals of countries outside the European Economic Area who are studying at UK institutions with student visas are usually permitted to work up to twenty hours per week during term-time (and more during vacations or work placements that are part of their studies). The policy of the Graduate Board, however, is that there is a limit of 250 hours of paid University-based activities per session for full-time research students to allow individuals to concentrate on their studies. The exception is the overtime period, when it may be permissible, in special cases, for international students to work up to a maximum of twenty hours per week.

8. Selection for and Allocation of Teaching

Teaching is to be undertaken by postgraduates on a voluntary basis only and students should not be made to feel pressurised into taking on unwelcome teaching commitments. It must be stressed, however, that the scope for such opportunities varies between different schools/faculties and students should not assume teaching opportunities will always be available.

All eligible postgraduate research students will be given the opportunity to express an interest in teaching. The Dean of the Faculty/Head of School must ensure that opportunities are distributed fairly and with due regard to the qualifications, experience,
aptitude and skills of each individual. The overriding factor however is to ensure the quality of the teaching made available to the receiving students.

The student’s supervisor will be given the opportunity to comment on the appropriate stage for a candidate to undertake teaching duties and on the potential impact on the progress of their research degree studies. However, responsibility for the decision on allocating teaching duties rests with the Dean of the Faculty/Head of School.

The process adopted by the Faculty/School should be transparent and ensure equality of access and opportunity. Reasonable adjustments should be made for disabled students.

Each Faculty/School should have a member of staff with responsibility for the coordination and monitoring of the quality of the teaching undertaken by postgraduate research students. In particular, care will be taken to bring to the attention of the research student undertaking such teaching, any reasonable adjustment identified as part of an assessment of need for disabled students.

9. Training

The University requires that all postgraduates with teaching responsibilities receive training and guidance. It is the responsibility of the relevant schools/faculties to ensure that training is provided. Some schools/faculties provide appropriate training and the Staff and Departmental Development Unit (SDDU) also runs a central programme of workshops for postgraduates who teach. Participation in SDDU training for teaching is strongly recommended for postgraduates with limited teaching experience. Equally significant is the training and on-going guidance received in the Faculty/School.

Postgraduates must:

- receive an induction into teaching in their Faculty/School;
- receive training in Health and Safety procedures;
- be fully informed of all risks and controls required as an outcome of any risk assessments;
- receive training in the use of any special equipment required for demonstrating or other techniques specific to the Faculty/School;
- receive all information for the module(s) on which they are teaching – module materials, handouts, etc.
- be assigned a mentor with whom they should meet regularly to discuss their specific teaching duties and responsibilities, the modules within which their teaching takes place, their progress and any problems and marking conventions within the Faculty/School;
- be encouraged to meet together in the Faculty/School to share ideas, resources and concerns. Appropriate issues arising should be considered by the Faculty/School learning and teaching committee;
- be kept informed about relevant administrative procedures, e.g. plagiarism and cheating, late or non-submission of work, attendance at classes;
be advised of any reasonable adjustments identified as part of an assessment of need for a disabled student that they will be engaged in teaching;
receive constructive feedback on their performance from the module manager or another member of the academic staff;
receive appropriate assessment training where postgraduate research students are involved in assessment.

In addition any teaching undertaken by postgraduates should be included in module/programme review.

10. Module Design

Module design should remain the responsibility of academic staff. It is not expected that postgraduates paid on an hourly basis will be involved in module design. However, postgraduates who teach should be involved in programme and module review by being invited to report back on the structure, level and content of modules on which they teach.

11. Marking

Schools/Faculties are required to give careful consideration as to whether or not postgraduates should be involved in marking and assessment. Adequate guidance, including clear criteria and marking schemes where appropriate, should be made available to the postgraduate, and their marking must be comprehensively monitored and moderated.

Assessment design must remain the responsibility of the Module Manager. Postgraduate Demonstrators and Tutorial/Teaching Assistants may be involved in assisting academic staff in the design of assessments; such duties should be carried out under close supervision and guidance from the member of staff involved.
12. **Accommodation and Resources**

It is expected that adequate accommodation, equipment and facilities such as photocopiers will be made available to postgraduates. Many postgraduates are allocated desks in shared offices, and where postgraduates are required to carry out individual tuition suitable accommodation should be made available for this purpose.

13. **Faculty/School Support**

Schools/Faculties are required to organise support for postgraduates with teaching responsibilities by the following means:

- the nomination of a member of staff who will co-ordinate postgraduate teaching within the Faculty/School
- assignment of a mentor to each postgraduate involved in teaching, demonstrating and tutorial work and assessment
- peer support mechanisms such as regular meetings of postgraduates to pool ideas, discuss teaching methods, problems and solutions. (A member of staff could be present at such meetings to offer advice and facilitate feedback.)

14. **Procedures for Evaluation and Review**

There should be clear and regular procedures within schools/faculties for the evaluation and review of the performance and role of postgraduate research students who teach.

The University will only continue to employ postgraduate students when their performance is judged to be satisfactory.

The University of Leeds also has a Code of Practice for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants (Part-time Students who are also Part-time Junior Members of Teaching Staff). This Code of Practice is available at [www.hr.leeds.ac.uk/policies/UploadedFiles/Teaching%20Assistants%20-%20Teaching%20Assistance.doc](http://www.hr.leeds.ac.uk/policies/UploadedFiles/Teaching%20Assistants%20-%20Teaching%20Assistance.doc)

JYF/ST/rscommo/sarah/gradboard/sess06/review of cop for students engaged in teaching/final copy of code EXT 35778

25/06/08
In exceptional circumstances, approved by the relevant Faculty Pro-Dean for Learning and Teaching, students studying for taught Masters’ degrees (with appropriate relevant experience) may be recommended to provide teaching. For those taught postgraduate students engaged in teaching the principles and arrangements set out in this Code will apply.

Other duties that may be undertaken by postgraduate research students include:

- Oversight of the computer facilities available at the University
- Supervision of laboratory facilities (out of hours)
- Bookshelving in the University library
- Invigilation and other related duties during examinations
- Other duties may be added from time to time.

or individual to whom responsibility has been delegated

Details of those countries within the European Economic Area can be found at http://www.ukcis.org.uk/student/eea.php

The Equality Service provides guidance and advice to staff and students (www.equality.leeds.ac.uk)

The feedback provided should be recorded.

November 2010

Leeds University Union

First Impressions overview

1,226 first year students completed the online survey in October 2010, which is equivalent to 9% of the first year population; this includes undergraduate, postgraduates, international and part-time students.

About the Union

- Overall, 94% rated the Union excellent/good and 62% said the Union played a part in their decision to study at the University of Leeds.
- 85% of first year students said they had a fantastic welcome to Leeds and 89% said they enjoy being in the Union building.
- The six most important things the Union can do for students to make sure they love their time at Leeds are:
  - To be there, provide support and be helpful
  - To provide a variety of events – daytime and in the evening
  - To continue with what they are doing
  - To communicate more and keep students informed of what’s happening
  - To be cheaper
  - To represent them on issues and be the voice for students

Students are satisfied with the quality of products, helpful and friendliness of staff, and product variety, they are least satisfied with the price of products and to some extent the length of time to get served. 93% said the Union was easily accessible.

58% of students have not seen or met the Student Executive Officers, which is a 2% decrease compared to last years’ figure.

Communication
65% of students felt sufficiently informed by the Union.
LUU has 5,927 Facebook fans and 712 followers on Twitter, to date. Facebook is the preferred social media amongst Undergraduate students and Twitter is preferred by Postgraduate and international students. 66% of first year students like LUU communicating with them via Facebook.
84% have visited the Unions’ website and 96% have the found the website useful.
84% picked up or received a copy of the Gist and 91% rated it excellent/good.

Student Comments
Students were most looking forward to making friends and joining a club or society. They were least looking forward to making friends and not knowing what to expect.

“I did feel a bit odd – being 26 around a load of fresh faced 18 year olds – it was all a bit intimidating. I avoided a lot of the socials for that reason. I’ve been and explored the Union since and it’s very impressive.”

“I am studying medicine, and i found it very difficult to get along to the freshers fair as it finished before my day of lectures finished. I would have liked to have had one day to properly look.”

November 2010

“As an international student, the adjustment is quite daunting but I was welcomed to Leeds Uni right from the start. The efforts of LUU and everyone associated with the freshers’ week events certainly helped me adjust and helped me feel more at home here in Leeds.”

“It was great, amazing work by the union, everyone was so friendly!”

“Brilliant! I had opportunity to speak to some of the union guys who were really friendly and welcoming! Thank you!”

Recommendations
Based on the results of this survey, reoccurring themes from past first impression survey results and feedback from staff; the following recommendations have been made:

Activities / Events
It is recommended the Union offers more Give it a Go activities during freshers in the daytime and in the evening. Some ideas include: more trips, board-game nights, film nights, general meet and greet, putting a roller rink/ silent disco in the precinct, bouncy castle, and ball pond.
The Give it a Go schedule should be put together at the same time as the Freshers Gist to ensure it is sent to all students with the university’s freshers’ mailing and is communicated to LUU’s hard to reach groups (postgraduates, mature and part-time students) before and during Freshers week.
It is also recommended to develop and raise the awareness of the Global café. This event will appeal to those who are looking for a non-alcoholic quieter event and give them the opportunity meet new people and will also give international students the opportunity to meet and make friends with home students. Those students who have a full time induction during freshers miss out on all the activity and fairs. It is therefore recommended to take the fair to the Worsley building, or communicate the international fair the Friday before or keep the fairs open longer during Freshers. This needs to be decided during the planning stages of freshers.

Operational and planning
It is recommended to start the planning of Freshers earlier, with most plans in place especially student activities before the end of term 3.
It is recommended to increase the use of the outside space with promotional and activity stalls and avoid cramming stalls into the Riley Smith Hall. This will also make the fairs more accessible and possibly increase the number of students attending.
It is recommended to have red t-shirt staff present during the evenings of freshers and a week after freshers’.

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