University of CUMBRIA

STUDENT VOICE POLICY

(Taught Degree Programmes)

Learning and Teaching Enhancement

POLICY SCHEDULE	
Policy title	Student Voice Policy
Policy owner	Dean for Student Success
Policy lead contact	Signy Henderson
Approving body	Academic Board (recommendation from SSQAC)
Date of implementation	September 2017
Version no.	7
Related Guidelines, Procedures, Codes of Practice etc.	Academic Strategy Learning, Teaching & Assessment Plan Placement Learning Policy Student Academic Representatives Guide
Next Planned Review Date (Biennial)	Spring 2027

1.   Introduction

1.1 Students' evaluation of their academic experience helps us better understand student needs and expectations and it informs ongoing module and programme developments and enhancements. The student voice is also vital in shaping our non-academic provision of services and facilities. The principles of receiving and responding to feedback from students apply equally to all areas of the student experience. The Student Voice is an integral component of our distinctive approach to engagement, belonging through partnership, as articulated within the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Plan.

1.2 Feedback is gained from students in a range of ways, including Staff/Student Forums, informal conversation between students and staff members, and internal and external surveys. The formal processes involved are described in this policy.

2. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to set out the University's requirements in relation to formal student evaluative feedback and associated procedures and processes for its administration, including collaboration with the University of Cumbria Students' Union (UCSU).

3. Scope

This Policy relates to taught, credit-bearing programmes and modules. Research programmes are evaluated and reported through the Graduate School. Its principles apply to all the student-facing services and facilities of the University.

4. The Policy Principles

Module Evaluation

4.1 It is the responsibility of the Module Leader to promote the University Module Evaluation Survey each semester, monitor live response rates and complete the associated Closing the Loop report to provide timely feedback to students. Every module, or instance of a module where it runs more than once in a year, must utilise the standardised survey through EvaSys, unless a valid case for exception and alternative arrangements are approved by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning & Teaching). Each year, these evaluations will run for the in November, April/May and once in the summer period, and utilise a standard question set. Guidance, support and training in the operation of the Module Evaluation Survey and associated

Closing the Loop reporting will be provided by Learning and Teaching Enhancement (LTE).

No other survey or formal mid-module evaluation should be undertaken unless it is a non-negotiable PSRB requirement, but module tutors should ensure that students are invited and given the opportunity to feed back informally on the module as it progresses.

4.2   Module Leaders are encouraged to involve their student representative(s) in the discussion of the outcomes of both formal and informal module feedback and any action planning.

Teaching Session / Learning Activity Evaluation

4.3   Tutors are encouraged to seek feedback from students/learners at the end of each teaching session to enable reflection on the session.

Programme Evaluation

4.4   It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to ensure that the programme is evaluated by students at levels 3, 4, 5 and 7. Programme feedback forms a part of the Annual Monitoring Report for the programme. This will be supported through use of the EvaSys platform from April 2025; timing of the survey will be designed to fall in the final fortnight of scheduled teaching for the cohort, where possible. Alternative timings will be considered for Apprenticeship programmes, recognising the time period between the last formal teaching period and the End Point Assessment activity.

Staff/Student Forums

4.5   Feedback on the programme is gathered through Staff/Student Forum (SSF) meetings held between staff and student representatives, twice a year. The SSFs may meet in person on campus or by a virtual event, using Teams or similar. The first SSF of the year must be timed so that actions can be taken before the end of the academic year, with a report on progress to the second SSF of the year.

Student Academic Representatives

4.6   All student cohorts elect a Student Academic Representative to be the formal student voice for their cohort.

4.7 Student Academic Representatives form a key part of the University of Cumbria Student Voice and are managed collaboratively by the University and UCSU.

4.8 It is the responsibility of the University to provide UCSU with information about student groups on each programme, campus and mode of study to inform the recruitment of representatives. This will normally be achieved through data extracts provided twice a year: in late September and in mid-December.

4.9 UCSU is responsible for overseeing the election of Student Academic Representatives, maintaining the database of current representatives, their contact details and training they have completed. UCSU is also responsible for organising the training of representatives as outlined in the next paragraph.

4.10 Training of new representatives is overseen by UCSU, with input to the content of the training and where possible attendance at the training events from the University. The Dean for Student Success (or in their absence, the Deputy Academic Registrar) is responsible for coordinating the University's review of and contribution to training materials, and the participation of University staff in the training events.

4.11 The purpose of the Student Academic Representative system is to ensure constructive feedback between students and their programme team. This enables a structured dialogue which drives the continuous improvement of delivery with the aim of enhancing students' academic experience and satisfaction.

Placement / Work-based Learning / Work Experience

4.12 Programme Leaders must ensure that there are opportunities for students to offer feedback on placement activity (or work-based learning or work experience) and that resulting actions and outcomes are included in the Programme Annual Monitoring Report.

Focus Groups

4.13 Programmes may wish to conduct focus group activity to gain additional and specific information to further explore particular areas. Students would be involved in these activities on a voluntary basis and individuals should be reassured that they would not be identified through any subsequent reporting of feedback findings. To preserve students' confidentiality, the Dean for Student Success will arrange support for running focus groups.

Other Evaluation

4.14 The University may make use of 'Pulse Surveys' throughout the year to explore particular issues at particular times. Pulse Surveys may extend to all students or certain categories of students.

4.15 Services which interact directly or indirectly with students are encouraged to make opportunities for students to provide feedback, and to have a response to their comments and suggestions. Formal surveys should be used very sparingly, to avoid creating "survey fatigue" in the student body and in so doing, undermining our ability to deploy surveys strategically when needed. Other ways of eliciting feedback include simple ratings (thumbs up, thumbs down for example on the exit from a facility), comment and suggestion boxes, or staff engaging directly with students using the service or facility. UCSU offers invaluable insight into students' non-academic experience and may be a useful source of information and advice when planning to seek feedback.

4.16 Throughout the academic year, the University will facilitate 'town hall' style events to provide opportunities for students to provide feedback directly to senior managers from across the organisation.

Principles of Conducting Evaluations

5.1 Confidentiality

All those involved in the collection of student evaluative feedback and its analysis (whether formal or informal), should make every effort to, as far as possible, assure students are not identified unless for a specific reason, whatever method is adopted. Students should be encouraged not to identify themselves or others in open comments they may make, in order to maintain anonymity. It must be made clear to students whether their responses are anonymous (cannot be ascribed to them once submitted), confidential (so that only those processing the responses know their identities) or non-confidential.

5.2 Preparation of Students

Students should be told the purpose of gathering their views and how the outcomes of any evaluation, survey or focus group will be fed back to them.

5.3 Encouraging Engagement

Staff are encouraged to make full use of the range of tools and technologies to engage students in feedback on their learning.

5.4 Reporting

Actionable insights provided through Student Voice mechanisms will drive actions at module, programme, Institute/Service and University levels through ongoing reporting to Quality Enhancement Committees, Student Experience Group and Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee.

6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (with particular reference to disability reasonable adjustments) and Equality Assessment Statements

6.1 The University values equality and diversity and is committed to maintaining an atmosphere where its employees, students and visitors are treated fairly and with respect at all times. It aims to ensure that its actions and working practices comply with both the spirit and intention of the Human Rights Act (1998) and the Equality Act (2010) which relates to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnerships, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The University and UCSU share the responsibility of reviewing the demographic characteristics of Academic Representatives and considering whether any groups are underrepresented. This policy has an approved Equality Impact Assessment in place.

7. Records Management Statement

7.1 The following statements apply to this policy:

- The records associated with this policy are controlled by Academic Registry and will be created, stored and disposed of in line with the University's Records Management guidelines and procedures.

- The University is committed to complying with the requirements of Data Protection legislation and regulations and any personal data created as part of this policy will be processed in accordance with the University's Data Protection Act procedures. This includes ensuring that data is held securely, is not disclosed unlawfully and is destroyed when no longer needed.

- The University also aims to ensure that users of this policy are aware of Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Records Management issues associated with this policy.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 It is the responsibility of the **Module Leader** to:

- Promote the Module Evaluation Survey to students and monitor response rates during the survey window

- Complete the associated Closing the Loop report, providing feedback to students on outcomes of the evaluation and any actions arising

- Encourage regular informal opportunities for student feedback on the module (e.g. end of teaching session reflections)

- Maintain an ongoing dialogue with student representatives.

8.2 It is the responsibility of the **Programme Leader** to:

- Highlight the National Student Survey (NSS) and other appropriate surveys applicable to the programme in question, in line with sector guidance, and to discuss the outcomes and resulting actions with students

- Explain and promote the value of the Staff/Student Forum and the Academic Student Representative system to students

- Support the election of Academic representatives, in collaboration with UCSU and module tutors

- Attend scheduled Staff/Student Forum meetings, where invited, and discuss programme-level feedback, agreeing actions as appropriate, and sharing news about the programme with student representatives

- Encourage regular informal opportunities for student feedback on the programme and maintain an ongoing dialogue with student representatives

- Ensure that any placement/work based learning/work experience is appropriately evaluated. Outcomes of these evaluations, and any resulting actions, should be communicated back to students and any other relevant stakeholders (e.g. placement providers)

- For Collaborative Provision programmes, work with the Partner Programme Leader to consider student feedback

- Produce the Annual Monitoring Report including reflections on and actions arising out of student evaluation

8.3 It is the responsibility of **Principal Lecturers** to:

- Create a culture of student engagement in areas of responsibility in relation to quality/feedback and evaluation, working with the UCSU to

enhance student representation and raising the effective profile of the student voice, feeding back to students on actions taken

- Ensure that the programme-level Annual Monitoring process is implemented robustly across the areas of responsibility

- Ensure that there is effective student evaluation across the areas of responsibility in line with University requirements and that results and associated actions are meaningfully reported back to students and staff groups

- Chair Staff/Student Forum meetings as required

- Ensure that students are properly able to voice their suggestions, concerns and any good practice, through Staff/Student Forum meetings; and ensure that feedback is recorded and followed up where necessary.

8.4 It is the responsibility of Institute **Heads of Learning and Teaching** to:

- Ensure that there is real opportunity for students to give informal and formal feedback across the Institute in line with University requirements and that results and associated actions are meaningfully reported back to students

- Actively promote an institutional culture of student engagement in quality/feedback and evaluation, working with UCSU to enhance student representation and raising the effective profile of the student voice, feeding back to students on actions taken across all Levels of study from Foundation to Postgraduate

- Ensure that, throughout the academic year, designated Institute meetings including the Quality Enhancement Committee have a clear focus on hearing the student voice, placing a focus on outcomes of Staff/Student Forums

- Ensure that the programme-level Annual Monitoring process is implemented robustly across the Institute

8.5 It is the responsibility of the **Learning and Teaching Enhancement service** to:
- Administer surveys through EvaSys as the standard University Student Voice survey platform
- Provide appropriate training, guidance and support to staff in utilising the survey process and platform

8.6 It is the responsibility of the **Academic Registry** to:

- Provide administrative support for Staff/Student Forum meetings, including providing summary information for HLTEs and formal committees (Programme Administration)
- Ensure that student feedback informs periodic reviews and revalidations in line with agreed procedures (Quality Assurance)
- Ensure that student feedback is obtained through Annual Partnership Review, for the University's collaborative programmes (Collaborative Provision)
- Provide relevant data from the student records system to support effective implementation of EvaSys evaluations (SITS) and external surveys

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UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA

POLICY DOCUMENT CONTROL SCHEDULE

Policy title	Student Voice Policy
Policy owner	Dean for Student Success
Policy lead contact	Signy Henderson
Approving body	Academic Board (recommendation from SSQAC)
Date of approval	25 June 2014 (original) 29 Mar 2017 (LTQC) 14 September 2020 (SSQAC) 14 September 2021 (SSQAC) 13 September 2023 (SSQAC) 21 October 2024 (Academic Board) 6 June 2025 (Academic Board)
Version no. Summary of changes since the previous version	7 Change of policy name; revised approach to Module Evaluation; other changes to general guidance on informal feedback mechanisms and to operation of the Student Academic Representative system. Change of policy ownership.
Related Guidelines, Procedures, Codes of Practice etc.	Academic Strategy Learning, Teaching & Assessment Plan Placement Learning Policy Student Academic Representatives Guide
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