



AGENDA

The one hundred and forty-sixth meeting of the Academic Board will be held by correspondence. Decisions to be made on or before close on Wednesday 06 May 2020.

Part A: Preliminary items		Paper	Led by
A1	Apologies		Chair
A2	Declarations of interest		Chair
Part B: Items for Information			
B1	The Students' Union Report	ACB-1920-039	C Hind/S Iqbal
B2	Access and Participation Scrutiny Committee	ACB-1920-040	T Lancaster
Part C: Items for Decision			
C1	Academic Assurance Report	ACB-1920-041	B Colledge
Part D: Other Business			
D1	Any other Business		Chair

Shaded items indicate that the Academic Board is being asked to make a decision.

**AOB in relation to this agenda should be notified to the Vice Chancellor or University Secretary by correspondence.*



Report from the Students' Union

Executive Summary

This report is to summarise the work undertaken by the Students' Union and inform the committee of any key academic issues or developments.

Action Requested

This report is for information. Academic Board is invited to note the report.

Appendices

Appendix A: School Fora Action Plans

Author

Name: Sherry Iqbal/Charlie Hind
Job title: Education Officer/Union Affairs Officer
Date: 17th April 2020

Approval Route

17th April 2020 Sherry Iqbal/Charlie Hind

Report from the Students' Union

Introduction

1. This report covers any key developments from the Students' Union relating to academic matters.

Officer Objectives

2. Given the current situation some work around Officer objectives has been put on hold, but the team is currently working to see how aspects of their objectives can be continued online. In lieu of the usual objective updates the Officers have provided a general update on their current activity.
3. The Officer Team have been inundated with messages and feedback from students in light of the recent COVID-19 outbreak and below is a summary of the main issue's students are experiencing.
 - a. **Mitigation, Extensions and Assessments.** Initial feedback from students is focused on the inconsistent approach across courses and Schools to mitigation, extensions and assessments which has caused a significant amount of distress and confusion amongst students. Furthermore, Nursing students have been in touch in relation to the difficulties with their dissertations and placement. A number of petitions have started online, with students calling for a "safety net" policy to support their academic study.
 - b. **Tenancy release and rent reimbursement.** This is currently the most prevalent issues being addressed by the Officer team. A number of students have asked for the Students' Union to lobby the University Accommodation Service and private rented sector to allow them to be released early from their tenancies. The Students' Union has been working closely with Unipol on this issue who have responded quickly and are taking positive action to help students in need. The private rental sector has proven more difficult and the Team is looking into joint action with Leeds University Union on this matter. We would like to thank the University for their decision to release students from their Halls of Residence tenancies and also the discount given to students who are remaining in Halls.
 - c. **Poor mental health.** Many students have been telling the Officer team that their mental health has been severely affected by both the anxiety around the virus itself and the impact of assessment and housing issues.
 - d. **Problems with self-isolation.** Some students have highlighted that they do not have the option to return to an out of term time address (for example, international students, students with parents who are key workers, students with suspected coronavirus) and are having to self-isolate alone in Halls, and feeling lonely and unsupported from the accommodation providers.
 - e. **Money Support.** A number of students have been made redundant and will not receive an income, impacting their lives. The anxiety around not having a job, therefore not being able to pay rent, pay bills or buy food supplies etc. impacts a number of areas in a students' life and it's important the University is able to advertise and provide money support to those that need it. SU officers have been in contact with Student Money who have been supportive of student applications to the hardship fund and will support students where needed as soon as possible. It's

important we monitor this as many students would rely on a summer job to support them through their time at University and the impact of COVID-19 may mean that students are unable to afford to come to University.

4. We have set up a Leeds Beckett Coronavirus Community Group on Facebook, which is currently nearly at 700 members. It has been a great way for us to engage with students by posting updates, sharing online events/workshops, and allowing students to connect with each other.

Academic Representation Update

Students' Union Measures

5. The final figure for Course Representatives who have completed their initial induction training this year is 74%. The free hoodies also seem to have been a well-received incentive and we would be grateful of School support to offer this again next year. As stated previously, this is a significant increase in completion of the induction training on previous years and our thanks go too colleagues across the University who helped to encourage student attendance.
6. A total of 275 students attended across the first two School Forums this year, with a further 81 providing feedback via the online student feedback tool.
7. Understandably, due to the current situation with Covid-19, the decision was taken to cancel the final round of School Forums in anticipation of the social distancing and subsequently the lockdown requirements. All Course Reps have been encouraged to submit feedback via the online student feedback tool in place of the third School Forum. The online tool has also been promoted to all students, as part of communications from the Students' Union during this time, for them to use if they are unable to raise feedback directly or via their Course Rep.

School Forum Feedback

8. The themes below summarise the student feedback raised in the second round of School Forums held throughout March and the feedback received online during April. The feedback corresponds to the different areas included on the School Forum agenda. The actions being taken to address student feedback is included in individual School Action Plans. The School Teams and the Student Voice Team work collaboratively to keep all progress up to date.
9. All School Fora Action Plans are in Appendix A. These outline the feedback received from students during the Fora and responses from staff.
10. **Teaching & Learning.** The feedback received from students in relation to their teaching and learning was focused on the structure of modules and courses, guidance and information given, placements, teaching styles and course content.
 - a. **Module & course structure**

- i. School of Built Environment, Engineering & Computing students commented that the structure of their courses could be improved to ensure that the timing of delivered content and assignments run parallel.
 - ii. Teaching & Education students suggested that seminars are introduced to their course to allow students to discuss their ideas with each other as currently they only have lectures.
 - iii. School of Events, Tourism & Hospitality students commented that one of their modules is scheduled for 3 hours but this is often cut short, so students are not able to have the most productive session.
 - iv. Physical Education students provided feedback that the laidback structure of one of their modules means some students are not motivated to attend.
- b. Guidance and information**
- i. Students studying Primary Education (5-11) fed back that on a recent assignment those on different modules were given different information to prepare for the assignment.
 - ii. School of Clinical & Applied Sciences students studying Biomedical Sciences fed back that the first lectures of their semester were repeating information. Students across the School commented that not all of the content for their lectures was being uploaded ahead of the session, so students felt unable to prepare.
 - iii. Students studying History in the School of Cultural Studies & Humanities commented that they require clearer guidance on how to complete work for one of their modules as they are confused and concerned about the requirements.
 - iv. Students studying Adult Nursing have requested that more support and information is made available for the online classes for their biology modules as this is a challenging subject.
- c. Placements**
- i. Carnegie School of Education students who had undertaken their placement between October and December fed back that the timing could have been improved so students have more contact with children before completing their degree.
 - ii. Carnegie School of Sport students provided feedback on their experiences of placements. Students commented that travelling to placement has been expensive.
 - iii. Students in the School of Events, Tourism & Hospitality Management fed back that they were concerned that due to the current situation they could not finish their work experience.
- d. Teaching styles**
- i. Students across the School of Built Environment, Engineering & Computing fed back that some lectures are stimulating whilst others are taught quite uninspiring and could have more opportunity for discussion and active learning.
 - ii. There were concerns raised by students in the School of Clinical & Applied Sciences about the behaviour and teaching style of staff members. Students commented that staff had been patronising and were teaching in a way that students felt was lazy.
- e. Course content**

- i. Students in Leeds Law School commented that the amount of preparation required can be overwhelming and those with less time available due to other commitments feel this is difficult to complete.
- ii. Leeds School of Social Sciences students commented that their tutors are trying hard during the current situation, however the amount of content can be confusing when it is not supported by contact time with lecturers. Students suggested that offering virtual workshops would help.

11. **Assessment & Feedback.** The feedback regarding assessment and feedback was focused on the quality of feedback, guidance on marking, the information provided and the timing of assessments and subsequent feedback.

a. **Quality of feedback**

- i. Students studying Project Management within the School of Built Environment, Engineering and Computing fed back that feedback varies across modules with some feedback being very brief and others more in-depth which is preferred. Similarly, Carnegie School of Education students commented that some of the feedback they receive is general and does not give them support for future assignments.
- ii. School of Clinical & Applied Sciences students also fed back that feedback had been generic and comments including 'more detail' being needed but this is not expanded upon. This was common feedback across the School.
- iii. Students within the School of Cultural Studies & Humanities commented that feedback has been received late and their marks left then unsure on how to improve in future.
- iv. Leeds Business School students fed back that they were receiving marks but not feedback for assignments and so cannot improve their work in future assignments.
- v. Leeds School of Arts students fed back that given the current situation they feel more feedback on assignments should be given prior to the deadline as they would usually have more support if they were at University.
- vi. Students studying Sociology & Psychology raised that their feedback had been delayed and when received the feedback was basic with no explanation on the marking.

b. **Marking**

- i. Students within the Carnegie School of Sport studying Physical Activity, Exercise and Health fed back that the mark scheme for a module is vague and students do not understand how to write their assessment without a brief.
- ii. Students in the School of Health & Community Studies have requested anonymous marking when submitting work on TurnItIn and staff are transitioning to this.
- iii. Mark schemes in the Leeds Business School students feel are inconsistent between modules. Some schemes are clear whereas others leave students unsure as to what is required to achieve a particular grade.

c. **Information**

- i. School of Clinical & Applied Sciences students fed back that more guidance was required for their assignments as they had been left feeling uninformed. Similarly, students studying on the Biomedical Sciences course commented that their assignments do not feel relevant to the content taught in lectures.

- ii. MSc International and Sports Events Management students fed back that there is not enough information in their module handbook to guide them on their assignment.
- iii. Students in Leeds Law School are concerned about how their assessments and grades will be affected by the current situations and feel that extensions do not solve this problem. Compared to students at other institutions they feel at a disadvantage.
- iv. Leeds School of Arts students studying Music Technology fed back that they had not received adequate information about how to complete an assignment which required technical skills where some students may have been disadvantaged.
- v. Leeds School of Social Sciences students fed back that lecturers have different preferences and marking rules for assessments and students can struggle when they are marked down because of this.

d. Timing

- i. School of Built Environment, Engineering and Computing Level 6 students commented that the timing of assessments in Semester One could be improved as these were concentrated after the Christmas break.
- ii. Students studying Primary Education (5-11) within the Carnegie School of Education fed back that the timing of their assessments and dissertation was challenging as these are all concentrated in semester two.
- iii. Carnegie School of Sport students commented that their assessments are scheduled within a short period of time which students find difficult.
- iv. Students within the School of Clinical & Applied Sciences commented that the feedback deadlines set by the School have been delayed and students have not received their results.
- v. Leeds School of Social Sciences students commented that having weekly assignments whilst also reading and preparing for other classes can be challenging.

12. Academic Support. Students fed back on their feelings within their Schools, the guidance available, and concerns about placements.

a. Contact

- i. Students within the School of Cultural Studies & Humanities fed back that currently, given the circumstances, that they feel unheard by their course.
- ii. Leeds School of Social Sciences students fed back that they do not feel as if all students have had the same experience with their dissertation supervisors with some struggling to get the required support. In addition, the allocated supervisors are not always lecturers from the same discipline, and this means support for the dissertation content is limited.

b. Guidance

- i. Students within Leeds Business School requested more guidance for students on how to write a report effectively in terms of structure and style.
- ii. Leeds School of Arts students were required to make a film as part of their first-year assessment but required more guidance on what they were being graded on.
- iii. PhD students commented that mental health workshops would be useful for them.

c. Placements

- i. Students within the School of Events, Tourism & Hospitality Management fed back on the support on offer to them regarding placements. Students felt that more guidance was needed on what placements are available and more support on securing these.
- ii. Health & Community Studies students fed back that they were supposed to be on placement for 13 weeks but are now unable to complete the end of their placements. Students now feel completing the full assessment is unachievable.

13. Organisation & Management. Feedback centred on placements, course changes & information and timetables.

a. Placements

- i. Students within the Carnegie School of Education require more information prior to going on placement so they can arrange travel and ensure they have the finances for this.
- ii. Students studying within the School of Clinical & Applied Sciences also commented on their experience of placements. It was fed back that in the current situation it has felt as though the University does not care about the decisions made about placement and has left decisions to placement providers.
- iii. Health & Community Studies students raised a number of issues with their placements and the prior occupational health requirements. Students fed back that appointments are difficult to organise, for example appointments were being arranged last minute which impacts students with dependents who require childcare.

b. Course changes and information

- i. MSc Data Science students within the School of Built Environment, Engineering and Computing fed back that tutorials and lectures on one of their modules has been changed multiple times without students being informed.
- ii. School of Clinical & Applied Sciences students fed back that the information provided in their module handbook did not correlate with the information provided by the lecturer. In addition, students commented that they did not receive information about the different pathways available to them early enough.
- iii. Students studying Adult Nursing in the School of Health and Community Studies fed back that they had not received confirmation that they had progressed into their second year of study until they were invited to a full day induction. This resulted in some students finding out they would not be progressing in front of their peers.

c. Timetabling

- i. Second year Teaching and Learning students within the Carnegie School of Education requested to know when their timetable will be released so they can decide whether to commute.
- ii. Students in Leeds Business School gave a variety of feedback regarding their timetables. Students fed back that they are timetabled for long days and would appreciate a break between classes. In addition, students suggested that drop in times be timetabled so they feel able to approach tutors for help.

14. Learning Community.

- a. Part-time Masters students within the School of Built Environment, Engineering and Computing fed back that there is a disconnect between part-time and full-time students and they would appreciate opportunities to network and learn from each other.
- b. Students within the Carnegie School of Sport commented that the drinking culture within sports teams is off putting for those who want to play sport.
- c. Cultural Studies & Humanities students commented that although there was a good learning community throughout the courses in the School learning from peers in Level 5 and 6 would be useful.
- d. School of Health & Community Studies students fed back that there is not a sense of community for a lot of students as they are taught in large groups within lecture theatres which makes it difficult to bond.
- e. It should be noted that there is a considerable variance between student's experiences of their learning community based on the course or School and many students fed back that they are extremely happy with their learning community.
- f. Postgraduate students fed back that they can feel very isolated, especially if they commute or are studying part-time. In addition, MRes students do not feel part of the Graduate School as a lot of the workshops held are directed towards PhD students.

15. Student Voice.

- a. Students within the School of Built Environment, Engineering and Computing studying MSc Strategic Project Management fed back that they had only received one end of module review and no mid-module reviews.
- b. School of Clinical & Applied Sciences students studying Sport Therapy and Biomedical Sciences commented that they do not feel listened to.
- c. Masters students within the School of Events, Tourism & Hospitality Management fed back that they feel able to talk to their course reps but not to their tutors directly because these staff members are too busy.
- d. It should be noted that a lot of positive feedback was also received with regard to the student voice and many students fed back that they have the opportunity to give feedback and see changes being made based on this.

16. Student Services.

- a. Students within the Carnegie School of Sport fed back that only having 4 sessions for wellbeing felt drastic and after these sessions' students are left unsure of who to talk to. This was also raised by students in the Leeds School of Social Sciences who commented that being referred for more long-term support would be useful.
- b. Adjustment plans have not been followed for students within the School of Clinical & Applied Sciences and students are losing marks when they should not be.
- c. Students within the School of Health & Community Studies fed back that given the current circumstances their placements have been replaced with alternative assessments. However, this has left some students unable to receive benefits due to their student loans being counted as income causing financial difficulties.
- d. Students in the Leeds School of Social Sciences also commented that the services available need to be better advertised so students know where to go if they are struggling.

17. Learning Resources.

- a. The remote app used by School of Built Environment, Engineering and Computing students can be difficult to access.
- b. Feedback about the library was received from students across the Schools. Building Surveying Level 6 students fed back that since the University has closed, they have struggled not having access to the library as not all books are available through MyBeckett. Similarly, School of Clinical & Applied Sciences students commented that their reading lists were showing books and resources that are not available.
- c. Leeds Business School students asked whether it was possible to extend the loan period for library books.
- d. Masters students were struggling with not being able to access the library currently and this is affecting their research.
- e. Carnegie School of Education students fed back that printing at University is quite expensive, especially when they are required to print resources whilst on placement. Paying printing was also an issue raised by students in the School of Health and Community Studies. Students in the Leeds School of Arts also fed back on the cost of resources, commenting that they have to provide an A3 layout pad and it would be helpful if this was provided.
- f. Students provided feedback on MyBeckett, commenting that there is inconsistency on where information can be found.
- g. School of Events, Tourism & Hospitality Management students had experienced issues with TurnItIn submissions.
- h. Students across the Schools raised feedback about their tutors not using lecture capture.

Course-based societies

18. There are currently 36 course-based societies at Leeds Beckett Students' Union. Currently, all societies have moved online, however students are still joining societies to get involved, especially course-based societies.

19. Societies have been hosting online events for their members, including:

- a. Computing Society hosted a Disney themed quiz.
- b. Computer Science Society held a coding session to find toilet paper locally.
- c. Creative Society organised a Facebook live event for students to sing.
- d. Physiotherapy Society hosted a series of exercise videos across their social media pages.

Conclusions & Recommendations

20. Academic Board is invited to note this report.