**Post Graduate Taught Student Experience**

Undergraduate Student Experience is something that is routinely discussed, measured and analysed in a variety of different ways. To date the Post Graduate Taught Student Experience has not been evaluated with the same level of scrutiny. At Aberdeen, the Postgraduate Committee (Taught) has recently started to consider the methods and processes adopted for UG with a view to agreeing a similar set of robust evidence for evaluating the PGT experience.

A working group of the Committee was formed. It has met twice and has discussed current tools and data open to them. It will continue to meet with the aim of producing a paper to be taken through all the usual approval stages, and ultimately for the approval of the University Senate. The ultimate intent is to ensure that there is a shared understanding and agreement across the University as to what constitutes evidence at PGT level.

Although it intends to be a short life working group, it is still at very early stages. The approach taken by the Group is to both look at what measures / metrics are routinely used at UG level, but also to ask – in a blank page way – what measures are the appropriate ones for PGT?

**Contemporaneous Experience Survey options**

One approach that Aberdeen has adopted in the past was to participate in the PTES surveys conducted by the Higher Education Academy. PTES was the largest sector wide survey aimed at gaining feedback from PGT students, with 104 institutions participating in 2017. The participating institutions were not able to identify the results for other institutions, but they could benchmark themselves against the overall results for various benchmark groupings comprised of other participating institutions. Garnering good response rates has been a significant challenge, and this has always been a cause of concern; even though rates have improved steadily over the years it is not possible to generalise from respondents to those who do not respond to the survey.

Although Aberdeen recognises the importance of participating in sector wide surveys, in 2018 the plan is to deliver a locally run PGT experience survey to run from mid-July until mid-September, with questions more akin to those found in the National Student Survey potentially supplemented by additional engagement survey questions.

The Group has noted it will likely be necessary to ensure the survey questions are properly addressed to the different cohorts of students. For example, although we are seeking to ensure a parity of experience there will not be identical experiences for on campus and online students.

**Destination Survey options**

Destination data on postgraduates is currently collected but not routinely reported upon, and response rates are again a concern. It was recognised that currently HESA requires institutions to achieve an 80% response rate minimum for Home/EU students in the DHLE surveys. Consequently the main focus has been to get response from that demographic. As there is a higher proportion of International students at PGT level, overall response rates can be as low as 20%.

Nevertheless, as this data has been collected, the initial feeling of the Group is that it should be considered as part of any evaluation of student experience. The data can also be used in interesting ways, such as showing a link between specific degrees and employment. It was recognised that not all PGT study was undertaken with the intention of seeking employment and that this would need to be considered when presenting any destination data; in particular students studying either on a part time and/or online may already be in graduate level employment.

**Retention / Award Data**

The Group has recognised this as a potentially important metric to consider, but also a very challenging one. What one defines as a “positive outcome” becomes much harder at PGT given the greater number of potential exit points. However, we do expect to undertake work around investigating the numbers of students exiting with the fullest degree from the programme on which they were initially registered. Where possible it would be also interesting to contrast the student’s undergraduate degree classification against their post graduate degree classification, and to consider if this may be a suitable measure of “value adding”.

**Consideration of International Practice**

Members of the Working Group are also keen to gather and learn from the experiences of others, both within and outwith the UK. When the opportunities arise, members of the group gather and bring back new thoughts and ideas that they have seen to feed into and improve the process at Aberdeen. For example, recently the Chair of the PGT Committee met with colleagues from Curtin University, Australia, who are similarly considering the best approaches to reporting on Student Experience at a post graduate level and together Aberdeen and Curtin will be exploring opportunities for potential collaboration.