

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY INSTITUTIONAL ACTION PLAN**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

*This paper provides the University Education Committee (UEC) with an update on the Institutional action plan to address the assessment and feedback focus of the NSS survey.*

*UEC is invited to note this paper and to comment on the action plan*

**2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED**

	<b>Board/Committee</b>	<b>Date</b>
Previously considered/approved by	SSEC	5 Dec 2022
Further consideration/ approval required by	N/A	

**3. DISCUSSION**

3.1 In NSS 2022, the University continued its year-on-year rise in student satisfaction ranking in this key sector survey, which captures students' views on a range of areas relating to their learning experience.

3.2 Assessment and feedback scale is the area we have seen greatest gains with an increase in 32 places in this year's results, reflecting the excellent work that we have been doing in this area. However, there is still room for further improvements to move us up from our current ranking of 57th out of 122.

3.3 Members of the UEC are asked to consider and discuss the updated action plan provided in the attached Annex A. A valuable discussion on Annex A and assessment and feedback in general took place at SSEC when colleagues considered and shared their School plans, institutional action and areas were identified for further focus.

**4. FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further information is available from Kirsty Kiezebrink, Dean for Educational Innovation [k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk) and Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support [jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk)

21 December 2022

**Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status:** Open



## Annex A

### NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY INSTITUTIONAL ACTION PLAN

Written on: 22/09/22

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Amended / updated on: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022

<b>PRIORITY 1: Assessment and Feedback Scale 03</b>				
<b>ANALYSIS:</b> <i>provide a summary of the area for enhancement based on the Comprehensive Analysis, freetext comments, and any other relevant student feedback</i>				
Assessment and Feedback overall % and (rank): 65.3% (89) 2021; 69.8% (57) 2022; performance (against benchmark) 2022: 69.8% (66.8%)				
The criteria used for marking have been clear in advance overall % and (rank): 67.3% (88) 2021; 70.2%(63) 2022, performance (against benchmark) 2022: 70.2% (68.8%)				
Marking and assessment has been fair overall % and (rank): 71.2% (27) 2021; 76.5% (8) 2022; performance (against benchmark) 2022: 76.5% (68.7%)				
Feedback on my work has been timely overall % and (rank): 56.9% (102) 2021; 61.7% (82) 2022; performance (against benchmark) 2022: 61.7% (63.2%)				
I have received helpful comments on my work overall % and (rank): 65.9% (66) 2021; 70.6% (50) 2022; performance (against benchmark) 2022: 70.6% (66.7%)				
In recent years, the University of Aberdeen ranking for the Assessment & Feedback scale has remained consistently low. However, in the 2022 results there has been a significant rise to 57 <sup>th</sup> in the sector, a rise of 32 places from 2021. This is the second year in a row that Aberdeen has risen in rank, having jumped 12 places in 2021.				
<u>Themes from the freetext comments</u> (9% of negative and 2% of positive comments related to assessment and feedback)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expectations of assessment and marking criteria not clear</li> <li>- Timeliness of feedback</li> <li>- Scaffolding of learning to enable learning to occur from feedback prior to next assessment</li> <li>- Over assessment / deadlines for assessment close together</li> <li>- Inconsistency of feedback and grading between markers</li> <li>- Feedback does not provide sufficient guidance on how to improve</li> <li>- Feedback and grades not clearly aligning</li> <li>- Constructive alignment between intended learning outcomes/ content/ assessment</li> <li>- Variety of assessment types and applicability to real world settings</li> </ul>				
<u>Overall analytical summary</u>				
The areas that require most attention, based on the data, are:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Timeliness of feedback</li> <li>- Quality of feedback</li> <li>- Clarity of expectations of assessments</li> </ul>				
ACTIONS		BY WHO?	BY WHEN?	OUTCOME AND COMMENTS
1.1	Continue to implement measures that ensure that all students have all the relevant information on assessment at the start of each course (including: type of assessment, criteria for marking, submission dates, return of feedback dates, contact person for	Schools	Beginning of each half session	

	support, calculation of degree classifications, etc)			
1.2	Obtain feedback from students at a course level regarding clarity of assessment expectations building the information from this into course reviews	Schools / Course coordinators	End of each half session	
1.3	Monitor that all of 1.1 action is completed, and provide guidance and support where issues arise. Report through School Education Committees	Directors of Education	First half-session: ongoing across half session  Second half-session all aspects: ongoing across half session	
1.4	Monitor the timeliness of feedback and ensure that all feedback is provided within the 3 week timelines (or sooner if the assessment is continuous)	Schools	Ongoing with immediate intervention and support where feedback is not provided on time  Each School to provide overview of timeliness of feedback across all courses to their School Education Committee	.
1.5	Pilot of TESTA within 2 schools	Dean Educational Innovation and TESTA team	Pilot in single programme in each of 2 schools in 1 <sup>st</sup> half session Extend to all programmes within 2 schools 2 <sup>nd</sup> half session	
1.6	Promotion of web-based resources (including toolkit resources) to support colleagues to enhance assessment practices including feedback on assessment, and ensure good communication on the resources.	Dean for Educational Innovation; Manager Centre for Academic Development	Ongoing with updates provided at 6 monthly intervals to UEC	
1.7	Develop further training and support for assessment and feedback to support enhancement	Dean for Educational Innovation; Manager Centre for Academic Development	Ongoing with updates provided at 6 monthly intervals to UEC	
1.8	Focus on assessment and feedback for Annual symposium, sharing good practice	QAA enhancement theme lead Dean for Educational Innovation Manager Centre for Academic Development	Summer 2023	

1.8	Development of communications and resources for students and staff to support assessment (e.g., academic integrity, essay mills, using feedback)	Manager Centre for Academic Development; Dean for Educational Innovation	Ongoing with updates provided at 6 monthly intervals to UEC	
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