1. **PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

   This paper updates UEC on progress to implement the University’s National Student Survey Action Plan.

   The Committee is invited to note and discuss this paper.

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

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<th>Board/Committee</th>
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3. **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

   3.1 The paper builds on (i) the ‘Comprehensive Analysis of NSS 2021’ (and its appendices including results and the freetext comments) which were before UEC on 6 October 2021 (UEC/061021/008 UEC) and (ii) the NSS Institutional Action Plan (“Institutional Action Plan”) first circulated 15 October 2021. The Institutional Action Plan identified two priorities: (Priority 1 Assessment and Feedback, [overall % and (rank): 67.4% (101) 2020; 65.3% (89) 2021; performance (against benchmark) 2021: 65.3% (66.8%)]; and Priority 2 Student Voice: 74.4% (66) 2020; 70.5% (27) 2021; performance (against benchmark) 2021: 70.5% (67.9%).

   3.2 The Dean for Educational Innovation, Kirsty Kiezebrink, is the institutional lead for Action Plan Priority One and the Dean for Student Support, Abbe Brown, is the institutional lead for Action Plan Priority Two.

   3.3 This institutional work sits alongside work to be taken by Schools and Directorates in relation to their own development, implementation and monitoring of their own NSS results. In October 2021, Schools were provided with a template in case this may assist. Action is proceeding...
through School Education Committees and the Departments. There is reporting to and monitoring by the University Education Committee and the relevant Directorate Group, and as part of the School planning process. Progress will be discussed at a meeting of the School Education Leads in February 2022.

3.4 An oral update on progress regarding the Institutional Action Plan was provided to UEC on 10 November 2021. The NSS Steering Group met on 1 December 2021 and considered the status at that time (see Annex - note this is in the same format as the same planning template provided to Schools). The papers from NSS Steering Group were noted at the Student Support Committee on 8 December 2021.

4. Present Status, Plans and Activities

4.1 Regarding priority one, assessment and feedback
A programme of work was launched on 8 November 2021 – “Focus on Assessment and Feedback” which aims to raise awareness and enhance the process of providing effective, timely and accessible feedback for students and Staff and Student Awareness and Support.

4.1.1 A range of initiatives are underway to support improvements in timely provision of feedback

- CAD provided a report of all assessment dates available within MyAberdeen.

- School Directors of Education have been requested to put in place measures within their Schools that ensure all students have all the relevant information on assessment dates and expectations at the start of each course (including: type of assessment, criteria for marking, submission dates, return of feedback dates, contact person for support, calculation of degree classifications). Guidance on this has been highlighted in the course readiness checklist.

- Going forward Schools are asked to implement a process to monitor the timeliness of feedback and ensure that all feedback is provided within the 3 week timelines through internal School monitoring processes.

4.1.2 A range of initiatives are underway to support improvements in feedback and assessment. These include:

- Discussion Panel: Focus on Assessment Feedback (18th Nov 2021) with around 70 staff attending (Panel members Dr Kirsty Kiezebrink, (Chair), Dr Vasilis Louca, Dr Joy Perkins, Dr Donna Maccallum, Dr Rachel Shanks)

- Community of practice: Assessment and feedback channel set up within Teams Education Enhancement space (currently named MyAberdeen users group)

- Development of web-based resources to support colleagues to enhance assessment practices including feedback on assessment, and ensure good communication on the resources:
4.2 Regarding priority two, student voice, the key points for action are (i) the approach to gaining student feedback; (ii) the response to student feedback; and (iii) the communication of actions / changes based on student feedback.

4.2.1 Based on the NSS results and a previous intern led project on feedback, a new Student Feedback Framework and Feedback action group will be launched. This is presently on hold until a new post has been approved in the Student Experience Team. The Framework and group will ensure that feedback is obtained in a variety of ways (such as listening groups and surveys) and a process will be put in place to ensure that students are not overburdened. Going forward, this Framework and group will include the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey; note that the results of this 2021 survey have been circulated and feedback sought from departments by 31 January and a paper will be considered by the Student Support Committee on 4 February 2021, and in turn reported to UEC. This Framework and group will focus primarily on non-academic feedback.

4.2.2 For academic feedback, the Institutional Action Plan action focusses on the class representative system, working together with AUSA and supported by SPARQS (Scotland's national agency for Student Engagement). Meetings have been held with the Director of Education for each School and the School, mapping the present process. A draft report has been prepared and a future programme of work including focus groups with students, will be shared. We intend to have two more phases, one being staff discussions in schools in parallel to discussions with class reps, and in the following phase join these groups together. These would be finished by the end of the academic year, with the proposals being drafted and approved by last committee cycle of the year.
4.2.3 Part of initial meetings regarding class representatives noted the challenges of class representatives obtaining feedback from their student cohort and AUSA have identified difficulties in mapping whether issues arise across the institution and from year to year. AUSA, the Student Experience Team, the Dean for Student Support and IT leads are investigating a joint pilot of UNITU software with a School from September 2022 to explore how this may address these issues and align with other University IT practices and systems. A product demonstration has been arranged so that the pilot School can assess the proposed system and evaluate what resource is required to support delivery.

5. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further information is available from Abbe Brown, Dean for Student Support ([abbe.brown@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:abbe.brown@abdn.ac.uk)) and Kirsty Kiezebrink, Dean for Educational Innovation ([k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk)).

January 2022

*Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open*
NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY INSTITUTIONAL ACTION PLAN
Written on: 15/10/21
Author: Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education
Amended / updated on:

**PRIORITY 1: Assessment and Feedback**

**ANALYSIS:** provide a summary of the area for enhancement based on the Comprehensive Analysis, freetext comments, and any other relevant student feedback

Assessment and Feedback overall % and (rank): 67.4% (101) 2020; 65.3% (89) 2021; performance (against benchmark) 2021: 65.3% (66.8%)
The criteria used for marking have been clear in advance overall % and (rank): 67.4% (105) 2020; 67.3% (88) 2021; performance (against benchmark) 2021: 67.3% (68.8%)
Marking and assessment has been fair overall % and (rank): 74.8% (34) 2020; 71.2% (27) 2021; performance (against benchmark) 2021: 71.2% (68.3%)
Feedback on my work has been timely overall % and (rank): 60.6% (115) 2020; 56.9% (102) 2021; performance (against benchmark) 2021: 56.9% (63.5%)
I have received helpful comments on my work overall % and (rank): 66.9% (102) 2020; 65.9% (66) 2021; performance (against benchmark) 2021: 65.9% (63.5%)

Themes from the freetext comments (15% of negative and 2% of positive comments related to assessment and feedback)
- Timeliness of feedback
- Quality of feedback
- Inconsistency of guidance on assessment between lecturers / expectations not made clear
- Amount of assessment excessive / deadlines for assessment close together
- Inconsistency of feedback between markers
- Feedback does not provide areas for improvement
- Support for dissertation from supervisor variable
- Lack of clarity regarding how degree classifications are calculated

Overall analytical summary
The areas that require most attention, based on the data, are:
- Timeliness of feedback
- Quality of feedback
- Inconsistency of feedback between markers
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<th>ACTIONS</th>
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<th>BY WHEN?</th>
<th>OUTCOME AND COMMENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Put in place 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 support, calculation of degree classifications, etc)</td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>First half-session: immediate Second half-session all aspects: by 14 January 2022</td>
<td>22/11/21: VPE discussed with School Directors of Education for their action.</td>
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<td>1.2 Monitor that all of 2.1 action is completed, and provide guidance and support where issues arise. Report through School Education Committees</td>
<td>Directors of Education</td>
<td>First half-session: ongoing from 15 October Second half-session all aspects: ongoing from 14 January</td>
<td>22/11/21: reporting process agreed for UEC.</td>
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<td>1.3 Put in place a process to monitor the timeliness of feedback and ensure that all feedback is provided within the 3 week timelines (or sooner if the assessment is continuous)</td>
<td>Schools with support from the Vice-Principal Education team</td>
<td>Process in place by 30 October Ongoing with immediate intervention where feedback is not provided on time</td>
<td>22/11/21: Measures in place for Schools to monitor timeliness of feedback, so that they can address any concerns quickly. Complete.</td>
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<td>1.4 Pilot of TESTA with funding for the pilot sought from the university’s Aberdeen 2040 strategic fund</td>
<td>Dean Educational Innovation and 2 School Directors of Education</td>
<td>Funding bid by 05 November Pilot from November 2021- November 2023</td>
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<td>1.5 Development of web-based resources to support colleagues to enhance assessment practices including feedback on assessment, and ensure good communication on the resources</td>
<td>Dean for Educational Innovation; Manager Centre for Academic Development</td>
<td>By 05 November</td>
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### 1.6 Develop further training and support for assessment and feedback to support enhancement

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<tr>
<td>Dean for Educational Innovation; Manager Centre for Academic Development</td>
<td>Plan in place by 05 November; delivery ongoing</td>
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### 1.7 Development of communications and resources for students to support assessment (e.g., academic integrity, essay mills, using feedback)

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<td>Manager Centre for Academic Development</td>
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### PRIORITY 2: Student Voice

#### ANALYSIS

Student Voice (overall): 74.4%, % (66) 2020; 70.5% (27) 2021; performance (against benchmark) 2021: 70.5% (67.9%)  
I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course: 90.3%, % (6) 2020; 89.7% (2) 2021; performance (against benchmark) 2021: 89.7% (81.6%)  
Staff value students’ views and opinions about the course: 76 % (67) 2020; 70% (53) 2021; performance (against benchmark) 2021: 70% (69.6%)  
It is clear how students’ feedback on the course has been acted on: 56.5% (97) 2020; 51.7% (64) 2021; performance (against benchmark) 2021: 51.7% (52.3%)  

#### Themes from the freetext comments (12% of negative and 2% of positive comments related to student voice)

- Not clear if feedback / comments on courses has been acted on  
- Input from Students' Union (may relate to class rep system but not clear)  

#### Overall analytical summary

The areas that require most attention based on the data are:

- The approach to gaining student feedback  
- The response to student feedback  
- The communication of actions / changes based on student feedback

#### ACTIONS

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<tr>
<td>2.1 Work in partnership with AUSA in the development of the class representative system with the aim</td>
<td>Vice President Education, AUSA Head of Student Experience</td>
<td>? by May 2022</td>
<td>22.11.21 Meetings completed with all School DoE and SAM by DSS and AUSA VPed, information</td>
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<td>of having a revised approach in place</td>
<td>Dean for Student Support</td>
<td>gathering on present activity. Plans underway for next phase, including workshops and engagement with SPARQS. 22.11.21 Discussions reactivating between AUSA CEO, DSS and DoSE re UNITU pilot for 22/3.</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>Put in place a ‘Feedback Working Group’ with a remit to review student feedback processes including how actions and changes are conveyed to students</td>
<td>Head of Student Experience</td>
<td>Tbc in academic year 2021/22 22.11.21 plans developed, await new resource in SE</td>
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