

Academic Services Quality Reporting Cycle: Qualitative feedback 2007-2008

1. SCOPE OF QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

Academic Services receives qualitative feedback from many different sources including:

- Suggestion scheme available from <http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/asfeedback/comments.html> ;
- Focus groups about the Library and about Additional Learning Needs;
- Academic Services and IT Student Advisory Group (ASITSAG) minutes;
- Staff comment and evaluation on MAAP course and myBU training programme;
- Student feedback from Teaching Learning and Assessment Survey/Annual Unit Evaluation (SUE) for the Languages Programmes;
- The annual evaluations of the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Scheme and Study Support workshops;
- Comments made in the myBU implementation group and board meetings;
- School programme meetings; annual Reports on Programme Monitoring (ARPM); School Committees;
- Students' Union Student Representative Synoptic reports;
- University reports received including student submissions as part of the QAA developmental engagements and Institutional Review;
- Comments made as part of any complaint;
- Unsolicited comments and testimonials.

2. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INFORMATION

The relevant section eg Educational Development Services, International Programmes, Learning Support, and Library, responds to all qualitative feedback first and then it is gathered centrally for triangulation to assist in assessing the strategic implications for service wide improvements. When qualitative feedback praises aspects of our services this is passed on to the staff concerned and is used in publicity if appropriate.

3. ILLUSTRATIONS OF ENHANCEMENT FROM 2007-2008

3.1 Additional Learning Needs

Feedback received from:

- Focus group with Additional Learning Needs students about the ALN service and other aspects of their BU Experience
- University reports received including student submissions as part of the QAA developmental engagements and Institutional Review;
- Comments made as part of any complaint;
- Unsolicited comments and testimonials.

3.1.1 ***CCTV equipment for visually impaired students***

A short term arrangement was made to house the bulky CCTV equipment owned by a visually impaired student within the Library. ALN is now investigating the purchase of portable equipment that can be loaned to any student thus avoiding the need for the student's own equipment to be housed in the Library.

3.1.2 ***Clarification about School and ALN Service roles and responsibilities***

A University report produced as part of the Administrative Process Review highlighted comments made by School based administrative staff about the need for clarity about roles and responsibilities relating to ALN matters. Autumn term meetings have been scheduled between each Deputy Dean Education and the ALN Service to clarify and enhance processes.

3.1.3 Complaints

This year ALN was involved in 5 student complaints about the support provided to ALN students from both the service and the School. These were carefully investigated through the BU Student Complaints Procedure and found not to have any substance. The main lesson learnt is to continue to encourage ALN students to declare their disability early and take advantage of support available.

3.2 Educational Development Services

Feedback received from:

- Comments made in the myBU Implementation Group and Board meetings;
- University reports received including student submissions as part of the QAA developmental engagements and Institutional Review;

3.2.1 Providing the most up-to-date learning environment with myBU

All Schools are now using the University's VLE and the system was upgraded to version 8.0 in June 2008. The enhancements covered the GradeCenter, and including of a free plagiarism detection tool "SafeAssign", a social bookmarking tool "Scholar" and a tool for self and peer assessment. These new tools will all be included in staff development for 2008/09.

3.2.2 Supporting flexible learning using lecture capture Echo360

2007/08 saw a pilot of a lecture capture system (Echo360) within the Marconi LT, to capture lectures and publish to myBU to support flexible learning, enhance understanding and provision for exam revision. It is anticipated further lecture capture stations will be available in other locations from 2008/09, therefore increasing usage and an enhancement to the student experience.

3.2.3 Requirement to implement Student Unit Evaluations (SUE) online

SUE have been made available online via myBU this year and it is anticipated that this process will be automated further in 2008/09.

3.2.4 Encouraging all staff to engage with myBU during Staff Induction

This year EDS have contributed to the University-wide staff induction demonstrating the potential on myBU.

3.2.5 Educational Enhancement

The EDS has worked closely with the Schools and Professional Services to support the Achievement of the Educational objectives of the Corporate Plan. Priorities for the service have focused around enhancing the student experience and releasing potential through the sharing and use of resources. This year the EDS have worked more closely with teams within Schools to provide a more focused provision which has been more efficient and beneficial than offering central workshops.

3.3 Language Centre

Feedback received from:

- School programme meetings; Annual Reports on Programme Monitoring (ARPM); School Committees;
- Comments made as part of any complaint;
- Unsolicited comments and testimonials.

3.3.1 Language Centre study environment

Pressure on the availability of the Language Centre for curriculum study continued. Following on from the enhancements made in 2006/07 more student language assistants were trained and additional signage was introduced.

3.3.2 Languages Programme

The Review for Closure of the Languages Programme was successfully undertaken in June 2008, and the panel commended the team for the very positive response from the students regarding the excellent academic support they had received. The units continued to be

offered within their host programmes this year and the External Examiners' feedback, reported in the ARPM, was again very complementary about the standards achieved by the students and the professionalism of the team.

3.4 Library and the Learning Space

Feedback received from:

- Suggestion scheme available from <http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/asfeedback/comments.html>
- Focus groups about the Library and about Additional Learning Needs;
- Academic Services and IT Student Advisory Group (ASITSAG) minutes;
- School programme meetings; Annual Reports on Programme Monitoring (ARPM); School Committees;
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- University reports received including student submissions as part of the QAA developmental engagements and Institutional Review.

3.4.1 ***Needing to improve further the study environment in The Sir Michael Cobham Library and BH Library***

Despite the past three year's increase in group learning space by over 100 places, the request for yet more group space as well as maintaining silent study areas continued. In the summer of 2008 half of the ground floor computers were relocated to the perimeter of the building and the study space was reconfigured with six techno booths for group work offering access to interactive white boards, PC and laptop connectivity. The facility is already very popular. Seven large group tables with access to power for laptops were introduced as well as sofa seating and refreshment vending. The increase in social learning space has already resulted in the three floors designated for silent study being used appropriately.

Bournemouth House Library benefited from a reduction in shelving required for print resources with the space saved being used for two new group clusters, one of which has four additional PCs.

3.4.2 ***Booking facility for PCs***

Feedback from ASITSAG indicated a clear need for some element of PC booking for serious study. A solution is being trialled this year with the 6 techno booths; 16 research PCs on the first floor and 10 PCs in a silent study zone on the third floor.

3.4.3 ***Enhancement to accessing help and advice***

The focus groups held with researchers and with taught students both confirmed the need for more help and advice available online to compliment our appointment service and our information skills programme. A specific suggestion was to introduce a CHAT service. This facility has been added to our other virtual enquiry services reported on last year which include the library section of the University's virtual advisory askBU; blogs; podcasts and our single number telephone help service. Our Blogs highlighting new resources are being regularly consulted. Advice about setting up RSS feeds is also included in our webpages.

3.4.4 ***Continued dissatisfaction with the availability of library text books***

Despite this being a perennial complaint which will never be eradicated and most recently mentioned in the Student Written Submission to Institutional Audit, we continue our emphasis on finding e-solutions that will increase access whether the library buildings are open or not. Our 2007 report gave details of how access is changing from print to e and we now have over 42,000 e-journals and report series and 48,000 e-books. The Subject Librarians are working closely with their Schools to give advice on all possible e-solutions available. Reading lists are linked to the units in myBU so that all the resources whether print textbooks or e-books and journal articles recommended by lecturers are easily accessible to every student.

The second year of our Copyright Licensing Agency agreement to scan eligible key articles and book chapters from the short loan collection has resulted in over 500 high demand

items now being in the myBU e-reserves collection. From August 2008, with some restrictions, this can now include American publications.

3.5 MA Academic Practice and Learning & Teaching Induction for new staff

Feedback received from:

- Staff comment and evaluation on MAAP course and myBU training programme.

3.5.1 Course review

The programme was revalidated as the PG Certificate in Education Practice to run over one year, and participants can now choose to take individual units over a two year period, to fit in with individual work commitments.

3.6 Peer Assisted Learning – Annual Evaluation of PAL

Feedback received from:

- The annual evaluations of the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) scheme and study support workshops.

3.6.1 Action plan

The action plan includes recommendations that:

- PAL leaders be better informed about the topic areas their students are currently studying and the assignments on which their students are working;
- An introduction to PAL is given during induction week by the School PAL contacts to the new students;
- More information about PAL is shared with members of the teaching team other than the PAL Contacts.
- Timetabling continues to be carefully considered by PAL contacts as despite improvements the students evidence how easily timetabling can become a barrier to the success of PAL;
- PAL Contacts are asked to work with their PLA leaders to give advice on handling boisterous or disruptive students.

3.7 Study Support

Feedback received from:

- The annual evaluations of the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) scheme and study support workshops.
- Review of Study Support with Schools

In response to increased demand for study support, enhancements to the service this year included extensive development of an Academic Skills Community available within myBU. This is being promoted to all students whether on campus or studying in Partner Institutions.

Staff development workshops on incorporating these materials into academic programmes are being offered to all Schools for 2008/09.

4. PRAISE HAS BEEN RECEIVED ABOUT A WIDE RANGE OF INDIVIDUALS AND SERVICES FROM ALL AREAS OF ACADEMIC SERVICES DURING 2007

What follows are just some of the many examples:

4.1 Additional Learning Needs

The following is typical of the testimonials received from grateful staff and students each year:

4.1.1 From the Focus Group

Experience in accessing the service:

“it’s been a positive experience. Once I knew about the service it was easy to access and very helpful.”

“My experience has been quite good to be fair overall. I suppose initially once things are made aware to you and you are advised what to do, things start to happen and the overall

impression I got was that the people were helpful, the information you were given was good. The advice and ongoing support has been excellent as well."

Tutor support:

"They were very supportive. I can't fault them you know. I'm very pleased so I've had a lot of support I mean I had a very short period of time didn't I? to kind of get everything involved. All the equipment and learn it. I had to battle with getting back on the course since I failed last year."

Time and Task Management Support:

"In my first year I didn't do too much, it was really just note taking that was it. But from my 2nd year onwards I also had troubles with my course and then I took advantage of this time management and mentoring and so on and so on."

4.1.2 From academic staff

"Thank you and your department for all your help and support to XXX and all our other students that you have and are supporting."

4.1.3 From disability WP work with local community

"Information was given very clearly about the amount of funding available and how to apply for it, also what it could be used for – PCs etc.

"The two people giving the information were excellent as they had both been through the system with learning difficulties and experienced it first hand."

Teacher

"Thanks for coming in James, I hope it has opened up a new channel of communication between us and helps your project and our students."

4.2 Educational Development Services

4.2.1 Staff comments

CS: "The myBU assessment session went extremely well and was much appreciated. We all went away from the event with a range of ideas as to assessment activities that we would like to develop further."

HSC: "Just wanted to say I felt I got a lot from the training today for myBU, I had a better understanding of what it was used for, what I personally could do and managed to navigate around."

HR: "I've found the support you've all offered invaluable in developing myBU as a Staff Development tool. The fruits of this will be shown this next term as we launch 3 important new communities – one for new staff, one for senior staff to support their leadership development and a third aimed at developing management capability which will be available to all staff."

4.3 Library service

4.3.1 From the Researcher Focus Group

"we definitely still need libraries you are the experts with your information management skills"

"there is so much information and the landscape keeps changing the Librarians help us keep up to date"

4.3.2 From the Taught Students Focus Group

"The Subject Librarian was useful for references/information when searching for my dissertation".

"Its nice to know there are skilled Library staff to help with finding books and journals when I need it"

"There'll always be a need for libraries and someone to talk to".

"As well as all the services you already offer it would be good to have an instant messaging facility so that could ask questions any time and get an immediate answer".

4.3.3 From verbal feedback about the introduction of the new learning space and the techno booths

"fantastic"; "wonderful" "its great to be able to use our lap tops and a PC together"

4.4 MAAP & PG Certificate

"Thank you very much for the team effort yesterday! It was a session packed full of information and it seemed that this level of information and knowledge was definitely needed by the programme participants. Thank you for organising the full star cast and to each of the presenters for your time and effort - it was much appreciated...It was a very positive contribution from everyone and so thank you again for your willingness to contribute".

4.5 Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)

The following comments are just a few of the many comments detailed in the annual review of PAL:

4.5.1 Skills developed through being a PAL leader

"I developed my own self confidence dramatically through PAL and my ability to speak in front of others, and it increased my faith in myself and my own academic ability."

"I improved on my organisation and preparation skills. Being able to plan and complete a strong session. I was able to present information about topic areas I wasn't strong on and enable discussions to take place to help the students build their thoughts. "

4.5.2 Best thing about being a PAL leader

"Meeting a whole new bunch of people who are as enthusiastic about the subject as I am."

4.5.3 On the first year experience

"PAL makes the first year a much more enjoyable experience."

"it helped me to gain confidence so that whenever I was stuck I didn't need to be worried about asking a busy tutor, I could merely email a PAL leader and get a quick response."