

**Faculty Student Voice Digest:  
Science  
May 2016**

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## **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

This digest complements our main report, but goes into more detail about feedback we have received from students in Science specifically.

Although the sample sizes throughout this report are not always substantial, our face to face work confirms what various local and national reports such as the NSS inform us year in and year out, and also raise the profile of student voice with students. In addition, many of the comments being made are reflective of what has been reported through the Faculty Student Voice Reports for a number of years now.

Most importantly our work going out and talking to students offers more insight to the depth of the problem, and will often point towards the solution. Talking to students can also be a valuable tool for determining not just whether or not LJMU has a policy in place, but whether or not this policy is recognised by students, and working in practice to improve their learning experience.

You will see that there are a number of areas within this section which have been highlighted as a potential issue, but given the student numbers commenting, we have not made a firm recommendation, as we would welcome working with Science to explore them in more depth and to understand them better.

## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Faculty Education Committee, and relevant faculty staff to highlight issues raised within this report that they would like to work with LiverpoolSU on, to explore further.
2. Support Programme Leaders to work in partnership with students, via their Course Reps, to establish the particular timetabling needs of the class and address these where possible.
3. Explore the possibility of students being able to know roughly what days and times modules will run, to allow them to make an informed decision when picking their options.
4. To work in partnership with LiverpoolSU to hold a placement question and answer event annually, at an appropriate time.
5. Raise awareness and improve communication about the policy that outlines that lecture aids should be available via Blackboard a minimum of 24 hours before the lecture takes place, and work with Course Reps to monitor that this is happening.

## AMAZING TEACHING IN SCIENCE

LiverpoolSU are pleased to be able to publish a full list of individuals nominated for each award within Science:

Amazing Teacher Undergraduate Award				
Alan De Asha	David Todd	Gaynor Bresnen	Marek Palasinski	Peter Falkington
Alan Gunn	Dr Catherine Willis	George Sharples	Mark Feltham	Peter Malinowski
Amanda Reid	Dr Ian Cubbin	Gordon Lowe	Mark Murphy	Phil Rowe
Andrew Leach	Dr Javier Barco Trillo	Helen Burrell	Mark Nesti	Philip Denton
Andy Evans	Dr Katie Evans	Ian Harvey	Mark Scott	Professor George Sharples
Anna Law	Dr Lee Graves	James Downing	Megan Milne	Professor Keith George
Anne-Marie Adams	Dr Masi Noor	Joanne Morrissey	Melissa Russell	Rebecca Walters
Barry Nicholls	Dr Matt Roberts	Joel Irish	Mike Davies	Robbie Rae
Brian Preston	Dr Nicholas Bryan	John Morrissey	Mike Traynor	Sally Williamson
Claire Wilson	Dr Patricia Burke	Jos Vanrentenghen	Jonathan Davies	Sam Shepherd
Constantine Eliopoulos	Dr Peter Penson	Justine Webster	Neil Henney	Sarah Dalrymple
Dave Wilkinson	Dr Touraj Ehtezazi	Kehinde Ross	Nicholas Bryan	Silvia Gonzalez
David Jordan	Elizabeth Whitfield	Kenneth Ritchie	Pat Barry	Stephen Fairclough
David McIlroy	Ellen Dawson	Laura Hughes	Patrick Byrne	Steve Enoch
David Moore	Fyaz Ismail	Laura Mirams	Paul Lattimore	

Amazing Teacher Postgraduate Award				
Darren Sexton	Dr Matt Roberts	Gareth Hunt	Mark Feltham	Paul Lattimore
Dr Ian Cubbin	Dr Matteo Borrini	Graeme Close	Mark Scott	Steve Enoch
Dr Jason Kirby	Fyaz Ismail	James Morton	Neil Henney	Vicki Anderson

Amazing Course Rep Award				
Alicia Mottram	Eloni-Jayne Lewis	Howisha Charlery	Megan Milne	Rhys Hawker
Alisha Halpin	Gene Ceguera	Justine Webster	Melissa Stanworth	Will Lister
Aneesa Khalid	Georgia Brown	Kallum Dray	Nihad Mahama	
Bupe Mwambingu Fath El Bab	Hannah Church	Leticia Morais da Silva	Patricia Mawire	
Christopher Leech	Heike Faith Adex	Matthew Mcelroy	Phaedra Zarach	

Amazing Academic Supervisor Award				
Andrew Young	Dr Constantine Eliopoulos	Dr Matteo Borrini	Dr Zoe Knowles	Pat Berry
Anna Law	Dr Janice Harland	Dr Michael Richter	Dr. Mark Robinson	Paul Lattimore
Colm Bowe	Dr Jennifer McLaughlin	Dr Neil Henney	Elaine Hemers	Prof Joel Irish
David Bourke	Dr John Morrissey	Dr Nicola Koyama	Elizabeth Whitfield	Robbie Rae
David Low	Dr Katie Evans	Dr Phil Riby	Gordon Lowe	Sally Williamson
Dr Adam Sharples	Dr Kostas Kiriakoulakis	Dr Robert Erskine	Helen Smalley	Stephen Fairclough
Dr Anne Marie Adams	Dr Lee Graves	Dr Ruth Ogden	Janice Harland	
Dr Celine Germond-Duret	Dr Mark Murphy	Dr Yvonne Harrison	Kanayo Umeh	

Amazing Course Team Award	
Biomedical Science	Pharmacy
Geography	Sport and Exercise Science
Introduction to Microbiology	Zoology
MSc Sport Nutrition	

<b>Amazing Feedback Award</b>	
Alan Gunn	Dr Robert Erskine
Amanda Boddis	Kehinde Ross
Dr Darren Sexton	Steve Enoch
Dr Melissa Russell	

<b>Amazing Personal Tutor Award</b>				
Amanda Boddis	Dr David McIlroy	Gary Eltringham	Mark Murphy	Sarah Dalrymple
Andrew Evans	Dr Gordon Lowe	Gaynor Bresnen	Martin Eubank	Sheelagh Conlan
Andrias O'Reilly	Dr Graeme Close	George Sharples	Masi Noor	Silvia Gonzalez
Anna Law	Dr Katie Evans	Isabelle De Groot	Matteo Borrini	Simon Bennett
Bob Morris	Dr Laura Randell	James Downing	Melissa Russell	Simon Brandt
Catherine Willis	Dr Neil Henney	Jennifer McLaughlin	Michael Richter	Steven Enoch
Colm Bowe	Dr Patricia Burke	Joanne Morrissey	Pat Barry	Susan Palmer-Conn
David Jordan	Dr Patrick Byrne	Joel Irish	Paul Lattimore	Suzanne Cutler
Dr Brian Preston	Dr Sharon Moore	John Morrissey	Paula Watson	Yvonne Harrison
Dr Christopher Hunt	Elaine Hemers	Jonathan Davies	Khalid Rahman	Sarah Dalrymple
Dr Constantine Eliopoulos	Elizabeth Whitfield	Kanayo Umeh	Robbie Rae	
Dr Dave Harriss	Ellen Dawson	Kostas Kiriakoulakis	Ruth Ogden	
Dr David Bourke	Francesca Giuntini	Laura Mirams	Sally Woods	

<b>Amazing Employability Award</b>	
Joanne Morrissey	Francesca Giuntini

## THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN SCIENCE

The week commencing the 26<sup>th</sup> October we asked students across Science the two following questions;

- What do you love most about your academic experience at LJMU?
- What one thing would you like to see improved at LJMU to enhance your academic experience?

We received feedback from 183 students from across the faculty, covering 24 programmes from across the 3 schools. For the purpose of this report we have filtered down feedback into five out of the six areas of the National Student Survey (NSS). The section of comments which relate to Teaching Quality can be found in the section for Academic Priorities.

### Organisation and Management

Almost two thirds of students (114) students spoke to us about their timetables, with a mix of positive and negative comments.

One of the prevalent themes was timetabling with 46 students talking about it. Only a handful of students commented positively on their timetables, saying the timetables allowed them to work outside of lectures and allowed flexibility of study. The larger proportion of students thought timetables were an area that could be improved.

Student comments related to long gaps between lectures, and early lectures being inconvenient for commuters, and the walk between campuses for some courses being tiresome and time wasting. Some students wanted more time off, whether that be for more study time or to spend time with their families. Other students wanted full days in university to be spread out as they were too intense. There were a vast array of opinions, with some students wanting more contact time with smaller group teaching and in depth lectures, whilst other students wanted less contact time.

Further, many students comments related to the accessibility of their timetables, saying they were confusing and difficult to understand. What is clear from the student responses is that students have different personal preferences to their timetables, with many factors affecting what they believe makes a good timetables and what can be improved.

LiverpoolSU appreciate the challenges the timetabling teams can experience and recognise the amount of work that has gone into addressing these issues over the last few years. We are excited to be involved with the ongoing timetabling project which is seeking to create a much more centralised and efficient system for

creating the timetable and we are especially pleased that the Estates team are putting students' wants and needs at the centre of this work. We look forward to seeing the impact of this.

We are also aware that recent changes have been made to the timetabling system and that more work is going to be done to improve the system. We are also aware that more data regarding student preferences for timetabling is going to be collected in the future to go towards the new system, and so these comments should be taken in the spirit with which they were collected.

It is clear that this is something that has no simple solution as it would be impossible to ever please everyone, additionally it seems evident that this is something which needs to be addressed at a course level, as well as an LJMU wide one. We would be interested in starting a conversation with, and hearing the views of relevant staff about how this could happen. LiverpoolSU believes that it is particularly important to work in partnership with students, via their Course Reps, to establish the particular timetabling needs of the class and address these where possible.

Students also commented that the range of modules on their course offered them more experience. A few students said that the modules on offer provided a good balance and helped them progress, which also aided employability in the future. Whilst a number of other students commented positively upon the structure of the course, specifically mentioning the benefits of small group teaching in tutorials and group work.

Out of the 18 students who spoke about practical work and field trips, 16 comments were positive. Students liked being able to get practical experience, enjoying a different environment and gaining skills for the future. This topic area will be discussed more in the learning resources section.

Dissatisfaction with timetables seems to be a recurrent theme, with students expressing their concerns in previous years. The NSS score for organisation and management within the Faculty of Science is 80%, which is admirable, but shows there is still room for improvement. LiverpoolSU believes that any changes to the timetabling system should be made in partnership with students and have student feedback at the centre, and the process and changes should be transparent to students. We would welcome working in partnership with Science to explore ways to do this and help to make it happen.

### Learning Resources

Out of 139 students who made comments relating to

learning resources, there was an even split between positive and negative comments.

Practical sessions were one of the most prominent themes, with a number of students making positive comments about their practical experiences. Students remarked that practical sessions gave them a more realistic view of their course and made it more enjoyable to learn. Students said that practical sessions, such as labs, gave students the opportunity to ask questions, get advice and solve problems. A small proportion of students wanted more practicals and this was also raised by Course Reps through their Boards of Study as well, showing how valuable an experience students think they are. Both Boards of Study responded with actions to address this and we would welcome these courses specifically looking to gather feedback on whether the actions they have taken has had a positive impact on the student experience and addressed the issues which Course Reps raised.

Positive comments relating to learning resources ranged from students enjoying the lecture notes and off campus applications, the ease of access to blackboard and materials on there, and the library resources. Some students also commented positively on the facilities and equipment, including laboratories. However, a number of students also felt the learning resources could be improved, some suggested recording lectures (both audio and video) to put online, putting lectures slides on Blackboard before lectures and using 'Textwall' more often. We believe that this is something that can already be achieved from a technical perspective through lecture capture, and is already being used in some courses in the Science faculty. As a subject that was discussed by Jim Turner, during a recent Science away day, it would be great to explore how we can make this standard practice for students in the faculty. Students asking for lecture slides to be put on Blackboard has also been raised at a Board of Study in the faculty, and through our International Student Project. International students commented that whilst some lecturers uploaded slides before the lecture, this practice needed to be extended to all lectures, and become standard practice. When this was raised via our 2014 December FSVR, the faculty response was that this was a policy that had already been in place for 2-3 years, however it became apparent that there was confusion amongst staff as to the awareness and interpretation of this policy, action was taken at the time to make staff more aware, with a new link to the policies, and so it is disappointing that this is still being raised and it is clear that further work needs to be done to ensure that the policy is being met.

The need for more printing and computer equipment at Byrom Street was a prominent theme for improvement, with students saying it was difficult to find free computers to do work between lectures, or to print off last minute

lecture notes. Some students also wanted to see longer availability for computers, asking for 24/7 access to facilities. This issue was also reflected by students in the Faculty of Engineering and Technology.

As this faculty has many programmes which require specialist resources, lab and field work, it is unsurprising that learning resources were an important issue for students. The faculty is also making many advances into utilising technology in the classrooms, using initiatives such as Textwall and trialling Learning Catalytics, which have been positively received by students. These practices could be disseminated amongst other faculties were relevant, specifically as there were positive comments from students about these initiatives.

The NSS scores for learning resources for the faculty stands at an impressive 90%, reflecting in the positive comments about the learning resources available to students. However, the overall score regarding access to general IT resources has dropped 2% from 2014. It may be useful for the faculties at Byrom Street to consult students about the general IT resources available to students at this campus and how they could be improved.

### **Academic Support**

The majority of the comments received about academic support were positive. The most prominent themes was support students received from lecturers or tutors, with a number of students expressing that the faculty staff were friendly, helpful, approachable and provided a good level of support. A number of students also mentioned that it was easy to contact lecturers in order to get help with problems, and lecturers were quick to respond with advice. This is a sentiment reflected from our International Student Project, where many of the students felt lecturers were helpful, friendly and took "extra care" to explain parts of content that may be harder to grasp for international students.

Student comments showed they enjoyed lab sessions and workshops which gave them better access to lecturers for help. A few students suggested improvements, where they wanted more drop in sessions with lecturers, more workshops or group work and better access to the academic staff in order to get help and support. Further, some students talked of better quality information coming from staff, and information coming in advance such as before lab sessions or workshops, in order to better prepare for these sessions. We would be keen to hear the views of colleagues in Science as to whether this is possible and what options there are for making this happen.

The NSS score for academic support for this faculty currently stands at 81%, the positive areas students highlighted when we spoke to them are reflected in the



answers to the NSS questions, such as whether students were able to contact staff when they needed to, where 87% of students mostly or definitely agreed.

### **Assessment and Feedback**

A number of students commented upon assessment and feedback with all but a couple of these comments being negative. The main theme emerging from the comments was the bunching of exams and assessment deadlines. Students wanted deadlines and exams to be spread apart so that they were not loaded with too much work at one time. A few students were also particularly concerned that deadline bunching was affecting the quality of the work they were producing. Student suggestions ranged from communication between module leaders to reduce deadline bunching, shorter term assignments throughout the academic year and less loading of work in Level 6.

Unfortunately under the assessment and feedback section of the NSS it does not provide students with the opportunity to feedback regarding this concern. The issue of assessment bunching was also discussed in our recent Student Written Submission, and has been raised as an issue in past FSVRs. This highlights the importance of our work going out and talking to students, as it provides students the opportunity to feedback about concerns that fall outside of the remit of the NSS and dig deeper into the reasons why students might be answering some questions in the ways that they are.

However, this is certainly not a Science specific issue, and assessment and feedback remains a top priority for LiverpoolSU to address at University level, as it is regularly mentioned to us by students and has been consistently the lowest scoring area of the NSS. The overall satisfaction at LJMU for assessment and feedback stands at 75%, with the faculty of Science behind this at 73% satisfaction. In response to this we have recently produced a [‘Making Assessment and Feedback Better’](#) report to be tabled at Education Committee.

### **Personal Development**

Out of 73 student comments relating to personal development, 64 comments were positive.

Around a third of these students remarked that they loved the atmosphere at LJMU which allowed them to meet new people and foster friendships. Students enjoyed the opportunities to meet other like-minded individuals in the classrooms, during group work sessions, and outside the classroom at socials and in Liverpool in general.

When asked about what they loved most about their academic experience, many students commented upon

their course, which they believed helped them achieve, built their confidence as well as expanded their knowledge and interest in their chosen field. Students also expressed a passion for learning and found their courses challenging and interesting, developing themselves through the process of learning.

Further student comments related to careers and employability. Students talked about gaining real life experiences from practical sessions and placements, which provided them with more opportunities and a different way of learning. A number of students also talked about making contacts, and developing their employability for the future.

The NSS score for personal development has continued to increase from 2012-2015 for LJMU overall, and the faculty score now stands at 84%, 1% above the national average. However, the student comments from above are not particularly reflected in the questions that the NSS asks, which centre on building confidence in communication and solving problem, and it is great to see that this is an area that is being valued.

From the small proportion of students who suggested improvements related to personal development, comments were made regarding how it was hard to make time for themselves and their families outside of studies.

## ACADEMIC PRIORITIES FOR SCIENCE STUDENTS

At the start of this year, we asked 1,920 LJMU students what their number one academic priority for the year ahead was. In Science 468 students had their say, and they picked Placements (chosen by 139 students) and Teaching Quality (chosen by 137 students) as their top priorities.

As a result of this LiverpoolSU has responded in a number of different ways, including;

- Meeting with senior LJMU staff to plan things like faculty events for students to ask direct questions to staff responsible for these areas,
- Creating a [section on our website](#) dedicated to placements, these webpages currently contain information such as top tips for placement students, placement student experiences from across LJMU faculties and placement opportunities at LiverpoolSU. There are feedback mechanisms on the website for students to provide LiverpoolSU with comments regarding their placement, before during and after,
- Submitting a policy to the National Union of Students Annual Conference asking them to commission research into students who do vocational placements,
- Participating in national consultation around the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework.

In addition to the things that we have already done, we would like to share with you the feedback that students from Science have shared with us, via this report.

### Placements

In November 2015 LiverpoolSU held faculty specific events across the campuses for students to speak to their academic staff and placements teams. These events were targeted at Course Reps, although were open to all students to attend.

Students from Science were able to talk to Phil Denton, the Associate Dean (Education) and Jamie Fearn, the Placement Learning Support Unit Manager from World of Work about issues surrounding teaching quality and placements. As turnout was low, we are looking to how we can improve and hold another event in the future. Any feedback received at this event was passed to the Associate Dean (Education) at the time that it took place.

### Teaching Quality

The NSS currently identifies four key areas that relates to teaching on a course; this includes; explanations, interesting subject, staff enthusiasm and being intellectually stimulating. These factors were discussed

in the 2014-15 FSVR and in our recent Student Written Submission, which both talked about Teaching Quality being one of LiverpoolSU top academic priorities, due to the regularity with which students spoke to us about it. Within these documents, we further explored how students at a local and national level view teaching quality.

In response to students choosing it as an academic priority again for 2015/16 we have carried out two weeks of going out and talking to students via our MiniSUs and through Course Reps, as well as a series of lecture shouts. We would like to thank Phil Denton and Ian Bradshaw, for their input and support in putting these questions together.

During the first week of MiniSU activity, we spoke to 185 Science students about their academic experience as a whole, and asked them the following questions;

- What do you love most about your academic experience at LJMU?
- What one thing would you like to see improved at LJMU to enhance your academic experience?

During the second week of MiniSU activity, we spoke to 195 Science students specifically about teaching quality, and asked them the following questions;

- Describe what makes a good lecture
- Describe what you think makes good teaching
- What examples have you experienced in either of the above?

Finally, the lecture shouts also focussed specifically on teaching quality. We spoke to 78 students via lecture shouts, where we sought to find out more information following on from the results of the UK Engagement Survey. These students were asked the following questions;

- How often have you discussed ideas from your course with teaching staff outside taught sessions, including by email/online?
- How often have you been encouraged through teaching to connect your learning to real-world problems or issues?
- Do you feel support to be academically successful at LJMU?

### Week One – Academic Experience

Out of the 185 students we spoke to about their academic experience, 110 made comments that highlighted teaching quality as the thing they loved most

about their academic experience, with the majority of these relating to positive experiences.

Students who spoke positively commented that lecturers were engaging and provided in-depth and interesting teaching styles, and that they were willing to go through difficult topics for the benefit of students. Further, many students talked about how approachable and friendly staff were. This is reflective of the positive comments we received about lectures and teaching when we asked students more directed questions about teaching quality.

Students also enjoyed the use of small group teaching to aid their learning, including labs, workshops and placements; the interactive nature of these provided students with a more hands on experience to translate the skills from lectures in to real life situations. The use of varied learning resources was a prominent theme when students were describing good lectures and teaching. These comments are mirrored in our International Student Project, where those students surveyed said they like lectures which were interactive, involved students and were practical.

A number of student comments also related to where they would like to improve the quality of teaching. Some students wanted more contact time and more practical sessions, as well as more diverse teaching methods. Students also commented that the lectures could be made more interactive, methods of which can be found in how students described good lectures and teaching later on in this section. Perhaps it would be beneficial for staff to work with Course Reps to establish what other teaching styles they would like to see in order to improve their learning and then explore what is manageable.

Satisfaction for the 'Teaching on my Course' section of the NSS for the faculty of Science currently stands at 84%. Although this is a respectable score, it is the lowest of the four faculties at LJMU and behind the national average. We hope that the advances in technology as a way to aid learning that have been made by the faculty may contribute towards improved NSS scores in the future, as many students highlighted the current use of different and diverse teaching methods as something which aided their academic experience.

## **Week Two – Teaching Quality**

### *Describe what you think makes a good lecture*

When students were asked about what they believed made a good lecture, the comments overwhelming related to engagement of staff with students, and students with their lecture with 146 students' comments within this theme. Interactive learning featured in many of the comments, which links with the use of learning resources and technology. Students liked lectures with

varied teaching methods, and lectures that included quizzes, debates, questions, videos, pictures and diagrams. Specific mention was also made about 'Textwall'. These methods allowed students to check their understanding and involved the students as participants in the lecture, rather than just being the audience. Many students highlighted the importance of questions, both being asked to them in the lecture, allowing time for debate, as well as having the opportunity to raise questions themselves throughout the lectures and at the end.

Despite the 'death by PowerPoint' comments that we frequently receive, students spoke about the benefits they can add to levels of engagement, when used interestingly and well. Students thought that when PowerPoint was used well, it included small amounts of concise text on slides and varying forms of content, like diagrams and animations. However, students did still emphasise that reliance on and/or reading off of PowerPoints was disengaging. They emphasised the need for extra information away from the slides with detailed and in-depth explanations from lecturers. This sentiment is reflected from our International Student Project, where the survey respondents noted that they liked interactive lectures with the use of social media and examples or first-hand experience of the topic.

Student comments related to good lectures having interesting content, provided through concise explanations and descriptions which engage students. A great deal of students also thought that breaks were important for good lectures, allowing students to take the information in and reflect upon it.

### *Describe what you think makes good teaching*

Once again, students highlighted that staff engagement with students and the student's engagement with the lecture content was the most popular with 115 comments relating to this area.

In reference to engagement, students talked about the importance of communication. Students' comments related to lecturers being effective communicators, who do not just read from the PowerPoint but provide further explanations around the topics and checked student understanding throughout sessions. Using a clear voice, speaking with confidence and being enthusiastic about the topics were also important ideals. Interactive learning, using resources and technology, which allowed students to get more involved was also used to describe good teaching; setting out clear learning objectives, asking questions, taking polls and encouraging discussions were all mentioned.

Staff knowledge and passion was also a prominent topic with a number of students commenting upon this. Students felt that when staff were perceived to be

passionate and enthusiastic, this in turn passed on to the students, which naturally made them more engaged, aiding their learning. Students also appreciated the use of examples, especially where lecturers applied their own experiences in the field to the content as well as application to real life situations. These methods allowed students to convert their knowledge to practical situations.

Staff approachability and friendliness also contributed to good teaching for students. Students' comments related to warm personalities, a nice environment to learn, and humour from lecturers.

*What examples have you experienced in either of the above?*

Students were asked to provide examples of where they have experienced a good lecture or good teaching. A great volume of students wanted to highlight specific modules, lectures and lecturers on their course that they found outstanding.

Students spoke about a number of examples, including the use of Textwall, where lecturers ask questions and recap from previous lectures, and where practicals are followed up by relevant theory in the following lecture.

If the faculty would like the information on the particular staff or modules that were selected by their students as examples of good teaching, so that they are able to share best practice, please do not hesitate to contact the Student Voice Team for more information.

### **Lecture Shouts – Teaching Quality**

Despite the low number of responses to these questions, due to not being invited into many lectures, we believe these initial responses can provide key insight for the faculty and establish a starting point for areas that we might like to explore further. We would be really grateful if staff from Science could advise on how we can reach more lectures next year, so that we can reach a greater number of students and provide the faculty with more significant feedback.

*How often have you discussed ideas from your course with teaching staff outside taught sessions, including by email/online?*

When asked how often students have discussed ideas with teaching staff outside taught sessions, answers varied widely. 32 students noted that they have never discussed ideas outside of a taught learning session, whilst 21 students commented they did this on a few occasions. Many students referred to tutorials sessions as a way that they raise any issues that occur. 21 students noted that they discussed ideas outside of scheduled teaching hours often or very often, with

students mentioning communications via email and communication happening more frequently around exam or deadline times. A handful of students also said that they contacted staff outside of regular teaching hours as and when they needed to, or when they were having issues.

Many of these comments reflect how students have previously said that faculty staff are easily accessible to students and willing to help. Although many students said they did not discuss ideas outside of scheduled sessions, this is not indicative of staff being unable or unwilling to help, but rather could be that students have not sought out staff, or do not require their help outside of taught sessions.

We believe that it is important for the faculty to set expectations as to how students are able to discuss ideas outside of taught sessions and how long they should expect to wait for a reply. Whilst it is encouraging that students speak positively about being able to contact lecturers 'as and when' they need to, this is not manageable and may create unrealistic expectations that are hard for LJMU and its staff to live up to. As such, it would be a positive step forward for students' expectations to be managed as to the maximum amount of time by when they should expect a reply.

*How often have you been encouraged through teaching to connect your learning to real-world problems or issues?*

When asked how often they have been encouraged through teaching to connect learning to real-world problems or issues, the most striking thing about student's feedback was how much it varied, even those studying on the same course at the same level. Half of the level 4 students from one course commented that they are 'never' or 'not very often' encouraged to connect teaching to real world problems, with the other half from the same course at the same level saying they are encouraged to do this the majority of the time in most or all lectures. Similarly on another course at level 6, 20 students said they were encouraged to connect real world issues to teaching often or all the time, whilst 5 students said they were never encouraged to do this, and a further 7 students remarked they only were encouraged sometimes.

This may highlight a discrepancy in student expectations or indeed how students perceive the use of real-world problems or issues used in teaching. Given real-world examples are something that is so frequently requested by students, and the University believing this is something that already happens, it is important that this is addressed.

Given the low numbers and the basic level of understanding we have gained from these questions,

our findings will need to be explored in more detail, and the faculty may wish to undertake some research into what students expect, and what they perceive to be the use of real-world problems in teaching.

*Do you feel supported to be academically successful at LJMU?*

Students were overwhelmingly positive when being asked this question, with 77 out of the 78 student spoken to, stating yes. This was the highest of all four faculties, and alongside the positive feedback received about Academic Support, is something for which staff from Science should be really proud of.

## **SCIENCE SUPPORTING THE COURSE REP SCHEME**

The School Administrators have been a great asset in providing Board of Study dates at the beginning of September, and we would like to specifically thank Mark Prosser and Ed Wells for their support. This allowed the Student Voice Team to schedule training in advance of Course Reps attending the first Boards of Study and to avoid clashes with these wherever possible. In addition, they have aided with the distribution of 'Course Rep information for LJMU staff' postcards to staff member and encouraged staff to collect the 'You're a Course Rep' cards.

The work of LJMU staff in the Science faculty has ultimately reflected in the high proportion of trained Course Reps in Science. Programme Leaders were also particularly great at communicating with students about training and referring new Course Reps to LiverpoolSU where necessary.

We would like to say thank you to the support we have received from Andy Tattersall, Dave Richardson and Satyajit Sarker in their role as School Directors with supporting the Course Rep System.

## ADVICE, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The tables below show a variety of statistics about the students from Science who used our Advice Service, the courses who used the service the most and what they needed support with. These statistics are from 1<sup>st</sup> June to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015, which is our particularly busy period, and then further tables show statistics from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 to 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> June and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015, we saw 69 students from Science, which was 23% of the total number of students who accessed our service from across LJMU. Table 1 shows what the issues were that students needed support with and Table 2 shows the top five programmes students who accessed the service came from.

**Table 1**

Category	No. of Clients
Academic Misconduct	4
Academic Appeals	18
Asked to Withdraw	3
Complaint	4
Course Transfer	2
Extenuating Circumstances	8
General Advice	3
Progression/Failed Assessment	27

**Table 2**

Programme
MPharm Pharmacy
Biomedical Science
Biology
Biochemistry
Sports and Exercise Sciences

Between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 and 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016, we saw 28 students from Science, which was 20% of the total number of students who accessed our service from across LJMU during this time. Table 3 shows what the issues were that students needed support with and Table 4 shows the top five programmes students who accessed the service came from.

**Table 3**

Category	No. of Clients
Academic Misconduct	3
Academic Appeals	1
Asked to Withdraw	3
Complaint	6
Contract Advice	1
Extenuating Circumstances	4
General Advice	5
Permanent Withdrawal	1
Placement	2
Progression/Failed Assessment	2

**Table 4**

Programme
Applied Psychology
Sports and Exercise Sciences
Biomedical Science
MPharm Pharmacy
Forensic Anthropology



## **CLOSING REMARKS**

We'd like to thank everyone that helped us to prepare this report and we look forward to working with LJMU and students to create an action plan around the recommendations we've identified. It is important for us to close the loop with the students who we ask for feedback, and so if you have any thoughts or questions, or make any changes as a result of the feedback within this report, we'd love to hear about it.

If you have any comments on this report, or its contents, or if you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact Becci McEvoy who is based in the Students' Union located at John Foster Building, 80-98 Mount Pleasant, via telephone on 0151 231 4942 or via email on [R.McEvoy@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:R.McEvoy@ljmu.ac.uk).