



QA48 Annex 4 – Student Engagement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement Through Surveys

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This Annex sets out the requirements for the use of student surveys to inform quality assurance and enhancement (QA&E) of teaching, learning and the academic experience.
- 1.2 All students registered on programmes leading to a University of Bath award must be provided with appropriate and effective opportunities to engage in quality assurance and enhancement (QA&E) through participation in student surveys relating to teaching, learning and the academic experience.
- 1.3 Annex 4 applies to:
 - **Unit evaluation**, which provides detailed insight to support unit-level and departmental quality enhancement, including the monitoring, review, and continuous improvement of teaching, learning and the academic experience. Student engagement with unit evaluation is conducted using Online Unit Evaluations (OUEs)
 - **Internal surveys**, which provide detailed insight to support course/programme-level and institutional QA&E, including the monitoring, review, and continuous improvement of teaching, learning and the academic experience
 - **National benchmarking surveys**, which are used for all the QA&E purposes set out for internal surveys above and, in addition, enable the University to evaluate its performance in comparison with the wider sector and inform strategic decision-making, enhancement activity and external accountability.
- 1.4 This Annex should be read alongside QA48, which defines institutional expectations for student engagement with QA&E across all modes of study.
- 1.5 Student surveys form a core mechanism for individual student engagement in QA&E and provide a key source of evidence for academic decision-making. The interaction between student survey data and other parts of the Quality Assurance Code of Practice is summarised in Section 4 of this Annex.
- 1.6 This Annex applies only to student surveys used to support QA&E of teaching, learning and the academic experience; the principles governing surveys relating to the wider student experience are set out in the University–Students' Union Student Engagement and Voice Partnership Agreement.

2. QA&E Survey Administration

2.1 Student Access and Participation

- 2.1.1 All registered and eligible students must be provided with the opportunity to participate in QA&E surveys relevant to their cohort.
- 2.1.2 Survey design and delivery must ensure that participation is accessible, inclusive, and proportionate, enabling all students to engage regardless of their mode of study, location, or personal circumstances.
- 2.1.3 Surveys must be designed and administered in a manner that:
 - Minimises barriers to participation
 - Supports equitable engagement across different student groups
 - Enables students to provide meaningful feedback on their academic experience

2.2 QA&E Survey Administration

- 2.2.1 Central student surveys used for QA&E are co-ordinated, administered and led by the Centre for Learning & Teaching (CLT) or Learning Partnerships Office (LPO) for partnership online courses. This includes OUEs as well as internal and national benchmarking surveys.
- 2.2.2 The portfolio of surveys may change over time in response to institutional priorities and sector developments.
- 2.2.3 Additional surveys to support student engagement with QA&E may be developed where appropriate; however these must be designed to:
 - Avoid duplication of existing data
 - Be inclusive and accessible to the targeted student cohort. Advice on best practice in survey design is available on the [Student Voice and Partnership webpages](#).
- 2.2.4 Any additional QA&E student survey must be:
 - Scheduled so as not to conflict with centrally coordinated surveys to the same cohort, (noting that multiple strategic QA&E surveys are administered February-May)
 - Notified in advance to the CLT Student Engagement Team
 - Adhere to the principles set out in QA48 and this Annex, including those relating to data analysis, data sharing and closing the feedback loop
 - Outputs should normally be triangulated with other survey data and collective student voice evidence within QA&E reporting.

2.3 Frequency and timing

- 2.3.1 Student surveys used for QA&E must be coordinated to minimise duplication and survey fatigue. The CLT leads co-ordination of student surveys for QA&E purposes.

2.4 Promoting Surveys

- 2.4.1 In the current context of declining response rates and increasing survey fatigue, the effective promotion of QA&E surveys is a shared responsibility across the University. The CLT coordinates survey promotion at institutional and Faculty/School level; however, Academic Departments and relevant Professional Services also play a critical role in supporting engagement. This includes actively promoting surveys to students, providing appropriate time within timetabled sessions (where feasible), and clearly communicating the purpose and value of student survey data and how it will be used. Guidance on effective survey promotion is available via the [Surveys Sharepoint Site](#).

2.5 Closing the feedback loop

- 2.5.1 Closing the feedback loop is essential to ensuring that student engagement with QA&E is meaningful, effective, and sustainable. Students must be informed of the outcomes of their feedback, including:
- Actions taken,
 - Planned improvements, and
 - Reasons where action is not possible.
- 2.5.2 Communication must be timely and accessible and should normally take place at course/programme or unit level.
- 2.5.3 Clear and timely communication of outcomes demonstrates that student input is:
- Valued,
 - Supports transparency,
 - Encourages continued participation in engagement processes.

3. Use of Student Survey Data in Quality Assurance & Enhancement

3.1 Principles of using student QA&E survey data

3.1.1 Survey data must be:

- Analysed systematically
- Used to inform decision-making across the appropriate levels of the institution (unit, course/programme, department, Faculty/School, University, Comparator Universities, Sector).

3.1.2 Survey findings should be interpreted with appropriate context, including:

- Response rates
- Trends over time
- Qualitative feedback.

- 3.1.3 Survey data must be considered alongside other sources of evidence, including collective student voice, to provide a robust and triangulated evidence base for QA&E.

4. Interaction with Other Parts of the Code of Practice

- 4.1 Student survey data forms a core source of evidence within the University's QA&E framework and is used systematically across multiple Quality Assurance processes.
- 4.2 Survey data is used to:
- Inform the approval and amendment of programmes and units (QA3, QA4)
 - Contribute to periodic review of provision (QA13)
 - Support quality assurance of research degrees (QA7)
 - Inform the development and review of assessment, feedback and academic advising practices (QA16, QA33)
 - Support the monitoring of collaborative and distance learning provision (QA20, QA41)
 - Contribute to institutional monitoring and evaluation, including consideration of equality, diversity, and inclusion and external accountability reporting.
- 4.3 The use of survey data within annual education monitoring and enhancement processes is set out in QA51. Student survey data provides one source of evidence and must be considered alongside other inputs when evaluating unit and course quality, as detailed in QA51 and including:
- Assessment outcomes
 - Staff feedback
 - External Examiner reports
 - Other student engagement mechanisms

5. Data Management and Sharing

- 5.1 Survey data must be managed in accordance with data protection legislation and University policy. Guidance is available on the University's [Data information and management](#) page.
- 5.2 Responses must normally be:
- Anonymised; and
 - Reported in aggregate form to prevent identification of individuals.
- 5.3 Access to more detailed data must be proportionate and must not compromise student or staff confidentiality.

6. Monitoring, Reporting and Assurance

Oversight of student surveys is maintained through a structured reporting, monitoring, and assurance framework. Reporting, monitoring and assurance must

ensure that student engagement with QA&E through surveys is effective, inclusive and demonstrably influential in informing decision-making and improvement of the academic experience.

6.1 Monitoring of Survey Delivery

6.1.1 Survey processes must be monitored to ensure that:

- Surveys are delivered in line with agreed institutional schedules
- Opportunities to participate are provided to all eligible students
- Survey design and delivery support accessible and inclusive participation
- Duplication across survey activity is minimised

6.1.2 The CLT Student Engagement Team is responsible for coordinating the monitoring of survey delivery at institutional level.

6.2 Reporting

Summary information on survey delivery must be reported annually through institutional QA&E processes. Reporting must include:

- Confirmation of survey activity undertaken
- An overview of participation
- Identification of any issues affecting delivery or engagement
- Reporting must support oversight by Faculties/Schools and relevant committees and contribute to institutional assurance.

6.3 Institutional Assurance

Institutional assurance is provided through annual reporting to Faculty/School and University-level committees, including Senate and Council, confirming that survey processes:

- Provide appropriate and effective opportunities for student engagement
- Are delivered consistently across the University
- Support QA&E processes as intended.

6.4 Principles for Assurance

- Proportionate and not unduly burdensome
- Focused on effectiveness rather than activity alone
- Aligned with regulatory expectations of the Office for Students and the Quality Assurance Agency regarding appropriate and effective opportunities for student engagement.

6.5 Assurance will focus on metrics that confirm that student engagement with QA&E processes are effective, inclusive and influential.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The effective design, delivery, and use of student surveys for QA&E is a shared responsibility across the University.

7.2 Students

Students are responsible for:

- Engaging with appropriate and effective opportunities to provide feedback through student surveys
- Providing constructive feedback to support the QA&E of teaching, learning and their academic experience.

7.3 Academic Departments/Programme Teams

Academic Departments and Programme Teams are responsible for:

- Promoting surveys to students and supporting participation
- Engaging with survey outcomes at programme and unit level
- Using survey data to inform monitoring, review and enhancement
- Ensuring that outcomes and actions are communicated to students
- Maintaining oversight of actions arising from survey data, including tracking progress and completion
- Ensuring that survey data is incorporated into annual monitoring and enhancement processes in accordance with QA51.

7.4 Professional Services

Relevant professional services contributing to the academic experience, as defined in QA48 Section 3.5, are responsible for:

- Engaging with survey findings relating to the academic support environment
- Contributing to analysis and interpretation where appropriate
- Supporting actions arising from survey data.

7.5 The CLT Student Engagement Team

The CLT Student Engagement Team is responsible for:

- Coordinating the institutional survey portfolio
- Ensuring alignment with QA&E priorities and avoiding duplication
- Promoting institutional surveys
- Advising on survey design, timing and delivery, including proposals for additional surveys
- Coordinating institutional analysis, benchmarking, and reporting
- Delivering student engagement training for staff
- Supporting the effective use of survey data across QA&E processes.

7.6 Faculties/Schools and Institutional Oversight

Faculties/Schools and relevant committees are responsible for:

- Promoting surveys to relevant cohorts
- Receiving and scrutinising survey outputs
- Ensuring appropriate actions are identified and progressed
- Responding to students
- Providing assurance that survey data is effectively used within QA&E processes.

7.7 The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education)

The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) has overall responsibility and annually approves the schedule of student surveys for QA&E.

8. Annual Review of Units: Specific Requirements

8.1 The purpose of annual review of units is to maintain and enhance the quality of units. Annual unit review encompasses two elements:

- Reviewing of the unit (of which an evaluation by students forms a part covering for example unit aims, learning outcomes, teaching modes, unit content and structure, assessment practice and notably formative assessment (see QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback) as well as the environment in which learning and teaching occurs, e.g. teaching space, support services and staff development issues
- Recording that review.

8.2 Heads of Departments have overall responsibility for ensuring that unit review takes place and that any actions are completed. The Director of Teaching, supported by the Director of Studies (Taught Provision or Doctoral, as appropriate) is responsible for ensuring that annual review is undertaken for each unit for which the Department/School is responsible.

8.3 Unit convenors should undertake the review of the unit(s) for which they are responsible at the end of the academic session and take any action necessary. The process for this is common to the review of all units and should encompass the following:

1. Reflection on the actions taken since last year to support enhancement and an assessment of the effectiveness of those actions
2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of formative assessment opportunities (see QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback)
3. Evaluation of feedback from staff, students (including unit evaluations - see 3.7ff) and External Examiners, and of formative and summative assessment results
4. Identification of areas for improvement and enhancement and planning of appropriate action to be taken as a result.

8.4 It is open to the Department/School Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee (D/SLTQC), or for professional doctorates Faculty/School Doctoral Studies Committee (F/SDSC), to decide how the outcomes of this review should most appropriately be recorded. This may be through a series of separate written reports for each unit; through the minutes of discussion of the units in the appropriate course/teaching committee (or equivalent) or the Board of Examiners for Units; or through a summary report that forms an appendix to the annual monitoring report for the course, if applicable. A template (QA48 form 4) is available for this purpose, upon request from Academic Registry, but its use is not mandatory. Whichever method is deemed most appropriate, the core elements that should be recorded are:

- The names of the units being evaluated
- A note of actions taken since the previous year (or unit occurrence)
- Formative assessment methods (not specified in the unit description)
- A summary of the unit convenor's evaluation highlighting issues to be addressed, and identifying aspects of good practice to be shared across the University
- A note of actions planned for the coming year.

8.5 Where a unit is offered in more than one cycle per year, the process of ongoing review and enhancement will necessarily be undertaken in stages aligned with the cycles in which the unit is offered. However, the formal review of units and recording of that review should still be undertaken on an annual basis, with appropriate attention being given in the resulting report to any differences between cycles.

8.6 Unit convenors may wish to involve staff external to the Department/School/Doctoral College/LPO in the process of reviewing. This would be particularly appropriate where the unit is taken by students from other Departments/School.

8.7 Feedback from students using the unit evaluation tool

Student feedback makes a significant contribution to unit review. Departments will obtain formal feedback from students using the University's unit evaluation tool (OUE). The tool automatically incorporates mandatory core questions agreed by Senate. There are six sets of core questions applicable to:

- Standard units (these questions apply to most units delivered at the University)
- Placement units
- Study abroad units
- Distance learning units
- Combined placement and study abroad units
- Professional doctorate units

8.8 Unit convenors (in association with Directors of Studies for Professional Doctorate courses) are responsible for selecting the set of core questions appropriate to the unit. A maximum of two discretionary questions selected from a list provided may also be added to a unit evaluation for an undergraduate or postgraduate taught course. The decision rests with D/SLTQCs or F/SDSC as to who has responsibility

for selecting discretionary questions and on what basis. Advice and support for using the unit evaluation tool includes the unit evaluation web page and a User Guide. The CLT provides advice and support for staff on online unit evaluation, including the Unit Evaluation webpage and a User Guide.

- 8.9 The core question on the effectiveness of teaching should be repeated for each member of staff who makes a significant contribution to teaching on the unit. This may include, for example, postgraduate students who teach (Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)), Lab Demonstrators, non-academic or external staff. In reporting the outcomes of unit evaluation to students (see 8.11 (iv)), the scores for this question should be reported anonymously, i.e., without any reference to named individuals.
- 8.10 The evaluation of student feedback is normally undertaken by the unit convenor. The Director of Teaching, supported by the Director of Studies (Taught Provision or Doctoral, as appropriate) is responsible for ensuring that a summary of the outcomes of unit evaluation and unit convenors' feedback (strengths identified, areas for development, proposed actions) is fed back to students in a timely manner via Moodle (see 8.11 (iv)).
- 8.11 As agreed by EQSC and Senate, the following measures are mandatory (with the exception of point (i)):
- i. Unit convenors are strongly encouraged to undertake an informal mid-delivery evaluation of the unit (anonymously, where possible). Unit convenors may find it helpful to use tools such as an electronic voting system for this purpose. The University's OUE tool should not be used for mid-delivery evaluation of single semester units, however for units which are longer in duration than a standard single semester, evaluations can run twice. In the first taught session following mid-unit evaluation, unit convenors should briefly discuss the feedback received and any changes planned as a result (or, if changes are not possible or desirable, why this is the case). Advice and support for using the unit evaluation tool includes the unit evaluation web page and a User Guide. Annually, each September, the CLT recommends the open and close dates to the Pro Vice Chancellor (Education). Unit evaluation should take place during a fixed period – normally during weeks 9 and 10 of each semester for standard units, with unit evaluations staying open for a maximum of 3 weeks and closing before the examination period. Unit convenors seeking to run evaluations outside the standard timeline above should seek advice and gain approval from the CLT Student Engagement Team. The evaluation of placement units, study abroad units, professional doctorate units and distance learning units should take place at a time deemed appropriate by the unit convenor or Learning Partnerships Office for partnership online MSc courses.
 - ii. Students should be encouraged to complete the survey using a mobile device during the final lecture of the unit, where possible.
 - iii. For all units, within eight calendar weeks of the close of the survey, the appropriate template for the reporting of unit evaluations (currently QA48 Form 6 for standard units, Form 7 for placement units, Form 8 for study abroad

units, Form 9 for distance learning units, Form 10 for combined placement and study abroad units and Form 11 for professional doctorate units) should be completed and uploaded to the department's unit evaluation Moodle repository or the Online VLE by the Learning Partnerships Office for partnership online courses(see (v) below) by the relevant unit convenor. The report template can be downloaded from SAMIS including the quantitative results data for the unit, and the unit convenor should complete the report with their qualitative comments. An email or announcement posted on the Online VLE should be sent to students (usually by departmental administrative staff) to notify them when the report is available and confirm where it can be found.

- iv. Departments should provide a central unit evaluation repository in Moodle where reports are stored for ease of access. The repository should be clearly signposted from relevant Department and individual unit Moodle pages.
- v. Following posting of unit evaluation reports on Moodle a summary report should be submitted to the appropriate SSLC for discussion.
- vi. All unit evaluation results are available via the University's Business Intelligence Portal for senior colleagues including Directors of Studies and Teaching.

8.12 A response rate of 30% or 30 respondents, whichever is the lower, will normally provide a sufficiently sound basis for scores to contribute to the evaluation of the unit. (Inviting students to complete the survey in class will help to ensure that response rates are above this threshold). For units with response rates that do not meet this threshold, the unit convenor should provide a response for students on Moodle, explaining that the response rate was insufficiently robust but that the feedback received will still be taken into consideration. The CLT Student Engagement Team offers support and advice to unit convenors on good practice with respect to increasing response rates to obtain more representative feedback, including qualitative comments that provide additional context for numerical scores.

8.13 All qualitative feedback on a unit is valuable and should be considered by the unit convenor. However, open comments unit evaluations are not normally shared with students or The SU. If there are open comments which it would be useful to share (e.g., if several useful suggestions have been made on the same theme), the unit convenor is responsible for removing any inappropriate comments and any information that would allow an individual to be identified.

8.14 Before students can access the OUE screen, they will be asked to read and electronically sign a statement confirming their intention to offer constructive feedback and clarifying the types of inappropriate and/or offensive comments which are unacceptable. They will need to complete this process once a semester (not for each individual unit), or at an appropriate point where the unit is not delivered within a set semester. Academic staff are encouraged to report any offensive or discriminatory comments to their Head of Department.

8.15 Department/School Learning and Teaching Quality Committees and Faculty/School Doctoral Studies Committees should discuss the action to be taken for those units

with low evaluation scores or, in the case of units with very high scores, how good practice might be shared.