

Covid-19 – Week Eight Check In Survey: Response from the Centre for Learning and Teaching

From the week 8 Student Pulse survey, the majority of respondents who made a free-text comment reflected on their blended learning experience this year. Of these, a significant number of students noted the positive aspects of online learning and appreciated the efforts that staff were making in what they acknowledged to be extremely challenging circumstances. As in the week 4 survey, it is clear that not all students have enjoyed learning online, and those that do would appreciate greater consistency between different units in terms of layout of content and release of online learning materials, measured use of breakout rooms in LOIL sessions, and appropriate use of IPT (and in some cases a clearer distinction between activities in IPT and LOIL).

Positive feedback regularly noted that online resources (and recordings) provide a more flexible learning experience, and students appreciate being able to pause online recordings, take notes at their own pace, and while still being able to come to campus for IPT sessions, online learning has enabled them to fit their studies around their schedule and reduced the amount they have to commute. One student noted “online learning makes me feel free”, while another noted of their Zoom sessions that “They also offer a much more personal space with the lecturer, and we feel more confident to ask questions”. There was also praise for the mixture of pre-recorded and LOIL content. Notable in this survey compared to the week 4 survey was the absence of comments around the stability of key learning systems (e.g. Moodle and Re:View), reflecting the work that has been done to ensure that these platforms remain robust and able to cope with the exponential demand that has been placed upon them this academic year.

It is clear, however, that in line with comments given in the week 4 survey, we need to continue to encourage staff to use consistent platforms (and to use those platforms consistently) to improve the student experience. Some respondents noted that the approach taken to their online learning can sometimes appear to be “random”; for instance, recordings of LOIL sessions are not consistently taken (or released at a fixed time) across a programme, and that the use of multiple platforms and notifications can mean that deadlines and work is getting missed. It is clear, too, that more can be done to ensure appropriate use of breakout rooms in LOIL sessions, with these breakout activities having a clear purpose. Likewise, many commented that IPT sessions could benefit from a clearer purpose and distinction from LOIL sessions. A number of respondents also noted that they would appreciate more formative feedback, and would appreciate skills (including digital skills) integrated into their units and programmes. Finally, workload issues continue to be of concern, and in particular time management with what is perceived to be an overload of content.

Addressing feedback:

- The new Instructional Designer team has worked with staff on reviewing Semester 1 modules on Moodle for consistency and have reviewed Semester 2 units in advance of delivery.
- The CLT has produced simple and clear guidance to staff addressing the main issues raised from the student Pulse surveys, and has run a number of workshops and “ask-me-anything” sessions to support staff. The CLT also continue to produce and update guidance and support for the Bath Blend more generally.
- The CLT is preparing to run additional workshops in advance of the Semester 2 to further support staff, introduce the Bath Blend and CASE approach (particularly where staff were not involved in S1 teaching), and will continue to respond to staff support requests on an on-going basis.

- Information to support students in the development of their digital skills has been co-produced with the Skills Centre: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/your-digital-skills-and-capabilities/>
- The CLT continues to support staff with the design of IPT sessions, and identifying examples of good practice across the institution.
- The CLT will ensure that students have an opportunity to feedback on their experience of Inspira for S1 exams, which will help to identify issues ahead of the next examination period.
- CLT colleagues supporting EQSC task group focused on assessment and feedback. Group will be meeting from January – will include student representatives and academic staff.

Dr Chris Bonfield
Acting Director
Centre for Learning and Teaching