

**LTC16D081**

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**Issue**

To receive School PTES Action Plan reports from SSF LTQC.

**Recommendation**

None.

**Resource Implications**

None.

**Risk Implications**

None.

**Equality and Diversity**

N/A

**Timing of decisions**

N/A

**Further Information**

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**Background**

N/A

**Discussion**

N/A

**Attachments** SSF School PTES Action Plans report.

## PTES SCHOOL ACTION PLANS 2016/17

### PSY

It is exceptionally difficult to develop a rational action plan from the PTES data for PSY. There are two main reasons for this.

1. Outcomes from the PTES are difficult to interpret as 'PSY' students and 'the psychology subject area' is conflated with other schools and programmes such as EDU, MED and NBS, Sociology; Social Policy and Anthropology and in some data even an interesting category labelled 'Combined'. Making sense of outcomes is also problematic given the small number of respondent involved, and the fact that respondents self-select both School and subject. The report declares that this "leads to some inconsistencies in the data which we cannot adjust for".

Indeed for a complex range of students and routes like the PSY delivered MRes compounded with 'psychological' elements in other Schools and subject areas this variation makes the data impracticable. The institutional commentary regarding the PTES makes statements which recognise these accounting issues such as: *"Respondents from PSY selected one main subject area. Psychology (for which PSY accounts for 45% of UEA's performance with EDU accounting for 31% and MED 24%). (PSY also features in Education Studies, Finance and Accounting and Social Work subject areas but accounts for under 10% of UEA's performance so this is not included in the analysis.) (p.51).* Some 'PSY' students will be students taking some PSY modules but also disciplinary modules and dissertation supervision from other Schools. In addition other Schools (EDU and MED contribute to the 'psychology subject area'.

Given the complexity of extracting useable and *meaningful* data from this survey, It makes little sense to develop an action plan based upon this report.

2. The survey is also outdated as our developments have gone way beyond any changes we might have considered as part of the PTES 'action plan'. The PSY hosted MRes in Social Science Research Methods has played a key role in the development of the recently awarded South East Network for Social Sciences (SeNSS) Doctoral Training Partnership. This role has included an increased range of disciplinary pathways linked to a redeveloped spine. These changes are now going through the course proposal process. These developments have already taken into account student feedback regarding previous (2014-15 and 2015-16) modules which would have been part of the early PTES reports.

Given the changes in provision the PSY 'action plan' is to:

- Review and develop Masters provision in response to the recently acquired South East Network for Social Sciences (SeNSS) Doctoral Training Partnership allowing UEA to receive ESRC 1+3 Studentships.
- Expand the number of discipline pathways to accommodate the maximum range of social science routes offered at UEA.
- Embed student feedback from SSLC and module review into these developments.

I'm not being obstreperous here, but the survey has fundamental flaws which make any specific action plan impossible to develop. Focusing energy upon on-going development makes much more sense and will lead to better student outcomes

(which will be arduous to evidence from future versions of this survey unless substantial changes to the methodology are introduced).

Neil

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## ECO REPORT

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*from:*            **duncan watson**  
*subject:*       **PTES School action report**  
*date:*            **November 16, 2016**

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The School welcomes the highly positive outcomes achieved in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey. In most categories the School performed above the UEA and Sector averages. Moreover, there is evidence of improved scores compared to previous questionnaire outcome. Overall there is evidence of high quality teaching, with the quantitative analysis supported by the available qualitative comments (e.g. “the enthusiasm of the lecturers is without a doubt...the best I have seen in my life so far”). There are no major concerns and current practices can typically be maintained.

### **Action Points**

Although there are issues at University level that could threaten these outcomes (e.g. issues with technology which can threaten the diverse pedagogical approaches used in ECO), the School is targeting the following areas to promote future outcomes:

- **Assessment & Feedback:** There have been improvements in scores across three of the four questions, indicating that good practice is generally followed. However, it is noticeable that- of the negative comments made by students- the focus is on the quality of feedback. To further improve on our feedback systems, a new feedback form is now compulsory for the current cohort. Impact of the new system is being monitored.
- **Learning Support:** Results indicate that this is an area in which the School can improve outcomes. The School is therefore adopting a complementary strategy: (1) The Teaching Committee will evaluate how the School’s transitions programme can be further improved; (2) The School invests heavily in local student support. The strategies adopted are currently under review; (3) SSLC is looking at how to further improve on communication, particularly to overseas student. Issues over accessing the ‘new student’ website have also been raised and are being investigated.
- **Engagement:** This is arguable the area of most concern for the School. Unlike the impressive outcomes achieved in all other categories, the School replicates the UEA outcome. Of particular note, there is evidence that student interaction could be further improved. The School is therefore looking at possible changes to its assessment portfolio and investigating how to further invest in teamwork skills outcomes. However, it should be noted that the School lacks adequate space. This will continue to impact negatively on PGT interaction and ensure that there are engagement issues beyond our control.

## **SWK**

SWK's results were highly positive and it performed significantly above the UEA average on three or more domains (with scores ranging from 80 to 96). SWK had scores in or near the top 25% of institutions. The theme most improved upon was Dissertation, rising from 55 in 2015 to 80 in 2016.

### ACTION PLAN

Slight decline in **Engagement** (96 to 89).

- The School will encourage appointment of deputy Student Reps (to cover for the usual 2 Reps) at SSLC meetings
- School to monitor success of SWK Facebook page.
- Seek feedback on SWK Society that students have proposed which will be student run.

Slight decline in **Organisation & Management** (91 to 84)

- SWK will continue to work with LTS in order to secure appropriate teaching spaces and also to avoid long distances between classrooms during short breaks.
- Continue to have the School's annual teaching review away day before the centralised timetabling deadlines in order to be proactive about addressing timetabling issues

Slight decline in **Information** (99 to 90)

- This is conjecture, but some students have asked for a more detailed overview of the two year course in Yr 1. The School will provide further information on Yr 2 during the first year orientation.

Improved scores on **Dissertation** (moved from 55 to 80):

- SWK will continue to assess the usefulness of the Dissertation teaching sessions that were introduced last year for the MA1s. This early preparation might be related to this year's higher scores in this theme. [Note: PTES questions ask students to comment on the supervision they receive in relation to their dissertation at a point in the year where many students have not yet received that supervision, so this is likely to continue to have a significant impact upon the scores (the PTES questionnaire is open from Jan to May and our students hand in the dissertation in July)].

## **DEV PTES Action Plan 2016-7: Main Points**

The PGT strategy shares many common elements with the NSS plan for UGs as indicated below. There are some PGT specific elements however.

### **PTES Specific Items**

- We note strong scores in all areas at school level. Sub-discipline sample sizes too small to draw conclusions eg Social Policy & Anthropology 14.  
From this strong base the overall aim is to consolidate improvements & high standards  
Eg. continue to improve way new feedback sheet is used so that feed-forwards value is maximised. Rise of 5 percentage points on last year shows this headed in right direction.
- Major concern is rooms, timetabling and option choices  
This has caused a great deal of dissatisfaction already this year and we are worried about the possible effects on PTES ratings.

The main immediate driver has been the imposition of caps on our module sizes which meant that many students were turned away from their first option choices. Until two years ago there were very large notional caps on our modules; the Hub used actual numbers from each year to plan room requirements for the next year. Then in 2015-6 far lower caps were put on the system somehow. As PGT numbers were lower than usual last year this did not cause a problem and was not noticed by teaching teams. Then this year the caps were slashed still further while at the same time PGT recruitment was very healthy. The result was disappointment for many students and hours of wasted staff time trying to arrange a temporary fix for this year.

Neither the Hub nor DEV staff know why or by who the low module caps were imposed over the last two years. There was no consultation with the school. Our best guess is that this is all related to rooming pressures.

In addition to the above there has again been a catalogue of problems with rooms and AV equipment.

We note the decline in 'resources and services' score and fear that this may be related to the above difficulties which are matters of central university provision about which the School can do little.

- Internships: numbers of students taking up the option of a professional placement have risen from 1 in the first year to 14 in the second and now 22. We are very pleased that this is proving successful and intend to keep making the option available to more of our courses.
- Employability  
The professional workshops have been very popular. We are seeking to extend our contact with the 'top 10 Development employers' in partnership with the Careers service and part of this will involve more sessions run by visiting professionals. A new MA Development Practice masters is being proposed for 2017-8.
- Two SSLCs per year  
This year we have increased the number of SSLC meetings in line with the UG practice. There is also an ongoing discussion over student members of Teaching Committee. We feel that the SU reps training is valuable and will try to encourage more DEV reps to take this up.
- dissertation support  
We are reviewing the provision of financial support for those students planning to carry out primary research as part of their dissertations. As a first step the deadline for applications has been moved back in response to feedback from last year's SSLC.

#### Items in both NSS and PTES

- Consolidate Assessment and Feedback gains with new feedback form  
Following discussion at our June teaching retreat some minor adjustments were made to the form for 2016-7. We have agreed to standardise the Academic Referencing criteria category so that it always has a weighting of 5% and is marked on a six point stepped scale.
- Increased dialogue within school on marking criteria, including level & spread of marks  
A card based exercise has been developed to facilitate development of a common understanding of how to apply the Senate Scale criteria categories. This was played at the June teaching retreat and will be repeated during the year.
- 100% turnaround within 20 days  
We have made excellent progress in establishing this as a high priority among all staff. It has been well expressed by the Head of School as 'You would not miss a

lecture and missing a marking deadline needs to be the same'. DEV came within a whisker of 100% turnaround within 20 days last year and we are determined to achieve it this year.

Particular attention is being paid to providing high quality and timely feedback for level 6 students, to help make sure they can reach their full potential during the vital final year.

- Annual teaching retreat  
It has become clear that an annual opportunity to block out time and discuss together the whole gamut of teaching related matters is very useful.
- Mid-module evaluation  
This is being encouraged for all modules. Feedback boxes and sets of paper slips were provided for lecturers to take to their final sessions before reading week. Students were asked to write down their comments and post them into the boxes as they left the class. Those lecturers who took part feel that this has been a worthwhile exercise but we intend that it will continue to be optional. Other colleagues are already obtaining mid-module feedback in other ways. It seems likely that the imposition of a compulsory and uniform approach here could well be counterproductive.
- Wider opportunities for internships & fieldtrips, plus introduction of year abroad degrees  
The careers service give a talk on volunteering to students in their first semester and we are supportive of students who want to take up internships during vacations. This year we are introducing Year 2 fieldtrips to Sheffield, Chile and Kenya or India. From 2018-9 all our UG courses will include the option of a year abroad variant.
- Student representation on Teaching Committee and School Executive to be considered
- Increased use of on-line reading lists: we aim to have all modules covered within the next 1-2 years. Feedback from UG and PGT SSLCs has been that these are very popular

### **NBS Action Plan based on PTES 2016 Survey Results:**

- Dissertation: MSc team to focus on dissertation supervision and how to improve the process and engagement from both staff and students.

- Marking and moderation: The NBS marking and moderation policy needs to be adhered to for team marking and currently perhaps not being used due to time constraints. Module marking standardisation meeting should be made mandatory. The policy is as follows:

For modules that use teams to mark assessments, it is imperative that examiners are consistent with one another. To ensure consistency, examiners working in teams should follow the process below.

**Prior** to marking, the Module Organiser should arrange a meeting of all examiners. At this meeting, the Module Organiser should brief the examiners on the marking criteria and the marking process.

**After** marking, the Module Organiser should arrange a second meeting of all examiners. At this meeting, descriptive statistics for each examiner's sample should be compared. A sub-sample should also be drawn from each examiner's sample and also compared. This should consist of one clear fail, one that is borderline pass/fail, one good pass

and one very good/excellent pass. Any inconsistencies between examiners regarding sample statistics or sub-sample cases should be discussed and action agreed regarding the scaling up or down of the marks of any outlying examiner.

Subsequent moderation should occur in the normal way as a final check for consistency.

- Skills development: An area that is woven into modules but more needs to be done. With that in mind the MSc team intends to develop a sustainable plan going forward.
- Introduction of the CIM/NBS Marketing Club. Events held via this club will allow an opportunity for students to network with marketing practitioners. Marketing event organised during UG Employability week but to which MSc students were invited.
- Communication: Audio feedback to students and communication via Twitter to be encouraged for individual modules.
- Mid-Module feedback is being encouraged and has taken place in semester 1 modules in the MSc. It is being encouraged that module organisers reflect and respond back to students during lectures after the mid module feedback exercise.
- SSLC: Important that all SSLC minutes and action log reaches all students.

#### **Relevant actions from NBS's TEF Readiness Plan:**

- New form of Peer Observation of Teaching (POT).  
In the past, pairs of colleagues took part in the activity. In order to improve the spread of best practice, this is now changed to a within- subject-area-group exercise. Within each subject area group, a nominated "Group Observer (GO) will conduct all observations within the group. In addition to the requirements of UEA's CoP policy, after all observations have been completed, each GO should convene an additional group level meeting where areas of improvement and related support and modifications are discussed and agreed.
- Teaching Activity Planning (TAP) Meetings.

TAP meetings have been established as part of TEF Readiness. These meetings are not formal "performance management" in the strict HR sense. They are not disciplinary and should not be perceived as threatening. Their purpose is to help, support and coach colleagues to deliver high quality teaching and assessment that will enhance their career prospects as well as meet student and UEA expectations.

- Improved Module Evaluation Questionnaire Response Rates.  
Validity improves with response rate and so it was important that the low module evaluation questionnaire response rates were improved. For this reason, it is School policy that all MOs reserve teaching time for students to

complete the module evaluation questionnaire. Module evaluation questionnaire response rates will be monitored and a minimum response rate of 50% should now be possible.

- Course Activity Planning (CAP) Meetings.

In addition to the module level, the course level is important. Accordingly, similar to the TAP meetings outlined above, informal CAP meetings with HoS and DoLTQ have been established as part of NBS TEF Readiness.

- New Monitoring Spreadsheet for all Programmes.

The MSc Programme Director will create and maintain a spreadsheet with TAP and CAP triggers for their programme. The following variables will be monitored:

Module Code

Module Name

Module Organiser

Module Evaluation Overall Satisfaction (**TAP trigger**)

Module Evaluation Response Rate

Number of Students on Module

Average Module Mark

Module Mark SD

No. of Module Students Achieving Merit and Distinction

% of Module Students Achieving Merit and Distinction

Number of Module Students Failing (with delayed assessment or re-assessment)

% of Module Students Failing (with delayed assessment or re-assessment)

Nature of Module Assessment - whether CW or Exam or both

Size of Module Teaching Team

Composition of Module Teaching Team (number of ATR, ATS, AT and/or Teaching Fellows)

Course Evaluation Overall Satisfaction (**CAP trigger**)

- Rewarding Teaching Excellence.

Excellent teaching does of course have many existing rewards. The University has introduced teaching excellence awards, excellent teaching is rewarded in the promotions and confirmation of appointment process, and very little beats the sense of satisfaction felt when a module has gone well. In addition to these existing rewards, NBS is re-launching internal awards for teaching excellence. The details have yet to be ironed out but there will be one award PG teaching in general and another for large PG module teaching. The awards will be in the form of a £1,000 top-up to the recipient's Staff Development Budget (to be shared if the module is team-taught).

### **Law School Action Plan – PTES 2016 – Claudina Richards 9.12.16**

The following action points should be considered in the context of a low number of participants (35 students from a total of 111) and mixed cohorts (LLM and GDL) making it difficult to discern general trends. The School is cautious of reacting too strongly to just one year's results on any particular issue due to the low number of participants; a small number of responses with strong views one way or the other

can have a significant impact on the School's scores, as is illustrated by the rapid moves up and down from year to year for some scores on matters where the School's actions and approach have not, in fact, changed over that time period.

- The School will have the Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies (GDL) students removed from the PTES sample as these students follow a completely different programme of studies from the other postgraduate taught students, making it difficult to ascertain from the results the prevailing views of Masters students. (The GDL students take level 5 modules with 1st and 2nd year Law UGs which are all prescribed, including weightings of summative assessment by coursework or examination, by the professional regulatory bodies whilst the LLM students take all level 7 modules.)
- There will be increased encouragement of and reminders to students to participate in the PTES and to explain that the School values and reflects on the student views expressed in the survey.
- The questions asked and results of the PTES will henceforth be shared with all teaching staff (similar to the NSS) to make them more aware of the areas being questioned, the students' views and concerns.
- The dissertation is the area in which the School continues to perform below expectations despite significant increased efforts including assistance from DOS over the last two years. The School will continue with its efforts to provide students with increased information on the dissertation module (see below), noting the context of the PTES being completed before the LLM students start the main part of their work on the dissertation which is undertaken over the summer.
  - o The first talk for PGT students about the dissertation has been brought forward in the calendar from February to the end of November
  - o There will be increased communication to the students early in the SPR so that students are clear as to the timeline for the dissertation, with students encouraged to feed into this process, to have earlier discussions with faculty as to the topic of their dissertation and to remind students as to faculty's areas of expertise for supervision.

## EDU's 2016 PTES Results and Action Plan

### **Warning Note:**

Due to the self-selecting sample groups, there are a number of inconsistencies in the data that cannot be accounted for; these need to be considered in light of the results. EDUs respondents selected three main subject categories: Teacher Training; Education Studies; and Psychology. EDUs Teacher Training accounts for 90% of UEAs performance (the remainder coming from NBS [7%], AMA [1%], and HSC [1%]), while EDUs Education Studies accounts for 60% of UEAs performance (the remainder coming from NBS [17%] and a wide range of other Schools) and EDUs Psychology accounts for 31% of UEAs performance (the remainder coming from PSY [45%] and MED [24%]). In addition to this, EDU also features in Economics, English-Based Studies, Management, Nursing, and Social Work.

Further to this, the very low base sizes for many of the courses in EDU make the findings indicative rather than conclusive - MA Counselling (10), MA Education: Learning, Pedagogy and Assessment (12), PGCE Primary (35), PGCE Secondary (29), and 'Psychology' (29). Base size: Education Studies (48), Teacher Training (82), and EDU (113).

### Highlights

- The majority of scores for EDU were in-line with UEAs average for most indicators.
- The real strength for the School is the 'Dissertation' category which achieved a satisfaction rating of 89% compared to UEAs average of 79%.
- Despite dropping slightly from the previous year, the 'Assessment and Feedback' category (84%) was considerably ahead of the UEA average (77%).
- In relation to the sector, the 'Education Studies' subject area achieved ahead of the sector on all bar one theme (Assessment and Feedback), moving into the top 25% of institutions for five themes, and considerably so for two other themes ('Dissertation' and 'Resources and Services').

### Lowlights

- The 'Teacher Training' subject area was behind the sector average for six out of nine themes. This has resulted in a fall into the bottom 25% of institutions for 'Overall Satisfaction', 'Dissertation', 'Skills Development', and 'Information'.
- Overall Satisfaction – slight decline from 89% to 81%
- Teaching and Learning – slight decline from 88% to 81%
- Engagement – slight decline from 83% to 81%
- Assessment and Feedback – slight decline from 88% to 84%
- Organisation and Management – slight decline from 76% to 72%
- Skills Development – slight decline from 84% to 77%
- Information – slight decline from 87% to 84%

### Action Plan

- Teaching and Learning – Improve the academic and/or intellectual nature of the courses and provide greater provision of support with learning.
- Skill Development – Develop communication and research skills of students further and provide confidence in their ability to work independently.
- Organisation and Management – Improve the initial induction period for students on all PGT programmes.
- Consider for the ongoing low satisfaction with the manageability of student workloads (especially for the PGCE courses).