

Napier Students' Association
Feedback Survey Summary/Discussion 4th August 2014

Introduction

Over the course of ten days in late July the survey got a total of 330 responses, which I felt was a good response rate considering that it is during the summer. If we were to read further into it I would say that it reflects the level of interest in this kind of topic throughout the student population. Furthermore the relevance, as all too often I have seen poor uptake in surveys that does not engage students. This is evidenced when you see the large amount of suggestions and comments on the issue at the end of the survey.

There were 11 questions in total, two of which were optional for writing comments and suggestions. Most of the other nine were multiple choice questions; initially there were some questions to establish a demographic of who was responding (See table 1 for a short summary).

Table 1.

Type			Faculty		
Full-Time	Part-Time	Distance	Business	FECCI	HLSS
83.9%	7.9%	8.2%	39.1%	31.2%	29.7%

One question asked specifically which course the student is studying also, if you look to the left hand side of the responses in the full survey there is a participant number. This is particularly useful for the later comments/suggestions section as you can match any participant comment to their earlier answer of what course they are studying.

Main Questions Summary

Q4. During your time at Edinburgh Napier University, have you received regular, timely and constructive feedback?

Strongly Agree: 31, 9.4%

Agree: 178, 53.9%

Disagree: 90, 27.3%

Strongly disagree: 31, 9.4%

There was a largely positive response to this question which was good to see.

Q5. Are you aware that you should receive feedback within three working weeks of any formal coursework assessment dead-line?

Yes: 223, 67.6%

No: 107, 32.4%

I was actually quite surprised at this one as it shows that a significant majority of the participants were well informed on this.

Q6. Do you regularly receive formal coursework feedback within three working weeks of its dead-line?

Strongly agree: 48, 14.5%

Agree: 135, 40.9%

Disagree: 108, 32.7%

Strongly disagree: 39, 11.8%

I felt the response to this question was less positive despite a leaning towards the agree side. Although more than half are agreeing, there is still a large percentage of 44.5% that are disagreeing. This highlights the problem of inconsistency across the University with regards to students getting their feedback on time. By referring to the results from this question and the various comments later on in the survey. It is easy to see that there are many cases of

positive experiences with feedback as there are many tutors, courses, departments that provide an excellent feedback service but the opposite also exists.

Q7. Are you aware that you can receive exam feedback within five working weeks of the exam period ending if you request it?

Yes: 66, 20.0%

No: 264, 80.0%

I wasn't expecting many students to know about this but there is a debate to be had whether it should really be a priority. Personally I would rather tutors made coursework feedback a priority. Although exams do make up in many courses as much as 50% of a student's overall mark so I think that we need to make sure that their exam writing skills are being developed also.

Whether the current system is appropriate remains to be seen and is a topic for discussion. Putting pressure on tutors to provide exam feedback is probably a misplacement of resources when it is well after the event and can only really inform future exams. Which usually change topic from year to year so it would only really be the generic skills that could be improved through feedback.

Q8. If you have requested exam feedback, have you received it within five working weeks of the exam period ending?

Strongly agree: 12, 17.9%

Agree: 25, 37.3%

Disagree: 17, 25.4%

Strongly disagree: 13, 19.4%

A similar split response to the earlier question on coursework feedback, but it again is leaning towards the agree side. But as mentioned earlier I am less concerned with this aspect of feedback. I am aware that it is unrealistic to expect a comparable standard and time scale as coursework feedback for a variety of reasons.

Q9. Staff have told you in advance if they cannot provide feedback in time?

Strongly agree: 39, 11.8%

Agree: 145, 43.9%

Disagree: 106, 32.1%

Strongly disagree: 40, 12.1%

I thought that it was important to include a question on this because it is outlined as one of the student expectations within the student charter. It can be a valuable thing for both students and staff because communication is key for plugging any gaps in the feedback service that student's have come to expect. Again the results are favouring the agree side but not by a huge amount. I don't think the importance of this can be emphasised enough because after studying at Edinburgh Napier for six years now there is nothing more frustrating than the failure of staff in communicating with their students. Generally students are very appreciative of the pressures that staff are under so even an email that notifies them of any delay in feedback goes a long way.

The following optional questions have had an emphatic response:

Q10. In your opinion what could staff do to make sure feedback is regular, timely and constructive?

Number of responses: 175

Q11. If you would like to make any further comments on this subject please do so below?

Number of responses: 89

The fact that they were optional but none the less well answered with a lot of interesting and constructive comments was really encouraging for me.

I have prepared another document for you both which I'll bring to our meeting that highlights some of the best suggestions and comments because there is probably too much to read in the raw survey.

Hopefully this short paper gives you a rough idea of what came back in the survey as opposed to trawling through the whole survey which is 43 pages long. I think that it gives us a lot of good stuff to work with and probably evidences in many respects what we were already expecting. As an initial gauge of student opinion to me it has been very useful and has put onto paper much of the verbal complaints I have heard over the years with regards to this issue.

Ryan Strachan
Vice-President