



School Presidents' Forum

11th March 2019, 5pm

Students' Association Large Rehearsal Room

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
 - a. Martynas (Computer Science)
 - b. Paul (Proctor)
 - c. Camilla (Rector's Assessor)
 - d. Evan (Earth and Environmental Sciences)
3. Matters Arising
 - a. MEQ Questions (Ailsa and Evan)
 - i. Way to change MEQs for each school, so it's more engaging for specific school. Students not filling it out because it doesn't feel relevant. Doesn't feel personal
 - ii. Modern Languages changed slightly – DOT changing one question
 - iii. Some school staff feel they can't change the questions.
 - iv. Dean of Arts: MEQs have just been changed because if they are not extremely carefully phrased, they encourage bias. Changed to try and lessen this bias. If you make the questions more 'exciting', the bias can be worse.
 - v. MEQ data is looked at across the board – if the questions were different, you wouldn't be able to look at them as 'tartan rug' (which allows you to see trends). Balance between being able to see this data and making these questions relevant or personal to students.
 - vi. If you have specific feedback on questions for your school, then feed this back to the deans directly (or through your DOT).
 - vii. Physics gets around this by using mid-semester surveys, so they can get

specific feedback – designed with input from lecturers in school.

Standardised across modules so they can be looked at as a whole (with some specific questions).

- viii. Would it be possible to give more information at the start of MEQs about what happens with this data – possible but also School Presidents can highlight this whilst advertising.
 - ix. IR feedback: sometimes the colour coding doesn't make sense, for example with the hours spent – this has been changed on new questions.
 - x. In philosophy tutors send personalised emails after students have filled out MEQs. Also have website to live track the changes being made as a result.
 - xi. Participation rate at about 50% - not bad but could always be better.
- b. NSS Questions (Sophia and Lyndsay)
- i. Lyndsay: film studies idea of NSS completion raffle – students could send in confirmation email of completion to be put into raffle.
 - ii. We don't want anything which suggests we forced students to fill in the survey in a certain way. But student encouraged participation is fine – if you are not directing in any way.
 - iii. Can apply to EDF for fun incentive ideas!
 - iv. Philosophy students giving feedback that they weren't sure what some questions meant – 'applying learning', for example. Wording hindering people from filling it out.
 - v. Alice been emailing NSS since November trying to ask about changing questions to no avail – other students can also email, and this feedback might be taken note of.
 - vi. Difficult as can't advise on how to answer questions – but students can skip questions.
 - vii. Lots of students have ruled themselves out this year – currently at 28% (was at 51% last year).
 - viii. Students not necessarily understanding the significance of the NSS – emphasising this.
 - ix. Reminding students that prospective students look at survey data to find out which University will be the right one for them.
 - x. University does spend a lot of time following up on NSS results.
- c. Grade Conversion (Gianluca)
- i. In applying for PGT degrees, particularly outside of the UK, St Andrews grade don't necessarily make sense – how rare 19 and 20 marks are, for example.

- ii. Different marking patterns across different disciplines – for example, in Arts schools the average is generally lower.
- iii. In some schools, markers are reluctant to give 20s or use the entire scale.
- iv. Contextual data is available.
- v. UK wide problem – but understand how this could be frustrating.
- vi. Deans can bring it up again, as they regularly do. No appetite at the top of the University to change the 20-point scale.
- vii. Comes up a lot as an issue in IR, as a large majority are American.
- viii. Debated frequently. Deans to take it forward and talk about it again.
- ix. Some schools do convert to percentages, but it isn't linear.
- x. Might be possible for Registry to provide contextual information – place in class, for example. Indicative table could be produced.
- xi. Conversion tables on University website not necessarily comprehensive – one does mean vs median, which is confusing. One does do American GPA.
- xii. Might be a need for department specific contextual data.
- xiii. Don't want to just benefit the students in the top ten.
- xiv. Alice to collect some input for the Deans.

4. AOCB

- a. Dean of Science: have passed the Turnitin discussion on and will feedback on this.