

# POLICY ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

## Introduction

We are committed to engaging with our students in the pursuit of activities to support quality assurance and enhancement. This policy has been developed in line with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and sets out the principles that define the participation of students in our institutional quality assurance and enhancement system.

The policy describes the opportunities for students to engage in formal and informal quality assurance and enhancement systems, both individually and collectively, at all levels of study.

## Student Engagement at UEL

Student engagement is an important aspect of the partnership between the University, the students and the Students' Union. At UEL student engagement means students participating in partnership with staff and each other in the life of the University; academically, socially, culturally and in decision-making. This includes making their voices heard through the student representation systems and feedback processes available. Further details are outlined in Chapter 16 of the Quality Manual (<https://www.uel.ac.uk/about/about-uel/governance/quality-assurance>).

## Principles

The principles of student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement activities are:

- We are committed to ensuring student representation at UEL is a collaborative partnership in which the University, its students and the Students' Union have a shared responsibility for promoting an environment which empowers the student/learner voice
- We are committed to embedding student engagement opportunities into our quality assurance systems
- We aim to provide both formal and informal opportunities for students to provide feedback in relation to their whole student experience
- We aim to ensure that student feedback is used to inform enhancements as part of an integrated, evidence-based approach.
- We aim to provide student feedback mechanisms that are responsive, with feedback provided to students in a timely manner
- We will provide support and training to empower students to actively participate in our quality assurance and enhancement system.

## Student Engagement Opportunities

The following opportunities exist for student engagement in our quality assurance and enhancement system. Where applicable, further information on the processes detailed below can be viewed in the relevant section of the Quality Manual at <https://www.uel.ac.uk/Discover/Governance/Quality-Assurance>:

## Student Engagement through the UEL Committee Structure

1. Student representation at UEL includes representation, via trained UEL Students' Union representatives, from course to institutional level. This includes student representation across the whole UEL committee structure.
2. UEL Students' Union Officers are invited to contribute to the development of academic policy via membership of working groups, institutional committees and project groups.
3. Course Committees meet once per term and are the primary formal mechanism for course level feedback. Course Committees are responsible to the School Education and Experience Committee. They are responsible for assuring the quality of the student experience at course level. Course Committees include all staff making a significant teaching contribution, students on the course, and representatives of relevant academic services (i.e. Learning Support Services). Its role is to ensure that the course(s) operates in a manner appropriate to its stated aims and objectives and to a standard commensurate to the award to which it leads. The Course Committee is responsible for approving the Continual Monitoring Process report produced by the course team prior to its consideration by the School Quality Committee.
4. The Student Experience Forum considers student feedback in relation to the non-academic student experience. This Forum takes an evidenced-based approach to responding to student feedback and includes representation from students as well as representatives from schools and professional services

### Course Approval

This section refers to the approval of a new course. For full details of the course approval process see Part 5 of the UEL Quality Manual.

1. The views of students are actively sought and taken into account in the design, delivery and outcomes of the course.
2. Evidence of discussions with students about the course proposal will be considered by the School Quality Committee as part of the approval process.
3. As part of its role in formally validating all courses on behalf of the Education and Experience Committee (EEC), the peer review process will ensure that all required action has been completed with regards to student engagement in the process.

### Course Re-approval

This section refers to the re-approval of an existing course. For full details of the course re-approval process see Part 5 of the UEL Quality Manual.

1. The views of students are actively sought and taken into account in the design, delivery and outcomes of the course.

2. It is not necessary for the course withdrawal process to be followed with regards to the course that is being replaced however, discussions will take place with students regarding the proposed changes and any transitional arrangements that will be put in place.
3. Evidence of discussions with students will be considered by the School Quality Committee as part of the approval process.
4. As part of its role in formally validating all courses on behalf of the EEC, the peer review process will ensure that all required action has been completed with regards to student engagement in the process.

### Module and Course Modifications

For full details of the module and course modification process see Parts 3 and 6 of the UEL Quality Manual.

1. Student feedback can be used to form the rationale behind the need to modify the course / module.
2. Students currently enrolled on, or applying to, a course who will be affected by any modifications proposed will be given the opportunity to discuss the proposed changes and advised when any modifications have been approved.
3. In relation to change of course title, discussions will take place with all students affected, both through the course committee and individual notifications. This will include discussions on transitional arrangements that will be put in place.
4. Evidence of discussions with students will be considered by the School Quality Committee as part of the modification process.

### Course Withdrawals

For full details of the course withdrawal process see Part 6 of the UEL Quality Manual.

1. Discussions will take place with students who are currently enrolled on, or intermitting from, a course that is being withdrawn and will be affected by the proposed changes. This will include discussions on transitional arrangements.
2. Where students currently enrolled on, or intermitting from, a course will not be affected by the withdrawal, i.e., the course will continue as normal until all students are complete; the students will be notified both at the course committee and via individual notifications.
3. Evidence of discussions with students will be considered by the School Quality Committee as part of the Course withdrawal process.
4. As part of its role in formally validating all course withdrawals, the peer review process will ensure that all required action has been completed with regards to student engagement in the process.

### Academic Review

For full details of the Academic Review process see Part 8 of the UEL Quality Manual.

1. As part of Academic Review, courses are measured against the Quality Criteria which requires that the views of students are actively sought and taken into account in the design, delivery and outcomes of the course.
2. A student representative appointed by the UEL Students' Union will normally form part of the panel. The student selected for each review will not be a student on one of the courses under review but may be from another school or another department within the school.
3. The programme for the review will include at least one meeting with existing students and former students.
4. Student feedback received through internal and external surveys such as Module Evaluation Questionnaires, the National Student Survey and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey will be included in the documentation presented to the review panel.

### Collaborative Review

For full details of the collaborative review process see Part 11 of the UEL Quality Manual.

1. The Collaborative Review provides an opportunity to appraise the nature of the link; to gain an overview of the quality of the courses offered by the link and to review the academic and administrative infrastructure of the link to ensure that it continues to be able to offer a suitable learning experience for students.
2. A student representative appointed by the UEL Students' Union will normally form part of the panel.
3. The programme for the review includes a meeting with existing students.

### Student surveys

1. Students have the opportunity to give feedback on each module anonymously. A centrally administered automated module evaluation system is used for undergraduate and postgraduate modules delivered at UEL. For taught modules, the standard questions cover the following areas: Teaching sessions; Module support; Module Organisation; Module Resources and Module Satisfaction. Results are provided to Module Leaders and relevant school staff for action and reported on in the Continual Monitoring Process and Module reports.
2. Further opportunities for anonymous feedback are provided via ad hoc questionnaires from UEL service providers.
3. Students have the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback at course and institutional level through internal and external surveys such as the National Student Survey, the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey.

### Short Courses

For full details of the short course withdrawal process see Part 10 of the UEL Quality Manual.

1. For short course withdrawals considered and validated by the School Quality Committee, discussions will take place with all students affected and will include discussions on transitional arrangements that will be put in place.
2. Evidence of discussions with students on the proposed withdrawal will be considered by the School Quality Committee as part of the withdrawal process.
3. Short courses will include opportunities for students to provide feedback on their experience.

### Continual Monitoring Process

For full details of the continual monitoring process see Part 7 of the UEL Quality Manual.

1. Course Representatives are given the opportunity to contribute to course-level Continual Monitoring Process (CMP) reports.
2. Course-level CMP reports will be discussed at course committee meetings.
3. Representatives from the UEL Students' Union will be committee members for School CMP meetings.

### External Examiner System

For full details of the external examiner system see Part 9 of the UEL Quality Manual.

1. Students have access to external examiner reports via the virtual learning environment (VLE) and are provided with advice from the UEL Students' Union on the interpretation and use of these.
2. As part of our external examiners system, students may be invited to meet with external examiners to provide general feedback on the course experience.

### Response to Student Feedback

1. We provide feedback to students via a range of methods. These vary depending on circumstance but include 'You Said, We Did' posters, course committees, Continual Monitoring Process reports and announcements on VLEs and in module guides.
2. Where course or module modifications take place, students affected by the changes will be notified of any modifications once they have been approved
3. We recognise the efforts of students engaging in quality assurance and enhancement and from 2020/21 the UEL Students' Union will introduce a new recognition scheme for course representatives which will focus on developing skills and encouraging broader engagement of students.

## **Student engagement at collaborative partners**

1. Collaborative partners are required to ensure adequate student feedback mechanisms are in place.
2. Collaborative partners are required to adhere to UEL policies (adjusted as appropriate to fit the context of delivery) and as such will fulfil all student engagement activities outlined in UEL quality assurance and enhancement policies.

### **Monitoring of policy**

Monitoring of our student engagement policy is undertaken annually in the following ways:

- The Continual Monitoring Process incorporates reporting at course, department, school and institutional level and will confirm that systems are working appropriately and ensure a formal reporting of survey results.
- The annual Quality Enhancement Report which reviews UEL's quality enhancement activity in learning and teaching, the student experience and the sharing of best practice.
- UEL and the UEL Students' Union jointly review the student representation system against The Student Engagement Partnership (TSEP) Academic Representation Benchmarking Tool.

### **Performance Indicators**

Outcomes from internal and external surveys such as the National Student Survey, Relevant UEL Students' Union Surveys and Module Evaluation Questionnaires will act as indicators of the effectiveness of this policy.

This policy will be periodically reviewed.