REFLECTIONS

Queen's University Belfast

Centre for
Educational Development

About *Reflections*

At the heart of many of the articles in this edition of *Reflections* is how we think about pedagogical practices that enhance the student experience.

Considering the strategic level, Karen Henderson discusses TEF2 and the implications for Queen's as a university. Professor Tom Millar takes an in-depth and considered approach to equality, diversity and inclusivity in the curriculum. Not only does this article outline some of the award-winning activities at Queen's, but it also poses some essential questions for us to think about in our academic practices. This is supported further in the article by Dr Latu that considers views from a School perspective.

Both Clare Thomson and Dr Elaine Farrell write about digital tools. Whilst Clare encourages us to think more creatively about video and the use of PowerPoint through the Pecha Kucha approach, Elaine writes about her experiences of PeerWise which has encouraged the development and sharing of opinions in her Level 1 History course.

The student voice is considered in two of the articles. Firstly, Nick Bohill takes a look at the 2016 NSS results for Queen's, as well as outlining the changes that are planned to the questions in the 2017 survey. Secondly, Karen Fraser, who is based in CED, considers the importance of mid-module review as a process for students that becomes embedded in the learning experience.

The Living Lab team takes us through their Teaching Awards prize-winning initiative that develops embedded, contextual and experiential learning for students on campus. If you are interested in our Teaching Awards the application process for 2017 is now open. Please think about applying, or, encourage others to do so.

Another place to celebrate our practice in this area is at the CED Annual Learning and Teaching Conference. Next year, the conference will take place on the 12th April and will focus on *Embedding Digital Literacies in the Curriculum*. Please consider coming along and taking part in what is a great networking opportunity as well as a great space in which to share practice.

Dr Claire Dewhirst
Editor of *Reflections*

We are exceptional

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity in the Curriculum

By Professor Tom Millar, Director, QUB SWAN Initiative

The Equality Challenge Unit's (ECU) Athena SWAN Charter is an award scheme that recognises universities and research institutes that are committed to advancing women's careers in STEM subjects. It was founded in 2005 following a pilot project among 10 founder universities of which Queen's was one. The awards, at Gold, Silver, Bronze levels, reward departments and universities who gather and analyse gender-based data from which Action Plans are developed and implemented. Data and actions go from undergraduate applications and conversion rates all the way to Professorial promotions and progression in order to monitor the 'leaky pipeline'. The aim is to understand why, and at what stage, women are being lost to the academy, whether universities have implicit and explicit biases that prevent women progressing in a fair and transparent manner and to remove barriers where they are found. Data is also

Professor Tom Millar

required on the representation of women at senior levels and on decision-making committees, and action plans must also address any under-representation.

In the past decade, Athena SWAN has grown massively with 617 awards held currently by departments and institutions in the UK, a sign of the importance of the agenda in HE – we simply cannot afford to waste the talents of 50% of the population. In the past two years, the award scheme has widened to include departments in Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law (AHSSBL), allowing our AHSS Schools to apply for awards from November 2015. Athena SWAN is also becoming an internationally-

recognised scheme with awards now available to Irish and Australian universities and other, related schemes are being piloted.

Queen's is involved as an evaluator in Systematic Action for Gender Equality (SAGE), a new H2020 programme involving seven universities, with Professor Yvonne Galligan as the local Principal Investigator, and SEA Change, a pilot involving around 15 US Universities. This is hosted by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, with funding from the National Science Foundation and strong support from the White House Office of Science and Technology. In the latter case, the emphasis is not only on gender but also on race and ethnicity. There is one further driver which has helped Athena SWAN grow so quickly in the UK and Ireland, namely the numerous comments made by funding bodies that they intend moving towards a situation in which an essential criterion for grant applications is that the university or department must hold a Silver award. Indeed, the National Institute for Health Research implemented this criterion for the first time in its 2016 grants round.

Queen's has a long and successful engagement with Athena SWAN. It was the first university to hold an Institutional Silver Award back in 2007, most recently renewed in April 2015. Success at this level is extremely difficult to achieve, only 10 of the 138 member institutions hold such an award. Queen's also holds the largest number of awards in AHSSBL – five out of a total of 19 in the UK. In addition to the University Silver, we currently hold two Gold awards (Biological Sciences and Psychology), eight Silver and five Bronze awards. This achievement reflects an enormous amount of hard-work and commitment from staff, both male and female, in every School, a process which is changing culture, as well as practices, throughout the University and which

marks Queen's as the leading UK University in this area.

One year ago, the ECU announced that Gold Institutional Awards would be available for the first time with applications open from November 2016, although with application criteria that were almost impossible to meet. From April 2017, the criteria will change and it is our intention to apply for Gold then. At Gold level, ECU has introduced a number of new elements including consideration of gender equality for professional and support staff and trans people. A second new area is the inclusion of a section on diversity in the curriculum and pedagogy. This includes providing information on how we address gender inequalities in the curriculum, inclusivity in pedagogy, and how Schools and Faculties discuss inclusivity at their decision-making committees. We are asked to reflect on course content, sources used and cited, outcomes of different assessment methods against, for example, race and gender, and the means by which equality and diversity are considered in the development of new courses. Other important issues to be considered are the use of staff training and development on inclusive pedagogical practice, staff confidence in embedding equality and diversity in their teaching and feedback from students. And Athena SWAN is no longer solely focused on gender; awards now require institutions to consider 'intersectionality' in data analysis, for example, the intersection of gender and ethnicity, or gender and disability.

Within Queen's this will mean, for example, the investigation of potential biases by gender and race in assessments and examinations, the provision of specific adjustments for disabled students, an awareness of the role of unconscious bias, and the analysis of the questions on equality and diversity included in the first and second year student experience

surveys earlier this year. The surveys show, for example, that in some Schools over 10% of respondents have been bothered by sexist or racist language from staff and/or students.

We have three immediate actions underway. One is the interactive workshop on Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum by Dr Pauline Hanesworth, the Academic Development Advisor to HEA Scotland which took place on 7 December 2016. The second is an on-line training module on Unconscious Bias that will be made available for all academic staff through Queen's Online early in 2017. The third is that the SWAN Steering Group has recently circulated a questionnaire to all Directors of Education on equality and diversity in the curriculum. The aim is in part to gather evidence of the good practice already present in Schools and in part to alert staff to the types of evidence that Athena SWAN requires. While this evidence is currently required only for Institutional applications, it is only a matter of time before it filters down to School applications.

The main driver to consider more carefully equality, diversity and inclusivity and their influences on educational experience and outcomes is not Athena SWAN however, but rather the desire of all educators to enhance the teaching and learning experience, something which rewards staff and students alike.

Making a Case for Gender Equality: the role of successful female role models

By Dr Ioana Latu, School of Psychology

Fostering gender and ethnic diversity in organisations is not only a moral choice. As recent research in psychology and management suggests, diversity can also have some practical advantages. For example, working in diverse teams can make people consider varied perspectives, thus stimulating their creativity and generating better solutions to problems (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Watson et al., 1993). Looking particularly at gender diversity, data suggest that, under certain conditions, higher representation of women on management boards is positively related to companies' financial performance. In other words, companies who have more women on their boards of directors perform better on certain outcomes, an effect known as the female leadership advantage. For example, a recent meta-analysis of 140 studies (Post & Byron, 2014) found that companies with more female directors tend to have higher accounting returns, especially in countries with stronger shareholder protections. It should be noted that the extent to which gender diversity has positive effects depends on the degree to which management creates and consistently supports an inclusive climate (Nishii, 2013).

Dr Ioana Latu

In my own research I study a particular type of benefit that comes from having women in powerful positions. Using experimental research I showed that successful female role models have an empowering effect on women with leadership aspirations. For example, in one study (Latu et al., 2013) we asked men and women to give a persuasive speech in front of an audience. Speakers were exposed either to a portrait of a female politician, a male politician, or an empty wall. We found that women underperformed men when exposed to a male politician or an empty wall. However, this gender performance gap disappeared when women were exposed to a picture of a successful female politician, suggesting that visible female role models inspire women who are faced with leadership challenges. In subsequent studies we showed that visible female role models are extremely important because they offer women opportunities to mimic behaviours that can be empowering – such as an open body posture while delivering a speech.

These findings suggest that increasing the number of women in powerful positions should not only be the goal of gender equality programmes, but it can also serve as the engine that drives gender equality in organisations. Those successful female leaders offer other women the opportunity to mimic and be empowered in challenging situations. It is also important to increase women's visibility in powerful positions, whether this is in business, politics, or academia. Women tend to be less visible not only because of lower representation, but also because they more often employ leadership styles which are less about being in the spotlight and more about motivating and developing individualised relationships with their followers. Athena SWAN efforts in the School of Psychology align with these research findings: female senior academics are not only visible role models but also active mentors who inspire younger academics.

'Women Emerging From the Shadows' by Michelle Rogers

The New Higher Education Quality Environment

By Karen Henderson, Academic Affairs

Most people will recall that, this time last year, the University underwent a Quality Assurance Agency Higher Education Review. This was a considerable undertaking. Preparations took almost eighteen months: a Self Evaluation Document was submitted, together with 700 pieces of evidence and the review team met with 33 members of staff and 32 students when they visited the University in November 2015. The University received a glowing report in which the review team stated that the University had met all the UK Quality Code expectations.

HEFCE Operating Model for Quality Assessment

Since then, there have been major changes in the HE quality environment. In March 2016, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) issued a Revised Operating Model for Quality Assessment to replace Higher Education Review. This provided details of an integrated quality assessment model encompassing new providers, established providers (such as Queen's), and further education colleges. Established providers will undergo an annual provider review, a one-off verification of their review processes and a five-yearly HEFCE Assurance Review. This process is now compulsory for HE providers in England and Northern Ireland. Wales will undergo a similar process and Scotland will retain its current enhancement-led process. This does not mean that the QAA no longer exists – the QAA will undertake many of the processes on behalf of HEFCE and will also continue to review transnational education.

The first step in the process is the Annual Provider Review. The University returns an annual accountability statement to the Department for the Economy (NI) each December. Up until this year, this statement has contained assurances on finances and audit. From this year the statement will contain assurances on the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and of student outcomes, and the reliability of degree standards. A comprehensive report has been provided to and approved by Senate, which is the University's governing body, providing evidence of the systems, processes and controls in place to allow Senate to provide the Department with a statement of quality assurance. In addition, the Department also considers key metrics such as the National Student Survey, the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education and retention, completion and recruitment data. A HEFCE Quality Committee will review all of the information and provide a judgement in May 2017 as to whether or not the University meets requirements. This will be the baseline quality standard.

Institutions which meet the baseline quality standard and have a Widening Access statement will be eligible to apply for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

In May 2016, the then Department for Business, Innovation and Skills published the white paper 'Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice' which included a section on a proposed Teaching Excellence Framework. In September 2016, the Department for Education (GB) published the Teaching Excellence Framework: Year Two Specification. The three aspects of quality to be measured are: Teaching Quality; Learning Environment; and Student Outcomes and Learning Gain. These are measured quantitatively through metrics such as NSS, HESA and DLHE outcomes and qualitatively through a provider submission. There are three possible outcomes: gold, silver or bronze awards. In England, the outcomes will be linked to fees

increases, however this will not be the case in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland, any benefits will be reputational. It is inevitable that TEF results will be used to create or feed into league tables. The award can be held for three years. Initially, the process will cover undergraduate provision but by 2018-19 it is expected that awards will cover postgraduate provision and that individual disciplines will be assessed and receive ratings. This is a voluntary opt-in process. The University has still to make a decision on whether or not to enter TEF. This decision will be made by Senate in December 2016. The final date for application to enter TEF is 26 January 2017 and outcomes will be published in May 2017.

Next Steps

These are very different processes to the QAA methodologies that have been in place over the past decade or so. However, they both rely on the internal quality assurance methods in place in the University. The HEFCE QA Model lists baseline regulatory standards including UK Quality Code, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the Competition and Markets Authority Guidance for HE and the University's quality processes and academic governance processes are aligned with these standards. The Teaching Excellence Framework builds on these and requires evidence of the impact on students of our teaching, learning and assessment methods. There is much uncertainty around the processes for the new methodologies. The

Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs will be keeping a watching brief and the University may participate in pilots arising from the new processes. However, the best preparation is to always be in a position whereby we are able to assure ourselves and demonstrate to stakeholders the excellence of our teaching, academic standards and academic student outcomes. The University's Charter states: *The objects of the University shall be the advancement and dissemination of learning and knowledge by teaching and research, and through the practice and inculcation of professional and other skills appropriate to the provision of higher education, and by the example and influence of its corporate life.* This is our core business and we will continue to strive to excel in all aspects.

Student Evaluation of Teaching and the Use of Mid-module Review

By Karen Fraser, Centre for Educational Development

Under the quality assurance framework and QUB Student Evaluation of Teaching regulations, a module must be evaluated every time it is taught and before it can be taught again. The timing of that exercise is a matter for the School to decide. However, traditionally, universities conduct end-of-course or end-of-module surveys, and by the time the feedback has been analysed and results published the students involved have moved on. The value of the exercise to academic staff cannot be under-estimated, but of what value is it to the student? Ultimately, students in subsequent years should benefit from evaluation and review, but in the majority of cases students who participate in course evaluation surveys, are then not told what happens as a result of the process.

"This should not be an autopsy at the end of a course, but a process embedded through the learning experience so that it is of benefit to the student giving the feedback and their experience."

(Alex Bols, Head of Education and Quality at the National Union of Students (NUS))

Being responsive to mid-module student feedback can both improve the student perception of the value placed on their feedback to staff, and enhance the students' learning experience by addressing common worries over assessment mode and assessment criteria (Lilly et al, 2010). By dealing with these worries promptly, the student can recognise that they have a voice and that staff do listen and act[1].

If you are considering mid-module review think about why you are doing it. What do you hope to find out, and, faced with potential change requests from students how do you intend addressing the issues? If the answer to these questions is that, where possible, the results will lead to action to improve the teaching and learning within the module, then the process will have been worthwhile.

Addressing the feedback is not always straightforward. Some requests will be easy to deal with, others will need a longer term approach: communication is key. Feedback to students as soon as possible and tell them what actions you are taking both short and long term, and most importantly involve students in the whole process. Work with the Class Reps to help design the questions, present the draft questionnaire to the class and ask for input. Then, together with the Class Reps, report the outcomes and actions to the class.

The model should reflect students and staff in a "collaborative academic community"

(University of Exeter, 2012)

The format of the survey can be electronic, paper, post-it notes, Personal Response System, focus groups etc. It depends largely on the size of the class you are surveying. The survey should be short and ideally take place at the end of a lecture around week 5/6. Using an electronic survey with a large class will ensure you can feedback to students in week 6/7 at the latest.

If you would like more information about student engagement in quality enhancement, please contact ced@qub.ac.uk.

1 https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/.../CPG_CLT_Mid_Module_Review_Guidance.docx
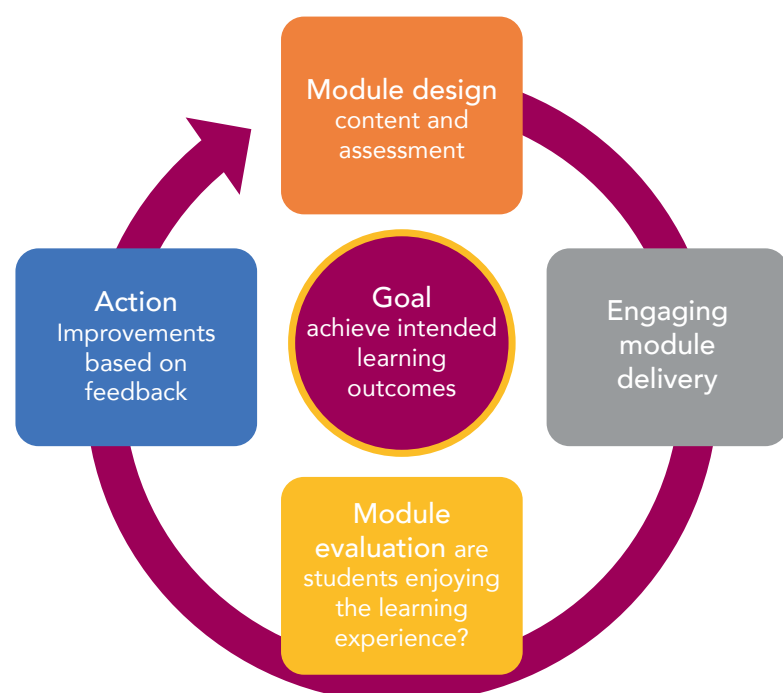
Framework for the Evaluation of Teaching

Queen's University Teaching Awards

The Teaching Awards Scheme was established to encourage and reward the development of learning, teaching and support practices which have led to particularly effective/worthwhile learning.

It's a competitive process with up to 10 Teaching Awards available, and comes with a prize of £1000 awarded to each successful individual or team which is paid into a dedicated School account for professional development purposes.

The Teaching Awards scheme has four categories

- Experienced Staff (colleagues teaching or supporting learning for five or more years),
- Rising Stars (less than five years),
- Excellence in Teaching in a Team
- Student-nominated category.

The Student-nominated category is promoted to students by the Students' Union. Students can nominate a lecturer by e-mailing the Centre for Educational Development (CED) with a short paragraph outlining why they and their classmates (a minimum of four per nomination) believe the nominated lecturer deserves an Award. CED then contacts the lecturer, informs him or her of the nomination and invites them to put forward an application for consideration by the panel.

The 2017 Teaching Awards scheme is now open and further information and application forms are available on the CED website at

http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/
AcademicStudentAffairs/
CentreforEducationalDevelopment/
PromotingGoodPractice/
QUBTeachingAwards/

In 2016, nine Teaching Awards were awarded to colleagues from across the University. Details of the 2016 Award recipients and their accompanying citations are given below.

Student-nominated category

Johanne Barry, School of Pharmacy

This Teaching Award in the Student-nominated category is presented to Johanne Barry, School of Pharmacy. Ms Barry is developing a culture of empathy and reflection in her students and providing interdisciplinary learning experiences with nursing and medical students that prepare her students for working in a multidisciplinary healthcare team. Her students noted that, *"Johanne is passionate about the subject of pharmacy practice and this shines through in her teaching."*

Dr Jesus Martinez del Rincon, School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

This Teaching Award in the Student-nominated category is presented to Dr Jesus Martinez del Rincon, School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, an enthusiastic and student-centred teacher who is providing a range of active and interactive learning experiences for his students. His use of group work and authentic research examples challenges and develops his students and enhances their employability. His students noted, *"Jesus provides an interactive learning environment that…very effectively ties together the theory and understanding of the lectures with the practical material."*

Dr Lezley-Anne Hanna, School of Pharmacy

This Teaching Award in the Student-nominated category is presented to Dr Lezley-Anne Hanna in the School of Pharmacy for the development, facilitation and oversight of a highly effective peer mentoring scheme for international students. Her approach ensures that the students feel supported, engaged and empowered to learn and encourages them to achieve their potential. The nominating students noted, *"She is the foundation of the scheme and she always takes care of the welfare of students, especially international students, because she knows that more support is needed for those coming to Belfast to study."*

Angela Allen, School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

This Teaching Award in the Student-nominated category is presented to Angela Allen in the School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science for the redesign of the delivery of a large, first-year compulsory module to incorporate live coding within the lectures and interactive practical sessions. The redesign develops essential programming skills that prepare her students for progression through the course and provides a relevant and dynamic learning experience at an early stage of their academic career. The student nomination noted, *"I have never met a lecturer…who cares as much about the quality of the education that students receive as Angela does."*

Sustained Excellence (Teaching for more than five years)

Professor Sean O'Connell, School of History and Anthropology

This Teaching Award for Sustained Excellence is presented to Professor Sean O'Connell in the School of History and Anthropology for his holistic and innovative approach to teaching and research that empowers student development and achievement. His initiatives to address employability develop useful skills and provide students with personal development experiences that are valued by employers.

Rising Stars Category (Less than five years)

Dr Joe Webster, School of History and Anthropology

This Teaching Award in the Rising Stars category is presented to Dr Joe Webster, School of History and Anthropology. Dr Webster provides a cross-disciplinary, interactive learning experience, incorporating a wide range of teaching approaches that motivates his students, challenges their views about the world around them and equips them with valuable, transferable research skills.

Dr Paul McCague, School of Pharmacy

This Teaching Award in the Rising Stars category is presented to Dr Paul McCague in the School of Pharmacy who has undertaken a fundamental redesign of the teaching of Pharmacokinetics, a challenging but underpinning subject of Clinical Pharmacy. His approach stimulates student interest in, and understanding of, the subject and has resulted in improved student feedback, engagement and attainment.

Team Category

Dr Barry Quinn, Dr Alan Hanna and Chris Annett, Queen's University Management School

This Teaching Award is presented to a team in the Queen's University Management School for the provision of authentic, extra-curricular learning experiences through the Queen's University Trading and Investment Club (QUTIC) and the Queen's Student Management Fund (QSMF). These initiatives are open to students at all levels and in all disciplines and they develop valuable skills that enable participants to effectively compete in a highly competitive industry.

Dr Haresh Manyar, Professor David Rooney, John Nugent, John Devlin and Bill Annesley, School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering and the Estates Directorate

This Teaching Award is presented to the Queen's Energy Team from the School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering and the Estates Directorate, who use the QUB campus infrastructure, such as the Combined Heat and Power plant, as a "Living Lab" to deliver innovative teaching. The team has developed a deeply embedded approach to hands-on learning through the live interactive demonstration of engineering principles to students. This approach is being used as an exemplar in other institutions.

The Living Lab: using campus infrastructure to enhance the student learning experience

By the Queen's Energy Team (Dr Haresh Manyar, Professor David Rooney, John Nugent, John Devlin, Bill Annesley, School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering and Estates Directorate)

*The University's Vision 2020 focuses on creating a world-class University with an emphasis on education, research and internationalisation. In alignment with this, and the strategic priorities of the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, the **Queen's Energy Team** was established within the School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, along with the Estates Directorate, in 2013.*

The Energy Team's objectives are to:

(i) enhance student education and research capabilities;

(ii) develop innovative teaching techniques;

(iii) accelerate learning outcomes;

(iv) increase employability skills;

(v) and, address the current and emerging carbon saving targets.

Queen's Energy team comprises academics, Estates engineers and technicians, along with support from Trend Building Energy Management Systems (BMS) and we have developed a Living Lab concept, which utilises the existing campus infrastructure in innovative, active teaching and research.

Chemical Engineering students are expected to learn a great deal of information in the form of the "facts" or "principles" and most modules in the first two years are primarily based on a high lecture load. The total number of students enrolled on Level 1 and 2 is in the range of 220-250 per annum, which includes international students visiting Queen's on ERASMUS and Science without Border programmes.

Based on the principle of Kolb's experiential learning theory, which states that, "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" we developed a more engaging and hands-on learning experience for our students. This approach includes live, interactive practical demonstrations, workshops and assignments in collaboration with Queen's Estates, and has been very well received by our students.

Our approach utilises Queen's campus infrastructures, such as the Combined Heat and Power plant based in the David Kier Building; the water treatment plant; the building heat and electricity load management systems; and Air-handling unit (AHU) control systems, and also includes safety management aspects including a hazard and operability (HAZOP) analysis. An example of a practical student learning experience was in using the BMS systems to vary the permissible CO_2 levels in the classroom. The students experienced first-hand how the pumps ramped up the air handling units in order to increase the flow of fresh air in the room and how, to maintain room temperature, the pumps in the heat exchangers were also ramped up. The real-time data from the Building Management System is now used as an in-class education tool, thereby enriching the learning outcomes through enhanced curriculum delivery. This initiative has not only resulted in better use of the Estate, but students are now able to experience the operational issues around a live installation such as data capture, diagnostics, automation, maintenance, and health & safety.

Student performance has steadily improved over past three years and student feedback has also been very encouraging. Below are some comments and feedback from staff and students.

Within Queen's, "the estate is an enabler for world-class teaching and research. In many areas, the Energy Team have gone one step beyond. A great example includes fostering a meaningful culture of imaginative collaboration with academic colleagues which allows the campus infrastructure to be used as an active teaching and research laboratory" (Professor Johnston, Vice-Chancellor).

Practical demonstration of campus infrastructure in the David Keir Building

"I enjoyed the fact that we actually got to see a real process plant in operation and I was happy that I was able to identify the majority of the equipment involved. I enjoyed the challenge of the assignment." (Student comment)

"It was very interesting to see real-world Chemical Engineering Industry right under our building! How this is used to save the University money, and the process control needed to maintain the plant." (Student comment)

The supporting evidence clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of our approach. The team's development of web tools has allowed staff and students to access statistics for their part of the University. Furthermore, the data supplied by Estates has been used to support research projects and funding applications. Students have successfully used the data and the facilities to enter and win international student competitions, and similarly academic staff have published research on this work. The concept of the **living laboratory** is an ongoing strategy. Academics are currently working with the Energy Team to

2016 QUB Teaching Award for Excellence in Teaching by a Team

develop enhanced energy storage and waste heat recovery facilities within the University in order to facilitate the delivery of postgraduate taught courses, as well as the supporting research in the newly established pioneering research programme in sustainable energy.

Last year, the team won a University Teaching Award for this work. The Award panel commended the team for the development of, *…a deeply embedded approach to hands-on learning through the live interactive demonstration of engineering principles to students."*

National Student Survey: results for 2016 & changes to the survey for 2017

By Nick Bohill, Careers, Employability and Skills

Survey Results for 2016

The National Student Survey (NSS) is instrumental in giving students a voice in their education. Earlier in the year almost 4,000 final year Queen's undergraduates were targeted by the NSS and nearly 3,000 of them took the opportunity to have their say. The NSS results enable prospective students to make choices about their future and are used by HEI's to enhance the quality of their courses. Positively, the NSS 2016 results for Queen's were the highest achieved by the University since the introduction of the survey in 2005.

Table 1 shows the continued improvement in the University's NSS scores over the past three years and provides data comparisons for the top quartile, the sector average and the Northern Ireland averages for 2016. Queen's scores are higher than the HE sector averages in all areas of the survey.

Table 1: National Student Survey 2016	Queen's University				All Institutions		
	2014	2015	2016	Rise /Fall	Sector Average	Top Quartile	NI Average
Teaching	88	90	90	-	87	90	88
Assessment and Feedback	70	72	75	▲	74	78	75
Academic Support	81	83	83	-	82	85	84
Organisation and Management	81	83	86	▲	79	84	85
Learning Resources	92	92	93	▲	86	88	91
Personal Development	85	86	86	-	82	83	86
Overall Satisfaction	86	88	90	▲	86	90	89
Satisfaction with the Students' Union	78	81	80	▼	68	70	68

The Overall Satisfaction score of 90% is 2% higher than last year. The University's score is 4% higher than the sector average and is 1% higher than the average score for Northern Ireland (NI)[1] and equal to the top quartile. The University also exceeded its HEFCE Benchmark score of 86% for Overall Satisfaction by 4%.

Scores for Assessment and Feedback, Organisation and Management and Learning Resources all increased by between 1 and 3%. Learning Resources remains the highest scoring area stretching its previous high score by 1% to 93%. Assessment and Feedback increased by 3% to 75% but remains lowest scoring area.

The 90% score for Teaching equals the score for the top quartile. Queen's score for Teaching is higher than the NI average by 2% and the sector average by 3%. Satisfaction with the Students' Union fell slightly to 80%. Across the sector, scores for this question are volatile but the University's score is 12% higher than both the sector average and the NI average, and is 10% higher than the score for the top quartile.

Furthermore, when compared with the 24 Russell Group universities, Queen's is ranked as follows:

- Joint 1st alongside Exeter for Personal Development;
- Joint 1st alongside York, Durham and Exeter for Assessment and Feedback;
- Joint 2nd with Oxford, Cambridge, Leeds and Newcastle for Overall Satisfaction;
- 3rd for Learning Resources;
- Joint 3rd with Durham and Exeter for Organisation and Management;
- Joint 6th with Durham, Exeter, Nottingham and Oxford for Academic Support; and
- Joint 7th alongside Birmingham, Bristol and Newcastle for Teaching.
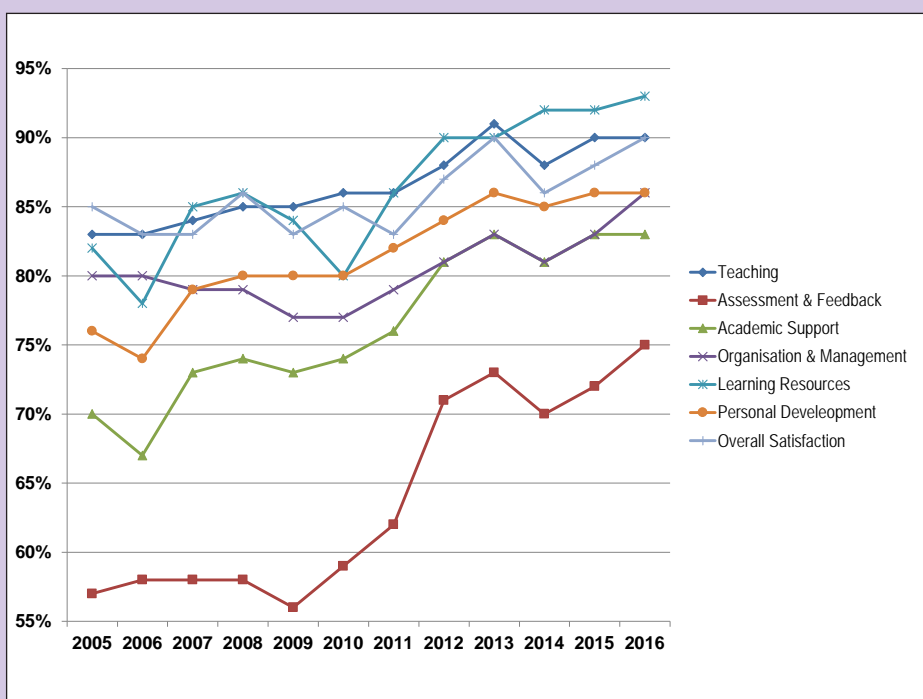
Historical Trend Data 2005-2016

The upcoming NSS for 2017 will see the first major changes to the survey since its introduction in 2005. Given that the redesigned questionnaire will inevitably interrupt trend data it is therefore probably an ideal time to reflect on the journey Queen's has travelled over the past 12 years.

It is great to see the progress Queen's has made from 2005 to 2016 and that is reflected in the upward trends across all the key metrics (see chart on following page).

The greatest strides have been made in Assessment and Feedback, Academic Support, Learning Resources and Personal Development which have all increased by at least 10 percentage points between 2005 and 2016. Assessment and Feedback remains the lowest scoring area, however, the University's score of 75% in 2016 is the highest it has ever recorded and the score has improved by 19% from a low of 56% in 2009.

The scores for Teaching (+7%) and Organisation and Management (+6%)

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1 Scores for other NI institutions: St Mary's University College 95%; Stranmillis University College 91%; Ulster University 88%.

Legend:
- Teaching
- Assessment & Feedback
- Academic Support
- Organisation & Management
- Learning Resources
- Personal Develeopment
- Overall Satisfaction

also improved between 2005 and 2016. Perhaps most importantly the Overall Satisfaction ratings have improved by 7% from the lows of 83% in 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2011 to a personal best score of 90% in 2013 and 2016.

Changes to the Survey for 2017

For the 2017 instalment of the NSS the funding bodies are introducing substantial changes to the survey questionnaire. The changes are based on the outcomes of the Review of Information[2] and an extensive testing programme.

These changes were needed to ensure the survey remained fit for purpose. The questionnaire changes were designed to be more reflective of the needs of the sector in 2017 and beyond. The focus is now firmly on student engagement and represents a move away from the concept of

"students as consumers" towards a more collaborative approach that values "students as partners".

Revised Questionnaire

Questions which are unchanged from 2016 are marked with an asterisk*.

The teaching on my course

1. Staff are good at explaining things*
2. Staff have made the subject interesting*
3. The course is intellectually stimulating*
4. My course has challenged me to achieve my best work [new]

Learning opportunities [new section]

5. My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth
6. My course has provided me with opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different topics
7. My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt

Assessment and feedback

8. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance*
9. Marking and assessment has been fair [amended]
10. Feedback on my work has been timely [amended]
11. I have received helpful comments on my work [amended]

Academic support

12. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to*
13. I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course [amended]
14. Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course [amended]

Organisation and management

15. The course is well organised and running smoothly*
16. The timetable works efficiently for me [amended]
17. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively*

Learning resources

18. The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well [amended]
19. The library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well [amended]
20. I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to [amended]

Learning community [new section]

21. I feel part of a community of staff and students

22. I have had the right opportunities to work with other students as part of my course

Student voice [new section]

23. I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course

24. Staff value students' views and opinions about the course

25. It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on

26. The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests

Overall satisfaction

27. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course*

The new survey is slightly longer than the current version, at 27 questions in eight sections compared to the current 23 in six.

Included are nine new questions on student engagement as well as updated questions on assessment and feedback and learning resources. The personal development questions have been removed from the core question set along with two other questions to ensure the survey remains concise. The open text boxes and the current scale for responses will continue to be used.

Preparations and Timings for NSS 2017

The NSS will be open to eligible students in Queen's on 16 January 2017 and close on 30 April. Schools are encouraged to promote the survey with eligible students. The Students' Union will be supporting the marketing campaign across the University and taking the lead on social media communications with students. Schools will receive weekly updates on their response rates and this data will also be posted on the Students' Union website. Students who complete the survey online will be entered into a prize draw with the chance to win a free graduation package.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support which is fundamental to the success of the survey.

For more information, please contact Nick Bohill in Careers, Employability and Skills (**n.bohill@qub.ac.uk**)

More than bullet points: channel your inner creativity

By Clare Thomson, e-Learning Developer, School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences

PowerPoint is a powerful multimedia package yet audiences routinely criticise it for the endless slides containing bullet points, overly crammed content and poor quality images. To combat this negative view the More than bullet points series was born. There are many presentation software packages available but I focus on PowerPoint in the videos as we all have this on our computers. The series will cover images, posters, infographics, Pecha Kucha and making videos. The latter two are discussed and linked below.

To get started all you need is a computer, PowerPoint 2013 onwards (for Wins or Mac), time and images. Access to the internet for images and audio is beneficial or a camera to take your own photographs. If you would like to narrate over your content a microphone is a necessity, this together with audio software such as Audacity will ensure you are pitch perfect.

Pecha Kucha

Pecha Kucha was launched in Tokyo in 2003 by architects Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham. The format consists of a presentation of 20 images each appearing on screen for 20 seconds. This means the whole presentation is restricted to 6 minutes 40 seconds and as the timings are built in, the presenter has no choice but to stick to this.

These restrictions may lead you to conclude that it is a very uncreative arrangement and that it is not applicable to all situations. However, from experience it is quite the opposite. Restricting yourself to images alone results in very creative uses of metaphor and brings much more personalisation to the talk. The time limit ensures that the speaker has rehearsed the talk many times and comes across very professionally. A side benefit that I did not anticipate is that it resulted in a very informal atmosphere in the conference setting and acted as an ice-breaker of sorts as many people injected humour into the proceedings.

Aside from conference talks this format can be useful for student presentations and can ensure sessions remain within time allocations. A training session would be required beforehand however, the video can be a good starting point for this: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWRtx97vDsU&t=7s**.

Making videos

The discovery that PowerPoint can make videos is one of my top finds of

the year, it is so easy and no one will know you haven't used top of the range video editing software. There is no end to the different ways you can harness this within the teaching environment – talks, support, hints and tips, feedback, digital stories, student assignments – imagination is the only limit.

The video **(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ci0ahjTz-mw&feature=youtu.be)** provides the basic instructions as to how to go about it but really I would advocate experimentation as there are different routes through each generating a unique result. You can decide to go with a music background track or to make it more personal add your own narration. You can choose to only include images or you can combine images and some text. I have used PowerPoint to create all the videos for *More than bullet points.*

Further information can be found on the Microsoft support pages: Windows **(https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/Save-your-presentation-as-a-video-fafb9713-14cd-4013-bcc7-0879e6b7e6ce)** and Mac **(https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/Save-a-presentation-as-a-movie-file-or-MP4-4e1ebcc1-f46b-47b6-922a-bac76c4a5691)**. Please send me an email with any queries: **c.thomson@qub.ac.uk**

Using PeerWise to Engage Students with their Learning

By Dr Elaine Farrell, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics

PeerWise is an online tool that allows users to pose and answer multiple-choice questions. One student provides a written question, a number of answers, and an explanation for each answer, and the respondent selects an answer, and adds further comments. The ability to contribute questions, answers, explanations and comments means that PeerWise can be used to proffer opinions. These features work particularly well for History since students can pose and respond to fact-based as well as critical questions.

Dr Elaine Farrell

I used PeerWise with students in my Level 1 History module, 'Deviance in Britain and Ireland, c.1700-1900'. Students were rewarded for their efforts via the tutorial contribution mark. PeerWise seems to facilitate greater engagement than the QOL discussion forum and is more user-friendly. The vast majority of my students contributed to PeerWise, even if this was simply to answer questions posed by classmates, whereas that is not typically the case with the discussion forum unless it forms a significant part of the assessment. Students can dip in and out of PeerWise; they can see a list of unanswered questions and can sort these chronologically or by difficulty rating, number of answers, number of comments and so on. They can answer multiple-choice questions in seconds, skipping questions as they please, or browse through contributions on a specific topic. It is thus more engaging and accessible than a discussion forum consisting of lengthy textual submissions. In some instances, I used questions/comments on PeerWise as a conversation-starter in tutorials or to tailor the in-class discussion to the interests of students.

The tool is also designed to be somewhat playful through the use of a leader-board, badges, followers, and question/answer ratings. Although I did not consider these features particularly important for my purposes, I underestimated some students' desire to be top of that leader-board!

PeerWise helps to develop written communication and critical analysis skills at this level. It also helps students to formulate research and discussion questions. I found it particularly effective for students with oral communication issues or those who do not make significant contributions to tutorial discussions. PeerWise offers an alternative means for such students to proffer opinions. Students can assume pseudonyms when posing questions and can answer anonymously, meaning that they are not anxious about classmates noticing a 'mistake'. However, since names are connected to students' email addresses, which allow users to gain access to the online course, as administrator I know who has posted each question/comment.

I found PeerWise particularly effective at Level 1 and for modules that have exams because the bank of questions that students generate can prove useful for revision purposes towards the end of the module. This potential was recognised by students, one of whom commented in the end-of-term evaluation: 'The lecturer got us to sign up to a site called "Peerwise" … I thought this was a brilliant idea as it's great for revision.' PeerWise will not suit all disciplines or all levels but it is another tool to engage students in discussion outside class time and to encourage peer learning.

Annual Learning & Teaching Conference:
Embedding digital literacies in the curriculum

12th April 2017
COMPUTER SCIENCE BUILDING, QUB

Are you enhancing student learning by using digital tools to:

**Collaborate,
Create,
Construct,
Communicate thinking?**

We are looking for examples of good practice at QUB to showcase at this year's annual conference.

The morning session will be dedicated to short presentations on "designing effective digital assessment & feedback"

During lunch there will an opportunity to view the posters and talk to the authors.

After lunch we will see the presenters demonstrate the use of the tools they are using to deliver effective digital assessment & feedback

The afternoon session will be devoted to the use of innovative apps and online tools used to help students develop the capabilities which are necessary for graduates living, learning and working in a digital society, specifically:
Developing their digital identities & wellbeing,
Creative thinking,
Digital learning & self development,

Abstracts of 300 words should be sent to ced@qub.ac.uk by 24th Feb 2017