Outcomes from Module Evaluation – Complete Academic Year 2015/16

Summary

This report provides a summary of the module evaluation activity undertaken during the 2015/16 academic year.

Senate has previously received the module evaluation results for surveys that were submitted in time for analysis at the end of the autumn and spring terms. However, as a number of surveys were received too late for inclusion with the autumn and spring terms' analysis reports, it was proposed that a further report would be prepared for Boards of Studies and Senate to provide an overview of all surveys returned during 2015/16.

This report includes a comparative analysis of the summary data collected during the 2015/16 and 2014/15 academic years. It covers all surveys completed and returned to Student & Academic Services, including those received too late to be analysed and considered by Boards of Studies and Senate during the standard reporting periods.

Four actions required.

Recommended Actions

Senate is asked to:

1. **consider** the outcomes from the 2015/16 module evaluations.
2. **note** the measures taken to improve data quality, and the importance of Schools:
   - verifying and updating module data on SITS ahead of each module evaluation period and
   - addressing issues which impact on survey return rates
3. **note** that overall, 82% of surveys packs requested by Schools were returned for analysis during 2015/16. However only 77% of these were returned by the agreed deadline for consideration by Boards of Studies and Senate, and 5% were returned too late to be included in the analysis reports submitted for committee consideration.
4. **note** the forthcoming module evaluation process review which aims to evaluate current practice and identify opportunities for enhancement.

Publication: Open

Module Evaluation – Complete Academic Year 2015/16

1. Context

This overview report provides Senate with an update on the outcomes of the module evaluation process undertaken during 2015/16. The summary includes data for both undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules including surveys completed online. The purpose of this report is to capture and analyse all the module evaluation surveys completed during the last academic year.

Senate has previously received the module evaluation results for surveys that were submitted in time for analysis at the end of the autumn and spring terms. However, as a number of surveys were received too late for inclusion with the autumn and spring term analysis reports, it was proposed that a further report would be prepared for Boards of Studies and Senate to provide an overview of all surveys returned during 2015/16.

This report includes a comparative analysis of the summary data collected during the 2015/16 and 2014/15 academic years. It covers all surveys completed and returned to Student & Academic Services, including those received too late to be analysed and considered by Boards of Studies and Senate during the standard reporting periods.

In line with previous years, Schools have received the individual module level data and, for those module evaluation surveys returned by the agreed deadlines,[1] corresponding statistical analysis for dissemination, in accordance with the process approved by ExCo. This process considers individual data both in relation to the academic staff CV and appraisal, as well as the management of feedback from students through the academic governance framework.

The module evaluation survey questions ask students to rate the teaching, assessment and feedback, the library resources for the module and for the extent to which they were satisfied with the overall quality of the module (as listed in Appendix 1). The questions are broadly based on questions asked in the NSS and the same scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) is used. The students were given one evaluation form for each module or, for multiple lecturer modules, one form for each lecturer group.

Cass Business School asked students additional questions that rate the individual academics responsible for the teaching of the module and two questions on the way in which ethical issues are considered in the module. The results for those questions have not been included in this analysis but has been considered in depth by the School.

2. Outcomes from 2015/16

3439 undergraduate and postgraduate modules were proposed for evaluation during the 2015/16 academic year as shown in Table 1, a 12% increase from the 2014/15 academic year (3077 modules).

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[1] The distribution period for surveys (including those for modules with non-standard delivery patterns) and return dates are agreed in liaison with Schools; the dates are selected to maximise potential completion rates and meet deadlines for outcome data to be submitted to Boards of Studies.

Table 1: Surveys expected/completed by Schools

School	Surveys requested/sent out to Schools		Surveys producing reports			
	2015-16	2014-15	2015-16		2014-15	
			No.	%	No.	%
SASS	649	648	640	99%	638	98%
CASS	750	563	523	70%	490	87%
SMCSE	725	535	632	87%	500	93%
CLS	751	789	644	86%	621	79%
SHS	564	542	380	67%	416	77%
Total	3439	3077	2819	82%	2665	87%

Table 1 shows the percentage of surveys producing reports during the past two years. 82% of the surveys requested produced reports in 2015/16 which is a 6% decrease to the recorded figure of 87% during 2014/15. The main reasons for this drop is surveys producing reports include:

- Until 2015/16 SHS reported actual numbers of students responding to the surveys rather than numbers in relation to students registered on the module; this has been rectified from 2015/16 and appears as a sharp drop in response rates for SHS in 2016.

- Due to a number of personnel changes in SMCSE, effective management of the module evaluation process was affected resulting in a lower percentage of surveys producing reports. Discussions with colleagues within the School took place with a view to improving the management of the process.

- A high number of module evaluations were requested from Cass Business School in 2015/16. During the year it was discovered that a number of modules would not be running due to low student numbers. The module evaluations produced for these modules were discarded.

- Module evaluation surveys are produced based on module/lecturer data held in SITS; it is important that this is as up-to-date as possible to ensure that survey requests are accurate. Draft module lists are made available to Schools ahead of each evaluation period to enable them to verify information and update SITS data before the surveys are produced. As in 2015, there were issues with the verification and SITS updating process ahead of each period and some updates were not reflected in subsequent data extractions. The main issue was around the identification of Module Tutor names on SITS. This impacted on the data quality and contributed to a 6% reduction in the numbers of surveys producing results between 2015/16 and 2014/15. A specific e:Vision form was developed in August 2015 to enable staff to make updates directly into the appropriate area of SITS. Training notes have been produced and disseminated to the Schools for information.

As in previous years, where surveys had not produced reports, the primary reasons are:

i. **Non-distribution of surveys to students**
Module evaluation forms were not distributed to students. Many survey packs were not collected from the Course Office by the lecturer/visiting lecturer/other relevant staff member for distribution to classes.[2]

ii. **Multiple lecturer module surveys**
When Schools request surveys for multiple lecturers, students are asked to complete more than one survey for a single module. Not all of these surveys were completed, e.g. some lecturers may have their completed their teaching sessions prior to the evaluation period.

iii. **Spoiled surveys**
The surveys were damaged or unreadable (e.g. if the bar code or module ID information has been crossed out or altered). Issues were experienced with 13 survey packs (of the 3439) which were unreadable and equates to 0.01% of all survey packs sent out for completion.

iv. **Non-return of surveys**
The surveys were not returned for scanning, or were returned uncompleted. In some instances, the surveys were completed by students however not returned for scanning so results were not available.

This indicates that non-distribution or return of surveys may account for the remainder of missing results. In some cases, surveys were returned after the deadlines for data to be collated in time for the relevant Boards of Studies deadlines. Schools have been provided with a log of outstanding surveys where relevant so that completion and return rates can be monitored. Schools have been advised to implement plans for the forthcoming year to monitor the collection/return of packs and address any issues to minimise the risk of non-distribution or returns.

3. Analysis of module evaluation by School

The percentage response rate achieved by individual modules relies on several factors: communication by the tutor in advance of the survey week; reminding students the survey is imminent; the number of students attending the session when the survey is delivered and the accuracy of data within SITS which provides the total number of students expected to respond.

Response rate data is checked during the data analysis stage to identify issues and rectify any anomalies. Response rates and the highest and lowest overall satisfaction scores for 2015/16 compared to the 2014/15 academic year are shown in Table 2.

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[2] Whilst it is requested that a Student Rep collects the completed surveys from the students, lecturers or other relevant staff are asked to deliver the packs to their class in the first instance.

Table 2: Response rates and maximum/minimum scores

School	2015-16						2014-15			
	Module response rate				Overall Satisfaction		Module response rate		Overall Satisfaction	
	80% and above		below 40%		Highest	Lowest	80% and above	below 40%	Highest	Lowest
	No.	%	No.	%			%	%		
SASS	169	26%	141	22%	5.00	1.00	27%	27%	5.00	1.67
CASS	331	52%	87	14%	5.00	1.92	49%	17%	5.00	1.50
SMCSE	91	24%	100	26%	5.00	1.71	23%	24%	5.00	1.33
CLS	289	46%	70	11%	5.00	0.00	46%	8%	5.00	2.71
SHS	238	46%	47	9%	5.00	0.00	83%	3%	5.00	0.00
Total	1118	40%	445	16%			45%	16%		

Overall response rates for modules over 80% were lower than the last academic year (a drop from 45% to 40%) and the response rate for the module scoring lower than 40% were the same at 16% for both academic years. Key points to note are:

- **Response rates of 80% and above:** 83% of SHS surveys had achieved a response rate of over 80% last year however it was then established that inaccurate student number figures for the School had been provided so this result cannot be relied upon. This year SHS surveys have been produced using the standard City method which has improved the accuracy of the response rate figure. CASS and SMCSE achieved improved response rates of over 80% compared to last academic year whilst CLS maintained the same scores for both academic years.

- **Response rates under 40%:** Although SASS, SMCSE and SHS had a higher proportion of response rates of under 40% this year, CASS and CLS performed well which resulted in a 10% reduction on the overall 'below 40% response rates' compared to last year.

The following points should be noted with regard to the accuracy of underlying data and the timing of survey distribution which can impact on survey response rates and results:

- There were issues with underlying data in terms of inaccurate student numbers (in SITS or for student groups) resulting in an overall decrease in response rates. This suggests that further work and support from Schools is required to refine the process to ensure that the underlying data in SITS is accurate.

- Surveys for modules with multiple lecturers have sometimes been requested for all registered students on the module, rather than the number for the specific group, which impacts on response rates. Schools were reminded to provide specific student group numbers before the results analysis stage, and improved data quality was achieved in most cases.

- If the survey is run before students are assessed, they cannot answer the assessment and feedback questions so their views on this performance indicator cannot be analysed. If the survey is distributed at the end of modules, participation rates may be low as student attendance can diminish later in the term. Survey period 'windows' for 2015/16 were established with Schools with the aim of collecting the maximum number of responses whilst enabling results to be processed and analysed within a suitable timeframe. The timing of the survey distribution is managed by Schools.

- Students should be reminded that the evaluation forms must be completed correctly so they can be read by the optical reader. It has been identified that incorrectly completed surveys were not being recorded as responses, which skews the response rates and average results.

4. Analysis by Survey Section

This analysis shows the number of modules attracting the highest and lowest overall scores for teaching, assessment and the overall satisfaction. Table 3.1 provides a breakdown of the percentages of modules per School which have achieved scores of 4.5 and above or below 3.5. Table 3.2 shows the numerical breakdown. Key points to note for the module evaluations receiving results are:

Teaching Scores

- 91 modules scored less than 3.5 for teaching. In percentage terms scores of less than 3.5 for teaching remained static (SASS, CASS, SMCSE) or declined slightly (CLS, SHS) compared with 2014/15.

- 1363 modules scored 4.5 or above for teaching. CASS and SMCSE have improved the percentage of modules receiving teaching scores of greater than 4.5 for the 2015/16 evaluation compared to the last academic year.

Assessment Scores

- 342 modules scored less than 3.5 for assessment. The percentage of assessment scores below 3.5 decreased for CASS and SASS but increased for the other Schools in comparison the last academic year. However it should be noted that many students may not have been assessed at the time of the surveys which impacts on the results.

- 716 modules scored 4.5 or above for assessment. The percentage of modules with scores of 4.5 or above for assessment increased or remained the same in all Schools in comparison to the last academic year.

Overall Satisfaction Scores

- 187 modules scored less than 3.5 overall. As a percentage, the overall satisfaction scores of less than 3.5 decreased for all Schools except for CLS.

- 933 modules scored 4.5 or above overall. All Schools improved in terms of percentage except SASS whose overall satisfaction decreased in comparison to last academic year.

Schools produce action plans for any modules scoring less than 3.5 in these categories, and these continue to be monitored by the ET+Deans group. Future performance of these modules will be monitored over time.

Table 3.1: High and Low Scoring Modules (by percentage) Autumn 2015/16

School	Overall score	Teaching		Assessment		Overall satisfaction	
		14-15	15-16	14-15	15-16	14-15	15-16
SASS	<3.50	2	2	22	20	8	7
	>4.50	46	44	18	18	32	30
CASS	<3.50	5	5	10	6	11	9
	>4.50	30	34	11	15	19	20
SMCSE	<3.50	3	3	8	9	9	8
	>4.50	38	42	16	21	21	27
CLS	<3.50	1	2	4	6	3	5
	>4.50	60	60	35	40	35	41
SHS	<3.50	2	3	16	20	6	4
	>4.50	63	61	33	33	45	48
Total	<3.50	3	3	12	12	7	7
	>4.50	47	48	22	25	30	33

% of modules recording scores below 3.50 or 4.50 and above

Table 3.2: High and Low Scoring Modules (by number) – 2015/16

School	Overall score	Teaching		Assessment		Overall satisfaction	
		14-15	15-16	14-15	15-16	14-15	15-16
SASS	<3.50	15	16	137	126	48	45
	>4.50	287	286	110	116	201	194
CASS	<3.50	34	35	64	37	69	55
	>4.50	192	218	71	93	121	128
SMCSE	<3.50	12	12	35	36	37	30
	>4.50	156	161	65	80	89	101
CLS	<3.50	5	14	21	36	16	34
	>4.50	300	377	174	255	173	261
SHS	<3.50	10	14	76	107	27	23
	>4.50	306	321	159	172	218	249
Total	<3.50	76	91	333	342	197	187
	>4.50	1241	1363	579	716	802	933

Number of modules recording scores below 3.50 or 4.50 and above

5.   Undergraduate Module Evaluation compared to performance in the NSS

The module evaluation questions are similar to those in the current National Student Survey (NSS) (Table 4) although the disaggregated nature of module analysis does not make the two surveys easily comparable. The NSS is based on course level information and JACS subject levels and asks respondents in relation to their whole programme of study whereas the module evaluation survey asks respondents to consider a small element across a shorter timeframe.

The comparison has been made using only scores drawn from undergraduate modules as the NSS is for undergraduate students only. The inclusion of postgraduate scores for module evaluation, which are generally higher, skews the results. For module evaluations for which results were available:

- Teaching scores are comparable to the 2014/15 module evaluation scores and NSS scores for 2016 with the exception of Question 1.1 which is slightly higher than the 2016 NSS;

- Assessment and feedback scores are indicating higher satisfaction for Questions 2.1 and 2.3 compared with the NSS scores for 2016. However, Question 2.2 is slightly lower than the NSS scores in 2015 and 2016;

- Module evaluation satisfaction with the Library is comparable with the 2014/15 academic year but lower than the NSS scores in 2015 and 2016;

- This module evaluation period has a similar score for overall satisfaction to the 2016 NSS scores and with the last academic year.

Table 4: Module Evaluation compared to performance in the NSS 2016

MODULE EVALUATION RESULTS*								
	Teaching			**Assessment & Feedback**			**Library**	**Overall**
	Qn 1.1	**Qn 1.2**	**Qn 1.3**	**Qn 2.1**	**Qn 2.2**	**Qn 2.3**	**Qn 3.1**	**Qn 4.1**
Average Score	4.35 (4.32)	4.52 (4.52)	4.40 (4.39)	4.02 (4.00)	4.02 (4.02)	4.10 (4.10)	4.05 (4.04)	4.19 (4.16)
% agree	87% (86%)	90% (90%)	88% (88%)	80% (80%)	80% (80%)	82% (82%)	81% (81%)	84% (83%)
RESULTS FOR CORRESPONDING QUESTION[3] IN THE NSS*								
Mean score	4.05 (4.55)	4.45 (4.50)	4.40 (4.55)	3.35 (3.40)	4.1 (4.1)	3.9 (3.9)	4.4 (4.45)	4.25 (4.35)
% agree	81% (91%)	89% (90%)	88% (91%)	67% (68%)	82% (82%)	78% (78%)	88% (89%)	85% (87%)

* Bracketed figures denote 2015 results for the NSS and 2014/15 module evaluation results.

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[3] Due to the number of questions within the NSS the question numbers do not align. Therefore, the corresponding questions have been used, but they may not reflect the same question number.

6. Feedback on Library provision

The question 'I was able to access the library resources I needed for this module' produced the following results in Table 5:

Table 5: Satisfaction with Library Resources

School	14-15	15-16
SASS	82%	83%
CASS	83%	84%
CLS	85%	84%
SMCSE	81%	81%
SHS	86%	87%

Satisfaction rates have improved for all Schools with the exception of CLS. As noted in Table 4, module evaluation satisfaction with the Library is comparable with the previous academic year but lower than the NSS scores in 2015 and 2016.

Reasons for the decreased Library satisfaction in some areas as shown in Table 5 should be explored to ensure that it can be addressed at module level, and does not impact negatively on future NSS results. The output from module evaluation for the academic staff CV excludes satisfaction with the Library, noting that it is generally outside the control of the module lecturer.

7. Next Steps

As previously reported, Programme Committees and Staff-Student Liaison Committees should have considered the detail of the summary reports to identify good practice and assist with module development. Any medium-term actions should be incorporated into Annual Programme Evaluations action plans. Boards of Studies should continue to review the feedback relevant to their programmes and produce and monitor action plans. For those surveys returned in time for analysis, summary reports were provided to each School to assist the Boards of Studies with this. Strengths should be noted and areas for development taken forward. The results from the module evaluation survey and planned actions should have been shared with student representatives and the wider student body.

Ongoing improvement in data quality in SITS is still required and over time will have a positive impact on the module evaluation process as well as other processes which draw upon it such as work relating to examinations and graduation. Schools will continue to have an opportunity to view and update the data held which impacts on the module evaluation process at an early stage each term and specific training is available for Course Officers. This should enable the necessary revisions to be made before the surveys are produced.

Once surveys have been distributed, the prompt return of completed questionnaires for scanning will enable the School and individual staff to receive the results earlier and provide feedback to students on the outcome of the module evaluation. The annual schedule has been drawn up in liaison with Schools to maximise the number of surveys distributed and responses; earlier survey production will enable additional time for survey distribution including those for multiple lecturer groups.

To monitor the accuracy of response rates, the Quality and Standards Officer will continue to verify and update registered student numbers with Schools at the time of completing the end of term analysis.

The module evaluation questions were designed to align with the questions in the current NSS. The launch of an updated NSS for 2017 has presented an opportunity to review the City module evaluation questionnaire. This will form part of a planned Module Evaluation process review which will also ascertain how the current questions should be revised in liaison with students both in order to continue to align with external benchmarks such as the NSS and meet the teaching and learning needs of students and City.

8. Conclusions

The module evaluation process has expanded rapidly since its introduction in 2011 and now includes the majority of undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules (and dissertation modules). Boards of Studies are routinely considering summary reports of all of their modules and using those reports to inform improvements and enhancements across their provision.

There has been a continued effort to improve SITS data quality over the past year, and specific training is now available to ensure the data within SITS required for module evaluation are accurately updated.   Nevertheless, 18% of survey packs produced during this academic year were not completed and returned in time to be considered by Boards of Studies. The autumn and spring term reports showed an average of 77% returns recorded and the additional 5% were returned after the deadline. The late returned surveys were not received in time for analysis and consideration by Boards of Studies. Schools have been encouraged to follow the module evaluation timetable as closely as possible.

The reasons for non-distribution and return of a significant proportion of the surveys requested was explored and the main reasons are listed in Appendix 2. The potential for online surveys can be considered to enable questionnaires and results to be produced more quickly and efficiently.

Dissemination of results to students and any action taken to make improvements to the module students is a key part of the process, both to assure students that their feedback has been valued and considered and ensure that modules are constantly kept under review.

Now the current system has been in place for five years, a review of the operational processes will be undertaken. The review will evaluate current practice and identify opportunities for enhancement. Discussions will take place with the City Executive Team, Schools, the SU and relevant Professional Services and staff to ensure that key stakeholders are consulted.
This will be an opportunity to ensure that module evaluation remains fit for purpose and continues to align with City's current priorities and other internal and external developments.

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Module Evaluation Questions

Teaching

    1.1 Teaching has helped my understanding of the subject.

    1.2 Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching.

    1.3 Staff have been available to respond to my queries about the module.

    1.4 The teaching on this module has been of a high standard. *(CASS only)*

Assessment and Feedback

    2.1 Feedback on my coursework has helped my learning.

    2.2 Feedback on my work has been prompt.

    2.3 I understand the assessment criteria and what is required of me to do well in this module.

Library

    3.1 I was able to access the library resources I needed for this module.

Overall satisfaction

    4.1 Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the module.

Additional questions for CASS

    5.1 It is important to cover ethical issues in this module.

    5.2 Relevant ethical issues were fully covered in this module.

Main reasons for non-returns

SASS
- the majority of non-returns were due to non-collection of the surveys;
- some module evaluation packs were not returned to the Course Office after collection.

SMCSE
- module evaluation forms were not collected by academic members of staff;
- some forms were requested in error and not required by the School;
- steps have been taken to ensure teaching allocations are provided to the Course Office detailing required timing of module evaluations and names of tutors to be evaluated are accurate.

CLS
- some academic members of staff did not collect module evaluation forms;
- some module evaluations were collected and sent to S&AS. However, upon checking local records, they were never received;
- a number of module evaluations not required due to the academic member of staff being on long term sick leave.

CASS
- two module evaluations were returned, but not received by S&AS;
- one module tutor had left, so the module evaluation could not be completed;
- one module tutor forgot to complete the module evaluation;
- due to a last minute change the module tutor did not teach on the module;
- one module tutor assumed module evaluations were not applicable to her and did not complete it.

SHS
- a significant number of module evaluations were not required for specified tutors as they were generated in error;
- a high proportion of surveys were duplicates;
- some module evaluation forms were missing;