

## Scrutiny Panel Report

<b>Officer</b>	Cassie Ulrich – Education Officer
<b>Session</b>	Term 2 – March

### 1. Objectives

1. To address the identified issues with timetabling from the review completed in Spring 2018 (such as the local versus centralised ownership of teaching rooms) within an action plan created in partnership with Student Services. This is to be completed by the <i>end of Term 3</i> with clear project leads and accountability.	
<b>Context</b> <i>(summary)</i>	<p>Students have been extremely dissatisfied with their timetabling experience for multiple years. Some problems are that the timetable isn't available early enough, doesn't display correctly, modules overlap, doesn't allow students to schedule work, caregiving or to participate in other activities.</p> <p>The University have identified that one of the main issues is some of the teaching buildings are owned by the central University, but the majority are managed by schools. This makes it challenging for Student Services to access rooms that have been reserved, but should be available.</p>
<b>Progress to date and next steps</b> <i>(summary)</i>	<p>While it has been slower than desired, the new <b>Timetabling Oversight and Steering Group</b> will begin to meet in March and will meet every two months. The first meeting of this new group was delayed because it was agreed that since the new Deputy Registrar (DR) would take ownership of <i>Timetabling</i>, the group shouldn't start until he was in post and settled in. The DR started in early February during which we had a meeting to discuss student concerns including Timetabling. The primary conclusion drawn was that academic staff and students need to agree on principles for timetabling that will allow the timetable to be built in an effective and optimised way. This work will be overseen by the group and coordinated with the SU.</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Terms of Reference are robust, including reference to short-term solutions with long-term strategic development such as the integration with lecture capture</li> <li>• Ensure Terms of Reference include an Equality Impact Assessment for all proposed changes so that student groups such as parents, carers, or disabled students aren't negatively impacted or disadvantaged</li> </ul>

2. To make the Extenuating Circumstances (EC) procedure more accessible to students before the <i>first centralised exam period</i> primarily through the introduction of a self-certification process, but also by increasing awareness of the ECs procedures including evidence requirements and impact on progression.	
<b>Context</b> <i>(summary)</i>	The University does not require staff to submit evidence to verify illness for seven days nor does it require staff to verify bereavement. Students often wait weeks to know the

	<p>outcome of their EC claim which can cause further anxiety. Also, students are often unable to schedule medical</p> <p>Recently, Cripps Health Centre where a majority of students are registered are now charging for sick notes.</p>
<p><b>Progress to date</b> (summary)</p>	<p>Although Self-Certification had been approved through the committees necessary, the same committees decided to pause the delivery of the process for the start of Term 1 in the 20/21 academic year due to the significant issues that could arise from a lack of information and also a lack of appropriate resit mechanisms in place currently. This was decided after I requested an update to the committee. I protested the decision in both Teaching and Learning Committee and the Education and Student Experience Committee.</p> <p>Faculty staff will soon undertake a piece of work to review how schools are practicing resit opportunities as the disparity between these practices was one of the major factors for this not being deliverable this year.</p> <p>Communication plan for next academic year has been confirmed to be developed by Student Services.</p> <p>Although this will not be available for the May exams period, I secured the opportunity for students who need to pay for sick certification notes from Cripps Health Centre to be reimbursed through the University Hardship Fund. This is to alleviate the financial burden associated with the new cost of certification notes introduced by the health centre this year. Students can use this for the May exam period.</p> <p>While I had hoped I could accelerate this process to be available within the year, the agreed change is still significant and will improve students' legitimate access to the ECs process from 20/21 on.</p>

	<p>3. To progress the following recommendations from the 2018/2019 SU Hidden Course Costs report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The University of Nottingham to commit to eradicating Hidden Course Costs (HCC)</li> <li>2. All Schools and Departments to form review groups with student representatives to investigate hidden and additional course costs (<i>Term 1</i>)</li> <li>3. All Schools and Departments to form solution groups in partnership with student representatives and the Students' Union (<i>Term 2</i>)</li> <li>4. The University of Nottingham Students' Union to create a resource to support academic representatives working with schools/departments on the issue (<i>October</i>)</li> <li>5. The University of Nottingham Students' Union to work with the University Widening Participation team to create an accessible activities bursary (<i>Term 2</i>)</li> </ol>
<p><b>Context</b> (summary)</p>	<p>In Spring of 2018, the previous SU Education Officer identified that students were experiencing a various different costs not included in tuition that were necessary to complete their degree. These costs were either unavoidable or additional costs that could be avoided through more accurate and timely communication. In November 2018, the Hidden Course Costs campaign which identified over 400 students had spent £224,245 in extra costs to their tuition. These extra costs affect students' ability to access their education and impact their attainment, finances and wellbeing. Given the</p>

	result of the research conducted at the University of Nottingham, the HCC report had five core recommendations listed in my objective above.
<b>Progress to date</b> (summary)	<p>Recommendation 1: <b>complete</b></p> <p>Recommendation 2 and 3: <b>in progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created an 11 pg “Next Steps” report which included a summary of the HCC report, a precis on the impact of student experience, an outline of the required regulatory compliance related to HCC, a guide for the stages of work with an endorsed approach, desired outputs, and an appendix with related documents and resources. The report split recommendations into two stages of work for the working groups: 1) the identification and communication of all hidden and additional costs to satisfy recommendation 1 and 2) solutions to eliminate hidden costs and reduce the additional cost burden to satisfy recommendation 3.</li> <li>• All faculties have commenced Stage 1 and will report back their findings in May. I will be contributing to the meetings within faculties that discuss the findings with faculty-based academic reps.</li> <li>• The outputs of Stage 1 and related reports will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Central University section on ‘Student fees and finance’ webpage (<a href="https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/fees/tuition-fees-student-services.aspx">https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/fees/tuition-fees-student-services.aspx</a>) with top-level statement indicating to students that they may incur additional course costs that vary per programme and signposting students to course-level webpages (appendix 6)</li> <li>○ Improved course-level webpages for all taught programmes or pdfs indicating the additional costs they may incur (appendix 6)</li> <li>○ Costs indicated in all course handbooks for taught programmes</li> <li>○ Cost evaluation to be included in all taught programme and module approvals</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Meeting scheduled with the University Head of Governance so that this work, as a piece of regulatory compliance, is maintained and effectively managed in the long-term upon the completion of my role as the Education Officer.</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation 4: <b>complete</b></p> <p>Recommendation 5: <b>in progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have started to write a paper for funding for students to participate in sports and societies that will either be submitted to the EDI Committee, Education and Student Experience Committee, CARO or Widening Participation envelope. I might suggest that multiple bodies contribute funding.</li> </ul>

4. To publish a report in *June* with recommendations to ‘Decolonise’ both the SU and the University taking a campaigns-based approach which includes engaging students, professional services, academics, UCU and SU staff in order to embed recommended practices across both institutions.

<b>Context</b> (summary)	At the University of Nottingham, the BME attainment gap is significant. BME students experience a range of negative impacts as a result of the colonial history of society including, but not limited to, microaggressions and the lack of representation in their learning resources, academic staff who teach them and professional staff who support
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	<p>them. The Decolonise campaign was originally started by the previous SU BME Officer and SU Education Officer.</p>
<p><b>Progress to date</b> <i>(summary)</i></p>	<p><u>Events:</u> In February, the LGBT+ Network and Officer hosted an event on ‘Decolonising Queer Spaces’. I encouraged the LGBT+ Officer in December to organise this event during LGBT+ History Month and gave him the contact information for the speaker. I also provided support for the LGBT+ Officer for the funding request to the Officer Budget for this event and additional events for LGBT+ History Month.</p> <p>Identified a funding source for and encouraged the University Libraries department to submit a funding application to increase the number of books authored by LGBT+ individuals. The department successfully ran this as a campaign during LGBT+ History Month calling for student submissions of books to purchase.</p> <p><u>Report:</u> The report identified will now take the form of a motion to Union Council to give ‘Decolonise’ the longevity it needs as a project with a submission deadline of <b>March 17th</b>. The motion will explicate the recommendations and campaign aims related to both the SU and the University. A key recommendation will be to pull together all the siloes of Decolonise work currently being done within different schools and programmes. By passing this as policy, the recommendations that the original report would have made will have formal accountability.</p> <p>Following a successful creation of Union Policy, UCU has confirmed collaboration with the SU to create a similar policy within the academic staff. This will support a joined up approach to Decolonising the University of Nottingham.</p> <p><u>Marketing support:</u> Marketing now have a full brief for assets to be created to support a ‘Decolonise’ awareness-raising and discussion-generating campaign.</p>

## 2. Remit

### Meetings

Meeting	Context	Outcome
University Council	Highest governing body of the University responsible for ensuring delivery of the strategy, regulatory compliance, maintenance of reputation and healthy financial operations.	<p>The University recently declared a Climate Emergency. This was the first item I've seen decided upon by a vote of Council instead of consensus agreement indicating that the topic was divisive and that there were members who did not support the declaration. I voiced an impassioned and well-reasoned position in support of the declaration which had an identifiable impact on the vote of some Council members.</p> <p>Furthermore, I requested that the statement be published during Sustainability Week to improve engagement with the campaign, which was agreed.</p> <p>This followed a motion from the ESJ Officer passed by Union Council to declare a Climate Emergency at the SU and the work he has done to raise the profile of sustainability at both institutions.</p>
Education Network Meetings	<p><b>Academic Council</b> – coordinating and decision-making body of the Education Network comprised of all Faculty Reps, Education Reps and the Education and Postgraduate Officer.</p> <p><b>Faculty Forums</b> – coordinating bodies for each of the five faculties with all levels of representation including Course reps, Education Reps and Faculty Reps (Education and Postgraduate Officer in attendance).</p>	<p><b>Sutton Bonington Forum</b> Organised and chaired a well-attended forum on SB campus for academic reps in the School of Biosciences and the School of Veterinary Medicine Science. Received a lot of high quality feedback for an array of issues, not all academic-related.</p> <p><i>Two key academic issues to follow-up on:</i></p> <p>1) Difficulty in using the lecture capture system, specifically some lectures being cut short because of how the system schedules and times recordings. *Raised issue at Teaching and Learning Committee and the Information Services have now identified that the system will be reconfigured within 3-4 months to fix this.</p> <p>2) Parity of experience for Biosciences students who have to travel to UP campus for exams while SVMS have exams on SB campus *Will work with the Biosciences Education Rep, the Head of School, and Student</p>

		<p>Services for a solution before May exams period.</p> <p><b>Academic Council</b>  Chaired an additional meeting of Academic Council to facilitate consultation on two issues: 1) Course Rep Selection 2) Proposed Model of the Democratic Review (January 30<sup>th</sup>)</p> <p><b>UG Faculty Rep 1-to-1s</b>  Organised 1-to-1s with the majority of the UG Faculty Reps to discuss their Term 2 priorities and support needed from the Union and University.</p> <p>Personal Tutoring is a priority for the Faculty of Science UG Faculty Rep. As a first step, I arranged a meeting with the University Senior Tutor and Deputy Senior Tutor to discuss the previous review and the current practices of quality assurance against the process annually. Determined that this work should primarily be focused within the faculty instead of at the institutional level for now. Next step are pending a follow-up meeting with the UG Faculty of Science Faculty Rep.</p> <p><b>Faculty Forums</b>  The second set of Faculty Forums are scheduled for w/c March 9<sup>th</sup>.</p>
<p>Learning Spaces Advisory Group</p>	<p>Oversees the strategic development and use of all learning spaces within the University, making recommendations to the improvement of the space physically and digitally to positively impact the student experience.</p>	<p>At this meeting I raised feedback given to me by the Disabled Students' Officer regarding the accessibility of rooms generally and by the lack of room access information available in timetables. This impacts students with mobility needs as information such as if the room is wheelchair accessible could not be easily found. An Estates committee member confirmed that the department was in the process of updating and collating this information and agreed to my request to make this available on the timetable (both the webpage and the phone application) and tentatively said it would be live within the term. This would be used going forward so that accessibility information was available for students should they need it.</p>

		I also ensured EDI concerns were properly acknowledged within the Terms of Reference of the group with specific reference to accessibility needs.
Planning and Resources Committee (Jan and Feb)	<p>Accommodation cost for new accommodation site on Jubilee Campus - initial price was proposed at £170 pppw in a self-catered hall.</p> <p>Capital Replacement Programme Business Case</p> <p>Curriculum and E-Assessment Business Case</p>	<p>Argued against the £170 price point based on financial capacity and mental wellbeing related to finances and accommodation prices. Secured explicit and minuted reference to the approval of the new housing project to not be contingent upon £170 pppw proposal, but instead for the final price to be determined by the overall accommodation pricing scheme that has yet to be completed.</p> <p>Requested explicit assurance in the business case at the next approval stage to include replacement of lifts that continuously malfunction and go out of service, specifically Hallward library, as it's the only library in the building.</p> <p>Supported the business case at PRC as one of the only projects that the committee has considered that would have substantial impact on student experience including better course and assessment design leading to increased engagement and literacy, increased confidence in marks, and access to actionable feedback leading to increased self-regulation of learning. The work would also enable the analysis of assessment data to identify if assessment strategies are having differential impacts on students with protected characteristics.</p>

### Other Projects, Issues or Events

Project		
Developing the Education Network		
Issue	Action	Outcome
Unfilled Course Rep positions for various courses across faculties resulting in no access to academic representation for many cohorts of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Course Rep Selection Proposal</b></li> </ul> <p>*Identified and discussed barriers to recruiting Course Reps in the current election system with various academic reps, SU staff and University staff</p>	The proposal is yet to be approved as that decision wont be made until March 24 <sup>th</sup> by Academic Council. If approved, this will take effect in Term 1 of the 20/21 Academic Year

	<p>*Researched different approaches in the sector</p> <p>*drafted v1 of a proposal to present to Academic Council</p> <p>*Academic Council approved the direction of travel and clarified concerns to be further investigated (eg number of possible reps, democratic principles)</p> <p><u>Next Steps:</u></p> <p>*Consultation on v2 of the proposal with the joint Academic Representation Steer Group (<b>March 10<sup>th</sup></b>)</p> <p>*Consultation/ Update via email with Heads of Schools to obtain feedback on the administrative impact of the proposal (eg too many reps)</p> <p>*Final approval of proposal by Academic Council (<b>March 24<sup>th</sup></b>)</p> <p>*Governance approval/edits by QSC (edits to Quality Manual) and DPC (edits to by-laws) (<b>May</b>)</p> <p>*Build the technical process</p>	<p>where data will be collected on positions filled.</p> <p>This method is being trialled with the April intake of the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science.</p> <p>We expect to see an increase in the number of representatives, but acknowledge that this proposal is one of several pieces to improve access to academic representations and to better support the engagement of academic reps.</p>
Issue	Action	Outcome
<p>Disjointed approach to academic representation between the SU and the University</p> <p>This creates confusion and a lack of clarity for academic reps which can impact on the levels of rep engagement which will subsequently impact on the quality of student feedback collected and actioned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arranged regular meetings with Education and Student Experience managers in all faculties</li> <li>• Introduced the Education Network structure, purpose and function at a variety of staff meetings with faculty and Education and Student Experience Staff members</li> <li>• Continued operation of the joint Academic Representation Steering Group which I chair (next meeting: March 10<sup>th</sup>)</li> </ul> <p><u>Next Steps:</u></p> <p>*Redevelop the discontinued joint SU/Uni event for all LCF staff which serves to introduce staff to the Education Network, the role of the SU in academic representation, and how we can work best together to support academic representation and our academic reps</p> <p>*Run event over the summer</p>	<p>Significantly strengthened relationship between the SU and University staff responsible for academic representation which has resulted in:</p> <p>*Improved communication related to student concerns and preparation for electing the next Education and Faculty Reps</p> <p>*Improved support for Faculty and Education Reps within faculties</p> <p>*Increased opportunity for collaboration on projects (eg supporting reps, Hidden Course Costs, Course Rep Selection proposal)</p>
Issue	Action	Outcome

<p>Unclear understanding of the responsibilities of Course Reps, Education Reps and Faculty Reps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completely redrafted role profiles for Education and Faculty Reps after consulting on the role profiles with each group of representatives. Emailed Education and Faculty Reps directly and while Course Reps received a form to fill out via the EdNet newsletter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced to 1 pg from ~3pgs each by including only the necessary information</li> <li>- Written in a more accessible format</li> <li>- Updated hour commitment</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Next Steps:</u>  *To be discussed at next joint Academic Representation Steering Group  *Course Rep role profile to be redrafted  *Marketing request for them to be branded with Education Network branding  *Ensure Education and Rep training align with the role profiles</p>	<p>Reps will have a greater understanding about the responsibilities and time commitment required by the role which will support improved and consistent engagement.</p> <p>These role profiles will be used for EP 4 at the end of March when nominations open for Education and Faculty Reps</p>
<b>Events</b>		
<b>Interviews</b>		
<p>SU Director of Student Influence</p> <p>PVC for Education and Student Experience</p>	<p>Interviewed candidates for the vacant director position at the SU</p> <p>Interviewed candidates for the new PVC for Education and Student Experience</p>	<p>The two positions will work closely together once in post as a partnership between the SU and the University.</p> <p>The new PVC is an important ally in the University and a true champion of enhancing the student experience through the student voice.</p>



### 3. Policy

<b>Policy</b>	1.4 24 Hours between Exam and Assessment Deadlines
<b>Type</b>	Joint
<b>With</b>	Postgraduate Officer
<b>Policy Resolves</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Education Officer must lobby the University to introduce a 24 hour gap between exams and assessment</li> <li>2. This should be written into the University Quality Manual to ensure consistent standards are met</li> </ol>
<b>Actions taken</b>	<p>The policy with its current mandates has not been implemented to this date, but this will be embedded in curriculum and assessment reviews to address overassessment and inappropriate assessment methods as the root issue leading to assessment intensity.</p> <p>This was discussed in a meeting of the Teaching and Learning Committee in Jan/Feb with a paper highlighting the number of assessments within a specific school raising the root issue.</p>
<b>Time Scale until students see results</b>	Indeterminate
<b>How Success will Be measured</b>	A reduction in assessment intensity and the number of overall exams required,
<b>How have you worked with the relevant PTO.</b>	NA

<b>Policy</b>	1.5 No Hidden Course Costs
<b>Type</b>	Joint
<b>With</b>	Postgraduate Officer
<b>Policy Resolves</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To campaign against hidden course costs and lobby the University to be open about the costs students may incur before coming to University.</li> <li>2. To campaign against additional course costs and lobby the University to reduce, and aim to remove additional costs for students not covered by their tuition.</li> </ol> <p>Subjective rating of policy: green</p>
<b>Actions taken</b>	Action against this policy reflected in the Objective Section as Objective 3.
<b>Time Scale until students see results</b>	Timeline indicated in my third objective
<b>How Success will Be measured</b>	Progress against my third objective
<b>How have you worked with the relevant PTO.</b>	NA

<b>Policy</b>	4.4 Cost of Graduation
<b>Type</b>	Single
<b>With</b>	NA
<b>Policy Resolves</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To lobby the University for a reduction in the cost of the 2 allocated guest tickets for graduation</li> <li>2. To lobby against any reduction in teaching and learning resource to finance this reduction</li> </ol>
<b>Actions taken</b>	<p>All resolves are <b>complete</b> – no further action required.</p> <p>The University no longer charges students for the first two graduation tickets and this has been completed without reducing resource for teaching and learning. However, while each student has received two free graduation tickets since Summer 2018, I am unaware of official documentation or University policy confirming this arrangement. Given this, I will raise this at the next Graduation Experience Board in January 2020 and seek a more formal agreement.</p>
<b>Time Scale until students see results</b>	Complete
<b>How Success will Be measured</b>	Complete
<b>How have you worked with the relevant PTO.</b>	NA

<b>Policy</b>	7.2 Support Repeal the 8th
<b>Type</b>	Single
<b>With</b>	NA
<b>Policy Resolves</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Launch a Home to V8te campaign on campus to raise awareness and encourage students to register to vote by May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018</li> <li>2. Create a travel fund to assist students to get home to vote on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018</li> </ol>
<b>Actions taken</b>	All resolves <b>complete</b> – no further action required
<b>Time Scale until students see results</b>	Complete
<b>How Success will Be measured</b>	Complete
<b>How have you worked with the relevant PTO.</b>	NA