University of Glasgow
Education Policy and Strategy Committee

National Student Survey Report 2013 – College of Social Sciences

Each College is asked to provide a brief report on actions to date regarding the College’s response to the results of the National Student Survey (NSS). Colleges are asked to submit their report to Jane McAllister, Clerk to EdPSC [jane.mcallister@glasgow.ac.uk] by Friday 11 October for inclusion with the papers for the Committee’s meeting on 23 October 2013.

Section A – NSS 2013 results¹

% agree with Statement 22: Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Social Sciences - Average</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology (students are no longer admitted to this degree)</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business studies</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance (analysis included below within Accounting)</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History (Economic and Social History in Soc Sci)</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Teacher Training</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management studies (analysis included below within Business)</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Policy (Public Policy is taught by Urban Studies)</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Satisfaction level on or below institutional benchmark of 80%
Satisfaction level on or above KPI of 90%

Please provide a brief summary of the College’s results, noting the main high and low points.

NSS Results for CoSS 2013 have been positive in that ITE, Law, Politics and Social Policy have made some excellent improvements on last year’s scores and in the face of some large class sizes and the difficulties experienced with room bookings during the session.

(1) Overall Successes

¹ Spreadsheets for each subject area, showing the responses to all statements over the past 4 years are provided to Deans Learning and Teaching as part of the NSS results information.
• Of the 9 subjects (without double counting for Accounting, Business and Sociology), for which KIS data will be published, 4 have met the 90% KPI for “Overall Satisfaction” (question 22). This is the same number as last year although there is some change in which subjects have achieved this threshold. This year ESH (History), Law, Social Policy and Politics all met or exceeded the KPI with scores of 95%, 94%, 94% and 90% respectively. (Last year it was Accounting, ESH (History), Law and Sociology).

• Teacher Training at Dumfries has obtained 100% overall satisfaction and has achieved 100% in 3 of the 4 questions relating to “teaching on my course”. This is excellent news but unfortunately due to the small numbers participating in the survey the results will not be included in the KIS data.

• Initial Teacher Education which last year proved so disappointing, has this year returned to a score on par with previous years achieving 80% satisfaction overall and meeting the KIP in 14 of the questions as compared to 8 last year.

• History/ESH and Social Policy have performed particularly well as only two questions fall below the 80% KPI for Q1-21. Even more notable is that Social Policy scored 100% for two questions in the section “teaching on my course” with improvements of around 20% in two of the questions in this category.

• It is notable that in “Assessment and Feedback”, ESH and Social Policy have only one question below 80%. Given this is typically the weakest area on the NSS at UoG, their achievements in this regard are to be recognized.

• In the questions that correlate most strongly with Q22 “Teaching on My Course” (1-4), all subjects, with only one exception, perform well and meet the internal KPI for each of the questions in this category.

• ITE, Law, Politics and Social Policy have all made notable improvements overall by reducing the number of questions that fell below the 80% KPI. Social Policy deserves particular praise for a remarkable improvement in results.

Areas requiring attention

In the key category of “Teaching on My Course” (q. 1-4) some areas for concentration are:

• Accounting: There has been some deterioration in the scores in this category which although in this current year are not problematic, need attention to ensure that they do not deteriorate further next year.

2 ESH is included within the History code. As such, it is impossible to extract the results for ESH specifically.
3 It is this category that correlates most strongly with overall satisfaction, particularly question 4 “The course is intellectually stimulating”.
• **Economics:** There has been some improvement in this category for Economics compared to last year, but attention is still needed if progress is to be made to return to the results obtained in 2010 and 2011.

In the category “**Feedback and Assessment**” (q5-9):

Most subjects perform less well in this category within CoSS and across the University. ESH (embedded within History) and Social Policy though buck this trend by meeting the KPI in all but one of the 4 feedback and assessment questions. ITE, Law and Politics achieve the KPI for one of the questions in this category but also have scores that need improvement, as do other subjects. Some particular concerns are:

• **Business:** In 2012 there were three scores below 50% in this category. This year, one has increased to 51% (from 45%) but 2 scores remain below 50%, and are lower than last year (36% and 39% this year compared with 43% and 42% respectively) so there is need for some attention here.

• **Economics:** Scores here have improved on last year for all but one of the questions – q5 which has reduced. Four of the 5 scores are, however, still in the 50s and is deserving of some focused attention.

• **Law:** Has seen an improvement in 2 of the 5 questions in this category with one exceeding the KPI. However, three scores are at 50 or below and there is some deterioration in q8, so Law also needs to explore how to raise scores in this category.

In the category “**Academic Support**” (q10-12)

Question 11, which relates to contacting staff, has obtained some very good scores in all subjects with only Business falling short of the KPI and then, by only 2%. Social Policy has increased its score here from 56% to 90% which is remarkable. Social Policy has met the KPI in all 3 questions, whilst ESH and ITE are only missing the KPI in one question out of the 3 in this category. However, despite these achievements, q10 and q12 indicate that students are not feeling always that they are receiving the advice and guidance that they need in all areas other than Social Policy. As these are 4th year students, the focus here is not on advisers of study, but on advice and guidance provided by the staff within the subject areas. As the weaker areas relate to “advice and support with studies” and advice when making study choices this would suggest that contact with academic staff is where we need to focus attention.

This area needs attention from most subjects to some extent, but from four in particular where scores are below 70%: **Business** (57%), **Economics** (55%), **Law** (65%) and **Politics** (65%).
Section B – NSS 2012

Please provide an update on actions noted in the previous year’s report on responses to NSS 2012.

The School NSS action plans for 2012, Law, Education and ASBS in particular, identified a range of actions that were summarised in the College report. It is difficult to do justice to them all in this short review so priorities are selected for comment.

Business & Economics: assessment and feedback was prioritised. Communication flows between staff have been reviewed, communications with students were made clearer and more timely in relation to the return of marking in particular, themes from the NSS were incorporated into SSLC discussions and students were given greater opportunity to discuss assessment and feedback in SSLCs.

ITE: priorities here were in relation to ‘teaching on my course’ and ‘course organization’. Extensive work went into preparing and monitoring the NSS Action plan. A considerable emphasis was placed on staff engagement with the issues raised in discussions relating to the NSS and detailed actions relating to all 22 questions were implemented. These ranged from improving the content of handbooks, provision of material on Moodle, support for staff using class based technologies, clarification of the expectations of students and staff, clearer guidance on staff responsibilities and tighter management of the turnaround times for marking. The actions have clearly lead to significantly improved results and many continue to feature in the NSS 2013 Action Plan as part of ongoing efforts to enhance communication, staff-student liaison, programme coordination and the student experience.

Law: much of the emphasis last time was on the efforts towards clarifying assessment criteria and improving the turnaround for marking. Internal processes were put in place to underpin efforts in these areas (eg, greater use of Moodle and Facebook to communicate with students).

Politics: has done a great deal to review policy and practice (aided by the PSR) around supporting students, processing assignment submissions, and drawing more extensively on input from the employability officer. Some of the benefits will be more fully experienced by students during 2013-14 as the implementation becomes embedded within Politics.

Social Policy: prioritised ensuring timely feedback and improving the consistency of feedback across the programme.

Sociology: similarly focused on providing timely and consistent feedback. They also sought to enhance students communication skills.

At the College level, efforts have been made to generate more support for Schools through the TELT (Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching) community (eg, supporting the introduction of Moodle 2 and wider implementation of Turnitin). Learning and Teaching Committees have also moved to promote wider awareness of achievements / developments in learning and teaching so that committees become an opportunity for sharing good practice and exploring issues rather than reporting University committee business.
Section C – NSS 2013

Please list actions, identified and in progress, responding to issues relating to the NSS 2013.

Each of the Schools as provided extensive Action Plans. The table below provides examples of the approaches being taken in response to the NSS categories. The actions highlighted are indicative and not exhaustive.

It should be noted that Schools have not adopted an instrumental approach to the NSS but instead, have sought to use the results (and results over time) to inform a broader view on how cultural attitudes and approaches to learning and teaching might be reviewed and enhanced. They have typically identified short-term and longer-term actions in an effort to improve the results over time.

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<tr>
<th>Area for action</th>
<th>Actions in progress</th>
<th>Proposed date for completion</th>
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| Cultural Change           | • **ASBS:** Enhancing responses to the student voice; introduction of learning and teaching forums to share good practice; enhanced staff induction (including GTAs); enhanced student induction; more SSLC meetings that focus on the student experience rather than operational matters; informal meetings between the Head of School and students.  
• **SPS:** enhanced induction programmes (Politics); co-design of marking criteria (students and staff) in honours study (Public Policy)  
• **Education:** planned programme of engagement with staff around the NSS action plan; greater priority given to UG teaching | All are to be completed by March 2014 with some prioritised for semester 1. |
| Improving Assessment & Feedback | • **ASBS:** reviewing ILOS and associated assessment across courses; introducing within class time, opportunities to discuss ILOs and assessment; development of marking schedules for all forms of assessment; introduction of pilot projects to improve efficiency in marking and feedback.  
• **Law:** explore with students in focus groups, what their expectations and experiences are around assessment and feedback; ongoing monitoring of marking deadlines and turnaround, formative feedback and the policy where Level 4 students can complete optional formative assessments; and new ‘induction’ | All to be completed by March 2014 but with some prioritised for semester 1 and some in progress already. |
| Improving Academic Support | • **ASBS**: introduction of a staff contact policy (setting office ours and providing contact information); increase opportunities for student/staff interaction around course choices.  
| | • **Law**: increased employability events for Fast Track LLB students; implementation of new advising policy with increased meetings with advisees in semester 1; hosting of information meetings between students and staff to encourage engagement and student support; introduction of writing skills programme from Sept 2013 and introduction of new communications policy.  
| | • **SPS**: enhanced student inductions and welcome events; and dedicated dissertation office hours (Politics).  
| | • **Education**: minimum response times to student emails; provision of course information to students in advance of lectures; and electronic assessment schedules provided to students at the start of the programme.  
| All to be completed by March 2014 but with some prioritised for semester 1 and some in progress already. |  
| Course Organisation | • **ASBS**: review (in Management) honours provision; enhance communication of information relating to courses and teaching approach.  
| | • **SPS**: improved communications relating to marking deadlines with students and staff (Politics and Sociology).  
| | • **Education**: manage expectations about student placements; standardise course handbooks based on university template; involve student reps in course committees.  
| All to be completed by March 2014 but with some prioritised for semester 1 and some in progress already. |  
| Personal | • **SPS**: Embed discussions around NSS themes  
| From Sept |  

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4 CEES does not have an NSS result but, as part of SPS, has engaged in a reflection on approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.
| Development | (personal development in particular) into SSLCs (Sociology)  
- **Education**: ensure greater use of student evaluations in school experience portfolios; embed student lesson evaluations more fully. | 2013. |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Resources</td>
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</table>
- **ASBS**: Review engagement with Reading Lists@glasgow  
- **Education**: build on previous employability conference and use of social media for student discussions about resources. | Complete by March 2014 |
| Supporting School NSS Action Plans |  
- **College L&T Committee** – to devote discussion at 2 committee meetings to share approaches to NSS action plans and explore how successes have been secured.  
  - The Dean of L&T has agreed with the Academic Development Unit that following discussion with the College L&T committee, 2 – 3 key topics (eg, providing effective feedback) will be the subject of College / School workshops to support staff endeavours.  
  - The Head of College will attend **School Exec Meetings and School Councils** to address the need to continue to enhance the student experience and to direct efforts towards the action plans.  
  - The **Dean of Research and the Dean of Learning and teaching** will design a College Council feature to highlight the value of research-led teaching. | In progress for implementation during 2013-14 |