**University Policy for**

**Unit Evaluation**

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| **Summary** |
| The policy sets out an institutional approach to unit feedback and evaluation by students. This is a core strand of the University’s approach to developing our degree programmes in a partnership between students and academic staff. |
| **Scope - This document applies to:** |
| This policy applies to units at all levels of study and outlines both mid-unit and end of unit survey principles. |
| For applicants entering in: | N/A | Applies to academic year: | from 2022-23  |
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| Division | Education and Student Success |
| Lead contact | Academic Quality Manager |
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| Revision schedule | Annual  | Next review date | June 2024 |
| Superseded documents | University Policy for Unit Evaluation for 2021-22 |
| Related documents | * Policy Annex A - Unit Evaluation using Bristol Live Unit Evaluation (Blue)
* [General guidance on unit evaluation](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/education-student-experience/SitePages/Unit-Evaluation.aspx)
* [BEAM guidance on using Blue for unit evaluation](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/beam/SitePages/unit-evaluation.aspx)
* [Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught programmes: Study Abroad in undergraduate programmes](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/regulations-and-code-of-practice-for-taught-programmes)
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| Keywords | Unit evaluation; unit surveys; feedback; enhancement; feedback loop; student voice |
| Notes | UAQSC owns this Policy, but any changes will also be consulted on with ULTC and School Education Directors. |

University Policy for Unit Evaluation

**Purpose**

Unit evaluation is part of the University's continuous process of evaluating and enhancing the quality of its units and programmes. Research has also shown that feedback, both to *and* from students, is “the single most influential factor in student learning” (Hattie 2009). Feedback from students helps teachers reflect on practice, consider unit design and adapt their teaching. Additionally, the reflection that students undertake during and at the end of each unit is a powerful tool in developing their own learning strategies. Bristol’s unit evaluation policy is particularly geared to this goal.

The primary purpose of unit evaluation and feedback is for the evaluation of educational provision and not routinely used for staff management.

Unit evaluation and mid-unit feedback provides a powerful means of responding to feedback quickly and supplements feedback collected from other sources designed to monitor and enhance unit and programme structures, curriculum teaching and assessment, such as External Examiner reports; internal and external (e.g. NSS) surveys; peer review; the outcomes of internal and external reviews. By listening, engaging in dialogue and agreeing appropriate actions, students can help shape units. This demonstrates that student voice is valued and acted on appropriately, and that students are partners in our education endeavour.

Gathering mid-unit feedback is designed to

* Enable Unit Directors to understand how the unit is being received by students;
* Enable Unit Directors to identify any issues early, identify the most appropriate course of action and ensure this is communicated to students;
* Encourage students to reflect on their own academic engagement and approach to learning in the unit.

End of unit evaluation enables

* Students to express their views about their education experience;
* Students to reflect upon their engagement with the learning on that unit;
* Staff to consider changes to the unit as part of the University’s commitment to cocreation of the curriculum with students.

End of unit evaluation outcomes should be used by the Unit Director to monitor and enhance the learning experience. The Programme Director, School Education Director (SED) and Head of School or their nominees/s may use the end of unit evaluation outcomes to monitor and enhance provision across the school. Students also gain by reflecting on their development through the programme. The resulting dialogue contributes to a sense of academic community for students and staff jointly.

The SED (or equivalent role) should ensure the operation of this policy within the school.

General guidance on unit evaluation can be found on the [Education and Student Success – academic quality SharePoint](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/education-student-experience/SitePages/Unit-Evaluation.aspx).

**Operational principles for unit evaluation**

1. Each unit must carry out mid-unit feedback and end of unit evaluation each time it runs. The following exceptions apply:
	1. **exempt from mid and end of unit evaluation** - units with fewer than five registered students, units delivered by a partner institution and units with over 120 credits
	2. **exempt from mid-unit feedback** - independent study units (e.g. project/dissertation/case study/portfolio), placement units and fieldwork-only units.

Any queries, please email: unit-evaluation@bristol.ac.uk

1. Students will not be asked to identify themselves in any feedback / evaluation and student confidentiality must be assured in line with the [University’s Data Protection Policies](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/data-protection/policy/). Where a member of staff feels that a student comment raises issues which require follow-up they should refer this to their School Education Director.
2. Where possible, time should be allocated within a regular teaching session to collect feedback / evaluation for both mid-unit and end of unit surveys.
3. All students registered on a unit will have the opportunity to give mid-unit feedback and participate in end of unit evaluation. Any student may choose not to participate.

**Mid-unit feedback**

1. Mid-unit feedback should be undertaken approximately halfway through the unit; this will vary depending on the length of the unit.
2. Mid-unit feedback should be a nimble process and therefore, the number of questions should be limited compared to the evaluation undertaken at the end of a unit.
3. The Unit Director should ensure that students are aware that the outcomes from mid-unit feedback will be limited to optimising the unit while it is running and cannot trigger significant changes to the unit design or scope.
4. Mid-unit feedback from students should be reviewed by the Unit Director and any other staff teaching on the unit and a response should be communicated to students within 10 working days. Where possible, time within a regular teaching session should be used to discuss responses with students and agree any immediate actions which could enhance the students’ experience of the unit.

**End of unit evaluation**

1. End of unit evaluation should normally be undertaken in the last few regular teaching weeks.
2. End of unit feedback from students should be reviewed by staff and a response should be communicated to students normally within 15 working days, but always by 20 working days.
3. Results from end of unit evaluations should be used by schools in their internal quality assurance and enhancement activities (e.g. annual programme review with actions captured in the School Education Action Plan (EAP), taken to Student Staff Liaison Committee). Aggregated end of unit survey data also forms part of the data considered in internal quality and enhancement processes, e.g. UQT.
4. Where relevant, the first teaching session should include reference to the summary of feedback/evaluations received from the previous student cohort and outline how these have helped shape the unit, demonstrating that the student voice is valued and acted upon appropriately.

**Blue – Bristol Live Unit Evaluation**

1. The University uses a system known as Blue (Bristol Live Unit Evaluation) to operate mid-unit and end of unit surveys. Blue is managed centrally by the Academic Quality and Policy Office (AQPO), Education and Student Success and operated by the School Administration Teams and Unit Directors in each school. Blue is integrated within the University’s virtual learning environment (Blackboard) to allow easy access for students.
2. The expectation is that Blue will be used by all units for mid-unit and end of unit evaluation. There are many advantages to using Blue, but it is recognised that there are two circumstances where Blue may not be the optimal survey method and an alternative method may be used, these are:
	1. for mid-unit and end of unit surveys - when unit dates do not conform with the Blue default survey dates (see Annex A point 14);
	2. for mid-unit surveys - when small units (with 20 or less registered students) may find that an alternative, perhaps more discursive, method may be more appropriate.
3. Further information about alternative digital methods that can be used to support unit evaluation can be found here: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/digital-education/guides/unit-evaluation/.> It is recommended that, wherever possible, the principles and question types that operate in Blue (see Annex A) are also used in units using alternative methods.
4. General queries about Blue can be addressed to unit-evaluation@bristol.ac.uk. Information of how to use Blue can be found in the [Bristol Education Administration Manual (BEAM)](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/beam/SitePages/unit-evaluation.aspx). Annex A to this policy provides guidance on using Blue for unit evaluation.

**Useful Links**

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| [General guidance on unit evaluation](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/education-student-experience/SitePages/Unit-Evaluation.aspx) |
| [BEAM: unit evaluation using Blue](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/beam/SitePages/unit-evaluation.aspx) |