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| **University Policy on Unit Feedback From Students** |  |

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| **Summary** | | | |
| The policy sets out an institutional approach to unit feedback from students. This is a core strand of the University’s approach to developing our degree programmes in a partnership between students and staff. | | | |
| **Scope - This document applies to:** | | | |
| This policy applies to units at all levels of study and outlines both mid-unit check-in and end of unit reflection survey principles. | | | |
| For applicants entering in: | N/A | Applies to academic year: | from 2024-25 |
| **Document Control** | | | |
| Owning team | Academic Quality and Policy Office | | |
| Division | Education and Student Success | | |
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| Superseded documents | University Policy for Unit Evaluation | | |
| Related documents | * Policy Annex A - Unit Surveys using Blue * [General guidance on unit feedback](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/education-student-experience/SitePages/Unit-Evaluation.aspx) * [BEAM guidance on using Blue for unit surveys](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/beam/SitePages/unit-evaluation.aspx) * [Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught programmes](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/regulations-and-code-of-practice-for-taught-programmes) | | |
| Keywords | Unit evaluation; unit surveys; feedback; enhancement; feedback loop; student voice; mid-unit check-in, end of unit reflection | | |
| Notes | UAQSC owns this Policy, but any changes will also be consulted on with ULTC and School Education Directors. | | |

University Policy on Unit Feedback From Students

**Purpose**

Unit feedback from students forms part of the University's continuous process of reviewing 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 feedback policy is particularly geared to this goal.

The primary purpose of unit feedback is to facilitate reflection on our educational provision and not routinely used for staff management.

Feedback from students provides a powerful means of responding to views 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 surveys (e.g. NSS); 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.

Feedback from mid-unit check-ins are designed to

* Encourage students to reflect on their own academic engagement and approach to learning in the unit;
* 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.

Feedback from end of unit reflection enables

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

End of unit reflection feedback should be used by the Unit Director to monitor, reflect on 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 feedback 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 feedback 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 feedback**

1. Each unit must carry out mid-unit check-in and end of unit reflection feedback gathering each time it runs. The following exceptions apply:
   1. **exempt from mid and end of unit feedback** - 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](mailto:unit-evaluation@bristol.ac.uk).

1. Students will not be asked to identify themselves in any feedback 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 for both mid-unit check-in and end of unit reflection surveys.
3. All students registered on a unit will have the opportunity to give mid-unit and end of unit feedback. Any student may choose not to participate.

**Mid-unit check-in**

1. Mid-unit check-in should be undertaken approximately halfway through the unit; this will vary depending on the length of the unit.
2. Mid-unit check-in should be a nimble process and therefore, the number of questions should be limited compared to that undertaken at the end of a unit.
3. The Unit Director should ensure that students are aware that the outcomes from the mid-unit check-in 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 check-in 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 reflection**

1. End of unit reflection should normally be undertaken in the last few regular teaching weeks.
2. End of unit reflections 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 reflection 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), Student Staff Liaison Committee/s). 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 of each unit should include reference to the summary of feedback 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**

1. The University uses a system known as Blue to operate mid-unit check-in and end of unit reflection 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 surveys (except for mid-unit check-in for the small number of units running in teaching blocks TB1-A, TB1-B, TB2-C and TB2-D where the short timescales do not lend themselves to this method). There are many advantages to using Blue, but it is recognised that there are 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 10);
   2. for mid-unit surveys when small units (with around 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 feedback 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 are used in Blue (see Annex A) are also used when using alternative methods.
4. General queries about Blue can be addressed to [unit-evaluation@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:unit-evaluation@bristol.ac.uk). Annex A to this policy provides guidance on using Blue for unit surveys.

**Useful Links**

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| [General guidance on unit feedback](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/education-student-experience/SitePages/Unit-Evaluation.aspx) |
| [BEAM: unit surveys using Blue](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/beam/SitePages/unit-evaluation.aspx)  Policy Annex A using Blue for Unit Feedback From Students |