

Student Surveys Policy

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THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

Student Surveys Policy

Introduction

1. All students have the right to provide feedback on their experiences of studying at the Glasgow School of Art. In meeting this expectation GSA operates a range of student surveys, open to all students at all levels of study. Collectively these surveys provide a core set of data and benchmarks to inform enhancement activity and support monitoring and evaluation.
2. This policy sets out GSA's operation of student surveys in order to assure their quality, reduce survey fatigue, and ensure appropriate analysis, response and dissemination. This policy is guided by the following key principles:
 - a. All students have the opportunity to provide feedback on their learning experience annually through a range of student experience surveys.
 - b. Participation in all student experience surveys is voluntary.
 - c. Feedback gathered via surveys is used by GSA to enhance the student experience and identify good practice.
 - d. Feedback from surveys should be analysed and considered in partnership with students, and where appropriate enhancement actions identified.
 - e. Actions in response to surveys should be reported to students within a timely manner to close the feedback loop.
 - f. Staff have a right to access student survey data where it pertains to their role / department in order to support reflection and enhancement.
 - g. Gathering feedback through surveys is a GSA-wide effort with academic and Professional Service staff asked to contribute through activities that encourage students to take part.
 - h. Student surveys should normally gather data in an anonymous way unless a legitimate purpose exists. Results of surveys should never be analysed or reported in such a way that could identify individual students' responses.
 - i. Survey data should be gathered and handled in accordance with GSA's Data Protection Policy and students made aware of the institutions basis for processing data.
 - j. It is recognised that student surveys have benefits and limitations due to their population, response rate, content, interpretation and use. This will be considered in the analysis, reporting and response to survey data as appropriate.

Development, Coordination and Promotion of Surveys

3. GSA operates a number of student surveys internally as part of our monitoring and evaluation work, as well as externally through national surveys as required.

4. GSA's Learning and Teaching Group holds institutional oversight for the coordination of all GSA wide student surveys for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. Surveys relating to postgraduate research students are coordinated by the Research Office.
5. GSA currently operates a range of institutional student surveys which covers taught and research programmes.
6. A range of internal surveys are also operated by Professional Service departments and academic Schools such as service user surveys and course evaluation surveys.
7. The Learning and Teaching Group maintain a register of all institution wide student surveys and review this periodically to ensure appropriate institutional oversight and coordination.
8. Any new institution wide student survey must be approved by the Learning and Teaching Group prior to implementation. This would include surveys targeted at all students, or students in a particular year of study. The aim of this oversight is to ensure a joined-up approach to student surveys across the institution, promoting efficiency, consistency, and effective sharing of insights.

Development of a student survey

9. Gathering feedback through surveys is a GSA-wide effort and it is important that surveys are used strategically, efficiently, and ethically to inform enhancements to learning, teaching, and the wider student experience. It is also important that we work to minimise duplication in feedback requests to students and avoiding potential survey fatigue. In developing or utilising a student survey it is the responsibility of the Survey Owner to ensure that:
 - a. Surveys are only undertaken when there is a clear, evidence-based rationale and a defined purpose that contributes to understanding and improving the student experience.
 - b. Alternative mechanisms for gathering feedback (such as focus groups, workshops, or analysis of existing data) are explored before commissioning a new survey.
 - c. Surveys are designed to yield high-quality, reliable, and actionable insights that can meaningfully inform decision-making and enhancement.
 - d. The timing and frequency of surveys are carefully considered to reduce duplication and avoid survey fatigue.
 - e. The purpose, process, and outcomes of survey activity are communicated clearly to students and staff. "Closing the feedback loop" to students supporting them to understand how their responses are used is essential to maintain engagement and trust.

Implementing a student survey

10. Survey owners hold primary responsibility for implementing and organising surveys, ensuring sample populations are identified and accuracy checked, and that surveys are appropriately setup and available to students as required.

11. Survey owners are required to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of data collection periods and timescales for availability of results, providing information and resources to support survey promotion to students.
12. Survey owners are responsible for coordinating any institutional communications in partnership with Marketing and Communications, ensuring consistent messaging as to the purpose, use and outcome of surveys to encourage student participation.
13. GSA will always seek to work in partnership with the Students' Association to promote student participation in surveys and to ensure that results are used pro-actively to improve the experience of students.
14. No action should be taken to influence a student's response to a survey. Further guidance is given in Appendix 1.

Survey Season

15. GSA operates an annual Survey Season in which data collection for both the National Student Survey and internal Student Experience Survey takes place. Only these surveys should be open to responses and actively promoted across the GSA during this period. This approach aims to maximise student participation, and provide a clear and consistent message to students and staff as to the nature and purpose of these student surveys.
16. Programme teams are responsible for introducing these surveys to their students during Survey Season, explaining their purpose and outcomes, and providing time during timetables sessions for students to participate.

Data Collection

17. Data collection will normally be undertaken through online means and will only utilise GSA endorsed systems in line with the Data Protection Policy.
18. Achieving meaningful response rates for surveys is important to ensure that data is reportable and usable. GSA has established a target response rate for the Student Experience Survey of 50% at programme level. Where response rates are below 50% programme teams must evidence other whole cohort feedback opportunities within their Programme Monitoring and Annual Reporting.

Survey results, analysis and reporting

19. Survey data should be made available to all stakeholders such as Programme Leaders and Professional Services in a timely manner to support reflection, analysis and action planning.
20. Data should be provided at institutional and programme level where programmes have achieved established reporting thresholds. Reporting thresholds are set out in the register student surveys held by the Learning and Teaching Group.
21. Where possible, and with full assurance of participant anonymity, analysis of survey data should include protected characteristics to ensure full consideration of the diversity of students experiences and representation of all students within responses.

22. Survey data should be discussed and considered with key stakeholders to collectively identify actions, initiatives and changes in response to student feedback. Where no actions are taken in response to surveys this should be clearly communicated and explained to students. For example, Programme Leaders are expected to discuss the outcomes of the National Student Survey and Student Experience Survey with students and their programme team to develop actions and close the feedback loop.
23. Identified actions should be clear, time specific and allocated to appropriate member(s) of staff to implement and report on. Reporting of actions taken should be done through an appropriate committees and groups. For example, actions in response to the National Student Survey and Student Experience Survey should be reported through the Staff Student Consultative Committee as well as updated to the wider student body through programme Canvas sites.
24. Survey data should be utilised where appropriate within Programme Monitoring and Annual Reporting (PMAR) to monitor impacts of enhancements and inform subsequent actions.
25. Survey owners are responsible for analysing survey data at the institutional level and producing reports for appropriate committees and groups. Institutional level data should normally be made available to all staff and students for example through institutional communications or via the appropriate Intranet pages.

Review and Monitoring

26. GSA's Learning and Teaching Group will review the effectiveness of student surveys for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students annually as part of its institutional oversight role. Survey effectiveness will be considered in relation to:
 - Student response rates including consideration of protected characteristics.
 - Feedback from staff on the timeliness and usability of reporting and data sets.
 - Feedback from students and the Students Association particularly on their awareness of surveys and institutional and programme responses to their outcomes.
27. The Learning and Teaching Group will report annually on student surveys to Education Committee making recommendations as required.

Appendix 1: Survey promotion principles for staff

Academic staff are best placed to speak to students about the benefits and importance of student experience surveys and should encourage students to participate. All those involved in the promotion of surveys should be aware of the guidelines regarding inappropriate influence. Staff can remind eligible students to complete a survey but they have a responsibility to ensure that their students are encouraged to give their honest feedback on their student experience without undue influence.

To avoid undue influence staff should therefore not:

- explicitly instruct students on how to complete any survey, such as explaining the meanings of questions or response scales. The questions and scale are self-explanatory and students should be left to interpret these in a way they see fit.
- recommend that students respond in a certain way, e.g. 'I recommend that you select agree or mostly agree', or misrepresent the scale to students, e.g. defining the 'neither agree nor disagree' as a negative response.
- link a survey to league tables, job prospects and the perceived value of students' degrees.
- tell students that if their courses do not achieve good satisfaction scores, this will make their degrees look bad to future employers.
- arrange compulsory sessions for students to complete student surveys. Completion of any of the surveys, while beneficial to GSA, is completely voluntary for students. While arranging completion sessions is encouraged, staff should not enforce student attendance nor make students feel there may be consequences should they not attend.
- stand or sit beside students when they are completing a survey, or take them through their responses question by-question. Students should be given due privacy so they can respond with honesty and not feel that they are being monitored or encouraged to answer the survey in a particular way.
- require students to provide evidence that they have completed the survey.
- complete the survey on behalf of students.