



UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX  
**STUDENTS' UNION**

# **Student Written Submission Quality Assurance Agency**

Prepared by the Students' Union  
December 2012

This report was submitted as part of the University of Sussex's Institutional Review to be carried out by the Quality Assurance Agency in 2013.

Further information about any of the contents can be requested from the Students' Union President – [president@ussu.sussex.ac.uk](mailto:president@ussu.sussex.ac.uk) – 01273 873350.

## Contents

Glossary .....	iii
Section 1: Introduction to the Students' Union.....	1
About the Students' Union.....	1
Relationship between the Students' Union & University.....	1
How this report was written.....	2
Key areas & themes .....	3
Section 2: How effectively has the institution addressed the recommendations of its last audit? .....	4
Section 3: How effectively the institution sets and maintains the threshold of its academic awards .....	6
3.1 Qualifications are assigned to the appropriate level in the framework for higher education qualifications .....	6
3.2 Design approval, monitoring and review of assessment strategies is effective in ensuring that students have the opportunity to demonstrate learning outcomes of the award .....	6
3.3 Subject benchmark statements are used effectively in programme design, delivery and review to inform standards of awards .....	7
Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)? .....	8
4.1 Professional standards for teaching and learning support are supported .....	8
4.2 Learning resources are appropriate to allow students to achieve the outcomes of their programmes .....	11
4.3 There is an effective contribution of students to quality assurance .....	16
4.4 Policies and procedures used to admit students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied.....	16
4.5 There are effective complaints and appeals procedures .....	17
4.6 The quality of learning opportunities is managed to enable the entitlements of disabled students to be met.....	20
4.7 The quality of learning opportunities for international students is appropriate .....	23
4.8 Appropriate support and guidance is provided to enable postgraduate research students to complete their programmes and to enable staff involved in research programmes to fulfil their responsibilities .....	26
4.9 The quality of learning opportunities delivered through work based and placement learning is effective.....	30
4.10 A student charter, or equivalent document, setting out the mutual expectations of the institution and its students, is available .....	31
Section 5: How effectively the institution manages the quality of the public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants .....	32
5.1 Is this information user-friendly, easy to find, accurate and up to date? Does it accurately describe courses and learning resources? .....	32
5.2 The extent to which programme specifications accurately describe the learning opportunities and outcomes of courses .....	36

5.3 How the institution works with students in the consideration of the NSS and how effective their analysis and dissemination of the results is .....	36
5.4 Where does the institution make available public information deemed important by the sector? .....	37
Section 6: How effective are the institution’s plans to enhance the quality of students’ learning opportunities? .....	38
6.1 How well the institution communicates any strategies for enhancement and changes made because of these strategies .....	38
6.2 How the institution identifies areas for enhancement and the extent to which students are involved in these decisions .....	39
6.3 How the institution uses the student voice to inform, develop and implement its enhancement agenda.....	41
Part B: Thematic element of review: Student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement .....	43
Section B1: Innovations in student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement .....	44
Section B2: Staff experience of/participation in student involvement in quality .....	47
Section B3: How contributions from students are acted upon, and how students know they are acted upon .....	48
Appendices .....	51
Appendix 1: Memorandum of Understanding.....	52
Appendix 2: Consultation procedure for academic issues.....	56
Appendix 3: Proposed consultation procedure for non-academic issues .....	58
Appendix 4: Focus group participants.....	60
Appendix 5: Documents submitted with this report .....	61

## Glossary

**ARC** - Students' Union Advice & Representation Centre.

**Associate Tutor** - Hourly paid tutors, usually research postgraduate students

**FTEO** - Full-time Elected Officer - the six students elected to work full-time for the Students' Union for a year (known in some institutions as sabbatical officers). The six positions are President, Operations Officer, Communication Officer, Activities Officer, Welfare Officer and Education Officer. The document will refer to these positions individually where appropriate.

**ISAO** - International and Study Abroad Office

**PGR** - Research postgraduate students

**PGT** - Taught postgraduate students

**Research Hive** - study space for PGR students (based in the Library)

**SEF** - Student Experience Forum. A student-led forum chaired by the Education Officer and attended by Student Reps and members of university management which receives direct feed-in from School Student Experience Groups and directly feeds into the Teaching and Learning Committee management.

**SSEG** - School Student Experience Group. A termly meeting held within schools involving Student Reps and school staff.

**Student Rep** - student representatives elected or appointed to represent students in their year and department. Student Reps attend departmental meetings and have the opportunity to sit on some University committees

**TLC** - Teaching & Learning Committee - Termly meeting to look at teaching and learning in the University, chaired by the Deputy VC. School teaching and learning committees feed into the TLC; these look at teaching and learning on a more school based level.

## **Section 1: Introduction to the Students' Union**

### **About the Students' Union**

The Students' Union is the representative body for the approximately 13,095<sup>1</sup> students at the University of Sussex and Brighton & Sussex Medical School (the latter in conjunction with the University of Brighton Students' Union). Our mission is to enable students at Sussex to make a positive difference to their University experience<sup>2</sup>.

We support around 150 student societies, 30 sports clubs and teams, hundreds of volunteers both within the Students' Union and local community, four student media outlets and run two shops and two bars on campus. Our Advice service (ARC) provides advice and representation to students on academic and welfare issues within the University and externally. We also run campaigns and lobby the University and other organisations based on evidence we gather from Student Reps, casework and other sources.

We run the Student Rep Scheme in partnership with the University which elects and supports students to represent the views of their peers on academic issues within the Students' Union and University. Students are also elected to over 40 positions within the Students' Union to represent students on our committees.

The Union is led by an Executive of six Full-time and four Part-time Elected Officers who work alongside around 35 permanent staff members to provide services and opportunities to our members. The Union, as a registered charity, is overseen by a Trustee Board comprised of the six Full-time Officers, three elected student trustees and three appointed trustees.

Visit [www.sussexstudent.com](http://www.sussexstudent.com) for more information and [www.sussexstudent.com/strategy](http://www.sussexstudent.com/strategy) for our current strategy.

### **Relationship between the Students' Union & University**

A Memorandum of Understanding<sup>3</sup> outlines the principles for the relationship between the Students' Union and University, the responsibilities of each party and channels of communications between the organisations. In June 2011 the University agreed to adopt a consultation protocol proposed by the Union as to how the Students' Union and students will be involved in consultations on academic matters<sup>4</sup>.

The Students' Union's Full-time Officers have regular formal and informal meetings with members of the University's senior management team. The Students' Union and University co-run the Student Rep Scheme with staff support provided by both organisations.

As a result of the academic consultation protocol, consultation with students and the Students' Union by the University has improved on academic matters. However there is scope for considerable improvement for consultation on non-academic matters. Some of the University's key committees, such as the Finance & Investment Committee do not include student or Students' Union representatives and others, such as the Doctoral School Committee, whilst including student representatives do not include a Union representative.

There have also been recent cases where large changes to the way the University operates - for example the privatisation of key services such as catering, estates and facilities management and unexpected large increases in international and postgraduate tuition fees -

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<sup>1</sup> Senate papers, 21/11/12

<sup>2</sup> Students' Union strategy 2011-2014 [www.sussexstudent.com/strategy](http://www.sussexstudent.com/strategy)

<sup>3</sup> See [Appendix 1: Memorandum of Understanding](#), page 23

<sup>4</sup> See [Appendix 2: Consultation procedure for academic issues](#), page 28

have been announced with no prior consultation with students or involvement from the Students' Union.

We believe that the views of students should be considered in all decision-making as non-academic decisions ultimately affect the learning environment at the University. To this end the Union has recently devised a consultation protocol on non-academic issues<sup>5</sup> which was presented to senior University management on 17th December 2012.

At times our ability to represent all students is hindered by our inability to contact all students via email directly. At present, emails we wish to send must be agreed by the University's Communications Team who have rejected requests from us a number of times as they felt they did not fit their criteria for mass emails. We feel that being able to email all students directly would help improve the number and diversity of student voices we can represent. This would also help communicate improvements made following student feedback.

### **How this report was written**

This report has been compiled by Duncan Stokes (Students' Union Representation & Engagement Administrator) and Jo Walters (Students' Union Membership Engagement Coordinator).

The wider project team met weekly and was comprised of Kelly McBride (President), Maria da Silva (Education Officer), Indi Hicks (Welfare Officer) and Steve Eagle (Director of Membership Engagement).

Valuable support was provided by Ellie Williams and Amy Horwood, (Teaching & Learning Project Officers) and we would like to thank Lucy Solomon (Academic Administrator) for dealing with our many requests for information!

The report was published online throughout the writing process for students to comment on. Student Reps and Union Councillors were also kept regularly updated throughout and invited to add their comments. The report was approved by Students' Union Council on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

The preparation of this submission has used a large range of existing documentation, research and evidence including;

- National Student Survey
- Students' Union annual questionnaire responses - 2012 (n=578)
- Students' Union ARC client statistics and casework
- Students' Union Associate Tutor survey - October 2012 (n=123)
- Students' Union Tuition Fee Increase survey - November 2012 (n=88)
- Students' Union student mental health & wellbeing survey – Autumn 2012 (n=182)
- Researchers of Tomorrow 2011 - Sussex data (n=132)

We refer during our report to a number of documents submitted alongside the report which provide evidence and/or context for our responses. The full list is available in [Appendix 5: Documents submitted with this report](#), page 61.

We also carried out research specifically to inform this report;

- Survey of current and former Student Reps (n=75)
- Survey of postgraduate students (n=230)
- Focus groups of Student Reps, PGT, PGR, disabled and international students as well as students that participated in the University's Periodic Review<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See [Appendix 3: Proposed consultation procedure for non-academic issues](#), page 29

<sup>6</sup> See [Appendix 4: Focus group participants](#), page 31

We have structured the report around the framework provided by QAA and endeavoured to comment on the areas we feel are of particular relevance and significance to students at this time. This means we have chosen not to comment on some sections and have provided more detail in others.

We have supporting evidence and documents for the points raised in this report, some of which have been omitted for the sake of brevity but we are happy to elaborate further on the points raised if required.

In some sections we present our response alongside recommendations for the University to implement in order to address our feedback. We have not provided recommendations for all points, particularly where the action required is clear, but are happy to provide examples of action we'd recommend.

We approve sharing the Student Written Submission with the University of Sussex. The report has been openly available during the writing process.

### **Key areas & themes**

The key areas we draw attention to are:

- The effective contribution of students to quality assurance (page 16)
- Support for international students (page 23)
- Support for postgraduate research students (page 26)
- Effective complaints and appeals processes (page 17)
- Communication with students about improvements made (page 38)
- The institution's use of the student voice to inform, develop and implement improvements (page 41)

We wish to acknowledge that with the arrival of Clare Mackie as PVC Teaching & Learning (and now Deputy Vice Chancellor) in 2010 there has been a demonstrable commitment from senior University management to encourage student engagement with and participation in developing certain areas of the University's learning environment - for example through increased support for the Student Rep Scheme; very actively encouraging students to participate in the recent Periodic Review process; restructuring the Student Experience Forum and a willingness to listen to and respond positively to concerns raised by students and the Union on issues such as timetabling and tuition fee policies.

However we also wish to highlight these areas for improvement which have appeared whilst producing this report:

- **Inconsistency**, e.g. whilst many examples of good practice exist there is sometimes a lack of consistency in how policies are applied across the University and in access to facilities from school to school
- **Ineffective and/or lack of timely communication**, e.g. meeting dates and papers, how and why decisions are made, policy changes not being communicated in a timely fashion, improvements implemented
- **Lack of central collection and analysis of information**, e.g. lack of annual reports on areas such as student complaints and academic misconduct



## **Section 2: How effectively has the institution addressed the recommendations of its last audit?**

Information about changes introduced since the last audit is drawn from progress reports to the University's Teaching & Learning Committee University and the QAA mid-cycle briefing paper of June 2011. The communication and consultation about changes to the structure of the academic year and Periodic Review are covered in more detail later in this report.

Information about the outcomes of the 2008 audit was published in the University's internal newsletter, the Bulletin, and on the University's website<sup>7</sup>. Student Reps and FTEOs were involved in University committees (e.g. the Teaching & Learning Committee) that received reports and made decisions on some of the outcomes. We sought the views of FTEOs from the 2009/10 and 2010/11 academic years who, although sitting on the committees that received progress reports, were not particularly aware that certain actions taken by the University were as a result of the previous audit. They also reported feeling that student consultation was sometimes 'tokenistic' and was used after most of the decisions were made rather than to inform and shape proposals. Furthermore there does not appear to have been any strong sense of engagement with the Union's previous SWS - either from the Union nor the institution.

We do not intend to comment comprehensively in this section on how the University implemented recommendations from the previous audit, but will just highlight changes to student representation, evaluating and using NSS information and the effectiveness of the Student Experience Forum.

There have been significant improvements and changes to the Student Rep Scheme since the last audit, with the University allocating greater financial and staff resource to the Scheme in 2011/12 and 2012/13. In the 2009/10 academic year the University convened a working group on student representation which reported in June 2010<sup>8</sup>. A further review was undertaken in May 2011<sup>9</sup>, which introduced some structural changes to the Scheme, such as the removal of School Rep positions.

In 2011/12 new nomination and election processes were introduced (which experienced some teething problems, mostly resolved in 2012/13, which were primarily due to project management issues on the part of the external agency who provide the nominations and elections platform); the Union website became the main source of online information for the Scheme; the University granted the Scheme £10K from the Alumni Fund to help promote the Scheme amongst students and approx £3K from the Careers & Employability Centre specifically to promote Sussex Plus and the University employed a Teaching & Learning Project Officer (an intern position) who was invaluable in helping run the Scheme.

During the course of 2011/12 the University approved a set of operating principles for the Scheme<sup>10</sup>, firmly enshrining the jointly run nature of the Scheme, that Reps are elected to committee places and a 3 year strategic plan<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> 'Top marks for Sussex from QAA' - 30th May 2008 - [www.sussex.ac.uk/press\\_office/bulletin/30may08/article6.shtml](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/press_office/bulletin/30may08/article6.shtml)

<sup>8</sup> Student Representation Working Group Report June 2010 (attached)

<sup>9</sup> Student Representation Review submitted to the Teaching & Learning Committee in June 2011 (attached)

<sup>10</sup> Student Rep scheme operating principles (attached)

<sup>11</sup> Student Rep Strategic Plan (attached)

Section 2: How effectively has the institution addressed the recommendations of its last audit?

The Scheme unfortunately experienced a drop in numbers of nominations and voters in 2012/13, which we believe to be due in large part to exceptional factors<sup>12</sup>, but it highlights the importance of not becoming complacent about the inevitability of year on year improvement.

In 2012/13 the Scheme has been promised another £10K from the Alumni Fund for Scheme promotion and there are now 2 Teaching & Learning Project Officers who have been assisting with the Scheme. Even taking this into account additional administrative staff support would be particularly welcome, as the Scheme generates a very heavy admin workload which is difficult to manage within current Union and University staff resource.

As regards PGR representation at institutional level, there are 3 PGR Reps on the Doctoral School Committee and 1 PGR Rep on Senate, but much work still needs to be done to improve PGR (and indeed PGT) representation. The Union will establish a Postgraduate Students' Association (PGA) this year (we have been conducting consultation with PG students through an online survey and regular meetings of a PGA Development Group, composed of interested PGR and PGT students, over the course of the Autumn term 2012/13) which we hope will help improve PGR representation both within the institution and Union, and act as lobbying force on both.

We deal elsewhere in the report with the University evaluation and use of NSS data, but it is worth highlighting that whilst the University has used such management information effectively in improving learning resources, it is less clear how effectively NSS data on assessment and feedback has been analysed and acted on. Neither the Union nor students are aware of systematic attempts to disseminate good practice on this throughout the institution, and it seems that although Deputy VC Clare Mackie asked all Heads of Schools (in November 2011) to pay close attention to their NSS data, particularly concerning assessment and feedback, and devise action plans, it does not seem that these have been centrally collected, analysed and nor has institution wide change been implemented.

In QAA audit progress reports to Teaching & Learning Committee mention is made of using the Student Experience Forum (SEF) as a communication/consultation channel with students. The Forum has had a checkered history since its inception in 2007/08, when it replaced a formal University committee - the Student Support & Progress Committee. The Forum was restructured by Clare Mackie (PVC Teaching & Learning) and she divided it into a formal committee and a wider forum, both primarily populated by Student Reps, with a genuine desire to see it work as a medium for student communication and consultation.

However, the Forum still has not functioned effectively in this way. In May 2012 the Union's Education Officer authored a report to the Teaching & Learning Committee recommending changes to the Forum<sup>13</sup>. Some of these are being implemented e.g. the Forum, although it will not be chaired by a Student Rep as originally proposed, will now be chaired by a Union Officer and Student Reps will receive a briefing from a Union staff member prior to Forum meetings. So far one meeting of the Forum has been held since the introduction of these changes, so it is still too early to say how effective the Forum will be, but attendees reported that having the meeting chaired by a Union Officer helped students feel more in control of the agenda.

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<sup>12</sup> see the Student Rep election report to November 2012 Teaching & Learning Committee (attached)

<sup>13</sup> SEF change proposals May 2012 (attached)

## Section 3: How effectively the institution sets and maintains the threshold of its academic awards

### 3.1 Qualifications are assigned to the appropriate level in the framework for higher education qualifications

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>The institution's SED outlines the ways in which it recently re-developed the academic framework in 2009-10. Both School and University TLC minutes from 2009/10 -11/12 indicate that there is student input into academic regulation, as the regulations and frameworks went through all these committees, on which sit various Student Reps and FTEOs.</p> <p>Discussions with FTEOs highlighted the need for the University to ensure that students are briefed on these matters and provided with the documentation to enable them to prepare adequately to ensure they are able to be active participants during academic regulation discussions and are not simply silent observers of the discussion due to lack of knowledge.</p> <p>These discussions also highlighted the need for the University to ensure underrepresented groups are able to provide feed-in to academic regulations.</p>	<p>University to continue to ensure student input when reviewing academic framework by ensuring input from students at School and University TLCs.</p> <p>University to ensure student participants in meetings are well informed and briefed by ensuring information is provided in a timely and accessible fashion.</p> <p>University to seek feed-in on academic regulation from under-represented groups such as student parents.</p>

### 3.2 Design approval, monitoring and review of assessment strategies is effective in ensuring that students have the opportunity to demonstrate learning outcomes of the award

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>The University has historically received comparatively low scores for assessment and feedback in the NSS. Please see our comments on page 36 to explain why it is difficult to provide a satisfactory answer to this question.</p>	<p>See recommendations here on page 36 and below.</p>

### **3.3 Subject benchmark statements are used effectively in programme design, delivery and review to inform standards of awards**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>We feel that one of the reasons for low scoring identified above is the lack of obvious use of benchmarks in feedback. Student Reps in focus groups were critical of the fact that feedback doesn't regularly mention why marks were awarded and very keen to see feedback provide clear guidelines as to why marks were awarded at a certain level, and crucially, how the student can improve to increase their grade. If this became policy in feedback, it would have two positive impacts - firstly that students would have the opportunity to demonstrate learning outcomes and secondly award standards would become much clearer to students.</p>	<p>University to develop guidelines for clearly including reasons students achieved a particular grade in all feedback.</p>

We have opted not to comment on these topics in this section;

- Design approval, monitoring and review of assessment strategies enables standards to be set in ensuring that students have the opportunity to demonstrate learning outcomes of the award
- Use of external examiners is strong and scrupulous

## Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

### 4.1 Professional standards for teaching and learning support are supported

#### Associate Tutors

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>We are concerned that the employment arrangements for Associate Tutors mean that some are unable to prepare their teaching and support students sufficiently.</p> <p>In our Student Rep survey only 49% of respondents reported feeling that their Associate Tutors had been able to suitably prepare and/or provide feedback.</p> <p>Associate Tutor roles include some or all of the following; "teaching, associated preparation, setting and marking of student assessments, feedback to students, associated record keeping ... and attendance at departmental meetings as required."<sup>14</sup></p> <p>Only 34% of respondents to our Associate Tutor survey felt their pay was calculated fairly, saying they were not paid for preparation (28%), marking (23%), office hours (40%), to help students or respond to their enquiries.</p> <p>There were also many comments about being allocated (and therefore paid for) insufficient time to prepare teaching and mark scripts (for which typically only 30 minutes is paid)<sup>15</sup>. Lack of time for marking was a common theme in our Associate Tutor survey.</p> <p><i>"Either we suffer by having to rush ourselves, or the students suffer by not receiving adequate feedback"</i><sup>16</sup></p>	<p>Ensure Associate Tutors are adequately paid for preparation, teaching, assessment and student interaction. This should include allocating sufficient time to mark work and prepare feedback.</p> <p>Clear guidelines for Associate Tutors who are also students to clarify their status as students and employees.</p> <p>Work alongside UCU and the Students' Union to address the issues faced by Associate Tutors and implement clearer guidelines.</p>

<sup>14</sup> University of Sussex Policy on Associate Tutors, March 2009. More information about role expectations can be found at [www.sussex.ac.uk/tldu/associatetutors/atfaq#whatexpected](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/tldu/associatetutors/atfaq#whatexpected)

<sup>15</sup> Students' Union Associate Tutor survey

<sup>16</sup> Respondent to Students' Union Associate Tutor survey

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

**Academic practice workshops**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>A welcome recent development is the introduction of referencing workshops rather than academic misconduct proceedings following (in most circumstances) a students' first case of misconduct<sup>17</sup>. We are interested in any evaluation of the workshops' effectiveness.</p>	<p>Review the effectiveness of academic practice workshops by the start of the 2013/14 academic year including asking attendees about their experience and assessing the impact of the workshop on their future performance.</p>

**Student Mentors**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>Student Mentors are second and third year undergraduates and postgraduate students who are employed by the University to offer support to other students, primarily study skills (e.g. workshops). There are mentors in all departments in all schools.</p> <p>We have concerns about the apparent lack of clarity and communication about the scheme, amongst staff and students. We are unsure how the student mentor scheme links with the different peer-led support projects run within different schools and also its relationship with the Student Rep Scheme.</p> <p>We also have concerns about the level of support given to the student mentor scheme, including training, support and mechanisms for feedback.</p>	<p>Review the student mentor scheme in light of its purpose, particularly against the individual school peer-led support projects.</p> <p>Establish a formal relationship between the student mentor scheme and the Student Rep Scheme.</p>

**Academic misconduct panels**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>We have identified a number of areas in which the academic misconduct process could be improved to increase the consistency of outcomes and to ensure improvements are implemented to reduce the number of cases.</p> <p>Our concerns centre around consistency of</p>	<p>Better training for schools, academics, chairs and presenters on the academic misconduct process and their roles in this process.</p> <p>Provide more notice of academic misconduct panels to students; we propose at least 14 days.</p>

<sup>17</sup> Academic Misconduct Procedure for a First Case of Plagiarism, [www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/resources/misconduct/guidancenotesanddocumentsforstaff/academicmisconductprocedureforafirstcaseofplagiarism](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/resources/misconduct/guidancenotesanddocumentsforstaff/academicmisconductprocedureforafirstcaseofplagiarism)

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>decisions made by panels, lack of knowledge amongst panellists of new and changed regulations, lack of awareness amongst students about the regulations concerning academic misconduct and mitigating evidence, insufficient notice of panel dates, inconsistencies amongst presenters and the lack of any process to monitor recommendations made by the panel.<sup>18</sup></p>	<p>Digitised evidence files for academic misconduct panels so they can be easily accessed by students and their representatives.</p> <p>An internal (and confidential) record of academic misconduct precedents to be made available to panels to ensure consistency of decisions.</p> <p>Adequate time scheduled for academic misconduct panels to avoid overrunning.</p> <p>Increase awareness amongst students of what constitutes academic misconduct - this may need to be targeted for particular times in the academic year, to certain schools, courses and students, particularly international students (see international student section on page 23 for more detail).</p> <p>Study skills workshops should be tailored by schools to the courses they provide.</p> <p>Increase awareness amongst students of the mitigating evidence procedure.</p> <p>Establish a system to ensuring that recommendations, feedback and recommendations to schools by panels are implemented.</p> <p>Create a detailed end of year report monitoring the trends amongst academic misconduct cases which makes recommendations about how schools could make improvements to help reduce future incidents.</p>
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**Lack of communication with individual students**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>Throughout our research we have found numerous examples of poor communication with students, e.g. no response to reference requests for future study, people not responding to emails.</p> <p>This is particularly problematic for students attempting to make arrangements from outside the UK, e.g. waiting to hear if their housing application has been successful so</p>	

<sup>18</sup> See a more detailed outline of our academic misconduct comments attached

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>they know whether or not they need to make their own arrangements.</p> <p>We are also aware of cases where students had to re-book flights at personal expense due to timetabling being change with little notice.</p> <p>We appreciate that reports of these incidents may be lacking contextual information and the sheer number of staff members employed by the University however would like to emphasise the negative impact these apparently isolated incidents can have on students' experiences, particularly when the aggregate number is considered.</p>	
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**Interactive lectures**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>A new style of teaching, 'interactive lectures', is being piloted this year. Several students and some Student Reps have reported dissatisfaction with these as they fear they might replace the traditional seminar format which allows much greater interaction with tutors and more developed discussion.</p> <p>Students are particularly dissatisfied with the spaces used for these lectures not being conducive to group discussion and the length of time that each session takes.</p>	

**4.2 Learning resources are appropriate to allow students to achieve the outcomes of their programmes**

We note that the 2012 NSS showed a marked increase in satisfaction with learning resources (Library and IT) of 6.8% compared to 2011. However, we would like to highlight the following;

**Computers & internet**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>Students living in University accommodation are provided with a wired internet connection point and the University has been rolling out wireless connections in these areas too. Much of the campus is covered by the University's wireless network.</p> <p>Students report failing connections and low connection speeds (particularly in student</p>	<p>Strong investment in IT systems to include:</p> <p>Increasing availability of cluster PCs, particularly in PGT study areas.</p> <p>Increasing wireless network capacity in identified high-traffic areas, particularly the library and other common study spaces. Student Reps would be able to identify</p>



Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>accommodation, with the Northfield halls of residence being identified as a specific problem) and poor wireless connections (particularly in the Library).</p> <p>Students would welcome more computers on campus, particularly in group spaces and within academic and social spaces, i.e. not just computer clusters. They would also like more spaces to work with their own laptops including charging points. Some reported insufficient numbers in the library where they'd like more in the desk spaces (rather than the social space) and regular monitoring to ensure the points are all working.</p> <p>PGT students have also commented on the provision of computers in their PGT spaces, with the School of Education &amp; Social Work expressing disappointment in the lack of provision or investment in computers for their PGTs.</p>	<p>problem areas if required.</p> <p>Making internet connection speeds and access clear to prospective students, particularly in relation to student accommodation.</p>
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**Library books**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>A common complaint from students is that insufficient copies of key texts and the latest editions are available in the Library. We welcome recent moves to address this complaint and are keen to see how this improves the situation for students.</p>	<p>Review key text availability at the end of the 2012/13 academic year by consulting students about their experience.</p>

**Lecture recording**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>We welcome the University's lecture capture programme and recognise its particular value to students who are unable to attend lectures due to caring responsibilities or illness.</p> <p>We are keen to see this programme rolled out consistently across schools and for students to be made aware of alternative arrangements if they are unable to attend lectures. The value of this programme is substantially diminished if students are not able to make proper use of it.</p> <p>This particularly disadvantages disabled students who are unable to attend lectures</p>	<p>Consistently record and share lectures.</p> <p>Ensure students are able to easily identify lectures which have been recorded and access these recordings.</p>

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

due to ill health and students with learning difficulties who find it useful to replay lectures they have attended. Participants in our disabled students focus group reported being promised all lectures would be recorded which did not happen. A student trying to use their own recording device was told they couldn't due to copyright reasons.

**PGR office space**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>We asked PGR students whether their office space was suitable and 52% felt the current arrangements were inadequate<sup>19</sup>.</p> <p><i>“there are 25 hot desks for a total of around 70 Phd students”<sup>20</sup></i></p> <p>Shared desk/office space was cited by many respondents as a hindrance to their research.</p> <p>The ‘hot-desking’ approach to shared desk space doesn’t appear to be working satisfactorily. Students have told us that some students leave personal items on desks to ‘claim’ them and that spaces are unused as students think they will be busy. Hot-desking was described as ‘survival of the most assertive’<sup>21</sup>.</p> <p>Students, particularly self-funded students, felt that being offered their own desk space was a standard expectation. They felt they hadn’t been adequately considered, particularly when they are carrying out activities, such as marking, which benefits the University.</p> <p>Some students felt that, at minimum, lockers should be available for students without desks to store their equipment in. These are available in limited numbers to some PGR students however they do not seem well-managed with students reporting that several are held by students who have left the University.</p>	<p>Ensure all future building development plans allow for one researcher per desk.</p> <p>Provide well managed lockers for PGR students.</p>

<sup>19</sup> Students’ Union Postgraduate Survey 2012

<sup>20</sup> Students’ Union Postgraduate Survey 2012

<sup>21</sup> PGR focus group participant

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>It appears the space offered to PGR students is inconsistent across schools and departments with some respondents answering that they were satisfied with office/desk provision and others forced to work elsewhere due to the high ratio of PGR students to desk spaces. Some of our focus group participants referred to 'battles' between departments over space and new PGR students not feeling welcome in shared space, both of which counter attempts to build a researcher community.</p> <p>We welcome the news that the School of Business, Management and Economics is investigating the allocation of space following student feedback.</p> <p>Some felt that there was a contradiction in being expected to form a researcher community but not being provided with facilities in which to do so. Many PGR students feel socially isolated in their roles. It should also be noted that the Research Hive was not originally conceived as a silent study space but rather as a means of creating a researcher community – it appears that lack of workspace facilities elsewhere has changed its purpose.</p> <p>The Research Hive was valued as a workspace because it is silent and for PGR students only and our PGR focus group participants mentioned it could be extended. Personal office space was the preferred study space however with the Hive described as 'an overspill car park'<sup>22</sup>.</p>	
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**PG study space**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>PGT students in particular have reported a lack of suitable study space<sup>23</sup>. The Research Hive for PGR students in the Library is envied by some PGT students who would appreciate a silent study area of their own#.</p> <p>Some respondents to our postgraduate survey requested storage space for</p>	<p>Study space specifically allocated for PGT students.</p>

<sup>22</sup> PGR focus group participant

<sup>23</sup> Students' Union postgraduate survey

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>equipment and books on campus, particularly for students without allocated office space.</p> <p>Access to computers was another common request so future study space developments should combine social and quiet spaces with computer facilities.</p>	
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**Cost of printing**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>During the 2011/12 and 2012/3 academic years, we asked students to submit examples of 'hidden costs' - costs they had incurred that they were not expecting. A common submission was the cost of printing, e.g. lecture handouts, journal articles (particularly those required for seminars) and coursework.</p> <p>Particularly since the introduction of £9000 fees at Sussex, students feel that they should not have to pay for these items.</p> <p>Many appreciate the availability of electronic resources, e.g. lecture slides, but not the shift towards students paying for hard copies of these it has often created. Students also resented having to pay to print handouts when they give presentations.</p>	<p>Provide financial assistance for students' printing costs near deadlines, particularly for final year dissertations as at other institutions.</p> <p>Make 'hidden costs' such as typical printing costs clear to prospective students.</p> <p>Whilst mindful of environmental considerations required handouts should be printed at the institution's expense rather than individual students' or staff.</p>

**Relationships with external organisations**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>We are aware of a case in which essential laboratory equipment was provided by a commercial firm. They reclaimed this equipment and no suitable replacement was made available. The students did not feel their concerns were being adequately considered by their school or department.</p> <p>There was a lack of clarity about the ownership of the equipment and subsequent rights to the results generated using it.</p> <p>Further, it seems that the relationship between school/department/University staff and this firm were not transparent and may have created a conflict of interests when</p>	<p>Where equipment used by students is not owned by the University, this should be made clear to students who should understand how (if at all) this affects their use of it and the results generated by it. Provision should be made for the termination of any such agreements so as to not disrupt the learning or research of students.</p> <p>Any relationships with external organisations should be clear and transparent to students.</p> <p>University to halt plans to outsource services and undertake full consultation with students, the Students' Union and trade unions as there is currently no student input into the proposals and this is highly likely to</p>

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>investigating the case.</p> <p>We are worried that the University's outsourcing proposals may in future have a negative impact on the provision of learning resources, e.g. increased prices, availability of staff. We fear that there will be less accountability to students from external providers and fewer opportunities for students to shape their experience by providing feedback. We are particularly concerned that, despite requests, the institution have been either unable or unwilling to provide us with any examples of cases where outsourcing on this scale has been successful.</p>	<p>negatively impact the student experience.</p>
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### 4.3 There is an effective contribution of students to quality assurance

The Periodic Review is covered later in this report (see page 44). The Student Rep Scheme is one of the most visible ways in which students contribute to quality assurance. We cover this in more detail on page 4.

#### Module evaluation questionnaires

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>There does not appear to be a central process for monitoring trends across student feedback via module evaluation questionnaires and assessing whether feedback is acted upon.</p>	<p>Establish, with input from Student Reps and the Students' Union, whether a central reporting system for module evaluation questionnaires would be a useful way to identify wider trends.</p> <p>Improve communication with students about changes made as a result of module evaluation feedback. This is also likely to increase response rates.</p>

### 4.4 Policies and procedures used to admit students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied

The Student Reps we surveyed were generally positive about their experience of Sussex's admissions processes with some giving a sense that Sussex is happy to consider the whole applicant rather than just their grades.

#### International student recruitment agents

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>We have raised concerns about the University's use of international student recruitment agents over the last few years<sup>24</sup>.</p>	<p>Ensure the University's planned research into the experience of international student recruitment agents, particularly that involving</p>

<sup>24</sup> Students' Union Recruitment Agent report (attached)

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>Our main concern has been possible inaccuracy of the information given to potential students by some recruitment agents.</p> <p>The University has started making some progress towards addressing these concerns and we are keen to see these proposals being implemented as soon as possible.</p>	<p>talking to students recruited by them, is carried out during the 2012/13 academic year. Ensure that the commitment to make this a part of an annual review is upheld.</p> <p>Ensure improvements arising from this research and feedback from the Students' Union is promptly acted upon.</p>
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**English language proficiency**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>One criticism raised in the Student Rep survey and an issue we're anecdotally aware of is the poor English language proficiency of some international students.</p> <p>We are concerned that students may be being advised they will be able to access additional English language support upon enrolment which is then not available.</p> <p>We are also concerned that the University's use of IELTS results to assess language proficiency is unsuitable and/or not being robustly applied.</p>	<p>Investigate other means of assessing English language proficiency.</p> <p>Schools that have shown disproportionate levels of poor English language skills need to develop action plans to tackle this issue.</p>

**Attendance Monitoring**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>There is confusion amongst University staff<sup>25</sup> about the University's policy on attendance monitoring e.g. who is responsible for ensuring monitoring is carried out; who is responsible for contacting students who are not attending.</p>	<p>The Students' Union understands that attendance monitoring can be an effective way of ensuring that students are supported effectively through their studies. We therefore recommend that the University improve the communication of attendance monitoring across all schools and ensure that data is collated centrally.</p>

**4.5 There are effective complaints and appeals procedures**

**Complaints procedure**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>Cases of some students who have</p>	<p>Students' Union to be informed about all</p>

<sup>25</sup> Periodic Review Action Plan, School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, submitted to school TLC November 2012 – see section 12 (attached)

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>approached the ARC for advice have given us cause for concern that the complaints procedure is often insufficiently clear, consistent, transparent or timely. It can be hard for students to understand what they should do and what time-frames apply (particularly when they can/should move to the next stage of the process). It is not clear what outcomes students can expect nor who they should contact for updates about their complaint.</p> <p>The present system does not ensure that the institution is held accountable for the changes they propose to a student unless the complaint was made with the assistance of the Students' Union.</p> <p>We believe more resource - e.g. staff time and training - should be dedicated to dealing swiftly and effectively with complaints and that there should be clearer guidelines for staff to enable them to do this.</p> <p>There is also a lack of clarity as to how to deal with complaints that are made a considerable period of time after the incident giving rise to the complaint.</p> <p>At the time of writing this report, the University's complaints summary for the 2011/12 academic year has not been made available to the authors and was not included in the papers for the University's Teaching &amp; Learning Committee. We are not aware of an annual complaints report ever being produced by the University.</p> <p>One of our concerns about the University's proposal to privatise campus services is how future complaints would be handled if external providers are running services. What rights would students have? What possible outcomes would there be? Would these be more limited at present? The accountability of these providers is a topic Union officers have raised with senior University managers.</p>	<p>complaints made by students about the University on a quarterly basis. This information should include any proposed University action plans. Data can be anonymised and summarised to avoid data protection issues.</p> <p>Review complaints procedure and information provided to students with input from the Students' Union. To include consideration of updates to complainants, timeframes, outcomes and impact on students.</p> <p>University to produce an annual report on complaints received, outcomes, recommendations made and implemented.</p> <p>We wish to reiterate <u>our earlier recommendation</u> that the University halts its outsourcing plan in light of our concerns regarding the accountability of service providers if these services are outsourced.</p>
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**Mitigating evidence procedure**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
Anecdotal evidence from the periodic review focus group highlighted a case in which a	Produce an annual report summarising the number and type of claims submitted,

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>student has been given inconsistent advice regarding submitting mitigating evidence this term. Additionally, the University changing its mitigating evidence procedures mid-term has caused confusion among school staff and students.</p> <p>The University produces a report summarising changes considered and made to the mitigating evidence procedure but we are not aware of an institution-wide summary of the number and type of claims submitted, upheld, rejected and deemed inadmissible. We think this would help identify trends, for example across schools, and would be a useful tool to establish whether the system is functioning well for students.</p>	<p>upheld, rejected and deemed inadmissible.</p>
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**Student discipline**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>We have chosen to include our concerns about the student discipline process here as it is closely linked with the complaints process.</p> <p>Again, our concerns stem from students who approach the ARC for advice and are centred around the length of time taken to process claims, consistency, unclear information for students and complainants and a lack of clarity about who students should contact while their case is being considered.</p> <p>Also, we are concerned that students are not always told they are entitled to representation from the Students' Union (or elsewhere).</p> <p>It is also unclear how complaints relating to students employed as University staff members are processed: whether this is via the University's HR procedures and/or student discipline process. This applies to Associate Tutors and students employed elsewhere within the University.</p> <p>Similar discipline issues within the student residences and schools are often treated differently and inconsistently referred up to the next tier in the process. Additionally schools will often not refer cases to panels. There is also a lack of consistency about</p>	<p>Thoroughly review student discipline procedures with input from the Students' Union by the start of the summer term 2012/13.</p> <p>Ensure staff involved in reporting, processing and responding to student discipline and complaints issues are suitably trained.</p> <p>Clarify the status of Associate Tutors and other students who are employed by the University as students and employees and which policies will be applied, e.g. if a complaint is made about them or if they want to make a complaint.</p> <p>All students subject to disciplinary proceedings to be informed that they are entitled to assistance and/or representation from the Students' Union or elsewhere.</p>



Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>informal resolution of cases between schools, e.g. cases involving harassment.</p> <p>Staff responsible for handling complaints and discipline issues are not currently provided with suitable training for dealing with students raising difficult and/or personal issues e.g. where a student may allege they have been raped by another student.</p> <p>It is also unclear what action the University may take whilst criminal proceedings against a student may be in progress.</p> <p>We are also concerned about the guidelines provided for presenters and chairs as we are aware of cases where presenters have ended up almost cross-examining the student in a manner which could be intimidating.</p>	
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**Lack of awareness of and inconsistent application of policies and procedures for PGR students**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>Our research suggests a lack of awareness amongst PGR students and supervisors of procedures for academic appeals, complaints etc, although information is contained in the Handbook for Doctoral Researchers. The Handbook makes no mention of mitigating evidence processes however and it is unclear how these might apply to PGR students.</p>	<p>Ensure that PGR students, supervisors and other relevant staff are aware of and adhere to appeals, complaints and misconduct procedures.</p> <p>Clarify the application of mitigating evidence procedures/relevant alternative procedures for PGR students.</p>

**4.6 The quality of learning opportunities is managed to enable the entitlements of disabled students to be met**

Please see our specific comments [later in this report](#) (page 28) about disabled PGR students.

**Provision for disabled students**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>Many students in our disabled students' focus group were complimentary about the support provided by the Student Support Unit (SSU), particularly the helpful nature of many of the staff. Some felt that the rules the SSU operates within are too restrictive and don't allow for flexible responses.</p>	<p>Ensure all relevant staff regularly check their student lists to find any additional support needs for their students. Combine this with making additional training available to relevant staff to ensure they are meeting the needs of students with disabilities and mental health problems.</p>

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

Some students reported being happy with the support provided but being aware of more comprehensive support provided by other universities, e.g. students provided with their own copies of assistive software. The need to purchase specialist software was an unexpected cost highlighted by students in the focus group.

It appears that not all staff use the University's student lists which identify individuals who may need additional support. One of our disabled students focus group participants reported that a demonstrator was apparently unaware of her disability and mocked her request for assistance.

Much support provided by the SSU is, understandably, broad and skills-based but members of our disabled students focus group would appreciate more assistance from academic staff.

The University provides ten dedicated PCs for students with a disability or specific learning need<sup>26</sup>. Students have told us that they are not always working, that they don't seem to be regularly checked and (in the case of the Library machines) it is unclear who can help with technical problems.

Students reported inconsistent guidance and application of policies, e.g. a student was told they would be given extra time for online multiple choice tests (in line with the support agreed for them) but this was not provided in practice.

Some students felt that adjustments made for them were not suitable, e.g. alternative exam venues up stairs which are unsuitable for students who find these hard to navigate, and that they were not informed of the locations of these rooms.

We are concerned that the 'Information for disabled students' webpage<sup>27</sup> is sparse and very out of date, e.g. it refers to out of date legislation, roles which have been replaced, does not include access information for new buildings and links to policies which were last

Regularly assess accessibility (and facilities) between and in buildings and ensure this information is available to all students.

Update information for disabled students pages on the University's website to ensure they are current and provide disabled students with relevant information. This information should also incorporate a section on mental health.

Address the concerns raised by the Students' Union's mental health and wellbeing survey to ensure these students are adequately supported.

The SSU be allocated additional resources.

<sup>26</sup> 'Assistive PCs' - IT Services - [www.sussex.ac.uk/its/help/guide?id=16](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/help/guide?id=16)

<sup>27</sup> 'Information for disabled students' - [www.sussex.ac.uk/equalities/disability/informationfordisabledstudents](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/equalities/disability/informationfordisabledstudents)

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>revised up to 10 years ago.</p> <p>Additionally we feel there is a lack of support for students with mental health problems and a lacking of University processes and training. For example respondents to our student mental health and wellbeing survey reported that:</p> <p><i>“There has been a lack of communication between the Student Life Centre and the Student Support Unit, which left me going back and forth between the two with no help or guidance given”</i></p> <p><i>“The overlapping roles of the PCS, SSU, and SLC can cause some confusion. I still don't know much about what the SSU do even though I've had some communication with them via email”</i></p> <p>The recent changes to the mitigating evidence process are likely to result in many more students registering with the SSU &amp; yet the SSU is quite poorly resourced, e.g. they only have a part-time mental health adviser.</p>	
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**Students with dyslexia**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>Students who receive Disabled Students' Allowance should be able to access regular one to one sessions with a specialist dyslexia tutor to help them with their reading, note-taking, assignment planning etc.</p> <p>Students have told us however that they have not been provided with this support due to a shortage of tutors and lack of resources within the SSU. For students on year-long courses, this could mean them completing large parts of the course without receiving the support they are entitled to.</p> <p>Students in our disabled students focus group also told us they feel they have to be persistent and proactive to receive support, and in some cases, simply useful responses and updates.</p>	<p>Ensure all students receive the support they are entitled to within a specified timescale, particularly individual tutor support.</p> <p>Greater support for students with dyslexia to ensure they are aware of, and encouraged to make use of, options available to them, e.g. training to use assistive software, stickers for their work, how to spend their Disabled Students' Allowance on books and resources.</p>

**Support for disabled students on placements**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>The ARC has previously been approached by disabled students who do not feel they receive adequate support whilst they are on placements.</p> <p>The number of cases we have been notified of has declined however it seems there may still be instances of students not being aware of support that is available to them and/or not being sure that their placement provider is aware of their needs.</p> <p><i>"I feel I only found out that someone could come to my placement to help me because my tutor happened to have recently gone on a course about it"</i><sup>28</sup></p>	
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#### 4.7 The quality of learning opportunities for international students is appropriate

##### Study skills & induction

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>The ARC has seen an increasing number and proportion of international students being accused of academic misconduct (25 cases in 2010/11, - 58% of academic misconduct cases, 45 cases in 2011/12 - 67%, 5 so far in 2012/13). The most common school involved in these cases is Business, Management &amp; Economics (58% in 2011/12, 100% of 2012/13 cases so far) and mostly new students<sup>29</sup>.</p> <p>Full-time international students for whom English is a second or additional language can attend optional academic development workshops which include information about referencing<sup>30</sup> and avoiding plagiarism<sup>31</sup>.</p> <p>The University's student skills development programme, Study Success at Sussex (S3), includes online information about referencing<sup>32</sup> and plagiarism. The University also offers 16 x 45 minute induction sessions</p>	<p>Improve understanding of UK academic culture for international students. In particular this information should come from schools to provide more subject-specific information.</p> <p>The University should consider how to encourage students to use the available resources as well as considering new options. These may include induction components on study skills and academic culture.</p> <p>Academic and other relevant staff to receive training and information about other academic cultures, particularly those of the countries where international recruitment is targeted e.g. China and India.</p>

<sup>28</sup> Paraphrased from focus group participant

<sup>29</sup> Students' Union Advice & Representation Centre client statistics 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2011/12

<sup>30</sup> 'Academic development support' - [www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/english/acadev](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/english/acadev)

<sup>31</sup> 'Academic misconduct' Study Success at Sussex - [www.sussex.ac.uk/s3/?id=33](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/s3/?id=33)

<sup>32</sup> 'Referencing' Study Success at Sussex - [www.sussex.ac.uk/s3/?id=37](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/s3/?id=37)

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>at the start of the term which include preparing for university, study skills for PGT and international students, referencing, academic misconduct. From the information provided to us it seems much of this directed students to the S3 online resources.</p> <p>We feel that international students, including postgraduates, are not given a sufficient induction to UK academic culture leading to unintentional academic misconduct. Many international students come from different academic backgrounds with different conventions. This includes approaches to references as well as different referencing styles. Members of our international student focus group said they did not think the guidance materials available were given sufficient weight given their importance, particularly referencing.</p> <p>We have demonstrated that information is available to students to find out about avoiding academic misconduct. We are concerned that students may not be aware of this information, its importance and the penalties for noncompliance.</p> <p>We believe that suitable preventative measures would reduce the time and worry for students accused of academic misconduct and the staff time involved in processing claims and appeals.</p>	
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**Fees for international students**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>International students have, until the current academic year, been able to opt for a fixed-rate for their tuition fees, an option chosen by an average of 10% of overseas undergraduates over the past three years<sup>33</sup>. Presumably this was to mitigate the risk of future fee increases and allow students to plan their finances.</p> <p>This option has now been withdrawn in a year which saw an increase of 12.8% in fees for non-EU international students (compared to 4% in the previous year). This will have</p>	<p>We would like to see the University implement a fixed fee policy for all returning students to ensure that fees do not rise above inflation.</p> <p>Where fee increases in line with inflation do happen, they should be communicated to affected students at least six months prior to the start of teaching for their course.</p>

<sup>33</sup> Information provided by the University of Sussex

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>affected the 817 overseas undergraduates returning for the 2012/13 academic year. At time of writing, the University have not formally given any explanation for the withdrawal of this option.</p> <p>A number of returning students have reported being charged an increased (variable) rate for their fees despite opting for the fixed rate<sup>34</sup>.</p> <p>Students have reported unexpectedly having to find large sums of money which is affecting them in the long-term, e.g. affordability of further study, and short-term, e.g. not being able to afford food<sup>35</sup>.</p> <p>47% of respondents to our tuition fee increase survey reported being notified about the increase fees less than two weeks before the start of the academic year.</p> <p>A member of our international student focus group reported trying to find out about fee increases before they arrived but was unable to find out this information.</p> <p>There has been a similar problem with increased fees for postgraduate students too.</p> <p>Whilst we welcome the University's apology and corrective action underway at time of writing we are concerned about the time taken to resolve the issue and seek reassurance from the institution that similar errors could not be made in future.</p>	
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**Visiting & Exchange students**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>A visiting student (part of our international students focus group) reported feeling 'dispensable' by the University. They felt they had not had enough contact or support from the University, e.g. the modules available to them changed prior to their arrival with no warning which affected how their Sussex credits mapped to their degree.</p>	<p>An improved induction period, as mentioned below (see page 34), would benefit these students with integration and feeling part of Sussex life.</p>

<sup>34</sup> Advice & Representation Centre clients and Students' Union Tuition Fee Increase survey

<sup>35</sup> Students' Union Tuition Fee Increase survey

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

**4.8 Appropriate support and guidance is provided to enable postgraduate research students to complete their programmes and to enable staff involved in research programmes to fulfil their responsibilities**

**Doctoral School**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>Several members of our PGR focus group told us that the Doctoral School website is a useful resource and that their experience of training organised by them was very positive.</p> <p>There was a feeling amongst some, however, that Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded students were prioritised in terms of support. More broadly, self-funded students felt at the bottom of the perceived PGR hierarchy.</p>	

**Facilities & tools for PGR students**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>PGR students reported finding it hard to book rooms with suitable facilities, e.g. Adobe Connect or conference call tools, as priority is given to undergraduate teaching.</p> <p>They felt this restricted their ability to do the things expected of them, e.g. hosting speakers and holding reading groups.</p> <p>Some referred to access to research facilities and tools as 'every man for themself' rather than a well-planned, resourced and fair allocation.</p> <p>Software was explicitly mentioned by several members of our PGR focus group as the University only holds limited licenses for some software and there are conflicting arrangements for use on and off campus.</p>	

**PGR supervisor relationship**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>The relationship between a PGR student and their supervisor can fundamentally shape their experience of their programme and its outcomes.</p> <p>We have been aware of many cases over</p>	<p>Ensure understanding and implementation of policies by supervisors is considered as part of their annual performance review.</p> <p>Draw up improved guidelines for PGR students outlining what to do if you have a</p>

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

the years where this relationship has been ineffective and/or problematic. We are aware of many incidents where students have been left feeling distressed and/or frustrated after meetings with their supervisors. Many of our focus group participants relayed tales of people leaving meetings with their supervisors in tears, of supervisors being unprepared for meetings and poor communication.

Participants in our focus group agreed that supervisors should receive training in managing the professional relationships with the students they supervise as in any other workplace.

There have been particular problems when a student's original supervisor leaves and is replaced by someone the student feels is inappropriate or under-qualified. These students have felt disenfranchised and unable to communicate their particular needs. Equally many students fear their supervisor leaving citing lack of consistency or notification in this situation as well as the lack of a known procedure for identifying a new supervisor.

The nature of the relationship results in a power imbalance with many PGR students unwillingly to raise their concerns about the support provided by their supervisor.

There is fear amongst many PGR students that changing their supervisors would reflect badly on them and damage their reputation and career prospects, particularly in smaller departments and close-knit communities. It was felt that this is not normally a viable solution for PGR supervisor problems.

*"It's very difficult to [raise concerns about your supervisor], when you know how hard they work and your phd depends on [a] good relationship."*<sup>36</sup>

Students in our focus group didn't feel they would know who to approach if they had problems with their supervisor and that they felt no control over changing this relationship.

Whilst half (54%) of respondents to our

problem with your supervisor.

Replicate the Law department PGR support model in other departments.

<sup>36</sup> Students' Union Postgraduate Survey 2012



Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>postgraduate survey felt students are able to raise concerns about their supervisor, it is worth noting that 16% did not agree and 30% were not sure<sup>37</sup>.</p> <p>The Director of Doctoral Studies has oversight of supervisory arrangements at School level, each supervisor, as an academic member of staff of the University is subject to an annual performance review at which matters such as supervisory activity are discussed.</p> <p>A PGR Law student told us about weekly sessions run by a member of faculty for PGR students to drop into for a talk and informal chat. They were identified as the 'go-to' person for PGR students and this session provided a useful opportunity to discuss any pertinent issues and receive for suggestions of how to address areas of concern, such as those with supervisors. It was felt by other members of our PGR focus group that this would be a useful model to use in other departments.</p>	
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**Support for disabled PGR students**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>A very limited amount of training appears to be available to supervisors about supporting students with disabilities, a single (optional) training session called 'Supervising Doctoral Students with Disabilities'<sup>38</sup>.</p> <p>The handbook for PGR students advises students with a disability or long-term medical condition which they believe may have an impact on their studies and/or require support are advised to contact the University's Student Support Unit<sup>39</sup>.</p> <p>Some students told us that they felt support provided by the Student Support Unit was focused around undergraduate, and to a</p>	<p>SSU to produce PGR specific materials.</p> <p>More proactive support for PGR students with dyslexia or other specific learning differences including more training resources for supervisors.</p> <p>Ensure disabled PGR students are aware of what information will be shared with their supervisor and allow them to edit and/or approve the text of this disclosure.</p>

<sup>37</sup> Students' Union Postgraduate Survey 2012

<sup>38</sup> 'Doctoral Student Supervision', Teaching and Learning Development Unit - [www.sussex.ac.uk/tldu/events/tldevents/docss](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/tldu/events/tldevents/docss)

<sup>39</sup> 'Handbook for Doctoral Researchers 2012/13' available from [www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/resources/researchdegreematters/handbooks](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/resources/researchdegreematters/handbooks)

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>lesser extent taught postgraduate, students.</p> <p>We are concerned that PGR students with dyslexia or other specific learning differences may not receive sufficient support, in part due to an assumption by the University that they will have received sufficient support or adjustments in their prior education so will be proactive in seeking support. We do not feel this should be the case.</p> <p>Additionally, we are worried that supervisors are not equipped with sufficient knowledge to effectively support PGR students with disabilities, particularly dyslexia and other specific learning differences.</p> <p>We spoke to disabled PRG students who were unsure of what information about them is disclosed to their supervisor. This led to a reluctance on their part to disclose too much information in case it was used against them.</p>	
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**Lack of representation within Doctoral School**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>The Doctoral School, launched in 2009, oversees the University's activities and commitments to doctoral researchers and research staff.</p> <p>However, there is no Students' Union representation on the Doctoral School Committee, although there are 3 places for PGR Student Reps.</p>	<p>The Students' Union to have two places on the Doctoral School Committee.</p> <p>Doctoral School to offer briefings to student and Students' Union members of the Doctoral School Committee prior to meetings.</p>

**Equality across disciplines**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>There appears to be a sense of inequality across disciplines, particularly comparing arts and sciences.</p> <p>PGR arts/humanities students typically report less access to office space and a feeling that qualitative based research is not as valued as their science colleagues who report spare office space.</p>	<p>Conduct an audit of office space availability for PGR students to ascertain if disparity exists and how space could be redistributed if needed</p>

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

**4.9 The quality of learning opportunities delivered through work based and placement learning is effective**

Please see comments above about the experience of disabled students on placements.

**Availability & allocation of placements**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>Some students have reported difficulty finding placements.</p> <p>For the 2012/13 academic year some Social Work placements were allocated later due to a delay in the University receiving placement details. We are concerned this could be a problem in the future if the University is over-promising on placement opportunities.</p>	<p>Closely monitor placement availability and tailor recruitment accordingly.</p>

**Placement support**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>Some students on placements have reported that their practice educator has not been suitably supportive and understanding of their trainee status<sup>40</sup>.</p> <p>Relationships between placement students and their supervisors typically demonstrate a similar power imbalance as that described for PGR students and their supervisors. Placement students may be unwilling to raise concerns about their supervisor for fear of consequences including their fitness to practise being questioned.</p> <p>There seems to be a lack of continuity and consistency about supervision arrangements which leave some students unable to put their concerns forward.</p>	<p>Ensure all practice educators are fully aware of relevant guidelines and adopt a supportive approach to their supervisees.</p>

**Placement travel costs**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>Students on placements sometimes find their travel costs are too high. Some students are eligible for bursaries which include £500 towards travel expenses however this is sometimes insufficient and not all students</p>	<p>Implement policy stating a student's maximum expenditure on travel costs and reimburse expenses over this amount.</p>

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<sup>40</sup> From Students' Union Advice & Representation casework

Section 4: How effectively does the institution manage the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching and academic support)?

<p>are eligible for this support. Students are no longer able to apply for financial support for travel costs from the Access to Learning Fund.</p> <p>The workload of these students is such that they are typically unable to take up paid work opportunities to contribute towards their travel expenses.</p>	
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**4.10 A student charter, or equivalent document, setting out the mutual expectations of the institution and its students, is available**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>This is currently not available.</p> <p>However, the University has expressed an interest in creating a student charter which is 'jointly owned' by the University and Students' Union with a target sign of date of summer term 2013/14. The University would like the Union to lead on the creation of the document.</p>	<p>University to allow Students' Union sufficient time to consult students on their views on a student charter and determine what should be included before taking any action to create one.</p>

We have opted not to comment on these topics in this section;

- There is an approach to career education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) that is adequately quality assured
- The quality of learning opportunities delivered through flexible and distributed arrangements, including e-learning, is managed effectively
- The quality of learning opportunities delivered as part of collaborative arrangements is managed effectively to enable students to achieve their awards.
- There is an effective use of management information to safeguard quality and standards and to promote enhancement of student learning

## Section 5: How effectively the institution manages the quality of the public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants

### 5.1 Is this information user-friendly, easy to find, accurate and up to date? Does it accurately describe courses and learning resources?

#### Misleading information (particularly for international and postgraduate students)

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>As <u>mentioned previously</u>, we are concerned about the way the University handled both the decision making process and the dissemination of information about fee increases for international and postgraduate students this academic year.</p> <p>Whilst we acknowledge that the University has revised its current position we urge the University to take appropriate action to ensure similar situations do not occur in future.</p> <p>Furthermore, a participant in our international student focus groups reported the cost of their PhD increasing between when they applied and when they started their course (and therefore they had to pay the increased amount unexpectedly).</p> <p>Changes to course fees should be communicated well in advance and not put students in a position of having to raise more money to fund a course to which they have already committed.</p>	<p>We wish to <u>reiterate our previous recommendation</u> about fees and communicating changes.</p>

#### Hidden costs, especially study packs & textbooks

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>Students have to spend their own money on certain learning resources such as equipment, safety clothing and trips (see also <u>our comments about the cost of printing</u> above).</p> <p>As our hidden costs survey<sup>41</sup> indicates, along with printing, the costs of books and study packs is a frequent surprise to new students. In many cases, the University does not</p>	<p><u>As recommended previously</u>, the University should ensure prospective students are aware of <b>all</b> costs associated with studying at the University. Increased transparency could take the form of mentioning them in prospectuses and the website.</p> <p>Taking steps to diminish some of these costs would also be very well received - for example by seminar tutors printing out</p>

<sup>41</sup> Hidden Costs campaign totaliser - [www.sussexstudent.com/hiddencosts](http://www.sussexstudent.com/hiddencosts)

Section 6: How effectively the institution manages the quality of the public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants

currently mention to prospective students or students considering particular modules that these items must usually be purchased.

The University might point to the library as somewhere that students can access course texts for no cost. However, we have found (through focus groups and survey responses) that in the majority of cases there are insufficient copies of texts, essentially forcing students who wish to be successful to purchase items. Therefore we would reiterate our request that the University be more upfront about these hidden costs (particularly in the case of course readers, which cannot be provided in the library due to not being published items) and also consider improving provision in the library of essential course texts.

Commuting to and from campus is also regarded as a hidden cost by many of those who have provided input into our survey. Whilst we appreciate that this is a cost which could be viewed as out of the University's control, we feel it would be advisable for the University to provide information on the costs of this to prospective students, as it may help them make a more informed choice as to whether they want to live off campus or on campus in their first year. This would also be helpful to students looking for employment and student parents who need to transport their children to school.

We also feel the University should ensure they are transparent about the cost implications of the decision to move some exams into venues off-campus in Brighton<sup>42</sup>. This is because whilst we appreciate every effort is being made to ensure that mainly second and third year students will be sitting exams in the proposed venues, we are aware that some first years (who are more likely to live on campus) will be affected so they must be made aware that going to these exams will cost money.

handouts and more essential course texts being made available in the library.

We would also welcome a commitment from the university to provide transport to exams in Brighton for students living on campus.

**Assessment feedback availability & timelines not within agreed/advertised timescales**

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<sup>42</sup> Exam timetables available at [www.sussex.ac.uk/sas/examtimetables](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sas/examtimetables)

Section 6: How effectively the institution manages the quality of the public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>The University does not currently operate a compliance model as they feel this would unnecessarily restrict innovation in individual subjects.</p> <p>Innovation in subjects is important and we are pleased that the University considers this something to be protected. However we feel there is far too much inconsistency between Schools with regard to feedback.</p> <p>The only consistency we see regarding the timing of assessment and feedback is that students are generally unhappy with timeframes.</p> <p>There is some confusion over the '15 days' guideline as students feel it is not adequately communicated that the 15 days means working days. We feel the University could do more to publicise this. Furthermore, even when there is an understanding of the 15 days, this is not often adhered to. This comes up consistently in SSEG minutes, surveys and focus groups.</p> <p>One solution that has been agreed by students in the School of Life Sciences is that tutors will have to provide an extra half a page of feedback for every day that it is late. Reps in other schools were unaware of this practice. If this sort of good practice was shared across schools then it could lead to feedback consistently returning on time across the University.</p>	<p>The University should clearly publicise to students the meaning of the 15 day feedback timescale to prevent misunderstandings. This could take the form of having the deadline date for feedback available to the student on submission of the work.</p> <p>More sharing of best practice from schools who succeed in meeting the timescales would be extremely helpful.</p>

**Inductions**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>For the 2012/13 academic year, student inductions were changed as University management wished to see more integration between international and UK students. The University also wanted to give all students more information about student life and support available.</p> <p>Whilst we agree that international students should be fully integrated into Sussex life and interact with UK students, we believe that there are some shortcomings in this</p>	<p>Reinstate the ISAO specialised induction for international students on life in the UK.</p> <p>A review into the Sussex Signposting event should be carried out, with a focus on which sessions were effective, tailoring events to specific groups of students, how to better publicise the event to students and when it is best to hold them.</p> <p>We would welcome a review as to how best we can get student support information to students beyond talks and lectures.</p>

Section 6: How effectively the institution manages the quality of the public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants

<p>well-intentioned plan.</p> <p>In previous years there has been a specific induction organised by the International and Study Abroad Office (ISAO) covering such things as banking, housing and living in the UK.</p> <p>However this didn't happen this year due to the integration of inductions and we feel that international students consequently missed out on essential information to help them settle into Sussex life.</p> <p>Furthermore we feel publicity about the new induction process was inadequate; this manifested itself in the low turnout from all students at the induction events (Sussex Signpost) in Fulton during fresher's week, in which the Welfare Officer and the ARC received no more than 15 visitors over four sessions throughout the week. This is particularly disappointing as one of the key recommendations of the periodic review was to improve signposting for students.</p> <p>We also have concerns relating to the further induction events happening at the beginning of spring term. This is because no review has been carried out relating to the low turnout at the Sussex Signposting event.</p> <p>We are concerned that the University are rushing through with repeat events without any process for ascertaining which events worked and which need to be tailored to meet specific student needs.</p>	<p>We are also looking forward to seeing the University's action plan on signposting, following recommendations arising from the periodic review.</p>
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**Timetabling**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>Student Reps from the School of English raised at the Student Experience Forum<sup>43</sup> that greater clarity of information, in the form of getting timetables out to students quicker, would be beneficial. This is particularly pertinent for both student parents, who need to time their plan well in advance due to childcare commitments, and international students, who need to plan their travel at the beginning and end of terms. We are pleased</p>	<p>The University should guarantee the release of both academic <b>and</b> exam timetables two months before the start of term to ensure students can plan their time for upcoming terms and exams effectively.</p> <p>If the University's information gathering of equality and diversity statistics was more robust, they would be able to more effectively timetable to meet the needs of students with dependents. We would also</p>

<sup>43</sup> Student Experience Forum meeting 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012



Section 6: How effectively the institution manages the quality of the public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants

<p>to note that this has been taken forward and will be looked at as a result.</p> <p>Draft exam timetables for the winter assessment period in 2013 were released on 3rd December 2012 which caused problems for some students planning their return travel to the University after the holidays.</p>	<p>welcome clarification from University management about which senior manager has overall responsibility for equality and diversity so that we can better liaise with them on this matter.</p>
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**5.2 The extent to which programme specifications accurately describe the learning opportunities and outcomes of courses**

We are not focusing on this area in great detail, but KIS data shows a generally high level of satisfaction with Sussex courses, indicating that programme specifications do match up with learning outcomes.

**5.3 How the institution works with students in the consideration of the NSS and how effective their analysis and dissemination of the results is**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>A financial incentive is provided to both students who fill out the survey (in the form of a £5 lunch voucher) and schools that meet certain response rate targets for the NSS: if achieved, this is to be spent with the input of Student Reps. The implication of this is that Reps will have an incentive in encouraging their cohort to buy into completing the NSS.</p> <p>The Deputy VC has been very keen to involve students (and Student Reps) in discussing NSS results, and in 2011/12 Reps were given access to and briefed on their School's NSS results. The Student Experience Forum has also been used to raise awareness of NSS results and update students on consequent action e.g. learning resources improvements.</p> <p>With regards to analysis of results the Deputy VC requested on 01/11/11 that all Schools should discuss their NSS results with students and devise action plans based on the results, with particular reference to assessment and feedback, traditionally Sussex's weakest areas.</p> <p>Whilst School Teaching &amp; Learning Committee minutes show that there are discussions regarding the NSS in some Schools there are inconsistencies between Schools regarding the extent to which this has taken place and we have found no evidence that the creation of action plans</p>	<p>Ensure all Schools analyse their NSS results and create action plans.</p> <p>Involve students in the creation of action plans and keep students informed of implementation progress.</p> <p>Centrally collate and analyse action plans.</p> <p>Disseminate examples of good practice and innovation in a systematic way.</p> <p>In addition the University should ensure that it does not rely solely on the NSS results when creating action plans and should conduct more specific research around problem areas identified.</p>

Section 6: How effectively the institution manages the quality of the public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants

<p>occurred.</p> <p>Furthermore it appears that Heads of School were not required to submit their action plans to the Deputy VC or report on them centrally. Consequently there does not seem to be any systematic way in which good practice is identified and rolled out across the institution, nor in which poor practice is identified and improved.</p>	
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**5.4 Where does the institution make available public information deemed important by the sector?**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>he University makes information available on its website<sup>44</sup>, most information deemed important to the sector is available in the 'about us'<sup>45</sup> section of the site, one click from the main page.</p> <p>The University also publishes a prospectus<sup>46</sup> for UG and PG students; these are available by ordering or downloading from the 'study with us' section of the website. Again this is visible one click from the main university page.</p> <p>We are pleased the information is provided online but feel that it highlights a problem of the website as it is easier to find this information using a google search than using the search function on the website. Finding items on the website can be deemed not very accessible if one is unaware of the need to use a specific google search (and it is likely that prospective students will be unaware).</p>	<p>Ensure information is easily accessible by updating it the website taking into account the needs of users who find it hard to navigate.</p> <p>We also wish to reiterate this recommendation and request that the equality and diversity pages also be updated as they are also out of date.</p>

<sup>44</sup> [www.sussex.ac.uk](http://www.sussex.ac.uk)

<sup>45</sup> 'About us' - [www.sussex.ac.uk/aboutus](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/aboutus)

<sup>46</sup> 'Order or download a prospectus' - [www.sussex.ac.uk/study/prospectus](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/prospectus)

Section 6: How effectively the institution manages the quality of the public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants

## Section 6: How effective are the institution’s plans to enhance the quality of students’ learning opportunities?

### 6.1 How well the institution communicates any strategies for enhancement and changes made because of these strategies

#### Policies coming into effect before being disseminated

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>There have been examples of policies coming into effect before being properly disseminated to students and relevant staff, e.g. recent changes to academic regulations including the mitigating evidence submission process.</p> <p>We are particularly concerned that the Union’s Advisers in the ARC are often not included in the distribution of this information yet they are required to advise students on appeals and other cases relating to their implementation.</p>	<p>We request that the University provide comprehensive briefings to all relevant front line student support staff (including, where appropriate, the ARC staff) before bringing policies into effect.</p> <p>We request that the university involves front-line student support staff and Students’ Union in the drafting of the communications about any changes such as the academic regulations changes to ensure that the information distributed to students is accessible and that students do not have to sift through a list of ‘academic regulations principles’</p>

#### Changes to the structure of the academic year

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>Discussions about changing the structure of the academic year began in 2008 and were consulted on in 2009.</p> <p>The then Education Officer raised concerns about the lack of consultation with students on this issue (as consultation had been focused on staff). FTEOs, who had been involved in discussions of the proposals, felt that they could not vote on the proposals without hearing from the student body at large and particularly from groups such as student parents, international students and disabled students<sup>47</sup>.</p> <p>As a result of the Students’ Union FTEO intervention, students then were consulted via an online survey and focus groups in conjunction with the Student’s Union. However the Union was concerned that this</p>	<p>Continue to abide by the academic issues consultation protocol in all similar future changes.</p> <p>A comprehensive review of the effect of the changes to the structure of the academic year is essential, with student input from the beginning of the process.</p> <p>We ask that future proposed changes are consulted on in a more open and transparent manner, ensuring that there is student involvement via questionnaires and structured focus groups. The Union would welcome the opportunity to be involved with these.</p>

<sup>47</sup> ‘Statement on the structure of the academic year’, Students’ Union - [www.sussexstudent.com/news/index.php?page=article&news\\_id=265753](http://www.sussexstudent.com/news/index.php?page=article&news_id=265753)

Section 6: How effectively the institution manages the quality of the public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants

<p>was conducted by the University without sufficient time and publicity for an adequate response.</p> <p>Further consultation focused on the mid-year assessment period. As a result of concerns over the conduct of this consultation the Union drafted the academic issues consultation agreement, which was approved by the University’s Teaching &amp; Learning Committee in June 2011.</p>	
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**6.2 How the institution identifies areas for enhancement and the extent to which students are involved in these decisions**

**The National Student Survey, assessment & feedback**

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>The NSS is a common driver for enhancements at Sussex, with senior University management paying close attention to Sussex’s scores.</p> <p>Deputy Vice-Chancellor Clare Mackie has in particular sought involvement from students – for example providing Student Reps with access to their Schools’ NSS scores and refocusing the Student Experience Forum so that it functions more as a mechanism for Student Reps to provide feed-in/feedback to senior academic and professional services staff on issues such as learning resources and assessment and feedback.</p> <p>The Deputy Vice-Chancellor did email all Heads of School in November 2011 asking them to ensure that they read their NSS reports and that they create NSS action plans, with a focus on assessment and feedback, and that the NSS should be a standard item on School Teaching &amp; Learning Committees. She also asked Heads of School to report on action plan implementation progress to School Teaching &amp; Learning Committees.</p> <p>However, it is unclear from School Teaching &amp; Learning Committee minutes whether Schools actually did all the above. Most Schools did at least discuss the NSS at least one meeting of their School T&amp;L Committee, but it appears that NSS action plans were not collated centrally and there was</p>	<p>Restate the importance of Schools creating plans to improve student satisfaction with assessment and feedback.</p> <p>Centrally collate and evaluate these plans so that good practice can be disseminated throughout the University.</p> <p>Make these plans easily accessible by staff and students.</p> <p>Schools to ensure Student Reps – and the wider student body – are fully involved and consulted on these action plans, by, for example, actively seeking students views on how feedback can be improved and then treating these views with a demonstrable seriousness.</p> <p>University to use data such as MEQ feedback to ensure they don’t rely on only the NSS scores.</p>

Section 6: How effectively the institution manages the quality of the public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants

<p>significant variability in how much attention Schools gave to NSS results.</p> <p>As mentioned above, following the University’s relatively consistent and comparatively low score in this area of the NSS since the NSS’s inception, schools were asked to create NSS action plans, focusing on assessment and feedback plans.</p> <p>Some of these involve innovative techniques, such as voice recordings of tutors giving verbal feedback, which are reported to be popular with students.</p> <p>As noted above, it is difficult to find evidence of how fully Schools engaged with NSS action planning. There is evidence for the School of English creating an action plan and reporting on it to students, and in Global Studies Student Reps created a report with suggestions for how feedback could be improved which was submitted to the Feb 2012 meeting of their School Teaching &amp; Learning Committee. Unfortunately it is unclear from the minutes of that meeting what, if any, action was taken as a result.</p>	
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**Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs)**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>The University’s internal mode of identifying areas of enhancement is through Module Evaluation Questionnaires. These are short module level questionnaires that are open to students to complete at or towards the end of the module. The questionnaires used to be paper based and are now accessed online via Study Direct. This has meant a large decrease in student completion rates. For example, the Anthropology department in the School of Global studies reported a completion rate of less than 30% online compared with around 80% when paper based were used<sup>48</sup>.</p> <p>There is also some concern over the timing of these questionnaires as they fall too late within the module for any improvements to benefit that cohort of students and often fall</p>	<p>Evaluate the University’s internal mode of collecting student feedback via the MEQs, including the format and timing.</p>

<sup>48</sup> Section 5.1: Course Annual Monitoring Report 11/12 Global Studies (Anthropology) (attached)

Section 6: How effectively the institution manages the quality of the public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants

before the students have received feedback for their work, thus making it difficult for students to rate that aspect.

### 6.3 How the institution uses the student voice to inform, develop and implement its enhancement agenda

#### The student voice in University meetings

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>Student Reps are invited to a number of meetings across the University and within schools. This commitment to including student representatives at all levels is welcomed by the Students' Union.</p> <p>We are concerned however that some of the University's key committees e.g. Finance &amp; Investment Committee and the Doctoral School do not include Students' Union Officers.</p> <p>Student and FTEO members of University committee meetings have highlighted some bad practice which impedes the student voice e.g. short notice cancellation of meetings without explanation and no rescheduled date, no papers or agenda for Student Experience Forum meetings (which was recently postponed at very short notice) and late circulation of papers for most committee meetings.</p> <p>Student Reps, in focus groups, indicated that the meetings they take part in at school and department level are effective and they have a voice but they feel they are 'a token' at committees such as TLC and Senate.</p>	<p>Ensure all University committees include at least one Students' Union representative.</p> <p>Ensure all University committees include adequate places for Student Reps.</p> <p>Creation of guidelines for minimum notice period for all meetings (from department level up) and time frames for distribution of documents including agendas and minutes. This should apply to both school level and University level meetings.</p>

#### The student voice elsewhere

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>There have been recent cases where large changes to the way the University operates have been announced with no prior consultation of students or involvement from the Students' Union.</p> <p>We believe that the views of students should be considered in all decision-making as non-academic decisions ultimately affect the</p>	<p>Consult the Students' Union and wider student population on non-academic issues and changes (in a similar fashion to academic issues) at the earliest opportunity. The Students' Union's consultation proposal should be used as the basis for this.</p>

Section 6: How effectively the institution manages the quality of the public information that it provides, including that for students and applicants

learning environment at the University.	
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We have opted not to comment on these topics in this section;

- The extent to which there is an ethos in the institution of constant improvement to services and the curriculum

We have chosen not to comment on whether Sussex has a case for a commended grade in quality or enhancement as we do not feel suitably well informed. The QAA assessors may find the key themes outlined at the start of our report useful.

**Part B: Thematic element of review: Student involvement in  
quality assurance and enhancement**



## Section B1: Innovations in student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement

We are pleased to note that the University appears to be taking steps towards effective management of this year’s topic. However, there are still areas requiring improvement (as outlined below), and these generally align with the themes we identified in Section 1.

The University was advised in its previous evaluation that it did not “exploit the opportunity to gain a full insight into the student experience” (paragraph 64). In the mid cycle review the University advised of actions taken to resolve this (section 5.1).

Whilst we welcome the University’s desire to not restrict innovation within schools, we feel there is scope for sharing best practice to benefit all students. This because, in our consultation with students, we have again found many inconsistencies in the student experience between schools.

### Periodic Review

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>The University conducted a ‘Periodic Review’ in 2012. The aim of this was to lead to “<i>validation of programmes for a five year period</i>”. The periodic review placed student involvement and consultation as a central theme, something we welcome.</p> <p>The University involved Student Reps from all schools and the Union’s FTEOs as part of the process by inviting them to attend review sessions within each school comprised of School academic staff and members of University management. All members of the review groups were asked to prepare by reviewing documents provided to them.</p> <p>As an incentive to involvement, Student Reps were also offered payment. This was well received and welcomed, as was the fact that Rep feed-in was driving the process and that Student Reps and FTEOs were equal members of all panel meetings.</p> <p>Student Reps involved in the periodic review gave us feedback regarding the process via focus groups<sup>49</sup>. Reps felt that as part of the process their opinions were taken into consideration. However, some felt that the process was ‘more for staff’.</p> <p>Students feel that the review was a worthwhile process but that the general</p>	<p>Implement mechanisms which facilitate the sharing of best practice in student involvement between Schools.</p> <p>Ensure that reviews focusing on student involvement are published and circulated in a timely fashion and that students are fully aware of any process that is being undertaken including how they can have input into it.</p> <p>Ensure that the most appropriate representatives are being asked for input on matters (e.g. PGT students must be asked about PGT issues).</p> <p>Review action plans arising from NSS and make certain that the changes recommended are being carried out and to communicate this effectively.</p> <p>Ensure that periodic review reports are available for all students to see.</p> <p>Produce an action plan following the institutional recommendations of the periodic review, to include timings, staff lead and appropriate student representation and involvement, e.g. working group to look at University signposting issues for student support.</p>

<sup>49</sup> Portfolio review focus group

<p>student body should have been made more aware of it. This is a sentiment we would echo as it has been somewhat difficult finding a copy of the finished review; there is no final published version available of the report almost 9 months after the review process was conducted. Whilst school reports do exist, we look forward to seeing this report on December 10<sup>th</sup>, when it is due to be published (after this report is drafted).</p> <p>There was concern that the papers for the review meetings were only given out to Reps days before the meeting. This meant that they couldn't properly gather feed-in from students before going to the meeting.</p> <p>Regarding representation, it was highlighted that in the School of Life Sciences (whose Reps felt the review had gone well overall), UG students were asked to conduct the PGT part of the review. We believe the experience of undergraduates differs in many ways to that of PGT students so in future reviews this should be avoided.</p> <p>The discussion with periodic review participants further highlighted areas in which consultation with students could be improved. For example Reps from the School of Law, Politics &amp; Sociology were angry that they were told that they would be moving into a new academic building during the periodic review process<sup>50</sup>. This decision which was then reversed without further consultation. Furthermore the Reps in the review echoed the feeling that there was lack of consultation over the academic year structure changes (<u>as outlined above</u>).</p>	
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### The Student Rep Scheme

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>We asked Student Reps whether they had seen any innovative ways in which students were involved in ensuring course quality<sup>51</sup>. 40% said they had and the comments relating to this focussed on the Rep Scheme</p>	

<sup>50</sup> Portfolio review focus group

<sup>51</sup> Student Rep Survey 2012

<p>itself being an innovative scheme and discussed ways in which their lecturers chose to interact with them:</p> <p><i>“Students are able to give their ideas to tutors on how to proceed in seminars... such as exercises which have aided learning”<sup>52</sup></i></p> <p><i>“When our lecturer emailed us all, it was like an electronic system where anyone could add what they wanted onto it and it was anonymous. Also as we could all see the comments written so far the lecturer wasn't getting a load of the same responses from everyone on the course”<sup>53</sup></i></p>	
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**NSS**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>The University is keen to perform well on NSS measures and the aforementioned action plans could be innovative if more emphasis was placed on carrying them out. As mentioned previously (see page 39) we have seen no evidence of this yet.</p>	<p>Ensure internal measures of quality, such as MEQs, are used in addition to NSS results.</p>

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<sup>52</sup> Student Rep Survey 2012

<sup>53</sup> Student Rep Survey 2012

## Section B2: Staff experience of/participation in student involvement in quality

We have chosen not to focus on this section in great detail, however we wish to highlight the following:

### Student Reps

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>One of the recommendations of the previous QAA report was to improve the Student Rep Scheme.</p> <p>We would reiterate our earlier comments (see page 4) as to how the scheme has developed but wish to emphasise the need for staff support to be in place. This is because there was a lot of pressure this year as the University did not have a Teaching &amp; Learning Projects Officer intern position in place until the middle of the autumn term. When they were recruited, it was decided that two positions would be offered this year, a decision which we commend. However, we are concerned about how the roles are being managed and the clarity of the job roles.</p>	<p>We ask the University to consider dedicating more staff support to the central Rep Team and also to ensure that there are two Teaching &amp; Learning Project Officers in place before the start of each academic year.</p> <p>More staff support to be provided for the Teaching &amp; Learning Project Officers, to include a clarification of their role description, clarity of line management and role aims.</p>

### Associate Tutors

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>Our prior comments about Associate Tutors (see page 8) highlights our concerns over Associate Tutors at Sussex. We feel that if the University addressed these concerns then they would be better equipped to be participate positively in student quality.</p>	

## Section B3: How contributions from students are acted upon, and how students know they are acted upon

### How contributions from students are acted upon

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>Mechanisms in place include School level and University committees which Student Reps and Students' Union Officers (the latter only on University level committees) sit on.</p> <p>These include School Student Experience Groups (SSEGs) School Teaching &amp; Learning Committees (STLC), University Teaching &amp; Learning Committee (UTLC) and the Student Experience Forum (SEF).</p> <p>We welcome the collaboration between the University and the Union in re-writing the terms of reference for the SEF.</p>	

### How students know they are acted upon

Our response	Our recommendations
<p>It appears that the main method for students to find out that contributions are acted upon is through the Student Rep Scheme. This means that there are inconsistencies between Schools and departments as to how much information the students receive. Minutes for University level committees are posted on Sussex Direct, however these are not advertised and it is not part of the Rep role description<sup>54</sup> to disseminate this information. Nor, in our opinion, should it be as Reps are giving up time for their role which would be best used in other ways.</p> <p>Due to this the wider student body is not made fully aware of changes made by the University. We consider this to be something that could be easily improved through better communication to students.</p> <p>Improving this communication is particularly important as it has been noted by Reps that these meetings are effective;</p> <p><i>“During Teaching &amp; Learning Committee meetings, students play an active role in</i></p>	<p>The University should communicate better to students the outcomes of University level committees by ensuring minutes are published in a timely manner and that all students know how to access these.</p> <p>Ensure details of contributions from students which were acted on as a result of meetings or other consultations are collated and periodically communicated e.g. termly.</p> <p>University to give Union ability to email all students to allow fortnightly updates of changes made by on behalf of students. Ideally the Union would be given its members' contact details annually so we can contact them ourselves. This happens at various other students' unions and is workable in these institutions so we do not anticipate any problems with it working at this institution.</p>

<sup>54</sup> 'Student Rep role description' - [www.sussexstudent.com/studentreps/content/744893](http://www.sussexstudent.com/studentreps/content/744893)

Section B3: How contributions from students are acted upon,  
and how students know they are acted upon

<p><i>determining ways that courses can be improved</i><sup>55</sup></p> <p>An example of this active role is a report compiled by Global Studies Student Reps of changes requested as a result of discussion around the NSS in their autumn SSEG<sup>56</sup>. This report indicates that as a result of the discussions at School level they felt (and were given the opportunity to) contribute to enhancing the quality of their marking. However it is unclear whether these changes were acted upon, as the minutes of the next meeting<sup>57</sup> did not give rise to any actions specifically addressing the concerns raised.</p>	
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**Student Reps**

<b>Our response</b>	<b>Our recommendations</b>
<p>We asked Student Reps, via our Student Reps survey, about the extent to which they feel they can make a contribution.</p> <p>87.3% of Reps surveyed felt that they (and students in general) can make an effective contribution to ensuring the quality of their course. This is encouraging, particularly as 78% of respondents found they have been able to suggest areas that could be improved.</p> <p>When it comes to the feedback of these things being acted on, only 45.2% of respondents said that students are told when ideas or suggestions from Reps are acted on. This is echoed by feedback from Student Rep focus groups, in which it was felt that it was underestimated by Reps how much they have to publicise their roles themselves.</p> <p>If Schools were to publicise changes more effectively then this would help students become aware of the effect of their voice.</p> <p>In addition to this, PGT Reps feel that their School meetings are too UG focused and this can act as a barrier to the enhancement of PGT teaching and learning. Therefore,</p>	

<sup>55</sup> Students' Union Student Rep survey 2012

<sup>56</sup> Global Studies Student Rep report February 2012 (attached)

<sup>57</sup> See point 12.1 of the Goba Studies STLC minutes February 2012 (attached)

Section B3: How contributions from students are acted upon,  
and how students know they are acted upon

setting aside time in meetings for PG issues, or having specific PG meetings would resolve this.	
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## **Appendices**



## **Appendix 1: Memorandum of Understanding**

### MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

The University of Sussex

and

The University of Sussex Students' Union

#### **Preamble**

The University of Sussex and the Students' Union, in the 50th year of their joint existence, wish to set out in this document some principles underlying the relationship between the two bodies.

The Students' Union is referred to in the Royal Charter that establishes the University of Sussex. Under the Charter and under the Education Act 1994, the Constitution is to be prescribed by the Council as governing body.

The Union intends to become a charitable Company limited by guarantee as from 2011/12.

The Union and University agree that the relationship hitherto enjoyed by the two bodies should not change as a result of this change in legal status.

#### **Introduction**

This agreement sets out an understanding between the parties on the provision of services. It is intended to create a positive working arrangement between the University and the Union. The agreement describes principles rather than detailed practice, which may be set out in related documents.

This agreement takes effect from 1st August 2011 and will be reviewed no later than the 2013/14 Academic Year. It may be amended at any time by agreement between the Registrar and Secretary on behalf of the University Council and the President on behalf of the Union Council.

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as creating a legal relationship between the parties. Any disagreement over interpretation or implementation will be resolved using the established channels of communication set out in this document.

Neither party shall assign or transfer any of its rights or obligations in this Memorandum without prior consent of the other party.

#### **Principles**

The University of Sussex Students' Union plays many roles in student life:

- as a representative of student views,
- as a coordinator of student activities,
- as a provider of welfare and advice services,
- as an advocate for individual students,
- and as a retail business providing commercial services to the campus community.

Appendices

The University of Sussex values the relationship with the Students' Union. The University recognizes the Union as the primary representative body for all Sussex students, and encourages students to participate in their union.

The University recognises the important role that the Union plays in the advancement and delivery of a positive student experience for all students.

The University is committed to a close working relationship and effective communication on matters affecting both the Union and the student community.

**The University agrees to:**

Continue to provide an annual block grant to the Union to fund the Union's core services to students, as laid out under "Financial Relationship" below;

Continue to provide premises for the Union's purposes, any change to the space occupied or services provided to be subject to agreement between the two parties;

Make available to the Union and subsidiaries information technology, communication and other facilities to the same extent as provided to Schools and other units. These facilities include, but are not limited to, internal post and telephone, e-mail and internet services, room bookings for Union events.

Provide contact details of all students to enable the Union to fulfil its duty under the Companies Act to maintain a register of members.

Extend to the permanent staff of the Union and subsidiaries those facilities provided to University staff including sports, access to the Library, parking facilities etc.

Provide access for Union Officers and staff to training and development opportunities provided by the University's Staff Development Unit.

Maintain the agreed channels of communication as set out in this document.

Ensure that the Union is fully engaged in the development, implementation and monitoring of the University's plans and policies.

**The Students' Union agrees to:**

Ensure that the Grant is used solely in pursuit of its charitable objects;

Ensure that it has in place appropriate arrangements for financial management, accounting and purchasing, and for achieving value for money.

Submit annual audited accounts and other periodic in accordance with the timetable required by the University;

Inform the University where any of the Grant or other funds have been misappropriated or subject to a fraud or attempted fraud;

Prepare annually, and submit according to the agreed timetable, a Budget for the year ahead as laid out under "Financial Relationship" below;

Prepare each year an Annual Report which will be made available to students and the University Council. The Report is to contain, among other material:

- A statement that the Union operates in a fair and democratic manner and that it has properly accounted for its finances.
- A report on the conduct and outcome of elections and appointments of Union Officers and Union Trustees, which must confirm that they have been fairly and properly conducted.

Appendices

- A list of the external organisations to which it is currently affiliated and the details of any donations, subscriptions or similar fees paid to such organisations since its previous Annual Report.
- A report on any long term or substantial short term borrowing, or any sale, transfer, lease assignment or disposal of any real or other assets valued at more than £25000.

Maintain the agreed channels of communication as set out in this document.

Maintain appropriate insurance arrangements against all reasonably foreseeable liabilities.

Ensure that the University is kept apprised of the development, implementation and monitoring of the Union's forward plans.

Maintain and publish its own procedure for considering complaints regarding its services.

Such procedure shall ensure that complaints are dealt with in an impartial, effective and timely manner. Where a complaint is not resolved through such procedure the Students' Union will refer it within ten working days to the Secretary to Council to be considered by the University.

Comply with the requirements of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 in relation to ensuring freedom of speech and to this end shall comply with the University's Policy on Freedom of Speech. This shall include the content of posters, notices, temporary signs and literature distributed on Union premises and where clubs and societies are using other University space.

Ensure that bars and entertainment operated on the premises shall be operated responsibly and with consideration for the occupiers of neighbouring premises and in accordance with current Licensing Laws. All licensees shall hold the National Licensees Certificate.

### **Financial Relationship**

The University is the principal funder of the Students' Union and the majority of this funding is in the form of the annual block grant agreed by the University Council and its relevant sub-committee after negotiation between the University and Union.

In accordance with s.22 of the Education Act 1994, the University Council shall exercise its statutory accountability for, and control of, the proper conduct of the Students' Union's finances through the following annual procedures for the approval of the Students' Union's budget and for the monitoring of its expenditure.

The Students' Union, like other spending units in the University, will normally expect to be notified by early May of its provisional allocation of funds for the following financial year.

The Students' Union shall prepare each year a detailed budget submission for the Union of its estimated income and expenditure for the following Financial Year (the "Budget").

The Students' Union shall prepare and update each Financial Year a forecast of its estimated income and expenditure for the subsequent 3 Financial Years (the "Forecast").

The relevant senior staff member of the Students' Union shall meet with the University to discuss the Budget, the Forecast and accounts at the University's request.

The University Council or relevant sub-committee, shall consider the Budget and, if it considers appropriate, hear presentations from the Students' Union in relation to the Budget.

The amount of the Grant for any Financial Year shall be decided by the University Council after considering the Budget and the report of the Finance Director of the University.

### **Channels of Communication**

The University and Students' Union have regular communication at all levels:

The main high level communication is via the student officers and the senior managers of the University, who will meet regularly for this purpose. Students' Union staff and student officers may access members of the administration direct on any issue. The Vice Chancellor will meet with student officers on a regular basis or as necessary.

Elected Union officers sit on Senate, Council and many committees within the University structure.

The Students' Union/Vice Chancellor's Executive Liaison Group (ELG) meets regularly to discuss matters of common concern.

There are established arrangements in Schools and Departments involving Students' Union Officers and Student Reps.

Likewise, there are specialist groupings of staff, for example in Welfare and Advice or Sports, where Union staff and elected officers play a full part alongside University representatives.

From time to time either party may be critical of the decisions or actions of the other. Both the University and the Students' Union will endeavour to use the established channels of communication in such a way that the long-term relationship is maintained and with consideration to the long-term reputation of the institution.

## **Appendix 2: Consultation procedure for academic issues**

This paper presents a model for how student consultation should take place at the University of Sussex, and formally recognises the role of the Students' Union in all student consultations. This agreement pertains to internal consultation procedures when the University is proposing change which could affect students.

The USSU Constitution and Memorandum of Understanding (2011) states that the University should:

3.8 Ensure that the Union is fully engaged in the development, implementation and monitoring of the University's plans and policies.

The ideal model for consultation will not rely solely quantitative research (online surveys), but will also consist of qualitative research, including focus groups, which both the Students' Union and the University will be jointly involved in organising. Additionally, the Student Experience Forum should be a central focus for canvassing student opinion on University-wide changes. When the forum is to be used for consultative purposes, an additional meeting should be held, and this should be widely publicised to the Students' Union, Student Reps and Schools with ample warning.

### **The University:**

- 1) Will have the lead responsibility for the consultation process.
- 2) Will give ample notice of any changes which will require student consultation before any decisions have been made (ideally one term in advance).
- 3) Will not announce decisions which are likely to have an impact on the student experience out of term-time, or before the Students' Union has been informed.
- 4) Will share any consultation and proposed plan/policy timetables with the Students' Union, in advance of the initiation of the process.
- 5) Will provide resource and expertise for the design of any consultation surveys, which will be jointly approved by the Students' Union.
- 6) Will have the lead responsibility for ensuring that any consultation procedures are well-publicised.
- 7) Will undertake extensive Equality Impact Assessments, which take into account the 2010 Equalities Act. They should also make extra effort to consult with any additional groups which are not legally covered by the Equalities Act, but who may also be affected differently to the majority of students, (for example, student parents, postgraduate students, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and overseas students).
- 8) Will make the results of the consultation publicly available.
- 9) Will ensure student representation on all committees which make decisions which are likely to have implications for a large number of students (e.g. Finance & Investment Committee)
- 10) Will ensure that papers for all formal committees are circulated at least 72hrs in advance.

### **The Students' Union:**

- 1) Will represent student opinion to the University at formal committees and other meetings.
- 2) Will work with the University on building consultation surveys, and offer feedback, to ensure that questions are clear, student-friendly and unbiased.

Appendices

- 3) Will assist the University with publicising information pertaining to the consultation, as well as any surveys, or meetings pertaining to consultation.
- 4) Will have sufficient membership of any relevant working groups in order to see that student opinion is understood and reflected in any recommendations arising from the consultation.
- 5) Will assist the University in publicising feedback to students regarding how and why the decisions were made.

### **Appendix 3: Proposed consultation procedure for non-academic issues**

This paper presents a model for how student consultation should take place at the University of Sussex, and formally recognises the role of the Students' Union in all student consultations. This agreement pertains to internal consultation procedures when the University is proposing change which could affect students.

The USSU Constitution and Memorandum of Understanding (2011) states that the University should:

3.8 Ensure that the Union is fully engaged in the development, implementation and monitoring of the University's plans and policies.

The ideal model for consultation will not rely solely quantitative research (online surveys), but will also consist of qualitative research, including focus groups, which both the Students' Union and the University will be jointly involved in organising.

Additionally, the Student Experience Forum should be a central focus for canvassing student opinion on University-wide changes. When the forum is to be used for consultative purposes, an additional meeting should be held, and this should be widely publicised to the Students' Union, Student Reps and Schools with ample warning.

#### **The University:**

- 1) Will have the lead responsibility for the consultation process.
- 2) Will give ample notice of any changes which will require student consultation before any decisions have been made (ideally one term in advance).
- 3) Will not announce decisions which are likely to have an impact on the student experience out of term-time, or before the Students' Union has been informed.
- 4) Will share any consultation and proposed plan/policy timetables with the Students' Union, in advance of the initiation of the process.
- 5) Will provide resource and expertise for the design of any consultation surveys, which will be jointly approved by the Students' Union.
- 6) Will have the lead responsibility for ensuring that any consultation procedures are well-publicised.
- 7) Will undertake extensive Equality Impact Assessments, which take into account the 2010 Equalities Act. They should also make extra effort to consult with any additional groups which are not legally covered by the Equalities Act, but who may also be affected differently to the majority of students, (for example, student parents, postgraduate students, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and overseas students).
- 8) Will make the results of the consultation publicly available.
- 9) Will ensure student representation on all committees which make decisions which are likely to have implications for a large number of students (e.g. Finance & Investment Committee)
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#### **The Students' Union:**

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- 3) Will assist the University with publicising information pertaining to the consultation, as well as any surveys, or meetings pertaining to consultation.
- 4) Will have sufficient membership of any relevant working groups in order to see that student opinion is understood and reflected in any recommendations arising from the consultation.
- 5) Will assist the University in publicising feedback to students regarding how and why the decisions were made.



## Appendix 4: Focus group participants

The following students were invited to be part of our focus groups. Almost all attended the sessions. We'd like to thank Ellie Williams & Amy Horwood for their assistance with these focus groups.

Participants for general student focus groups were drawn from respondents to surveys carried out for the preparation of this report as well as the Students' Union survey. Students were also invited via email from relevant University departments.

### Student Reps A

Life Sciences UG  
Media & Film PGT x2  
Anthropology UG x3  
Law UG  
Art History PGR  
English PGT  
International Relations UG

### Student Reps B

Science & Technology Policy Research  
PGT  
Life Sciences UG x2  
Psychology UG  
Unknown  
Economics UG x2  
Mathematics UG  
Business and Management UG  
Media & Film UG  
Psychology UG

### Disabled students

English PGR 4th year  
History, Art History & Philosophy UG 1st year  
Business, Management & Economics UG 1st year  
Life Sciences UG 1st year x3  
Psychology UG 1st year  
Life Sciences PGR 1st year  
Education & Social Work PGCE  
English UG 2nd year  
Business, Management & Economics PGR 1st year

### Portfolio Review participants

International Relations UG  
Law UG  
Physics UG  
Life Sciences UG  
Geography UG

### Taught Postgraduates

Psychology x2  
English  
Business & Management x2  
Contemporary European Studies  
Institute of Development Studies  
Engineering & Design  
International Relations  
Philosophy  
Gender Studies  
Global Studies

### International students

Engineering and Informatics PGR 1st year  
Life Sciences UG  
Politics UG  
Law UG 1st year  
Marketing & Management UG 2nd year  
Sociology & Media Studies UG 1st year  
Education & Social Work PGR 3rd year  
History, Art History & Philosophy PGR 2nd year  
Art History PGT  
Institute of Development Studies PGT  
Neuroscience UG 2nd year  
English UG 2nd year

### Research Postgraduates

History, Art History & Philosophy 2nd year  
Psychology 3rd year  
Engineering and Informatics 2nd year  
Media, Film & Music 3rd year  
Mathematical and Physical Sciences 2nd year  
Business, Management & Economics (Economics) 2nd year  
Business, Management & Economics (SPRU) 2nd year  
Life Sciences 2nd year  
Physics and Astronomy 3rd year  
English 2nd year  
Law, Politics & Sociology 1st year  
Education & Social Work 1st year

## **Appendix 5: Documents submitted with this report**

SWS01	Student Representation Working Group Report June 2010
SWS02	Student Representation Review May 1011 – submitted to the Teaching & Learning Committee June 2011
SWS03	Student Rep Scheme operating principles
SWS04	Student Reps Scheme strategic plan 2012-15
SWS05	Student Reps November 2012 election report – submitted to the Teaching & Learning Committee November 2012
SWS06	Student Experience Forum recommendations May 2012
SWS07	Students' Union academic misconduct feedback report
SWS08	Students' Union recruitment agent report
SWS09	Periodic Review Action Plan, School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences – November 2012
SWS10	Course Annual Monitoring Report 11/12 Global Studies (Anthropology)
SWS11	Global Studies Student Rep report February 2012
SWS12	Gobal Studies STLC minutes February 2012