

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

Main Trust Student Feedback Exercises 2015: Summary Report

1. Background

The Trust-wide student feedback exercise was piloted in October 2004 to generate student feedback on the experience of students in the previous academic year for the Trust's annual review and enhancement process. In 2006, the exercise was extended to all course years and took place in June during course seminar/teaching time.

Over the last five years or more –

- Students have been asked to complete the form in week 1 and week 2 of the summer term. Students, notably Year 1 students, have by the beginning of the summer term had sufficient time to reflect on their experience of learning and teaching and on other aspects of the student experience within the trust. Furthermore, they are fresh from a break in teaching and not preoccupied at that time with immediate assessment tasks.
- The existing generic student feedback form is reviewed annually and revised.

In late 2010, the then Trust Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee decided there should be separate student feedback exercises for Main Masters level and Trust courses and for students studying on *postgraduate research degrees*.

The primary rationale for this was that the required teaching and learning resources are not identical between the two sets of course programmes. The Trust Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee were of the view that the Trust should try on a pilot basis to deliver two separate exercises.

In 2011 the findings of each exercise were reported on in the same report. In 2012, the Trust published separate reports for the respective exercises and this continues in 2015 through the outcome of the PRES Survey to be the practice.

For the Main Exercise in 2015 the overall response rate was **63%** but this disguises a disparity in response between those who completed the survey in seminar and those who completed via Moodle. See below for more details.

Arising from the findings of the 2015 exercise an Action Plan has been drafted and will be a standing item on the Academic Governance and Quality Assurance Committee until completed.

2. Introduction and Overview – 2015 Main Student Feedback Exercise

In 2015, the main Trust exercise again took place early in the summer term between 20th April and 1st May 2015.

All M level university validated courses participated in the exercise (a total of 25 courses with the universities of East London and Essex) together with a small number of long duration Trust courses. In addition, all of the associate centres and alternative centres of delivery in the United Kingdom and Italy and participated in the process, a total of 43 courses in 2015. The overall response rate in the Associate Centres/alternatives centres of de

The Trust has continued to publish a course level statistical report containing both quantitative and qualitative data.

As in 2014 the outcome of various discussions at both formal and informal levels was the view that the most effective way in which to elicit a high response from students was to emphasise the importance of sufficient time being allocated in seminar/teaching time for students to complete the detailed form. In addition, it was agreed that the generic form should be posted and highlighted in the general *Moodle* (the Trust virtual learning environment) area/pages so that students might be aware of its structure and content in advance of the two week window for the exercise. In respect of students being given sufficient time in teaching sessions to complete the generic form, a communication to this effect was circulated to all Organising Tutors, a short time in advance of the exercise.

It was decided in the early spring of 2015 to pilot completing the generic form on *Moodle*. Three courses were chosen for the pilot: *The Introduction to Counselling and Psychotherapy* (d12); the e version of the same course (eD12) and the *MA/PG Dip/PG Systemic Cert in Consulting and Leading in Organisations: Psychodynamic and Approaches* (D10). Although the last named course elicited a very good response the first two did not using this particular platform. The overall response across the three courses was **44%** (much lower than the Trust overall response rate of 63%) and of course disguising a large disparity between course D10 and the two D12 courses. This is an issue which needs to be considered in moving forward to delivering the Main Student Survey in 2016.

The practice of holding *Student Focus Groups* was not arranged again in 2015: in 2010 both scheduled meetings of the group had not attracted students in spite of ample notice. No information has emerged at either course committees or through the student feedback exercises in either 2014 or 2015 to suggest that anything of a negative nature should be read into the lack of participation in such events; rather that the other opportunities (course committees, course meetings, etc) for the 'student voice' to be heard are sufficient in themselves. However, the Trust has now established a *Student Experience*

Committee which met for the first time in October 2015 and will on a termly basis provide a transparent opportunity for the student voice to be heard within a senior level of the Trust as the committee is chaired by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

For the main Trust exercise 717 forms were distributed in the Trust and 461 forms were returned.

In 2010 for the first time the Trust undertook an external benchmarking of its feedback results. The Higher Education Academy's Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey was the benchmark used. A separate benchmarking report is being written for 2015 to be received by the Academic Governance and Quality Assurance Committee in December 2015. The overriding outcome of the benchmarking exercise in 2014 was that the Trust and its Associate Centres are doing better than the postgraduate taught education sector in the areas of learning and teaching, student engagement, the professional relevance of courses and assessment and feedback.

3. Student Feedback Form

In 2014 the generic form underwent significant change.

This was in order to be able to more extensively benchmark our results against those of the Higher Education Academy Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES). This necessitated both in the overall content and structure of questions and also in the use of gradations.

The gradations were –

Definitely Agree;
Mostly Agree;
Neither agree nor disagree (Neutral)
Definitely Disagree
Mostly Disagree
No Answer
Not Applicable

Thus, the form consisted of the following sections and alignment:

Section A: Learning & Teaching – both PTES and Tavistock questions.

Section B: Engagement – follows PTES questions

Section C: Assessment & Feedback – follows PTES questions

Section D: Dissertation – follows PTES questions

Section E: Transfer of Skills & Knowledge to the Workplace – Tavistock questions

Section F: Organisation & Management – follows PTES questions

Section G: Resources and Services – follows PTES questions

Section H: Equality of Opportunity – Tavistock questions

Section I: Overview of your Experience as a student – Tavistock questions

The form remained the same in 2015.
The provision of the respondent's name was optional.

4. Findings

Accompanying this report is an illustrative appendix of the quantitative results – providing a question by question analysis for the reader. It differentiates between the results in the Trust and those in Associate Centres and compares results with 2014.

A narrative is provided below of the key outcomes.

4.1 Very Satisfactory

Quality of Teaching 94% positive rating in Trust; 98% in Associate Centres;
Found course intellectually stimulating 96% positive rating in Trust; 99% in Associate Centres;
Learning materials provided on the course were helpful 90% positive rating in Trust; 95% in Associate Centres;
Encouraged to ask questions, to make contributions in taught sessions 95% in Trust; 100% in Associate Centres
Library resources are relevant 91% in trust; 82% in Associate Centres

4.2 Important Questions

The Trust is particularly concerned with the task of providing feedback to students on assessed work in a timely way and in a consistent structure and detail that is helpful to the individual student.

It is thus important to note that there was an improved response in terms of promptness of feedback to a 77% positive rating (from 68% 2014) in Trust; 87% in Associate Centres.

It has also been concerned that in recent years students have expressed some dissatisfaction with audio-visual and teaching room facilities being conducive to learning. In 2015 the positive rating within the Trust was 70% compared with 53% the previous year.

4.3 Less Satisfactory Results

It is important to note where satisfaction on the part of our student appears comparatively low.

Awareness of how support services available to students in the Trust elicited a positive rating of only 54% (55% in 2014);

Awareness of accessible information for those with a disability in the Trust only a 60% positive rating but 25% of potential respondents did not respond at all;

A question relating to support for planning dissertations elicited a positive response of 67% but the sample who responded was small.

4.4 Areas of improvement

We can discern year on year improvement in relation to –

Moodle – Virtual Learning Environment. This year in response to the question – “I have found Moodle to be a useful and easy-to-use resource some 87% responded positively in the Trust and 85% in Associate Centres.

Quality of learning materials. This year in response to the question – “The learning materials provided on my course are useful?” there was a 90% positive rating in the Trust and 95% in Associate Centres.

This year there was an improved response to the information provided by the Trust to help choose a course? By the measure of easy to find, useful, sufficient and accurate, positive ratings of 88%, 89%, 83% and 85% respectively.

4.5 Course Level Analysis

In the main exercise with 27 courses participating Course Comparison Grids have been drafted for the questions that are included in the course Review and Enhancement Process.

5. External Benchmarking

This year the results of the Trust exercise will again be benchmarked against those of the Higher Education Academy Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey. A separate report will be written on the comparative analysis between the two surveys.

6. Review of 2015 Exercise

This is based not just on the findings but discussions in the Academic Governance and Quality Assurance Committee.

- The exercise still elicits a good response from students
- It remains worthwhile to continue to benchmark areas of learning and teaching against the national picture i.e. the Higher Education Academy's Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
- The approach we adopted in 2015 included selected on-line completion of the generic form but do we have sufficient evidence to place more emphasis on on-line completion in 2016?
- Year on year there is a need for more qualitative questions to be included and so again the issue of the time it takes to complete
- There is a strong case for spending time in the Spring Term in 2015 undertaking a full review of the approach and the generic form itself

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02/11/2015