Increasing engagement in 'Unit Surveys'

Background

This document has been produced to support Schools in promoting and raising awareness of Unit Surveys. We have included central methods undertaken by the Teaching and Learning Support Office (TLSO) / Student Communications and Marketing (SCM) to promote Surveys. It has also been developed with materials and activities that have been shared from a range of Schools. Some of the material is relevant to both online or paper based surveys, whilst other material is tailored to one of the two approaches.

There is evidence to suggest (NSS 2013) that students are more likely to fill in a survey if **its purpose, value and impact have been articulated positively and by a 'known' person.** Therefore the TLSO really value the partnership we have with Schools and appreciate the efforts you go to in order to promote your Unit Surveys.

Contents

There are three sections to this document:

1) **Summary of TLSO/SCM promotion activity**
2) **Key/headline activities (identified by roles within Schools) that could be undertaken to promote surveys**
3) **Examples of emails that could be tailored to your students/staff**

1. Central TLSO/SCM Promotion

Whilst a lot of our promotion has a focus on promoting online surveys, many of these have the added bonus of raising students' awareness of Unit Surveys in general.

- ✓ 'Tell Us' Banners placed in buildings such as
    - o Alan Gilbert Learning Commons
    - o University Place
    - o Students' Union
    - o And many other school specific buildings
    - o Please contact unitsurveys@manchester.ac.uk if you would like a full list
- ✓ 'Tell Us' Posters
- ✓ Unit Survey Ambassadors
    - o We employ Student Ambassadors who are visible on campus when surveys are 'live' by wearing a tailored University Hoodie and taking part in a social media campaign.
    - o Schools are invited to make use of their Unit Survey Student Ambassadors, for example, by allowing them to do lecture shout outs.
- ✓ University PC Cluster Screensavers
- ✓ Automated Communications which can be tailored at a school level- Online Surveys only
    - o An automated invitation email with a direct link to surveys
    - o A reminder email once a week to non-respondents only with a direct link to surveys
    - o A 'Thank you' completion email

2. Headline activities

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Although TLSO/SCM promote surveys centrally we recognise that Faculty and School staff, both **academic and PSS, are key for promoting surveys** as they are a 'known' people to students.

Examples of good practice include:

A. Promotion within lectures: state specifically what has changed about a module and asking for feedback about certain elements of the course can help students to see the impact their comments have on teaching modules. It can also help them to see the relevance to their own learning.
   a. We've attached a 'I said…., the University did…' slide that can be adapted for your own examples.
B. Prepare students in advance that they will be asked to fill out their online survey during class time (if feasible) and share this clip (http://www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/enhancing-my-experience/tellus/) with students to help them download the app correctly.
C. Promotion of Surveys in School Newsletters prior to their release- see below for an example from Manchester Business School-or using personalised posters (from the template provided)

D. Mini rewards for students who demonstrate they've completed their surveys (a number of Schools have a box of chocolates at their Student Support/Teaching and Learning Office main desk for students take one once they've shown someone their 'Thank you for completing your surveys' email.

Who can get involved?

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- **Anyone**
  - In conversations with students, stress the importance and value placed on feedback
  - Using any digital promotion in presentations (available here) / emails (signature attached)
  - Displaying posters in 'high student traffic' areas. These are being distributed to you but additional copies can be requested by emailing studentnews@manchester.ac.uk

- **Programme Director / Director of Study / School level**
  - Face to face explanation of the surveys' importance to the School / Discipline and value placed on student comments to enhancing teaching quality
  - Email reminder to teaching colleagues that surveys are live and encouragement to communicate with students to promote completion
  - (if online) In partnership with PSS colleagues, regularly monitor response rates and identify where, if needed, additional targeted interventions to required
  - (if online) Encourage/incentivise higher response rate by posting 'Top 5 Units'
  - Arranging briefings/articles in relevant newsletters/updates

- **Unit Lead / Course Convenor**
  - Reminding students of the changes made to the unit following last year's survey and any areas on which their comments would be valued
  - Promotion in lectures using 'Tell US' lecture slide (available here)
  - (if online) Email to remind students surveys are live
  - (if online) Monitor response rate and encourage students to reach a target
  - (if online) Arrange for a dedicated timetable slot (potentially in a computer cluster) and provide incentives for students to attend/complete survey

- **PSS staff**
  - Promote on any School controlled digital signage/screensavers (available here and here)
  - Use any social media channels to encourage students to think about feedback in advance or completing the survey and (if online) provide links/information about mobile app / Blackboard
  - Include promotion in staff team briefs/newsletters
  - Include article in student newsletters (particularly to include any impact of previous years)
  - Reminder emails from a 'known' email address that surveys are live and to think about their response and (if online) provide relevant links for completion
  - Incentivise completion with sweets (e.g. one discipline has a box of chocolates/sweets for distribution when students show proof of their completed online survey – screen shot/mobile app screen or print out)
  - (if online) In partnership with academic colleagues, regularly monitor response rates and identify where, if needed, additional targeted interventions to required

- **Student Reps**
  - Promotion through their regular communication channels (social media and email) as well as lecture promotion

3. **Sample Emails**

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The following emails have been developed based on emails shared from a wide range of Schools and highlights the desire to communicate with all stakeholders about the process.

Email No.	From	To	Frequency / Time period
1	Programme Director	Students	Once / start of surveys
2	Unit Lead (if online)	Students	3 times / following first lecture after surveys were promoted, then mid/end of each week
3	Programme Director / PSS Survey lead (if online)	Unit Leads	3 times / start of surveys, then reporting response rates
4	PSS staff (if online)	Students	
5	PSS staff	Teaching staff	Once / start of survey

Email 1

Dear *<<Student years 1-3>>*

First of all, I know you're all extremely busy and have a million and one things to think about before the end of term. I know it feels like you are being asked constantly to fill in forms, but I'm afraid that is the way of the world these days. I'm sure you are aware this is something that is becoming so important in a professional context to collect feedback from key stakeholders. In an academic context the School really want to know what you think of what we do. We've already encouraged you to complete a much broader (macro level) survey, Student Barometer, and thank you for taking the time to do that. We will now be pleading with you to complete the questionnaire for each course unit before the end of the term, which gives us very valuable course specific (micro level) information.

Your opinion helps us to identify what we are doing well, as well as areas for improvement. The School and University place great value on the feedback provided to us via Unit Surveys as it helps us identify areas in which the units are going really well and ways in which we can improve our teaching and course materials. *<<insert if there are key areas that the School is interested in e.g. eLearning, placements in modules, etc. to personalise why the Unit Surveys are so important>>*

<<insert method by which surveys take place paper/online and giving instruction how best to complete survey – see Email 4 for online instructions if needed>>

warmest wishes

Email 2

Dear All,

After the lecture today, this is just a reminder to please fill out the module unit survey when you have a

moment. These are important for us as they not only tell us what you guys did not like but also what you did like about the module. This semester we used the feedback from last year to continue to improve the module (by ***<<insert any changes made as a result of last year's feedback>>***). It is also important that you tell us what you liked, because otherwise when we try to improve the module by adding one thing we may accidentally remove something you all liked as well - but we do not know you liked it unless you tell us. For example ***<<insert aspects you believe students found helpful/enjoyable in the course>>***

You can fill out the evaluation by logging into Blackboard and then clicking on Unit Evaluation in the left hand column. The evaluation function closes on ***<<insert closing date of survey>>***.

Thank you to those that have already filled out the survey.

Kind regards,

additional line or email to include after surveys have already been open a few days…
A quick reminder about the module surveys that have been open a few days now. Thank you so much to those who have already completed this – the module now has a response rate of ***<<insert response rate>>*** , which is great but I'd love to have more of you comment about the module. It would be great if we could reach a total of ***<<insert desired response rate>>***.

Email 3

Dear colleagues,

Unit Surveys have now been deployed to all our UG/PGT students and they will have received an email inviting them to complete an online survey for each module.

The surveys are a valuable tool to understand our students' experiences of their modules and teaching. Comments from staff across the University seems to indicate the quality and depth of feedback is better from online surveys but we need to work hard to encourage students to complete the surveys so to increase our response rates. As a School we are hoping to achieve ***<<insert desired response rate>>*** during the period in which surveys are open ***<<insert survey period>>***.

Students can fill out their surveys via a mobile app (in addition to the original option via Blackboard) and information for you (to monitor response rates) and providing information to students about how to complete online can be found [here](#).

after response rates are known
I'm really pleased to let you know that we already have a response rate of ***<<xxx%>>*** with our highest response rates coming from:
<<insert units with high response rates>>

It would be great if we could achieve our target.

Thank you for continuing to promote the surveys in class and by email.

Regards,

Email 4

Dear Student,

The online Unit Surveys are now available for you to provide feedback and evaluate the units you are taking during **<<insert Semester 1 or Semester 2>>.** The results of these will be collated and reviewed by senior academics within the School and Faculty, and appropriate actions will then be taken as a result of your feedback.

The online questionnaires can be accessed via Blackboard on the Student Portal and will close on <<insert closing date>>. Information on how to access them can be found here:

- [UoM How To: Access online Unit Surveys through Blackboard (students)](#)

You can also download an app in order to complete the questionnaires via your mobile, if more convenient. Please see information here:

- [UoM How To: Use EvaluationKIT mobile app to access Unit Surveys for students](#)

Your opinion counts! Complete your Unit Surveys and have your say!
Please be assured that all responses are confidential and anonymous, so we would encourage you to spend just five minutes of your time and fill out the online questionnaire. I understand that, with exams around the corner, you will be busy revising and studying, but I urge you to complete these questionnaires as they are really important in helping us improve things for future students.
Thank you very much for your co-operation.
Best wishes,

Email 5

Dear all,

The teaching questionnaires are now available for students to complete in order to give feedback on **<<insert Semester 1 or Semester 2>>** course units. They will be available until **<<insert closing date of surveys>>**. Students will be able to access these via Blackboard, or they can download an app to complete the questionnaires via their mobile.

As part of the campaign, temporary 'pop-up' computer clusters will be set up in various University buildings including Alan Gilbert Learning Commons and University Place. These will be staffed by student ambassadors who will engage with fellow students and encourage them to take their online Unit Surveys there and then. Targeted email reminders will be sent to those students who have not completed their surveys.

I have attached the email sent to the UG and PG students, for your info.

Can I ask you to do all you can to promote the surveys (promotional material can be found [here](#) and if you are sending anything out to your students before the end of teaching, please do include a reminder about the surveys – please emphasise that all responses are anonymous

Thank you very much for your co-operation. Let me know if you have any queries.

Best wishes,

This is a developing document and we are very grateful to those Schools who have shared the email examples with us. Further examples of good practice would be very welcomed and should be directed to unitsurveys@manchester.ac.uk