Redefining Student Voice Meetings

The Students' Union Review of SSLCs

SU Education Team

Emma Bramwell (she/her)
Education Manager

Ausrine Naujalyte (she/her)
FSE Coordinator

Emma Hollenberg (she/her)
Humanities Coordinator

Krystyna Drewenska (she/her)
FBMH Coordinator

studentreps@manchester.ac.uk

What do we do?

Student Voice

- Academic reps!

  - Recruitment, training, Stellify, newsletters, queries

- Student voice projects

- School reps

- Work with officers

- Teaching and Learning leadership meetings and other committees

Why we focussed on SSLCs

- Survey results and NSS scores around student voice

- Feedback over the past two years from reps and staff

- Focus groups with staff, IAG, and students

Who attended?

Number of Focus Group Participants by Role and School

Legend: Academic Rep, Academic Staff, IAG
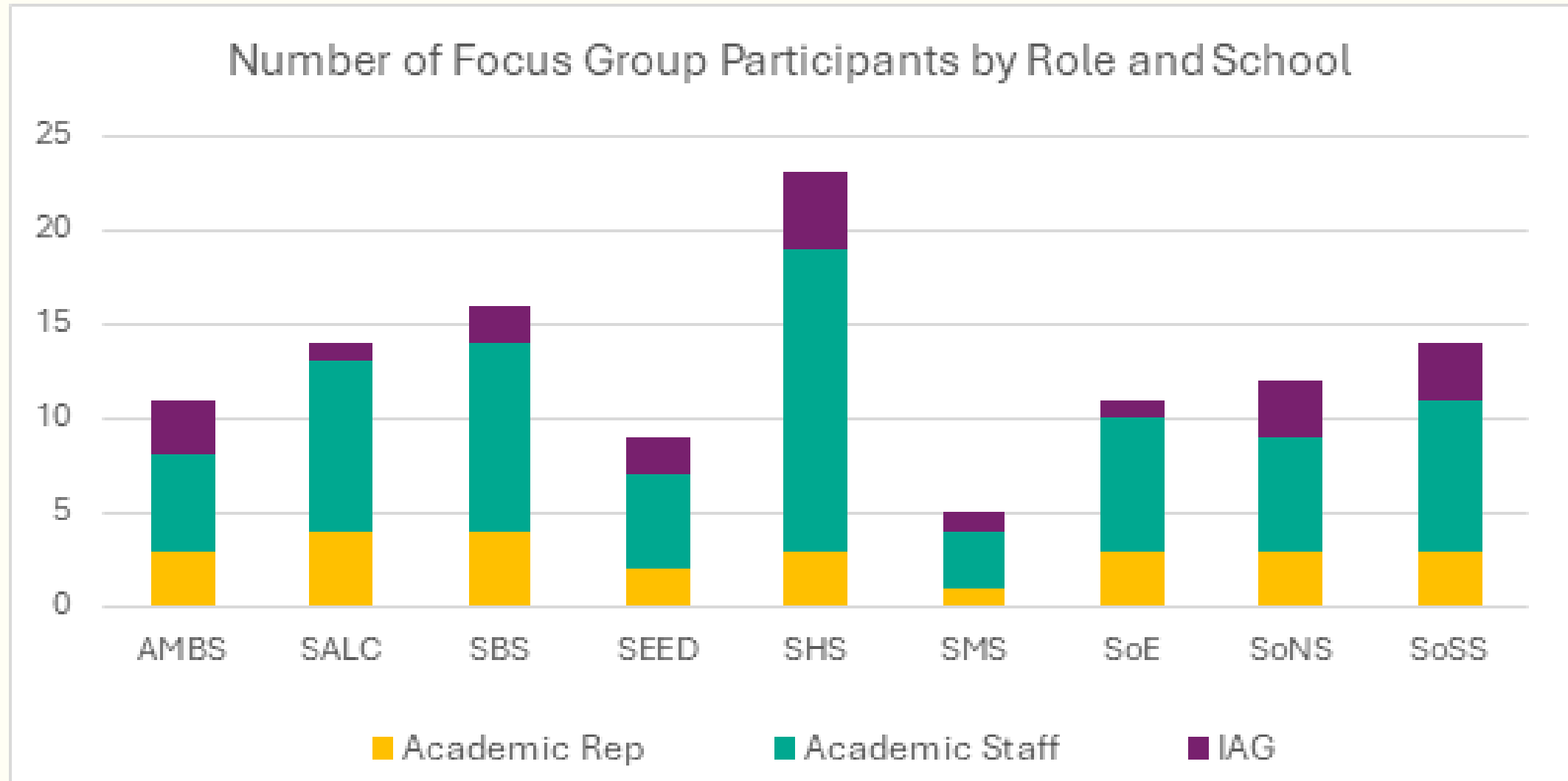
Our focus today:

Revealing our findings from the focus groups and presenting solutions and recommendations

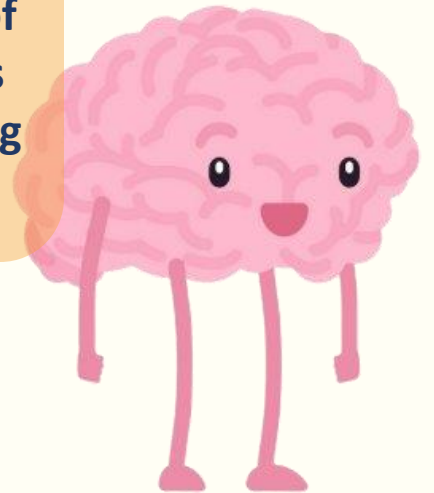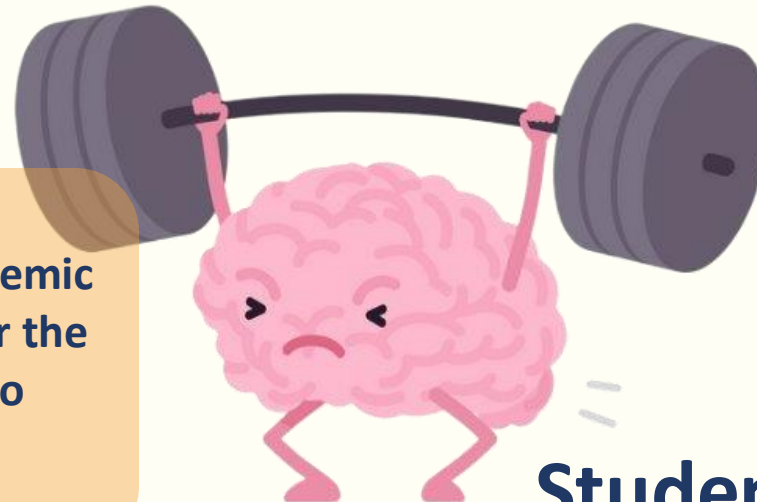# Let's set the scene for SSLCs

Academic member of staff, constantly fighting for time in their calendar

IAG team member, administering all of the School's SSLCs as well as managing the School Hub

PS Staff

Academic

First time academic rep, excited for the role but also nervous

Student

**All three are about to go through an SSLC cycle…
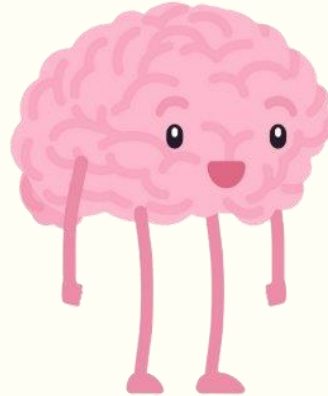Let's follow what happens**

Getting Ready – calendar invite

STUDENTS' UNION
University of Manchester

Student

✓ SU Rep Training
✓ Invited to SSLC

✗ Practical experience
✗ Doesn't know who to contact
✗ Doesn't know many other reps

PS Staff

✓ Invited reps and academic staff to series of SSLCs for the year

Chosen a time that suits most, but very difficult!

Academic

✓ Invited to SSLC

✗ Doesn't know who the reps are or if they've been trained

ACADEMIC REPS

Getting Ready – gathering feedback

Student

Doesn't know how best to contact cohort

Engagement dropping off through the year

Has sent out survey but only has 6 responses

Doesn't know which issues are best raised at SSLC, or before?

As a joint honours student, where do you take relevant feedback?

Getting Ready – key takeaways

Reps

- More practical training, especially on gathering feedback
- Survey templates
- Clear responsibilities
- Rep handbook and FAQs
- Better check ins
- Access to SU data
- Clearer complaints process

IAG

- Involve academics more in choosing SSLC times
- Clarify role for joint honours reps
- Clearer way for reps to be able to contact cohorts they're representing

Academic Staff

- Informed of SU rep training ahead of time
- Provide additional training to reps on specifics of their SSLC (if needed and if possible)
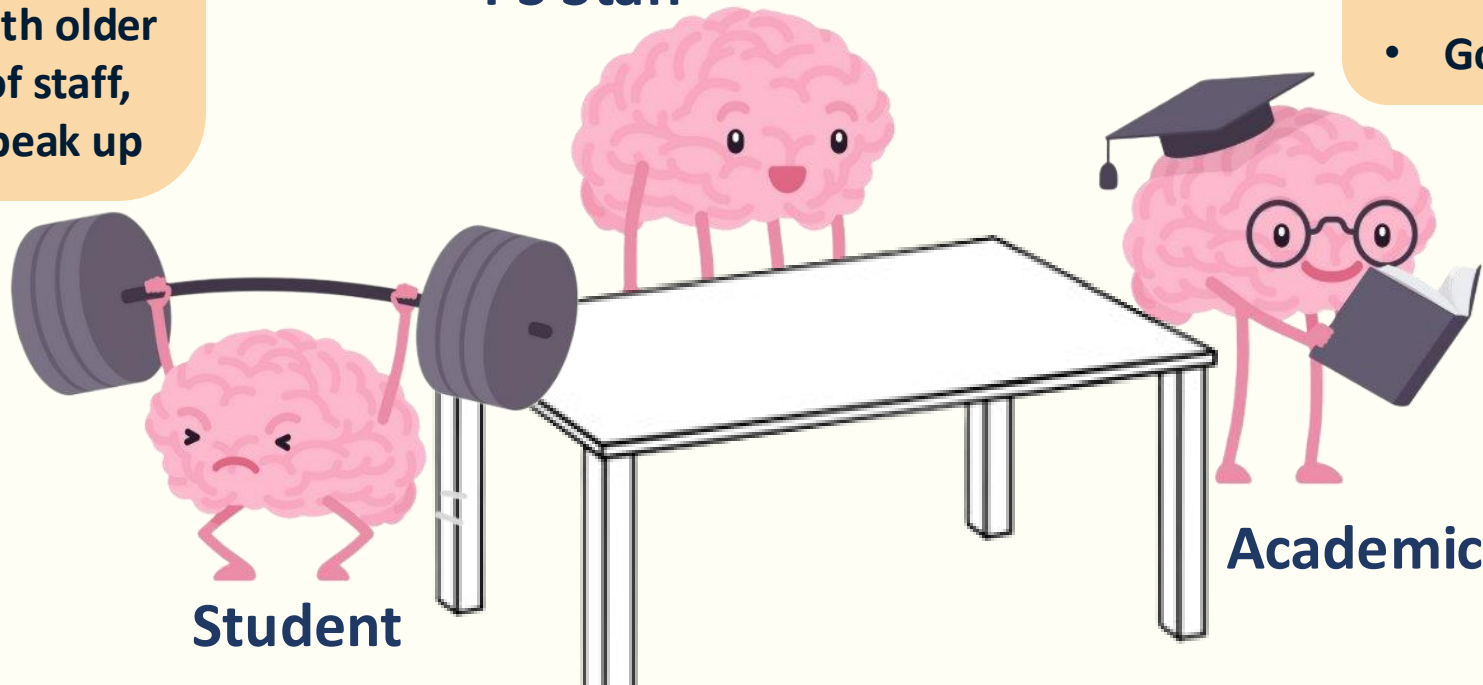
The Meeting – set up

STUDENTS' **UNION**
University of Manchester

- **Not sure who's who**

- **No agenda, not sure what to expect**

- **This is a room with older years and lots of staff, don't want to speak up**

- **Fist of 3 they will attend today**

- **Starts chairing meeting without agenda**
- **Goes off on tangents**

PS Staff

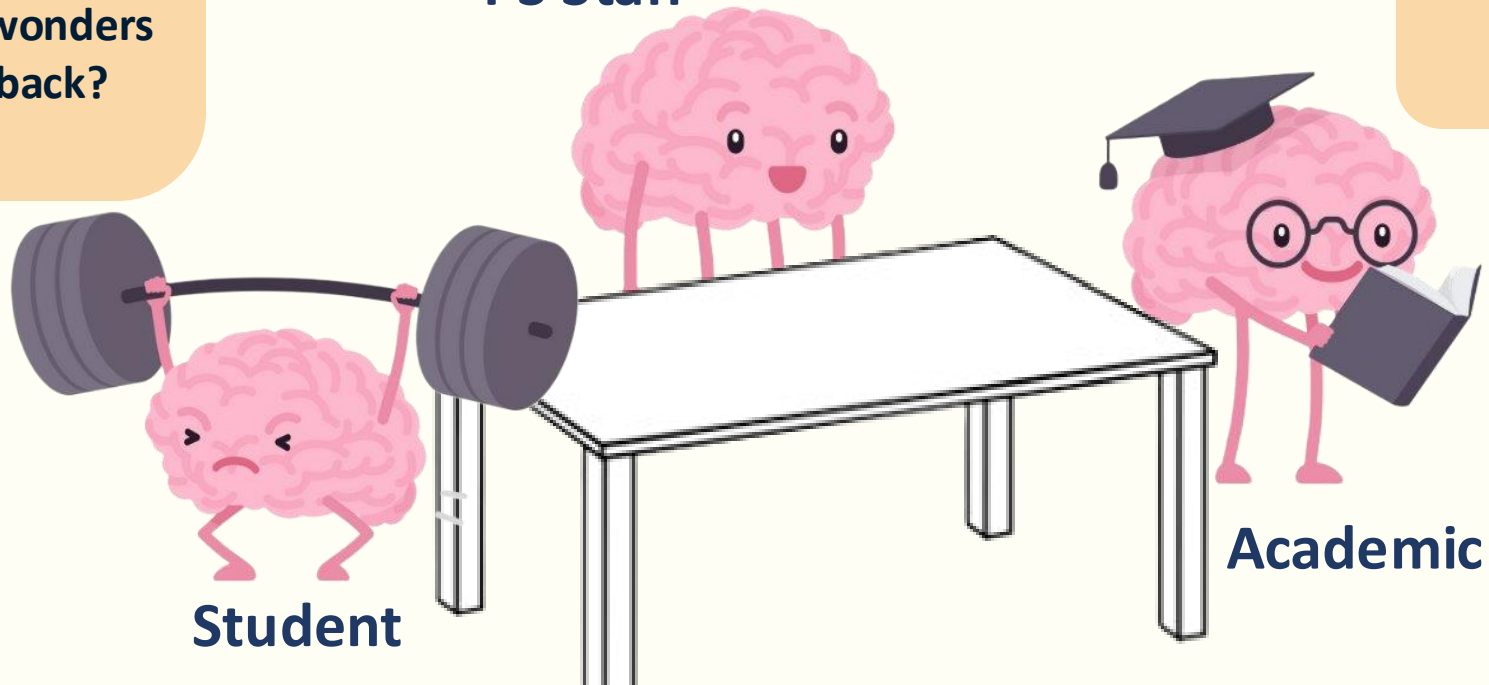**Academic**

Student

ACADEMIC REPS

The Meeting – who's listening?

- Has less than 5 minutes to bring up multiple issues, runs out of time

- Of feedback which is acknowledged, wonders if they'll hear back?

- Meeting is running over, and the minutes are many pages long

- Knows exactly what to do about some issues, but not all as not within remit
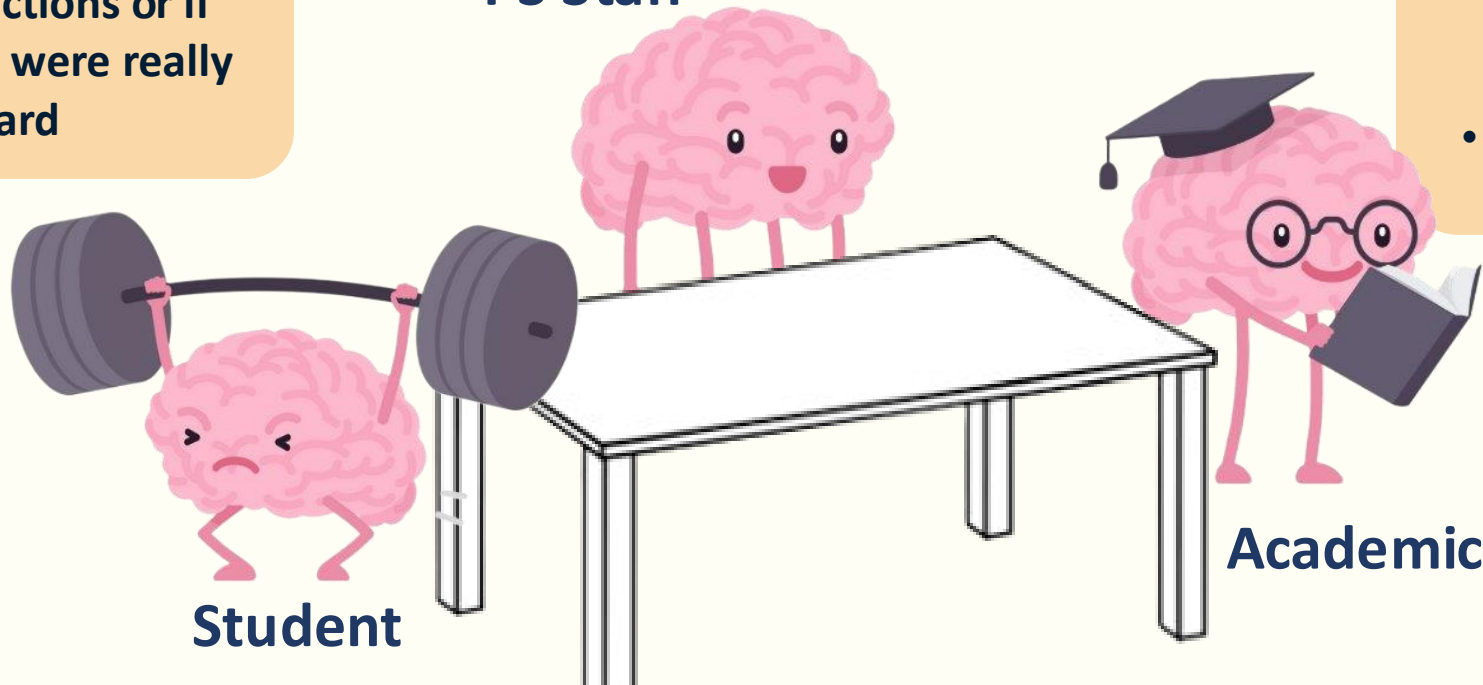
PS Staff

Academic

Student

The Meeting – behind the scenes

Minutes need checking, will take months to verify and ensure accuracy

Don't know who's coming to the meeting

PS Staff

Doesn't know if they can chase on actions or if their points were really heard

Needs to follow up on actions but the minutes aren't ready

Can't track actions

Academic

Student

The Meeting– key takeaways

Reps

- Trained on feedback delivery
- Work as a team of reps
- Creating digital spaces to connect with peers

IAG

- Making sure there's an agenda
- Flat lecture room
- Recognition that although reps aren't present, they might be working as a team with others
- Meetings shouldn't be longer than 2h
- Rep attendance tracking system

Academic Staff

- Consider co-chairing with a student
- 'you said, we did'
- Making meeting more interactive and solution focused
- Make it easier for PDs to escalate issues
- Space for reps to get to know staff and vice versa
- Manageable rep numbers
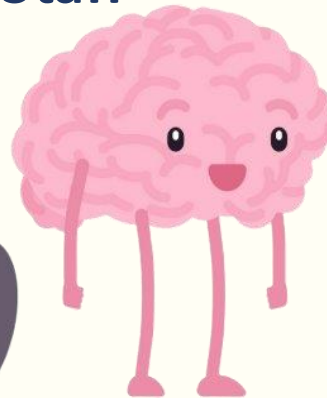
Post-meeting - closing the feedback loop

Can't chase staff for updates on actions as have a busy workload!

PS Staff

- Doesn't know what's relevant to tell the cohort form the meeting
- Focused on gathering feedback for next meeting

- Doesn't know which actions have been completed or not

Academic

Student

Post-meeting – new practices emerging

Action tracker instead of detailed minutes – makes it easier to close feedback loop

Feedback being submitted in advance for comment – more time for dialogue and collaboration

Trialling short Instagram videos with updates from SSLC
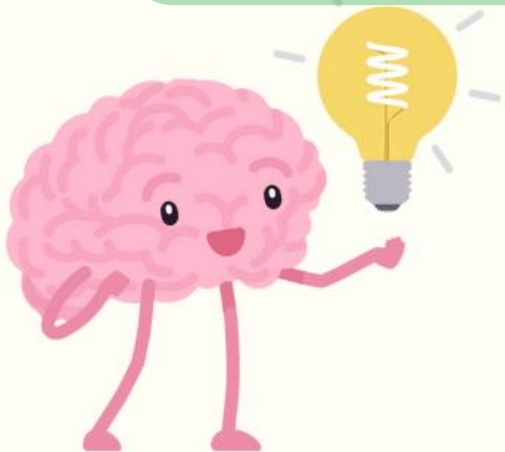
"You said, we did"

Rep socials

How frequent should meetings be?

Should more staff be involved? Societies?

Using AI to minute meetings

Consider separate forums for unit-level feedback

SSLCs are working, but inconsistently

Next steps…

We can create a culture shift!

Thank you!

studentreps@manchester.ac.uk