



L-Università  
ta' Malta

# Student Feedback Policy

*May 2023*



## Executive Summary

The University of Malta (UM) strives to reach excellence in learning, teaching, research and the overall student experience provided throughout its academic programmes. Student feedback is crucial to the evaluation of the student experience and is therefore a key source of information for the continuous enhancement of the programmes of study and resources offered to students. This policy seeks to define the approach to be taken in the systematic collection and analysis of student feedback, how Faculties, Institutes, Centres and Schools (FICS) determine actions to be taken based on student feedback and how student feedback outcomes are communicated to students.

The student feedback policy is based on student voice empowerment and the partnership of the University and FICS with students, the University Students' Council (*Kunsill Studenti Universitarji*, KSU) and other student societies towards the continuous improvement of the student experience at the University. Emphasis is placed on closing the student feedback loop by communicating outcomes as student feedback can only be effective as long as students perceive that FICS are listening to and willing to act on their feedback.

Over the years, a number of academics, departments or FICS have asked for student feedback through their own student feedback mechanisms that were distinct from the student feedback questionnaires collected centrally by the University administration through the **Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit (APQRU)**. This policy recognises the importance that FICS take responsibility for the provision of student feedback mechanisms throughout their programmes of study. FICS are encouraged to explore methods of feedback that would suit their learning and teaching environment and programmes of study. This aims not only to improve engagement but also to make the feedback more meaningful within the context in which it is being presented. Moreover, it will provide the quality assurance information that is necessary for the annual review of the programmes of study that are offered. At the same time, the student feedback questionnaires run centrally by APQRU offer a harmonised quality assurance benchmark across all FICS programmes. It is envisaged that these mechanisms should run in parallel and complement each other, while avoiding overlapping surveys. Programme coordinators are to take into account the study-units selected by APQRU when determining the selection of study-units to be included for student feedback collection within FICS in order to avoid replication and minimise survey fatigue.

While recognising the importance of student anonymity throughout the feedback collection, analysis and reporting stages, the policy lists a number of responsibilities by which students should abide in their provision of feedback. These include the provision of objective, constructive and balanced feedback. It is important that positive engagement of both students and staff in the student feedback process are maintained. Confidentiality and respect for the rights and dignity of staff wherever student feedback identifies academic management issues are therefore as important as student anonymity, the transparency of the feedback processes to students and the communication of feedback outcomes to students.

Finally, the spirit of the policy is rooted in both student empowerment and improving and assuring the quality of programmes within UM. It can be clarified that student feedback is a circular process that also involves the academics relaying their own ideas back to the student, based in collegiality and discussion. The results of this process are maximised when both the student and the lecturer understand their part within this mechanism and when an environment of feedback is cultivated.

## Student Feedback Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University of Malta has a clear commitment to high quality in learning, teaching and postgraduate research and to enhancing the student experience at all levels of study and across programmes.
- 1.2 Students' feedback plays a critical role in the evaluation, development and enhancement of the quality of all programmes and student experience which encompasses learning, teaching and assessment. Student feedback is therefore important to:
  - a) assess the effectiveness of all programmes of study;
  - b) assess the overall educational experience from the students' viewpoint; and
  - c) guide the adjustments required to sustain continuous improvement.

### 2. Aim

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to define the approach of the University to the systematic collection and analysis of student feedback, how the University and the Faculties, Institutes, Centres, and Schools (FICS) determine actions to be taken based on student feedback and how the University and the FICS communicate student feedback outcomes to students.

### 3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy is limited to the collection and evaluation of student feedback on individual study-units and programmes of study, and how this can be used to enhance the quality of teaching, learning resources and support available to students at the University.

### 4. Principles

- 4.1 The UM considers it important to create a culture and an environment that empower student voice and active engagement throughout the institution.

- 4.2 The UM is committed to work in partnership with KSU and the Student Societies within FICS to provide opportunities for all students to give feedback on their learning experiences and to contribute to their continuous enhancement.
- 4.3 All conversations with students should recognise that our student body is diverse and that students will have varied views on issues. Student feedback mechanisms must be inclusive and enable all students to participate so that as many student voices as possible may be captured.
- 4.4 The student feedback process must be respectful of the rights and dignity of both students and staff. Privacy, student anonymity and confidentiality must be maintained at all stages of the process.
- 4.5 The UM is committed to listen to the students' voice captured at different levels and through different mechanisms, including but not limited to activities led by the KSU and student societies.
- 4.6 The student feedback process must be transparent. The purpose of collecting student feedback, how the feedback data will be processed, its intended use, and how results and actions will be disseminated to students, should be clearly stated, especially at the point when feedback is being requested.
- 4.7 The UM is committed to closing feedback loops and believes that feedback to students is as important as feedback from students. Students are to be informed of the results of feedback and of any actions taken in response to it or reasons why actions cannot be taken. Student feedback should always elicit a response, both when action or changes result from the feedback and when this is not possible.
- 4.8 The UM is committed to student feedback processes that seek positive engagement of academic staff and students towards the continuous enhancement of the students' learning experience. Any student feedback that addresses academic management issues and academic conduct must be treated in confidence by FICS management to ensure that the rights of academics to privacy and confidentiality are respected.
- 4.9 Students' feedback and student voice mechanisms are an essential part of the UM's Quality Assurance and Enhancement framework.

## **5. Collecting student feedback**

- 5.1 Systematic collection of student feedback is required to record students' learning experiences in all study-units. FICS are responsible for implementing systematic collection of student feedback, allowing feedback mechanisms to be adapted to the needs of specific study-units and programmes of study.

- 5.2 University-wide student feedback collection will be carried out by APQRU as part of the UM's institutional level quality assurance. This centralised form of student feedback, carried out through a standard questionnaire for a sample of study-units in every programme offered across the University, provides a harmonised quality assurance benchmark across all FICS programmes.
- 5.3 The student feedback process run by APQRU will therefore complement the student feedback collected at FICS level.
- 5.4 All activities related to student feedback collection, storage, analysis and results presentation must adhere to the provisions of data protection legislation.

## **6. University-wide student feedback collection**

- 6.1 The UM emphasises the need for the involvement of students in the quality assurance of higher education. This requires that students are recognised as collaborators in, rather than merely receivers of, learning and teaching.
- 6.2 The UM is to ensure that mechanisms are in place for students to provide feedback both with regard to the individual study-units they are following, and also with regard to their experience at the University once they have completed the entire programme of study. This feedback is conducted by APQRU through the **study-unit evaluation survey and the end-of-programme survey**.
- 6.3 The UM shall provide appropriate fora and opportunities to celebrate and share good practices emerging from the outcomes of student feedback.

## **7. Student feedback collection by FICS and their responsibilities**

- 7.1 Feedback from students is used by academics to consider both how to enhance students' learning and how to develop their own teaching practice. As partners with the academics involved in their education, students should have the opportunity to comment on the teaching they receive, and to be kept informed of any action taken (or not taken) arising from the feedback they supply.
- 7.2 FICS should make provision for feedback across all study-units within each programme of study. Feedback should be provided anonymously and on a regular basis, and such initiatives should be well-publicised so that all students have an opportunity to provide feedback.

- 7.3 The programme coordinator for each programme of study shall liaise with lecturers and coordinate the collection of feedback from study-units for the purpose of the **Annual Programme Review**. This coordination would take into account the study-unit feedback performed annually by APQRU so as to minimise survey fatigue.
- 7.4 Boards of Studies are to review student feedback analysis reports and discuss actions arising from student feedback in matters pertaining to study-unit content, learning outcomes, and methods of learning, teaching and assessment, within the remit of the Boards of Studies.
- 7.5 It is recommended that FICS appoint a committee to oversee student feedback collection methodology within the FICS and disseminate student feedback best practices suitable for study-units offered by the FICS amongst the academic staff. Where appropriate FICS can assign these roles to an existing committee tasked with the quality assurance of its programmes of study.
- 7.6 Feedback processes should incorporate strategies to maximise student participation and should take into account the length of the unit and the numbers of students enrolled. These may include but are not limited to, study-unit questionnaires, focus groups or interviews, in-lecture temperature checks in the form of small group instructional diagnosis (SGIDs), **intercept surveys**, online feedback portals or mid-quarter feedback which would allow the lecturer to 'check-in' with students with enough time to tweak teaching prior to the end of the study-unit.
- 7.7 FICS are encouraged to engage with students in the design of feedback collection and explain how students can provide feedback on their programme and/or study-unit.

## **8. Student Responsibilities**

- 8.1 Students are at the heart of the feedback process, and its ultimate intended beneficiaries. Through the collection of feedback, the students' voice can inform subsequent action taken at FICS level, as well as more broadly across the UM.
- 8.2 Students should provide open and constructive feedback that respects the dignity of students and staff and abides by ethical standards.
- 8.3 Students should provide honest and balanced feedback that identifies strengths in study-unit content and delivery where this is appropriate as much as it identifies weaknesses and areas for improvement where this is necessary.
- 8.4 Students are encouraged to liaise and collaborate with their student representatives, student unions and student societies in delivering collective feedback where prompt action is required to improve their student experience.

- 8.5 Student representatives are encouraged to participate in and take advantage of relevant training opportunities in relation to how feedback is collected, analysed, interpreted, used and presented.
- 8.6 Student societies are encouraged to liaise with FICS, Faculty Boards, Boards of Studies, Deans, Heads of Departments, programme coordinators and/or student representatives to design and implement feedback processes such as questionnaires and to present the analysis and outcomes to the Faculty Board and/or Board of Studies.

## **9. Communicating student feedback outcomes**

- 9.1 Collecting, analysing and responding to evidence are fundamental features of a university.
- 9.2 Relevant feedback should be shared with student representatives, allowing them to be discussed within FICS in fora such as Boards of Studies.
- 9.3 Students or their representatives are to be informed of any action that has been taken in response to feedback received, giving details if appropriate.
- 9.4 There are a number of mechanisms which may be used to directly communicate to students the actions taken as a result of feedback. These include but are not limited to:
- E-mails from Dean, Head of Department, programme coordinator, etc.
  - Regular 'You Said, We Did' campaigns which may be supported by student representatives or societies.
  - Social media

## **10. Quality assurance and enhancement**

- 10.1 The UM has in place institutional monitoring and feedback systems for assuring the quality and standards of all the learning and teaching that it provides throughout a student's programme experience. This monitoring and feedback should be complemented and permeated within FICS.
- 10.2 The **National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education (2015)**, which reflects the **European Standards & Guidelines (2015)** highlights the need to continuously engage the student's voice as a way of improving the quality of the learning and teaching environment. It sets out the expectation that students are actively engaged, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. This includes engaging students in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

- 10.3 All FICS are expected to set out their approach to programme and study-unit feedback and these approaches are to be agreed with student representatives as part of FICS Board and/or Board of Studies discussions.
- 10.4 Feedback approaches and outcomes are to feature in the Annual Programme Review performed by FICS. This will also contribute to the UM's commitment that students are achieving the learning outcomes.



## Appendix – Example Survey and Further Information

The following is a sample of a study-unit evaluation survey implemented using Google Forms, included here with the kind permission of the Faculty of Dental Surgery. This survey is intended as an example of a questionnaire with Likert-type items. It is recommended that the type and the number of questions are adapted according to the specific needs of the target study-units.

# FACULTY OF DENTAL SURGERY STUDENTS' STUDY UNIT EVALUATION FORM

1. The aim of this evaluation form is to help us improve the quality of our teaching activities. It is therefore specific to a Study Unit, so that we can target any necessary changes appropriately.
2. This questionnaire is ANONYMOUS.
3. In this questionnaire the Study Unit will be referred to as SU.
4. Should you wish to add any comments to the questionnaire, please add your observations at the end of the questionnaire.

We thank you for your cooperation, Dean  
Faculty of Dental Surgery

\*Required

Q1: The Learning Outcomes in the SU description were clear \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q2: The Learning Outcomes in the SU description were achieved during the \* coursework

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q3: In this class, the SU content was presented in a manageable format \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q4: In this class, the balance between SU theoretical and practical aspects is \* fair

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q5: The SU methods of assessment are satisfactory \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q6: The marks allocated to the different methods of assessment are reasonable \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q7: The content of the SU is sufficient to make me feel confident in being able \*  
to practice the discipline.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q8: Tutor's sincerity, commitment, regularity and punctuality to official \*  
timetables were satisfactory

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Tutor 1</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Tutor 2</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Tutor 3</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9: The tutor has covered the Learning Outcomes as outlined in the SU \*  
description

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Tutor 1</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Tutor 2</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Tutor 3</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10: The tutor was able to clarify doubts, teaching with relevant examples \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Tutor 1</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Tutor 2</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Tutor 3</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11: The tutor was able to generate interest \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Tutor 1</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Tutor 2</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Tutor 3</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12: Overall rating of Tutor's Commitment to Teaching/instructing students \*

1- VERY POOR

10- VERY GOOD

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Tutor 1</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Tutor 2</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Tutor 3</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13: This study unit is best offered in the following format \*

Mark only one oval.

- FACE-TO-FACE (F2F)
- ONLINE ONLY
- ONLINE ONLY WITH F2F TUTORIALS
- Blended: F2F & ONLINE IN EQUAL PROPORTIONS
- Blended: MAINLY F2F & THE REST ONLINE
- Blended: MAINLY ONLINE & THE REST F2F

Q14: My grade in this class at this time is best described as: \*

Mark only one oval.

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F

Q15: Overall rating of SU \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<b>VERY POOR</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<b>VERY GOOD</b>

Q16: Please add any comments on the study unit here. Thank you! \*

## Further information and resources

Further useful information on study-unit evaluation and SU evaluation methods can be found from the following references:

- 1) [Harvard University Online Resources - Getting Feedback](#)
- 2) [University College London Teaching and Learning Resources - Student Voice and Surveys](#)
- 3) [University of Washington - Gathering Student Feedback](#)
- 4) [Victoria University Learning and Teaching Resources - Evaluation for Improving Practice](#)
- 5) [E. Keane, I. Mac Labhrainn, "Obtaining Student Feedback on Teaching & Course Quality", Briefing Paper, Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching, 2005](#)

The Senate approved the Student Feedback Policy during its meeting on 11 May 2023.

This policy document was prepared by the Student Feedback Working Group that was set up by the Quality Assurance Committee. The members of the working group were:

Prof. Ing. Maurice Apap, Quality Assurance Committee, Faculty of Engineering, Chairperson

Prof. Sandro Caruana, Faculty of Education

Rev. Prof. Mark Sultana, Faculty of Arts

Dr Lourdes Farrugia, Faculty of Science

Mr Lionel Attard, Academic Prog Quality & Resources Unit

Ms Julia De Bono (Student Representative)

Elisa Micallef Peplow (Student Representative)

Dr Jacqueline Vanhear, Quality Support Unit

Dr Jonathan Xuereb, Quality Support Unit