

Section 8: Formal Student-Staff Consultation

This section should be read in conjunction with other resources available on the [University website](#).

8.1 Responsibility of teaching staff

8.1.1 Teaching staff hold the primary responsibility for educational quality and good academic standards at the University of Westminster. The design and delivery of modules provides the framework for the student experience. Continuous self-monitoring of delivery is central to the achievement of good quality delivery. Collaboration between colleagues at School level enhances the ongoing review process.

8.2 Heads of School

8.2.1 Each College is organised on the basis of complementary disciplines within the overall subject of its title. Each subject specialist team is organised into a School; some are single subjects, others represent cross-disciplinary subjects.

8.2.2 Responsibility for providing management and leadership for the teaching and research staff within these subject specialist units lies with the Head of School. Specifically, this encompasses management of academic quality of delivery, and monitoring student achievements, within the University's framework of policies and processes for quality assurance.

8.2.3 The generic job description of the Head of School includes responsibilities for managing and monitoring the quality assurance of courses, modules and other educational programmes provided by the School, and to ensure the provision of academic and pastoral support for students studying programmes in the school. Heads of School are members of the College Executive Group.

8.2.4 The Head of School's specific responsibilities for taught courses will reflect the scale and character of the courses, but would normally encompass:

- **assessment**
(including liaison with internal and external examiners, and arrangements for the scrutiny of all draft coursework and examination requirements)
- **monitoring and review**
(including the aggregation of student feedback from local sources of student evaluation and the University module feedback questionnaire for analysis by the course teaching team; preparing the annual self-monitoring report; and coordinating the preparation for course re-validation, external review and/or re-accreditation).

8.3 Course Leaders

8.3.1 Within the Statutes and Principles of the University approved by Privy Council in 1992, the appointment of a member of staff as leader of the course or named award programme is specified, with the responsibility of ensuring that:

- the course/programme meets its specified aims and objectives;
- it is conducted in accordance with the appropriate regulations and academic administrative requirements;
- it meets the requirements of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy;
- documentation is provided for monitoring and review.

8.3.2 The role of the Course Leader may vary within and between Schools to reflect the level and mode of the course. However, the responsibilities of the Course Leader would normally encompass:

- **student induction and support;** including course-specific induction, organisation of elections for student representatives and arrangements for engagement activity; and overseeing the effectiveness of the Personal Tutorial System for students registered for named awards within the course scheme in consultation with the School Senior Tutor.
- **course definition;** keeping an overview of the consistency between subject-specific aims and learning outcomes and the aims and learning outcomes for core and subject-specific option modules; ensuring that assessment criteria for each module are published for reference by students, teaching staff (PT as well as FT), external examiners and external accrediting agencies; and updating and circulating the Course Handbook, in accordance with the requirements specified in Section 6.

8.4 Student Engagement

8.4.1 Students on taught courses are represented by their peers in engagement activity between student and staff representatives with at least two contact points each semester.

8.4.2 Each course must have a formal meetings process for consulting with and gathering feedback from student and staff representatives and this should be advertised to students on the course's BlackBoard site. Consultation by group e-mail can be very effective. Whatever the format, the primary task is to consult actively and provide timely feedback on the outcome. A summary of agreed action points and progress against them should be made available to all students.

8.4.3 All students can channel their comments through their tutor or another member of teaching staff but the view put across by the elected course representative is much more likely to be seen as presenting the case of the student group as a whole. Constructive criticisms of the way the course is run or the facilities available may be reported to the College Teaching Committee, and University-wide issues highlighted in this way are likely to be followed up at a senior level precisely because it is recognised that they provide an overview of student opinion.

8.4.4 Aspects of study not covered by student representatives are:

- personal problems of individual students
- academic difficulties of individual students
- allegations of unfair or inappropriate treatment by staff or other students.

These sorts of issues should be handled confidentially (as private concerns) and, with the advice of the Course Leader, they should be referred to the appropriate staff member such as the student's Personal Tutor, the Head of School, the Head of College, the University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU), or the Counselling and Advice Service.

8.4.5 If general student comment highlights a problem, potential or actual, it should be reported to the Course Leader (without identifying the individual source of the comments) by a student representative; the Course Leader may be in a position to resolve the matter or may need to refer it to the Head of School, Head of College, or manager of the relevant service, for resolution. If comments relate to the approach taken by individual staff members, they should always be referred to the Head of School, who will meet the students concerned and later with the staff member. If it is not possible to resolve the issue, the Head of College will be asked to convene a further meeting with the staff member to identify appropriate action. Any such meetings, with staff or students, will remain confidential as far as possible.

8.4.6 Obviously formal committees (and monitoring and review meetings) are not the appropriate places for dealing with potential student complaints about an individual member of staff; the University has a student complaints procedure for this purpose, details of which are available on the [University website](#).

8.5 Student Survey's

8.5.1 All students are invited to complete a Student Module Evaluation (SME) at the end of each module. Satisfaction scores and comments are made available to the Module Leader to share with the module teaching team. It is expected that the Module Leader will reflect on the outcomes of the SME in their Module Leaders Report and identify necessary modifications or enhancements from the SME feedback. Both qualitative and quantitative module results will be made available, beyond the module teaching team, to the relevant academic managers in the College as determined and formally agreed with the Deputy Vice Chancellor by the Head of College. Quantitative SME data will be provided to College's to enable this information to be reviewed and considered by appropriate University, College, School and subject groups.

8.5.2 The annual National Student Survey (NSS) is a census of all UK students in their final year of an undergraduate course. The results are available on the [Unistats website](#).

8.5.3 Postgraduate students receive an equivalent questionnaire. International students receive a number of tailored surveys throughout their studies. The satisfaction scores and comments from internal and external student experience surveys will be made available to the relevant academic managers in the College as determined by the Head of College. Colleges are required to identify actions for improving the student experience and to monitor their effectiveness in partnership with the Teaching Committee.

8.5.4 Student engagement is represented through the academic governance of the

University. University committees such as Academic Council, Teaching Committee, College committees and Court of Governors have University of Westminster Student Union representation. In addition the Student Experience Committee (see section 1) is Co-Chaired by the President of the Student Union.