Student Engagement in Learning and Teaching Quality Management:

A Study of UK Practices

Research Findings

Commissioned by the Quality Assurance Agency

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Foreword

QAA has been working at the forefront of engaging students in quality assurance and enhancement now for a number of years. We firmly believe that by doing so we can play a positive role in ensuring that students get the best possible educational experience. We do this by working in collaboration with students wherever we can, from the work of our Student Advisory Board influencing directly the work of the Agency, through the involvement of student reviewers in reviewing providers' quality and standards, to the issuing of national expectations agreed by the sector through the UK Quality Code.

Much has happened in this area in recent years, with more attention and more focus put by providers and sector bodies on this topic than perhaps at any other time. It was with that in mind that we commissioned the team at the University of Bath to examine the state of current practice in this area, and help develop a strong evidence base and good practice guidance for student unions and providers as they develop their own approaches to this agenda.

We are extremely grateful to Gwen Van Der Velden and her team for the work they have undertaken in these reports which we believe shed new and important light on this area and look forward to seeing them stimulate debate and discussion.

Anthony McClaran
Chief Executive
Quality Assurance Agency

Executive Summary

1 Amidst these new fee structures, national policy changes affecting all four UK countries, growing Higher Education (HE) private provision, expanding numbers of organisations with degree awarding powers and the re-positioning of individual institutions within HE landscape in the UK, it is remarkable that across all parts of the sector, the focus on student engagement continues to grow steadily. Perhaps a more competitive environment stimulates a strong focus on student opinion, supported by national policies requiring increased availability of public information for students (BIS, 2009, 2011a, 2011b).

2 Since the introduction of the QAA's new Quality Code chapter on Student Engagement (B5), institutions and students' unions have sought to benchmark their efforts against both this chapter and practices elsewhere. This research report was commissioned to support that interest in benchmarking. It also aims to give some indicators of our collective direction of travel, changes in institutional perceptions and attitudes to student engagement. This report has been produced together with a good practice guide entitled *a good practice guide to institutions and students' unions'* (Van der Velden et al., 2013) and *a 'Project Report'* (Van der Velden and Pool, 2013). This guide captures examples of the innovative, original and inspired student engagement practice identified in the survey.

3 Student engagement has been the focus of many studies in higher education around the world (see: Little et al., 2009, QAA, 2005, 2006, 2008a. 2008b, 2008c and 2009 in England; York Consulting Limited, 2006 in Wales; Cockburn, 2005 in Scotland; Trowler, 2010 and Trowler and Trowler, 2010 in the UK; Froestad and Bakken, 2004 and QAA, 2008d in European Nordic countries; Kuh et al., 2007a and Pike and Kuh, 2005 in the USA; Coates, 2005, in Australia).

4 Student engagement in higher education varies according to the socio-political context in which institutions operate in the UK. HE providers have different missions and deliver to a wide range of differing student populations. In the UK, students play a role in the process of, and procedures for evaluating, shaping, assuring and enhancing the quality of their learning experience through many formal and informal institutional processes. These processes and procedures are governance related mechanisms to provide accountability and ensure that the student voice is listened to and acted upon (Little et al., 2009). Student engagement in HE in the UK takes many different forms, such as: student engagement in the teaching and learning process; student feedback; student evaluation of teaching; student representation; student participation in governance; and student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms, processes and procedures.

5 The studies reviewed above analysed student engagement in quality learning and teaching enhancement management separately in England, Scotland and Wales. In this study, the focus has been on the UK as a whole and has studied the opportunities provided for students to engage in quality learning and teaching enhancement management, as well as their perceived effectiveness.

6 In line with the chapter B5: Student engagement, part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, this study looked at the domain of student engagement related to 'the participation of students in quality enhancement and quality assurance processes, resulting in the improvement of their educational experience' (ibid.: 2). This also 'includes but is not restricted to representation of the student view through formal representation mechanisms' (ibid.: 2). In this study, the 'indicators of sound practice' (QAA, 2012: 4) have been used to guide the investigation of UK student engagement in quality learning and teaching enhancement management. The indicators of sound practice used in this study are presented in Table 1.

Conclusions:

Opportunities provided for student to engage in learning and teaching quality management

1 The overall majority of institutions provided opportunities for their students to engage in learning and teaching quality management. Student representation on other committees, student feedback questionnaires, and SSLCs were widely used mechanisms to engage students in institutions. Student feedback systems for distance learning courses were not widely used because not all institutions provided distance learning courses. In institutions that provided distance learning courses their range of provision varied from a limited range to a substantial range and others that were mainly distance learning providers. In this variety of provision, residentials played an important role in limiting the expansion of student feedback systems for distance learning courses, because students' feedback was collected during these residentials.

2 Institutions also provided o*ther* opportunities for their students to engage in learning and teaching quality management. These other opportunities were: representation and membership on SSLCs, other (sub-)committees, panels, working groups, meetings, forums, (sub-)groups, and through participation in the NSS, internal and external surveys and questionnaires, (review) panels, meetings, focus groups, face-to-face group discussions, online surveys, online discussions, online forums, and tutorials. The most common of these other opportunities were (review) panels, (sub-) committees and meetings.

Student representation in institutions

3 Institutions had student representatives at different levels within their structures and the selection process of student representatives varied between levels. Election (through the SU or similar body) was the most common means through which students became representatives at institution, faculty/school, discipline/department and study programme levels, followed by nomination (usually by fellow students) at study programme and discipline/department levels, self-volunteering and election (through institutional mechanisms) at study programme level. In some institutions students became representatives through a mixture of election, nomination, selection and self-volunteering. Some institutions and students' unions did not know or were aware of

the means through which students became representatives at faculty/school, discipline/department and study programme levels.

4 Institutions organised the representation of students mainly through elections carried out by the institutions (faculty or administrators) themselves, conducted online or inside classrooms. In some institutions this election was organised by their students' union and in few institutions it was jointly organised by institutions and their students' unions.

Student participation on committees

5 In the majority of institutions, students were fully involved in discussion and had voting rights when participating on committees. In some institutions, students voiced their concerns but did not vote. In few institutions, students participated only when invited to do so. A new category of student participation on committees, which deviates from the three main ones, emerged from the institutional survey: '*students are fully involved in discussion in a no voting system*'.

6 In some institutions, student survey was the only means students had to participate in the learning and teaching quality management. In other institutions there were some discrepancies between policy and the practice of student engagement in learning and teaching quality management at faculty/school level. In a small number of institutions, students were not allowed to participate in some of their committees because of the sensitivity of the issues discussed on these committees.

Engaging groups of student who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management

7 Institutions and students' unions perceived part-time, working, work-based, placement, postgraduate taught and research, distance learning, mature, international and off-campus students, as well as students in partner institutions, to be the groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in such procedures, because of these groups of students' academic workload demands and work demands. Their perceptions are probably related to the nature and ethos of institutions, their student populations and their policies of widening participation and access.

8 The majority of institutions are taking actions to improve student engagement from these groups of students. Few institutions do not know or are aware of any actions being taken in their institutions. And fewer institutions are not taking any action to engage these groups of students. In institutions that have international provision it difficult to engage these groups of students because of the political constitution of their hosting countries.

Participants' perceptions of students' roles in their institutions in different situations

9 Institutions and students' unions perceived the roles of their students differently in different situations. In institutions the students' role was perceived as: (1) *stakeholder*; (2) *equal partner*; (3) *customer/consumer*; and (4) *an expert*, whilst students' unions perceived the roles of students as: (1) *stakeholder*; (2) *customer/consumer*; (3) *equal partner;* and (4) *an expert*. It was recognised that tuition fees had probably impacted on institutions and students' perceptions of the roles of students in their institutions in different situations. Some institutions held a combination of perceptions of the role of students, such as: partners and stakeholders; customers/consumers and partners; customers/consumers, partners and stakeholders; stakeholders, customers/consumers and equal partners; equal partners and stakeholders; and stakeholders, experts and equal partners. Although these institutions acknowledged that there is an element of customer/consumer in their relationship with their students, they recognised that there were struggles in holding some perceptions more than others, and the possible consequences of holding particularly the perceptions of the roles of students as customer/consumer. Other institutions preferred to perceive the roles of their students as *'fellow practitioner/participant'*, *'young professional'* and '*vital contributor*'.

Training and support for students to take part in learning and teaching quality management mechanisms in institutions

10 In some institutions, institutions and their students' unions were considered to be the main organisers of the training for students to take part in learning and teaching quality management. Other institutions were the sole organisers of this training. In fewer institutions, their students' unions were the organisers of such training. The National Unions of Students (NUS) played a less significant role in organising such training in institutions.

Addressing the topic of student engagement and representation in institution's Staff Development (SD)

11 Some institutions addressed the topic of student engagement and representation in their Staff Development (SD) arrangements for probationary lecturers, experienced academic staff and administrative staff. They used wide range of mechanisms mainly focused in the areas of training, policy and organisation, membership, induction and resources, to enable their academic and administrative staff and students to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management.

The influence of student engagement within institutions

12 The perceptions of institutions and students' unions of the effectiveness of student engagement within institutions differed. Institutions perceived feedback questionnaires and other committee membership (excluding SSLCs) as highly effective forms of student engagement in bringing about change at any level in their institutions, followed by other committee membership and SSLCs. Whilst students' unions perceived other committee membership (excluding SSLCs) and SSLCs as highly effective forms of student engagement in bringing about change at any level in their

institutions, followed by feedback questionnaires. The difference between the perceptions of institutions and students' unions may be directly related to the question of whose interests were being served by these three forms of student feedback and engagement in institutions in the UK.

13 Student engagement within institutions has brought about a huge variety of changes in their institutions. Institutions and students' unions reported that the most common changes were related to the areas of: (1) policy, practice and procedures; (2) feedback; (3) curriculum; (4) assessment; and (5) resources.

The informed student voice: sharing of data between students and institutions

14 Institutions shared a wide range of information and data with their student representatives, students' unions and student members of committees. Institutions shared more data with student members of committees and student representatives than with students' unions. Institutions and students' unions reported that the data most shared by institutions was: NSS, Reports of actions taken to enhance student educational experience and Annual programme evaluations. Some institutions made any information and data available to students as standard practice. Others made information available only when requested through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Communicating student experience enhancement to students

15 Institutions used a wide range of mechanisms to inform their students of enhancements to the student experience. The most common mechanisms used by institutions were: first, use of email updates; second, publications (Newsletters, Student Magazine, Student Handbook, etc.) and third, news items on student facing websites. Whilst, students' unions described a slightly different pattern: first, use of email updates; second, use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.); and third, news items on student facing websites. This difference in communication was related to the purpose of the communication and the target audience, i.e. 'public' use.

16 It is interesting to point out that news items on student facing websites were the only two mechanisms which both held the similar perception of their use in their institutions, i.e. the use of email updates were considered to be most commonly and heavily used mechanisms and news items on student facing websites were considered to be the third most commonly used mechanism in their institutions.

17 Some institutions explicitly acknowledged the contributions of their students to learning and teaching enhancement. Other institutions did not explicitly acknowledge students' contributions. Some institutions explicitly acknowledged their students' contributions only '*if [it is] appropriate*'. Other institutions used informal means of acknowledging and at the same time rewarding, students for their contribution to the enhancement of learning and teaching in the institution.

The use of Performance Indicators (PIs) to measure the effectiveness of student engagement and changes originated from the use of PIs.

18 The overall majority of institutions did not have PIs. Few institutions had PIs and fewer did not know whether they had any PIs in their institutions. Other institutions used the NSS results and participation as PIs to measure student engagement in learning and teaching quality management, as most of the changes reported were related to the NSS ratings and league tables.

Student Charter or similar Staff-Student Agreement: establishment and contentions issues

19 The overall majority of institutions have a student charter or similar staff-student agreement in place. Few institutions did not have one, and fewer reported that it was work in progress in their institutions. *In some institutions,* the student charter or similar staff-student agreement was *owned by the institution. In another it was owned by their students' unions.*

20 In this particular context, the most contentious issues in the debate, reported by institutions and students' unions were around: the content, language and terminology, status of the student charter or similar staff-student agreement and issues related to feedback and assessment.

21 The concerns surrounding the student charter or similar staff-student agreement, reported by institutions and students' unions were around: balancing rights and responsibilities in a fair manner, avoiding the use of strong language and the meaning and value of the student charter or similar staff-student agreement. Some institutions did not have any contentions issues around the development of their student charter or similar staff-student agreement. Some institutions felt that the student charter or similar staff-student agreement provided them with the opportunity to bring together institutional policies and practices that were scattered across the institution.

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1 Introduction

1 In an environment in which students are paying more towards the cost of their education, the UK government wants the higher education system 'to be more responsive to the needs of students' (BIS, 2009: 71), and provide better information to students as 'well-informed student choice will be the most powerful force for change' (ibid.: 79), student choice 'will shape the landscape of higher education in the UK' (Browne, 2020: 4), turning this landscape into 'a more dynamic and student-led system [by] giving customers more power to get the service they want; deregulating and encouraging fair and dynamic markets and increasing local decision making and autonomy' (BIS, 2011a: 23). In this system 'student charters and student feedback will take on a new importance to empower students whilst at university' (BIS, 2011b: 6), where the goal of the UK government is to have a higher education system 'that is more responsive to student choice, that provides a better student experience and that helps improve social mobility' (ibid.: 8).

2 Amidst these new fee structures, national policy changes affecting all four UK countries, growing Higher Education (HE) private provision, expanding numbers of organisations with degree awarding powers and the re-positioning of individual institutions within HE landscape in the UK, it is remarkable that across all parts of the sector, the focus on student engagement continues to grow steadily. Perhaps a more competitive environment stimulates a strong focus on student opinion, supported by national policies requiring increased availability of public information for students (BIS, 2009, 2011a, 2011b).

3 Since the introduction of the QAA's new Quality Code chapter on Student Engagement (B5), institutions and students' unions have sought to benchmark their efforts against both this chapter and practices elsewhere. This research report was commissioned to support that interest in benchmarking. It also aims to give some indicators of our collective direction of travel, changes in institutional perceptions and attitudes to student engagement. This report has been produced together with a good practice guide entitled *a good practice guide to institutions and students' unions'* (Van der Velden et al., 2013) and *a 'Project Report'* (Van der Velden and Pool, 2013). This guide captures examples of the innovative, original and inspired student engagement practice identified in the survey.

4 The project team would like to thank the many colleagues in institutions and students' unions who were kind enough to return the survey and above all, those who were willing to be interviewed. These colleagues have been crucial to this research and the team hopes this report will provide some new insights into student engagement in return for the generous contributions of time and views. The team would also like to thank the Quality Assurance Agency for commissioning this research, and specifically Chris Taylor and Sarah Halpin, from the QAA's Student Engagement team for their practical support and encouragement.

2 Focus of the study against a background of prior reports and literature

2.1 Prior research

1. Student engagement has been the focus of many studies in higher education around the world (see: Little et al., 2009, QAA, 2005, 2006, 2008a. 2008b, 2008c and 2009 in England; York Consulting Limited, 2006 in Wales; Cockburn, 2005 in Scotland; Trowler, 2010 and Trowler and Trowler, 2010 in the UK; Froestad and Bakken, 2004 and QAA, 2008d in European Nordic countries; Kuh et al., 2007a and Pike and Kuh, 2005 in the USA; Coates, 2005, in Australia). In the UK, according to Trowler (2010), student engagement has received considerable attention in the literature since the mid-1990s arising from the economic, social, political constraints and increasing demands for accountability imposed on public higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world. Trowler provides a definition of student engagement based on a literature review as follow:

   > Student engagement is concerned with the interaction between the time, effort and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimise the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance, and reputation of the institution (Trowler, 2010: 3).

2. Student engagement in higher education varies according to the socio-political context in which institutions operate in the UK. HE providers have different missions and deliver to a wide range of differing student populations. In the UK, students play a role in the process of, and procedures for evaluating, shaping, assuring and enhancing the quality of their learning experience through many formal and informal institutional processes. These processes and procedures are governance related mechanisms to provide accountability and ensure that the student voice is listened to and acted upon (Little et al., 2009). Student engagement in HE in the UK takes many different forms, such as: student engagement in the teaching and learning process; student feedback; student evaluation of teaching; student representation; student participation in governance; and student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms, processes and procedures.

3. There are many established processes for engaging with students in HE in the UK. These processes include questionnaires, surveys (including National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Evaluation Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Evaluation Survey (PRES), focus groups, representation and membership in boards, committees, panels and formal quality processes (such as periodic programme review). According to Little at al. (2009: 17-18), there are 'other formal processes' (such as 'regular meetings between the president/other SU officers, the institutional head and/or senior management team') (ibis.: 17) and 'informal processes' (such as 'tutors'/lecturers' open door policies' and 'the use of email and online discussion fora') (ibid.: 18). Cockburn (2005), in his research, points out that institutions perceive informal links between student representatives and institutional staff as more effective in their operation, because such links 'allow student representatives to

understand more about the institution's priorities and individual committee members' agenda' (ibid.: 17).

4. *Student engagement in the teaching and learning process* has been addressed by many studies covering: student engagement in educationally purposeful activities (Astin, 1977, 1993; Kuh, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007; Kuh et al., 2005, 2007a, 2007b; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Gonyea, 2005; High School Survey of Student Engagement, 2005; McCarthy and Kuh, 2006; Zhao et al., 2005); the effort students make in and out of the classroom to experience and engage with diversity and personal growth (Pike, 2003; National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), 2005); student engagement and college characteristics (Pike and Kuh, 2005; Pike et al., 2006; Kezar and Kinzie, 2006; Kuh et al., 2005, 2007a; Kuh and Umbach, 2004); student engagement through ICTs (Nelson Laird and Kuh, 2005); student engagement to improve quality (National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), 2002, 2004; Zhao and Kuh, 2004; Machell and Saunders, 2007; Richardson et al., 2007); student consumerism (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005; Naidoo et al., 2011); international students' perceptions of quality teaching in higher education in the UK (Pimentel Bótas, 2012) and students' perceptions of quality teaching in higher education in the UK (Pimentel Bótas, 2000, 2004, 2008a, 2008b, and forthcoming).

5. *Student engagement through feedback* has played an important part in assuring and enhancing the quality of the student experience and the quality and standards of programmes in HE in the UK. Student engagement through feedback in UKHE has been addressed by Brennan and Williams (2004, 2003), Harvey (2001, 2003), QAA (2005, 2009) and (HEFCE, 2003). Brennan and Williams (2004) documented the perceptions of institutions of the purposes of student feedback. According to their findings, institutions perceive the purposes of student feedback as: 'enhancing the students' experience of learning and teaching' and 'contributing to monitoring and review of quality and standards' (main purposes); as well as 'ensuring the effectiveness of course design and delivery'; 'enabling a dialogue with students'; 'helping students reflect upon their experiences'; 'as part of the teaching and learning process'; 'identifying good practice'; 'measuring student satisfaction'; and 'contributing to staff development' (Brennan and Williams, 2004: 11).

6. This variety of perceptions of the main purposes of student feedback in HE have been the driver of many studies on student engagement focusing on specific issues such as: students' evaluations of teaching and its validity (Emery, 2003; Lin et al., 1995; Marsh and Dunkin, 1997; McCormack, 2005; Narasimhan, 2001; Ory, 2000; Pratt, 1997; Prosser and Trigwell, 1990, 1991; Shevlin et al., 2000; Abrami et al., 1997; Arubayi, 1987; Cohen, 1981; Marsh and Roche, 1997; McKeachie, 1997; Greenwald, 1997; Gregory et al., 1995); individual module questionnaires, including students' evaluations programmes (Byrne and Flood, 2003; Levenson, 1999) and students' evaluations of courses (Cohen, 2005; Feldman, 1984; Prosser and Trigwell, 1990); student feedback surveys such as the SEEQ (Coffey and Gibbs, 2001; Marsh, 1982) and the NSS in the UK (Machell and Saunders, 2007; Richardson et al., 2007; Pimentel Bótas and Brown, 2013) and CEQ in Australia (Ainley and Long, 1994; Johnson, 1999; McInnis et al., 2001; Ramsden, 1991; Richardson, 1997; Wilson et al., 1997); and evaluations of institutions

(Kettunen, 2003). Other studies have provided criticism of these tools, including: motivation of student to take part in such engagement (Chen and Hoshower, 2003; Husbands, 1996, 1997; Ngware and Ndirangu, 2005); issues related to bias and faculty views (Cramer and Alexitch, 2000; Nasser and Fresko, 2002); effects of student feedback (Menges and Brinko, 1986); and the implications of student feedback for higher education and academics (Neumann, 2000).

7. *Student engagement through representation* in the UK has been addressed by the QAA (2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2009) and Van der Velden (2012a, 2012b). Cockburn (2005) mapped the student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement processes in Scotland. York Consulting Limited (2006) studied the effectiveness of student representation structures within Welsh institutions, whilst Little at al. (2009) researched student engagement in England. According to Cockburn (2005), student engagement through representation means that: (1) the institution offers an opportunity for students to attend institutional meetings and events related to quality assessment and enhancement processes and procedures; (2) students do take up those opportunities and attend meetings and events; and (3) students are allowed to engage in those meetings and events and are able to make an effective contribution to their institutions' quality assessment and enhancement processes and procedures.

8. In relation to student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement processes in Scotland, Cockburn (2005) found, among other findings, that: (1) At institutional level, across the sector, students were less likely to participate in staff development and audit committees, and that the difficulties associated with student engagement were not solely related to issues concerning students' personalities, but also related to issues concerning features and practices over which institutions have control. (2) At faculty/school level, there was less engagement as the definition and practice of student engagement and the appointment of student representatives varied significantly across Scotland, and only where the faculty viewed it as appropriate. And (3) at departmental level, student engagement was through representation on SSLCs or similar bodies. Cockburn also found that institutional support and training for students participating in internal subject reviews was generally limited to a briefing about the procedures used within the institution. According to him, undergraduate and full-time campus-based students were likely to engage in quality assurance and enhancement procedures and processes, whilst postgraduate (taught and research), part-time and international students were less likely to be engaged.

9. In Wales, York Consultancy Limited (2006) studied the extent and effectiveness of existing student representation structures within Welsh institutions. They found that: (1) At institution level, student representation was generally undertaken by SU President and other elected officers. (2) At faculty, school or department level, across the sector, student representation was supported through course representative structures. They pointed out that in some institutions, student representation was managed centrally at these levels, with either the students' unions or institutions issuing clear guidelines. They observed that in some institutions, whilst a requirement that student representation mechanisms should be in place, the operationalisation and management of these was at the discretion of the relevant faculty, school or

department. However, this research suggested that, more often than not, the selection process of student representatives was 'students putting themselves forward for the position' (p. ii), i.e. self-volunteering. (3) At course programme and module levels, across the sector, the approach to appointment of student representatives varied according to the extent to which sufficient numbers came forward for nomination. It was also found that, across the sector, part-time students were the group least likely to engage in student representation. The research showed that the majority of the Welsh institutions were found to offer a programme of training to their student representatives.

10. More recently, Little et al. (2009) studied the process of student engagement in informing and enhancing the collective student learning experience and its effectiveness within institutions providing institutions in England. They found that: (1) Student feedback questionnaires were widely used at institution (92%) and module/unit (87%) levels; (2) Student representation on committees was near universal, with 71% of their participating institutions having no difficulties at all in filling posts at institution level. (3) Students, in the majority of cases, were more likely to become representatives by nomination or volunteering than by any more formal election process. (4) In just over half of HEIs, SSLCs were operated at institution and department levels. (5) Students were made aware of the role of student representatives during the induction process and also through emails, websites and posters. (6) A third offered student representatives the opportunity to gain recognition for their role. (7) Groups of students less likely to engage in representation were First year (worried about transition to university), PGT, and Final year students (concentrating on their studies). (8) Training for student representatives was nearly universal; in just over half of the surveyed institutions the SU was responsible for this training, and in around one third it was the joint responsibility of the HEI and SU. (9) There was clear evidence that institutions and their students' unions were putting some effort into producing (jointly) student representative handbooks and codes of practice on student representation. (10) 32% of the institutions were more likely to consider SSLCs to be very effective in raising issues relating to the quality of students' learning experiences. However, it was pointed out that 'it [was] evident from the survey responses and fieldwork interviews that though overarching processes for student representation [might] be similar across the sector, there [was] much variation between institutions and within institutions' (Little et al, 2009: 32). Furthermore, it was found that institutions used a range of dissemination methods to impart information to their students, including: items within Schools' newsletters, posting information on notice-boards and web pages.

11. The studies reviewed above analysed student engagement in quality learning and teaching enhancement management separately in England, Scotland and Wales. In this study, the focus has been on the UK as a whole and has studied the opportunities provided for students to engage in quality learning and teaching enhancement management, as well as their perceived effectiveness. The QAA argues that 'it is accepted that the views of students, individually and collectively, should inform quality systems with the purpose of improving the student educational experience' (QAA, 2012: 2). According to the agency, the involvement of students in quality enhancement

and assurance processes have a positive influence on the delivery and developments of any aspect of the student educational experience at all levels and throughout all aspects of their educational journey. It argues that all students should have the opportunity to be involved these processes.

12. In line with the chapter B5: Student engagement, part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, this study looked at the domain of student engagement related to 'the participation of students in quality enhancement and quality assurance processes, resulting in the improvement of their educational experience' (ibid.: 2). This also 'includes but is not restricted to representation of the student view through formal representation mechanisms' (ibid.: 2). In this study, the 'indicators of sound practice' (QAA, 2012: 4) have been used to guide the investigation of UK student engagement in quality learning and teaching enhancement management. The indicators of sound practice used in this study are presented in Table 1, below:

Table 1 – Indicators of sound practice and their relationship to our surveys

Numbers	Indicators of sound practice (QAA, 2012)	Surveys' questions
1	Higher education providers, in partnership with their student body, define and promote the range of opportunities for any student to engage in educational enhancement and quality assurance	3, 4, 5, 6, and 7
2	Higher education providers create and maintain an environment within which students and staff engage in discussions that aim to bring about demonstrable enhancement of the educational experience	15, 16, 17, 31 and 32
3	Arrangements exist for the effective representation of the collective student voice at all organisational levels, and these arrangements provide opportunities for all students to be heard	8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13
4	Higher education providers ensure that student representatives and staff have access to training and on-going support to equip them to fulfil their roles in educational enhancement and quality assurance effectively	4, 18, 19 and 20
5	Students and staff engage in evidence-based discussions based on the mutual sharing of information	21, 22, and 23
6	Staff and students disseminate and jointly recognise the enhancement made to the student educational experience, and the efforts of students in achieving these successes	25, 26 and 27
7	The effectiveness of student engagement is monitored and reviewed at least annually, using pre-defined key performance indicators, and policies and processes are enhanced where required	28, 29, and 30

13. It is important to note that questions 18, 19 and 20 in the survey were not included for students' unions. These questions were related specifically to the institutional role in training and developing their academic and administrative staff on issues concerning student engagement, representation and the institutional understanding of the role students play in learning and teaching quality management. Hence, those questions were not relevant to respondents from students' unions.

3 Purpose of the study and research methodology

3.1 Purpose of the study

1 The purpose of this study was to investigate how UK institutions engage their students in learning and teaching quality management procedures. The study focused on the perceptions of institutions and students' unions of such engagement. This report aims to provide an overview and examples of good practice in student engagement in quality management as found currently in UK institutions. The research findings are intended to inform the sector and support the future development of student engagement policy, such as that provided in the QAA Quality Code of Practice.

2 In line with the QAA's chapter B5: Student engagement, part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality), this study looks at the domain of student engagement within the following definition: *'the participation of students in quality enhancement and quality assurance processes, resulting in the improvement of their educational experience'* (ibid.: 2), which *'includes but is not restricted to representation of the student view through formal representation mechanisms'* (ibid.: 2). Indeed, in this research some aspects of student engagement have been explored which are not related to the Quality Code but which were considered to be of potential interest to the sector.

3 In more detail, the research intended to:

- Determine the **current extent and nature of student engagement** in learning and teaching quality management in UK institutions, be it through the use of student surveys, committee participation, SSLCs or other mechanisms used in support of student engagement;
- Explore the **opportunities provided** by institutions for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management and the **changes that are perceived to have been brought about** by this;
- Determine which **groups of students are deemed less likely to engage** in learning and teaching quality management procedures and the actions taken by institutions and students' unions to improve participation of these groups of students;
- Explore the **training, support and development** provided for students to take part in learning and teaching quality management in UK institutions, and for the staff that engage with them;
- Determine the **information exchange and communication of enhancements** to the student experience between the institution and students' unions.
- Explore the use of **performance indicators** to measure the effectiveness of student engagement and changes originating from them in institutions; and
- Explore institutional and student body experiences relating to the introduction of **student charters** or similar staff-student agreements in institutions.

3.2 Research methodology

1 The study was undertaken using desk research, online surveys of institutions (including large, small, specialist and private institutions) and their students' unions and telephone interviews of a selected group of institutional staff with oversight of quality management in their institution. The main part of this empirical study, that is the online surveys and interviews, was undertaken during April-July 2013.

2 The online survey was sent to institutional staff responsible for quality management (or at least quality assurance) in their institutions and students' unions' President/Vice-President/Sabbatical Officers in 260 institutions and 199 students' unions. Seventy-five institutions and 26 students' unions responded and returned completed surveys. It was not the case that the 26 students' unions matched with 26 (of the 57) institutions that responded to the survey. Hence the team did not undertake effort to see whether students' unions responses corroborated institutional responses or vice versa. However, some comparisons between patterns of responses across the students' unions collectively and the institutions collectively have been made. Qualtrics was used to create and distribute the online surveys, collect institutions' and students' unions' responses and prepare them for analysis. Excel was used to undertake the quantitative analysis. NVivo was used to code and compare the open questions' answers as well as the interview transcripts with the survey's concepts and findings.

3 The survey was constructed around the indicators of sound practice identified by the QAA in chapter B5 (QAA, 2012), as listed in Table 1, above. It is important to note that questions 18, 19 and 20 in the survey were not included for the students' unions. These questions were related specifically to the institutional role in training and developing their academic and administrative staff on issues concerning student engagement, representation and the institutional understanding of the role students play in learning and teaching quality management. Hence those questions were not relevant to students' unions' respondents. The full survey can be found in the appendices of this report.

4 The survey invited closed and open responses together with responses against given scales. The surveys comprised a series of 16 closed questions and 14 related open questions for the institutional survey and 15 closed questions and 12 related open questions for the students' union survey. As mentioned elsewhere, the only difference between the two surveys was the omission of the question concerning staff development provision in institutions and its two related open questions. The responses were anonymous, apart from those institutions which agreed to take part in the telephone interviews.

5 In addition to the online surveys, telephone interviews were undertaken with institutional staff responsible for quality assurance provision in their institutions and, in two cases, with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for learning and teaching. The interviews were scheduled to explore respondents' answers in the survey in more detail and to capture examples of good practice. These in-depth, semi-structured telephone interviews were carried out with 14 institutions with a strong

distance learning emphasis, evident from the surveys' findings, the use of performance indicators, active reviews of student engagement practices or clear indications of good practice. Of the interviewed institutions, seven were pre-92 institutions, five were post-92 and two were specialist institutions. Of these, one was a mixed higher education and further education institution, two were private, five had substantial distance learning or provision based fully abroad (Transnational Education), two were Welsh and 12 English. Regrettably no Scottish or Northern Irish institutions were available for interview. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and then analysed against the indicators of sound practice and the survey findings. The transcribed interviews were further scrutinised to collate an overview of original, innovative or unusual practice, which the team has reported separately by the team in the *project report* and *a guide to good practice for institutions and students' unions*.

4 Opportunities provided for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management

1 In the survey we found that all institutions) provided the following opportunities for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management. This finding is supported by the responses of the students' unions. The opportunities provided are: student feedback questionnaires, SSLCs, student representation on committees (excluding SSLC) and student feedback systems for distance learning courses. In Table 2 below, both the total number of institutions providing these opportunities and the total number of students' unions where these opportunities are available to students are presented.

Table 2 – Opportunity for student engagement in institutions – institutional and students' unions' responses

Opportunity for student engagement	**Total number of respondents**		**Level**				
			Institution	**Faculty/ School**	**Discipline/ Department**	**Study Programme**	**Module/ Unit**
Student feedback questionnaire	**HEIs**	**74**	57	21	28	46	68
	SUs	**26**	23	19	17	19	23
Staff-student liaison committees (SSLCs)	**HEIs**	**72**	40	36	38	46	10
	SUs	**26**	12	13	18	15	8
Student representation on other committees (excluding SSLCs)	**HEIs**	**74**	73	56	42	45	8
	SUs	**26**	26	24	19	14	5
Student feedback systems for distance learning courses	**HEIs**	**47**	22	12	17	31	29
	SUs	**15**	7	7	9	10	6

Please Note: Numbers presented at each of the levels (institution, faculty/school, discipline/department, study programme and module/unit) are the number of respondents who selected each of these levels, out of the total number of respondents presented in bold in the second column.

2 Table 2 shows that student representation on other committees (excluding SSLC), student feedback questionnaires, and SSLCs are mechanisms used widely by institutions to engage students in learning and teaching quality management (in that order). Student feedback systems for distance learning courses are less commonly used as not all institutions in the UK provide distance learning courses. Table 2 also shows that according to students' unions' student feedback questionnaires, student representation on other committees (excluding SSLC), and SSLCs are widely used mechanisms to engage students in learning and teaching quality management in their institutions (again in that order).

3 Furthermore, taking into account the total number of respondents from institutions and students' unions (at all levels) in each type of opportunity, one can observe that:

- ***Student representation on other committees (excluding SSLCs)*** is the *most* common means provided by institutions for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management, whilst students' unions consider it to be the *second* most common means provided by their institutions for students to engagement in learning and teaching quality enhancement.
- ***Student feedback questionnaires*** are the *second* most common means provided by institutions for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management, whilst students' unions consider them to be the *first* most common means provided by their institutions for students to engagement in learning and teaching quality enhancement. It is interesting to point out that the perception of the students' unions can be informed by the high media interest and publicity given to NSS results and the high importance institutions place on national rankings in the UK. It also appears to be the case that students who do not articulate vocally their interests place high importance on feedback questionnaires than other means of engagement in learning and teaching quality management.
- ***SSLCs*** are perceived by both institutions and students' unions to be the *third* most common means provided by institutions for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management.
- ***Student feedback systems for distance learning courses*** are perceived by both institutions and students' unions to be the *least* common means provided by institutions for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management. In the survey only 47 institutions and 15 students' unions reported that their institutions provided distance learning courses.

4 It is interesting to acknowledge that SSLCs and student feedback systems for distance learning courses are the only two opportunities which both institutions and students' unions hold the similar perception of their provision in their institutions, i.e. SSLCs are considered to be the third most common opportunity provided for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management and student feedback systems for distance learning courses are considered to be the *least* common opportunity provided in their institutions.

5 In the interviews further exploration of the findings of the survey was carried out revealing that there is a considerable variance between institutions even where they had indicated to use the same mechanisms to engage students in quality management activity, or where a comparable approach to the election, selection or nomination of students was in place. For instance, in relation to student feedback questionnaires, interviews revealed that there was considerable variety in how students were engaged in the development, use and evaluation of these. Some participants reported getting student representatives involved in the development and revision of the questions used in their student feedback surveys, whilst for others this was a matter entirely for staff. Similarly, although the sharing of module feedback outcomes with student representatives, usually at SSLCs, was still under discussion in some institutions, in others it has become common practice. In terms of the areas covered by

questionnaires, it was noted that whilst in the past module feedback questionnaires and particularly the inclusion of student feedback on the quality of teaching had been controversial, participants have no longer reported such controversy as an obstacle.

6 Both institutions and students' unions were also invited to list any other opportunities provided for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management in their institutions. Forty-eight institutions and six students' unions reported that they provided a wide range of '***Other opportunities for student engagement in learning and teaching quality management***'. These other opportunities are presented in the tables below (see Table 3 for institutional responses and Table 4 for students' unions' responses).

Table 3 - Other opportunities provided for student engagement in learning and teaching quality management – institutional responses

Participation in:	**Other opportunities provided for student engagement in learning and teaching quality management**	**Number of respondents out of 48 HEIs**
Review Panels, Committees and meetings	Annual; Periodic; Programme review; Performance; Internal Quality Assurance/Quality Enhancement; Module; Department; Quality; Subject; Curriculum; Approval; Re-approval; Validation; Revalidation; Procedure; Curriculum co-creation, development and design; Internal Review Teams	**48**
	Institutional/University; Senate; Student- Staff College Level; Student- Staff Subject Level; Student-Staff Learning; Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees; Council; Vice-Chancellor; Directors; Senior Management Team	**14**
Focus Groups and Working Groups	Topic Based; School Specific; Recruitment Strategies; Strategic Quality Issues/Quality Enhancement; Feedback; Institutional/University/Executive; Teaching, Learning and Assessment Task and Finish; Quality and Enhancement Issues; Strategic	**12**
Survey/ Questionnaire evaluation and/or design	NSS; Internal; Induction; Destination; Online; One-off	**8**

Table 3 – Other opportunities provided for student engagement in learning and teaching quality management – institutional responses – ***continuation***

Participation in	Other opportunities provided for student engagement in learning and teaching quality management	Number of respondents out of 48 HEIs
Consultation/ Consultancy	Quality/Enhancement Issues; State; Service; Support; Institutional/University/Executive; Teaching, Learning and Assessment Task and Finish	**3**
Report	External Examiner	**3**
Forum	Discipline; Study Programme; Module; HE Faculty; Online	**3**
Bodies	Student Academic Council; Student Parliament	**3**
Award	Student led Teaching Award; Student lead Student and Staff Teaching and Staff Representation Awards	**3**
Evaluation	Module; Online	**2**
Conference	Learning and Teaching; Student; Student Voice	**2**
Action Plan	School Response to NSS; Institutional Action Plan in response to NSS	**2**
Monitoring	Annual Programme	**1**
Observation	Teaching and Learning	**1**
Training	Leading; Contributing	**1**
Mentoring	Peer	**1**
Project	Learning and Teaching	**1**

7 In Table 3 above, it shows that students' participation and membership in review panels, focus groups and working groups were also common ways of engaging students. The responses also provided further insight into the type of committee and survey/questionnaires mechanisms already identified as commonly used.

Table 4 – Other opportunities provided for student engagement in learning and teaching quality management – students' union responses

Participation in:	Opportunities provided for student engagement in learning and teaching quality management	**Number of respondents out of 6 SUs**
Review Panels, Committees and Meetings	Periodic; Programme review; Re-accreditation	**6**
	Course; QAA; QAEC; University; Access Agreement Monitoring	**3**
	Programme; Department; Faculty; University; Reviewers; Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Students and Academic Standards; Key university staff	**2**
Policy Network	Input on strategic decisions alongside the Director of learning and teaching	**1**
Conference	Learning and Teaching	**1**
Survey/ Questionnaire evaluation and/or design	NSS; Internal; Institutional; Module	**1**

8 In Table 4 above, it appears that for these students' unions, students' participation and membership in review panels was also another common way to engage students, also noted by institutions. Again, this table provides a further insight into the type of committees with which students were engaging. In both Tables 3 and 4, one can observe that students' participation in review panels, committees, survey/questionnaires and conference are the common areas reported by both institutions and students' unions were other opportunities were provided for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management in their institutions.

9 In the interviews, participants also shared other examples for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management. Two examples were of particular note, with several institutions reporting these engagement practices and their perceived positive influence. One of these related to the establishment of fora, which can be referred to as *'student affairs forum/committee'* (Participant), though in each institution alternative names were used. Although student affairs fora were considered by participants to be particularly influential in quality enhancement, policy development and strategic planning in relation to the student experience, mainly due to their informal nature, the remit of such fora was reported to be wider than learning and teaching issues, usually addressing the whole student experience. Items for discussion and consideration were put forward by both student representatives and staff, including the evaluation of major surveys relating to institutional or professional services. Although there was often overlap with more traditional quality management committees, not all such fora were part of the formal committee structure. Hence, the membership of these fora also included core professional service leaders, thus allowing direct communication and exchange between student representatives and the professional services managers. The participants provided some examples of various (service) enhancement activities that had resulted from these fora discussions.

10 The second of these changed practices related to periodic programme reviews and, in particular, the role students have taken in these reviews. Although these reviews are a well-established part of institutional quality review methods, several participants commented on how student participation in these reviews was undergoing change. It was reported that increasingly, student representatives are full members of the review panels and were given support and advance training for their role. Such support was provided sometimes by the students' union and sometimes by the institution, whilst in some institutions this had become a collaborative effort. The role of the student representative is, in some institutions, limited to quality matters with academic standards (explicitly or implicitly) excluded from their judgment. Participants highlighted that although input through feedback surveys and direct meetings of the panel with students had already been in place in their institutions, the quality of feedback from direct meetings had benefited particularly from having a student panel member to lead discussions with students. Participants observed that feedback from staff on student membership was reportedly positive with several examples of reviews being undertaken in a more rigorous way resulting in more comprehensive outcomes. The benefits of the students' input was acknowledged.

11 One participant illustrated how their institution was trialling an extended student review of programmes. The process involved staff and students engaging in a half day of programme review separately initially, to then meet and compare findings. According to this participant, this innovative practice has so far led to a higher level of engagement by staff and students, resulting in a better quality review. Furthermore, this participant claimed that this new practice has enhanced significantly the staff-student relationship and, consequently led to enhancement in other joint activities.

5 Student representation in institutions

1 The survey found that institutions adopted different selection processes to engage student representatives at different levels within their structures (i.e. programme, department, faculty and institutional). In Table 5 below, the means through which students become representatives in their institutions are presented

Table 5 – Means through which students become representatives in their institutions – institutional and students' unions' responses

Selection Process	Total Number of respondents		Level			
			Institution	Faculty/ School	Discipline/ Department	Study Programme
Elected (through the SU or similar body)	**HEIs**	**61**	55	36	24	27
	SUs	**24**	24	14	14	12
Elected (through Institutional mechanisms)	**HEIs**	**29**	12	15	11	21
	SUs	**14**	2	6	10	13
Nominated (usually by fellow students)	**HEIs**	**50**	16	17	25	37
	SUs	**14**	3	7	5	10
Self-volunteered	**HEIs**	**41**	14	17	23	32
	SUs	**18**	6	7	9	15
Selected (usually hand-picked by staff)	**HEIs**	**14**	3	6	2	9
	SUs	**12**	2	4	4	7

Please note: Numbers presented at each of the levels (institution, faculty/school, discipline/department, study programme and module/unit) are the number of respondents who selected each of these levels, out of the total number of respondents presented in bold in the second column.

2 Table 5 shows that: election (through the students' union or similar body) is the most common means through which students become representatives in the institutions at institution and faculty/school levels, followed by nomination (usually by fellow students) at study programme level, self-volunteering and election (through institutional mechanisms) at study programme level. Table 5 also shows that for students' unions: election (through the students' union or similar body) is the most common means through which students become representatives in their institutions at institution, faculty/school, discipline/department and study programme levels, followed by self-volunteering at study programme and discipline/department levels, and election (through institutional mechanisms) and nomination (usually by fellow students) at study programme and faculty/school levels.

3 The following observations were also made:

- ***Election (through the students' union or similar body)*** is considered by both institutions and students' unions to be the *most* commonly used means through which students become representatives.
- ***Nomination (usually by fellow students)*** is the *second* most commonly used means through which students become representatives in 50 institutions. However, for 14 students' unions it is the *third* most commonly used means through which students become representatives in their institutions.
- ***Self-volunteering*** is the *third* most commonly used means through which students become representatives in the institutions, whilst for students' unions it is the *second* most commonly used means.
- ***Election (through institutional mechanisms)*** is the *fourth* most common used means through which students become representatives in the institutions, whilst it is *third* for students' unions.
- ***Selection (usually hand-picked by staff)*** is considered by institutions and students' unions to be the *least* commonly used means through which students become representatives in their institutions.

4 It was interesting to note that the election (through the SU or similar body) and selection (usually hand-picked by staff) were the only two means which both institutions and students' unions held similar views on, i.e. the election (through the SU or similar body) is considered to be the *first* most commonly means and selection (usually hand-picked by staff) is considered to be the *least* commonly used means through which students become representatives in their institutions.

5 A more surprising finding was that one institution and two students' unions were unable to identify the means through which students became representatives at their faculty/school, discipline/department and study programme levels.

6 In the interviews, most participants reported that election of student representatives was the preferred means over any of the other forms in their institutions. Clarity was provided on why students were nonetheless sometimes hand-picked. In some cases students with particular characteristics (international background, for instance) were invited to join panels or meetings, or they were invited because they had already fulfilled a specific and relevant role, such as being a student researcher for a particular project or policy. Examples were also given of a lack of students' willingness to stand for elective positions, in which case staff had selected students they deemed suitable and invited them to take on a representative role. The reasons provided for the selection of students were that students were hesitant to stand for a representative role because of conflicting interests with paid work or caring responsibilities, all consuming (vocational) educational demands, limited prior tradition of student representation or a lack of clarity of the role.

7 Where students were selected, several institutions outlined the extent to which they provided support and advice to their representatives to ensure that these students approached the role in the most appropriate way and gathered wider student opinion.

8 Whilst it may have been unclear from the survey initially, the interview findings indicated that the preferred method of electing student representatives was more common in some types of institutions than others. In traditional and larger institutions, student representatives tended to be elected, whilst in smaller institutions, and especially those of a strongly vocational nature, student representatives were more often selected. In smaller institutions, representatives were not necessarily supported by the existence of a students' union or similar body, whilst in large institutions there was consistently a firm students' union presence.

9 Several institutions, where selection was commonplace, had put arrangements in place to stimulate more interest in standing for election into representational roles ranging from increasing publicity and guidance about roles, to appointing election officers and working with the students' union to further develop their election arrangements. In one case, the institution took the opportunity to involve their international students in the organisation of social events around relevant international celebrations. These students were then encouraged to take their roles a step further and move into representative roles. The majority of the participants reported to envisage long term progression towards a more independent and elective student representation system. In some institutions including private institutions, a students' union or representational system did not exist and was not felt to be achievable (or desirable), so a student or recent former student was employed to fulfil the role of student representative.

10 Some institutions reported that some level of payment for representation roles existed, most commonly for those areas where it was harder to establish representative roles (faculty or school level, i.e. the level above the discipline) or for intensive temporary roles (curriculum review panel membership). Others had a firm stance against paying students. Where the arguments against related to safeguarding the independent nature of representational roles, the arguments in support of payment ranged from wishing to enable all students to stand for representational election, despite their financial situation, to insisting that if staff were rewarded for their contributions, this should also be the case for students. One institution had tried to overcome these issues by not paying the representatives, but rewarding their students' union for time spent on representational matters. The students' union was then responsible for finding representatives and paying these an annual honorarium.

6 Student participation on committees

1 The survey found that there were three main categories of student participation on committees in the institutions: (1) students participated only when invited to do so; (2) students voiced their concerns but did not vote; and (3) students were fully involved in discussion and had voting rights. In the tables below, the responses of institutions and students' unions are presented.

Table 6 – Categories of student participation on committees – institutional and students' unions responses

Student participation on committees	**Total number of respondents**		**Level**			
			Institution	**Faculty/ School**	**Discipline/ Department**	**Study Programme**
Students participate only when invited to do so	**HEIs**	**13**	11	3	1	6
	SUs	**11**	4	6	8	9
Students voice their concerns but do not vote	**HEIs**	**21**	11	7	9	12
	SUs	**10**	3	2	5	8
Students are fully involved in discussion and have voting rights	**HEIs**	**61**	60	39	35	42
	SUs	**23**	22	18	16	14

2 Table 6 shows that the most common categories of student participation on committees in the institutions are: students are fully involved in discussion and have voting rights, followed by students voice their concerns but do not vote and finally, students participate only when invited to do so. The pattern is slightly different for students' unions: students are fully involved in discussion and have voting rights in their institutions, followed by students participate only when invited to do so and students voice their concern but do not vote.

3 In Table 6, interesting observations include:

- ***Students are fully involved in discussion and have voting rights*** is the *most* common categorisation of student participation on committees in both institutions and students' unions.
- ***Students voice their concerns but do not vote*** is the *second* most common categorisation of student participation on committees in institutions, whilst students' unions consider this to be the *third* most common categorisation of student participation on committees in their institutions.
- ***Students participate only when invited to do so*** is the *third* most common categorisation of student participation on committees in institutions, whilst students' unions consider this to be the *second* most common categorisation of student participation on committees in their institutions.

4 It is important to observe that one extra category was provided by seven institutions, which deviated from the three main ones above: '***students are fully involved in***

discussion in a no voting system' (our emphasis), that is, students are fully involved in discussion but there is no tradition of voting in committees in those institutions. Students' unions did not provide any other category to characterise student participation on committees, though three students' unions did comment further on practices in their institution:

- 'Sabbatical Officers will have voting rights at higher level meetings, whereas other students attending will not',
- 'You raise concerns, then say yes if you are happy with things', and
- 'Committees are hard for any student representative to engage with as the language used is a barrier to their participation'.

5 Arising from the survey, it was interesting to note that one institution claimed that student surveys were the only means students have to 'participate in the decision-making process' in their institution, and another institution expressed concerns about the discrepancy in his/her institution between students having 'full rights in policy' but added that, in practice, the 'policy did not work well' at faculty/school level as it did at study programme and institution levels.

6 The interviews' findings reinforced the suggestion found in the survey that the student voice was accepted widely on committees. None of the participants reported their academic staff objecting to students being present at committees, nor considered the student voice less relevant. There were some examples of particular efforts to ensure that the student voice was given appropriate attention, such as adding *'Students' business'* as a standing item after *'Chairs' business'* on committee agendas. Training in relation to encouraging an effective student voice was also provided by students' unions or institutions, or sometimes jointly. Several participants explicitly referred to the need for both chairs and student representatives to ensure that a balance is found to encourage a pro-active and constructive student voice. As one participant in the interviews described:

> *We drew up a new, more student friendly agenda and discuss some training for the chairs of those committees to think about how they might ensure that those meetings were more accessible to students and some of that was just small things like advising that it's wise to get maybe final year undergraduate students to speak first, rather than necessarily going to first years each time because they might not feel so confident about speaking in a forum* (Participant).

7 Where institutions had committee-specific representative roles, participants reported that there were difficulties in finding students willing to stand for such a role, unless they had prior understanding and experience of engaging in learning and teaching quality management. Two participants referred, as an example of this, to the role of curriculum representative at faculty level within their institutions. The faculty representative had the role of on-going involvement in all curriculum proposals, approval and review processes at faculty level. The roles were slightly different between the institutions, but in each case the student representative was selected,

where possible with guidance from the students' union, simply because none of the students understood the role sufficiently to stand for the position.

7 Engaging groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures

1 In the survey and subsequent interviews the perceptions of institutions and students' unions of groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures in their institutions was explored. Consideration was also given to the actions they were both taking in order to improve engagement of these groups of students.

7.1 Identified groups of students deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management

1 According to the institutions surveyed, the groups of student deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures were part-time, working/work-based, postgraduate and distance learning students. However, according to students' unions', these groups were distance learning and post-graduate taught students. In Table 7 below, the number of institutions which reported recognising particular groups of students they deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures are presented. And in Table 8 below, the same responses are reported for students' unions.

Table 7 – Groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures reported by institutions

Groups of students who are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures	**Number of respondents out of 71 HEIs**
Part-time students (including postgraduate, executive, professional, mature, working, caring and those based on international campus)	**21**
Working/work-based/placement students (including health, nursing, professional, executive and CPD)	**14**
Postgraduate students (including Taught and Research)	**13**
Distance learning students	**13**
Mature students	**7**
International students	**7**
Off-campus students (including living at home and with caring responsibilities)	**5**
Students in Partner institutions (including FE Colleges)	**5**
Young students	**3**

*Table 7 – Groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures reported by institutions – **continuation***

Groups of students who are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures	Number of respondents out of 71 HEIs
Students who are very focused on their studies and with heavy individual timetables and workloads	**3**
Students based on international campus	**2**
Vocational students (including performing Arts)	**1**
Students studying abroad	**1**
Visiting students	**1**

2 In Table 7, it seems that part-time, working/work-based/placement, postgraduate, distance learning, mature, international, off-campus students and students in partner institutions are the groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures in institutions.

Table 8 – Groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures reported by students' unions

Groups of students who are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures	Number of respondents out of 22 SUs
Distance learning students	**6**
Postgraduate students (including Taught and Research)	**5**
Students who are very focused on their studies and with heavy individual timetables and workloads	**2**
Mature students	**2**
Vocational students (including performing Arts)	**2**
First year students	**2**
International students	**2**
Working/work-based/placement students (including health, nursing, professional, executive and CPD)	**1**

Table 8 – Groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures reported by students' unions – ***continuation***

Groups of students who are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures	**Number of respondents out of 22 SUs**
Off-campus students (including living at home and with caring responsibilities)	**1**
Students studying abroad	**1**
Part-time students (including postgraduate, executive, professional, mature, working, caring and those based on international campus)	**1**

3 The data captured in Table 8 suggests that according to students' unions, part-time and postgraduate students are the groups who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures in their institutions.

4 It is important to point out that one students' union reported that all groups of students in its institution were less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures in their institutions. This answer was most likely to do with the nature and ethos of the institution where this students' union was located.

5 It is interesting to observe that the perceptions of both institutions and students' unions of the student groups who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures were probably related to their student populations and their policies of widening participation and access.

6 In the interviews, participants spoke extensively about the engagement of student groups deemed least likely to engage in quality management. Concentrating on the needs of these particular groups, institutions had tried to identify shortcomings of their existing mechanisms and were working with their students' union to find new ways to engage. Strikingly, there appeared to be broad consensus amongst the participants that improving representation of under-represented groups was a matter for students' unions. This was an interesting finding, as it could signify a shift in views on who is responsible for ensuring student engagement in a quality context. Perhaps it also indicates that students' unions are increasingly perceived to be an integral part of the quality management system of an institution.

7 A particular challenge appeared to be the participation of *Postgraduate Research (PGR) students* in SSLCs. PGR students were reported to view the representational system as an arrangement for taught students, whilst they compared their own circumstances more closely to those of academic staff. The perception was that these students were looking for more direct ways of representing their own interests and were unlikely to commit to responsibilities outside their research commitments.

8 *Students enrolled in distance learning* course posed interesting challenges for their institutions, mainly in relation to the engagement of student representatives and the use of SSLCs. For distance learners the participants reported that other commitments or a lack of identification with the institution or student community were reasons for students not to be attracted to representational roles.

7.2 Actions institutions are taking to improve the engagement of these groups of students

1 In the survey, 57 institutions and 13 students' unions reported to be taking actions to improve student engagement from these groups of students. Four institutions and four students' unions reported that they were not taking any action. Interestingly, nine institutions and six students' unions reported that they did not know or were unaware of any actions that their institutions or students' unions were taking in order to improve student engagement from those student groups deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures. Institutions and students' unions that reported taking action in order to improve student engagement from these groups were asked to describe them. The actions described by 56 institutions and 12 students' unions are presented in the Tables below (see Table 9 for institutional responses and Table 10 for students' unions' responses).

Table 9 – Actions institutions are taking to engage groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management

Type of actions Taken	Actions to engage groups of student who are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management	Number of respondents out of 56 HEIs
Adapting to groups of student representatives' needs	Carefully scheduling and timing of meetings, events and training to make them accessible to student representatives of these groups e.g. scheduling student meetings over lunchtime and early evenings	**7**
	Rearranging meeting to provide opportunity for student representatives of these groups to participate in meeting/events by using digital communication (Skype and telephone conference call and virtual SSLC meeting)	**5**
	Reviewing and altering SSLC structures to accommodate PGT, PGR, distance and blended learning students, in order to improve participation of students	**3**
	Using the VLE to enable students to participate more effectively as part of the academic community and to reach students who are harder to reach	**2**

Table 9 – Actions institutions are taking to engage groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management – ***continuation***

Type of actions Taken	Actions to engage groups of student who are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management	Number of respondents out of 56 HEIs
Promoting engagement and participation	Working in partnership with the SU to promote and encourage student engagement, to raise awareness of students of the profile and effectiveness of student representation, and adopt a flexible approach to student engagement in quality procedures and reviews	**6**
	Increasing the numbers of 'learner voice sessions'	**3**
	Involving student representatives in staff development	**1**
	Preparing a video setting out the benefits of student engagement in learning, teaching and quality processes	**1**
	Using the Learner Engagement Officer and Student Council to promote and raise awareness of student engagement and disseminate information leaflets	**1**
	Engaging international student earlier on during the induction process	**4**
Evaluation systems	Redesigning institutional level Student Experience Survey to capture relevant feedback from students on all aspects of their experience and levels of engagement	**5**
	Using focus group of students (including those who are from particular groups)	**4**
	Using internal student questionnaire for FE students	**1**
	Using PTES to survey the experience of PG students	**1**
	Implementing QA processes (review meetings/annual monitoring) at partner institutions to explore the mechanisms used to elicit student feedback and how these are used to effect change	**1**
	Using a unique evaluation system for one semester and one year visiting students, based on the NSS	**1**

Table 9 – Actions institutions are taking to engage groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management – ***continuation***

Type of actions Taken	Actions to engage groups of student who are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management	Number of respondents out of 56 HEIs
Communication	Developing and using online mechanisms and resources to engage these groups of students (including part-time and placement students)	**5**
	Creating Study Abroad Student Forum	**1**
	Direct engagement with these group of students via the SU and Departments	**3**
	SU targeting communication with these groups of students	**2**
	Improving digital and published communication with these groups of students (including VLE)	**2**
	Looking for better ways of communicating outcomes from the feedback provided by students (including VLE)	**2**
	Ensuring that specific issues related to PGT student experience are addressed in the University's Action Plan and clearly communicated to the PGT students	**1**
	Creation of the Student Experience Committee	**1**
Research	Working with the SU to identify groups of student which are under-represented, to research the experience and needs of these group of students, to gather evidence-based from which to develop interventions in order to make changes, and to look at the wider data to understand why these groups of students are under-represented	**4**
	Using the Student Engagement Officer to fully understand the issues related to the engagement of student representatives of these groups	**1**
	Working with the International Office and the SU to develop an International Student-led Project to understand the perceptions of belonging and engagement of international students, and why and how their engagement can be improved	**1**

Table 9 – Actions institutions are taking to engage groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management – ***continuation***

Type of actions Taken	Actions to engage groups of student who are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management	Number of respondents out of 56 HEIs
Recruitment and placement	Working with the SU to ensure that PGT student representatives are recruited to be involved in quality management processes and to sit on Student Council	**2**
	Pro-actively and purposefully recruiting representatives of these group students (including part-time students) to join committees	**2**
	Ensuring that students representatives from these groups sit on Validation and Review Panels and the Quality Network, and monitor their attendance	**3**
	SU is selecting a PG student representative to sit on Student Council	**1**
	Ensuring that PG student representatives are engaged in all levels of the University	**1**
Training and support	Pro-actively training representatives of these group students to join committees	**3**
	Enhancing training for course/year student representatives	**1**
	Using the Learner Engagement Officer to provide training to student representatives	**1**
	Working with the SU to ensure that PGT student representatives are trained to be effectively involved in quality management processes	**1**
	Providing all student representatives with an enhanced handbook and support	**2**
	Giving support for PG representative to sit on Institutional Teaching and Learning Committee	**1**
	Designing better learning and resources on how to get engaged at different levels, e.g. class representatives on internal committees as part of students' unions or as individuals, and writing guides on 'what does it mean being a student representative'	**1**
Use of incentives	Using incentives such as food/vouchers/travel expenses for attracting these groups of students to attend committees/meetings	**3**
	Introducing a Student Fellowship Scheme which will pay students to undertake some engagement work	**1**

Table 9 – Actions institutions are taking to engage groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management – ***continuation***

Type of actions Taken	Actions to engage groups of student who are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management	Number of respondents out of 56 HEIs
Policy	Establishing a Postgraduate Society/setting up a Graduate Students' Association (GSA)	**2**
	Reviewing the Student Engagement Policy and Development	**1**
	Reviewing the mechanisms to engage distance learning students by an appointed member of the SU	**1**
	Reviewing the programme/module questionnaire to allow cross-programme comparison	**1**
	Reviewing the University's unit for QA for student feedback and moving away from Subject Group towards Programme which students tend to identify with more easily	**1**
	Involving PG students in Governor shadowing scheme	**1**
	Working with the NUS to set up a Student Charter for PG students	**1**
	Trying to write in our processes that students' involvement is needed	**1**

Table 10 – Actions institutions are taking to engage groups of student who are deemed less likely to engage – students' unions' responses

Type of actions taken	Actions being taken to engage groups of student who are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management	Number of respondents out of 12 SUs
Promoting engagement and participation	Finding a way of using online resources to engage these groups of students	**2**
	Working with Graduate School Directors to promote and encourage engagement	**1**
	Raising awareness of students at induction process	**1**
Adapting to groups of student represent	Carefully scheduling and timing of meetings/events to make them accessible to student representatives of these groups	**2**

*Table 10 – Actions institutions are taking to engage groups of student who are deemed less likely to engage – students' unions' responses – **continuation***

Type of actions taken	Actions being taken to engage groups of student who are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management	Number of respondents out of 12 SUs
Communication	Organising specific fora for PGR students	**2**
	Advertising for open 'have your say' fora and consultations	**1**
	Including PG students in key meetings; Nominate PG student representative to sit on meetings	**2**
	Using the VLE to enable students to participate more effectively	**1**
Recruitment	Working with the Graduate School Directors to ensure that PGT student representatives are recruited to be involved in quality management processes	**1**

Representation	Nominate PG student officer to the SU	**1**
Training	Providing online training for student representatives	**1**
	Engaging international students earlier on during the induction process	**1**
Policy	Creating a PG charter	**1**

2 In both tables above, in relation to actions being taken to improve the participation of these student groups least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures, there was some consensus amongst institutions and students' unions about the most effective actions to improve participation. This consensus included areas such as: online, induction, promoting engagement and participation and adapting to groups of student representatives' needs.

3 The interviews confirmed that considerable work was being undertaken to make alternative arrangements to engage the harder to reach student groups. Specifically in fully distance learning based contexts (i.e. without residential arrangements at any time) the use of surveys to capture the student voice, sits firmly alongside representational systems and in some cases replaced it entirely. Where residential meetings were held, irrespective of their regularity, such events were used by the institution or relevant programme teams to seek staff-student liaison engagement with all students present. Sometimes this was also when course representatives are (s)elected.

4 Alternative approaches were therefore put in place such as scheduling informal meeting with all PGR students within a discipline around research seminars and internal conferences or establishing a single PGR student co-ordinator to represent students at faculty, school and college levels.

5 Virtual learning environments (VLEs), and in particular, discussion boards and blogs which are based within a closed environment (VLE or MLE), were also referred to as means of supporting student engagement in asynchronous staff-student liaison discussions. Reportedly, several institutions ran their SSLCs online *for part time, distance learning and mature cohorts*, either at a given time using a discussion forum, or more often opening a few strands of discussion for a given amount of time (week), for students to respond to. After closing the discussion a summary was made and taken further for evaluation and action by staff. There was rarely a particular student representative role discernible in online SSLCs.

6 *Students on campuses abroad* pose other challenges for institutions and students' unions. One participant reported that their representational system on a campus in Asia was deliberately the same as the system at the UK base. In order to accommodate representation of students on key institutional committees from their Asian campus, video conferencing was used resulting in early morning meetings for all key committee

meetings at the UK campus. Other participants pointed out that political circumstances of the host country can have considerable impact on how representation is organised. For example, in Malaysia unionising students would be against national laws and, therefore, their Malaysian based students were not organised in that manner. In China, there may be political influences prohibiting unions developing in ways common to the UK. Yet, in both cases, alternative forms of collectively organised representation were put in place, by developing social associations with some form of informal representation, or a greater reliance on surveying the student voice. The same participants noted that the views of their locally recruited staff on how acceptable it is for students to provide frank feedback on their tutors' teaching could also influence the form that student engagement and representation would take.

7 In the context of *multiple campus provision*, one participant reported that their institution insisted on the same mechanisms being used across all campuses, regardless of where in the world they were based. Another institution which works with multiple small units of provision abroad (Europe), instituted academic liaison roles for staff that travelled to meet with staff and students allowing them to keep a close eye on student engagement and quality matters. In the latter case, no strict parity expectations on student engagement between delivery sites existed.

8 Participants' perceptions of students' roles in their institutions in different situations

1 In the survey, institutions were asked to rate the extent to which the roles of their students were perceived differently according to the context, for example, in the learning and teaching environment or in relation to facilities such as residences in their institutions. The scales were from zero to 100. The categories of perceptions given to the participants to rate were as follow: Students are perceived as: (1) an equal partner, (2) an expert, (3) customer/consumer, (4) stakeholder and (5) something other. 71 institutions and 19 students' unions recognise that the roles of their students are perceived differently in different situations. In Table 11 below, the *mean* and *median* values of institutional and students' unions' perceptions of the role of students are presented.

Table 11 – The mean and median values of institutional and students' unions' perceptions of the role of students

Perception of the role of students as:	**Total number of responses**		***Mean* value**	***Median* value**
As stakeholder	**HEIs**	**71**	76	81
	SUs	**19**	62	60
As an equal partner	**HEIs**	**71**	57	51
	SUs	**17**	53	50
As customer/consumer	**HEIs**	**65**	50	50
	SUs	**18**	53	53
As an expert	**HEIs**	**62**	36	33
	SUs	**17**	35	37
Other	**HEIs**	**9**	6	0
	SUs	**4**	5	0

2 Table 11 shows that the *most* common perception of the roles of students in both institutions and students' unions is as *stakeholder*. Particularly, institutions consider that this role applies to students by 76% on average and, in addition, half of the institution respondents think that it matches students by 81% or more. These numbers are slightly lower for students' unions with an average of 62% and median of 60% but it still remains the top role for students' union respondents. The *second* most common perception of the roles of students perceived by institutions is as an *equal partner*, whilst the *second* most common perception of the roles of students perceived by students' unions is as *customer/consumer*. The *third* most common perception of the roles of students perceived by institutions is as *customer/consumer*, whilst the *third* most common perception of the roles of students perceived by students' unions is as an *equal partner*. The *least* common perception of the role of students for both respondent types is as *an expert* with institutions and students' unions rating it to be applicable on average by only 36% and 35% respectively. However, nine institutions and four students' unions do not consider any of the above categories to be relevant and classify students' roles as *other*.

3 The nine institutions which reported to perceive the roles of their students as *other* were asked to describe their perceptions. The perceptions reported were:

- Student as 'fellow practitioner'
- Student as 'fellow participant'
- Student as *'young professional'*
- Student as *'vital contributor'*

4 However, these nine institutions acknowledged that there were contradictions in some perceptions held more than others, particularly in relation to the role of students as 'customer/consumer'. Some of the participants stated:

- 'We don't like to use words like customer/consumer, but it's obviously that they are treated this way in some situations'
- 'Some information, e.g. special cases data, etc. cannot be shared with student representatives and etc. as we cannot identify individual students. Therefore, students cannot be treated as wholly equal partners'
- 'We see them as partners, but not necessarily as equal partners'
- 'We see students as partners, but the reality is that they will never be equal partners where the balance of power lies with the institution'
- 'We have a way to go with all staff'

5 The comments above showed that while there has been movement away from perceiving student as having no rights at all, the situation is still fluid with contradictions and contestation.

6 In interviews there was further exploration of how participants viewed the role of students within their institutions. In line with much of the survey, the most commonly held view was that students were stakeholders. Some respondents, without being asked, contrasted this to their perception of the public view of the sector suggesting that students were partners together with a government seen to be promoting students as consumers. Illustrated by the following quotes, some institutions clearly took a more intermediate position in this regard by viewing students as stakeholders. This could be seen as a position somewhere between partners and consumers. A participant mentioned: *'Well, they are definitely stakeholders. They are consumers and we're moving towards equal partners'.* Another participant stated: *'it is stakeholder, but we're moving towards partnership, but there is still definitely an element of consumerism'*. And similarly from another participant: *'I think somewhere in that territory between equal partner and stakeholder'.* In the interviews it became increasingly clear that the concept of student as stakeholder presented institutions with a realistic compromise between consumerist interests and partnership values. This finding was of particular interest as not previously noted from the literature reviewed.

7 About a third of participants reported that their institution viewed students as partners, albeit often alongside other roles. One respondent described how the partnership role played out in relation to their institution's quality management:

> *It can be a collaborative learning experience and because of that it's important that we work with them in partnership to achieve whatever change it is that we feel is important at institutional level. Sometimes changes and initiatives are sponsored and initiated by the institution itself, either from the ground up or top down, sometimes of course they're sponsored and initiated by the students through the Students' Union and I think in both of those ways, very positive changes have come about* (Participant).

8 Again, about a third of respondents rejected the idea of viewing students as consumers:

> *Well, partly (…) because of the culture of the institution (…). Definitely not – on the academic side – definitely not consumer. We've got a sort-of institutional ethos that treating a students as a consumer is actually disrespectful' and 'we've had discussions with the tripling of the tuition fees, about you know, are they a customer, are they consumer, and we're quite clear they are not* (Participant).

9 On the other hand, about a third of participants felt that it was important to recognise students as consumers sometimes, as well as recognising the range of other roles students often fulfilled. One participant stated that: *'there is a consumer element to that and we mustn't ever neglect that.* (…) *I know they are encouraged by the government to see themselves as customers and I guess they are ultimately'.* Another participant said: *'I guess they seem much more as customer/consumer in this type of [private] organisation'.* And a further participant commented:

> *I think colleagues are rapidly beginning to recognise that we are moving into a fundamentally changed university environment where there will be a fundamentally different relationship with students. And even though we don't like to call them 'customers' because that implies some sort of (…) customer service provider relationship, and I think we recognise that we need to ensure that our customers get a very high quality product and if they feel that something should change, their voice should not only be heard, but also taken very seriously indeed* (Participant).

10 Yet others did not relate at all to any one single way of typifying the role of students in their institutions, as one participant pointed out that: *'It differs by level of study […] they are members of the university community. I think PGR level they would be recognised readily as members of the academic community'.* And another participant said:

> *I went to a university where we were called from day one members of the University and I'm still regarded as a member of the university, a senior member of that university. I like the model that we're all in it together, it*

doesn't mean we all have the same expertise, but it does mean that we're part of an organic community (Participant).

11 An important finding from the interviews was that in six institutions there was quite a mixed range of perceptions about students' roles, sometimes influenced by the particular situation, including:: (1) partners and stakeholders; (2) customers/consumers and partners; (3) customers/consumers, partners and stakeholders; (4) stakeholders, customers/consumers and equal partners; (5) equal partners and stakeholders; and (6) stakeholders, experts and equal partners.

9 Training and support for students to take part in learning and teaching quality management mechanisms in institutions

1 In the survey, institutions and students' unions were asked to indicate who was responsible for organising training for students to participate in learning and teaching quality management mechanisms. The options provided were students' unions, the NUS, departments and peers. The responses are presented in Table 12, below.

Table 12 – Group responsible for organising training for student representatives to take part in learning and teaching quality management mechanisms – institutions and students' unions' responses

Group responsible for organising training for student representatives to take part in learning and teaching quality management mechanisms	Total number of respondents		Yes	No	I do not know
Institution	**HEIs**	**70**	62	7	1
	SUs	**23**	11	8	4
Students' Union	**HEIs**	**67**	56	10	1
	SUs	**24**	22	1	2
National Union of Students (NUS)	**HEIs**	**49**	24	16	9
	SUs	**23**	16	4	3
Departments	**HEIs**	**51**	25	16	10
	SUs	**20**	4	12	4
Peers	**HEIs**	**47**	14	21	12
	SUs	**21**	4	12	4

2 Table 12 shows that in the institutional responses, institutions and students' unions are the main organisers of training for student representatives, with NUS, departments and peers playing a lesser role. It also shows that in the students' unions' responses, students' unions and NUS are considered to be the main organisers of such training, with institutions, departments and peers playing a lesser role. This illustrates a clear difference between perceptions of institutions and students' unions.

3 In the interviews, three types of support to student representatives were noted. The first type of support and training was for specific quality management roles such as participation in periodic review panels or approval processes. This type of support and training is more likely to be provided by institutions to their student representatives than by students' unions, although it was not uncommon for sabbatical officers to be directly involved in the delivery of this training. One participant pointed out that:

> *We certainly train students. We don't send them in [to committees] cold. We will sit them down and go through the documentation with them and say is there anything you don't understand or you're unhappy about and the things to look at (…). We never say to them there are student type questions. That's never the case. We say: 'you can ask a question on anything'. You are a full panel member. Yes, the chair might say: 'what is*

(…) the students' point of view?' But equally we like students making all kinds of comments (Participant).

4 The second type of support related to sabbatical officers and representatives in more "senior" roles, i.e. those who represented students at institutional and intermediate (faculty, school, college) committees. As might have been expected, the interview findings showed that traditional institutions with well-established students' unions were more likely to base such training in their students' unions than those with less well-established students' unions. Often a specific support officer, usually based within the students' union, was available to support sabbatical officers and student representatives in their understanding, analysing and responding to the paperwork of each major committee meeting. These officers also trained student representatives in order to enable them to contribute to formal meetings in an informed way. In most instances, the preparation for committee meetings related to institutional and sometimes faculty, school or college levels meetings, but very rarely to discipline level meetings. Participants rated the impact and influence of these representation support officers very highly and shared examples of how their support had helped establish a more credible and effective student representation system within the institution.

5 The third set of support and training efforts related to the much wider cadre of student representatives who tended to concentrate on programme and departmental levels of engagement with quality management. Whilst support to representatives at this level did not occur in all institutions, there was certainly a common understanding that such training was desirable, with some institutions planning for training and support becoming available in the short term. Where the support and training was available, student representatives were usually trained at the start of the academic year, with on-going support through some form of Student Council or Academic Council for the rest of the year. Such Councils were usually regular meetings where information about current items of interest was given with discussion taking place between student representatives on further items of interest. Students' unions instigate council meetings of this kind to both ensure student representatives are informed and prepared for debate, as well as to ensure the student representatives can inform and steer their students' union on matters of interest.

6 Similar to the findings of the surveys, participants in the interviews reported that training was commonly provided to student representatives either by the students' unions or institutions, or jointly in collaboration between institutions and their students' unions. One participant mentioned: *'Our [students' union] (…) took on responsibility for the training and support of all student representatives from the university and that initiative has worked well. We work very closely with them to provide that training and support'*. In almost all cases, some level of communication existed regarding the content of such training and few participants expressed their reservations regarding the interference of their institutions in the independence of their students' unions. Of course, if the same interviews were held with students' union representatives that impression may well have been different.

7 In interviews, the participants also noted that the overburdening of student representatives, particularly at institutional and faculty/school/college level was

becoming a problem. By increasing students' involvement in a wide range of governance activities, institutions noted that student representatives were becoming overwhelmed, to the detriment of the quality of their contributions, or their longevity in key representational roles. One participant stated: *'they seize a student who's good and is interested and wants to get stuck in and I think as a university we need to think very carefully about how much we're burdening students'*. No clear pattern of how institutions and students' unions were addressing this emerged, beyond reconsideration and separating of currently combined responsibilities across more representatives, and sometimes, employing representatives preferably within a structure of support designed to ease the pressures.

10 Addressing the topic of student engagement and representation in institution's Staff Development (SD)

1 In the survey, institutions were asked whether they addressed the topic of student engagement and representation in their institution's Staff Development (SD) arrangements for probationary lecturers, experienced academic staff and administrative staff. This issue was omitted from the students' union survey as set out previously in our methodology section. The survey found that out of 73 institutions:

- For *Probationary lecturers*: 39 institutions reported that they addressed this topic, 21 reported that they did not address this topic, and 13 reported that they did not know if this topic was addressed in their SD for probationary lecturers.
- For *Experienced academic staff*: 33 institutions reported that they addressed this topic, 26 reported that they did not address this topic, and 14 reported that they did not know if this topic was addressed in their SD for experienced academic staff.
- For *Administrative staff*: 27 institutions reported that they addressed this topic, 31 reported that they did not address this topic, and 15 reported that they did not know if this topic was addressed in their SD for administrative staff.

2 Institutions were also asked to describe other mechanisms they use to enable their academic and administrative staff and students to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management. These mechanisms are presented in the tables below. In Table 13 below, we present the other mechanisms used to enable academic and administrative staff, and in Table 14 below, we present the other mechanisms used to enable students understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management.

Table 13 – Other mechanisms institutions use to enable academic and administrative staff to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management

Mechanisms used to enable academic and administrative staff to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management		**Number of respondents out of 37 HEIs**
Training and Guidance	Running training sessions with academic staff and students in partnership at discipline level for identifying what works well and discussing possible future ideas whilst giving academic staff a sense of ownership over the agenda	**11**
	SD process for Quality Office Staff includes student engagement	**4**
	Induction for new members of the SSLC, Staff-Student Committee (SSC) and Staff Liaison Contact (SLC)	**3**

*Table 13 – Other mechanisms institutions use to enable academic and administrative staff to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management – **continuation***

Mechanisms used to enable academic and administrative staff to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management		**Number of respondents out of 37 HEIs**
Training and Guidance	Review of the SD programme to reflect the HEA Professional Standards Framework	**3**
	Course Leader Conference	**2**
	It is a theme in the PG Cert HE for new lecturers	**2**
	Use of an academic staff handbook	**2**
	Collaboration with the SU on a Student Representative Guide for staff on course representation	**2**
	SD programme developed by the Schools addressing student engagement and delivered to all academic staff	**1**
	Making teaching and administrative staff aware of the QAA requirements through presentations	**1**
	It is part of the general induction for academic and administrative staff	**1**
	Document from the SU describing the roles and responsibilities of student representatives available and highlighted on the University's website to all staff	**1**
Policy	New policy on Student Feedback putting emphasis on feedback and closing the loop at all levels	**3**
	Partnership with students in the management of quality and standards is in our University Code of Practice	**2**
	Student engagement is embedded in our Institutional Strategy, and they are part of our Branding	**2**
Awareness raising	Frequent reference to it in the President's weekly email to all staff	**2**
	Reinforcing the role of students in regular updates at key institutional/faculty/school committees	**2**
	Informal discussions about the importance of student engagement at institutional/school/discipline level committees	**2**

Table 13 – Other mechanisms institutions use to enable academic and administrative staff to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management – continuation

Mechanisms used to enable academic and administrative staff to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management		**Number of respondents out of 37 HEIs**
Membership and Participation	Membership of committee work and attendance of committee meetings	**4**
	Appointment of a strong network of College Chairs of Learning and Teaching Committees	**1**
Learning through experience	College and support teams are asked to provide feedback on student feedback and come up with any appropriate action for quality improvement	**2**
	Practical experience of working with student representatives on learning and teaching quality matters (learning-by-doing)	**1**
Support	Members of staff are allocated to provide administrative support	**1**
	Staff Liaison Officer (SLO) bridging communication between student representatives and Schools	**1**

Table 14 – Other mechanisms institutions use to enable students to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management

Mechanisms used to enable students to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management		**Number of respondents out of 62 HEIs**
Training and Guidance	Training for student representatives provided by the SU, by the University or jointly provided by the SU and University	31
	Written guidance such as student/course/module/programme handbooks and guides	26
	Induction by the SU and by the University introducing and encouraging students to engage with the Quality Monitoring Mechanisms	14
	Training sessions from the University, SU, QAA, HEA staff, SPARQs and NUS	8

Table 14 – Other mechanisms institutions use to enable students to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management - ***continuation***

Mechanisms used to enable students to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management		**Number of respondents out of 62 HEIs**
Training and Guidance	Web pages linking to course handbooks and listing resources (including video) and explaining how student can get engaged and defining student engagement in the distance learning context	7
	External Examiner Guidance for Students and provision of information on VLE on 'how to read External Examiner Reports'	4
	Setting up a Mahara portal to allow student committee members to communicate with each other	1
Membership and Participation	Active participation in the Quality Enhancement Committee, School and Course Board Annual Teaching and Learning Conference, and Annual Student Conference	5
	Termly meeting with student representatives and discussion with the SU Council on an annual basis	3
	Student representation on committees and Accreditation and Award System	2
	Student membership on the Student Experience Committee, Periodic Review Panels, Deliberative Committees, Appeals and Academic Misconduct Meetings	2
	Involvement in strategic decision making	1
	Partnership with the SU/Guild/Association in the management of quality and standards processes and procedures	1
	Change Agents Initiatives to empower students from any discipline or background to initiate research projects that will change the University supported by the SU and the University	1
Awareness raising	SU and University Conference on Student Engagement	2
	Charter	2
	Student Forum	2
	Emails inviting students to participate in quality enhancement activities Weekly Student e-bulletins	2
	Student Communications Officer directly promoting representatives' meetings and putting Posters in communal areas	2

*Table 14 – Other mechanisms institutions use to enable students to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management - **continuation***

Mechanisms used to enable students to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management		**Number of respondents out of 62 HEIs**
Awareness raising	A Student Engagement Map was created and placed on Intranet to show the levels at which students can engage	1
	Use of case studies	1
	Student Voice are on the VLE describing opportunities for involvement including questionnaires and representation	1
	Students providing short summaries on the Mahara portal on the committee business to brief each other	1
Feedback	'You said, we did' campaign to highlight and feedback to students on actions taken in response to their feedback institutionally and locally and exercises after module evaluations	4
	Feedback to programme groups on SSLC activities/actions	2
	Feedback on actions plans from student focus groups	2
	Deans annual meetings with their cohort of students	1
Support	Provide support for students engaged on Module and Departmental Reviews, Faculty advisors to Student Council, Mentor system for student involved in Validation and Periodic Reviews, Pastoral Care Groups, and briefings by the Student Learning Committees	9
Incentives	Award for student representatives (Student led 'Partnership Awards) to publicise and celebrate the role of the Student representatives	5

3 With regard to the other mechanisms that institutions used to enable academic and administrative staff and students to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management in their institutions, that the evidence shows that the most commonly used mechanisms reported are around the areas of training, membership and awareness.

4 Staff Development in this area was not covered in the interviews undertaken.

11 The influence of student engagement within institutions

1 In the survey and subsequent interviews exploration of the perceptions of both institutions and students' unions of the types of changes brought about by student feedback and participation on committees, the effectiveness of student feedback and engagement in bringing about these changes and at what levels was undertaken.

11.1 Types of changes brought about by student feedback and participation on committees

1 In the survey the institutions and students' unions were asked to specify the most important examples of change that student engagement in learning and teaching quality management had helped bring about in their institutions. Fifty-seven institutions and 20 students' unions reported such changes and these are presented in the tables, below (see Table 15 for institutional responses and Table 16 for students' unions' responses).

Table 15 – Changes brought about by student feedback or participation on committees in the institutions – institutional responses

Areas	Changed brought about by student feedback or participation on committees	Total number of respondents out of 57 HEIs
Policy, Practice and Procedures	Changes to Code of Practice and Process of Assessment. Change to Extenuating Circumstances policy Changes to Mitigating Circumstances Policy. Opportunity for student to review the volume of assessment. Changing to grading matrix to make assessment more straight forward. Introduction of online submission of assessment and course work. Changes to assessment regimes and processes. Introduction of penalties for late submission of and over-lengthy assessments. Commitment to Anonymous Marking	**14**
	Changes in student representation systems, student involvement in reviews and panels and introduction of student representation at all committees levels. Changes to the practice of electing and supporting student representatives. Introduction of student-led reviews of all aspect of provision for PGR, PGT and UG students. Involvement of student representatives in all areas of the institution's work and service, from setting the strategic direction to discussing detailed proposals	**12**
	Introduction of student representatives involvement and collaboration in major projects	**7**
	Introducing students as partners to selected projects (including learning and teaching enhancement projects)	**7**

*Table 15 – Changes brought about by student feedback or participation on committees in the institutions – institutional responses – **continuation***

Areas	Changed brought about by student feedback or participation on committees	Total number of respondents out of 57 HEIs
Policy, Practice and Procedures	Changing teaching days and hours: no teaching taking place on specific days and no teaching taking place after 6pm or other specific time. Removal of Saturday examinations	**4**
	Restructure of the Academic Year including Vacation Periods	**4**
	Introduction and redevelopment of Student Charter	**3**
	Move technology-enhancement developments up in the institution agenda. Implementation of VLE. Technology enhanced learning	**3**
	Change to aspects of student experience	**2**
	Introduction of e-registration	**1**
	Improved information and guidance on good academic practice	**1**
	Introduction of termly meeting with the Director	**1**
	Changes on how feedback data is shared with student representatives	**1**
	End of course evaluation	**1**
	Changes on publication and dissemination of external examiner reports	**1**
	Recognition of excellence in teaching and learning	**1**
	Implementation of a credit modular structure	**1**
	Match institution policy to QAA codes	**1**
	Review Procedures for Academic Misconduct and Misconduct Policy	**1**
	Making the data on contact hours available to students	**1**
	Creation of a Students' Association/SU	**1**
	Setting up a new programme	**1**
	Changes to the Absence Recording Policy	**1**
	Introduction of the University wide Progression Committee	**1**

Table 15 – Changes brought about by student feedback or participation on committees in the institutions – institutional responses – ***continuation***

Areas	Changed brought about by student feedback or participation on committees	Total number of respondents out of 57 HEIs
Feedback	Changes on feedback requirements, i.e. more comprehensive feedback on academic work. Timely feedback back to students, i.e. by a specific time after submission	**16**
	Provision of online feedback	**4**
	Introduced guidelines for good practice on giving feedback	**1**
Curriculum	Changes to curriculum design and review	**5**
	Changes to programme, core and specific units	**3**
	Content	**3**
	Reintroduction of Modern Languages	**1**
	Changes to internships	**1**

Resources	Extension of the opening hours of resource centres and libraries	**2**
	Expansion of book stock of the libraries and more e-journals available from the library	**2**
	Introduction of personal and academic tutoring systems	**2**
	Introduction of electronic module handbooks to replace hardcopy ones	**2**
	Revision of Alumni Scholarships and Concessions Policy. Transparent approach to "additional costs" (fieldwork and equipment)	**2**
	Introduction of the use of texting and other electronic means to alert students about timetable changes and course management issues	**1**
Estate	Creating study rooms and quite areas for study	**3**
	Creating common rooms for students	**1**
	Establishing areas of high priority	**1**
	Building a recording studio	**1**
	Re-modelling of the SU Building and changes in the physical environment	**2**

*Table 15 – Changes brought about by student feedback or participation on committees in the institutions – institutional responses – **continuation***

Areas	**Changed brought about by student feedback or participation on committees**	**Total number of respondents out of 57 HEIs**
Student service	Creation of a one-stop shop type approach to student service being located in the same area	**1**
	Development of study skills classes timed to best suit the students' needs	**1**
	Rebrand of the student services	**1**
Registration	Introduction of registration cards for distance learning programmes	**1**

Table 16 – Changes brought about by student feedback or participation on committees in the institutions – students' unions' responses

Areas	**Changed brought about by student feedback or participation on committees**	**Total number of respondents out of 20 SUs**
Policy, Practice and Procedures	Introduction of student representatives	**2**
	All lectures to be recorded	**1**
	Prevented closure of certain departments	**1**
	Reducing class sizes for MA programmes and introducing smaller seminar groups	**1**
	Working status for PGR students who teach and ensuring fair pay, proper training and right to trade union representation	**1**
	Ensuring modular choice is not affected by staff redundancies	**1**
	Increasing contact hours	**1**

	Introduction of Universal print credits	**1**
	Introduction of student-led projects	**1**

Table 16 – Changes brought about by student feedback or participation on committees in the institutions – students' unions' responses – ***continuation***

Areas	**Changed brought about by student feedback or participation on committees**	**Total number of respondents out of 20 SUs**
Resources	24 hours library	**2**
	Timetables for induction	**1**
	Change to feedback timetable	**1**
	Moving the refurbishment of the library from the final term to over the summer	**1**
	Wednesdays' afternoons were made free for sport and student activities	**1**
	Gym built	**1**
	Introduced a new improved system of email that increased mailbox size and flexibility	**1**
	Increase in bursaries	**1**
	Extension of the opening hours of libraries during assessment period	**1**
	Rebrand of the computer room	**1**
Assessment	Introducing Anonymous Marking	**3**
	Introduction of online submission of assessment and course work and portfolios	**2**
	Exams were changed from January to December	**1**
	Changed assessment system	**1**
	Assessment process changed and improved	**1**
	New marking structure	**1**
Feedback	Feedback process changed and improved	**4**
	Changes to feedback policy, requirements and mechanisms	**3**
	Provision of online feedback	**1**

Table 16 – Changes brought about by student feedback or participation on committees in the institutions – students' unions' responses – ***continuation***

Areas	Changed brought about by student feedback or participation on committees	Total number of respondents out of 20 SUs
Representation	Student involvement in reviews and panels	**2**
	Changes academic representation structure	**1**
	Re-designing student engagement process with faculty	**1**
	Involvement of students in the entire process of periodic reviews	**1**
Curriculum	Reform and review of module programme	**1**
	Extended final year project support, including timetabled individual support and not just group meetings	**1**

2 In relation to the changes brought about by student feedback or participation on committees, evidence showed that there have been a huge variety of changes reported by institutions and students' unions. The most common changes reported by both parties related to policy practice and procedures and organisation, feedback, curriculum and resources. However, notably in both Tables above institutions and students' unions also provided examples of changes that happened in their institutions in different areas, such as: institutions provided examples of the substantial changes in estate, student service and registration, whilst students' unions provided examples of substantial changes in assessment and representation.

3 In the interviews, participants recognised the strong interest their students have in matters relating to feedback to students. All respondents related strongly to this aspect for enhancement. However, they invariably described the changes they made in their institutions as also affecting the broader aspect of assessment, due to the inextricably linked nature of assessment and feedback. Some respondents felt that the student voice on this aspect has undoubtedly been supported by NSS results, which show each year across the sector lower scores on assessment and feedback than any other aspect. Other participants strongly emphasised the powerful drivers of change that student representation and internal surveys represented in their institutions. One participant stated:

> *I think they influence our painstaking, agonising reflection on assessment, which has led to all kinds of things going on here including our involvement in setting up of national projects and international activity and that kind of thing. That came from the student voice and student dissatisfaction with what we were doing. […] We wrestle continuously about assessment, in a way the students won't let us rest on that one* (Participant).

11.2 Effectiveness of student feedback and engagement in bringing about change

1 The institutions and students' unions were asked to rate the effectiveness of some of the commonly used forms of student feedback and engagement in bringing about change in their institutions. The scales were from zero to 100. The forms rated were: (1) feedback questionnaires, (2) SSLC and (3) committee membership (excluding SSLC). In table 17 the *mean* and *median* values from the participant institutional and students' unions' responses have been presented.

*Table 17 – The **mean** and **median** values from the participant institutional and students' unions' responses.*

Forms of student engagement	Total number of respondents		*Mean* value	*Median* value
Feedback questionnaires	**HEIs**	**75**	64	66
	SUs	**23**	51	57
SSLCs	**HEIs**	**64**	56	63
	SUs	**23**	61	70
Committee membership (excluding SSLC)	**HEIs**	**74**	61	61
	SUs	**22**	60	68

2 Table 17 shows that, in relation to the effectiveness of these forms of student feedback and engagement, institutions perceive feedback questionnaires and committee membership (excluding SSLC) as the more effective forms of student feedback and engagement in bringing about change at any level in their institutions. In particular, feedback questionnaires are considered to be on average 64% effective with half the respondents identifying it as having more than 66% effectiveness in stimulating change. The corresponding numbers for committee membership (excluding SSLC) are both 61%, meaning that this form is on average 61% effective and half the respondents rate its effectiveness at 61% or more. It is interesting to note that only 64 respondents rated SSLCs. Moreover, it appears that the average rating of 56% they have assigned to it is lower than those for the other two forms of students' feedback and engagement. It is important to observe that the perceptions of institutions of the effectiveness of feedback questionnaires might explain the constant focus and attention paid by institutions to the NSS rates of completion, results and rankings. Furthermore, it also explained why some institutions in the survey have targets for student participation in the NSS, PTES and PRES. Institutions were aware of what one participant termed the *'publicly and highly influential'* power of the NSS. Some institutions may be genuinely engaging with their NSS results in order to address the concerns of their students, while for other it may be *'purely in reaction to student voice'*. Other institutions indicated their engagement with their NSS results were because they did not *'want to look bad in national league tables'*, i.e. an *'institutional reaction to public league tables'*.

3 Going back to the effectiveness of the three given forms of student feedback and engagement, Table 17 also showed that students' unions perceive SSLCs and other committee membership as more effective in bringing about change at any level in their institutions than feedback questionnaires. Namely, half the students' unions respondents rated the effectiveness of SSLCs as 70% or higher compared to 68% for other committee membership and just 57% for feedback questionnaires. This ranking

was also clear when comparing the average effectiveness with feedback questionnaires being rated 10% lower than SSLCs and 9% lower than other committee membership. This perception of the students' unions may well be associated with a sense of "having a voice and making oneself heard" just by having a physical presence at SSLCs and other committee membership, as opposed to the use of feedback questionnaires, where questionnaires may influence change, but students would not necessarily be informed about change having taken place. However, it was interesting to observe that there seemed to be a discrepancy between the forms of engagement provided by institutions for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management (refer to Table 2) and the forms students' unions perceive to be effective. In Table 2, the order of the most commonly provided opportunities are: (1) feedback questionnaires; (2) student representation on other committees (excluding SSLCs); and (3) SSLCs. In Table 17, the order of the rate of effectiveness that students' unions perceive of these most commonly provided opportunities are: (1) SSLCs; (2) student representation on other committees (excluding SSLCs); and (3) feedback questionnaires. The reasons for this discrepancy may well be associated with: first, the sense of "having a voice and making oneself heard" by just being physically present in the SSLCs and other committees membership; and second, that the timeliness between "expressing their concerns" and having "their concerns addressed" is shorter than having to wait for the data collected through surveys and feedback questionnaires to be analysed, an action plan elaborated and implemented in order to address students' concerns. These might explain why students' unions did not consider feedback questionnaires to be as effective in bringing about change to the student experience in their institutions as SSLCs and other committees membership.

4 The difference between the perceptions of institutions and students' unions may be directly related to the question of *whose interests are being served by these three forms of student feedback and engagement in institutions in the UK*.

5 In the interviews, although the majority of participants reported that SSLCs and other committees were more effective means of engaging students in learning and teaching quality management, two participants from institutions with a strong element of international provision considered SSLCs to be a less effective means, for obvious reasons.

6 Half of the participants also used the NSS for quality management purposes, although the NSS was mostly used as a means of evaluation at strategic level, particularly for scrutiny by staff at discipline and institutional level as a performance indicator. Table 18 (below) provides further evidence that NSS data is actively shared with students, but from interviews it appears that the sharing of information does not necessarily lead to student involvement in action planning. Some respondents suggested that, in general, the NSS was a driver for increasing student engagement in quality management in their institutions. Yet from interviews, only four institutions involved students in evaluating and planning action as a result of the NSS outcomes. Of these four, two institutions involved the students' union in the evaluation of results, whilst the two others involved the students' union as well as students based within the disciplines covered by the NSS. Both these two institutions related their strong

emphasis on working in partnership with students to their high ranking in national league tables.

7 Some of the participants also noted that the student voice was at times a more effective driver of change than previous efforts steered from within their institution. One participant stated:

> *And this is one of the great things we discovered is that departments or sections which had a reputation for being very hard to govern and never taking things very seriously and always moaning, when there are students in the room they tend to behave more professionally (…) and actually they have been fantastic* (Participant).

11.3 Student engagement drives change at different levels of the institution

1 The survey also asked institutions and students' unions to indicate whether in their experience student feedback or participation on committees was thought to have effected substantial change at the following levels: institutional, faculty or school, department, programme or unit level. *Student feedback and participation on committees* was used as a proxy for student engagement within the learning and teaching quality management context. This was intended to help establish where student engagement was making most impact, at least according to the institutions and students' unions that responded.

2 The survey found that out of 73 institutions and 23 students' unions which considered that substantial changes brought about by student feedback or participation on committees have happened in the following order: (1) at institution level with 60 institutions and 21 students' unions selecting this option; (2) at programme level with 58 institutions and 20 students' unions selecting this option; and (3) at faculty/school level with 43 institutions and 18 students' unions selecting this option. However, in relation to the substantial changes brought about by student feedback or participation on committees at unit and discipline/department levels, institutions and students' unions seem to differ in their opinions: institutions considered that substantial changes happened (4) at unit level and then (5) at discipline/department level, whilst students' unions considered that substantial changes happened (4) at discipline/department level and then (5) at unit level. It is important to note here that the perceptions of students' unions were directly related to their perceptions of SSLCs and other committee membership as being more effective than feedback questionnaires.

3 The interviews explored the challenges that student engagement posed to institutions more at the intermediate level of the institution (faculty/school/college) than at institutional or departmental level. One participant illustrated how these challenges could be being addressed by stating:

> *They are on the [intermediate] school committees, but what they say to us is [that] it's much more useful when I'm talking to the Psychology professors about the Psychology degree than sitting there and you've got the person from International Relations and the person from Religious Studies and all the rest of it. (…) They don't have the same sense of need to*

engage at that particular structure but then the next level up, the policy level, where we're making attendance policy or setting assessment policy – which they find very useful (Participant).

4 This observation tallied with those of other respondents who reported they encountered a lack of interest from students to stand at the intermediate level. Feedback had also been received from those who did engage at intermediate level that the quality management matters they engaged with, were often beyond the students' understanding – unless there were specific support structures for these students.

12 The informed student voice: sharing of data between students and institutions

1 The survey and subsequent interviews explored how institutions, student representatives and students' unions shared information and data with each other.

12.1 Information and data that institutions share with their students

1 The survey found that institutions shared a wide range of information and data with their student representatives, students' union or similar body and student members of committees. This finding was also confirmed by the survey undertaken with the students' unions. In Table 18 below, the types of information and data institutions share with their students' unions are presented.

Table 18 – Type of information and data institutions share with their students

Type of information and data shared		Level						I Do not know
		Student representatives		SU or similar body		Student member of committees		
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Outcomes of unit evaluations	**HEIs**	55	12	28	22	46	9	8
	SUs	12	6	8	11	11	7	1
Annual programme evaluations	**HEIs**	63	3	30	20	59	3	1
	SUs	7	9	14	5	11	4	4
National Student Survey (NSS)	**HEIs**	59	6	56	6	59	5	2
	SUs	15	3	19	1	15	3	0
Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)	**HEIs**	33	10	34	11	35	8	13
	SUs	10	5	14	2	10	5	5
Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)	**HEIs**	33	12	32	12	34	11	10
	SUs	11	5	15	2	13	4	3
Other external student experience surveys	**HEIs**	30	8	24	12	31	6	17
	SUs	8	7	13	3	8	6	5

Please note: that the total number of respondents from the institutions and students' unions for each type of data and information shared with students is made up of the sum of the number of respondents under the columns '**Yes**' and '**No**' which are under each of the names of the columns student representatives, students' union or similar body and student member of committees.

*Table 18 – Type of information and data institutions share with their students - **continuation***

Type of information and data shared		Level						I Do not know
		Student representatives		SU or similar body		Student member of committees		
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Periodic programme reviews	**HEIs**	54	5	35	16	55	2	1
	SUs	8	9	15	3	12	5	4
Reports from external bodies	**HEIs**	43	12	31	12	53	3	7
	SUs	5	7	10	4	9	5	6
Response to external examiners reports	**HEIs**	57	9	33	18	60	3	1
	SUs	7	7	10	5	11	5	5
Proposals for strategic direction of learning and teaching	**HEIs**	39	8	46	9	59	4	4
	SUs	9	6	17	2	13	4	2
Student progression and retention data	**HEIs**	43	11	35	12	58	2	4
	SUs	3	10	11	6	8	8	4
Reports of actions taken to enhance student educational experience	**HEIs**	58	3	46	4	60	1	1
	SUs	12	7	16	3	14	5	2
Graduate destination data	**HEIs**	41	9	36	8	50	5	9
	SUs	8	8	12	5	10	6	3
Annual institutional financial data	**HEIs**	16	28	27	16	25	20	17
	SUs	2	14	13	5	7	11	4
Annual institutional performance data	**HEIs**	17	24	36	10	34	13	11
	SUs	5	8	12	3	10	5	6
Annual SSLCs' findings	**HEIs**	33	11	25	12	34	9	18
	SUs	5	8	6	7	6	7	7

Please note: that the total number of respondents from the institutions and students' unions for each type of data and information shared with students is made up of the sum of the number of respondents under the columns '**Yes**' and '**No**' which are under each of the names of the columns student representatives, students' union or similar body and student member of committees.

2 From table 18, it appears that the information and data that is most shared of all are the NSS and reports of actions taken to enhance the student educational experience. It is perhaps interesting to note that the NSS and reports on enhancement activity are both strategically important sets of information, not least in relation to reputation and league tables.

3 Against that background it is perhaps noteworthy that the least shared information and data sets were annual institutional financial data, annual institutional performance data, annual SSLC findings and other experience surveys. Whilst the relatively low levels of sharing these data sets is perhaps clear for the latter two because these may not be collected in all institutions, and the first two sets of data (institutional financial and performance data) relate to institutional accountability.

4 Comparing the most shared information and data sets with the least shared sets, there was perhaps more institutional interest in student engagement in maintaining quality and strategic development of learning and teaching than there was in retrospective evaluation of institutional effectiveness in financial terms or against performance indicators.

5 The following patterns of information sharing can be observed in relation to:

- ***Outcomes of unit evaluations*:** institutions shared the outcomes of unit evaluations more with student representatives and student members of committees than with their students' union or similar bodies. Students' unions responded to the same pattern. Eight institutions and one students' union did not know if outcomes of unit evaluations were shared at all.
- ***Annual programme evaluations*:** institutions shared annual programme evaluations more with student representatives and student members of committees than with their students' union or similar bodies. However, students' unions reported that their institutions shared annual programme evaluations more with their students' union or similar bodies and student members of committees than with student representatives. One institution and four students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.
- ***NSS*:** institutions reported that they shared their NSS information and data in almost equal measure with student representatives, students' unions or similar bodies and student members of committees. This was also the case for students' unions. However, two institutions did not know whether NSS information and data was shared at all.
- ***PTES*:** institutions reported that they shared PTES information and data in almost equal measure with student members of committees, students' union or similar bodies and student representatives. However, students' unions reported that their institutions shared more information and data with students' union or similar body than with student representatives or student members of committees. Thirteen institutions and five students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.
- ***PRES*:** institutions reported that they shared PRES information and data in almost equal measure with student members of committees, students' union or similar body and student representatives. Students' unions reported that their institutions shared more information and data with students' union or similar body and student members of committees than with student representatives. Ten institutions and five students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.
- ***Other external student experience surveys*:** institutions reported that they shared other external student experience surveys more with student members of committees and student representatives than with students' union or similar body. However, students' unions reported that their institutions shared such information more with students' unions or similar bodies, than with student members of committees and student representatives. Seventeen institutions and five students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.

- ***Periodic programme reviews (PPR)*:** institutions reported that they shared PPR information and data more with student members of committees and student representatives than with students' union or similar body. However, students' unions reported that their institutions shared PPR information and data more with students' union or similar bodies and student members of committees than with student representatives. One institution and four students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.
- ***Reports from external bodies*:** institutions reported that they shared external body reports most with student members of committees, second most with student representatives and often with their students' union or similar bodies. However, students' unions reported that their institutions shared external body reports more with the students' union or similar bodies and student members of committees than with student representatives. Seven institutions and six students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.
- ***Response to external examiners reports*:** institutions reported that they shared responses to external examiners reports more with student members of committees and student representatives than with the students' union or similar body. However, students' unions reported that their institutions shared responses to external examiners reports more with student members of committees and students' union or similar bodies than with student representatives. One institution and five students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.
- ***Proposals for strategic direction of Learning and Teaching*:** institutions reported that they shared such proposals most with student members of committees, second most with students' unions or similar bodies and then still substantially also with student representatives. However, students' unions reported that their institutions these proposals more with students' union or similar body and student members of committees than with student representatives. Four institutions and two students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.
- ***Student progression and retention data*:** institutions reported that they shared progression and retention data more with student members of committees than with student representatives or the students' union or similar bodies. However, students' unions reported that their institutions shared more information and data with students' union or similar body and student members of committees than with student representatives. Four institutions and four students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.
- ***Reports of actions taken to enhance student educational experience*:** institutions reported that they shared more information and data with student members of committees and student representatives than with the students' union or similar bodies although this is still substantial. However, students' unions reported that their institutions shared reports of actions taken somewhat more with students' union or similar body than with student representatives and student members of committees. One institution and two students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.
- ***Graduate destination data*:** institutions reported that they shared graduate destination data somewhat more with student members of committees than with student representatives or the students' union or similar body. However, students'

unions reported that their institutions shared graduate destination data more with students' union (or similar) than with student members of committees and with student representatives. Nine institutions and three students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.

- ***Annual institutional financial data*:** Overall, both institutions and students' unions reported lower levels of sharing of annual institutional financial data than other data. Institutions reported that they shared annual institutional financial data more with their students' union or similar body and student members of committees than with student representatives. However, students' unions reported that their institutions shared such financial data more with students' union or similar body than with student members of committees and rarely with student representatives. Seventeen institutions and four students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.
- ***Annual institutional performance data*:** Institutions reported that they shared annual institutional performance data more with students' union or similar bodies and student members of committees than with student representatives. Students' unions responded according to the same pattern. Eleven institutions and six students' unions did not know if this information and data was shared at all.
- ***Annual SSLCs' findings*:** institutions reported that they shared annual SSLC findings more with student members of committees and student representatives than with the students' union or similar bodies. Students' unions reported that their institutions shared annual SSLC findings more with the students' union or similar body and student members of committees than with student representatives. Eighteen institutions and seven students' unions do not know if this information and data was shared at all.

6 Institutions were also asked to list any other type of information and data they also made available to students. The types of information and data listed were:

- Staff Student Committees
- PSRB (Professional Regulatory and Statutory Bodies) data
- College level quality data
- College committees
- University level quality data
- University committees
- Proposed amendments to University Legislation
- Discussion of amendments to Student Representation Policy
- Equality and Disability data
- League tables
- Proportion of 'Good honours'
- Internal examiners' report, and
- Learner Evaluation Survey and OFFA (Office for Fair Access) Access Agreement.

7 However, students' unions did not report any other type of information and data that their institutions made available to them than the ones already given in the survey question.

8 It was interesting to note that one institution made all information and data available to students as standard, and two institutions make any information available when requested through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

12.2 Information and data that students' unions or similar bodies share with their institutions

1 In the survey, institutions were asked to indicate which of the following types of information collected by their students' union or similar body were shared with their institutions: survey outcomes, minutes of academic representatives' meeting (or summary thereof) and other. The survey found that out of 56 institutions: 43 reported that their students' union or similar body shared their survey outcomes; 29 reported that their students' union or similar body shared their minutes of academic representatives' meetings or similar thereof; and 11 reported that their students' union or similar body shared other types of information and data with their institutions.

2 Institutions were also asked to list these other types of information and data that their students' unions or similar bodies shared with the institutions. The other types of information and data listed were:

- Reports from focus groups on specific issues
- Summaries of representatives' meetings
- Proposals for action arising from the students' union Council
- Regular operational update, and
- Outcomes of the Higher Education Faculty Forum.

3 Importantly to note, that one institution reported that their students' union or similar body shared minimal information and data with their institution; and another institution reported that only *ad hoc* activities were shared by their students' union or similar body. Seven institutions reported that their students' unions or similar bodies did not share any information or data with their institutions and one institution reported that they did not know whether their students' union or similar body shared any information or data with their institution. However, it was interesting to observe that two institutions reported that they did not have a students' union or similar body.

4 In relation to the students' unions, the survey found that out of 20 students' unions: 19 reported that they shared information derived from their survey outcomes; nine reported that they shared information derived from their minutes of academic representatives' meetings (or summary thereof); and two reported that they shared other types of information with their institutions.

5 Students' unions were also asked to list what other types of information they shared with their institutions. These included:

- Student representatives' reports
- Consultations done on behalf of the institution, and

- Reports commissioned and produced through the students' unions.

6 However, only one students' union expressed the following issue in relation to sharing information they collected with their institution. They said*: 'It depends what the survey is for as to whether it is shared with the institution or not. However, it is usually shared in order to influence change'.*

7 In the interviews participants provided several examples of how the information shared between students' unions and institutions had influenced change in their institutions and even initiated policy development. In some institutions, this was capitalised on by inviting an annual report from their students' unions on issues that had arisen over the last academic year in students' union councils, committees and sometimes SSLCs. These respondents felt that such input offered their institutions a good base for developing proposals for future enhancement activities.

8 Participants reported that students in their institutions were not just involved in sharing data but more importantly, they were also involved in making sense of it, i.e. analysing and interpreting. Participants mentioned that their institutions used student representatives, students employed as researchers and specifically selected students (usually because of a relevant characteristic) to help interrogate, analyse and interpret data from surveys and similar. One participant stated:

> *Whilst we are in the meeting, because they are anonymous surveys, we have the opportunity because student reps are in the meeting so we can say to them: 'well this looks like it is saying something about this, do you guys have a view on that?' And we can actually get a bit more detail from the students from something that has been pointed out anonymously in a survey* (Participant).

9 This approach appeared to be equally attractive for working with distance learners, reinforced by another participant, who said:

> *I've asked for students to be involved in the analysis of the results, so we will join a consultant to provide some assistance with the analysis. But we would run some online competent sort of focus groups or something, to see how the reactions are with some students in terms of, you know, we this means that or do you think that's a fair interpretation of our findings?* (Participant).

10 Similar feedback was also given by other participants in the interviews.

11 There were also examples of students using information and gathering data in a very conscious effort to make their case; especially if they found themselves in an opposing position to that of their institution. One senior manager gave the following example:

> *I was very keen on doing anonymous marking throughout the institution and of course the NUS are terribly keen on that. I took it to the working*

> *group on academic structures and the students said no, we don't want it – as clear as anything. They went away and did research, they read papers on it and so an. They came back with all the arguments against it* (Participant).

12 Equally, participants gave examples of how data and information instigates proposals or action from students' unions specifically. A good example was given by this senior manager:

> *I think the NSS drives an awful lot and I think feedback from Staff Student Liaison Committee drives an awful lot as well. Quite often what will happen is the Students' Union will use that data as evidence for pushing things forward but I don't think they'd particularly come up with anything we haven't already identified. So I think it's primarily data driven and then the Students' Union using that data* (Participant).

13 One participant, like many others, said that the sharing of data with students had led only very rarely to being challenged on that data. Instead, by sharing data and information, institutions found they more often worked from the same starting point as their students' union. Although it was not uncommon to hear concerns from institutional managers regarding the sharing of data and information with potential political opposites in their students' unions, such concerns now seemed to have been overcome.

13 Communicating student experience enhancements to students

1 In the survey and subsequent interviews the perceptions of institutions and students' unions of how their institutions communicated to their students enhancements to the student experience and how the contributions of students to the enhancement of learning and teaching in their institution was explored and acknowledged.

13.1 Mechanisms used by institutions to inform students of enhancements to the student experience

1 In the surveys, both institutions and students' unions were asked to indicate which of the listed mechanisms their institutions used to inform students of enhancement of the student experience. The list of options provided were: (1) publications (Newsletters, Student Magazine, Student Handbook, etc.); (2) news items on student facing websites; (3) Pin boards, LCD or similar; (4) use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.); (5) use of email updates; (6) regular meetings with all students; and (7) I do not know. The survey found that institutions used a wide range of mechanisms to inform their students of enhancements to the student experience. In Table 19 below the mechanisms institutions used to inform their students of enhancements to the student experience and the level to which these mechanisms operated are presented.

Table 19 – Mechanism used in institutions to inform students of enhancements to the student experience and the level to which these mechanisms operate

Mechanism used to inform students of enhancement to their experience	**Total Number of respondents**		**Level**							
			Institution	**Students' Union**	**Jointly by SUs and HEIs**	**Faculty/School**	**Discipline/ Department**	**Study Programme/ Course**	**Module/Unit**	**Student representative**
Publication (newsletters, student magazine, student handbook etc.)	**HEIs**	**57**	43	29	21	24	18	32	12	17
	SUs	**18**	9	17	5	6	4	2	1	9
News items on student facing websites	**HEIs**	**63**	56	34	14	22	19	20	5	11
	SUs	**17**	13	16	4	5	6	4	4	5

***Please note*:** the numbers presented in each column are the number of the respondents which select the options stated in each column out of the Total number of respondents highlighted in bold. The first three columns lists the responding institution or students' union perception of *by whom* the given mechanism is used, whilst the final five rows indicate the responding institutions and students' unions perceptions of *at whom* this mechanism is aimed.

Table 19 – Mechanism used in institutions to inform students of enhancements to the student experience and the level to which these mechanisms operate – **continuation**

Mechanism used to inform students of enhancement to their experience	**Total Number of respondents**		**Level**							
			Institution	**Students' Union**	**Jointly by SUs and HEIs**	**Faculty/School**	**Discipline/ Department**	**Study Programme/ Course**	**Module/Unit**	**Student representative**
Pin boards, LCD panels or similar	**HEIs**	**52**	40	21	14	23	21	24	9	12
	SUs	**17**	10	12	3	8	3	2	1	5
Use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	**HEIs**	**57**	46	32	10	11	10	9	3	16
	SUs	**18**	15	18	3	6	6	2	1	10
Use of email updates	**HEIs**	**57**	49	25	18	23	23	31	25	23
	SUs	**19**	16	18	5	7	8	6	6	12
Regular meetings with all students	**HEIs**	**54**	20	13	11	20	17	33	19	27
	SUs	**11**	5	9	4	4	5	5	3	6

***Please note*:** the numbers presented in each column are the number of the respondents which select the options stated in each column out of the Total number of respondents highlighted in bold. The first three columns lists the responding institution or students' union perception of *by whom* the given mechanism is used, whilst the final five rows indicate the responding institutions and students' unions perceptions of *at whom* this mechanism is aimed.

2 Table 19 showed that the most common mechanisms used to inform their students of these enhancements are: first, use of email updates; second, publications (Newsletters, Student Magazine, Student Handbook, etc.) and third, news items on student facing websites. However, students' unions described a slightly different pattern of communication mechanism for this purpose: first, use of email updates; second, use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.); and third, news items on student facing websites. It was interesting to note the difference in communication channels for 'public' use, which for institutions was controlled through media (print) and for students' unions through very open media (social media).

3 Table 19 also showed that publication, news items on student facing websites, Pin boards, LCD panels or similar, use of social media, use of email updates and regular meeting with all students were not used significantly at faculty/school, discipline/department, module/unit and jointly by students' union and institution levels as they were at institution, students' union, study programme/course and student representative levels.

4 Table 19 further shows that in relation to joint communications, institutions considered publications (newsletters, student magazine, student handbook etc.) and the use of email updates, the most likely mechanisms to be used for joint communication with their students' union. The mechanisms least likely to be used for joint communication with the students' union were the use of social media or regular

meetings with all students. Students' unions did not indicate a clear preference or reservation in relation to joint use of any of the mechanisms specifically.

5 ***Use of email updates –*** Both institutions and students' unions perceived email updates to be the *most* commonly used mechanism to inform students of enhancement to their experiences. Institutions reported that this mechanism was heavily used at all levels and particularly at institution and study programme/course levels. Students' unions also perceived their institutions to use email updates across all levels, though most strongly for students' union, institution and student representatives' levels.

6 ***Publication (newsletter, student magazine, student handbook, etc.) –*** Institutions perceived publication to be the *second* most commonly used mechanism to inform students of enhancement to their experiences, and it was mostly used at institution, study programme/course and students' union levels. However, students' unions perceived publication to be the *fourth* most commonly used mechanism by their institutions to inform students of enhancement to their experiences, and it was mostly used at students' union, institution and student representative levels.

7 ***News items on student facing websites –*** Both institutions and students' unions perceived email updates to be the *third* most commonly used mechanism to inform students of enhancement to their experiences. Institutions used this mechanism mostly at institution and students' union levels. Students' unions perceived that their institutions used this mechanism mostly at students' unions and institution levels.

8 ***Pin boards, LCD panels or similar –*** Institutions perceived these to be the *fourth* most commonly used mechanisms to inform students of enhancement of their experiences and they were mostly used at institution level. However, students' unions perceived Pin boards, LCD panels or similar to be the *fifth* most commonly used mechanisms by their institutions to inform students of enhancement to their experiences, and they were mostly used at students' union and institution levels.

9 ***Use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) –*** Institutions perceived this to be the *sixth* most commonly used mechanism to inform students of enhancement to their experiences, and they were mostly used at institution and students' union levels. However, students' unions perceived the use of social media to be the *second* most commonly used mechanism by their institutions to inform students of enhancement to their experiences, and they were mostly used at students' union and institution levels.

10 ***Regular meetings with all students –*** Institutions perceived these to be the *fifth* most commonly used mechanisms to inform students of enhancement to their experiences, and they were mostly used at study programme/course and student representative levels. However, students' unions perceived these regular meetings to be the *sixth* most commonly used mechanisms by their institutions to inform students of enhancement to their experiences, and they were mostly at students' union and student representative levels.

11 It is interesting to point out that the use of email updates and news items on student facing websites were the only two mechanisms which both institutions and students' unions held similar perceptions of their use in their institutions, i.e. the use of email updates were considered to be the most commonly and heavily used mechanisms and news items on student facing websites were considered to be the third most commonly used mechanism in their institutions.

13.2 Acknowledging contributions of students to learning and teaching enhancement

1 The survey found that out of 69 institutions, 45 explicitly acknowledged the contributions of their students to learning and teaching enhancement in their publications and news items, and 24 did not explicitly acknowledge students' contributions. Thirty-six of the institutions which explicitly acknowledged students' contributions also described how these acknowledgements were made (see Table 20 below).

Table 20 – How students' contributions to learning and teaching enhancement is explicitly acknowledged in institutions – Institutions' responses

How students' contributions to learning and teaching enhancement is explicitly acknowledged in HEIs			**Total number of respondents out of 36**
Means	**Type**	**How it is acknowledged**	
Published	News, Newsletters, Press Releases, Student Newspapers, and Posters campaign	'You said; we did…', and Public Thank you	**14**
	Reports of meeting and events	Students' names, roles and photographs are recorded	**11**
	Documentation	Direct reference to student support and involvement and responses to issues raised by the SSLCs	**4**

*Table 20 – How students' contributions to learning and teaching enhancement is explicitly acknowledged in institutions – Institutions' responses – **continuation***

How students' contributions to learning and teaching enhancement is explicitly acknowledged in HEIs			**Total number of respondents out of 36**
Means	**Type**	**How it is acknowledged**	
Published	Prospectus	Case studies	**2**
	Course and Module guides	Section indicating response to previous student feedback	**1**

	Awards	Awarding to students representatives for their contributions	**1**
Verbal	Meetings, Inductions, and Conferences	Direct reference to student support and involvement and drawing attention to innovative student work	**10**
Online	Website	Students' names, roles and photographs are recorded	**1**
Social media	Twitter/Facebook	Students' names are mentioned	**2**

2 It was interesting to note that three institutions stated that the contributions of their students to learning and teaching enhancement would only be explicitly acknowledged '*if [it is] appropriate*'. And only one participant explicitly acknowledged that *'good practice would say that contributions, regardless of status, should be acknowledged'*.

3 In relation to the students' unions, the survey found that out of 20 students' unions, 14 reported that students' contributions to learning and teaching enhancement were explicitly acknowledged in publications and news items in their institutions, and six reported that students' contributions were not explicitly acknowledged. Six students' unions, which reported that their institutions explicitly acknowledged their contributions, described how these acknowledgements were made:

- *'The institution will state who they worked with'*
- *'The names and positions of attendees are recorded in the minutes of meetings'*
- *'The university often gives credit to the students' union for its campaigns, etc. and only when students' union is involved and something is changed, then it is acknowledged'*
- *'Citing the involvement of student representatives'*
- *'Mentioning of student involvement in the process',* and
- *'It is often outlined in the process'*

4 Though the interviews concentrated more strongly on other aspects of the research, there were some participants who commented on other ways of recognising students' contributions, ranging from annual celebrations for student representatives and awards, to approaches which benefited students in a more individual manner, including in the Higher Education Achievement Records (HEAR) or local award schemes that recognises extra-curricular learning, usually run by the Students' Union.

14 The use of Performance Indicators (PIs) to measure the effectiveness of student engagement and changes originated from the use of PIs

1 In the survey and subsequent interviews, the perceptions of institutions and students' unions of how their institutions use performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of student engagement in their institutions and changes resulting from the use of these performance indicators are explored.

14.1 The use of performance indicators for student engagement in institutions

1 In relation to the use of Performance Indicators (PIs) to measure the effectiveness of student engagement in their institutions, the survey found that out of 75 institutions: 14 have PIs; 52 do not have PIs; and nine do not know whether they any have any PIs in their institutions. In the survey, 11 institutions described the PIs their institution uses. In Table 21 below, the PIs used to measure the effectiveness of student engagement in these institutions are presented.

Table 21 – PIs used to measure the effectiveness of student engagement and the number of institutions which have these PIs in place

Performance indicators used to measure the effectiveness of student engagement in the HEIs	**Total number of respondents out of 11HEIs**
Student Satisfaction Outcomes: responses to NSS, PTES, PRES, Internal surveys, and the additional question bank B6. Looking at the statements and percentage of students satisfied	**6**
A range of issues stated in their Student Engagement Strategy	**1**
Annual Impact Reports provided by the SU showing how they have worked with students to improve experience at the institutions	**1**
Online blogs showing how improvements have been made at the institutions	**1**
Benchmarking the Annual School Student Experience Report by checking feedback and actions taken or to be taken	**1**
KPIs for Heads of Department and Faculty Leads are regularly updated in dashboard	**1**
Targets for number of Class Representatives and Student Representatives on internal and Board committees	**1**
Targets for levels of Student Satisfaction	**1**
Minutes of Student Staff Liaison Committees	**1**

2 In relation to the use of PIs to measure the effectiveness of student engagement in their institutions, the survey found that out of 20 students' unions, nine reported that their institutions have PIs, five reported that they do not have PIs in their institutions and six do not know whether they any have PIs for student engagement in their institution. In the survey only six students' unions which reported having PIs described them. In Table 22 below, the PIs reported by students' unions used to measure the effectiveness of student engagement in these institutions are presented.

Table 22 – PIs used to measure the effectiveness of student engagement in the institutions and the number of students' unions which reported having these PIs in place in their institutions

Performance indicators, reported by students' unions, used to measure the effectiveness of student engagement in their institutions	**Total number of respondents out of 11 SUs**
Percentage scores on NSS, PTES, PRES, and internal surveys	**4**
Targets for Modules Evaluation Questionnaires	**1**
Student Voice Framework used as a matrix to measure engagement on different levels	**1**
Meeting attendance	**1**
SU Annual Survey	**1**
Annual 'You said, we did' campaign	**1**
QAA meetings	**1**
Task and Finish Group	**1**
Chapter B5 – Student Engagement compliance test	**1**

3 In both Tables above, outcomes from the NSS, PTES, PRES and other internal surveys are the most commonly used PIs to measure the effectiveness of student engagement in learning and teaching quality management reported by both institutions and students' unions.

14.2 Changes resulting from the use of performance indicators

1 In the survey, institutions and students' unions were asked to provide an example of any change which resulted from using these PIs in their institutions. Six institutions provided examples of changes which resulted from using PIs. These were:

- Change to the timeline of providing students with feedback on assessment
- Providing support to the President of the students' union, in order to reduce stress placed on his/her shoulders
- Opening hours of technical workshops
- 24 hours library
- Student-staff Charter
- Improved response to students feedback questionnaire

2 However, two institutions did not know of any changes resulting from the use of PIs, and three institutions did not know of any changes because these PIs had only recently been put in place.

3 In the survey, students' unions were also asked to provide an example of any change which resulted from using the PIs in their institutions. Four students' unions provided examples of changes which resulted from using these PIs by institutions including:

- More students participating in key decision making meetings
- Improvements to the assessment criteria and feedback methods to make them more student friendly and engaging

- Better blinds in dark rooms
- Access agreement funding for student engagement projects with a portfolio of 19K

4 However, one students' union was unsure of any changes that resulted from the use of PIs in their institutions.

5 In the interviews, several participants described in more detail the types of PIs they used to measure the effectiveness of student engagement in learning and teaching quality management in their institutions. Three types of approaches to measuring performance in student engagement emerged in the interviews. The first type was the direct evaluation of the effectiveness of student engagement activity. Qualitative examples of this approach were specific questions on student engagement in internal surveys and students' unions' surveys, the use of the relevant additional question set in the NSS used to collect feedback from students (B6), focus groups to evaluate aspects of engagement in quality management and formal reviews of the structure of student engagement in institutions. Quantitative evaluations were also mentioned such as target for the return numbers of (module) feedback questionnaires, or numbers of student representatives relative to the total number of students. Interestingly, several participants reported that their institutions adhered to a target of 1:20 as a representation target, but were not able to explain the reason why they had adhered to these specific numbers. One participant commented: '*the [SU] measure turn out in elections, the number of students putting themselves forward to be representatives and the number of students nominating in and so n, which are useful metrics but they demonstrate participation rather than impact'.*

6 The second type was the use of student satisfaction scores by some institutions as an indication of how effective student engagement might have been in quality management, such as improvements in NSS results which were then attributed to a changed approach to engagement of students. One participant said: *'so I suppose if you're looking for a serious crunch performance indicator, the student engagement feeds into the NSS'.* However, it was important to note that the participants, who reported using this second type of PIs, questioned the validity of the underlying assumption of this approach embedded in their institutions.

7 The third type was the interpretation of retention and progression data, class attendance, library usage and similar as PIs of student engagement. However, such data was not related to student engagement in learning and teaching quality management, but directly related to engagement with the learning and teaching itself.

8 A striking finding from the interviews was that students' unions were reported to be taking a lead in developing PIs for student engagement. Several participants indicated that their students' unions had pre-existing indicators relating to student representation, ranging from the numbers of students standing for election to the numbers of students taking up the role of student representatives of those "hard to reach" groups of students. Some institutions reported that students' unions also included questions regarding the effectiveness of their students' unions as the voice of students and their influence within their institutions.

15 Student Charter or similar Staff-Student Agreement; establishment and contentious issues

1 The survey found that out of 74 institutions: 60 reported to have a Student Charter or similar Staff-Student Agreement in place; six reported that it is a work in progress in their institutions; and eight reported that they did not have a Student Charter or similar Staff-Student Agreement in place in their institutions. The survey found that out of 26 students' unions: 17 reported that their institutions had a Student Charter or similar Staff-Student Agreement in place; six that it was a work in progress; and three reported that they did not have a Student Charter or similar Staff-Student Agreement in place in their institutions.

2 In relation to institutional perception of the balance between meeting the interests of students and staff in their Student Charter (or similar), the survey found that out of 67 institutions: 56 felt that the interests of students and staff to be balanced; 10 felt the interests to be favouring students more; and only one felt the interests to be favouring staff more. In relation to the perception of students' unions, the survey found that out of 23 students' unions: 19 felt that the interests of students and staff to be balanced; only one felt the interests to be favouring students more; and three felt the interests to be favouring staff more.

3 In the survey, both institutions and students' unions were asked to report the most contentious issues in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement they had in place or where it was a work in progress. Fifty-eight institutions reported a variety of *contentious issues and concerns* surrounding the Student Charter or similar Staff-Student Agreement. These are presented in Table 23 below.

Table 23 – The most contentious issues in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement reported by institutions

The most contentious issues in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement reported by HEIs	**Total number of responses**
'The content, i.e. the balance between the responsibilities and 'obligations' of students against those of the institution and 'making it clear where responsibilities lie'	**7**
The language and terminology, i.e. 'What does the university mean by partnership?' (Participant), 'using a language that is relevant and accessible to students' , and 'from a language of rights and responsibilities, to a language driven by values'	**7**
The status of the charter, i.e. its 'legal', 'contractual' and 'legislative' status of the document or a 'service agreement' or 'aspirational statements'	**4**

*Table 23 – The most contentious issues in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement reported by institutions – **continuation***

The most contentious issues in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement reported by HEIs	**Total number of responses**
The conceptualisation and positioning of students, i.e. as 'members of the same academic community', 'partners in and co-creators of a charter', and consumers	**4**
The extent of feedback provided on course work and assessment	**3**
Contact hours	**2**
Right access to technical resources	**1**
The tone the document, i.e. presented in a '"formal" or in a "student friendly" way'	**1**
The word 'Charter'	**1**
The usefulness of the Charter, i.e. 'Does it do what it says on the tin?'	**1**
The format, i.e. 'finding a meaningful format for the Charter'	**1**

4 Institutions also expressed some *concerns* in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement they had in place or where it was work in progress. These concerns are presented in Table 24 below.

Table 24 – Concerns reported by institutions in relations to the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement they have in place or where it is a work in progress

Concerns reported by HEIs in relations to the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement they have in place or where it is a work in progress	**Total number of responses**
Commitments and entitlements, as well as setting and managing expectations. 'Some staff wanting it to say "Students MUST"… (i.e. attend lectures and penalties could be applied if not, etc.) […] .Senior management did not agree with this view and thankfully the language was far more benign in the end: "University will endeavour to": …' and "students are encouraged to": …'	**7**
The value-add of a Student Charter or similar Agreement, i.e. 'Did it add any value?' and 'would it add significant value to the existing statements the University has?' The risk of the Student Charter being a 'just ticking a box' exercise and it will simply be a document that 'sits on shelves and doesn't actually influence the relationship between student and institution'. 'In reality, the charter is not referenced or used significantly, but [we] were required to draw one up'. Its prescriptiveness	**6**

*Table 24 – Concerns reported by institutions in relations to the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement they have in place or where it is a work in progress – **continuation***

Concerns reported by HEIs in relations to the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement they have in place or where it is a work in progress	**Total number of responses**
Availability of staff, timetabling and 'provision of minimum levels of academic support'	**5**
Access to resources and matching resources to 'what you say you must do'. 'Making sure that both staff and students were going to do what they said they were going to'	**4**
'How to avoid the representation of students as consumers'	**2**
It would lead to an increase and student complaints	**1**
'Raising awareness amongst students'	**1**
'Avoid a transactional model that amounted to a service level agreement between the university and students'	**1**
The 'need not just to focus on rights, but also focus on responsibilities'	**1**
'Whether there were shared commitments between staff and students or whether there should be separate commitments'	**1**
Balancing rights and responsibilities with academic values	**1**
Reflecting internal differences between UK and Transnational sites, and	1
'The willingness of the student body as a whole to fully accept responsibility for various outcomes'	**1**

5 In the survey, 15 students' unions expressed a variety of *contentious issues and concerns* surrounding the Student Charter or similar Staff-Student Agreement. The contentious *issues* reported by students' unions are presented in Table 25 below.

Table 25 – The most contentious issues in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement reported by students' unions

The most contentious issues in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement reported by students' unions	**Total number of responses**
The language and terminology reducing students' accessibility and understanding	**2**
The status of the charter, i.e. its legal and contractual status with legal obligations	**2**

*Table 25 – The most contentious issues in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement reported by students' unions - **continuation***

The most contentious issues in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement reported by students' unions	**Total number of responses**
The 'content', i.e. the balance between the responsibilities and opinions of student and staff	**2**
Timeliness of feedback on assessed work	**2**
How to best encompass the whole body in the institution	**1**
How to engage Post-graduate students	**1**
The archaic and inaccessible wording of the document, i.e. 'we had to battle to decode it'	**1**

6 Students' unions also expressed some *concerns* in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement they had in place or where it was a work in progress. The concerns of students' unions are presented in Table 26 below.

Table 26 – Concerns reported by students' unions in relations to the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement they have in place or where it is a work in progress

Concerns reported by students' unions in relations to the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement they have in place or where it is a work in progress	**Total number of responses**
'Making it a fair and balanced document which was achievable and motivational'	**2**
'Will it actually mean anything?'	**1**
'Will it be clouded by all the other documents?'	**1**
'Outlining responsibilities, i.e. what students are responsible for and what the institution and SU are responsible for'.	**1**
'Inclusion – which students would be included or excluded?'	**1**
'Would it be relevant to students studying in partner colleges in the UK and abroad?'	**1**
'The use of language, i.e. "we intend to" for the university versus "we expect you to" for students, as any stronger word than intend was deemed to be committal for the university, and students who may wish to use the charter in complaints would have their cases diminished'	**1**

Table 26 – Concerns reported by students' unions in relations to the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement they have in place or where it is a work in progress ***– continuation***

Concerns reported by students' unions in relations to the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement they have in place or where it is a work in progress	**Total number of responses**
'The extent to which student complaints and appeals procedures should be highlighted in the document'	**1**
How to best encompass the whole body in the institution	**1**
How to engage Post-graduate students	**1**

7 It was interesting to note that 22 institutions and two students' unions reported not having any contentions issues around the development of the Student Charter or similar Staff-Student Agreement and in three institutions the Student Charter was still work in progress. However, it was important to point out that only one institution in the survey felt that the Student Charter or similar agreement *'provided an opportunity [for the university] to bring together institutional policies and practices that are scattered across the institution'*.

8 The interviews did not explore issues related to Student Charters or similar agreements.

16 Conclusions

Opportunities provided for student to engage in learning and teaching quality management

1 The overall majority of institutions provided opportunities for their students to engage in learning and teaching quality management. Student representation on other committees, student feedback questionnaires, and SSLCs were widely used mechanisms to engage students in institutions. Student feedback systems for distance learning courses were not widely used because not all institutions provided distance learning courses. In institutions that provided distance learning courses their range of provision varied from a limited range to a substantial range and others that were mainly distance learning providers. In this variety of provision, residentials played an important role in limiting the expansion of student feedback systems for distance learning courses, because students' feedback was collected during these residentials.

2 Institutions also provided o*ther* opportunities for their students to engage in learning and teaching quality management. These other opportunities were: representation and membership on SSLCs, other (sub-)committees, panels, working groups, meetings, forums, (sub-)groups, and through participation in the NSS, internal and external surveys and questionnaires, (review) panels, meetings, focus groups, face-to-face group discussions, online surveys, online discussions, online forums, and tutorials. The most common of these other opportunities were (review) panels, (sub-) committees and meetings.

Student representation in institutions

3 Institutions had student representatives at different levels within their structures and the selection process of student representatives varied between levels. Election (through the SU or similar body) was the most common means through which students became representatives at institution, faculty/school, discipline/department and study programme levels, followed by nomination (usually by fellow students) at study programme and discipline/department levels, self-volunteering and election (through institutional mechanisms) at study programme level. In some institutions students became representatives through a mixture of election, nomination, selection and self-volunteering. Some institutions and students' unions did not know or were aware of the means through which students became representatives at faculty/school, discipline/department and study programme levels.

4 Institutions organised the representation of students mainly through elections carried out by the institutions (faculty or administrators) themselves, conducted online or inside classrooms. In some institutions this election was organised by their students' union and in few institutions it was jointly organised by institutions and their students' unions.

Student participation on committees

5 In the majority of institutions, students were fully involved in discussion and had voting rights when participating on committees. In some institutions, students voiced their concerns but did not vote. In few institutions, students participated only when invited to do so. A new category of student participation on committees, which deviates from the three main ones, emerged from the institutional survey: '*students are fully involved in discussion in a no voting system*'.

6 In some institutions, student survey was the only means students had to participate in the learning and teaching quality management. In other institutions there were some discrepancies between policy and the practice of student engagement in learning and teaching quality management at faculty/school level. In a small number of institutions, students were not allowed to participate in some of their committees because of the sensitivity of the issues discussed on these committees.

Engaging groups of student who are deemed less likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management

7 Institutions and students' unions perceived part-time, working, work-based, placement, postgraduate taught and research, distance learning, mature, international and off-campus students, as well as students in partner institutions, to be the groups of students who are deemed less likely to engage in such procedures, because of these groups of students' academic workload demands and work demands. Their perceptions are probably related to the nature and ethos of institutions, their student populations and their policies of widening participation and access.

8 The majority of institutions are taking actions to improve student engagement from these groups of students. Few institutions do not know or are aware of any actions being taken in their institutions. And fewer institutions are not taking any action to engage these groups of students. In institutions that have international provision it difficult to engage these groups of students because of the political constitution of their hosting countries.

Participants' perceptions of students' roles in their institutions in different situations

9 Institutions and students' unions perceived the roles of their students differently in different situations. In institutions the students' role was perceived as: (1) *stakeholder*; (2) *equal partner*; (3) *customer/consumer*; and (4) *an expert*, whilst students' unions perceived the roles of students as: (1) *stakeholder*; (2) *customer/consumer*; (3) *equal partner;* and (4) *an expert*. It was recognised that tuition fees had probably impacted on institutions and students' perceptions of the roles of students in their institutions in different situations. Some institutions held a combination of perceptions of the role of students, such as: partners and stakeholders; customers/consumers and partners; customers/consumers, partners and stakeholders; stakeholders, customers/consumers and equal partners; equal partners and stakeholders; and stakeholders, experts and equal partners. Although these institutions acknowledged that there is an element of customer/consumer in their relationship with their students, they recognised that

there were struggles in holding some perceptions more than others, and the possible consequences of holding particularly the perceptions of the roles of students as customer/consumer. Other institutions preferred to perceive the roles of their students as *'fellow practitioner/participant'*, *'young professional'* and '*vital contributor'*.

Training and support for students to take part in learning and teaching quality management mechanisms in institutions

10 In some institutions, institutions and their students' unions were considered to be the main organisers of the training for students to take part in learning and teaching quality management. Other institutions were the sole organisers of this training. In fewer institutions, their students' unions were the organisers of such training. The National Unions of Students (NUS) played a less significant role in organising such training in institutions.

Addressing the topic of student engagement and representation in institution's Staff Development (SD)

11 Some institutions addressed the topic of student engagement and representation in their Staff Development (SD) arrangements for probationary lecturers, experienced academic staff and administrative staff. They used wide range of mechanisms mainly focused in the areas of training, policy and organisation, membership, induction and resources, to enable their academic and administrative staff and students to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management.

The influence of student engagement within institutions

12 The perceptions of institutions and students' unions of the effectiveness of student engagement within institutions differed. Institutions perceived feedback questionnaires and other committee membership (excluding SSLCs) as highly effective forms of student engagement in bringing about change at any level in their institutions, followed by other committee membership and SSLCs. Whilst students' unions perceived other committee membership (excluding SSLCs) and SSLCs as highly effective forms of student engagement in bringing about change at any level in their institutions, followed by feedback questionnaires. The difference between the perceptions of institutions and students' unions may be directly related to the question of whose interests were being served by these three forms of student feedback and engagement in institutions in the UK.

13 Student engagement within institutions has brought about a huge variety of changes in their institutions. Institutions and students' unions reported that the most common changes were related to the areas of: (1) policy, practice and procedures; (2) feedback; (3) curriculum; (4) assessment; and (5) resources.

The informed student voice: sharing of data between students and institutions

14 Institutions shared a wide range of information and data with their student representatives, students' unions and student members of committees. Institutions shared more data with student members of committees and student representatives than with students' unions. Institutions and students' unions reported that the data most shared by institutions was: NSS, Reports of actions taken to enhance student educational experience and Annual programme evaluations. Some institutions made any information and data available to students as standard practice. Others made information available only when requested through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Communicating student experience enhancement to students

15 Institutions used a wide range of mechanisms to inform their students of enhancements to the student experience. The most common mechanisms used by institutions were: first, use of email updates; second, publications (Newsletters, Student Magazine, Student Handbook, etc.) and third, news items on student facing websites. Whilst, students' unions described a slightly different pattern: first, use of email updates; second, use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.); and third, news items on student facing websites. This difference in communication was related to the purpose of the communication and the target audience, i.e. 'public' use.

16 It is interesting to point out that news items on student facing websites were the only two mechanisms which both held the similar perception of their use in their institutions, i.e. the use of email updates were considered to be most commonly and heavily used mechanisms and news items on student facing websites were considered to be the third most commonly used mechanism in their institutions.

17 Some institutions explicitly acknowledged the contributions of their students to learning and teaching enhancement. Other institutions did not explicitly acknowledge students' contributions. Some institutions explicitly acknowledged their students' contributions only '*if [it is] appropriate*'. Other institutions used informal means of acknowledging and at the same time rewarding, students for their contribution to the enhancement of learning and teaching in the institution.

The use of Performance Indicators (PIs) to measure the effectiveness of student engagement and changes originated from the use of PIs.

18 The overall majority of institutions did not have PIs. Few institutions had PIs and fewer did not know whether they had any PIs in their institutions. Other institutions used the NSS results and participation as PIs to measure student engagement in learning and teaching quality management, as most of the changes reported were related to the NSS ratings and league tables.

Student Charter or similar Staff-Student Agreement: establishment and contentions issues

19 The overall majority of institutions have a student charter or similar staff-student agreement in place. Few institutions did not have one, and fewer reported that it was work in progress in their institutions. *In some institutions,* the student charter or similar staff-student agreement was *owned by the institution. In another it was owned by their students' unions.*

20 In this particular context, the most contentious issues in the debate, reported by institutions and students' unions were around: the content, language and terminology, status of the student charter or similar staff-student agreement and issues related to feedback and assessment.

21 The concerns surrounding the student charter or similar staff-student agreement, reported by institutions and students' unions were around: balancing rights and responsibilities in a fair manner, avoiding the use of strong language and the meaning and value of the student charter or similar staff-student agreement. Some institutions did not have any contentions issues around the development of their student charter or similar staff-student agreement. Some institutions felt that the student charter or similar staff-student agreement provided them with the opportunity to bring together institutional policies and practices that were scattered across the institution.

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18 Annex A – Institutional Survey

qualtrics.com

Default Question Block

Q1.
Thank you for choosing to participate in our survey on student engagement in learning and teaching qualtiy management.

We value your opinion and candid contribution to our research.

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes and will be completely anonymous.

Please click the NEXT button below to continue.

Q2. Informed consent:

☐ I agree to participate in this research on the understanding that my name and the name of my institution will be anonymised

☐ I am willing to be contacted for a further face-to-face or telephone interview. My name and telephone number are:

Q3. Please tick the opportunities provided for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management at each of the levels indicated below

	Institution	Faculty/School	Discipline/Department	Study programme	Module/Unit
Student feedback questionnaires	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff-student liaison committees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student representation on other committees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student feedback systems for distance learning courses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q4. Please list any other opportunities your institution promotes for student engagement in learning and teaching quality management and the level to which they operate

Q5. Does your institution have a student charter or similar staff-student agreement in place?

○ Yes

○ In progress

○ No

Q6. How would you rate the balance between meeting the interests of students and staff ?

	Favouring staff more	Balanced	Favouring students more
The charter or similar agreement is...	○	○	○

Q7. What were the most contentious issues in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement?

Q8. How do students become representatives in your institution? (Please tick all that apply)

	Institution	Faculty/School	Discipline/Department	Study programme
Elected (through the Students' Union or similar body)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Elected (through Institutional mechanisms)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nominated (usually by fellow students)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Self-volunteered	☐	☐	☐	☐
Selected (usually hand-picked by staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not know	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q9. How would you categorise student participation on committees at the following levels?

	Institution	School/Faculty	Discipline/Department	Study programme
Students participate only when invited to do so	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students voice their concerns but do not vote	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students are fully involved in discussion and have voting rights	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐	☐

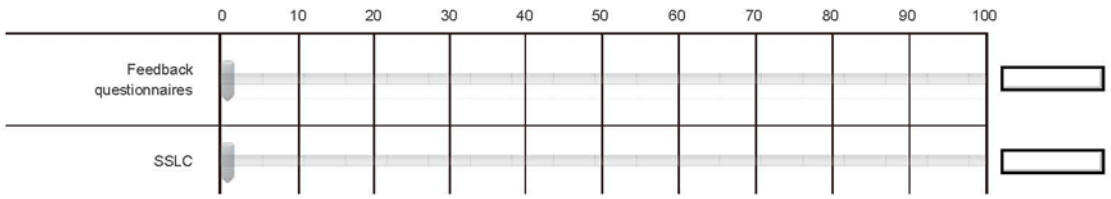
Q10. If you selected OTHER, please describe it

Q11. In your experience has student feedback or participation in committees brought about substantial change at any of the levels below?(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Institution
- ☐ Faculty/School
- ☐ Discipline/Department
- ☐ Programme
- ☐ Unit

Q12. Please record two of the most important examples of student involvement that have helped to bring about change.

Q13. Rate the effectiveness of each of the following forms of student feedback and engagement in bringing about change at any level:



Q14. Which of the following groups organise training for students to take part in learning and teaching quality management mechanisms? (Please tick all that apply)

	Yes	No	I do not know
Institution	☐	☐	☐
Students' Union	☐	☐	☐
National Union of Students (NUS)	☐	☐	☐
Departments	☐	☐	☐
Peers	☐	☐	☐

Q15. Which groups of students are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures?

Q16. Is your institution taking action to improve student engagement of the group you mentioned above?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I do not know

Q17. What actions is your institution taking?

Q18. Does Staff Development (SD) in your institution cover student engagement and representation for:

	Yes	No	I do not know
Probationary lecturers?	○	○	○
Experienced academic staff?	○	○	○
Administrative staff?	○	○	○

Q19. Please describe any other mechanisms your institution uses to enable academic and administrative staff to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management.

Q20. Please describe any mechanisms your institution uses to enable students to understand the role students play in learning and teaching quality management.

Q21. What type of information and data does your institution make available to students and at what level?

	Student representatives		Students' Union or similar body		Student members of committees		I do not know
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Outcomes of unit evaluations	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Annual programme evaluations	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
National Student Survey (NSS)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Postgraudate Research Experience Survey (PRES)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Other external student experience surveys	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Periodic programme reviews	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Reports from external bodies	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Response to external examiners reports	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Proposals for strategic direction of Learning and Teaching	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Student progression and retention data	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Reports of actions taken to enhance student educational experience	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not

							know
Graduate destination data	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Annual institutional financial data	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Annual institutional performance data	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Annual SSLC findings	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know

Q22. Please list any other type of information and data your institution makes routinely available to students and at what level.

Q23. What type of information collected by the Students' Union or similar body is shared with the institution? (Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Survey outcomes
- ☐ Minutes of academic representatives' meetings (or summary thereof)
- ☐ Other

Q24. If you selected OTHER, please describe it.

Q25. Please indicate the mechanisms used to inform students of enhancements to the student experience and the level at which these mechanisms operate. (Please tick all that apply)

	Institution	Students' Union	Jointly by Students' Union and Institution	Faculty/ School	Discipline/ Department	Study programme/ Course	Module/ Unit	Student Representatives
Publications (Newsletters, Student Magazine, Student Handbook, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
News items on student facing websites	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pin boards, LCD panels or similar	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of email updates	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Regular meetings with all students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not know	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q26.
In publications and news items (see above), are the contributions of students to learning and teaching enhancement explicitly acknowledged?

- O Yes
- O No

Q27. How are these contributions acknowledged?

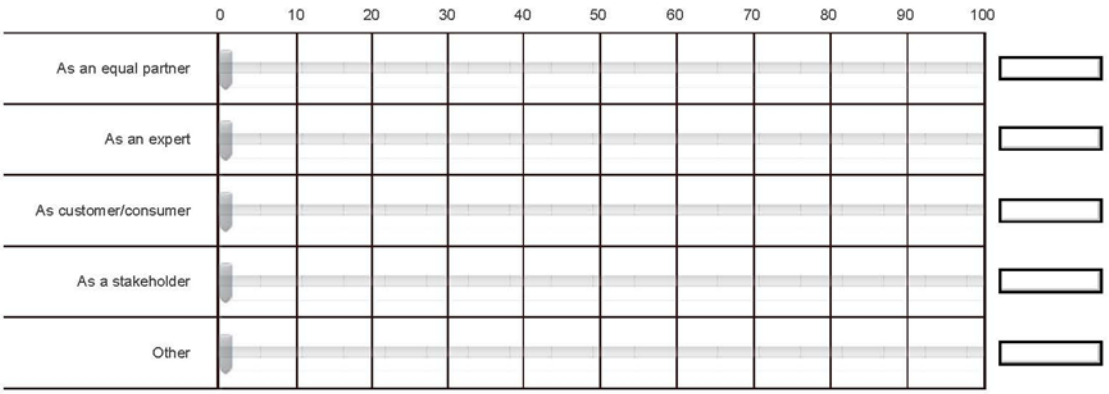
Q28. Does your institution have performance indicators for the effectiveness of student engagement?

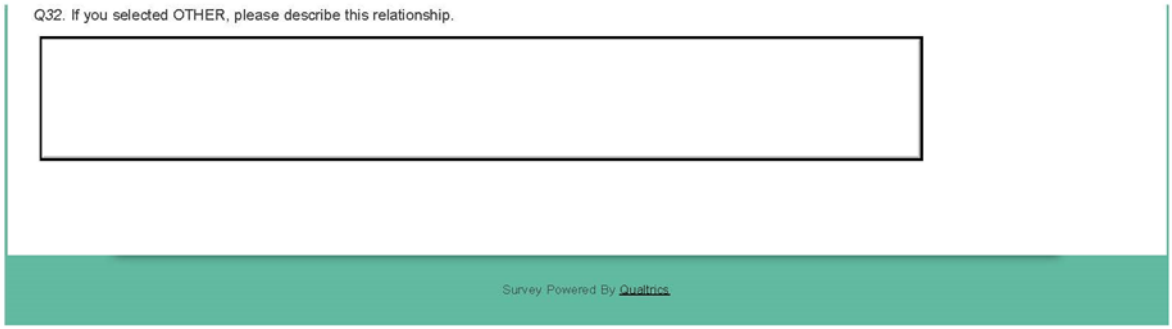
- Yes
- No
- I do not know

Q29. Please describe them.

Q30.
Please give an example of change which resulted from using these indicators?

Q31.
Students' roles are perceived differently in different situations within institutions. Please rate the extent to which each of the following classifications represent the student roles in your institution?




Q32. If you selected OTHER, please describe this relationship.
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19 Annexes B: Students' Unions' Survey

qualtrics.com

Default Question Block

Q1.
Thank you for choosing to participate in our survey on student engagement in learning and teaching qualtiy management.

We value your opinion and candid contribution to our research.

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes and will be completely anonymous.

Please click the NEXT button below to continue.

Q2. Informed consent:

- ☐ I agree to participate in this research on the understanding that my name and the name of my institution will be anonymised
- ☐ I am willing to be contacted for a further face-to-face or telephone interview. My name and telephone number are:

Q3. Please tick the opportunities provided for students to engage in learning and teaching quality management at each of the levels indicated below

	Institution	Faculty/School	Discipline/Department	Study programme	Module/Unit
Student feedback questionnaires	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff-student liaison committees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student representation on other committees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student feedback systems for distance learning courses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q4. Please list any other opportunities your institution promotes for student engagement in learning and teaching quality management and the level to which they operate

Q5. Does your institution have a student charter or similar staff-student agreement in place?

- ○ Yes
- ○ In progress
- ○ No

Q6. How would you rate the balance between meeting the interests of students and staff ?

	Favouring staff more	Balanced	Favouring students more
The charter or similar agreement is...	○	○	○

Q7. What were the most contentious issues in the debate when considering a charter or similar agreement?

Q8. How do students become representatives in your institution? (Please tick all that apply)

	Institution	Faculty/School	Discipline/Department	Study programme
Elected (through the Students' Union or similar body)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Elected (through Institutional mechanisms)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nominated (usually by fellow students)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Self-volunteered	☐	☐	☐	☐
Selected (usually hand-picked by staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not know	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q9. How would you categorise student participation on committees at the following levels?

	Institution	School/Faculty	Discipline/Department	Study programme
Students participate only when invited to do so	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students voice their concerns but do not vote	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students are fully involved in discussion and have voting rights	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐	☐

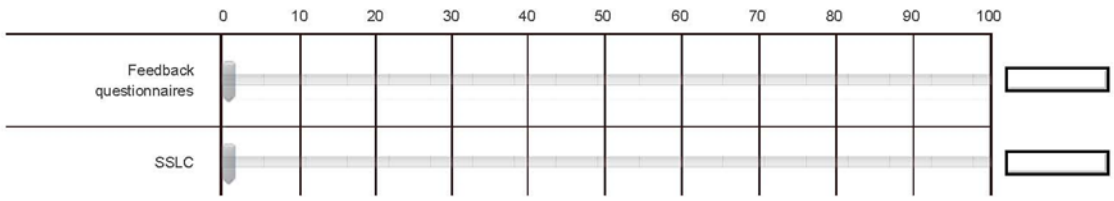
Q10. If you selected OTHER, please describe it

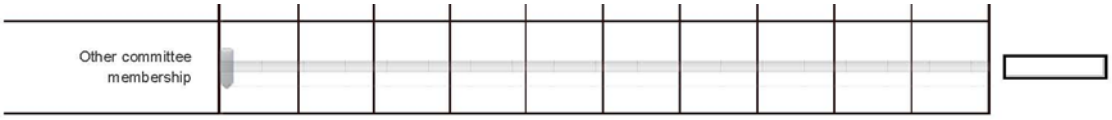
Q11. In your experience has student feedback or participation in committees brought about substantial change at any of the levels below?(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Institution
- ☐ Faculty/School
- ☐ Discipline/Department
- ☐ Programme
- ☐ Unit

Q12. Please record two of the most important examples of student involvement that have helped to bring about change.

Q13. Rate the effectiveness of each of the following forms of student feedback and engagement in bringing about change at any level:





Q14. Which of the following groups organise training for students to take part in learning and teaching quality management mechanisms? (Please tick all that apply)

	Yes	No	I do not know
Institution	☐	☐	☐
Students' Union	☐	☐	☐
National Union of Students (NUS)	☐	☐	☐
Departments	☐	☐	☐
Peers	☐	☐	☐

Q15. Which groups of students are least likely to engage in learning and teaching quality management procedures?

Q16. Is your institution taking action to improve student engagement of the group you mentioned above?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I do not know

Q17. What actions is your institution taking?

Q18. What type of information and data does your institution make available to students and at what level?

	Student representatives		Students' Union or similar body		Student members of committees		I do not know
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Outcomes of unit evaluations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Annual programme evaluations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
National Student Survey (NSS)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
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	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Postgraudate Research Experience Survey (PRES)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
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	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
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	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Reports from external bodies	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Response to external examiners reports	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Proposals for strategic direction of Learning and Teaching	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Student progression and retention data	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Reports of actions taken to enhance student educational experience	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Graduate destination data	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Annual institutional financial data	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Annual institutional performance data	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know
Annual SSLC findings	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	I do not know

Q19. Please list any other type of information and data your institution makes routinely available to students and at what level.

Q20. What type of information collected by the Students' Union or similar body is shared with the institution? (Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Survey outcomes
- ☐ Minutes of academic representatives' meetings (or summary thereof)
- ☐ Other

Q21. If you selected OTHER, please describe it.

Q22. Please indicate the mechanisms used to inform students of enhancements to the student experience and the level at which these mechanisms operate. (Please tick all that apply)

	Institution	Students' Union	Jointly by Students' Union and Institution	Faculty/ School	Discipline/ Department	Study programme/ Course	Module/ Unit	Student Representatives
Publications (Newsletters, Student Magazine, Student Handbook, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
News items on student facing websites	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pin boards, LCD panels or similar	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of email updates	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Regular meetings with all students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not know	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q23.
In publications and news items (see above), are the contributions of students to learning and teaching enhancement explicitly acknowledged?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q24. How are these contributions acknowledged?

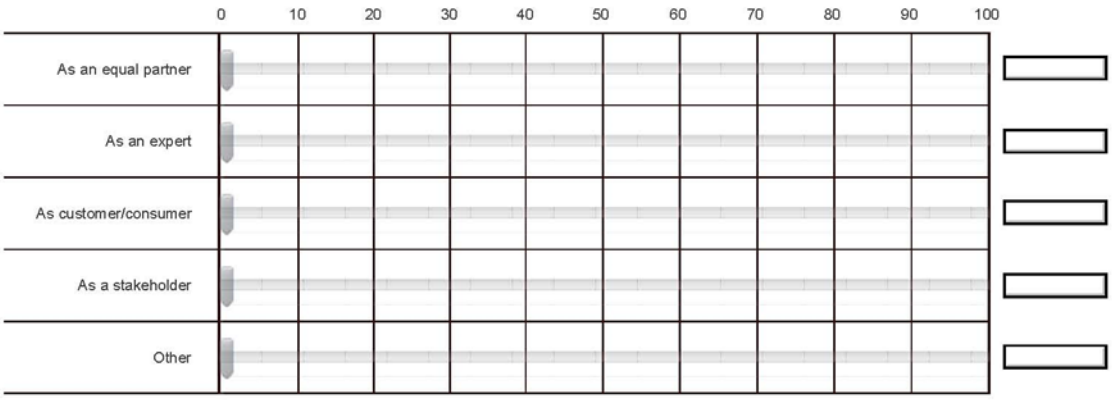
Q25. Does your institution have performance indicators for the effectiveness of student engagement?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I do not know

Q26. Please describe them.

Q27.
Please give an example of change which resulted from using these indicators?

Q28.
Students perceive the student role in different ways in different situations within institutions. Please rate the extent to which each of the following classifications represent what you believe to be the student roles in your institution?



Q29. If you selected OTHER, please describe this relationship.

Survey Powered By Qualtrics

20 Annex C – Interview schedule

Student engagement in quality management (all participants)

1. Which of the following types of educational provision is the mainstay of your provision?
    - Campus traditional undergraduate
    - Postgraduate professional work based learning
    - Undergraduate part time mature learning
    - Distance learning
    - Other. If other, could you please describe it?

2. How much of your provision is covered by this category? (Student numbers and relative indication)

3. Could you please describe any major efforts your institution has made to promote student engagement in quality management in recent years?
    - Policy, strategy, procedures projects?
    - Any good practice? Or use of peer comparison with other institutions?

4. In which areas has student engagement had the strongest impact and resulted in real change in your institution?
    - (The survey suggests that in many institutions student engagement has had the strongest impact on the broad theme of assessment).

5. Has student representation at departmental/ discipline faculty levels been discussed within your institution? For instance, in relation to participation in committees:
    - What were the concerns on potential obstacles for representation at those levels?
    - In the survey we also noted that student representation is generally strong at institutional level and at programme/unit level, but less so at the department/discipline level and school/ faculty level in between. In your opinion, what do you think may be happening here?

6. What role do students play in enhancement and development activities in your institution?
    - Can you give an example of a current major project in which students are involved?
    - How are students involved in these activities? And why?
    - How do staff view students involvement in these activities?

7. Do you use any technological means to enable student engagement? If so, what do you use? And what is it used for?
    - Virtual Learning Environment, clickers, social media such as Facebook, discussion boards, Skype, etc.
    - Why have you or your colleagues gone down this route?

Student engagement in quality management (only those who responded in survey as described in question)

8. The survey indicates that the groups of students hardest to reach are: part time, mature, based in FE, and postgraduate. You have suggested your institution is considering reviewing student representational arrangements for specific groups of students.
   - Could you tell me which groups you consider hard to reach in your provision?
   - What changes is your institution considering making in order to include them?
   - Are students from these groups involved in this discussion?
   - What is the approach your students' union is taking on this issue?

9. We understand that you have mechanisms in place, both in relation to staff student liaison and representation, for engaging distance learning students. Could you tell us what arrangements you have in place to achieve engagement of distance learning students?

10. Your survey response suggests that your institution uses performance indicators for student engagement. Which indicators do you use? And how have you responded to what these indicators have told you?

General question

11. Student roles are perceived differently in different situations and in different institutions. In the survey we described some of these roles as follows:
   - Equal partner
   - Expert
   - Customer/ consumer
   - Stakeholder
   - Other

12. In your opinion, which are the main roles students have in your institution? Could you describe them? Why do you think this is the case?

13. Is this different for distance learning, post graduate, mature, part time or undergrad students?

14. Are there any aspects of what we have discussed in this interview that you would like to discuss further? Or are there any matters relating to student engagement you wish we had discussed you about?

Many thanks indeed for your responses!

21 Glossary

AAU – Association of American Universities	PGR – Postgraduate research
BIS – Department for Business Innovation & Skills	PGT – Postgraduate taught
CEQ – Course Experience Questionnaire	PIs – Performance Indicators
CPD – Continuing Professional Development	PPR – Periodic Programme Review
FE – Further Education	PRES – Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
FOIA – Freedom of Information Act	PSRB – Professional Regulatory and Statutory Bodies
GSA – Graduate Students' Association	PTES – Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
HEA – Higher Education Academy	QAA – The Quality Assurance Agency
HEAR – Higher Education Achievement Record	QAEC – Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee
HEFCE – Higher Education Funding for England	RIGs – Rating Interpretation Guides
HEFCW – Higher Education Funding Council for Wales	SD – Staff Development
HEIs – Higher education institutions	SEEQ – Student Evaluation of Educational Quality Questionnaire
ITCs – Information and Communication Technologies	SLC – Staff Liaison Contact
KPIs – Key Performance Indicators	SLO – Staff Liaison Officer
LCD – Liquid Crystal Display	SPARQS – Student Participation in Quality Scotland
MLE – Managed Learning Environment	SSC – Staff-Student Committee
NSS – National Student Survey	SSLCs – Staff-Students Liaison Committees
NSSE – National Survey of Student Engagement	SU – Students' Union
NUS – The National Union of Students	SUs – Students' unions
OFFA – Office for Fair Access	UG – Undergraduate
PG – Postgraduate	VLE – Virtual Learning Environment
PG Cert HE – Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education	