Module evaluation

1.1 Purpose

Module evaluation is an important feedback tool to understand the student experience. It has a developmental purpose, and is one of a number of methods used at Queen Mary for gathering feedback from students.

The collation of this feedback and consideration of the quantitative and qualitative data received should be a regular part of each school/institute’s programme monitoring processes, alongside other sources of information such as student performance data and academic input. Module evaluation results, and details of actions taken, should be shared with students via Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) and via other channels as appropriate. The in-year nature of module evaluation also allows for changes to be made on an ongoing basis.

In order to ensure that students feel able to provide honest feedback, module evaluations should be anonymous. Processes have been designed to ensure that individual students cannot be identified from evaluation responses.

1.2 Scope

Module evaluation is carried out for all undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, for both London-based and TNE programmes. This includes associate schemes, joint honours and distance learning programmes, and Queen Mary Academy programmes. There will be a number of module evaluation questionnaires covering the modules on each programme, but there will not necessarily be a questionnaire associated with every module.

The module evaluation process does not cover research degrees or non-award bearing continuing education.

1.3 Process

1.3.1 Overview
Queen Mary uses an internet-based survey management tool called Evasys to run the module evaluation scheme. ARCS has responsibility for managing the system and producing the data extracts and reports as well as organising the administration of the evaluations themselves.

By default, schools/institutes are expected to use the centrally administered system, whereby ARCS manages the process of setting up and delivering the surveys. In some instances, schools/institutes may opt out of the central scheme. Requests to opt out require the approval of the Vice-Principal (Education), who will consider any requests in conjunction with the relevant Dean (Education). These schools/institutes will then have responsibility for setting up surveys and running data collection themselves. They are still required to include the Queen Mary core statements and return the responses for these statements to ARCS (see below).

The standard Queen Mary questionnaire for taught modules comprises eleven core statements and three open text questions. The standard questionnaire for dissertation or project modules has eight core statements and three open text questions. Statements are scored on a five-point Likert scale. Queen Mary has adopted this scale because it is used in the National Student Survey (NSS), and therefore will allow some comparability with NSS data.

Schools and institutes can request additional questions to be included, subject to the approval of the relevant Dean (Education). Where schools/institutes wish to propose additional questions, they should, as a matter of good practice, involve students in their design.

All schools/institutes are expected to have a clear internal procedure for running module evaluations that is operated in a transparent and consistent way and understood by students and staff. This procedure should be based on the following principles:

- Evaluations are carried out at an appropriate time (usually weeks 8-12 of the semester but other times may be agreed if modules run outside standard semesters). See below regarding informal feedback and ‘pulse surveys’.
- Student anonymity is maintained.
- Students are informed about the purpose of evaluations (i.e. to gather their feedback on the experience of taking the module, and to identify areas for enhancement) as well as how to access and use the survey tool. Students should be encouraged to make sure that any free text comments which they write are constructive and are aligned to the University’s expectations of student behaviour.
- It can be good practice to allow students time at the end of a teaching session (whether on campus or online) to complete the survey. However, staff should not be present in the room while this takes place.

Schools and institutes should also have a clear internal process as to how the data produced by evaluations is reviewed and considered. It is expected that Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) are provided with this information in addition to other academic committees.

Schools and institutes should inform ARCS at the beginning of each academic year of the administration contact for module evaluation and the name(s) of people who should receive access to the module evaluation data for review.

More details on the operation of the scheme, including the core statements, deadlines and guidance on use of data can be found on the ARCS website.
1.3.2 Response rates

The standard process is for students to be contacted directly via their University email with a personalised link to the survey. It is therefore important that schools/institutes encourage students to check their email and complete the questionnaire in order to ensure good response rates.

The module evaluation system allows for single-password surveys to be set up, allowing staff to send a single link to all students taking the module. While this does offer additional flexibility, there are also some limitations (principally that a student could complete the survey more than once, or complete a survey for a module which they are not taking). Where a school/institute wishes to use this approach they should first seek approval from the relevant Dean (Education).

It has been recommended by the Education Quality and Standards Board that by default, a block will be displayed on the relevant module page on QMplus which will show students they have an evaluation to complete. The block is designed so that it only appears if there is a survey open – it is hidden at any other time. Queries about the block should be addressed to the E-Learning Unit via the Helpdesk.

1.3.3 Informal feedback questionnaires

Several schools/institutes/disciplines run mid-semester informal module evaluation questionnaires (‘pulse surveys’) in order that the current cohort can benefit from immediate action taken in response. This good practice is encouraged, as is the use of real-time student feedback mechanisms such as Mentimeter.

1.4 Evaluation and consideration of the data

Module evaluation results are available from Power BI. This brings together the data previously available through a series of standalone reports. Access to the dashboard will be granted to relevant staff in schools/institutes and Faculties as required (ordinarily the Head of School/Institute Director, Director of Education, and School/Institute Manager). The dashboard shows results at both a module and cohort level. It also allows for year-on-year analysis at both a module and school/institute level. Staff in schools/institutes will be able to see module evaluation data relating to modules owned or taught by their school/institute.

1.4.1 Dissemination to staff

Access to module evaluation results will be granted to the named contacts (see section 1.3.1) who are expected to review the data and determine if there are any concerns which the school/institute may need to address. Therefore, it is expected that this is undertaken by senior members of staff such as the Director of Education. Once this review has taken place, schools/institutes can disseminate the data to other staff for consideration. However, in some instances modules may have very low numbers of respondents. The Vice-Principal (Education) and the Deans for Education have agreed that in the cases of module reports with fewer than five respondents, Heads of School/Institute Directors should determine whether or not to pass on the full report to module leaders to protect the anonymity of the students. The Power BI dashboard allows for a filter to be applied which can exclude modules with low numbers of respondents, and can also aggregate the results of multiple modules to mitigate for low response rates.

1.4.2 Dissemination to students
Module evaluation data should be made widely available to students in each school/institute/discipline. Summaries of module evaluation data and actions taken in response should be made available on websites and discussed with students at Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC). Verbatim free-text comments should not be shared with students unless the school or institute has reviewed the comments to remove any remarks that could identify any individual, whether student or staff.

Schools and institutes should ensure that students are kept informed of the actions taken and outcomes achieved where problematic issues have been identified. Module organisers are encouraged to add a summary of their responses to the QMplus module page, and to the subsequent year's QMplus module page, in order that students from successive cohorts can see the results of the feedback given in the preceding year and the actions taken to close the feedback loop.

After the SSLC has considered it, module evaluation data should then be seen by the School/Institute Education Committee (or equivalent), together with any comments from the SSLC. Any issues identified as needing more consideration should be forwarded to the Director of Education or Head of School/Institute Director for further consideration.

Within Faculties, the Dean (Education) (or their nominee) is responsible for monitoring module evaluation and its operation across all schools/institutes, and will also consider summary data for all module evaluation within the Faculty. For the purposes of monitoring across the institution, summary data will be provided to committees with responsibility for student feedback and quality assurance and enhancement.

Further information can be found in the guidelines for the use of module data document on the ARCS website.
Core statements for taught modules 2021/22

Statements to be measured on a 5 point Likert scale:

Teaching

1. Teaching on the module has helped me to understand the content.
2. The module challenges me to achieve my best work.

Learning Opportunities

3. I felt able to actively contribute to the module (e.g. class discussions, online forums, online sessions) and check my understanding.

Assessment and Feedback

4. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.
5. Feedback on my work has been timely.
6. The assessment challenges me to show an in-depth understanding of the module.
7. I have received helpful comments on my work.

Academic Support

8. I have been able to contact teaching staff if I needed to.

Organisation and Management

9. The module is well organised and runs smoothly.

Learning Resources

10. The learning resources have supported my learning well.

Student Voice

11. Staff value students’ views and opinions about the module.
12. Overall, I am satisfied with this module.

Free text questions

13. What are the best things about the module?
14. In what ways could the module be improved?
Core Statements for Dissertation / Project modules 2019/20

Statements to be measured on a 5 point Likert scale:

1. I am happy with the support I received for planning my dissertation/project (topic selection, outline, literature review etc.)
2. My supervisor had the subject knowledge to adequately support my dissertation/project
3. My supervisor had the appropriate skills to advise me about research strategies and methods
4. My supervisor provided helpful feedback on my progress
5. My supervisor provided feedback on written and/or practical work in accordance with internal deadlines
6. The criteria used in marking on the dissertation/project had been made clear in advance
7. I was able to access adequate learning resources to support my research/project
8. Overall, I am satisfied with the dissertation/project supervision I have received

Free text questions:

9. What was the best thing about undertaking a dissertation/project?
10. What would you change?
11. Do you have any other comments about your experience of undertaking your dissertation/project?