

Closing the Loop guidelines for teaching and learning at UCL

UCL is committed to ensuring that our students ‘feel that they are a key and integral part of our university community, and that their opinions and suggestions are valued and acted upon, as full partners in the future of UCL’ (UCL 2034).

There are a range of ways that UCL students can share their views and ideas, from nationwide surveys such as the NSS and PRES, to staff-student partnership projects such as [ChangeMakers](#) and [Student Quality Reviewers](#).

UCL offers varied opportunities for students to give feedback, and our scores for the Student Voice section of the National Student Survey (NSS) are ahead of the sector benchmarks. However, within the Student Voice section, UCL is behind sector benchmarks in response to NSS statements 25 and 26 ‘*Staff value students’ views and opinions about the course*’ (-1 point behind 2022 sector benchmark) and ‘*It is clear how students’ feedback on the course has been acted on*’ (-1 in 2022).

NSS Student Voice statement	UCL score NSS 2022	UCL performance vs benchmark
“I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course”	83%	+4ppt
“Staff value students’ views and opinions about the course”	68%	-1ppts
“It is clear how students’ feedback on the course has been acted on”	51%	-1ppts
Student Voice category score	67%	+1ppt

The scores suggest that UCL’s students are aware of the varied and flexible options for them to provide feedback on their learning experiences, but they often struggle to see where staff are listening to their views and factoring the student voice into changes.

This document outlines a new framework for UCL staff to “Close the Loop” with students on how they use their feedback and ideas which can be integrated into programmes and modules with minimal impact on curricula or staff workloads.

UCL staff are welcome to interpret and build upon these guidelines according to their local knowledge, networks and preferences.

‘Closing the Loop’ activities for your area of UCL

With UCL’s departmental scores in the Student Voice section of the NSS ranging from 91% at the highest to 31% at the lowest, there is an apparent need to raise the standards for ‘closing the loop’ activities.

Bringing greater consistency to ‘closing the loop’ efforts across departments may particularly benefit students on multidisciplinary pathways, who often complain of inconsistent experiences between modules in different parts of UCL. These concerns were frequently expressed in focus groups supporting the Student Experience Transformer project.

The following initiatives will help UCL staff Close the Loop on student feedback more effectively:

- **Beginning of Term One: setting the tone** – As part of welcome / induction events (such as talks / presentations) and communications to new and returning students at all levels of study, departments should include information on how the cohort will benefit from previous students’

feedback.

- a) Staff should pick out examples of how feedback from students (including via Student Reps, surveys or module evaluation questionnaires) has shaped changes, and include these examples in comms and presentations to students.
 - b) Include notable changes inspired by student feedback in the Student Handbook for new starters.
 - c) Let students know where actions will be tracked and any changes will be communicated. In departments with Unitu, direct students to the 'Together we Changed' section, so they can review the improvements made through staff-student partnership in previous sessions. Other departments may wish to have a Moodle page as the 'home' for this information.
 - d) Make sure new student reps are aware of this information and any changes that have happened from the previous year.
- ***Explaining what's changed at the start of each Module*** – Module leaders should spend a few minutes in the first teaching session detailing how the module has evolved in response to student feedback. This will give students confidence in coming forward with their own feedback, as they know it can make a difference.
 - a) Examples given do not need to be from the previous academic year, but it is particularly useful if staff outline where the student feedback was given e.g., in surveys or via Student Reps.
 - b) The module leader should outline the opportunities for students to give feedback over the duration of the module, through Module Dialogue or via their Student Reps.
 - ***Term One SSCC Meeting: a key opportunity*** – Staff-Student Consultative Committees are a vital tool in making changes through Staff-Student Partnership at UCL and can give students reassurance that their feedback is valued.
 - a) Before the meeting, staff SSCC Co-Chairs should share the minutes from previous SSCC meetings with the Reps due to attend the Term One SSCC meeting. This will help them prepare for the discussion and will also make them aware of improvements that have already been implemented.
 - b) Following the meeting, the staff SSCC Co-Chair should follow up with students with a condensed summary of the discussions and action points from the session. This only needs to be a few bullet points calling out the key feedback from the meeting and how the department plans to respond and could be posted on Unitu or a Moodle page then a notification/email sent to let the the whole cohort know.
 - ***Departmental summaries of survey results*** – Beginning with New to UCL in Term One, departments should share a top-level summary of their results in each of the student surveys carried out at UCL.

The department should include the key points from the survey, and their ideas on how to respond to any issues raised by students via the survey.

- a) Departments should only share the results with the relevant cohort of students. For example, a department's results from the NSS should be shared with undergraduates.
- **Reinforce any messages with a 'Close the Loop' campaign to run Term One** – The UCL-wide You Shaped UCL campaign will launch in Term One, and staff are encouraged to run their own campaigns locally.
 - a) Departmental or faculty colleagues will be invited to download You Shaped UCL template materials that they can adapt for their own localised campaigns.

Good practice from UCL departments

1. Introductory presentations

In recent focus groups, students recalled their module or programme leaders using introductory presentations or emails to explain how feedback from previous cohorts had inspired changes. The Department of Psychology and Language Sciences, meanwhile, includes notable improvements made in response to student feedback in their Student Handbook. This sets a precedent for staff-student partnership and may have contributed to their excellent scores in NSS Student Voice questions.

2. Follow up reports

Circulating follow-up report on the department's performance in a recent student survey, with a breakdown of results. This report demonstrated that the department valued the students' feedback, and helped students (particularly Academic Reps) identify potential areas of focus for future improvement. The follow-up reports also reassure students their feedback is heard and valued.

3. Staff Student Committee Meetings (SSCC) actions

Some UCL departments send follow-up emails to students after Staff-Student Consultative Committee (SSCC) meetings, summarising the key points and action points. Focus group attendees felt that this was useful as it offered reassurance that students and staff were working collaboratively. Other departments have left this to the Student Reps, but it is worth considering that Reps may not always have the contact details for their student cohort, particularly in other year groups.

Several departments have also made use of the "together we changed" section of their Unitu boards, to show where improvements have been made in response to student feedback. If your department does not have Unitu, you may consider setting up a section of a Moodle site to host changes inspired by student feedback.

UCL-wide Closing the Loop initiatives

UCL provides several resources to help to close the loop on student feedback:

- The [You Shaped UCL landing page](#) shows students the changes made to UCL-wide services such as Libraries and Academic Support in response to feedback. Links to this page are often

included in emails promoting student surveys such as the NSS. Staff in Professional Services should share any notable changes with the [Student Engagement and Experience team](#).

- Roller banners around campus directing students to the You Shaped UCL landing pages, and A1 posters in Malet Place highlighting the most notable changes inspired by student voices. The banners and posters are created by the Student Engagement and Experience unit within the V-P Education team.
- The Templates & Guides section of the Teaching & Learning Portal website includes [customisable templates](#) for departmental or faculty colleagues to run their own localised 'Closing the Loop' campaigns.

If you have any questions about the activities proposed here, or if you would like to share your own best practice on how to demonstrate the impact of student feedback, please contact student.engagement@ucl.ac.uk.