

Surveys and survey feedback discussion
A paper by Doug Hunt, Deputy President (Education)

Background

Currently the College takes part in numerous internal and external surveys (appendix 1), which heavily focus on maximising the participation rate for the results to be accurate and representative of what the student body thinks. Without high participation rates some academics believe the data is skewed by those who have a strong opinion.

These surveys take up an incredible amount of time for students to fill in when you consider how many surveys a student has to complete for their entire time spent at Imperial. They also take up student academic representatives' and departmental staff time when it comes to encouraging their students to take part.

When considering the staff costs and the collective amount of student time spent on maximising the participation rate, I would like to expect that the data is acted upon and changes were fed back to the students. However this is currently not taking place in all the surveys and this is effectively wasting a significant amount of students' and staff time.

Opportunities

The College has shown an increased level of interest in this area, as the Pro Rector (Education) has placed surveys and feedback on their results in her most recent Education and Student Strategy, while the College is paying for a flexible survey platform (Qualtrics) that allows quicker analytics on the results and are trying to make this external provider offer module surveys, so they can carry out SOLE on this platform.

Discussion

Do we believe the College should put more resources into analysing the survey data or into software that can do this automatically? If so, should more resources be placed in creating departmental league tables for DUGS, DPS, HODs and Faculty Deans to help drive change?

Do we feel that the College and departments need to invest more resources in communicating actions taken in light of survey data and in explaining the importance of key surveys? One example is Physics creating a "You Said, We Did" page to show their students that their feedback does matter - <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/Physics/DUGS/YousaidWedid>

Do we think Qualtrics should be adapted to show live granular participation rates? This would empower the student academic representatives and academics to promote these surveys (I have been trying to offer this service this year via <https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/sole> by updating it 3 times a week, as ICT and Registry can apparently not already do this).

Is there any other added features you would like Qualtrics to have?

Appendix 1 – The College surveys students are encouraged to complete

There may be more surveys than the ones below and it may vary by department, but those are the ones I am aware of.

Undergraduate

Internal:

SOLE – module evaluation (2-3 times a year – even more for medicine)

Overall SOLE (once a year for non-final years)

TOLE (once a year)

POLE (once a year)

Final year project survey (once a year for final years)

Student Experience Survey (once a year)

External:

NSS (once a year for final years)

Student Barometer (once a year – doesn't include final years)

Postgraduate Taught (including MRes)

Internal:

PG SOLE (2 times a year and each department can decide if they take part)

Student Experience Survey (once a year)

External:

PTES (once every two years)

Student Barometer (once a year)

Postgraduate Research

Internal:

Student Experience Survey (once a year)

External:

PRES (once every two years)

Student Barometer (once a year)