

Education & Representation Board

Minutes

*The second Ordinary Meeting of the Education & Representation Board for the 2016-17 Session will be held on Wednesday 30th November 2016. Location Meeting Room 3*

**Formal Business**

1. **Chairs Business-Welcome and introductions. Apologies noted.**
2. **Minutes of last meeting. Approved**
3. **Matters arising. None**

**Matters for Report**

1. **Updates from the Deputy President (Education)**

Rep training. Nearing the end of first stage, second stage in development.

Learning and Teaching strategy; still in consultation stage, mostly through online, pop up stands, town hall meetings, next on 8th Dec, 12-1 in SAF. Would like to see more students there. Spread the word.

**ACTION:** Luke to circulate details of town halls and pop-ups to committee.

Zero Tolerance Submission Policy. Flared up quickly, union wants to involve students, and help shape our stance. Discussion here today will help shape Union’s policy.

TEF submission. Imperial will have to put together proposal outlining justification for fee grading to HEFCE. Will be co-written between the union and College. Opportunity for ERB involvement.

PG sports. Fully approved by provost, but concerns remain about space and resourcing. Departments have been asked to share their space more willingly. Most likely come into effect next few years.

1. **Updates from the Constituent Union Academic Affairs Officers. Noted.**

**Matters for Discussion:**

1. **Learning and Teaching strategy**

Different opportunities for students to get engaged. Is there a document we can use for reference?

**ACTION: LUKE TO EMAIL BRIEFING**

Feels like it’s happening but I’m not really sure how to engage with it.

ICSMSU: Got good engagement, students think it’s year and course specific, unsure as to how students can relate it to wider college.

Town hall meetings

1. **Zero Tolerance submission policy**

Thank you to everyone who put forward reports. Context. Origin from last years NSS response, a proposal for a gradation scale put forward at QUACE. Another proposal suggested. Now have three options, put out to consultation. 250 responses

66 in favour of graduated mark reduction

19 in favour of zero tolerance

15 in favour of capped mark.

Abhijay’s paper. Put forward to formalise change. Had a FoNs meeting; staff said it’s difficult to administer graduated mark reduction, students fear that it might encourage cheating the system. Students would rather have pass mark cap.

How would the grad system be gained? If you had done only half the work, and had more time, meant that your work would be better.

What if your pass mark isn’t 40%? Dependant on department pass mark

Computing. Students value good feedback, gradual reduction not an option, impacts on feedback turnaround. 40% Cap, don’t even want that, group projects often have a lot of weight. Mixture of priorities means that one person ends up doing the work and collective marks suffer. Either zero tolerance, or a one ‘life’ system.

One day won't make a difference.

Zero tolerance penalises students for human error such as missing bus, MH issues etc.

RSMSU: Good logistical issues. There’s already a large variation in what students experience in the current policy. Changing the policy would only add to inconsistency.

This was a response to feedback and assessment, Has nothing to do with ZT. Lecturers need to change their rather than change policy. If something happens out of your control, can’t you apply MitCirc.This is what happens in my faculty. The issues is around delivery of mitcircs. I don't think this policy will help stressed students. There should be more support and a more open dialogue. Deadlines reflect real life.

Technical point: No you can’t. College Policy does not allow for it.

ICSMSU: Don't have a zero tolerance policy, mixed bag. 4th year ZT, other year groups graduated mark.

Don’t do hard copy hand in, all online

CivEng: Worry is that admin staff will spend more time focussing on this rather than fixing other problems. Already negotiated staggered deadlines.

Computing. Have one chance to submit work late.

Nas: Can’t take the chance that departments will be understanding. Have to understand that a lot of other departments aren’t as understanding.

An option to consider is to keep ZT and update MitCircs? Tech: in theory MitCircs have been updated, but in reality, still inconsistencies.

MitCircs not communicated to students.

Chemistry: Main issue is that feedback needs to be given promptly. Differing means of assessment mean that student will prioritise certain assessments over others.

EIE: maybe teach students better organisational skills

Nas: There is a workload issue, this policy won't change assess and feedback, there will be some people who can’t hand in work on time because of all other commitments.

Technical: Work not marked immediately, there’s no difference in a few days

Maybe look at something around hours not days. Graduation should be based on weighting of work. Leniency should be documented.

Materials: ZT strongly enforced. Late work can often delay feedback. Students not that aware.

ICSMSU: Students prefer ZT. Might discourage people from submitting their work in on time.

RCSU: Do we think that students are that lax?

Either Vote on paper, or vote on differing policies.

ZT YES: 13

ZT NO: 3

ZT ABS: 1

GS YES 2

CM YES 9

Abs: 2

Concern raised: That this board conflicts with consultation.

**ACTION:** Recirculate the poll to get further reach. Add more context. And add more detail around graduated system? Can we break it down departmental responses. Do we even want to keep this on the table? Can also raise in SSC’s.

**ACTION: DEP REPS TO EMAIL OUT TO STUDENTS? CAN IT GO OUT IN AN ALL STUDENT EMAIL?**

1. **SOLE Discussion**

-Effectiveness

-Timeliness

RSMSU: Works if students feel like their lectures are taking it seriously. Timeliness, last week of teaching of modules. Would be interesting to see it could be done after exams, but don't want students to complain

Materials: For short courses difficult to use sole. Focussing more on rolling feedback, Feedback as you go. Seems to be okay, problems are being solved, but there’s no formal method.

Possible infringement on QA policies.

ChemEng: People would be more inclined to participate if they feel that the departments respond. You said we did approach.

Computing: Developing a rolling system, where students can constantly give feedback. Staff filters out inappropriate comments before passing on to Lecturers.

Chemistry: Long questions, questions can sometimes be irrelevant. Generally quite low response rates. Incentivised. Lecturers benefit from SOLE rather than other informal means of feedback.

ICSMSU: Really bad response rate. Have a You said, we did. Traffic light system for changes made. The issues is the structure of SOLE, every question is required. Moved to google forms and there’s been a higher rate. Means that there is less to do.

Maybe a more formalised equivalent.

CGCU: SOLE evaluates the course as a whole. Maybe having spring term and summer term ones.

SOLE serves a purpose, but maybe having a more diagistic approach.

Physics: Some courses so poorly taught that SOLE feedback has no impact. Below a certain threshold means that staff have to go to training. An air of conceit, lecturers view themselves as untouchable

Thoughts on You said, we did: it helps students benefit from change. Once SOLE is felt as irrelevant, it reflects that in students approach. If students want to revive SOLE, focus on response from 1st years. Rename it?

Point of anonymous feedback, for student welfare, potentially harmful.

1. **Student Involvement in Imperial TEF’s submission.**

Imperial currently silver.

Other SU’s considering boycotting NSS, current stance is neutral.

Discussion around how the Union gets involved in co-writing.

Will fee rises be college wide, or departmental specific?

Is there an option for Imperial to opt out of fee raises? Difficult to persuade College to do so.

Initially welcomed it; Welcome focus on teaching, means there’s nothing to hide behind. Gives students a clearer sense of what’s going on. Need a wider consultation to determine stance.

On paper a good idea, but in reality, all we’ll get back from it is the fee raise. Even if we put forward a stance, College is unlikely to change their view.

If the government want fees to go up, they will.

If we work with College, we’ll get more out it.

College need to improve their NSS. There’s no way that they’re going to change that quick.

Will be difficult to get students behind an issue that doesn’t affect them

Worries about the reflection on the School of Medicine, and value of Imperial degree in the future.

If we work with College now, they’ll be more likely to work with us in the future.

Imperial is run as a business, they’ve not decreased International student fees, so why would they do that for home students.

Differentiated fees, promotes bad NSS scores. NSS scores can be affected by other methods. Boycotting the NSS won't do anything

Something to consider, student finance wont be able to cover fees.

We need to focus on what we can effect.

If the union stops pushing NSS, departments will still push it.

College will have to find the root cause of why students are unhappy

1. **Departmental Action Plans- To note**
2. **Departmental ‘Education Newsletters’**

Students not always necessarily aware of changes being made, working on a newsletter in Physics, also have one in Medicine.

Role of staff should be able to do that.

1. **PG students in CU’s**

Bringing PGT under CU rather than GSU. Academically, the experience of PGT students more aligned with UG’s.

A conversation to be had with PGTs. Focused on Academic Representation.

**ACTION: Contact Sinziana and Lloyd to follow up.**

**AOB**

ICSMSU: Last year union pushed college to introduce a two week feedback system, gone abysmally. Jeopardising feedback quality. Need a discussion around this. ACTION: Add to Agenda next time.