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Context

<u>Why is the feedback board needed? What are the challenges of our current feedback system?</u>

Each department's student year representatives (reps) are elected in autumn to represent their cohort's academic and welfare interests. They are responsible for collecting their peers' feedback and raising any issues with their departmental staff in various student-staff committees/ student-staff liaison groups (SSCs/SSLGs). Departmental SSCs/SSLGs are held once or twice per term, and the representatives can provide general feedback, such as a comprehensive, thematic programme evaluation.

Often our students are first and foremost concerned with short-term issues affecting their immediate experience. Most short-term queries and problems can be fixed relatively quickly, but raising those queries is not well signposted. Student reps have sought to utilise general feedback platforms (e.g., SSCs/SSLGs) as an opportunity to raise all queries and feedback. This has led to an overdilation of these meetings due to a build-up and focus on specific queries. Due to the retrospective nature of specific queries and lack of a direct feedback loop, short-term problems are often not addressed shortly, which create a degree of frustration among students.

In addition, many students often have the same issue simultaneously. Year reps are overwhelmed by many messages from multiple channels without a streamlined platform. When year reps and students raise the same query to staff, this increases their workload to reply to individual queries. Escalated queries are not transparent as individual replies to individual students is not accessible across the entire student body.

The new system was trialled in Medicine (MBBS) in January 2021, which the previous ICSMSU President (Muntaha Naeem) and year reps set up and moderate centralised academic feedback boards on Padlet. Students do not need to own an account to write feedback/enquiries. Reps will send a unique link to the cohort so that students feel safe to post any comments and provide appropriate and respectful feedback. Neither staff members nor the public can access these boards. Although this board is anonymous, student reps gatekeep student submissions before publishing on the platform to ensure inappropriate messages are filtered. In addition, year reps will signpost students to the College and Union's welfare services if any student expresses significant wellbeing concerns.

Students' queries are listed as open, in progress, and closed so that they can see what has been asked and escalated (see figure 1). This system has successfully alleviated resource intensiveness and workload of uncoordinated escalation. Effectively, issues can be raised and resolved timely. The board can provide reassurance when everyone can access the relevant information. Heavy load of built-up specific queries was alleviated from the termly SSCs/SSLGs, allowing it to focus on wider discussion points. The system has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from students, year reps, and faculty/departmental staff.

I firmly believe that expanding this project to other departments can improve communication between students and their departments, strengthening student-staff collaboration and perception of a considered student voice.

Purpose

To improve the feedback process for reps and students by initiating a feedback board where students can submit feedback or enquiries on a centralised platform.

Aim

To close the feedback loop and ensure SSCs are focused on high-level issues. We hope this platform can make a positive change for students.

How it works

Students can submit academic feedback or enquiries through the platform. Reps are then able to raise feedback to the relevant staff members. After receiving a response, the reps can notify students on the feedback board so everyone can see the progress. Hence, all feedback is automatically collated onto one platform. As a result, the feedback loop is effectively closed, leaving feedback more accessible for all students, and SSCs can be focused on higher-level issues rather than granular queries.

Who will use the feedback board?

•   Students – Ask questions or provide feedback.

•   Year reps – Collecting feedback from the board, raising feedback to their departmental SSCs, encouraging students to use them.

•   Departmental reps – Overseeing all year boards and monitor feedback, raise feedback to their faculty SSCs if appropriate.

•   Faculty reps – Can access the feedback boards but will not play a major role in regularly monitoring or responding to feedback. They raise feedback to faculty meetings if appropriate.

•   DPE – Monitor rep engagement to get an overview of student issues. Training for reps to use the platform.

•   Union/ Rep team – Communications, monitor rep engagement, highlight rep wins and rewards.

Platform functionality (admin/rep's perspective)

Figure 1: An overview of the feedback board using the Padlet software. The DPE built the template. The board from an admin's perspective. For more details, visit the link here.

(https://en-gb.padlet.com/icudpe/oes7295gszkms0s1)

Section headline

Anonymous submission

- Only year and dep reps will read them
- Academic or welfare enquiries
- Students can leave their name/email address if they wish
- Admins (reps) will move them to a separate page where other students and staff cannot access them (see figure 2). Each department will have one of these.
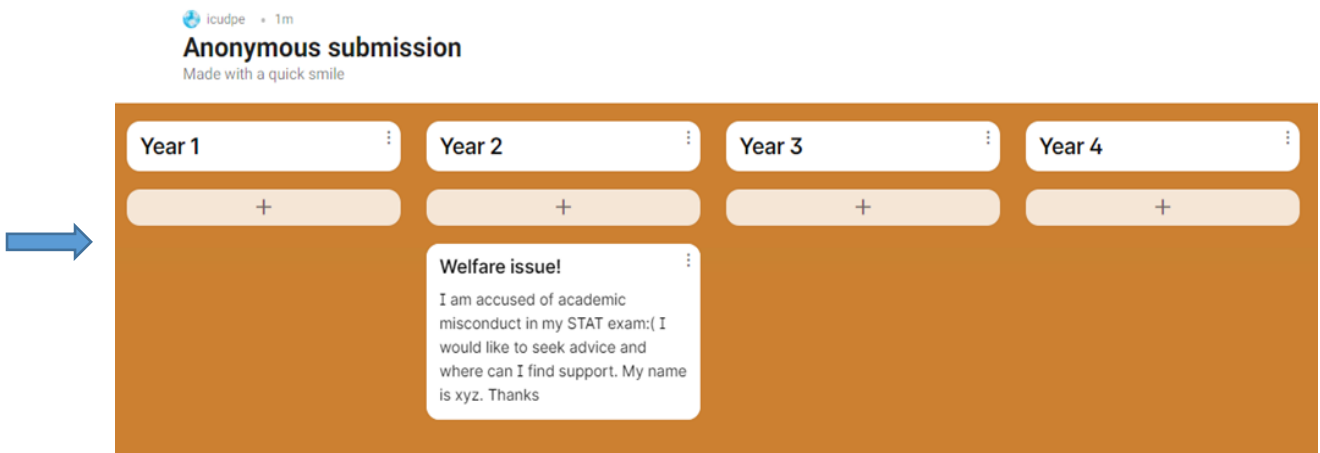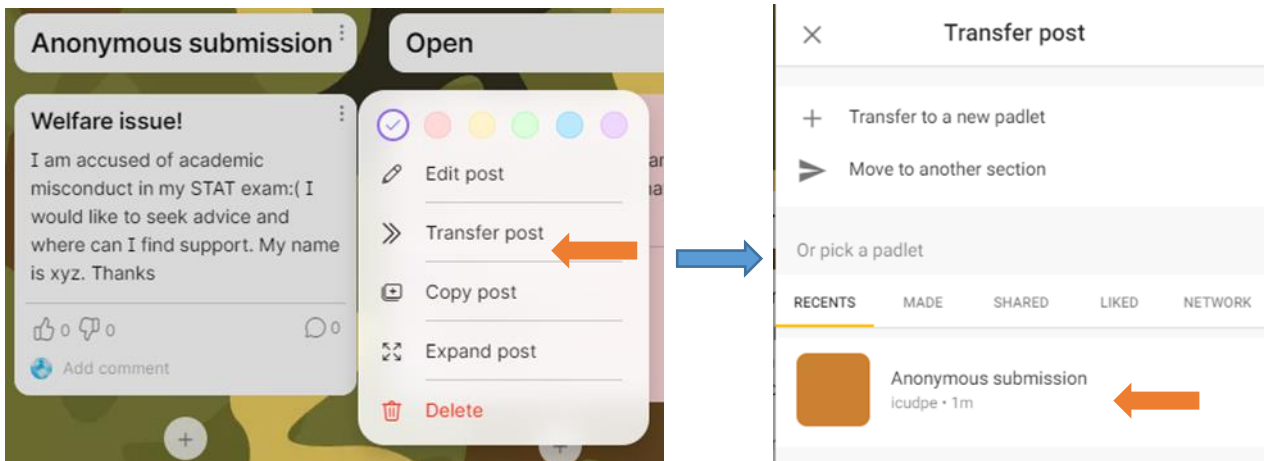
Figure 2: A flow chart showing handling anonymous submission from an admin's perspective.

Open

- Students submit general and non-sensitive enquiries/feedback here
- All posts will need approval from the admins before being published under the tab
- Reps will approve and put them under the 'Open' tab
- Students can thumbs up if they are facing the same issue/ comment under the post (figure 5)

In Progress

- Admins will move the post from the 'Open' tab to the 'In progress' tab when they have picked up the issue. The most common way would be reps contacting a departmental staff before moving it to the 'In Progress' tab
- If reps receive an email reply, they will comment under the post
- The post will remain in the tab unless it is solved

<u>Closed</u>

- Reps will move solved enquiries to the tab
- No further actions are required
- If the enquiry does not require any escalation (usually can be signposted), admins will move the post to 'Closed' directly and insert the link if appropriate

<u>Ground rules</u>

- Simple rules for students to follow – Some Dos and Don'ts

<u>Welfare queries</u>

- Links and descriptions of the College and ICU's welfare support services
- ICU Advice Centre, warden team, counselling, disability, student support, SVLOs
- Tailor-made signposting links to fit individual departments
- Contacts for department and faculty senior tutors

<u>User instruction</u>

- Instructions to navigate the platform and how the sections listed above are used

Feedback submission walkthrough (user/student's perspective)

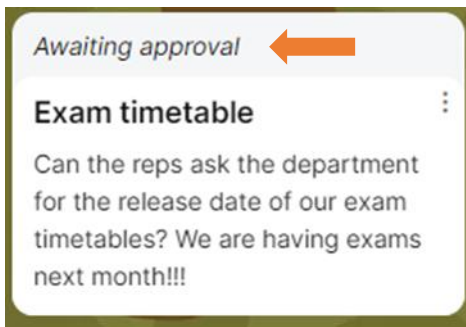<u>Post submission (general through the 'open' tab)</u>
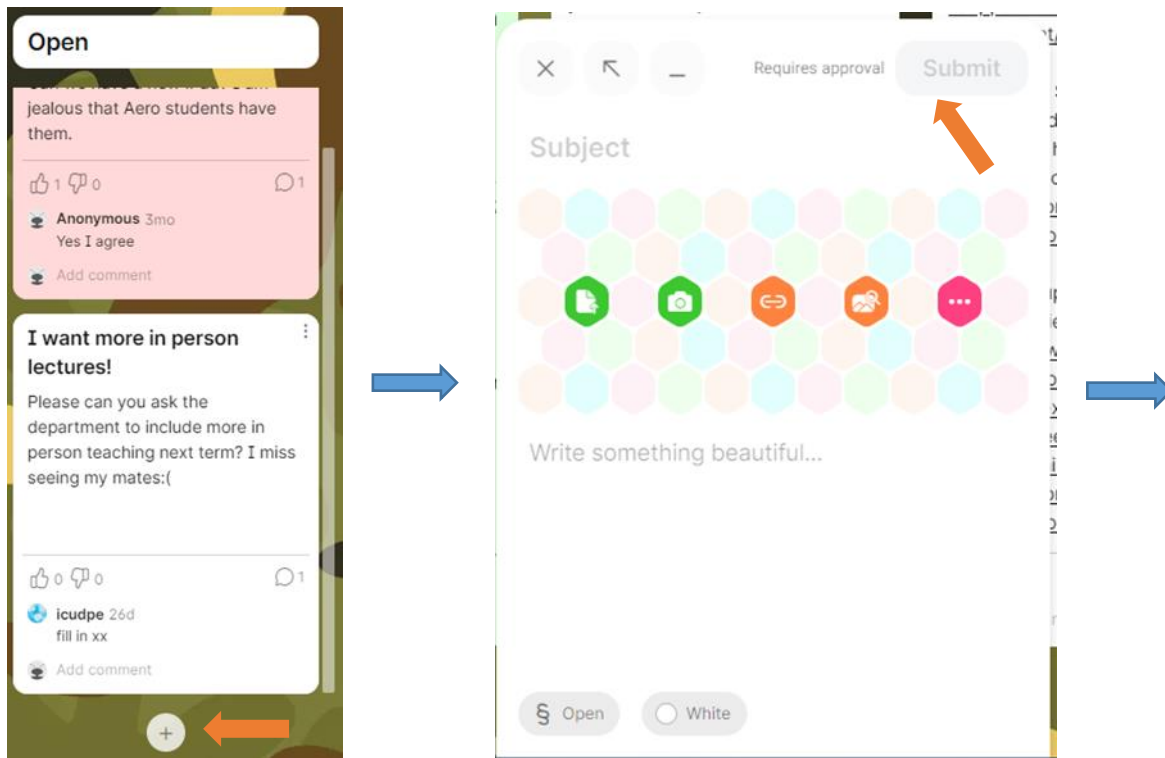
Figure 3: A flow chart showing the submission process if students raise enquiry/feedback. Students can submit a post by clicking the (+) button. Students can submit them in words, documents or pictures. Regardless of students submitting under the 'Anonymous submission' and 'Open' tab, their posts will require approval from the admin (reps). Students can edit the post even if it's pending approval.
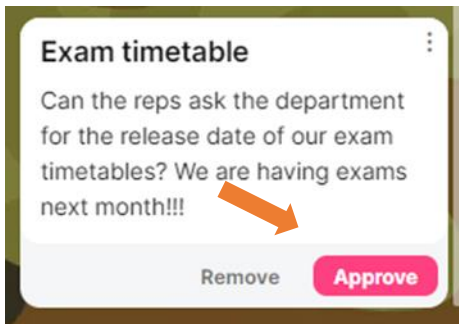

Figure 4: An admin's perspective if they receive a post from students. Admins will approve the post as long as it is academic-related, appropriate, and have not been raised before. It will remain in the 'Open' section if they approve it. A transfer is needed if it is submitted under the 'Anonymous submission' tab. If the post contains inappropriate or sensitive information, admins can edit the post to delete some parts of the post or remove the entire post.

Post submission (through the 'anonymous submission' tab)

The main difference is the same step as above. The main difference would be the post will not be visible to other students. Reps can contact the student if the student wishes to. The post's author cannot view or edit their post once it is submitted, as it will be moved to another board (see figure 2).
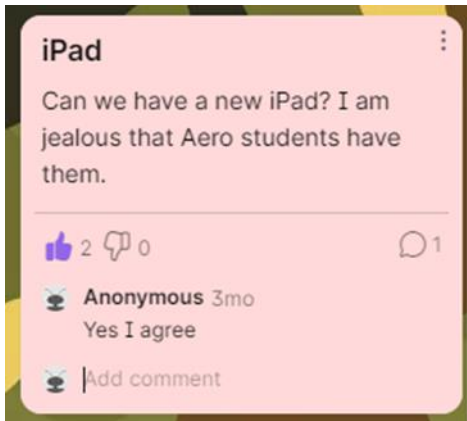
Figure 5: A student's perspective to interact with an approved post. Students can put a thumbs up, a thumbs down, or comment under the post. Students won't require approval to comment, but reps can remove inappropriate comments.

Supplementary bits

Details of the welfare queries

Welfare welcome!

While this feedback board is designated for academic feedback only, you are welcomed to contact our wellbeing year rep XX (email) for welfare concerns and questions.

However, if your issues are particularly sensitive, we suggest you contact the ICU advice centre or your department senior tutor xx.

For more information, check out the links below!

ICU Advice Centre – Free, confidential and impartial advice on academic, housing or financial issues advice@imperial.ac.uk

Wardening team - Provides pastoral support for people living in halls https://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/support/in-your-halls/

Counselling and mental health team - Provides free, professional mental health support https://www.imperial.ac.uk/counselling/

Disability advisory service - Supports disabled students or students with a specific learning difficulty https://www.imperial.ac.uk/disability-advisory-service/

Student support fund - For students who might need financial assistance https://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/financial-assistance/student-support-fund/

Personal tutoring - Provides academic support to students https://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/support/in-your-department/

Report and Support - A tool that can be used to disclose incidents of bullying, harassment and sexual violence anonymously https://report-and-support.imperial.ac.uk/

SVLOs - Support for students who have experienced sexual violence https://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/student-services/sexual-violence-support/meet-the-sexual-violence-liaison-officer-team/ https://report-and-support.imperial.ac.uk/

<Faculty/departmental welfare support links, if any>