

Imperial College Union Feedback board project brief

Author(s): Daniel Lo (Deputy President Education)

Context

Why is the feedback board needed? What are the challenges of our current feedback system?

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 over-dilation 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)

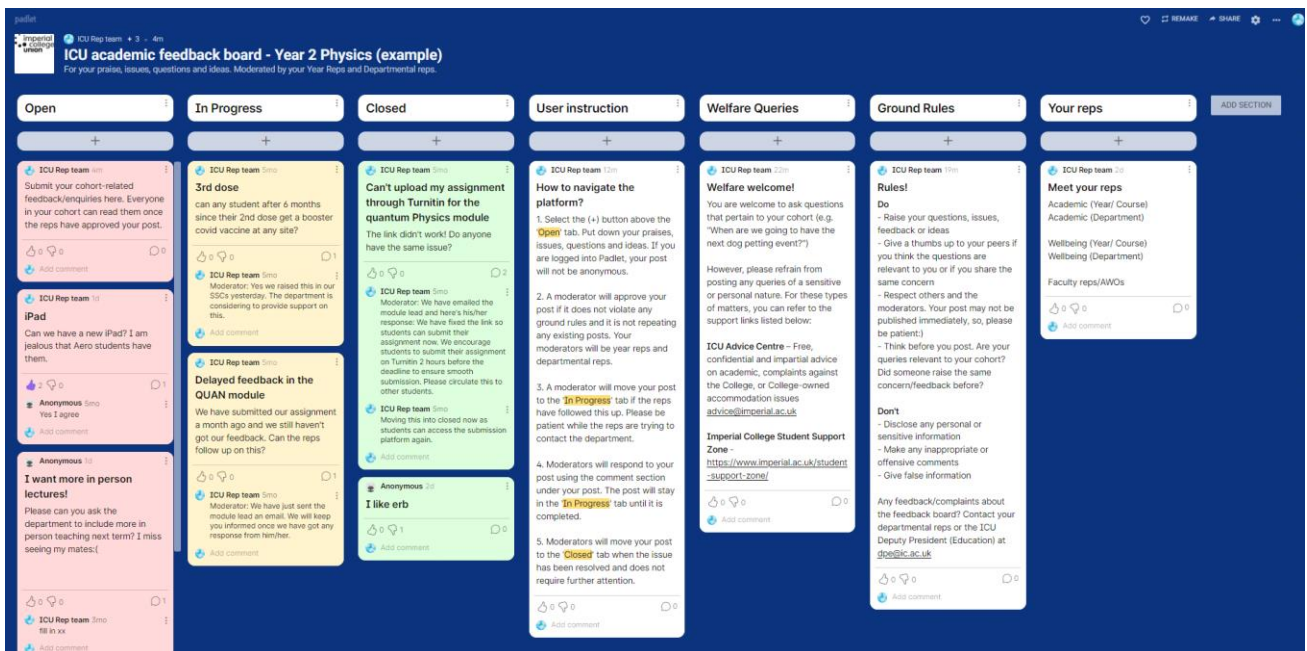


Figure 1: An overview of the year feedback board using the Padlet software built by the DPE. The board from an admin's perspective. For more details, visit the link [here](#).

Section headlines

Open

- Students can submit general and non-sensitive enquiries/feedback here
- All posts will need approval from the admins before being published under the 'Open' tab
- Students can interact with any of the posts (figure 5)
- Reps should change the post background colour to red

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 departmental staff before moving it to the 'In Progress' tab
- If reps receive a response or would like to provide an update, they will comment under the post. The post will remain in the tab unless it is resolved
- Reps should change the post background colour to yellow

Closed

- Reps will move resolved enquiries to the 'Closed' tab
- No further actions are required

- Admins will move the post to the ' Closed' tab directly if the inquiry does not require any escalation (usually can be signposted).
- Reps should change the post background colour to green

User instruction

- Instructions to navigate the feedback board

Welfare queries

- Useful links to the Union's Advice Centre page and the College's student support service
- Contacts for department directors of undergraduate/postgraduate studies and senior tutors

Ground rules

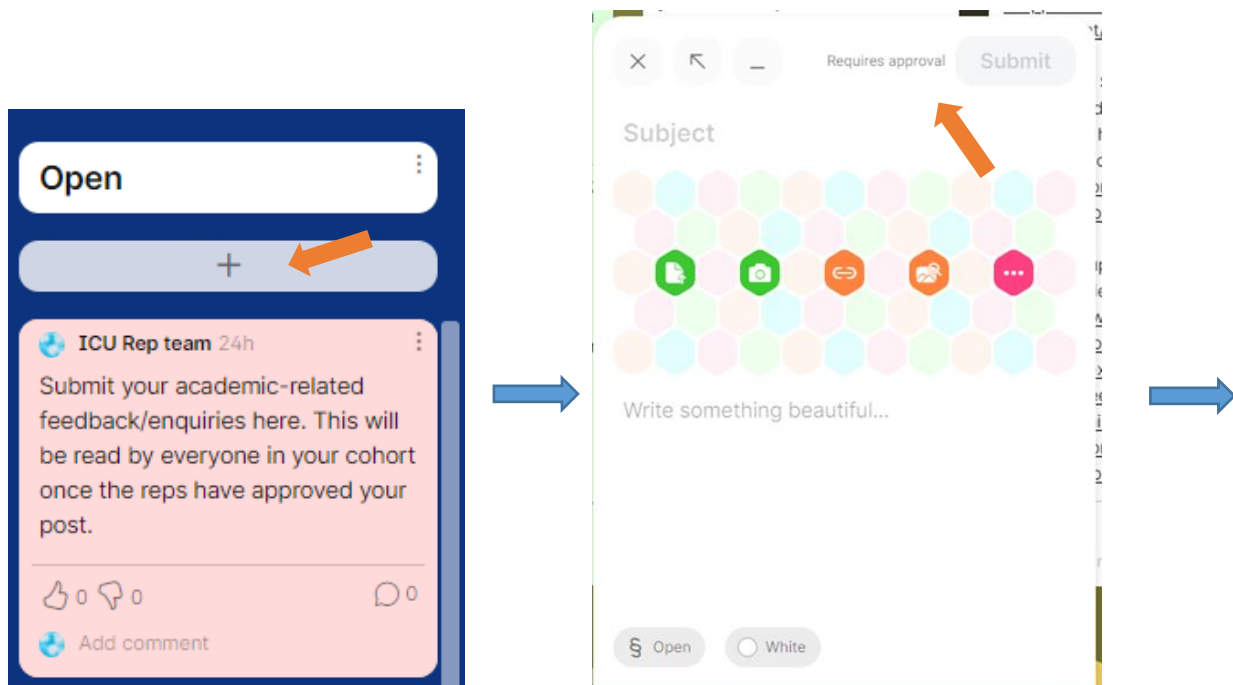
- Simple rules for users to follow – Some Dos and Don'ts

Your reps

- Names and contact details of your year and departmental academic and wellbeing reps

Feedback submission walkthrough (user/student's perspective)

Post submission (through the 'Open' tab)



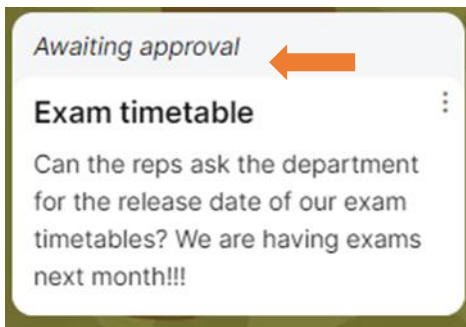


Figure 2: A flow chart showing the post submission process. Students can submit a post by clicking the (+) button. Students can submit them in words, documents or pictures. The posts will require approval from the admin (reps). Students can edit the post even if it's pending approval.

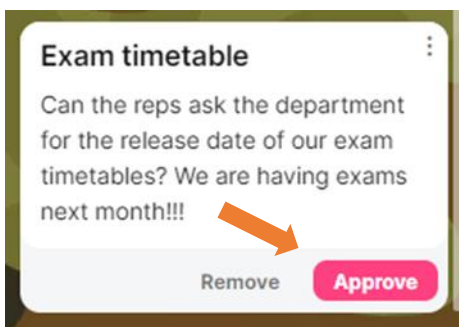


Figure 3: An admin's perspective if they receive posts from students. Admins will approve the post as long as it is cohort-related, appropriate, and no one has raised the same feedback/enquiry before. It will be shown under the 'Open' tab after they approve it. If the post contains inappropriate or sensitive information, admins can edit the post before approving, or delete the post entirely.

Post interaction

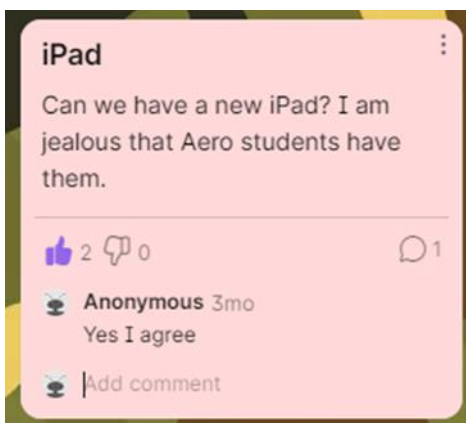


Figure 4: Students can put a thumbs up, a thumbs down, or comment under the post. Students won't require an approval to comment, but reps can remove inappropriate comments. Students are encouraged to check the ground rules if they are unsure. Users won't stay anonymous if they logged into their Padlet account.

Supplementary bits

Year board user instruction

1. Select the (+) button above the 'Open' tab. Put down your praises, issues, questions and ideas. If you are logged into Padlet, your post will not be anonymous.
2. A moderator will approve your post if it does not violate any ground rules and it is not repeating any existing posts. Your moderators will be year reps and departmental reps.
3. A moderator will move your post to the 'In Progress' tab if the reps have followed this up. Please be patient while the reps are trying to contact the department.
4. Moderators will respond to your post using the comment section under your post. The post will stay in the 'In Progress' tab until it is completed.
5. Moderators will move your post to the 'Closed' tab when the issue has been resolved and does not require further attention.

Details of the welfare queries

You are welcome to ask questions that pertain to your cohort (e.g. "When are we going to have the next dog petting event?")

However, please refrain from posting any queries of a sensitive or personal nature. For these types of matters, you can refer to the support links listed below:

<Department staff contact details>

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

Imperial College Student Support Zone -<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/>

Details of the ground rules

Do

- Raise your questions, issues, feedback or ideas
- Give a thumbs up to your peers if you think the questions are relevant to you or if you share the same concern
- Respect others and the moderators. Your post may not be published immediately, so, please be patient:)
- Think before you post. Are your queries relevant to your cohort? Did someone raise the same concern/feedback before?

Don't

- Disclose any personal or sensitive information
- Make any inappropriate or offensive comments
- Give false information

Any feedback/complaints about the feedback board? Contact your departmental reps or the ICU Deputy President (Education) at dpe@ic.ac.uk