‘Student Expectations of Higher Education’

Wednesday 24th October 2018

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This session

Edge Hill’s Student Charter sets out the terms of partnership between the University and its students and summarises what a student can expect from the Institution and what is expected of them in return. This session will draw upon findings from national research to consider students’ expectations of teaching, assessment, and academic and personal support. We will also consider the impact of consumer legislation on higher education providers in respect of delivering programmes as advertised whilst retaining the ability to make changes that enhance the student experience. By the end of the session participants should have gained a good knowledge and understanding of students’ perceptions of their higher education experience, both as learners and consumers.
Financing students

- “A new system for higher education funding which ensures that no first-time undergraduate student will have to pay fees up-front and that people are only ever asked to contribute towards the cost of their education, once they can afford to do so.”

- “To be successful, institutions will have to appeal to prospective students and be respected by employers. Putting financial power into the hands of learners makes student choice meaningful.”
Improving the student experience

• “We will remove the regulatory barriers that are preventing a level playing field for higher education providers of all types, including further education colleges and other alternative providers... It will also lead to higher education institutions concentrating on high-quality teaching.”

• “We will radically improve and expand the information available to prospective students, making available much more information about individual courses at individual institutions and graduate employment prospects. Student charters and student feedback will take on a new importance to empower students whilst at university.”

• “We expect new courses to offer increased value for money.”
‘Student Academic Experience Survey’
(HEPI-Advance HE, 2018)

- Annual student satisfaction survey with c. 15,000 respondents
- Covers the full range of the student academic experience, including:
  - General satisfaction and ‘value for money’
  - Teaching and learning
    - ‘Teaching Intensity’ (student workload and class size)
  - Assessment and feedback
  - Student wellbeing
Has your experience matched expectations?

- **It's been better in some ways and worse in others**
  - 2012: 49%
  - 2013: 45%
  - 2014: 50%
  - 2015: 49%
  - 2016: 49%
  - 2017: 51%
  - 2018: 53%

- **It's been better**
  - 2012: 26%
  - 2013: 32%
  - 2014: 27%
  - 2015: 28%
  - 2016: 27%
  - 2017: 25%
  - 2018: 23%

- **It's been worse**
  - 2012: 11%
  - 2013: 13%
  - 2014: 12%
  - 2015: 12%
  - 2016: 13%
  - 2017: 13%
  - 2018: 12%

- **It's been exactly what I expected**
  - 2012: 11%
  - 2013: 8%
  - 2014: 9%
  - 2015: 9%
  - 2016: 9%
  - 2017: 9%
  - 2018: 10%

Base: All respondents. 2012 (9,058); 2013 (17,090); 2014 (15,046); 2015 (15,129); 2016 (15,221); 2017 (14,057); 2018 (14,046). Statistically significant differences between 2017 and 2018 in bold.
Why has the experience been worse than expected?

- Teaching quality worse than expected: 52% in 2017, 52% in 2018
- Course poorly organised: 48% in 2017, 50% in 2018
- Did not feel supported in independent study: 45% in 2017, 43% in 2018
- Too little interaction with staff: 37% in 2017, 36% in 2018
- Feedback was poor: 36% in 2017, 38% in 2018
- Fewer contact hours than expected: 33% in 2017, 34% in 2018
- Not put in enough effort myself: 30% in 2017, 30% in 2018
- Too little interaction with other students: 26% in 2017, 28% in 2018

Base: All respondents whose experience has been wholly worse than expected 2017 (1,769); 2018 (1,725).
Chart based on top eight mentions 2018.
Value for money of your present course

Base: All respondents. 2007 (14,859); 2012 (9,058); 2013 (17,090); 2014 (15,046); 2015 (15,129); 2016 (15,221); 2017 (14,057); 2018 (14,046). Statistically significant differences between 2017 and 2018 in bold.
Value for money – by home nation

Base: All respondents domiciled in each nation 2018. Scotland (955); EU (929); Wales (457); Northern Ireland (249); Non-EU (556); England (10,891). Value for money defined as Good / Very Good combined. Statistically significant differences between 2017 and 2018 in bold.
Value for money – by institution type

- **Russell Group**
  - 2017: 39%
  - 2018: 42%

- **Pre-92 (excluding Russell Group)**
  - 2017: 37%
  - 2018: 37%

- **Specialist**
  - 2017: 36%
  - 2018: 37%

- **Post-92**
  - 2017: 32%
  - 2018: 35%

Base: Russell Group (3,899 / 3,913); Pre-92 (3,054 / 3,071); Specialist (296 / 218); Post-92 (6,730 / 6,804). Value for money defined as Good / Very Good combined. Statistically significant differences between 2017 and 2018 in bold.
Value for money 2018 – by TEF award

- TEF Gold institutions: 40%
- TEF Silver institutions: 33%
- TEF Bronze institutions: 34%

Base: Students from TEF Gold institutions (4,828); TEF Silver (6,377); TEF Bronze (1,496). Value for money defined as Good / Very Good combined.
Top 5 reasons for Poor / Very Poor value

- Tuition fees: 62%
- Teaching quality: 45%
- Contact hours: 44%
- Course content: 37%
- Cost of living: 37%

Top 5 reasons for Good / Very Good value

- Teaching quality: 68%
- Course content: 67%
- Course facilities: 62%
- Career prospects: 53%
- Quality of campus: 51%

Base: Figures in red – all respondents perceiving Poor / Very Poor value (4,499); figures in green – all respondents perceiving Good / Very Good value (5,283).
Which areas of university spend are the most reasonable use of tuition fees?

- Spending on teaching facilities: 65%
- Spending on teaching staff: 60%
- Spending on student support services: 57%
- Spending on campus development: 52%
- Spending on financial support for students: 49%
- Spending on research facilities & resources: 49%
- Spending on careers services & resources: 48%
- Spending on sports & social facilities: 30%
- Spending on research staff: 30%
- Spending on developing global links: 27%
- Spending on management staff: 20%
- Spending on student recruitment: 16%
- Spending on raising the university's profile: 15%
- Spending on investing in local community: 12%

Base: All respondents (14,046).
Has your university provided enough information on how fees are spent?

Base: All respondents. 2015 (15,129); 2016 (15,221); 2017 (14,057); 2018 (14,046).
Should all courses charge the same fee?

- Yes: 50%
- No: 41%
- Don't know: 9%

Base: All respondents who pay home / EU fees (13,252).
‘Teaching Intensity’

- “weights the number of hours taught by the staff-student ratio of each taught hour” (Office for Students, 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Hours (0-5)</th>
<th>Hours (6-10)</th>
<th>Hours (11-15)</th>
<th>Hours (16-20)</th>
<th>Hours (21-25)</th>
<th>Hours (26-30)</th>
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Base: All respondents (14,046), by JACS subject areas.

Base: All respondents (14,046), by JACS subject areas. Chart displays number of hours spent.

Base: All respondents (14,046), by JACS subject areas. Value for money defined as Good / Very Good combined.

 Advance HE/HEPI, 2018
Workload – by subject

Base: All respondents (14,046), by JACS subject areas.
Hours spent in different class sizes

- 50 other students or more
- 16–50 other students
- 0–15 other students

Base: All respondents (14,046), by JACS subject areas. Chart displays number of hours spent.
Value for money 2018 – by subject area

- Medicine & Dentistry: 62%
- Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture: 56%
- Physical Sciences: 55%
- Subjects allied to Medicine: 45%
- Engineering: 41%
- Biological Sciences: 40%
- Law: 40%
- Non-European Languages: 39%
- Architecture, Building & Planning: 38%
- Creative Arts & Design: 37%
- Mathematics: 36%
- Linguistics, Classics: 35%
- Education: 33%
- Combined: 33%
- European Languages, Literature: 32%
- Mass Communications & Documentation: 31%
- Technology: 30%
- Historical & Philosophical Studies: 29%
- Social Studies: 29%
- Business & Administrative Studies: 28%
- All respondents: 38%

Base: All respondents (14,046), by Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) subject areas. Value for money defined as Good / Very Good combined.
Since starting your course how much do you feel you have learnt?

2017:
- A little: 27%
- A lot: 65%

2018:
- A little: 29%
- A lot: 63%

Base: All respondents (14,057). Statistically significant differences between 2017 and 2018 in bold.
Teaching-staff characteristics – year-on-year differences

- Teaching staff encouraged you to take responsibility for your own learning: 77% (2015), 77% (2016), 78% (2017), 79% (2018)
- Teaching staff clearly explained course goals and requirements: 63% (2015), 63% (2016), 65% (2017), 65% (2018)
- Teaching staff were helpful and supportive: 68% (2015), 65% (2016), 67% (2017), 65% (2018)
- Teaching staff used contact hours to guide independent study: 57% (2015), 56% (2016), 59% (2017), 57% (2018)
- Teaching staff worked hard to make their subjects interesting: 55% (2015), 56% (2016), 55% (2017), 55% (2018)
- Teaching staff motivated you to do your best work: 52% (2015), 51% (2016), 54% (2017), 52% (2018)
- Teaching staff regularly initiated debates and discussion: 38% (2015), 37% (2016), 38% (2017), 37% (2018)
- Teaching staff helped you to explore your own areas of interest: 33% (2015), 33% (2016), 37% (2017), 35% (2018)

Base: All respondents excluding not applicable. 2015 (14,947); 2016 (14,989); 2017 (13,854); 2018 (13,805). Chart displays % who say all or most of their teaching staff demonstrate the above characteristics. Statistically significant differences between 2017 and 2018 in bold.
Rating of how teaching staff provide assessment – year-on-year differences

- Teaching staff put a lot of time into commenting on my work: 2015 (36%), 2016 (36%), 2017 (38%), 2018 (36%).
- Gave you more general feedback on progress: 2015 (39%), 2016 (39%), 2017 (42%), 2018 (41%).
- Gave you feedback on draft work: 2015 (32%), 2016 (32%), 2017 (35%), 2018 (37%).
- Gave you feedback in time for help with the next assignment: 2015 (55%), 2016 (53%), 2017 (54%), 2018 (54%).
- Gave you useful feedback: 2015 (55%), 2016 (54%), 2017 (55%), 2018 (54%).
- Were open to having further discussions about your work: 2015 (57%), 2016 (57%), 2017 (59%), 2018 (58%).

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Returning assignments – whether expectations met

- Expectations exceeded:
  - 2016: 8%
  - 2017: 9%
  - 2018: 9%

- Expectations met:
  - 2016: 46%
  - 2017: 48%
  - 2018: 46%

- Expectations not met:
  - 2016: 46%
  - 2017: 43%
  - 2018: 45%

Base: All respondents. 2016 (15,221); 2017 (14,057); 2018 (14,046). Statistically significant differences between 2017 and 2018 in bold.
Returning assignments – expectation versus reality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Time taken</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>One week or less (0–7 days)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two weeks or less (8–14 days)</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three weeks or less (15–21 days)</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four weeks or less (22–28 days)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than four weeks (29 days or more)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents (14,046).
Students on value for money and tuition fees

‘£33.40 per hour and I do 600 hours of semester of self-study time. Could’ve just got a part time job and a library card, but I wouldn’t have the piece of paper which says I can do it.’

‘£9,000 a year for a degree, are you joking? The library was always overcrowded with half the amount of plug sockets for the number of seats. I will be paying this off for the rest of my life.’

‘£9,000 a year is an absolute rip off but because there’s no choice you have to pay it. Other European countries’ degree courses are a lot less and sometimes more beneficial than UK universities.’

‘I can’t comprehend how the money spent each year is used as I get the absolute bare minimum of contact with actual members of the department. I expected to have at least a weekly tutorial every week before I came to university but that isn’t the case. The excess and waste of the university with regards to spending is obvious so I can only assume a tiny fraction of the tuition fee actually goes towards tuition.’

‘The rise in tuition fees is something very few students agree with, but the knowledge and experience we gain is invaluable.’

‘Doing a physics degree, we use a lot of special (and probably very expensive) equipment in the labs and I think that the cost of tuition fees is suitable to cover this.’

‘The lecturers have an industry background and this is a great opportunity for the students to learn from them. The lecturers were sharing with us real life experiences from the manufacturing industries and, above all, there are lots of resources to support our learning.’

‘The lecturers are amazing; they know their stuff and they can answer the questions that you need to know without judgement.’

‘The module choices are neither inspiring nor varied. The campus is really tiny and it’s very difficult to ever get into the library and restaurant/cafes because they’re always packed to capacity. The small amount of hours in lectures does not seem worth the substantial tuition fees we have to pay, especially when most professors only offer one or two hours’ worth of office hours a week.’

‘There is no literal breakdown of what I am paying towards my tuition. I have at most two lectures a week and the rest of my studies is in my spare time. We are encouraged to spend 40+ hours on coursework/art work and I have to work part time to cover living costs.’

‘The transparency of our fees is not clear to us as students; we are not out-right told where the breakdown of our £9,250 pounds a year goes. I think that these fees are restricting, in that not all young people feel as though they can go to university due to the costs, especially if they come from a low-income family. The amount of debt we have when we graduate from university and enter the ‘real world’ is absolutely outrageous and then there is pressure put on us to pay it back. When I signed contracts and agreed that I was delighted that Student Finance would pay my fees directly to the university, I was totally unaware that the fees would go up by £250. This is outrageous.’

‘Value for Money: The Student Perspective’, Office for Students/ trendence UK, 2018
Students on value for money and tuition fees

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‘The rise in tuition fees is something very few students agree with, but the knowledge and experience we gain is invaluable.’

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‘Value for Money: The Student Perspective’, Office for Students/ trendence UK, 2018
**What do students studying different subjects think of their tuition fee?**

‘As an arts student, I don’t feel I receive £9,000 worth of contact time and resources. I currently have the equivalent of 5 hours per week contact time with staff. I have to purchase all of my own reading and printing materials. Although I have access to a lot of online material, I fail to see where my money has been spent other than on new campus development, staffing and subsidising degrees in other disciplines.’

‘Chemistry is an expensive course to run. It actually costs more than £9,000 a year but is paid for by other courses.’

‘Doing an economics course, I believe the graduate schemes available will overshadow the cost of the tuition fees. A career in economics/finance has significant monetary benefits where the tuition fees are only a fraction of your potential lifetime earnings.’

‘I have very few contact hours as an English and film student and so most of my work is independent. I am still required to pay for all my course books – which are mandatory for learning. Science students have labs, expensive equipment and many more contact hours. Personally I don’t think I should be paying the same as them as they are paying for the use of specialist equipment; I am paying £9,250 for only 2–3 hour lectures a week and seminars. I feel we should pay less or at least some of our books should be subsidised. They are as essential to our learning as the specialist equipment is to a science student.’
Students on what should their tuition fee should fund:

‘Access is the key, I believe that once a person is aware of what is available they may be inspired or motivated to find a way to continue looking for better opportunities.’

‘Access to the library, both on campus and the online resources, is one of the most important things on a degree that can be the difference between a pass and a fail.’

‘Learning infrastructure is pivotal to a course and accessing costly learning resources for free is a major draw of being a part of a university.’

‘Leisure and sport have a huge impact on quality of life. Rather than the strict focus on mental health services, invest in sport and leisure to reduce mental health issues. Universities should train us to become sustainable humans in the workforce and pay attention to health wellbeing.’

‘One of the most important things to me is a good learning environment and an excellent library filled with good study spaces and resources. It just makes the academic experience at university so much better.’

‘Sports and leisure are one of the most important aspects in university as students need to be healthy physically and emotionally.’

‘Along with the funding for the course and research, activities and clubs and societies form an integral part of the enjoyment and experience of university. People can take a break from studies and enjoy time with people with similar interests to them – but those who can’t afford certain aspects such as the competition payments etc end up missing out.’

Students on extra university costs

‘At school I was always told ‘everyone can afford to go to university’, however if your parents, like mine, earn just over the cut off point for loans it is actually quite unaffordable. [...] There isn’t any support or warning about how expensive it all really is, and unless your parents are on very low wages you don’t get any help whatsoever despite any other circumstances.’

‘I’m quite surprised by how much I have learned throughout this survey. For example, I had no idea that my fees paid for research completely unrelated to my field of study. I don’t think we were even told what our fees would pay for actually.’

‘The course had additional costs for printing and binding of theses which were not mentioned. No further information was offered about living costs, travel expenses etc.’

‘I was not told all the extra costs and how expensive activities from societies would be, which means I can’t join many… How expensive books would be that are compulsory for the course we have to pay on our own…. How much accommodation outside of campus would be… there should be reduced schemes.’

‘Although my student loan was received and covered my student accommodation rent, it failed to cover living costs and I had to get a part-time job in order to support myself. Which meant I was unable to concentrate solely on my studies alone[...]’

‘If I had such support I would have been able to make more informed choices when selecting my course/modules. I feel that some things were purposely not said in the induction as staff knew that it would have deterred some students. But the knock-on effect was that after the first year students would leave or transfer to another university because the support that was promised was not there and tutors/lecturers can be very aggressive when being challenged as to the information they are giving.’
Can you think of anything else the government or the higher education regulator could do to ensure that students receive value for money?

‘Actually listen to what we have to say, rather than pretending to, and take it seriously, take it on board. We’re the future of this place, our say should matter. And don’t expect our parents to spend the money they have earned to constantly help us just to make it through the week. I always feel so much guilt when I need to turn to my parents for help because just paying rent puts me hundreds and hundreds into my overdraft so I struggle to afford food.’

‘Allow students to have more of a say on investments – eg make universities consult the student body on investments like new buildings/maintenance which sometimes seem unnecessary/overpriced.’

[...]Appoint a HEFCE/Office for Students student rep at each university to be visible and report on how students feel about value for money. Put a question about value for money in the NSS.

‘If people are passionate about their degree they shouldn’t be put off because one degree is cheaper than the other, so we should be wary about this. I am aware a science degree costs a lot more than a languages degree. I worry that it will put people off doing what they love out of fear of not getting the best value for money. But I still think we should know clearly what we are actually getting for our money. It’s a difficult situation.’

‘Allow students to complete an annual survey for every year they spend at university, where they are able to express their views on the course, the university attended, the support received and the costs incurred in their studies. The survey should be submitted to both the university involved and the higher education regulator, so that immediate actions can be taken in case the overall satisfaction of students is below average. In this way, students are able to judge if any improvements have been made throughout their course of studies and hence if their suggestions have been taken into consideration, thus hopefully improving their overall university experience.’

‘Just try and be as transparent as possible with the students. I have no idea what my £9,000-a-year tuition is going towards and I feel like the popular opinion of universities is that they are just taking these tuition fees and pocketing them without using any of it for investment into the university.’

‘Stop assuming that the only reason students go to uni is to get a job that earns them lots of money! There are lots of things that provide value for money that are not about money itself. Personal development and growth, becoming a more engaged citizen and having more knowledge are also good outcomes of HE and getting these things from your experience also provide “value for money”.

‘Reducing highly paid, unrealistic management costs with the distribution of these savings going to those in greater need, i.e the students who need to work to provide an income in supporting their studies.’

‘Regular updates on the investment projects, improvements across the university both in facilities and staff, accreditation by industry bodies, data for employability of students, and employer networks with the university are some suggestions that present a clear evidence the university will provide a good value for money. At the end of the day it is the quality of the education that we receive and the better life that it offers us that determine our decisions and satisfaction with our choice.’

‘Regular independent checks on the standards of teaching and facilities. Facilities are poor because the money is not invested to maintain buildings properly.’

‘Should stop referring to education as a value for money item. Education should not be commodified.’

‘Showing us where our money would go or for us to choose where our money goes, so a fixed fee that everyone has to pay but you can choose where some of it goes so that you can have a bit more control.’

‘The government could reduce the costs of tuition fees to match the university guidelines and teaching that they provide. Also to improve value for money I think that the universities could give a breakdown of the cost of where the tuition fees go because at the moment no one knows how their money is being utilised. Also universities should provide help for families on a lower income even if students are getting student finance payments because it is a big strain to only work with what student finance gives out.’

‘Value for money is the incorrect measure for university. It does not reflect the true value of university, which is unquantifiable, cultural, and social, as well as economic. Tuition fees should be removed and universities given more central funding from government so the cost does not fall on individual students. Cost should never be a barrier to access. And students should not be focused on taking courses that offer “value for money” or jobs, but on courses that they enjoy and which add to our collective wellbeing and development.’
Brief discussion (1)

• How does the survey feedback about value for money correlate with our own feedback from students? Are there any things we could be doing differently?

• How do we set and manage student expectations in relation to course organisation, assessment feedback and staff contact (hours)?
# How Students, Staff and the Students' Union can work together

## Students
- Show commitment to your studies by taking ownership of your learning and engaging fully with all aspects of your course
- Attend taught sessions well prepared and ready to participate fully
- Ensure work is completed on time and act upon the feedback given in order to continuously improve
- Take responsibility for organising your time well, both in and outside of timetabled sessions
- Familiarise yourself with information about your course and what is expected of you
- Treat study and learning environments with respect and take advantage of facilities to enhance your own learning
- Remain committed to continuously developing your own knowledge, skills and attributes

## Staff
- Show commitment to the student experience by providing high quality teaching, learning and services
- Ensure all taught sessions are well planned, engaging and designed for students
- Provide students with thoughtful and constructive feedback and ensure it is returned in a reasonable amount of time and in line with set timescales
- Provide students with a clear and accessible academic timetable
- Give students clear and up to date information about their course and what is expected of them
- Ensure suitable study and learning environments are accessible
- Show commitment to continuing professional development in order to enhance the student experience
How Students, Staff and the Students’ Union can work together

**Students**
- Show that you are committed to the Edge Hill community by being respectful of the campus environment and local area
- Act in a manner that ensures your safety and the safety of others
- Be open, honest and courteous in dealing with staff and other students
- Provide staff with constructive feedback on how things may be improved and engage with any advice and guidance that is offered
- Attempt to resolve any issues through open and honest dialogue
- Engage with policies and procedures in a professional manner
- If issues do arise, seek to engage with staff to resolve them
- If, in particular circumstances, a procedure does need to be followed, ensure that you engage with the process in a fair, transparent and professional way

**Staff**
- Provide high quality facilities and surroundings that can be used for learning and living
- Ensure students are provided with safe spaces in which to live and learn
- Be open, honest and courteous when interacting with students and colleagues
- Listen to student feedback and offer constructive advice and guidance
- Attempt to resolve any issues through open and honest dialogue
- Provide clear, fair and accessible policies and procedures
- If issues do arise, seek to engage with students at the earliest opportunity to resolve them
- If, in particular circumstances, a procedure does need to be followed, ensure that both the process and engagement with students is fair, transparent and professional
How Students, Staff and the Students’ Union can work together

**Students**
- Attend planned personal tutor meetings to discuss your progress, personal and professional development
- Fully engage with your induction programme in order to help you transition into university life and academic study
- Familiarise yourself with the support services on offer at the University
- Seek the support, advice and guidance you need as soon as you are able
- Take responsibility for your own personal, social and educational development
- Share your views and experiences so that the University can continuously improve
- Engage with supportive policies and procedures in an honest, professional and courteous way

**Staff**
- Provide students with a personal tutor who will offer academic and pastoral support
- Provide a thorough induction to support students’ transition into university life and academic study
- Provide students with support on finance, health and wellbeing, personal matters, study and accommodation
- Offer opportunities to engage in wider academic, sporting, social and cultural activities
- Actively seek and listen to students’ views on their experience
- Provide timely feedback and thoughtful responses
- Maintain policies and procedures that support students’ safety and the safety of others with whom students may come into contact
How Students, Staff and the Students’ Union can work together

**Students**
- Take advantage of the extra-curricular and enhancement opportunities that are of interest to you
- Respect the facilities provided and enjoy the living, learning and social spaces on campus
- Engage with opportunities to improve your employability and readiness for work
- Take advantage of the high quality advice and guidance relating to work and volunteering opportunities that are of interest to you
- Offer your feedback to the University if you think there are things that could be improved
- Offer feedback on things which you think are to be commended as this could help ensure they remain for future students
- Identify and offer feedback if you think there are ways that the University and students can better work in partnership

**Staff**
- Provide a range of extra-curricular and enhancement opportunities that can aid a well-rounded university experience
- Invest in campus facilities to ensure excellent spaces to live, learn and socialise are available to students
- Ensure employability is an important feature of the mainstream curriculum
- Provide access to high quality advice and guidance relating to work and volunteering opportunities for students
- Provide opportunities for students to voice their opinions on a range of matters
- Carefully consider students’ views and how they can be used to ensure the Edge Hill experience is positive and impactful beyond study
- Identify ways to work in partnership with students
- Remain committed to monitoring and evaluating how enhancement activities impact upon the student journey
‘Students as consumers’

• The relationship between HE providers and students is governed by consumer protection law overseen by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and enforceable by local authority Trading Standards (NB this excludes academic appeals and complaints which are handled by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator)

• Students are afforded particular protection in law because they are seen to be in a weaker bargaining position than HE providers and once on programme cannot easily change providers

• CMA guidance to providers (March 2015) covers all stages of the ‘student journey’, that is:
  • Pre-entry – “It is unlawful to mislead students by failing to give them the information they need to make an informed choice... **Missing, hidden or inaccurate information** may affect students’ decisions”, e.g. course content, teaching arrangements and full costs of study. The offer of a place is deemed to be a **contract for educational services** and changes to the advertised product must be notified prior to contract... A term that affords a wide discretion to the HE provider to withdraw or cancel a course in its entirety before it commences... is potentially unfair.”
• Post-entry – “Terms that allow an HE provider to vary something – such as the course content or fees – may be unfair where they allow wide discretion to the HE provider to make changes to important aspects of the service. Terms allowing variation are not automatically unfair, and there is likely to be a need for an element of flexibility, given that unforeseen events or circumstances may arise, but this has to be balanced against giving an HE provider too wide a discretion to make changes to the detriment of students... a term that allows blanket changes and affords the HE provider a broad discretion to change significant aspects of the course (such as the course content, the location of study, method of assessment or the final qualification to be awarded), without describing the circumstances when and reasons why this might happen so that the student is able to foresee how and when changes might be made, is unlikely to be considered fair”.
Brief discussion (2)

• How do we meet **students’ expectations of us** as set out in our Student Charter? What are the important areas for attention at course, Faculty or University level?

• Which of **our expectations** require particular reinforcement with students and how is this managed most effectively?

• How confident are we that our **course information** is accurate, fair and up-to-date and so is ‘CMA-compliant’?
References


• Video: https://stream.liv.ac.uk/b7hrum9r.


Thanks for your participation