



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

Student Feedback Surveys

an holistic approach to maximising their value to staff and students

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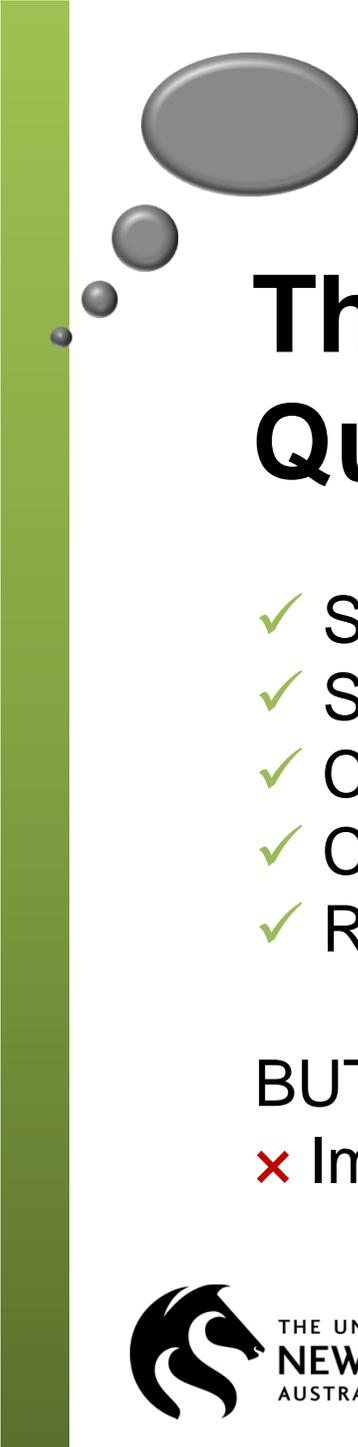
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SUMMARY

- Traditional approaches to quality assurance
- Barriers to completion of the quality enhancement cycle
- The University of Newcastle Model
- Student Feedback on Courses: a case study



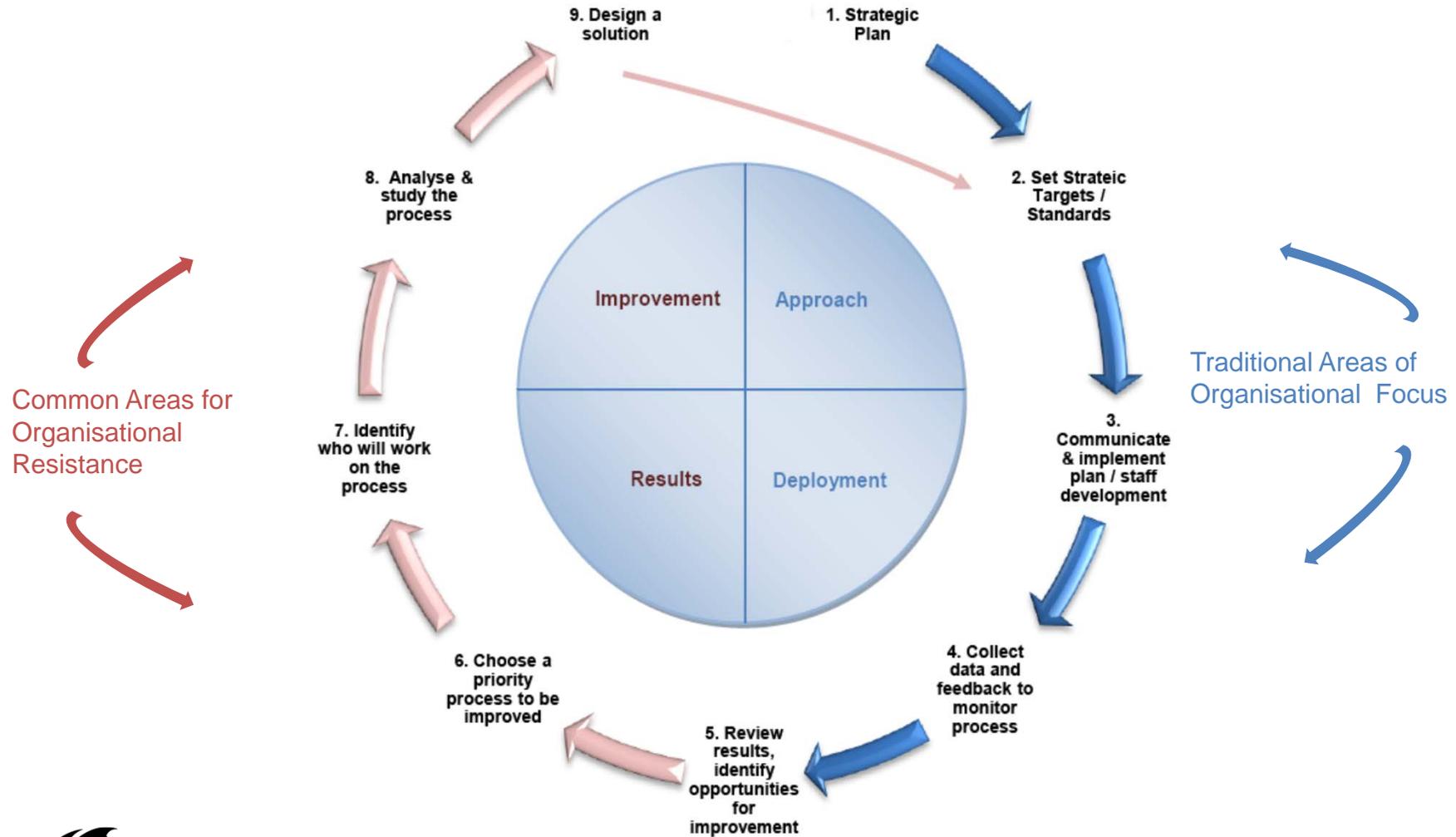
The Traditional Approach to Quality Assurance

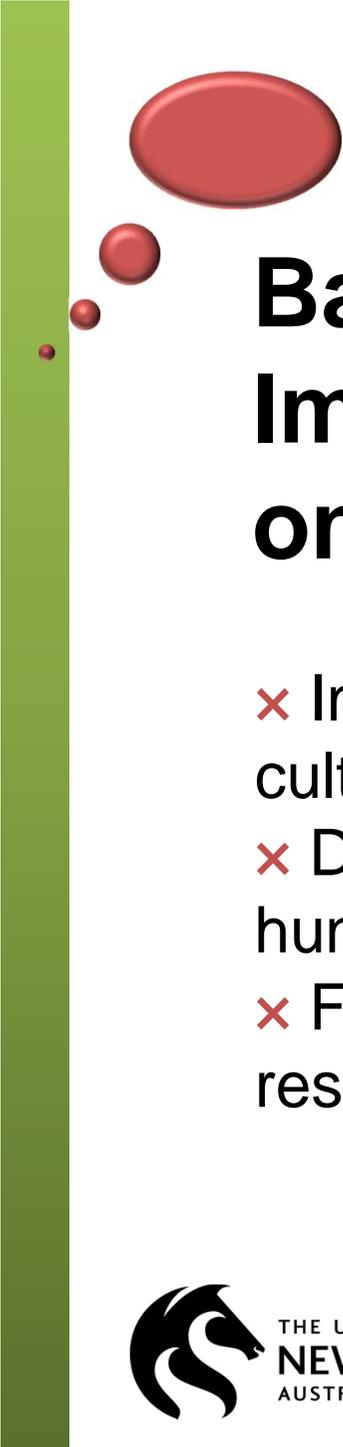
- ✓ Strategic Plan
- ✓ Set Strategic Targets / Standards
- ✓ Communicate and implement plan / staff development
- ✓ Collect data and feedback to monitor processes
- ✓ Review results and identify areas for improvement

BUT...

- ✗ Implementation of improvements are often stymied

The Quality Enhancement Cycle





Barriers to Successful Implementation and Capitalisation on Feedback

- × Improvement = Change (resistance to change at sub-cultural level)
- × Deficit focussed approach (perceptions of a 'witch-hunt')
- × Feelings that change is beyond individual's scope or responsibility

The Top 10 drivers behind passive responses / resistance

1. Survey response rates too low to be valid
2. Only poor performing and/or whingeing students respond
3. Data not relevant / out of date
4. The standard of student quality is in demise
5. Not enough financial resources
6. Not enough time – change not a priority
7. Casual staff only teach and disappear / full-time staff carry the burden
8. No time to update courses
9. The students won't turn up if technological modes of delivery are fully utilised
10. Suspicion / fear (us vs. them)
etc, etc, etc





THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE'S MODEL FOR **SUCCESSFUL** COMPLETION OF THE **QUALITY** **ENHANCEMENT CYCLE**

-Engendering a Culture of Continuous Improvement

Our Six Guiding Principles

1. Consultation

- Coordination, engagement, collaboration, continually informing and providing feedback about a process

2. Communication

- Positive language, knowledge sharing, closing the feedback loop, best practice dissemination methods

3. Encouragement

- Supporting: an individual's ability to change, professional development, reflective practice, peer review, peer support, and mentoring practices. It also encompasses targeted recruitment of quality-focussed staff

4. Celebration

- Highlighting success, sharing successful stories within communities of practice, and providing genuine recognition of these efforts

5. Integration

- Addresses quantitative bias by supplementing statistical trends with qualitative data. It also implies a total organisational focus on quality through collaboration and cooperation

6. Innovation

- Student-led identification of strengths and weaknesses through feedback mechanisms. Staff-led via staff surveys and other forms of input



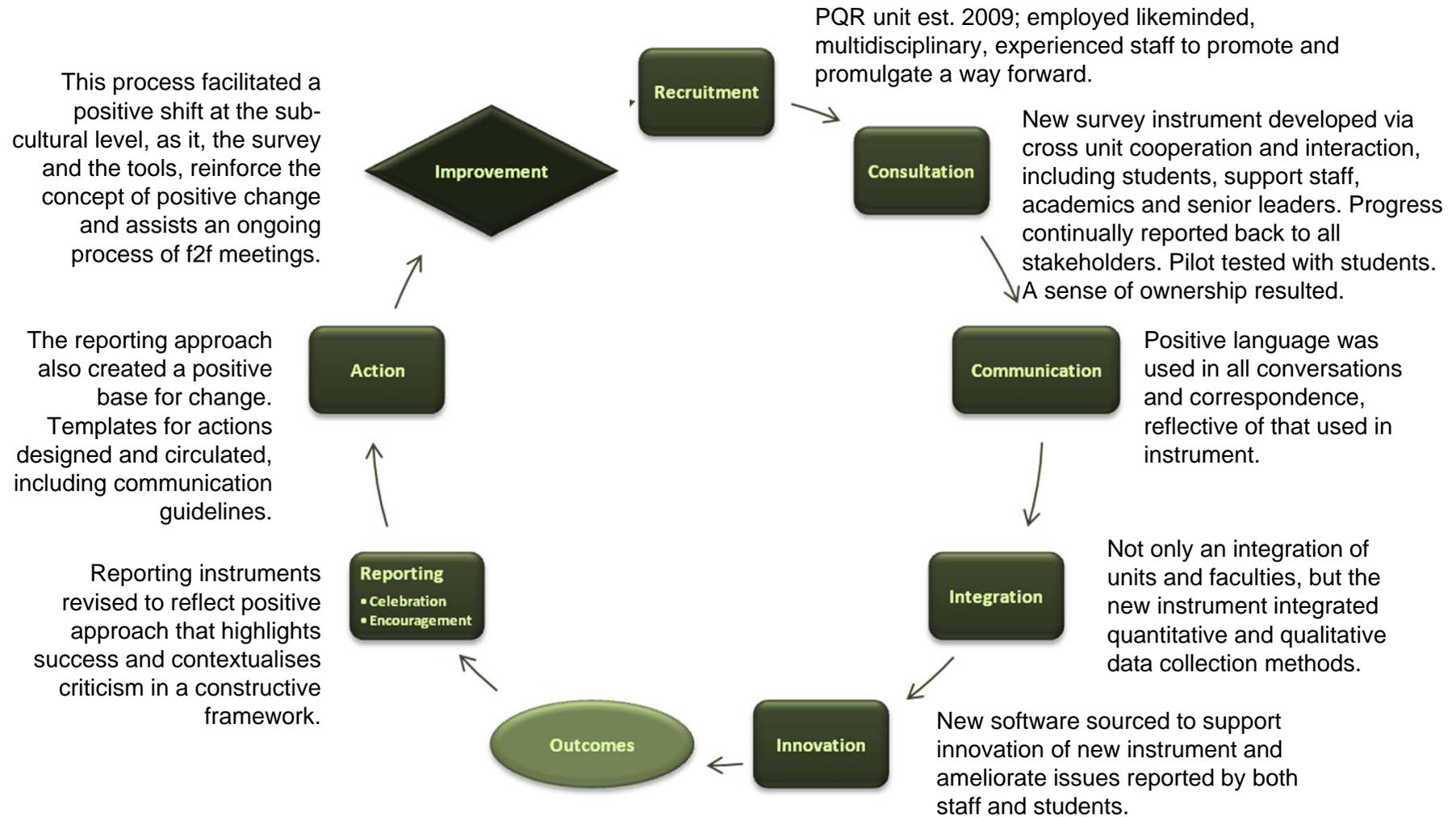


STUDENT FEEDBACK ON COURSES: A CASE STUDY

-Continuous Improvement in Action

Our Six Principles in Action

Revising our Student Feedback on Courses instrument



Student Feedback on Courses Continuous Improvement Cycle

Reports produced

- ✓ Comments coded into themes for each course (55,000 comments into broad themes in 2009)
- ✓ Integrated quantitative and qualitative reports prepared for each course (>1500 reports written in 2009)
- ✓ Summary reports for Executive Committee and each School and Faculty with comparative data
- ✓ Reports on the web for staff and students
- ✓ Ongoing meetings with Heads of School and academic staff – lots of conversations!

Methods of Closing the Feedback Loop

Posters



www.newcastle.edu.au

WHAT YOU SAID

STUDENT FEEDBACK ON COURSES

Your feedback provided us with a great opportunity to assess and improve the quality of our Programs. It really is making a difference! Report summaries have been sent to all Schools and Faculties where plans are being developed to address the points you raised. Here is a little of WHAT YOU SAID:

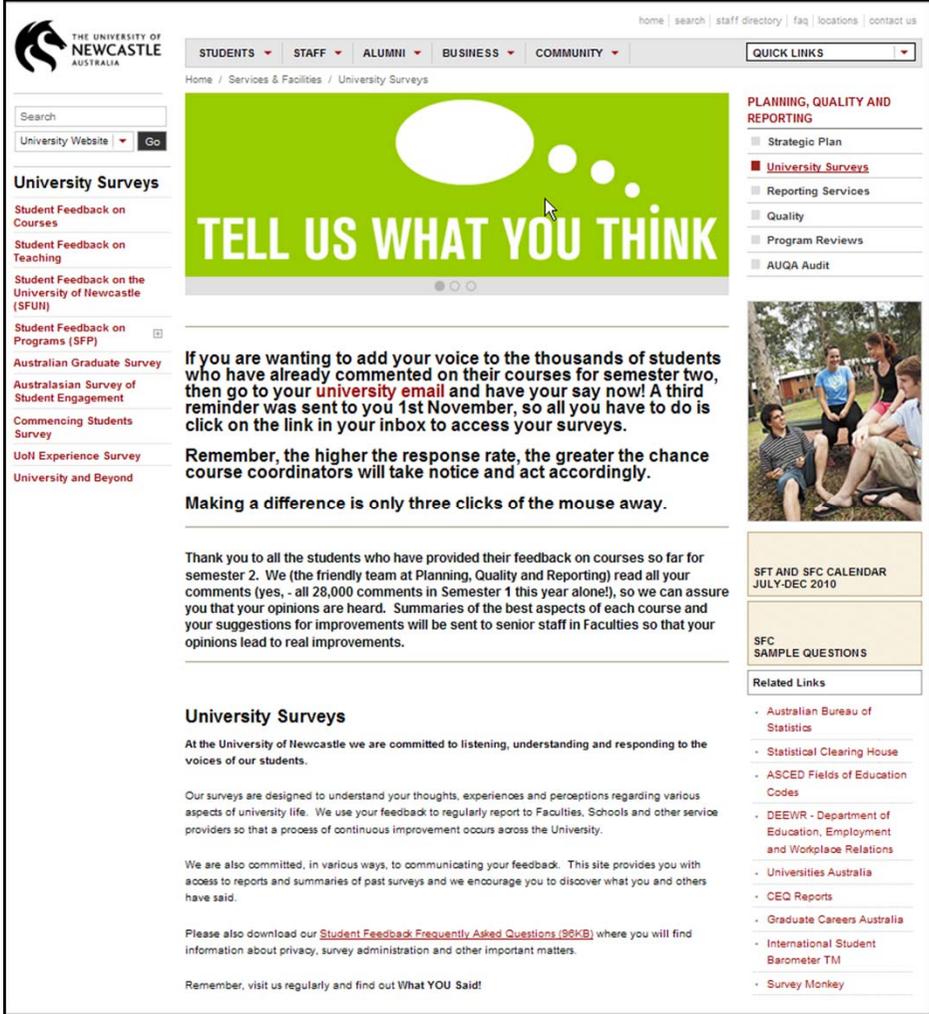
- You value learning that is connected to the **'real world'**.
- You engage better with hands-on teaching methods that encourage **practical** engagement with the course material.
- You evaluate teachers holistically and like them to be **organised, lucid, committed, approachable, helpful** and **willing** – both inside and outside the classroom.
- You value **flexibility** in subject choices, timetabling and teaching methods.
- On-line** resources, when used effectively, are important to your learning.
- You expect **timely** assessment **feedback** to inform you of your learning and prepare you for your next assessment.

For a more detailed look at WHAT YOU SAID, go to www.newcastle.edu.au/studentfeedback/

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TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

PLANNING, QUALITY AND REPORTING

- Strategic Plan
- University Surveys**
- Reporting Services
- Quality
- Program Reviews
- AUQA Audit

If you are wanting to add your voice to the thousands of students who have already commented on their courses for semester two, then go to your university email and have your say now! A third reminder was sent to you 1st November, so all you have to do is click on the link in your inbox to access your surveys.

Remember, the higher the response rate, the greater the chance course coordinators will take notice and act accordingly.

Making a difference is only three clicks of the mouse away.

Thank you to all the students who have provided their feedback on courses so far for semester 2. We (the friendly team at Planning, Quality and Reporting) read all your comments (yes, - all 28,000 comments in Semester 1 this year alone!), so we can assure you that your opinions are heard. Summaries of the best aspects of each course and your suggestions for improvements will be sent to senior staff in Faculties so that your opinions lead to real improvements.

University Surveys

At the University of Newcastle we are committed to listening, understanding and responding to the voices of our students.

Our surveys are designed to understand your thoughts, experiences and perceptions regarding various aspects of university life. We use your feedback to regularly report to Faculties, Schools and other service providers so that a process of continuous improvement occurs across the University.

We are also committed, in various ways, to communicating your feedback. This site provides you with access to reports and summaries of past surveys and we encourage you to discover what you and others have said.

Please also download our [Student Feedback Frequently Asked Questions \(SBKB\)](#) where you will find information about privacy, survey administration and other important matters.

Remember, visit us regularly and find out What YOU Said!

SFT AND SFC CALENDAR JULY-DEC 2010

SFC SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Related Links

- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Statistical Clearing House
- ASCED Fields of Education Codes
- DEEWR - Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- Universities Australia
- CEQ Reports
- Graduate Careers Australia
- International Student Barometer TM
- Survey Monkey

Methods of Closing the Feedback Loop cont:

Communication Guidelines

Student Feedback on Courses Communication Guidelines
Communicating results of student surveys back to staff and students, deciding on actions to take and reporting back on outcomes.

1. Overview

- It is important that student feedback is presented to staff as a developmental tool for them to improve the programs and courses they coordinate and teach.
- The positive aspects of the survey should be emphasised; the negative aspects should be presented as opportunities for improvement.
- For feedback to be effective it needs to be responded to in a timely way, with the development of appropriate actions, and the closure of communication loops with all those involved, as soon as practical.
- Heads of Schools and/or Program Convenors are able to request a meeting with Planning Quality & Reporting (PQR) staff to discuss the raw student comments for a course, on providing an appropriate rationale, and on the condition that student confidentiality is maintained.
- All survey data, and mechanisms to feedback summary results to staff and students, must be handled discreetly and sensitively, whilst ensuring any issues raised are appropriately addressed.

2. Reporting to staff

- Prepare a Departmental and or discipline/subject specific summary of the key themes of the survey for sharing with teaching staff, and to be delivered initially at a staff meeting rather than by email.
- Prepare Faculty wide summaries identifying recurring themes, to encourage Faculty wide discussion and collaboration, and where appropriate, to enable an integrated and holistic approach to addressing issues and sharing exemplary practices.
- Celebrate those courses that have rated highly, and note the positive aspects most commented on by students.
- Limit distribution of detailed course-specific information to those who need to see it, particularly where sensitive issues have been raised in a course.
- Where there are genuine issues that need addressing organise a discreet conversation with the appropriate staff first, before any course specific comments are distributed. This will enable the talking through of issues, in a calm and safe manner, and assess their validity or otherwise.
- If appropriate, and should a significant issue have arisen, consider adjusting or rephrasing comments that might cause offense, anxiety or controversy, without undermining the meaning/intention of the comment.
- If a valid issue arises from the evaluations an action plan is put in place to ensure that the issue is resolved prior to the next delivery of that course.

This could be developed in consultation with PQR, and in liaison with other relevant support sections, such as Centre for Teaching and Learning, as appropriate.

3. Reporting to students

Student Feedback on Courses Communication Guidelines
Prepared by Planning Quality and Reporting, March 2010
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Lecture Slides (delivered during 1st lecture)



COURSE: CENG1010

HOW PAST STUDENT FEEDBACK HAS IMPROVED THIS COURSE

- ✓ We have integrated more practical elements in the curriculum
- ✓ We are now utilising technology to its full advantage, so you have greater flexibility in content delivery
- ✓ We have implemented new systems to ensure feedback on assessment items is timely and thorough

This semester, make sure you respond provide your feedback. Remember, the more people that respond means a greater chance of your feedback being acted upon.

To access past student feedback go to www.newcastle.edu.au/studentfeedback



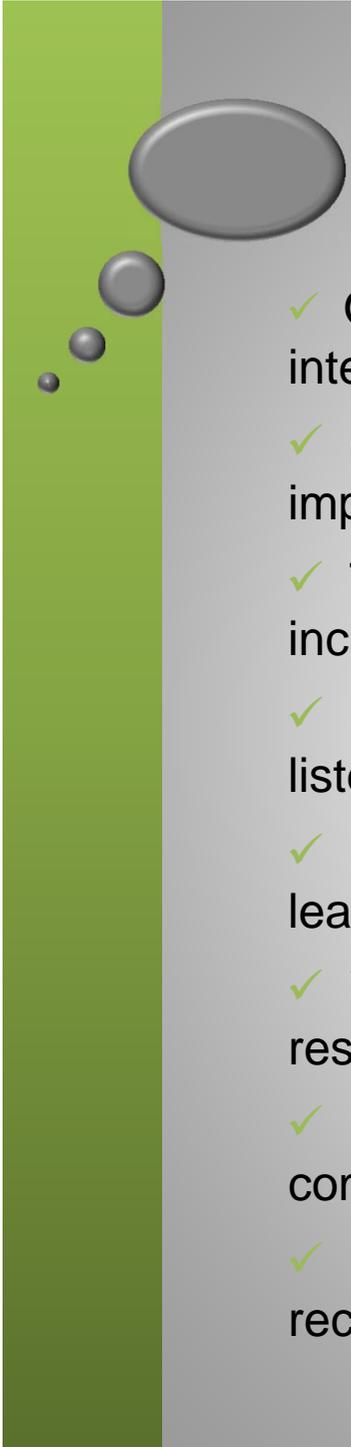
- ✓ Information about improvement is also provided to students in course outlines

Measures of Success

Qualitative Indications of Improvement

- ✓ Increased goodwill across the University
- ✓ A more collaborative culture
- ✓ Increased engagement with, and respect for, feedback
- ✓ Increased awareness of closing the feedback loop
- ✓ An increase in initiatives and innovation surrounding the student experience





CONCLUSION

- ✓ Our principles recognise and address sub-cultural needs and interests
- ✓ Our principles bridge the divide between the rhetoric of quality and implementation
- ✓ This has seen improvement in process and practices, leading to an increase in engagement with the student feedback process
- ✓ Students report that they now believe that someone is actually listening to them and acting on their feedback
- ✓ Senior managers now have the tools and information they need to lead change
- ✓ We have seen encouraging rises in student satisfaction and response rates
- ✓ Students and staff are developing stronger links to their university communities
- ✓ In recognition of their efforts, the Student Feedback Team recently received a Vice-Chancellors award for general staff excellence!



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QUESTIONS