

Equality Scheme Student Survey Report on data

Introduction

This year Canterbury Christ Church University is moving towards a single Equality Scheme, which the Equality and Diversity Unit will draft by the end of this academic year 2010-11. In January 2011, a University wide student consultation process was launched in the form of an online student survey which ended on 28th February 2011. [See appendix 1]

As well as collecting demographical data (part 2 of this report), the survey asked a series of open ended questions, in order to collect qualitative data on the student experience in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. These responses are discussed in the first part of this report, including some recommendations for concrete actions and improvements across the University, its facilities and services.

We also collected quantitative data on student satisfaction with provisions and services within the University and a discussion on these data follows in the final part of this report.

Part 1 – qualitative data

❖ Discrimination and unfair treatment

In the survey, students were asked to consider whether they had seen or experienced discrimination or unfair treatment at the University, specifically in relation to the Protected Characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 (age; disability; gender including gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnerships; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation).

1. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination. Have you seen or experienced unfair treatment or discrimination at CCCU on any of the following grounds?

Of 100 participants in the survey, there were 8 responses to this question, from which age, disability, race, religion and sexual orientation emerged as themes.

a) Age

Interestingly, of the 8 responses to this question, 3 raised issues of unfair treatment/discrimination on the basis of age. 1 student felt that his/her age made him/her feel 'unable to make complaints in certain areas'. Interaction between mature and young students is noted as an issue by 1 mature student who felt uncomfortable and ridiculed when asked their age by younger peers.

Conversely, 1 respondent raised an issue regarding relations between academic staff and younger students, reporting that he/she felt 'disrespected' by tutors and cited an 'upsetting' experience of a staff "telling off" a student as if they were a school pupil.'

b) Disability

3 of the 8 responses described negative attitudes and behaviours, or a general lack of awareness in relation to disability. 1 respondent reported that a blind student was 'mocked' by others; 1 disabled student felt that his/her disability was not taken into consideration for work experience placement and also experienced discrimination by

an external supervisor; 1 respondent noted feeling uncomfortable being questioned about his/her disability by peers who seemed unaware of 'hidden disabilities'.

c) Race, Religion or belief

3 responses related to race, religion or belief with 1 student reporting that he/she was 'laughed at' because of his/her ethnicity and 'criticised in public' because of his/her religion and, another reported 'mockery of Christian students'. Another response criticised a 'creeping secularisation' at the University.

d) Sexual Orientation

Whilst there are no specific examples given of actual discrimination or unfair treatment on the grounds of Sexual Orientation, 1 student describes an 'uncomfortable feeling of lingering homophobia' at the University and notes that they were advised by others not to study at CCCU if they were gay or considering a Civil Partnership. This may be a result of some negative publicity the University received several years ago following the Government introduction of civil partnerships, a misinterpretation of events which the University must continue to work hard to quash.

❖ **Challenging unfair treatment and discrimination**

2. Would you know what to do if you wanted to challenge unfair treatment or discrimination?

In the 7 responses given to this question, there seemed to be a general understanding of what the correct procedures are –personal tutors, student services and equality and diversity were all listed, and in 1 response the student indicated that he/she would first try to self-manage the situation by discussing with the perpetrators. Promotion of the correct procedure would help consolidate these responses.

❖ **Barriers to inclusion**

3. Do you believe that there are any barriers to inclusion for students from the groups listed in Question 1? (e.g. University policies and procedures)

89% of the students did not think that there were any barriers to inclusion, 11% thought that there were barriers and we had 9 detailed answers of what kind of barriers were perceived to be in place at CCCU.

a) Changes to timetable or room changes

2 of the 9 responses mentioned that changes in timetabling and rooming made them feel excluded, in 1 case because of childcare commitments or in the other case, due to wheelchair access which was forgotten when a room was changed.

b) Access

3 responses related to accessibility of services or facilities as a barrier. In 1 case the student did not feel able to access dyslexia support because of the large number of dyslexic students accessing a smaller number of dyslexia tutors. A similar issue is raised again regarding disability services (in response to Q6).

2 students felt that some of the buildings are inaccessible to those with mobility issues; in particular there is 1 reference to the Students' Union building. It is worth noting that the Students' Union will be moving to a new purpose built location in 2012-13, and these issues should be a key consideration.

c) Attitudes

3 of the responses relate to perception of attitude in and around the University. 1 respondent notes 'unfair remarks from fellow students' and 'social stigma' as a barrier to inclusion, another respondent 'feels uncomfortable' and another student notes a 'culture of homophobia'. It is difficult to know to what the first 2 responses relate, however it is clear that some awareness-raising of LGBT issues is needed.

1 student raised the issue of tutors as a barrier to inclusion, although in what way is not specified.

d) Faith facilities

The difference in the facilities provided for Christian students and those provided for other Faiths is raised as a barrier to inclusion, specifically that other faiths at the University do not comparative facilities to the 'lovely Chapel' and 'weekly meetings' that the Christian community have. It is worth noting that the University has an Inter Faith Council, with multi faith representation, which meets regularly to discuss how the different faith groups can be supported and provided for.

❖ Becoming a more inclusive university

Students were asked to comment on how the University could become more inclusive.

6. How do you think Christ Church could become a more inclusive University? (For example for disabled students, students who are parents, gay/lesbian students, students of different faiths etc.)?

This question elicited the greatest number of responses in the survey, with only 20% choosing to not answer or who felt that enough was already being done. 80% of the 100 responses had constructive suggestions and there were some clear themes emerging from the responses.

a) Childcare

Given the gender demographic of the University, with a majority female population, it is perhaps unsurprising that childcare has come up as a key theme in the responses to the survey, with 12 responses relating directly to students with children. In particular, the suggestions refer to improved facilities, flexible timetabling and inclusive activities. The main recommendations are:

- 4 students specifically asked for crèche facilities on campus and 1 asked for student accommodation for families.
- 1 suggestion for priority allocation to parents for tutorials, places on workshops and seminars.
- 1 response asked for greater flexibility for students who are parents and another student asked for consideration of school holidays in timetabling, to ensure that students who are unable to arrange/afford childcare do not miss out on University to care for children.
- 3 responses related to activities for students who have children, with suggestions for more inclusive Students' Union activities suitable for students with families (e.g. picnics) and societies for parents,

b) Age

The University has a student population that includes both young school leavers and mature students returning to study, which at times may cause tensions and discrepancy in the student experience. As the University moves into an uncertain financial period, and begins to look at alternative modes of study and the non-traditional student model, one of the key themes to remember is Age.

In response to this question, there are 2 specific suggestions for improved inclusivity relating to age:

- Activities within the Students' Union and the representation of the mature students' needs (including the issues which were raised in childcare) - 1 student mentioned that the Mature Student Officer post had disappeared from the Students' Union.
- 1 respondent raised an issue relating to stereotypes based on age - in particular, that mature students 'know more' and therefore do not need the same level of support.

c) Disability

14 of the responses related directly to disability and suggestions for improvement. The areas of improvement included awareness-raising, increased resources, improvements to facilities and consideration of needs:

- 1 response felt that the Disability Services were supportive but because of caseload, the Disability Advisor was hard to get hold of. The University is currently recruiting an Assistant Disability Advisor (although this is only a temporary post until July 2011)
- 1 student suggested a 24/7 counselling service
- 1 response asked for awareness raising for staff and students regarding 'hidden' disabilities
- 10 responses related to facilities – including accessibility issues in buildings (including Students' Union, Powell and Invicta), lecture theatres (hearing loops and choice of seating for wheelchair users) rooms, and also to course materials. The new Students' Centre will be built with increased accessibility in mind, however there needs to be some method of checking facilities to ensure lifts are accessible and hearing loops are operating fully.

d) Religion and Belief, Race

As an Anglican Foundation University, with an International student population that is set to increase in the next few years, there appears to be some issues that the University should be aware of when drafting the Equality Scheme. 4 responses referred explicitly to religion and belief including:

- 1 which focused on the Anglican foundation as a positive aspect of the University, worth celebrating and not to be pushed aside.
- 1 student asked for an awareness and promotion of other Faiths. For example, celebrating and promoting important dates on different Faith calendars, another suggested workshops on different faiths.
- Students' Union activities – 2 called for more societies and 1 for non-drinking related activities which can be accessed by students from different cultures and from Religions which prohibit drinking.

e) Sexual Orientation

Whilst direct discrimination on the grounds of Sexual Orientation has not been raised in the survey as an issue, a feeling of latent homophobia was, so it is clear that there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that both staff and students feel comfortable to be open about their sexuality. Balancing the University's Christian values and its responsibility towards creating an inclusive environment for all is an important topic in relation to Sexual Orientation. The main areas for improvement are:

- 2 responses suggested that the University improve its promotion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) related activities and issues

- 2 responses suggested that providing support and information for LGBT students was important, such as signposting LGBT students to the relevant support services.

f) Campus Network

With four campuses across Kent – Broadstairs, Folkestone, Medway and Salomans – a consideration of the equality of student experience must be taken into account. 1 respondent felt that there was a Canterbury-centric attitude, and that ‘opportunities were limited’ compared to those of students on main campus. A long distance learner at Salomons requested that there be extended library opening times at that campus, in line with the Canterbury campus.

Over the next few years, as a result of the change in economic climate, the University may see an increase in students studying close to home, which means that the Campus Network is ideally suited to capturing this student population and feedback from current students on these Campuses is vital to ensure all needs are met.

Part 2 - Student Demographic Data

Q.7

Gender		
SES Consultation (2011)		
	No	%
Female	76	76%
Male	24	24%
Whole University 2009		
	No	%
Female	12605	70.52
Male	5270	29.48

A slightly higher proportion of females answered the survey, than that of the whole University population in 2009 but possibly more in line with our current student population (data not available). There are over 50% more female respondents to the survey than male students. This may account for the theme of Childcare related issues raised in our qualitative data.

Q.8

Age		
SES Consultation (2011)		
	No	%
Under 18	1	1.0
18-24	69	69.0
25 +	29	29.0
Whole University 2009		

	No	%
Under 18	94	0.53
18-24	7850	43.91
25 +	9930	55.56

Of our respondents, more were aged between 18 and 24 years old despite the fact that this age group made up a smaller proportion of the student population in 2009.

Q.9

Ethnicity		
SES Consultation (2011)		
	No	%
White – British, Irish or Other	80	80.0
BME	16	16.0
Whole University 2009		
	No	%
White – British, Irish or Other	14354	80.30
BME	2442	14.54

Proportionally, the ethnicity of the respondents to the Single Equality Scheme student survey reflects the ethnicity makeup of the University as a whole, in 2009.

Q.10

Sexual Orientation		
SES Consultation (2011)		
	No	%
Bisexual	5	5.0
Gay/ Lesbian	5	5.0
Heterosexual (straight)	86	86.0
Whole University – no data available		

The University does not currently collect data on Sexual Orientation; however 10% of our respondents disclosed that they are bisexual or gay with only 4% choosing not to answer this question. In our qualitative data, there are references to 'lingering homophobia' and a lack of 'emphasis on gay or lesbian students', so it could be that some students feel unable to disclose their true sexual orientation or that the University is not attractive to prospective LGBT students.

Q.11-12

Religion and Belief		
SES Consultation (2011)		
	No	%
Christianity	37	37.0
Islam	5	5.0
Secular / No religion	52	52.0
Other major religion (including Atheism)	5	5.0
Whole University 2009		
	No	%
Christianity	5295	29.62
Islam	246	1.38
Secular / No religion	3715	20.78
Other major religion (including Atheism)	383	1.29

In our survey, over half of our respondents were of no particular faith or religion, and a lower rate from Christian students – although this does not reflect the whole University data.

Q.13-14

Disability		
SES Consultation (2011)		
	No	%
Not disabled	83	83.0
Disabled	17	17.0
A specific learning difficulty e.g. Dyslexia	12	70.59
Blind/ partially sighted	0	0.00
Deaf / hearing impaired	3	17.6
Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties	3	17.6
Personal care support	1	5.88
Mental Health Difficulties	2	11.76
Unseen disability e.g. diabetes, epilepsy	3	17.6
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	1	5.88

Other (not listed)	5	29.41
Whole University 2009		
	No	%
Not disabled	15800	89.30
Disabled	1894	10.70
A specific learning difficulty e.g. Dyslexia	837	44.19
Blind/ partially sighted	35	1.85
Deaf / hearing impaired	84	4.44
Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties	65	3.43
Personal care support	2	0.11
Mental Health Difficulties	37	1.95
Unseen disability e.g. diabetes, epilepsy	187	9.87
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	28	1.48
Other (including multiple)	644	34.0

The response rate in our survey from disabled students and non-disabled students is a fairly close match to the whole University data and disability features as a key theme in the feedback given. Interestingly, although Dyslexia is the most common disability across the University, our feedback focuses more on physical disabilities such as hearing impairment and mobility difficulties.

Q.16

Mode of Study		
SES Consultation (2011)		
	No	%
Full-time	81	81.0
Part-time	17	17.0
Whole University 2009		
	No	%
Full-time	10141	56.73
Part-time	7734	43.27

A higher percentage of full-time students responded to our survey than that of the University as a whole and indicates a much larger gap between full and part time than that of the University as a whole.

Q.17

Level of Study		
SES Consultation (2011)		
	No	%
Undergraduate	84.0	84
Postgraduate	15.0	15
Whole University 2009		
	No	%
Undergraduate	13373	74.81
Postgraduate	4502	25.19

A higher percentage of our respondents were undergraduate students, which is to be expected given the data of the University as a whole.

Q.18

Faculty		
SES Consultation (2011)		
	No	%
Faculty of Arts and Humanities	30	30.0
Faculty of Business and Management	10	1.0
Faculty of Education	17	17.0
Faculty of Health and Social Care	14	14.0
Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences	29	29.0
Whole University 2009 - no data available		

There is no comparative data by faculty.

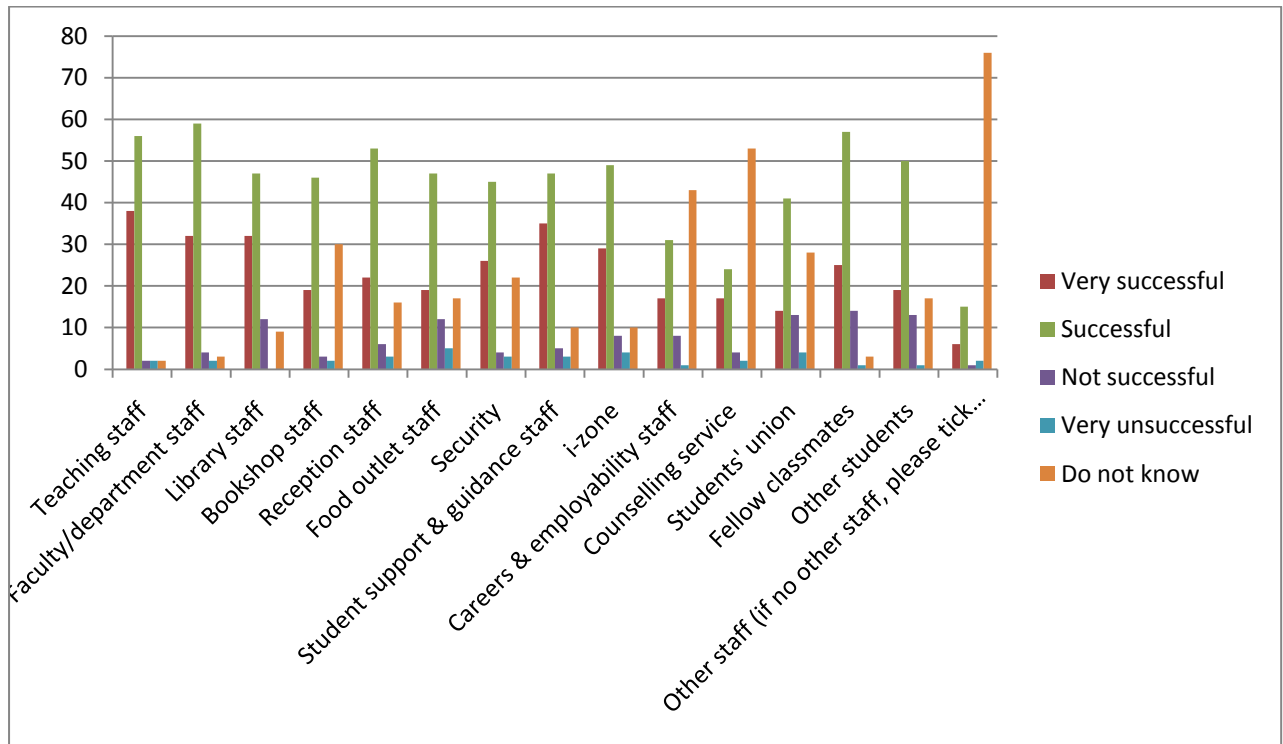
Q.19

Location of Study		
SES Consultation (2011)		
	No	%
Canterbury	72	72.0
Another campus or long distance	28	28.0
Whole University 2009 - no data available		

There is no comparative data by location of study, however it would be expected that more of responses would come from Canterbury as it is the largest site for students.

Part 3 – Services and Facilities

Q4. How successful do you think the following services are at responding to and respecting individual needs of all students studying at the University?



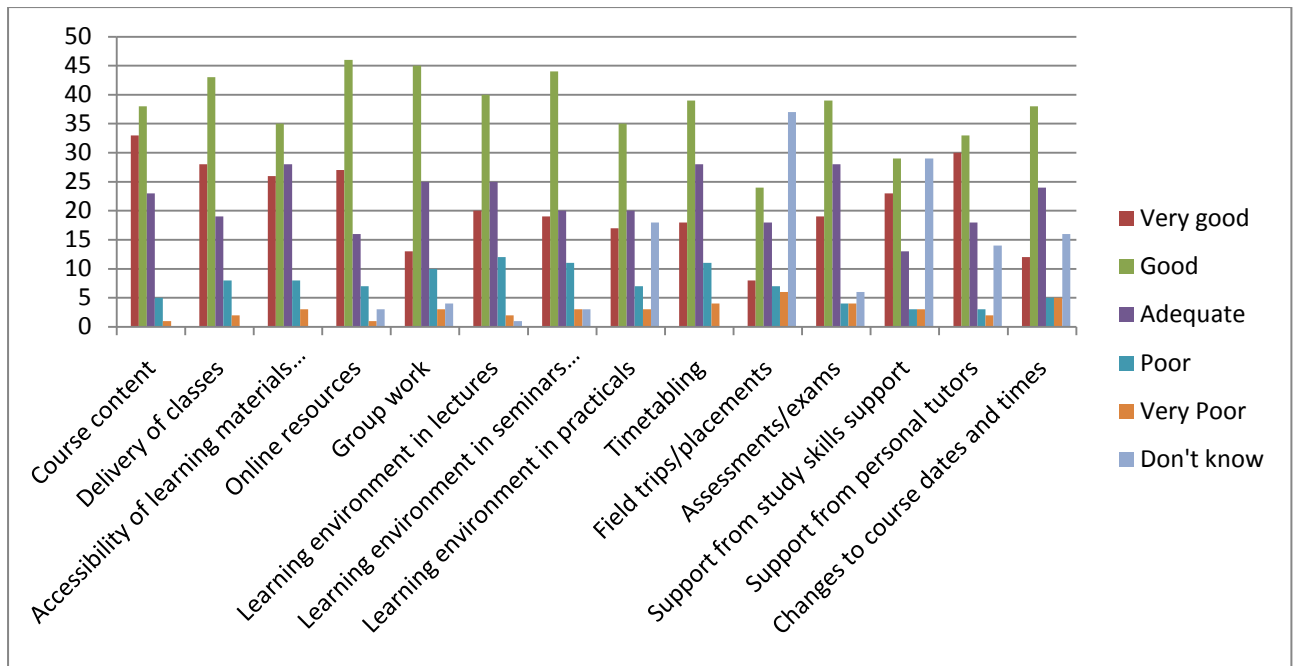
The responses to this question seem to indicate that the University is either very successful or successful, across the different services and departments, at responding to and respecting the individual needs of its students. There are quite a high proportion of answers where a student has answered 'do not know' – for example, 53% for counselling and 43% for careers and employability. However, these are specific services which not all students will need to access, or may only need to access once in their entire time at University. The Bookshop had 30% 'Do not know', and again it is a service that it based at the main campus and students at other campuses may not choose to use it.

13% of the respondents noted other students and 15% noted fellow classmates as being 'not successful' or 'very unsuccessful' at responding to and respecting the needs of other students. This would suggest that some kind of awareness-raising should be a priority for the report. The Students' Union had 17% response rate of 'not successful' or 'very unsuccessful'. From subsequent suggestions in the survey, a need for more inclusive activities seems to be the main issue raised – for students who are parents and students from other cultures. Students' Union new Student Centre is underway, which will address some of the access issues raised, although the further issues of inclusivity should also be kept in mind.

Food outlets have 17% 'not successful' or 'very unsuccessful' and the library has 12%, although it is unclear from the survey what the issues are, so further investigation may be helpful.

Q. 5 How well do you feel the following aspects of the University's learning, teaching and assessment practices and support mechanisms take into account the individual needs of students?

Departments	Very good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor
Course content	33	38	23	5	1
Delivery of classes	28	43	19	8	2
Accessibility of learning materials (e.g. handouts)	26	35	28	8	3
Online resources	27	46	16	7	1
Group work	13	45	25	10	3
Learning environment in lectures	20	40	25	12	2
Learning environment in seminars and workshops	19	44	20	11	3
Learning environment in practicals	17	35	20	7	3
Timetabling	18	39	28	11	4
Field trips/placements	8	24	18	7	6
Assessments/exams	19	39	28	4	4
Support from study skills support	23	29	13	3	3
Support from personal tutors	30	33	18	3	2
Changes to course dates and times	12	38	24	5	5



The majority of responses indicate that the University is 'good' at taking into account the individual needs of students, in its learning, teaching and assessment practices, and in its support mechanisms. However, there are a number of areas where the University is providing only an 'adequate' response to its students needs.

Timetabling is the most negatively reviewed with 28% 'adequate' responses and 15% 'poor' or 'very poor'. Suggestions from students indicate that the University does not always take into consideration, the needs of students with children and that this can have a negative impact in terms of childcare costs or in attendance. Changes to course dates and times had 10% 'poor' or 'very poor' and 24% 'adequate'.

Online resources have the most positive scores, with 73% of our respondents rating them as 'good' or 'very good'. Course content and delivery of classes received 71% positive responses.

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