

ViewPoint 



# Student Survey Success

Your guide to creating a successful student feedback campaign.

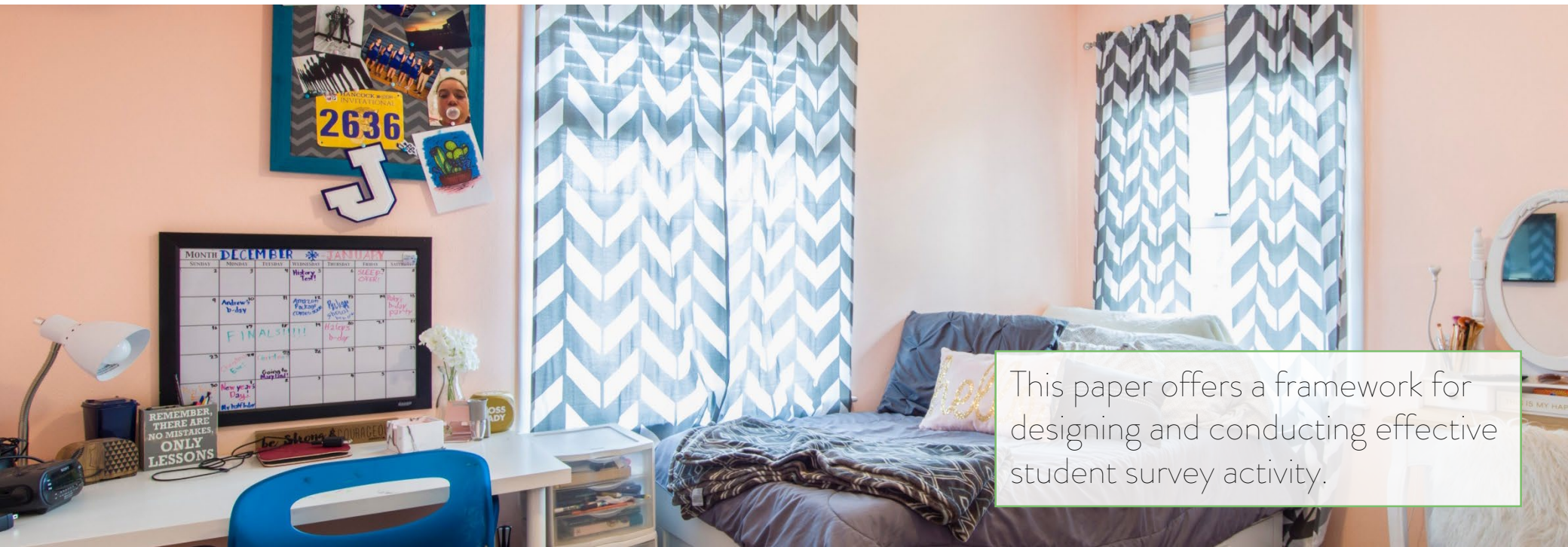
# The 'student experience' matters.

We pose the question : What would your students say, today, about their experience on campus? And how would you respond?

It can be difficult to answer these questions with last year's satisfaction data alone, and comment cards are limited in the insights they provide.

Whether your drivers are ranking and reputation, excellence in customer service, profitable new revenues ... or all of the above.

Our tips will help you grow a responsive approach to feedback capture at crucial experience 'touchpoints,' and develop timely insights that give you the confidence to act.





What is the value?



Start at the end



The little things matter



Value the feedback



Don't burn the relationship

# Planning the route to survey success



A single survey has the potential to help you get to understand your students better. The right questions, asked in the right way and at the right time can return timely and genuinely actionable insight.

## Or it can be meaningless.

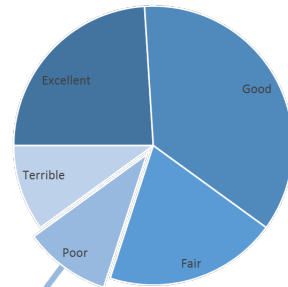


It may feel great to have 1,000 people respond to a survey saying “Everything is fine”, but if anecdotal evidence tells you something different, then you may question the value of the responses .

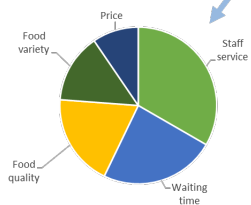
Far more valuable is the survey that maybe gives you a less than perfect rating, but directs you to exactly where improvements can be made.

## How would you rate us today?

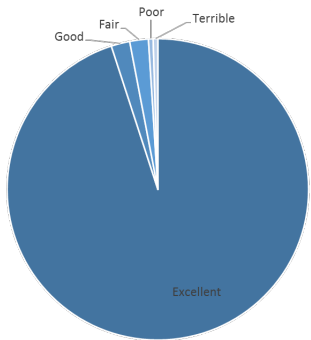
How would you rate us today?



We're sorry to hear that. Please tell us why:



How would you rate us today?



# What is the value?

A good survey gives feedback.  
A bad survey delivers nothing.



## What does improvement look like?

It is critical to understand exactly what you want to achieve from a survey right from the start. Understanding what type of data you want to capture will help to provide focus to the whole process, including the questions you ask, who you ask them to, how you ask them and when.



## Factors to consider

### How are you going to react to the data?

**OWNERSHIP.** Plan who will take control of the data and make sure it is filtered to the right channels in order to influence improvements.

### Who needs to know the results?

**REPORTING.** Plan who will receive reports, and the detail required for each group. Results need to be meaningful if they are to result in change, for example giving the operational teams all of the open-ended responses whilst collating in to sentiment analysis for the faculty report.

### When will you tell them?

**FREQUENCY.** Schedule when reports will be distributed. This can differ for different user groups – on the ground staff may receive data weekly, departmental terms monthly and the board quarterly.

If you don't know  
where you are  
going, how will you  
get there?

Start at the  
end



We often hear

*“Trying to improve the student experience is an impossible task.”*

And we agree.

Don't get us wrong, it's not that students' experience cannot be improved, but experience is not one thing. It is a collection of sometimes large but often small; tiny; minute elements that considered together create an overarching view. By changing these small things, you can have a significant effect on the big.

Understand the touchpoints.



Feedback should deliver insights on the touchpoints that matter most to your students. Understanding what they are and how they are resonating help to make all those small transactions positive.

The little things matter



## Feedback is gold dust.

“Doing a survey” is not enough. Although it is a necessary start. A survey alone will not deliver any benefit. Moving from a survey led approach to a improvement led approach, will ensure you complete the process.



### Ask

Conduct a survey



### Learn

Study the feedback



### Grow

Make the improvement


# Value the feedback


The value hides  
in the reason  
behind the  
results




# Don't burn the relationship

Feedback needs to be relevant to both the respondent and to you. When feedback fails it is often because one side of the relationship feels let down.

 **Survey fatigue** occurs when students feel they are being over-surveyed, without any signs of being listened to. Low response rates or unconsidered answers will lead to unreliable data for analysis.

 **Survey abandonment** Bored participants presented with too many questions are prone to walking away mid question, leaving incomplete data sets to work with.




 **Data Confidence** for you is diminished when the results do not reflect reality. Disengaged students are less likely to provide you with reliable data.

*The worst thing to do is ask for feedback and then do nothing with it.*



The first steps are the hardest.

Deciding to move away from adhoc, tick box exercises to dynamic, timely feedback solutions is important. It is the first step on the journey to really understanding what your students need.

-  The right questions
-  The right channel
-  Journey checklist
-  Survey design

# The Journey

Make sure the questions you ask will give you the type of data that you need.

## Smiley faces

Smiley face questions create an instant opportunity for customers to tell you what they think. Used in combination with one or two quick follow-on questions you can understand WHY your students feel the way they do

## Write questions in the right way

The question asked needs to be appropriate for the respondent and their environment. Who will be answering, where will they be when answering and when? Consider the time they have available to them.

## The magic question

“Is there anything else you want to say today?”

The power of this question to give insight to the issues is not to be underestimated. The magic question tells you what REALLY matters to the people answering your questions. Open questions allow them to tell you something you may not have ever considered.

# The right questions

“How would you rate your service overall based on your experience today?”



“How did we do today?”



# The right channel

Use an appropriate feedback channel for your audience and for what you are trying to capture.



Do you want continuous, in-the-moment feedback from large numbers of people?

**Try a kiosk in a public space.**



Do you want to carry out some staff-assisted surveys or run a focus group?

**Tablets work well in these environments.**



Do you want roll out of a wide-reaching survey or one that targets specific groups?

**An online or SMS survey is probably best.**





# Journey Checklist

What?

With the goal in mind, designing questions to give you the information you need is a critical step. Smiley face surveys are a simple way to see how your students feel. These can be combined with open ended questions that allow students to expand on their views.

Where?

The location chosen to capture views can impact feedback success. It is important to ensure the survey is accessible to all to give a broad range of results, and it is conducted at a location convenient for the student to focus on the task in hand. The number of questions and time expected to complete will impact just where you want the participants to be.

When?

In the moment data, that is captured on site, can yield results up to 80% more accurate than the same questions asked just 24 hours later.

Who?

Whether feedback is to be collected from staff, students or visitors will influence what you ask and how you ask it.

How?

Thorough consideration of the goals of the feedback will help determine the best method for capture. The vehicle chosen will yield differing results. For example Kiosks deliver in the moment data quickly, whereas online can target particular user groups.

There is no one size fits all when it comes to creating the perfect student experience survey. To deliver success a feedback solution should be designed unique to the feedback goals determined at the start.

Attractive  
feedback  
solutions catch  
the eye and  
engage.

Lacklustre  
surveys give  
you lacklustre  
results.

### Top tips

Use images to draw people in.

Keep your text short. The more wordy your questions, the less likely people are to read them properly.

If you're using kiosks, make sure they have presence wherever they are. An attractive design and prominent siting will ensure your survey is never ignored.


Consistent branding confirms exactly who they are being asked about. Even when asked onsite, reaffirming the brand will keep the participants answers focused.

Local references – eg use names for shops, or include other local knowledge so that they feel that the survey is personal to them.

A photograph of a woman with short brown hair, wearing a red jacket, smiling and talking to another person whose back is to the camera. They are in a crowded outdoor setting, possibly a festival or public event. The background shows other people and a red flag.

Survey Design



 What is it people want to tell you?

 Focus on what you can fix

 Don't go alone

 Frequent flyer rewards

 Stay on course

 Be seen to use it

# The Destination



# Extracting meaning from students' comments

Feedback reports should easily identify where improvements are needed and ensure that the information is relayed swiftly in clear, meaningful ways.

## What are your students telling you?

By analysing the articles of an open-ended answer it is possible to assess what respondents are concerned about, pleased with, or simply want to tell you about. Reports should present indications of the areas that need to be looked into in detail and often highlight the areas that are not covered in the set questions.

## Present the data to the right people at the right time.

Timely reporting is critical for a successful feedback campaign, in order to be confident that any plans made on the basis of the data, are relevant.

What is it  
they want  
to tell you?



Feedback reports give an indication of the feeling amongst your student population. Using this to incite change is how you influence the student experience.

# Focus on what you can fix



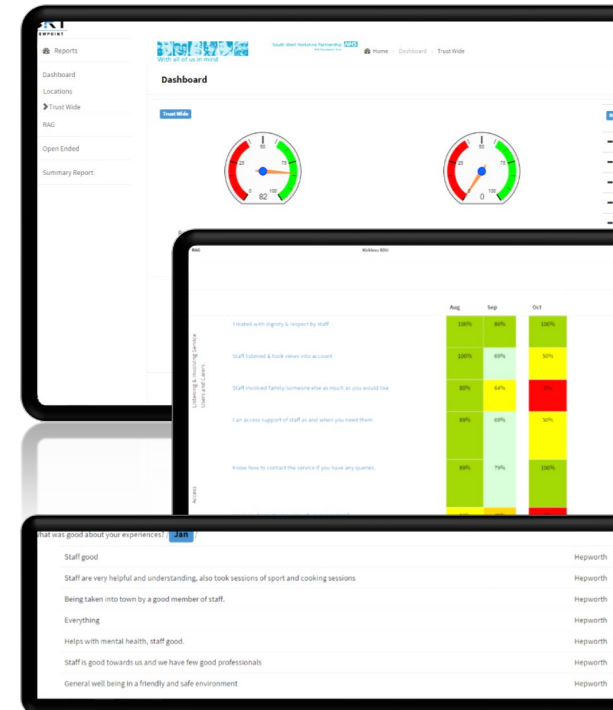
Small things = big ripples.

Feedback success is not determined by the size of the project that follows. What seems minor feedback to you can be a big bug bare for your students, which left to fester for 3 years becomes an issue. Giving attention to those little things and finding ways to reduce friction amongst students will alter their view of their time at university.



Timely improvement.



With structured reporting procedures and clear ownership of improvements, feedback can inform improvement programmes continuously. This means that the issues of today are fixed today or next week – not next year.







## Embed change through staff involvement

-  Successful improvement processes collaborate with staff and gain their input from the outset. During any period of transformation, staff are the single most critical factor in enabling those changes and embedding them in daily routines.
-  By ensuring all staff are on the journey with you, you lower the sense of threat. This then reduces the potential for opposition during any consultation and period of change.



Don't go  
alone

# Frequent Flyer Rewards

## Keep monitoring for continued growth

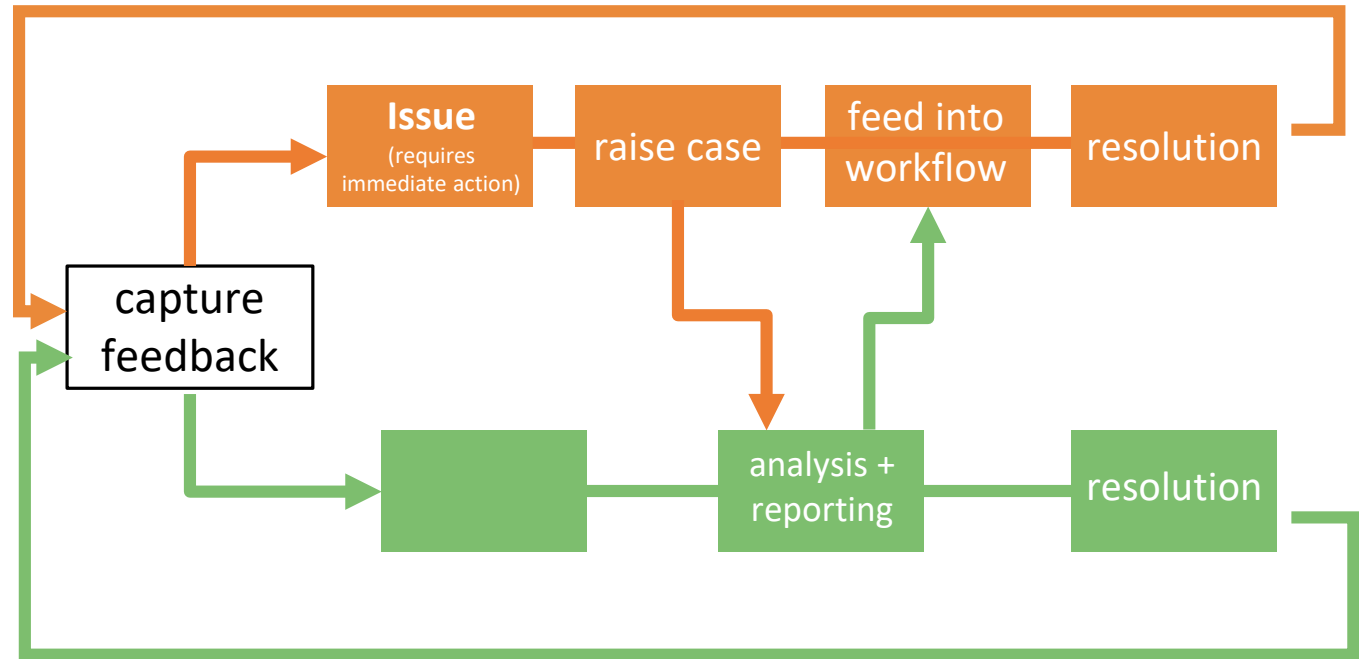
A feedback loop is dynamic and reactive, enabling services to amend to the needs of the students as their expectations of services also change.

But with trends changing all the time, it is important to keep monitoring continuously.



The value of  
feedback  
increases over  
time.

# Stay on course



## Keep going in the right direction


Monitoring improvements to understand successes prove value in data capture both to budget holders and to peers who can also benefit from the information you provide.

## Dynamic process

Filter results that can be used in future feedback campaign in order to delve deeper in to issues for confident change.



Create loyalty through  
improvement

 More feedback = Better experiences.

Feedback programmes should be a continuous loop of engagement that adds value on every rotation.

 Be proud of your improvements.

We recommend you show your students the improvements that have been put in place. This way, past participants will appreciate that their effort has led to service changes that in turn improve their lifestyle.

You said.  
We did.

Making a  
positive  
impact on  
students

Be seen to  
use it

# Contact

At ViewPoint we are passionate about genuine feedback for real student experience improvement.

## We see the value in it constantly.

Through feedback there is an opportunity to make a positive difference to students every day. Whilst these improvements have value in themselves, the impact of cannot fail to have an encouraging effect on positions in the various national survey results, such as the NSS.

## Please get in touch

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