



YORK'S SECOND POSTGRADUATE FORUM

June 2010

Foreword

The Graduate Students' Association appreciate that it is vital that the University is aware of the views and concerns of postgraduate students' and that we connect with our membership to ensure we accurately represent these views at university level. In March 2010, we held the university's first Postgraduate Forum in collaboration with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. This successful event has guided our activities and informed our discussions on the future strategy of the GSA, while allowing us to reinforce our role at the university and giving postgraduates the opportunity to voice their opinion. The Action Plan that was generated and included in the review of the event has been well received by a number of University bodies, including Operations Group, University Teaching Committee, and Student Services Committee.

This report reviews our follow-up Postgraduate Forum, held in collaboration with the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Students, on the 2nd June 2010. This gave us the opportunity to develop these plans further while showing what progress we have made on the issues identified by our membership in March.



Representation



Academic



Welfare



Events



Sports



Community

Background

The Graduate Students' Association is an independent body which exists to represent postgraduate students at the University of York. We are the primary representative body for postgraduates on a wide variety of University Committees, focusing on issues including Teaching & Learning, Student Welfare, and Campus Services. As our membership consists of nearly a quarter of the student body, it is vital that we connect with our members and accurately express their views when communicating with the University.

With the cooperation of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the GSA organised the university's first Postgraduate Forum in March 2010. This event encouraged all postgraduates to voice their opinions on all aspects of the Postgraduate Student Experience in the company of those who could make a difference, including but not restricted to Teaching & Learning Provision, Assessment & Feedback, the postgraduate application process, campus accommodation, campus services, careers & skill development, research provision, finance, PGWT Strategy, as well as feedback on the service the GSA provides. The issues raised at the event were reviewed, and an action plan generated detailing how we would work to address each case. This report was in turn submitted to a variety of university bodies and services, including Operations Group and University Teaching Committee, and has been well received across the board.

Since March, we have worked in collaboration with a number of university bodies to make progress on addressing many of the issues included in this plan. Detail on what we have achieved to date can be seen in the review of the March Action plan which is attached to this document. In June, we took the opportunity of hosting our second postgraduate forum, this time in collaboration with the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Students Dr Jane Grenville. This gave us the opportunity to demonstrate what we have achieved to date, while developing this further to guide our strategy for the near future.

After reflecting on the organisation of the first forum and the feedback we gathered from attendees, we had the opportunity to make changes to the format for our June event. A more structured approach was taken where seven groups were established, each having a set remit and facilitated by a member of the Graduate Students' Association and a member of staff from a relevant university body. Similarly to the first forum, discussions were recorded and have been analysed, and we have developed our action plan further. This updated action plan is included in this review, detailing the issues raised and how we will look at addressing these concerns.

Promotion

The event was promoted to all postgraduates through the following mechanisms:

- Email to departments from Pro Vice-Chancellor Jane Grenville
- Email to Postgraduate Department Representatives from the GSA Academic Affairs Officer
- Email to all postgraduate college members from each college administrator
- Email to all Graduate Common Room Committees from the GSA Services Officer
- Email to YUSU Sabbatical Officers and GSA Council members
- Email to Wentworth College Provost and College Tutors
- Inclusion within the York Extra, GSA Newsletter & Posters throughout campus
- Facebook event created and invitation sent to all members of the York GSA Facebook group



We contacted the Campus Media outlets several times yet had no response. We have since had discussions with York Vision, The Yorker, and Nouse concerning this, and lack of inclusion will be addressed for future events.

Turnout

Around sixty postgraduates attended the event, a small increase on the attendance at our first forum. It was pleasing to see a diverse range of our membership represented; including international students, student parents, and distance learners.

We were also fortunate to have representatives from various university bodies in attendance; including the GTU, Careers Service, Library, Academic Support Office, Campus & Commercial Services, Wentworth College, International Office, and the Graduate Schools Office.

Forum Schedule

Attendees were greeted by GSA representatives on arrival and handed a folder containing forum information and relevant documentation from the Association, including a review of the work undertaken on the action plan to date. Prior to the informal feedback session, an introductory message was given by GSA President Rui Huang on behalf of the GSA and Pro Vice-Chancellor Jane Grenville on behalf of the University. The motivation behind both talks was to stress the importance of postgraduate representation at university level and how this can improve the postgraduate student experience in the future.

A two hour long informal feedback session was then held, with attendees divided into seven groups of nine or ten attendees, with discussion facilitated by a member of the GSA committee and a member of staff from a university body. The focus of these groups was:

- (i) Student Supervision – facilitated by Dr Jane Grenville (Pro Vice-Chancellor) & Heather Rowley (GSA Welfare Officer)
- (ii) Academic Support – facilitated by Cecilia Lowe (Academic Support Office), Kieran Alden & Charlie Leyland (GSA & YUSU Academic Affairs Officers)
- (iii) Colleges – facilitated by Dr Russell Yates (Wentworth Provost) and Richard Rhodes (GSA Finance Officer)
- (iv) Campus Facilities – facilitated by Sue Johnston (Head of Campus Services) & Tim Ngwena (YUSU President)
- (v) Library – facilitated by Chris Ellwood (Head of Academic Liaison, Library) & Rui Huang (GSA President)
- (vi) Careers & Skill Development – facilitated by Liz Smith (Director of Careers Service) & Dr Jen Winter (GTU)
- (vii) Graduate Students' Association – facilitated by Michael A. Kirkpatrick (GSA Services Officer) & Louise Redsull (GSA Students with Disabilities Rep)



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Following this, both postgraduate students and members of university staff had the opportunity to put any other questions to a panel consisting of Pro Vice-Chancellor Jane Grenville, GSA Academic Affairs Officer Kieran Alden, GSA Welfare Officer Heather Rowley, and YUSU President Tim Ngwena. At the end of the session, we collected feedback from participants to enable us to evaluate the forum and build this into future events.

Summary of Discussions

(i) Student Supervision Group

Facilitators: Pro Vice-Chancellor Dr Jane Grenville
& GSA Welfare Officer Heather Rowley

It became apparent that what is expected from a supervisor varies both between postgraduates at all levels and departmentally. Departmental discrepancies included contact hours, the format of supervision, the supervisor/student ratio and who provides the supervision (some departments PhD students are given supervisory roles). Consequently, the role of a supervisor and how the process works is often unclear to students. Therefore, it would benefit students and their supervisors if the department clearly stated the purpose of the supervisory role and departmental specifics from the start. Concern was raised in regards to ensure that supervision is adequate for all students as group situations may refrain students from airing problems or that some PhD students may not have the necessary training or time.

Timetabling has raised issues, especially where courses span across different departments. Communication needs to improve in order to ensure that the timetable is realistic and clashes do not occur. There is a need to consider the diversity of postgraduates and that many have jobs, dependents and other responsibilities that have to be balanced with their studying. As a result it is crucial for students to make plans, which is made difficult if timetables are not available in advance.

Feedback is essential to improving assessments, however students often find that feedback from previous assignments is not received in time consider it for the next. This needs to be considered when planning assignment deadlines and ensuring that the turnaround for marking work is consistent. In addition where there is a discrepancy between first and second marker, it was apparent that students would like clear reasoning for why this occurred, which is not often current practice. There has been call for a more structured TAP process, as how it stands has been seen to result in delays that may affect the overall process of the thesis writing.



(ii) Academic Support Group

**Facilitators: Cecilia Lowe from Academic Support,
& GSA & YUSU Academic Officers Kieran Alden & Charlie Leyland**

In regards to academic support students spoke positively of departments they felt strived in actively supporting students whether this be through readily receiving feedback and acting upon it, to organising programs like the Biology PhD Training Scheme. It was suggested that this scheme should be replicated in other departments. The move to choosing dissertations early in the spring term was also seen as a positive step. However, while the skills courses offered in welcome week were positively received it is evident that students rarely look outside their department for training opportunities. Therefore, it is clear that in the coming Welcome Week while there is a demand for a greater academic approach it is essential that is accompanied with improved communication and advertisement. This may be achieved by improving GSA and departmental relations, something the newly appointed Representative, Advice and Welfare (RAW) Coordinator is currently working on.

It became apparent that there is a greater need to support research students in regards to the 'Culture Shock' that can occur when beginning a PhD program. Students reported this is often a result of the lack of clarity on expectations, their supervisor relationship and research budgets. Therefore, this may be something that the PVC Research and departments together need to take into consideration. The PhD peer to peer group may also be essential to providing this support.

There was particular concern about the level of support during the summer, especially for Masters students who are working on their dissertations at this time. As a result of reduced opening hours for the library and academic staff being on research/ annual leave, it has been put forward that the GSA and university support staff offer a coordinated support system in the style of drop in sessions where students can check their work and/or be offered advice.

(iii) Colleges Group

**Facilitators: Wentworth Provost Dr Russell Yates
& GSA Finance Officer Richard Rhodes**

Students were in agreement that the system of college membership is not very clear, specifically in terms of how a student is affiliated to a college. While all postgraduates are automatically members of Wentworth, students are unclear as to whether they are connected to other colleges through where their department is based or if they live in another college. Furthermore, some postgraduates who live off campus feel disconnected to the college system altogether, whereas others tend to be closer to their departmental college. Therefore, it has been acknowledged that there is a need to clearly highlight to students from the beginning of their studies at York which colleges they belong to and what such association is based on. Additionally, it is important for the GSA to consider that postgraduates live in all colleges and off-campus,



and this should be reflected in the services that they provide. This has been considered for the upcoming Welcome Week.

The issue of integrating UK, EU and non-EU students was raised. It became clear that students believe York is a top international university, and should be at the forefront of fostering an internationally integrated community. However, it was felt that this was not the reality and accommodation allocation needed to be reformed. While both the university and the GSA are aware of this, the demographics of the students makes social engineering in colleges problematic. This is an area that the GSA can look at over the next year and try to provide alternative solutions for enhancing a integrated postgraduate community.

While Wentworth is solely a postgraduate college, there are still a number of students that share colleges with undergraduates. There was mixed feedback on these set ups, but often students living a predominantly undergraduate colleges felt they were not catered for. This is something the GSA can work on through the GCR system and ask the university to address how postgraduates are distributed in mixed colleges, ensuring there is a minimum admission of postgraduates in a college.

(iv) Campus Facilities Group

**Facilitators: Head of Campus Services Sue Johnston
& YUSU President Tim Ngwena**

Attendees expressed the belief that campus facilities did not best reflect the needs of postgraduate students, especially on arrival of international students. As a result students often felt they missed opportunities that would have been beneficial to settling in or placed in a situation that could prove to be a security risk (i.e. cash office closed). It was proposed that GSA, YUSU, ISA and International Office need to work together to produce a more coordinated program that eases students into life at the University of York.

Services within colleges have produced concern with students. The current complaints system related to Circuit Services goes through the company and consequently does not reflect actual student's satisfaction. Therefore, it has been suggested that there is a second reporting structure that goes through facilities managers so they can monitor feedback and report this to Circuit. Additionally, the change in the cleaning system where fines have been introduced worries students. However, with clear communication on what is expected should ensure that that both students, the colleges and campus service are satisfied.

While the Berrick Saul building was added to meet the expectations of international students, it was highlighted that not all students can access this building. Therefore, publicity needs to reflect the way the university is responding to students' expectations it needs to be honest of the actual situation. The issue of office space for postgraduates was brought up as often this is not available but due to the nature of topics of study such as case law which has high ethical requirements it necessary that such facilities are available.



(v) Library Group

**Facilitators: Head of Library Academic Liaison Chris Ellwood
& GSA President Rui Huang**

The quantity and accessibility of resources in the library were of concern to students attending the forum. It was noted that the relevant text for particular courses is often in short supply in comparison to the number of students. Furthermore, it was highlighted that international students cannot use the reading software. During these discussions a proposed solution was that students access books through their department library liaison.

In addition to this, the lack of awareness of the library refurbishment plan was raised yet again. While YUSU and the GSA have been working with specific committees to ensure communication about such issues are made clearer, it appears that there is still an issue and an awareness campaign may be appropriate.

In relation to security, the possibility of a library returns box in Wentworth during winter was discussed.

(vi) Careers & Skill Development Group

Facilitators: Director of Careers Service Liz Smith & Dr Jen Winter from GTU

On the whole, attendees spoke positively of the information available on the careers website and distributed by email from the service. It was acknowledged that the website could do with some tweaks to the design, but it was noted that this is taking place. A recurring thought from students was that they would like to see more careers specific information coming from their department; through departmental talks on career options, case studies of past graduates, and where to get help with seeking jobs either here or abroad. It was felt that this would be valued as some were unsure as to whether the careers service possesses the knowledge specific to their subject (e.g. zoo archaeology). A careers fair aimed at postgraduates was also suggested.

Many research student attendees felt that overall the GTU is providing a good range of courses and opportunities for skill development alongside their studies. It became apparent that there is an issue with the communication of such opportunities, with inclusion in induction programmes, departmental websites, and PhD handbooks seen as measures which could be used to counter this. Masters students also questioned whether such opportunities could also be expanded in order that they can access these opportunities.

Overall, the communication of such opportunities did appear to be the main issue, with many unaware of careers service drop-ins, GTU and computing service courses, CETLE opportunities, and volunteering projects on offer. The skills development process used in Biology, where a dedicated Training & Careers advisor is on hand to assist PhD students and promote such opportunities, was highly commended and suggested as an example that other departments should seek to replicate.



(vii) Graduate Students' Association Feedback Group

**Facilitators: GSA Services Officer Michael A. Kirkpatrick
& GSA Students with Disabilities Rep Louise Redsull**

It was brought to attention that the level of awareness among students of what the GSA is and what the GSA can offer students is still low. A new website and improved avenues of communication between the GSA and postgraduates were suggested as ways in which the GSA could increase their presence. Currently, the GSA are investigating the possibility of having a new website designed and online for Welcome Week 2010. This will hopefully provide an arena by which students can gain a greater understanding of the GSA, as well as provide a means for improved communication and information sharing. While the GSA sends out a weekly newsletter, it appears that this may not be the most effective way of providing information to postgraduates and this is something the GSA will need to investigate in the near future.

There continues to be a perception that the GSA is too orientated around Wentworth and therefore needs to create connections with non-Wentworth based postgraduates. This has been recognised and as a result has led to the use of both other campus venues and off-campus locations for the events already planned for next year. In addition, the GSA is committed to closely working with the GCRs in all the different colleges to create an environment in which all postgraduates feel part of.

In regards to social events organised and run by the GSA, those in attendance recommended that the GSA considered including more 'mature' events and trips. Consequently, trips to museums and galleries have been considered as possible events for next year. It was also believed that a coffee afternoon, such as those run by the ISA, should be implemented. This idea was raised at the last forum, and has been considered, but due to the high cost involved, further discussion and research needs to take place.

Question & Answer Session

All attendees were given the opportunity to raise any remaining issues to a panel during a half hour question and answer session. The panel consisted of PVC Dr Jane Grenville, GSA Officers Kieran Alden & Heather Rowley, and YUSU President Tim Ngwena. The following points were addressed:

- Provision for Postgraduates on Heslington East
- GSA Engagement with membership
- How YUSU engages with Postgraduates
- Best communication methods to use to get information to postgraduate students



Future Plans

Following the growing success of these forums, we will continue to organise one event per teaching term, while hoping to maintain the link with a member of University Senior Management Group. Dr John Local, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, has agreed to undertake this role at the next forum in November 2010.

Based on feedback we received from those who attended and GSA Representatives, we will look introduce the following changes:

- There is a need for a new location that is more of a focal point on campus.
- Time at each station was limited, meaning that often topics were often brought up but could not be discussed any further. Also having a group in the middle of the room meant that a few students missed going to this one. Suggested solutions: having an overarching theme for the forum and then breaking the groups into specific issues related to this theme to allow for more in depth discussion. Alternatively, there could be fewer, broader ranging topics with the hope that this would provide more time for discussion. However, this may lead to many topics being brought up and discussions may be less focused. In the future, we would look to briefing each facilitator prior to the event and providing facilitator guidelines.
- There is a perceived need to improve the publicity for the forums to ensure that students are aware of when the event is taking place, where and what the purpose is. Advertising in advance – making sure university support staff are contacted earlier and that students know about the forum from welcome week onwards.
- Ensure that course reps are told about the forums as soon as they are elected and that the importance of these are stressed from the very beginning. Perhaps have a section in handbook about them and making departments aware that these are happening and that perhaps their reps should use this as an arena for bringing forward opinions and views from people on their courses.
- The GSA should review the refreshments made available.



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Welfare



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Sports



Community

Conclusions

Our Postgraduate Forums have guided our activities through this academic year and informed our discussions on the future strategy of the GSA, while allowing us to reinforce our role at the university and giving postgraduates the opportunity to voice their opinion. Our second forum gave us the opportunity to show how we have reflected on the discussions at the first, and how we have begun to act upon this feedback. What has become apparent is that we still have work to do on some of the issues identified at the first, while new issues and concerns have also been identified. Through a combination of these, we have updated our Action Plan (attached), which details how we hope to address these concerns. This will be made accessible to our membership, and representatives will be responsible for reporting how they are addressing the points allocated to them.

We are grateful to all members of both the University and the Graduate Students' Association who ensured this session was successful. We are now much better informed of the issues facing postgraduate students and can work on addressing these concerns. We look forward to repeating this event in November, in collaboration with Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research Dr John Local, and throughout the next academic year.



June 2010 Action Plan

Abbreviations:

UTC: University Teaching Committee
SCA: Standing Committee on Assessment
BfGS: Board for Graduate Schools
ISA: International Students' Association
GTU: Graduate Training Unit
GSO: Graduate Schools Office

APR: Annual Programme Review
ASO: Academic Support Office
CELT: Centre for English Language Teaching
TAP: Thesis Advisory Panel
GCR: Graduate Common Room
Timescales - S: Short-Term, M: Medium Term, L: Long-Term

Issue	Timescale	Designated GSA Area	Potential Source(s) of Resolution
Teaching & Learning			
<i>Taught Masters</i>			
Student timetable complicated/not released early enough for planning of childcare/not enough time given to move rooms	S	 Academic	Dept Reps, Departments, Timetabling Office, UTC
Better signposting needed to direct students to academic support services	S	 Academic	Departments
All module information and materials should be on the VLE	M	 Academic	Dept Reps, APR's, Departments, UTC
Grading criteria should be made available for all modules	M	 Academic	Dept Reps, Departments, SCA
Clarify what students' should expect from their supervisor (in terms of contact time, format, supervisor/student ratio)	M	 Academic	Dept Reps, Departments, UTC
Students are unclear as to the standard of feedback they should be expecting	M	 Academic	Dept Reps, Departments, SCA
First feedback not received until beginning of second term for some courses	M	 Academic	Departments, SCA
Some feedback is still being received a long time after the submission date of an assignment	M	 Academic	Departments, SCA
Clarify whether taught postgraduates have access to the Berrick Saul desk areas if not taken by research students	M	 Academic	Departments, Berrick Saul Administrator
Concerns raised on support given over the summer when library hours reduce, and supervisors/research teams go on research leave	M	 Academic	Departments, UTC



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Welfare



Events



Sports



Community

Induction information given prior to enrolment was generally poor	M	 Academic	Dept Reps, Departments, SCA
<i>Research</i>			
Address the 'Culture Shock' new PhD students can feel through better induction program at start of PhD	M	 Academic	Departments, PVC Research
Large number of PhD Students unsure on what to expect from their supervisor	M	 Academic	PVC Research, Departments, build into GTU course?
TAP Process is unstructured in some departments, with difficulties in arranging meetings; delaying thesis preparation	M	 Academic	Departments, UTC, SCA
Research students would like clarity on the Undergraduate lectures they can access	M	 Academic	Departments
Biology PhD Training Programme seen as good practice and suggested this is replicated across departments	M	 Academic	Departments, PVC Research, GTU
Large number of students unaware of how their research budget is spent/how much is available/how they can spend this	M	 Academic	Departments
Better advertising of public lectures/seminars across campus	M	 Academic	Communications Office
Campus & Commercial Services			
Lack of awareness of refurbishment plan highlighted again	S	 Representation	Dept Liaison Librarians, Departments, Dept Reps, Library
International Students cannot use the reading software	M	 Representation	Dept Liaison Librarians, Departments, Library
Not enough key-texts available	M	 Academic	Dept Liaison Librarians, Departments, Library
Campus & Commercial Services			
Many campus services shut during Welcome Week, and on arrival of International Students	S	 Representation	Commercial Services
Complaints structure needs to be clarified to students, to ensure students feel their needs are being addressed	S	 Representation	Commercial Services
Space for some research, such as case law (having high ethical requirements) is not available	S	 Representation	Campus Services

Costcutter hours reduced out of term-time though postgraduates (and some undergraduates, i.e. over 25% of students) remain on campus	M	Representation	Commercial Services
Careers & Skill Development			
Students unaware of services available at Careers centre	M	Academic	Careers Service & Departments
No standardised approach to PhD Transferrable skills across departments/inconsistent monitoring of transferrable skills training	M	Academic	GTU, Departments, UTC
Colleges & Accommodation			
Students living in Undergraduate Colleges did not feel catered for by the college	S	Community	PVC Students, College Provosts
Clarify the system of college membership for PG Students	M	Community	PVC Students, College Provosts
Off-Campus Students feel disconnected from college system altogether	M	Community	PVC Students, College Provosts
Perceived lack of integration of UK, EU, and non-EU students throughout accommodation	M	Community	PVC Students, College Provosts, Accommodation
Investigate whether all on-campus accommodation should have access to the wireless network(s)	L	Community	Computing Services, Accommodation Office
Student Welfare			
Security presence around campus is not felt by students	S	Welfare	Health, Safety & Welfare Committee, Campus Security
Improved lighting by security phones on sport fields	M	Welfare	Campus Services, Campus Security
Lighting between both Halifax and Goodricke and campus, and Catherine House and campus deemed insufficient	M	Welfare	Health, Safety & Welfare Committee, Campus Services
Graduate Students' Association			
Run more academic skills courses, especially in Welcome Week (prior to commencement of course)	S	Academic	ASO
GSA seen to not be acknowledging students who live in different colleges	S	Community	



<p>'Branding' and awareness of services was perceived to be weak</p>			
<p>Email newsletter not seen as being the most effective way of communicating important information & could be restructured</p>	S		
<p>GSA still deemed too 'Wentworth Centric' and needs to appeal in other colleges</p>	S		
<p>Improve communication to off-campus students on the campus/college facilities they have access to</p>	S		
<p>Engage with membership through informal coffee afternoons in Edge (as ISA do)</p>	M		Wentworth Catering Manager
<p>GSA has no policy and little support for Distance Learners</p>	M		GSA Council, Distance Learning Forum
<p>GSA has no policy and appears to offer little support to mature learners</p>	M		
<p>Engage with members through text-messaging</p>	L		



March 2010 Action Plan & Actions to Date (distributed at June's forum):

PVC – Pro Vice-Chancellor, SCA – Standing Committee on Assessment, UTC – University Teaching Committee, GCR – Graduate Common Rooms, YUSU – York University Students' Union, GSO – Graduate Schools Office, CELT – Centre for English Language Teaching, BfGS - Board for Graduate Schools, ASO - Academic Support Office, GTU - Graduate Training Unit, ISA – International Students' Association



Issue	Urgency	Designated Body/ Person(s)	Potential Source(s) of Resolution	Progress
Teaching & Learning				
<i>Taught Masters</i>				
Student timetable complicated/not released early enough for planning of childcare/not enough time given to move rooms	Short	GSA Academic Affs, Dept Reps	Departments, Timetabling Office, UTC	YUSU & GSA Academic Affs Officers met with Timetabling Office & issue has been raised at UTC, and within Annual Programme Reviews
All module information and materials should be on the VLE	Medium	GSA Academic Affs, Dept Reps	Annual Programme Reviews, Depts, UTC	In progress, but discussed at both SCA and UTC
Grading criteria should be made available for all modules	Medium	GSA Academic Affs, Dept Reps	Departments, SCA	In progress
International students unaware that language support is available if necessary	Medium	GSA Academic Affs	International Students Office, CELT	In progress
Students are unclear as to the standard of feedback they should be expecting	Medium	GSA Academic Affs, Dept Reps	Departments, SCA	In discussion with YUSU regarding a paper to be submitted to SCA to seek clarification from departments
Some departments not returning feedback within six week turnaround time	Medium	GSA Academic Affs, Dept Reps	Departments, SCA	Areas where this has happened identified and raised at SCA or via the

-  **Representation**
-  **Academic**
-  **Welfare**
-  **Events**
-  **Sports**
-  **Community**

				Chair.
First feedback not received until beginning of second term for some courses	Medium	GSA Academic Affs	Departments, SCA	In progress but to be discussed at SCA
International Students unsure of UK/York exam procedure, and would like practice or better clarification	Medium	GSA Academic Affs	Departments, GSO, SCA	'Mock exam' trialled by YUSU to be extended next year. Raised in Academic Affs Officer oral report at SCA
Clarify whether taught postgraduates have access to the Berrick Saul desk areas if not taken by research students	Medium	GSA Academic Affs	Departments, Berrick Saul Administrator	In progress
Induction information given prior to enrolment was generally poor	Medium	GSA Academic Affs, Dept Reps	Departments, SCA	In progress
<i>Research</i>				
Large number of PhD Students unsure on what to expect from their supervisor	Medium	GSA Academic Affs	BfGS, Departments, build into GTU course	In progress following discussions with new Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research
Students unsure of where to seek support for Stafford Loan Applications	Medium	GSA Academic Affs	GSO, International Students Office	In progress
Research students would like clarity on the Undergraduate lectures they can access	Medium	GSA Academic Affs	Departments	In progress
Academic Integrity Week classes were useful – there should be more of these	Medium	GSA Academic Affs	ASO	Four more have been arranged since March and more will continue to be organised where there is demand
Large number of students unaware of how their research budget is spent/how much is available/how they can spend this	Medium	GSA Academic Affs	Departments	In progress but has been raised with PVC Research and PVC Students
Better advertising of public lectures/seminars across campus	Medium	GSA President	Communications Office	GSA President/General Manager discussing communication strategies with University



Postgraduates who Teach					
Lack of standardisation across departments for supporting PGWT's	Medium	GSA Academic Affs & PGWT Rep	PGWT Working Group, UTC	PGWT Rep integral part of working group looking at making this the case	
PGWT's should have access to learning objectives and outcomes for the module they are teaching	Medium	GSA Academic Affs & PGWT Rep	PGWT Working Group, UTC	PGWT Rep integral part of working group looking at making this the case	
Improve mechanisms by which teaching is monitored	Medium	GSA Academic Affs & PGWT Rep	PGWT Working Group, UTC	Discussed at both working group & UTC	
Library					
Lack of Study Space for students due to library refurbishment	Short	GSA Academic Affs	Library Refurb Steering Grp, Library Committee	Additional study spaces advertised by newsletter, promotion of new building in Heslington, production of a study space 'map' currently taking place	
Students' unaware of refurbishment plans	Short	GSA Academic Affs	Library Refurb Grp	Raised at Library Refurb Group	
Not enough key-texts available	Medium	GSA Academic Affs, Dept Reps	Dept Liaison Librarians, Depts, Library	Raised at Library Committee by GSA President	
Campus Services					
Costcutter hours reduced out of term-time though postgraduates (and some undergraduates, i.e. over 25% of students) remain on campus	Medium	GSA President	Commercial Services	Raised by Academic Affairs Officer & General Manager at Operations Group – agreed market research is needed & will be discussed shortly	
Off-campus students not encouraged to come back onto campus to use the bars as they are not competitively priced	Medium	GSA Services & Finance	Commercial Services, Bar Strategy Group	Raised by Academic Affairs Officer & General Manager at Operations Group, and others at Bar Strategy group – continually monitored	
Careers & Skill Development					
Students unaware of services available at Careers centre	Medium	GSA Academic Affs	Careers Service & Departments	In progress	
Courses available at GTU need to be publicised within departments	Medium	GSA Academic Affs, GTU	GTU, Departments	Discussions held with GTU on working with GSA to promote GTU courses	



				more effectively
No students had heard of PDP or Postgraduate York Award	Medium	GSA Academic Affs,	GTU, Careers Service, Departments	In progress
No standardised approach to PhD Transferrable skills across departments/inconsistent monitoring of transferrable skills training	Medium	GSA Academic Affs, GTU	Departments, UTC	Raised at FELT and SCA, and with PVC Research – continued discussion at next strategy meeting
Accommodation				
Residents unsure of who their College Tutors are	Short	GSA Welfare, College Provosts	Provosts & Tutors, Pro-VC Jane Grenville	Raised with PVC Students & will be discussed at GSA & Provosts meeting in June
Rooms & Kitchens not sufficiently cleaned	Short	College Administrators	Cleaning Services / Residents	Raised with relevant administrators
Accommodation form difficult to complete for those with disabilities	Medium	GSA Welfare & Disability Rep	Accommodation Office	Application process assessed and adjusted where appropriate
Potential students lead to believe postgraduates would be given place in Wentworth	Medium	GSA Welfare	Accommodation Office	Much clearer guidelines are being sent to future postgraduate students as of 2010
Investigate the need for all-Female postgraduate flats on campus	Medium	GSA Welfare & Gender Equality	Accommodation Office	In progress
Laundry facilities in Wentworth not meeting the demand	Medium	GSA Welfare, College Provost	Campus Services	Raised with relevant welfare teams
Furniture in rooms may not be fit for purpose / damaged	Medium	GSA Welfare, College Provost	Accommodation Office	Raised with relevant welfare teams
Investigate whether all on-campus accommodation should have wireless access	Long	GSA Services	Computing Services, Accommodation	Monitoring demand in collaboration with YUSU, who also state this as an objective
Student Welfare				
International students unsure where to collect prescriptions issued by the health centre	Short	GSA Welfare	Health Centre	In progress



Security presence around campus is not felt by students	Short	GSA Welfare	Health, Safety & Welfare Committee, Campus Security	Welfare Officer in discussions with Security on improving communication
Students unsure of methods to use to contact security in an emergency	Short	GSA Welfare	Health, Safety & Welfare Committee, Campus Security	Addressed in newsletter. Security talk added to Welcome Week & all new students will receive a card stating this information
Improved lighting by security phones on sport fields	Medium	GSA Welfare	Campus Services, Campus Security	In progress
Lighting between both Halifax and Goodricke and campus, and Catherine House and campus deemed insufficient	Medium	GSA Welfare	Health, Safety & Welfare Committee, Campus Services	In progress
Graduate Students' Association				
Events need to be more widely publicised	Short	GSA Services, Communications, Events	College Admin, YUSU, campus media, commercial services	Services Officer has worked on publicity GSA marketing being professionally developed March - September
No events tailored for students who live off-campus	Short	GSA Services, Events, Off-Campus Rep		Three events run in the Summer term, and more to be added
Improve information given to GCR Committees on budgeting events	Short	GSA Services & Finance	Wentworth College Welfare & GCR	Services Officer to prepare GCR Handbook for future committees, Finance Officer to work more closely with GCRs
Students unaware of what GSA Officers have achieved this year	Short	GSA President & Communications		Website and Blog to be updated, and use of other tools such as Twitter analysed as part of marketing review
Noted that GSA Council is too long, too formal, not to the	Short	GSA Council Chair		Addressed by Council Chair



point, and should be more social				
Improve communication to off-campus students on the campus/college facilities they have access	Short	GSA President & Communications		In progress as part of marketing review
Engage with membership through informal coffee afternoons in Edge (as ISA do)	Medium	GSA Services	Wentworth Catering Manager	In progress
Events need to be more varied to involve a wider range of students	Medium	GSA Services, Events		Different styles of events trialled in the Summer term and their success is being analysed
Improve communication on getting involved in GSA Sports on arrival	Medium	GSA Services, Sports		Will be addressed in Welcome Week 2010
GSA has no policy and little support for Distance Learners	Medium	GSA Academic Affs & Distance Learning Rep	GSA Council, Dist Learn Forum	Academic Affs Officer to discuss this as at the University Distance Learning Forum
GSA has no policy and appears to offer little support to mature learners	Medium	GSA President		In progress
Students would like to know how the GSA spends their budget	Medium	GSA Finance		Budget is available on the website, 2010/11 Budget to be announced this month
Engage with members through text-messaging	Long	GSA Services		Under investigation
Other				
Students unaware of the 'Magic Bus' service	Short	GSA President	YUSU Dem & Services	Raised with YUSU
Students find it difficult to approach YUSU	Medium	GSA President	YUSU President	Raised with YUSU
Investigate whether the university/YUSU/GSA could offer a 2 nd hand book sale service	Long	GSA President & Services		GSA President In discussions with YUSU and the University

