

Proposer: Durgesh Prabu (Chair of LSESU Liberal Democrats)

Seconder: Tooba Mushtaq (Student Representative to the Academic Board)

LSESU should lobby LSE departments to provide students with personal exam feedback and access to photocopies of their exam scripts.

**This Union Notes:**

1. There is no standard policy across departments of giving exam feedback to students with some departments being willing to provide their students with a substantial amount of personal feedback (International History and Geography) and others not happy to give any at all (Law).
2. Under the Data Protection Act 1998, universities are not obligated to provide exam scripts to students and LSE chooses not to. Using the Act's provisions to request the comments written by examiners on exam scripts is of very limited use to students as many examiners make their comments separate pieces of paper.
3. National Student Survey results assessing the quality of assessment and feedback at the LSE have been consistently low. In particular in the categories of 'the criteria used in marking have been clear in advance', 'I have received detailed comments on my work' and 'feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand' have been ones where the School is significantly underperforming.
4. Students have expressed little faith in the collective/generic exam feedback that is currently the norm in many departments 29% of respondent to an SU survey on generic feedback thought that feedback had 'not at all' enabled them to make improvements in the following year, another 29% thought it had enabled them to make improvements in the following year 'a little' and another 29% thought generic feedback had enabled them to make improvements in the following year 'moderately'.
5. There is an increasing desire and demand for personal exam feedback among LSE students. Nearly half of National Student Survey (NSS) comments in 2014 which mentioned 'feedback' (21/50) either praised or requested personal exam feedback: -'They have increased class teaching hours and improved feedback mechanisms greatly since I have arrived. We now get detailed feedback on our exam answers, and see samples of past exam answers and coursework answers for most modules.' (Student in the Geography Department, 2014) - 'Exam and coursework feedback has helped me constantly improve over my university career.' (Student in History Department, NSS 2014) - 'No feedback is available from exams, including coursework, which can make it more difficult to learn where to improve.' (NSS 2014) - 'Not enough feedback from exams or essays – this is a serious issue. How am I to learn from my mistakes when I receive no exam feedback?' (NSS 2014)
6. Exam feedback has had a positive effect in the two departments which have thus far introduced it. The International History department which introduced exam feedback in 2011/12 saw overall NSS assessment and feedback scores increase from 79% to 90% and the Geography and Environment department which introduced exam feedback in 2012/13 saw feedback scores increase from 65% to 74%.

7. Personal exam feedback, where it is currently practiced in the School, is given orally by the student's academic adviser.

**This Union Believes:**

1. It is in the School's interest to improve the examination performance of its students and in its obligations to listen and respond to the wants of its students whose money pays for its continued existence.
2. Personal exam feedback would enable students to properly analyse their performance under exam conditions and their approach to answering questions. This would assist them in working on ways in which they can improve their performance in future assessments.
3. Exam marks without personal exam feedback merely give information on a student's performance on a given day. It is important to promote long-term, cumulative learning by highlighting through personal feedback the topics which a student has a weaker grasp on or incorrect understanding of so they can go and reflect on what they have learnt and improve in future years.
4. Personal exam feedback should be delivered, as it currently is in those departments which practice it, in the form of a conversation between an academic adviser and student. This works well to improve students' understanding of their feedback and therefore improves their capacity to learn from it.
5. Students should be able to request photocopies of their exam scripts in order that the feedback that they have received from their academic adviser can be properly understood in context. Students cannot be expected to remember what they wrote in an exam three months previously and so without the script in front of them the value of any oral feedback is diminished.
6. The quality of the marking of LSE exams is widely acknowledged among LSE students to be of an extremely high standard and the provision of personalised exam feedback and access to scripts will therefore not result in departments receiving large numbers of complaints regarding marks awarded. In any event, a clear, unequivocal statement by departments that the provision of feedback does not change the School's position that 'the academic judgement of the Board of Examiners' cannot be 'call[ed] into question' will prevent such an occurrence.

**This Union Resolves:**

1. That the student representatives to the Academic Board and the Education Officer shall be mandated to pursue through all channels available to them the standardised provision of oral personal exam feedback via academic advisers and the option for students to access photocopies of their exam scripts.

2. That all members of the Academic Board be personally notified of: the passing of this motion, the number of students who have voted in favour and the margin by which it passed, and the specific demands of the Students' Union and motivations for these as explained within the motion.

Passed, 20.2.2015

560 in favour (99%)

5 against (1%)

16 undecided