Notes of the StARs Forum - Monday 9th December 2013

12:30 – 14:00 (EEG162)

Topic: Worcester Week, Turnitin and Course Management Committee

Present:
33 students (StARs and Institute Reps)
Tom Clarke – **TC** (Vice President Education (Chair)
John Ryan - **JR** (Pro Vice Chancellor (Students)
Kelsey Coward – **KC** (Student Transition and Progression Officer)
Heather Barrett – **HB** (Associate Head of the Institute of Science and the Environment (with special responsibility for co-ordinating Worcester Weeks)
Ruth Christie – **RC** (SU Membership Services Manager (taking notes)

Welcome and introductions: TC welcomed everyone and introduced himself. The other members of staff introduced themselves.

Students said	Panel response	Action/suggestions from StARs
Worcester Weeks **ISE** **Archaeology yr 2:** • It was too disruptive to the semester having two Worcester Weeks • The workshops were very good • They shouldn't have to be mandatory – it would be good to explore the possibility of staff working with students more to ensure we're getting value for the time **English Language yr 1:** • Most first-year students went home, partly because English Language was grouped with other courses and no events directly related to English Language were organised	In answer to a question about why Worcester Weeks 1 and 2 were so close to each other, **JR** explained that the second week needed to be during graduation week. The University was very keen to move graduation week, but this was not possible due to the lack of availability of the cathedral during alternative weeks. The University recognises that the gap between	Involve students in planning future Worcester Weeks Students want to know about <u>all</u> of the events and activities open to them – not just those which are course-specific Worcester Week timetables should be made available to students as far in advance as possible, so they can make informed decisions about what to do and, where necessary, make arrangements so that they can attend

- Overall the feedback from students was poor. Perhaps staff did not have enough time to plan the weeks?
- Would it be possible to send students a basic oversight of the plans for the week by text? This would improve attendance

Geography
- The full programmes for all three Worcester Weeks was published in advance in the course handbooks, which was excellent

Geography yr 3:
- Lack of communication – students didn't know what Worcester Weeks are or why they had been introduced and therefore thought they are another reading week – pointless!!!
- Early communication over the summer is needed
- Most sessions in geography were well received – would prefer to know about others, though
- Sessions should be grouped together so that people can plan and the timetables should be sent out earlier

Human nutrition
- The session was useful, but the content could easily have been covered during a normal timetabled Friday. It looks as if nothing much is happening during the third Worcester Week

IHCA

- There seemed to be a lot of disparity between the

Worcester Weeks is too small.

HB said that the University is conscious of the issues. The principle of Worcester Week events is that they should enhance students' experience of their course. Timetables should not be significantly different from students' normal timetable, so that students should not have to make changes to their normal arrangements to attend activities.

JR pointed out that some activities had proved very popular, such as the language taster sessions, which 150 students attended. A number of StARs said they were not aware that these were available.

JR asked StARs which channel of communication was likely to be most effective to ensure that all students get the

Some courses have managed to include all three Worcester Week timetables in their course handbooks – that's good practice and all courses should do this

Whereas it was the responsibility of course teams to arrange events and activities, some of the more popular sessions were cross-course or even cross-Institute

Some students will welcome the opportunity to attend events which are of personal interest, outside their normal course

During Worcester Weeks, every effort should be made to publicise all events so that students can see exactly what's available to them – suggestions include using Blackboard and having a calendar of the week's events on display in Peirson, Main Reception and the SU

Where Worcester Week content is course-specific,

number of events and activities provided for students, eg lots for screenwriting but only one for creative writing	information they need about Worcester Weeks. StARs said:	students would like to see visiting speakers and perhaps graduates talking about their careers, rather than have their usual lecturers delivering sessions

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Sociology yr 1:
- There were strikes by lecturers near to Worcester Week 2 and the effect of this was that assignments and assignment draft deadlines were postponed and moved closer to Worcester Weeks. As a result, students were less willing to turn up as they had deadlines and work to do
- Students wanted more relevant workshops linked to assignments to help improve their grades

Sociology yr 2:
- The first Worcester Week was not well attended because a) there was little in the programme of relevance to the course, b) assignment deadlines were so close, most students used Worcester Weeks to get their assignments written, c) lack of information/lateness of availability of information
- Lecturers were extremely negative about Worcester Weeks and they expressed this to students, so the students don't see the point of attending

Sociology yr 3:
- There was a full schedule, but the majority of students went home

Art and Design yr 2:

information they need about Worcester Weeks. StARs said:
- Blackboard
- All-student emails
- Directly from tutors
- Notices in WBS

HB said that guidance will be given to course teams – it is expected that Worcester Week 3 will have a focus on independent study, employability and careers for final year students.

JR said that tutors will be encouraged to work with StARs on planning for next year's Worcester Weeks

JR said he is hopeful that Worcester Week timetables will be made available before the end of Semester 2

HB said that all students will have opportunities to evaluate Worcester Weeks and the results of this consultation

students would like to see visiting speakers and perhaps graduates talking about their careers, rather than have their usual lecturers delivering sessions

There needs to be clarity about whether attendance during Worcester Weeks is mandatory or optional

• Students wanted more enthusiasm and advertising for the Worcester Weeks. They also found that some of the lectures didn't contribute to their modules and wanted lectures to help their coursework • One idea that the students have suggested is open workshops and trips to collect experience and inspiration **<u>Digital Film Production yr 1:</u>** • Most students don't have the drive to attend non-mandatory events. Those who attended the Worcester Week activities enjoyed them, but the majority of students would prefer them to be "reading weeks" – a chance to catch up with assignments and go home **<u>Digital Film Production yr 2:</u>** • Our lecturers keep telling us that they think Worcester Weeks are pointless and hoping they will disappear and go back to traditional teaching **<u>Creative and Professional Writing yr 1:</u>** • The Helen Cross author visit was really good. Students feel the first two Worcester Weeks are too close together **<u>English Literature yr 1:</u>** • It could be an idea to consider adding on the Worcester Week and assessment week to the end of the Christmas holiday, as people find it difficult to return	will be collated and taken into account.	

from home, have two weeks of teaching, then two weeks of non-teaching again, as some students may want to return home and use the Christmas holiday as an opportunity to do work, as opposed to two weeks of disruption
- Many students went home
- Students also appreciate that Worcester Weeks are complicated to organise and acknowledge the efforts of staff to enhance our learning experience – thank you!

History
- Worcester Week was very well received by history students, particularly the talk by Holocaust survivor Zigi Shipper and the discussion about Jack the Ripper. These were directly relevant to first year modules.

IHS
BSc Nursing (Top up):
- It is important to let the students know the activities of the Worcester Weeks. This can be done using emails and tutors, because we felt Worcester Week was just a one week break

Paramedic Science yr 2:
- Are professional Health and Society courses entitled to Worcester Weeks? We were set a research piece of homework for our "Worcester Week". People who had Worcester Weeks for IHS courses mentioned attendance of a conference

– this may have been useful for us?
- We break up this week from University lectures and from placement on 23/12/13, starting placement again on 06/01/14 – we don't have University lectures until February, but don't appear to have Worcester Weeks – are we entitled to them? If not – that's fine – we were just unsure

Psychology yr 1:
- The group couldn't see the relevance of the activities. Having a timetable which was different from the normal timetable presented great difficulties for some students, particularly those with other commitments such as jobs and childcare
- The conference was brilliant and was well attended by 2nd and 3rd year students
- The research methods unit is causing panic amongst first year students, who would have benefitted from some extra help with this during a Worcester Week

WBS
- Students at the Business School did not know about any events held at St Johns which were open to all students, some of which would have been of interest

Business Management:
- There was a lot of positive response from students to their experiences of the workshops, including the

entreprenuer workshop
- Those students who did not participate viewed the week as an opportunity to recap their learning or to relax – many students went home
- The workshop on essay writing was particularly helpful

Business, HR Management and PR yr 3:
- The first Worcester Week appears to occur too soon – third years don't feel prepared for the limited sessions that are relevant to them
- Overall, having Worcester Weeks as a part of the timetable is seen as positive

Accounting yr 1:
- For accounting there were not really activities related to the course. However, general feedback is that it was valuable, as we had our first assignments and had time to prepare them

Accounting yr 2:
- The timetable for the second Worcester Week was only made available to students one week earlier

Masters in Management
- Worcester Week events were not promoted to Masters students and none attended

ISES
Institute Rep:
- The timetable was available several weeks in advance, but sessions were poorly attended

• The sports fair was very well attended but talks were cancelled! • Good variety and content eg intensive dissertation lecture • Good selection of courses – more occurrences required due to popularity • Good use of time as students are not missing lectures • More courses should be available • WABBA – week long, so miss everything else – would like massage/taping courses – high demand • Clashes – courses and talks, especially on Wednesdays when students play sport – can there be repeats in separate weeks? • Well communicated by staff via email • Misguidance about whether the sessions were mandatory – confusion between staff also • Some people didn't see the point as they already have a lot of work – it's seen as an extra demand • Some students didn't know what a Worcester Week was – communicate in the summer • Potential Institute schedule		

rather than course? eg PGCE and teaching limited to PE students when others want it

- If there are no lectures, students go home

- Prefer reading weeks – they prompt us to do work

- Student empowerment – we should choose what we want to do during Worcester Weeks

<u>IE</u>

<u>Education Studies yr 2:</u>

- There was only one activity during each of the Worcester Weeks and these were attended by fewer than 10% of those students for whom the events were intended

- There needs to be much more communication about Worcester Weeks much earlier – still don't know what's planned for the third Worcester Week and students finish for Christmas this week

- There was a purple bus parked opposite the SU (Nat West) but no-one seemed to know what it was and that they could have visited it

Weeks 20 and 21 StARs revealed that a number of them have been told by lecturers that during the fortnight commencing Monday 6th January, there will be no teaching – just tutorials. This will	**JR** stressed that these two weeks are scheduled teaching weeks and the expectation is that a normal timetable of	**JR** has sent a message to Heads of Institutes asking for clarification by Thursday 12th December 2013

require some students to travel to University just for a few hours during that fortnight. Courses mentioned included those from the Institutes of Health & Society, Humanities & Creative Arts, Sport & Exercise Science and Science & the Environment	classes will run during that fortnight	
Sociology: There is only one taught session in January (not the mandatory module) – all others are optional tutorials. Tutorials are being used as "fillers".		
Ditigal Film Production yr 2: Two weeks after Christmas, lecturers are using it for tutorials, help on finishing assignments, not teaching anything new as we should have pretty much finished our work anyway. Film Movements was more or less finished 6/8 weeks in, then we were left doing presentations recapping the work and looking at TG work and nothing specifically related to this module. **ISES:** Teaching after Christmas – formal sessions are not necessarily being run. Some students don't see the point of attending if they are run because all assignments will have been handed in.		
Media and Cultural Studies yr 2: Lectures are being crammed to meet the 12-week schedule so lecturers can use their resources/Powerpoint schedule from past years		
Turnitin **JR** explained that part of his	Guidance for students, including a video explaining	History students yr 1: would like additional help with dealing

responsibility is to chair "cheating committees", where students are called to account for alleged plagiarism. The academic integrity tutors and **Kelsey** work on this too. He asked what students' experiences are of using Turnitin

- Students have found themselves unable to log in to Turnitin because they are using the US version (the top result when using a Google search) rather than the UK version. This is a simple problem to resolve by ensuring that students are made aware of the correct link

- A number of StARs reported that their courses have had little more than a brief outline of how Turnitin works, or it has been mentioned in relation to the first assignment

- Some students know what it is, but haven't received any guidance

- Geography students are offered a number of chances to find out how it works, but there's inconsistency as some lecturers set higher tolerance standards than others. Students are afraid of it due to the bad experience of a fellow student. It's seen as an extra annoyance and can be stressful. It can also take a long time to get the results. There are also concerns about it compromising anonymous marking as

how to use Turnitin, can be found here http://www.worc.ac.uk/elearning/668.htm

In reply to a question, **Kelsey** confirmed that students can use Turnitin voluntarily. Students can get individual advice and support from Libby Symonds – email eos@worc.ac.uk and there is more information on the ILS website http://www.worc.ac.uk/elearning/ Students can sign up to the Turnitin Blackboard module

In reply to a question about what percentage Turnitin result should be of concern to students, **Kelsey** explained that it is a mistake to focus on percentages, which don't give detailed information. Having a high percentage on the Turnitin report is often an indication that a student does not

with primary sources, especially relatively uncommon sources such as diaries

Charlie Goss, Institute Rep, brought StARs' attention to the fact that a Blackboard smartphone app is available free

Students and staff can also now sign up to Box of Broadcasts, where you can:
- Record and watch whole TV programmes from all FreeView channels for the coming week
- Record and watch whole TV programmes from all FreeView channels from the previous week
- Record and listen to radio programmes for the coming and previous week.
- Search and watch previously recorded material of TV/ radio programmes on FreeView from 2000 onwards
- Create playlists
- Create clips (and playlists of clips)
- Link to programmes and clips from Blackboard

lecturers can access the website

- English Literature: Don't think anyone knows what it is and don't know if we have to use it

- Human nutrition: have had 2 sessions on how to use it. You can log in using "Worcester" followed by your student ID

- Masters Business students have had "loads on Turnitin"

- Education Studies: are required to add their full name to every page when using electronic submission, so there's no pretence of anonymity

- Marketing and management: do not put names on submissions. Didn't know we had to use Turnitin

- WBS 3rd year – we were given good support throughout the transition to Turnitin, but first- and second-year students wouldn't have had this

- Outdoor Adventure and Leisure Management yr 2: were told about Turnitin right from the start and given lots of guidance

- WBS: if you follow the instructions, it's not confusing, but students forget about it if not reminded, as it was introduced to them before they needed to use it

fully understand how to paraphrase, summarise and reference, so it is very much a learning tool. The youtube video explains this well http://release.worc.ac.uk/watch.php?r=VM40EL3T&s=Y

It's not possible for Turnitin to be set up for anonymous submission as any matches need to be traced back to the original paper.

With regard to resubmission, this is an optional setting that a tutor can elect for when setting up a class assignment which allows students to resubmit up until the set deadline. This will enable the system to overwrite previous submission from the same student, however it does take longer for the originality report to be generated.

The University is aware of the discrepancies in use of Turnitin in relation to support,

To access this free service, go to bobnational.net

To login:
1. Go to BoB National.
2. Select your institution in the" where are you from?" box.
3. Click on "go to login" and you should be directed to your institutional login.
4. When you have successfully logged in you will automatically be redirected to BoB National.
5. You will be presented with two options. Select "new user".
6. You will then be directed to your individual account's MyBoB preferences.
7. Enter your email address in the Account information field and save.

- Business, HR Management and PR: overall, Turnitin has positive feedback – the only downside is that if there is any uncertainty, 3rd years feel like they should know, so there needs to be more awareness generated about the help available. Also, the 24 hour delay for second submission concerns some students. Turnitin is helpful because it makes students aware, conscious and assured about plagiarism. A downside to e-submission is students feel like they sometimes get generic feedback. Some would like to have the hard copy to see the specifics

- ISES: had no idea about the assistance available via ILS; Turnitin has been introduced to every module – every assignment has to go through the system; students feel it is a hassle; there are directions of how to use it in the module guide and also in some lectures; some people are unaware of how to use it and cannot understand why it has suddenly been introduced; appendices that are mandatory are causing high similarity scores; it can take a long time to receive feedback, making it difficult for students to apply changes and submit again due to the 24 hour turnaround; it's seen as a learning tool for some modules – correct citing, referencing, writing style, paraphrasing; there's confusion – some links on

originality scores, and whether it is mandatory to submit this way. In response to this a policy on the use of Turnitin is being written (by Kelsey with ILS input). Kelsey will be using the feedback from the StARs Forum to ensure that the policy addresses concerns raised by students. The first draft of the policy will be presented to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee in February and the hope is that the policy will be operational for all students starting and returning in September 2014.

Kelsey would also like to thank all of the StARs for their comments as these have been really useful in considering the points that the policy needs to address.

John explained that Turnitin should

Blackboard require website and class password; ISES needs a universal system to make it easier; Turnitin doesn't allow anonymous marking; it delays handing in, due to the long turnaround • Geography yr 3: Opportunities for explanation are available, though not in abundance; in its "experimental" phase – only a few modules on the course use it and this becomes confusing; students are afraid that a high result will cause them to fail assignments (I know this is not the case, but it needs to be explained); some lecturers are stricter than others – set to higher levels- and students become concerned over different percentage levels. A common level needs to be set; can take a long time to receive results; re-submission takes a long time; higher percentage each assignment – plagiarising yourself!	be used in the first year as an educational tool, to help students learn how to use references and citations correctly and to avoid unintended plagiarism and accusations of cheating.	
Course Management Committees (CMCs) **Sociology** Staff were very defensive. They don't seem to listen to StARs **Human nutrition** Staff were really receptive – it was a positive experience **Masters in Marketing Management** No module tutors turned up		

Business All programme leaders and lecturers turned up and all issues were taken on board. The date was changed with very little notice to a busy day during Worcester Week and only two StARs attended Students don't know who their StARs are, as many are inaccurately listed on SOLE (eg many WBS StARs are listed under Advertising, but are not Advertising students) Better organisation of CMCs and more notice would be appreciated **Geography** Unless you sound experienced, staff are dismissive. It's difficult to have authority as a first-year, but when you get to your third year, you feel closer to the lecturers and the experience is much better. Some lecturers have <u>never</u> been to CMCs. It's good to discuss the course with StARs from other year groups. Lecturers don't know who the StARs are and seem to think there are more than those listed on SOLE. The CMCs are well led and well organised, but some lecturers never attend. Staff need more knowledge of the StARs and which ones are active **Animation** As a first-year StAR, it was good to meet second- and third-year StARs and the tutors were there too.		

Institute of Education Institute Reps have sat in on CMCs for all education courses. Students and their views seem very important and their issues are addressed. PGCE StARs also have pre-CMC meetings to filter out some issues which can be dealt with outside the formal meeting. **Archaeology** We are completely engaged and well supported. **Psychology** The CMC was very well attended and there was a rapid response from lecturers to StARs' comments. **Sociology** One lecturer appeared completely disengaged and left half-way through the meeting. **Human nutrition** I was the only StAR for the whole of biology and human nutrition, although forensics were well-represented. **English language** The meeting was good, but it was crammed into a lunch-hour so it was rushed. **ISES** It's important that StARs know they can go to Institute Reps for support, particularly if they can't attend themselves and also to know that they can send comments via email to ensure they're included. There has been good		

attendance at CMCs with representation from all years; lecturers are willing to listen to student feedback as they want to know what's working well and what isn't; there's successful engagement throughout the meeting; suggestions are taken on board and some have already been implemented; the atmosphere is good; StAR training has helped students to be more vocal in meetings; all students have an input, even if they're unable to attend, either by emailing their Institute Reps to forward to the correct person or to email feedback when sending apologies; lecturers' responses are fed back to students **Art and Design** The CMC was very communicative. Despite my nervousness of approaching ideas and issues to the module tutors, my suggestions were taken on board. **English Literature** Tutors tend to talk down students at CMC. You can bring forward a point with a valid reason and it feels as though your point is irrelevant or wrong. **Accounting** Vague information for first-years, with most having no idea of the opportunities it gives		
Other comments/topics **English Language yr 1:** Timetabling for lectures and seminars need improvement		

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Human Geography yr 1: Students are questioning the anonymous marking system because our names are on the tracking sheets we have to print out. We thought it's taken off before tutors mark it but when we collected our work the sheets were still attached … **Geography yr 3:** Suggested topics for future forums – canteen and campus shop, online submission, hidden costs There has been a lot of negative feedback on the first year business challenge module. Many students feel they were poorly informed about the assignments they had to do. In addition they have informed me that they feel that there is no organisation in the module. **Media and Cultural Studies yr 2:** Suggested topic – assignment feedback		