

## **Aberdeen Institute of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence at SCNU**

### **Student Feedback Protocol**

South China Normal University (SCNU) and the University of Aberdeen (UoA) recognise that engaging students in their learning is crucial to the quality of the Institute's teaching and learning provision and that student feedback plays an important role in enhancing this and in contributing to the monitoring and review of quality and standards.

SCNU and UoA each have several formalised opportunities in which students can provide feedback on their experience. As such, the institutions have agreed to the following protocol for the collection and use of student feedback from students at the Aberdeen Institute and any associated feedback relating to SCNU or UoA staff. The protocol covers all types of student feedback mechanisms including, but not limited to, course evaluation, staff-student liaison committees and surveys.

The protocol takes cognisance of Chapter 17 (b) of the revised articles stipulated in the 'Supplement and refinement of the articles in the Charter, including those related to quality assurance, between South China Normal University and The University Court of the University of Aberdeen as approved by the Joint Management Committee (16 August 2021):

*'UoA regulations, policies and procedures will govern the UoA awards and courses. SCNU regulations, policies and procedures will govern the SCNU degree and courses. This applies in all areas including, but not limited to grading schemes, examination, resits, progress and appeals, late submissions of coursework, student feedback, plagiarism, degree classification and the appointment of external examiners. Where necessary, joint approaches will be agreed by the Academic Committee and approved through relevant UoA and SCNU departments or committees'.*

The protocol also seeks to avoid feedback fatigue amongst students, increase engagement with feedback mechanisms and collect only the minimum amount of information that is considered necessary to both SCNU and UoA to achieve the purpose.

### **Section A: Key Principles**

SCNU and UoA agree the following Key Principles:

1. *Normally*, SCNU will collect student feedback on SCNU provision and UoA will collect student feedback on UoA provision. Should the institutions agree to jointly gather feedback the collection, storage, reporting and distribution of data will be mutually agreed and approved by each institution, taking into account relevant data protection and privacy laws and seeking input from quality assurance and data protection colleagues.
2. Students will be made aware that
  - 2.1 The feedback being collected will be used to enhance the learning and wider student experience;
  - 2.2 They will not be disadvantaged for providing feedback;
  - 2.3 All feedback will be collated, analysed and reported in such a way as to ensure that feedback is anonymous and not attributable to individual students;
  - 2.4 Their views will be taken seriously;
  - 2.5 Where possible, action will be taken and students informed. If action cannot be taken, students will be told the reason why.
  - 2.6 SCNU and UoA shall clearly advise students of points 2.1-2.5 above before undertaking course evaluation, staff-student liaison committees and/or surveys.
3. Mechanisms used to gather student feedback will
  - 3.1 State clearly the purpose for collecting the student feedback;
  - 3.2 Ensure the principle of data minimisation is taken into account by seeking to ensure that any survey responses are provided anonymously to the extent possible;
  - 3.3 Include only questions that are purposeful, necessary and focus on the learning, teaching and wider student experience;

- 3.4 Ensure questions will not focus on the evaluation of, or gather information about, individual members of UoA staff and ensure that individual members of UoA staff cannot be identified via responses;
  - 3.5 Encourage constructive feedback and discourage comments about individual students or UoA staff;
  - 3.6 Inform students of how the feedback will be used including who it will be shared with and why;
  - 3.7 Stipulate how results/actions will be disseminated to students.
4. *Normally*, students will *not* be asked to share data which can be sensitive or personal, related to equality, diversity and inclusion, for example, race, sexual orientation or gender (i.e. protected characteristics). However, in order to drive inclusive approaches it may be appropriate, on occasion, to invite students to share their protected characteristics. This would be to support policy development only and would not be used to identify individual students. Feedback would remain strictly confidential and be reported anonymously.
  5. Wherever possible, SCNU and UoA will aim to coordinate requests for student feedback in order to avoid duplication of requests, maximise student engagement and avoid feedback fatigue.
  6. Raw data will be held securely by SCNU and UoA in their respective institutions and shared, where required, via the Data Transfer teams site. The collated analysis, or summary reports thereof, will be reported, on an anonymous basis, as follows:
    - a. Within SCNU - to the SCNU Aberdeen Institute Senior Management Team and the SCNU Teaching Affairs Office;
    - b. Within UoA – to the School Education Committees, the Aberdeen Institute of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence Implementation Board, Quality Assurance Committee and International Partnerships Committee;
    - c. To the joint Academic Committee, Operations Management Team and Joint Management Committee.
  7. Data collected will be collated, reported and shared via the Data Transfer teams site and in adherence with the China Personal Information Protection Law, the UK Data Protection Act and UK General Data Protection Regulations. Feedback collected that is considered disparaging or derogatory or is of a personal nature regarding UoA staff (e.g. in free text boxes) will be deleted before analysis and will not be shared.

## Section B: Feedback Mechanisms

SCNU and UoA agree that student feedback at the Aberdeen Institute of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence will be collected and shared as follows:

### 1. Course Evaluation

- 1.1 UoA will conduct course evaluation for UoA designed and UoA delivered courses; SCNU will conduct course evaluation for all SCNU courses. Each institution will administer, analyse and report their course evaluation process in accordance with their respective institutional policies and practices. Each institution will confine the scope of their course evaluation questionnaires to their own institution's courses.
- 1.2 **UoA designed and UoA delivered courses:** Students will be asked to complete one Course Evaluation Form (CEF) per course.
- 1.3 UoA will share the automatically generated course evaluation summary reports and the Annual Course Review proforma's with SCNU.
- 1.4 SCNU may use SCNU course evaluation forms to evaluate SCNU lecturers who support the UoA designed (but SCNU delivered) courses. These forms will NOT be used to evaluate UoA staff or UoA courses.
- 1.5 **SCNU courses:** Students will be asked to complete one course evaluation for each member of staff who contributes to the delivery of the course.
- 1.6 SCNU will share a summary report of the SCNU course evaluations with UoA.

## **2. Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs)**

- 2.1 UoA will convene SSLCs for the UoA programmes and SCNU will convene SSLCs for SCNU programmes. Each institution will convene SSLCs in accordance with their respective institutional policies and practices and will confine the scope of their committee agendas to their respective courses and programmes.
- 2.2 The SCNU Vice Dean (Academic) will be invited to attend UoA SSLCs on behalf of the SCNU teaching staff. Likewise, the UoA Vice Dean will be invited to attend SCNU SSLCs on behalf of the UoA teaching staff.
- 2.3 Feedback pertaining to the other institution's provision or identifiable staff members which has inadvertently been collected shall not form part of any report from the appropriate SSLCs in accordance with the Key Principles as outlined above.
- 2.4 SCNU and UoA will each share the minutes of their respective SSLCs with the other institution.

## **3. Surveys**

### **Institution-specific Surveys**

- 3.1 SCNU and UoA recognise that each institution will, on occasion, wish to survey students for their own, internal purposes on a range of topics that impact the overall student experience (e.g. Employability surveys, Digital Experience surveys, Student Experience surveys).
- 3.2 In addition, each institution may be required to participate in nation-wide surveys in accordance with their respective national Higher Education Framework within which they operate.
- 3.3 On such occasions, SCNU and UoA agree to:
  - 3.3.1 Keep the partner institution fully informed in a timely manner of upcoming surveys (including content, purpose and use of the planned survey(s));
  - 3.3.2 Comply with the Key Principles outlined above;
  - 3.3.3 Ensure that surveys are carried out anonymously and that responses remain confidential at all times;
  - 3.3.4 Ensure, for institutionally-designed surveys, questions focus solely on the teaching and learning provision of the institution undertaking the survey;
  - 3.3.5 Allow the partner institution *a minimum of 10 working days* to review the survey questions and request any amendments (noting that for national surveys it will not be possible to address the partner's feedback);
  - 3.3.6 Share any feedback on an anonymous basis that is pertinent to the partner institution's provision and, if necessary, staff members.

### **Joint SCNU-UoA Surveys**

- 3.4 Should SCNU and UoA agree to operate a joint survey to students the institutions will work collaboratively to design the questions with the draft questionnaire being made available to each institution's approval bodies<sup>1</sup> *not less than 10 working days* in advance of its release date.
- 3.5 The institution proposing a subject / focus for a joint survey will take the lead on the design, analysis and reporting of the survey outcomes, liaising with the other institution for feedback throughout the process. Annual joint surveys will be led on, a rotating basis, by the institution Chairing the OMT or AC as relevant to the survey subject content.
- 3.6 Joint surveys will be carried out in accordance with the Key Principles outlined above.
- 3.7 Joint surveys will be run using Microsoft Forms<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.8 Joint surveys will be scheduled to suit both SCNU and UoA schedules.

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<sup>1</sup> The approval bodies for SCNU are Aberdeen Institute Senior Management Team and Teaching Affairs Office and for UoA are the Quality Assurance Committee and Data Protection Team

<sup>2</sup> The Microsoft Form tool having been approved by the UoA Information Security Manager and SCNU's IT Office.

- 3.9 Any necessary data and the analysis will be made available to both institutions for reporting internally within both SCNU and UoA and for onward reporting to the Academic Committee and/or Operations Management Team as appropriate.

#### **4. Other Feedback Mechanisms**

- 4.1 SCNU and UoA recognise that each institution operates other methods in which to collect student feedback (e.g. focus groups, online feedback).
- 4.2 Both institutions agree that these methods may continue *where necessary* to supplement the student feedback mechanisms noted above to further SCNU's and/or UoA's understanding of the student experience **subject to** their adherence to the Key Principles outlined in this protocol.

#### **5. Informal feedback**

- 5.1 SCNU and UoA recognise that informal feedback may be received from time to time, solicited or unsolicited (e.g. students approaching staff members directly).
- 5.2 Should SCNU or UoA receive such informal feedback that relates to the other institution's provision this will be shared quickly in accordance with the Key Principles outlined in this protocol.