

Student Voice Forums (SVFs) Guidance

Faculties must provide an opportunity for every student to engage in discussions with members of the programme/faculty team and give feedback on their programme to contribute to a high quality learning experience for current and future students. Our combined efforts will aim to strengthen the student voice and to improve the quality of the student experience within our individual programmes, and at our university as a whole.

Purpose of SVFs

Student Voice Forums (SVF) should therefore provide opportunities for:

- Students to feedback to staff about their programme and overall student experience
- Reviewing the current programme(s) to inform change and enhancement
- Students to feed 'the Student Voice' into the university's strategic decision-making

Agendas should primarily focus on academic issues identified by the student body (usually via Student Representatives), and staff must endeavour to ensure that the SVF provides a forum to which all students feel able to contribute openly to.

Membership of SVFs

A list of programme(s) covered by each SVF will be determined by the programme leader and/or an Associate Dean. Membership will be student representatives and all programme and module leaders associated with those programme(s), with open invitation to all students enrolled on those programme(s). The Associate Dean and Dean of Faculty are ex officio members. Any other relevant staff (heads of operational areas etc.) are to be invited as required by specific agenda items. Officers of the Students' Union should be invited to attend as observers so they can give feedback to the University on any University level issues which may emerge.

Student Representatives may be given the opportunity to chair or co-chair an SVF if they wish to do so. If any student representatives express an interest in taking on this role they should be advised to contact the Student Voice Co-ordinator in the Students' Union.

Format and frequency of meetings

SVFs may take any format, and may be based around either a single programme or cognate group of programmes, provided they are consistent with these principles. In some circumstances a face-to-face meeting of the entire group of students on a programme is not possible, e.g. for part-time or distance learners, or programmes delivered at more than one delivery site. In these circumstances the programme leaders may make arrangements for smaller, local pre-meetings to take place before the main SVF. Representatives from that delivery site or group may then attend the SVF, either in person or by Skype, or minutes/actions/issues arising from the pre-meeting can be included on the main agenda for discussion. It may also be possible to have an online timetabled discussion in Moodle.

The opportunity for staff - student consultation must be provided at regular intervals, at least twice during the academic year. The dates of meetings should be agreed and published at the start of the year and reminders issued at least 3 weeks in advance of each meeting. Student comments arising from the discussions must

be recorded, and considered in programme and subject team meetings. Students must be provided with feedback on actions arising from their comments.

Associate Deans are responsible for ensuring that Student Voice Forums take place in their Faculty, taking into account the following guidelines:

- SVFs must meet at least twice a year, that is at least once each semester for programmes operating on a two semester timetable;
- The dates of SVFs should be agreed by the Associate Dean/ Programme Leader and published in advance at the beginning of the academic year via the Student & Programmes Centre (SPC) via the Programme/Subject central Moodle Hub;
- The SPC are able to provide administrative support to one SVF per semester, if any additional meetings are required those dates should be confirmed at the start of the academic year and the Assistant Registrar, Students & Programmes consulted regarding the availability of SVF staff for those events.
- It is recommended that Semester 1 SVFs are held within the period October –December to ensure all actions can be completed prior to Semester 2.
- Meetings, including the agenda, should be set up by the Associate Dean/ Programme Leader in consultation with student representatives. The Programme Leader should actively encourage Student Representatives to contribute to the agenda.
- A Moodle Hub should be set up for each subject/programme to act as the definitive source of SVF information for those students. Guidance on how to create and develop the Hub is available from the Faculty's TEL Representative.
- The Programme Leader will determine which members of the programme team must be in attendance at the meeting and disseminate the Outlook invitation as appropriate.
- A Moodle message should be sent to students three weeks prior to each SVF meeting as a reminder of the event. To be actioned by the SPC.
- Programme Leaders should encourage student/student rep interaction by allocating some time for student reps to speak to students prior to a SVF e.g. by giving the student reps 15 minutes at the end of a lecture to speak to their cohort. Student Reps should be encouraged to utilise 'Tell Glyn' for collating and reporting any issues, concerns or comments raised by students.
- The Associate Dean/Programme Leaders should consider issues of impartiality and the extent to which the model they devise for their SVF is likely to be conducive to open and frank discussion
- It is the responsibility of the Associate Dean/Programme Leaders to confirm the Chair of their SVF meeting(s). The Chair should be a Principal Lecturer or Programme Leader within the Faculty, and should be selected from the pool of approved SVF chairs (available via the SPC).
- The Chair must be **independent from the management and delivery of the programme(s)** to be considered by the Forum. It is not necessary for a member of staff outside of the faculty to chair the SVF meeting.
- The Programme Leader(s) of the programme(s) under consideration must be in attendance for the main agenda items however there should be a section at the end of the meeting where the Programme Leader/Team are asked to leave and students given the opportunity to raise any additional issues, if they wish to do so.

- It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure students engage with the meeting as the focus of the meeting is 'The Student Voice'. Students should be actively encouraged to contribute to discussion and to raise any additional items.
- If it is not possible to identify an independent Chair the Associate Dean should be asked to nominate an appropriate person from the pool of SVF Chairs who have completed the relevant training.
- For the meeting to be quorate there should be a minimum of 50% of the expected student representatives, and at least one member of the Programme Team present. If a meeting is not quorate but (i) student feedback has been submitted in writing and/or (ii) at least one student rep is present, the meeting should still take place.
- If no student reps turn up for a meeting, but have accepted the invitation, there is no requirement to re-arrange the meeting it should be recorded in the central SVF repository that a meeting was held but no students attended
- The agenda should include those items identified in the suggested agenda below, however programme teams and Student Reps (on behalf of their cohorts) should be given the opportunity to add additional items during the agenda setting process.
- A draft agenda, developed by the Programme Leader/Associate Dean, will be distributed to Student Representatives two weeks before each meeting with a request for any additional items.
- The final agenda will be published one week before the SVF meeting.
- SVFs to be used as the mechanism for signposting external examiner reports and responses to Student Representatives. Information to be made available via Moodle Hub, briefly noting or updating on any points of particular relevance.
- NSS results and response/action plan should be signposted in the Semester One meeting noting any items of particular reference to students. In the Semester Two meeting the SVF should be provided with an update on the action plan and final year Student Reps should also be reminded to encourage their cohort to complete the survey. The NSS is relevant to all students, regardless of level or programme as the results and associated actions can have a direct impact on their studies therefore it is important that the NSS is signposted at all SVFs.
- Consideration of individual modules to include any available results from SEMs (Student Evaluation of Module), this will include confirmation that the module leader has been through the results and that the cohort are aware of, and accept, any actions which have been taken in response.
- All actions should be given a clear deadline for completion, with a maximum timeframe of two weeks.
- If an action remains un-assigned in the meeting the default will be to allocate the action to the Programme Leader.

SPC Support for SVFs

A member of the SPC will provide the following support to the Programme Leader/Associate Dean:

- At the beginning of each academic year publish all SVF dates (as confirmed by Programme Leader)
- Send reminders to students via Moodle, 3 weeks prior to each meeting.
- Invite attendees to the SVF via the University email system (and/or Moodle).
- Assist the Programme Leader / Associate Dean in identifying a suitable, trained, Chair.

- Assist the Programme Leader/ Associate Dean in producing a draft agenda two weeks before each meeting which will be distributed to Student Representatives via the Moodle Hub with a request for any additional items.
- Liaise with the Student Voice Co-ordinator to obtain the latest 'What's New WGU' publication and copies of any feedback submitted through Tell Glyn.
- Publish the confirmed agenda on the Moodle Hub one week before the meeting.
- Attend the meeting, take notes and then provide an electronic set of Action Minutes for approval using the agreed template. It is the responsibility of the Chair, not the Programme Leader, to approve the Action Minutes.
- Action Minutes to record any decisions made by the SVF and the agreed actions. Any positive feedback provided by the students should also be noted.
- Arrange for the definitive Action Minutes to be saved in the central repository and a link set up to the relevant Moodle Hub.
- Associate Deans to be included in distribution list when SVF minutes are made available.
- Assist the Programme Leader/Associate Head in completing any follow up actions and updating the Action Minutes and Moodle Hub accordingly.

Suggested SVF agenda

The agenda should have a student focus and include:

- confirmation that student reps have consulted with students prior to meeting and what mechanisms were used (*e.g. email, meeting, Moodle Hub or Tell Glyn*)
- feedback / update on actions completed since the last meeting and any other issues that have arisen during that time
- signposting of external examiner reports and programme team responses (*mandatory agenda item, depending when report received*)
- signposting of NSS results and action plans/responses from the programme/Faculty/University (*semester one agenda item*)
- Update on NSS action plans and encouraging relevant students to complete the survey (*semester 2 agenda item*)
- review of enrolment/induction experience (*semester 1 agenda item*)
- programme organisation and management
- student module experience – views on teaching, assessment, feedback, SEM results
- academic support, e.g. personal tutoring, study skills support
- resources – IT, library, classrooms, etc (*students to be encouraged to use Tell Glyn to raise resource or non-academic issues*)
- any other issues raised by students or staff (*to include any additional items raised during agenda setting process*)
- at each point members should also be invited to comment on positive experiences

Actions from SVF, to be undertaken by the Programme Leader or Associate Dean with support from the SPC

- publish Action Minutes normally within three weeks on Moodle Hub
- approved Action Minutes to be stored in the central repository (via the Student Representatives section of Moodle), programme leaders should also provide a link to the approved Action Minutes in the Moodle Hub.
- take steps to draw attention of students and staff to the presence of the Action Minutes on Moodle
- Implement any actions arising (academic or operational) and notify students when actions are completed
- lodge Action Minutes and agreed responses to points raised with SPC
- Updates to be recorded in minutes for future reference, via 'post meeting updates' and also via a progress report on Moodle
- publish changes resulting from student feedback in programme handbooks
- make available an archive of previous meetings/outcomes

Where there are issues raised by students which are outside the control of the Programme Team or the Faculty team then the Programme Leader or Associate Dean must refer those matters to the group or committee that has a responsibility for that particular area of concern. The students should always be made aware of the progress of these and other matters they raise. Programme teams should ensure that feedback and actions from SVFs is included in their annual monitoring of programmes.

Any items which have an expired deadline and are outstanding after two weeks of the publication of minutes will be escalated to the relevant Associate Dean. If an action is un-assigned the Programme Leader will be allocated by default.

The Students' Union Representation & Democracy Manager will produce an 'action matrix' for dissemination to Associated Deans which collates relevant information from all SVFs each semester noting any issues that had not been closed down and highlighting any trends or areas of concern that should be addressed at a more senior level. A summary report, incorporating the action matrix, will be presented to LTQC on an annual basis by the Students' Union.

Tell Glyn

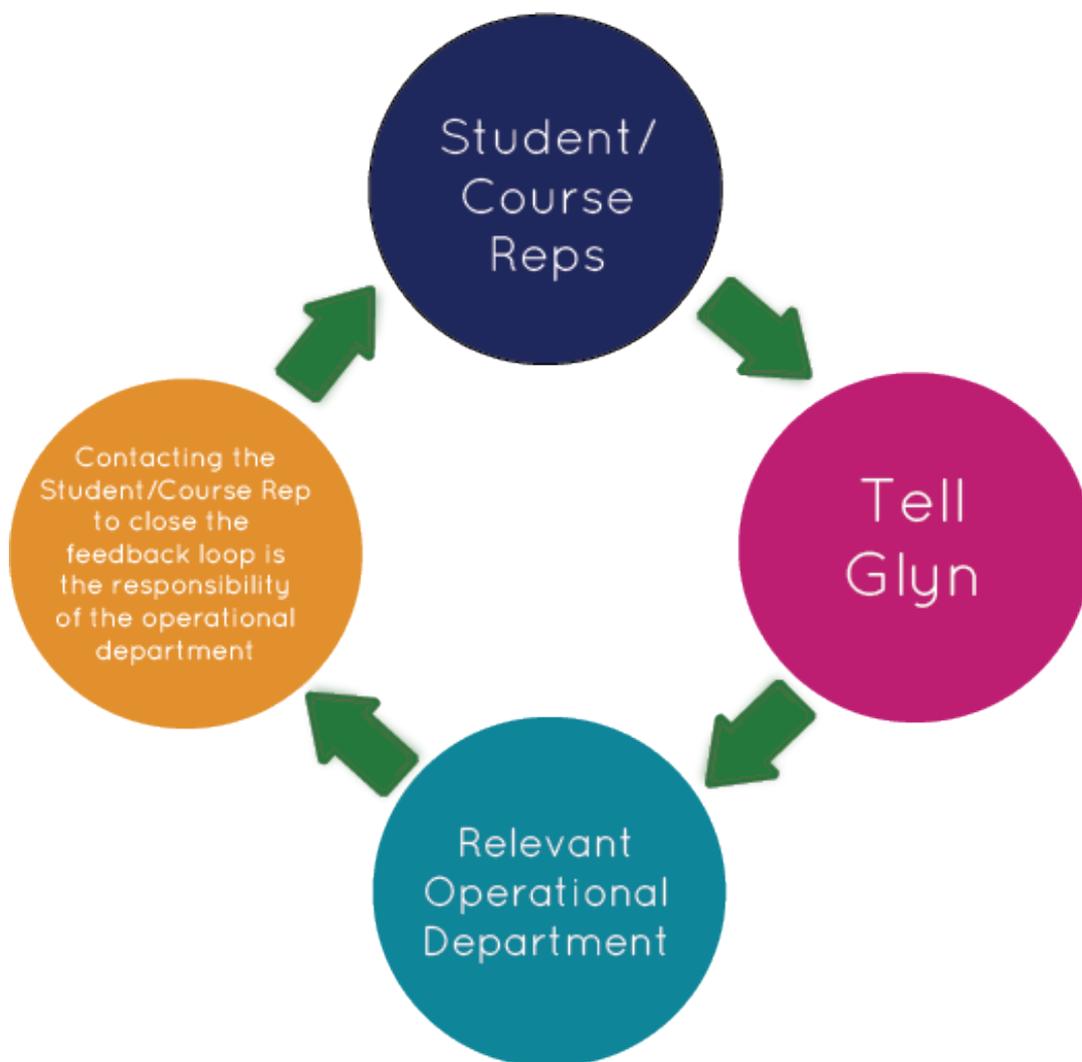
Tell Glyn is an online feedback tool for students and course reps developed by the WGU Students' Union. The tool captures feedback that will be sent instantaneously to the relevant individuals/departments. We highly recommend that staff encourage students to use this tool in order to identify issues as they occur. To assist this process it is vital that Programme Leaders ensure Student Representatives details are sent to the Students' Union annually by the published deadline in order to for their information to be uploaded to the Tell Glyn software.

Operational Feedback (e.g. Wi-Fi, I.T, Study Skills Support, Catering, SU, Library, Campus and estates, Sports centre etc)

It can be difficult for academic staff to give a response to operational feedback at SVFs. Tell Glyn is intended to capture this feedback outside the SVF and allow students to receive a direct response. Students will have the option to select the department to which they wish to give feedback. That feedback will then be sent direct to the relevant department and the department will then be able to respond directly to the student. For operational matters brought up at Student Voice Forums, staff are encouraged to ask students to use Tell Glyn in order to receive a direct response.

Chart 1: Operational Feedback [CHART BELOW]

**Programme leaders and lecturers are encouraged to promote the use of the Tell Glyn tool which can be found on the Students' Union website. Using Tell Glyn, feedback on operational matters will be sent directly to the relevant department(s).*



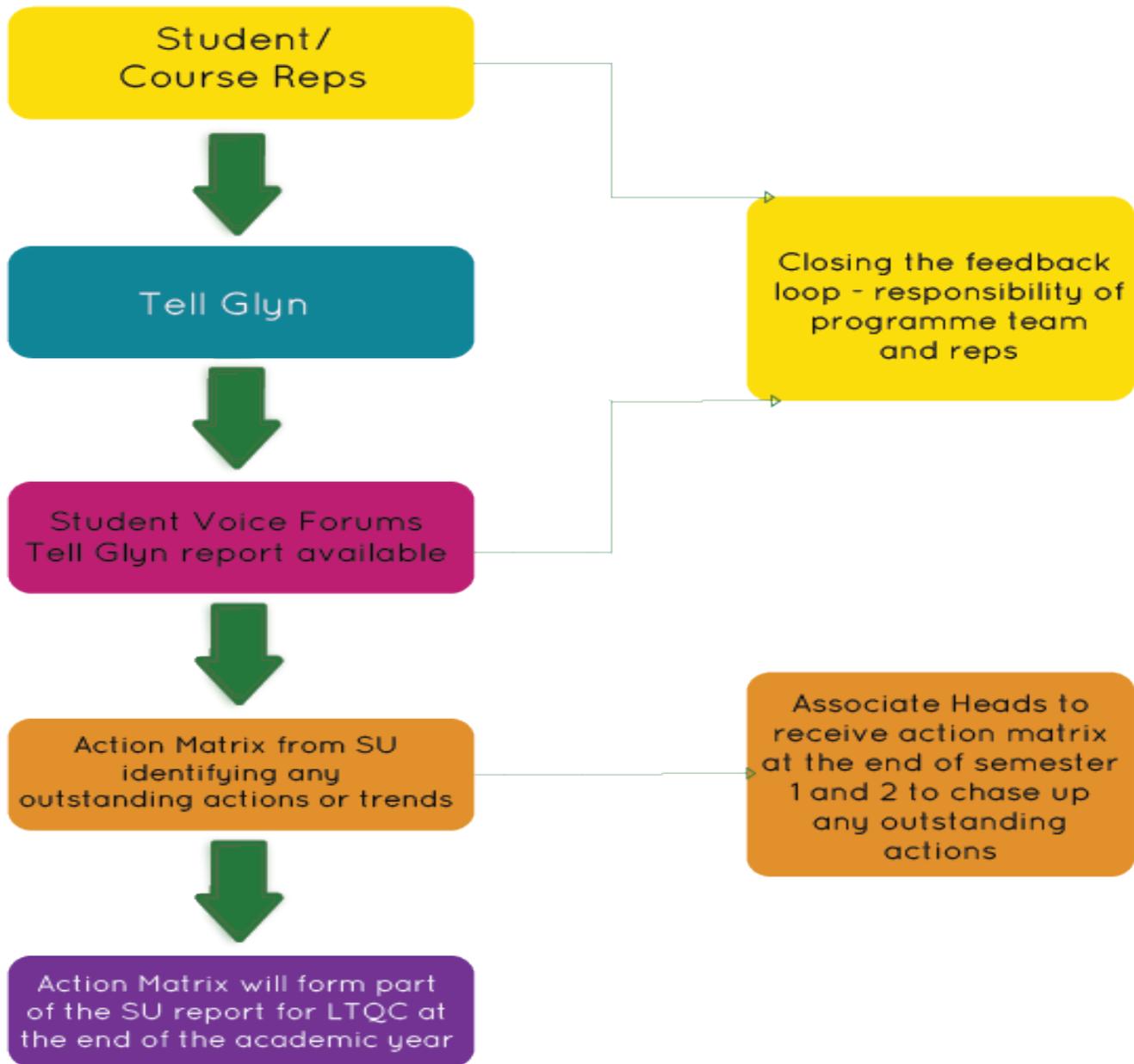
Programme Level feedback (e.g. Module experience, teaching, assessment, induction, programme organisation and management, NSS results, External Examiner, Personal tutoring etc.)

If a student uses Tell Glyn to give feedback for their programme, this will be sent directly to the Student Representative for that programme to be raised and addressed via the SVF. Student Representatives can also use the tool when liaising with students as a way to log feedback.

The Students' Union will receive a copy of all feedback submitted via Tell Glyn and will ensure that a report is sent to the SPC in preparation for the SVF. If for any reason course reps are unable to attend an SVF, SPC will be able to present a copy of the student feedback in order to continue with the meeting. If an issue arises when a SVF meeting is not due the Student Rep should raise the matter directly with the Programme Leader or Associate Dean to ensure the issue is dealt with swiftly. The Student Rep should provide a brief summary of the issue, and resolution, at the next SVF.

Chart 2: Programme Level Feedback [CHART BELOW]

**Programme leaders and lecturers are encouraged to promote the use of Tell Glyn which can be found on the Students' Union website. Student reps can log feedback on this tool when liaising with students.*



Tell Glyn can be accessed on the Students' Union Website at: www.wrexhamglyndwrsu.org.uk or through www.tellglyn.co.uk

For more information please contact Marc Caldecott – Marc.Caldecott@glyndwr.ac.uk 01978 294404

Effectively Closing the Feedback Loop

Examples of good practice and/or issues which are raised at the meeting and deemed to be outside of the parameters of programme management will be referred to the Associate Dean with responsibility for Student Engagement for consultation and institutional action. Recommendations or further actions will be taken therein and referred appropriately to relevant parties/staff/stakeholders.

Feedback on actions from SVFs should be provided to students via the Moodle Hub within two weeks of the meeting, this must include progress updates where actions are still ongoing. Feedback should constitute an essential agenda item for all SVFs. A suggested mechanism for closing the feedback loop is via the 'Together We...' campaigns, if Programme Teams would like support in developing this they should contact the Representation & Democracy Co-ordinator in the Students' Union. Further information is also available via the SU Course Rep Handbook for Staff and Partners.