



bucks
new university

Distinction and Diversity
in Higher Education



World class student experience across UK higher education

Ruth Farwell

Vice Chancellor, Bucks New University

Chair, GuildHE

Chair, HEFCE Teaching Quality & Student
Experience Committee

National investments in higher education

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Expenditure on tertiary education as a percentage of GDP (21 August 2012)

	1995	2000	2005	2009
OECD average	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.6
United Kingdom	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.3
United States	2.3	2.7	2.8	2.6
Korea		2.2	2.3	2.6
Canada	2.1	2.3	2.7	2.5
Chile			1.8	2.5

Reasons to feel cheerful aka 19th nervous breakdown

- National Student Survey (NSS), introduced 2005
- Increased focus on student interest
- Widespread student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement processes
- Commitment to more transparent information
- Institutional review judgments on information
- Key Information Set (KIS)
- Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)
- Student charters including NUS
- Graduate employment rate

National Student Survey

- Overall satisfaction increased (again) from 83% in 2011 to 85% in 2012
- Top 30 institutions for overall satisfaction
 - Some obvious
 - All shapes and sizes
 - Large city based
 - Small and specialist, monotecnics
 - Small and general, particular history and values
 - Private
- Celebrating success of a diverse HE ecosystem
- Pride and/or sense of belonging



Is more of the same good enough?

- Are the current changes in the system a threat to this or an encouragement?
- Can we enhance the student experience as measured by the NSS even more? Will it plateau?
- Are we spurred on to make further improvements (because of the KIS)?
- Is the term 'world class' bandied about as a proxy for defending tradition?
- Are NSS scores only part of the story?
- What about the whole student journey?

Back to basics

- Celebrate difference
 - Institutions and students
- Pride and/or sense of belonging
- A good student experience comes in all shapes and sizes
- HE is both transactional and transformational
- Different measures for different types of students

HE students 2010/11 (HESA)

- 38% of full-time first degree students are aged 21 or over
- 40% of all undergraduate students are part-time
- Only 7.5% of part-time first degree students are aged 20 or less, 57% are 30 and over
- 47% of postgraduate students study part-time

A broader more holistic view

- Students as active participants, taking part
- Getting more out of their time in higher education; greater involvement and interest
- Raising their own game, knowledge, experience and skills
- Happier and more content as students
- Better prepared for what happens next and after that
- Better able to make the right choice for them
- Better citizens
- But in a balance which suits them

The student experience comes from

Involvement in:-

- Learning (through institution) and sometimes working (through partners)
- Social aspects (through SU)
- Sporting activities and societies (through SU)
- Democratic and decision making processes (through SU)
- Work and volunteering activities (in part sometimes through SU or institution)

... but in different proportions for different individuals

In these changing times, a good student experience is defined by the students themselves, and students should contribute to decision making about their experience in its broadest sense and in the broadest ways.

The consequences

- There isn't a single ideal model of an institution or a student
- The same applies to the student experience.
- Respecting and protecting students' right to choose
- Quality and standards
- National: Is legislation needed? Single gateway?
- Institutional: Leadership and governance

What the whole student experience delivers

A message still relevant today

- Intellectual capital for all future life challenges
- Creativity, entrepreneurship, innovation;
- Transferable skills
- Specific knowledge, experience and skills for today's and tomorrow's jobs
- Social and cultural capital to make rounded contribution to society

Let's not lose sight of this

