

NAVIGATING LSE SERVICES AND SUPPORT WORKSHOP

Over the course of this Student Education Panel meeting, several significant points that could drive the long term improvement of LSE's services have been raised. Below, we thematically cover key points and focused solutions that could allow for the holistic development of the student experience. We refer to specific departments and individuals who could facilitate these changes. We trust you are able to act upon these findings as soon as possible.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The student experiences this year have been mixed. Hybrid learning definitely took a toll on socialising, and it was quite difficult for students to meet each other on their course. We really appreciated having in-person classes and we think its vital that these are maintained throughout next year. We were also really pleased with the quality of the careers service and LSE Life. We hope they are maintained over the next year. In terms of practical steps that can help, we believe that having an induction week supported by departments would be very useful. On a separate note, maximising class time is vital and we believe that training teachers and providing them with the appropriate technological support would be useful.

MENTAL WELLBEING

The mental wellbeing support has been frustrating at times. Alongside the long waiting times and unprofessional experiences numerous students also felt like LSE's wellbeing support was superficial. We would suggest that LSE Life & the broader LSE Community Welfare teams increase their counselling services and wellbeing support, and aim to get sessions in-person as soon as possible. We also think that creating more in-person social events would help overcome the isolating feeling many first-years felt, and creating events for commuting students and internationals who are unable to make it to campus is important too. We also believe that there needs to be better support for survivors of sexual harassment and violence and LSE must provide the appropriate services to tackle this.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication between departments and students has been substandard. Some SEP participants reported exam expectations being shared mere weeks or even days before summer assessments. Word limits, exam time lengths, referencing technique and more were not communicated to students and even some staff members ahead of time. LSE also needs to better communicate the facilities it has on offer to students, such as LSE Life, mental and wellbeing support. LSE services should follow the lead of the exemplary Career Service.

IT

LSE's cornucopia of online platforms has caused undue stress and confusion for students. While some staff and services prefer to use Zoom, others use Teams, Moodle, Yammer or Slack. We propose that LSE uses just one platform for video conferencing and standardises across all departments the sharing of Zoom links, uploading of class materials and platform for forum discussion.

STAFF VISIBILITY

In-person class experience are irreplaceable for most students. Students appreciate the opportunities to interact with teachers in-person, as well as extra-efforts by teachers (through additional office hours). This created a sense of community for most students. Recorded lectures were also very helpful, as students were able to revisit lectures including those who were not able to attend classes due to several reasons. These, among others, should be encouraged in the future. It would also be helpful if access to recordings and other resources can be extended beyond the official end of program.

ASSESSMENTS

Throughout the year, the assessment schedules and timetabled exams have not been consistent enough coupled with exams overlapping for too many students when the exam period runs for more than 2 months which has not only caused uncertainty but also stress. In the future, we need more clarity and better communication from the assessment team.

HOME TRUTHS

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated underlying issues that have been festering under the surface. We call on LSE's leadership to recognise that the issues raised by the SEP and other forums in the last 12 months are not 'COVID problems' – they require long-term solutions.

AUDIENCE

- LSE Directors
- Programme Directors
- Student Support Services
- Exam Boards
- LSE Tech Support/Eden digital
- Teaching staff, Teaching Assistants
- Student Representatives
- LSE Students Union