



Postgraduate Student Engagement - Case Study 5

Closing the Postgraduate Feedback Loop at CCT College Dublin

cct

College Dublin

Computing • IT • Business

The challenge:

CCT prioritises continuous improvement in all College activities, facilities and initiatives. Sectoral engagement, research and enquiry to facilitate identifying and adopting national and international best practice, and strategic planning and implementation provide the foundation for a proactive approach to enhancement. Feedback from stakeholders plays an important role in this, aiding the College to determine the suitability of proposed initiatives and developments and determining the ongoing benefit of existing initiatives, within the CCT context.

The student satisfaction survey is one of several tools the College uses to secure feedback. The College recognises this process can only be effective where it is deemed to be of value by the students and therefore it is essential that any feedback received is responded to. Dialogue in respect of enhancements, some of which may relate directly to learner feedback or may already be in process and supported by learner feedback, is a central pillar of feedback processes in CCT. This closing of the feedback loop is understood as essential in motivating learners to engage in providing constructive feedback.

Traditionally, Class Reps would be notified of the College's actions or intentions relating to feedback received from learners or initiatives arising from strategic intentions of the College and they would disseminate this to their peers. The pivot to emergency remote learning in March 2020 presented the challenge of finding an alternative approach to closing the feedback loop that would reach all learners while also allowing for students to revisit the information or to access it at a later date.

The solution:

The Closing the Feedback Loop in an Emergency Remote Learning Context project was initiated to make sure students continued to have the opportunity to receive information from the College in response to their feedback but also in relation to planned or recently implemented developments or the continuation of services, supports and initiatives, including those of specific relevance to the new context.

The structure:

A cross-college team including representatives from Student Services, the CCT Centre for Teaching and Learning, the Management Team and the Executive Leadership Team

researched, coordinated and implemented the project, agreeing the timeline, approach and format to be used.

The output of the project would be a short video comprising of image and text-based slides, informing students of recent and new developments and plans that are of relevance to the feedback they had provided as well as those which will be of interest to students in general. This could be as simple as confirming continuation of supports and services that were highly rated in the student survey, or it could be advising of new developments the College had been implementing ready for the next academic year. The video slides would be designed in a way that showed students there was a benefit to providing feedback and hence the format of "You said, and we did..." was introduced. The College actions were not necessarily a direct response to student feedback alone, but this format was helpful as a means of updating students on enhancement initiatives that were of relevance to their feedback. The first slide of each sub-section would summarise what students had indicated in their feedback, followed by a slide that summarised any recent or planned actions of the College.

The benefits:

Primarily there was a notable appreciation for the range of opportunities for students to continue sharing their views and feedback but moving to a loop closing mechanism that reached the entire learner community first-hand was deemed to be a significant enhancement, reducing the reliance on communication through class reps and also reducing the potential for non-receipt of the College response. The use of the video meant it not only had wide reach, but it improved accessibility for students and could be revisited easily.

Learning to date:

In CCT, acquiring and responding to student feedback is a cross college initiative. One of the key aims of the project was to employ mechanisms to promote effective two-way dialogue between the College and learners in the remote learning context. This particular feedback approach didn't operate in isolation but was supported by additional existing feedback mechanisms which were transitioned to the online context. When promoting this feedback opportunity to students, the College took advantage of the online environment by arranging virtual visits to classes to discuss the amended feedback survey, informing students that the College drew upon their feedback and experience to inform enhancements for the upcoming term. The survey was also promoted on social media and through email with similar messaging. By acknowledging to the students that it was a challenging semester and looking for their experience, the relationship was strengthened, and the two-way dialogue aspired to was achieved.

This case study was published as part of the Postgraduate Student Engagement project in April 2021 by the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP). To find out more visit studentengagement.ie