Feedback Collection Policy

Last updated 18/08/2025

Purpose and scope

As a Students' Union, listening to students and acting on the feedback we receive is part of our mission and a core activity undertaken regularly by most teams across QMSU's charitable and commercial services. This policy outlines some basic principles for how we collect and store data in terms of feedback, and the steps staff must take when they want to collect feedback data from students.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that our feedback data is collected in an ethical and safe manner, students can trust our data management practices, and our data collection initiatives are conducted in a consistent, professional and effective way.

The policy covers all feedback collection initiatives across all teams in the Students' Union. For the purpose of this policy, feedback collection initiatives are defined as all activities that are undertaken by Students' Union staff (including student staff) or Executive Officers with the purpose of gathering feedback or opinions from current QMUL students. Unsolicited feedback from individual students isn't covered by this policy.

The policy normally covers joint feedback collection initiatives with the university or external partners, but exemptions from the policy may be agreed for such initiatives if necessary.

The policy does not cover other forms of data collection, processing or storage.

Feedback collection process

Listening to students is an important part of our mission, but to avoid feedback fatigue and disengagement, we must ensure our feedback collection is well-designed, coordinated and actioned effectively. To help us achieve this, you must complete this checklist before you collect feedback. If you need guidance or are unsure how to complete this checklist, you should contact your line manager or the Head of Student Voice and Insights.

All feedback collection initiatives

- ☐ Design your feedback collection tool to give you the data you need (see separate guidance document about data collection for further information).
- ☐ Have a clear plan for how you will analyse the data, take action and report back. If you do not have a clear plan for how the data will be used, you should not collect it.
- ☐ Consider how you will encourage participation in your data collection. This should include a comms plan and incentives.
- ☐ Familiarise yourself with the feedback collection policy, including requirements for data retention and storage.
- ☐ Confirm your feedback collection plans with your line manager.

Additional steps for large-scale feedback collection initiatives

Large-scale feedback collection includes initiatives aimed at the full student population, entire demographic groups (e.g., all postgrads) or target groups larger than 2000 students.

- ☐ Complete the steps outlined above.
- ☐ Contact the Head of Student Voice and Insights or the Head of Communications and Marketing at least three weeks before your intended data collection period to coordinate timelines, communication plans and incentives.

Feedback collection tools

A range of feedback collection tools are available for staff to use. These **must** be used to avoid data leaks from unsafe platforms or loss of data when staff members leave.

If you wish to use other feedback collection tools, this must be approved by the Head of Student Voice and Insights before the data collection begins.

- Large-scale surveys should normally be conducted through the organisational Typeform account. Access must be arranged with the Head of Student Voice and Insights or the Head of Communications and Marketing. Typeform access is approved on a case-by-case basis, and if access is granted, you must only use it for the agreed purpose.
- Area-specific surveys (including regular user surveys) should normally be conducted through MS Forms using individual staff account provided by QMUL IT.
- In-session feedback can be collected through Mentimeter (using Single Sign-On (SSO) access through QMUL’s institutional licence).
- Other survey platforms such as Google Forms and SurveyMonkey **must not** be used.
- Recordings of interviews or group interviews should be completed through MS Teams using a staff account provided by QMUL IT.
- Written notes from feedback initiatives should normally be recorded in MS Word and shared in a QMUL OneDrive or Sharepoint area.

Data must not be captured using personal (non-work accounts) in any circumstances. Data must also not be captured using any platform not listed above without explicit approval from the Head of Student Voice and Insights or the Head of Communications and Marketing. They will review your request and see whether there are any legitimate reasons for using an alternative platform.

Data retention

Different forms of data should be retained for different periods of time:

- Identifiable raw data should be retained for six months from the end date of the data collection period. After six months, the data should be anonymised and retained in line with the data retention period for anonymised raw data, and the identifiable data should be deleted[1].

[1] If identifiable data has been collected for the purpose of incentivisation, you should give participants a deadline for collection of incentives that allows you to comply with the requirement to delete identifiable data after six months.

- Anonymised raw data should be retained for five years from the end date of the data collection period, after which the raw data should be deleted.
- Analysis, reports, presentations and other outputs must be retained for at least ten years from the end date of the data collection period.

Department Managers / Head of Departments are always responsible for adherence to the data retention periods for feedback collected by their teams.

Data storage

Feedback data must be stored in a way that ensures the data is only accessible to staff members that need access and that data isn't lost or destroyed accidentally.

All raw data, analysis, reports, presentations and any other materials produced must be saved in the correct folders on SharePoint or OneDrive.

You must not save local copies or store files in personal accounts (including Google Drive, DropBox and similar services).

Access to identifiable data should be restricted to the smallest possible number of staff members that need access for legitimate purposes (this includes staff that need access for analysis, reporting and management of incentives). Identifiable data should either be saved in OneDrive with access granted to relevant staff members or saved in SharePoint with password protection. In some cases, creating a separate SharePoint for a project may be the most appropriate way to save data in a secure manner and manage access effectively.

If a survey platform or a similar data collection tool is used for the feedback collection, the data should be saved immediately after the data collection has been completed. Data must be saved in an editable format (usually .xlsx for quantitative data and .docx for qualitative data, but other formats may be relevant for other data types, including photos, voice recordings and videos). To minimise the risk of data loss or unauthorised access, raw data should not be stored on survey platforms after the feedback collection has been completed. If the survey platform is used to assist with the analysis, data can be stored on the survey platform until the analysis has been completed.

When raw data is removed from the survey platform, you should not remove the survey itself. Remove the response data but keep the questions, format and layout.

At the end of your employment at QMSU, you must transfer data, analysis, reports, presentations and any other materials held in your OneDrive to a suitable SharePoint (your line manager can advise on the most appropriate place to store files).

Storage for institutional memory

For the purpose of institutional memory, reports, presentations or similar outputs should be submitted to the Head of Student Voice and Insights. Raw data should not be submitted. These files will be saved in a cross-organisational SharePoint to enable knowledge sharing across teams and preservation of institutional memory.

Incentives

Students are more likely to participate in feedback collection initiatives if you provide an incentive, such as a prize draw or a freebie for all participants. Incentives should reflect the scale of the project (a larger project will need better incentives to get a high participation rate) and the time/effort required from participants (the more time/effort it requires to take part, the better the incentives need to be).

To avoid unhelpful competition between different feedback initiatives, incentives should be agreed with the Head of Student Voice and Insights or the Head of Communications and Marketing before you begin your feedback collection.