



QM PLUS

QMplus 2012/13 Student Survey

A report by the E-Learning Unit, Queen Mary University of London

By: BrettLucas

November 2013

 Queen Mary
University of London

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The screenshot displays the QMplus interface for the module 'HST5345 - Mandela's World - 2012/13'. The page is structured as follows:

- Header:** QMplus logo, 'Humanities and Social Sciences', and 'Queen Mary University of London'.
- Navigation:** Home, My QMplus, Student Life, Library Resources, Help.
- Module Info:** Code HST5345, Level 5, Credit Value 15. Convener: Saul Dubow.
- Teaching Schedule:** LECTURE on Thursday 2pm-3pm, Lects 1-12. SEMINARS on Thursday 2pm-4pm, Arts Tve 2-18 and Thursday 4pm-6pm, Arts Tve 2-18.
- Latest News:** A list of recent updates from Saul Dubow, including dates like 15 May 2012 and 16 Apr 2012.
- Assessment Overview:** Teaching and Learning Profile, Assessment Profile and Feedback Timescale, Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria, Past Exam Papers and Model Answers.
- Submit Assignments:** History Coversheet for Undergraduates, Essay Plan, Coursework Essay 3500 words.
- Course Reports:** Logs, Live logs, Activity report, Course participation, Statistics.
- Module Announcements:** Online Sources, Reading List, Coursework Questions.
- Module Content:** A list of topics including 'Introduction and Overview: Segregation, Apartheid, and Political Resistance', 'Mandela Comes of Political Age', 'The ANC Youth League and the Politics of the 1940s', and 'Campaign Against Unjust Laws and the Freedom Charter'.

A Module layout from the HSS Template for the School of History from 2012/13 – HST5345 Mandela's World

2 FOREWORD



On behalf of the E-learning Unit in the Centre for Academic and Professional Development, I am delighted to introduce the *QMplus Student Survey 2012/13*. We introduced our new learning environment - QMplus - to half of QM in August 2012 and this report provides a comprehensive overview of student attitudes during that first academic year. It examines in some detail how effectively it was used to support student learning, attitudes towards its look-and-feel, and also explores the effectiveness of the support infrastructure.

The report suggests that the introduction of QMplus into teaching at Queen Mary has been broadly successful, with students valuing the ways it is being used by academic staff to support their learning. On the whole they find it easy to use and navigate, and they access it quite frequently from a variety of devices – mobile devices are particularly popular. There do however remain some issues with QMplus which the report clearly highlights. These centre around the ways in which the rich teaching tools within the environment are actually being used by teaching staff, the consistency of approach to module design, and technical issues around assignment submission.

It is our strong desire to create a vibrant culture of e-learning amongst staff and students at Queen Mary, so that technologies positively enhance learning. The only way this can be achieved is by having creative vision, enthusiastic staff, and robust and productive tools. This report will help us to improve upon what we are already doing to ensure we make the best of our sector-leading online learning environment.

I would like to thank all the students who gave up their time to let us know what they thought of the system and to my colleague Brett Lucas, E-learning Policy & Change Manager, for running the survey and compiling this report.

Stella Ekebuisi
Head of E-Learning

3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 OVERVIEW

- 3.1.1. This report records the results from a college wide survey into student attitudes towards QMplus, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) introduced at Queen Mary in late August 2012. The aim of the survey was to gather important feedback on student attitudes to the way QMplus was used to support their learning, and for those involved in its implementation to find out how successful it had been from technical, support, design and usability perspectives. The results will help inform future development of the system.
- 3.1.2. In the 2012/13 teaching year QMplus was used to support blended and distance teaching in all taught modules in the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, the Institute of Dentistry, Postgraduate Courses in Medicine, The Joint Programme in Beijing (with BUPT) and a number of first year programmes in the Faculty of Science & Engineering.
- 3.1.3. The survey was carried out from late May to late June 2013 by the E-Learning Unit.
- 3.1.4. 542 responses were received with representation from all faculties, campuses and modes of learning including the Beijing Joint Programme, distance programmes as well as from part-time students. The largest number of responses came from the School of English and Drama with 73 responses (13% of the total). 75% of all responses received were from students studying at Mile End.
- 3.1.5. It will be important to communicate the results of this survey back to students across Queen Mary. Many changes have already been made to the design and configuration of QMplus and the shape of e-learning support based on the findings from this survey. Sharing this information with our students will ensure that they know their voices are being heard and will encourage participation when running future surveys.

3.2 ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

- 3.2.1 We asked respondents how they felt about using technology generally in their learning and found that 90% found it easy to use. 9.8% mentioned that they required some support and only 0.6% indicated that they struggled with the technology. In addition, 78% of all respondents had used a VLE before using QMplus.
- 3.2.2 There are many potential benefits to be gained from a more digitally comfortable (though not necessarily 'literate') student body as it means that academics can feel more comfortable about exploring some of the innovative pedagogies that are possible with learning technologies without fear of students feeling alienated or unfairly discriminated against (the so-called digital divide). Of course, merely 'using' a learning environment doesn't suggest a lot about the types of learning activities students may have encountered previously but it might suggest that we may, in Higher Education, need to differentiate our use of VLEs in blended teaching to establish more pedagogically advanced approaches for an increasingly discerning audience. Module leaders and programme teams working with first year students, for example, have less to fear than they may have thought about the kinds of online approaches they take.

3.3 ORIENTATION AND USE

- 3.3.3. Perhaps unsurprisingly the survey revealed that just over 50% of respondents had learned how to use QMplus by themselves. Moodle was designed with students in mind and the project team worked hard to achieve an intuitive interface. Most respondents talked of *“picking it up as they went along”* and that the system was *“pretty self-explanatory”*. Clearly classmates, friends, the help guides in QMplus and even Google were also useful.
- 3.3.4. Online support material in QMplus was seen as most useful by 76% of respondents. General orientation sessions (provided during Welcome Week) were seen as useful by 48% while 42% found their local departmental or school support useful. With respect to ‘awareness’ of the different kinds of training and orientation offered 92% knew about the online materials and 66% knew about Welcome Week sessions.
- 3.3.5. The most popular suggestions for improvement of the training received were to revise the content, to provide such things as: a more detailed explanation of where to find grades and feedback, how to upload assignments or *‘the full scope of the programme explained’* and to make it more specific for their context. Respondents also suggested providing more detail about the functionality available, showing how all the software systems at QML work together (MySIS, QMplus, Control Panel, Office 365). They also mentioned that the face-to face-sessions should allow time for questions or more hands-on activity.
- 3.3.6. With respect to the typical location to access QMplus, 90% of respondents accessed it from home, 70% on campus, 25% on the move and 15% from their workplace. Laptops were the commonest device that respondents used to access QMplus (86%) followed by smartphones (52%), desktops (47%) and tablets (25%).
- 3.3.7. The devices used by students to access the VLE present both challenges and opportunities to those supporting its use. In an increasingly mobile world there is a growing requirement to deliver a consistent learning experience across the different screen sizes and operating systems which these devices employ. No longer can the institution control the equipment in terms of configuration and look and feel. Smartphones present additional challenges for display as their form factor is so small and optimising software to perform similarly to a laptop or desktop can be difficult.

3.4 SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING

- 3.4.0 Ease of access to assessment information was identified as a key requirement for the design of QMplus and was written into the E-learning policy documentation for HSS from the outset. Survey results suggests that this information - consisting of ‘Assessment criteria’, ‘Learning & Teaching profile’, ‘Past exam papers’ etc. - was important to students.
- In fact results in this section generally highlight the importance of the learning environment in supporting the assessment lifecycle, from assessment information through online submission, to the release of grades and feedback.
- 3.4.1 Lecture notes and slides are clearly very important resources for students studying in blended contexts and the results of this survey suggest that this long-acknowledged

benefit of the digital space to augment the face-to-face classroom is well used and liked by QML students (79% accessed these materials on a regular basis with 30% accessing them every day): *“If I had to miss the lecture for good reason, I can go and look at the basics at least”*. In fact, some respondents were unhappy if they were not available *“..remind lecturers to upload materials”*, or preferred them to lecture capture.. *“notes prepared by teachers would be better than video materials”*.

- 3.4.2 It may come as some surprise that more than 50% of respondents had never tried Q-Review, however, among those who had, these lecture-videos are seen as very useful for their learning: *“all lectures should be recorded and uploaded using Q-Review ..it has been the most important help for me during revision.”* The results we have noted here correspond with a recently published report from the Students’ Union into Learning Resources¹: *“For most students, the benefits are so obvious that it is baffling that so many lectures held in Q-Review enabled classrooms are not recorded.”*
- 3.4.3 There was some dissatisfaction expressed in the comments about technical problems experienced during the year when submitting assignments. Problems centred around the process of submission - *“Uploading essays was hard to do so, frustrating and an unnecessary stress. Please fix this for future students.”* and the lack of acknowledgement of a submitted assignment via email - *“Make it clearer if assignments have uploaded”*.
- 3.4.4 The uptake of and perceived usefulness of the group functionality in QMplus (Mahara) is pleasing to see, although the group tools themselves were often seen as being *“backward and clunky”* compared to web 2.0 tools on the web (Facebook etc). But there was a clear willingness, expressed in the comments questions, to encourage both community features and groupwork generally...*“groupwork on QMplus is a good idea and should be encouraged more”*. It will be worthwhile tracking the growth in use over time of this functionality.
- 3.4.5 More advanced teaching tools within QMplus such as the database tool, the workshop tool and portfolio creation were not used very often by survey respondents. These tools require time and effort to create, monitor and evaluate. Most academics have many demands on their time and finding out about these tools within the learning environment may not be a priority. Learning materials need to be developed to enable academics to understand the usefulness of these tools within QMplus and see examples of how they can be used effectively with students.
- 3.4.6 The communication features provided in QMplus did not prove particularly useful to respondents. This may be due to a lack of focus on communication capabilities both during migration training in the summer of 2012, and to students themselves during the orientation sessions. It could also be due to the fact that most people have an established network of contacts and communication mechanisms already in place prior to arriving at university and don’t see this as a prime requirement of our system.
- 3.4.7 Students should be free to choose whatever communication channel they like to chat and email friends, however, there may be specific learning contexts where communication between classmates, group members or between a student and their personal tutor or module lead should be done in a password protected environment that is close to the materials being discussed, free from advertising or more ‘private’. For this reason we must ensure that the tools provided are fit for purpose and we should continue to inform users of their presence and how to use them.

¹ [Student Experience Seminar 2012 : Learning Resources](#)

- 3.4.8 When asked about other ways QMplus could be used to support student learning, the most popular suggestions received centred around using both Q-Review and QMplus to their fullest potential. The desire for student facing IT systems to be more integrated (e.g. email notifications in QMplus, access to SITS through QMplus) and for more groupwork to be encouraged. Other comments of note were the call to develop more of a sense of community within QMplus, resolving some of the outstanding technical issues e.g. assignment submission problems and a call to open up access to the system to allow students to view content on other modules. *“..when learning about Freud there could be some links to certain sections of a psychology module which focuses on his ideas.”*

3.5 TECHNICAL SUPPORT

- 3.5.1. On the whole the results in this section suggest that QMplus is being supported quite well from a student perspective. The software is pretty intuitive to use and the service ran pretty smoothly throughout the 2012/13 academic year. The majority of respondents found that problems could be solved by working it out for themselves or asking friends. *“it’s very self-explanatory. Most troubleshooting is easily resolved by just clicking around the site til you get used to it.”*
- 3.5.2. The formal channels to seek technical support were not as widely known about as might have been expected, in particular the helpdesk in the Queen’s building and the FAQs located on the IT helpdesk web interface. We do need to better promote the help and support available if problems arise when using QMplus. One way to do this would be to refresh the help and support area within QMplus to better signpost all the offerings and how to access them.

3.6 LOOK AND FEEL

- 3.6.1 In general, the look and feel of QMplus was well received by survey respondents with most parts of the Module home page seen as useful by 80% or more of respondents. The feature mentioned most often was the general clarity and accessibility of the design. Respondents found the layout easy to navigate and easy to read *“simple clear and modern”*. The collapsible topic sections, a feature of most faculty and school templates, enabled users to focus on what was important, improved navigation and reduced the clutter: *“there isn’t too much unnecessary information clogging the screen.”* The Module Info block with contact information and a simple overview of the module timetable were also seen as very useful.
- 3.6.2 There was some confusion about the display of assignments in the HSS template. We provided an assignment summary in the ‘Assessment Information area’ which essentially linked to the assignments within the topic sections themselves or, in the case of some modules, were not (they chose to keep them hidden from view rather than repeat them). This caused some confusion and we need to ensure consistency in the layout and presentation of this important feature. In addition we need to work with our theme designers to more prominently display links to grades, feedback and assignment deadlines, where appropriate.

3.7 EASE OF USE

- 3.7.1 Respondents found the key features of QMplus which were integral to their studies, easy to use. These include downloading files, accessing learning materials, uploading assignments and accessing grades and feedback. In addition logging in was seen as being easy by three quarters of those surveyed. In fact none of the features and activities we explored were difficult to use for more than 10% of respondents.
- 3.7.2 What is more interesting is the fact that eight of the features and activities that we asked about had not been tried at all by a lot of respondents and this represents the most interesting area of future work. Clearly it is not possible for respondents to try an activity type if it is not present in the learning material and this is probably true for features like video and audio content, online quizzes, discussion forums and workshop activities.

4 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 GENERAL

- 4.1.1 When we carry out the next student survey greater effort will be made to encourage more students from *all* campuses of Queen Mary to participate. Extra focus will be made to encourage participation by students in China (both at BUPT and the new programme in Nanchang), Whitechapel and our Distance and Part-time students.
- 4.1.2 Ensure that students across Queen Mary are informed of the results of this survey as well as the QMplus project phase 2 'deliverables' and our future plans for their learning environment.
- 4.1.3 Continue to ensure that QML supports the enhancement of e-learning across the college through ambitious and imaginative strategy and policy, support for staff involved in developing e-learning and listening to the views of students by conducting a regular evaluation of this support.

4.2 ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

- 4.2.1 Continue to focus on providing an intuitive and accessible interface that continues to enable students to pick-up how the system works without difficulty or complication.
- 4.2.2 Work with schools to produce effective tailored documentation for students highlighting the essentials of 'Getting started' and where to go for more information or help.
- 4.2.3 Develop and improve the depth and range of online help and guidance available for students in the QMplus 'help and support' area and work with schools to develop and/or publicise their own support materials in the same place.
- 4.2.4 Develop a '*Quick reference guide*' for students to include the most useful features and links to other help and support available.
- 4.2.5 Remodel the training and orientation sessions during Welcome Week based on school input and advertise them more aggressively.
- 4.2.6 Cancel the library drop-in sessions

Already actioned in 2013/14

- Currently the ELU is developing a new set of training materials for the Groups and Portfolios area and updating the student facing materials for QMplus.
- Library drop-in sessions were not delivered in the 2013 Welcome Week.

4.3 ACCESSING QMPLUS

- 4.2.7 Develop and deploy a mobile friendly theme on QMplus as soon as possible.
- 4.2.8 Educate staff in how to design module areas to ensure optimal performance on mobile devices.
- 4.2.9 Promote the pedagogical opportunities offered by mobile devices during workshops and training sessions with staff.

4.4 SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING

4.4.1 General information and administration

- 4.4.1.1 Continue to provide clear and easy ways for students to access the assessment information for their modules.
- 4.4.1.2 Reinforce the importance of displaying essential contact information for all members of the teaching team on the module homepage.
- 4.4.1.3 Ensure the student help area in QMplus contains information about how to access the calendar for assessment deadlines.
- 4.4.1.4 Promote the time-saving features of specialised tools like 'Group choice' to staff.

Already actioned in 2013/14

- The Module Info block has been redesigned to display more key module information through a simple and clear admin interface.
- Templates created for the seven schools and programmes in S & E all include clear and visible assessment information links.

4.4.2 Teaching materials

- 4.4.2.1 Work with the library to continue to promote and better advertise the advantages of using the TALIS Aspire reading list software.
- 4.4.2.2 Further exploration of the way readings lists are best presented and used.
- 4.4.2.3 Profile examples of blended learning designs that include embedded audio and video activities and resources.
- 4.4.2.4 Provide an easy way for academics and students to upload and store larger multimedia files into QMplus.
- 4.4.2.5. Continue to promote the benefits of lecture capture and profile best practice in its use.
- 4.4.2.6 Profile examples of more advanced use of e-learning through case studies, workshops/ seminars and one-to-one sessions.

Already actioned in 2013/14

- Use of TALIS aspire reading lists has already grown in the 2013/14 academic year.
- Opt-out² policies for Q-Review have been implemented in 4 Humanities schools and the Institute of Dentistry.
- The new ELU website will include a new case study area as well as a pedagogical support area to augment the technical advice about how to use E-learning.
- Ongoing work is being carried out around a one-year pilot of a new media server which would integrate with QMplus and enable greater use of multimedia in teaching & learning.

4.4.3 Assessment and feedback

- 4.4.3.1 Focus on improving the student experience of assignment submission with:

² An 'Opt out' policy means that by default all lectures in rooms with recording capability will be recorded automatically. Academics can choose not to be recorded on request.

- Clear and simple submission screens for all assignment tools.
- A receipting system to inform students clearly that a successful upload has taken place.
- Guidance provided by schools to all staff informing them of the appropriate configuration of assignment tools to improve the consistency of their use on modules.

4.4.3.2 Provide training and examples of how online quizzes and question banks can be used for formative and summative assessments in imaginative ways.

4.4.3.3 Encourage schools to include clearly signposted assessment information in their module templates.

Already actioned in 2013/14

- An improved assignment submission tool (Turnitin assignment type) was added to QMplus in August 2013. This tool includes email notification to students on submission, better integration with the online marking tool 'Grademark' (part of the Turnitin service) and an improved user interface.
- Most Science & Engineering schools learned from the experience of implementing the HSS template design in year 1 and included a summary of assessment information at the top of their module page layout.

4.4.4 Groups and Portfolios

4.4.4.1 More work is required to profile the benefits of using Mahara for such things as reflecting in an e-portfolio and supporting groupwork and interaction.

4.4.4.2 Development of an online 'Getting started with groups and portfolios' course in QMplus, similar to the existing Moodle course area, for students to learn about how the software can be used to support their learning journey at Queen Mary in formal and informal ways.

4.4.4.3 Improve the guidelines and help given to academic staff on the ways they can engage with the Groups & Portfolios area and provide case studies of how it is already being used at QML.

4.4.4.4 Solve technical problems and usability issues around the integration of Moodle and Mahara that are affecting usability.

Already actioned in 2013/14

- Currently developing a comprehensive set of learning materials for staff and students on using the Groups and Portfolios area
- There is already increasing use of the tools in the Groups and Portfolios area visible this academic year e.g. an 'Academic Portfolio' will be piloted in the Institute of Dentistry with 72 students from January 2014.

4.4.5 Interactive activities

- 4.4.5.1 Continue to provide opportunities for staff to learn about the wealth of interactive capabilities within QMplus and how they can enhance blended teaching.
- 4.4.5.2 Develop a set of pedagogical guides to the interactive features within QMplus and augment these with case studies of best practice.
- 4.4.5.3 Move from 'tools focussed' help guides to more pedagogically focussed documentation.

Already actioned in 2013/14

- The ELU is currently developing a new web presence which will provide more pedagogically focussed information about e-learning as well as a collection of case studies from around Queen Mary.

4.4.6 Communicative features

- 4.4.6.1 Integrate college email into QMplus (e.g. notifications, direct email links) so that the two systems can be used together more easily.
- 4.4.6.2 Examine the potential to redesign or upgrade some communication features such as 'commenting' and 'chat'.
- 4.4.6.3 Fix technical issues affecting email notifications from Mahara.
- 4.4.6.4 Improve integration between Moodle and Mahara so that, for example, notifications from one can be seen in the other.

4.4.7 General

- 4.4.7.1 Foster college networks of e-learning professionals.
- 4.4.7.2 Create a bank of case studies of best practice in using QMplus and disseminate them widely.
- 4.4.7.3 Encourage the development of e-learning strategies in schools that both promote pedagogical innovation and a degree of consistency of approach.
- 4.4.7.4 Frame the blended learning experience in schools clearly for students so that expectations can be managed more easily.

Already actioned in 2013/14

- An e-learning practitioner group has been established in Mahara with more than 200 users.
- An monthly e-learning newsletter is sent to over 300 users around the college.
- The ELU's programme of workshops and mode of delivery is under review.
- The ELU is delivering a module on e-learning for the PGCAP (ESDM018).

4.5 TECHNICAL SUPPORT

- 4.5.1 Ensure that QMplus remains clear and simple to navigate and use.
- 4.5.2 Advertise the technical help available more widely.
- 4.5.3 Redesign the help and support area in QMplus to signpost clearly the technical help on offer.
- 4.5.4 Repurpose the FAQs on the IT helpdesk to make them more user friendly and easier to find and navigate.

Already actioned in 2013/14

- New ELU website to include a new 'Student' area with improved help and support materials.
- FAQs to be structured more clearly and expanded to include more guidance on key aspects of QMplus.

4.6 LOOK AND FEEL

- 4.6.1 Design, test and implement a mobile friendly version of QMplus. Particular focus should be given to document access and download, as well as Q-review lectures.
- 4.6.2 Work closely with schools to develop clear guidance for staff on best practice for layout and presentation of key information in module templates.
- 4.6.3 Improve training on how to design blended modules and how various parts of the module page work e.g. the assessment information in topic zero, configuring the module info block.
- 4.6.4 Work with our theme designers to more clearly signpost the grades and feedback area.
- 4.6.5 Expand the scope of design questions in the next survey to include e.g. the Home page, the new School landing pages and the groups and portfolios area.

Already actioned in 2013/14

- The module info block has been completely redesigned to allow users to input information more easily through a form driven interface. The new block also integrates with the new timetabling system (SMART).
- A workshop on blended learning design is now offered by the ELU.

4.7 USABILITY

- 4.7.1 Develop guidance and support around advanced features of QMplus including the development of online quizzes, using discussion forums and peer review.
- 4.7.2 Ensure that in all our ongoing development work, usability continues to be of the utmost importance.
- 4.7.3 At QML we can and should continue to develop and enhance our e-learning and teaching through both ambitious strategies (teaching & learning and IT) and imaginative classroom and online implementations.

Already actioned in 2013/14

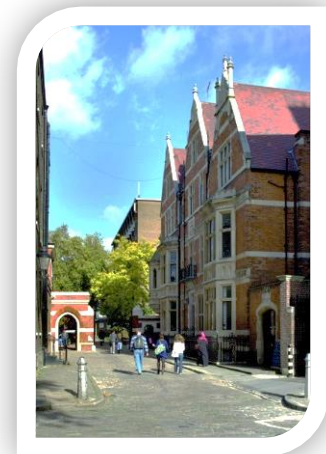
- As previously mentioned the ELU is launching a new web presence with renewed focus on e-learning pedagogy and inspirational case studies from around QML.

5 BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In August 2012 a new online or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) called QMplus was launched at Queen Mary University of London (QML). The new system was introduced in a staged rollout to replace the Blackboard VLE that had been in use since 2005. The new VLE consists of two pieces of educational software configured to work as a single environment:

- *Moodle* - for academic staff to design and deliver interactive learning experiences to students in both blended and distance mode and
- *Mahara* - primarily a student-led environment specialising in E-portfolio creation, group functionality and social networking.



The Charterhouse square campus

In the academic year 2012-13, QMplus was introduced into teaching within all three academic faculties at Queen Mary University of London. This included all taught modules in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), all postgraduate taught and distance programmes in the School of Medicine and Dentistry (SMD), and all taught programmes in the Institute of Dentistry.

There was also some take-up of QMplus in the Faculty of Science and Engineering (S&E) particularly in the first year undergraduate programmes in the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science (EECS) and the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences (SBCS). The system was also fully adopted by our Joint Programme in B.U.P.T³, China.

Professional Services is represented in QMplus at Faculty level as 'Learning and Support'. In 2012/13 there was some use of the learning environment in this area, particularly by the former Learning Institute (now CAPD⁴). QMplus was not used at all in the Undergraduate Medical Programme (MBBS), and in the School of Physics & Astronomy.

The introduction of QMplus into teaching in many Schools and departments at Queen Mary was facilitated by the development of ambitious and forward-looking strategies. These e-learning strategies acted as enablers to help shape the development of the emerging service and in addition helped guide the design and configuration of the system during 2012/13.

5.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of carrying out the 2012/13 student survey was to gauge what is arguably one of the most important measures of the effectiveness of the new system at the end of its first academic year of operation: What the students who have been using it to study think of it. Has it helped enrich and enable their learning? Have we got the balance of design and usability right? Do students feel that their experience has improved by using the tool?

The survey sought student opinions and responses across six main categories covering the uses of QMplus as well as background respondent information.

³ BUPT: Beijing University of Post and Telecommunications

⁴ CAPD: Centre for Academic and Professional Development – The former Learning Institute at Queen Mary

5.3 TOOLS EMPLOYED

The survey was developed and administered via a questionnaire run through the Bristol Online Survey (BOS) Tool. Paper-based copies were also made available in the Mile End library.

The survey consisted of 32 questions some mandatory and some optional comment questions. The survey was tested on a sample group of students before the design was finalised and tested on a further small group. The average length of time to complete the survey was 15 – 20 minutes.



A poster created as part of the campaign to promote the survey in May 2013

5.4 TIMEFRAME

This survey was administered over 5 weeks from mid-May to the end of June 2013. This represented the end of the exam period for the majority of campus-based students. Entry into a draw to win £50.00 worth of Amazon vouchers was offered as an incentive for students to complete the survey. The survey was advertised through a number of channels at Queen Mary including direct emails to students through QMplus, emails to academics and key school contacts in all faculties, posts to relevant user groups in the system itself, a mini-poster campaign and from the end of May 2013, a prominent graphical link /advertisement for the survey from the home page of QMplus itself.

As an incentive to participate in the survey respondents had the chance to enter a prize draw to win £50.00 worth of Amazon vouchers. The winner of the prize was a second year student in the Department of English.

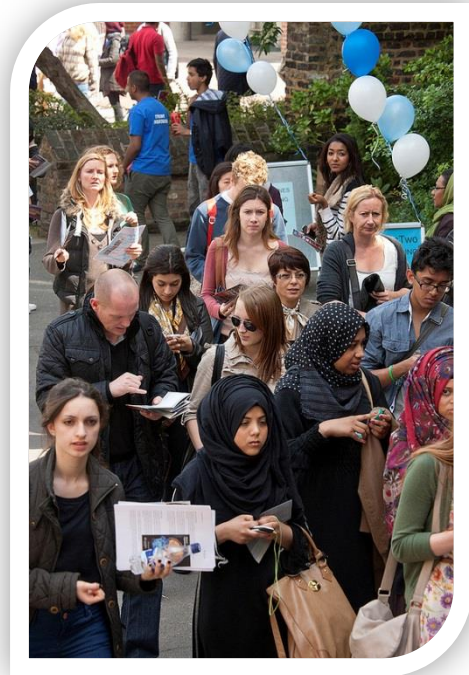
5.5 NOTES ON READING THE REPORT

The report presents the results of the survey in chapters which correspond to the original questionnaire categories. The commentary describes the data received then highlights the key findings in each area. Comments from respondents have been categorised where possible and information presented in both graphical and discursive form where appropriate. Further details and raw data may be provided to those parties who are interested by contacting the e-learning unit directly.

Where applicable a selection of student comments is presented along with the results for that question in a section called **'Student voices'**. Comments in this section are presented verbatim.

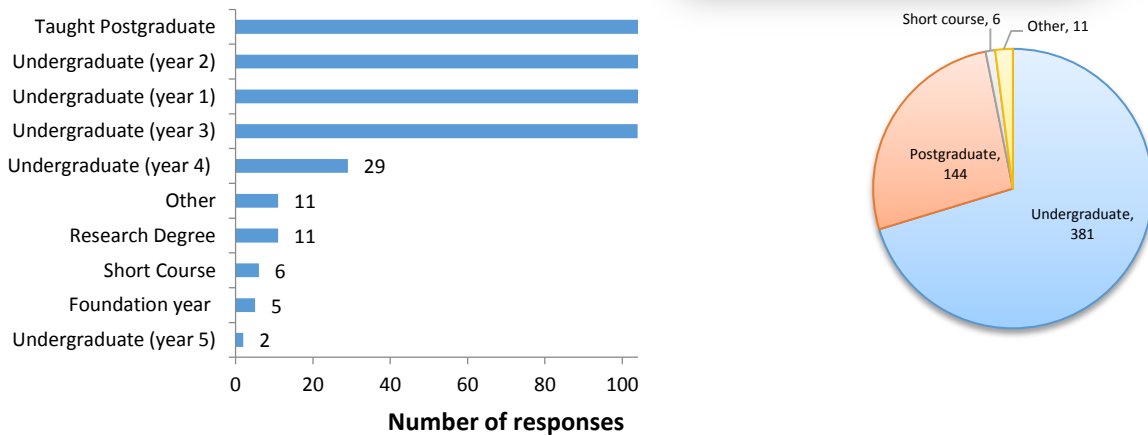
6 ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

In this part of the survey we asked six questions to find out some background information about the respondents. We were interested in which school and campus they study from, their year of study, what their general attitude to using technologies in their learning is and whether they had used a VLE like QMplus before.



6.1 YEAR OF STUDY

Figure 1: Survey responses by year of study

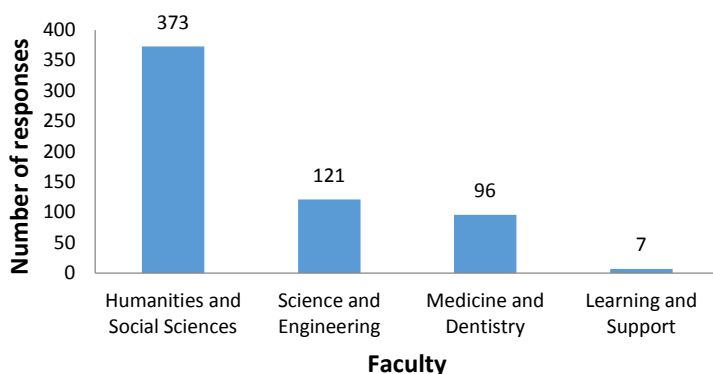


In this section we asked respondents to select their year of study from 10 available options. In total we received 542 responses. The year group that represented the majority of responses were the taught postgraduates with 133 responses (25% of all responses). Undergraduates represented 70% of the total with 381 responses and the remaining 3% of responses (18) was made up of those studying on short courses and others (e.g. those offered by the former Learning Institute).

This response pattern largely represents the distribution of students that started using QMplus in 2012/13. The majority of students in the 18 schools and departments that make up the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the 5 year BDS programme in the Institute of Dentistry and the Science & Engineering Schools that used QMplus were undergraduates.

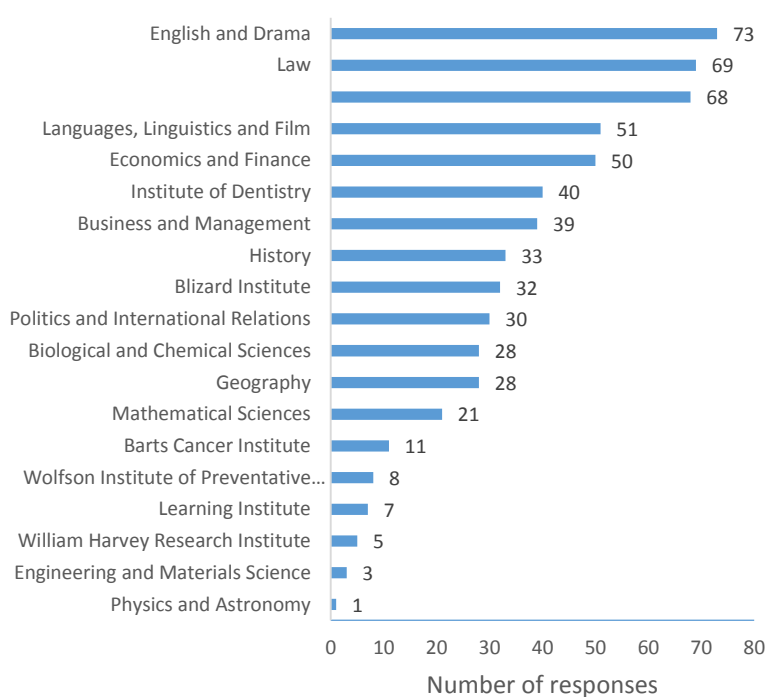
6.2 FACULTY AND SCHOOL BREAKDOWN

Figure 2: Number of survey responses by faculty



In this section we can see a more detailed breakdown of respondents by both faculty and school. By far the greatest number of responses (373 or 69%) came from the schools that make up the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences (HSS). This was followed by 121 (22%) from the Faculty of Science & Engineering (S&E) and 96 (18%) from the School of Medicine and Dentistry (SMD). Phase 1⁵ of the QMplus rollout across Queen Mary centred on HSS, and The Institute of Dentistry and postgraduate courses taught in the five institutes in SMD. The high number of respondents in the Faculty of Science & Engineering represented the adoption of the new VLE by two schools (Biological and Chemical Sciences (SBSC) and Electronic Engineering and Computer Science (EECS) across many of their first year modules, as can be seen in the bar chart below.

Figure 3: Number of responses by School or Institute

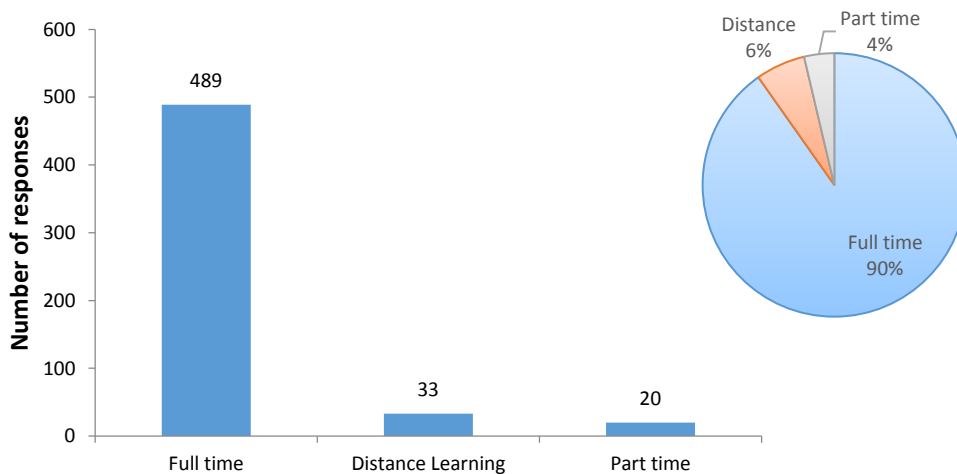


⁵ Phase 1 of the QMplus project took place between December 2011 and November 2012 – The project formed part of the IT transformation programme and was managed by a team comprising staff from IT services and the E-learning Unit.

With respect to the breakdown of respondents by individual school or department we can see that the greatest number of respondents came from the School of English and Drama (SED) with 73 responses (13%) this was followed by the School of Law with 69 responses and the School of Electronic Engineering & Computer Science (EECS) with 68 responses (12.5%). Schools and departments with high response rates in HSS included the 61 responses from the Department of English (11%), 58 from the School of Law (11%) and 39 from the School of Business & Management (7%). The Blizzard Institute had the highest response rate of all the postgraduate medical courses taught in 2012/13 with 32 responses (6%).

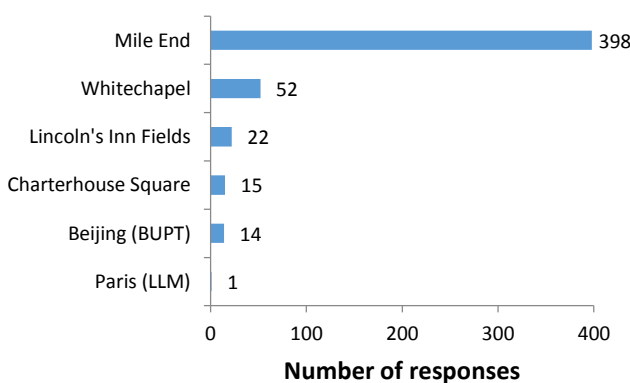
6.3 ATTENDANCE MODE AND CAMPUS

Figure 4: Response by attendance mode



Respondents were asked to select what their ‘mode of study’ was at Queen Mary. 90% of respondents were studying full time (489), while 6% were studying through one of Queen Mary’s Distance taught postgraduate programmes (taught in the School of Law -⁶LLM , and in the 5 research institutes in SMD).

Figure 5: Responses by main campus of study



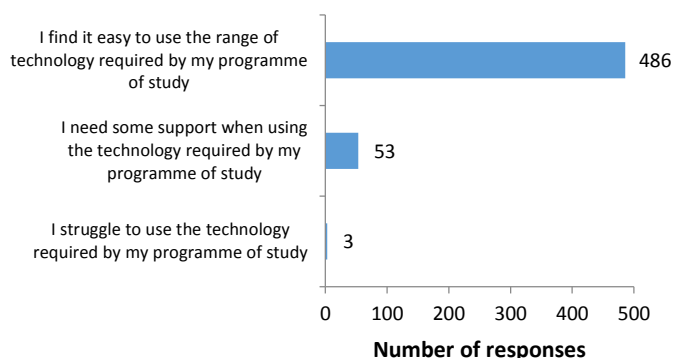
In this section we asked respondents which campus they were mainly studying at. The vast majority of respondents (398) were studying at the largest Queen Mary Campus at Mile End London (75% of all responses), while 10% were studying at the Whitechapel Campus (52), home to much of the teaching in the Medical and Dentistry Schools. 4% responded from the Lincoln’s Inn field campus

⁶ Postgraduate Programme taught in the School of Law and the Centre for Commercial Law studies

(22) and we received 14 responses from QML Joint Programme students studying at the Beijing University of Post and Telecommunications (BUPT).

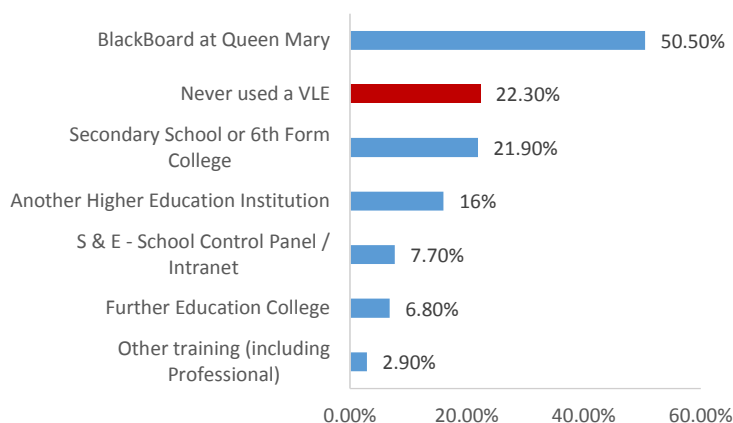
6.4 ATTITUDE TO LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND PREVIOUS USE

Figure 6: Which of the following most closely describes how you feel about using technology generally in your studies?



We asked respondents how they felt about using technology generally in their learning and found that 90% (486) found technology easy to use in their programme of study. 9.8% (53) mentioned that they required some support, and only 3 students out of those surveyed (0.6%) indicated that they struggled with the technology required by their programme of study.

Figure 7: Have you used anything like QMplus in your studies before?



We were particularly interested to know whether students came to QMplus with experience of using Virtual Learning Environments previously in their studies and whether this might have an effect on their attitudes to using the new system at Queen Mary. Respondents were asked which previous educational contexts they had used a VLE, and could select as many as applied. Each result is presented as a percentage of the total number of responses.

78% of all respondents (421) had used a VLE before with 51% (274) having used the former VLE offering at Queen Mary: Blackboard. 8% of respondents (42) had used the various bespoke VLE systems in S & E (often referred to as 'Control panel' or 'Intranet'). 22% (119) had used VLEs in their secondary schooling and 16% (87) had encountered VLEs in previous studies in Higher Education.

6.5 DISCUSSION

6.5.1 Response rate

Whilst we were pleased with the response rate to the survey we would have liked higher numbers particularly amongst students in SMD and distance taught cohorts as well as from our Joint Programme in China. Participation in student surveys such as this can be problematic amongst a student body that can feel slightly survey-fatigued.

To encourage a greater response rate from as broad a range of students as we can across the college in the next survey we will need to promote the survey in advance through as many appropriate channels as possible. Beyond simple promotion, perhaps the most important thing is to ensure that students can see value in completing the survey i.e. that their voices are taken into account when shaping the future development of the system.

The results of this survey and the impact these have had already on how QMplus looks and is being used in 2013/14 is important to communicate, as well as the work completed and ongoing that is detailed in the *QMplus phase 2 closure report*. These findings and observations will all shape the future development of the VLE. Sharing this information with our students will ensure that they know their voices are being heard and will encourage participation when running future surveys.

6.5.2 Timing

In terms of timing, we ran the survey from the middle to the end of the main exam period for campus based students - mid May to late June. The timing, particularly the start date, was not entirely appreciated by some staff who felt that students had other priorities at the time beyond doing surveys.

However, as the purpose of the survey was to capture as much information as we could about how students viewed the use of the system and this use also included innovative uses of QMplus near and during the exam period (e.g. SBCS added discussion forums for revision onto most of their modules) we feel that on balance the timing of a student survey of the VLE seemed about right. We may need to demonstrate more clearly to some colleagues the benefits of this approach.

6.5.3 Previous use and experience

The fact that so many students in Higher Education today have already experienced VLEs in other educational contexts and express comfort with using technologies in their studies is a growing trend across the sector. Recent surveys into the Student experience by JISC, and the 2012 UCISA VLE report⁷ also point to this trend nationally.

There are obvious benefits from a more digitally comfortable (though not necessarily 'literate') student body as it means that academics can feel more comfortable about exploring some of the innovative pedagogies that are possible with learning technologies without fear of students feeling

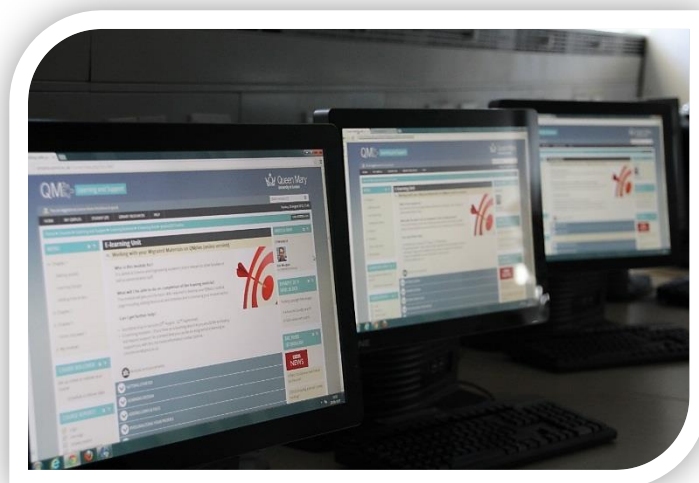
⁷ [2012 Survey of Technology Enhanced Learning for Higher Education - UCISA](#)

alienated or unfairly discriminated against (the so-called digital divide). Of course, merely 'using' a learning environment doesn't suggest a lot about the types of learning activities students may have encountered previously but it might suggest that we may, in Higher Education, need to differentiate our use of VLEs in blended teaching to establish more pedagogically advanced approaches for an increasingly discerning audience. Module leaders and programme teams working with first year students, for example, have less to fear than they may have thought about the kinds of online approaches they take.

The other implication of this growing depth of experience and comfort students are bringing to HE contexts lies in the support we provide: how much is required, what type and how advanced? Some of the comments we received in this survey point to a tech-savvy generation that understand very clearly what they want and how it should look, function and be utilised.

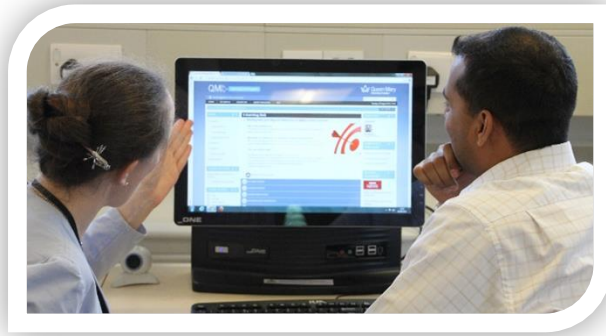
6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- When we carry out the next student survey greater effort will be made to encourage more students from *all* campuses of Queen Mary to participate. Extra focus will be made to encourage participation by students in China (both at BUPT and the new programme in Nanchang), Whitechapel and our Distance and Part-time students.
- Ensure that students across Queen Mary are informed of the results of this survey as well as the QMplus project phase 2 'deliverables' and our future plans for their learning environment.
- Continue to listen to the views of students about QMplus by conducting a regular evaluation.



7 ORIENTATION AND USE

In this part of the survey we wanted to find out how respondents had learned how to use QMplus and what they thought about those methods. We were also interested in where QMplus was being accessed from (e.g. at home, work etc.), and what kinds of technologies were being used to access it.



Types of training and orientation offered

Orientation sessions: The E-Learning Unit in conjunction with schools, departments and institutes run *orientation sessions* for QMplus during Welcome week. These sessions are not mandatory and can be run by the department themselves, or by a member of the E-learning unit. The format differs and can range from as little as a 10-15 minute walkthrough and familiarisation to QMplus with the entire year-group, through to an hour-long tutorial with a particular programme or module.

E-learning managers: Six Schools/Institutes at Queen Mary have a full-time e-learning professional working for them. Responsibilities include providing training and support for the VLE in the form of sessions similar to those mentioned above or developing bespoke handouts and user guides, screencasts etc.

Library drop-ins: At the beginning of the 2012/13 year the ELU ran bi-weekly drop-in sessions at Mile End, Whitechapel and Lincoln's Inn Fields staffed by a member of the E-learning Unit. Students could come and discuss any questions or issues they had with QMplus.

Online help: The ELU put together a set of training materials including screencasts and handouts into an open course area on QMplus accessible from the primary navigation menu under 'help'.

7.1 LEARNING ABOUT QMPLUS

With respect to training and orientation, respondents were asked to rank the usefulness of the seven main methods available to learn about QMplus. Respondents were asked to rank usefulness on a five point scale: 'Not at all useful' to 'Very useful'. They could also indicate whether they were aware of the method but 'Chose not to use it', they 'didn't know about it' at all, or it was 'not applicable' to them (e.g. face-to-face orientation for a distance learning student).

We then asked students in several optional open questions to tell us about other ways they had learned about QMplus, what they found useful about the training/orientation they had received and any suggestions they would make for improvement.

The results for the usefulness rankings are presented in the bar charts below in order of overall usefulness (indicated in green).

How did you learn about QMplus and how to use it? How useful were the training and orientation opportunities provided?

Figure 8 : Online material in QMplus

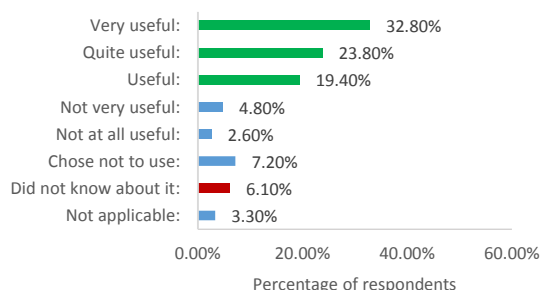


Figure 9: Orientation session – general (e.g. during the welcome week)

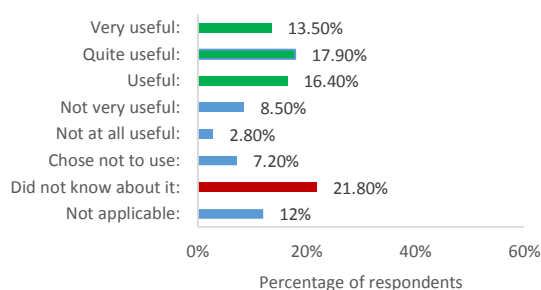


Figure 10: My department or school support

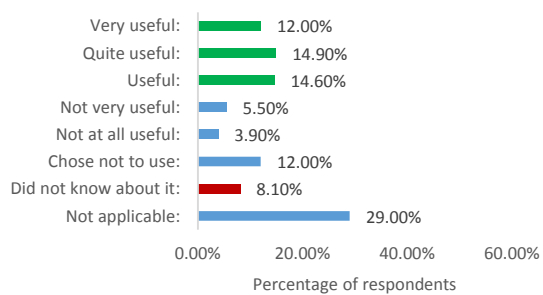


Figure 11: Another student showed me

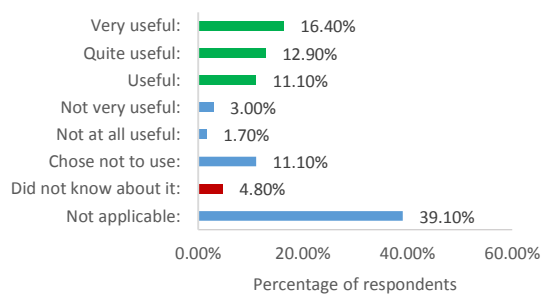


Figure 12: Orientation session with my module leader

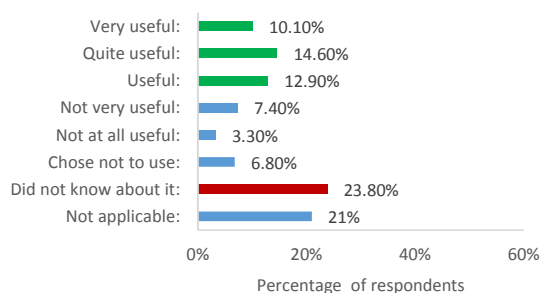


Figure 13: My module leader/organiser showed me when I needed help

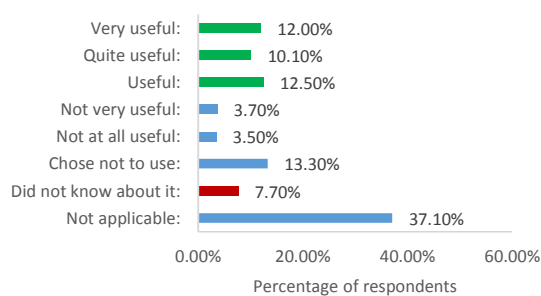
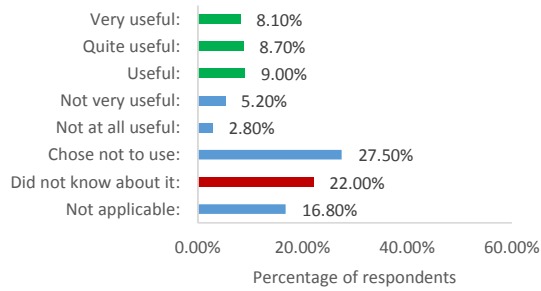


Figure 14: Library drop-in session

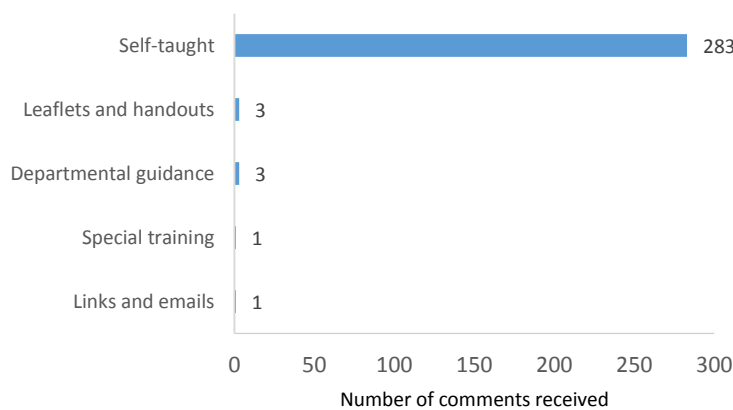


The most useful form of support provided is the online material in QMplus with 76% (412) of all respondents finding this ‘useful’. The general orientation sessions were seen as useful by 48% of respondents (259) while 42% (225) found their local departmental or school support useful. 40% of respondents found another student showing them useful and orientation sessions provided by the module lead were seen as useful by 38% (204). Asking the module lead (when the respondent needed help) or attending library drop-ins were seen as useful by 35% (188) and 26% (140) respectively.

With respect to ‘awareness’ of the different kinds of training and orientation offered, 24% (129) did not know about orientation sessions with their module lead and 22% (119) had not heard of library drop-in sessions or the general orientation sessions run in welcome week. The online materials available in QMplus were the most widely known about (92% of all respondents) with only 7.2% choosing not to use them. The general orientation sessions in welcome week were known about by 66% with only 7% choosing not to use them, library drop-in sessions were known about by 62% of respondents although 28% of them chose not to use them.)

7.1.1 Other ways of learning about QMplus

Figure 15: Are there any other ways you learned about QMplus and how to use it?



We were interested in finding out what other ways respondents had used to find out about and learn how to use QMplus. In all 322 comments received, these were grouped by theme and are presented in *figure 15* in order of popularity, excluding those comments about ways already mentioned in the previous question.

The vast majority of responses (283) representing 52% of all survey respondents taught themselves (often through trial and error) how to use QMplus, respondents mentioned that the interface was clear, simple and or straightforward and wasn’t hard to pick-up.

Student voices
Are there any other ways you learned about QMplus and how to use it?
<i>"It wasn't easy to use it first after such a long time of using blackboard, but I got used to it pretty quickly and didn't use any help."</i>
<i>"I taught myself - I think the features of QMplus were easy to grasp, especially since we have already been using Blackboard last year, it was easy for me to familiarise myself with the new system."</i>
<i>"Instructions given and links to pages are all quite clear and easy to use in itself."</i>
<i>"I.T. staff came into seminars and lectures to show us QM+, but I had to listen to it a few times because of different subjects and it's really not very complicated so it did, after the first session, feel like a waste of teaching time."</i>
<i>"The introductions provided in Welcome Week were quite basic."</i>
<i>"Trial and error during the course of the entire year. Even now, at the end of the year I am still discovering new elements to the system."</i>

7.1.2 Most useful aspects of the training

Figure 16: What did you find most useful about the training/orientation received?



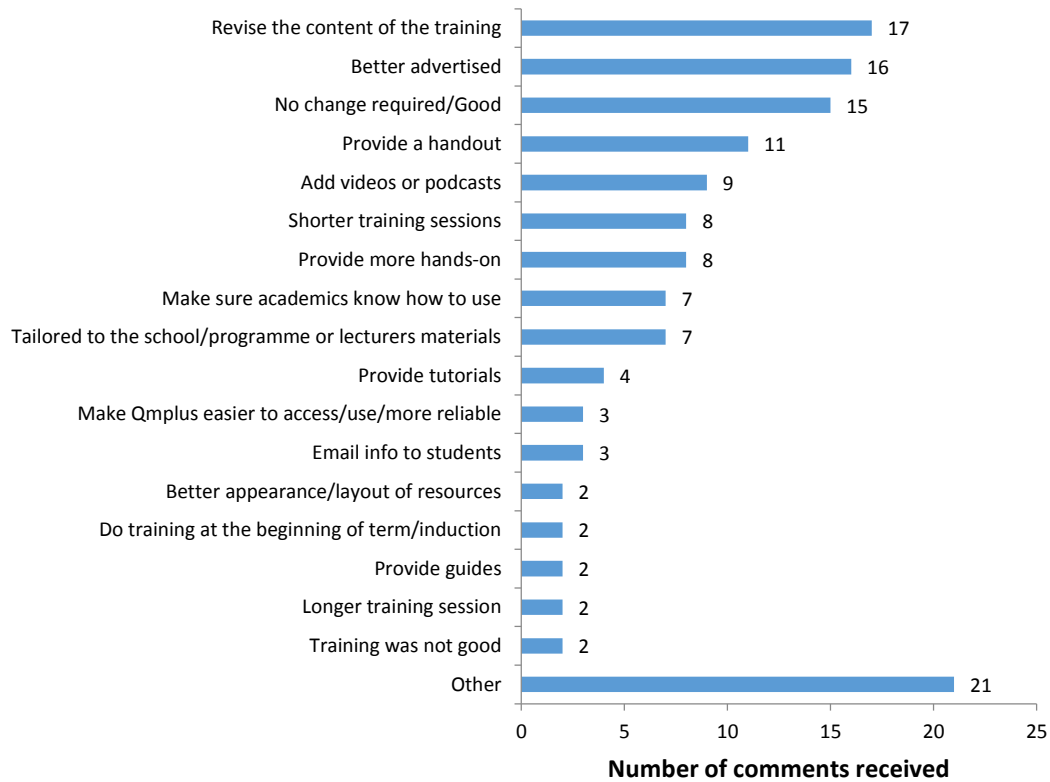
This question asked respondents to comment on the most useful parts of the training/orientation they received. 135 comments were grouped by theme and are presented above in order of popularity.

Providing clear and simple handouts was the most useful part of the training for 36 respondents (7% of the total) while providing the overview of key areas of the system and how to navigate was seen as useful by 19 respondents (4%). Walkthroughs by course leaders in the form of seminars or tutorials and giving a presentation were mentioned by 10 (2%) and 8 (1.5%) respondents respectively. Despite the fact that respondents were asked about the most useful aspects of the training 8 comments reported that it was not effective citing the lack of practical 'hands-on', that it was 'too basic' or that it was 'confusing'.

Student voices
What did you find most useful about the training/orientation received?
<i>"Handouts allowed me to teach myself rather than rely on tutor orientations."</i>
<i>"Showing overview over the platform (point out most important aspects of it)."</i>
<i>"The PowerPoint presentation with annotated images so that it was clear where menus and sub-menus are."</i>
<i>"the delivery from the person explaining its usage was helpful"</i>
<i>"The how-to videos on QMplus are useful for visual learners; I would make them fixed links on the front page, however, as they themselves can be difficult to find."</i>
<i>"There wasn't any training on QMplus for study abroad students but I feel that it's easy enough to figure out on your own."</i>
<i>"We didn't receive any training with regards to it, lecturer literally said you will find a link on SBCS control panel to QMplus which we will be using."</i>

7.1.3 Suggestions for improvement of the training

Figure 17: How could the training/orientation have been improved?



Survey respondents were asked if they had any suggestions for how the training they received could be improved. 139 suggestions and comments were received. These were then grouped into common themes.

The bar chart (figure 17) displays all the themes that received at least two comments. Suggestions could roughly be divided into those focussing on the ‘structure’ of the content being delivered and the rest focussing on ‘how’ it was delivered.

The most popular suggestions were to revise the content (17 comments) of the training e.g. provide a more detailed explanation of where to find grades and feedback or how to upload assignments or

'the full scope of the programme'. Respondents also suggested providing more detail about the functionality available, showing how all the software systems at QML work together (MySIS, QMplus, Control Panel), and that face-to-face sessions should allow time for questions or allow more hands-on.

16 respondents mentioned that training and drop-in sessions were poorly advertised, if at all "I didn't feel like there was any training". 11 respondents talked about providing a booklet, hand out or quick reference "with a list of common tasks and how to perform them". 9 respondents asked for multimedia training with e.g. "entertaining rather than instructional videos". 8 respondents suggested shorter sessions possibly with smaller groups "shorter and less formal" (though 2 wanted longer ones) and 7 respondents stressed the importance of academics knowing how to use QMplus and using it consistently "train the lecturers! Waited AGES for feedback because a lecturer didn't know how to upload something!"

Student voices
How could the training/orientation have been improved?
<i>"What REALLY confused me was all the different systems- MySis, QMPlus and Control Panel. I also have to do online assessments on XXXXXX. It took me a while to find out which software was used for what, but not before I'd missed my first two assignments on XXXXXX!"</i>
<i>"If we are sitting at computers and get to have a go as we are taught."</i>
<i>"been shorter and just simpler and straight to the point, students use computers all the time we pick up stuff quite fast. If anything else is mentioned it makes it tedious and unhelpful."</i>
<i>"More specific training on things we use a lot - orientation showed me things I never actually use"</i>
<i>"Also, a good idea would be to ensure that all lecturers know how to use it, since on my course, almost half of the teaching staff were very bad with computers and technology. For instance, check the current condition of XXXXXX - it is a mess, and it is very hard to navigate through bunch of previous course' files and current ones and plethora of empty folders."</i>
<i>"By working - there were a lot of teething problems which did not get fully resolved until a couple of months into the course."</i>
<i>"Make the layout of resources much much clearer so it's easier or at least possible to find what you're looking for so that training is not as imperative. Have lecturers show you exactly where to find chats on it etc, maybe more than once too."</i>
<i>"Would have been nice if module organisers were required to use QMplus in a similar way, e.g. inputting grades."</i>

7.1.4 Discussion

The key question to ask after looking at the results received about training and orientation is: Have we got it right? The responses received suggest that the shape of the offering is pretty good but that we need to fine-tune some parts, expand others and possibly discontinue some methods completely.

Introducing a new learning environment that had been developed in the 9 months prior to launch in September 2012 was an exciting time for the QMplus project team. A major strand of the VLE rollout was a comprehensive training programme for academic staff moving onto the new platform so that they could take advantage of the increased functionality offered in the new system to build engaging online courses. In some cases staff had never used VLE's before.

We adopted an approach that identified departmental champions or advocates who worked closely with the E-learning Unit to start early on developing their courses. We migrated content from the Blackboard environment and ran classroom training for all staff in the basics of getting started.

For students we took a different approach. Experience from colleagues at other institutions who had migrated to Moodle/Mahara in the recent past suggested that the system was pretty intuitive and that in-depth workshops would not be required.

Not surprisingly the survey confirmed our instincts, with just over 50% of respondents having learned how to use QMplus by themselves. Moodle was designed from the bottom up with students in mind and the project team worked hard to develop that aspect of the system through the design of an intuitive interface. Most respondents talked of 'picking it up as they went along' and that the system was 'pretty self-explanatory'. Clearly classmates, friends, the help guides in QMplus and even Google were also useful.

By far the most useful formal training method identified by students were the online materials provided in QMplus⁸. These consist of help guides and a dedicated course area in QMplus with short screencasts introducing students to the system. 76% of respondents found this method useful. It would be useful to expand the materials in this area to provide more comprehensive coverage of QMplus as it applies to students. Based on survey data, priority areas for development of orientation materials should include: customising My QMplus, accessing grades, modifying how notifications work and using the Groups and Portfolios area. It would also be a good idea to provide school specific training resources in the same area on QMplus.

General orientation sessions are seen as useful to students but the structure of those sessions needs to reflect the particular context of the students. In the free text questions respondents mentioned that they found the overview of QMplus structure, navigation and terminology useful and that they appreciated the quick run through the terminology and 'essential features'. However, some respondents felt that the content of the orientation sessions were too 'high level' and didn't cover the essentials in nearly enough detail e.g. assignment submission, whilst others would have preferred a more subject-specific orientation or hands-on session rather than a lecture. Development of a quick reference guide was another useful suggestion.

If each school could provide a detailed breakdown of how they are going to use QMplus in the next year and what exactly they want students to get out of an orientation session then we may see more value in running these sessions.

Clearly the ELU and schools need to communicate better the fact that the orientation sessions are taking place as a large number of respondents (20%) had no idea they even existed!

The drop-in sessions for students at both the Mile-End and Whitechapel libraries were not particularly popular at the time and the survey data suggests that this may not be the most useful way to orientate students to the new system with only 26% finding them useful. There may also have been some confusion in our questionnaire with what a 'Library session' was i.e. it may have been interpreted as being the sessions on 'using the library for academic study' rather than our small area of the lobby devoted to showing students the VLE!

⁸ <http://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=102>

7.1.5 Recommendations

- Continue to focus on providing an intuitive and accessible interface that continues to enable students to pick-up how the system works without difficulty or complication.
- Work with schools to produce effective tailored documentation for students highlighting the essentials of 'Getting started' and where to go for more information or help.
- Develop and improve the depth and range of online help and guidance available for students in the QMplus 'help and support' area and work with schools to develop and/or publicise their own support materials in the same place.
- Develop a '*quick reference guide*' for students to include the most useful features and links to other help and support available.
- Remodel the training and orientation sessions during Welcome Week based on school input and advertise them more aggressively.
- Cancel the library drop-in sessions.

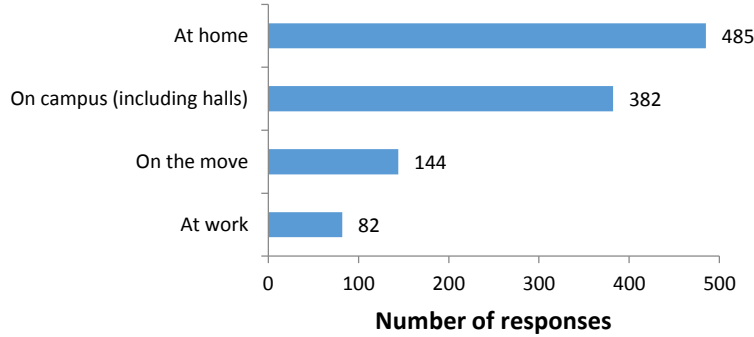
7.1.6 Already actioned in 2013/14

- Currently the ELU is developing a new set of training materials for the Groups and Portfolios area and updating the student facing materials for QMplus.
- Library drop-in sessions were not delivered in the 2013 welcome week.

7.2 ACCESSING QMPLUS

7.2.1 Location

Figure 18: Whereabouts do you usually access QMplus?

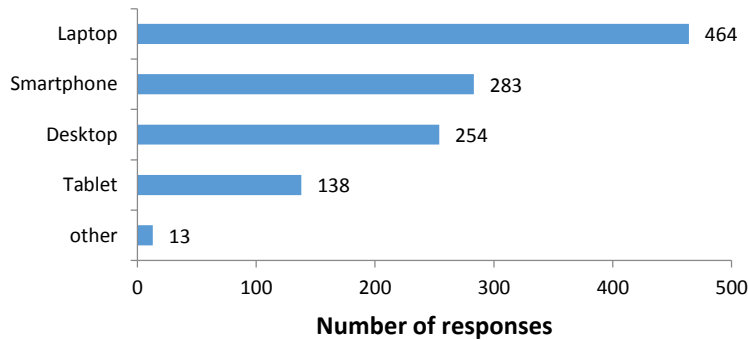


Respondents were asked to select the typical location they accessed QMplus from, from a choice of four. It was possible to choose more than one location.

The most common location chosen was ‘at home’ with 485 responses (90%). The second most common location to access QMplus was on campus selected by 382 respondents (70%). 25% of respondents (144) typically access QMplus on the move while 82 (15%) access it at their place of work.

7.2.2 Equipment

Figure 19: What do you typically use to access QMplus? (Summary)



Respondents were asked to select as many types of equipment/devices as they typically used to access QMplus over the academic year from a menu of thirteen types. A free text box enabled other types of equipment to be mentioned. The summary chart in figure 19 above groups the equipment into 4 major groups, a detailed breakdown is presented below in figure 20.

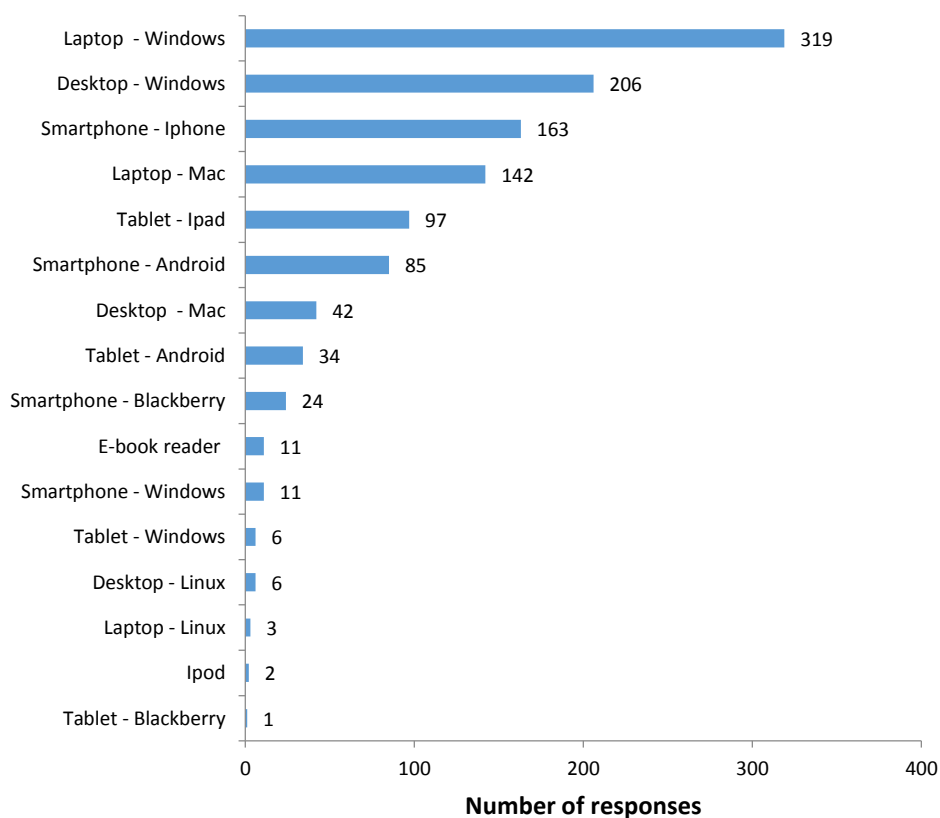
The most popular type of equipment used were laptop computers, with 464 respondents (86%). The majority of laptop users (59%) were using the Windows operating system.

Smartphones were also a popular way to access QMplus, in fact more popular than desktop computers, with 283 respondents (52%) using them. The iPhone was the most popular of the smartphones representing 30% of that total. Desktop computers were the third most popular access

technology with 254 respondents (47%) using them. Windows was the most common operating system on those desktops with 206 respondents (38%) using it.

Tablet computers were the final major type of technology used to access QMplus with 138 respondents (25%) using them. The iPad was the most popular tablet type with 97 respondents (18%) reporting using it.

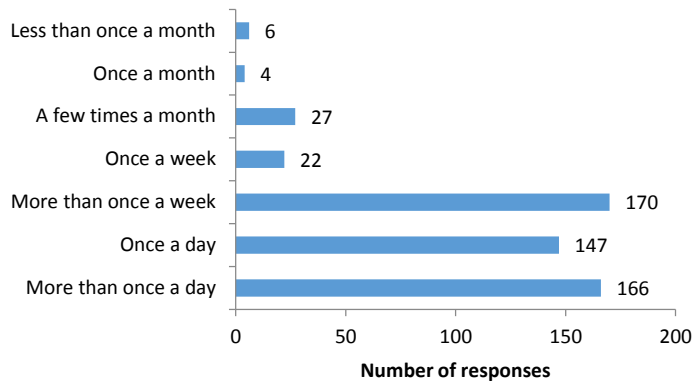
Figure 20: What do you typically use to access QMplus? (All)



7.2.3 Frequency of access

In the final question in this section we were interested in how often respondents logged into QMplus. Respondents were asked to select a frequency from a 7 point scale ranging from the frequent (more than once a day) to the irregular (less than once a month).

Figure 21: On average how often do you access QMplus?



With respect to frequency of access 93% of respondents (505) are accessing QMplus at least once a week. 31% (166) accessed QMplus more than once a day, and 27% (147) accessed it once a day.

7.2.4 Discussion

The results in this section provide an interesting first look into how, where and when students are accessing our VLE. We learn that they mostly access at home, at least once a week for most but more frequent for many and predominantly on a laptop or smartphone.

The devices used by students to access the VLE present both challenges and opportunities to those supporting its use. In an increasingly mobile world there is a growing requirement to deliver a consistent learning experience across the different screen sizes and operating systems which these devices employ. No longer can the institution control the equipment in terms of configuration and look and feel.

Smartphones present additional challenges for display as their form factor is so small and optimising software to perform similarly to a laptop or desktop can be difficult.

There has always been a requirement for QMplus to support mobile and tablet devices, however, it is difficult to implement a consistent mobile experience with the current version of the Moodle software we have. The results of this survey clearly point to the need to move quickly to ensure that we do have a usable VLE to support smaller screen sizes. It is not just a question of display however, we also need to ensure that assignment submission and file downloads work smoothly and consistently all over the world.

Accessing QMplus on the move also presents technical challenges e.g. in the performance of the system in low bandwidth environments and the most appropriate ways modules should be designed and configured. We must ensure that when developing our system we test our enhancements on all platforms including mobile.

The move to mobile devices to access the VLE can also be viewed as a great pedagogical opportunity for educators. Mobile devices can more easily be integrated into teaching experiences whether in labs, seminar rooms or out in the field and offer a host of tools that can be employed by students when working on coursework or developing e-portfolios.

The fact that students are accessing QMplus so frequently would suggest that they already regard it as being integral to their studies. In future evaluations it would be useful to enquire as to the nature

of the engagement in more depth. For course developers it will be interesting to note how often students are checking the system and what opportunities this level of interest may provide when designing learning activities etc.

7.2.5 Recommendations

- Develop and deploy a mobile friendly theme on QMplus as soon as possible.
- Educate staff in how to design module areas to ensure optimal performance on mobile devices.
- Promote the pedagogical opportunities offered by mobile devices during workshops and training sessions with staff.

8 SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING

In this section we were interested in respondents' attitudes towards features within the system designed to support their learning. The main features of QMplus which support student learning were divided into six sections:

1. *General information and administration*
2. *Types of teaching materials*
3. *Assessment tools*
4. *Tools within the 'Groups & Portfolios area (Mahara)*
5. *Interactive tools*
6. *Communication tools*



The student café was created as a social discussion space for students on the distance taught MSc Burn Care – Blizzard Institute

While the majority of questions looked at core VLE functionality to support learning (e.g. discussion forum use), some focussed on the more advanced pedagogical tools within QMplus such as the ability to select a seminar group (*the Group choice tool in Moodle*), peer assessing a classmate's work (*the Workshop tool in Moodle*) or uploading a CV (*the CV tool in Groups & Portfolios – Mahara*) as we were keen to see how this functionality may have been adopted by academics in the first year of the new system and the students reaction to their use.

The questions within each section explored the frequency of use of each tool ranging from 'Daily' to 'Never used'. These questions were mandatory for all respondents. A series of optional free-text asked respondents to comment about the most and least useful ways QMplus had been used to support their learning. A summary of comments from this section have been added to the appropriate sections in the first part of this analysis (student voices).

The final questions in this section (8.7 – 8.9) looked at other technologies respondents found helpful in their learning. The first mandatory question consisted of a predetermined list of the most popular external tools grouped into twelve categories and the second invited respondents to tell us more generally about other ways they felt QMplus could be used to support their learning.

For ease of analysis the respondents who had never used a tool are coloured red in the bar charts that follow. Those who accessed the tool frequently (i.e. daily or every week) are coloured green. The individual charts are presented in order of frequency with the most frequently used first. In the discussion percentages have been rounded up to the nearest whole number.

8.1 GENERAL INFORMATION AND MODULE ADMINISTRATION

Below you will find a range of potential ways QMplus can be used to support learning. Tell us the frequency with which you used the system in these ways.

Figure 22: Finding out about assessment and feedback on my module

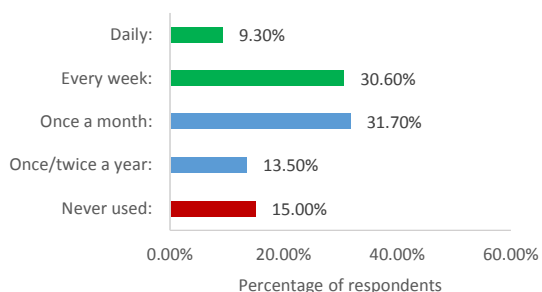


Figure 23: Managing my calendar/checking my calendar

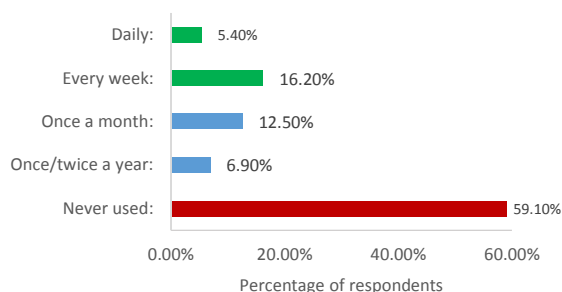


Figure 24: Finding out contact details of teaching staff

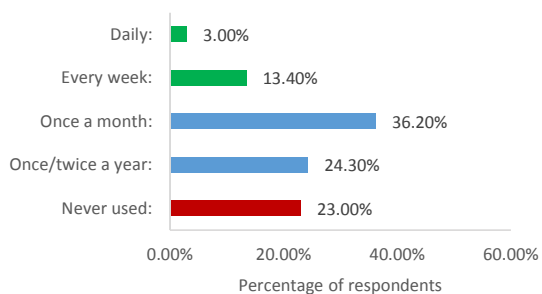
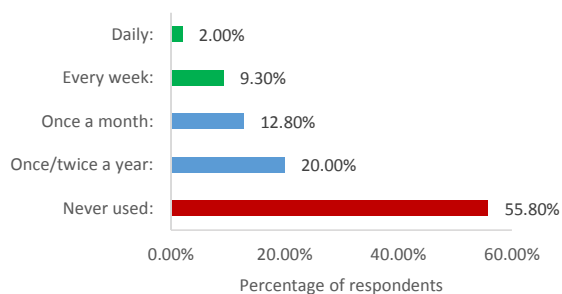


Figure 25: Signing up to seminar or tutorial groups



With respect to how frequently respondents used QMplus to access general information and administrative functions, 40% of respondents (215 respondents) accessed assessment information on a frequent basis while almost 22% checked their QMplus calendar (116) frequently. 16% (88) assessed contact details of teaching staff for their modules (88) and 11% (61) frequently used QMplus to sign up for seminar/tutorial groups.

On the other hand the calendar and seminar/tutorial group signup features were never tried at all by 60% (318) and 56% (301) of respondents respectively. Staff contact details too were never accessed by 23% (124) respondents.

Overall, assessment and feedback information was accessed most often with 85% (461) of respondents looking at it at least once or twice a year, followed by contact details of teaching staff 77% (418) and at the other end only 44% (241) and 41% (224) of respondents accessing the seminar/tutorial signup and calendaring functionality over the same time period.

Student voices

Of all the ways used to support your learning mentioned above which was the most or least useful and why?

"I also need to contact my tutors regularly, and having their contact details available is very helpful."

"Organisation tools i.e. calendar, feel clunky and very outdated."

"The calendar, it is not as useful as the calendar on a phone, as it is too difficult to access. If there was an application for the calendar, which gave alerts, it would be more useful."

8.1.1 Discussion

Ease of access to assessment information was identified as a key requirement for the design of QMplus and was written into the E-learning policy documentation for HSS from the outset. The data in this survey suggests that this information - consisting of assessment criteria, learning & teaching profile etc. - was important to students not necessarily all the time but certainly at key points in the module teaching lifecycle.

Contact details for key teaching staff were presented through the module info block and this too proved popular. The calendar feature proved less popular. This may be because the calendar is not immediately visible in the QMplus interface unless the module convenor has added it to the module homepage as a block (though it can also be added by any user on the My QMplus page via the customisation feature). In the comments section one respondent mentioned the desire to download a feed from the calendar to their smartphone via ical. It might be a good idea to make the link more prominent and/or include a 'how to add the calendar' guide in the student help documentation area.

We did not expect widespread use of advanced tools such as group/seminar choice, as they require time to set-up and careful execution. We were aware of heavy use of the tool in the School of Business and Management (SBM) in September 2012 but it comes as some surprise that 2% of respondents said they were accessing this feature every day! There may have been some misinterpretation of the question in this respect, as respondents may have mistaken the wording and thought it applied to any kind of group/tutorial signup ability (e.g. via a handout or discussion forum) rather than a specific tool in the QMplus itself.

8.1.2 Recommendations

- Continue to provide clear and easy ways for students to access the assessment information for their modules.
- Reinforce the importance of displaying essential contact information for all members of the teaching team on the module homepage.
- Ensure the student help area in QMplus contains information about how to access the calendar for assessment deadlines.
- Promote the time-saving features of specialised tools like 'Group choice' to staff.

8.1.3 Already actioned in 2013/14

- The Module Info block has been redesigned to display more key module information through a simple and clear admin interface.
- Templates created for the seven new areas within S & E all include clear and visible assessment information links.

8.2 TEACHING MATERIALS

Below you will find a range of potential ways QMplus can be used to support learning. Tell us the frequency with which you used the system in these ways.

Figure 26: Accessing lecture notes

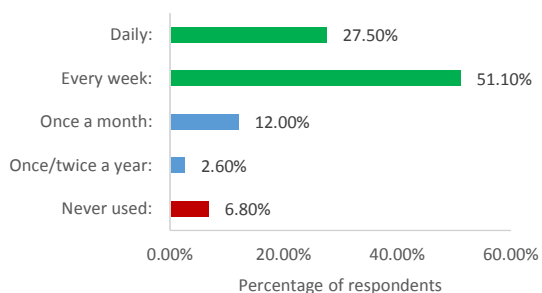


Figure 27: Accessing lecture slides (e.g. PowerPoint)

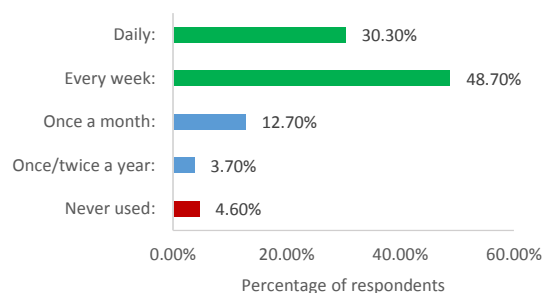


Figure 28: Accessing a reading list within my module

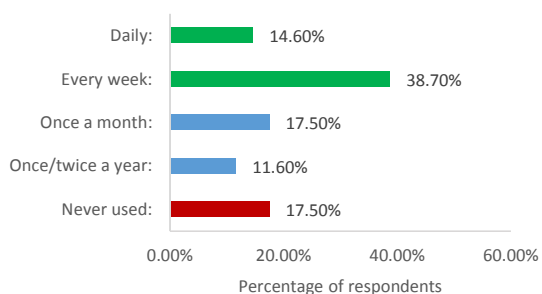


Figure 29: Accessing a reading list for my module/course using the Library reading list software (TALIS)

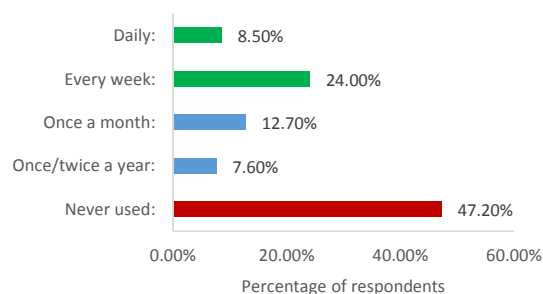


Figure 30: Accessing other websites via a QMplus hyperlink

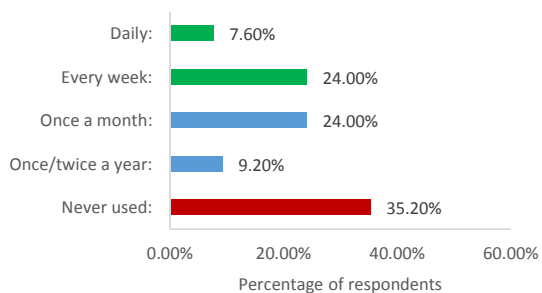


Figure 31: Watching lectures using Q-Review

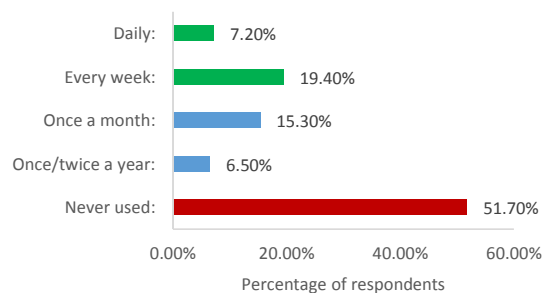


Figure 32: Watching videos in QMplus (e.g. YouTube, Screencast etc.)

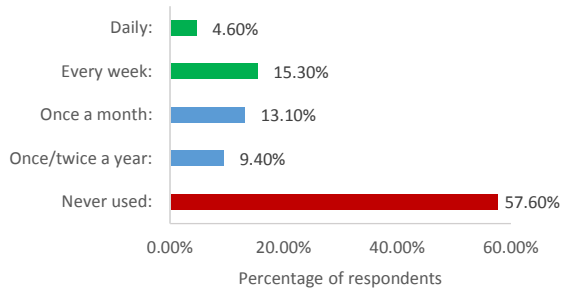
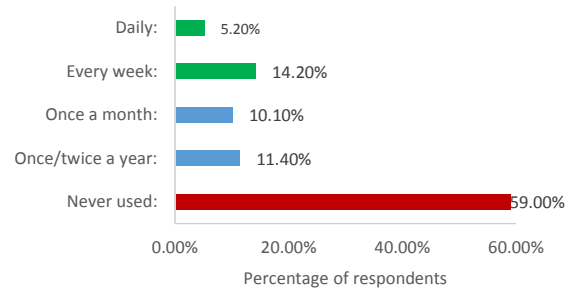


Figure 33: Listening to audio files or podcasts



In this section we looked at a set of eight different kinds of teaching material created in other software packages and uploaded or linked to within the QMplus module area. With respect to how frequently respondents used QMplus to access these materials, approximately 79% of respondents (427) accessed both lecture notes and lecture slides on a frequent basis. Of these two types 30% (164) accessed their lecture slides every day while 28% accessed their notes.

Reading lists were broken down into the ‘standard’ reading list i.e. created as an HTML ‘page’ or uploaded ‘file’ in QMplus or a Talis Aspire⁹ reading list i.e. created in the external tool. These were the next most frequently accessed materials with 53% (289) and 36% (176) of respondents respectively accessing them on a frequent basis. This was followed by external hyperlinks at 32% (171).

The Q-Review lecture capture service was accessed by 27% of respondents (144) on a frequent basis. Other multimedia learning materials in the form of video and audio were the least frequently accessed at 20% (108) and 19% (105) respectively.

Almost 60% of respondents never used either audio or video to augment their learning in QMplus and the echo360 lecture capture service Q-review was never tried by almost 52%.

Student voices
<i>Of all the ways used to support your learning mentioned above which was the most or least useful and why?</i>
<i>“..the module leaders updated us with news, prezzi’s, powerpoints, seminar handouts, and many more, which are useful and mostly essential to enhance our understanding and knowledge of the period.”</i>
<i>“Dr XXXX provides lots of materials for the weekly seminars on QMPlus which is very helpful! Better for the environment than a course pack.”</i>
<i>“Q-review was particularly good and useful. If I was ill I could watch a lecture at home. Really good job. The only disadvantage was that I could not see the white board where my lecturer was writing questions.”</i>
<i>“I was pleased when relevant readings were uploaded in a timely manner”.</i>
<i>“Reading lists are good, but only when they work. Some links have been useless and I've had to manually search for the article on Ebsco instead.”</i>
<i>“Having the lecture slides, notes and video lectures on QMPlus was incredibly useful. Made all resources easily accessible and could go over material again. I would like lecturers to put more information up at the start of the year rather than release it as the year progresses, even if they must change bits, as it gives us a much clearer idea of the material to be covered.”</i>

⁹ Talis Aspire is reading list software [supported by the library](#) that integrates into QMplus.

"Most of my lecturers did not have access to QMPlus themselves and were unable to ensure that documents were posted in the proper sections, or posted at all. Slides weren't available when the lecturer intended, or a document would be in a completely random area. Not helpful to our learning."

8.2.1 Discussion

Lecture notes and slides are clearly very important resources for students studying in blended contexts and the results of this survey suggest that this long-acknowledged benefit of the digital space to augment the face-to-face classroom is well used and liked by QML students. *"If I had to miss the lecture for good reason, I can go and look at the basics at least"*. In fact, some respondents were unhappy if they were not available *"..remind lecturers to upload materials"*, or preferred them to lecture capture.. *"notes prepared by teachers would be better than video materials"*.

Although more students had never tried the TALiS Aspire reading list software (supported by the library), the same percentage of respondents used both the reading list software as they did the more general reading lists provided by the academic within QMplus. It is difficult to read from the data the benefits or otherwise of each type of list suffice to say the lists themselves were seen as useful *"I was pleased when relevant readings were uploaded in a timely manner"*. It would be worthwhile exploring the use and effectiveness of both in follow-up research or the next survey.

It may come as some surprise that more than 50% of respondents had never tried Q-Review, however, among those who had these lecture-videos are seen as very useful for their learning *"all lectures should be recorded and uploaded using Q-Review ..it has been the most important help for me during revision."* The results we have noted here correspond with a recently published report from the Students' Union into Learning Resources¹⁰: *"For most students, the benefits are so obvious that it is baffling that so many lectures held in Q-Review enabled classrooms are not recorded."*

Results for the use of multimedia (audio and video) were very similar with 58-59% never having used this kind of learning material within QMplus and only about 20% of respondents having accessed them on a daily or weekly basis. As there is currently no infrastructure to support the storage, upload and delivery of media files at Queen Mary the use of multimedia has not been actively encouraged.

Access to external links were also quite low with 17% of respondents accessing them on a daily or weekly basis. Either academics don't see the need to provide links to external materials, they expect students to find resources themselves or they are included in reading lists. As it was the first year of using a VLE for many academics the focus may have been on getting their materials migrated into the system from Blackboard and getting a working module up and running with core materials such as lecture notes. It will be very interesting to compare the data received in this section with next survey to see whether a greater diversity of learning materials are being employed as QMplus matures.

¹⁰ [Student Experience Seminar 2012 : Learning Resources](#)

8.2.2 Recommendations

- Work with the library to continue to promote and better advertise the advantages of using the TALIS Aspire reading list software.
- Further exploration of the way readings lists are best presented and used.
- Profile examples of blended learning designs that include embedded audio and video activities and resources.
- Provide an easy way for academics and students to upload and store larger multimedia files into QMplus.
- Continue to promote the benefits of lecture capture and profile best practice in its use.
- Profile examples of more advanced use of e-learning through case studies, workshops/seminars and one-to-one sessions.

8.2.3 Already actioned in 2013/14

- Use of TALIS aspire reading lists has already grown in the 2013/14 academic year.
- ‘Opt-out’ policies for Q-Review have been implemented in 4 Humanities schools and the Institute of Dentistry.
- The new ELU website will include a new case study area as well as a pedagogical support area to augment the technical advice about how to use E-learning.
- Ongoing work is being carried out around a one-year pilot of a new media server which would integrate with QMplus and enable greater use of multimedia in teaching & learning.

8.3 ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK INFORMATION AND TOOLS

Below you will find a range of potential ways QMplus can be used to support learning. Tell us the frequency with which you used the system in these ways.

Figure 34: Accessing assessment documents (e.g. criteria etc)

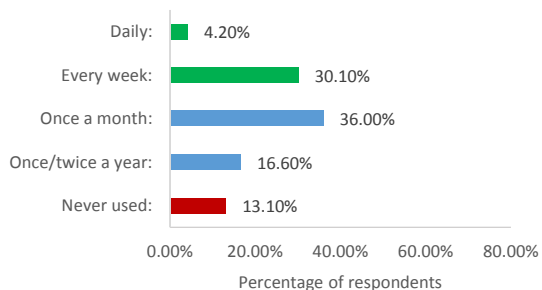


Figure 35: Submitting work/assignments electronically

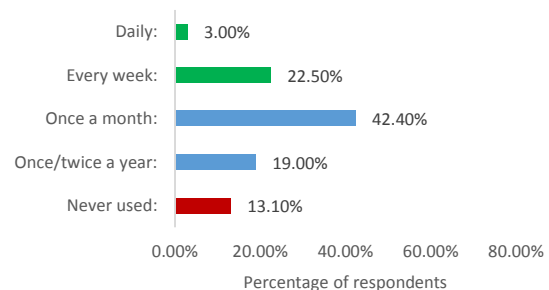


Figure 36: Viewing feedback

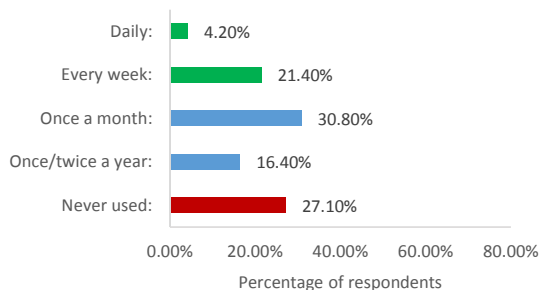


Figure 37: Taking online tests or quizzes

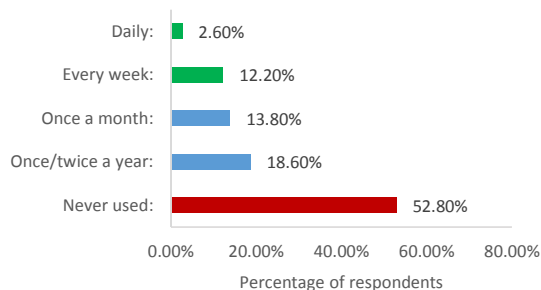
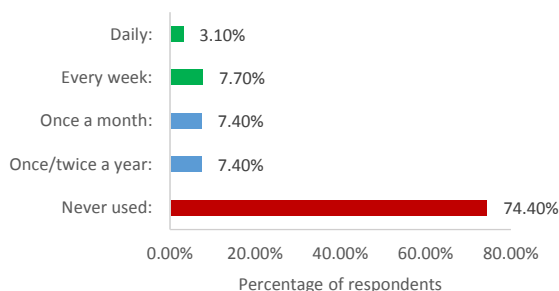


Figure 38: Developing an e-portfolio for my module/programme



In this section we grouped together five different tools and features of QMplus whose purpose is to facilitate assessment and feedback.

With respect to these tools, 34% of respondents (186) accessed assessment information frequently i.e. at least once a week and 26% (139) submitted assignments on at least a weekly basis. Feedback was accessed by 25% of respondents (138) and online quizzes by 15% (80). E-portfolios were accessed frequently by 11% (59) of those surveyed.

In contrast 74% (403) of respondents had never developed an e-portfolio as an assessed task, 53% (286) never tried taking online quizzes, and 27% (147) never used QMplus to view feedback.

Student voices
<i>Of all the ways used to support your learning mentioned above which was the most or least useful and why</i>
<i>"All in all QMplus offers a direct and reflective way for seminar leaders to provide feedback on assignments."</i>
<i>"Feedback online is also very useful as you can access from home and so you do not have to wait to travel into university to receive feedback - more efficient."</i>
<i>"Submitting work online at first was hard but actually worked out a lot better than anticipated."</i>
<i>"Online quizzes were a treat."</i>
<i>"Least useful? - Viewing Feedback. There is not a single feedback there."</i>
<i>"Uploading essays was hard to do so, frustrating and an unnecessary stress. Please fix this for future students."</i>

8.3.1 Discussion

Assessment and feedback information are an important part of the modern online learning environment, in fact the 2012 UCISA survey into ¹¹TEL (Technology Enhanced Learning) nationally noted that assignment submission is increasing in scale across the UK. In our survey, 87% of respondents accessed assessment information and uploaded assignments into QMplus. This high percentage and the comments received, suggest that this feature was very popular with students: *“less hassle when being able to submit from home” and “far easier than sending emails”*.

There was some dissatisfaction expressed in the comments about technical problems experienced during the year when submitting assignments. Problems centred around the process of submission - *“Uploading essays was hard to do so, frustrating and an unnecessary stress. Please fix this for future students.”* - and the lack of acknowledgement of a submitted assignment via email - *“Make it clearer if assignments have uploaded”*. These comments about the difficulties surrounding assignment submission are echoed in other parts of this report notable sections 10.3 and 12.2)

Another interesting observation in these results was the fact that 27% of respondents never received any feedback through QMplus. This suggests that academics may be using the system to manage assignment collection but have other ways to give feedback. That being said 73% of respondents did receive feedback on QMplus at least once or twice during the year.

Whilst the numbers of respondents using the E-portfolio in QMplus as an integral part of their module was low (11% doing this frequently) the results do show some promise for the future development of this area of the system. It would be useful to find out in future surveys more detail about the kinds of portfolios being developed (reflective learning journals, one-off portfolio activities etc.).

Another interesting statistic is the number of students who had actually encountered online tests and quizzes in QMplus at least once in the year (47%). Considering the learning curve required to implement online tests in Moodle and the fact that quiz development was not a topic covered as part of core training for the new system during the migration, we should be pleased with these results. SBCS and EECS have been particularly enthusiastic users of this functionality and the experiences gathered by practitioners in this area – both pedagogical and administrative - need to be more widely shared across the college.

The results in this section generally highlight the importance seen by the student of the learning environment in supporting the assessment lifecycle from information (criteria, learning profile etc.) through online submission to the release of grades and feedback.

8.3.2 Recommendations

- Focus on improving the student experience of assignment submission with
 - clear and simple submission screens for all assignment tools
 - a receipting system to inform students clearly that a successful upload has taken place
 - Guidance provided by schools to all staff informing them of the appropriate configuration of assignment tools to improve the consistency of their use on modules

¹¹ 2012 Survey of Technology Enhanced Learning for higher education in the UK - UCISA

- Provide training and examples of how online quizzes and question banks can be used for formative and summative assessments in imaginative ways.
- Encourage schools to include clearly signposted assessment information in their module templates.

8.3.3 Already actioned in 2013/14

- An improved assignment submission tool (Turnitin assignment type) was added to QMplus in August 2013. This tool includes email notification to students on submission, better integration with the online marking tool 'Grademark' (part of the Turnitin service) and an improved user interface.
- Most Science & Engineering schools learned from the experience of implementing the HSS template design in year 1 and included a summary of assessment information at the top of their module page layout.

8.4 GROUPS AND PORTFOLIOS

Below you will find a range of potential ways QMplus can be used to support learning. Tell us the frequency with which you used the system in these ways.

Figure 39: Keeping an online journal

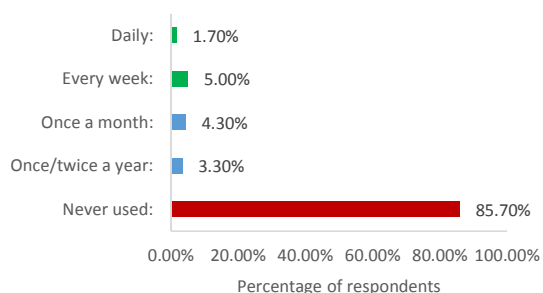


Figure 40: Carrying out group work

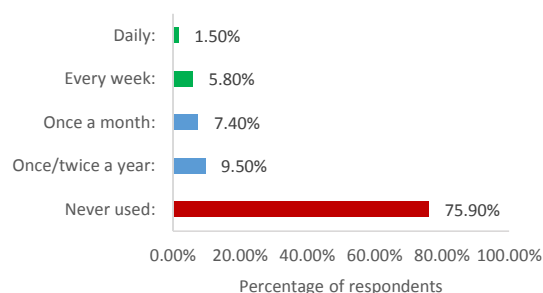


Figure 41: Developing your own personal portfolio

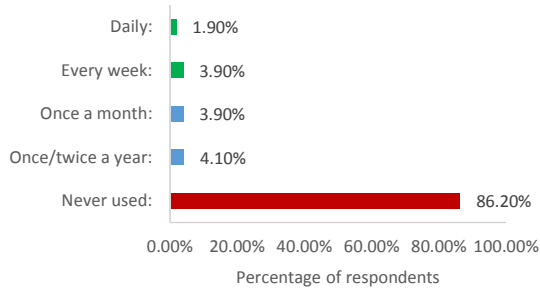


Figure 42: Uploading and/or presenting a CV

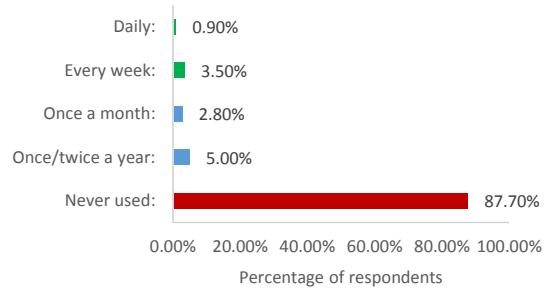
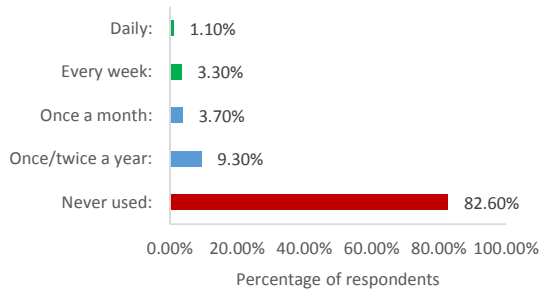


Figure 43: Setting up a group



With respect to the frequency of use of the Groups and Portfolios (Mahara) area of QMplus we selected the five main ways the tool could be used to help support learning and asked users to tell us how often they used them.

The two most frequently accessed parts of the system to support learning were keeping an online journal and carrying out groupwork ~ 7% for each (39 respondents). Using Mahara to set up a personal portfolio was done frequently by 6% of users (31). Only 4.4% (24) of all respondents had used the CV development tools or set up their own group in the system.

In contrast, 88% of respondents had never tried to upload a CV and 86% did not use the portfolio features or developed an online journal.

Carrying out group work was the most frequently accessed of all the areas that we asked about with 24% of users having accessed this feature at least once in the year.

Student voices
<i>Of all the ways used to support your learning mentioned above which was the most or least useful and why</i>
<i>"Least useful - The groups and portfolios. I have never used it as I am not sure how it works and how I can benefit from this part of QMplus."</i>
<i>"Least useful - all social network-like features, such as chat, creation of groups and so on. Because I simply don't need them."</i>
<i>"I don't need another social network, hence chat option, creating groups and etc. seems pointless to me (I have a Facebook account which I check only once a month - and that is more than enough for me)."</i>
<i>"Encourage greater interaction between students on QMplus. Perhaps make a group/page for each module/course year."</i>
<i>"Blogging software allows teaching to be more personal to each student, if they document their work and other things that relate to their course, teachers can access them and then comment on their discussion forum to help the student or the student can help to inform the tutor of what works and doesn't in seminars."</i>
<i>"developing an e-portfolio was a novel way of learning that I really enjoyed"</i>

8.4.1 Discussion

The Groups and Portfolios (Mahara) area is quite different to the QMplus module area (Moodle). This difference is not just restricted to the interface itself (look and feel, file upload mechanisms etc) but the ownership and control of the system, where, for the most part, the student owns the space and can set it up to work as they see fit. This might be guided by schools or module leads to achieve particular learning outcomes, but more often relies on the student themselves.

With the ambitious timetable we set ourselves to implement QMplus we did not give this area of QMplus the kind of attention it needed to ensure users understood its purpose and how to set it up effectively. Orientation sessions with students, necessarily time constrained, meant focus was placed on the main teaching areas of the system and the functionality therein and there was little online help and guidance in QMplus for either staff or students in how to use these tools and why one might want to. The results of this lack of information are clearly shown in the survey data. *"I was not even aware that there were so many aspects to QMplus"*.

The uptake of and perceived usefulness of the group functionality is pleasing to see and it will be worthwhile tracking the growth in use over time of this functionality. The group tools themselves were seen as being *'backward and clunky'* compared to web 2.0 tools on the web. But there was a clear willingness, expressed in the comments questions, to encourage both community features and groupwork generally... *"groupwork on QMplus is a good idea and should be encouraged more"*.

8.4.2 Recommendations

- More work is required to profile the benefits of using Mahara for such things as reflecting in an e-portfolio and supporting groupwork and interaction
- Development of an online 'Getting started with groups and portfolios' course in QMplus, similar to the existing Moodle course area, for students to learn about how the software can be used to support their learning journey at Queen Mary in formal and informal ways
- Improve the guidelines and help given to academic staff on the ways they can engage with the Groups & Portfolios area and provide case studies of how it is already being used at QML.
- Solve technical problems and usability issues around the integration of Moodle and Mahara that are affecting usability.

8.4.3 Already actioned in 2013/14

- Currently developing a comprehensive set of learning materials for staff and students on using the Groups and Portfolios area
- Increasing use of the tools in the Groups and Portfolios area visible this academic year e.g. an 'Academic Portfolio' will be piloted in the Institute of Dentistry with 72 students from January 2014.

8.5 INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES

Below you will find a range of potential ways QMplus can be used to support learning. Tell us the frequency with which you used the system in these ways.

Figure 44: Participating in online discussion

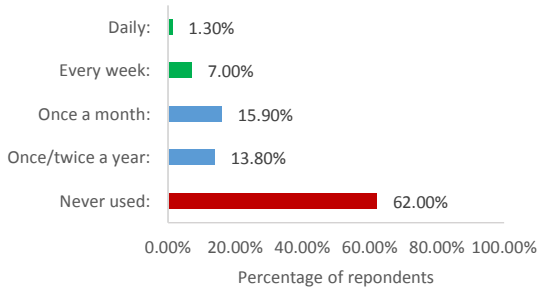


Figure 45: Other online learning packages e.g. revision activities/program specific activities

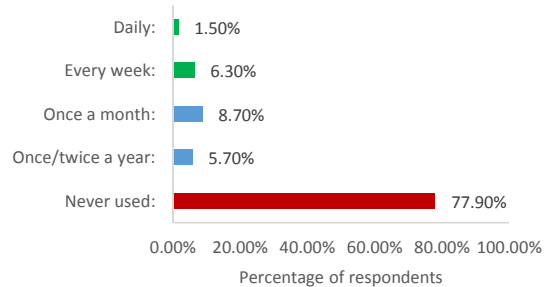


Figure 46: Participating in online chat

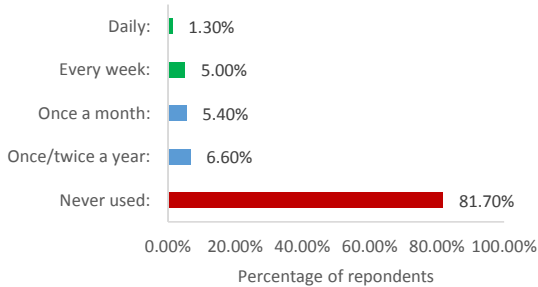
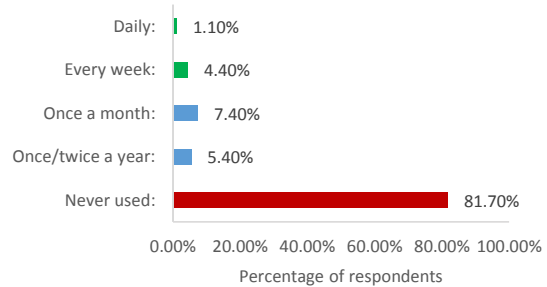


Figure 47: Peer reviewing other student's work



In this set of questions we explored the frequency of use of four of the main interactive tools within QMplus. Use of these tools by students would represent more advanced use of the system.

8.3% (45) of respondents participated in online discussions more than once a week and 38% (206) participated once or twice a year or more. However, only 8% of users accessed an online learning package (e.g. a publisher developed learning module) frequently. Using QMplus for synchronous online chat was only accessed by 6% of users and about the same percentage used QMplus for peer reviewing other student's work.

Student voices
<i>Of all the ways used to support your learning mentioned above which was the most or least useful and why</i>
<i>"I think that it would be more useful if tutors organised more chat groups to help students understand a topic. On Facebook there is a group which was organised for 1st year students to allow them to ask questions to each other, which was very useful for a lot of students who were struggling during preparation for exams. I believe that it would be very useful to organise the same thing on QM-Plus to involve teachers and correct any information given by fellow students."</i>
<i>"Well, most things listed in the survey I didn't even know and they seem pretty cool, like chat and e-portfolio, so, I guess I'll try find them and use them"</i>
<i>"Online chats - simply because I have never had, nor felt the need to use the system in this fashion."</i>
<i>"Using the chat option has been especially useful for working away from campus - since March a group have us have been using it weekly, or more, as a way of creating a structured working environment online to support each other in our work, particularly in writing and we have use the chat function to set up a weekly remote/online writing retreat, based on the model of residential writing retreats run by Thinking Writing."</i>

"Discussion forums. I often feel shy and uncomfortable with the idea of other students being able to see what questions I ask the professor. I prefer if there was instead an option to opt in/out of other students viewing your posts."

8.5.1 Discussion

Interactive tools represent a more advanced use of the learning environment than content delivery (uploading files, lecture notes or links) and are the area of pedagogical development in online learning that the E-learning Unit are particularly interested in encouraging at Queen Mary.

Of the four tools we asked about, the online discussion or forum tool is, arguably, the easiest to implement and can assist in the preparation of students for a range of tasks including seminars and lectures, exams, fieldwork etc. It is, therefore, quite surprising how little it was being used. As has been mentioned previously, this may be because there is a lack of understanding about the potential of online discussion to support face-to-face teaching or that the tool is perceived as inappropriate for the learning context etc. A staff survey of QMplus will be conducted at the end of the 2013/14 academic year and questions such as these will need to be explored.

Peer reviewing other students' work can be carried out using the workshop tool, custom built for that purpose, or more simply using the forums, database or glossary tools in QMplus or feedback tools in Mahara. Only 18% of users had encountered some kind of peer review activities over the course of the year. Again these types of online activities require time and effort to create, monitor and evaluate.

Most academics have many demands on their time and finding out about these tools within the learning environment may not be a priority. Training and support resources need to be developed to enable academics to understand the usefulness of these tools within QMplus and see examples of how they can be used effectively with students.

With respect to online chat activities, students mentioned that they didn't use them because there were better tools out there that they were familiar with such as Facebook.

8.5.2 Recommendations

- Continue to provide opportunities for staff to learn about the wealth of interactive capabilities within QMplus and how they can enhance blended teaching.
- Develop a set of pedagogical guides to the interactive features within QMplus and augment these with case studies of best practice.
- Move from tools focussed help guides to more pedagogically focussed documentation.

8.5.3 Already actioned in 2013/14

- The ELU is currently developing a new web presence which will provide more pedagogically focussed information of this type.

8.6 COMMUNICATION FEATURES

Below you will find a range of potential ways QMplus can be used to support learning. Tell us the frequency with which you used the system in these ways.

Figure 48: Sending emails using Quickmail¹²

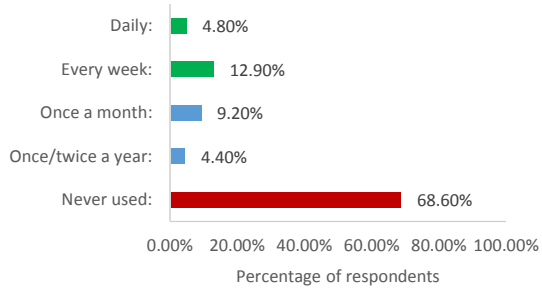


Figure 49: Communicating with classmates and tutors

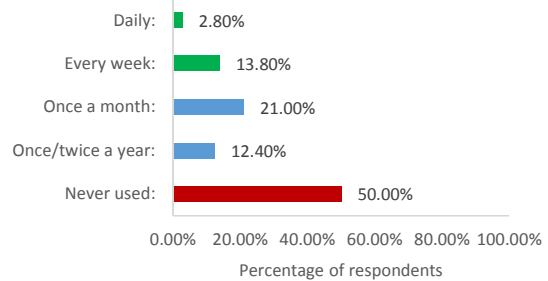


Figure 50: Communicating with other QML friends

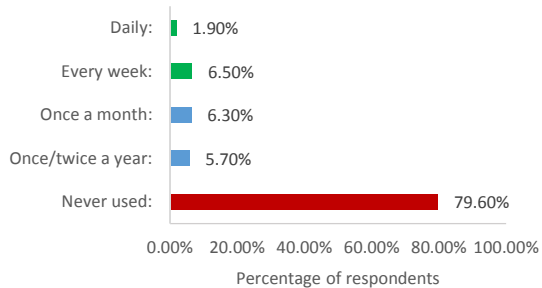


Figure 51: The wall in your Groups & Portfolios area

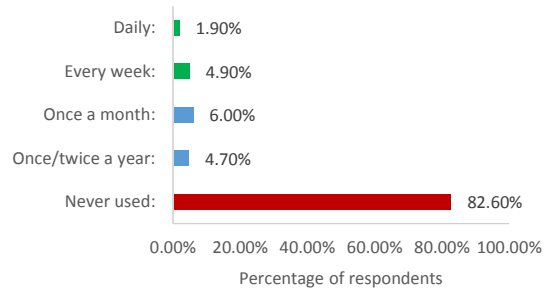
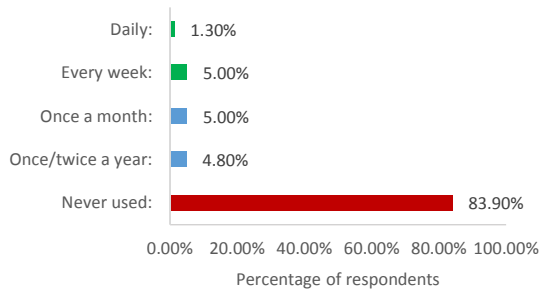


Figure 52: The Comments block



This section explored the five different communicative methods that could be used within QMplus and asked respondents how often they used them.

20% of respondents (170) used QMplus to send emails (using the Quickmail block), with almost 18% accessing the email system on a frequent basis (96). 50% of respondents communicated with each other and their tutors at least once or twice a year with about 17% (90) doing this more frequently. 20% of respondents used the software to communicate with their QML friends with about 8% doing this frequently.

In contrast, the wall-posting capabilities on the Mahara profile page were only popular with around 7% of users, though a further 10% had tried the features at least once in the year and only 6% of

¹² Quickmail is an email plugin for Moodle that allows users to send an email to individuals or groups within the class. It can be used by teachers and students and is found in the block menu within a module or course.

respondents tried the comments block in Moodle (accessible in the blocks menu of the My QMplus page).

Student voices
<i>Of all the ways used to support your learning mentioned above which was the most or least useful and why</i>
<i>"Quickmail is SO useful - it's great having an easy way to contact staff and colleagues."</i>
<i>"Group / communication features. Would have been useful if people were using them, but there are plenty of well-featured alternatives (Google Hangouts, Freedcamp) for group projects."</i>
<i>"Least useful - Talking to friends over QMplus, as used other resources such as Facebook groups and chats, as is more accessible: it allows to download a system which notifies automatically about new messages on the phone/laptop."</i>
<i>"Training on QMplus needs to be better as some of the features I was not made aware of such as quickmail and groups/portfolio so do not know how to use them or how they might be useful."</i>

8.6.1 Discussion

The communication features provided in QMplus did not prove particularly useful to the respondents of our survey. In fact the proliferation of red in the barcharts representing 'never used' tells the story clearly.

The key question is why people aren't using QMplus to communicate in the ways described and does it matter if they aren't? It may be due to the fact that we did not publicise the communication capabilities particularly well to academics during their migration training in the summer of 2012 or to students themselves during the orientation sessions. It could also be due to the fact that most people have an established network of contacts and communication mechanisms already in place prior to arriving at university and don't see this as a prime requirement of our system. How many walls do you need? Many respondents also identified this as a 'least useful way' to support learning in section 8.7.

All of these potential factors may have been compounded by the fact that the tools themselves are either clunky (online chat), difficult to find (the comments block) or were not designed particularly well and therefore performed in variable ways (Quickmail). Quickmail is an interesting case, the software was added to QMplus quite late in 2012 just prior to the start of the year and not many academics knew about it. A couple of schools in HSS used it a lot and integrated it into modules in their school with some success (noted by some respondents).

The technical integration of Moodle and Mahara has not reached the point where communication or notifications can be transferred between the two. Therefore communication chains are easily broken. In addition email links to discussion forum posts in Mahara can often take the user to error pages if they are not authenticated, hardly conducive to promoting communication.

Students should be free to choose whatever communication channel they like to chat and email friends. However, there may be specific learning contexts where communication between classmates, group members or between a student and their personal tutor or module lead should be done in a password protected environment that is close to the materials being discussed, free from advertising or more 'private'. For this reason we must ensure that the tools provided are fit for purpose and we should continue to inform users of their presence and how to use them.

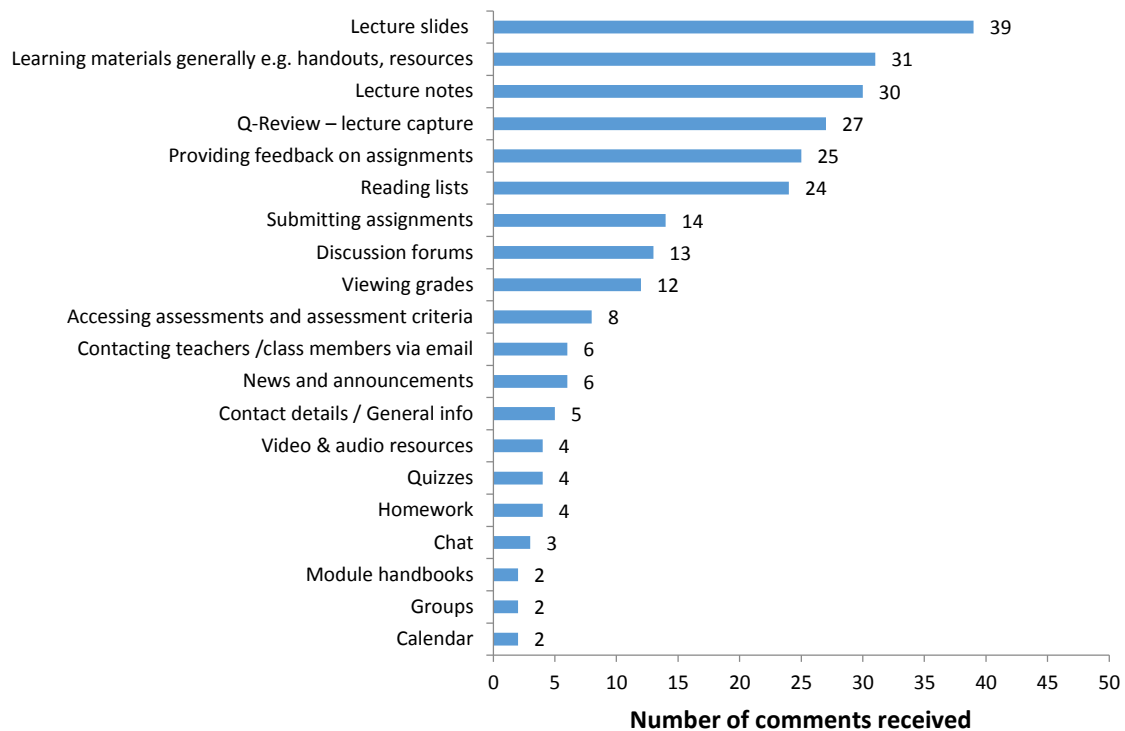
8.6.2 Recommendations

- Integrate college email into QMplus (e.g. notifications, direct email links) so that the two systems can be used together more easily.
- Examine the potential to redesign or upgrade some communication features such as commenting and chat.
- Fix technical issues affecting email notifications from Mahara.
- Improve integration between the two systems so that, for example, notifications from one can be seen in the other.

8.7 THE MOST AND LEAST USEFUL WAYS QMPLUS SUPPORTED STUDENT LEARNING

In this section we asked respondents to comment on the most and least useful ways QMplus had supported their learning. A large number of comments were received on both and these were grouped into appropriate themes. Some of the comments have already been included in the ‘Student voices’ sections of this area. The bar charts list the most popular themes by frequency.

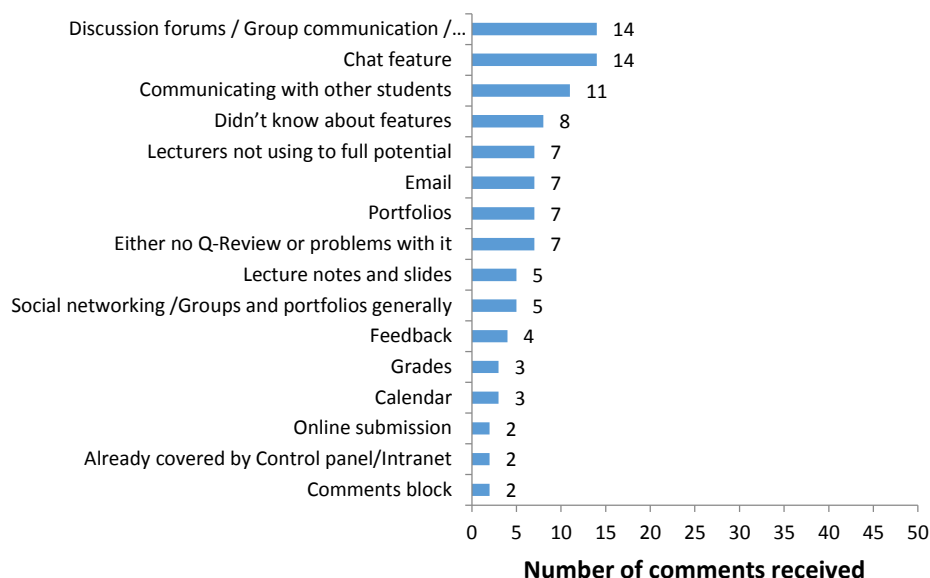
Figure 53: Of all the ways used to support your learning mentioned which was the most useful?



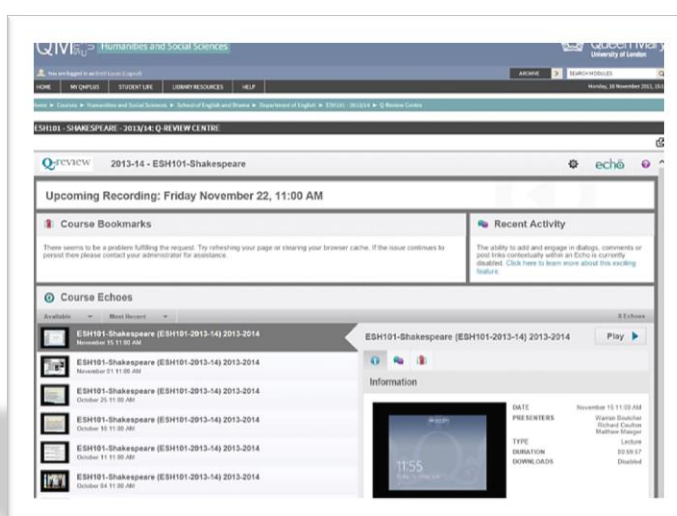
In total 292 respondents made comments about the most useful ways QMplus had supported their learning (not all are presented on the bar chart). As already seen in the teaching materials section (figure 27) respondents saw lecture slides as being the most useful resource in QMplus to support their learning with 39 mentioning them (7.1%): “..definitely one of the most useful features”. Learning material generally as well as lecture notes were also seen as very useful by 31 and 30 respondents respectively (6%): “ by having them online you can look at diagrams in greater detail

and make notes accordingly.” Lecture capture was seen as useful by 27 respondents (5%) with many expressing the desire for all lectures to be uploaded. Feedback on assignments was seen as most useful by 24 respondents, many of those cited the time-saving aspect of getting this feedback through QMplus. 24 respondents mentioned reading lists as being most useful citing reasons like “all information in a modular fashion in one place.”

Figure 54: Of all the ways used to support your learning mentioned which was the least useful?



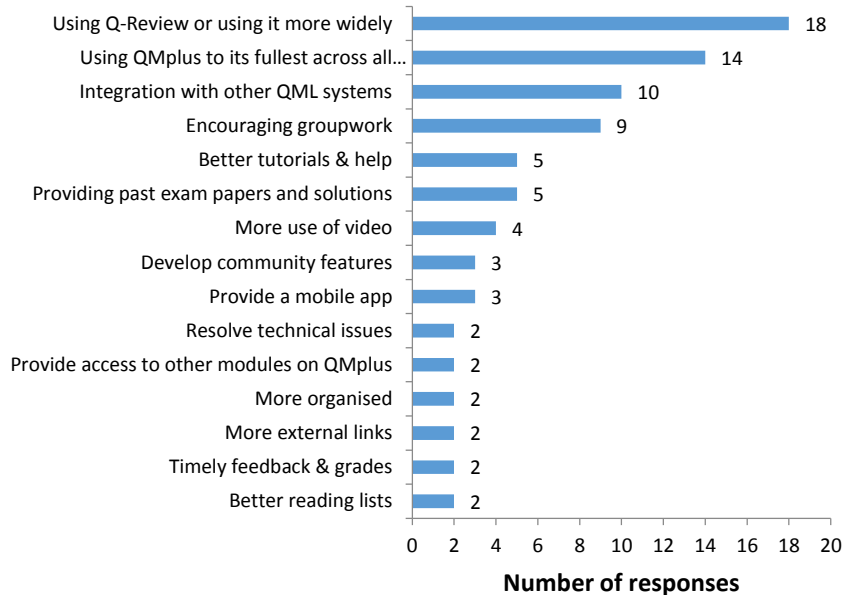
With respect to the least useful ways QMplus was seen as supporting student learning, the number of comments received was far fewer (122 comments), nevertheless once grouped into common themes some trends do emerge. As has been previously discussed, communication features including group communication (14 comments), chat (14 comments) and communicating with other students (11) were all seen as not being very useful in supporting their learning. There was also a cluster of 7 comments received mentioning lecturers not actually using QMplus to its fullest potential, Q-Review not being used or not working properly and the sense that feedback and grades were either not being used or not being used consistently “lecturers using different ways to send student grades back so we never know where we have them”.



Integration of Q-Review with QMplus – The Q-review Centre where students can access all the lectures for their module.

8.8 OTHER WAYS QMPLUS COULD BE USED TO SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING

Figure 55: Are there any other ways that QMplus could be used to support your learning?



In the final question in this section respondents were asked to comment on any other ways they felt that QMplus could support their learning. 107 comments were grouped into themes and are presented in the bar chart above in order of popularity. Although there were not a large number of comments received, there were some interesting suggestions.

The most popular suggestions centred around using both Q-Review and QMplus to their fullest potential (18 and 14 comments respectively). 10 respondents commented on the lack of integration of student facing IT systems and the desire for them to be more integrated and there was a call by 9 respondents for more groupwork to be encouraged. Other comments of note were the call to develop a sense of community within QMplus, resolve some of the outstanding technical issues e.g. oft-mentioned assignment submission problems as well as an interesting suggestion to open up access to the system to allow students to view content on other modules. *“..when learning about Freud there could be some links to certain sections of a psychology module which focuses on his ideas.”*

Student voices
Are there any other ways that QMplus could be used to support your learning?
<i>“Not all lecturers publish their notes - what they actually say during the lecture - and that is very depressing. Sometimes lecture slides are making no sense and there is no lecture recording available. So if the lecturers were asked to publish their notes every time, I would find qmplus much better in terms of increasing the quality of my learning experience.”</i>
<i>“It would be nice if everything was gathered in one place. Mysis and QMplus could be interlinked.”</i>
<i>“A hub, bringing together emails, calendars and reading lists/module information all into one place.”</i>
<i>“Relevant information to courses found by fellow students or teachers should be able to be shared in an area so everyone can share websites or info that is useful more effectively.”</i>
<i>“It would be nice if it didn't crash in the days before assignments are due in. This has happened a few times, and it would be great if 'downtime' was scheduled for the middle of the night rather than in the afternoon.”</i>

“Streamline it for lecturers who aren't full time employees. They seem to not be very trained on the subject, and are not given direct access, and it affects the students immensely.”

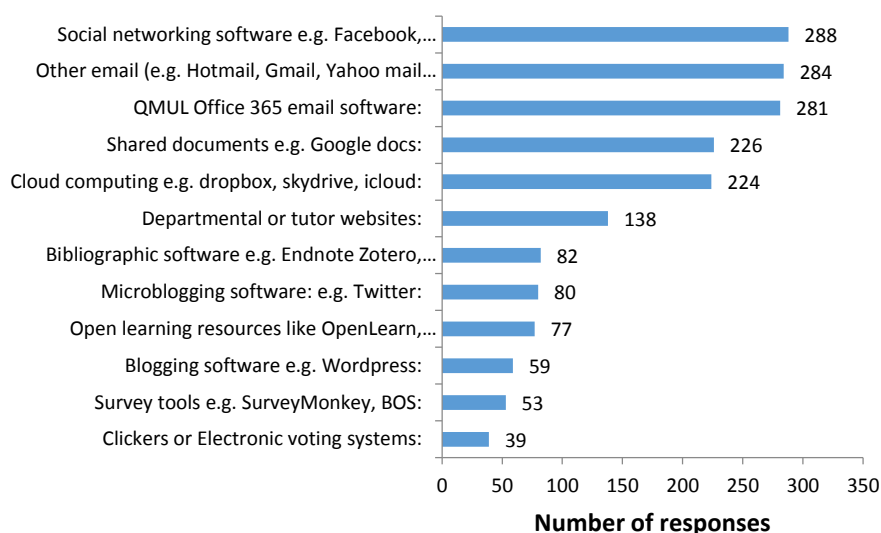
“I think perhaps if there was a way to create our own shortcut links on our homepage, as it can sometimes take a while to get to the section I need and much clicking around.”

“It would be great if the previous year's lecture notes could be available to access in the second and third year. This is so that it can be used for revision or if you have forgotten how to do something that you learnt in the first year it can be easily looked up on QMPLUS.”

8.9 OTHER DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES USED

In the final question in this section we stepped from the main Queen Mary supported learning technologies (QMplus & Q-Review) and instead asked about the so-called ‘unsupported technologies’ (excluding clickers) that students are using to assist their learning. Twelve popular technologies were presented and respondents were asked to select as many as they found helpful.

Figure 56: What other technologies do you find helpful for your studies?



Interestingly it is the communication tools that respondents find the most helpful with 53% (288) mentioning social networking software like Facebook or LinkedIn, and 52% (284) mentioning non-college email systems. Sharing documents in the cloud, such as Google Docs, was helpful for 42% of respondents as was the cloud storage sites like Dropbox and SkyDrive.

25% of respondents found departmental or tutor websites helpful and about 15% of users (80) found Microblogging software (e.g. Twitter), open educational resources (OERs) and Bibliographic software useful. Clickers or voting systems were seen as helpful by 7% of respondents.

8.10 FINAL COMMENTS

The key messages coming from the data in this section are that more needs to be done to promote the creative use of QMplus at Queen Mary and more research needs to be undertaken to find out how external tools are being used and what makes them effective in learning?

In respect of the promotion of E-learning, the E-learning unit has already acknowledged the fact and has embarked on an ambitious plan to redevelop its web presence to provide the detailed technical help and guidance needed to employ the tools available in QMplus and more importantly to develop its pedagogical guidance in more practical and dynamic ways. A case study template has been established and case studies are now being collected to showcase the innovative ways that tools can be employed. A network of practitioners has also been established in Mahara which enables users to ask questions about how colleagues are using different tools and how to use them effectively.

While the ELU already provides a regular programme of workshops on using parts of the system, it would also be useful to provide shorter more focussed sessions where users could come and talk about a particular activity they have used that worked well. These sessions would work well in a lunchtime format.

With regards to external tool usage, it is important that we understand how our students are engaging with the tools and capabilities of the web beyond the university, what they find most useful and why. Knowing this can help inform the types of learning activities it is possible to develop, the types of facilities that should be offered in-house and whether or not outdated tools should be supported.

8.11 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Foster college networks of e-learning professionals
- Create a bank of case studies of best practice in using QMplus and disseminate them widely.
- Encourage the development of e-learning strategies in schools that both promote pedagogical innovation and a degree of consistency of approach.
- Frame the blended learning experience in schools clearly for students so that expectations can be managed more easily.

8.12 ALREADY ACTIONED IN 2013/14

- An e-learning practitioner group has been established in Mahara with more than 200 users.
- An monthly e-learning newsletter is sent to over 300 users around the college.
- The ELU's programme of workshops and mode of delivery is under review.
- The ELU is delivering a module on e-learning for the PGCAP (ESDM018).

9 TECHNICAL SUPPORT

To gain an understanding of how the technical help and support provided for QMplus is viewed by the students at Queen Mary we asked respondents to rate the usefulness of the seven main ways in which help and support are delivered. We also asked them to let us know if they hadn't used the service or had never heard of it. Finally we asked a couple of optional questions about technical support overall and other methods that they may have used to get help.



9.1 SOLVING TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

In this section we were interested in how useful students found seven different methods of solving technical problems. Each of the methods was ranked by respondents using a five point scale of usefulness (*very useful to not useful at all*). The results presented in the bar charts below have been shaded to show respondents who found the method useful (green) and red if the method was not used.

Have you used any of the following methods to solve a technical problem with QMplus? Please indicate which methods you have used and rate how happy you were with the help you received.

Figure 57: Asked a friend / Classmate

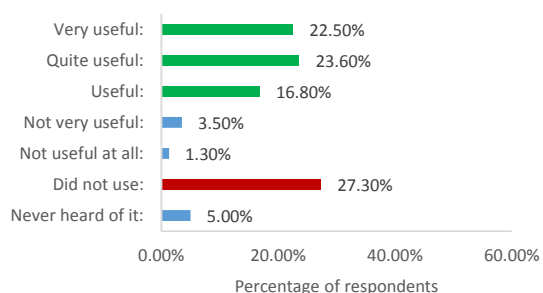


Figure 58: Asked a member of staff (e.g. your module lead)

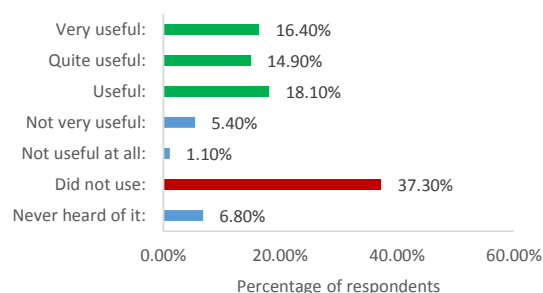


Figure 59: Online support material in QMplus

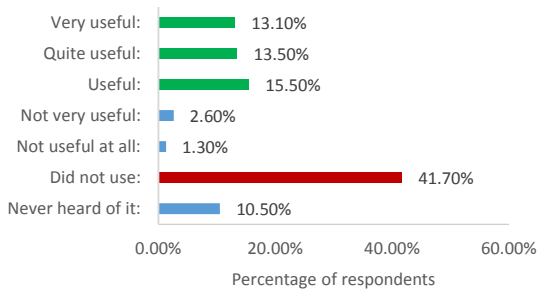


Figure 60: Used my department/school support

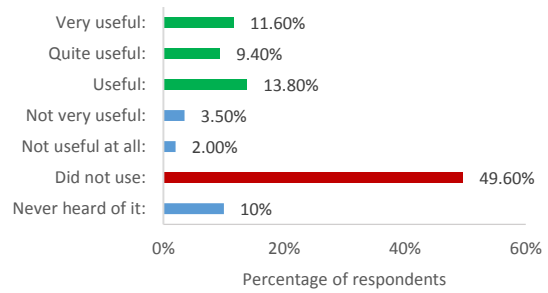


Figure 61: IT helpdesk (face-to-face e.g. Queen's Building)

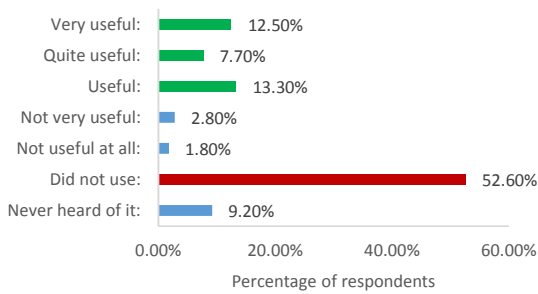


Figure 62: FAQs on the IT helpdesk

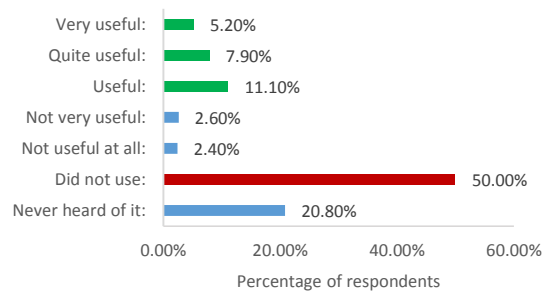
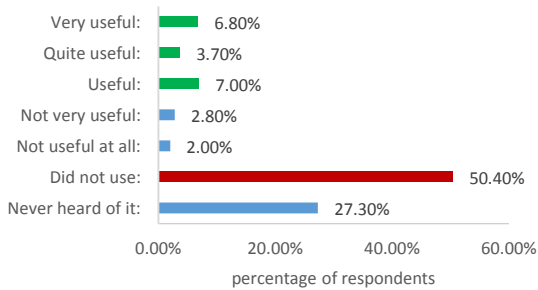


Figure 63: IT helpdesk /phone support (ext 8888)



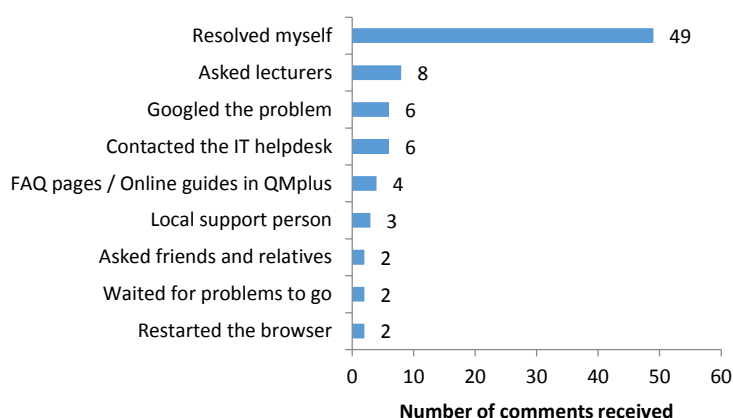
With respect to usefulness, asking a friend or classmate was by far the most useful method for solving QMplus technical problems with 63% (341) of respondents ranking this as useful, 23% of which found it very useful. 48% (268) found asking their module lead or another staff member useful while 42% (228) found the online support materials available in QMplus met their needs. The online IT helpdesk and/or the phone support (ext 8888) offered by the helpdesk was found useful by only 18% of respondents (95).

Two methods of getting technical support were not known about by large numbers of respondents, with 27% of respondents (148) not knowing about the ability to raise a ticket or sending an email to the IT helpdesk (or phone support) and 20% (113) not aware of the FAQs available on the IT helpdesk web interface. All the other ways of getting help were at least familiar to 90% of respondents.

The least used method of the seven was physically turning up at the IT helpdesk with 53% of respondents (285) saying they didn't use it. The FAQs available on the IT helpdesk and raising a ticket/email about technical issues were also not used by 50% of respondents (271).

9.2 OTHER METHODS OF SOLVING TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

Figure 64: Have you used any other methods to solve a technical problem?

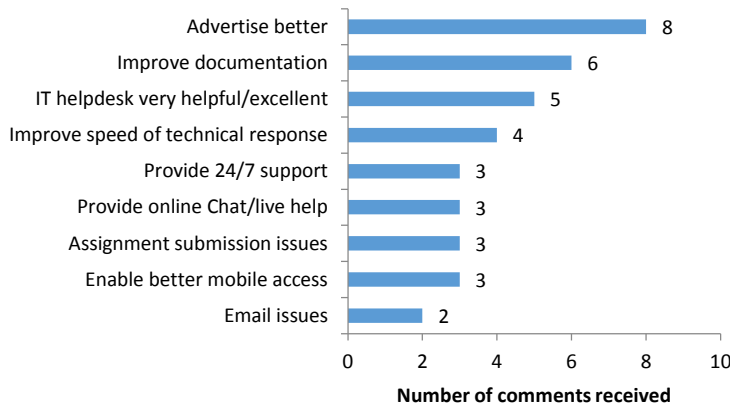


We asked respondents to tell us about the other ways they had used to solve their technical problems. We received 89 responses and the most common by far was resolving the problem themselves. *“trial and error, didn't know how to submit, figured it out in the end”*. Other methods of significance that had not already been mentioned were using Google (6 responses) and pragmatic solutions like *“waiting for problems to go away”* (2 responses).

Student voices
<i>Have you used any other methods to solve a technical problem?</i>
<i>“Most problems require common sense to resolve, so 9 out of 10 times I don't need to approach anyone else or any service to overcome an issue. QMplus is more user-friendly than Blackboard was, any the errors that do occur are usually ironed out pretty quickly; those that aren't haven't really affected me.”</i>
<i>“We tried to send emails to IT support, never received an answer.”</i>
<i>“..there was a member of staff available if there were any technical issues and she did her best to resolve any issues for students as soon as possible so it was useful to know that there was someone to help”</i>
<i>“The majority of technical problems occur when trying to submit assignments...and this (appears) when the IT support is relying on an out of hour's service with a lone operator. “Resolving it yourself” is usually the only way forward.”</i>
<i>“I never really experienced a technical problem so serious that I felt the need to seek help to rectify it - QM Plus has always run fairly smoothly for me.”</i>
<i>“Sometimes shutting down my browser and trying again resolves the issue”</i>

9.3 GENERAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS ABOUT TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Figure 65: Do you have any comments or suggestions to make about technical support?



There were only 56 responses to this question but after grouping those into common themes the most commonly made comment was the need to increase general awareness of the support options on offer (8 comments) *“make the options available a bit more visible. Maybe an FAQ sheet.”* 6 respondents mentioned the need to improve the documentation by for example *“simplifying the FAQ’s”* or *“providing suggestions for rectifying common issues”*. 4 respondents wanted speedier responses to help enquiries, particularly at key times of the year like during exams. There was also a call for better mobile access and 24/7 technical support (for internet connection issues and assignment upload issues). It is also worthwhile noting here that 5 respondents specifically mentioned the excellent service they had received from the IT helpdesk.

Student voices
Do you have any comments or suggestions to make about technical support?
<i>“The services need to be more widely promoted at the moment students first option is to let the lecturers know.”</i>
<i>“A detailed FAQ and suggestions for rectifying common issues should suffice until offices open again in the morning.”</i>
<i>“Online support was very good. I raised an issue about not being able to log in, I received a log number and a prompt follow up email informing me that they were working on the problem and again when it was later resolved. A very high standard!”</i>
<i>“The IT helpdesk need to tend to problems quicker. You see that your ticket has been looked at and is being dealt with but it is a long while before you actually get an email saying that the situation has been resolved (can be days); if something is urgent you have to travel into uni and sort it out yourself.”</i>
<i>“The iPad does not have access to most of the readings! (there is no Adobe on iPad)”</i>
<i>“A practical way of gaining technical support may be through formulating an online chat on the QMplus, so anyone can report quickly the problems they have facing and also get a fast response for the technical team.”</i>
<i>“There should be a 24 hour service for any internet connection problems for students, since eduroam is hard to configure, and could pose problems during submission of essays.”</i>

9.4 DISCUSSION

On the whole the results in this section of the survey show that QMplus is being supported quite well from a student perspective. The software is pretty intuitive to use and the service ran pretty smoothly throughout the 2012/13 academic year. The majority of respondents found that a technical problem could be solved by working it out for themselves or asking friends. *“it’s very self-explanatory. Most troubleshooting is easily resolved by just clicking around the site til you get used to it.”*

The formal channels to seek technical support were not as widely known about as might have been expected, in particular the helpdesk in the Queen’s building (Mile End campus) and the FAQs located on the IT helpdesk web interface. We do need to better promote the help and support available if problems arise and one way to do this would be to refresh the help and support area within QMplus to better signpost all the offerings and how to access them.

There are more than 200 FAQs available for staff and students on the system but these FAQs are currently buried in the IT helpdesk interface behind numerous drop-down menus and may not be easy to find or navigate to. FAQs need to be made more visible, clearer and easier to navigate. They could form the basis of a downloadable booklet providing troubleshooting tips for the most common technical issues experienced.

Why did the IT helpdesk score so low on the usefulness scale? Perhaps face-to-face support is becoming less and less important in an increasingly online learning community? Though some users found the service provided very good: *‘The IT helpdesk are fantastic and very helpful’*

Some respondents used the comments section to talk about the specific technical issues they experienced rather than answering the question.

9.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that QMplus remains clear and simple to navigate and use.
- Advertise the technical help available more widely.
- Redesign the help and support area in QMplus to signpost clearly the technical help on offer.
- Repurpose the FAQs on the IT helpdesk to make them more user friendly and easier to find and navigate.

9.6 ALREADY ACTIONED IN 2013/14

- New ELU website to include a new ‘Student’ area with improved help and support materials.
- FAQs to be structured more clearly and expanded to include more guidance on key aspects of QMplus.

10 LOOK AND FEEL

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section we were interested in finding out views on the usefulness of some of the important design features incorporated into the QMplus module page.

We asked respondents to rank seven parts of a typical module layout against a five point scale 'not useful at all' to 'very useful'. A screenshot was included in the questionnaire as an aide memoire (figure 66 below).



A selection of the icons designed to enhance the experience of a QMplus module page.

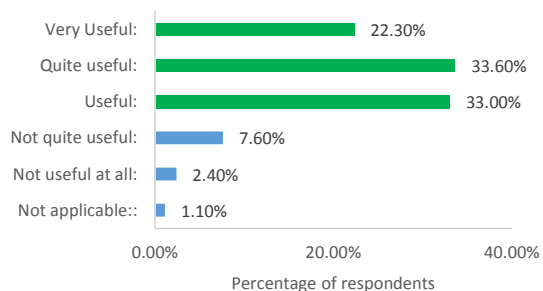
Quick key to design elements

Figure 66 : Screen shot of a module homepage from HSS

- a. **The Module info Block:** basic details about the module, contact details of the teaching team as well as a schedule or basic timetable.
- b. **News and announcements area:** ability to display the latest class news announcement or alternatively some static text.
- c. **The module image:** ability to display an image which represents the module or a theme within it.
- d. **The Course menu block:** navigation links to the topic sections of the page.
- e. **The assessment information area:** Often two columns containing links to assessment criteria, learning & teaching profiles, assignments submissions areas etc
- g. **icons:** graphical representations of the most common resources & activity types
- h. **Collapsible topic sections:** Learning materials are placed in topic sections which can then be collapsed to save screen space.

Green is used on the barcharts below to indicate those responses that were judged 'useful' to 'very useful' on the scale.

Figure 67: How useful was the overall design of the module/course homepage?



With respect to the overall design of the module page 91% of respondents (479) found it useful, of those 20% (121) found it very useful.

Seven components of the design of a typical module page are now examined for usefulness in more detail. The letters in brackets above each chart correspond to the image in figure 66 on the previous page. The charts are presented in order of usefulness.

Thinking about the design and usability of the QMplus, please rank the following areas of a QMplus module area on a scale of usefulness.

Figure 68: The course menu. (d)

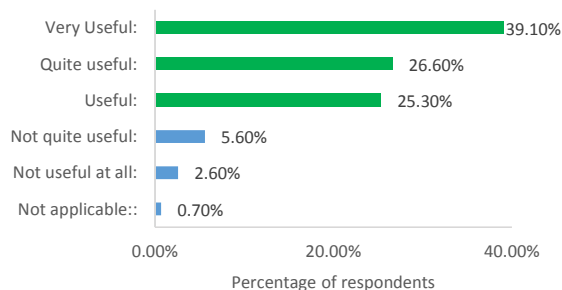


Figure 69: the collapsible topic sections. (h)

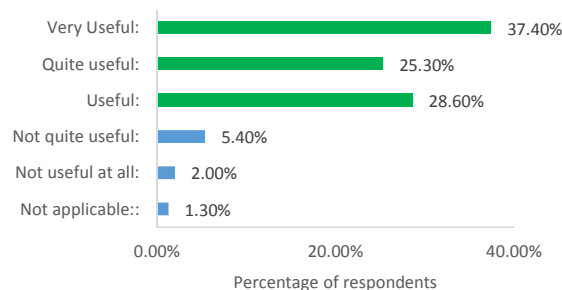


Figure 70: Module info block (top right) (a)

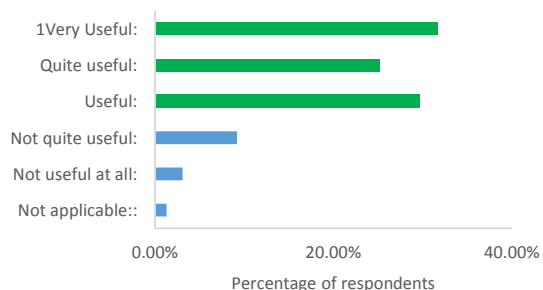


Figure 71: the icons (e.g. book, quiz, assignment) (g)

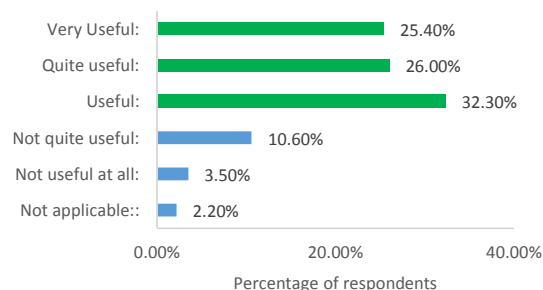


Figure 72: the show/hide assessment information. (e)

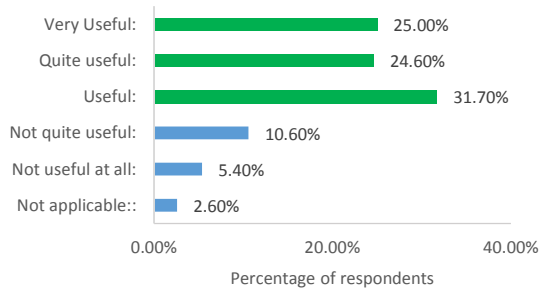


Figure 73: The news and announcements area at the top of the page. (b)

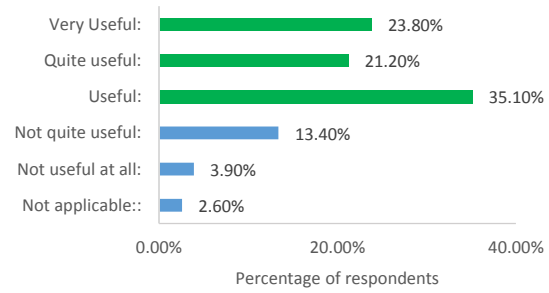
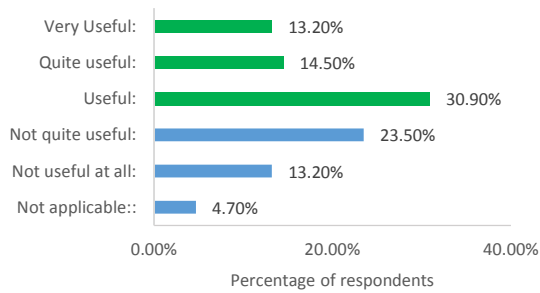


Figure 74: The module image. (c)



91% of respondents (486) found the course menu and the collapsible topic sections useful with 39% finding the course menu very useful. The Module Info block was considered useful by 86% of respondents (461). 84% of respondents (451) found the icons useful. The assessment information located at the top centre of the module page in many school templates, was seen as useful by 81% of respondents (436), whilst the news and announcements area was found useful by 80% of respondents (431). The least useful design feature was the Module image with 59% of respondents finding this feature useful (315). Though this result is still high compared to other question responses in this survey.

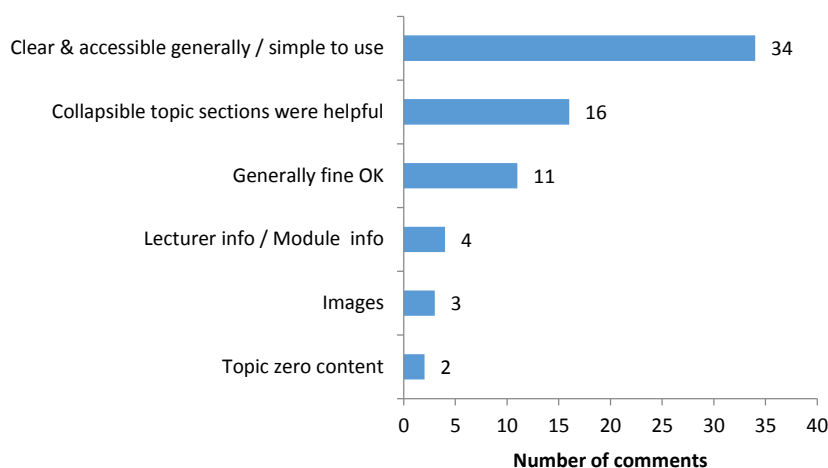


A topic section with a module on QMplus with a week of resources and activities.

10.2 FOCUS ON DESIGN FEATURES

With respect to why respondents particularly liked or didn't like features of the design, comments were grouped into common themes and presented in in order of the number of comments received.

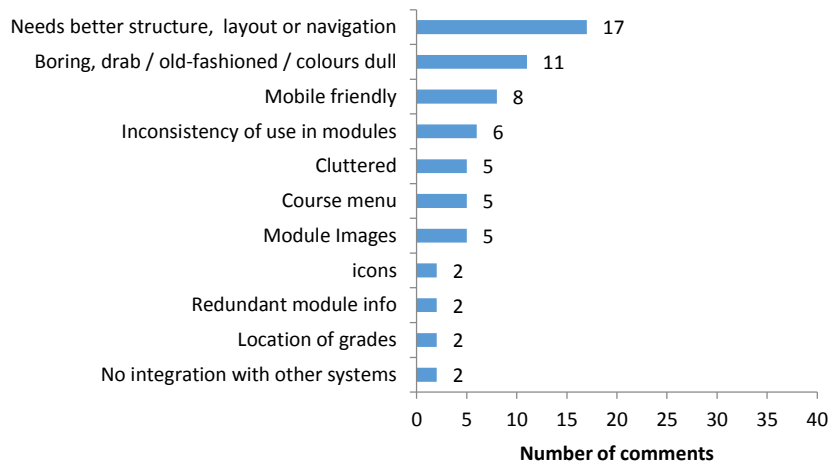
Figure 75: Why did you like certain features of the design?



In all 74 comments were received. The feature liked the most (34 comments) was the general clarity and accessibility of the design. Respondents found the layout easy to navigate and easy to read *"simple clear and modern"*. The collapsible topic sections, a feature of most faculty and school templates, was mentioned by 16 respondents, who commented on how the collapsed sections allowed them to focus on what was important and the way the feature improved navigation and reduced the clutter: *"there isn't too much unnecessary information clogging the screen."* 4 respondents liked the Module Info block with contact information and a simple overview of the module timetable: *"..great to be able to have lecturer details (including image)."* 11 respondents simply said it was nice to look at or that it was an improvement on Blackboard.

Student voices
Why did you like certain features of the design?
<i>"Layout is easy to navigate and pleasant to look at without it being clustered despite containing a lot of information."</i>
<i>"Collapsible topic section makes it easy to navigate on small screens and to quickly identify a needed area."</i>
<i>"Module info block because I'm never sure of my lecturers names. Or seminar tutors. rude to ask. Email addresses also."</i>
<i>"Keep the ICONS GENIUS"</i>
<i>"It is very easy for the collapsible topic sections to be misused and too much to be put in one section however the feature itself is a very good idea"</i>
<i>"Layout is generally user friendly and a big improvement over Blackboard"</i>

Figure 76: Why did you not like certain features of the design?



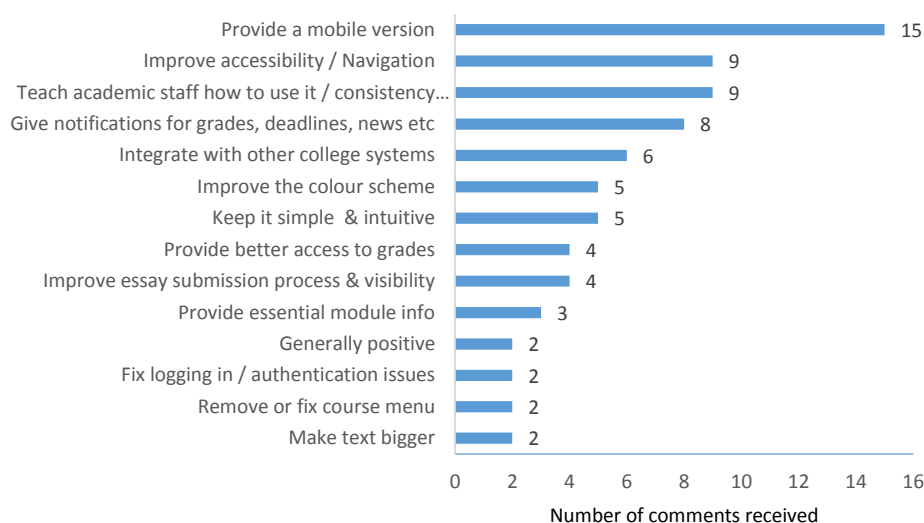
On the other hand 96 respondents commented on what they did not like about some aspects of the design. 17 respondents found the interface difficult to navigate: “.. items not always listed in a manner that is easy to find”. Specific mention was also made about topic sections making it difficult to find information and some important information being difficult to locate e.g. feedback.

The inability to access everything quickly was also mentioned. 11 respondents also found the overall design rather drab and old-fashioned: “the colours feel a bit dull”. The lack of a mobile-friendly interface annoyed 8 respondents with comments made about some functionality not working correctly if at all (downloads, menus and overall speed). 6 respondents talked about the lack of a universal design of modules (beyond the template features at the top of the page) making it extremely difficult to locate information and worryingly the information being out of date and thus causing confusion: “It would be helpful to keep features more structured and universal.” 5 respondents commented on module images not adding very much to the page, the course menu not working and/or not adding anything and that generally the layout felt cluttered: “too much going on.”

Student voices
Why did you not like certain features of the design?
“The photo doesn't integrate well with the rest of the page, and I feel as if it could be more engaging”
“Reiterating the menu (d) is a waste of screen real estate, it doesn't add any functionality.”
“Not having deadlines come up on the main page, not being able to find lecture capture - lecturer eventually made an announcement with a link”
“There was great confusion amongst professors about putting documents above the collapsible topic sections or within the topic sections. The topic sections are very useful, but not when used improperly. More training for the professors would be nice.”
“layout could be in terms of year of study instead of everything. better understanding represented of what is expected of us to motivate us to use it throughout the year and what is expected of us to achieve/do in the year.”
“My only problem is that the grades are hidden the left toolbar, it was only when someone told how to find grades of assignments that I could find them.”

10.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR DESIGN ENHANCEMENTS

Figure 77: Do you have any suggestions for improvements or enhancements?



With respect to suggestions for improvements or enhancements 105 comments were received. 15 respondents stressed the need for better mobile optimisation across a range of devices and the ability to access uploaded documents easily on mobile devices. 9 respondents mentioned that the layout both at site and module level still requires some work: *“most of the modules have icons not leading anywhere or with nothing in the content.”* *“sometimes it’s not easy to navigate between modules.”* 9 respondents also suggested that academic staff learn how to use QMplus correctly: *“make sure all lecturers get taught how to use QMplus in a proficient manner?”*. Materials and information are not always in the same places across modules, content was not updated and links lead nowhere: *“be more diligent with the info block, put all info in it. Pictures are good, icons necessary.”*

8 respondents suggested that notifications generally needed improvement with specific mention made of notifications when grades are released, assignments submitted (by email) and making the news and announcements section more prominent. 6 respondents suggested that QMplus would benefit from better integration with other college systems e.g showing unread office 365 emails. A brighter colour scheme was suggested by 5 respondents and 4 respondents wanted the ‘grades’ area to be more accessible: *“Perhaps it would a good idea to make certain features which students deem the most important (e.g. grades) more bold and eye-catching.”* There was also some more confusion over assignment submission, commented upon by 4 respondents, suggesting that more clarity about where and how to submit should be provided.

Student Voices

Do you have any suggestions for improvements or enhancements?

“Maybe this is the time that the Queen Mary University of London makes a new free app that provides all current and new students with personalised information and services for every smartphone platforms (such as, iOS, Windows phone, Android, Blackberry). Maybe you can name it, QMAPP or QMPLUS. Because it is quite difficult if I open QMplus via phone.”

<i>"Teaching the lecturers how to update all the information and put information up in a clear manner would improve the layout and user-friendliness of the site"</i>
<i>"The news an announcements section is only useful if academic staff update it within enough time for students to see it! Updating it on the day of the lecture saying that the lecture is cancelled isn't helpful, but obviously that's not really an issue with QMplus- maybe when it's updated it could trigger an email to be sent to all students on the course?"</i>
<i>"Showing how many unread emails we have received (not having to also log in to the email system after logging into QMplus)"</i>
<i>"Maybe a different colour scheme. Purple is so last year."</i>
<i>"Make it simple and work properly."</i>
<i>"I think QMplus should not time out and log one out completely after a day, but just like ask to give first three letters of password and then unlock the page so that you are still on whichever page you left open."</i>

10.4 DISCUSSION

The look and feel of QMplus was an important part of the development of the system. QML had a clear vision in mind – to build a sector leading learning environment that was clear, modern, intuitive and easy to navigate. We employed external theme designers to help us realise our vision and by September 2012 we had a design that worked across multiple browsers and desktops and laptops. We did not implement a mobile friendly design at the time as it was deemed difficult, expensive and problematic to implement on the version of Moodle we were using.

Once an overall look and feel had been implemented we then translated that look and feel into working module templates for faculties and schools. These template designs were either driven by E-learning strategies and widely consulted upon or developed with local contexts and requirements in mind.

The difficulty in evaluating the design elements of the system in a survey such as this, is that students in different parts of the college are having a different experience. Postgraduate medical courses do not look exactly the same as Humanities modules. In addition, module leads are free to choose different layouts for their learning materials (e.g. topic view or collapsible topic view). This flexibility within the system may explain some of the responses we got from students about not having certain features or certain features simply not being used, or used inconsistently.

This flexibility also extends to the approach an individual course designer may take to the layout of materials. It is tempting to place materials in long lists in topic sections and this might look muddled. Whereas adding subheadings, clustering activities into groups and maintaining a consistent format every week are things that, whilst talked about in training, may only emerge in practice over time.

We may see evidence of this in the conflicting feedback about some parts of the design e.g. 34 respondents mentioning how simple and easy it was to navigate, yet 17 did not like the layout or navigation and 5 found it cluttered!

In general, however, the look and feel of QMplus was well received by survey respondents with most parts of the Module home page seen as useful by 80% or more of respondents.

There was some confusion about the display of assignments in the HSS template. We provided an assignment summary in the 'Assessment information area' which essentially linked to the assignments within the topic sections themselves or, in the case of some modules, were not (they chose to keep them hidden from view rather than repeat them) this caused some confusion and we need to ensure consistency in the layout and presentation of this important feature in future. In

addition we need to work with our theme designers to more prominently display links to grades and feedback and assignment deadlines, where appropriate.

Basic module information, displayed through the module info block, needs to be clear, consistent and up-to-date.

In the next survey it would be useful to broaden the scope of this question to include other elements of the design and navigation e.g. The QMplus homepage and the Groups & Portfolios (Mahara) area.

10.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Design, test and implement a mobile friendly version of QMplus. Particular focus should be given to document access and download, as well as Q-review lectures.
- Work closely with schools to develop clear guidance for staff on best practice for layout and presentation of key information in module templates.
- Improve training on how to design blended modules and how various parts of the module page work e.g. the assessment information in topic zero, configuring the module info block.
- Work with our theme designers to more clearly signpost the grades and feedback area.
- Expand the scope of design questions in the next survey to include e.g. the Home page, the new School landing pages and the groups and portfolios area.

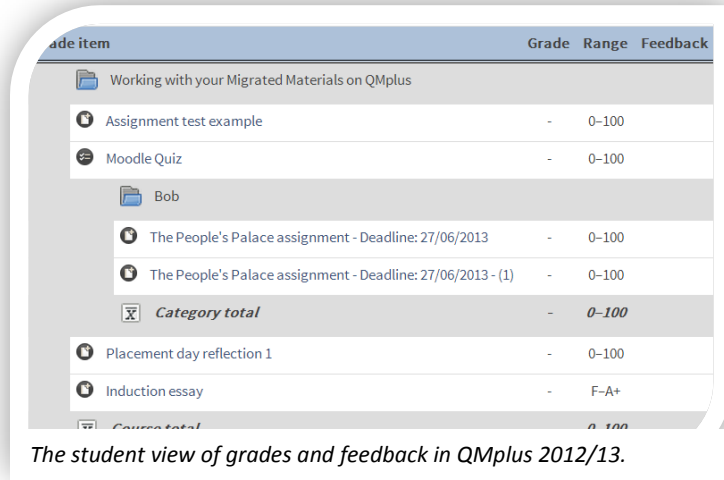
10.6 ALREADY ACTIONED IN 2013/14

- The module info block has been completely redesigned to allow users to input information more easily through a form driven interface. The new block also integrates with the new timetabling system (SMART)
- A workshop on blended learning design is now offered by the ELU

11 USABILITY

11.1 EASE OF USE

In this section we were interested in finding out how easy respondents found it to use the core functionality that supports the student learning experience within QMplus. Respondents were asked to rank the ease of using fourteen key aspects of the system on a five point scale from 'very difficult' to 'very easy'.



The green bars in the charts below show responses for a feature that was 'easy' or 'very easy' to use. Red indicates the number of respondents that had not tried this feature. The barcharts above are presented in order of 'ease of use'.

We would like to know how easy you find it to use QMplus for learning. Please rate the following activities and functions on a scale of how easy or difficult you think they are to carry out.

Figure 78: Logging in.

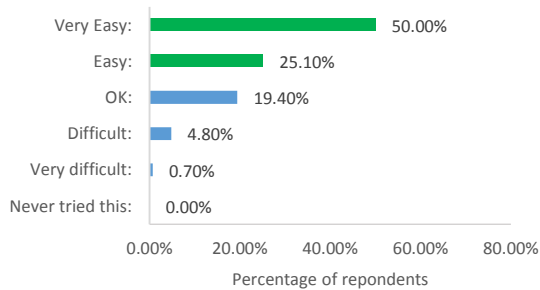


Figure 79: Downloading a file (e.g. pdf or ppt)

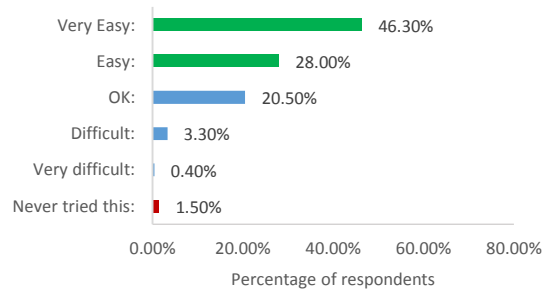


Figure 80: Moving around and locating the content you need.

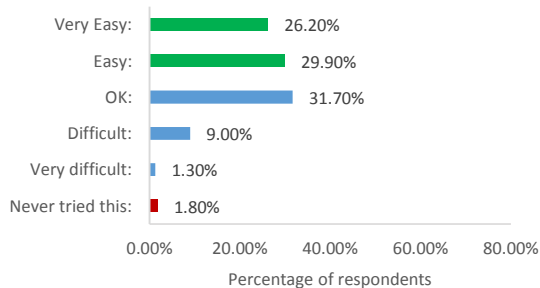


Figure 81: Accessing news and announcements from the module/course organiser.

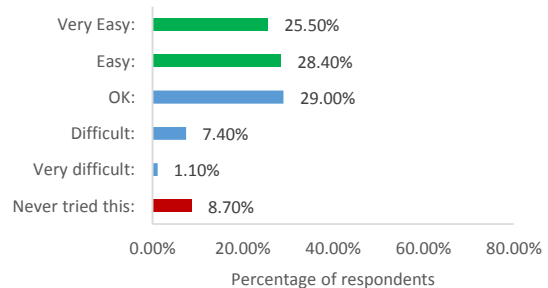


Figure 82: Uploading an assignment

Figure 83: Accessing your grades and feedback

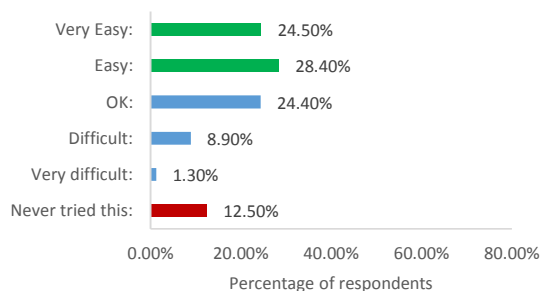


Figure 84: Accessing audio/ video content (e.g. Q-Review).

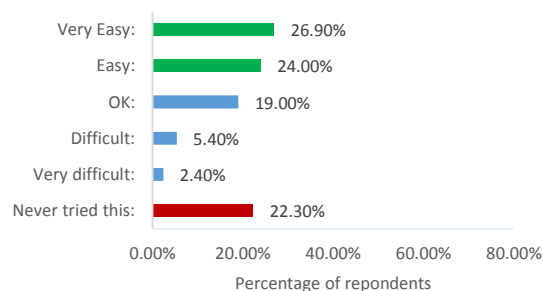


Figure 85: Doing a quiz.

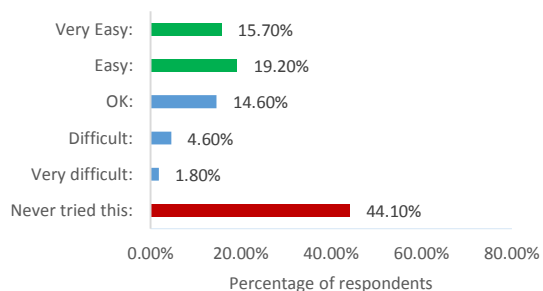


Figure 86: Posting to a forum

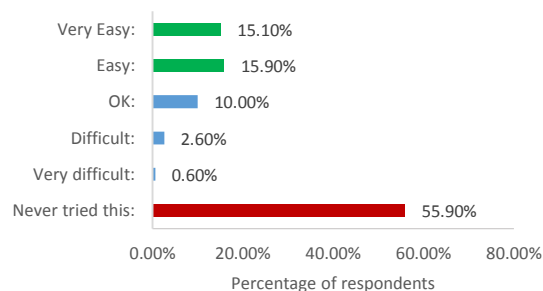


Figure 87: Making a choice of seminar or tutorial group.

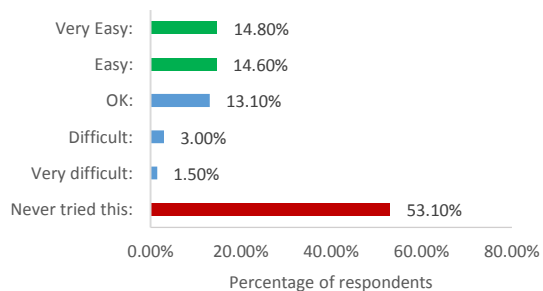


Figure 88: Doing a workshop activity

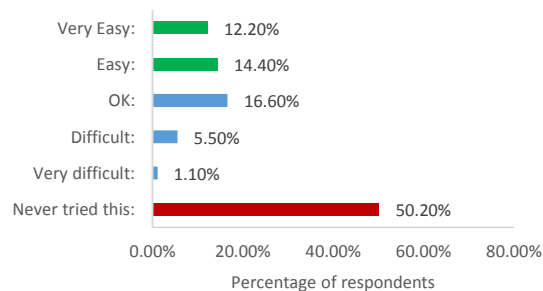


Figure 89: Starting a group.

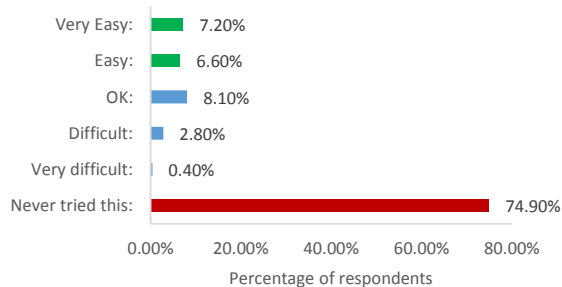


Figure 90: Customising the organisation of the page.

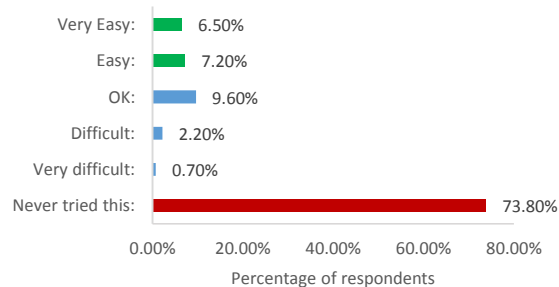
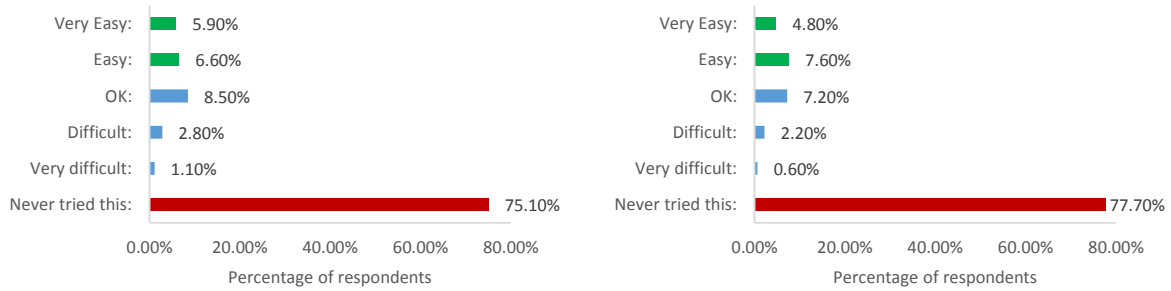


Figure 91: Creating a portfolio page.



75% of respondents (407) found logging in easy (with 50% of those finding it very easy). 74% (403) found downloading files easy and 56% (304) found navigating to the content they needed easy, with a further 32% (172) finding it OK.

Accessing news and announcements and uploading assignments was considered easy by 54% (292) and 53% (287) of respondents respectively, in addition 51% (276) found it easy to access their grades and feedback. These six activities and functions were also used by the vast majority of respondents (as indicated by the “smaller” red bars), however, 22% of respondents (121) had never tried to access their grades or feedback.

Results for the other 8 activities and functions were much lower. 35% of respondents (189) found accessing multimedia content easy and 31% (168) said the same for doing quizzes. Posting in discussion forums was easy for 29% of respondents (159) and choosing seminar groups was easy for 27% (144). The lowest number of respondents, only 14% (75) found it easy to do a workshop activity while 12% (74) found it easy to start a group (in Mahara). About 13% of respondents (67) found it easy to customise the organisation of a page or create a portfolio page.

Many respondents had not tried these last 8 activities. For example, 78% had not tried to create a portfolio page and 75% hadn’t tried to customise the organisation of a page, done a workshop activity or started a group. 56% had never done a quiz and 53% hadn’t posted to a forum.

From a usability perspective, where they had actually used it, most respondents did not find any of the features and activities listed in the question difficult to use, with navigating to content and uploading assignments registering the greatest difficulty (about 10% of respondents)

11.2 DISCUSSION

The results in this section suggest that the features and activities that respondents have mentioned elsewhere in the survey as being integral to their studies, are easy to use. These include downloading files, accessing learning materials, uploading assignments and accessing grades and feedback. In addition logging in was seen as being easy by three quarters of those surveyed, despite the difficulties respondents mentioned in the previous section. In fact none of the features and activities we explored were difficult to use for more than 10% of respondents.

What was more interesting was the fact that eight of the features and activities that we asked about had not been tried at all by a lot of respondents and this represents the most interesting area of future work. Clearly it is not possible to try an activity type if it is not present in the learning material and this is probably true for features like video and audio content, online quizzes, discussion forums and workshop activities.

As the features and tools within QMplus and the blended teaching it supports become more familiar to academic staff it is natural that they will start to engage with more of the capabilities of the system. Designing online quizzes and navigating the relative complexities of peer assessment using the workshop tool are obstacles in an environment where online teaching can be viewed as peripheral.

It was also surprising to see the number of respondents (53%), similar to those in section 7.5 who had not posted in a discussion forum.

Other results in this section also support findings elsewhere in the study about the low use of Groups and portfolios functionality

11.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. At QML we can and should continue to develop and enhance our e-learning and teaching through both ambitious strategies (teaching & learning and IT) and imaginative classroom and online implementations.
2. Develop guidance and support around advanced features of QMplus including the development of online quizzes, using discussion forums and peer review.
3. Ensure that in all our ongoing development work usability continues to be of the utmost importance.

11.4 ALREADY ACTIONED IN 2013/14

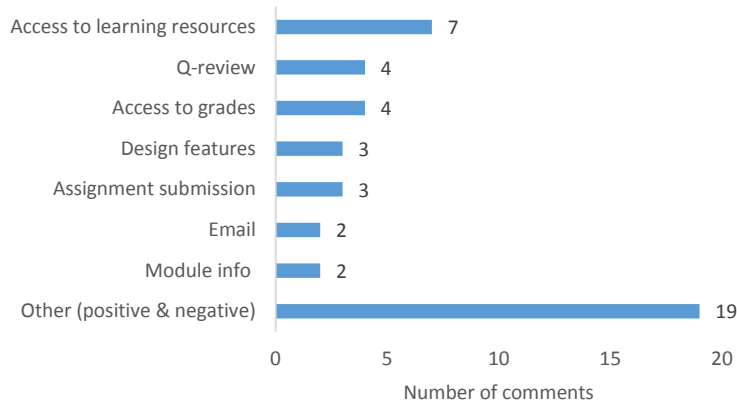
- As previously mentioned the ELU is launching a new web presence with renewed focus on e-learning pedagogy and inspirational case studies from around QML.

12 CLOSING COMMENTS

12.1 OTHER USEFUL TOOLS

In the penultimate question respondents were asked to let us know about any other tools and functionality they found useful in QMplus. In total 44 comments were received. These were grouped into common themes and those with two or more comments are presented in the bar chart below.

Figure 92: Any other tools or functionality you found useful in QMplus?



7 respondents found being able to access learning resources useful with past exam papers mentioned most often. Access to grades and Q-Review were the next most commonly mentioned benefits of using the system with four comments each. Assignment submission was the next most popular comment *“this tells you the percentage of plagiarism which is quite useful to reassure you to be honest.”* Being able to send emails (using the Quickmail block) and the ease of access to key contact information in the Module info block were also mentioned by 2 respondents.

Other comments received spanned a variety of comments and did not entirely focus on ‘useful’ features of QMplus. Assignment submission issues were mentioned by 5 respondents particularly the lack of confirmation of submission, mentioned several times previously in this survey. One respondent mentioned the lack of anonymity in forums.

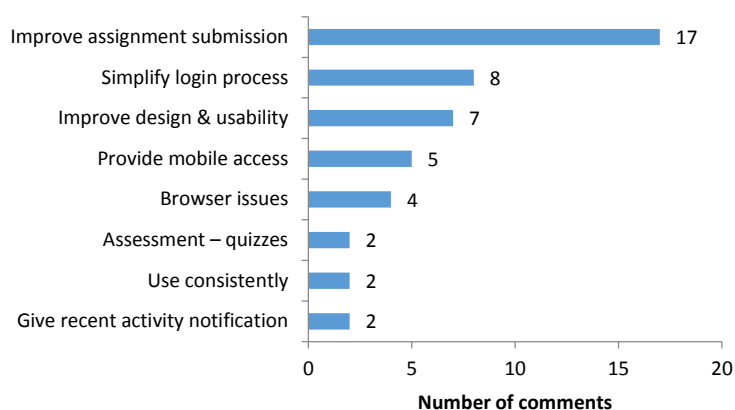
Student voices
Any other tools or functionality you found useful in QMplus?
<i>“I appreciate the links to the Library website. It helped a lot in my first few weeks in College.”</i>
<i>“The submission of assessments - this tells you the % of plagiarism which is quite useful to reassure you to be honest. There are only so many ways you can write 'was significantly different', so it is reassuring for QMplus to tell you that there is nothing to worry about!”</i>
<i>“I do like the layout of the Grades and feedback page.”</i>
<i>“Loved the ability to pick your own colour backgrounds.”</i>
<i>“Forums are really useful and easy to use: I can post a question/response, and this is an interesting and engaging way of communicating ideas.”</i>
<i>“Uploading content can sometimes be cumbersome (timewise)”</i>

12.2 GENERAL COMMENTS

The final question asked respondents to make any other comments they liked. In all 69 comments were received, 15 respondents made generally positive comments and suggestions and 54 took the final opportunity to comment on what hadn't worked well for them either technically or pedagogically and in many cases how things might be improved.

There were enough suggestions for improvement to group into common themes. These are presented in the bar chart below.

Figure 93: Suggestions for improvements



The overwhelming majority of comments received (17 respondents) mentioned that the assignment submission process needs to be improved. Respondents expressed the desire for more consistency of approach *“Uploading assignments should perhaps be standardised across all departments, to make things easier and clearer for interdisciplinary students and students taking a module from a different department”*. They also mentioned technical issues encountered when uploading *“..especially corrupt files where there was no indication of what was deemed corrupt”* and the process of having to ‘upload twice’ *“attaching a file, then send for marking, then clicking continue”*. The lack of any kind of receipt of submission was the third most common issue mentioned.

8 respondents wanted the login process to be simplified *“Not sure why there isn’t a remember me function”*. 7 respondents mentioned that design and usability could be improved *“navigating between forum and other module pages can be a little confusing”* *“choosing your own layout is pointless”*. *Once more* accessing files on mobile devices was mentioned by 5 respondents, in particular the problems with downloading audio, video and pdf files on iPads.

4 respondents mentioned issues with the Mac browser: Safari, in particular problems with files not downloading, downloading in unexpected ways or not opening in the browser. Two respondents mentioned the lack of notification if content had been updated and the lack of consistent use.

Other comments were made about system downtime happening at inconvenient times, technical problems with Q-review and a comment about the poor search tool *“results are often not relevant”*.

On the positive side, 5 respondents mentioned that QMplus was better than Blackboard. Another respondent commented on the colour scheme being *“neutral and pleasant”*.

Student voices
Any other comments?
<i>"Q-Review though it is very useful, there are always technical problems relating to it."</i>
<i>"It would be most helpful, if new uploads (and to a lesser degree announcements and activities in general) since the last time that a user accessed his/her account were clearly indicated. At the very least, the addition of uploading dates next to the uploaded materials."</i>
<i>"There are far too many click-walls that prevent you from accessing qm+. Two notorious wastes of time are in logging in initially (you have to click through a normal vs abnormal login wall) and in returning to qmplus after navigating away from it (it reminds you that you're already logged in rather than just showing you qm+)."</i>
<i>"QMUL have to provide a receipt service for essay submission it's ludicrous that students are put in the position whereby they have no real guarantee of submission."</i>
<i>"The submitting of assignments is flawed in the fact you need to effectively submit an assignment twice (attaching the file, then sending for marking, then clicking continue); this needs to be made really clear as people are often not quite thinking straight when submitting assignments. Also, not all of my marks went onto QMPlus, and there were just hard copies in the office."</i>
<i>"would be quite interesting to have a grade calculator, that organised total percentage and grade so far from assignment feedback."</i>
<i>"It works very well overall - SO MUCH BETTER THAN BLACK BOARD!!!! :)"</i>

13 APPENDIX

13.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

We are extremely proud of the new learning environment we have implemented for Queen Mary and we would like to know what you think of it too. As this is the first year that we have used QMplus we would like to find out what you think of it, how you used it and how you would like to see it being developed in the future. Your answers may help shape the future development of the system. As an added incentive to do the survey we will also enter your completed survey into a prize draw to win £50.00 of Amazon vouchers.

How long will the survey take?

The survey should take 15 - 20 minutes to complete. All questions are mandatory except long answers but we would still appreciate your thoughts if you have the time.

Who should do the survey?

If you have been a student at Queen Mary, University of London in the 2012/13 academic year and you have used QMplus in any of your modules then you can participate. We welcome contributions from ALL students either local to London, studying in Beijing or Paris and via distance learning around the world.

The survey will not be linked to individual students. All results will be consolidated. The only people who have access to the raw data will be members of the E-Learning Unit. If you have any questions about the survey or about QMplus more generally please contact the E-Learning Unit : elu@qmul.ac.uk

What are we going to do with the data?

When we have analysed the data we will publish all findings in a short report on our website (<http://www.learninginstitute.qmul.ac.uk/elearning/>). This will be made available to all students at Queen Mary. We also aim to show you what improvements will be made.

Section 1

About you

1. What is your current year of study?

- Foundation year
- Undergraduate (year 1)
- Undergraduate (year 2)
- Undergraduate (year 3)
- Undergraduate (year 4) e.g. BDS
- Undergraduate (year 5)
- Taught Postgraduate (e.g. MSc)
- Research degree (e.g. MPhil/PhD)
- Short course
- Other (*please specify*):

2. Which school, department or institute do you study in? (select all that apply)

- Barts Cancer Institute
- Biological and Chemical Sciences
- Blizard Institute
- Business and Management
- Centre for Commercial Law Studies
- Comparative Literature and Culture
- Drama
- Economics and Finance
- Electronic Engineering and Computer Science
- Engineering and Materials Science
- English
- Film Studies
- French
- Geography
- German
- History
- Iberian and Latin American Studies
- Institute of Dentistry
- Language Centre
- Law

- Learning Institute
- Linguistics
- Mathematical Sciences
- Physics and Astronomy
- Politics and International Relations
- Russian
- William Harvey Research Institute
- Wolfson Institute of Preventative Medicine

3. What is your mode of attendance?

- Full time
- Part time
- Distance learning

4. Which campus are you mainly studying at? (Optional)

- Beijing (BUPT)
- Charterhouse Square
- Lincoln's Inn Fields
- Mile End
- Paris (LLM)
- West Smithfield
- Whitechapel
- Not applicable

5. Which of the following most closely describes how you feel about using technology generally in your learning?

- I find it easy to use the range of technology required by my programme of study
- I need some support when using the technology required by my programme of study
- I struggle to use the technology required by my programme of study

6. Have you used anything like QMplus in your studies before? (select all that apply)

- Yes - BlackBoard at Queen Mary
- Yes - Faculty of Science & Engineering - School Control Panel/Intranet
- Yes - Secondary school or 6th form college
- Yes - at a Further Education College
- Yes - Other training including professional
- Yes - another Higher Education Institution
- No

Section 2

Orientation and use of QMplus

7. How did you learn about QMplus and how to use it? How useful were the training and orientation opportunities provided? Please select all the options you have used from the list below and rate them for usefulness where 1 is not useful at all and 5 is very useful.

	1 = Not at all useful	2 = Not very useful	3 = Useful	4 = Quite useful	5 = Very useful	Chose not to use	Did not know about it	Not applicable
a. Orientation session - general (e.g. during the Welcome week)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Orientation session with my module leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Online material in QMplus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Library drop-in session	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Another student showed me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. My module leader/organiser showed me when I needed help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. My department or school support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Are there any other ways you learned about QMplus and how to use it? (e.g. I taught myself) (Optional)

9. What did you find most useful about the training/orientation received? (e.g. Handouts, Delivery etc) (Optional)

10. How could the training/orientation have been improved? (Optional)

11. Whereabouts do you usually access QMplus? (select all that apply)

- On campus (including halls of residence)
- On the move (e.g. public transport etc)
- At work
- At home

12. What do you typically use to access QMplus?(select all that apply)

- A Desktop computer - Windows
- A Desktop computer - Mac
- A Laptop computer - Windows
- A Laptop computer - Mac
- A Tablet - Ipad
- A Tablet - Android
- A Tablet - Windows

- A Smartphone - Iphone
- A Smartphone - Android
- A Smartphone - Blackberry
- A Smartphone - Windows
- An E-book reader (e.g. Amazon Kindle, Nook etc)
- A Games console (e.g. Nintendo Wii, Xbox 360)
- Other (*please specify*):

13. On average how often do you access QMplus?

- More than once a day
- Once a day
- More than once a week
- Once a week
- A few times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

Section 3

Below you will find a range of potential ways QMplus can be used to support learning. Tell us the frequency with which you used the system in these ways. Choose the closest fit you can.

14. General info and admin

	Once/twice a year	Once a month	Every week	Daily	Never used
a. Finding out about assessment and feedback on my module	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Managing my calendar/checking my calendar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Signing up to seminar or tutorial groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Finding out contact details of teaching staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Teaching Materials

	Once/twice a year	Once a month	Every week	Daily	Never used
a. Accessing lecture notes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Accessing lecture slides (e.g. PowerPoint)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Watching lectures using Q-Review	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Watching videos in QMplus (e.g. YouTube, Screencast etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- e. Listening to audio files or podcasts
- f. Accessing other websites via a QMplus hyperlink
- g. Accessing a reading list for my module/course using the Library reading list software (TALIS)
- h. Accessing a reading list within my module

16. Assessment

- | | Once/twice a year | Once a month | Every week | Daily | Never used |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Submitting work/assignments electronically | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Accessing assessment documents (e.g. criteria etc) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. Taking online tests or quizzes | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. Viewing feedback | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. Developing an e-portfolio for my module/programme | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

17. Groups and Portfolios

- | | Once/twice a year | Once a month | Every week | Daily | Never used |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Keeping an online journal | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Uploading and or presenting my CV | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. Setting up a group | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. Carrying out group work | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. Developing my own portfolio | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

18. Interactive activities

- | | Once/twice a year | Once a month | Every week | Daily | Never used |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Participating in online discussions | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Participating in online chat | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. Peer reviewing other student's work | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. Other online learning packages e.g. revision activities/program specific activities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

19. Communication

- | | Once/twice a year | Once a month | Every week | Daily | Never used |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Communicating with classmates and tutors | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Communicating with other QMUL friends | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. Sending emails (using Quickmail) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. Comments block | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. The wall in your groups and portfolios area | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

20. Of all the ways used to support your learning mentioned above which was the most useful and why? (Is there a particular way your lecturer used QMplus that you would like to highlight?) (Optional)

21. Of all the ways used to support your learning mentioned above which was the least useful and why? (Optional)

22. What other technologies do you find helpful for your studies? (select all that apply)

- Blogging software e.g. Wordpress
- Microblogging software: e.g. Twitter
- Shared documents e.g. Google docs
- Cloud computing e.g. dropbox, skydrive, icloud
- Social networking software e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn
- Bibliographic software e.g. Endnote Zotero, Mendeley
- Departmental or tutor websites
- QMUL Office 365 email software
- Other email (e.g. Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo mail etc.)
- Clickers or Electronic voting systems
- Open learning resources like OpenLearn, iTunesU, khan Academy
- Survey tools e.g. SurveyMonkey, BOS

23. Are there any other ways that QMplus could be used to support your learning? (Optional)

Section 4

Technical Support

24. Have you used any of the following methods to solve a technical problem with QMplus? Please indicate which methods you have used and rate how happy you were with the help you received.

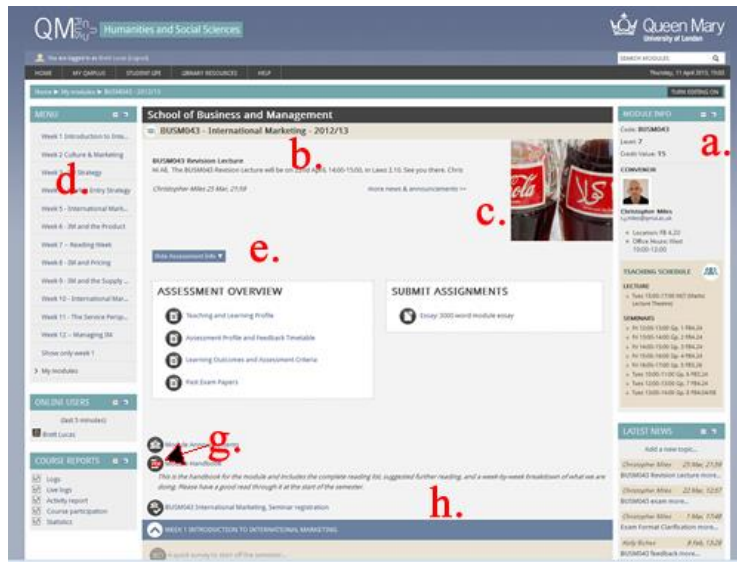
	1 = Not useful at all	2 = Not very useful	3 = Useful	4 = Quite useful	5 = very useful	Did not use	Never heard of it
a. IT helpdesk (face-to-face e.g. Queen's Building)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Webhelpdesk/Phone support (ext 8888)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. FAQs on the Webhelpdesk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Online support material in QMplus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Asked a friend/classmate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Asked a member of staff at QMUL (e.g. your module leader)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Used my department/school support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. Have you used any other methods to solve a technical problem with QMplus? (e.g. Resolving it yourself) (Optional)

26. Do you have any comments or suggestions to make about technical support for using QMplus? (Optional)

Section 5

Look and Feel



27. Thinking about the design and usability of the QMplus , please rank the following areas of a QMplus module area on a scale of usefulness where 1 represents not useful at all and 5 is very useful. If your course does not have a particular feature then please tick the box to the right. (Use the image above as a guide if you unsure of the names)

	1 = Not useful at all	2 = Not quite useful	3 = Useful	4 = Quite useful	5 = Very Useful	Not applicable
a. The Module info block (top right)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The news and announcements area at the top of the page	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The Module image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The course menu (top left)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. The show/hide assessment information (or General Info) area at the top of the page	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. The overall design of the module/course homepage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. The icons (e.g. book, quiz, assignment)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. The collapsible topic sections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. Why did you like or not like certain features of the design? (e.g. layout, working on different devices etc) (Optional)

29. Do you have any suggestions for improvements or enhancements? (e.g. new features, device support etc) (Optional)

Section 6

Ease of use

30. We would like to know how easy you find it to use QMplus for learning. Please rate the following activities and functions on a scale of how easy or difficult you think they are to carry out

	1= Very difficult	2 = Difficult	3= OK	4= Easy	5= Very Easy	Never tried this
a. Logging in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Downloading a file (e.g. pdf or ppt)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Moving around and locating the content you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

need

- d. Uploading an assignment
- e. Accessing news and announcements from the module/course organiser
- f. Making a choice of seminar or tutorial group
- g. Doing a quiz
- h. Posting to a forum
- i. Starting a group
- j. Creating a portfolio page
- k. Customising the organisation of the page
- l. Doing a workshop activity
- m. Accessing your grades and feedback
- n. Accessing audio/video content (e.g. Q-Review)

31. Please let us know about any other tools or functionality you found useful in QMplus. *(Optional)*

32. Any other comments? *(Optional)*

End of Survey

This is the end of the survey. Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey. We value your contribution to the ongoing development of QMplus.