



QMUL STAFF EVALUATION OF E-LEARNING – 2016/17

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

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1. ABOUT THE SURVEY

In July 2016, the E-Learning Unit ran its first staff survey to evaluate e-learning at QMUL. The survey was open to all current staff and external partners who use e-learning technologies at QMUL. Its primary purpose was to gather feedback about e-learning services at QMUL in order to inform the E-Learning Unit on areas to focus for improvement.

The survey launched on Tuesday, 5th July 2016 and closed on Wednesday, 2nd November 2016. There were a total of 24 questions (fewer depending on participants' responses) and included 2 open ended optional questions at the end, where participants were asked to provide either positive comments or suggestions for improvement. The survey questions covered use and satisfaction levels for the following areas:

1. QMplus, the online learning environment
2. Q-Review, the lecture recording facility
3. Other e-learning applications, such as Turnitin (plagiarism detection); BOS (online survey creation); Turning Point (audience response system); QMplus Hub (groups and portfolio area); and QMplus Media (video storage and streaming).
4. E-Learning support and training
5. E-Learning communication

2. ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

There were **340 responses** - from the three faculties and Professional Services (a response rate of approximately 7.28%).

2.1. Breakdown of responses by Faculty

- 39% from School of Medicine and Dentistry (SMD)
- 29% from Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS)
- 25% from Sciences and Engineering (S&E)
- 7% from Professional Services (PS)

2.2. Although SMD returned the highest number of survey responses, S&E had the highest response rate compared with staff numbers within the faculty:

- S&E – 16.69% response rate
- HSS – 8.58% response rate
- SMD – 8.16% response rate
- PS – 2.07% response rate

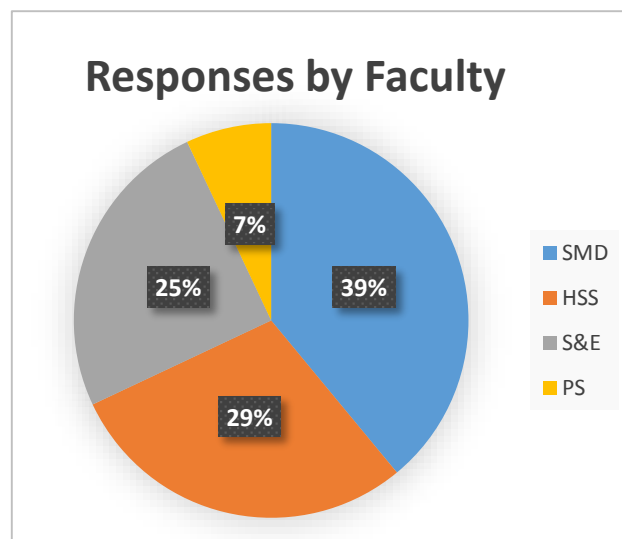


Figure 1

2.3. The three schools with the most responses were:

- School of Languages Linguistics and Film (32 responses, 9.4%)
- Health Sciences Education (29 responses, 8.5%)
- The Blizzard Institute (27 responses, 7.9%)

2.4. The **School of Mathematical Sciences** had the highest response rate per school – 25.93%

2.5. The majority of respondents were **Academic staff (67.6%)** based at **Mile End campus (57.1%)**

2.6. Almost 50% of respondents have worked at QMUL for more than 5 years

3. AWARENESS AND OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH E-LEARNING APPLICATIONS

3.1. Key Findings

- 3.1.1. In general, staff at QMUL are satisfied with e-learning applications (slightly satisfied to very satisfied). However, there are areas on which we can focus our efforts to continue to improve our applications, such as navigating around QMplus, the general look and feel of QMplus, and its performance; as well as communication around Q-Review processes.
- 3.1.2. Many respondents were not aware of the various e-learning technologies and services available at QMUL and improvement could be made to promote these more among the academic community. QMplus was the most widely used e-learning technology, with 91% of respondents indicating that they use it.
- 3.1.3. QMplus Hub (for groups and portfolios) and Bristol Online Surveys (for online survey creation) were used by less than a quarter of respondents while more than half did not know that these technologies were available. Other technologies such as QMplus Media and Turnitin had slightly higher usage. Of all the e-learning applications that are available at QMUL, users were most satisfied with Turnitin (87% satisfaction), according to the results. Detail below.

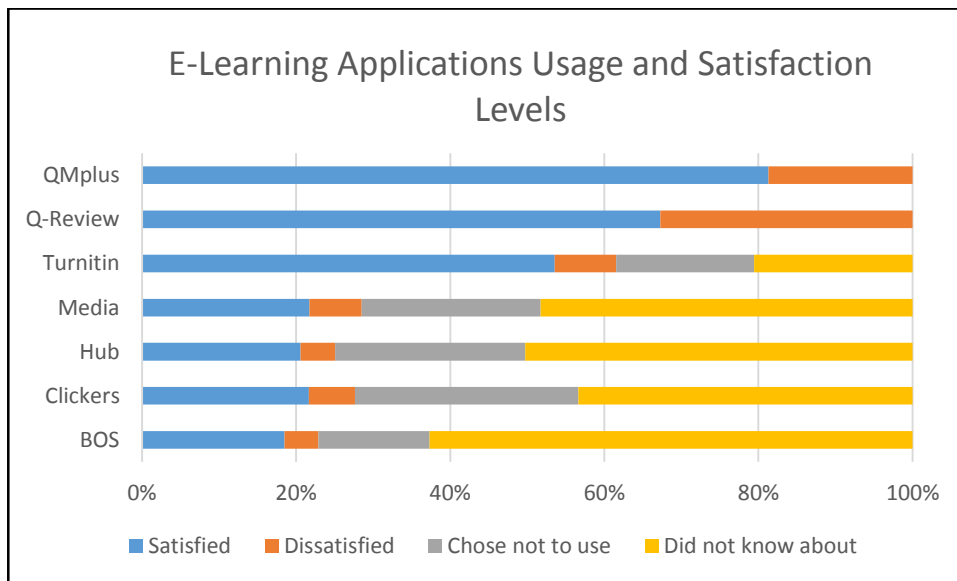


Figure 2

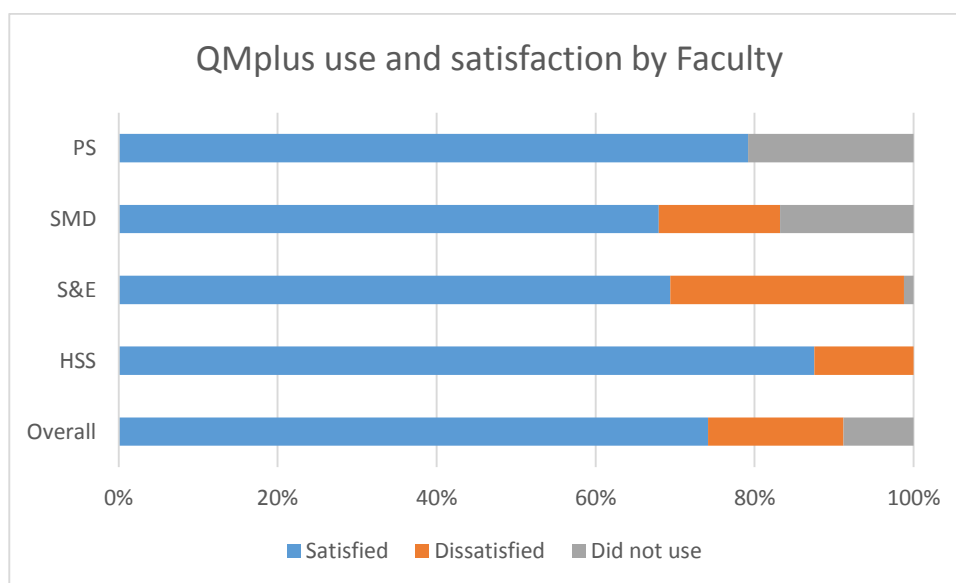
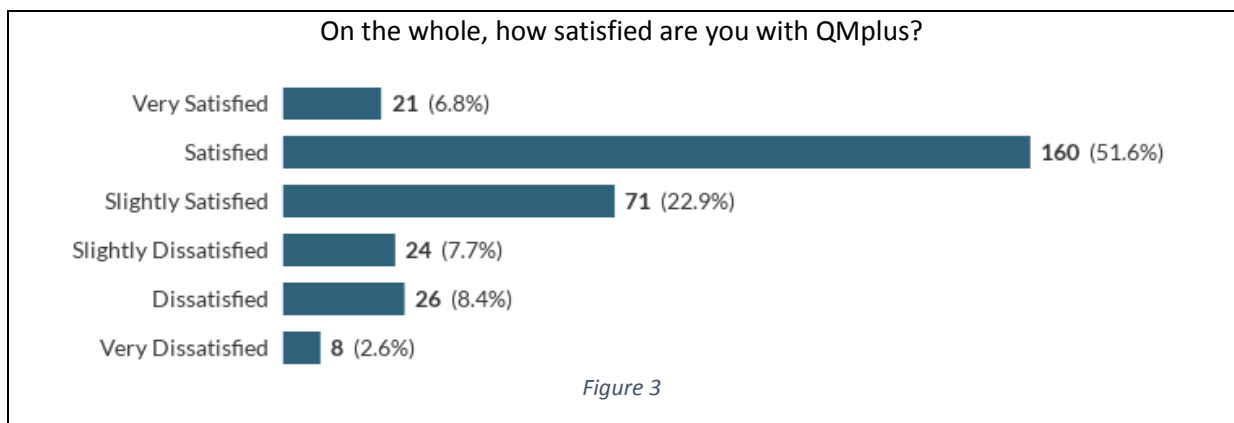
4. QMPLUS

4.1. Key Findings

- 4.1.1. Survey participants were asked to indicate whether they use QMplus, the online learning environment and if so, to evaluate it.
- 4.1.2. QMplus is the most widely used e-learning technology among respondents and a high number of staff expressed general satisfaction with the online learning environment.
- 4.1.3. Most respondents use QMplus to add resources and material and to communicate with their students. They are generally satisfied with their ability to use QMplus for these activities. Fewest respondents use QMplus for group work and assessment activities.

4.2. The Data - Usage and Satisfaction Levels

- 4.2.1. Over 91% of respondents indicated that they use QMplus.
- 4.2.2. Overall, 81% are satisfied on some level with QMplus (slightly satisfied to very satisfied).



4.2.3. Looking at the use and satisfaction levels by faculty and Professional Services

- HSS were the highest users of QMplus, with 100% of HSS respondents indicating that they use QMplus,
- 98% of S&E respondents indicated that they use QMplus and they were the most dissatisfied
- Professional Services had the highest satisfaction levels (100% satisfied)

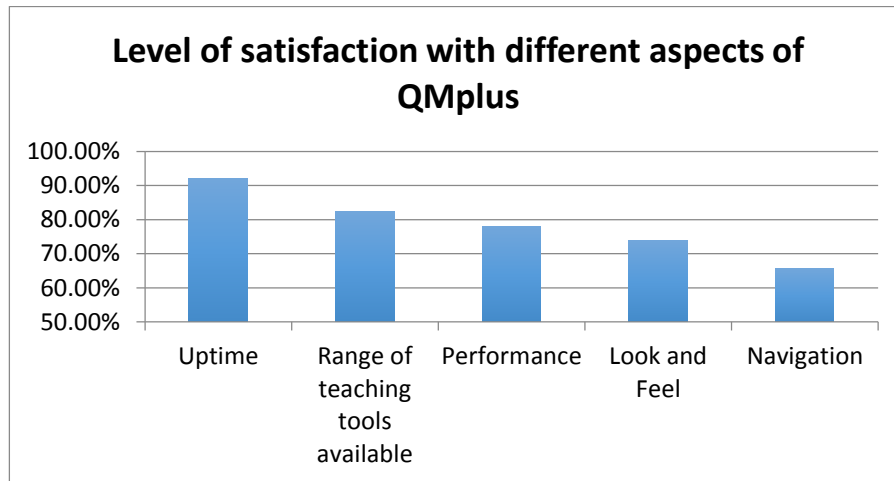


Figure 5

4.2.4. Looking at the different aspects of QMplus, staff were most satisfied with the uptime (i.e. how much QMplus is available) and with the range of teaching tools available. However, staff indicated some dissatisfaction with their ability to navigate around the environment.

- Uptime: 92.2% satisfied
- Range of Teaching Tools: 82.5% satisfied
- Performance: 78.1% satisfied
- Look and Feel: 74% satisfied
- Navigation: 65.8% of respondents expressed satisfaction with QMplus navigation (i.e. their ability to get around QMplus)

4.2.5. Survey participants were asked to evaluate specific features and functionality within QMplus, indicating which features they used and what their level of satisfaction was with these items.

4.2.6. Most respondents use QMplus to add resources and material (90%) and to communicate with their students (82%) and were generally satisfied with their ability to use QMplus for these activities. Fewer respondents used QMplus for group work and assessment activities.

- 90% of respondents wanted to be able to share online resources and material with their students, of which 85% were satisfied with their ability to do this in QMplus.
- 82% of respondents used QMplus to communicate with their students, of which 80% were satisfied with their ability to do this in QMplus.
- 80% of respondents wanted to be able to design a nice looking course area for their students, of which 72.4% were satisfied with their ability to do this with QMplus.

- 72.3% of respondents wanted to be able to create online activities that reflected the way they teach, of which 68% were satisfied with their ability to do so in QMplus.
- 61% of respondents used QMplus to set up formative assessments, of which 73% were satisfied.
- 56% used QMplus for summative assessments, of which 70% were satisfied.
- 53.9% used QMplus to set up groups and group activities, of which 67% were satisfied.

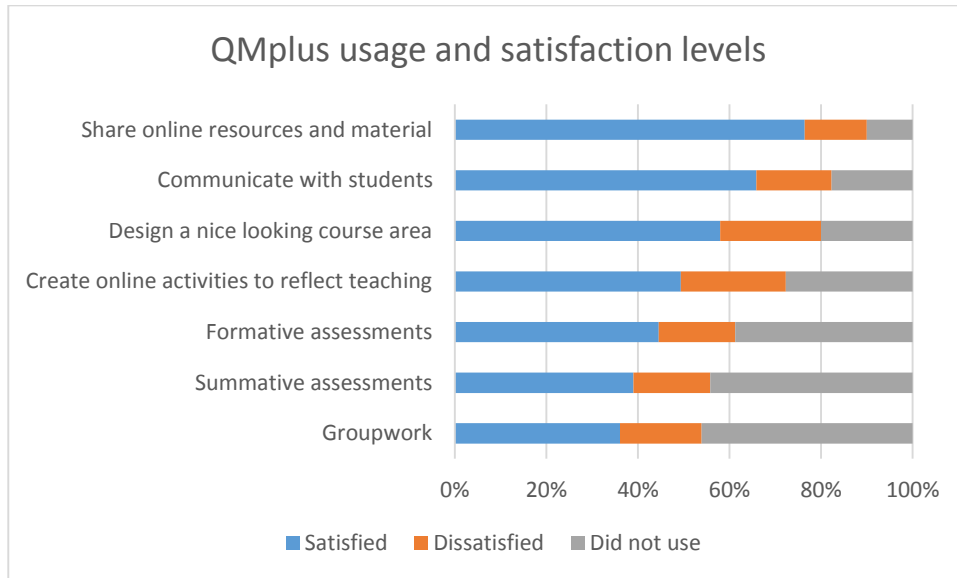


Figure 6

5. Q-REVIEW

5.1. Key Findings

Survey participants were asked to indicate whether they use the Q-Review lecture capture system and if so, to evaluate it.

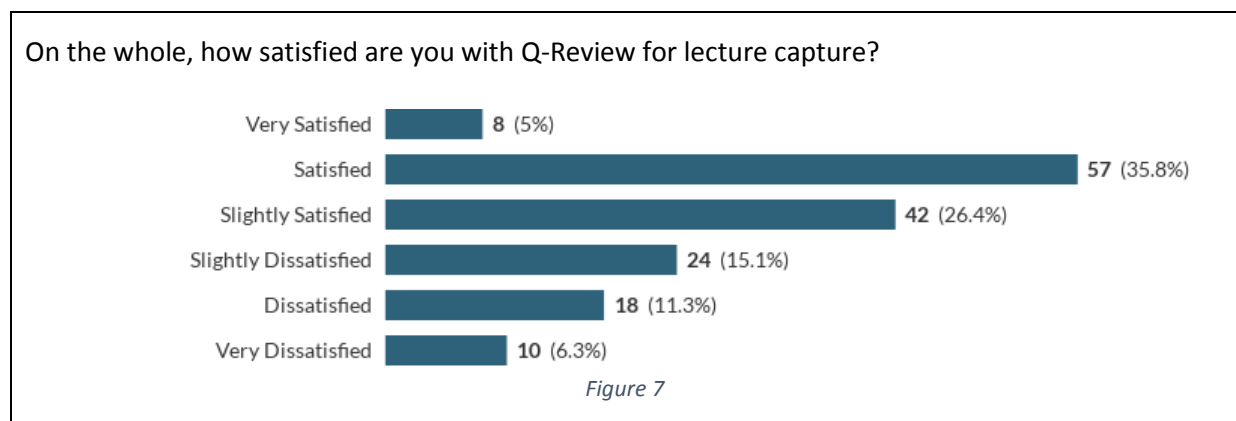
Almost half of the survey respondents indicated that they use Q-Review to record their lectures, and more than a quarter indicated that they do not teach and so had no reason to record lectures. Of those who used Q-Review, over two thirds indicated that they were satisfied on some level with this technology.

More than half of respondents expressed that they are comfortable with their lectures being recorded. 59.6% placed themselves at 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being “Very Uncomfortable” and 5 being “Very Comfortable with being recorded”.

Staff would most like to see improved controls within the classrooms that would allow them to be aware of when they are being recorded, and to be able to easily start, stop or pause a recording when necessary

5.2. The Data - Usage and Satisfaction Levels

- 46.8% indicated that they use Q-Review to record their lectures.
- 26.8% indicated that they do not teach, and so had no reason to record lectures.
- 6.8% did not know if their lectures were recorded.
- 20% chose not to record their lectures.
- 67.2% of respondents are satisfied with the Q-Review lecture capture system.



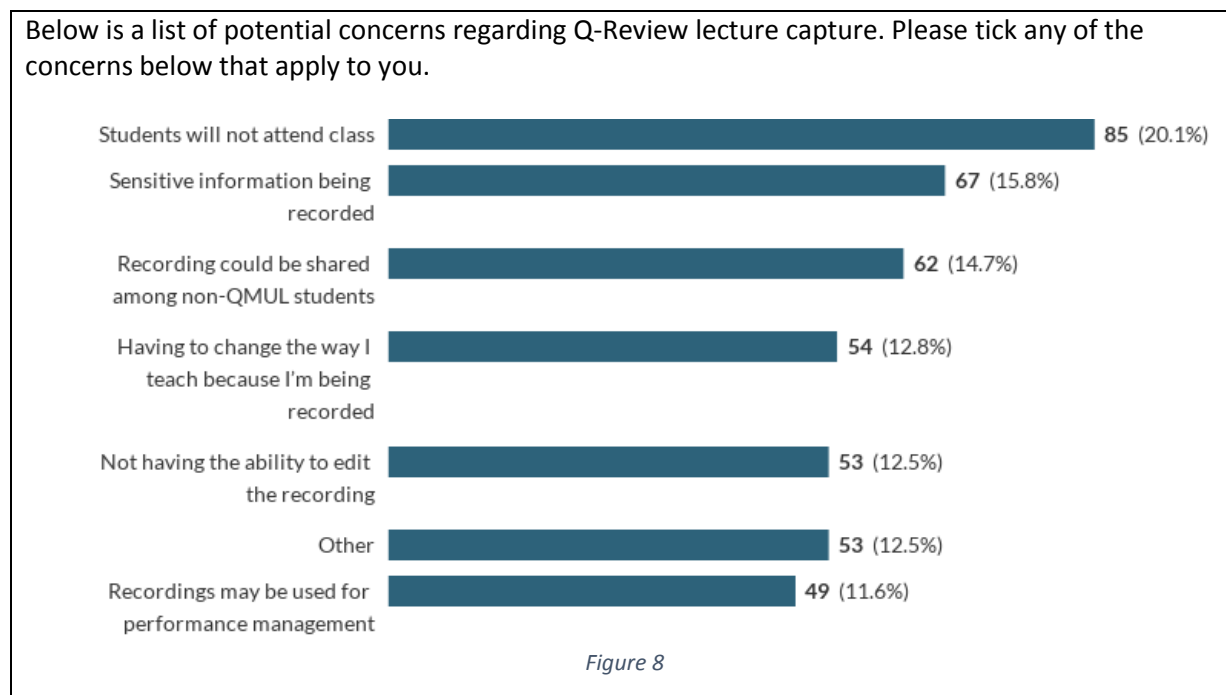
5.3. Key Messages

5.3.1. Editing Recordings

Almost a third of respondents (32.7%) indicated that they did not know how to edit their lecture recording, even though an online editing facility exists. 12.5% cited this as a concern for them, while a number of respondents indicated that they did not edit recordings and left open comments citing that this was because ‘editing recordings was not a part of their job description’.

28% indicated that they did generally edit their recordings – either always (8%) or sometimes (20%).

5.3.2. Concerns regarding lecture capture



Staff continue to have concerns around recording lectures and students' attendance, with 20% of respondents citing this as one of their concerns. Others included:

- Sensitivity: 15% indicated concerns around sensitive information being recorded
- Sharing: 14.7% were concerned about students sharing the recordings
- Teaching Style: 12.8% were concerned about having to change the way they teach when being recorded
- Editing: 12.5% expressed concern about being unable to edit their recordings
- Performance: 11.5% were concerned about recordings being used for performance management

It should be noted that the default setting for Q-Review recordings requires a QMUL username and password to view recordings, and Q-Review recordings are not downloadable by default. It should also be noted that the Q-Review policy expressly states that the system is not to be used for performance management.

5.3.3. Q-Review Enhancement

Thinking about the ongoing development of the Q-Review service, which of the following do you think is most important for development over the next academic year?

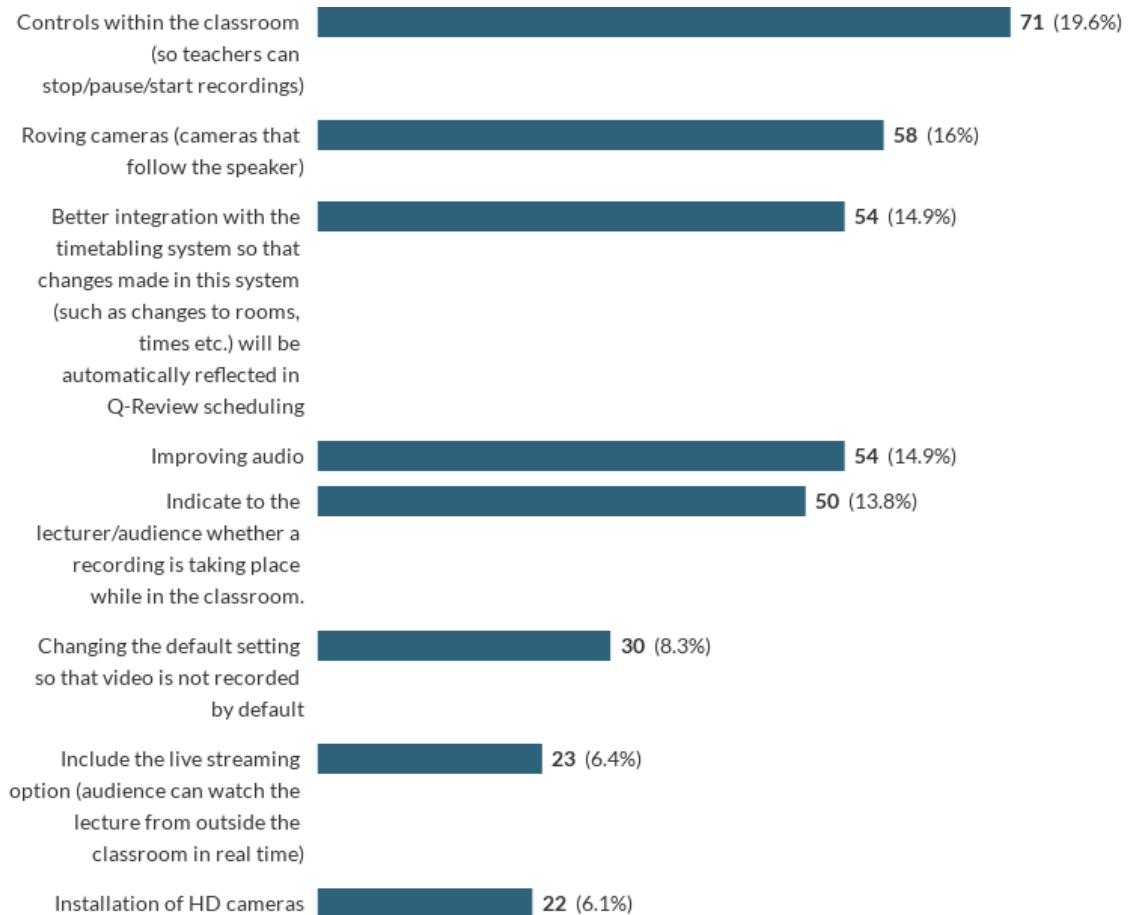


Figure 9

The highest number of respondents indicated that they would like to have more control over their recordings in the classroom – with the ability to start/stop/pause a recording (19.6%) being ranked as the highest request for development. There were also open comments about the quality of the recordings needing improvement.

6. OTHER E-LEARNING APPLICATIONS

6.1. Key Findings

Survey participants were asked to evaluate five other QMUL e-learning applications, indicating which ones they used and what their level of satisfaction was with these applications.

Of all the technologies, the Turnitin Plagiarism detection service is used by the highest number of respondents and received the highest level of satisfaction. Bristol Online Survey service was the application that fewest respondents had heard of.

6.2. The Data - Usage and Satisfaction Levels

Below is the data broken down for each of the five e-learning applications:

Turnitin - plagiarism detection

- 61% use, of which 87% are satisfied
- 21% did not know about Turnitin
- 18% chose not to use it

QMplus Hub – groups and portfolios

- 25% use, of which 82% are satisfied
- 50% did not know about QMplus Hub
- 25% chose not to use it

QMplus Media – video storage and streaming

- 29% use, of which 76% are satisfied
- 48% did not know about QMplus Media
- 23% chose not to use it

Clickers – audience response system

- 27% use, of which 78% are satisfied
- 44% did not know about clickers
- 29% chose not to use them

Bristol Online Surveys (BOS) – survey creation

- 23% use, of which 81% are satisfied
- 63% did not know about BOS
- 14% chose not to use it

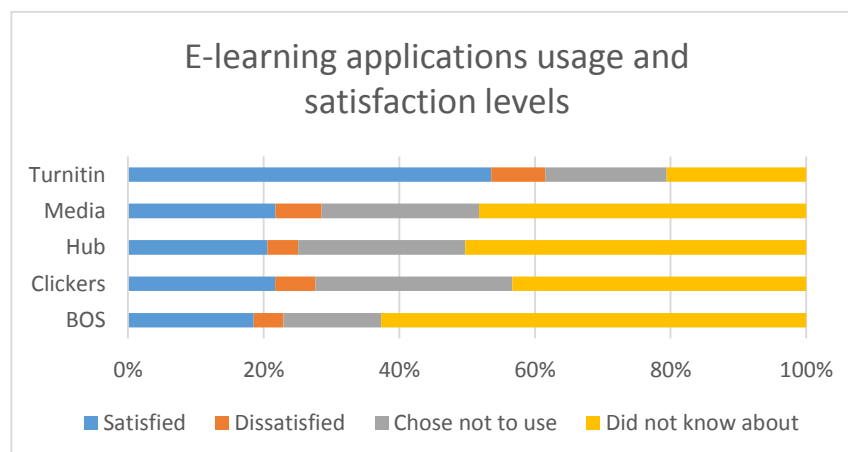


Figure 10

7. STAFF ATTITUDES TOWARDS E-LEARNING SUPPORT

7.1. Key Findings

Respondents were asked to evaluate the methods they had used to obtain help and support with e-learning related queries.

Most respondents indicated that they visited the e-learning website to get support. Overall, of the methods available for e-learning support, respondents were most satisfied when they met with someone from the e-learning team (93%).

7.2. The Data - Usage and Satisfaction Levels

E-Learning Website

- 63.5% of respondents indicated that they visited the e-learning website for support.
- Of those, 86% had some degree of satisfaction (slightly to very satisfied).

Helpdesk

- 59.6% of respondents indicated that they have raised a ticket on the ITS Helpdesk system to receive e-learning support.
- Of those, 68% had some degree of satisfaction.

E-learning workshops

- 58.2% of respondents indicated that they have attended an E-Learning workshop or training session.
- Of those, 90% had some degree of satisfaction

E-Learning Unit Staff

- 53.2% of respondents indicated that they have met with someone from the E-Learning.
- Of those, 93% had some degree of satisfaction

Email

- 50% of respondents emailed someone from the E-Learning Unit directly to get help.
- Of those, 85% had some degree of satisfaction

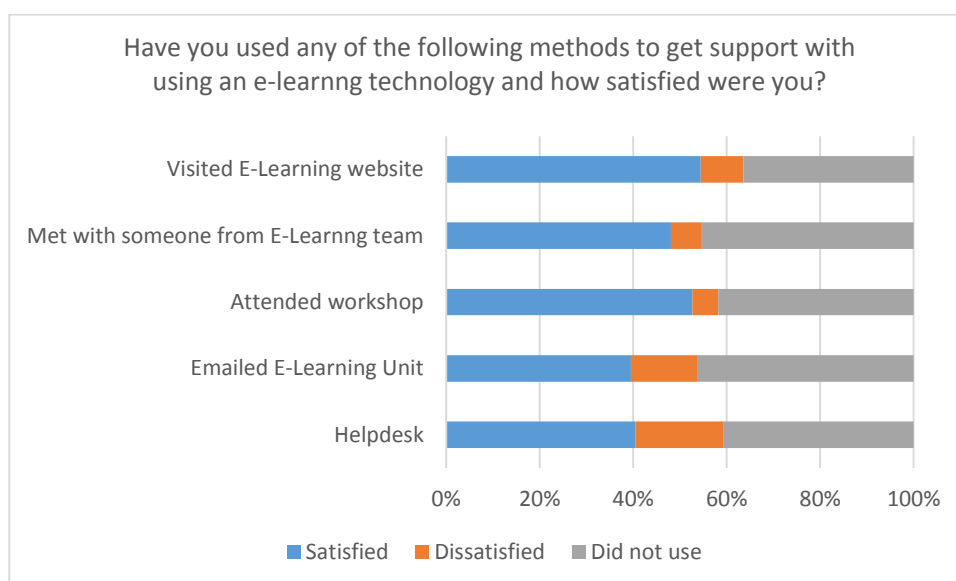


Figure 11

7.3. Key Messages

7.3.1. Preferred method to receive e-learning support

Staff were presented with a list of methods to obtain help and support (including methods not currently offered by the Unit) and were asked to choose their top three preferences from the list.

The most preferred method to obtain e-learning support was to make a phone call.

Below is the full list in order of respondents' preference. * indicates methods not currently offered by the E-Learning Unit.

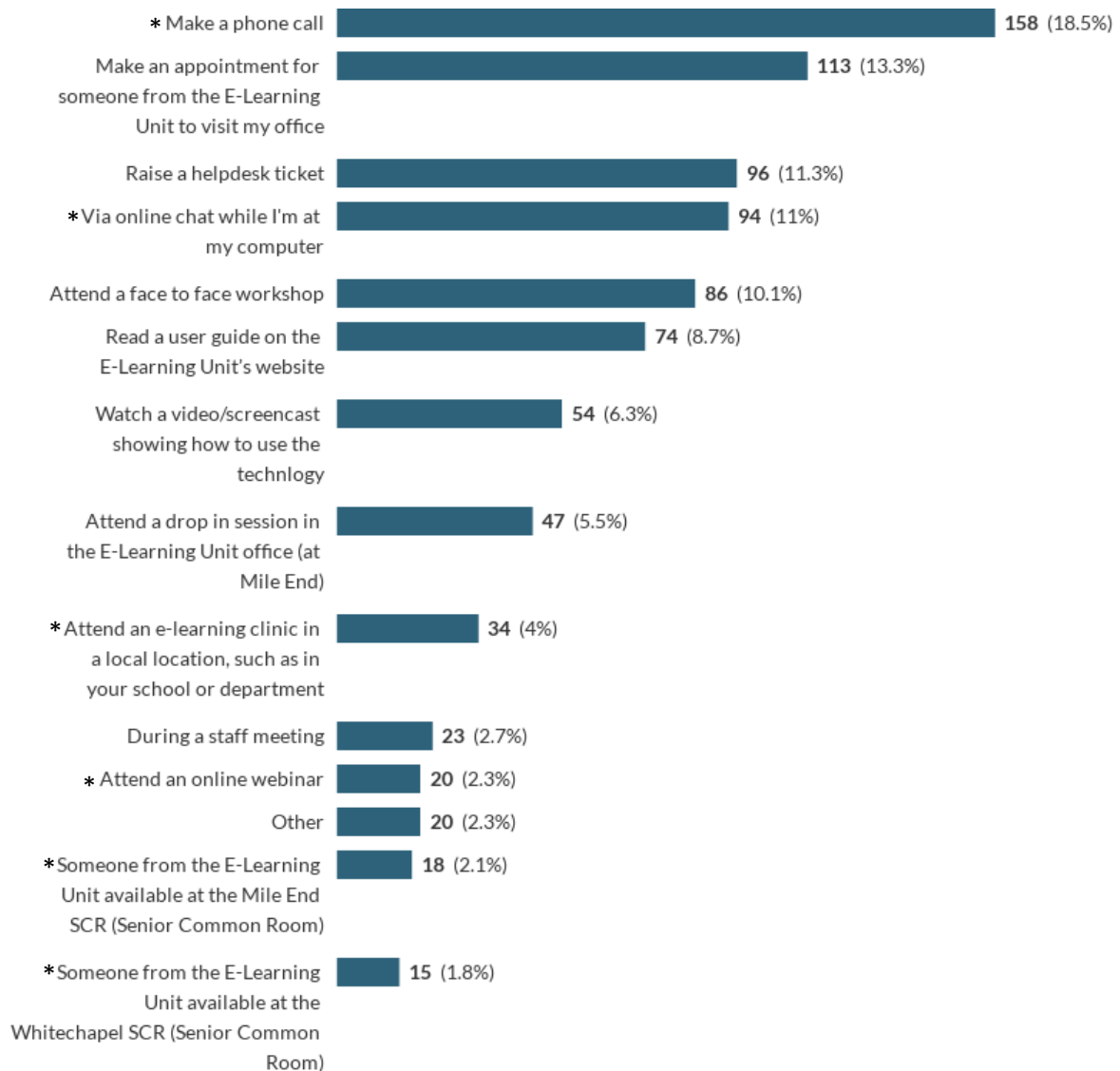


Figure 12

The 2.3% of respondents who selected 'Other' entered open comments, such as:

- Direct email to someone from the E-Learning Unit
- Local support (in specific schools and buildings)
- Support in the classroom at the time of emergency
- One to one support when needed

7.3.2. Experience with E-Learning Unit staff

The above data is backed up the free text comments left at the end of the survey. There were over 300 comments left at the end of the survey where respondents were asked to leave either positive comments on or suggestions for improvements to QMplus, Q-Review or e-learning Support.

Overall, it is evident that staff are happy with and appreciate the support that they receive from the E-Learning Unit. However, they expressed some frustration that this support is not always easy to

access, especially when having to go through the Helpdesk system. A few comments about the availability for phone support were left in the open comments section indicated that respondents resorted to non-helpdesk routes for resolution, e.g.:

Everytime I have attended a course, spoken to or met a person from e-learning or needed equipment the experience has been great. Really good courses, really helpful staff.

'Having to go through the Helpdesk makes things slow and you often get referred to the wrong person. On several occasions I have ended up phoning the e-learning team or visiting them because my ticket has been sent around the houses.'

There were some very enthusiastic comments given, including:

- Once through to e-learning support I've always been impressed by the knowledge and attitude of the staff.
- I think the support is great, the online resources and regular emails are very handy and they are written very clearly for a non-tech person to understand, I just wish I was able to put more of the features into practise. There's been the QM showcase events etc which are useful.
- When you actually manage to get someone on the phone or face to face they are very competent and sort stuff out. Which is excellent. But this is hard to do.
- The e-learning team are great. Very helpful and knowledgeable.
- E-Learning remains as good a professional service as any in the college, probably the best.
- A very supportive and enthusiastic team!

"I am no longer in an e-learning role, however I was doing this last year and the e-learning support was brilliant. All the team were very helpful and always made themselves available for guidance."

And some specific members of staff mentioned:

- Generally very good. Big up Richard Chantler a jolly good fellow.
- BRILLIANT. Gill and Richard have been incredibly helpful to the school of Politics. GREAT!!!!
- I've had excellent support from E-Learning Support. Particularly Dr. Mark Roberts, Gill Ritchie and Karin Fernandes, who supported our work which was funded through the E-learning Production Scheme. This is a fantastic scheme.
- I have received GREAT support from Gill Ritchie in E-Learning. Couldn't have made improvements to our QM+ module delivery without her. Couldn't have been better. Really.

8. STAFF ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHER E-LEARNING SERVICES

8.1. Key Findings

Survey participants were asked to evaluate other services offered by the E-Learning Unit, indicating which ones they used and what their level of satisfaction was with these services.

Of all the e-learning services we asked about, the highest number of respondents indicated that they had 'Booked a Learning Technologist' (26%). Overall, respondents were most satisfied with this service (91%) as well as the 'Drop In Sessions' and the 'E-Learning Studio'. A high number of respondents were not aware of the 'E-Learning Production Scheme' (where they can apply to receive an E-Learning Assistant resource) and the 'QMplus Request Tracker' (where they can submit QMplus enhancement requests).

8.2. The Data - Usage and Satisfaction Levels

Book a Learning Technologist (meet with a member of the E-Learning team)

- 26% of respondents indicated that they have used the Book a Learning Technologist (BALT) service to obtain e-learning advice.
- Of those, 91% had some degree of satisfaction.
- 47.6% did not know about this service.

Equipment Loan Service (borrow technology such as clickers, laptops, microphones etc.)

- 20% of respondents indicated that they have used the equipment loan service.
- Of those, 85% had some degree of satisfaction.
- 55% did not know about this service.

Drop In Sessions (normally Tuesdays/Thursdays 1-2pm)

- 19% of respondents indicated that they have used the drop in service for e-learning support.
- Of those, 91% had some degree of satisfaction.
- 52.6% did not know about this service.

E-Learning Studio

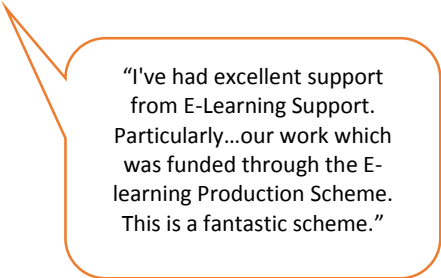
- 16% of respondents indicated that they have used the E-Learning Studio.
- Of those, 91% had some degree of satisfaction.
- 54.4% did not know about the Studio.

E-Learning Production Scheme (apply for E-Learning Assistant resource)

- 15% of respondents indicated that they have used the E-Learning Production Scheme service to obtain assistance in developing e-learning activities.
- Of those, 86% had some degree of satisfaction.
- 61.8% did not know about this scheme.

QMplus Request Tracker (submit QMplus development requests)

- 15% of respondents indicated that they have used the QMplus Request Tracker to request QMplus development.
- Of those, 79% had some degree of satisfaction.
- 65.3% did not know about this service.



"I've had excellent support from E-Learning Support. Particularly...our work which was funded through the E-learning Production Scheme. This is a fantastic scheme."

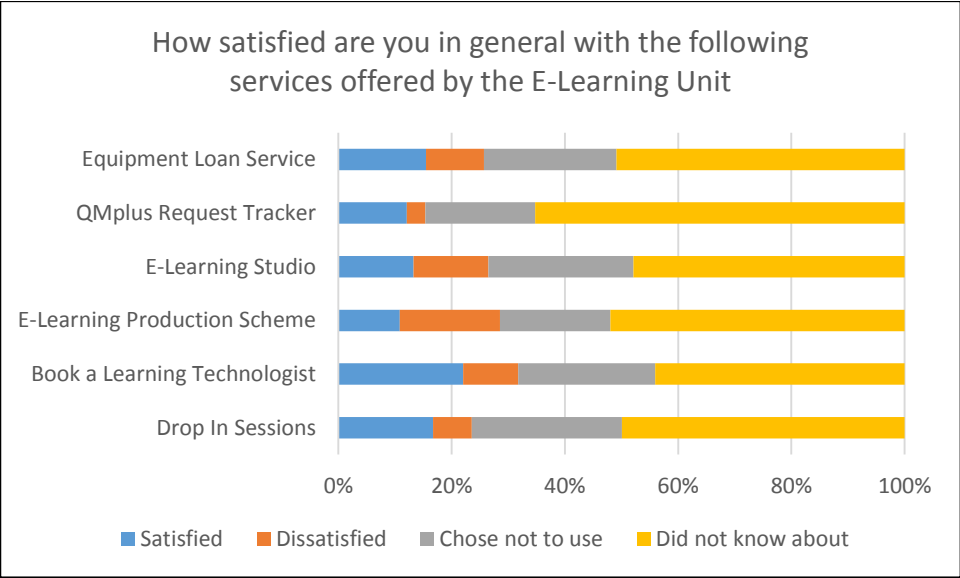


Figure 13

9. COMMUNICATION

9.1. Key Findings

Participants were asked whether they were subscribed to, or viewed, the different communication channels for e-learning and their general level of satisfaction with the information received via each method.

Of all the e-learning communication channels that they were asked to evaluate, the highest number of respondents indicated that they have used the e-learning website to obtain information (51%). The highest rate of satisfaction was for the e-learning Twitter feed (100% satisfaction) although only 11% of respondents indicated that they were subscribed to or viewed the twitter feed for e-learning information.

9.2. The Data - Usage and Satisfaction Levels

E-Learning Website

- 51% of respondents indicated that they have used the e-learning website.
- Of those, 88% had some degree of satisfaction.
- 33.2% did not know about the website.

QMplus news and alerts (messages that appear on QMplus homepage)

- 45% of respondents indicated that they have viewed the news and alerts on QMplus.
- Of those, 88% had some degree of satisfaction.
- 39.4% did not know about this method of communication.

E-Learning Monthly Newsletter

- 39% of respondents indicated that they are subscribed to the monthly newsletter.
- Of those, 94% had some degree of satisfaction.
- 45.3% did not know about the newsletter.

Online E-Learning Practitioners Forum (in QMplus Hub)

- 18% of respondents indicated that they are subscribed the online practitioner forum.
- Of those, 92% had some degree of satisfaction.
- 66.2% did not know about this forum.

Twitter Feed

- 11% of respondents indicated that they view the e-learning twitter feed.
- Of those, 100% had some degree of satisfaction.
- 61.5% did not know about this communication channel.

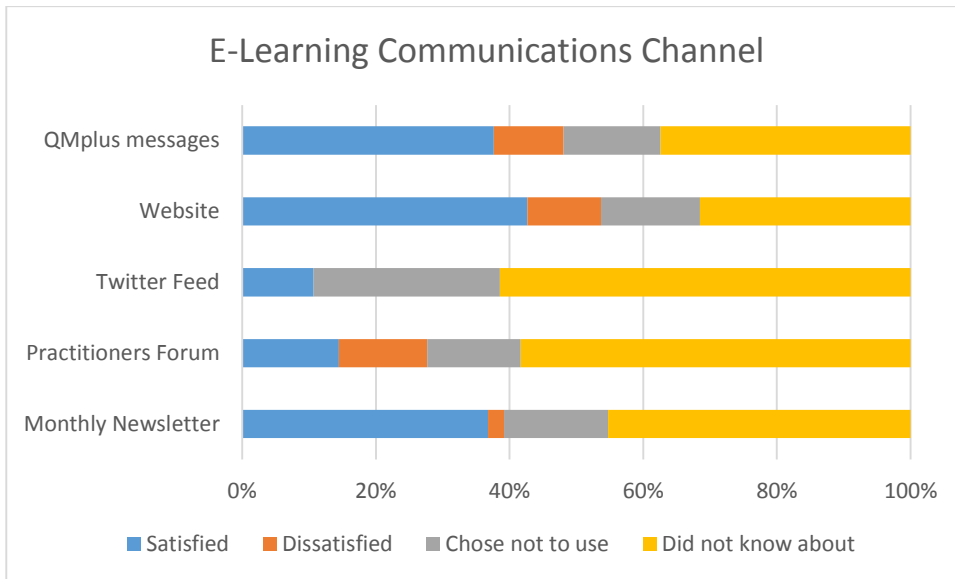


Figure 14

9.3. Key Messages

9.3.1. Preferred Channel

Participants were asked about their preferred method to receive information about e-learning and were given a list from which to choose their top 3 from. The top choice was 'Regular emails (monthly) from the E-Learning Unit' (34.3%) followed by 'notifications on QMplus' (20.2%).

Below is the full list.

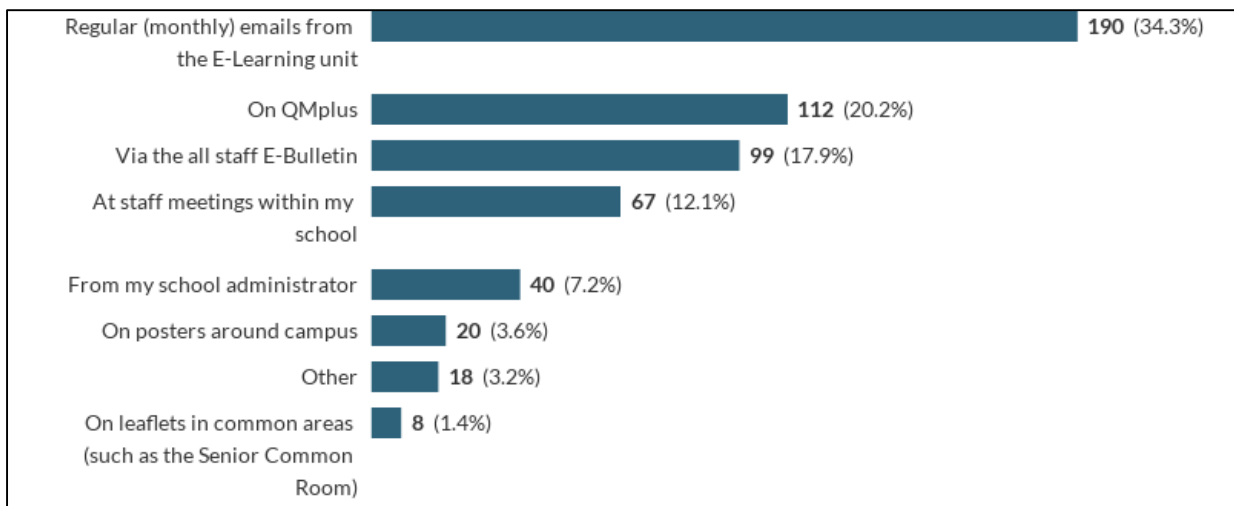


Figure 15

Other suggestions included:

- On Twitter
- At Training Sessions
- 1-1 tuition or small group sessions
- On leaflets in pigeonholes

- At Learning Technology Group Meetings
- When new members of staff arrive at induction briefings

9.3.2. Preferred Information

Participants were asked what kind of information they would like to receive from the E-Learning Unit and given a list to choose from. This question received a mixed response, with no clear lead, but generally ‘How to user guides and videos’ received the highest number of votes with 21%.

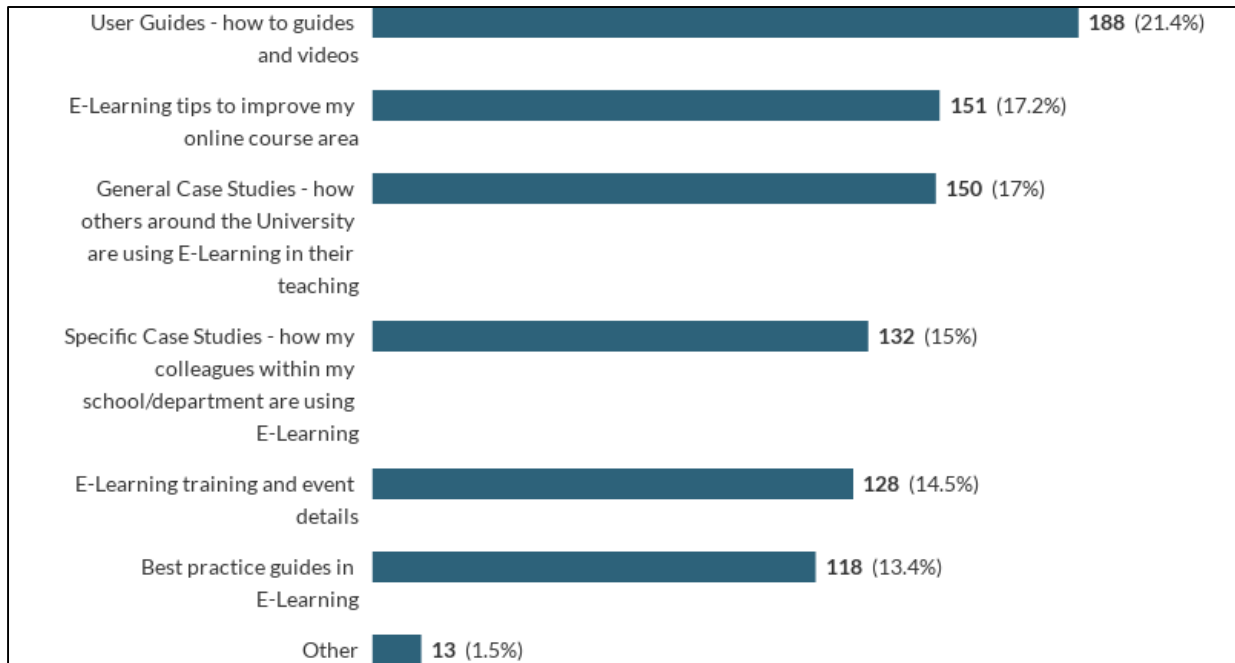


Figure 16

Some open comments included:

- Overview of changes made
- Simpler FAQs
- No time to engage with information
- Not videos – they take too long and don’t always have the technology to support them
- I want access to help when I need it, such as on the phone

10. CONCLUSION

Respondents were generally satisfied with e-learning applications at QMUL, although there were comments suggesting that it would be better if these were more intuitive to use. Once they knew how to use the specific functionality, it was found to be very useful. Some specific features that were mentioned included Turnitin, drag and drop functionality, and the ability to set up timed restrictions.

Respondents indicated that they liked the range of tools available, although there are still a number of staff who are not aware of the range of learning technologies available, in particular QMplus Hub (groups and portfolios) and Bristol Online Surveys (survey creation).

What do you like about QMplus?

'...it's consistently improving' and 'it's being used by the whole school (University) so makes a better student experience

Some respondents were dissatisfied with their ability to navigate around the QMplus environment (34.2%). In the open ended questions when asked to 'name one thing that you would like to improve about QMplus', navigation was mentioned most frequently. It was not always clear from the comments what could be improved here. Some comments around navigation include:

- It's very hard to navigate and some names and terms are counterintuitive.
- Too crowded and difficult to navigate.
- Navigation! You never get taken back to the point/page you were on previously. For example when I'm in assignment submissions and do something with someone on one page it automatically reloads back to the first page. Very annoying!
- Students find it hard to navigate, especially using a mobile phone. On their request I email out a link to the correct items, and then they are much more likely to access than showing them where to find the files on the 'tree'
- Some of the navigation choices are difficult and clunky.

I think the support is great, the online resources and regular emails are very handy and they are written very clearly for a non-tech person to understand, I just wish I was able to put more of the features into practise. There's been the QM showcase events etc which are useful.

Although Q-Review is widely accepted, staff still have concerns about recording their lectures (45.3%), and this was reflected in the survey results. It should be noted that in January 2016, Science and Engineering became a Q-Review faculty, following Humanities and Social Sciences who became a Q-Review faculty in 2014/15. This means that all lectures that take place in recordable rooms, within these faculties, are recorded by default. Members of staff are able to 'opt-out' by requesting that their lecture is not recorded. This was a big change for the faculty and may have had an impact on responses.

Name one thing that you would like to improve most in QMplus.

The navigation took some time for me to get used to.

There are clearly some misconceptions regarding how Q-Review works. Even though an online editing facility exists, there were still concerns around being able to edit Q-Review recordings (12.5%). Others were concerned that their recordings would be shared among non-QMUL students (14.7%) although the default setting for Q-Review recordings requires a QMUL username and password to view recordings, and Q-Review recordings are not downloadable by default.

There was frustration expressed that recordings are not linked to the Timetabling system. While an automatic integration with the timetabling system would make administration easier, there were counter concerns about the data that is

available in the timetabling system which conflicts with what happens in reality during the lecture – such as overrunning or early finishes.

“My biggest concern is that recordings stop and start at times identified on the timetable. However in reality lectures stop and start at different times so recordings are often incomplete.”

11. RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The 2016/17 staff survey has been a valuable tool to collect staff views and feedback on e-learning applications and support at QMUL, and will help us to focus on specific areas for improvement over the coming months/years. Below are the identified short, medium and long-term recommendations to improve e-learning applications and services in response to these survey results.

* indicates items that we have already started to implement.

QMplus

- Short Term: Consider some smaller QMplus improvements via contributed plugins, such as the coursework manager plugin and better search functionality. *
- Medium Term: Further evaluate QMplus navigation concerns to identify specific areas that require improvement. Run focus groups with respondents to gain more insight. *
- Longer Term: Review the grades area in QMplus and consider ways to improve the layout.

Q-Review

- Short Term: Consider ways to improve awareness of the Q-Review features and processes to ensure that staff know the facts, such as editing capabilities within the system.
- Short Term: Improve editing capabilities.*
- Medium Term: Purchase and install equipment within the classrooms to give staff the ability to start/stop/pause a recording in the classroom. *
- Medium Term: Investigate ways to integrate the timetabling system with Q-Review for more seamless recording schedules and to ensure that changes made in the Timetabling system will be reflected in Q-Review bookings. *
- Longer Term: Conduct research to determine whether recorded lectures results in reduced student attendance.
- Longer Term: Consider purchasing HD cameras to help improve the quality of recordings.

Other General Recommendations

- Staff want easier access to the support team. Consider an e-learning support phone helpline. *
- Staff who use Twitter are satisfied with the e-learning Twitter updates and find it useful. Continue to tweet regularly and around a range of topics, so that staff remain up to date on e-learning related matters.
- Explore other e-learning technologies such as conferencing tools and polling software and investigate benefits of institutional services or licensing arrangements. These technologies were mentioned when respondents were asked to name other technologies that they use within their teaching. *
- Many staff are not aware of the technologies available and how to use them. Improve communication about what e-learning tools and services are available at QMUL
- Consider ways to improve subscription to the monthly e-learning newsletter that is emailed to subscribed users; only 39% of respondents indicated that they are subscribed even though respondents indicated that their preferred method to receive information about e-learning was via 'Regular emails (monthly) from the Unit'.

"By doing this survey I have realised there is much more to e-learning than I realised - I just feel dissatisfied that I don't know more or how to use it properly. Often it's because we are so busy teaching and running courses that it's easier to stick with what you know which is not ideal."

If you would like more details about the staff survey, please email elearning@qmul.ac.uk

Subscribe to our monthly e-learning newsletter:
<http://www.lists.qmul.ac.uk/sympa/info/elearning-practitioners>