



**Higher Education Services  
Academic Voice  
Framework**

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# Higher Education Services Academic Voice Framework

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The academic voice is crucial to FutureLearn. The following document outlines the ways in which academics can get involved and help to develop the Higher Education Services academic delivery.

1.2 The academic voice refers to the active participation, opinions, and perspectives of academics in decisions that affect FutureLearn’s academic delivery. Empowering academics to share their views encourages a sense of ownership, engagement, and loyalty. When academics are given a platform to express themselves through surveys, online discussions, or collaborative projects they develop confidence, critical thinking skills, and a stronger connection to their academic community.

1.3 Listening to the academic voice also helps FutureLearn create more inclusive, relevant, and effective learning experiences for students. Academics often provide insights into what works and what does not in their modules, helping FutureLearn tailor approaches to better meet the student’s needs. Moreover, recognising the academic voice can contribute to improved mental health and wellbeing, as academics feel heard, respected, and valued.

1.4 Incorporating an academic voice is not just about giving them a say, it is about genuinely considering their input and involving them as partners in shaping FutureLearn’s academic delivery. FutureLearn prioritises its academics' voice to build a culture of mutual respect and continuous improvement.

## 2.0 Academic Voice Feedback System

2.1 FutureLearn offers several opportunities for academics to engage with the organisation. Enabling academics to have a voice provides ongoing formal and informal communications to continue. FutureLearn finds this feedback is highly valuable when developing the high-quality programmes offered.

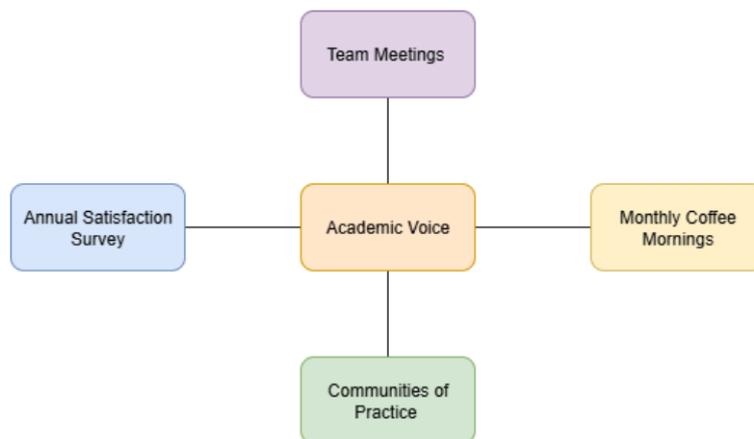


Figure 1: Academic Voice Feedback System

## 2.2 Purpose of the Academic Voice

2.2.1 The presence of an academic voice on FutureLearn is of critical importance as it establishes authority, reliability, and intellectual rigour within the learning environment. Academics bring evidence-based knowledge and well-informed perspectives that ensure the integrity and credibility of

course content. Their voice adds depth and context to complex topics, guiding learners toward a more nuanced and critical understanding of subject matter.

**2.2.2** Beyond providing expertise, the academic voice also demonstrates the value of scholarly contributions in shaping public discourse and extending access to higher-level thinking beyond traditional institutions. In this way, FutureLearn becomes not merely a platform for delivering information but a space where academic voices actively influence, inspire, and uphold the standards of quality education, at the same time as visibly showing FutureLearn's commitment, respect and value of the academic delivery team.

## 3.0 Process for Academic Feedback

**3.1** FutureLearn provides several ways in which feedback can be received. These are as follows:

- Annual satisfaction surveys
- Coffee mornings
- Team meetings
- Communities of Practice

### 3.2 Feedback Systems

**3.2.1 Annual satisfaction surveys** – this is a recent addition to the academic team. The satisfaction survey is important because it helps FutureLearn gather structured, anonymous feedback from its academic delivery team. This is important for several reasons:

- **Identifies strengths and weaknesses** – By asking staff to rate aspects like recognition, communication, work-life balance, and compensation, the survey highlights both what's working well and where improvements are needed.
- **Improves working conditions** – Insights from the survey can inform management decisions about policies, resources, and practices that directly impact the academic team's day-to-day experience.
- **Supports retention and motivation** – When employees feel heard, valued, and supported, they're more likely to stay engaged and satisfied in their roles.
- **Encourages open communication** – Providing a safe, anonymous channel for input builds trust and ensures that even difficult concerns can be voiced.
- **Benchmarking satisfaction** – Tracking responses over time allows FutureLearn to measure progress and evaluate whether initiatives to improve academic satisfaction are effective.

**3.2.2 Communities of Practice** enable teams to share common interests, such as research or subject matter interests. This builds a sense of belonging whereby the academic teams can share their experiences, regularly interact and learn from each other. Communities of Practice are an important aspect of academia as they encourage creative thinking, personal development, problem solving and encourage continuous improvement.

**3.2.3 Team meetings** are held by Programme Leaders. They provide teams with updates on programmes and FutureLearn. In addition, any challenges and ideas can be discussed, and any actions can then feed into the programmes and governance committees, for example, into partner Board of Studies or FutureLearn's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee.

**3.2.4** The **Monthly Coffee Mornings** are an informal meeting where all academic teams are invited to come together and virtually socialise, catching up with each other and generally touching base to ensure everyone's wellbeing.

## **4.0 Review**

**4.1** The FutureLearn academic voice system will be formally reviewed annually for its effectiveness and a report submitted to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee for information, discussion, or action.

## Appendix

### Academic Satisfaction Survey

This is a survey for academics at FutureLearn. The aim is to understand the working conditions, professional expectations, and overall role satisfaction of our academic delivery team.

Your feedback is anonymous. Filling in the survey should take you a maximum of 5-10 minutes.

Your responses will help us identify areas that need improvement and improve the working experience for everyone.

#### How long have you been working or contracted at FutureLearn?

< 1 year	1-2 years	2-5 years	6-10 years	10+ years
<input type="checkbox"/>				

#### Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of your experience at FutureLearn.

Scale	Extremely dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Extremely satisfied	Not applicable
Your role overall	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Having your work recognised and appreciated	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Communication from management	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Access to the tools and resources to perform your role effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Opportunities to provide feedback to your programme leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Opportunities for professional growth in FutureLearn	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Work-life balance	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Compensation & benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>					

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>How likely are you to recommend FutureLearn to a friend as a good place to work?</b> (1 = Extremely unlikely, 10 = Extremely likely)	<input type="checkbox"/>									