2011 inaugural student survey report

Background

This was our first annual student registrants' survey. We sent it to all students about to start their second, third, fourth or pre-reg years for whom we have a valid email address. The main focus was customer service issues such as online retention and communication. There were also some questions about our standards and students' perception of registration.

Summary

- 89% of students found online retention 'easy' or 'very easy' to use. This is an increase from 81% of fully-qualified registrants.

- 93% of students completed retention in ten minutes or less, compared to 86% of fully-qualified registrants.

- Students overwhelmingly felt that the information we had sent about the importance of registration had been clear. This was reflected in 87% of students renewing on time this year, well up from 78% the previous year.

- 92% of students felt being GOC-registered helped them to understand the professional status of optometrists and dispensing opticians.

- 94% of students who contacted the registration team during retention felt our customer service was courteous and efficient.

- 81% of respondents read at least some of eBulletin – students identified the pre-reg year as the main area where they would like more information.

Section A – profile of registrants responding

1) Type of registrant responding

120 people responded to the survey:

- 87 student optometrists (73%)
- 33 student dispensing opticians (27%)

2) Year of study

- 16 students are going into their second year
- 55 are going into their third year
- 8 are going into their fourth year (NB – most degrees are only three years plus the pre-reg year)
- 37 students are going into their pre-reg year
- 4 students declined to answer

3) Institutions where they were studying

- 11 students were studying with ABDO
- 12 with Anglia Ruskin
- 14 with Aston
- 5 with Bradford College
- 15 with Bradford University
- 14 with Cardiff
- 4 with Candl
- 10 with City University
- 17 with Glasgow Caledonian
- 7 with Manchester
- 4 with Ulster

Section B – online retention (OLR)

4) Did you renew your GOC registration online this year?

- 116 students completed their retention online
- 2 completed a paper form
- 2 declined to answer

5) How easy did you find the new OLR system to use?

- 89 (75%) found it very easy
- 16 (14%) found it easy
- 8 (7%) found it fairly easy
- 3 (2%) found it difficult
- 2 (2%) had to abandon the process
- 2 declined to answer
- Overall, 89% found it easy or very easy, compared to 81% of fully-qualified registrants.

6) How long retention took to complete

- 71 (61%) completed within five minutes
- 38 (32%) took 5-10 minutes
- 5 (4%) took 10-30 minutes
- 3 (3%) took 30 minutes or more
- 3 declined to answer
- 93% completed in ten minutes or less, compared to 86% of fully-qualified registrants.

7) Qualitative question asking how we can improve retention next year

- The majority of qualitative feedback was very positive. There was no specific overriding theme from those who had problems with the system. The Registration team will analyse all feedback before next year's retention period.

Section C – about student registration

8) Did we clearly communicate the retention requirements, and the consequences for not completing on time?

- 116 said yes
- 3 said no
- 1 declined to answer
- This is reflected in the far higher percentage of students renewing on time this year (87%, up from 78%)

9) Does OLR give you more control over your registration?

- 114 said yes
- 5 said no
- 1 declined to answer

10) Does being registered with the GOC as a student help you to understand the professional status of optometrists and dispensing opticians, and that you must adhere to certain standards?

- 109 (92%) said yes
- 10 (8%) said no
- 1 declined to answer

Section D – customer service

11) Number of students who had to contact the registration team during retention

- 86 (72%) did not
- 34 (28%) did
- A slightly higher proportion of students contacted the registration team compared to fully-qualified registrants (24%). This is presumably down to them having less experience of the retention process.

12) Which contact method did they use?

- 23 used the telephone
- 9 used email
- 2 declined to answer

13) Did you find our Registration team courteous and efficient?

- 31 did
- 2 did not
- 1 declined to answer

14) For those who didn't find the team courteous and efficient, how could the service be improved?

- This only applied to two people. The Registration team will consider the replies.

Section E – communications

15) Did you read the last eBulletin?

- 11 (9%) read all of it
- 38 (32%) read most of it
- 11 (9%) read half of it
- 36 (31%) read a little of it
- 21 (18%) read none of it
- 3 did not receive it
- These figures showed a slightly lower proportion of readership than among fully-qualified registrants. 50% read at least half, compared to 58% among fully qualifieds.

16) Most popular articles in eBulletin (you could select as many or as few as you liked)

- 66 (70% of those who read at least some) liked the student retention article
- 39 (41%) liked our positive CHRE review
- 32 (34%) students liked the Fight for Sight Carrots Nightwalk story
- 12 (13%) liked the Council member feature
- The charity and Council member features received proportionately higher results than their equivalents in the fully-qualified registrants' survey. Like fully-qualified registrants, students showed a preference for articles about statutory issues which directly affect them, although this was to a lesser extent.

17) Qualitative question asking what students would like from eBulletin

- The biggest recurring theme here was asking for more articles related to students. Currently, students and fully-qualified registrants receive the same eBulletin. Because fully-qualified registrants make up around 75% of the readership, in the past there tend to be more stories of interest to them.

18) Would you like a specific student eBulletin?

- 71 (61%) would
- 46 (39%) would not
- 3 declined to answer

19) If you would like a specific student eBulletin, what content would you like to see?

- This produced a very strong theme of students asking for more information about the pre-reg year – some 26 students mentioned this out of 57 who answered the question. This shows clear evidence of a knowledge gap concerning this part of the education process. The Communications team will work with the Education department and external stakeholders to consider the best way of improving the information students are provided with about pre-reg placements.

  Other recurring themes for this question were advice on exams and advice on going into the world of work. We will consider how we may be able to help in these areas, although it may more suitable for the professional bodies to provide guidance.