

# RH100 Panel

End of Year Report  
2017-18



## Contents

1. An Introduction to the RH100 Panel & Proposed Topics	3-4
2. RH100 Operations	5-6
3. Panel Demographics	7
4. Panel 1 Report	8
5. Panel 2 Report	9
6. Focus Group 1 Report - #Gethired Campaign (Dr. Olga Walsh)	10
7. Panel 3 Report	11
8. Focus Group 2 Report – Learning Time and Space (Justin O’Brien)	12
9. Discussion Topics Progress Report	13
10. Satisfaction Survey Results	15
11. RH100 Panel 2018-19 - Recommendations	16

### Introduction

RH100 is now operationally delivered by the Student Engagement & Sport Department within the Academic Services Directorate. Lead contacts for any enquiries are Sandro Gunther (Campus Engagement Manager) and Chloe Humphreys (Student Engagement Officer). The panel had 28 returning students and a further 75 new students were recruited.

Student Engagement and Sport have absorbed the previous administrator post as advised by PRC and had a delivery budget of £16,000.

A termly report was provided to Student Experience Committee to give a regular update to all members. The panel met on three occasions with detailed panel input, which was fed back directly to the topic owner.

### Purpose of RH100

As the panel transferred to its second year since inception from the Student First project, it was important that we did not lose sight of the purpose of RH100 and what the panel is used for. The main aim for the RH100 is to ensure Student Voice is represented as the College implements strategic change projects across the breadth of student experience. The panel has balanced representation from all degree levels and departments as well as different student groups, including mature, commuting, joint honours and international students.

The RH100 panel is not intended as a **feedback** mechanism for professional services or academic departments i.e. you said, we did/surveys on business as usual activity. Instead, the panel is challenged with providing **input** on how they want to shape and steer 'live College' that requires complex thought and representation from a diverse student body.

Members of the panel were also invited to attend follow-up focus groups relating to their specific cohort and/or student profile. This was typically used to capture 'benefit realisation' of projects that the panel have provided input on previously.

# Key dates and proposed topics to be approved by the Student Experience Committee:

	Topic	Owner	Reporting to
14 Nov	Sports Centre Investment	Head of Student Engagement and Sport / VP Sport	Sports Centre Investment Project Board
	Academic Representation	Head of Membership Support and Engagement (SU)/ VP Education	Academic Strategy Steering Group
16 Jan	RH Graduate Employment Journey	Director of Careers and Employability	Employability Committee
	Learning & Social Spaces	VP Education	Student Experience Committee
<b>Focus Group 1</b>			
20 Feb	#GetHired – Careers' Comms channels	Internal Communications Officer (Employability and Student Voice)	Employability Committee
13 Mar	Access to Campus	Deputy Director of Estates	Director of Estates
	Academic Quality – Feedback	Senior Lecturer (Teaching Focussed) VP Education	Teaching Innovation Working Group
<b>Focus Group 2</b>			
19 Mar	Teaching Environment workshop	Senior Lecturer (Teaching Focussed) VP Education	Teaching Innovation Working Group

## RH100 Operations

### 1) Recruitment

This year's RH100 Panel saw the application process be altered to a formal Stonefish job application. The applicants were asked to provide evidence on their communication & time management skills and reasons why they would like to be a member of the panel. The improved application process ensured a high quality of applicants and raised awareness of the professionalism of the panel.

We received **113 applicants** for the panellist position, **111** of whom were shortlisted to attend an assessment centre held the following week. These applicants were in the running for approximately 70 panel positions (the remaining 28 are already held by returning panellists).

#### 1.1) Assessment Centres

We used group assessment centres to best judge the suitability of the applicants. The assessment centres consisted of the students discussing the distribution of the Alumni Fund budget and then presenting their findings to the room. Throughout this activity, the Campus Engagement team assessed the applicants' communication, teamwork and presentation skills, monitoring the applicants' contribution to the task, their peer dynamic and the clarity of ideas.

Based on this activity, the applicants were scored and our **final 103 panellists** were appointed (allowing a contingency for dropouts). As the charts in Appendix 1 demonstrate, the panellists are a representative group reflecting the demographics of our highly diverse student community at Royal Holloway.

### 2) Training

Both the returning and newly recruited student panellists were expected to attend a training session, where they were trained on various aspects of their role, how the panel feeds into the College's strategic objectives and the importance of **student voice** on all levels of the student experience. The training also provided an opportunity to inform the new panel of its legacy and the visible impact it has had, thereby **closing the loop** from last year.

### 3) Student discussion priorities

The topics listed in the table on Page 6 came out of further discussion at the training session. The panel were offered the opportunity to advise on topics that they felt were important to them and their peers. The discussion points were grouped and themed.

As a result of this, Table 1 provides recommendations on those themes that should be discussed at Panels 2 & 3 based on the potential of panel discussion to have an impact on any live change projects and/or planning round priorities for departments.

**Table 1: RH100 themes requested by the panel**

Theme	Specific topics	Comments	Priority
<b>Learning &amp; Social Spaces</b>	Crossover in learning and social spaces Condition and use of existing spaces e.g. Bedford and Windsor (old SSC)	This topic could further inform the February focus group on the Davison building and should therefore be considered for discussion at Panel 2 in January.	High
<b>Access to Campus</b>	On and off campus parking Bus service Commuters' facilities		High
<b>Safety on and around campus</b>	Lighting on and off campus (Kingswood) Back gate Liaison with local community		High
<b>Accommodation and Catering</b>	Food pricing Laundry pricing Accommodation allocation	Commercial Services are already engaging in student feedback	Medium
<b>Academic Review</b>	Teaching quality Recruitment of academic teaching staff		Medium
<b>Attendance Monitoring</b>		Discussed at Panel 2 last year – informing panel of outcomes of this discussion	Medium
<b>Bursaries and Scholarships</b>	Widening of options	Minimal impact on wider student body	Low
<b>Ongoing building maintenance</b>		Feedback rather than input	Low

## Panel Demographics

Chart 1.1

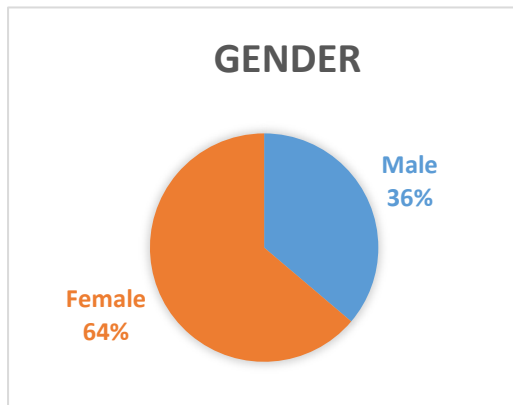


Chart 1.2

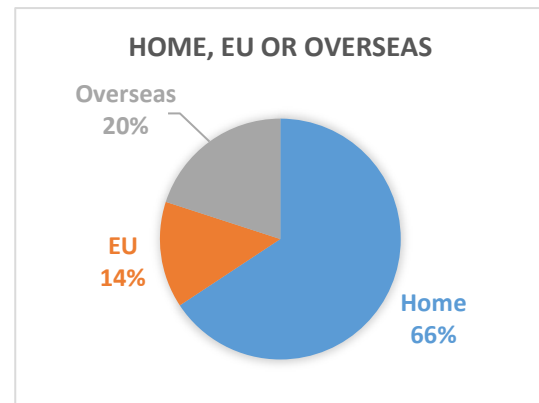


Chart 1.3

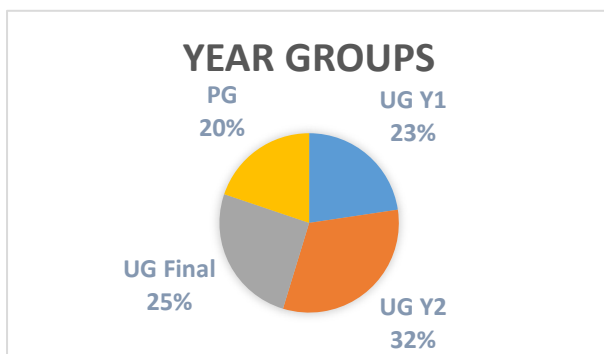


Chart 1.4

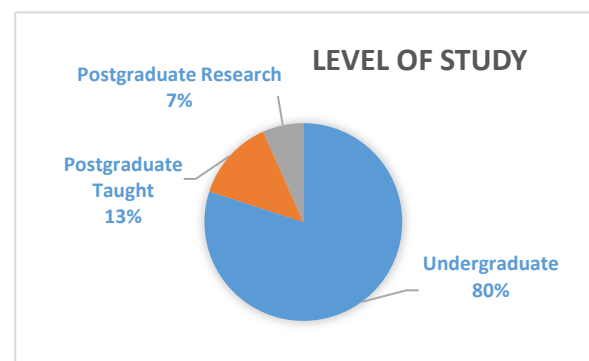
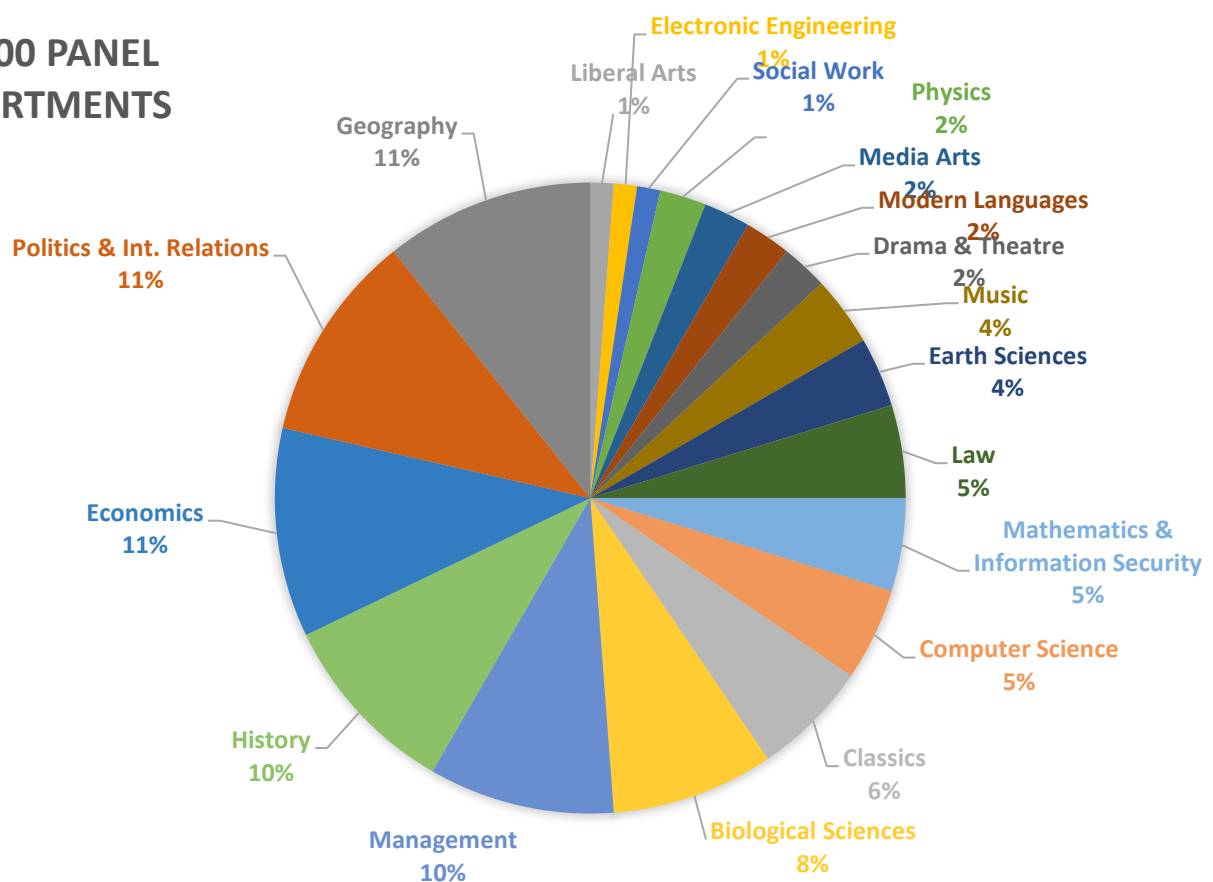


Chart 1.5

## RH100 PANEL DEPARTMENTS



## RH100 Panel 1 Report



**Date: Tuesday 14 November 2017**

**Panellist Attendance – 87.4%**

**Departments in Attendance – Campus Engagement, ALS, Students' Union**

### *Discussion Topic 1 – Sport Facilities Investment*

RH100 Panel discussed the current state and usage of RHUL's sports facilities and how the facilities could be improved.

**Panellists informed the College that...**

- Sports facilities did not heavily influence university selection however many panellists became more involved in sports once they had arrived at Royal Holloway
- Sport and physical activity is widely seen as adding value to campus life
- increasing levels of physical activity and improving the health and wellbeing are seen as the key outcomes from the university's investment in sports facilities
- improving BUCS rankings and attracting elite athletes are seen as a by-product of improving the sports facilities
- the costs of using the sports facilities are not seen as good value for money

**Panellists therefore suggested...**

- improvement of gym facilities, e.g. more space, new equipment
- improvement of sports hall e.g. spectator area, new studio space
- a "pay as you go" scheme/ class-only scheme/ monthly payments/ "try before you buy" scheme

### *Discussion Topic 2 – Academic Representation*

RH100 Panel discussed what does and does not work about current academic representation and how it could be improved.

**Panellists informed the College that...**

- students are unaware/unclear of who their course representative is and their role
- lack of communication with students is a key issue – students are not fed back the outcomes of the meetings and therefore are less likely to engage

**Panellists therefore suggested...**

- regular, scheduled meeting times for students to feedback to their course representative, e.g. drop in times before SSC meetings
- the process should be standardised across departments to ensure a more formal process
- a link to an online portal so that Reps can receive feedback about the issues affecting students
- representatives for more specific issues, i.e. 'Year Abroad Rep'

## RH100 Panel 2 Report



Date: Tuesday 16 January

Panellist Attendance – 80%

Departments in Attendance – Students' Union, Careers and Employability, Library

### *Discussion Topic 1 – Spaces on Campus (please reference Appendices 1, 2 and 3)*

RH100 Panel discussed the current usage of space on campus and how this could be improved.

Panellists informed the College that...

- Usage of Davison building for **study** is high across all cohorts
- Usage of computer centre is low.
- Most **social spaces** are used frequently by all cohorts, with the Boilerhouse Café identified as a best practice of a social and study crossover space
- **Commuters** tend to use the same spaces as non-commuting panellists
- Panellists are often not aware of alternative study spaces available to them on campus if the Library is full

Panellists therefore suggested ...

- Social spaces such as **Imagine** and **Crosslands** could be remodelled/redecorated
- There may be a lack of the following on campus:
  1. A meditation room/silent space for reflection (see *Appendix 2* for examples of best practice)
  2. Sleep pods (raised by commuters) – (see *Appendix 3* for examples of best practice)
  3. A chill out/games room (Imagine may be appropriate for this)
- The use of live screens around campus identifying free study spaces
- The use of departmental space for study should also be highlighted

*For details on Discussion Topic 2 – Graduate Employability Journey, please refer to the Careers Aspirations Strategy.*

## Focus Group 1 - #GetHired Campaign

A subset of 22 RH100 panellists discussed the channels where they encounter and source information about events and support available via the College's Careers & Employability Service.

### Panellists informed the College that...

- They get careers-related information from the following main touchpoints:
- Careers Centre (12) (30% of panellists *have never* used the Careers and Employability Service)
- Internet searches (7),  
Careers service emails (4)  
'Target Jobs' (4)
- They find out about careers events primarily through the newsletter and campus posters - 5% *always* read the Careers newsletter, 50% *sometimes* read the newsletter and 45% *never* read the Careers newsletter.

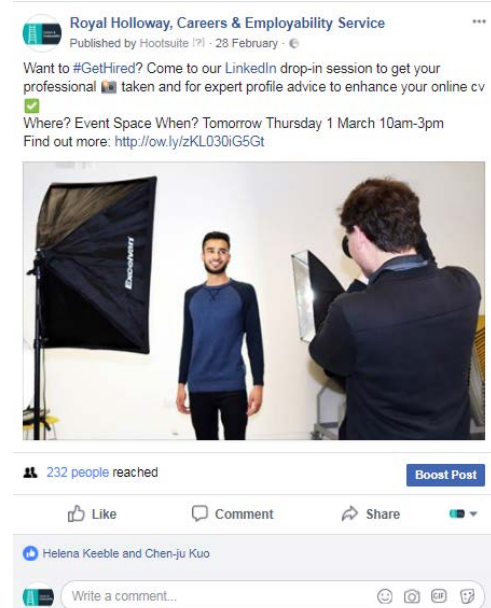
### Panellists therefore suggested...

- The type of material they would like to see in the bi-monthly Careers newsletter should be/include;
  - Easy to read, not making job hunting overwhelming
  - People to contact
  - Links to useful websites
- The type of content most likely to capture their attention on social media are memes and events.
- Facebook events are a good way for students to sign up for Careers events.

### Group activity

The panellists created four social media posts in groups for the upcoming Get Hired campaign. They were provided with a brief and some material to choose from if they wished, but were encouraged to create posts that they would find engaging.

Two of the panellists' posts were published on the Careers & Employability Service's Facebook and Twitter pages during the week-long Get Hired campaign.



## RH100 Panel 3 Report

**Date: Tuesday 13 March**

**Panellist Attendance – 74%**

**Departments in Attendance – Estates, Victoria Bourne (Psychology)**

### *Discussion Topic 1 – Access to Campus*

RH100 Panel discussed accessibility to campus including parking, bus routes and other method of transport and how this could be improved.

**Panellists informed the College that...**

- There is insufficient car parking on campus
- Buses are often unreliable and the routes are not easily available
- The price of public transport is a big factor in deterring students from using public transport
- The relationship between local residents and students is frayed – many issues with student behaviour in the local area

**Panellists therefore suggested...**

- Parking permits could be extended to non-commuters at off-peak times
- Managing costs of public transport would encourage students to use it more frequently
- Social media campaigns on road safety should be more engaging, e.g. memes
- Building on the relationship between students and the local community might encourage better student behaviour in the area

### *Discussion Topic 2 – Academic Quality – Re-thinking Feedback*

RH100 Panel discussed the ways in which they currently receive feedback on both coursework and exams and how this could be improved.

**Panellists informed the College that...**

- Feedback is often inconsistent – some is personalised, some generic
- Feedback is often not given back to the student within the allocated 4 week timeframe
- Some departments are better than other at giving appropriate levels of feedback

**Panellists therefore suggested...**

- Personalised feedback – step by step process
- More standardised feedback – consistency across departments (especially for joint honours students)
- More accountability for staff who turn in feedback late
- Relate feedback to a mark scheme (possible make mark schemes available when the essay is given out)
- Focus on improvement rather than what was incorrect

## Focus Group 2 – Learning Time and Space

RH100 panellists discussed the structure of the academic year and how the environment affects their learning.

Panellists informed the College that...

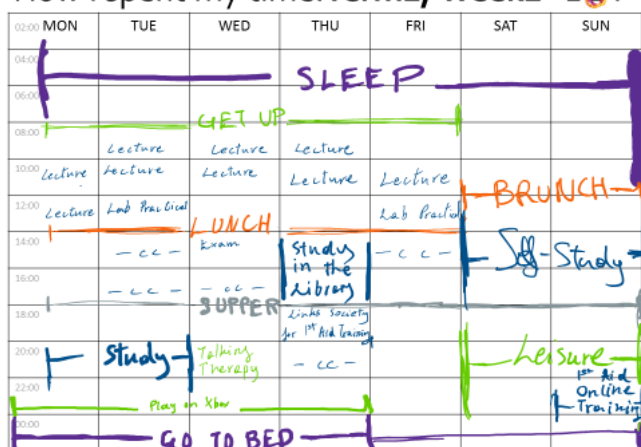
- First year students find the academic transition difficult – lots of socialising and less time for studying
- Reading Weeks are too inconsistent across departments
- Term 3 is not seen as good value for money
- Generally students approve of the learning environments at the College – good variety of spaces, facilities and aesthetics
- Some lectures/seminars take place in small rooms making it a crowded and difficult learning environment

Panellists therefore suggested...

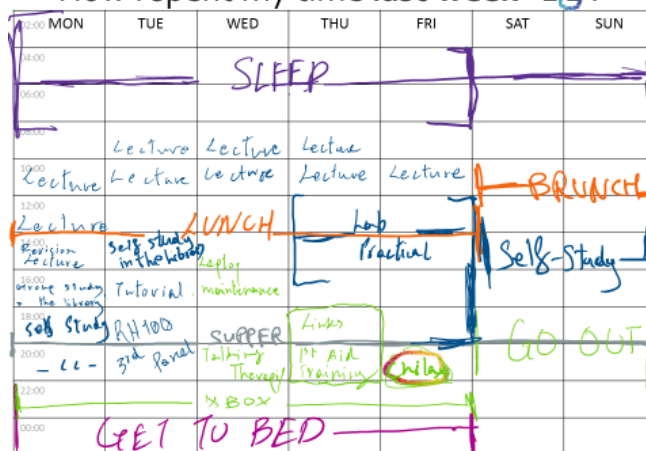
- Spreading assignment deadlines out across the academic year
- More revision classes/study session and general contact hours in term three
- Reading Weeks given to all departments or none
- Improving some of the older academic buildings on campus
- Ensuring all spaces are engaging for learning e.g. natural light, bright colours, usable facilities e.g. printers

Example of an activity panellists were asked to complete:

How I spent my time: Term 2, Week 2 12 F



How I spent my time last week 12 F



## Discussion Topic Updates

Panel Discussion Topic	Update
Sports Facilities Investment	<p>Consultants produced a Stage 1 document (available on request) and made a number of recommendations based on student input.</p> <p>Progress report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rusham Park development – a large scale sports complex in approximately five years' time.</li> <li>- Currently working closely with SU to address outdoor facilities balance between sports clubs, social sports and community users.</li> <li>- A planning request to Runnymede Council to extend lighting to 10pm (allowing for five extra sessions per week).</li> <li>- Consulting with both sports clubs and community users on training times.</li> <li>- Agreeing on the reconfiguration of the fitness suite which will include expanding space, replacing equipment and bringing the environment up to date with improved air conditioning and decoration.</li> </ul>
Academic Representation	<p>Consultant produced a report consisting of 42 actions (which will take at least 2 years to implement).</p> <p>SU are currently focusing on action 6D in partnership with the College. To achieve this, the SU will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invest in and implement online course representative elections.</li> <li>- Work closely with academic departments to improve consistency in the use of course representatives.</li> <li>- Improve training provisions to empower course representatives to be effective and make change.</li> <li>- Produce staff and student facing guides outlining expectations and key contacts.</li> </ul>
Spaces on Campus	<p>Measures have already been put in place including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased number of study spaces</li> <li>- Periodical PGT access to the PGR space</li> <li>- Improved communications around Library@ spaces and more digital signage displaying PC Finder.</li> </ul> <p>Davison Building feedback has been very positive – no negative reviews and the spaces appear to be working very well.</p> <p>LUAG will be exploring with the students what facilities they would like and what more they might want to improve the user experience. There has been a clear necessity to educate students on the study spaces available to them on campus.</p>
Graduate Employability Journey	<p>The consultation was used to inform the Careers Aspiration Strategy. The panel discussion validated some opinions but also produced some surprises such as the students generally not preferring employability to be embedded in the curriculum, instead students stressed the importance of the interaction with their personal tutor. The language</p>

	used in the strategy was also established through the consultation with the panellists. The strategy has passed its draft stages and a 'soft' launch will occur in January. The Employability Committee will implement this.
Access to Campus	<p>With respect to Parking, Bus and Cycling provision, these themes are being tied in as agenda items for the project and programme boards that are going to define the next stage of capital works for the University. It will also help inform various estate strategies including the further development of the University's Green Travel Plan which consistently seeks to enable improved access to campus for staff and students that is not dependent upon single car usage.</p> <p>Behavioural change: two specific actions are underway.  Road safety: College is forming a new pedestrian access point onto campus that better aligns with the traffic light crossing on the A30 adjacent to Harvest Road.  Noise: College is also working closely with Surrey Police, the SU and Community Groups to address the issue of transient noise during late evenings and early mornings in the local community through a number of existing and emerging initiatives. This issue is at least in part linked to the improved effectiveness of bus usage (Union Bus) referred to earlier that physically displaces transient noise from the local streets.</p>
Academic Quality: Rethinking Feedback	<p>VB will produce a report on the findings. Session outcomes were incorporated into a talk that VB gave recently for the RHUL Teaching and Learning Interest Group (TALIG) for their workshop on "blended learning, automated feedback and peer assessment".</p> <p>VB has spoken with TALIG convenors about running a session on feedback, which would include students from the RH100 session, but this would not take place until next academic year. VB will also be feeding back on the meeting to the Teaching Innovation Working Group chaired by RD.</p> <p>On a departmental level, VB is currently revamping the way that feedback is given in Psychology.</p> <p>SU is currently working on a policy piece on feedback – looking towards a holistic approach with College and SU.</p>
Focus Group	Update
#GetHired Campaign	Social media posts designed by panellists in the focus group were immediately put into action. The focus group informed future student facing communications posts.
Learning and Social Spaces	JO'B to produce a report to present to Student Experience committee in May and the next Teaching Innovation group.

## RH100 Panel Satisfaction Survey results



Panellists were asked to complete the satisfaction survey following the final focus group on March 19. 68% of panellists completed the survey.

Below is a summary of the results:

- 96% of respondents rated their experience on the panel as Very Good or Good.
- Respondents rated 'Spaces on Campus' and 'Academic Quality-Rethinking Feedback' as the topics that would have the most impact on student life at Royal Holloway.
- 77% of respondents think the panel should run more focus groups next year.
- 97% of respondents rated the administrative aspects of the panel as Very Good or Good.
- **74% of respondents felt their voice had been heard/listened to as a result of the panel.**
- 72% of respondents felt they were making a difference/involved in the university as a result of being on the panel.
- 91% of respondents would recommend being on the panel to a friend.

Comments from the panellists include:

*'In essence, I think that RH100 panellist meetings have **the ability to make the students' lives better at the university.**'*

*'Thank you so much for allowing me to be part of such a **well-organised and friendly panel.** I can't wait to do it all over again next year!'*

*'Pushing myself **outside of my comfort zone** in a busy and opinionated environment'*

*'I like to feel as though I am contributing my almost four years' experience of living on campus... To know that my comments have been heard, and to see **the progress which has already been made,** has been a **very positive process.** I am very fond of RHUL and would like to see it progress in the future.'*

*'**The University is for the students.** It has been a wonderful opportunity to be a part of the panel and have an input into the decisions made for future students.'*

*'I am **already beginning to see change.** When taking part of the panel I felt like my opinions were respected and acknowledged. It was a very welcoming and constructive environment.'*

*'The administrative team were fantastic! They did a lot to **prepare the panellists** for the discussion and to keep the discussion contained and well-structured to be **productive.** Thank you! Very organised and efficient!'*

*'I went to one focus group and it was really relaxed and made you feel a lot more that **the college wanted the best for its students,** plus the more chances students have to get their voices across the better!'*

## RH100 Panel 2018-19 - Recommendations



The RH100 team will address the feedback from panellists and staff members involved in the panel to continuously improve the structure, delivery and content.

Recommendations include:

- Developing a 'Topic Proposal Form' to ensure consistency
- Creating criteria to establish the scope of Student Voice focus groups
- Revising the location of the panels to facilitate both group work and whole panel discussions
- Revamping the training session to include more information on constructive feedback and effective contributions
- More flexibility around time frames (depending on complexity of the topic)
- Improving our methods of closing the loop effectively
- Raising awareness of the panel within the wider student and staff community
- Formalising feedback processes pre- and post-panels
- Maintaining Alumni Voice within the RH100 panel by informing graduates of discussion outcomes
- Improving the use of social media provisions to engage the wider student body