

COMMENTS BOX SUMMARY

STUDENT FEEDBACK BULLETIN 37

AUTUMN TERM 2009



Welcome to the latest Student Feedback Bulletin which provides a summary of students' comments received via the Comments Box in Reception. In addition to the Student Bulletin on general matters which is issued by the Principal to all Students, usually twice a year, we aim to provide a Student Feedback Bulletin once a term if there are enough comments in the Comments Box. You can also send your comments by email to: studentfeedback@marywardcentre.ac.uk

Some students request a private reply and those comments and replies, if they are personal, are not printed in this bulletin. We do like to hear what you have to say about the Centre. In addition to the feedback methods you use in your class, a clipboard survey in the Spring Term and the Principal's and Vice Principal's occasional open meetings with students and visits to classes, the Comments Box is a key part of our quality assurance process.

BOUQUETS - FOR WHICH WE THANK YOU

- the artistic, friendly, creative atmosphere
- the fabulous teachers and superb quality of teaching
- Dear, nice people
- 'The Fox' by Michael Rolfe
- 'My friends'
- The beautiful building, especially when lit at night, in the elegant square
- Friendly, welcoming style
- The window boxes
- The excellent café
- The people—helpful, kind, informative and friendly
- Challenging, stretching but considerate and thoughtful teaching
- It enriches 'my 75 year old life'
- The caring attitude
- Cleanliness of the premises
- The diversity of the students
- The 'political message' and history of offering the opportunity for education in an equal, non-discriminatory setting
- Friendliness, efficiency
- Range of courses
- Sculpture on Thursdays
- Roof garden
- What I don't like is nothing really!



WHAT YOU THINK NEEDS ATTENTION

THE ENVIRONMENT


We don't like:

The waste of electricity—lighting on all the time especially during the day, in bright sunshine. Could not the Mary Ward set an example in this regard?




The Centre is conscious of the need not to waste power, for economic as well as environmental reasons, and our 'Green Group' has, as one of its remits, the task of considering how to reduce our electricity consumption. However, we do also have to consider safety issues, and the style and layout of the building mean that there are certain areas, e.g. parts of the staircases, and the basement, which need extra lighting, either because of a lack of natural light or to help some of our less mobile students and those with less than perfect vision. You will be pleased to know that the Centre has recently signed up to the 10:10 campaign, a nationwide project which aims to reduce carbon emissions by 10% in 2010. The Centre's Green Group will be meeting to consider ways to encourage all staff, students and visitors to the Centre to help achieve that goal.

COMMENTS ON OUR CLASSES



Mary Ward Centre should run Portuguese classes



I would like more opportunities to play Chamber music during the day

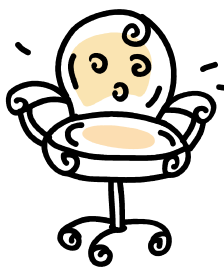
If a course is full and the waiting list is big enough to form another class, then another class should be opened.

We agree it would be lovely to be able to offer more and different courses in all subject areas. Unfortunately funding, space and timetabling constraints mean that we cannot meet all requests. Courses each year are arranged having regard to the demand from the previous year, the feasibility of appointing an appropriate tutor, and the facilities available to run the course. You may find that the next prospectus will offer the subject you wish to study even if this year's does not. We always do our best to meet demand where possible, so please continue to let us know about any suitable course you would like us to consider.

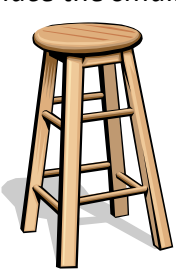
labelling a class at the last minute is unacceptable.

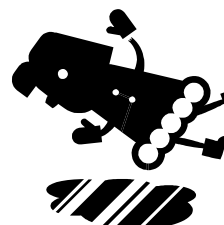
We completely agree with you. Wherever a class has to be cancelled, perhaps because of tutor absence or inclement weather, our Reception staff will contact students at the earliest opportunity to let them know. Unfortunately, some students, especially those who live further away from the Centre, may not get a message in time to prevent a wasted journey. It is important that we have your up-to-date contact details so that we can get in touch with you promptly in these circumstances.

ACCOMMODATION



Could you please provide a chair for the ladies toilet on the ground floor?
We are currently working on providing seating for the ladies toilets. There is little free wall space, but we are considering a suitable arrangement to replace the small table which is against the wall opposite the entry door.





There are not enough tall stools in the Sculpture studio.
The Arts Department will make sure there are enough stools for each class. However, if on occasion more are required, tutors may request them.

I am anxious that I might slip on a slippery floor in the Print studio. Could we please have more rubber mats?
It is mainly the area around the sink in the Print Studio where water may cause a slip hazard. From a health and safety point of view, it is much better to have wetness dried when it occurs than to put down more slip mats, as these can prevent wet patches from drying out. Cleaning is being checked to ensure that any water put down to wash the floor is properly dried away. It was noted before Christmas that there was a problem of overspill of excess water from the sink, but this has now been fixed. However, the situation is being monitored and if necessary, after following the procedure mentioned above, more slip mats will be provided.

ENROLMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH CONCESSIONARY STATUS



I was told the course I wanted to do was fully booked because people had booked on line. I am working part time and in receipt of Housing Benefit, and was told I could not get concessionary fees by booking on line. I do feel it's very discriminatory towards anyone under financial strain and works against the principle of equal opportunities for all.

Prospective students who wish to take advantage of concessionary fees are not able to complete their enrolment on line because it is a condition of our funding that we see documentary evidence of students' eligibility for concessions before they enrol, and unfortunately our enrolment system cannot cope with this process electronically at present. Such students are therefore asked to enrol by post, fax or in person. If concessionary students contact us by phone, we are able to hold a place for them for 4 working days (depending on how near the start of the course is) to give them time to bring in or send the required evidence. Alternatively, they can enrol on line at full cost, and claim a refund of the balance providing concessionary evidence is produced before the course starts. We do share your concerns about equality of opportunity, and we very much hope to accommodate all student

THE CAFÉ

'As I am a bit disabled, I cannot use the restaurant midday as the queues are very long. I have not had a meal there since 2000 when I had good use of my legs! Unfortunately I am a vegetarian!'

'The café is not open late enough, shutting at 8.45pm. If the class has a break there is nowhere to get a drink.'

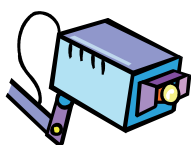
'I don't think it is fair that people reserve places with their belongings before they join the queue for serving. Those who queue first then may not get a seat. I don't know how you can stop this—it seems a bit unthoughtful.'

All these comments illustrate the popularity and success of our café, not only for our students and staff but also for the public! Unfortunately, present constraints on space within the building mean that we are unable to expand the facility for the foreseeable future. The queues are long at certain times, and if you can come in a little earlier or later, you are less likely to have to stand in line for too long. The reservation of seats is a matter that so far we have left to people's good sense and consideration. There are notices warning about the danger of theft if belongings are left unattended. If a seat is not occupied by a person, it should be assumed that it is free. We will try putting up a sign asking people not to reserve seats before they queue.

The café opens at 9.30am, and closes at 8.50pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30pm on Friday, and 4pm on Saturday. When the Centre is open on Sunday, the café is open 10am to 2pm. These are very long hours, and there has to be a period at the end of each day, before the building is locked for the night, for the café staff to clear up and prepare for the next day.



THEFT



I had my bike stolen in February 09 and more recently I had part of the replacement bike stolen. I would like MWC to put up a CCTV camera and big notices in the Square. We are sorry to hear of these thefts. We are very concerned about security within the Centre, and we have CCTV cameras in common areas within the building. However, we have no power to place or monitor cameras in the public Square. If you are the victim of theft within the building, please report it to Reception at once; or outside, please report it to the Police, and also let us know, as soon as possible. We cooperate with police investigations wherever we can.

Beryl Washington
PA to the Principal

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