Impact of GTP on non-AL staff

Is there any other information you feel we should have to help with the negotiations on GTP?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	103
red question	103
ed question	52

Number	Response Text
1	Staff Tutors as frontline staff should have been consulted far more widely. their expertise should be valued.
2	the process was utterly demoralising, bringing in KPMG disregards that expertise lies with regional staff and they should have had the opportunity to take the lead in any restructuring of tuition, however the way GTP is implemented seems to hold a grave risk of alienating and losing students.
3	We are not whingers. We are dedicated and hard working members of academic staff
4	N/A
5	I think now we've had one cycle, we know better what to expect. Venues MUST be booked earlier in the process.
6	Yes tell the Vice Chancellor of an old maxim, If it ain't broke don't fix it. My students under the "old" system always had all their online tutorials at a time and date that suited the majority. £400,000 per year could provide a lot of compensation.
7	Yes, management should suspend GTP until we have tried and tested ICT systems that work, are sustainable and deliver what they should be delivering. For a distance learning institution, our systems are shockingly poor. I would also add that much more recognition and understanding of the particular contexts of the different countries in the British Isles is required. GTP cannot work on an OU-wide basis. Scotland, for instance, and perhaps Ireland, require their own distinctive GTP which reflects the particular student bodies in those countries.
8	I think [module title omitted] fared lightly as we were all familiar with OU Live so it was just the shared tutorials and students. I do have students from my tutor group unhappy about not being able to attend my tutorials as there is no space. Frustrating as there are non attenders from other tutors' groups!
9	The idea of Group Tuition is a good one but must be organised from the ground up not the other way around.
10	The SST in R09 is about to be lost. The new team in MK is underskilled. Some of the emails we have received from them is clear evidence of that. 17B will be worse than 16J if that team are the only people left to manage it. They MUST have more training. They do not understand the organization or their jobs.
11	it is worse than embarrassing to be the point of contact with students having to deal with issues created by those who do not have to pick up the pieces
12	No but GTP was not the only problem - it caused other things to be neglected e.g. iCMA and TMA scores carried forward from a previous presentation. My students did not have confirmation before iCMA41 and TMA01 were due
13	Academic Services need to work with a blueprint of Faculty support that works for Faculties- we have been told repeatedly about things that can't be done as they are not part of the blueprint eg emailing students about dayschools taught jointly by a number of tutors. there is still the backlog of adding venues for 16J to be addressed and no sense of how this is going to be resolved
14	no
15	For me, the biggest issue that affects tutors rather than students is that our employer is demanding we give up the flexibility that made OU work attractive in spite of low pay. But we get no increase in pay or job security to compensate for this. Not being able to rearrange tutorials even when this would normally be easy, having to keep dates free long in advance of knowing whether we even have a contract....
16	Part of wider problem of managers not really understanding pedagogical issues. Let's go back to OU offering quality educational experiences!
17	Ensure the IT systems are robust enough to cope. Ensure all the required data is accurate & up-to-date. Give students as much information as possible at the start of the presentation to help them plan workload and tutorial attendance.
18	Staff Tutors (regional academics) need to be included in this, and we are still having more responsibility for sorting out this mess being placed on us.

19	I would like to know what the ultimate aim of all these changes are. They certainly are not for the benefit of our students, and they are not helpful to ALs or their Staff Tutors. Should we be concerned that we are all going to be made redundant and the OU turned into a completely online university? I have heard small rumours about this that make me concerned for my financial security as I currently work full-time for OU.	
20	Yes, stop pressing for 'compensation' and help us keep our dignity by damning this idiotic policy for what it is, rather than seeking to profit from the mess it's created.	
21	I think the impact on the nature of the staff tutor role and therefore job description is very significant and this has been imposed with no negotiation at a time of AL services realignment and removal of our located faculty assistant support	
22	We need to ensure that our contact with our students is not put at risk. We have already lost face to face sessions and now this!!!!!	
23	the Union should emphasize that it's all likely to be much worse next year when regional offices have closed.	
24	The physical toll on some has been excessive; the emotional and mental toll is perhaps less quantifiable but no less real and has an ongoing, huge impact.	
25	I'm pleased that ALs have been offered a small amount of money, but I dont personally want to be paid for this - I want radical review of the tutorial provision including the policy not just the implementation and a real change of direction by the VCE not just public humble pie and yet more money for KPMG but more of the same arrogance and ignorance underlying it. We should not continue to employ KPMG or maybe we could say that all staff should be paid the same amount as them because we already told the management what was going wrong without asking for extra pay. And the KPMG fees should come from VCE salaries ... :)	
26	GTP systems are driving this - they should serve the policy not the other way round. Clusters are rigid, learning events inflexible, not extra tutition hours for ALs yet all face to face has to have OU live alternatives; what about moderating cluster forums. ie no resource provided to ease the implementation	
27	This entire shambles (although not the massive scale of it) was predicted from outset by staff tutors, faculty teams, and those ALs who were made aware of what was being proposed (although ALs were not properly consulted - we were told what was happening). We were completely ignored. This situation simply cannot be allowed to happen again. The OU would not exist without ALs. We are good at our jobs. Many are extremely successful academics and we know what we are talking about. The failure of the OU powers that be to consult with, listen to, or to show any respect for ALs is utterly baffling. This perhaps isn't answering your question - but the main information I think you should have is that ALs need to be listened to!	
28	There was limited consultation with the staff who carry out much of the admin related work (ALS) but we then 'carry the can' for everything which goes wrong or is disliked by students & tutors. We are mostly G4 staff, some of us in closing locations. We feel we have been treated with contempt - basically we are 'cannon fodder'.	
29	What made it considerably more stressful and time-consuming was the loss of dedicated Academic Assistant support based in AL Services. Previously, the bulk of detailed work relating to setting up timetables year on year was done by the colleague in this role, who also fielded the occasional venue or timetabling issue that arose during a presentation. As things are, we not only had to do this work in its entirety through unusable systems, but we continue to have to helicopter over timetables where venue availability and late bookings continue to be an issue. With the relocation and remaking of ALS and venue teams, I cannot see that changing for the duration of 16J.	
30	I think we have to look at what we are trying to achieve. On the modules I work on, the majority of students do not register until closer to the module start, and many of those are studying on other modules that that time. What we need to provide is the TMA and EMA/exams dates - these are more significant than much of the tutorial plan - although face to face and dayschool event planning is also important to students.	
31	It has probably all been said	
32	I think that the sheer number of bugs/errors which have been regularly identified by the teams using the programs and subsequently reported should be sufficient feedback.	
33	Reverse it or limit the number of changes or amendments as it could cause the same problem again. No knee-jerk responses basically and much more consistency is required.	
34	Senior management must take notice of objections to new ways of working. We don't object to all change just those changes that seem unreasonable.	
35	Such a complex system should never have been introduced without a pilot being carried out first! It has been a nightmare	
36	If something major like this is implemented, a good time management is crucial.	
37	We're now planning for 17B and I'm greatly concerned that the same situation will arise again. Not least because our AL Services team is in an office which is closing in January.	
38	I feel we have no research to indicate the benefits of this way of working which seems driven by economics. I think we should factor in the anxiety caused to staff by being unable to build up a rapport with their own students. In my third level module, I had one face to face session with my own students followed by an OU Live session for which only 2 of 18 students are from my group. Meanwhile for the second tutorial, 9 of my students are doing a face to face session with another colleague.	

39	One of the paradoxes of GTP is that it assumes our students tend to be those who plan studies and sessions far in advance. Is this the case when many of my students leave the assignments to the last evening they are due? A further paradox is that if the students ignore the policy, nothing happens in any case. They are very likely to conclude: what difference does it make?
40	Why was this project implemented at the same time as closing down 7 RCs -why was the risk register ignored.
41	it's just that my motivation levels at the moment are completely rock bottom. We are repeatedly told to bend over backwards to improve registration and retention levels, and then higher management comes up with disastrous ideas like GTP. Fuck it! It's time I focused on less altruistic activities to improve my personal CV so that I can get out of this sinking ship.
42	No
43	Some staff are now being made ill by overwork. I myself have been losing sleep, waking up with headaches, becoming on occasion grumpy and irritable. Am aware of others with similar problems.
44	I think the offer of at least one additional day of Annual Leave should be considered alongside a monetary reward
45	Tutors (Associate Lecturers) are the worst affected. They bear the brunt of student complaints (of which there are many), and they have had to resort to the older system of providing tutorials because of the inflexibility that GTP has provided.
46	This isn't just about completing spreadsheets, or IT system not working, it is about the institution not realising what its strengths are and why it has the reputation it does for quality teaching. It seems happy to throw away much of what was good about its interactions with students and reduce the flexibility ALs had to react to student needs as and when required.
47	I wrote to my Director and LM to inform them we were on a collisions course at the beginning of Aug 16. None took any action. A dereliction of duties. I was thinking of resigning and taking constructive dismissal as the pressure we have been asked to work under has been unbearable. GTP in itself was not the problem as much of the policy we have been delivering over the years. The failure was in the GTP implementation.
48	GTP principles are perfectly sound - the implementation was fundamentally flawed - process review required
49	Given the GTP implementation teams may not have had relevant expertise in teaching and research into distance Ed pedagogy- Could be useful to have the relevant job descriptions and appointment procedures?
50	They were told it would lead to this. And the University are fortunate to have a staff who will attempt to rescue the situation for students despite the management's efforts to ignore the expert advice. But that goodwill, that we all have for the University, is fast eroding. As a staff we are not resistant to change, but we are critical thinkers who care deeply about the students' education. Change for the sake of change and change upon change upon change (GTP, SRSC, Faculties) was always going to lead to chaos.
51	I really don't know where to start! I am very concerned about the impact on retention (on both students and staff) but we will not see that until 12 months time.
52	No, but I would like the OU to be aware that I will tender a resignation this year. I am concerned that the damage to its academic reputation is beyond repair.
53	No.
54	STs are often disregarded so it would make me feel more respected and understood if we were even mentioned in all of this.
55	If only there was some way of getting a 'true' student view of the VLE, so that we could see what they see and offer appropriate advice. The VCs announcement at Senate that module teams would offer/organise extra tutorials for affected students was real shooting-from-the-hip stuff --- there is a signicant lack of capacity to deliver this and, at the least, we should have been informed before he told the students! The university is 'siloing' too much information: whole swathes of staff are not really being told what is going on with GTP (or anything else) --- it is being viewed as a student-facing issue and so eg, central academics do not need to know what is going on --- this is far from correct!
56	Beyond the time and compensation issues there are far more important issues around staff wellbeing that have been completely ignored. In the last 6 months I have personally witnessed: - Colleagues in tears, unable to function in their job - Colleagues so frustrated at being ignored that they have little professional agency left; - Colleagues so stressed and tired that they have become less effective and efficient; - The growth of a management culture that seems to not only ignore the wellbeing of staff but actively manipulate it.
57	There is much expertise and local knowledge on tutorial venues in the Regions, but they were not consulted until too late

	58	There was a total lack of information and preparation for the policy roleout. Total shambles, that was only rescued due to the dedication and hard work of staff, the same staff who felt the impact the most.
	59	I don't think lessons have been learnt from the chaos of the past month to improve future implementation. Work on the implementation of GTP for 2017B presentations has already begun with no further training and no feedback as to what went wrong for 2016J. Colleagues involved in this work feel poorly prepared and a little overwhelmed.
	60	No
	61	The GTP debacle because of a toxic cocktail of ignorance and arrogance at the top of the university. It was hubris, and we all know how that turned out for the Greeks...
	62	University does not appear to be collecting information on the impact on AL workload, despite GTP saying that they are going to review this.
	63	The IT system (LEM) is not fit for purpose. It should not have been imposed on us when it is still not 100% (by a long way). For example, if a tutor has a double group on a module, then they can't see the full set of tutorials.
	64	Need to consider the psychological impact on staff.
	65	There is a high risk of buck-passing. Some in management/the GTP team have seemed to suggest that module teams caused the problems, or ALs, or STs, or faculties. This is absolutely untrue and needs to be challenged. Nor is this a "systems problem" or an "IT problem". It's a policy problem, caused by blind adherence to notches on one's own CV above the needs and wishes of students. Disabled and AR students have been particularly badly affected, and this is what pains me the most. Thank you for running this survey. It's appreciated.
	66	Adminstration needsto be included as part of the role of implementing GTP. GTP should have been piloted first. Review and renewal of all IT systmes -I have no SD time left for replacment of OU live or etma training as all my SD time has gone on sorting out GTP issues - so please raise SD payments
	67	My impression was that no-one knew what they were doing right from the beginning. There was very poor understanding of the policy itself and the implications for implementation. For example, the idea that timetables can be scheduled months in advance shows a lack of understanding of the level of negotiation with individual tutors that is required during timetabling due to the part-time and insecure nature of their contracts. There was also very little understanding of the problems caused by employing tutors on a regional basis and managing them in cross-regional clusters. It is my belief that the policy was flawed from the start - we were all tasked with delivering the impossible and consequently confusion reigned at all levels throughout.
	68	The systems introduced to help implementation of the GTP were catastrophically bad. Laughably bad. I study Computer Science with the OU and the experience reads far worse than the "How not to create software" case studies we look at in my course/s!
	69	These are not simply teething problems. The principles on which the GTP are founded are unworkable as was pointed out the moment anybody who would have to implement them saw them. Our expertise, particularly local knowledge, was simply ignored. A policy which was designed to save money has cost a small fortune in cash, and a huge amount in terms of goodwill. This was management incompetence on an industrial scale.
	70	STs have frequently been asked for venue information within their clusters and have had to research places far afield (not part of their role). I am based in Nottingham but have been asked about venues in Ipswich and Cardiff!
	71	This was a complete nonsense from the beginning and I cannot believe that the experience of ALs and importantly Staff Tutors was overlooked and ignored. The only way that we have kept the courses running is through the goodwill of the tutors and that we, unlike the VC and Executive, have put the students first. The reason I wanted to work for the OU is that it is an Open and ethical institution - treating students and staff in this way is the opposite of that and is unbelievably disappointing.
	72	The role of cluster manager on top of being an ST needs to be looked at, and how our work is allocated (for example the 'old' way of working out how many we managed depending on how many tutors we had is clearly redundant. There is an enormous work load associated with cluster management, and the role needs to be defined - and frankly, it's not a role I signed up to, it has been imposed.
	73	With the regions winding down it is harder than ever to get support with issues like this. I'm talking to admin staff in Gateshead about issues with particular venues in Exeter. This does not make sense.
	74	There is a lot of bad OU publicity on social media as a result of this issues and we have a lot of competitors providing distance HE now, it is crucial that we address these issues and reinstate our USP otherwise we don't stand a chance as a University. But maybe that's the goal of some people?
	75	In April the Social Science Faculty had a Q and A session with the VC. At this event (which ranged widely over problems of his leadership and policies such as the locations review and GTP) the potential problems of GTP and the need for it to be paused was directly raised by a number of speakers. He dismissed those concerns. He also sought to off-load responsibility for GTP by claiming it 'came from academics' via Senate.

76	I strongly feel the policy should be over-turned in its entirety. Belinda Tynan's ideas of reinventing the wheel of OU, up to that point, very successful model of tuition (I have taught for the OU for over 15 years and have always had very well attended tutorials) has caused havoc and Belinda is not even here to face the consequences of the plans she introduced. GTP aims fundamentally to break the geographic and personal connection between a tutor and student and both the geographic connection, a sense of personal belonging to a specific tutor group (which aids retention remarkably!) and a restoration of greater number of face to face tutorials ought to be the aim of the University at present so as to enhance student retention and progression.
77	More generally, in the 7 years I have worked at the OU (all on temporary contracts!) I have been struck by the juxtaposition of colleagues who are absolutely brilliant and senior management whose main goals seem to be to 'make some mark' so they have a convincing narrative about themselves to take to the next job interview. Witness the latest portfolio review as clear evidence of this. Senior management at the OU needs a massive culture change.
78	It's a mess. There was the opportunity to stop proceedings in July, but the decision was made by Sr management to continue, had frontline staff been consulted rather than ignored we would have advised against implementing this at this time.
79	Ask the VC to resign.
80	VCE's claim to be unaware of the problems cannot be true given the warnings that the GTP team raised repeatedly (have emailed about this)
81	yes however I will communicate this in person
82	The issues relating to the GTP have been compounded by the impending closures of the regional centres. It has proved very difficult to get information relating to some study centres. Simply put: the management should have listened - there is way too much change that is going on all at the same time, and staff are feeling the impacts.
83	I'm not sure what there is to negotiate now, and have no confidence that the idiots who made this mess will start listening to people who actually know what the OU is and does, and how it best does it. A barely intelligent 9 year old (human being, or even a cat) would have seen that a) implementation of the GTP and b) rapid destruction of regional structures; could not have taken place simultaneously without these disastrous consequences. Rather than pushing for more or better 'consultation' in future, please could we be spared time-wasting spiel and pseudo-conversations from Stepford men in suits- of which we in former regional offices had many.
84	GTP is hiding a number of other key issues in relation to the loss of secretarial support for academic staff in regions, in administrative support and regional knowhow as staff leave - this will only get worse unless it is recognised as conflated here
85	The need for AL Services and faculties to clarify their responsibilities regarding GTP and have a clear plan of expectations on both sides with contingencies, as this was lacking for 2016J.
86	I also know staff that have been sick as a result of all this stress and extra work
87	Administrative support for regional faculty teams was withdrawn just as work on GTP related arrangements began. Ostensibly this will be provided by the newly centralized AL Services teams, but no specific information has been provided as yet. I am not 'above' filling in and checking spreadsheets, checking forms and sending out CAMEL emails, but it seems an odd use of the University's funds to pay me to do such basic work, and while I'm doing that I have less time to support students and tutors and manage the faculty, which is what I should be doing. If the University could be reminded that this support is very important to the good and smooth running of regional faculty work, I would be very grateful.
88	Staff made it clear to senior management at every opportunity that they were worried about how the GTP would work.
89	not at present
90	No, but I wish everyone luck.
91	I have operated a cluster model for OULive tuition for years - ALs and students have thought this operated well. However, in trying to do the same thing this time, it could not have gone worse. The amount of barriers being put in our places mean the wrong decisions are being taken at lots of points and for the wrong reasons. (Sadly, this is already feeding forward into 17B too...) I have severe concerns (I have proof of this) that the GTP team are re-writing history and are now blaming cluster managers for delaying information and causing the issues when we were working within university and HR guidelines, plus applying pedagogy (yes - I think we still tried to do this despite the barriers), in order to put our ALs and students first. The GTP project team still thinks it is feasible to add dates to a calendar and then slot ALs next to these dates and times after they have been published. This is unfeasible and very unfair to the ALs. I would also like to state how much the cluster managers appreciate the work done by ALs and AL Services throughout this entire fiasco.
92	I think the situation has now reached the point where ALs are showing how gullible they are in respecting the VC's inept attempts to be their friend. The GTP Forum is supposed to have moderators but they only answer the comments they like and avoid the underlying issue of why this all went so very wrong. And that's the information I want - was this due to systems (why? weren't they tested first?) or what?

93	No - I think I've said enough now!
94	There is a massive resource gap which can't be covered by DL contracts for ALs who aren't trained. In addition, we don't have regional offices in which to work with them so this offer was a completely waste of time. There needs to be Faculty assistants within FASS who are separate from AL services. AL services needs to be supported with far more resource.
95	I am not directly affected by GTP. However, staff have been taken away from LTS to help sort out the mess. This results in less staff for crucial project work, which increases the risk of delivering timely, quality materials for students. As well as increasing the stress levels of the staff left in the office.
96	no
97	I recently attended a graduation ceremony were leadership failed to acknowledge the role and hard work of the ALs - it was appalling.
98	Stop it
99	n/a
100	Students and staff think it will fail. It already is failing; it has not been thought through and someone should halt this now.
101	The office closures on top of everything else are going to be hugely damaging as staff leave - we have barely even seen the impact of this yet. Can this not be reversed?
102	This is undermining the credibility of the OU
103	Given the failure of the GTP, we should demand nothing less than the resignation of the VC. He is clearly incompetent and unfit for the role.