

# Hull University Union's Annual Student Written Submission 2013



STUDENTS' UNION OF THE YEAR 2012

Students' Union  
**Evaluation Initiative**

**Gold Award** 2011

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HULL UNIVERSITY  
**UNION**

**HULL UNIVERSITY UNION  
STUDENT WRITTEN  
SUBMISSION 2013**

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HUU should be consulted on any use of this document and the data herein.

Published 24th September 2013

Hull University Union (HUU)

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This submission was planned and written by Victoria Winterton, Vice President Education (VPE) 2012/14 and Steve Ralph, Education and Representation Co-ordinator. We would also like to thank all of our colleagues for their support in the production of this submission.

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## **Preface**

Hull University Union is proud to be submitting its fifth annual Student Written Submission, known in the sector as an annual quality report and whilst other students' unions begin to write their first report, we can take comfort in the knowledge that we are already ahead of the curve.

The Student Written Submission is a wonderful way to collate all the data we gather from students every day into one simple document. The submission makes recommendations each year to enhance students' experiences for the better. The partnership which the Students' Union and University share means that the submission is always treated with great importance and we hope this year will be no different.

As a second year sabbatical officer I have truly enjoyed writing this year's Student Written Submission. It is fantastic to step back and look at the previous year's engagement with students and assess what the issues are facing students now. There have been difficult moments, but working your way through them provides a more satisfying end result.


Thanks go to Steve Ralph for contributing a chapter, Sally Bates for wonderfully proof reading and fellow sabbatical officers and staff for feedback and support along the way.

I am incredibly excited for the year ahead as my passion for education, for this university and this



students' union continues to grow and we have a great team in place to meet the challenges ahead.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victoria Winterton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Victoria Winterton

Vice President Education



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# 1. Introduction

As part of our commitment to enhancing our members' student experience and education, Hull University Union (HUU), has pledged to produce an annual written submission. These submissions provide a summary of the issues raised regarding the range of services, resources and means of academic support, as well as departmental issues, teaching quality and feedback. This document stands as our fifth annual submission and as with previous years we hope the University will continue to work with us to address the key issues arising from this report. Improving the student experience forms a fundamental part of HUU's work. The document includes a number of recommendations as well as a prioritised action plan at the rear of the document.

## **1.1 Research Methodology**

Broad research bases were used to identify key issues and then more focused studies were conducted on those areas. This approach ensures that the report is founded on real problem areas rather than in areas where we assume there are problems. This document has been produced using extensive qualitative and quantitative data. All primary quantitative data has been inputted and analysed using Microsoft Office Excel. Qualitative data has been coded and analysed using traditional methods. Unless otherwise specified, all graphs within this submission are from the Education Survey 2013. The sources from which we have drawn our evidence include:

- **Academic Council and Course Representative Forum minutes**  
Academic Council is a forum for Course Representatives to discuss academic issues. Over the academic year five Academic Councils (Hull) and five Course Representative Forums (Scarborough) took place.
- **Direct student comments, emails, issues and eBridge discussions**  
HUU staff deal with education issues of students on a daily basis. These staff members used their extensive experience to contribute to this document.
- **Education Survey**  
The Education Survey was completed by a total of 1060 respondents across both campuses.
- **End of Year Staff-Student Committee (SSC) reports and minutes**  
All departmental SSCs are required to produce an End of Year Report summarising the issues they have dealt with over the year.
- **Student participation across University committees, projects and working groups**  
HUU has helped match Sabbatical Officers and students to provide student input and representation across a number of committees, projects and working groups.
- **Training for Course Representatives**

An integral part of training involves building on the experiences the Course Representatives have from being a student, leading to a sizable amount of data on student issues.

- **Other Secondary Sources**

- National Union of Students (NUS) papers, reports and conferences
- NUS Workers in Democracy and Representation (WIDAR) meetings
- National Students Survey (NSS)
- University of Hull committee meetings, conferences, working groups, publications and Codes of Practice
- Academic, governmental and research sources

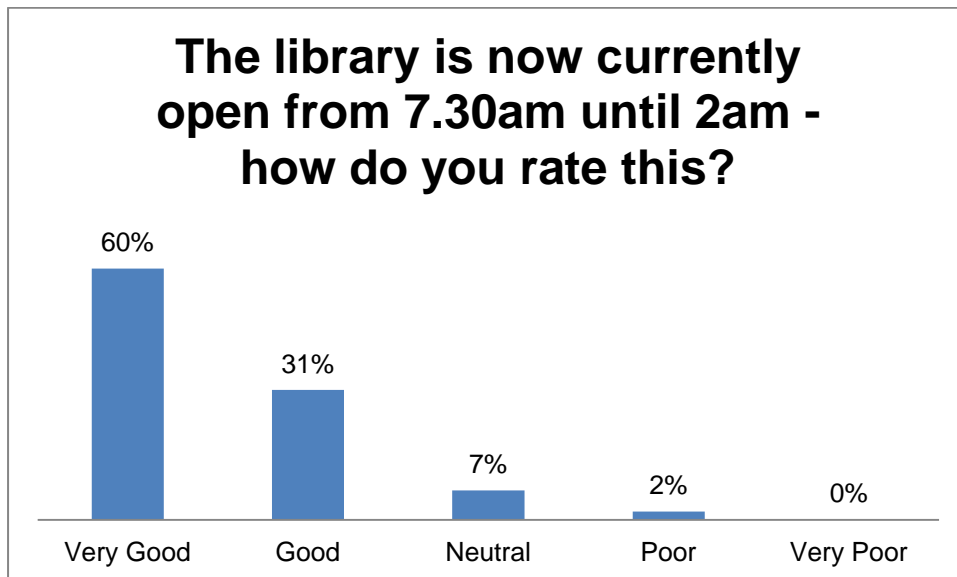
## 2. Learning Environments

### 2.1 Libraries

Brynmor Jones Library (BJL)

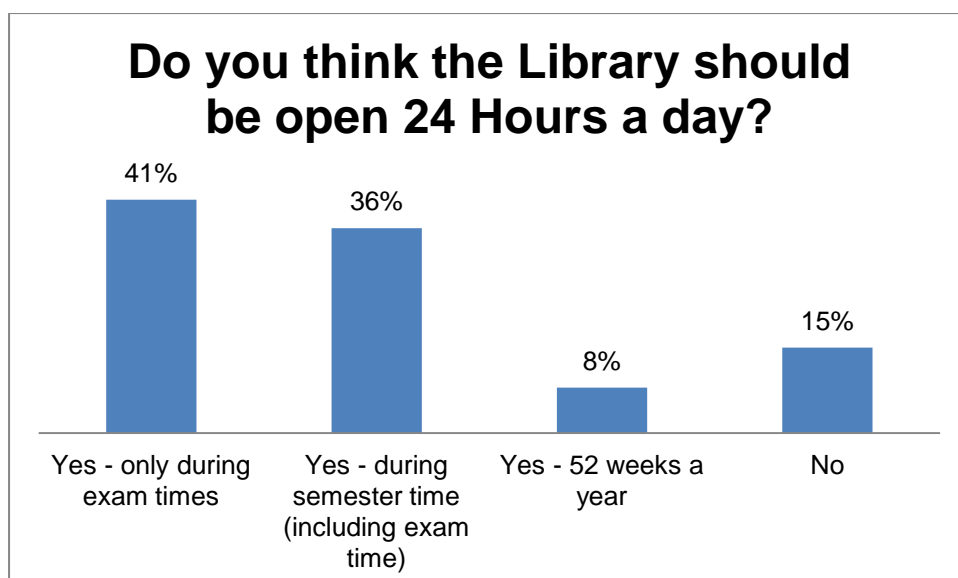
The redevelopment of the Brynmor Jones Library began in September 2012, since then HUU has received few complaints about the progress of building works.

As part of our research this year, and in light of the new library opening in summer 2014, we asked students to rate the current opening times of the Brynmor Jones Library.



The data clearly shows that the majority of students rate the current opening hours as Very Good with 2% of students rating the opening hours as Poor or Very Poor. It is interesting to compare the answers to this question with the follow up question we asked about 24 hour opening times.



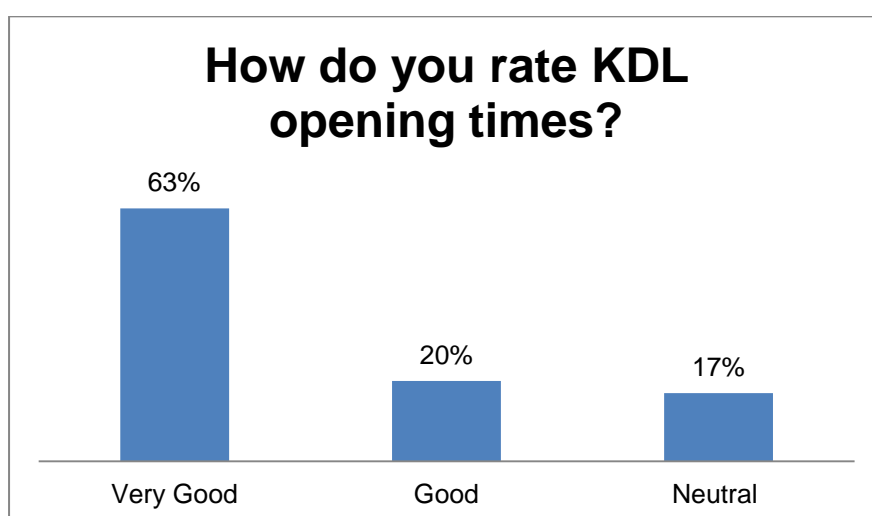


This highest preference is towards 24 hour opening in exam time only with 41% of students favouring this option, not far behind 36% of students would prefer the Library to be open 24 hours during semester time, including exam time. A further look into the data did not show a preference depending on level of study, for example the 68 students that preferred the Library to be open 52 weeks a year were not all postgraduate research as you may suspect, only 3 of the 68 were postgraduate research students.

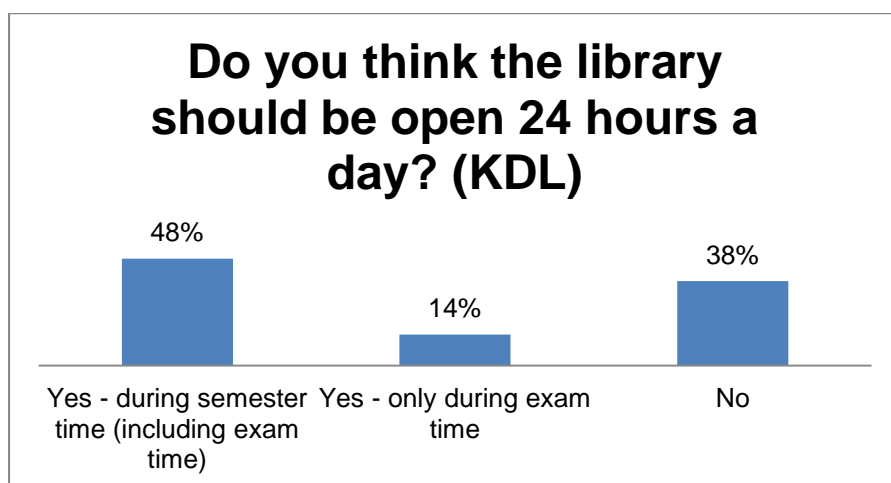
The Data shows that 44% of students want the library open 24 hours a day beyond just exam times and that 85% of respondents want some form of 24 hours opening. We recommend the University opts for 24 hour opening during semester time (including exam time) when the final stage of the redevelopment is complete.

**Recommendation:** (LT) The Brynmor Jones Library should be open 24 hours a day during semester time, including exam time.

Keith Donaldson Library (KDL)



In comparison with the BJL, no respondents considered the current opening hours to be poor or very poor, despite the KDL only being open until midnight. The data shows less are dissatisfied with the opening hours, this suggests that it is right to offer different opening hours on each campus to fit with different needs of students.



It is interesting that there is no desire expressed for the KDL to be open 24 hours a day, 52 weeks with a significant 38% being against 24 hours a day opening.

Based on the significance of those that said no, whilst recognising the total 62% that would like 24 hour opening during exam time, it is recommended that the KDL trials 24 hours a day opening during exam time.

**Recommendation:** (LT) Trial 24 hours a day opening during exam time at the Keith Donaldson Library.

It is worth noting that this evaluation of opening hours is based on the curriculum currently in place. When answering these questions students may perhaps be thinking about essays and assignments during semester time and exams at the end of semester, and their response may change during the course of the Curriculum Reform Programme.

It is therefore recommended that HUU continues to ask these questions in the Education Survey in order to track the change in behaviour and attitudes of students.

**Recommendation:** (ST & LT) To continue to ask students, via the Education Survey or otherwise how they rate the Library opening hours and their thoughts on 24 hour opening.

## 2.2 Buildings

### Hull

The 2012 Education Survey asked students which buildings, areas and/or rooms should be refurbished and the responses were included in the 2012 Student Written Submission. This year we have instead reviewed the NSS comments to identify which

buildings are mentioned the most and we have identified the top three which students mentioned needed refurbishment.

Top three building mentioned in NSS for refurbishment

1. Brynmor Jones Library
2. Larkin
3. Foss

The three are the same as the top three last year. As the Brynmor Jones Library is under refurbishment already, it is recommended that the plans to refurbish Larkin are resumed this Academic Year. Serious consideration should be given to the refurbishment of the Foss Building. The refurbishment of the University estate should, where appropriate, include consultation with students.

**Recommendation:** (ST) Resume refurbishment of the Larkin Building.  
(LT) Refurbish the Foss Building.

#### Scarborough

The comments regarding the Scarborough Campus are simply about Scarborough Campus Facilities in general; some students have recognised the investment already made by the university to the campus.

***"There have been major improvements from starting in my first year at the University of Hull Scarborough campus, initially I would have said the lecture rooms could be better as could the library, however these changes have already been carried out. A common room would be a good addition to the university."***

#### (NSS 2013)

The most popular responses regarding the facilities which need improvement have been identified as:

Top three facilities mentioned in NSS 2013

1. Computers
2. Sport
3. Students' Union

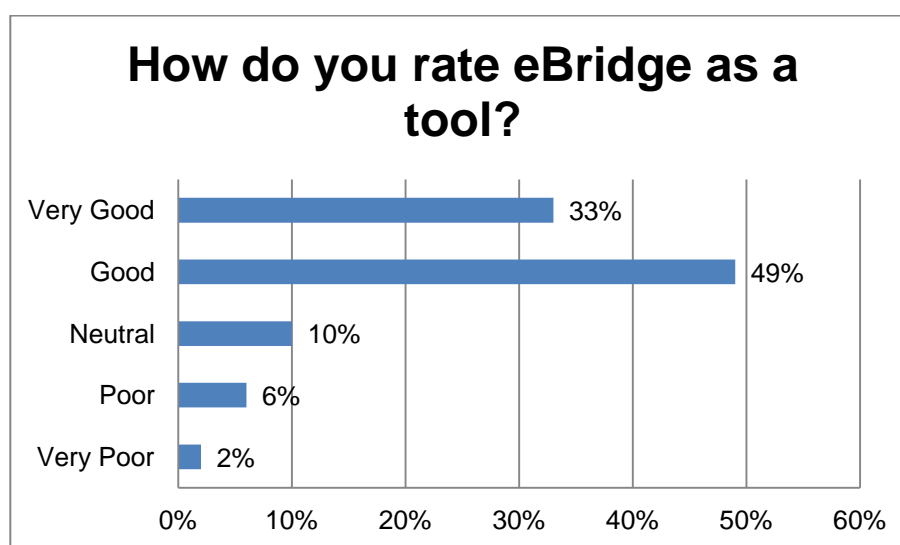
Due to the change in Academic Footprint at the Scarborough Campus, notably the Creative Music Technology course moving to the Hull Campus, there is an opportunity to review spaces and facilities, particularly the three empty

performance studios. The University should write a strategy for facilities at the Scarborough Campus. It should consult with HUU in the process and consider introducing more social spaces for students.

**Recommendation:** (ST) A strategy should be created for Scarborough Campus Facilities.

### 2.3 Digital Learning Environments – eBridge

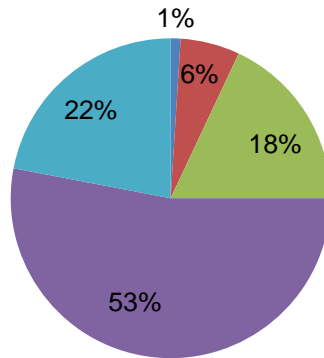
In previous years we have focused primarily on the physical learning environments of the University; this year we asked students specifically about the virtual learning environment, eBridge, in order to gain an understanding of how students feel about the system and its usefulness.



As shown above the majority of students asked rate eBridge as "Good" or "Very Good" Tool with just 8% answering "Poor" or "Very Poor". The data suggests the current Virtual Learning Environment is meeting students' needs well.

## How satisfied are you with your lecturer's use of eBridge?

■ Very Dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Neutral ■ Satisfied ■ Very Satisfied



We asked students to rate eBridge but also to let us know how satisfied they are with their lecturer's use of the system. It seems students have an even higher regard for lecturer's use of the tool than the tool itself. It is important to note the question asks about individual lecturer's use of the tool not the approaches of departments, this will be picked up in a later section about departmental communication.

Since the results of this question are positive, it is recommended that the University explores ways to build on existing strengths and bring all departments to a similar level. As some departments have more students than others we have not been able

*American Studies*  
*Music*  
*Physics*  
*Sociology*  
*Sport Health and*  
*Exercise Science*

*Departments with good*

to pick out the departments with the highest satisfaction. It seems most departments received a range of responses from satisfied to dissatisfied, however departments have been identified that received zero "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" ratings and they are listed in the box to the left.

**Recommendation:** (ST) The University explores areas of eBridge good practice in order to bring all departments to the same level of quality.

## 2.4 Computers, Software and Networks

HUU would like to congratulate the University of Hull on the expansion of WiFi across campus and to all University owned accommodation.

In addition it appears when comparing comments on surveys, that there has been a reduction in problems experienced by students on slow computers; this is a great improvement for students.

However as referenced in last year's Student Written Submission, software issues appear to be a growing problem that is largely department focused, given different departments require different types of software.

***“Geography Department needs to be open more hours, for example having a 24-hour centre. They should also have PC's that contain specific software for the course and shouldn't be available anywhere else on campus except the Geography Department.” (NSS 2013)***

***“In assessment period, it is hard to ensure the use of a computer with musical software, as there aren't many with it on.” (NSS 2013)***

***“I would like to see better IT facilities for the Engineering Department. Current PC can struggle with some engineering software.” (NSS 2013)***

***“An improvement for my department (computer science) would be to have a computer lab that was not bookable for lectures labs so that when you are working on coursework and therefore need the specialist software on the labs computers you do not have to move around every hour due to the room being booked for specific modules labs.” (NSS 2013)***

The number of comments regarding availability of computers has also increased significantly. This is to be expected given the closing of parts of the BJL for the redevelopment. It will be important to assess students' computer satisfaction after the redevelopment is complete as this is one of the main issues, along with plug sockets, the redeveloped library should address.

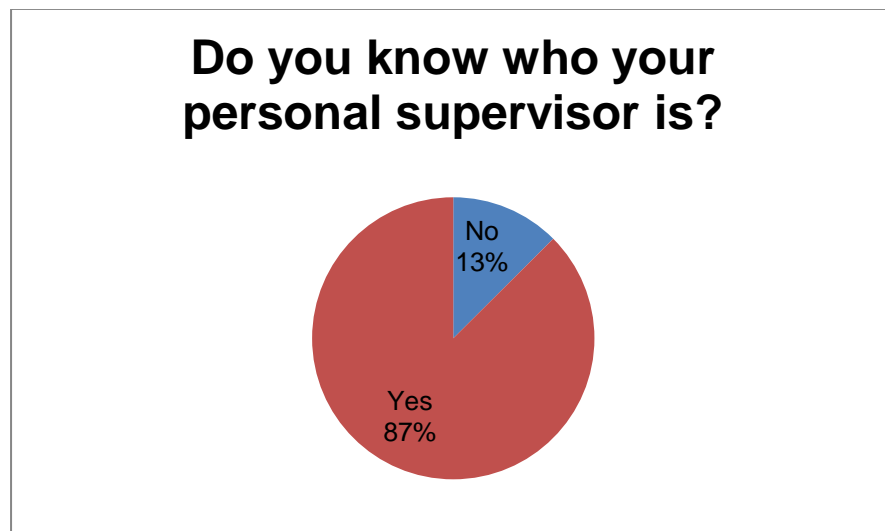
**Recommendation:** (LT) HUU to investigate students' satisfaction with I.T. after the completion of the BJL redevelopment.



## 3. Student Support

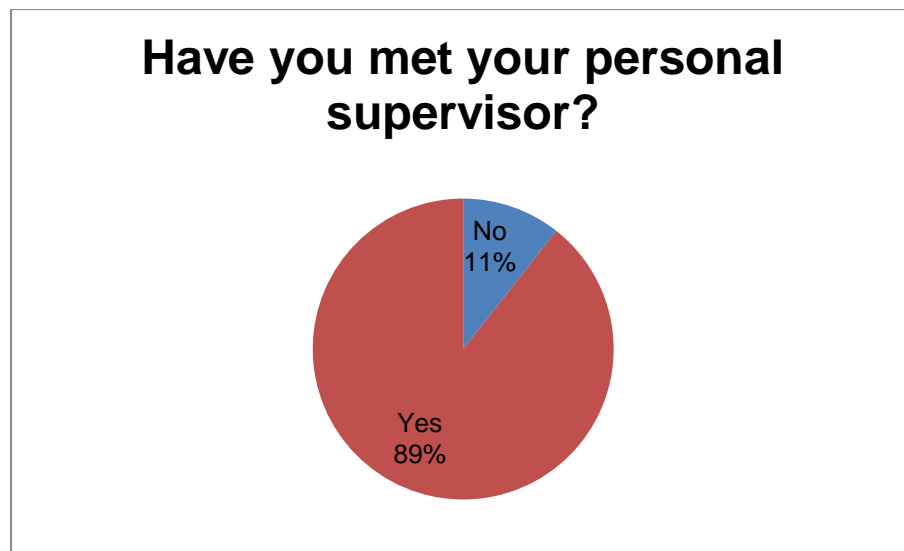
### 3.1 Personal Supervision

HUU continues to be concerned about the Personal Supervision system at the University of Hull. Last year's Student Written Submission showed that 8% of students asked in the Education Survey didn't know they had a personal supervisor, 11% of students had never met their personal supervisor and a further 11% chose to go elsewhere for advice. This year the Education Survey has been used again to collect data on this matter.



As the question is slightly different from the previous year it is unfair to suggest the issue has declined a further four percentage points as the four percentage points could account for people who know they have a personal supervisor but are not aware who they are. At 13% this is a significant number of students who do not have the opportunity for support and this is unacceptable.

*Please note the following question is asked of those who responded "Yes" to "Do you know who your supervisor is?"*



Of those that answered Yes, a further 11% had never met their personal supervisor. The Education survey asked students why they had not met their supervisor, below are some of the responses.

***"My personal supervisor changes every year, I find it frustrating that I can't choose someone to be my personal supervisor. Lecturers should be paid commission for taking on board students to personally supervise, this way the students are given a choice in whom they want to write their reference, this way it will encourage people to talk to their supervisors because they must have selected them for a reason."***  
(Education Survey 2013)

***"I didn't have any problems"*** (Education Survey 2013)

***"Laziness, I intend to meet him soon"***

***"I've never felt like I needed an appointment"*** (Education Survey 2013)

***"I haven't had any reason to go visit them this year."***

***"I regularly had meetings with my supervisor and kept a record of this. But in my final vital year he left the university. I had to email the department to ask who the new supervisor was and they had not allocated anybody. The university clearly does not think about student welfare outside the university!"***

***"I didn't meet them in first year then thought it would be too late."***

***"I met them once in my first year and was told not to bother them unless I was in real trouble or thinking of leaving university. I took this as a hint not to come back."***

***"My Dissertation Supervisor gave me adequate support and he taught me for three modules so any queries I had, I visited him instead."***

***"Tried to but they were never around"***

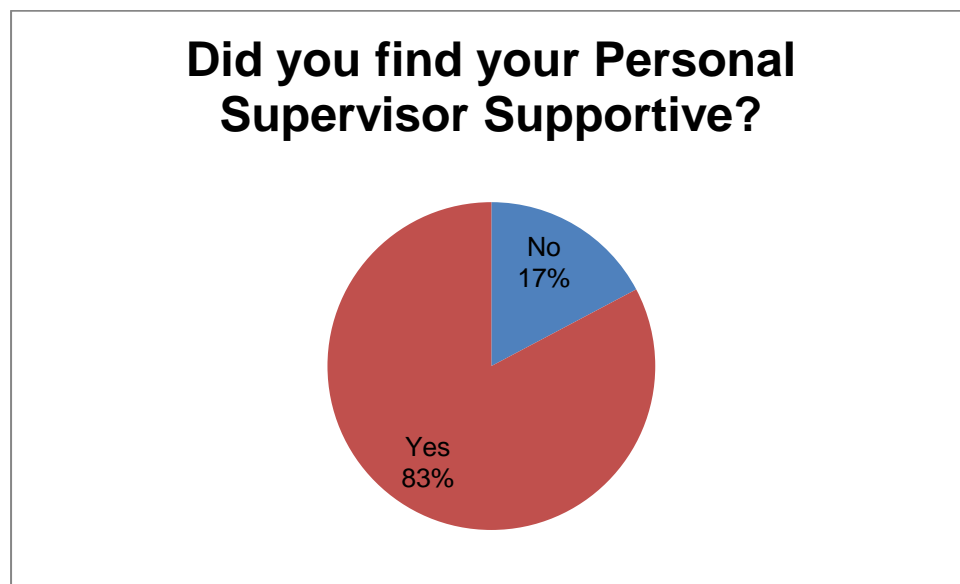
***“My personal tutor has been changed several times over the 2 years and I have found it more trouble to keep up with them than to just ignore them”***

***“Because he is useless. He sent an email last September saying that he would arrange a time so that my tutor group could meet up with him on a weekly or semi-regular basis. The only contact that I heard from him since was when I sent him an angry email in April saying how let down by him I feel. And the same thing happened in the second semester of last year with the same staff member. He shouldn't be allowed to get away with it. I'm paying all this money and getting only 7 contact hours a week. It's honestly a joke. The whole university experience at hull has proved to be a massive disappointment.”***

***“Did not feel appropriate and lacked confidence to have a discussion.”***

***“I do not really understand what a personal supervisor is”***

***“I recently send them a draft of my essay and they never replied with any feedback, my essay deadline is now gone and I didn't feel confident with my essay. They're never available in their office”***



It is concerning that of those who had met their supervisor a further 17% did not find them supportive. It was asked why this was the case, the responses had two general themes: no need and not helpful.

This data highlights four key issues.

1. Lack of understanding about the personal supervision system  
*As the comments show people are unsure what they need a supervisor for and feel they must have a reason for visiting. The University does not provide direction in this and the debate needs to be had about the purpose of the system, for example is it to provide, pastoral support, academic support, progress reviews, career support or all of the above.*
2. Staff being unresponsive to emails

*If a student is in need of support and staff take time to respond, it can seriously affect their confidence and ability.*

3. Students feeling more confident going elsewhere

*Many students either lack confidence in their appointed supervisor or prefer to talk to someone else about their concerns; this can then have an adverse effect on the amount of time more approachable staff have and as such rewards poor service.*

4. Staff being openly dismissive

*Some staff are clearly not interested in personal supervision and are not worried about showing it; this is a problem and is not acceptable.*

**Recommendation:** (ST) The University should evaluate the impact of training for personal supervision after recent changes to the code of practice.

(ST) The University should consider the importance of the Personal Supervision system and consider ways to strengthen staff commitment.

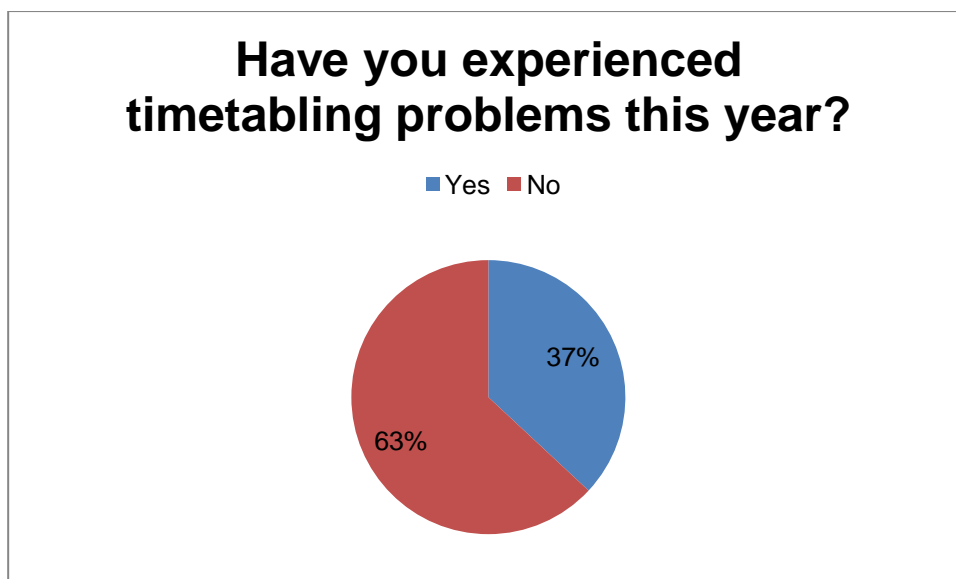
## **2.2 Departmental Support and Communication**

### **2.2.1 Timetabling**

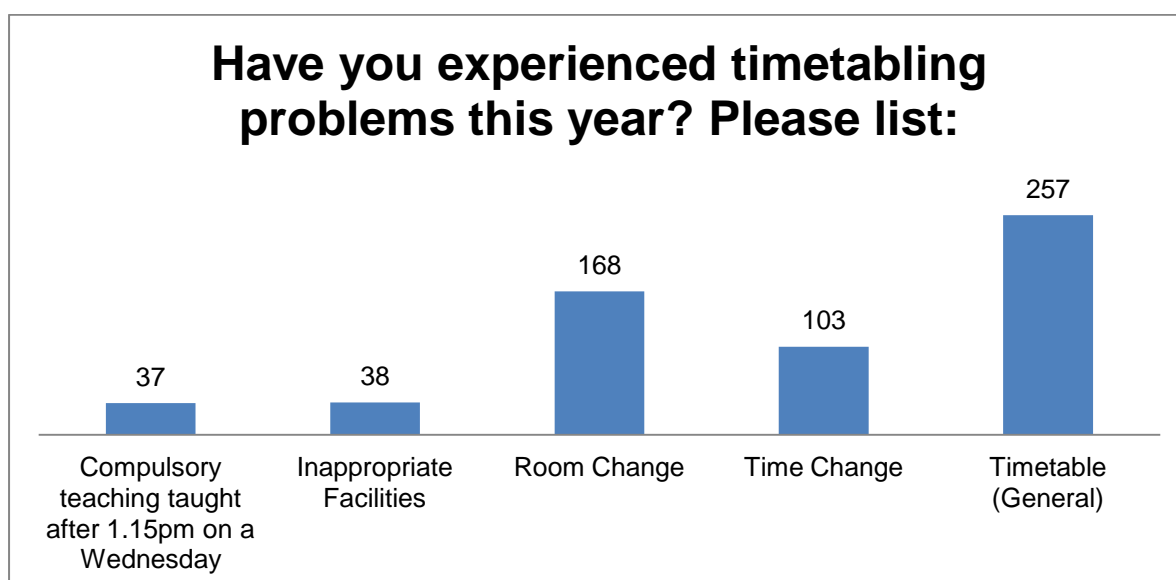
Timetabling has been a priority for HUU over the last academic year and will continue to be over the coming year. The University has made significant improvements to the timetabling process and HUU would like to congratulate them on this; it has also been evidence of some great partnership work.

The problems with regard to the timetable centre around the date of release being too late and frequent changes being made to the timetable once it has been released, thus making it almost impossible for students to organise themselves on their course and to get involved in extracurricular activities, part-time work or childcare.

The question asked in the Education Survey shows the experience of students and their timetabling problems. This shows an increase of 16 percentage points on 2012.



Students were then asked to provide information of the kind of timetabling problems they had experienced.



There are a number of students who have experienced compulsory teaching after 1.15pm on a Wednesday. The fact they cite it as a problem could suggest they have not been consulted on this and requires further investigation from HUU. Whilst the timetable (general) option gives us little information, it is interesting to note room changes are the second biggest problem experienced.

**Recommendation:** (ST) HUU to investigate teaching taught after 1.15pm on a Wednesday.

However, since the timetable has been released six weeks ahead of the start of the 2013/14 academic year HUU has already received a number of positive comments from students.

***"That's great news! and a massive help to us all! it's nice to know the plan for next semester so early on! thank You!" (Facebook)***

***"for those of us with kiddos this is really great. it allows us to arrange childcare ahead of time instead of trying to do it in a couple of days." (Facebook)***

***"@HUUEducation @UoHStdServices so so so happy that I've managed to get my timetable sorted for uni already! xoxo" (Twitter)***

***"Just wanted to say well done for getting the timetabling information available so early, I'll actually be able to plan ahead this October! Thanks." (Email)***

***"Just done mine, so chuffed that I've got my timetable before I start! Gives me a chance to look for jobs :) Seems crazy to me that I've only got a day and a half at uni each week!" (Hull Student Website)***

***"This is great. I don't know what future plans are for further improvement, but what about iphone apps etc, that allow for updates too?" (Hull Student Website)***

***"Really pleased to see this, as a mature student with childcare and shifts to fit around uni it was really worrying having to wait until we start to get timetables!" (Hull Student Website)***

***"It's great even though I haven't got the tutorials yet, I can already clearly see when I'm free to work which is so helpful compared to waiting until after the start of term." (Student pop in)***

This great work must continue into the future and ensure timetables are always released at least six weeks before the start of term in full.

There were also some comments received about the complexity of the process and whilst students recognised the vast improvement in timing, students would prefer a simpler way of assembling the timetable. The University's current plans to implement a fully personalised online timetable are fully supported by HUU.

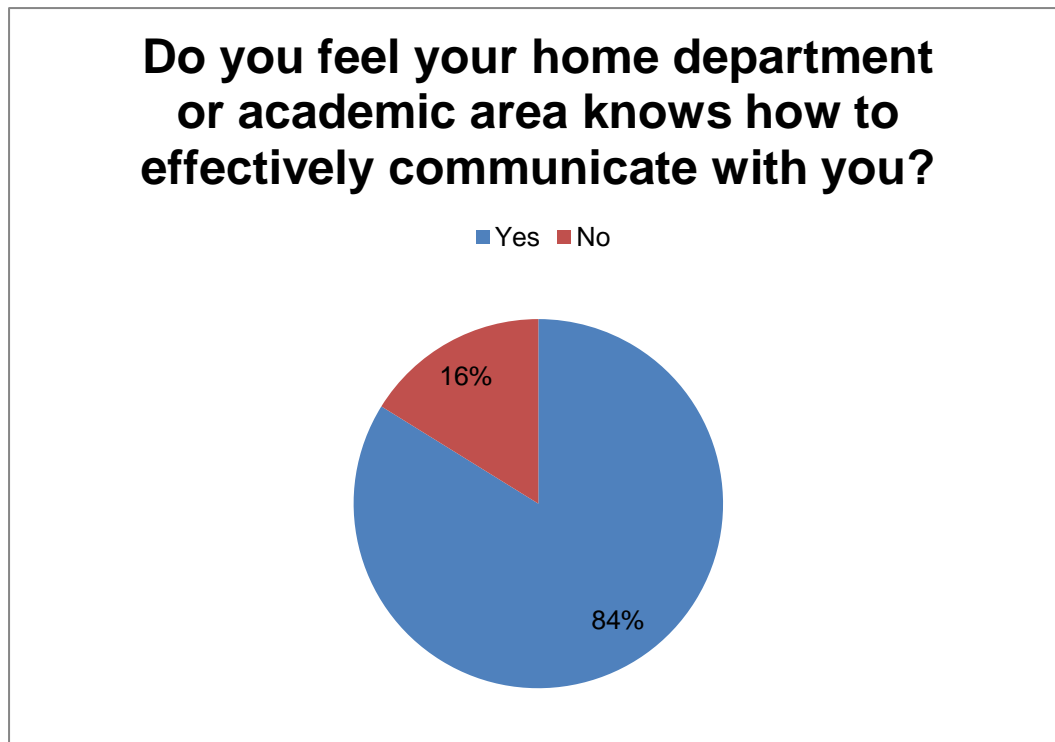
**Recommendation:** (ST) The University to implement fully personalised online timetables.

(ST) The University to amend the timetabling policy to ensure that timetables will be released six weeks before the start of semester each year.

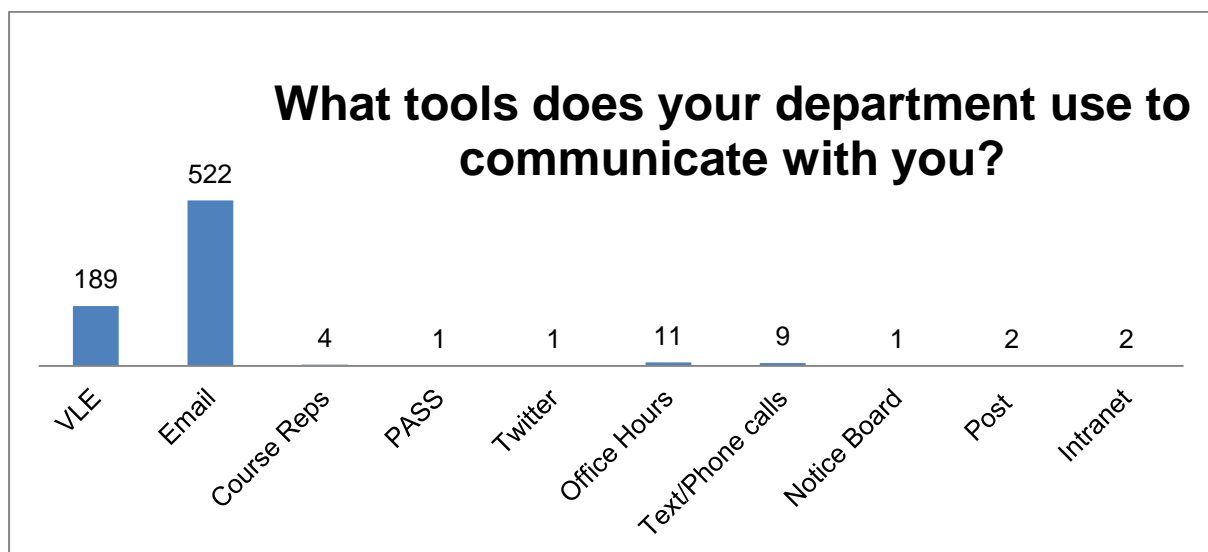


### 2.2.2 Communication

A recurring theme throughout the previous Student Written Submissions has been the issue of departmental communication. The same question was asked as last year in relation to this, "Do you feel your home department knows how to effectively communicate with you?" The data suggests some improvement on last year's results, as in 2012 over 20% of students answered "No" to the question; this year this has dropped to 16% although it is difficult to know why this is the case.



We asked those who answered "Yes" to the question to list the ways that their department communicates with them.



As the data shows the main medium of communication is email and students appear to be reasonably satisfied by this. We can gain an indication of departments who excel in communication from the NSS comments. At the end of the survey students are asked two free text questions:

- Looking back on the experience, are there any particular positive aspects you would like to highlight?
- Looking back on the experience, are there any particular negative aspects you would like to highlight?

The comments below were drawn from the answers to these questions.

***“Communication between staff and students. Accessibility and approachability of staff. Departmental facilities.” Department A (NSS 2013)***

***“Often a lack of communication. Often felt left out of the department due to doing a joint degree i.e., often did not receive info that others did.” Department A (NSS 2013)***

***“Excellent feedback from which improvements have been made. Excellent communication with most lecturers and help with module work.” Department B (NSS 2013)***

***“I am studying part-time and perhaps inevitably there are issues to do with timetabling, communication etc., which make being a part-timer even harder.” Department B (NSS 2013)***

***“Excellent communication via email and SMS. Opportunity to present essay plans for guidance. Choice of modules means I am learning things that are already of interest to me.” Department C (NSS 2013)***

***“Not all teachers have been of an equal standard at times the odd lecturer has not made learning as easy as other lecturers were able to. As I am part of the X and X School, communication was not passed between the two departments very well.” Department C (NSS 2013)***

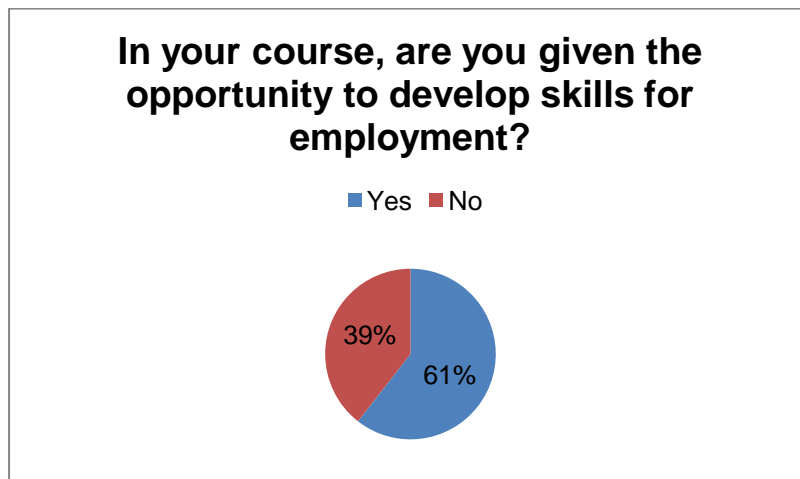
The comments from NSS show a lack of consistency, for each comment that celebrates a department's strong communication skills there is another to diminish them. In many cases it is difficult to see why this is the case, but in some the experience is different for different types of students, if they are part-time or on a joint course. The recommendation for the University remains the same as in previous years.

**Recommendation:** (ST) The University still needs to develop a unified and institution wide communication strategy. This strategy should provide guidance to departments on how to communicate with students and should govern the use of email, eBridge, social media, intranets, websites, notice boards, posters,

announcements in lectures, personal supervisors and postal mail. With clearly defined institution wide guidelines, students can be reassured where to seek information no matter what department, programme or module it involved.

### 3.3 Employability and Skills

The employability agenda has become increasingly important over the past few years as students become more focused on how their degree is preparing them for the world after they graduate. In the Education Survey we asked students where they felt their employability skills came from.



The 61% that answered "Yes" to the question, were then asked to expand on the opportunities they have.

**"History offers relevant work placements, internships which I wish I had considered more before my final year!" (Education Survey 2013)**

**"We are asked to do presentations, take part in group discussions, group work and take on individual tasks - these are all important employability skills." (Education Survey 2013)**

**"The course is Clinical Psychology - so directly relevant to a job." (Education Survey 2013)**

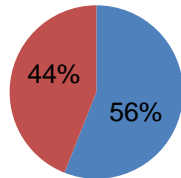
**"Placement opportunities are excellent." (Education Survey 2013)**

**"I am occasionally offered careers service events." (Education Survey 2013)**

The quotes show that opportunities are varied, along with what students regard as opportunities; some see the direct link between their course and their chosen career whilst others feel the only opportunities are through the careers service.

### Have you developed skills for employment in other activities?

■ Yes ■ No



Many students do seek out skills for employment in other activities regardless of whether they are obtained through the course or not. However of those who answered “No” to “In your course have you been given the opportunity to develop skills for employment?” a further 51% answered “No” to gaining skills through other activities. This shows a significant proportion of students are not gaining skills for employment at all throughout their degree or that they are not aware of how activities are developing their employability skills.

The Hull graduate attributes framework outlines important skills for employment that should be embedded within programmes and opportunities to obtain them should be readily available through other activities.

**Recommendation:** (LT) Embed the Hull graduate attributes framework into programmes for all students.

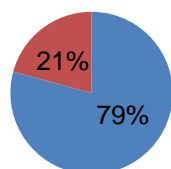
(ST) To create a “Hull Award” or equivalent to help students to articulate the skills they have gained whilst at the University of Hull.

### 3.4 Complaints

Over the past few years, HUU has had growing concerns about the University's complaints process. It is difficult to find out how to complain in the first place, the process can be very time-consuming and students fear that complaints affect their marks. The Education Survey asked students if they had ever felt inclined to complain, it then asked those who answered “Yes” whether they had followed their inclination through and asked those that did not “Why not?”.

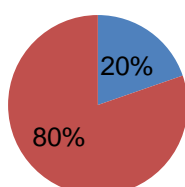
### Have you felt inclined to make a formal complaint?

■ No ■ Yes



### Did you?

■ Yes ■ No



A significant 21% of students surveyed have felt inclined to complain, yet only 20% of these students actually complained. This data highlights a weakness in the complaints process. The comments in response to the question "Why not?" have been analysed to show the most common reasons. The numbers next to the headings indicate how often the point was made in the comments.

#### *Would it make a difference? – 42*

Many students felt the complaint would go unnoticed, ignored, there would be no change or impact and the University would take the side of the staff.

#### *Afraid of repercussions – 28*

Students felt complaining would affect their marks, they would be viewed as a troublemaker or gain a reputation in the department and in some extreme cases thought it would cause them to fail their degree.

#### *How to complain – 27*

Students didn't know how to complain, who to complain to, felt the process was unclear and have never been told how.

#### *Too vulnerable – 16*

Students felt there was a lack of support in making complaints, some thought they would not be taken seriously, were made to feel small by staff, patronised and scared.

#### *Others complained on their behalf - 12*

Groups of students came together to complain; some spoke to their Course Representative who resolved the issue or the Advice Centre.

### *Timely -10*

Students felt the process was a waste of their time and would take too long.

### *Plan on complaining – 8*

Some students are planning to complain, but are waiting until after exams/ assessments are finished, in some cases to not distract themselves, in others to avoid it affecting their marks.

### *Too much hassle – 7*

Students felt it would be too much of a fuss or hassle and wanted to remain focused on assessments.

### *Too late – 6*

Students felt it was too late to complain either because their course was ending or staff concerned were leaving.

### *Told to not complain – 5*

Students were bluntly told not to complain by lecturers and personal supervisors, in some cases they were told it would take too long, nothing would happen and it was a waste of their time.

### *Was it appropriate? – 4*

Students were not sure why they did not complain, whether or not it would have been appropriate.

The following comments show some of the more unique reasons.

**“Based on Cultural differences, coming from a country where raising a complaint about the lecturer can lead to you being victimised and failing your degree or graduating with a mark lower than you really worked for (It has happened to me in the past that’s why).Secondly, I managed to get my work done, overlook the situation and move on. (Although not easy)” (Education Survey 2013)**

**“It would not have been listened to or used to improve the quality of service. I also do not feel that the complain would be anonymous. My experience of other students making formal complaints is that they are not listened to and are often made to feel uncomfortable by university staff. This is another example of the poor quality of service provided by Hull University.” (Education Survey 2013)**

**“The issue seemed well known about by the faculty and I did not feel a formal complaint would be beneficial, I was also concerned on how this may impact me academically” (Education Survey 2013)**

**“Due to growing financial difficulties and some of the tutor’s obvious dislike for me and lack of support...I made the decision to leave after the second year, However I would’ve liked to have gone on to the third year and try for the honours degree. I would rather leave and not make a fuss, I’m sure other students in the future or who already have experienced the same problems as me will have the confidence to speak up.” (Education Survey 2013)**



**“Our latest exam had a question we have never studied on it, haven’t decided whether to lodge a complaint or not, imagine it would take a lot of people to complain for anything to be done” (Education Survey 2013)**

**“Was under the impression the department would sort the problem” (Education Survey 2013)**

**“Tier 4 status - unsure of real attitudes towards foreign students at different levels of the university. Strong evidence from my own experiences that attitudes vary significantly; and are especially problematic in back-end functions with departments that have no exposure to overseas cultures. For a University and school drawing heavily on foreign students fees, this is an area of high priority to address.” (Education Survey 2013)**

**“I just let it go and built on it and, and it only made me grow stronger and more determined. Naturally have a weakness for challenges when thrown at me.” (Education Survey 2013)**

Recommendation: (ST) Review the complaints procedure taking into account the concerns of students listed above.  
(ST) Provide a mechanism for students to complain anonymously.

## 4. Learning and Teaching

### 4.1 Assessment

Assessment continues to be a priority issue for students, in last year's Student Written Submission the focus was around the spacing of assignment deadlines, comments from NSS 2013 show this continues to be a problem for students.

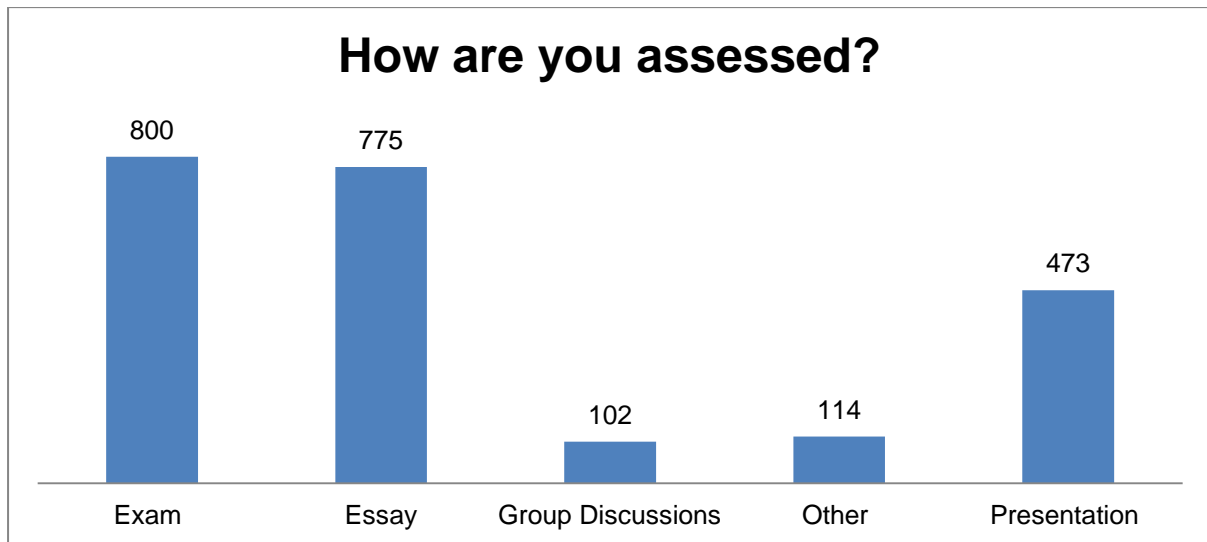
***“I would like my module assignments and group work to be more evenly spread out as they all have similar deadline dates.” (NSS 2013)***

***“Deadlines could be spaced more rather than all in the same week!” (NSS 2013)***

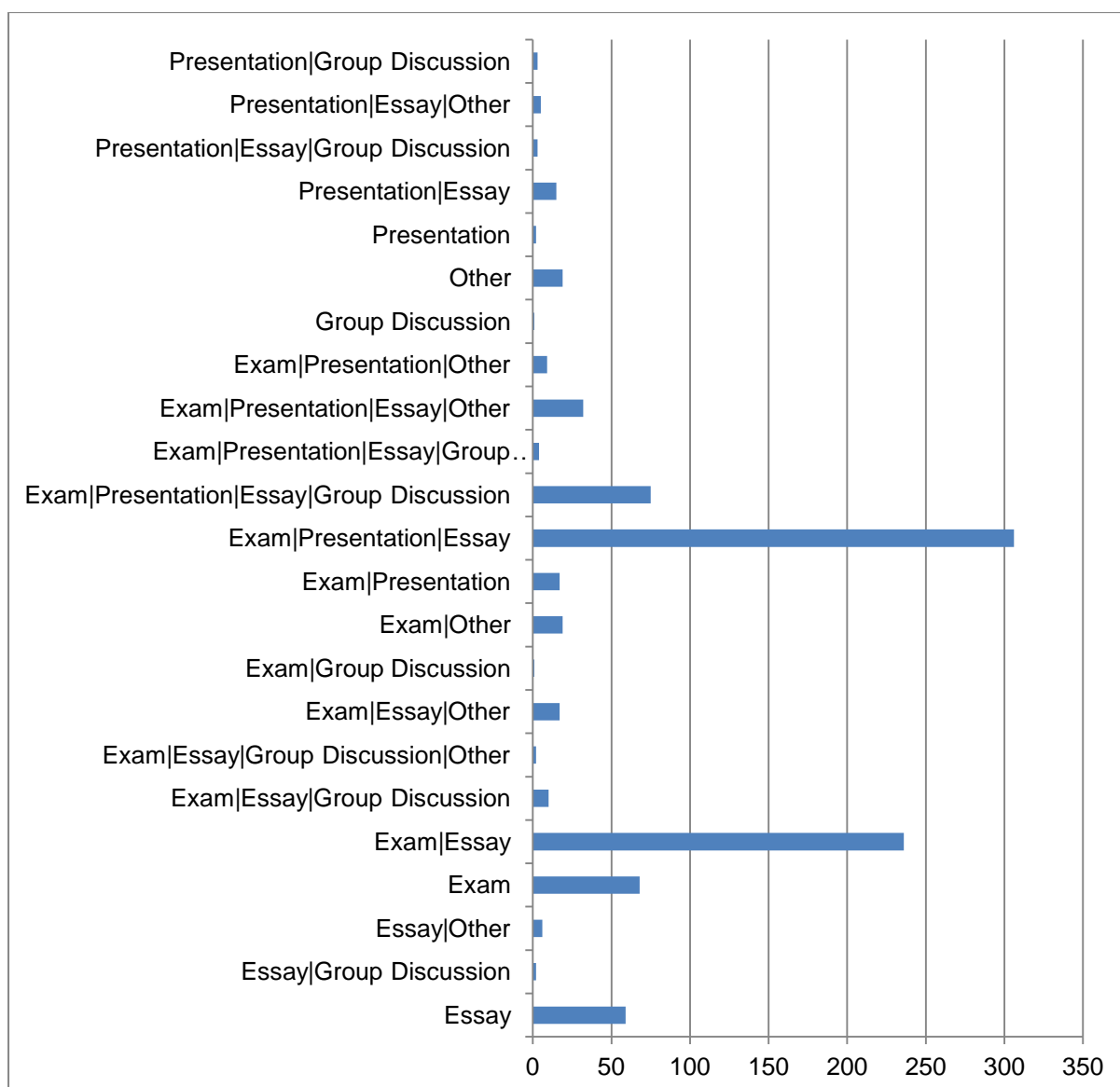
***“Some exams' timetables and assignments deadlines were very close to each other, which have resulted in more stress, pressure and unsatisfactory results. The system overall lacks voluntary exam resits in case of higher mark is desired at later stage.” (NSS 2013)***

However, this year HUU took a closer look at how students are assessed. As part of the Education Survey, students were given a multiple choice question, in which they could select all the ways they are assessed. The options were essay, exam, presentation, group work and other.

The following graph shows how often each option was selected.



This shows that the majority of students face exams and essays; a significant amount are assessed through presentation but the numbers are considerably less for any other form of assessment.



You can see from the table above that the highest combination of assessment is based on just the three ways of essay, exam and presentation with the second highest the simple combination of exam and essay. This factor contributes to the way assignments are often heavy towards the end of the semester, the idea that in order to complete a substantial essay or exam you need to have studied most of the module prior to this point.

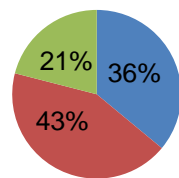
## 4.2 Feedback

Feedback is consistently a high priority for students and often feedback is looked at wholly. In this year's Education Survey students were asked how they are assessed (see above), if they receive feedback on this assessment and how they rate their feedback. The responses to these questions are shown in the pie charts below. Only those who selected they were assessed by exam were then asked about the feedback they received. Those who responded "Yes" or "In some modules" to "Do you receive exam feedback?" were then asked to rate the feedback on a scale

from Very good to very poor. This process was the same for the questions regarding essays, presentations and group discussions.

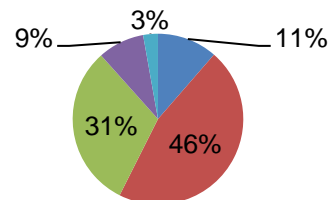
### Do you receive exam feedback?

■ Yes ■ No ■ In Some Modules



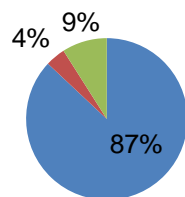
### How do you rate your exam feedback?

■ Very Good ■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor ■ Very Poor



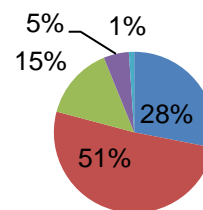
### Do you receive essay feedback?

■ Yes ■ No ■ In Some Modules



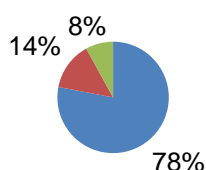
### How do you rate your essay feedback?

■ Very Good ■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor ■ Very Poor



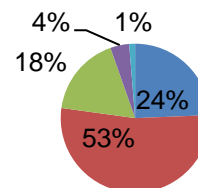
### Do you receive Presentation feedback?

■ Yes ■ No ■ In Some Modules



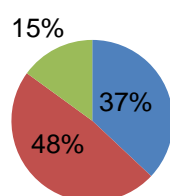
### How do you rate presentation feedback?

■ Very Good ■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor ■ Very Poor



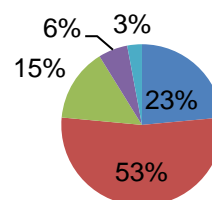
### Do you receive group discussion feedback?

■ Yes ■ No ■ In Some Modules



### How do you rate group discussion feedback?

■ Very Good ■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor ■ Very Poor



The data provides some interesting conclusions. Firstly the smallest response of those answering "Yes" to "Do you receive feedback?" of the four assessment types in the question was exams at 36%, with group discussion only 1% ahead. This is alarming given an earlier graph that shows examination is the most common way students are assessed. It is concerning to note that there is still 4% that did not receive feedback on their essays. Essay feedback has the highest rate of combined very good and good responses at 79% total. Presentation feedback and group discussion feedback ratings are also positive at a combined total of 77% and 76% respectively. However although the rating of group discussion feedback is high, those that actually receive it is very low. Overall the data suggests that there has been a heavier focus on essay feedback over any other and that exam feedback has received the biggest neglect. Exam feedback needs to be separated for special investigation.

The University needs to ensure all students receive equal opportunity to receive quality feedback. Like last year the Student Written Submission has averaged the three questions asked on feedback in the National Student Survey to show the top departments with regard to feedback and those that still need to improve. Whilst many of the scores have increased on last year's, the gap between the top performers and those that require improvement remains the same.

## Top Performers

Department	7	8	9	Average
American Studies	79	96	93	89.33
Sport Health and Exercise Science	84	85	85	84.67
History	78	86	82	82.00
Drama	65	94	85	81.33
Centre for Environmental and Marine Sciences	77	85	81	81.00
Social Work	78	80	80	79.33
Music	77	79	74	76.67
Creative Music Technology	76	84	68	76.00
Politics	75	74	76	75.00
Combined Languages	69	78	78	75.00

Congratulations to American Studies, Sport Health and Exercise Science, History, Music and Combined Languages for being in

National Student Survey Questions

7. Feedback on my work has been prompt.

8. I have received detailed comments on my work.

9. Feedback on my work has helped me to clarify things I did not

## Improvement needed

Department	7	8	9	Average
Theatre and English (Scarb)	38	81	57	58.67

Economics, Psychology and Marketing and Business Strategy were all in the

Chemistry	57	54	64	58.33
Marketing and Business Strategy	59	55	42	52.00
Economics	39	60	53	50.67
Psychology	60	49	39	49.33

**Recommendation:** (ST) Curriculum Development and Teaching Enhancement directorate should work with the departments who are consistently scoring low to try new ways of feedback.

(ST) The University should work specifically on exam feedback to ensure students are at least receiving feedback on their exams.

### 4.3 Student-Led Teaching Awards

The second annual Student-Led Teaching Awards took place in May 2013. The aim of the awards is to raise the profile of learning and teaching within the University by putting a spotlight on staff who students hold in high esteem. This year we made some changes to the Student-Led Teaching Awards Campaign. We began the campaign with a launch in which we hid over 100 small gold apples all over campus for students to find and return to us with the chance to win Amazon vouchers provided they submitted a nomination. This meant we were able to ensure participation from each area of the campus rather than just those that naturally migrate towards the Union building. On filling in the nomination we asked students to write on a large red apple which we added to a tree in the Union building to showcase those nominated. At the end of each day these were removed and posted to staff. This increased the impact of the Awards as all staff nominated were told rather than just those shortlisted for the awards themselves.



An additional award was also introduced to ensure each area of the University is accounted for: the Admin/Support Staff Award was separated into Departmental Admin Award and Student Support Staff Award. Students don't always recognise the support they get from central services and the latter award was to cater for this.

Finally on the evening itself we asked winners to say a few words about what it meant to them to receive their award. This gave the evening a little something extra and it was wonderful to hear staff speak so passionately about their job and their students.

The programme for the evening lists all those nominated and the reasons. The nine winners are listed below.

1. Best Module Award - War and Politics since 1900 - Professor Caroline Kennedy



2. Best Feedback Award - Christine Murphy
3. Best Supervisor Award - Kay Fraser
4. Departmental Admin Award - Gwen Irving
5. Student Support Staff Award - Diane Cunningham
6. Postgraduates' Choice Award - Dr Ioanna Palaiologou
7. Innovative Teaching Award - Dr Tjeerd Jellema
8. Inspiring Teaching Award - Mike Parker
9. The Overall Outstanding Achievement Award - Dr Max Hope



*Each award was presented by a student and member of University senior management team or special guest.*

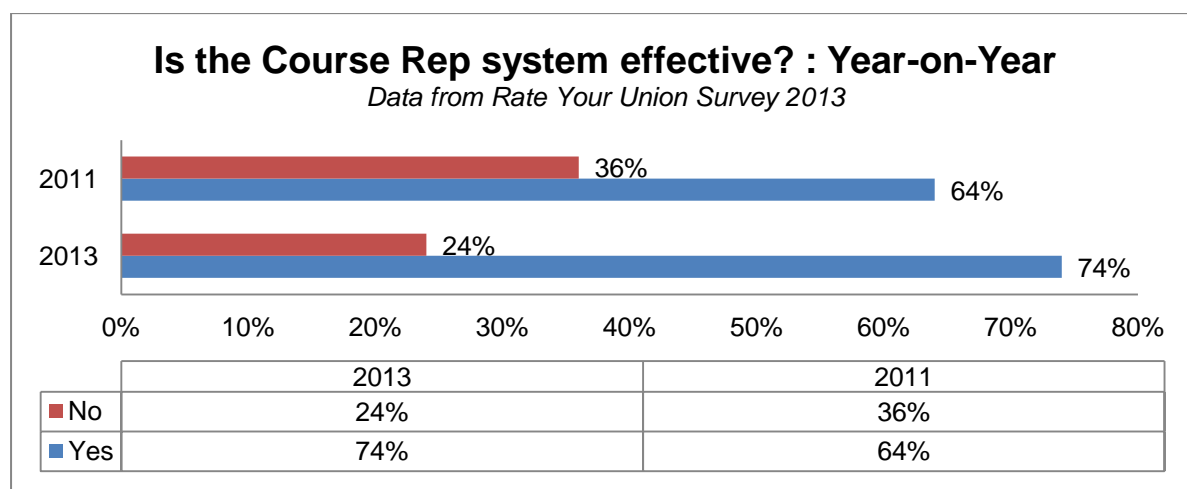
**Recommendation:** (ST) HUU to continue to hold the Student-Led Teaching Awards.

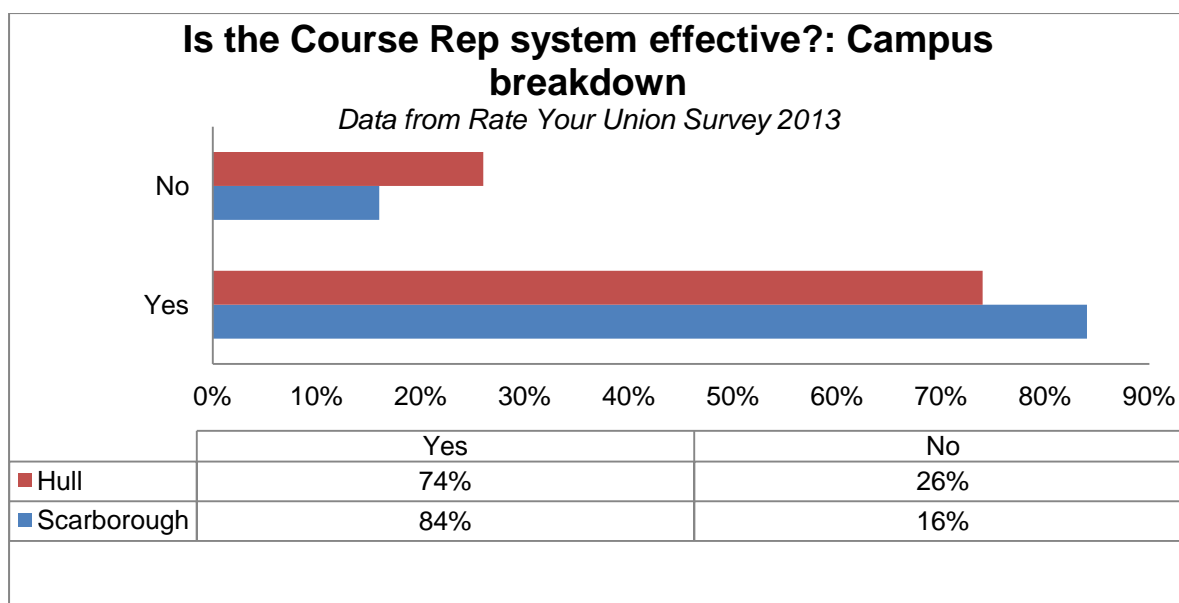
## 5. Student Engagement in the Course Representation System

It has been another successful year for the Course Representative system. There has been an additional two Academic Councils this year, further to the recommendation within last year's Student Written Submission with increased attendance of 39%. (Please note: since the previous year only held three Academic Councils, we combined all of their attendees with this year's first three Academic Council attendees to reach the 39% figure.)

### **5.1 Effectiveness of the Course Representative System**

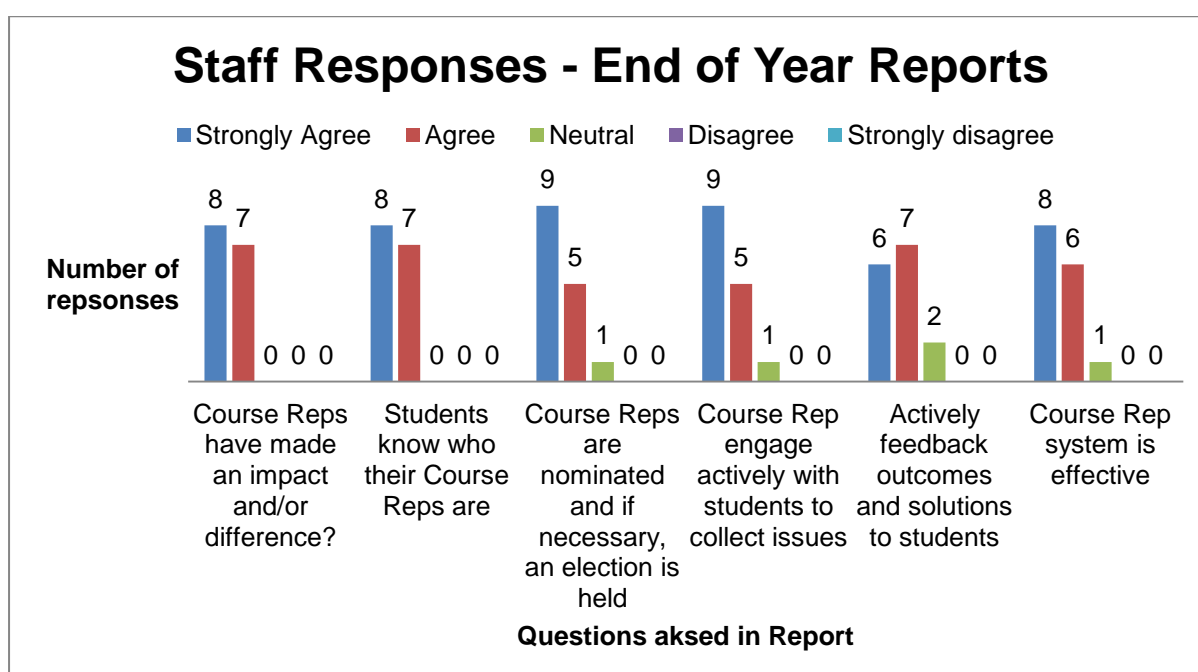
HUU set a target of 80% effectiveness of the Course Representative System within our Rate Your Union survey. The response to this question in 2013 was 84% on Scarborough Campus and 74% on Hull Campus, overall score of 74% effective. This increase of 10 percentage points on the previous year is positive, however HUU is committed to increasing the effectiveness of the Course Representative system.



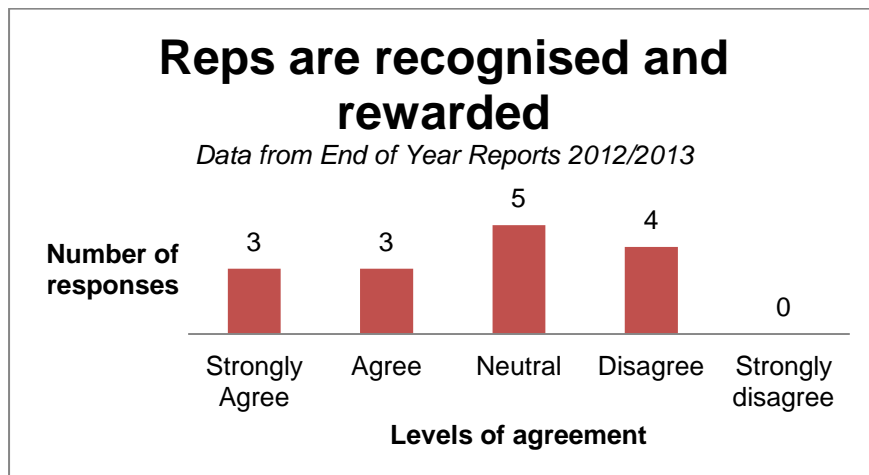


## 5.2 End of Year Reports - Staff-Student Committee

In relation to the Student Engagement Chapter of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, the University of Hull meets several of the indicators: they provide a partnership with students, staff and students engaged in discussions about improving the educational experience of students; the Course Rep system has different levels of representation from department level all the way up to Senate and it also meets the code in many other ways. The Course Rep system meets indicator 7 specifically as departments review the year through end of year reports. The graph below indicates that departmental staff see the impact and difference that Course Representatives make. The end of year reports add further validity to the Rate Your Union results which show that the Course Representative system is effective with 14 departments agreeing (variations of Strongly Agree and Agree).



Within the End of Year report there is a section about the reward and recognition of representatives, this section is completed by Course Representatives themselves. Five areas of study cited "Neutral" and four cited "disagree". HUU should look into a recognition scheme for representatives to ensure that representatives are rewarded appropriately due to their commitment to the role.



HUU is developing a new newsletter system for course representatives, using software that will monitor engagement (i.e. how many open the email, how many click on the links and how many delete the email). With this new form of monitoring we can see which departments require more communication from HUU.

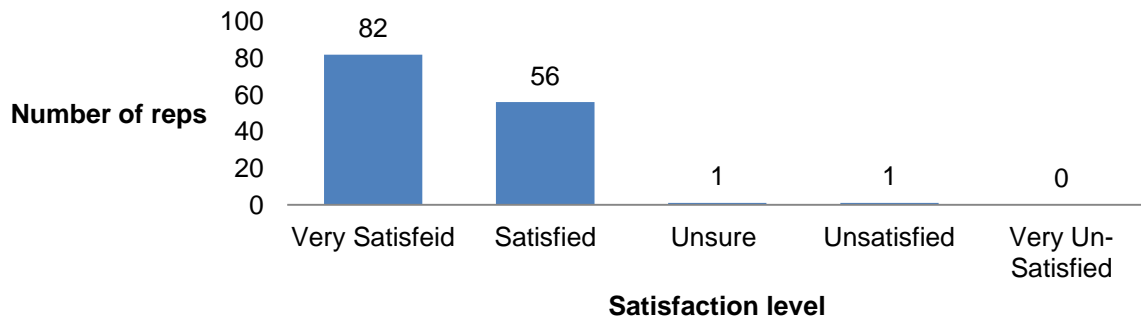
### 5.3 Course Representative training

In relation to the Quality Code Chapter 5: Student Engagement, Indicator 4 "Higher education providers ensure that student representatives and staff have access to training and ongoing support to equip them to fulfil their roles in educational enhancement and quality assurance effectively" HUU provides Course Representative Training, with a satisfaction rate of 98.5%. This however reflects the views of only 140 representatives out of 480 (16 were trained online and did not give feedback, 33% of the 480 representatives were trained).

In order to train more representatives HUU will be providing the same initial training, two weeks after the first set, and also ad-hoc sessions, at the request of departments (across both campuses). This will increase the numbers of reps trained in the first semester. HUU will provide further training in campaigns, public speaking and data handling across the entire year. The campaigns training will be pilot study before being used for other volunteers.

## How Satisfied are you with Course Rep training?

*Data taken from Course Rep training evaluations*



Recommendation: (LT) HUU is to develop an appropriate Recognition scheme.  
(ST) HUU is to train at least 50% Course Representatives, with more training, two weeks after the initial training. More training to occur in the second semester after Christmas.