

HULL UNIVERSITY
UNION

Annual Student Written Submission 2016

Introduction from Vice-President Education, Matt Thomeycroft

The University of Hull and the Hull University Union have both undergone a substantial level of change and development over the last few years, continuing to build a strong and robust partnership for students. The Student Written Submission is a clear demonstration of how the University take into consideration the Union's view of students' academic, and overall university, experience. We can see this in abundance through the redevelopment of the Library, the construction of the new medical building and accommodation, and redevelopment of Middleton Hall.



The impact of recent developments can be seen in the NSS results and overall feedback, for instance, the learning resources where we can see market leading scores. However, now is the ideal time to maintain this momentum by not only focusing on protecting the amazing changes we've made but by looking forward. We need to be dynamic: constantly adapting and developing to fit what our students need from their university experience. Most importantly, we need courage – the bravery to take forward the strategies of both HUU and the University and to take risks to benefit students.

During my first few months 'change' has been a word that has filled many of my induction meetings and introductory conversations. With so much change happening in the HE 'market', from the introduction of the TEF Framework and larger White Paper to City of Culture and its legacy, we must continue to be pragmatic and seize opportunities. In consideration of all the change, we have taken the approach in this SWS of reviewing a much wider trend in the NSS scores to measure the student experience before and after implementing changes, such as the new library. This allows both the University and Union to work together in partnership to strategically review the impact we have on students and identify the key areas of focus for us to improve. I am incredibly excited to see how we can work together to achieve amazing things for our students. Through strategy, courage and the dynamism to continuously improve we can make Hull an exceptional place to be.

I would also like to thank Jacob Zobkiw (Education Co-ordinator) for his exceptional hard work on producing the report, and his insightful evaluation of the data. Additionally, I would like to thank Chelsea Baxter (Research and Campaigns Co-ordinator) for her astute analysis of the data collected in the last year.

Matt Thomeycroftscarborough

Vice-President Education
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Chapter 1 Introduction

This Student Written Submission (SWS) is presented to the University to ensure the student voice is heard by both HUU and the University of Hull. This is the eighth consecutive edition of the SWS, one of the few reports that incorporates the wealth of student feedback data, generated by students through HUU, and the University during the year. The SWS aims to provide a detailed overview of the student academic experience. The SWS provides a series of recommendations so that HUU and the University can work in partnership to devise an action plan for the future.

This submission will explore the theme of "**long term change at the University of Hull**", employing NSS data from the last 10 years to investigate the trends, developments and anomalies relating to the quality of the student experience. This theme is particularly pertinent since the proposed changes to the NSS 2017 will likely make next year's data incomparable to the previous bank of data. Consequently, the SWS 2016 represents a summation of a period of time coming to the end of its cycle.

1.1 Executive Summary - HUU's Student Written Submission for 2016

The 2016 HUU SWS recommends that:

- 1 HUU and the University investigate why mature students rate their assessment and feedback more highly than young students, and identify how this understanding can be used to improve the assessment and feedback experience across the student body.
- 2 HUU and the University investigate why mature students are less satisfied with the learning resources available on campus compared with younger students.
- 3 The University seeks to understand the needs of the diverse 'mature student' group, and the crossover between 'part-time' and 'mature' students.
- 4 The University explores ways to take into consideration those with familial or other responsibilities when it comes to timetable procedures.
- 5 Following excellent NSS scores, the University continues to build upon the outstanding learning resources available.
- 6 The University continues to remind students how far the BJL has advanced in a short space of time.
- 7 HUU and University continue to work together to implement the Principles of an Excellent Student Experience.
- 8 The University continues to communicate effectively to staff, as well as students, the resources and specialist help available to those with a disability, specifically students with a specific learning disability.
- 9 HUU and the University continue to work together to ensure that all students receive a high quality academic support experience.
- 10 HUU and the University continue to work together to ensure that the AST system – and particularly the monitoring process and procedures – runs effectively, with communications in place clearly outlining what is expected of staff and students.
- 11 HUU evaluate the impact of changes to the AST project through research and engagement with students – particularly through Course Reps – and conduct analysis of the new AST monitoring reports.

- 12 Following the implementation of the 2016/17 academic timetabling procedures, HUU continue to review student feedback on the approach.
- 13 The University examines why student satisfaction has fallen below the NSS average in Organisation and Management, and implement procedures to minimise late notice room or time changes.
- 14 HUU work in partnership with the University to monitor issues around student communications in light of the structural changes in 2016.
- 15 The University ensure that subject groups effectively communicate times for office and staff hours.
- 16 HUU and University work together to ensure that clear communications are provided regarding the development of student hubs and key physical and virtual points of student support.
- 17 HUU and the University work together to manage expectations among the student body regarding a timely response to enquiries.
- 18 The University provides more opportunities for placements for students across disciplines and that the International Office reviews its procedures for assisting students on placement abroad.
- 19 The University looks into the experience and provision for disabled students on placement and the processes for allocating placements is reassessed in Schools.
- 20 In response to student feedback, the lack of opportunities for PGR and PGT students to gain teaching experience should be investigated and reviewed.
- 21 HUU consider the issues student face when considering a complaint or appeal and base any future recommendations on clear understanding of the issues to be addressed.
- 22 That the University take proactive steps to share practice across subjects ensuring that where excellent practice can be transferred across the Institution efforts are made to do so.
- 23 HUU present a summary of the SLTA data to the University, and that the University consider the possible use which could be made of the data to inform staff development and planning.
- 24 HUU and the University work together to review the approach to recording and actioning issues in SSCs in light of feedback received.
- 25 HUU work closely with the University to establish clarity regarding the role of Course Reps and the purpose of the various forums they attend.
- 26 That HUU considers how it interacts with SSCs and Course Reps for those students who operate outside typical term time and programme structures ensuring an outstanding representation system for all.
- 27 HUU work with the University to publicise the identity of Course Reps, the work they do and the impact they have on the student experience.
- 28 The University seek to understand the cause of the declines in NSS scores in key areas since 2014.
- 29 HUU review the overlap between the NSS, HSS and the Education Survey to ensure that the distinct role of each mechanism is clear to students and the opportunities for gathering student views are maximised.

1.2 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 2016. The sources from which we have drawn our evidence include:

- Education Survey

The Education Survey was conducted by HUU and completed by a total of 744 respondents across both campuses. The Education Survey is open to any student studying at the University of Hull.

- 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. This year HUU received a record amount.

- National Students Survey (NSS)

Department scores from 2016 National Student Survey results. Analysis undertaken by HUU as well as benchmarking reports created by NUS.

- Hull Student Survey (HSS)

An institutional non-final year undergraduate survey reflecting the proposed changes to the NSS next year.

- Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

Exploring the views and opinions of the Postgraduate Taught population of the University of Hull through the HEA survey.

- Student-Led Teaching Awards Nominations (SLTAs)

Analysis and extracts from the 500+ nominations HUU received this year from its annual Student-Led Teaching Awards.

- HUU Experience Survey Report

A report analysing data from the "HUU Experience Survey", which focused on student activities, employability and their correlation to student satisfaction. There were 416 respondents.

- Mature Student Survey

Conducted by HUU's 2016 Mature Students Officer, Phil Yelland, the Mature Students Survey garnered over 200 responses, enabling HUU to take into account specifically the views of mature students for the first time.

1.3 The Experience of Mature Students

Phillip Yelland, Mature Students Officer 2015-16, organiser of the 2016 Mature Students Survey

Education offers so much. It opens many doors and provides opportunities to obtain skills and experience. I sought these opportunities by continuing my formal education after a seven-year absence. What surprised me was that I met other mature students with very different mind-sets. Everyone has different reasons for joining university and it is important that these are investigated without bias. So I proposed myself for election as Mature Students Officer with the intention of discovering what motivations exist for fellow mature students in their university lives.



The difficulty with representing mature students is that the demographic is based solely on an uncapped age. A mature student is anyone who is 21 years old and above but a 25-year-old single male studying an undergraduate degree cannot be fairly represented in the same way as a 55-year-old grandmother studying a PhD. Mature students can involve people with very different financial burdens compared to the typical 18-to-21-year-old student, such as mortgages, babysitting fees, extra education expenses as well as varying responsibilities inclusive of employment, housekeeping and child care. As a service provider, it is important that the University and Union learns about their students and aids in improving their chances of achieving their educational ambitions. The mature student demographic is a very complex network of varying ages and personal circumstances which requires research and interaction in order to avoid the easy mistake of oversimplifying such a vast age range under one label.

The only way to discover what is needed by students is through engagement, which is where the survey came in. The purpose was to provide an insight into our mature students and understand the areas that they require support in rather than assuming that they are all one collective to be treated in the same way and offered the same thing(s). From this, strategies can be put in place to cater for these needs that might be overlooked.

With the launch of the Mature Students Survey this year, HUU has focused on the experience of mature students at the University of Hull, utilising information garnered from the survey and NSS data. The University of Hull categories a mature student as “anyone aged at least 21 at the point of undergraduate registration or 25 for postgraduates.”¹ This is a wide category that can incorporate a very diverse range of students. The table below highlights the academic experience of mature students at the institution in the key areas defined by the NSS, and these results are compared to the data from last year and the sector-wide average.

	The teaching on my course	Assessment and feedback	Academic support	Organisation and management	Learning resources	Personal development	Overall Satisfaction
Mature (University of Hull 2016)	87	75	81	75	88	84	85
Mature (University of Hull 2015)	88	75	81	73	85	84	84
Mature (2016 HEI Sector-Wide Score)	87	78	81	77	84	82	85

The table demonstrates a mixed set of experiences across the categories. Compared with last year, mature students rated their experience in Organisation and Management as **2%** better, yet this is still **2%** behind the sector-wide average. There is a big improvement in Learning Resources, an area that the institution has excelled in across the board, helping the University of Hull in reaching the overall sector-wide benchmark (although Overall Satisfaction is not an average of all the scores but a category in its own right). Generally, the University is meeting expectations in regard to the mature student experience and has improved on last year by **1%** in the Overall Satisfaction category.

¹ <http://www2.hull.ac.uk/student/support/mature.aspx>

The table below compares the experience of mature students to that of young students at the University of Hull:

	The teaching on my course	Assessment and feedback	Academic support	Organisation and management	Learning resources	Personal development	Overall Satisfaction
Mature	87	75	81	75	88	84	85
Young	85	70	80	78	92	82	86
Difference	+2	+5	+1	-3	-4	+2	-1

Generally, the mature student experience rates higher compared to that of young students in all areas apart from Organisation and Management, Learning Resources, and Overall Satisfaction. Mature students rate Assessment and Feedback **5%** higher than young students. It might be the case that mature students are more likely to recognise feedback in its many forms.

Recommendation

HUU and the University investigate why mature students rate their assessment and feedback more highly than young students, and identify how this understanding can be used to improve the assessment and feedback experience across the student body

The tables below highlight the three questions in each of the two lowest academic areas in regard to the mature student experience:

Organisation and Management

	13. The timetable works efficiently as far as my as my activities are concerned	14. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively	15. The course is well organised and is running smoothly
Mature	76	75	73
University of Hull average	80	76	76
Difference	-4	-1	-3

Learning Resources

	16. The library resources and services are good enough for my needs	17. I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to	18. I have been able to access the specialised equipment, facilities or rooms when I needed to
Mature	86	91	85
University of Hull average	91	92	88
Difference	-5	-1	-3

The data demonstrates that timetabling has proven to be dissatisfactory for mature students and further work is needed to release timetables earlier so that those who work part-time, commute long distances, or need to arrange childcare have the appropriate time to rearrange their schedule. It is notable that question 16 and 18 in the NSS are intrinsically linked: if the timetabling is not efficient, then students will identify that the course is not well organised or running smoothly. Therefore, ineffective central timetabling will have an effect on all courses.

More work needs to be done to find out why mature students do not rate the learning resources as highly as young students. One possible reason is that mature students are more likely to be commuters to the University and so will not use the resources on campus, or that Wi-Fi accessibility is not readily available to those working off-campus in the region. Many comments in the Mature Students Survey list car parking as an issue, so this could impact on satisfaction scores on the resource accessibility. This is something that potentially could be investigated further.

Recommendation

That HUU and the University investigate why mature students are less satisfied with the learning resources available on campus compared with younger students.

The Mature Students Survey has enabled HUU to access free text comments from this particular demographic for the first time, allowing insight into the areas that mature students value most. Free-text comments are taken from the question: "Are there any issues you would like to see addressed by the University or Union on behalf of Mature Students?" For more information on the issues affecting mature student experience at University, see the mature student comments section (Appendix 2.1).

I would like timetabling finalised more than 3 days in advance, and more information shared on ebridge for those lectures I can't attend due to work/family commitments.

Yes, timetabling for modules changed 3 times before the start of this semester which has caused me lots of problems with work as I had to keep renegotiating time off for lectures.

Yes, earlier release of timetables, as sometimes a week's notice is difficult when you are trying to arrange childcare.

Yes... sort the timetables out earlier and stop changing them because some of us have family commitments.

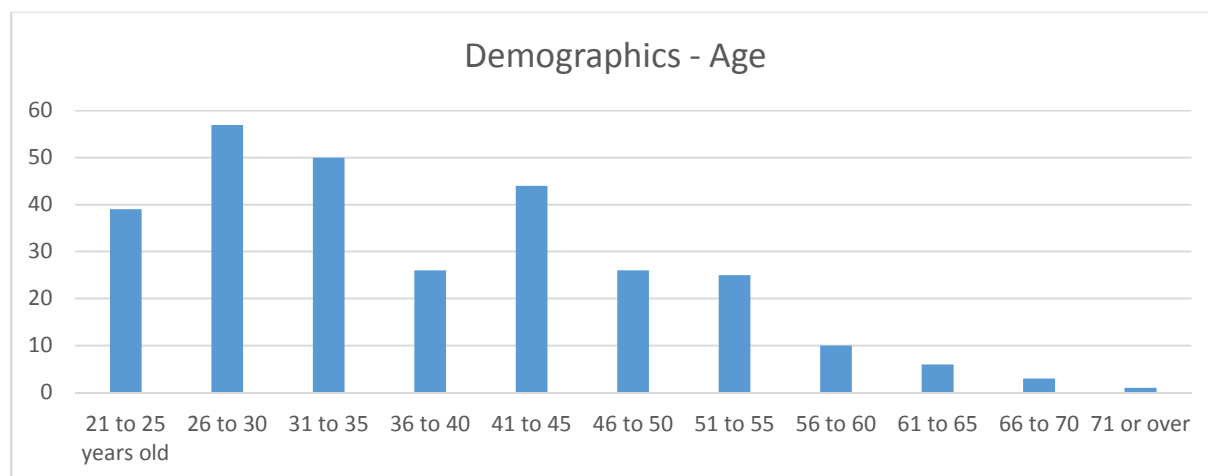
Recommendation

The University explores ways to take into consideration those with familial or other responsibilities when it comes to timetable procedures.

On occasion, students rejected the label of mature student and felt it did not appropriately describe them, with some identifying themselves more readily as a part-time student.² The graph below exhibits the range of ages categorised as a 'mature student' among survey respondents. With such a broad range of ages, it can be problematic to place such a multitude

² Comments of this nature can be seen in appendix 2.

of backgrounds into one category. For instance, students from ages 26-35 may have children dependent on them, while 40+ may have older children who are independent.



Recommendation

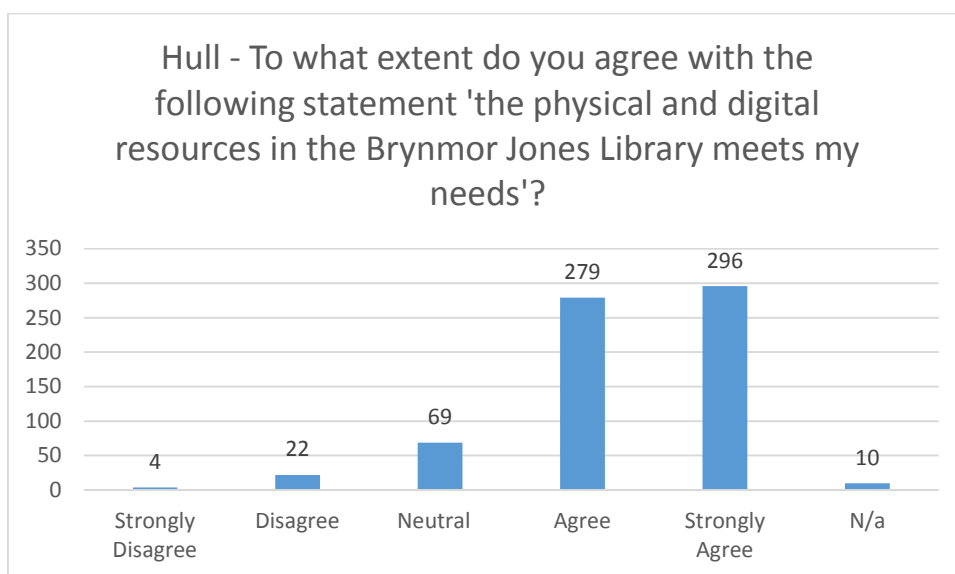
HUU and the University investigate why mature students are less satisfied with the learning resources available on campus compared with younger students.

The University seeks to understand the needs of the diverse 'mature student' group, and the crossover between 'part-time' and 'mature' students.

Chapter 2 Learning Environments

2.1 Brynmor Jones Library

In the SWS 2015 there was an overwhelmingly positive response to the library resources among students after a period of flux owing to disruptions caused by the redevelopment. HUU once more asked respondents to comment on the BJL in the 2016 Education Survey, and whether the facilities and resources met their needs. We are pleased to report that the positive trend has continued, with 86% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing that the library resources met their needs. This presents an increase of **7%** in student satisfaction on last year and demonstrates the powerful impact the redevelopment of the library has had on student learning.



In addition, NSS results relating to Learning Resources for the Institution are overwhelmingly positive.

The NSS scores relating to learning resources reflect improvements across all areas:

	Learning resources	16. The library resources and services are good enough for my needs.	17. I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to.	18. I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities or rooms when I needed to.
2016	91	91	92	88
2015	88	89	90	86
2014	83	80	86	82
Difference	8	11	6	6

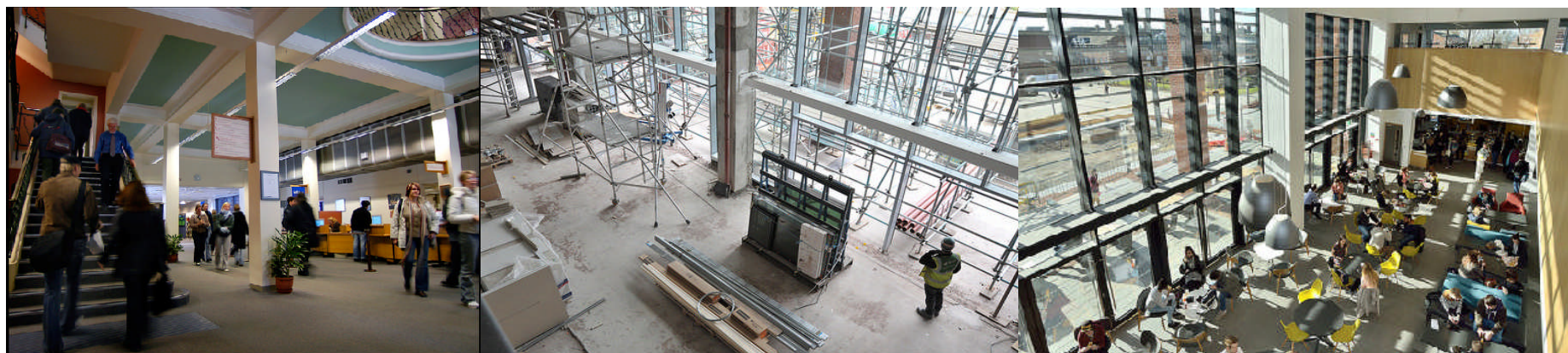
Congratulations to the University of Hull for once again achieving the NSS top quartile scores for Learning Resources and improving satisfaction scores by 8% in two years.

The table below shows that undergraduates are more satisfied with learning resources than PGT students. However, the PTES results have improved in every area since 2015 and is only **1%** behind the NSS top quartile in two areas and 1% above in the other.

NSS & PTES scores for learning resource compared with the top quartile / 2015

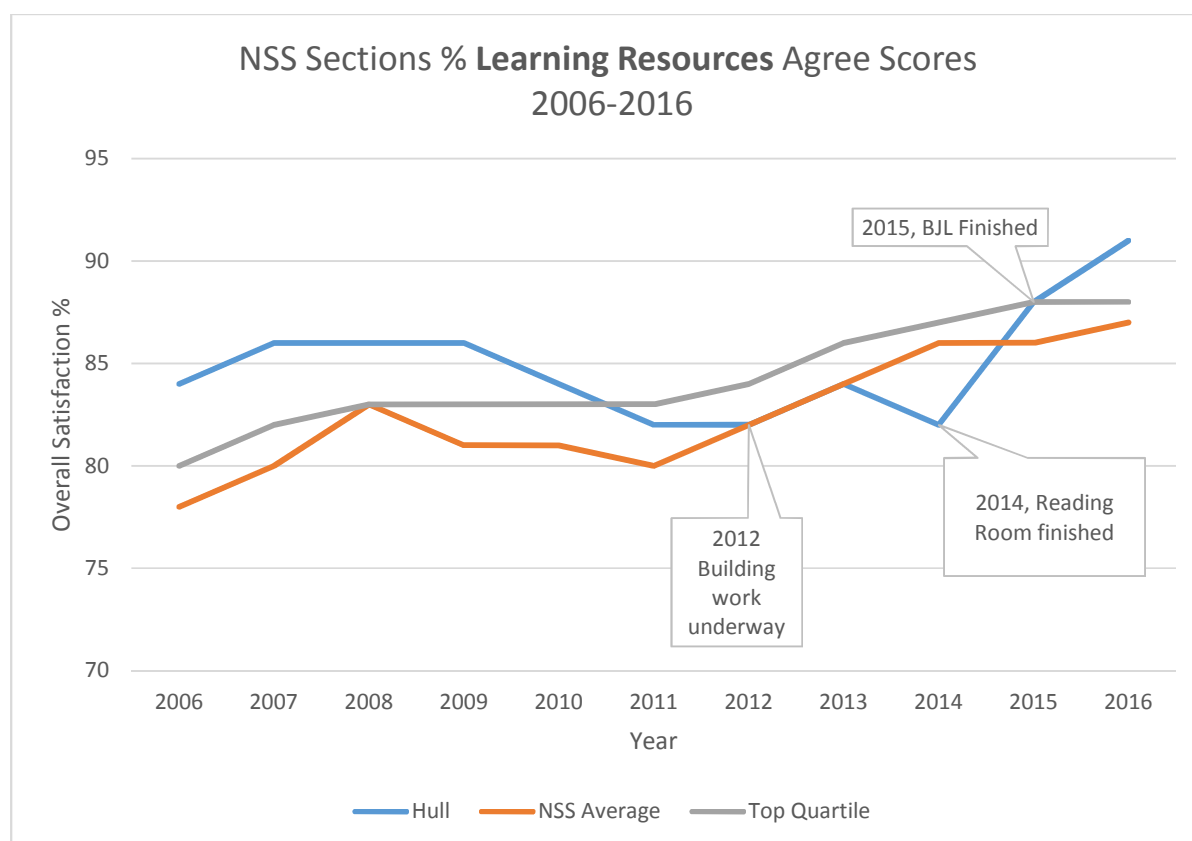
	The library resources and services are good enough for my needs.	I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to.	I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities or rooms when I needed to.
NSS Hull	91	92	88
NSS Top Quartile	89	91	83
PTES 2016	88	90	84
PTES 2015	86	89	83

Congratulations to the University of Hull for improving the experience of PGT students in regard to learning resources.



Long-Term Analysis: Learning Resources

An analysis of the last 10 years of the NSS data on Learning Resources reveals a stagnation in satisfaction among students at the University of Hull before the BJL redevelopment in 2011. Unsurprisingly, this rate fell further when the construction took place, but the building work has paid dividends as satisfaction in this area has reached a record high, and represents the NSS category in which the University excels in, achieving well above, not just the NSS average, but also the top quartile:



However, as the graph indicates, there has been a consistent rise generally across the sector in this competitive area, as the NSS average bar reveals. We can conclude, therefore, that the BJL redevelopment has been vital for the institution to remain competitive in an increasingly saturated sector; the BJL is not a luxury, but a necessity. It is also important for the University to focus on learning resources beyond the library to ensure it is meeting expectations.

A further caveat is that, as students become more familiar with the library facilities, there may be less comparisons to the old library and potentially an apathetic attitude to the outstanding resources available. In consequence, HUU anticipates with interest next year's NSS results on Learning Resources.

Recommendation

The University continues to build upon the outstanding learning resources available, and advertise them to students.

The University continues to remind students how far the BJL has advanced in a short space of time.

Chapter 3 Student Support

3.1 Academic Support

The 2016 NSS results demonstrate that the overall score for academic support at the Institution dropped by 1%; this is a **2%** drop since 2014. The top quartile of UK institutions scored 85%.

This is **5%** more than the University of Hull, and the gap has widened since 2015.

Disconcertingly, the University has dropped further behind the benchmark average.

NSS academic support scores against the sector

	University of Hull	NSS Top Quartile	HEI Average
Academic Support % Agree 2016	80	85	82
Academic Support % Agree 2015	81	84	82

Academic Support satisfaction has fallen in every area, with the University also dropping behind the sector average in every category:

	10. I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies.	11. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.	12. Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices.
2016	79	85	76
2015	80	86	77
NSS Average	80	87	78

The overall results for academic support mask significant variation between subject areas, for example the difference between the highest and lowest scores is **37%**. HUU has previously identified the need to share practice between high and low scoring departments before and continues to reiterate the need to ensure a consistently high quality student experience.³ The

³ From the SWS 2015: "HUU asks the University to ensure that good practice is shared and that targeted support for low scoring departments is provided."

table below showcases the top scoring departments in this area, in which there will be examples of good practice.

Top NSS Scores for Academic Support

	Academic support	10. I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies.	11. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.	12. Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices.
043 English (Scarborough) ⁴	97	100	90	100
050 Ctre for Environmental & Marine Sciences	94	92	96	90
004 Physics	93	93	95	90
002 American Studies	91	88	94	91
020 History	90	92	89	88

Congratulations to the Centre for Environmental & Marine Sciences, History, and Physics for making the top 5 for a second year. The English Department in Scarborough has also reached 100% for both Question 10 and 12 in the NSS! The biggest improvement from last year overall was English (Scarborough) by 22%.

It is recommended that the University and HUU investigate into how these subjects raised satisfaction rates in this area. The **NSS free text** comments offer a degree of clarification:

Staff are exceptional in their subject knowledge and have been dedicated to all of their students. Email correspondence is efficient and office hours have been flexible and convenient. The English Department have been excellent at dealing with students' problems particularly in light of the confusion and

The lecturers in the CEMS Department at Scarborough campus are enthusiastic about the subjects they teach... There has been a wide variety of field trips included within the course that have aided my learning, not only making it more engaging but also more interesting

⁴ Please note that English (Scarborough) was in its final year on the campus and had 11 students.

My department (Physics) has an extremely good staff-student relationship, where all staff know students by name and happily work with them whenever necessary. Our admin staff are amazingly helpful and friendly too

The American Studies Department is one of the best things about the university. The staff and their modules work effectively and efficiently to make every student experience is special and informative.

Most improvement needed for NSS academic support:

	Academic Support	10. I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies	11. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to	12. Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices
052 Scarborough School of Education	59	65	58	54
044 Scarborough Management Centre	69	67	80	60
027 Philosophy	71	63	88	63
046 Social Work	72	76	78	63
022 Law	72	65	85	65

Social Work and Philosophy were subjects in the bottom 5 last year. However, Philosophy has improved satisfaction rates by **14%**, the second biggest increase overall in Academic Support. Both SSE and the Scarborough Management Centre fell by over 10% this year (SSE -20%, SSM -14%). There has been a general improvement in the lowest and highest scores, however the average has still fallen by **1%**. It is important for the University to identify why many subject groups have declined and to ensure that students in Scarborough receive a good level of support in the final year of the campus. HUU is aware of the range of initiatives underway to support students in Scarborough in line with the joint Principles of an Excellent Student Experience.

Recommendation

HUU and University continue to work together to implement the Principles of an Excellent Student Experience.

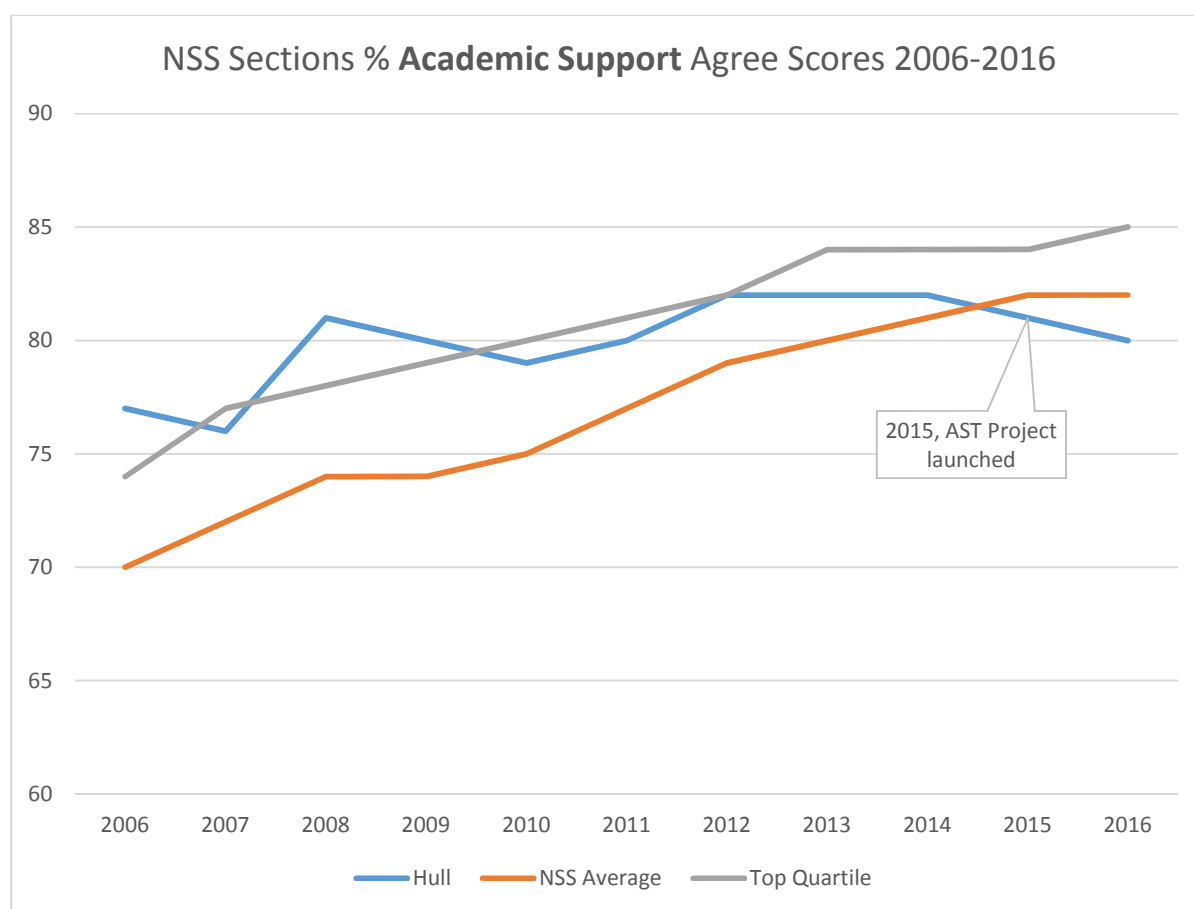
Finally, the satisfaction percentage of students with a specific learning disability regarding Academic Support has fallen to **75%**, a drop of 4% from last year and **6%** behind the sector average for specific learning disability students (defined as those with ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia etc.). It is imperative that staff, as well as students, are aware of the services and support available for students with a disability.

Recommendation

That the University continues to communicate effectively to staff, as well as students, the resources and specialist help available to those with a disability, in particular students with a specific learning disability.

Long-Term Analysis: Academic Support

In terms of Academic Support, the University of Hull was in the top quartile until 2010. These scores are concerning since in the last two years (since 2014) there has been a downward trend, falling below the NSS average, and consequently behind the sector average.



Recommendation

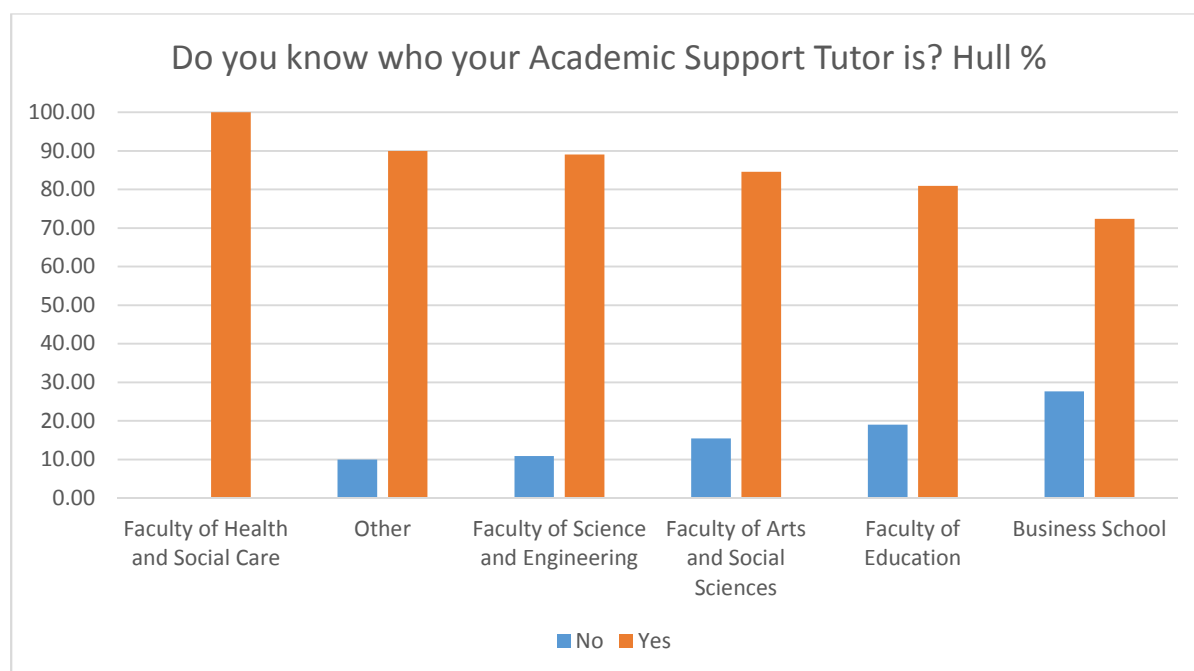
That HUU and the University continue to work together to ensure that all students receive a high quality academic support experience.

3.2 Personal Supervision (Academic Support Tuition)

As a result of issues identified in 2013 and 2014, the Academic Support Tuition (AST) system was launched in 2015 to improve the effectiveness of personal supervision. Last year, it was recommended that "HUU will, following full implementation of the new Academic Support Tutoring policy, evaluate the impact of changes through research and engagement with students."⁵ Whilst the new approach is still being rolled out it is worrying that some feedback in this areas is still negative. For example, the number of students who know their AST has decreased by **3%** since last year. Of these, the number of students who had met their AST decreased by **5%**.

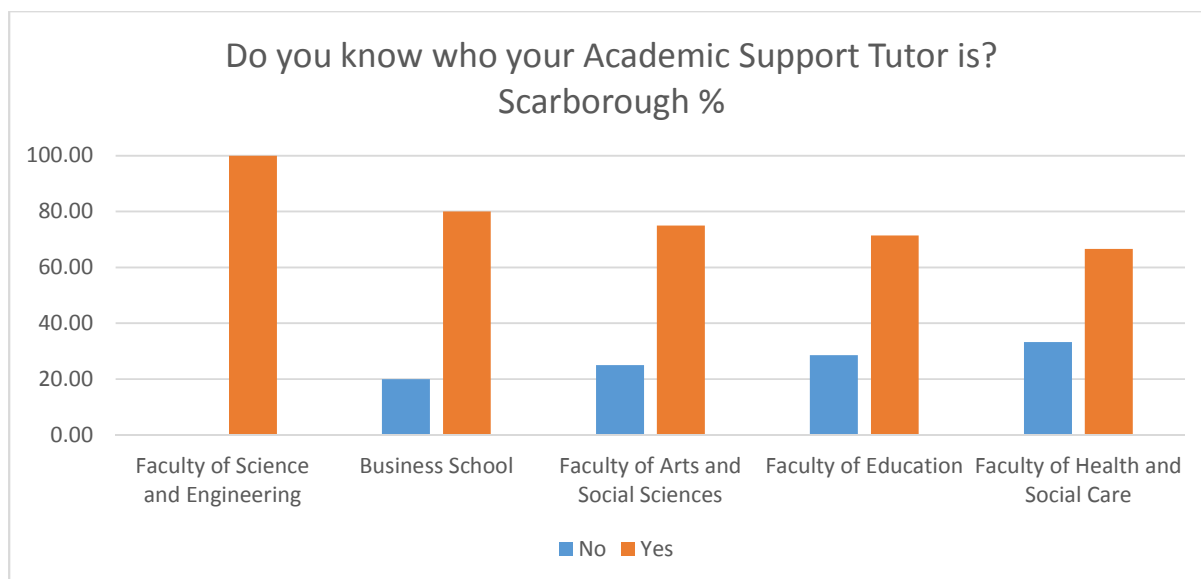
HUU notes that the AST Project Team is currently attempting to remedy the issues identified and is investigating what students perceive as good supervision. The project team has made a series of recommendations, including VLE training for staff, a framework and benchmarking process, and a referencing guide, that will be implemented in academic year 2016/17; HUU will be keen to explore the effect the changes will have for next year.

There is also a discrepancy in satisfaction scores, first, between faculties and, second, between Hull and Scarborough students on knowing who their AST is. On the Hull campus 28% of Business School students (21 respondents) replied that they did not know the identity of their AST. In comparison, **100%** of students from the Faculty of Health and Social Care (48 respondents) acknowledged that they knew who their AST is.



On the Scarborough campus, **9.5%** fewer students know who their AST is, although it must be acknowledged that there were only 56 respondents to this question from Scarborough, and only 6 respondents from the Faculty of Health and Social Care.

⁵ HUU Student Written Submission 2015, Appendix 1, Recommendation 9.



Through an analysis of the SLTA data, and feedback from Course Reps in an AST Feedback Forum, it is apparent that some students gravitate towards staff who are not necessarily their AST, but rather someone they feel comfortable with, often their module leader or project supervisor:

From the **SLTA Data 2016**:

[She] is not directly my academic support tutor but due to a long-term staff illness, [she] has become the go to person for support and advice.

He is the only one I can confide with despite the fact I have my own personal supervisor.

She has helped me with my master's application despite not being my academic supervisor this year. She is always ready and willing to help.

The SLTA data also highlights the importance of supervisors in the retention of students, and in some cases the reputation of a member of staff can determine a student applying to the Institution:

As my supervisor he has motivated me from a failing grade to a 2:2 standard and has motivated me to stay on the course even though I thought the only plan would be to leave.

If I did not have his patience and understanding in such an important year for my final project at university, I may not have been able to carry on this academic year.

She is amazing & honestly I might not have chosen the uni without her, I also wouldn't have got through my first year either.

[W]ithout [her] support and guidance, I don't think I will have been able to continue my studies to the level I have done. I cannot thank her enough for this as not many people would give the time and energy she has in ensuring I am managing with my studies.

The impact of good personal supervisors is evident from the NSS free-text comments 2016. These comments can be seen in Appendix 2.

Recommendation

That the University ensures that the AST system – and particularly the monitoring process and procedures – runs effectively, with communications in place clearly outlining what is expected of staff and students.

HUU will, following implementation of the recommendations made by the AST project, evaluate the impact of changes through research and engagement with students – particularly through Course Reps – and conduct analysis of the new AST monitoring reports.

3.3 Department Support and Communication

3.3.1 Timetabling

Timetabling continues to be an area that causes dissatisfaction among the student body, despite significant efforts by the University to ease the process and implement improves. The 2016/17 academic year will see some changes, including lectures starting on the hour, the centralisation of the timetable, and the involvement of Faculty Business Managers in the timetabling process, which may improve matters.⁶

NSS scores for organisation and management compared to the top quartile

	Organisation and management	13. The timetable works efficiently as far as my activities are concerned.	14. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively.	15. The course is well organised and is running smoothly.
NSS Top Quartile	84	84	84	84
NSS University of Hull	77	80	76	76
Difference between top quartile and University of Hull	-7	-4	-8	-8

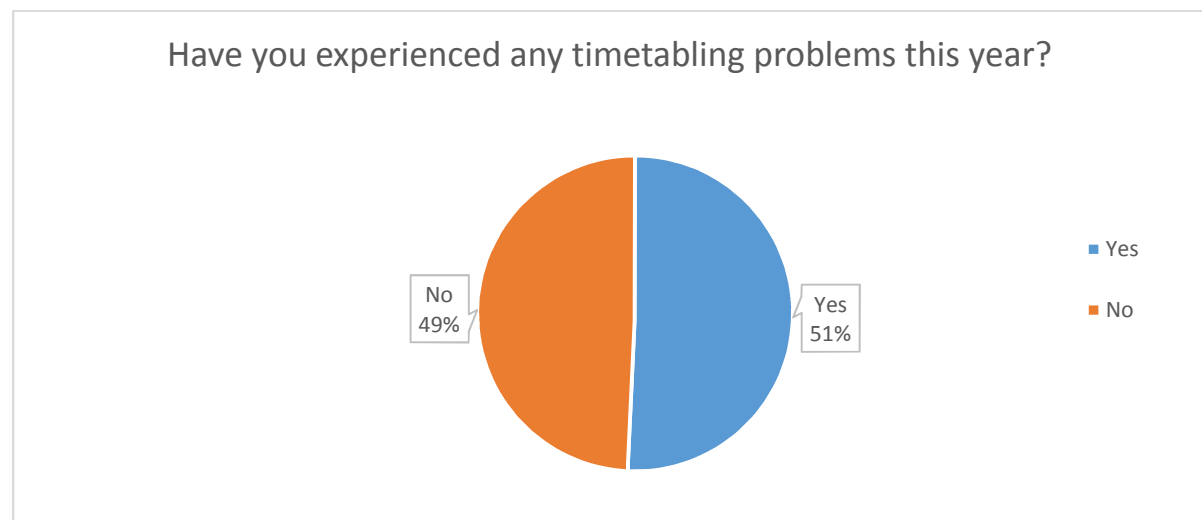
The figures reveal that Hull is far behind the top quartile. In particular, it is clear that students do not feel that changes to a course or teaching have been communicated effectively, with the Institution **8%** behind the top quartile and **4%** behind the NSS average. Consequently, HUU will be monitoring the implementation of the centralised timetable for the new academic year and will measure its effectiveness through student engagement.

Recommendation

That, following the implementation of the academic timetabling procedures, HUU will continue to review student feedback on the approach and the impact on survey scores.

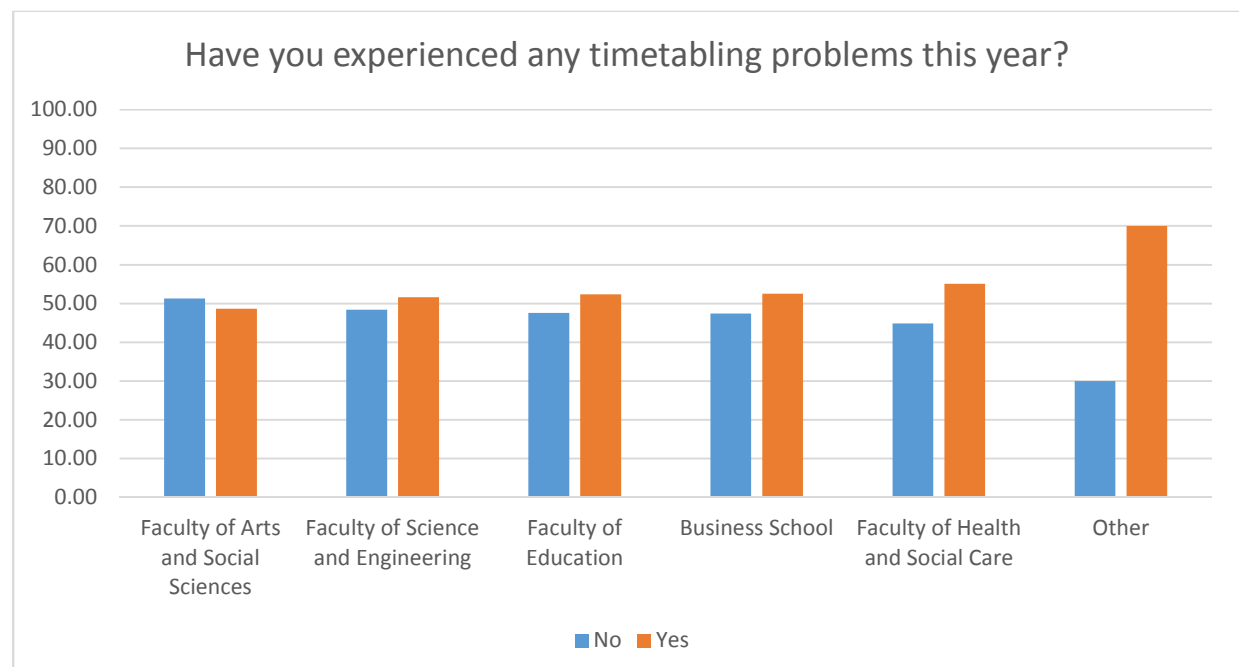
⁶ University of Hull 2016/17 Academic Timetabling Policy.

The chart below outlines the responses to questions about timetabling in the 2016 Education Survey:

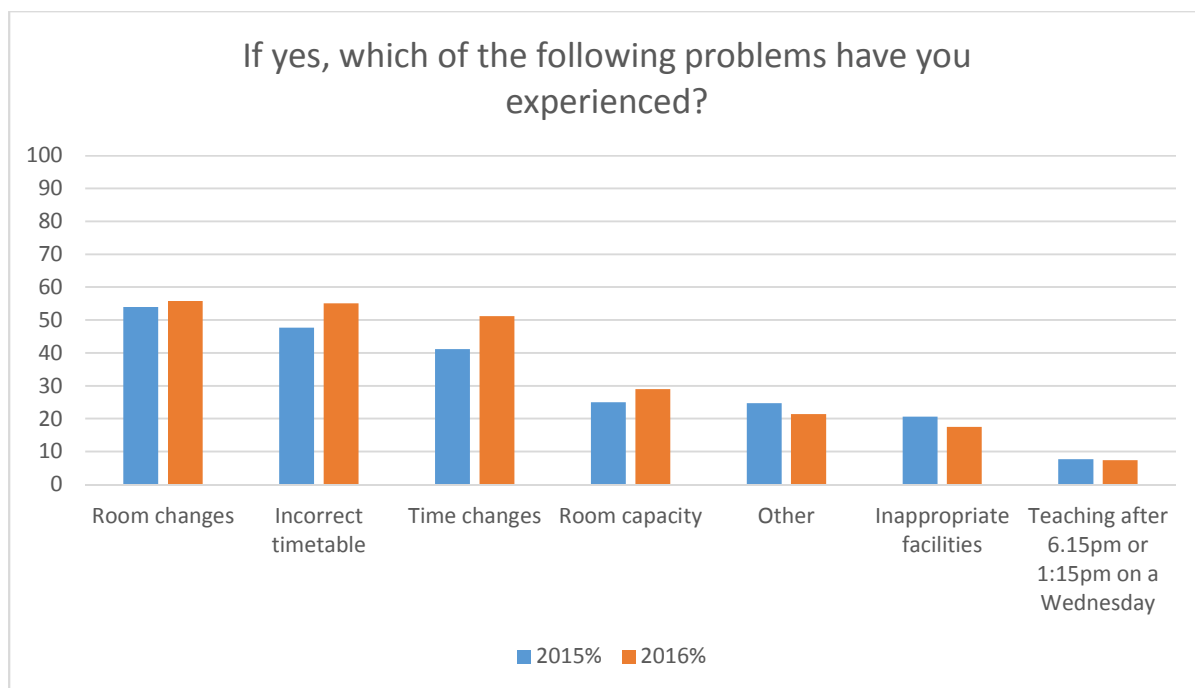


Data reveals that **51%** of students have experienced timetabling problems; this is an increase of **6%** on 2015, which itself had increased by **3%** on the previous year. Indeed, this is one of the most persistent problems students at the University face, and the situation appears to be deteriorating.

Nor is this a problem applicable to one or two faculties. As the graph below demonstrates, there is a fairly even spread in terms of timetabling issues across the faculties.

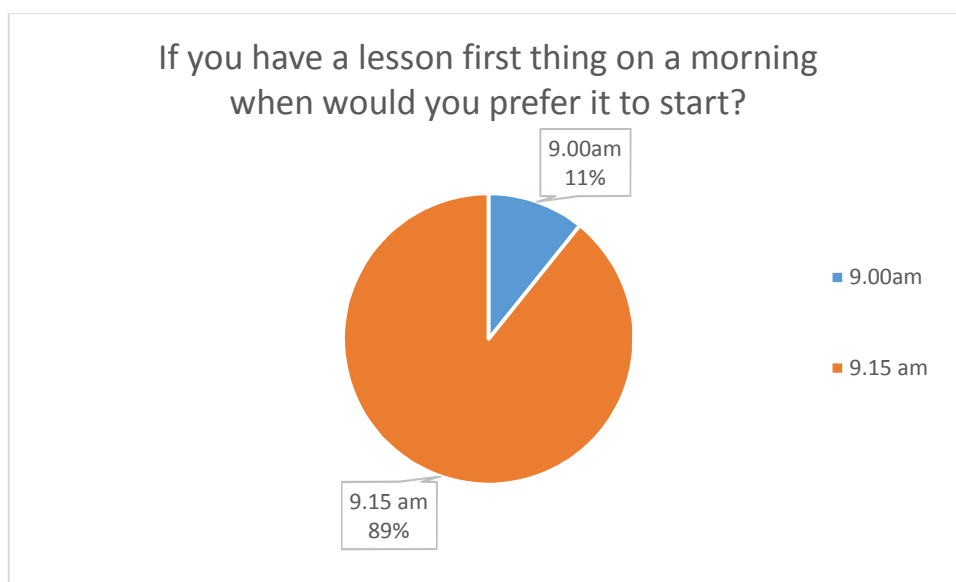


The major problems highlighted from the last two years of the Education Survey were room changes and the timetable being incorrect. This year, both issues seem to be persistent. Furthermore, short-notice time changes have become a prominent issue, with **10%** more students dissatisfied with this aspect compared to last year, as the graph below indicates:



The most frequent 'other' issues reported by students were lectures not appearing on timetables; lesson overlap/clashes; or rooms double booked. As identified earlier, it is students with work or caring commitment who are most affected by these issues.

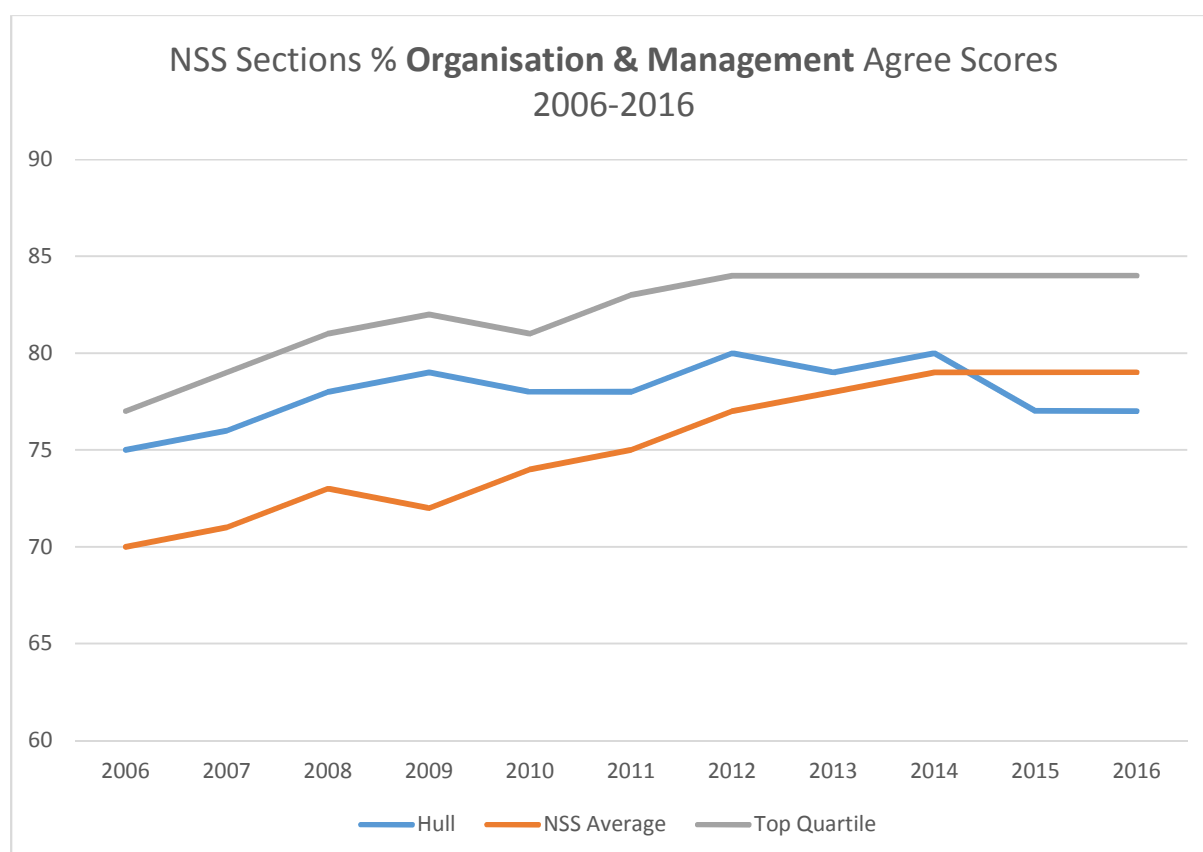
Finally, with regard to the issue of timetabled sessions starting on the hour (rather than at quarter past) next year, HUU asked students in the Education Survey to identify the time at which they would prefer lectures to start:



Only 11% of students preferred the start time on the hour. The mismatch between student views and University policy could be down to a multitude of factors, such as the challenge of communicating the changes to students clearly; a general resistance to change by the student body; or a fear that there will be less time to commute to the University. It could also be a factor that students replied based purely on the question being focused on preferring to start 15 minutes later first thing in the morning.

Long-Term Trends: **Organisation and Management**

On NSS data concerning organisation of the courses and timetabling, there is cause for alarm as the Institution fell below the NSS average in 2014 and has not improved since then, and the University has only improved by **2%** since 2006. Again, 2014 has been the year in which there has been a peak in satisfaction rates, only to be followed by a big drop in 2015.



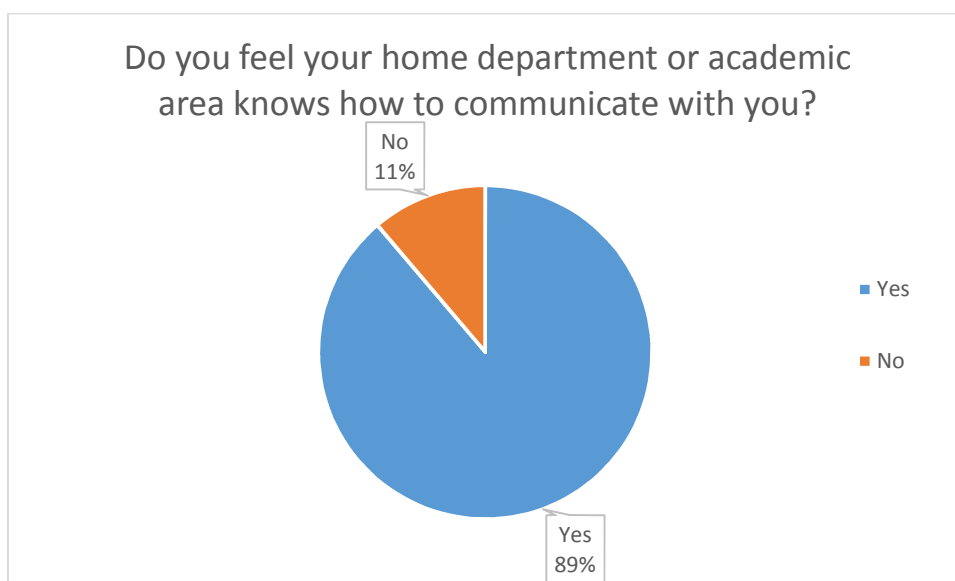
Recommendation

The University examines why student satisfaction has fallen below the NSS average in Organisation and Management, and implement procedures to minimise last notice room or time changes.

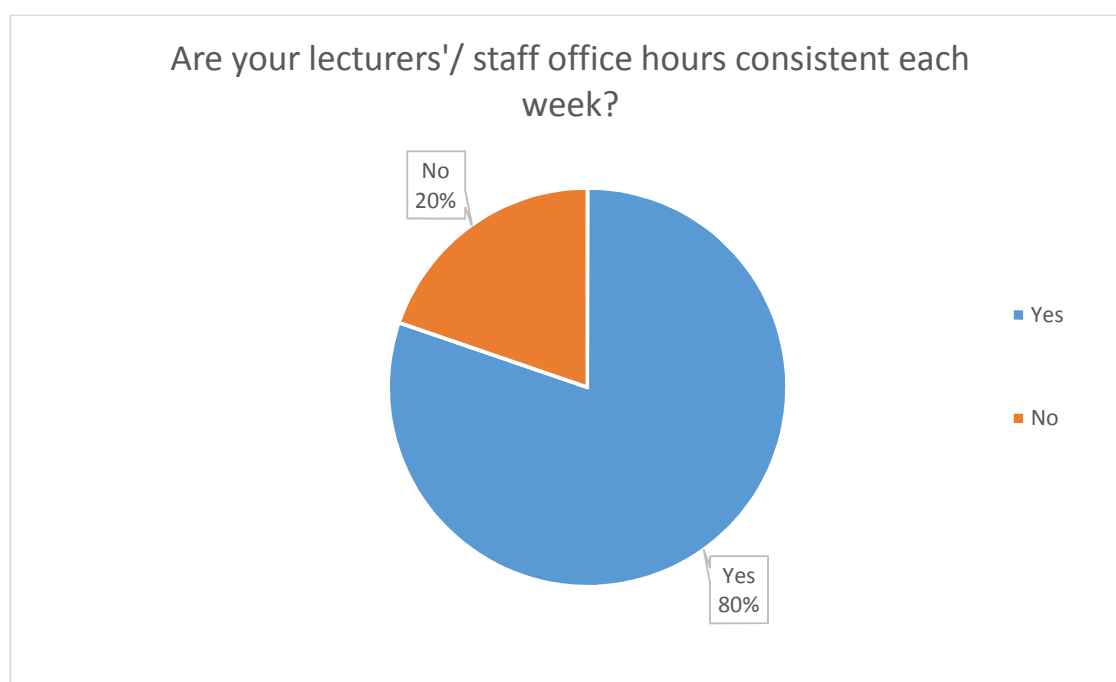
HUU will monitor the impact of the centralised timetabling and changes to the start time of teaching sessions in the 2016/17 academic year.

3.3.2 Communication

The 2016 Education Survey highlights that 89% of respondents feel their home department knows how to communicate with them. This is an improvement on last year by **3%**, and an increase of **9%** since 2012. The University is to be congratulated on the extensive work undertaken in this area.



Despite these gains there are issues around the communication of staff office hours. While 20% of respondents reported that staff hours were not consistent each week, constituting a **2%** drop in satisfaction, 26% of respondents reported that it was not easy to find out when their lecturers or staff office hours were. This is an increase by almost **7%**. This also links to the low scores the Institution has received relating to the effective communication of changes to the timetable, from the NSS.



8d. Is it easy to find out when your lecturers/staff office hours are?				
	2016 Tally	2015%	2016%	Difference
Yes	528	80.32	73.64	-6.68
No	189	19.68	26.36	6.68
Total	717			

The problem is more prominent in Scarborough, with more than half of respondents answering that it is not easy to find out when staff member office hours are.

8d. Is it easy to find out when your lecturers/staff office hours are?			
	Hull %	Scarborough %	Difference
Yes	75.76	49.12	-26.63
No	24.24	50.88	26.63

SLTA comments show that even where academic staff office hours are unclear students appreciate the quality of interaction from student-facing professional services staff:

Her help has been extremely beneficial as without her support I would likely have dropped out of University.

[She] has been amazing at getting us organised as a cohort and she seems to have an answer to even the most difficult question – she is always willing to help...

[She] is always my first point of contact. She helped me negotiate the complexities of my [course] and she is always extremely helpful and the font of all knowledge. She is always available, calm (when I panic), and her professionalism at all times inspires confidence. I cannot recommend [her] highly enough for this award.

The issue of Faculty 'hubs' was a key discussion point across the board in SSC minutes. The quotes included below are indicative of some student concerns:

"[Students] were concerned that the perception of the department may change and cause dissatisfaction for the alumni. They believe that it will have an adverse effect on the National

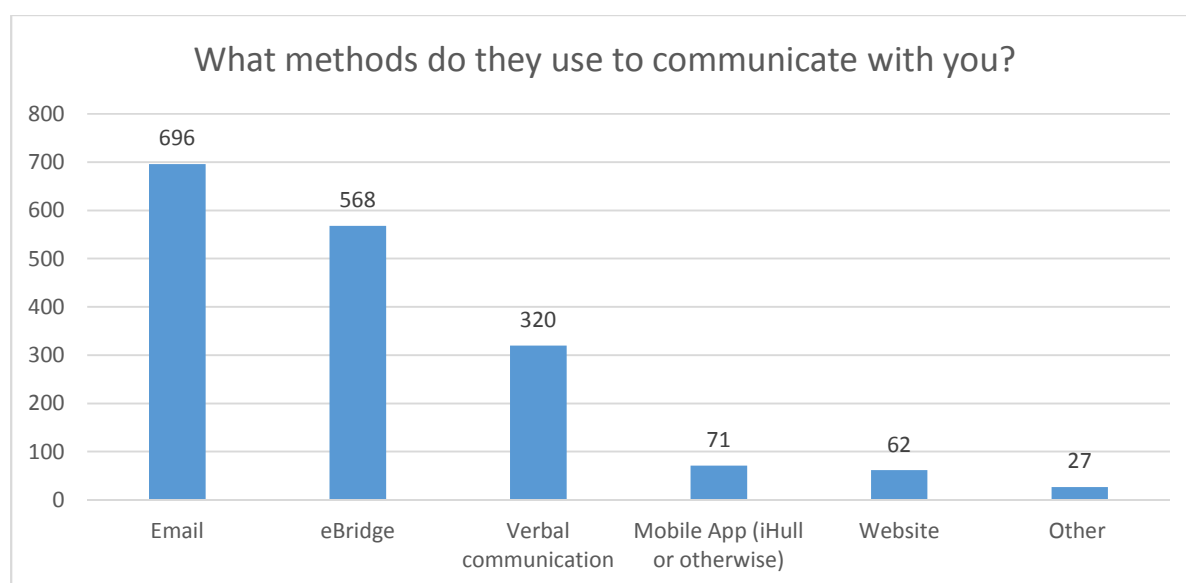
Student Survey. The students see 'the school' as the ??? office and feel a real sense of community. Concerns were raised about having to deal with an impersonal "hub" and not having access to academics."

"a student rep commented that students were concerned about the re-organisation of Admin staff ... into a "hub" which would greatly affect the student experience."

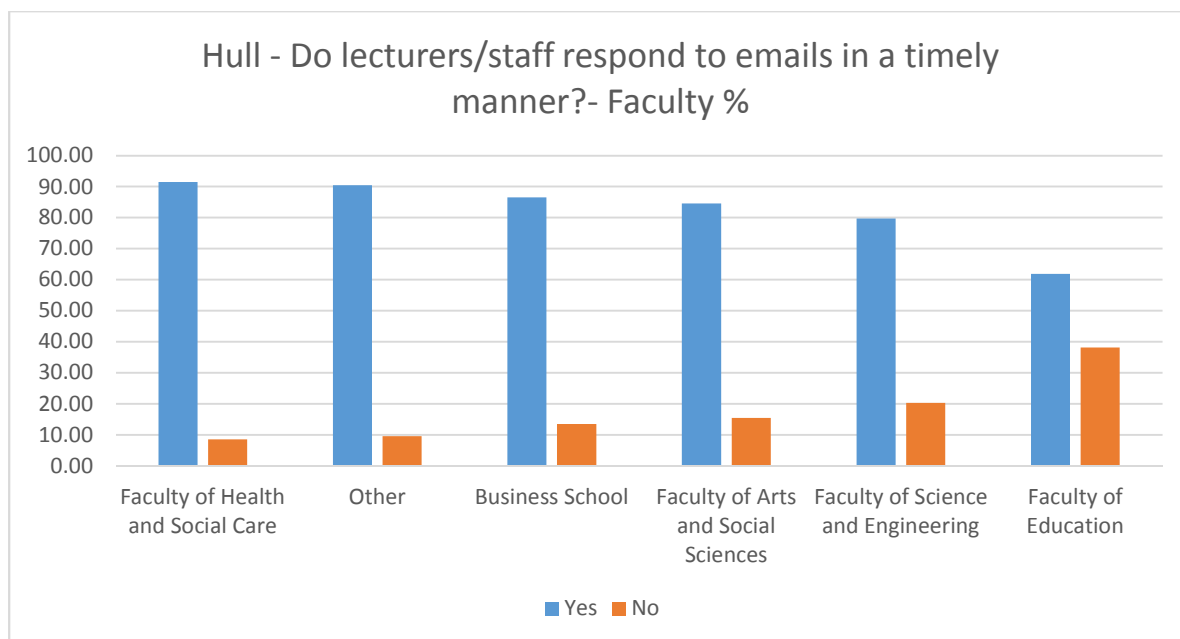
Recommendation

HUU and University work together to ensure that clear communications are provided regarding the development of student hubs and key physical and virtual points of student support.

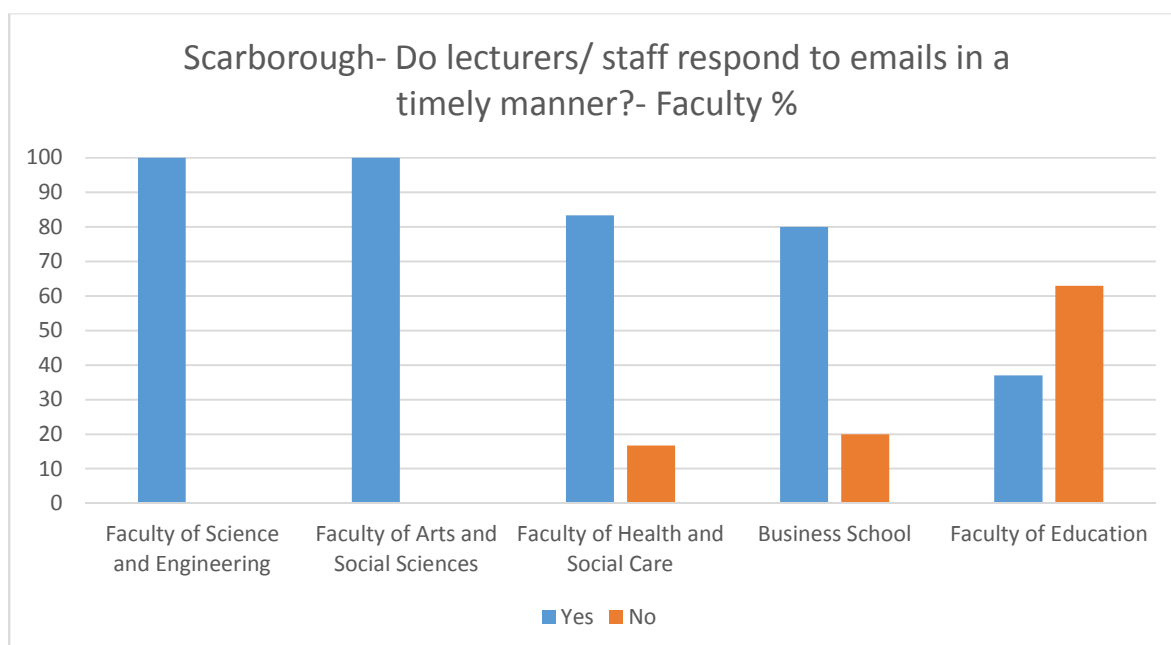
The graph below reveals that e-mails are still the typical method in which students receive information from their department or school.



As e-mails are the most frequent method in which students are contacted by departments, HUU asked students if staff members responded in a timely manner to student enquiries. On the Hull campus, 38% of students in the Faculty of Education responded that the Faculty did not respond to them in a timely manner. At the positive end of the scale 91.5% of students in the Faculty of Health and Social Care (43 respondents) believed that staff responded in a timely manner.

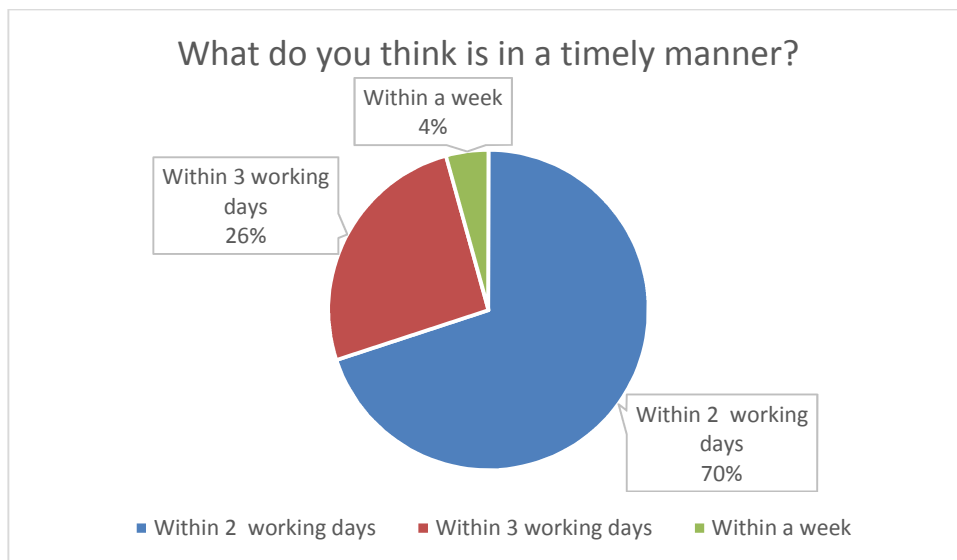


In Scarborough, it is once again Faculty of Education students who feel they are not being communicated with effectively, with only 37% of students replying in the affirmative.



Students were asked what they deemed to be a 'timely manner' in regard to receiving e-mails from University staff. The majority of students (**70%**) responded that they believed a timely manner to be within 2 working days. Only **26%** identified that 3 working days is the appropriate time for staff to respond to an e-mail.⁷ This is possibly a reason for falling scores in this area – students have unrealistic expectations. Although work has been done in this area, such as the communications guide for staff, it would be appropriate for HUU and the University to do further work in managing students' expectations in this area.

⁷ See 'A Guide to Effective Communications with Students', p.5. See also HUU's Feedback Charter: <https://www.hullstudent.com/education/feedback>.



Recommendation

The HUU and the University continue to monitor issues around student communications in light of the structural changes in 2016.

The University ensure that all subject groups effectively communicate times for office and staff hours.

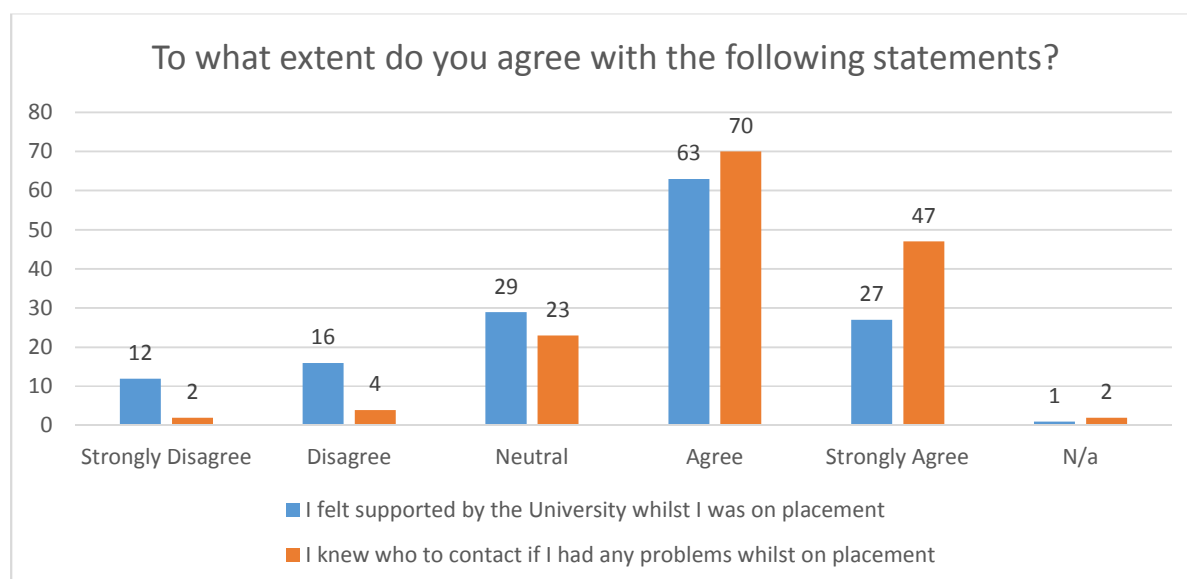
HUU and the University work together to manage expectations among the student body regarding a timely response to enquiries.

3.4 Employability

3.4.1 Placements

One of the aims of the 2016 Education Survey was to place greater focus on the experience of students on placement, particularly after concerns were raised in the 2014-2015 HUU Placement Project Report highlighting some deficiencies in support and communication.⁸ Feedback from students in 2015 suggested that there was an issue relating to placements and assessment: some students commenced a placement only to have the experience cancelled when previous assessment outcomes resulted in a failure, leading to wasted time and embarrassment on the part of the student. HUU note the work which has been done in this area, for example the Faculty of Health and Social Care have sought to address this by altering the final year structure, to ensure – where possible – that final year students are not in practice at the time of the assessment results. In addition, the Faculty has introduced the release of unratified results, supported by a 'results helpline' that students can access if they need help or support regarding assessment outcomes. These adjustments, along with other initiatives across the Institution have proved beneficial to placement students at Hull.

The 2016 Education Survey focused on the experience of students on placement. In total, 148 students (20%) responded that they had been on a placement this year – a **2%** increase from 2015 – with a further 99 respondents (14%) indicating that they will go on placement before the end of their course, an increase of **3%**. The graph below illustrates the responses from placement students to questions in the Education Survey focusing on communication and the quality of support from the University.

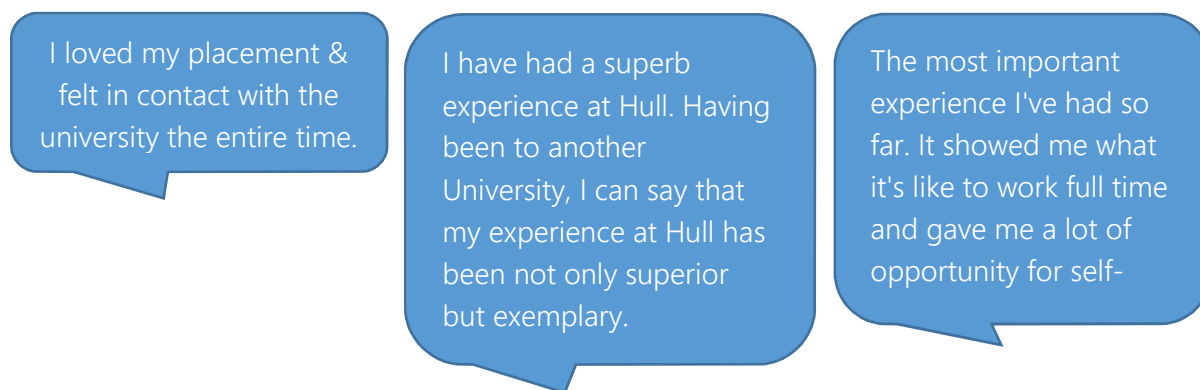


The graph shows that 79% of students knew who to contact if they had problems on placement. However, only 61% of students felt supported by the University during this period, a disparity of **18%**. This may suggest that students knew who to contact if they had problems, but that the University was not always proactive in offering support. On the other hand, it might be

⁸ Student Placement Survey 2014, see SWS 2015, 'Appendix 2: Prioritised Actions Arising from HUU's Place Report', p.34.

that students did not know who to contact while on placement precisely because they had no problems to begin with and did not feel the need to find out. Scarborough students did not rate their placement experience very highly, with **41%** of students from the campus disagreeing that they felt supported, compared with only **4%** from Hull.

Education Survey respondents were invited to comment on their placement experience, with the majority being positive:



These comments reflect the quality of many placement experiences, however the most frequent negative comments centred on placements abroad, specifically the role of the International Office in providing support before and during the placement, and in signposting students on to the relevant help and guidance. There were also comments from students expressing the desire to go on placement while undertaking programmes that do not typically include placement opportunities. These comments can be seen in Appendix 2.

Recommendation

That the University provides placement experience for students who typically do not have access to such opportunities and that the International Office reviews its procedures for assisting students on placement abroad.

The 2016 Vice-President (Education) has promised, as part of his manifesto this year, to 'improve placement experiences and regulations' and are pleased to participate in Task and Finish Groups on this topic. HUU has examined in greater detail the NSS results for placements.⁹ The table below indicates the overall results from 'N3: Practice Placements', with a breakdown by student demographics.

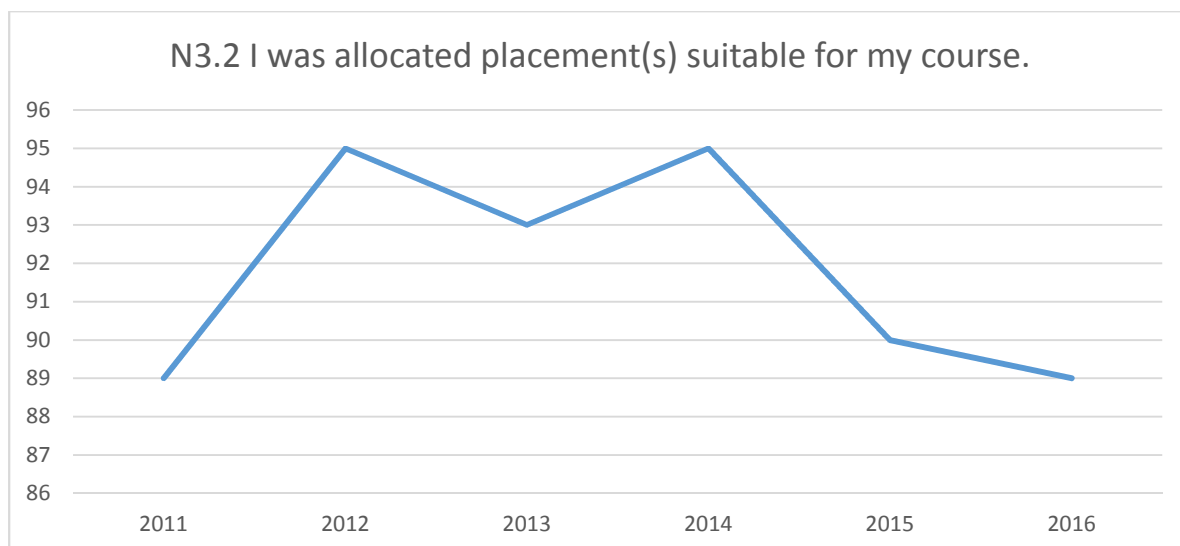
⁹ These NSS questions were answered by students in the Faculty of Health and Social Care, and Social Work only.

Category	Type	Current Year	Previous Year	Sector	Top Quartile	% Difference Year	% Difference Sector
	Overall	89	89	88	89	0	1
Age	Young	90	89	89		1	1
	Mature	88	89	87		-1	1
Disability	Specific Learning Disability	80	87	85		-7	-5
	Other Disability	90	97	83		-7	7
	No Known Disability	90	88	88		2	2
Gender	Male	84	89	88		-5	-4
	Female	89	89	88		0	1

Overall, placement satisfaction has remained consistent with the previous year and in the top quartile. The key area of note is those with a disability dropping by **7%** in each category. Another area of concern is male students on placement dropping by **5%**; this is 4% beneath the sector.

Well done to the University for once again achieving the top quartile for placement experience.

An area the University appears to be struggling with regarding placements is on the suitability of the placement, wherein the institution is **3%** behind the sector average. The graph below reveals the downward trend in this area:

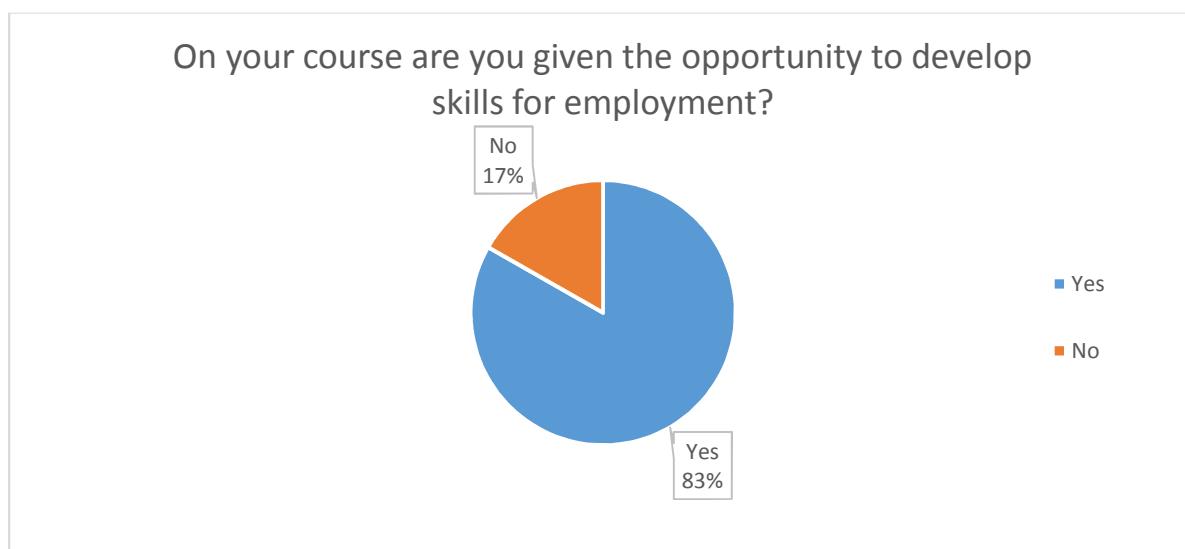


Recommendation

That the University looks into the experience and provision for disabled students on placement and the processes for allocating placements is reassessed.

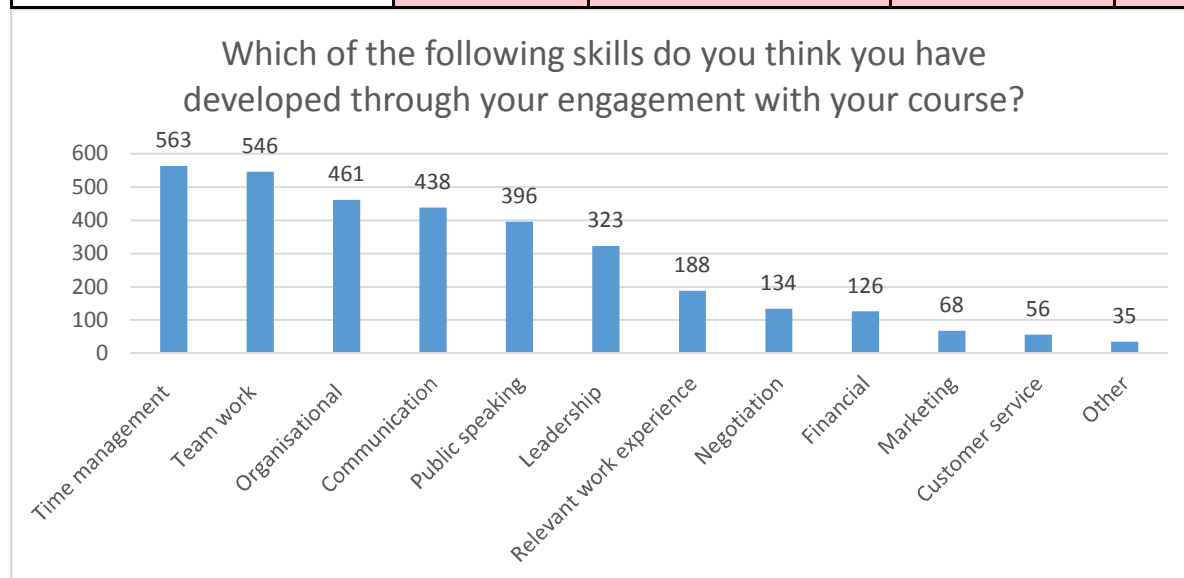
3.4.2 Employability Skills on Course

The 2016 Education Survey confirms that in the last three years there has been a **22%** increase in the number of respondents who feel their course provides them with employability skills, with a **4%** rise in the last year. These results are reflected in the DLHE data. This is a real positive for both the University and its students.



The graph below reveals the types of skills students feel they have learned on their course:

	Personal development	19. The course has helped me to present myself with confidence.	20. My communication skills have improved.	21. As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems.
2016	83	81	84	83
2015	84	83	85	84
2014	86	85	86	85
Difference	-3	-4	-2	-2



76% of Education Survey respondents believed their course had helped improve their time-management skills, while **73%** focused on team-work as a key skill they had developed.

It is a concern that the overall NSS scores for personal development have decreased (between 4% and 2%) across all areas of personal development since last year. More alarmingly, this points to a downward trend since 2014. The Education Survey, however, tells a different story, and it could well be that the University is improving in this area in regard to non-final year students, but that this will not be reflected in the NSS scores until next year.

NSS scores for questions regarding personal development:

	<i>Personal development</i>	<i>19. The course has helped me to present myself with confidence.</i>	<i>20. My communication skills have improved.</i>	<i>21. As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems.</i>
Drama	94	92	97	92
American Studies	92	94	91	91
Physics	92	87	93	97

Top NSS scores for personal development

Along with American Studies and Physics, congratulations to Sociology, which experienced a 14% rise in student satisfaction, followed by English Scarborough (11%), Economics (10%) and the top subject in personal development, Drama (10%).

In this regard, the NSS data reflects the 2016 SLTAs, as 3 members of staff from Drama were nominated for an award. Here are a few quotes from the nominations for staff in this department:

[Her] classes are always really engaging, and she actively encourages all students to take part. If every member of staff was as supportive, intelligent and understanding as she is, Hull would be the new Oxbridge – or Huxbridae. as it would now be called!

I feel perfectly prepared to enter the employment world because of [him]... He has also provided career mentoring by looking at my CV and covering letters for my first applications.

Most improvement needed for Personal Development

It is notable that while Physics is in the top 3, the subject counterpart Maths is in the bottom 3. Philosophy fell by 7%. Eighteen departments dropped in student satisfaction in the area, while ten rose.

Once again overall scores hide considerable difference at a departmental level with the gap between the highest and lowest scoring departments being **31%**.

	Personal development	19. The course has helped me to present myself with confidence .	20. My communication skills have improved.	21. As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems.
Philosophy	63	50	63	75
Maths	65	67	62	67
Computer Science	70	63	73	73

The PTES 2016 has seen positive results in the six questions concerning “Skills Development”, particularly 16.1 “As a result of the course I am more confident about independent learning” which has seen an increase of **12%**, and 16.4, “My ability to communicate information effectively to diverse audiences has developed during my course”, which has risen by **9%**. These are excellent results and proves that postgraduate taught students at the University feel they are building and developing key skills at the University.

Well done to the University for achieving fantastic scores in the category “Skills Development” in the PTES 2016.

An issue identified this year has been the lack of opportunities for PGT and PGR to teach, therefore missing out on key employability skills and a requisite development opportunity for those who wish to work in academia. Below are free-text comments from a range of sources:

As a PhD student, part of my choice to come to Hull was due to the opportunities in teaching but these have been abolished. *Education Survey 2016*

The only concern I have is that, due to budget constraints, the Department does not offer many teaching opportunities. This has been a slight disappointment, I have been thinking of a career in academia and some HE experience would have been useful for my CV, however, the teaching situation was made clear to me from the start of the course and I accept that the absence of this opportunity reflects the University's financial position rather than an indifference to PhD teaching in general. *PRES 2015*

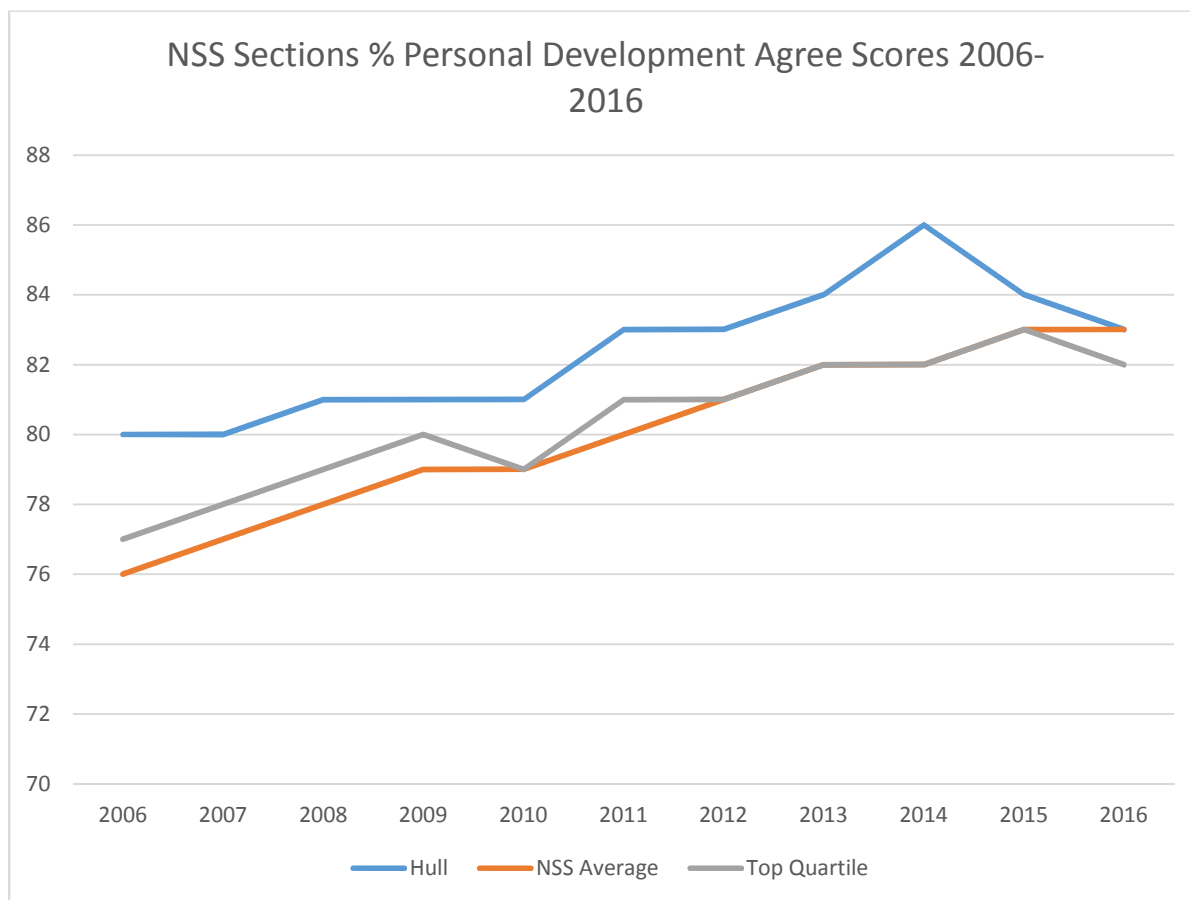
So far I have had excellent experience. However, I feel it would have been much better if research students were given an opportunity to teach, assist with tutorials and facilitate workshops in undergraduate classes. *PRES 2015*

I think the university should offer more teaching opportunities for PhD students and the international students' office should treat international students better. *PRES 2015*

Recommendation

In response to student feedback, the lack of opportunities for PGR and PGT students to teach should be investigated and reviewed, especially in areas such as FACE and FBLP.

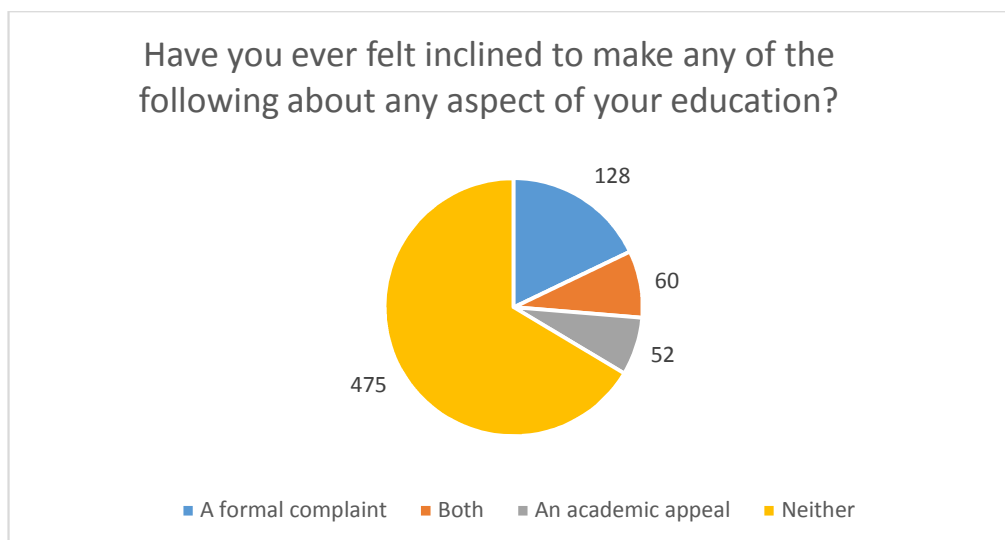
Long-Term Trends: Personal Development



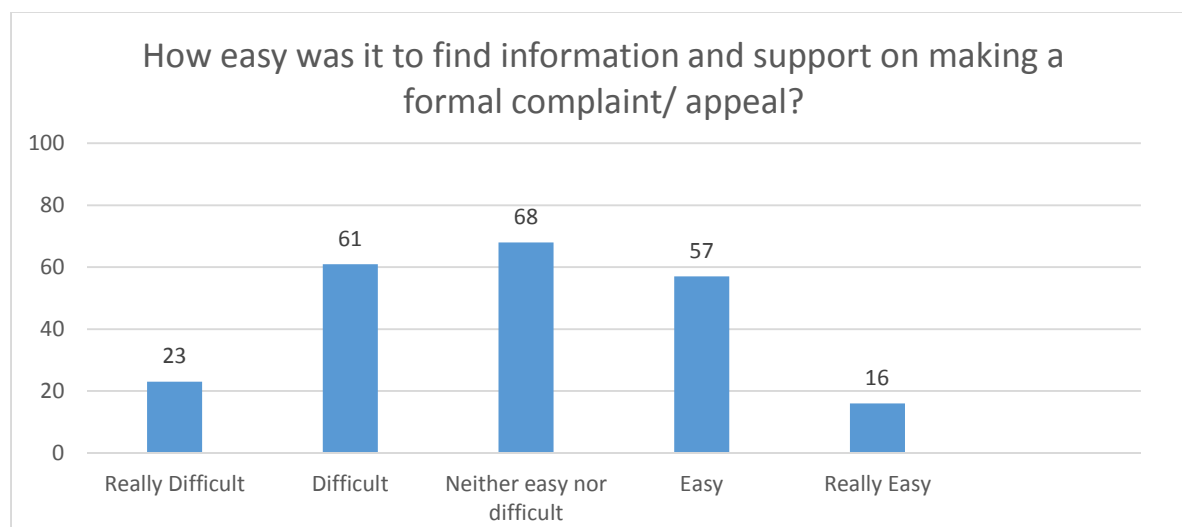
While the Institution has hit the benchmark once again for personal development, it is the first time in the last decade that the University is not above the average. Since reaching a high of 86% in 2014 the University has been on a downward slide. It is apparent that for many NSS categories – not just Personal Development – there has been a big dip between 2014 and 2015 which has not been rectified.

3.5 Complaints and appeals

The chart below documents results from the 2016 Education Survey on the issue of complaints and appeals:



There has been a **4%** decline in the number of students wanting to make a formal complaint to the University in the last year, indicating an increase in satisfaction. However, of those who considered making a formal complaint, only 26% (49) of students actually did. This could suggest that many students who want to complain are put off by the procedure and process or that matters were resolved informally. Equally, while 112 students (15%) considered making an academic appeal, only 34% (38) of this number actually did. The graph below reveals how students experienced making a complaint or appeal:



37% of students found the process either difficult or really difficult, while 32% had the opposite experience, finding the process easy or really easy. The SWS 2015 made three recommendations concerning complaints and appeals, including: the proposal to launch a HUU campaign based on the tagline 'It's OK to complain'; that the University begin to capture informal resolutions to share best practice; and that HUU explores student perceptions of peer support during the informal resolution stage.¹⁰ Appeals and complaints information issued by

¹⁰ SWS 2015, p.23.

both the University and HUU has been reviewed and any further work needs to be based on a more in depth understanding of the issues involved.

Recommendation

That HUU consider the issues student face when considering a complaint or appeal and base any future recommendations on clear understanding of the issues to be addressed.

Chapter 4 Learning and Teaching

4.1 Assessment and Feedback

Assessment and Feedback has traditionally been the lowest scoring category at the University of Hull and across the sector. The 2016 NSS results highlight the differences between departments with a **51%** disparity between the highest and lowest scoring departments. It is concerning that the Faculty of Science and Engineering on the Hull Campus is not represented at all, and for the first time in 5 years, Sports Health and Exercise Science is not in the top 10. Once again, the Faculty of Arts, Cultures and Education (formerly FASS) is well represented in the list. Overall, it is generally question 7 ('Feedback on my work has been prompt') which receives the lowest scores in this category. For instance, Drama received only 42% for this question, but achieved 78% in Assessment and Feedback overall, which is 5% above the NSS average.

Top 10 Departments for Assessment and Feedback

	Assessment and feedback	5. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.	6. Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.	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 clarify things I did not understand.
043 English (Scarborough) ¹¹	96	90	100	90	100	100
002 American Studies	91	91	97	79	94	91
CYW Community & Youth Work	87	82	82	88	94	88
173 Scarborough Centre for Health Care Studies	81	88	92	73	81	73
020 History	81	84	87	67	91	78
050 Centre for Environmental & Marine Sciences	80	86	82	73	82	77
025 Music	79	79	79	74	82	82
012 Educational Studies	78	76	76	81	82	73
030 Politics	78	73	83	79	81	75
088 Combined Languages	78	87	79	70	81	73

¹¹ This course is no longer run at Scarborough.

Music and American Studies have been in the top 10 for 5 years!

Congratulations to CEMS, American Studies, Educational Studies, History and Music for being in the top 10 for yet another year. Congratulations to English (Scarborough) for reaching 100% in 3 questions!

Most improvement needed for Assessment and Feedback

	Assessment and feedback	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 clarify things I did not understand.
052 Scarborough School of Education	45	52	38	30
044 Scarborough Management Centre	57	47	60	57
090 Screen	63	44	80	52
046 Social Work	63	65	65	55
058 Biological Sciences	64	48	55	65

It is concerning that SSE has fallen by 16% in comparison to last year and SMC fell by 17%. Although in the bottom 5, Biological Sciences has increased satisfaction rates by 6%.

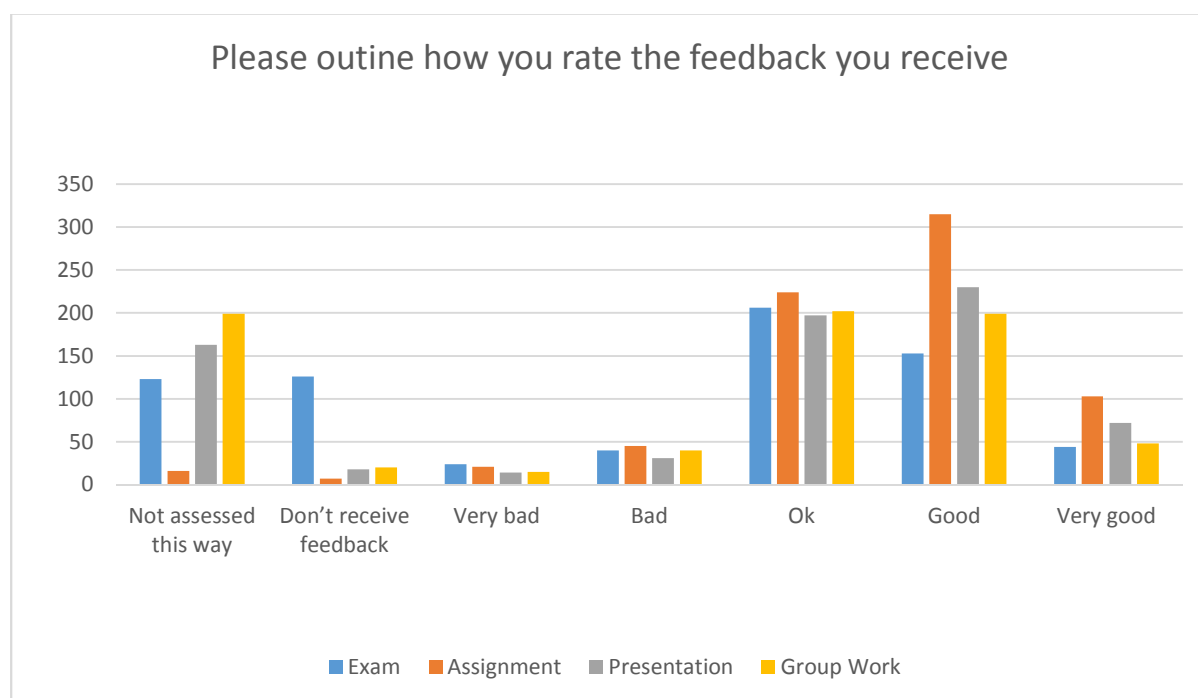
In general, the lowest scores in this area have improved, yet there has still been a general drop in the University average.

Recommendation

That, as in other areas the University take proactive steps to share practice between the highest and lowest scoring subjects. Where excellent practice can be transferred across the institution efforts should be made to do so.

The graph below is from the Education Survey 2016 and outlines that 17.6% of students who rated the quality of their exam feedback reported that they do not receive their feedback in this area at all. Although a problem area, it is pleasing that the number of respondents who say that they do not receive feedback on exams has declined by over 3%. The perceived quality of feedback also seems to be improving. In 2015, 11.5% felt that exam feedback was poor/very poor (now 8.5%). In 2015, 9.4% thought that assignment feedback was poor/very poor (now 8.9%) and 8% felt presentation feedback was poor (now 6%).

Despite these impressive figures, only 27% of respondents rated their exam feedback as good or very good, which is a lot lower than the responses relating to assignment feedback. The effective communication of exam feedback across subject areas is an area that the University can still focus on and improve.



Thank you to all staff who have worked hard to provide and promote feedback on the full range of assessment types.

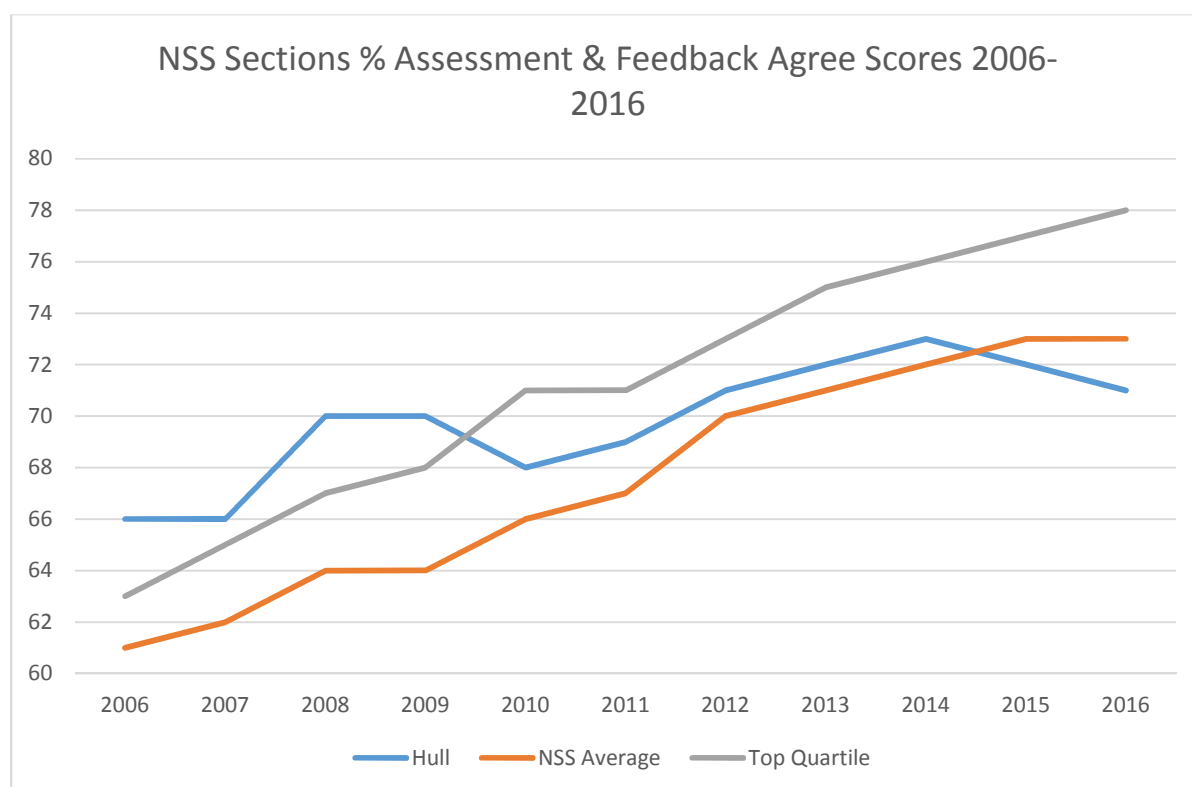
Whilst there are many positives to be taken from the Education Survey, in terms of the NSS, Hull is below the top quartile for feedback and assessment, the lowest score being 66% for prompt feedback. This is 11% below the top quartile, although a 1% improvement on last year.

As noted within the Feedback Charter, there is a four week turnaround for feedback, and the previous Vice- President (Education) made efforts to engage with students collecting and utilising feedback with the "Treasure your Feedback" campaign.

HUU used PTES data to compare the assessment experience of undergraduate and postgraduate students and found that these are comparable, although there is a slight discrepancy in prompt feedback. The University has improved in two areas in regard to PTES score and only dropped slightly in the fairness of assessment arrangements and marking.

	The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.	Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.	Feedback on my work has been prompt.
NSS Hull	78	76	66
NSS Top Quartile	80	82	77
PTES 2016	81	75	65
PTES 2015	78	77	63

Long-Term Analysis: Assessment and Feedback



After 2010, the University has steadily improved Assessment and Feedback scores and, until 2015, never dipped below the NSS average. Once again the downward trajectory is a concern.

4.2 Student-Led Teaching Awards

The Student-Led Teaching Awards have been run by HUU for five years and have become an important aspect in the partnership between the University and HUU. In 2016 HUU received over 500 nominations, with the emphasis on quality submissions over quantity. The awards showcase the fantastic work of professional services staff and academics across both campuses with the event growing in size and prestige every year.

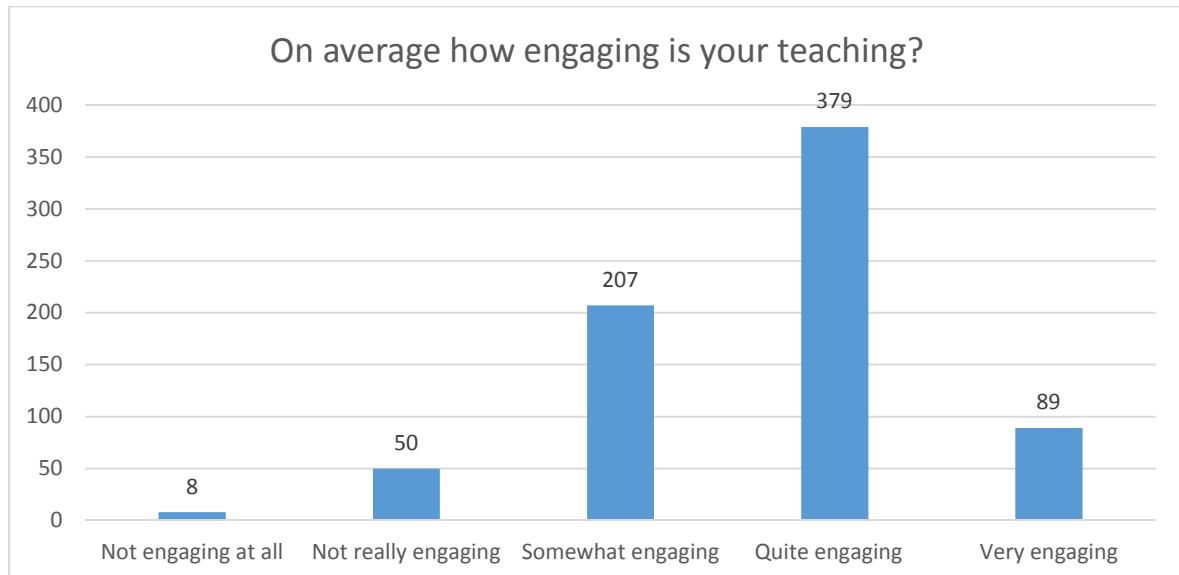
The SWS 2015 recommended "that the University consider the possible use which could be made of the SLTA nomination data to inform staff development and planning," as there has been no previous analysis of this data and best practice is only shared through the awards ceremony itself. Currently, HUU is creating a summary of the key qualitative data, in addition to an appendix listing the names of every member of staff nominated by their students this year, which will be disseminated throughout subject groups and Schools and presented to the Task and Finish Group on Disseminating Effective Practice.

Recommendation

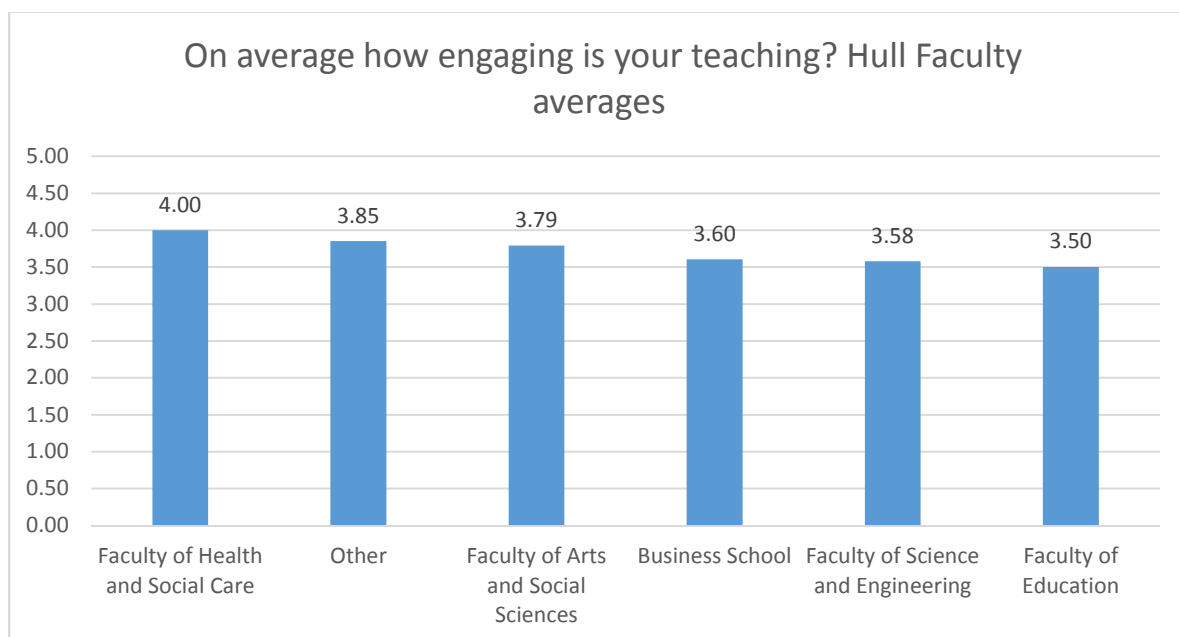
That HUU present a summary of the data to the University, and that the University consider the possible use which could be made of the SLTA nomination data to inform staff development and planning.

4.3 Teaching

The Education Survey enquired into the quality of teaching at the University of Hull. Overall, **64%** of students listed their teaching as quite/very engaging, with 8% stating that their experience was not engaging at all/not really engaging. This is fairly positive, although 28% of students only found their teaching somewhat engaging. Therefore, it is important for the University to look into methods in which more students will feel fully engaged with their course.



Over 80% of students in the Faculty of Health and Social Care stated that their teaching was either quite or very engaging. For FASS, 71% responded in the affirmative for engaging teaching; 60% for the Business School; 58% for FSE; and finally 45% for the Faculty of Education. Although Education has finished bottom in terms of faculties, it actually had one of the most nominations for the Student-Led Teaching Awards, complicating matters into why these students are not fully engaged with their teaching.



In regard to NSS scores for the teaching quality at the University, there has been a fall in every category, including 3% in the category, 'Staff have made the subject interesting'. The Institution is **2%** behind the NSS average on 'The Teaching on my Course'.

	The Teaching on my Course	1 Staff are good at explaining things	2 Staff have made the subject interesting	3 Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching	4 The course is intellectually stimulating
NSS Hull 2016	85	90	81	84	86
NSS Hull 2015	87	91	84	86	88
Difference	-2	-1	-3	-2	-2

Top NSS Scores for the Teaching on my Course

	The Teaching on my Course	1 Staff are good at explaining things	2 Staff have made the subject interesting	3 Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching	4 The course is intellectually stimulating
043 English (Scarborough)	100	100	100	100	100
009 Drama	99	100	97	100	97
002 American Studies	98	97	100	97	97
030 Politics	96	100	94	94	95
020 History	94	97	90	92	97

Once again it is Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences which dominate the top 5, with all these subjects coming in the top 5 for many of the NSS categories in terms of student satisfaction.

Most improvement needed for NSS Teaching on my Course:

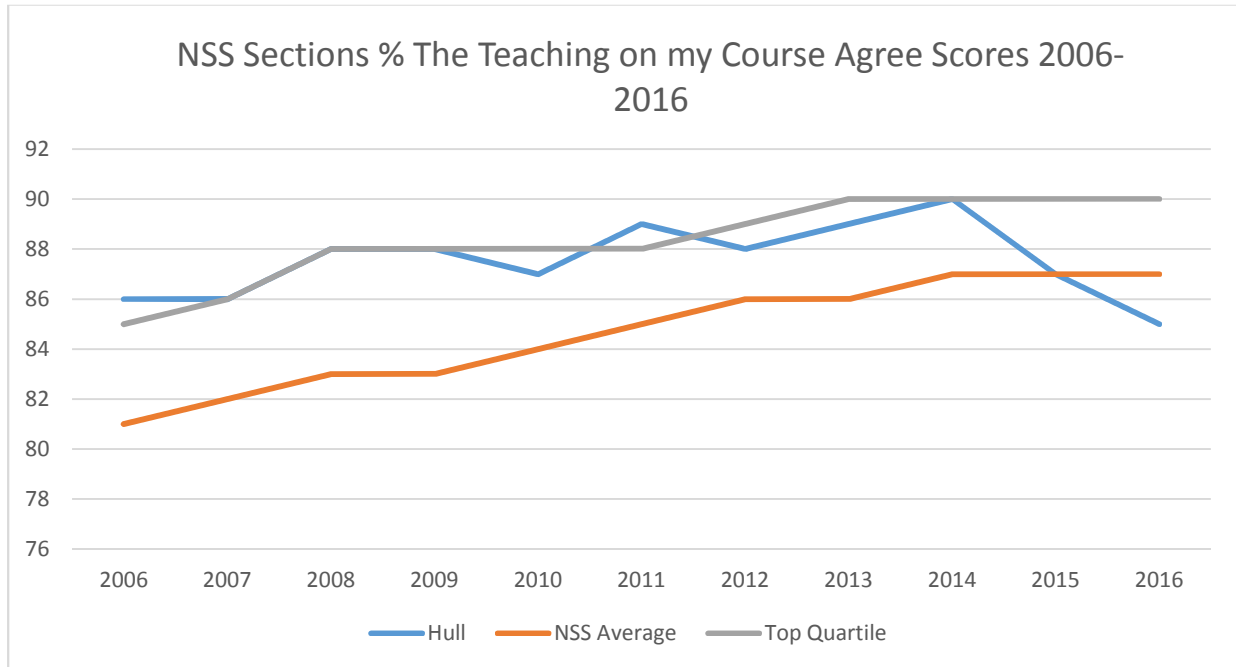
	The teaching on my Course	1 Staff are good at explaining things	2 Staff have made the subject interesting	3 Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching	4 The course is intellectually stimulating
032 Maths	68	67	57	76	71
044 Scarborough Management Centre	69	77	77	60	63
008 Computer Science	72	74	67	67	80
052 Scarborough School of Education	74	82	74	74	67
010 Economics	79	92	68	78	78

No subjects from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences appear in the bottom five.

There has been a notable drop in satisfaction scores among students with a specific learning disability, as the table below indicates:

	A specific learning disability	Other Disability	University of Hull	NSS Top Quartile	HEI Average
Teaching on my Course % Agree 2016	79	85	85	90	87
Teaching on my Course % Agree 2015	88	87	87	90	87

Long-Term Analysis: The Teaching on my Course



For another NSS section, this time in 'The Teaching on my Course' there has been a huge drop since 2014 that has no sign of abating. In 2014 the University had attained the top quartile of 90%. Over the last 2 years that percentile has fallen by 5%, also falling 1% behind the NSS Institution score in 2006. Concerning is the fact that Hull has fallen below the NSS average for the first time in a decade.

Chapter 5 Student Engagement

5.1 The Student Experience

5.1.1 HUU Experience Survey

The HUU Experience Survey was undertaken by the 2015/16 Vice-President (Activities), Kathleen Brook, and Vice-President (Sport), Gurmok Sanghera.¹² The intention of the research was to find a correlation between student satisfaction, employability and retention, in relation to involvement in student activities. For the context of this research, "student activities" referred to student participation in the following: societies, sports teams, student media, the International Students Association (ISA), Raising and Giving (RAG), and Hull University Social Services Organisation (HUSO). The sample of students was 416, 10.26% of the students registered as involved in activities at HUU.

The data evaluated has shown that: over **99%** of participants agreed "involvement in sports/societies/activities has positively affected [their] experience at the University of Hull"; **54%** of students agreed "involvement in sports/societies/activities impacted on [their] decision to remain a student at Hull"; and **85%** of participants agreed that "being involved in a sport/society/activity has made [them] more employable". These results show that of the students surveyed, a positive correlation can be drawn between involvement in student activities and student satisfaction, retention and employability and that student activities can form a central part of the student experience.

*Free text comments relating to **retention** and **employability** in the Hull Experience Report:*

During my first year I was having thoughts about dropping out. Football gave me a new network of friends and something to look forward to. I truly believe that if it wasn't for the football club I would have left university in my first year. Now in my third and final year I look to graduate with a 1st class degree.

HUU Pokémon Society is partly responsible for my choosing to remain in Hull after my MSc to do my PhD.

I don't think I would have continued university due to feeling lonely. In second year I lived in halls away from my course friends and so felt lonely as would only see them during lectures and that was it. So I joined a society and made friends who I now live with.

¹² 'HUU Experience Survey Report: How has being part of a society, sport or activity shaped your experience?'

Being part of my sports team has made me more active, confident and introduced me to a huge number of people across the Athletic Union. I've made so many good friends and doing sport alongside my team has helped me to destress and aim to be the best I can be.

I have developed transferable skills which will benefit me throughout the remainder of my degree and increase my chance of gaining employment upon graduation. These skills include: interpersonal, teamwork, problem solving and leadership.

5.1.2 Review of the code of practice

During 2014-15 HUU and LEAP worked together to add more accountability to the current student representation system and ensure that actions arising from Staff-Student Committees (SSCs) were reported clearly. The reporting template was developed in collaboration with departments. The aim of the template was to highlight the key areas of best practice and improvement.

However, feedback has been received on the template and it is clear that additional work is needed. Feedback showed that it was not clear where professional services staff were to send the form (to the Faculty, or to HUU); it was not clear how long the report had to be; and, finally, staff felt that they were repeating the same information twice, from the minutes of their SSC.

Recommendation

HUU and the University work together to review the approach to recording and actioning issues in SSCs in light of feedback received.

5.1.3 End of Year Reports

The End of Year Reports (EOYR) are completed by both staff and course reps. This year HUU received 34 EOYRs, more than last year, including for the first time the Faculty of Health and Social Care. HUU extends its thanks to every department for this collegial approach. However, 2 reports were not completed properly and as such these have been omitted from the data analysis.

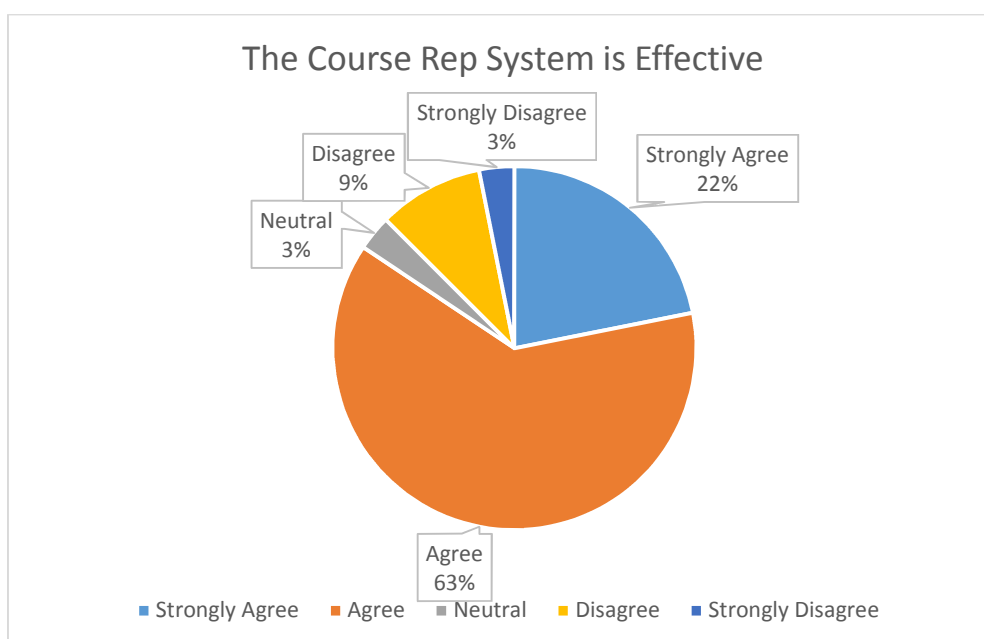
The table below provides an overview of the topics discussed at SSC. It is clear that Academic Council, HUU's forum for Course Reps to air general views on their academic experience outside the remit of the SSC, was the least talked about subject area. An overview of the minutes shows that University staff are not aware of its role or even that Course Reps are expected to attend this meeting.

Recommendation

HUU work closely with the University to establish clarity regarding the role of Course Reps and the purpose of the various forums they attend.

Theme	Number of SSCs discussing
Student Representation	23
Learning and Teaching Methods	20
Quality of Teaching	18
Work placements/Year Abroad	11
University/Department Policy	12
Content and quality of programmes and modules	17
Feedback and Evaluation of assessed work	19
NSS	18
Last Year's Annual Report	12
HUU Course Rep Training	15
Assessment Methods	16
Student Evaluations	14
Project Work	10
Quality and Availability of resources	11
Library and IT resources	14
Student Support	14
Personal Supervisor System (AST)	12
External Examiners Report	15
Module Evaluation reports	14
Annual Monitoring	8
Academic Council	7
Promoting and advertising work of Course Reps	13

Course Reps from each SSC (32 in total) were asked to collectively answer certain questions about their experience as a representative, including if the system is effective:



There has been an increase in respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that the Course Rep system is effective, rising by **14%** from 2015. At the same time, however, the number of respondents that disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement has risen by **8%**. Notably, the SSCs that disagreed with the statement – or were neutral – were those that often have students on placement, such as Business, Health and Social Care, and Education, and that have a higher percentage of mature students.

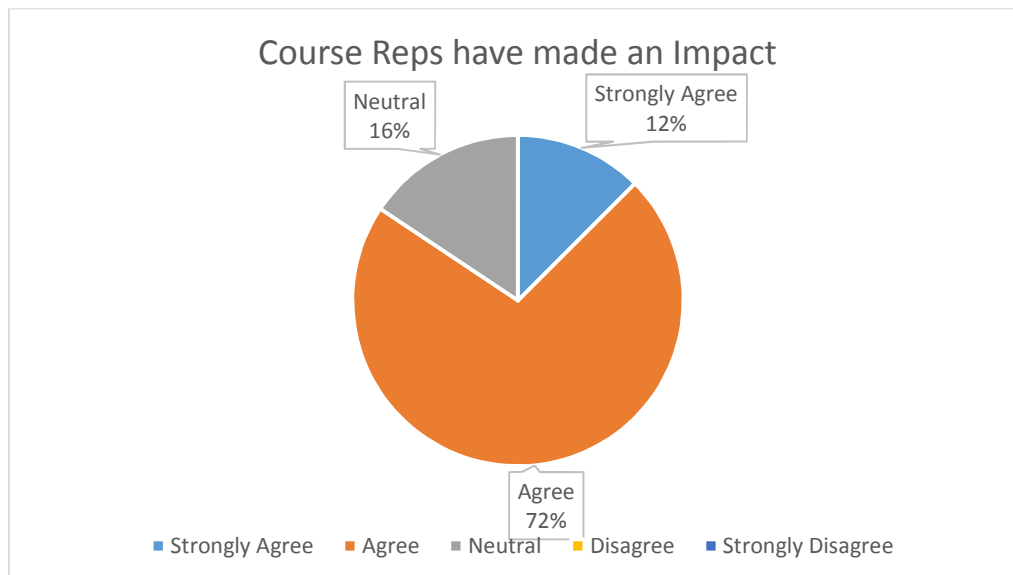
Recommendation:

That HUU considers how it interacts with SSCs and Course Reps for those students who operate outside typical term time and programme structures ensuring an outstanding representation system for all.

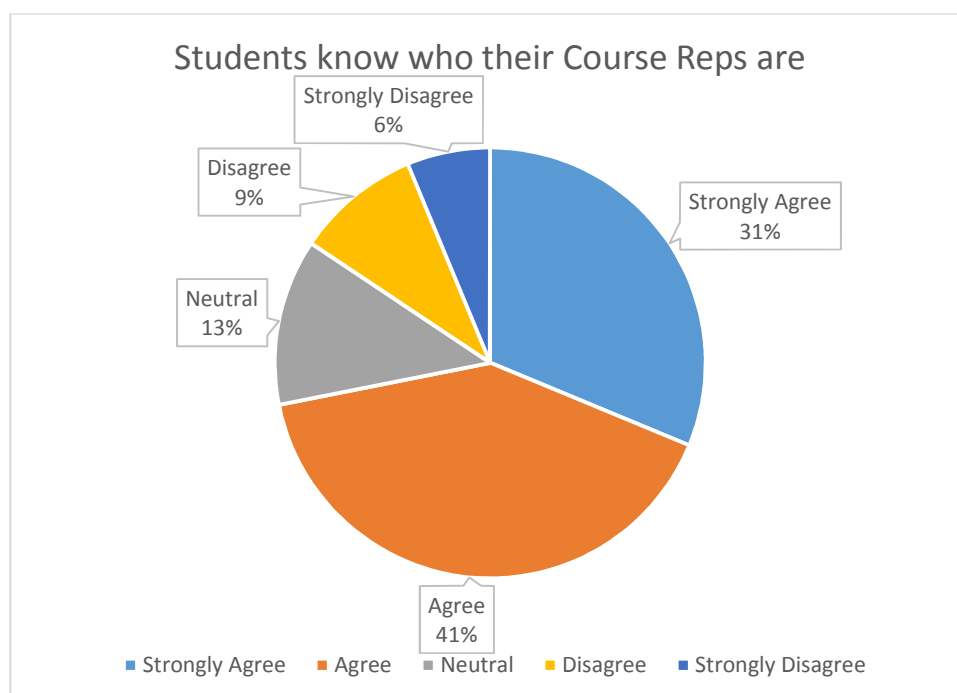
It should also be acknowledged that the Faculty of Health and Social Care SSC is in its first year thanks to the work of the staff – particularly the Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching. Consequently, it is still growing, so it is understandable there may be initial issues.

"The Course Rep System is Effective"					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2016	22	63	3	9	3
2015	13	58	25	4	0
Difference	9	5	22	5	3

For the second year running, HUU is happy to report that no departments disagree with the statement, "Course Reps have made an Impact". Furthermore, a greater level of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement compared to last year, rising to 84% (a difference of 5%). Almost all SSCs that remained neutral were from the Hull University Business School or the Faculty of Education. Therefore, HUU should work closely with students and staff from these areas to ensure Course Reps understand their role, and that the correct framework is in place for them to make an impact.



Although there were improvements in nearly every category of the EOYR compared to last year, a discernible drop occurred with the statement "Students know who their Course Reps are".



Overall, 8% more SSCs were either neutral or disagreed with the above statement compared to 2015. Therefore, it is important for HUU and departments to provide a more concerted level of training on the importance of Course Reps reaching out to fellow students. It is also vital that HUU and departments aid Course Reps in their efforts to communicate with students, implementing communicative tools such as Canvas and University e-mail lists to assist Course Reps.

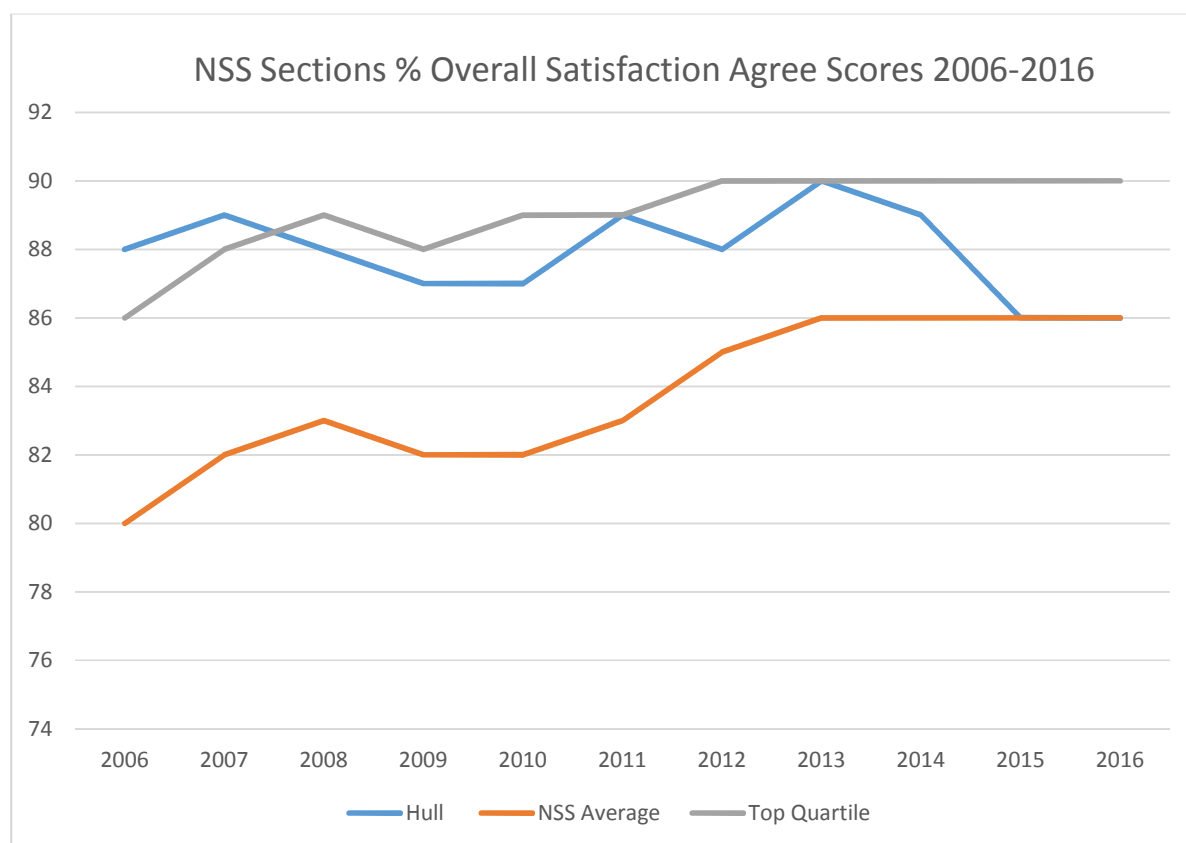
Recommendation

That HUU work with the University to publicise the identity of Course Reps, the work they do and the impact they have on the student experience.

Conclusion: Looking Forward

The final long-term graph charts the satisfaction scores for question 22, "Overall Satisfaction".

Long-Term Trends: Overall Satisfaction



The graph reveals that the University of Hull has been typically around the top quartile for Overall Satisfaction in the last decade. Between 2013 and 2014 the Institution reached its highest scores for this area in the NSS, once again attaining the top quartile. However, since 2014 the rate has been on a downward trend, for the first time only reaching the benchmark average. In 2014, the library resources were still to be fully completed, yet the Institution still achieved record results. At the moment, the University has record-breaking results in Learning Resources but has its lowest rating since 2006.

Apart from Learning Resources, every major area of the NSS has fallen in satisfaction since 2014. Therefore, HUU strongly urges the University to evaluate what has happened since 2014 to cause such turbulence, and also to reflect on what projects or initiatives may have been abandoned that perhaps were benefitting the University.

Recommendation

That the University review its academic policies and initiatives to evaluate what has contributed to the fall in satisfaction in most areas since 2014.

With the change in NSS format in 2017, the University of Hull has run a Hull Student Survey (HSS) to reflect this and gauge the opinion of non-final year students. HUU understands that it is difficult to compare the NSS with the HSS, but work is needed to ensure that issues identified by non-finalist students are addresses, With the launch of HSS and the more coordinated approach to surveys within the University HUU will be reviewing the nature and scope of the annual Education to reduce survey fatigue and ensure the best approach to student feedback.

Recommendation

HUU review the overlap between the NSS, HSS and the Education Survey to ensure that the distinct role of each mechanism is clear to students.

Appendix 2 Free text Comments

In the free text comments, words that are considered key themes or problem areas will appear in bold.

2.1 Mature Students Survey Sample Comments

Selected comments from respondents who answered 'rarely' or 'never' when asked the question: "How often do you interact with other students outside of lectures"

"Because a lot of the students do not have family ties and there is no one to watch my daughter – it is hard enough getting childcare for my lectures."

"As a part time student on a research based post grad, I only meet other students at PG study forums (which this year, has coincided with my work schedule, thus only allowing me to attend occasionally)."

"As a single mother of 2, full time at uni and part time job, I just don't have a life, or time to, also because most of my class mates are a lot younger i don't feel like i fit in their conversation. i don't have any friends here."

"As well as Uni I also work part time and have a family so my time is limited."

"I don't live nearby. socializing with students, especially if you have a full time job, is very difficult. Nevertheless, I kept in touch with my classmates via social media means."

"99% of people on my course/modules all aged under 25. They treat you as though you are invisible."

"Work and family commitments. I did try to start up an informal study/social meet up with other research post-grads but this wasn't supported."

140 comments were received for this question. The big factors are other commitments which stop mature students socialising and taking part in further activities at University.

Selected comments from respondents who answered the question: "Are there any issues that you would like to see addressed by the University or Union on behalf of Mature Students? Please specify."

"1. The rules sometimes in terms of mitigating circumstances are a bit insulting (eg proving bereavement), but I understand the need and have been supported exceptionally well. 2. I do think I should have qualified for a bursary. I came to Hull after doing a year at a university centre so was automatically ineligible. In my position and with bridge/travel fees, very unfair."

"A place where you could go to work but have it as a social area for children eg a soft play area that safe with seating areas so u can work and know your children are safe."

"being able to park at university!!"

"bringing mature students together, other then the more young drinking and clubbing and sports mainly publicised."

"Cafes open at times when part time students are in, but the full timers may not be."

"car parking please, I travel from York and there is very little parking (no public transport that takes less than two hours from where I live)."

"don't assume that all students are young and have no responsibilities".

"Easier access to emotional support."

"Extra classes for mature students who haven't done A levels"

"I dislike the title 'mature student'. 31 is not old and feel that title implies I am. I think at 18 yrs old to know exactly what career path you would like to pursue is few and far between as i didnt know until i was in my mid twenties. A 'student' should be just a student. You would not identify other groups such as a female students for example."

"I think mature students have completely different issues than the younger students - i.e. they are more likely to have added financial responsibilities and childcare issues and I think these are often overlooked where social events/the Union is concerned."

"I would like to meet up with other mature students from different course. Perhaps have a dedicated space in the library?"

"Lectures should be recorded to allow easier working from home for those who don't live locally and or have parental responsibilities. It can be a real hindrance having to miss lectures because the kids have different term dates to university. Alternately term dates could move to be in line with school holidays."

"Maybe more consideration for the childcare and travel aspects of attending uni. Eg the timetabling can be really unhelpful in this respect (having to attend from 9 - 6 one day, then in for an hour another, when its an hour's travel can be frustrating!)"

"More to do with the course itself, and how we seem to get 2nd class service as apposed to full-time students. We seem to always get the unprepared lecturers, that specialise in full-time teaching, and they don't always appreciate our needs. For the money that we pay, I personally, don't feel we get value for money."

"no 6.15 finishes. This is one thing that doesn't work well for students with children in childcare that finishes at 6pm. IT makes it so difficult to attend these late lectures. Also planning lectures to be more on the same day instead of one hour in the middle of the day 4 times a week which again makes it impossible to afford childcare as you end up paying for them to be cared for the whole day! I would rather they were all close together on the same day/days rather than spread out here and there so sparingly."

"On site child facilities during holidays, holiday clubs for example. child friendly events not run within the bar... the last time they did this during my 'freshers' week my daughter wet herself because we couldn't find a toilet as they weren't sign posted from the bar."

"Parking!! Can't justify/afford a permit when only attending infrequently but can't get parked if not arriveing before? 8am".

2.2 Personal Supervision (Academic Support Tutors)

Please note, all comments taken from the NSS, unless otherwise stated.

Positive Comments

"My main positive aspect about the department is having ??? as my **personal supervisor**, he's/she's always there to help and give support and advice about any problems I had, even after I bombarded him/her with questions, he/she also always gives essays back in an appropriate time. Hull University is very lucky to have such a wonderful lecturer."

"The **personal supervisor** I was given was incredibly helpful with information regarding my independent study."

"My **individual supervisor** for my course has been fantastic and extremely supportive throughout my time as university and if he/she was not available, there was somebody else I could be in contact with... My university experience as a whole has been good. I received above average support from my supervisor and knew I could always contact him/her should I need to do so."

"My personal supervisor (???) went above and beyond to support me with any issues throughout my three years at university, and I don't think I would have managed to do as well if it weren't for his/her support. Changing my course was easily done which was helpful."

"Supervisor kept in touch while not on campus, felt comfortable talking to staff about issues."

Negative Comments

"**Academic supervisors** were so swamped with the amount of student work they had to mark that they didn't have time for each individual student".

"Too many **academic supervisors** who are inconsistent with each other meaning students don't know if they are doing things right or not."

"I also had a negative experience with my dissertation allocation as the **supervisor** I was assigned to then proceeded to leave. It wasn't until almost 3 months later that I was finally told who my new supervisor would be and what project I would be doing, this was a week before I was due to start it."

"Not sure how helpful **personal supervisors** are in academic or personal support."

"My '**personal supervisor**' organised two meetings with me (both in first year) and I haven't heard from his/her since. I'm not sure who to speak to about Masters applications and am working through them on my own, but I would've appreciated some advice or some aspect of personalisation from the staff."

Please note, searches were made for "AST" or "Academic Support Tutor" which did not result in any matches.

2.3 Placements

From the Education Survey 2016:

*Selected comments from respondents who answered question three, relating to placements:
"Please comment on your experience and how you think it can be improved".*

"Better communication - my staff support turned up on the day with only 1 days' notice!"

"Community and youth work studies need more staff as the staff are generally good but obviously overwhelmed"

"Everything is fine no problems. Very good department."

"Fantastic communication between lecturers and placement staff. Well informed."

"Going really well but more regular face to face time with personal tutors could help track/improve progress."

"GREAT SUPPORT THROUGHOUT 3YR COURSE".

"Have a better support structure in place and departments to produce a list of contacts of who to turn to if students find themselves in difficulty whilst abroad as many suffer with mental health issues or struggle to fit in and need a helping hand and not to be turned away."

"I had Skype calls which were v helpful."

"I knew who to contact but never needed to."

"I would like to have a placement even though it isn't part of my course."

"more information on who to go to for different issues. sometimes unclear as who to contact specifically."

"more integrated placements for music students, the industry is very competitive, you need the upper hand".

"My lecturers and personal tutor wasn't very helpful. The international office were appalling they had no clue and thought I was in the wrong country (then were rude to me). Slow and unhelpful at a stressful time when people need a contact and need advice, help or support."

"no support before the placement from international office".

"placement itself was enjoyable, but trying to find a placement was difficult as I had to do it all myself. Would be better if my department could have helped"

"Placements are good, although the funding for travel to placement is poor when they are far away."

"really good, any concerns in a timely manner, very happy".

"Would have liked the opportunity to do History related placements".

"year abroad. the international office made things difficult and were never able to help"

Overall there were 199 respondents to this question.

2.4 Feedback and Assessment

Selected comments taken from the NSS, unless otherwise stated.

Positive Comments

"Good **feedback** on coursework. Good revision sessions for exams."

"All staff were there when needing any support of advice, through verbal communication and contact via email. All **assessments** were released on time, and with relevant marking and feedback."

"Most **feedback** was given in depth and often with a separate lecture to explain details and answer any questions. A lot of the modules overlapped with my reviews and research project which was useful for extra reading and transferring ideas."

"Most of the lecturers are very helpful and the **assessments** link well to the course."

"Variety of **assessment** methods throughout the course has helped with development of both written and verbal communication skills."

"Tutors are very helpful and give good feedback. The labs are great too."

"Interesting modules, tried to accommodate individual needs, chance to participate, and **feedback** was mostly prompt."

Negative Comments

"Throughout the course, essay **feedback** wasn't explained clearly and help was never given to challenge obstacles especially regarding first and second year."

"Staff refusing to give out answers to exam questions, not helpful to learning and preparing for the exams. Some assignments are given back with grades but no **feedback** on how to improve for next time."

"More educational trips are needed, more **feedback** in assignments. Some lecturers did not provide enough to enable you to be able make positive changes in future work."

"The amount of **feedback** you get is poor, the amount of details that go into it. Generalised comments when comparing to other students on the course is the same."

"Sometimes **feedback** would take ages, preventing me from assessing what I would need to get in a following assignment to achieve a certain grade."

"Marking seems to vary excessively dependant on lecturer. **Assessments** could be spread more evenly over the year. Compared to other courses higher grades seem much less readily given out."

"Feedback times have been, on occasion, chronic! Timetable issues are very common at the start of the year."

2.5 Complaints and Appeals

Selected comments taken from the NSS, unless otherwise stated.

"I don't think the marking system is fair and the same for every student. Appeals for grades should also be an option and resits should not be capped!"

"Believe it is appalling that there are no University Regulations regarding the conversion of Year Abroad grades. Thus making students open to arbitrary decisions regarding Hull grades and students having to go through stressful appeals procedures."

"More support can be offered to a student when faced with difficulty or mitigating circumstances. Students are not to be treated differently just because some are more favourable to tutors than others."

"Support with mitigating circumstances having to supply additional information when none is available. I feel your word of what has been going on in your personal life should be sufficient without having to supply additional information when disclosure has already been made at personal supervision and discussed and documented."

"When I broke my ankle, the department were amazing at keeping me up-to-date with work and giving me feedback for my essays when asked for mitigating circumstances."

"Assistance for mitigating circumstances and module choices, etc. has been good. Most modules well taught and interesting."

"I have found staff to be very understanding regarding mitigation I have had to apply for regarding a long-term medical condition."

"I suffered 4 bereavements in a short period of time. One of the bereavements was a very close relative, which impacted on me significantly. I put in mitigation circumstances and had it declined due to lack of evidence. I feel this requirement needs to be looked at in the case of bereavement. Asking for an order of service, a ledger from a relative or a doctor's letter as evidence in my opinion is not appropriate, specifically the order or service I feel this is a very private and personal document. This situation left me feeling very unsupported."

Selected Comments from the Education Survey 2016, Question 6d: "If you made a formal complaint/appeal: How did you find the process?"

"the process with fine with members of staff helping me through the process"

"fill out a form and wait results. this was simple".

"I went through the subject rep so it was ok"

"Confusing, frustrating and lack of ownership from the university."

"DIFFICULT TO GO THROUGH PROCEDURE."

"I found it relatively straight forward; finding all the relevant forms was simple enough and I think it has been dealt with well"

"infuriating and no progress has been made in 9 months."