

HUSU STUDENT VOICE REPORT

2019/20 - REPORT THREE

Introduction

The 2019/20 HUSU Student Voice Report 3 summarises students' priorities, concerns and feedback that have been shared with Hull University Students' Union through a variety of means. The data from the Alterline Pulse Survey for the Pulse 3 period has been collected between April and June 2020 from 776 respondents.

It should be noted that all survey responses included in this report were collected during the period when the University and Union moved to remote delivery in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Readers are encouraged to bear this in mind when considering the data, in particular when comparing between responses made in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Academic Life

Overall, and against the majority of measures, students have expressed a greater level of satisfaction with their academic experience this year than during the same period in 2019. In answer to the statement, 'Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my course', 81% of respondents selected 'agree' or 'strongly agree', compared with 74% in Pulse 3 2018/19.

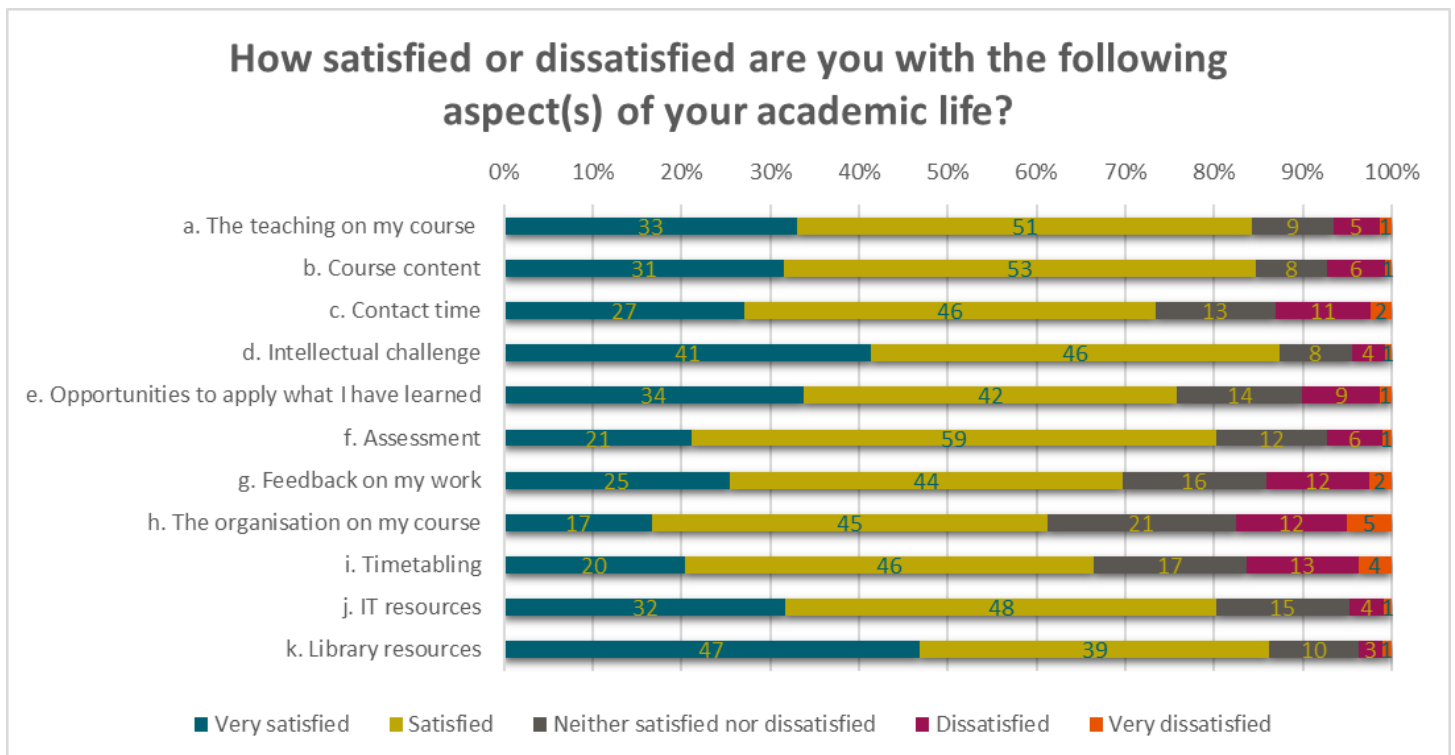


Figure 1: Students' Satisfaction with their Academic Experience (Pulse 3 2019/20)

COMPARING 2020 WITH 2019: THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

A comparison of the proportion of students who expressed satisfaction with aspects of their academic experience in 2020 and 2019 in April to June is available in figure 2 (below).

	% of students 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with this aspect of academic life in Apr-Jun 2019	% of students 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with this aspect of academic life in Apr-Jun 2020
The teaching on my course	79	84 +5%
Course content	79	84 +5%
Contact time	69	73 +4%
Intellectual challenge	84	87 +3%
Opportunities to apply my learnings	73	76 +3%
Assessment	72	80 +8%
Feedback on my work	69	69 ~
The organisation on my course	55	62 +7%
Timetabling	56	66 +10%
IT Resources	76	80 +4%
Library Resources	83	86 +3%

Figure 2: Students' Academic Experience (Pulse 3, 2018/19 and 2019/20)

Student feedback here demonstrates that satisfaction has improved across all areas but one, feedback on work which has maintained the same level of satisfaction as the previous year. Timetabling, assessment and course organisation show the greatest movement.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FACULTIES

Levels of students' satisfaction with their academic experience increased in most areas across the Faculties, with a few notable exceptions such as intellectual challenge in FBLP and FoSE, and feedback on work in FBLP and FHS. There was increased satisfaction across all areas in FACE, some by a significant margin.

The following table displays the proportion of students expressing satisfaction with their academic experience across each faculty:

	FACE		FBLP		FoSE		FHS	
	Apr-Jun 2019	Apr-Jun 2020	Apr-Jun 2020	Apr-Jun 2020	Apr-Jun 2019	Apr-Jun 2020	Apr-Jun 2019	Apr-Jun 2020
The teaching on my course	79	90 +11%	85	79 +14%	75	80 +5%	79	86 +7%
Course content	73	84 +11%	82	81 -1%	77	85 +8%	84	86 +2%
Contact time	59	75 +16%	67	69 +2%	72	76 +4%	74	72 -2%
Intellectual challenge	76	87 +11%	85	81 -4%	90	86 -4%	86	91 +5%
Opportunities to apply my learning	67	79 +12%	79	73 +6%	71	73 +2%	77	78 +1%
Assessment	73	86 +13%	76	82 +6%	67	77 +10%	72	78 +6%
Feedback on my work	76	85 +9%	70	65 -5%	60	65 +5%	71	65 -6%
The organisation on my course	60	68 +8%	62	62 ~	51	63 +12%	52	54 +2%
Timetabling	65	74 +9%	56	63 +7%	48	64 +16%	56	64 +8%
IT Resources	74	82 +8%	73	85 +12%	79	77 -2%	76	80 +4%
Library Resources	86	87 +1%	87	90 +3%	79	85 +6%	80	85 +5%
Total number of respondents	131	195	84	126	155	210	147	245

Figure 3: Students' Academic Experience by Faculty (Pulse 3 2018/19 and 2019/20)



Representation

ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION

During this period, 57% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the **Students' Union effectively represents students' academic interests**. This is an increase of 16% from Pulse 3 in 2018/19.

More than half of respondents agreed that **Hull University Students' Union** represents students on the right academic issues (57%), and helps students overcome challenges that may prevent them from completing their studies (59%). Over a third (39%) of respondents agreed that they know what the **Students' Union** is doing to represent their academic interests.

COURSE REPS

There were 272 academic representatives in total for the 2018/19 year, including Course Reps, Course Rep Leaders and Faculty Reps.

There was a slight increase in the level of awareness and understanding of Course Reps this year as during the same period last year, with 53% of respondents stating they knew who their Course Rep was, and 54% stating that they knew how to contact their Course Rep. These figures were 45 and 46% respectively in 2019.

61% said they understood what their Course Rep does – an increase of 10% from the same period last year, and just over a quarter of survey participants (27%) reported knowing about the achievements of their Course Rep this year, an increase of 3 percent from last year.

HUSU is currently in the process of recruiting and training Course Reps for the new academic year. Whilst recruitment over the summer months has looked very healthy due to a number of reps returning to volunteer in this role again and helping to promote the opportunity to their peers, now that the year has begun, the number of students nominating themselves for this has now very much slowed down. The virtual induction and welcome process for students, a necessity due to institution-wide safety measures in light of the pandemic, has not been a successful means of promoting the academic representation system and course rep vacancies. HUSU would welcome input from University colleagues on how we can ensure that academic representation is as effective as it can be this year under the circumstances.

STUDENT-STAFF FORUMS

Whilst two Student-Staff Forums were organised by the Faculty of Health Sciences during Trimester 3, unfortunately no Course Reps attended these meetings.

At the time of writing, no Faculties have yet scheduled Student-Staff Forums for the new academic year, which is a cause for serious concern. It is essential that students continue to be represented academically, and that there are the formalised routes for this to take place, particularly during this year when students and staff are facing the new challenges of blended teaching and learning.

We would expect Student-Staff Forums to take place in accordance to the usual frequency (twice per trimester in most cases), and for these meetings to be held virtually on a platform available to all staff and students such as Microsoft Teams or on Canvas.

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION: PRESIDENT TEAM

The 2019/20 President team completed their year in office working remotely and continued representing students through virtual means, holding events on Facebook Live and Canvas, publishing blogposts on our website and using social media to reach out to students.

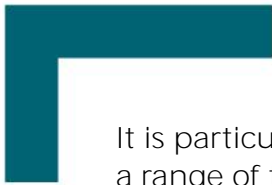
Our survey data for April to June demonstrates that there continues to be an improved awareness and knowledge amongst students about how they are represented by the sabbatical officers compared to last year.

- 58% of respondents agree that they know who the President team are. This is an increase of 23 percentage points from the same period last year
- An additional 20% of students report understanding what the President team does (50%)
- Almost a third of students (31%) report being aware of the Presidents' achievements – an increase from less than a quarter of students reporting this during the same period last year (23%)

There has also been improvement in the proportion of students who agree that Hull University Students' Union represents them on different types of issues, as demonstrated by the table below:

Issues	% of students agreeing that HUSU represents students' interests Apr-June 2019	% of students agreeing that HUSU represents students' interests Apr-June 2020
Course issues	45	56
University issues	60	71
Local issues	41	42
National issues	27	45
International student issues	31	42

Figure 4: Representation of students' interests (Pulse 3 2018/19 and 2019/20)



It is particularly heartening that students are feeling better represented across a range of types of issues, in particular university, national and international student issues, indicating that the students' union is shifting towards being more outward-focused whilst balancing this with institution-specific concerns.

In June 2020, the newly elected President team took office, under very challenging circumstances as all HUSU staff were either working from home or on furlough, which created a very difficult situation for them to complete their induction and training, and settle into their roles without meeting Union and University colleagues and students face to face in person.

Some projects and campaigns that the President team have been working on include:

- Developing new Sexual Consent training for students which covers topics in more depth, including exploring scenarios and signposting to relevant services
- Working with University colleagues on the student Learning from Covid Project to gain a greater understanding of both the positives and negatives of studying in lockdown from a student perspective
- Working with community organisations and student groups to plan Black History Month
- Planning a project to gain a greater understanding of BAME students' mental health and how their needs could be met more effectively
- Diversifying the Curriculum work with HYMS
- Securing extensions for students studying during Trimester 3, including PGT students' extended deadlines until January to complete their dissertations
- Working with University to seek reassurance that the blended learning approach will meet the needs of different programmes, and different student demographics
- Exploring how to increase student engagement and improve their university experience through academic societies
- Developing a Student Media Policy and planning how to improve the organisation and support for Student Media groups
- Working with sports clubs and Hull Sport colleagues to address issues such as training and storage, and in particular the cost of sport given the additional challenges presented by Covid-19
- Strong social media promotion of sports clubs throughout August to highlight the work they do and help promote the range of opportunities for new and returning students in September

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION: ELECTIONS

By-elections are taking place at the start of the 2020/21 year to elect volunteer Part-Time Officers into vacant positions. The results of these elections will be shared at the next USEEEC meeting.

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION: UNION COUNCIL

Whilst no Union Council meetings have taken place during the summer months, those Part-Time Officers who were elected in spring have attended informal virtual meetings as well as training for their roles on Microsoft Teams, supporting them to develop the skills and knowledge they will need to fulfil their representative roles for the coming year.

Wider Student Experience

STUDENT WELLBEING AND CONCERNS

In response to the question 'overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?' respondents were 77% satisfied between April-June 2020 – this is 1% more satisfied than the same period in 2019.

The table below shows how concerned students reported feeling about different issues; across the majority of areas, respondents are less concerned than in a similar period last year. The fact that this data was collected during remote studying and lockdown should be taken into account when noting the differences between last year and this; in particular, a lessening of concerns about finances, balancing social and academic time and the effect of other responsibilities on academic achievement will have been affected by the change in home circumstances which occurred for many students during this period.

Issue	% students 'concerned' or 'very concerned' in April-June 2019	% students 'concerned' or 'very concerned' in Apr-June 2020
Physical health	45	45 (-)
Mental health and wellbeing	49	56 (+7)
Personal safety	26	18 (-8)
Career prospects	56	56 (-)
Accommodation	25	25 (-)
Academic workload	59	54 (-5)
Academic achievement	68	62 (-6)
Balancing academic and social time	47	34 (-13)
Loneliness	36	39 (+3)
Bullying	6	5 (-1)
Employability	52	49 (-3)
Being able to pay for the things I need	61	46 (-15)
My level of debt	48	37 (-11)
Effect of my other responsibilities on academic achievement	49	36 (-13)

Figure 5: Student Concerns (Pulse 3 2018/19 and 2019/20)



RECOMMENDATIONS

- University and Hull University Students' Union to work in closer partnership on promoting course rep recruitment and the academic representation system in general to the whole student body throughout the year
- The relevant colleagues in each Faculty to ensure that Student-Staff Forums are organised for the 2020/21 year, and that all meeting details are communicated in a timely manner to HUSU Education Coordinators and all Course Reps who have completed their training through the Union to ensure that effective student representation takes place across all areas.
- Continue to build on the progress shown in works to address the issues of timetabling, assessment and feedback to continue the upward trajectory seen throughout the 2019/20 year; for the University to ensure that students are involved in developments and plans in these areas so **that they meet students' needs and expectations**
- Evaluate in more detail the reasons behind differing levels of student satisfaction with aspects of academic experience in different Faculties so that they can be addressed; in particular those areas that deviate further from the institution-wide figures; to work with Faculty Reps and Associate Deans of Student Experience on this