

STUDENT VOICE TRIMESTERLY REPORT

2019/20 – TRIMESTER TWO

Introduction

The 2019/20 Trimester 2 Student Voice report summarises students' priorities, concerns and feedback that have been shared with Hull University Union through a variety of means. The data from the Alterline Pulse Survey for the Pulse 2 period has been collected between January and March 2020 from 560 respondents.

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', 79% of respondents selected 'agree' or 'strongly agree', compared with 78% in Pulse 2 2018/19.

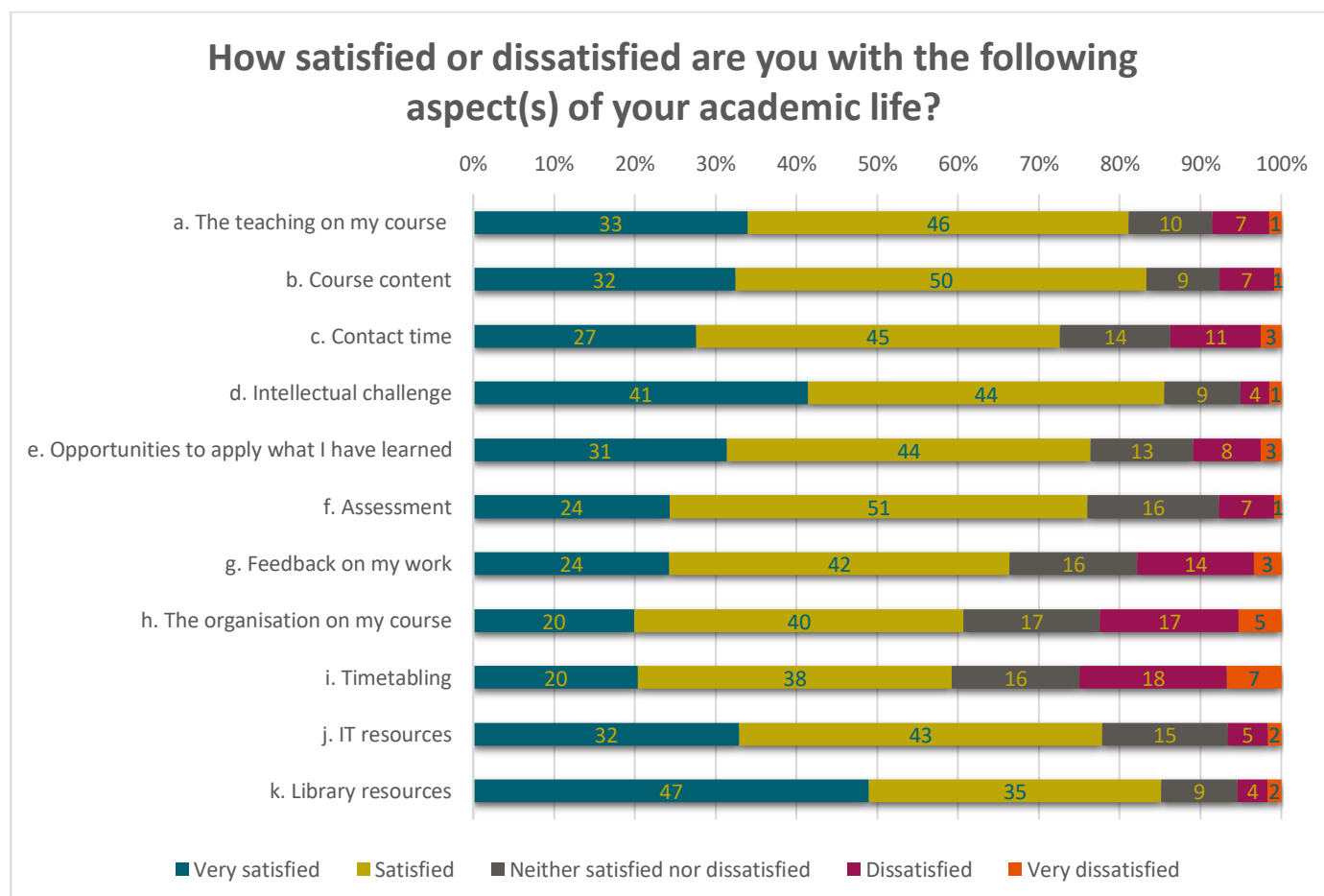


Figure 1: Students' Satisfaction with their Academic Experience (Pulse 2, 2019/20)

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 January to March is available in figure 2 (below).

	% of students 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with this aspect of academic life in Jan-Mar 2019	% of students 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with this aspect of academic life in Jan-Mar 2020
The teaching on my course	81	79 -2%
Course content	80	82 +2%
Contact time	70	72 +2%
Intellectual challenge	83	85 +2%
Opportunities to apply my learning	71	75 +4%
Assessment	73	75 +2%
Feedback on my work	64	66 +2%
The organisation of my course	55	60 +5%
Timetabling	49	58 +9%
IT Resources	78	75 -3%
Library Resources	83	82 -1%

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

Student feedback here demonstrates that satisfaction has improved across most areas and in particular, the work with timetabling, course organisation and opportunities to apply learning is having a positive impact on the student experience.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FACULTIES


Levels of students' satisfaction with their academic experience in the above areas differed between the different Faculties at the University.

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

	FACE		FBLP		FoSE		FHS	
	Jan-Mar 2019	Jan-Mar 2020	Jan-Mar 2019	Jan-Mar 2020	Jan-Mar 2019	Jan-Mar 2020	Jan-Mar 2019	Jan-Mar 2020
The teaching on my course	86	80 -6%	80	80	74	78 +4%	84	81 -3%
Course content	82	81 -1%	80	78 -2%	75	82 +7%	82	85 +3%
Contact time	73	68 -5%	60	68 +8%	73	73	72	75 +3%
Intellectual challenge	86	86	78	80 +2%	80	82 +2%	86	89 +3%
Opportunities to apply my learning	76	76	64	70 +6%	65	73 +8%	78	80 +2%
Assessment	78	78	73	77 +4%	69	74 +5%	72	75 +3%
Feedback on my work	71	77 +6%	59	65 +6%	53	61 +8%	71	63 -8%
The organisation of my course	63	64 +1%	54	65 +11%	54	55 +1%	53	58 +5%
Timetabling	58	66 +8%	55	55	42	57 +15%	45	55 +10%
IT Resources	78	79 +1%	75	74 -1%	77	79 +2%	81	70 -9%
Library Resources	87	88 +1%	82	84 +2%	74	78 +4%	87	80 -7%

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

FoSE students have reported increased satisfaction across all but one area, with timetabling, feedback on work and opportunities to apply learning demonstrating the greatest improvements.



FACE students are generally well-satisfied, with the growth in satisfaction with timetabling and feedback particularly positive; however there has been decreased satisfaction with teaching and contact time.

FBLP shows small declines in satisfaction across just a couple of areas, with considerable progress in course organisation, contact time, feedback and opportunities to apply learning.

FHS students have reported the steepest declines in satisfaction with some areas, notably IT resources, library resources and feedback on work, whilst there is improved satisfaction with timetabling and course organisation.

Representation

ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION

During this period, 51% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Students' Union effectively represents students' academic interests. This is an increase of 1% from Pulse 2 in 2018/19.

Just over half of respondents agreed that Hull University Union represents students on the right academic issues (51%), and helps students overcome challenges that may prevent them from completing their studies (51%). Over a third (35%) of respondents agreed that they know what the Students' Union is doing to represent their academic interests.

COURSE REPS

There are currently 264 Course Reps and Course Rep Leaders who have completed their training this academic year, in addition to three Faculty Reps and four Deputy Faculty Reps.


There is a similar level of awareness and understanding of Course Reps this year as during the same period last year, with 50% of respondents stating they knew who their Course Rep was, and the same proportion stating that they knew how to contact their Course Rep. 57% said they understood what their Course Rep does, however less than a quarter of survey participants (23%) reported knowing about the achievements of their Course Rep this year.

STUDENT-STAFF FORUMS

According to the data we have, the number of Student-Staff Forums that have taken place in Trimester 2 has varied significantly across Faculties.

Faculty	Total number SSFs	Before remote working	During remote working
FACE	5	2	3
FBLP	9	4	5
FHS	14	7	7
FoSE	6	6	0

Figure 4: Student-Staff Forums by Faculty in Trimester 2, 2019/20



Whilst it is acknowledged that the current circumstances present unprecedented challenges and situations for staff and students to manage and deal with, it is disappointing and concerning to note the low number of SSFs which have taken place in FACE and FoSE during this Trimester.

In FACE, it is noteworthy that such a small number took place whilst face-to-face teaching was still happening and although some areas have held online meetings since the pandemic affected delivery, this does not cover all programmes.

In FoSE, some third round and all fourth round SSFs have been cancelled, meaning that none at all have taken place since the move to online-only teaching and studying. This is of great concern in terms of academic representation in this faculty.

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION: PRESIDENT TEAM

This Trimester has seen the elected President team continue to play a visible part in representing students despite some difficulties; as the Covid-19 pandemic progressed and the University moved to online-only delivery, so the students' union moved to remote working and this has resulted in some challenges for the team as they seek to be accessible to and communicative with our members.

For an overview of the President team's work in response to the pandemic, please see <https://hulluniunion.com/news/article/president-update-april>

Our survey data 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.

- 56% of respondents agree that they know who the President team are. This is an increase of 15 percentage points from the same period last year
- An additional 11% of students report understanding what the President team does (49%)
- Almost a third of students (32%) report being aware of the Presidents' achievements – an increase from a quarter of students reporting this during the same period last year

There has also been improvement in the percentage of students who agree that Hull University Union represents them on national issues (up 18 percentage points from the same period last year to 47%) and international student issues (up 8 percentage points to 42%). This demonstrates the greater focus of the President team on some of the broader issues which affect students in Hull.

During this trimester, the President team have focused on a number of issues that are core to improving the experience of university for a large number of students, particularly around accessibility, inclusivity and costs, such as the following:

- Value for Money and student loans – All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), representing students in Parliament, working with local MP Emma Hardy and leading a campaign on additional costs of studying
- Reduction by 50% of fees for international students on full year placements by working with the Fees and Scholarships Group
- Mental Health - Consulting students for feedback on mental health provision, work with Student Minds and APPG on the Mental Health Charter
- Work on accessibility with students and the university, including Accessibility Open Forums and contribution to the VC's independent review of accessibility
- Partnership working with Hull Sport to drive down the cost of sport for students, reallocating funding to improve this for non-BUCS teams, and working to increase the number and diversity of students getting involved in sports through taster sessions and work with liberation groups
- Due to the President of Activities having resigned in January, the rest of the team have also picked up this workload between them to support activities such as societies, student media, LINKS, RAG and HUSSO volunteering

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION: ELECTIONS

This year we separated out the full-time and part-time officer elections, in the hope that this would help students to understand the distinction between running for the full-time paid sabbatical positions and the volunteer part-time positions, and that this would drive up the number of candidates for volunteer roles, which has been a challenge in recent years in the March elections.

Reports on both sets of elections will be published over the course of the next month, but in summary, sabbatical officers were elected into all five positions in the President elections for the next academic year, with a turnout of 2152 voters, or 13.2%. The full results can be seen here -

<https://hulluniunion.com/news/article/president-elections-2020-results>

Conducting the part-time officer elections separately was successful in terms of attracting a greater number of candidates – 16 students ran for 12 roles, compared to just 7 having run for these positions over the past two years. This was especially impressive as the elections were conducted wholly online due to having moved to remote working by this stage, including all training and support for candidates, and all campaigning. 12 positions were filled and the results can be viewed here - <https://hulluniunion.com/news/article/pto-elections-results>

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION: UNION COUNCIL

Union Council meetings have continued to be the seat of student debate and decision-making at the students' union and in Trimester 2 to date, four meetings have been held in total; two meetings have been held face-to-face and two meetings have been held remotely on Canvas, which has worked sufficiently well for students to put forward their motions and discuss and vote on them.

Motions that were passed in Union Council in February to April 2020 include the following motions to:

- Lobby the University to update Mental Health training for staff
- Lobby the University to provide genderless toilets in every building
- Oppose increasing the price of the annual Sports Pass, making sports more affordable for all
- Create a Team GB student panel
- Change Hull University Union's brand to Hull University Students' Union
- Lobby the University to change the default search engine to Ecosia, a more eco-friendly option than Google
- Introduce Wellbeing Advocates to student groups, a specific volunteer role to signpost students to relevant support services and resources

All motions which have passed this year at Union Council can be viewed at <https://hulluniunion.com/change-things/union-council>

Wider Student Experience

STUDENT WELLBEING AND CONCERNS

In response to the question 'overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?' respondents were 75% satisfied between January-March 2020 – this is 4% less 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 again less concerned than in a similar period last year. Whilst across these issues, there are still significant numbers reporting concerns, it is positive to see fewer students reporting concerns about their personal safety, academic workload and balancing academic and social time.

Issue	% students 'concerned' or 'very concerned' in Jan-Mar 2019	% students 'concerned' or 'very concerned' in Jan-Mar 2020
Physical health	44	43 (-1)
Mental health and wellbeing	53	56 (+3)
Personal safety	38	17 (-21)
Career prospects	56	52 (-4)
Accommodation	23	23 (~)
Academic workload	64	58 (-6)
Academic achievement	67	63 (-4)
Balancing academic and social time	52	46 (-6)
Loneliness	34	34 (~)
Bullying	7	6 (-1)
Employability	49	46 (-3)
Being able to pay for the things I need	57	59 (+2)
My level of debt	47	43 (-4)
Effect of my other responsibilities on academic achievement	45	42 (-3)

Figure 5: Student Concerns (Pulse 2 2018/19 and 2019/20)



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Both the University and Union to continue exploring effective ways of working for and with students during this period of remote working, and to evaluate methods of engagement and projects which should be further developed when face-to-face delivery returns
- Build on the progress shown in works to address the issues of timetabling, assessment and feedback to continue the upward trajectory shown in data collected in Trimester 1; 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
- University and Hull University Union to work in closer partnership on promoting course reps to the general student body throughout the year
- Hull University Union to work with the University to promote the work of the Union and how we are representing students academically
- Hull University Union and the University to work more effectively in partnership on Student-Staff Forums to ensure that student representation takes place across all areas