

STUDENT VOICE TRIMESTERLY REPORT

2019/20 – TRIMESTER ONE

Introduction

The 2019/20 Trimester 1 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 1 period has been collected between October and December 2019 from 535 respondents; it should be noted when comparing this to the Pulse 1 data from last year that this only covered November-December 2018 with 338 respondents.

Academic Life

Overall, and against the majority of measures, students have expressed a greater level of satisfaction with their academic experience during this period than November-December 2018. 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 74% in Pulse 1 2018/19.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspect(s) of your academic life?

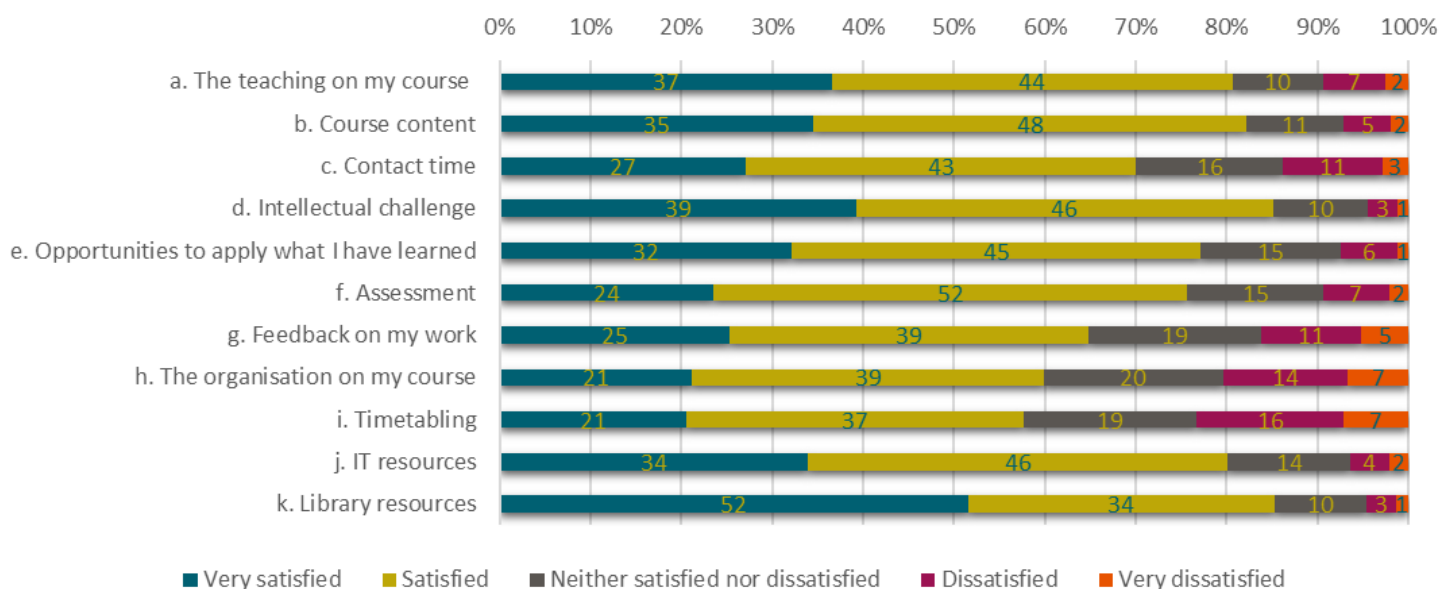


Figure 1: Students' Satisfaction with their Academic Experience (Pulse 1, 2019/20)



COMPARING 2019 WITH 2018: THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

A comparison of the proportion of students who expressed satisfaction with aspects of their academic experience in 2018 and 2019 is available in figure 2 (below).

	% of students 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with this aspect of academic life in Oct-Dec 2018	% of students 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with this aspect of academic life in Oct-Dec 2019
Library Resources	88%	85% (-3)
IT Resources	78%	80% (+2)
Timetabling	48%	58% (+10)
The organisation of my course	53%	60% (+7)
Feedback	63%	65% (+2)
Assessment	70%	76% (+6)
Opportunities to apply my learnings	72%	77% (+5)
Intellectual challenge	82%	85% (+3)
Contact time	69%	70% (+1)
Course content	80%	82% (+2)
The teaching on my course	82%	81% (-1)

Figure 2: Students' Academic Experience (Pulse 1, 2018/19 and 2019/20)

Student feedback here demonstrates that the work to address issues with timetabling, assessment, 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.

FHS students were the most satisfied across the board when compared with the university-wide data, with a higher proportion rating themselves as 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' against all aspects of their academic experience. By contrast, students from FoSE were the least satisfied when compared to the overall data.

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



	FACE	FBLP	FoSE	FHS	Pulse 1 2019/20 total
Library Resources	82	84	84	89	85
IT Resources	84	80	77	81	80
Timetabling	61	61	52	59	58
The organisation on my course	63	63	54	61	60
Feedback on my work	73	64	56	68	65
Assessment	72	79	72	80	76
Opportunities to apply my learnings	73	80	70	85	77
Intellectual challenge	83	82	85	90	85
Contact time	70	66	68	74	70
Course content	78	85	79	85	82
The teaching on my course	84	75	78	84	81

Figure 3: Students' Academic Experience by Faculty (Pulse 1 2019/20)

Representation

ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION

During this period, 51% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Students' Union effectively represents students' academic interests. This is a decrease of 3% from Pulse 1 in 2018/19.

Just over half of respondents agreed that Hull University Union represents students on the right academic issues (52%), and helps students overcome challenges that may prevent them from completing their studies (53%). Of greater concern is the fact that just over a third (37%) of respondents agreed that they know what the Students' Union is doing to represent their academic interests, with approximately another third (32%) disagreeing with that statement and the remaining students neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

COURSE REPS

243 students have completed their course rep training in Trimester 1, with a further 74 students having signed up to volunteer in this role but having not completed the training. In addition, there are four Faculty Reps and four Deputy Faculty reps, appointed through an application and interview system.

There was slightly more awareness of Course Reps than during the similar period last year.

Slight increases can be noted between the figures for this year and last year:

- In April-June 2018, 47% of respondents knew who their Course Rep was. This has slightly risen to 49% during the same period in 2019.
- During this period in 2018, 48% of respondents knew how to contact their Course Rep. In 2019 50% of respondents said they knew this.
- In Pulse 1 2018, 53% of respondents understood what their Course Rep did. This has risen to 57% in 2019.
- In 2018, 22% of respondents stated they were aware of their Course Rep's achievements this year. This has risen to 26% in 2019.

STUDENT-STAFF FORUMS

According to our records, 40 Student-Staff Forums were held during Trimester 1. However, it is possible that minutes/action registers are missing or delayed from some academic areas where we currently have no records of any SSFs taking place.

Some issues with the updated academic representation system have been identified in Trimester 1 and are in the process of being addressed through consultation with course reps and relevant members of HUU and university staff through the Student Voice Operations Group as we move into Trimester 2.

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION

This Trimester has seen the elected President team have a very visible and vocal presence on campus and online representing students' issues and needs. This is reflected in the significant increase in students' awareness and understanding of the elected officer team as follows:

- 57% of respondents agree that they know who the President team are. This is an increase of 20 percentage points from Pulse 1 last year
- An additional 11% of students report understanding what the President team does (47%)
- There has also been an increase of 10% in the proportion of students being aware of the achievements of the President team

Related to this is how well-represented students report feeling on different kinds of issues. 43% of students agreed that Hull University Union represents them on local issues and national issues; this is an increase of 8 and 16 percentage points respectively.

This indicates student awareness and appreciation of work on issues that resonate with them such as foundation student funding, the climate crisis, safety for women at night, nursing student bursaries, the general election, plus much more. A number of these campaigns and projects have involved high-profile events which have both offered our student population opportunities to get involved, and have been shared widely on social media and in some cases local print, television and radio media. Examples include:

- Presidents and students calling a climate strike on campus and then going to join the city centre strike;

- Writing a letter to the Universities Minister in support of funding foundation programmes in light of the Augar review and student concerns;
- Holding the only General Election hustings event for Hull North candidates, and campaigning to encourage students to register to vote and turnout on polling day, in partnership with the University

In September, the Board of Trustees called a referendum for members to vote on the updated Articles of the organisation. It met the quorum of the necessary 5% of members voting and passed with over 90% of the vote.

By-elections were held in October, where students were elected into voluntary Part-Time Officer positions, to represent their constituents on Union Council. There are currently 26 Union Council members.

Motions that were passed in Union Council in October to December 2019 include the following:

- Hull University Union's Bye-Laws updated to become more concise, student-friendly and line up with the newly updated Articles
- President team mandated to lobby the University to improve consent training for new first year and foundation students
- President team mandated to lobby the University to introduce sharps bins on campus for students who may benefit from this, e.g. diabetic

YOUR IDEAS SCHEME

The Your Ideas scheme is ceasing in its current form, and will be replaced in Trimester 2 with a webpage which invites students to submit their ideas and signposting and supporting them to access our other existing mechanisms for change through the students' union.

Namely, this will advise students of the most appropriate route for their proposal and offer resources and support from staff and officers, for example submitting a motion to Union Council; contacting their course rep; creating a petition; conducting further research or consultation into an issue; or passing feedback onto the relevant person to action.

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 both between October-December 2019 – this is 3% more satisfied than in Pulse 1 2018/19.

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. Whilst across these issues, there are still significant numbers reporting concerns, it is positive to see fewer students reporting loneliness, worries about academic workload and achievement and their mental health and wellbeing.

Issue	students 'concerned' or 'very concerned' in Pulse 1 2018/19	students 'concerned' or 'very concerned' in Pulse 1 2019/20
Physical health	40%	39% (-1)
Mental health and wellbeing	56%	50% (-6)
Personal safety	16%	20% (+4)
Career prospects	51%	47% (-4)
Accommodation	21%	21% (-)
Academic workload	70%	64% (-6)
Academic achievement	71%	64% (-7)
Balancing academic and social time	54%	53% (-1)
Loneliness	37%	31% (-6)
Bullying	7%	6% (-1)
Employability	46%	44% (-2)
Being able to pay for the things I need	55%	60% (+5)
My level of debt	42%	42% (-)
Effect of my other responsibilities on academic achievement	44%	46% (+2)

Figure 5: Student Concerns (Pulse 1, 2018/19 and 2019/20)

As part of our commitment to students' mental health and wellbeing, Hull University Union is taking part in the Student Minds Students' Union support programme, which is a three year project. To date, this has included members of the President team and staff attending networking and training events, attending the launch of the Student Minds University Mental Health Charter, and the President of the Students' Union and President of Inclusivity and Diversity accessing specialist mentoring. This is covering topics such as embedding student mental health in organisational strategy, supporting volunteers, campaigning, policy and a whole University approach.

Advice Centre

During this period, 318 new cases were opened as well as a number continuing from previous periods, with the majority of students accessing advice face-to-face in the Advice Centre situated on the second floor of Student Central.

Method of advice given	Number of instances
Face-to-face visit	519
Email	129
Phone	13

The most common reasons for students seeking advice are shared below:

Student Finance England Maintenance Loan	225
Student Finance England Tuition Loan	191
Personal/Health	177
Student Finance England Problems	107
Hardship Support Fund	98
Calls to Student Finance England	90
Mental Health	81
General Hardship	64
Student Finance England Compelling Personal Reasons	60
Emergency Loan	56

As can be seen from the above, whilst there is much variety in individuals' circumstances, the predominant reason that students are accessing the Advice Centre relates to their finances, which reflects the fact that 60% of



respondents reported feeling concerned about being able to pay for the things they need.

Part of the service that the Advice Centre provides is ensuring that students are accessing all of the funding and benefits that they are eligible to receive. To this end, below is a breakdown of the funding that the Advice Centre has supported students to be able to receive:

- Housing Benefit £14,523.60
- The Hardship Fund £4,000.00
- Universal Credit £20,427.48
- Uni compensation £500.00
- The Humber Grant £500.00
- Total £39,951.08

Student Activities

Over three-quarters of survey participants (77%) agreed that the students' union offers a wide range of sports, clubs and societies that they can get involved in. There are currently over 50 sports clubs and over 80 societies for students to join, as well as volunteering opportunities through HUSSO and in partnership with local voluntary and community organisations.

The number of students engaged in different opportunities are shown below:

- Sport 1896
- Societies 2119
- HUSSO 105
- RAG 7
- LINKS 12
- Student Media 23

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 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
- University and Hull University Union to work in closer partnership on promoting course reps to the general student body throughout the year
- Work with the Library to improve library resources after decrease in satisfaction, including library lift renovation and microwave in library

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- Hull University Union to work with the University to promote the work of the Union and how we are representing students academically
 - Increase the proportion of those students who register an interest in becoming a course rep completing their training
 - Hull University Union and the University to work to ensure all SSFs take place during T2
 - Hull University Union to re-launch Your Ideas
 - Address the increase in student concern in personal safety and being able to pay for things they need in partnership. HUU President doing additional cost campaign and President of Sport campaign on cost of sport
 - Hull University Union to campaign on Student Finance and Maintenance loans