# STUDENT VOICE TRIMESTERLY REPORT

2018/19 – TRIMESTER ONE

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# Methodology

This report has been developed by analysing a range of data sources including:

## Minutes from Student Staff Forums (SSFs):

SSFs take place twice in each Trimester which includes teaching. These meetings are an opportunity for students and staff to meet and discuss any positive or negative feedback regarding the academic student experience. The issues arising from SSFs in the first trimester of the 2018/19 academic year have been analysed and presented to Faculties, and the main themes are included here.

## Minutes from Course Rep Forums:

There are five face-to-face, each with two sessions, and five online Course Rep Forums throughout the academic year. Each Course Rep Forum is chaired by the President of Education and is open to all academic reps. Academic reps are given an opportunity to share any positive or negative feedback that they have in regards to their academic experience with the President of Education and ask questions about University processes and procedures. Minutes and action registers that are produced as a result of the forums are used to keep track of issues.

## Alterline Student Life Pulse Survey:

The survey runs for nine months of the year (October to June). The student population is divided by nine on a random basis, and one ninth of the population is emailed each month and invited to take part. Pulse Surveys are presented to HUU in 3 month 'waves', Pulses 1-3. Over the full academic year, all students will have the opportunity to complete the questionnaire.
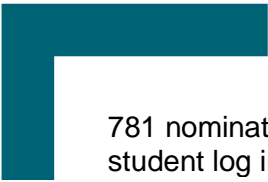
Pulse 1 usually covers the period October to December, however due to technical delays, this year we have only collected responses in November and December. The survey was completed by 339 students in total. The breakdown of students by faculty is as follows:

| FACULTY | NO. SURVEY RESPONDENTS |
|---------|------------------------|
| FACE | 79 |
| FBLP | 59 |
| FHS | 92 |
| FSE | 109 |

The data for Pulse 2 was received on 16th April and limited headlines are included here. A full overview will be included in the Trimester 2 Report.

## Student-Led Teaching and Support Awards

Hull University Union has undertaken research analysing the nominations for the 2018 Student-Led Teaching and Support Awards.

781 nominations were collected using an online nomination form which required a student log in. Students were invited to offer up to three reasons why their nominee should win the award, writing between 100 and 500 words.

This data was analysed qualitatively using NVivo software; nominations' contents were coded in line with aspects of Grounded Theory.

In doing so, key themes surrounding students' expectations of good practice in teaching and support were identified, thus highlighting what students think constitutes this good practice.

## Your Ideas Scheme

During 2016-17 Hull University Union introduced the 'Your Ideas' scheme to enable students to directly submit ideas for change and enhancement online.

## Student-Led and President Campaigns

Part of the remit of the Union's President Team is to campaign on issues identified as being of importance to students and drive positive change. In addition, Hull University Union offers campaign support and funding for student-led campaigns. Such campaigns are a source of information about students' priorities and issues of concern.

## Union Council Motions

Any student can bring a motion to Union Council, where motions are debated and voted on by the Council, comprised of elected and appointed part-time student officers. Motions set policy and direction for the Student President team and Hull University Union.

# Academic Life

This section provides an overview of key issues identified with regards to students' academic experience in trimester 1, whilst the sample size is relatively small (339) the results offer a snapshot of student satisfaction and more detailed break downs of the data have been sent to all Faculties.

Overall, the results of the Student Pulse 1 survey suggest that students are less satisfied with their academic experience in 2018 than they were in 2017.

## UNIVERSITY-WIDE RESULTS 2018: THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE
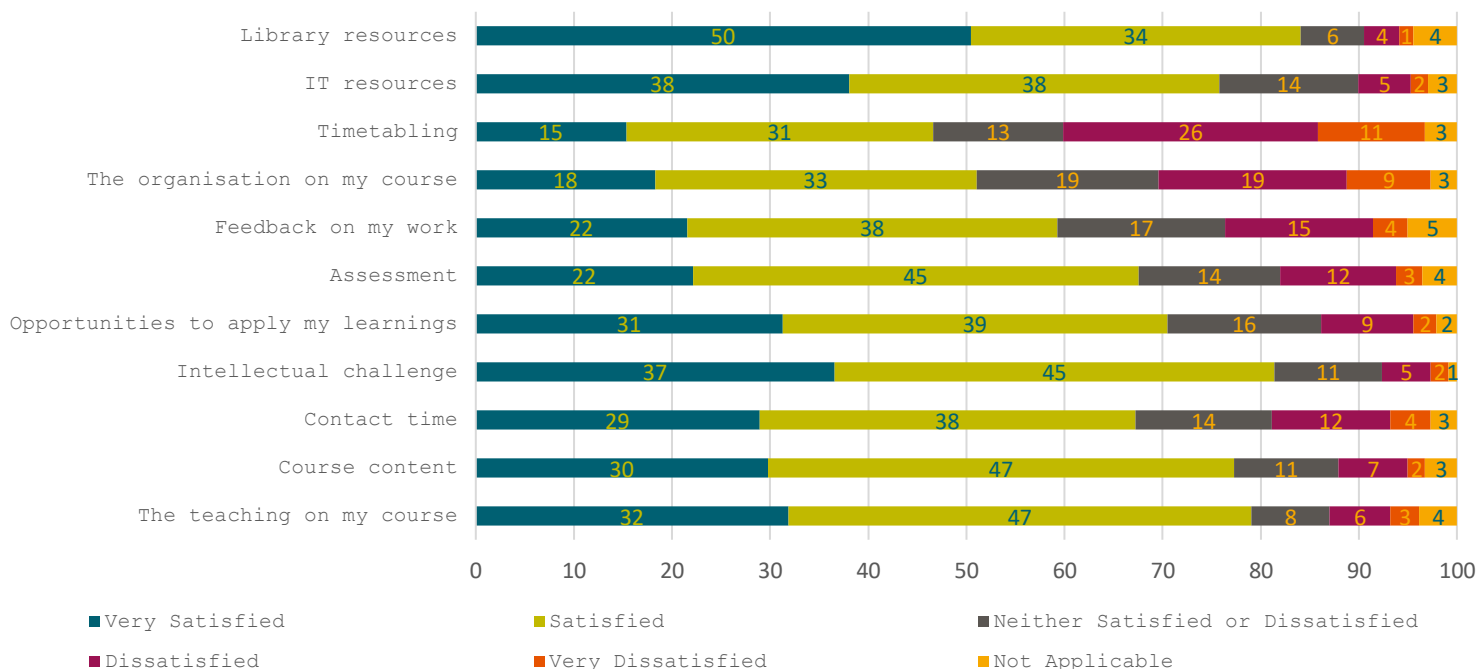


*Figure 1 (University-wide data, Pulse 1, 2018/9)*

- **79%** were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of teaching on their course
- **77%** were satisfied or very satisfied with the course content
- **67%** were satisfied or very satisfied with the contact time that they received
  **81%** of students felt intellectually challenged by their course
- **70%** felt that they had opportunities to apply what they were learning
- **67%** were satisfied or very satisfied with their assessments
- **59%** were satisfied or very satisfied with the feedback that they received
- **51%** of students feel that their course had good organisation
- **47%** of students were satisfied or very satisfied with the university timetabling

## COMPARING 2018 WITH 2017: THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

- In general a comparison between the data from Pulse 1 in 2017 and 2018 suggests students are less satisfied with their academic experience in autumn 2018.

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- A comparable proportion of students stated they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with teaching, contact time, intellectual challenge and assessment in 2017 and 2018.
- A smaller proportion of students stated they were satisfied with timetabling; the organisation of their course; assessments; opportunities to apply their learning; and the content of their courses.
- Furthermore, we can see levels of dissatisfaction in certain areas, even when a similar proportion of students expressed satisfaction with an aspect of their academic experience. For example, in 2017 only 13% of students stated they were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the feedback they received; in T1 2018 this figure has increased to 19%.
- A comparison of the proportion of students who expressed satisfaction with aspects of their academic experience in 2017 and 2018 is available in figure 2 (below). All percentages which experienced a change of more than 3% have been highlighted.

| | % of students 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with this aspect of academic life in T1 2017 | % of students 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with this aspect of academic life in T1 2018 |
|---|---|---|
| Library Resources | 83% | 84% (+1%) |
| IT Resources | 78% | 76% (-2%) |
| Timetabling | 53% | 47% (-6%) |
| The organisation of my course | 60% | 51% (-9%) |
| Feedback | 59% | 59% (~) |
| Assessment | 72% | 68% (-4%) |
| Opportunities to apply my learning | 76% | 71% (-5%) |
| Intellectual challenge | 83% | 81% (-2%) |
| Contact time | 68% | 67% (-1%) |
| Course content | 83% | 77% (-6%) |
| The teaching on my course | 81% | 79% (-2%) |

*Figure 2 (University-wide data, Pulse 1, 2017/8 and Pulse 1, 2018/9)*

Hull University Union is aware of the specific challenges faced at the start of 2018/19 with regard to course administration with the introduction of the new student records system. These issues were clear from the 'Chocolate and Chat' sessions hosted by the President of Education during trimester 1. Whilst some students reported that overall their experience was positive they were aware of challenges with information and logistics. We are also aware of the ongoing work to ensure that robust timetables are released in a timely way. In addition, we welcome work to resolve long-standing issues with assessment and feedback in some areas as it is disappointing to see further declines the area of assessment.

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FACULTIES

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

**Faculty of Arts, Culture and Education 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' with every aspect of academic life, especially in the following areas: Timetabling; Feedback; Opportunities to apply learning; Teaching on the course; Course content

By contrast, **Faculty of Business, Law and Politics students were the least satisfied**, most strikingly in the following areas: Assessment; Opportunities to apply learning; Intellectual challenge; Feedback; Timetabling; Contact time. 'The organisation of my course' was the only aspect rated more highly in this faculty than the university-wide data. There was a more mixed picture for the other two faculties.

**Faculty of Health Sciences students** were less satisfied with the organisation on their course and course content, but more satisfied with library resources and intellectual challenge than the university-wide data.

Meanwhile, **Faculty of Science and Engineering students** were more satisfied with intellectual challenge and contact time, but less satisfied with IT resources and the teaching on their course.

An initial review of the University-wide Pulse 2 data suggests that, whilst still variable there are some upward trends in responses regarding course teaching, contact time, and assessment.

# Representation

## UNIVERSITY-WIDE RESULTS: THE ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION SYSTEM

In Pulse 1 the NSS question relating to how well the SU represents students' academic interest saw a slight decline (1%) compared to the same period last year with a slight increase (1%) in Pulse 2. Year to date we remain at 52% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing.

In comparing the data relating to academic representation by course reps, the following observations can be made.

- In both 2017 and 2018, around half of all respondents stated they knew who their course rep was, knew how to contact them and knew what they did.
- In both 2017 and 2018, around one quarter of respondents stated they were aware of the achievements of their Course Rep in the past year.

Only minor changes can be noted between the 2017 and 2018 figures.

- In two areas we can see small increases:

    o In 2017, 45% of respondents knew who their Course Rep was. This has increased to 46% in 2018.

o In 2017, 46% of respondents knew how to contact their Course Rep. In 2018 47% of respondents said they knew this.

- In two areas we can see small decreases in student awareness of academic representation.

    o In 2017, 56% of respondents knew what their Course Rep did. This had dropped to 52% in 2018.
    o In 2017, 25% of respondents stated they were aware of their Course Rep's achievements. This had dropped to 23% in 2018.

When we look at the data at a faculty level, FBLP has the lowest proportion of students knowing who their course reps are, what they do and how to contact them. FACE and FHS have the highest levels of engagement and knowledge about course reps, although we acknowledge that there is still much work to do to reach optimum levels of awareness about academic representation across all faculties.

## ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

The number of Student-Staff Forums that took place during Trimester 1 in each faculty are displayed in the table below:

| Faculty | Number of SSFs held | Number of meetings cancelled |
|---------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| FACE | 16 (2 per subject area) | 0 |
| FBLP | 8 (2 per subject area) | 4 (2 per subject area) |
| FHS | 4 (1 per subject area) | 2 (1 per subject area) |
| FoSE | 13 | 0 |

No meeting had 100% attendance from academic reps, and we will be working to address issues of attendance.

Key issues that were raised across several SSFs this trimester continued the discussion around topics that were raised throughout last academic year, including the **accessibility of Academic Support Tutors (ASTs),** the effectiveness and functions of the **iHull app** and **Panopto** lecture recordings.

### Trimester 2 Plans

Hull University Union's President of Education, Isobel Hall, is leading a review of the system of academic representation at the University, which will involve consultation with students, including those who are and are not currently involved in academic representation, and University staff, as well as researching other institutions' systems and processes for representing students' academic interests. The outcome of this work will be presented to USEEEC in May 2019.

In addition, the Hull University Union has worked on a number of projects to help improve the visibility and awareness of academic reps amongst the student population, for example:

- Relaunching the recruitment of reps and online training for those wanting to be involved for just the second trimester

- Social media campaign to highlight the benefits of the role and encouraging students to find out more
- Comprehensive study of rep recruitment marketing campaigns at other students' unions in the UK to help inform our own recruitment for the 2019/20 academic year
- More opportunities for reps to further enhance their skills through training, e.g. RepFest event of workshops and talks
- Celebratory events to demonstrate the value and recognition for students fulfilling these roles well, in 2018/19 Hull University Union hosted 'Course Rep Christmas' and 'Course Rep Celebration'.

Overall evaluation of the 2018/19 course rep experience will be included in a future report.

## STUDENT-LED TEACHING AND SUPPORT AWARDS 2018 DATA

Analysis of data from the 2018 Student-Led Teaching and Support Awards (SLTSAs) highlighted that the most prevalent themes were **Supportiveness, Appreciation of Staff Effort, Enthusiasm, Availability of Staff** and **Effective Communication of Subject-Specific Knowledge.** The content of nominations varied between faculties, with students in different subject areas emphasising different themes. This analysis was submitted to ULTC in February 2019.

This analysis confirmed many of the findings of the 2016 and 2017 analysis. Students appreciated teaching which was **inspiring, innovative** and **invited their participation;** which was effectively communicated by **charismatic** lecturers; and which was **well structured.** Staff members who were **available** and provided **pastoral support** were recognised on several forms, as was feedback which was praised for being **accessible, constructive, clear, detailed** and **quick**.

This analysis identified further themes which appeared especially prominently in nominations which celebrated good teaching. Students appreciated staff who helped **build their confidence** and **fostered student discussion.** Nominations also suggested that teaching which was **challenging** and **encouraged independent study** was both enjoyable and brought extra intellectual benefits.

Postgraduate teachers and members of administrative or support staff were also praised in distinct ways. Undergraduates showed appreciation for **approachable** postgraduate tutors who were **helpful without being condescending**. Students emphasised the importance of non-academic members of staff who were **approachable, helpful** and **friendly.**

Different groups of students had different expectations of good practice. Several nominations referred to the support a staff member offered a disabled student. Students expressed appreciation for this support emphasising the important role staff members play in making education accessible. Additionally, the data collected when nominations were made enabled us to analyse the expectations of mature and part-time students. Both groups of students emphasised the holistic support staff members offered them. They celebrated staff members who were **supportive, offered pastoral support, were responsive to enquiries** and **understood the idiosyncrasies of their student experience.**

Nominations for the 2019 Student-Led Teaching and Support Awards opened in December and saw the introduction of some new awards to celebrate a broader spectrum of good practice at the University, including Equality and Diversity and Sustainability. A full evaluation of the 2019 awards will be included in a future report.

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# DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION

During October 2018, Hull University Union held its by-elections where there were 17 part-time officer positions available; of these, 16 nominations were submitted for 11 positions, and 6 positions received no nominations. Of these latter positions, three were subsequently filled through co-option in Union Council meetings.

A total of 984 votes were cast by 284 unique voters in comparison to 2,215 total votes cast by 588 unique voters in the October 2017 by-elections. This is a decrease of 304 unique voters; similarly there was a decrease of 357 unique voters between the October 2016 and 2017 by-elections demonstrating a significant downturn in the number of students engaging in the by-elections process.

A total of 16 motions passed at the three Union Council meetings during Trimester 1, many of which aimed to improve how well the Students' Union represent different groups of students. For example, Union Council has voted to:

- Make the Trans Rep position elected in the main union-wide elections by all students identifying as trans, rather than elected by just those students who are part of the LGBT+ committee
- Create new part-time officer roles to better represent Foundation level students and HYMS students
- Reduce the number of members needed for societies to be ratified and access funds.
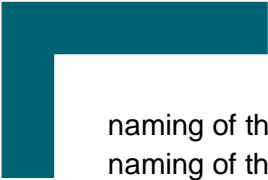
Throughout this trimester, the President of the Students' Union, Osaro Otobo, led work on a review of the student decision-making and governance system. The work continued ongoing research into this topic. This work involved regular engagement with Union Council and HUU representative groups and consultation with students through surveys, meetings and polls. In addition a workshop to identify good practice and students' aspirations was held with an external facilitator. Students fed back that they found the current system confusing, complicated, intimidating, dysfunctional and bureaucratic. In light of this, the President worked with students to propose a new system which aimed to be simpler, clearer and more student-focused.

In trimester 2, a proposal for a revised governance system was considered by referendum, enabling all students to have the opportunity to vote on the system. Whilst the proposal was supported by the majority of students who voted, it did not reach the 2/3 majority needed to pass. Ongoing work on HUU's governance will be reported in future submissions.

The main Union Elections took place in March, with nominations open between 27th February to 6th March, and voting between 12th and 15th March. The aim was to increase voter engagement and turnout from 14.8% from the previous two years to 16%. The promotional campaign focused on more opportunities for students to meet face-to-face with relevant union staff and officers to find out more about the process of running and voting in the elections. We were delighted that voter turnout increased to 16.6% and a full overview of the elections will be included in a future report.

## UNION COUNCIL MOTIONS

As noted above a number of motions to Union Council focused on the development of democratic processes and structures. In addition, two significant issues where raised via Union Council in trimester 1, the opposition to the naming of a lecture theatre after Dame Jenni Murray and the mandate of HUU to become a living wage employer paying all employees the National Living Wage for over 25s. The latter issue applies to student staff and is one the Trustee Board continue to review. In the case of the

naming of the lecture theatre the President team all signed a motion to oppose the naming of the lecture theatre and raised student concerns with the University.

## STUDENT-LED CAMPAIGNS

Whilst members of the President team ran campaigns, including those exploring the experience of mature students and in support of Black History month, during trimester 1 the number of student-led campaigns planned and delivered has been disappointing. A workshop was held to gather information from students on how they would like to receive campaign information. It was agreed that having information online about how to campaign, along with previous campaigns to reference would be ideal. Over trimester 1 content was gathered and the website was updated with information on how to run campaigns along with the addition of an online fund application form.

## YOUR IDEAS SCHEME

Far fewer ideas were submitted during trimester 1 than in the previous year; in part this is because there has been a focus on ensuring that progress was being made on the ideas which had been submitted by students during the 2017/18 academic year, rather than adding to the workload of the President team before they had opportunity to develop the existing work.

Ideas Progressed in Trimester 1

- There were three ideas in the 'future' section about mental health advertising which the President of Welfare & Community, Andy Costigan, worked on with the University as part of the institution-wide integrated mental health strategy.
- Eight of the remaining 'working on' ideas were about increasing printer credit for all students which has been achieved by the President of Education, Isobel Hall, worked with the University Leadership Team. This success was announced at the beginning of trimester 2.
- Seventeen of the remaining 'working on' ideas were about installing more water fountains – Andy Costigan, President of Welfare & Community, led on this piece of work and a phased implementation started in trimester 2.
- There were three ideas submitted about food wastage apps being used in the Union. Commercial services don't feel this would work because there is very little food wastage since most food is made to order or sold before the sell-by date.

The Your Ideas Scheme will continue to provide a mechanism for students to submit ideas for action and campaign by Hull University Union.

# Wider Student Experience

During the Pulse 1 period it appears that students were feeling less positive about their wellbeing and general life than in the same period in 2018. In response to the question 'overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays' respondents were 7% less satisfied than the same period last year. Specific concerns about physical and mental health and wellbeing both increased by 6% and 13% respectively. Pulse 2 has seen these trends continue and in addition, student concerns regarding personal safety have increased 32% and 28% in February and March 2019 respectively.

Student concern with academic workload also saw a significant increase in Pulse 1(12%) and Pulse 2 (8%), the reasons for this are unclear, but may be related to lack of clarity about the workload expected and assignment bunching, both of which have been raised by Course Reps. These trends will continue to be monitored. Student concerns about accommodation were the only area which fell significantly (6%) in Pulse 1, which perhaps reflects the availability of accommodation on campus.

One of the areas of the wider student experience that Hull University Union explored in trimester 1 is the development of a more sustainable model for the funding of competitive student sport. Work by the President of Sport in December 2018 highlighted the impact of sport on the student experience and provides valuable context to some of the health and wellbeing concerns raised above, over 400 students responded to the survey. The results are in line with research conducted in 2015 regarding the impact of engagement with students' union activities.

| AU Member survey questions | % of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing |
|---|---|
| "Being part of an AU club has enhanced my time at Hull", | 95.5% |
| "Being part of an AU club has positively impacted on my physical health", | 91.4% |
| "Being part of an AU club has positively impacted my mental health", | 85.5% |
| "Being part of an AU club has been a major factor in me staying at Uni". | 69.1% |

The approach to the development and funding of competitive sport at the University is reviewed by the joint Sport Management Group and work on funding models and participation will be included in future reports.

# Conclusion

The Trimester 1 Student Voice Report provides an overview of student views on specific issues and Hull University Union's work to leverage these views to enhance the student experience. Future reports will provide additional detail on Pulse 2 and the work undertaken to explore student feedback on diverse issues from changes to graduation to Pulse data on student perceptions of ASTs and Faculty Hubs.

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