

# **STUDENT VOICE REPORT 2.0: ONLINE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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**January 2021**



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# **Foreword**

**Thomas Oatey, SU President**

**Lauren France, SU Vice President**

Harper Adams University is specialist agricultural university that was originally established as an agricultural college in 1901. Since its establishment, the institution has progressed to now provide a multitude of higher education courses in a variety of land and animal based subject areas. The student experience at Harper Adams University is categorised by extensive practical learning and high quality academic teaching. These are elements that Harper Adams Students' Union continues to prioritise as our academic representation work progresses.

This report follows on from our first Student Voice Report which was released in June 2020 following the move to online teaching due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Whilst the recommendations from the previous report have helped to shape the academic experience, we want to ensure that we are continually listening to the student voice and adapting to these ever-changing circumstances.

This second Student Voice Report highlights how our previous recommendations have been acted upon whilst suggesting further recommendations for the remainder of the 2020/21 academic year and beyond as we navigate out of this global pandemic. We appreciate that the past few months have been incredibly difficult for both students and staff alike, however we hope that by increasing our understanding of the current feeling amongst students, we can make a positive impact on the student experience.

A huge thank you to those who completed the Student Voice Survey that informed this report. Thank you also to the university staff members who have worked with the Students' Union this term to collect and act upon student feedback. Despite the circumstances, this has been an incredibly positive term for collaboration and communication, for which we are very grateful.

# **Executive Summary**

This report is the second Student Voice Report produced by the Students' Union and follows on from the recommendations made in the first report. The basis of this report is to summarise the findings of the second SU Student Voice Survey in order to evaluate the student experience of online learning and formulate further recommendations. The aim of this is to ensure that students at Harper Adams University continue to be provided with high quality teaching and that the university adapts to dynamic student feedback.

From analysing the responses received in the Student Voice Survey, it appears that many respondents are understanding of the limitations caused by COVID-19. However, despite this over half of respondents encountered some form of issue engaging with online study, the breakdown of which is discussed further within the report. Wi-Fi issues were found to be a predominant factor affecting accessibility, whilst some respondents expressed that they felt there was limited engagement when joining a session using the study buddy system.

Overall, although some elements of online learning did receive mixed feedback, the student experience in general appears positive. Consideration of the Student Voice and ensuring that feedback such as this is applied to decisions about online learning has arguably helped to ensure that the student experience has been maintained as far as possible under the circumstances.

# **1.0 Introduction**

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In June 2020, the Students' Union released its initial Student Voice Report, the first of its kind for the organisation. The report highlighted issues faced by students due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and put forward a set of recommendations aiming to improve the student experience. Six months later circumstances are continuing to change and it is therefore vital to review how students are currently finding their studies.

A second Student Voice Survey was released between November and December 2020, with questions placing a greater focus on a variety of teaching methods as well as accessibility, communication and support. Based on the feedback received from the survey, the Students' Union will continue to work collaboratively with the University to implement further recommendations.

# **2.0 Impact of the previous report**

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The first Student Voice Report was completed in the summer of 2020. This allowed feedback to be acted upon and recommendations to be implemented in advance of the 2020/21 academic year. The University and the Students' Union reacted proactively to the feedback received with an aim of minimising the impact of issues raised on the student experience.

The recommendations formed in the first Student Voice Report (seen below in Table 1) have largely been well implemented. Recommendations such as avoiding live lectures to minimise disruptions due to poor Wi-Fi have directly influenced the University's approach to online teaching in the 2020/21 academic year. Online lectures have therefore mostly been pre-recorded and an asynchronous approach to delivery has been adopted.

The previous Student Voice Report also recommended that all staff should be trained in online lecture delivery ahead of the new academic year. Extensive online training was developed by the University and the Students' Union which assisted with training of staff members whilst informing them on the findings of our initial report. There are a small minority who are yet to complete the training, however staff members have demonstrated an ability to adapt and develop their knowledge of online learning, despite there being some who may have had minimal previous experience.

Table 1 below details the recommendations formed in the first Student Voice Report whilst also evaluating how these recommendations have been implemented.

Recommendation	Evaluation
1.1 We would endorse the decision to move lectures online at the start of the 2020/21 academic year until safe to resume full face-to-face teaching.	The University moved lectures online for the 2020/21 academic year and have committed to resuming full face-to-face teaching when safe to do so and in line with government guidance.
1.2 Avoid using Microsoft Teams for large groups and avoid live lectures where possible.	It has been communicated to staff that they should avoid large groups on Microsoft Teams and the majority of online lectures have been pre-recorded rather than live. Pre-recorded Panopto lectures have received positive feedback from students.
1.3 Live Microsoft Teams sessions are recommended for smaller group sessions. Lecturers should provide clear guidance on how students can interact in these sessions.	Microsoft Teams has been effectively used for online tutorials and students have been supported with how to use Microsoft Teams. For the most part, students seem aware that they can engage using the 'hands up' and 'chat' functions. During Course Committees, a small number of students have raised that online lectures are less engaging and it seems students tend to prefer to keep their cameras turned off. More work in encouraging students to interact with their online sessions may be useful.
1.4 All staff should be trained in online lecture delivery ahead of the 2020/21 academic year.	Staff members were invited to complete compulsory training via the Learning Hub with information about how to record and upload lectures and how to engage students online. Most staff members have completed this training, however there are still some staff members yet to complete it.
1.5 The POP scheme should continue with focus on observation of online delivery for the 2020/21 academic year.	The POP scheme has not been a priority under the current circumstances. The SU has communicated with the incoming Director of Education regarding this and they aim to encourage staff to observe online lectures during term two. The POP scheme will hopefully also be revisited at LTSEC and the SU will continue to support the continuation of the scheme.

<p>1.6 All lectures should include a clear voice over and if there are exceptional circumstances, full notes/transcripts may be an option.</p>	<p>Training for staff members included how to record online lectures or include voice overs on Powerpoint presentations. This seems to have worked well and students have expressed positive feedback about recorded Panopto lectures. The University also implemented a policy preventing the provision of printed handouts however notes and additional reading are still included in module pages on the Learning Hub.</p>
<p>2.1 Transcripts of lectures should be generated for when students have access difficulties.</p>	<p>The implementation of closed captioning for online lectures has proven to be useful for accessibility purposes and students are making use of them. This may explain a lack of requests by students for full transcripts, however ongoing work to see if closed captions can be fully downloaded from Panopto will continue.</p>
<p>2.2 Live lectures should be avoided where possible.</p>	<p>Lectures have been pre-recorded with live sessions being used for smaller tutorial sessions. Feedback from students has mostly been positive however a small number of students have raised that they would like more opportunities to engage with their lecturer in a live lecture. This must be balanced against students who may experience Wifi issues during live lectures.</p>
<p>2.3 We strongly recommend the University should adopt asynchronous delivery for online lectures next academic year.</p>	<p>Asynchronous delivery has been adopted for online lectures alongside live online tutorials and face-to-face practical sessions. During Course Committees students have been positive about the ability to watch lectures at their own pace. Some issues were raised regarding students spending too long on these lectures, however an advice video was created to provide support and students are encouraged to speak with the learning support team if required.</p>
<p>2.4 An alert system for new content should be introduced.</p>	<p>The possibility of an alert system was discussed, however a combination of infrastructure and issues with students receiving excessive notifications or emails resulted in this recommendation being side-lined. During Course Committees students expressed gratitude to staff who email them when new content is uploaded onto the learning hub, however it was also appreciated that this would significantly increase workload for staff.</p>

<p>3.1 Lectures should have a follow up activity such as a discussion, quiz or online Q&amp;A with the tutor.</p>	<p>Staff training included advice about creating engaging content. The University and Students' Union also continue to work together to provide examples of best practice that can be shared with colleagues. Such an example is a weekly discussion on a module forum on the Learning Hub.</p>
<p>3.2 All modules should have a weekly activity list to say what materials should be accessed.</p>	<p>Staff training included advice about activity lists. This appears to have been implemented by many staff members with positive feedback being received by students. The 'activity completion' feature on the Learning Hub has also been popular with students and it has been recommended that staff make use of this feature.</p>
<p>3.3 The University and Students' Union should provide advice and training to students through induction/welcome activity on how to best engage with online lectures.</p>	<p>Advice and training was provided to students during the induction period at the start of term one. Later in term one, the SU worked with the university to produce videos that advised students on how to get the most from their online lectures. The SU will continue to work with the university to support students in engaging with online study.</p>
<p>3.4 All lecturers should publish how they will be available to students during any period of online learning eg. office hours, forums, phone, Microsoft Teams hours.</p>	<p>This has been recommended to lecturers and students do not appear to be unable to communicate with their lecturers. The university will continue to reinforce the importance of ensuring students are aware of their availability. The SU will also continue to work with students to help manage expectations.</p>
<p>3.5 We welcome a conversation about when students should use email, what alternatives they should expect and what the response expectations are.</p>	<p>Teams has been well implemented and in general students have a better understanding of expectations. The SU is aware of some minor issues relating to heightened expectations of response times, however the SU will continue to work with students to help manage expectations.</p>
<p>4.1 The University are asked to consider the comments on the library experience and consider any ways that might help students. If remote library access cannot be improved then perhaps different expectations in the alternative assessments would further support students.</p>	<p>The University, Students' Union and the Library team have been working in collaboration to act upon student feedback. Library opening hours have been carefully considered and online resources continue to improve as well as a 'click and collect' service being implemented. Some issues were raised in a recent Students' Union Course Committee summary report for term one which continue to be discussed with library staff.</p>

	Alternative assessments have also now taken the form of a TOBA (Timed Open Book Assessment) which does not require extensive full referencing. This may reduce pressure on students to find specific resources.
5.1 In the event of future lockdown/micro lockdowns/self-isolating, students would value a more consistent level of interactivity and engagement with peers and tutors, with more clear scheduling and consideration of the varied home circumstances of students. Recording all live online session is a recommended minimum way to improve accessibility of remote learning.	<p>Students continue to have a set timetable and have a minimum of one hour face-to-face teaching per module per week. Feedback suggests students would prefer tutor sessions to also be timetabled or to at least have clear and consistent scheduling of when these sessions will be.</p> <p>Discussions have taken place regarding recording of live online sessions however this initially did not occur due to data protection issues. In light of the change to online learning rather than a blended approach for many students pre and post Christmas, live sessions are permitted to be recorded by tutors and shared with students. These recordings will be deleted after two weeks. This policy will be reviewed in February 2021 depending on government guidance.</p>

**Table 1 An evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations from the first Student Voice Report.**

## **3.0 The Context**

The first Student Voice Report was contextualised by the height of a global pandemic and the beginning of a journey into online learning. This second report takes place six months down the line at a time when online learning has become the norm and both staff and students are far more experienced with the likes of Microsoft Teams.

Staff and students have become accustomed, if begrudgingly, to the uncertainty of learning during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and have proven to be incredibly adaptable. Circumstances continue to change, with the UK having most recently come out of a second lockdown during November 2020 and students having travelled home early for Christmas in a 'student travel window' There is therefore a sense of gratitude amongst students for the hard work their lecturers are putting in and an appreciation that they can continue with their university education. Alongside this however, is frustration at the uncertainty of the situation and annoyance that university life cannot be like 'normal'. This is important to consider when analysing the survey results with some feedback

suggesting that only 'normality' will be good enough, failing to recognise restrictions imposed by law.

## **4.0 Methodology**

Feedback was collected by distributing a survey to students via SurveyMonkey. Survey questions were in relation to a variety of topics such as online teaching, practical sessions, communication and support. Both open and closed questions were used, with multiple opportunities for students to provide unrestricted feedback in a text box.

Students were notified about the survey using social media and their student email accounts. Incentives were used to encourage completion of the survey, resulting in 628 respondents completing the survey. This provides a representative sample of 21.98% of the student population (student population statistic 2019/20 based on mainstream Undergraduate and mainstream taught Postgraduate students) at Harper Adams University, allowing significant amounts of data to be analysed.

## **5.0 Results**

The results of the survey were analysed using descriptive statistics to summarise the information collected and allow patterns to be identified. The results are separated according to area, such as online teaching or practical teaching.

The results demonstrated that students once again have had a mixed experience of online learning. Some students appear to prefer face-to-face delivery and have not enjoyed the move to online learning. Others however have benefited from the experience, suggesting it has provided a more flexible learning environment to work at their own speed. All students appear to recognise the need to make the most of the situation as a community. Many compliments were received regarding how staff have pulled together with students to ensure the learning environment is as inclusive and accessible as possible given the current climate.

The feedback summary below should be seen in this context. There are many areas for improvement, but these are offered in a collaborative spirit to try and ensure that we enhance the student experience of learning and teaching inside and outside of the classroom. We aim to do this in a way that optimises the spirit of Harper Adams and the student experience.

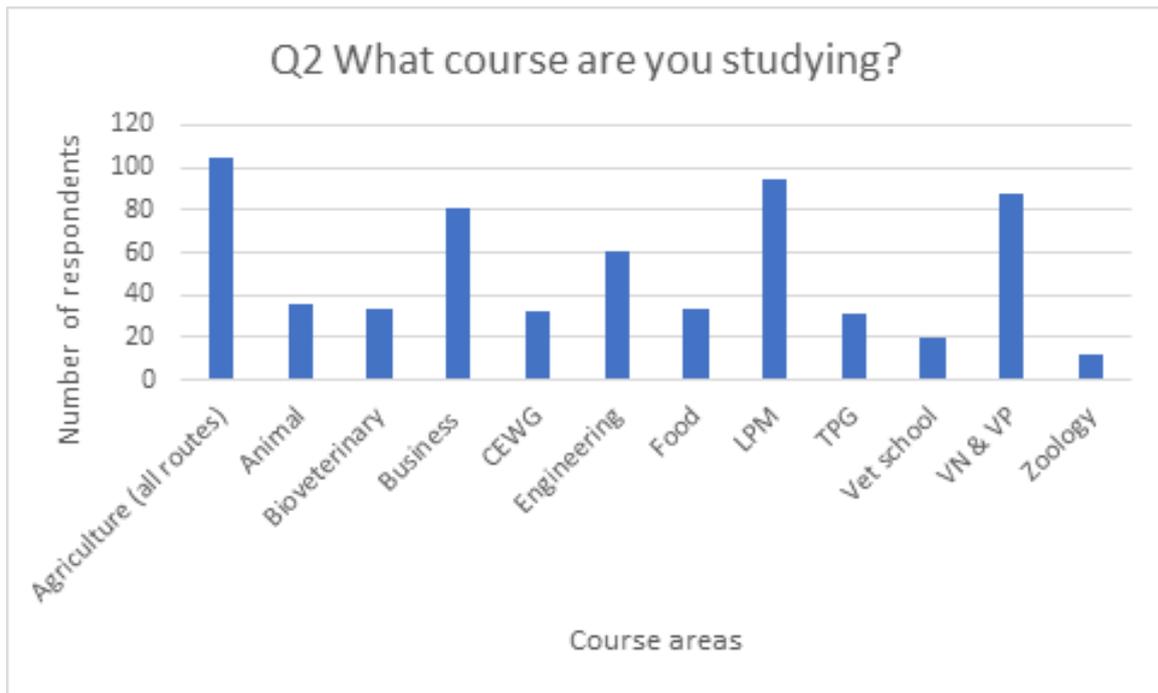
All student quotes are bullet pointed verbatim. Evidenced below are some of the comments receiving expressing compliments to staff.

- Glad I chose this uni as the environment is a lot nicer than others and all the teaching staff are really on top of their game, knocking it out of the park.
- I can understand and appreciate how hard the lecturers are working in order to effectively teach us.
- Harper is doing the best it can under the circumstances
- Thank you for doing your best to allow us to learn and get on with life as easily as possible.
- Wanted to say what a brilliant first year of university education I'm having thanks to harper and I'm really impressed with the teaching, communication and student support in place PowerPoint/Online lectures.

## **5.1 Demographics**

In comparison to the previous Student Voice Survey, the second survey included a wider variety of demographic questions. This allows us to draw more conclusions about respondents of the survey through data analysis. The survey was completed by 628 students, an increase of almost 3% from the previous survey carried out in May 2020.

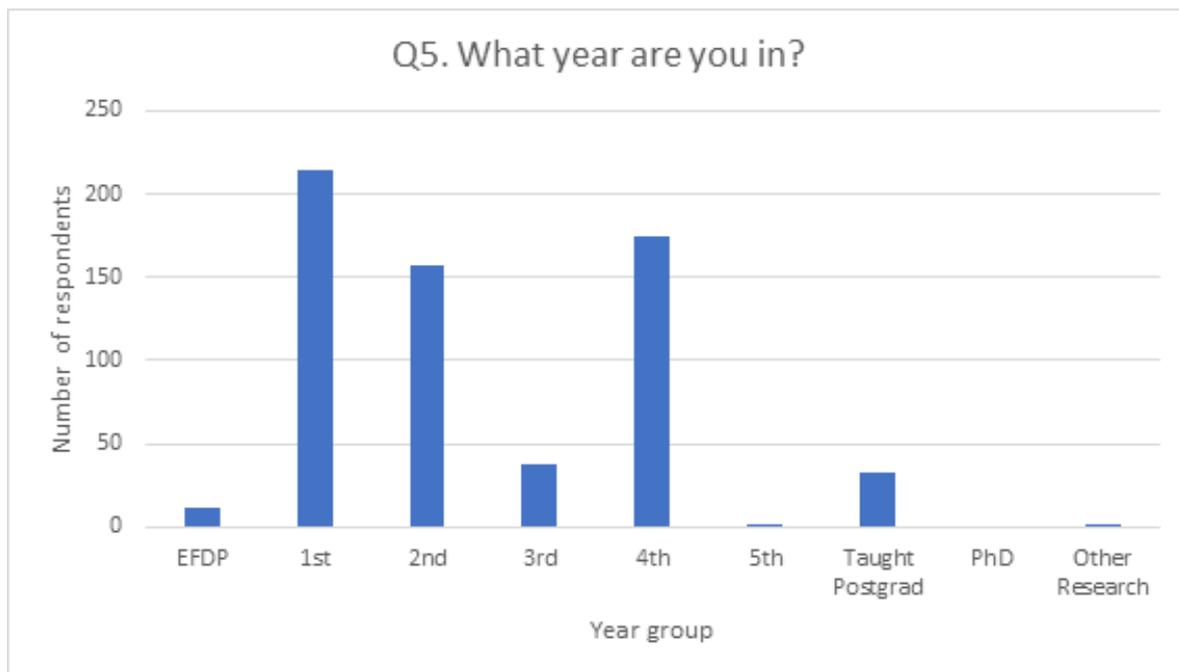
Of the respondents, 94% were studying an undergraduate course with the remaining 6% studying a taught postgraduate course. The most frequent course area amongst respondents was Agriculture whilst Zoology and Harper Keele Veterinary students made up the smallest percentage of respondents.



**Figure 1 A summary of the course areas of survey respondents**

The majority of responses were from home students (94%) which was to be expected due to the small number of EU and international students within the institution. As part of the survey, we wanted to ensure we were reaching all students such as those with disabilities including dyslexia and dyspraxia. Each year disabled students make up approximately 20% of the total student population. From our research 18% of those completing the survey said they were a student registered with a disability which is a similar percentage to the whole population, therefore giving us an accurate representation.

We were expecting most of the responses to be from students in their first (including year 0 for EFDP), second and fourth year of study due to these students having had the most experience of online teaching. This has clearly been shown in the results with a total of 88% of responses coming from these year groups. Fifth year students include those on the Meng route or students completing an Extended Foundation Degree Programme course leading onto a four-year BSc course, although this was only one respondent in this category.



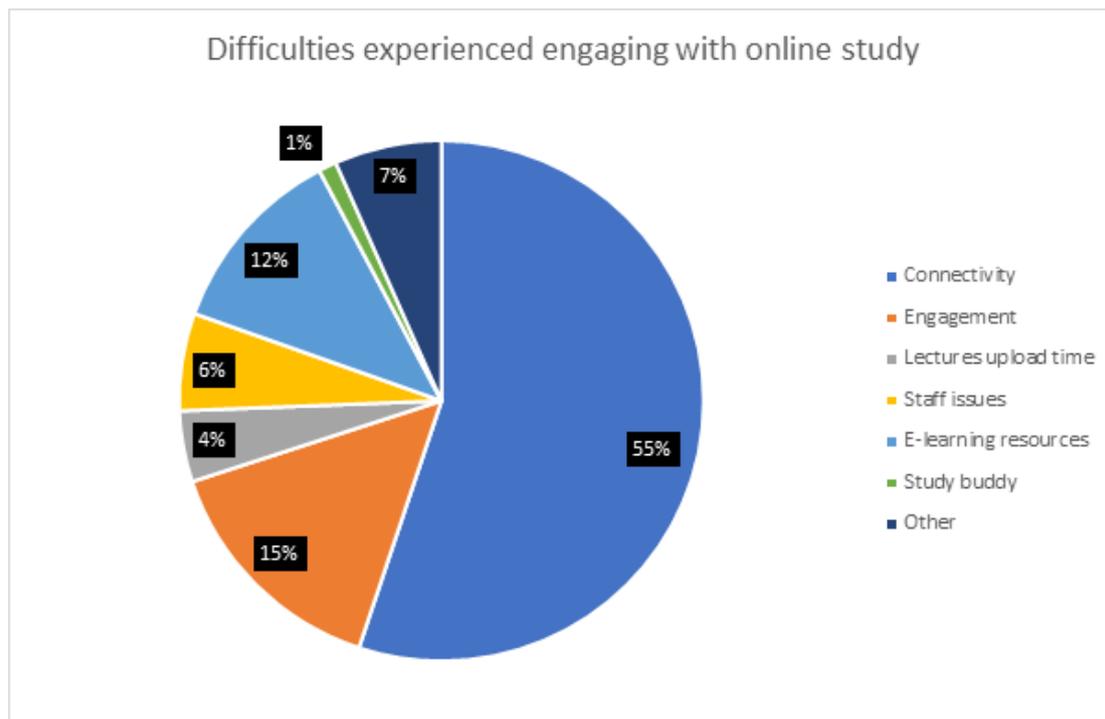
**Figure 2 A summary of the year groups of survey respondents**

## 5.2 Online Learning

Engagement with online study was a key point of this research with over 56% of respondents having experienced a problem when engaging with online study. This could for example include connectivity issues due to Wi-Fi, not having a suitable study space or problems with the content available to the student.

The university adopted Microsoft Teams as its official digital platform for delivery of a blended learning and teaching experience. Microsoft Teams is a relatively new programme to the university, with students having no experience prior to the pandemic. We therefore felt it was relevant to understand the level of confidence amongst students when using the software. 75.4% of students confirmed they were either confident or very confident using the software but 24.6% of students either responded neutral, unconfident or very unconfident. This suggests 1 in 4 students have experienced this as an additional barrier to engagement during the first academic term.

Respondents were asked to expand upon the difficulties they experienced whilst engaging with online study. Over half (55%) of those who experienced difficulties suggested this was due to Wi-Fi and connectivity issues when accessing online learning. This included downloading and watching pre-recorded lectures from the Learning Hub as well as issues with Microsoft Teams lagging or freezing and other issues related to relying on an internet connection.



**Figure 3 A summary of the difficulties survey respondents experienced in engaging with online study**

Of those students who experienced difficulties with online engagement, 15% said that they struggled to keep engaged and focus during online sessions. This was for a variety of reasons including background noise, unsuitable working environments, inability to concentrate for periods of time and lack of motivation due to having to manage one's own time. Students found that it was tempting to stop working due to other more 'interesting' distractions but this resulted in students getting behind on their work and then struggling to catch up.

The third most popular difficulty experienced by respondents was issues with e-learning platforms. Problems occurred when the Learning Hub was unavailable for periods of time and students described experiences of it crashing and therefore being unable to access their work. Respondents raised issues with Microsoft Teams, describing situations where there have been multiple or no meetings set up for students to join. Difficulties include those surrounding being able to use Teams effectively, students not knowing how to share screens and lagging making it unclear what is going on in the tutorial. When tutorials have been recorded using Panopto, it has been said to 'skip forwards and backwards' whilst students are watching, 'especially when there is other media in the video' such as a quiz or YouTube video. The recordings haven't always been a good quality resulting in poor sound which has made it hard to hear content.

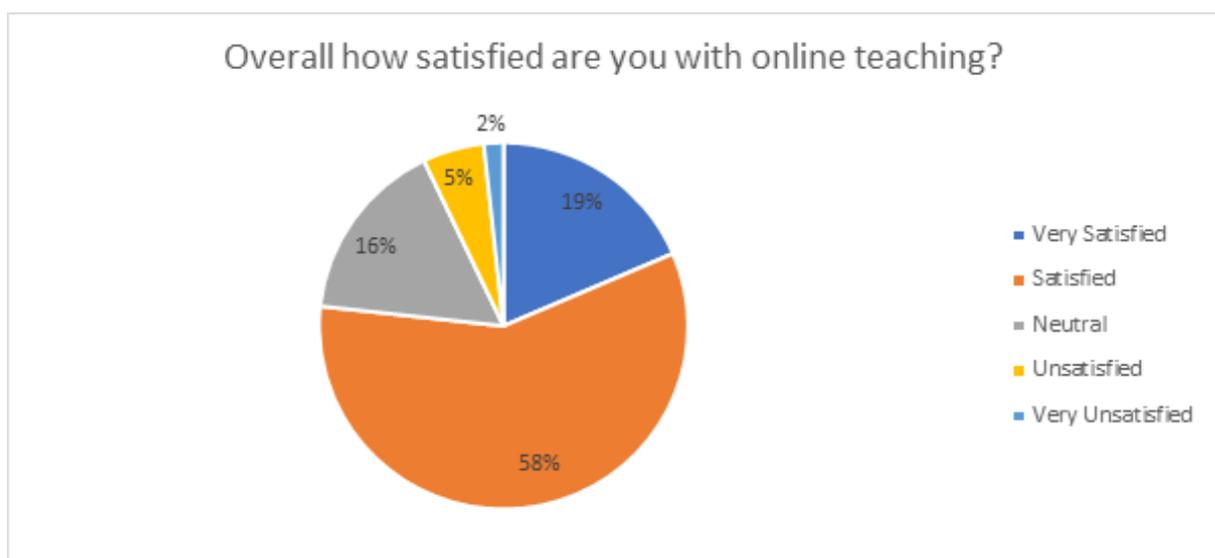
Seven percent of responses relating to difficulties engaging with online study included students not enjoying online studies and preferring a face to face

classroom environment. Other responses said this type of learning was a struggle for them due to their dyslexia.

Six percent of difficulties were due to teaching staff not being fully able to operate the software and equipment effectively which resulted in delayed starts to teaching sessions or inaudible live sessions due to the microphone not facing the right direction for example. A lack of communication between staff and students was also a reason for causing difficulties as students were unaware if the tutorial was happening online, in class or both

Other issues included the effectiveness of the study buddy system for students isolating and unable to attend face to face sessions. Initially this was the responsibility of students however, it was soon found to be more beneficial if staff were responsible for the study buddy system. This has been an improvement, however some issues still remain such as being unable to hear the lecturer clearly or being unable to see the whiteboard. This only accounted for one percent of responses in the survey but was an issue raised in multiple course committees and detailed in our Term One Course Committee Summary Report (Appendix 2). Another issue raised throughout the term was the late upload of lecture materials to the Learning Hub. Students have raised in Course Committees that lectures have been uploaded 'the night before or even the morning of the lesson'. This does not give students sufficient time to prepare for any face to face sessions in the module.

Overall, 77% of respondents said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with online teaching as a whole with another 16% being neutral and 7% being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.



**Figure 4 A chart showing the level of satisfaction with online teaching amongst survey respondents.**

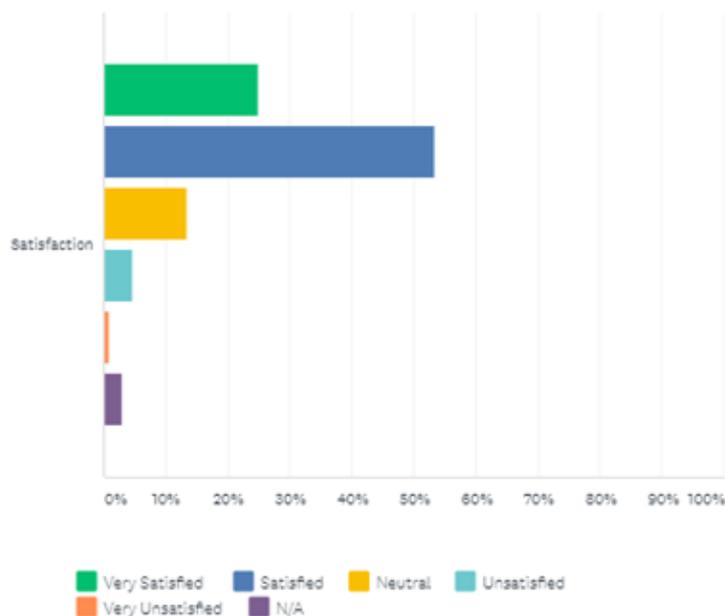
There was a range of comments given for this question from 136 respondents with ranging from positive to negative. Some of the key comments were as follows:

- Nice to be able to work at your own pace and the materials are of good quality and understandable
- Online lectures are good but tutorials are confusing and not effective
- Not as engaging as face to face
- I think it is excellent, very well organised
- I am always learning whether I'm in the classroom or learning online
- Not very suitable for me
- Better than I thought but sometimes very difficult to follow
- Very professional and helpful
- Reduces the change of catching Covid-19 which is good
- Some of the achieved materials that the PG students ae directed to are dated

### 5.3 Face-to-Face Learning

Overall how satisfied are you with your classroom based face to face sessions?

Answered: 539 Skipped: 89



	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEUTRAL	UNSATISFIED	VERY UNSATISFIED	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Satisfaction	24.86% 134	53.25% 287	13.36% 72	4.64% 25	0.93% 5	2.97% 16	539	2.01

**Figure 5 A summary of the level of satisfaction with classroom based face to face sessions amongst survey respondents**

Many students were satisfied or very satisfied with their classroom based face to face activity with 78.1% of respondents selecting these options. Face to face learning and teaching sessions have provided students with a respite from digital fatigue and a sense of normality. Students reflected on classroom based face to face sessions and reported that these provide the engagement that online learning lacks, commenting on the ability to engage with peers and academics.

- They have allowed me to ask questions I wouldn't have asked if it was all on teams.
- It's a good overall experience and is good to help explain the online lecture material.
- I feel the in person lectures are better than the online lectures. They are more structured and there is the chance to ask questions.

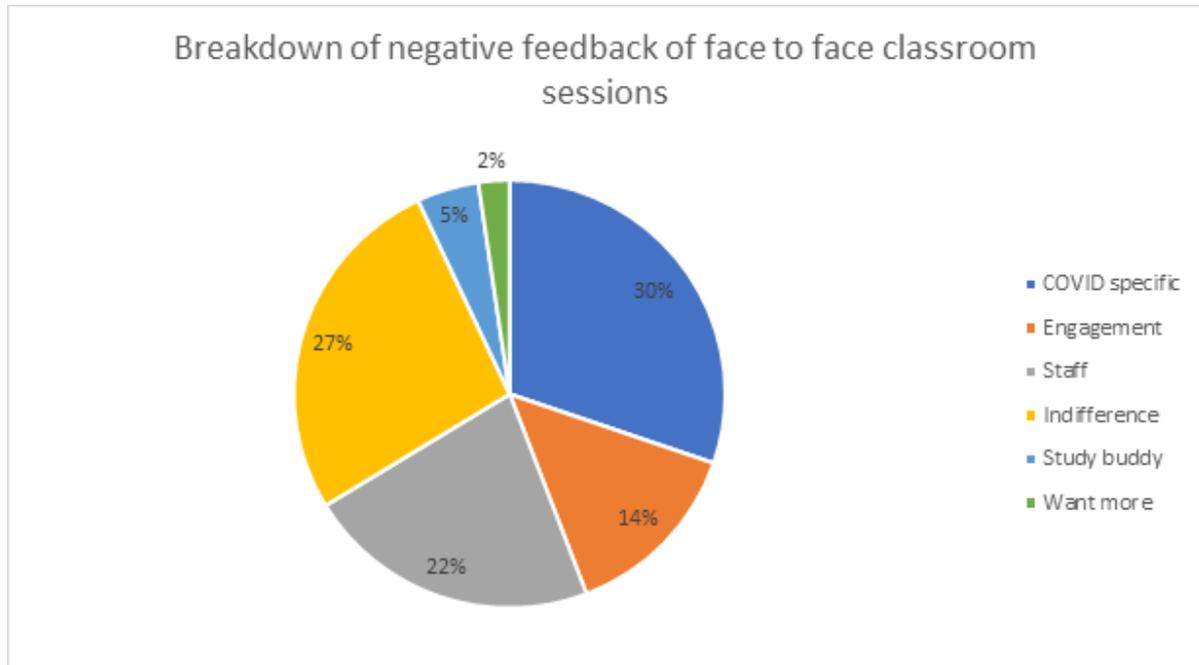
Those who reported either a neutral or negative stance highlighted a lack of social distancing and concern for safety within the class room as the main reason for their lack of satisfaction.

- There is always plenty of sanitiser and paper towels. Not totally satisfied as the bin is often at the entrance to the classrooms that have a different entrance and exit door. What is the point of that? Everyone files in in an orderly manor and then scrums to the entrance door to put their paper towel in the bin as others are trying to walk to the exit door. Bad system.
- Lack of social distancing
- Its ok- don't like being in though because of the thought of having to self isolate would prefer it all be online and be able to go for a walk and go to the shops!

From analysis of the written comments it is clear that students feel some sessions are not following the COVID secure guidance for teaching, therefore increasing anxiety and safety concerns amongst students. Several respondents were concerned with face-to-face teaching as they believed this would put them at a higher risk of isolation, which could affect their practical assessments.

During the first term we were aware of 179 positive COVID cases within the student population and a number of cases resulting in a large portion of a course group had to isolate due to close contact tracing. Due to this we wanted to analysis the effect this has had on the student experience of remote learning. Of 628 respondents, 539 students answered the question "Have you had to self-isolate during any face to face classroom sessions?". 58% (316) of the students who answered this question confirmed they had missed a face-to-face session due to isolation.

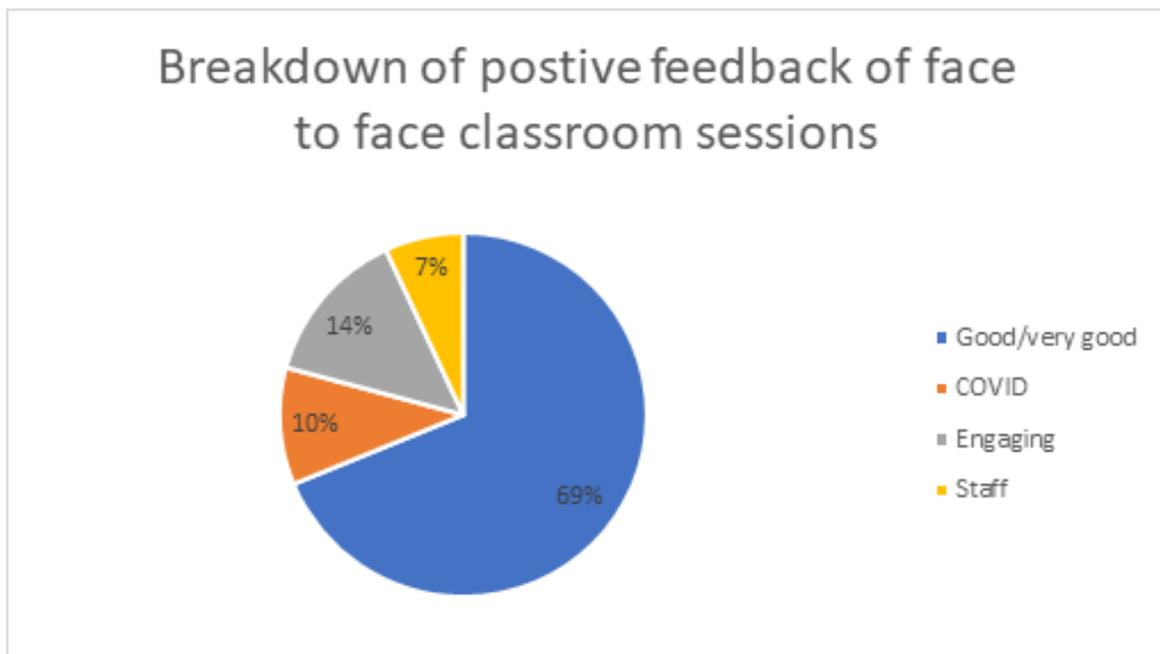
We asked students about their experience of face to face classroom sessions. It was pleasing to see over two thirds (67%) of respondents highlighted positive elements to this type of teaching. The remaining third (33%) highlighted some negative elements to their experience. Of this negative feedback, 30% was COVID-19 related with some students feeling that face-to-face sessions were an unnecessary risk and could be done online unless it was a practical session.



**Figure 6 A breakdown of the negative feedback received from survey respondents in regards to face to face classroom sessions**

Several respondents (27%) were indifferent about face to face sessions and did not find them of use or felt they were a repeat of the online session. Slightly over one fifth of these respondents suggested that staff elements were the reason for their negative comments, whether this was due to staff not allowing time for questions at the end of sessions or sessions running over time. Comments also included that staff did not know how to operate the technology such as Microsoft Teams, resulting in lost time during sessions. Some students (14%) found it difficult to engage/interact with the classroom sessions and wanted them to be more interactive.

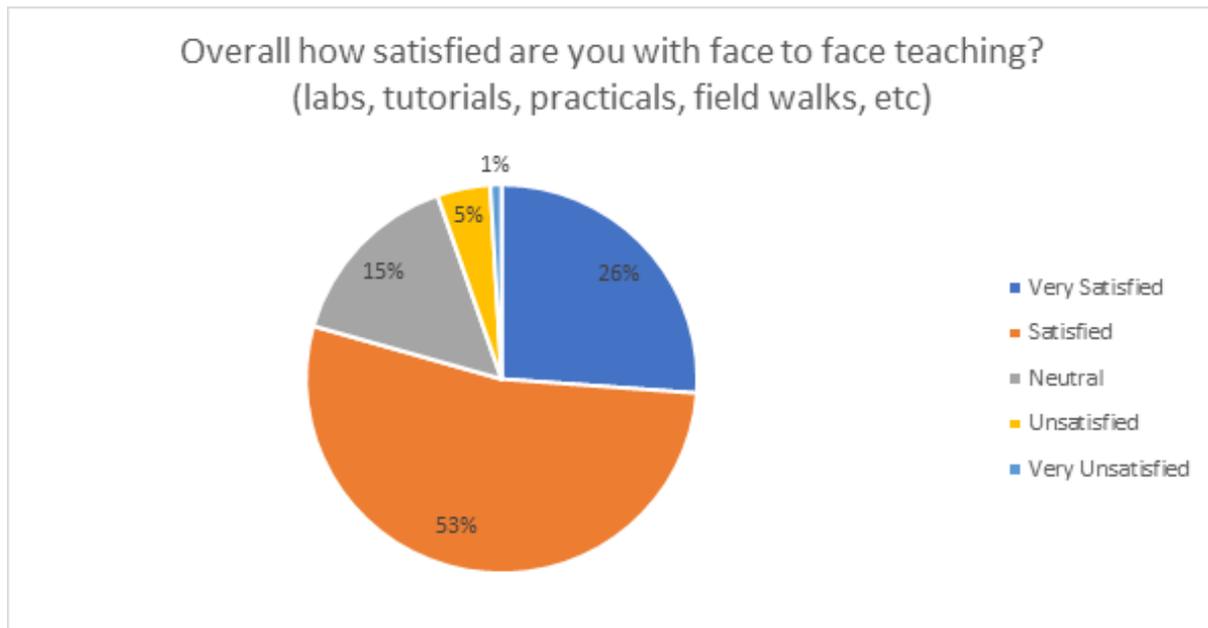
Conversely, the positive feedback (67%) for face to face classroom sessions rated sessions as good or very good (69% of positive feedback) with students highlighting the benefits of smaller class sizes.



**Figure 7 A breakdown of the positive feedback received from survey respondents in regards to face to face classroom sessions**

Students also noted that face to face sessions made them feel connected as it offered opportunities for students to engage with one another and with teaching staff. These sessions allowed for students to ask questions about the work they had done online and gain feedback. A number of positive comments regarding face to sessions were COVID related (10%) where students said there were good social distancing measures in place which made them feel comfortable. Students also highlighted the positive engaging nature of face to face sessions which allowed for students to learn more effectively which was preferred to an online learning environment.

Overall, 79% of students said they were satisfied or very satisfied with face to face teaching in general, including practical, lab-based and classroom sessions.



**Figure 8 A summary of the level of satisfaction with face to face teaching amongst survey respondents**

Some of the key comments about how students found face-to-face sessions were as follows:

- Given the circumstances the tutors have really tried to make it feel normal and put us at ease
- It is good they are still face to face
- Engaging
- Enjoyable, informative and interesting
- Farm walks are more engaging and more motivated to contribute
- The teaching is done safely
- Should be optional
- Non-attending due to anxiety

#### **5.4 Practical Learning**

For many students the engagement that was provided through a variety of practical sessions was essential. We asked students about their thoughts on delivery of these sessions. The majority of comments suggested that the delivery of these sessions were engaging and well received, but others reported frustrations about the requirement to wear PPE. At scale students reported their thanks for these sessions being permitted and said that they were well organised.

- Labs they delivered via a series of short videos which I actually think I gained more from than I would of in the labs as I could pause the video, go back and

because the lecturers were doing it I knew the methods were correct so feel better about knowing what to do myself. The walks were nice to get out as a tutorial group, socially distanced, and see the farm and crops

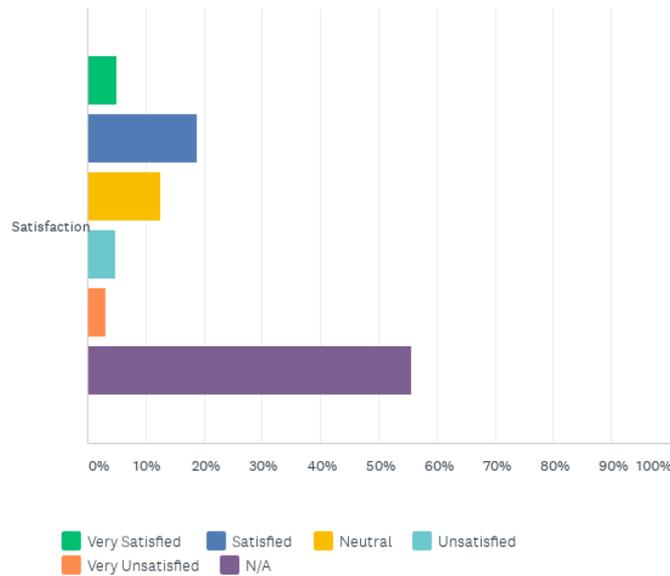
- Thought they were very well done considering social distancing etc
- All the sessions have been organised really well with covid in mind, social distancing maintained while still giving us opportunity to carry out activities we would have pre covid
- Able to do crop walks which is good. Labs were recorded some online and some face to face and presented on the screens so we could see which was good.
- Good because they allow for social distancing.

Negative comments were largely based on two major issues. The first issue related to the requirement to wear PPE/face coverings in outside spaces and on crop walks, with a number of comments referring to the PPE in labs as excessive. The other major issue raised was regarding practical sessions which did not require any hands on skill development, with a number of students commenting on the necessity of these sessions as they felt they were not developing any practical skills.

- Farm walks are no different to last year. I find the online lab sessions pretty much useless, as I am not actually carrying out the practical I am not actually gaining any practical skills.
- They make us wear masks walking to a field it's stupid. We have to wear too much PPE in labs.
- Lab sessions are obviously very restricted which makes you question why you should actually be there, when you could just watch the person on teams. Because of the spacing apart of students you can't actually see what's going on for example during a dissection. Because you're just watching the screen in the labs anyway, it makes sense just to broadcast it on teams.
- Using an outdoor area purely as a classroom is pointless. Unless it is actually practical it should be in a classroom. You cannot note take properly in e.g. the soil hall for a tutorial on a whiteboard.

Of those students surveyed, we asked if any student had to self-isolate during any scheduled practical session. Out of the 518 students who completed this question 151 students (31%) confirmed they had missed a practical session due to having to self-isolate. Of those sessions missed there was a fairly even spread across labs, Engineering, RFA, Farm Walks and the Animal Units. Students who reported that they missed a practical session due to self-isolating were also asked how they were able to engage with any practical session remotely and their overall satisfaction of the remote session.

### Q23 How satisfied were you with your remote practical set up?



**Figure 9 A summary of the level of satisfaction with remote practical set ups amongst survey respondents**

The vast majority of students answered that they were able to engage in the session via the Study Buddy system which was set up by a lecturer. However, 10% of those answering the question still mentioned that they were personally still having to set up Microsoft Team calls with peers, to be able to engage with the practical session.

A smaller number of comments highlighted further areas of concern regarding practical sessions on the farm and the lack of connection meaning students were unable to engage with the session. Practical sessions held outside seemed to receive this feedback, with the majority of comments referring to poor WiFi connection when trying to join a Microsoft Teams call outside, rather than being able to watch a recording of the session. Students who had missed field or crop walks spoke highly of recorded field walks by staff and thanked them for their additional time in creating these engaging videos.

Overall there has been a balanced opinion of the remote practical set up for students during term one. 23% of those who answered said they were very satisfied or satisfied, 13% said they were neutral and 8% of those reported as unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. This left 56% which answered N/A, who we assume didn't miss a practical and therefore have not had an experience of the remote practical setup.

The table below shows a breakdown of the overall satisfaction of each individual practical session that we identified before we launched the survey, alongside the weighted average for each.

	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEUTRAL	UNSATISFIED	VERY UNSATISFIED	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
RFA	1.57% 7	3.58% 16	1.12% 5	0.67% 3	0.00% 0	93.06% 416	447	2.13
Engineering Workshops	3.51% 16	6.36% 29	1.97% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	88.16% 402	456	1.87
Labs	16.27% 61	24.70% 123	4.42% 22	2.21% 11	0.20% 1	52.21% 260	498	1.86
Farm Walks	15.50% 75	20.45% 99	2.69% 13	0.83% 4	0.00% 0	60.54% 293	484	1.72
Animal Unit	16.28% 78	12.94% 62	2.51% 12	0.42% 2	0.21% 1	67.64% 324	479	1.62

**Figure 10 A breakdown of the level of satisfaction with practical teaching amongst survey respondents according to the type of practical session**

## 5.5 Accessibility

The two biggest accessibility challenges for students during the first academic term has been access to a consistent internet connection and issues relating to access of resources. Over 400 comments of these types were received. Students said they have to rely on a strong internet connection to engage and benefit from online study. A selection of illustrative comments shows the scope of these problems and their impact on study.

- WiFi on campus can be volatile.
- Keep the library open so student with poor WiFi or working environment at home can carry on working efficiently.
- WiFi issues mean some teams meetings are not possible.
- Online study is relatively easy to access. However I have had a few times during this year when WiFi has completely stopped working up to a week and this means it's been hard to do anything at all because of solely online lectures.
- Sometimes when everyone in the house is watching lectures or taking part in online tutorials, the internet is very slow.

Compared to the previous report, there were no comments relating to staff WiFi impacting the quality of live sessions. This may be explained due to staff having wider access to campus facilities compared to the last term of the prior academic year.

Students often highlighted the lateness of resources being added to Learning Hub by academic staff causing accessibility problems and further increasing the stress placed on students to watch these before tutorials. 40 comments were related to these points within the accessibility question.

- I think that the learning hub is well laid out but it is challenging as a student to be able to manage your time effectively when that week's online resource isn't uploaded until the last minute.

- Some lecturers don't make it clear where they have put the pre-recorded lectures. Which have often been uploaded late.

Students often highlighted that accessibility issues were made worse when resources were not clearly signposted or inconsistently uploaded into many different areas. A number of comments were made regarding uploading of material into teams which students suggest are difficult to find and engage with compared to using the Learning Hub which received very positive comments on accessibility.

- I enjoy that its put up online to access whenever but some lectures should out there work on sooner rather than a day before or on the day.
- Inconsistency in practice of uploading lectures on timing of the upload.
- Only that lecturers should make sure that they update at the same time or first thing Monday morning. A couple have said "have you had a chance to look at the lecture" during their tutorial, when they only uploaded it a couple hours prior midweek. May have been possible for those living on campus to just about squeeze it in, but not someone who has a 40min commute. There needs to be a 9am upload on a Monday morning really.
- I think that the learning hub is well laid out but it is challenging as a student to be able to manage your time effectively when that weeks online resource isn't uploaded until the last minute
- On the whole it is relatively accessible, however, some lectures are quite late to be uploaded compared to when the tutorial is, giving me stress that I will not complete the notes on time.

A number of comments were made from students regarding the ability to download lectures from Panopto. Some students highlighted they were able to and some students haven't, showing inconsistencies across delivery.

- Being able to download video lectures was an advantage.
- Good availability. All content could be downloadable to help those with connection issues.
- I should be able to download the online lectures on Panopto and listen offline when I go for run outside.
- Good availability. All content could be downloadable to help those with connection issues.
- Most content is accessible. Being able to download would be a benefit.

Of the 60 comments we received regarding the study buddy system, it is evident that a lack of engagement with remote learners may impact the accessibility of teaching. Some comments suggested academics had not organised meetings in advance and were not following the latest update from the university.

- It is sometimes hard to hear the lecturers when you are study buddying in on a course mates laptop, it is much easier to hear when the lecturer is hosting the teams call.
- Study buddy system doesn't work, students taking responsibility for other students learning is distracting and unfair. Then some lecturers forget that there are students online and they don't learning anything.
- Lecturers should be in charge of putting up the study buddy links and make sure people can hear them. Pre-recorded lectures should be put up earlier.

The majority of students were found to join classes remotely via Microsoft Teams set up via the academic leading the session. Of the 2.6% of respondents who said they engaged through another means, they mostly joined through Teams calls set up by students with a very small number joining through another method as well as Teams, such as FaceTime or WhatsApp. In total, 64% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their remote classroom set up and 10% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. When students were asked to justify their answer, the typical comments included the following:

- It was good considering the circumstances
- Easy enough when set up by tutor
- It was difficult to hear tutorial
- Mostly good but little interaction from students
- Set up was adequate but the level of engagement was much lower
- Very effective
- Very well organised
- Its not the same as being face to face
- Very well organised
- Just the same
- Can be difficult to contribute

Students also raised a small number of issues relating to equipment, which were directed at staff headsets and microphones either not working or being faulty.

## **5.6 Communication**

During the current climate it is essential that communication is as strong as it can be so that students are informed with relevant information at the right times. Because of this, we asked students how satisfied they were with their experience of the university's communication regarding learning and teaching.

	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEUTRAL	UNSATISFIED	VERY UNSATISFIED	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	20.00% 95	54.95% 261	16.00% 76	6.32% 30	1.47% 7	1.26% 6	475	2.13

[Comments \(96\)](#)

**Figure 11 A breakdown of the level of satisfaction with communication amongst survey respondents**

Overall students are very satisfied to satisfied with the level of communication they are receiving from the University (75%) with 25% replying neutral to very unsatisfied. On analysis of the comments students have positively commented on the university's level of communication and the information provided on latest guidelines and rules:

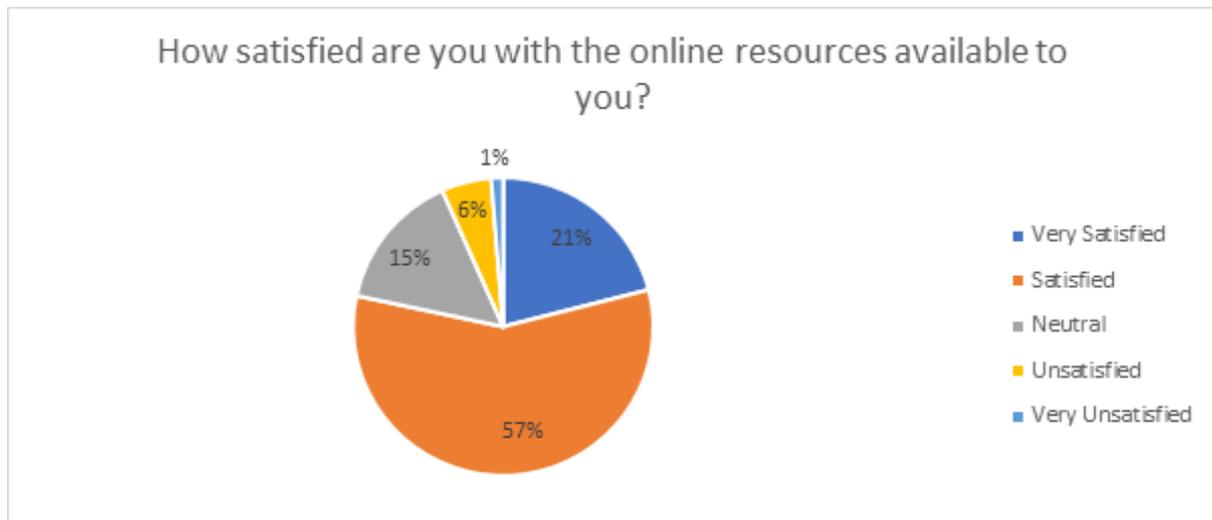
- I know it's a hard time, but I think they've been great at explaining things. I think more work to show the general public that most students well behaved would be great.
- Uni's communication has been clear and updated regularly.
- They have kept us up to date with what is going on regarding corona and the rules.
- I feel I have been well informed of the different approaches to learning and how they will operate.

We are pleased to see that the information regarding learning and teaching has been well received, but alongside these positive comments a number of issues have also been raised. It is clear that students are receiving far too many emails due to the automatic system that Microsoft Teams runs on. Over 30 comments were received regarding the volume of emails that have been sent this year, causing students to lose track of important emails. These emails appear to be at a tutor level rather than wider email communications, however a number of comments were made about the length of coronavirus update emails sent by the Vice Chancellor.

- Too many emails to keep track of what's important especially now we are getting more telling us about tutorial groups we don't need.
- Too many emails especially regarding teams meetings that aren't relevant - all tutorials are invited not just one.
- Emails a bit lengthy.
- The one thing I would say is that the covid updates sent from the vice-chancellor seem very 'aggressive' and don't really do much to put us at ease. I understand the gravity of the situation being in a pandemic, but perhaps they could be delivered in a more easy to read, user friendly way so that we don't feel bombarded with information.

## 5.7 Resources and Support

With 50% of teaching being carried out online we wanted to hear how students felt towards the resources that were available to them online. We asked them to consider resources such as the library, academic support, recorded lectures and other online wellbeing support that has been offered.



**Figure 12** A chart showing the level of satisfaction with online resources amongst survey respondents

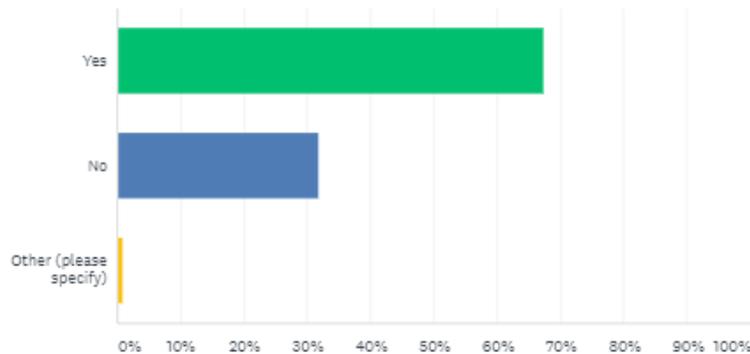
From the responses to this question 78% were satisfied or very satisfied with the range on online resources available with comments such as 'booking to go to the library was very easy' and 'lots of resources available'. Students confirmed that materials provided are accessible and easy to find via the Learning Hub. Seven percent of respondents said they were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the online resources available and said there was a 'lack of academic guidance support' and it can be 'frustrating not being able to get books out straight away, need to think what you need'.

When reviewing negative experiences nearly all comments related to experience of online lectures being uploaded less than 48 hours before tutorials. This was commonly during a weekend when students were not reviewing the Learning Hub for updated materials. These experiences are echoed in comments received in the open ended questions concerning accessibility.

Late uploading of recorded material was identified as an issue during Course Committees, resulting in a question regarding experiences of late uploads being introduced to the survey.

Have you experienced a late upload of recorded lecturers material? (less than a week before the timetabled tutorial/practical session)

Answered: 560 Skipped: 68

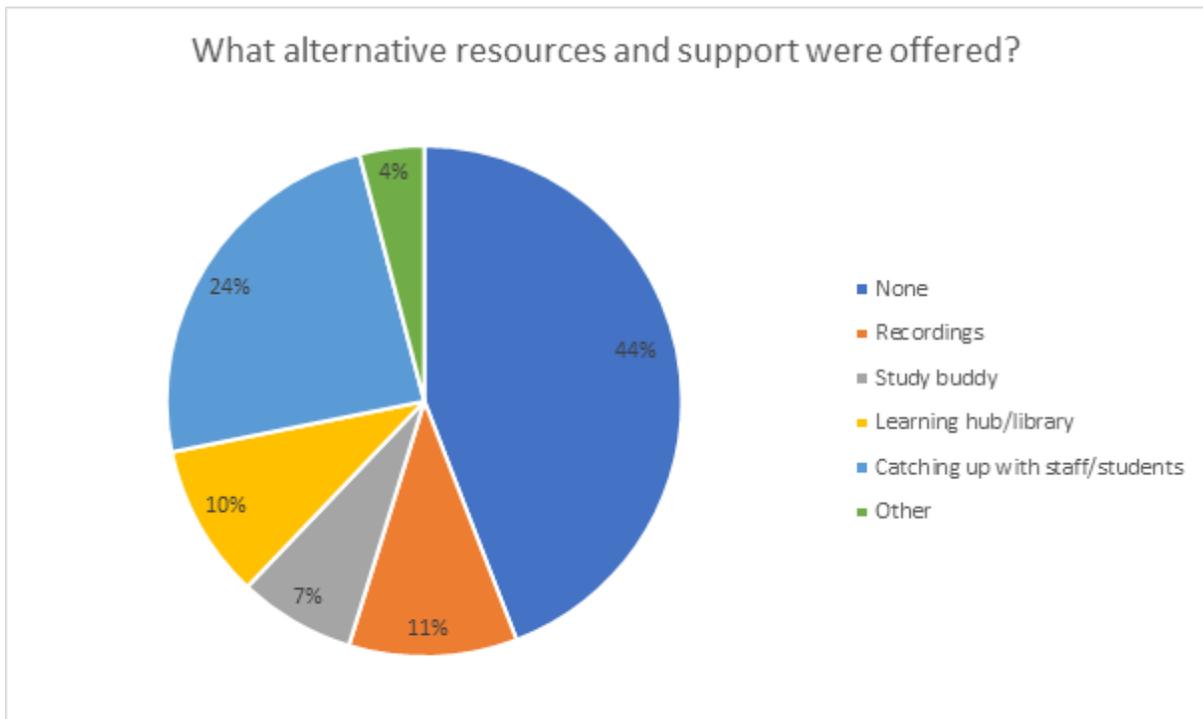


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Yes	67.32%	377
▼ No	31.79%	178
▼ Other (please specify)	0.89%	5
TOTAL		560

**Figure 13 A chart showing the percentage of survey respondents who have experienced a late upload of lecture material**

67.3% (377) of students confirmed they had on one or more occasions experienced a late upload of a recorded lecture. Comments showed support and appreciation towards academics and students on the whole showed empathy for increased workload on academics. However, an overwhelming number of comments directly linked the late upload of materials to increased anxiety and stress within the student body.

Due to students having to isolate and being unable to attend the classroom in person we also wanted to investigate any alternative resources that were introduced to ensure students were able to keep up to date with their studies.



**Figure 14** A chart showing the alternative resources and support offered to survey respondents

Almost half of respondents suggested they were not offered any alternative resources or support when they were needing to catch up on work missed. This is something which should be investigated going forward to ensure that students are not falling behind with their work.

Alternatives are available such as recordings of missed sessions such as a crop walks. Students used the study buddy system (7%) to dial in the sessions and almost a quarter (24%) of respondents used notes provided by other students to catch up. Some members of staff offered one to one calls or catch up sessions to prevent students falling behind due to being unable to attend a physical session. Other support included drop-in sessions with the Students' Union or members of staff from Student Services to check up on students' wellbeing and mental health.

### 5.7.1 Improvements

Students were invited to leave comments about the ways their student experience of learning remotely online may have been improved. While we hope not to return to a full lockdown again, the suggestions carry over into a blended set up. The comments have been thematically grouped. The top three areas mentioned are;

1. Students highlighted organisation as a major development that would improve their digital educational experience. Over 50 comments

detailed points including staff adding Microsoft Teams calls into student outlook calendars and ensuring lectures are provided within good time before tutorials. The vast majority of these comments included the development of lectures being added to the timetable.

- Ensure that lectures are provided within good time before tutorials.
- It would be helpful if lectures could be put up at least a week in advance. If they online lectures were actually an hour of content. I think it would also be helpful to have the lecture slot in our timetable to structure the week more.
- Online recorded lectures should be placed in the timetable so that students feel that they need to watch them at a specific time.
- Put more of a timetable of which work should be done and when, on the right side of the learning hub there is a tab which shows some work but not all that needs to be completed that week, would be nice to see a work schedule.
- To make sure all the lecturers are a week ahead on the lecture uploads to VLE
- Provision of materials at least a week in advance

2. Students highlighted that different approaches and skill levels by different lecturers is causing confusion and frustration within the student body. In the first report it was widely recognised that the situation may have led to this. Within the survey comments this time, staff training and clarity to ensure consistency has been a major theme within this specific question set.

- There needs to be more alignment between different modules. Some lecturers provide closed caption on all lectures where as some choose not to.
- There should have been a blanket rule for all courses. As some courses have had additional lectures/ teams meetings where others have had nothing which provides unfair advantages.
- Lectures all need the same training so that they can all share the screen, have working microphones where we can hear and actually engage with us that are online and listen if we have any problems. Just ensure they are all trained and have the proper equipment. we're paying to be here, we shouldn't have these problems really!

3. The third improvement from students was also about ensuring lectures are all consistently engaging and supporting students. In the survey support levels varied from consistent communication and support from lecturers to students feeling isolated and alone. This creates further stress for students and we would welcome some further guidance and reassurance from the university of expected contact levels for students.

4. The call for live online lectures was prominent within the responses, alongside corresponding comments asking for an improvement in the WiFi across campus.

We can conclude from analysing the source of comments requesting live lectures, that these appear to be coming from respondents who have a more reliable and high speed internet service.

### **5.7.2 Examples of Best Practice**

We also asked students to highlight any good experiences they have had with online study that they felt would be beneficial if shared further. There were several really good practices that we wanted to take the time to highlight:

- Really enjoyed participating in the sensory evaluation that was sent in the post and completed using teams.
- The quizzes put on some of the lectures in the pantopo app are beneficial as they give us a break and help make sure we've taken in what is being said.
- Lab anatomy classes. Can see more in depth and clearer on dissections
- Crop protection and technology pre recorded lecture done in a 'weather man' style. Research methods tutorials with menti
- In labs dissections were easier to see through the online video via teams than what they were in the actual class.
- The use of online software during tutorials to maximise engagement & involvement for everyone in the classroom and at home e.g. the use of Menti and Kahoot. These have been used in Economic Policies with Dimitrios Paparas and Leadership and People Management with Claire Toogood. Really great resources.
- Some lectures have quiz questions half way through which REALLY helps to stay engaged. Other lecturers send out an email each week detailing what is to be done for the week on the given subject - this helps to stay organised.
- The use of menti.com has been a very successful platform in online tutorials as it encourages whole class participation and keeps everyone engaged, therefore I think this platform could be utilised further by other lecturers.

Students were also asked what materials may improve their educational experience. Students used this space to specifically highlight their concerns and issues with the late uploading of pre-recorded lectures before tutorials (<150 comments). The overwhelming feedback showed that this is a consistent issue across course areas.

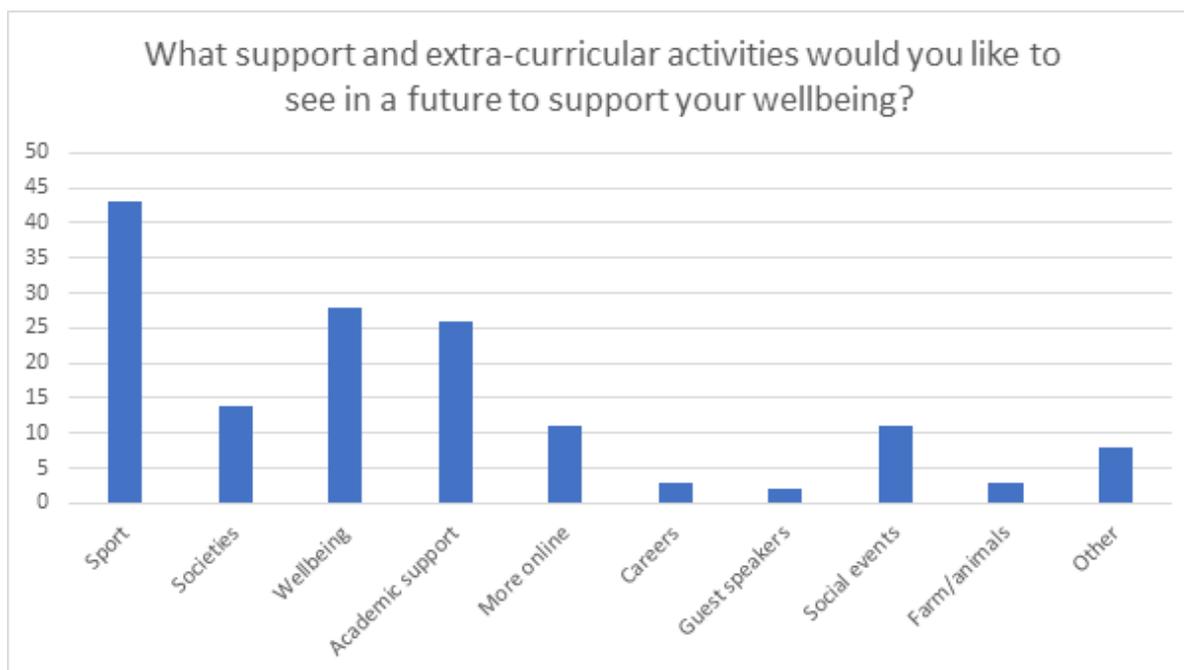
Other materials noted by students were:

- Past papers put on earlier to see what we need to learn from lectures and tutorials.
- More access to online reports and papers.
- Booklets such AHDB booklets.
- Online examinations and quiz's (not assessed) are useful.
- The lectures being printed out for us and then have a collection point. Some paper resources of the lectures would be extremely helpful because I cannot afford printer ink/paper in addition to my tuition fees.
- Plan of what to do that week. Especially with HRP project.
- Access to the edc for 24 hours
- Databases: Mintel report, Passport, Statista, Google scholar and Sciencedirect

### **5.8 Extra-Curricular Activities**

We wanted to ask students what they would like to see more of in terms of extra-curricular activities to help support their wellbeing. We thought that this question would give the SU an insight in the types of events students would like to see being organised.

Most of the comments which referenced sports involved students wanting a wider variety of sport to be offered and for club training to continue. This is a matter the SU has carefully considered and continued to review throughout the term, however with national restrictions being in place this has restricted the sports that can be offered.



**Figure 15 A chart showing the types of support and extra-curricular activity that survey respondents would like to see in the future**

There were a series of comments relating to wellbeing and students wanting more wellbeing services to be offered, including one to one sessions with tutors to discuss how students are progressing with their work. Students also suggested they wanted to see more wellbeing services from Student Services and the SU. Desired sessions include those regarding general wellbeing, how to cope with studying remotely and drop-in sessions for students who are not necessarily isolating. Throughout the first term the SU and Student Services staff have been running drop-in sessions for isolating and non-isolating students on a regular basis. Work can be done here to improve the advertising of these sessions to increase students' awareness of them.

Twenty six comments were associated with the general academic experience rather than activities students would like to see. Comments included students wanting a printing allowance to make up for the materials they would have previously had in other years.

Feedback also included students wanting some online events hosted by the SU which can be engaged with by students in their flats, houses or halls of residence. Over the past term the SU has run a series of virtual events including quizzes, escape rooms and live game shows which have had minimal engagement from students. We are in the process of reviewing our strategy for targeting students and investigating the events students would like to see.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

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Based on the feedback from those who completed the Student Voice Survey, a set of further recommendations have been produced for consideration in term two of the 20/21 academic year. These recommendations are a continuation from those suggested in the first report and are once again offered in the spirit of promoting positive change to the student experience.

### **6.1 Recommendation 1**

A number of comments were received from survey respondents regarding late uploads of online lectures where tasks must be completed ahead of a tutorial. This issue was also prominent in term one Course Committees across multiple course areas.

It is understood that staff are under immense pressure and their hard work is certainly appreciated. Late uploads of content, however, causes additional stress for students who are already struggling to plan and manage their workload. Therefore, it is recommended that a minimum requirement for pre-record content being uploaded in advance of tutorials is enforced. The SU will work with the university to review and negotiate an appropriate minimum requirement to be reinforced during term two.

### **6.2 Recommendation 2**

Due to comments received by students regarding organisation and scheduling of live online sessions, it is recommended that Microsoft Teams calls are added to student Outlook calendars. The aim of this is to support students with organising their remote study. The SU will lobby the university to introduce a consistent method of promoting live Microsoft Teams sessions.

### **6.3 Recommendation 3**

Consistency remains a prominent topic raised by students. Whilst the intent is not to limit the originality and individuality of teaching, it is recommended that there is increased consistency across modules and departments to ensure students have the best possible experience.

Students have expressed frustration during Course Committees where they perceive the treatment of students on other courses to be different in regards to teaching, support or assessment criteria. The SU will therefore urge the university and Heads of Department to ensure all lecturers have attended online training and will continue to gather feedback from students on this subject.

#### **6.4 Recommendation 4**

Feedback suggests that remote learners feel less engaged, particularly when calling into a face to face session via the study buddy scheme. The current SU Officers therefore commit to lobbying the university to continue supporting staff with up to date training and advice regarding how to engage remote learners. It is appreciated that engagement with online learning can be difficult to achieve, however the SU will continue to assess student feedback and communicate this to staff.

#### **6.5 Recommendation 5**

A significant barrier to engagement and accessibility is Wi-Fi issues. For the most part this is a structural issue that will most likely remain incredibly difficult to resolve. The SU will, however, champion the improvement of Wi-Fi provision in halls of residences across the university campus. The SU will work with Student Services to educate students in off-campus accommodation about suitable Wi-Fi packages and speeds. The SU will also work with landlords in the local area to champion the improvement of Wi-Fi provision in accommodation where this is already included within the rent.

#### **6.6 Recommendation 6**

It is vital, particularly during such confusing and stressful times, that communication with students is both informative yet clear. It is recommended that the SU work with the university to ensure communication is 'student friendly' and concise whilst retaining the importance of the information provided.

#### **6.7 Recommendation 7**

The response of the university in respect of educational and well-being support has been impressive given the circumstances. Remote learners and isolating students do have multiple sources of support, however it is recommended that the SU and university work together to improve the awareness of the support available.

#### **6.8 Recommendation 8**

The majority of students have now grown accustomed to using Microsoft Teams and other new platforms. There are a small number, however, that have raised concerns about their confidence using these new platforms. It is suggested that periodic support sessions are held throughout the year for students to ask questions and learn about new features of these continually updating platforms.

## **6.9 Recommendation 9**

For many students, a significant part of their experience involves club and society activity which has unfortunately been minimal due to the pandemic. The SU will continue to support C&S Executives in providing online activity to their members.

The SU will also continue to work towards the delivery of sports clubs and societies when it is safe to do so and within government and national governing body guidelines.

## **6.10 Recommendation 10**

Many lecturers have been working hard to ensure their lectures include interactive content to improve student engagement and this has received positive feedback from students. The SU will work with the university to ensure the development of follow up activity is continued across all areas to increase interactivity and peer interaction in the form of discussions, quizzes or online Q&A's with tutors.

## **6.11 Recommendation 11**

As with term one, the SU will continue to publish and recognise best practice within the community to help inspire and push for constant improvement in the student experience.

## **6.12 Recommendation 12**

Due to the online learning environment being less structured than 'normal' delivery, students appear to be struggling with time management and productivity. It is therefore recommended that the SU and university work together to explore digital timetables or time management sessions to encourage students to make efficient use of their time.

## **6.13 Recommendation 13**

For the majority of students, term two will begin with purely online learning off-campus. Both Student Voice Surveys have identified the issues students have experienced in engaging with online study. Due to the highlighted issues regarding Wi-Fi, computer access and working environment, we strongly recommend that the university continues with asynchronous delivery for the remainder of the academic year.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

Ultimately, whilst the pandemic raises difficulties for both students and staff, the community at Harper Adams has shown immense strength and spirit despite the circumstances. It is hoped that this second Student Voice Report highlights the improvements that have been made due to the dedication of staff to providing an outstanding level of teaching. Students have also demonstrated themselves to be incredibly versatile and understanding regardless of the challenges being thrown their way.

The recommendations provided in this report should be used as guidelines for further improvement rather than criticism in order to maintain excellent standards of the student experience. The SU will of course continue to speak for students and make their voices heard, whilst improving the level of academic representation and standards of the SU itself.

# **Appendix 1: Student Voice Survey**

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Welcome to the survey

**At Harper Adams Students' Union we are conducting this survey to better understand your experiences of the new blended learning and teaching approach. The results of this survey will be collated into a report which will be presented to the University in order to review the first academic term of 2020. This will then allow for developments and improvements to be made for the second half of the academic year.**

**No names will appear in the results and any answers will not be traced back to an individual student unless we need further information regarding an issue or comment. If you have any further questions about the survey, please get in touch with the Students' Union at [studentsunion@harper-adams.ac.uk](mailto:studentsunion@harper-adams.ac.uk).**

\* 1. Are you an Undergraduate student or Postgraduate student?

Undergraduate

Postgraduate

\* 2. What course are you studying?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> AGRI-BUSINESS   | <input type="radio"/> FOOD AND CONSUMER STUDIES                             |
| <input type="radio"/> AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS                                    | <input type="radio"/> FOOD INDUSTRY MANAGEMENT                              |
| <input type="radio"/> AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING                                  | <input type="radio"/> FOOD MANUFACTURING WITH MARKETING                     |
| <input type="radio"/> AGRICULTURAL LAW  | <input type="radio"/> FOOD TECHNOLOGY AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT               |
| <input type="radio"/> AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND PRODUCTION SYSTEMS              | <input type="radio"/> FOOD TECHNOLOGY WITH NUTRITION                        |
| <input type="radio"/> AGRICULTURE   | <input type="radio"/> FORESTRY MANAGEMENT                                   |
| <input type="radio"/> AGRICULTURE WITH ANIMAL SCIENCE                           | <input type="radio"/> GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIROMENTAL MANAGEMENT                 |
| <input type="radio"/> AGRICULTURE WITH CROP MANAGEMENT                          | <input type="radio"/> INTERNATIONAL AGRI-BUSINESS AND FOOD CHAIN MANAGEMENT |
| <input type="radio"/> AGRICULTURE WITH FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT                 | <input type="radio"/> IPM   |
| <input type="radio"/> AGRICULTURE WITH MECHANISATION                            | <input type="radio"/> LAND AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT                          |
| <input type="radio"/> AGRI-FOOD MARKETING WITH BUSINESS                         | <input type="radio"/> MECHANICAL ENGINEERING                                |
| <input type="radio"/> AGROECOLOGY   | <input type="radio"/> PLANT HEALTH AND BIOSECURITY                          |
| <input type="radio"/> ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE                              | <input type="radio"/> PLANT PATHOLOGY                                       |
| <input type="radio"/> ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE                                 | <input type="radio"/> PRODUCT SUPPORT ENGINEERING                           |
| <input type="radio"/> ANIMAL PRODUCTION SCIENCE                                 | <input type="radio"/> REAL ESTATE   |
| <input type="radio"/> APPLIED MECHATRONIC ENGINEERING                           | <input type="radio"/> REALM   |
| <input type="radio"/> APPLIED ZOOLOGY   | <input type="radio"/> RUMINANT NUTRITION                                    |
| <input type="radio"/> AUTOMOTIVE ENGINEERING (OFF HIGHWAY)                      | <input type="radio"/> RURAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT                             |
| <input type="radio"/> BIOVETERINARY SCIENCE                                     | <input type="radio"/> VETERINARY BIOSCIENCE                                 |
| <input type="radio"/> BUSINESS ECONOMICS  | <input type="radio"/> VETERINARY MEDICINE AND SURGERY                       |
| <input type="radio"/> BUSINESS MANAGEMENT WITH MARKETING                        | <input type="radio"/> VETERINARY NURSING WITH COMPANION ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR    |
| <input type="radio"/> COUNTRYSIDE AND ENVIROMENTAL MANAGEMENT                   | <input type="radio"/> VETERINARY NURSING WITH SMALL ANIMAL REHABILITATION   |
| <input type="radio"/> CONSERVATION AND FOREST PROTECTION                        | <input type="radio"/> VETERINARY NURSING                                    |
| <input type="radio"/> DATA SCIENCE FOR GLOBAL AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT | <input type="radio"/> VETERINARY PHYSIOTHERAPY                              |
| <input type="radio"/> ECOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS                                   | <input type="radio"/> WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT    |
| <input type="radio"/> ENGINEERING BUSINESS MANAGEMENT                           | <input type="radio"/> ZOOLOGY WITH ENTOMOLOGY                               |
| <input type="radio"/> ENTOMOLOGY  | <input type="radio"/> ZOOLOGY WITH ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT                 |
| <input type="radio"/> ENVIRONMENTAL LAND MANAGEMENT                             |   |

\* 3. Are you a Home/EU or Overseas student?

- Home Student
- EU Student
- International Student

\* 4. Are you a student registered with a disability? (including dyslexia and dyspraxia)

- Yes
- No

\* 5. What year are you in?

- EFDP
- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- 5th
- Taught Postgrad
- PhD
- Other Research

### Accessibility of Online Study

\* 6. Have you experienced any problems engaging with online study? (Consider your study environment, connectivity problems, specific issues with the content, etc.)

Yes

No

7. Please detail any difficulties you had engaging with online study.

\* 8. Do you have any comments on the accessibility of online study?

**Online taught sessions**

\* 9. Overall how satisfied are you with **online teaching materials**?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	N/A
<input type="radio"/>					

\* 10. Overall how confident do you feel using Microsoft Teams whilst studying online?

Very Confident	Confident	Neutral	Unconfident	Very Unconfident
<input type="radio"/>				

\* 11. Have you experienced a late upload of recorded lecturers material? (less than a week before the timetabled tutorial/practical session)

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

12. Please highlight any positive or negative feedback regarding your face to face classroom sessions.

**Face to face classroom based sessions**

\* 13. Overall how satisfied are you with your **classroom based face to face sessions**?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	N/A
<input type="radio"/>					

Please explain your rating

\* 14. Have you had to self-isolate during any face to face classroom sessions?

- Yes
- No

\* 15. How were you able to engage with any classroom sessions remotely?

- Via Microsoft Teams (set up by tutor/academic)
- Via Microsoft Teams (set up by student)
- Fellow student (not via Microsoft Teams)
- N/A
- Other (please specify)

\* 16. How satisfied were you with your **remote classroom set up**?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	N/A
<input type="radio"/>					

Please explain your rating

17. What alternative resources and support were offered?

18. Please highlight any positive or negative feedback regarding your face to face classroom sessions.

## Practical Sessions

\* 19. How have your practical sessions been delivered? (Tick as many as appropriate)

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Labs                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Farm Walks  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering Workshops  | <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Unit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RFA                    | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |                                      |

20. If yes to any of the above, what are your thoughts on how these sessions were delivered?

\* 21. Have you had to self-isolate during any scheduled practical session? Which?

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Labs                   | <input type="radio"/> Farm Walks  |
| <input type="radio"/> Engineering            | <input type="radio"/> Animal Unit |
| <input type="radio"/> RFA                    | <input type="radio"/> N/A         |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify) |                                   |

\* 22. How were you able to engage with any practical sessions remotely?

- Via Microsoft Teams (Set up by Tutor/Academic)
- Via Microsoft Teams (Set up by student)
- Fellow student (not via Microsoft Teams)
- N/A
- Other (please specify)

\* 23. How satisfied were you with your **remote practical set up**?

- |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Very Satisfied        | Satisfied             | Neutral               | Unsatisfied           | Very Unsatisfied      | N/A                   |
| <input type="radio"/> |

Please explain your rating

24. What alternative resources and support were offered?

\* 25. How satisfied are you with your **practical sessions**?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	N/A
Labs	<input type="radio"/>					
Engineering Workshops	<input type="radio"/>					
RFA	<input type="radio"/>					
Farm Walks	<input type="radio"/>					
Animal Unit	<input type="radio"/>					

26. Please highlight any positive or negative feedback regarding your practical sessions.

## Overall Experience

\* 27. Overall how satisfied are you with **online teaching**?

Very Satisfied      Satisfied      Neutral      Unsatisfied      Very Unsatisfied      N/A

Please explain your rating

\* 28. Overall how satisfied are you with **face to face teaching?** (labs, tutorials, practicals, field walks, etc)

Very Satisfied      Satisfied      Neutral      Unsatisfied      Very Unsatisfied      N/A

Please explain your rating

\* 29. How satisfied are you with the online resources available to you? (Consider library resources, academic support, recorded lectures, lecture slides, revision aids, wellbeing support.)

Very Satisfied      Satisfied      Neutral      Unsatisfied      Very Unsatisfied      N/A

Please explain your rating

\* 30. How satisfied are you with your **overall experience of online study?** (Consider online teaching, resources, contact with academics/personal tutors, etc.)

Very Satisfied      Satisfied      Neutral      Unsatisfied      Very Unsatisfied      N/A

Please explain your rating

\* 31. Please detail any improvements that are needed to support your digital educational experience.

\* 32. Please highlight any good experiences you have had with online study that you feel would be beneficial if shared further.

33. What resources and materials would improve your educational experience?

\* 34. How satisfied are you with your **overall experience of the university's communication** with regarding to your learning and teaching experience during the pandemic?

Very Satisfied

Satisfied

Neutral

Unsatisfied

Very Unsatisfied

N/A

Please explain your rating

35. What support and extra-curricular activities would you like to see in a future to support your wellbeing?

36. Do you have any further comments?

**THE END**

**Thank you for completing our survey, to be entered into our prize draw please leave your student number below.**

\* 37. What is your student number?

*\*\*This will only be used for our prize draw\*\**

If you need any further support or have any questions regarding the survey please contact your Students' Union on [studentsunion@harper-adams.ac.uk](mailto:studentsunion@harper-adams.ac.uk)

# Appendix 2: Course Committee Term 1 Report



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## HARPER ADAMS STUDENTS' UNION

### Summary report of matters raised at Course Committees Term One 2020-2021

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Between October and November 2020, Students' Union representatives attended undergraduate Course Committees for term one of the 2020-2021 academic year. These were the first Course Committees attended by the Students' Union, with the inclusion of Students' Union representation at Course Committees being approved by the Academic Board in the Summer of 2020. Common issues were raised by students from varying course areas as well as common strengths in the academic experience. In general, the sentiment expressed by the majority of students was one of tolerance and appreciation that academic staff are working incredibly hard during unprecedented and difficult circumstances. There are however, some areas that the Students' Union would recommend for improvement which can be found listed in order of priority in **Table 1** at the end of this document.

Students identified elements of teaching that they have found useful and expressed gratitude to lecturers for their hard work. Amongst the positive feedback received was that students have really enjoyed the recorded Panopto lectures and have benefited from the ability to pause and speed up the lectures to assist with note taking. This was the most commonly received positive feedback and was raised by students in multiple course areas, namely Animals, Business, Engineering and Food.

The engagement monitoring feature on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) was also identified by students as a useful tool to allow them to see tasks needing to be completed. Students would like to see more modules making use of this feature and to-do lists so they can plan their learning. The use of a 'talking head' style lecture with the inclusion of a video of the lecturer with a powerpoint was also identified by students as being more engaging. Students further expressed their appreciation for lecturers who have emailed to notify them when lectures have been uploaded onto the VLE. Students have acknowledged that this is above and beyond what is expected from lecturers but are appreciative and find this incredibly helpful.

A number of areas for improvement were also raised by students during the Course Committees. By far the most frequently raised issue was relating to lectures not being uploaded far enough in advance of tutorials, with some students stating lectures were uploaded on Friday evening or over the weekend with tasks needing to be done for Monday morning. The course areas raising this as an issue were as follows: Agriculture, Animals, Business, Engineering, Food, Land and Property Management, Veterinary Nursing and Zoology. Students were sympathetic to the

difficulties lecturers are facing but felt that late uploads affect their ability to plan their learning and cause stress amongst students.

Furthermore, students suggested the Study Buddy system has improved due to lecturers being responsible for the set up and calling in of students, however there were other issues identified with the system. Students suggested that remote learners are experiencing limited interaction from lecturers and are struggling to see physical visual aids such as whiteboards and hear the lecturer speaking clearly. This was identified as an issue from students in the Animals, Business, Food, Land and Property Management and Veterinary Nursing areas. Laboratory sessions were identified as a specific concern in relation to the Study Buddy system.

Library opening hours were also suggested to be too short by students in multiple course areas and Wifi issues for students living off-campus were frequently raised. Some students did question why teaching could not be completely online, however others stated they were happy with the current blended approach. The length of recorded lectures was identified in multiple Course Committees as an issue. Students suggested that 50 minute lectures broken up into sections were suitable, however 50 minute lectures that purely consisted of talking were considered too long. It was also raised that students are finding that lectures are heavy in content and are therefore taking two to three times longer to complete and fully absorb, although student note-taking ability should be considered here. During Course Committees, students were found to be taking more notes than in face to face delivery due to being able to control the flow of a lecture which will also impact time taken to complete lectures.

Other issues were raised by smaller numbers of students and the Students' Union will continue to work with the university on these issues. Table 1 below highlights the frequently raised issues that have been discussed as well as some of those not previously discussed. The Students' Union would recommend that the university acts upon those issues listed as a high priority first.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommended Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Lectures not being uploaded far enough in advance of tutorials.	Ensure staff are aware of minimum expectations.  Review the current recommendation for minimum time before tutorials for lectures to be uploaded. We recommend that this be at least two working days before the timetabled face to face session.	High
Lecture length	Recommend that staff ensure the amount of content in lectures is manageable.  Conduct sessions for students on effective note taking for online lectures.	High
Study Buddy – limited interaction, difficulties in seeing the board or hearing the lecturer.	Support staff with how to include remote learners and report or manage technical issues. This may be in the form of support/training videos produced by the E-Learning team to be viewed over the Christmas break.	High
Staff not seeming to understand Teams – issues with screen sharing, muting etc.	Remind staff to complete the mandatory online training and ensure they are aware of who to ask for help if not confident using Teams.	High

Weston Lecture Theatre – lack of track and trace, no sanitation and students taking off masks whilst on tables.	Investigate these reports and take appropriate action.  If there is adequate reasoning behind current circumstances in the Weston Lecture Theatre, work with the SU to ensure sufficient communication of this to students.	High
Include engagement monitoring feature on all VLE modules	Recommend to lecturers that this is switched on or that to-do lists are created.	Medium
Inconsistent layouts of VLE module pages	Assist the SU in conducting feedback sessions on this topic with Course Representatives to find examples of best practice.  Share examples of best practice amongst staff.	Medium
Inconsistent assignment briefs and assessment criteria – some detailed and some less so	Assist the SU in conducting feedback sessions on this topic with Course Representatives.  Investigate where there are inconsistencies and propose minimum requirements of detail.	Medium
Library opening hours	Due to difficulties with staffing, ensure the reasoning behind decisions is effectively communicated to students to increase understanding and reduce frustration.  Consider provision of other spaces on campus for students to use for study outside of library opening times.	Medium
Wifi issues	Ensure adequate spaces are available on campus for students to access good wifi including on weekends although we are aware of the university's work on this.	Medium
Communication from the Vice Chancellor too long and not being read.	Ensure communications are in a 'student friendly' format with the most important information being the focus of the communication.	Medium
Students unsure of whether they will be having course tutor sessions or not.	Include course tutor sessions on the timetable or if not possible, ensure course tutors are regularly holding course tutors sessions in free slots and communicating this to students.	Low
Online live tutorials not being recorded for access on the hub later.	Work with the SU to communicate to students the reasoning behind tutorials not being recorded (data protection, students being less likely to contribute, encouraging student laziness)	Low

**Table 1 – Student issues according to priority and recommended actions to consider**



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