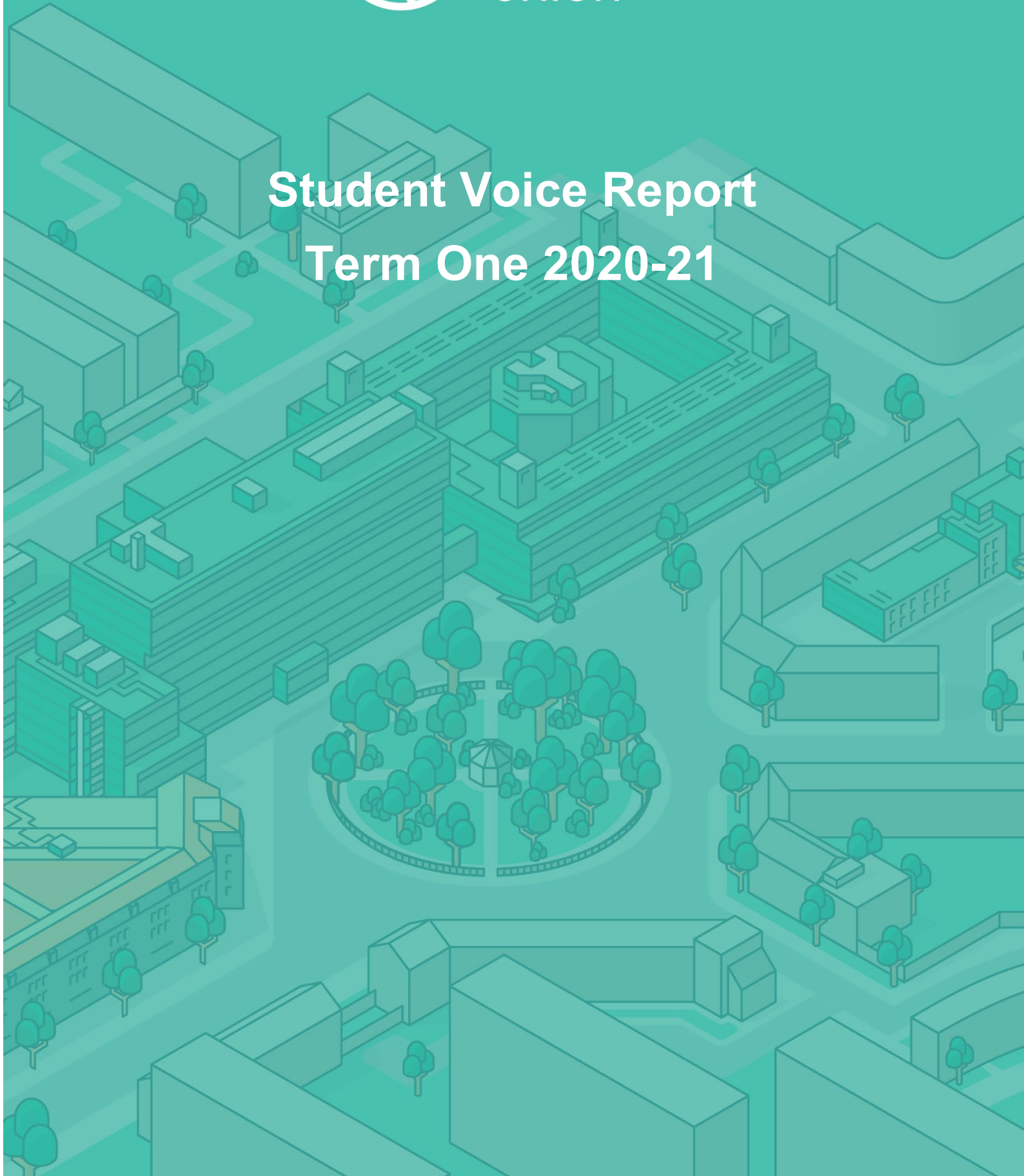




CITY
STUDENTS'
UNION

Student Voice Report Term One 2020-21



Introduction

The Student Voice Report is a termly report produced by the Union offering analysis of student feedback from across City, University of London. This report draws its data primarily from the following sources:

- Union Advice Service's case management system.
- Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) minutes where available.
- City, University of London, Students' Union 'Check into City' report.

City's Student-Staff Liaison Committees are responsible for engaging with students; considering their views on the quality of programmes; seeking views on strengths, areas for improvement and responding to issues raised.

The Union expects the sources upon which it draws and the analysis it is able to provide to change as the report goes through new iterations and standardises and widens its data capture apparatus, enabling it to report more precisely according to the remit of differing committees.

The Union produced a Student Voice Report for Term 1 and Term 2 of the last academic year. This is the Union's third report and aims to reflect the student voice and feedback from term 1 of the current academic year. To compile this report, The Union acquired copies of minutes from the SSLCs for each School between December 2020 and January 2021. We note that we were not able to obtain SSLC minutes for every meeting held in the academic year to date and also note that in some cases it was not possible to perform analysis at the course level due to incomplete recording on minutes.

In this report the Union have completed the following:

- tracked percentage attendance for staff and programme representatives
- analysed issues raised as "Feedback from Student Reps" and responses and actions taken as a result of feedback.
- Recorded issues raised by Programme Representatives, reduced to summary, and grouped by theme.
- Highlighted the most prevalent issues by School

Below the Union have produced a set of university recommendations alongside school-specific feedback and recommendations.

City wide recommendations

These recommendations are based on themes identified across all five Schools. These are intended as improvements that every school could implement to improve students' academic experience.

Recommendations

Based on the evidence which follows, this report recommends that:

1. No assessment be held with a completion window less than 24 hours.
2. All schools develop and make permanently available:
 - a. resources which clarify for students the use, safe operation, expectations, and management of remote learning platforms including Zoom, Teams, and Moodle, and other essential software such as is appropriate.
 - b. resources which clarify for lecturers, staff, and other users, the optimum use, best practice around, and standardised implementation for remote learning platforms including Zoom, Teams, and Moodle, and other essential software.
3. All schools make available and accessible on a permanent basis, resources which aid study, revision, and learning for the purposes of assessment, including but not limited to past papers, mark schemes, FAQs, worked answers, exemplary answers, and assessment criteria.
4. All schools conduct full reviews of online, remote, and blended learning approaches with a view to improving quality, logistics, timetabling, and workload with the expectation for delivering the highest possible quality education in a sustainable way for students with these as the primary modes of delivery for at least the 21-22 academic year.
5. All group assessment be abandoned for the duration of remote learning.
6. The proportion of hours dedicated to non-assessed peer-to-peer learning is increased such that no less than half current synchronous study time may be represented as dedicated peer-to-peer learning for the promotion of academic community and a more collegial study environment.

Overview of Term 1 – Academic Year 2020/21

Summary of Issues Raised

There were five key themes that can be extrapolated from the discussions held between City staff and 373 Programme Representatives who attended Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings. (A breakdown of Programme Representative attendance at SSLC meetings and the training and support they have received in Term 1 can be found in Appendix 1.)

The issues that were most consistently raised by Programme Representatives at SSLC meetings across all five Schools relate to **online learning, teaching standards, learning resources, assessments** and **support**. In appendix 2 there is a table which breaks down how prevalent themes were across Schools and overall.

We appreciate the efforts the University has gone through to evaluate its own work to implement the educational offer and student experience in the recently published '*Reflecting on the transformation of our student experience, teaching and learning for term 1 2020-21*' report. We also appreciate that all Schools have provided a detailed account of how they have been responding to student feedback received through Term 1. This report supplements and shores up the evidence base for the University's work here, as well as standing as independent research in its own right.

Online Learning

The new blended learning approach was one of the most frequently discussed and contended items in our feedback. For clarity, the particular aspects under discussion were the expectations to view pre-recorded content (asynchronous learning) and complete assigned reading before attending the synchronous classes during the week.

Students felt that due consideration had not been given to the time-intensity of this approach and the compound effects of blended learning on students under pandemic conditions. Across all five schools, reports were received of expectations for viewing high volumes of pre-recorded videos in advance of synchronous classes. Late upload times were also frequently reported. It was felt across the board that the work and study environment, as well as the quality of learning and general student wellbeing would be improved by reducing or spreading the asynchronous workload, and improving the use of moodle and remote-learning technologies, particularly offering uploads with sufficient time to access and view materials. This issue among Programme Representatives is demonstrated by the volume and detail of comments, some of which are highlighted below:

- "Some weeks there are 2 videos, some weeks there are 7; "some lectures can be long lasting up to 3.5 hours and students can take a full day per lecture when they are simultaneously writing notes"
- "Classes on Monday or Tuesday sometimes don't post videos or revision content online until Fridays. Hard to do all the necessary work over the weekend".

It should be noted that students voiced a general approval of synchronous learning, and some students appreciated weekly study plans which were supplied by their courses as time-management aids and part of the new blended approach.

Students across all five schools were concerned about the lack of interaction in-between students and between staff and students during live lectures. It was generally felt that improvements could be made in facilitating interaction and encouraging engagement in

breakout rooms and other interactive exercises¹. Students registered very positive feedback for interactive sessions with high engagement². The University's evaluative report "*Reflecting on the transformation of our student experience, teaching and learning for term 1 2020-2*" also describes that some students have found the online teaching environment challenging, with some finding that classmates are less willing to participate in breakout rooms or appear on camera which can impact the teaching and learning experience.

Students also flagged the difficulty of asking questions during tutorials and lectures, especially questions pertaining to pre-recorded content³ and would benefit from more dedicated QandA time with lecturers to discuss and understand asynchronous material.

Other points of improvement for online learning included breaks in between synchronous lectures, which would allow for reduced sedentary time, improved focus, and heightened engagement⁴. In terms of accessibility, students applauded the implementation of subtitles for pre-recorded videos as standardised university policy.

A related, but wider-reaching issue, students suggested that improved communications from the university regarding future plans could have a great positive effect on the online learning experience. In light of known concerns around mental health and wellbeing, as well as difficulties in maintaining motivation and a sense of community under pandemic conditions, it was felt that improvements in the clarity, certainty, and timeliness of communications would add a great deal of value to the online learning experience⁵.

Course Organisation

This item is related to the above but warrants discussion as distinct. It was felt across all schools that the quality of teaching had suffered in ways which did not owe only to the conditions of remote learning. Particularly, students felt that, even in synchronous learning environments, the quality of delivery was reduced. Reports were made across schools of lecturers simply reading slides or reciting pre-prepared scripts with little effort to produce interactive learning or facilitate engaged teaching in any way. Similarly, an over-dependence on asynchronous materials including set exercises and study materials has been cited in numerous places as problematic, with lecturers seeming to increase the volume of self-study material, again without offering concurrent forums to discuss, question, and share ideas. While students acknowledged the difficulty of the situation for lecturers, who they recognise have had to adapt to pandemic conditions and develop new teaching methods in an unprecedented situation, they felt significant improvements could still be made in these areas.

Additionally, a number of issues in teaching quality *were* related to technology and the blended approach, including poor lecturer use of technology, poorly optimised use of

¹ "Breakout rooms are silent sometimes and lecturers try to encourage students to interact with each other."

² "They enjoy working together in breakout rooms and continuous assessment activities and in effect learn better talking to classmates."

³ "When watching pre-recorded lectures, students don't get the chance to ask questions or interact with the lecturer. It feels awkward to interrupt a tutorial to ask questions about a pre-recorded lecture as it doesn't always line up with the tutorial plan or with what is being discussed. There is also not enough time to ask these questions in tutorials."

⁴ "students have been enjoying the extra and longer sessions however by the end of the day are left feeling quite tired, the students would appreciate 5 to 10-minute breaks and potentially perhaps a break of 30 minutes between two modules"

⁵ "In general the concerns were more about the pending information regarding the plans for term 2 teaching; face to face teaching and or online teaching".

Moodle, zoom, and teams platforms, and inconsistent implementation of communication methods.

Taking the above, especially the reliance on non-interactive and asynchronous materials into account, students have described finding this new online teaching delivery to be heavier than in previous years with an expectation to complete a heavier workload than is felt to be reasonable. Module delivery can feel rushed, with the sense of a great deal of content included without meaningful teaching and learning. The reduction in quantity of content in favour of the increased quality of content might be considered preferable here for overall improving teaching standards⁶.

These reports are supported by the term 1 student check-in project which further found that academic challenge was the second-most-prevalent concern for students at the start of the 2020-21 academic year⁷.

The Union acknowledges that Schools are aware that students are reporting feeling overwhelmed and wherever possible, actions have been taken by Schools to address students' concerns now and continuing into Term 2. The reports herein do not diminish the importance of the work that has already been completed, but may be taken to indicate the areas of more effective further change as we move forward and continue to adapt to new learning methods and environments.

Learning Resources

In this section we highlight the difficulties accessing software during the beginning of the year (Mathematica, STATA, Gitlab, SPSS, MATLAB and SolidWorks). Many reports were received of difficulties accessing necessary resources across all schools⁸. It was also reported that insufficient teaching had been dedicated to training students in new software other essential resources, which were said to be easier to learn in person rather than online⁹. These difficulties students reported during Term 1 are supported by University data which describes that support queries to IT increased by 65% over the same period. IT's launch of the Apps Anywhere and remote PC lab access services may be seen as welcome responses here, but still not adequate to fully address the concerns at this time. Further efforts to facilitate access to learning and teaching software from home would be greatly-appreciated improvements to services here. Access to manuals and books were similarly reported as major concerns in the Schools of Law, Business and SASS¹⁰.

⁶ "WL highlighted that the course felt rushed, there was a lot of content crammed in and not enough time to complete the work."

⁷ "Some students have noted they feel the workload is much higher in 2020/1, and this is not just linked to being in final year. They feel they have a large number of coursework assessments and this means they do not have time to take on other projects."; "Many students perceived that their workloads were placing a heavy burden on them and worried about keeping up with their course. Access to services and software, which covers returning to site and engaging in in-person opportunities and services was also part of this" (Student Check-ins Report 2020).

⁸ "There had been some problems with downloading the SPSS software for Quantitative Methods; some students who had missed content due to technical issues felt that they were so far behind that they had given up on attending classes."

⁹ "When we are learning how to use software it's much more effective to do it in person than on Zoom or Teams. You have to have the Zoom meeting open and running, and be running the software at the same time on the same screen, which is difficult."

¹⁰ "It was acknowledged that the issues surrounding manuals and books have been more problematic this year. This has been exacerbated by delays in receiving hard copy books from suppliers."; "Students would like electronic access to core books and readings."

Finally, students across all five schools asked for further access to online revision resources, such as past exam papers, sample exam papers, quizzes and tutorials, as well as recordings of classes and tutorials for revision purposes¹¹.

It is also notable that students have appreciated the implementation of the Student Digital Support Community on MS Teams to support students with online platforms (MS Teams, Zoom, Moodle, etc), and would value similar initiatives in this area.

Assessments

A consistent issue even prior to the start of pandemic conditions, students continue to request various improvements to assessment and feedback procedures, such as individualised, bespoke feedback rather than generic group feedback, and more clarity and detail on assessment guidelines and marking criteria¹². Overlapping and clustered coursework deadlines were again cited as issues, compounded by other problems with the density of work under blended learning¹³. Students explicitly requested that assessment deadlines not be set during reading weeks.

Particular issues arising from the transition to online learning included a lack of information around placements and the assessment period in January. Students were unsure about structure of examinations, resources needed to complete examinations, the mode of assessment (online or in person) and various other issues stemming from unclear or delayed communications.

Finally, students were very concerned around the timings of assessments due to the high number of international students in different time-zones¹⁴. It was felt that assessment structures could be improved by reducing or removing time limits in order to provide more accessible conditions for the entire student community.

Support

In terms of support, students would have appreciated prompter assignment of personal tutors early in the year and more interactive support from their mentors¹⁵. Some students also noted they felt there would be value in more structured contact with personal tutors, including systematic reminders. This method would prevent the onus falling on already-overburdened students for organising contact for their own academic support and wellbeing.

The need for improvements in the current implementation of the Personal Tutor system is well-acknowledged by Schools, who are in agreement that more welfare capacity and expertise is desirable as students' needs are increasing and that more work needs to be

¹¹ "Many tutorials are not being recorded. Recordings allow students to go over any missed content."

¹² "Some people may not feel comfortable requesting feedback in a group and would prefer this privately"; "Was too general and would have preferred individual feedback."; "more detail and clarity on the assessment criteria to help students"; "There could be more clarity on the TV Newsday assessment guidelines."

¹³ "the coursework weighting is 100%, as such these assessments will require a lot of effort and if deadlines overlap; students may not be able to put much effort on the quality and instead their focus will be on submitting the work on time."

¹⁴ "online tests being posted in Reading Week with designated two-hour time slots, which he said were not always compatible with different time zones"; "In addition, the reps from Group E expressed some concerns regarding the timing of assessments, especially as a number of students are in different time zones."

¹⁵ "There had been a time delay of Personal Tutors being assigned"; "Some groups are getting lots of hands on and very proactive interaction with their mentor and other groups their mentors are quite silent."

done to ensure staff have capacity for personal tutoring and that staff-student ratios are manageable. The extent to which improvements are needed varies across Schools.

Face to Face (F2F)

Students found teaching face to face to be desirable and preferred (where possible). As mentioned above, learning new software was felt to be easier in person, and the benefits of peer-to-peer interaction in seminars and project-work cannot be overstated.

When accessing campus to study, students felt improvements could be made in clarity around the renewal and return of books in the library and the booking of study spaces. It was also notable that some queries were raised around the rationale for 3h timeslots in the library. It may be worth investigating whether library access could be more effectively optimised¹⁶. Overall, students repeated previous comments concerning a lack in sense of community and belonging and felt much more could be done to improve the production of community spaces (virtual or physical). Year 1 students especially have been struggling to engage with their peers both socially and academically, and other students found no opportunities to meet with their peers after class, creating a hard impact on student wellbeing.

Technology

Technology, whilst a theme that appeared frequently in feedback from Reps and in many of the minutes can be broken down into key elements such as the **quality and timeliness of recordings, lecturer's and students' adaptation of online tools, or access to software**. These have been contextualised and included in the analysis of other major themes such as feedback around online learning or teaching standards respectively.

Communications

Similarly to technology, poor communication is a theme that appeared frequently in feedback from Programme Representatives and the Union regards this theme as an intangible which runs as undercurrent through and affects all other issues due to lack of clarity around position and confusion concerning the university's stance. The data collected for this report suggests that significant value could be gained across all aspects of the student academic experience with the improvement of communications alone.

¹⁶ "Time slots for library not long enough for people that travel from afar to campus."

Summary of Issues Raised in Term 1 by School– 2020/21

In this part of the report, we highlight the most prevalent issues by School. Though we have offered university-wide recommendations and analysis above, numerous issues have been shown to be school-specific during the analysis of SSLC meeting minutes. For example, in SHS the organisation of placements was an issue, whilst value for money and tuition fees was more prevalent in the Business School. Though we will be dealing with school-specific issues, we will identify concerns even in the case that they intersect with concerns in other schools or all schools. This approach allows us to properly gauge the severity and specificity of issues in the student body.

In this section we will attempt to cross reference the SSLC minutes with data from Union Advice. It should be noted that not all students who raise issues at SSLC will request advice, and therefore Union Advice data is unable to give a full representation of students escalating issues.

The below table shows the amount of cases we advised on for Term 1 for each School:

School	Number of Cases
Business School	27
School of Arts and Social Sciences	23
School of Health Sciences	15
School of Mathematics, Computer Science & Engineering	22
The City Law School	15
Total	103

The complaints category is where students are likely to request advice on the issues raised at SSLC. Therefore, our advice data will focus on student complaints. Please note, that whilst we advise on group complaints, the individual concerns and outcomes are difficult to track and often leave our metrics incomplete in this area. However, as we will advise the lead complainant of a group complaint, sometimes one complaint can involve a whole cohort. The below table shows the amount of complaint cases we advised on for Term 1.

School	Number of Complaint Cases
Business School	6
School of Arts and Social Sciences	2
School of Health Sciences	3
School of Mathematics, Computer Science & Engineering	5
The City Law School	2

As the numbers above are low, we will not be filtering the data by course or department in order to protect confidentiality.

SASS

SASS had the highest number of students concerned about their academic skills and revision support¹⁷. Students were concerned about the access to cameras and the equipment room¹⁸.

Students in SASS were particularly concerned around group work, as some students were not engaging (either due to not attending or not feeling confident to contribute)¹⁹. This not only increases the burden on other students, but also has a negative impact on the learning environment itself. Feedback here brings into question the value of group work under current circumstances.

SASS students were concerned about the lack of support to secure work experience and internships. While this concern was not limited to SASS, students were keen to have the particular issues within employability at this school registered²⁰.

Finally, as a recurring theme, students flagged the lack of curriculum diversity²¹. It should be noted that the Union are already moving to address curriculum diversity in International Politics. It would be valuable if the university moved to address curriculum diversity across the school.

We only advised on two complaints involving SASS students. One was a course related complaint and one related to assessment supervision. Neither complaint related to the issues listed above.

We advised on 8 extenuating circumstances cases.

Recommendations

- For course officers to liaise with the Academic Skills team to organise a larger number of support sessions for different courses.
- To reconsider the value of group assessments in the context of online learning and abandon group assessments if necessary.
- To deliver school specific careers fairs targeted at the needs of specific student groups based on course of study.
- To convene a meeting with SU EDI ambassadors and systematically develop an ongoing plan of action to understand and deliver what students want in terms of a diverse curriculum.

¹⁷ "The Year 2 reps reported requests for a refresher session on referencing."; "the second-year students were feeling confused and unsure about how to write assessments."; "SB not enough comms on revision classes, general feeling of lack of being prepared, feeling of confusion with some modules."

¹⁸ "Students would like more access to the camera/equipment room. The tech team have often left the building when students are trying to take out or return cameras, and students struggle to manage their timings around this".

¹⁹ "Concerns were raised about student participation breakout rooms, it was noted that a large proportion of students have not completed the reading or prepared in advance for tutorials. The representative noted that this makes group work difficult and feels that it is unbalanced."; "they are struggling with the amount of reading, which makes them feel less confident about participating in group work and tutorial sessions."; "not all students attend Group work sessions which is frustrating for students who do attend."

²⁰ "Students reported their concerns that work experience is looming, and they feel like they are getting little support from lecturers in such a difficult time to secure work experience and internships."

²¹ "It was noted by students that the course theorists tended to be older, white, western men, although it was recognised that these would be foundational texts for the first year."

SMCSE

SMCSE had the highest number of concerns around miscommunications regarding zoom links and timetable confusions. There was a particularly high incidence of issues around communications in SMCSE²².

In terms of online platforms, students prefer MS Teams over Zoom, as it offers recordings of everything discussed and interactions. Overall, the consistent use of only one platform rather than two would be preferred in SMCSE to online learning.

There were a few complaints regarding the allocated times to complete tests, especially concerning students in different time-zones²³. Further concerns were raised around the marking on Moodle Quiz and difficulty level of the assessment²⁴.

In terms of revision, students would appreciate access to solutions (especially step-by-step solutions) as part of constructive feedback as standard²⁵.

Finally, students appreciated the use of the whiteboard (and would like for it to be saved for reference).

It should be noted that 100% of complaints received at our advice service relating to SMCSE (6/6, including group complaints) related to course dissatisfaction, which is at least suggestive of the value improvements to courses would add. It is additionally significant that we have received a number of students expressing dissatisfaction with the provision of IT software needed to complete assessments, which has led to such students requesting advice on submitting extenuating circumstances claims. Again, a lot stands to be gained by the improvement of academic provision in this area.

Recommendations

- For academics to provide exemplary answers and worked solutions for assessment questions via Moodle or other format in good time prior to the release of assessments, or otherwise justify why such provision would not be possible.
- To produce a suite of online guidance workshops supporting students in the use of remote learning platforms and technologies, to be permanently accessible to all students via Moodle.
- Of particular relevance to this school, for no assessment to be held for a time window of less than 24 hours.
- For tutors or Course Officers to ensure that students have access to the necessary equipment and software needed to study and complete assessments.

²² "Students sympathetic to issues caused by move to online teaching. However, issues with Teams and links to lectures is causing frustration and impacting the learning experience. Two platforms (Zoom and Teams) exacerbate the issues. This can lead to student missing beginning of classes."; "Different timetables were available on different channels including MS Teams, Outlook and Moodle."

²³ "Linear Algebra test all students thought they needed more time"; "noted that the duration of tests, 30-minute window, is not enough therefore maybe 1 hour should be given"; "He also raised the issue of online tests being posted in Reading Week with designated two-hour time slots, which he said were not always compatible with different time zones."

²⁴ "you either get it right or wrong but you don't get marks for working out."; "mentioned concerns regarding the Design 3 module quizzes and the rigid way in which they have been set up."

²⁵ "Students would like Structural Mechanics tutorials to provide step by step solutions to problems. Would allow them to go over in their own time.;" "mentioned that worked solutions were not included with the step-by-step answers."

SHS

In SHS, the Union found that the five issues which were prevalent across all five Schools were also present in this School. Aside from all-school issues, dissatisfaction with the organisation of placements was a key issue in the School. In our data, online learning was raised 47 times, learning Resources 19 times, teaching standards 35, face-to-face 12 and assessment 14.

Regarding face-to-face teaching, some students were concerned about travelling to campus, others really appreciated the opportunity to have face-to-face teaching²⁶. Some issues were also noted, however, with scheduling, indicating the difficulties around having on-site and remote classes scheduled on the same day, a particularly difficult problem affecting commuting students and students who are at risk from coronavirus infection or are shielding family members²⁷.

In terms of placement, students flagged some miscommunication problems and confusion about how placements would work²⁸. These concerns were compounded by delays in placement information and poor organisation at placement centres. While students acknowledge the difficulties or arranging placements while pandemic conditions change unpredictably, more could have been done to support students here on the school's part²⁹.

In terms of the January assessment period, students felt quite anxious and asked for more online resources (tutorials, quizzes, sample exam papers), access to past exam papers and exam style questions. With regard to academic performance, it is noteworthy that, though not all items progress to a formal complaint, Union advisors record a high incidence of general dissatisfaction with communication from this School when advising on other issues. Improvements in communications would be highly effective here.

Recommendations

- To avoid the scheduling of synchronous remote classes and on-site study on the same day.
- To convene a fortnightly placement forum or meeting for placement students, to include external placement staff and facilitated by university staff to feed back and discuss issues concerning placements and offer a clear structure for feedback to be escalated to placement sites.
- To produce a suite of online resources including past papers, worked solutions, and other revision aids available for and applicable to all assessment periods.

Business School

In the Business School, schools flagged the miscommunication from the university regarding future plans, whether January exams and teaching in Term 2 would take place online or in person. In this school, teaching in person was one of the most frequently cited concerns and considered highly preferable amongst students.

²⁶ "students prefer in person rather than online asynchronous learning"

²⁷ "representative stated there had been a day where students had to come into University and then travel home to attend online sessions. They would prefer one or the other; completely in person at the University, or completely online."

²⁸ "Students were informed they had to go back for two weeks, then this was cancelled. Students are therefore uncertain about their next placement and would like to plan ahead if possible"; "the only thing which could have been improved upon would be better communication with trusts re their expectations of returning students".

²⁹ "added the students had said it was a stressful time set against the lateness of placement Post Covid."; "Disorganisation at Moorfields and made to feel unwelcome"

Numerous reports were made from students suggesting that the use of online platforms for remote learning could be better optimised and better deployed to make best use of the affordances of the technology³⁰.

Students requested better clarity around the delivery of international electives with a preference for early clarity, particularly regarding online or face-to-face delivery affecting travel plans, visas, and the like for internationals³¹.

The Business school is also the site for the highest incidence of complaints concerning tuition fees and fee refunds. The University has acknowledged and recognised the case for financial compensation³². The concerns in this school were well-reflected in the Union advice service, where two thirds of cases were related to course dissatisfaction, inadequate feedback, lack of tutor support, and financial compensation.

Recommendations

- To develop a suite of online guidance and training for Staff recommending best practice and optimum efficacy in the use of remote learning platforms and softwares.
- To deliver dedicated summer training sessions for staff in the use of remote learning platforms.
- For no module to be planned or presented to students, internationally or locally, for Face-to-Face delivery without a sufficient online learning alternative planned.
- To re-evaluate any international modules planned for on-site delivery and redevelop this content for full-online delivery.
- For no assessment to be held for a time window of less than 24 hours.

City Law School

In the Law School, there were concerns around the limited access to manuals and books essential to course completion, suggesting the value in either affording better accessibility options for all students to makes use of essential resources, or considering syllabus redesign.

Students again called for improvements to communications from the university due to the delayed access to the exam timetables and guidelines³³. Problems with assessment timings and time allocations were raised in this school also, again citing issues affecting students studying from different time zones.

Students requested if tutorials could be recorded and appreciated the use of whiteboard option (and would like to for it to be saved for reference).

³⁰ "Delivery of hybrid lectures (online and F2F) is lacking (case for Operations Management and Managing Value Creation which were delivered in-class/over Zoom); there's little to facilitate dynamic teaching and online students have had a very poor experience whereby they can't hear in-class student discussion and don't get much in terms of classroom experience."

³¹ "CO said for now, the approach to the international electives is same as starting in January, face to face, and the plan is to deliver them as scheduled. In the event of cancelation once again, we are developing contingency plans (e.g. optional online versions for some electives). In particular, the international electives that run as 'consulting weeks' (e.g. Vietnam, Portugal, and Columbia) are likely to offered on an online basis."

³² "When will we hear back about the possibility of receiving a partial refund for those of us taking Colombia as an online module in November?"; "have there been any updates from other cohorts on fee reduction?"

³³ "Communication was voted as poor from the University. Students voted that they were not prepared for exams. A lot of people are worried about when they are getting the exam timetable."; "LW enquired if Year 4 students could receive early communication about the SQE as the format is different to a normal academic year."

Law students especially called for reductions in workload around assessment periods, and the reduction in assessment density, as well as improved peer-to-peer interaction and better facilitation of a collaborative learning environment from the University³⁴.

These experiences led to a few complaints in terms of tuition fees³⁵, which may be linked to the higher incidence of claims for short-term loan support from Union advice than any other school.

Recommendations

- To guarantee student access to essential resources and textbooks (physical or virtual) through such initiatives as hardship funding and digital poverty funding.
- To improve student-staff contact by exploring the employment of research students or short-term staff in teaching, thereby reducing the student: staff ratio.
- To facilitate more peer to peer learning and interaction such as including a greater number of tutorials in learning schedules, and considering other sector best practice.
- For no assessment to be held for a time window of less than 24 hours.

³⁴ "It was noted that for the formative assessment period, there is a lot of work to complete in two weeks and can there be easing of workload during this period?"; "It can be difficult to communicate with students due to the course being online with no chance for in-person interaction such as after class."

³⁵ "With limited or no access to books, physical classes, and with reduced module numbers some students are asking about possible compensation"

Appendix 1: Programme Representatives

School	Number of Reps attending	Percentage of a School's total Reps attending meetings
School of Arts and Social Sciences	111	57.8%
School of Health Sciences	85	50.2%
The City Law School	79	54.9%
The Business School	19	10%
School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering	79	50.3%
Total*	373	43.8%

373 out of a total 852 Programme Representatives attended a SSLC meeting in term1. The meeting dates spanned from 26 October to the 4 December. The earlier meetings were not as well as attended as some Programme Representatives had not been elected by this point and meetings towards the end of term were also not very well attended due to Programme Representatives contending with end of year assessments.

On the whole, attendance by Programme Representatives at SSLC meetings was very good. Of the 56 meetings the Union received attendance records for, only 39% of meetings saw attendance of less than 80%. This is despite students have reported finding it challenging to engage with the wider student experience remotely. The overall attendance at SSLC meetings across all five Schools is 43.8%, which the Union would regard as good considering the challenges. The overall percentage is also skewed because the Business School only provided attendance records for four meetings which has skewed our data.

Resources, training and support for Programme Representatives is provided by the Union and this year the Union have adapted its offer in response to the pandemic and continue implementing the recommendations as part of the Student Feedback and Representation Review completed in August 2019 to ensure they can continue to represent the views of the peers effectively.

15 Programme Rep Training sessions were held in weeks 4 and 5 of the Academic year. The sessions were hosted as online webinars on Zoom. The training was separated into two types. The Union held five induction training sessions for newly elected Programme Reps and five training sessions for Retuning Programme Reps; in week 5 there were an additional five sessions scheduled.

In total over 260 Reps attended training, a reduction from 2019/20.

To ensure that all Programme Reps are able to receive their training, the Students' Union has created the Students' Union Programme Representative Community on Moodle. This page is designed to allow Programme Reps to access the resources they need to be successful in the role, such as the slides from training or code of conduct. This Moodle community was launched in the later part of term and since the launch has been accessed by 210 Programme Reps.

Attendance at SSLC meetings is displayed in the graphs below:

Law:

Meeting name	Reps attending	Reps invited	Attendance %	Staff attending	Staff invite	Attendance %
BVS	23	26	88%	8	10	80%
GDL	6	6	100%	4	8	50%
GELLB	2	2	100%	5	5	100%
LLB LP	1	4	25%	5	8	63%
LLB	30	57	53%	6	6	100%
LLB IBL	0	2	0%	4	7	57%
LLM	4	5	80%	4	5	800%
LPC	13	14	93%	8	11	73%

SHS:

Meeting name	Reps attending	Reps invited	Attendance %	Staff attending	Staff invite	Attendance %
Nursing (Foundation)	2	4	50%	1	6	17%
Division of Midwifery and Radiography	16	24	67%	5	6	83%
BSc S&L	3	3	100%	9	27	33%
BSc S&L (2)	3	8	38%	14	27	52%
Health Services Research and management	5	7	71%	10	18	56%
Intro to Optometry	4	4	100%	1	2	500%
BSc Opt Y1	1	8	13%	1	1	100%
BSc Opt Y2	6	8	75%	1	1	100%
BSc Opt Y3	7	8	88%	2	2	100%
MSc S&L	8	9	89%	14	26	54%
RTP	26	26	100%	4	6	67%
Intro to HS	4	4	100%	4	4	100%

Business: *

Meeting name	Reps attending	Reps invited	Attendance %	Staff attending	Staff invite	Attendance %
Mphil/PhD	3	4	75%	4	4	100%
MBA SSLC	4	4	100%	3	4	75%
Dubai MBA SSLC	4	4	100%	4	4	100%
Executive MBA SSLC	8	8	100%	3	7	43%

The Union only received data for four Business School meetings.

SMCSE:

Meeting name	Reps attending	Reps invited	Attendance %	Staff attending	Staff invite	Attendance %
UG CIV Eng 2,3,4	5	10	50%	6	12	50%
BE/ngMEng Common Engineering	9	15	60%	4	11	36%
BSc Maths	14	19	74%	6	7	86%
EEE 3&4	10	10	100%	4	7	57%
MSc Aviation Management programmes	NA	NA		NA	NA	
UG Computer Science	12	21	57%	6	7	86%
PG Computer Science	11	12	92%	6	7	86%
PG Computer Science (2)	11	12	92%	7	7	100%
BENG/MENG MEA ENGINEERING STAGES 2/3/4	7	10	70%	12	16	75%

SASS:

Meeting name	Reps attending	Reps invited	Attendance %	Staff attending	Staff Invite	Attendance %
PG International Politics	2	2	100%	3	3	100%
Dpsych Counselling Psychology (y1)	3	3	100%	8	11	73%
Dpsych Counselling Psychology (y2)	3	3	100%	8	10	80%
Dpsych Counselling Psychology (y3)	3	3	100%	8	11	73%
PG Econ Health	5	6	83%	3	3	100%
PG Econ Fin	2	2	100%	3	3	100%
PG Econ Intbus	3	3	100%	3	4	75%
PG JOUR Broad	3	4	75%	2	2	100%
PG JOUR INV	2	2	100%	1	1	100%
PG JOUR MAIJ	4	4	100%	4	4	100%
PG JOUR TV	2	2	100%	2	2	100%
PG PSECON PSDECO	4	4	100%	3	3	100%
PG PSYCH CounPGC	2	2	100%	3	3	100%
UG Econ (Y1)	3	5	60%	6	7	86%
UG Econ (Y3)	2	5	40%	5	5	100%
UG ENGL	7	7	100%	3	3	100%
UG IP	28	49	57%	9	10	90%
UG JOUR Y1)	2	3	67%	4	9	44%
UG JOUR Y2)	5	5	100%	7	12	58%
UG JOUR Y3)	3	5	60%	8	12	67%
UG MUSIC	8	13	62%	10	12	83%
UG SOC	9	20	45%	5	5	100%
UG_YR2_USECON_UJE WAC	6	7	86%	2	3	67%

Appendix 2 – Breakdown of Issue by theme and School

	Online Learning	Learning Resources	Course Organisation	Technology	Face to Face (F2F)	
	May refer to: recorded videos, students not interacting with breakout rooms, too much work in the evening, face to face, campus access (law and business), no detriment	May refer to: Uploading resources to Moodle, quality of recordings, no subtitles etc, assessment guidance	May refer to: Lecturer too fast or too slow, doesn't explain things properly, module is broken up (SMCSE - term 1 heavy content, term 2 no)	May refer to: Connectivity problems, Software access	May refer to: The quality of face to face teaching or students asking for more face to face teaching	Total (per school):
CLS	27	17	10	15	6	75
SHS	47	19	35	17	12	130
SMCSE	43	34	23	31	7	138
Business	19	4	7	6	8	44
SASS	74	60	44	49	9	236
Total:	210	134	119	118	42	623

	Support	Assessment	
	May refer to: Personal tutor support	May refer to: Time and Day of assessment, method used for assessment, not prepared for assessment, feedback and marks for assessments	Total (per school):
CLS	5	16	21
SHS	9	13	22
SMCSE	12	20	32
Business	6	6	12
SASS	40	49	89
Total:	72	104	176

	Student Experience	Community & Wellbeing	Employability & Opportunities	Placements	Tuition Fees	
	May refer to: Loss of community, library, study spaces, comms from university	May refer to: International Students, loss of interaction, wellbeing concerns	May refer to: Careers, modules choices			Total (per school):
	11	4	1	1	2	19
	14	4	1	9	0	28
	19	9	4	1	2	35
	19	3	8	0	4	34
	31	17	10	5	2	65
Total:	94	37	24	16	10	181