

Briefing: Face-to-face teaching survey Term 2

January 2022

Audience: Students' Union staff and officers

Introduction

The Students' Union conducted an online survey between January 13 – 17, 2022 to obtain student feedback on perceptions and preferences on face-to-face teaching in term 2. The survey asked three main questions:

1. Compared to term one, would you like more, less or the same amount of face-to-face teaching in term two?
2. In term one, roughly what percentage of your teaching was face-to-face?
3. Will your course have more, less or the same amount of face-to-face teaching in term two?

484 students responded to the survey, including 310 undergraduates (UG), 135 postgraduate taught (PGT) students, and 28 postgraduate research (PGR) students. Sample sizes are reported alongside results as students did not have to answer every question.

Main Findings

1. Preference for face-to-face teaching in term two

Over half (54%, N=255) of respondents said they would like *more* face-to-face teaching in term two compared to term one.

- » This is consistent for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students when disaggregated by level of study, however only one third (32%, N=9) of postgraduate research respondents report wanting *more* face-to-face teaching. However, it is important to note that there was a smaller sample of postgraduate research students in the survey (28 compared to 136 postgraduate taught and 308 undergraduates).
- » The primary reason given for wanting more face-to-face teaching is that in-person learning is more effective, engaging, and motivating than online learning. Many respondents also highlighted that face-to-face learning provides more opportunities for social interaction and contributes to better mental health. Additionally, some students reported not having enough (or any) face-to-face teaching last term, and that in-person learning provides better value-for-money than online modules.

“Face-to-face teaching is more effective, more engaging, and increases the chances of the essential out-of-the-classroom communication between course mates and/or academic.” – PGR student

“I feel safe going in person so long as everyone wears a mask and it's so much nicer to be able to see course mates when learning.” – UG student

“Being able to be in-person as much as possible is great for my mental health - it makes me get out of the house and talk to friends in person which is so important.” – UG student

“There are few restrictions in the UK. It seems strange that there should be any limits on face-to-face teaching when night clubs are open.” – PGR student

“Feel like I'm paying a lot of money for some lectures recorded last year.” – UG student

A little over a quarter (27%, N=127) of respondents said they would like *less* face-to-face teaching in term two.

- » This is consistent for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students when disaggregated by level of study, however almost half (46%, N=13) of postgraduate research respondents report wanting *less* face-to-face teaching.
- » The primary reason given for wanting less face-to-face teaching is concern over Covid-19 caseloads (especially considering the Omicron variant) and risks to health. Several students also mentioned preferring the flexibility of online learning, international travel restrictions preventing or complicating a return to campus, and concerns about needing to self-isolate and thus missing out on in-person teaching.

“Having remote options is highly convenient and useful for those in isolation or who are concerned about the severity of the virus.” – UG student

“It's more convenient for me (travel-wise) and allows me to save time to work through lecture content and review at my own pace.” – PGT student

“As an international student, it is challenging and expensive to travel to the UK and I would like to stay safe.” – UG student

“Have to travel into London, not overly comfortably [sic] on the trains at the moment with omicron so prevalent.” – PGT student

“Studying part time, working and looking after children so online is much easier.” – PGT student

19% (N=90) of respondents said they want the same amount of face-to-face teaching this term.

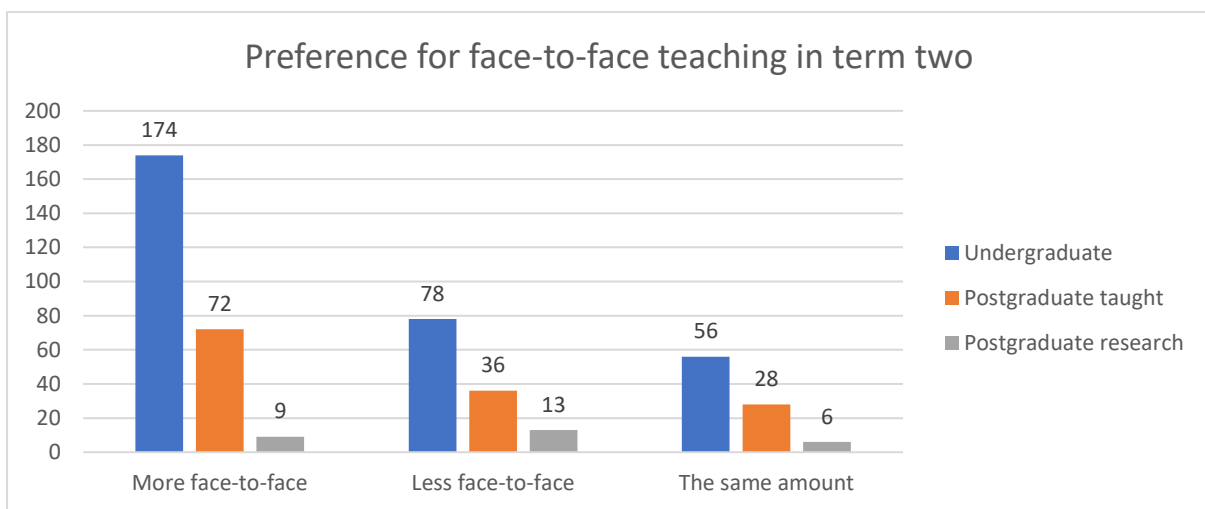
- » The primary reasons given for this preference is that hybrid learning has generally worked well and provides good balance. Some also cited ongoing concerns about Covid-19, while others reported that all their teaching was already face-to-face.

“It’s important to attain a balance between necessary in-person teaching to ensure a proper education while also creating a healthy and safe environment.” – UG student

“I enjoy the engaging aspect of face-to-face teaching, but if there were more, I would be really uncomfortable given the Omicron situation. In smaller classrooms, it would be harder to social distance.” – UG student

“I think watching the lectures in my own time is more manageable and I find having the seminars in person is a great way to discuss the material. I think the blended format works well for me so far.” – UG student

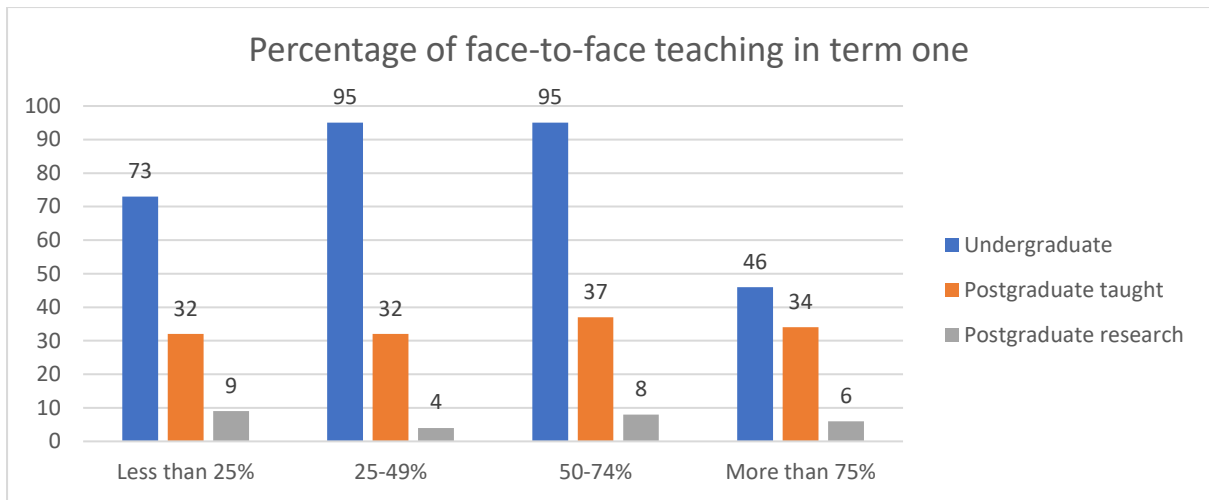
“I think blended learning is good as I commute quite far into UCL so on the weeks I have online class, I save more time.” – PGT student



Preference for F2F teaching in term two	Undergraduate	Postgraduate taught	Postgraduate research	Overall
Less face-to-face	25%	26%	46%	27%
More face-to-face	56%	53%	32%	54%
The same amount	19%	21%	22%	19%

2. Percentage of face-to-face teaching in term one

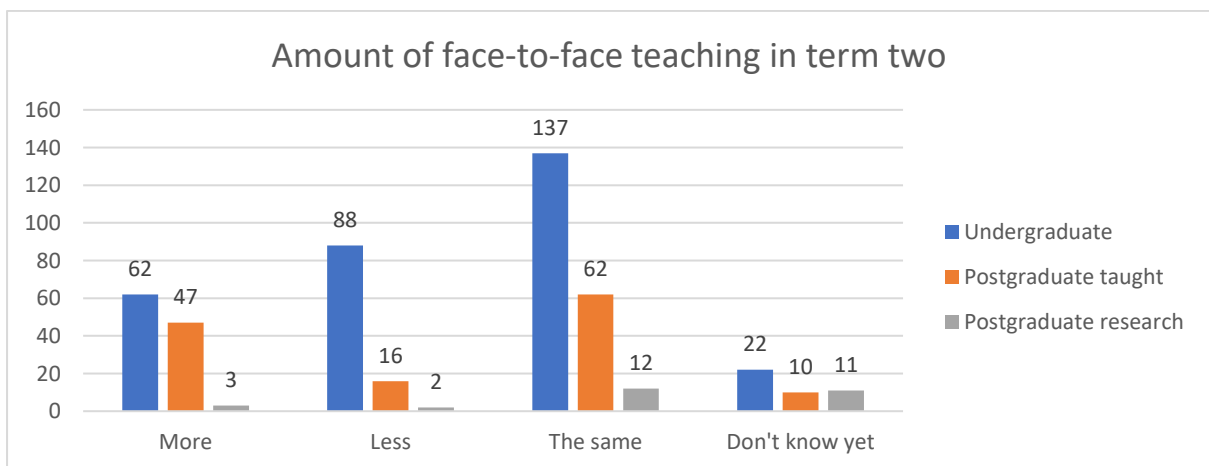
- » The amount of face-to-face teaching received in term one varied greatly. Approximately a quarter of respondents (24%, N=114) completed less than 25% of their teaching in-person. Meanwhile, 58% (N=271) of respondents had between 25% and 74% of their teaching face-to-face. Only 18% (N=86) of respondents had more than 75% of their teaching in-person.
- » Postgraduate research students were slightly more likely than other levels to have *less* than 25% of their teaching in person, however the overall response rate for PGR students was low.



Percentage of F2F teaching in term one	Undergraduate	Postgraduate taught	Postgraduate research	Overall
Less than 25%	24%	24%	33%	24%
25-49%	31%	24%	15%	28%
50-74%	31%	27%	30%	30%
More than 75%	15%	25%	22%	18%

3. Amount of face-to-face teaching in term 2

- » A large proportion of respondents (45%, N=211) report having the same amount of teaching in term two as they had in term one.
- » 24% (N=112) of students report having more face-to-face teaching in term two, while 22% (N=106) report having less. 9% (N=43) don't know yet how their term two teaching compares to term one.
- » Postgraduate taught students were slightly more likely to report having *more* face-to-face teaching in term two, while undergraduate students were slightly more likely to report having *less* in-person teaching.



Amount of F2F teaching in term two (compared to term one)	Undergraduate	Postgraduate taught	Postgraduate research	Overall
More	20%	35%	11%	24%
Less	28%	12%	7%	22%
The same	44%	46%	43%	45%
Don't know yet	7%	7%	39%	9%