

Briefing: NSS 2020 Headline Results

15 July 2020

The 2020 National Student Survey (NSS) results were published on 15 July 2020. A full breakdown of these results is available on request and publically available through Discover Uni¹. This briefing aims to discuss general trends and headline data for UCL.

Headlines

- » Overall satisfaction has fallen by 1% compared to last year, going from 81.6% to 80.6%.
- » The Students' Union question saw a significant overall rise (+4.5%), with over 50% now agreeing that the SU "effectively represents students' academic interests".
- » When discounting neutral answers, 76.6% of those who expressed an opinion on the Students' Union question responded positively, compared to just 23.4% who responded negatively.
- » Aside from the Students' Union question (which now sits as a standalone question in its own section rather than in the Student Voice area), the question areas which saw the greatest rises in scores were Learning Resources (+2.3%) and Academic Support (+1.5%).
- » The question areas of Organisation & Management (-0.5%) and Learning Community showed the biggest drop in scores.

Question areas	UCL 2020 % agree	UCL 2019 % agree	Change vs last year
Overall Satisfaction	80.6	81.6	-1.0
Teaching	82.0	82.1	-0.1
Learning Opportunities	80.1	79.6	+0.5
Assessment & Feedback	65.1	64.1	+1.0
Academic Support	74.5	73.0	+1.5
Organisation & Management	73.3	73.8	-0.5
Learning Resources	86.9	84.8	+2.3
Learning Community	70.5	71.1	-0.6
Student Voice	72.2	71.6	+0.6
Students' Union	51.4	46.9	+4.5

- » The overall response rate for the survey fell at UCL this year, from 69% in 2019 to 67% in 2020.
- » The area of Student Voice saw a small rise of 0.6% on last year's results, continuing an upward trend from 2018 (+3.6%).

¹ <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>

Student Voice Questions	UCL 2020 % agree	UCL 2019 % agree	Change vs last year
23. I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course.	85.6	86.2	-0.6
24. Staff value students' views and opinions about the course.	73.4	72.2	+1.2
25. It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on.	57.7	56.4	+1.3
Student voice	72.2	71.6	+0.6

Sector Comparisons

Russell Group institutions as well as London institutions tend to perform less favourably in the NSS. Below outlines how UCL compares across the Russell Group and institutions in London.

Across the Russell Group, the overall satisfaction score places UCL 19th of 22 Russell Group institutions (not including Oxford and Cambridge as their results were not available), and below the Russell Group average of 82.8%. Of London Russell Group universities, UCL placed above Queen Mary (80.4%) and Kings (77.5%), but below LSE (83.7%) and Imperial (81.4%).

The score for the Students' Union question places Students' Union UCL 12th of 22 Russell Group Students' Unions, rising from 15th last year. We are just above the Russell Group average of 51.0%. Of London Russell Group Students' Unions, UCL scored below Queen Mary (56.1%) and Imperial (54.3%), but above LSE (48.2%) and King's (46.4%).

Impact of COVID-19

Whilst it is difficult to consider the impact of COVID-19 specifically on UCL's NSS results, the overall response rates remained stable after 11 March (the day the pandemic was declared by the World Health Organisation), with the UK's final response rate only slightly lower than in 2019 and 2018. Most providers still reached the minimum response rate of 50% to have their results published.

There was no obvious change in the agreement rate (the proportion of students responding 'strongly agree' or 'mostly agree' to questions) that can be attributed to the pandemic. Similar trends can be found in the results in 2018 and 2019, when survey results submitted later significantly differ from those submitted earlier.

Across the sector, there was a small negative shift in results between 2019 and 2020, but these were still within a normal margin, with either positive or negative changes of more than 5% from 2019 described as "unusual".