

How can we listen to students' feedback? A case-study based on the NSS survey

The CIVIL Engineering Portfolio



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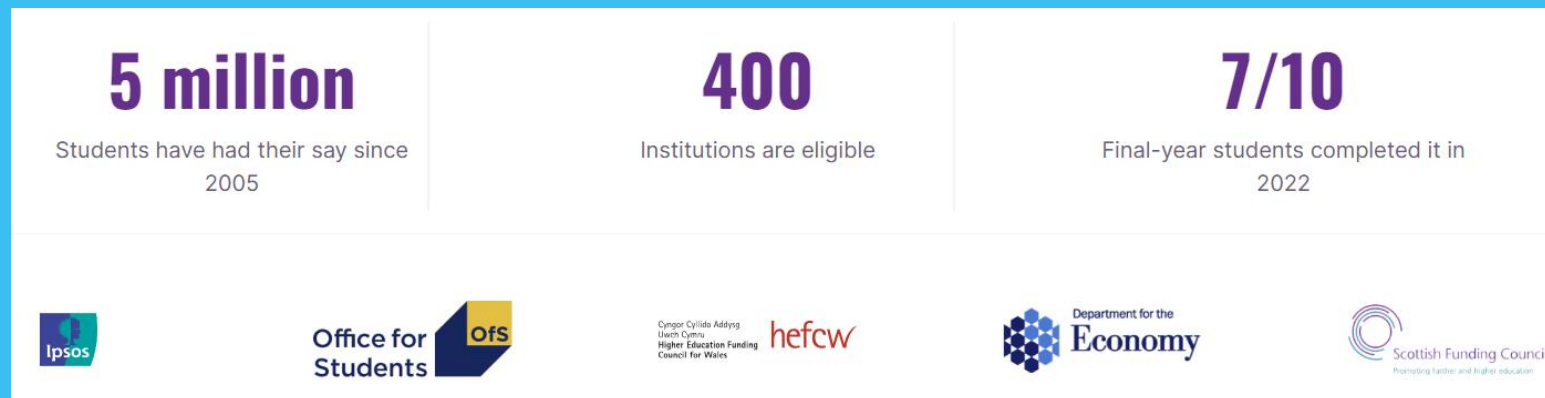
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Showcase Layout

- NSS
- NSS 2021 - Civil Engineering
- Action plan 2021/2022
- Results of NSS 2022 - Civil Engineering
- What can we do to continue along this direction?
- NSS 2023
- Questions

The National Students Survey (NSS)

- NSS ([thestudentsurvey.com](https://www.thestudentsurvey.com)) is currently a very common tool used by universities to identify issues as well as strategies for enhancing their offer to students (since 2005)
- Achievement of University Strategic plan (University of Greenwich, 2022): *by 2030 every course to be in the top quartile for its subject area benchmark*
- The survey is completed by final-year students (nearly half a million) across the UK



The National Students Survey (NSS)

- Single choice questions relating to various aspects of their course. Some students (e.g., nursing, midwifery) may be asked about their practice placements
- Category of questions: The Teaching on my Course, Learning Opportunities, Marking and Assessment, Academic Support, Organisation and Management, Learning Resources, Student Voice, Mental Wellbeing Services, Freedom of Expression

5 million

Students have had their say since
2005

400

Institutions are eligible

7/10

Final-year students completed it in
2022



Cymor, Cynllio Addysg
Iechyd Cymru
Higher Education Funding
Council for Wales

hefcw



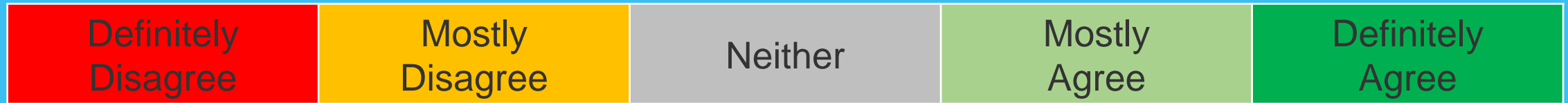
The National Students Survey (NSS)

- Questionnaire from 2022 - Think about your most recent education degree and act like a student:
 - Does not want to spend too much time on this
 - Might not have a clear idea of the consequences
 - Less experienced in surveys/statistics



The National Students Survey (NSS)

- NSS 2022 response scale: quite generic if same for all categories

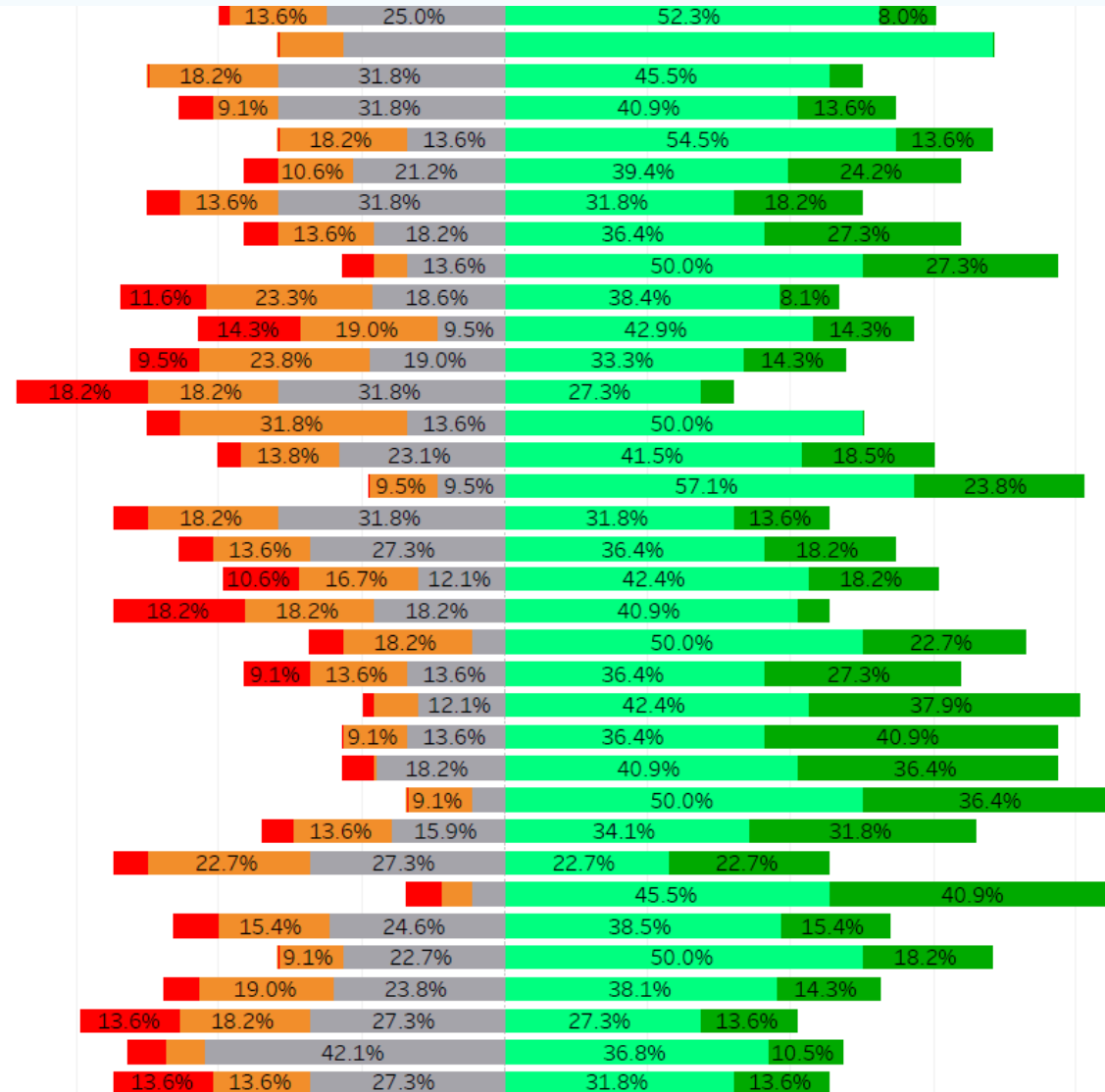


“Neither” is an option that ONLY looks neutral

- Some questions are not clearly linked to the taught programme (e.g. *“The timetable works efficiently for me”* or *“I feel part of a community of staff and students”*)
- Some external factors can affect the answers (e.g. Covid when asked *“I have had the right opportunities to work with other students as part of my course”*). Students’ response rate can affect the records in previous years
- The OVERALL satisfaction is the main result

NSS 2021 – Civil Engineering

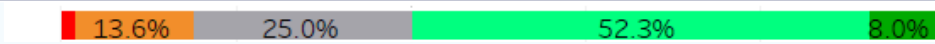
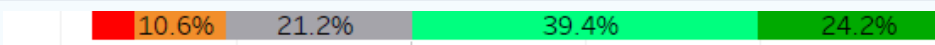
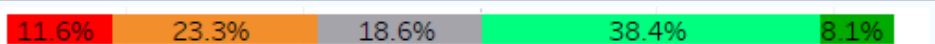
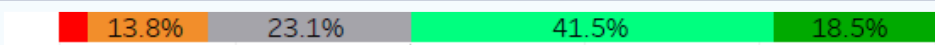
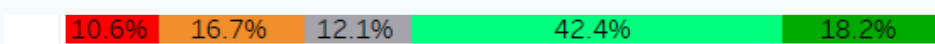
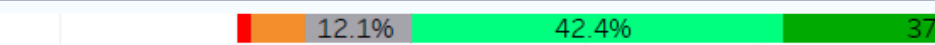
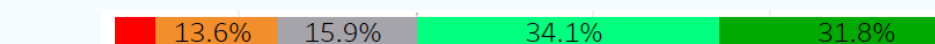
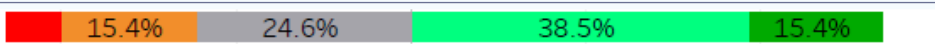
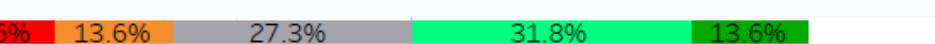
- The teaching on my course
1. Staff are good at explaining things.
 2. Staff have made the subject interesting.
 3. The course is intellectually stimulating.
 4. My course has challenged me to achieve my best work.
- Learning opportunities
5. My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas or c..
 6. My course has provided me with opportunities to bring information ..
 7. My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have ..
- Assessment and feedback
8. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.
 9. Marking and assessment has been fair.
 10. Feedback on my work has been timely.
 11. I have received helpful comments on my work.
- Academic support
12. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.
 13. I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my cou..
 14. Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on..
- Organisation and management
15. The course is well organised and running smoothly.
 16. The timetable works efficiently for me.
- Learning resources
17. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated ef..
 18. The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learnin..
 19. The library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spac..
 20. I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipme..
- Learning community
21. I feel part of a community of staff and students.
 22. I have had the right opportunities to work with other students as p..
- Student Voice
23. I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my cours..
 24. Staff value students' views and opinions about the course.
 25. It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on.
- The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents stude..
- Overall satisfaction



- Positive answers larger than negative
- “Neutral” answers affect significantly results
- Negative in:
 - Feedback
 - Value to student opinions
 - Learning experience

NSS 2021 – Civil Engineering

- How to read this Survey Outcome?

Scores in 2021	Question	% Agree			
	The teaching on my course	83	↑ 2019	↓ 2021	60
	Learning opportunities	77			64
	Assessment and Feedback	71			45
	Academic support	79			59
	Organisation and management	59			61
	Learning resources	97			80
	Learning community	62			66
	Student Voice	62			53
	Overall satisfaction	62			45

Action plan 2021/2022

- Negative answers #1

The teaching on my course	Def Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Mostly Agree	Definitely Agree
1. Staff are good at explaining things	-0.90%	4.10%	13.70%	8.90%	-26%
2. Staff have made the subject interesting	-2.00%	12.80%	17.60%	-10.40%	-18.00%
3. The course is well structured	2.20%	10.10%	13.70%	10.40%	-20%
4. My course is relevant to my career	-1.10%	12.80%	17.60%	10.40%	-18.00%

One of my module had a change in lecturer to whose teaching I wasn't used to

Some of the lecturers weren't as communicative during the pandemic

- Reasons

- Staff members were not comfortable with the teaching allocations
- Difficult acceptance of some topics
- Lack of subject-specific practical activities throughout the programme
- Missing topics/subjects to enhance employability skills and CV

Action plan 2021/2022

- Negative answers #1

The teaching on my course	Def Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Mostly Agree	Definitely Agree
1. Staff are good at explaining things	-0.90%	4.10%	13.70%	8.90%	-26%
2. Staff have made the subject interesting	-2.00%	12.80%	17.60%	-10.40%	-18.00%

- Actions

- Review of teaching allocation for core modules based on staff strengths/expertise
- Introduction of subject-specific modules at level 4
- IT skills typically requested in job adverts at all levels
- Introduction of hot topics in the field, such as environmental and earth material

Action plan 2021/2022

- Negative answers #1

The teaching on my course	Def Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Mostly Agree	Definitely Agree
3. The course is intellectually stimulating	2.20%	3.00%	18.50%	-5.50%	-18.20%
4. My course has challenged me to achieve my best work	-2.50%	12.10%	-0.20%	12.00%	-21.40%

- Actions

- Restructure of Level 5 (BEng/MEng): two current modules at Level 5 (CIVI1126 and CIVI1124) will be merged in one 30-credit module at the same level. A new course title and code with additional practical session
- Change module contents, aims and learning outcomes at Level to introduce the topics related to Geology at this starting level

Action plan 2021/2022

- Negative answers #2

The teaching on my course	Def Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Mostly Agree	Definitely Agree
5. My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas	3.00%	8.40%	6.20%	-10.70%	-6.80%

- Reasons

- Covid lockouts and reduction of face-to-face time
- Missing field trips and practical sessions
- Lack of clear link between common modules and Civil applications

Never get to be practical and apply

Action plan 2021/2022

- Negative answers #2

The teaching on my course	Def Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Mostly Agree	Definitely Agree
5. My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas	3.00%	8.40%	6.20%	-10.70%	-6.80%

- Actions

- Practical activities throughout the programme: surveying activities at Level 4, Geology trip at Level 5 and Constructionarium at Level 6
- Teaching experience as a unique process
- Reduced the repetitions in modules within the same year and at different levels

Action plan 2021/2022

- Negative answers #3

Organization and management	Def Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Mostly Agree	Definitely Agree
15. The course is well organised and running smoothly.	10.90%	5.50%	0.80%	-3.00%	-14.20%
16. The timetable works efficiently for me.	-0.70%	8.80%	-8.90%	9.70%	-8.80%
17. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated	5.00%	4.70%	-1.50%	-5.80%	-2.40%

- Reasons

An overwhelming amount of group coursework

Too much workload due to assignments. So not much time to do revision for exams

- Coursework too much to-face to-face
- Missing practical sessions
- Lack of clear link between common modules and Civil applications

Action plan 2021/2022

- Negative answers #3

Organization and management	Def Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Mostly Agree	Definitely Agree
15. The course is well organised and running smoothly.	10.90%	5.50%	0.80%	-3.00%	-14.20%
16. The timetable works efficiently for me.	-0.70%	8.80%	-8.90%	9.70%	-8.80%
17. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated	5.00%	4.70%	-1.50%	-5.80%	-2.40%

- Actions

- Transparent and monitored assessment regime with focus on deadlines – agreed with students (Blackburn, 2022).
- Review of assessment strategy
- Group moderation of exams and coursework (large weighting)

Action plan 2021/2022

- Negative answers #4

Student voice	Def Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Mostly Agree	Definitely Agree
24. Staff value students' views and opinions about the course.	0.10%	12.60%	7.60%	-2.00%	-18.30%

An effective control of complaints, especially when several students have expressed a disappointment, would be much appreciated and would benefit everyone

- Reasons

- “Staff and Student liaison meetings” not accurately capturing feedback
- Weak link with GSU and academic staff
- Staff involvement in decisions

Action plan 2021/2022

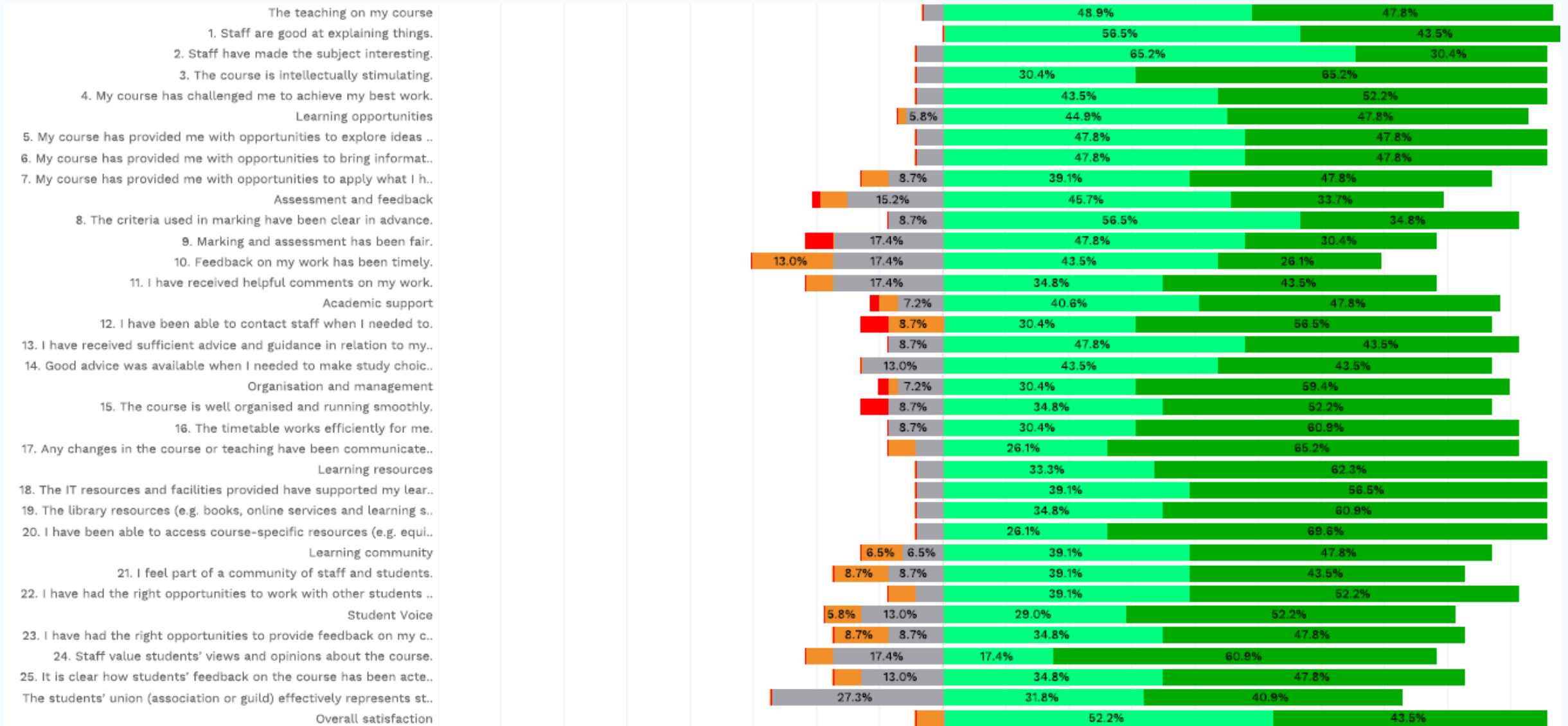
- Negative answers #4

Student voice	Def Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Mostly Agree	Definitely Agree
24. Staff value students' views and opinions about the course.	0.10%	12.60%	7.60%	-2.00%	-18.30%

- Actions

- New Programme Committee Meetings (PCMs) to collect students' feedback
- Common meeting with all students (BEng/Meng – MSc – Part-time and Full-time)
- Active dialogue with GSU and involvement in PCM

NSS 2022 – Civil Engineering



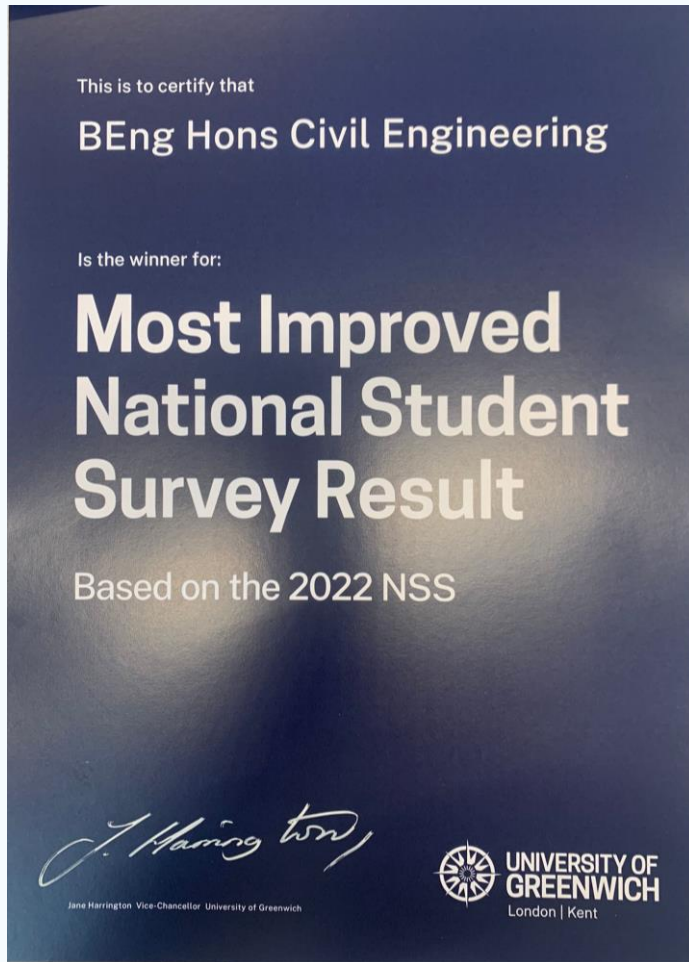
NSS 2022 – Civil Engineering

The teaching on my course	Def Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Mostly Agree	Definitely Agree
1. Staff are good at explaining things	0%	0%	0%	62%	38%
2. Staff have made the subject interesting	0%	0%	4%	65%	31%
3. The course is intellectually stimulating	0%	0%	4%	38%	58%
4. My course has challenged me to achieve my best work	0%	0%	4%	42%	54%

The teaching on my course	Def Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Mostly Agree	Definitely Agree
5. My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas	0%	0%	8%	46%	46%

Organization and management	Def Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Mostly Agree	Definitely Agree
15. The course is well organised and running smoothly.	4%	0%	8%	35%	54%
16. The timetable works efficiently for me.	0%	0%	8%	35%	58%
17. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated	0%	8%	4%	27%	62%

NSS 2022 – Civil Engineering



NSS 2022 – Civil Engineering

Student voice

Def

Dis

Mostly

Definitely

Agree

24

All the teachers and tutors are helpful and willing to help throughout your course

about the course

My three years of studying at University of Greenwich has been a really good learning experience

8%

Most lecturers are extremely helpful and great teachers

I liked the part where we had practice involved besides the lectures that were running. Like labs and field trips.

NSS 2022 – Civil Engineering

What can we do to continue along this direction?

Question	Response
9 Marking and assessment has been fair	Def Disagree: 4%
10 Feedback on my work has been timely	Mostly Disagree: 15%
12 I have been able to contact staff when I needed to	Def Disagree: 4% and Mostly Disagree: 12%
15 The course is well organised and running smoothly	Def Disagree: 4%
21 I feel part of the community of staff and students	Mostly Disagree: 12%
26 The representation of the profession or guild) effective rests	

Feedback on assignments is sometimes slow

Communication is not clear between lecturers and students. Coursework involved information that was not covered

NSS 2022 – Civil Engineering

What can we do to continue along this direction?

Question	Response
9 Marking and assessment has been fair	Def Disagree: 4%
10 Feedback on my work has been timely	Mostly Disagree: 15%
12 I have been able to contact staff when I needed to	Def Disagree: 4% and Mostly Disagree: 12%
15 The course is well organised and running smoothly	Def Disagree: 4%
21 I feel part of a community of staff and students	Mostly Disagree: 12%
26 The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests	Neutral: 24%

Actions

- Continue engagement with PCM and GSU
- New assessments for some modules and dates for exams
- New social activities with students and staff members

The National Students Survey (NSS)

- NSS 2023 was reviewed (please provide link)
- New response scale, depending on the question

Very good	Good	Not very good	Not at all good	This does not apply to me
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Very often	Fairly often	Not very often	Rarely	This does not apply to me
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- Different questions/categories

Conclusions

- NSS is a tool giving us a wider picture than a single % on Overall Satisfaction
- We can intervene as soon as possible on issues raised by students
- An active internal dialogue can be a key in teamwork (academic side)
- Students can be part of the learning process (student-to-teacher contract?)

The National Students Survey (NSS)

Please answer to the questions, guessing our new results



<https://www.menti.com/albtd41p3ib1>

Thank you

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