

National Student Survey 2021: Summary of College Results

Introduction

1. This paper provides an overview of the College's performance in the National Student Survey (NSS) 2021 at Institutional and Departmental level.
2. The NSS is an annual survey of final year undergraduate students consisting of two parts: a quantitative survey of 27 questions grouped into nine question categories; and a qualitative free-text section asking students to comment on the positive and negative aspects of their student experience. Within the quantitative survey respondents are asked to rate the extent to which they agree with each question, responding as follows: Definitely Agree; Mostly Agree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Mostly Disagree; or Definitely Disagree. Scores are presented as "Percentage Satisfaction", calculated from the proportion of respondents answering either "Definitely Agree" or "Mostly Agree".
3. There have not been any changes to the survey questions since the 2018 NSS, meaning that direct comparisons between the 2020 and 2021 results are possible. Oxford and Cambridge did not have overall institutional results, and this should be taken into account when viewing the College's movement in rankings.
4. A detailed analysis of the NSS 2021 results can be found in Annex A.

Summary of Key Outcomes

Institutional Level

5. The response rate was 73% with 1,772 total respondents. This compares to 75% in 2020 and a sector wide response rate of 69%.
6. Overall Satisfaction in the College increased to 84.5% from 81.4% in 2020.
7. The College's percentage satisfaction improved in seven question categories: Teaching (+2.6 percentage points to 86.3%); Learning Opportunities (+1.9 percentage points to 82.9%); Assessment and Feedback (+3.4 percentage points to 63.8%); Academic Support (0.6 percentage points to 77.5%); Organisation and Management (+1.9 percentage points to 76.3%); Learning Community (+0.3 percentage points to 77.7%); and Students' Union (+3.4 percentage points to 57.7%).
8. The College's percentage satisfaction fell in two question categories: Learning Resources (-2.0 percentage points to 87.5%); and Student Voice (-0.4 percentage points to 74.6%).
9. For 2021 the College ranks 11th in the Sector for Overall Satisfaction (84.5%), out of the 156 Higher Education Institutions (excluding Further Education Colleges and Alternative/Private Providers) with overall results. This is an increase of 84 places from 95th in 2020. The College has moved into the top quartile for Overall Satisfaction in 2021.
10. Of the Russell Group institutions with 2021 results, the College ranks 1st for Overall Satisfaction (84.5%).
11. The College is in the top quartile for all question categories except for Student Union where it is in the second quartile and Assessment and Feedback where it is in the bottom quartile.

Department Level

12. Overall satisfaction increased in eleven Departments in 2021, the largest increases being in Medical Biosciences (+26.0 percentage points to 65.5%); Chemistry (+13.0 percentage points to 87.3%); Civil Engineering (+11.8 percentage points to 89.9%); and Mathematics (+10.4 percentage points to 90.7%). Computing, Materials, Life Sciences- Biochemistry, and Physics also saw increases in Overall Satisfaction of

at least 4 percentage points. Earth Science had the highest level of overall satisfaction (93.8%).

13. Overall satisfaction decreased in 6 Departments, the largest decreases being in Design Engineering (-16.7 percentage points to 80.7%) and Mechanical Engineering (-7.7 percentage points to 87.1%). The lowest level of overall satisfaction was in Medical Biosciences (65.5%).
14. The College ranks in the top quartile for Overall Satisfaction in the NSS Subjects for Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering; Civil Engineering; Computing; Earth Sciences; Mechanical Engineering; Medicine; and Mathematical Sciences.
15. Civil Engineering ranks in the top quartile for all Question Categories while Chemical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering rank in the top quartile for all but two Question Categories.

Annex A: Detailed Analysis of NSS 2021 College Results

Institutions without Publishable Overall Results

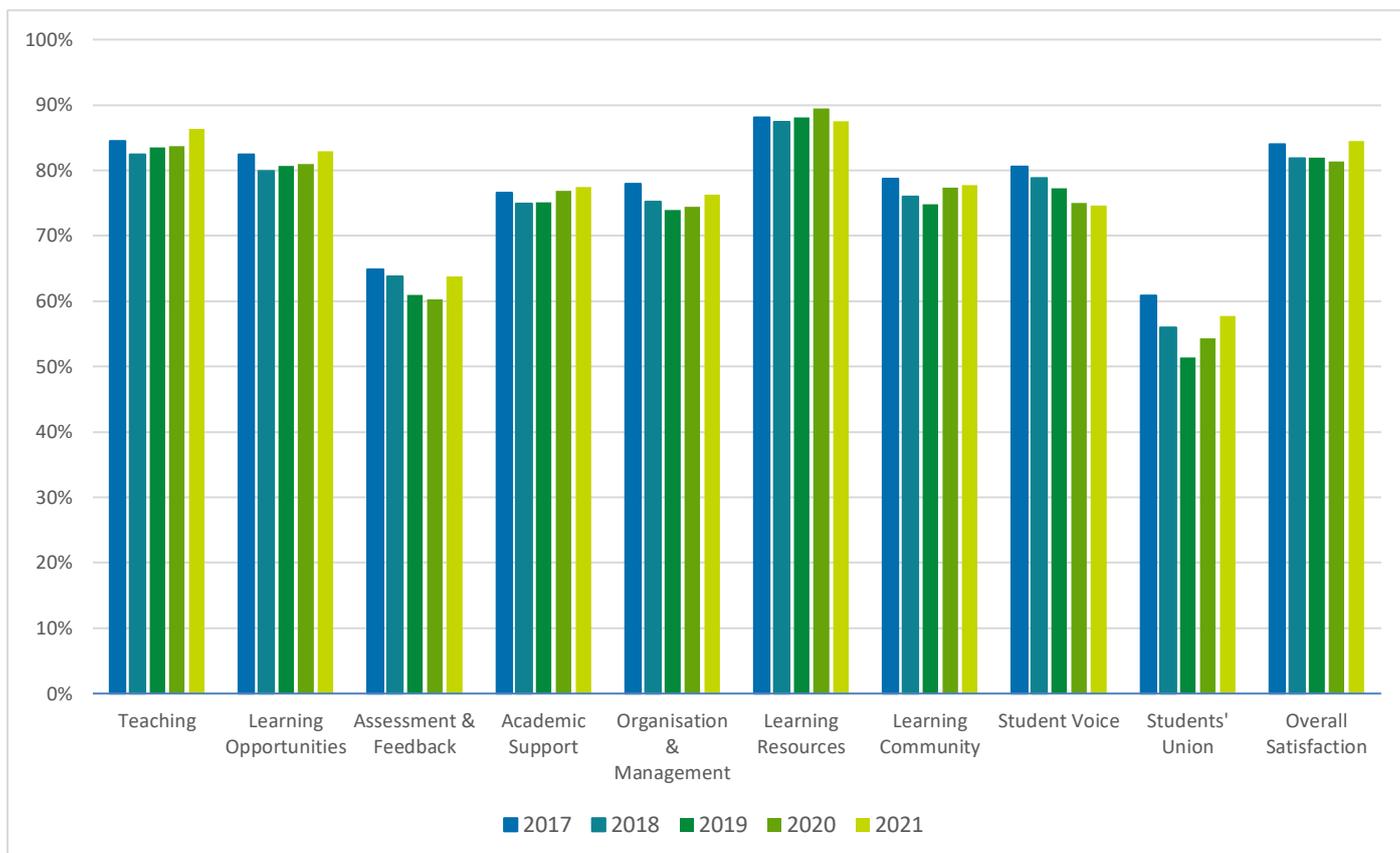
- i. Due to an NSS boycott, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge do not have overall institutional results. This should be taken into account when viewing the College’s movement in various rankings. Although these institutions do not have overall results they do appear in certain subject tables, where they have met the publication threshold at subject level (50% response rate and at least 10 respondents).

Score Analysis

Institutional Results

- ii. Chart 1 below shows the trend in the College’s results in each NSS Question Category between 2017 and 2021. Percentage satisfaction increased across seven Question Categories between 2020 and 2021: Teaching (+2.6 percentage points to 86.3%); Learning Opportunities (+1.9 percentage points to 82.9%); Assessment and Feedback (+3.4 percentage points to 63.8%); Academic Support (0.6 percentage points to 77.5%); Organisation and Management (+1.9 percentage points to 76.3%); Learning Community (+0.3 percentage points to 77.7%); and Students’ Union (+3.4 percentage points to 57.7%).
- iii. Percentage satisfaction decreased across two Question Categories between 2020 and 2021: Learning Resources (-2.0 percentage points to 87.5%); and Student Voice (-0.4 percentage points to 74.6%).

Chart 1: College Trend in Percentage Satisfaction by NSS Question Category



- iv. Table 1 below shows the percentage point change in the College's NSS results since 2019, and provides a comparison to the Sector, Russell Group and London Averages in 2021.

Table 1: College Sector Performance by NSS Question Category

NSS Question Category	Imperial			Sector Average 2021	Russell Group Average 2021	London Average 2021	Imperial's rank in Sector 2021 (/156)	Imperial's rank in Sector 2020 (/153)
	2021	Δ since 2020	Δ since 2019					
Teaching	86%	3%	3%	80%	82%	80%	10	83
Learning Opportunities	83%	2%	2%	79%	78%	79%	24	118
Assessment & Feedback	64%	4%	3%	68%	62%	68%	123	146
Academic Support	78%	1%	2%	74%	72%	73%	34	113
Organisation & Management	76%	2%	2%	68%	71%	68%	18	62
Learning Resources	88%	-2%	-1%	73%	75%	72%	2	17
Learning Community	78%	0%	3%	68%	65%	67%	18	76
Student Voice	75%	0%	-3%	67%	65%	66%	14	66
Students' Union	58%	3%	6%	56%	51%	59%	61	100
Overall Satisfaction	85%	3%	3%	75%	77%	74%	11	95

Key

Top Quartile	Second Quartile	Third Quartile	Bottom Quartile
--------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------

Rankings are now based on scores to 2 decimal places. Prior to this, results were only available rounded to the nearest whole number.

- v. Percentage satisfaction for the College is above the Sector Average in the Question Categories: Teaching (6 percentage points higher); Learning Opportunities (4 percentage points higher); Academic Support (4 percentage points higher); Organisation and Management (8 percentage points higher); Learning Resources (15 percentage points higher); Learning Community (10 percentage points higher); Student Voice (8 percentage points higher) and Student Union (2 percentage points higher). The College is below the Sector Average in Assessment & Feedback (4 percentage points lower); The College is 10 percentage points higher than the Sector Average in Overall Satisfaction.
- vi. The College is above all three of the Sector, Russell Group and London Averages for Teaching; Learning Opportunities; Academic Support; Organisation and Management; Learning Resources; Learning Community; and Student Voice.
- vii. The College ranks within the bottom quartile in Assessment & Feedback. Apart from the Students' Union, Assessment & Feedback continues to be the College's worst performing category. The lowest percentage satisfaction was in the questions relating to feedback ("Feedback on my work has been timely" fell by 4 percentage points to 59%, and "I have received helpful comments on my work" remained at 60%).
- viii. The College's result in Overall Satisfaction resulted in an increase of 84 places to rank 11th.
- ix. Of the 22 Russell Group institutions with overall institution results (only the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge did not have overall institutional results) the College ranks 1st for Overall Satisfaction. The College ranks 4th of 34 London institutions. Amity Global Education ranks 1st in London, with an Overall Satisfaction score of 100%.

Departmental Results

- x. Table 2 below shows NSS 2021 percentage satisfaction by NSS Question Category for each Department, colour coded to provide a comparison to the Sector Average and last year's results. Five Departments have a higher percentage satisfaction in all NSS Question Categories than the Sector Average: Civil Engineering; Electrical & Electronic Engineering; Medicine; Chemistry; and Mathematics. No department has a lower percentage satisfaction in all NSS Question Categories than the Sector Average.

Table 2: NSS 2021 Department Percentage Satisfaction by NSS Question Category

Percentage Satisfaction by Department	Teaching	Learning Opportunities	Assessment & Feedback	Academic Support	Organisation & management	Learning Resources	Learning Community	Student Voice	Students' Union	Overall Satisfaction	Overall Satisfaction Δ since 2020
Aeronautics	78.6	76.4	55.0	81.1	84.2	86.5	72.7	61.8	42.6	80.0	0.3
Bioengineering	92.9	92.0	61.0	75.5	55.6	89.6	89.7	78.2	55.0	82.4	0.4
Chemical Engineering	89.2	88.6	76.2	79.9	81.7	87.6	85.3	90.2	52.5	89.2	-0.9
Civil & Environmental Engineering	88.4	93.3	75.9	84.2	89.2	91.5	93.1	82.5	64.9	89.9	11.8
Computing	88.2	91.5	59.3	76.1	81.6	90.4	81.0	79.5	46.0	88.0	4.4
Design Engineering	88.7	89.3	57.3	79.6	68.8	85.0	85.5	87.1	54.8	80.7	-16.7
Earth Science & Engineering	80.1	83.3	54.3	65.9	66.6	84.0	77.8	64.2	54.4	81.9	-2.5
Electrical & Electronic Engineering	95.3	89.6	77.6	86.1	92.4	91.7	88.5	88.2	63.8	93.8	-2.1
Materials	82.4	77.9	53.9	78.4	68.6	90.3	84.3	77.6	65.6	75.7	4.6
Mechanical Engineering	88.5	85.1	73.6	79.6	84.7	82.3	82.0	82.1	53.2	87.1	-7.7
Medicine	87.6	83.4	70.8	81.6	78.7	89.3	82.1	79.4	75.3	91.6	1.8
Medical Biosciences	81.8	83.0	42.7	67.3	57.6	84.9	70.0	64.9	57.4	65.5	26.0
Life Sciences - Biology	84.9	77.3	54.7	75.0	74.2	88.2	70.7	63.9	50.5	80.7	-4.2
Life Sciences - Biochemistry	90.4	83.2	54.0	76.3	74.9	86.9	71.2	65.5	54.6	86.0	4.8
Chemistry	83.8	83.2	71.5	77.2	75.8	89.7	78.0	77.6	60.1	87.3	13.0
Mathematics	90.2	79.6	76.2	82.8	85.9	89.0	71.3	81.4	64.2	90.7	10.4
Physics	79.1	68.4	49.1	67.8	64.6	82.8	56.0	55.0	47.7	68.7	6.9

Key

Green fill: Higher percentage satisfaction in 2021 than 2020	Red fill: Lower percentage satisfaction in 2021 than 2020
Blue text: College outcome greater than Sector Average	Red text: College outcome less than Sector Average

- xi. Table 3 overleaf shows the NSS 2021 rank in the sector by Department and NSS Question Category. Ranks are highlighted to show quartile performance. Seven Departments rank in the top quartile in their NSS Subject for Overall Satisfaction: Chemical Engineering; Civil Engineering; Computing; Electrical & Electronic Engineering; Mechanical Engineering; Medicine; and Mathematics. Materials; Medical Biosciences; and Physics are in the bottom quartile for Overall Satisfaction.

Table 3: NSS 2021 Department Rank in Sector and Quartile Performance

Rank in Sector by Department	Teaching	Learning Opportunities	Assessment & Feedback	Academic Support	Organisation & Management	Learning Resources	Learning Community	Student Voice	Students' Union	Overall Satisfaction	Number of HEIs
Aeronautics	13	12	18	6	2	4	11	13	24	9	31
Bioengineering	4	3	13	14	24	4	4	8	16	11	27
Chemical Engineering	1	3	3	11	8	6	4	1	16	1	32
Civil & Environmental Engineering	7	1	12	9	3	1	1	4	6	9	62
Computing	5	3	82	37	7	3	6	11	80	6	118
Design Engineering	4	5	19	11	15	6	5	3	10	10	29
Earth Science & Engineering	21	10	60	60	48	17	16	41	35	21	33
Electrical & Electronic Engineering	3	9	7	8	2	3	8	3	10	6	72
Materials	5	6	8	7	7	2	3	2	1	7	8
Mechanical Engineering	3	5	6	9	2	18	4	4	29	8	70
Medicine	17	21	14	7	6	4	18	8	2	7	32
Medical Biosciences	42	14	70	51	64	13	30	47	35	67	74
Life Sciences - Biology	30	32	46	32	29	3	23	36	29	26	52
Life Sciences - Biochemistry	12	20	49	29	24	7	22	37	26	17	54
Chemistry	32	26	22	38	28	9	23	20	21	22	60
Mathematics	4	19	21	21	7	4	19	10	13	8	71
Physics	39	46	48	46	39	21	45	48	29	45	49

Key

Top Quartile	Second Quartile	Third Quartile	Bottom Quartile
--------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------

Comments Analysis

Institutional Results

- xii. In addition to the main questions within the NSS, respondents were provided with the opportunity to comment on two free-text questions, asking them about the “positive” and “negative” aspects of their student experience. Of the College’s 1,772 respondents to the survey, 1,042 respondents chose to comment on at least one of these questions and in total 1,867 comments were provided. Each comment often contained multiple statements covering a range of topics. In total there were 1,776 positive statements and 1,484 negative statements in 2021.
- xiii. Charts 2 and 3 provide a breakdown of the positive and negative statements. Respondents’ statements have been grouped into appropriately themed categories. The top three categories of positive statements for the College in 2021 were for *Course Content* (16.6% of positive statements), *Teaching* (16.0% of positive statements) and *Academic Support* (11.7% of positive statements).
- xiv. The top three negative statements were for *Assessment & Feedback* (14.8% of negative statements), *Workload* (11.7% of negative statements) and *Organisation & Management* (11.1% of negative statements). It should be noted that negative statements do not always directly correlate with dissatisfaction. For example, respondents highlighting one negative aspect of their teaching experience may have concurrently provided a positive comment on different aspects of their teaching experience and answered that they were satisfied with their teaching.

Chart 2: Breakdown of Positive Statements by Category

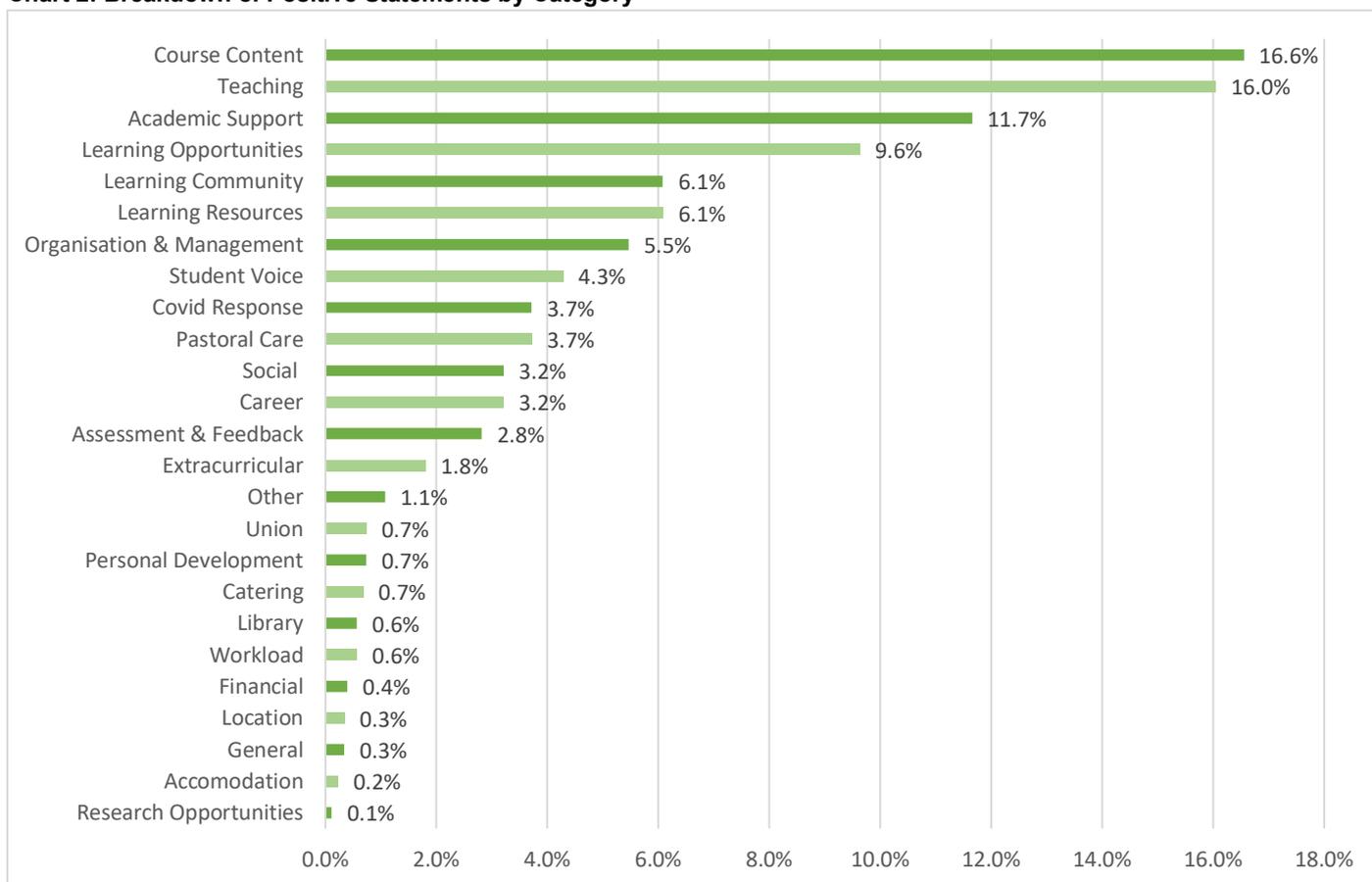
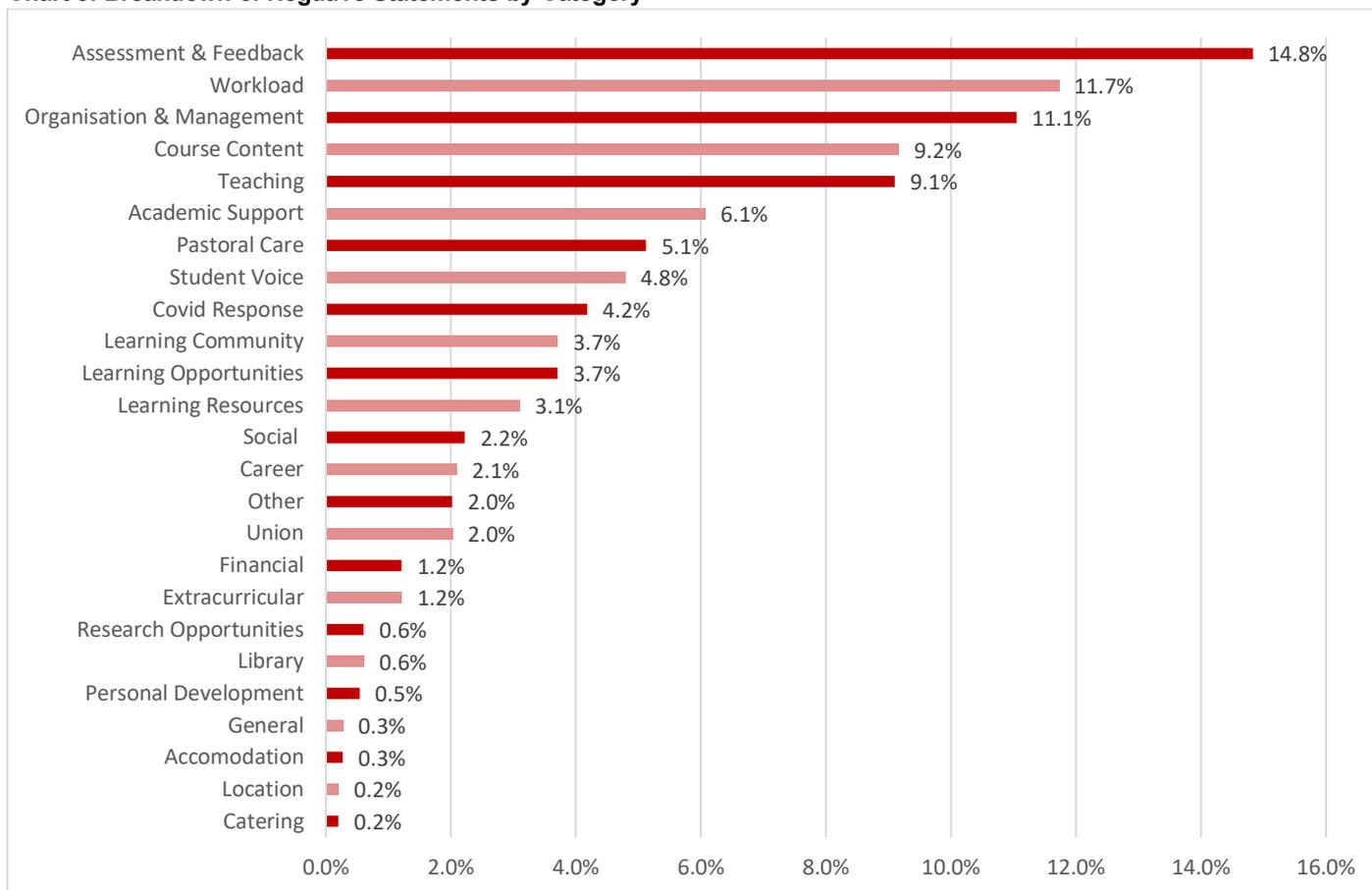


Chart 3: Breakdown of Negative Statements by Category

- xv. The *Other* category includes general comments about facilities (e.g. availability of study spaces), IT, diversity, attitudes of other students, broad statements about the College *etc.* where the statements were not considered appropriate to be included elsewhere.

Departmental Results

- xvi. Table 4 overleaf provides a summary of the top positive and negative statement categories for each Department from the free-text comments section on the survey.
- xvii. *Assessment & Feedback* and *Workload* were the most common negative statements for the Faculty of Engineering. *Organisation & Management* and *Teaching* were the most common negative statements within the Faculty of Medicine. *Assessment & Feedback* was the most common negative statement within the Faculty of Natural Sciences.

Table 4: Summary of Top Positive and Negative Statement Categories by Department for NSS 2021

Department	Top Positive Statement Category(s)	Top Negative Statement Category(s)
Aeronautics	Teaching	Workload
	Learning Opportunities	Course Content
	Student Voice	Assessment & Feedback
Bioengineering	Course Content	Organisation & Management
	Learning Opportunities	Assessment & Feedback
	Academic Support	Workload
Chemical Engineering	Course Content	Workload
	Teaching	Course Content
	Student Voice	Career
Civil & Environmental Engineering	Course Content	Workload
	Teaching	Teaching
	Learning Community	Assessment and Feedback
Computing	Course Content	Assessment and Feedback
	Career	Workload
	Teaching	Teaching
Design	Course Content	Workload
	Learning Opportunities	Course Content
	Learning Resources	Assessment & Feedback
Earth Science & Engineering	Course Content	Assessment & Feedback
	Teaching	Teaching
	Learning Community	Course Content
Electrical & Electronic Engineering	Course Content	Assessment & Feedback
	Teaching	Organisation & Management
	Learning Opportunities	Academic Support
Materials	Course Content	Assessment & Feedback
	Teaching	Organisation & Management
	Learning Opportunities	Learning Resources
Mechanical Engineering	Course Content	Workload
	Academic Support	Course Content
	Organisation & Management	Assessment & Feedback
Medicine	Teaching	Student Voice
	Academic Support	Teaching
	Learning Opportunities	Organisation & Management
Biomedical Science	Learning Opportunities	Organisation & Management
	Course Content	Assessment & Feedback
	Teaching	Teaching
Life Sciences - Biology	Course Content	Assessment & Feedback
	Teaching	Organisation & Management
	Academic Support	Academic Support
Life Sciences - Biochemistry	Course Content	Assessment & Feedback
	Teaching	Organisation & Management
	Academic Support	Academic Support
Chemistry	Teaching	Workload
	Academic Support	Assessment & Feedback
	Learning Opportunities	Teaching
Mathematics	Academic Support	Workload
	Course Content	Assessment & Feedback
	Teaching	Course Content
Physics	Teaching	Assessment & Feedback
	Course Content	Teaching
	Learning Resources	Course Content