

**SENATE**

**Title of paper:** National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey Results 2024

**Main purpose of the paper:** For information

**Presenter(s):** Prof Ruth Valentine, PVC Education

**Date of paper:** 4 November 2024

**Purpose of the paper:**

To present a summary of the National Student Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results for 2024

**Recommendations:**

- To note the results

**Consultation to date (including any previous committee consideration and its outcome):**

Results have been or will be considered by Boards of Studies, Faculty Education Committees, and University Education Committee.

# National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey results 2024


## Background

1. This paper presents a brief summary of results for two of our core student experience surveys:
  - National Student Survey (NSS) of undergraduate finalists (compulsory as part of our registration with the Office for Students)
  - Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey of all PGT students undertaken voluntarily by 107 institutions in 2024
2. N.B. There was no Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) in 2024 as the survey runs every other year. PRES will run in 2025.
3. NSS and PTES results are available through the [Strategic Insights Portal](#). Full NSS results were published on the portal on the day of release (10 July). Newcastle PTES results were uploaded to the portal in June, with sector comparator data added when it became available in October.
4. The dashboards available through the portal provide a comprehensive analysis for all our results and therefore University Education Committee did not receive a detailed statistical report as had been necessary in previous years.
5. NSS 2024 provides the second year of results using a revised set of [questions](#) and questionnaire format. Key changes of note are the switch to 'positivity' scores which are calculated from the percentage of positive responses (students have a choice of very negative, negative, positive or very positive question specific response options) and the removal of the 'overall satisfaction question'.
6. NSS 2023 introduced the publication of benchmarks, original used as part of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) exercise. Benchmarks are calculated by the Office for Students and take into account some of the factors which contribute to different NSS results. They are a prediction of what the NSS results would have been if the sector had the same population mix as the population in focus. Benchmarking factors include: mode/subject/level of study, age, ethnicity, disability and sex. A response on or near benchmark is the expected results, below benchmark is underperformance and above is overperformance. Benchmarks change from year to year. To secure the best outcomes in TEF institutions are expected to be at or above benchmark. NSS 2023 and 2024 are the first two years out of four that will contribute to TEF 2027.
7. National benchmarking is not available for PTES and previously only ranking information had been provided via AdvanceHE. This year's results include for the first time an internally calculated 'benchmark' using the CAH2 data and includes the subject weighted sector median at Faculty/School/Subject/Programme level.

## National Student Survey (NSS)

8. Our response rate for 2024 was 69.1%, almost identical to last year (69.3% 2023), putting us slightly behind the Russell Group (70.4%) and full-service sector (73.5%) but showing a good level of engagement.
9. Across all themes and questions our positivity score – the proportion of students giving a positive answer to the new four point scale questions – increased.

Theme	Positivity score	Benchmark	Positivity score previous year	Change
Teaching on my course	84.0%	85.8%	83.1%	↑ 0.9%
Learning opportunities	79.4%	81.7%	77.6%	↑ 1.8%
Assessment & feedback	70.2%	74.9%	69.5%	↑ 0.7%
Academic support	86.1%	86.1%	83.3%	↑ 2.8%
Organisation & management	74.8%	75.0%	71.7%	↑ 3.1%
Learning resources	89.0%	87.2%	87.2%	↑ 1.8%
Student voice	71.6%	72.6%	68.9%	↑ 2.7%
Students' Union	71.8%	70.2%	69.3%	↑ 2.5%
Mental wellbeing	86.3%	78.0%	82.4%	↑ 3.9%
Freedom of expression	85.7%	86.0%	84.1%	↑ 1.6%

2.5% below benchmark  2.5% above benchmark

**Figure 1** Institutional results by theme showing benchmark, 2023 positivity score, change 2023 to 2024

10. In relation to all 7 themes our results have moved closer to/beyond benchmark this year, noting that performance is still below benchmark for 5 themes, so there is still room for improvement.
11. Our rank within the Russell Group increased for 5 out of 7 themes (by 1-3 places) and 17 out of 27 questions. We ranked 1st in the Russell Group and 4th in the full-service sector for Q26 'How well communicated was information about your university/college's mental wellbeing support services?'
12. Figure 2 shows a summary of the Faculty level results. Across the Faculties there is generally a positive move and move towards or beyond benchmark for HASS and SAgE. FMS has seen small absolute reductions but this is generally against a picture of already high performance above benchmark in all themes except assessment and feedback.
13. There is substantial variation across academic units and detailed results are reviewed by units and Faculties to identify local actions.

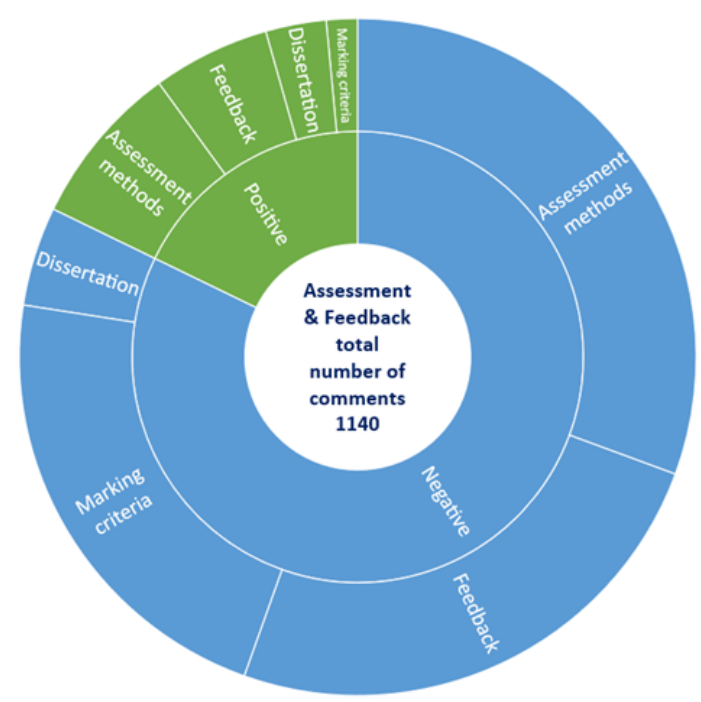
Area	FMS			HASS			SAgE		
	Theme	PS	Diff to BM	Change	PS	Diff to BM	Change	PS	Diff to BM
Teaching on my course	88.0%	2.2%	↑ 0.7%	84.4%	-1.7%	↑ 1.3%	79.3%	-5.3%	↑ 0.5%
Learning opportunities	82.4%	0.8%	↓ -0.3%	79.1%	-2.7%	↑ 2.4%	76.9%	-4.5%	↑ 2.6%
Assessment & feedback	69.1%	-2.3%	↓ -1.7%	73.1%	-3.7%	↑ 0.5%	64.8%	-9.1%	↑ 3.3%
Academic support	86.4%	3.3%	↓ -0.7%	87.8%	0.6%	↑ 4.8%	82.0%	-4.2%	↑ 2.0%
Organisation & management	67.0%	0.1%	↓ -1.3%	80.3%	2.2%	↑ 4.3%	70.5%	-5.8%	↑ 4.6%
Learning resources	87.8%	2.1%	↓ -1.0%	90.6%	2.7%	↑ 2.8%	87.6%	0.2%	↑ 2.6%
Student voice	72.8%	2.1%	↑ 4.1%	72.6%	-0.9%	↑ 1.9%	68.1%	-4.5%	↑ 2.7%

2.5% below benchmark  2.5% above benchmark

**Figure 2** Faculty results by theme showing benchmark, 2023 positive score, change 2023 to 2024

*Qualitative comments*

14. As well as the quantitative outcomes of the NSS we also have a wealth of data provided by students in relation to the question. *‘Looking back on the experience, are there any particularly positive or negative aspects you would like to highlight?’*. This is coded using an AI language model and we are experimenting this year with how to make the most of this tool and so undertook a deep dive into comments coded for assessment and feedback, to triangulate against the quantitative results.



**Comments on assessment and feedback**

18% positive

82% negative

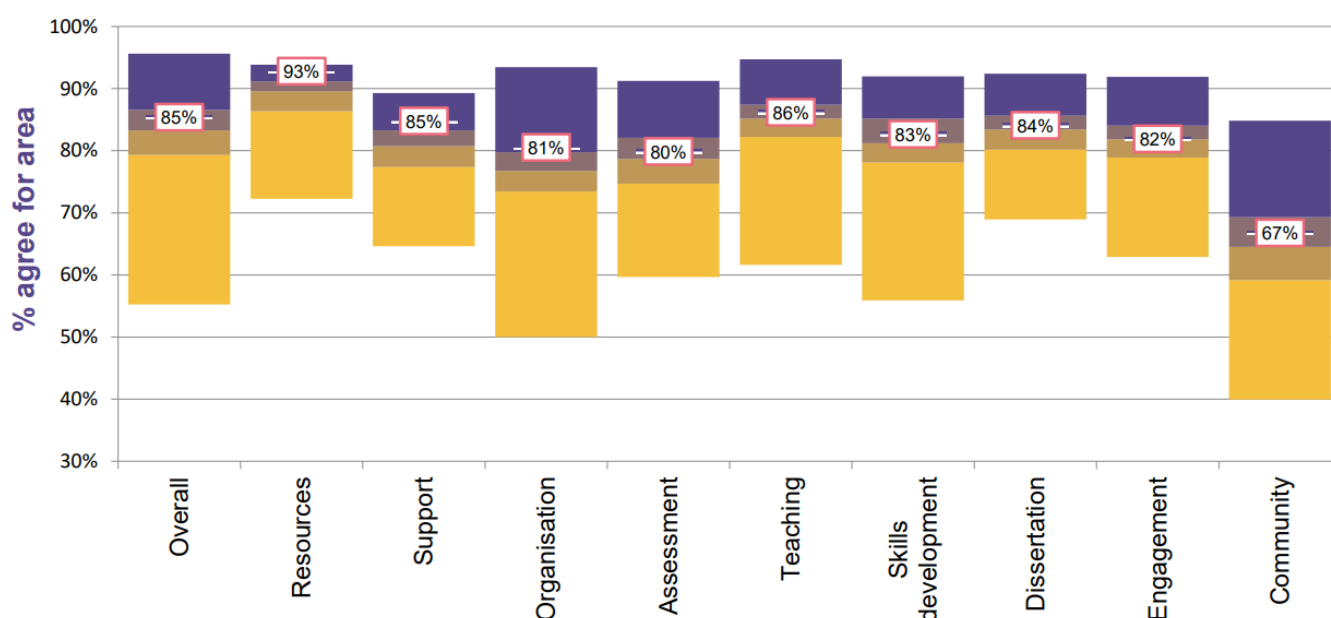
**Overall**

- 38% Assessment methods – 20% positive
- 30% Feedback – 18% positive
- 24% Marking criteria - 6% positive
- 8% Dissertation – 38% positive

15. These comments provide insight beyond the quantitative questions and help us know what to change. Full analysis is available in the UEC paper [UEC24-25-004](#).
16. Professor Valentine has asked this year that across the University we focus on assessment and feedback, using tools that we have already developed, to ensure a consistently high-quality experience for all students. Colleagues have been asked to adopt a standardised assessment brief and to review their approach to feedback with a self-assessment tool. One of the Education Strategy workstreams has been asked to identify further 'quick wins' that we can put in place for 2025-26 to improve student experience in this area in advance of any larger scale changes.

### Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

17. Our response rate for 2024 was 34.9%, above last year but below 2022. Our response rate is substantially above the sector average of 24.7%. Response rates varied by Faculty with 35.4% FMS, 39.2% and 27.9% SAgE.
18. The picture for PGT student satisfaction is generally positive. Overall satisfaction was 85.4% which was very similar to 2023 and above the sector median of 85.0%. This placed us 37<sup>th</sup> out of 107 of the institutions who took part. This is comparable to 2023 where we were 30<sup>th</sup> out of 101.



**Figure 3** Institution PTES results by question group showing sector quartiles

19. There is an improving trend across most question groups, with particularly encouraging trend in key areas of Teaching and Assessment and feedback, noting still weaker performance in engagement and community.

Question	2021	2022	2023	2024
2.1. Staff are good at explaining things	84.2%	88.5%	91.6%	90.5%
2.2. Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching	85.9%	89.3%	90.9%	91.4%
2.3. The course is intellectually stimulating	81.5%	84.6%	85.9%	84.4%
2.4. The course has enhanced my academic ability	81.0%	86.7%	87.2%	88.3%
2.5. The learning materials provided on my course are useful	78.4%	85.3%	84.8%	86.2%
2.6. There is sufficient contact time (in-person or virtual/online) bet...	55.8%	74.1%	74.6%	78.2%
2.7. I am happy with the support for my learning I receive from sta...	68.9%	78.7%	82.0%	84.3%
<b>Question group</b>	<b>76.5%</b>	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>85.3%</b>	<b>86.2%</b>

Figure 4 Institution PTES results for Teaching question group 2021-2024

Question	2021	2022	2023	2024
8.1. The criteria used in marking have been made clear in advance	77.2%	81.8%	85.0%	83.4%
8.2. Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair	72.8%	77.1%	78.4%	79.7%
8.3. Feedback on my work has been prompt	66.5%	72.4%	74.0%	75.8%
8.4. Feedback on my work (written or oral) has been useful	72.3%	76.9%	80.4%	80.6%
<b>Question group</b>	<b>72.2%</b>	<b>77.1%</b>	<b>79.5%</b>	<b>79.9%</b>

Figure 5 Institution PTES results for Assessment and Feedback question group 2021-2024

20. Of the 15 Russell Group institutions that took part in PTES we sat in the top quartile overall and for 7 out of 8 question groups. Performance is more variable across question groups.

CAH subject	Teaching & learning	Engagement	Community	Assessment & feedback	Dissertation / major project	Organisation & management	Resources	Support	Skills development	Overview
All responses	86.2%	81.9%	66.8%	79.9%	84.1%	80.5%	92.8%	84.8%	82.6%	85.4%
Agriculture, food and related studies	84.8%	81.8%	60.4%	75.0%	92.2%	81.3%	93.6%	91.5%	82.3%	87.5%
Allied health	95.6%	80.0%	51.3%	76.9%	86.3%	80.0%	98.5%	75.0%	94.9%	100.0%
Architecture, building and planning	76.0%	70.1%	52.2%	66.2%	77.9%	72.2%	84.6%	77.0%	70.8%	78.3%
Biosciences	97.1%	88.0%	88.9%	86.7%	94.5%	90.7%	98.7%	86.7%	87.6%	93.3%
Business and management	85.6%	83.0%	74.7%	79.2%	82.2%	82.1%	90.9%	84.4%	84.6%	85.2%
Combined and general studies	88.3%	81.8%	66.7%	62.8%		66.7%	80.0%	75.8%	90.6%	90.9%
Computing	78.7%	72.4%	66.9%	77.5%	82.9%	76.3%	92.2%	88.7%	77.1%	75.8%
Education and teaching	92.4%	88.4%	73.5%	89.7%	90.9%	82.6%	94.8%	86.0%	85.5%	91.1%
Engineering	86.5%	82.6%	72.1%	75.9%	86.4%	79.5%	94.0%	85.9%	85.3%	83.3%
English studies	86.5%	85.6%	70.1%	83.1%	83.7%	84.0%	94.9%	88.7%	84.8%	85.5%
Geography, earth and environmental studies	93.6%	88.9%	56.9%	89.7%	80.9%	87.1%	100.0%	87.8%	77.5%	94.1%
History and archaeology	91.1%	78.5%	67.5%	88.5%	88.2%	76.9%	96.0%	79.7%	77.9%	96.2%
Law	96.4%	90.8%	53.5%	87.5%	88.2%	90.0%	100.0%	88.1%	82.3%	87.5%
Media, journalism and communications	91.6%	86.7%	75.4%	88.5%	83.3%	85.2%	97.1%	91.3%	88.6%	91.2%
Medical sciences	88.7%	80.0%	33.3%	84.2%	78.0%	77.9%	82.8%	74.5%	86.8%	94.7%
Medicine and dentistry	81.5%	77.0%	40.5%	73.8%	86.6%	77.5%	90.8%	78.2%	71.9%	82.8%
Politics	95.4%	87.1%	65.5%	90.1%	88.2%	86.3%	91.9%	83.5%	80.8%	96.4%
Psychology	87.1%	83.3%	47.9%	77.6%	78.1%	78.6%	92.7%	79.1%	81.5%	77.1%

Quartile key: Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 No quartile data

Figure 6 Positivity score by CAH2 subject