

Section 1

To undertake the TEF student submission, all current level 5 and 6 students, both at Wakefield College and Selby College, and all former HE students who graduated in 2022, asking them to volunteer for participation were contacted by email newsletter and text. Those who volunteered were current students, or recent graduates of Wakefield Campus, however, information from Selby Campus was provided to offer a wider perspective for discussion. Those who agreed to volunteer decided that it was best to undertake the task as a focus group that would look at a number of pieces of evidence and relate it to their own experiences and understanding. The full transcript of the student focus group is available upon request.

It was then agreed that we would gather evidence from students and alumni through the 'Skills. Careers and Employability Advice Surveys' sent to current level 5 and 6 Wakefield students, and the 'Skills and Employability - Alumni Survey' sent to Wakefield and Selby alumni who graduated in 2022. The Survey was sent out in November 2022 with an end date 9th of December 2022. Several reminders were sent to students and requests sent to staff to encourage students to complete the survey.

133 respondents for current student survey

38 respondents to alumni survey

We were assisted with the communications and survey design by the HE Student Support Coordinator.

Evidence used in the focus group.

The TEF student submission document was supplied to students before their meeting and hard copies provided on the day for reference.

Evidence used:

- Outcomes of the Skills and Employability Surveys, including both quantitative results and qualitative comments.
- NSS survey 2022 – from OFS website
- Student Information and Careers Newsletters- sent through 'Mailchimp' and email from 2020 - 2022.
- COVID support contextual information provided by college staff to be checked against the focus group's own experiences.

Evidence was provided to the group before meeting and copies provided on the day for reference for reference.

Section 2

Academic experience and assessment

For this discussion, the group referred to the National Student Survey 2022 results on the Office for Student website and how related this related to their experiences. The group also looked Student email newsletters, and the COVID support contextual information provide by college staff to allow them to discuss in terms of their own experiences.

SE1:

The student panel agreed that a mixed approach was provided when assessment feedback was given, each approach suitable for the purpose of feedback. For example, in the beginning, to make students more comfortable, tutors used a face-to-face approach to understand the student on a personal level. The group concluded that the student experience of assessment feedback they had was very good as it was helpful for students and the staff to reflect so they could understand how they could develop.

They also discussed, how at the end of the modules some tutors gave feedback forms which allowed the students to give their opinions on the modules and suggest any improvements they thought necessary. They believed this helped to assess student experience and staff teaching which also helped the teacher make any changes to make delivery of lectures better.

Some in the group felt that more 1-1 meetings occur so students could discuss if there was anything they were struggling on. However, overall, it was agreed that students were given 'amazing support' from teachers, so they were able to approach them at any point in a lesson or even outside of lesson.

SE2:

Students discussed the different approaches of learning they made on their course. They discussed the different approaches they enjoyed and those that worked.

They agreed that class discussions allowed engagement from all students as it allowed them to feedback thoughts and opinions with teachers and build on activities. They also discussed that the supportive class environment made it easier for discussions which allowed students to develop their knowledge and skills.

Feedback was also given on some lessons where there would be a lack of practical work and more note taking. It was also stated by some of the students that they were forewarned to prepare them. They concluded that personal preference played a big role in how an individual perceives a lesson. They also expressed those activities on phones i.e., Kahoot etc, keeps individuals engaged throughout lessons.

A unanimous decision from the group was made that lesson organisation was very good at keeping students engaged, they also agreed that activities such as group presentations helped them to stretch their knowledge.

They stated that sometimes difficulties were experienced when working within groups, as it was a group grade, even if some put more effort into it then others. Some students stated that if the problem occurred it was always something a tutor would address, nonetheless it would still leave the impression that poor groupwork could still influence their grades.

Student Submission: Heart of Yorkshire Education Group

The students stated that smaller groups allowed more attention to be given to each student. They also agreed that the smaller class sizes allowed a greater amount of personal development.

Some in the group suggestion felt study skills could be delivered in different ways so people could utilise the time to work on assignments and expand on skills, referencing etc. Some of the students disagreed, and it was more down to those students who didn't turn up to study support that complained there wasn't enough support available.

Overall, the students stated that the delivery and support of their course was 'great', because during COVID, those with extensions had extra booster student support classes arranged by their tutor to help them catch up.

SE3:

The students found this topic to be a difficult one to discuss but eventually concluded that maybe it was suggesting how knowledge gained from the course contributes to understanding the real-life work.

It was put forward that information and knowledge gained from essays and reports gave information about expectations of certain roles and tasks.

One student suggested the introduction of work placements to allow individuals to put knowledge into practice for some courses. They also made a statement that they had organised placement for themselves to gain this experience, but maybe allowing the option to others could be useful.

Another student suggested putting assignments into practice and expanding certain areas of knowledge to help in the working world.

A united decision was made that the topic was difficult to address, and no further information was given, or suggestions discussed.

Resources, support, and student engagement:

SE4:

One of the students explained they had experienced teaching from a teacher on probation and how he was open about explaining how it would work for him etc. They also expressed how the feedback from his module helped his professional development.

It was also stated how students have limited knowledge about how staff are supported but they are given more information about students' support staff.

Again, an accordant decision was made that this would be difficult for students to discuss in any detail.

SE5:

The students agreed that the support was very good all round, not only from tutors but also from other such as the student support coordinators and outreach officers.

Student Submission: Heart of Yorkshire Education Group

They also stated that support was consistent both pre-COVID, during COVID and post-COVID. It was also stated that everyone's support was tailored to them according to their personal needs.

The working space and environment offered to students was very helpful and allowed personal progression as tutors were always looking for ways to develop skills.

Students stated that they are always able to contact their tutors via different methods such as email and teams and most of them will almost instantly reply.

It was also stated that library resources were also useful online during COVID as they were able to have the academic resources to help them to complete resources.

SE6:

Students stated that there was always access to virtual library resources and they could readily access it. However, there was some people who preferred physical copies to virtual and the library only had a limited amount so some people would be without access to copies.

It was also stated by one of the students that if they were without a resource to help them complete their assignment the teacher would go out of their way to ensure that they had the required resources to work.

The main improvement was access to library resources and assistance with referencing from the library. Even though a lot of the help was readily available in books made by the library which students could use as referencing guides there was some things students needed support within terms of referencing.

Over the course of COVID students felt that access to resource was readily available, however, there was certain things that did affect learning that couldn't be helped such as lagging Wi-Fi which was unavoidable.

Students also felt that if there was anything that they did miss out on they could always email the teacher to get support with it. Students also suggested when virtually learning there were more difficulties for the teachers than students as they could not see who was understanding and who was having difficulties, despite this, they thought teaching standards improved.

SE7:

The students stated that 'staff go above and beyond what it expected'. Overall, the response was positive, and students felt that they were given was 'second to none'.

It was also discussed that the support was readily available from all staff such as the student experience coordinator and careers development staff member.

It was also suggested by one of the students that there was a bit of a staffing problem, which did affect the learning on their degree, however, it was resolved and during this time they were able to go to other staff members for support those times who were happy to help.

Student Submission: Heart of Yorkshire Education Group

The students mentioned they could always approach teachers for any help they needed to improve with their learning experiences.

Overall, feedback on student support was positive and suggested that student experience and outcomes were favourable.

Positive outcomes:

For this section the group used the evidence from the Skills and Employability Surveys and commented upon how they related to their experiences and use the

SO1:

The Skills and Employability survey questions cover student preparedness for HE studies, reasons for studying HE, how students think their course is preparing them for employability, and what they think works well and what improvements they feel would be beneficial to enhance these skills. The Alumni survey asks similar questions but also asks about what students have gone onto to do since graduating e.g. preparation for further study and or employment, new opportunities or promotion in current job roles and what developments and further support they think would be useful for graduates.

The students highlighted certain factors on the Skills and Employability 2022 surveys (question 8), it suggested that there was a lot about opportunities and mock job interviews. They also highlighted that these would also be factors covered in study skills.

One of the students stated that they were offered mock interviews but since every course is not the same, interviews tailored to each course would be beneficial. It was also mentioned that a lot of activities were cancelled due to COVID and the restrictions that came with it.

A student mentioned how a student experience officer came in and spoke about the different options and routes available for students when they leave university, this discussed the current jobs available in the area, different routes to continue with postgraduate education etc.

It was also mentioned that the timetabled lessons are around 2-3 days a week for each course, which allow individual students to focus on work, family life and additional study time.

To conclude, there was also statements given about tutors who kept in contact with students and emailed current job vacancies and opportunities available. The careers 2022 survey has many conflicting views such as 'everything is provided' and others stating that more work was needed. The student panel stated that support would be available, but it was the job of the individual to take some responsibility for finding out information on what they might want to do when they finished their studies.

SO2:

There was little discussion on the topic, students discussed that there was a large change in the number of people who continued the degree until the end.

They also stated that the main reason for low levels of student continuation was because of a lack of individual efforts. Two of the individuals stated that they went directly from an access course to

Student Submission: Heart of Yorkshire Education Group

the degree programme, and another stated that they and 4 others from their group had come from level 3.

SO3:

Looking at the alumni student survey 2022, question 4 showed there were many students going into further study, it also showed that 40% of students had gone into a job role related to their degree. They discussed why people may not have gone into the job role within their degree and one student stated that it may have been a matter of job application opening after the questionnaire was filled in (which was the case for him).

For question 6 in the alumni survey 80% agreed the degree helped them to enhance career progression.

Students within the focus group stated that the degree with either help them in their job or help them to get their job.

Educational Gains

SO4:

The alumni student survey 2022 question 8 was put forward, and the answers suggested 100% of students felt that effective team working improved. The results of problem solving were also positive, along with 80% stating professional career development had also improved.

Answers from question 7 of the alumni survey stated that 'the degree has given them much more opportunity', another stated 'gained more confidence', these were related to personal benefit rather than the degree.

SO5:

It was agreed that SO5 was already touched upon briefly, students stated that tutors get to know them on a personal level and then help to guide you into the right direction. It's not standardised for the whole class, it is different for everyone.

It was also discussed that staff, such as the University Centre careers team member, helped to direct and guide people in the right direction by giving talks about what possible pathways were available to the students when graduating. Some suggestions were given in question 11 of the alumni student survey.

The students concluded that in their final months of study the University Centre tutors, and support staff, provided talks on further study and employability options, and that once they have completed their studies, they still receive communications on employability skills workshops and progression opportunities that are open to graduates.

SO6:

It was discussed that the University Centre recognises student achievements by hosting a graduation ceremony at Wakefield Cathedral, where tutors and former students appear as case studies or guest speakers.

They also discussed it may be difficult for the University Centre to evaluate because interaction from former student is limited.