Teaching Excellence Framework 2023

Student Submission

Approach to evidence-gathering

The Student Association (SA) is a group of students who represent the student voice across Reaseheath College and UCR, as well as leading the coordination of student life across campus. Members of the SA represent the student body at a range of meetings across the college, including, for UCR, the HE Academic Board, Learning, Teaching and Scholarship Committee, and Access and Participation Steering Group, in addition to our involvement in meetings of the governing body and its HE committee. This is so that we can take on board and improve anything that is raised as well as reporting back to members of the Executive management team and the governing body. The Student President, who is gathering feedback and reporting this study, is a newly elected full-time role working closely with staff but acting as the main student voice with the interests of the students solely. Therefore, the independence in this report has been managed by evidencing student views through student-student interviews that have no staff present, as well as having conversations with students around campus and a survey to reach a wider range of students. Our approach ensured that students could answer in their own time and therefore provide more detailed and independent responses.

For previous years, data has been accessed from UCR through previous surveys, such as NSS results, however the evaluation of this data presented within this submission is independent to us. Some students from previous years are still here so that allowed us to gain wider knowledge on how they feel through the different years and what has helped them develop in their studies. However, for the alumni students, five students from different courses were contacted to assess how their degree from UCR had helped them to achieve a degree-related job.

Two other students who are the   have supported the President in gathering feedback. The plan was to interview a range of students across different courses as well as gather feedback through the survey and our feedback form to the President. Different courses included animal management, conservation, equine, agriculture, food and business, and sport. The questions used to gain feedback were open ended questions. We took this approach to give students a chance to elaborate on their feedback and not just targeted at specific areas. This gave them the opportunity to answer broadly to how they feel about the course, areas relating to teaching and the course, and support/feedback. This gave the main questions sub-questions to them.

UCR have provided help and guidance with this report by providing previous data from past and recent years and allowed us access to any data that we may require in order to conduct feedback research.

Acknowledgement

As the SA we pride ourselves on our work with our students. We can confirm that the content of this independent submission is a true representation of the UCR student body. UCR has supported us through our involvement in the writing of the provider submission, and has provided data and information to assist us, but had no undue influence in the writing of this submission.

Evidence about Student Experience

The Teaching on my course

Upon reviewing the data compiled from the National Student Survey (NSS), the overall satisfaction percentage was 84.59 in 2019. Students agreed on a number of different factors impacting on their experience throughout the academic year at UCR. Teaching quality was assessed through four key components: how well staff explained concepts, how subjects held the interest of students, how intellectually stimulated students felt, and how confident students felt that they could work to the best of their ability. The highest rated component was that staff explained concepts well which achieved an average of 93.15 per cent. The foundation degrees in Dairy Technology, Wildlife Conservation and Ecology, and Zoo Management were all rated above average for this area.

By reviewing the data taken from the academic year of 2020-21 from the NSS survey, the overall percentage was 75.84%. This was a decrease of 8.75% from 2019 on how students thought their teaching experience was over the year. This was the year where studies were significantly affected by covid, and the student experience of teaching and learning would have been highly affected. The quality of teaching was assessed through four key components. The highest component from the quality of teaching assessed overall was the course being intellectually stimulating, rated at 78% for the year. FdSc in Zoo Management (90.52%), Rural Events Management (90%), and Animal Management (76.25%) were the top three courses where students felt that teaching on their course was at a sufficient, if not, higher level than others as stated next to the course titles. Reflecting on FdSc Canine Behaviour and Training, it shows a 20.06% decrease of the teaching experience but covid did have a big impact on staffing, module content, and practical sessions. We noted that changes to kennel licencing laws were also a significant factor during 2021-22 as they resulted in the temporary closure of the on-campus kennel facility during the second half of the academic year. The no-notice changes required the College to apply for a kennel licence, which was obtained by the summer of 2022. Staff adapted practical delivery to include more guest speakers and visits, but our discussions with students demonstrated that their learning was obviously impacted.

Upon reviewing the data taken from 2021 by the NSS the overall rating for 'teaching on my course' was 80.66% an increase of 4.82% from 2020 in which students agreed on several factors on how the teaching at UCR was experience within the year. The quality of teaching was assessed through four key components on how working was explained via staff delivery, interest of subjects, the extent to which they were intellectually stimulating, and how confident students were in achieving their best work. The highest rated component was that of staff interactions when explaining topics to students at an average of 88.68% with FdSc Equine Training and Rehabilitation and Foundation Degree in Dairy Technology reaching above average on reflection.

After reviewing the 2022 NSS report, the overall percentage was 71.51%, a decrease of 9.32% from the 2021 academic year in which students agreed upon several factors in relation to the teaching of their course at UCR. The quality of teaching is assessed through the ability of staff to explain information, the interest of the subject or module, whether the course is intellectually stimulating and whether the course has challenged the student in order to achieve their best work. The highest scoring course at 100% success rate for teaching is Wildlife Conservation and Ecology, however in comparison to the previous year, which has no listed score for this course, it is difficult to access the level of improvements seen within teaching. The lowest scoring course within this section during 2022 is Animal Management ranking at 55.36% which was perhaps impacted by the more limited access to resources associated with C-19.

"This course is brilliant as it brings out the science part of the course and what you want to work with it proven in the assignment too"
(NSS comment – 2022)

Academic support

The third area of observation was academic support, and this was assessed in three key stages: the availability of staff for students to contact, the advice and guidance students felt they received in relation to their course, and that students felt that good advice was available when they needed to make study choices for their course. Academic support achieved an average of 81.62 per cent, with the availability of staff for student contact achieving an average rating of 88.36 per cent. The foundation degrees in Canine Behaviour and Training, Dairy Technology, Equine Physical Therapies, and Wildlife Conservation and Ecology achieving higher than average ratings.

Academic support would have seen a decrease with students not being able to stay onsite and access all resources on site but with lectures being available more than usual from staff being based at home. The overall percentage in 2020 for academic support is 73.87% with a 7.75% decrease in support in comparison to the previous survey. Overall, from the results, academic support has seen to decrease over the various courses and in all aspects of academic support. We believe that this again comes down to the 2020-21 academic year being a covid year and some students have struggled with support and access to resources. Academic support over the various relevant sub-topics only decreased by a maximum of 10% which seemed to be a good outcome considering covid year was a new experience for everyone and had to adapt. Some students have said that it was a difficult time to study due to having to do it from home and online, the engagement was not 100% from everyone so lectures felt as if the tutor was doing all the work with not much engagement from students. Students told us that they found being on camera difficult, and that online learning was not their preferred approach to study. They were happy that all sessions had returned to in person delivery from 2022-23.

The data from academic support from 2021 by the NSS the overall percentage was 72.88% a decrease of 2.96% from 2020 in which students agreed on several factors on how the teaching at UCR was experience within the year. The Academic support was assessed through four key components on how confident students have found being able to contact staff, receive sufficient

advice and guidance and advice on further course progression. The highest rated component was how confident students felt in being able to contact staff for academic support with an average of 77.83% with Foundation Degree in Canine Behaviour and Training and Foundation Degree in Rural Events Management scoring above average.

Included within the report, the successful provision of academic support decreased from 72.94% in 2021 to 68.48% in 2022. Academic support is assessed through several key components including the ability to contact staff when needed, the provision of sufficient advice and guidance, organisation and management levels, the efficiency of the timetable and changes within the course. All staff within UCR have office hours, made available through an online booking system, which enables students to book time with any tutor for additional help and support. This is in addition to their regular one to one tutorials with their personal academic tutor. In regard to academic support, UCR's Zoo Management Course scored highly for academic support at 96.67% in comparison to Canine Behaviour and Training which students only deemed academic support as 52.38% successful, perhaps again impacted in their views by the unexpected changes to resources.

"Academic support is great; my module leaders / tutors are always available to support and give a me further information If I am unsure about a topic. There are a variety of tools available for me if I need support."
(Food and Business Level 6 student, 2023)

Assessment and Feedback

Assessment and feedback were also assessed through four key areas. These were that students had advance knowledge of the marking criteria, that students felt that the marking and assessment was carried out fairly, that students felt they received timely feedback on their work, and that the comments they received were helpful. Assessment and feedback were graded 69.58 per cent on average, and the highest component was that marking, and assessment was carried out fairly, being rated at 75.17 per cent. The foundation degrees in Canine Behaviour and Training and Wildlife Conservation and Ecology were both rated above average in this area.

The overall percentage in 2020 for assessment and feedback was 69.59% which showed an increase of 0.01%, comparing well to the England average. The highest component from this section was that feedback has been timely which rated at 72.3% meaning a 10.49% increase of satisfaction from getting feedback on time compared to the previous year in 2019. Wildlife Conservation and Ecology (90.38%) and FdSc Rural Events Management (82.5%) were both rated above average which was a 5.91% increase overall for receiving assessments and feedback on time. Wildlife Conservation and Ecology reviewed that 100% of the assessments and feedback was on time which was a 27.27% increase and reaching the maximum. FdSc Dairy Technology shows that figures were low for assessment and feedback which may have been impacted by covid and all work transferring to online, making it difficult for assessments and feedback to go ahead.

Reviewing the data taken from 2021 by the NSS the overall percentage was 74.05% an increase of 4.46% from 2020 in which students agreed on several factors on how the assessments and feedback

were given at UCR within the year. The assessment and feedback results were assessed through four key components on how the criteria used in marking was clear in advance, how fair the marking and assessments were when provided, how feedback was given back on time and how helpful comments were to students. The highest rated component was that of how the criteria used in marking was clear in advance at an average of 77.73% with Foundation Degree in Canine Behaviour and Training and Foundation Degree in Dairy Technology reaching above average on reflection.

The overall percentage of students agreeing that assessment and feedback during the 2022 academic year was successful is 68.02%. This is a decrease of 6.02% in comparison to the 2021 NSS report. This section of the report is split into the use of clear marking criteria in advance of completing the assessment, fair marking, and appropriate, timely feedback on all assessments. Excluding the provision of marking criteria in advance, which scored an 80% agreeable success rate, all sections of assessment and feedback for the Wildlife Conservation and Ecology, were scored at 100% by students during this academic year. The Animal Management course only scored 37.5% based on their ability to provide successful assessment material and feedback.

> *"Feedback is given via turnitin but sometimes general feedback is given during lectures. We can also have tutorials to go through any assessment feedback if we wish"*
> *(Level 5 Agriculture with Dairy Herd Management student)*

Learning Resources

Learning resources in 2019 were also assessed through three key stages. These were IT resources and facilities, library resources, and the ability for students to access course-specific resources. The learning resources available achieved an average rating of 81.62 per cent. The foundation degrees in Dairy Technology and Wildlife Conservation and Ecology both achieved higher than average ratings.

Learning resources had an overall percentage of 80.86% which was a 2.55% increase from the previous year. The top two courses with a higher overall percentage were FdSc Rural Events Management (96.67%) and FdSc Dairy Technology (92.86%). The learning resources which were available, such as IT, library resources and course specific equipment and resources had restrictions involved due to covid. The increased use of Microsoft Teams for example impacted the quality of WiFi on site, whilst covid safety measures, combined with the lockdowns unavoidably restricted access to some resources. This meant that the resources were not able to be used to the extent of what they should be used for. The highest overall percentage for library resources and course-specific equipment rated at 100% for FdSc Dairy Technology and FdSc Rural Events Management. The other courses were a bit below average due to restrictions being in place limiting students to accessibility.

Upon reviewing the data taken from 2021 by the NSS the overall percentage was 61.45% a decrease of 19.41% from 2020 in which students agreed on several factors on how the teaching at UCR was experience within the year. The quality of learning resources was assessed through four key

components on how IT, library, and course specific resources were used and accessed. The highest rated component was students using the library at an average of 66.83% with Foundation Degree in Canine Behaviour and Training and Foundation Degree in Rural Events Management reaching above average on reflection. There is notice that some resources were restricted from use due to COVID-19 measures in place during the year of 2021.

After reviewing the 2022 NSS report, the overall percentage was 71.51%, a decrease of 9.32% from the 2021 academic year in which students agreed upon several factors in relation to the teaching of their course at UCR. The quality of teaching is assessed through the ability of staff to explain information, the interest of the subject or module, whether the course is intellectually stimulating and whether the course has challenged the student in order to achieve their best work. The highest scoring course at 100% success rate for teaching is Wildlife Conservation and Ecology, however in comparison to the previous year, which has no listed score for this course, it is difficult to access the level of improvements seen within teaching. The lowest scoring course within this section during 2022 is Animal Management ranking at 55.36%.

After reviewing of the NSS report for 2022, the overall percentage for learning resources is 63.57%, an increase of 2.13% from the previous year in which students agreed on the successful provision of learning resources within UCR throughout the year. The quality of learning resources is assessed through three key components on how well IT facilities have supported the students learning, the effectiveness of the library resources and the ability to access course specific facilities and equipment. Regarding the availability of learning resources, students within the Zoo Management course agreed that they had sufficient access to resources such as the library, IT facilities and course specific equipment such as the zoo. This course ranked the highest, deeming resources 100% effective. Although, both Canine Behaviour and Training and Dairy Technology students agreed that the resources provided within their curriculum areas is only 55.95% effective in aiding them in their studies.

"The course has given me practical opportunities and it's allowed me to network with people in the industry that I want to work in, it's got access for practical experience on the zoo, it's got good resources for HE students"
(NSS comment – Animal Sciences)

Student Voice

The final area for assessment was the student voice. In 2019 this area achieved an average rating of 75%. The SA is committed to working in partnership with Reaseheath College and UCR to strengthen engagement with the student body and to represent their academic interests more fully. The establishment of the SA President role as a full-time sabbatical post is the first step in our strategy to strengthening the role of the SA in representing the student voice. Later this year, we will be facilitating hustings for SA President and Vice-President roles, supporting students in the election of their key representatives. We are also currently developing plans to form the SA into a Student Union, recognising our expanding role in representing the academic interests of our student body. Student voice was assessed based on three key areas: students felt that they had

the opportunity to provide feedback on their course, students felt that their views and opinions on their course were valued by the staff and students felt that it was clear how their feedback had been acted upon. Foundation degrees in Animal Management, Dairy Technologies, Equine Physical Therapies, and Wildlife Conservation and Ecology rated above average.

The student voice had an overall percentage of 64.19% which is a decrease of 10.81% in 2020. The student voice was assessed based on students having the opportunity to provide feedback relating to their course, staff valuing student's views and opinions based on the course, how clear student's feedback has been acted on, and, how well the SA have represented students' academic interests. The SA had an overall percentage of 59.12% meaning an increase of 3.97%. The SA had a difficult task to provide feedback from students as they were often remote but were still able to use social media and Teams to reach other students. UCR has a mix of residential and commuter students who travel to campus each day, which also makes engagement more challenging. Wildlife Conservation and Ecology had an overall percentage relating to how clear the student's feedback has been acted on, which was 84.62% leading to an increase of 30.07% on student's feedback being heard and acted upon. The SA for each course had either a slight increase in percentage or remained the same which shows that it was a challenging time, but the SA were still available and receiving feedback from other students during a restricted time.

Upon reviewing the data taken from 2021 by the NSS the overall percentage was 66.19% an increase of 2% from 2020 in which students agreed on several factors on how the teaching at UCR was experience within the year. The student voice was assessed through four key components on how students had the opportunities to provide feedback on their course, how staff value student views, feedback and how the Student Association effectively represents students' academic interest. The highest rated component was that of how students had opportunities to provide feedback on their course at an average of 75.94% with Foundation Degree in Canine Behaviour and Training and Foundation Degree in Dairy Technology reaching above average on reflection.

The overall percentage of students agreeing that student voice was effective and successful during the 2022 academic year is 60.8%. This is a decrease of 5.21% in comparison to the 2021 NSS report. This section of the report is split into 4 sections including the opportunity for students to provide feedback on their course, sufficient chance to speak to staff regarding opinions of their course, information regarding how their feedback has been dealt with and representation within the student association in relation to academic interests. The highest-ranking course in which students believed that student voice was accurately represented within the year 2022 is currently Wildlife Conservation and Ecology at 90%. However, some students at UCR believe that student voice is not well represented, with only 42.86% of students on the Animal Management course agreeing that they are well represented through student voice.

"Overall, I have been provided with plenty of support throughout my time at Reaseheath and provided with good advice"
(NSS comment 2022)

Evidence about Student Outcomes

The student body has access to a variety of tools that will aid them throughout their studies which include both educational material and life skill resources. The UCR Graduate toolkit is an online, 24h accessible, self-guided hub with resources regarding many aspects of student life, from academic support with assessments and research to support with wellbeing and gaining valuable life skills and even resources regarding employability and entrepreneurship after university level study. Many of the students across all levels and courses access this on a weekly basis and have spoken positively about the value and support that it provides with their studies and life away from home. Student voice is another important tool that the student body has access to through the Student Association and Course Representatives in order to express their concerns and provide academic and student life feedback. As mentioned in previous sections students have evaluated the Student Voice positively and feel as their representatives can accurately convey their feedback and opinions to the relevant departments as well as see the outcome of their feedback. Aside from the academic growth that the students undergo they also develop their life skills and personal attributes. Through access to resources, like those in the Graduate toolkit and through great attendance of seminars and presentations organized by lecturing staff or guest talks from societies, students have developed their critical thinking and research knowledge in their relevant fields. Societies and the Student Association have also aided the students to learn valuable skills regarding society as well as build great social skills and confidence.

Continuation

The percentage of continuation of studies at UCR is at a similar level as that of other higher educational facilities and greater of other further educational colleges. In the most recent dataset continuation reached 99.3% with students from many different backgrounds and ethnicities furthering their studies with both having an 80%+ continuation score. Students with varying personal characteristics and circumstances where able to complete their studies with the support that was offered by the Inclusive Learning Team as well as the Reaseheath Wellbeing team who were able to guide students struggling to complete their studies due to educational, health or mental health restrictions through online support materials and 1-1 meetings. This was especially important during the pandemic and return to face-to-face studies when many students were struggling with their mental health, but the figures mentioned depict the important work and support that UCR provides for its students.

"There have been many case studies and assignments which have been challenging which is good for my progression in my sector"
(NSS comment – 2022)

Completion

Students completing their course would have been affected due to covid. Some students in various years were challenged with the covid restrictions and changes to their course which prevented them

completing the course to their full potential. During the covid academic year from 2020-21 and the following year 2021-22, extenuating circumstances for extending and deferring assignments were put in place. This allowed students to complete work in their own time without the additional stress from deadlines which some may have found difficult due to the impact of covid on their studies. These circumstances have now changed for the 2022-23 academic year, and regulations have now returned to pre-covid standards. As 2022-23 is the first academic year after covid, they should not face the same difficulties as their earlier counterparts which should improve the completion rates across all courses as they begin to run more smoothly and effectively.

"Studying online during covid had it's challenges but UCR and my lecturers supported me when I needed it through Teams which eased the stress of deadlines"
(Canine graduate student)

Progression

Students that have completed their course and would be moving on with their career should be career ready or progressing onto a post-graduate course. Students being career ready is all based on the content of their course, combined with the wider graduate skills students develop, and if the years have corresponded together to be able to get a course specific/related job. Some Alumni students that we have spoken with students who studied Animal Sciences have progressed onto animal related jobs and believe that their degree has helped them achieve their desired job working with animals. Some of these include well-known animal industries include   Zoo, Zoo,   Safari Park, and   Zoo. The work-based learning module that students study in their second year gives them the opportunity to find a work placement which may allow them to network for when they graduate. Other opportunities that UCR provide the students with are guest speakers, national and international study tours, field trips, and placements. These may help develop their learning skills and give them a wider sense of career direction that they want to pursue. Guest speakers have also made an impact on students, for example, Wagtail company made an appearance and inspired the student leading to them working for them now after they graduated.

"Studied Agriculture at Reaseheath and I'm now an Assistant Farm Manager. From having a mixture of studies and practicals allowed me to develop my learnt skills and I'm now adapting them to my work"
(Graduate comment   )