

Provider name: Leeds Beckett University

1. Our approach

The TEF student submission has been prepared and drafted by Leeds Beckett Students' Union, utilising research and insight work led by our Student Voice and Insight department, and working closely with our [redacted] who is the student lead for the TEF submission. We have drawn on a range of existing data and insight to inform the areas we wish to focus on in the student submission, which include the TEF workbook, NSS results, our annual Big Student Survey, Access 2 (research undertaken around accessibility of course delivery) and direct feedback from students garnered through our academic representation structures and various focus groups led by the Students' Union, such as those that we have run as part of the University's work towards the Mental Health Charter.

- Our annual Big Student Survey typically draws a sample size of over 3,000 students from across the University, and asks students about their perceptions on a range of topics affecting their experiences as a student at Leeds Beckett.
- Our academic representation structures consist of a network of around 1,000 course representatives who are trained and supported in their roles by the Students' Union, and led by a team of Academic Representation Assistants (one per school) who are employed by the Students' Union to facilitate communication between students, Students' Union and University and to help drive change based on student feedback.

In line with OfS guidance, we have also chosen to take advantage of composing our submission from a hybrid of written document and video content. The written document will outline our main observations that we wish to put forward, and the video content will expand on these and provide further context, through conversations with [redacted] Academic Representation Assistants from [redacted] schools that we believe present a good range of positive feedback and challenges to address within the University. We have provided a link to the video content here, as the submission portal is limiting file size to 50MB despite saying that 2000MB is the maximum limit:

Consistent with our constructive day-to-day working relationship with the University, which allows us to support each other's objectives while retaining our role as a 'critical friend', we have maintained an open and honest relationship over the course of producing our TEF submissions. The Students' Union has been represented on the University's TEF working group, we have had sight of their draft submissions as they have developed, and we have kept the University up to date on the areas we wished to focus on in our own submission, as well as sharing drafts with them. The University is always respectful of our independence and is encouraging of us to offer challenge where there is evidence that it is in the best interests of students. With this in mind, we can confirm that the University has not sought to influence the content of this submission, and we are confident that any challenges we have outlined will become areas of work that we will collaborate on in the months and years ahead.

We have chosen to focus the majority of our submission on some of the main issues affecting students at Leeds Beckett right now, whilst also providing an overview of the wider student experience. We have largely chosen not to repeat metrics that the panel will already be well aware of, and that will be well documented in the University's submission, but rather to supplement these

with data from our own insight, as well as personal insights from students whose experiences broadly reflect what we know from our work supporting and representing them.

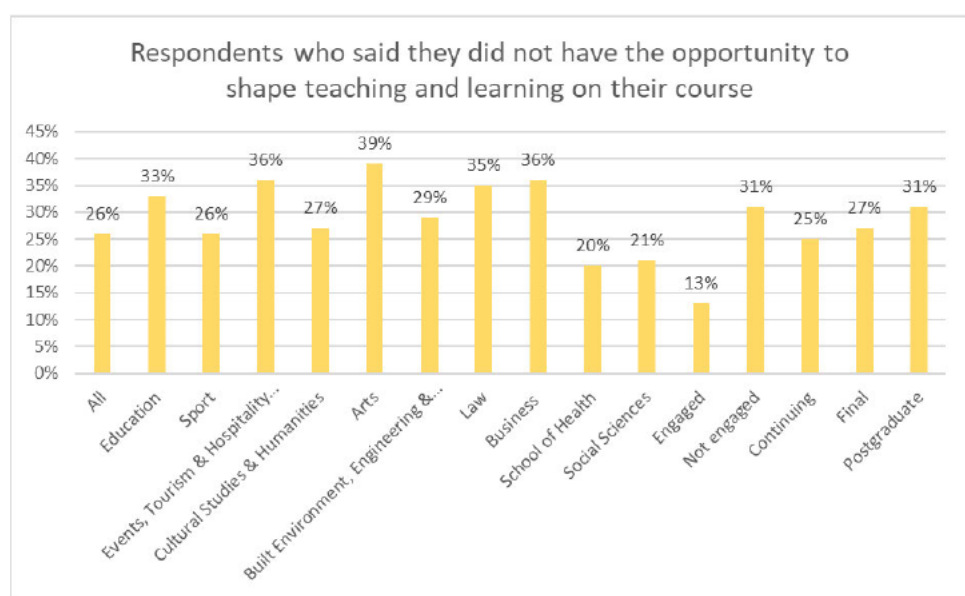
2. Academic Experience

Broadly, our insight tells us that the academic experience for the majority of students at Leeds Beckett is a positive one. As was the case across the sector, satisfaction across a number of areas decreased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but despite this there are some excellent examples of how the University responded to these challenges.

a. Teaching practices and course content

Some of the most positive examples cited by students in this area include the availability and support offered by academic staff, teaching methods that make learning interactive and provoke critical thinking, and future employability and career progression built in as an integral component of the course. Students also pointed to examples where a wide range of different learning scenarios and assessment methods are employed. These examples underpin crucial elements of the University's Education Plan, so it is very positive to see these coming through in practice.

Insight from the Students' Union's Annual Survey also shows that courses where students reported feeling that they had the opportunity to shape teaching and learning on their courses generally correlate with higher values within the TEF metrics.



Some of the biggest challenges in this area are around wider student engagement, particularly on some of the larger courses, and the impact this has on course community and sense of belonging. Hybrid learning (a mix of online and in-person delivery), has brought about many positives, particularly around accessibility, however feedback from students also suggests that it can present challenges around engagement and belonging. This is an area we have chosen to focus on later in our submission.

¹ Big Student Survey 2021/22. Respondents who stated they did not have the opportunity to shape teaching and learning on their course. *Leeds Beckett Students' Union*

b. Assessment and feedback

The University has put a lot of work into improvement in this area in recent years, and this is reflected in the fact that their most recent NSS results across this area put them ahead of the sector average. The best examples cited by students talk about feedback that is timely, detailed, individualised, and that makes it clear what they need to do to improve. Clear examples of improvement can be seen in the Carnegie School of Sport, where multiple concerns were raised through course representatives around expectations and deadlines for assessments during 2021/22 – this issue has not presented itself in the current academic year, demonstrating that student feedback has been acted on.

However, consistency across the institution appears to be an issue in this area. Some of the more challenging examples point to feedback that is vague, leaving students unclear on how to improve, and the timeliness of feedback was a strong theme in the focus groups we ran as part of our work supporting the University's submission for the Mental Health Charter. Here, students talked about the negative impact that late feedback can have on their mental health, when they are unable to apply feedback to future assessed work due to it not being received in time:

"I've struggled to focus on projects due to the delays on getting feedback."

"Sometimes it takes months to get feedback back, and if you cannot physically enter campus you've likely done more assignments before you get feedback."

International students can sometimes struggle with their first assessments if they have been assessed in different ways prior to studying in the UK. Starting in 2022/23, the library now run an induction week which covers different aspects including academic writing and research practices that are in line with expectations when studying in the UK and specifically at LBU.

Assessment and feedback whilst on placement also present challenges, with students sometimes feeling that the same level of support is not there compared to when they are on campus.

On assessment and feedback within the TEF data dashboard, 'students with a disability reported' category had a higher level of performance (3.5% above benchmark) than 'no disability reported'. Qualitative insight from the Mental Health Charter focus groups and Access 2 research indicated that students with disabilities have an improved academic experience once support has been secured:

"Wellbeing team were helpful that I'd have the support for securing mitigation by giving a wellbeing statement"

c. Access to resources

Broadly, students are very happy with the availability of resources that are essential for their course. Library and online resources are viewed positively, although there is a perception that awareness of resources that exist, and how to access them, could be improved. This was apparent in the Mental Health Charter and Big Student Survey research projects:

"Just more overall structure and resources to be used around campus. There is only one real study area which is the library, I don't know of any other areas I could go that are less overwhelming than the library"

"more bookable time in the library/meeting rooms"

“There's just so many resources that we don't know about, but I know it's difficult to understand the when and how.”

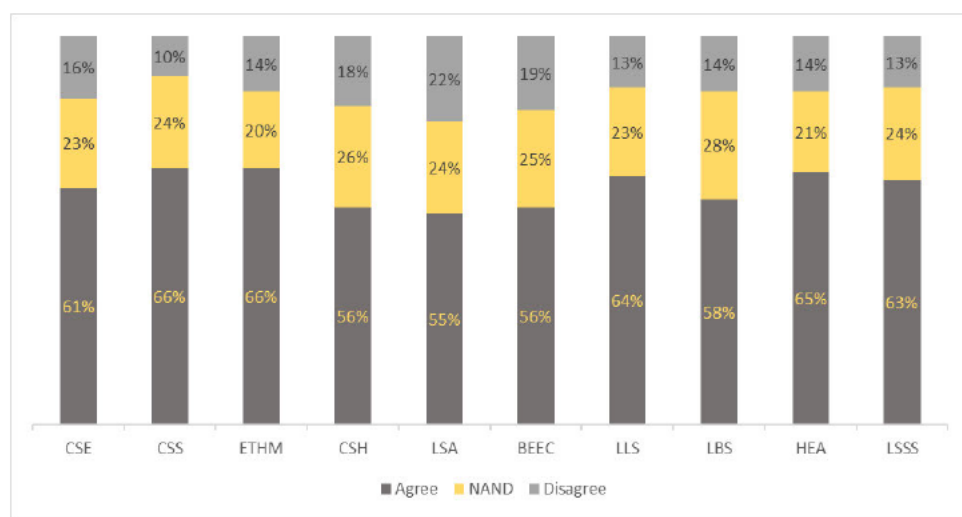
“Students are ‘bombarded’ by successive emails, find out about some services really late or not at all, shorter emails and less with crucial information requested.”

d. Career development and employability

This is another area in which the University has invested time and resource to ensure that this is firmly embedded into course design and delivery, and is another major feature within their Education Plan. Students are able to point to opportunities throughout their courses that help them to develop employability-related skills linked to their future careers, and cited placements as an excellent opportunity to build career confidence.

3. Course community and sense of belonging

A strong theme that has emerged through research activity such as the NSS, the Students’ Union’s Annual Survey, and feedback received through our academic representation structures is that there is a challenge around students feeling like they belong to a community at Leeds Beckett.



has been working on developing initiatives to tackle this issue within her own school of study () which has a number of very large courses, and has this to say about her motivation to work on this issue:

‘Student belonging was becoming a buzzword even prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, where the issue was exacerbated. Even though we are now fully emerging from this difficult period, the aftermath of loneliness, poor mental health and academic regulatory changes is still being felt.

It is clear that both the University and Students’ Union at Leeds Beckett are striving to achieve a sense of belonging and community for all students while they are studying here. The University is committed to working closely with student representatives at both course and school level, as well as supporting the delivery wherever possible of the elected Students’ Union Officer objectives. A key area of strength for the University is their linking of core working practices on course identity and

² Big Student Survey 2021/22. I feel like I belong to a student community at LBU by department. Leeds Beckett Students Union

integrity to their Education Plan – however the outcomes of this work are not yet being widely felt in practice.

Studying on a large course such as with over 800 students in a single year group, and spanning multiple pathways such as Law, Leadership and Finance, feeling a strong connection to the course was always difficult. One of the challenges faced by the University is the size of some of the larger cohorts and their ability to embed consistent opportunities for students from different pathways, seminars groups and levels to connect with each other and learn from each other. I would like to see the University ensure that their inclusivity by design process and overall module content includes informal opportunities to learn from others and increase that sense of belonging and connection.'

Feedback from Academic Representatives also suggests that hybrid delivery of teaching presents challenges in this area. Whilst it is important that the University retains the positive elements of hybrid delivery originally brought about as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, it should be noted that some students feel that opportunities for collaboration, and the ability to actually get to know other people on the course are both reported to be much more of a challenge when higher proportions of course content are delivered online. However, it is important to note that the option to view a lecture online, or watch a recording, is viewed positively from an accessibility point of view – particularly amongst disabled students and commuter students, who may struggle to attend campus so often for a myriad of reasons, including the cost of travel which is pertinent at the current time.

There are some clear examples that can be pointed to where the University is taking proactive steps to tackle this issue head on – for example timetabling students in cohorts in Business and Management, introducing peer mentoring into modules, and undertaking the 'From A to B-longing' research project, which hopes to foster a greater understanding of how students feel and behave when adapting to university life. Peer mentoring in particular is something that students have requested on a number of occasions, so it is great to see the University taking action on this. Any initiatives that seek to understand and take action on how students' sense of belonging can be improved are always welcome – however it is a complicated issue which remains a serious threat to continuation and completion rates.

Finally, it is important to recognise the circumstances of much of the Leeds Beckett student population in relation to sense of belonging – economic hardship, a high proportion of commuting students, and a high number of students who need to work alongside their studies all present unique challenges.

4. Cost of living and student support

Perhaps the greatest single issue affecting student welfare in recent times is the cost of living crisis. It is not just the immediate and obvious impacts that affect students – the knock-on effects of struggling with the cost of living also impact heavily on the ability of students to engage fully with their University experience, with more needing to work to supplement their income, or choosing to live at home and commute to save money. These were pertinent issues even prior to the current cost of living crisis, featuring consistently as strong themes in the Students' Union Annual Survey and Mental Health Charter focus groups.

The work that the University has done alongside the Students' Union on softening the impact of the cost of living crisis is a great example of where effective representation, collaboration and dialogue between the University and SU has led to meaningful support being put in place to help students through extremely difficult times. The package of support put in place by the University to help

reduce hardship included a significant increase to the hardship fund, absorbing increases in accommodation costs, reducing extra course costs wherever possible, and making hot meals available on campus every day for £2. A cost of living working group has also been established to ensure ongoing dialogue around further measures that could be taken, and the University has been responsive when issues have been raised with them – for example, reinstating software licenses on students' own computers in the School of Art, meaning they didn't have to fund these themselves or incur unnecessary expenditure travelling to campus.

Feedback from Academic Representatives does suggest that more could be done on an everyday, practical level to further mitigate against financial hardship and poor wellbeing. Suggestions include timetabling to minimise travel costs and to ensure that there is available time for wellbeing activity (such as participation in sport).

The overall support available for students at Leeds Beckett is generally viewed very positively, especially once it has been received, with students commenting in surveys and focus groups that they have found support mechanisms such as wellbeing and counselling appointments beneficial to their mental health and overall wellbeing – however a consistent theme is that many students are either unaware of available support, or experience long waiting times before they can access it. This could be having a negative impact on continuation and completion, where an earlier intervention could have made the difference between a student choosing to stay or leave their studies. The University has taken some very positive steps to address this, introducing school-based wellbeing practitioners who help to facilitate timely support for those students who need it, however comments around awareness of available support and wait times remain a feature of recent surveys and focus groups:

“The disability advice team are understaffed, so their activities and services centre on - and are defined by - their capacity as opposed to on student need. If there are long wait times which negatively impact students, then the team should be expanded to reduce those wait times.”

“...the waiting lists are very long to get any support, around 1 month for wellbeing”

“More advertisement is needed on where to go, rather than ask for advice because a lot of people are reluctant to do this.”

“Wellbeing team were helpful that I'd have the support for securing mitigation by giving a wellbeing statement”

Support while on placement is also a common theme, and suggests that some students may still be undertaking unpaid placements:

“Halls and placement travel takes up so much of my money I can't even afford a food shop some week”

“Due to the current placement I am at, I have to pay for travel additionally it limits my opportunity to work, and I do not meet the requirements for travel support”

“My student loan doesn't cover the rent. I'm on placement 30+ hours a week. Difficult to work at the same times as well as with uni.”

5. Part-time students

Although the provision of part-time courses at Leeds Beckett has never been a major focus at undergraduate level (with most programmes aimed at students employed locally who are required to undertake study as part of their career), the difference in how part-time students view their overall experience compared to full-time stands out, with satisfaction lower in most areas. There are exceptions to this trend – for example in learning resources, where part-time is 4.7% ahead of the benchmark.

As outlined in the University's own TEF submission, the majority of part-time provision is now for degree apprenticeships in the schools of Built Environment, Engineering & Computing, Business, and Health. This remains a developing area for the institution, and early discussions have taken place between the University and Students' Union about establishing effective representation channels for Degree Apprenticeship students in order to better understand their experience.

Below is a selection of comments received so far as part of the Students' Union's annual student survey (currently open) from part-time students, which could provide some useful guidance of where work could be undertaken to improve their overall experience:

"More opportunities for virtual links and being mindful of time restraints for part time students. More evening or weekend activities or items"

"More interactive learning, not show old, pre-recorded PowerPoints"

"Clearer information about timetabling and work needed on campus in advance. Earlier timetable release. As a part time student, it would be nice to know when I will be expected to attend more than a week or so beforehand"

"Difficult to fully engage with university as a part time student while working full time, study over my weekends"

"Time - I work full time so opportunities outside of my schedule are scarce."

"Not as much support for part time students, feel like I'm drowning in work"

"Balancing work and Uni means I have to either compromise my studies or work"

TEF Student Submission, Leeds Beckett University – Transcript of video content

Hi I'm _____ and I am a

_____ at Leeds

Beckett _____.

This is our test student submission.

So my academic experience started in _____.

I finished school and _____.

I underwent a _____.

_____ that was COVID.

We were told to come back.

Everything's going to be back in the in person and stuff

and I spent the the year in front of a computer.

I think everyone really struggled throughout the pandemic.

And this sort of had, I think, repercussions throughout the next

three years.

After that, the second year of university was better.

There was a slight

difference in learning and a lot of online learning,

which I think has a really big effect on how students interact and belonging.

The online sort of hybrid learning

was quite hard and I think people felt quite unconnected in a way.

And now in my final year, you know, everything sort of quite back to normal.

We still have a bit of hybrid learning with online lectures,

and I think this is sort of had this repercussions throughout.

Well, our year group has really suffered in that way

where we haven't really connected, we haven't felt all together.

And I think that's had a major effect on everyone's experience

not having those opportunities to bond together and have teamwork

has really meant that we're not we're not really connected

and we're not we don't feel part of something.

We're just all different individuals in an institution.

And I think

there's a lot of different things we can we can do to make that better.

So since I started, my academic studies been a bit of a rollercoaster.

So I started with before COVID and then COVID hit halfway during

my first year, I spent all the second year online in my own place.

Then and now I'm back from my final year.

I feel like my experience hasn't really been affected.

I think all the support I've got from the teachers

hasn't really changed throughout the years.

I went on placement

and I managed to secure that placement during a year that was fully online.

I do feel like the support was very well.

Talk to me and I'll say it managed to get me a role

which shows how well kind of the school and the university

adapted to being online and then adapted back to going face to face.

I would describe my academic experience at Leeds Beckett to be positive.

Overall, I've really enjoyed my time studying here,

although it has changed throughout my course and throughout the years.

I initially began during the pandemic,

which meant that a lot of my learning was online.

However, moving to second and third year, this has been more in-person

and I've really enjoyed the aspect that it's try to be current with

what's going on and adapt to the situations that have taken place.

I think feedback has been really

well listened to throughout my time on the course

and as a student I feel that my views have been really, really valued

by academic members of staff on the issue as well.

And overall, I think academic experience for me, I've really enjoyed my time

studying at these back out and I know I can say the same

for a lot of my peers as well, which is really positive.

But teaching practices, I think overall it's really good.

I think it's very dependent on the teacher where there's interactive
this I'm a big believer of interacting and some of the teachers up at the School
of Sport are, you know, they go out and try to get you to think and,
you know, try to apply critical thinking and trigger your thought.

Teaching experience at the university.

It's always been quite positive.

I find that a lot of my teachers have like extra out of hours on in my seminars
or my lectures where they will go through material with us.

And so the question I have is who will sit in the café downstairs
for like an hour a day and you can just walk up to them
and go ask them any questions.

It helps us if we feel like we're pulling a bit behind, we can go have a chat
with them and get back on track around assessment periods as well.

They tend to do extra assessment that teachers
or drop in which I found really useful as well.

I find that the seminars are quite interactive
and especially my needs because when you're in a lecture
sometimes obviously you've been taught to and you kind of write it down, but the
seminars really let you kind of explore what was said within the lectures.

I think the.

Teaching practices, at least back at universities

for my learning and progression, well,

I've really enjoyed the

academic due to support I've received throughout my time at Leeds Beckett.

I feel I always have somewhere to go with my queries

and there's always someone who's capable of answering my question

or passing it on to someone who might be better suited to do so.

And they really do

care about personal matters that are affecting your university work

as well as your university work in general.

I do have a feel that

I would have really benefit from a passport or body kind of system.

I think that would be really, really nice to see.

As you progress up the level

you have so much knowledge

that would just be really nice to share with lower levels

and that could mitigate the need for some of the academic tutors

to have meetings with me because we're fully capable of answering your questions.

When you get to a certain level.

I mean, that would be really nice to see.

I think something else that impacts my learning,

at least Beckett's timetabling

has been a bit of an issue, and I know that is being

looked at by the University, which is really great to see.

But receiving timetables quite late into time for next semester

and not always knowing where you need to be isn't beneficial to the learning

and can be difficult at times.

So assessment of feedback overall is really good.

It's very detailed.

There's a lot of different points to work on, very good point of sort of

acknowledging the good work you've done.

And obviously in the academic sense, you know, there's a lot of input from

what can be improved.

I believe that I benefit a lot from it and I hope the other students benefit

from a lot from it because it's some really good advice and feedback

that teachers given is very personal and individual to each student.

So overall, I would enjoy it and I think it's really good.

I find that on some modules I get quite good feedback and quite detailed notes.

They tell me what I've done well, what if it isn't better?

And I found that those types of feedback have been the most helpful to me.

Sometimes I found that when the feedback tends to be positive,

but you haven't got like the best grade that you could possibly get.

I think sometimes being praised on when I was on placement, I kind of had a tutor who I never really got to me or see or have any lessons with.

So I found that the feedback that I got from those source assessments felt a bit rushed or like they weren't really prioritized

because I was in placement

and I kind of was away from the university,

but I'd get no feedback about what I could do better.

Like I got all positive feedback, which sometimes can be a bit confusing

because if you didn't get, you know, above 70 could feel like,

Oh, well, what could I have done better to get that?

And, but you never really find that out.

I feel I've had a positive experience of assessing the feedback.

I think I've always received feedback in a timely manner, although I know

this isn't the case for all courses across the university on my school.

Specifically, feedback can be really helpful at times.

However, it's not always clear how this is actioned

or how we should go back saying this.

And sometimes you can't always get access to your assessor

or the lecturer who provided the feedback to clarify with them exactly

what you need to do to improve.

It would be really, really great to see if within feedback there was signposting

to resources that could help you improve and assess academic scale.

If that's what's required.

If you're told to improve your Harvard referencing,

it would be great to see signposting to the library who can help you do this.

But that's not always made clear to students.

And whilst feedback can sometimes be overall positive

and this is really, really lovely to see, it's not always clear what you can do

to improve that, to bring your work up to the next great boundary

and to keep improving on something that is already positive.

And that would be really nice to see as well.

Just to make it clear what students can be doing to progress themselves

in every aspect of their education.

Personally, I found my course very engaging.

I found it also challenging.

The content delivered is very interesting and there's a lot to learn from it.

There's a lot of different points of views and there's a lot of different ways

that we're taught and to question sort of concepts,

especially in the wider world, where that knowledge

there's a lot of controversial sort of opinions.

I've always found that interesting.

I've always engaged a lot with with courses I've always attended.

However, I can't speak for everyone, but there's a lot of issues

where students aren't engaging and these are wider issues.

I believe certain times I have found it challenging.

I find maybe assessments.

These are challenging the sort of stress builds are overall.

You know, I find the course is very engaging.

However, sometimes I feel that we're a bit spoon fed where we're sort of

talked about and we're not sort of asked to contribute.

And maybe that is not the best way to teach.

I think my course content has quite challenged me.

I feel like on my course in particular they cover lots of different areas.

I found that the variation was quite good and challenging myself.

Having that variation, people are better at different things, so it does help you

to kind of work on your strengths and your weaknesses at the same time,

I've really enjoyed the variety of different.

Learning scenarios and styles that have been incorporated into my course,

and I've really enjoyed a wide variety of assessments,

including not just writing essays but more practical and course

based assessments that feel really relevant to what we're studying.

I would, however, like to see more group working,

especially within courses working in the professional world.

We're going to work with so many other disciplines

and people who study different subjects and we don't always get the opportunity to interact with those people throughout our academic experience.

And that would be really nice to see

to make sure that we all feel really integrated with one another

and have a good understanding of what professionally.

We all have to offer.

Access to resources are overall quite simple, you know,

they're all on one side, they're all on my back.

I've never struggled really to access this personally.

For me, I found access to resources quite good throughout this.

A lot of resources are online on things like journal articles

or links to PDFs of copies and stuff.

I find them really helpful.

Although laid back, it has some fantastic resources to offer to students.

It's not always clear what students are entitled to or how they can access them.

Whether this is to do with academic access, helping students

improve their academic experience, or if this is to do with students

wider circumstances.

It's not always clear who you can ask and what you're entitled to.

I think that's especially current with the cost of living crisis at the moment.

There are lots needs like a university is doing to help counteract this,
but it's not clear or available to students how they can access this
and how that can improve their current situation.

I think that also has a lot to do with continuation, right?

With students not knowing what they're able to access
and what can help support their experience overall to ensure that they are able
to see through their university career.

I find the physical learning is very important and I find that I've actually
benefited from that.

I think that's the best way

I learned personally, and I think a lot of people share that opinion.

However, I believe that the blended approach
where there is the opportunity to go in physically, however, if one is sick
or if one has an appointment or something, they cannot attend the lecture.

That seminar or workshop in person,
there is the opportunity for them to rewatch them
and that would be recorded and they'll be accessible to anyone who's missed out.

I find that adapted quite well to online learning and distance learning.

I do kind of enjoy the more face to face aspect being able
to ask questions on the spot and now actually putting a face to a name.

Whereas online, sometimes when it's little cameras

and microphones, it can feel a bit like, I think especially for lecturers as well,
like talking to nobody.

I found that I quite enjoyed it.

I can see why others maybe wouldn't ask.

If students come from

maybe a lower economic background, they don't have a quiet space,
so they have access to kind of like resources,
which can really affect the way that people study as well.

I have enjoyed since being back lecturers do still record lectures
and I think this sort of blended learning really does help with
if you are like engaged and you want to go into university,
that's completely your choice. And you can.

But then you also have the choice like safe
obviously around like train tracks or things like that.

If you can't make it into university, you're not missing out
on that particular lecture and you can go watch it in your own time.

And I think it also helps to recap when you come to assessments.

I find that being able to go back to online lectures really helped.

I feel I.

Have a preference for in-person learning, as I know I've massively benefited
from having my cohort around me and seeing that course

cohesion and also coming together to collaborate on projects.

However, I realized that online learning does have its place,

and I think a blended approach can work really well for a lot of courses

to allow people with limitations on their learning.

And I think a blended approach can be really beneficial

to ensure that the needs of all students are taken into account.

I think online learning during the pandemic was done really well

and I felt that I always had access

to the tutors and course materials when I needed it.

However, I much prefer being in person and I think if courses can get back to

maturity in person, that would really benefit engagement

throughout all courses.

So I've had various opportunities, career and employability

development opportunities.

There was various opportunities showed through the course.

I worked with a community center in

, working with elderly people and doing classes.

I think especially in my school, there's been a lot of opportunities that

help with our career development.

I applied for placement, the support I got from the patient team

they would like send us.

Jopling every day to what was open and culturally doing career fairs.

Even though I applied during COVID when everything was online,

they set up online sort of talks with different companies

so that you could ask them questions about the whole process.

And they did manage to kind of blend in as well.

So the opportunity didn't stop even though everything was online.

I think it really helped with my career development.

I feel a lot more confident now that I have done a placement year

and the opportunity that was available to me.

There's been lots going on and lots of events

and it's never been short of that sort of support as well.

And modules, they kind of teach us how to write. CVS.

And skills based like self assessment and personal development plan.

So all of that kind of come together and now I feel like

my prospects are a lot better for going into a graduate career now,

and I'm feeling quite confident going into applying for them now.

I feel I've had the opportunity to take part

in a wide variety of activities that can support my employability.

For example, my placements are integrated into my course,

which gives me such an exciting eye into my future career

and what that working environment is going to look like.

I've been able to engage in interprofessional learning days with other disciplines and health care professional based courses from across the UNI, which allow me to gauge an understanding of what other courses do and what other professions bring to the table within future working environments.

Sense of belonging of the university is being quite.

How do you feel?

I think in the last two or three years with COVID, it has really sort of gone down.

I feel that people in my course and myself, we haven't really connected.

The class of 2023 started in

COVID, had a full year online where we only saw each other's initials.

And I think that had a massive effect.

There was very little sense of belonging with each other is

it just feels like you're going in and out and you don't really know anyone.

I was

of course you have your little group of friends,

but maybe,

you know, with the sort of anxiety

that COVID has caused and the sort of pressure of uni,

you know, people sustain themselves

and we haven't been able to sort of get out and

we haven't been able to be all together and maybe a non-university setting.

I feel that the Uni hasn't really adopted various takes for belonging.

You know, it's very much just come in, come out.

There's not much work by the university

in the courses to get people together and to hopefully make a nice team.

That's been very hard with COVID.

And it's understandable that belonging has gone down.

However, it's an issue

that needs to be resolved as numbers are gradually plummeting

and people don't feel part of courses or the university.

So at the start of the year I felt my sense of belonging was quite strong.

We did a lot of group work and we did a lot of shared activities.

I started making course my, which obviously is quite difficult

during first year.

Doing great work and stuff like that was really helpful.

So my sense of belonging however then

because it was

obviously the first year that it happened and we just had to kind of

go straight into online learning group work kind of puzzle

and you know, so people will come with off and stuff like that which kind of felt

like it was a bit disjointed and like you couldn't really make

like friends in your seminars or on your courses.

And then going on to yeah, I kind of had barely any contact with the university.

So it was, I felt like for two years I felt kind of disconnected

from the university

and that my belongingness was a little bit affected because I was

really panicky after my placement year that when I came back,

I wouldn't actually know anyone because my friend, she didn't do a placement.

You had graduated and then I hadn't had the opportunity to make any of this.

So yeah, I was slightly panicked coming back into it.

But I think since being back in my final year now

my sense of belongingness has really improved.

I can actually come in to campus and I now know a lot more members of staff

within my school, which I didn't really know during the past years.

And I find that I know more people who I can go and talk to for support.

Starting to work with the placement team in terms of belongingness

for the summer tuition to study abroad or on placement.

So I'm trying to work on initiatives just like if we can have like a group way

of having all the placement students within a school in the same group,

maybe on teams so that they can connect with each other.

They can sort of ask each of the questions.

I've spoken with a few placement students

and they've I found during my research that they just felt like

they were acknowledged when they came back.

So just trying to help that transition, I feel like could have really helped

belongingness and sort of just celebrating people who actually went away.

What these companies and come back with like so much more knowledge

that could help other people as well who maybe didn't go on placement as well.

A sense of belonging isn't

something I feel has come naturally throughout my Leeds Beckett journey.

I think that once in-person teaching came back

for my second year, I was able to bond with my cohort

and my immediate classmates a lot better within that learning environment.

However, I don't feel that I have a sense of belonging within my school as a whole.

My school is quite a large one and that obviously does

mean that there are barriers to getting lots of students together,

but I can't think of an opportunity that has ever presented itself to do so.

That hasn't been organized by students themselves.

I'd really like to see the university put more effort into ensuring

that students have that sense of belonging across courses

to ensure that students continue in their courses and have the support

they need from their peers across a multitude of professions.

I think I'd definitely like to see some events that incorporate

cross course collaboration, especially within the .

We're all going to be working together in the future,

no matter what environment you go into.

They'll be that multidisciplinary approach.

And I'd like to see that

I take the university and really begin that for us early on.

I'd also like to see more of a social aspect placed on those kinds of events,

ensuring that all wellbeing is taken into consideration

and that role encouraged to support one another

and pool our resources to really make sure that we're getting the most out of.

Our academic experience.

So wellbeing is becoming sort of unequivocal,

really important in the university setting.

I feel the university does give opportunities for wellbeing.

You can access the mental health team and they can they can give you support.

However, I accessed them in the past and they were really helpful.

However, the wait time is very long.

You can go up to one month, two months, three months sometimes.

But I did find them very helpful.

Yes. The issue of wellbeing and being in sort of student

welfare is quite big where, you know, if you're going into a sort of setting

where you don't feel psychologically safe, where you're not a group.

And so I think this sort of creates worse wellbeing and

less belonging in the whole sort of spectrum of that.

The support is there.

However, the support maybe is not strong enough.

I think the support can also be helped by students, by staff,

by creating more of that sense of belonging and a sense of community.

Now in the cost of living, crisis is even bigger.

The sense of the pressure on students.

I feel that a lot of people are struggling,

especially with students who are commuting in or they have big costs for

for coming into university if they're coming from further afield.

I feel that,

you know, the costs of food is going up, the cost of petrol is going up.

And so a lot of people are finding that that safety is being broken,

where one has to work even more in their part time job,

where one maybe can't attend uni because they're working or one

can't spend money because it's going to cost even more to drive in or commuting.

So all of this creates a storm for students

and I think it has a massive effect on wellbeing

and has a massive effect on belonging.

It has a massive effect on the community at the university.

I know that a lot of people kind of commute

and have to drive like hours because especially there is a bit of a

housing crisis at the moment

and people have to come from places like different cities like Manchester.

I know a lot of international students have to go to different cities

like Bradford and obviously that can be quite expensive.

So I think timetabling.

So if a student has to be in by one hour most days,

it just isn't helpful, especially because of cost of living.

And the price actually is great with petrol and train strikes.

It's just a lot harder to travel to university now.

So I think timetabling could sort of like help.

And in terms of like mental health at uni, it's quite obviously a big issue

and a lot of people to sports and things like that.

But a lot of people have struggled with timetabling because most sports

are on Wednesday afternoons and that's when people have to go either train

or they have to go to competitions or like play a match.

And a lot of people have done that.

They've had stuff on Wednesday afternoon that especially if you're like a third

year, you don't really want to miss because it's like important exam season,

but it means they also have to curtail doing sports, which is obviously helping the mental health and then that can have a detrimental effect on student cost.

I think the university have responded

to the cost of living crisis and made changes in some areas.

I do think there's a lot more that needs to be done

and this needs to be done with student voices in mind.

I think the changes that are being made aren't always suitable to students

and don't always support exactly what we need.

For example, the University of

Just put back their shuttle bus service, which takes you from each campus

multiple times a day for actually no charge.

However, lots of students live in between these two campuses and either end

meaning that the shuttle bus service doesn't really aid their travel.

It would be really beneficial if stopped could be added in between.

That could allow students a free easy transportation to

and from university and allow more flexibility in their travel.