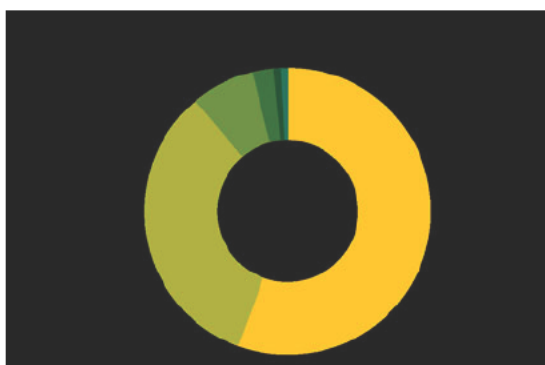


Introduction, Approach & Basis of Assessment

This report is produced by Goldsmiths Students' Union, where every single student at Goldsmiths, University of London is a member. We are a student-led registered charity, independent of the College. This report seeks to inform the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023 assessment of Goldsmiths, University of London as a provider of higher education, specifically in the areas of student experience and outcomes through student feedback. We conducted an extensive survey, of which over half of all respondents were undergraduates. Of undergraduate respondents, an overwhelming majority were current students and a handful were alumni, including recent graduates. This survey was collected as part of our student submission for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023. As part of TEF requirements, only undergraduate responses have been included in this report. Undergraduate respondents generally spanned across departments, with the exception of the History department, of which respondents were postgraduates. The Centre for Academic Language and Literacies (CALL) and Confucius Institute, both of which are [non-school departments](#), did not see any responses. We also engaged archival material, including data from the Goldsmiths Student Union's Advice Service, departmental student coordinator reports and histories of campaigns at the university.



We would also like to report that as well as working on our own independent student submission, we were offered the chance to take part in the college's submission, as a result of which we had access to the college's draft for TEF submission in addition to any data that they were using. Overall, we believe the college has been supportive of our student contact and has allowed us to maintain total independence in writing our student submission.

Throughout this document, Goldsmiths, University of London is also referred to as "Institution" and "the College".



Basis of Assessment

In the following sections, we assess the points of balance and contention between the reality of student experience and outcomes at Goldsmiths and the College’s targets through published and marketed iterations of institutional mission, values and strategy. The College’s [mission statement](#) articulates the offer of a “transformative experience, generating knowledge and stimulating self-discovery through creative, radical and intellectually rigorous thinking and practice”. This, it builds on six institutional values. Across the 2018 to 2023 period, the College sought to uphold and materialise the above mission and values through seven strategic aims that, we posit, can be organised into the following categories of investment which can be measured against TEF Assessment sections.

Goldsmiths Mission Statement			
We offer a transformative experience, generating knowledge and stimulating self-discovery through creative, radical and intellectually rigorous thinking and practice.			
Goldsmiths Values	Goldsmiths Institutional Strategic Aims for 2018-2023 see: https://www.gold.ac.uk/strategy/	Categories of Investment	TEF Assessment Sections
-Achieving academic excellence -Radical and innovative thinking	1: Shaping our distinctive academic profile 2: Enhancing our teaching and learning	Academic	SE1 - SE3 SO1 - SO3
-Respecting the individual -Promoting access and diversity -Supporting our students and staff	6: Supporting the Goldsmiths community of students, staff and alumni 7: Building an efficient and effective infrastructure	Wellbeing	SE4 - SE7
-Creating change, locally and globally	3: Making a difference through our research and knowledge exchange 4: Strengthening our international relationships and profile 5: Civic engagement for mutual benefit: active partnership with our community	Community	SO4 - SO6

Fig. 1: Breakdown of College Mission, Values and Strategy against Categories of Investment and TEF Assessment Sections.

Student Experience

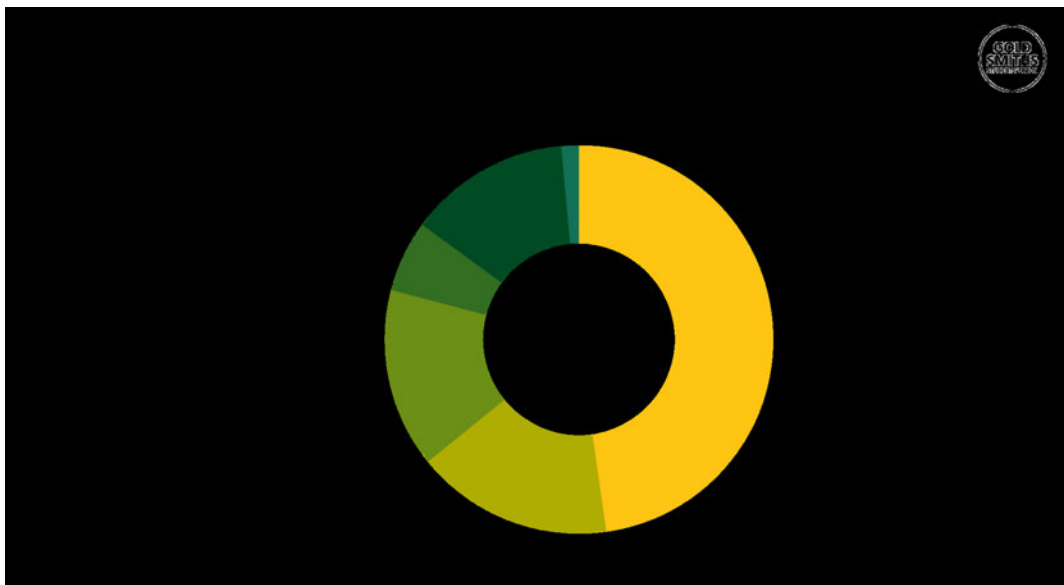


Fig. 2: Student Motivations for Admission to Goldsmiths.

The specialised academic offering at Goldsmiths continues to be the biggest attraction for students to the College, with nearly half of students reporting their course as motivation for admission. Responses indicate the College's pedagogical appeal may be more closely related to the reputation of Goldsmiths and its historic strength of liberal arts and humanities expertise arising from work by the community of students and academics, as opposed to the merit of the institution and its operational provisions as a whole.

We thus establish our understanding of student experience as one that is holistic, where academic development at the core influences and is influenced by other concurrently vital factors of studenthood such as wellbeing and sense of community, all of which have been reflected as part of the College's Institutional Strategy for 2018 to 2023. At Goldsmiths across recent years, the evidence supports a distinction between a student's academic experience and their overall experience as a student at the College.

SE1 to SE3: Academic Experience and Assessment

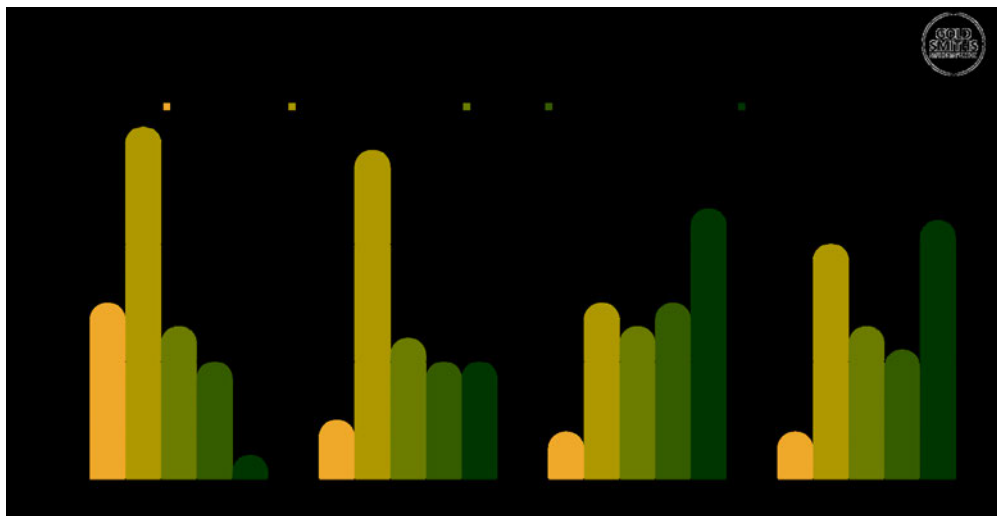


Fig. 3: Breakdown of Student Satisfaction Levels.

We recall the Basis of Assessment shown in [Figure 1](#) where it is understood the College’s academic investment is central to their offer of a transformative experience. From the cross-examination of institutional mission, values and strategy, it can also be understood that the College’s investment here is built on expanding the institution’s academic offer through an advanced scholarship (i.e. “enhancing our teaching and learning”) in line with Goldsmiths’ historic reputation (i.e. “Shaping our distinctive academic profile”). However, we note from feedback that the academic offer may be seeing a shift over the course of 6 years by way of experiential value. Student satisfaction levels are on a downward trajectory based on the direct jurisdiction of each domain of student experience, with academic experience seeing the highest student satisfaction rates as shown in Figure 3. Feedback by students on teaching, delivery and assessment practices have been largely positive on a course-specific level of academic experience, but this is not mirrored in impressions of College-wide provisional standards. With reference to Figure 4 below, over 52.9% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that their course, which is run by individual conveners, was well-organised, while only 18.6% felt the same about the College.



Fig. 4: Feedback by students based on experience of course vs college operations.

Comparison data in Figure 5 above depicts students' confidence levels on the delivery of their expected learning experience. There is consistently over half of students either strongly agreeing or agreeing that their tutors have met their academic knowledge expectations, provided sufficient advice and guidance in relation to learning, been approachable in providing support and have delivered their expected learning experience. This is in contrast to the feedback on the College's provisions of key academic adjacent student support. For instance, while 60% of students are confident in their tutors' abilities to deliver the learning experience they are expecting, only 34.3% feel confident in the College's ability to provide the student experience they were expecting. Nearly half of respondents felt that the College had not communicated key academic-adjacent needs, such as information on timetables, pertinent to student academic development clearly enough.

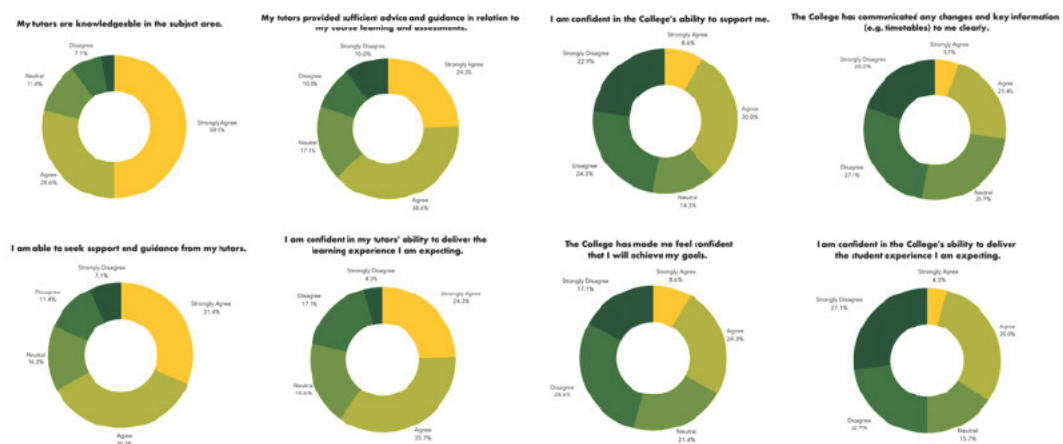


Fig. 5: Comparison of student confidence and expectations in course vs college.

Student satisfaction with their academic experience at Goldsmiths has thus been associated with the running of their course or programme which, based on the above data, is seen by students as generally well provided by the tutors who are directly in charge of their

content learning. However, this satisfaction does pivot where the College is responsible for provision, for example, of key information vital and prior to the receipt of their education such as timetables. Therefore, where teaching, delivery and assessment of their course is directly concerned, student satisfaction on learning experience against their expectations saw a high. In comparison, where the College is responsible for crucial academic adjacent provisions, satisfaction levels did see a dip (see Figure 3).

SE4 to SE7: Resources, Support and Student Engagement

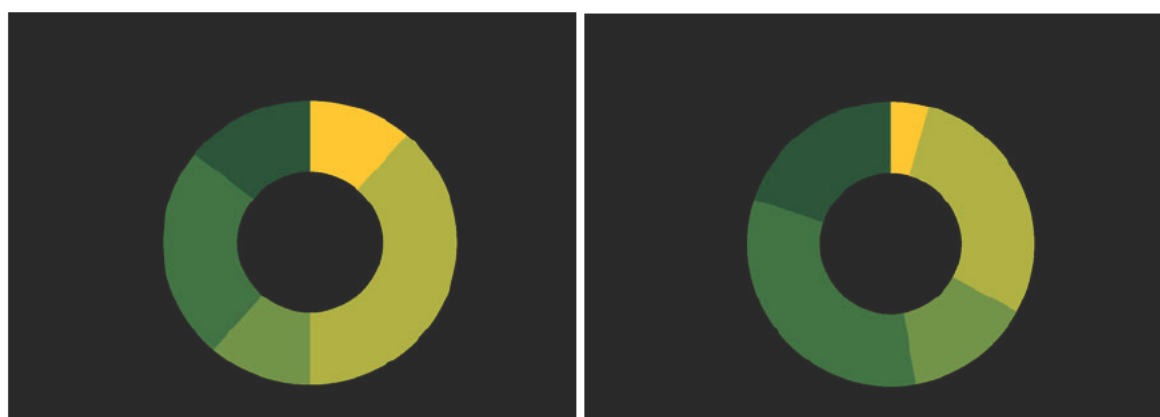


Fig. 6: Awareness and Clarity on College Admin & Support.

We recall the Basis of Assessment shown in [Figure 1](#) where it is understood the College’s offer of a transformative experience also involves an investment in wellbeing. From cross-examination of institutional mission, values and strategy, it can also be deduced that the College intends to establish pastoral care in its values through prioritising “an efficient and effective infrastructure” that supports the College’s community of students and staff. We note, from student feedback, that the offer of support and resources is distinct from their delivery. Evaluation on their provision should therefore consider both offer and delivery in their entirety. In Figure 6, it is observed that exactly half of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they knew where to go for support or resources when needed. Yet, clarity among students on the College’s support structure sat at a lower 32.9%. This means that there is concurrently an awareness of but lack of clarity on available support, resources and administration at the College, where students know what they need and where to go to, but not the exact process or structure to engage in. This is further supported by data depicted in Figure 7 below signalling an incompatibility in terms of actual student satisfaction and confidence of the support they receive from the College.

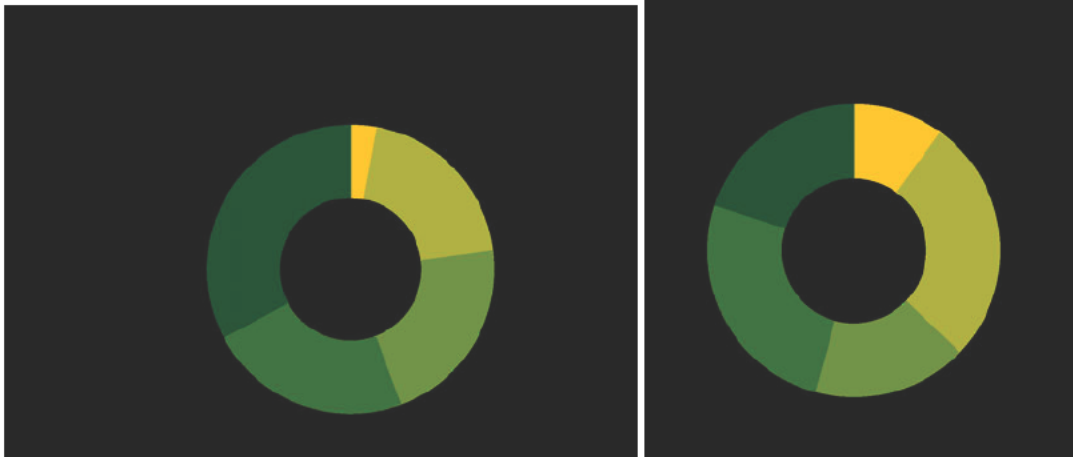


Fig. 7: Do students feel supported?

Additionally, with reference to the charts on Figure 8, it does not appear that students feel their voices (i.e. opinions and experiences) are as heard by the College as they are by their tutors directly. This supports a divergence in the institution's provision of overall student experience, forking where the responsibilities of the College split from the direct undertakings of individual tutors and their students. Thus, we observe the student satisfaction rates as shown in Figure 3, where the majority of respondents reported being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with every other domain of student experience (i.e. Wellbeing, Financial and Administrative Support) from the academic, the former being a responsibility of the College's provision and the latter being individual tutors' undertaking.

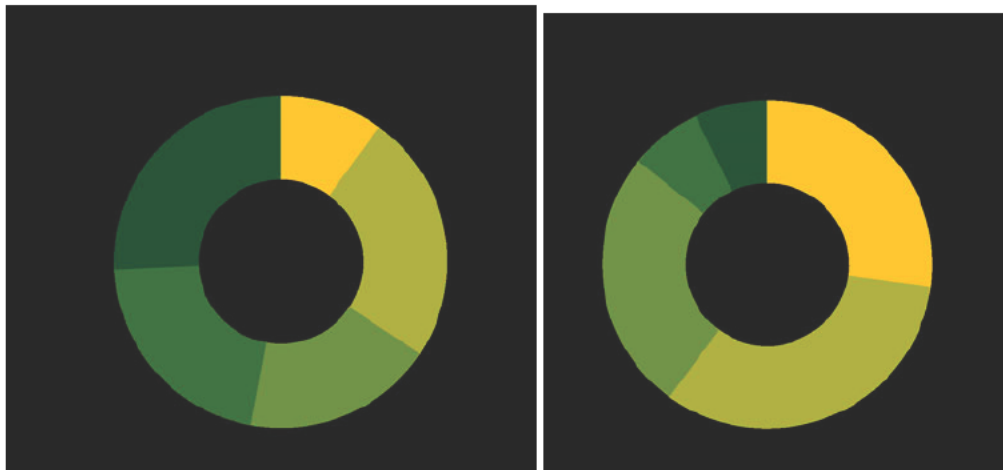


Fig. 8: Student feedback on voice.

Student Outcomes

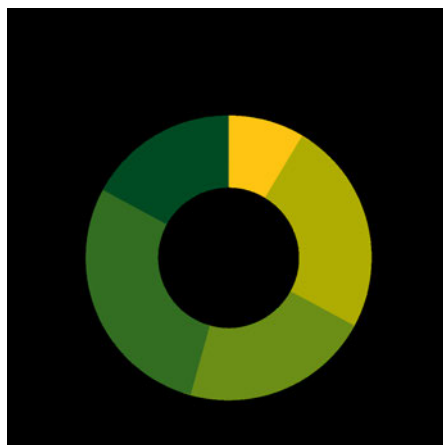


Fig. 9: Student Confidence Levels on Goal-Attainment

We recall the Basis of Assessment shown in [Figure 1](#) where it is understood the College's offer of a transformative experience also involves an investment in community. From cross-examination of institutional mission, values and strategy, it can also be deduced that the College's intention is to boost the scholarship profile of the academic and student body at Goldsmiths, in order to "create change locally and globally". With reference to Figure 10 below, we note that student issues have fluctuated over the years, with issues of Appeals, Progression and Assessment hitting a peak in the 2021/22 academic year. This peak has coincided with the roll-out of the College's Pandemic Recovery Restructure plan. The new school system was implemented towards the end of the summer 2022 term and with it, grades and extenuating circumstances applications were no longer processed by departments and were to be processed centrally by the registry. With the loss of departmental administrative teams this has resulted in an increased workload being taken on by a smaller, less specialised team in a school.

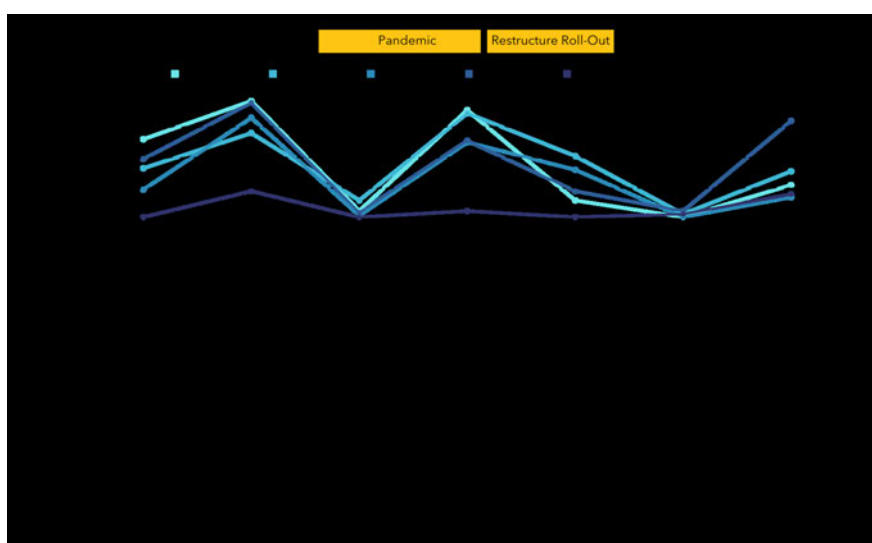


Fig. 10: Goldsmiths SU Advice Service Breakdown of Total Cases by General Sub-Matter Type, 2018-2023 inclusive.

For instance, in the last academic year, delays with the processing of results have affected 2021/22 undergraduate students across all years and departments. Specifically, undergrad students who have submitted all their assessments and were expecting their results back in July, were affected. Results publication for undergraduate students were pushed back from the 22nd July to the 16th September to then the 26th September for continuing students, and 30th September for final year students. However, we have heard of further delays from the 26th of September for some continuing students. The delays with results release have caused an undeniable, severe chain impact on the lives of students. Without having grades processed, final year students have been unable to get their transcripts nor graduate on time. The offer from College to request interim documentation of achievement of their degree award also comes with the prerequisite of downloading their final grades from a portal, where the processing delay applied. This means there is a further interim in which these students have neither their final transcript nor official documentation, therefore have had to put their progression plans (e.g. career, further education) on hold as a result. It reached an extent where parents have written to us due to a lack of communication from the College. On the other hand, continuing students who experienced delays in the processing of their results were and are unable to enrol or access personalised timetables. This has also caused a delay in their access to student finance and other sources of funding such as scholarship funds. This asks that the College accepts responsibility for a centralised system materialised at a particularly bad time. On top of this, new incoming students to the 2022/23 academic year were already facing issues on arrival as we began receiving emails requesting assistance or escalation for the College's attention. We point this out to draw attention to some inconsistencies in institutional strategy, particularly in the last two academic years, where the College appears to have shifted from a wellbeing and community focused strategic direction towards a financial-first one, which may sideline the student experience they continue to market to incoming students.

Feedback on Student Experience

<p>I love my tutors - they're all incredibly knowledgeable and supportive. Timetabling is really confusing every year though and we often have no idea what we're doing until the very last minute.</p> <p>The merges of department was awful, many did not have accurate timetable, many had no timetable, had to wait in the queue for more than an hour in my break, and miss my lunch just to fix my timetable. I applied for [redacted] in so much stress and what did I get in end - nothing. I was told to wait until Jan. Even though it's way past deadline. So stressing when I am unwell still the staff just cut their hands up saying not my problem. Not understanding anything. They say it like it's no big deal, work on getting better- this degree is important to me. I am paying huge loan for this. This is emotional and financial investment. Awful. They don't care about students at all. There's nothing that they can do. Also I have been indicated that my reason to apply for [redacted] was probably will not be accepted. Definitely do not care for the students.</p> <p>I love my course, department and tutors, and have no criticism of them. But I do not like how the university as an establishment is run, particularly - how they treat their staff. I do not believe the university cares about student experience given how they dealt with strikes last year. To be clear I am in full support of my lecturers and tutors striking, and I am angry that the university put them in a position where they were forced to do so. It is clear the university cares more about money than their staff and students by refusing to come to an agreement with the union and forcing the staff to strike in order to save their jobs & livelihoods at the expense of the students.</p>	<p>Tutors are very supportive but the college, the hub and the wellbeing are reacting very slow.</p> <p>Im doing a joint honors and it's been way too difficult to change my module and i still don't know if the change has been fully successful. Goldsmiths handling of anything is always terrible everytime ive had to deal with it and i cannot wait to leave</p> <p>All these strikes, which I get, has affected everyone negatively. The course isn't what it was described to be</p> <p>Awful administration issues, centralisation had made things go from half broken to broken completely. Facilities are often impossible to access and there is no one there to help since hubs are completely new staff, who are very kind by the way, but that has nothing to do with the university. University spends money on all things but on what is actually needed. Horrible value just to see the Goldsmiths Cafe sell half sandwiches to students for 1GBP while they are paying 9 to 20 thousand pounds per year for this scam of an education. Students do not know what's going on, neither to university staff. Everyone's given up already, including SU and GUCU which are only about culture at this point, and is waiting for this business to crash. Picking an attractive course of study is the only thing that prevented me from a complete mental breakdown but this higher education is a make your own adventure experience, whatever good comes - Goldsmiths has nothing to do with it but will gladly stick their name on it.</p>	<p>Strikes and central hub team for department administration has completely ruined everything.</p> <p>The College has been absolutely terrible with changing my name on the system as a [redacted] student. I have received amazing support from my tutors yet the collage itself seem to have a major problem with this.</p> <p>extremely stressful, unsupportive and lonely, not at all what I expected or have experienced in other academic places. had a lot of discrimination being disabled, there's not enough support</p>
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Fig. 11: Some open-ended feedback from students.



Conclusion

The academic provision at the College continues to be specialised in the liberal arts and humanities strain, thanks to the tireless work of the Goldsmiths community of students and staff dedicated to the scholarship. We might call to question the emphasis that the College places upon the pastoral care and student-centric radical pedagogy that it has built into its values and mission. We contend that the provision of a transformative student experience is only as adept in offer as it is in delivery and receipt in real terms. We do not want to see the excellence in scholarship become itself transformed by incompatible institutional operations. We believe that some structural improvements would go a long way in helping the College attain higher awards in the TEF, and in the experiences of students.