Teaching Excellence Framework

Student Submission 2023

DN Colleges Group 10004695

UCNL (University Campus North Lincolnshire) approached in October 2022 to complete this submission, and it was explained what it was and what was required in the submission. The Student Submission guidelines were provided, and the opportunity to ask questions where needed was given. There was no obligation to complete this submission and ample time was given to go away and think about completion. The university understood the situation and encouraged not to take this on unless it could be completed around other studies and commitments.

The support from the Higher Education (HE) staff, has been vital in completing this submission. Although it has not been necessary to contact UCNL/UCDon (University Campus Doncaster) about the submission frequently, the HE staff have stayed connected. This contact has been mainly to check on progress and offer support and assistance if needed. At the very start of this process, a list of contacts was provided who could support the submission, and data sources of information that the staff thought could support the submission were made available. It was clear where these had come from, and original unedited versions were seen and are outlined in the Evidence section below.

At no point was there any undue influence by anyone within UCNL/UCDon, no one made any attempt to steer the submission or guide it in a particular direction. It was made clear from the outset that if this occurred then this should be raised immediately and that this submission was independent from the Institution submission and would be sent in addition.

whilst all HE students were given the opportunity to work on the TEF Student Submission unfortunately there were no other volunteers. Help was sought from the Student Representative population and the student submission contact helped to try and drum up support from the student rep population.

A recommendation to make in the future would be for the university to seek out potential submission candidates at a much earlier time, and where possible a team to potentially cover different aspects of the submission and then collate it into one. The data that was provided was useful but some of it was data related and some future students may find this difficult to digest, a little context and training to those future students would be beneficial.

A recommendation for the TEF and the Office for Students on future submissions would be to provide examples of submissions, of what the submission could look like, although the student submission guide was helpful and full of useful information for completing the submission, the template provided was very basic. Having never completed a submission like this before it was at first daunting, and this may put off some students from completing a submission, the full guide needs to be to understand what is expected fully from the submission which takes time, one thing students tend not to have much of!

Finding the time to be able to fulfil this submission has been tricky to say the least there was an underestimation of the volume of work separate to the submission that needed to be completed, though at no time did the university add any additional pressure and there was an awareness this process could've been stopped at any time.

Evidence used:

- Feedback from Student Representatives, through surveys and questions.

- Annual Monitoring, Review and Enhancement of Programmes (AMREP): Institutional Review and Enhancement Report 2021-2022
- Annual Monitoring, Review and Enhancement of Programmes (AMREP): Collaborative Provision, Institutional Review and Enhancement Report 2018-2019
- Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 2021/22
- Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 2022/23
- National Student Survey Data from Years 2018-2022
- Case Studies from previous students.
- Ofsted Inspection of DN Colleges Group: 22 to 25 March 2022
- TEF Data Dashboard

Feedback from student reps was from 30 Representatives from both UCDon and UCNL campuses, from multiple subjects including: Social Science, Business Management, Medical Bioscience, Leaning and Development, Applied Animal Welfare Science, Biochemistry, Early Childhood Studies, Criminal Justice, Illustrational and Concept Art, Education studies and Contemporary relational Counselling.

The case studies from previous students who have now completed their studies come from 6 former students across a range of courses at UCNL/UCDon, including Business Management Social Science, Game development.

Evidence regarding the student experience has mainly come from student rep feedback from both campuses as these are the voice of the students within UCNL/UCDon who have a better understanding of the moods, feelings, and experience of the students.

This feedback from the student reps was in the form of a survey asking them for positive feedback and areas of opportunity, this feedback has been collated into two word clouds, one for positive feedback and anther for opportunity feedback.

**Positive feedback Word Cloud**

Opportunity feedback word Cloud

In general, you can see from these two-word clouds, the positive feedback appears to be focused around the teaching and academic support and this is reflected in the comments and scores from NSS. The opportunity feedback is more around the non-teaching and support aspects, such as facilities, equipment, and communication.

National Student Survey Data for DNCG:
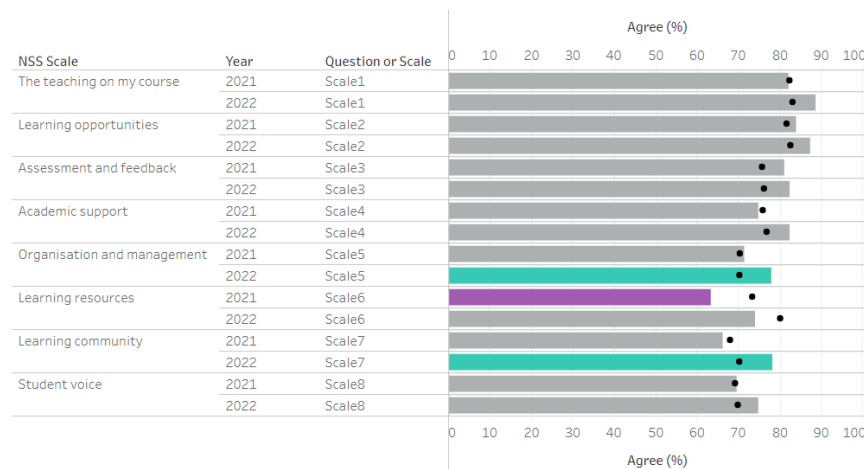
The Teaching Excellence Framework Indicators have been used as the basis to present the rest of the student submission.

1. **The teaching on my course**

The NSS results for 2021 and 2022 highlight that this area has shown significant improvement from 82% to 88%. This is reflected in comments from student rep feedback collected in November and December 2022.

Positive Comments from student reps included:

"Tutors are extremely helpful and approachable; you can tell they are enthusiastic about their students."

"Teaching is a good standard with staff listening to the support students require and helping to cover these topic areas in more detail to help with assignment completions".

"The teaching of my course throughout my time here has not only been well-taught and well-thought-out, but also inspiring."

Questions one and two of the NSS, Staff are good at explaining things and Staff have made the subject interesting, both scored highly in 2022 at 90% and 88% for positive responses.

The only negative feedback found from the student reps were comments regarding PowerPoint teaching, that some students would benefit from different methods of teaching, especially for the courses that are less practical.

2. **Academic support**

Academic Support NSS scores between 2021 and 2022 show massive improvement from 74% to 86%, this is significantly above benchmark. Which is a direct reflection of the changes and improvements that appear to have been made to the Academic Development and Pastoral Team (ADAPT). I know that many students on my course have used this service for many things, either support for academic skills they need help with or for assistance with finance or disability.

Positive feedback regarding academic support:

"The academic support team has been a great help in giving guidance on referencing and structuring an essay",

"I have always been able to access guidance and advice".

"The support has been amazing" and "The academic support has also been a tremendous benefit".

Although not all feedback has been positive there could be an issue with distance learning and the support that is available for them, it may be there but not necessarily communicated effectively to distance learners?

Opportunity feedback for Academic Support

"A forum for distance learners. Adapt is not aimed at distance learners at all. If you are promoting distance learning, more support is required to ensure we are included."

Communication is an issue or trend that appears in the feedback from the student reps. Although the scores for NSS Questions such as Question 17, Any changes on the course or teaching have been communicated effectively, are positive at 72% and 74% they are still lower scores and could be improved. These scores are above benchmark, but the below comments highlight there is an issue that needs addressing. This looks to be communication that differs from academic feedback, such as individual communication between student and tutor,

student, and staff, and ensuring a consistent message is delivered to students regarding their course/learning.

Opportunity feedback regarding communication

"Although support is available, it is essential students are told the correct thing from all staff, inside and outside the classroom".

"Communication between staff, so students have same info from all angles and not one staff member saying one thing and another staff member saying another and left with mixed messages, this also includes staff from outside the classroom".

"Academic enhancement (lack of response and or appointments)"

"(better) Communication of changes to program" and "tried to send emails previously to gain more information and ask questions, but I did not receive any responses".

3. **Assessment and feedback**

The NSS scores for this section are 81% for 2021 and 82.5% for 2022 which significantly above the benchmark figures of 75% and 76% for the respective years.

Feedback from student reps reflects these scores with examples of assessment and feedback being described positively below:

"Provided with helpful information surrounding our assignments by lectures".

"Feedback is provided in a way that enables students to comprehend not only what they have done but also how to improve."

"Feedback is detailed, useful and constructive and assists students to make improvements in the future".

With this comment from first year student rep regarding feedback and assessment they have received in one-to-one format as they have yet to receive feedback for assignments.

"Our due dates have not yet passed but throughout the semester we have had one on one tutorials and help   further our understanding of the modules we are learning."

4. **Learning resources**

IT resources have previously scored lower than benchmark in previous years NSS scores, 2021 was just 63% positive responses, but this had increased to 73% in 2022 but is still below benchmark of 76%. IT resources are also commented on in feedback from student reps, and reflect the lower scores, although investment can be seen on campuses with new or improved equipment, support seems to be an area that also needs improvement.

Comments from Student Rep feedback:

"Positive is the integration of technology into the course using different technologies, software and possibilities for the future really helps to bridge the gap."

"The specialist equipment, the labs are brilliant for Bioscience. Very happy."

"Without the equipment I would not be able to do the course I'm doing (Sports). There are different models of the equipment, which gives me experience with different machines. I have knowledge and understand this equipment."

"We use macs, photoshop, adobe software, drawing boards, graphics boards provided by you (DNCG). It is great, everything we need is there, and anything we ask for is provided."

"IT- This needs improvement especially for distance learning. It is not good enough."

"Lack of IT tech guys. One throughout the whole building is a stretch."

"Access to IT at the start of the year (Teams, Canvas)"

"Having canvas working properly would be hugely advantageous as it seems to be very problematic for students and tutors".

The library resources have seen an increase in scores in the NSS from 62% to 74% from 2021 to 2022, but this is still below the benchmark for 2022, but mention heavily for positive feedback in the student rep feedback. The library and the support staff have been helpful to both me and others, they play an important role in the student experience.

"The library and other study tools have also played a significant role in my journey throughout university."

"Excellent library opening times and librarians", "Have wide access to useful information", "Library and staff" and "Library access and variety".

Although scores overall for learning resources are low on the NSS, my experience of the resources on offer has been vital to studies. Having access to both UCNL and University of Lincoln online resources is fantastic. This possibly not communicated enough and can be made easier to access.

Other feedback around the resources available to students is below, which is both positive and areas of opportunity but shows how the non-academic issues impact the overall learning experience.

"The canteen to be open slightly longer for lunch".

"More staff in Coffee Shop needed (Queue a mile long at break times)".

"Better choice of food in Starbucks towards the end of week".

"More staff in the canteen - consider use of Catering Students from North Lindsey to offer work experience".

"Cleanliness of the entire site"

"The Pods are brilliant for being able to go somewhere outside of the home environment to be able to focus".

This is an area I have experienced, as a mature student who accesses the facilities in an evening my experience is different to the other course who are there during the day. I don't necessarily need a full canteen service, but others may as we are studying through a normal dinner period.

5. **Student voice**

The author feels that as a student representative themselves, they feel part of the student community, and are able to have communication with other students, acknowledging that there is a group of people who are going through the same experience whom they can contact for support. This view by the author is reflected in feedback from other students at DN Colleges Group.

The student reps are volunteers and are the voice of the student population and can feedback comments, issues, or concerns on behalf of the student population to tutors and the university. They in the most part, are listened to and feedback is taken on board and action taken.

The NSS scores for student voice aren't necessarily reflective of this, the question it is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on scores 49% in 2021 and 53 in 2022. This is a little below benchmark and although there is an increase there is still work to do.

Comments from Student reps include:

"I feel that as a student we have a voice, and our suggestions and comments are taken into consideration and assessed"

"Reps being approachable." And "I absolutely feel listened to, by being a student rep, the student society and in the classroom, and my peers all agree."

"There are often regular posts about what is happening around the campus for students to get involved in which is good".
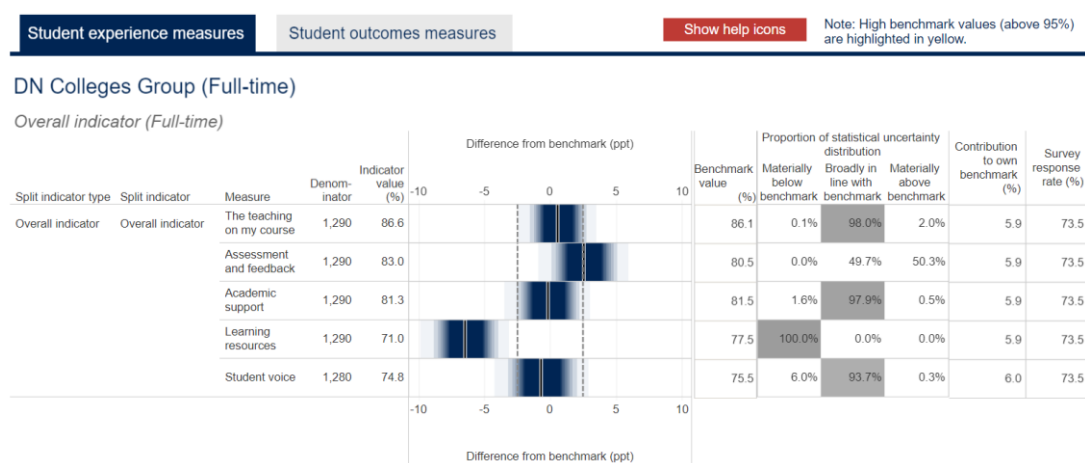
Although there was nothing specific mentioned in the comments from Student Rep feedback about the student voice, this indicates to me that the student reps do feel they have a voice, the fact they have responded to the request for feedback means they must know that they are listened to and that changes will happen.

There was this comment about the student voice, and how an anonymous feedback system can be used. This is another option the University can use to help gain important information from their students.

"An anonymous feedback area for all students on canvas which can then be brought up in meetings, as some things are wanted to be kept private from Reps."

The student reps go through training which is accessed on Canvas and have support from staff at the university, the training is based around how they gather information and feedback, how to assist peers with signposting them if needed to the correct channels or people to deal with their issue, and the importance of their role. The training includes, training videos, responsibilities, rep handbook, and they have access to useful information and links for support.

TEF Data - Student Experience Measures

Split indicator type	Split indicator	Measure	Denom-inator	Indicator value (%)	Difference from benchmark (ppt) -10 -5 0 5 10	Benchmark value (%)	Materially below benchmark	Broadly in line with benchmark	Materially above benchmark	Contribution to own benchmark (%)	Survey response rate (%)
Overall indicator	Overall indicator	The teaching on my course	1,290	86.6		86.1	0.1%	98.0%	2.0%	5.9	73.5
		Assessment and feedback	1,290	83.0		80.5	0.0%	49.7%	50.3%	5.9	73.5
		Academic support	1,290	81.3		81.5	1.6%	97.9%	0.5%	5.9	73.5
		Learning resources	1,290	71.0		77.5	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9	73.5
		Student voice	1,280	74.8		75.5	6.0%	93.7%	0.3%	6.0	73.5

The figures above from TEF data dashboard also show the teaching is broadly in line with the benchmark and feedback and assessment is above the benchmark, with academic support

also in line with benchmark. This is in line with the feedback from peers, data I have investigated and my own personal experience.

Comments from Students about Educational Gain

"I can work, and I can study, it's really accommodating."

"The influence you could have outside of DNCG is something I like, studying here helps you to dare to think differently."

"My confidence has increased.
There was a UCNL recruitment stand and I went and tried to talk to them. They encouraged that I could do it, that I am perfectly capable to do this. I feel much more confident, I took English classes and am doing my degree."

"Our class is a mix of ages, it's good to speak to all ages the younger ones ask for help with writing a professional email, and the older ones ask for help on what some social media trend they don't understand is".

"It was intimidating to go back to school as a mature person, a big change in my life but even on the first day I felt welcomed and like I belonged, my peers and I sat and ate lunch together, all of us were nervous".

In year one the Managing Personal Development module of FdA Management, allowed students to look at their skills, understand how to analyse what their strengths and weaknesses were and how best to use or improve these. The learning about reflection was very useful and students are able to both utilise this during studying but also apply it to employment as well. A guided work-based project module aligns learning with real world experience, and encourages students share their experience within the course to show how what they are learning is relevant to employment.

The other courses have similar modules built in and there are many that have practical placements built into the course where either the students go and work or volunteer to gain employable skills and put into practice their learning.

There are mock ups and replicas of real working environments for course where this is needed, for example hospital or care facilities. There is equipment in use that would be used in the real world, and the tutors the author has had experience with and met have extensive knowledge and experience of their fields and share the real-life application of what is learnt.

These comments below are form former students who were also student reps commenting on their experience of how they were prepared in their studies to progress beyond the learning and take what they have learnt into further employment.

"Each year we had one specific module focused on career progression, creating an online presence and self-promotion".

"The teaching was designed to explore theoretical and legislative perspectives and show how these would link into my practice".

"There was an employability module on my course, Social Science in the Professions. This module included developing a graduate cv, looking at possible career paths and using PROSPECTS to find a match for your skill set".

Student Outcomes

This information below was taken from DN Colleges Group Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 2021-22:

Survey response rates remain low with 39% Complete and Partially complete responses received. The national response rate was 52%. Activity to ensure graduates remain in touch and provide updated contact details following graduation are being considered.

Graduate Outcomes by Activity and Domicile remain generally in line with the sector, with DNCG exceeding sector totals for Employment and Further Study (+1%) and PT employment (+5%):

• 89% of DNCG graduates are in paid employment and/or further study.

• 83% of DNCG graduates are in paid employment.

• 26% of DNCG graduates are involved in further study.

TEF Data - Student Outcomes Measures:

					Difference from benchmark (ppt)						Benchmark value (%)	Proportion of statistical uncertainty distribution			Contribution to own benchmark (%)	Survey response rate (%)
Split indicator type	Split indicator	Measure	Denom-inator	Indicator value (%)	-4	-2	0	2	4			Materially below benchmark	Broadly in line with benchmark	Materially above benchmark		
Overall indicator	Overall indicator	Continuation	3,120	80.5							83.3	67.2%	32.8%	0.0%	3.3	[N/A]
		Completion	2,500	77.0							77.7	0.5%	99.5%	0.0%	2.5	[N/A]
		Progression	630	62.9							63.4	11.0%	85.9%	3.1%	7.6	37.5

In conclusion it was found that the overall student experience is of a high quality for students studying with the DN Colleges Group. The results and comments from students and student reps appear to reflect the scores from National Student Survey and the Groups on internal studies.

It was pleasing to see comments from the student reps commending the teaching and that students found it interesting and their tutors knowledgeable and inspiring. The support teams also deserve the praise they have received, they too work hard for the students to support and guide them both from the learning resource teams and the ADAPT student support teams.

There are areas to work on to improve the student experience such as better communication between the teaching staff and students, at times there has been some confusion or mixed messages. Opportunities to improve the student experience could also be made in the non-teaching aspects of the experience, such as points raised around the canteens and cafeterias.

This submission is representative of the student body, that all data is feedback from students, and data collected that supports this feedback. The students have had the opportunity to come forward and work on the student submission and the student body has been provided with the finished submission for their consideration and consultation and changes had been made from this further feedback.