

AECC TEF Student Submission 2023

1. Background

Authorship

My name is _____, and I am a _____ student at AECC University College (AECC UC) studying on the _____. I represent the student body as the Vice President of Education on the AECC UC Students' Union (ASU). Part of my role involves managing year representatives across all courses at the university, as well as being a point of support for all students at the institution. As a result of my position, I was therefore nominated by the Vice Chancellor to be the student contact for the 2023 TEF submission and decided after consultation with my peers to write this submission.

Upon writing this submission I have received assistance in the form of proof reading from _____.

This submission has received support from the TEF submission authors via sourcing supporting documentation. The TEF authorship team has read this report prior to its submission, however they did not have any input on what information has been included, nor how it has been presented. Therefore, readers can be assured the author was free of any undue influence from the institution, and this submission can be deemed an independent one.

Scope

The AECC UC currently has approx. 940 students, 777 of which are enrolled on the MChiro course. As a result, this submission will largely reflect the experience of students on the MChiro provision, however some of the below presented data does apply to all students at the university.

It should be noted by the reader that this student submission is limited by the relatively small-scale students' union at AECC UC which placed limitations on data collection.

2. Approach to evidence-gathering

Pre-existing evidence

Minutes of:

- Student experience committees (2017-2022)
- MChiro course steering groups (2017-2022)
- Year rep meetings (2021-2022)

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Placement evaluation survey 2021-22

- 161 participants
- Response rate 99%

NSS Results 2021 & 2022

Whatuni.com data (sample size 282)

Additional evidence gathered

TEF Focus group (14/12/2022)

- Attended by students studying MChiro

3. Student experience

Study space and resources

Study space on campus has received a high level of investment in recent years. Students at the TEF focus group felt that the quality of the spaces is excellent, with TV screens, plug sockets and ergonomic chairs resulting in the spaces being highly useful for learning. However, student feedback has been consistent across year rep meetings, student experience committees and in the TEF focus group that these spaces are not plentiful enough. Students have noted that before and during examination periods study spaces are busy and it has been difficult to find a place to study on campus during these periods. The institution has reacted to this feedback with the purchase of two more study booths in the library, and the creation of two extra bookable study rooms on campus. Alongside this, screens are present around campus showing teaching room availability for private study. This author is confident these recent changes will increase the availability of study spaces on campus during our upcoming examination periods.

The library provides both bookable and non-bookable study spaces and is well equipped with 10,932 textbooks, supplemented by access to 795 electronic books. Additionally, students have access to over 10,000 articles and e-books via EBSCO's 'Find it' database. Other online resources available to students include Anatomy TV, Acland's Video Atlas of Human Anatomy, Cite Them Right, Mango Languages and Skills4study Campus. Students really appreciate having access to such a wide variety of resources, which the NSS results reflect with 86% and 78% of students agreeing that the library resources support their learning from 2021 and 2022 respectively.

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Facilities

Space to perform practical skills is paramount on our campus, and there are currently six rooms which are equipped to host practical classes. The School of Chiropractic has invested heavily in improving the quality of the benches which students have access to, and over the last thirty-six months have purchased fifty three new chiropractic tables at an approximate cost of £211,700. Whatuni data shows 67% of students rated the university's facilities four or five stars out of five.

The onsite clinic we have at AECC UC is highly valued by students on the MChiro course and provides students with hands-on supervised experience. In 2019 the chiropractic clinic had 49,688 patient sessions. A placement evaluation survey of the 2021-2022 cohort found 71% agree/strongly agree that they are gaining skills and knowledge to further their practice and 80% agree/strongly agree that they anticipate they will be able to apply their learning from the placement.

The chiropractic clinic is complemented with onsite imaging facilities including ten ultrasound units, an open upright MRI scanner and digital X-ray. Final year MChiro students not only have the opportunity to include in-house referral to these diagnostic imaging facilities when managing patients, but also have outreach sessions to observe and participate with these imaging modalities as part of their clinical experience.

The university is licensed with the Human Tissue Authority to store and utilise human cadavers for the teaching of anatomy onsite. This is a unique opportunity not available at other institutions of similar size and is the only pro-section laboratory outside of a medical school in the UK. Students reflected how grateful they were for this opportunity at a TEF focus group, and a quote from a review on Whatuni stated "The opportunity to work on cadavers to learn more in anatomy lessons is what I find most precious: nothing is better than having a visual understanding, especially for this subject!". A recent purchase (2022) of an Anatomage table will further enhance anatomy teaching at the college with its 3D virtual dissection software.

Having a gym onsite ensures students have an accessible way to exercise, and it is incredibly affordable, priced at £70 annually. This lower price is not reflected in the gym's content, with a £70,000 investment in 2020, followed by further £20,000 investment in 2022, enhancing its value for money. The gym is highly valued, evidenced by 420 gym memberships sold for the 2022-23 academic year, making up 44% of the university's student cohort.

The University College has recently opened a new £4.5m integrated rehabilitation centre which includes 9 treatments rooms and 238m² of multi-zoned rehabilitation space which highlights the institutions commitment to ongoing investment in its facilities. It is too soon to have any data from

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the student body as to how this will impact their experience and learning. From the authors recent personal experience utilising the new space and equipment, the ability for patients in the chiropractic clinic to have access to this new resource has greatly enhanced patient care available, as well as diversified the learning opportunities for to students.

Student services and support

The Student Services team at AECC UC provide a diverse range of support to students such as well-being services, including counselling, financial advice, disability and inclusion support, study skills tutoring, alongside general student advice on accommodation, travel, and health services. Between 2018 and 2021 there were 2,109 student support sessions provided by Student Services.

Alongside financial advice, Student Services have a hardship fund to support students in navigating difficult and unforeseen financial situations they may find themselves in. This fund has recently been doubled to £20,000 in response to the current cost-of-living crisis.

Students at the TEF focus group were overwhelmingly positive about student support available at the institution, with participants highlighting the free counselling services onsite as invaluable and the workshops to support academic skills as useful for students who have taken a break from education or whose first language is not English. This is further backed up by Whatuni data in which 42% of students rated student support an overall 5/5, with 40% electing for 4/5.

Quotes from students on Whatuni about student services at AECC UC include:

“Counselling in Student Services offers a great environment for students to take problems and worries off their chest”

“Student services and library services are amazing! Always open to you if you need it and the staff involved are so kind and approachable.”

Community

The MChiro course at AECC UC has a large range of students from different backgrounds, with over fifty nationalities represented on the course. The benefits of this ‘mixing pot’ were felt within students at the TEF focus group. Students reported feeling a real benefit from coming across multiple different cultures whilst at university, enriching their experience outside of academic life.

International students also reflected upon how well they settled into university life in the UK. They attributed this in part to being one of many international students who come to study on the MChiro course and are therefore part of a bigger community facing the same

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issues. The ASU introduced a dedicated elected officer to support international students in 2013, whose role is appreciated amongst students from overseas studying here in the UK.

Being a small university enhances its community feel. Students said on Whatuni that “Everybody knows each other, and it is a very friendly environment” and similarly “The small university feel means everyone knows everyone and there is a real family feel around campus”. Themes that were present at the TEF focus group when asked about the community at AECC UC included the fact that it was close-knit and friendly with students reflecting that they feel safe on our campus. Students benefit from an open-door policy with all members of staff being accessible to students, right up to the Vice Chancellor, enhancing this close-knit feeling. NSS results from 2021 and 2022 showed that the majority of students (68% and 64% respectively) agree that they feel part of a community of staff and students.

Local life

It's no secret that having one of Europe's best beaches within 10 minutes walking distance of campus is a real asset to AECC UC and greatly improves student life. One student on Whatuni stated “beach is amazing in summer, and we often study there before exams”. Another student at the explained that having access to such a beautiful part of nature is extremely helpful to their own mental health. It should also be noted that having this natural resource nearby enriches opportunities for students, with water sports a key aspect of AECC UC's community which includes both a swimming and surf society. In addition to the infamous Bournemouth beach, Dorset has plenty more natural attractions to offer, making it an attractive place to live. These include Old Harry Rocks, The New Forest, Lulworth Cove, and Durdle Door.

Despite satisfaction with the university's general location in the UK as outlined above, the immediate location in which the university is based, Boscombe, is not as popular with the student body. Students in the TEF focus group felt that Boscombe was ‘not the friendliest place to be’, and preferred to travel to Bournemouth centre for social activities, shopping etc. This feeling is reflected in the Whatuni data with direct quotes saying “Boscombe is shabby, Bournemouth is better” and “Boscombe town is not really good”. Bournemouth town centre is however incredibly accessible from our campus, being just three miles away and on a main bus route. Students typically will travel to Bournemouth itself for nightlife, shopping, and work. The BCP Council is pro-active in trying to regenerate Boscombe town centre, with a business case for a regeneration masterplan currently in Government for approval.

On balance, this author feels that the student consensus of the location of AECC UC is generally positive, with the Bournemouth area providing unique experiences for students as outlined above. Whatuni data shows that 40% of students rated local life as four stars out of five. It should also be

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noted that AECC UC offers student-led clinical services to its local population in Boscombe. Therefore, having the opportunity to provide healthcare to members of the public from a lower income background provides a unique set of clinical experiences for students that may not be available elsewhere.

AECC UC Students' Union (ASU)

The ASU is a registered charity managed by the Student Engagement Manager and comprises of seven elected officers from the student body who work as volunteers. These roles include President, Vice President of Education, Vice President of Enrichment, Social Officer, International Officer, Sports Officer, and a Press and Communications Officer. The ASU also employs a bar manager from the student body to run its onsite bar. Given the size of the institution, the ASU does not employ any sabbatical officers, and relies largely on the work of the elected student volunteers.

The ASU manages year representatives across all courses, providing the reps and all students with an independent body to raise concerns with. Furthermore, the elected officers sit on decision making panels, from disciplinaries right up to the board of governors, ensuring that the interests of the students are protected across all aspects of the university.

Elected Champions form an important part of the AECC UC community, and like year reps are managed by the ASU. The idea of this scheme is to ensure representation for previously under-represented groups at university, as well as to increase awareness of issues important to society. The Champion positions currently include Sustainability, Mental Health & Wellbeing, Postgraduate, LGBTQ+, Ethnic Diversity & Inclusivity, Women's, and Disability.

Further details of the ASU's roles are included below.

Social life

Students are welcomed to the AECC UC community with an Arrivals' Week designed to help the new students settle in and make social connections with their peers. Social activities are planned throughout the week by the ASU and included in 2022: a beach day, karaoke, pub golf, instructor led salsa dancing, a scavenger hunt around Bournemouth town centre, and a quiz night with a hog roast.

Social life amongst the AECC UC students is centred around its onsite bar, Toggler's Arms. Toggler's Arms is run by the ASU, for students, and is not centred around making a profit. This means that drink prices are more affordable when compared to competitors in the local area with pints priced at £3.50. The bar is open three days a week and provides a place for students across courses and years to mingle and sports teams to celebrate/commiserate their games on

Provider name: AECC

Wednesday nights. At the Students' Union we are tasked with populating the social agenda with themed nights at the bar, such as Neon Night, as well as support societies with their own social events.

Students on Whatuni said about the institution's social events; "great social events and as it is quite a small uni you end up knowing everyone" and "On site bar = perfect".

Whilst drinking events are still popular at AECC UC, the institutions community is seeing a shift in popularity of consuming alcohol at social events. With this in mind, the ASU endeavours to host a wide range of social events including coffee mornings and board game nights and supports societies hosting activities such as laser quest and movie nights.

Sports teams and societies

The ASU currently coordinates the running of all sports teams and societies at AECC UC, whom they provided £16,000 and £21,000 of funding during the course of the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic year respectively.

Having left our association with Bournemouth University in 2017, the ASU had to redevelop sports teams and societies from scratch. The ASU's strategic plan was to increase sports and societies provision to six British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) teams and ten societies. These targets were surpassed in the sporting sector with eight sports teams competing in BUCS, alongside students competing individually in surfing, squash, swimming, indoor athletics, and outdoor athletics. There are currently nine societies being run under the ASU's supervision for the 2022-23 academic year. For a full list of sports teams and societies see Appendix 1.

Whatuni data presents a lower level of student satisfaction with societies and sports when compared to other metrics on the website with the highest metric being 36% scoring 3/5. The limitation of sports and societies being student-led in a small university is that there is a lack of diversity and niche options available, which could explain these lower scores. This was evidenced in the written feedback left by students on Whatuni, when asked about the variety of sports and societies one student said, "Not as extensive as most unis" and another "limited if you don't like rugby, football or netball". This theme was reflected in feedback received during the TEF focus group, where students expressed a desire to have a more diverse range of sports teams available to join at our university.

Whilst we have to accept that as a smaller institution AECC UC may never have the number and diversity of sports teams available at other larger universities, it should be noted that when comparing ourselves to other institutions of our size we come out ahead. Hartpury College (4000

Provider name: AECC

students) and Royal Agricultural College (1100 students) currently have four teams in BUCS, compared to AECC UC's eight. Furthermore, although sports teams and societies being student-led has its limiting factors, it also has positive effects. Students running teams and societies are given an opportunity to develop their leadership, budgeting, communication, and organisation skills whilst managing their peers.

4. Student Outcomes

Career prospects

Having exposure to clinical placements ensures students at the university college are well-placed to start their careers post-graduation. Further to this, final year chiropractic students study business skills to build a foundation of knowledge for those who wish to start their own businesses in the future, as well as ensure that graduates understand the key differences to different employment statuses.

The Future Pathways Event is a careers event held on campus which enables students to meet employers, with a view to post-graduate employment, as well as to enhance their professional network. In 2022 the event was well attended by employers, with forty clinics present, demonstrating the value the chiropractic profession holds in AECC UC graduates.

Reviews on Whatuni present a positive feeling amongst students for their career prospects, with 49% rating career prospects as 5/5, and 31% as 4/5. Below are some quotes from chiropractic students when asked about their career prospects, taken from Whatuni reviews:

"This degree and university will enable me to be in a chiropractic job within 2 months of graduating"

"Speed meet with chiropractors is absolutely brilliant. The majority of students have employment lined up prior to sitting their final exams!"

"There is a speed meet interview day which is a great opportunity to get a job and meet employers from all over the country."

"Great job prospects after graduation"

Appendix 1

Societies

- Afro-Asian-Caribbean Society
- Christian Union
- Asia-Pacific Society
- Music Society
- Surf Society
- Physiotherapy Society
- Vegan Society
- Self Help Society
- FICS (International Federation of Sports Chiropractic Society)

Sports teams

- Women's Netball (x3)**
- Men's Football (x2)**
- Men's Rugby*
- Men's Volleyball*
- Women's Volleyball*
- Swimming (mixed)
- Athletics (mixed)
- Golf (mixed)
- Men's Handball
- Women's Handball*
- Badminton (mixed)
- Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (mixed)
- Tennis (mixed)
- Kairos Fitness Club
- Taekwondo (mixed)

*Indicates a BUCS team