

Provider name: University for the Creative Arts

### University for the Creative Arts Student Submission for TEF 2023

We have elected to have a two-part submission consisting of a short video detailed in Appendix 1, and a written student submission contained in this document.

#### 1. Approach to evidence-gathering

I am \_\_\_\_\_, SU President Surrey, one of two sabbatical officers at UCASU, and I am the primary contact for this student submission. I was elected by the UCA student body in UCASU's \_\_\_\_\_ Elections alongside SU President Kent and seven part-time student officers. My role is to represent the students of UCA through UCASU's mission, vision, and values. UCASU's Acting Chief Executive Officer, \_\_\_\_\_, has supported me with this submission, recruiting for and running focus groups, interpreting existing SU data and leading on the Student Life Pulse Survey. She has also proof-read this submission.

In forming this submission, we have used both existing and new SU data. The existing data we have referred to includes:

- **Student Voice Survey 2021 (SVS 2021)** - UCASU launched the Student Voice Survey to the UCA student population in February 2021 over a three-week period. The survey's purpose was to understand what aspects of university life students placed most importance on. It was conducted online, via Survey Monkey, and featured 74 questions with a 4-point likert scale for the majority of questions, along with space for verbatim comments. It was promoted via UCASU social media, weekly newsletters and on our website. The response rate was 605 with undergraduates making up 425 (70.25%) of the respondents.
- **Student Voice Survey 2022 (SVS 2022)** - The Student Voice Survey returned in April 2022, over a period of three weeks with a predominantly online focus, via Survey Monkey, supplemented by physical questionnaires that students could complete and return to the Students' Union. Satisfaction of UCA and SU areas was surveyed, as well as Importance, again using a 4-point likert scale. The results from the physical questionnaires were added to the online responses. It was promoted via UCASU social media and website, weekly newsletters, UCA's student portal 'myUCA' and in person by staff and sabbatical officers. There were 646 respondents in total, 284 (43.96%) were identified as undergraduates.
- **Course Rep Feedback Survey 2021-22** - In June 2022, the Course Representatives for that academic year were surveyed on their experience as a Rep. This was to help UCASU understand their readiness for the role, gain opinion on the training received and from a University perspective, to discover how UCA staff perceive and value the position. 338 Course Reps were sent the online survey, conducted on Survey Monkey and there were 89 responses (26.33%). The survey didn't contain a question asking for Level of Study so we cannot ascertain what proportion were undergraduates, however, we were able to look at themes in the open response question ("If you could change one thing about being a Course Rep, what would it be?") and identify from student numbers the undergraduate responses. We have discussed data/responses in this submission where we can identify undergraduates.

Additional evidence that was collated:

- **Student Life Pulse (SLP / Pulse survey)** - This survey was brought in to replace the Student Voice Survey in 2022/23, in time for the TEF student submission. SLP is conducted by a third-party organisation, AlterLine, and has been specially developed for Students' Unions in the UK. A random sample of UCA students will be contacted via email, by AlterLine, and asked to complete a survey on their student life, both academic and social, at three points in the year. As newly enrolled members of the Pulse Survey, UCASU have only one iteration of results. The survey was sent out early December and received 290 responses (across all Levels of Study); a response rate of 13%. This was high compared to other HEI's, where the average response rate was 7%. The number of undergraduate responses was 173 and this was across all undergraduate courses. The data has been recently received and will be shared with UCA's leadership team, relevant questions and results will also be shared with key stakeholders in the University, such as those in Creative Careers who focus on employability and graduate outcomes.
- **Focus Groups on Student Experience and Student Outcomes** - To further enrich our submission with a more detailed account of both student experience and student outcomes by running focus groups, in January 2023. Led by myself, , and Acting CEO, we undertook two groups on student outcomes and two on student experience (one of the student outcomes groups included questions on student experience). We aimed to have 8-10 participants for each discussion, but turnout was poor and each group had 3-4 undergraduates. Each discussion lasted 1 hour, and participants were rewarded with a £15 One4All gift voucher:
  - Focus Group 1 - Student Outcomes & Student Experience - 3 students
    - 3 x
    - TV & Film Production, Acting & Performance, Photography disciplines
    - All have held leadership roles with UCASU i.e., Course Reps, club or society leader
  - Focus Group 2 - Student Outcomes - 4 students
    - 
    - Graphic Design, Film Production, Fine Art
    - None have held UCASU leadership roles nor been involved with clubs or societies.
  - Focus Group 3 - Student Experience - 4 students
    - 
    - TV & Film Production, Music Business & Management, Events and Promotion Management, Business Management.

The student experience group focused on overall academic experience as well as teaching, feedback and access to resources. For student outcomes we discussed career readiness, future plans, why they may have felt ready, or not, the skills developed at UCA and the careers/skills support they've received. Focus group 1 discussed both areas.

The University has been very supportive throughout this process, and we haven't felt pressured to include particular data or information. The video part of the student submission features existing footage taken at Graduation shows and has been edited by a University staff member but the SU decided on the film length, the captions of text/facts that appear and I signed off the video. UCASU (myself and ) have attended weekly TEF meetings with UCA and have had access to their submission throughout. A near final draft of our student submission was shared with the university

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prior to the deadline, again this was optional and I elected to be upfront with what was being submitted. Full independence was maintained, we decided what existing data to use, chose to implement the Pulse survey and ran the focus groups. UCA's main support was financial; they paid for the Pulse survey (which requested) and have covered the cost of gift vouchers for the group discussions.

## 2. Student experience

UCA and UCASU work closely together to enhance the student experience. This is achieved through monthly collaborative enhancement meetings between the Acting CEO and UCA's Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience); bi-monthly operational discussions between the Acting CEO and UCA's COO, sabbatical officer updates with the PVC (Student Experience) and Director of Academic Services, as well as UCA welcoming UCASU proposals for additional funding and resources to enhance Student Experience. Financial support from UCA includes funding technical services and entertainment for the four Freshers' Fairs in 2022; enabling UCASU to employ student staff for the annual moving-in weekends; financial support for Christmas coach trips to Winchester Christmas Market and Bluewater Wonderland, and bi-monthly, day-time student engagement events on each campus.

The described in Section 1 of this report was used as a measure against the five Student Experience TEF indicators.

### Indicator - The Teaching on my Course

Teaching quality and standards remain a priority for UCA students. In SVS 2021 when asked to rank importance across academic and social areas, the top answer was 'Teaching Quality and Standards' with 99.75% of undergraduate students rating this as either 'very important' (96.2%) or 'a little important' (3.54%); 395 undergrads responded to this question. In SVS 2022, 98.08% of undergraduates surveyed (261) stated that they either 'Strongly Agreed' or 'Agreed' that 'Teaching Quality and Standards' was important to them.

As well as being a priority we also know that students are satisfied with the quality of their course. This is indicated in both SVS 2022 and the Pulse survey. In SVS 2022, undergraduates rated their satisfaction with 'Teaching Quality and Standards' as 78.13% either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' and 'Overall Course Content' with 79.13% of undergraduates confirming that they 'Strongly Agreed' or 'Agreed'.

In the Pulse survey, we have been able to look at undergraduate responses, per Level of Study, to support this submission. For the question "**Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my course**", 73% of Level 4 students answered with 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree', 57% of Level 5 and 62% of Level 6. This represents an average of 64% satisfaction among undergraduates; with first year undergraduates being most satisfied.

In the same Pulse Survey, students were asked to state their level of satisfaction with various aspects of their academic life. With relation to the indicator of **Teaching on my Course**, Course Teaching and Course Content are the aspects of academic life where undergraduate students were most satisfied, as seen below (173 responses):

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you	Very Satisfied	Satisfied %	Total Very
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with the following aspects of your academic life?	%		Satisfied / Satisfied %
The teaching on my course	32.37%	40.46%	72.83%
Course content	27.17%	45.66%	72.83%
Contact time	22.54%	36.99%	59.54%
Intellectual challenge	20.23%	43.35%	63.58%
Opportunities to apply my learnings	17.92%	46.82%	64.74%
The organisation on my course	10.98%	39.88%	50.87%

Students place great value on the course content, 98.99% of undergraduates in SVS 2021 stated that 'Overall Course Content' was of importance to them, with 97.22% recognising the importance of 'Diversity in Course Content'.

To further demonstrate student satisfaction, the focus group discussions elicited a common theme in that *all* participants were happy with their course content and those in final year had found the content progressive during their time at UCA. students in the Business School discussed a fashion/music-heavy focus for courses unrelated to those disciplines, which they had found disappointing. However, by the there was a vast improvement with the content corresponding more appropriately to meet the students' expectations. The majority were pleased with the teacher's academic abilities and stated that teachers helped engagement with others.

Another theme that emerged from the focus groups was cross-course collaboration with *all* participants raising this as a discussion point. TV Production and Photography students, where collaboration is regularly utilised, emphasised how crucial this was to their course but students from other courses cited how much they would welcome the introduction of this initiative; Acting gave an example of when producing short films they are required to work both in front and behind the camera, collaborating with Film students on projects was felt to be a beneficial solution.

Progress in the standard of work is evident through the below statement and answers from the Pulse survey. Students overwhelmingly agree that their work has improved since starting university. When asked the question: **"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your academic experience assessment - My work has improved since I started university"**, 33% of undergraduates responded with 'Strongly Agree', 49% responded with 'Agree' giving a total percentage of 82% who agreed with this statement.

#### Indicator - Academic Support

Students in the student experience focus groups unanimously agreed that the support they received from academics was excellent and identified the following ways in which support was shown:

- always on hand to help,
- answering emails outside of standard time,
- strong industry experience,
- meeting feedback return deadlines,

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- offering one-to-ones.

Academics going above and beyond was hugely appreciated by students. Students' general view was that confidence had vastly improved during their time at UCA and this was done through presentation skills, constructive feedback, and one-to-ones with tutors to look at specific areas to work on students' confidence.

### Indicator - Assessment and Feedback

For this section the data and discussions yielded mainly feedback from assessments, projects, coursework etc. There wasn't much discussion in the focus groups about the range or types of assessments students are asked to complete, we just have a single question from the Pulse survey on this area.

Undergraduates are largely satisfied with the feedback they receive at UCA with nearly 70% overall satisfaction for 'Feedback on my work', as the below table shows (173 undergraduate responses). Assessment satisfaction is a little behind but ultimately UCA undergraduates are satisfied here, too.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your academic life?	Very Satisfied %	Satisfied %	Total Very Satisfied / Satisfied %
Assessment	19.65%	43.93%	63.58%
Feedback on my work	21.97%	47.98%	69.94%

First years tend to be more satisfied with assessment than other years, whereas second years score higher for satisfaction of feedback on work (Pulse survey - 173 responses), indicated below:

	Total Very Satisfied & Satisfied %		
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your academic life?	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year (inc. 4th Year)
Assessment	67.86%	63.27%	60.29%
Feedback on my work	67.86%	73.47%	69.12%

Delving deeper into feedback, in the Pulse survey students were asked: **"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your academic experience assessment - The feedback I receive on my work helps me to improve for my next assessment"**. 173 undergraduates responded; 27.17% 'Strongly Agreed', 48.55% 'Agreed' with a combined total of 75.72% who *agreed* overall.

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The below table shows the above question split across year of study. There is no explanation as to why this decreases year on year but overall, the results provide evidence that UCA is strong at supporting students' progression with the feedback provided.

Year of Study	Total % who Strongly Agree & Agree	Number of respondents
1st	80.36%	56
2nd	75.51%	49
3rd (includes 4th year UG)	72.06%	68

Evidence from the student experience focus groups supports the above data; most students are satisfied, and *all* participants have found feedback both useful and timely at *some* point during their time at UCA. That said, of the participants cited disparity in feedback depending on who was marking, common answers were:

- students weren't given feedback on their work, despite having one-to-ones leading up to the deadline,
- feedback was sometimes provided too late to make significant changes,
- more specific and direct feedback would be welcomed to achieve the next grade boundaries and understand areas of improvement.

said that in their final year they had seen positive improvements in feedback quality, from their first year.

### Indicator - Learning & Resources

UCA has a wealth of resources to support students in their creative endeavours. The SVS 2021 indicates the importance placed on the below areas, a total of 391 undergraduates responded:

Rate Importance of .... to you	Very Important	A Little Important	Total 'Importance'
Workshops and Equipment	83.63%	14.07%	97.7%
Library	64.6%	29.91%	92.51%
Available spaces to work	76.29%	18.81%	95.1%

The above data is further verified with results from the following year's SVS 2022 when a satisfaction measure was brought in. When questioned on satisfaction with 'Workshops and Equipment', 'Library' and 'Available spaces to work', the combined total of 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' answers was 78.85%, 94.47% and 77.87%, respectively.

The Pulse Survey (173 respondents) demonstrates that both UCA's IT and Library resources are well received; undergraduates are highly satisfied with both areas, particularly Library resources:

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How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your academic life?	Very Satisfied %	Satisfied %	Total Very Satisfied / Satisfied %
IT Resources	30.06%	43.35%	73.41%
Library Resources	42.2%	42.77%	84.97%

The student experience focus groups discussed the ease of booking technical equipment and studios. All students across the groups, who required access to these areas, found them easily accessible and technicians very helpful. Equipment was perceived to be of industry standard across all relevant areas, notably on the TV Production course in Maidstone which has a studio on site, however Film Production students found the equipment in the first year *not* to be of the required standard but did state that they had begun to use better kit in the second year and expect to be using the best items in their final year. They also said that technicians and academics would listen to suggestions on how to improve the kit offering and would act upon that.

#### Indicator - Student Voice

SVS 2021 data indicates that students place high importance on how they are enabled to influence the running of the university, shown in the table below (377 responses).

Rate Importance of .... to you	Very Important	A Little Important	Total 'Importance'
Your ability to influence how the university is run	52.79%	34.48%	87.27%

While students regard the ability to influence as crucial to them, they felt less confident about the university acting upon their student voice, shown below from the SVS 2021 (373 responses).

**Question: Are you confident that your voice, opinions and/or concerns raised to the University will be acted upon?** 42.63% said 'Yes', 23.86% said 'No' and 42.63% stated 'I don't know'. In SVS 2022, 49.18% agreed ('Strongly Agree' and 'Agree') to the statement: **"I am able to influence how the university is run"** (244 responses).

Further evidence supports this notion in the Pulse survey (173 responses), below, however for the question relating to whether the university takes feedback seriously, the neutral answer was at nearly 20%. It may be that students couldn't provide an answer because they have never given feedback to UCA.

<i>"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about student feedback on the academic experience?"</i>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Total 'Agree'
The university takes feedback from	17.92%	36.42%	19.65%	54.34%

<b>students about their academic experience seriously</b>				
<b>The university has made positive changes to the academic experience based on feedback from students</b>	12.72%	33.53%	10.98%	46.24%

From the 2021/22 Course Rep survey it was established that the most common theme for undergraduate Course Reps, across a range of courses, was the need for an increase in meetings with academics outside of Course Boards. Course Boards occur once a term, usually 3-4 a year, and they are mandatory, but it is the decision of the Programme Director or Course Leader to have regular rep meetings outside of the Course Boards. Students valued the Course Boards, with some students citing their appreciation for how much their lecturer has helped, but felt that these meetings didn't provide enough time to deal with feedback, that there weren't enough of them and that having three months in between them was too long a gap. We do know from the Quality Enhancement Reviews (QERs), undertaken by the university, that more Programme Directors and other academics are increasing the frequency of meetings with Reps.

### 3. Student Outcomes

For Student Outcomes we have focused on the support offered to students to help them succeed and progress beyond their studies and have also looked at how UCA provides support in Educational gains. The evidence compiled is in relation to work readiness, as well as academic and personal development.

Considering the Education gains that undergraduates achieve, the Pulse Survey results, below, demonstrate strong academic and personal development gains in a number of skills, as well as work readiness attributes of leadership and working in a team. There were 173 question responses.

<b>For each of these skill(s) please give an answer on a scale of -5 to 5 for how much the university has helped you to improve or reduce your skills, where -5 is 'has reduced my skills', 0 is no improvement, and +5 is 'has improved my skills'.</b>	<b>Total % who said there had been improvement – +5 to 1</b>	<b>Total % who said no improvement had been made - 0</b>
<b>Analytical/critical skills</b>	82.08%	14.45%
<b>Problem-solving skills</b>	80.92%	16.18%
<b>Ability to work independently</b>	84.97%	13.29%
<b>Ability to work in a group/team</b>	78.03%	15.03%
<b>Ability to take initiative</b>	80.92%	16.76%
<b>Time management skills</b>	71.10%	21.39%
<b>Flexibility/adaptability</b>	80.92%	16.18%



<b>Decision-making skills</b>	81.5%	16.76%
<b>Networking skills</b>	66.47%	30.06%
<b>Confidence</b>	84.39%	8.09%
<b>Leadership skills</b>	71.1%	24.28%
<b>IT skills</b>	68.79%	29.48%
<b>Interpersonal skills</b>	74.57%	20.23%

Confidence, in particular, was discussed in both of the Student Outcomes focus groups. In the first student outcomes group, all three participants held leadership roles within UCASU. All three cited that communication, leadership and collaboration skills had improved as a direct result of being either a club/society committee leader or Course Rep. Confidence in their ability to go into their chosen career had grown throughout their courses too, this was through the technical skills they had developed and the experience gained by working on projects. The second student outcomes discussion group featured students who hadn't been involved in UCASU roles and while confidence was cited as something that had improved during their studies, it wasn't as evident in all participants.

We know that UCA undergraduates care about their employability. 97.94% ranked **"Additional assistance with gaining employment within your chosen industry"** as 'very important' or 'a little important' in SVS 2021 (388 question responses). The Pulse survey asked respondents (173 responses) **"Which of the following best describes your current plans for your career?"** 82.08% had considered plans after UCA whether that be further study, setting up a business, or securing work experience on their course. Less than 7% had not thought about their career at all and 11% didn't have ideas but wanted to think about it. The most popular answer, with 23.12%, was **"I know what I want to do but I'm not sure how to get there"**, followed by **"I have a career in mind and intend to gain relevant work/placement experience whilst completing my course"** (20.82% of the responses). Employability remains a priority for UCASU too. In the Pulse survey, when asked **"Please choose three things from the following list which you feel should be top priority areas for the Students' Union"**, the top answer was "Helping students gain skills and experiences which will make them more employable for the future" with 41.62% of responses (173 total responses for this question).

Looking at Positive Outcomes, how well does UCA prepare its students for graduate life? The Pulse survey suggests that the university does well in this area, see the below table. UCA offers students support with their employability both in class and through the Creative Careers department. Students in the student experience focus groups enjoyed the 'LinkedIn Surgery' and welcomed the support they had received with CVs and cover letter writing.

<b><i>"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement - My current activities at university are preparing me for my future career"</i></b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Total 'Strongly Agree' &amp; 'Agree'</b>
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<b>1st Year</b> (56 responses)	25%	48.21%	19.64%	73.21%
<b>2nd Year</b> (49 responses)	8.16%	48.98%	26.53%	57.14%
<b>3rd Year, inc. 4th Year</b> (68 responses)	14.71%	50%	23.53%	64.71%
<b>All Undergraduates</b> (173 responses)	16.18%	49.13%	23.12%	65.32%

Two areas of improvement for UCA suggested across all three focus groups were:

- to provide more alumni engagement opportunities,
- to introduce placements on sets as runners, data analysts and/or camera trainees (Film Production students only). This would be beneficial in gaining experience and building industry connections.

Overall, with the quality of UCA's curriculum and enthusiastic personnel, UCA believes that creativity improves the energy, inventiveness, and humanity of global civilizations. UCA also encourages people to use their creativity to affect change, overcome challenges, and improve the lives of others by ensuring that they are delivering the best quality of education. UCA is always willing to assist enrolled students, which never makes them feel like they are alone.

### **Appendix 1 – Video submission**

The submission has an additional short video featuring footage taken from UCA undergraduate shows, UCA undergraduate academic work as well as brief highlights from UCASU club and society activity, since 2018/19, across all campuses. It is interspersed with highlights from the main document.

The background music in the video can be credited: Uplifting Upbeat Dubstep - by Difourks – Main Theme. It was purchased from audiojungle.net.

We have submitted a low-resolution video to allow for the 50MB upload limit but the link to the high resolution video can be found via Dropbox: