

## TEF Student Submission 2023

*"Lincoln is like a hug",* Student Contact, Vice President Education (VPE)

### Executive Summary

The University of Lincoln (UoL) encourages a 'One Community' approach, where students *"feel (Lincoln is) like my extended family"*, 2022 International Student. A collaborative learning environment goes beyond the curriculum to, engage, develop, and challenge students, where a Kaizen approach is adopted to develop the overall student experience.

At the heart of Lincoln, students are encouraged to take a proactive approach in their academic development and wider experience. Whilst it has been a challenging few years' given the economic, multi-faceted factors that have affected HE, Lincoln remains committed to supporting students' success within an enriching environment.

Over the last four years, UoL has seen progressive developments in widening opportunities for students within and beyond the 'classroom'. Overall, students appreciate the support received from academic and professional service staff, alongside the development of quality learning resources available. There is a wealth of additional opportunities to engage in within the Lincoln community, both within UoL and the University of Lincoln Students' Union (ULSU), promoting positive student outcomes, and student wellbeing. Where issues were identified in relation to NSS indicators, student responses convey that UoL is working to continuously improve services to reflect the change in student needs and perspectives. In particular, the Library Services, Wellbeing Services, Student Voice, and Employability Initiatives were all rated excellent. Issues arose relating to COVID-19 teaching and learning delivery and student awareness of on-campus support and learning services.

### Statement of Independence

UoL had no undue influence over the content of this report.

### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the student perspective and contextualise the impact of UoL initiatives on student experience and outcomes in response to UoL's OfS TEF indicators and provide insight into the Lincoln Community. Issues that emerged from research and NSS data benchmarks are contextualised to assess the University's response to intervene, rectify and improve the student experience and educational gains.

### Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used to gather student feedback. It must be recognised that COVID-19 impacted the insight gathered, where student behaviour differed, and engagement varied. Origins of data referenced to in this report with participants' demographical breakdown are in *Figure 1*.

	Participants	Home	International**	Female	Male	Other gender Identity	Age 16-25	Age 26-30	Age 31+	Identify as having a disability	Lincoln International Business School	College of Arts	College of Science	College of Social Science	Academic Reps
Annual SU Survey 2022	1049	957	92	665	380	4	1004	25	20	276	149	272	302	326	62
COVID-19 Survey	286	265	21								29	80	102	75	
Nov 2021 Rep Hub	84										11	15	31	27	84
Oct 2022 Rep Hub	108										17	20	30	41	108
Self-Certification Survey 2022	91	81	10	51	39	1	81	6	4	27	16	15	36	24	26
Safety on Campus Survey	206	201	5	91	113	1	161	25	21	37	76	27	84	19	22
Sport Strategy Survey	139	129	10	76	63	0	136	4	0	28	17	17	57	48	12
Sabbatical Officer Survey 2021	326	308	18	216	110	0	303	12	12	100	43	85	90	108	13
Personal Tutor Survey	98	88	22	65	33	0	89	5	3	27	14	29	37	18	81
Focus Groups	21	17	4	9	11	1	13	5	3	8	2	8	9	2	
TEF Survey	213	194	20	131	82	0	196	8	9	59	35	47	67	64	

Assessment Feedback 2022	84	75	9	59	24	1	84	0	0	13	4	46	26	8	3
May Member Insight Package (MIP) 2021	110														
Total Responses	2815	2315	211	1363	855	8	2067	90	72	575	413	661	871	760	411
Percentage Total	100%	92%	8%	61%	38%	>1%	93%	4%	3%	26%	15%	25%	32%	28%	19%

Figure 1: An overview of the totalled demographics reported on with reference to individual research methods.

\*Blank cells equate to unknown data. Totals omit unknown data. \*\*International PG comments have been omitted from data.

A survey was conducted that focused on the TEF indicators with the demographics analysis given in Figure 2.

	Lincoln International Business School (LIBS)	College of Arts (Arts)	College of Science (Science)	College of Social Science (Social)	Total
<b>Respondents (% of total)</b>	35 (16%)	47 (22%)	67 (31%)	64 (30%)	<b>213</b>
<b>Internationals (%)</b>	23%	4%	13%	2%	<b>9%</b>
<b>Home students (%)</b>	77%	96%	87%	98%	<b>91%</b>
<b>Female (%)</b>	51%	77%	46%	72%	<b>62%</b>
<b>Male (%)</b>	49%	23%	54%	28%	<b>38%</b>
<b>Age 16-25 (%)</b>	91%	96%	94%	88%	<b>92%</b>
<b>Age 26-30 (%)</b>	3%	2%	3%	6%	<b>4%</b>
<b>Age 31+ (%)</b>	6%	2%	3%	6%	<b>4%</b>
<b>Identify as having a disability (%)</b>	17%	38%	28%	27%	<b>28%</b>
<b>Ethnicity: White/British (%)</b>	80%	91%	85%	92%	<b>88%</b>
<b>Ethnicity: Indian (%)</b>	0%	2%	3%	2%	<b>2%</b>
<b>Ethnicity: African (%)</b>	0%	0%	1%	3%	<b>1%</b>
<b>Ethnicity: All others (%)</b>	20%	6%	10%	3%	<b>9%</b>

Figure 2: TEF Survey Demographics

With knowledge of UoL's TEF indicators, focus groups were conducted for Schools with multiple NSS indicators below sector benchmarks, including Architecture and Computer Science. Further focus groups for all students, and one for International Students gave wider context.

## Findings and Analysis:

### The Student Experience –

#### Teaching & Learning Opportunities

According to Academic Representatives (Reps) during conversations about the start of the 2021/22 academic year, feedback reflected that teaching is *"Excellent and interesting, but could be more interactive in places"*. When asked to holistically rate their teaching experience within the TEF Survey, 72% of respondents rated their teaching as '5 - Excellent' or '4 - Very Good'. This was best rated in the College of Arts which averaged 81%, where *"lecturers are genuinely interested in our development"*. All other Colleges averaged between 71-82% with most comments reflecting *"really interesting lecture(s) that inspire"* and staff being *"very encouraging"*, School of Fine and Performing Arts. All focus group respondents rated teaching at either '4' or '5', excluding 2 COVID-19 ratings, discussed below. Participants were asked to expand, where all referenced excellent communication, engaging lectures, and course structure. See Figure 3.

**Science: Computer Science**

"(Lecturers are) Very engaging, very approachable, ... from an academic standpoint [they] are very clear, [they] are studying computing because they are fascinated by its pedagogy, and it very much comes across in [their] lectures. It is engaging... [they] know how to make it engaging".

**Social Science: Nursing**

"I can't say it is only one [lecturer] because it is all of them, it is exactly what I was expecting them to be, open and approachable and supportive... if I need anything I can go to them"

**Arts: Music & Architecture**

"My teachers **cannot do enough for us and go above and beyond**".  
"Being looped into university decisions via email and knowing that officials and authorities **value my opinion** does make me feel part of the wider community".

**LIBS: Business & Management**

"All of my lecturers are **extremely helpful**, provide quick answers to queries (especially to emails), and take on advice on what needs changing in lectures".

Figure 3: Teaching and Learning Feedback

ULSU are involved in Module Evaluations with UoL with a joint focus on continuous development and ensuring effective change in response to student feedback. In January 2022, all schools had above 90% satisfaction for modules enhancing subject knowledge apart from the School for Film, Media & Journalism which averaged 86%. Individual feedback was reported and actioned in Committees by each School to improve teaching,

including inviting *“more guest speakers”* and *“providing more practice questions and assessments”*, with suggestions taken directly from students to improve learning opportunities.

To contextualise the TEF survey responses, focus groups explored students' perspectives on teaching and learning. The impact of COVID-19 on teaching delivery was highlighted, particularly affecting learning in subjects that required practical guidance, such as Architecture and Computer Science. Examples included having *“no access to the studio was very difficult for a creative course”*, COVID-19 Survey, School of Design. The Architecture, Computer Science, and 'All Student' focus groups directly referenced COVID-19 as a negative impact due to issues with blended learning and, because of restrictions, students lacked access to specialist equipment, software, or staff expertise, hindering their learning experience. When asked to rate the online learning experience, only 43% rated this as 'good' or 'excellent' in the COVID-19 Survey, with students qualifying higher scores by saying *“(the) pandemic was unexpected and the shift to online learning was unavoidable, with very short notice”* but that it was 'good' given these circumstances.

Since restrictions eased, learning returned promptly to face-to-face delivery which increased engagement and satisfaction. When participants were asked to rate teaching experience (1 being poor, 5 being excellent) one student said, *“I'd give it a 2 just because of the issues during COVID-19... it felt like blended learning had issues... but we are continuing to step-up, but COVID has really affected this (rating), I think if I started here in 2022 it'd be framed slightly differently”*, Focus Group, School of Maths & Physics. Students acknowledge the pressure to learn within the disrupted environment, which has vastly affected perception throughout their studies. It was further noted that current 'face-to-face' lectures and staff *“are absolutely brilliant”*, *“(they) went through the entire module with us... answering any question”* referring to an impromptu evening seminar.

Similar examples were given by 83% of focus group participants. It was noted that alternative provision was made in many areas, including the introduction of equipment loans, ensuring student access to laptops for remote learning. Developments made were reflective of the student voice as the COVID-19 survey saw students ask for *“more eBooks”*, School of Humanities & Heritage, *“all lectures being recorded”*, School of Accountancy, Finance & Economics and *“Assignments need to be altered...if they require computer software or laboratories”*, School of Geography. All of which were redesigned and invested in to ensure student learning met module outcomes, this included investments in the digital library, Wi-Fi on-campus, and Panopto recordings alongside initiatives such as a safety net policy to ensure no student was disadvantaged academically during COVID-19. UoL also responded to this by increasing access to Cloud Desktops, which was called a *“life-saver”*, Computer Science Focus Group, providing off-campus software access. Students' also welcomed e-book reading lists designed by staff and implemented by the Library, allowing remote access to larger numbers of e-books.

Where improvements were identified, in NSS benchmarks, it was evident UoL are taking steps to improve teaching and learning. Comments were raised regarding students feeling they required further guidance to grasp complex concepts. Examples were given that *“Lecturers can sometimes deliver content in an overly complicated way”*, Computer Science focus group. Evidence UoL is addressing this is shown as students reported *“there has been improvement on that... the workshops and how they are structured are now a great way to use examples and give the theory and knowledge you've learnt, an application”*, Computer Science focus group.

To complement and extend learning beyond the classroom, ULSU provide academic volunteering opportunities for students to partake in alongside their studies. As part of this, in partnership with UoL's Lincoln Academy of Learning & Teaching (LALT), teaching and support panels were developed in 2020, to respond to COVID-19 and the required changes in teaching and support. This initiative allows students to discuss staff proposals and give constructive feedback, allowing them to develop services, with students acting as producers in their experience. The panels have allowed student-led change, such as 'Feedback Folders' and 'The Arts referral programme' implementation, alongside developments to wider UoL provision including 'raising multicultural awareness' and 'increasing access of Undergraduate Research Opportunities Scheme'. This encourages active student engagement, while also providing opportunities to develop employability skills, by chairing panels and providing feedback on student experience. All feedback taken from the 2021/22 participants reported students felt empowered, involved and a part of the conversation. This scheme is currently undergoing a review to broaden the scope of proposals discussed and to encourage more staff and student involvement as numbers have declined since the return to face-to-face teaching delivery, shown in *Figure 4*.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of student participants	47	39	24
Number of proposals reviewed	7	4	4

Figure 4: Teaching &amp; Support Panel statistics

Additional co-production opportunities are available with the creation of 'Student Futures Manifesto consultant' roles, developed in November 2022. Owing to the strong relationship, UoL requested USLU to be a key partner in this as representatives of the wider student body. This initiative aims to introduce positive change actioned by students, for students, to reflect current student needs, under the six holistic themes guided by the UPP Foundation Student Futures commission. Students are at the heart of this initiative, where positive and proactive relationships between students, UoL and ULSU, aims to create a manifesto to develop a set of sustainable developments for UoL and ULSU to deliver in the future.

### Assessment and Feedback

108 Reps from 60 courses and 106 cohorts, provided student insight regarding assessment and feedback in thematic discussions. Both Science and Social Science noted good quality exam feedback throughout all courses, though Reps reported a small number of delays in Law, the feedback provided was largely noted as helpful and constructive. The remaining 2 Colleges did not discuss assessment feedback. Furthermore, the 2022 Assessment Feedback Survey found 82% of students felt that their assessment feedback is clear and detailed, enabling development, and a further 92% of students also stated that they felt comfortable in approaching their assessor to discuss further feedback, if required. 82% of students noted that feedback on their assignments was received in a timely manner, with these students also noting comments are specific and give guidance on areas for improvement, see Figure 5. Responses from students indicate that UoL are receptive to suggestions, implement supportive change, and "staff are happy to elaborate on any feedbacks given", School of Geography, shared by 82% of TEF responses, allowing students to develop from feedback.

	LIBS	Arts	Science	Social science
Students indicating 'yes' to feedback received in a timely manner	91%	89%	81%	80%
Students indicating 'yes' to feedback enabling development	88%	94%	70%	81%

Figure 5: TEF Survey Feedback results split by College

*"Was it timely and supportive? I'd have to say 5/5, our lecturers, if they say we're going to get it on that date, we get it on that date" and "(they) make themselves available which means you have a conversation rather than just reading through it" – All students Focus group, School of Health & Social Care.*

Assessments were found to "have a range of different exam styles ... we do portfolios, we do essays ... we will never usually have 2 modules with the same exam style... that is something they do really well", All students Focus group, Social Science; all students agreed or gave similar experiences on their courses. Students found the assessment variety enabled support to develop a wide variety of transferable skills.

Where improvements on assessment and feedback were explored, the following themes emerged, 'standardised approach to marking needed' and the 'need for individual feedback over group feedback'. Students elaborated with "group feedback although good, is not ideal for design courses where each student has an individual style", Architecture Focus Group. There is evidence that students can ask for further feedback, which is welcomed by students, with all agreeing "we greatly appreciate this ... now every person gets 5-10 minutes individual feedback", Architecture Focus Group. UoL has addressed inconsistencies in assessment feedback in the 2019 Assessment Policy review, which has seen a positive impact in improving assessment practice, shown in the NSS data.

### Academic Support

Academic Support is a priority for UoL, to equip every student with the tools to progress and succeed. Holistically, individual Schools and Colleges were praised, with responses in focus groups referencing positive 'communication' and being 'able to contact members of relevant staff'.

The University-wide provision of personal tutors' forms part of the academic support offered. When asked where they would prefer to go to seek academic support, 65% of students said they would contact their Personal Tutor, Self-Certification survey. Research found that when personal tutors are accessed, the feedback is excellent, however, availability of tutors remains inconsistent for some students and needs further improvement. The Personal Tutor Survey found 17% of students across campus (Science 15%, Arts 7%, Social Science 5%, and



LIBS 29%) had not been contacted with their personal tutor in Semester A of 2022/23. When asked to rate the support received from their personal tutor, 69% of respondents to the Personal Tutoring Survey rated it as 'good' or 'excellent'. It is worth noting that of the 19% that rated the support negatively, 66% commented that they did not know how to access the support, which impacted the rating given.

All students who interacted with their personal tutors in the focus groups stated their communication and support was excellent noting *"it's the support that's nice... I asked (them) to set up some meetings for some assignments ... I do feel like it's very helpful to have someone to talk too rather than just sending emails"*, International Student focus group.

Student feedback formed part of the 2021/22 Personal Tutoring Policy review undertaken by UoL, with contributions from ULSU. Including a proposal at a Teaching & Support panel, where students noted *"Personal Tutor sessions have not been well structured"* which led to the introduction of a Personal Tutoring framework, where each School can select one of four models that best suits their students, each including a one-to-one element, which was highlighted as preferable by students. Comments in the Personal Tutor Survey also highlighted that individual sessions were preferred over group tutorials.

Architecture was noted for delivering improvements in academic support offered in the last year, regarding NSS indicators, with students recognising this change, and 100% of participants in the Architecture Focus Groups identifying individual colleagues for *"outstanding support"*, who *"have a mission to know and help everybody"*. All other Colleges received similar feedback:

*"I'm able to go to my lecturers, talk to them if I have issues, send them an email if I need clarification, I would say it was quite easy for me/engaging"* – International Student Focus Group, Department of Management

Alongside this, the TEF survey asked whether students accessed academic Support Services, shown in Figure 6. This list is not exhaustive of all services, rather it encompasses those most utilised by the student body.

Service	All	LIBS	Science	Social	Arts	Disability	International Students
Academic Writing Development	11%	15%	1%	19%	13%	9%	28%
MASH: Maths & Statistics support	4%	12%	1%	6%	0%	2%	0%
Subject Librarians	29%	24%	22%	38%	32%	24%	28%
International College	1%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
Pass Plans	23%	6%	18%	27%	38%	69%	11%
School Support Sessions	15%	15%	18%	13%	17%	15%	17%
Wellbeing	10%	0%	3%	4%	2%	8%	0%
None	26%	26%	39%	17%	0%	16%	22%

Figure 6: Percentage of Students accessing academic support services

All services received positive feedback, but the Library, including Subject Librarians and Maths & Statistics Help (MASH) were marked as excellent by all students that accessed these services, (95% of those in Focus Groups). This was mirrored in Rep discussions where Subject Librarians were noted as 'welcoming and helpful'.

MASH held 808 appointments in 2021/22 and Academic Writing Development held 702 which students describe as *"beyond helpful"*. Key themes emerged across the TEF survey where student-staff engagement enhanced the academic support available; Technicians and Librarians, specialised systems access, and the curricula connections to employment, were all praised. Examples detailed in Figure 7.

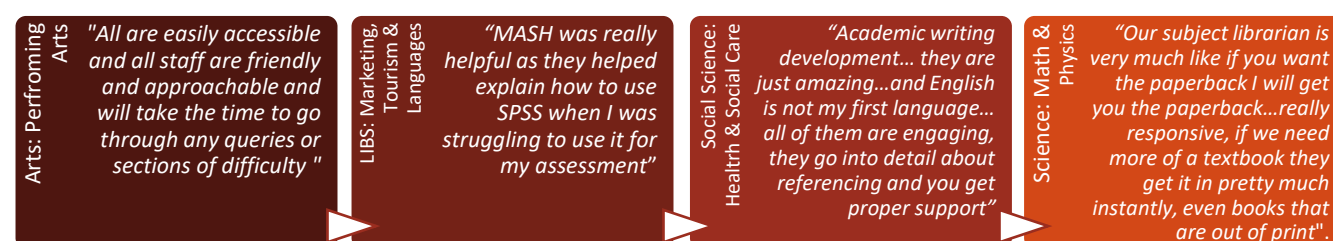


Figure 7: Learning Resource Student Feedback

UoL recognises that some students require additional academic support to reach their student outcomes, both academically and pastorally. As part of this, attendance monitoring which assesses attainment, will soon be supported by the 'Student Success and Engagement Team'. The creation of these roles fosters an early intervention-based practice, offering support and guidance to precede further formal support, and as personal tutors have been noted as inconsistent, this development ensures a student-centred approach, focussing on overall wellbeing.

Personalised Academic Study Support (PASS) plans, developed in 2019/20, in collaboration with Student Reps, were highly thought of, with all students that referred to them across the research praising the “*initial testing was very quick, the report came back extremely quickly too. Student wellbeing are also asking if I need support, which is fantastic*”, School of Health & Social Care. The number of PASS plans issued has increased from 1144 in 18/19 to 1617 in 21/22, and of those accessing this support felt:

“*My pass plan has given me **reassurance** that support is available*”, School of Humanities and Heritage, and  
“*has been very helpful*” – TEF Survey School of Psychology.

### Advice, Wellbeing Support and Mental Health

Students are increasingly seeking support for their individual wellbeing and mental health, 3688 students accessing the Student Wellbeing Centre (SWC) in 18/19 compared to 7718 currently in 22/23. Of this, mental health support provision has seen 1648 students access it in 18/19 to 5230 students currently in 22/23. Support on campus has grown to reflect this demand and student rep's have been involved in policy revisions to provide student insight within this area. There are currently more Mental Health Advisors within SWC than there has been in previous years, and there has been investment in services including the introduction of a dedicated police liaison officer, night-time mental health worker and demographic specific advisors (i.e., BAME Advisor).

“***The SWC is incredible**, they are consistently trying to help in any way they can, but the University do not make it easy for them and they don't really signpost them properly to students either*” – Senior Rep Group minutes, Unknown

81% of students in the annual ULSU Survey would know how to access wellbeing on campus, giving either 'SWC', 'Student Support and Advice Services' or 'ULSU Advice Centre' as their key contact for support, others directly referenced lecturers which was particularly prevalent in the College of Social Science. A Teaching and Support panellist noted that beyond Personal Tutors, “*professional services are vital to support for wellbeing*”

The ULSU Advice Centre, SWC and Student Support have a strong working relationship, which allows bespoke support to be offered to students. The communication between departments and robust referral system aims to make the student journey seamless to access support and ensure the quality of service. Students who access financial aid at UoL are also eligible for a care package from ULSU Advice Centre for immediate support.

The ULSU Advice Centre also makes crisis referrals to SWC and their counselling services to assist those that are most in need. ULSU has a representative on the Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention group to ensure that the viewpoint of students is considered in the development of crisis services across Lincolnshire.

Students identified campus safety as a contributing factor to the sense of belonging, which directly impacts their experience. Following student feedback, improvements have been made to the safety culture on campus including increased lighting and improvement of security cameras, with 92% of students feeling safe after-dark on campus in 2022, compared to 81.5% in 2021, Safety on Campus Survey. SWC led an innovative campaign around the national spiking epidemic in 2021, to support students who may have been directly impacted. As part of this, ULSU venue staff were trained by SWC and Police to carry out rapid testing on drinks and on individuals who were concerned they may have been spiked to reinforce campus safety.

### International Student Support

UoL undergraduate international student population consists of approximately 500 students. It is important to note that most international students at UoL are PG students, and thus needs can differ greatly between the two demographics. The increase in intake of international students has seen some challenges due to the UoL infrastructure meeting the needs of international students, particularly, regarding adequate resourcing, housing, and cultural awareness.

The support for international students is increasing, with the International College development, Pre-session English Language Preparation Courses expanding and Chaplaincy services growing. This aims to support students in their studies and welcome them to UoL's 'One Community'. Where students accessed these services a positive experience was shared, however, students occasionally struggled to access it, “*I like the support here, there's a lot, but you have to know where to go to, like the International College, that's a lot of support, but you need to know where to go and use it*”, International Focus Group, School of Humanities & Heritage.

## Learning Resources

Lincoln has seen major improvements to facilities, particularly in IT and learning resources where the VLE, specialised software access and Library refurbishments all received praise from students as enabling a positive academic experience. TEF participants were asked whether learning resources, in terms of available hardware, software, and physical resources, including module handbooks, supported learning, 91% indicated 'Yes', with no discrepancies between demographics found. Accessibility of learning resources, both physical and digital was also noted, including specialised systems access where *"everything is a lot more accessible"*, Rep discussion, Nov 21, College of Science.

UoL has seen a large change in student digital accessibility needs across the last 4 years, this is partly due to the impact of the pandemic, but also impacted by the cost-of-living crisis, restricting students' budgets. Continuous investment into 'digital education' at UoL allows developments to best enable students to progress, including over £8.8m invested into library services since 2020 after students asked for "an increase in the number of digitally accessible resources", School of Humanities & Heritage, COVID-19 Survey. Student learning has evolved because of this, shown through the e-journal access statistics which have dramatically increased from 1,186,207 in 2018/19 to 2,524,999 in 2021/22. Comments were received in *"an incredibly well-resourced Library"*, COVID Survey, School of Creative Arts, and *"I appreciate the time and effort put in by (Library) staff (to support studies)"*, School of Film, Media & Journalism, shared by 99% of all reports detailed in figure 1. 24/7 access to Library buildings has also been extended during the summer, based on student feedback, which enabled, particularly those in healthcare or on non-typical course start dates, to access resources essential to their studies. The addition of the Ross Library within the new Medical School building increased available learning spaces essential for students, creating study spaces built for student needs.

An accessibility review carried out in April 2020 by the Disabled Students' Officer found that there was a lack of subtitling features for lecture recordings, which was further amplified by the transition to online delivery during the pandemic. This feedback along with comment from students with digital accessibility needs, led to speakers and Panopto also receiving substantial investment. Students appreciated the use of recorded lectures, saying *"they record lectures so that you can catch up"* COVID Survey, Health & Social Care, and the use of this has continued since the return to face-to-face delivery. A student shared *"Blackboard is extremely useful with the lecture recordings, as I process things slowly, it is nice to go back and revise sections"*, TEF Survey, School of Psychology. Occasional issues were noted in audio devices not working, however UoL actively responds to reports ensuring an accessible digital learning environment.

## Student Voice

At UoL, the ethos of students as producers is embedded, meaning students are actively involved in the co-production of their teaching and educational experience, where ULSU represents the student voice and works to ensure change meets students' requirements. Student Reps sit on all teaching and learning committees across the University, including Academic Board which ULSU Lead Officer, VPE & College Officers attend to ensure the student perspective is central in decisions. *Figure 8* depicts student representation on institutional committees.

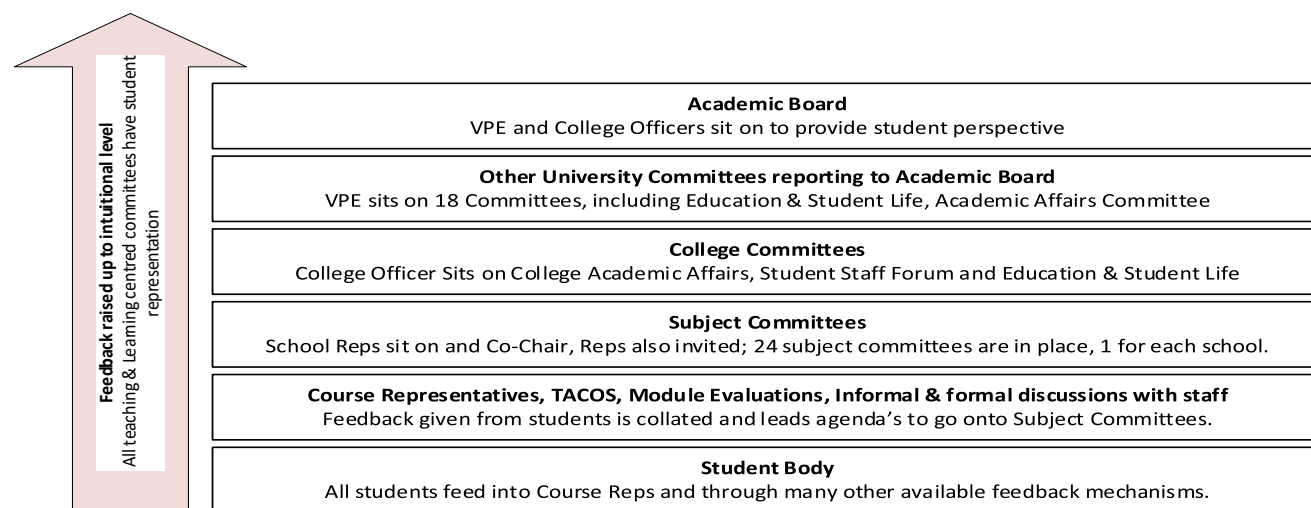


Figure 8: Committee Feedback Map

Student Engagement Leads (SEL) are a key contact for ULSU, supporting student voice mechanisms and championing wider engagement opportunities. SELs were created to support Reps be effective in their role and champion wider student academic opportunities. This means that students are represented across UoL, through the use of student voice mechanisms where *"(Reps) have done very well to provide help and take feedback from students"*, MIP, Anonymous.

*"Our year had a very abnormal first year (Covid-19), **feedback taken from us has definitely been applied to future years. Our year has been offered a lot of support**"* – Focus Group, School of Architecture.

To complement this, online feedback platforms, facilitated via ULSU, such as, SUGgestions and Coursemate allow students to enact their voice and make proposals for university wide improvements. With 71 SUGgestions submitted between September 2020 and December 2022, improvements have been seen in 'Captioning for lectures', 'Mental Health absence request forms' and a '24hrs multi-Faith Prayer room during religious events' all of which were highly thought of by students to feel that *"UoL as a whole is very inclusive"*, Fine Art Rep, Oct 22. For Coursemate, 500 anonymous pieces of feedback have been received since its 2018 launch. Most recently, this has seen the organisation of dissertation support sessions, guest lecturers, and solving issues in timetabling. UoL has also utilised a variety of feedback mechanisms, such as padlet, town hall meetings, and TACOS (Teaching & Learning, Assessment & Feedback, Careers & Employability, Organisation & Management, Student Support) with Reps at the forefront. Reps commented:

*"I feel like my voice can have an impact and inform both course related changes and university wide decisions. I have seen my own and other student feedback go on to inform future changes to my course programme which really makes me feel like my feedback is valued"* – Senior Rep, School of Geography.

70% of respondents in the Annual ULSU Survey 2022 stated they know how to feedback to a Rep and 83% of Reps in the TEF survey see value in being the voice of their cohort, with students commenting *"I think there is plenty being done ... in order for student feedback (to be actioned)"* -MIP, anonymous. 86% of MIP respondents felt confident giving Rep's feedback and 64% felt they knew how best to voice their opinions about their experience. TEF Survey respondents were also asked if and how they saw change actioned, with 84% seeing their feedback result in positive change, *Figure 9* provides the demographics analysis.

Is feedback acted upon?	LIBS	Arts	Social	Science	Disability	International Students
Yes, for my cohort	56%	13%	17%	3%	5%	11%
Yes, for my cohort and future cohorts	18%	53%	39%	52%	50%	63%
Yes, only for future cohorts	18%	26%	27%	22%	25%	16%
No	0%	9%	16%	22%	20%	11%

*Figure 9: Actioned Feedback breakdown by cohort and demographic analysis*

An example of positive change enacted across UoL in 2022, includes students being able to self-certificate for extensions across the institution, with Academic Board approving Reps' request for the long-term implementation of this pilot scheme. This followed research by Reps that found only 66% of students felt comfortable with applying for an extension outside of this pilot period, (59% for BAME students and 54% for students with disabilities), Self-certification Survey 2022.

The focus groups provided more in-depth detail into this with, 'communication', 'structure' and 'collaboration' praised across all 4 Colleges to enable student voice.

*"Being asked to do surveys, being invited to debates regarding the uni community and having regular emails keeping me updated on **my school does make me feel valued**. I know that if I ever had a problem with my course, **my lecturers would be happy to listen**."* TEF Survey, College of Arts.



## Student Outcomes –

### Employability

Employability initiatives at Lincoln are extensive and expand into the curriculum, with opportunities for placements, School Specific Industry Events, guest speaker sessions and the chance to take part in business projects. The Careers and Employability department were also widely praised for the support and services they provide *“Careers is awesome... with my CV... they gave me all these online tools, gave it a score, and made it 1000x better... then from sitting down in there 15min sessions, we went over it and made it a million times better”*, Computer Science focus group, agreed by all participants.

The Careers and Employability department work with ULSU to promote and engage students in The Lincoln Award and annual Careers Fayre, which had 1,800 attending in 2022/23. There are vast volunteering employability opportunities to complement, support and develop students' skills providing pathways to employment. The Lincoln Award is available to all students to increase career preparedness and evidence their skills, it offers a bespoke pathway for L1, L2 and L3 to build needed employment skills throughout their studies. This service is now completely digitalised to increase accessibility. All comments received in the TEF survey, stated it helped prepare students for employment and contributed to developing their university experience.

*“The Lincoln Award has proven to me that I can go the **extra mile** while at University”* – TEF survey, Department of Management.

Students can understand their skills development from engaging in opportunities via an online platform 'Skills Log' developed by ULSU. Students can download a report showing what transferable skills have been gained by being able to participate in wider opportunities outside of the 'classroom'. Career Advisors at UoL utilise this report when advising on career prospects. *Figure 10* provides feedback received for the Skills Log.

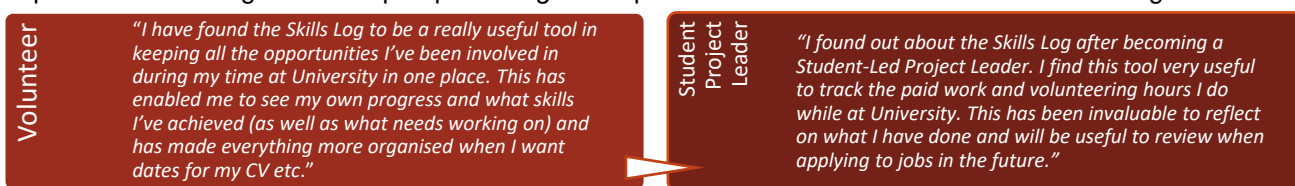


Figure 10: Skills Log Feedback

To increase Student Engagement and employability through skills development, a range of Academic Opportunities are run in partnership between UoL and ULSU, including The Staff-Student Insight Scheme. This opportunity gives students high profile career insights, where students are paired with Senior members of staff. In 2020, the scheme focused on widening participation backgrounds and saw 13 student/staff pairings. This opportunity continues to develop, with more staff being invited to take part, allowing more students to participate helping with progression, employability, and skill development.

*“Some of the skills I gained were **communication, leadership, teamwork, perseverance, initiative, problem-solving, and commercial awareness**. .... This scheme can prepare as well as inform what will be expected of you... you will have the opportunity to meet other top-level executives of the university and there was a lot of background support”* – Department of Accountancy, Finance & Economics Student

Other voluntary Academic Opportunities have been implemented in partnership between ULSU, UoL, LALT and the Careers Department to increase student engagement. These include Student Recruiters, where trained students are members of recruitment panels for UoL staff (256 students to date in 2022/23) and Student Reviewers, where students from different disciplines contribute ideas and share best practice for the revalidation of programmes (19 students to date in 2022/23). Each Academic opportunity complements the curriculum and improves students' employability and *“critical thinking skills”*, School of Health & Social Care, while gaining vital experience that relates to a variety of industries.

Academic and interest-based sports and societies also help to develop student outcomes, particularly in relation to confidence and networking skills, agreed by 86% of students in the Sports Strategy Survey.

*“You gain life skills such as **teamwork, problem-solving, communication** and it benefits your course as well”* – Unknown, Sports Strategy Survey.

Societies are also widely accessed across the University with 41 academic societies established to support students in networking and sharing knowledge with over 1980 current academic society members for 2022/23.

*"We have the opportunity to **develop skills outside of the classroom**"* – Student Leader Survey 2021; reiterated in 74/76 independent comments, with 327 respondents.

Students perceive themselves to be developing in terms of outcomes and employability, where 100% of respondents in TEF Survey noted they had developed employable soft skills, see *Figure 11*. Alongside this, 85% of students believe UoL, in collaboration with ULSU, is preparing them for the world of work, these figures are noticeably higher in Social Science, 95%, and International Students, 94%.

	Time management	Networking	Organisation	Attention to detail	Industry knowledge	Collaboration skills	Academic & report writing	Presenting and public speaking	Communication	Confidence
<b>Percentage of Students gaining skill</b>	69%	37%	66%	51%	55%	58%	67%	59%	67%	56%

*Figure 11: Percentage of Students perceiving themselves to gain employable soft skills.*

Individual Schools also have access to additional certifications which aim to improve the employability and confidence of students interested in specialised sectors or specific programming software's. All Colleges in the TEF survey also gave examples of positive employability initiatives, *"The careers & employability sessions have allowed me to unlock new skills"*, School of Creative Arts.

Students also felt learning reflects the wider working world; *"the economics assessments are real world examples, ... (it asks) what is happening in the world and then you give an economic analysis about it. It's not something fabricated, ... it comes from the direction of the UK is facing this situation"*, School of Management, and *"I would say my course has actually abled me to prepare for the real-world"*, School of Management. An International exchange History Student also appreciated wider skill development in *"working towards employment, you're working towards (gaining)transferable skills and critical thinking"*.

Module content also appeared to directly relate to employment, where *"The modules are teaching key things that are used in industry... beyond the fundamentals and we are starting to specialise a little bit"* – Computer Science focus group, agreed by all participants. This was seen across the Colleges with Architecture students stating *"(The course) stretches you in a positive way, and the range of knowledge prepares you for all firms in Architecture"* where *"There's good opportunities to develop your presentation skills"*, agreed by all participants. Further praise was received in *"they format our work in the way the industry would require it"*, School of Design. Computer Science also had particularly strong praise, where *"in industry you will be practically implementing what you have learnt in your degree"*, agreed by all participants. All courses within LIBS received similar comments, particularly in relation to economics directly reflecting practice, alongside *"The strategic ones and the operational management ones especially... it is really helping me to get my transferable skills and develop my employability"*, International Student, Department of Management.

## Conclusion

Students praise the community and support services at Lincoln, 94% of students (TEF survey) strongly agree or agree they are satisfied with their academic experience. The teaching environment at UoL was equally praised with staff being friendly, accessible, and open to change to reflect the student voice for the large majority of courses. Any outlined issues identified, UoL have shown a proactive interest to resolve, continually improving the students' academic experience and outcomes. Issues highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic have now largely been addressed and on campus learning has returned to being *"connected"*, Lincoln Law School, *"interactive"*, Department of Accountancy, Finance & Economics, *"fun, and interesting"*, School of Psychology, although students affected by the disruption to learning feel this has negatively impacted their university experience. UoL aims to continually develop the teaching, support, and employability opportunities on offer, in partnership with students, to enhance student outcomes, whilst being reflective and recognising areas for improvement.