

Academic Representation: Semester 1 Student Staff Panel Summary



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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of student feedback gathered through Semester 1 Student Staff Panels (SSPs), drawing on 928 individual comments submitted across 24 Schools. Each comment was coded against a set of NSS-aligned themes to identify patterns in what students feel is supporting or hindering their learning experience.

Across the University, the most frequently raised themes were Teaching on my Course, Organisation and Management, Other, and Learning Resources. Students highlighted the importance of high quality, well-paced teaching and consistent provision of core materials. They also drew attention to operational issues such as timetabling accuracy, room suitability, and the reliability of teaching technologies. These factors collectively shape their day-to-day experience and significantly influence learning outcomes.

Analysis at College level showed similar patterns across AHSS, BLS, and PSE, with Teaching on my Course and Learning Resources consistently among the highest-coded themes. However, BLS displayed a more even spread of feedback across categories, suggesting a wider distribution of concerns rather than concentration in specific areas.

A deeper review of comments coded under Other revealed strong, cross-University issues relating to buildings and facilities, access to specialist spaces, equipment quality, communication clarity, student support, safety, and the availability of social or community building spaces. These comments indicate that the physical and operational environment continues to have a significant impact on students' comfort, sense of belonging, and ability to work effectively.

Overall, the findings highlight the critical role of clear communication, dependable facilities, accessible learning resources, and coherent support processes in shaping the student experience. Students recognise good teaching and positive changes but also express a consistent desire for more reliable information, better maintained environments, and structures that support a diverse range of needs. These insights provide a clear evidence base to inform future enhancements at School, College, and institutional levels.

Introduction

This report summarises the feedback raised by Student Academic Reps at Student Staff Panels (SSPs) across Semester 1 to provide a clear, University wide picture of what students say helps or hinders their learning and student experience now. It draws directly on the comments supplied through SSP minutes/ summaries, grouped under a common, NSS-aligned set of themes and related institutional topics. In total, 928 individual comments were recorded in Semester 1 SSP minutes and coded against 15 themes (Teaching on my Course; Learning Opportunities; Assessment & Feedback; Academic Support; Organisation and Management; Learning Resources; Timetabling; Employability; Student Voice; Placements; Postgraduate Issues; Joint Honours; Wins/Positive Changes; Overall Student Experience; Other). Of the University's 24 Schools, all submitted at least some SSP minutes for analysis in this period, providing broad coverage of the student voice.

This report is produced to ensure that the University maintains a clear and evidence-based understanding of the real time student experience. By analysing Student Staff Panel feedback systematically across all 24 Schools, the Students' Union and University can identify emerging patterns, highlight areas where students feel well-supported, and flag issues that may be hindering learning or wellbeing.

When each school submitted Student Staff Panel minutes, the Student Voice team collated these minutes into a single spreadsheet and allocated a theme for every piece of feedback. For each comment, a single primary theme was recorded. While many issues could plausibly straddle multiple categories (for example, releasing lecture slides earlier touches Teaching on my Course, Learning Resources and Organisation & Management), we maintain a single code to retain comparability across Schools and reduce double counting. Where a comment could not be mapped cleanly to one of the core themes, it was placed under 'Other'.

University-wide Findings

Across the institution, the single most frequent theme was Teaching on my Course (197 comments; 21% of all feedback). Organisation and Management followed (127; 14%), then Other (125; 13%) and Learning Resources (100; 11%). Assessment & Feedback (87; 9%) and Timetabling (58; 6%) were also notable, with Academic Support accounting for 6% (52). Student Voice (39), Placements (40) and Overall Student Experience (41) each made up 4%. The figure below shows the quantity of comments that were grouped into each theme.

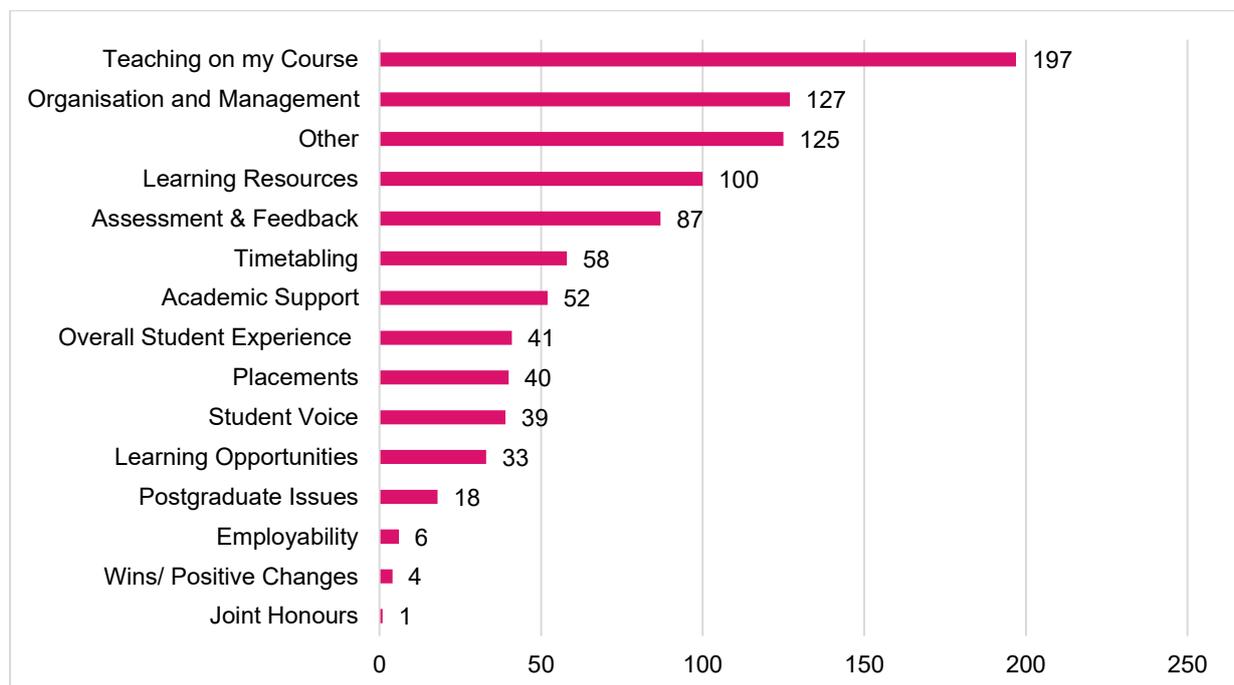


Figure 1 - Quantities of comments received by theme (University-wide)

Student feedback under Teaching on my Course commonly refers to the pace of delivery, the relationship between contact hours and independent study requirements, and the timing of releasing core materials.

“Classes are interactive and enjoyable. Some students feel the pace is too slow and lessons too easy, with requests for more challenging material and faster progression.”,

“Slides should be uploaded to LC 48 hours before the lecture to help students prepare”.

Feedback categorised under Organisation and Management predominantly concerns the timeliness and consistency of support information, session scheduling & room allocations, and notification of changes, as well as the availability of recording/AV provisions and required software.

“Students find the three-hour lectures quite long but understand it can’t be changed. There have been days when students have a three-hour lecture, one hour lecture and then two-hour lecture all in the same room. Could different rooms be scheduled for each lecture.”

“Details of lab sessions not showing in timetable on student app resulting in difficulty completing pre-labs;”

Student feedback categorised under ‘other’ highlights a wide range of operational and environmental issues that fall outside standard NSS-aligned themes but are consistently felt across Schools. These comments frequently point to problems with buildings and facilities — including unreliable temperatures, electrical faults, poor water provisions, unsuitable teaching rooms - all of which affect comfort and learning.

“Main building teaching rooms on the second floor are freezing cold with no heating.”

“Plug sockets on the top floor of the ASSL are not working.”

“Students raised concerns about the water fountain on the third floor being located inside a toilet.”

Students also report challenges around access to key spaces, with limited or unpredictable availability of studios, labs, and specialist rooms hindering progress, particularly in project-based disciplines.

“Is it possible to access the Rocket Lab outside of hours, allowing students more time to work on projects?”

“MSC students don’t have a room to work in... communal study spaces get busy and noisy.”

Additional feedback under this category highlights gaps in accessibility and support, worries about safety and wellbeing processes, and the need for community building spaces.

“There is no dedicated communal space for PGR students... the rest room is no longer restful due to constant disruptions.”

“Students would welcome social events organised specifically for PGT students.”

Beyond release timing and accuracy comments raised under ‘timetabling’, many comments point to inappropriate or inaccessible spaces being timetabled, particularly where room size, layout, or facilities fail to meet student needs.

“rooms... had fifty to sixty students with only eight or nine desks... one student who uses a wheelchair having very little room”.

Other Schools described overbooked rooms, or teaching spaces lacking the equipment necessary for learning, prompting requests to explain why rooms are overbooked.

Students also raise concerns about heavy clustering of teaching and unsustainable scheduling patterns, including long blocks without breaks or extended days with minimal gaps.

“6 hours of back-to-back sessions”

“2 hours of power system lecture, then 2 hours of math lectures... a lot to take in one day”

“issues... disabled students being asked to take modules back-to-back with no lunch break”.

College-level Findings

To understand how these issues manifest across the institution, we analysed the distribution of themes by College. Between the three Colleges similar trends were observed, with Teaching on my Course and Learning Resources emerging as the most frequently raised themes across all areas. However, in BLS the pattern differed slightly, with comments distributed more evenly across a wider range of categories rather than concentrated within just a few. Figure 2 below illustrates the quantity of comments received across each theme by college, for the data in a table format please see appendix 1.

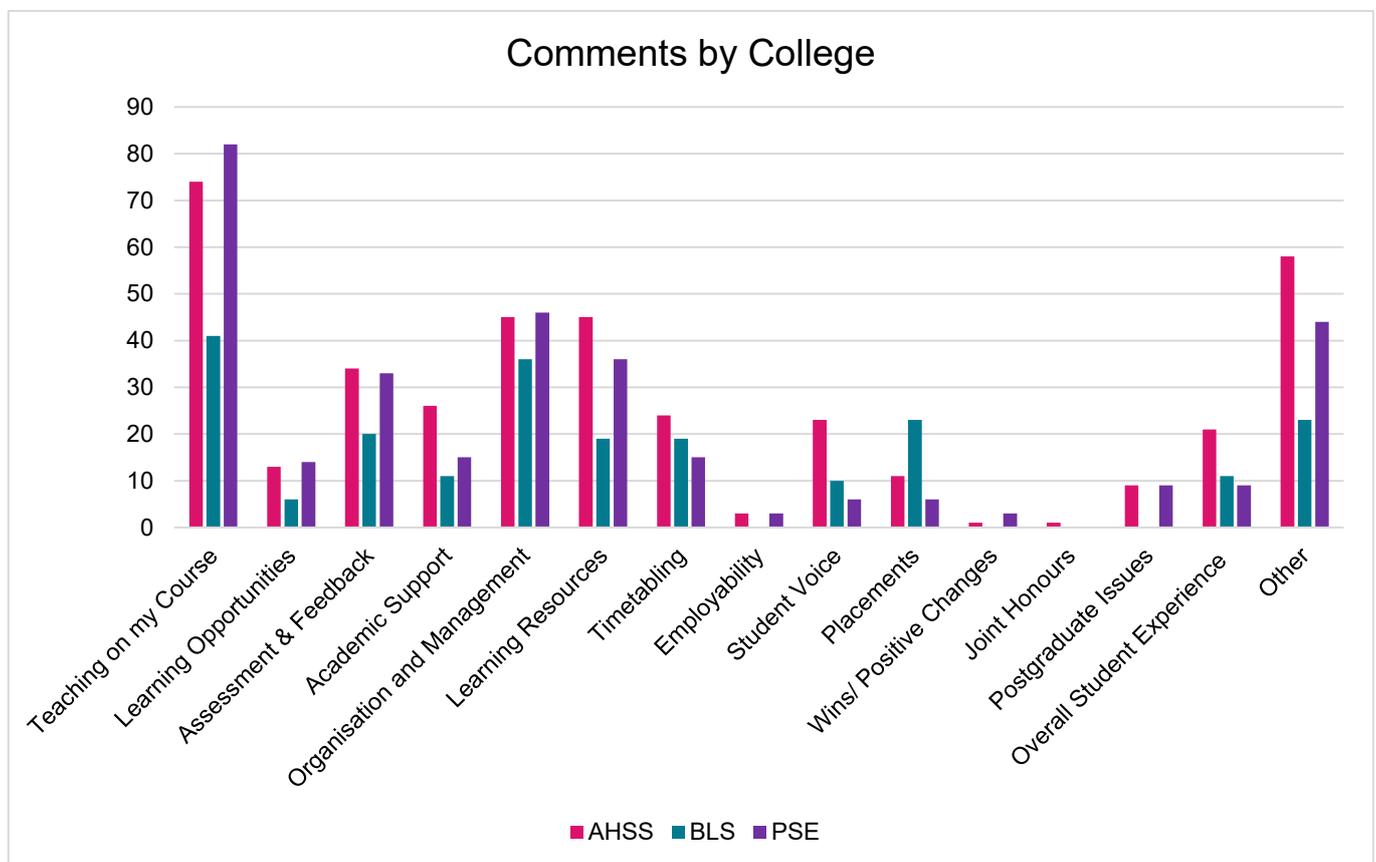


Figure 2 - Quantities of comments received by theme per college

Across AHSS, the most frequently raised themes were Teaching on my Course, Organisation and Management, and Other, with students highlighting a mix of pedagogical, operational, and environmental concerns. Feedback often centred on the pacing and structure of teaching, access to core materials, and the suitability of allocated rooms for interactive or discussion-based learning.

“some seminar rooms aren’t set up appropriately for language classes... tables have to be moved at the start of seminars.”

Issues relating to buildings and facilities were also prominent, including inconsistent temperatures, broken equipment, and limited access to appropriate social or study spaces.

“Main building teaching rooms on the second floor are freezing cold with no heating.”

Communication challenges were another recurring issue, with students reporting inconsistent messaging and late updates.

“short notice with room changes not showing up on the app.”

In BLS, feedback was more evenly distributed across multiple themes, indicating a broader spectrum of concerns rather than strong concentrations in specific areas. While Teaching on my Course and Organisation and Management remained notable, students also raised issues relating to Assessment & Feedback, Placements, Learning Resources, and the Overall Student Experience. Students frequently referenced the suitability and availability of specialist facilities and equipment.

“the hearing loops in the basement lecture theatres are not working

“lectures timetabled in the middle of the day disrupting lab work and experiments.”

Navigation and scheduling challenges also emerged, particularly where large cohorts needed to move quickly between buildings.

“lecture locations being across two different venues meant large cohorts struggled whilst moving between buildings.”

Access to essential spaces and resources, especially for laboratory based or practical work, was another significant concern.

“students are not allocated to sessions... workshops not clearly highlighted as mandatory.”

Within PSE, Teaching on my Course was the most frequently raised theme, followed by substantial feedback relating to Organisation and Management, Learning Resources, and Other. Students often reported issues with the suitability of teaching spaces, especially for large cohorts or highly technical subjects due to unsuitable room allocation.

“seated on the floor or along the walls”.

Concerns about the reliability of equipment and facilities were also common, including issues in specialist studios.

“broken/missing lights... and space feeling neglected”

Timetabling challenges emerged frequently, due to clustered teaching blocks. Feedback coded under Other highlighted additional concerns about building conditions, room temperatures, and communication around scheduling or access.

“S1.32 is too cold”

“door to the garden in the Trevithick Hub won't open with key cards.”

Further information

This report provides an overview of the key themes raised through Semester 1 Student Staff Panels across all Schools, offering a consolidated picture of the factors shaping students' learning and day-to-day experience. By presenting these findings at University, College, and School levels, it supports ongoing conversations and local engagement activity without prescribing specific actions. The data shared here is intended to inform understanding, promote transparency, and underpin continued collaboration in responding to the student voice.

If you have any questions about the findings in this report, would like further detail at School or programme level, or wish to explore the data in more depth, please get in touch with the Student Voice Team. We are happy to provide additional analysis, or support with interpreting feedback to inform local student voice work. You can reach us at: StudentReps@cardiff.ac.uk

If you would like to discuss student voice initiatives, rep development, or ways to strengthen Student Staff Panels within your School, we would also welcome a conversation.

Appendices

Theme	AHSS	BLS	PSE	Total
Teaching on my Course	74	41	82	197
Learning Opportunities	13	6	14	33
Assessment & Feedback	34	20	33	87
Academic Support	26	11	15	52
Organisation and Management	45	36	46	127
Learning Resources	45	19	36	99
Timetabling	24	19	15	58
Employability	3	0	3	6
Student Voice	23	10	6	39
Placements	11	23	6	40
Wins/ Positive Changes	1	0	3	4
Joint Honours	1	0	0	1
Postgraduate Issues	9	0	9	18
Overall Student Experience	21	11	9	41
Other	58	23	44	125
Total	387	219	321	928

Appendix 1 - Quantities of comments received by theme per college



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