

University of Essex
International Academy
Student Satisfaction Survey 2014-15
Summary Report for Students

Each spring the Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) takes place for all students in years 0, 1 and 2. There are two sections to the survey: main and optional questions. The main survey questions are based on the questions asked in the National Student Survey (NSS); sometimes these questions maybe slightly adapted, and cover the following aspects of the learning experience: degree content, the teaching on student's degree, teaching, assessment and feedback, academic support, organisation and management, learning resources, personal development and overall satisfaction. Students also have the option of answering an additional set of questions, selected by the University each year.

The SSS results for all departments for 2014-2015 Academic Year have recently been published. The results show that student satisfaction within the International Academy (IA) is very good.

SSS results in 2015 indicated that the International Academy students rated our teaching provision above that of the University. According to the students surveyed, 86% indicated that 'the teaching on my degree' was a positive experience which mirrors that of the University as a whole but slightly higher when compared with the Colchester campus at 83%. Looking at the more detailed data related to 'teaching on my degree', the students from the International Academy rated our provision higher than the University on three out of four categories: (1) staff are good at explaining things (94% in the IA compared with 90% across the University and 88% of the Colchester campus); (2) staff have made the subject interesting (80% of International Academy students indicated this compared with 79% for the whole University and 75% for the Colchester campus); and (3) staff are enthusiastic at what they are teaching where 88% of International Academy students agreed with this compared with the University at 86% and the Colchester campus at 83%. Only on the statement of 'the degree is intellectually stimulating' did International Academy students rate our Department slightly lower than both the University and the Colchester campus: the International Academy was rated at 82% compared with the University at 88% and the Colchester campus at 85%.

This result is slightly surprising given the fact that part of our Undergraduate provision underwent a Curriculum Review during the academic year 2013-14 where module learning outcomes and aims had been drastically changed as well as our assessment methods to help ensure a more challenging experience for the students.

Through the free text comments related to the question: Looking back on your experience of studying at the University this year, are there any particular positive or negative aspects you would like to highlight? the students noted the following in relation to our teaching provision:

'My course studies have been stimulating and I find most of the teaching methods used interesting and effective'

'The interactive nature of some of my lectures; the manner in which students' opinions are treated: with respect; the opportunity to maintain an open line of communication with my lecturers'

'Teachers/lecturers have been kind and useful when it comes to answering questions and providing further insight into taught materials'

'The best thing would be that i met some fantastic lecturers in my year...they influenced my choices in my further education, even in the direction of further career development'

The International Academy's Assessment and Feedback provision continues to be rated very highly at 85% compared with the rest of the University at 73% and the Colchester Campus at 67%. In particular, 90% of the students surveyed remarked that our marking criteria are clear and made available in advance compared with

only 68% across the Colchester Campus. Our assessment arrangements and marking were deemed fair by 86% of the students surveyed compared with 73% at the Colchester Campus.

IA SSS results 2013, 2014 and 2015, with University results for 2015.						
Categories of the survey	IA 2013	IA 2014	IA 2015	Uni 2015	IA to Uni 2015	IA trend 2014 to 2015
The teaching on my degree	86	84	86	86	none	
Assessment and feedback	89	88	85	73		
Academic support	89	88	84	83		
Organisation and management	83	89	78	84		
Learning resources	82	84	81	84		
Personal development	81	76	77	74		
Overall I am satisfied with the quality of my degree	89	96	84	86		
Careers	80	79	76	77		
Social opportunities	80	75	74	80		
Students' Union	78	81	75	77		
Course delivery	85	91	80	79		
Feedback from students	78	82	80	65		
Assessment	81	88	80	82		
Facilities	76	80	66	72		
Equality and diversity	88	91	90	91		
Overall satisfaction	84	83	81	86		

These results are particularly pleasing as considerable time and effort goes into reviewing marking criteria annually and marking standardisation processes are employed across our provision as well as very transparent double-marking policies. The use of the standard Feedback Matters coversheet might also help ensure that students consult the relevant marking criteria in advance and consult with the academics on the precise expectations for a particular piece of coursework.

An impressive 84% of our students surveyed noted that coursework feedback had been provided in a timely manner compared with 69% across the whole University and 64% on the Colchester campus. The module assignment submission and feedback schedules are carefully organised in order to avoid clusters of assessment deadlines as well as ensuring that feedback on one assignment is delivered in good time for the student to feed forward any good practices identified as well as suggestions for improvements.

Finally, although 87% of the students surveyed noted that they had received detailed feedback on their work compared with 69% of the overall Colchester campus, only 76% noted that the feedback they received had

helped them clarify things they did not understand. Although this latter result is better than the experience of the students in general at the University where 69% agreed with this statement, it is a drop of 13% within the International Academy from the previous academic year. Part of the Tutorial Journal will encourage students to highlight elements which are still unclear even after the written feedback process.

Dr Nilüfer Demirkan-Jones
Director of Education
Chair, SSLC

Dr Ritta Husted
Undergraduate Director
Member, SSLC

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