NSS

SPAH’s performance in the 2015 NSS continues to be very strong. On some of the main sub-categories, results are well ahead of the University averages. For example:

- **Overall Satisfaction:** SPAH (95%) / University (92%).
- **Teaching on my Course:** SPAH (97%) / University (89%).
- **Assessment and Feedback:** SPAH (83%) / University (78%).

SPAH continues to perform very strongly in some of the core academic questions, and to have improved its already impressive scores from last year. For example:

  - **Staff are good at explaining things:** 2015 (100%) / 2014 (97%)
  - **Staff are enthusiastic about what they teaching:** 2015 (98%) / 2014 (92%)
  - **Staff have made the subject interesting:** 2015 (97%) / 2014 (97%)
  - **I have been able to contact staff when needed to:** 2015 (97%) / 2014 (90%)
  - **The course is intellectually stimulating:** 2015 (93%) / 2014 (93%)
  - **I have received detailed feedback on my work:** 2015 (92%) / 2014 (87%)
  - **My leaning has benefited from modules that are informed by current research:** 2015 (92%) / 2014 (76%)

The written comments also reflect this, with a large number of positive assessments, including:

- “The teaching staff are excellent and dedicated… As are the support staff”
- “Really great lecturers and teaching staff”
- “Fantastic quality of teaching, great dedication to independence of thought, challenging and well structured course. Great preparation both for further study and life generally”

Despite improving on last year’s performance, there are still areas within the core academic questions where SPAH is not scoring as well as we could. While the “Clarity of Criteria” for marking showed significant improvement (up from 74% in 2014 to 82% in 2015), “promptness of marking” continues to score poorly (falling from 73% in 2014 to 66% in 2015).

SPAH fell behind University averages in other sub-categories, such as:

- **Academic Support:** SPAH (83%) / University (84%)
- **Learning Resources:** SPAH (82%) / University (87%)
- **Personal Development:** SPAH (83%) / University (86%)
- **Careers:** SPAH (62%) / University (81%)
- **Feedback from Students:** SPAH (67%) / University (70%)
Results for specific questions within these sub-categories highlight immediate areas for improvement.

- In the “Academic Support” category, for example, only 71% of students agreed that “Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices”.

- In the “Learning Resources” category, “access to specialized equipment” scored 76% (a slight improvement on last year, but still a relatively poor score).

- In the “Careers” category, there was a significant drop in scores for “Good advice is available for making career choices” (down from 73% in 2014 to 53% in 2015) and “Good advice is available on further study options” (down from 77% in 2014 to 60% in 2015).

- In the “Feedback from Students” category, however, the only significant shift in scores was an 18% increase in students agreeing that they had “adequate opportunities to provide feedback” (up from 75% in 2014 to 93% in 2015)

The following problematic themes also emerged in the written comments:

- Limited range of modules
- Late return of Coursework
- Different Methods of Submitting Coursework (paper/online etc)
- Deadlines piling up.
SSS

Similar to the NSS, SPAH’s performance in the 2015 NSS was very good. SPAH equaled or bettered the University averages in some of the core sub-categories:

- **Teaching on my Course**: SPAH (92%) / University (85%)
- **Overall Satisfaction**: SPAH (87%) / University (87%).
- **Assessment and Feedback**: SPAH (74%) / University (71%).

SPAH also continues to perform strongly in some of the core academic questions. For example:

- Staff are good at explaining things: 2015 (96%) / 2014 (92%)
- The degree is intellectually stimulating: 2015 (94%) / 2014 (89%)
- Staff are enthusiastic about what they teaching: 2015 (90%) / 2014 (94%)
- Staff have made the subject interesting: 2015 (87%) / 2014 (87%)

However, on some of the core questions, scores for SPAH have dropped from last year. For example:

- I have been able to contact staff when needed to: 2015 (86%) / 2014 (92%)
- I have received detailed feedback on my work: 2015 (85%) / 2014 (86%)
- My leaning has benefitted from modules that are informed by current research: 2015 (60%) / 2014 (74%)

More broadly, for 2015, SPAH has fallen behind the University average score in a number of other SSS sub-categories, including:

- **Academic Support**: SPAH (79%) / University (82%)
- **Learning Resources**: SPAH (79%) / University (85%)
- **Assessment**: SPAH (79%) / University (81%)
- **Organisation & Management**: SPAH (76%) / University (85%)
- **Careers**: SPAH (75%) / University (78%)
- **Course Delivery**: SPAH (70%) / University (78%)
- **Personal Development**: SPAH (61%) / University (73%)
- **Feedback from Students**: SPAH (51%) / University (64%)

Certain questions within these sub-categories highlight immediate areas for improvement.

- “Academic Support”: only 78% of students agreed that “Good advice was available from my department when I had questions about my studies”

- “Learning Resources”: “access to specialized equipment” was a problem, with a score of 60% (a decrease on last years’ score of 63%)

- “Assessment”: only 70% agreed that “Teaching staff test what I have understood rather than what I have memorised” (a significant drop from 81% in 2014)

- “Course Delivery”: the lowest score in this category was 60% for “My learning has benefitted from modules that are informed by current research”, (down from 74% last year)
In the “Personal Development” category, only 56% agreed that “The degree has helped me present myself with confidence” (down from 73% in 2014), and 58% with “My communication skills have improved” (down from 78% in 2014).

In the “Feedback from Students” category, scores were particularly low for “It is clear to me how student’s comments on the course are being acted upon”, with only 35% agreeing (significantly down from 42% in 2014).