

<b>Committee Title</b>	Student Voice											
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> October 2021											
<b>Title/Subject</b>	Students' Association NSS Survey Results 2021											
<b>Paper Presenter</b>	Adil Rahoo – Student President											
<b>Brief Summary of Issues/Topic</b>	<p>The National Student Survey (NSS) asks final year undergraduate students <a href="#">27 questions</a>, relating to 8 aspects of the learning experience. Students are also given the opportunity to make positive and negative comments in an open answer question.</p> <p>The students' association question is "The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests" (question 26).</p> <p>The Students' Association received a 53% satisfaction score in 2021, exactly the average for the Scottish sector and UK sector.</p>											
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Information</td><td></td><td>Discussion</td><td>X</td><td>Approval</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p><b>Any member can ask a question by raising their voting card and being recognised by the Chair to speak.</b></p> <p>Student Voice are asked to note the findings within the report.</p>						Information		Discussion	X	Approval	
Information		Discussion	X	Approval								
<b>Who have you consulted when developing the paper?</b>	Chief Executive											
<b>Staff/Student Protocol</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td><td></td><td>No</td><td>X</td><td>N/A</td><td></td></tr> </table>						Yes		No	X	N/A	
Yes		No	X	N/A								
<b>Will any decision approved directly affect the work of staff?</b>	Chief executive has been consulted											
<b>Should the paper be submitted to any other committee following its consideration/approval at this meeting?</b>  <b>If yes, please state the committee and proposed date of submission.</b>	No											

# National Student Survey (NSS) 2021 – Q26 Analysis Report

## 1.0 Introduction

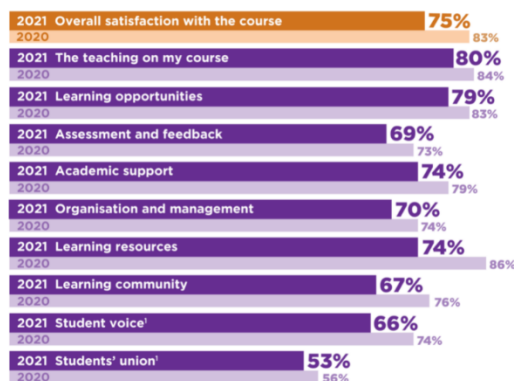
This report presents the findings from the 2021 National Student Survey (NSS), focusing on the GCU Students' Association's results for Question 26: *The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests*. This is the fifth year the question has been asked replacing a former question (Q23) on satisfaction.

The NSS launched at GCU in February 2021 and ran until April 2021. This was during the coronavirus pandemic when almost all in-person transitioned to online. The university response rate was a healthy 72% of all those eligible (undergraduate students in their final year). The impact of the lockdown and, subsequent pivot to digital can clearly be seen in the data, not for GCU or the Students' Association, but for the sector as a whole. The biggest slide in satisfaction in the sector as a whole was Learning Resources (-12.2) and Learning Community (-9.2).

A recap of GCU's overall results is provide in section 5. Most of this report, though, will focus on Question 26 (Q26) that pertains to Students' Associations.

### 2021 National Student Survey

Percentage of respondents who gave the two most positive answers ('definitely' or 'mostly' agree) on:



<sup>1</sup> The data for the 'student voice' scale does not include responses to Q26 on the students' union, which is reported separately in this chart.

## 2.0 Overall Results for Q26

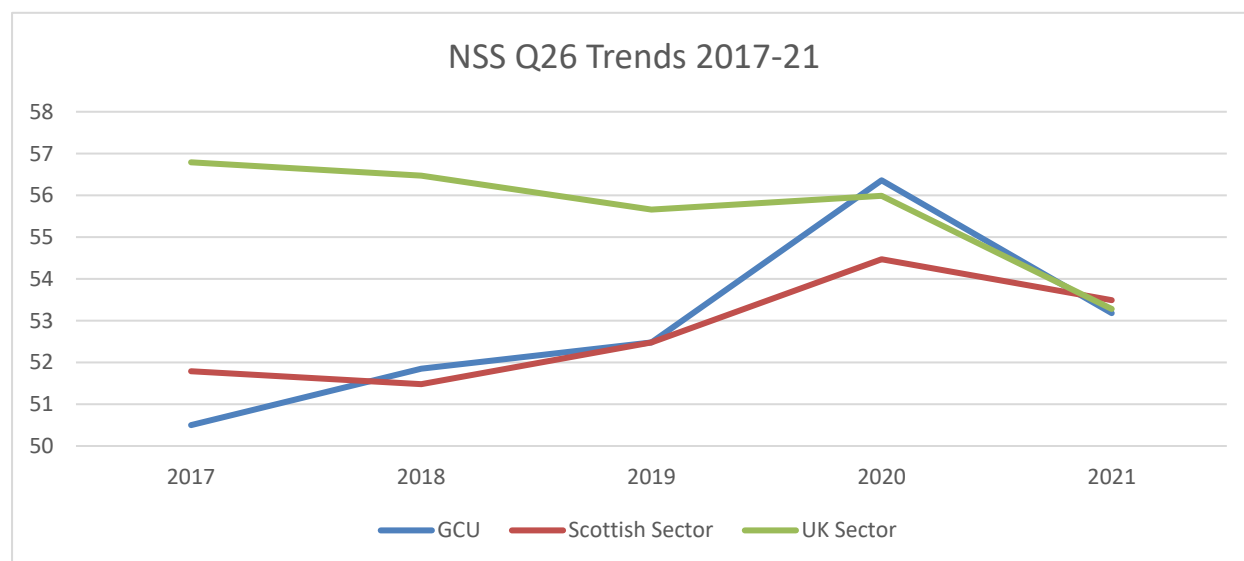
	GCU	UK	Scotland
2017	50.5	56.79	51.79
2018	51.85	56.47	51.48
2019	52.48	55.66	52.48
2020	56.36	55.99	54.47
<b>2021</b>	<b>53.18</b>	<b>53.28</b>	<b>53.49</b>

This year, we have fallen back to being about average when compared with the Scottish and UK sector after a 3-point increase last year thanks in part to the winning no fees for graduation campaign. Even with the dip from Covid, there is still more than 2.5 percentage points increase in those answering positive to the question compared to 2017.

	GCU	Scottish	Difference
2017	50.5	51.79	-1.29
2018	51.85	51.48	+0.37
2019	52.48	52.48	equal
2020	56.36	54.47	+1.89
<b>2021</b>	<b>53.18</b>	<b>53.49</b>	<b>-0.31</b>
Change	2.68	1.7	

	GCU	UK	Difference
2017	50.5	56.79	-6.29
2018	51.85	56.47	-4.62
2019	52.48	55.66	-3.18
2020	56.36	55.99	+0.37
<b>2021</b>	<b>53.18</b>	<b>53.49</b>	<b>-0.31</b>
Change	2.68	-3.3	

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### 2.1 Ranking of Sector on Q26

This decrease in our score for Q26 has resulted in us returning to the 10<sup>th</sup> place spot after achieving 7<sup>th</sup> place last year when compared to Scottish universities. Even in this difficult time, 8 universities saw increases in the Q26 outcome including a 7-point gain by Heriot Watt and an 8-point gain by Aberdeen.

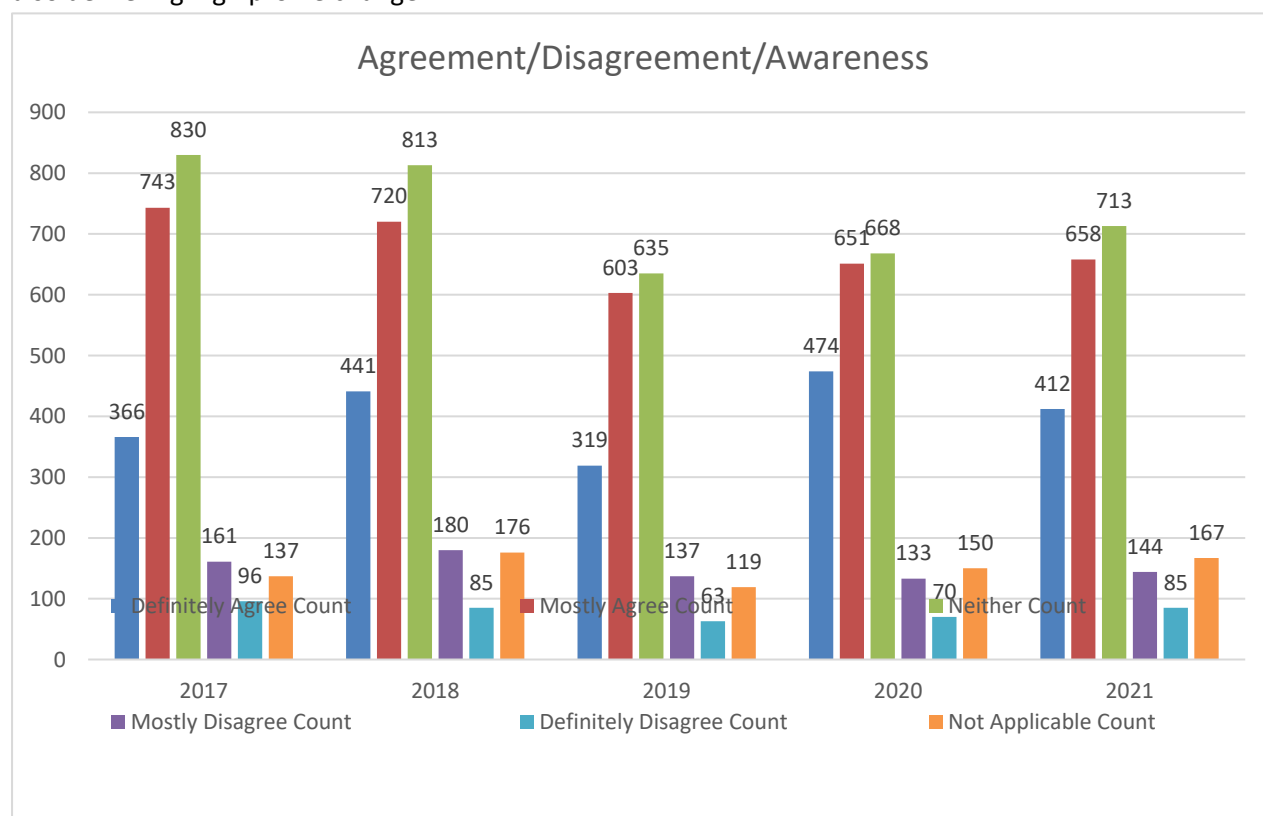
Institution	Q26 2020	Q26 2021	Movement	2021
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	53%	70%	▲	1 (=11)
University of St Andrews	69%	69%	▼	2(1)
University of Strathclyde	62%	65%	▲	3(=2)
Heriot-Watt University	56%	59%	▲	4(=7)
Queen Margaret University Edinburgh	57%	58%	▲	5(=5)
University of Glasgow	55%	56%	▲	=6(=9)
University of Aberdeen	48%	56%	▲	=6(15)
Robert Gordon University	61%	55%	▼	8(4)
University of Stirling	57%	54%	▼	9(=5)
<b>Glasgow Caledonian University</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>53%</b>	▼	<b>10(=7)</b>
University of Dundee	62%	52%	▼	11(=2)
Edinburgh Napier University	55%	50%	▼	12(=9)
University of the Highlands and Islands	49%	49%	=	13(14)
University of the West of Scotland	53%	48%	▲	14(=11)
Abertay University	53%	47%	▼	14(=11)
University of Edinburgh	40%	43%	▲	16(17)

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## 2.6 Agreement Trends

The past few years of the NSS action plan has focused on raising awareness of the Students' Association work on academic representation. In 2018, 41% of participants answered this way. It dropped in 2019 to a low of 30%. Interestingly, during 2020 when we had a particularly strong year, the percentage of those answering neither/nor or not applicable increased to 38%. This year we are back up to 40%.

In interrogating the data, our strongest years of 2019 and 2020 had different factors that lead to the increase. In 2019, we decreased the number of students not having an opinion on us either way and that made a small increase to our overall rating on Q26 of 0.6% points. In 2020, the increase of 3% on the previous year was due not to shifting number of those who are not aware or don't have an opinion but on a high profile campaign win that pushed up the numbers of those responding positively. Thus, the secret sauce is both keeping awareness of the Students' Association high whilst also delivering high profile change.



## 3.0 Segmentation Analysis

To better understand how the Students' Association is meeting the needs of students in terms of academic representation, segmentation analysis was undertaken for both demographic segments and subject area segments.

### 3.1 Demographics - Overall

The NSS provides insight into not only what fourth year undergraduate students think but also who they are, as the survey asks a number of demographics question and the response rate is high. Below

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is the percentage of students who described themselves as fitting into each demographic segmentation.

Full Time	93.3	Other disability	8
UK	93.3	Part Time	6.7
No known disability	88.5	Asian	6.1
White	86.3	EU	4.7
Female	60.1	A specific learning disability	3.4
Young	58.3	Black	2.9
HE route	49.7	Not known (ethnicity)	2.6
School Qualification	47.6	International (non-EU)	2
Mature	41.7	Mixed	1.2
Male	39.9	Other (ethnicity)	0.8

### 3.2 Demographic Segmentation - Trends

Demographic Segment – Percentage Agreeing	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	Change between 2017 - 2021
Overall	53.18	56.36	52.48	51.85	50.5	2.68
Mature	53.04	53.77	53.31	52.37	50.82	2.22
Young	53.28	58.23	51.99	51.58	50.34	2.94
Specific learning disability	49.28	63.44	48.75	55.86	55.22	-5.94
No known disability	53.26	56.18	52.69	51.63	50.66	2.6
Other disability	53.99	54.11	52.08	51.85	43.48	10.51
EU excluding UK	61.86	54.32	46.74	45.24	46.43	15.43
Other (Domicile)	55.81	65.96	74.29	64.06	47.73	8.08
UK	52.67	56.21	52.33	51.75	50.73	1.94
Asian	56.69	70.94	63.03	53.57	56.93	-0.24
Black	66.13	61.22	69.7	68.29	64.44	1.69
Not known (ethnicity)	60.38	55.56	44.68	47.87	39.34	21.04
Other (ethnicity)	52.94	48.89	50	44.19	56.25	-3.31
White	52.2	55.46	51.57	51.72	49.97	2.23
Female	59.38	59.42	57.37	55.34	54.4	4.98
Male	43.72	52.06	44.56	46.19	43.97	-0.25
School Qualifications	52.36	58.34	53.14	49.55	50	2.36
HE Qualifications	53.41	54.79	52.14	54.58	51.25	2.16
Other/Not known	63.64	50	48.61	44	46.83	16.81
Full Time	54.37	56.9	53.19	52.68	51.2	3.17
Part Time	35.2	47.9	40.21	32.61	36.54	-1.34

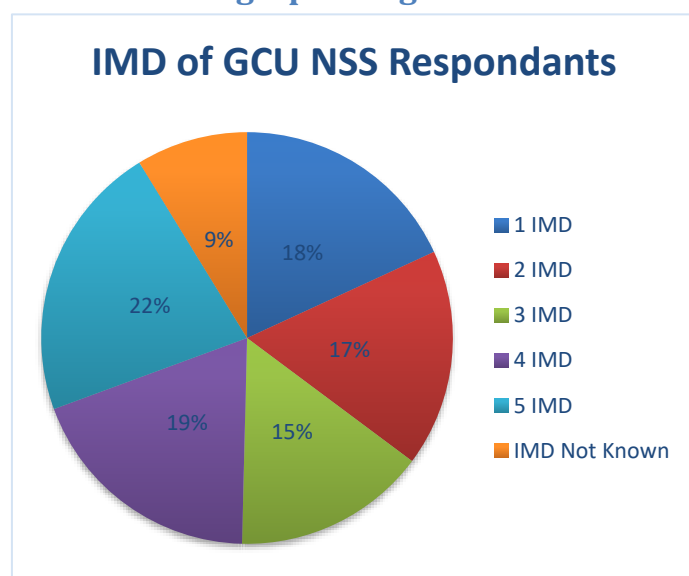
For most of the demographic groups, we continue on an upward trajectory in their satisfaction with the Students' Association even during the coronavirus pandemic. However, we did though lose

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significant gains from last year. Some of the segments with fewer individuals within that demographic will also experience more variability compared to the larger segments due to the law of averages. Moreover, small gains in segments with large population will have larger impact on overall score than larger gains in segments with fewer students.

Our lowest agreement rates come from part-time student (only 35% of 146 respondents were in agreement) and male students (44% of 870 respondents were in agreement with Q26). We need to do more to appeal to these groups and show our value.

### 3.3 New demographic segments in the survey



In the last two years, respondent's postcodes have been used to align them with the "index of multiple deprivation". The IMD for the NSS is a 5-point scale on how deprived a local area is and while it is not accurate on an individual level (economically deprived individuals can live in non-deprived areas and vice versa) it is useful at an area/population level. IMD 1 is the 20% of most deprived areas according to the index and IMD 5 is the 20% least deprived areas. There was pretty equal distribution of GCU NSS Respondents in the 5 IMD areas

Below is the percentage of respondents agreeing with Q26 based on their IMD areas for the last two years that there is data.

Index of Multiple Deprivation Level	2021	2020
IMD 1	57.38	57.09
IMD 2	54.73	59.36
IMD 3	48.53	55.3
IMD 4	52.79	60.54
IMD 5	51.46	54.19
IMD Not Known	54.75	54.36

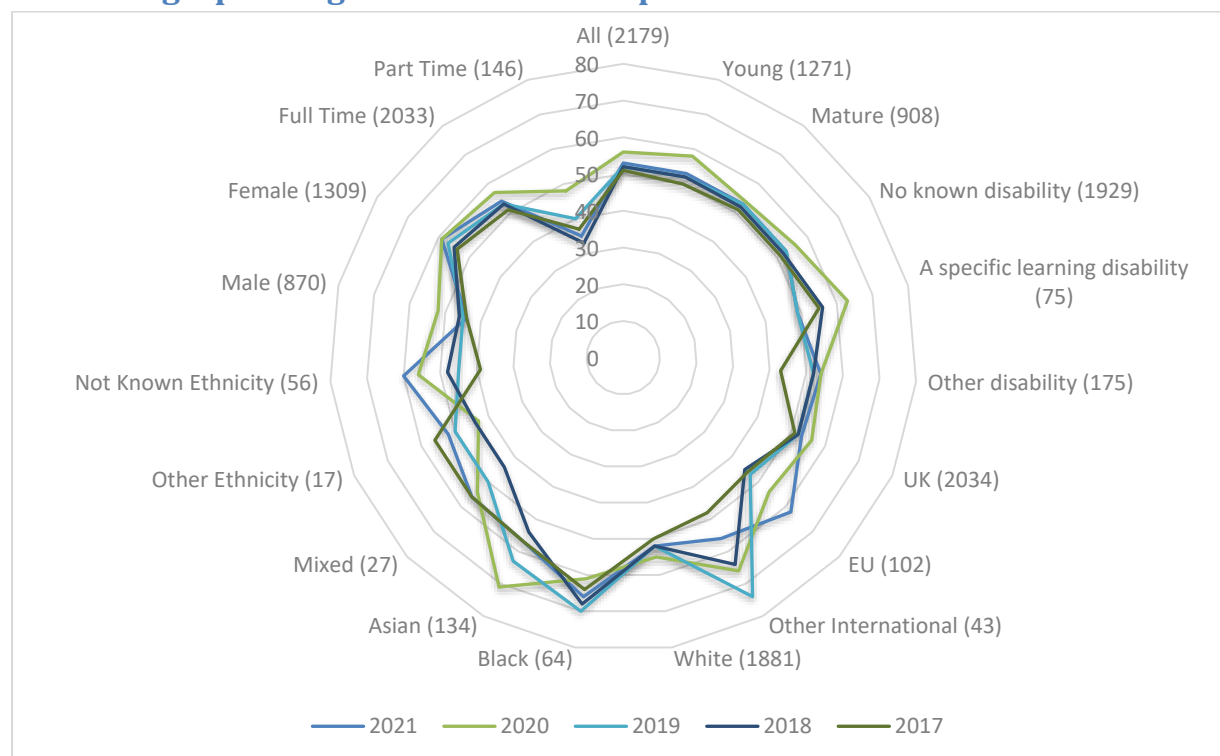
A new category of "Mixed" was added to the ethnicity data which will better indicate a person's ethnic background. Below are how respondents have responded favourably to Q26 based on their ethnicity including mixed ethnicity. In the future both IMD and the Mixed Ethnicity will be included in the standard demographic analysis.

Ethnicity	2021	2020
Asian	56.69	70.94
Black	66.13	61.22
Mixed	56	54.17

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Not known (ethnicity)	60.38	55.56
Other (ethnicity)	52.94	48.89
White	52.2	55.46

### 3.4 Demographic Segments – Radar Graph



### 3.2. Demographic Segmentation – Sector Comparison

When we compare our NSS Q26 to the UK Students' Union/Association sector as a whole on Q26 it shows we use some of our strengths as well as weaknesses. We do well comparatively with those who identify into the demographic categories of Black and Mixed race. We also score higher than the sector average with EU students and those with a non-learning disability. As our score on Q26 is consistent with the average score across the UK, we are within 0.5 of percentage point with several different demographics including traditional age students, those who are UK based, those who identify as white and/or female and students studying full time. All of these are substantially large demographic categories.

There are several categories that we lag behind the sector. One of them is mature students who make up a large proportion of students at GCU. We have improved the difference between the sector wide score and our score this year (last year's difference was over 3 percentage points) but more work needs to be done on this. Possible campaigns on the opening of the Mature Student Room as well as working with mature students on financial issues are suggestions that could help to raise this score. We also do less favourably than the sector average with International students and Asian students and we should do more promotion of our work geared towards these students.

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The demographic group that is of most concern when looking at our scores compared to the UK sector average score is with students who identify as Male. We are over 5 percentage points below the average with group. Further, we have not internally improved on this score since 2017 as the GCU Q26 trends data showed above. At the same time, we do well with students who identify as Female as we are 3% above the UK average. The quandary is how do we appeal to more males without turning off our core female audience.

Demographic Group	GCU 2021	UK Sector 2021	Difference	Above or below average
Overall	53.18	53.28	-0.1	=
Mature	53.04	53.87	-0.83	▼
Young	53.28	53.09	0.19	=
A specific learning disability	49.28	51.66	-2.38	▼
No known disability	53.26	53.78	-0.52	▼
Other disability	53.99	50.37	3.62	▲
EU	61.86	55.34	6.52	▲
International (non-EU)	55.81	59.24	-3.43	▼
UK	52.67	52.52	0.15	=
Asian	56.69	58.43	-1.74	▼
Black	66.13	57.09	9.04	▲
Mixed	56	50.6	5.4	▲
Not known (ethnicity)	60.38	54.38	6	▲
Other (ethnicity)	52.94	55.13	-2.19	▼
White	52.2	51.81	0.39	=
Female	59.38	56.06	3.32	▲
Male	43.72	49.04	-5.32	▼
School Qualifications	52.36	52.98	-0.62	▼
HE Qualifications	53.41	53.95	-0.54	▼
Other/Not known	63.64	56.6	7.04	▲
Full Time	54.37	53.94	0.43	=
Part Time	35.2	45.07	-9.87	▼
IMD 1	57.38	56.09	1.29	▲
IMD 2	54.73	53.86	0.87	▲
IMD 3	48.53	52.43	-3.9	▼
IMD 4	52.79	51.39	1.4	▲
IMD 5	51.46	50.28	1.18	▲
IMD Not Known	54.75	55.16	-0.41	=

### 4.0 Segmentation by Subject Areas

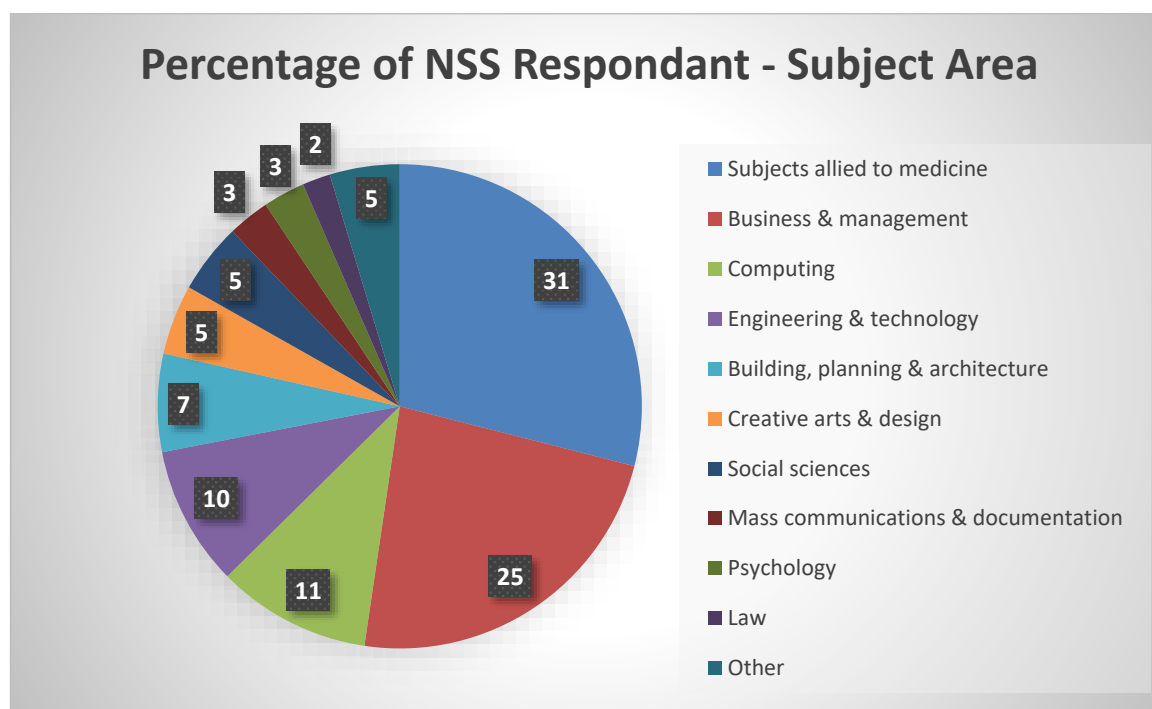
The data for the NSS can also be segmented based on subject area of the respondent's degree. An analysis based on subject segments is even more important given the reformulation of the student union/association question from a focus on general satisfaction to satisfaction with academic representation.



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### 4.1 Subject area segmentation at GCU

The NSS breaks down all academic degrees into a dozen subject areas that are listed in the following table along with the relative size of each subject area based on respondents to the NSS. The pie chart helps to illustrate the relative size of each subject area at GCU.



### 4.2 Subject Segmentation – Trends

Subject area	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	Trend
Subjects allied to medicine	56.31	58.98	56.19	60.09	58.33	▼
Business & management	55.14	64.24	58.35	52.08	47.55	▲
Engineering & technology	46.43	47.14	41.55	50	47.94	▼
Computing	46.43	46.71	50	48.02	41.52	▲
Building, planning & Architecture	39.71	49.64	46.02	34.26	45.68	▼
Social studies	56.04	58.3	46.74	43.86	47.7	▲
Psychology	70.49	61.43	48.72	NA	NA	▲
Media, journalism & communications	48.33	44.68	43.64	50.68	40.52	▲
Creative arts & design	50	50	55.38	57.14	45.45	▲
Law	48.84	65.22	48.72	48.39	25	▲

The overall trend from 2017 to 2021 is a positive one with more students in most subject areas agreeing that we represent their academic interest. However, we made a large jump last year and most of this gain has not been sustained this year as we had hoped. Worryingly, the subject areas where we have lost traction are some of the biggest. We are down 2 percentage points in Allied Health subject areas which comprises 31% of all NSS respondents. Engineering and technology is down by 1.5 points and makes up 10% of NSS respondents. Building and Planning is another large area in SCEBE

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with 7% of NSS respondents and we are down 6 percentage points. We have done well with those studying psychology. Since it became a distinct subject area in 2019, we have increased positive agreement by 22 percent including a 9-point increase in what was a difficult year.

### 4.3 Subject Segmentation – Sector Comparison

Q26 Positive Agreement Percentage 2021	GCU	UK Sector	Difference	Above or below average
Subjects allied to medicine	56.31	52.13	4.18	▲
Business & management	55.14	57.61	-2.02	▼
Computing	47.04	48.96	-1.92	▼
Engineering & technology	46.43	52.28	-5.85	▼
Building, planning & architecture	39.71	49.46	-9.75	▼
Creative arts & design	50	52.46	-2.46	▼
Social sciences	56.04	52.38	3.66	▲
Media, journalism and communications	48.33	49.7	-1.37	▼
Psychology	70.49	54.18	16.31	▲
Law	48.84	51.39	-2.55	▼

In comparison to the rest of the sector, our strengths are in Psychology, Allied Health and Social Sciences. However, we do especially poorly with SCEBE based subjects of Engineering and Building & Planning.

### 5.0 GCU - Overall Results

The following pertains to the full NSS survey not just Q26 and have been analysed by the university.

Scores have declined across all of the NSS categories apart from Organisation and Management. The largest decreases are seen in the Learning Resources and Learning Community categories, and the single biggest drop at individual question relates to 'Feedback on my work has been timely' which is now at 57% (-18). In six categories, we are on a par or above the Scottish sector average, and we outperform the UK average for overall satisfaction and all categories except Assessment and Feedback.

- Overall Satisfaction 78% (-7 percentage points)
- Teaching 80% (-5)
- Learning opportunities 80% (-5)
- Assessment & feedback 66% (-8)
- Academic support 74% (-6)
- Organisation and management 73% (=)
- Learning resources 78% (-11)
- Learning community 68% (-10)
- Student voice 68% (-8)

### 5.1 GCU - Sector Comparison

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The table below provides the results for overall satisfaction in the Scottish sector, excluding small specialist institutions.

### NSS 2020 Scottish university 'overall satisfaction' scores

University	2021 Overall Satisfaction	2020 Overall satisfaction	Variance to 2020
St Andrews	93%	93%	0
Aberdeen	85%	87%	-2
Strathclyde	85%	86%	-1
Robert Gordon	84%	90%	-6
Glasgow	84%	87%	-3
Edinburgh Napier	81%	86%	-5
Stirling	81%	87%	-6
Queen Margaret	79%	83%	-4
Heriot-Watt	79%	84%	-5
Abertay	79%	89%	-10
Dundee	79%	88%	-9
UHI	78%	82%	-4
GCU	<b>78%</b>	<b>85%</b>	-7
UWS	74%	85%	-11
Edinburgh	71%	78%	-7

*\*Figures are rounded to the nearest whole number, however, ranking order reflects exact scores. Glasgow School of Art, SRUC and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland are excluded.*

### 5.2 GCU - School and programme results

Outcomes for overall satisfaction at School level:

- SHLS: 81%
- GSBS: 80%
- SCEBE: 73%

Schools have programme level outcomes, which show that three programmes achieved 100% satisfaction, and in total 14 programmes scored 90% or more.

## 6.0 Summary

This has been a tough year for students and the NSS bore out the results of their frustrations. The gains that we had made in the 2020 survey have been wiped out yet we are on the whole in a better place than we started in 2017. The analysis has shown where we need to focus more of our communications, service improvements and campaigns on part time, mature and male students as well as better represent the interests of students studying in Allied Health and SCEBE.