

Committee Title	Student Voice					
Date of Meeting	Monday 23 rd October 2023					
Item Number and Title/Subject	Students' Association NSS Survey Results 2023					
Paper Presenter	Sara MacLean, Student Voice Team Leader					
Brief Summary of Issues/Topic	<p>The National Student Survey (NSS) asks final year undergraduate students questions, relating to various 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 25).</p> <p>This year, the Students' Association question jumped by almost 22 percentage points to 73.53% of NSS respondents giving us a positive rating. Much of this increase is due to the removal of the neither/nor option. This was a sector wide trend – however, GCU positive rating increased more substantially than did the Scottish sector rate or the UK sector rate. This means that GCU scored above both the UK and Scottish sector average. This is only the second time in seven years that we have achieved this feat.</p>					
Recommendation(s)	Information		Discussion	x	Approval	
	<p><i>Any member can ask a question by raising their voting card or virtual hand and be recognised by the Chair to speak.</i></p> <p>Student Voice are asked to discuss the NSS Survey Results 2023 report</p>					
Who have you consulted when developing the paper?	Trustee Board					
Staff/Student Protocol	Yes		No		N/A	x
Will any decision approved directly affect the work of staff?	N/A					
Should the paper be submitted to any other committee following its consideration/approval at this meeting?	N/A					
If yes, please state the committee and proposed date of submission.						

1.0 Introduction

The National Student Survey (NSS) invites students in their final year of their undergraduate degree to rate eight different areas of their academic experience as well as a question on their overall satisfaction* with their course and a question about the Students' Association. This report presents the findings from the 2023 National Student Survey (NSS), focusing on the GCU Students' Association's results for Question 25: *The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests.*

The NSS launched at GCU in February 2023 and ran until April 2023. The university response rate was a healthy 72% of all those eligible (undergraduate students in their final year). A recap of GCU's overall results is provide in section 5. Most of this report, though, will focus on Question 25 (Q25) that pertains to Students' Associations.

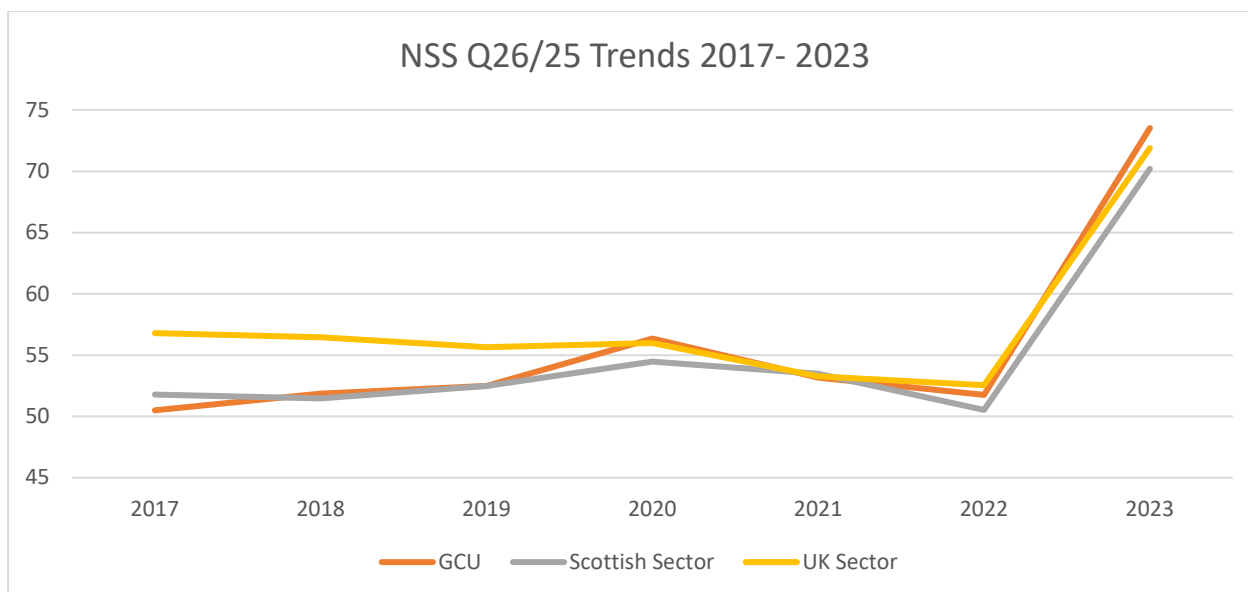
1.1 Changes to the NSS

This year the NSS underwent significant changes following a two-year consultation period. Changes included the removal of the Learning Community from the core survey (these questions moved to the optional bank of questions), the inclusion of a question on communication of mental health services as well as a couple of England only changes (addition of a question on freedom of speech and removal of the overall satisfaction question). The Students' Association question remains unchanged except for it is now question 25 instead of questions 26 in the survey. The most significant change is the change from a 5-point Likert response scale to a 4-point scale. This means that the "Neither/nor" option has been removed. As the Students' Association question has had the largest neither/nor response in the survey, it does mean that there has been a significant jump in our approval rating.

2.0 Overall Results for Q25/Q26

	GCU	Scottish Sector	UK Sector
2017	50.5	51.79	56.79
2018	51.85	51.48	56.47
2019	52.48	52.48	55.66
2020	56.36	54.47	55.99
2021	53.18	53.49	53.28
2022	51.76	50.53	52.55
2023	73.53	70.2	71.89

This year, the Students' Association question jumped by almost 22 percentage points to 73.53% of NSS respondents giving us a positive rating. Much of this increase is due to the removal of the neither/nor option but when students could no longer sit on the fence regarding this question, most of them responded positively. This was a sector wide trend – however, GCU positive rating increased more substantially than did the Scottish sector rate or the UK sector rate. This means that GCU scored above both the UK and Scottish sector average. This is only the second time in seven years that we have achieved this feat.



2.1 Ranking of Sector on Q25

So how does GCU Students' Association doing in Q25 compared to the other universities in Scotland? Simple answer: Good. We are ranked between 5th and 6th in Scotland depending on if the numbers are rounded to the first full number or if you included small and specialist universities. For this report, the usual method is to round to the first full number giving us this table:

Institution	Q25 2023 Score	Q26 2022 Score	Movement	2023 (2022) Rank
University of Strathclyde	79	63	=	1=(1)
Queen Margaret University Edinburgh	79	60	▲	1=(2)
University of St Andrews	78	56	=	3=(3)
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	76	52	▲	4 (=7)
Abertay University	74	43	▲	5=(15)
Glasgow Caledonian University	74	52	▲	5=(7)
University of Glasgow	72	52	=	7=(7)
Robert Gordon University	72	52	=	7=(7)
Edinburgh Napier University	72	54	▼	7=(5)
University of Stirling	71	56	▼	10=(3)
University of the West of Scotland	70	51	=	11(11)
Heriot-Watt University	69	54	▼	12(=5)

University of Aberdeen	68	49	▼	13(12)
University of the Highlands and Islands	67	48	▼	14(13)
Glasgow School of Art	62	41	▲	15(16)
University of Dundee	60	46	▼	16=(14)
University of Edinburgh	60	37	▲	16=(17)

On this sector comparison table, GCU Students' Association is ranked joint 5th with Abertay. However, with no rounding, Abertay pips GCU by .8 percentage points to be 5th in Scotland with GCU ranking 6th. Then there is the universities method of removing small and specialist institutions from their league table. If a similar methodology was applied to this table, then we would be joint 4th/5th in Scotland as the Royal Conservatory and the Glasgow School of Art would not be included. However, irrespective of methodology, GCU Students' Association is in the strongest position we have been in since the introduction of Q26/Q25.

Strathclyde Union and Queen Margaret Students' Association top the table this year. This is the second year that Strathclyde has topped the table. They have brand new facilities, six sabbatical officers and by far the largest block grant from their university in Scotland. Queen Margaret University Students' Union is an interesting case study. They are a newer university, like GCU, and focused on employability. Factors that may have affected their high scoring include a small cohort of students (currently around 6,000 students study at QMU compared to 20,000+ at GCU). QMUSU also receive a larger block grant per student than GCU Students' Association. Their big "win" has been successfully introducing microwaves on campus – this was introduced the year they rocketed up the table and events looks to be a key area of their model (with both a staff member and part-time events officer). St Andrews Student Union has good facilities, a small cohort of students, a large sabbatical team and a large per head block grant as well as a demographic of students that are traditionally able to get involved in SU activities. Abertay University is much like QMU – a newer university with a smaller cohort of students (around 5,000). It has rocketed from close to last in the table to joint 5th this year. Before this, they were mid-table, so their trajectory is unstable. Last year, they introduced measures to help alleviate the cost of living crisis for students such as collaborating with Fare Share to give out free food on Tuesdays and offering free soup on Thursday.

3.0 Segmentation Analysis

3.1 Demographics - Overall

The NSS provides insight into not only what final year undergraduate students think but also who they are, as the survey asks a number of demographics question and the response rate is high. This year, new demographic data from the NSS included metrics on type of occupation of parents, whether the student is studying local, and whether parents went to HE. There has also been changes to how disability is recorded with more categories added as well as the classification of mature students into different age bands. Below is the percentage of students who described themselves as fitting into each demographic segmentation sorted by the largest percentage.

Most of final year undergraduates are studying full time with a decreasing number studying part-time (3.4% this year compared to 6.7% last year and 4.8% in 2018). Apprenticeships accounted for 3.6% of mode of study and it is the first year this has been noted in the NSS. Most undergraduates completing the NSS are UK based with 4.6% of students from the EU and 1.4% are international (non-EU) students. 86.3% of final year students participating in the NSS reported no disability. Those reporting a disability has increased by almost 3% since 2018. This year the NSS had a broader range of choices for reporting a disability. 5.2% of NSS respondents reported a learning impairment (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia), 3.2% reported a disabling mental health condition, 2.7% reported multiple disabilities, 1.8% reported a physical or medical impairment and 0.9% reported a social or communication impairment.

Of the new data recorded, 37.2% of NSS respondents started HE after the age 20. This year, the NSS broke the mature student category into three bands. Those who were between the ages of 21 – 25 when they started HE (18.5% of GCU NSS respondents), 26 – 30 years old when they began (8.4%) and those who began after the age of 30 (10.3%). This year, the data from NSS also included a new demographic breakdown of “studying locally”. 48% of respondents were classified in this category with 52% are from outside the local area. I was unable to find out how this metric was calculated, for example how is “study locally” defined. Another new demographic is whether the students’ parents have HE qualifications as parental

UK	94
Full Time	93
No disability reported	86.3
White	81.4
Non- NHS	66.1
Female	63.2
Young	62.9
Not Studying local	51.6
A Levels or equivalent (highest qualification on entry)	51.1
HE (highest qualification on entry)	48.1
Studying Local	48
Parents HE Qualified	47.8
Parents not HE Qualified	38.4
Mature	37.2
Male	36.8
NHS Student	33.9
IMD 5	22.7
IMD 4	19.3
Mature 21 - 25	18.5
IMD 1	18.5
Higher manager & professional	18.3
IMD 3	17.3
IMD 2	16.1
Lower managerial & professional	15.3
Disability reported	13.7
Intermediate Occupations	11.5
Mature 31+	10.3
Semi-routine occupations	8.6
Mature 26 - 30	8.4
Routine Occupations	7.6
Asian	6.5
Small employers & Own account	5.6
Lower supervisory & technical	4.8
EU	4.6
Apprenticeship	3.6
Part Time	3.4
Black	2.8
Mixed ethnicity	1.6
Never worked & long-term unemployed	1.5
International (non-EU)	1.4
Other (ethnicity)	0.7

educational background has a strong influence on attending HE. 38% of GCU respondent did not have a parent with an HE qualification with 48% having parents with an HE qualification.

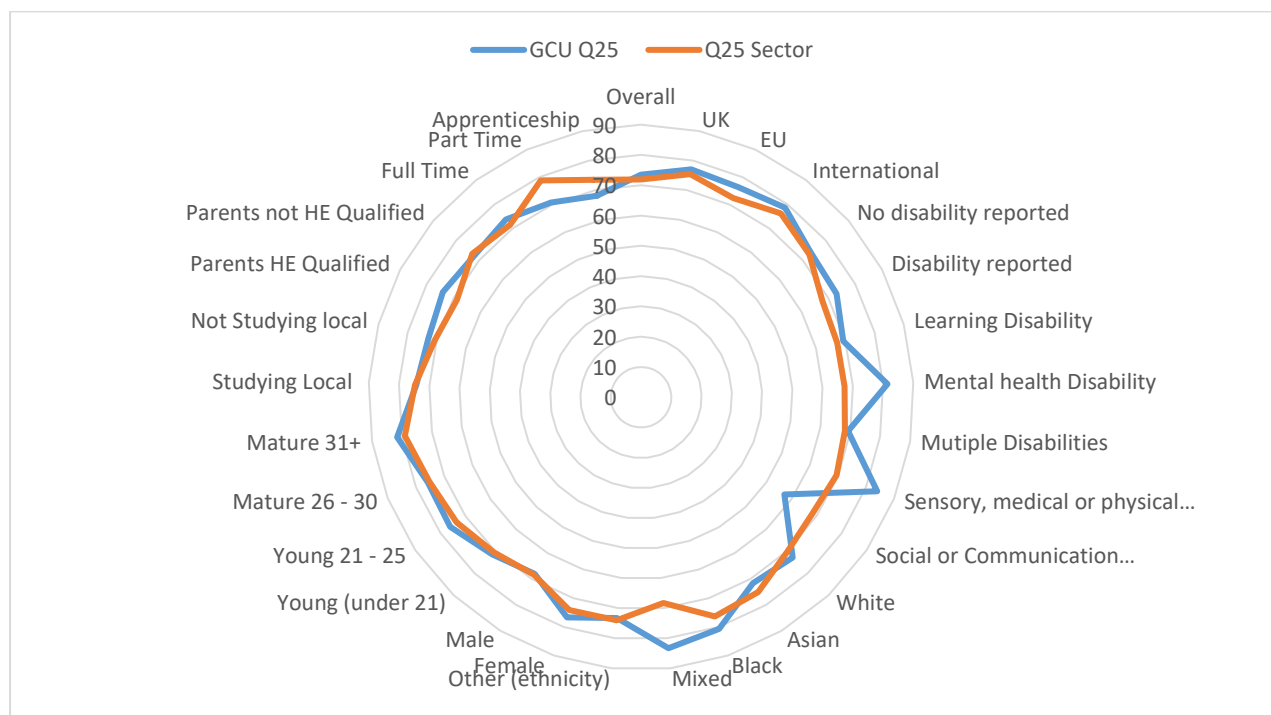
3.2 Demographic Segmentation – UK Sector Comparison

<i>Demographic</i>	GCU Q25	Q25 UK Sector	Difference	% of respondents
<i>Overall</i>	73.53	71.89	1.64	100
<i>UK</i>	77.04	75.42	1.62	94
<i>EU</i>	76.47	72.51	3.96	4.6
<i>International</i>	78.57	76.22	2.35	1.4
<i>No disability reported</i>	73.61	72.84	0.77	86.3
<i>Disability reported</i>	73.02	67.77	5.25	13.7
<i> Learning Impairment</i>	69.31	67.2	2.11	5.2
<i> Mental Health Impairment</i>	81.48	67.25	14.23	3.1
<i> Multiple Impairments</i>	69.3	68.21	1.09	2.7
<i> Sensory, Medical or Physical Impairment</i>	83.87	69.47	14.4	1.8
<i> Social or Communication Impairment</i>	57.14	68.35	-11.21	0.9
<i>White</i>	72.83	70.23	2.6	81.4
<i>Asian</i>	71.65	75.04	-3.39	6.5
<i>Black</i>	80.7	76.37	4.33	2.8
<i>Mixed ethnicity</i>	83.33	68.35	-14.98	1.6
<i>Other ethnicity</i>	73.33	74.06	-0.73	0.7
<i>Female</i>	76.69	74.07	2.62	63.2
<i>Male</i>	68.08	68.44	-0.36	36.8
<i>Young (under 21)</i>	71.48	70.53	0.95	62.9
<i>Young 21 - 25</i>	76.19	73.55	2.64	18.5
<i>Mature 26 - 30</i>	75.78	75.17	0.61	8.4
<i>Mature 31+</i>	81.6	79.02	2.58	10.3
<i>Studying Local</i>	74.3	74.75	-0.45	48
<i>Not Studying Local</i>	72.89	70.63	2.26	51.6
<i>Parents HE Qualified</i>	74.09	68.75	5.34	47.8
<i>Parents Not HE Qualified</i>	72.21	73.12	-0.91	38.4
<i>Full Time</i>	73.75	71.53	2.22	93
<i>Part Time</i>	70.83	78.92	-8.09	3.4
<i>Apprenticeship</i>	68.09	73.48	-5.39	3.6

As there are significant jump in all demographic categories for Q25 because of the removal of the neither/nor option, it is more fruitful to compare how we did compared to the UK sector as a whole. Overall, we are ahead of the sector in most demographic areas. It is important to note that 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

We did particularly well to represent students with a mental health impairment indicating that this is a strength for us. According to the data we are 5.25 percentage points above the UK sector when it comes to representing disabled students with almost all sub categories within this segmentation above average except for students with social or communication impairments. We also did well with respondents who have a parent with an HE qualification and those that identify as black and/or come from the EU. We did not do so well comparatively with respondents who identified as mixed ethnicity or Asian and this is an area we need to improve. Another area we need to work on is representing part-time and apprenticeship students with both these scores below average.

3.3 Demographic Segments – Radar Graph



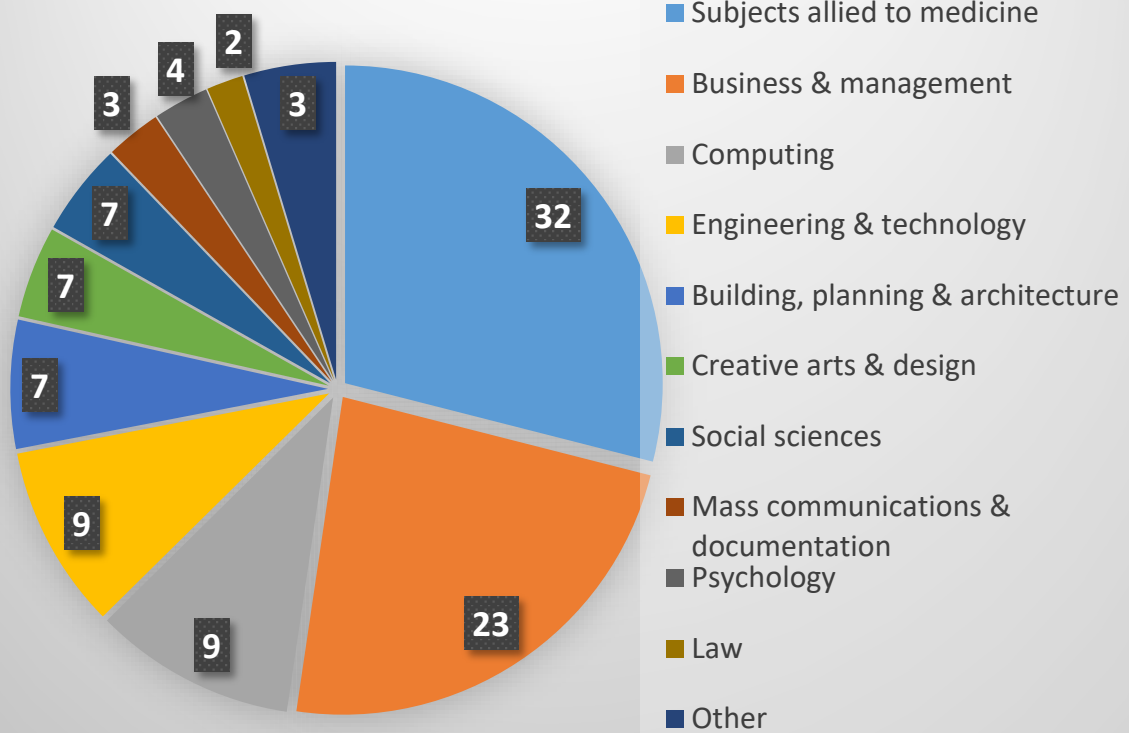
4.0 Segmentation by Subject Areas

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.

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.

What Subject do NSS Respondent Study

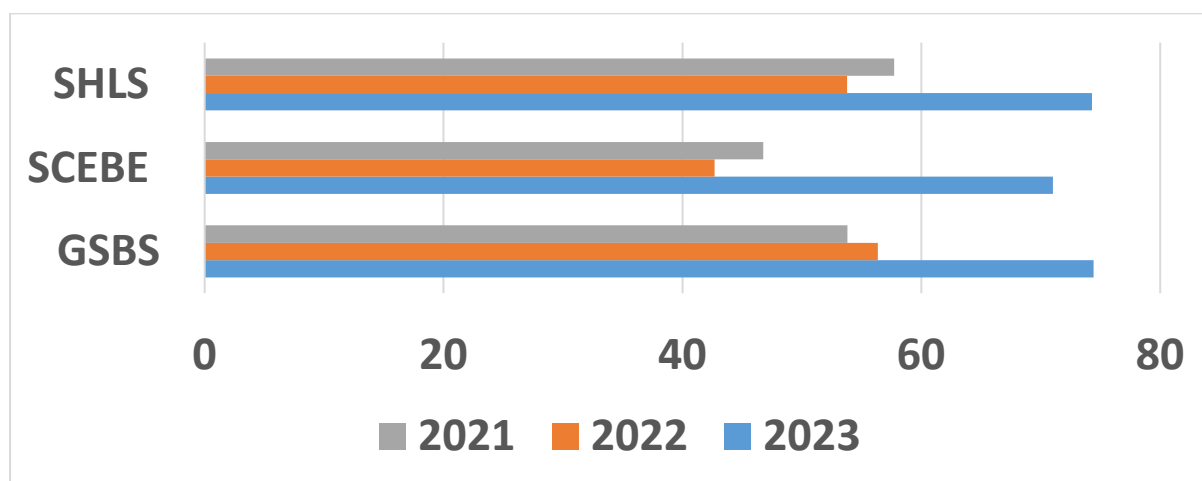


4.2 Subject Segmentation – Sector Comparison

	2023 GCU	2023 UK Sector	Difference 2023	Difference 2022
Subjects allied to medicine	73.64	73.44	0.2	1.04
Business & management	75.75	76.84	1.09	-4.71
Computing	78.17	71.33	6.84	-4.31
Engineering & technology	67.07	68.57	-1.5	-6.67
Building, planning & architecture	65.77	73.49	-7.72	-17.37
Creative arts & design	84.62	70.5	14.12	7.86
Social sciences	63.24	70.5	-7.26	6.29
Media and journalism	79.37	70.3	9.07	-9.43
Psychology	79.75	75.48	4.27	-2.25
Law	82.93	69.73	13.2	2.76

For the largest subject area at GCU, subjects allied to medicine, we are about the UK average. We improved in the other large SHLS cohort of psychology going from 2 percentage points below average to 4 percent above average. We also made strong gains in Computing finishing close to 7 points above average compared to last year when we were 4 points below average. While we are still below average in the other SCEBE subject areas of Engineering & Technology and Building, Planning and Architecture, we have closed some of the gap from previous years (relative to the UK average). For programmes in GSBS, we were one point below the sector average. We also scored lower than average with NSS respondents in social sciences. We did well in the GSBS subject areas of media & journalism and law.

5.0 School Comparison on Q25



Q25	Student Voice section total	Student Voice section total
GSBS	74.43	75.3
SCEBE	71.01	64.9
SHLS	74.29	73.45

We made large gains in all the schools with the biggest improvement coming in SCEBE even if it is still the School with the lowest positivity of Q25. Further, the Students' Association question is no longer the lowest average scoring question on the NSS with the new changes. This is also reflected in our scores when compared to the university Student Voice subsection. We scored higher in 2 out of the 3 schools on this.

6.0 GCU - Overall Results

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

In the latter part of the NSS survey fieldwork, the University was informed that Ipsos, the company that administers the NSS, had miscoded Glasgow Caledonian University as an English university, meaning that Glasgow Caledonian students had been administered the English version of the survey, which excludes the overall satisfaction question.

Following lengthy discussions with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), OfS and Ipsos, to mitigate any potential negative impact to the University, it was agreed that the Scottish sector average for overall satisfaction would be applied to Glasgow Caledonian at institutional level (given that we were at the Scottish sector average in the 2022 NSS), and that 2022 overall satisfaction scores would be noted where appropriate at course level.

	Teaching on my course	Learning opportunities	Assessment and feedback	Academic support	Organisation and management	Learning resources	Student voice
GCU	85	81	75	84	73	89	72
+/- Scotland	-1	=	+1	=	+1	+2	+1
+/- UK	=	=	-3	+1	-1	+3	=
Scotland	86	81	74	84	72	87	71
UK	85	81	78	83	74	86	72

Rank	University	NSS 2023	NSS 2022	+/- previous year	2023 benchmark	+/- benchmark
1	St Andrews	90	89	+1pp	81	+9pp
2	Aberdeen	85	86	-1pp	79	+6pp
3	Abertay	84	81	+3pp	76	+8pp
4	RGU	82	83	-1pp	76	+7pp
5	Strathclyde	82	82	=	78	+3pp
6	UHI	81	82	-1pp	79	+1pp
7	Edinburgh Napier	78	80	-2pp	74	+4pp
8	Glasgow	78	80	-2pp	79	-1pp
9	Glasgow Caledonian**	77	79		N/A	N/A
10	UWS	75	74	+1pp	74	=
11	QMU	74	76	-2pp	76	-2pp
12	Dundee	74	77	-3pp	75	-2pp
13	Stirling	71	80	-9pp	76	-6pp
14	Edinburgh	71	73	-2pp	78	-7pp
15	Heriot-Watt	68	70	-2pp	77	-9pp

*Excludes SRUC, Glasgow School of Art and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

** Due to the survey administration error outlined in Section 3, the Scottish sector average for overall satisfaction has been applied to Glasgow Caledonian.

	Teaching on my course	Learning opportunities	Assessment and feedback	Academic support	Organisation and management	Learning resources	Student voice
GSBS	87	85	78	88	80	91	75
SCEBE	79	74	70	81	67	85	65
SHLS	88	83	77	82	70	89	74

7.0 Summary

GCU Students' Association has had a positive year overall in regards to the NSS results. Changes to the questionnaire, especially the removal of the neither/nor option in the answer bank. This change saw Q25 jump across the sector. Moreover, GCU Students' Association improved more than the sector and for the second time in 7 years we are above both UK and Scottish sector averages for Q25. This puts us in joint 5th place across Scottish Student Associations/Unions. New demographic data was added to the NSS this year and we did strong in most demographic areas. Segmentation analysis for the subject areas within GCU also showed mostly a positive rise in satisfaction with academic representation at GCU.