

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN STUDENTS' UNION

ULSU Q23 Result 2015.



2015 University of Lincoln Students' Union NSS Result

This year's NSS results were released on 31st July, with an embargo in place until 12th August. This document contains student comments from the NSS, and is therefore for internal use only. The University of Lincoln received a response rate of 2050 respondents (73%) out of a possible 2811 (100%). Percentage wise this is an equivalent response rate to 2014 but comparing numbers to last year, there were 225 less respondents.

Across the University the results have improved for the majority of questions however, there were ten questions where there was a lower satisfaction score received. This includes the Overall Satisfaction of the University which fell to 85%, 1% decrease from the results of 2014.

Areas that increased in satisfaction were:

- The mean of the section, "Academic Support" increased by 2% to 84% (above the sector average by 2%)
- The mean of the section, "Learning Resources" increased by 3% to 90% (above the sector by 4%)
- The mean of the section, "Personal Development" increased by 1% to 87% (above the sector by 5%)

Areas that decreased in satisfaction were:

- The section, "The Teaching on my Course," decreased by 1% to 87%
- Question 8, "I have received detailed comments on my work," decreased by 3% to 73%
- Question 14, "Any changes in the course or learning have been communicated effectively," decreased by 2% to 77%.

The area within question 8 is an area which was outlined as an area for improvement in the analysis of the feedback campaign delivered over December/ January 2014/15. We hope that the year ahead this area can be improved using the data that was received and sent to schools of the respondents. A full breakdown of the scores for each question with a comparison to NSS 2014 results can be found at the end of this document.

Already the course of Nursing has been highlighted as an area of attention for the University. The team in EDEU have been asked to help the staff team on the Nursing programme, to create an action plan for this area as a focus from the results of NSS 2015. With a course such as Nursing, there are external factors to influence the student body that wouldn't do so on others. When considering actions for the development of this course area, these external factors should be considered, such as the NHS Staff morale. Students' who will be placed in this environment for the majority of their studies will be influenced by this and feed that back through methods such as the NSS Survey. Additionally we need to be aware that the NSS is an autumn priority for this year for the Vice Chancellor, Mary Stuart, in order to improve and have an impact on results for 2016.

For Question 23, "I am satisfied with the Students' Union (Association or Guild) at my institution," we received 73% satisfaction rate, a 1% decrease on last year's result. Research led by NSS shows that the type of institution doesn't seem to affect the score that the Students' Unions will receive, but that there is a relationship between block grant allowance and satisfaction score – increase of

grant = increase of satisfaction. Additionally their research shows that there is a correlation with how much spending there is on Sports and Societies – the higher spend, the higher the satisfaction, but only up to £1 million pounds.

Questions 23 also should be considered in a different manner due to how broad the question and how impossible it is to tell which aspect of the Union a respondent is considering when measuring their satisfaction, which is one of the reasons it's currently under review. For this reason we have used the NSS comments linking to the Students' Union and the Annual Membership Survey 2015 results.

It's also important to note that the methodology changed this year in the way that questions and statements were presented to students. In previous years, the selections of statements have been presented in the order of the level of agreement. This year the selection of statements were presented in a mixed order for each question asked, which may have an effect on how students score different areas. The impact of the change to methodology is something we will need to measure in the future after students have been surveyed in this manner more than once.

The table below is a breakdown of the results by the level of agreement to the statement within the question. We can see from this that a higher percentage of students have moved into Not Applicable, as well as dropping down the scale generally – Mostly Agree to Neither count, Neither Count to Mostly Agree.

Table 1: Table to show the no. of students who chose each agree statement in 2015 comparing to 2014.

Chosen Statement	2014	2015	Difference
Definitely Agree	701 (31%)	599 (29%)	-102
Mostly Agree	895 (39%)	788 (38%)	-107
Neither Count	411 (18%)	353 (17%)	-58
Mostly Disagree	91 (4%)	101 (5%)	+10
Definitely Disagree	65 (3%)	61 (3%)	-4
Not Applicable	112 (5%)	148 (7%)	+36
Total of Respondents	2275	2050	-225

With a score of 73%, University of Lincoln Students' Union is now in the second quartile of Students' Unions with a ranking of 42 out of 137. This is a drop of seven places compared to last year's ranking of 35, but still nine places higher than the ranking in 2012 of 51, when Question 23 about Students' Unions was introduced to the NSS. Generally across the Sector for this question, only 13% of Unions saw a decrease in score.

2014/15 was the first academic year after the success of achieving NUS Higher Education Student's Union of the Year Award, and with it came heightened expectations from our students. To add to this, NSS 2015 is the first through which the first year of £9000 students are coming through were surveyed. These students' have higher expectations generally due to the idea of "buying" their degree and overall student experience, which is something to bear in mind when looking at this year's results as well as plans to develop the Union in the future. Over the past academic year, we have faced different challenges in our service and support to

students. For instance, at the start of Term One of 2014/15, we had staffing problems in three areas of the Students' Union; Reception, Activities and Representation. Taking Reception as a first instance, lack of support and service on the first point of contact to the Students' Union will have a negative influence on our students – particularly for those who are engaging with us regularly with a specific purpose such as a Sport's President submitting a team list on a weekly basis. We believe that this is an area of weakness reflected in the NSS due to feedback received in March. In the Annual Membership Survey 2015 (published April, 2015) we had a decline of satisfaction, with 11% of respondents who had used the service disagreeing to some extent with the statement; "My query was dealt with effectively."

Linking to this some students may have felt that they had limited support from the staff in the Activities department, who were a team member down due to illness and then permanent leave. A similar situation was seen within the Representation department which may have affected those final year Course Representatives who went on to complete the survey. Comments received within the NSS reflected that this may have been an issue that students considered when measuring their satisfaction:

"The Students' Union is completely unhelpful if you are the one running a society or group (fab if not though)"

"More advertising is needed for student sports teams and support from the SU."

There were some customer issues within our commercial services such as in early 2014/15, The Shed venue name was legally changed to The Swan, something which not all students agreed with as there were concerns over losing the identity it had developed over time. In Our Annual Membership Survey 2015 (April, 2015) asked students about their awareness of our services and venues. This question saw The Swan receive a lower level of awareness than other venues (7%). We believe that as we welcome a cohort of students who will only have identified The Swan as The Swan that this will increase awareness and satisfaction in future years. Additionally in term two, the initial success of Orderella with students led to issues within the Tower Bars kitchen and bar due to the staffing and speed of service.

Additionally, there was an expectation that this year as we had been busier in our commercial services such as The Engine Shed (Quack) that our satisfaction score would increase. However, stats from our Students' Union Management System shows that the breakdown of attendees are:

- Year 1 – 39%
- Year 2- 31%
- Year 3 – 19%

These figures suggest that, those who completed the NSS may not have been using all our services that have been developed and improved on over the past academic year. We anticipate a rise in next year's satisfaction due to these figures.

General comments received within the NSS that can be used to consider when developing the Students' Union generally were:

"Student Union is poor with poor organisation and poor staff training."

"Students' Union lacks organisations and communication between the different departments. Anything involving the Students' Union becomes a long drawn out process of jumping through hoops!"

"The university needs to push more on the Students' Union; it would have been nice to have more societies and nights out to choose from."

"Lack of engagement with the local community. Lack of activities (non-sports based) during the day."

Currently, we're working to implement changes to areas to address the decline in satisfaction score for the Students' Union. This academic year we will see the launch and introduction of the Students' Union Advice Centre. We believe that this service will open the doors to helping a number of students who otherwise may not engage with us. Additionally, this service will allow us to provide good quality and impartial advice to students, showing our members that we are there to truly help. Another area that we're keen to work on and improve as a Students' Union is with employability. Within the Annual Membership Survey 2015 (April 2015), employability was seen as a weakness of ours which is something we want to change, as 26% of respondents felt they did not know how to access employability opportunities we provide. This coming year we hope to implement an employability plan focussing on access to employability events and workshops. Additionally we will be promoting student employability opportunities within our services, such as commercial and volunteering teams, in order to show they can develop their skills. There has also been extra care taken with the annual update of materials that takes place over summer, to make the benefits that link the opportunities to employability.

With regards to more everyday life for our students, we wanted to make ourselves more accessible to them. The Annual Membership Survey showed that the majority of our students don't know who the Sabbatical Officers of the Students' Union are. The term Sabbatical Officer is not a phrase regularly used nor is it well understood by students. This raises difficulties when trying to relate to students who it was that spoke to them in The Swan about Hidden Course Costs or who it was that gave a lecture shout out about voting in the Students' Union Elections. For this reason we have rebranded our Sabbatical Officers as Student Leaders.

Another major development this academic year is our new democracy structure. Over the past two years, the question within our Annual Membership Survey) which asked whether members felt they can influence the SU were lower that we would like (2014 = 54%, 2015 = 56%). In 2014/15, our President carried out a Democracy Review on our current structure and barriers to involvement. The outcomes were a larger executive committee by introducing a Vice President International, and a new Zone structure. The introduction of the extra Student Leader will ensure that International students are represented across the board within the Students' Union in order to ensure their experience is as good as our Home students. The Zone structure was recommended and now implemented, in order to ensure scrutiny from the students to volunteer officers, and the volunteer

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officers to the Student Leaders. Each zone discussing their issues and reporting updates will also allow Student Council to be more effective and discuss motions or governance changes for an appropriate length of time. The introduction of this structure should enable more students to get involved with our democratic systems and influence the work we do, and hopefully improve their satisfaction and experience with us.

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Question	2014 (%)	2015 (%)	Difference
The Teaching on my Course	87%	88%	-1%
1) Staff are good at explaining things	90%	90%	=
2) Staff have made the subject interesting.	86%	84%	-2%
3) Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching.	90%	89%	-1%
4) The course is intellectually stimulating	86%	84%	-2%
Assessment and Feedback	72%	72%	=
5) The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance	77%	78%	+1%
6) Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair	77%	76%	-1%
7) Feedback on my work has been prompt	64%	67%	+3%
8) I have received detailed comments on my work	76%	73%	-3%
9) Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand.	68%	68%	=
Academic Support	83%	84%	+1%
10) I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies.	82%	83%	+1%
11) I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.	87%	88%	+1%
12) Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices	80%	81%	+1%
Organisation and Management	78%	77%	-1%
13) The timetable works efficiently as far as my activities are concerned.	80%	81%	+1%
14) Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively.	79%	77%	-2%

15) The course is well organised and is running smoothly.	76%	74%	-2%
Learning Resources	87%	90%	+3%
16) The library resources and services are good enough for my needs.	85%	90%	+5%
17) I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to.	91%	92%	+1%
18) I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities or rooms when I needed to.	86%	87%	+1%
Personal Development	85%	86%	+1%
19) The course has helped me to present myself with confidence.	84%	85%	+1%
20) My communication skills have improved.	87%	88%	+1%
21) As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems.	84%	86%	+2%
Overall Satisfaction	86%	85%	-1%

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