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Student guide

Survey Season 2022



This guide is to help you complete your student survey for the 2021/22 academic year.

Please contact us for any further help and questions:
studentsurveys@arts.ac.uk



Fill in the survey
bit.ly/SurveyUAL

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Your voice matters

This is an annual opportunity for all students - undergrad, postgrad and further education - to feed back during a dedicated 'survey season' from January to March.

This includes a wide area of feedback with a number of different topics.

By completing your survey you can inspire change – your feedback will help us to improve UAL, making the experience even better for you and future students.

With an ongoing pandemic, it's been an exceptionally challenging year for all of us, and we understand your feedback will reflect this.

How you can take part

Visit bit.ly/SurveyUAL. From there, select your year group and you'll be taken straight to your survey.

You'll also be contacted by email with full details on how to take your survey. If you're a final year undergrad you'll be contacted by Ipsos MORI for the NSS from 27 January, otherwise your email will come from UAL.

You will stop receiving reminders once you have completed the survey.

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What do we want to know?

When thinking about these areas, consider the whole experience. Outside of core teaching, this can include the libraries, technicians, guest lecturers, and visiting practitioners.

The different areas you'll be asked about – and some of the things you might like to think about when you answer – include:

Teaching on my course

How do staff make the course engaging and stimulating?

Learning opportunities

What kind of opportunities did you get to apply the skills you've learnt here?

Assessment and feedback

What was the quality of the feedback on your work?

Academic support

How well were you supported in your studies, for example through your course tutors, technicians, and Academic Support including language tutors?

Organisation and management

How well organised was your course?

Learning community

Did you have opportunities to collaborate with other students and build your network?

Learning resources

How helpful were the resources supporting your learning, such as Library, IT, and specialist resources like software and workshop equipment?

Student voice

What opportunities did you have to feed back on the course and influence change?

Diversity

How diverse do you find your course content?

Course costs (CSS, NSS and PTES)

Were any additional costs on your course reasonable?

Welfare resources

Whether or not you used this, how useful did you find UAL welfare/student services?

Overall

How satisfied are you with the quality of your experience at UAL?

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Survey types and dates

24 January – 18 March

Course Student Survey (CSS)

For 1st and 2nd year undergrads and Graduate Diploma students

National Student Survey (NSS)

For final year undergrads

1 February – 18 March

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

For taught postgrads

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

For research postgrads

11 April – 3 June

Further Education Student Survey (FESS)

For further education students

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CSS and NSS question set and guidance

Anyone completing their NSS will also be able to separately share their experience during the Covid-19 pandemic by completing an optional section for feedback. Otherwise you should give feedback about your entire higher education experience since the start of your course.

Teaching on my course

- 1 Staff are good at explaining things.
- 2 Staff make the subject interesting.
- 3 Staff are understanding of my personal situation and help me to succeed.
- 4 The course is intellectually stimulating.
- 5 My course challenges me to achieve my best work.

Consider whether your course has challenged you to be creative, innovative, to problem solve and think critically in relation to both practice and theory.

Creative practice and making are also intellectual activities. Consider aspects of your course outside of core teaching – for example, guest lecturers, visiting practitioners and live projects.

Learning opportunities

- 6 My course provides me with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth.
- 7 My course provides me with opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different topics.
- 8 My course provides me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt.

Think about how your course has incorporated theory and practice. Does the course provide you with a sense of freedom and flexibility to pursue specific areas of study and personalise your learning? In addition, was this freedom balanced by the right level of structure?

Think about whether you were able to learn in a way that was demanding but also responded to your interests.

Assessment and feedback

- 9 The criteria used in marking is clear in advance.
- 10 Marking and assessment is fair
- 11 Feedback on my work is timely.
- 12 I receive helpful comments on my work.
- 13 Feedback on my work is personalised and allows me to reach my potential.

Feedback comes in many forms and settings, written and verbal, formal and informal, and from both lecturers and technical members of staff, and your peers.

Have you been able to apply the feedback you've received to help your learning?

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Academic support

- 14 I am able to contact staff when I need to.
- 15 I receive sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course.
- 16 Good advice is available when I need to make study choices on my course.

Think about the full range of staff you and fellow students can contact for advice and guidance: course tutors, technicians, academic support staff, librarians and administrators, finance and mental health support etc.

Guidance can similarly include careers support, tutorials, academic support from tutors and all visiting speakers and alumni.

Did you know how to contact your tutors and get advice?

Study choices can include, for example, elective units and dissertation subjects.

Organisation and management

- 17 The course is well organised and is running smoothly.
- 18 The timetable works efficiently for me.
- 19 Any changes in the course or teaching are communicated effectively.

Reflect on how well the online timetabling system works for you. This can include, for example, occasions where a course has been organised so there are shorter breaks between lessons, or perhaps where longer breaks have been arranged to allow students to have a pause during intense days.

Some courses have timetables to allow sessions to happen in a particular part of the week to help you plan and maximise your opportunities for paid work and independent study.

Think about the ways you are contacted by tutors etc. When something has changed, were you given enough notice and were the appropriate channels used for communicating these changes?

Learning resources

- 20 The IT resources and facilities provided support my learning well.
- 21 The library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) support my learning well.
- 22 I am able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I need to.

Think about all aspects of learning resources: studios/ technical workshops, Archives and Special Collections, equipment and help available from technicians, as well as the library. Reflect on some of the ways in which resources have been made available online/in alternative ways as part of UAL's response to the pandemic: click and collect services, online technical demonstrations, etc.

Online services can also include ASK and LinkedIn Learning, free copies of software for UAL students, Moodle and the MyUAL app also, Academic Support Online (academicsupportonline.arts.ac.uk).

Learning community

- 23 I feel part of a community of staff and students.
- 24 I have the right opportunities to work with other students as part of my course.
- 25 I feel my performance and ability to succeed is negatively impacted as a result of a lack of acknowledgment my cultural, religious, linguistic or national background.

Consider issues of inclusiveness and social integration. Were there any course specific community building events/initiatives?

You can also consider: group work, collaborative practice units, peer mentoring offered to first year students, networks and College site based events.

“Other students”, this can include both those on the same course and those across the wider College/ University.

Student voice

- 26 I have the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course.
- 27 Staff value students’ views and opinions about the course.
- 28 It is clear how students’ feedback on the course has been acted on.
- 29 The students’ union (association or guild) effectively represents students’ academic interests.

Think about the various channels of feedback made available to you, such as Course Committees, Student Reps, Deans meetings, other Arts SU channels.

Think about specific changes which have happened as a result of student feedback.

Overall

- 30 Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my course.

This is the question which is referred to most, once results are published. This is because it reflects the overall satisfaction once you have taken everything into account.

Diversity

- 31 My course encourages me to explore a range of culturally diverse course and research materials.

This is a chance for you to feed back on how diverse you find UAL to be.

This can be related to your studies, like the selection of diverse example texts and other learning resources.

Course costs

- 32 The costs associated with my course (additional to fees) are more than I can afford.
- 33 My financial situation does not have an impact on my academic attainment.

You should consider whether you feel costs are reasonable in the context of the course you are undertaking.

This is a question from Arts SU.

Welfare resources and facilities

- 34 There is sufficient provision of welfare and student services to meet my needs.
- 35 When needed, the information and advice offered by welfare and student services has been helpful.

Whether or not you have used them, this is a chance for you to feed back on the services available to you which might include counselling, mental health or disability and dyslexia support, money and immigration advice.

In your own words...

- 36 Thinking about your overall experience, are there any particularly positive or negative aspects you would like to highlight?

This question is for optional free text comments. When completing the survey, you will be given the chance to provide both positive and negative comments. You can reflect on your overall experience and/or give feedback on anything you feel hasn't been covered in the previous questions.

PTES question set and guidance

For most of the questions students will be asked to use the following scale to answer:

Definitely agree – Mostly agree – Neither agree nor disagree – Mostly disagree – Definitely disagree – Not applicable.

There is also an opportunity to provide open-ended comments at the end of the survey.

Teaching and learning

- 1 Staff are good at explaining things.
- 2 Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching.
- 3 The course is intellectually stimulating.
- 4 The course has enhanced my academic ability.
- 5 The learning materials provided on my course are useful.
- 6 There is sufficient contact time (face-to-face and/or online) between staff and students to support effective learning.
- 7 I am happy with the support for my learning I receive from staff on my course.

Consider aspects of your course outside of core teaching – for example, guest lecturers and visiting practitioners. Have you felt challenged by the course? Remember that ‘making’ is also an ‘intellectual’ activity.

‘Academic ability’ could be reflected upon in the context of creating work as an intellectual activity point.

Academic ability is about experimentation, concept development, research and reflection, communication and debate.

In thinking about support, answers can reference the full range of staff you can contact for advice and guidance: course tutors, technicians, academic support staff, librarians, administrators and others.

Engagement

- 8 I am encouraged to ask questions or make contributions in taught sessions (face-to-face and/or online).
- 9 The course has created sufficient opportunities to discuss my work with other students (face-to-face and/or online).
- 10 My course has challenged me to produce my best work.
- 11 The workload on my course has been manageable.
- 12 I have appropriate opportunities to give feedback on my experience.

Think about the various channels of feedback made available to you, such as Course Committees, Student Reps, Deans meetings, other Arts SU channels.

Remember that your input may have helped enhance the course and the learning experience.

Reflect on how your learning and development has been encouraged and progressed through feedback and assessment.

Think about teaching sessions that have particularly encouraged debate and discussion, as well as moments in the course where you've been able to present your work and ideas to each other.

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Assesment and feedback

- 13 The criteria used in marking have been made clear in advance.
- 14 Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.
- 15 Feedback on my work has been prompt.
- 16 Feedback on my work (written or oral) has been useful.

Feedback comes in many forms and settings, written and verbal, formal and informal, and from both lecturers and technical members of staff, and your peers.

Remember, marking criteria may have been outlined in unit handbooks or in the briefing presentation for a unit. Many different forms of feedback can be included, such as crits / feedback from peers / emails. Have you been able to apply feedback received to help your learning?

Dissertation or major project

- 17 I understand the required standards for the dissertation/major project.
- 18 I am happy with the support I received for planning my dissertation/major project (topic selection, project outline, literature search etc.).
- 19 My supervisor has the skills and subject knowledge to adequately support my dissertation/major project.
- 20 My supervisor provides helpful feedback on my progress.

Think about the process involved in supporting you to identify your topic.

This may include how many tutorials are offered. How have tutors provided research skills, and what feedback tutorials have there been already and/or are planned?

NB: If you have not yet started this stage of your studies, mark this as 'not applicable' (e.g. students in year 1 of a 2 year masters, on a January start, etc).

Organisation and management

- 21 The timetable fits well with my other commitments.
- 22 Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively.
- 23 The course is well organised and is running smoothly.
- 24 I was given appropriate guidance and support when I started my course.
- 25 I am encouraged to be involved in decisions about how my course is run.

Reflect on how well the online timetabling system and Moodle work for you; this can include, for example, occasions where a course has been organised so that there are smaller breaks between lessons.

Think about the ways you are contacted by staff, e.g. when something has changed, were you given as much notice as possible, and were the appropriate channels used for communicating these changes?

Resources and services

- 26 The library resources and services are good enough for my needs (including physical and online).
- 27 I have been able to access general IT resources (including physical and online) when I needed to.
- 28 I have been able to access subject specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software) necessary for my studies.
- 29 I am aware of how to access the support services at my institution (e.g. health, finance, careers, accommodation).

Think about all aspects of learning resources: studios/ technical workshops, Archives and Special Collections, equipment and help available from technicians, as well as the library.

Reflect on some of the ways in which resources have been made available online/in alternative ways as part of our response to the pandemic: click and collect services, online technical demonstrations, etc.

Online services can also include ASK and LinkedIn Learning, free copies of software, Moodle and the MyUALapp and Academic Support Online (academicsupportonline.arts.ac.uk).

This is a chance for you to feed back on the services available to you which might include counselling, mental health or disability and dyslexia support, money and immigration advice.

Support

- 30 The support for academic skills meets my needs (for example, support for your writing, language, subject-specific skills)
- 31 The support for using IT and accessing resources meets my needs (for example, support with accessing online journals and e-books, using digital learning tools/apps)
- 32 The support for my health and wellbeing meets my needs (for example, personal tutor, student support and counselling services)

Consider the support you received as part of Academic Support, digital support and health and wellbeing.

Whether or not you have used them, this is a chance for you to feed back on the services available to you, which might include counselling, mental health or disability and dyslexia support, money and immigration advice.

Skills development

- 33 As a result of the course I am more confident about independent learning.
- 34 My confidence to be innovative or creative has developed during my course.
- 35 My research skills have developed during my course.
- 36 My ability to communicate information effectively to diverse audiences has developed during my course.
- 37 I have been encouraged to think about what skills I need to develop for my career.
- 38 As a result of the course I feel better prepared for my future career.

Think about careers support, tutorials, academic support from tutors and all visiting speakers and alumni.

Keep in mind projects which have been undertaken in the course that focus on these kind of skills, especially live projects with externals.

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Overall

- 39 Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course.
- 40 Please comment on one thing that has been most enjoyable or interesting on your course.
- 41 Please comment on one thing that would most improve your experience of your course.

Think of all aspects of the course when answering this question.

Institutional questions

- 42 The costs associated with my course (additional to fees) are more than I can afford.
- 43 My course encourages me to explore a range of culturally diverse course and research materials.
- 44 When needed, the information and advice offered by welfare and student services has been helpful.

This question was requested by Arts SU.

Consider whether costs are reasonable in the context of the course you are undertaking.

This is a chance for you to feed back on how diverse you find UAL to be. This can be related to your studies, like the selection of diverse example texts and other learning resources, or in terms of how culturally diverse the wider UAL environment is.

Whether or not you have used them, this is a chance for you to feed back on the services available to you, which might include counselling, mental health or disability and dyslexia support, money and immigration advice.

PRES question set and guidance

For most of the questions students will be asked to use the following scale to answer:

Definitely agree – Mostly agree – Neither agree nor disagree – Mostly disagree – Definitely disagree – Not applicable.

There is also an opportunity to provide open-ended comments at the end of the survey.

Supervision

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about supervision?

- a** My supervisor/s have the skills and subject knowledge to support my research
- b** I have regular contact with my supervisor/s, appropriate for my needs
- c** My supervisor/s provide feedback that helps me direct my research activities
- d** My supervisor/s help me to identify my training and development needs as a researcher

Consider how your supervisory team's knowledge and specialist skills, feedback and support for your personal development has helped you develop as a researcher.

It would be helpful to comment more specifically on your knowledge, skills, feedback and personal development needs in terms of the different stages of your doctorate, e.g. pre- and post-confirmation, submission.

Resources

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about resources?

- a** I have a suitable working space when I am on campus
- b** I have a suitable working space when I am studying remotely
- c** There is appropriate access to physical library resources and facilities
- d** There is appropriate access to online library resources
- e** There is appropriate access to IT resources and facilities when I am on-campus
- f** I have access to the specialist resources necessary for my research (for example, equipment, facilities, software, materials) when I am on campus
- g** I have access to the specialist resources necessary for my research (for example, course materials, software, virtual learning environment) when I am studying remotely

This refers to all resources including Archives and Special Collections. Online services includes the PGR Hub, RNUAL Resources available on the PGR Hub, ASK, LinkedIn Learning , Thinking Teaching, Write Here Write Now.

Consider also Academic Support Online. You might also consider the college Student Support Fund to which all students can apply to support their research.

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Research culture

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the research culture?

- a** I have access to a good seminar programme in my research area
- b** I have frequent opportunities to discuss my research with other researchers including research students
- c** The research community in my research area stimulates my work
- d** I am aware of opportunities to become involved in the wider research community, beyond my department

Consider seminars, and opportunities to engage with fellow researchers offered through RNUAL, College based activities, Research Centres and Institutes. Consider also newsletters, residencies and events offered by the Post-Grad Community. Think about the online provision developed through RNUAL, the PGR Hub, online College Groups and the Post-Grad Community.

It would be helpful if you can comment to the university-level provision RNUAL and Institutes, college and department-level provision (centres, hubs, formal or informal activities) It would be helpful to specify how this provision related to stages in your study progression.

Progress and assessment

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about induction, progression arrangements and assessment?

- a** I received an appropriate induction to research degree programme
- b** I understand the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress
- c** I understand the required standard for my thesis
- d** The final assessment procedures for my degree are clear to me

You may want to reflect on RNUAL and college inductions. You might want to consider training directed at the preparation for registration, confirmation and submission and consider the supervisory support at each stage.

The Research Degrees Handbook and the PGR Hub contain guidance and detail on progress and assessment – have you found these helpful?

Responsibilities

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about responsibilities?

- a** My institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students
- b** I understand my responsibilities as a research degree student
- c** I am aware of my supervisors' responsibilities towards me as a research degree student
- d** Other than my supervisor/s, I know who to approach if I am concerned about any aspect of my degree programme

Think about specific changes which have happened as a result of your feedback.

Remember the various channels of feedback made available to you, such as Course Committees, Student Reps, other Arts SU channels. Supervisor and student responsibilities are clearly explained in the Research Degrees Handbook and details on who to approach are in the Handbook and on the PGR Hub.

Support

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about available support?

- a** The support for academic skills meets my needs (for example, support for your writing, language, subject-specific skills)
- b** The support for using IT and accessing resources meets my needs (for example, support with accessing online journals and e-books, using digital learning tools/apps)
- c** The support for my health and wellbeing meets my needs (for example, personal tutor, student support and counselling services)

Consider support and resources received through RNUAL; academic support; library support; disability and mental health services; students union; supervisors and administrative staff.

Whether or not you have used them, this is a chance for you to feedback on the services available to you which might include counselling, mental health or disability and dyslexia support, money and immigration advice.

Research skills

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about research skills development?

- a** My skills in applying appropriate research methodologies, tools and techniques have developed during my programme
- b** My skills in critically analysing and evaluating findings and results have developed during my programme
- c** My confidence to be creative or innovative has developed during my programme
- d** My understanding of 'research integrity' (e.g. rigour, ethics, transparency, attributing the contribution of others) has developed during my programme

Think about how you have benefited from RNUAL, college/institute based training and supervision. You might also consider how opportunities to present/exhibit your work inside and outside of UAL have enhanced your confidence as a researcher.

Professional development

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about professional development?

- a** My ability to manage projects has developed during my programme
- b** My ability to communicate information effectively to diverse audiences has developed during my programme
- c** I have developed contacts or professional networks during my programme
- d** I have increasingly managed my own professional development during my programme

Think about how training opportunities and experiences gained during your research degree have helped you develop your profile as an independent researcher.

Motivation

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about your motivation?

- a** As a result of my research degree programme I feel better prepared for my future career.

Think about how supervisory support, RNUAL training, opportunities to share your research with the research community inside and outside of UAL have prepared you for your future career.

Covid-19 pandemic

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Covid-19 pandemic?

- a** Communications from my institution in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic were appropriate and clear
- b** I have received the support I need from my institution in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic
- c** My institution has worked to ensure the quality of my academic experience during the Covid-19 pandemic

Think about the communications you received from UAL, Research Student Team, your supervisory team and your college. Consider how RNUAL and college training, viva examinations, confirmation meetings and supervision moved online and are continuing to give support. Think about how these developments have supported you and provided you with opportunities

Overall

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience?

- a** Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of my research degree programme of my research degree programme
- b** I am confident that I will complete my research degree programme within my institution's expected timescale

This is the question which is referred to most once results are published. This is because it reflects the overall satisfaction of students once they have taken everything into account.

Consider your awareness of the timeline of your research degree and the support you are receiving to stay on track with that timeline.

What, if anything, has been the one most positive aspect of your research degree programme so far?

What, if anything, is the one top area in which your experience of your research degree programme so far could be improved

This question is for optional free text comments. When completing the survey, you will be given the chance to provide both positive and negative comments. Reflect on your overall experience and/or give feedback on anything you feel hasn't been covered in the previous questions.

FESS question set and guidance¹

For most of the questions students will be asked to use the following scale to answer: Definitely agree – Mostly agree – Neither agree nor disagree – Mostly disagree – Definitely disagree – Not applicable.

There is also an opportunity to provide open-ended comments at the end of the survey.

¹The FE Office expect the wording of some questions to change slightly to ensure they reflect both blended and online course delivery (The areas covered by the questions will not change).

Communication

- 1 The information available before I started the course was clear and accurate
- 2 Timetables are accurate and were provided in good time
- 3 The information on Moodle supports my learning

Do you feel you received enough, accurate information in good time? This includes start dates, timetables and what to expect in the first week etc.

Teaching and projects

- 4 My course helped me understand assessment requirements
- 5 Projects help me meet the course objectives
- 6 Teaching sessions are varied and interesting
- 7 Tutors are motivated and supportive
- 8 The standard of teaching on my course is high
- 9 Technicians are skilled and supportive
- 10 The course has helped me to study independently
- 11 I am aware of progression opportunities (e.g. BA and industry)
- 12 understand more about sustainable practices from my course (e.g. recycling, re-using materials)

Consider all aspects of your course including that outside of core teaching – for example: guest lecturers and visiting practitioners. Have you felt challenged by the course? Do you feel you were supported in your development throughout the year and are ready to progress to higher education?

Language skills and maths

- 13 My ability to write and speak about my subject has improved
- 14 My ability to use maths-related skills has improved (e.g. measurement, scale, proportion)

This is about maths and English development in your field of study, not comparing it to your GCSEs or other qualifications.

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The environment of the course

- 15 I know who to ask if I need help with my studies
- 16 I know where to go if I need help with non-academic issues (e.g. finance, accommodation, visa, personal welfare, welfare of others)
- 17 The course promotes equality and cultural diversity
- 18 The college provides a safe working environment
- 19 My course is free from bullying and discrimination
- 20 I feel part of the larger creative UAL community
- 21 Library Services (e.g. information resources, online services, learning spaces and help from staff) meet my study needs

Whether or not you have accessed these facilities; this is a chance for you to feed back on the university services available to you which might include counselling, mental health or disability and dyslexia support, money, immigration and accommodation advice.

Recommendation

- 22 I would highly recommend my course

Provide as much detail as possible, if you were happy with the course or not.