



FACULTY STUDENT  
VOICE REPORT



SPRING '17

SCIENCE



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# JAMIE BENNETT

## VP ACADEMIC QUALITY

Welcome back to Liverpool Students' Union's Faculty Student Voice reports for 2017. These reports are produced each year in partnership with our members, your students. The main aim of these reports is to provide staff with the voice of their students regarding the issues that matter most to them. This year we opted to trial another FSVR for the year 2017 in order to try and track the progress made towards the agreed upon recommendations contained within the last FSVR. We decided this in order to close the feedback loop effectively with our members who take the time to help us produce these reports.

You may also have noticed that this year LiverpoolSU have engaged in a host of new activities. This year we decided to try and standardise the feedback mechanism for all students when engaging with LiverpoolSU. We achieved this with the introduction of SimOn, our Simple Online feedback tool which allows students to give feedback on their academic experience, 24/7, 365 days of the year. Thus far 260 students have completed SimOn since its introduction in January. Course Reps have been and will continue to be trained on what SimOn is and how to use it responsibly and we believe this tool could be a boon for our reps. All new student reps from September will have training on SimOn as part of their initial Course Rep training. Further, this year we have introduced School and Faculty Reps. This, we believe, enhances the representation of our students in the co-creation of their educational experience at LJMU from the students who benefit the most from this strengthening of the student/staff partnership.

We would like to thank LJMU staff for their ongoing support in assisting in our vision to make students Love Student Life and their commitment to the student voice and improving the experience of their students.

This report provides an update on the Faculty Student Voice Report (FSVR) recommendations made in December 2016. Discussions were held with the Associate Dean of Education for Sciences and the Faculty Sabbatical Officer regarding the progression of each recommendation from the December 2016 FSVR and what changes have occurred since that report was published. This has formed the basis of this report along with data obtained from SimOn reports collated between 16th January and 28th March 2017.

This report was created in collaboration with the Associate Dean of Education Phil Denton and the Faculty Sabbatical Officer Summer Jette-Gray. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for their contribution in writing this update. We would also like to thank staff, reps and students for their comments and feedback, which has helped shape this document.

Jamie Bennett, Vice President Academic Quality  
Liverpool Students' Union

# MEET THE NEW FACULTY REP COORDINATORS

Hello! We are the newly appointed Faculty Representation Coordinators. We are the key contacts for LJMU staff to interact with LiverpoolSU for everything relating to representation for students. This involves the everyday management of the Course Rep system in the Faculty, while building up the connection with the Faculty as a whole.

## WE ARE DOING THIS BY...

- A.** Working with academic staff to help elect and select Course Reps to encourage our partnership development. This will create a more cohesive recruitment process that will improve the feedback loop as a result.
- B.** Developing the Course Rep system to ensure that students are aware of what being a Course Rep entails.
- C.** Providing training for Course Reps on SimOn (our new feedback application) to improve the feedback loop for all students everyday.

There have been a number of exciting changes that have been taking place at the SU in terms of representation.

We have piloted a new system of Faculty and School Reps to support and increase student representation at School and Faculty level. The Faculty and School Rep roles have been trialled as a response to question 26 of the National Students Survey (NSS), 'The students' union effectively represents students' academic interests'.

So far, the creation of these roles have provided a valuable insight into what happens in each School and Faculty. Part of the roles of these 'super reps' is to submit a report that denotes trends in the student experience. These reports, written solely by the Faculty and School Reps, will be disseminated to the university in order to provide them with vital feedback that we hope will change the student experience for the better.

...Continued overleaf



We are the key staff members for Faculty and School Reps and facilitate their representation by coordinating meetings and ensuring that they are engaged and prepared to feedback.

We have been excited to join the Insight and Representation team at LiverpoolSU to improve the Course Rep system to ensure that student representation is at the heart of everything we do. We have achieved much in the last three months, and have met many incredibly influential people in the university so far that are as enthusiastic about representation as we are! We hope that with the continuing support of staff and students, we can ensure that all students engage in implementing change and recognising value in their student experience. We also value input in developing the Course Representative structure and welcome any feedback on the implementation of Faculty and School Reps roles.



## SCS FACULTY REP COORDINATOR

The designated Faculty Representation Coordinator for the Faculty of Sciences is Nasreen Hasan. Please do not hesitate to contact Nasreen regarding queries related to representation. Nasreen can be found in the Byrom Street, James Parsons Building in the social space, Tuesday-Friday and can be contacted on the email below during regular office hours.



N.Hasan@ljamu.ac.uk



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# BLACKBOARD & CANVAS

## RECOMMENDATIONS DECEMBER 2016

We are delighted to hear that the university has listened to the voice of our students and decided to move from Blackboard to the new Canvas system. We look forward to being a part of this new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and providing support and input in any way we can.

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## MAY 2017 UPDATE

Canvas will be introduced and rolled out from August 2017 with Blackboard being fully replaced from August 2018. Canvas is a cloud-based learning platform that creates a dynamic learning environment for both educators and students. It is built to meet the requirements of digitally engaged students and university teaching staff.

This system will offer Outlook e-mail and calendar integration, which will significantly improve communication with students. In addition, a number of apps can be integrated into this system such as Vimeo, Evernote, Dropbox and WordPress via the Canvas App Center. The features of this system will be of great benefit to SCS students, many of whom are placement-based and will require a more immersive VLE experience to facilitate more interaction with their respective programmes. Furthermore, many students within SCS commute to and from their campuses. Canvas will offer more support in terms of working from home.

*"I have spoken to students that already use Canvas. They say that it is very straightforward and easy to use, with tabs linking to each area of the site".*

- Level 6 Student

Teaching staff received a budget since the last Faculty Student Voice Report in December and were issued with a microphone and USB system called Panopto. This technology allows them to record their lectures, and as the technology is compatible with Canvas, programme leaders can now post the relevant lecture material onto Canvas. This is beneficial to students, as it will allow them to digest the information from lectures remotely using technology that can be accessed in their own time on a number of devices (phone, tablet, and laptop). Students support the introduction of Panopto, and have stated that it would be helpful if lectures were recorded for people who can't make it to the lecture at some point, and have asked the faculty to record lectures as information doesn't go in first time round.

The initial stages of implementation for Canvas began November 2016. Faculty Reps have been encouraged to become Canvas Student Champions as a means of promoting and supporting the use of Canvas amongst students. Programme Leaders have also been trained on Canvas in preparation for its introduction.

LiverpoolSU are currently part of a working group dedicated to Canvas and its features. There are discussions ongoing about how the Course Rep System may engage with Canvas making the Course Rep more visible to fellow students, and be able to give information in a streamlined way.

We believe that the change from Blackboard to Canvas will be excellent for students and staff at LJMU and welcome any support we can give. We are excited at Liverpool Students' Union to understand how we can be involved with Canvas and how it can be used to support students sharing information with fellow course members, and facilitate improved academic representation.

# PLACEMENTS

## RECOMMENDATIONS DECEMBER 2016

- To create minimum standards of best practice placement processes in the Faculty.
- To create consistent information, covering communication and support across placements from LJMU.
- To ensure that students have adequate time and support as part of their placement to complete any work given by LJMU to the best of their ability.

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## MAY 2017 UPDATE

There is a Placement Learning Code of Practice that exists for students on curricular courses that details how the student learning experience, as well as their safety and wellbeing, is safeguarded whilst on placement.

The placement team evaluate the Placement Learning Code of Practice (PLCoP) through different means. Students are given the opportunity to feedback on their placement experience. The placement team do this online to make it as easy as possible for students, however, each course has a slightly different approach to collecting student feedback on placement. For example, Sport and Exercise Sciences (SES) and Natural Sciences and Psychology (NSP) schools use a system called 'Rate my Placement' that allows students to evaluate their experience and comment on its advantages and disadvantages.

This feedback is collated and fed back to the Faculty of Science Health and Safety Committee and Placement Coordinators. Any issues of a non-urgent nature, are followed up with the student to seek clarification, and we would then follow this up directly with a Placement Provider if there was a specific issue of concern. The placement team are also dedicated to ensuring early intervention regarding placements, for example sandwich placements, by delivering information in lectures in courses at Level 4, Level 5 and Level 6 to promote their services and the benefit of work experience and placements.

## The placement team create consistent information through communication and support across placements by:

- Delivering a session to students giving information about the placement process and the support available to support students sourcing placements.
- Creating a section on Blackboard containing information about the placement process in modules where placements are part of the curriculum.
- Contributing to module handbook information.

The placement team coach students with barriers to learning (time management, confidence, and presentations) to ensure that they are equipped to manage their studies (which includes finding placements) and can communicate themselves effectively to professionals on placement.

We appreciate that placements are varied across Programmes and Faculties. LiverpoolSU will support the process as best we can, and ensure that students are at the heart of any decisions made in this department, utilising the Course Rep system to do this. LJMU is continuing to support the dissemination of best practices in placement processes across the Faculty. Further development around information on placements is in progress.





## STUDENTS SAY...

*"Good range of placements/jobs advertised. Placements are advertised on Blackboard for students."*

Level 5 Student

*"Students had concerns on the inconsistencies between placement visits."*

Level 6 student

*"Although students only have a couple of placements a year, some students expressed that travel expenses are too expensive to get to placements and that sometimes they are placed too far away from home ."*

Level 6 student

# COURSE REPS

## RECOMMENDATIONS DECEMBER 2016

- We would love to work with you to increase the promotion of Course Reps and their activity throughout the university and within modules.
- To embed a LiverpoolSU Student Rep section into the new VLE so that reps have an institutional virtual environment to reach their students.
- To give Reps the opportunity to collect feedback at the start and/or end of lectures.
- To ensure that every School and Faculty has a representative.

The introduction of their roles, and their ability to gather information from their peers and encourage student voice, has proven to be an invaluable resource for both the Liverpool Students' Union and the university. This is because they represent the student experience, and strive to ensure that the quality of their experiences are upheld through discussion and the evaluation of processes with Liverpool Students' Union and the university. In addition, both Faculty and School Reps have consistently endeavoured to empower students to use their voice by organising their own meetings and creating an open environment for students to feedback in.

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## MAY 2017 UPDATE

In order for student representation to be facilitated on each programme, Course Reps are elected/selected by Programme Leaders. Course Reps provide the university with valuable student-led feedback regarding their course on positives, improvements and new ideas about their academic experience.

In addition to Course Reps in each Faculty, LiverpoolSU have also piloted two new roles, Faculty Reps and School Reps. The students in these roles are paid an honorarium to write a specialised report that includes details and feedback on their respective Schools and Faculties. We welcome any feedback regarding this new system from academic staff, as we believe these roles to be valuable in contributing to a culture of feeding back between staff and students.

For SCS we recruited two Faculty Reps (one Undergraduate and one Post Graduate) along with two School Reps for Natural Sciences and Psychology (NSP) and Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences (PBS). These posts have been successful in engaging students at all levels. The Faculty Reps have also been welcome additions at Faculty Education Committees. In the same respect, School Reps have also been present at Course Rep Critical Friends Group and the Student Engagement Panel. We encourage the engagement of these reps at all levels.

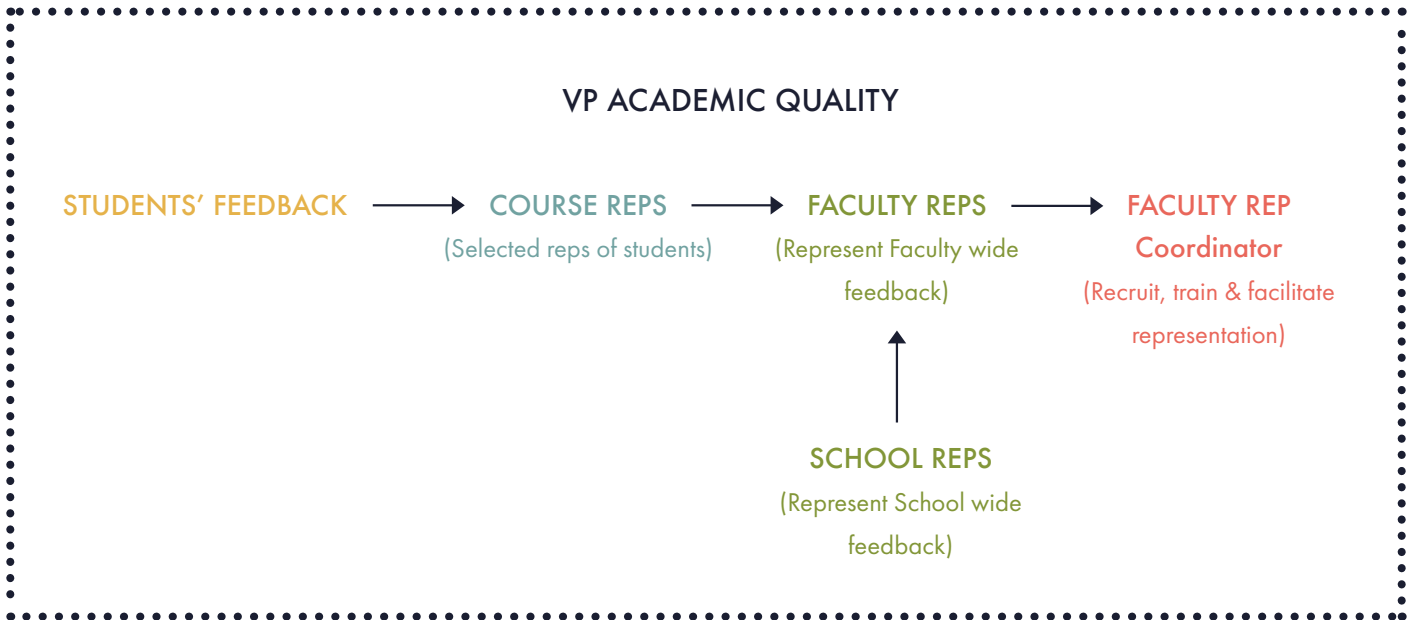
Course Rep election and selection have changed this academic year, with academic staff being encouraged to elect or select Course Reps for level 5 and 6 for the next academic year, with level 3, 4 and 7 being selected in October or when their course date starts. We hope that this change will offer more guidance and make this a more efficient process for academic staff. We hope that this will allow for a greater degree of autonomy and help students take more ownership of their voice in terms of academic representation.

Faculty Rep Coordinators (FRC's) have worked with LJMU academic staff to improve communication with students about the Course Rep system via various mediums, including lecture shout-outs. These lecture shout-outs have been welcomed by a number of programme leaders and have proven to be useful in enthusing students to think about representation. Evidence of this can be observed through the number of students that have approached FRC's for additional information on the role of the Course Rep and what it entails. This presence in lectures by the FRC's has resulted in the significance of the role of Course Rep to become more visible to both students and academic staff.

Through the introduction of SimOn –the 24/7 simple online feedback tool for students, FRC's have been able to ensure that feedback can be collected 24/7 on an individual level or through a Course Rep. This has been successful so far, with 260 responses being made since the launch of SimOn on 16th January. The engagement of the tool has been improved through training that takes place in all faculties that is mandatory for all Course Reps.

Fig 1.

## Structure of support for representation available for LJMU students



*“LiverpoolSU might consider having a coffee session with all the PGR and staffs once a month during our monthly “Bring Your Own Lunch” gathering in Great Crosshall Street foyer. It might promote LiverpoolSU activities as well as gather more feedback and information on PGR”*

- PHD Student

Currently the representation team are developing new and innovative ways in which to engage students from all levels to ensure that representation is at the forefront of their experience. In the new semester, we hope to achieve this by designing and promoting events and gatherings, such as the 'Course Rep Drop In' so that Course Reps can share best practice and discuss appropriate recommendations for the university.

LiverpoolSU are dedicated to the effective running of the Course Rep System and will continue to evaluate the system as a whole through planning and development as a team. The first step is to review the way in which we provide training for Course Reps to improve engagement. We here at Liverpool Students' Union welcome feedback from the university and will welcome ongoing support from the Associate Dean of Education from SCS.

# TIMETABLING

## RECOMMENDATIONS DECEMBER 2016

- We are pleased to say that LJMU are currently looking into personalised timetables, as reflected in the recommendation here and would welcome engagement with our Student Reps around this.
  - To provide students with their timetables prior to their teaching weeks.
  - To look into the accessibility of student timetables and the clarity of the information given for students to learn how to access their timetables.
- .....

## MAY 2017 UPDATE

Through conversations with the Timetabling and Space Management Director, LiverpoolSU have found that personalised timetabling was introduced for LJMU staff this year. This will be followed by a limited student pilot early in 2018 ready for full implementation in the 2018/19 academic year.

LJMU have introduced dedicated staff into post to coordinate timetabling across each Faculty. There are two timetabling officers for SCS that coordinate timetables for students across all four Schools in the Faculty.

This process has been introduced as a means of improving timetabling efficiency and time management; lectures have been 'bunched' together across the Faculty so that there is not as big a gap between lectures. This is useful for commuting students and those affected by the aforementioned issue.

*"Timetabling isn't great, but the week to week timetables are OK. They can often be complicated to read. Having a personalised timetable would be so much better."*

Level 7 Student

LiverpoolSU is aware of the difficulties surrounding timetabling and hope that these changes will support students. We would welcome the opportunity to work with LJMU around the conversations with timetabling and encourage all students to engage with opportunities for its development and feedback.

# ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK

## RECOMMENDATIONS DECEMBER 2016

- We would welcome working with you to embed the assessment and feedback recommendations into university life.
- To review the options of group work and how social loafing\* is dealt with across the faculty, so it is perceived as fair and reasonable by students.

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\*Social Loafing: Students that do not adequately contribute in group work, and receive the same mark as students who have contributed to the work load.

## MAY 2017 UPDATE

The university have created 'Guidance on feedback on draft student work' that proposes that students will be able to send a draft copy of work to the lecturer and receive guidance on how to improve the assessment, but will not be graded.

In SCS, ADE Phil Denton has been using a number of interactive, personal response system apps in his lectures to assess students and has asked the SU to look out for feedback on these to see if students are responding well to them. Phil Denton (ADE) uses Text Wall quite frequently and is developing an initiative in the department to make it common practice for other Programme Leaders.

To ensure that marks are fair in group work, WEB PA, an online peer assessment app, has been utilised in the department. This system helps lecturers allocate a mark to groups, then individuals are rated based on a set of criteria. Some programme leaders are using this system (Applied Chemistry) and the academic team in SCS are currently devising a strategy to ensure all Programme Leaders use this to alleviate any disparity in marks based on participation.

*"Always get great informative feedback not long after submitting coursework. Coursework criteria is always clear. Staff are always offering help via email or drop-ins."*

Level 5 Student

LiverpoolSU will continue to monitor the development of any changes regarding assessment and feedback and will work with LJMU whenever it is possible. We would also welcome the opportunity to work with LJMU staff and students to seek group work support solutions as well as further consultations around assessments and feedback.

# PERSONAL TUTORS

## RECOMMENDATIONS DECEMBER 2016

- To do a Faculty audit of personal tutoring in order to ensure that students are receiving a standard practice across the institution.
- To create personal tutoring training, ensuring that all Personal Tutors are aware of the expectations of their role and how it aids students development
- To increase the 121 contact hours for tutors and communication with their Personal Tutors.

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## MAY 2017 UPDATE

The role of the Personal Tutor is significant to students as they provide continued support and advice in an academic capacity, as well as offering further support by way of signposting students to additional services within the university. There is a current Personal Tutor Policy used throughout all Faculties that was developed in collaboration between LiverpoolSU and LJMU.

More training is being provided for Personal Tutors to allow them to perform their role and support students more effectively across the Faculties. The university is working towards adhering to a 1:14 ratio of tutors to students. Furthermore, 1:1 contact hours have been increased so that students have more time to go and see their Personal Tutor for support.

The actions for the next academic year is to insist that tutorials are scheduled on a day when students are otherwise in for other sessions. This is to ensure that students are not being asked to come into university for a 50 minute tutorial and nothing else.

In regards to the content of the Personal Tutor sessions however, it can be observed from the quote below that the time is very valuable to students. This is because these sessions promote the progression of students' engagement with their course and allow for open discussion about changes that perhaps need to be implemented in the running of the course.

*“Tutorial sessions are highly engaging and topical points relevant to the course are often brought up which prompts intelligent debate.”*

Level 3 Student

The ADE for SCS is aware of ongoing work and policies around the role of Personal Tutors, and will look for guidance on how the system should be implemented and supported throughout the Faculty. We welcome the opportunity to support the university whilst they are making changes to the Personal Tutor system.



# OUR SOCIAL SPACES ARE CHANGING . . . .

## Liverpool Students' Union's social spaces are about to undergo a radical overhaul in time for Academic Year 2017/18

One of the things students ask for above other things is a comfortable place on campus to chill out, make (not necessarily buy!) a drink, and chat to others. We've worked really closely with the Estates team at LJMU to create a new concept for our spaces, in each of our main locations, that are unique to each campus, but linked in the way they look and feel.

Each space takes what we have now on each campus, and expands and transforms it into something truly spectacular. Following on from feedback received from academic staff, we have taken on board key points around the layout of our social spaces in Byrom Street and have reflected these in our plans.

Thanks to the contributions from students in the design process from day one, we know that the most important things are distinctiveness, connectivity, comfort, flexibility and a real sense of ownership. These things are at the heart of the new spaces.

It's all part of our #futureSU programme – working directly with students to make sure we're meeting their needs now, for next five years and beyond.

We can't wait to share them with you in September!

# LIVERPOOLSU RETENTION

The LiverpoolSU Retention Project is now well underway. We have been collecting data from our student staff, academic societies, and using SimOn, our new online feedback tool to find out the key reason why student might withdraw early from university, the support that students find most useful, and how this support can be enhanced in the future. As part of this research we have been exploring the specific support offered to students within each School and Faculty, and have found amazing examples of induction programmes, peer mentoring, and excellent personal tutoring.

If you are involved in or know of any other projects that have a positive impact on the student experience and encourage students to stay the course, please get in touch with [e.r.williams@ljamu.ac.uk](mailto:e.r.williams@ljamu.ac.uk) so that we can learn more about these projects and the impact they have.

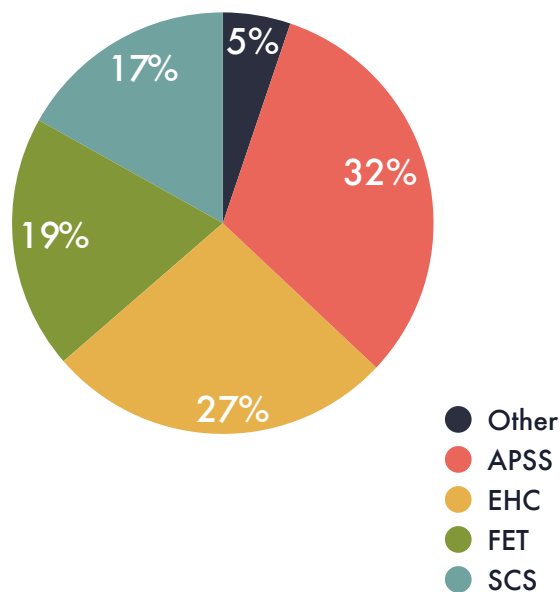




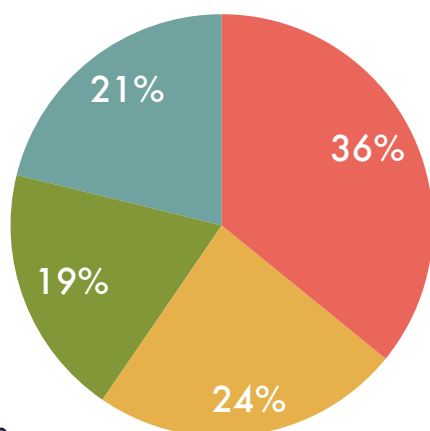
# ADVICE DATA OVERVIEW

The Advice service dealt with 154 new cases between the 1st of October 2016 and the 31st of March 2017

Faculty	Cases
APSS	49
EHC	41
FET	30
SCS	26
Other*	8



\* Partner institutions, external, applicants, alumni



- APSS
- EHC
- FET
- SCS

Faculty	Students per Faculty
APSS	7670
EHC	5074
FET	4144
SCS	4550

# ADVICE DATA • SCS

17% of our cases between 1st October 2016 and 31st of March 2017 concerned SCS students.

SCS	26
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## THE MAIN ISSUES FOR SCIENCE

Process	No of Cases	% of Cases for SCS	% of Cases across all faculties
Complaints	5	19%	23%
Mitigating Circumstances	5	19%	9%
Appeals	3	11%	6%
Criminal Convictions	2	8%	1%
Disciplinary	2	8%	2%
Academic Misconduct	2	8%	13%

## THE MOST COMMON COURSES

Most of our clients within the faculty of Science came from Pharmacy programmes (19%), Sports and Exercise Science (15%) or Applied Psychology (15%).

## THE MAIN ISSUES FOR SCS

As for other faculties, most SCS students contacted us about lodging a complaint (representing 19% of SCS cases but 23% of all our cases over the last 6 months). However, 19% of SCS students contacted us about Extenuating Circumstances processes, compared to an average of 8% of all cases across faculties. The 2 criminal convictions cases we saw over the last 6 months and 2 out of the 3 disciplinary cases also came from the Faculty of Science.

# AMAZING TEACHING AWARDS

## NOMINATIONS BY FACULTY

This year LiverpoolSU have had over 1600 nominations across the Amazing Teaching Award categories. Here is the breakdown of total number of individuals/teams across faculty.

Please note that the numbers for support staff team do not add up as some lie outside of faculties.

No of Individuals/Teams Nominated	Total LJMU	FET	APSS	SCS	EHC
<b>Total</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>120</b>
Amazing Course Rep	58	10	14	14	20
Amazing Course Team	33	3	11	7	12
Amazing Personal Tutor	145	27	25	52	41
Amazing Support Staff Member/ Team	23	3	4	3	3
Amazing Feedback	21	4	8	5	4
Amazing Academic Supervisor	69	16	12	27	14
Liz Allen Award	8	1	2	3	2
Amazing Teacher	280	51	100	71	58

