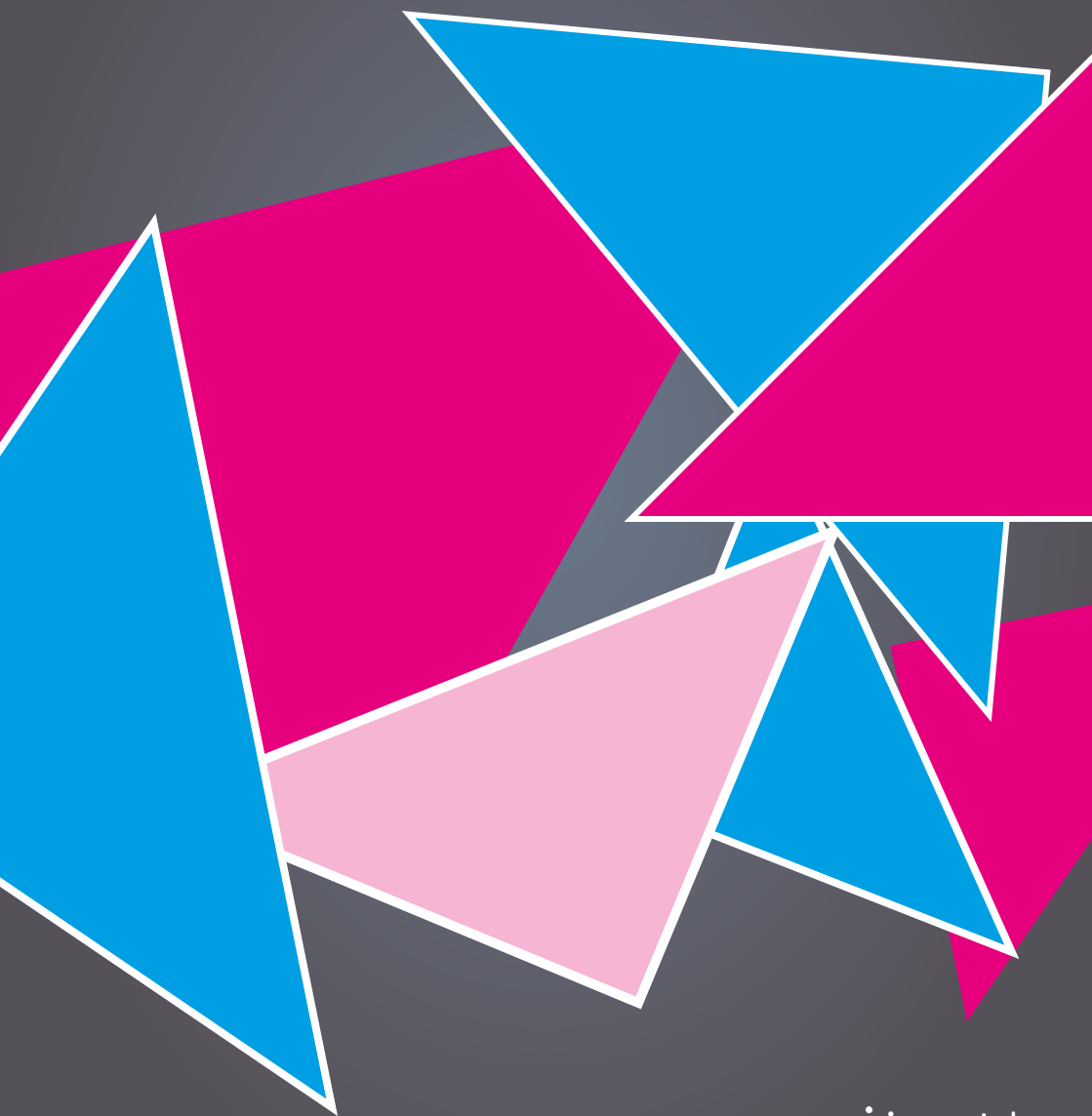


# NSS Response

2016



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All information correct  
at the time of going to  
print September 2016

# Introduction

Imperial College Union (ICU) are excited to present our sixth annual National Student Survey (NSS) Response, as part of our continued efforts to build a dialogue with our members and with College around improving the educational experience at Imperial College London.

The NSS is completed by final-year Undergraduate students shortly before they graduate. It asks students to reflect on their time at university and give feedback on the quality of their educational experience here at Imperial. The results from the survey are published a few months later and offers us a wealth of insight into the student experience, drawing our attention to key areas of excellence and weakness. Our annual response gives us the opportunity to amplify the student voice and drive forward significant and lasting change.

This year, Imperial College Union has focused its theme around the importance of creating a partnership between staff and students. Students should be at the heart of everything we do here at Imperial and their learning should reflect that. Every aspect of learning at Imperial should be shaped around the direct needs of the student in order to provide them with a balanced, thorough and enabling education. However, this can only be achieved when students are empowered to be active participants in their own learning.



Luke McCrone

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Our suggested approach encourages everyone to reconsider the role and perceived value of students in relation to building a world-class education. Students should be viewed as partners in the educational cycle, and not as consumers, which was a feeling some students expressed when completing the survey.

Students should be in a position where they feel comfortable working alongside staff to advance their own academic experience. The range of skills which students can gain through this working relationship is astounding: leadership, organisational management and social confidence to name a few. Similarly, in recognising that both staff and students have a vested interest and shared mission in delivering the highest-quality education possible, lecturers are able to create courses

that respond to the ever evolving requirements of the graduate job market. Given the highly competitive nature of the graduate job market, students are now acutely aware of the skills they need to be developing in order to become more employable and how their course can assist them in this.

By bringing students closer to decision-making, their appreciation for the elements which constitute a quality education can only grow and develop. Consequently, the individual student begins to value why effective assessment and feedback is important, allowing them to constructively criticise their own department's approach to these elements.

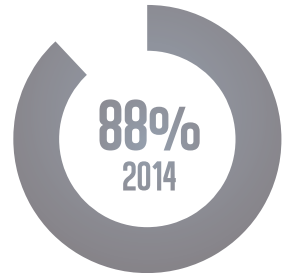
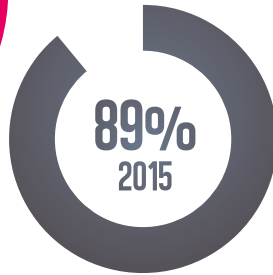
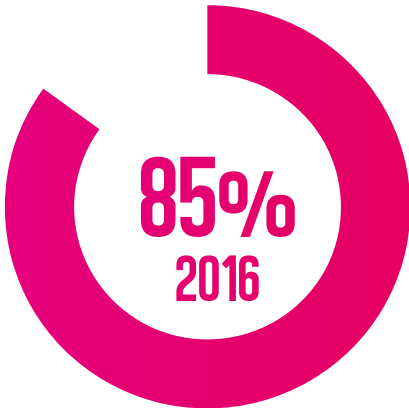
Imperial College London is a centre of bright minds. Aside from world-class research, its members should value the input which students can contribute to developing the educational landscape. The Union highly values its Academic Representation Network for this very reason; students are given the opportunity to play an active role in shaping their own learning experience.

The key challenge for College are understanding things from a student perspective; ultimately, students have an integral role to play in the academic quality assurance cycle. Giving students the opportunity to be involved in the curriculum design process allows for a collaborative relationship to develop between students and staff which inevitably benefits College in the long run.

I would firstly like to express my appreciation for the hard work that my colleagues Nayab Cheema and Sky Yarlett have put into assisting me with this Response. I would also like to thank the Academic Reps who have challenged the ideas and recommendations suggested; they play an integral role in shaping what is put forward here. Finally, I want to thank the students who completed the NSS survey this year and wish them all the best in their future pursuits.

The Union have immensely enjoyed compiling this Response, and look forward to working with College to transform these recommendations into action.

# Teaching



**87%**  
Sector  
Average

**88%**  
Russell Group  
Average

Overall satisfaction with teaching at Imperial College London has fallen in 2016 as compared to 2015; we are now below both Russell Group and sector averages.

The upcoming Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) will reward institutions for excellent teaching with reputational and financial incentives from 2017/18. As a world-class institution, it is in College's best interest to optimise the quality of teaching now more than ever.

Many students have expressed that teaching excellence stems from the impressiveness of their lecturer's knowledge and enthusiasm for their field of research. However, this alone is not enough. The recommendations in this section outline some of the changes that will ensure Imperial College London continues to strive for excellence.

Teaching should foster a two-way relationship between staff and student; when academics tailor their teaching around their students, these students feel increasingly satisfied and pro-actively engage with their department and their learning experience as a result. However, students are beginning to feel isolated and distanced from their learning owing to the one-way approach to teaching we see in many departments.

Building a dynamic rapport between academics and students not only develops a sense of community within the department, but also enables students to constructively engage with the teaching that takes place within their department.

As it stands, students are currently consulted via various surveys and are invited to contribute through avenues such as student-staff committee meetings. However, more needs to be done to bring students closer to decision-making and pedagogic processes; students should feel valued and recognised as assets to their department. In this response, we ask departments and College to work on building constructive relationships with students, allowing for a healthy dialogue to take place between staff and students.

## Recommendation

Departmental staff should work alongside students as partners in the teaching review process, ensuring that student representation is included on all quality assurance panels.



The degree overall is a good balance of classroom and laboratory/more practical learning. Some lecturers present their courses with great enthusiasm.

PHYSICS STUDENT



I feel that the experience at Imperial College is lacking. There is a sense that we, the students, are not respected and welcomed parts of the community, but difficult customers the staff must deal with in order to fund the faculty. Overall, I feel I have been very let down by the experience.

PHYSICS STUDENT

Imperial College London is a world-class institution which offers cutting edge research and pockets of teaching excellence. Unfortunately the same innovation that has been seen in research has not been reflected in teaching.

Teaching quality continues to differ between individual lecturers, with students in some departments observing a distinct lack of enthusiasm from their lecturers. Students get excited by changes in teaching methods which means that lecturers should be encouraged to be creative with their teaching techniques.

Group projects, for example, are highly praised due to their capacity to develop social and communication skills for the students involved. Lecturers should look to be innovative in their approach to teaching, and should be rewarded as such. At present, the annual Student Academic Choices Awards (SACAs) exist to recognise and reward innovative teaching efforts across College. However, more should be done to invest in and celebrate excellent teaching across College. Based on recommendations from previous NSS responses, College have already committed £1m to a teaching innovation fund which is a step in the right direction.

## Recommendation

Recognise and invest in exemplary teaching across the College, providing exceptional lecturers with the opportunity to continually evolve teaching methods and experiment with innovative teaching styles and tools, such as Mentimeter.



Very high level of science is taught, especially when I compare it to similar courses in other universities. They push us to think outside of already understood science, by teaching us current unresolved research. It stimulates us to think of possible outcomes and can make us passionate to get involved in future research.

LIFE SCIENCES STUDENT



A partnership learning community gives students the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way both to their department and the institution. Students should be able to see the value of their contribution to their department.

Some students have described their learning environment as mundane and manufactured; yet there is the capacity for students to participate and contribute to the running of their course and through doing so, actively shape their educational experience.

Undergraduate Teaching Assistants have epitomised the concept of developing students in an active role which facilitates partnership between staff and student. There could be scope for students to provide continued feedback to the lecturer regarding the content and delivery of their course, acting as teaching consultants. The Union would welcome the opportunity of creating a framework with guidelines for such a role. This is a concept successfully employed in the United States as stated in the Engagement through Partnership report produced by the Higher Education Academy document.

## Recommendation

Students should be given the opportunity to act as teaching consultants, working together to provide constructive feedback for lecturers.



Some lecturers were very unhelpful, in terms of course content and content delivery. They generally give the excuse of not wanting to spoon-feed us. This university is more focused on research work and gaining international recognition from innovative research which is okay but it often feels as if the undergraduate students are neglected. Teaching seems to be an aside consideration.

AERONAUTICS STUDENT

# Assessment & Feedback



62%  
2016

68%  
2015

67%  
2014

73%  
Sector  
Average

69%  
Russell Group  
Average

Feedback is a crucial aspect of the learning process; it allows students to grow and develop. Given Imperial College London's below average score in this area, it is clear that more effort needs to be invested into improving assessment and feedback practices across the College.

Imperial College Union is pleased to see a commitment to improving the standard of assessment and feedback emulated in College's 2015-2020 strategy as originally requested by the Union. However, in order for there to be a consistent approach to assessment and feedback, both staff and students need to better understand the benefits of timely and useful feedback.

A change in culture and attitude regarding assessment and feedback is one that needs to be addressed at both a faculty and departmental level. Involving students in the assessment and feedback cycle can help us identify what, how, and how often students study. This alliance with students should help to reduce over-assessment at Imperial College London.

The Union is dubious of the apparent trade-off between timely feedback and high quality feedback. Issues around feedback boil down to what constitutes a well rounded, balanced feedback system.

College policy, created in collaboration with ICU, currently dictates that feedback on all assessments should be returned within a two week time period. However, we are increasingly seeing instances where feedback return is being delayed for large periods of time. Not only is this frustrating for students who have to wait for their work to be returned, but it also hinders their learning.

Timely feedback should inspire students to reflect on their previous work and further develop as individuals; yet we find that late feedback does not allow for this reflective process to take place. Students have even stated that receiving mediocre feedback on time is preferable to receiving detailed feedback which is late.

Adhering to the two-week return policy in this instance can only be of benefit to both students and staff.

## Recommendation

A Feedback Traffic Light system should be implemented centrally to regulate feedback timeliness. Green: returned on time; red: coursework returned late (in line with two week return policy).



The department has improved significantly in its feedback mechanisms, with proper channels now in place for students to do so, and academic staff do inform us of what they have considered from our feedback and what has been changed for subsequent years.

CHEMICAL ENGINEERING STUDENT



Feedback is an area which needs improvement. All coursework needs to be marked within 2 weeks as per policy rather than continuously put off and a clear mark scheme presented as to where marks were won and lost. Comments also need to be made on all pieces not just a few, especially where something was done wrongly as this helps us learn from our mistakes.

AERONAUTICS STUDENT

Alongside the timeliness of feedback, there are also issues around the quality of feedback; constructive feedback enables students to contemplate areas of improvement. Conversely, poor feedback which solely dwells on the negative does little to motivate students, instead, having the opposite effect. Further to this, there should be a balance reached between feedback which is overly complex and feedback which is too brief.

There should be a minimum standard that all feedback should adhere to across College; departmental teams should focus their efforts on maintaining a standard of feedback which strikes this balance.

## Recommendation

Departmental leader(s) should be responsible for overseeing the quality of feedback across the department, interacting closely with Academic Reps and students such as in SSC meetings.



The department have also been fantastic with taking on student feedback and reorganising anything that students felt did not work well. If there was ever an issue with a lecture not being taught or explained well, it was addressed promptly and sorted out.

CHEMICAL ENGINEERING STUDENT

Students are in a prime position to facilitate the alignment of programmes where teaching, learning and assessment all come together to achieve learning outcomes. Giving students the opportunity to be involved in the curriculum design process allows for both staff and students to work together to design a curriculum that is innovative and engaging for both staff and student.

College's initial instinct when designing courses should be to involve students in a meaningful and challenging manner, paying attention to communicating any changes that have been made as a result of student feedback. In doing so, a natural partnership will form between students and staff. Imperial College are behind the curve, compared to other institutions, in going beyond the student voice.

With the upcoming implementation of the Academic Standards Framework (ASF), all departments will undergo a modularisation process which will standardise the size of all modules to a set level of credits. This will provide departments with an excellent opportunity to collaborate with students in redesigning modules.

## Recommendation

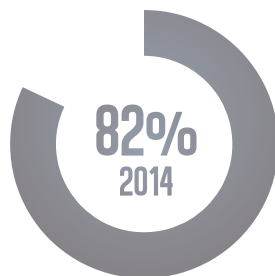
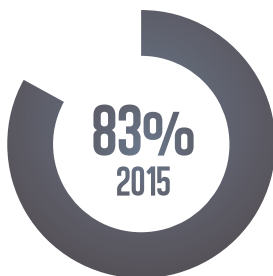
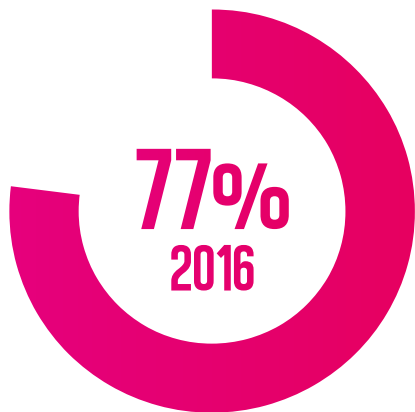
Students and academics should work closely to co-design curricula assessment and feedback practices.



There is not enough feedback on work throughout the course! We should be able to hand in problem sheets and get feedback on work like other universities. The only feedback in Year 1 and 2 is on weekly tests, which is not enough for each course. Problems classes should go through solutions rather than places where people do questions. In 3rd and 4th year, there is no feedback unless a lecturer offers.

MATHEMATICS STUDENT

# Academic Support



**82%**  
Sector  
Average

**81%**  
Russell Group  
Average

Receiving a degree from Imperial is no small feat and requires years of hard work and dedication. Imperial is a world-class institution and as such, a lot is expected of students who study here. Expectations are high, and whilst some students thrive in this high-pressure environment, in recent years, Imperial College Union have argued that this environment is actually doing more harm than good. Instead, we have found that academic pressure is a contributing factor to the rising number of students with mental health issues.

In 2014, working with Imperial College Union, Mentality, a group of students who have been personally affected by mental health issues, produced the Mentality Report. The report, based on a survey filled out by over 1,000 students, found that 70% of respondents had suffered or were suffering from some kind of mental health condition. This campaign exemplifies the keenness of certain students in wanting to make positive change.

As a result of the Mentality Report, College recognised the fundamental importance of mental health within its 2015-2020 strategy to revise and improve its mental health provision. We welcome this commitment and recognition of the welfare needs of students at Imperial College London - and hope to see further understanding of the impact academic pressure can have on the welfare of students and vice versa.

A lack of a strong support system can leave many students feeling isolated, leading to the increased number of students with mental health issues that we have observed. We recognise that the role of a Personal Tutor is both crucial to the success of students but also incredibly demanding for staff who have pre-existing academic commitments.

For many students, their Personal Tutor is the first point of call for many academic and pastoral issues. As such, not only do we need to better understand how students view the role of a Personal Tutor but also whether tutors serve as academic support or pastoral care. This understanding will enable us to provide the necessary tools for Personal Tutors so that they are able to support students in the right ways.

In this vein, Personal Tutors should be continually trained and supported in their roles to deliver the best care for our students. In 2015, the Educational Development Unit released several online resources to assist Personal Tutors in their roles; departments should be using these resources and provide regular training to all staff involved in student welfare.



Student welfare is really looked after in our department. As a disabled student, I have always felt comfortable talking with the department, and have felt they have tried their very best to accommodate to my needs. The organisation of the department is without fault. The staff are very friendly and helpful. The department cares about its students.

CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING  
STUDENT



When I've been ill, the office and staff had made me jump through so many hoops that in all cases I haven't bothered to apply for mitigating circumstances or to rearrange labs. They claim to account for religious holidays, etc. but refuse to rearrange labs for Muslim students who want Fridays 1-2 p.m. free for the congregational prayer.

AERONAUTICS STUDENT

Alongside this, Personal Tutors should be able to develop over the course of their role, to this end, College should consider establishing a Personal Tutor network where tutors from across the College can regularly meet to share best practice. Personal tutors should therefore be better supported in being able to apply the skills they've acquired to the STAR framework, which is designed to recognise staff at Imperial who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to developing their professional practice. There should be the acknowledgement that Personal Tutors are required to offer both academic advice as well as pastoral care which is a substantial remit for one individual to take on top of any other time intensive commitments.

Owing to this, we also recommend that College consider evolving the Personal Tutor system, giving every undergraduate both an academic tutor and a welfare tutor so that they are able to receive bespoke advice for any issues that arise during their time at Imperial.

## Recommendation

Continue to develop the Personal Tutor system, considering the establishment of a Personal Tutor network to assist in the development of tutors and consider splitting the academic and pastoral care aspects of the role.



The Bioengineering Department has consistently shown its interest in students' welfare and has always provided the needed support. Academics and staff were approachable and helpful. Feedback on any problem was considered and almost always acted on.

BIOENGINEERING STUDENT



Dealing with mitigating circumstances at a departmental level can end up being a huge administrative burden both on students and departmental staff; this in turn leads to inconsistencies in the way mitigating circumstances are administered both within departments and across College.

As a result of this, students have different experiences of receiving mitigating circumstances and can often feel frustrated by the seemingly endless amount of 'red tape' they have to cut through.

We recommend that College consider standardising the administration of mitigating circumstances, creating consistency across the board. Additionally, College should create a framework that will reaffirm both the guidelines and the process through which students are able to receive mitigating circumstances.

## Recommendation

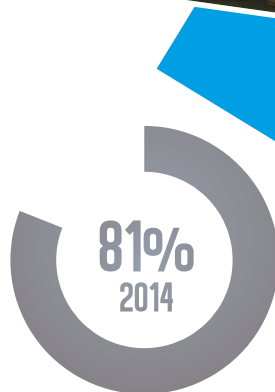
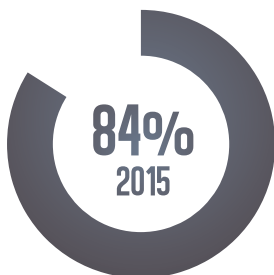
Consider standardising the administration around mitigating circumstances to a faculty level, ensuring a consistent and easy to understand approach to the delivery of mitigating circumstances.



Due to the intense pressure and stress of the course, I will never do a degree at Imperial again as even though I was interested by the material being taught, it is no way to live your life in anxiety and stress that Imperial puts upon students. I would say the poor welfare and high prevalence of mental illness amongst stressed students is just short of a scandal.

LIFE SCIENCES STUDENT

# Organisation & Management



**87%**

Sector  
Average

Time is precious; students today have to be competent multi-taskers, with many students juggling part-time jobs and extracurricular activities alongside their studies.

As such, students need to be able to plan their time in advance so that they're able to manage their busy schedules effectively. Any changes to timetables, examination information and assessment deadlines should be communicated to the student well in advance.

**81%**

Russell Group  
Average



Coursework and assessment are invaluable opportunities for students to apply the theories and concepts taught in their lectures, and reflect on what they have learned so far. However, as multiple deadlines increasingly fall on the same day, students are losing out on the chance to adequately develop their understanding to the inevitable detriment of their personal growth.

We recommend that all departments across College endeavour to evenly distribute all assessment and coursework deadlines throughout the term, using assessment matrices in an effort to avoid clashes. Information on deadlines would be available centrally if a Feedback Traffic Light system was implemented in all departments, offering benefit in this area.

## Recommendation

Collate deadlines for all modules in a single departmental repository to assist in achieving an even distribution of deadlines which avoids clashes in all student timetables.



I like how well structured and organised all the lab and lecture courses are as it enables the course as a whole to progress efficiently. I feel the lab schedule is down really well, especially when personalised timetables were introduced in 3rd year.

CHEMISTRY STUDENT



Departmental organisation is very poor. Often, timetabling mistakes are not noticed by course coordinators until students have complained of their inconvenience afterwards

PHYSICS STUDENT

Effective time management is crucial to the success of students here at Imperial; students need to be able to plan their time efficiently both inside and outside the classroom.

Extracurricular activities outside of the classroom allow students to develop as individuals and promotes a healthy work/life balance, which is proven to have an extremely positive effect on students' wellbeing.

However, departments failing to provide students with timetables in advance and communicate last minute timetabling changes leaves students restricted in their ability to participate in activities outside of the classroom. Therefore, departments should provide termly timetables well in advance, so that students are able to manage their time effectively.

## Recommendation

Adhere to existing College policy by providing termly timetables in advance of term start dates so that students are able to anticipate and manage their extracurricular time alongside academic study.



Generally well organised. A good improvement in timetabling system throughout the years. Efforts in reducing 9 a.m. lectures are highly appreciated.

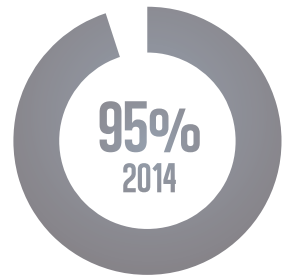
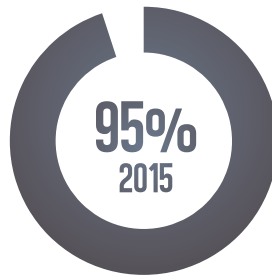
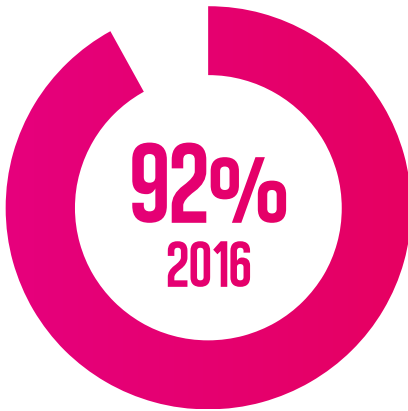
CHEMISTRY STUDENT



Exam period is far too congested; the exams must be spread out more in order to give students' time to prepare effectively. I would recommend no more than 3 exams in a week with at least a day between each. The timetabling seems to be decided by convenience to the department rather than what is best for students

PHYSICS STUDENT

# Learning Resources



**83%**  
Sector  
Average

Historically, Imperial College London has exceeded both the sector and Russell Group average in student satisfaction with learning resources; this trend has continued this year. However, the score has still dropped from 95% to 93%.

**88%**  
Russell Group  
Average

Learning Resources cover a wide range of facilities and equipment which are crucial to student success in learning. This includes space, equipment and library facilities - comprising both the Central Library and departmental libraries. Looking ahead, demands for space is one of the greatest issues facing Imperial College London. The South Kensington campus is at near full capacity with the development of the White City Campus still around ten years from completion.

Imperial's library facilities have been described as excellent, offering a wide range of relevant study material; it is generally reported by students to be the prime place for study. However, with space at a premium, students are now finding it difficult to find a seat in the library. Furthermore, since the library was renovated recently, the top floors of the library have become a very hot, unbearable place to work.

With space at the South Kensington campus limited as it is, going forward, College will have to be innovative with the space currently available. Students, becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of space, have identified their needs in relation to space around two key areas; firstly, the ability to undertake study in a quiet space and secondly, being able to meet with other students for collaborative group projects.

Imperial College London defines having 'good communication' as one its key graduate attributes; it is one reason why collaborative, group projects are so important. It is therefore imperative that the institution fulfills its promise to provide facilities which accommodate the development of such attributes.

Departments should be encouraged to use space effectively, working with central timetabling on efficient ways of utilising rooms around College.

## Recommendation

Reflect on how better to use College room space at times of high intensity, working closely with the Central Timetabling Support Office and the new Associate Provost (Space).



Learning atmosphere is great around the campus, the Central Library is always packed with people, and our department is very lucky that we have our own departmental library, which is one of our favourite places to study, and the wide range of specialised books collections of and the helpful librarian provide great assistant and wonderful opportunity and great environment for us students to research and study.

CIVIL & ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING  
STUDENT



The use of chalkboards in lecture theatres, surely the college can... get more modern equipment, such as interactive whiteboards which would not require any cleaning by the lecturer when they are trying to teach, and also allowing them to upload what they've written straight to Blackboard.

PHYSICS STUDENT

Imperial College London is proud to be home to many innovators, past, present and future. In this respect, both staff and students should feel comfortable using new forms of technology to enhance learning opportunities.

As a world-class institution, whose speciality is in STEM subjects, it is fundamental that new technologies are embedded in learning throughout Imperial College. Students have expressed frustration at the fact that certain lecturers still use 'chalk and blackboards' to demonstrate theories.

It would be more beneficial to see all lecturers using interactive technologies which enable students to observe and reflect on taught theory, especially considering the history of proven success in this area.

## Recommendation

The College should continue to ensure that the facilities used for teaching continue to be world-class, supporting lecturers and students to be continually innovative in utilising digital technology for learning.



The facilities available at Imperial are second to none and notably IT, library and teaching facilities. Generally, the resources provided by the department are brilliant. For example, all lecture notes are provided on the day - this is a simple thing but extremely useful. Also, things like software licences and access to journal articles are very useful as well.

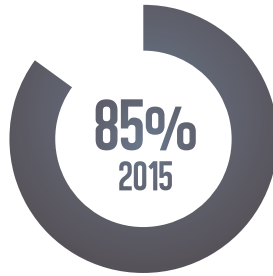
AERONAUTICS STUDENT



IT resources within the department itself are stretched to maximum capacity, which is especially unacceptable given that it is a Science and Technology College and many students have computational projects. There is also little collaborative space for students to work on projects.

PHYSICS STUDENT

# Personal Development



**85%**  
Sector  
Average

**81%**  
Russell Group  
Average

Imperial College London turns out world-class graduates, who often are able to demonstrate a wide range of skills gained through both academic and non-academic experiences during their studies. A focus on personal development ensures that Imperial College London produces well-rounded scientists, engineers and medics who are able to apply their learning and experience to a wide variety of careers and causes.

Imperial is proud of its list of graduate attributes - a set of core competencies to which Imperial aspires to teach to students throughout its degree programs. The Imperial Award rewards students who demonstrate the successful application of these attributes; the Union have worked closely with College in developing and promoting this award. These attributes include good communication skills, independent thinking, as well as teamwork & leadership skills.

These skills can be best taught by embedding them in assessment criteria, group presentations, vivas and specialist modules. It is integral that as part of the learning process, these skills are clearly identified within courses. Course planning should carefully take into consideration self-reflection and opportunities for extracurricular activities. This is an area where involving students as partners in curriculum design can be particularly effective.



Imperial College students continue to claim that the high intensity of the course workload restricts opportunity for digestion of content; many students are simply not granted enough time to reflect. Over-working students means that there is little capacity for their personal development. Students spend more time chasing grades rather than exploring their chosen field of study.

The benefit of departmental staff having open, honest conversations with students about the time they invest into different things can go a long way in making amendments to programmes and avoiding over-working students.

## Recommendation

Ensure that all departments agree a minimum amount of free time provided for the student to reflect, decided at the faculty level by closely working with students.



This course has been well organised with a wide range of options and customisability available. It has helped me to greatly improve my interpersonal and communication skills through numerous presentations.

ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC  
ENGINEERING STUDENT



There is no life. Labs. Home. Labs. Home. Internship. Labs. Home. Library. Even though I became a better engineer, Imperial turned me into a horrible person.

COMPUTING STUDENT

Personal development is sometimes neglected at the cost of students investing the majority of their time into academic work. Imperial College and the Union are beginning to strive to achieve a culture which breeds more of a balanced individual.

If Imperial College wishes to develop students with core graduate attributes then the students themselves must be aware of what these attributes are. This is where the diversification of learning outcomes, by specifying which core skills will be developed in each course module, can help to bring about such awareness.

## Recommendation

Identify and consider which of the key graduate attributes will be developed in each course module, embedding this information in learning outcomes.



My fourth year project has been an excellent opportunity to develop my soft skills, and is by far my favourite section of the course.

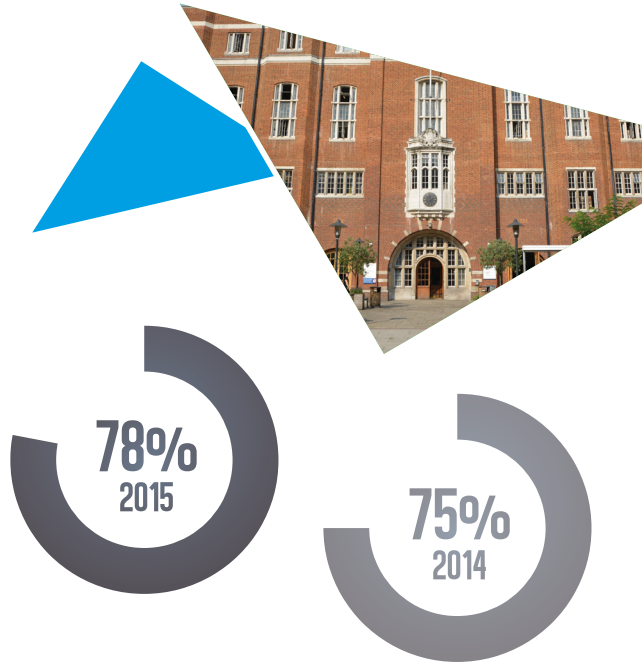
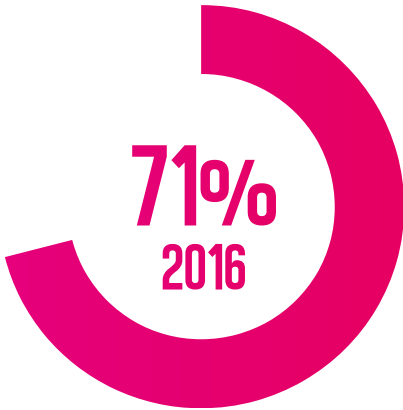
CHEMISTRY STUDENT



Intensity is overwhelming at times. Not easy to understand the subjects deeply when too much contents are taught within short amount of time.

CIVIL & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDENT

# Imperial College Union



**67%**  
Sector  
Average

**68%**  
Russell Group  
Average

Imperial College Union ultimately strives to serve its students by offering services and opportunities which improve their student experience during time at university. However, to some students, Imperial College Union can seem like a large organisation with overwhelming levels of bureaucracy and staff whose roles are unclear. This perception sometimes creates a mistrustful relationship between the Union and segments of the wider student body.

The Union are currently in a fortunate position having held the biggest student elections of any university this year - a statistic we are immensely proud of. Nonetheless, there is area for improvement in how we engage students and where we choose to invest our resource and effort. We therefore encourage College to work closely with Officer Trustees, volunteers and staff in establishing these areas for improvement.

Imperial College Union is a membership organisation. For our members to be truly engaged they need to understand the organisation more deeply; its composition, what it stands for and the opportunities available for them as members. The issue of unawareness with our members appears to be tied closely to our ability to communicate effectively.

The ways in which students currently perceive Imperial College Union and the things which they affiliate the brand with are incredibly variable. We want to work towards being in a position where all students truly understand our main purpose: optimising the student experience. Our cohort of 63 staff, student trustees and volunteers all work to satisfy all members of the Union.

## Recommendation

Review the methods that Imperial College Union uses to communicate information to its student members in the interest of achieving transparency with its processes, organisational structures and actions.



Other than for the...teaching, I had a great time at Imperial thanks to Imperial College Union. I don't know if other universities in the UK have such an amazing Student Union, but this one really made the difference for me.

PHYSICS STUDENT



This almost political approach makes dealing with the university, Central Union and Sport Imperial confusing, complex and most often disappointing.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE STUDENT

Imperial College Union prides itself on being a student-centred organisation by providing thousands of students with the opportunities to lead clubs, societies, campaigns and Constituent Unions, as well as offering volunteering opportunities which develop individuals. This said, there are still groups of students who do not engage with these activities. The Union needs to continuously review our offerings striving to ensure we reach every student.

Recently the Union have become affiliated with Citizens UK, an organisation dedicated to building communities to act and make change. This support, alongside our previous experiences as an organisation, will allow us to better support and develop students in order for them to be able to directly create positive change at this university.

## Recommendation

Explore new ways of engaging students and strive to empower volunteers to take an active role in making change.



Incredible facilities for health, sports and other extracurricular activities. The choice of extracurricular activities on offer by the student body, and supported by the college through the union is overwhelming.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE STUDENT



As a student body, I feel we have a very quiet voice. Our union isn't active enough and isn't listened to over matters which have drawn student activity.

PHYSICS STUDENT

# Vital Statistics

Department	Satisfaction 2016	Satisfaction 2015	Difference
Overall	83%	88%	-5%
Aeronautics	74%	91%	-17%
Bioengineering	81%	97%	-16%
Chemical Engineering	89%	90%	-1%
Chemistry	86%	75%	+11%
Civil & Environmental Engineering	96%	91%	+5%
Computing	90%	90%	0%
Electrical & Electronic Engineering	87%	89%	-2%
Life Sciences	80%	77%	+3%
Materials	76%	91%	-15%
Mathematics	84%	92%	-8%
Mechanical Engineering	83%	96%	-13%
Physics	67%	87%	-20%
Biomedical Sciences	76%	N/A	-
School of Medicine	87	88%	-1%

Metric	2016 score	2015 score	Imperial College Union recommendations summaries
<b>Teaching</b> Staff are good at explaining things; Staff have made the subject interesting; Staff are enthusiastic; Course is intellectually stimulating	85%	89%	1) Departmental staff should work with students in the teaching review process, ensuring student representation on quality assurance panels. 2) Recognise and invest in exemplary teaching, providing exceptional lecturers with the opportunity to continually evolve teaching methods and experiment with innovative teaching styles and tools. 3) Students should be given the opportunity to act as teaching consultants.
<b>Assessment and Feedback</b> Marking criteria is made clear in advance; Assessment arrangements and marking are fair; Feedback on work is prompt; Feedback comments are detailed; Feedback helps clarify understanding	62%	68%	4) Feedback Traffic Light system should be implemented to regulate feedback timeliness. 5) Departmental leader(s) should be responsible for overseeing the quality of feedback across the department, interacting closely with Academic Reps and students. 6) Students and academics should work closely to co-design curricula assessment and feedback practices.
<b>Academic Support</b> Sufficient support and advice with studies; Able to contact staff when need to; Advice available when needing to make study choices	77%	83%	7) Continue to develop the Personal Tutor system, considering the establishment of a Personal Tutor network. Consider splitting the academic and pastoral care aspects of the role. 8) Standardise the administration around mitigating circumstances to a faculty level.
<b>Organisation and Management</b> Timetable works efficiently with regard to activities; Changes in the course or teaching are communicated effectively; Course is well organised and running smoothly	78%	84%	9) Collate deadlines for all modules in a single departmental repository to assist in achieving an even distribution of deadlines which avoids clashes in all student timetables. 10) Adhere to existing College policy by providing termly timetables in advance of term start dates.
<b>Learning Resources</b> Library resources and services satisfy needs; Able to access general IT resources when needed; Able to access specialised equipment, facilities and rooms when needed	92%	95%	11) Reflect on how better to use College room space at times of high intensity, working closely with the Central Timetabling Support Office and the new Associate Provost (Space). 12) The college should continue to ensure that the facilities used for teaching continue to be world-class, supporting lecturers and students to be continually innovative in utilising digital technology for learning.
<b>Personal Development</b> Course allows one to present themselves with confidence; Communication skills have improved; Feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems	80%	85%	13) Ensure that all departments agree a minimum amount of free time provided for students, decided at the Faculty level by closely working with students. 14) Embed relevant key graduate attributes within learning outcomes of each module.
<b>Imperial College Union</b>	71%	78%	15) Review the methods that Imperial College Union uses to communicate information to its student members in the interest of achieving transparency with its processes, organisational structures and actions. 16) Explore new ways of engaging students and strive to empower volunteers to take an active role in making change.

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