1. **PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

This report provides an overview of the National Student Survey 2023 results for the University of Aberdeen.

2. **PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board/Committee</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previously considered/approved by</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further consideration/ approval required by</td>
<td>SSEC UEC 21st September xx</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The paper is provided for information and discussion.

4. **BACKGROUND**

4.1 The National Student Survey (NSS) is undertaken annually by students across the higher education sector. As such, it is published every year and is a rich and influential source of information about higher education. The survey is a key component of the quality assurance and wider regulatory landscape in UK higher education, and the results are also utilised by the three domestic league tables for ranking universities (Times & Sunday Times Good University Guide, Complete University Guide, and the Guardian University Guide). The survey is completed by final-year students at:

- All publicly funded higher education universities and colleges in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland
- Further education colleges in England and Northern Ireland
- Further education institutions (FEIs) in Wales (with directly funded higher education students)

4.2 Following a review and subsequent consultation conducted by the UK higher education funding and regulatory bodies in 2020-2022, the themes, questions and responses in the NSS have changed for 2023.

4.3 The changes to the NSS for 2023 make direct comparison with previous years difficult as the suite of questions within the NSS have been changed with some questions removed and added. Further to this, questions have been reframed for NSS 2023 to move away from soliciting an agree/disagree style response. The previous five-point Likert response scale has been replaced by a new four-point item-specific response scale for most questions, essentially removing a neutral response option such as the 'neither agree nor disagree' from the Likert scale.

4.4 The seven themes (‘scales’) included in the NSS 2023 are as follows: Teaching on my course, Learning opportunities, Assessment and feedback, Academic support, Organisation and management, Learning resources, and Student voice. Additionally, there are standalone questions on the students’ union, mental wellbeing services, freedom of expression (England only) and overall satisfaction (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland only).
4.5 Previously the focus of NSS reporting has been around the overall satisfaction question. However, this question has only been retained within NSS 2023 for Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish institutions and therefore can no longer provide a full sector comparison. This measure has been retained as a secondary measure in this report.

4.6 This report will instead focus on an aggregated mean average of the positive response percentages across the 25 questions that are asked at all institutions across the United Kingdom, excluding the Student Union question. This closely mirrors the approach that the Complete University Guide has taken in its “Student Satisfaction” metric for previous iterations of the NSS. This aggregated mean average of the positive responses will be abbreviated to “positive response” for the purposes of this report. This also mirrors the approach taken by many other UK institutions in order to rank their UK positioning, although some variability is noted (e.g. University of Surrey additionally include the English institution-only question on freedom of expression in their calculation).

5. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RESULTS

5.1 The University’s mean positive response score across the 25 UK-wide questions was 83.7% in NSS 2023, which represents a 4.6 percentage point rise from 2022, noting that direct comparison is limited due to the change in NSS methodology. This ranks the University at 10th in the UK when using the list of providers included in the latest iteration of the Guardian University Guide (published September 2022). In Scottish terms the University is ranked 4th, behind St Andrews, Abertay and Robert Gordon. St Andrews is ranked top across the United Kingdom for this measure.

5.2 The University is ranked in the UK Top-10 for four of the seven scales contained within the NSS: Teaching on my course (6th), Academic support (7th), Organisation and management (7th), and Learning resources (2nd).

5.3 In terms of individual questions, the University has been ranked at top of the UK for two questions: Question 19 (“The IT resources and facilities have supported my learning well”) in Learning resources and Question 22 (“I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course”) in Student voice.

5.4 The scales outwith the Top-10 are ranked as follows: Learning opportunities (16th), Assessment and feedback (65th), and Student voice (21st). Notwithstanding the methodology change, the Assessment and feedback scale has been consistently the poorest ranked NSS scale for the University in recent years.

5.5 In terms of individual questions, Question 13 (“Feedback on my work has been timely”) included in the Assessment and feedback scale is the lowest ranked question for the University in NSS 2023 at 97th in the UK.

5.6 In terms of CAH Level 3 subjects in the NSS, the University is ranked top in the UK in the NSS for the following five subjects:

- Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology
- Business Studies
- History of Art, Architecture and Design
- Linguistics
- Philosophy

5.7 The University is ranked in the Top-10 nationally for a total of 21 subjects at CAH Level 3.

5.8 The highest level of positive response at School level is found in the School of Education (89.4%). The lowest level of positive response is in the School of Engineering (75.0%).

5.9 For the specific overall satisfaction question the University has a score of 84.7%, down from 85.6% last year. Although there can be no UK rank for this question due to its non-inclusion in
England, the University is ranked second across the 25 providers in the devolved nations of the UK for this question, with only St Andrews ranked higher.

5.10 At School level the highest level of overall satisfaction is found in the School of Social Science (89.0%). The lowest level is found in the School of Engineering (77.6%).

5.11 The response rate for NSS 2023 was 68%, which was up one percentage point from last year. This ranked the University 103rd in the sector for NSS response rate.

6. **NEXT STEPS**

6.1 Headline communications were sent to Court, UMG and staff on Friday 11 August. The initial analytical report was sent to Schools on Monday 14 August.

6.2 The NSS Power BI Dashboard is available to users and can be shared with colleagues.

6.3 The initial analytical report was discussed at the Student Support and Experience Committee, and the University Education Committee.

6.4 The expanded analytical report now includes: demographic analyses (age, disability, ethnicity, gender, IMD), qualitative analyses of students’ comments, and the optional bank questions. This report is to be further discussed through the SSEC and UEC with institutional action(s) identified.

6.5 In academic year 2022/23, assessment and feedback was an institutional theme and it is recommended that this will continue for 2023/24.

6.6 Schools will take forward action planning at School and discipline level using an updated template (which allows for all Education-related action planning in one overall action plan). School action plans will be completed by the end of October after which the Dean for Student Support and Experience will hold a Directors of Education forum to discuss results and good practice. The aim will be to share and disseminate good practice as appropriate. School Education Committees will provide School-level governance on progress with action plans, and SSEC will monitor updates on School action plans at university level.

6.7 The institutional action plan will be developed and finalised by the end of October and discussed at SSEC in November, with governance for its implementation and progress sitting with SSEC and UEC.

7. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education (ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk) and Chris Souter, Head of Data and Business Intelligence (chris.souter@abdn.ac.uk).

29th September 2023

**Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status:** Closed
National Student Survey 2023 Results (Expanded Report)
Analysis by the Directorate of Planning & Governance

12th September 2023

Background & Outline Methodology

The National Student Survey (NSS) is undertaken annually by students across the higher education sector. As such, it is published every year and is a rich and influential source of information about higher education. The survey is a key component of the quality assurance and wider regulatory landscape in UK higher education, and the results are also utilised by the three domestic league tables for ranking universities (Times & Sunday Times Good University Guide, Complete University Guide, and the Guardian University Guide). The survey is completed by final-year students at:

- All publicly funded higher education universities and colleges in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland
- Further education colleges in England and Northern Ireland
- Further education institutions (FEIs) in Wales (with directly funded higher education students)

For the purposes of ranking the University of Aberdeen in the UK higher education sector, the institutional-level rankings have considered 121 higher education institutions that are included in the most recent Guardian University Guide. Please note that although this list includes the University of Cambridge and University of Oxford, these two institutions do not ordinarily participate in the National Student Survey, effectively making the ranking out of 119 institutions historically (see Appendix for a full list). However, the University of Oxford has participated in NSS 2023, so the rankings for this year are now out of 120 institutions.

There are some changes for NSS 2023. Following a review and subsequent consultation conducted by the UK higher education funding and regulatory bodies in 2020-2022, the themes, questions and responses in the NSS have changed for 2023. The themes included for NSS 2023 are as follows:

- Teaching on my course
- Learning opportunities
- Assessment and feedback
- Academic support
- Organisation and management
- Learning resources
- Student voice
- Mental wellbeing services
- Freedom of expression (England only)
- Overall Satisfaction (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland only)

Additionally, some questions have been added/removed from the above sections, and the questions have been reframed slightly to move away from soliciting an agree/disagree style response. The previous five-point Likert response scale has been replaced by a new four-point item-specific response scale for each question, essentially removing a neutral response option such as the ‘neither agree nor disagree’ from the Likert scale. The one exception to this has been for Q28: Overall I am satisfied with the quality of the course, also known as the “Overall Satisfaction”
question, which remains unchanged from the previous version of NSS and retains the five-point Likert response scale. This question is asked at Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish institutions only.

For previous versions of our NSS reporting we have focused on the Overall Satisfaction question (was Q27 previously, now Q28) as the headline item for reports. However, with the change to this question only being asked for Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish institutions it has necessitated a refocussing of the headline item in order to provide a full sector comparison. This means that this report will instead focus on an aggregated mean average of the positive responses percentage across the 25 questions that are asked at all institutions across the United Kingdom excluding the Student Union question. This closely mirrors the approach that the Complete University Guide has taken in its “Student Satisfaction” metric for previous iterations of the NSS. This aggregated mean average of the positive responses will be abbreviated to “positive response” for the purposes of this report.

The responses to the Overall Satisfaction question will not be included in the aforementioned “positive response” measure as it is not asked across the UK. However, it is included in this report as a secondary focus as it allows continuity with previous versions of the National Student Survey and remains an important question in its own right.

In addition to the mandatory set of questions in the core NSS survey, universities also have the option to choose up to six banks of optional questions and may include up to two additional questions specific to the provider. This year the University chose the optional six bank question themes as follows:

- B2. Students’ Union (Association or Guild)
- B7. Course Delivery
- B9. Welfare Resources and Facilities
- B15. Employability and skills
- B16. Environmental sustainability
- B17. Student safety

This report contains the following sections and subdivisions:

Section One: Positive response
- NSS 2023: University of Aberdeen overall performance in positive response
- NSS 2023: University of Aberdeen positive response performance by Scale – Score and Rank
- NSS 2023: Institutional positive response score / rank / quartile by NSS Scale and Question
- NSS 2023: Positive response by Subject (CAH Level 3) against Sector – Scores
- NSS 2023: Positive response by Subject (CAH Level 3) against Sector – Rank
- NSS 2023: Positive response by University of Aberdeen School
- NSS 2023: Positive response by demographic category (against Sector where available) - Scores

Section Two: Overall satisfaction
- NSS 2023: University of Aberdeen overall performance in overall satisfaction
- NSS 2023: Overall satisfaction by University of Aberdeen School

Section Three: Optional bank questions
- NSS 2023: Positive response by bank question group

Section Four: Text comments
- NSS 2023: Distribution of positive / negative comments by question

Section Five: Response rates
- NSS 2023: Response rates
SECTION ONE: ‘POSITIVE RESPONSE’

NSS 2023: University of Aberdeen overall performance in positive response

National Student Survey 2023 Positive Response

‘Positive response’ is the average of positive responses across all UK-wide questions in the NSS.

Positive Response 83.7% ▲ (up 4.6 pp from 2022)

UK Rank 10th ▼ (-3 places)

Scottish Rank: 4th (-2 places)

The University of Aberdeen’s score for positive response has risen by 4.6 percentage points from the 2022 position (see table 1), although it should be noted that this has been based on a new set of questions in 2023, so not directly comparable. The University has fallen from a UK rank of 7th to 10th in 2023 out of 120* institutions (based on the 121 institutions listed in the Guardian University Guide 2023, not including Cambridge who did not participate in the NSS). The University moved from a rank of 2nd to a rank of 4th for positive response within Scotland.

*Previously we had framed the University performance around an agreed list of 124 universities which commonly featured in domestic league tables. With the changes to the NSS this year we have instead opted to use the most recently available list of institutions ranked in the Guardian University Guide against which to rank the University. Had we continued to use the list of 124 institutions we would have ranked 13th in the UK for this measure.

Table 1: University of Aberdeen performance in the National Student Survey 2023 for positive response compared with 2022.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Positive Response (UK Rank)</th>
<th>Positive Response (Scottish Rank)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>10th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difference</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>movement</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▼</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1: University of Aberdeen performance for NSS positive response (2019-2023)
The University of Aberdeen scored the greatest positive response of the past five years at 83.7% in 2023 (see chart 1). This was a 4.6% increase from 2022 and a 2.9% increase from the previous maximum of 80.8% in 2019.

Additionally, a 10th place rank in 2023 was a three-place decrease from the previous year but the second highest rank of the past five years.

Table 2: University of Aberdeen performance across NSS Scales 01 to 07 in 2023 compared to 2022.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Scale 01: Teaching on my course</th>
<th>Scale 02: Learning Opportunities</th>
<th>Scale 03: Assessment and Feedback</th>
<th>Scale 04: Academic Support</th>
<th>Scale 05: Organisation &amp; management</th>
<th>Scale 06: Learning resources</th>
<th>Scale 07: Student Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023 PR</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 % agree difference movement</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023 rank</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 rank</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difference movement</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University of Aberdeen was ranked inside the UK Top-10 for four of the seven scales in NSS 2023 – Teaching on my course (6th), Academic Support (7th), Organisation & management (7th), and Learning resources (2nd).

Positive response scores increased across all seven NSS scales for the University of Aberdeen between 2022 and 2023 (see table 2). The greatest rise was for Scale 04 (Academic Support) at 8.9 percentage points.

Rank, however, increased for only one of the seven NSS scales (Learning Resources) for the University of Aberdeen. Aberdeen decreased in rank for five of the seven scales. The largest decrease in rank was Scale 07 (Student Voice) with 13 places.
NSS 2023: University of Aberdeen performance by Scale – Score and Rank

Note: Some caution is advised on making time trend assumptions with this data as the changes for NSS 2023 do not make the data directly comparable to previous years.

Scale 01: Teaching on My Course

Based on student responses to questions 1 to 4:
1. Staff are good at explaining things, 2. Staff have made the subject interesting, 3. The course is intellectually stimulating, and 4. My course has challenged me to achieve my best work.

![Chart 2: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 01: TEACHING ON MY COURSE in NSS (2019-2023)]

The University of Aberdeen rank for the Teaching on My Course scale within NSS has been variable over the last five-year period (see chart 2). In 2023, the University increased in score by 3.7 percentage points from 85.8% to 89.5%.

Despite the increase in score for Teaching on My Course, the University has dropped two places from 4th to 6th.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 3rd for this scale in the Scottish sector.

Scale 02: Learning Opportunities

Based on student responses to questions 5 to 9:
5. My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth, 6. My course introduced subjects and skills that builds on what I have already learned, 7. My course has provided me with opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different topics, 8. My course has the right balance of directed and independent study, and 9. My course has developed my knowledge and skills that I will need for my future.

![Chart 3: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 02: LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES in NSS (2019-2023)]

The University of Aberdeen’s positive response score has been consistently in the low 80s from 2019 to 2023 (see chart 3). In 2023, there was an increase in score for Learning Opportunities from 81.7% to 84.4% - a rise of 2.7 percentage points.

The institutional rank for the Learning Opportunities scale had previously been declining for several years with Aberdeen falling to 102nd in 2020. However, the University of Aberdeen has increased for this scale since this. The University of Aberdeen have remained 16th for 2023.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 5th for this scale in the Scottish sector.
Scale 03: Assessment and Feedback
Based on student responses to questions 10 to 14:

10. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.
11. Marking and assessment has been fair.
12. Assessments have allowed me to demonstrate what I have learned.
13. Feedback on my work has been timely.
14. Feedback helps me improve my work.

Chart 4: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 03: ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK in NSS (2019-2023)

There was a rise of 7.3 percentage points from 69.8% in 2022 to a 77.1% in 2023 (see chart 4).

In recent years, the University of Aberdeen ranking for the Assessment & Feedback scale has remained consistently low before there was a significant rise to 55th in the sector in 2022. However, in 2023 the rank decreased ten places from 55th to 65th despite the rise in positive response score.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 7th for this scale in the Scottish sector.

Scale 04: Academic Support
Based on student responses to questions 15 to 16:

15. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.
16. Teaching staff have supported my learning.

Chart 5: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 04: ACADEMIC SUPPORT in NSS (2019-2023)

The University of Aberdeen’s ranking for the Academic Support scale in the NSS has been generally rising over the last five years, despite a dip in 2020 (see chart 5). The University of Aberdeen ranked 7th in the UK in 2023, a decrease in ranking of one place, compared with 2022. Additionally, positive response score increased by 8.8 percentage points to 89.2%.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 3rd for this scale in the Scottish sector.
Scale 05: Organisation and Management
Based on student responses to questions 17 to 18:

17. The course is well organised and running smoothly and 18. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively.

Chart 6: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 05: ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT in NSS (2019-2023)

The University of Aberdeen’s rank for the Organisation & Management scale has been consistently high across the five-year period and remains in the top-10 for the fourth consecutive year, ranking 7th which is a decrease of 2 places in rank from 2022 (see chart 6).

Aberdeen’s score has risen by 2.1 percentage points from 2022 to 2023, the highest score of the latest five years.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 3rd for this scale in the Scottish sector.

Scale 06: Learning Resources
Based on student responses to questions 19 to 21:

19. The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well, 20. The library resources (e.g., books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well, and 21. I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g., equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to.

Chart 7: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 06: LEARNING RESOURCES in NSS (2019-2023)

In terms of scoring, the University of Aberdeen has remained fairly consistent, although there was a drop in score by almost ten percentage points for positive score in 2021 (see chart 7). An increase of 5.2 percentage points for our latest year has helped drive our rank to its highest position in the five-year period.

The University of Aberdeen has performed exceptionally well in ranking for the Learning Resources scale within the NSS in recent years. The University achieved its highest position of 2nd place for the latest NSS results.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 1st for this scale in the Scottish sector.
Scale 07: Student Voice
based on student responses to questions 23 to 25:
22. I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course, 23. Staff value students’ views and opinions about the course, and 24. It is clear how students’ feedback on the course has been acted on.

Chart 8: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 07: STUDENT VOICE in NSS (2019-2023)

The University has achieved its highest score in Student Voice over the five-year period (see chart 8). There has been a rise of 1.8 percentage points from 74.5% in 2022 to 76.3% in this year’s release.

Despite a rise in score, the University has dropped 15 places in UK rank from 9th to 21st. This has been the largest drop in rank over the seven NSS scales.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 5th for this scale in the Scottish sector.
Table 3: University of Aberdeen performance across NSS Scales and Questions by Score and Rank/Quartile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2023 Rank</th>
<th>2022 Rank</th>
<th>UK Rank Change</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>Quartile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale 1: The teaching on my course</td>
<td>1. How good are teaching staff at explaining things?</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-2 ▼</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. How often do teaching staff make the subject engaging?</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-11 ▼</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. How often is the course intellectually stimulating?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-4 ▼</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. How often does your course challenge you to achieve your best work?</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-2 ▼</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale 2: Learning opportunities</td>
<td>5. To what extent have you had the chance to explore ideas and concepts in depth?</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0 ▼</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. How well does your course introduce subjects… on what you have already learned?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-2 ▼</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. To what extent have you had the chance… ideas from different topics?</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>new</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. To what extent does your course … balance of directed and independent study?</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. How well has your course… skills that you think you will need for your future?</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>new</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale 3: Assessment and feedback</td>
<td>10. How clear were the marking criteria used to assess your work?</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>-10 ▼</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. How fair has the marking and assessment been on your course?</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>-15</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. How well have assessments allowed you to demonstrate what you have learned?</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-11 ▼</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. How often have you received assessment feedback on time?</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>new</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. How often does feedback help you to improve your work?</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>-17 ▼</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale 4: Academic support</td>
<td>15. How easy was it to contact teaching staff when you needed to?</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-1 ▼</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. How well have teaching staff supported your learning?</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-5 ▼</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale 5: Organisation and management</td>
<td>17. How well organised is your course?</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 △</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18. How well were any changes to teaching on your course communicated?</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-3 ▼</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale 6: Learning resources</td>
<td>19. How well have the IT resources and facilities supported your learning?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6 △</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20. How well have the library resources … supported your learning?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-14 ▼</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21. How easy is it to access subject specific resources… when you need them?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-2 △</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>Q1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scale 7: Student voice</td>
<td>22. To what extent do you get the right opportunities to give feedback on your course?</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-12 ▼</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
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<td>23. To what extent are students’ opinions about the course valued by staff?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 ▲</td>
<td>89.2</td>
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<td>24. How clear is it that students’ feedback on the course is acted on?</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-2 ▼</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>Q1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25. How well does the students’ union … represent students’ academic interests?</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>60.0</td>
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<td>26. How well communicated was information about … mental wellbeing support services?</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>new</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Note: ***Q28 only applicable in 2023 to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland
| Across the 25 total questions counted within the NSS 2023 positive response calculation, four had improved in UK rank since the previous year – Q4, Q17, Q19 and Q20 (see table 3). Similarly, of the seven total scales, Learning Resources increased in rank by six places.

Twelve questions decreased in rank, resulting in the greatest negative rank change of 27 places in 2023 for question 24 (on feedback from students), placing it at 64th of 120 ranked institutions.

Questions 13 (timely feedback) and 14 (impact of feedback on work) ranked 97th and 78th respectively, making them the lowest ranking questions in the main part of the survey. The Assessment and Feedback scale consequently ranked lowest of all University of Aberdeen scales at 65th in the UK for 2023.

At the base of table 3 we have additionally included Question 25 on the students’ union and Question 28 on the overall satisfaction, the latter only being asked in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In regards to the student’s union and how well it represents students interest, the University remained in 93rd place. Overall student satisfaction increased by one place in 2023 to 2nd place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The missing question (27) on freedom of expression is only applicable to English universities.
This section provides a more detailed analysis of individual subject performance in the NSS. Subjects are measured at different levels, known as the Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH). This data is provided by HESA and determines how degree programmes are categorised into distinct subject groupings. Based on these groupings it is possible to disaggregate the University’s score for each metric to subject-level. For the purposes of this report, subjects have been analysed at the more detailed CAH level 3. This section utilises the new positive response measure across the UK-wide questions in the NSS, excluding the students’ union question.

Chart 9: University of Aberdeen performance in positive response measure against Sector across the NSS CAH Level 3 Subjects 2023
The University of Aberdeen generally performed favourably compared to the sector for most CAH Level 3 subjects, with the University outperforming the sector for 34 of the 42 CAH Level 3 subjects to which it has been assigned a positive response score (see chart 9).

Eight subjects have a positive score of larger than 10% against the sector - anatomy, physiology and pathology (11.7% positive gap), business studies (11.6% positive gap), English studies (non-specific) (10.1% positive gap), history of art, architecture and design (16.8% positive gap), linguistics (12.5% positive gap), philosophy (13.4% positive gap), physics (10.5% positive gap) and sociology (11.6% positive gap).

Nine subjects performed lower for the University against the sector, with the largest gap existing between chemical, process and energy engineering at -12.7%.

Chart 10 on the next page indicates the positive response score per CAH Level 3 subject and the respondents (full-person equivalent) that have been included in each subject area.
Chart 10: University of Aberdeen positive response performance in NSS CAH Level 3 Subjects 2023 and number of respondents
Charts 11 to 54 below provide an overview of University of Aberdeen performance for Positive Response at CAH level 3 subject level, between 2019 and 2023, compared to the sector positive response.

Some caution is advised on making time trend assumptions with this data as the changes for NSS 2023 do not make the data directly comparable to previous years.

Chart 11: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Accounting (2019-2023)

The University of Aberdeen has consistently scored below the sector positive response in Accounting since 2019 (see chart 11). However, in 2023 there is a positive gap of 3.3 percentage points against the sector.

Chart 12: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology (2019-2023)

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector positive response for Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology for the previous five years (see chart 12). In 2023 the subject achieved a positive gap of 11.7 percentage points compared to the sector response.
The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector for Anthropology throughout the previous five years (see chart 13). For 2023, the positive gap is 10.1 percentage points.

[Graph showing Anthropology performance from 2019 to 2023]

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector positive response for Biomedical Sciences (non-specific) for the previous four years (see chart 14). In 2023 the subject achieved a positive gap of 9.2 percentage points compared to the sector positive response.

Missing data indicates years in which a subject did not meet the response threshold for inclusion (this can be due to subject recoding or student numbers).
For Biology (non-specific) the University of Aberdeen’s performance has generally outperformed the sector over the timescale (note that this subject area did not report in NSS 2021) (see chart 15). In 2023, the University achieved a positive gap of 7.8 percentage points.

Missing data indicates years in which a subject did not meet the response threshold for inclusion (this can be due to subject recoding or student numbers).

Historically, the University consistently outperformed the sector in Building for positive response (except for 2022 where it was not scored) (see chart 16). However, there is a negative gap of 5.4 percentage points when comparing the University with the sector in the 2023 results.

Missing data indicates years in which a subject did not meet the response threshold for inclusion (this can be due to subject recoding or student numbers).
In 2023, the University outperformed the sector in Business Studies with a positive gap of 11.6 percentage points (see chart 17). It is noted this is the first year that Business Studies has been scored for the University for the NSS in the last 5 years.

Missing data indicates years in which a subject did not meet the response threshold for inclusion (this can be due to subject recoding or student numbers).

The University of Aberdeen has a negative gap of 12.8% against the sector’s positive response score of 80.2% (see chart 18) for Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering. This is the largest gap in the time period shown.
The University of Aberdeen has seen a year-on-year increase in positive response scores for Cinematics and Photography from 2019 to 2022 (see chart 19). However, in 2023 there has been a decrease in positive response from 87.3% to 79.3%. Despite this, the University still outperformed the sector.

The University of Aberdeen has risen in positive response from the previous year with a score of 74.7% compared with 70.0% (see chart 20) for Civil Engineering. However, a negative a gap of 5.1% in positive response is seen when compared with the sector.

Missing data indicates years in which a subject did not meet the response threshold for inclusion (this can be due to subject recoding or student numbers).
Performance for Computer Science at the University of Aberdeen has been inconsistent across the timescale (see chart 21). In 2023 the subject achieved a positive gap of 3.8 percentage points compared to the sector positive response.

The University of Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector positive response in Accounting since 2019 (see chart 22). This has continued in 2023 with a positive gap of 7.3 percentage points.
The University of Aberdeen performance in Earth Sciences has outperformed the sector for the three most recent years (see chart 23). In 2023, it can be seen that there is a positive gap of 3.5 percentage points compared with the sector.

Economics has outperformed the sector for the past three years (see chart 24). However, in 2023 there is a positive gap of only 0.1 percentage points.
In 2023, the University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector for Education by 6 percentage points (see chart 25). To note: this is only the second time that Education has featured in the NSS. It is noted that Education does not include Teacher Training.

Missing data indicates years in which a subject did not meet the response threshold for inclusion (this can be due to subject recoding or student numbers).

Electrical and Electronic Engineering has performed inconsistently against sector positive response scores over the past five years (see chart 26). However, in 2023, the University has achieved its highest score in this subject area since 2020 and outperformed the sector positive response score by 9.3 percentage points.
The University of Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector benchmark for English Studies (non-specific) (see chart 27). In 2023, the University has achieved its highest score in this subject area since 2020 and outperformed the sector positive response score by 10.1 percentage points.

Positive response has varied in Finance over the five-year period (see chart 28). In 2023, the University has achieved its highest score in this subject area since 2020 and outperformed the sector positive response score by 4.1 percentage points.
The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector positive response score in French Studies for the previous four years (see chart 29). In 2023, there is a positive gap of 5.4 percentage points.

The University of Aberdeen has scored lower than the sector for Genetics in the last two years (see chart 30). In 2023, there is a negative gap of 5.7 percentage points.

Missing data indicates years in which a subject did not meet the response threshold for inclusion (this can be due to subject recoding or student numbers).
The University of Aberdeen had outperformed the sector benchmark in History between 2020 and 2022 (see chart 31). However, in 2023 there is a negative gap of 0.1 percentage points.

The University of Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector in History of Art, Architecture and Design (no data is available for 2021) (see chart 32). In 2023 the positive gap against the sector positive response score is 16.8 percentage points, with the subject area achieving its highest score since 2019.

Missing data indicates years in which a subject did not meet the response threshold for inclusion (this can be due to subject recoding or student numbers).
The University of Aberdeen scored below the sector positive response score for Human Geography every year between 2019 and 2021 (see chart 33). However, in the two most recent years the subject has outperformed the sector score with a current positive gap of 4.3 percentage points in 2023.

The University of Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector in Law over the five-year period (see chart 34). In 2023 the subject achieved a score of 81.9%, 4.2 percentage points above the sector.
The University of Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector in Linguistics over the last four years (see chart 35). In 2023, the University has achieved its highest score in this subject area and outperformed the sector positive response score by 12.5 percentage points.

Positive response has varied in Management Studies over the five-year period (see chart 36). The University of Aberdeen has scored lower than the sector positive response by 2.4 percentage points in Management Studies in 2023.
The University of Aberdeen scored 89.7% in Mathematics which is a positive gap of 8.5 percentage points compared to the sector (see chart 37). This was Aberdeen’s highest score for the past five years and was greater than any sector score in the same timeframe.

The University of Aberdeen scored 79.5% in 2023 for Mechanical Engineering, outperforming the sector by 3 percentage points (see chart 38) by three percentage points.
The University of Aberdeen scored 84.4% in 2023, which is a positive gap of 9.3 percentage points compared to the sector. The University of Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector throughout the five-year period.

The University of Aberdeen scored 84.0% for positive response in 2023 for Microbiology and Cell Science, which is a positive gap of 3.8 percentage points compared to the sector (see chart 40). This was Aberdeen’s highest score for the past 5 years.

Missing data indicates years in which a subject did not meet the response threshold for inclusion (this can be due to subject recoding or student numbers).
The University of Aberdeen scored 83.9% in 2023 for Molecular Biology, Biophysics and Biochemistry which is a positive gap of 3.8 percentage points compared to the sector. This is Aberdeen’s greatest score since 2019 (see chart 41).

The University of Aberdeen scored 72.3% for Music in 2023, which is a negative gap of 6.2 percentage points compared to the sector (see chart 42). This was the lowest score for Aberdeen of the past five years.
The University of Aberdeen scored 85.9% for positive response in 2023 for Others in Biosciences, which is a positive gap of 6.3 percentage points compared to the sector (see chart 43).

The University of Aberdeen scored 80.8% for Pharmacology in 2023, which is a negative gap of 0.3 percentage points compared to the sector (see chart 44). This was Aberdeen’s second lowest score in Pharmacology over the five year period.
The University of Aberdeen scored 93.6% for positive response in Philosophy for 2023, which is a positive gap of 13.3 percentage points compared to the sector (see chart 45). This was the greatest score for Aberdeen in this period.

The University of Aberdeen scored 83.7% for Physical Geographical Sciences in 2023, which is a positive gap of 2.1 percentage points compared to the sector (see chart 46).
The University of Aberdeen scored the highest score for Physics for the past five years (see chart 47). In 2023 the subject achieved a score of 90.5%, 10.4 percentage points above the sector.

The University of Aberdeen scored 84.6% in 2023 for Politics (see chart 48). This is a positive gap of 5.4 percentage points compared with the sector.
The University of Aberdeen scored 3.2 percentage points above the sector in 2023 for Psychology (non-specific) with a score of 82.7% and has been consistently above the sector throughout the previous five-year period.

The University of Aberdeen scored 89.7% in Sociology for 2023, the highest score of the past five years. Sociology outperformed the sector by 11.6 percentage points in 2023 (see chart 50).
The University of Aberdeen scored 82.6% in 2023 for Sport and Exercise Sciences (see chart 51). This was 1.9 percentage points below the sector score of 84.5%, in contrast to Aberdeen’s previous marginal outperformance over the sector between 2019 and 2022.

The University of Aberdeen scored by far the greatest Teacher Training score of the past five years in 2023 (see chart 52). Aberdeen outperformed the sector by 9.2 percentage points in 2023, in contrast to being lower scoring historically.
The University of Aberdeen scored 91.8% in 2023 for Theology and Religious Studies (see chart 53). This is a positive gap of 6.2 percentage points compared to the sector score. Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector for this subject throughout the three years that it has featured in the NSS.

Missing data indicates years in which a subject did not meet the response threshold for inclusion (this can be due to subject recoding or student numbers).

The University of Aberdeen scored greater than the sector for Zoology by 1.1% in 2023 with a score of 80.4% (see chart 54); this was the second lowest score for Aberdeen in the past five years.
An overview of the University of Aberdeen’s performance for CAH Level 3 with rankings for Positive Response in the UK is presented in Table 4. Table 4 provides the 2022 and 2023 ranks, the change in rank from 2022, the number of institutions offering the subject, and the % agree for positive response. Further detail on School performance at this level can be found in the NSS Power BI dashboard when available.

### Table 4: University of Aberdeen performance for CAH Level 3 subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject (CAH 3)</th>
<th>2023 Rank</th>
<th>2022 Rank</th>
<th>UK Rank Change</th>
<th>No Institutions (2023)</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
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*Note: Yellow highlighting shows where the University of Aberdeen has ranked 1st in the UK*
The University of Aberdeen ranked 1st in the UK for five subjects: anatomy, physiology and pathology, business studies, history of art, architecture and design, linguistics and philosophy (see table 4).

Another nine subjects ranked elsewhere in the top five in the UK: anthropology, biology (non-specific), English studies (non-specific), others in biosciences, electrical and electronic engineering, medicine (non-specific), physics, sociology and creative writing.

A further seven subjects ranked elsewhere in the top ten in the UK: earth sciences, mathematics, microbiology and cell science, theology and religious studies, French studies, teacher training and education.

This brings the number of CAH Level 3 subjects ranked in the UK Top-10 for the University of Aberdeen to 21 out of 43 subjects.
The greatest positive response score across the twelve schools was for Education at 89.4, followed by Social Science at 87.4, and Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History at 85.4 (see chart 55).

No Schools scored greater than 90% in 2023. However, this result should not be directly compared with the result of 2022 due to differing questions and reporting methodology.

Eleven of twelve Schools at the University of Aberdeen scored a positive response greater than 80%. The sole school to score less than 80% was Engineering at 75%.
The Business school scored its highest positive response of the past five years at 83.0% (see chart 56). Scores have fluctuated around the mid-70% from 2019 to 2022. The 2023 score was the first in the past five years to exceed 80%.

The School of Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History scored its highest positive response for the past five years at 85.4% (see chart 57).
The School of Education scored its highest positive response of the past five years in 2023, at 89.4%, following an increase of 15.9% points (see chart 58).

The School of Engineering scored 75.0% in 2023, a minor increase of one point from 2022 (see chart 59). This score was the second highest score in the last five years.
The School of Geosciences scored its highest score of the past five years in 2023 at 83.5% (see chart 60). This was a minor increase from 2022 at 82.2%.

The School of Law scored 81.7% in 2023, the greatest score of the past five years and marginally higher than the second highest score at 81.1% in 2019 (see chart 61).
The School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture scored 85.1% positive response in 2023, the highest of the past five years (see chart 62).

The School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition scored 84.1% in 2023, marginally the second highest score of the prior 5 years (see chart 63). The highest score was 84.2% in 2019.
The School of Natural & Computing Sciences scored by far its highest score of the past five years in 2023 at 85.3% (see chart 64). The second greatest score was 2020 at 79.8%.

The School of Psychology scored its second-lowest score of the past five years at 82.4% (see chart 65). However, this was negligibly different from all years except the lowest-scoring, 2021 at 73.0%.
The School of Biological Sciences scored its highest score of the past five years at 84.2% in 2023 (see chart 66), with the highest response rate in the four years previous being 81.2%.

The School of Social Science scored the highest score of the past five years in 2023 at 87.4% (see chart 67). This was 8% greater than the next highest at 79.4% in 2019.
Positive Response – Ethnicity

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector for positive response for both Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and White students (except for BAME students in 2020), across the five-year period.

The positive response for students who identify themselves as White have higher positive response than BAME students in all years except 2023. The current gap indicates a higher positive response for BAME students by 0.3 percentage points.

The latest results show a gap of 3.6 and 3.3 percentage points against the sector, in favour of the University for the categories BAME and White, respectively.

Positive Response – Domicile

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector for all domicile categories in positive response across the five-year period.

Positive response scores have varied throughout the five years for each of the domiciles. In 2023, the highest positive response score is found in EU students, but the previous four years seen ‘others’ as the most positive.

The latest results show a gap of 3.4, 5.7 and 2.3 percentage points, in favour of the University against the sector for the categories UK, EU and Others, respectively.
Positive Response – Gender

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector in positive response for both Female and Male students across the five-year period except for Male students in 2020.

Positive response scores have varied throughout the five years for each of the domiciles. In 2023, the highest positive response score is found in Female students, but the previous two years seen Male students as the most positive.

The latest results show a gap of 4.5 and 2.5 percentage points, in favour of the University against the sector for both Female and Male students, respectively.

Positive Response – IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation)

The most recent NSS results has seen IMD quintiles 2-5 scoring higher than IMD quintile 1 (most deprived) for positive response with a score of 83.2% compared to 81.9%.

Index of Multiple Deprivation is a UK government qualitative study of deprived areas for Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland, where quintile 1 represents the most deprived areas and quintile 5 represents the least deprived areas.

From 2019 – 2021 quintile 1 had lower positive response scores against the aggregated quintiles 2-5. However, in 2022 year shows quintile 1 increased by 12 percentage points on the previous year and has a positive response score that is 5.1 percentage points higher than for quintiles 2-5 for 2022.

Unfortunately, sector comparison data is not available for IMD data.
In 2023, NSS results have seen students at the University who are 31 years and over on entry score higher than each of the other age categories in positive response. This has been the case for the last five years.

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector in each of the age categories in 2023. Students who are 31 years and over on entry have the highest positive gap of 7.6 percentage points compared to the sector.

Unfortunately, historical comparison of positive response scores cannot be made for the University or the sector as the age categories have changed in this year’s NSS edition.

In 2023, NSS results have seen students at the University who have no disability reported score higher in positive response than those who have reported a disability by 2.1 percentage points.

The 2023 results show a gap of 3.5 and 4.4 percentage points, in favour of the University against the sector for students who have no disability reported and those who have reported a disability, respectively.

Unfortunately, historical comparison of positive response scores cannot be made for the University or the sector as the disability categories have changed in this year’s NSS edition.
Positive Response – Local Students & otherwise

Chart 74: University of Aberdeen performance for Positive Response – Local Students, in NSS 2023

In 2023, NSS results has seen students at the University who are distance learners score higher in positive response than other student categories with a positive response score of 92.4%. The rate of positive response for local and non-local on campus students is identical at 83.5% for the University.

The 2023 results show a gap of 3.1, 9.6 and 3.9 percentage points, in favour of the University against the sector for students studying at an HE provider local to their home address, distance learners and students studying at an HE provider not local to their home address, respectively.

Unfortunately, historical comparison cannot be made between positive response scores for the University or the sector as this is a new category in this year’s NSS edition.

Positive Response – Sexual Orientation

Chart 75: University of Aberdeen performance for Positive Response – Sexual Orientation, in NSS 2023

In 2023, NSS results has seen students at the University who are of heterosexual orientation score higher than the two other sexual orientation categories with a positive response score of 83.9.

The 2023 results show a gap of 4.9, 3.8 and 0.1 percentage points, in favour of the University against the sector for students who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, heterosexual or of other sexual orientation, respectively.

Unfortunately, historical comparison cannot be made between positive response scores for the University or the sector as this is a new category in this year’s NSS edition.
In 2023, NSS results has seen students at the University whose parent(s) do not hold a HE qualification score higher for positive destination than those students whose parents do hold a HE qualification with a positive response score of 82.8.

The 2023 results show a gap of 3.5 and 3.1 percentage points, in favour of the University against the sector for students whose parent(s) hold a HE qualification and those who don’t, respectively.

Unfortunately, historical comparison cannot be made between positive response scores for the University or the sector as this is a new category in this year’s NSS edition.
SECTION TWO: ‘OVERALL SATISFACTION’

NSS 2023: University of Aberdeen overall performance in overall satisfaction

National Student Survey 2023 Overall Satisfaction

‘Overall satisfaction’ is based on positive responses to Q28. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course.

Overall Satisfaction 84.7% ▼ (down 0.9 pp from 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Overall Satisfaction</th>
<th>Overall Satisfaction (UK Rank)</th>
<th>Overall Satisfaction (UK Rank excl. England)</th>
<th>Overall Satisfaction (Scottish Rank)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University of Aberdeen’s % Agree score for overall satisfaction has fallen by 0.9% between 2022 and 2023 (see table 5). The University of Aberdeen ranked 2nd of participating UK universities (i.e. excluding English institutions) in 2023, a one-place increase from 3rd place in 2022 compared to the same group of institutions. However, Aberdeen remained ranked 2nd in Scotland between 2023 and 2022.

Chart 77: University of Aberdeen performance for NSS overall satisfaction (2019-2023)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University of Aberdeen marginally reduced by 0.9% in overall satisfaction score from 2022 to 2023. This is the second lowest score since 2019 (see chart 68).

Please note that a UK rank for overall satisfaction is no longer available due to the discontinuation of this question in England.
Across the twelve Schools at the University of Aberdeen, the greatest score for overall satisfaction in 2023 was the School of Social Science at 89.0% (see chart 69). This was marginally greater than the School of Education at 88.8% at second highest scoring. However, no Schools scored greater than or equal to 90% in 2023.

Ten of the twelve Schools in total scored greater than 80%, placing only two marginally outside this. The Schools of Engineering and Natural & Computing Sciences scored 77.6% and 78.3% respectively. The difference between the maximum (Social Science) and minimum (Engineering) School scores was 11.4%.
The Business School scored 82.2% overall satisfaction for 2023 (see chart 70). This was third highest at 2.4% lower than the maximum score of 84.6% in 2019.

The School of Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History scored second lowest of the past five years at 87.9% (see chart 71). This score was five points lower than the peak of 92.9% in 2022.
The School of Education scored its highest score of the prior five years in 2023 at 88.8% (see chart 72). This was 17.7% greater than the lowest reported score of 71.1% in 2020.

The School of Engineering scored its lowest score of the past five years in 2023 at 77.6% (see chart 73). This contrasts with its maximum score of 87.5% in the previous year.
The School of Geosciences scored the second highest score of the past five years in 2023 at 86.5% (see chart 74). This contrasts with its maximum score of 92.9% from the previous year.

The School of Law has achieved a score of 87.0% in 2023 for overall satisfaction (see chart 75). This was the lowest score of the past five years at 6.8% lower than the maximum score from 2020.
The School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture scored 84.7% in 2023, the lowest score of the past five years (see chart 76).

The School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition scored 84.1% in 2023, the lowest score of the past five years.
The School of Natural & Computing Science scored 78.3% in 2023, the lowest score of the past five years (see chart 78).

The School of Psychology has had a variable score over the past five years (see chart 79). The 2023 overall satisfaction score was 86.3%, 10 points lower than the maximum of 96.3% in 2022.
The School of Biological Sciences scored 86.1% overall satisfaction in 2023, an increase from the previous year (see chart 80).

The School of Social Science scored a second-highest score of 89.0% in 2023, marginally behind 2020 at 90.7% (see chart 81).
SECTION THREE: OPTIONAL BANK QUESTIONS

In addition to the core NSS questions, every participating Institution can choose whether or not to ask their students extra questions. The NSS has a list of 17 additional groups of questions, known as optional bank questions, of which each institution can choose up to six of these to ask their student population. The following charts display the scores of the University of Aberdeen against the sector for the extra questions that were chosen for this year’s results.

The University of Aberdeen chose to submit the same optional questions to the NSS as the previous three years and therefore can be directly compared. The questions were chosen both to reflect priorities for the student experience as well as to allow year on year comparisons and measurement of progress. The questions that were chosen are: B2 Students’ Union (Association or Guild), B7 Course Delivery, B9 Welfare Resources and Facilities, B15 Employability and skills, B16 Environmental sustainability, and B17 Student safety.

It is noted that in the 2023 edition of the NSS, sector-wide scores for additional bank questions have not been released.

B2: Students’ Union (Association or Guild)

based on student responses to questions B2.1 to B2.3:

B2.1 The Students’ Union (Association or Guild) had had a positive impact on my sense of belonging to the university or college.  
B2.2 The Students’ Union (Association or Guild) has had a positive impact on the local community.  
B2.3 The Students’ Union (Association or Guild) has helped me develop useful life skills.

![Chart 91: University of Aberdeen performance for B2 Students’ Union (Association or Guild), in NSS from 2019 to 2023](image)

The University of Aberdeen has scored 32.8%. This is an increase of 4.1 percentage points compared to the University's score in 2022.
B7: Course Delivery
based on student responses to questions B7.1 to B7.5:
B7.1 Learning materials made available on my course have enhanced my learning. B7.2 The range and balance of approaches to teaching has helped me to learn. B7.3 The delivery of my course has been stimulating. B7.4 My learning has benefited from modules that are informed by current research. B7.5 Practical activities on my course have helped me to learn.

Chart 92: University of Aberdeen performance for B7 Course Delivery, in NSS from 2019 to 2023
The University of Aberdeen has scored 79%. This is a reduction of one percentage point compared to the University’s score in 2022.

B9: Welfare Resources and Facilities
based on student responses to questions B9.1 & B9.2:
B9.1 There is sufficient provision of welfare and student services to meet my needs. B9.2 When needed, the information and advice offered by welfare and student services has been helpful.

Chart 93: University of Aberdeen performance for B9 Welfare Resources and Facilities, in NSS from 2019 to 2023
The University of Aberdeen has scored 72.3%. This is an increase of 2.2 percentage points compared to the University’s score in 2022. This is also the highest achieving score over the five-year period shown in Chart 93.
B15: Employability and skills
based on student responses to questions B15.1 to B15.3:

B15.1 My Higher Education experience has helped me plan for my future career. B15.2 My institution offered activities and resources designed to prepare me for the next step in my career. B15.3 The skills I have developed during my time in Higher Education will be useful for my career.

Chart 94: University of Aberdeen performance for B15 Employability and skills, in NSS from 2019 to 2023

The University of Aberdeen has scored 77%. This is an increase of 0.3 percentage points compared to the University's score in 2022.

B16: Environmental sustainability
based on student responses to questions B16.1 to B16.3:

B16.1 My institution encourages good environmental practice. B16.2 My course has encouraged me to think about environmental sustainability. B16.3 I have had opportunities to take part in activities supporting environmental sustainability.

Chart 95: University of Aberdeen performance for B16 Environmental sustainability, in NSS from 2019 to 2023

The University of Aberdeen has scored 58.8%. This is an increase of 3.5 percentage points compared to the University’s score in 2022.
B17: Student safety
based on student responses to questions B17.1 & B17.2:
B17.1 I feel safe to be myself at university/college. B17.2 My institution takes responsibility for my safety.

Chart 96: University of Aberdeen performance for B17 Student Safety, in NSS from 2020 to 2023

This question was absent for the University of Aberdeen in the 2022 edition of the NSS.

In 2023, the University of Aberdeen scored 88.4%. When comparing with 2021, the University has achieved an increase of 8.4 percentage points. This is the highest score over the four-year period.
SECTION FOUR: TEXT COMMENTS

The NSS affords students the opportunity to respond with free text to the prompt ‘Looking back on the experience, are there any particularly positive or negative aspects you would like to highlight’ in a positive and negative text box. 751 students completed the freetext comments with 885 unique positive comments, and 639 unique negative comments. The distribution of these comments is summarised in Table 6. Schools, Professional Services (e.g. IT, Library, Student Support) and Aberdeen University Students’ Association will be provided with access to their own text comments, and comments are additionally being categorised for their attention and action.

The most numerous positive comments were made against **Scale 04: Academic support** with 273 positive comments, followed by **Scale 01: Teaching on my course** (256 positive comments) and **Scale 02: Learning opportunities** (177 positive comments). Negative comments were more evenly distributed across several survey themes, with most frequent negative comments were made against **Scale 01: Teaching on my course** (149 negative comments), **Scale 03: Marking & Assessment** (155 negative comments) and **Scale 05: Organisation & Management** (132 negative comments).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: Distribution of positive and negative comments in NSS 2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale 01: Teaching on my course</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1. How good are teaching staff at explaining things?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2. How often do teaching staff make the subject engaging?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3. How often is the course intellectually stimulating?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4. How often does your course challenge you to achieve your best work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of face-to-face teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching standards (delivery/online/recorded teaching etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale 02: Learning opportunities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1. To what extent have you had the chance to explore ideas and concepts in depth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10. How well do your course introduce subjects and skills in a way that builds on what you have already learned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11. To what extent have you had the chance to bring together information and ideas from different topics?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12. To what extent does your course have the right balance of directed and independent study?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13. How well has your course developed your knowledge and skills that you think you will need for your future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of Courses etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/Study/Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement/Work Opportunities/Successfully Abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale 03: Marking &amp; Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20. How clear were the marking criteria used to assess your work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21. How fair has the marking and assessment been on your course?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q23. How often have assessments allowed you to demonstrate what you have learned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24. How often have you received assessment feedback on time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25. How often does feedback help you to improve your work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale 04: Academic support</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy was it to contact teaching staff when you needed to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well have teaching staff supported your learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale 05: Organisation &amp; Management</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well organised is your course?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well were any changes to teaching on your course communicated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale 06: Learning Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well have the IT resources and facilities supported your learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well have the library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) supported your learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy was it to access subject specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software) when you needed them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale 07: Student Voice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well does the students’ union (association or guild) represent students’ academic interests?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale 08: Mental Wellbeing Services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20. How well have good mental Wellbeing support been promoted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination/ Racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Staff Notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The University of Aberdeen increased by one percentage point in response rate from 67% to 68% in 2023; this was the second-greatest score for the past five years (see chart 82). This was contrasted by a drop of 19 places in response rate ranking from 84th to 103rd.
**NSS Results Dashboard**

A Power BI dashboard will be made available to Schools for their use. The Dashboard includes the following information:

### Overall Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headline</td>
<td>Main headlines for 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary 2022</td>
<td>Scoring, rank and quartile showing change against 2022 (all questions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling Five Years</td>
<td>Scoring, rank and quartile (user has option to choose year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranking List</td>
<td>Listing of universities ranked (allows user to view our performance against other universities). The user has option to choose year and question to view.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Subject Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject Analysis</td>
<td>Bar chart displaying scores allowing user to compare Aberdeen’s performance against other institutions (user has option to choose subject and question).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Score</td>
<td>Heatmap giving an overview of Aberdeen’s scoring by School and Subject for all questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Rank</td>
<td>Overview of Aberdeen’s ranking by School and Subject for all questions (rank is colour coded by quartile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Details</td>
<td>Scoring and Rank by School and Subject (user has option of choosing question or group of questions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlight 100%</td>
<td>Overview of Aberdeen’s scoring by School and Subject for all questions highlighting those which have scored 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Ten Ranking</td>
<td>Overview of Aberdeen’s ranking by School and Subject for all questions highlighting those which are ranked within top 10.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chris Souter, Linda Murdoch, Lisa Gove, and James Buchanan  
**Directorate of Planning and Governance**
APPENDIX

In 2023, for ranking purposes, the University of Aberdeen has been ranked out of the 121 UK higher education institutions as listed below, which represent institutions included in the most recent Guardian University Guide. Please note that although this list includes the University of Cambridge and University of Oxford, these two institutions have not ordinarily participated in the National Student Survey in recent years. However, the University of Oxford has been included in NSS 2023. As the Guardian University Guide list of institutions is revised every year, the University’s comparative pool of institutions may change year-on-year.

- 10000291 Anglia Ruskin University Higher Corporation
- 10000571 Bath Spa University
- 10000824 Bournemouth University
- 10000886 University of Brighton
- 10000961 Brunel University London
- 10000975 Buckinghamshire New University
- 10001143 Canterbury Christ Church University
- 10001282 University of Northumbria at Newcastle
- 10001478 City, University of London
- 10001726 Coventry University
- 10001833 De Montfort University
- 10002718 Goldsmiths’ College
- 10003270 Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine
- 10003614 University of Winchester
- 10003645 King’s College London
- 10003678 Kingston University
- 10003861 Leeds Beckett University
- 10003863 Leeds Trinity University
- 10003956 Liverpool Hope University
- 10003957 Liverpool John Moores University
- 10004048 London Metropolitan University
- 10004063 The London School of Economics and Political Science
- 10004078 London South Bank University
- 10004180 Manchester Metropolitan University
- 10004351 Middlesex University
- 10004484 City, University of London
- 10004592 University College Cork
- 10004797 Nottingham Trent University
- 10004930 Oxford Brookes University
- 10005337 Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
- 10005343 Queen’s University of Belfast
- 10005500 The Robert Gordon University
- 10005553 Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
- 10005790 Sheffield Hallam University
- 10006022 Solent University
- 10006299 Staffordshire University
- 10006463 University of East London
- 10006840 The University of Birmingham
- 10006841 The University of Bolton
- 10006842 The University of Liverpool
- 10007137 The University of Chichester
- 10007138 University of Northampton, The
- 10007139 University of Worcester
- 10007140 Birmingham City University
- 10007141 University of Central Lancashire
- 10007143 University of Durham
- 10007144 University of East London
- 10007145 University of Gloucestershire
- 10007146 University of Greenwich
- 10007147 University of Hertfordshire
- 10007148 The University of Huddersfield
- 10007149 The University of Hull
- 10007150 The University of Kent
- 10007151 University of Lincoln
- 10007152 University of Bedfordshire
- 10007154 University of Nottingham, The