TEF 2023
Provider
Submission
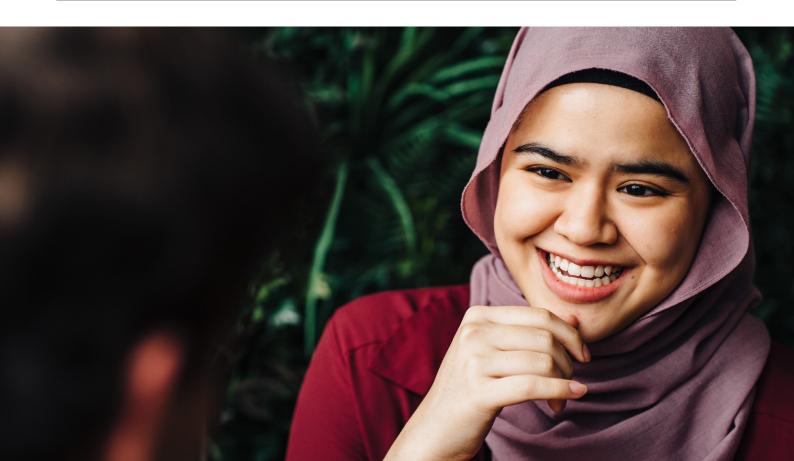
1. Approach to evidence-gathering

Warwick Students' Union exists to represent students' views and interests, support students with university life, and provide social activities and opportunities for all students at the University of Warwick. We are led by a team of seven elected Full-Time Officers, including the President and Vice President for Education, who developed this submission. We were supported in the data collation, analysis and write-up of the document by students' union staff and external consultants.

The evidence for the student submission was largely pre-existing, and sources are detailed below. A wide range of student feedback data was analysed to identify key themes, with supplementary evidence drawn from University reports, policies and meeting records. Additionally, we used the initial data analysis to identify areas to explore further with students and conducted two focus groups specifically for TEF: one covering academic support and the sense of community at Warwick, and one looking at the disabled student experience. The report went through

several draft phases, with the lead student officers reviewing and revising at each stage, and we are confident that the evidence-led approach we have taken ensures that this submission is a fair reflection of the views of the student body at the University of Warwick.

The submission was written independently of the University and we can confirm that there was no undue influence over the submission's content. We have worked collaboratively with the University to develop our submissions concurrently, and the University has been very supportive with providing data and advice. We have shared initial themes and drafts in the spirit of collaborative partnership, but the University and Students' Union are clear that the student submission must be independently produced and accurately reflect the views of our students.

ID	Source	Years	Sample size	Student mix
E1	NSS 2021 data summary report	2021	3,421 (70%)	Final year UGs
E2	NSS 2021 free text analysis report	2021	3,421 (70%)	Final year UGs
E3	NSS 2022 split by question and subject	2022	2,819 (62%)	Final year UGs
E4	NSS 2022 demographic analysis	2022	2,819 (62%)	Final year UGs
E5	Student panel focus group reports	2021 - 2022	77	48 UG, mix of years; 7 PGT; 8 PGR; 23 Home; 26 Int
E6	Term surveys: T1 2020, T3 2021, T1 2021, T3 2022	2020 - 2022	1 - 812 2 - 2287 3 - 1765 4 - 1768	Survey sent to all UG and PGT students. May include repeat responders.
E7	Inclusive Education Model summary report and July 2022 update	2020 - 2022	N/A	University report
E8	Race Equality Charter submission 2021	2018 - 2021	N/A	University report
E10	Applicant survey report 2019 and 2020	2019 - 2020	1 - 6808 2 - 4946	Survey sent to all offer accepters and decliners in July
E11	SU Pulse surveys 2018-19, 2020-21, 2021-22	2018 - 2022	1 - 1291 2 - 4992 3 - 3277	Survey sent to all students. May include repeat responders.
E12	Student Communications Survey 2021 and focus group notes	2021	160	Demographics unknown
E13	Report & Support Annual Report 2020/21	2019 - 2021	N/A	University report
E14	Warwick SU SSLC Reports Summary 2021/22	2021 - 2022	N/A	FSS - 7 UG, 5 PG SSLCs Arts - 4 Schools, 1 PGT SSLC FSEM - 1 UG, 6 PG SSLCs
E15	Focus group on academic support and learning community	Nov 2022	4	UG students, mix of years L4 to L6, Law, Management, Computer Science, Software Engineering
E16	Focus group on the disabled student experience	Nov 2022	6	UG students identifying as disabled; mix of years L4 to L6

2. Student Experience

2.1 Academic experience

The National Student Survey indicates that students are generally very satisfied with their academic experience at Warwick: scores for the majority of areas covered by the survey are above the sector average, and overall satisfaction was 8 points above the sector average in 2021 (E1). NSS scores also held up comparatively well during the Covid-19 pandemic, notably in the area of organisation and management, which scored 11 points higher than the sector average in 2021 and remained comparable to pre-pandemic scores. The survey did note two areas for improvement: students' ability to apply what they have learned scored two points below the sector average, as did the clarity of marking criteria (E1). Breaking the data down by department, however, does show some variance: the Centre for Lifelong Learning, which offers part-time degrees to non-traditional students with a range of other commitments, returned an average overall satisfaction score of 54.9% in 2021, with scores indicating that organisation and management, learning community and student voice were particular issues for this cohort. NSS comments indicate that organisation and management is also an issue for some joint honours students (E2).

Perhaps the biggest issue we see reflected in the evidence we have considered is that of departmental variability. There are clear examples of excellent practice in many areas such as academic support, online learning, community and student voice, but we feel that there is not enough sharing of this good practice across the whole University.

The high level of autonomy given to departments can result in very different experiences for students: in some departments with low NSS results across the board, we feel there is scope for more faculty- or university-level oversight, scrutiny and support. We recognise that the disciplinary context means things may be done differently for good reasons, but believe that each department requires adequate resourcing to ensure that their students receive the learning experience and support that they need. We look forward to continuing to work with the University around this area and to supporting these departments to engage with student feedback and representation. More detail on departmental variability is evidenced in the sections below.

As indicated in NSS free text comments, the broad and diverse range of modules available is important to students, and this aspect of the University's offer received the highest number of comments in both positive and negative sections (E2). The University's applicant surveys (E10) support this, with choice and flexibility of modules the most popular reason why applicants were impressed with the course. Students found their choice vindicated on joining the university and finding flexible and customisable first year courses (E15). However, where comments were negative, students expressed frustration at being unable to access the full range of available modules due to oversubscription, suggesting that in practice students may not be able to experience the full breadth of modules that drew them to the course.

High quality teaching and support from staff were highlighted across multiple sources in our evidence base as a real strength of the Warwick experience. NSS scores for teaching are high (85.1%, E1) and staff receive the greatest proportion of positive comments in the NSS results, where they are described as accessible and approachable, knowledgeable, passionate, and enthusiastic (E2).

Students were positive about the approachability of personal tutors both for academic and personal matters (E15). Some negative comments were recorded but tended to refer to small numbers of individual staff not providing support or high-quality teaching, rather than a reflection of practice across the board. Students were also positive about the level of intellectual stimulation provided, and how interesting and relevant the course content was, but there were pockets of dissatisfaction with particular modules (E2). Teaching has never been an area of undue concern for the Union, and we thank the University for their continued commitment to a high-quality teaching experience, emphasised by the well-deserved award for University of the Year for Teaching Quality by the Sunday Times' Good University Guide 2022. This commitment is best illustrated in the continued collaborative work between the Students' Union and the University regarding Student Voice and the commitment to enhancing student module feedback through Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs).

A key theme emerging from multiple sources of evidence is community and belonging. Survey responses on this topic related largely to pandemic restrictions, but our SU Pulse survey indicated that in 2019, prior to the pandemic, only 49% of students felt there was a strong sense of community at Warwick (E11, T3 2019), much lower than the Russell Group benchmark of 69%. Although still above the sector average, the Learning Community section was the lowest scoring indicator in the NSS and fell below 70% in 2021 (68.7%, E1). Scores for feeling a sense of community improved as face-to-face teaching returned, with SU Pulse scores increasing to 58% (E11 T3 2022), but the 2022 end of term 3 survey showed that still only half of students felt connected to other students, and only 36% felt connected to the wider community (E6 T3 2022). Students' sense of connection to their academic community varied due to inconsistent offers of social events and meetups across departments (E15). Additionally, Disabled students were less likely than their non-disabled peers to feel connected to the University or fellow students (E6 T3 2021, T1 2021), due in part to societies feeling loud, overwhelming, and impenetrable for students with social anxiety difficulties (E16); these students were twice as likely to say they seriously considered dropping out (E11 T3 2019).

Moreover, the evidence we examined revealed that Black students were the least likely of all ethnicities to feel connected to other students (E6 T3 2022). The Race Equality Charter action plan has a number of points relating to community and culture, as does the Inclusive Education Model (E7, E8), and the Students' Union is excited to continue to support this work and has appreciated the collaborative progress so far.

Students interviewed at focus group level strongly associated Students' Union societies with a sense of belonging. A focus group with Disabled students (E16) also highlighted the importance of an intersectional approach; disabled students who are also queer, and/or Muslim have indicated that both things combine to make them feel less likely than other students to belong. Belonging is strongly associated with the social and extracurricular experience so this is something the Students' Union can commit to exploring further with the University.
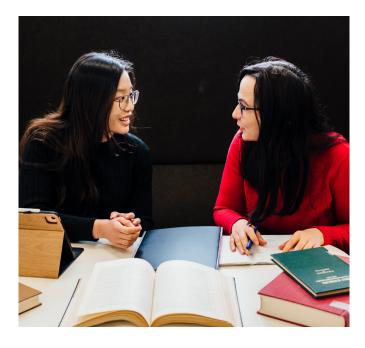
The Covid-19 pandemic necessitated a sudden shift to online learning for students across the UK, and Warwick students were similarly affected. In 2020, many students commented that online learning did not offer the same quality of experience as on-campus learning, but many praised staff for their efforts in adapting to an online learning environment (E6 T1 2020). Following the pandemic, most students have expressed a strong preference for face-to-face teaching but would like to retain some elements of blended learning. In comments, recorded lectures and some asynchronous content were cited as the most helpful in complementing face-to-face engagement and aiding flexibility (E2, E6 T3 2021). There is a strong preference for small-group teaching such as seminars to be in-person, with students highlighting the increased interactivity and quality of learning; but students are more divided on the value of in-person lectures, with attendees at an October 2021 panel identifying the ability to review, pause and clarify during a recorded lecture as valuable (E5 Oct 2021). The University's termly surveys consistently indicate that those with a significant amount of in-person teaching were more likely to be satisfied with the blend of online and physical teaching (E6 T3 2021, T3 2022), and that students were more likely to be satisfied with the quality of face-to-face teaching than online whilst experiencing both (E6 T1 2021, T3 2022). Overall, despite the challenges faced by the pandemic, the strong student endorsement of the University's response was recognised in subsequent awards.

Post-pandemic, students' priority is choice and flexibility: whilst retaining a strong preference for in-person teaching, students were also clear that they expect in-person sessions to be recorded and made available for revision or in the case of illness or a timetable clash (E6 T3 2022). Practice and student satisfaction levels with the mix of online and in person learning varies between departments, and even between individual lecturers: some departments make all content available online, whereas others do not, and still others will only upload the content at the end of a module or delete it after two weeks in order to encourage attendance at in-person sessions. Satisfaction ranged from above 80% for Warwick Business School (WBS) and Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL) students to below 50% for mathematics and history among others (E3) with the approach of particular departments causing significant access problems for some. For example, one student with additional needs cited a refusal to make lectures available online after the University had returned to face-to-face teaching as posing a significant barrier to their being able to access the course (E16). While the Students' Union recognises that there will always be some variability in satisfaction with online resources due to disciplinary differences, we would greatly appreciate working with the University to further enhance the quality of online resources where required. Further to this, the Students' Union greatly appreciates the work the University has done to enhance the provision of lecture capture across campus, an example being the wider implementation of lecture capture technology. However, we recognise that further collaboration between the Students' Union and the University is required when it comes to the broader provision of lecture capture across University departments.

Whilst the Students' Union may have lacked a strong focus on this issue in recent years, this is now a key Students' Union priority and thus, we appreciate deeply the ongoing collaborative approach taken to the issue by the University, an example of which has been the recent formation of the Students' Union/University co-led Warwick International Higher Education Academy (WIHEA) learning circle on Lecture Capture Policy which, through both staff and student engagement, looks to provide relevant policy guidance. We as a Students' Union look forward to further collaboration with the University on these issues, ensuring: a consistent approach to lecture capture whereby all content is available online for revision and accessibility purposes, and in case of unplanned absence; a continued drive to provide more rooms with lecture capture technology; and ways to ensure consistent compliance across all departments.

Students highlight that where online teaching is good, it uses a mix of different types of content and encourages interaction - the use of short videos, quizzes, polls and group discussion make it more engaging (E6 T1 2020, T3 2022). Some found a lack of interactivity to be a negative feature of their lectures (E15). Having content uploaded in advance and clear signposting to work and resources makes online learning easier (E6 T1 2020), with good organisation and structure of online content to allow students to plan their work (E6 T3 2021). In 2020-2021, students at panels indicated that the use of different platforms across different staff and departments caused frustration (E5 May 2021, Oct 2021), echoing calls for consistency in the use of online platforms and tools earlier in the pandemic (E6 T1 2020). By spring 2022, the termly survey indicated that most students were satisfied with their online learning, with only minor technical issues and a lack of interactivity remaining concerns for some (E6 T3 2022).

Diversity is a key focus for Warwick, particularly in the area of race equality. The University achieved a Bronze award following its Race Equality Charter submission in 2021, an in-depth process with significant focus on students' and Students' Union involvement (E8). The Students' Union is pleased with the action plan put in place following this exercise, but recognises the need for a greater focus on staff diversity within the education executive. That said, we accept this work takes time and we eagerly await the benefits of positive change in this area within middle management. We have enjoyed being consulted on, and support fully the introduction of, the Inclusive Education Model (E7), which, building on work initiated by the Students' Union on decolonisation, aims to: embed diversity in the curriculum; to support teachers and students to model inclusive behaviour; and to reduce the Black awarding gap to 0 by 2025. Such collaboration is illustrated by Students' Union representation on the Inclusive Education Board, allowing for our direct involvement in the monitoring and assessing of departmental inclusive action plans. As a key partner in this work, we see it as a great example of successful, ongoing collaborative work with the University. Continuing this work we would like to see a stronger focus and allocated resource for embedding diversity into Wellbeing Support Services, in order to develop a more culturally competent approach to student wellbeing, though we appreciate this is an issue not specific to Warwick, but rather one that is sector wide.

2.2 Assessments and awards

Regarding assessment and feedback, Warwick scores very highly, achieving number 1 in the Russell Group in NSS 2021 with 70.4% satisfaction (E1). This is clearly a testament to the work done by the University within this area and the collaborative work achieved between the Students' Union and University through the SSLCs. However, whilst assessment and feedback is very good overall, there is evidence, indicated in free text comments (E2), of variation in satisfaction by department, with Liberal Arts, Film & TV Studies and Education scoring over 80%, but WMG, Computer Science and Engineering scoring below 60% in this area (E1). Open text comments for assessment and feedback highlighted unclear, inconsistent or unfair marking (8%, E2); inadequate feedback on assessed work (7%, E2); and inadequate guidance on assessments (5%, E2). Concerns about a lack of support, both prior to and following submission of assignments, were raised in a focus group. Minimal feedback for assignments (law), and a slow return to face-to-face teaching with some teaching (engineering) remaining largely online, were also highlighted as negative factors (E15).

However, these examples of variation and pockets of dissatisfaction tend to represent a minority of students. Nevertheless, a more centralised approach is required to address the variations highlighted, developed in collaboration with the Students' Union, particularly through the relevant SSLCs and the wider course rep structure.

Across multiple evidence sources, students highlighted exam timetables and assignment deadlines as key issues. NSS comments reveal that initial exam timetables often did not reflect the final timetable, with students feeling unprepared and unable to plan (E2). This issue was the third most commonly cited issue in negative comments. The University's termly survey and February 2022 student panel indicated that students require their exam timetables earlier, with many suggesting they should be released before the Easter break (E5 Feb 2022, E6 T3 2022):
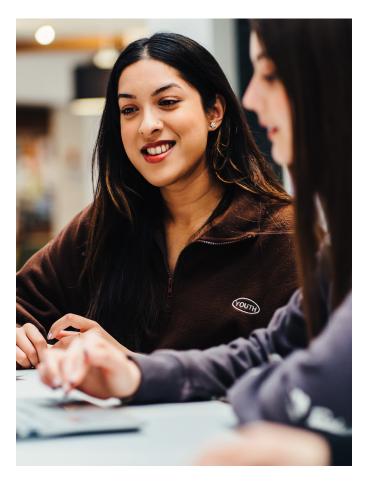
[What one thing could the University have done to improve your experience this term?] "Give out the exam timetable earlier. It's ridiculous to have to wait so late in April. Most other unis do it much earlier, I don't see why Warwick can't adapt too" (E6 T3 2022).

The Students' Union recognises that any change to the exam timetable release schedule would require large scale structural changes within the University and thus, any changes would have to take place over time. However, as this is not a new issue, having been raised continuously by students over the past few years, the Students' Union asks that this be made a more immediate priority.

Students at the February 2022 panel also commented about the distribution of assessment across the year resulting in high pressure, particularly at Christmas, and the "clumping" of deadlines often resulting in two or three assignments being due on the same day (E5, Feb 2022). One joint honours student found that their departments did not coordinate deadlines effectively and this led to multiple assignments being due within a short space of time (E16). Some students commented in the T3 2022 termly survey that the spring assessment period was overly long and should be condensed to allow for more teaching, with others giving negative feedback about online exams being held on weekends (E6 T3 2022). We are aware that the University is keen to explore these issues and understand that continued work on assessment design will help provide solutions. We note that the University, in consultation with the Students' Union, had previously started to review the structure of its academic year, the scope of which included assessment points and term dates. The project is currently paused, but we look forward to being able to support and engage with future progress in this area. Given the length of time further detailed consultation and the changes will take to implement, we feel this should be made a more immediate priority.

Preparedness for assessment was another prominent theme emerging from our evidence: students highlighted assessment guidance and formative assessment as two areas for improvement. In spring 2022, only 67% of respondents agreed that they felt well prepared by their department for assessments (E6 T3 2022), and 21% disagreed. Disagreement was highest amongst those sitting in-person exams on campus (29%). Students commented that they would have appreciated more revision and preparation sessions before exams (E6 T3 2022). Students at a February 2022 panel commented that they appreciated the University's online "preparing for assessments" content but wanted it to be more subject specific and completed earlier in the year (E5 Feb 2022). Formative assessment and practice papers were brought up at three student panels in 2021-22: in May 2021, students noted all past papers were for closed book exams and the online exams would be open book (E5 May 2021). In February and March 2022, students commented that they had appreciated the opportunity to submit a draft by email and receive feedback, or undertake formative assessments, but felt this opportunity had gone after Covid restrictions were lifted, and that access to past papers and model answers was limited. First-year students in particular felt a need for more formative assessment, as they were aware exams would be different to A Levels and wanted the opportunity to practise (E5 Feb, Mar 2022). The Students' Union believes that relevant past papers should be accessible to students across all departments or, where these are unavailable, a specimen paper provided. Further, we believe that where examination is a necessary form of assessment, the opportunity for students to apply learning to practical or exam-style problems and receive formative feedback, should be consistently embedded throughout modules, both to better prepare students for an exam environment and for the world of work.

Covid-19 necessitated a number of changes to assessment regulations, including the introduction of online exams and the implementation of a "no detriment" policy for 2019-20. Students welcomed the policy, whereby for that year a student was awarded the better of either their term 1 results or their results for the entire year, in recognition of the disruption caused to their learning. There were some comments in NSS 2021 regarding dissatisfaction that the policy was not extended to cover 2020-21 (E2), but the Students' Union recognises that for that year there was no pre-pandemic baseline from which to apply the policy.

The return to in-person exams in spring 2022 caused some students anxiety as they had not undertaken these in several years. Many students felt that they were not prepared for how in-person exams would work, with one student saying that they had not experienced an in-person exam since taking their GCSEs (E5 Feb 2022). However, despite this, many commented that they were well run and preferred them to online exams, which were perceived to be of a much higher difficulty (E6 T3 2022), and the Union commends the University on a positive return to in-person examination.

2.3 Resources, support and student engagement

Learning resources was the score that dropped most significantly in NSS 2021, although the overall figure remained comparatively high at 79%, 24th in the sector (E1). Free text comments indicate that some students were frustrated they couldn't access the library during lockdowns, with some suggesting that measures such as bookable time slots could have been implemented (E2). The biggest concern with regard to resources is study space on campus: the University's term 3 2021 survey received several comments regarding the need for more individual study spaces equipped for online learning (e.g. with charging points) (E6 T3 2021), which was echoed in comments at a student panel in November 2021 (E5 Nov 21).

Moreover, the SU Pulse survey in spring 2022 showed a decline in satisfaction with study spaces on campus to 53% (E11 T2 2022). The shift to blended learning has exacerbated a pre-existing issue: in the 2019 term 3 SU Pulse survey, study space on campus was the area of highest dissatisfaction for students (E11 T3 2019). However, the Union has always appreciated positive engagement with the University on the issue of study space and notes the University's active monitoring of related satisfaction scores, consistently looking for ways to improve the offering. Previous Students' Union Education Officers have gathered and attended to feedback on types of study space, and influenced how study spaces have been shaped and distributed across campus through the mapping of student behaviour and habits. Recent developments are a testament to the success of such collaboration, for example the renovation and implementation of more collaborative, group-focused study spaces along the social sciences corridor, replacing the long straight spaces which had existed previously. Another example is the Faculty of Arts building, regarded very positively by students, which has been designed with study space in mind, with focus on open and collaborative learning spaces. Early work on a Learning Grid in Leamington Spa has also been very exciting, boasting impressive Students' Union representation and consultation.
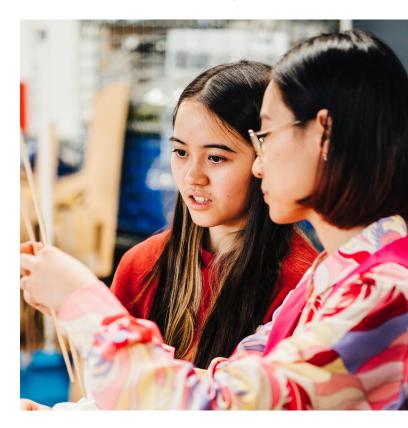
The Students' Union is keen to continue work with the University to improve the availability of small, individual spaces on campus to support the recent changes made to studying,

as well as ensuring that study space remains at the heart of any new building developments. This is illustrated by current collaborative work between the current VP for Education and the Teaching and Learning Spaces Development Group in shaping how study space should be provided across the University, and the direct involvement of student faculty reps in the discussion of the ongoing grand challenges happening in both the Science, Engineering & Medicine (SEM) and Social Sciences Faculties.

The opportunity to undertake placements, study abroad or gain industry experience were all commonly cited as reasons for applicants to accept an offer from Warwick (E10 2019). NSS comments indicate that students were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences of placements, studying abroad and work experience, and specifically the support they received. Whilst some issues were raised such as the lack of information provision and the feeling of unpreparedness, this was only in a minority of cases.

Academic support scored highly in the University's termly surveys (E6 T1 2020, T1 2021, T3 2022) and in NSS (E1). In termly surveys, students are most likely to refer to personal tutoring in their comments, with many students expressing that the support provided was invaluable, alongside praising staff's responsiveness and willingness to put aside time for them (E6 T1 2020, T3 2021, T3 2022). However, some negative comments highlighted that the aspects praised by some students were felt to be lacking by others: some reported no contact with their personal tutors, or poor levels of responsiveness (E6 T1 2020, T3 2021, T3 2022). In one survey, some students suggested that additional clarity on the role and expectations of personal tutors would be helpful, such as the frequency of contact or what students could expect from them (E6 T3 2022). Further analysis of NSS by department shows that whilst some departments score very highly for academic support, some such as Computer Science, Law, Medicine, Engineering and Business (E3) score poorly. However, our focus group with students from these departments (E15) reflected positively on academic support provision, with personal tutors described as approachable, responsive and supportive. This perhaps indicates that issues relating to academic support evident in the departments highlighted may not refer exclusively to personal tutoring, or that initiatives from the University are having positive impact.

The Students' Union remains committed to collaborating with the University on initiatives to improve and develop Academic Support, building on existing good practice such as, providing additional resources and training as part of the Inclusive Education Model (E7), and the Warwick Awards for Personal Tutoring Excellence.

Ongoing collaborative work between the Students' Union, students and the University has shaped the provision of personal tutoring positively. For example, in recent years Students' Union Officers have helped deliver information and training to personal tutors, especially around the area of students "making connections", emphasising the important roles played by societies and sports clubs during a student's time at university. Additionally, the Students' Union President has worked alongside the Dean of Students and SEM Faculty Head, as well as directors of Student Experience, senior tutors and heads of department, to review the need for a more targeted, tailored approach to wellbeing and academic support for students taking Mathematical Sciences degrees. Such positive steps have helped the University to achieve a high score in the NSS, illustrating the effectiveness of such work. The Students' Union is supportive of this work and remain committed to working closely with the University on this matter.

To ensure these positive initiatives have greater impact we would appreciate a continued strong centralised push from the University for all departments to engage equally with the development of academic support; and a commitment to implementing best practice across the board, to achieve a consistent academic support experience for students across different departments.

When asked in the SU Pulse survey whether they would know where to turn if they were struggling, 67% of students indicated that they did (E11 T1 2022), with the majority turning to friends and family. 31% of students who knew where to seek support would turn to their personal tutor, which dropped from a figure of 43% in term 3 2021 (E11 T3 2021). NSS free text comments showed a mix of praise and criticism for mental health and wellbeing support: some respondents felt students' wellbeing was not adequately supported through Covid-19, whereas positive responses highlighted regular check-ins from staff and opportunities to access support remotely (E2). Our SU Pulse surveys show that stress, anxiety and managing workload were consistently the biggest issues for students across 2018-2022 (E11), but that awareness of University mental health and wellbeing support is high, averaging between 82% and 85% across 2020-2022. Feedback from student panels in 2021 highlighted a perception amongst students that University support services had long waiting times and were not responsive, with several students saying they were put off from engaging with the services due to their own or friends' experiences (E5 May 21, Nov 21). March 2022 panel participants noted improvements, however (E5 Mar 2022). When evaluating support specific to disabled students, some students mentioned long waiting times, restrictive university policies and having to speak to lots of different staff.

Disabled students also characterised support services as reactive rather than proactive, with students having to experience barriers or disadvantages before gaining support. Some students would appreciate a pre-emptive system which foresaw potential barriers to learning and put systems or advice in place to overcome these (E16). Data supplied by University Wellbeing Services indicates that the average waiting time for an initial consultation was just 15 minutes for 2021-22, so it may be that there are delays between consultation and referral. The Students' Union would like to work with the University to properly monitor waiting times between consultation and referral and work to reduce these where possible and appropriate. We are also committed to helping the University to tackle negative student perceptions of wellbeing services that are preventing some students from accessing the support they need.

Warwick scores well in the Student Voice section of the NSS, ranking 14th in the sector overall and in the top quartile for all questions (E1). The lowest scoring question is, "it is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on", at 58%, which was a five-point drop from 2020. As with other areas of the NSS, departmental analysis shows significant variability. Non-standard provision in WMG and the Centre for Lifelong Learning have the lowest scores for Student Voice at 50% or below, and English (59%), Computer Science (61%) and Engineering (64%) are also significantly below the University average (E1). Free text comments reflect this variability: there were slightly more positive than negative comments on the availability of feedback channels and responsiveness to feedback, but the negative comments highlighted the opposite (E2). The University's term 3 2021 survey identified "communication as dialogue" and listening to the students as aspects that were missing from the University's Covid-19 approach to communication (E6 T3 2021). A focus group on communications held the same year also highlighted that students want a two-way conversation with the University and more information about what has been done in response to issues raised (E12). The Students' Union believes that more work needs to be done to "close the feedback loop," or to ensure that changes as a result of student feedback are communicated to students in an effective, timely and transparent way. The current increased engagement with the Student Insight Group of both the Students' Union and the University has been fruitful in this regard, particularly in the sharing and coordination of data between the Students' Union and University, as well as a shared desire to promote via social media the positive changes made to the student experience based on student feedback.

The University and Students' Union operate the course representative system in partnership, with the Students' Union leading on electing and training the reps, and University departments responsible for scheduling Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs) and responding to student feedback. Academic representation is embedded in the broader representation structures of the Students' Union: course reps feed departmental issues up to departmental reps, and faculty reps bring broader issues to faculty-level meetings. The faculty reps also sit on the Students' Union's Academic Representation Council, which is chaired by the Vice President for Education and Vice President for Postgraduate, who attend University committees. The Students' Union collates annual reports from each SSLC, identifying course rep "wins" and general themes which are communicated to the University and Students' Union (E14).

The 2021/22 SSLC summary reports showed that course reps found the training provided by the Students' Union to be excellent, but indicated that the Students' Union could do more to communicate with and support reps throughout the year. The Students' Union is currently working on enhancing and providing additional training and resources, both face-to-face and online, better equipping reps to carry out their role, and 300 reps have engaged in this process during this year alone. To enhance communication between the Students' Union and reps, channels have been developed virtually via MS Teams, as well as through Academic Council and Education Committee, and SSLC drop-ins. Further, socials such as the Christmas party have helped foster an increased sense of belonging amongst reps.

Historically, issues have persisted regarding engagement within those academic departments often seen as peripheral to Students' Union activity, in particular WBS, the Medical School, and WMG. In response, the Students' Union is actively seeking to improve academic representation in these departments over the next 2-3 academic years, beginning with the recent increased engagement with reps from the Medical School and the Business School. Furthermore, the Students' Union is actively seeking to develop better and more collaborative links with University student engagement coordinators, and with the wider SSLC academic convenor network across the various faculties. Whilst the previous few years have been challenging for the academic voice team within the SU, in part due to the large staff turnover, with the new established changes and reforms being made the Students' Union is confident that it is stepping in the right direction, ensuring that the rep structure remains collaborative and effective in authentically representing and articulating the student voice.

The relationship between the University and Students' Union within the education arena has and continues to be very good, with Students' Union engagement and close collaboration throughout the University's structures. Students' Union officer input on a range of committees is a testament to the shared desire to ensure student representation at every stage of the University's decision-making process. However, whilst this is deeply appreciated, such a large number of committees has, at some points, served as a hinderance to officers.

There have been a small number of times when the lack of prior collaboration with the University prior to committees has constrained the Students' Union's influence on certain projects or initiatives. However, it is a fair assessment to say that typically any issues in this regard have tended to occur within professional services spaces, as opposed to education, which typically sees extensive student engagement prior to formal recommendations being presented at committee meetings and so should be appropriately weighted when considering the scope of TEF. However, large committee loads on specific Students' Union officers does occasionally limit officers from engaging in other important work and collaboration on exciting new initiatives. Thus, whilst the Students' Union appreciates the opportunity to engage in a wide range of committees, there is existing collaborative work to be had on determining which committees are necessary for officer involvement, and which it would be beneficial to have different representatives. We emphasise that this is not a call to disengage, but rather should be viewed as a symbol of reengagement, whereby the Students' Union and the University can work together to maximise student representation, effectiveness, and ability to influence policy and projects in a timely, meaningful manner.

3.Student Outcomes

Employability is very important to Warwick students: in 2019, applicants identified employability, linked to the University's reputation, as the number one reason why they decided to come to Warwick (E10 2019). NSS comments indicate that students were generally positive about the extent to which their course had prepared them for their future career, and any negative comments regarding careers and employability were largely related to the impact of Covid-19 on the graduate job market (E2). Comments were more mixed regarding the quality and availability of careers advice: equal numbers of positive and negative comments were received in 2021. In the University's 2021 communications survey, students rated careers and employability as the third most effective area of communication from the University (E12).

In student panels, students were also positive about careers support, particularly Careers Week, but some students wanted more face-to-face interaction such as a stall on the piazza (E5 Mar 2022).

Some students wanted more careers-focused content in University communications (E5 Nov 2021), but others were positive about the regular careers emails sent to second year students (E5 Jan 2022), and several students indicated that they had gained internships or attended development sessions as a result of these emails (E5 Oct 2021). The one area that the University may wish to look at further is the opportunity within the curriculum for students to apply what they have learnt: this would aid work-readiness and is currently one of the few areas of the NSS where the University scores below the sector average (E1).

Chih-Hsiang Lo
Vice-President Education 2022/23
Warwick Students' Union

Will Brewer
President 2022/23
Warwick Students' Union