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Survey Season 2024

Student guide

This is a guide to your student survey for the 2023/24 academic year.

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

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Welcome to Survey Season

Each year, we run a dedicated 'Survey Season' ⤴ from February to April as an opportunity for all students – undergraduate, postgraduate, and further education – to have your say on a number of topics.

By completing your survey you help to drive change. Your feedback will help us to improve, making the experience better for you and future students.

How you can take part

You can find all the surveys online ⤴. From there, select your year group and you'll be taken straight to your survey.

You'll also be contacted directly by email with full details on how to take your survey. If you're a final year undergrad you'll be contacted by Ipsos MORI for the National Student Survey (NSS) from Thursday 8 February, otherwise your email will come from UAL.

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

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What do we want to know?

We want to hear your feedback on your overall academic experience at UAL. Outside of core teaching, this can include technical facilities and workshops, libraries, technicians, guest lecturers, visiting practitioners, and UAL's Student Support services, including Counselling and Health Advice.

For undergraduates, the different areas you'll be asked about – and some of the things you might like to reflect on – include the themes below. These themes are very similar for postgraduates but there will be some postgraduate-specific questions too.

Teaching on my course
How do staff make the course engaging and stimulating?

Learning opportunities
What kind of opportunities do you get to apply the skills you are learning in your studies?

Marking and assessment
How are you marked and assessed? How do you engage with feedback you receive?

Academic support
How well are you supported in your studies?

Organisation and management
How well organised is your course?

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

Student voice
What opportunities do you have to feed back on the course and influence change?

Mental wellbeing services
How aware are you of the counselling, health advice and other student support services provided at UAL?

Freedom of expression
How free do you feel to express yourself?

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Diversity (CSS)
How diverse do you find your course content?

Course costs (CSS)
Are any additional costs on your course reasonable?

For undergraduates (Course Student Survey and National Student Survey), you will have an opportunity to write open comments at the end of the survey to give us feedback directly.

For postgraduates (Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and Postrgraduate Research Experience Survey), you will have opportunities to write open comments at the end of each section of the survey. These reflections are incredibly valuable to us, and we encourage you to give as much feedback as you wish.

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Survey types and dates

5 February - 30 April 2024

Course Student Survey (CSS)
For 1st and 2nd year undergraduates and Graduate Diploma students

National Student Survey (NSS)
Typically for final year undergraduates

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)
For taught postgraduates

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)
For research postgraduates

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Course Student Survey (CSS)

We want your honest views about your experience since the start of your course.

Teaching on my course

1 How good are teaching staff at explaining things?

Very good
Good
Not very good
Not at all good
This does not apply to me

2 How often do teaching staff make the subject engaging?

Very often
Fairly often
Not very often
Rarely
This does not apply to me

3 How often is the course intellectually stimulating?

Very often
Fairly often
Not very often
Rarely
This does not apply to me

4 How often does your course challenge you to achieve your best work?

Very often
Fairly often
Not very often
Rarely
This does not apply to me

Learning opportunities

5 To what extent have you had the chance to explore ideas and concepts in depth?

To a large extent
To some extent
To a small extent
Not at all
This does not apply to me

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6 How well does your course introduce subjects and skills
in a way that builds on what you have already learned?

Very well
Well
Not very well
Not at all well
This does not apply to me

7 To what extent have you had the chance to bring together
information and ideas from different topics?

To a large extent
To some extent
To a small extent
Not at all
This does not apply to me

8 To what extent does your course have the right balance
of directed and independent study?

To a large extent
To some extent
To a small extent
Not at all
This does not apply to me

9 How well has your course developed your knowledge
and skills that you think you will need for your future?

Very well
Well
Not very well
Not at all well
This does not apply to me

Marking and assessment

10 How clear were the marking criteria used to assess your work?

Very clear
Clear
Not very clear
Not at all clear
This does not apply to me

11 How fair has the marking and assessment been on your course?

Very fair
Fair
Not very fair
Not at all fair
This does not apply to me

12 How well have assessments allowed you to demonstrate what you
have learned?

Very well
Well
Not very well
Not at all well
This does not apply to me

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13 How often have you received assessment feedback on time?

Very often
Fairly often
Not very often
Rarely
This does not apply to me

14 How often does feedback help you to improve your work?

Very often
Fairly often
Not very often
Rarely
This does not apply to me

Academic support

15 How easy was it to contact teaching staff when you needed to?

Very easy
Easy
Not very easy
Not at all easy
This does not apply to me

16 How well have teaching staff supported your learning?

Very well
Well
Not very well
Not at all well
This does not apply to me

Organisation and management

17 How well organised is your course?

Very well organised
Well organised
Not very well organised
Not at all well organised
This does not apply to me

18 How well were any changes to teaching on your course communicated?

Very well
Well
Not very well
Not at all well
This does not apply to me

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Learning resources

19 How well have the IT resources and facilities supported your learning?

Very well
Well
Not very well
Not at all well
This does not apply to me

20 How well have the library resources (e.g., books, online services and learning spaces) supported your learning?

Very well
Well
Not very well
Not at all well
This does not apply to me

21 How easy is it to access subject specific resources (e.g., equipment, facilities, software) when you need them?

Very easy
Easy
Not very easy
Not at all easy
This does not apply to me

Student voice

22 To what extent do you get the right opportunities to give feedback on your course?

To a large extent
To some extent
To a small extent
Not at all
This does not apply to me

23 To what extent are students' opinions about the course valued by staff?

To a large extent
To some extent
To a small extent
Not at all
This does not apply to me

24 How clear is it that students' feedback on the course is acted on?

Very clear
Clear
Not very clear
Not at all clear
This does not apply to me

25 How well does the students' union (association or guild) represent students' academic interests?

Very well
Well
Not very well
Not at all well
This does not apply to me

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Mental wellbeing services

26 How well communicated was information about your university/college's mental wellbeing support services?

Very well
Well
Not very well
Not at all well
This does not apply to me

Freedom of expression

27 During your studies, how free did you feel to express your ideas, opinions, and beliefs?

Very free
Free
Not very free
Not at all free
This does not apply to me

Overall

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

Open text question

29 Looking back on the experience, are there any positive aspects you would like to highlight?
30 Looking back on the experience, are there any negative aspects you would like to highlight?

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Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

Survey questions TBC

Please note these are last year's question sets. Advance HE will confirm final question sets, with minor amends, later this month (December 2023).

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

There will be opportunities to provide open-ended comments throughout and at the end of the survey.

Teaching and learning

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

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

'Academic ability' can be considered in the context of making as an intellectual activity. Academic ability is about experimentation, concept development, research and reflection, communication and debate.

Contact time can include being with staff in any context – including online – such as in one-to-one tutorials, crits, lectures, etc.

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

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Engagement

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

> Think about the various channels of feedback made available to them, such as Course Committees, Course Reps, Student and Dean Fora, other Arts SU channels. Remember that your input may have helped enhance the course and your learning experience.
>
> Reflect on how your learning and development has been encouraged and progressed through feedback and assessment.
>
> Think about teaching sessions that have particularly encouraged debate and discussion, as well as moments in the course where you have been able to present your work and ideas to each other.

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Assessment and feedback

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

> Feedback comes in many forms and settings, written and verbal, formal and informal, and from both lecturers and technical members of staff, and your peers.
>
> Remember, marking criteria may have been outlined in unit handbooks or in the briefing presentation for a unit. Many different forms of feedback can be included, such as crits/feedback from peers/emails. Have you been able to apply feedback received to help your learning?

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Dissertation or major project

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

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

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

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

Organisation and management

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

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

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

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Resources and services

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

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

You can think about some of the ways in which resources have been made available online, or in alternative ways, like click and collect services, online technical demonstrations, etc.

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

Support

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

Consider the support you may have received, whether that is academic support, digital support and health and wellbeing support.

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

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Skills development

33 As a result of the course I am more confident about independent learning.

34 My confidence to be innovative or creative has developed during my course.

35 My research skills have developed during my course.My ability to communicate information effectively to diverse audiences has developed during my course.

36 I have been encouraged to think about what skills I need to develop for my career.

37 As a result of the course I feel better prepared for my future career.

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

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

Overall

38 Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course.

39 Please comment on one thing that has been most enjoyable or interesting on your course.

40 Please comment on one thing that would most improve your experience of your course.

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

Institutional questions

41 The costs associated with my course (additional to fees) are more than I can afford.

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

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

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

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Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

Survey questions TBC

Please note these are last year's question sets. Advance HE will confirm final question sets, with minor amends, later this month (December 2023).

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

There will be opportunities to provide open-ended comments throughout and at the end of the survey.

Supervision

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

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

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

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

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Resources

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

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

> This refers to all resources including Archives and Special Collections. Online services includes the PGR Hub, RNUAL Resources available on the PGR Hub, ASK, LinkedIn Learning , Thinking Teaching, Write Here Write Now.
>
> Consider also Academic Support Online. You might also consider the college Student Support Fund to which all students can apply to support their research.
>
> It would be helpful to comment more specifically on the physical and digital university infrastructure for study, e.g. RNUAL, physical working space, library.

Research culture

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

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

> Consider seminars, and opportunities to engage with fellow researchers offered through RNUAL organised by the Doctoral School, College based activities, research centres and institutes.

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Consider also newsletters, residencies and events offered by the Postgraduate Community.

Think about the online provision developed through RNUAL, the PGR Hub, online College groups and the Postgraduate Community.

It would be helpful to comment on the university-level provision RNUAL and Institutes, college and department-level provision (centres, hubs, formal or informal activities).

It would be helpful to specify how this provision related to stages in your study progression.

Progress and assessment

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

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

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

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

Responsibilities

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

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

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

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

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Support

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

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

Consider support and resources received through the Doctoral school and RNUAL, academic support, library support, disability and mental health services, ArtsSU, supervisors and administrative staff.

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

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Research skills

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

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

Think about how they have benefited from RNUAL organised by the Doctoral School, College/institute based training and supervision. You might also consider how opportunities to present/exhibit their work inside and outside of UAL have enhanced your confidence as a researcher.

Professional development

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

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

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

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Overall

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

    a. Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of my research degree programme of my research degree programme

    b. I am confident that I will complete my research degree programme within my institution's expected timescale

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

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

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Open text comments

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

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

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

Motivation

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

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

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

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For further information, visit the
[Student surveys webpage ↯](#)