EARLY EXPERIENCE STUDENT SURVEY – SUMMARY REPORT 23-24

Date: October 2023
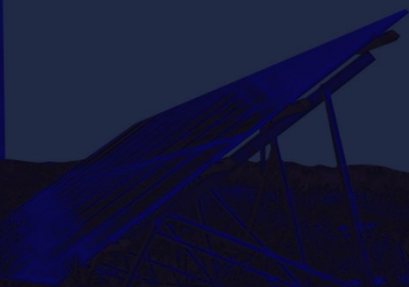
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Introduction

This is a high-level report detailing the overall satisfaction per curriculum area.

For a consecutive year the Dumfries and Galloway College Early Experience Student Survey was issued by the Performance Team to ascertain levels of student satisfaction. The survey was open for two working weeks from 11 September 2023 to 22 September 2023 and could be accessed by students via a link on LearnNet/Student Portal and was hosted in a Wufoo Survey. Digital screens displaying a QR code were also utilised to promote the survey. Personal Tutors were asked to promote and encourage engagement with the survey.

Students were invited to rate their satisfaction from 1 star (very poor) to 5 stars (great). The questions sought feedback in each of the following areas:

- Feeling Welcome and Valued
- Learning Experience so far
- Our Curriculum Staff
- Our Support Staff
- Support Services
- Places and Platforms for Learning
- "One Thing" we could do better

Additional questions were added to this sessions survey to generate additional feedback on support services.

As this is the second academic session the Early Experience Survey has been issued, we are able to make comparisons from session 22-23, where the questions remained the same.

Specific curriculum/support area data has been shared with the relevant manager. Action grids have been produced to allow opportunity to feedback on the comments raised. This will form part of the College DG-See process.

Survey Participation

Overall participation in the survey was extremely positive with 1055 responses in total.

65% of the total eligible current student population took part. The 65% return is a 24.5% increase on the response rate for Session 22-23 (722 responses, 40.5% return).

The response rates varied across curriculum teams, with the highest response rates being from Supported Programmes and Business at 81%, followed by Prince's Trust at 80%. For the majority of curriculum areas there was a significant increase in the participation rates on comparison to Session 22-23.
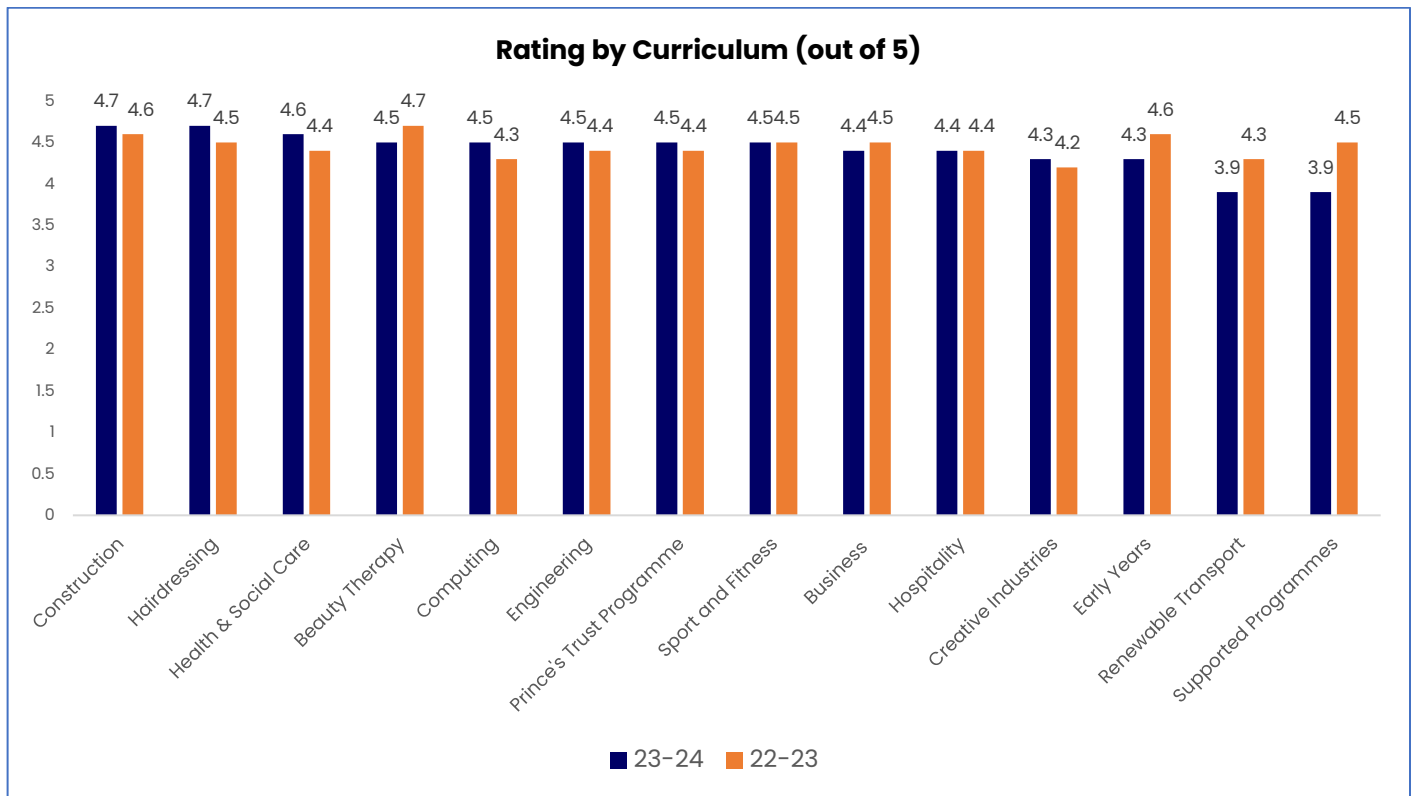
Chart of Respondents by Curriculum Area

Survey Participation by Curriculum Area
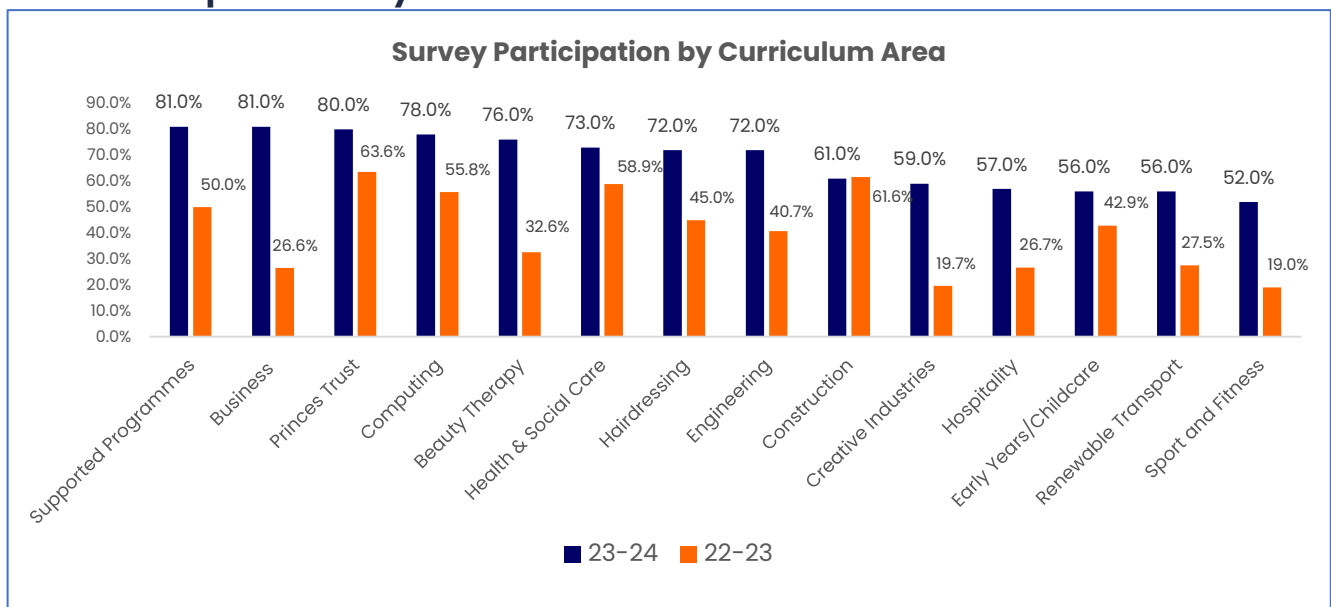
Overall Results

The average overall rating across all questions was 4.5 out of 5, the same average was achieved for Session 22-23. The retainment of this average for a consecutive session is very positive.

The charts below display the overall satisfaction rating by Curriculum Area and by the count of results by each rating (1 to 5):

Rating by Curriculum (out of 5)

Curriculum	23-24	22-23
Construction	4.7	4.6
Hairdressing	4.7	4.5
Health & Social Care	4.6	4.4
Beauty Therapy	4.5	4.7
Computing	4.5	4.3
Engineering	4.5	4.4
Prince's Trust Programme	4.5	4.4
Sport and Fitness	4.5	4.5
Business	4.4	4.5
Hospitality	4.4	4.4
Creative Industries	4.3	4.2
Early Years	4.3	4.6
Renewable Transport	3.9	4.3
Supported Programmes	3.9	4.5

Results, by Question

Average rating (out of 5) across all Curriculum areas by Question:

Total Rating (out of 5)	Welcome and Valued	Learning Experience	Our Curriculum Staff
4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4

Our Support Staff	Our Support Services	Places and Platforms
4.4	4.3	4.3

Results by Question

Question 1 - Feeling Welcomed and Valued

Students were asked - things like welcome activities, induction processes, sense of belonging, staff and fellow students, feeling that you are cared about as a student. How do you feel about this?

Feeling Welcomed and Valued - Rating by Curriculum Area (out of 5)

Curriculum Area	23-24	22-23
Construction	4.7	4.6
Hairdressing	4.7	4.4
Health & Social Care	4.7	4.5
Princes Trust	4.7	4.6
Beauty Therapy	4.6	4.7
Computing	4.6	4.3
Sport and Fitness	4.6	4.3
Engineering	4.5	4.3
Business	4.4	4.4
Early Years	4.4	4.6
Hospitality	4.4	4.3
Creative Industries	4.3	4.2
Supported Programmes	4.0	4.6
Renewable Transport	3.9	4.0

On comparison to Session 22-23, 9 of the curriculum areas had higher ratings, 4 had decreased ratings and 1 area remained the same.

Students were given the opportunity to make comments relating to each of the six questions. A selection of comments from the Feeling Welcomed and Valued question are:

- I have been overwhelmed by the warm welcome I've received since beginning this course. From the friendly classmates and supportive lecturers to the

inclusive learning environment, every aspect of it has made me feel valued and appreciated. It's been a truly enriching experience so far.
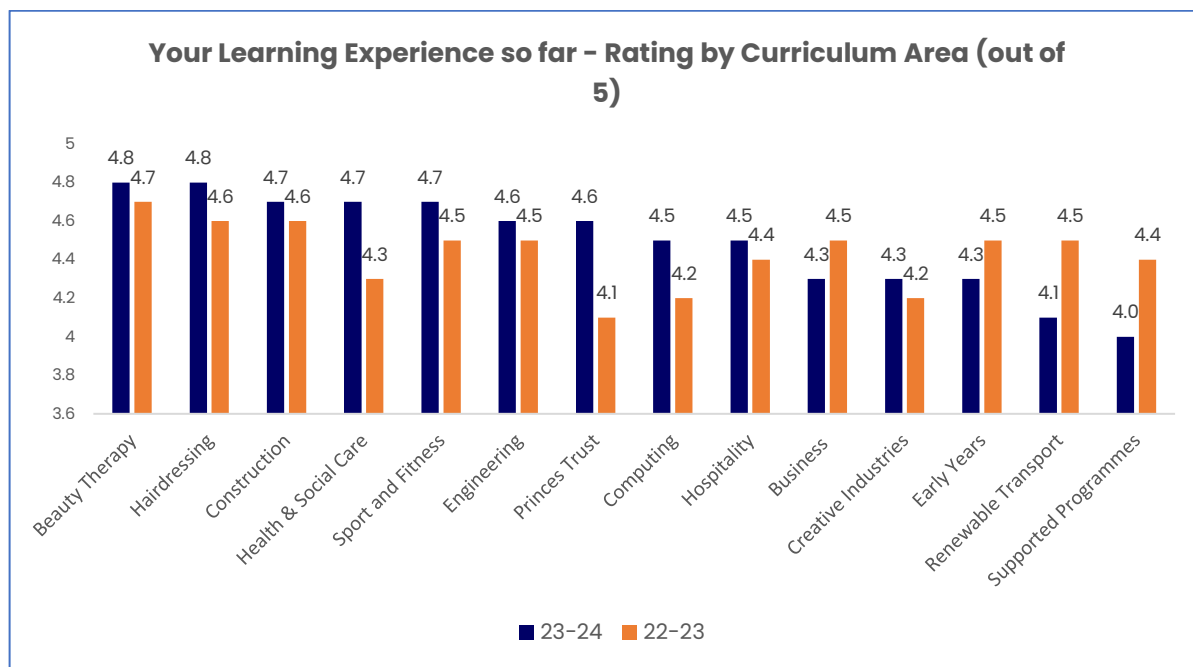
- I got a tour of the college before I started due to my anxiety which made me feel so much more comfortable. My lecturer also met with me before making me feel better because I knew who would be teaching me.
- I think the welcome activities and inductions gave us a good view on what to expect for starting the course.
- The staff are great. I'm excited to make some new friends with the students as I've not really spoke to anyone yet.
- The induction you get from the college is amazing they make sure you know where you are going. The lecturer also checks if you are settling in and how you are finding it. It's such a better experience rather than a school environment.

A number of areas for improvement highlighted by students included:
- Could maybe be organised a bit better for further year groups.
- Didn't really have any welcome activities.

Question 2 - Your Learning Experience so far

Student were asked - things like your course and classes, your expectations, being engaged and making progress, getting feedback. What is your experience?

Your Learning Experience so far - Rating by Curriculum Area (out of 5)

Curriculum Area	23-24	22-23
Beauty Therapy	4.8	4.7
Hairdressing	4.8	4.6
Construction	4.7	4.6
Health & Social Care	4.7	4.3
Sport and Fitness	4.7	4.5
Engineering	4.6	4.5
Princes Trust	4.6	4.1
Computing	4.5	4.2
Hospitality	4.5	4.4
Business	4.3	4.5
Creative Industries	4.3	4.2
Early Years	4.3	4.5
Renewable Transport	4.1	4.5
Supported Programmes	4.0	4.4

On comparison to Session 22-23, 10 of the curriculum areas rated higher this session, and 4 rated lower than in session 22/23.

Students were given the opportunity to make comments relating to each of the six questions. A selection of comments from the Learning Experience so far question are:

- Tutors have been great at giving feedback and suggestions both in and out of class time, and I am understanding the work I am doing.
- My classes have a very laid-back feel to them, but not to the point where nothing gets done. I find that so far it's been quite easy to understand my course and learn and I look forward to coming into college each week.
- The qualification work is just what I was expecting, it's easy to engage and so far I like the studying because I love gaining knowledge about different aspects for the outside world. Can't wait to start my new work experiences.
- The class so far has been good we have done a lot and learned a lot already. we done both practical and theory which is good as it means we aren't doing theory weeks before we do practical.
- So far the learning experience has been good as the lecturers are supportive, the course material is of a high quality and easy to access.
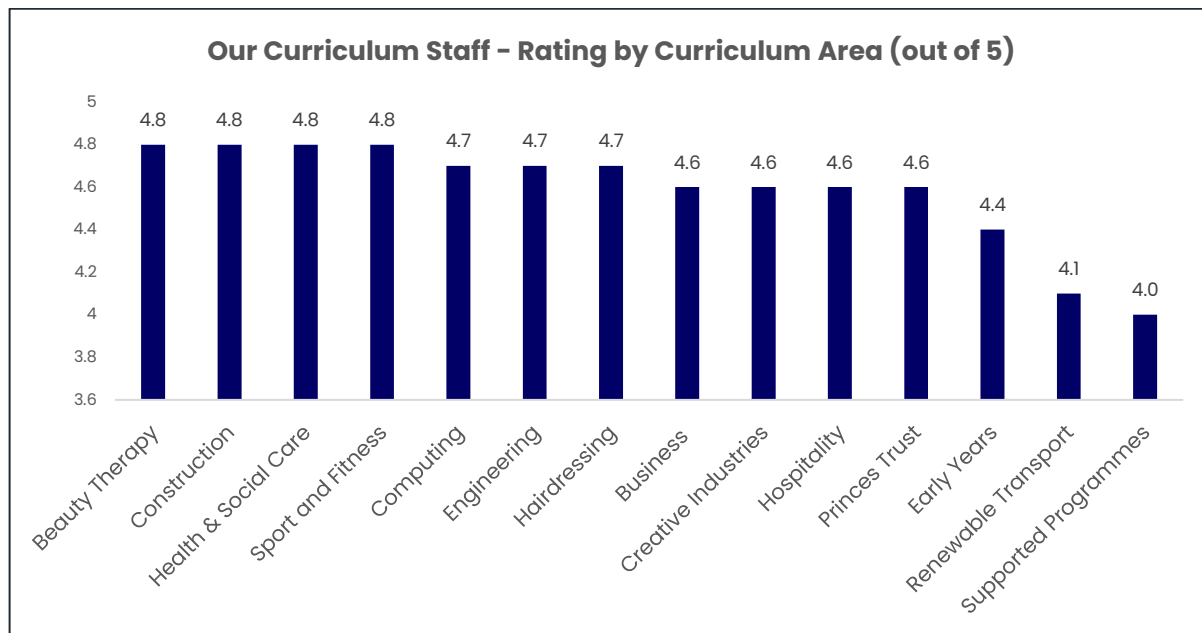
A number of areas for improvement highlighted by students, which have been shared with relevant Curriculum Managers, included:

- I overall really like my course but I'm not a fan of group work and would prefer to do work on my own.
- I am enjoyed college so far but just can't seem to get onto teams to see the work.
- Difficult to concentrate online sometimes but the experience is good.
- Difficult due to online classes and lack of motivation.
- Enjoying the work but it can be very boring at times, and I'm not used to working in groups so adapting to that is proving to be quite difficult.
- I like most of my classes I just struggle in one because they go to fast and don't use the correct stuff in LearnNet we get the HNC classes PowerPoints in class and the Level 6 in LearnNet.
- Prefer being in college not online.

Question 3 - Our Curriculum Staff

This is a new question for Session 23-24 so no comparison to previous session.

Students were asked - things like how helpful and approachable are your lecturers, Personal Tutor, Curriculum Manager. Do you feel supported as a student and an individual by our staff? How are we doing?

Our Curriculum Staff - Rating by Curriculum Area (out of 5)

Curriculum Area	Rating
Beauty Therapy	4.8
Construction	4.8
Health & Social Care	4.8
Sport and Fitness	4.8
Computing	4.7
Engineering	4.7
Hairdressing	4.7
Business	4.6
Creative Industries	4.6
Hospitality	4.6
Princes Trust	4.6
Early Years	4.4
Renewable Transport	4.1
Supported Programmes	4.0

Students were given the opportunity to make comments relating to each of the six questions. A selection of comments from the Our Curriculum Staff question are:

- You don't feel judged or pressured. You can answer questions with no worry do getting them wrong and feeling embarrassed.
- Very helpful, guided throughout course so far. Feedback always given. Quick responses.
- All of my lecturers are welcoming, understanding and good at helping me understand the errors I have made.
- I feel like lecturers are very supportive and helpful during classes and I feel like whenever I am stuck or don't understand what's going on in the session, I feel like I can ask questions and have a conversation with them.
- I am very comfortable with my lectures and feel like I can approach them very easily and get whatever support I need.
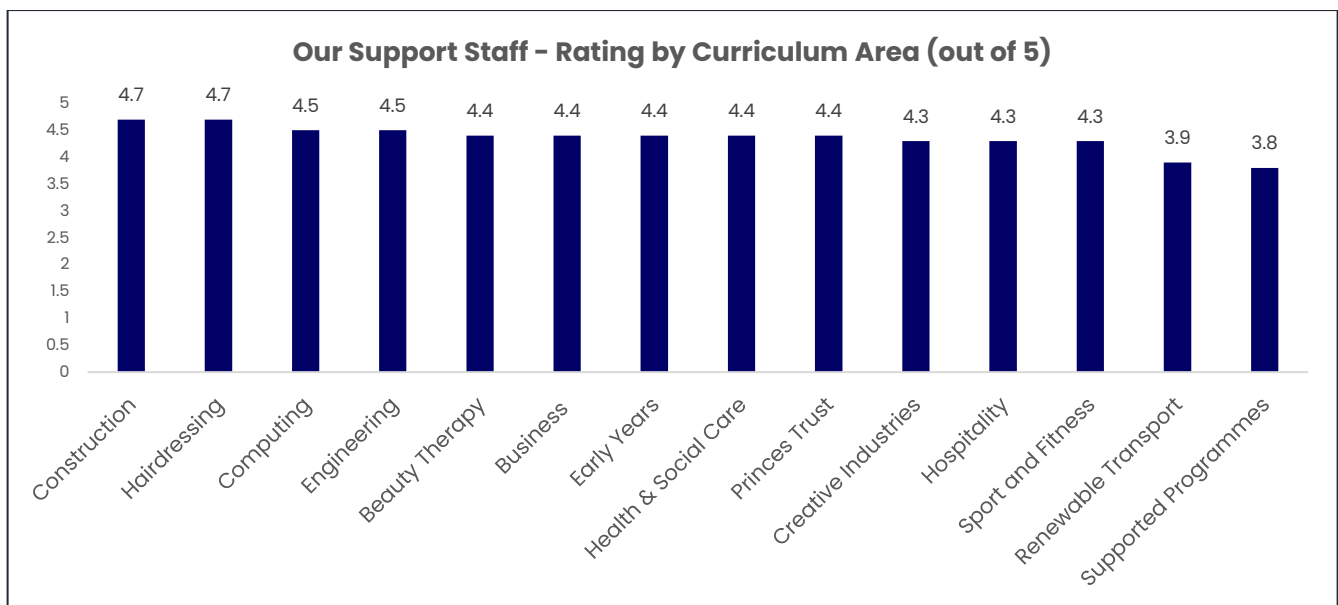
A number of areas for improvement highlighted by students, which have been shared with relevant Curriculum Managers, included:

- My lecturers don't help as often.
- Some lecturers make their subjects more complicated than they need to.

- Some lecturers better than others.
- Some have made themselves much more approachable than others. More information about staff's specific roles and responsibilities to us as students would be helpful from the start of the course.

Question 4 – Our Support Staff

This is a new question for Session 23-24 so no comparison to previous session.

Students were asked - things like how helpful and approachable are specialist student support staff. Do you feel supported as a student and an individual by our specialist support teams? How are we doing?

Our Support Staff - Rating by Curriculum Area (out of 5)

Curriculum Area	Rating
Construction	4.7
Hairdressing	4.7
Computing	4.5
Engineering	4.5
Beauty Therapy	4.4
Business	4.4
Early Years	4.4
Health & Social Care	4.4
Princes Trust	4.4
Creative Industries	4.3
Hospitality	4.3
Sport and Fitness	4.3
Renewable Transport	3.9
Supported Programmes	3.8

Students were given the opportunity to make comments relating to each of the six questions.

A selection of comments from the Our Support Staff question are:

- Any time I have asked for help I have received it in abundance. The support team are fabulous and encouraging to everyone I have personally spoken to.

- As of yet I have not needed to use any of the specialist support teams but I am aware that they exist and how to contact them if I need them.
- have been involved with many supporting teams in the college and every department has helped me a great deal so far. and I have a plan going forward with each team.
- Interactions with the funding team were great, slight issue with funding form and they very swiftly helped me through the issue.
- Reception staff are very friendly.

A number of areas for improvement highlighted by students, which have been shared with relevant Support Managers, included:
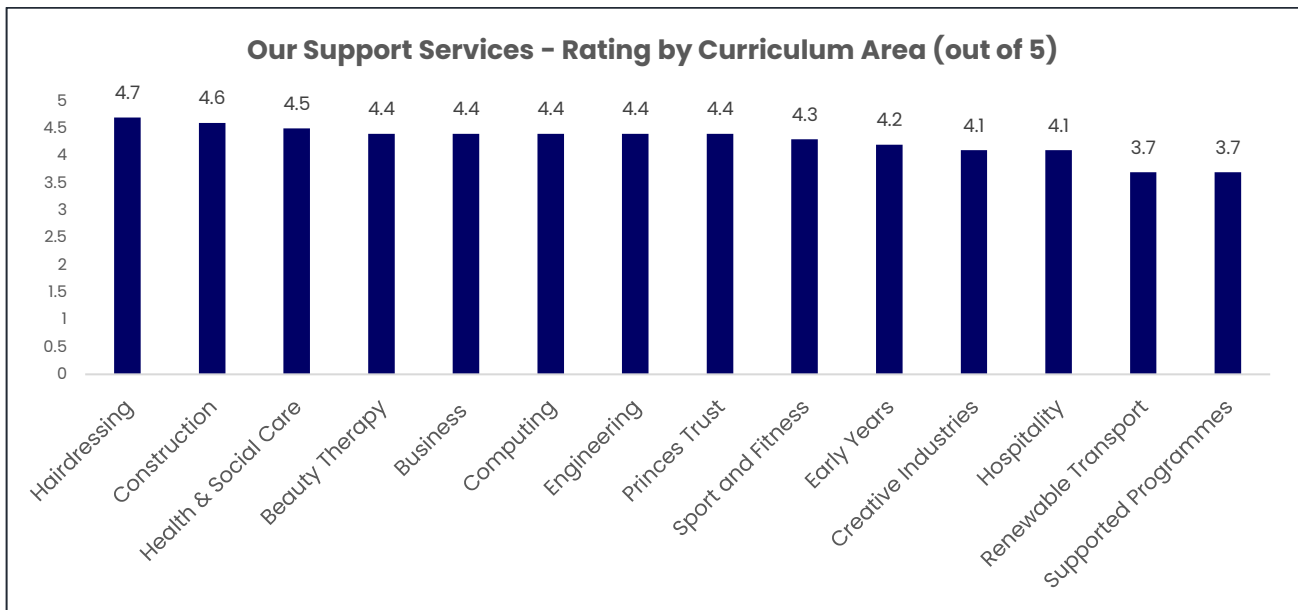- I also do not know who they.
- I do not know who the specialist student staff are so it's a no for this one as I don't know who they are.
- I have never interacted with them, so I don't know.

Support Managers to consider raising profile of their areas during the onboarding process.

Question 5 – Support Services

This is a new question for Session 23-24 so no comparison to previous session.

Students were asked – How effective are our specialist support services such as the application proves, enrolment process, onboarding activities? Do you feel our support services enhanced the overall student experience? Please tell us about your experience.

Our Support Services - Rating by Curriculum Area (out of 5)

Curriculum Area	Rating
Hairdressing	4.7
Construction	4.6
Health & Social Care	4.5
Beauty Therapy	4.4
Business	4.4
Computing	4.4
Engineering	4.4
Princes Trust	4.4
Sport and Fitness	4.3
Early Years	4.2
Creative Industries	4.1
Hospitality	4.1
Renewable Transport	3.7
Supported Programmes	3.7

Students were asked – How effective are our specialist support services such as the application process, enrolment process, onboarding activities?   Do you feel our support services have enhanced the overall student experience? Please tell us about your experience.

Students were given the opportunity to make comments relating to each of the six questions. A selection of comments from the Our Support Services question are:
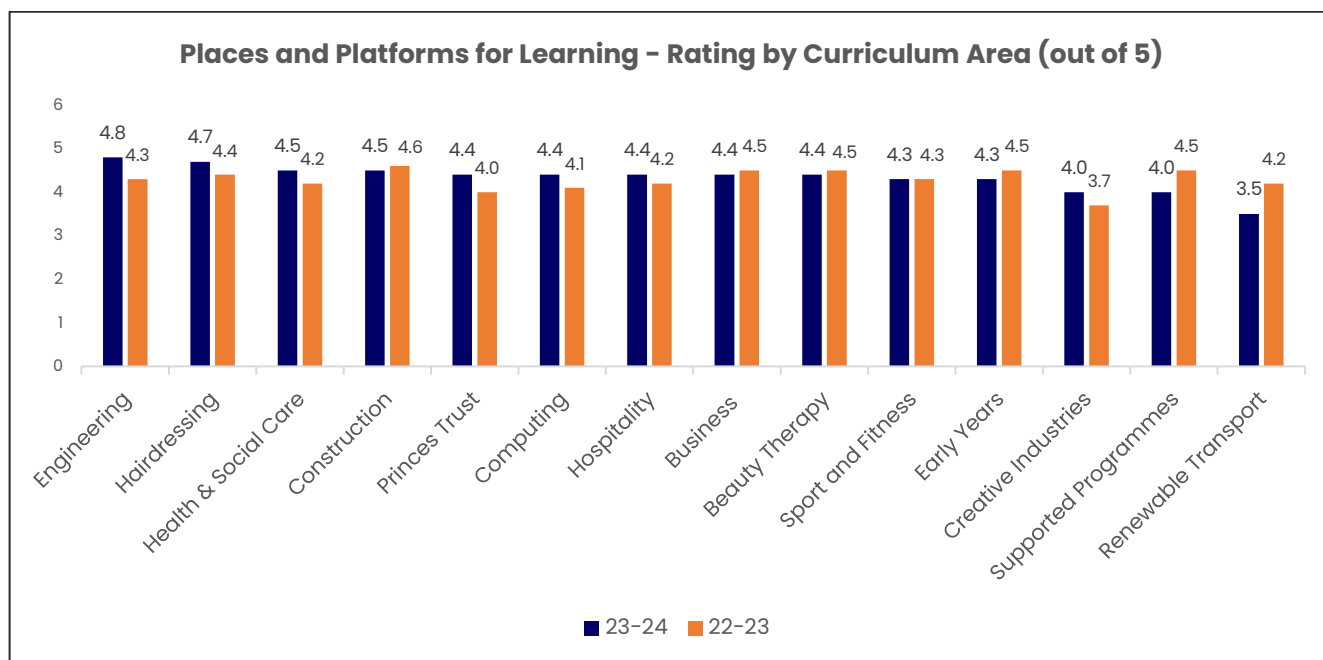
- From the application to the college down to the little WhatsApp message that keep me entertained and engaged leading up to joining college has been really helpful. The support at this college enhances every year for me.
- All the application processes and enrolment was very easy and I found that if I struggled there was help available.
- Always kept up to date with activities, application process enrolment process via email.
- been really helpful. The support at this college enhances every year for me, it's very up to date as we further develop into more modern education systems.
- I feel moving the IT support to the same floor as the computers has been a benefit.

A number of areas for improvement highlighted by students, which have been shared with relevant Support Managers, included:
- Found it difficult to log in.
- Had to chase my application a few times which was down heartening.

Question 6 - Places and Platform for Learning

Students were asked - things like college spaces - buildings, studios and workshops and online learning environments. Please tell us about your experience.

Places and Platforms for Learning - Rating by Curriculum Area (out of 5)

Curriculum Area	23-24	22-23
Engineering	4.8	4.3
Hairdressing	4.7	4.4
Health & Social Care	4.5	4.2
Construction	4.5	4.6
Princes Trust	4.4	4.0
Computing	4.4	4.1
Hospitality	4.4	4.2
Business	4.4	4.5
Beauty Therapy	4.4	4.5
Sport and Fitness	4.3	4.3
Early Years	4.3	4.5
Creative Industries	4.0	3.7
Supported Programmes	4.0	4.5
Renewable Transport	3.5	4.2

On comparison to Session 22-23, 7 of the curriculum areas had higher ratings, 6 had decreased ratings, and 1 remained the same.

Students were given the opportunity to make comments relating to each of the six questions. A selection of comments from the Platforms and Places for learning question are:
- We have an amazing space with the best equipment and products very lucky we have what we do for our learning always in a clean professional environment.
- Very good spaces to go and work quietly to complete work for the course and comfy seating as well.
- The new esports lab has been good for computing.
- The workshop is laid out well so everything is easy to find and there is enough space on the benches to work without being cramped.

- I find the classrooms that I've had to work in so far very warm. The classrooms are very spacious and have enough room for us all to work with enough space to do certain tasks. The building and surrounding grounds are clean and tidy and well kept.

A number of areas for improvement highlighted by students, which have been shared with relevant Support Managers, included:
- Could be more classrooms for revising as there's not a lot of room.
- Get more study space for the college.
- Good, however it was unclear as to whether you had to book a library booth and still unsure.
- I don't enjoy online learning as having to sit on a call for hours and concentrate then having to go and do the work my concentration and motivation is gone.
- Hard doing everything online would rather have paper.
- Lack of computer space for independent learning.
- Need social study areas back. Online learning isn't good.

Question 7 - "One thing"

Students were asked - If there is one thing we could do to make your experience at College better what would that be?

There were 359 comments logged, noting areas where we could do better. These are free text responses which have been examined for key themes. The themes are comparable to last sessions and a summary of the most common themes is provided below:

Theme	23-24	22-23
Catering provision, choice and pricing	25.6%	26.7%
Curriculum	43.7%	34.1%
Estates	10.6%	13.4%
IT	6.1%	4.6%
Support/Funding	2.8%	4.1%
Transport	4.5%	7.4%
On campus activities	6.1%	9.7%
Other	0.6%	0.0%

There has been an increase in the number of comments submitted in relation to 'one thing we could do better' in comparison to last session. This is not an area for concern, due to the increased number of students participating in this survey this session.

A number of comments received were in relation to bottled water no longer being available for purchasing. The Director of Estates and Sustainability has provided feedback regarding this – *this is a sectoral approach to remove single use plastic products as part of our sustainability approach. The student association have refill bottles available and we have multiple refill stations for free water. The £2.35 bottles are reusable bottles, hence the higher price. These bottles should be used for refill after first use.*

A number of students commented that it would be useful to be able to take laptops home to work on. These comments have been passed to the Digital Services Manager.

Several comments were received suggesting that there should be more activities over lunchtime. These comments have been passed to the Student Association for consideration.

The Performance Team
October 2023