

AUSA e-Voice Diary Report: 2020, Semester 1, Week 4

Report completed as of 28/04/2020



AUSA STUDENT VOICE OFFICE

1.0 Aim

Every semester, the Student Voice Office at AUSA sends out an online survey to registered Class Representatives to gather information regarding what is going on across the campus and within classroom settings at the University of Auckland. This report aims to outline the feedback received from Class Representatives about how semester one of 2020 has gone so far.

1.1 Methodology

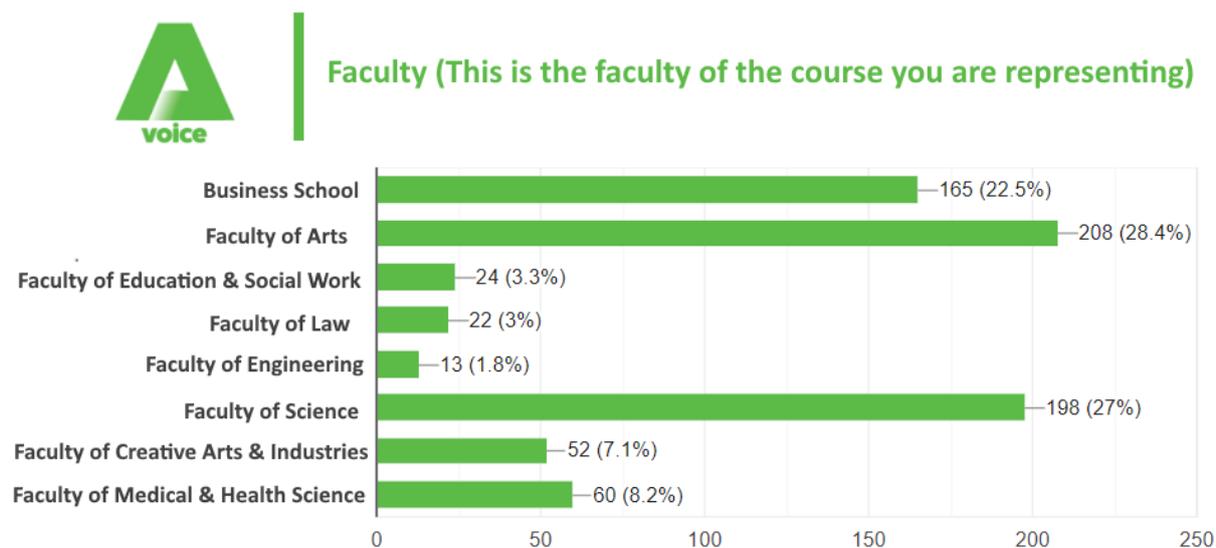
The e-Voice diary is set up using google forms as the surveying platform. The survey was distributed to all registered Class Representatives via email. Class Representatives are usually given a week to fill out the survey. However, this semester they were offered two weeks due to initial confusion surrounding when week four was according to the university's new timetable in response to COVID-19. **In total, we received 732 responses overall.**

1.2 Introduction

The report will follow the structure of summarising the results of each question before going into further analysis of the results for that question. A summary will be provided at the end of the report with possible implementations and recommendations as well as further implications following from here on forth.

2.0 Faculty Contributions

The following information provided details on which faculties took part in the survey and which faculties had the most respondents. The total amount of submissions received for this section is from **732**.



The following statistics are reflective of the graph above, and presented in order from the highest level of respondents to the lowest.

• Faculty of Arts	208	28.4% * 732
• Faculty of Science	198	27% * 732
• Business School	165	22.5% * 732
• Faculty of Medical & Health Science	60	8.2% * 732
• Faculty of Creative Arts & Industries	52	7.1% * 732
• Faculty of Education & Social Work	24	3.3% * 732
• Faculty of Law	22	3% * 732
• Faculty of Engineering	13	1.8% * 732

Based on these statistics, it is noticeable that the Faculties of Arts, Science and Business School has the highest respondent rates, when compared to other faculties.

The **three possible** reasons for low response rates among certain faculties might be:

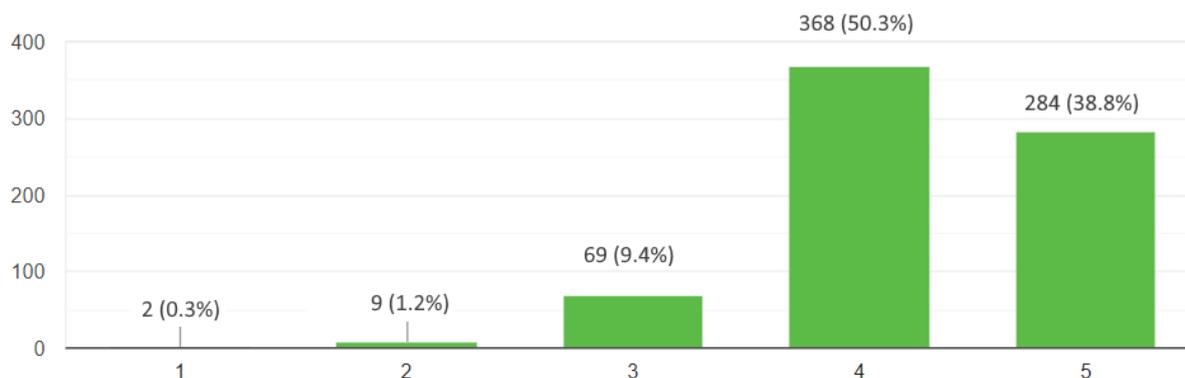
1. There are fewer courses within the faculties.
2. Some class reps may represent an entire cohort; therefore, the number of courses being displayed would be smaller as multiple courses may have one class rep.
3. There is just a general lack of engagement by Class Representatives from these faculties with low response rates. That said, AUSA could conduct enquiries into why that is the case.

3.0 Course Experiences

The following information outlines the overall rated experience of courses provided at the University of Auckland across all faculties during the first four weeks of semester 1, 2020. The Class Representatives were asked to select how they would rate the respective courses they represent, from '1' being 'Poor', to '5' being 'Excellent'. Overall total responses to this question was **732**.



Overall Course Experience



The following statistics are reflective of the graph above but in order from **5 (Excellent)** to **1 (Poor)**:

• 5 (Excellent)	284	38.8%*732
• 4	368	50.3%*732
• 3	69	9.4%*732
• 2	9	1.2%*732
• 1 (Poor)	2	0.3%*732

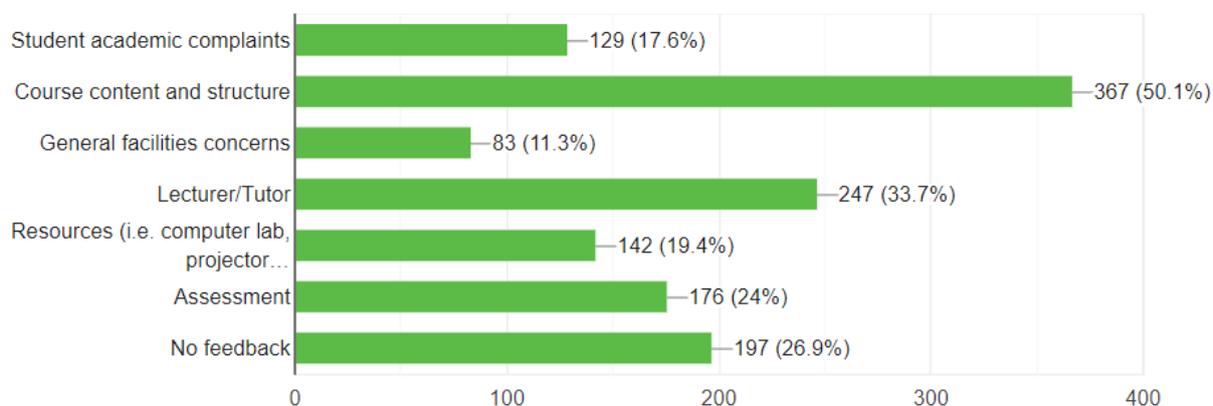
- It can be noted that overall course experiences have been mostly positive for the first four weeks of semester 1, 2020.
- It should be noted that these responses may have limitations. For example, Class Representatives biases.

The following diagram displays what specific area of course experience related feedback students wished to cover. The total amount of responses to this question was **732**:

3.1 Outlining what Categories Class Representative 'Course Experience' Feedback Relate to



Class Rep Course Experience Feedback is About



The following statistics are reflective of the graph above but in order from the highest level of respondents to the lowest.

• Course Content & Structure	367	50.1%*732
• Lecturer/Tutor	247	33.7%*732
• No feedback	197	26.9%*732
• Assessment	176	24%*732
• Resources	142	19.4%*732
• Student Academic Complaints	129	17.6%*732
• General Facilities Concerns	83	11.3%*732

- The data above outlines that 'Course Content & Structure' is the number one key area of course experience feedback received by Student Voice from Class Representatives, totalling half (50.1%) of the overall feedback.
- The following two other areas of course experience feedback are about lecturer and tutor performance, and 'no feedback' follows on after.
- The lowest area of course experience feedback relates to general facilities concerns.

4.0 Expressed Views Regarding Course Experiences Categories

The following section seeks to outline the specific areas of feedback provided under each 'Course Experience' category that was outlined in the previous section, 3.1.

It should be noted that some sections were noticeably intertwined when it came to analysing responses made. Therefore, some sections will share one subheading with others. Each subheading will outline what the standard feedback information was, as well as present individual quotes directly from class representatives.

The total amount of responses generated in this section was in total, **732**.

NB: For the most part, and as outlined in section 3.0, students provided more positive feedback more than anything else. Henceforth, the following listed aspects are the **common areas for concern** that have been noted by Class Representatives:

4.1 Course Content & Structure / Lecturers & Tutors / Student Academic Complaints

- **Students are concerned with how their courses may adapt to the university's COVID-19 response with changes to assessments due dates, and if and when to cover learning modules.**
 - *"General uncertainty exists around how the course will operate after the University's to move to online teaching."*
 - *"This semester has been filled with uncertainty... The first 3 weeks were really good for all courses. However, the Covid-19 pandemic (as expected) has been causing lots of problems, especially with the Govt implementing an Alert 4 shutdown."*
 - *"There is an understandable amount of confusion as the course is updated to suit our current circumstances."*
- **Students find the lack of direct physical presences in class affects engagement, thereby making students feel unmotivated to work to the best of their abilities.**
 - *"Limited practical interactions have made it incredibly difficult for students transitioning to digital learning, as the supplementation of videos as a substitute for hands-on experience has significantly discouraged students from attempting assessments or engaging with fellow students online."*
 - *"A lot of people are worried about the Covid19 stuff and finding the motivation study in isolation."*
- **There has been an expressed disappointment among students not being able to fulfil practical aspects of their courses e.g., practicum.**

- *“Mixed views about switching to online teaching. Many students are frustrated by the lack of access to materials and studio space which they are paying for.”*
- *“Students are just mainly concerned about whether or not practicum will take place at the moment due to the effects of COVID-19.”*

4.2 Assessments

- **Students request that course coordinators be reasonable with assessment gradings and deadlines during this transition into remote learning.**
 - *“There are concerns about the upcoming assessment, and they are worried about how the Coronavirus will affect this course and their grades.”*
 - *“Generally, the class is finding the whole switching to an online medium of assessment, a bit overwhelming.”*
 - *“So far due to the nature of University closing, it has been turbulent with when assignments are due and challenges that students are facing. Multiple students have reached out to me, saying that they need assignment deadlines extended because of lockdown symptoms & complications.”*
- **There is a need for lecturers to be more explicit regarding assessment structure and details. It is difficult for some students to get clarity on their assessments during remote learning.**
 - *“Little communication regarding how upcoming assessments will be facilitated during Semester One - still unclear how large (15-30%) assessments will be assessed.”*
- **There are concerns around changes to weighting for some assessments thereby causing stress among some students.**
 - *“Obviously we are all well aware of the lockdown circumstances now, and my class is waiting to see exactly what that means for lectures and assignment weighting etc.”*
 - *“Concerns over the department considering merging the test with the final exam due to closure. This would make the exam worth 70% and put the class at a huge disadvantage.”*

4.3 Resources / General Facilities Concerns

- **Unfamiliarity with how the Zoom programme operates.**
 - *“...some are finding it stressful and hard to work electronically on zoom.”*
- **Some find it difficult to have access to adequate technology for remote learning.**
 - *“One of the students in my group claims to have no microphone... Please do provide a guide for students to make sure they're able to present to the best of their abilities.”*
- **Online platforms for interaction do not cater to the quality of in-person presentations.**
 - *“The quality of the sound - obviously, the sound quality on a livestream video will be less than ideal for our musical instruments.”*
- **Lack of internet access for some need to be taken into account.**
 - *“Some don't have wifi at home, and others in rural areas have limited wifi and can't afford to attend lengthy zoom lectures.”*
- **Have Zoom calls recorded just like standard lectures.**
 - *“Since Zoom calls aren't compulsory or recorded, some students have raised concerns over whether a recording of the Zoom call would be accessible for students who didn't attend, in order to get an overview of the important concepts discussed.”*
- **Piazza would be preferred, especially during remote learning, whereby contact and interaction with the course is desirable.**
 - *“Some classmates alongside myself had queries about the pace of lecture recordings being uploaded onto Canvas, and also about establishing a Piazza page for the course.”*
 - *“Generally, if people have any queries about the course content, they go to piazza, and on that platform, people are able to get their questions answered by lecturers or students from their course.”*
 - *“Students are finding Piazza effective in communicating course content related issues.”*
 - *“All has been well besides a group of students who wanted their lecturer to be more proactive on Piazza.”*
- **Lack of entry to physical libraries causes a reduced access to desired textbooks, and online texts are limited.**

- *“We have had to adjust to the move online with finding resources for assessments (still not sure if the library is an essential service).”*
- *“Access to library material is huge, as very few architecture related books are online. Topical and historical research with an architectural lens is very hard to find purely searching online and the university has a very limited amount of its architecture collection online.”*
- *“Although a lot of this information is in the textbook, given the current circumstances, some students won't be able to access resources such as library textbooks to help them.”*

4.4 Commendations

Aside from all the common general concerns listed above, as mentioned earlier, for the most part, many Class Representatives and other students have expressed their gratitude and encouragement towards the university and academic staff so far for semester one of 2020.

- *“Informative classes with experienced guest speakers.”*
- *“Lecturer is teaching at a good pace whilst engaging with the students in class. Providing good sources and helping us with past exam questions in tutorials.”*
- *“The course is going well so far, as it is a general education course many students are doing it out of pure interest and the course is fun and interactive.”*
- *“Lecturer is incredibly engaging, and I have heard from some peers that they are enjoying this course because of not just the content, but the lecturer's teaching style being intriguing.”*
- *“The use and experimentation with Zoom was great, class enjoyed it.”*
- *“Students are overall content with their course experience.”*

5.0 Key Takeaways

This report has outlined the general, as well as, key information Class Representatives of the University of Auckland have provided regarding how the start of semester 1, 2020 has gone.

So, what have been the key takeaways from all this information provided?

- Students are, for the most part, pleased with how things are going in the semester, especially in light of the university's COVID-19 responses which have been praised for the most part.
- Students seek that the university and academic staff continues to update students effectively regarding assessment due dates, marking schemes, as well as other key university and course-based events.
- Students request that the university continues to offer support and be mindful of the circumstances that students may be facing during their time in remote learning, ideally that the university seeks to and continues to work in a manner of good faith.

5.1 Three Possible Recommendations to Consider

Piazza

- Students have continued to praise the use of Piazza. Many are expressing their desires to have such a platform provided to their courses, especially during this time of remote isolation. Remote isolation has caused a lack of engagement among many students. Having a platform like Piazza at hand to facilitate online discussion and interaction regarding course content would be incredibly useful.
 - Therefore, a recommendation to have Piazza implemented in all courses would be a step in the right direction. This would be ideal in the eyes of many students, mainly when course interaction is already limited.

Zoom Recordings

- While university guidelines outline that lectures should be pre-recorded rather than being streamed live, the fact of the matter is some courses still receive essential and useful information through live-streamed course content, such as information provided in drop-in-sessions.
 - The recommendation is that the university makes scheduled Zoom session recordings mandatory as they already do with in-class lecture recordings.

Increase Online Library Content

- Due to the university-wide closure, access to academic material such as library books has limited many students' ability to gather resources for their learning and assessments. The university offers an excellent platform for students to access academic texts through the online library; however, due to absolutely no access to the physical library, the content online is not deemed enough.
 - The recommendation is a generalised request for the university to explore possible ways of providing access to a broader range of academic resources for students so that they can learn and work to the best of their abilities.