Dumfries and Galloway College

One step ahead

EARLY EXPERIENCE STUDENT SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT 26-27

Date: October 2026

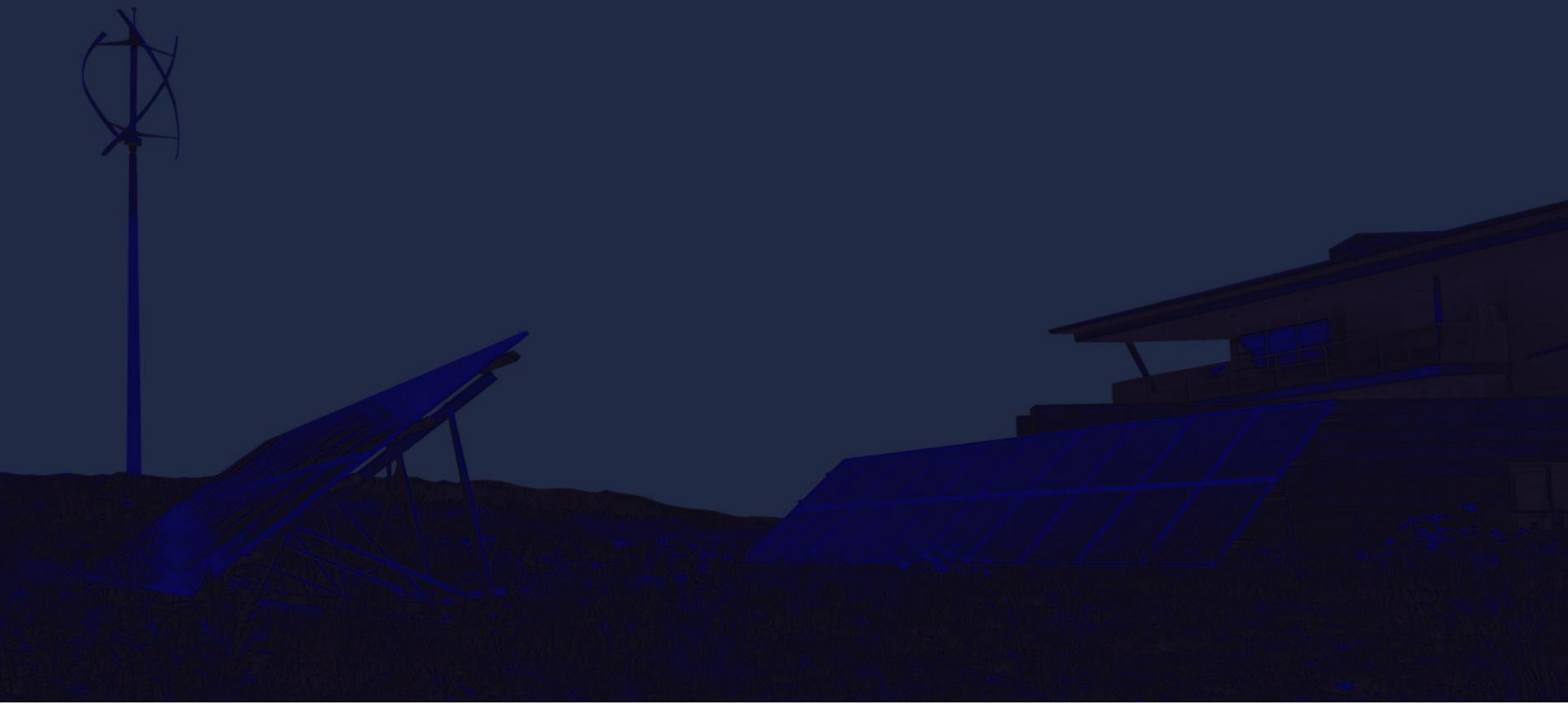


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Introduction

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

For a fifth 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 14th September to 25th September 2026 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. The Admissions team included the survey in their September Purlos Campaign.

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

- Welcome and Induction (Organisation and Management)
- Community and Belonging
- Curriculum
- Learning and Teaching Delivery, Assessment and Feedback
- Resources, Environment and Technology
- Our Curriculum Staff
- Our Professional Services Staff
- Support and Guidance

New questions were included to provide additional feedback relating to:

- Barriers for Learning
- Induction

It was highlighted last session that the Early experience survey had coincided with another student survey for the two previous sessions. Both surveys have been combined for session 26-27 to avoid survey fatigue for students. The feedback relating to the Induction process will enable the student journey team to make comparisons to data gathered from previous sessions.

Specific curriculum/support area data, including comments, has been shared with the relevant manager. Action grids have been produced to allow opportunity to feedback on the comments raised, to note any examples of You Said We Did, and to record any cross-college trends.

Key Observations

- 70% of eligible students participated (+3% 25-26)
- Students rated their overall satisfaction 4.6 out of 5 (+0.1, 25-26)
- Analysis of each campus data mirrors the overall satisfaction rate, 4.6 out of 5
- Curriculum areas Business and Computing achieved the highest participation rate of 100% (%)
- Curriculum area Construction achieved the highest participation (quantity)
- Nine Curriculum areas increased their participation rate from the previous session
- The highest participation increase was 29% (Renewable Transport)
- Hairdressing had the highest overall satisfaction rates (4.8)
- Overall satisfaction ratings of 4.5 and above were maintained for all curriculum areas with the exception of Hospitality and Lifeskills, Employability and Pathways (4.4)
- The Curriculum areas of Business and Computing had the highest participation rates (100%) but the second lowest overall satisfaction (4.5)
- 80.2% of students attended Induction
- Less 'One More Thing' comments were received in comparison to previous sessions

Survey Participation

Overall participation in the survey was extremely positive with 1210 responses in total. 73% of the total eligible current student population took part.

Session	2026-2027	2025-2026	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023
Responses per session	1210 (73%)	1252 (70%)	1289 (80%)	1055 (65%)	722 (40.5%)

Chart of Respondents by Curriculum Area (Quantity)

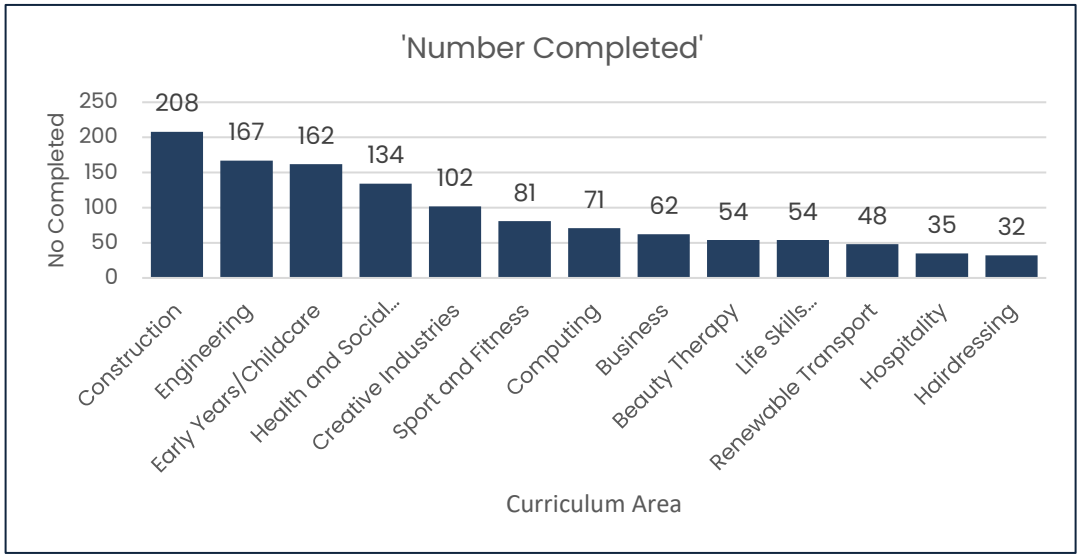
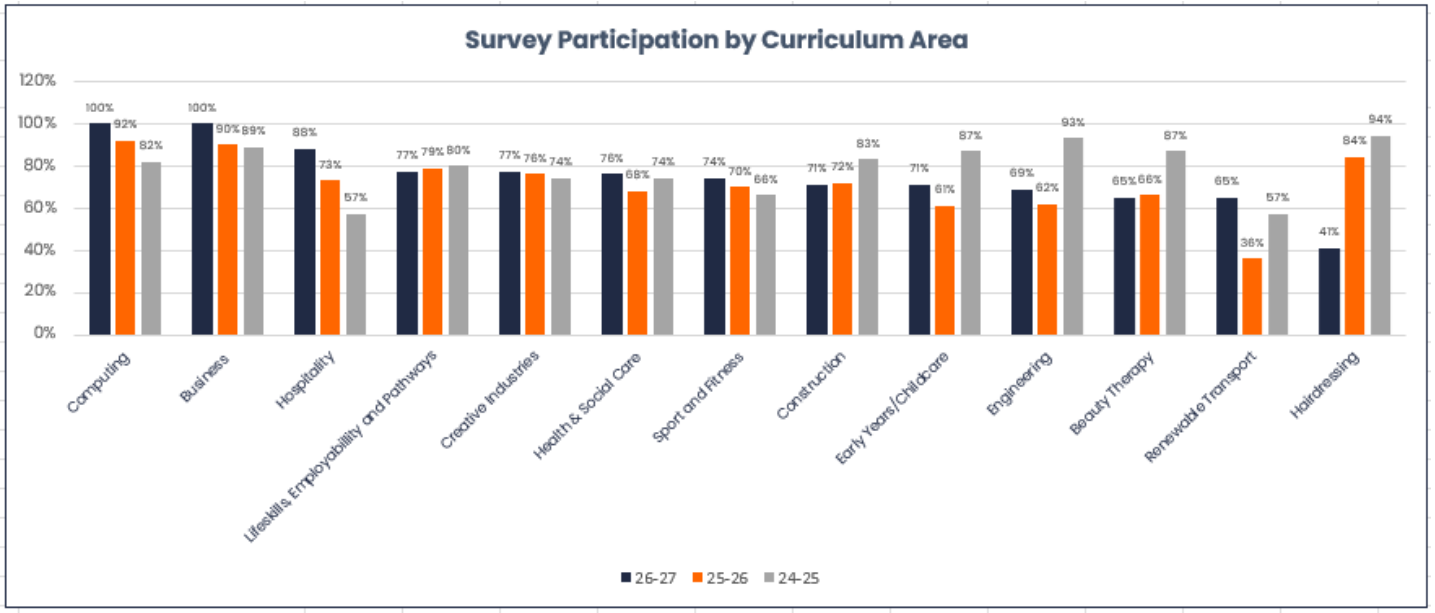


Chart of Respondents by Curriculum Area (%)



The response rates varied across curriculum teams, with the highest response rates being from Business and Computing (100%). For nine curriculum areas there was an increase in the participation rates in comparison to the previous session.

The most significant participation increase was for Renwable Transport, increasing by 29% from 2025-2026. The other eight curriculum areas noted increases as follows: Hospitality (+15%), Business and Early Years (+10%), Creative Industries and Computing (+8%), Engineering (+7%), Sport and Fitness (+4%) and Health and Social Care (+1%).

A significant participation decrease was noted for Hairdressing (-43%)
Particpation for Lifeskills Employability and Pathways, Construction and Beauty Therapy decreased minimally, -2%, -1% and -1% respectively.

Although four curriculum areas noted a decrease in their participation rates in comparison to the previous session, this was an improvement on the eight curriculum areas that noted decreases last session.

Overall Results

The average overall rating across all 8 questions was 4.6 out of 5, a slight increase (4.5, 25-26) on the rating achieved in the previous session.

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



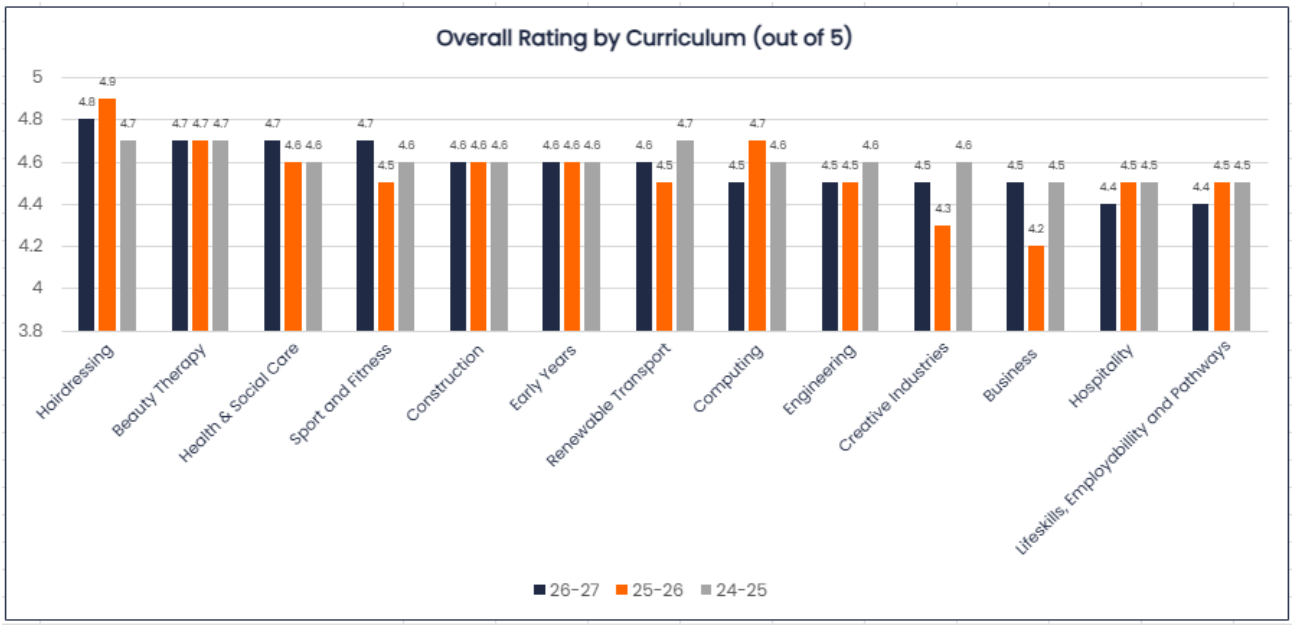
Average Dumfries Campus rating (out of 5) across all Curriculum areas by Question:



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



The chart below displays the overall satisfaction rating by Curriculum Areas and by the count of results by each rating (1 to 5):



In comparison to session 25-26, five curriculum areas, Business, Creative Industries, Health and Social Care, Sport and Fitness and Renewable Transport, noted increases (+0.3%, +0.2%, +0.1%, +0.2% and +0.1% respectively) in their overall satisfaction ratings. Four areas maintained the same rating. Four areas noted decreases in the overall satisfaction rating.

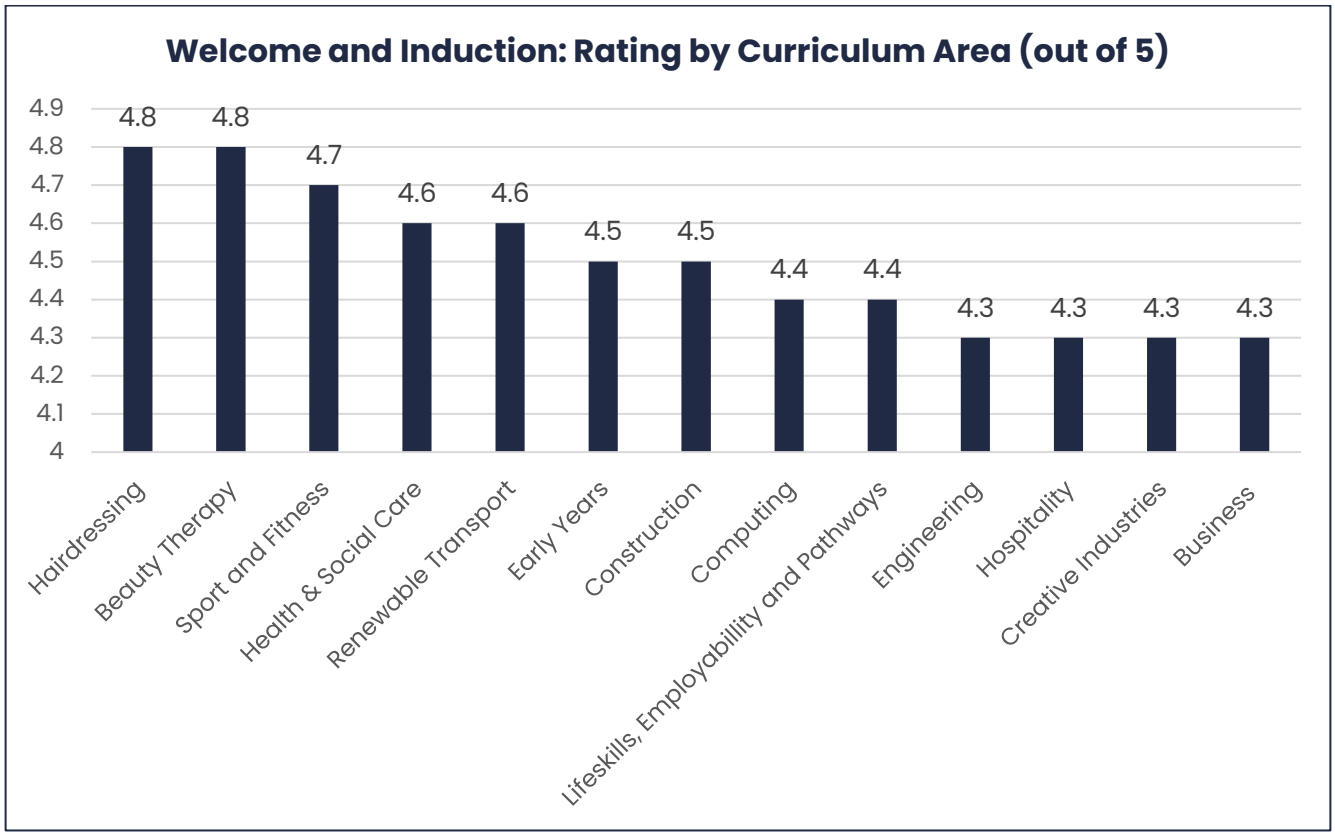
As all ratings are 4.4 and above out of 5, we have continued to maintain a high overall rating across all curriculum areas.

Although the Curriculum area of Business had one of the highest participation rates, they had one of the lowest satisfaction rates. Further analysis shows that the overall satisfaction rate of one FE schools group attributed to this.

Results by Question

Question 1 – Welcome and Induction (Organisation and Management)

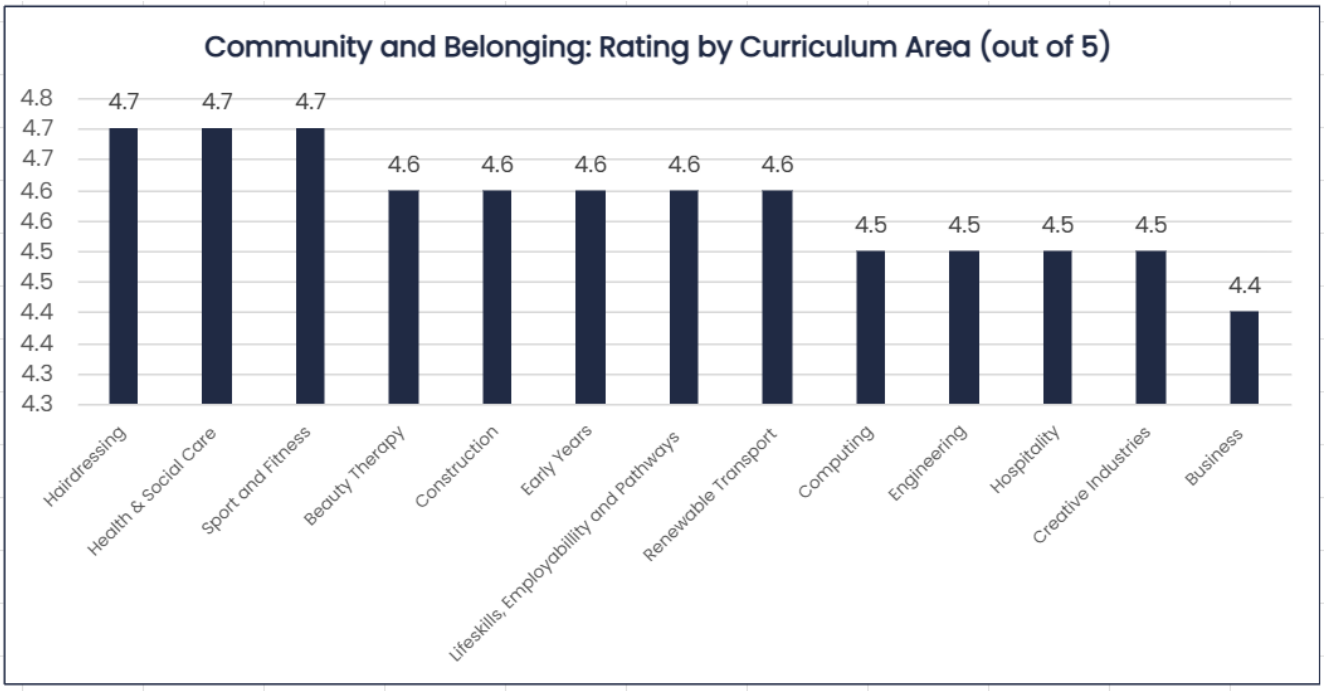
Students were asked - things like welcome activities, clear induction process, pre-course communication, advanced notice of timetable How do you feel about this?



A summary of comments relating to the induction process is provided further on in the report. Please see Induction Question 5.

Question 2 – Community and Belonging

Students were asked – Things like sense of belonging, feeling included, respectful of the diverse community, feeling safe. What is your experience?

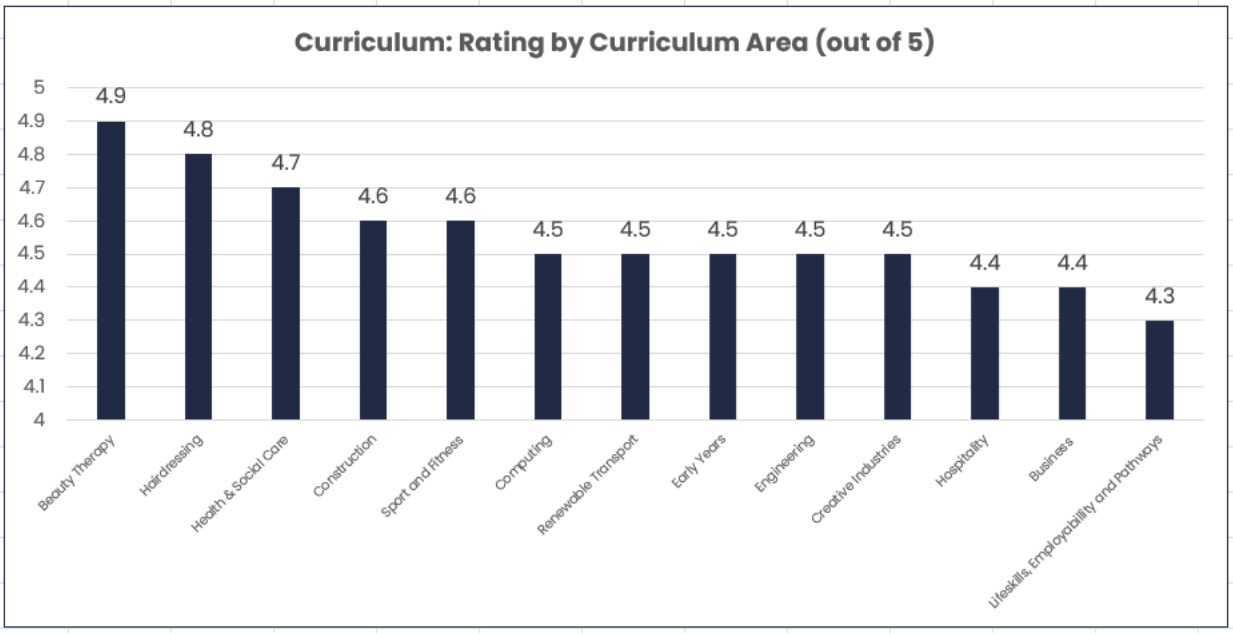


The majority of comments referred to sense of community and belonging being very positive, safe and inclusive. A selection of individual comments from the Community and Belonging question are:

- A good sense of belonging in college. Respected & feel safe & listened to.
- The experience feels pretty fine with everyone I pass by being very friendly and sociable. I also find Dumfries college a very safe place to be at as they have a great way of finding people who don't belong or shouldn't be here without their student id.
- I have felt included by all lecturers I have encountered at the college so far, everyone is friendly, welcoming, and approachable.
- Both my peers and my lecturers are all super welcoming and lovely. Everyone is very accepting and kind.
- I have felt very included and reassured during my time at the college, this has helped a lot as I am just beginning education after a while off.

Question 3 – Curriculum

Students were asked - Things like your course content and structure, relevance, accessible and inclusive classes, your expectations. What is your experience?

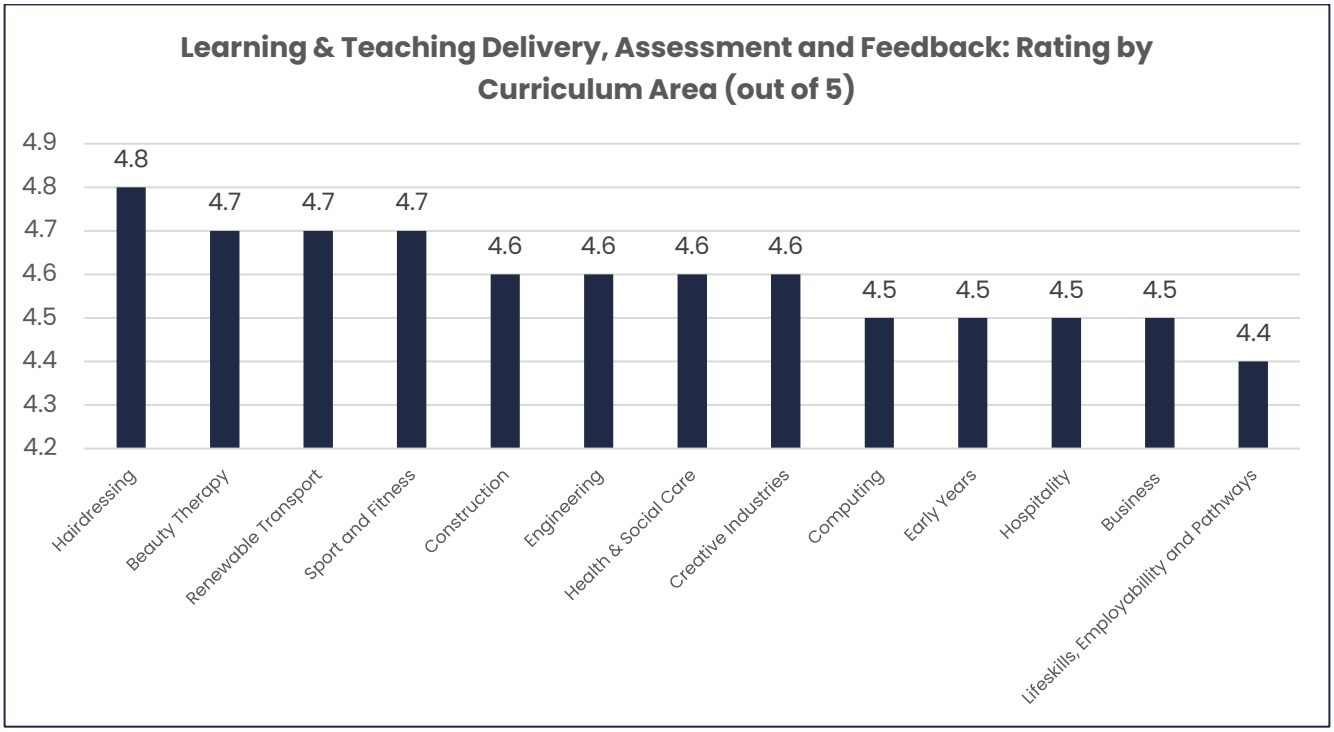


The majority of comments noted that students felt their course content was clear, with easily accessible materials. A selection of individual comments from the Curriculum question are:

- Excellent course content & structure. Feeling valued & included in & around the classroom.
- The course is all very accessible to use at home or when revising.
- I am so far enjoying my course content and am comfortable with the workload. LearnNet has been very easy to navigate and any problems I've had with teams have been quickly resolved with assistance from my lecturers.
- I have really enjoyed the course content so far. The work is interesting and relevant and makes the structure easy to understand. I also feel like classes are inclusive and that I can get support when needed.
- My course is very satisfactory, being both challenging and enjoyable to help me learn.

Question 4 – Learning and Teaching Delivery, Assessment and Feedback

Students were asked - Things like effective teaching methods, being engaged, interactive, making progress, helpful feedback, assessment support. What is your experience?

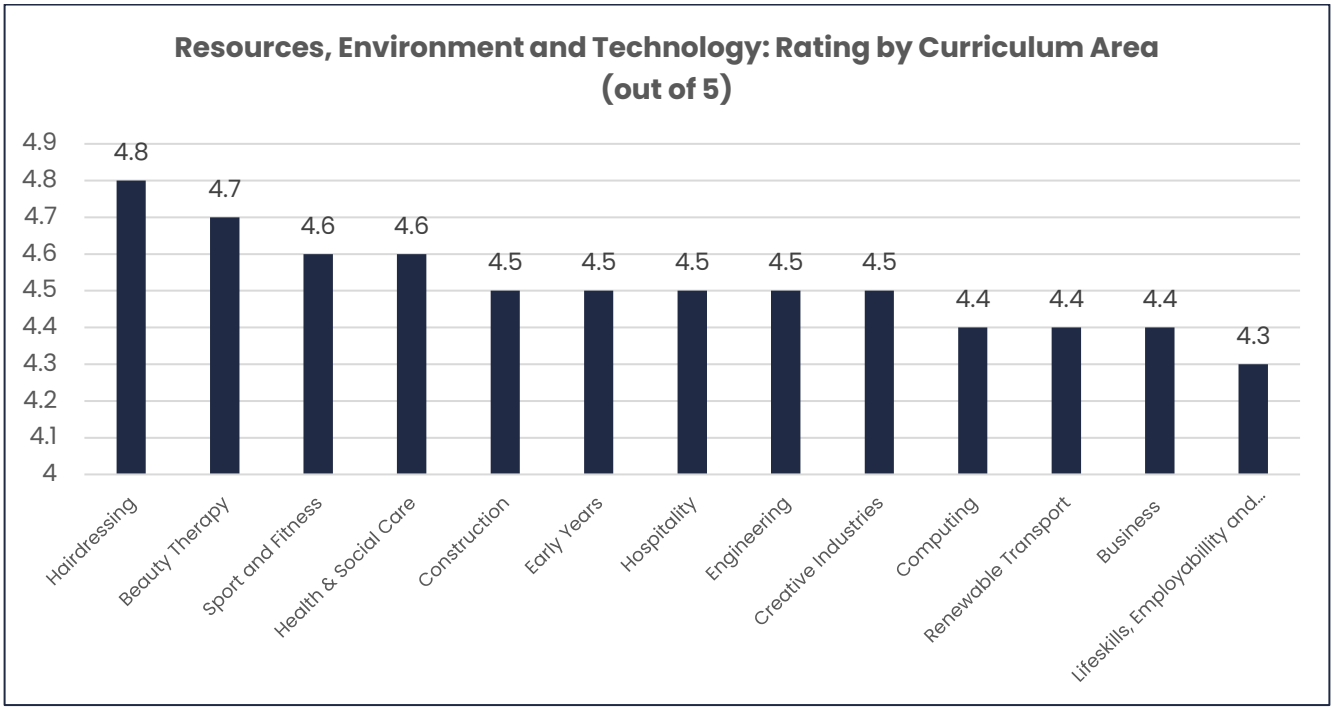


The majority noted that teaching methods were effective, engaging with regular feedback provided. A selection of individual comments from the Learning and Teaching Delivery, Assessment and Feedback question are:

- I think the staff listen really well to feedback and are very thorough when explaining.
- I get explained and taught very well and in a good method with plenty of examples and get asked question about my understanding and I feel like it helps me learn and memorise far better.
- All my lecturers have been very friendly, and easy to talk to, give helpful honest feedback so I can improve and I feel I have made good progress
- Very good. Interactive, step by step demonstrations, helpful advice, approachable tutors. Positive encouragement and good atmosphere in class.
- Lecturers are very knowledgeable and are accepting of different students abilities.

Question 5 – Resources, Environment and Technology

Students were asked – Things like classrooms, workshops, library, virtual learning environments, individual and group study spaces, physical and digital learning resources. Please tell us about your experience.

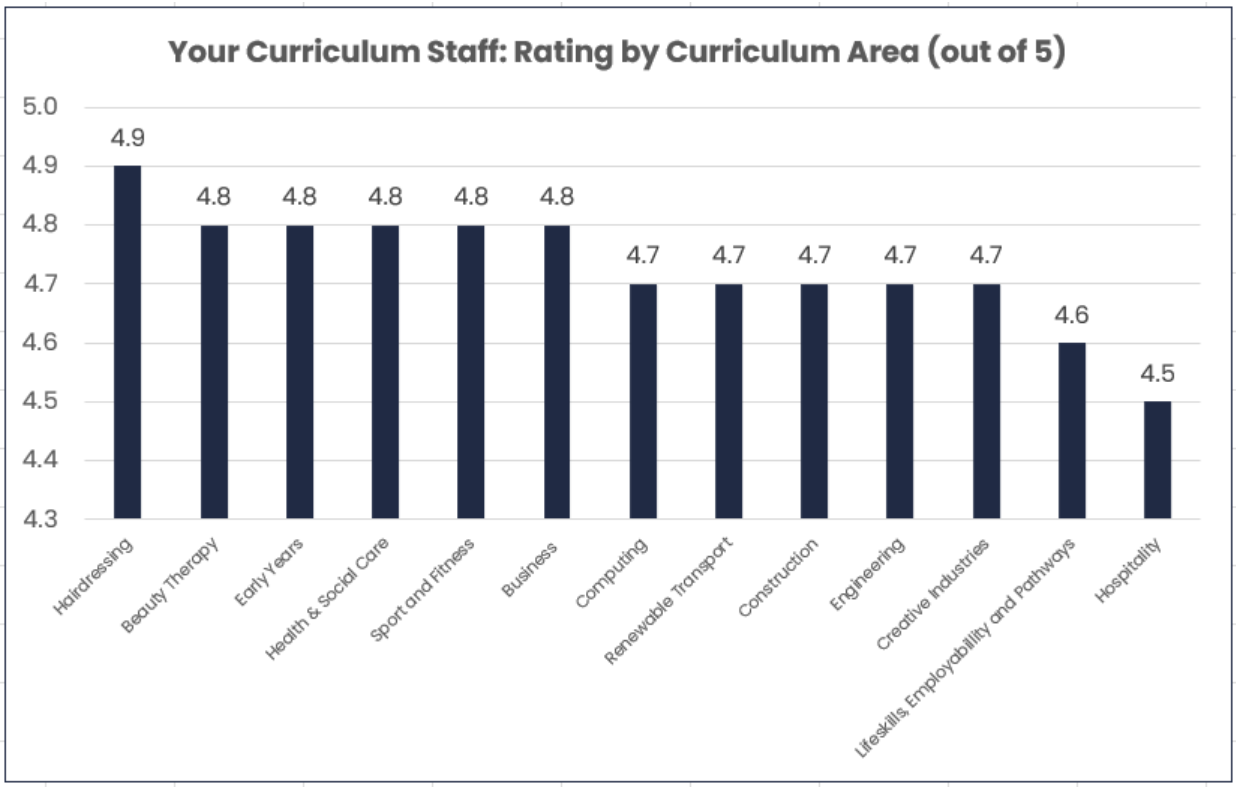


Most comments confirmed that our resources, environment and technology are conducive for learning and study. A selection of individual comments from the Resources, Environment and Technology question are:

- Great study spaces. The library is amazing.
- Great access to the library and learning spaces.
- As I'm studying online, I find the digital resources and online learning platform useful and easy enough to access. The course materials are helpful and I like having everything available online.
- Great that I can just come in and borrow a laptop when I need it.
- I am happy with the learning facilities and resources. The classrooms and digital resources are useful and support my learning. I have access to the resources I need for my course.

Question 6 – Your Curriculum Staff

Students were asked – Things like how helpful and approachable are your Lecturers, Personal Tutor, Curriculum Manager. Do you feel supported by Curriculum Staff? How are we doing?

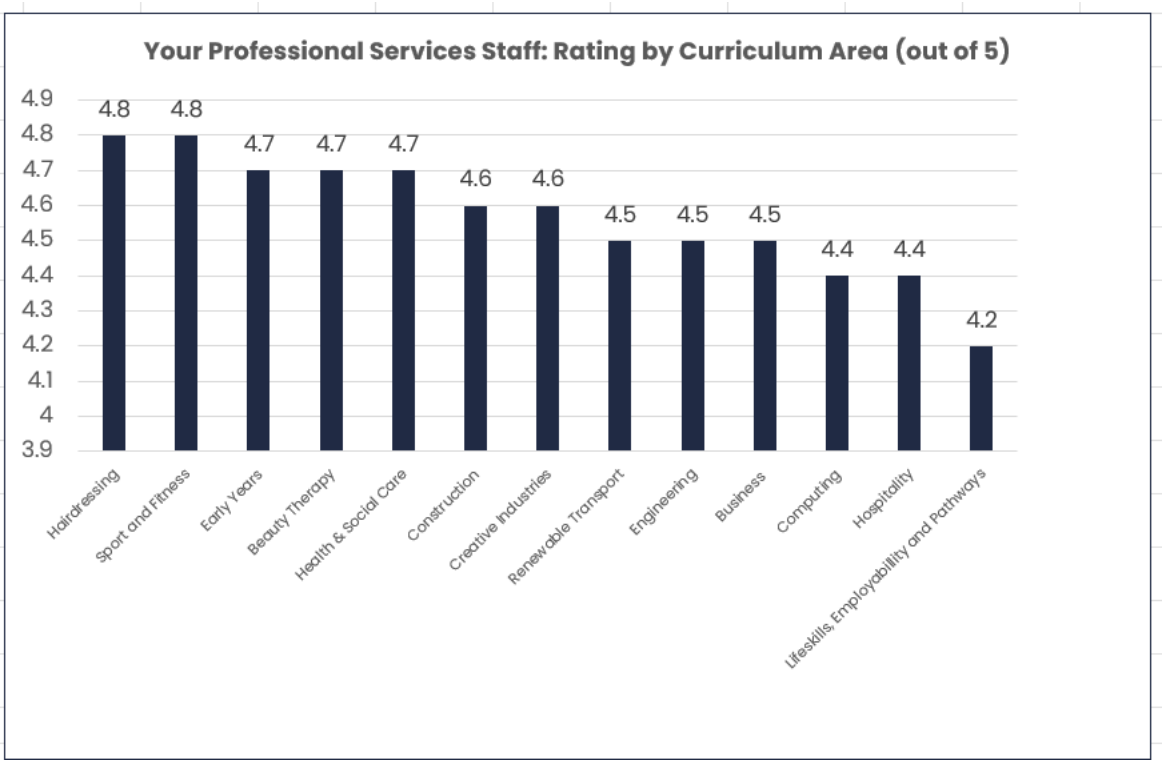


The majority of comments noted that curriculum staff were approachable and supportive. A selection of individual comments from the Your Curriculum Staff question are:

- All of my lecturers are easy to approach and talk to when needed.
- I feel comfortable around everyone and feel supported. I know I can ask for help if I am struggling or don't understand something.
- Yes all good I've messaged several asking questions and had responses, it's been easy to communicate.
- They are all really supportive and try to explain things by simplifying their language in order for everyone to understand boosting inclusivity.
- My lecturer is helpful which I appreciate because she's always happy to help and explain anything in further detail. I feel supported by all the staff members.

Question 7 – Your Professional Services Staff

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

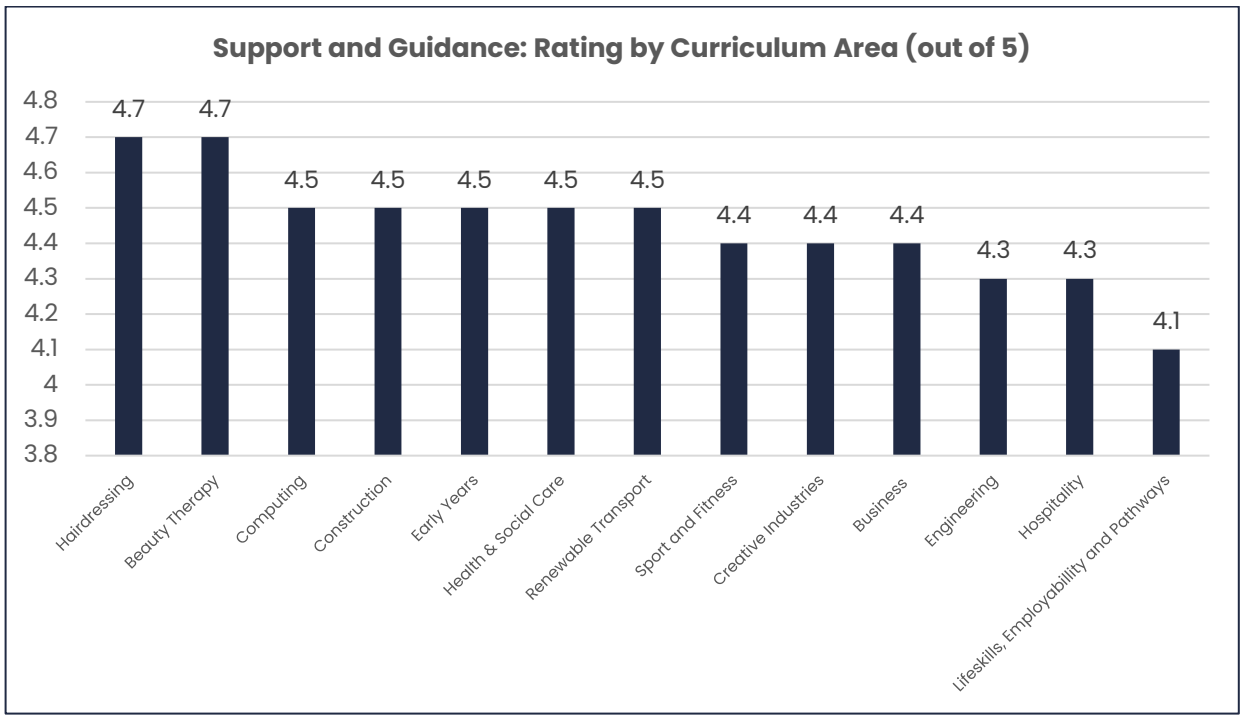


The majority of comments referred to support staff being helpful, supportive and approachable. A selection of individual comments from the Your Support Staff question are:

- I feel really supported and heard, they are very approachable and professional.
- Professional Services Staff make me feel very supported and make sure I know I have people to talk to if I'm struggling with anything.
- Extra support staff have been a massive help and they are always kind and ready to listen.
- I have good support when I have needed it. Everyone I have spoken to has been helpful and explained things to me.
- I requested additional support and this was easy to do, and supportive to me.

Question 8 – Support and Guidance

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



The majority of comments referred to our support services as being really effective and our application process being straightforward. A selection of individual comments from the Support and Guidance question are:

- I think they are quite effective and it's nice to get regular updates through emails within a few weeks advance.
- Specialised professional services & student advisors have enhanced my overall student experience.
- Yes all have been great! I especially like the WhatsApp communication.
- I have found the support and guidance helpful throughout my student experience. The enrolment and other processes were clear, and I felt supported when I needed help. The support has made my experience as a student more positive.
- Very straight forward and easy, I enrolled easily and I felt support throughout the process and knew where to go if I had any concerns.

Question 9 – Barriers for learning

Students were asked – Is there anything practical that could make it difficult for you to attend, participate or continue with your course? The Barrier for learning categories and responses are shown below:

Barrier	Number of responses	%
Childcare	50	10.4%
Travel	279	58.0%
Digital Access	45	9.4%
Funding	107	22.2%
Total number of responses	481	

Question 10 – Course selection

Based on what you know now, do you feel you are on the right course and at the right level?

- 1184 (98.6%) indicated 'Yes'
- 26 (2.1%) of students indicated 'No'

Students were asked if anything was different from what they expected.

For the students who indicated they were on the wrong course level, 5 students advised that a higher level would be less repetitive and more challenging, and the remaining students were happy with their choice (1), had since changed their mind on their course of study (1) and were unsure of current course but will continue with their studies (2). For the students who indicated they were on the wrong course level, 17 provided no further comment.

Question 11 – "One thing"

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

A total of 380 students provided a 'Yes' response to this question, although 282 indicated 'Yes' but did not provide a comment. Feedback from 10 students indicated they had either no suggested improvements, were unsure at this point in

time or their college experience had been positive so far. There were 85 comments logged, noting specific areas where we could do better. These are free text responses which have been examined for key themes.

Session	26-27	25-26	24-25	23-24	22-23
Number of comments received	85	319	310	359	217

The themes are comparable to the previous sessions, and a summary of the most common themes is provided below:

Theme	26-27	25-26	24-25	23-24	22-23
Catering provision, choice and pricing	9.4%	15.1%	21.9%	25.6%	26.7%
Curriculum	51.8%	42.3%	50.2%	43.7%	34.1%
Estates	8.2%	12.2%	5.1%	10.6%	13.4%
Digital Services	4.7%	4.7%	3.5%	6.1%	4.6%
Support/Funding	3.5%	2.2%	2.3%	2.8%	4.1%
Transport	14.1%	15.4%	6.8%	4.5%	7.4%
On campus activities	7.1%	6.0%	9.3%	6.1%	9.7%
Other	1.2%	2.2%	1.0%	0.6%	0.0%

There has been a substantial decrease in the number of comments (-234) submitted in relation to 'one thing we could do better' in comparison to last session.

A large quantity of the "One thing" comments provided positive feedback and were not related to a particular theme. A sample are provided below:

- Better food options
- Food options in canteen are repetitive on specific days
- Fix the printer issue please, other than that all good.
- More signage on where classrooms are, for example at the start of a hallway there could be a sign saying all of the room numbers down that hallway, (rooms 1-30) for an example
- More than one pool table
- Get more activities to do, more than one pool table.
- Make transport to and from college more accessible to more students especially those from outwith Dumfries

'One thing' comments relating to **curriculum areas** are comparable to the previous sessions and a summary of the most common themes is provided below:

Theme	26-27	25-26	24-25	23-24	22-23
Number of curriculum related comments	44	135	156	157	74
Course content/management	47.7%	46.7%	51.9%	42%	59.5%
Hybrid learning	6.8%	14.1%	14.7%	10.8%	21.6%
Rooms/tools/facilities	31.8%	20.0%	14.4%	23.6%	6.8%
Start times/breaks	0.0%	12.6%	10.3%	17.8%	9.5%
Support	13.6%	6.7%	8.3%	5.7%	2.7%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0%	0%

Feedback from curriculum and professional services managers will be gathered as part of the College You Said We Did process.

Overall Curriculum Comparison ratings Questions 1 to 8

Curriculum Area	Overall Satisfaction (out of 5)	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8
Hairdressing	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.7
Beauty Therapy	4.7	4.8	4.6	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.7
Health & Social Care	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.5
Sport and Fitness	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.8	4.4
Construction	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.6	4.5
Early Years	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.8	4.7	4.5
Renewable Transport	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.4	4.7	4.5	4.5
Business	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.8	4.5	4.4.
Computing	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.7	4.4	4.5
Creative Industries	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.6	4.4
Engineering	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.3
Hospitality	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.3
Lifeskills Employability and Pathways	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.6	4.2	4.1

Overall Curriculum Comparison – Participation versus Overall Satisfaction

Curriculum Area	Participation (%)	Particpation (Number)	Overall Satisfaction (out of 5)
Computing	100%	71	4.5
Business	100%	62	4.5
Hospitality	88%	35	4.4
Lifeskills, Employabillity and Pathways	77%	54	4.4
Creative Industries	77%	102	4.5
Health & Social Care	76%	134	4.7
Sport and Fitness	74%	81	4.7
Construction	71%	208	4.6
Early Years/Childcare	71%	162	4.6
Engineering	69%	167	4.5
Beauty Therapy	65%	54	4.7
Renewable Transport	65%	48	4.6
Hairdressing	41%	32	4.8

Your Induction

Additional questions relating to Induction were included in the 26-27 survey.

Question 1 - Did you attend your College Induction?

Attended Induction – Both Campuses	Number of responses	%
Yes	971	80.2%
No	239	19.8%

Attended Induction – Dumfries	Number of responses	%
Yes	859	79.6%
No	220	20.4%

Attended Induction – Stranraer	Number of responses	%
Yes	112	85.5%
No	19	19.0%

Question 2 - Following your Induction, do you know where to find important College information? Students were asked to select all that applied:

Area	Number of responses	% of Induction attendees
Student Advisors	746	76.8%
Student Funding	534	55.0%
Admissions	464	47.8%
Student Association	580	59.7%
Educational Support	502	51.7%
Wellbeing support or counselling	473	48.7%
Active Campus	457	47.1%
I'm not sure to contact	134	13.8%

Question 3 - If you needed support, which of the following services would you know to access? Students were asked to select all that applied:

Area	Number of responses	% of Induction attendees
Student Portal	782	80.5%
Interactive Student Guide	309	31.8%
Student Charter	228	23.5%
College Website	643	66.2%
Skills Development Scotland	422	43.5%
I'm not sure how to find these	100	10.3%

Question 4 – During your course induction, were you introduced to the following? Students were asked to select all that applied:

Area	Number of responses	% of Induction attendees
Your lecturers and curriculum team	871	89.7%
Your Personal Tutor and Tutorial Time	721	74.3%
Your timetable	788	81.2%
Teaching rooms and facilities	777	80.0%
Your course structure and expectations	758	78.1%
Assessment and feedback	629	64.8%
Academic honesty and related policies	618	63.6%
Opportunities to get to know other students	658	67.8%

Question 5 – *Students were asked – Is there anything you wish had been explained better during your Induction?*

A total of 37 students provided a response to this question. A selection of the individual comments covered various themes which included:

- information on assessments
- information on placement
- ID cards being available
- Information on timetables

The Performance Team
October 2026