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**Issues paper**

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This report is for information

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This report provides an overview of the results from the sixth annual National Student Survey carried out in 2010 and a five-year time series of the overall scores for the higher education sector. It provides details of the satisfaction scores split by student and course characteristics.

# National Student Survey

## Findings and trends 2006 to 2010

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# National Student Survey

## Findings and trends 2006 to 2010

To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions Heads of HEFCE-funded further education colleges Heads of universities in Northern Ireland
Of interest to those responsible for	Quality assurance and enhancement, Student services, Planning
Reference	2011/11
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## Executive summary

### Purpose

1. This report provides an overview of the results from the sixth annual National Student Survey (NSS) carried out in 2010 and a five-year time series, between 2006 and 2010, of the overall scores for the higher education (HE) sector.
2. It follows on from 'National Student Survey: Findings and trends 2006 to 2009' (HEFCE 2010/18)<sup>1</sup> and provides details of the satisfaction scores split by student and course characteristics. As with the previous document, it is intended to be a descriptive analysis of the data and does not attempt complex analysis of the effects that student, course and institutional characteristics have on the NSS results.

### Key points

3. The NSS has been running annually since 2005, and during this time the coverage of the survey has widened and developed. The report considers three main populations: the 'overall population', which contains all students invited to complete the NSS, the 'full-time core population' and the 'part-time core population', which contain only those groups of students who have been invited to complete the survey in the last five years. More detail on these populations is in paragraphs 33-36.

### Overall population

4. For the 2010 NSS, we compared the satisfaction scores of various groups of students with those reported for the overall population (the 'global score'). Respondents studying in Northern Ireland and Scotland were significantly<sup>2</sup> more satisfied than the global score in the NSS

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<sup>1</sup> All HEFCE publications are available at [www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs).

<sup>2</sup> The term 'significant' in this publication denotes statistical significance. Further details on when we consider a difference to be statistically significant can be found in paragraph 41.

categories of questions on Organisation and management, Learning resources and Personal development, but were significantly less satisfied with Assessment and feedback.

5. Respondents studying at further education colleges (FECs) showed significantly different satisfaction profiles to the global scores. Chiefly, they were more satisfied with Assessment and feedback and less satisfied with Organisation and management and Learning resources.

6. Further to the analysis carried out in HEFCE 2010/18, data on part-time respondents have been split into those on distance learning courses and those on other part-time courses. Both categories of part-time respondents were more satisfied than the global score for questions on Assessment and feedback, and both were less satisfied regarding Personal development. However, they differed in opinion for the areas Academic support and Organisation and management: those on part-time distance learning courses were more satisfied than the global score, and other part-time respondents were less satisfied.

7. NHS-funded students showed significantly different satisfaction profiles to non-NHS funded students. The two question categories with the largest differences were Organisation and management, where NHS-funded students were less satisfied, and Personal development, where NHS-funded students were more satisfied.

8. The overall population satisfaction scores were also split by institution in order to consider the variation in scores for each category of question within the sector. The category with the largest range in satisfaction scores was Overall satisfaction, while the category with the smallest range was Teaching and learning.

### **Full-time and part-time core populations**

9. The five-year time series, from 2006 to 2010, for respondents studying full-time and on part-time courses that had not been completed using distance learning showed an increase in satisfaction for all question categories. Those on part-time distance learning courses also saw an increase in satisfaction for most question categories but a decrease for Personal development (from 74 to 73 per cent) and Overall satisfaction (from 94 to 92 per cent).

### **Full-time core population**

10. For the 2010 full-time core population, significant differences were observed between male and female students. The greatest differences in satisfaction were found in the question categories of Academic support and Learning resources, where female students were less satisfied than male students. Further, the 2006 to 2010 time series showed that differences in Overall satisfaction had decreased over time and that in 2010 female respondents were less satisfied than male respondents for the first time since 2006.

11. Students in the age groups 21-24 and over 25 were significantly less satisfied than students aged under 21, in the categories of Academic support, Organisation and management, Learning resources and Overall satisfaction. However, students aged over 25 were significantly more satisfied than the global score in the question categories Assessment and feedback and Teaching and learning.

12. Between 2006 and 2010, overall satisfaction for respondents in both the 21-24 and over-25 age groups was consistently lower than the global score.

13. The NSS 2010 showed that disabled students were significantly less satisfied than the global scores in all question categories; the categories with the largest difference in satisfaction were Organisation and management and Overall satisfaction. Overall satisfaction for disabled respondents between 2006 and 2010 was consistently lower than the global score.

14. For Teaching and learning, students from the EU and international students were significantly less satisfied than the global score. For five of the other six question categories international students were significantly more satisfied than the global score.
15. Considering overall satisfaction between 2006 and 2010, international respondents have seen a smooth transition from a difference of -3 per cent, in 2006, to +2 per cent, in 2010, while EU students have remained less satisfied than the global score during this period.
16. We restricted our analysis of ethnicity to UK-domiciled respondents, because the profile of respondents who were not UK-domiciled differed so markedly to that of UK-domiciled respondents that to combine the results may have masked differences in satisfaction between ethnic groups. In 2010, satisfaction profiles varied significantly for UK-domiciled students depending on their ethnic background. Differences in satisfaction score were significant in two categories: Teaching and learning and Academic support. In both cases students from a White ethnic background were significantly more satisfied than the global score, and students from all other ethnic backgrounds were significantly less satisfied than the global score.
17. Looking at the 2006 to 2010 time series for Overall satisfaction, the difference in satisfaction from the global score has reduced for most UK-domiciled ethnic groups; however this is not the case for respondents with Mixed or Unknown ethnicity.
18. The students with the highest satisfaction score were those undertaking historical and philosophical studies or physical studies; Overall satisfaction (question 22) was 89 per cent. Those studying creative arts and design gave the lowest score, at 72 per cent. However, care should be exercised not to compare one subject with another; these data have been included to complete the five-year time series.
19. Comparing the 2006 NSS with the 2010 survey, nine out of the 21 subject areas saw little change in satisfaction. The biggest positive change was found in subjects with relatively few respondents, and the biggest negative change was found for respondents doing Initial Teacher Training, at a fall of 3 per cent.
20. Students entering HE with qualifications other than A-level or equivalent (either Level 3 or below, or Level 4 or above) were significantly less satisfied than the global score in five of the seven question categories. Between 2006 and 2010, respondents with Level 4 or above qualifications have seen a year on year improvement in Overall satisfaction, while the other qualification groups have remained stable.
21. For Assessment and feedback, respondents studying for qualifications other than a first degree were more satisfied than those studying for a first degree, and less satisfied with Teaching and learning, Organisation and management and Overall satisfaction. The finding for Overall satisfaction was consistent between 2006 and 2010.
22. Respondents aged under 21 and from low young participation areas (quintile 1 in the POLAR classification) were significantly more satisfied than the global score for Assessment and feedback, while those from high participation areas (quintile 5 in the POLAR classification) were significantly less satisfied. In contrast, for Organisation and management those from low participation areas were significantly less satisfied and those from high participation areas were significantly more satisfied.
23. Those aged 21 and over from areas with high adult HE-qualified rates (AHEQ 5) tended to be less satisfied than respondents from areas with low adult HE-qualified rates (AHEQ 1) across all question categories. Significant differences between the satisfaction of AHEQ 1 and AHEQ 5

were observed in the question categories Assessment and feedback, Academic support and Personal development.

**Action required**

24. No action is required in response to this document.

## Introduction

25. This report provides an overview of the results from the sixth annual National Student Survey (NSS) carried out in 2010 and a five-year time series, between 2006 and 2010, of the overall scores for the higher education sector. We intend to publish these sector-wide data annually, providing details of the satisfaction scores split by student and course characteristics as well as looking at a time series of results.

26. This report follows on from 'National Student Survey: Findings and trends 2006 to 2009' (HEFCE 2010/18)<sup>3</sup> and is intended to be a descriptive analysis of the data; it does not attempt complex analysis of the effects that student, course and institutional characteristics have on the NSS results.

## Methodology

27. The NSS comprises 22 core questions (see Annex A) which can be grouped into seven categories for the purposes of analysis:

- a. Teaching and learning (Q1 – Q4).
- b. Assessment and feedback (Q5 – Q9).
- c. Academic support (Q10 – Q12).
- d. Organisation and management (Q13 – Q15).
- e. Learning resources (Q16 – Q18).
- f. Personal development (Q19 – Q21).
- g. Overall satisfaction (Q22).

28. Respondents choose from six responses to each question:

- a. Definitely agree.
- b. Mostly agree.
- c. Neither agree nor disagree.
- d. Mostly disagree.
- e. Definitely disagree.
- f. Not applicable.

29. We report on the percentage of respondents that are satisfied; in other words the sum of Definitely agree and Mostly agree respondents, divided by the total number of respondents (defined as the sum of Definitely agree to Definitely disagree respondents) for that question or category of question.

30. In 2007 six questions were added to the survey, specifically for students on National Health Service (NHS)-funded courses (see Annex A). Analysis of responses to these questions can be found in Annex B.

31. The NSS has been running annually since 2005. During this time the coverage of the survey has widened and developed. A summary of the NSS population history can be found in Annex C.

32. The NSS has been carried out by Ipsos MORI on our behalf since 2005. In the first instance, the company contacts students by e-mail and asks them to complete the survey online; this is followed up with a reminder SMS text. If students do not respond online they are sent a paper copy of the survey. If this is not returned they are contacted by phone. This mixed

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<sup>3</sup> This document can be viewed at [www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2010/10\\_18/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2010/10_18/).

methodology approach has produced overall response rates consistently greater than 50 per cent, despite the changing NSS population of students discussed in paragraph 31.

## Population

33. To provide year on year comparisons, the report considers three populations: the 'overall population', the 'full-time core population' and the 'part-time core population'.

34. The overall population contains all students invited to complete the 2010 NSS. The full-time and part-time core populations contain only those groups of students who have been invited to complete the survey for the last five years<sup>4</sup>, which allows a five-year time series to be considered.

35. To enable a distinction between the satisfaction scores calculated from the total population used and the satisfaction scores calculated from a subgroup of that population, the report uses the term 'global score' for the satisfaction score of the total population<sup>5</sup>.

36. Table 1 shows the number of respondents for each of the populations used in the report.

**Table 1 Comparison of overall population and core populations for 2006 to 2010**

NSS year	Number of respondents		
	Overall population	Full-time core population	Part-time core population
2006	157,120	140,125	12,370
2007	187,935	152,755	13,655
2008	219,405	170,600	14,460
2009	223,530	165,030	14,130
2010	252,450	177,400	25,175

Notes: All table entries are rounded to the nearest five for publication. The NSS sampling algorithm was changed in 2010 for part-time students to allow more students on continuous learning courses to be included in the sample population, see Annex C for details.

## Overview of results

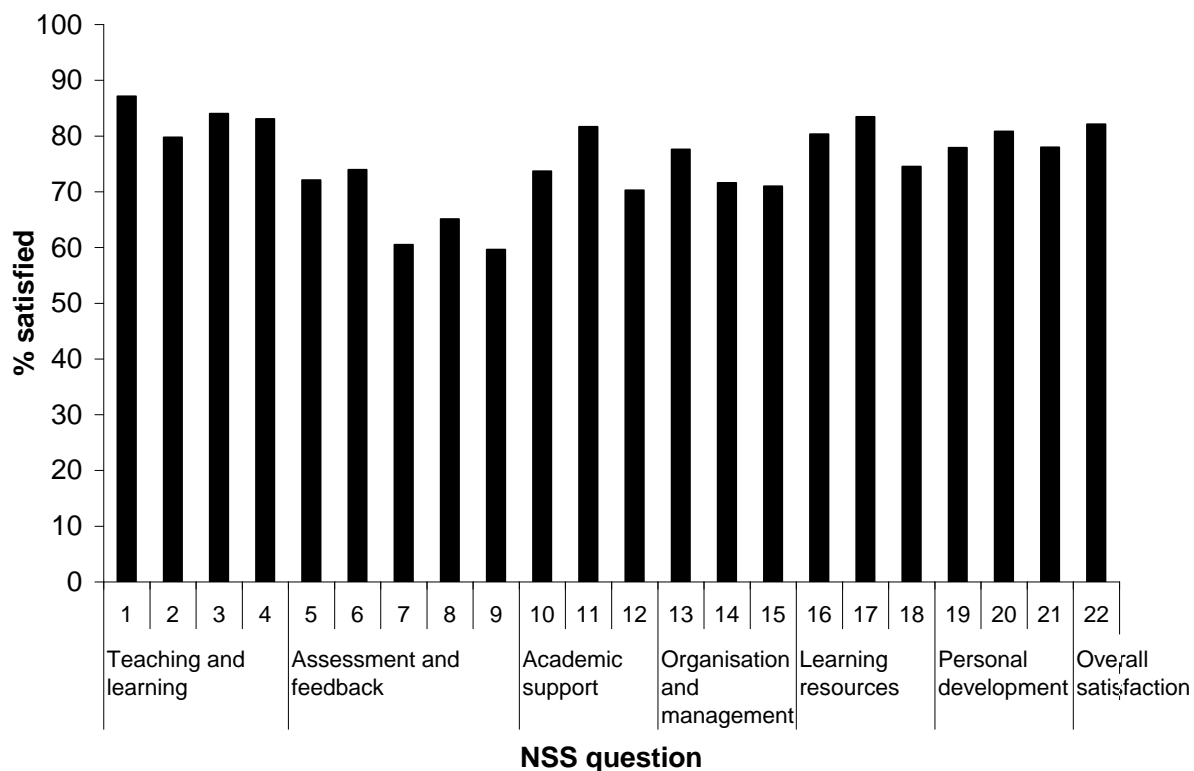
37. Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents who were 'satisfied' (see paragraph 29) for each of the 22 core questions (see Annex A) in the 2010 NSS. From the 400,050 students surveyed there were 252,450 respondents; giving an overall response rate of 63 per cent.

<sup>4</sup> Students studying at English, Northern Irish and Welsh HEIs, excluding those with NHS funding.

<sup>5</sup> References to the total population can be the overall population, full-time core population or the part-time core population depending on the context; in each case the global score refers to the satisfaction of all the respondents included in the relevant population.

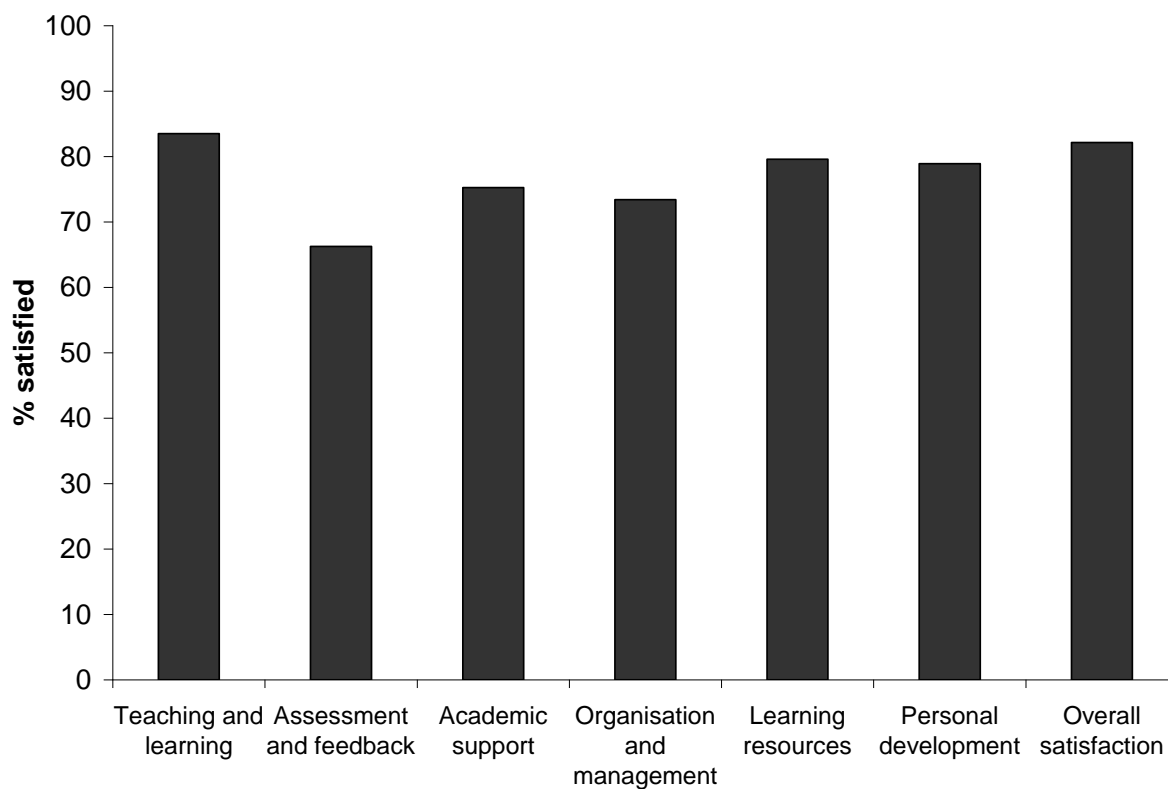


**Figure 1 Global scores for 2010 NSS by question**



38. Figure 2 gives the global scores with the questions grouped into the seven categories listed in paragraph 27.

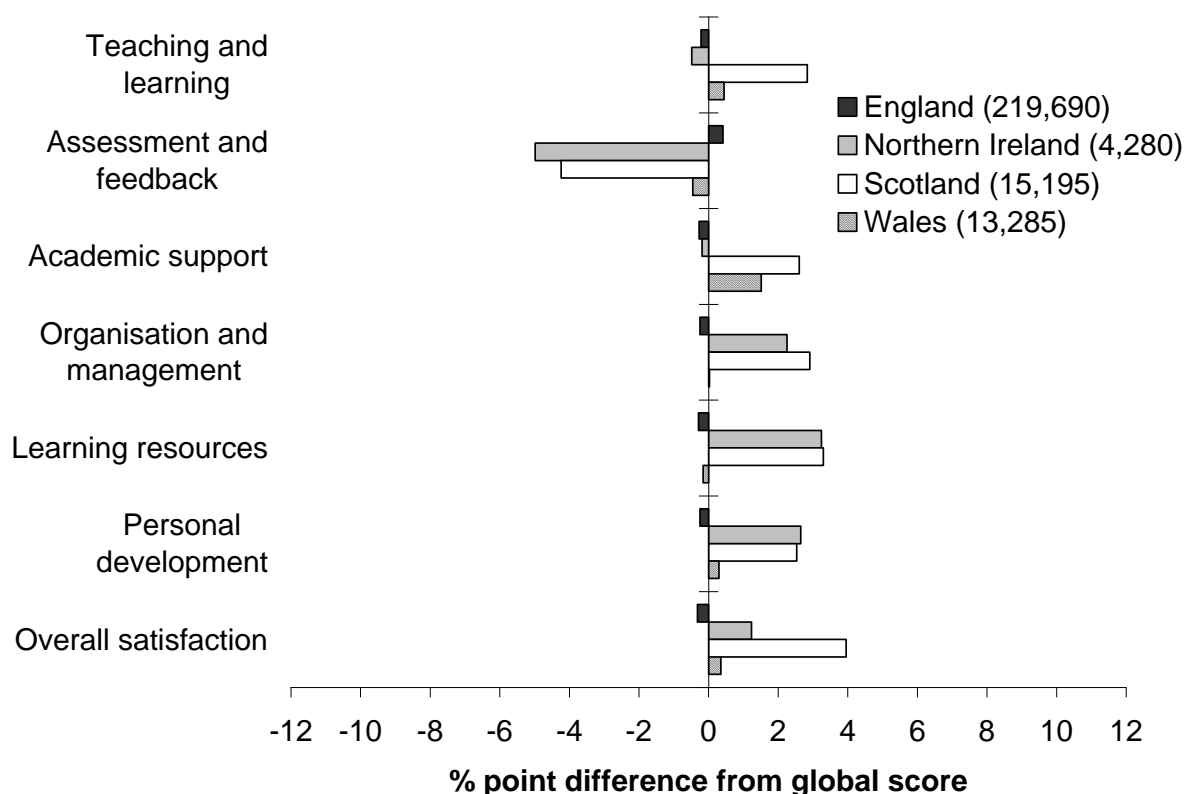
**Figure 2 Global scores for 2010 NSS by question category**



39. The analysis in this overview (paragraphs 40-47) uses the global scores given in Figures 1 and 2 as the baseline, and displays the difference from this by various characteristics. The number of respondents for each characteristic is given in the legend of each figure in brackets.

40. Figure 3 compares satisfaction by the country in which the teaching institution is located. For Teaching and learning, the global score was 83 per cent (see Figure 2). Figure 3 shows that for this question category respondents studying in England, Northern Ireland and Wales responded with a similar satisfaction score to the global score while those studying in Scotland<sup>6</sup> responded with a score three percentage points higher, resulting in a satisfaction score of 86 per cent.

**Figure 3 Difference in satisfaction from global score by country of teaching institution**



41. Throughout the report it can be hard to interpret what a difference from the global score means. The approximate confidence intervals for statistically significant results are:

- If the number of respondents is greater than 10,000 then a 1 per cent or greater difference in satisfaction is a statistically significant result.
- If the number of respondents is between 2,000 and 10,000 then a 2 per cent or greater difference in satisfaction is a statistically significant result.
- If the number of respondents is between 1,000 and 2,000 then a 3 per cent or greater difference in satisfaction is a statistically significant result.
- If the number of respondents is between 600 and 1,000 then a 4 per cent or greater difference in satisfaction is a statistically significant result.

However, the practical significance of any differences are left to the reader to understand and interpret.

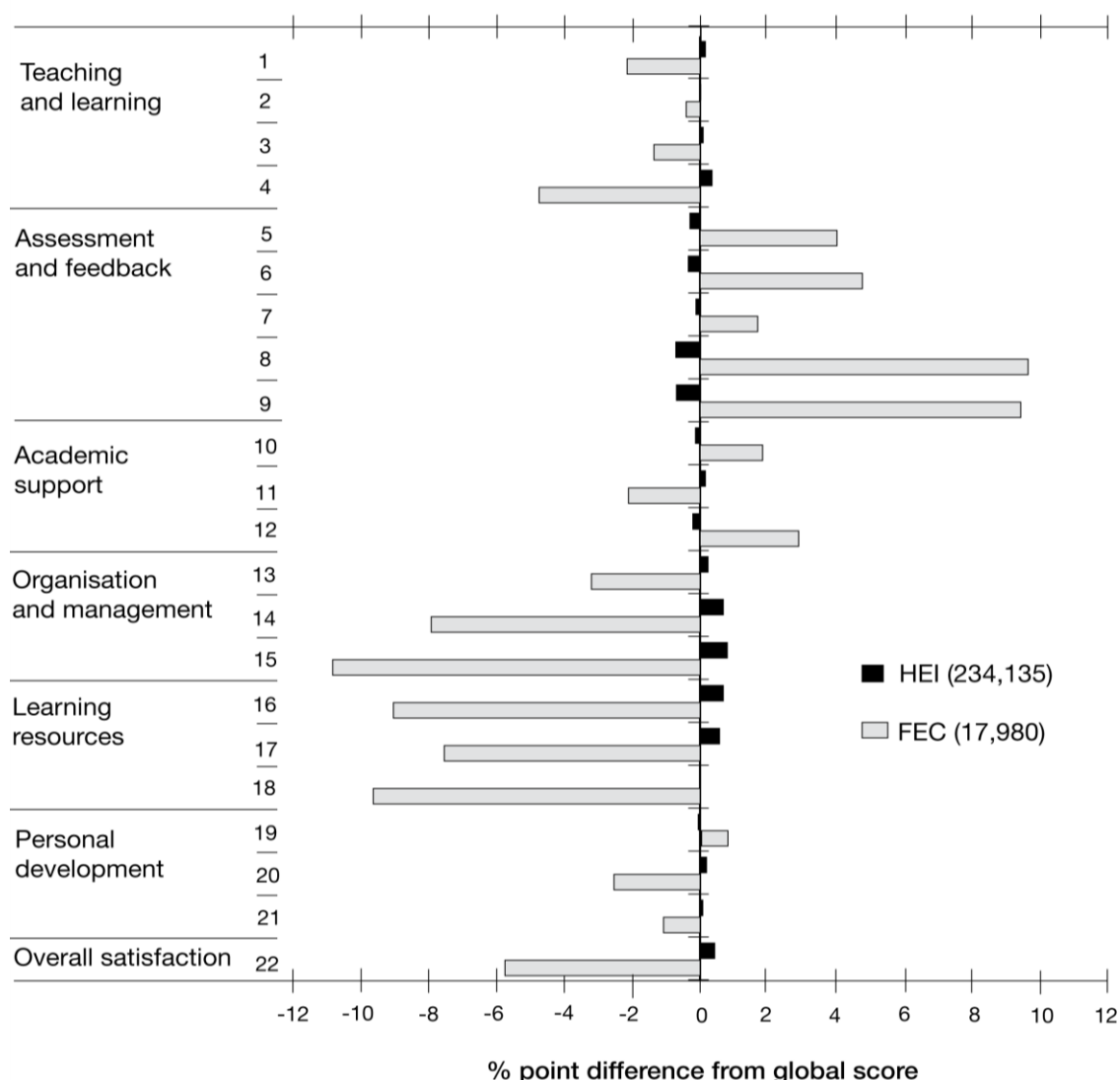
<sup>6</sup> Only 12 of the 19 publicly funded Scottish HEIs opted to participate in the 2009 NSS.

42. Therefore the result observed in paragraph 40 is statistically significant because more than 10,000 respondents studied in Scotland, and the difference in satisfaction for Teaching and learning was more than 1 per cent.

43. Figure 3 also shows that respondents studying in Northern Ireland or Scotland were significantly more satisfied than the global score in the question categories: Organisation and management; Learning resources and Personal development, but were significantly less satisfied with Assessment and feedback.

44. Figure 4 shows that the profile of satisfaction scores for respondents studying at FECs was significantly different to those studying at HEIs. The largest differences were observed for Assessment and feedback questions, where FEC students were more satisfied, and Learning resources and Organisation and management questions, where FEC students were less satisfied.

**Figure 4 Difference in satisfaction from global score by type of teaching institution**



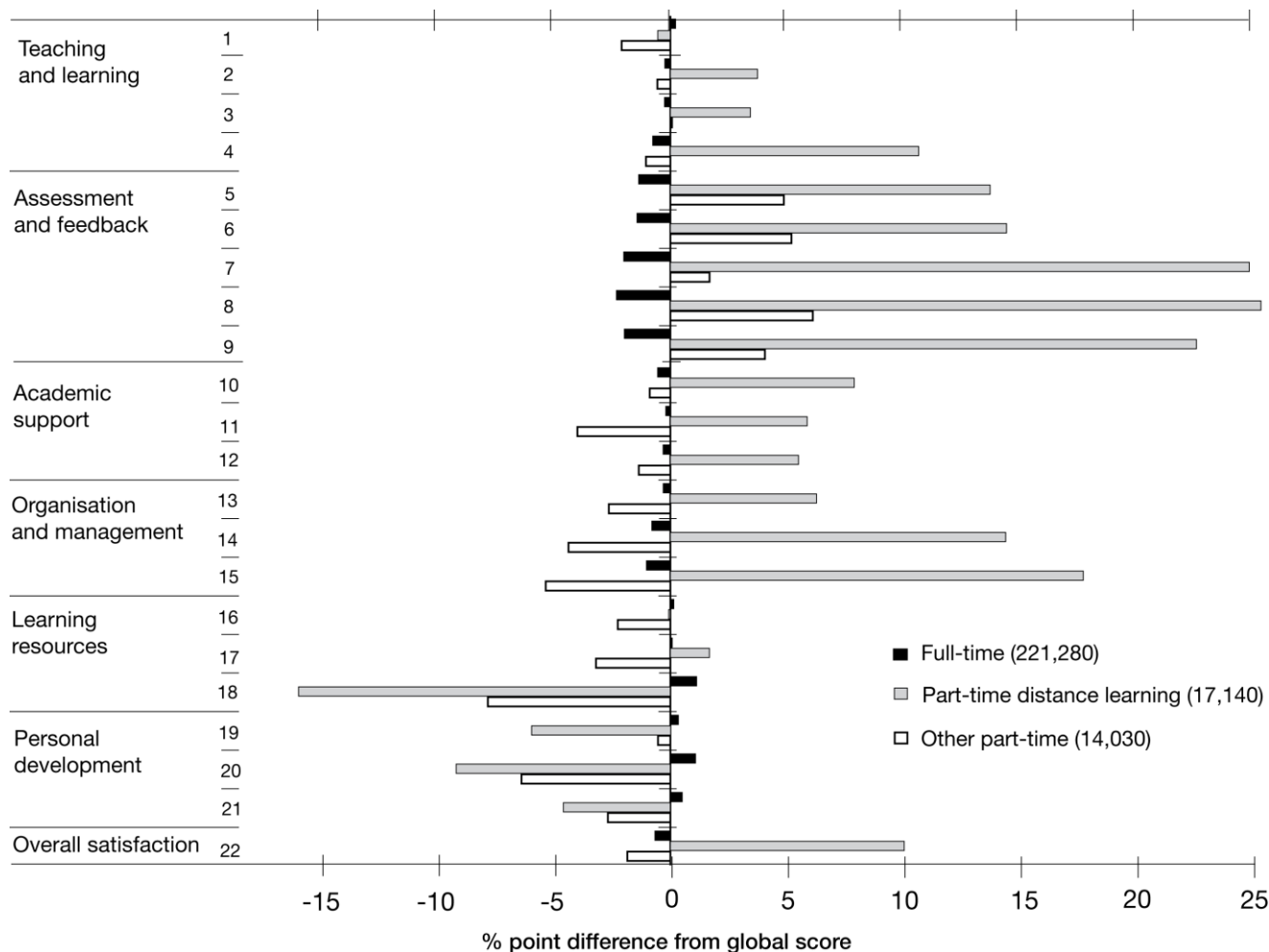
Notes: Some institutions have been classified as private universities and colleges rather than HEIs or FECs and have been grouped using the registering institution. Five hundred and fifty-five students attended institutions in this classification; 345 of these responded to the survey.

45. The HEFCE 2010/18 analysis considered part-time respondents as one mode of study, however part-time respondents have been split into those on distance learning courses and those on other part-time courses for this analysis. Figure 5 shows that the profile of satisfaction

scores for the three modes of study (including full-time) varies significantly from the global score despite the global score calculation being dominated by full-time respondents.

46. There are two question categories where both groups of part-time respondents agree they are: Assessment and feedback, where part-time respondents were more satisfied; and Personal development, where part-time respondents were less satisfied. The other question categories with large differences by mode of study were Academic support, Organisation and management and Overall satisfaction: in all cases part-time respondents on distance learning courses were more satisfied than students on both full-time and other part-time courses.

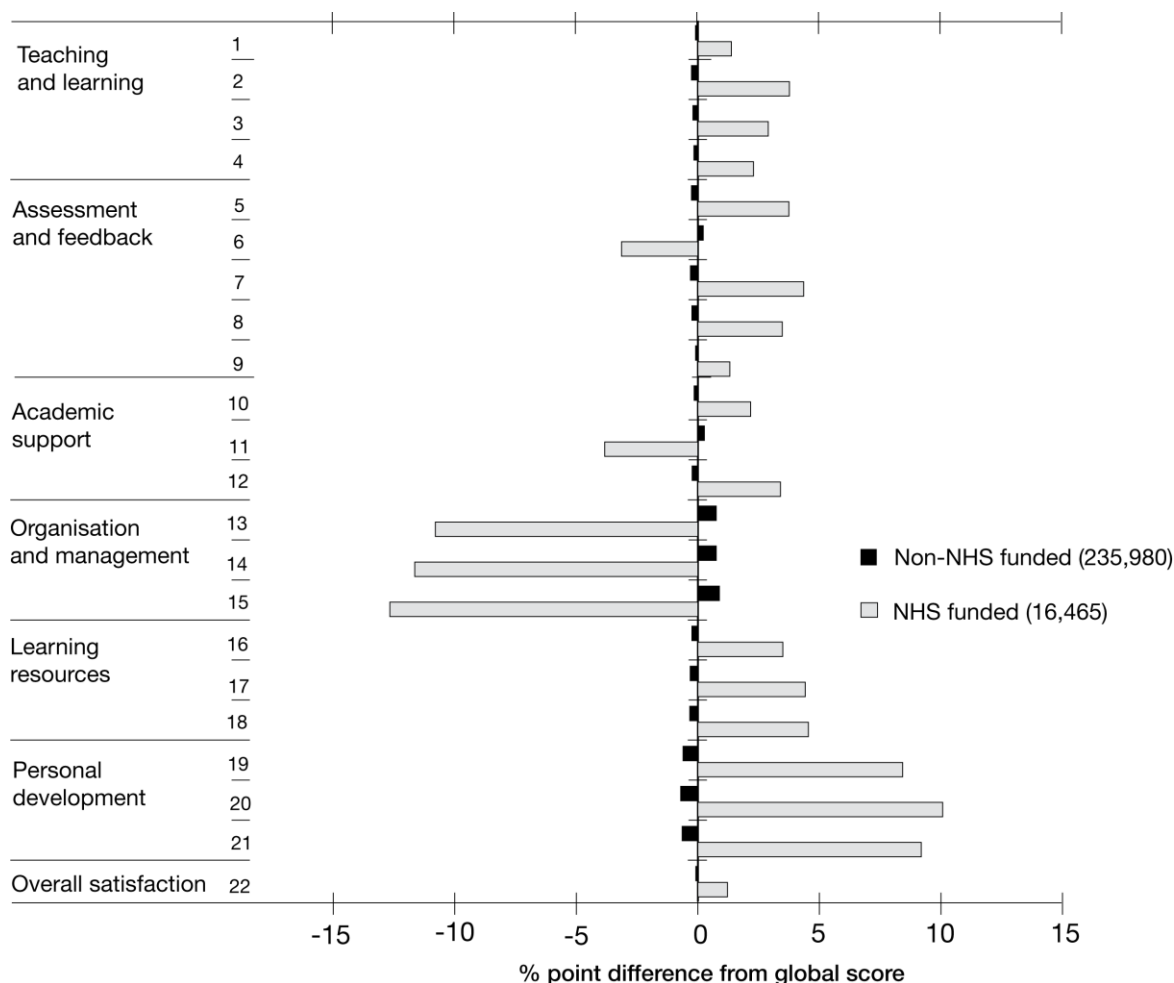
**Figure 5 Difference in satisfaction from global score by mode of study**



Note: The horizontal axis runs from -15 to 25 rather than -12 to 12.

47. Figure 6 shows that the profile of satisfaction scores for NHS-funded<sup>7</sup> students was significantly different to that of non-NHS funded students. The question categories with the largest differences were Organisation and management, where NHS-funded students were less satisfied, and Personal development, where NHS-funded students were more satisfied.

**Figure 6 Difference in satisfaction from global score by NHS-funded or non-NHS funded**



Note: The horizontal axis runs from -15 to 15 rather than -12 to 12.

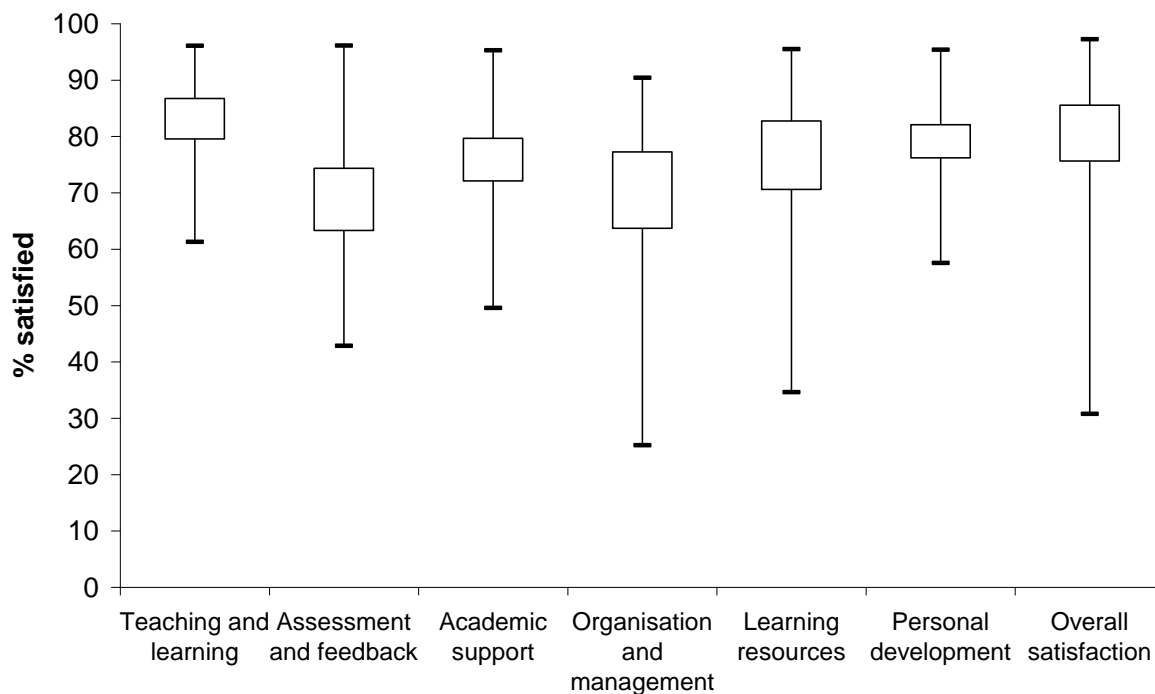
48. Figures 3 to 6 show much variation in the satisfaction score within the sector. Figure 7 shows the spread of institutional satisfaction scores (over 270 institutions met the publication threshold<sup>8</sup>) for each of the question categories. The box plots show the highest and lowest scores at its extremes; the box itself identifies the middle 50 per cent of institutional satisfaction scores.

<sup>7</sup> For the definition of NHS-funded students and further analysis by subject area see Annex B.

<sup>8</sup> The publication threshold for NSS results is at least 50 per cent response rate within an institution, with at least 23 students responding.

49. Figure 7 shows that within the sector there were institutions for all question categories where satisfaction was greater than 90 per cent. The question category with the largest range in satisfaction scores was Overall satisfaction, while the one with the smallest range was Teaching and learning.

**Figure 7 Box plots of institutional satisfaction scores by question category**



## Time series of results using a core population

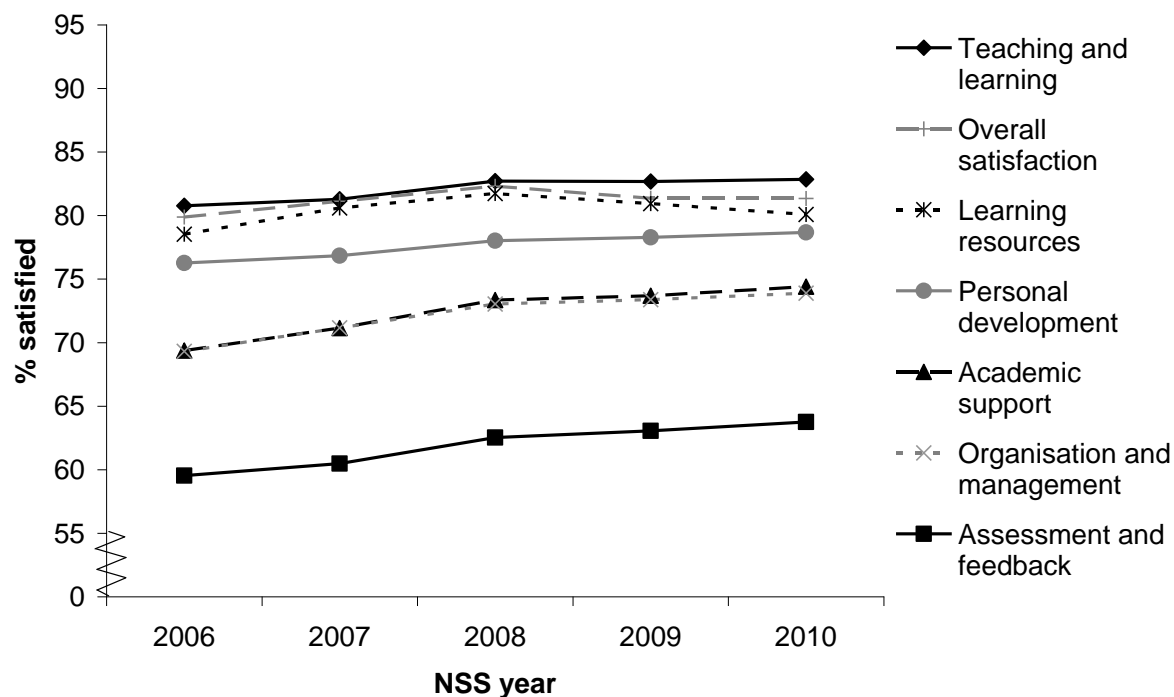
50. To make like-for-like comparisons between satisfaction scores over the five-year period 2006 to 2010, we considered the core student population that had been surveyed during that time. Such a population comprised respondents studying at English, Northern Irish and Welsh HEIs and excluded those with NHS funding<sup>9</sup>.

### Full-time core population

51. Figure 8 shows that, for full-time students, there was increased satisfaction between 2006 and 2010 for all categories of question. The biggest increases were in Academic support, Organisation and management and Assessment and feedback, while the smallest increase was in Overall satisfaction.

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the students included in the NSS population see Annex C.

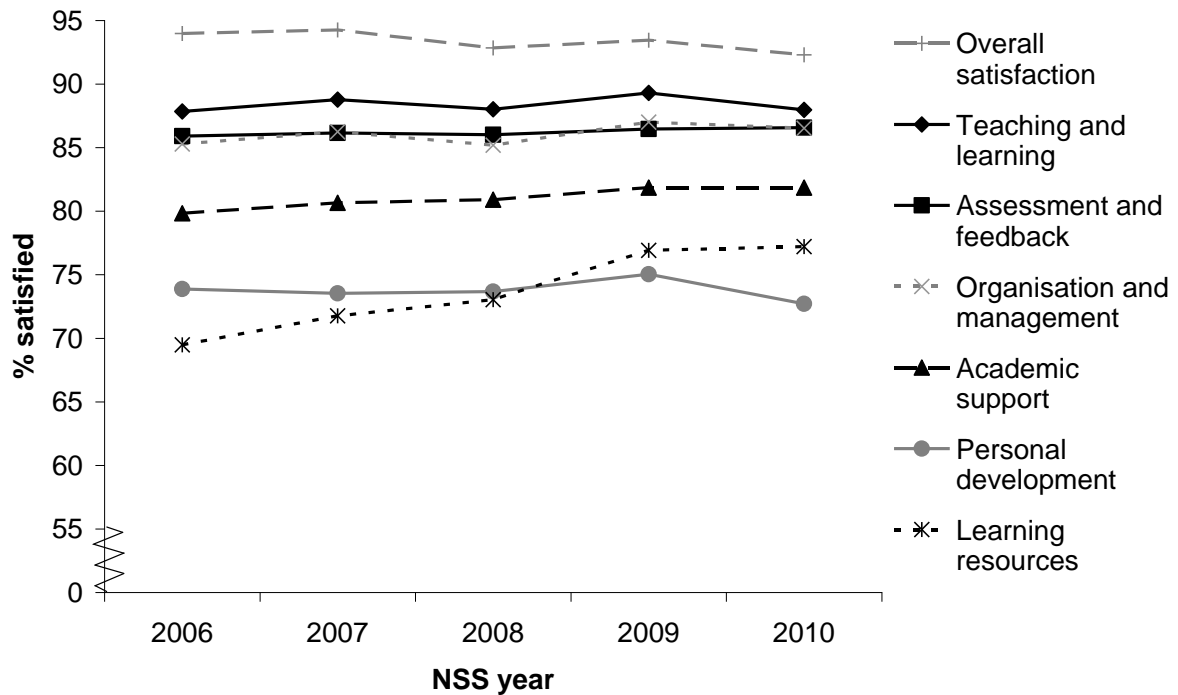
**Figure 8 Time series of core population satisfaction scores for full-time respondents**



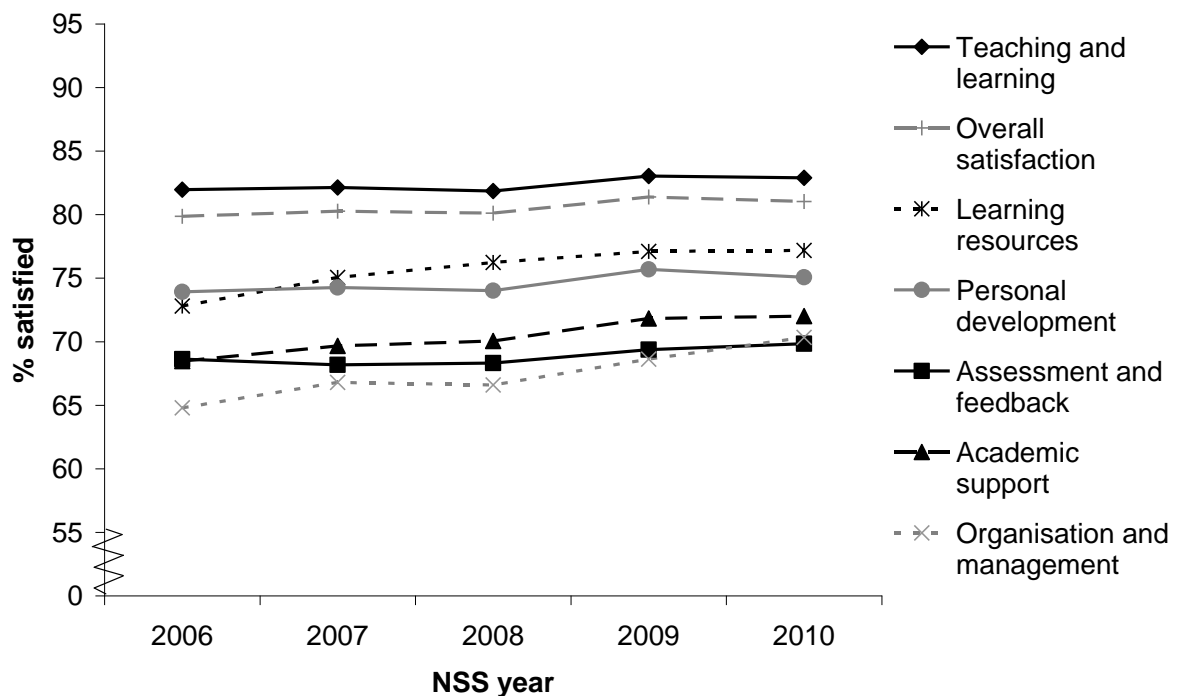
### Part-time core population

52. Figures 9 and 10 show the equivalent data for part-time distance learners and other part-time respondents. They show that the distance learners' satisfaction levels were spread over a wider range and that their Overall satisfaction has been consistently higher than that seen for the other part-time respondents. Further, the distance learner trends over the five-year period saw increased satisfaction levels in most question categories apart from overall satisfaction and personal development, while the trend for other part-time modes increased for all question categories between 2006 and 2010.

**Figure 9 Time series of core population satisfaction scores for part-time distance learners**



**Figure 10 Time series of core population satisfaction scores for other part-time respondents**



53. Comparing Figure 8 to Figure 10 shows that full-time and other part-time students were satisfied with question categories at similar rates to each other; however the Assessment and feedback scores were lower for full-time students than for part-time. Also, as noted in the previous paragraph, both the other part-time and the full-time respondents saw increasing satisfaction between 2006 and 2010 for all question categories.



## Satisfaction of full-time core population by particular characteristics

54. This section of the report uses the full-time core population. It analyses results from the 2010 NSS and then considers the five-year time series 2006 to 2010.

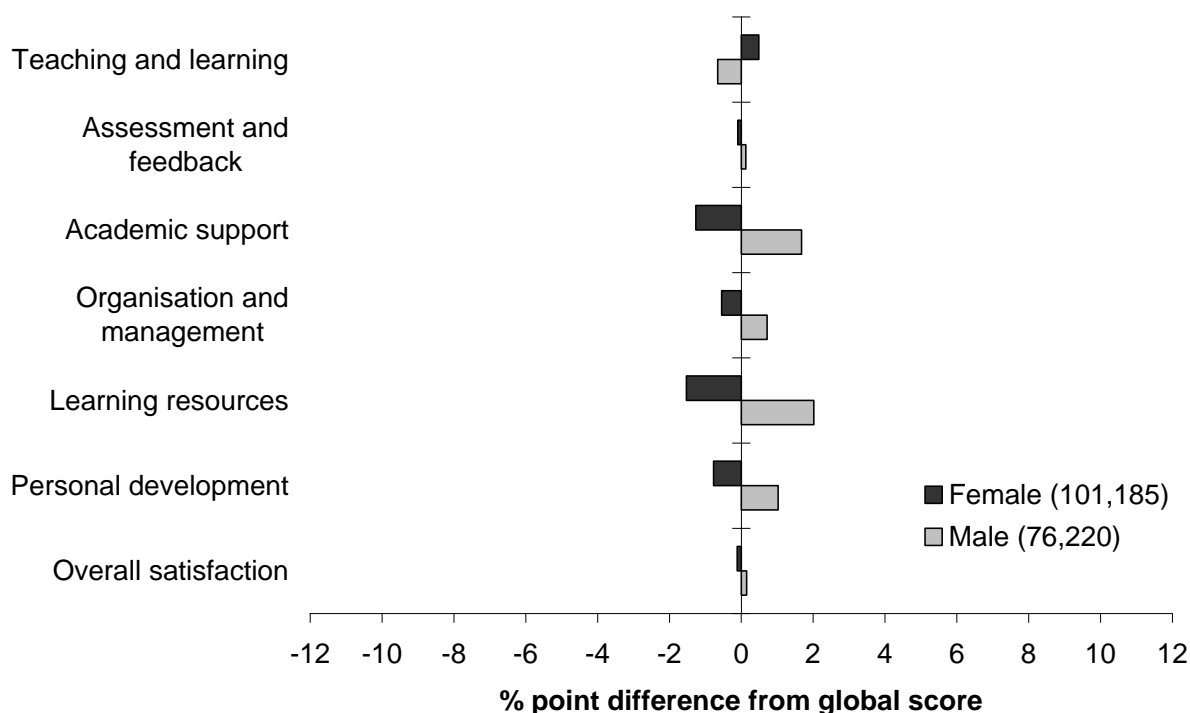
55. Paragraphs 56 to 80 compare the global scores, see Figure 8, to that of students grouped by particular characteristics. The characteristics considered are:

- a. Sex.
- b. Age group.
- c. Disability status.
- d. Domicile.
- e. Ethnicity (UK-domiciled).
- f. Subject area.
- g. Qualification on entry.
- h. Level of study.
- i. Local area participation in HE.

### Sex

56. While Overall satisfaction of male and female students was similar to the global score, significant differences were observed in other categories, most notably for Academic support and Learning resources (see Figure 11).

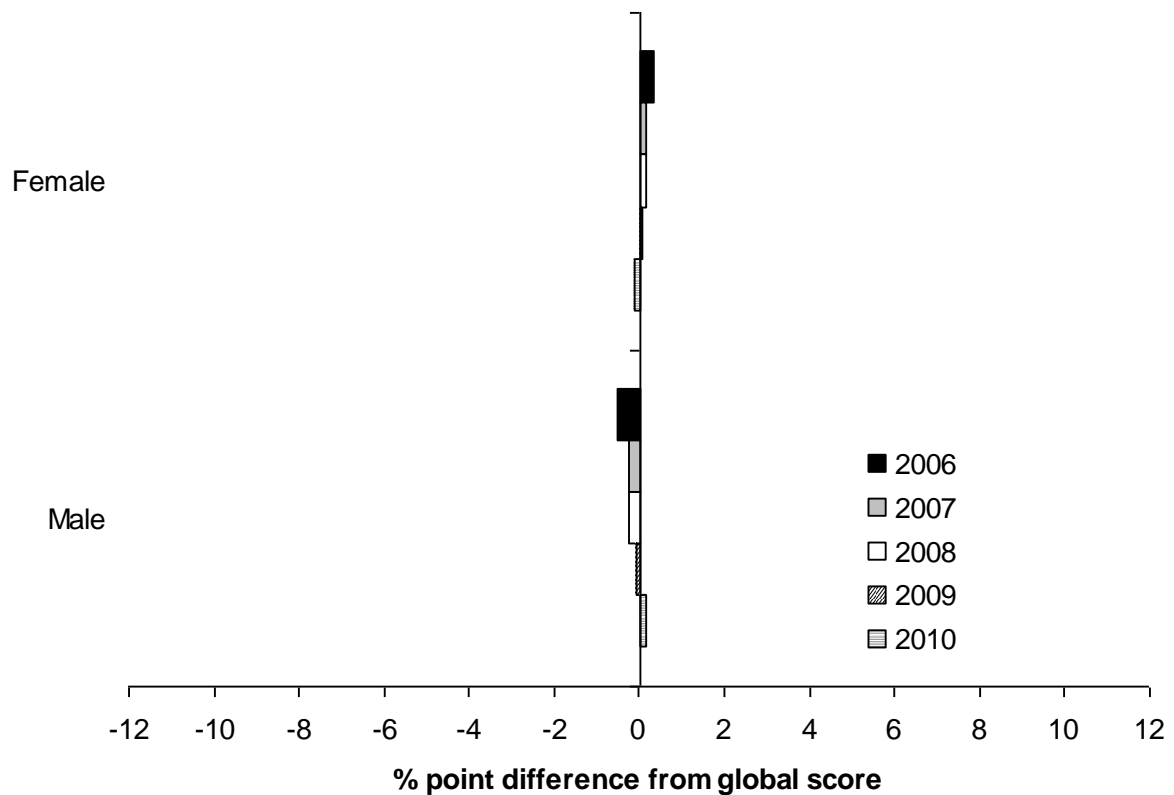
**Figure 11 Difference in satisfaction from global score by sex**



Note: Students recorded as indeterminate sex did not meet the NSS publication threshold of at least 50 per cent response rate and at least 23 students responding, therefore they are not included in this figure.

57. Figure 12 shows that over the five-year period 2006 to 2010 the difference in overall satisfaction between male and female respondents has decreased. Also, in 2010, female respondents were less satisfied than male respondents for the first time since 2006.

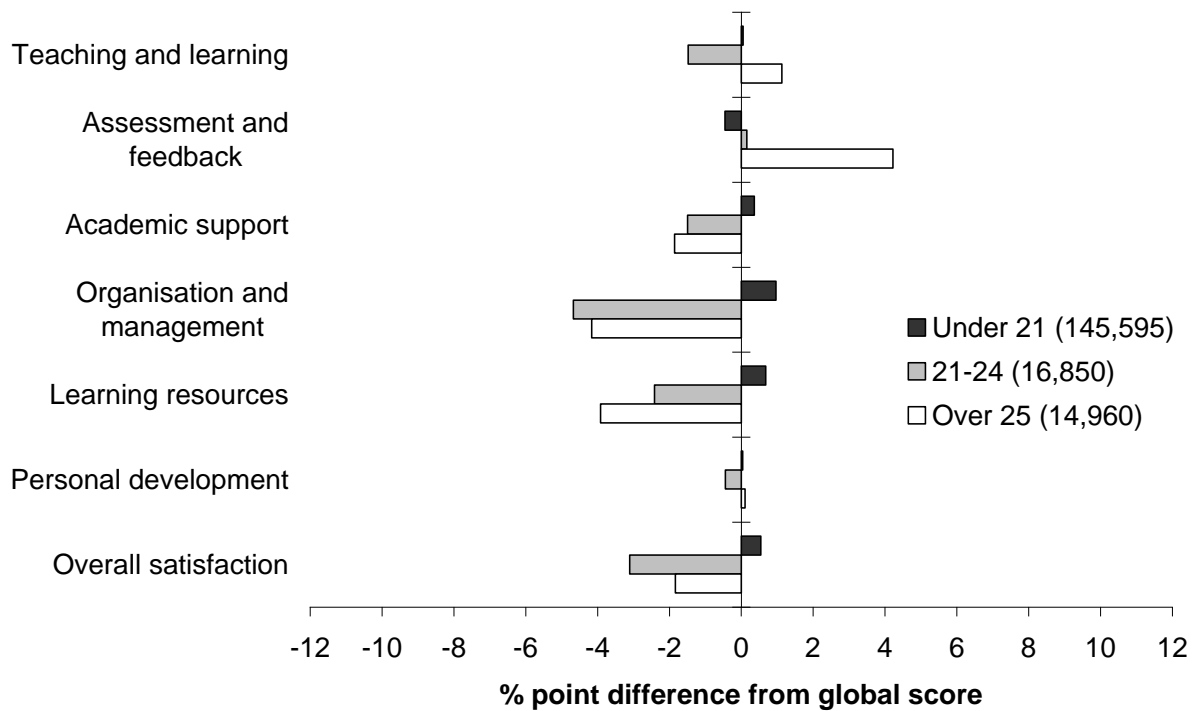
**Figure 12 Time series of difference in overall satisfaction from global score by sex**



### Age group

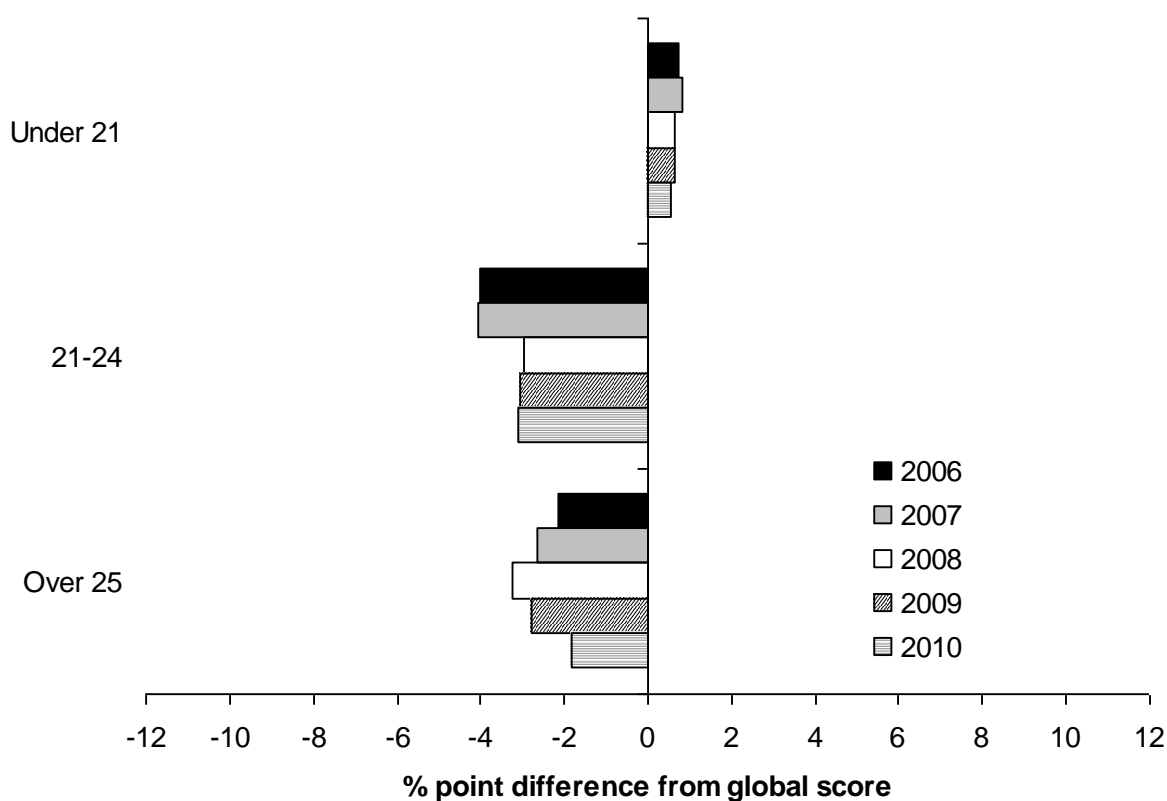
58. Figure 13 shows that students in the age groups 21-24 and over 25 were significantly less satisfied than students aged under 21, in the questions on Academic support, Organisation and management, Learning resources and Overall satisfaction. However, students aged over 25 were significantly more satisfied than the global score for the categories Assessment and feedback and Teaching and learning.

**Figure 13 Difference in satisfaction from global score by age group**



59. Figure 14 shows that overall satisfaction has consistently been low for respondents aged 21 to 24: between three and four percentage points lower than the global score. Respondents aged over 25 have also had lower scores than the global score but this difference increased from two to three percentage points between 2006 and 2009 and in 2010 decreased back to two percentage points below the global score.

**Figure 14 Time series of difference in overall satisfaction from global score by age group**

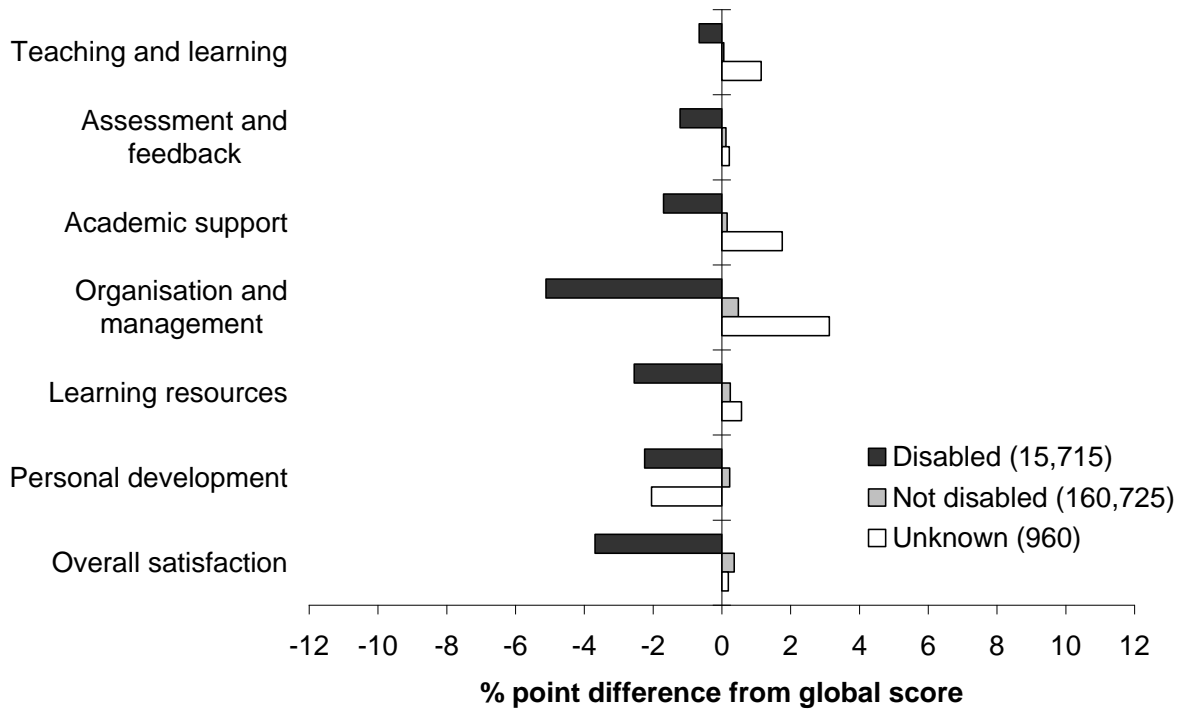


### **Disability status**

60. Disabled students were significantly less satisfied than the global scores in all question categories (see Figure 15). The question categories with the lowest satisfaction scores were Organisation and management and Assessment and feedback.

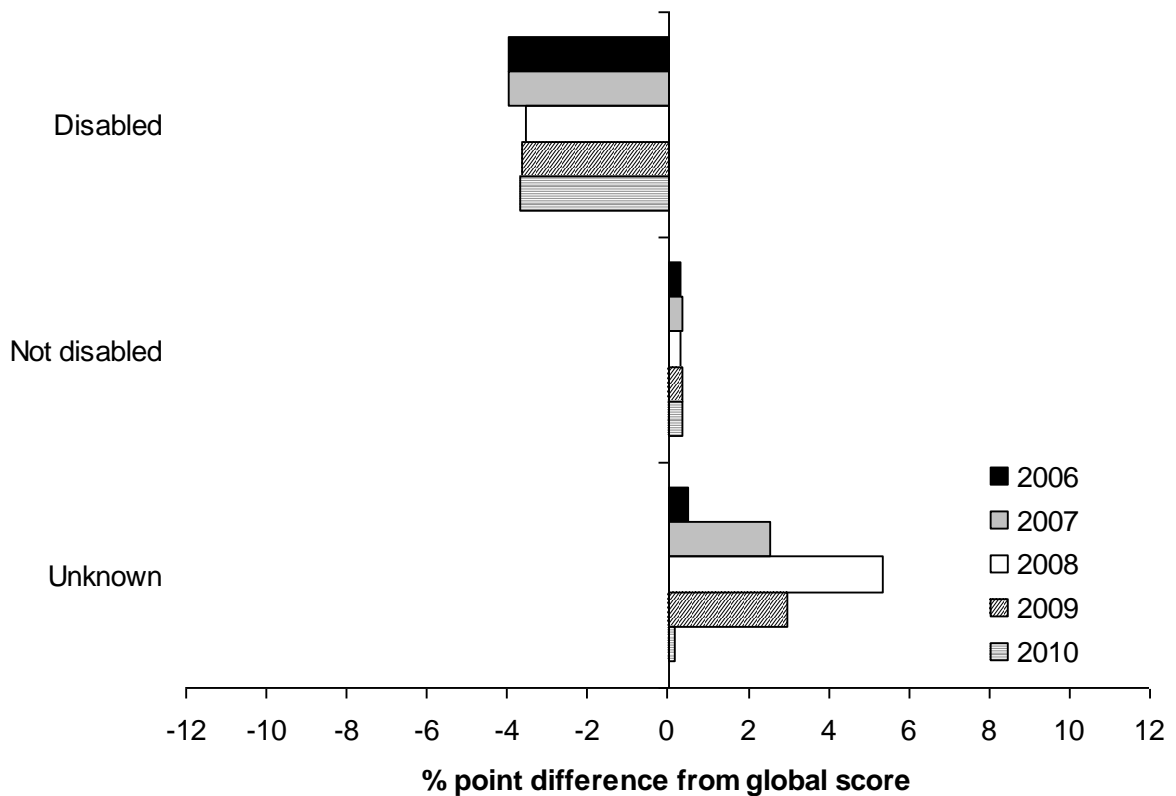
61. As this is a descriptive analysis (see paragraph 26), additional factors affecting satisfaction, such as institution, have not been accounted for. Since over 40 per cent of respondents with Unknown disability status were registered at just one institution, it is likely that satisfaction associated with this institution has distorted the true differences related to being in this group.

**Figure 15 Difference in satisfaction from global score by disability status**



62. Disabled respondents have consistently shown significantly less overall satisfaction than the global score between 2006 and 2010 (see Figure 16). The fluctuation in responses from those with unknown disability status is mostly driven by poor data quality from particular institutions in different years.

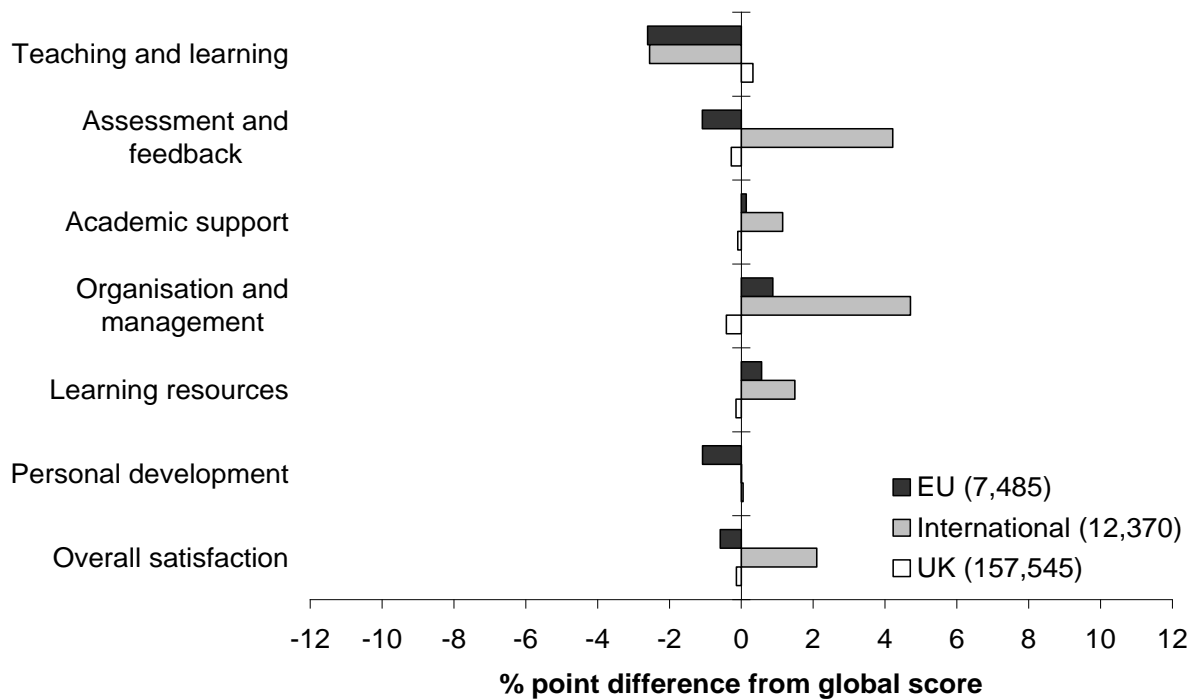
**Figure 16 Time series of difference in overall satisfaction from global score by disability status**



## Domicile

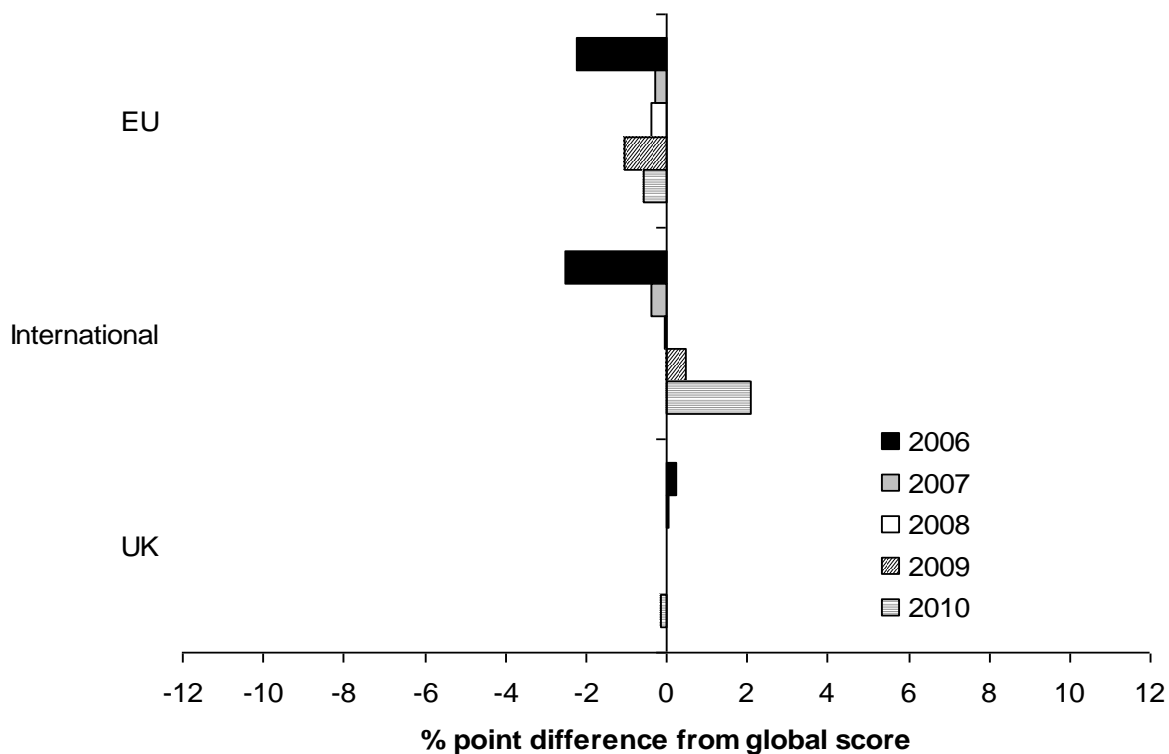
63. Students from the EU and international students were significantly less satisfied with Teaching and learning than students from the UK (see Figure 17). However, for five of the remaining six question categories international students were significantly more satisfied than the global score.

**Figure 17 Difference in satisfaction from global score by domicile**



64. Figure 18 shows that in 2006 both respondents domiciled in the EU and those domiciled internationally were around three percentage points less satisfied than the global score. However, between 2006 and 2010, international students saw a year on year improvement in their overall satisfaction score while EU students were more satisfied than in 2006, but still less satisfied than the UK and international respondents.

**Figure 18 Time series of difference in overall satisfaction from global score by domicile**

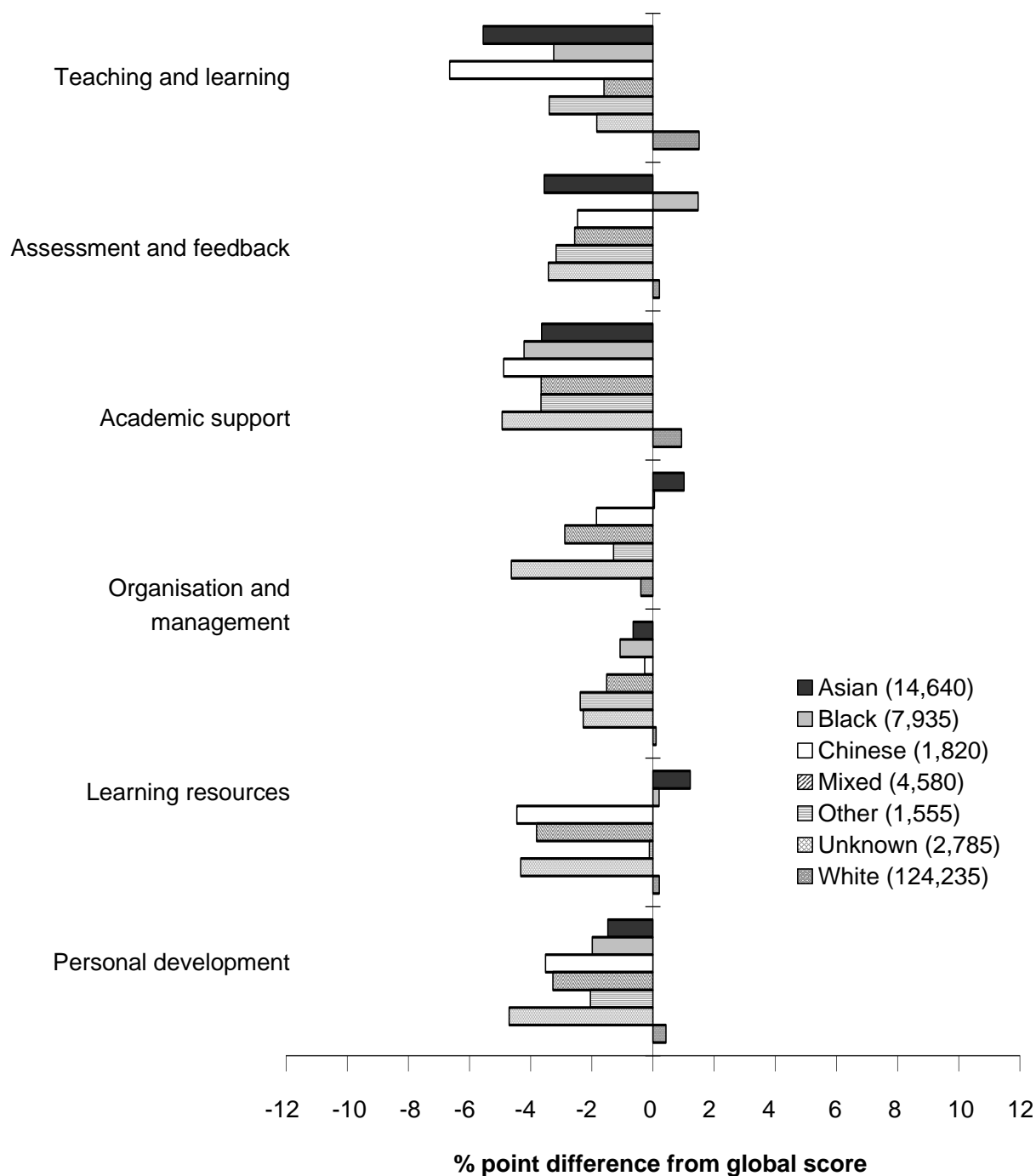


### Ethnicity (UK-domiciled)

65. When considering satisfaction by ethnicity the full-time core population was further reduced to focus on UK-domiciled full-time core respondents. This was done because EU-domiciled and international respondents had markedly different satisfaction profiles to UK-domiciled respondents (see Figures 17 and 18), so to combine the results may have masked differences in satisfaction between ethnic groups. We have not presented the results split by ethnicity for EU and international students as this resulted in small group sizes (less than 500) which would have needed greater than 5 per cent differences in satisfaction to be statistically significant.

66. Figure 19 shows that the satisfaction profiles varied significantly depending on students' ethnic background. In two categories all the differences in satisfaction score for respondents with known ethnicity were significant: Teaching and learning and Academic support. For these, students from a White ethnic background were significantly more satisfied than the global score, and students from all other ethnic backgrounds were significantly less satisfied than the global score.

**Figure 19 Difference in satisfaction from global score by ethnicity for UK-domiciled respondents**

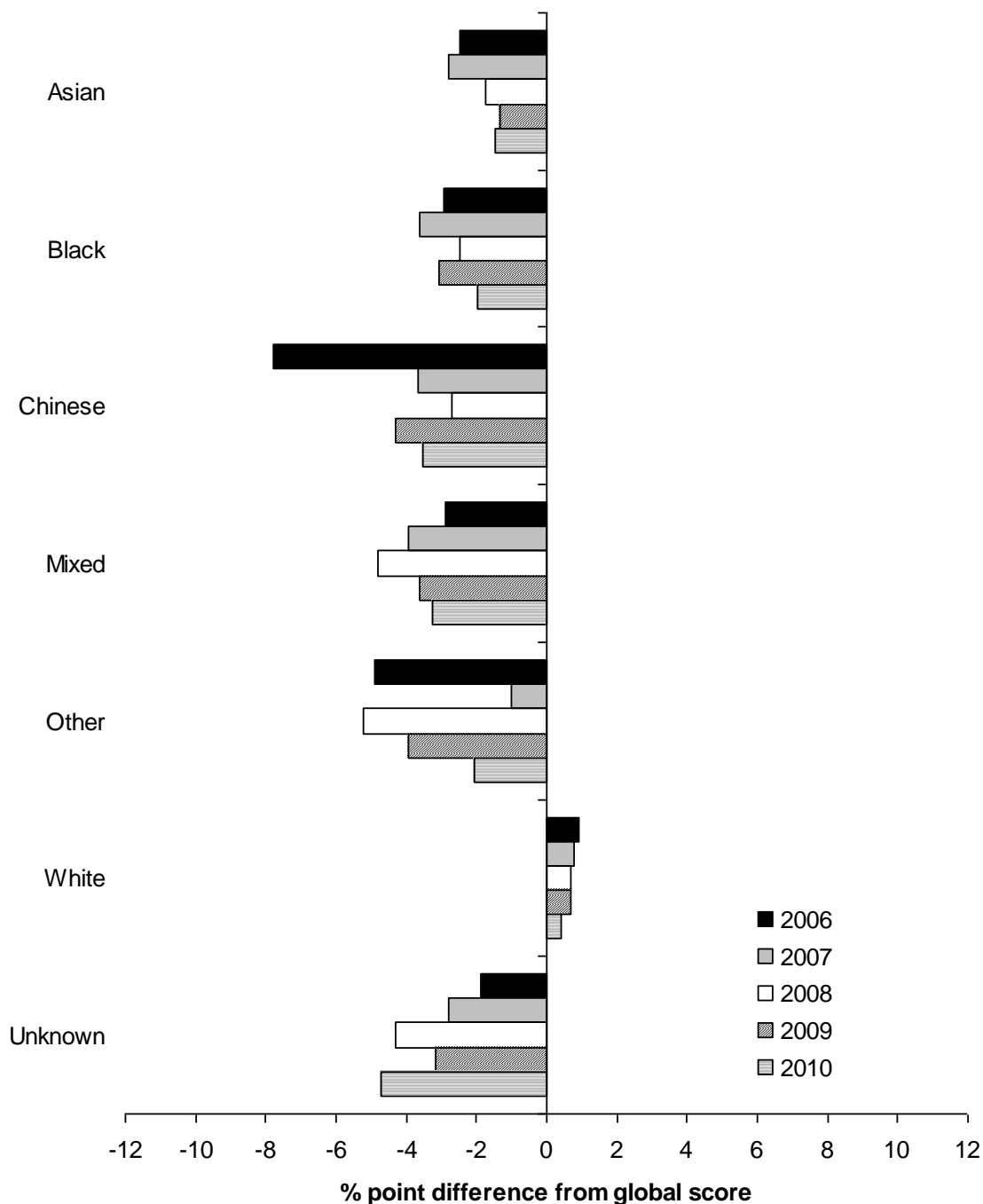


Note: The global score used here is the one calculated from the entire full-time core population.



67. Figure 20 shows that respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds have lower overall satisfaction than White respondents. However, over the last five years the difference in satisfaction from the global score has reduced for most ethnic groups, apart from respondents with Mixed ethnicity and Unknown ethnicity.

**Figure 20 Time series of difference in overall satisfaction from global score by ethnicity for UK-domiciled respondents**



Note: The global scores used here are calculated from the entire full-time core population in each year.

### Subject area

68. Table 2 shows the results for Overall satisfaction (question 22) split by subject area; results for all 22 questions split by subject area can be found in Annex D. As explained in paragraph 61,

differences in satisfaction score can be affected by interactions with other characteristics, so the differences between subject areas are likely to be affected by factors such as the varying student demographic profiles and course delivery methods present in each subject area. Thus care should be exercised with these data, including not making invalid inferences by comparing one subject with another; these data have been included to complete the five-year time series.

69. Respondents studying in the subject area historical and philosophical studies gave the highest satisfaction score for this question (89 per cent), while those studying creative arts and design gave the lowest score (72 per cent).

**Table 2 Satisfaction scores for Overall satisfaction by subject area**

	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Q22 - Overall satisfaction (%)</b>	<b>% point difference from global score</b>
Agriculture and related subjects	1,340	82	1
Architecture, Building and Planning	5,025	77	-4
Biological Sciences	18,975	85	4
Business and Administrative studies	22,940	80	-2
Combined	445	86	5
Computer Science	6,885	77	-4
Creative Arts and Design	22,745	72	-9
Education	3,865	81	0
Engineering and Technology	10,575	80	-1
Geographical Studies	4,230	88	7
Historical and Philosophical studies	8,985	89	7
Initial Teacher Training	5,205	80	-1
Languages	12,220	87	6
Law	8,805	85	4
Mass Communications and Documentation	6,050	73	-8
Mathematical Sciences	3,345	87	6
Medicine and Dentistry	5,340	83	2
Physical Sciences	5,390	88	7
Social studies	17,385	81	0
Subjects allied to Medicine	7,275	85	3
Veterinary Sciences	375	87	5
<b>Global score</b>	<b>177,400</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>0</b>

70. Table 3 compares the NSS 2006 results with the NSS 2010 results, nine out of the 21 subject areas saw little change in satisfaction. The biggest positive change in satisfaction was a change of 4 per cent in the subjects: Agriculture and related subjects; Combined subjects; and Veterinary Sciences. However, as the number of respondents was lowest in these subject areas we would expect the variation in satisfaction score to be higher than for other subject areas. The biggest negative change in satisfaction was a change of 3 per cent for respondents doing Initial Teacher Training.

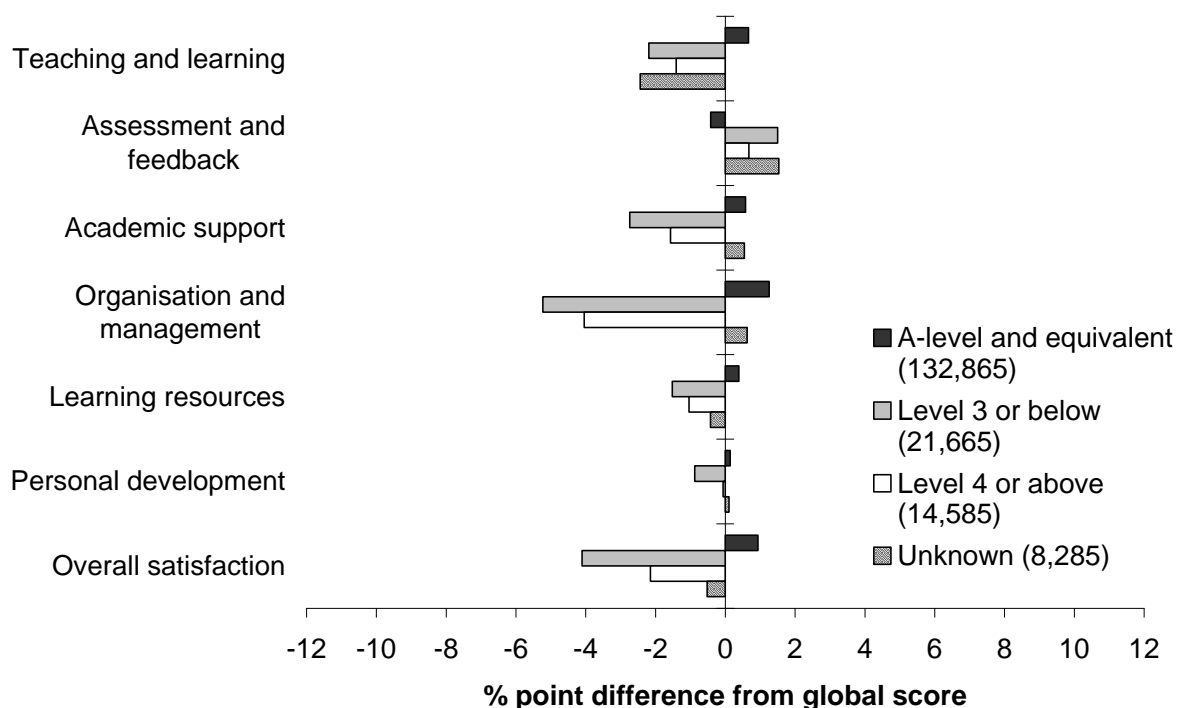
**Table 3 Comparison of difference in overall satisfaction from global score for NSS 2006 and NSS 2010 by subject area**

	NSS 2006		NSS 2010		% point difference change from 2006 to 2010
	Number of respondents	% point difference from global score	Number of respondents	% point difference from global score	
Agriculture and related subjects	1,555	-3	1,340	1	+4
Architecture, Building and Planning	2,645	-4	5,025	-4	0
Biological Sciences	15,345	3	18,975	4	0
Business and Administrative studies	17,130	-2	22,940	-2	0
Combined	610	1	445	5	+4
Computer Science	7,880	-6	6,885	-4	+1
Creative Arts and Design	17,345	-10	22,745	-9	0
Education	2,665	-1	3,865	0	+1
Engineering and Technology	7,275	-2	10,575	-1	+1
Geographical Studies	4,235	7	4,230	7	0
Historical and Philosophical studies	7,465	8	8,985	7	-1
Initial Teacher Training	4,740	2	5,205	-1	-3
Languages	10,220	6	12,220	6	-1
Law	7,575	5	8,805	4	-1
Mass Communications and Documentation	5,110	-7	6,050	-8	-1
Mathematical Sciences	2,085	4	3,345	6	+2
Medicine and Dentistry	3,130	2	5,340	2	0
Physical Sciences	3,780	7	5,390	7	0
Social studies	13,520	0	17,385	0	0
Subjects allied to Medicine	5,505	3	7,275	3	0
Veterinary Sciences	310	1	375	5	+4
<b>Global score</b>	<b>140,125</b>		<b>177,400</b>		

## Qualification on entry

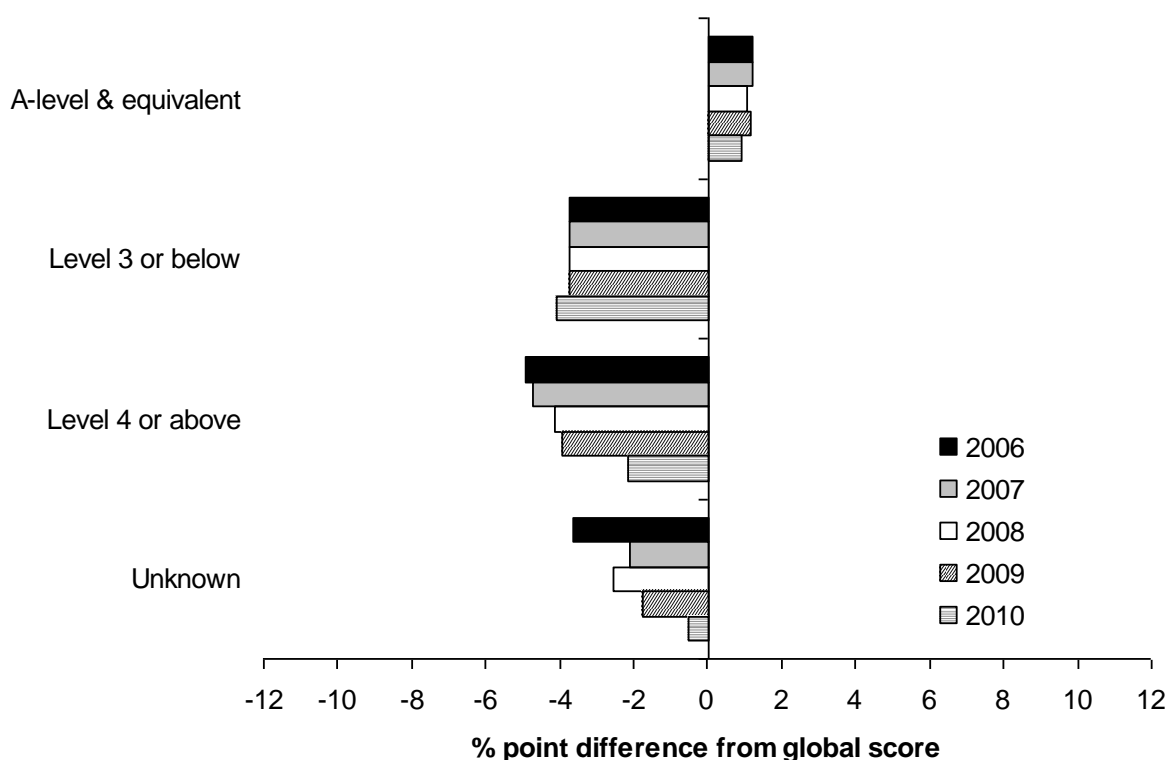
71. Three-quarters of respondents entered HE with A-level or equivalent qualifications: 75 per cent of the full-time core population. The other 25 per cent – students entering with other qualifications (either Level 3 or below or Level 4 or above) – were significantly less satisfied than the global score in five areas: Teaching and learning, Academic support, Organisation and management, Learning resources and Overall satisfaction (see Figure 21).

**Figure 21 Difference in satisfaction from global score by qualification on entry**



72. For both those respondents entering HE with A-level or equivalent and those with Level 3 or below qualifications Figure 22 shows that Overall satisfaction has remained stable for the last five years: around one percentage point higher and four percentage points lower than the global score respectively. Respondents with Level 4 or above qualifications have seen a year on year improvement in Overall satisfaction.

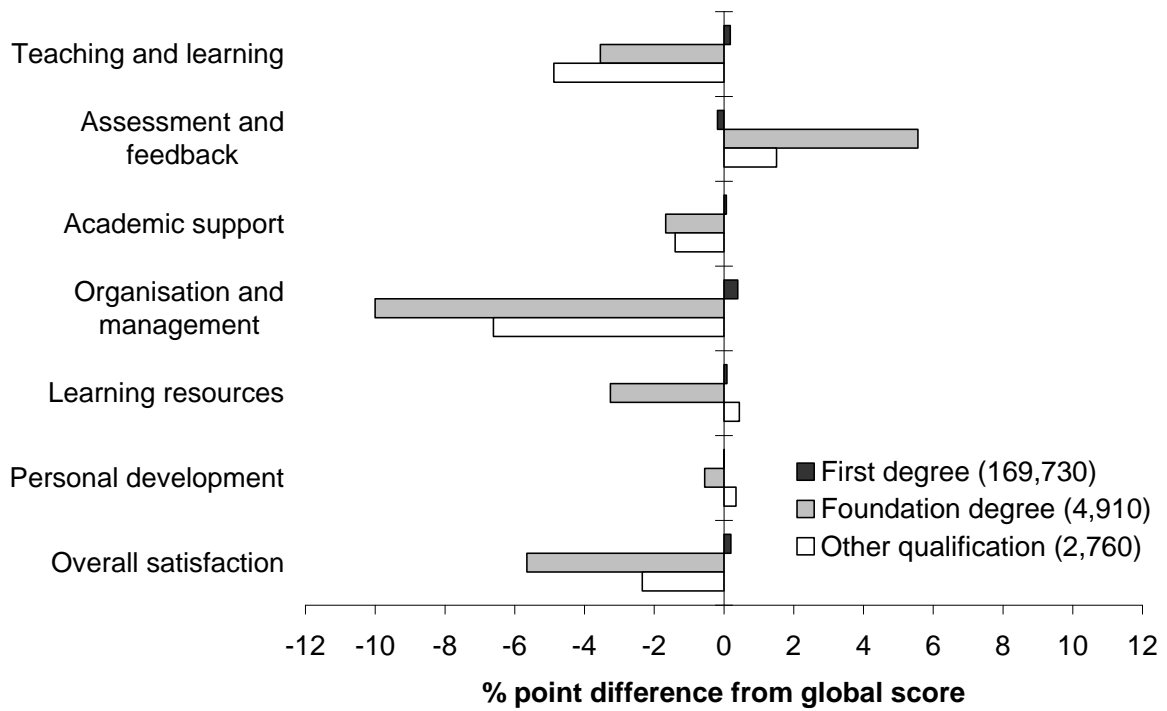
**Figure 22 Time series of difference in overall satisfaction from global score by qualification on entry**



### Level of study

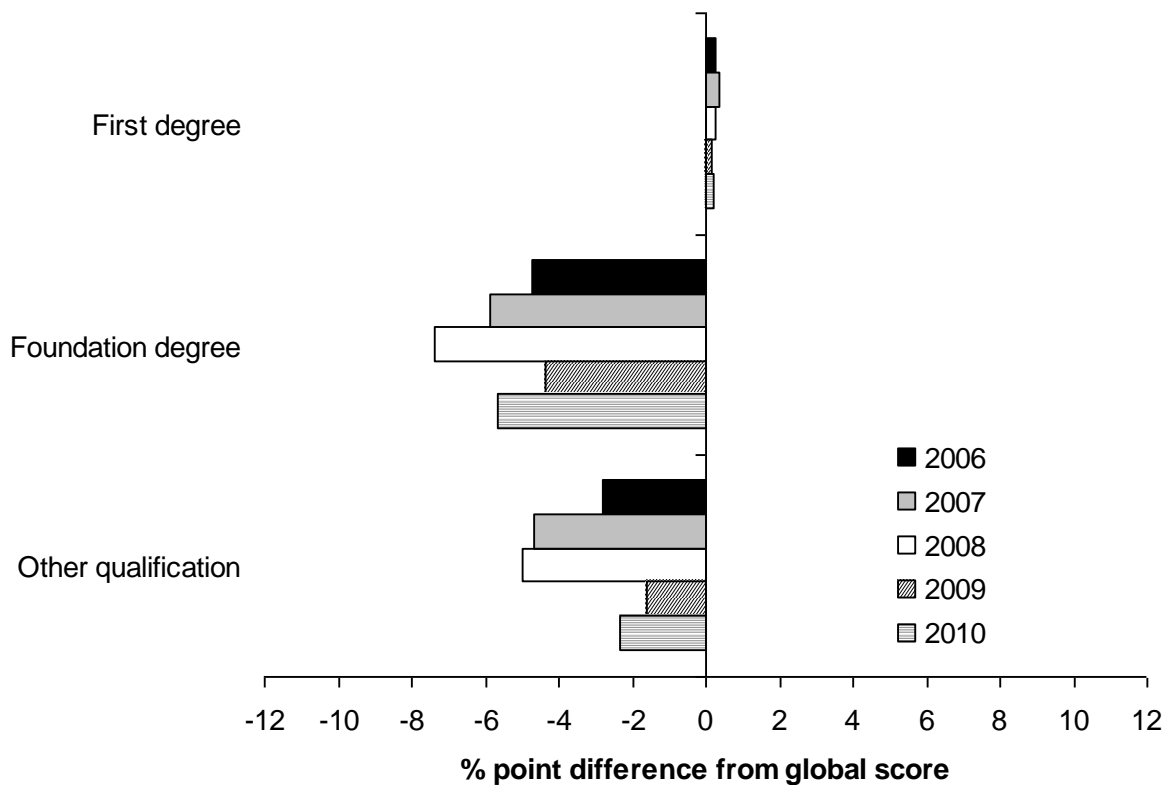
73. Respondents studying for foundation degrees and other qualifications (including Diplomas in Higher Education and Higher National Diplomas) have significantly different satisfaction profiles to those studying for first degrees (see Figure 23). The largest differences from the global score for respondents studying for foundation degrees and other qualifications were for question categories Assessment and feedback, where they were more satisfied than first degree students, and Teaching and learning, Organisation and management and Overall satisfaction, where they were less satisfied.

**Figure 23 Difference in satisfaction from global score by level of study**



74. Figure 24 shows that respondents studying both for foundation degrees and other qualifications have been consistently less satisfied than those studying for first degrees between 2006 and 2010.

**Figure 24 Time series of difference in overall satisfaction from global score by level of study**



## Local area participation in HE

75. The final characteristic considered is rates of participation in HE for the area respondents lived in before they began their HE study. Rates are calculated as a proportion of the relevant population in that area, and have been produced for wards defined in UK 2001 Census Area Statistics. These were grouped and ordered to give five quintile groups of areas, with '1' identifying wards with the lowest participation and '5' identifying wards with the highest participation.

76. The two measures used for this analysis are:

- a. The young participation local area rate (POLAR<sup>10</sup>) which calculates the proportion of young people who went to university aged 18 or 19 between 2000-01 and 2005-06.
- b. The adult HE-qualified rate (AHEQ) which calculates the proportion of 16-74 year-olds with an HE qualification in the 2001 Census.

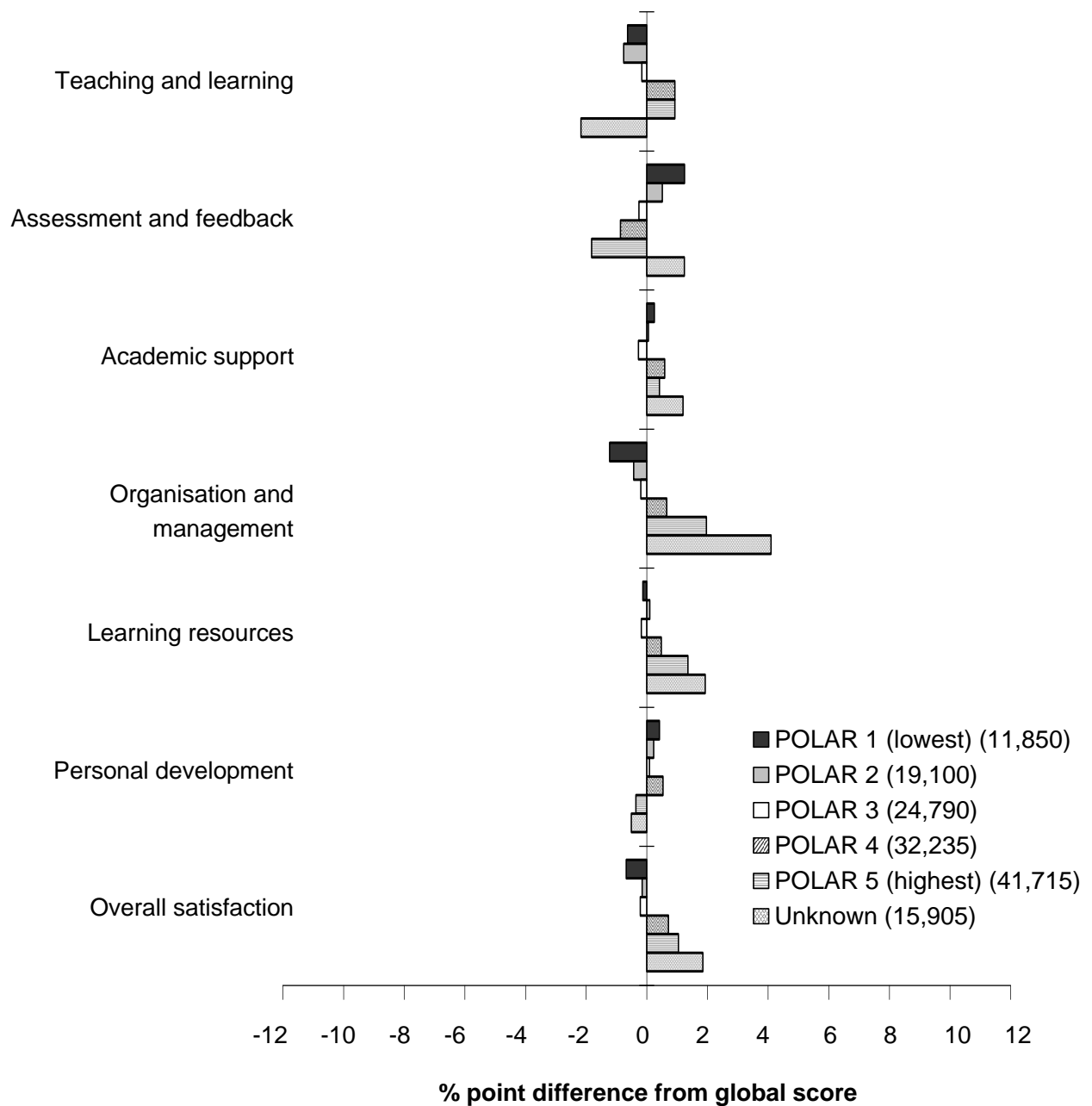
The population is split at age 21, in line with the age groups analysis previously discussed (see paragraphs 58-59), and we consider respondents under 21 using the POLAR measure and respondents aged 21 and over using the AHEQ measure.

77. For Assessment and feedback questions, respondents who were under 21 and from low participation areas (POLAR 1) were significantly more satisfied than the global score, and those from high participation areas (POLAR 5) were significantly less satisfied. In contrast, for Organisation and management those from low participation areas were significantly less satisfied and those from high participation areas were significantly more satisfied (see Figure 25).

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<sup>10</sup> POLAR refers to the updated measure POLAR2. For more information on POLAR2 and AHEQ (adult HE-qualified) calculations see [www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/polar/polar2/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/polar/polar2/).

**Figure 25 Difference in satisfaction from global score for respondents under 21 by POLAR quintile**

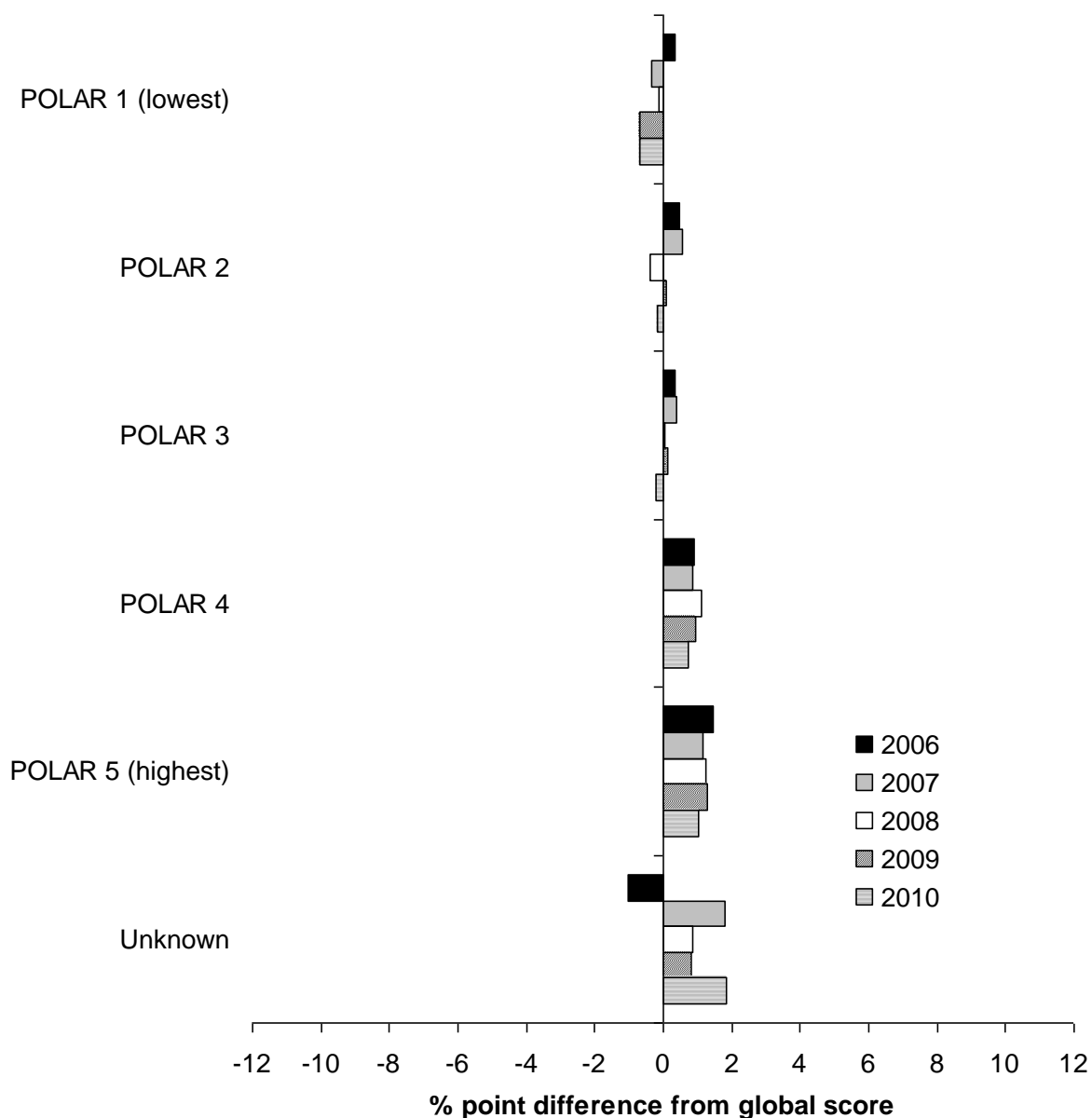


Note: The global score used here is calculated from the entire full-time core population.

78. Figure 26 shows that the overall satisfaction scores have remained fairly stable over the five-year time series.



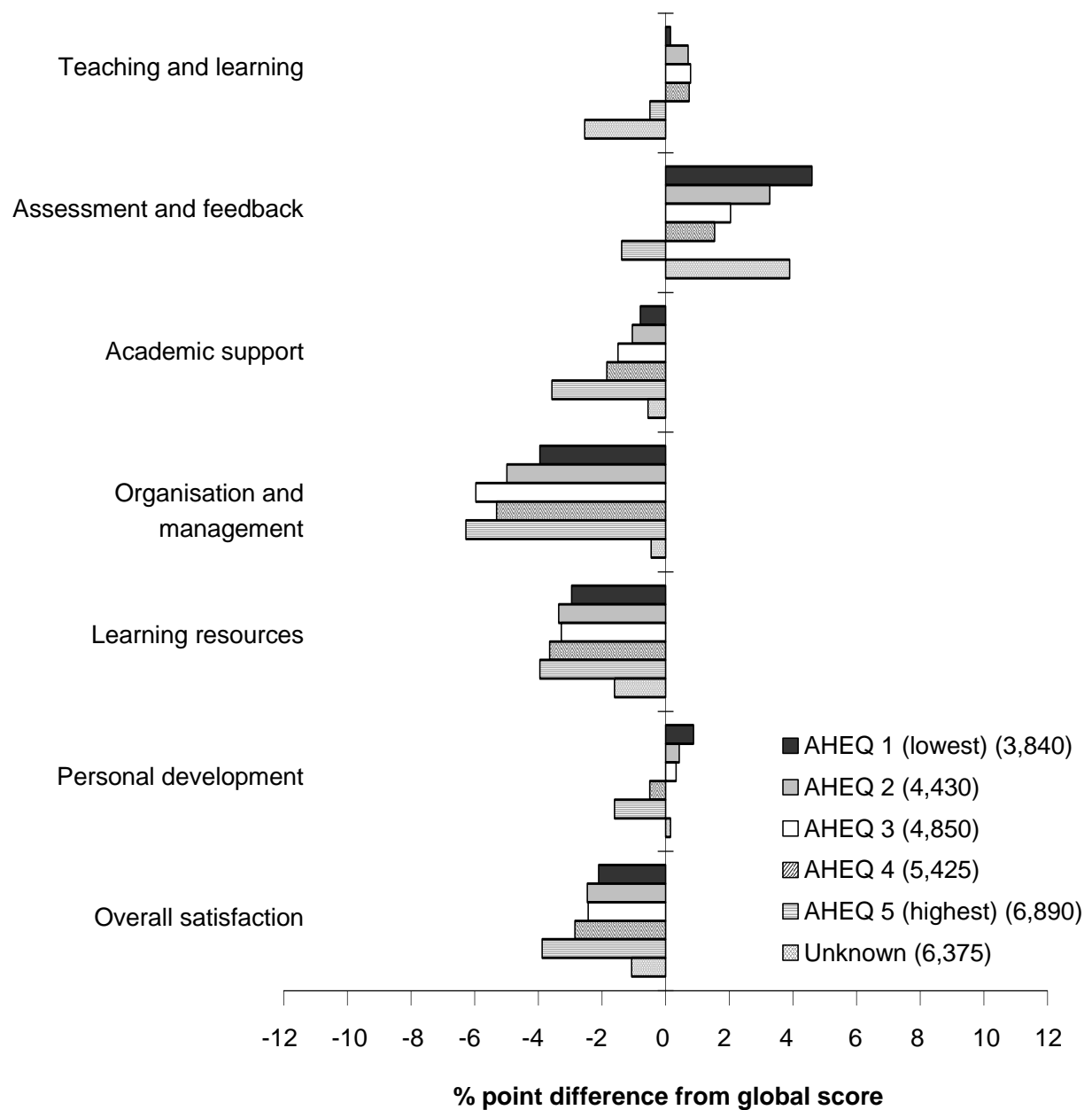
**Figure 26 Time series of difference in overall satisfaction from global score for respondents under 21 by POLAR quintile**



Note: The global scores used here are calculated from the entire full-time core population in each year.

79. Figure 27 shows that those aged 21 and over from areas with high HE-qualified rates (AHEQ 5) tended to be less satisfied than respondents from areas with low HE-qualified rates (AHEQ 1) across all question categories. This tendency was statistically significant in the question categories Assessment and feedback, Academic support and Personal development.

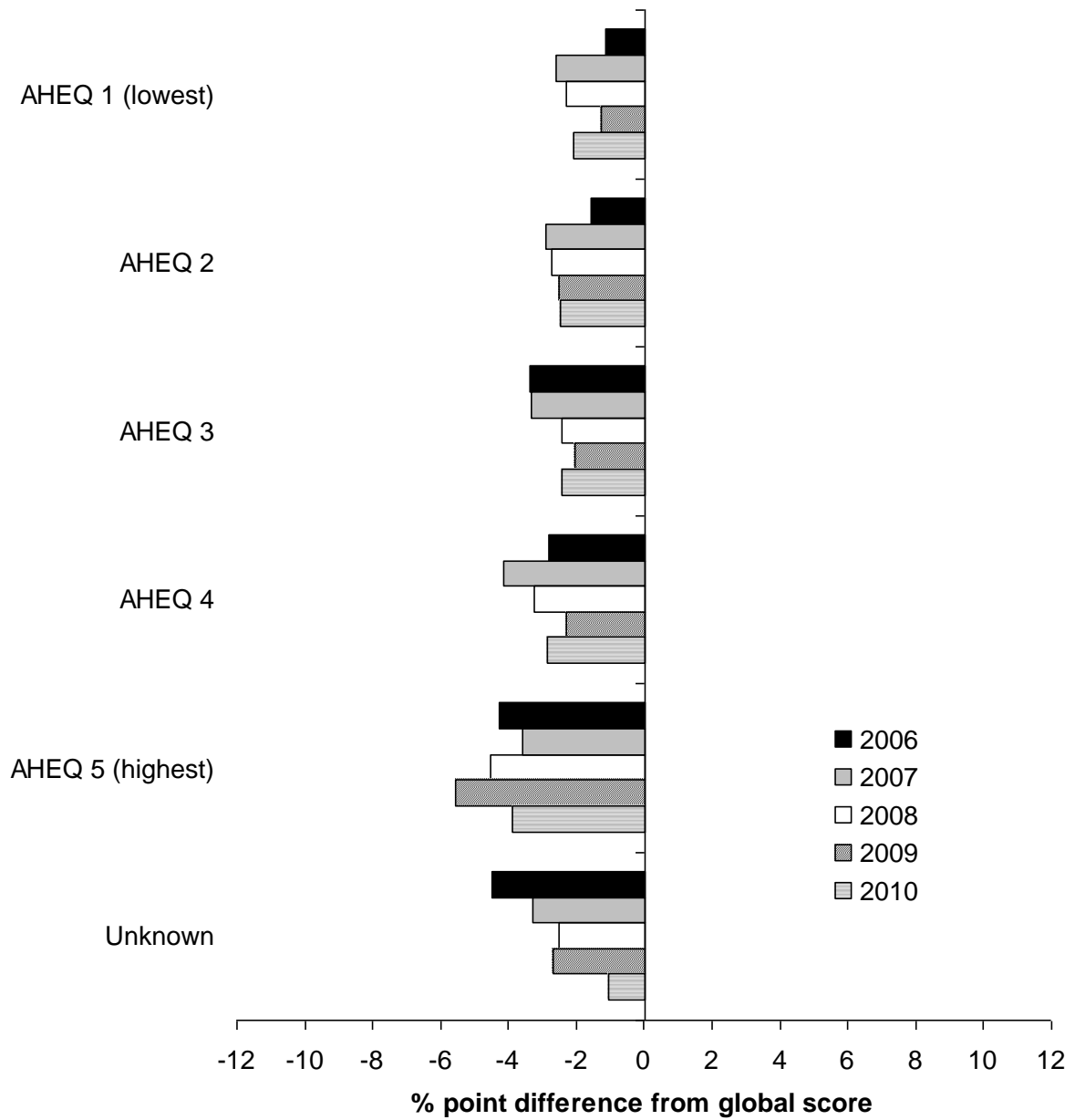
**Figure 27 Difference in satisfaction from global score for respondents aged 21 and over by AHEQ quintile**



Note: The global score used here is calculated from the entire full-time core population.

80. Figure 28 shows the Overall satisfaction scores between 2006 and 2010. As observed in paragraph 59, respondents aged 21 and over were less satisfied than the global score, however the difference in satisfaction was not significant.

**Figure 28 Time series of difference in overall satisfaction from global score for respondents aged 21 and over by AHEQ quintile**



Note: The global scores here are calculated from the entire full-time core population in each year.

## **Annex A**

### **2010 NSS questions**

#### **Core questions**

- 1 Staff are good at explaining things.
- 2 Staff have made the subject interesting.
- 3 Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching.
- 4 The course is intellectually stimulating.
- 5 The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.
- 6 Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.
- 7 Feedback on my work has been prompt.
- 8 I have received detailed comments on my work.
- 9 Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand.
- 10 I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies.
- 11 I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.
- 12 Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices.
- 13 The timetable works efficiently as far as my activities are concerned.
- 14 Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively.
- 15 The course is well organised and is running smoothly.
- 16 The library resources and services are good enough for my needs.
- 17 I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to.
- 18 I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities or rooms when I needed to.
- 19 The course has helped me present myself with confidence.
- 20 My communication skills have improved.
- 21 As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems.
- 22 Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course.

#### **Questions for NHS-funded students**

- 23 I received sufficient preparatory information prior to my placement(s).
- 24 I was allocated placement(s) suitable for my course.
- 25 I received appropriate supervision on my placement(s).
- 26 I was given opportunities to meet my required practice learning outcomes/competences.
- 27 My contribution during placement(s) as part of the clinical team was valued.
- 28 My practice supervisor(s) understood how my placement(s) related to the broader requirements of my course.

## Annex B

### NHS-funded<sup>11</sup> and healthcare students

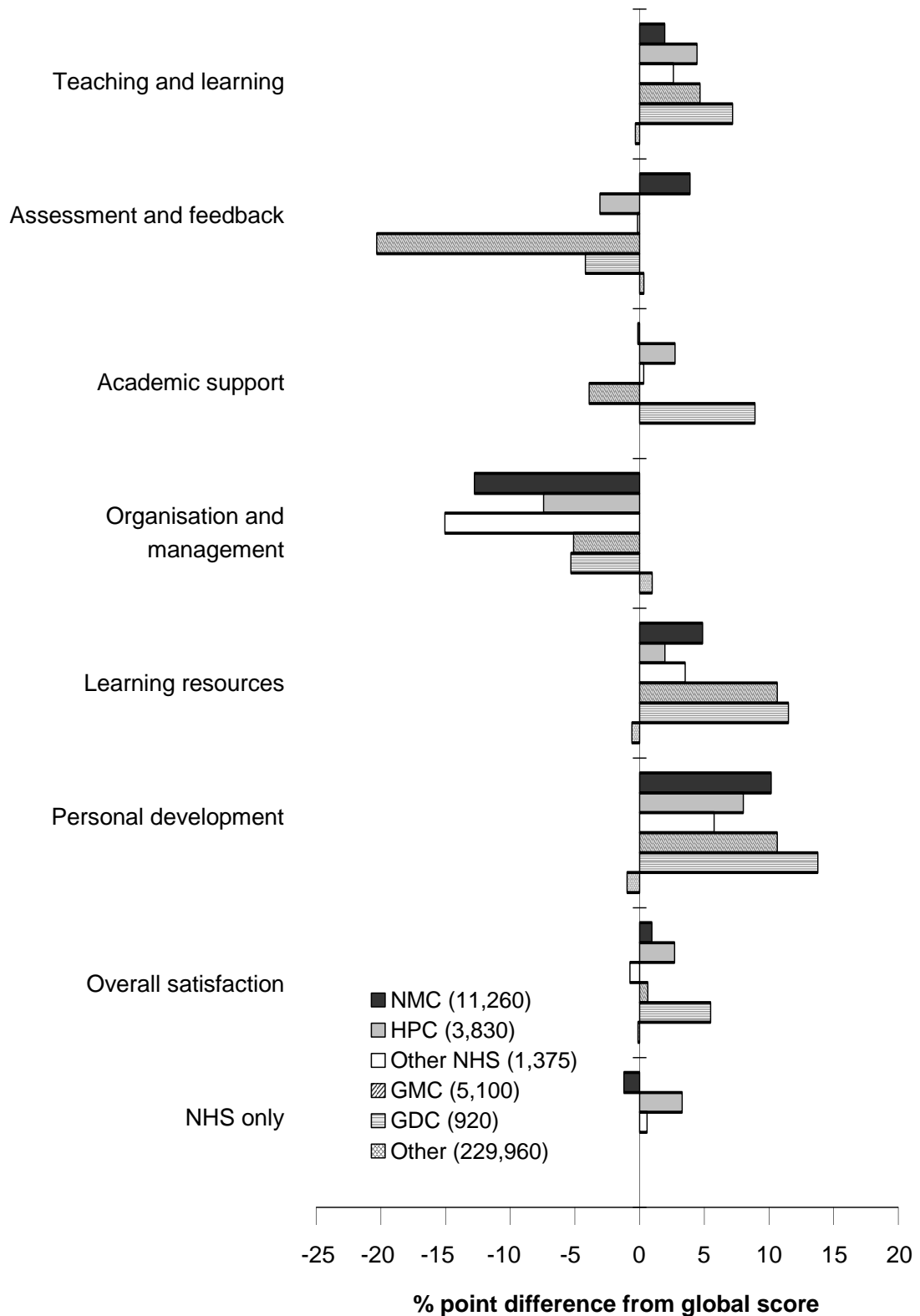
1. Figure B1 shows a further split to Figure 6 in the main report by regulatory body:
  - a. NHS-funded students are split into the groups: Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), Health Professions Council (HPC) and other NHS.
  - b. Non-NHS funded students are split into the groups: General Medical Council (GMC), General Dental Council (GDC) and Other.
  
2. For the question categories Teaching and learning, Learning resources and Personal development, Figure B1 shows that respondents studying under the regulatory bodies are significantly more satisfied than the global score, and for Organisation and management they are significantly less satisfied. The categories Assessment and feedback, Academic support and Overall satisfaction show more mixed responses in satisfaction from the global score.

---

<sup>11</sup> Students are defined as being NHS-funded if:

- a. They attend an English, Northern Irish or Scottish institution and
  - i. They are on a course funded by the Departments of Health or Social Care or NHS and are not eligible for funding by the funding councils.
  - ii. They are funded by the Department of Health.
  
- b. They attend a Welsh institution and are on a course funded by the Departments of Health or Social Care or NHS or Welsh Assembly Government and are not eligible for funding by the funding councils.

**Figure B1 Difference in satisfaction from global score by NHS funding and regulatory body**



Note: The horizontal axis runs from -25 to 20 rather than -12 to 12.

3. Table B1 gives a more in-depth look at the results from the NHS-funded students by subject area for all 28 questions.

**Table B1 Global score for overall population and NHS-funded students with NHS-funded score by regulatory body and subject area**

	Global score – overall pop'n	Global score – NHS-funded	Nursing and Midwifery Council						Health Professions Council				Other regul'y bodies
			Nursing	Midwifery	Paediatric nursing	Adult nursing	Mental health nursing	Other subjects	Physio-therapy	Radiology	Occupational therapy	Other subjects	
<b>% response rate</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>67</b>	60	69	71	66	63	63	74	73	73	73	65
<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>252,449</b>	<b>16,467</b>	1,826	1,012	802	5,860	1,478	285	1,055	607	843	1,324	1,376
<b>Question</b>	<b>% satisfied</b>		<b>% point difference from the global score for NHS-funded</b>										
1	<b>87</b>	<b>89</b>	0	-2	4	0	-1	-3	3	0	-1	1	-1
2	<b>80</b>	<b>84</b>	0	3	3	-2	-1	0	7	-3	2	-1	0
3	<b>84</b>	<b>87</b>	-1	3	3	-1	-2	1	4	-4	4	1	0
4	<b>83</b>	<b>85</b>	0	5	3	-3	-4	2	8	-1	1	2	1
5	<b>72</b>	<b>76</b>	-2	2	4	2	1	-1	2	-5	-6	-3	-2
6	<b>74</b>	<b>71</b>	-1	1	10	0	2	0	-3	-1	-6	-2	-1
7	<b>61</b>	<b>65</b>	2	-5	9	3	2	-12	0	-7	-11	-8	-1
8	<b>65</b>	<b>69</b>	4	1	7	1	3	1	-2	-9	-9	-5	-3
9	<b>60</b>	<b>61</b>	3	1	4	2	4	-1	-1	-8	-12	-7	-3
10	<b>74</b>	<b>76</b>	0	-1	5	-1	0	-2	5	-2	-3	1	-1
11	<b>82</b>	<b>78</b>	-1	0	6	-3	-5	-5	8	1	1	7	1
12	<b>70</b>	<b>74</b>	-1	1	6	-1	-2	-2	5	-2	-2	1	-1
13	<b>78</b>	<b>67</b>	-1	0	3	0	-3	1	5	0	1	2	-4
14	<b>72</b>	<b>60</b>	-1	2	1	-2	-6	7	10	5	3	5	-3
15	<b>71</b>	<b>58</b>	2	-4	4	-1	-4	-5	10	1	2	3	-3

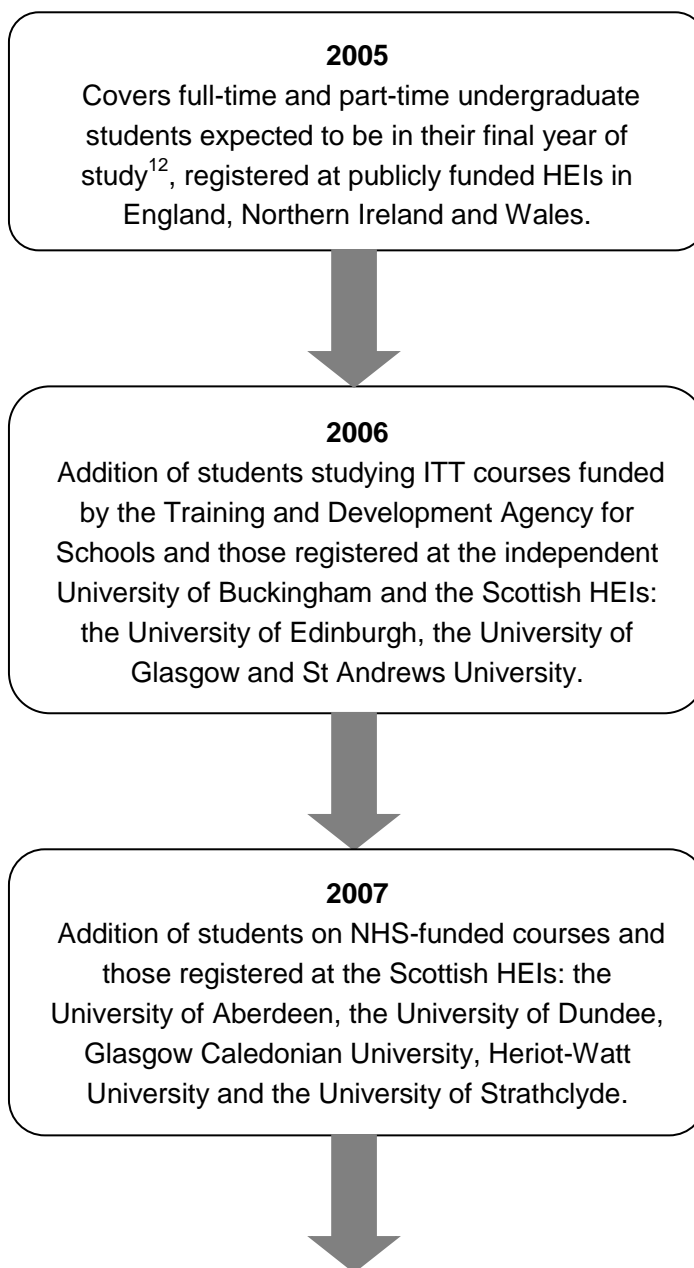
	Global score – overall pop'n	Global score – NHS-funded	Nursing and Midwifery Council						Health Professions Council				Other regul'y bodies
			Nursing	Midwifery	Paediatric nursing	Adult nursing	Mental health nursing	Other subjects	Physio-therapy	Radiology	Occupational therapy	Other subjects	
<b>% response rate</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>67</b>	60	69	71	66	63	63	74	73	73	73	65
<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>252,449</b>	<b>16,467</b>	1,826	1,012	802	5,860	1,478	285	1,055	607	843	1,324	1,376
<b>Question</b>	<b>% satisfied</b>		<b>% point difference from the global score for NHS-funded</b>										
16	<b>80</b>	<b>84</b>	2	0	2	2	4	-15	2	1	-8	-9	0
17	<b>83</b>	<b>88</b>	0	0	4	2	1	-5	-1	0	-6	-5	-1
18	<b>75</b>	<b>79</b>	0	0	1	0	0	-8	7	-3	-1	-1	-1
19	<b>78</b>	<b>87</b>	0	0	5	1	0	-3	-1	-5	-1	-1	-2
20	<b>81</b>	<b>91</b>	-1	-2	4	2	1	-8	2	-4	0	-1	-5
21	<b>78</b>	<b>87</b>	1	0	6	1	0	-6	1	-4	-3	-2	-4
<b>22</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-2</b>
23	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>	0	-4	5	-1	-9	-10	5	7	0	6	5
24	<b>88</b>	<b>88</b>	0	7	4	-3	-3	-7	3	4	2	3	1
25	<b>82</b>	<b>82</b>	-1	-2	7	-3	-4	0	7	1	7	4	1
26	<b>88</b>	<b>88</b>	-1	-4	3	-1	1	-6	5	0	4	1	-1
27	<b>88</b>	<b>88</b>	-1	-1	4	0	1	-2	4	-5	2	-1	-1
28	<b>81</b>	<b>81</b>	-1	0	3	-3	0	-4	7	2	3	5	-1



## Annex C

### History of the National Student Survey population

Below is a summary of the population history of the National Student Survey.



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<sup>12</sup> A small proportion of part-time students, on flexible courses, were included when they were expected to have completed more than one full-time equivalent, which may not have been during their final year of study.



**2008**

Addition of students registered for higher education at FECs and those registered at the Scottish HEI the University of Stirling.



**2009**

Additional methods of response (phone and post) for students on NHS-funded courses and addition of students registered at the Scottish HEIs: Edinburgh Napier University, Glasgow School of Art and Robert Gordon University.



**2010**

Part-time student population widened to capture a larger proportion of students on continuous learning courses (where course length unknown questionnaire sent to those in fourth year of study, providing three FTE completed, rather than fifth year of study).

## Annex D

### NSS question results split by subject area

	No. of respondents	% response rate	Question number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<b>Global score for full-time core population</b>	<b>177,400</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>% satisfied</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	5,340	70	<b>% point difference from the global score</b>	1	7	3	11	-10	-7	-18	-29	-16	-5	1	-3	-5	-8	-8	10	10	10	10	13	11	2
<b>Subjects allied to medicine</b>	7,275	67		2	3	1	5	-2	-1	-2	-7	0	2	2	3	-2	1	0	2	0	3	5	5	4	3
<b>Biological sciences</b>	18,975	68		3	2	3	4	1	1	-2	-2	-3	1	2	1	5	6	8	1	0	4	-1	-1	-1	4
<b>Veterinary sciences</b>	375	66		8	8	5	14	-17	-1	-13	-31	-20	-4	5	-5	-14	-17	-11	11	9	11	3	5	4	5
<b>Agriculture and related subjects</b>	1,340	69		3	3	0	0	3	3	-9	0	-2	3	1	3	0	-3	-2	-1	1	4	2	1	0	1
<b>Physical sciences</b>	5,390	67		5	3	4	8	-2	5	3	-3	5	7	6	6	1	6	8	7	6	10	0	-1	5	7
<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	3,345	65		0	-7	-1	5	2	12	14	-9	4	4	8	2	1	12	16	8	6	6	-12	-16	-2	6
<b>Computer science</b>	6,885	61		-5	-9	-8	-7	3	3	-2	-6	-1	0	0	0	-1	1	-1	3	4	3	-2	-3	0	-4
<b>Engineering and technology</b>	10,575	64		-3	-6	-5	-1	-1	1	-5	-7	-2	2	0	2	-2	1	-1	6	3	2	0	-1	1	-1
<b>Architecture, building and planning</b>	5,025	64		-6	-4	-4	-2	-7	-8	-8	-5	-2	-2	-4	-2	-3	-5	-9	1	-3	-4	0	0	0	-4

	No. of respondents	% response rate	Question number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<b>Global score for full-time core population</b>	<b>177,400</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>% satisfied</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Social studies</b>	17,385	63	<b>% point difference from the global score</b>	0	0	0	2	-1	0	1	0	-2	-3	-1	-3	2	2	2	-6	-3	-4	-2	-3	-2	0
<b>Law</b>	8,805	62		3	-1	0	6	0	1	4	-1	-1	-3	1	-2	3	4	8	-1	1	0	1	0	3	4
<b>Business and administrative studies</b>	22,940	63		-2	-9	-7	-8	5	-1	-2	-5	-5	-3	-2	-3	-1	1	2	1	-1	0	1	2	0	-2
<b>Mass communications and documentation</b>	6,050	63		-4	-2	-3	-10	-1	-3	-6	4	0	-3	-3	-2	-3	-9	-11	-1	-3	-3	-3	-1	-4	-8
<b>Languages</b>	12,220	68		5	8	7	7	1	5	7	12	8	4	6	2	5	6	8	-3	-1	-1	0	2	-1	6
<b>Historical and philosophical studies</b>	8,985	65		6	11	8	10	2	8	10	14	11	5	6	3	7	8	11	-8	-2	-5	1	0	1	7
<b>Creative arts and design</b>	22,745	67		-6	0	-1	-8	-5	-6	2	7	5	-3	-6	-1	-7	-13	-17	0	-1	-6	-3	-3	-4	-9
<b>Education</b>	3,865	66		0	1	2	-3	8	2	6	12	7	2	-4	0	1	-2	-4	-4	-3	-4	5	4	2	0
<b>Combined</b>	445	58		4	7	4	4	1	4	1	0	-1	-1	1	-2	-1	7	6	-3	-4	-4	-1	-3	-4	5
<b>Initial teacher training</b>	5,205	70		2	2	3	-3	3	-1	-3	8	-3	3	0	4	-10	-16	-17	-4	2	2	7	4	3	-1
<b>Geographical studies</b>	4,230	70	5	9	8	6	5	4	2	5	-1	6	5	5	8	10	11	2	-1	5	4	3	3	7	