

Feedback

Feedback has been the subject of much discussion in recent years, and a question about feedback has been included in the Ministry's survey since 2016¹. In 2020, students at Aarhus University had the opportunity to respond to an additional four questions concerning feedback. This year's student survey thus included a total of five questions about feedback. The questions fall under two categories and include three questions concerning the value of the feedback provided as well as two questions relating to the scope of the feedback provided.

It should be noted that the findings of this year's survey may be affected by the coronavirus restrictions. Classes have been converted to completely or partially online formats, which may have influenced the need for and focus on possibilities for feedback relative to previous years.

In the wake of the shutdown in the spring, in early summer 2020, the university conducted a survey evaluating the transition to online teaching and exams. The aim of the survey was to learn from these experiences in order to enhance AU's approach to digital teaching and exams in future. The report and main conclusions are available here: <https://newsroom.au.dk/nyheder/vis/artikel/hvad-laerte-vi-af-foraarets-corona-undervisning>.

The student survey was conducted from 20 October to 15 December 2020. During this period, the university was subject to a variety of coronavirus restrictions, but was not shut down.

¹ The student survey is carried out by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science. The study consists of a number of sub-elements, including the Learning Barometer (which measures the students' experiences of the learning environment on their degree programme and their own approaches to learning), Degree Programme Zoom (digital admissions tool that allows students to compare degree programmes), Teaching Environment (under the auspices of Dansk Center for Undervisningsmiljø (the Danish centre for the teaching environment)).

² The response categories are a bit different in the Degree Programme Zoom and the Learning Barometer. The scale runs from 'Strongly agree' and 'Strongly disagree' in the Degree Programme Zoom and 'Completely agree' and 'Completely disagree'.

Main findings for Feedback:**Value of feedback**

- At AU, 49% of respondents replied that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree'² that their **teachers provide helpful feedback**. A majority (61%) of the respondents from Nat indicated that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the statement – which applies to just 29% of the respondents at HE.
- 45% of the respondents replied that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that **material they have not fully understood is made clearer by the feedback they receive**. Here again, there are major differences between the faculties. Where AR, BSS and Tech rank relatively close to the AU average, 62% of the respondents from Nat and only 29% from HE say that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the statement.
- To the question about the extent to which **the feedback that the students receive helps them make progress in working with the material they need to learn**, 66% replied that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree'. There are also large differences between the faculties. The largest percentage at Nat (78%) and the smallest percentage at HE (49%) replied that they feedback they receive helps them make progress in working with the material they need to learn.

Amount of feedback:

- Fewer than one in five respondents from HE (19%) replied that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that they receive **feedback on their work on a regular basis**. This applies to just under one in three respondents from BSS (30%), 44% at AR and over half of the respondents from Tech (51%) and Nat (66%).
- A total of 46% replied that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that **they get enough academic feedback**. However, this applies to just 28% of respondents from HE – and for 70% of respondents from Nat.

Value of the feedback provided

49% of respondents replied that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that their teachers provide helpful feedback. However, it should be noted that the percentage of respondents who replied 'Neither agree nor disagree' is relatively large – 32% at AU as a whole, cf. Table 1. There are large differences between the faculties with regard to the assessment of the value of the feedback provided. A majority (61%) of the respondents from Nat indicated that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the statement – which applies to just 29% of the respondents at HE. In 2016 and 2018 as well, HE was the faculty with the lowest percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, with 27% in 2016 and 32% in 2018.

There are no major differences between students from different degree programme levels. However, there are differences between the sexes. 54% of the male respondents indicated that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the statement. This applies to 46% of female respondents.

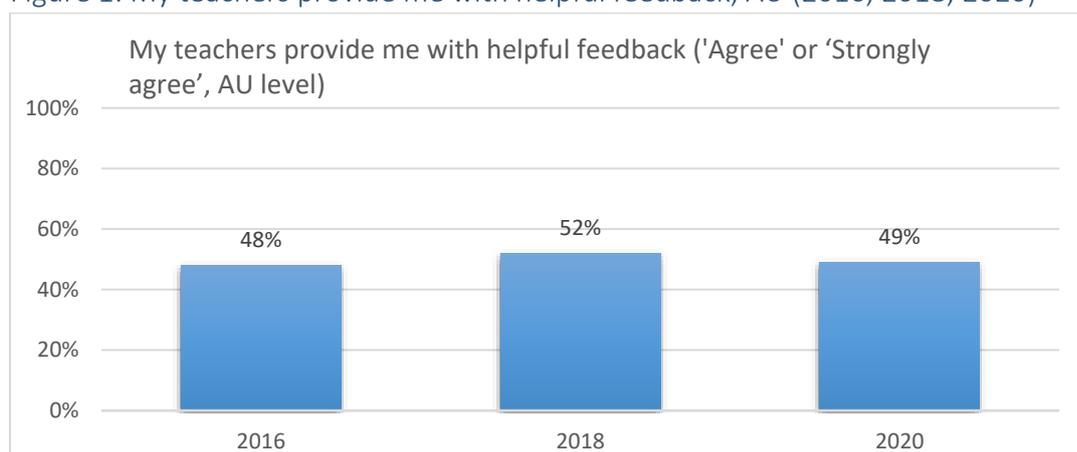
Table 1: My teachers provide me with helpful feedback, AU and faculty level

My teachers provide me with helpful feedback	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
AR	15%	43%	28%	12%	2%
BSS	9%	33%	33%	19%	6%
HE	5%	24%	36%	26%	10%
Nat	15%	47%	30%	8%	1%
Tech	9%	43%	35%	11%	2%
Grand total	11%	38%	32%	15%	4%

*The response category 'Unsure/not applicable' is not included in the calculations. n=10680

There is no significant development in the percentage of students who indicate that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that their teachers give them helpful feedback, cf. Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: My teachers provide me with helpful feedback, AU (2016, 2018, 2020)



Note: The figures show the percentage who replied 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree'. The remainder have replied 'Neutral', 'Somewhat disagree', or 'Disagree'. The response 'Unsure/not applicable' is not included in the calculations.

The students were also asked whether the feedback they receive helps clarify material they have not fully understood. Table 2 shows that 45% of respondents replied that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the statement.

The same tendency we saw in relation to the question about helpful feedback above is evident here: there are large differences between the faculties. Where AR, BSS and Tech rank relatively close to the AU average, 62% of the respondents from Nat replied that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that feedback they receive helps clarify material they have not fully understood., while this only applies to 29% of the respondents from HE.

There are also differences between the sexes; 53% of the male respondents 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the statement, whereas this applies to 41% of the female respondents.

Table 2: What I have not quite understood is made more clear by the feedback I receive, AU and faculty level

What I have not quite understood is made more clear by the feedback I receive	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
AR	10%	38%	34%	14%	4%
BSS	7%	35%	31%	20%	7%
HE	4%	25%	38%	23%	11%
Nat	18%	44%	28%	9%	1%
Tech	7%	40%	36%	13%	4%
Grand total	9%	36%	33%	16%	5%

The response category 'Unsure/not applicable' is not included in the calculations. n=9608

To the question about the extent to which the feedback that the students receive helps them make progress in working with the material they need to learn, 66% replied that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree'.

Table 3 shows that there are also major differences between faculties here as well, and that once again that Nat was the faculty with the largest percentage that replied 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' (78%), while HE had fewest (49%). There are no significant differences correlated to sex or degree programme level in responses to this question.

Table 3: The feedback I receive helps me continue working on what I need to learn, AU and faculty level

The feedback I receive helps me continue working on what I need to learn	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
AR	19%	51%	22%	7%	1%
Aarhus BSS	16%	48%	23%	10%	3%
HE	9%	40%	36%	11%	4%
Nat	23%	55%	16%	5%	1%
Tech	14%	55%	24%	6%	1%
Grand total	17%	50%	24%	8%	2%

The response category 'Unsure/not applicable' is not included in the calculations. n=9899

Amount of feedback:

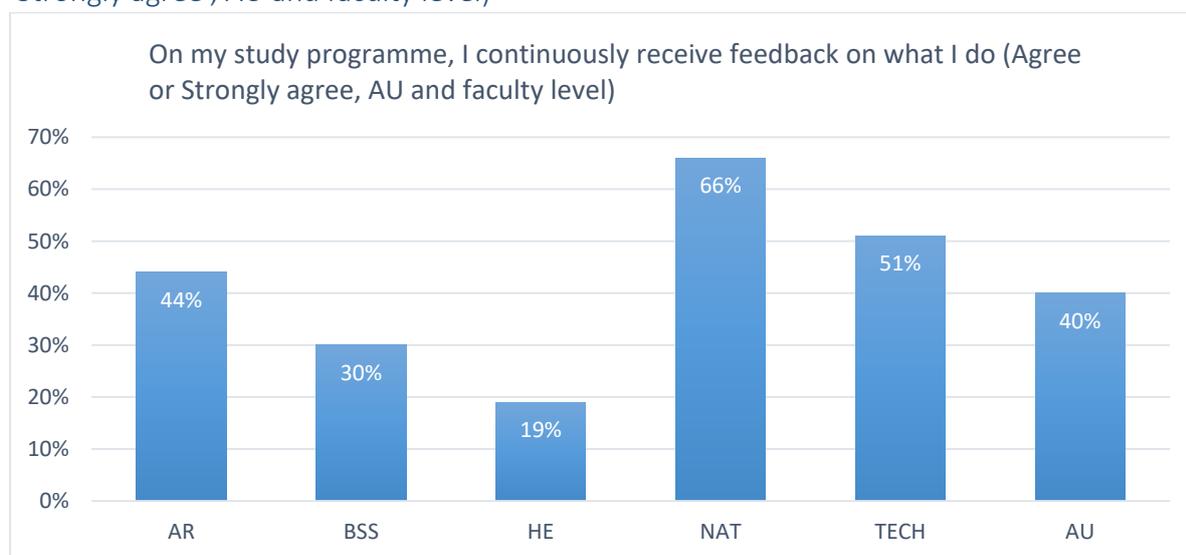
The students were also asked whether they receive regular feedback on their academic work, and whether they think they receive enough feedback on their academic work (the survey made it clear

that feedback could be individual or joint feedback from teaching staff, fellow students or supervisors).

40% of the respondents indicated that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that they receive feedback on their academic work on a regular basis. Figure 2 shows that there are very large differences between the faculties with regard to whether students indicated that they get regular feedback.

Fewer than one in five respondents from HE (19%) replied that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that they receive feedback on their work on a regular basis. This applies to just under one in three respondents from BSS (30%), 44% at AR and over half of the respondents from Tech (51%) and Nat (66%).

Figure 2: On my study programme, I continuously receive feedback on what I do ('Agree' and 'Strongly agree', AU and faculty level)



*The response category 'Unsure/not applicable' is not included in the calculations. n=10240

There are also differences correlated with degree programme level. 46% of professional Bachelor's degree student respondents, 43% of academic Bachelor's degree students and 34% of Master's degree student respondents indicated that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that they receive feedback on their academic work on a regular basis. With regard to gender, this applies to 36% of female respondents and 46% of male respondents.

Finally, students were asked whether the amount of feedback they receive is sufficient. A total of 46% of respondents indicated that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that they get enough feedback on their academic work, but there are major differences between the faculties. Just 28% of respondents from HE replied that they get enough feedback on their academic work – as opposed to 70% of respondents from Nat.

Table 4: I feel I get enough feedback on what I do on the programme (e.g. individual or collective feedback from teachers, peers or supervisors)

I feel I get enough feedback on what I do on the programme	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
AR	11%	37%	24%	22%	6%
BSS	7%	31%	26%	26%	10%

HE	4%	24%	29%	33%	10%
Nat	21%	49%	18%	11%	1%
Tech	10%	44%	27%	16%	3%
AU	10%	36%	25%	23%	7%

*The response category 'Unsure/not applicable' is not included in the calculations. N: 10298

There are also differences in how female and male respondents assessed the extent of the feedback they receive. 51% of the respondents indicated that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that they receive feedback on their academic work on a regular basis. This applies to 42% of female respondents. There are no significant differences correlated with the degree programme level of the respondents.

FACTS about the 2020 survey:

AU's study environment survey is based on data collected by Epinion for the Danish Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Aarhus University. The results of the survey form the basis for the university's teaching environment evaluation, which is conducted every three years.

The survey is carried out every other year and was most recently conducted in the autumn of 2020.

The questionnaire was sent to 33,381 full-time students at Aarhus University and 11,133 students took the survey, which results in an overall response rate of 33.40%.