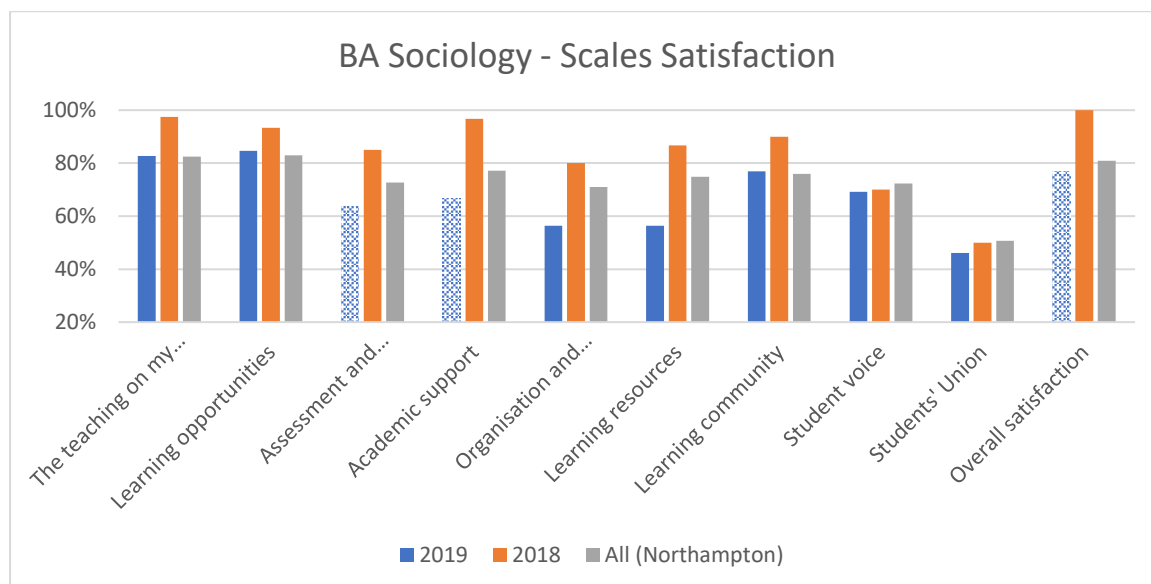


BA Sociology

In 2018, BA Sociology posted a maximum overall satisfaction score, but this has tumbled by 23 ppts to below the University's threshold. In fact, approval dropped on every scale, with assessment and feedback, and academic support also now under their threshold figures. In the former case, only 62% concluded that marking had been fair (Q9), while the statistic for receiving helpful comments (Q11) nosedived by 46 ppts. For academic support, this was, ironically, the same fall as seen for being able to contact staff (Q12) and 62% recognised the advice to make study choices (Q14).



Organisation and management also came in for censure. A 44-ppt descent was apparent on the course being well-organised (Q15); meanwhile, communication of course changes (Q17) only delivered 54% approval. This theme was also repeated for learning resources – together with the perennial fulmination about IT (Q18), the figure for course-specific resources (Q20) declined by 36 ppts to 54% again.

There was much appreciation for the academic staff in the comments, with one describing them as 'more like friends than teachers'. Another added: "The staff ... are extremely dedicated to help all who want it and will go the extra mile It's down to their help and guidance that I have achieved well during my degree and will be continuing on to do a Masters." Moreover, the course content was referred to as 'highly entertaining', 'engaging' and 'very varied'.

Yet, the most common complaint was lack of organisation, caused by 'staff leaving in the middle of the course', some lectures being 'cancelled with very short notice' and 'problems with timetabling'. One said that the feedback was 'not always useful', while another stated: "Online sessions can be a bit tricky in terms of access." A third thought that some modules could offer more online content.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Given 48% of known ethnicity on the programme are currently BAME students (across stages), the fair marking issue provides evidence for the introduction of anonymous marking across the institution, where possible. Programme staff should offer clear feedback with explanations on how students can improve, while the staff email policy needs to be reintroduced and enforced. Better promotion of the MyNorthampton app to staff is required, so that they send out notifications to students in the event of room changes. Contingency planning for staff leaving must be considered to minimise disruptions and ensure continuity in programme delivery.