



**NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY**  
**STUDENTS' UNION**

# **Student use of** **ReCap**

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## How students use ReCap at Newcastle University

### Background

The following report has been put together in the wake of a research exercise undertaken by NUSU to ascertain student attitudes around ReCap. This exercise was led by Chris Duddy, NUSU Education Officer, in collaboration with Joe Barton (Representation Support Worker), Sophie Matthews (Athletic Union Officer), and Daniel Wood & Errol Kerr (Students with Disabilities Officers).

One main survey and two sub-surveys were disseminated to students through email, social media, and the student representation system. The first sub-survey was specific to students with disabilities and the second was specific to students who compete for Newcastle University sports teams – referred to as “students who compete”. These surveys received a combined total of 951 responses at the time of writing, with approximately 900 unique respondents.

In employing an “opt-out” ReCap policy up until very recently, Newcastle University is in line with the majority of Russell Group institutions,<sup>1</sup> and the sector globally (Rios-Amaya, Secker & Morrison 2016). Newcastle University’s move to a “where appropriate” policy demonstrates a well-informed move in the right direction – adding a requirement of rationale to “opting-out”.

Aside from issues regarding intellectual property rights, the most frequently raised concern around ReCap from academic staff pertains to its effects on lecture attendance and participation. As Alun Karnad notes, a series of academic studies into the effects of lecture capture (Von Lonsky *et al.* 2009; Holbrook & Dupont, 2009; Pursel & Fang, 2012), have demonstrated that ‘in general, access to recorded lectures has little to no effect on student attendance at live lectures’ (3). The findings of this report echoes these studies, demonstrating that the overwhelming majority of Newcastle University students view and use ReCap as a study tool to complement, rather than substitute, lecture attendance.

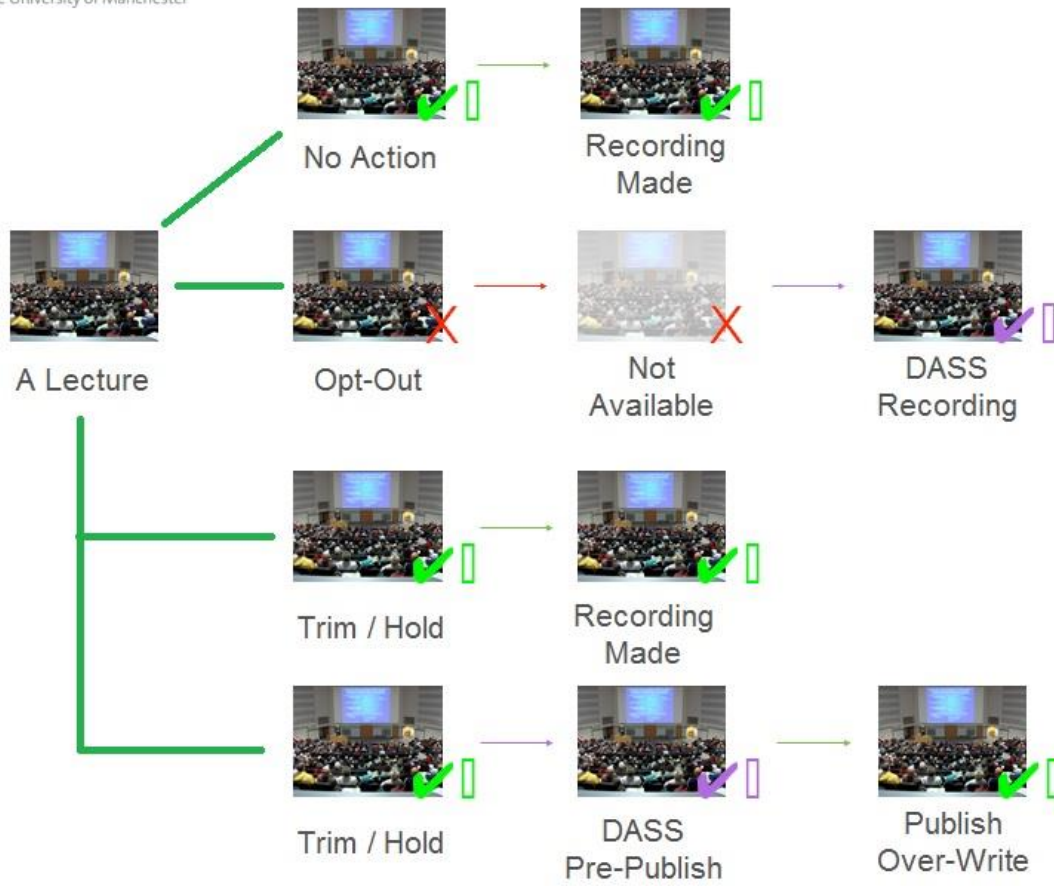
Following an Inclusive Learning and Teaching conference held at York St John’s University in May 2017, we have been able to liaise with comparator institutions around inclusive learning and teaching strategies in general, including approaches taken to lecture capture. Since the conference we have been in close contact with the lecture capture team at Manchester University – and they have kindly given us permission to share some of their data and details about their lecture capture policy, which will feed into the recommendations at the conclusion of this paper. See annexe A for the full range of data provided by Manchester University.

Manchester University currently utilise an “opt-out” policy, however, if you are a student with a disability this “opt-out” is overridden and the recording is made available to the student in question. A summary of the system can be seen in Figure 1. This system means that 97% of lectures are ‘recapped’ at Manchester – with 82% available to all students and an extra 15% available to students with disabilities. The remaining 3% would fall into what we at Newcastle may refer to as an “appropriate opt-out” under our new ReCap strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Thirteen Russell Group Universities, including Newcastle, currently use an “opt-out” policy; six use an “opt-in but strongly encouraged” approach, four are unclear in their policy, and two (Cambridge and Queen’s Belfast) are currently only piloting the technology.

Fig1.



### Section 1 – All students

Figure 2. illustrates the breakdown of respondents to the All Student Survey. This survey aimed to provide a broad overview of how the student body views ReCap across the institution. With almost 850 individual students responding, with proportionate representation from each faculty, we are confident with the results to view them as a representative sample.

It must be noted that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students form the bulk of the respondents, this is a result of the survey running around the same time as the NSS, prohibiting proactive dissemination to final year students. This will, however, make it quite useful to follow up on these results in one or two years' time as the new ReCap policy begins to embed.

Fig 2. Your stage: (847 responses)

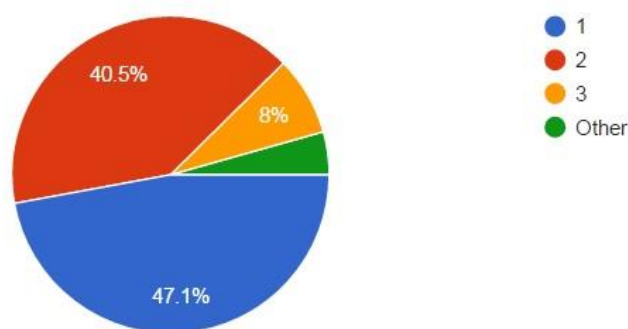
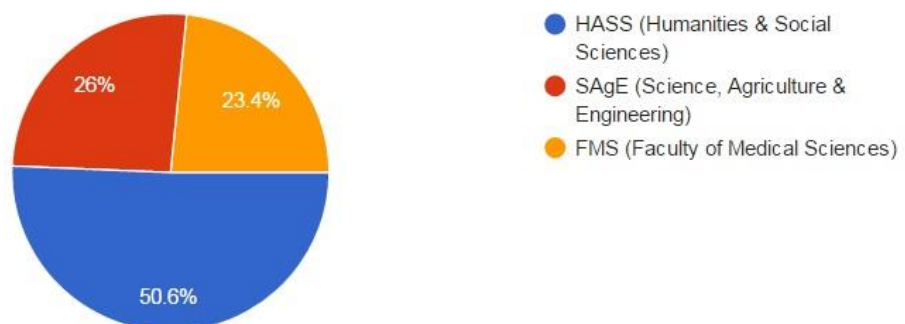
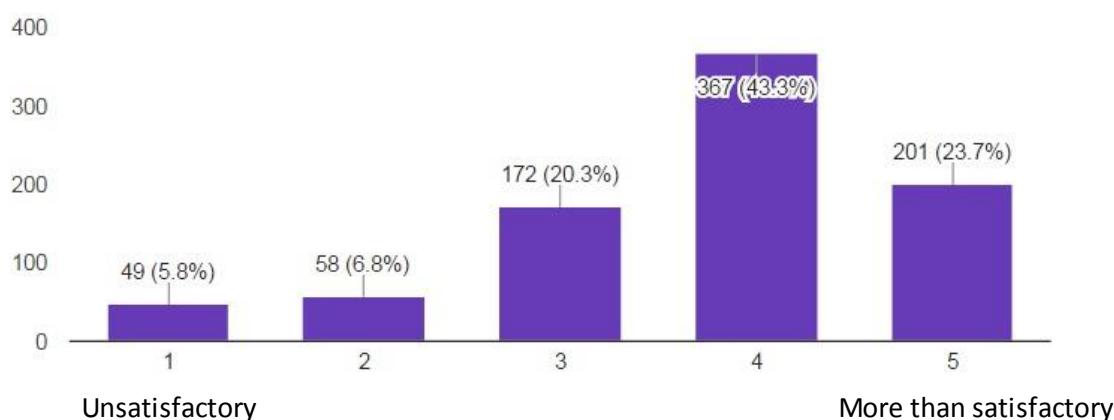


Fig 3. Your faculty: (847 responses)



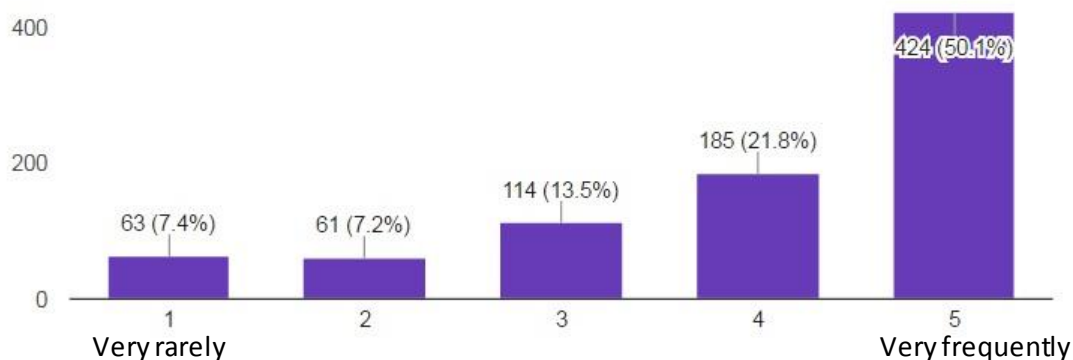
Students were asked five compulsory questions, with an optional “open text” question at the end. The open text question received 207 responses, and some highlights will be presented at the end of this section.

Fig4. To what extent do you believe the level of ReCap is satisfactory on your course? (847 responses)



Question 1 returned very positive results, with 67% of students being “satisfied” or “more than satisfied” with the provision of ReCap on their course. While this is encouraging, the fact that 33% of the student body are either “indifferent” or “dissatisfied” with ReCap provision, suggests that further work is required for the University to remain at the cutting edge of technology-enhanced learning.

Fig5. Do you use ReCap as a revision tool? (847 responses)



The results from Question 2 strongly support the argument that ReCap is a popular and effective revision tool, with an impressive 71.9% of respondents confirming they used ReCap frequently for revision.

Fig6 Do you use ReCap as an alternative to attending lectures? (847 responses)

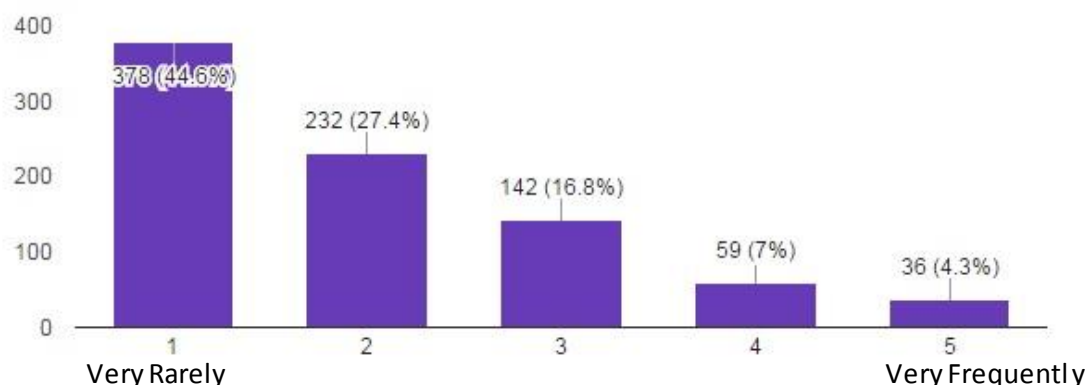
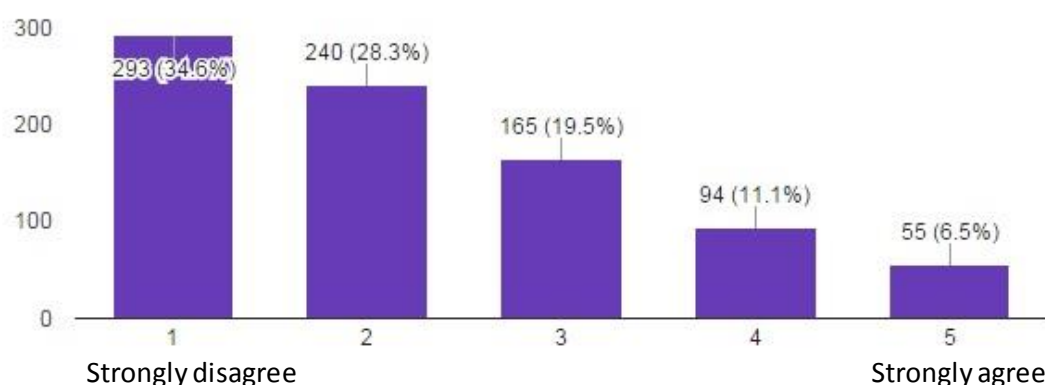


Fig7 Does the provision of ReCap influence your decision to attend lectures? (847 responses)



Given their complementary nature, the results from Question 3 and 4 are considered together. As previously discussed, one of the most frequent concerns held by academic staff regarding lecture capture is that its introduction may prove to be a disincentive for their students to regularly attend their lectures.

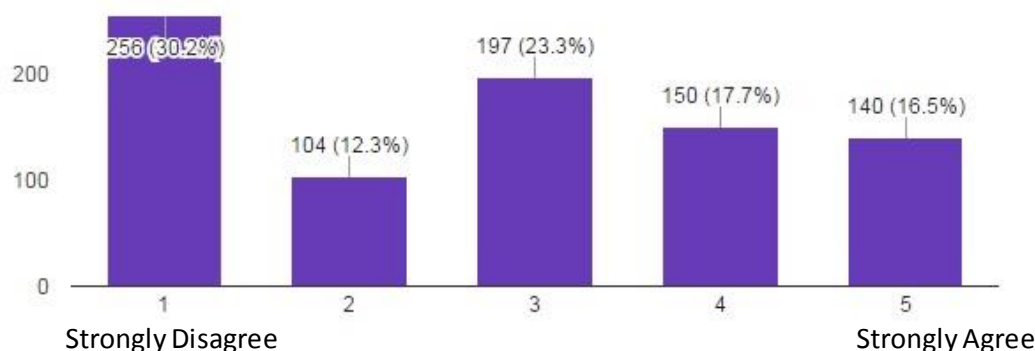
As Fig (6) demonstrates, this does not appear to be the attitude of students at Newcastle University. 72% of students either rarely or very rarely use ReCap as an alternative to attending lectures. Only around 11.3% of respondents said they frequently or very frequently used it as such.

Following this, when asked if ReCap “influenced their decision” to attend, 62.9% of students responded that it did not. The level of “indifferent” respondents rose by 2.7%, and those who agreed rose 6.3%.

While the responses show that provision of ReCap may play a role among other factors in a student’s decision whether or not to attend a lecture, they also show that it is not used as an alternative to attendance. Indeed, this reflects Karnad’s observation that ‘there is little evidence that students actually believe that having access to recorded lectures is the main cause or incentive to miss lectures’ (2013, 3).

It is imperative to note that initial interrogation of the data shows that five students who answered “very frequently” in Fig (6) also answered our Students with Disabilities survey. Six more students who answered “very frequently” also answered our Students who Compete survey.

Fig 8. Does the provision of ReCap on a module influence your decision to take it?  
(847 responses)



The results above show the diverse range of attitudes towards ReCap when it comes to selecting a module. My intention is to sit down with the ReCap team and look into this data further to understand the difference in attitudes across faculties, but it’s interesting to contrast the results above with the results to the same question posed to students with disabilities in the following section.

**Open-text highlights:**

All of the open-text responses have been shared with the ReCap team to aid the identification good practice and areas for improvement. Some of the most illustrative comments can be found below:

*“It’s not about attendance for most people; it’s about getting the best grade possible.”*

*“Surely the focus on recording attendance (via the card/scanning system) could help address the issue of attendance.”*

*“The absence of ReCap is definitely a negative point in the revision, because in case you have missing information from the lecturer in your notes, you need to interpret the slides yourself.”*

*“All our modules use ReCap. I use it as a revision tool when necessary but do not use it as an alternative to lectures.”*

*“I am jealous of my friends in other modules who can use ReCap, not because they miss lectures, but because they have the additional study tool!”*

*“With my timetable there will always be a clash, so recap is essential! This is very common on my course!”*

*“My lectures are two hours long and I frequently have them back to back. This makes it extremely difficult to maintain high levels of concentration throughout the full duration of the lectures.”*



*Therefore, ReCap is extremely helpful as it allows me to revisit the last hour of a lecture if I feel the quality of my notes decreased due to fatigue.”*

*“ReCap is one of the best resources the University has, it stops you from falling behind if you happen to miss a lecture for whatever reason or if you don't grasp something in the lecture you can re-watch it.”*

*“I wouldn't go to a university for my Masters course if ReCap was not available, it is extremely important for revision and helpful when you cannot get to a lecture.”*

## **Summary**

Both the quantitative and qualitative responses to the All Student Survey clearly demonstrate that the majority of students at Newcastle University value ReCap as a study aid, particularly for revision purposes. As such, the findings of this report appear to echo that of Cornock's 2015 York University study, which found that students viewed lecture capture as a 'scaffold for independent study, as well as a supplementary resource to aid understanding'. Moreover, the responses demonstrate that while ReCap provision may be one factor amongst others in a student's decision to not attend a lecture, the majority of students nevertheless do not regularly use ReCap as an alternative to lecture attendance.

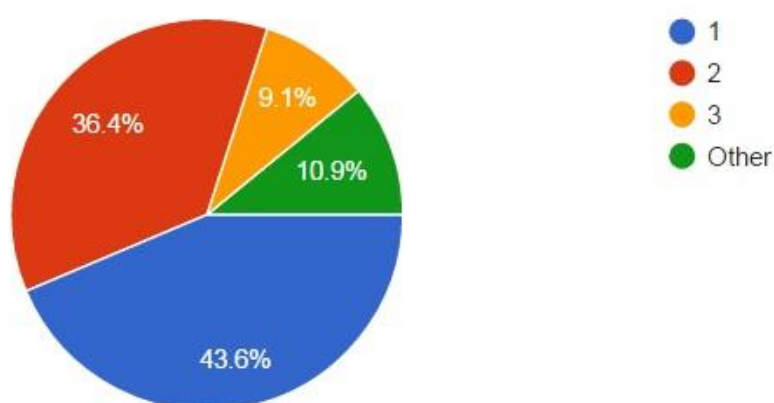
As such, the patterns in ReCap use among the general student body at Newcastle University echo those observed in by Karnad, Cornock and others, namely, that lecture capture technology is broadly viewed and used as a study tool to complement traditional lectures in a manner that does not significantly affect attendance.

## Section 2 – Students with Disabilities

The first of two supplementary surveys was produced and disseminated with the assistance and expertise of Errol Kerr and Daniel Wood, the Part Time Officers for Students with Disabilities 2016/2017.

Below is the breakdown of responses we received by year, and it forms a similar demographical picture to the breakdown of the “all-student” survey. One key thing to note is that students were given the option to explicitly state their name and course *if they so wished*. This option was implemented as a result of disabled students asking for that option, as many wanted to have their names attached to the experiences they described. Just under half of respondents took this option.

Fig9. Your stage: (55 responses)



## Name (if you wish to disclose) (25 responses)

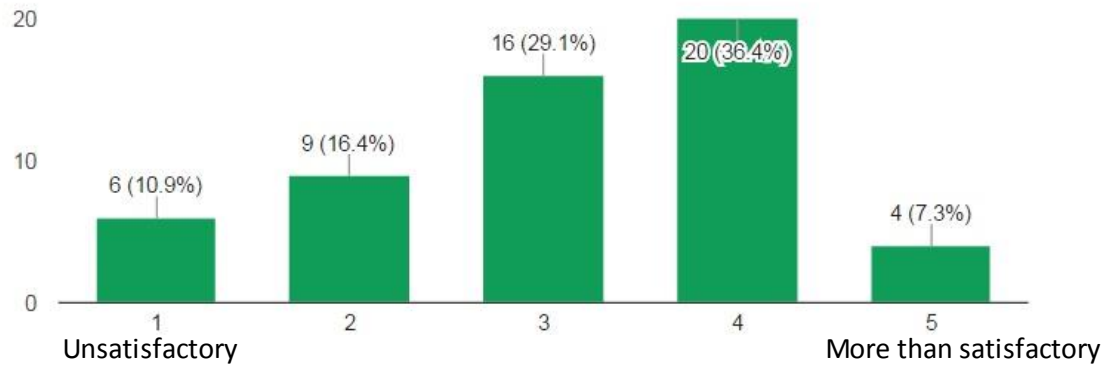
This survey contained three compulsory questions:

- To what extent do you believe the level of ReCap is satisfactory on your course?
- Does the provision of ReCap on a module influence your decision to take it?
- “How important is ReCap to your Academic Experience?”

Three open-text questions were included in this survey:

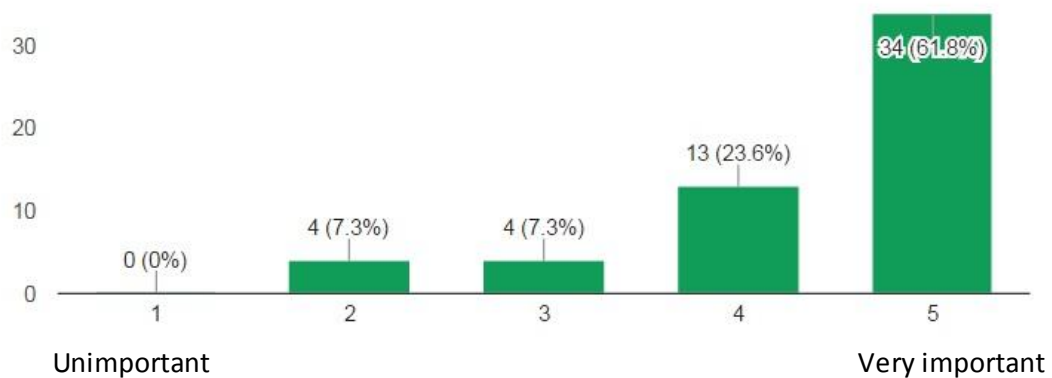
- How is your learning experience affected if ReCap is not provided?
- How is your learning experience affected if ReCap is provided?
- Please feel free to disclose any personal opinions you have around the provision of ReCap as a student with a disability.

Fig 10. To what extent do you believe the level of ReCap is satisfactory on your course?  
(55 responses)



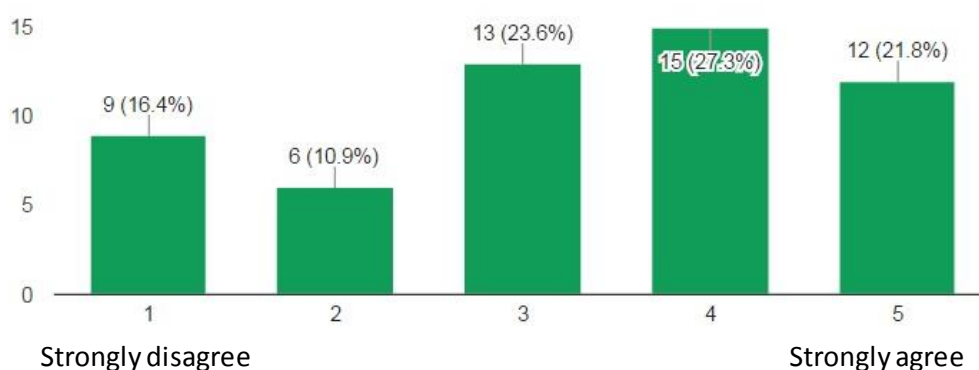
The question “To what extent do you believe the level of ReCap is satisfactory on your course?” returned a similar result to that of the All Student Survey, however the percentage of students who were “more than satisfied” was much lower, with more general dissatisfaction present among students with a disability

Fig 11. How important is ReCap to your Academic Experience? (55 responses)



When asked how important ReCap was to their academic experience, 85.4% of respondents believed it was either “important” or “very important”, and no respondents declaring it to be “unimportant”.

Fig 12. Does the provision of ReCap on a module influence your decision to take it?  
(55 responses)



The third and final compulsory question provided a similarly mixed response to that received in the All Student Survey, albeit with a heavier leaning towards the sense that the provision of ReCap does influence their decision.

#### Open text question 1 – “How is your learning experience affected if ReCap is not provided?”

*“As someone with a hearing impairment, I struggle in lectures on a regular basis as lecturers often don't wear microphones. Recap ensures I don't miss anything/can catch up at home.”*

*“I often will be feeling left behind as I cannot fully catch up on what I have either missed due to illness, which is often due to my compromised immune system, or have not been able to pay full attention due to my blood glucose levels not being in the correct range.”*

*“Any portion of the lecture I miss due to temporary uncontrolled inattention is lost and I have to catch up using notes which leads to an incomplete picture. If I'm distracted by people entering or other noises I wouldn't be able to check what I missed.”*

*“If I'm ill I find it extremely difficult to catch up especially with Chronic Fatigue as this has an impact on my concentration skills to read so it's a lot easier if Recap is there.”*

*“Without recap my anxiety is worse as I'm concerned I forget what a lecturer says, and I miss things to write down etc. I know on days of really bad mental health, or physical illness recap will have my back if I can't attend.”*

*“I struggle to keep up with the speed lecturers go at, and so a lack of ReCap for a lecture usually results in only half of that lecture having notes, putting me at a disadvantage when I come to revise.”*

*“Irlen's syndrome means I struggle to see the board and SpLD makes it hard for me to take in and understand spoken information. This combination along with a slow working speed means Recap is vital to me being able to learn content for modules.”*

*“If I miss all or part of a lecture due to doctor's appointments, hospital appointments, debilitating low or high blood sugars, then I have to use notes from someone else and often don't get the context of the topic being discussed, that I would have got had I been in the lecture.”*

### **Open text question 2 - How is your learning experience affected if Recap is provided?**

*"I am able to revise lectures I may have struggled to understand when present due to either my medication (side effects are fatigue, light headedness, migraines, confusion) or pain as a result of my condition."*

*"Can make full use of information provided if unable to attend lectures. Can focus energy/attendance on compulsory sessions knowing I can catch up on lectures using recap"*

*"I'd be able to go over lectures if I didn't understand and use it as a revision tool. If I miss the lecture I wouldn't miss the information that can affect my overall grade."*

*"I struggle to keep up with the speed lecturers go at, and use ReCap after the lectures to make sure I catch everything. It allows me to go at my own speed and pause and repeat bits I didn't fully catch."*

*"Less stress, better able to process information, helps me save my energy, allows me to listen and learn in the best way I can knowing that the information is available again for extra notes afterwards."*

*"ReCap reduces the pressure of note-taking in lectures and supports me to learn as well as other people. Before university there was no system like this so now I am surprising myself with how much better my grades are."*

### **Open text question 3 – inviting general student opinion / other comments**

*"Recap is essential to many students with disabilities as it ensures we're not disadvantaged by the problems we encounter in lectures."*

*"My academic life would be ten times easier if staff used ReCap as my disability would not have such a huge impact on my learning and hinder my academic progress as well as my social progress due to exhaustion, pain and the need for recovery."*

*"As a student with dyslexia it is very difficult and often impossible to make good lecture notes in the lecture as the pace is just too fast. Having recap means I can re-listen to lectures at a slower speed and make clear and comprehensive notes which are crucial for good revision before exams."*

*"ReCap is the biggest life saver out there for someone who has slow brain processing so does not receive all the information in a standard lecture. I can go back listen, pause, research and return to lectures as a please."*

*"I cannot write notes in lectures fast enough because of my learning difficulty so recap is a vital tool to ensure there are no gaps in my knowledge."*

## Summary

These quantitative and qualitative responses demonstrate the considerable importance that students with a disability place on ReCap provision. For many students, ReCap is an essential learning tool whose absence proves a barrier to fair and effective study. Moreover, the responses also reveal the extent to which ReCap provision is currently insufficient and/or dissatisfactory for many students with disabilities, suggesting the need to secure more consistent and universal implementation of ReCap for this demographic within the student body.

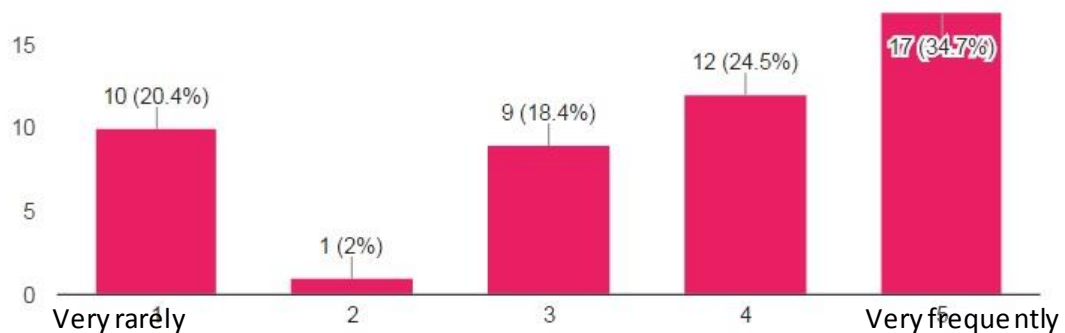
### Section 3 – Students who Compete

The final supplementary survey, entitled “Students who Compete”, was produced in collaboration with Sophie Matthews, the NUSU Athletic Union Officer for 2016/2017.<sup>2</sup> The survey was more succinct and is designed to be overlaid with the All Student Survey. As with the Students with Disabilities Survey, there is a greater focus on qualitative data in the form of open text comments.

Students were asked the following questions:

- “Is ReCap currently used on a Wednesday afternoon for your lectures?”
- “Does the provision of ReCap on a Wednesday afternoon affect your decision to compete?”
- “How is your sporting experience affected if ReCap is not provided?”
- “How is your learning experience affected if ReCap is provided?”
- “Please feel free to disclose any personal opinions you have around the provision of ReCap as a student who competes.”

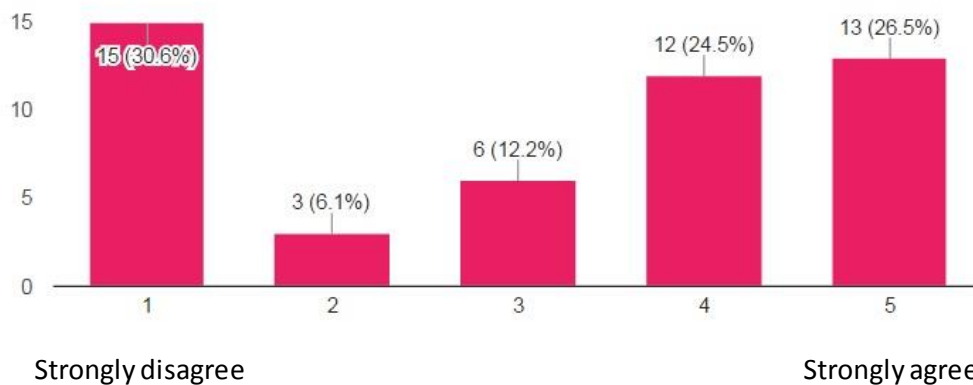
Fig 13. Is ReCap currently used on a Wednesday afternoon for your lectures?  
(49 responses)



The results above once again paint a relatively positive picture, with a majority of students benefitting from ReCap on a frequent or very frequent basis.

<sup>2</sup> The results from this survey will be carried forward by Sophie and subsequent AU Officers in their continuing conversations with faculties around the preservation of free Wednesday afternoons to benefit students who compete.

Fig 14. Does the provision of ReCap on a Wednesday afternoon affect your decision to compete?  
(49 responses)



The results to the above question illustrate the balance that students who compete try to strike between their sporting and academic commitments. Indeed, the 30.6% of respondents who strongly disagree that provision of ReCap has an influence on their decision to compete, might be best interpreted as those who are absolutely committed to their sport irrespective of academic implications.

By contrast, the results demonstrate that a combined majority of students agree or strongly agree that ReCap provision does affect their decision, denoting a cohort of students who may strike a different balance between their academic and sporting lives. Furthermore, highlights from the open-text responses provide a real insight into the factors playing into this balance:

**Open-text question 1 – “How is your learning experience affected if ReCap *is not* provided?”**

*“I am under pressure to compete to stay in the team even if this means missing lectures and material.”*

*“Ultimately, as a sport scholar I choose to compete rather than attend the Wednesday lectures. Lecturers are often difficult about catching up with the university missed, so ReCap would enable me to ensure nothing was missed.”*

*“[Lack of ReCap provision] encourages me not to play sport which I feel is not right.”*

*“[ReCap] makes it a lot easier to balance both important aspects of university, as I know I can do just as well with my work with ReCap if I have a clash with competitions. Without ReCap, I would either not perform well in my sport or miss out on lectures.”*

*“Very strongly as much harder to catch up on what is missed without. Would be less likely to compete far away if there was no recap available”*

*“I would definitely struggle to catch up on work missed [without ReCap] and would most likely have to attend fewer sports matches as a result.”*

*“I started a new sport but didn't want to miss Wednesday teaching when fixtures started at the beginning of the academic year. As a result I felt too far behind to join fixtures a few weeks in and this led to me now having stopped the sport altogether.”*



## **Open-text question 2 - How is your learning experience affected if Recap is provided?**

*"I think it improves learning experience, I use it a lot during revision if there is a topic I haven't understood, and you are able to slow it down which is really useful."*

*"Massively, allows me to feel comfortable missing a lecture to represent the uni."*

*"Can participate in University sports on the basis that will not have missed out on any of the required lectures."*

*"It enables me to compete and work around and attend competitions which i wouldn't be able to do if recap wasn't available."*

## **Final open-text question – inviting general student opinion / other comments**

*"As a student playing in a sports team Recap is very useful to me and I would seriously consider not playing if it meant I missed Wednesday lectures and there was no way I could catch up on the lecture."*

*"It needs to be provided more. I have a Wednesday afternoon seminar which I cannot attend because of rowing commitments."*

*"It is not fair for the University to expect students to make every single lecture while also emphasising the importance of being involved in extracurricular activities (sports / clubs / societies)."*

*"ReCap is a massive help when lectures or concepts are difficult and you've missed the lecture for a competition. It means your never at a disadvantage for representing the University."*

## **Summary**

The responses to the Students Who Compete Survey demonstrate that ReCap is a vital tool for students balancing academic and sporting commitments. While the results show that there are a considerable minority of absolutely dedicated competing students for whom ReCap is not a consideration, they also demonstrate that ReCap is a key factor for the combined majority of students who compete. Moreover, when provided, ReCap allows these to avoid having to choose between carrying out their studies to the best of their abilities or representing the University in a sporting capacity.

## Summary

See below a snapshot of results from NUSU's three surveys into the use of ReCap at Newcastle University.

1. *"To what extent do you believe the level of ReCap is satisfactory on your course?"*

Cohort:	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree
"All-students"	12.6%	20.3%	67%
"Students w/ disabilities"	27.3%	29.1%	43.7%

2. *"Do you use ReCap as a revision tool?"*

Cohort:	Rarely	Indifferent	Frequently
"All-students"	14.6%	13.5%	71.9%

3. *"Do you use ReCap as an alternative to attending lectures?"*

Cohort:	Rarely	Indifferent	Frequently
"All-students"	72%	16.8%	11.3%

4. *"Does the provision of ReCap influence your decision to attend lectures?"*

Cohort:	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree
"All-students"	62.9%	19.5%	17.6%

5. *"Does the provision of ReCap on a module influence your decision to take [that module]?"*

Cohort:	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree
"All-students"	42.5%	23.3%	34.2%
"Students w/ disabilities"	27.3%	23.6%	49.1%

6. *"How important is ReCap to your academic experience?"*

Cohort:	Unimportant	Indifferent	Important
"Students w/ disabilities"	7.3%	7.3%	85.4%

7. *"Is ReCap currently used on a Wednesday Afternoon for your lectures?"*

Cohort:	Rarely	Indifferent	Frequently
"Students who compete"	22.4%	18.4%	59.2%

8. *"Does the provision of ReCap influence your decision to compete?"*

Cohort:	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree
"Students who compete"	36.7%	12.2%	51%

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