

When the campus closed: longitudinal evidence on belonging, hybrid provision and the future of built environment education

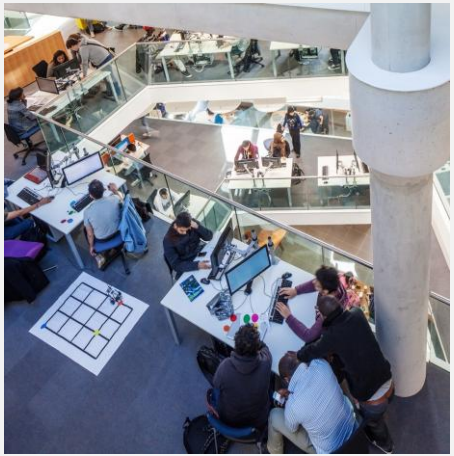
Adelina Skirth

iBEE 2026

Studios, workshops, labs, project rooms and site visits are more than spaces for teaching,

they are fundamental elements of professional formation.

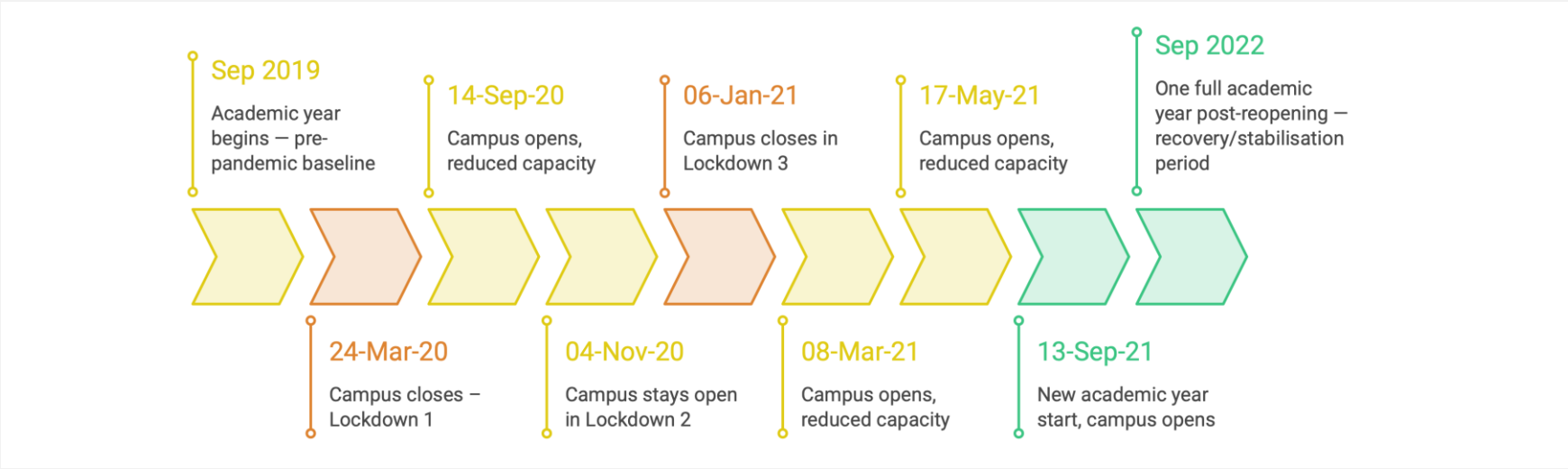








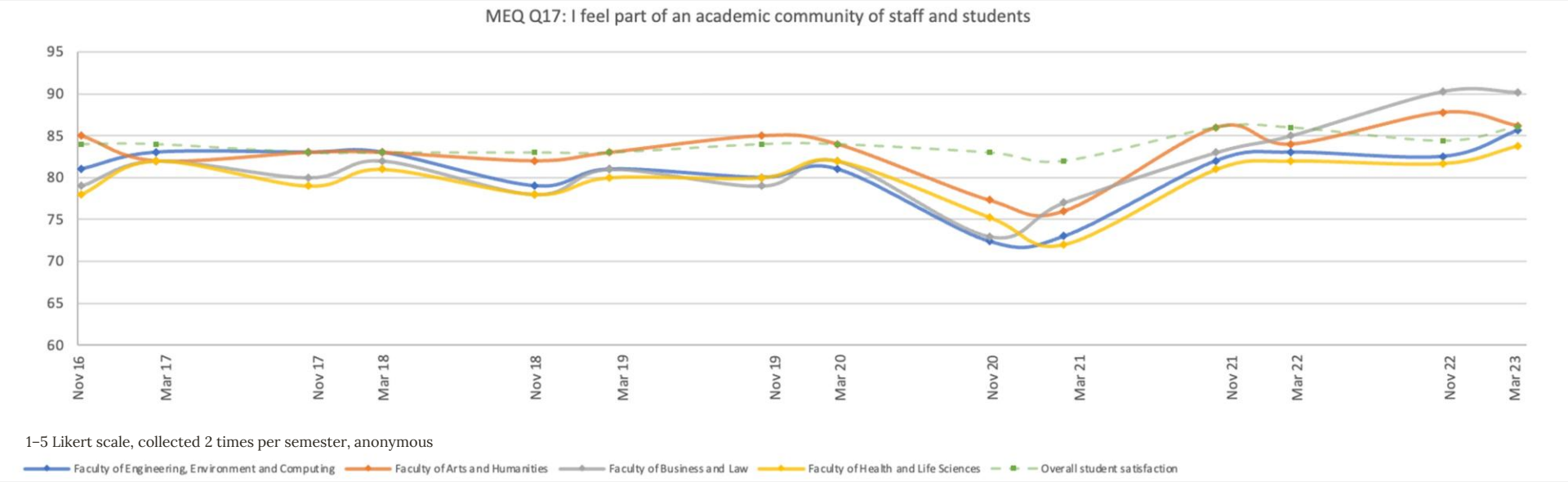
The natural experiment



Teaching, assessment and academic support continued throughout via digital provision, only physical access changed.

The dataset

Longitudinal Module Evaluation Questionnaire (MEQ) data



7

Academic years

32,773

Respondents average/ year

Two questions

Q20 (Satisfaction)

"Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this module."

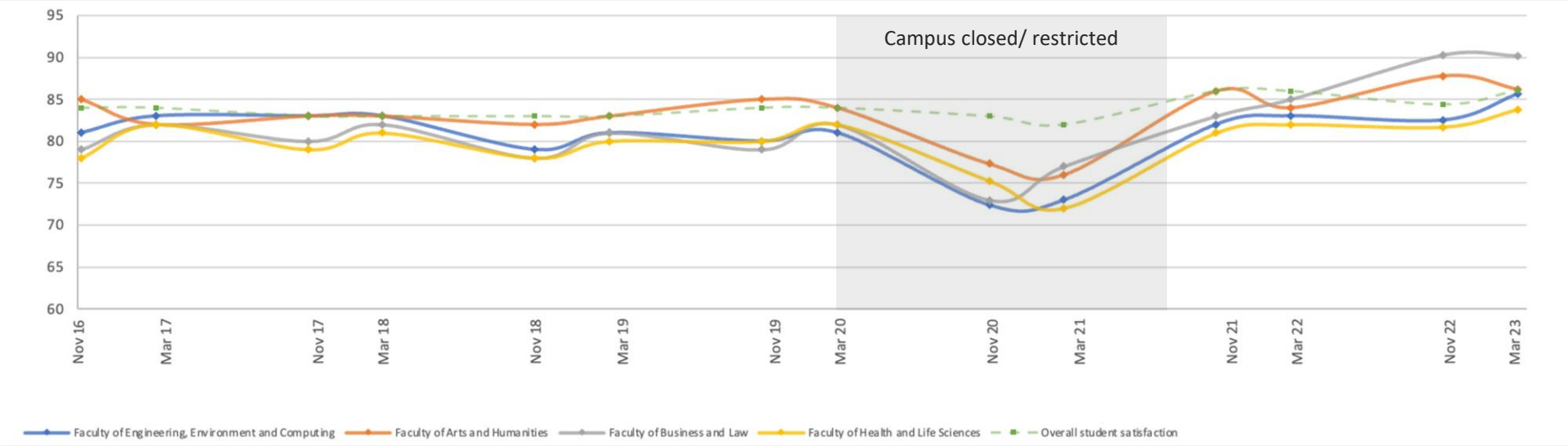
3% drop during closure

Q17 (Community)

"I feel part of an academic community of staff and students."

9.5% drop during closure

Impact of closure on students







The difference

Hybrid provision held up perceived teaching quality reasonably well.

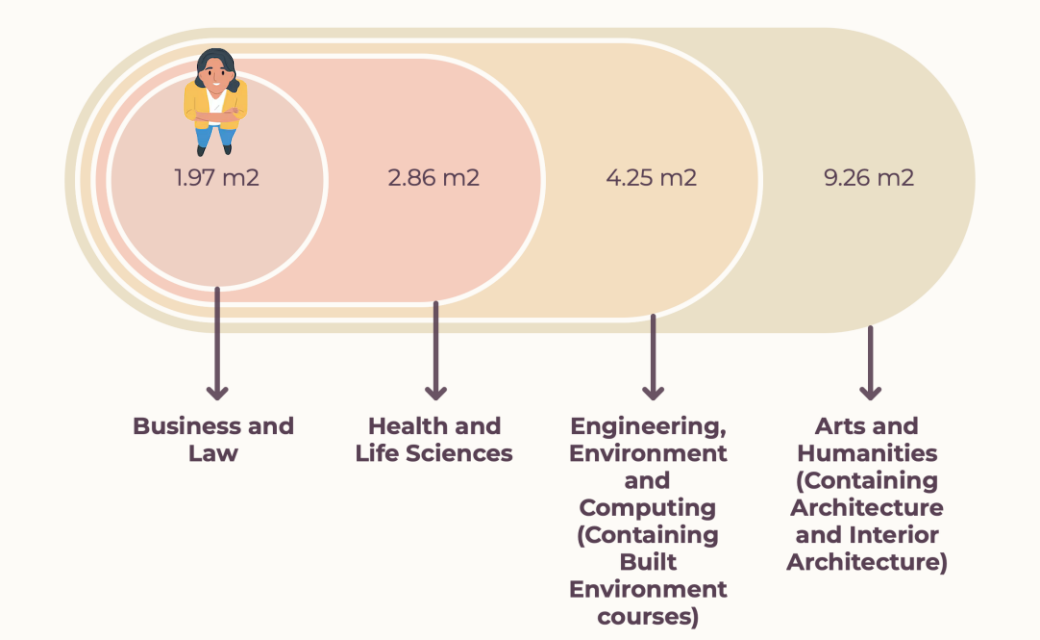
It did not substitute for the sense of belonging that comes from physical co-presence.

Satisfaction and community are not the same, and they don’t change at the same rate.

Does the amount of space per student matter?

Faculty of Arts and Humanities had the smallest community drop (8 points)

All others dropped ~10 points regardless of starting score **or** m²/student

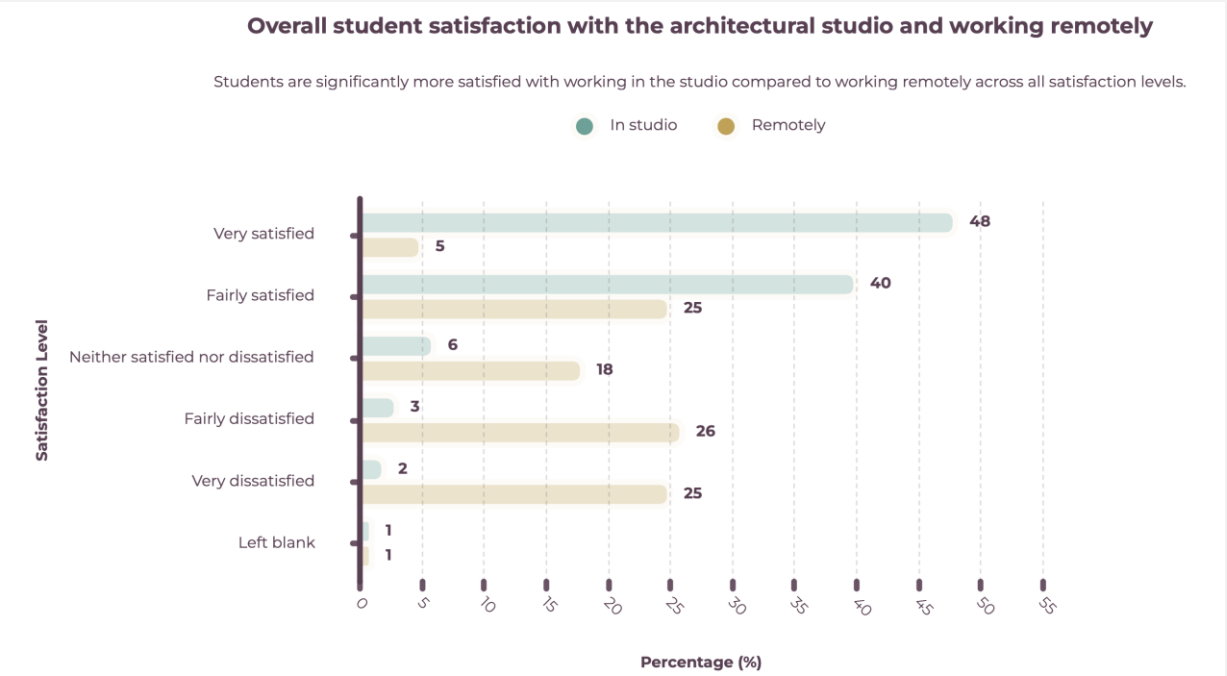


Are Architecture students different?

UK-wide survey, 798 students / 120 tutors, 29 architecture schools.

Studio satisfaction fell 88% to 30% on the move to remote delivery, driven mainly by loss of peer interaction and informal learning, not formal teaching quality.

(Grover & Wright, 2023)



Grover, R., & Wright, A. (2023). Shutting the studio: The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on architectural education in the United Kingdom. International Journal of Technology and Design Education, 33(3), 1173–1197. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10798-022-09765-y

This matters for built environment education specifically

- MEQ data covers all faculties, but studios, labs and site visits are exactly the co-present activity q17 measures
- Belonging comes from daily interaction with peers and staff (Tinto, 2017) and is core to these disciplines
- Same pattern as architecture course: construction management site visits and hands-on content suffered most when moved online (Shojaei et al., 2023)
- Effect probably stronger where pedagogy is built on shared physical practice, "signature pedagogies" (Shulman, 2005)



Shojaei, A., Ly, R., Rokooei, S., Mahdavian, A., & Al-Bayati, A. (2023). Virtual site visits in construction management education: A practical alternative to physical site visits. Journal of Information Technology in Construction, 28, 692–710. https://doi.org/10.36680/j.itcon.2023.036

Shulman, L. S. (2005). Signature pedagogies in the professions. Daedalus, 134(3), 52–59. https://doi.org/10.1162/0011526054622015

Tinto, V. (2017). Reflections on student persistence. Student Success, 8(2), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.5204/ssj.v8i2.376

Implication 1: Where to draw hybrid limits

Post-pandemic hybrid provision has often settled in by accumulation of individual decisions.

Question for the room: which elements of delivery can safely run online, and which are load-bearing for professional formation?

Successful online

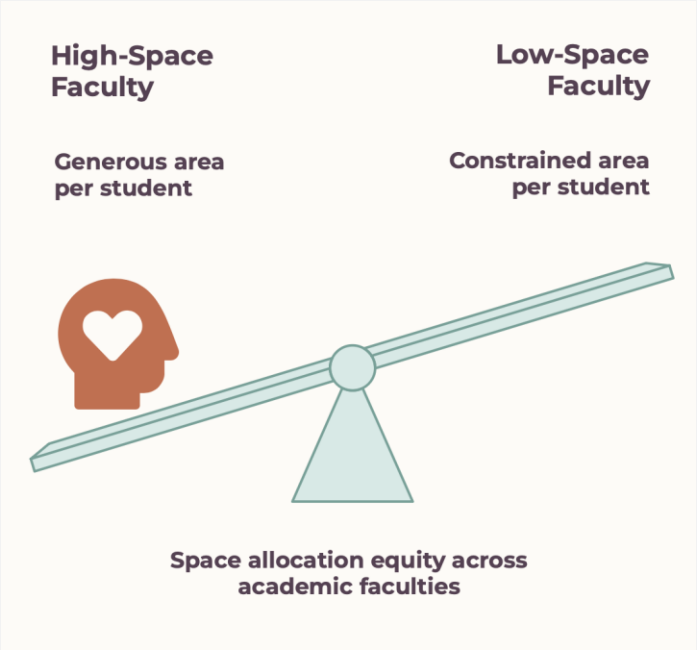
Needs co-presence



Implication 2: Internal equity of space

Space-per-student varies substantially by faculty/course (1.97 m²–9.26 m² in the CU case study).

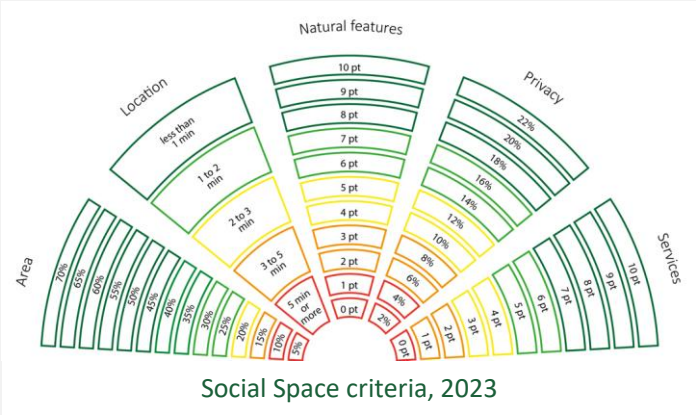
If space correlates with resilience of community during disruption, it brings an equity question across cognate subjects



Implication 3: What accreditation frameworks could measure

Current criteria audit teaching space, not the informal social space around it, yet that's where much of the peer interaction and belonging this data measures happens.

Accreditation could extend physical-resources criteria to assess the presence, accessibility and quality of social space adjacent to studios and labs, drawing on emerging assessment tools built for that purpose.



Social Space criteria, 2023

Manea, A. (2023). Design criteria for social spaces and a healthier university campus: A Coventry University case study[Master's thesis, Coventry University]. Coventry University Pure Portal. https://pureportal.coventry.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/design-criteria-for-social-spaces-and-a-healthier-university-camp/

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they are fundamental elements of professional formation.

"What would professional accreditation criteria need to measure to include this?"

Thank you



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The Good Space Index

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More about the Social Space Criteria: