

Dear clients of the Income Tax Unit,

I am pleased to share with you the attached overview of the results of the **2020 HQCSS Client Satisfaction Survey for the Income Tax Unit (ITU)**.

As one of the components of the Headquarters Client Support Service (HQCSS) in the Department of Operational Support (DOS), the Income Tax Unit processes income tax reimbursement for US citizens and US residents for the entire UN Secretariat and several Agencies, Funds and Programmes.

AREAS OF STRENGTH

Overall, the satisfaction levels were higher in terms of the quality of the services provided (65%) compared to the timeliness (58%).

I am pleased to note that the satisfaction levels for the individual services provided by the Income Tax Unit were higher than the overall results, with 5 out of the 7 services scoring higher than 70% overall satisfaction. Some of the **main areas of strength** included “**Statement of Taxable Earnings**” (83%) and “**Estimated Tax Advances**” (73%) in alignment with the results of 2019. I am also happy to highlight that various clients recognized the support received and provided personal thanks to colleagues.

I take the opportunity to share that ITU was able to process 100% of the requests received by the IRS deadline in 2020.

AREAS OF DISSATISFACTION

Some of the **main areas of dissatisfaction** included “Penalty and Interest” and “any other tax related advice”. I also note that many respondents took the time to provide feedback highlighting the complexity and lengthiness of the process as well as the slow response time.

In reference to the areas of dissatisfaction, I wish to emphasize that the Income Tax Unit is a very small team serving over 7000 staff members globally and that top priority is given to the timely settlement of tax reimbursement claims to ensure that all requests that are submitted by the deadline are processed on time before the IRS deadline, which may impact other areas of work due to the limited staffing capacity. Additionally, in regard to the high levels of dissatisfaction in the area of “any other tax related advice”, I take the opportunity to highlight that as per its mandate, ITU is **not permitted** to provide advice to staff members or to assist in the preparation of tax returns.

Despite the staffing constraints, I acknowledge that improvements continue to be required in the areas of the timeliness of responses to clients as emphasized in the comment section of the survey. HQCSS is working to propose an enhancement of capacity as to further launch innovation projects that will improve service delivery and continue to ensure the timely processing of requests.

RESULTS OVER TIME:

The overall satisfaction rates increased for the Income Tax Unit compared to 2019, both overall as well as by process. The positive results are the result of a number of factors, including but not limited to the continuous dedication and hard work of HQCSS staff.

I thank you for your participation in the 2020 Survey and look forward to continue working with you throughout 2021.

Best regards

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HQCSS 2020 CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Client feedback on the services provided by the Income Tax Unit during 2020.

DOS/DOA/HQCSS/ITU

Introduction

At the end of 2020, the Headquarters Client Support Service (HQCSS) launched a survey to gather client feedback on the services provided by the Income Tax Unit (ITU). The survey aimed to gather information on the quality and timeliness of services provided in the second year of the Department of Operational support (DOS) and of HQCSS. The results will help the Income Tax Unit in its efforts to continuously improve the services provided to our clients.

Key Findings

- **UN Income Tax Unit:** 65% satisfaction with the quality and 58% satisfaction with the timeliness of services;

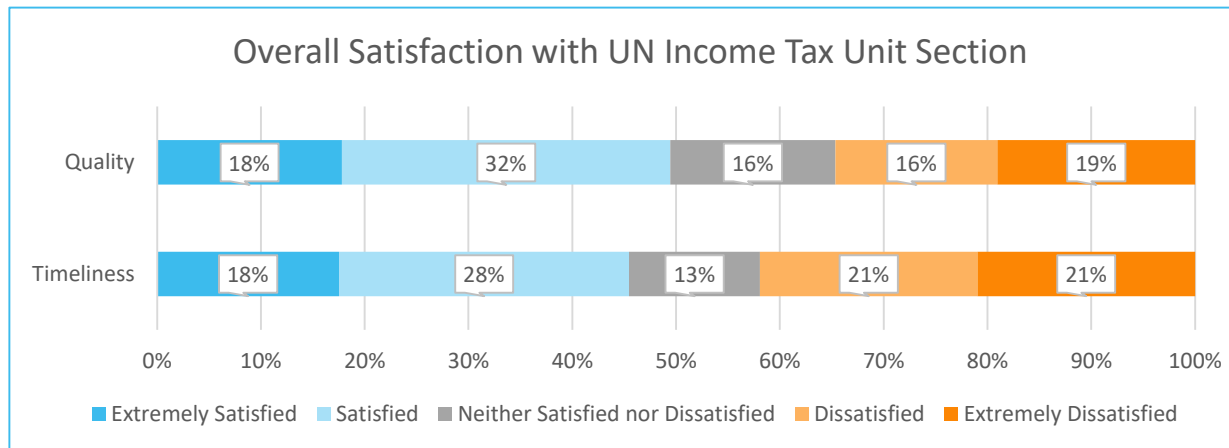
Survey Background

The survey was open from Tuesday, 8 December through Thursday, 31 December 2020.

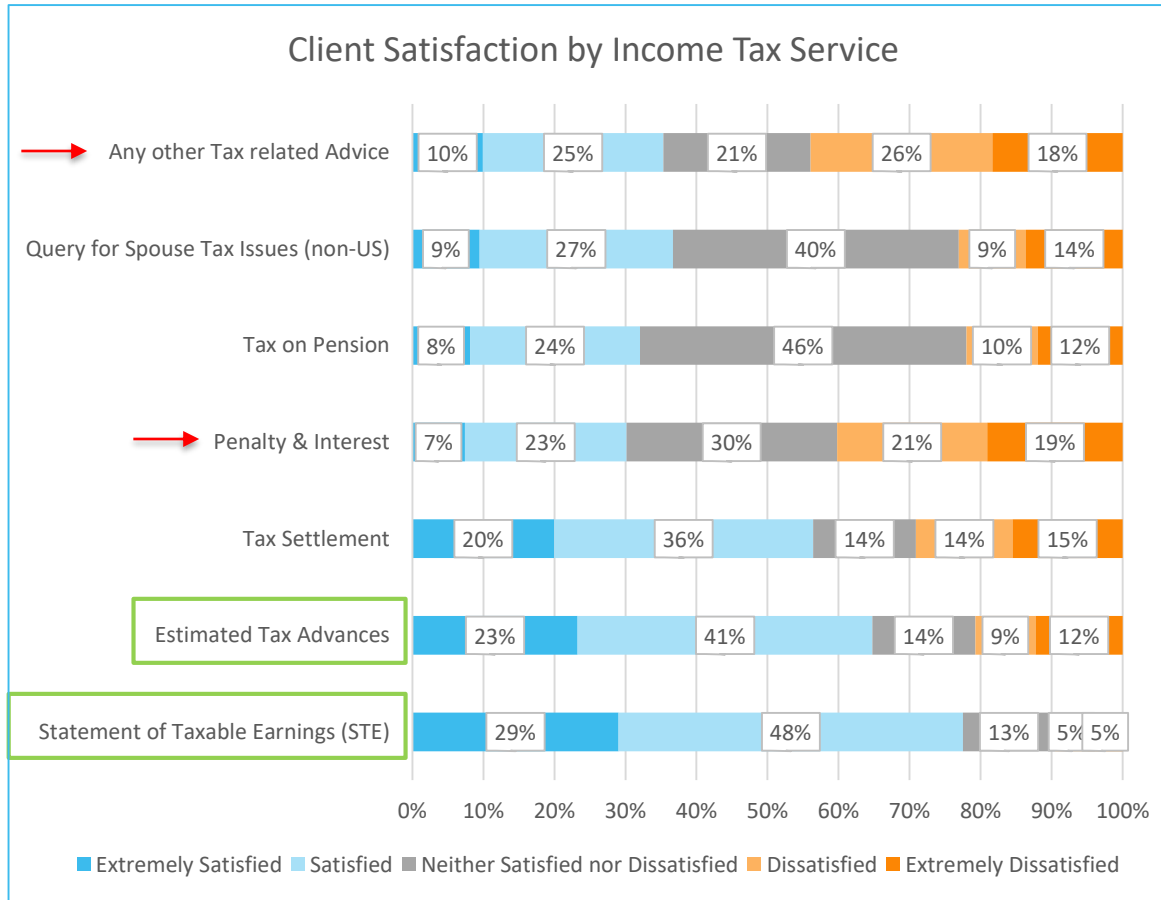
- The **Income Tax Unit survey** was shared with all clients through the STAR distribution list. The survey was filled out by a total of **737 respondents** (51% of respondents were from the UN Secretariat).
- The results were gathered through the survey platform “Microsoft forms” and are presented both as overall satisfaction levels by component, as well as satisfaction levels by service.
- The results present satisfaction levels only for those clients who have engaged with the specific service.
 - Overall satisfaction rates include “Extremely Satisfied”, “Satisfied”, and “Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied”.
 - Responses that were “Not Applicable” were not included.

Income Tax Unit

- Overall, 65% of clients were satisfied with the quality and 58% with the timeliness of services of the UN Income Tax Unit. 35% of clients dissatisfied with the quality of the services and 42% with the timeliness.



Satisfaction by Income Tax Unit service



Services with the highest satisfaction rates included:

- Statement of taxable earnings (29% extremely satisfied, 48% satisfied, and 13% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied);
- Estimated tax advances (23% extremely satisfied, 41% satisfied, 14% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied);

Services with the lowest satisfaction rates included:

- Any other tax related advice (26% dissatisfied, 18% extremely dissatisfied);
- Services on penalty and interest (21% dissatisfied, 19% extremely dissatisfied);

The breakdown of services changes compared to the overall satisfaction with 5 out of 7 services scoring higher than 70%.

Income Tax Unit Results: 2020 compared to 2019

- The **Income Tax Unit** received less responses in 2020 compared to 2019 (737 compared to 1011 responses from the previous year). The percentage of internal Secretariat staff respondents was lower than in 2019 (51% compared to 59%).
- The overall satisfaction rates for the Income Tax Unit were higher than in 2019 with a 7% increase in reference to the quality and 8% increases in reference to the timeliness of services.
- The processes identified in the Survey remained unchanged to those assessed in 2019.
- It is worth noting that while the Income Tax Unit overall satisfaction stood at 65% for quality and 58% for timeliness, the satisfaction rates per process stand higher with 5 processes out of 7 scoring above 70% satisfaction.

Satisfaction

- In 2020 the services with the highest satisfaction remained “**Statement on taxable earnings (STE)**” as well as “**Estimated tax advances**”. It is worth noting that the overall satisfaction increased for both compared to 2019, respectively from 83% to 91% and from 74% to 79%.

Dissatisfaction

- The services with the highest dissatisfaction rates remained “**Any other tax related advice**” and “**Penalty and interest**”. For both the overall dissatisfaction decreased, respectively from 51% to 44% and from 44% to 40%.

Income Tax Unit Results: Reflections

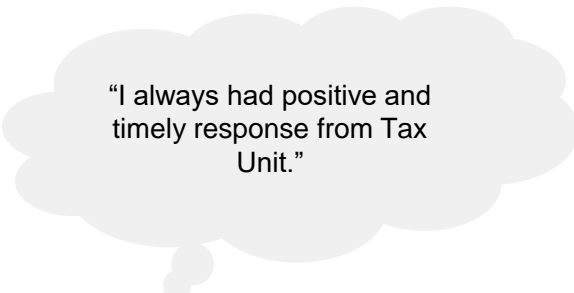
- Overall, the improvements seen in the area of the Income Tax Unit are the result of the **dedication and hard work** of the ITU team that played a **key factor in processing 100% of the requests** received by the IRS deadline in 2020.
- Additionally, the **automation and improvement of various processes**, including the expansion of **e-payments** to the staff of the Agencies, Funds and Programmes, positively contributed by ensuring a faster and safer payment method (electronic transfer) to all UN staff since the end of 2019.
- Finally, it is important to note that the satisfaction levels in the individual areas were above the overall average for the unit, with 5 out of 7 levels achieving over **70% satisfaction**.
- In reference to the areas of dissatisfaction, it is important to highlight that the Income Tax Unit is a **very small team serving over 7000 staff member globally** which requires **prioritization** of the areas of work accordingly. Given the **limited staffing capacity**, top priority is given to the timely settlement of tax reimbursement claims, timely payments of estimated tax advances, and issuing of the statement of taxable earnings to clients submitting earnings report.
- Additionally, with regard to the high dissatisfaction levels in the area of “Any other tax related advice”, it is important to emphasise that as per its mandate, ITU is **not permitted** to provide advice to staff members or to assist in the preparation of tax returns.
- Given the staffing constraints mentioned and the prioritization required to deliver the essential services, improvements continue to be required in the area of the timeliness of responses to clients as emerged in the comment section of the survey.
- HQCSS is **working to propose an enhancement of the capacity**, specifically to **improve communication** and continue to work on further innovation projects that will improve service delivery and continue to ensure the timely processing of requests. In fact ITU has started working with OICT on the development of a new software to facilitate the submission of US tax reimbursement claims for staff through online platforms for a faster and more secure process.

Comments and Feedback


Overview

- Out of 737 respondents, 426 provided additional comments and feedback.
- Several clients recognized the support received and provided personal thanks to colleagues for their support.
- The main areas of concern focused on the following:
 - Slow turnaround time with need to escalate in order to receive a response;
 - Request to improve service for staff away from NY;
 - Suggestions to streamline and digitize the process;
 - Lack of clarity on processes;
 - Delays in the receipt of the statement of taxable earnings;
 - Criticism with the UN/US tax system;

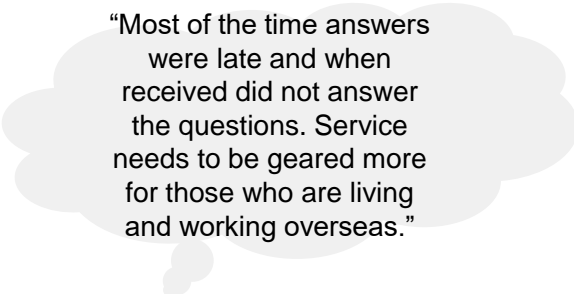
Comments



“I always had positive and timely response from Tax Unit.”



“Service was excellent when I got it, but there were extremely long delays.”



“Most of the time answers were late and when received did not answer the questions. Service needs to be geared more for those who are living and working overseas.”



THANK YOU