

HERTS UNF!LTERED 2.0

2025-26

DROP THE
RECEIPTS



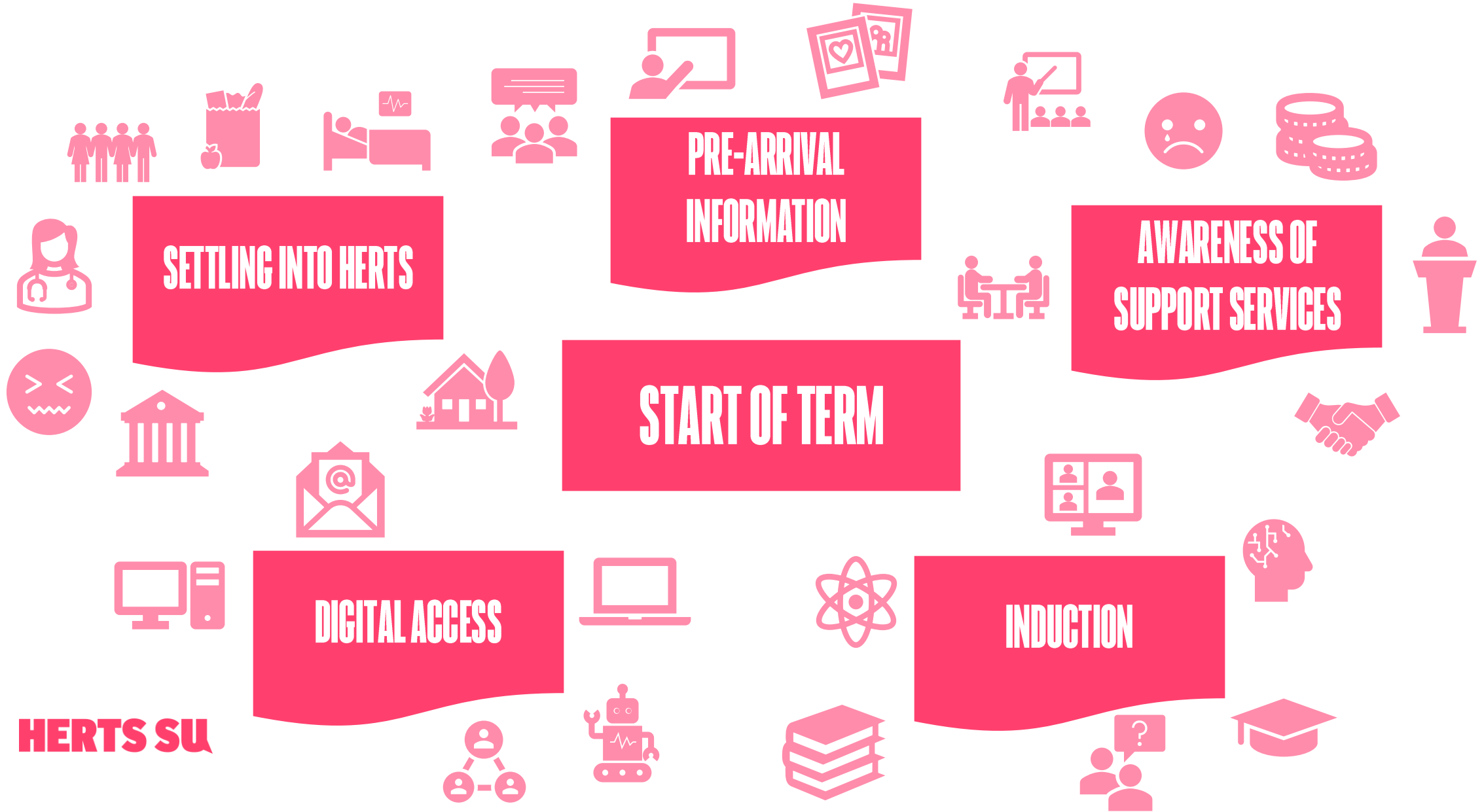
HERTS
SU YOUR
UNION

INSIGHT TEAM
research@hertssu.com

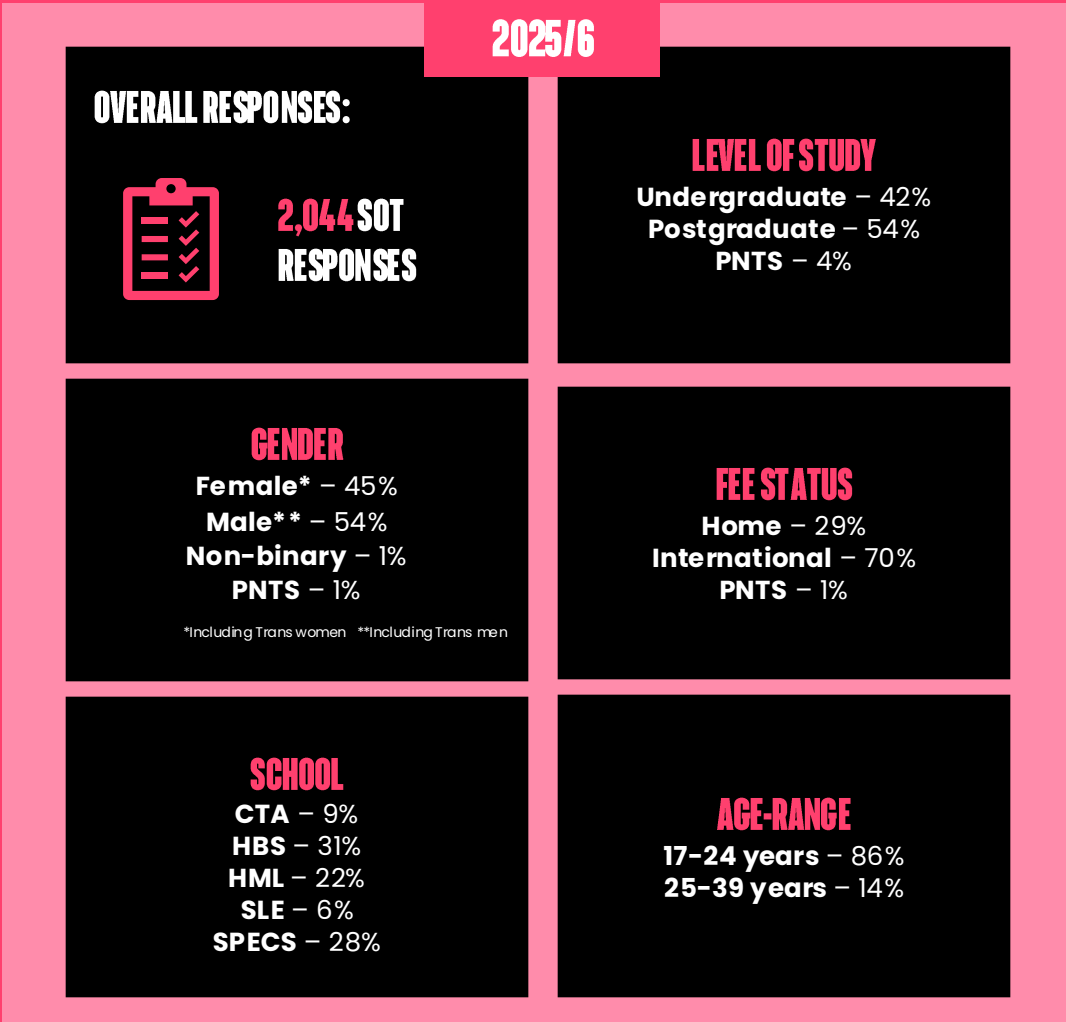
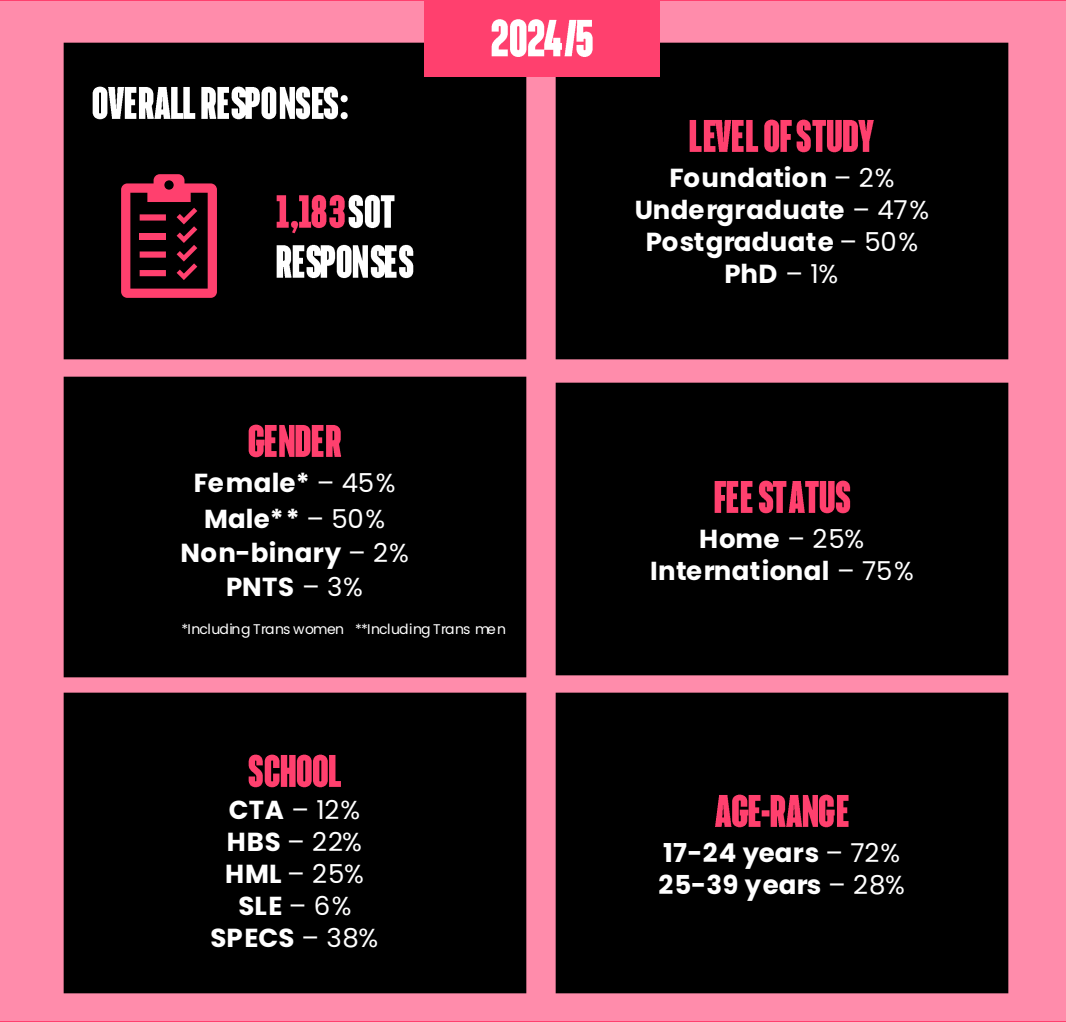
WHAT IS **HERTS UNFILTERED?**

- Herts Unfiltered is a **student listening** project – focussing on understanding students' **expectations, experiences, and concerns** throughout the year.
- The project began in the 2024–25 academic year, receiving **6,897 responses** from students.
- Our target audience is **first year UG** students, however we welcome responses from everyone.
- Data is predominantly collected via our **student staff** – enabling **signposting to support**, whilst supported by targeted student communications.
- **Insights will be shared** on an ongoing basis with the goal to **address concerns in real time**, where possible.

HERTS UNF!LTERED 2.0 | PHASE 1 | THEMES EXPLORED



RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

2024/5

ETHNICITY

Asian – 65% Arab – 2%
Black – 11% Mixed – 2%
White – 14%
BAME – 83%

DISABILITY

Disabled – 7%
No Disability – 93%

WORK

No Part-Time Work – 72%
0-10 Hours – 9%
11-20 Hours – 17%
20+ Hours – 2%

LIVING

Live on-campus – 37%
Live in Hatfield – 23%
Live within 60mins – 27%
Live 60+mins away – 13%

FIRST IN FAMILY

FIF – 48%
NFIF – 52%

CARE RESPONSIBILITIES

Yes – 11%
No – 89%

2025/6

ETHNICITY

Asian – 62% Arab – 2%
Black – 17% Mixed – 2%
White – 15%
BAME – 85%

DISABILITY

Disabled – 14%
No Disability – 86%

WORK

No Part-Time Work – 68%
0-10 Hours – 12%
11-20 Hours – 16%
20+ Hours – 4%

LIVING

Live on-campus – 22%
Live in Hatfield – 20%
Live within 60mins – 35%
Live 60+mins away – 23%

FIRST IN FAMILY

FIF – 42%
NFIF – 58%

CARE RESPONSIBILITIES

Yes – 19%
No – 81%

EXPECTATIONS BEFORE ARRIVAL

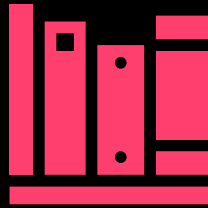
WHY DID YOU WANT TO COME TO UNIVERSITY?

1



To improve career prospects (**33%**).

2



To continue my education after school/college (**18%**).

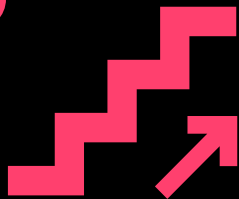
3



To study a subject that I enjoy (**12%**).

BEFORE YOU ARRIVED AT UH, WHAT WERE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?

1



Developing my career (**62%**).

2



Meeting new people (**27%**).

3

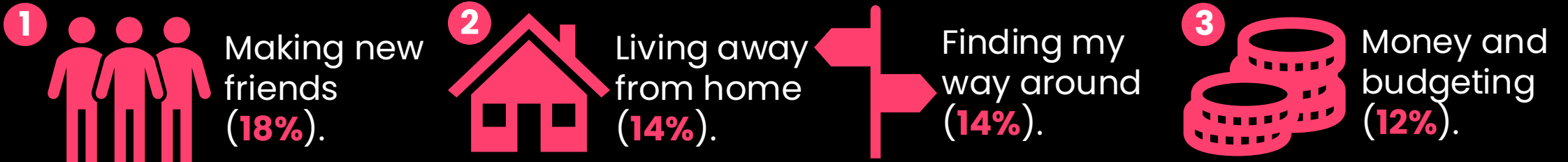


Studying a subject I am passionate about (**26%**).

EXPECTATIONS BEFORE ARRIVAL

BEFORE ARRIVING AT UH, WHAT WERE YOU MOST NERVOUS ABOUT?

20% WEREN'T NERVOUS ABOUT ANYTHING

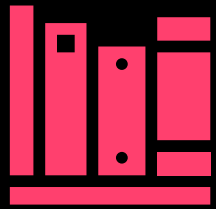


WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO FOR FUN?



EXPECTATIONS BEFORE ARRIVAL | DEMOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS

WHY DID YOU WANT TO COME TO UNIVERSITY?



Home + UG +

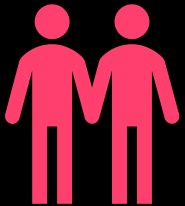
Males: To continue my education after school/college (**23%**).

BEFORE YOU STARTED, WHAT WERE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?



Caring responsibility: Developing my career (**67%**).

BEFORE YOU STARTED, WHAT WERE YOU MOST NERVOUS ABOUT?



Non-Binary: most nervous about making friends (**35%**).

DID YOU FACE ANY CHALLENGES IN YOUR FIRST FEW WEEKS AT HERTS?



Females: felt anxious in social situations (**25%**).

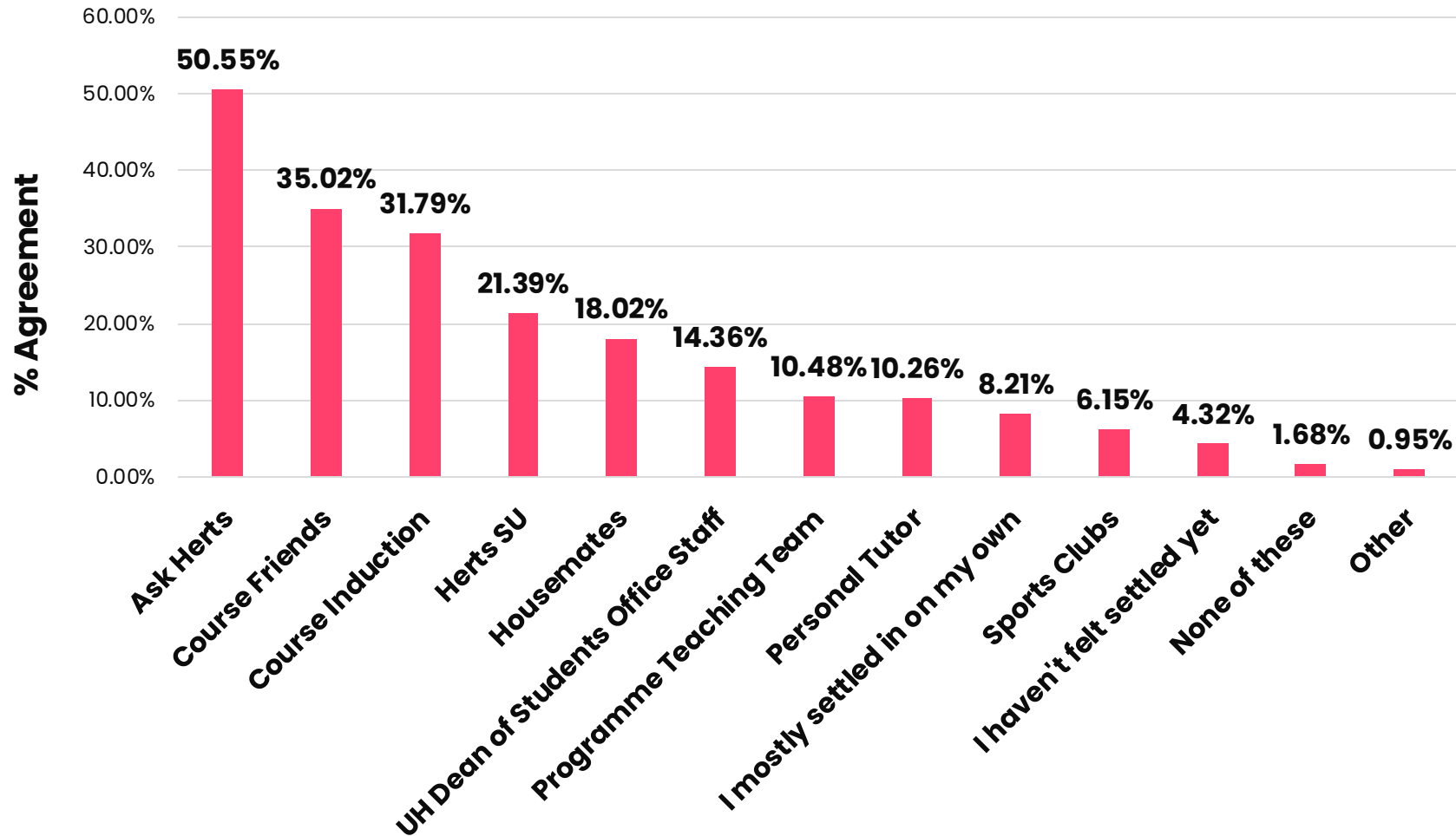
UNDERGRADUATE HOME RESPONDENTS:

Males: felt very nervous about making friends (**24%**).

Asian ethnicity: were excited to develop their careers (**61%**).

Disabled: felt friends on their course were the most helpful in settling into Herts (**47%**).

THE FIRST WEEKS | SETTLING-IN



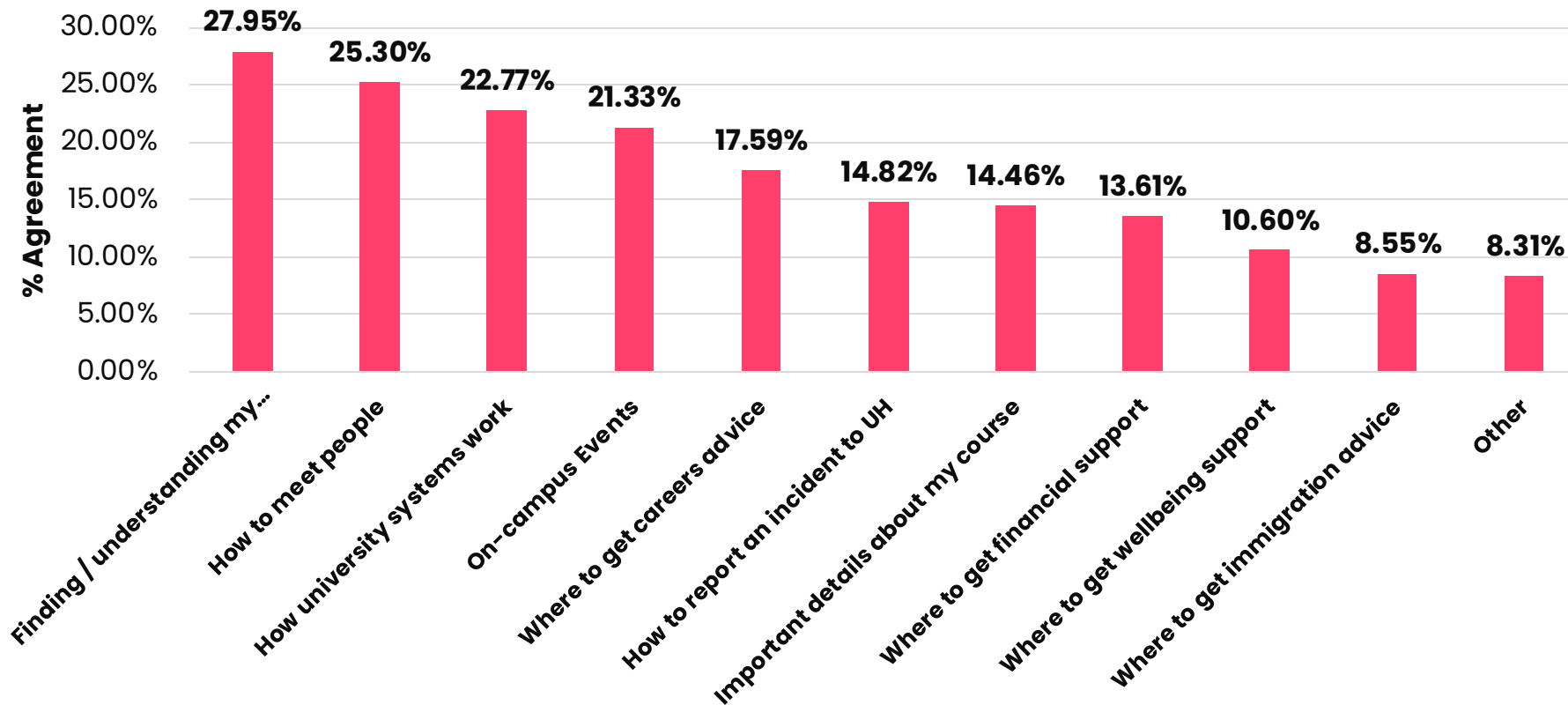
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WHAT HELPED YOU SETTLE IN?

Although Ask Herts was reported the most helpful for settling in, **Home** students had a different experience, reporting **friends on my course (50%)** and **Course Inductions (34%)**, as the most helpful in settling in. Students from **CTA** and **SLE** also reported **friends on my course** as the most helpful, speaking to the **need for strong communities** alongside formal inductions.

THE FIRST WEEKS | INDUCTIONS

Was any information missing or unclear during your induction?



TIMETABLING

Across all segmentations of data, of which we produce 40, there was only **One** group of students that didn't report **Finding / Understanding my timetable** as one of the top two issues, and that was **Foundation** students – who still reported **How University systems work** as their top issue (32%)

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HOW MANAGEABLE WAS YOUR INDUCTION CONTENT? 26% TOO MUCH 68% ABOUT RIGHT 5% NOT ENOUGH

HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED | 2024/5 vs. 2025/6

QUESTION	2024/5	2025/6	DIFFERENCE
SoT had exceeded my expectations	14%	38%	24%
How to access academic skills support.	94%	80%	-14%
How to access wellbeing support.	94%	68%	-26%
How to apply for financial support.	82%	60%	-22%
How to access careers guidance.	90%	74%	-16%
I have met my personal tutor	69%	51%	-19%

Overall, the **SOT Experience** had improved on last year, increasing reports of **exceeding expectations** by **24pp**.

Awareness of support services has **dropped significantly** since last year, with the **biggest decline in Wellbeing Support (-26pp)**.

THE FIRST WEEKS | FINDING HELP (2025 - 6)

Do you know how to get help with these matters (if needed)?

	OVERALL	HBS	CTA	HML	SLE	SPECS
Course Questions	78%	76%	81%	82%	76%	78%
Mental wellbeing	68%	61%	76%	77%	68%	66%
Physical Health	65%	62%	66%	68%	63%	70%
Academic Skills	80%	79%	80%	82%	76%	83%
Digital Skills	70%	68%	76%	66%	64%	75%
Financial Support	60%	57%	57%	61%	61%	64%
Careers Advice	74%	75%	73%	73%	74%	79%
Visa Advice	57%	68%	44%	49%	45%	65%

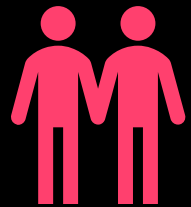
THE FIRST WEEKS | DEMOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS



Second year respondents were unsure how to get help with their course (**75%**).



18–24-year-olds were less likely to know how to access careers advice (**46%**).



Mixed ethnicity respondents felt anxious in social situations during their first few weeks at Herts (**19%**).



25–39-year-olds were less likely to know how to access mental health support (**36%**).

UNDERGRADUATE HOME RESPONDENTS

Mixed Ethnicity respondents: had less knowledge of how to access digital skills support (**60%**).

Asian Ethnicity respondents: had a lower agreement rate when asked if they knew how to access (**71%**).

THE FIRST WEEKS | CHALLENGES

DID YOU FACE ANY CHALLENGES IN YOUR FIRST WEEKS AT UH?

50% FACED NO CHALLENGES

1



Felt anxious
in social
situations
(19%).

2

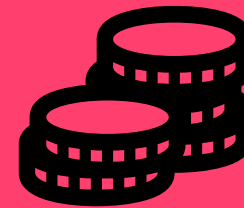


Felt
homesick
(12%).

3



Didn't
feel they
belonged
(10%).



Worried
about
money
(10%).

HOW OFTEN, IF AT ALL, DO YOU FEEL LONELY?

65%

TO ANY EXTENT

Rarely, Occasionally, Often,
and Daily combined.

28%

RARELY

Once per
semester

20%

OCCASIONALLY

Once per
month

13%

OFTEN

Once a
week

5%

DAILY

Or Always

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THE FIRST WEEKS | LONELINESS

HIGHEST LEVELS OF REPORTED LONELINESS

83%

ANXIOUS

80%

LIVE ON-CAMPUS

77%

CTA

72%

HML

72%

BLACK

LOWEST LEVELS OF REPORTED LONELINESS

50%

PGR

50%

20+ HOURS WORK

57%

ARAB

59%

HBS

60%

FOUNDATION

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THE FIRST WEEKS | PERSONAL TUTORING

PERSONAL TUTORING PREFERENCES



In-person
1-to-1's
(63%)



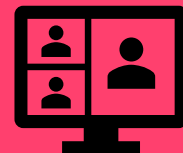
In-person
Groups
(16%)



E-mail
contact
(9%)



Online
1-to-1's
(8%)



Online
Groups
(3%)

51%

Had met their
Personal Tutors.
Representing a **18pp
decrease** from the
same time last year.

Black (40%), White (42%),
Students that lived **on-**
campus (43%) Students from
SPECS (44%), and **Trans**
(45%) were the least
engaged with **Personal**
Tutors



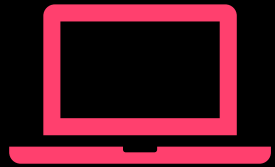
FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF CAMPUS...



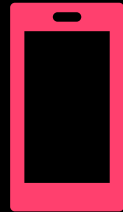
Safe Clean Nature Busy Difficult
Peaceful Social Big Confusing to
Welcoming Lively Pleasant Cold navigate

THE FIRST WEEKS | DIGITAL ACCESS & SKILLS

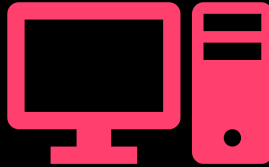
BEFORE STARTING AT UH, WHICH DEVICE DID YOU EXPECT TO USE FOR YOUR STUDIES?



Laptop
(**63%**).



Mobile
phone
(**26%**).



Other
(**11%**).

62%

Agreed they were told, or were aware, of any specific equipment that they would require for their studies.

92%

Feel confident using UH's online systems (i.e. Canvas) in their first weeks.

80%

Feel confident using Artificial Intelligence tools to appropriately support their learning.

AI TOOLS WIL MOST LIKELY BE USED FOR...

39%

Explaining difficult concepts

30%

To help with revision

THE FIRST WEEKS | COST OF LIVING

50%

I **can cover** my living costs

40%

I **can cover** my living costs, **with some difficulty**

10%

I am **unable to cover** my living costs

WHO STRUGGLES THE MOST?

Non-Binary (20%), **Mixed Ethnicity** (34%), and respondents **living over 60mins travel time from campus** (40%) are the groups of students who reported the lowest levels of agreement that they could cover their living costs (without difficulty).

60%

Are aware of **Money advice or financial support**, down **22pp** on last year.

THE FIRST WEEKS | DEMOGRAPHICS



Mixed ethnicity respondents felt confident using the UH online systems(**100%**).



46% of home students were not made aware of specific equipment or digital technology required for their course.



Only 45% of Non-Binary respondents had met their personal tutor compared to the average (**51%**)



40 + respondents were feeling lonely on a daily basis (6%).

UNDERGRADUATE HOME RESPONDENTS:

Black ethnicity respondents: had lower agreement rates when asked if they were aware of specific equipment required for their course(**47%**).

Disabled: only **58%** of respondents felt confident using AI to support their learning.

START OF TERM | RACE EQUITY

Black, Arab, Asian, Mixed Ethnicity and **White** students all come to UH with **Improving career prospects** as the main reason for going to University, and are **most excited about developing their career**.

But all ethnicities have different expectations what makes them nervous, e.g. **Asian** and **Arab** students **aren't nervous**, while **White** students worry about **making friends**, and **Black** students worry about **finding their way around**.



While **Asian** students report higher levels of satisfaction and awareness than last year and higher than **White** students in some areas this year.



Arab, Black and **Mixed Ethnicity** students continue to report a different experience of UH compared to their **White** counter-parts.

ACCESS PARTICIPATION

When segmenting data further and although the numbers, are small (which raises disengagement concerns) for **UG Home White** or **Black, Male White** or **Black, UG Home Male White** or **Black, Black** students **almost always** reported lower levels of satisfaction and awareness.

HERTS UNFILTERED | START OF TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. MAINTAINING FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION.

- Maintaining implementation of the Induction and Transition Framework will aid in building upon an equal start, with a mind to review activities to ensure steady pace and flow of information, coupled with the need for repetition to embed information.
- Maintain course to implement the Careers Development Framework as students universally agree that they came to the university to improve their career prospects and are most excited by how the university will support them to develop in their career while here.
- Review utilisation of Personal Tutor Framework following clear change in student preferences across the institution for individual face-to-face support.

2. A RACE-EQUITABLE CAMPUS.

- An institution-wide project to tackle race equity, including a detailed analysis of key drivers, such as attendance, awarding, campus engagement and support services as Black, Arab and Mixed Ethnicity students consistently report gaps in experience.
- Pro-active additional communication with APP target groups (UG Home Black students) as low-engagement with Herts Unfiltered, despite Black students engaging in higher numbers, may indicate early signs of disengagement.

HERTS UNF!LTERED | START OF TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

3. A COMMUNITY THAT NEEDS NURTURING.

- A revitalised collaboration with Herts SU to develop communities within schools that builds upon existing students-supporting-students informal practices, as seen when settling in, to tackle differences in experience and loneliness, despite coming to the university with similar expectations.
- Include Home students in on-campus enrolment, providing additional opportunities for earlier face-to-face connection with each other and the university.

4. REVIEW TIMETABLING PROVISION.

- Conduct a review of timetabling provision to meet agreed principles, with a clear communication plan to students, helping them understand how to access their timetables.

5. ACCESS TO DIGITAL AND MATERIAL RESOURCES

- Review pre-arrival communications ensuring required technology and resources students need to complete their course are sufficiently covered to improve student preparedness.
- Establish a digital access and course materials fund to bridge the gap where students that have recently joined the university, that may now be in a position where they're at risk of disadvantage due to being unable to purchase required materials prior to arrival, as half of students report challenges covering their living costs.

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**HOW ARE YOU GETTING ON @ UNI SO FAR?
TALK TO US!**



ANY QUESTIONS?

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