

# HERTS UNFILTERED 2.0

## SEMESTER B ENTRANTS

Phases 1-3 Combined

DROP THE RECEIPTS



**HERTS**  
**SU** YOUR UNION

INSIGHT TEAM  
[research@hertssu.com](mailto:research@hertssu.com)

# WHAT IS HERTS UNFILTERED?

- Herts Unfiltered is a **student listening** project – focusing 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.
- For **Phases 1-3b**, undertaken between February – March 2026, our target audience was only students who had **begun their studies in Semester B**.
- This feedback opportunity was promoted **exclusively via e-mail** – through registered student data shared with Herts SU by UH Academic Registry. Semester B entrants received **4 bespoke e-mails** requesting involvement with the project.
- While additional promotion was requested from Schools, most declined due to conflicting survey activity.

# HERTS UNFILTERED 2.0 | SEMESTER B ENTRANT PHASES

## PHASE 1b



### START OF TERM EXPERIENCES

**Ran: Start of Sem B**

- Expectations before arriving.
- Settling-in
- Awareness of support

**185**

**Responses Received**

## PHASE 2-3b



### ON-CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

**Ran: February 26**

- Attendance patterns
- Challenges
- Value of engagement

**140**

**Responses Received**

**295 SEM B ENTRANTS RESPONDED = 8% RESPONSE RATE**

# HERTS UNFILTERED 2.0 | CONDITIONAL FORMATTING

- We've previously **RAG** rated findings against **Overall** findings, with at or above in green, within 3% in amber, and 3% above/below in red.
- We've revised our approach to formatting of data identifying appropriate targets to meet research standards and improve data confidence.

## Targets

- Student confidence target: 75%
- Student satisfaction: 85%
- Student awareness: 90%
- Student engagement: Up YoY
- Other: Ad Hoc

## Formatting

- Bright Green: >5% above target
- Light Green: <5% above target
- Yellow: <5% below target
- Light Red: 5% – 10% below target
- Bright Red: >10% below target

# RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

## PHASE 1-3B

### OVERALL RESPONSES:



**295**  
**RESPONSES**

### LEVEL OF STUDY

Undergraduate – 6%  
Postgrad – 93%

### GENDER

Female – 32%  
Male – 68%

### FEE STATUS

Home – 3%  
International – 97%

### SCHOOL

CTA – 5%  
HBS – 31%  
HML – 3%  
SLE – 5%  
SPECS – 60%

### AGE-RANGE

18-25 years – 71%  
26+ years – 29%

## PHASE 1-3B

### ETHNICITY

Asian – 78%  
Black – 14%  
White – 2%

### DISABILITY

Disabled – 7%  
No Disability – 93%

### WORK

No Part-Time Work – 89%  
0-10 Hours – 2%  
11-20 Hours – 7%  
20+ Hours – 2%

### LIVING

Live in Hatfield – 31%  
Live within 60+ mins – 39%

### FIRST IN FAMILY

FIF – 26%  
NFIF – 74%

### CARE RESPONSIBILITIES

Yes – 18%  
No – 82%

# BEFORE ARRIVAL | MOTIVATIONS

\* Compared to Sem A Entrants

## WHY DID YOU WANT TO COME TO UNIVERSITY?

1



To improve career prospects (53%).

20pp ↑\*

2



To qualify for a specific profession (10%).

3

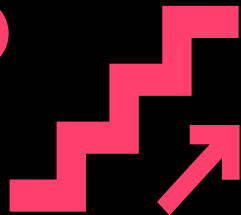


To study a subject that I enjoy (7%).

5pp ↓\*

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

1



Developing my career (70%).

8pp ↑\*

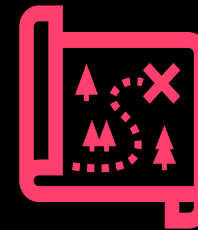
2



Studying a subject, I am passionate about (36%).

9pp ↑\*

3



Exploring my new location (29%).

12pp ↑\*

# BEFORE ARRIVAL | EXPECTATIONS

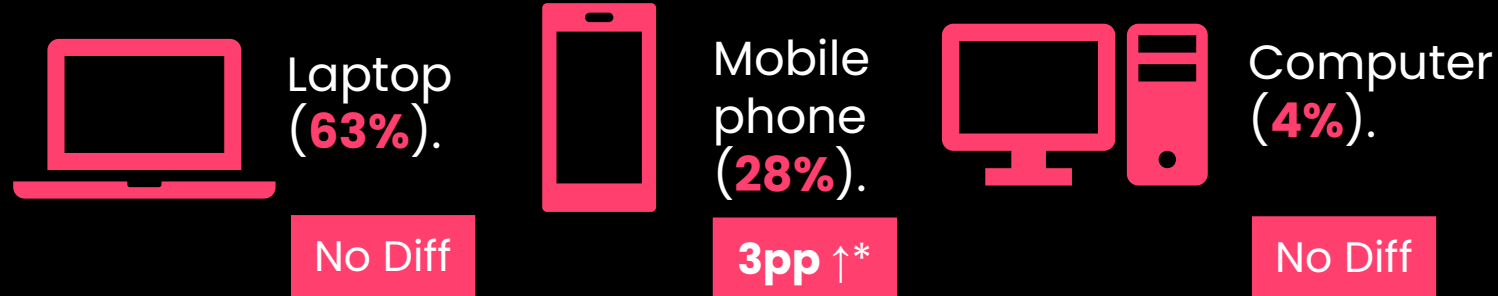
\* Compared to Sem A Entrants

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

**31%** WEREN'T NERVOUS ABOUT ANYTHING **11pp ↑\***



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



**73%**  
Agreed they were told, or were aware, of any specific equipment that they would require for their studies  
**(+11pp Increase)**

# THE FIRST WEEKS | INDUCTION

\* Compared to Sem A Entrants

## HOW MANAGEABLE WAS THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION YOU RECEIVED IN YOUR INDUCTION?

**69%**

Agreed that the content of Induction felt **"About right"**

1pp ↑ from Sem A

**23%**

Agreed that the content of Induction felt **"Too much"**

3pp ↓ from Sem A

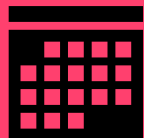
**8%**

Agreed that the content of Induction felt **"Not enough"**

2pp ↑ from Sem A

## WHAT INFORMATION WAS MISSING OR UNCLEAR?

**1**



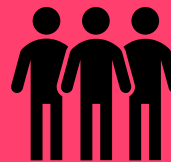
How to find/understand my timetable (27%) **1pp ↓\***

**2**



How university systems work (25%) **2pp ↑\***

**3**



How to meet people (23%) **2pp ↓\***

**4**

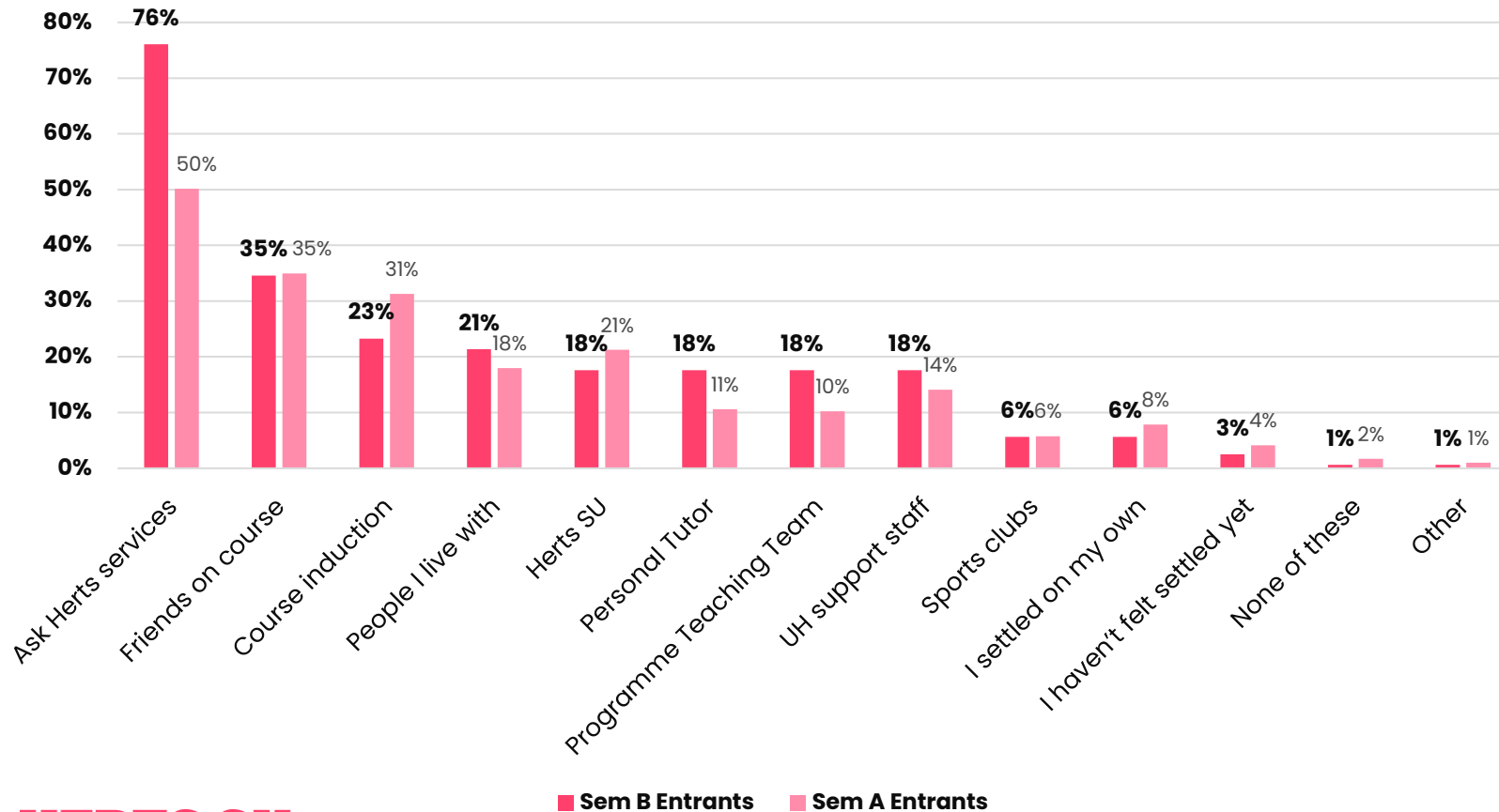


Where to get careers advice (21%) **4pp ↑\***

# THE FIRST WEEKS | **SETTLING-IN**

**ASK HERTS SERVICES HAD THE GREATEST POSITIVE IMPACT FOR SEMESTER B ENTRANTS**

**Which of these have been the most helpful at settling you in at Herts?**



**HERTS SU**

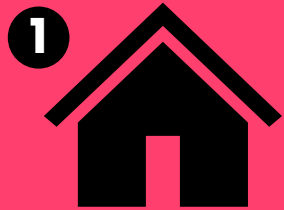
Although Ask Herts was reported the most helpful for settling in, **Home** respondents had a different experience, reporting **friends on my course (60%)** and **Course Inductions (60%)**, as the most helpful in settling in.

Students from **HML** also reported **friends on my course** as the most helpful, speaking to the **need for strong communities** alongside formal inductions.

# THE FIRST WEEKS | CHALLENGES

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

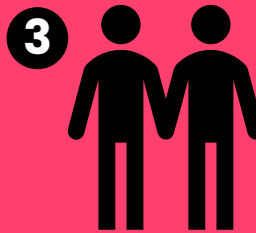
**54%** FACED NO CHALLENGES



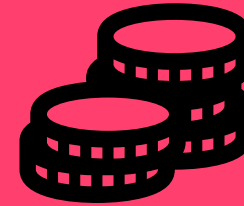
Felt homesick (15%).



Felt anxious in social situations (12%).



Didn't feel they belonged (10%).



Worried about money (10%).

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

**66%**

**TO ANY EXTENT**

Rarely, Occasionally, Often, and Daily combined.

**21%**

**RARELY**

Once per semester

**28%**

**OCCASIONALLY**

Once per month

**11%**

**OFTEN**

Once a week

**6%**

**DAILY**

Or Always

**HERTS SU**

# THE FIRST WEEKS | COST OF LIVING

**48%**

I **can cover** my living costs

↓ 2 pp from Sem A

**40%**

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

Remained the same from Sem A

**12%**

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

↑ 2 pp from Sem A

## WHO STRUGGLES THE MOST?

**Has never met their PT** (40%), **Males** (42%), and respondents **living over 60mins travel time from campus** (42%) are the groups of students who reported the lowest levels of agreement that they could cover their living costs (without difficulty).

**63%**

Are aware of **Money advice or financial support**, a **3pp increase** from Sem A SOT.

# THE FIRST WEEKS | AWARENESS OF SUPPORT

	Semester B Entrants	Semester A Entrants	PP Diff
Questions about your course	81.76%	78.16%	+3.60%
Mental health / wellbeing	61.01%	68.21%	-7.20%
Physical health	64.15%	65.43%	-1.28%
Academic skills	80.13%	79.70%	+0.43%
Digital skills	75.32%	69.99%	+5.33%
Financial support	63.46%	60.00%	+3.46%
Careers advice	76.92%	74.46%	+2.46%
Visa advice	69.23%	57.48%	+11.75%

Overall, Sem B entrants rated their start-of-term experience as meeting or exceeding their expectations **-4pp lower** than Sem A entrants (**89%**).

Overall, awareness of most support areas show positive progress compared to Semester A, with particularly **strong improvements** in awareness of **Ask Herts Services and Visa Advice**.

**Mental health and wellbeing is the only area with a notable decline**, highlighting a key priority for further attention.

# CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT & ACADEMIC CONFIDENCE

\* Compared to Sem A Entrants

SEMESTER B ENTRANTS REPORTED **27pp** ↑ AGREEMENT THAT THE UNIVERSITY'S ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS WERE CLEAR

**98%**

**1pp** ↑\*

"Coming to campus helps me learn better."

**94%**

**3pp** ↑\*

"Being on-campus improves my wellbeing."

**96%**

**2pp** ↑\*

"Being on-campus helps me have fun."

SEMESTER B ENTRANTS REPORTED **15pp** ↑ AGREEMENT THAT THEY MOST COMMONLY ATTENDED CAMPUS 3-DAYS PER WEEK

**94%**

**2pp** ↑\*

Feel confident about their academic performance

**94%**

Feel confident about achieving their degree goals

**97%**

**4pp** ↑\*

Feel their academic workload is manageable

# ACADEMIC SUPPORT

How helpful has each of these forms of support been to your academic confidence?



Surprisingly, although Semester B entrants reported higher levels of agreement that UH Academic Skills support was helpful to them (**+4pp; 91% vs. 87%**), they also rated External Academic Skills Support (non-UH) favourably (**88% vs. 71%**), with a **+17pp** higher helpfulness score than Semester A entrants.

Also, Sem B respondents reported **+17pp higher** confidence that they can identify when it is appropriate to use AI tools in their academic work (**96% vs. 79%**).

# PERSONAL TUTORING

## PERSONAL TUTORING PREFERENCES



In-person  
1-to-1's  
(64%)



In-person  
Groups  
(18%)



E-mail  
contact  
(10%)



Online  
1-to-1's  
(5%)



Online  
Groups  
(3%)

**49%**

Had met their  
Personal Tutors.  
Representing; a **2pp decrease** from  
**Semester A (SOT)**  
respondents.

Students from **SPECS (37%)**,  
**Black (38%)**, **18–24-year-olds (43%)**, **Postgraduate Taught (46%)**, and  
**International (48%)** reported  
the lowest engagement with  
**Personal Tutor** support.



## FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF CAMPUS...



Beautiful

Overwhelming

Supportive

Good  
infrastructure

Peaceful

Friendly

Modern

Welcoming

Attractive

Pleasant

Confusing

# KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEM A AND SEM B ENTRANTS

## Stronger Career Orientation

Semester B entrants demonstrate **higher career motivation** and are **more career-driven** at every stage: pre-arrival motivation, excitement for study, and use of AI for academic enhancement

**But they have a higher level of academic anxiety**

## Greater overall confidence

- Semester B entrants show:
- Higher **confidence in managing early anxieties.**
  - **Stronger clarity about AI** requirements for their studies.
  - Higher **academic confidence**

**But experience slightly higher levels of homesickness and lower awareness of how to seek wellbeing support.**

## Lower Start-of-Term Satisfaction

Semester B entrants **heavily relied upon** the support available from **Ask Herts Services as part of settling-in at UH.**

**This could have played a role in Semester B entrants rating their Start-of-Term lower than Semester A entrants.**

# KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEM A AND SEM B ENTRANTS

## Implications

**These findings reinforce the need for consistent, high-quality induction and transition support across all entry points, with particular attention to:**

- Strengthening **course-level induction** to complement central services and improve early satisfaction.
- Accelerating implementation of a **Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework** to address awareness gaps.
- Enhancing **community-building** and belonging, especially for commuter students.
- Reviewing timetabling, pre-arrival communication, and **digital (UH systems) readiness** to reduce friction in early weeks.
- Harnessing **strong career motivation** through continued investment in employability frameworks.

# HERTS UNFILTERED 2.0 | RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. MAINTAINING FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION.

- Maintaining implementation of the **Induction and Transition Framework** but reconsider pace across all four weeks of induction to reduce information overload.
- 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 and undertake some more directive work to ensure students know they've met with a PT (employ a similar approach to HBS)
- **Launch Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework in order to address a gap in student understanding of the benefits that campus brings to student wellbeing.**

## 2. EQUITABLE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE.

- **Institutional prioritisation for the APP initiative, Herts Against Racism, due to the ongoing inequity of experience by ethnicity.**
- **Herts SU** to delve deeper into campus experience as part of Phase 4, to interrogate and unpick the **vastly different experiences** on campus (**Home & International, UG & PG, Male & Female**), and the relationship between **UH experience and School experience.**

# HERTS UNFILTERED 2.0 | 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.
- **Re-prioritise the community building impact of Start of Term, ensuring the key focus is on UH pride, community building and the benefits of attending campus.**

## 4. SETTING STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESS.

- **Conduct a review of timetabling practices that negatively impacted the start of term experience, inclusive of how to access, accessibility, communication of changes, accuracy, and consistency of provision.**
- Review **pre-arrival communications** ensuring required technology and resources students need to complete their course are sufficiently covered to improve student preparedness.
- Improve efficacy in **referral pathways and procedures** to mitigate against exceptional circumstances, reflective of non-academic impacts on student engagement and academic success.
- Review of on **campus facilities** to meet the needs of students, enabling them to feel the benefits that students know come with being here, without the need to leave campus.