

HERTS UNF!LTERED 2.0

PHASE 4 | STUDENT INTERVIEWS

DROP THE RECEIPTS



HERTS
SU YOUR UNION

INSIGHT TEAM
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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 **Phase 4**, undertaken between February – March 2026, our target audience was only students who were not due to complete the NSS, PTES, or Phases 1-3b (Semester B entrants).
- Responses were collected entirely via our student staff Insight Assistants **conducting interviews** with students on-campus; both campuses were covered equally by our outreach activities.

HERTS UNFILTERED 2.0 | SURVEY PHASES

PHASE 1



START OF TERM EXPERIENCES

Ran: Start of Sem A

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

2,044

Responses Received

PHASE 2



ON-CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

Ran: October 25

- Attendance patterns
- Challenges
- Value of engagement

2,227

Responses Received

PHASE 3



ACADEMIC CONFIDENCE

Ran: November 25

- Confidence builders
- Confidence busters
- Support

3,100

Responses Received

PHASE 4



STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Ran: February 26

- Personal Tutoring
- Community engagement
- Loneliness
- Facilities zoom-in

514

Interviews Conducted

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7,885 INSIGHTS RECEIVED FROM 5,690 STUDENTS (EXCL. PHASE 1-3b FOR SEM B ENTRANTS)

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 4

OVERALL RESPONSES:



514
INTERVIEWS

LEVEL OF STUDY

Foundation – 2%
Undergraduate – 41%
Postgrad (Taught) – 44%
Postgrad (Research) – 13%

GENDER

Female – 46%
Male – 54%

FEE STATUS

Home – 17%
International – 83%

SCHOOL

CTA – 7%
HBS – 23%
HML – 25%
SLE – 4%
SPECS – 42%

YEAR OF STUDY

1 – 78%
2 – 17%
3 – 2%

PHASE 4

ETHNICITY

Asian – 68% Arab – 3%
Black – 18% Mixed – 1%
White – 8%

DISABILITY

Disabled – 4%
No Disability – 94%
PNTS – 3%

AGE-RANGE

18-25 years – 78%
26-30 years – 16%
Over 30 years – 5%

LIVING

Live on-campus – 24%
Live in Hatfield – 21%
Live within 60mins – 33%
Live 60+mins away – 22%

WHICH CAMPUS DO YOU SPEND MORE TIME AT?

College Lane – 71%
De Havilland – 25%

EXPERIENCE OF PERSONAL TUTORING

71% HAVE ACCESSED, OR KNOW HOW TO ACCESS, PERSONAL TUTOR SUPPORT | 85% PREFER IN-PERSON CONTACT

WHAT STUDENTS EXPECTED

- Academic progress support (**62%**)
- Understanding course requirements (**36%**)
- Study skills / time management support (**32%**)
- Career advice (**30%**)

WHEN CONTACT WAS FIRST MADE

6% Before arriving at UH



32% During Induction

62% After Induction, in first term.

DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL TUTOR

- Friendly (**68%**)
- Supportive (**67%**)
- Easy to contact (**37%**)
- Approachable (**38%**)
- "Listens to me" (**24%**)
- "Cares about my wellbeing" (**18%**)

REALITIES OF PERSONAL TUTORING

- "I know how to ask for help" (**60%**)
- "Helped with my study skills" (**28%**)
- "Gave me personal support" (**27%**)
- "Gave careers guidance" (**23%**)
- "Gave clear guidance on expectations" (**23%**)

OF THOSE WHO HAD ENGAGED WITH PERSONAL TUTORING, 69% RECEIVED THE SUPPORT THEY HAD EXPECTED

EXPERIENCE OF PERSONAL TUTORING

71% HAVE ACCESSED, OR KNOW HOW TO ACCESS, PERSONAL TUTOR SUPPORT | 85% PREFER IN-PERSON CONTACT

WHAT HAS WORKED?

- Easy to contact (**43%**)
- "I know who they are" (**42%**)
- "I understand their role" (**39%**)
- Respond promptly (**33%**)
- Provide useful academic advice (**26%**)



BARRIERS TO POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

- Hadn't met them (**57%***)
- Don't know who they are (**24%***)
- Don't know how to contact (**23%***)
- Don't know their purpose (**16%***)
- "They don't know me" (**13%***)

*%s of students who reported that Personal Tutoring support had either not met their expectations, or they hadn't had contact (N = 270/498).

CONTACT PREFERENCES

In-person 1-to-1's	In-person Groups	E-mail contact	Online 1-to-1's	Online Groups
46%	38%	23%	25%	18%

WHAT COULD MAKE IT BETTER?

- Academic mentoring (**62%**)
- More 1-1 time (**29%**)
- More space in timetable for meetings (**27%**)
- Study skills development (**23%**)
- More proactive outreach (**20%**)



OF THOSE WHO HAD ENGAGED WITH PERSONAL TUTORING, 69% RECEIVED THE SUPPORT THEY HAD EXPECTED

EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

73% FEEL PART OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY | FEELING PART OF COMMUNITY DOESN'T MATTER TO 14%

COMMUNITY DRIVERS

- Amount of time spent on campus per week (**52%**)
- Having friends at university (**40%**)
- Community involvement – i.e. Societies / Sports (**28%**)
- Balance between on-line / on-site teaching (**24%**)
- Course of school-based events (**19%**)
- Group work (**16%**)

COMMUNITY DIVIDERS

- "I'm mainly here to get my degree" (**63%**)
- "I already have friends outside of uni" (**41%**)
- "I don't have much time to get involved" (**27%**)
- "I don't spend much time on-campus" (**21%**)
- "I prefer to keep my uni and personal life separate" (**19%**)

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	OVERALL	HBS	CTA	HML	SLE*	SPECS
↓ Community ↓ Driver						
Time spent on campus	52%	58%	52%	51%	20%	52%
Friends at university	40%	33%	52%	45%	27%	41%
Community involvement	28%	33%	26%	25%	27%	28%
Course or School-based events	19%	18%	26%	19%	27%	18%

* SLE received less than minimum number of responses for analysis (SLE = 17, min threshold = 30). But data has still been shared for illustrative purposes.

FORMATTING KEY:

>5pp above "Overall"	0.01-5pp below "Overall"
<5pp above "Overall"	5.01-10pp below "Overall"
	>10pp below "Overall"

*Directionality switch if a negative measure.

EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

22% HAVE FELT LONELY OR ISOLATED WHILST AT UNI | 21% HAVE FELT LONELINESS MORE OFTEN SINCE COMING TO UNI

GREATEST CAUSES OF LONELINESS AT UNIVERSITY



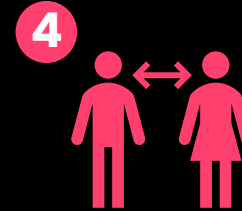
1 Long gaps between lectures (**25%**).



2 Living far from campus (**24%**).



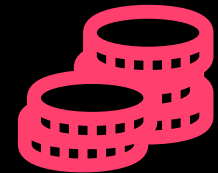
3 Commuter lifestyle (**22%**).



4 Not joining societies or events (**16%**).



5 Feeling out of place in course culture (**14%**).



6 Financial barriers to socialising (**14%**).



6 Social anxiety (**12%**).



7 Lack of personal confidence (**11%**).

Creative Arts (CTA) respondents reported the highest level of loneliness experience whilst at university (43%); with 24% putting it down to feeling socially isolated whilst living in on-campus accommodation. Whilst HML respondents reported 11pp higher levels of social anxiety as a driver for loneliness.

EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

73% FEEL PART OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY | FEELING PART OF COMMUNITY DOESN'T MATTER TO 14%

	OVERALL	HBS	CTA	HML	SLE*	SPECS
Being part of the UH community matters to me	80%	82%	77%	75%	88%	82%
I feel I am part of the UH community	73%	72%	77%	72%	38%	76%
Has experienced loneliness whilst at UH	22%	21%	43%	19%	0%	22%

HBS reported the highest level of impact, of their **time spent on campus** on their community belonging.

CTA placed the highest value on **being known by staff (35%)** in influencing their community belonging.

HML respondents reported **11pp higher** levels of **social anxiety** as a key **driver for loneliness** experience.

School-based events, community involvement, and **uni friendships** were equal drivers of community for **SLE**.

Long gaps between lectures on-campus (**28%**) was the key **driver for loneliness** experience of **SPECS** respondents.

* SLE received less than minimum number of responses for analysis (SLE = 17, min threshold = 30). But data has still been shared for illustrative purposes.

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*Directionality switch if a negative measure.

EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

73% FEEL PART OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY | FEELING PART OF COMMUNITY DOESN'T MATTER TO 14%

	OVERALL	Lives ON-CAMPUS (CL)	Lives ON-CAMPUS (DH)	Lives IN HATFIELD	[Lives outside Hatfield] COMMUTER
Being part of the UH community matters to me	80%	83%	83%	83%	78%
I feel I am part of the UH community	73%	80%	85%	82%	70%
Has experienced loneliness whilst at UH	22%	38%	29%	25%	13%

COLLEGE LANE

KEY DRIVERS FOR LONELINESS IN ON-CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION

DE HAVILLAND

- 1) Long gaps between lectures (30%)
- 2) Social anxiety (19%)
- 3) Feeling socially isolated (17%)
- 4) Not joining societies or attending events (17%)
- 5) Sitting alone in lectures or classes (14%)

- 1) Feeling socially isolated (28%)
 - 2) Not joining societies or attending events (19%)
 - 3) Not knowing people on course (13%)
- Financial barriers to socialising (13%)
Lack of personal confidence (13%)

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FORMATTING KEY:

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>10pp above "Overall"	>10pp below "Overall"

*Directionality switch if a negative measure.

EXPERIENCE OF COST-OF-LIVING PRESSURES

45% AGREED THAT COST-OF-LIVING PRESSURES AFFECT THEIR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

WHAT ARE THE MAIN WAYS THAT COST-OF-LIVING PRESSURES AFFECT YOUR EXPERIENCE?

1



Rent costs
(64%).

2



Campus
food/drink
costs
(41%).

3



Travel costs
(29%).

4



Impact on
attendance
(20%).

5



Feeling
different
from peers
(18%).

6



Limits on
social life
(14%).



Impact on
confidence
or mental
health
(14%).



Laptop,
internet,
and tech
access
(14%).

OF THOSE WHO WERE AFFECTED BY COST-OF-LIVING PRESSURES

25%

Have borrowed
money from
friends or family.

23%

Have moved to
cheaper
accommodation.

22%

Have cut down on essential
spending (i.e.
food/transport/heating).

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EXPERIENCE OF CAMPUS CATERING FACILITIES

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR LUNCH?



WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU MORE LIKELY TO BUY ITEMS FROM THE ON-CAMPUS SHOP?

34%
BETTER VALUE FOR MONEY

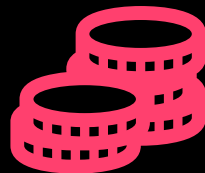
33%
BETTER MEAL DEALS

29%
BETTER DIETARY SPECIFIC OPTIONS

28%
LOWER PRICES

20%
LARGER PORTION SIZES

MAIN REASONS FOR NOT PURCHASING FOOD FROM ON-CAMPUS OUTLETS



Too expensive (**49%**).



Dietary needs not catered for (**23%**).



Lack of healthy options available (**17%**).



Lack of food quality (**17%**).



Limited choice (**16%**).

EXPERIENCE OF LIVING ON-CAMPUS

COLLEGE LANE

BEST THINGS ABOUT LIVING IN ON-CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION

DE HAVILLAND

- 1) Close to lectures and teaching spaces (**56%**)
- 2) Bills included in rent (**49%**)
- 3) Easy access to library and study spaces (**38%**)
- 4) Feeling part of university life (**31%**)

- 1) Easier to make friends (**42%**)
- 2) Bills included in rent (**39%**)
- 3) Easy to access library and study spaces (**37%**)
- 4) Close to library and teaching spaces (**32%**)

COLLEGE LANE

IMPROVEMENTS FOR ON-CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION

DE HAVILLAND



Cleanliness
(**41%**).



Rent affordability
(**33%**).



Soundproofing
(**27%**).



Rent affordability
(**41%**).



Laundry affordability
(**38%**).



Room size
(**30%**).

WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO LIVE ON-CAMPUS

- 1) Lower rent or better value for money (**36%**)

- 2) Job availability (**26%**)
- 3) Better cleanliness standards (**23%**)
- 4) Better facilities - e.g. laundry / storage (**21%**)

KEY THEMES

Implications

- **Personal Tutor support** is understood and appreciated by many students but is inconsistently experienced across the university population - with a large proportion of respondents reporting little or no contact and uncertainty about expectations.
- **Belonging to the university community** matters to most students, but this sense of belonging is strongly shaped by time spent on campus, commuting patterns, finances, and social connection.
- **Financial pressures are widespread** and materially affecting students' academic and daily lives, particularly through accommodation costs, food costs, and travel.
- **Loneliness** is not universal but remains a significant experience for a substantial minority, often linked to long lecture gaps on campus, and lack of social connection.
- **Cost and perceived value and quality** strongly influence student engagement with campus food and facilities, alongside satisfaction with on-campus accommodation, with high prices frequently cited as a barrier.

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.