HERTS UNF!LTERED

KEY TAKEAWAYS

SPILL THE TEA

HERTS SU YOUR UNION

INSIGHT TEAM
research@hertssu.com

WHAT IS HERTS UNF!LTERED?

- Herts Unfiltered is a **student listening** project – focussing on understanding students' **expectations, experiences, and concerns** throughout the term.

- The project ran from **Start of Term to Mid-March** in the 2024-25 academic year.

- Our target audience was **first year UG** students, however we welcomed responses from all students.

- Data was collected predominantly via our **student staff** (Insight Assistants)– enabling **signposting to support**, and targeted student communications.

- **Insights were shared** on an ongoing basis with the goal to **address concerns in real time**, where possible.

HERTS SU

HERTS UNF!LTERED | THEMES EXPLORED

Friendships

Feeling safe

Attending events

Travelling to campus

Community belonging

Clear expectations

Academic Workload

Personal Tutors

AI

LIFE	STUDIES
REFLECTIONS	SUPPORT

Challenges

Inclusivity

Key Supports

Suggested improvements

Expectation vs. Reality

Confidence

Awareness of support services

HERTS SU

THE DEMOGRAPHICS

HERTS UNFILTERED received **5714** responses.

GENDER

Female* – 37% **Male**** – 57%
Non-binary – 1% **PNTS** – 4%

*Including Trans women **Including Trans men

ETHNICITY

White – 10% **Asian** – 71%
Black – 7% **Mixed** -2%
PNTS – 4%

AGE-RANGE

17-24 years – 68%
25-39 years – 31%

FEE STATUS

Home –20%
International – 80%

SCHOOL

SPECS – 46% **HBS** – 23%
LMS – 12% **CTA** – 7%
HSK – 7% **HLE** – 4%

LEVEL OF STUDY

Foundation – 2%
Undergraduate – 11%
Postgraduate – 56%
PhD – 1%

REGISTERED DISABILITY

Yes – 6%
No – 90%
PNTS – 4%

*Self-declaration

COMMUTER STATUS

Commuter* – 75%
Non-commuter – 25%

*Self-defined

HERTS SU

PNTS = Prefer not to say.

THE DEMOGRAPHICS

HERTS UNFILTERED received **5714** responses.

FIRST YEAR, UNDERGRAD

20%

FINAL YEAR, UNDERGRAD

9%

FIRST IN FAMILY

56%

CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

15%

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

EMPLOYMENT
No PT Job – 59**%**
Works 0-10 hours p/wk. – 13**%**
Works 11-20 hours p/wk. – 25**%**
Works 20+ hours p/wk. – 3**%**

FINANCIAL POSITION
No concerns – 43**%**
Some concerns – 49**%**
Serious concerns – 8**%**

COMMUTER STATUS
**Commuter*** – 75%
Non-commuter – 25%
*Self-defined

HERTS SU

PNTS = Prefer not to say.

KEY FINDINGS - CAMPUS COMMUNITY

BELONGING: **Overall, 90% of respondents felt they were part of the UH community and 93% had formed friendships with other students.**
Non-binary (86%), home (79%), undergrad (86%) and **disabled (83%)** respondents had a **lower sense of belonging** compared to the overall. Respondents who were working **20+ hours per week** struggled to **create friendships** with other students **(87%)** compared to the overall percentage.
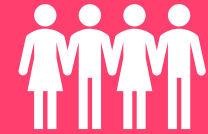
CAMPUS SAFETY: **96%** of respondents felt safe on the university campus.
However, this was not the case for all demographics of students. Only **91%** of **home** respondents felt **safe on campus** and **63%** of respondents with a **declared disability** felt **safe on campus** (**-33pp**).

LONELINESS: **Overall, 82% of respondents stated they felt lonely during their time at UH and 15% of these respondents felt lonely daily**. **Non-Binary** respondents reported double the **daily loneliness rate (33%)** compared to overall.

HERTS SU

KEY FINDINGS - STUDENT EXPERIENCE

PERSONAL TUTORING

Overall, **72%** of respondents had **met their personal tutor** and **70%** had **corresponded with their tutor by email.** However, **black (61%)** and **mixed (64%)** ethnicity respondents had less contact with their **personal tutor by email,** and they had **met their personal tutor** less than the overall level (**66%** and **62%** respectively).

SERVICE SUPPORT

83% of respondents had accessed **Academic Skills Support;** whilst **75%** were **aware of UH Financial Support, 88%** were **aware of UH Wellbeing Support,** and **88%** were **aware of UH Careers Guidance.**

Home, Mixed and **Black** respondents reported the **lowest awareness levels of** all support services.

REFLECTIONS

Regarding **their academic workload, 88%** of respondents found it manageable and **92%** of respondents felt they would **accomplish the degree classification** they aspired to achieve. **94%** of all respondents felt that **UH was the right choice** for them.

HERTS SU

WHAT ELSE WE FOUND...

"I **can** afford my living costs"	"I **can not** afford my living costs"

Engagement with On-Campus Activities

76% of these respondents indicated that they **attended on-campus events,** compared to **65%** of respondents who were unable to cover their living costs– and 4pp ↑ than the average response.

Impact of Mental Health Difficulties

When asked if they felt lonely, respondents with financial difficulties **felt lonelier** compared to those in a better financial position, and they were **4pp** ↑ than the average response.

Differing Personal Tutor Contact Preferences

Respondents who were able to afford their living costs reported ↑ levels of having **met with, and e-mail contact from, their Personal Tutors.** They also indicated their relationship was better with their tutors as they knew their names.

Access to support services

Respondents with financial difficulties reported **lower levels of access with support services.** This included academic skills, wellbeing services and financial support services. They were **26pp** ↓ than those without financial concerns regarding access to financial services.

HERTS UNF!LTERED | UH RANKED FINDINGS

AREAS OF HIGHEST AGREEMENT	AREAS OF LOWEST AGREEMENT
1. I **feel safe** on campus (**96%**)	1. I **never feel lonely** (**18%**)
2. I feel like **UH was the right choice** for me (**94%**)	2. I **can afford** my living costs (**43%**)
3. I have **made friends** with other students (**93%**)	3. My **Personal Tutor knows my name** (**66%**)
4. I frequently **use AI** to help with my learning (**93%**)	4. I have had **e-mail contact** with my P Tutor (**70%**)
5. I feel confident that I will **achieve the degree classification I am aiming for** (93%)	5. I have **met my Personal Tutor** (**72%**)
6. I feel part of the **UH community** (**90%**)	6. I have **attended events** on-campus (**72%**)

HERTS SU

HERTS UNF!LTERED | SCHOOL SNAP-SHOTS

BUSINESS

The area of highest agreement from HBS respondents was relating to **feeling safe** on campus (**97%**).

The area of lowest agreement was relating to their **personal tutor** knowing their name (**68%**).

CREATIVE ARTS

The area of highest agreement from CTA respondents was relating to **UH being the right choice for them** (**93%**).

The area of lowest agreement was **awareness of available UH financial support** (**64%**).

HEALTH & SOCIAL WORK

The area of highest agreement from HSK respondents was relating to **feeling safe** on campus (**97%**), followed by respondents **forming friendships** with their peers (**95%**).

The areas of lowest agreement was **attendance of events on-campus** (**56%**), followed by **awareness of available UH financial support** (**72%**).

HERTS SU

**The school snap-shot rankings have had the financial position and loneliness areas removed due to consistently being the areas with the lowest levels of agreement across the schools.

HERTS UNF!LTERED | SCHOOL SNAP-SHOTS

LAW & EDUCATION

The area of highest agreement was relating to **achieving the degree classification they aimed for** (**93%**).

The area of lowest agreement was relating to **awareness of UH financial support** (**70%**).

LIFE & MEDICAL SCIENCES

The area of highest agreement from LMS respondents was relating to **feeling safe** on campus (**94%**).

The area of lowest agreement was **awareness of available UH financial support** (**63%**).

PHYSICS, ENGINEERING & COMPUTER SCIENCE

The area of highest agreement from SPECS respondents was relating to **feeling safe** on campus (**97%**), followed by confidence that respondents would **graduate with their ideal degree classification** (**95%**).

The areas of lowest agreement was relating to "**My Personal Tutor knows my name**" (**57%**) and having had **e-mail contact with their Personal Tutor** (**62%**).

HERTS SU

**The school snap-shot rankings have had the financial position and loneliness areas removed due to consistently being the areas with the lowest levels of agreement across the schools.

FIRST YEAR, UNDERGRADUATES

Herts SU received 1137 responses from First year, undergraduate students; 20% of all Herts Unfiltered responses.

CAMPUS COMMUNITY:

- **90%** of respondents felt they were part of the **UH community** and **93%** had **formed friendships** with other students.
- Moreover, only **67%** of respondents had **attended extracurricular events** on campus but **94%** felt **safe on campus.**
- **81%** of first year, undergraduate respondents **felt lonely** and **15%** of respondents felt **lonely on a daily basis.**

STUDENT EXPERIENCE:

- **72%** of respondents had **met their personal tutor** and **65%** of respondents had **contacted their personal tutor via email.**
- Regarding support services, **79%** had accessed **Academic Skills Support**, **73%** had accessed **Financial Support** and **87%** had accessed **Wellbeing/Mental Health Support.**
- **94%** of respondents also felt that **UH was the right choice for them**

AI:

- **89%** of respondents had **used AI** at least once to aid their learning but only **80%** had stated they **received guidance from UH** about how to responsibly use AI in relation to their learning.

HERTS SU

RECOMMENDATIONS

HERTS SU

HERTS UNF!LTERED | FINAL 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ENHANCE PERSONAL TUTORING THROUGH CURRICULUM INTEGRATION, EVALUATION, AND TUTOR UPSKILLING.

- Explore the integration of personal tutoring into the curriculum to foster consistent student engagement.
- Evaluate the Personal Tutoring Framework, and its implementation, through an APP lens to assess its impact on student outcomes - particularly in supporting large student cohorts.
- Strengthen the personal tutoring system by upskilling Personal Tutors to deliver effective non-academic guidance and signposting, enabling them to address a broader spectrum of student needs.

2. REVIEW TIMETABLING PRINCIPLES TO ENABLE OPTIMAL MAXIMISATION OF STUDENT TIME AND STUDY-LIFE BALANCE.

- Review timetabling principles - as these have not been reviewed since pre-Covid - considering options allowing optimal time for engaging with part-time work and extracurricular opportunities across Herts's broad demographic of students.
- For schools reporting low event attendance and community belonging (i.e. LMS, HSK & CTA); to consider embedding start of term, and/or term-time, extracurricular events within student timetables to encourage engagement.

HERTS SU

HERTS UNF!LTERED | FINAL 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

3. INTEGRATE ACADEMIC SKILLS GUIDANCE INTO TEACHING SESSIONS TO ENHANCE STUDENT AWARENESS AND SUCCESS.

- Embed academic skills content into teaching delivery, prioritizing the start of courses for new students and the beginning of each academic year for returning students; to ensure all students begin their studies at the appropriate level and are aware of how to access additional academic skills support when needed.

4. ENHANCE TEACHING DELIVERY TO FOSTER STUDENT INTERACTION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING.

- Include additional opportunities for students to interact, outside of assessed group work, within the learning environment, focusing on building community and engagement within taught sessions.
- Herts SU could run timetabled mixer events within schools with lower levels of reported community belonging; alongside exploring how academic societies within schools offering placements can run tailored activities to keep students connected whilst working away from campus.

5. IMPROVE STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY AND FINANCIAL STABILITY THROUGH CAMPUS OPPORTUNITIES AND CURRICULUM INTEGRATION.

- Enhance employability opportunities for students by integrating employability workshops from day one, woven into the curriculum, whilst adopting a holistic approach to assessing and expanding part-time employment opportunities on-campus.

HERTS SU

HERTS UNF!LTERED WILL RETURN ! | 2025-26

- Planning is underway for Herts Unfiltered to return within the 2025-26 academic year, however with a few differences:

  - The project will still run from **Mid-September – March**; however, our survey questions will **change for every pulse** survey (of which there will be **3**).

  - We will be exploring **new themes**, such as the value of on-campus engagement, and student stress.

- Our target audience is still **first year UG** students, however we're still welcoming responses from everyone.

- Data will still be collected via our **student staff** (Insight Assistants)– enabling **signposting to support**, alongside **targeted communications.**

- **Insights will continue to be shared** on an ongoing basis with the goal to **address concerns in real time**, where possible.

HERTS SU

ANY QUESTIONS?

Faith Goligher | *Advice & Insight Manager* | f.goligher@herts.ac.uk

Arub Abbas | *Assistant Insight Manager* | a.abbas3@herts.ac.uk

HERTS SU