

STUDENT ACADEMIC SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2022

HERTS SU



Automatic
door

Respect social
distancing



Please wear a
face covering



Avoid touching your
face and mouth



Wash and sanitise
your hands regularly



Clean your workstation
before and after use

University of
Hertfordshire **UH**

CAP
1000

TABLE OF CONTENTS

5	Overview
9	Hertfordshire Business School
10	Hertfordshire Law School
11	School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science
12	School of Creative Arts
14	School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Education
15	School of Health and Social Work
16	School of Life and Medical Sciences
18	Recommendations



OVERVIEW

This Student Academic Satisfaction Survey (SASS) examined 1,718 responses from students from November – December in the 2022–23 academic year. Student responses were collected from all schools (Figure 1).

Hertfordshire Business school had the highest number of responses, with 31% (N=537/1718) of answers coming from there. Moreover, responses were well represented amongst international and home students (Figure 2, 53% vs. 47% respectively). In previous years, international students were overrepresented in the survey. In SASS Semester A (2021–22), 64% of responses came from international students, but in our latest survey, there was a balance between international and home student responses.

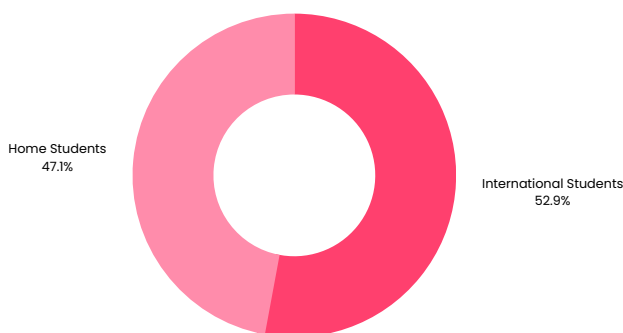


Figure 2: Doughnut chart showing responses by registration status

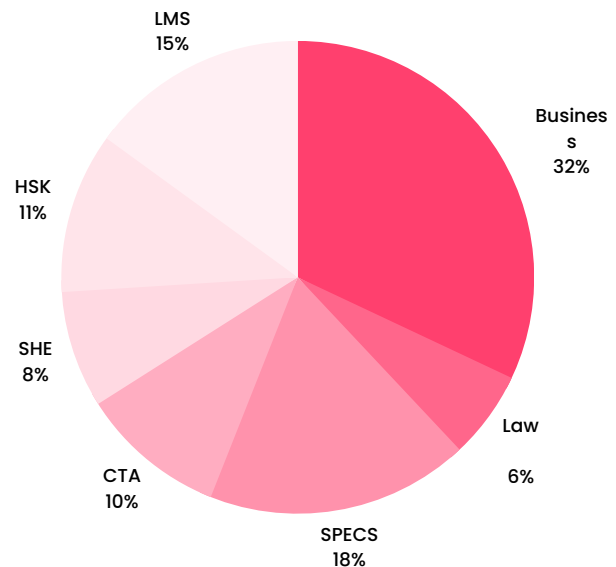


Figure 1: Pie chart showing distribution of responses via School of Study

Themes examined throughout the survey were **Personal Tutor**, **Communication**, **Teaching and Support**, **Timetabling**, **Academic Skills** and **Course Costs**. These themes consisted of a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. Satisfaction was highest for the theme of Teaching and Support, with an average agreement of 90% to those questions. This is a change from the 2021–22 to 2022–23 academic year, where satisfaction was highest for Course Communication. It is worth noting the Students' Union represents the students well, with 77% (N = 1136/1718) of students agreeing to the statement.

Teaching and Support

Satisfaction levels relating to queries around Teaching and Support were high. 94% (N=1469/1718) of students agreed content in their modules and courses was useful and beneficial for their future career. However, this did vary amongst the schools as the School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science reported a lower satisfaction rating of 91% (N=250/311). This level of satisfaction rose for students within the School of Health and Social work (96%, N= 127/140).

Satisfaction regarding the marking of assessments was also measured and it was found that 94% (N = 1464/1718) of students agreed with the statement that marking was fair. Again, this varied by school and demographic. For example, only 87% (N=27/31) of students who identified as non-binary agreed with the statement compared to 94% of males and females (N=1359/1448).

Amongst schools, 90% (N= 84/106) of students in the Hertfordshire Law School agreed that marking had been fair but for the School of Health and Social Work, this rose to 98% (N =129/140). On average, 87% (N = 1366/1563) of students reported they received helpful comments concerning their work. Students in the second year of their undergraduate degree reported notably lower agreement (80%, N = 188/243). In comparison, 91% (N = 575/631) of postgraduate students reported they had received useful comments about their work.

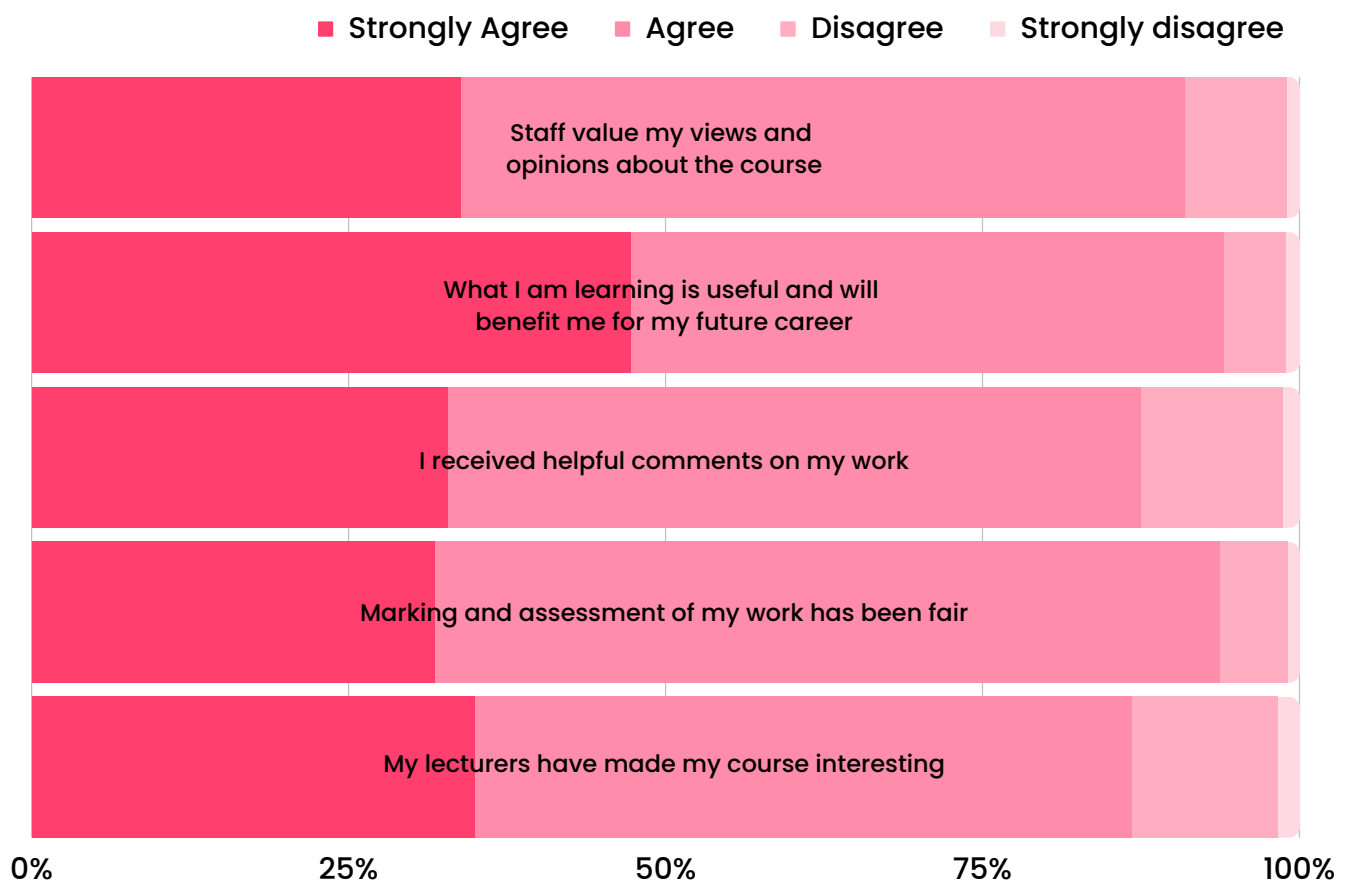


Figure 3: Rating distribution of Teaching and Support theme

Course Costs

1 in 4 (24%, N=363/1497) students reported experiencing unexpected costs required to fully take part in their course that they were not aware of prior to starting. 1 in 3 (34%, N = 504/993) students reported struggling to afford costs related to their course, such as equipment, books or software. 63% (N = 938/559) of students reported that the Cost of Living crisis had impacted their university experience. The most reported costs that students were facing were textbooks, software, transportation, fuel, accommodation and food. Placement students commonly mentioned struggling to afford the cost of travel.

The frequency of experiencing unexpected costs varied by school and by student demographic. Students in Creative Arts and the Hertfordshire Law School were most likely to report experiencing unexpected costs at 34% (N = 51/151) and 30% (N= 27/89) respectively. Disabled students were also more likely to experience this at 46% (N = 63/139).

Students aged 46–54 years were also more likely to report struggling to afford course-related costs at 51% (N = 19/37). Disabled students and final year undergraduates were also more likely to experience this at 60% (N = 84/139) and 44% (N = 111/254) respectively.

💬💬 Printing work should be free. We have to present our work every week, and the printers the uni have are really expensive 💬💬

💬💬 I spend a lot on commuting because of my timetable. I almost had to come to uni every day of the week which is very cost demanding. Therefore, I can't spend the money I have on other essential things because a lot of it is spent on commuting 💬💬

💬💬 It's been hard to manage the SFE and I believe it is not enough not just me but all students. There should be an additional money due to cost-of-living crisis 💬💬

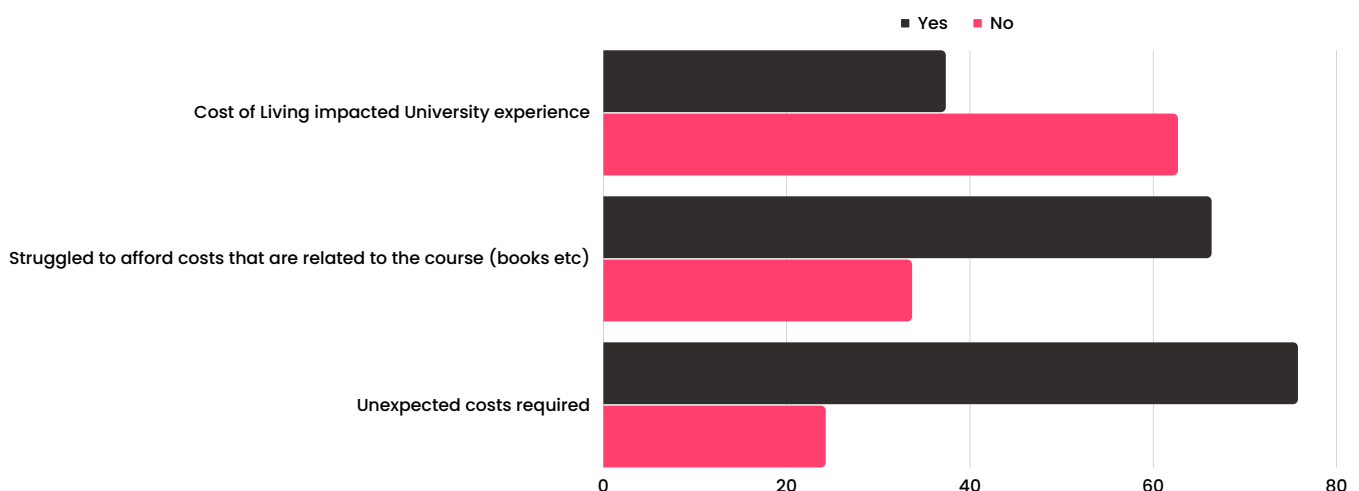


Figure 4: Bar graph showing Course Costs theme



HERTFORDSHIRE BUSINESS SCHOOL

Communication

Students from the Hertfordshire Business School agreed that they knew who to contact if they needed help with academic support (92%, $N = 451/491$) and 94% ($N = 462/491$) were comfortable contacting academic staff if they required help. Students were significantly more likely to receive details of their assignments, allowing them to complete work to a high standard ($P < 0.05$). Furthermore, 87% ($N = 425/491$) of students understood how their work had been marked and how they had achieved their grade. 85% of students felt replies from staff were helpful.

92% OF STUDENTS KNEW WHO TO CONTACT FOR HELP

When contacting academic staff, students felt their replies had been helpful with the problem they faced (85%, $N = 415/491$) while 19% ($N = 93/491$) of students felt staff did not respond to queries in an appropriate amount of time. 33% (164/491) of students felt that staff should reply to their queries within the same day. This was significantly higher than other schools ($P < 0.05$). 86% ($N = 351/408$) of international students agreed with this statement, suggesting that international students have higher expectations of the response time compared to home students.

85% OF STUDENTS FELT REPLIES FROM STAFF WERE HELPFUL

Timetabling

Business School students utilise their time well on campus (89%, $N = 416/469$) but only 69% ($N = 323/469$) were satisfied with the timetable, which was lower than the average satisfaction rate of 75%. Students were significantly more likely to find their timetable demanding ($P < 0.05$). Additionally, 47% ($N = 223/470$) stated that their timetable restricts them from taking part in extra-curricular activities.

💡 So much free time between lectures. Sometimes only one lecture a day so need to travel for one hour from far away 💡

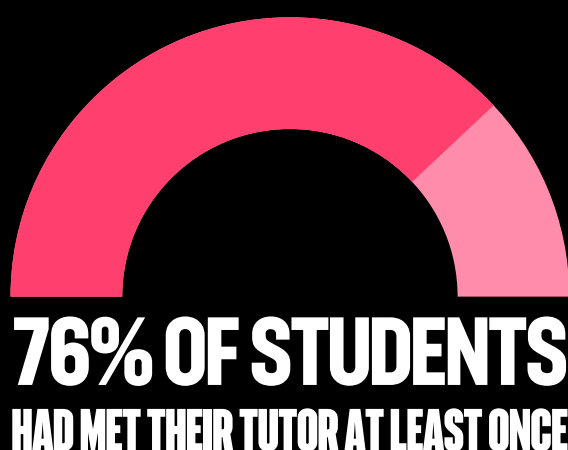
💡 Sometimes there are only one lesson per day situated in the afternoons or very inconvenient times of the day which means I cannot work nor focus on doing anything else on that day due to the random placement of the lesson 💡

💡 You should consider the international students' issues, as we are new to here, we need more time to get settled but the university is pushing us Very hard with tight timetable schedule and assignments, students are becoming depressed 💡

HERTFORDSHIRE LAW SCHOOL

Personal Tutor

Students from the Hertfordshire Law School were less likely to know their personal tutor ($P < 0.05$) and only 83% ($N = 85/102$) of students knew how to contact their personal tutor which was lower than the average rate of 88%. Moreover, only 66% ($N = 67/102$) of students reported to have received academic support from their personal tutor, again, falling below the average rate of 70%. 76% of students had met their personal tutor at least once, but this was lower than the average (78%).



Communication

92% ($N=87/95$) of the Hertfordshire Law School cohort felt comfortable asking staff for help and 87% ($N = 83/95$) of students felt staff provided clear explanations of what they were going to be assessed on for their upcoming assignments. Communication between staff and students was also seen when 85% ($N = 81/95$) of students agreed that details of assessments were provided in advance and 84% ($N = 80/95$) reported they knew the guidelines to complete assessments.

Course Costs

Students in the Hertfordshire Law School faced higher costs than anticipated. 30% ($N = 27/89$) of students reported to having faced unexpected costs related to their course which had not been factored in before they started. Moreover, 45% ($N = 40/89$) of students struggled to afford equipment related to their course and 71% ($N = 63/89$) felt that the Cost of Living had impacted their university experience. This figure was the highest amongst the schools.

“ I have been unable to focus and prioritise on my uni work and assignments. This is because of my financial problems as I am currently trying to balance full time working 3 jobs and being a full-time student. Current cost of living has impacted my day-to-day life because I spend more time trying to save up to pay my rent from minimum wage, which gives me little to no time to revise ”

“ Law books are expensive. As a disabled student I print everything off too and it's very expensive with the amount I do. Everything is too expensive currently ”

QUESTION	YES	NO
Unexpected costs required	30.34%	69.66%
Struggled to afford costs that are related to the course (books etc)	44.94%	55.06%
Cost of Living impacted university experience	70.79%	29.21%

Table 1: Course cost responses from students in the Hertfordshire Law School

SCHOOL OF PHYSICS, ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Personal Tutor

Students in SPECS were significantly less likely to know who their personal tutor was ($p < 0.05$) as 32% ($N=95/293$) of students stated they did not know their personal tutor. 41% ($N = 119/293$) of students stated they did not know how to contact their personal tutor but this was significantly lower than in other schools ($p < 0.05$). Only 42% ($N = 123/293$) of students had received wellbeing support from their personal tutor which was significantly lower than the average rate of 63%. This trend continued as 45% ($N=131/293$) of students stated they had never met their personal tutor, and this was significantly higher compared to other schools ($p < 0.05$).

This data is very similar to the SASS Semester A (2021-22) report. In the previous report, SPECS students did not know who their personal tutor was and this was lower than the other schools. Similarly to the current report, students previously did not know how to contact their personal tutor for support.



**42% OF STUDENTS
HAD WELLBEING SUPPORT FROM
THEIR PERSONAL TUTOR**

Communication

18% ($N=48/276$) of students did not understand how their assignments had been marked, which was significantly lower compared to the other schools ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, 15% ($N = 42/276$) of students felt academic staff did not explain what they were going to be assessed on before completing the assignment, and this was significantly higher in comparison to the other schools ($p < 0.05$). It should be noted that 85% ($N = 235/276$) of students agreed that details of assignments were given in advance to allow students to complete them to the best of their abilities.

Timetabling

Some students stated that their timetable was demanding (62%, $N=163/267$) and this was reiterated as 50% of SPECS students stated that their timetable prevented them from partaking in extracurricular activities ($p < 0.05$, $N = 133/265$). Despite this, 76% ($N = 201/266$) of students were still satisfied with their timetable as it worked well for them.

💡 So far, the timetable has not benefitted me and most students in my course and area of study Electronics Engineering. I have to come to school 4 times in a week, sometimes to attend just one lecture. I will want it to be reduced to 2 times in a week as an MSc student because that will give me more time to do more independent study and research 💡

SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS

Communication

Students in Creative Arts were significantly less likely to contact academic staff if they needed help as they did not feel as confident or comfortable compared to students in other schools ($P < 0.05$). Additionally, 19% ($N = 32/166$) of students disagreed that details of assessments were given out in advance.

Students were asked if academic staff had been useful when they contacted staff with queries or issues, and 86% ($N = 143/166$) of students felt they had helped them resolve problems or issues. However, this is significantly less compared to other schools ($P < 0.05$).

Academic Skills

Similarly to the 2021-22 academic year, Creative Arts students agreed less to queries regarding academic skills (i.e. essay writing skills, referencing and citations) as they had an average of 79% agreement rate, whilst the average was 84%.

Creative Arts students were significantly less likely ($P < 0.05$) to know where to seek additional support for academic skills (24%, $N = 37/153$). Additionally, 22% ($N = 34/153$) of students felt significantly less confident to contribute to class discussions ($P < 0.05$).

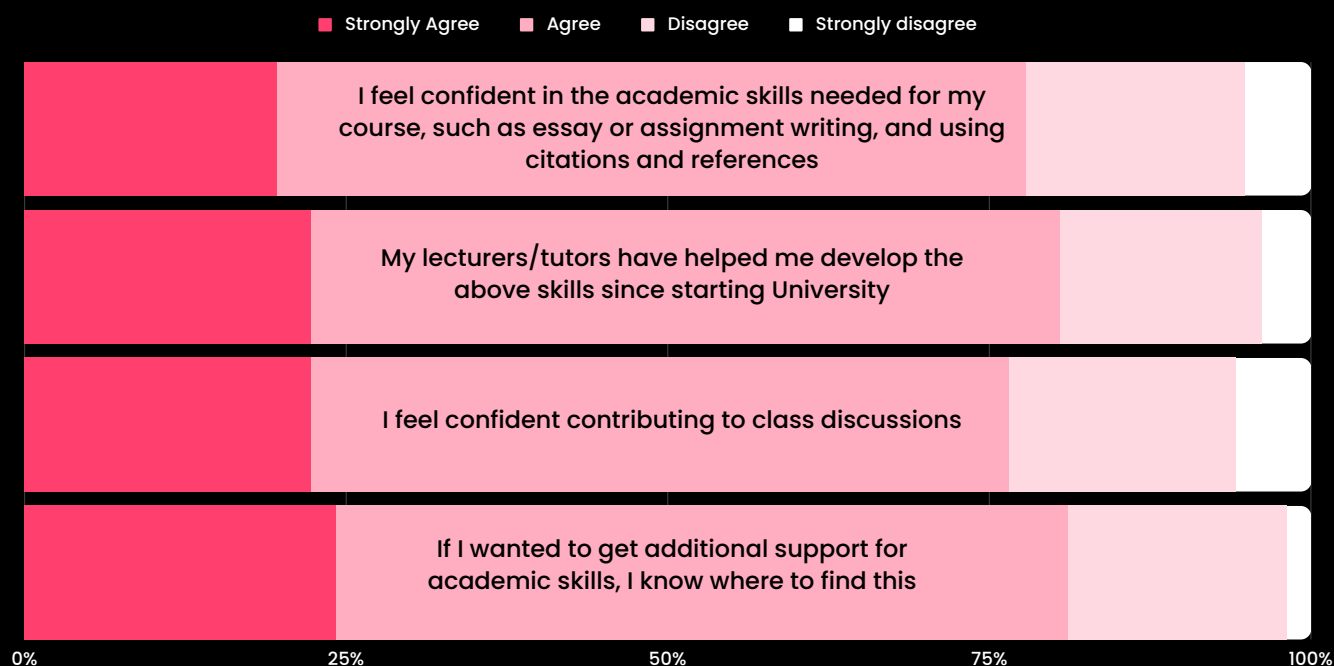


Figure 5: Stacked bar graph relating to answers for Academic Skills questions for Creative Arts students

Course/Equipment Costs

34% (N = 51/151) of students stated they had incurred unexpected costs related to their course which they were unaware of before starting their course. This was drastically higher in relation to the average which was 25%. Equally, almost half (49%, N = 74/151) the students agreed they had struggled to afford costs that were directly related to their course. These were items such as books, software and other equipment that was needed to complete their course. Students from Creative Arts were significantly more likely to report this, compared to other schools ($P < 0.05$). 58% (N = 87/151) of students also stated they had been affected by the Cost of Living and this had impacted their university experience at Herts.

“ I use Adobe Creative Cloud for my assignments and the monthly cost is quite considerable which concerns me. I can't physically get to campus easily as I live 3hrs away ”

QUESTION	YES	NO
Unexpected costs required	33.77%	66.23%
Struggled to afford costs that are related to the course (books etc)	49.01%	50.99%
Cost of Living impacted university experience	57.62%	42.38%

Table 2: Course cost responses from students in
School of Creative Arts

“ The equipment needed in terms of art supplies (I didn't anticipate needing as a digital artist) and technology I needed for the course (although I already anticipated that). The cost-of-living crisis made everything in terms of food and bills more expensive which means money I'm less likely to buy equipment that I need for my course ”

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION

Personal Tutor

Students from the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Education had a higher satisfaction rate compared to the average rate for statements in this theme. 65% (N = 90/138) of students were aware of who their personal tutor was and 67% (N = 93/138) of students knew how to contact their personal tutor when needed.

Students from SHE were significantly more likely to contact their personal tutor when they needed support through the year ($P < 0.05$). Personal tutors from SHE were significantly more likely to check in with students and their mental wellbeing throughout the year ($P < 0.05$).



STUDENTS WERE MORE LIKELY TO CONTACT THEIR PT FOR HELP

Course Costs

Although 22% (N = 28/130) of students from SHE stated they faced unexpected costs, this was lower than the average which was 25%. However, it must be noted that 37% (N = 48/130) of students stated they struggled to afford costs that were directly related to their course and 69% (N = 90/130) of students felt negatively impacted by the increasing cost of living.

Teaching and Support

93% (N = 123/132) of students agreed that their lecturers have made their course interesting; this was a higher rate compared to the average agreement rate which was 89%. Students found they received helpful comments on their work (95%, N = 125/132) and again, this was higher than the average rate of 88%. However, it has been found that students in SHE had significantly less opportunity to engage with peers outside of the classroom ($P < 0.05$).

LESS OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH PEERS

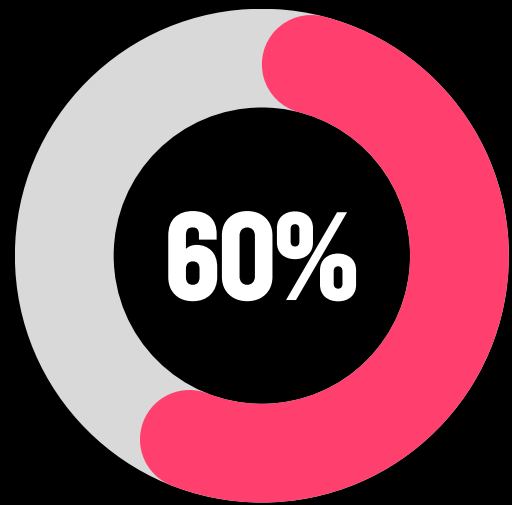
QUESTION	YES	NO
Unexpected costs required	33.77%	66.23%
Struggled to afford costs that are related to the course (books etc)	49.01%	50.99%
Cost of Living impacted university experience	57.62%	42.38%

Table 3: Course Cost responses from students in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Education

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK

Timetabling

89% (N = 159/178) of students from the School of Health and Social Work (HSK) felt that they effectively used their time on campus, which was higher than the average rate (83%). Although 60% (N=106/177) of students felt their timetable was demanding, 82% (N=145/177) stated their timetable works well for them and 76% (N=136/178) were also satisfied with the academic timetable.



**STUDENTS FELT THEIR
TIMETABLE WAS DEMANDING**

STAFF VALUED THEIR OPINIONS ABOUT THE COURSE

Course Costs

Unexpected costs affected students as 28% (N = 49/176) faced unforeseen costs that they were not aware of before starting the course. Moreover, 41% (N = 73/176) of HSK students struggled to afford expenses that were associated to their course (i.e. equipment, books and/or software). 66% (N = 117/176) of students felt the Cost of Living impacted their university experience; higher than the average rate of 64%.

Teaching and Support

Students from the School of Health and Social Work were significantly more likely to agree that their lecturers made their course more interesting ($P < 0.05$). 94% (N=170/180) of students stated staff valued their views and opinions about the course, which was higher than the average agreement rate of 91%. Students were also significantly more likely to report they found course content useful for their future careers ($P < 0.05$). 94% (N=170/180) of students stated they were satisfied with marking completed by the lecturers and 86% (N=154/180) felt they had the opportunity to connect with peers outside of the classroom.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION

Communication

Students in the School of Life and Medical Sciences were significantly less likely to know the expectations for their assignments ($P < 0.05$) and students also felt that assessment details were not given to them in advance ($P < 0.05$). 17% ($N = 41/241$) of students reported that academic staff did not provide details of what students would be assessed on for upcoming assignments. On the other hand, 93% ($N=223/241$) of students knew who to contact if they needed academic guidance and 88% ($N=211/241$) were comfortable asking for help from the staff. However, this was slightly lower than the average agreement rate of 91%.

17%

OF STUDENTS SAID STAFF
DID NOT GIVE DETAILS OF
WHAT WILL BE ASSESSED
ON ASSIGNMENTS

Teaching and Support

Although 82% ($N = 195/239$) of students reported their lecturers made their course more interesting, this was significantly lower than the average agreement rate of 88%. Moreover, only 80% ($N = 191/239$) of students felt there were useful comments about their marked assignments compared to the average of 88%. It should be noted that 95% ($N = 226/239$) of students felt that their work had been marked fairly. 87% ($N = 209/239$) of students reported staff did not value their opinions about the course.

Timetabling

Overall satisfaction regarding the academic timetable is lower for students in LMS compared to the average satisfaction rate (67% vs 75% respectively). LMS students were significantly more likely to report that their timetable was demanding. Only 68% ($N = 160/236$) of students stated that their timetable worked well for them, again lower than the average rate (78%).

“ There are way too many classes I cannot take part in extracurricular activities. I wanted to play cricket, but I don't have the chance. So, classes should be long instead of taking more days ”

“ There were some days with 1 lecture from 5-7 which are not great especially for commuters. With only 2 days a week, on campus accommodation seems hardly worth it as I am not originally close to Hatfield. Also, the 2 days are unevenly split between 9-5 on Tuesday and only 1 hour in the morning on Wednesday. This is highly inconvenient and tiring ”

“ Too many 9ams, 10am and onwards would be more acceptable as the traffic for commuting students is less chaotic. We don't need to adhere to the same timetable as 9-5 workers so why not push it forward a bit ”



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PERSONAL TUTORING AND SUPPORT

Finding

Not all students were satisfied with the personal tutoring framework that currently exists. For example, not all students are aware of their personal tutors or even how to contact them. SPECS students had the lowest agreement rate amongst schools when asked if they knew their personal tutor (68%, N=198/293). This means students will not receive the support they need from their personal tutor throughout their studies. Students from the Law School also had low agreement rates in relation to personal tutoring, as only 84% (N = 86/102) of students knew who their personal tutor was and 83% (N = 85/102) of students knew how to contact their personal tutor. This indicates a lack of communication and poor relationship between the personal tutor and student, which can result to a poor university experience.

Recommendation

Ensure that all students are made aware of their personal tutor during the induction period, and how and what they can support them with throughout their studies, as standard across all Schools of Study without exception. This must include a minimum expectation of contact hours per semester and the type of support they can offer.

2. COST OF LIVING

Finding

Across schools, students have been affected by the Cost of Living and on average 63% (N=938/1497) of students stated that this impacted their university experience. Students from Hertfordshire Law School, CTA, HSK and SHE stated they struggled to afford costs that were related to their course.

Recommendation

Schools to take a more proactive approach in ensuring students are aware of the financial support available for students, signposting where appropriate, and feeding this in as part of their wellbeing support package via personal tutoring.

3. ASSESSMENT SUPPORT/COMMUNICATION

Finding

On average, 15% (N=231/1586) of students did not know the expectations to complete an assignment and this should be communicated better to student so they can achieve the best in their assessed work. 13% (N=205/1586) of students experienced difficulties as details of assignments were not given in advance.

Recommendation

Programmes to ensure all students receive assessment information in advance, with ample opportunities to discuss in lectures/tutorials with academic staff. Information should be provided to students before each assessment deadline and should be clearly highlighted on Canvas.



HERTS SU

