



Hertfordshire Students' Union

Timetabling Survey 2019 Report

This report from Hertfordshire Students' Union explores the feelings of students towards their academic timetables on a whole, and further based on the academic school they belong to. It looks to understand the needs and expectations of the students timetables to inform the university on future timetabling strategies, by looking at satisfaction, student expectations and commuting students' perspectives. A total of 2,471 students responded to the questionnaire distributed in the 2018/19 academic year, giving a large insight into the issues currently surrounding timetables at the university.



**Hertfordshire
Students' Union**

#YourHertbeat

Contents

Methodology	3
Findings and Implications.....	3
School of Creative Arts	6
School of Computer Science.....	8
School of Engineering and Technology	10
School of Health and Social Work	12
School of Physics, Astronomy and Maths	14
School of Life and Medical Sciences.....	16
Hertfordshire Business School	18
Hertfordshire Law School	20
School of Education	22
School of Humanities, incl Joint Honours	24

Methodology

The data was collected via an online survey containing 24 questions, both quantitative and qualitative. The survey was distributed to all current students registered at Hertfordshire University via email, as well as promoted through StudyNet and various social media outlets.

Findings and Implications

Demographics

2,471 students completed the timetabling survey, 63% of the respondents were female, 35% were male and 1% preferred not to disclose their gender.

All age categories receive representation in the final data, with 18-21-year old's making up the largest proportion (58%).

49% of students surveyed considered themselves commuters compared to 51% non-commuters.

In regard to ethnicity, respondents display a wide variety of diverse backgrounds which reflects the 20% of international students that attend the university, the highest response rates were of a White – British (33%) followed by Asian or Asian British – Indian (13%) ethnic background.

Academic Background

Most of the students surveyed study full time (90%) with the highest proportion at first year level (31%), however a good representation was gained from each level of study (Figure 1).

Hertfordshire Business School (21%), School of Life and Medical Sciences (17%) and School of Creative Arts (13%) gave the most responses, School of Physical, Astronomy and Maths received the least (2%), however this reflects the sizes of the school at the university in terms of student numbers so is an understandable split. The school with the best response rate of 17% was the School of Computer Science.

Executive Summary

62% of those surveyed agreed that they have an enjoyable university experience. In receiving the termly timetable, 69% of respondents agreed it was sent at an appropriate time. Of the 17% that disagreed, the main issue identified through written comment responses was the inability to arrange other aspects of life outside of university such as part time work, childcare and transport.

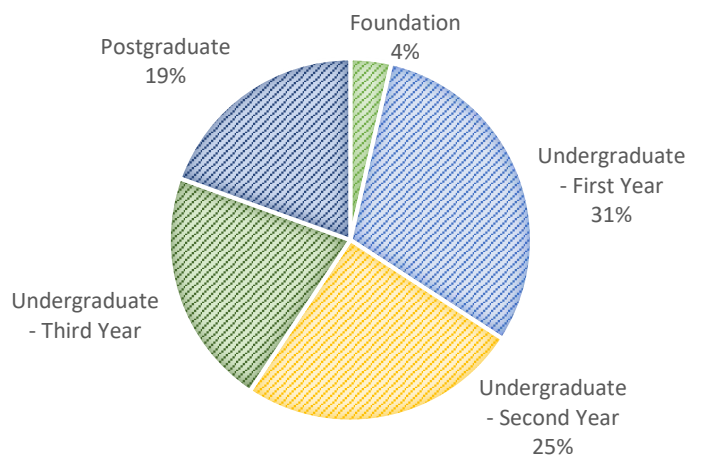


Figure 1. What is your level of study?

"My job works on a rota where you bid for shifts. I cannot book any work until I get my time table and so all shifts get booked up. I received my timetable probably 3 days before I was due back after Christmas break. I now have no work and no money." – 2nd year, CA

"I didn't get my first term timetable until 2 days before it started. I work for a living, so I NEED to know when I can work in order for me to survive. It was poorly organised." – 1st year, HUM

In terms of satisfaction with the timetable, 28% indicated they were dissatisfied when it was received, and gave an average of six from zero to ten for how the timetabled events fit around their daily life and commitments, 9% selected one and below, 12% selected nine and above.

18% said their timetables were inaccurate when it was published, with classes missing and time errors. The spaces and rooms used for lectures and seminars are deemed unsuitable by 16% of respondents.

Extended periods of three plus hours between timetabled events are typical for 43% of respondents. Of those that have extended periods, 70% do not enjoy having longer breaks between their timetabled events. Overall, 64% of all respondents do not enjoy having these extended periods between classes. A strong majority of students, 86%, agree that full time students should have at least one free day per week, 74% strongly agreeing.

Students most commonly spend time eating, studying with friends/people on their course and studying alone. Other activities identified by students included; housework and errands, active student sessions and approaching lecturers about topics not understood from lessons. A breakdown of activities can be seen in figure 2.

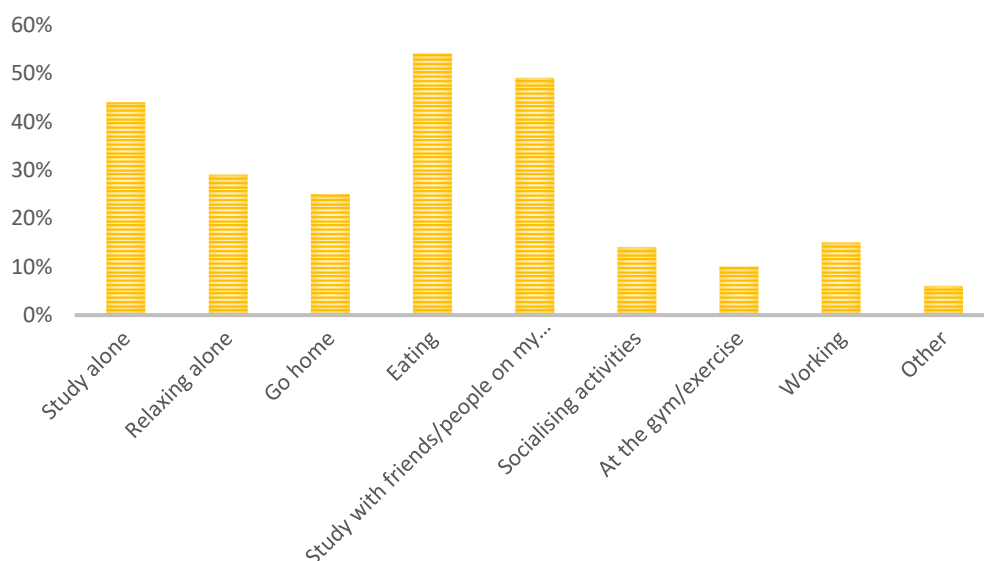


Figure 2. What would you say you spend the most of your time doing during breaks in your timetable?

Students are most likely to visit the library once a week, closely followed by everyday they are on campus. However, 14% stated they never visit the library.

Considering the timetable as a whole;

	Agree	Disagree
I effectively utilise the time I spend on campus	50%	23%
I would skip timetabled events if it meant going home earlier	28%	50%
I enjoy having longer breaks between my timetable's events	15%	64%
I have good attendance and attend all my lectures and seminars	76%	13%
I avoid 9am starts because it means my day is longer	19%	60%
My timetable is very demanding	35%	29%
My timetable works well for me	41%	29%
My timetable stops me taking part in extra-curricular or sports	32%	35%
I spend my Wednesday afternoon free time on campus either studying or participating in extra-curricular	30%	45%
I find my university experience enjoyable	62%	14%

School of Creative Arts

The school of creative arts comprises of 2859 students and received 318 responses to the survey (11%). In terms of finding their university experience enjoyable 70% agreed that this was the case, which is great.

Findings

A majority of students agreed that they received their termly timetable at an appropriate time, however there were still 34% that disagreed to this. Upon receiving their timetable, students in general were more satisfied (48%) than dissatisfied (25%) a breakdown of each study level's satisfaction levels can be seen in figure 3. Although this is positive, a large number indicated that timetables were not accurate (31%), this causes issues for effective time management.

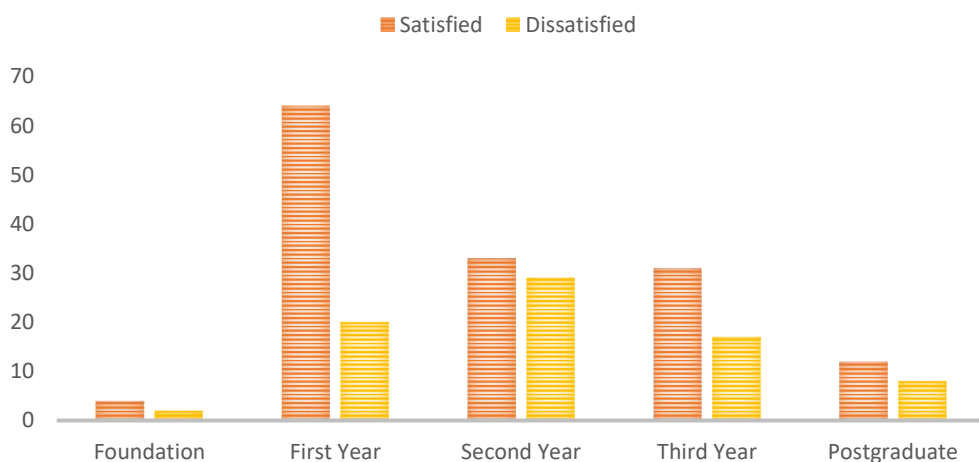


Figure 3. Satisfaction with timetable upon publication separated by level of study for the School of Creative Arts

An average of 6/10 was given for how well their timetable fits around their daily life and commitments, however an overwhelming majority (82%) still indicated that they think students should have at least one day per week free (Figure 4).

Below are some student comments regarding having a day off, which represent the consensus that workload is the primary reason for getting this extra day, as 25% also say that their timetable is very demanding. Another thing to consider is that 42% of respondents do not spend the free Wednesday afternoon on campus either studying or participating in extra-curricular.

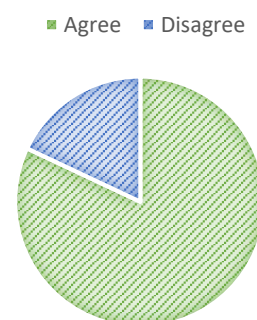


Figure 4. "Full time students should have at least 1 free day per week"

"University can be tough, having at least one free day allows students to either rest or for the outside study time that they have to do outside of lecturers/seminars etc." – 2nd year

"Particularly with coursework-based assessment – lots of the assessment process is done outside of university and at least one free day is vital for this. Even if a more exam-based

assessment, there are lots of admin/organisation/general life things to complete as a student/adult and it's more than reasonable to have a day a week to do so.” – Postgraduate

“In the case of our course which is fairly intensive it would be good to have a day to do private studies” – 1st year

36% of respondents said they do have empty periods of longer 3 hours during their typical week, with the time spent in any breaks most commonly being eating, studying alone and studying with friends or people on their course, least likely to be at the gym or exercising, with most students only visiting the library once a week. Over half of the respondents indicated that they do not enjoy having longer breaks between their timetabled events.

A large issue brought to attention is that 22% indicated that the rooms for their lectures and seminars were not suitable, highlighted by the following 2 comments:

“Sometimes we would have a 2-hour lecture in a room without tables, so we are unable to take notes. In addition to this, notes were not uploaded to study net for the lectures.” - 2nd year

“Last semester we had a room for our C&CS (in which we write our essays about what we learn so notetaking is a must) and the room had no tables that we could lean on and hardly fit our course, at times either people had to stand or sit at the very side of the room.” – 2nd year

Recommendations

1. Take the time to make sure students have an accurate timetable when it is published, ensuring the timetable is accurate will allow students to plan their time accordingly, sort baby sitters and enable part time work increasing their satisfaction of the course and their student experience.
2. With large gaps in timetables, and the agreement amongst students in this school of creative arts that they would like one free day a week, and that they don't enjoy longer breaks, consider how lectures can be condensed into shorter time frames reducing the large gaps each day.
3. When assigning rooms to classes, do the research to ensure that it is appropriate for the type of work happening – a room without tables is no use for a seminar that strictly requires note taking for succeeding on the course, do everything you can to make learning for your students easy.

School of Computer Science

The school of computer science comprises 1268 students and received 221 responses to the survey (17%). In terms of finding their university experience enjoyable 61% agreed that this was the case.

Findings

For students to receive their timetables very close to the start of term can cause stress for organising various personal commitments; work, baby sitting and transport for example. A clear majority (70%) in this school agreed that they did receive their timetable at an appropriate time which is really positive. Although timetables were on time, just over half were satisfied indicating a potential problem with the timetables themselves, a breakdown of satisfaction with the timetables by level of study is shown in figure 5. One reason for this may be that there were inaccuracies in the timetables – inaccuracies were present for 13% of respondents.

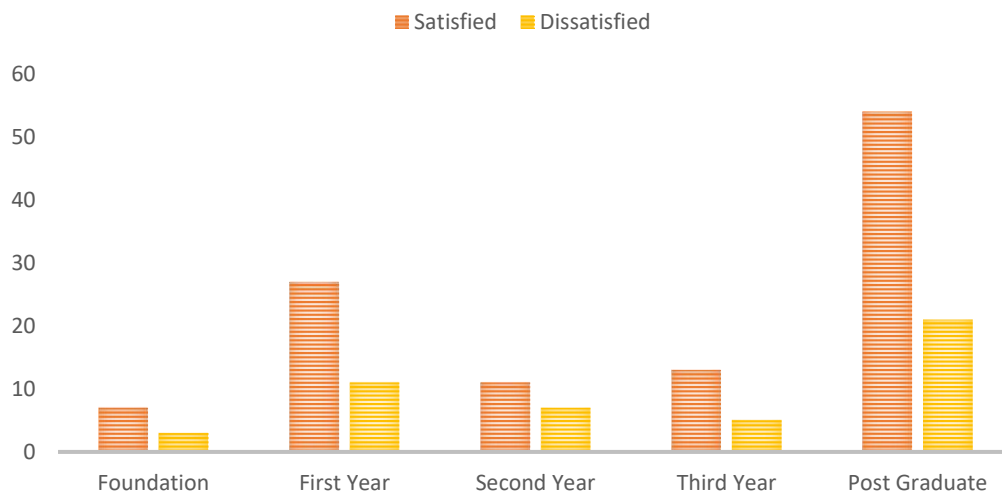


Figure 5. Satisfaction with timetable upon publication separated by level of study for the School of Computer Sciences

39% of respondents rated their satisfaction that their timetable fits around their daily life as five or lower with the average response on a scale of zero to 10 as a six. Further to this, 55% of respondents have extended periods of over three hours in their typical university week, this can be a large inconvenience for travel arrangements or work. In line with these figures surrounding the timetable suitability, 84% agreed that full time students should have at least 1 free day per week, which from the comments appears to be the case for some in this school already.

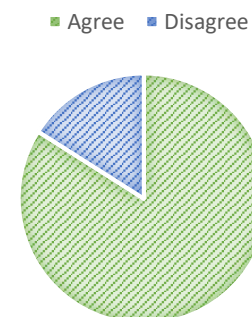


Figure 6. "Full time students should have at least 1 free day per week"

"I have no classes on Wednesdays and it's good to have that one day because it gives me time to study or just simply relax." – 3rd year

"I think that it's very important to have at least one day of the week that isn't a weekend day off, not just for the purpose of recreational activities like sports and clubs, but also to allow students to work part time jobs or to catch up on lectures, coursework or assignments as opposed to having a lot to do on the weekends. It also gives students a breather from their academic routine, since we all need that every once in a while." – 1st year

Breaks during lectures are most commonly filled with studying with friends or people on their course, eating and studying alone, they are least likely filled with going to the gym or exercising – with once a week being the most common frequency for visiting the library.

Although a small proportion (9%), it was indicated that some spaces and rooms for the lectures and seminars are not suitable, out of 24 written comments very few were bad, but some did highlight the size of rooms as an issue amongst postgraduate students.

"Sometimes there is no place in labs to sit." Postgraduate

"Sometimes students sit on floor or stairs in room" Postgraduate

"Overcrowded sometimes" – Postgraduate

Recommendations

1. The most common activity for students in the school of computer science is to study with people on their course, the school might consider encouraging this and facilitate by providing areas for group studying in the school, this way you are aiding their learning experience.
2. Take a specific focus on room allocation for postgraduate student timetables as this is where the only issues lie in regard to suitability of rooms – these comments also revolve purely around space, so making sure room capacity is considered in regard to student numbers is vital.

School of Engineering and Technology

The school of engineering and technology comprises of 1604 students and received 187 responses to the survey (12%). In terms of finding their university experience enjoyable 59% agreed that this was the case.

Findings

64% of the respondents agreed that they did receive their termly timetable at an appropriate time, this number could be improved upon, with agreement levels being as high as 79% in other schools. Less than half (47%) were satisfied with their timetable once it was received, this is very low. A breakdown of satisfaction with the timetable by level of study is shown in figure 7. Of note, second years are more dissatisfied than satisfied with their timetable, they stated issues with frequent changes with their timetables.

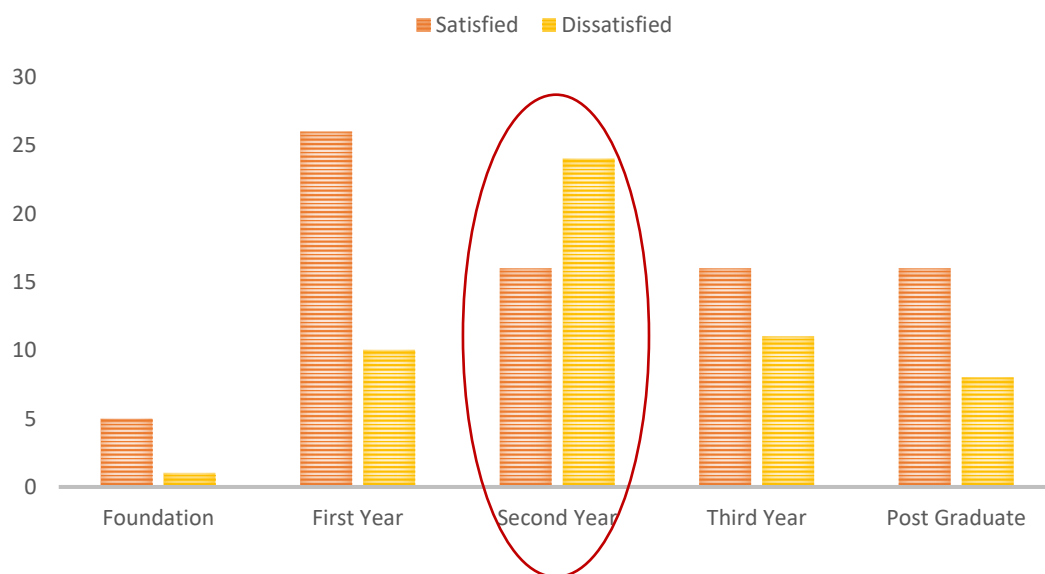


Figure 7. Satisfaction with timetable upon publication separated by level of study for the School of Engineering and Technology

Overall in the school 26% indicated their timetables were not accurate when it was received, with common themes in written responses concerning accuracy being clashes in their timetables and complete modules being missing.

“Lecturer didn’t turn up because of timetable overlap, same thing happened last semester.” – 1st year

“When I was finally able to receive my timetable, it was full of electives and overlapping lectures, as I was not given the option to choose what to attend. I feel like this can be resolved by taking the concept of “electives” away, many international students also found this to be confusing. It is easier to just follow an established course/timetable.” – 2nd year

An average of five was given from zero to 10 on how well their timetable fits around their daily life and commitments.

58% of respondents do have extended periods of over three hours during a typical university week. It is then important to consider that 61% said they do not enjoy having these longer breaks between their timetabled events. 83% agreed that full time students should have at last one free day per week, and 55% disagreed that they avoid 9ams because they make their day longer, all the data suggests that condensed days with less breaks during the day would lead students to be more satisfied with their course and not detract from attending.

"You should aim to fit classes into 4 days a week between 9-5. Aim to have one-hour slot a day for lunch. Would prefer classes to be back to back so I could head straight home after class instead of having to kill 2/3 hours before my next class." – 3rd year

"To avoid stress, being able to have better time management, giving the freedom to explore extracurricular activities and help people who also work part-time. Most uni's do this, and the university I came from also does this (Teesside) I don't understand why this university does not." – 2nd year

During their breaks from timetabled sessions, students are most likely to study with friends or people on their course followed by eating and studying alone. These activities are likely to take place in the library, as the majority of students stated that every day they are on campus, they will visit the library. The least popular activity for in-between timetabled events was going to the gym or exercising.

In terms of room suitability, 12% said indicated they have had unsuitable rooms for their lectures or seminars, for example;

"For numerous thermo/fluids lectures we were scheduled a music room without any desks etc to facilitate note taking. When catch up/important revision lectures were scheduled people were sitting on the floor and each other's laps." – 2nd year

The Prince Edward Hall was specifically mentioned several times in relation to unsuitability.

Recommendations

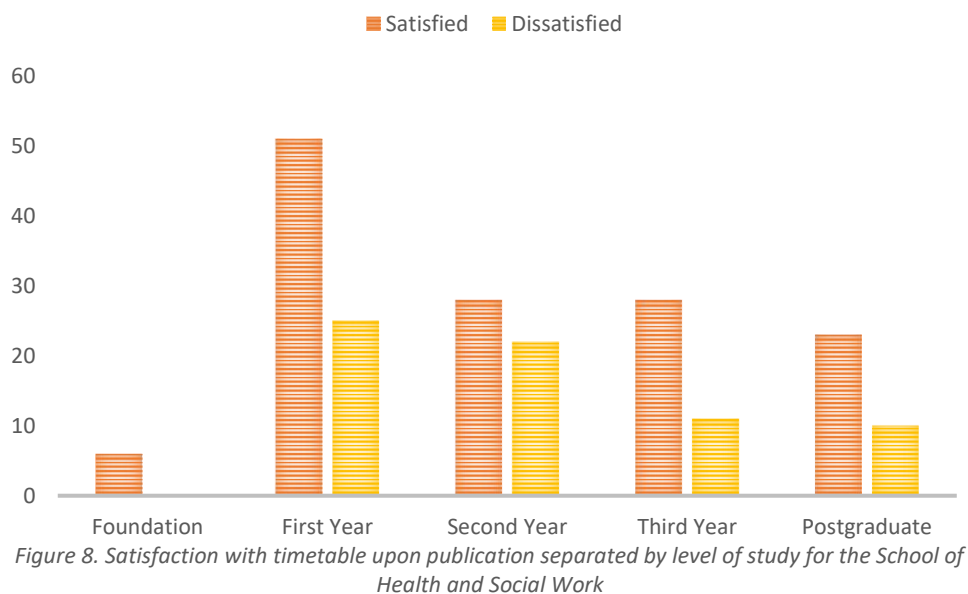
1. To increase satisfaction with timetables, consider reducing the longer breaks in between timetabled sessions. Most students have indicated that they have these, but do not like them, and really want a day off a week.
2. If Prince Edward hall must be used, make sure it is for shorter periods of time, or for small seminar sessions, as students find it very difficult to hear the lecturer clearly and not being able to see from far.

School of Health and Social Work

The School of Health and Social Work comprises of 4781 students and received 269 responses to the survey (6%). In terms of finding their university experience enjoyable 60% agreed that this was the case.

Findings

Many students were happy with the timing they received their timetable, with only 12% saying they didn't receive it at an appropriate time, saying they would always be happier if it was earlier, but with more concern lying with exam timetables and how late they receive those. Overall, students were more satisfied than dissatisfied, but satisfaction levels were low, only 53% agreed they were satisfied with their timetable when it was received. A breakdown of satisfaction by level of study can be seen in figure 8.



Only 60% of respondents said their timetable was accurate when published. An accurate timetable allows students to effectively plan their remaining time outside of lectures, without this it can lead students to be disorganised and result in worsened time management. Students rated the timetable at a six for fitting around their daily life and commitments, 26% rated it at eight and above meaning the students do not see the timetable as too demanding.

39% of all respondents have extended periods of over 3 hours in their typical timetabled week. 81% of students in the school agree that full time students should have at least one free day per week. 75% of all students said they do not enjoy having longer breaks between their timetabled events and the comments indicate that smaller gaps between lecturers cannot be used effectively, therefore students would prefer sessions condensed down into shorter or fewer days.

“To help catch up on work from lectures. One hour between each lecture is useless as not much can get done once you leave, have a chat with mates, find a place to work then go back to lecture.” – 1st year

“Too many hours to kill between lectures so could get rid of the gaps between lectures then either finish earlier or have a day free.” – 1st year

“Commuting is a pain as it is. Having to come in every day when things can be condensed is much easier.” – 3rd year

This sample suggests there are more commuters studying in the School of Health and Social Work than non-commuters (Figure 9). Commuting students ‘definitely disagree’ significantly more than non-commuting students that their timetable works well for them and of these commuters, 53% said they have to kill time at university due to their travel arrangements.

■ Commuters ■ Non-Commuters

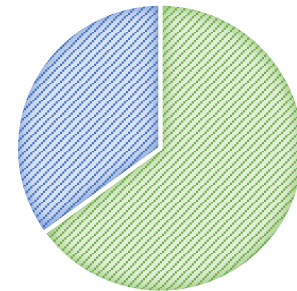


Figure 9. Do you commute / travel to UH from outside of Hatfield?

Most commonly they visit the library once a week, and the three most popular activities to fill breaks in their timetable are eating, studying with friends/people on their course and studying alone. The least popular choice is socialising activities e.g. society, sports club and volunteering.

21% of respondents said the rooms used for their seminars and lectures are not suitable, the majority of comments relate to overcrowded rooms, then temperature problems and rooms being too big for the cohort.

“One room is very small and overcrowded. Not enough chairs for everyone is if you arrive later, you have to go back outside the room to find a chair” – Postgraduate

“The rooms are often too small for our class size” – 1st year

“Some of our rooms cram us in to the point where we can’t move our chairs without affecting someone else’s chair” – 2nd year

Recommendations

1. Students have indicated issues with exam timetables and that these are not provided in enough time to properly prepare and manage time.
2. A lot of your students are commuters, make sure their needs are considered carefully in regard to timetabling – the longer breaks in timetables aren’t convenient. They are the majority, so their needs are more prominent, and from the data it seems changes made for commuters would be welcomed by non-commuting students anyway.

School of Physics, Astronomy and Maths

The School of Physics, Astronomy and Maths comprises of 398 students and received 57 responses to the survey (14%). In terms of finding their university experience enjoyable, 69% agreed that this was the case.

Findings

77% of respondents agreed that they received their termly timetable at an appropriate time, but more were dissatisfied than satisfied. This was the case overall, but specifically for first- and second-year students in this school (Figure 10). There is a big disparity in second years satisfaction, something to be looked at.

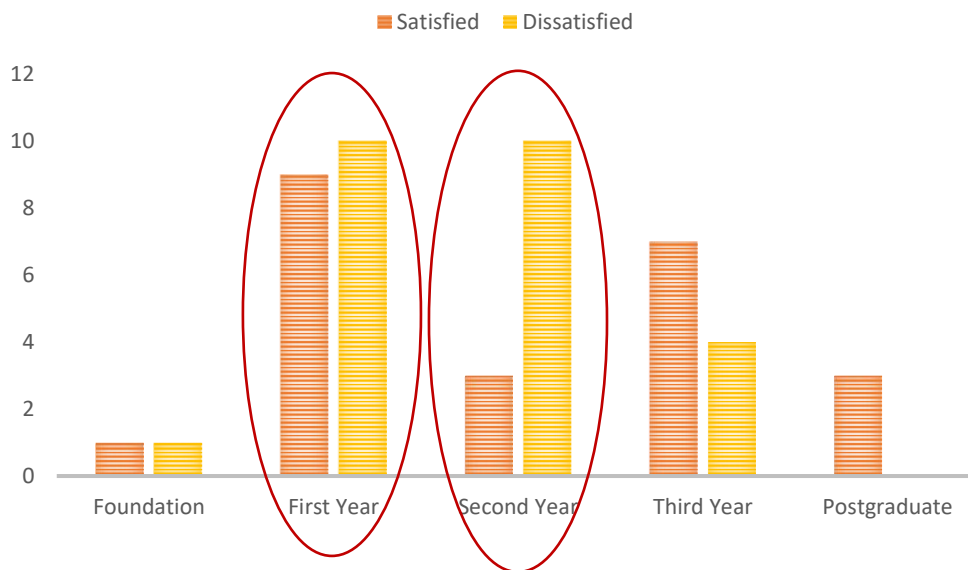


Figure 10. Satisfaction with timetable upon publication separated by level of study for the School of Physics, Astronomy and Maths

16% of timetables had inaccuracies. Specific comments mentioned that timetables are not kept up to date. This can be confusing to have things on your timetable that you are not meant to attend but could ultimately reflect badly on the students giving them poor attendance scores that are not warranted.

“Some of the module that I dropped still appeared in my timetable and I keep getting emails from the lectures that you haven’t done the work or attend that module.” – 2nd year

“A few modules included on it were ones which I either was unable to take as I hadn’t yet done the prerequisite modules. There were also a few tutorials missing.” – 2nd year

Timetables were rated at a five out of 10 for fitting around their daily life and commitments indicating that they are not able to achieve a satisfactory work life balance, this will cause overall dissatisfaction with the course and university experience. 65% of respondents said they have extended periods of three plus hours between timetabled events, and 54.9% indicated they do not enjoy having these longer breaks between timetables events. This

could be the underlying reason for dissatisfaction as longer gaps can cause disruption to the learning process throughout the day.

Students strongly agree that full time students should have at least one free day per week.

“Free days allow students to effectively revise the material they have been learning in classes” – Foundation

“I currently get one day off a week and I feel like it gives me the opportunity to recap the work I've done through the week without cutting too much into the weekends” – 1st year

“I have previously always had a day free and it's a great opportunity to catch up on coursework or do things such as food shopping that can otherwise be difficult to squeeze into the week. I have also experienced it to be a useful day for some lecturers to put on extra sessions for those who wish to attend.” - 2nd year

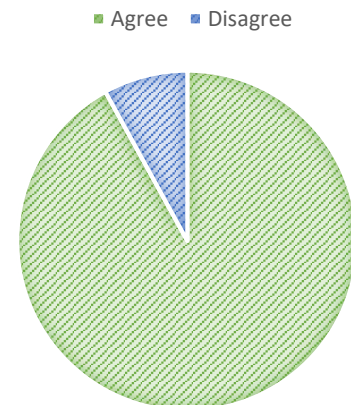


Figure 11. “Full time students should have at least 1 free day per week”

Eating, studying with friends/people on their course and studying alone are the most popular activities for students to do in the breaks between timetabled sessions, the least popular being going to the gym and exercising, with students typically visit the library every day they are on campus

12% said the spaces and rooms that are used for lectures and seminars are not suitable, with the main concern surrounding spaces not being big enough to comfortably learn in.

“It's so crowded. Especially for PAM students taking mathematical techniques. The Lindop building was much better and the air conditioning is always on in winter and off during summer. It gets really cold and uncomfortable” - 2nd year

“Cramped” – 2nd year

Recommendations

1. 1st and 2nd year students are more dissatisfied with their timetables, see if you can work specifically with these years to make improvements.
2. Make sure changes to timetables are also followed through electronically to ensure records are correct for the module's student are taking, this will reduce errors in attendance and prevent follow up emails for in-completed work.

School of Life and Medical Sciences

The School of Life and Medical Sciences comprises of 4015 students and received 405 responses to the survey (10%). In terms of finding their university experience enjoyable 60% agreed that this was the case.

Findings

Most students in the school agreed that they received their termly timetable at an appropriate time. Just 56% were satisfied with the timetable once it was received. A considerable proportion for each level of study were dissatisfied, especially in second year (Figure 12).

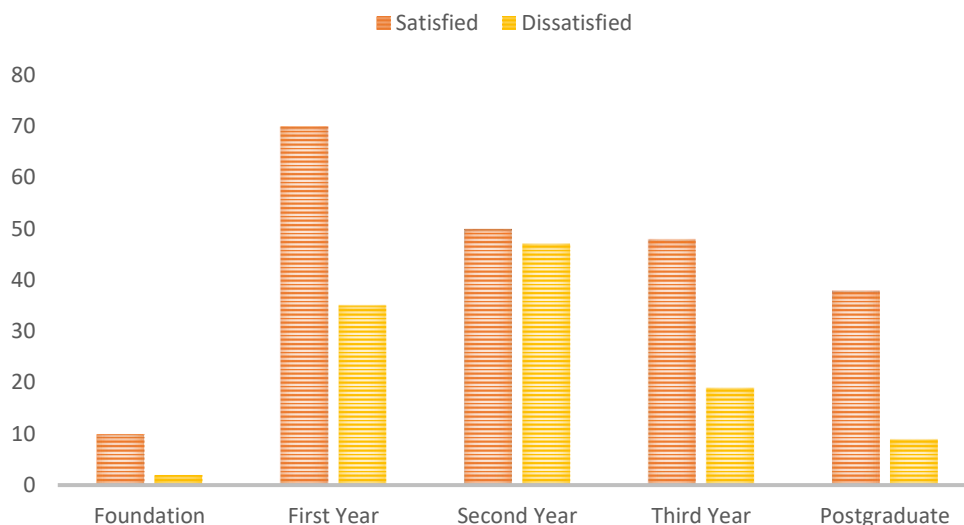


Figure 12. Satisfaction with timetable upon publication separated by level of study for the School of Life and Medical Sciences

Students did highlight that some timetables contained inaccuracies when published. Many of these issues involved sessions appearing on the timetable which were not mandatory or that did not apply to their course.

“Timetable doesn’t reflect actual term dates, needs someone to check it over as sometimes have turned up to a lecture/practical which isn’t either mandatory or even on” – 1st year

“Lots of additional lectures added to timetable that were not actually a part of the course.”

“Wasted a lot of time travelling when there was no lecture.” – 2nd year

Only three percent disagreed to full time students having at least one free day per week.

Respondents rated how satisfied they were with how their timetable fits around their daily life and commitments as a five, this is low with room to improve students’ work life balance. During a typical university week, 46% have extended periods of over three hours between timetabled events and 65% indicate that they do not enjoy having longer breaks in-between timetabled sessions.

"If the breaks are in the day in between lectures the time is wasted but if I'm at home I easily hit 7 hours per day studying." – 3rd year

"The lack of contact time but one thing per day 5 days a week could easily be put onto 2 or 3 days, but instead we are having to spend more time and money commuting every day and it is interfering with the compulsory placement we are required to do." – 2nd year

"Would prefer for lectures to be grouped into one/two days as this would make travelling much easier. The break days could then be effectively used for studying." – 2nd year

Most commonly students will visit the library every day that they are on campus, filling their time during breaks from timetabled sessions eating, studying with friends/people on their course or studying alone. 47% said they effectively utilise the time they spend on campus, and 35% agreed that they spend their Wednesday afternoon free time on campus either studying or participating in extra-curricular activities.

16% of respondents indicated that the spaces and rooms that are used for lectures and seminars are not suitable. Many comments centred around rooms being too small, being cramped leading to an unpleasant learning environment.

"On occasion there are not enough seats. On a progress test last year, I was absolutely horrified that someone was asked to sit on the floor!" – 3rd year

"Most rooms yes. Some rooms are just too small and thus we look like a bunch of sardines trying to fit in a room" – 1st year

"Some rooms are very small for 100 students" – 1st year

"Sometimes we are advised to sit on the floor as there is no room." – 3rd year

Recommendations

1. The possibility of condensing the timetable into shorter times and providing a free day would be welcomed by students and may be feasible to do with almost half having lengthy time gaps in their current timetables.
2. It seems students do not use time effectively whilst on campus, condensing the timetable allowing students to work from home if desired may increase productivity levels and improvement in quality of work.
3. Room suitability is a large issue. Having rooms that are too small really limits the students learning experience – rooms should be large enough to accommodate all those enrolled on the course, not just when students do not turn up to lectures.

Hertfordshire Business School

Hertfordshire Business School comprises of 4389 students and received 503 responses to the survey (11%). In terms of finding their university experience enjoyable 58% agreed that this was the case.

Findings

68% of respondents from Hertfordshire Business school agreed that they received their termly timetable at an appropriate time, but inaccuracies were present in 12% of them. Those who disagreed with appropriate timing made comments that timetables were given at very late notice.

“Cause my course is already started and I don’t yet have my timetable” – Postgraduate

“Today is the 17th, semester B is commencing on 21st and I still haven’t received my timetable” – 2nd year

“The second semester of my course starts tomorrow, and my timetable is incomplete” – 2nd year

Once received, 51% were satisfied with them. A breakdown of satisfaction with the timetable can be seen in figure 13, this shows that although overall scores show satisfaction, there is still a large proportion for each year aside from foundation courses that are dissatisfied.

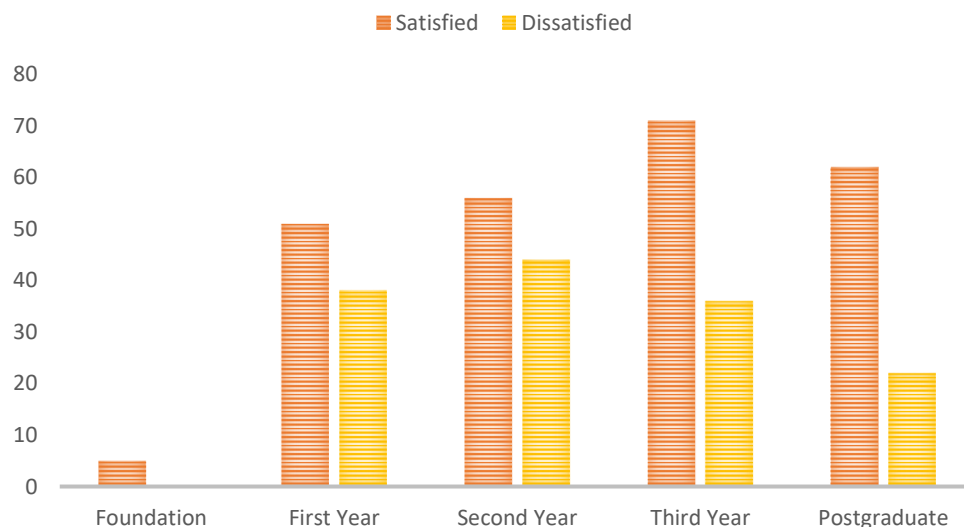


Figure 13. Satisfaction with timetable upon publication separated by level of study for Hertfordshire Business School

Respondents rated the timetable at a five out of 10 for fitting around their daily life and commitments, indicating the timetable does not allow for a good work life balance. 66% do not enjoy having longer breaks between timetabled events, and half of respondents indicated that they do typically have these extended periods of three plus hours.

Students strongly indicated that they would want at least one free day per week with only 40% saying they effectively utilise their time when on campus. The three most common

activities for during breaks in the timetable are eating, studying with friends/people on their course and studying alone, the least common is going to the gym and exercising. Typically, students visited the library twice a week for either leisure or study.

In regard to the rooms and spaces used for lectures and seminars, 13% said they were not suitable. Comments did mention recent refurbishments that have really improved the learning spaces, however room size still remained a problem.

"Our room for Wednesday pm lectures is not big enough for our class and there is a problem with the board/ squeaking floor boards. Not suitable for seminars." – Postgraduate

"Hard to get seats in lecture rooms, have to make everyone stand up to get in." – 1st year

"They are suitable with the exception of a few modules, if a module has 200 plus students then lecturers or room allocation need to be more detailed as to how much each room can take. Sitting squashed is annoying especially when I want to take notes and idiots want to talk and play games or watch videos out load." – 3rd year

Recommendations

1. Try and work to provide timetables sooner. Students have lots of other commitments which need to be arranged in plenty of time.
2. Reduce the number of long breaks in the timetables, these are inconvenient for students and reduces a happy work life balance.

Hertfordshire Law School

Hertfordshire Law School comprises of 1368 students and received 139 responses to the survey (10%). In terms of finding their university experience enjoyable 50% agreed that this was the case

Findings

69% of the respondents agreed that they received their termly timetable at an appropriate time and the following comments were given to support their claim:

"I just arrived here and already registered for the course and immediately I receive the email for first class, then I was given a timetable for the next day and next week, so I think it's very good for me to plan anything." – Postgraduate

Despite the comments, 23% of Law Students were dissatisfied with their academic timetable when it was received and there was a common theme that the timetables had no consistency, and that this was a bigger issue than a delayed timetable, highlighted below:

"At the beginning of the academic year my timetable was released about 23 weeks I think before I was due to start. Which isn't really an issue. The problem however was that it changed a lot in the first 2 months which can be problematic when trying to arrange work etc." – 2nd year

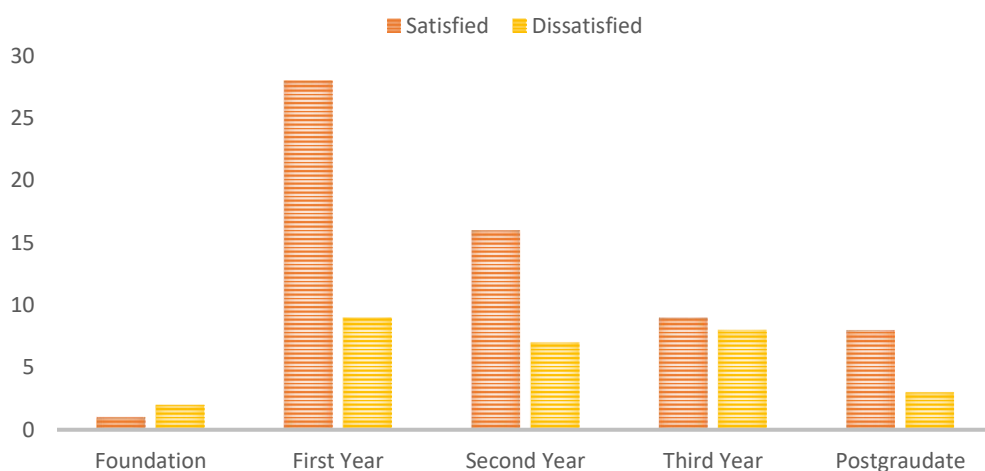


Figure 14. Satisfaction with timetable upon publication separated by level of study for Hertfordshire Law School

After timetables were released 14% of students asserted that it had inaccuracies with them as a student highlighted there were *"Mixes and clashes"* between different modules. This may be one of the reasons that respondents were dissatisfied with their timetables when it was received.

Further to this, it was highlighted that 50% typically have extended periods of three plus hours between timetabled events which could be a burden for commuting students who have to travel into university on various days, comments highlight this struggle and the desire for days to be condensed.

"All our classes could be fit into one day, it is not necessary to be so spread out especially as a commuting student." – 3rd year

"For students who commute this is especially important as it is hard to find time to catch up on work during the day because travelling takes up so much time." – 1st year

Moreover, it could be suggested that in compressing lectures and seminars into fewer days allows for students to have at least one free day a week which was a recommendation made by 87% of students who have given the following comments to support their reasoning:

"It's important to have a free day to prepare for seminar workshops and class discussion." – 1st year

"For students who commute this is especially important as it is hard to find time to catch up on during the day because travelling takes up most of the time." – 1st year

Studying alone, studying with friends/people on their course and eating are the activities students spend the most of their time doing during breaks in their timetable. Least likely to go the gym and exercise and socialising activities e.g. society, sports clubs and volunteering. The lack of engagement these students have with socialising activities may due to the fact that they seem not to have enough free days where they could possibly manage both the work load imposed on them as a result of their course and other commitments like work.

It was found that 17% of seminar/lecture/workshop rooms were unsuitable due to being small in size and it was often found that if a student didn't like his/her lecturer, they would simply change to another workshop which made that room overcrowded to be in.

Recommendations

1. Try to minimise spreading out their timetables over 5 days and only have timetabled events for at least 2/3 days so that students can use the other free days to either engage more with other socialising events such as societies and/or volunteering, or simply have a day or two to destress and relax.
2. Try to have less flexibility on how students can change workshops as this can lead to overcrowding in small rooms. Instead allow for students to only change if they have a valid ongoing reason, or if they find another students in the other workshop with whom they can swap with.

School of Education

School of Education comprises of 2159 students and received 108 responses to the survey (5%). In terms of finding their university experience enjoyable 63% agreed that this was the case.

Findings

It should be considered, 75% of respondents in this school are commuters, meaning for a vast majority of them their student experience will be very different. 54% of which stated that they often find themselves having to “kill time” at university as a result of travel arrangements. Therefore, it could be suggested that social events such as societies and volunteering options which are specific to these students can be utilised very well if carried out, which would further their enjoyment from their university experience.

78% agreed that they received their timetable at an appropriate time with most comments stating that on their induction the timetable for the following 9 months was provided, however minor change did occur here due to room changes, but the majority were happy with the simplicity of accessing it on Canvas.

“I just subscribed to the timetable on StudyNet and so it just came up when I needed it.”

“We have our timetable for the year and receive plenty of notice if there is a change.”

However, away from the majority, 26% were dissatisfied with their timetable for the term based on factors such as late published copies of timetables with students saying:

“We were about three and a half weeks in when we received our timetable. We had paper copies handed out, but it was impossible to organise my childcare as we got a day or two at a time.”

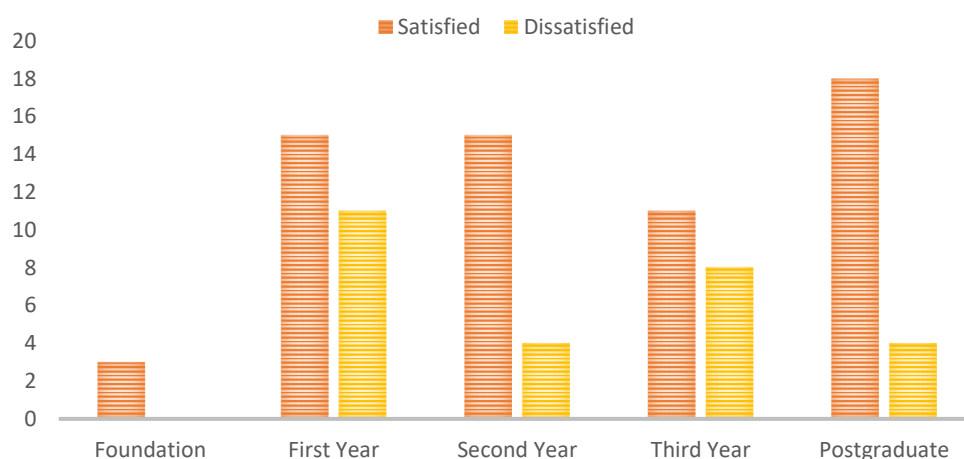


Figure 15. Satisfaction with timetable upon publication separated by level of study for the School of Education

On the other hand, 79% said their timetables were accurate, highlighting the reliability of the timetables. However, a minority of 10% reported having inaccuracies within their timetable

due to last-minute changes in lectures due to staff illness or inconvenience of family visiting during compulsory lectures/seminars, things outside of the control of timetabling.

18% do not have extended periods of three plus hours between timetables events in a typical university week. Since 68% do not enjoy having longer breaks between their timetabled events this is positive. Of the 18% that do have them, 0% said that they enjoy having longer breaks between their timetabled events.

83% agree that full time students should have at least one free day per week, 72% of which strongly agree. Comments left to support their views were based on the idea that it allows for time for other commitments such as work and/or *"important to allow time for reflection and to absorb"*.

Eating, studying with friends/people on their course and studying alone are the top activities that education students spent doing during their free time. Going to the gym and exercise were rated at the least common thing these students spend their free time doing.

43% said their timetable is very demanding, and 32% say the timetable does not work well for them. This may be due to the fact that students find that their timetables have no consistency week to week.

"I prefer a timetable that is the same every week. My timetable changes from week to week and we don't get the same day off a week. This makes it hard to fit things in outside of uni. I also prefer to come in for blocked seminars or lectures. It takes me over an hour to drive in so for only a two-hour lecture. I'm travelling longer than I'm actually in uni."

14% of people said the spaces and rooms that are used for lectures and seminars are not suitable however a staggering 86% were satisfied with their rooms with the following comments to support:

"Well equipped."

"They are comfortable and spacious."

"Most are roomy and nice."

Recommendations

1. Continue to keep down the number of extended periods between timetabled events as students do not enjoy having these, and this helps in reducing the number of days
2. Be more consistent with timetables week to week, this will allow students to get into a routine of what spare time they have. It will also help those who have a family and/or work commitments and ease making travel arrangements.

School of Humanities, incl Joint Honours

School of Humanities, incl Joint Honours comprises of 1561 students and received 162 responses to the survey (10%). In terms of finding their university experience enjoyable 73% agreed that this was the case, the highest number across all schools.

Findings

74% agreed that they received their termly timetable at an appropriate time which allowed students to have plenty of time to manage their other work/family commitments around their workload at university. Nevertheless, there were a few comments by the 16% who were not satisfied, requesting for the release date for timetables to be earlier than two weeks before the start date of the course, a breakdown for level of study can be seen below for satisfaction with their timetable (Figure 16).

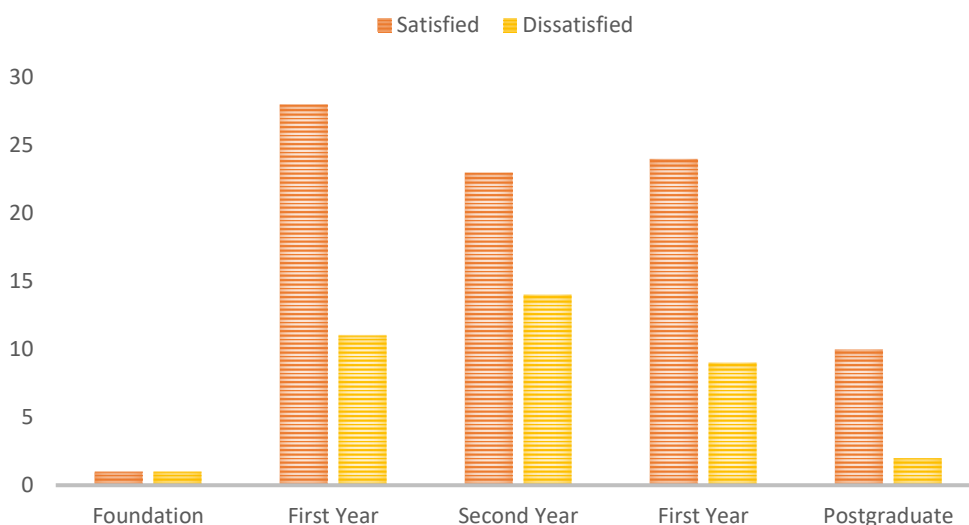


Figure 16. Satisfaction with timetable upon publication separated by level of study for the School of Humanities, incl Joint Honours

Regardless of majority receiving their timetables at an appropriate time, 22% of students asserted that their timetable had some inaccuracies when it was published, with a lot of changes to lectures prior to the start date. This may have caused an inconvenience to those that have work commitments which by contract would be difficult to change.

Extended periods of three plus hours are not present in 50% of respondent's timetables. Of those that do have these extended periods, 64% do not enjoy having them. Overall 69% do not enjoy extended periods between timetabled events, preferring back to back lectures condensed into fewer days.

"It's great to have more classes per day and commute less days! We are much more productive having 3 fully booked days of classes instead of days with only 2h to work. I have many colleagues that did not commute to university just for 1 class as this has a big cost for students."

91% agree that full time students should have at least one free day per week, 81% of which strongly agree. Comments indicated that students are generally stressed and overwhelmed

with their workloads and so having a day to unwind is seen as a necessity to relax, catch up on work and spend time with friends and family.

"We all need at least one day off a week whether to relax, be able to work all day for money or catch up on assignments." – 3rd year

"I already have days off uni, have had since first year, but I'm quite lucky with that. I know others who don't have days off and I know it's very beneficial to have a day off either to catch up on work or take a day off to relax and de-stress" – 3rd year

Most free time is spent by students in this school either studying alone, eating or studying with friends or people on their course. Going to the gym and exercising were the least common amongst these students.

24% said the spaces and rooms that are used for lecturer and seminars are not suitable with comments highlighting the extent to which they can often be cramped and not big enough for the amount of people sitting inside.

"Often, the rooms are very cramped (M-block for example) and people are crowding around desks that cannot support all the chairs, no one can tuck themselves in, let alone take notes effectively." – 1st year

"Some of the rooms that are timetables for seminars are too small for everyone to be sitting around the table in a circular fashion, therefore you cannot engage fully in discussions." – 1st year

Recommendations

1. Students say they not like to have extended periods between timetabled events and would prefer a day off each week. This is due to a stressed out feeling which through their suggestions could be remedied with having a day off.
2. Room allocation can drastically change a student's learning experience. Ensure rooms booked can comfortably accommodate the number of students, and if this isn't possible split the sessions into two groups so that the environment can be used effectively by students.