



MORI

Student Living Report //



Commissioned by UNITE and conducted by MORI //

2001





Student Living Report // 2001 //



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chairman's remarks //



This is UNITE's first 'Student Living Report' and, we believe, the first comprehensive survey into the student experience.

Our intentions are to capture a flavour of the highs and lows of the higher education experience, exploring how students will be living and learning in the 21st century. It provides a snapshot of life as a student right now, but it is our intention to monitor the sector on an annual basis, adding more depth and comparability to the picture over time.

It is a vast area to cover and, for our first survey, we have chosen to focus on the key areas of finance, current study, technology, accommodation, crime, welfare, leisure time and post study aspirations.

Students represent our future. To understand their motivations and beliefs today will be to catch a glimpse of how our society may be shaped in years to come.

The findings are exciting and extremely encouraging. Two themes are particularly striking:

The UNITE/MORI survey highlights the sheer optimism with which students view their time in higher education and their appreciation of the doors it will open in their future careers.

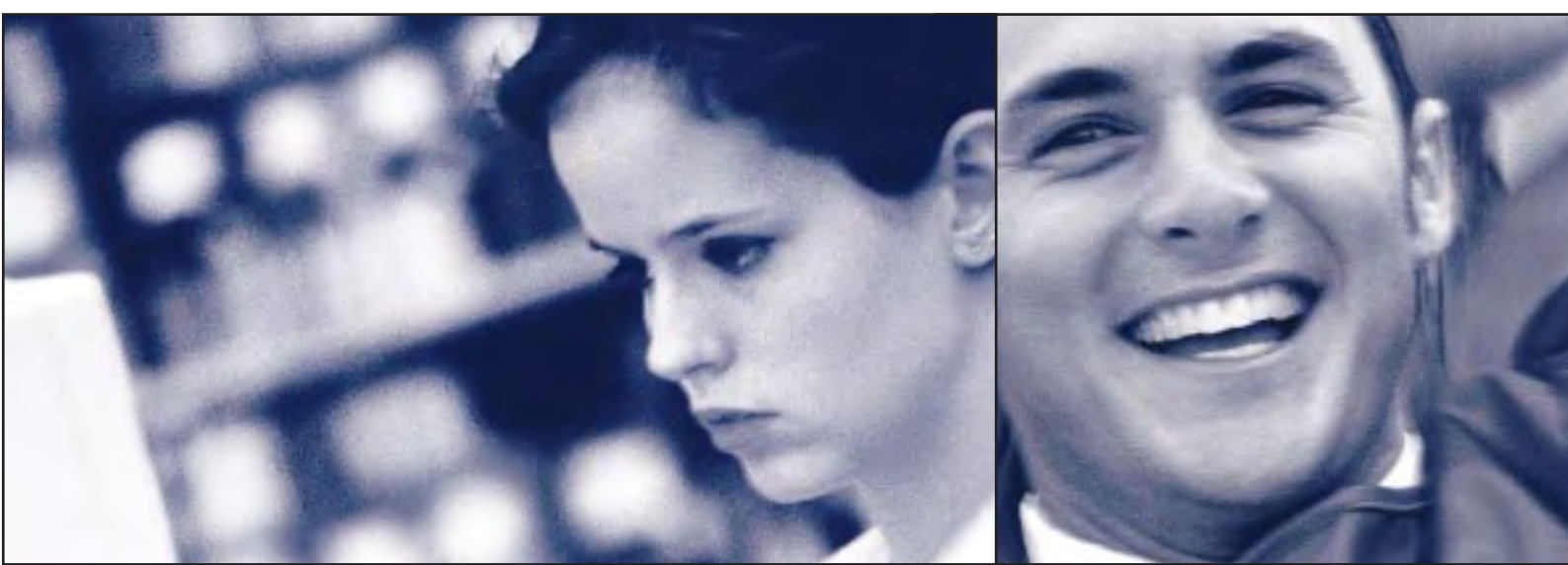
It also demonstrates that students have taken on a powerful consumer mantle, demanding higher standards and real value for money.

At UNITE, the UK's leading specialist provider of student accommodation services, we are committed to continuing to contribute to the understanding of the student experience, in order that we can constantly improve in servicing their requirements and those of our partners in the higher education arena.

“It is our intention to monitor the sector on an annual basis, adding more depth and comparability to the picture over time”

Geoffrey Maddrell

Geoffrey Maddrell
Chief Executive



Objectives

The aim of this first Student Living Report is to establish a comprehensive, ongoing study to explore how students are meeting the challenges and opportunities of the higher education experience.

We wish to gain insight of the changing nature of the 'student experience', encompassing a broad understanding of how students perceive their time at university including academic, social, personal, accommodation and financial areas.

Specific objectives for this research include:

- Understanding student attitudes to the higher education experience as a whole
- Examining reasons for going on to higher education
- Investigating the best and worst aspects of University life
- Understanding academic expectations
- Measuring numbers of students working whilst in higher education and how it is affecting them
- Examining attitudes to finances
- Investigating attitudes to different types of accommodation
- Understanding spare time activities
- Analysing the impact of crime and stress
- Examining the role of the Student Union
- Monitoring political activism and voting intentions
- Understanding students' expectations for the future

Methodology

MORI's research took place in two stages between August and November 2000.

The first stage involved a series of four focus groups held in London and Birmingham.

The preliminary focus groups allowed researchers to gain in-depth, qualitative input into the issues explored in this report and helped to frame relevant questions for the wider survey. Although focus group responses have not been included in the percentage findings, some of their comments, where appropriate to particular questions, have been included in the following pages.

In the second stage of research, which took place between 23 October and 15 November 2000, 1,103 confidential, face-to-face interviews were conducted, with students across the UK. Respondents constitute a representation of the full-time UK university student population – including proportional splits by age, gender, university, subject studied, academic year, ethnicity and geographic region.

All interviews and focus groups were conducted by MORI, the UK's largest independent market research organisation.

The following pages cover the key findings of the research. These findings have been briefly summarised and comparative charts provided.

Please note that totals may not always equal 100%. In some instances this is because of rounding or where respondents were allowed to choose multiple responses for a particular question. An asterisk (*) represents a value of less than 0.5 per cent but more than 0.

summary //



Selection of University

Students are going to university to gain qualifications and, in an increasingly competitive job market, to improve their prospects of future employment. Indeed, improving their career prospects emerges as the 'best' aspect of university life along with meeting new friends.

Whilst a number of different factors are taken into consideration when choosing at which university to study, the course on offer is of overriding importance.

Prospectuses play a key role in guiding the student to the right university although other factors such as advice from family, friends and past school or college personnel play an important role. Indeed, for many students their choice in university appears to have been appropriate, with more than four-fifths claiming their opinions and impressions of their university are favourable.

Despite the preparation and guidance, one in ten students are found to switch course primarily because they change their mind or decide that the course is not what they wanted or not of sufficient interest for them to continue.

Students' education prior to university appears to have set them in good stead with almost nine in ten considering it to have equipped them (either fully or partially) for their university studies.

Course

For the majority, the course on which they are studying meets with students' expectations and, for a fifth, exceeds expectations. For three-fifths, their course stretches them intellectually, especially those studying science and engineering. The recent focus on IT within universities is reflected in the study results with the majority considering the availability and accessibility of IT to be 'good'. However a substantial minority feel the availability of course books in the library to be 'poor'.

Students rate the course on which they are studying most highly for being 'up-to-date'. Students also rate their course as 'good' in the majority of cases for its content, standard of teaching, frequency of lectures or classes and the academic tutor system.

Over half of all undergraduates hope to graduate with a 2:1 degree. Sixteen per cent predict that they will achieve a first, with only one in ten (13%) believing they will get a 2:2. Students are found to become less optimistic about their anticipated qualifications as they progress through the university system.

There is increasing press coverage of the need for graduates to achieve at least a 2:1 degree if they are to be considered for a good job. Just over half of all students agree that it is essential to achieve a 2:1 to get a good job – a fifth disagree.

The majority of students feel that their current course does (fully 46% or partially 42%) equip them for a future career. However, seven per cent feel that their course will leave them unprepared in this respect.

Just under half of students plan to find a job in the UK whilst one quarter hope to study further, particularly those currently studying for a HND/HNC or other sub-degree qualification (33%). Under a fifth of postgraduates (16%) hope to continue their studies beyond their current course. A fifth of students say they want to travel after university.

The majority of students (70%) believe that university has set them in good stead for their working lives, one in ten disagree.

Finances

By far the worst aspect of university life is having little money to spend and being in debt.

On average, students predict that they will owe £7,026 by the time they have completed their studies.

Half of the students included in the study pay some form of tuition fee. On the whole, three-fifths of fee paying students perceive their course to be 'good value for money' – a similar proportion to those who do not pay fees.



Eight in ten students agree that the money they are spending on their education is a good investment in their future. Perhaps the high proportion of students who consider the money spent on their higher education as an investment helps to explain why one in three are not seriously worried about the debts they are incurring as a result of their studies.

Indeed, the majority of the students appear to be accepting of their loans with one in two not worried as they can pay off their loans once they start work.

Nine in ten students received some help from their parents or others whilst at university to help pay for such things as food, living expenses and accommodation.

Despite a substantial proportion being in debt, students own a wide variety of consumer goods, among the most popular being CD players, mobile phones, TVs and computers.

Students' expectations appear to become more jaded and less positive as they progress through their years at university.

Working

The majority of students have had some form of work experience during their time at university. Working part-time is more likely than not to have had an adverse effect on their university studies.

Students appear to be coming under increased pressure and, for many, juggling their university work with their other commitments is seen to be a problem.

Accommodation

Just under one half of university students currently live in private rented accommodation, one-fifth live in halls of residence, an identical proportion live with their parents or guardian and one in ten live in their own home.

It is generally thought that, in the second and third year of university, foreign students are the most likely type of student to be living in a hall of residence.

The main advantages of living in a halls of residence are perceived to be the ease with which students can meet other people and the social life. Despite the advantages, it is widely accepted that halls of residence are noisy and students residing in them may have to live with people they may not like.

More than one half of those who have lived with their parents or in their own home at some point during their time at university 'agree' that money played an important role in their decision to live at home – a significant minority (30%) would have preferred to have moved away from home had they been given the choice to do so.

Students renting from a private landlord appear to have had more problems with their accommodation than those living in halls of residence. The repairs required, the lack of cleanliness and cost are cited as the top three complaints of those living in privately rented accommodation.

One in ten students received pressure from parents or guardian to live at home while attending university.

Social Life

Students continue to spend their spare time doing traditional 'student activities', such as going to the pub, meeting friends and watching TV. Two-fifths participate in sport, this is slightly higher among males.

Two-thirds of students rate the availability of personal or pastoral support as good while similar proportions believe the support they receive with their academic studies is 'good' (69%).

More than two-fifths could not do one or more of the domestic activities specified such as cook, budget and iron.

If there were a General Election tomorrow Labour would win the largest proportion of the student vote.

Student Union

The majority of students do not view the Student Union as a political body, offering a political voice for students and the opportunity to get involved with student politics. For most it is a way of accessing the services they provide and obtaining discount goods and services or an organiser of social events.

Crime

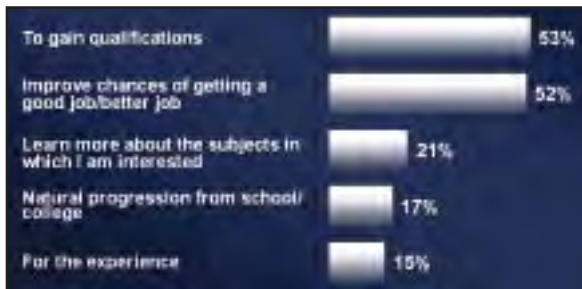
One-fifth of students have been a victim of crime while at university. Despite this, the majority feel that they and their belongings are safe in their current accommodation.

01. choice of university //

1.1 Reasons for going to University

Q. Why did you decide to go to University?

Top mentions



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

1.1 Reason for going to university

Students of today are most likely to take the decision to go to university to gain qualifications (53%) and improve their job prospects (52%). Learning more about their subject (21%), the perception that it is a natural progression (17%) and experiencing student life (15%) are also important considerations.

Going to university to improve job prospects is more likely to be an important consideration among students from a C2DE background (58%), than among those from social classes AB (49%) or C1 (51%).

Additionally, comparisons between the various educational establishments reveals that those educated at private schools (25%) are more likely than those educated at state or further education colleges (15%) to perceive going to university as a natural progression.

1.2 Factors important in choice of University

The course on offer emerges as the main deciding factor in the students' choice of university, ahead of a city or town location and the social facilities available in the locality.

However, for a fifth of students, being able to live at home is an important factor in their decision. This is found to be particularly important among HND/HNC/other sub-degree students (41%), mature students (31%) and those from social class groupings C2DE (31%).

The social facilities a town or city has to offer are more important to younger students, particularly those aged 22 years or under (28%) and also among those from an AB background (29%). University league tables also influence more students from these two latter sub-sample groups.

1.2 Factors important in choice of university

Q. Which, if any, of the following were important to you in your choice of university, for your current course?

Top mentions



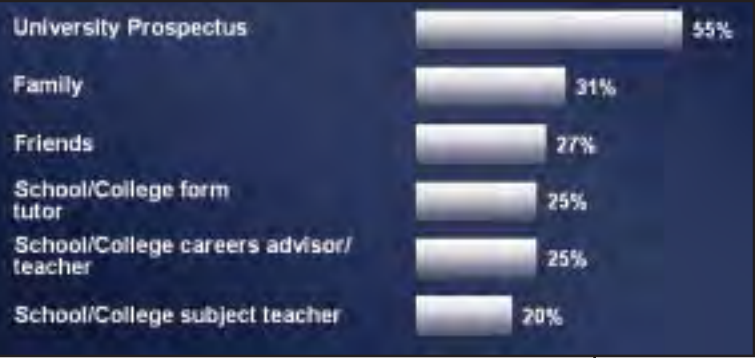
Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI



1.3 Guidance and support with choice of University

Q. Which, if any, of the following groups have been helpful in providing guidance and support when selecting which university to study your current course?

Top mentions



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

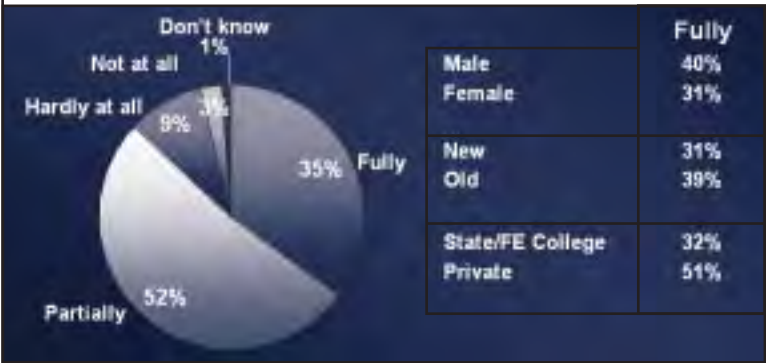
1.3 Guidance and support with choice of university

University prospectuses emerge as the most helpful source for providing students with guidance and support when selecting universities, although teachers (careers, form or subject) also play an important role, along with family and friends.

The family is more likely to be considered helpful among those from an AB background (37%), than C1s (28%) and C2DEs (26%) – perhaps as a result of their parents being more likely than others to have had personal experience of going to university themselves or because students from the AB grouping tend to be younger.

1.4 Education prior to University equips for studies at University

Q. To what extent do you think your education prior to university equipped you for your studies at university?



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

1.4 Education prior to university equips for University

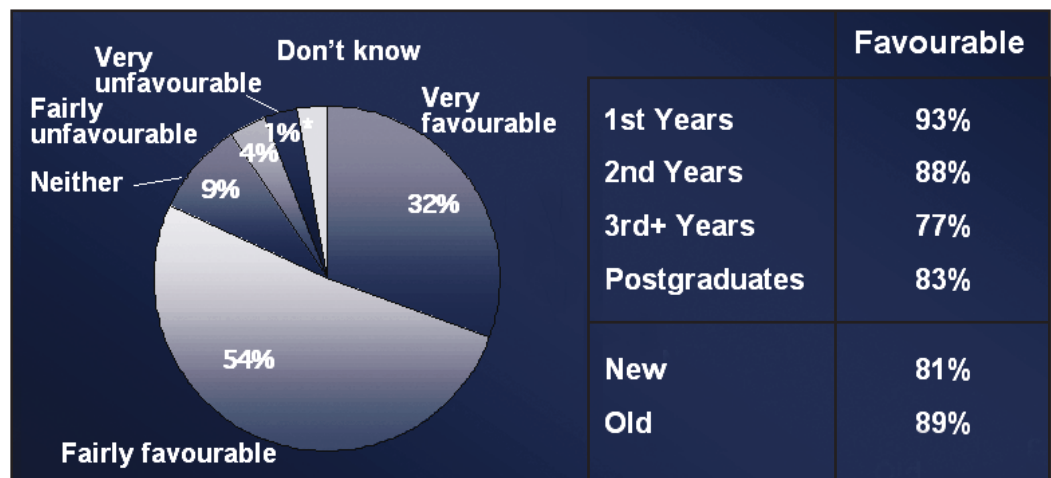
One third of students feel that their education prior to going to university has 'fully' equipped them for their current studies, while a further half feel it has 'partially' equipped them. However, a substantial minority believe their previous education has not equipped them (hardly or not at all).

Male students, those studying at an old university and those who have had a private education prior to university life, are more likely to consider themselves as 'fully' equipped.

02. overall attitudes towards university //

2.1 Attitude towards University life

Q. How favourable or unfavourable are your opinions and impressions of your university?



Base: All students (1,103)
Source: MORI

“Having lots of friends on tap...
you'll never get that again”



2.1 Attitude to University life

More than eight in ten students have a favourable opinion of their university. A third claim their impressions are 'very' favourable.

Among undergraduate students, impressions become less favourable as time progresses. The vast majority (93%) of first year students, who had only been at university for a matter of weeks at the time of the survey, hold a 'very' or 'fairly' favourable opinion of their university. Among second years, this falls to 88 per cent and by the third or subsequent year it declines further to 77 per cent. The level of favourability increases again among postgraduates, that is among those who have chosen to continue with their studies after graduation.

Views among students attending old universities are found to be most favourable (89% favourable), than those attending new universities (81%).

“Best thing is going out with people, the worst thing is money and the lack of it”

2.2 Best aspects of University life

Q. What, if anything, do you consider to be the best aspects of university life?

Top mentions



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

2.2 Best aspects of University life

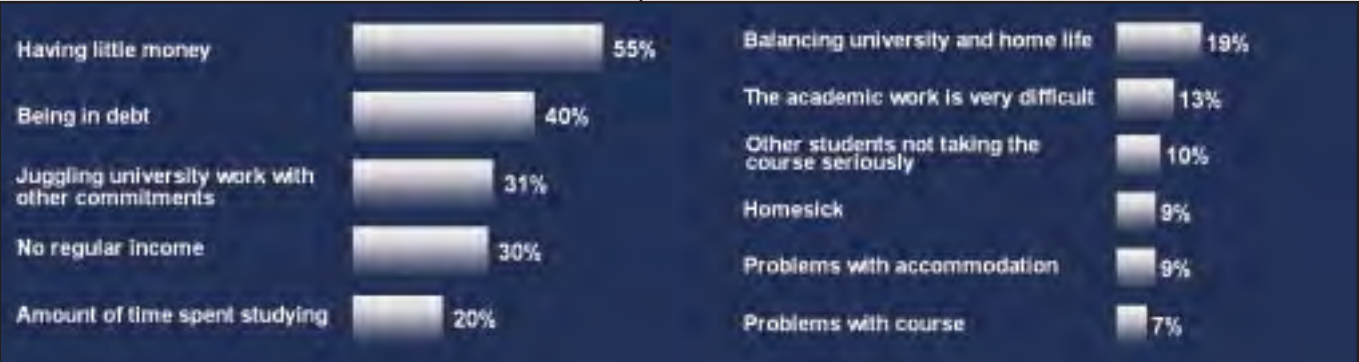
Students of today appear to be taking the academic side of university life very seriously. Although meeting new friends and the social life both appear in the top mentions for the ‘best’ aspects of university life, improving career prospects, learning more about their chosen subject and being stretched intellectually feature prominently.

Significantly more male than female students rate the social life as one of the best aspects. Whereas, more female than male students believe that they are doing something for themselves.

2.3 Worst aspects of University life

Q. What, if anything, do you consider to be the worst aspects of university life?

Top mentions



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

2.3 Worst aspects of University life

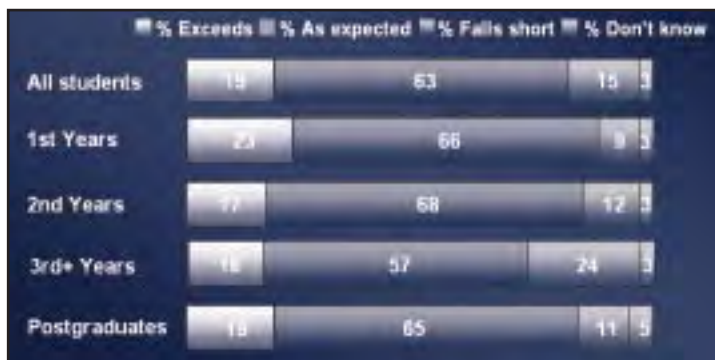
Issues relating to money and debt and juggling university life with other commitments are cited as the worst aspects of university life. Although a concern, issues relating to specific aspects of academic work are mentioned less frequently. One in ten mention problems with their accommodation.

Being in debt is a particular concern for students from a C2DE background (48%), whereas juggling university life with other commitments is found to be more of a concern for those aged 26 years and over (40%) – perhaps due to their other commitments.

03. academic aspects of university life //

3.1 Extent to which course meets expectations

Q. Does your current university course meet your expectations?



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

3.1 Extent to which course meets expectations

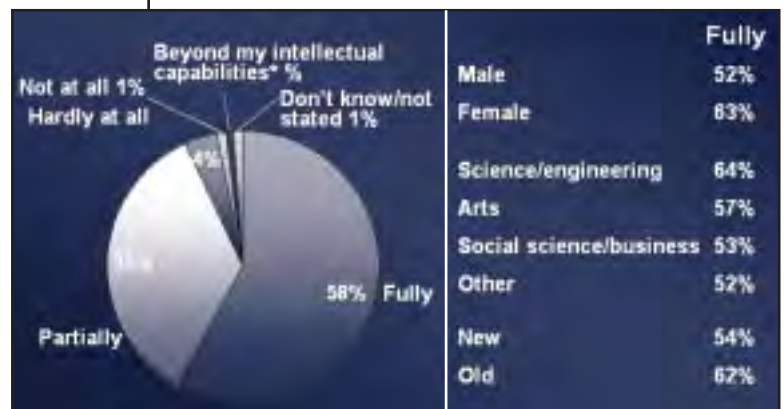
For the majority of students, their current university course either meets (63%) or exceeds (19%) their expectations. Only 15 per cent feel their course falls short of expectations.

It appears that for undergraduates, the further into the course they progress, the more likely they are to consider their course falls short of expectations. During their first year optimism is at its highest with only nine per cent feeling their course falls short of expectations, rising to 12 per cent during the second year, then doubling to 24 per cent during their third year, or subsequent year.

Among postgraduates, expectations are restored where one in ten feel their course falls short of expectations.

3.2 Intellectual challenge of current course

Q. To what extent does your current course stretch you intellectually?



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

3.2 Intellectual challenge of current course

University courses are stretching the majority of today's students. Three-fifths (58%) say their current course stretches them 'fully', and a further 35% say 'partially'. Only a small number (5%) feel they are not being stretched.

Females (63%), science and engineering students (64%) and those studying at old universities (62%) appear to be the most likely students to be stretched to their full potential.

3.3 Lectures and course content

Q. To what extent do you consider the following to be good or poor?



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

3.3 Lectures and course content

Encouragingly, perceptions of the course content, structure and teaching is highly praised by students. Those viewing each aspect of the course and teaching as 'good' outnumber those seeing them as 'poor' by a large margin, with substantial proportions rating each as 'very good'.

In particular, the course content is considered to be up-to-date (88% rating this aspect as 'good'; 50% 'very good').

3.4 Ability to further knowledge of chosen subject

Students' courses are highly regarded for furthering their knowledge of the subject they are studying. The vast majority rate their current course as very (41%) or fairly good (47%) on this aspect.

Once again, students attending old universities and those in their first year are more likely to rate their course positively on this aspect.

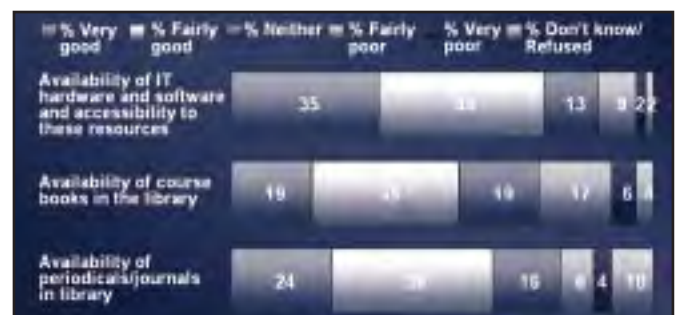
3.5 Changing course

One in ten students have changed course since starting university. Changing their mind about what they wanted to study and the course not being what was wanted, expected or being of interest, are among the foremost reasons for change.

“ You don't have a working environment 9.00am until 5.00pm, and then it is a sort of relaxed environment, it is not like school or college, no set time, it's quite relaxed ”

3.6 Library and IT facilities

Q. To what extent do you consider the following to be good or poor?



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

3.6 Library and IT facilities

The recent focus on IT within universities is reflected in the study results, with the majority considering the availability and accessibility of IT to be 'good' (74%), than rate the availability of course books in the library in the same way (54%). The availability of periodicals and journals in the library is also rated highly.

Arts students are more critical of the availability and accessibility of IT (16% rate this aspect as poor), and social science and business students of the availability of course books in the library (30% rate this aspect as poor).

04. working and finances //

4.1 Working while at University

Q. Have you or are you doing any of the following types of work during your years at university?



Base: All students (1,103)
Source: MORI

4.1 Working while at University

One third of students have worked part-time (30%) while at university, and a fifth have worked full or part-time during the holiday period (19%).

Among undergraduates, twenty-six percent work part-time in their first year, rising to 35% in the second year. During the third or subsequent years the pressures of academic work may reduce the proportion working part-time (at 30%).

Those living with their parents or in their own home are found to be more likely to have part-time jobs (41%) than those who have moved away from the home environment. Indeed, this may be a result of their established links with local businesses and the commercial environment.

“When you're there you are just doing 'Uni things' and you don't realise how long it takes to earn what you spent”

4.2 Effect of working part-time on students' studies

The majority of those that have worked part-time 'agree' that this has had an adverse effect on their university studies.

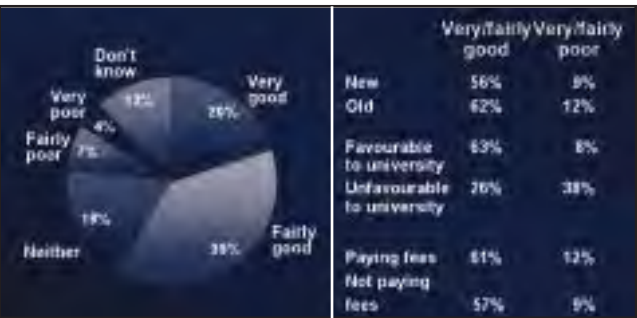
The adverse effect of part-time work is more notable among postgraduates and those in their final year who are under most pressure and at a critical stage in their education.

4.3 Tuition fees

Just over half of all students (53%) pay some form of tuition fee. Whilst around a third pay the standard £1,025 fee, one in ten pay only part as a result of being means tested, one in twenty pay the higher international fee and a handful (2%) pay the full fee as they are having to re-sit their exams.

4.4 Value for money of course

Q. The value for money you receive from your course?



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

4.4 Value for money of course

Three-fifths of university students perceive their course to be 'good value' for money, with only 11% perceiving it to be 'poor'. There is no significant difference in the proportion who consider it good value between those who do (61%) and those who do not pay tuition fees (57%).

A larger proportion of those studying at old universities feel they are receiving 'good' value for money than those at new universities (62% v 56%). As could be expected, only a quarter of students (26%) who have an unfavourable view of their university believe they are receiving good value for money.

4.6 Not owing money – currently or as a result of going to University

A fifth of students believe they will leave university without owing any money at all. These student are more likely to be postgraduates; have received a private education, are receiving funding from other sources, or are living in their own or their parents home.

4.5 Owing money – currently and as a result of going to University

Q. How much money overall, if any, do you currently owe, and anticipate owing at the end of your course, and have to repay as a direct result of being at university?

All students:	Currently owe £3,326	Anticipate owing £7,026
1st years	£1,447	£7,524
2nd years	£4,047	£8,356
3rd+ years	£4,611	£6,164
Postgraduates	£3,403	£5,152
Lived in halls	£3,854	£7,552
Lived in private rented	£4,087	£7,520
Lived in home	£3,069	£5,928
State/FE College	£3,371	£7,173
Private	£3,085	£6,300

Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

4.5 Owing money – currently and as a result of going to University

On average, students currently owe (and have to repay) £3,326 as a result of attending university, and predict they will owe an average £7,026 by the time they have completed their university studies.

Those who live at home are found to be in the most advantageous financial situation. This group of students anticipate owing £5,928 at the end of their university studies, 16% below the sum anticipated by students overall. Those in this group are also more likely to be working part-time.

The social class in which the student belongs appears to make no significant difference to the average amount currently owed, however by the time they leave university, AB students anticipate owing more than £1,000 pounds less than their C1 and C2DE counterparts. Similarly, privately educated students anticipate leaving university with less debt than those who attended state schools or collages.

“ I finished my first year in credit and this year I am £2,000 in debt, so it went slightly wrong ”

4.7 Help from parents

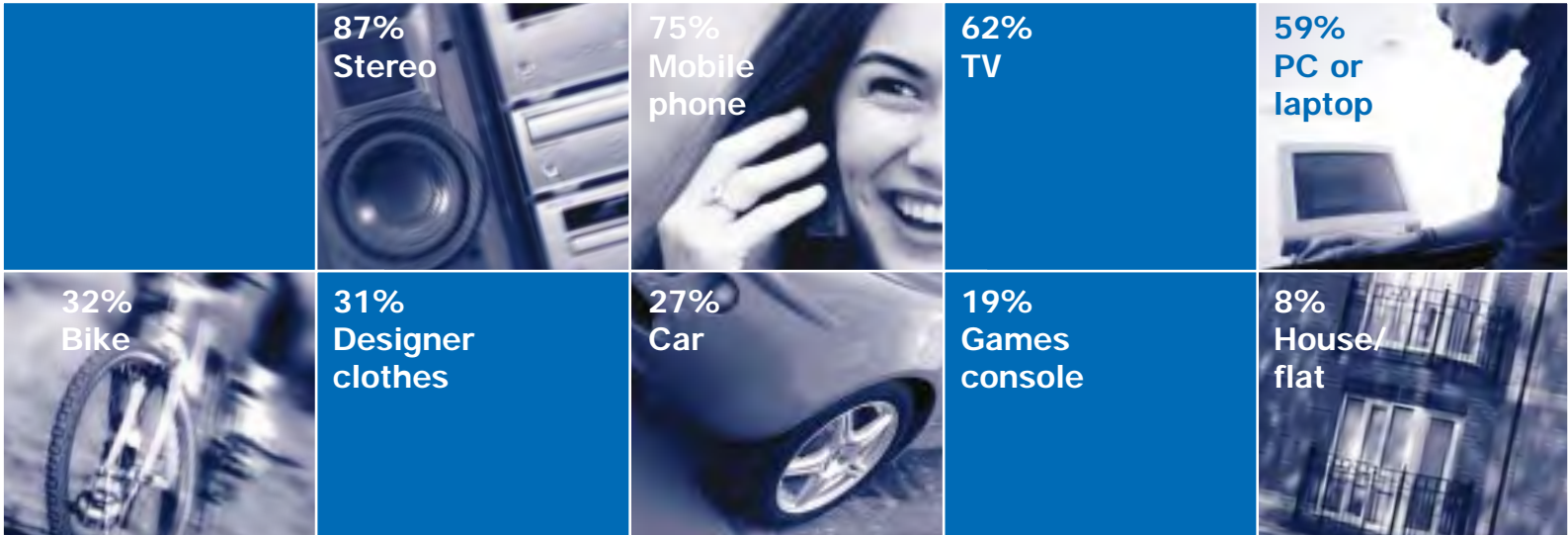
Q. Which, if any, of the following have your parents/guardians/partner/other family member helped you with?

Top mentions



Base: All students (1,103)
Source: MORI

4.10 Students' possessions



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

4.7 Help from parents

The vast majority of students (88%) receive some form of financial help from either their parents, guardian, partner or other family members.

Only seven percent receive no financial help at all, while a further five per cent claim they have no one available to help them. Those who have no one to help tend to be older students aged 26 years and over.

4.8 Help from parents, by social class

Around one half of students from the social class grouping AB receive help with their rent (58%), tuition fees (51%) and living expenses (50%). Students from the C1 grouping appear to receive more help than their C2DE counterparts.

4.9 Help from parents and effect on money owed

As to be expected, those who receive help from others are less likely to find themselves in debt than those who do not receive help.

Students who receive financial help when they are in a crisis are more likely to be those who owe money.

“ You have to work during the holidays, work during the term, just to be able to survive really ”



4.11 Attitudes to cost of attending University

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following...?



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

4.11 Attitudes to cost of attending University

Despite the magnitude of debt, the vast majority of students 'agree' (84%) that the money they are spending on their education is a good investment in their future, 4% 'disagree'.

Those studying for an HND/HNC or other sub-degree qualification and those with an unfavourable opinion of their university are marginally less likely to agree.

Perhaps the high proportion of students who consider the money spent on their higher education as an investment helps to explain why one third are not seriously worried about the debts they are incurring as a result of going to university.

Students are almost equally split on whether or not they are seriously worried about the debts they are going to incur as a result of going to university (36% 'agreeing' they are worried v 32% 'disagreeing'). Those expressing the most concern tend to be; C2DEs (46%), HND/HNC/Other sub-degree qualifications (46%), those who have an unfavourable view of their current university (45%) and women (41%).

Students with a state school education are far more likely to be worried about debts than those who attended private school (39% v 23%).

Over half of students (55%) appear to live for today and 'agree' that they are not worrying about the loans incurred at the moment and will pay them off at a later date when they start working. Male students, those with a private school education and those from social class AB emerge as being the least worried on this count.

4.10 Students' possessions

Students own a variety of consumer goods. Among the most popular are stereos and CD players (87%), mobile phones (75%), TVs (62%) and computers/laptops (59%).

Females are more likely than males to own a mobile phone or a car, conversely males are more likely than females to own a bike, designer clothes or a games console.

Postgraduates are quite different from undergraduates in terms of what they own. Fewer postgraduates, perhaps because of the age difference, own a stereo/CD player, mobile phone, designer clothes or a car. However, postgraduates are more likely to own a bike or their own home.

05. accommodation //

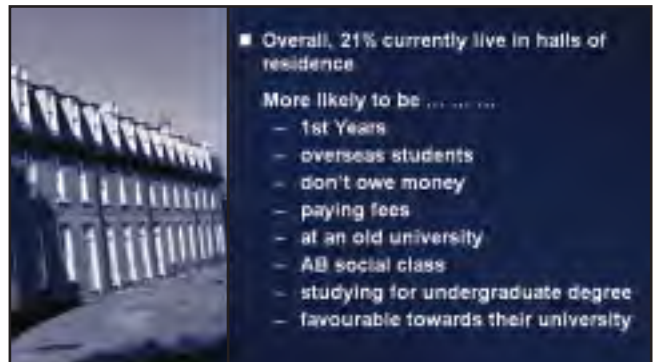


“I definitely wanted to go to a university that had halls on campus rather than you had to live in digs. I like the idea of everyone starting off in halls like a community”

5.1 Current accommodation

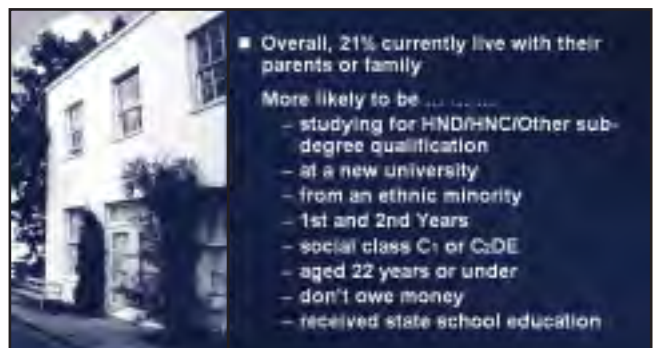
Just under half of university students (47%), currently live in private rented accommodation, a fifth live in halls of residence (21%), an equal proportion with their parents or guardians (21%) and one in ten (11%) in their own home.

5.2 Living in Halls of Residence



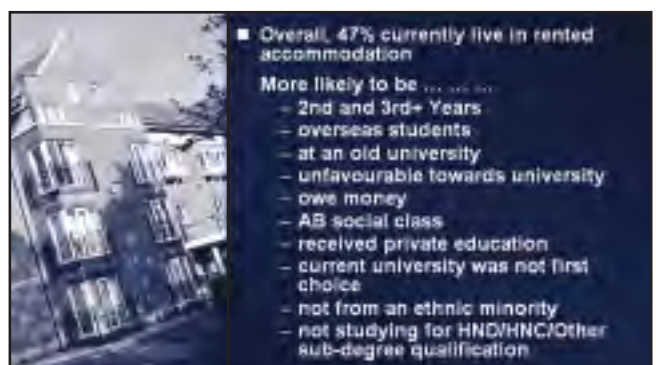
Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

5.3 Living with parents or family



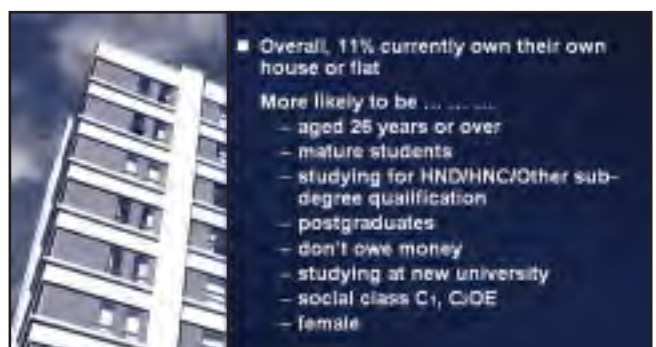
Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

5.4 Living in private rented accommodation



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

5.5 Living in own house or flat



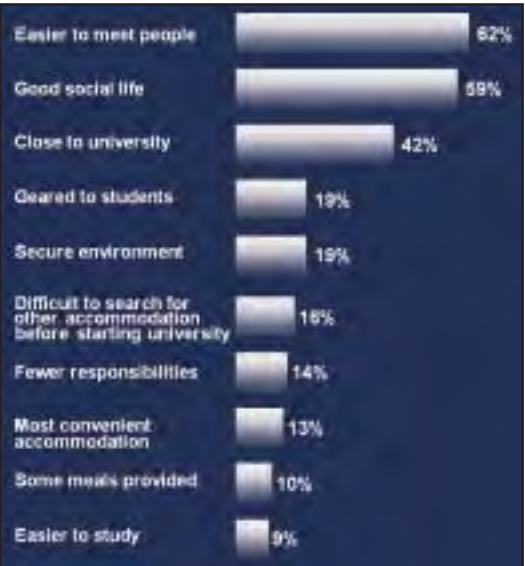
Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI



5.6 Advantages of Halls of Residence

Q. What are considered or perceived to be advantages of living in halls?

Top mentions



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

5.6 Advantages of Halls of Residence

The two main advantages of living in halls of residence are seen to be the ease with which students can meet people (62%) and the good social life (59%). The halls being in close proximity to the university also gains a high score (42%).

Significantly, a higher proportion of female (45%) than male (39%) students consider the close proximity of halls of residence to the university to be an advantage, possibly for security reasons.

Male students in particular consider the reduced responsibilities while living in halls as an advantage, particularly the provision of some meals.

5.7 Disadvantages of Halls of Residence

Q. What are considered or perceived to be disadvantages of living in halls?

Top mentions



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

5.7 Disadvantages of Halls of Residence

Living in halls is also seen to have its disadvantages. Students see the two main disadvantages of living in halls of residence as the level of noise (46%) and having to live with people they do not like (45%). Noise levels are found to be particularly off putting to students aged 26 years or over.

5.8 Reasons for not living in Halls

Q. For what reasons have you chosen not to live in student halls of residence during your time at university?

Top mentions



Base: All who have never lived in Halls (559). Source: MORI

5.9 Factors in decision not to live away from home

Over half of students who have lived with their parents or in their own home ‘agree’ that money played an important role in their decision to live at home. This has affected an even greater proportion of those from a C2DE background (69%), those aged 22 years or under (67%) and male students (64%).

A significant minority (30%) would have preferred, given the choice, to have moved away from home. These students tend to be male and aged 22 years or under, and the same sub-sample groups as those who claim to live at home for financial reasons.

One fifth or more of these students ‘agree’ that if maintenance grants were still available (31%) and they did not have to pay tuition fees (23%) they would not have had to live at home. Once again, these students tend to be male and younger; however, the introduction of tuition fees has also had an impact on the middle classes.

5.10 Problems with current rented accommodation

Q. Which of the following problems, if any, do you have with current accommodation?



Base: All who currently live in rented accommodation (717). Source: MORI

5.11 Problems with current accommodation

Except for the noise in halls of residence, students tend to have more problems with private landlords than they do while living in halls.

5.12 Victims of crime



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

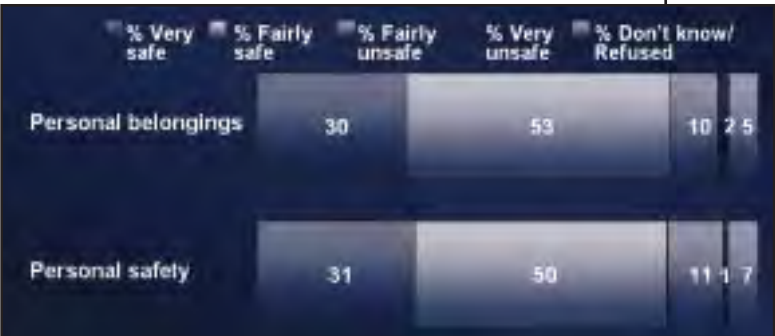
5.12 Victims of crime

A fifth of students claim to have been a victim of one or more crimes while at university. Six per cent (that is 70 students) have had their cars stolen or vandalised and a further six per cent (44 females and 20 males) have been followed or intimidated.

Over a third of students in their third or subsequent years at university have personally been affected by crime. Those living in private rented accommodation are found to be the most at risk.

5.13 Safety of personal belongings and personal safety

Q. To what extent do you consider your personal belongings and personal safety to be safe in your current accommodation/area you live?



Base: All who live in rented accommodation (717). Source: MORI

5.13 Safety of personal belongings and personal safety

Despite the relatively high levels of crime students have experienced, only one in ten of those living in rented accommodation, feel their personal belongings are unsafe in their current accommodation (12%) or feel personally unsafe in the area they currently live (13%).

Women and those who have personally been a victim of crime are more likely to feel unsafe in the area in which they are currently living. Students in Scotland and Wales feel the safest from the threat of crime against the person. Those in the North/Northern Ireland are the most concerned about their personal safety.

5.14 Chores

When first starting university, a fifth of male students could not budget their money (23%), cook (23%), use a washing machine (21%) or iron (21%). The proportion of females who could not perform these chores was lower, but still one in ten females could not cook (11%) or use a washing machine (11%).

06. spare-time activities and attitudes //

6.1 Spare time activities

Q . What do you do in your spare time when you are not studying?

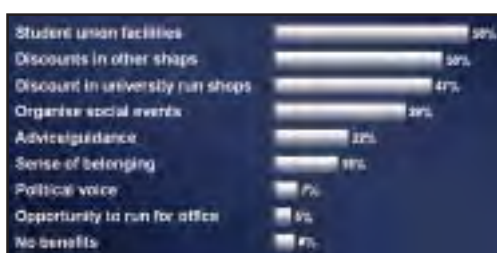
Top mentions



Base:
All students
(1,103).
Source:
MORI

6.2 Student Union

Q. What benefits, if any, does the Student Union bring to you personally?



Base:
All students
(1,103).
Source:
MORI

6.1 Spare time activities

Students continue to spend their spare time doing traditional 'student activities', such as going to the pub, meeting friends and watching TV. Two-fifths participate in sport, this is slightly higher among males (49%).

Twenty-eight per cent are in paid employment and a fifth (16%) spend leisure time on the internet and sending e-mails.

6.2 Student Union

The majority of students do not view the Student Union as a political body, offering a political voice for students and the opportunity to get involved with student politics. For most, it is a way of accessing the facilities and services they provide, obtaining discounted goods and services and organising social events. A fifth (22%) recognise that the Student Union offers advice and counselling to students.

Students who are full or partial socio-political activists (as defined by MORI – see notes) view the Student Union more as a political body. A slightly larger proportion of this sub-sample group recognise that the Student Union offers advice and guidance (29%), a political voice (9%) and the opportunity to run for student office (12%).

6.3 Satisfaction with the Student Union

Just over half of university students assess their student union as being 'very' (15%) or 'fairly' (40%) good. However, 19 per cent feel it is 'neither good nor poor' and 16 per cent rate it poorly. First year students rate its services most highly (66% good), compared with only 45 per cent of postgraduate students.

6.4 Emotional and academic support

Two thirds of students rate the availability of personal or pastoral support as 'good' while a similar proportion believe the support they receive with their academic studies is 'good' (69%). Those on HND/HNC/Other sub-degree qualifications rate the assistance they receive most highly. As undergraduates pass through university they are seen to become more critical of the level of support provided.

6.5 Student involvement

Q. Are you personally a member of or contribute your time to any of the following organisations or groups?



6.5 Student involvement

The majority of students, especially male students have not involved themselves with any charity or voluntary organisations, environmental groups, human rights organisations or political parties. Students from an AB background are more likely to be involved with such groups.

Only a third (30%) of students voted in the last general election, compared with an average of 72 per cent of the General Public. Many students would have been under 18 years of age at the time, however.

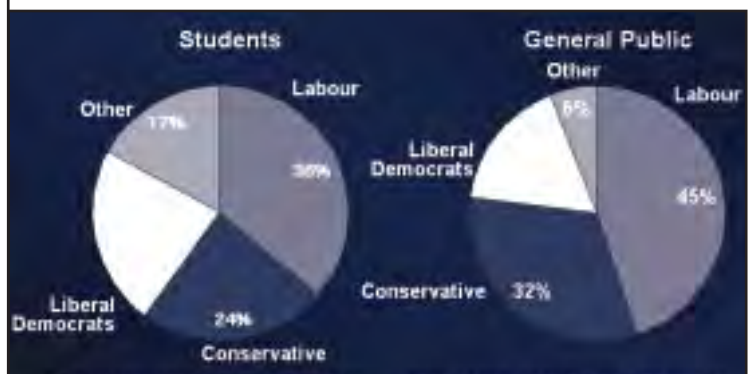
6.6 Voting intentions

If there were a General Election tomorrow, Labour would win the largest proportion of the student vote. Equal proportions of male and female students would vote for this party. The Conservative support (16% overall) is more likely to come from male rather than female students, while the Liberal Democrat vote exhibits the opposite tendency.

Fourteen per cent remain undecided over how they would vote, while one in ten students has made the decision not to vote.

6.7 Student versus general public voting intention

Q. How would you vote if there were a general election tomorrow?



6.8 Political Activism

Students are more likely than the general public as a whole, to have made a speech before an organised group, perhaps as part of their course. However, the General Public are more likely than students to have presented their views to a local MP or councillor, or urged someone else to do so.

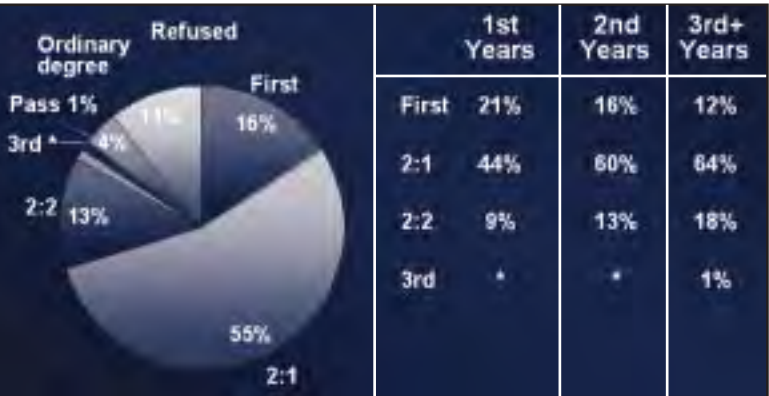
Female students are more likely than male students to have helped with fund raising, while male student are more likely to take an active role in a political campaign.

07. The future //



7.1 Class of degree Under-graduates hope to achieve

Q. What class of degree do you expect to get when you graduate?



Base: All undergraduates (959). Source: MORI

7.1 Class of degree undergraduates hope to achieve

Over half of all undergraduates hope to graduate with a 2:1 degree. Sixteen per cent predict that they will achieve a first, with only one in ten (13%) believing they will get a 2:2.

First year students are the most optimistic. A fifth believe they will achieve a first class degree. As students progress through university it appears their expectations are lowered, with the proportion predicting a first falling and the number hoping to achieve a 2:1 or 2:2 rising.

7.2 The importance of a 2:1

There is increasing press coverage of the need for graduates to achieve at least a 2:1 'degree' if they are to be considered for a good job. Just over half of all students agree that it is essential to achieve a 2:1 to get a good job. A fifth disagree.

Among undergraduates, those who predict they will achieve at least a 2:1 are more likely to agree with this notion than those who believe they will achieve a 2:2 or third class degree, a classic example of cognitive dissonance! Those studying at 'old' universities also place greater importance on getting a 2:1 as a means of getting a good job.



7.3 Current course equipping for future career

The majority of students feel that their current course does (fully 46% or partially 42%) equip them for a future career. However, seven per cent feel that their course will leave them unprepared in this respect.

Three-fifths of postgraduate students believe their course fully equips them for their future careers, higher than for any undergraduates.

Once again, students become more critical as they progress through the university system. Just over half (54%) of first year students believe that their course will fully equip them, falling to 43 per cent in the second year and 33 per cent in third and subsequent years.

Science and engineering students feel better prepared by their course as the most 'fully' equipped (52%), followed by social science and business students (49%). Only a third of arts students say their course fully equips them for their future careers.

7.4 Plans beyond University

Just under half of students (45%) plan to find a job in the UK. Students aged 26 years or over are particularly keen to enter the UK job market (55%) on completion of their course.

A quarter hope to study further, particularly those currently studying for a HND/HNC or other sub-degree qualification (33%). Under a fifth of postgraduates (16%) hope to continue their studies beyond their current course.

One quarter of students say they want to travel after university. Female students (26%) tend to be more adventurous than their male counterparts (18%). Student debts do not appear to be deterring students from making travel plans. Twenty-four per cent of those who owe money plan to go away compared with 19% who have no debts. Those who owe money tend to be younger and have moved away from home.

7.4 Plans beyond University

Q. What do you intend to do when you have graduated/finished your studies on your current course?

Top mentions



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

7.5 Attitude to University

Q. What do you intend to do when you have finished your current course?



Base: All students (1,103). Source: MORI

7.5 Attitudes to University

The majority of students (70%) 'agree' that university has set them in good stead for their working lives, one in ten disagree. Once again, it tends to be students reaching the end of their university course who are more critical.

Students from an AB background are more likely to agree that university has put them in good stead for their working lives (73%), than those from a C1 (69%) or C2DE (63%) background.

The majority of students are happy with their choice of university and/or course. However, a significant minority agree that, in hindsight, they would have chosen a different course (15%) or university (14%).

While only one in ten first year students (10%), who were only a few weeks into their courses at the time of the survey, would have chosen a different course, among second years 13 per cent say they would have chosen a different course and by the third or subsequent years almost a quarter (24%) would have made a different choice.

Being on the wrong course is a major reason for dissatisfaction with university life. Almost half the students (46%) who have an unfavourable impression of their university would, in hindsight, have chosen a different course.

More students at new universities (18%), than those at old universities (11%) agree that if they had their time again they would have gone to a different university. As with the choice of course, third years are more likely to agree with this statement, than those in earlier years.

UNITE is the UK's leading specialist provider of accommodation services for students

A partnership approach

UNITE is the UK's leading specialist provider of accommodation services for students. The reason behind this growth is simple. Instead of imposing standard answers, we work in partnership with universities and colleges to deliver total solutions to their individual needs.

The complete range of services

Each of our solutions is unique to that particular institution. We offer an unrivalled range of accommodation services and facilities management support. Further solutions for your accommodation problems may include purchase and leaseback or design and build, backed by a choice of financial options.

Our vision

The aim is always the same: to release academic institutions so they can focus on their primary mission, and to provide the highest standard and best value accommodation for students. We remain highly focused on our specialist area of expertise, and committed to delivering the most innovative and comprehensive solutions.

The future

In January 2001, UNITE launched www.bunk.com, UNITE's comprehensive accommodation search and on line booking service for university students.

UNITE's On Line Accommodation Service enables universities and colleges throughout the UK to offer the complete on line accommodation booking and management facility for their students.

Sponsorship and community affairs

UNITE is proud to support an exciting new charity – Big Brothers and Sisters.

Big Brothers and Sisters sets up regional agencies to recruit, screen and match volunteer mentors.

The charity is new to the UK, but was started in the USA in 1904 and the network of agencies has spread to 26 other countries around the world. You can find out more about this charity, that already boast supporters such as Mr and Mrs Clinton, Robert Redford and Jody Foster, by visiting the website. www.mentors.org.uk

appendices //

Sub-group Definitions

In most instances the definition of sub-groups used in the computer tabulations are self explanatory. Definitions of any sub-groups where it is not immediately clear how they have been defined are given below.

Subject:

- Science and engineering –
Medicine & dentistry/Subjects allied to medicine/Veterinary sciences, Biological sciences/Physical sciences subjects, Agriculture & Related subjects, Mathematical sciences/Statistics/Computer sciences, Engineering & technology, subjects, Architecture building & planning
- Social sciences/business – Social, economic & politics, Business & administration/Librarianship & information science subjects
- Arts – Law, Languages/Humanities subjects, Creative Arts and Design subjects
- Other – Education, Combined courses

Socio-political Activist

- Socio-political Activist – completed five or more of the following in the last two to three years
- Semi Socio-political Activist – completed three or four of the following in the last two to three years
 - Presented my views to a local councillor or MP
 - Written a letter to an editor
 - Urged someone outside my family to vote
 - Urged someone to get in touch with a local councillor or MP
 - Made a speech before an organised group
 - Been an officer of an organisation or club
 - Stood for public office
 - Taken an active part in a political campaign
 - Helped on fund raising drives
 - Voted in the last general election

Sample profile

The survey was designed to cover a representative cross-section of full-time students at UK universities.

Part-time students were excluded.

Whilst non-UK nationals who were completing an entire course in the UK were included in the study, those who were in the UK on an exchange programme were excluded.

The following tables below provide an overview of the weighted and unweighted sample profile.

Q. Gender		
	Unweighted (1,103) %	Weighted (1,103) %
Base: All students		
Male	46	47
Female	54	53
	Source: MORI	

Q. Age		
	Unweighted (1,103) %	Weighted (1,103) %
Base: All students		
17 or younger	1	1
18	12	13
19	18	19
20	17	18
21	15	16
22	9	10
23-25	10	10
26 or older	17	15
	Source: MORI	

Q. Social Class		
	Unweighted (1,103) %	Weighted (1,103) %
Base: All students		
A	6	7
B	31	33
C1	41	39
C2	11	11
D	7	6
E	3	3
Refused	1	*
	Source: MORI	

Q. Ethnic Minority		
	Unweighted (1,103) %	Weighted (1,103) %
Base: All students		
White	83	87
Black – African	2	2
Indian	3	2
Chinese	2	2
Other Asian	3	2
Black – Caribbean	1	1
Black – Other	1	1
Pakistani	2	1
Bangladeshi	1	*
Other	2	1
Refused/Not stated	1	*
Total ethnic	17	13
	Source: MORI	

Q. What qualifications are you currently studying for?		
	Unweighted	Weighted
Base: All students	(1,103)	(1,103)
	%	%
Undergraduate:		
HND/HNC/Other sub-degree qualification	5	4
Honours Degree	72	71
Ordinary Degree	10	11
Postgraduate:		
Post Graduate Diploma – Taught	2	2
Post Graduate Diploma – Research	1	*
Masters Degree	7	7
PhD/docrate	3	3
Other	1	1
	Source: MORI	

Q. In which academic year of your degree course are you currently studying?		
	Unweighted	Weighted
Base: All students	(1,103)	(1,103)
	%	%
First year	35	35
Second year	32	33
Third year	24	23
Fourth year	7	8
Fifth year and above	1	*
	Source: MORI	

Q. Could you tell me what course/ degree you are currently studying?		
	Unweighted	Weighted
Base: All students	(1,103)	(1,103)
	%	%
Languages /Humanities	11	13
Medicine and dentistry/ Subjects allied to medicine/ Veterinary sciences	11	12
Biological sciences/ Physical sciences subjects	12	12
Business and administration/ Librarianship and information science subjects	13	12
Combined (Study more than one main subject)	10	10
Engineering and technology	9	9
Social, economic & politics	9	9
Mathematical sciences/ Statistics/ Computer sciences	8	8
Creative Arts and design	6	6
Education	4	5
Law	4	4
Architecture building and planning	2	2
Agriculture and related subjects	*	1
	Source: MORI	

MORI



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