

## Students' Union Student Feedback Report – June, July & August 2023

The Student's Union Monthly Feedback Report aims to provide a summary of the most prominent issues and concerns raised by students with SU within the previous month. This report contains statistics from our Advice Centre, Helpdesk, and our online feedback platform Union Voice for three months over the summer of 2023, an introduction to our new department reps and officers, a write up of our annual Student Voice Report as well as a summary of findings from wave 3 of our 'Hallam, How Are We Doing?' pulse survey.

### Report Summary

- The [Students' Union's Advice Centre](#) received **268** new enquiries between 1<sup>st</sup> June and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023. Nearly a third were about academic issues, but students also approached the advice centre for help with housing, funding and benefits. Most enquiries were initiated through the online AskUs platform.
- The [Students' Union's Helpdesk](#) received **331** queries from students across between 1<sup>st</sup> June and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023. There were fewer face-to-face enquiries, with students relying on remote methods (phone and email); academic issues remained the most pressing issue but students also wanted information about volunteering, societies and Give It a Go events.
- There were **three** new submissions to [Union Voice](#), two of which related to financial problems specific to international students.
- [Twelve department reps](#) and two new **College Officers** have taken up their roles. Six more department rep vacancies are currently under recruitment and a new College Officer for Health, Wellbeing and Life Sciences will be elected in October 2023.
- Over **1100 students** completed our '[Hallam, How Are We Doing?](#)' survey, and reported improved year-on-year sentiment relating to nearly all aspects of SHU's student offering.
- The 2022/23 [Student Voice Report](#) recognises the challenges of learning in a post-Covid world, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on students' lives and the importance of belonging and community. Meetings are now being planned with key stakeholders to discuss the practical implementation of the **thirteen recommendations** (six relating to the learning experience and seven on wellbeing and community).

*Click on the links above to view more detailed information.*

*Table 1: The source of data used throughout this report, as well as the number of queries or responses. All instances of Feedback received between 1<sup>st</sup> June – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023, unless otherwise stated.*

<b>Source</b>	<b>Number of queries / respondents</b>
Advice Centre	268
Helpdesk	331
Union Voice	3
Hallam, How are We Doing? (Wave 3)	1148

**Monthly Statistics from the Students' Union**

The **Students' Union's Advice Centre** received **268** enquiries from students during June (**94**), July (**87**) & August (**87**). The majority of these (**147**) were submitted online via our new '[Ask Us](#)' online platform.

	June	July	August
Total	94	87	87
Ask Us online platform (submitted by student)	44	52	50
Advice Centre Telephone drop-in	18	10	18
Email	14	14	11
In Person - ad-hoc (@ The Hubs)	3	7	4
In Person – ad hoc (@ Collegiate drop-in service)	5	1	3
Social media	-	-	1
Advice Centre telephone drop-in (signposting enquiry only)	4	1	0
Advice Centre email (signposting only)	5	2	0
Referrals (from SHU or external organisation)	1	0	0

**Main topic areas of advice enquiries**

	June	July	August
<b>Academic Issues</b>			
Appeal (challenge a decision or grade)	27	19	34
Academic Conduct / ACP / AM	16	12	8
Complaint	5	8	3
Extenuating circumstances / RRAA	-	4	2
Progression problems / repeat year	-	3	2
Withdrawal / Leaving course	-	-	3
Fitness to Practise	-	-	3
Break in study	2	2	
Other	5	2	5
Placement issues	-	-	2
<b>Benefits</b>			
Benefits overpayment / appeal / other	2	-	-
Check benefit entitlement / effect of studying	-	2	-
<b>Funding &amp; Fees Issues</b>			
Funding - other	4	-	-
Tuition fee debt	3	2	-
Financial hardship (general)	2	-	-
<b>Housing Issues</b>			
Council Tax	-	3	-

Finding Accommodation	-	2	2
Check contract / tenancy agreement	2	-	2
Housing - other	2	-	-
<b>Something Else</b>			
Other	3	7	7
Consumer complaint	-	3	-

(Other sub-topics had a count of 1 or less)

The **Students' Union's Helpdesk** received **331** queries from students during June (**138**), July (**90**) & August (**103**). (not including enquiries about pool cues, gaming controllers, shuttle bus, directions / toilets, etc.) Queries about the Children's Media Conference are also excluded; more than 70 queries were directed to the helpdesk during the three days of the conference.

	June	July	August
Total	138	90	103
Face-to-face at SU Helpdesk	55	27	34
SU email	34	17	30
SU phone	44	43	30
SU live chat	5	2	5
Ask Us online platform	0	1	4

### **Main SU enquiry topic areas**

	June	July	August
Academic issues;	35	22	25
Merchandise;	27	11	9
Societies;	16	12	20
Volunteering;	12	2	3
Give it a Go / Events;	9	12	7
Welcome event info;	7	6	11
Accommodation (e.g. finding, problems);	6	4	9
Student Rights / Campaigns;	5	4	2
Student Reps (Course or Department);	4	7	-
Officers;	3	3	1
Funding / Finance	-	4	3
Enrolment	-	-	3
SU Jobs	-	-	4

- (Other sub-topics had a count of 1 or less)

Academic issues tend to be signposted to students' representatives (i.e., Course or Department), the University's Hallam Help, Course Leaders, or the Advice Centre, dependent on need.

### Union Voice

The Students' Union online feedback platform, [Union Voice](#) received **2** new submissions in June, **1** in July and none in August. **4** issues (the three new submissions and one from April) were resolved and no submissions remain open.

The new submissions relate to:

- Financial assistance for international students (**1**)
  - An international student was upset about their experience of financial hardship and access to healthcare; they asked about what financial help was available to international students. The student was offered help via the Advice Centre.
- Placements in Service Sector Management (**1**)
  - A student complained that several students had been unable to get a suitable placement, partly because of poor communication about the timeline relating to placements.
- Nigerian students and fees (**1**)
  - A Nigerian student complained about the bureaucratic handling of issues relating to late payment of fees due to the economic crisis in Nigeria.

### Department Reps & Department Student Forums

We have our new Department Reps and College Officers for 23/24!

What are Department Reps? A Department Rep is a paid student-staff member who listens to concerns from Course Reps and raises any issues that are wider-spread in higher level meetings to contribute to good student experience. Department Reps are also a great way to feed-back information to students about changes on their course/department.

What are [College Officers](#)? Officers are paid, full-time staff, and they play a crucial role in ensuring that we're able to fulfil our role of improving the lives of students at Sheffield Hallam. The College Officers take feedback from Department Reps and work on College-wide issues.

#### Business, Technology and Engineering

- College Officer – Seun Seidu, [s.seidu@shu.ac.uk](mailto:s.seidu@shu.ac.uk)
- Department of Computing – Joba Fatola, [J.Fatola@shu.ac.uk](mailto:J.Fatola@shu.ac.uk)
- Department of Engineering & Maths – Harry Saxton, [Harry.Saxton@shu.ac.uk](mailto:Harry.Saxton@shu.ac.uk)
- Logistics & Supply Chain Management – Abimbola Joseph, [A.Joseph@shu.ac.uk](mailto:A.Joseph@shu.ac.uk)
- Department of Management – Milly Collyer, [M.Collyer@shu.ac.uk](mailto:M.Collyer@shu.ac.uk)
- Department of Service Sector Management – Shannon Parkes, [Shannon.Parkes@shu.ac.uk](mailto:Shannon.Parkes@shu.ac.uk)
- Department of Finance, Accounting and Business Systems – *currently recruiting*

#### Health, Wellbeing and Life Sciences

- College Officer – *elected in October*
- Department of Allied Health Professions – Thomas Grapes, [T.Grapes@shu.ac.uk](mailto:T.Grapes@shu.ac.uk)
- Department of Biosciences and Chemistry – Abi Marchant, [A.Marchant@shu.ac.uk](mailto:A.Marchant@shu.ac.uk)
- Department of Nursing & Midwifery – Aimee Hastings, [A.Hastings@shu.ac.uk](mailto:A.Hastings@shu.ac.uk)
- Academy of Sport & Physical Activity – Layla Barrett, [Layla.Barrett@shu.ac.uk](mailto:Layla.Barrett@shu.ac.uk)
- Department of Social Work, Social Care and Community Studies – *currently recruiting*

Social Sciences and Arts

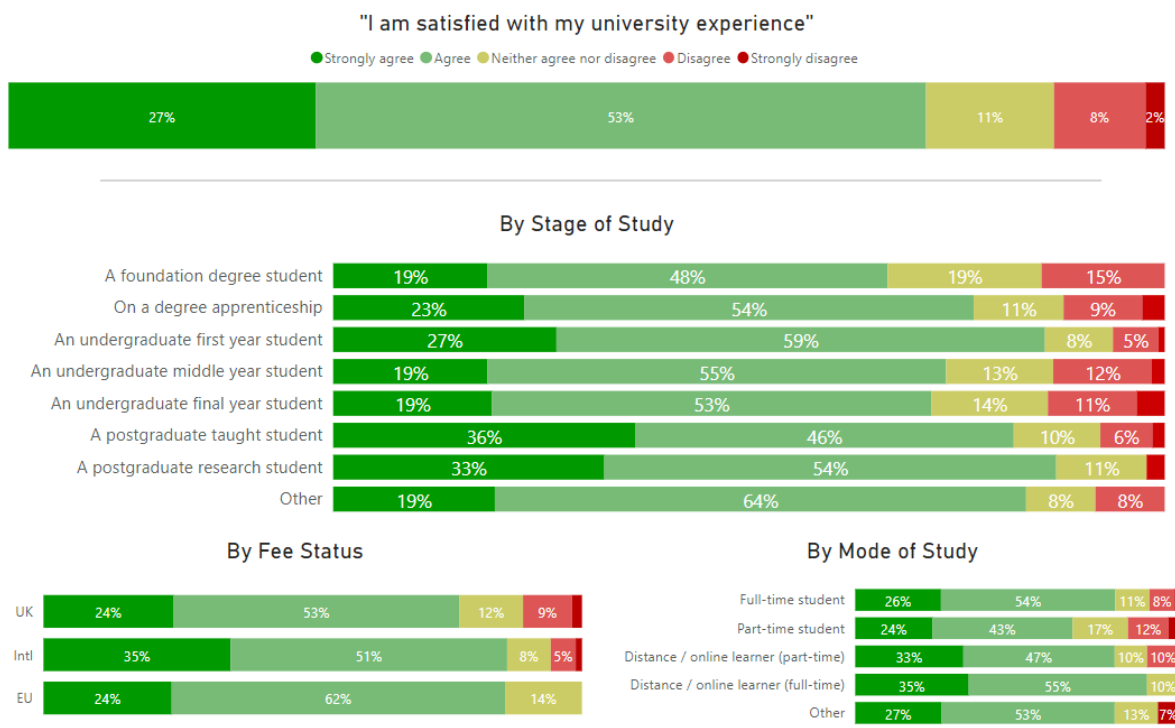
- College Officer – Martha Mitchell, [Martha.Mitchell@shu.ac.uk](mailto:Martha.Mitchell@shu.ac.uk)
- Institute of Education – Alice Iveson, [A.M.Iveson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:A.M.Iveson@shu.ac.uk)
- Department of Law & Criminology – Wiktoria Bernat, [W.Bernat@shu.ac.uk](mailto:W.Bernat@shu.ac.uk)
- Department of Psychology, Sociology and Politics – Obianulu Michelle Osamor, [O.Osamor@shu.ac.uk](mailto:O.Osamor@shu.ac.uk)
- Department of Art & Design – *currently recruiting*
- Department of Humanities – *currently recruiting*
- Department of Media, Arts and Communications – *currently recruiting*
- Department of Natural & Built Environment – *currently recruiting*

**Hallam How Are We Doing? – Wave 3**

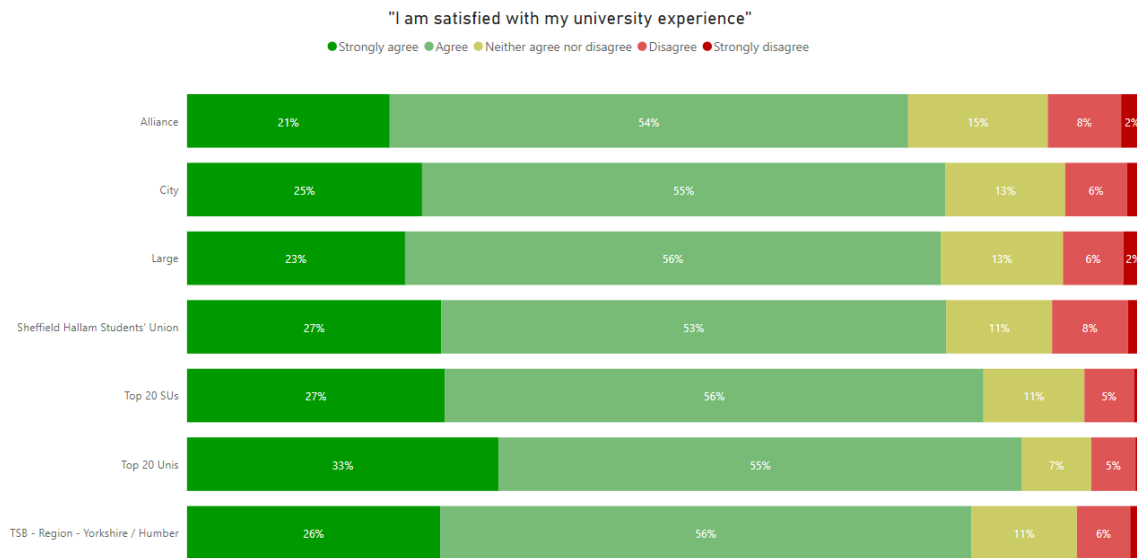
The ‘Hallam, How Are We Doing’ survey was open from 10th May 2023 and closed to submissions on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The survey received 1148 unique responses. This is the third, and final iteration of the survey for the 2022-2023 academic year, otherwise known as Wave 3. The survey looked at university satisfaction, satisfaction with and use of the Students’ Union (SU), students’ wellbeing, sense of community, and communication with the SU. These questions, asked at regular intervals, help us track general student attitudes over time. Despite a general downward trend through undergraduate years of study (third year undergraduates are generally less satisfied than first years), satisfaction with the university experience is broadly high across the board, and has risen significantly from Wave 3 last year. Although satisfaction has remained high, there has been a slight increase in active dissatisfaction since Wave 2 this year.

**University Satisfaction**

According to the survey, most students (80%) are satisfied with their overall university experience at SHU, no change from Wave 2 this year (this is a significant increase since this time last year, where only 66% of students were satisfied with their university experience). However, 10% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, up three percentage points from Wave 2 this year. When analysed by demographics, 86% of international students strongly agreed or agreed, a 2-percentage point decrease from Wave 2. In contrast, only 67% of foundation degree students strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with their university experience – the lowest percent of agreement across all the levels and years of study (compared to Wave 2 where final year undergraduates had the lowest percentage of agreement at 67%).



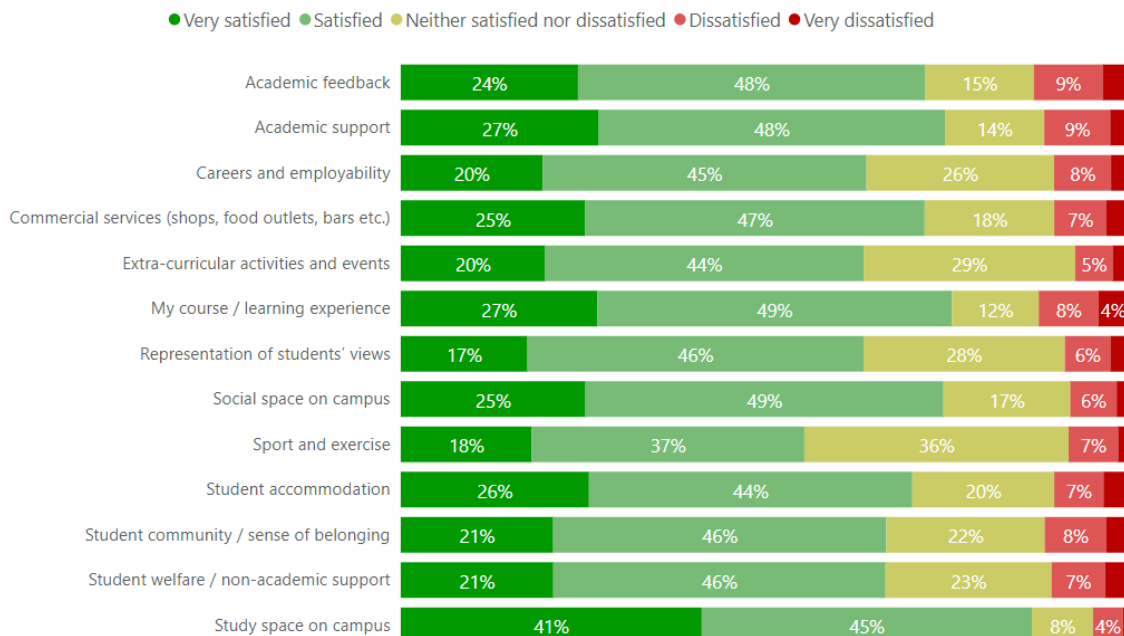
## Satisfaction with University Experience Benchmark



Satisfaction with individual elements of the university experience have generally increased across the board since this time last year. Levels of dissatisfaction remain consistent across this year, with around 1 in 10 or fewer respondents dissatisfied with each element of the student experience. There was a significant decrease in all levels of satisfaction for elements of the student experience in 2021/2022 which was not replicated in Wave 3 this year.

## University Satisfaction Detail

How satisfied are you with each of the following elements of your university experience? (excl. N/A)



**86% of students** were very satisfied or satisfied with their **study space on campus**. While this is the same percentage as this time last year, there has been some upward movement from those in the satisfied box into the very satisfied box, which is a positive shift. Respondents were less satisfied with their sport and exercise experiences. **55% of respondents** were very satisfied or satisfied, which

is a two percentage point decrease from Wave 2 this year, but a two percentage point increase from Wave 3 last year.

**Wellbeing**

45% of students rate their enjoyment of university life as a whole 8+ out of 10, with less than a fifth giving a score of 5 or below. There has been a significant increase from Wave 3 last year in the proportion of students who believe the SU cares about their wellbeing (from 53% to 61%) and the university cares about their wellbeing (from 59% to 68%). Most importantly, fewer students have considered dropping out of university in this wave (25% this year compared to 31% last year).

**Wellbeing KPIs**

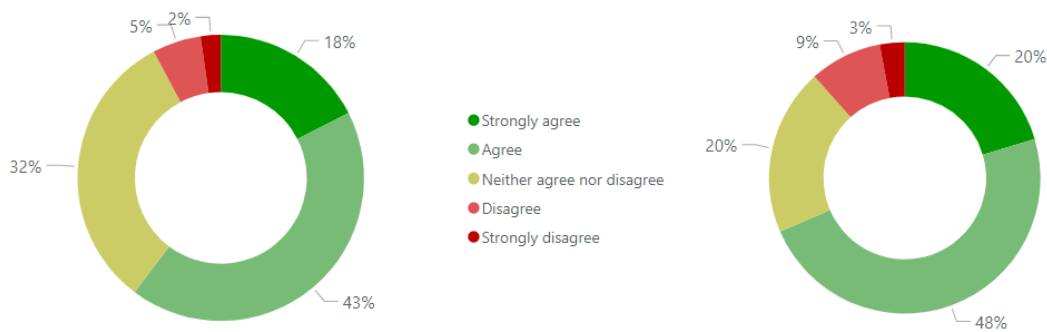
On a scale of 0-10, how enjoyable do you find university life on the whole?

● 0 = Terrible ● 1 ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 ● 6 ● 7 ● 8 ● 9 ● 10 = Very enjoyable



I feel [my SU] cares about my wellbeing

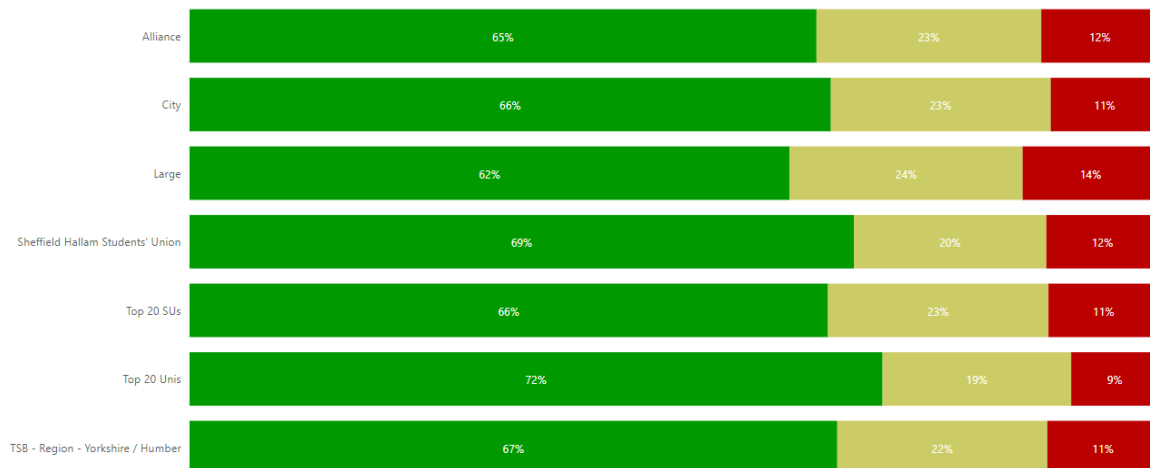
I feel my University cares about my wellbeing



**University Wellbeing Benchmark**

"I feel my University cares about my wellbeing"

● Strongly agree / agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Strongly disagree / disagree

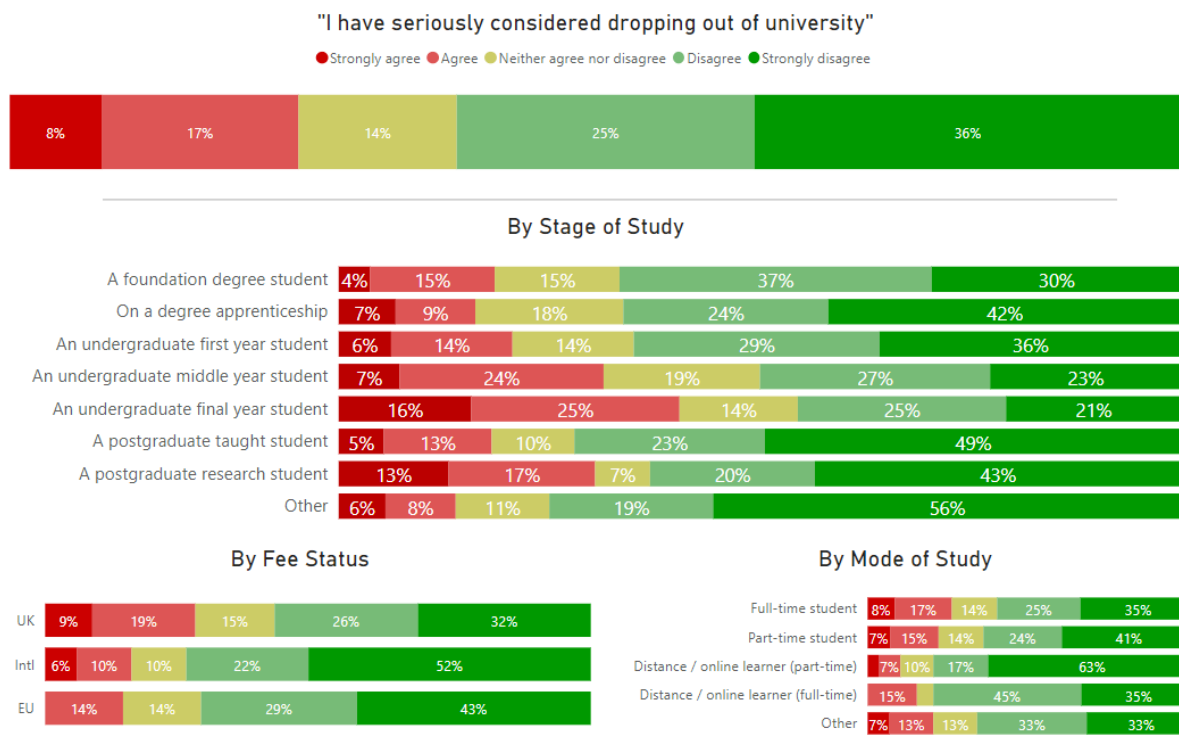




25% of all respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they have seriously considered dropping out of university. This is a decrease of one percentage point from Wave 2 this year. However, when analysed by demographics, **41% of undergraduate final year students** had seriously considered dropping out of university, a four-percentage point increase from Wave 2 this year. Only **18% of postgraduate taught students** and **16% of students on a degree apprenticeship** had seriously considered dropping out of university.

Unfortunately, students who self-declared a disability are still the most likely group to have seriously considered dropping out of university in Wave 3. **37% of students with disabilities** said they strongly agreed or agreed to considering dropping out of university. Although this is a decrease in six percentage points from Wave 2 this year, it is still significantly higher than the average respondent.

## Considered Dropping Out



## Community

Students are more likely to agree there is a strong sense of community compared with Wave 3 last year (60% vs 51%). There has been a one percentage point decrease from Wave 2 this year, however, SHSU is still performing well compared to most benchmarks, in line with the large universities benchmark and ahead of the city benchmark (56%).

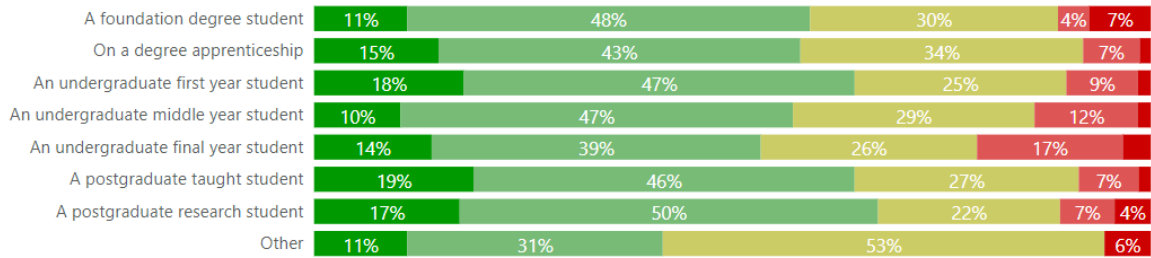
## Sense of Community

"There is a strong sense of community at my University"

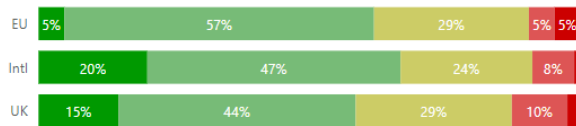
● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree



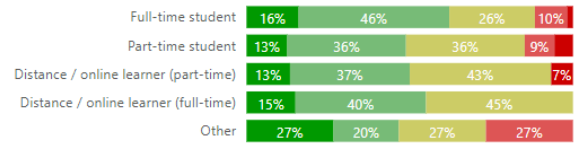
### By Stage of Study



### By Fee Status



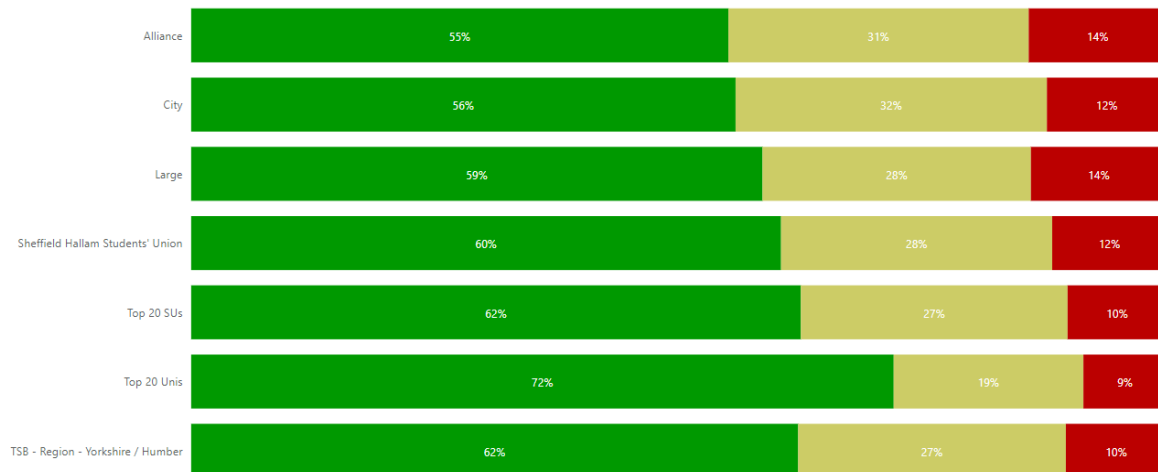
### By Mode of Study



## Sense of Community Benchmark

"There is a strong sense of community at my University"

● Strongly agree / agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Strongly disagree / disagree



## Student Voice Report

### Overview

- The annual [Student Voice Report](#) is commissioned independently by the Student Officers and prepared by the Students' Union.
- Reflects the student experience through the collection and analysis of various forms of feedback that the Students' Union has received from students throughout the year.
- Presented in a single report, it establishes clear actions, priorities and goals which can be reached through a joint partnership between the Union, students and the University.
- Communicated to SHU Dean of Students and SETL, who oversee SHU's response to report.

### Findings: Learning Experiences

Our research and student voice feedback points to pockets of high student satisfaction and excellent **academic provision**, undercut by **a lack of consistency** and a teaching and learning offering that **does not always reflect the realities of a post-covid world**.

- Not all SHU students benefit from the latest innovations in **blended and interactive learning**, and current **timetabling and delivery models** fail to acknowledge travel and opportunity costs for our large commuter cohort.
- SHU takes pride in its applied vocational learning yet **support for students whilst on occupational placement** is inconsistently delivered, and standards vary from course to course.
- Particularly the case for **Students with disabilities**, who can often find themselves left to negotiate **reasonable adjustments** directly with their placement settings.

### Findings: Wellbeing and Community

**SHU's non-academic support provision is well regarded** by students, however our cost-of-living research points to the need for more proactive interventions from the university, with SHU students increasingly having to contend with:

- the **rising costs of food and university-related travel**, particularly travel to mandatory placement settings which can be anything up to 2 hours away.
- the **cost and availability of housing**, where affordable supply is beginning to contract and the market is failing to accommodate some cohorts - particularly **international and mature students** with dependents.
- balancing their academic commitments with **work demands**, as students look to take on **more hours and longer shifts**, often in more precarious employment to make ends meet.

In this context, SHU students are struggling to generate a sense of belonging during their studies, with our survey data and qualitative reports continuing to point to:

- A tailing off of student satisfaction over the course of their undergraduate degree, with increasing **dissatisfaction with the sense of community** at SHU among 2nd & 3rd year students mirroring an increase in them seriously considering dropping out.

- **High levels of ambivalence** toward the existing provision of sports and exercise, as well as other social **extracurricular activities** at the university that might otherwise help build a feeling of community and belonging.

Recommendations

Section	No.	Recommendation	SHU	HSU
<b>1: Our learning experiences</b>	1	Teaching staff should be supported to share and adopt approaches that make full use of a blended learning environment to encourage student engagement, improve accessibility and maximise learning opportunities. Expectations of learning experiences should be clearly communicated to students at the beginning of each academic year.	•	
	2	SHU should ensure the upcoming Delivery Models project findings are adopted consistently across the university, while maintaining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A long-term iterative process for timetable planning, responsive to student feedback.</li> <li>b) The flexibility to continue to accommodate those students actively disadvantaged by the new timetables/consolidation of teaching hours.</li> </ul>	•	
	3	SHU should identify internal best practise in the communication and implementation of reasonable adjustments for disabled students on placement, and ensure the process is standardised, wherever possible, across the whole university.	•	
	4	SHU should continue to work with HSU in promoting resources for student support, including, but not limited to, lecture slides and video content that will market the Student Union offer, including student representation.	•	•
	5	SHU should continue to engage fully with the findings of the HSU Nursing & Midwifery Recovery Plan Report, maintaining the serious steps taken to improve placement allocation and flexibility, safeguarding/whistleblowing processes whilst on placement, and ensuring that the appropriate allocation of placement support contacts are in place for each student. Placement best practise should be shared across all Health and Social Care departments.	•	•
	6	SHU should encourage and support staff (ASELs, Student Experience Leads, etc) to work with HSU during the first semester of 23/24 academic year to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Improve awareness of the function and processes of academic societies, as well as the benefits they can bring to the student experience,</li> <li>b) Increase both the number of academic societies (thereby reducing the number of courses without an academic society option) and the number of students engaged with those societies,</li> </ul>	•	•

		so that every student has access to an appropriate academic society option.		
<b>2: Our wellbeing and community</b>	7	In addition to a continuing commitment to targeted food promotions such as £1 Wednesdays, all food outlets across campus should offer at least one affordable, healthy, hot food option, all day every day.	•	
	8	SHU should raise placement mileage reimbursement for mandatory placements, subject to eligibility, from 28p to 59p per mile for the first 3,500 miles and 24p thereafter, as per Royal College of Nursing guidelines.	•	
	9	SHU should explore the creation of an integrated, city-wide and multi-university partnership approach to housing, such as the partnership housing strategy in Nottingham, which considers affordability for students, diversity of student need (such as family housing, single housing, etc).	•	•
	10	SHU and HSU should offer more part-time student job opportunities. All job descriptions need to include minimum and estimated average weekly hours and some should not exceed 20 hrs per week to ensure that all students, including international students, can apply. All student jobs should be paid at the Real Living Wage, regardless of a students' age.	•	•
	11	SHU should expand their careers and employability offer to provide greater in-study work support, including events such as a student job fair, to assist students' progression into highly skilled employment.	•	
	12	SHU and HSU Welcome events should encourage the participation of returning students and specifically target some activities at those students continuing their studies.	•	•
	13	SHU and HSU should organise regular, free or low-cost social wellbeing activities, particularly social sport (e.g. a campus running club or GoodGym team, lunchtime walks from Collegiate Crescent, regular social team sports, morning walking bus from City campus to Collegiate, etc).	•	•

**Next Steps**

While the university's official response to the report is awaiting sign-off, internal SHU stakeholders have been contacted and provisional responses have been extremely constructive. Stay tuned for implementation and progress updates over the next few months.

**END**