

Students' Union Student Feedback Report – March, April & May 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. Following a brief hiatus, this report contains statistics from our Advice Centre, Helpdesk, and our online feedback platform Union Voice for the last 3 months, a write up of our Department Reps' feedback for May, as well as a summary of findings from wave 2 of our 'Hallam, How Are We Doing?' pulse survey.

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 1st March – 31st May 2023, unless otherwise stated.

Source	Number of queries / respondents
Advice Centre	190
Helpdesk	723
Union Voice	16
Department Rep Reports (May only)	16 across SSA, HWLS & BTE
Hallam, How are We Doing? (Wave 2)	1307

Report Summary

- The **Students' Union's Advice Centre** received 190 new enquiries between 1st March and 31st May 2023. Appeals, academic misconduct, and housing were the most common issues raised.
- The **Students' Union's Helpdesk** received 723 queries from students across March, April & May. Again, academic concerns and housing issues were prominent alongside the usual queries around societies (both academic and social) and merchandise.
- New submissions to **Union Voice** included a range of feedback on topics as diverse as contact hours on social work courses, financial assistance for international students, as well as positive comments regarding employability training in Sport & Physical Activity and wellbeing initiatives in the Computing dept.
- **Our Department Reps** fed back on the perennial issue of timetabling, dissatisfaction with the quality of some assessment feedback, and the travails of commuter students in SSA.
- Over 1300 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.

Monthly Statistics from the Students' Union

The **Students' Union's Advice Centre** saw little slowdown in volume this semester, with **135** new enquiries in **March** and **April**, and a further **55** in **May**. The vast majority of these (**151**) were submitted online, either by email, our website form or our new '[Ask Us](#)' online platform. The main topics raised by students in these enquiries were:

- **Academic Issues:** including Academic Conduct, Appeals, Complaints (particularly about disability provisions not being adhered to), Non-engagement **106**
- **Funding & Fees Issues:** including a large number of students having difficulties with paying tuition fees **15**
- **Housing Issues:** leaving tenancy / not realising they had signed a tenancy, complaints, inter-tenant disputes **24**
- **Miscellaneous** **16**
- **Benefits:** either checking benefit entitlement and the impact of study thereon, or appealing a decision **4**
- **Wellbeing** **1**

The **Students' Union's Helpdesk** received **723** queries from students during March (**342**), April (**184**) & May (**197**). Of these, the majority were received face-to-face at the Students' Union Helpdesk located in the Hubs (**327**) or via the SU hotline (**219**). The most common query topics received were:

- Societies, [Give It a Go](#) events, and volunteering (**128**)
- SU merchandise, including varsity related (**138**)
- Academic issues (**95**)
- Accommodation/housing (**30**)
- Student Rights & Campaigns (**23**)
- Student Reps (course/dept) (**17**)
- SU Elections (**12**)
- Funding/Finance (**6**)

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 **14** new submissions in March, **1** in April and a further **1** in May, although two were apparently duplicate issues. **19** issues (one from May, fourteen from March, one from February, three from 2022) were resolved, two duplicate issue was archived, and one submission remain open.

The new submissions relate to:

- Contact hours and teaching in Social Work and Social Care and Community Studies (**2**)
 - Both submissions bemoaned the apparent lack of contact hours in comparison to other courses, like nursing and teaching, and what contact they had often felt like rote repetition of a PowerPoint presentation.

- Financial assistance for international students (2)
 - Submissions pointing to a disparity in the financial assistance provision for international students (particularly undergrads) in comparison to home students.
- The student elections and the disqualification of a candidate (2)
 - Two complaints about the disqualification of a particular candidate. These were redirected to the official complaints process.
- Placements in Nursing and Midwifery (1)
 - A student unhappy with the lack of placements in a particular area of specialty.
- Visas and retakes (1)
 - An international student unsure of the processes surrounding re-takes and visa extensions.
- Exam timetabling (1)
 - A student in Academy of Sport and Physical Activity, unhappy at having two assessments on the same day.
- Students' Union facilities (1)
 - An appeal for the SU bar to be reopened.
- Positive feedback on employability opportunities (1)
 - A student delighted with the CV and LinkedIn building opportunities within the Academy of Sport and Physical Activity, and encouraging SHU to maintain these going forward.
- Belonging and the University (1)
 - A BTE student unhappy that their course did not receive suitable recognition (when filling out online SHU forms, for example) and that they felt less included within the college as a result.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing (1)
 - A Computing student feeding back positively that a departmental film screening of the Imitation Game helped relieve the pressure of assessment season.

Department Reps & Department Student Forums

The Students' Union's Department Representatives act as a conduit for feedback from students and course reps as well as liaising with University staff on higher-level issues affecting large numbers of students. These are the significant issues raised via the dept reps in their respective May Department Student Forums.

HWLS

Within Health, Wellbeing and Life Sciences, students have been crucial to the **Portfolio Redevelopment** as Departments are consulting regularly with them which has helped students feel empowered and has developed their confidence.

In Allied Health Professions, student concerns are around **lack of quality in feedback from assessments**, too many unclear emails, and needing more support earlier on with the Library Printing Service. In addition, students on placement say that **placement evaluations** need to be anonymous, less frequent, and that the benefits of the surveys need to be clearly communicated. The Biosciences and Chemistry Ball was a great success with attendance from both staff and students, **increasing their sense of community**. This was organised by the Biosciences Society so the President (who is also the Department Representative) worked hard to make this event successful.

The HWLS Officer has completed a research report about **learning contracts and disabled student support** within Nursing & Midwifery which was presented to stakeholders from the university Placements Team, with a member of the SU Research & Insight team who led the project. Also, in Nursing & Midwifery, the Silver Group has closed and the themes within it have been moved into other workstreams within the Department. Meetings on how to improve the student experience regarding **Placements and Wellbeing** will continue between the SU Representation & Campaigns Teams and University Staff.

SSA

In Social Sciences and Arts, students reported **timetabling** as their main concern. Some students have contact hours at 9am and then nothing until 5pm, this is also a prevalent issue in the College of Business, Technology and Engineering (see below).

Commuter students have felt unsupported as their learning experiences have been heavily affected by:

- Timetabling - as some classes fall between 5-7pm so they cannot attend, this also applies to students with caring responsibilities.
- Industrial Action – as classes are cancelled at the last minute, they are having to travel unnecessarily.
- Availability of learning resources – in Humanities, some software and learning resources are only available on campus which means that they cannot make the most out of their learning experience.

In Art & Design, students reported that their building, the Head Post Office, does not reflect their department which decreases their sense of **community**. Therefore, the Department Representative is working on displaying more student artwork around this building.

In the Media, Arts & Communications Student Forum, students reflected on the Course Rep role and felt that **recruiting course reps** would be easier if it was made clear that the role isn't formal or time-consuming. They also reported that getting feedback from students can be difficult but works better in-person.

BTE

Over in Business, Technology and Engineering, students reported that their biggest concern is also **timetabling**. Students wish their timetables were organised over 3 full days rather than 5 inconsistently spread days so they would feel more motivated, also this would reduce costs for commuter students. One student reported that evening classes should be moved online to alleviate this issue.

Following the exam period, students across the College reported that **assessment feedback** is slow and lacks detail, which hinders their learning progress. Also, in Engineering and Maths, a final year exam did not have a formula sheet attached which panicked students, but the Department mitigated this issue by offering a resit in due course which students were happy with.

In Computing, some students are dissatisfied with the **new grading system** that is being put into place, as it caps the students at the mark of 82. Also, Computing **Apprentices** feel unsupported as academic staff assume knowledge from them which creates an uncomfortable environment. They feel they need more support and understanding from the staff.

Other sentiments common across the whole College are students would appreciate the actions from their feedback being relayed back to them (i.e. **closing the feedback loop**), and that they wish their **academic advisor** was signposted to them better.

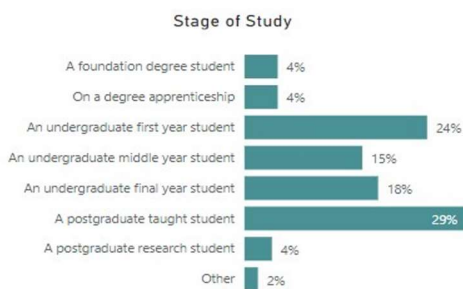
Hallam, How are we Doing? - Wave 2 Results

The Students' Unions' 'Hallam, How Are We Doing?' survey (HHAWD) was open between 20th February and 19th March 2023. This is the second of three waves of the 2022-2023 academic year for this, our regular pulse survey, which looks at student satisfaction with the university experience, their engagement and satisfaction with the Students' Union (SU), as well as their broader wellbeing and sense of community. The survey, which was open to all students, received 1307 responses: approximately a 3.5% response rate.

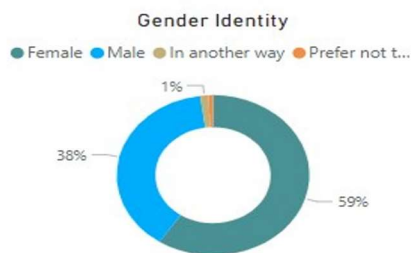
The following summary focus on the students' perceptions of their university experience, the teaching and learning provision, and wellbeing support. It incorporates some comparisons with results from wave 2 of last year's survey as well as sectoral comparisons with SHU's competitor HE institutions. These results were previously published in May's Student Voice Bulletin.

Demographics

Wave 2 Demographics



- **61% of respondents UG and 33% are PG** (compared to 66% and 28% of population, respectively)
- **25% of respondents are EU or international students** (compared to 22% of population)
- **59% of respondents identify as female** (compared to 56% of population)
- **60% of respondents are engaged*** (compared to 43% for academic year 21/22 & 45% YTD)



Mode // Fee Status	EU	Intl	UK	Total
Full-time student	18	292	854	1164
Part-time student	7	9	87	103
Distance / online learner (full-time)	1	1	15	17
Distance / online learner (part-time)	3	1	17	21
Total	29	303	975	1307

Our respondent demographics tracked reasonably closely with the broader student population, with the exception that our respondents were, unsurprisingly, significantly more likely to have engaged with the students' Union in other ways, e.g. attended SU events, acting as course rep, voting in elections, etc.

University Satisfaction

80% of respondents are satisfied with their experience at Sheffield Hallam, an increase of 5 percentage points from this time last year, with just 7% saying they are dissatisfied with their experience.

Satisfaction with University Experience

All students n= 1307

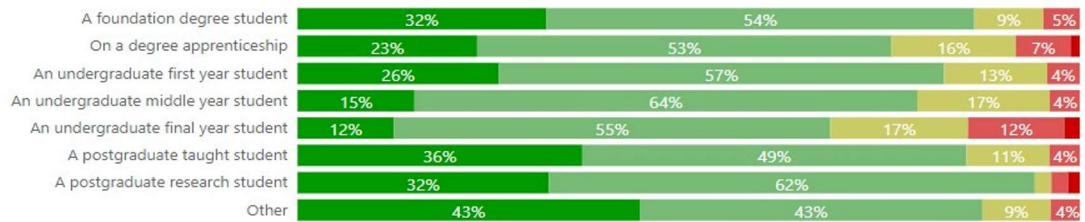


"I am satisfied with my university experience"

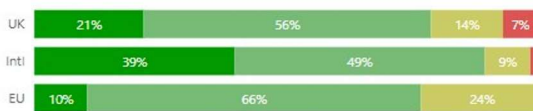
Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree



By Stage of Study



By Fee Status



By Mode of Study



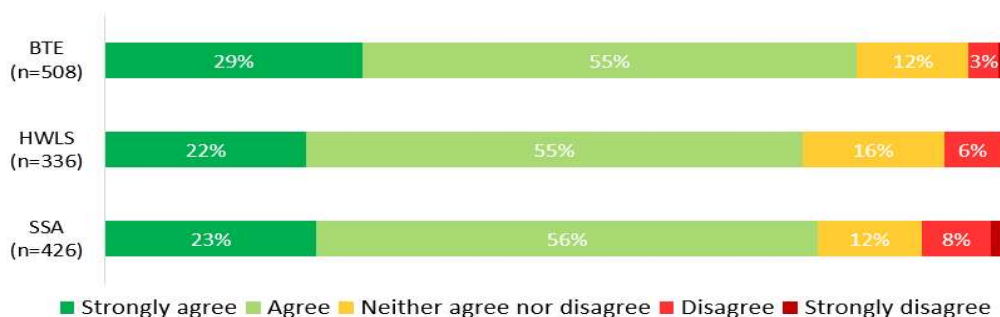
However, there was significant variance by level of study, with final year undergrads least likely to agree/strongly agree at just 67%. International students were also significantly more likely to be satisfied compared than home students. There was also some variance by college, with BTE receiving the highest level of satisfaction at 84%, SSA a combined agree/strongly agree score of 79%, and HWLS slightly below that at 77% combined satisfaction.

Satisfaction by College

All students n=1270



"I am satisfied with my university experience"



Levels of dissatisfaction have improved from last year, especially amongst UG first years (4% say they are dissatisfied vs 17% 21/22) and UG middle years (4% say they are dissatisfied vs 13% 21/22). This puts Sheffield Hallam broadly in line with most benchmarks, though behind the Top 20 Universities where 88% report being satisfied.

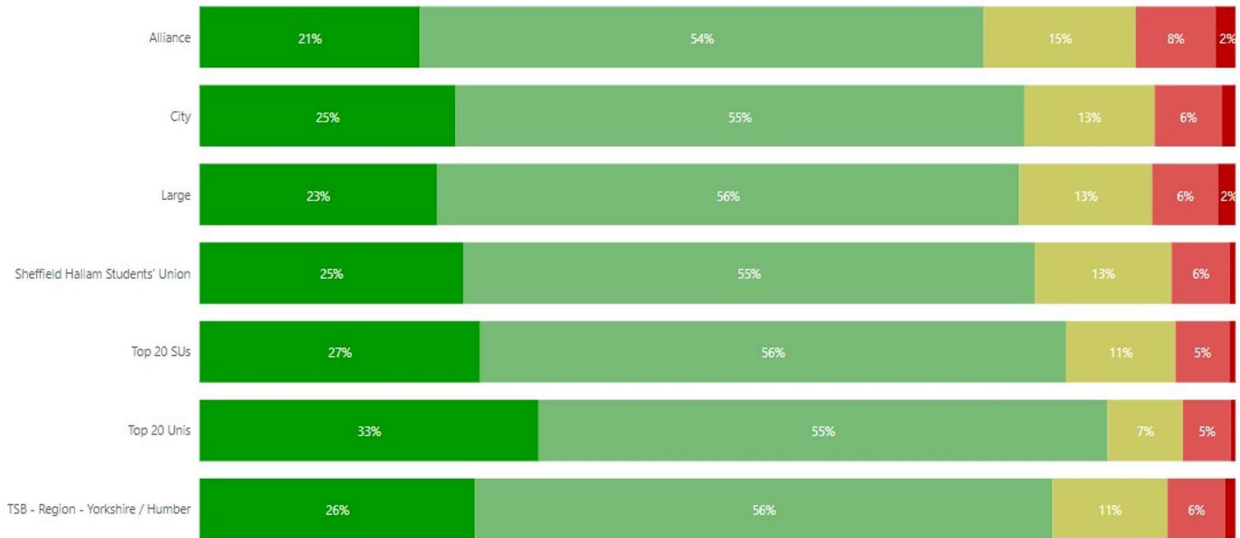
Satisfaction Benchmarking

All students n= 1307



"I am satisfied with my university experience"

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



Satisfaction with individual elements of the university experience has remained consistent or slightly improved from Wave 2 2021/22, including high levels of satisfaction with available study space (86%), course / learning experience (78%), commercial services (78%), academic support (78%) and social spaces (74%). Extra-curricular activities and events (57% in 21/22 to 64% 22/23) and representation of students' views (59% in 21/22 to 65% 22/23) saw the greatest increase in satisfaction in comparison to Wave 2 2021/22.

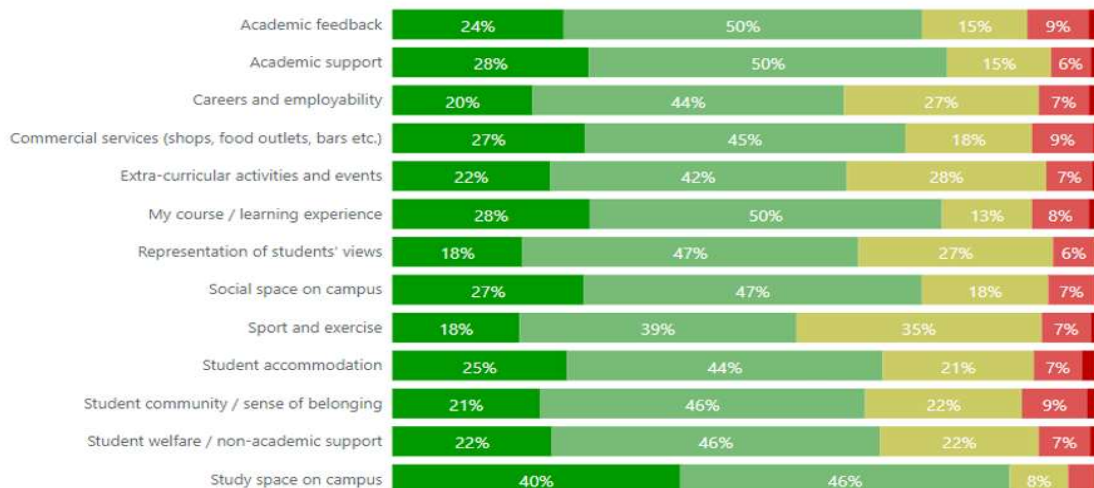
University Satisfaction Detail

All students n= 1307



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

● Very satisfied ● Satisfied ● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ● Dissatisfied ● Very dissatisfied



There are high levels of neutrality with some elements of the university experience, particularly sports and exercise (35%), extra-curricular activities and events, and careers and employability (27%), indicating lower levels of participation, suggesting more could be done in these areas to raise awareness within the student body and encourage participation.

Wellbeing

44% rate their enjoyment of university 8+/10, and around 1 in 4 rate it 5 or below. This is broadly consistent with Wave 2 2021/22 and most benchmarking groups, aside from Top 20 Unis which have less negative sentiment about overall university life.

Wellbeing

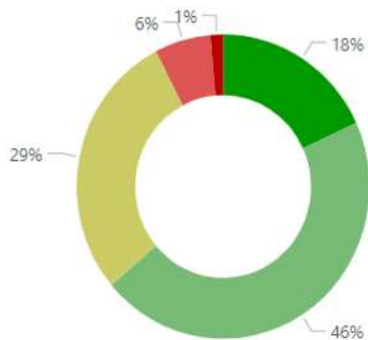
All students n= 1307

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

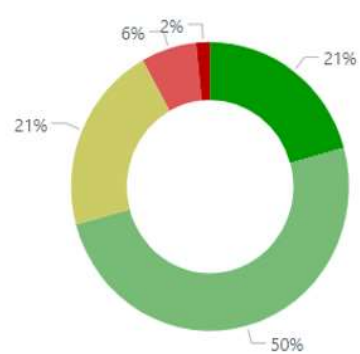
● 0 = Terrible ● 1 ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 ● 6 ● 7 ● 8 ● 9 ● 10 = Very enjoyable



I feel [my SU] cares about my wellbeing

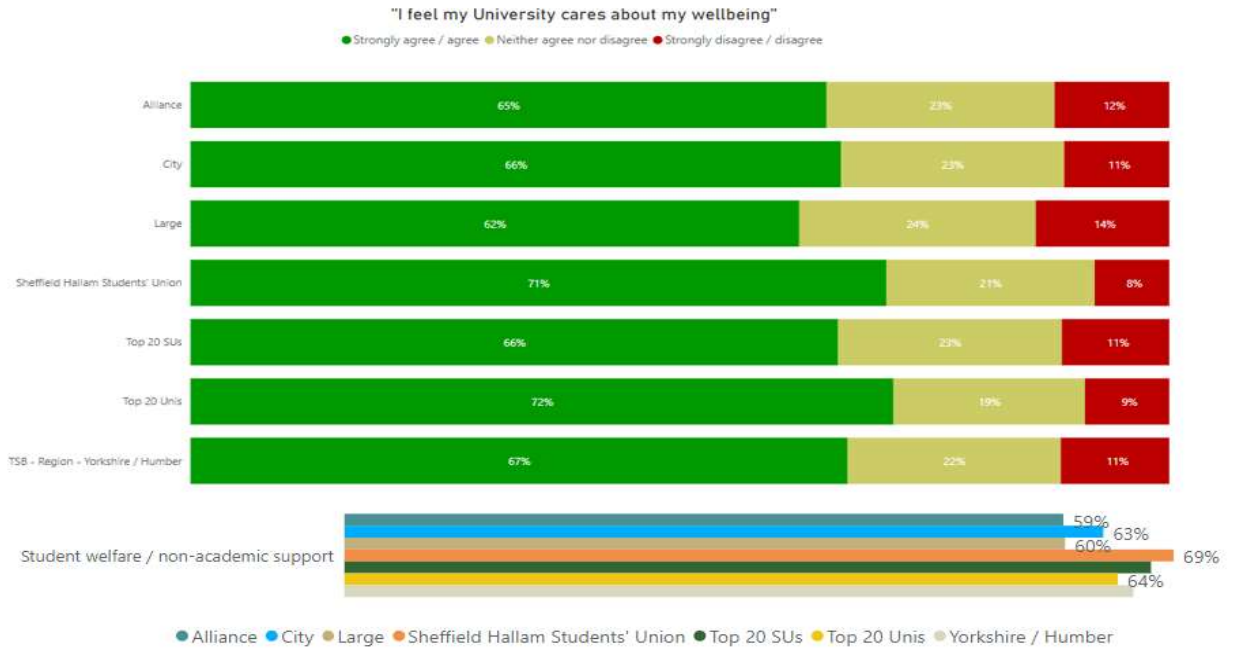


I feel my University cares about my wellbeing



More impressive is student sentiment toward the University's wellbeing provision. 71% of students believe that the university cares about their wellbeing, up from 66% from this time last year, and 69% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with SHU's student welfare and non-academic support. These figures compare extremely well against competitor benchmarks.

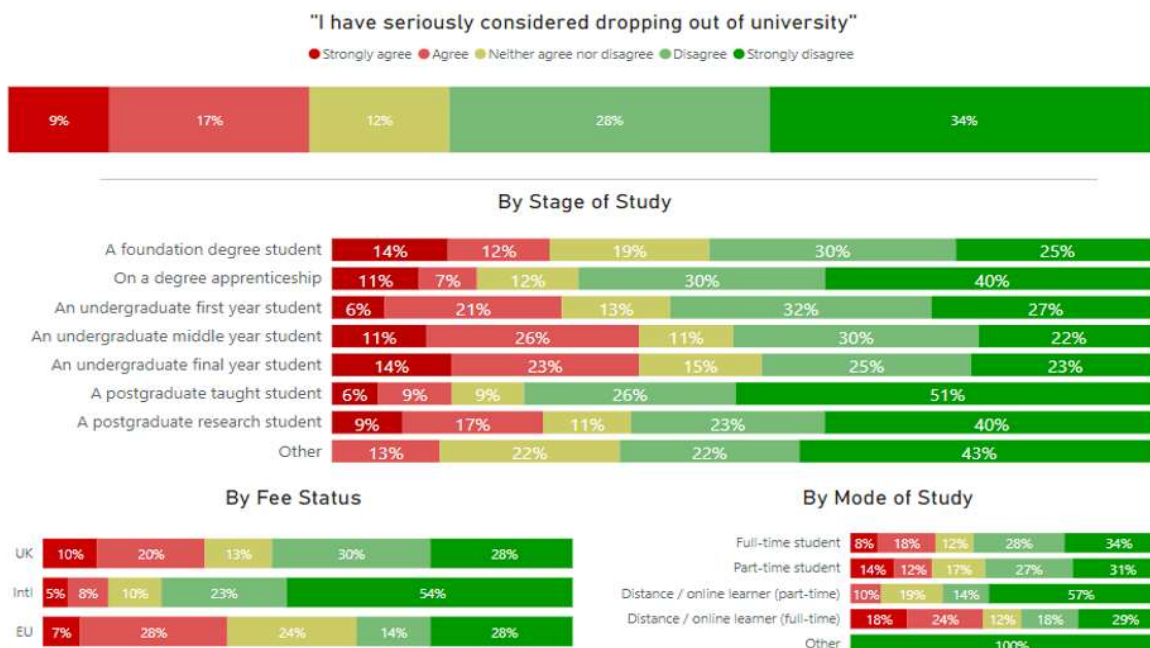
Wellbeing Benchmarking



In line with Wave 2 2021/22, around 1 in 4 have seriously considered dropping out of university with undergraduate middle and final year students being among the most likely to say so (37%). This puts Sheffield Hallam in line with the Top 20 Unis benchmark (24%).

Consideration of Dropping Out

All students n= 1307



Community

62% of students agree that there is a strong sense of community at Sheffield Hallam, while 1 in 10 disagree. This is largely consistent with Wave 2 in 2021/22; however, undergraduate middle year students are more likely to agree this year (65% vs 49%).

Sense of Community

All students n= 1307

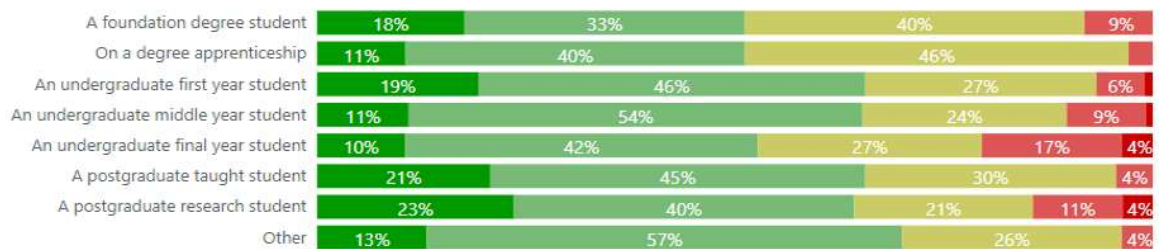


"There is a strong sense of community at my University"

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



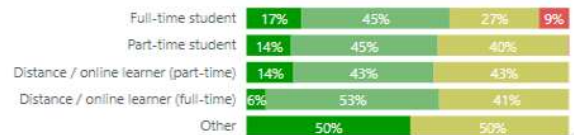
By Stage of Study



By Fee Status



By Mode of Study



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