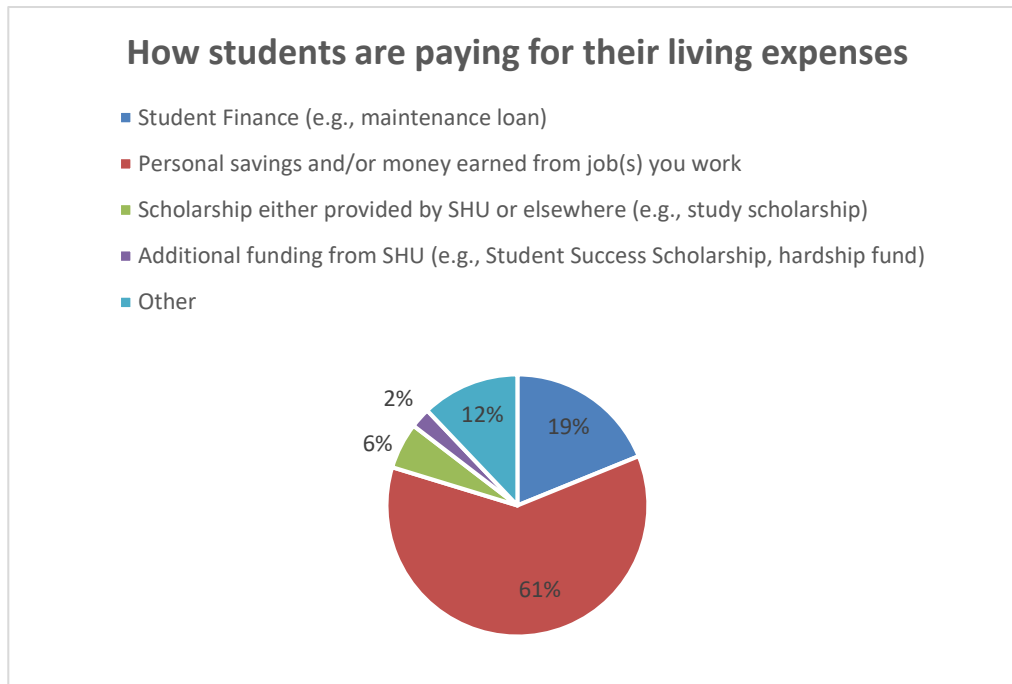


## Cost of Living Survey 2022

The Students' Union's *Cost of Living Survey* was open for postgraduate students (including PGR and PGT) and student apprentices on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022, closing on the 5<sup>th</sup> August 2022. The survey received a total of 258 responses. See the respondent demographics page for breakdown of respondents at the end of this report.



*Figure 1: % of how students are paying for living expenses, of all respondents (n=258).*

The majority of students paid for their living expenses via personal savings and money earned from work (61%). Nineteen percent of students used their maintenance grant from Student Finance to subsidise their living costs. A further 8 percent used scholarships and hardship funds.

The respondents who answered 'other' made up the final 12%.

- 3 respondents said they use Universal Credit.
- 3 respondents said they had borrowed from friends.
- 2 respondents said their PHD stipend supported their finances.
- 1 participant said they use a credit card.

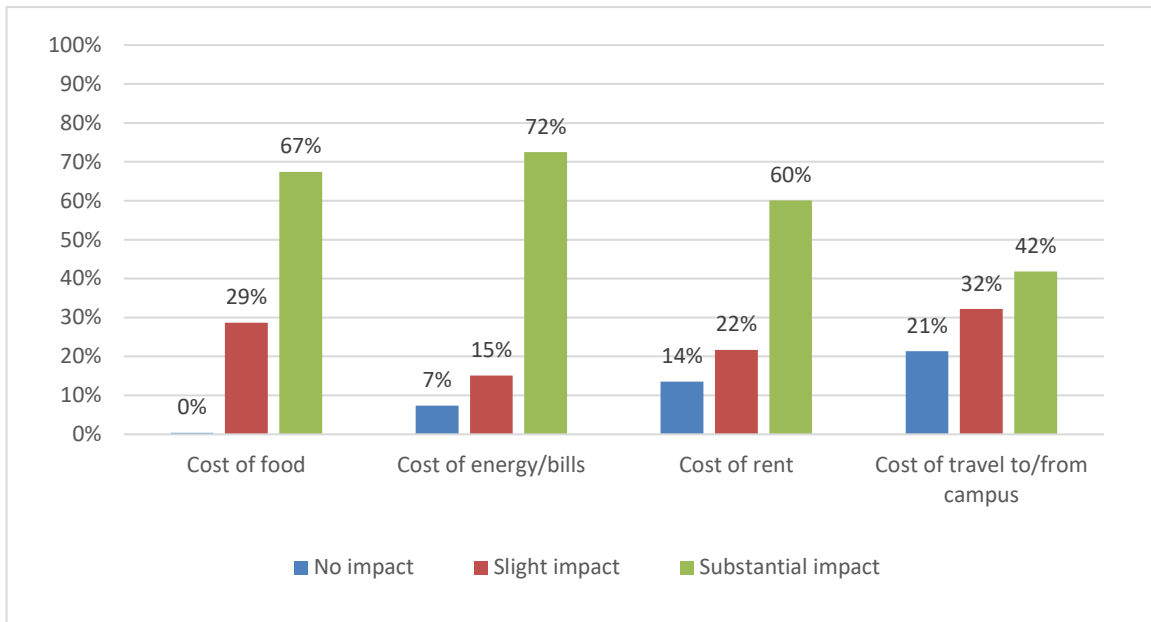


Figure 2: Extent to which respondents have been negatively financially affected by the increase of food, bills, rent and travel, of all respondents (n=258).

Students were asked to what extent the increases in price on food, energy bills, rent and, commuting had on their finances. The largest felt impact was the increase in price on energy and general bills (72% substantial impact). Additionally, less than 0.5% of the 258 respondents said that there was 'no impact' on the increase of food prices. Out of the 'No Impact, Slight Impact and 'Substantial impact', 'Substantial Impact' was the most selected answer for all four selections.

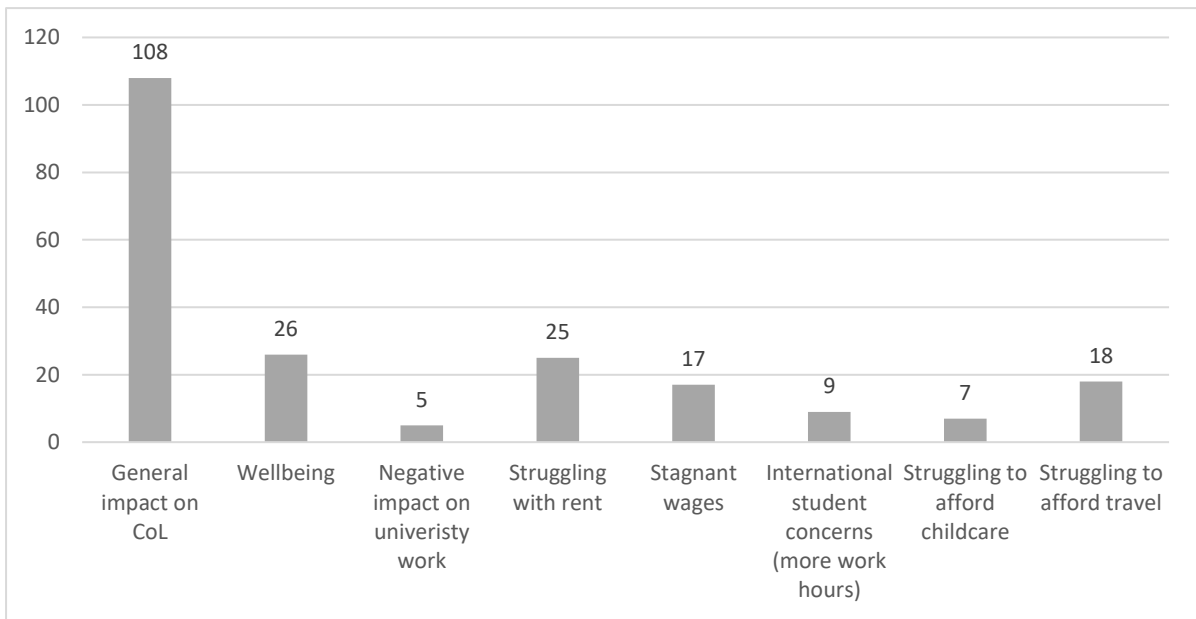


Figure 3: Count of responses to explain impact responses (n=215).

Respondents were then asked why they answered the above question (*To what extent since the beginning of 2022, have you personally been negatively impacted by increases in any of the following?*) the way they did. This question was not obligatory and had 215 respondents.

There is a large majority of respondents asserting the the sheer impact of the cost-of-living crisis creates different levels of impact. This theme considered comments relating to the substantial increase in fuel, energy, and food prices. All themes were financially related bar “wellbeing” and “negative impact on university work”.

- 26 respondents mentioned the impact that cost of living crisis is having on their mental health and overall well-being.
- 25 respondents mentioned struggling with rent.
- 18 respondents shared that they are struggling to afford the cost of travel.
- 17 respondents commented on the impact that stagnant wages is having on their finances.
- Other areas of impact: childcare costs, impact on university work, and international students’ concerns with restricted Tier 4 visa hours.

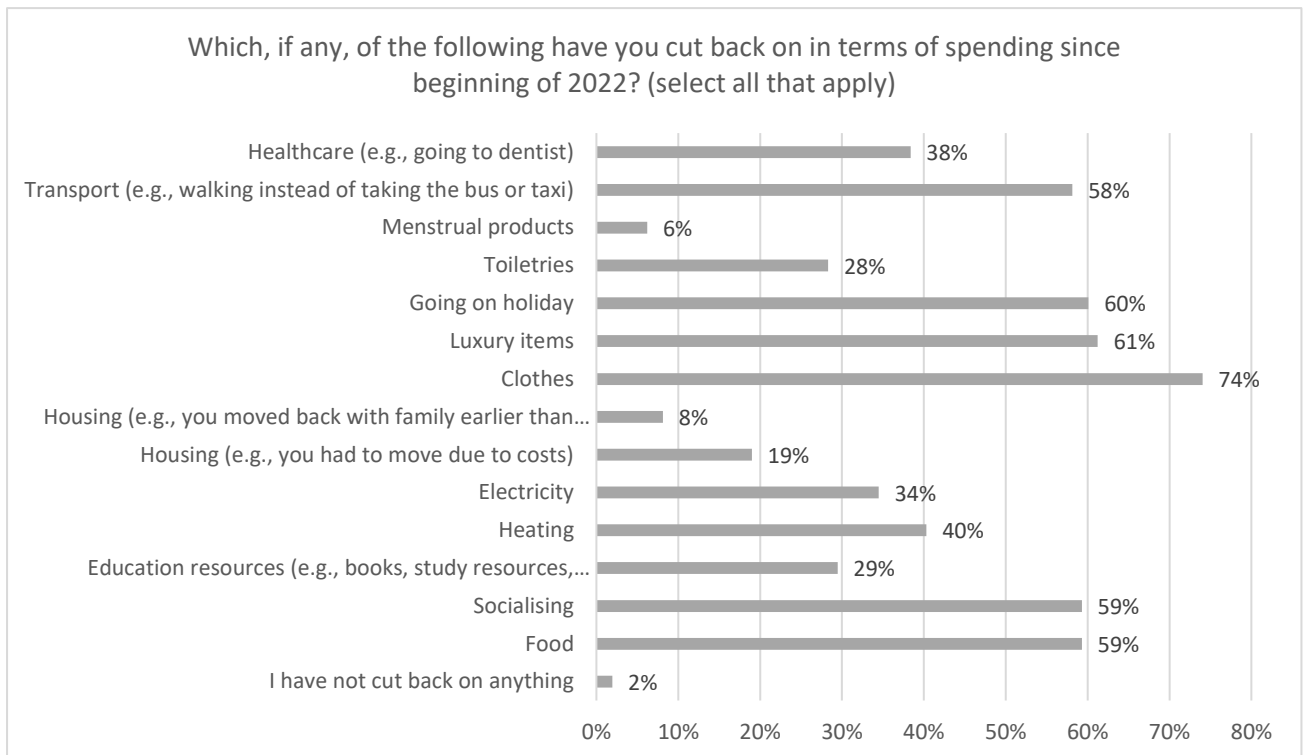


Figure 4: % of respondents indicating cutbacks on items, of all respondents (n=258).

Respondents were asked to select all the items they have had to cut back on in the face of the cost-of-living crisis. Transport (58%), holidays (60%), luxury items (61%), clothes (74%), socialising (59%) and food (59%) all received over 50% of selections. Only 2% of respondents answered that they have not cut back on anything.

Respondents who indicated they have had to cut back on items were asked to rank said items. When analysed by each area, the following aspects caused the most pressure on respondents: housing, electricity bills, heating bills, and healthcare. Areas which are causing the least pressure on respondents: socialising, luxury items, and holidays.

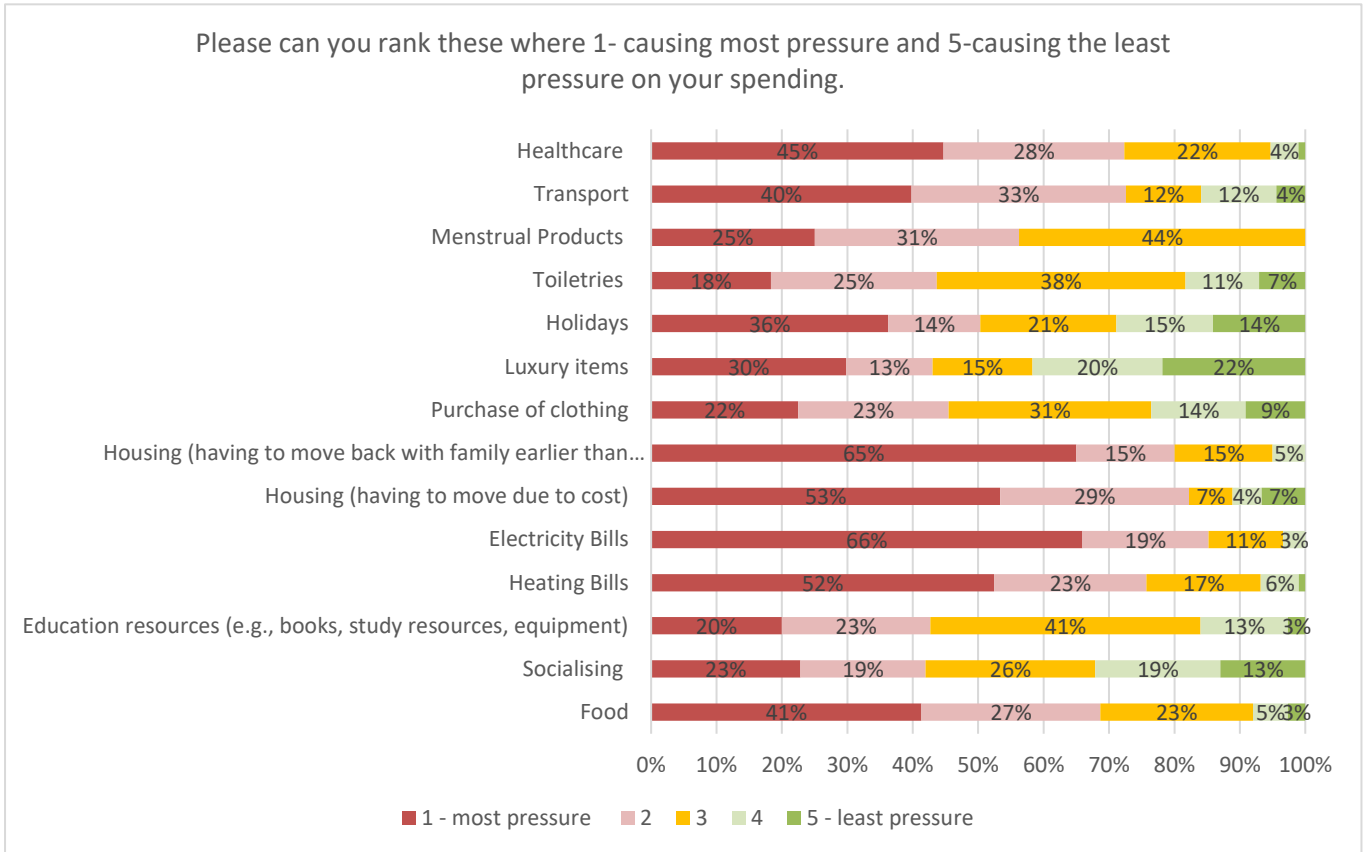


Figure 5: Areas which are causing pressures, ranked, all respondents (n=258).

Respondents were asked “Thinking about how the cost of living is affecting you, what are the top 3 things that you would like to change?”. The top 3 mentioned changes were:

- A decrease in travel and commuting costs (26%).
- Discounted food on campus (21%).
- A decrease in energy bills (13%).

A decrease in rent (11%) and more general student discounts (11%) were also frequently mentioned. A neat and representative comment of a response from this question is below:

*“Decrease in prices of food in Hallam social areas, the boxes are quite expensive. Support offered for students who commute - a fund they can apply for to help with travel costs and a fund for rent - if people are struggling with the cost due to not enough student loan, too high rent, other expenses such as food or bills a fund they can apply for.”*

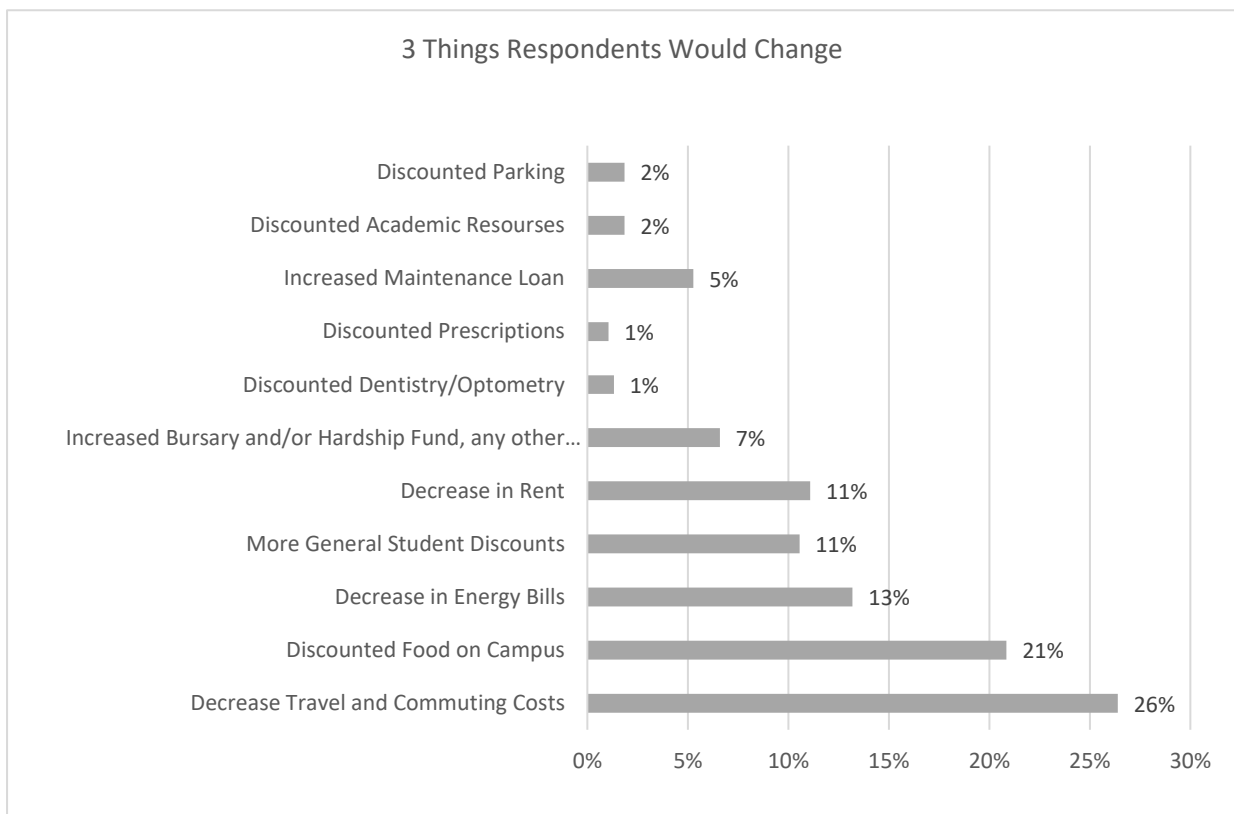


Figure 6: Three things respondents would choose to ease the cost of living crisis, all respondents (n=258).

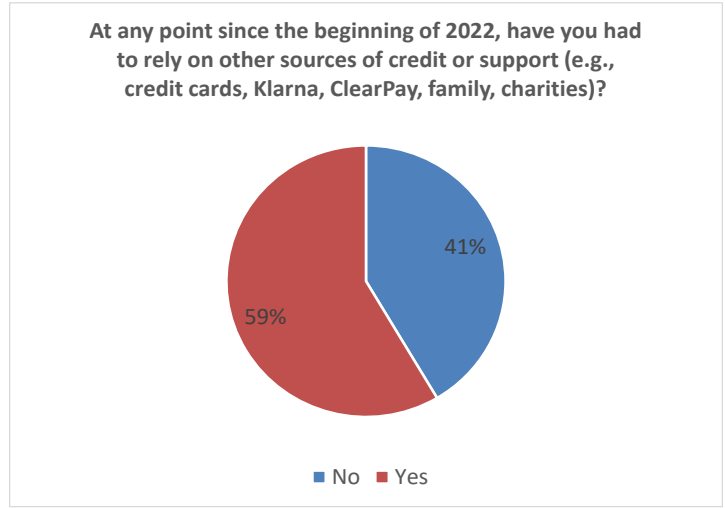


Figure 7: % of respondents that have used credit or support since the beginning of 2022, of all respondents (n=258).

In this section students were asked if they had used or relied on alternative means of credit to subsidise living costs. The majority (59%) of respondents said they have used alternative means of credit.

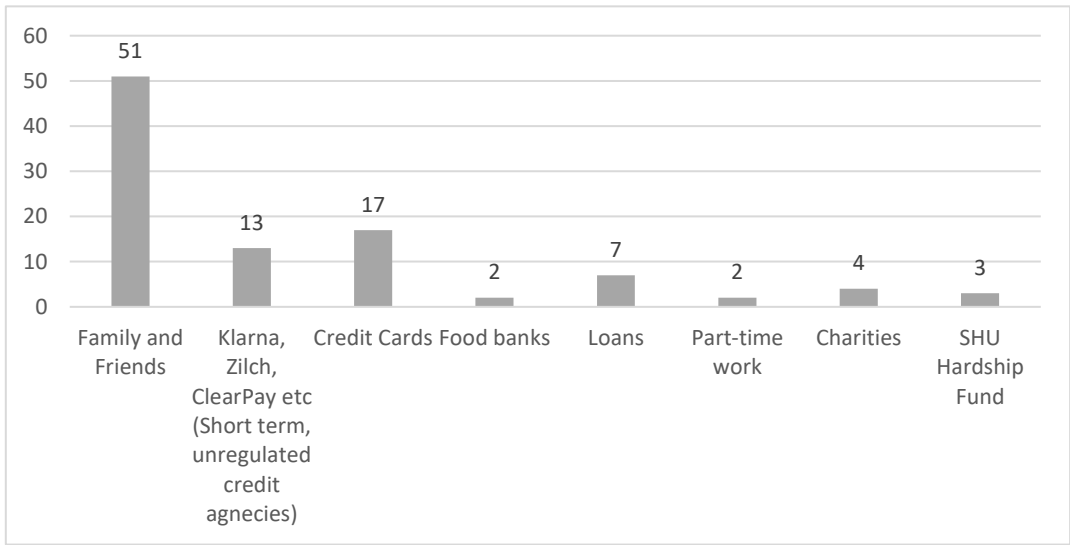


Figure 8: Count of themes based on what types of credit or support respondents had received since beginning of 2022, of those that had used credit (n=108).

The following question asked respondents that had received credit or support since the beginning of 2022 to detail where they have received other sources of credit. A total of 108 respondents answered this question. Of these respondents, 54 percent said they have used family and friends as an alternative source of credit. Only 4% of respondents used Sheffield Hallam University financial hardship funds.

Finally, respondents were asked to share any other comments they might have. Although these comments varied, below is a summary:

- 10 international students had specific concerns, generally around the number of work hours they are allowed on a Tier 4 student visa.
- 4 respondents mentioned the need to decrease the cost of travel, either via public transport and personal vehicles.
- 4 respondents commented on the university providing more scholarships for those in need.
- 3 respondents mentioned the university allowing students to pay for their tuition fees in instalments.
- 2 respondents would like cheaper food, especially on campus.
- 2 respondents mentioned, again, having to sacrifice basic living items.
- Other comments were about the university listening to students, providing suitable support, and cheaper accommodation.



## Cost of Living Survey: Respondent Demographics

Below are the demographic details of respondents.

<b>Work Status</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count of Work</b>
Other (please specify)	12%	32
Yes – full-time (35 or more hours per week)	6%	16
Yes – part-time (less than 35 hours per week)	61%	158
Grand Total	100%	258

<b>Commuter or Live in</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count of Commuter</b>
Does to commute	33%	84
Commutes to University	67%	174
Grand Total	100%	258

<b>Identifying Gender</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count of Gender</b>
Female	57%	146
Male	39%	101
Unknown	4%	11
Grand Total	100%	258

<b>Age</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count of Age Range</b>
18 - 21	3%	7
22 - 25	30%	78
26 - 30	28%	73
Over 30	34%	88
Unknown	4%	11
Grand Total	100%	258

<b>College</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count of College</b>
BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING	53%	138
HEALTH WELLBEING AND LIFE SCIENCES	17%	43
SOCIAL SCIENCES AND ARTS	26%	66
Unknown	4%	11
Grand Total	100%	258