

## Students' Union Student Feedback Report – January 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 insights from January 2023, including statistics from our Advice Centre & Helpdesk, our online feedback platform Union Voice, our Department Reps within the 3 colleges, as well findings from wave 1 of our thrice-yearly '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 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, unless otherwise stated.*

Source	Number of queries / respondents
Advice Centre	81
Helpdesk	289
Union Voice	1 (+6 outstanding)
Department Rep Reports	14 across SSA, HWLS & BTE
Hallam How Are We Doing?	1675

### Report Summary

- The **Students' Union's Advice Centre** received 81 new enquiries between 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023. This is consistent with the volume we received in the same period last year. While topics were varied, academic concerns around non-engagement, complaints and specific academic conduct queries were prominent.
- The **Students' Union's Helpdesk** received 289 queries from students during January. The types of queries concerned SU facilities/way finding, merchandise, SU societies, events and Give It A Go, or finance & funding. 20 students contacted the Helpdesk regarding academic issues.
- Our feedback platform **Union Voice** received a new submission in January and remains unresolved, alongside 6 previously submitted, ongoing issues. The latest submission related to clashes clash between course lectures and placement commitments, as well as general timetabling concerns.
- **Our Department Reps** fed back regarding student engagement during in-person teaching and timetabling issues in HWLS, on efforts to enhance the sense of community within departments and to promote sustainability within SSA, and on exam support and Blackboard consistency in BTE, among many other topics.
- The results from the 1<sup>st</sup> wave SU's student pulse survey '**Hallam How are we Doing?**', indicated levels of student satisfaction have remained consistent with last year, restated the established relationship between students' sense of community (or lack thereof) and consideration of dropping out, and pointed to the possible impact engagement with the SU can have in all these metrics.

### Monthly Statistics from the Students' Union

The [Students' Union's Advice Centre](#) received 81 new enquiries in January. This is consistent with the volume we received in the same period last year. The majority of these (60) were submitted online, either by email, our website form or our new '[Ask Us](#)' online platform. The main topics were:

- **Academic:** non-engagement (13), complaint (11), academic conduct (6), ECs / RRAA (5), appeal (4), progression problems (2), fitness to practice (2), break in study (2), other (2)
- **Funding / Finance:** compelling personal reasons (2), funding check (2), rent or mortgage arrears (2), general hardship (2)
- **Housing:** Disrepair (2), Landlord complaint (2), Inter-tenant dispute (2)
- **Other:** Victim of fraud / crime (2)

The remaining enquiries all concerned discrete unique topics and, for brevity's sake, a full list has not been included here.

The **Students' Union's Helpdesk** received 289 queries from students during the month of January. Of these, the majority (175) were received face-to-face at the Students' Union Helpdesk located in the Hubs. The most common type of queries received were about Societies, events and [Give It A Go](#) (58), SU facilities/way finding (37), merchandise (27). All of these students will have been signposted to the relevant service within the Students' Union. 20 students contacted the Helpdesk about academic issues, which were generally about specific queries with their course, and 15 Students contacted us about finance or funding. 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 feedback platform, [Union Voice](#), received a new submission in January, while there were 6 open & ongoing issues from November and December.

- The new submission was from a final year Social Work & Community Studies student, unhappy that lectures and contact hours were being scheduled seemingly without consideration of the significant amount of time students are required to spend on placement, leading to frequent clashes and a truncated number of contact hours. Furthermore, what contact time they were able to attend was spread unevenly, with some sessions requiring the student to attend campus for 1 hr of teaching.

The ongoing issues were:

- A Teaching student unhappy with the lack of support from the university whilst on placement. This is currently being handled by the college officer.
- A student with Business student with special support needing additional training on university equipment and systems. Again, the relevant college officer is liaising with SHU to help resolve.
- Engineering & Maths students concerned about the shift to in-person assessments. This has been raised with the university and has led to a joint statement being issued with the SU, detailing the types of support that will be available to E&M students to help them prepare for in-person exams. See the Dept Rep report for BTW below for more details. This case remains open for monitoring purposes only.
- An international Business student struggling to find permanent accommodation. They are currently working with the International Students officer to resolve.
- Two queries relating to the cold temperatures at Aspect Court remain open pending an update from the SU President.

The [Trending Topics](#) from Union Voice queries are updated regularly and students are shared this information if their query fits into one of these topic areas.

### **Department Reps**

Our [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 January, by college.

Within **Health, Wellbeing and Life Sciences**, common themes discussed at the College Student Forum included back-to-back lectures, academic societies, and in person teaching. Department reps reported that students really value in person teaching but sometimes feel too reserved to ask questions in lectures; technology such as Padlet was suggested as a solution to this, where students could ask questions anonymously. Back-to-back lectures were raised as an issue due to lack of study space between sessions, and the lack of time to move between locations. Whilst academic societies are making positive moves in being set up, students sometimes struggle to organise activities for their peers, and it was suggested that the help of academic staff might help this process. Last minute changes to timetabling was raised as a concern as it results in organised meetings having to be cancelled due to student availability. The need to support disabled students more was also conveyed as some have not had reasonable adjustments implemented where necessary.

Within **Social Sciences & Art** the department rep of Natural & Built Environment has been looking to support the university-wide drive toward greater sustainability by helping to introduce student-facing policies such as increased opportunities for recycling. This has proved popular with students and supports the work being undertaken by [Dayo Oladiti](#) as College Officer at an institutional level. Following feedback from students, the Institute of Education Department Rep is working on increased the feeling of community in the department, by planning to put on an end of year ball for all education students. This is particularly aimed at those who will be graduating several months later. They are also lobbying for increased welfare support, with a focus on those students on placement after reports of students feeling isolated during these periods.

In Psychology, Sociology & Politics, there is a strong push towards promoting employability, specifically more area-focused placement and graduate job opportunities. The department rep has been working closely with the student experience lead and wider department to promote this and encourage a broader range of opportunities.

In Law & Criminology, the department rep has created a survey which course reps can tailor to suit their course, hopefully providing more specific feedback for each course which can then be acted on accordingly.

In Humanities, students have reported feelings of a lack of community, so the department rep has maximised the promotion of the humanities lounge via members of staff during course sessions and via social media. They have also made it a priority to host department events such as showcases and socials in the humanities lounge to increase its use.

Over in **Business, Technology & Engineering**, the topic of so-called 'essay mills' was raised in Engineering & Maths. Students are apparently being contacted by people offering to submit assessments on students' behalf. It's unclear how students' contact details are obtained. The issue could particularly have import for international students, as it could have visa implications. There was also further discussion of assessment support in the department. The Department Rep, alongside the College Officer [Mobolaji Edun](#), and the Students' Union worked with the Department to produce a statement reassuring students of the kinds of support they can expect to receive when preparing for in-person exams.

Timetabling was raised in four of the five Department Forums, with the common and recurring issues of the scheduling of in-person sessions being spread thinly across the week rather than condensed into 1 or 2 days, and seminars being schedule *before* the corresponding lecture, the most prominent themes. There was also some feedback around consistency of BlackBoard sites and of the learning materials that are uploaded there. Finally, there was some feedback around desire for more Academic Societies.

Feedback from Department Reps in Health Wellbeing & Life Sciences, Business, Technology & Engineering and Social Sciences & Arts continues to be collected and will be included in these monthly reports on an ongoing basis.

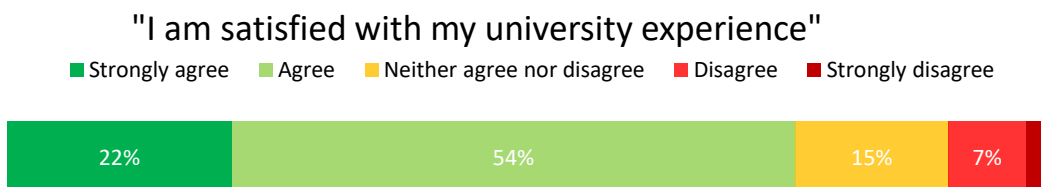
### **Hallam How Are We Doing?**

The 'Hallam, How Are We Doing?' survey (HHAWD) was open between 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and 4<sup>th</sup> December 2022, with the results collated and analysed in the first few weeks of January. This is the first wave of the 2022-2023 academic year for 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 1675 responses, approximately a 5% response rate. Three waves of HHAWD were conducted in 2021-2022, the first of which, conducted in November 2021, is used as a comparative benchmark for these results. Below is a summary of the university-specific results.

### **University Satisfaction**

Overall, students are broadly happy with their university experience, with over 75% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing they were satisfied with their time at Uni, in line with results from this time last year.



*Figure 1: extent of agreement, all respondents (n=1675)*

This sentiment is fairly consistent across colleges, with Health, Wellbeing & Life Sciences receiving the lowest agree/strongly agree score at 71% (see fig.2).

### "I am satisfied with my university experience"

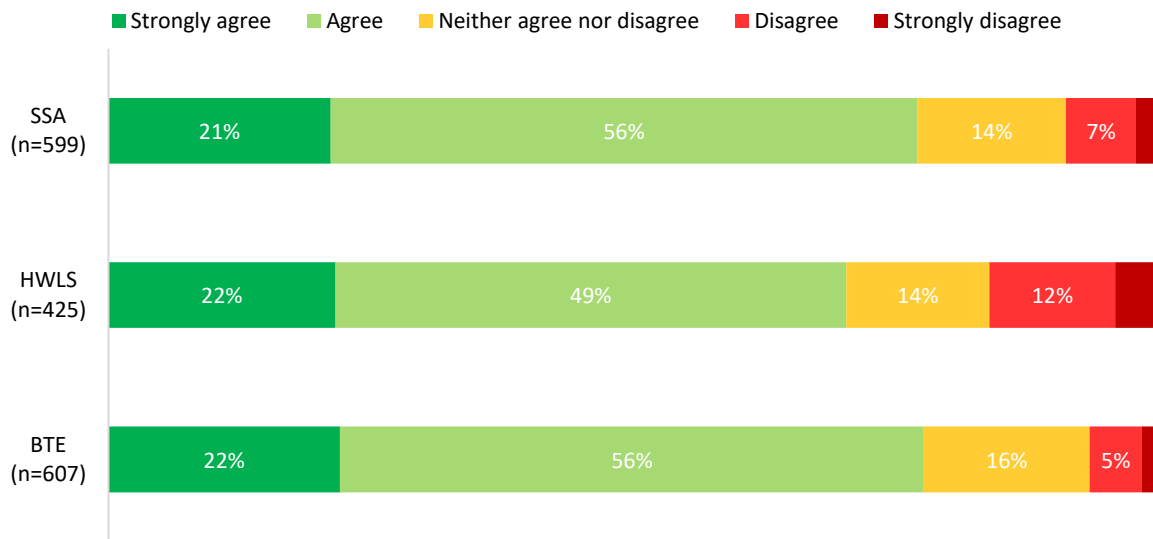


Figure 2: extent of agreement, by college (n=1631)

However, when we analyse this metric by level of study (see fig.3) more variation emerges. 1<sup>st</sup> year undergrads, postgrads (both taught and research) and foundation students had the highest rates of satisfaction with the university experience, ranging from 80-83%. This drops for middle year undergrads (72%) and then again for final year undergrads and those on degree apprenticeships (66-69%).

### "I am satisfied with my university experience"

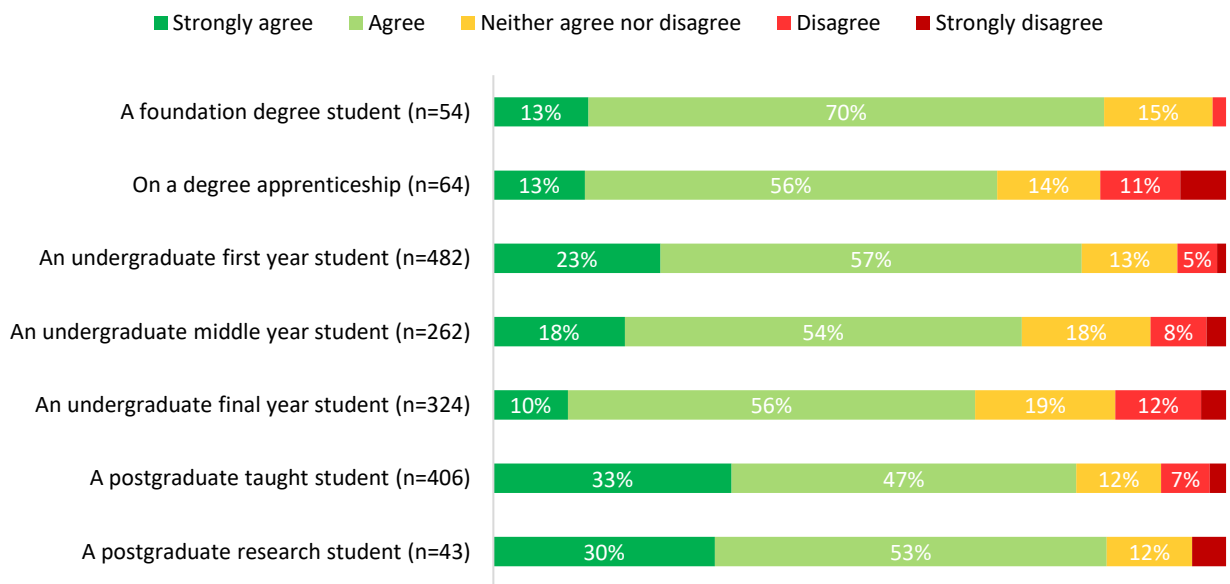


Figure 3: extent of agreement, by level of study (n=1635)

Satisfaction with individual elements of the university experience has remained consistent from Wave 1 2021/22, including high levels of satisfaction with available study space (85%), course/learning experience (74%), commercial services (72%), social spaces (72%) and academic

support (72%). Levels of dissatisfaction also remain consistent with this time last year, where around 1-in-10 respondents were dissatisfied with each element of the university experience.

**Wellbeing**

When asked how enjoyable they find university life, 64% respondents rated their experience 7+ out of 10, with just 25% rating it 5 or below. Furthermore 65% of students believe the university cares about their wellbeing This is consistent with wave 1 2021/22.

"On a scale of 0-10, how enjoyable do you find university?"

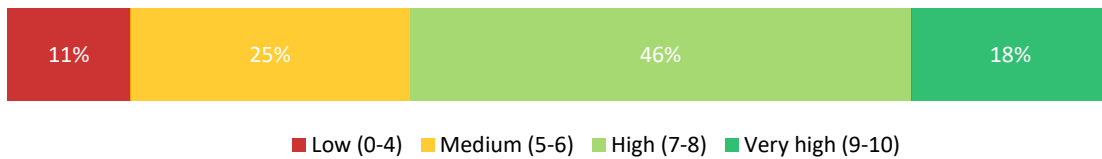


Figure 4: Enjoyment of university, rated 0-10 (n=1675)

1 in 4 respondents admitted to having considered dropping out of university. Of these students, 50% had rated their enjoyment of university as 5 or below and 30% actively disagreed that the university cares about their wellbeing. As one might expect, there was a strong relationship between student’s perceptions of a sense of community at Hallam with whether they had considered dropping out (see fig. 5).

"I have seriously considered dropping out of university"

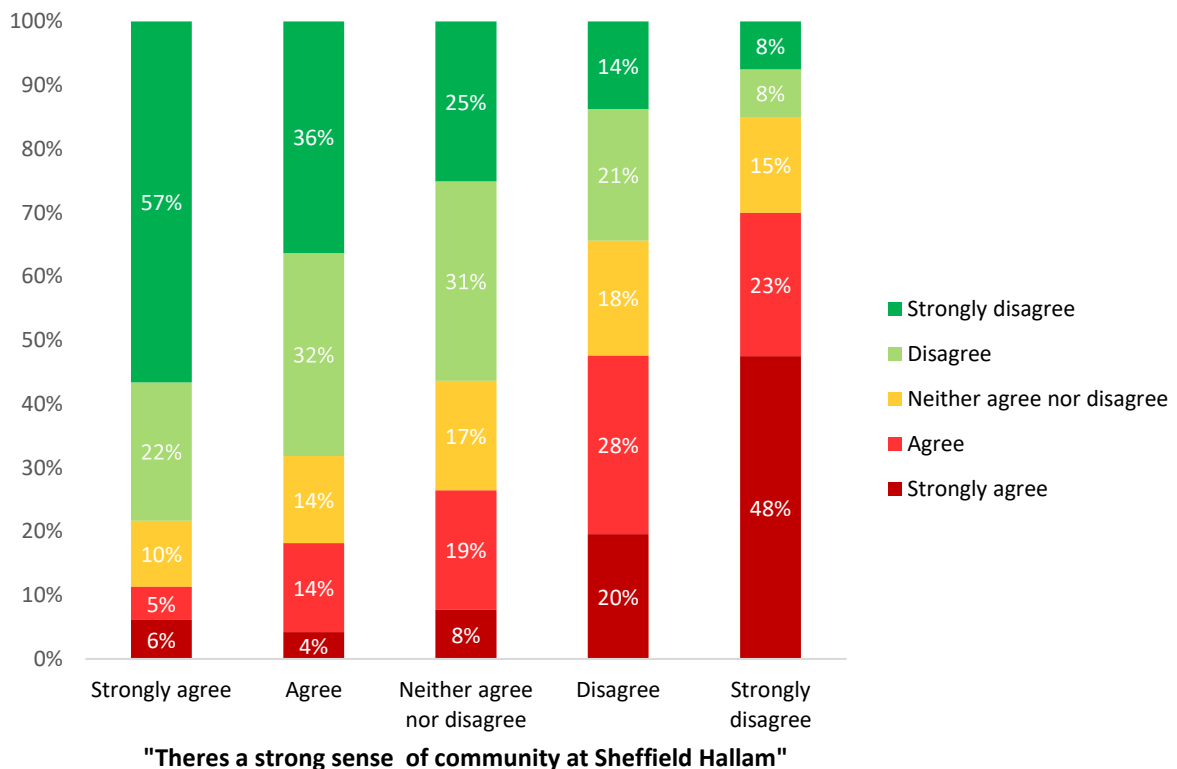


Figure 5: Consideration of dropping out, by perception of strong sense of community (n=1675)

Interestingly there was also a relationship, albeit less pronounced, between whether a student had engaged with the Students' Union in some way and both their consideration of dropping out (see fig. 6), *and* their sense of community (see fig. 7), pointing to the role the SU can play in helping foster students' sense of belonging here at Hallam.

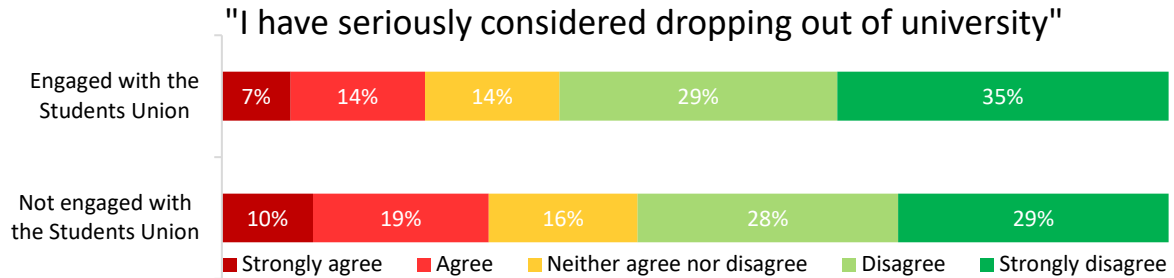


Figure 6: consideration of dropping out, by engagement with the Students' Union (n=1675)

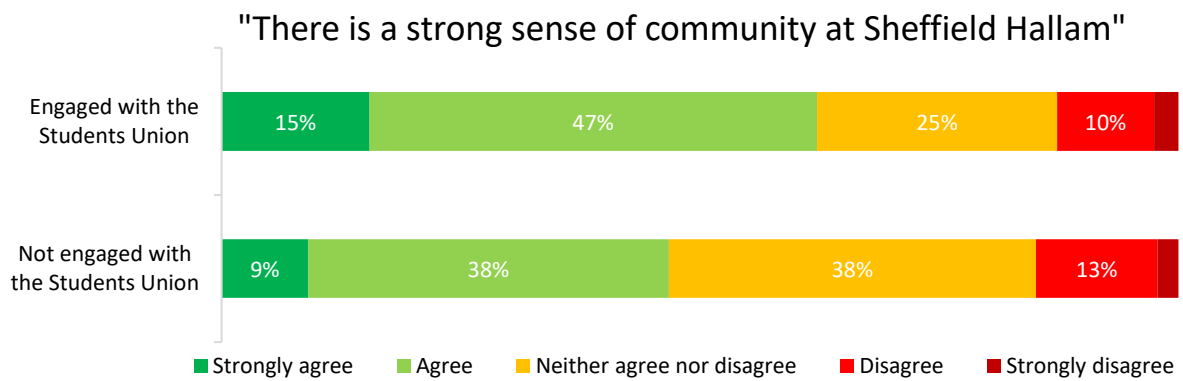


Figure 7: Perception of sense of community at Hallam, by engagement with the Students' Union (n=1675)

The 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of HHAWD will go live for students to complete later this month, so look out analysis of those results in March's Monthly Student Feedback Report.

End