

Briefing: New to UCL Survey Headline Results

January 2021

Introduction

The New to UCL survey assesses what factors influenced a student's decision to study at UCL and seeks feedback on the arrival and induction experience for new students.¹ The survey is for all new students, both undergraduate and postgraduate.

The 2020-21 survey was conducted in November and December 2020 and 7,600 students responded (31% of new students). This briefing reviews the headline results of the survey.²

Overall Satisfaction

- » The number of new students satisfied with their experience of arrival at UCL was 86%, down from 93% in 2019. Figures were also down for the number of new students who felt 'welcome and part of the wider UCL community', and who felt 'part of the community in my department or research unit'. Figures for all 3 questions were the lowest they'd been since these questions were first asked in 2016 and 2017.

Question	2020	vs 2019
Overall, I am satisfied with my experience of arrival at UCL	86%	-7%
Based on my experience so far, I feel welcome and part of the wider UCL community	79%	-9%
Based on my experience so far, I feel part of the community in my department or research unit	81%	-6%

- » 90% of respondents indicated that they were happy with the social distancing measures in place on campus, however only 45% of respondents indicated that they were currently on campus.
- » Overall satisfaction scores are slightly lower amongst undergraduates than postgraduates; for example, there was a 4-point gaps between each level of study on the question 'based on my experience so far, I feel part of the community in my department or research unit' (78% for UG, 82% for PGT and 86% for PGR).
- » However, Postgraduate Research students scored consistently lower on how useful they found certain induction channels, such as the Guide for New Students on the Welcome to UCL app (58% vs 65% for UGs and 68% for PGTs) and the UCL Students website (81% vs 86% for UGs and 87% for PGTs).

Support Services

¹ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/student-engagement/student-surveys-results/new-to-ucl>

² <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/you-shape-ucl/survey-news-and-results/new-ucl-results>

- » There was an increased level of awareness of various UCL support services this year compared to 2019, with UCL funding (71% vs 60% in 2019), UCL Careers (90% vs 82% in 2019), and immigration advice (72% vs 64% in 2019) seeing the highest increases in score.
- » When broken down by level of study, postgraduate research respondents were consistently more aware of how to access support services than undergraduate students, with postgraduate taught students falling in the middle of these two groups. Awareness of support services was also consistently lower amongst UK respondents than EU or non-EU respondents.
- » However, there were some unsurprising drops in certain areas due to the pandemic, including being able to access the libraries at UCL (79% vs 95% in 2019). Certain online resources such as accessing online library resources, also saw a slight drop in score (91% vs 92% in 2019).

Admissions & Decisions

- » Despite it still being the biggest factor mentioned in response to the question ‘what, if anything, might have stopped you from studying your chosen degree programme here’, fewer students than in previous years mentioned the cost of living in London, possibly due to the change in circumstances because of Covid-19.

What, if anything, might have stopped you from studying your chosen degree programme here?	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Cost of living in London	37%	45%	48%	44%	50%

- » 18% of respondents said that risk of exposure to Covid infection might have stopped them from studying at UCL this year, with 14% stating that social distancing restrictions implemented in response to Covid-19 may have put them off.

Accommodation

- » Of students living in UCL managed accommodation, there was a decrease in the number of respondents who felt that they were ‘aware of all the support available to residents in my halls or house’, with this figure 8% lower than in 2019 (72% vs 80%).
- » Halls of residence with particularly high scores across accommodation questions include Goldsmid House (94% average across 6 questions), Unite Beaumont Court (93%) and Unite Stapleton House (90%). Halls with particularly low scores include Campbell House East (75% average), James Lightill House (74%) and John Tovell House (74%).

Students’ Union

- » Perhaps due to Covid, there were significant drops on the questions regarding whether respondents found the Welcome Fair useful (59% vs 80% in 2019) and whether the social events in the first week helped them to settle in (58% vs 77% in 2019). Figures were lowest amongst undergraduate and UK home students.
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Question	2020	vs 2019	UG	PGT	PGR	UK	EU	Non-EU
I found the social events in the first week helped me to settle in	58%	-19%	52%	63%	56%	46%	50%	70%
I found the Welcome Fair useful	59%	-21%	53%	64%	63%	46%	49%	72%

- » Amongst survey respondents, fewer students have signed up for a club or a society this year compared to previous respondents. Far more respondents are still undecided about whether to sign up than in 2019.

Have you signed up for a club or society?	2020	vs 2019
Yes	36%	-10%
No, but I intend to	25%	+4%
No, and I probably won't	17%	-3%
No, not sure if I will sign up	21%	+9%
I can't remember if I signed up	1%	+1%

- » There was a significant increase in the number of respondents who indicated that they knew how to access support and advice from Students' Union UCL, with 84% indicating that they were able to do so, up 8% from 2019. This average did not fluctuate meaningfully between different levels of study and fee statuses, with all these figures falling between 81% and 86%.