

# BBSU Survey 2026 Report



The Research & Insights Team  
March 2026

# Executive Summary

The BBSU Survey (Big Bristol SU Survey) is an annual survey that captures student feedback and satisfaction levels across all key Bristol SU measures including our services, democracy, spaces, events and more. The survey helps us monitor and understand how Bristol SU is delivering for students, and informs future changes and improvements to the organisation. The 2026 survey ran from January 19th - February 6th, 2026 and received **2534 complete responses**.

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction or level of agreement on different aspects of SU activity using 4-point scales (e.g., ranging from Very satisfied to Very dissatisfied). The reported percentages represent the proportion of respondents who were Satisfied with the statements. Satisfaction = % Very satisfied + % Satisfied when excluding those who selected N/A.

## Key Findings

- **Satisfaction remains high at 96%**, with nearly all demographics reporting over 90% satisfaction. The previously identified satisfaction gap has **slightly improved for disabled students**.
- **Disabled, men, and trans students report lower positivity** across all measures.
- When thinking of the SU, student's **mostly think positive words: fun, inclusive, and supportive**.
- Students would like to see more **careers support**, greater affordability, financial support, and more **targeted SU communications**.
- The SU's purpose to students is **support, representation, and advocacy**, with community building and cost of living support also seen as important roles.
- Overall sentiment is most positive among Year 1 students, with the **sharpest decline occurring at the Year 1 to Year 2 transition**, the critical point for intervention.
- Satisfaction with SU Services, Spaces, Activities, and Opportunities has held steady or improved, with **no categories declining year on year**.
- **'Cost of Living' remains the top student priority**; 'Student Community and Belonging' has risen to second, while 'Academic Experience' has fallen to fifth.
- Whilst **22% of students are confident they know who the SU officers are**, the largest group (42%) report partial awareness.
- **38% of students plan to stay in Bristol over summer**, prioritising affordable, social activities making use of the local area.

# The Big Picture

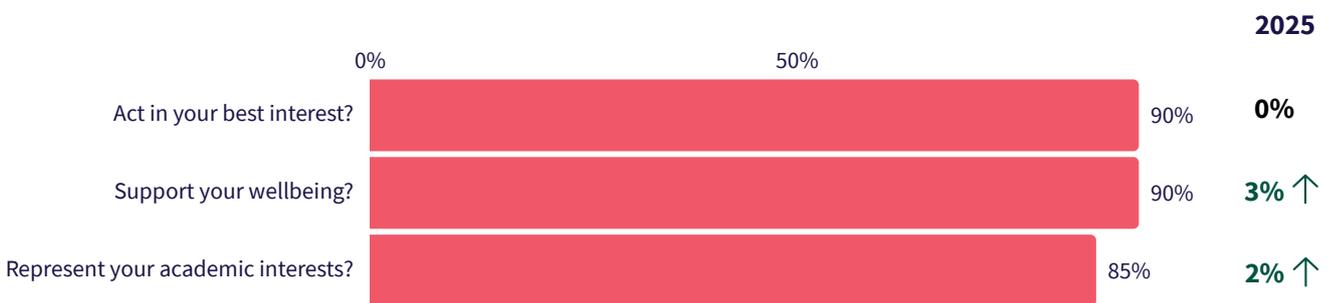
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the SU?

N = 2473; excluding 50 "Not applicable"



How well does Bristol SU...

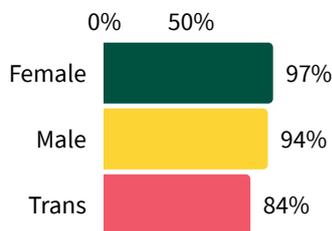
N = 2214; excluding 72 "Not applicable"



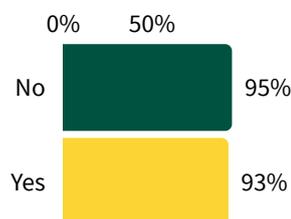
## Overall satisfaction by demographic

Satisfaction among **disabled students has improved**, narrowing gaps seen in previous years. However, disparities are present for gender and orientation: **men, gay men, and trans** students report the lowest satisfaction in their categories. Notably, white students, home students, and postgraduate researchers also report the lowest satisfaction within their respective categories, though relatively high at 93%.

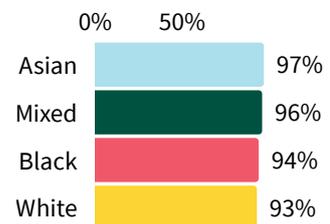
### Gender



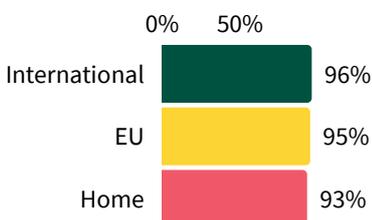
### Disability



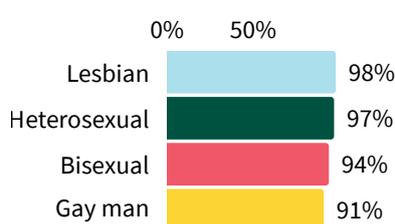
### Ethnicity



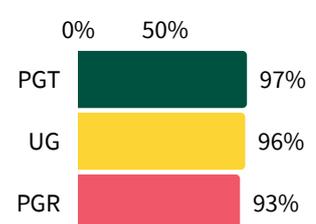
### Fee Status



### Sexual Orientation



### Study Level

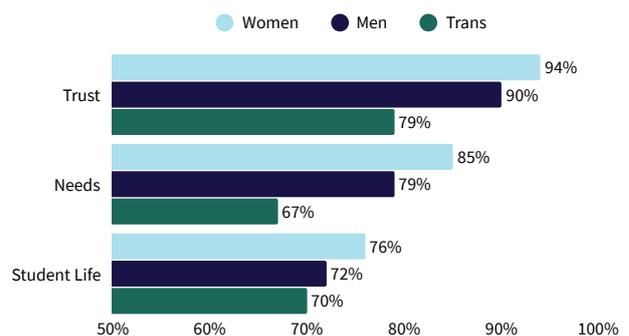
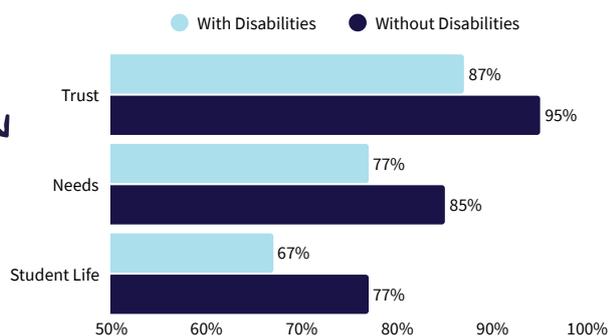
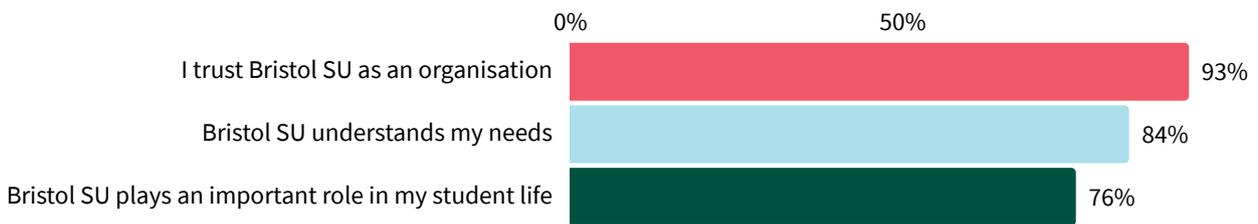




# SU Brand Perception

How much do you agree or disagree with the following:

N = 2214; excluding 72 "Not applicable"



**Disabled students report consistently lower** perceptions across all three measures than their non-disabled peers. **Men** and **trans** students also score lower than women, and **white** students report lower perceptions than students from other ethnic backgrounds (average 81%).

What do you think is Bristol SU's purpose?

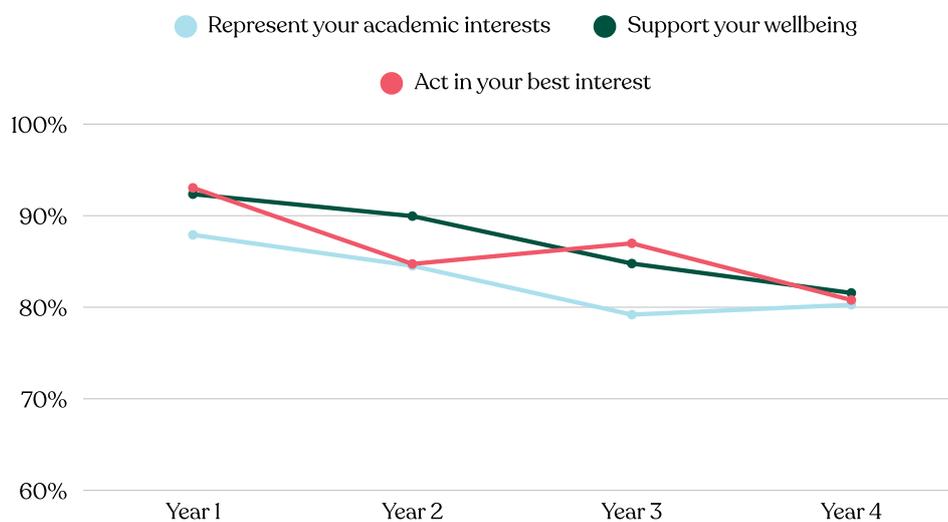
N = 2315; excluding "N/A", "don't know" etc.



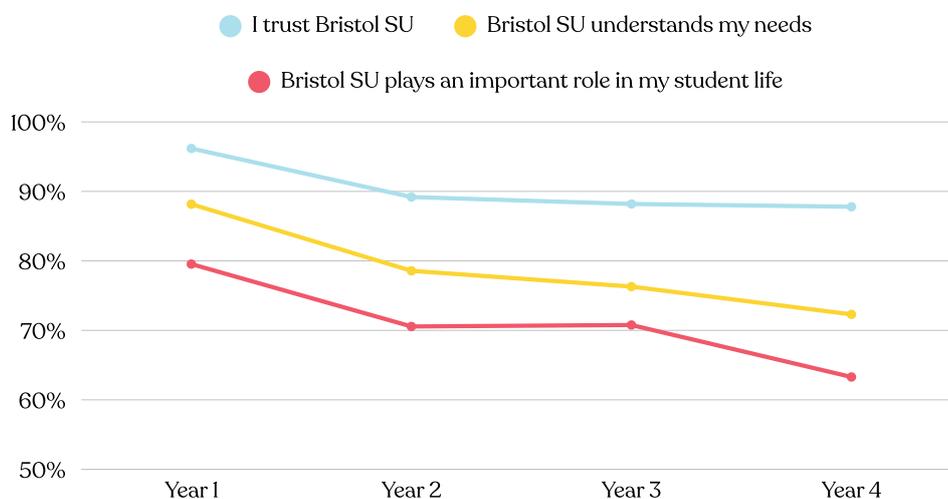
Students perceive Bristol SU's primary purpose as **supporting, representing, and advocating for students across academic, social, and employment matters**. Beyond this, students also see the SU as playing an important role in building community, supporting wellbeing, and responding to the pressures of the rising cost of living.

# SU Perceptions Over Time

## Representation and support by year group



## Attitude toward Bristol SU by year group

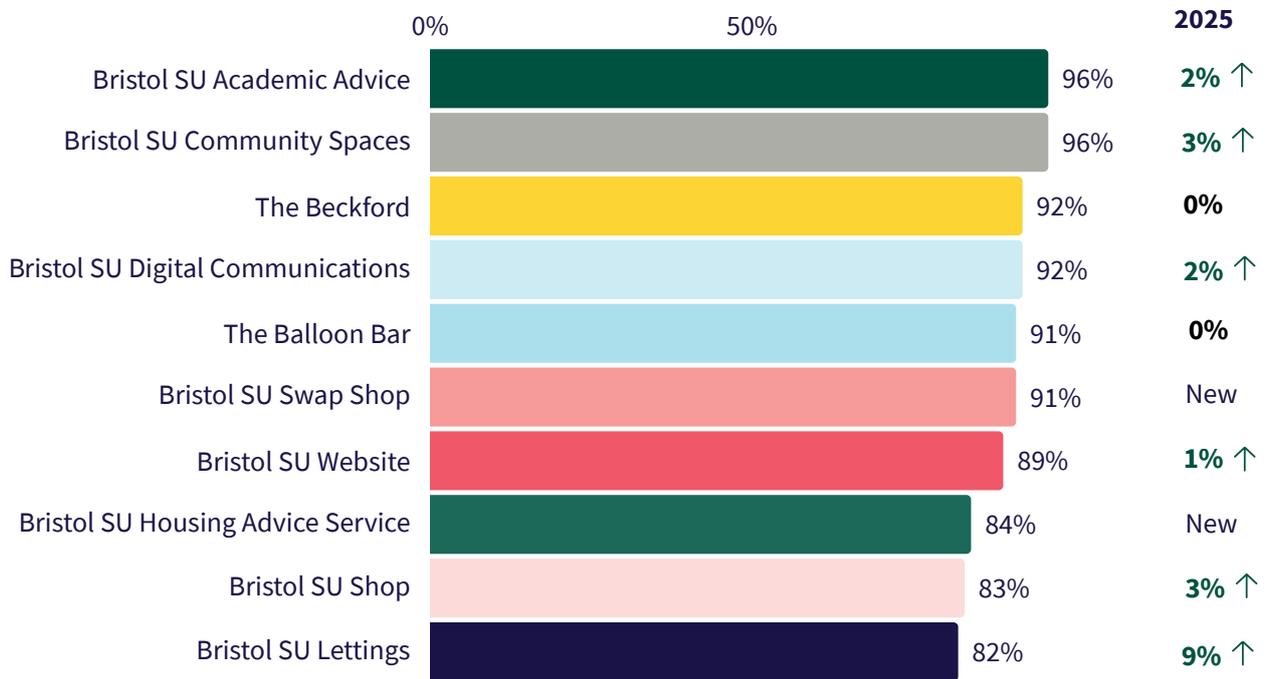


Year 1 students report the most positive sentiment across all questions, with scores declining as students progress through their degree. This pattern was also present in 2025, confirming it as a consistent, structural trend rather than a one-year anomaly. **The sharpest drop occurs between Year 1 and Year 2**, suggesting this transition is the critical point at which student connection to the SU weakens most. Targeted intervention at this stage would therefore have the greatest impact on long-term sentiment and engagement.

# Services and Spaces

## Satisfaction with SU Services and Spaces

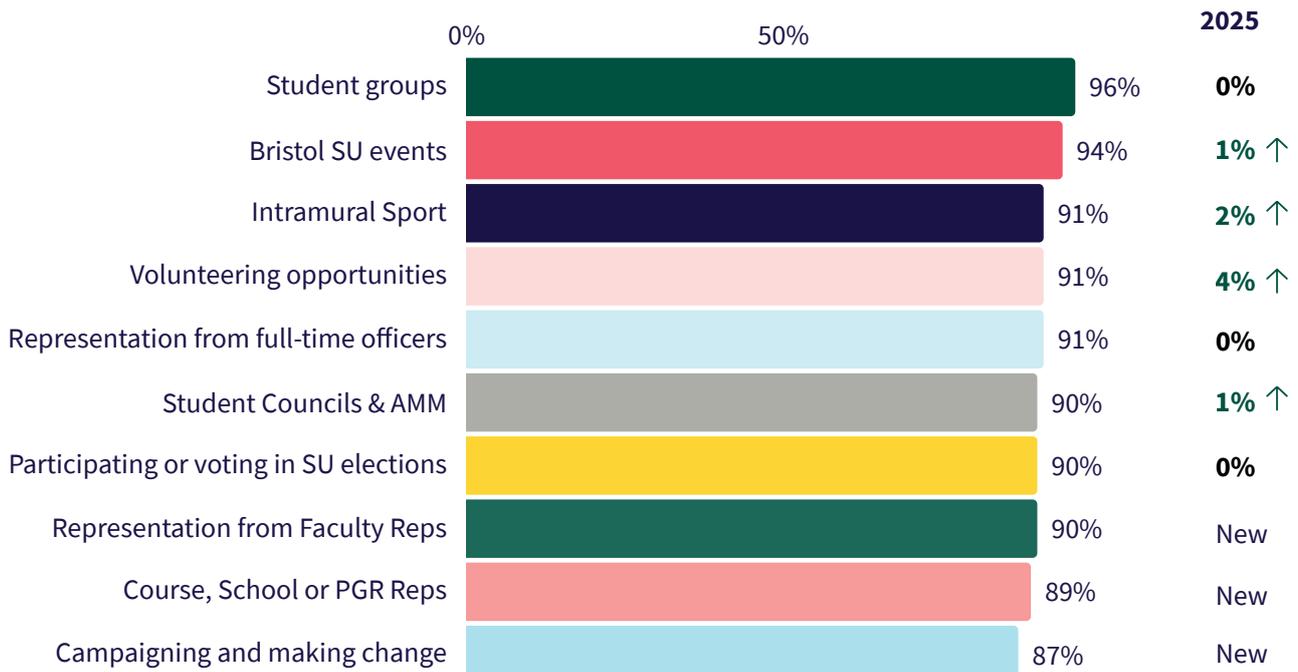
*N = avg. 1662; excluding avg. 919 "have not used this" or "not aware of this"*



# Activities, Events and Opportunities

## Satisfaction with SU Activities and Opportunities

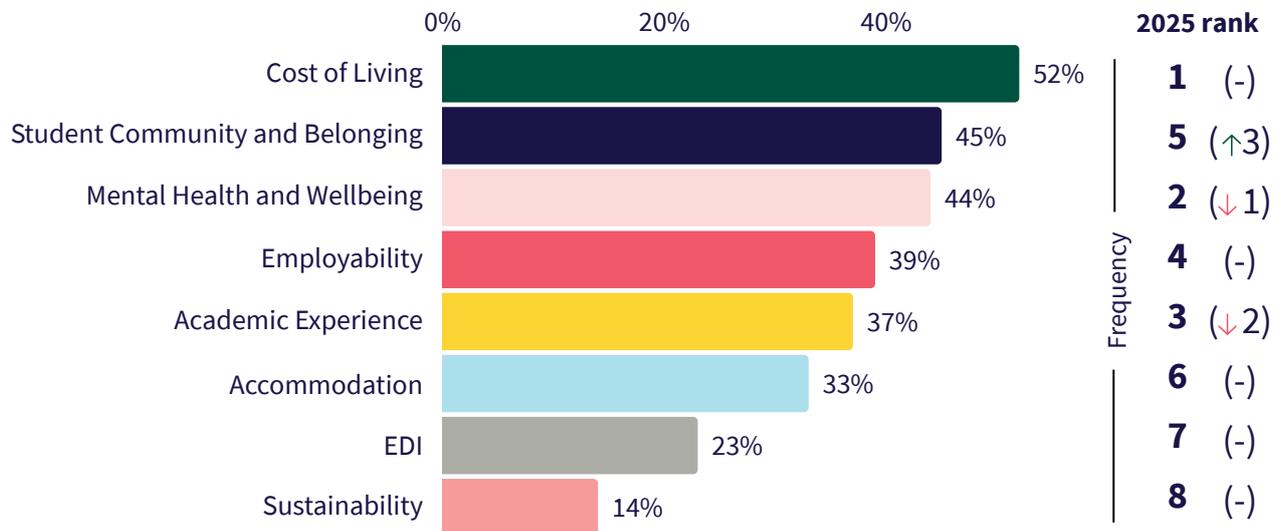
*N = avg. 1851; excluding avg. 701 "Not applicable"*



# Academic Representation and Campaigns

Which of the following issues should Bristol SU work on?

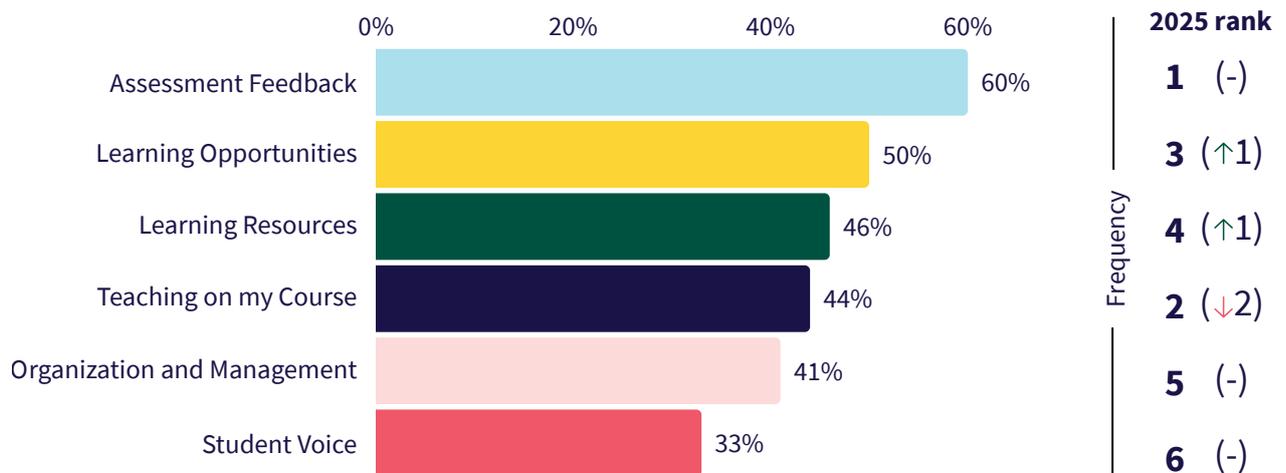
N = 2524; excluding 10 "Not applicable"



'Cost of Living' remains students' top priority. 'Student Community and Belonging' has risen three places since last year, now ranking second ahead of 'Mental Health and Wellbeing'. 'Academic Experience' has fallen to fifth, while 'EDI' and 'Sustainability' continue to rank considerably lower across the student body.

Which of the following academic issues should Bristol SU work on?

N = 2524; excluding 10 "Not applicable"



# Student Representation

## Do you know who your elected officers are?

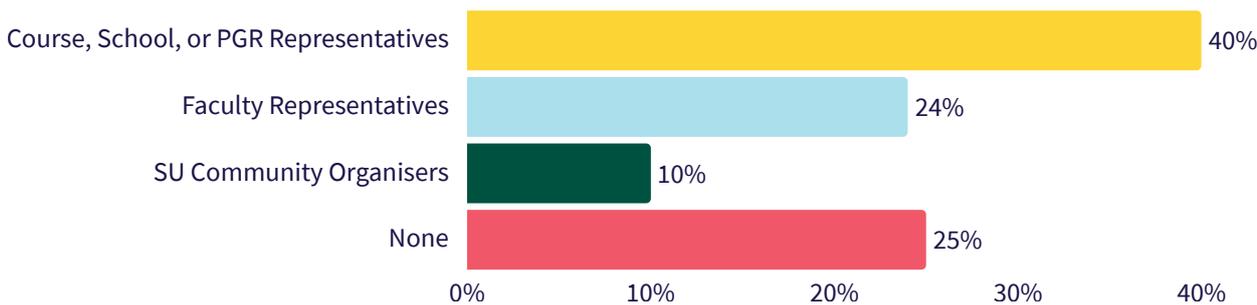
*N = 2522; excluding 12 "Not applicable"*



The 2026 survey introduced additional response options, providing greater nuance than the previous year. While a similar proportion of students (22%) are confident they know who the SU officers are, the largest group (42%) report only partial awareness. This significant segment was not captured in the 2025 data, representing a newly visible opportunity for the SU to deepen officer recognition.

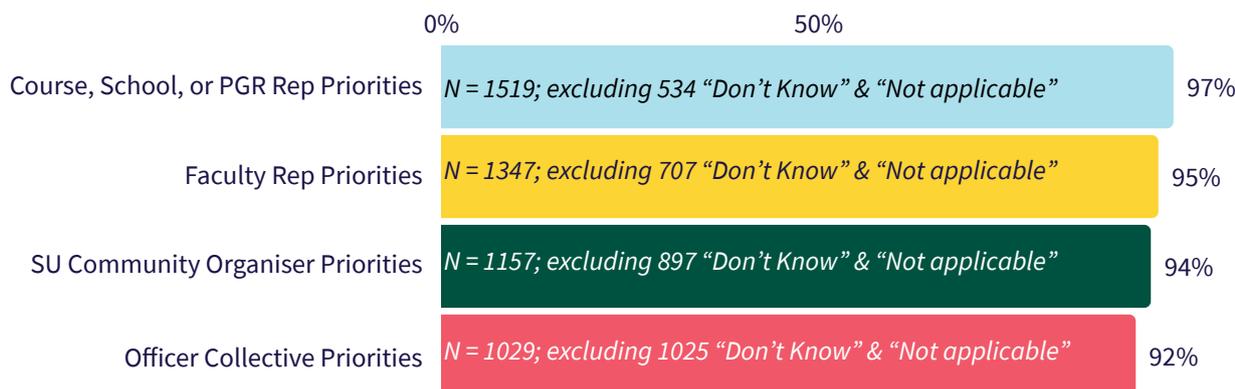
## Are you aware of the following...

*N = 2524; excluding 10 "Not applicable"*



Awareness of Course, School, or PGR Representatives has fallen from 49% to 40%. However, this decline should be interpreted with caution: in 2025 these were captured as a single option, whereas 2026 separates them by course and faculty level, meaning last year's figure was likely inflated by the broader categorisation.

## To what extent do you agree or disagree with their priorities?

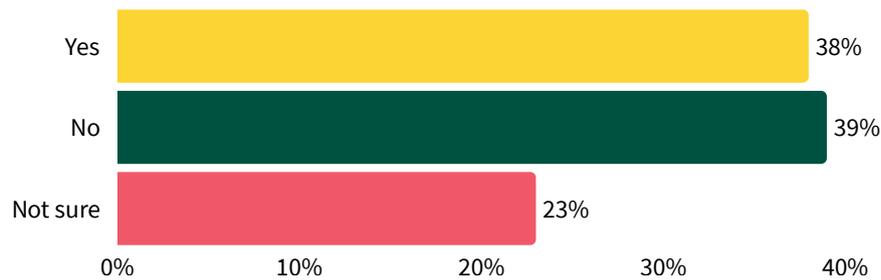


# Summer Support

Do you plan to stay in Bristol over the summer?

N = 2521

Demographics: N = avg. 906  
(those who selected "Yes")



**Over a third of respondents (38%) plan to remain in Bristol over the summer.** Of these, the majority are Home students (55%), female (67%), and undergraduate (48%), with Asian students (40%) representing a notably high share relative to the overall sample. A quarter identify as disabled (25%).

## What events, activities, spaces, and support services would you like from Bristol SU over the summer period?

Students highlighted a desire for **affordable or free activities** and events that encourage **social interaction**, make use of the local area, and take advantage of the summer weather.

### Activities

Excursions and day trips, sports and sports days, craft activities e.g. pottery and outdoor activities such as picnics, BBQs and walks.

### Events

Community events, summer fair/festival, non alcoholic, food, concerts/clubbing, movie nights, pub quizzes, board games, book clubs and PGR events.

### Employment

There was also large emphasis on career support, workshops, volunteering, and jobs/internships.

### Support and Spaces

Students highlighted the need to keep study and social spaces open and continue offering services, e.g. wellbeing, housing, study and financial support.

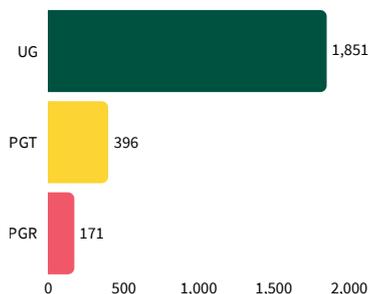
*I would like to see SU organise more affordable trips and accessible events for those who are financially unstable and struggling. Maybe more focus on outdoor activities and to organise sporting events*

*I hope the focus can be on career development, such as CV writing and skills training*

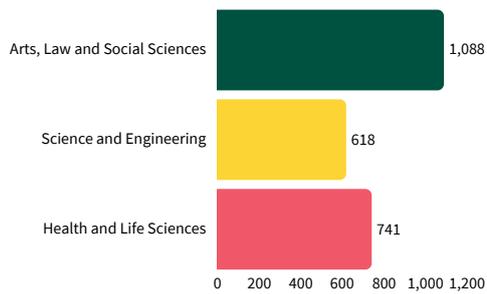
*Services to remain open despite it being out of term time in case people need or wish to use them. Also support for those who don't have a family or support system*

# Demographics Ns

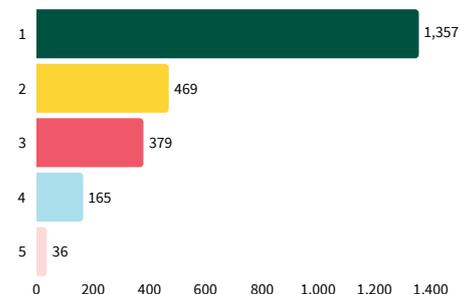
## Study Level



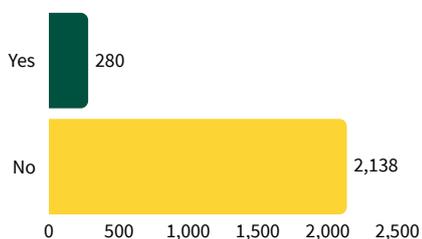
## Faculty



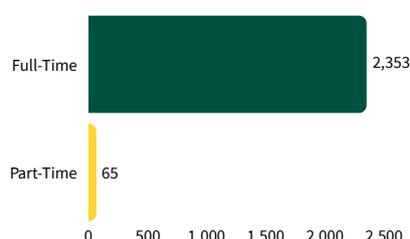
## Year of Study



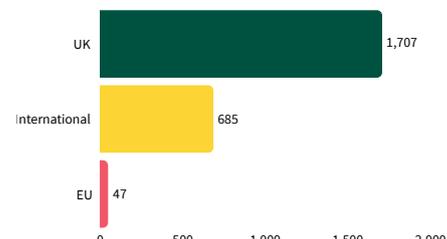
## Mature Student



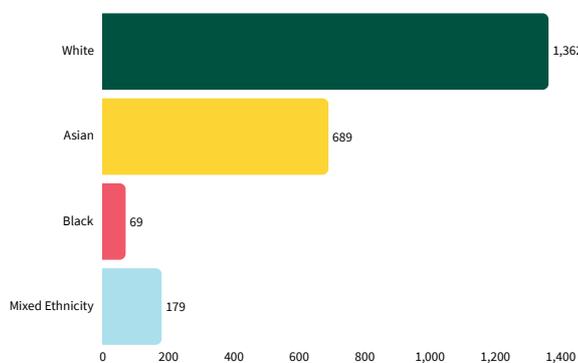
## Mode of Study



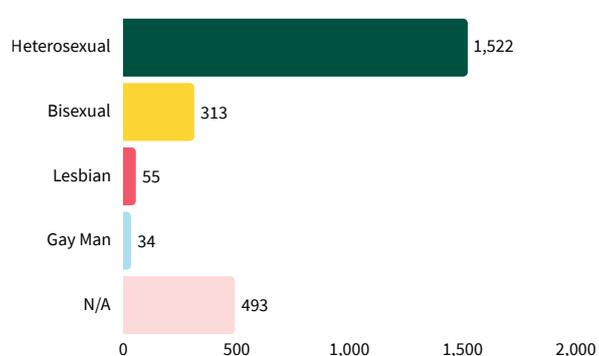
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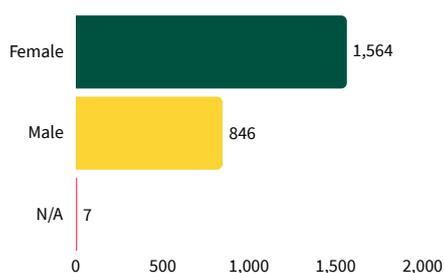
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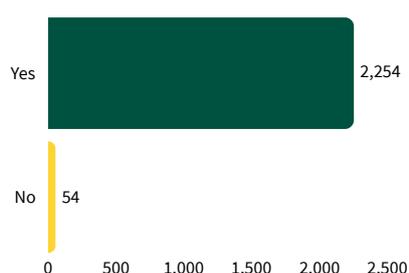
## Sexual Orientation



## Sex



## Gender matches sex at birth?



## Disability

