

# 2019 Student Wellbeing Survey



Wellbeing and study  
responses from UK students



Study supported by:

**Studiosity**

January 2019

With thanks to all students who participated in this study and all university staff who help students every day to feel better about, and more capable of, succeeding with their studies.

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**This is a blessing.  
Thank you!**

(UK Student, December 2018)

## Foreword

Dear Educator,

Like so many aspects of British culture, higher education in the United Kingdom is at a crossroads. Upwards of 162 universities across the UK enrol more than 2.3 million students, delivering education and employability skills to the next generation of workers. The sector is a major contributor to the national identity with its ancient heritage of higher learning a perennial attraction to International students, who comprise more than 19 percent of the total population.<sup>1</sup>

Yet today's students live in a very different world to the one we experienced during our own university days. They're more likely to be studying in a "hybrid mode" that combines both on-campus and online experiences. The sector's efforts to widen participation in recent years means more students are from traditionally underrepresented groups, many are first-in-family to attend university, speak English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D), or have culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD). And both domestic and international students are more likely to start their courses with academic skill levels that put them at risk for attrition.

As a sector, we recognize that student expectations are also changing. There is a world of instant access to information, whether for communication, service delivery, or entertainment. There also are multiple demands on students' time, and striking a balance between life, work, and study seems to be increasingly challenging. Education needs to keep pace if we are to optimize the likelihood that our students will succeed in their courses, enjoy their learning, and enter the workforce as successful graduates and proud ambassadors of their alma maters.

The book you are holding (or reading on your screen) contains the results of a sophisticated survey into student attitudes and feelings toward study, their study patterns, and their expectations and experiences in their university courses. We hope the insights - both quantitative and qualitative - assist you and your university on your own journey to reimagine the student experience as we head toward 2020 and beyond.

We look forward to hearing your feedback and comments. To contact us, please email [marketing@studiosity.com](mailto:marketing@studiosity.com).

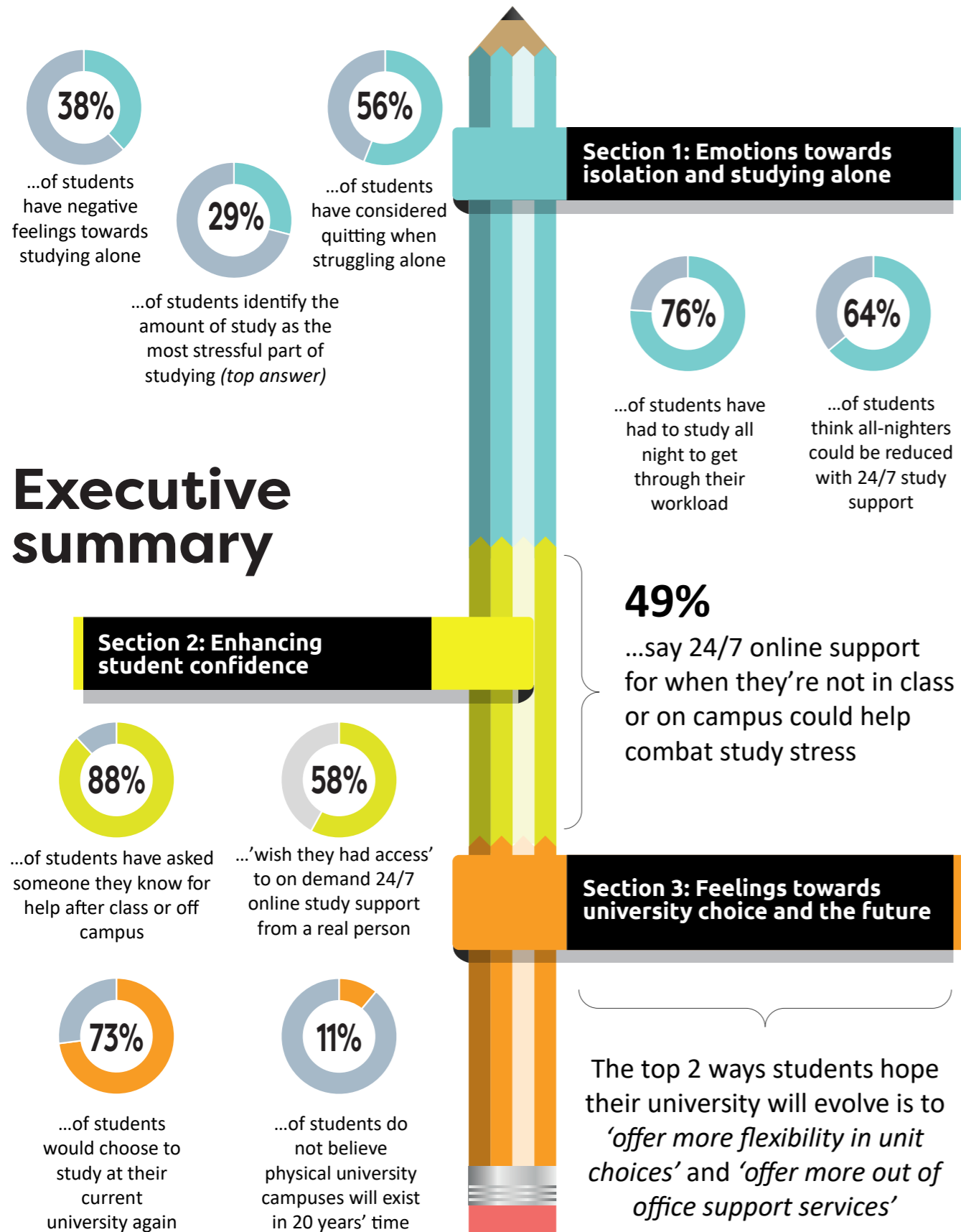
Best wishes,

Mr Jack Goodman  
Founder, Executive Chair

**Studiosity**

<sup>1</sup> Patterns and Trends in UK Higher Education, 2018. Universities UK.

# Executive summary



# Recommendations

## Section 1: Emotions towards isolation and studying alone

Whilst some students are comfortable with studying alone, and may prefer it, the majority of students find it demotivating and it can impact their mental health and wellbeing. For these students, universities need to employ tactics and measures to avoid students working in isolation. Things that universities could do include encouraging SUs to focus on and develop course societies, develop the role of course reps, create online communities or have anonymous Q&A sessions with lecturers.

Student support services should also be developed and utilised to help combat study stress, and to prevent feelings of isolation from students.

## Section 2: Enhancing student confidence

Universities should look to improve their support services to students, focusing on financial and wellbeing support in particular. It is worth noting that lecture and tutorial sizes are areas which cause stress for students – a situation Universities should address where needed. Universities can also encourage lecturers to reply to emails quicker, for example introducing a 48-hour mandatory reply window.

## Section 3: Feelings towards university choice and the future

Universities should look to adapt to students' wants and needs where possible, especially in terms of more flexibility in unit choices and more out of hours support services. The impact that studying at university has on students' mental health should continue to be a priority across the sector with a continued effort to make real, tangible steps taken to improve this.

# Methodology

## Background:

Studiosity commissioned independent market research agency Red Brick Research to gather insights around students' wants and needs in relation to study support. The survey helps us understand and demonstrate how Studiosity services may contribute to students' academic performance, support their wellbeing at university and enable them to fulfill their potential.

The survey ran from 19th December 2018 – 7th January 2019, and gained a total of **2,228** responses.

## Participants:

- The survey was completed by current students studying at a broad range of universities across the UK.
- Demographical data was collected on
  - Gender (Male/Female)
  - Student type (UG/PG/Other)
  - Nationality (UK/EU/International)

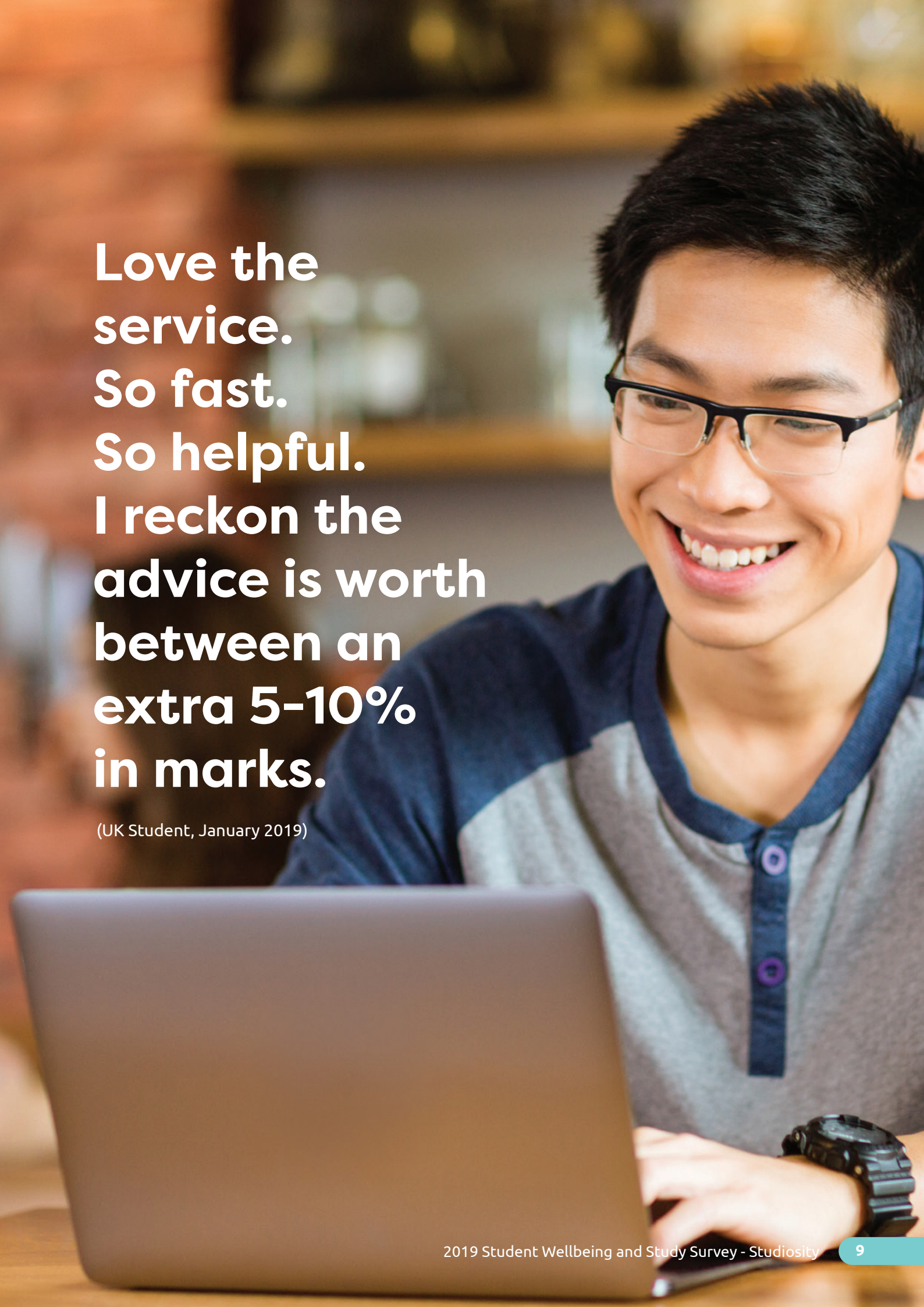
*Full breakdown available in accompanying tables*

## Objectives:

- To understand student experiences and struggles in relation to academic study, and demonstrate the need for Studiosity services as a means to support wellbeing and help students maximise their academic performance.

## Analysis

Most survey questions were quantitative, followed by optional, free-text commentary. The overall analysis of the survey results was focused on the quantitative responses. Even without a content analysis of the qualitative content, the students' free-text responses were used to provide additional narrative, offer a more comprehensive set of survey results, and potentially act as further information should quantitative data require clarification.

A young man with dark hair and glasses is smiling broadly while looking at a laptop screen. He is wearing a blue and grey polo shirt and a black watch on his left wrist. The background is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a library or study area.

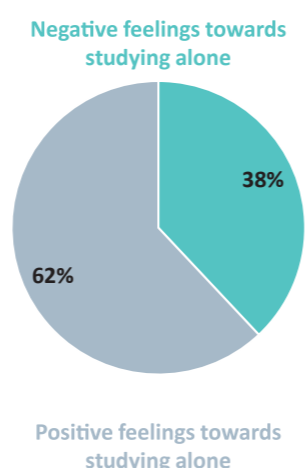
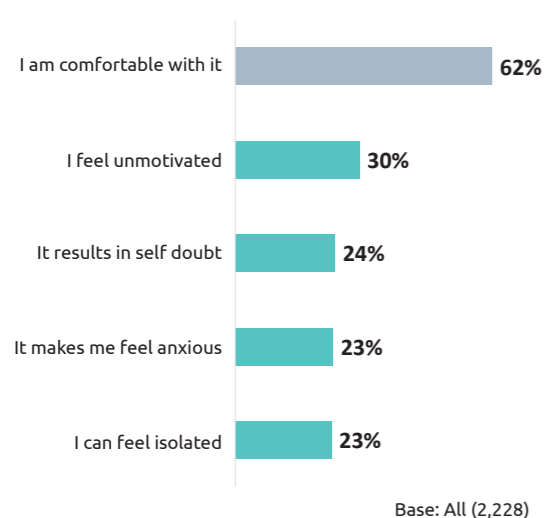
**Love the service.  
So fast.  
So helpful.  
I reckon the advice is worth between an extra 5-10% in marks.**

(UK Student, January 2019)

# 1. Feelings about studying alone

## Q1a. How does studying by yourself make you feel?

With increased hybrid and online learning in universities, students are now increasingly expected to spend hours by themselves tackling what is often new and difficult material. While 62% of students in the UK feel comfortable studying alone, a third suggest that long hours by themselves can lead to a lack of motivation. A quarter report that without peers and instructors around them, they feel increased self-doubt when it comes to their university courses. Many students sometimes feel overwhelmed, distracted, lonely, anxious or even bored without others around to guide or accompany them in their studies.



Females were more likely to feel self-doubt (27%) and isolated (26%) when studying alone compared to males, of whom 19% reported feelings of self-doubt and 18% feelings of isolation.



More undergraduates feel unmotivated (32%) studying alone compared to post-graduates (25%).



Amongst nationalities, 32% of UK students reported feeling unmotivated while 22% of EU nationals and 20% of international students revealed feelings of lack of motivation when studying by themselves.

Q1b. "Do you have any additional comments about how studying by yourself makes you feel?" Indicative responses for supporting narrative, further insight, or areas for further investigation.

Of the students who felt at ease studying alone, many suggested that they could more readily regulate distractions, go at their own pace, and focus on topics they wanted to. In some cases, studying alone helped them get more done providing the students had acquired the necessary self-discipline. That said, many of these same students indicated that it took time to reach a state where they felt comfortable studying alone. This suggests university life requires a period of adjustment to the long hours of independent work. Many suggested being alone resulted in less overall social activity. They wondered if they were doing things right. All this indicates that even students who feel comfortable studying alone might use extra support to ease anxiety or develop stronger independent study habits, especially in their first few years of university.

### SELF-DOUBT

*"Sometimes whilst studying by myself, I end up doubting as to whether I'm doing the right thing. It is also sometimes hard to structure how to work, particularly at the post-grad level when you are given more freedom."*

*"It can make feel vulnerable at times not having people around me to ask for help."*

*"The challenges vary. While on some days, you feel comfortable with working alone, elements of self-doubt and anxiety can creep in because of the fear that you may be misinterpreting a text or finding the literature difficult to follow. The pressure of doing well also creeps in."*

### MOTIVATION, DISTRACTION, ISOLATION

*"I don't feel as productive as I can be, and (I am) less motivated to continue when I struggle."*

*"I get distracted easily working from home by myself. I like working in a community studio space surrounded by other people whom I can chat to whilst working."*

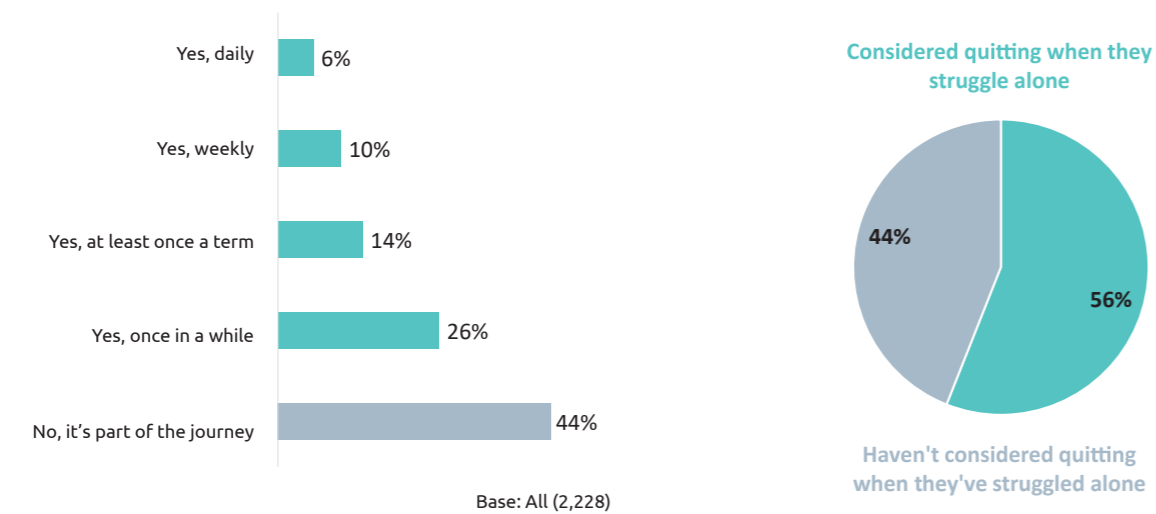
*"It can be hard to know if I am fulfilling the assignment requirements or doing completely the wrong thing, especially as some assignments are very vague, and I have no one to compare my approach to."*

*"It can become quite lonely as doing essays all the time means that I can't do as much socialising as I would like. I would like to have more work set that involved working as a group so that I could build better relationships with others on my course."*

## 2. The struggle of studying alone and thoughts of quitting

Q2a. Have you ever found that struggling with study when you're alone (after class or when you leave campus) has made you think about quitting your course?

Remarkably, over half of the students surveyed (56%) thought about quitting their course when they were left to their own devices. The struggle of working independently clearly affects attrition rates in the UK. Although it's inevitable that not every university student will stick to their original program of study, if there are ways that additional support can keep more students in their courses, it's an area to invest in.



The struggle of independent study led more female students (15%) to consider quitting their courses weekly over male students (11%).



Of those surveyed, nearly half of post-graduate students (49%) considered studying alone to be part of the journey. That percentage significantly dropped with first degree students. Only 42% expected independent study to be part of their undergraduate experience.



A greater number of students from the UK reported that their struggles independent study led them consider quitting their courses. Nearly a third (28%) of UK nationals found themselves contemplating leaving a course due to the struggles of studying by themselves compared to a fifth (19%) of international students.

A slight majority of EU and international students (54%) felt that independent work was part of the experience of studying at the university. In comparison, the majority of UK students weren't as comfortable with that expectation. Only 42% took studying alone as a necessary process of university life.



Q2b. "Is there anything else you would like to say about struggling with study when you're alone?" Indicative responses for supporting narrative, further insight, or areas for further investigation.

While many students reported soldiering on with independent work as a necessary experience of university life, a large number or respondents found that the isolation negatively affected not only their mental health but their motivation to stay enrolled in their courses. Students reported feeling not being supported enough by tutors and peers, and self-doubt inevitably followed. For many, the social aspect of learning was lost in the expectation that they work alone.



### LACK OF SUPPORT

*"Sometimes I feel lost because I lack support from friends and tutors at university, and I regularly feel like I need to come home to get sufficient support."*

*"Wanting to leave university is a constant thought. I don't think there is as much support as there could be."*

*"There's no one to ask if you're confused."*

### LACK OF MOTIVATION

*"I feel less motivated if I struggle. I don't complete reading tasks. It makes it much harder and less enjoyable, but I understand it's part of the experience."*

*"Having a social aspect and being with people helps me motivate myself. On my own, it gets monotonous with one question after another."*

### STRUGGLING AND QUITTING

*"In my second year, I almost quit. But I stayed, and in my final year, I now go to the library with friends, which motivates me to enjoy studying more."*

*"It's easy to think that you're the only one who is feeling this way, which is isolating and leads to issues of self-blame."*

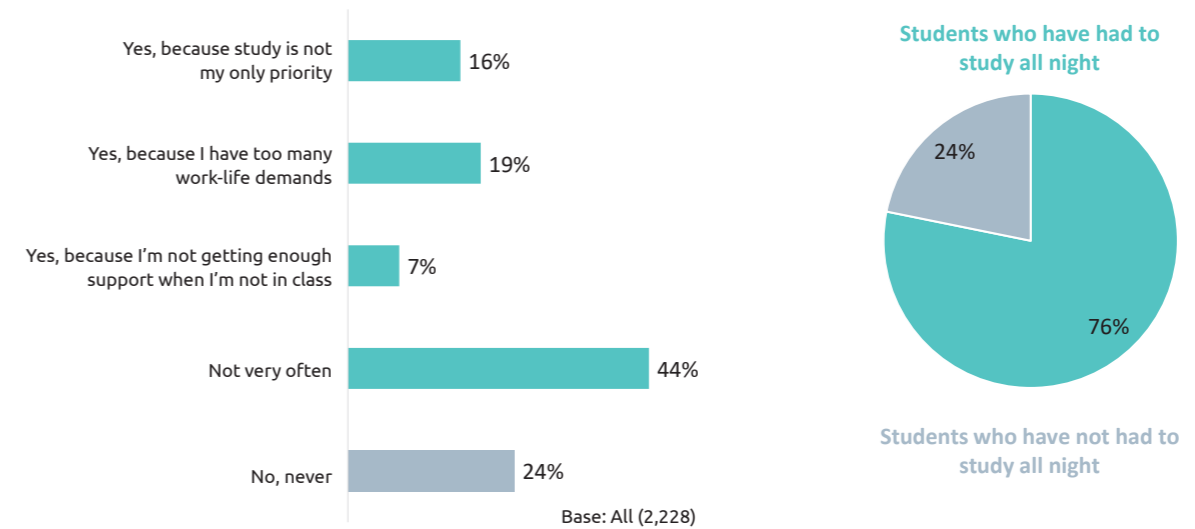
*"Self-doubt can often lead to a struggle to be motivated, which subsequently leads to high stress when deadlines approach. This often puts a strain on my mental health and makes me question my life choices, such as taking the course."*

## 3. All night study and workload

Q2a. Have you ever had to study all night to get through your workload?

Q4a. Do you think all-nighters could be reduced with 24/7 study support available when you finish your class or leave campus?

A predominance of students (76%) found that they had to pull all-nighters at some stage of their journey, which suggests that students could use extra support both to manage their time and to get them through a heavy workload. Tutors and peers are usually not available in the middle of the night, and 24/7 support might bridge the gap in available support networks. A majority of respondents (64%) felt that 24/7 support when they left campus would help in reducing all-nighters.







Males appear to pull more all-nighters over females, with 79% of male respondents reporting they stayed up all night to finish an assignment in crunch periods compared to 74% of female respondents. International students ranked highest overall in pulling all-nighters, with 83% reporting at some point staying up all night to study. Compared to 75% of UK students, it's clear that international students might use some extra support.



A significant majority of UK students (66%) thought that 24/7 support, such as that provided by Studiosity, would reduce the number of all-nighters.



Nearly a quarter (24%) of international students surveyed reported that work-life demands led them stay up all night in busy study periods while that figure dropped a few percentiles with home (19%) and EU nationals (18%).

The figures of those who reported not getting enough support in class were largest amongst international students (13%), which suggests that while international students are used to independent study, many of them end up staying up all night because of lack of support.

Q4b. "Is there anything else you would like to say about all-nighters?" Indicative responses for supporting narrative, further insight, or areas for further investigation.

Numerous students recognised that poor time management skills meant that they would often wait to the last minute to complete assignments. A handful of respondents found themselves juggling busy social lives and part-time jobs. With all the different activities happening on campus, many students found they pulled all-nighters as an unavoidable consequence of university life. However, time management skills can be learnt, and with the right support network, what many students consider a "bad habit" can be overcome with the right personal guidance. Several students wished that practical lessons in managing time were taught on campus. Those same students suggest that fewer all-nighters would happen if the right lessons were in place to counteract them. Lecturers, however, are rarely, if ever, available on demand. There clearly is a need for more concentrated support for individual learners, not only with last minute help, but with practical guidance on how to juggle a busy study schedule and campus life.



#### TIME MANAGEMENT

*"Students will always do all-nighters because they are not great at time management."*

*"The only time I ever do all-nighters is when I have left deadlines to the last minute, so I need to work through the night to complete them."*

*"Normally, it's because students leave things to the last minute."*

#### LOGISTICS

*"It's difficult to not do them. So much is happening at university with societies and events. In trying to balance work and social life, I always find myself confused with all my work at the last minute, and I try to do it all on my own."*

*"All-nighters are never preferable, but sometimes they feel necessary because of multiple deadlines at one given time and other non-study related commitments and pressures that take up study time."*

#### SUPPORT

*"I think it would be helpful if time management or organization skills are taught to help with these issues."*

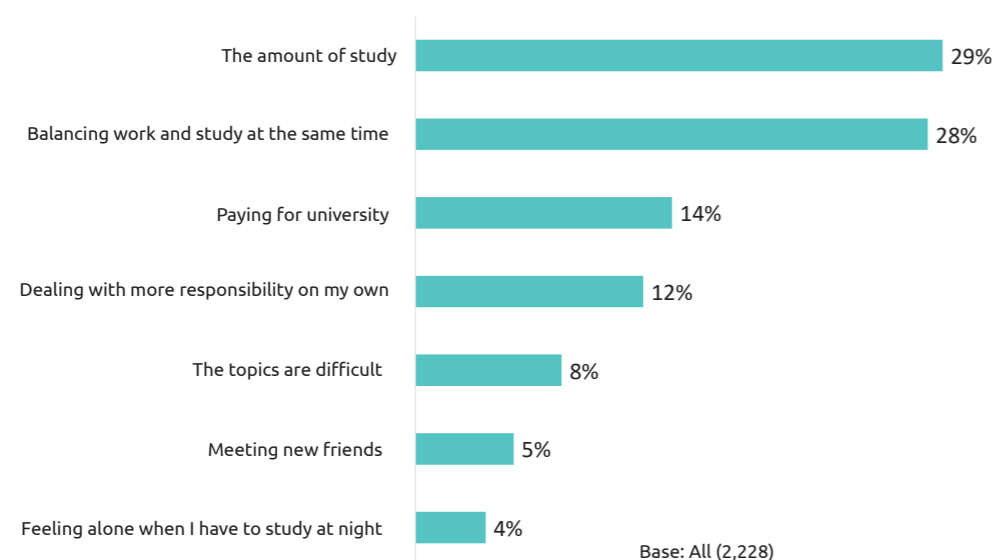
*"Sometimes, it's the frustration of not having support that causes you to procrastinate. Then you struggle with catching up and end up pulling off an all-nighter."*

*"If support is available, it will help many students progress with their assignments and achieve better results."*

# 4. The causes of study-related stress

## Q5a. What do you find is the most stressful part of studying?

In a recent 2018 volume of the *Journal of Mental Health*, Richard Bentall et. al. concluded that loneliness was the strongest overall predictor of mental distress in university students while assessment stress in university was the most important academic predictor. Over a quarter of the respondents of our survey (28%) reported that they found balancing work and study at the same time the most difficult aspect of university life. However, their additional comments suggest that their mental health was affected significantly by financial pressures and feeling overwhelmed with too much to do. Many of them did not feel supported enough, both on campus and at home. Greater responsibilities at university also proved a factor with 12% of students reporting that dealing with greater responsibility was the most stressful part of studying.



Nearly a third (30%) of male respondents reported that balancing work and study caused them stress compared to a quarter (25%) of female respondents.



When it comes to the stress of paying for university, 16% of female respondents compared to just 12% of male respondents found this the most taxing part of studying.



A good proportion of EU and international students similarly found paying university fees stressful with 13% of home students, 16% of EU students, and 17% of international students citing financial worries as the most stressful aspect of their time at the university.

A relatively large percentage of international students (17%) found the topics difficult and cited this as the most stressful aspect of university life.

## Q5b. What do you find is the most stressful part of studying? Indicative responses for supporting narrative, further insights, or areas for further investigation.

In these responses, a surprising number of students reported that they struggled with managing their time between household and academic responsibilities. Many of them cited financial woes, whether those included dealing with sparse student loans or regulating the schedules and budgets of a part or full-time job in order to fund their studies. A few cited chronic illnesses and referred to the stress of a lack of accommodation at their universities for days missed. Workload anxieties often led to increased stress in other areas of students' lives, and a few used the word "snowball" to describe the effect of accumulative stress coming from different areas of their lives.

### LACK OF SUPPORT

*"Students don't get enough financial support and advice when at university."*

*"I find it stressful that the tutor is unavailable to answer all of the questions."*

*"When you're behind everyone else on your course, studying alone can make you feel defeated."*

*"I've rang the Samaritans weekly for about two months because studying at night makes me feel so lonely and cut off from the world."*

### ACCUMULATIVE STRESS

*"The stress can snowball. If I don't do work straight away, the stress of oncoming work adds to it."*

*"I think the amount of work given by lecturers can become stressful because they often set too much, especially when deadlines are coming up. I find that I have to stop doing the classwork and readings in order to prevent doing all-nighters."*

### WORK-STUDY BALANCE

*"The expected workload is too much with everything else from commuting to making dinner as well as other responsibilities."*

*"I work quite a lot, especially around Christmas and Easter. They are evening and night shifts, so balancing the two is very difficult. I also find the reading sometimes is impossible to understand, yet I don't feel I can speak to lecturers about it."*

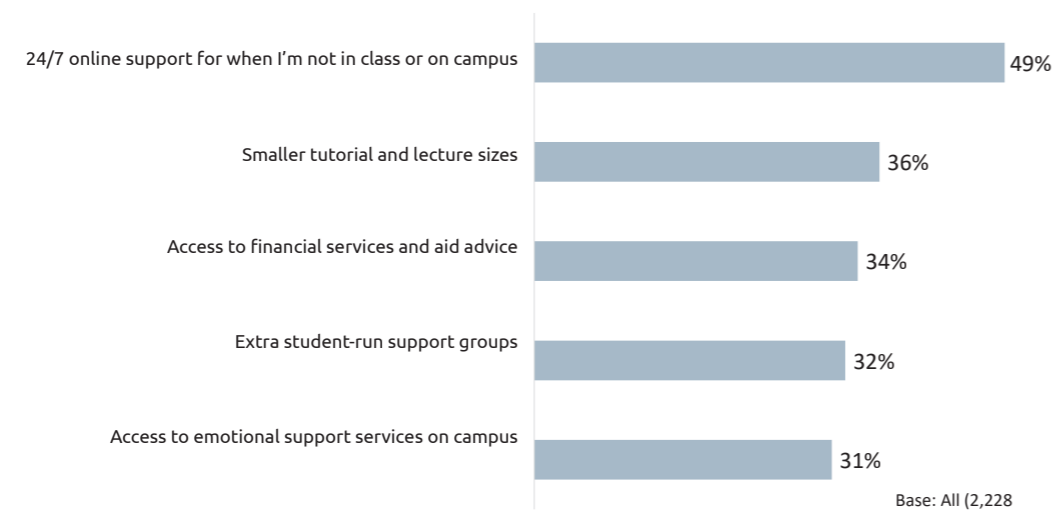
*"More so dealing with absence. I have a chronic illness, and some lecturers are not sympathetic about me catching up."*

*"It's hard to balance social life, sporting activities, personal time and university work. We are expected to do extra-curricular things, yet we are not given any time to complete them."*

# 5. Preventing stress when studying

## Q6a. What could help combat these issues?

After raising the issue of stress when studying, students were asked what they thought could help combat it. Nearly half of the respondents suggested that having 24/7 online support when they were not in class or on campus could help to prevent stress. Among those who vouched for 24/7 support, over half of female respondents (53%), undergraduate students (51%) and UK students (51%) considered access to support at all times a viable way to combat the inevitable demands and stressors of university life.



While providing access to emotional support services on campus ranked lowest on the list of options overall, 37% of female respondents considered this a viable source of prevention compared to only 21% of male respondents. Similarly, more females (34%) considered extra student-run support groups would be beneficial in preventing stress than males (29%) did.



Copy to follow...copy to follow...copy to follow...copy to follow?



A large number of EU students—38%—considered greater access to financial services and aid advice would combat stress when studying compared to only 32% of UK students surveyed.

Q6b. "What could help combat these issues?" Indicative responses for supporting narrative, further insights, or areas for further investigation.

Students' responses suggest they have different needs when it comes to 24/7 support lines or extra student-run support groups. Many found that the classes and lectures themselves were not guiding them enough to begin with, and they thought a 24/7 support service might lend a hand where support from lecturers ended. Some of them found that they needed extra help with the readings or essays or simply another person to talk to in order to sort out complex material. Still others discovered that the support needed wasn't academic in nature but emotional, mental or psychiatric. Students put forward the need for ways to assuage the loneliness cited in other parts of this study. One respondent suggested bringing animals on campus to combat stress. Others wanted people to talk to or more professional mental health support freely available. Financial aid was also considered a large source of stress, and several respondents felt more needed to be done by the universities to support them financially.

### ACADEMIC SUPPORT

*"I know university isn't about having your hand held through your education, but in my first year of university, we were given module handbooks and now in my third year, I miss them."*

*"Being able to discuss readings with lecturers could help a lot. I often struggle to understand so talking it out with someone is easier."*

*"Lecturers should have extra classes and always answer emails."*

### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

*"Psychiatric evaluation, a treatment plan, supported private counselling."*

*"Dogs and cats from rescue services should come to campus, which would help their social adaptiveness and reduce student stress levels."*

*"Knowing where I could go to talk to someone other than my personal tutor."*

### FINANCIAL SERVICES

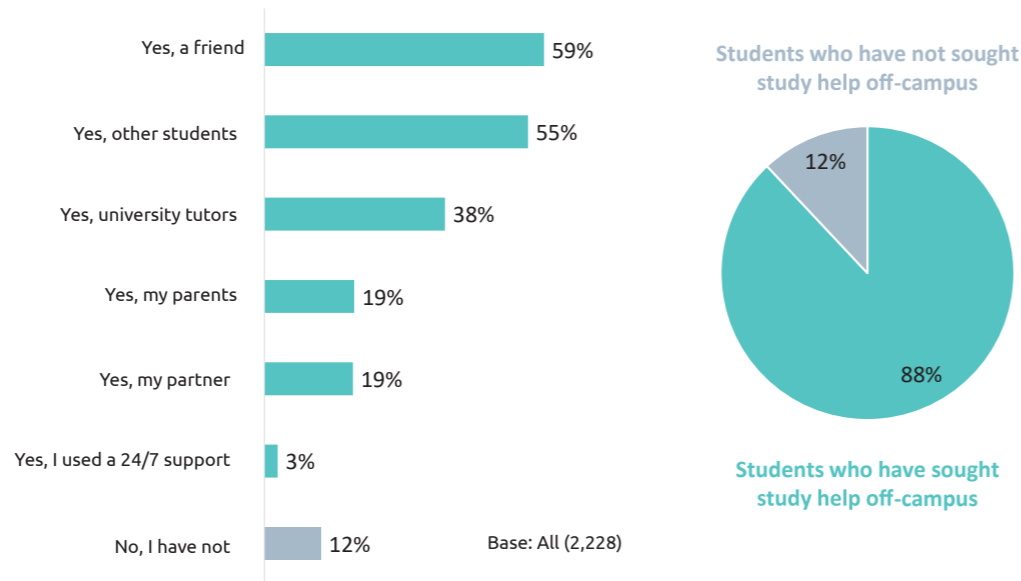
*"My university does not accept adverse financial situations for mitigating circumstances."*

*"Clear and available financial support for everyone."*

# 6. Support from personal networks

Q7a. Have you ever needed study help after class or off campus, and asked someone you know for help?

An overwhelming majority of the students surveyed have sought help after class or off campus. The figure – 88% – suggests that support outside of the regulatory class and study hours is indeed in demand. Kathina Ali, Louise Farrer, Amelia Gulliver and Kathleen M Griffiths suggest in their 2015 study “Online Peer-to-Peer Support for Young People with Mental Health Problems” that the need for support for young people is not always met. “Peer-to-peer support,” they write, “enables young people to connect with others, share experiences, seek and provide information, advice and emotional support, and is often delivered as a part of complex multi-component online interventions.” Results from our survey suggest students seeking support after class primarily turn to their peers, whether a friend or other students. University tutors ranked not far behind with partners and 24/7 support service following.



Female were more likely to seek support from other students (61%), partners (21%) and parents (21%). Comparatively, only 47% of male students sought support from their academic peers, with 19% and 12 % of male respondents seeking support from parents and partners.



Undergraduates sought a great deal more support than post-graduate students. 60% of undergraduates turned to friends and 57% sought support from other students.



A relatively high percentile of international students – 28% – sought help from their parents, compared to only 19% of UK students and 16% of EU students surveyed.



Q7b. Do you have any additional comments, or anyone else you might have asked for help? Indicative responses for supporting narrative, further insight, or areas of further investigation.

In the survey conducted, a number of students reported that they felt apprehensive about approaching their lecturers for help, whether after a lecture, in office hours, or online via email. Many of them expressed the need for a more extensive support network and resorted regularly to friends, fellow students, and family members to give them help or advice with their studies and concerns. Others felt unsure of who to ask. One stated: “I don’t know anyone who could help me.” Another reported: “People never have time for me.” Many felt internal barriers that prevented them from asking for support in the first place, whether out of uncertainty or insecurity. One student reported feeling “too nervous and worried” to ask anyone for support. Others feared their grades might be affected if they turned to lecturers for additional help. Still others didn’t want to be a burden to their peers, who themselves had heavy workloads. As a result, students reported that they had regularly hidden how much they really needed the extra support.

Even when students felt comfortable turning to peers and professionals for support, a few cited that time constraints didn’t always make it possible. Staff hold limited office hours, and many lecturers or learning support staff need to be booked well in advance. The reality is few of those who can professionally support students in their academic queries have the time outside of a busy schedule when its most needed.

A relatively low number of students had turned to a 24/7 service for support, but few had heard of any 24/7 service available. One student suggested that a round-the-clock support site “could be useful,” especially when s/he is off-campus. Students who hired additional professional tutoring reported that it made a positive difference in their coursework.

## ASKING FOR HELP

*"It really helps to live with course mates. You can discuss different work problems and work together on projects. Having this doesn't make me as stressed as I have been in the past."*

*"Asking people to view or review written work helps. It helps if they can provide context or a to practice a topic that helps me understand the material more."*

## BARRIERS

*"I find it hard to go to people for help because I feel like I am bothering them."*

*"I rely on my parents for help a lot, but they aren't in the same field and can only help so much."*

*"You don't really want to ask students because they have a workload of their own. Often it can be hard trying to contact or arrange a meeting with university lecturers or additional learning support (ALS) who you need to book to see months in advance!"*

## ALTERNATIVES

*"Some lecturers are very available, which is great. But if there were a 24/7 service, that would be even better."*

*"I would love someone to be present purely for the pastoral side of academic study, and balancing work, study, and a social life as well as transitions to university."*

*"In second year, I hired a tutor for extra support because I really didn't understand the topic, and my lecturer was unapproachable ... After getting a tutor, I realised that the module actually wasn't that difficult."*

Q7b. How has asking for study assistance from someone you know affected your personal relationship with that person?

Most respondents reported that asking for additional support either had no impact on the relationship (49%) or positively affected the relationship (43%). Only a very small percentage reported that asking for help caused any tension (7%). That said, the qualitative results reveal that many students struggle with insecurities around negatively affecting a personal relationship before and after help is sought. Some worried they might bother their peers, friends or family members. Others cited tension because of the stress that accumulates when two students supporting each other are under the same academic pressures.

## RELATIONSHIPS

*"Sometimes I hold back in asking 'stupid questions' because I am nervous how it will affect the relationship."*

*"I can feel too nervous to ask for help from friends in particular. I worry it may cause tension, and they won't have time because they are focusing on their own work."*

## NEGATIVE EFFECTS

*"Spending too much time with people can take a toll on your friendship with other people."*

*"I think if I didn't reciprocate that help then it would cause tension."*

*"I have had to give people study assistance before, and this has resulted in causing me more stress."*

## BURDENING OTHERS

*"It is always awkward asking for help. Even if people are willing to help, you feel like a burden."*

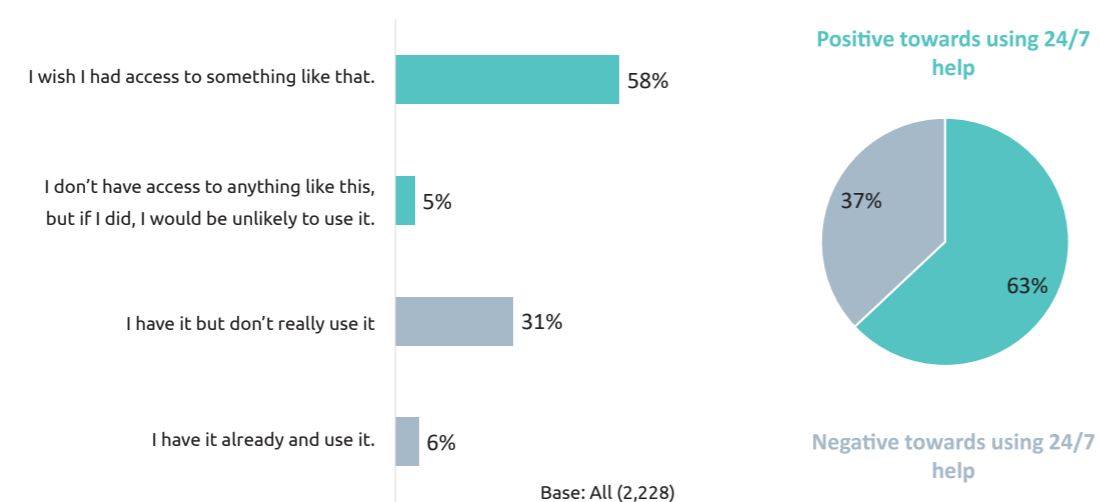
*"I am sometimes worried that people I ask get annoyed that I don't know the information, and I am bothering them."*

*"My friends usually have loads of work of their own, so it feels stupid constantly asking them for help with mine."*

# 7. Feelings towards 24/7 study help

Q9a. How would you feel about on demand 24-7 online study support from a real person?

The responses to the survey on 24/7 help were overwhelmingly positive with well over half of respondents reporting that they wish they had something always at their disposal for support. While female students expressed a greater desire for a round-the-clock support service for their studies, the interest in 24/7 support ran across the board with both undergraduate and post-graduate students as well as UK, EU and international students mostly responding positively to the idea.



The majority of female respondents (64%) expressed that they wished they had access to a 24/7 student support service while a slightly lower percentage (50%) of males communicated the same wish.



Undergraduates in the survey reported that they were more likely to use a 24/7 service compared to post-graduate students with 71% of undergraduates suggesting they would likely use it and 65% of post-graduates.

**“Speedy service and feedback was easy to understand. It’s really helpful to get an independent view as when reading your own work, it’s easy to miss things. Thanks.”**

(UK Student, December 2018)

Q9b. Do you have any additional comments about an on demand 24-7 online study support?

## REDUCING STRESS

*“It would be helpful to have access to this when you feel lost or are struggling at night.”*

*“This would be a huge step forward for students if they were to miss classes due to unforeseen circumstances.”*

*“I feel it would help reduce stress for students.”*

## AVAILABILITY

*“This would be useful to all students because they would be able to have access to online support whenever they need it, and it would also alleviate some of the stress students are going through. This should be a main feature in all universities as students will always need support with their studies and work”*

*“I think this would be very beneficial as my tutors and lecturers have a large workload with many students so don't have a lot of time to help.”*

*“It would be really helpful especially during the holidays when deadlines occur during the first week of returning.”*

*“I would be interested in this. There are some questions even google can't answer! And sometimes talking something through or even vocalising your thoughts to a real person helps.”*

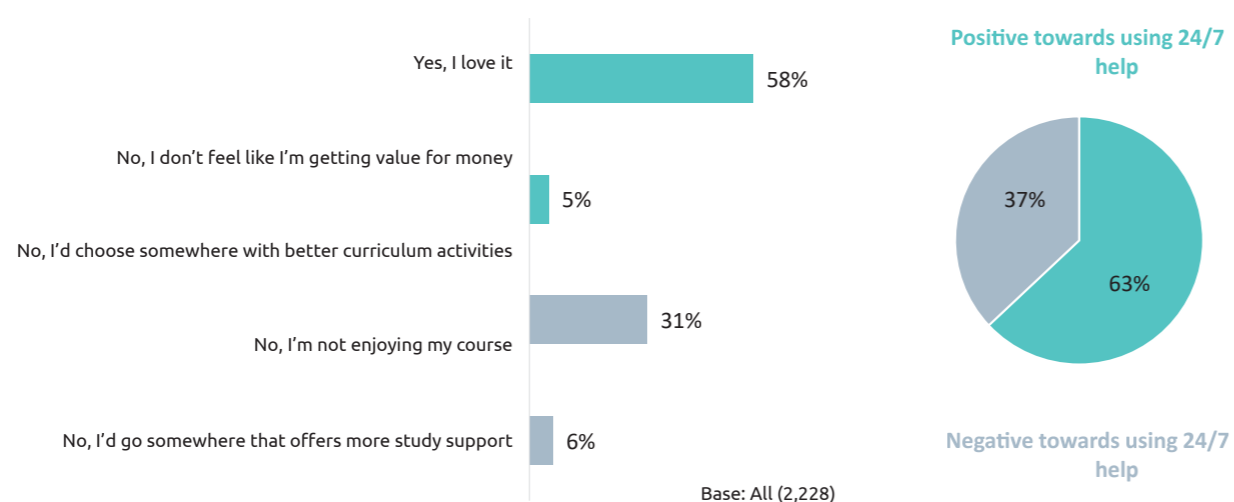
## ANONYMITY AND PRIVACY

*“It would be incredibly useful for someone who didn't know you to be able to proof read essays and reports. It would be amazing if they could even tell you if you were doing enough work to meet the grade criteria too.”*

# 8. University Choice

Q10a. If you could choose the university you go to again, would you choose the same one?

Nearly three quarters of the total respondents in our survey disclosed very positive feelings about their university, with 72% of students across the board stating that they loved their choice and would choose the same university if given the opportunity. Post-graduates were most enthusiastic about their current choice, with 77% expressing complete satisfaction with their programs.



Post-graduate respondents in the survey reported more positive feelings about their choice of university, with 77% stating they loved it compared to 71% of undergraduates reporting the same attitude.

More undergraduates communicated dissatisfaction with the value for money at their universities, with 14% responding that they didn't feel like they were getting value for money compared to only 10% of post-graduate students.



When it came to disappointments around curriculum activities, 14% of EU students stated that they would, if they had the chance, choose a university with better options; whereas, only 8% of UK students felt similarly.

Q10b. "Do you have any additional comments about whether or not you'd choose the same university again?" Indicative responses for supporting narrative, further insight, or areas of further investigation.

While the majority of students reported that they loved their university and wouldn't change if they had the opportunity, when asked if they had any additional comments, a fair number of respondents reported misgivings about the costs of their programs and the lack of support outside of lectures.

## SUPPORT

*"I feel like my university can do better in terms of financial and study support for students like me."*

*"There is already a lot of support, but I wish tutors were more approachable."*

*"I really like it here, but I also feel very lost. The courses are moving too fast, and now I have all these exams, and I am clueless."*

*"Such a lovely close-knit university. My department is small and easy to feel a part of."*

*"I would prefer another university, but I would also choose this university as they are supportive in my particular program."*

*"I think every university could provide extra support, especially due to the amount of money we are paying for degrees. It is hard to stay motivated at university when the lecture doesn't offer a lot of help, and you are paying so much to attend these lectures."*

## EXPENSES

*"It is extremely expensive, and finances worry me."*

*"I do feel like I might be paying too much for the amount of contact time with lecturers."*

*"I love my university, but I question how much I am getting for my money when it comes to my course."*

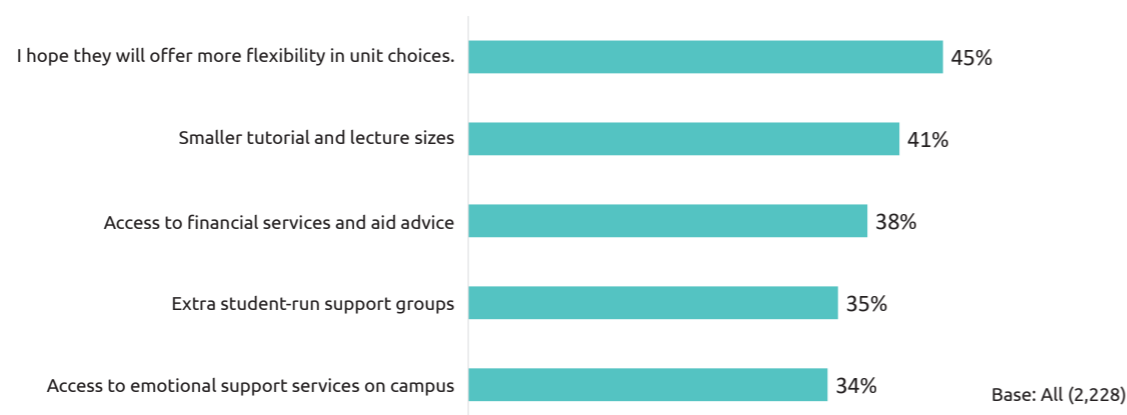
*"I think that the accommodation is not good enough for the amount charged, and I am not enjoying my course. If I had the chance, I would pick a different university."*

# 9. The Future of University Campuses

Q11a. How do you hope your university will evolve in the next 5-10 years?

Q12a. Do you think physical university campuses will exist in 20 years' time?

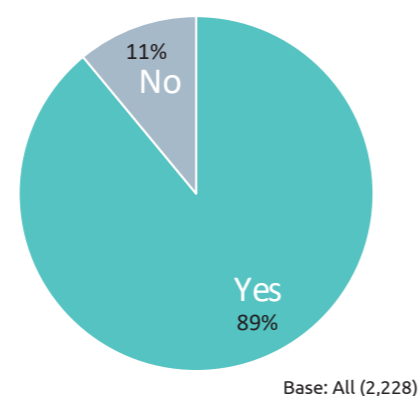
Only 11% of total respondents in our survey foresaw the physical university campus no longer existing two decades from now. When asked about their hopes for that evolving campus, nearly half wanted more flexibility in their choices and 41% wanted to see more support out of the normal office hours on campus. A large number of students surveyed hoped that the ease of studying online would increase, with a third of respondents looking forward to the possibility of attending online lectures and using more digital technology in tutorials and lectures.



Q12b. "Do you have any additional comments about how you hope your university will evolve?"

Indicative responses for supporting narrative, further insight, or areas of further investigation.

Students surveyed had diverse reactions to this question, with several of them citing the hope for a greater availability of mental health services and better distribution of funds toward student support overall. Many students wanted more flexibility, whether it was a greater range of choices in their courses or access to the ways they are delivered. Responses varied when it came to the idea of publishing more university lectures online. Many felt that the in-person contact with fellow students and lecturers on a campus was vital to university life. But even amongst those who stressed the importance of physical presence, many expressed a desire for making some content available online, especially for those who juggled busy lives with families and part or full-time work alongside their studies.



## SUPPORT

*"I really hope more money goes into their support system as its over-booked, over-worked and because of that, people are falling through the cracks. It's sad to see happen."*

*"Give people from more disadvantaged backgrounds more knowledge about the university and that anything is possible. No matter what financial background anyone comes from."*

*"I hope they do more for student mental health services. They have put such a public emphasis on supporting students' mental health; however, at ground level within the university, it seems to be very difficult...It seems especially in the case of young men being taken seriously that mental health services on campus prove challenging."*

## FLEXIBILITY

*"I hope they will record more lectures, so if you have a disability or struggle with something in class you can watch it and catch up."*

*"It would be helpful to students if they were able to participate in online lectures/seminars and still have that marked towards attendance. Students like me who have mental health issues often suffer from poor attendance, which causes more stress. Online resources would help with that issue."*

*"Moodle is an amazing app, but it's not being used well and consistently by all staff. If it was, that would be a great improvement."*

*"I'd like more flexibility in module choices if possible, but the course is mainly good. I think I am coming from a position where I may not need additional services, but it would be fantastic to see additional support and online access for those who need it and create a make university a more accessible place for all."*

## PHYSICAL PRESENCE

*"I think development of online lectures and choices would be great for those with less typical university lives such as parents and would hopefully encourage more such individuals to come to university. Saying that, I think it's also important to have the physical interaction of lectures as it helps students and lectures build a rapport and friendships which I think are vital for effective learning and the development of wider skills."*

*"I don't think online study should replace lectures. I feel like there is enough online resources available at the moment; however, more lecturers could upload their lectures online."*

*Most of these emphasised growing options of not having to visit campus, I have found that the more I have known my tutors and lecturers personally through attending lectures in person, the better I tend to do and the more I tend to understand the lectures and assessments. Therefore, I think it is important that we do not lose this in the future just so we can have more online lectures etc."*



Q13b. Do you have any further comments about the future of physical university campuses?  
Indicative responses for supporting narrative, further insight, or areas of further investigation.

An overwhelming majority of respondents felt that while digital resources, online support and greater access to material, especially on sick days, would improve student outcomes, nothing beats a physical campus. Students responded that a physical campus provides an in-person social network, learning in person is more effective and physical interaction with other people improves confidence, trust in others, and overall well-being

#### SOCIAL NETWORKING

*"Having a physical presence helps students be more involved in student life and leave their homes to socialise. It also helps studying because it causes you to be more focussed."*

*"It's very important for students meet face to face with the lecturers and other people to encourage people in terms of confidence and meeting new people."*

*"I think they are essential as it enables you to be part of something wider, more sustainable than studying alone. Also, friendship groups, wider discussions and participation counts for an awful lot."*

#### EFFECT ON LEARNING

*"I think, although online services are good, there's nothing like seeing someone face-to-face and the good communication and trust building that comes with meeting a person cannot be matched."*

*"University would be awful without a physical campus. Online learning is not as effective and can only supplement a lecture or face to face conversation."*

*"I don't think universities would be able to provide the experiences they do without physical campuses."*

*"I think it would be a great shame if they didn't exist. Learning should be interactive and option of real time discussion about one's studies is highly important and beneficial to their area of expertise."*

## Conclusion

It is clear from our study that everyone from undergraduates to postgraduates and UK to international students benefit from a little extra support. Whether it's with their research and writing or their emotional wellbeing, few if any of our student respondents valued a completely independent and solitary experience of learning and development. Many respondents accept that university life comes with increased responsibility and independence, but as John Donne writes in his 1964 Devotions: "no man is an island, entire of itself." Even mature students with work obligations and families to support may require guidance outside of lectures, in-person tutorials and study groups. Few universities offer support in the middle of the night, and it is often at the eleventh hour that students need the most guidance, despite their developing independence or established maturity. Several students also admitted to hiding their need for support out of a sense of shame.

Several respondents spoke of various kinds of stress during university, whether financial, social or from a sense of feeling overwhelmed with work and study responsibilities. Further studies could be conducted in this area to dig deeper into the precise causes and possible solutions to relieving university students from unnecessary stress during their studies.

Students value the physical presence of the university campus, and few of our respondents foresaw it disappearing altogether. That said, with increased access to resources online and with educational technology developing all the time, further research based on this study might investigate how online access to cherished, study materials, and tutorials might work in tandem with the university's physical campus and lecture halls. We can begin to develop research into ways that technology helps to decrease stress and isolation as well as benefits student outcomes and wellbeing.

Ultimately, we want students to enjoy their years at university; to value that time as a period of learning, enrichment, and friendships. We want our students to feel successful and supported rather than anxious and isolated during their university years. University should come with positive memories and lessons that will carry students through adulthood and into the world of work. Anything that can support them in this is highly worthy of investigation.

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#### Works Cited

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- Bentall, R.P., Corcoran, R., McIntyre, and J. C., Woods, P.H. "Academic and Non-Academic Predictors of Student Psychological Distress: The Role of Social Identity and Loneliness." *Journal of Mental Health*, 27(3), 2018, 1-10.

# Survey Questions

Confidence level = 95%

## Q1) How does studying by yourself make you feel?

	Total	Gender		Student type			Nationality		
	Total	Male	Female	UG	PG	Other	UK	EU	International
Sample Size	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
Valid Cases	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
<b>I am comfortable with it</b>									
% Valid Cases	62%	<b>67%</b>	<b>58%</b>	61%	63%	65%	61%	64%	67%
<b>I feel unmotivated</b>									
% Valid Cases	30%	<b>26%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>25%</b>	30%	<b>32%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>It results in self doubt</b>									
% Valid Cases	24%	<b>19%</b>	<b>27%</b>	24%	23%	22%	25%	20%	20%
<b>It makes me feel anxious</b>									
% Valid Cases	23%	<b>19%</b>	<b>26%</b>	22%	26%	23%	23%	23%	26%
<b>I can feel isolated</b>									
% Valid Cases	23%	<b>18%</b>	<b>26%</b>	23%	24%	18%	<b>24%</b>	18%	19%

“I prefer to study on my own as I get more done!”

“I prefer it as I can go at the pace I prefer and focus on the topics I need to focus on the most”

“Sometimes I feel distracted and that I just switch off when I’ve had enough. It would probably help to have someone else to motivate me at this point to keep me going!”

## Q2) Have you ever found that struggling with study when you’re alone (after class or when you leave campus) has made you think about quitting your course?

	Total	Gender		Student type			Nationality		
	Total	Male	Female	UG	PG	Other	UK	EU	International
Sample Size	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
<b>Yes, daily</b>									
Column %	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	8%	6%	4%	
<b>Yes, weekly</b>									
Column %	10%	10%	11%	11%	8%	16%	11%	10%	
<b>Yes, at least once a term</b>									
Column %	14%	<b>11%</b>	<b>15%</b>	14%	13%	10%	14%	10%	
<b>Yes, once in a while</b>									
Column %	26%	27%	26%	27%	24%	19%	<b>28%</b>	22%	
<b>No, its part of the study journey</b>									
Column %	44%	46%	43%	<b>42%</b>	<b>49%</b>	47%	<b>42%</b>	<b>54%</b>	

“Sometimes I feel lost because I lack support from friends at uni and tutors and regularly feel like I need to come home to get sufficient support”

“It helps a lot to get help from others, otherwise I will feel isolated”

“I think this is time when you can begin to overthink things especially when you’re by yourself”

### Q3) Have you ever had to study all night to get through your workload?

	Total	Gender		Student type			Nationality		
		Total	Male	Female	UG	PG	Other	UK	EU
Sample Size	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
Valid Cases	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
<b>Yes, because study is not my only priority</b>									
% Valid Cases	16%	18%	16%	17%	14%	22%	17%	13%	15%
<b>Yes, because I have too many work-life demands</b>									
% Valid Cases	19%	19%	20%	19%	19%	24%	19%	18%	24%
<b>Yes, because I'm not getting enough support when I'm not in class</b>									
% Valid Cases	7%	7%	8%	8%	7%	8%	7%	7%	13%
<b>Not very often</b>									
% Valid Cases	44%	45%	43%	44%	42%	41%	44%	46%	43%
<b>No, never</b>									
% Valid Cases	24%	21%	26%	24%	27%	19%	25%	24%	17%

### Q4) Do you think all-nighters could be reduced with 24/7 study support available when you finish your class or leave campus?

	Total	Gender		Student type			Nationality		
		Total	Male	Female	UG	PG	Other	UK	EU
Sample Size	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
<b>Yes</b>									
Column %	64%	63%	65%	66%	61%	57%	63%	67%	66%
<b>No</b>									
Column %	36%	37%	35%	34%	39%	43%	37%	33%	34%

“They’re draining but necessary for design students”

“They are not useful as you ruin the next day, much better to go to bed early and wake up early in the morning”

“Sometimes it’s just got to be done regardless of how much you’ve been working on a project. That’s what the Games industry is about.”

### Q5) What do you find is the most stressful part of studying?

	Total	Gender		Student type			Nationality		
		Total	Male	Female	UG	PG	Other	UK	EU
Sample Size	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
<b>The amount of study</b>									
Column %	29%	27%	30%	29%	28%	22%	28%	33%	32%
<b>Balancing work and study at the same time</b>									
Column %	28%	25%	30%	28%	29%	19%	30%	23%	13%
<b>Paying for university</b>									
Column %	14%	16%	12%	13%	16%	17%	13%	11%	21%
<b>Dealing with more responsibility on my own</b>									
Column %	12%	12%	13%	12%	13%	12%	11%	16%	18%
<b>The topics are difficult</b>									
Column %	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%	17%	8%	6%	9%
<b>Meeting new friends</b>									
Column %	5%	6%	5%	5%	4%	10%	5%	9%	4%

“Students do not get enough financial support and advice when at uni”

“My maintenance loan means I’ve been forced to study my final year part time so I can work part time to be able to afford to live. I’m still barely scraping by.”

“I live at home off campus and my mum isn’t well so when she shouts me to help her to the bathroom or out of her bed repeatedly I end up giving up on studying”

“Adapting to different ways of work and juggling it with social life, sleep, health etc”

## Q6) What could help combat these issues?

	Total	Gender		Student type			Nationality		
	Total	Male	Female	UG	PG	Other	UK	EU	International
Sample Size	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
Valid Cases	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
<b>24/7 online support for when I'm not in class or on campus</b>									
% Valid Cases	49%	43%	53%	51%	43%	54%	51%	37%	43%
<b>Smaller tutorial and lecture sizes</b>									
% Valid Cases	36%	38%	34%	36%	35%	33%	34%	40%	42%
<b>Access to financial services and aid advice</b>									
% Valid Cases	34%	33%	34%	32%	38%	35%	33%	38%	34%
<b>Extra student-run support groups</b>									
% Valid Cases	32%	29%	34%	32%	32%	39%	32%	33%	36%
<b>Access to emotional support services on campus</b>									
% Valid Cases	31%	21%	37%	30%	34%	28%	31%	29%	32%

“I feel like students generally just are not very good at dealing with stress, it is just part of the student life”

“I know university isn't about having your hand held through your education but in my 1st year of uni we were given module handbooks and now in my 3rd year I miss them so much”

“Just regular mandated emotional support”

## Q7) Have you ever needed study help after class or off campus, and asked someone you know for help?

	Total	Gender		Student type			Nationality		
	Total	Male	Female	UG	PG	Other	UK	EU	International
Sample Size	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
Valid Cases	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
<b>Yes, a friend</b>									
% Valid Cases	59%	57%	60%	62%	48%	63%	60%	51%	56%
<b>Yes, other students</b>									
% Valid Cases	55%	47%	61%	57%	53%	49%	57%	53%	44%
<b>Yes, university tutors</b>									
% Valid Cases	38%	36%	39%	39%	35%	34%	39%	35%	30%
<b>Yes, my parents</b>									
% Valid Cases	19%	16%	21%	19%	16%	28%	20%	16%	10%
<b>Yes, my partner</b>									
% Valid Cases	19%	15%	21%	18%	20%	20%	20%	13%	11%
<b>Yes, I used a 24/7 support service</b>									
% Valid Cases	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%
<b>No, I have not</b>									
% Valid Cases	12%	16%	9%	10%	17%	11%	11%	13%	17%

“If I ever I get mental and emotional problems, I always call my parents for motivational purposes.”

“We have a group chat and when anyone's struggling or needs notes on a class we help each other”

“Mostly friends who I have studied with in the past whether at univeristy or from sixth form. Often someone will know the answer and be able to help”

## Q8) How has asking for study assistance from someone you know affected your personal relationship with that person?

	Total	Gender		Student type			Nationality		
	Total	Male	Female	UG	PG	Other	UK	EU	International
Sample Size	1,963	733	1,211	1,407	482	74	1,589	178	196
<b>It had no impact</b>									
Column %	49%	45%	51%	51%	43%	38%	50%	51%	32%
<b>It brought us closer</b>									
Column %	43%	47%	40%	40%	49%	49%	41%	43%	57%
<b>It caused tension between us</b>									
Column %	7%	6%	7%	7%	6%	11%	7%	4%	9%
<b>We had a falling out as a result of me asking for help regularly</b>									
Column %	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%	3%	2%

“Everyone I have asked for help from has always been helpful and vice-versa.”

“Its good a way to build a good relationship with teachers specially when you need references for the future”

“It strengthens our relationship as we talk and become closer and have deep and meaningful conversations often about the work”

## Q9) How would you feel about on demand 24-7 online study support from a real person?

	Total	Gender		Student type			Nationality		
	Total	Male	Female	UG	PG	Other	UK	EU	International
Sample Size	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
<b>I wish I had access to something like that</b>									
Column %	58%	50%	64%	59%	57%	43%	58%	59%	63%
<b>I don't have access to anything like this, but if I did I would be unlikely to use it</b>									
Column %	31%	34%	28%	29%	35%	34%	31%	31%	27%
<b>I have it but don't really use it</b>									
Column %	6%	8%	5%	6%	4%	12%	6%	7%	6%
<b>I have it already and use it</b>									
Column %	5%	8%	3%	5%	3%	11%	5%	3%	5%

“It would be helpful to have access to this when you feel lost or are struggling at night”

“I feel it would help reduce stress for students”

“This would be a huge step forward for students if they were to miss classes due to unforeseen circumstances”

## Q11) If you could choose the University you go to again would you choose the same one?

	Total								
	Total	Gender		Student type			Nationality		
		Male	Female	UG	PG	Other	UK	EU	International
Sample Size	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
Valid Cases	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
<b>Yes, I love it</b>									
% Valid Cases	73%	72%	73%	71%	77%	77%	74%	69%	71%
<b>No, I don't feel like I'm getting value for money</b>									
% Valid Cases	13%	13%	12%	14%	10%	6%	12%	15%	12%
<b>No, I'd choose somewhere with better curriculum activities</b>									
% Valid Cases	9%	10%	9%	10%	8%	7%	8%	14%	11%
<b>No, I'm not enjoying my course</b>									
% Valid Cases	7%	8%	7%	8%	7%	6%	8%	6%	8%
<b>No, I'd go somewhere that offers more study support</b>									
% Valid Cases	7%	6%	8%	7%	6%	5%	7%	4%	8%

“Fantastic university so I have decided to do a 4th year there”

“Such a lovely close-knit university. My department is small and easy to feel a part of.”

“It is extremely expensive and finances so worry me”

## Q12) How do you hope your University will evolve in the next 5 - 10 years?

	Total								
	Total	Gender		Student type			Nationality		
		Male	Female	UG	PG	Other	UK	EU	International
Sample Size	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
Valid Cases	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
<b>I hope they will offer more flexibility in unit choices</b>									
% Valid Cases	45%	45%	45%	44%	49%	40%	44%	50%	51%
<b>I hope they will offer more out of office support services</b>									
% Valid Cases	41%	32%	47%	42%	40%	43%	42%	37%	36%
<b>I hope they will make it easier to study online without feeling like I am missing out</b>									
% Valid Cases	38%	38%	39%	41%	32%	35%	40%	34%	29%
<b>I hope they will increase the use of digital technologies in tutorials and lectures</b>									
% Valid Cases	35%	40%	33%	36%	32%	40%	36%	34%	33%
<b>I hope it will be optional to attend an online lecture, without needing to go to campus</b>									
% Valid Cases	34%	31%	37%	37%	30%	28%	36%	24%	32%

“I won't be there, but I'd like to feel that they have evolved if at all.”

“I hope they do more for student mental health services. They have put such a public emphasis on supporting students mental health, however at 'ground level' within the university it seems for be very difficult, from what I have been told by friends and peers, to be seen and get support by mental health professionals. It seems that especially in the case of young men being taken seriously be mental health services on campus proves difficult and challenging”

“More Peer Mentoring services and a great support for Student led communities.”

## Q12) Do you think physical university campuses will exist in 20 years' time?

	Total	Gender		Student type			Nationality		
	Total	Male	Female	UG	PG	Other	UK	EU	International
Sample Size	2,228	874	1,332	1,567	578	83	1,788	205	235
<b>Yes</b>									
Column %	89%	90%	89%	88%	92%	88%	89%	92%	90%
<b>No</b>									
Column %	11%	10%	11%	12%	8%	12%	11%	8%	10%

“It would be a shame to lose physical campus’s as there is a great amount of experiences at university including living away from home for the first time and feeling more independent”

“A physical university campus gives more of a sense of community”

“I think face to face talking and discussions with people can at times be more valuable than any online support can offer”



A photograph of a silver laptop on a wooden desk. The laptop screen is black with white text. To the right of the laptop is a black mesh pen holder containing several pens and pencils. In front of the laptop is a black smartphone. To the right of the laptop is a green spiral notebook.

**“Really impressed with this service. It has highlighted key areas that I need to work on and helps to build my confidence. Thanks.”**

(UK Student, December 2018)

**“As a first year student the help has given me confidence in my writing abilities. I will be using Studiosity frequently.”**

(UK Student, December 2018)



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