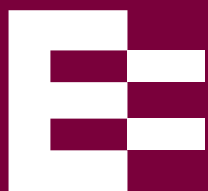
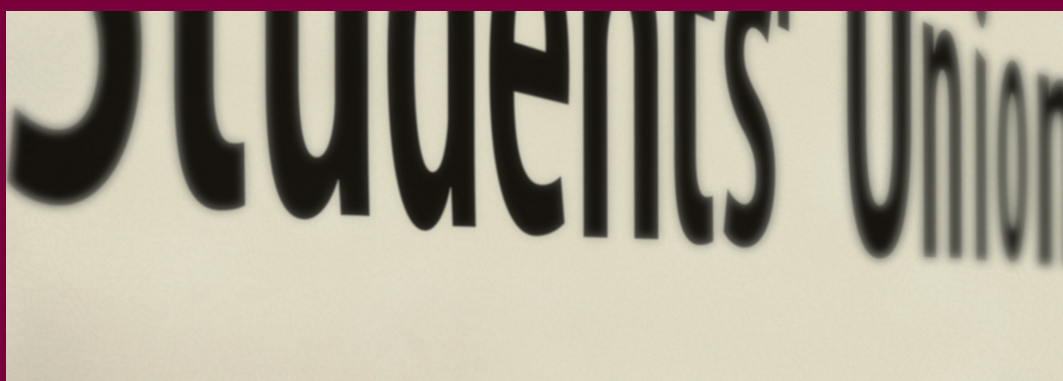


Inclusive Students' Unions

Survey Findings 2007



Equality Challenge Unit



national union of students



Equality Challenge Unit supports the higher education sector in its mission to realise the potential of all staff and students whatever their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief or age, to the benefit of those individuals, higher education institutions and society.

Equality Challenge Unit was established in 2001 to promote equality for staff employed in the higher education sector. Its role was expanded in 2006 to cover equality and diversity issues for students as well as staff.

The Unit is funded by Universities UK, GuildHE, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland. The Scottish Funding Council also funds the Unit to collaborate with Equality Forward in Scotland.



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Inclusive Students' Unions Survey Findings 2007

Written and researched by Shelly Smith
and Robyn Challis



Equality Challenge Unit

1 Executive summary

Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) has worked in conjunction with the Association for Managers in Students' Unions (AMSU) and the National Union of Students (NUS) on this project. The project arose from the realisation that while higher education institutions (HEIs) have been required to work transparently to meet various legislative demands in relation to equality, including relatively new agendas of proactive work on race, disability and gender equality, there has been a lack of clarity about the equality legislation as it applies to students' unions.

The Inclusive Students' Unions project set out to find answers to research questions under the following broad headings:

- = democracy and representation: do students from all backgrounds feel equally able to take on representative roles within unions' democratic structures?
- = Union staff: do union staff reach out proactively to different groups of students to ensure that all students take part in union life?
- = Union services: are union services and facilities equally accessible to and used by students from all backgrounds?

ECU surveyed both students and union staff in England, Wales and Northern Ireland over a two-week period in June/July 2007. This document sets out the findings of this research.

The headline findings are as follows.

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1.1 Democracy and representation

- ⇒ Election processes may not have been designed to include or attract postgraduate or part-time students, disabled students and students who are parents and carers, as well as students of different ages and minority ethnic groups. This means that student leaders generally do not mirror the full diversity of their student body.
- ⇒ Election processes may also discriminate indirectly against women, who are more likely to be mature and part-time students, and are more likely to have parenting and/or caring responsibilities.
- ⇒ We found that 31% of students (30) would consider standing for a full-time officer post, whereas 48% (47) would consider standing for a part-time officer post. Female students, students who hold a religious belief, and students in the 18–21 age group and those in their 40s and 50s were significantly more attracted than others to part-time elected officer positions.
- ⇒ In terms of attitudes to elected officers, the results of this survey highlight low levels of awareness or knowledge about the roles, job descriptions and activities of these officers.
- ⇒ Twenty-nine per cent of students (26) disagreed or strongly disagreed that elected officers are accessible and approachable, and felt that they did not understand the roles of elected officers. The same number of student respondents felt that elected officers did not adequately represent their concerns about student life. Comments made by respondents to these questions indicate that more emphasis needs to be placed on communication generally between unions and students, and specifically between elected officers and students.

1.2 Union staff

- ⇒ Twenty-five per cent of staff (33) reported that they do not believe students' union staff to be a diverse group of people. However, it is clear from the comments received that there is a lack of clarity about who the permanent staff should reflect – the student body, or the community from which they are drawn.

- = A significant number of staff (20%, 27) did not feel that students' union staff are well trained about equality issues. Generally, the comments made by staff indicated an ever-increasing awareness of equality and diversity issues, but that this was not matched with training opportunities for all staff.

1.3 Union services

Communications

- = A sizeable number of student respondents selected 'don't know' in regard to communications. It is significant that 12% (10) could not comment about unions' websites, and 27% (20) about newsletters. It was not possible to determine if these students did not use the service, or if they did not have a view on its accessibility.
- = Comments from both staff and students show that students' unions have experienced difficulty communicating with some hard-to-reach groups. They suggest that this is as much about communicating the relevance of the students' union to these students' lives as it is about informing them of the services the students' union provides.
- = In terms of the opportunity to communicate upwards and influence services, considerable numbers of students responded 'don't know' (20%, 16) or 'disagree' (17%, 14).

Services

- = What is remarkable about the findings reported here is the number of students who chose the 'don't know' option. This is surprising as the survey was disseminated through the NUS website and actively distributed by NUS through the email databases of its four liberation campaigns (for women, Black students, disabled students, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans students), suggesting that respondents were students who were in some way engaged with students' unions.
- = Only 50% of students (39) found general social spaces to be welcoming and inclusive. Similarly, only 53% of both staff and students reported union entertainments to be inclusive.

- = The lack of childcare facilities was identified as hindering the development of a more diverse workforce and the provision of more inclusive services.
- = The comments on freshers' weeks reveal that a great deal of work has taken place to make these more inclusive. However, the data show that many staff (22%, 28) and students (24%, 20) did not believe sufficient efforts were made to include all students in freshers' week. Comments also suggested that one difficulty was that students were initially bombarded with information, but little attempt was made to communicate with them throughout the rest of the year.
- = Comments by both staff and students suggest that clubs and societies are perceived to be the jewel in the crown of students' unions. However, surprisingly a number of students responded that they did not know if these were welcoming and accessible (15%, 13) and a further 14% students (12) reported that clubs and societies were unwelcoming and not accessible. The barriers to clubs and societies were cited as:
 - clubs and societies perceived to be cliquey or elitist
 - drinking culture and initiation ceremonies
 - not enough done to encourage mature and postgraduate students to participate.

1.4 Next steps

The next stage of the project involves gathering more in-depth case studies from survey respondents about inclusive practice in their own unions. To assist with this, an in-depth focus event with some survey respondents took place in October 2007 to establish and explore priority areas for further developing inclusive practice in students' unions. Full guidance for students' unions will be published in Spring 2008, facilitating sharing of practice through case studies, and making recommendations based on the outcome of focus groups and other interviews. The guidance will be relevant to staff and students working at all levels within students' unions, from general managers and service managers to elected officers and leaders of clubs and societies.

2 Introduction

2.1 Context

This document sets out findings of research undertaken with students and staff working in students' unions, which examined issues of inclusiveness, equity and representation within unions. Discussion of the findings and subsequent recommendations will follow in Spring 2008, completing this guidance.

Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) has worked on this project in conjunction with the Association for Managers in Students' Unions (AMSU) and the National Union of Students (NUS). The project arose from the realisation that while higher education institutions (HEIs) have been required to work transparently to meet various legislative demands in relation to equality, including relatively new agendas of proactive work on race, disability and gender equality, there has been a lack of clarity about the equality legislation as it applies to students' unions. Students' unions purport to represent their members' interests democratically, and are renowned for challenging practices within HEIs from fairness and ethics perspectives, but are now coming under some of the same scrutiny both internally and from outside. The sector was beginning to ask: how inclusive are students' unions themselves?

The Inclusive Students' Unions project set out to find answers to research questions under the following broad headings.

- = Democracy and representation: do students from all backgrounds feel equally able to take on representative roles within unions' democratic structures?
- = Union staff: do union staff reach out proactively to different groups of students to ensure that all students take part in union life?
- = Union services: are union services and facilities equally accessible to and used by students from all backgrounds?

2.2 Methodology

ECU surveyed both students and union staff in England, Wales and Northern Ireland over a two-week period in June/July 2007. These two surveys are reproduced in Appendices A and B.

The survey for students' union staff was disseminated via AMSU's electronic mailing list. The survey for students was available online through the NUS website for any higher education student in England, Wales or Northern Ireland to complete. This survey was also actively distributed by NUS via the email databases of its four liberation campaigns (for women, Black students, disabled students, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans students). The survey responses reflect some of the respondents' particular knowledge about equalities issues and the students' union movement (illustrated by the fact that 13% of student respondents were elected officers).

Partial responses to surveys were welcomed. This means that not all respondents answered every question. The analysis below refers to the percentage of respondents who answered individual questions.

The raw data for each question are provided in Appendices C (staff responses) and D (student responses). These tables contain the number of respondents and provide information on how they responded in both actual and percentage figures.

2.3 Respondents

Full or partial responses were received from 248 members of union staff based in 53 unions. Ninety-five per cent of respondents were based in England and 4% in Wales, with no response from union staff in Northern Ireland (one response was received from a member of union staff based in Scotland, which had to be disregarded). This can be set against a national context of the 89% of unions located in England, 15% in Wales and 6% in Northern Ireland.

Full or partial responses were received from 229 students based in 19 HEIs in England (97% of respondents), Wales (1% of respondents) and Northern Ireland (1% of respondents). This included responses from postgraduates (16%), part-time students (5%), international

students (4%) and EU students (4%). Thirteen per cent of respondents were elected student officers.

No claims are made for the statistical significance of the responses; carrying out this work during the summer meant that numbers of responses would remain at a statistically low but manageable rate. However, we are satisfied with the response from union staff in terms of both numbers of respondents and the spread across a number of different unions – responses were received from 35% of unions. We acknowledge that the number of responses from students is even less representative, given that the higher education student body across the UK numbers in excess of 2 million.

Approximately 80–85 students and 119–129 staff completed the monitoring section of the survey.

The diversity of respondents was similar between students and staff.

More women than men responded to both surveys. In the staff survey 58% of respondents were women, and in the student survey this figure was 65%.

In the student survey the majority of respondents were aged between 19 and 21, but there were respondents of all ages up to 61. In the staff survey we saw the following pattern:

- = 20–30, 50%
- = 31–40, 25%
- = 41–50, 16%
- = 51–60, 9%.

Under ethnic group, the following was reported:

- = 84% of students and 87% of staff white British with an additional 4% of staff white Irish
- = 9% of students and 3% of staff Asian/Asian British
- = 5% of students and 3% of staff mixed race
- = 2% of students and 3% of staff black/black British.

Again, there was a striking similarity in terms of religion and belief:

- = no religion, 40% of students and 42% of staff
- = Christian, 47% of students and 51% of staff
- = Jewish, 3% of students and 1% of staff
- = Muslim, 2% of both staff and students
- = other, 7% of students and 4% of staff.

Sexual orientation:

- = heterosexual/straight, 80% of students and 86% of staff
- = bisexual, 4% of both staff and students
- = gay man, 6% of both staff and students
- = gay woman/lesbian, 6% of students and 4% of staff
- = other, 4% of students and 1% of staff.

Disability:

- = 16% of students and 12% of staff reported that they are disabled
- = a further 4% of students and 2% of staff said that they were unsure.

3. Democracy and representation

3.1 Survey findings

Respondents were asked whether they felt election processes in their union are, in practice, open and accessible to all, and what could be done to improve them. They were also asked whether elected student officers match the diversity of the student body as a whole, and if not, the reasons why. It should be noted that the survey questions explored respondents' perceptions of gaps in representation. It is likely that many respondents would not have had access to statistical data about the diversity of student leaders.

Accessible election processes

Staff Survey Q4 (Appendix A) and Student Survey Q10 (Appendix B)

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

The process for electing student officers, including:

- = paid officers, often known as 'sabbatical officers'
- = unpaid officers
- = full-time and part-time officers
- = other representatives, such as course representatives

is open and accessible, in practice, to the following students (see Figures 1 and 2).

On the whole, the 98 students who responded to this question felt that election processes were open and accessible to the majority of students, irrespective of their identity or background. Seventy-five per cent of respondents (72) felt this way in relation to disabled students, and this figure rose with respect to gender identity, faith, culture, age and sexual orientation until it reached 88% (86) in relation to male and female students. Examples of good practice in this area were good support for union candidates from union

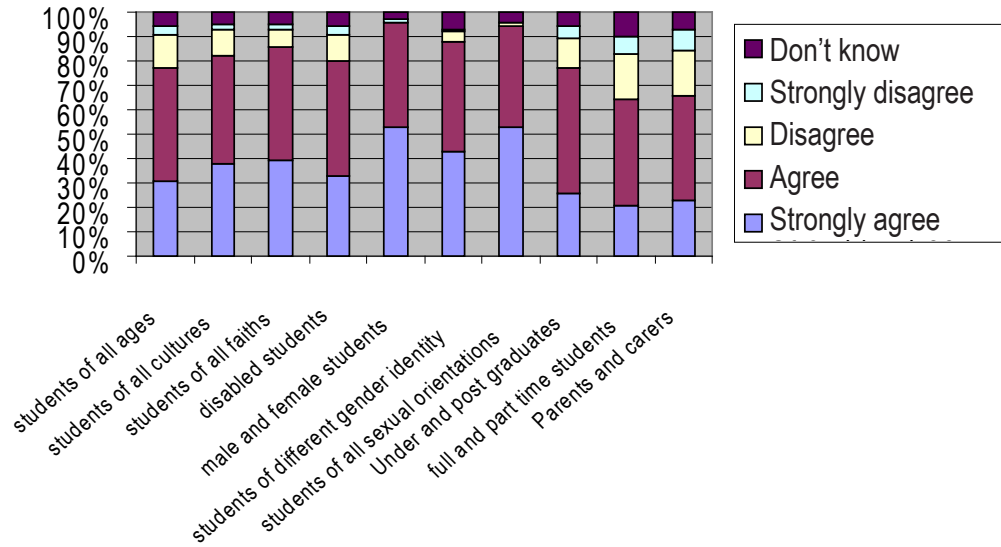


Figure 1 Q4: Accessible election processes (staff responses)

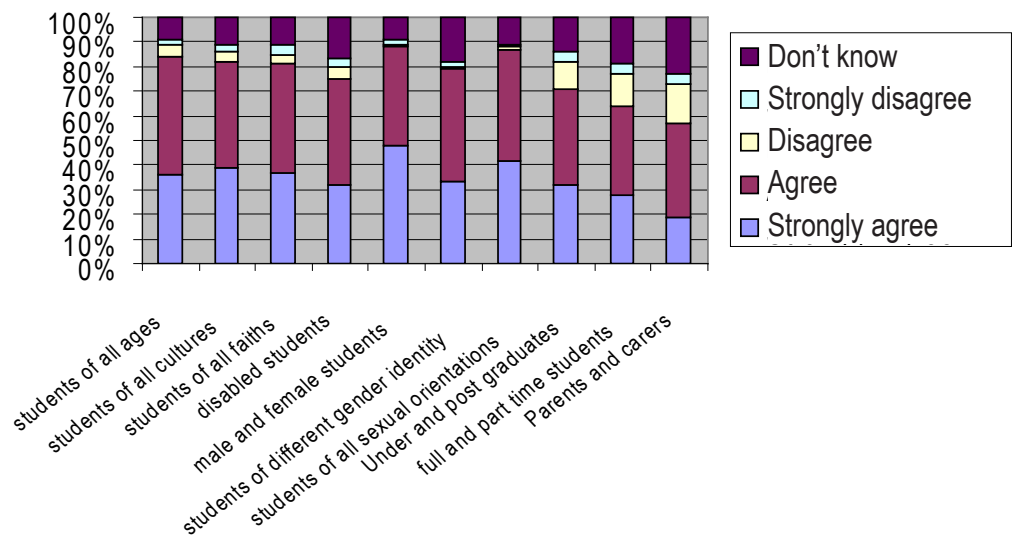


Figure 2 Q10: Accessible election processes (student responses)

staff, and well publicised nomination periods. One respondent commented:

'I am a part-time student and voted in elections in 2004. I publicly raised the issue that according to our then rulebook, part-time students could not stand for elected union office! It took a year, but after heartfelt oration to the student body, it was passed unanimously that part-time students could stand for elected union office. The rule had originally been made to prevent the election of part-time students on short courses, but had effectively excluded part-time undergraduates, HND and Diploma students for 20 years.'

A significant number of student respondents did not know how accessible election processes were to disabled students (17%, 16); students of different gender identity (18%, 18); undergraduate and postgraduate students (14%, 14); full- and part-time students (19%, 18), and students who are parents or carers (23%, 22).

It is notable that 15–20% of student respondents (15–19) disagreed or strongly disagreed that election processes were, in practice, open and accessible to both undergraduates and postgraduates, both full- and part-time students, and students who are parents or carers. The sense that these student groups are being excluded from election processes was felt to an even greater extent by staff survey respondents.

Twenty-six per cent (35) of 134 union staff respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that processes were, in practice, open and accessible to both full- and part-time students. Twenty-seven per cent (36) of 135 union staff responses disagreed that processes were, in practice, open and accessible to students who are parents and carers. Staff commented:

'Certain student groups, e.g. those who are parents and carers and part-time students, often do not have the time to canvas during elections, which means they will have less of a high profile and therefore are less likely to get elected.'

'Election processes are not well organised for those with other responsibilities, e.g. short lead-in time, meetings in the evenings.'

'These student demographics feel disenfranchised from the union as a whole.'

Seventeen per cent of staff respondents (23) also disagreed that processes were open and accessible to students of all ages, and students of both undergraduate and postgraduate status (17%, 24):

'Postgraduate research students are difficult to engage with. They see themselves more as staff than students, and we need to work hard to offer them experiences that are relevant to them before we can involve them in any representative roles.'

Representation of the student body by elected student officers

Staff Survey Q5 (Appendix A) and Student Survey Q15 (Appendix B)

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

The elected student officers match the diversity of our student population in the following areas (see Figures 3 and 4).

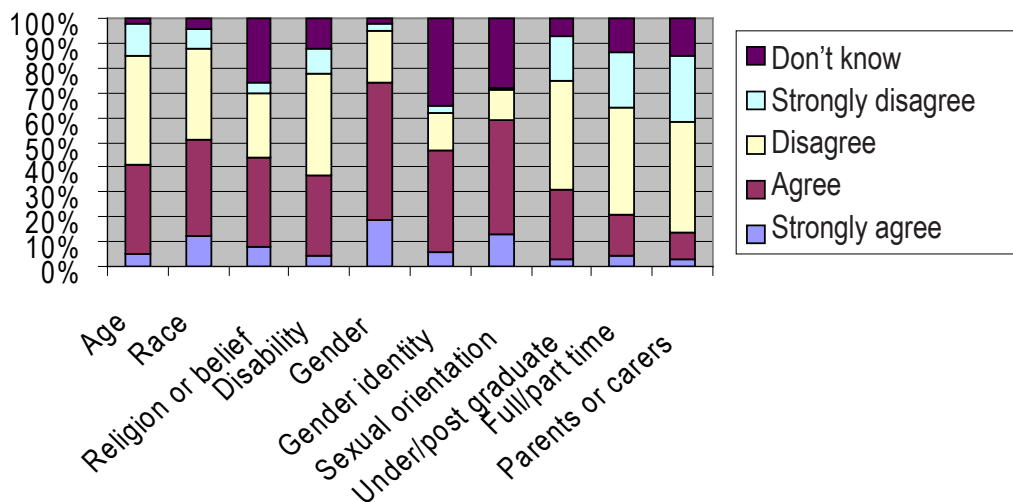


Figure 3 Q5: Elected student officers match the diversity of our student population (staff responses)

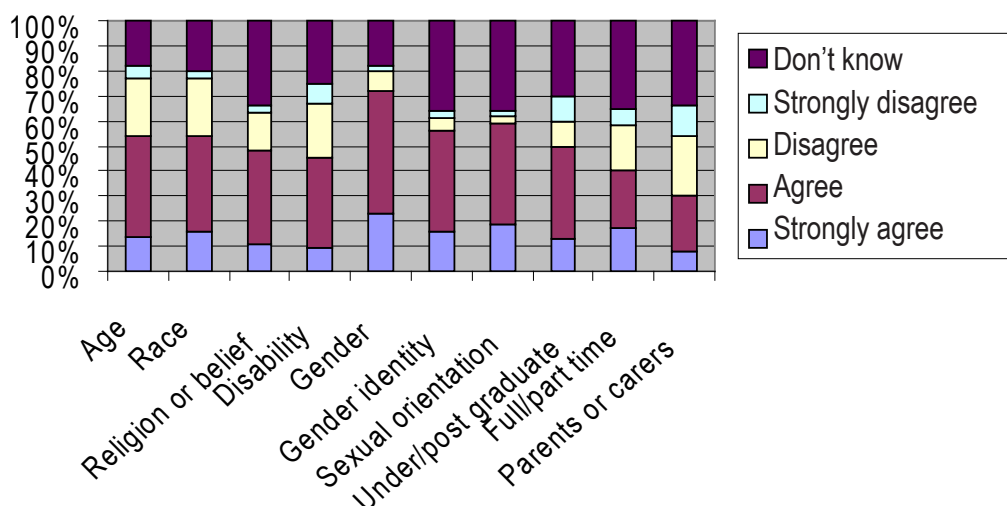


Figure 4 Q15: Elected student officers match the diversity of our student population (student responses)

Student respondents did not tend to make a connection between this question and the preceding one. Between 25 and 36% of student respondents (24–33) reported that elected officers did not match the diversity of the whole student population in relation to age, race, disability, full-time/part-time status and those who are parents or carers. Respondents commented:

'They have been voted in, so cannot always fit into each category.'

'The diversity of officers may not reflect the diversity of the university purely because no-one from that category, i.e. race, chose to stand for that position.'

'We have a fairly homogeneous bunch of sabbatical officers, mainly because it is only a certain type of student who ever runs for these things.'

These respondents observe the truism that only those who stand can be elected to posts. The third comment comes closest to making a connection with the earlier question by pointing out that 'it is only a certain type of student who ever runs for these things'.

Union staff, on the other hand, seemed to make a close connection between the openness and accessibility of election processes, and the lack of representation of the full diversity of the student body in

elected positions. A significant 71% (93) of the 116 respondents to this question either disagreed or strongly disagreed that students who are parents or carers were proportionately represented among elected officers.

'Parents or carers already have vast responsibility, and taking on a voluntary role in a union is often too time-consuming.'

'There's an expectation from a union to run an elected officer into the ground and you can't do that unless you've got 100% of the officer's focus.'

Sixty-two per cent (82) of 133 staff respondents felt that students of undergraduate/postgraduate status were not proportionately represented among elected officers; 65% (86) of these respondents felt that students of full-time/part-time status were not proportionately represented.

'What's in it for an MA student to continue for a year when they almost certainly will have accumulated debts?'

Regarding whether staff respondents felt students of all religions/beliefs, sexual orientations and disabled students were properly represented by elected officers, 'don't know' was the response of 26% (35) for religion/belief, 28% (37) for sexual orientation and 35% (46) for disabled students. Of those that did have a view, 51% (69) of respondents felt that disabled students were not properly represented, and a similar number of respondents (54%, 77) felt that students of all ages were not properly represented.

'Disabled students – access issues.'

'We have a high percentage of mature students, but few/no mature officers.'

In the main, it was felt by both union staff and students that male, female and trans students, and students of different sexual orientations, were all well represented in elected officer positions, whether paid or unpaid.

Disabled students, and students of diverse ethnic backgrounds and religions or beliefs, were felt to be generally under-represented in these posts.

Both staff and student respondents agreed that the least represented students were those who study part-time, at postgraduate level, and those who are parents and carers. Part-time students are also more likely to be women and/or disabled, and people with parenting and caring responsibilities in society are again more likely to be women. The disenfranchised groups identified by survey respondents are to be found at the confluence of more than one diversity indicator.

Voting in elections

Student Survey Q11 (Appendix B)
Do you generally vote in student elections?

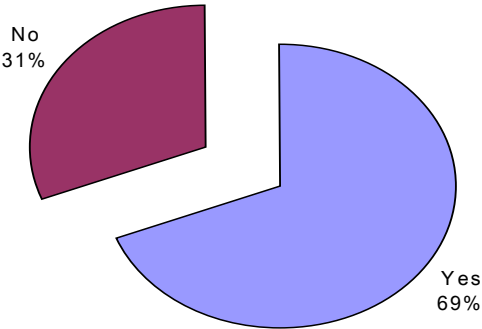


Figure 5 Q11: Do you generally vote in elections?

Ninety-seven students responded to this question, 69% (67) of them answering 'yes' (again demonstrating the skewed sample of students who responded to this survey) – **NUS Election Research 2007** found that an average of 11.9% of students voted in elections in 24 unions. The most common reasons given for not voting were lack of awareness of elections (6 respondents), not feeling that elections are important (4), forgetting to vote (3), distance from campus/problem of split campus (3), not knowing/not being impressed by candidates (3), and not being around/involved (3).

Inclination to stand for election

Student Survey Q12 (Appendix B)

Would you consider standing for full-time office in your students' union?

Would you consider standing for part-time office in your students' union?

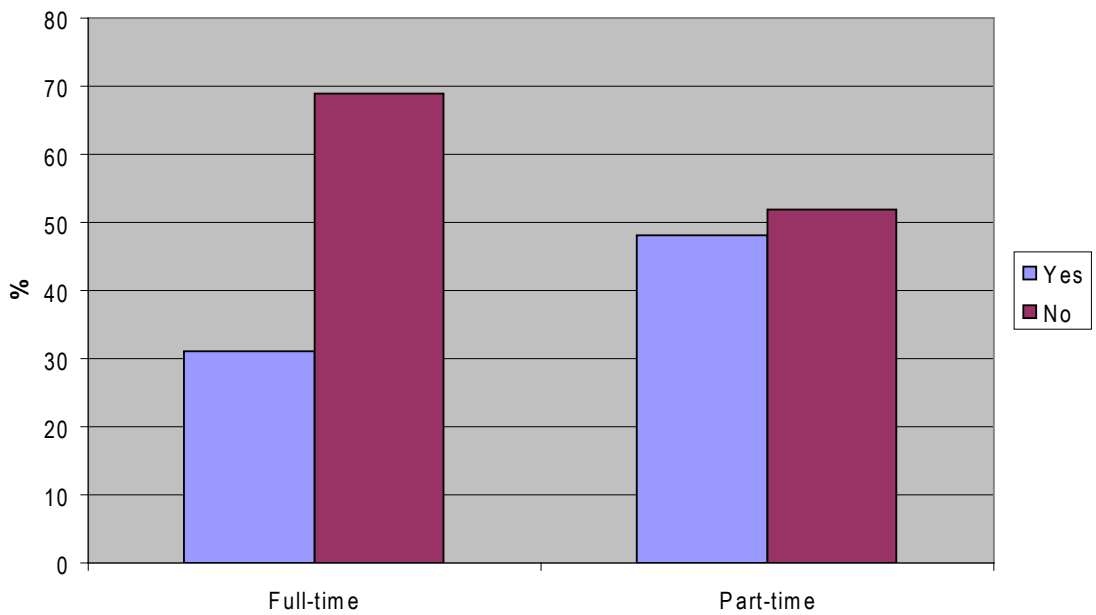


Figure 6 Q12: Inclination to stand for election

Students were also asked whether they would consider standing for full- or part-time office. While 31% (30) of the 98 students who answered this question would consider standing for full-time office, a significantly larger 48% (47) would be prepared to stand for part-time office.

Students should also have been asked why they would not consider standing for election, but were not asked this question due to a fault within the online survey.

An analysis of the identity of the students who replied ‘yes’ to the above questions showed that part-time elected positions have the potential to attract more female students, more students who hold a religious belief, and more students in the 18–21 age group and in their 40s and 50s.

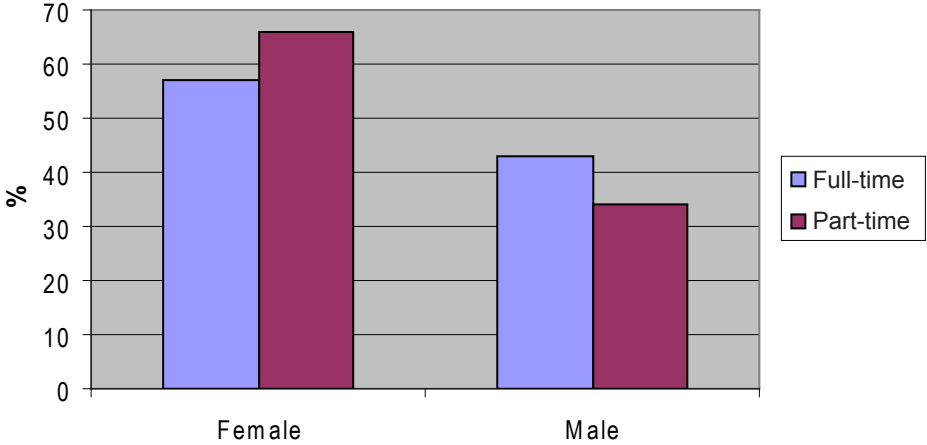


Figure 7 Q12: Inclination to stand for election (gender)

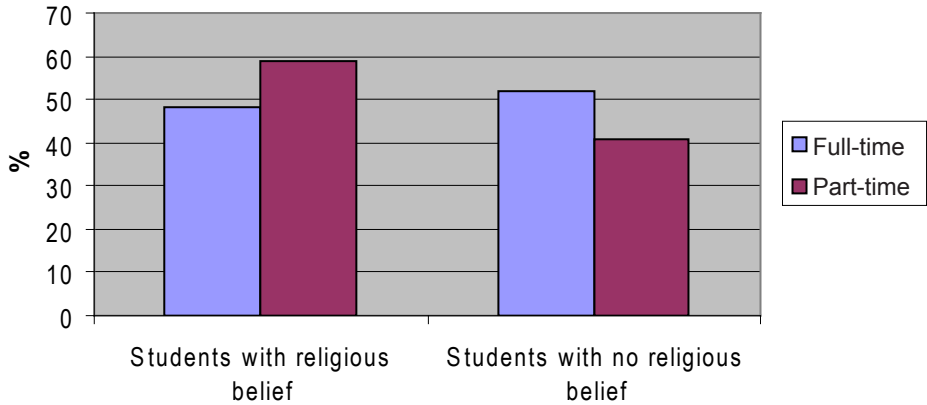


Figure 8 Q12: Inclination to stand for election (religious belief)

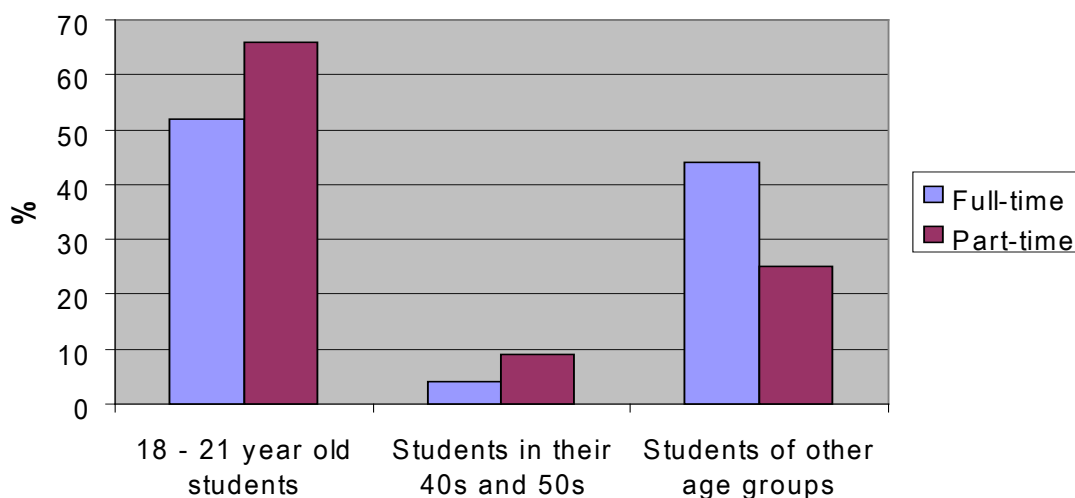


Figure 9 Q12: Inclination to stand for election (age)

Attitudes to elected officers

Students were then asked whether they find elected officers accessible and approachable, and whether they understand the officers' roles and responsibilities. They were also asked whether they felt officers adequately represented their concerns about student life.

Student Survey Q13 (Appendix B)

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:
Elected student officers are accessible and approachable. I understand their roles and responsibilities and know which officer to approach when I have a problem at university.

Twenty-nine per cent (26) of the 91 students who responded to this question disagreed or strongly disagreed that elected officers are accessible and approachable. Similarly, 29% (26) of student respondents did not have an understanding of elected officers' roles and responsibilities. Reasons for this included:

- = officers not always staying visible once elected (10)
- = job descriptions being unclear (7)

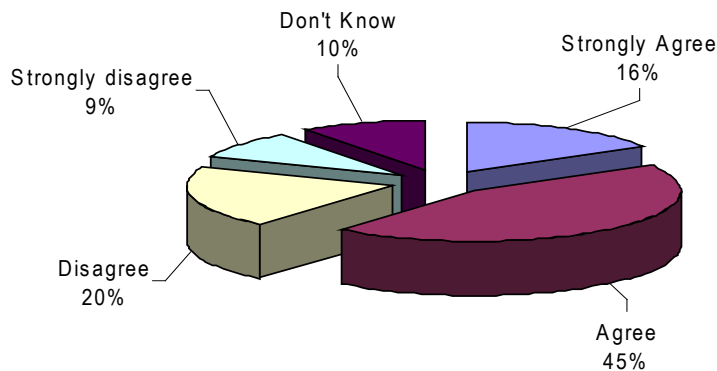


Figure 10 Q13: Elected student officers are accessible and approachable (student responses)

- = information not being routinely disseminated (4)
- = extreme left-wing politics acting as a deterrent to some students (2)
- = students on different campuses struggling to engage with officers (1).

'They are not held accountable to ensure they do the job they have been elected to do.'

'I don't know their roles, I've never been told.'

'Everybody comes to me with their problems because I am the deputy president, whether or not it fits into my job role, so I wish students understood better who to approach about different problems.'

Student Survey Q14 (Appendix B)

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:
Elected student officers in my union adequately represent my concerns about student life.

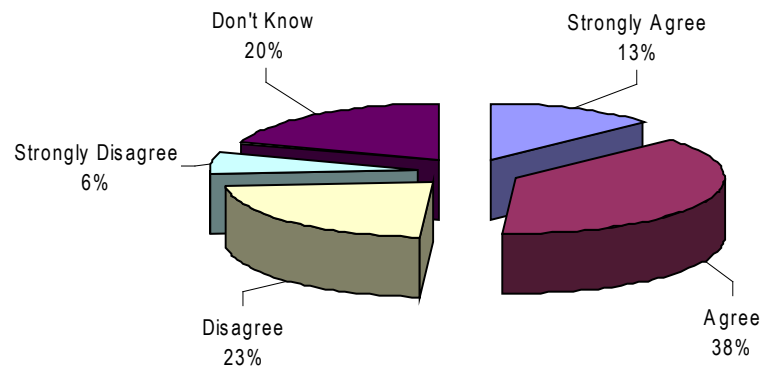


Figure 11 Q14: Elected student officers adequately represent my concerns (student responses)

The same level of student respondents (29%, 26) felt that officers did not adequately represent their concerns about student life.

'Everyone's concerns differ, they can only act on those concerns they have heard about – they're not mind-readers, students need to speak out more.'

'Certain radical officers push their own agenda and fail to address issues that genuinely concern the student community, and fail to improve their quality of life.'

'Once they are elected, you don't hear from them again and they don't ask for your opinions once you have voted for them.'

One student spoke about the need to raise concerns regarding treatment of international and postgraduate students, but did not seem to designate responsibility for resolving these problems to student officers:

'This isn't their fault. As an international student I am quite unhappy about the way this university treats its international and postgraduate students, and my response has been to get involved in union council and try to raise these issues.'

3.2 Democracy and representation: analysis

The survey findings on the issue of diversity within students' unions' democratic and representation structures show a perception among both union staff and students that those who stand for, or who are

elected to, student office are 'a certain type of person'. This type of person may be either male or female, straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual, but is least likely to be a postgraduate, a part-time student, or a parent or carer.

'Three out of four sabbaticals are male. All officers are full-time students. All are undergraduate students. But it must be noted that all are voted [in] by the student population.' (Student respondent)

'Union involvement in these positions tends to be very white and middle class – which continues to promote their dominant values – makes it hard for minority groups to see a reason to get involved.' (Staff respondent)

Union staff generally felt that election and other democratic processes were simply not attractive to all students or compatible with their lifestyles, requirements or other commitments. Data show that part-time and postgraduate students, and those who are parents and carers, are all more likely to be mature (aged 21 or over); and part-time students¹ and people with parenting and caring responsibilities in general are more likely to be women².

'The system is set up to be difficult for part-time students, international students, mature students, and students who are parents to participate. This is because of time commitments, but also because of the time of year that elections are held.' (Staff respondent)

'I think that some of the processes for electing an officer aren't disabled student-friendly ... Some students with mental health issues aren't catered for as part of the hustings process.' (Staff respondent)

These findings raise questions about the design of democratic and representation structures within unions, which echo national debates within local and central government. The findings do not

1. Universities UK (2006) **Part-time students and part-time study in higher education in the UK**. Universities UK, London.

2. Equalities Review Panel (2007) **Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review 2007**. Cabinet Office, London.

claim to represent the views of all students and union staff, but do provide a partial evidence base for the suggestion that it may be necessary for students' unions to start 'doing' democracy differently.

Further evidence for this is the finding that some student groups – including female students, those holding a religious belief, and those in age groups 18–21 and 40–59, would feel more inclined to stand for election to a part-time student officer post than a full-time post. Constituting elected posts differently may be just one of many ways in which students' unions can adapt to include and involve a wider range of students in democratic life.

Approximately half of the students surveyed felt that the relationship between elected officers and the student body as a whole was transparent and functioned well, and that officers represented students' concerns adequately. No groups of survey respondents were found to be particularly disenfranchised in this respect, but it appears that there is scope for elected officers to focus on communication with students across all demographic groups, and to become aware of the concerns of all students.

The students and union staff who responded to the surveys gave many examples of the particular barriers to be found within democratic and representative structures, as well as examples of how these are beginning to be addressed within individual unions:

'The wage offered is generally not substantial enough to support someone with a family – this is an issue that arose this year in our elections.' (Student respondent)

'Publicity expenditure per officer post is capped at a limited amount. Should a candidate be in financial difficulty, appropriate sensitive procedures are in place to provide assistance.' (Staff respondent)

'Culturally, I think students whose first language is not English struggle to understand what is going on.' (Student respondent)

'We changed the language – from "hustings" to "meet the candidates".' (Staff respondent)

'Using diverse role models in the wider world ... and the impact they have had whilst carrying out their roles, in our marketing campaigns for elections ...' (Staff respondent)

ECU will explore some of these issues further in the next steps of this project, which will result in guidance for the students' union sector.

4. Students' union staff

4.1 Survey findings

This section of the surveys sought to explore perceptions of both the diversity of students' union staff and the service they provide to an increasingly diverse student body. Staff and students were asked how far they agreed that staff were approachable, diverse and well trained about equality issues.

Staff Survey Q6 (Appendix A) and Student Survey Q16 (Appendix B)

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:
I feel on the whole, the staff at my students' union are... (see Figures 12 and 13).

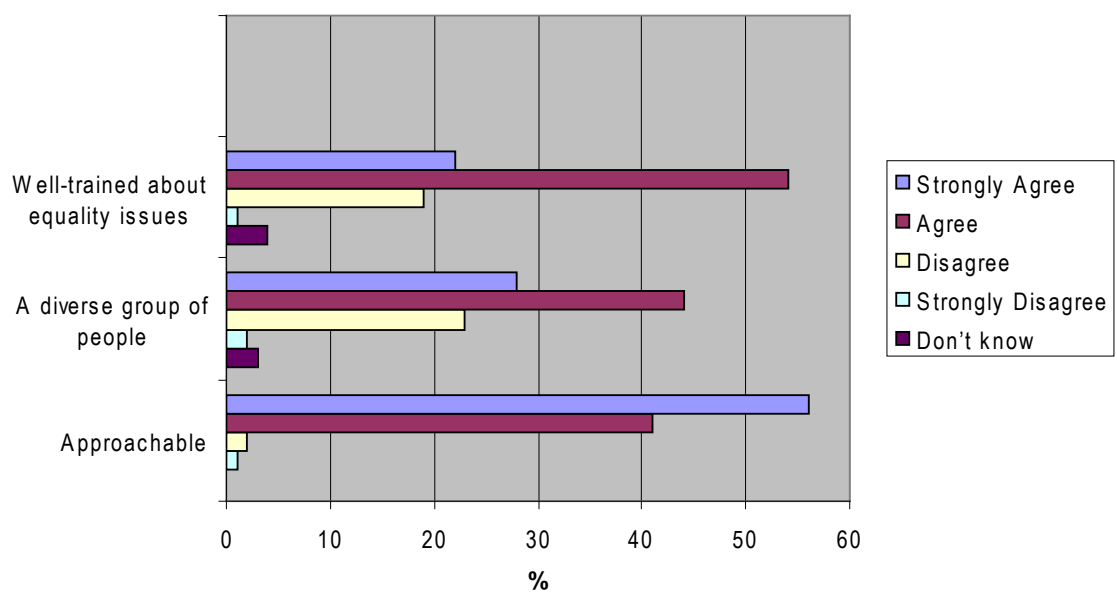


Figure 12 Q6: I feel, on the whole, the staff at my student's union are... (staff responses)

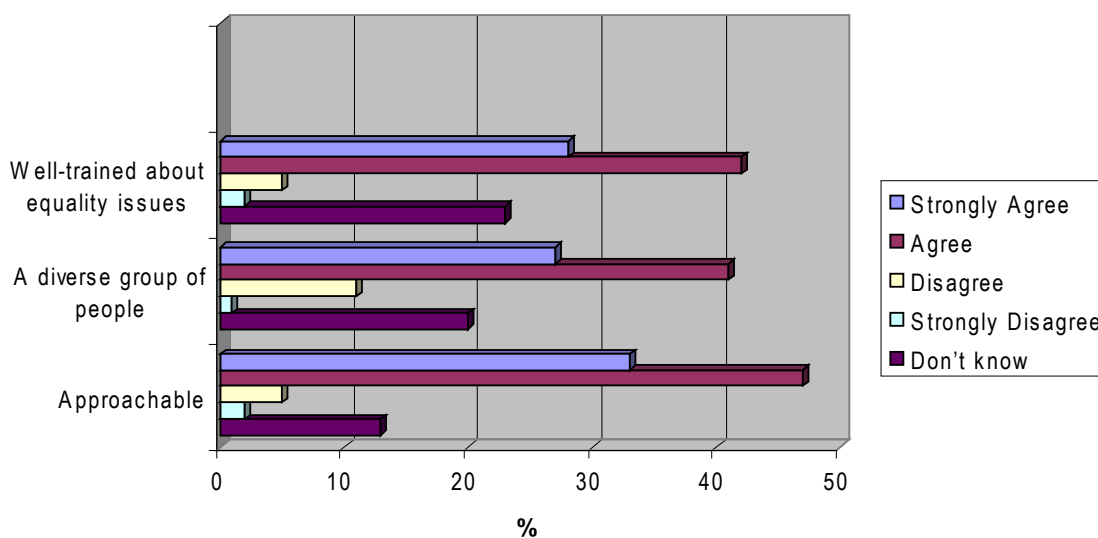


Figure 13 Q16: I feel, on the whole, the staff at my student's union are... (student responses)

Diversity

Several respondents interpreted 'diversity' widely to include socio-economic factors and differing backgrounds, and one student even referred to the political beliefs of staff. However, for the purpose of this report, 'diversity' refers to the six protected equality areas: age, race, religion and belief, disability, gender and sexual orientation.

A total of 130 staff and 88–90 students responded to this section of the questionnaire. A significant number of staff (25%, 33) reported that they did not believe staff were a diverse group of people. This compares with 12% of students (11) who disagreed with the statement 'I feel that, on the whole, the staff of my students' union are a diverse group of people'.

This discrepancy between staff and student responses may be explained by two factors. First, students were not asked to differentiate between permanent and student staff. The research undertaken by the Association for Managers in Students' Unions (AMSU) in its *Diversity Report* (2006) suggests that, while student

staff do reflect the student population, this is not necessarily the case for permanent staff. The second factor is the differing levels of knowledge of staff diversity. Twenty per cent of students (18) did not know if staff were diverse or not. This is not surprising, given that students are unlikely to be aware of the diversity of members of staff unless this is in some way visible. However, staff were more likely to have access to such information; work has been undertaken by AMSU that examined staff diversity within the students' union workforce (see section 4.2).

Approachable staff

There was a significant gap between staff and students on this question. As many as 97% (126) of staff agreed with the statement: 'I feel that, on the whole, the staff at my students' union are approachable'. However, only 80% (72) of students agreed, a difference of 17%.

Of the 20% of students who did not agree with the statement, 7% (6) of these respondents actively disagreed and 13% (12) responded 'don't know'.

The comments received, however, were positive.

'The staff... are incredibly committed and dedicated. A more likeable, interesting and student-friendly set of staff I have yet to meet.' (Student respondent)

Equality training

Turning to the statement: 'I feel, on the whole, that staff at my students' union are well trained about equality issues', a substantial number of staff (20%, 27) disagreed. Generally, the comments made by staff who responded to this survey indicated an ever-increasing awareness of equality and diversity issues within students' unions. However, they suggested that this has not yet been matched with training for all staff.

'Strong culture, not completely backed up by robust training, systems and monitoring.' (Staff respondent)

'Resources restrict training.' (Staff respondent)

'Not all staff have training on equality issues, everyone knows it is important to ensure equal opportunities as this is a key principle ... and although I'm sure most staff put this in to practice, we've not all had training on doing so.' (Staff respondent)

Seventy per cent (62) of students felt that staff were well trained in equality and diversity, with only 7% (6) disagreeing. While students were being asked about their perceptions, 23% (20) selected 'don't know'. It is likely that these respondents did not feel they could comment about the level and scope of training staff may have received.

Support to students

Staff Survey Q7 (Appendix A) and Student Survey Q17 (Appendix B)

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:
Staff at my union offer support to students who may have difficulty getting involved in social activities and services.

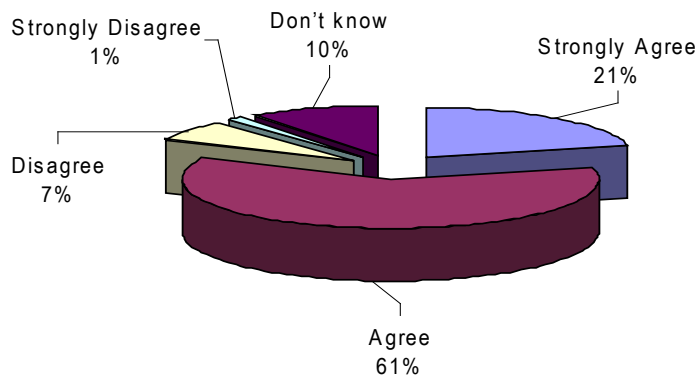


Figure 14 Q7: Staff at my union offer support to students who may have difficulty getting involved (staff responses)

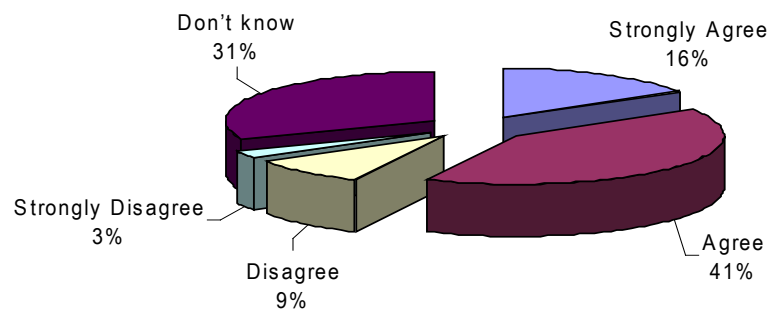


Figure 15 Q17: Staff at my union offer support to students who may have difficulty getting involved (student responses)

A total of 130 staff and 90 students responded to the statement 'staff at my union offer support to students who may have difficulty getting involved in social activities and services'. As seen in Figures 14 and 15, there were notable differences between the responses of staff and students. Many students (31%, 28) responded 'don't know' compared with 10% of staff (13). This was perhaps unsurprising, and related to levels of experience of this service. If students have not themselves experienced any difficulty in getting involved in students' union activities, they may not have felt qualified to comment.

Staff observed that volunteering and clubs and societies are particularly inclusive. The contribution of clubs and societies to equality and diversity is explored more fully below.

From the comments, one difficulty is the extent to which students' unions are able to reach beyond the students who are already involved through clubs and societies and those who approach the union for assistance.

'Activities tend to be more aimed at students who are already involved in the union in one way or another (e.g. through clubs or societies).' (Staff respondent)

'Staff will go out of their way to help someone if they can – but I imagine that a lot of the time that would depend on the student needing to "ask" for help in the first place – so some people will remain excluded.' (Staff respondent)

The availability of resources (buildings, staff and money) is a significant issue in relation to a union's ability to include or involve students.

'In my department we are happy to help any students who are keen to get involved in our volunteering and student group activities and put in an effort to support them to do this. Whether we actually have sufficient resources to do this... is another question.' (Staff respondent)

Of the 46 staff who commented on this section, five mentioned that their buildings were not suitable or accessible for users with physical disabilities.

The lack of childcare facilities was mentioned as a separate factor that thwarts more inclusive services.

4.2 Students' union staff: analysis

As noted above, 25% (33) of staff stated that they did not believe students' union staff to be a diverse group of people. This ties in closely with AMSU's own research (*Diversity Report 2006*), which identified a lack of diversity within the students' union workforce:

'There are few students' union BME staff (6% of permanent staff, 4% managers), but higher proportions of officers (18%) and student staff (30%). Women form the bulk of union staff (58%) but fewer are managers (42%) ... The numbers reporting themselves as having a disability were very low (7% of the quantitative survey) and the age profile of respondents showed only 15% of respondents to be over 50. Almost half of permanent staff were under 30, with another quarter between 31–40. This trend was particularly noticeable among men. 96% of executive officers were under 30.'

The comments received show that there is no clarity about who the permanent staff should reflect – the student population, or the community from which they are drawn.

'Our staff team is predominantly female. In that respect they are not diverse and culturally they are not diverse. However, culturally they reflect the general ... population.' (Staff respondent)

'Staff are always recruited under the equal opportunities policy, but for some reason this has left us a fairly undiverse group. This is not assisted by the local area, and thus employment catchment area, being very undiverse also.' (Staff respondent)

5. Communications and services

5.1 Survey findings

The purpose of this section was to explore how communications and services were experienced by students and perceived by staff.

In this part of the survey, both staff and students were provided with a list of services and methods of communication and asked to indicate whether they perceived these to be inclusive and welcoming; neither welcoming nor unwelcoming; or not welcoming or accessible.

Communication: website, newsletters and TV/radio services

Staff Survey Q8 (Appendix A) and Student Survey Q18 (Appendix B)

Please tick to indicate how inclusive and accessible to all students are the following services in your union:

- = website
- = TV/radio station
- = newsletter/newspaper.

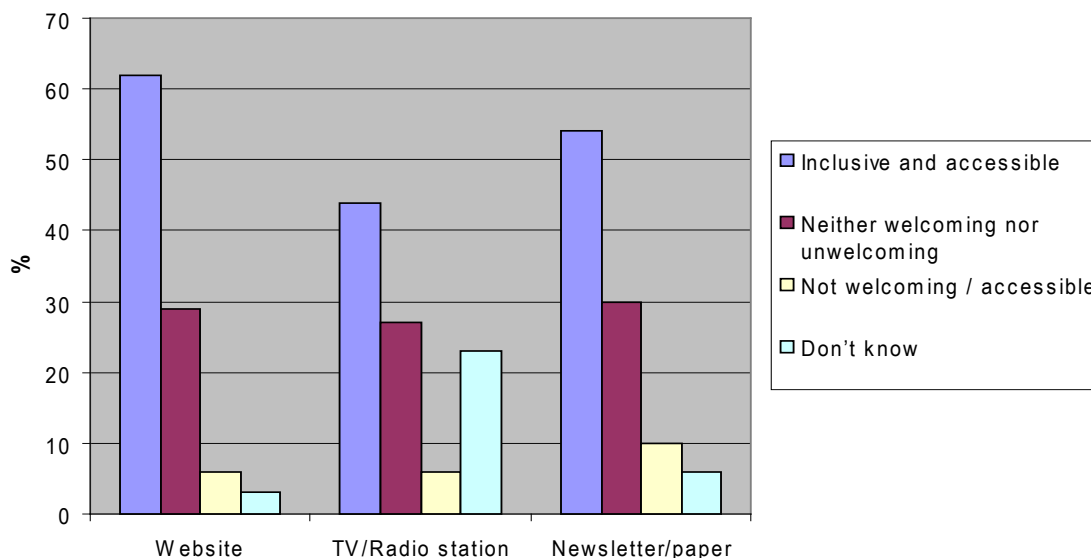


Figure 16 Q8: Communication services (staff responses)

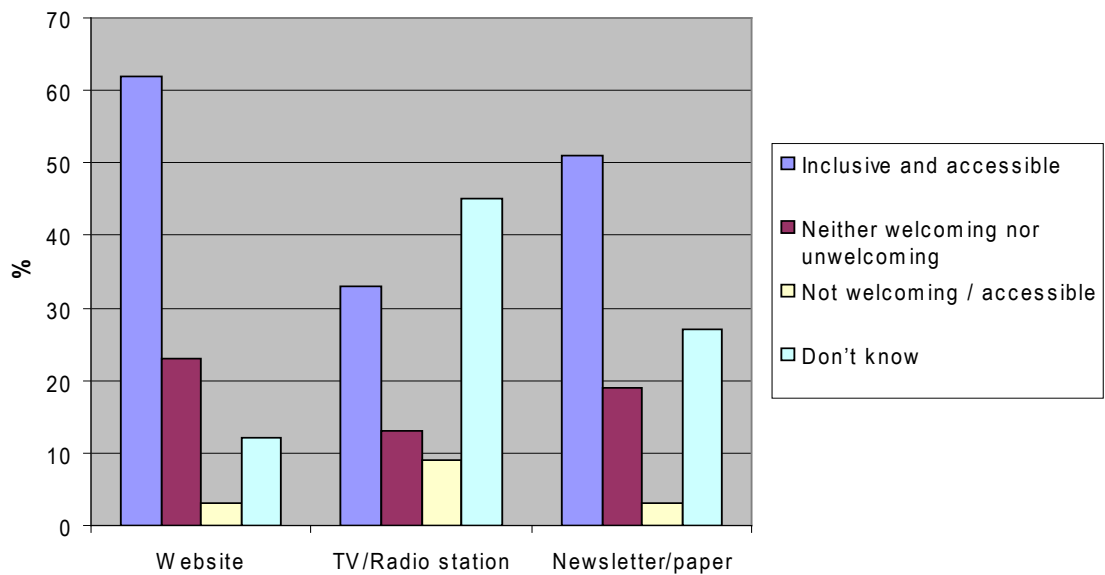


Figure 17 Q18: Communication services (student responses)

The number of students who selected 'don't know' in this section is significant. As seen in Figure 17, 12% (10) could not comment about the website, 27% (20) about newsletters, and 45% (30) about TV and radio services. It is not possible to determine if these students do not use the services, or if they did not have a view on the equality aspect.

Further study of those respondents who chose 'don't know' or 'not welcoming or accessible' did not highlight any particular group of students as excluded.

Surprisingly, 23% of staff (24) reported 'don't know' with regard to TV/radio services, although considerably fewer did so for the website (3%, 4) and the newsletter/paper (6%, 7).

A substantial number of both staff and students replied that these services were 'neither welcoming nor unwelcoming': for the website the figures were 29% of staff (37) and 23% of students (19); TV/radio, 27% of staff (28) and 13% of students (9); and for the newsletter/paper, 30% of staff (30) and 19% of students (14).

Student Survey Q21 (Appendix B)

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:
There are enough opportunities for me to influence the range of services and social activities provided by my union.

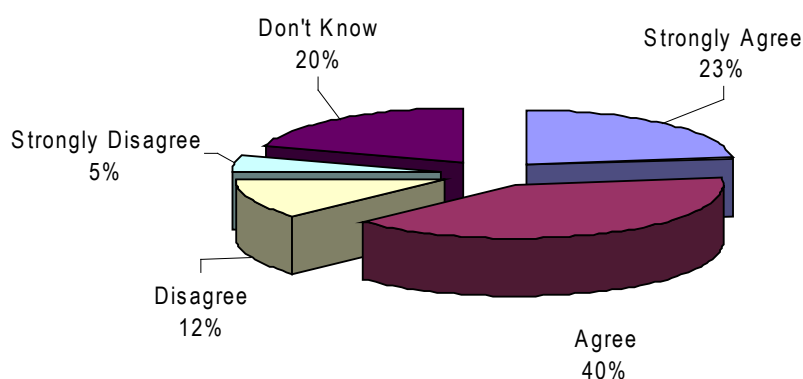


Figure 18 Q21: There are enough opportunities for me to influence the range of services and social activities provided by my union

Only students were asked about the opportunities to influence the range of services and social activities provided by students' unions. This question was answered by 82 students. Again, considerable numbers of students responded 'don't know' (20%, 16) or disagreed (17%, 14).

'The main problem for me is simply to include graduate students better.'

'Try to make information more available to those not involved in extra curriculum activities...'

'There are not enough surveys done to get feedback from the students; they don't get asked their opinion a lot.'

Services: bars, eating establishments and shops

Staff Survey Q8 (Appendix A) and Student Survey Q18 (Appendix B)

Please tick to indicate how inclusive and accessible to all students are the following services in your union:

- = bars and eating establishments
- = shops.

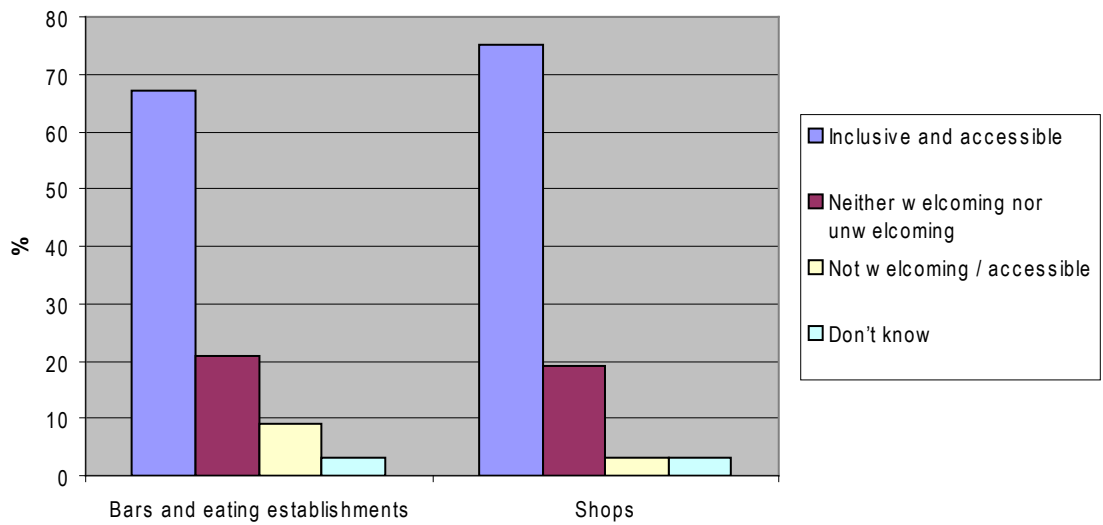


Figure 19 Q8: Bars, eating establishments and shops (staff responses)

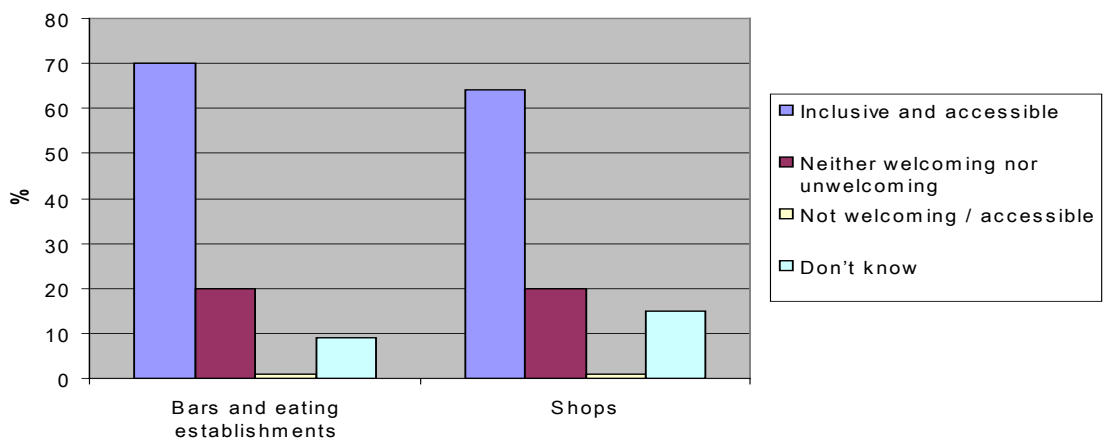


Figure 20 Q18: Bars, eating establishments and shops (student responses)

Again, many students were unable to comment and responded 'don't know'; 9% (7) for bars and restaurants and 15% (11) for shops.

'The shop ... has a range of products, but still doesn't cater for all cultures or dietary requirements i.e. could stock vegan, wheat-free, dairy-free foods. Has some hot food – but this is all very unhealthy and not much choice.' (Staff respondent)

The above comment illustrates the range of products that shops would need to stock to cater for the diverse student population – this can prove quite a challenge for some students' unions. While only one student and three staff members complained of an inaccessible or unwelcoming shop, many staff (19%, 22) and students (20%, 15) said they were neither welcoming nor unwelcoming.

Similar figures were received for bars and restaurants, with 21% of staff (27) and 20% of students (15) selecting 'neither welcoming nor unwelcoming'. Only one student reported that bars and restaurants are inaccessible; however, 9% of staff (11) believed this to be the case.

Examination of those who responded 'don't know' or 'unwelcoming' did not reveal any particular groups to have been excluded – the respondents were mixed. It is impossible to tell from the data collected whether any of these students live off campus.

General social areas and entertainment

Staff Survey Q8 (Appendix A) and Student Survey Q18 (Appendix B)

Please tick to indicate how inclusive and accessible to all students are the following services in your union:

- = general social areas
- = entertainment.

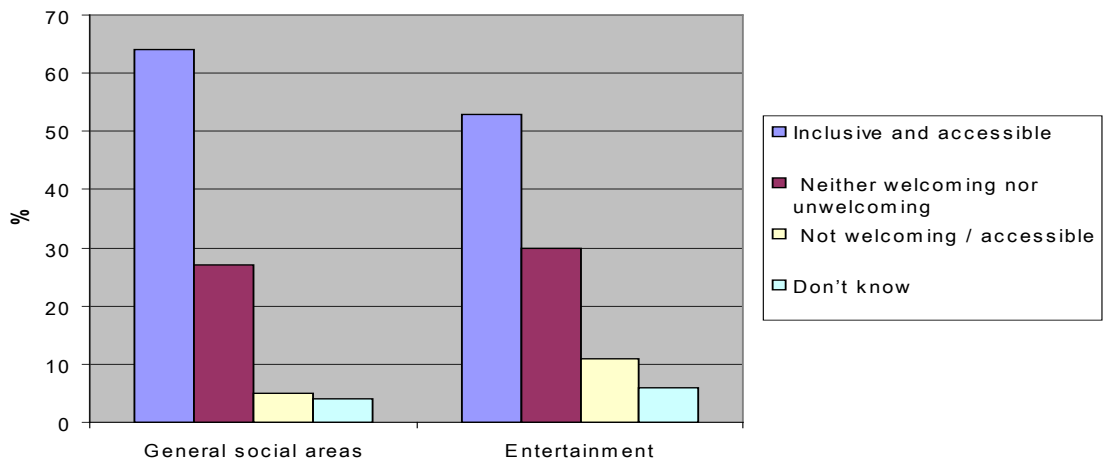


Figure 21 Q8: General social areas and entertainment (staff responses)

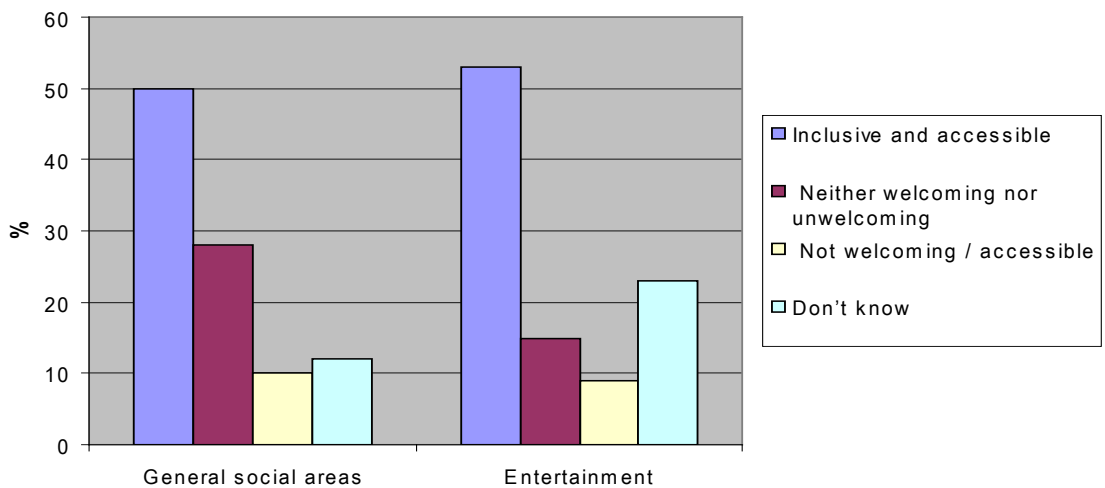


Figure 22 Q18: General social areas and entertainment (student responses)

Once again, a considerable number of students responded 'don't know'. This is perhaps more remarkable in terms of general social areas than for entertainments, as it could be expected that these areas would be used by all students. However, 12% of students (9) selected 'don't know' in relation to general social areas, and 23% (18) said 'don't know' regarding entertainment.

Analysis of those who responded 'don't know' did not reveal any specific excluded or dissatisfied groups. Students who described the entertainment as not accessible did not provide comments on why they felt this to be the case.

For general social areas, a relatively high number (10%, 8) responded that these were not welcoming, while a further 28% (22) reported that these spaces are neither welcoming nor unwelcoming. This was echoed by staff, with 27% (32) selecting 'neither' in response to the question. Only 50% (39) of students found these spaces to be welcoming and inclusive, compared with 64% of staff (76).

Regarding entertainment, a similar number of both staff (11%, 14) and students (9%, 7) reported that this service was not welcoming. There was a marked difference in terms of 'neither': 15% of students (11) selected this option compared with 30% of staff (38). Only 53% of both staff and students reported entertainments to be welcoming and inclusive.

The majority of the comments made by the students bemoaned the lack of services rather than reporting on the quality of them. Staff comments highlighted concern about the drinking culture.

'We would benefit from more social space without alcohol sales.'
(Staff respondent)

'... student group events revolving around alcohol and the perception of the need to drink to have a good time.' (Staff respondent)

'... they're very heteronormative in the types of events they run. Rather than being inclusive and diverse, there's only a tokenistic approach to including students and staff. Rather than being inclusive and welcoming to all, ideas of running a student gay night aren't picked up.' (Staff respondent)

This view is not reflected in comments made by students or in the analysis of responses from gay, lesbian or bisexual students. These students are engaged with the students' unions either through clubs and societies or use of services such as bars and restaurants.

Other services

Staff Survey Q8 (Appendix A) and Student Survey Q18 (Appendix B)

Please tick to indicate how inclusive and accessible to all students are the following services in your union:

- = information and advice
- = job shop
- = occasional events and outings
- = childcare facilities
- = volunteering opportunities.

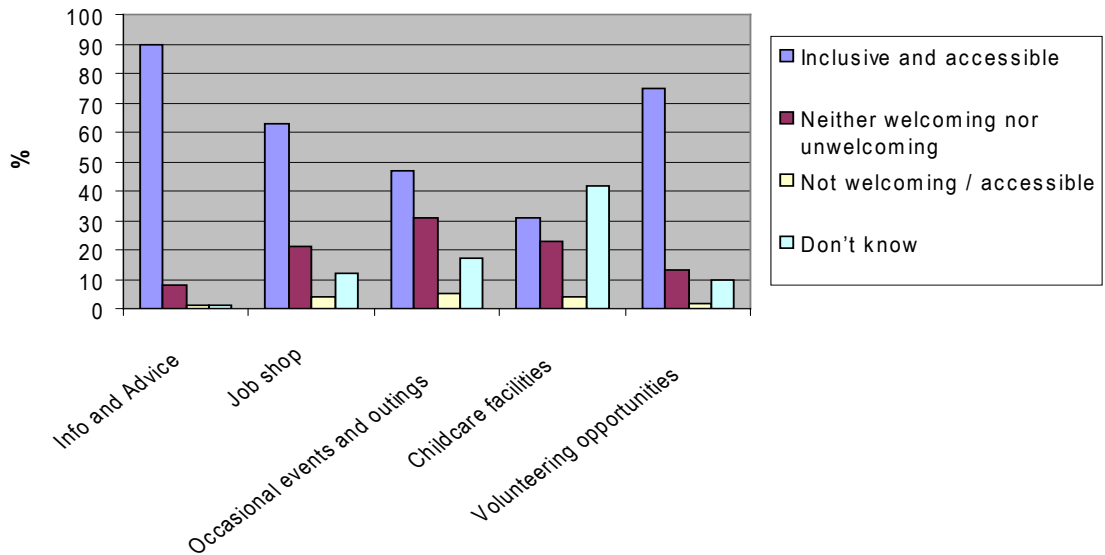


Figure 23 Q8: Other services (staff responses)

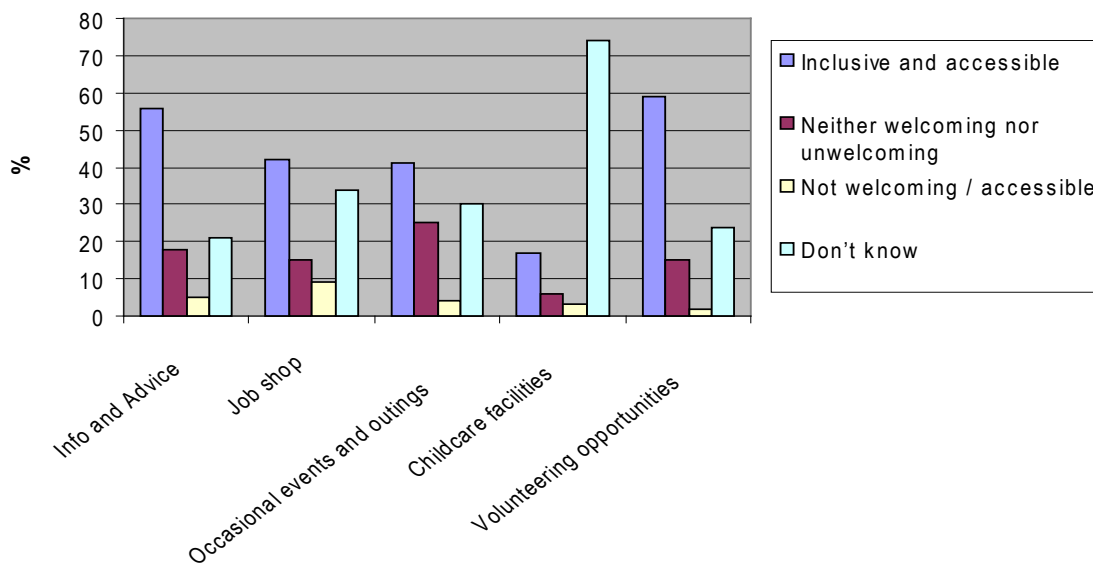


Figure 24 Q18: Other services (student responses)

There was quite a difference in the responses of staff and students regarding the provision of information or advice. Ninety per cent of staff (116) believed it to be both accessible and welcoming compared with 55% of students (45). However, it is likely that this figure is low because students have not accessed this service. Indeed, 21% of students (17) selected 'don't know' in response to this question.

There was a marked difference between staff and students' perceptions of the job shop service: 63% (47) of staff rated it as inclusive and welcoming against only 42% (29) of students.

The lack of childcare facilities provided by students' unions has been commented on as a significant issue in terms of both staff diversity and providing accessible services. However, it is not surprising that the majority of students (74%, 47) responded 'don't know' to this question, as many will not require this service.

A high number of students (24%, 19) selected 'don't know' regarding volunteering. Again, there was a difference between how staff and students perceive this service: 75% of staff (90) compared with 59% of students (47) described it as inclusive and accessible.

Staff Survey Q9 (Appendix A) and Student Survey Q19 (Appendix B)

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:
In my opinion, sufficient efforts are made to include all students in freshers' week.

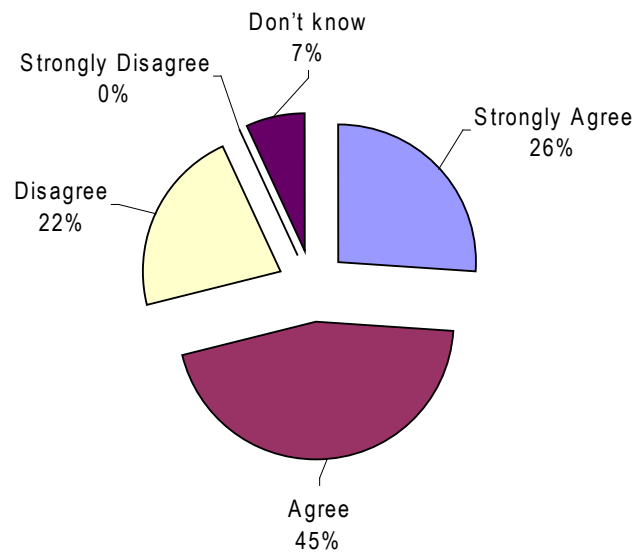


Figure 25 Q9: Sufficient efforts are made to include all students in freshers' week (staff responses)

Staff and students were both asked to indicate how far they agreed with the statement: 'In my opinion, sufficient efforts are made to include all students in freshers' week'. It is a concern that a considerable number disagreed: 22% of staff (28) and 24% of students (20). Seven per cent of both staff and students (nine and six, respectively) answered 'don't know'.

A review of those who responded 'don't know' or disagreed with this statement did not suggest that any particular groups of students were not engaged in freshers' week. Of the seven students who strongly disagreed, three were elected officers.

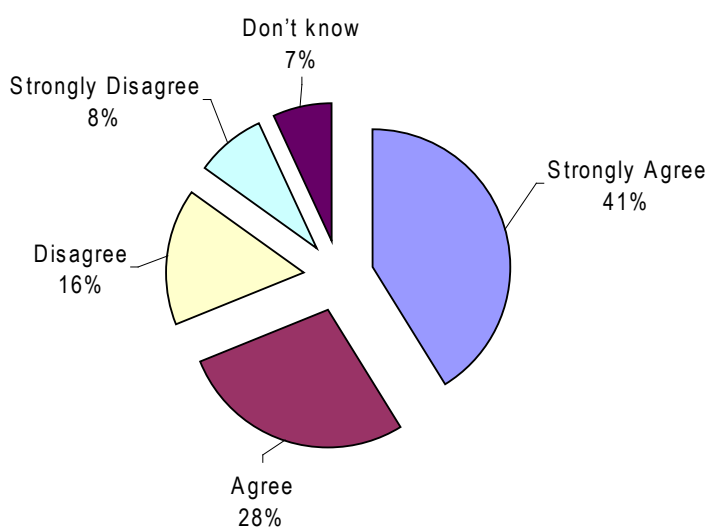


Figure 26 Q19: Sufficient efforts are made to include all students in freshers' week (student responses)

The comments received show that students' unions were taking steps to make freshers' week more inclusive and accommodating for all students.

'For a start we don't call it freshers' week but welcome week.' (Staff respondent)

'Staff are appointed to be responsible for each diverse group of members. That staff member is then responsible for ensuring that group is catered for and that all union services offer communication and activity that is accessible and relevant to that group's needs.' (Staff respondent)

'A freshers' crew is also around all the time to help with any concerns or problems.' (Student respondent)

Respondents noted the wider range of events on offer at freshers' week:

'...For example, we're hosting a picnic for student parents and their children to provide opportunities for them to meet other student parents in a relaxed atmosphere where there is a certain amount of child supervision.' (Student respondent)

'There are a range of alcoholic (pub crawl) and non-alcoholic (film nights/bowling) events, and the details are publicised all over campus...' (Student respondent)

'Our union started a 'Laid back and Latte' night of acoustic music, stand-up comedy and nice coffee/ food during freshers' week. It meant that all of the big nights during freshers' week didn't revolve around alcohol.' (Student respondent)

However, the comments also tell of continuing problems in including those hard-to-reach groups:

'...On the downside, more could be done for postgraduates and mature students.' (Student respondent)

'More always needs to be done to encourage postgrads to believe they are actually part of the union and can get involved.' (Student respondent)

'Although there was a postgraduate societies fair, not enough was done to ensure that all societies were represented there.' (Student respondent)

'I thought as a graduate student there was no effort to include me in freshers' week at all.' (Student respondent)

'... but more is done to include the freshers living in halls of residence; those living at home or in private accommodation can be left out a bit.' (Student respondent)

'Saw no evidence of anyone over the age of 25 being approached.' (Student respondent)

'We offer opportunities to mature students but they do not take them up.' (Staff respondent)

In addition, the drinking culture was again identified as a problem. Of the 49 staff who provided comments, 25% (12) noted the alcohol focus of freshers' week, while 30% (5) of the 17 students who made comments also mentioned alcohol.

'I think that a lot of the freshers' week activities were based around going out and drinking.' (Student respondent)

Staff Survey Q10 (Appendix A) and Student Survey Q20 (Appendix B)

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:
In my opinion, clubs and societies provide a welcoming and accessible environment for all students.

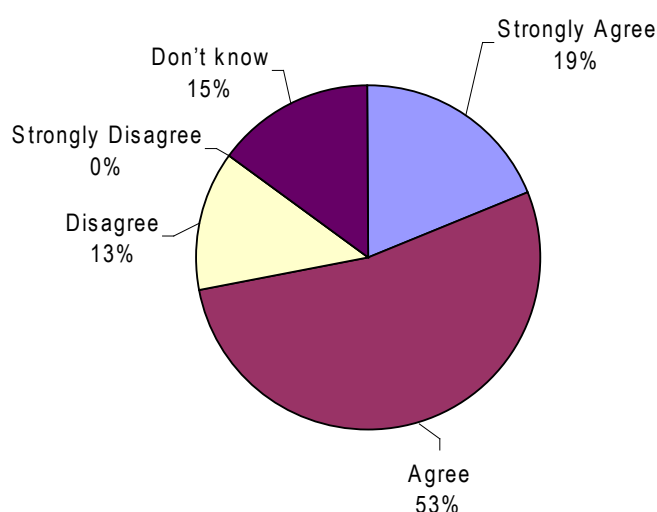


Figure 27 Q10: Clubs and societies provide a welcoming and accessible environment for all (staff responses)

Clubs and societies were cited as being the most inclusive element of students' unions. Both staff and students comment that if there are gaps in provision, any student can start one and will often be assisted in this process. Clubs, societies and sports groups can be one way of bringing diverse groups of people together to enjoy a shared passion or interest.

Many of the comments received were very positive:

'... Inclusive practice is that we have a very wide range of societies which can offer something for everyone!' (Staff respondent)

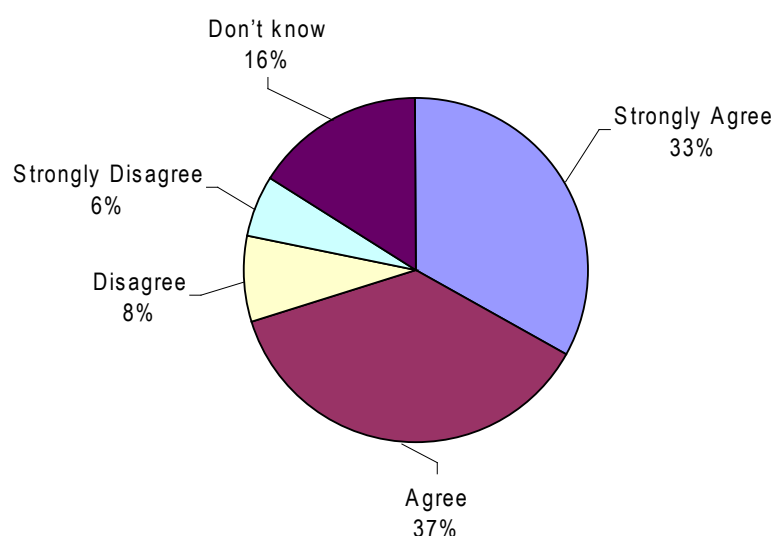


Figure 28 Q20: Clubs and societies provide a welcoming and accessible environment for all (student responses)

'Every effort is made to accommodate all students at all clubs I have been involved with.' (Student respondent)

'I am yet to know a society that isn't welcoming...' (Student respondent)

In this context, it is perhaps surprising that so many students (16%, 13) replied 'don't know' in response to the statement 'In my opinion, clubs and societies provide a welcoming and accessible environment for all'. Also, 14% of students (12) disagreed with the statement, suggesting that they find clubs and societies neither welcoming nor accessible. This figure was mirrored by staff responses, with 13% (16) disagreeing with the statement.

Seventy two per cent of staff (88) and 70% of students (57) felt that clubs and societies provide a welcoming and accessible environment for all students.

It is difficult to establish if any particular group is excluded, given the relatively small number of respondents. However, of those that disagreed, it is notable that approximately 33% were postgraduate students, suggesting that this group does feel marginalised in terms of clubs and societies.

Comments were made about issues or practices that are not inclusive. A number of students observed that, while clubs and societies appeared welcoming at freshers' week, this did not continue throughout the year. Others described members of clubs and societies as cliquey or elitist.

'They can be very welcoming during the freshers' fair but can be a bit unapproachable as they seem cliquey.' (Student respondent)

'Sometimes a society can seem elitist or unwelcoming to new members or those with no previous experience of the activities involved.' (Student respondent)

Some unions have taken steps to deal with this issue by developing schemes for students to participate in events and meet established members, breaking down the barriers where they exist.

'Barriers are students themselves ... we've tried to address this via Give it a Go, which [involves] activities run by staff. Also incentives to societies to run their own taster events, plus fines if they don't.' (Staff respondent)

One staff member commented that, while some societies have an excellent record in diversity, this experience, know-how and commitment is not evenly spread across all clubs and societies. Students' unions are supporting them to become more inclusive in a range of ways.

'Development workers have been conducting accessibility reviews with all clubs and societies to try to ensure they are inclusive and open.' (Staff respondent)

'More joint club and society events have helped groups themselves to diversify.' (Staff respondent)

'...We're planning to bring in guidance on dealing with dyslexia and sight difficulties in the coming months and signposting which clubs and societies are particularly accessible...' (Student respondent)

'Heads of these societies are trained in equal opportunities and encouraged to publicise themselves wherever possible...' (Student respondent)

Other issues mentioned included:

- = drinking culture and initiation ceremonies
- = not doing enough to encourage mature students or postgraduates to participate
- = resources in terms of venues, time and money.

5.2 Students' union communication and services: analysis

Communications and marketing

There is evidence that the website and newsletter/paper are not reaching students with whom the students' unions are not already in contact. This is significant because, as the comments below illustrate, students' unions have to strive to show students that they are relevant to their lives as students, as well as inform them of the services they provide.

'They are wonderful at getting you involved in rallies about stopping the war/arms trade, but precious little else.' (Student respondent)

'If students felt that unions could actually make a difference to the university, then students would be more inclined to approach them with their problems or support them more. Apathy is caused by the feeling that unions are fairly powerless.' (Student respondent)

Services

What is remarkable about the findings reported above is the number of students who chose the option 'don't know'. This is surprising, as this survey was disseminated through the NUS website and actively distributed by NUS through the email databases of its four liberation campaigns (for women, Black students, disabled students, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans students). This suggests that respondents were students who were in some way engaged with the students' unions.

When analysing the responses, it was difficult and often not possible to determine if any particular groups felt excluded or marginalised. This may be due to the relatively small sample of

students. Data were not collected on whether these students lived on or off campus, a factor that may have influenced how students experienced services.

The findings have highlighted some areas of concern that require further consideration, listed below.

- = Opportunity to influence services and communications – 20% of students (16) reported that they did not know of opportunities to influence services, and a further 17% (14) disagreed with the statement that there were adequate opportunities.
- = General social spaces – only 50% of students (39) found general social spaces to be welcoming and inclusive.
- = Entertainments – only 53% of both staff (67) and students (41) reported entertainment to be welcoming and inclusive.
- = Childcare facilities – the lack of facilities hinders attempts to achieve a more diverse workforce and to provide inclusive services.
- = Freshers' week – the comments reveal that a great deal of work has taken place to make these more inclusive. However, the data show that many staff (22%, 28) and students (24%, 20) did not believe that sufficient efforts were made to include all students in freshers' week.
- = Clubs and societies – while these were perceived to be the jewel in the crown, a surprising number of students responded that they did not know if these were welcoming and accessible (15%, 13) and a further 14% of students (12) reported that clubs and societies were unwelcoming and not accessible.

These areas will be explored further as part of our next steps.

6. Next steps

The next stage of the project will involve gathering more in-depth case studies from survey respondents about inclusive practice in their own unions that has been indicated in survey responses. To assist with this, an in-depth focus event with some survey respondents took place in October 2007 to establish and explore priority areas for further developing inclusive practice in students' unions. Full guidance for students' unions will be published in Spring 2008, facilitating the sharing of practice through case studies, and making recommendations based on the outcome of focus groups and other interviews. The guidance will be relevant to staff and students working at all levels within students' unions, from general managers and service managers to elected officers and leaders of clubs and societies.

Appendix A: ECU Survey for Staff in Students' Unions

About this survey

This survey (17 questions with estimated completion time of 20 minutes) has been developed by ECU, in partnership with AMSU (Association for Managers in Students' Unions). We would like to find out whether students' union staff think that union services and functions are open and accessible to all students whatever their age, race, religion or belief, disability, gender or sexual orientation.

The survey will give union staff the opportunity to tell us about examples of inclusive practice in their unions, which we hope to publicise. We will always anonymise any examples of negative practice that are described in survey responses.

Survey findings

ECU intends to use the findings of this survey to produce guidance materials to help inform union staff, elected officers and other student leaders about changes they can make to create a positive environment in which all students can participate.

About Equality Challenge Unit

ECU promotes equality and diversity in higher education. ECU is funded by Universities UK, GuildHE, and UK higher education funding bodies (HEFCE, HEFCW, DEL-NI) and by Scottish Funding Council to work in collaboration with Equality Forward in Scotland.

Instructions for completing this survey

When completing the survey, please navigate between pages by using the Previous and Next buttons at the bottom of each page. Please do not use the back and forward arrows on your internet browser as this will disrupt the survey.

We understand that survey respondents may not be able to answer all the questions, and we welcome partially completed surveys.

If you require this survey in a different format, please contact ECU by telephone: 020 7438 1010 or by email: info@ECU.ac.uk

The survey

Contact details (optional but please read information below)

Confidentiality: ECU will not divulge the identity of any individual responding to this survey, or use information in ways that could lead to the identification of individuals.

We would like to follow up this survey by contacting people to ask for more detail about their experiences, or for permission to publicise examples of good practice.

1. Your details

Name _____

Email _____

Telephone/ mobile number _____

2. At which students' union(s) do you work?

3. Main location that you work in (England/ Wales/ Northern Ireland/ Scotland)

Part 1: Your views about student officers and students' union elections

4. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

The process for electing student officers, including:

- = paid officers, often known as 'sabbatical' officers,
- = unpaid officers
- = full-time and part-time officers
- = other representatives, such as course representatives

is open and accessible, in practice, to the following students:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Students of all ages					
Students of all cultures					
Students of all faiths					
Disabled students					
Male and female students					
Students of different gender identity					
Students of all sexual orientations					
Under-graduates and postgraduates					
Full-time and part-time students					
Students who are parents or carers					

4a. If you don't agree that the process is open and accessible in practice, please explain why.

4b. What do you think could be done to improve your union's election processes?

4c. Please tell us about any good practice examples from your union in relation to open and accessible elections.

5. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

The elected student officers match the diversity of our student population in the following areas...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Age					
Race					
Religion or belief					
Disability					
Gender					
Gender identity					
Sexual orientation					
Under-graduate/ postgraduate status					
Full-time/ part-time status					
Students who are parents or carers					

5a. If you don't agree that elected officers reflect the make-up of the student population, please explain where you think the gaps in representation are.

Part 2: Your views about students' union staff

6. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

I feel that on the whole, the staff of my students' union are... (tick all that apply)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Approachable					
A diverse group of people					
Well trained about equality issues					

6a. Any comments?

7. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

Staff at my union offer support to students who may have difficulty getting involved in social activities and services.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

7a. Please describe any specific inclusive practice or barriers that you are aware of.

Part 3: Your views about communications and services

8. Please tick to indicate how inclusive and accessible to all students are the following services in your union:

	Inclusive and accessible	Neither welcoming nor unwelcoming	Not welcoming/ accessible	Don't know	Service not provided
Website					
TV/radio station					
Newsletter/ newspaper					
Bars & eating establishments					
Shops					
General social areas					
Entertainment					
Information & advice					
Clubs and societies					
Job shop					
Sports activities					
Occasional events and outings					
Childcare facilities					
Volunteering opportunities					

8a. Please describe any specific inclusive practices or barriers.

9. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

In my opinion, sufficient efforts are made to include all students in freshers' week.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

9a. Please provide any positive or negative examples.

10. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

In my opinion, clubs and societies provide a welcoming and accessible environment for all students.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

10a. Please describe any specific inclusive practices or barriers.

11. Please provide any other suggestions for making your students' union more inclusive, or any relevant information not covered above.

Part 4: Monitoring Information

Please choose one option from each of the sections listed below and then tick the appropriate box.

12. Your age

13. Your gender

14. Your ethnic group (the options are listed alphabetically)

Asian or Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Any other Asian background (specify if you wish)

Black or black British

Caribbean

African

Any other black background, (specify if you wish)

Chinese, or other ethnic group

Chinese

Any other ethnic background (specify if you wish)

Mixed

White and Asian

White and black African

White and black Caribbean

Any other mixed background (specify if you wish)

White

British

Irish

Any other white background (specify if you wish)

15. Religion or belief: which group below do you most identify with?

- No religion
- Bahai
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Jain
- Jewish
- Hindu
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other, please state.

16. Sexual orientation: please indicate whether any of the following apply to you.

- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Heterosexual/straight
- Other

17. Disability: do you consider yourself to have a disability, impairment or health condition?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please describe your disability, impairment or health condition. You may mark one of the boxes below, or use your own words at the end

- Physical impairment, such as using a wheelchair to get around and/or difficulty using your arms.
- Sensory impairment, such as being blind / having a serious visual impairment or being deaf / having a serious hearing impairment.

- Mental health condition, such as depression or schizophrenia.
- Learning difference/ disability (such as Down's syndrome or dyslexia) or cognitive impairment (such as autism or head injury).
- Long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy.
- Other, such as disfigurement (please specify below).

17b. If you selected 'Other' in the above question, please specify.

Thank you for completing the survey. To submit your answers, please click the Submit button below.

You will then see a page which summarises your responses. If you would like to keep a record of these responses, please print that page. Otherwise, please leave the survey by closing your browser.

Appendix B: ECU Survey for Students about Students' Unions

Purpose of this survey

This survey (27 questions with estimated completion time of 25 minutes) has been developed by ECU to find out what students think about the services provided and functions performed by their students' unions. We are particularly interested to know whether students think that unions are open and accessible to all students, whatever their age, race, religion or belief, disability, gender or sexual orientation.

The survey will give students the opportunity to tell us about examples of inclusive practice in their unions, which we hope to publicise. We will always anonymise any examples of negative practice that are described in survey responses.

Survey findings

ECU will use the findings of this survey to inform guidance materials for students' union staff, which will help them to create a positive environment in which all students can participate.

About Equality Challenge Unit

ECU promotes equality and diversity in higher education. ECU is funded by Universities UK, GuildHE, and UK higher education funding bodies (HEFCE, HEFCW, DEL-NI) and by the Scottish Funding Council to work in collaboration with Equality Forward in Scotland.

Instructions for completing this survey

When completing the survey, please navigate between pages by using the Previous and Next buttons at the bottom of each page. Please do not use the back and forward arrows on your internet browser as this will disrupt the survey.

We understand that survey respondents may not be able to answer all the questions, and we welcome partially completed surveys.

If you require this survey in a different format, please contact ECU by telephone: 020 7438 1010 or by email: info@ECU.ac.uk

The survey

Contact details (optional but please read information below)

Confidentiality: ECU will not divulge the identity of any individual responding to this survey, or use information in ways that could lead to the identification of individuals.

We would like to follow up this survey by contacting people to ask for more detail about their experiences, or for permission to publicise examples of good practice.

1. Your details

Name _____

Email _____

Telephone/mobile number _____

2. Please state at which higher education institution(s) you are studying _____

3. Main location that you study in: (England/ Wales/ Northern Ireland/ Scotland) _____

More about you

4. What is your mode of study?

Full-time

Part-time

5. Are you

An undergraduate?

A postgraduate?

6. Are you

A UK student?

An EU student?

An international student?

7. Are you an elected officer?

- No
- Yes – full-time
- Yes – part-time

8. What is the name of your post? _____

9. Are you the leader of a representative association (e.g. LGBT society, mature students' association)?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what is the name of your society or association?

Part 1: Your views about student officers and students' union elections

10. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

The process for electing student officers, including:

- = paid officers, often known as 'sabbatical' officers,
- = unpaid officers
- = full-time and part-time officers
- = other representatives, such as course representatives

is open and accessible, in practice, to the following students:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Students of all ages					
Students of all cultures					
Students of all faiths					
Disabled students					
Male and female students					
Students of different gender identity					
Students of all sexual orientations					
Under-graduates and postgraduates					
Full-time and part-time students					
Students who are parents or carers					

10a. If you don't agree that the process is open and accessible in practice, please explain why.

10b. What do you think could be done to improve your union's election processes?.

10c. Please tell us about any good practice examples from your union in relation to open and accessible elections.

11. Do you generally vote in student elections?

Yes

No

11a. If you selected 'No' in the above question, please state why below.

12a. Would you consider standing for full-time office in your students' union?

Yes

No

12b. Would you consider standing for part-time office in your students' union?

Yes

No

12c. If you have said 'no' to either of the previous questions, is this because: (please tick all that apply)

You lack time.

You do not find students' union buildings and/or facilities accessible.

You would not feel comfortable with the election procedures, for example public speaking or debating.

None of the available posts are attractive to you.

You are put off by the single-issue politics that can dominate your union.

Another reason (please comment).

12d. You mentioned in the previous question that you said 'no' due to a 'lack of time'. Could you please expand on this below.

Do you have a lack of time due to:

Looking after children

Other caring responsibilities

- Paid employment
- Pressure of course work
- Other commitments (please comment)

13. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

Elected student officers are accessible and approachable. I understand their roles and responsibilities and know which officer to approach when I have a problem at University.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

13a. If you don't agree that elected students are accessible and approachable, or that their roles are clear, please explain what the problems are.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

Elected student officers in my union adequately represent my concerns about student life.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

14a. If you don't agree that elected students adequately represent your concerns, please explain why.

15. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

The elected student officers match the diversity of our student population in the following areas...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Age					
Race					
Religion or belief					
Disability					
Gender					
Gender identity					
Sexual orientation					
Under-graduate/ postgraduate status					
Full-time/ part-time status					
Students who are parents or carers					

15a. Any comments?

Part 2: Your views about students' union staff

16. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

I feel that, on the whole, the staff of my students' union are...

(tick all that apply)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Approachable					
A diverse group of people					
Well trained about equality issues					

16a. Any comments?

17. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

Staff at my union offer support to students who may have difficulty getting involved in social activities and services.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

17a. Please describe any specific inclusive practice or barriers that you are aware of.

Part 3: Your views about communication and services

18. Please tick to indicate how inclusive and accessible to all students are the following services in your union:

	Inclusive and accessible	Neither welcoming nor unwelcoming	Not welcoming/ accessible	Don't know	Service not provided
Website					
TV/radio station					
Newsletter/ newspaper					
Bars & eating establishments					
Shops					
General social areas					
Entertainment					
Information & advice					
Clubs and societies					
Job shop					
Sports activities					
Occasional events and outings					
Childcare facilities					
Volunteering opportunities					

18a. Please describe any specific inclusive practices or barriers.

19. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

In my opinion, sufficient efforts are made to include all students in freshers' week.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

19a. Please provide any positive or negative examples.

20. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

In my opinion, clubs and societies provide a welcoming and accessible environment for all students.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

20a. Please describe any specific inclusive practices or barriers.

21. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

There are enough opportunities for me to influence the range of services and social activities provided by my union.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

21a. Please provide any other suggestions for making your students' union more inclusive, or any relevant information not covered above.

Part 4: Monitoring information

Please choose one option from each of the sections listed below and then tick the appropriate box.

22. Your age

23. Your gender

24. Your ethnic group (the options are listed alphabetically)

Asian or Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Any other Asian background (specify if you wish)

Black or black British

Caribbean

African

Any other black background, (specify if you wish)

Chinese, or other ethnic group

Chinese

Any other ethnic background (specify if you wish)

Mixed

White and Asian

White and black African

White and black Caribbean

Any other mixed background (specify if you wish)

White

British

Irish

Any other white background (specify if you wish)

25. Religion or belief: which group below do you most identify with?

- No religion
- Bahai
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Jain
- Jewish
- Hindu
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other, please state.

26. Sexual orientation: please indicate whether any of the following apply to you.

- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Heterosexual/straight
- Other

27. Disability: do you consider yourself to have a disability, impairment or health condition?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please describe your disability, impairment or health condition. You may mark one of the boxes below, or use your own words at the end

- Physical impairment, such as using a wheelchair to get around and/or difficulty using your arms.
- Sensory impairment, such as being blind / having a serious visual impairment or being deaf / having a serious hearing impairment.

- Mental health condition, such as depression or schizophrenia.
- Learning difference/ disability (such as Down's syndrome or dyslexia) or cognitive impairment (such as autism or head injury).
- Long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy.
- Other, such as disfigurement (please specify below).

27b. If you selected 'Other' in the above question, please specify.

Thank you for completing the survey. To submit your answers, please click the Submit button below.

You will then see a page which summarises your responses. If you would like to keep a record of these responses, please print that page. Otherwise, please leave the survey by closing your browser.

Appendix C: Staff Survey Responses

Q4. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

The process for electing student officers, including:

- = paid officers, often known as 'sabbatical' officers,
- = unpaid officers
- = full-time and part-time officers
- = other representatives, such as course representatives

is open and accessible, in practice, to the following students.

	Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					Total respondents
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	
All ages	31 (43)	46 (64)	14 (19)	3 (4)	6 (8)	(138)
All cultures	38 (52)	44 (60)	11 (15)	2 (3)	5 (7)	(137)
All faiths	39 (53)	47 (65)	7 (9)	2 (3)	5 (7)	(137)
Disabled students	33 (46)	47 (64)	11 (15)	3 (4)	6 (8)	(137)
Male & female students	53 (72)	43 (58)	0	1 (1)	3 (4)	(135)
Different gender identity	43 (59)	45 (62)	4 (5)	1 (2)	7 (9)	(137)
Sexual orientations	53 (72)	41 (55)	2 (3)	0	4 (6)	(136)
Under- & postgraduates	26 (35)	51 (69)	12 (17)	5 (7)	6 (8)	(136)
Full- & part-time students	21 (28)	43 (58)	19 (26)	7 (9)	10 (13)	(134)
Parents & carers	23 (31)	43 (58)	18 (24)	9 (12)	7 (10)	(135)
Total number of respondents = 134–138.						

Q5. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

The elected student officers match the diversity of our student population in the following areas...

	Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
Age	5 (6)	36 (49)	44 (59)	13 (18)	2 (3)	(135)
Race	12 (16)	39 (53)	37 (50)	8 (11)	4 (5)	(135)
Religion or belief	8 (11)	36 (48)	26 (35)	4 (6)	26 (35)	(135)
Disability	4 (5)	33 (44)	41 (55)	10 (14)	12 (16)	(134)
Gender	19 (26)	55 (74)	21 (28)	3 (4)	2 (2)	(134)
Gender identity	6 (7)	41 (54)	15 (20)	3 (4)	35 (46)	(131)
Sexual orientation	13 (17)	46 (61)	12 (16)	1 (1)	28 (37)	(132)
Under-/post-graduates	3 (4)	28 (37)	44 (58)	18 (24)	7 (10)	(133)
Full-/part-time	4 (5)	17 (22)	43 (57)	22 (29)	14 (19)	(132)
Parents or carers	3 (4)	11 (15)	44 (58)	27 (35)	15 (20)	(132)
Total number of respondents = 131–135.						

Q6. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

I feel that, on the whole, the staff of my students' union are...

(tick all that apply)

	Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
Approachable	56 (73)	41 (53)	2 (2)	1 (2)	0 (0)	(130)
A diverse group of people	28 (36)	44 (57)	23 (30)	2 (3)	3 (4)	(130)
Well trained about equality issues	22 (28)	54 (70)	19 (25)	1 (2)	4 (5)	(130)

Q7. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

Staff at my union offer support to students who may have difficulty getting involved in social activities and services.

	Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
	21 (27)	61 (79)	7 (9)	1 (2)	10 (13)	(130)

Q8. Please tick to indicate how inclusive and accessible to all students the following services are, in your opinion.

	Percentage (actual number in parentheses)				
	Inclusive and accessible	Neither welcoming nor unwelcoming	Not welcoming /accessible	Don't know	Total respondents
Website	62 (79)	29 (37)	6 (7)	3 (4)	(127)
TV/radio	44 (46)	27 (28)	6 (6)	23 (24)	(104)
Newsletter/ paper	54 (67)	30 (37)	10 (13)	6 (7)	(124)
Bars/eating establishments	67 (85)	21 (27)	9 (11)	3 (4)	(127)
Shops	75 (86)	19 (22)	3 (3)	3 (3)	(114)
General social areas	64 (76)	27 (32)	5 (6)	4 (5)	(119)
Entertainment	53 (67)	30 (38)	11 (14)	6 (7)	(126)
Information & advice	90 (116)	8 (10)	1 (1)	1 (1)	(128)
Job shop	63 (47)	21 (16)	4 (3)	12 (9)	(75)
Occasional events & outings	47 (54)	31 (36)	5 (6)	17 (20)	(116)
Childcare facilities	31 (15)	23 (11)	4 (2)	42 (20)	(48)
Volunteering opportunities	75 (90)	13 (16)	2 (2)	10 (12)	(120)
Total number of respondents = 124–128. Responses of 'service not provided' have been removed; these figures relate to the responses of those who do receive this service.					

Q9. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

In my opinion, sufficient efforts are made to include all students in freshers' week.

Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
26 (33)	45 (57)	22 (28)	0 (0)	7 (9)	(127)

Q10. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

In my opinion, clubs and societies provide a welcoming and accessible environment for all students.

Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
19 (24)	53 (67)	13 (16)	0	15 (19)	(126)

Appendix D: Student Survey Responses

Q10. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

The process for electing student officers, including:

- = paid officers, often known as ‘sabbatical’ officers
 - = unpaid officers
 - = full-time and part-time officers
 - = other representatives, such as course representatives
- is open and accessible, in practice, to the following students.

	Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
All ages	36 (35)	48 (47)	5 (5)	2 (2)	9 (9)	(98)
All cultures	39 (38)	43 (42)	4 (4)	3 (3)	11 (11)	(98)
All faiths	37 (36)	44 (43)	4 (4)	4 (4)	11 (11)	(98)
Disabled students	32 (31)	43 (41)	5 (5)	3 (3)	17 (16)	(96)
Male and female students	48 (47)	40 (39)	1 (1)	2 (2)	9 (9)	(98)
Different gender identity	33 (32)	46 (45)	1 (1)	2 (2)	18 (18)	(98)
All sexual orientations	42 (41)	45 (44)	1 (1)	1 (1)	11 (11)	(98)
Under- & post-graduates	32 (31)	39 (38)	11 (11)	4 (4)	14 (14)	(98)
Full- & part-time students	28 (27)	36 (35)	13 (13)	4 (4)	19 (18)	(97)
Parents & carers	19 (18)	38 (37)	16 (15)	4 (4)	23 (22)	(96)
Total number of respondents = 96–98.						

Q11. Do you generally vote in elections?

Percentage (actual number in parentheses)		
Yes	No	Total respondents
69 (67)	31 (30)	(97)

Q12. Would you consider standing for full-time / part-time office in your students' union?

	Percentage (actual number in parentheses)		
	Yes	No	Total respondents
Full-time	31 (30)	69 (68)	(98)
Part-time	48 (47)	52 (51)	(98)

Q13. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

Elected student officers are accessible and approachable. I understand their roles and responsibilities and know which officer to approach when I have a problem at university.

Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
16 (15)	45 (41)	20 (18)	9 (8)	10 (9)	(91)

Q14. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

Elected student officers in my union adequately represent my concerns about student life.

Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
13 (12)	38 (35)	23 (21)	6 (5)	20 (18)	(91)

Q15. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

The elected student officers match the diversity of our student population in the following areas.

	Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
Age	14 (13)	40 (36)	23 (21)	5 (4)	18 (16)	(90)
Race	16 (14)	38 (34)	23 (21)	3 (3)	20 (18)	(90)
Religion or belief	11 (10)	37 (33)	15 (13)	3 (3)	34 (30)	(89)
Disability	9 (8)	36 (32)	22 (20)	8 (7)	25 (22)	(89)
Gender	23 (20)	49 (43)	8 (7)	2 (2)	18 (16)	(88)
Gender identity	16 (14)	40 (36)	5 (4)	3 (3)	36 (32)	(89)
Sexual orientation	19 (17)	40 (36)	3 (3)	2 (2)	36 (32)	(90)
Under-/post-graduate	13 (11)	37 (33)	10 (9)	10 (9)	30 (27)	(89)
Full-/part-time	17 (15)	23 (21)	18 (16)	7 (6)	35 (31)	(89)
Parents or carers	8 (7)	22 (20)	24 (21)	12 (11)	34 (30)	(89)
Total number of respondents = 89–90.						

Q16. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

I feel that, on the whole, the staff of my students' union are ...

(tick all that apply)

	Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
Approachable	33 (30)	47 (42)	5 (4)	2 (2)	13 (12)	(90)
A diverse group of people	27 (24)	41 (37)	11 (10)	1 (1)	20 (18)	(90)
Well trained about equality issues	28 (25)	42 (37)	5 (4)	2 (2)	23 (20)	(88)
Total number of respondents = 88–90.						

Q17. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

Staff at my union offer support to students who may have difficulty getting involved in social activities and services.

Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
16 (14)	41 (37)	9 (8)	3 (3)	31 (28)	(90)

Q18. Please tick to indicate how inclusive and accessible to all students are the following services in your union.

	Percentage (actual number in parentheses)				
	Inclusive and accessible	Neither welcoming or accessible	Not welcoming/ accessible	Don't know	Total respondents
Website	62 (50)	23 (19)	3 (2)	12 (10)	(81)
TV/radio	33 (22)	13 (9)	9 (6)	45 (30)	(67)
Newsletter/ paper	51 (38)	19 (14)	3 (2)	27 (20)	(74)
Bars/eating establishments	70 (54)	20 (15)	1 (1)	9 (7)	(77)
Shops	64 (49)	20 (15)	1 (1)	15 (11)	(76)
General social areas	50 (39)	28 (22)	10 (8)	12 (9)	(78)
Entertainment	53 (41)	15 (11)	9 (7)	23 (18)	(77)
Information and advice	56 (45)	18 (15)	5 (4)	21 (17)	(81)
Job shop	42 (29)	15 (10)	9 (6)	34 (23)	(68)
Occasional events and outings	41 (31)	25 (19)	4 (3)	30 (22)	(75)
Childcare facilities	17 (11)	6 (4)	3 (2)	74 (47)	(64)
Volunteering opportunities	59 (47)	15 (12)	2 (2)	24 (19)	(80)
Total number of respondents = 82–83. Responses of 'service not provided' have been removed; these figures relate to the responses of those who do receive this service.					

Q19. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

In my opinion, sufficient efforts are made to include all students in freshers' week.

Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
41 (34)	28 (23)	16 (13)	8 (7)	7 (6)	(83)

Q20. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

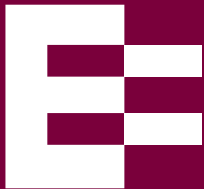
In my opinion, clubs and societies provide a welcoming and accessible environment for all students.

Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
33 (27)	37 (30)	8 (7)	6 (5)	16 (13)	(82)

Q21. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

There are enough opportunities for me to influence the range of services and social activities provided by my union.

Percentage (actual number in parentheses)					
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total respondents
23 (19)	40 (33)	12 (10)	5 (4)	20 (16)	(82)



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