

What ● Our Students Want

An insight into what our members need to
make sure they love their time at Leeds.



Express Yourself 2018: The Ultimate Feedback Challenge

As a Union, we're always asking our members to tell us what they're thinking to keep us on our toes and ensure LUU is **100% student focused**. To prepare for our 2018-2022 plan we took students

expressing themselves to the next level gathering even **more data, insight and knowledge** into what our students need and want. Here's what we found when we asked our members to express themselves.



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Introduction

“ We’re really pleased to introduce you to the findings of **Express Yourself 2018**. This report reflects our latest exercise to bring together various data, given directly by our members, about how we can improve their experience as students at the University of Leeds. The findings show us how the **needs of students have deepened and diversified** over the last few years. In the open comments and brief quantitative analysis, we can see the specific requirements around how the Union and University should be working hard to meet the academic, social and welfare needs of students.

This report reinforces the role Leeds University Union plays as the expert in what our students want from University life. From this report, the Union trustees, elected officers, LUU staff and volunteers will all be working hard to achieve a greater impact for students. This will evolve into the **LUU Strategic Plan for 2018-2022**. Additionally we’d like to invite comments and invitations from potential partners to help develop our plan to make students’ lives better. Contact us if you want to help students **love their time at Leeds.**”

AIDAN ▲ GRILLS
Chief Executive

JACK ▲ PALMER
Union Affairs Officer 2016-18

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Express Yourself kicked off in November 2017 and feedback was gathered in all kinds of ways including:



LUU Big Forum

We wanted to hear from our most engaged members to find out what we should be doing to make LUU, the University and the city of Leeds better. Over **170 ideas were generated** proving how invested our members are in improving student life. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Leeds, the Leader of Leeds City Council and the Vice-President Welfare for the National Union of Students (NUS) attended and shared their views too.

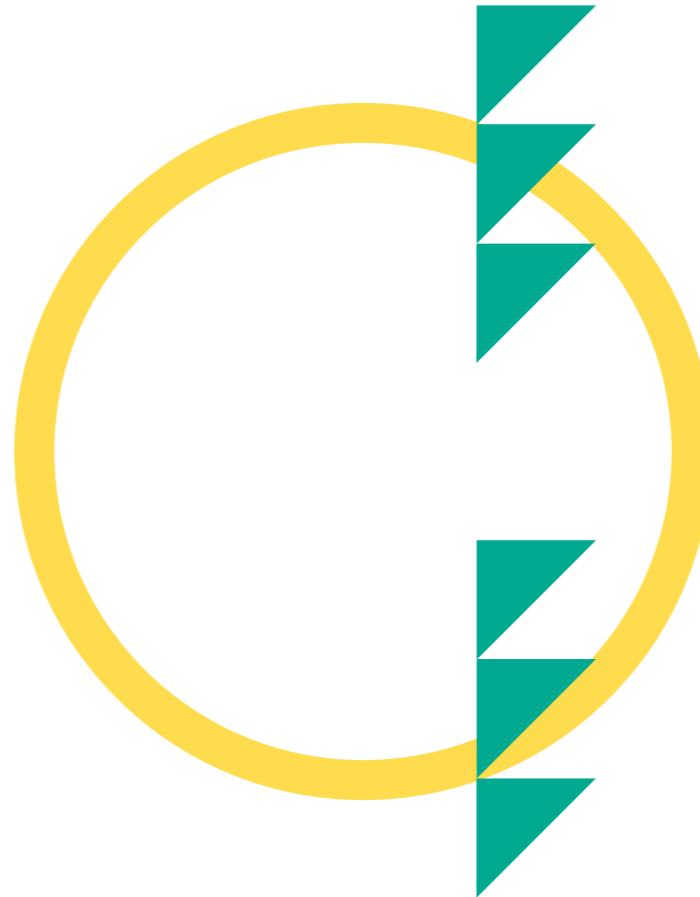
Survey

For this aspect of our research, we wanted a big data set and we got it with **4,114** current UoL students responding to our online survey. We asked a set of **five key questions**, focussing on the awareness, importance and performance of some of the highest impact work we do for our members:

- ♥ Helping and supporting you with your student life
- ♥ Preparing you for your future
- ♥ Providing student led activities, sport and societies
- ♥ Supporting your academic experience
- ♥ Delivering quality and value through our services

And we wanted to know how to make our students lives better by asking:

- ♥ What one thing should LUU be doing to make sure you love you time at Leeds?
- ♥ What one thing should the University be doing to make sure you love your time at Leeds?



Focus Groups

Finally we gathered focus groups to hear from the specific groups of **students who may not always get to speak up**. These groups included part-time students, liberation groups, mature, postgraduate and male students in particular.

In the groups we asked 20 core questions from the key themes found in our survey results, such as member understanding of LUU and survey questions. This covered:

- ♥ Engagement with LUU activities
- ♥ Communication of LUU activities
- ♥ Mental health provision
- ♥ Academic support
- ♥ Community opportunities

Further insight was gained from **focus groups with sixth form students** who were going to university, to get some additional perspective surrounding motivations and expectations.



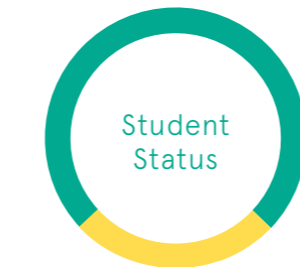
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What We Know

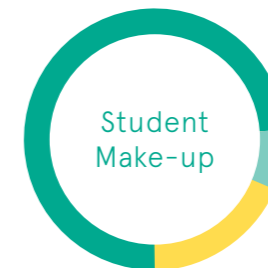
Who Our Students Are

At the time of Express Yourself, there were **35,834 students** registered at the University of Leeds.

♥ 74% undergrads



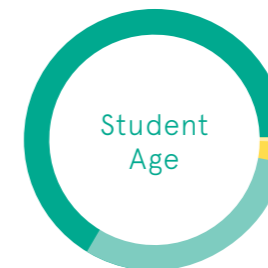
♥ 26% postgrads



▲ 73% from the UK

▲ 9% from China

▲ 19% from 126 other countries



■ 65% under 21's

■ 32% aged 21-35

■ 4% aged 36-50

■ >1% aged 50+

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What We Found Out

from LUU Big Forum 2017

The University

- ♥ Should be a diverse, inclusive, responsible, sustainable and accountable body - reflected in students and staff activities.
- ♥ Should be a transparent and fully accountable institution where a variety of study spaces are available to students.
- ♥ Should provide more, and better, mental health support.

Forums told us that:

LUU

- ♥ LUU services and outlets should all be run by students, for students.
- ♥ Should be more integrated into degree courses.
- ♥ Should be completely sustainable - minimal waste and emissions, maximum recycling and use of renewable energy sources.
- ♥ Should be an inclusive space, accessible for all.

Leeds

- ♥ Should remind students that they are part of a wider community, bringing these communities together.
- ♥ Should offer appropriate housing for the environment (sustainable, green) and Liberation Groups (quality, accessible, affordable).
- ♥ Should improve community links and cohesion to work towards common goals and shared considerations.

What We Found Out

From our survey and focus groups

What is LUU?

LUU was described mostly as **a body for student representation that provides a forum for students**. Students believed the Union should hold the University accountable and enact change across campus, the University and wider higher education.



"The Union is about your wider life at University, rather than academic life."



"The Union building is a great place to come for help and issue resolution and to find a useful part-time job through Joblink."



"The physical space upgrade has really made LUU stand out, with its clear layout and branding, which is helpful as it is such a big building."

"The Union should enact change across campus"

Give us more positive community impact in Leeds

Students **want LUU and the University to collaborate more** with the local council especially when it comes to recycling and waste disposal. Students were clear that the Union should keep lobbying the University to **promote sustainability across campus** and within the community.

132 students said that LUU should focus on their work in the community, sustainability and the environment so they could love their time at Leeds.

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"The £1 bus fare is great, useful and cheap. Needs more promotion, but clearly shows good engagement with the community to help students. More please."



"Collaboration is taught and considered important across University, so this should be reflected in the local community to help local residents in particular with living in co-operation with the large student body."

*Express Yourself Survey Nov 2017

Where does my money go?

Students weren't sure where the money they spend in LUU goes. They told us that "offering value in shops and services would make us love our time at Leeds".



"Why are there not more commercial agreements with other supermarkets, pharmacies, local businesses to get good advantages and agreements for us in the Union?"

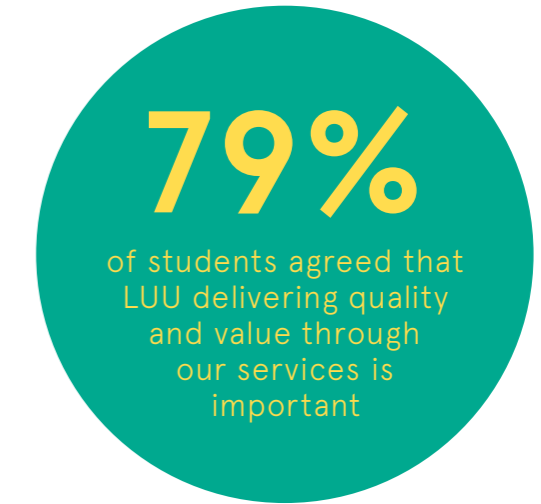


"Raising awareness and transparency and providing more information on what different departments within the Union are doing and why, is sensible."



"A clearer message of the Union's role in prices and which services are subsidised/offered by LUU and how much is spent on these is important."

*Express Yourself Survey Nov 2017



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Support My Mental Health

There's a rising demand for counselling services. Students want a proactive approach to counter this and let them access the services more easily. They also want to see an **increase in the range of services provided** and see a **greater collaboration between LUU and the University** on who offers which service.



"Counselling services on the whole have been very helpful and helped me resolve some issues, but more services are needed."



"The current approach to counselling and mental health provision is reactionary. You have to have a problem before seeking help, and even then the waiting list is crazy. I had to wait 4 months to even speak to someone remotely helpful and qualified."



"Awareness of the counselling available across campus needs improving, as do the waiting times. These are far too long and cause even more stress at a time when that really isn't needed."

*Express Yourself Survey Nov 2017

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71%

of students believe that LUU offering help and support with student life is important

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"You should be focusing on mental health and wellbeing"

105

students said preparing them for their future is the most important thing LUU and UoL can do to help

Prepare Me For My Future

Our members told us **they want more help with life skills**, you might call it 'adulthood'. They wanted to learn how to deal with the responsibilities of day to day adult life.

67%

of students believe that LUU preparing them for their future is important



"Offer seminars on finance and adult life."



"Discuss post-degree career options more regularly and offer more career opportunities in the academic year."



"Guiding first year students with what they should be doing regarding adult things like internships or housing for next year."

How are you supporting my studies?

Members were **confident in how the University should support them academically**, but **less certain how LUU could help** on a day-to-day basis. Students did know LUU was the place to come if they had issues in their academic life. Other ways to get were also noted as the advice centre, tutors, Nightline and the Big White Wall.

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"I want you to provide academic and pastoral support to make sure that we can complete our courses to the best of our abilities."



"I'm not very aware of the help and support available for academic studies so having a guide to how to use these and what they are specifically for would be helpful."



"The Union helping academically is important, however there is more to university than that and LUU should be making sure students have fun first."

*Express Yourself Survey Nov 2017



72%

believe that LUU supporting them with their studies is important

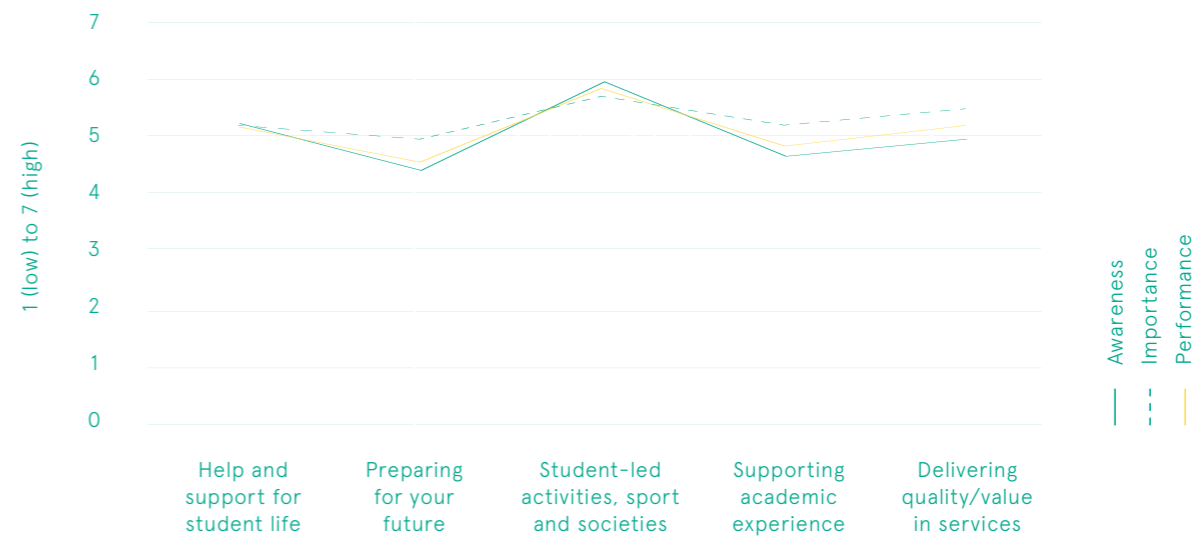
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"... academic support would help us to love our time at Leeds"

Supporting Our Diverse Groups

International Students

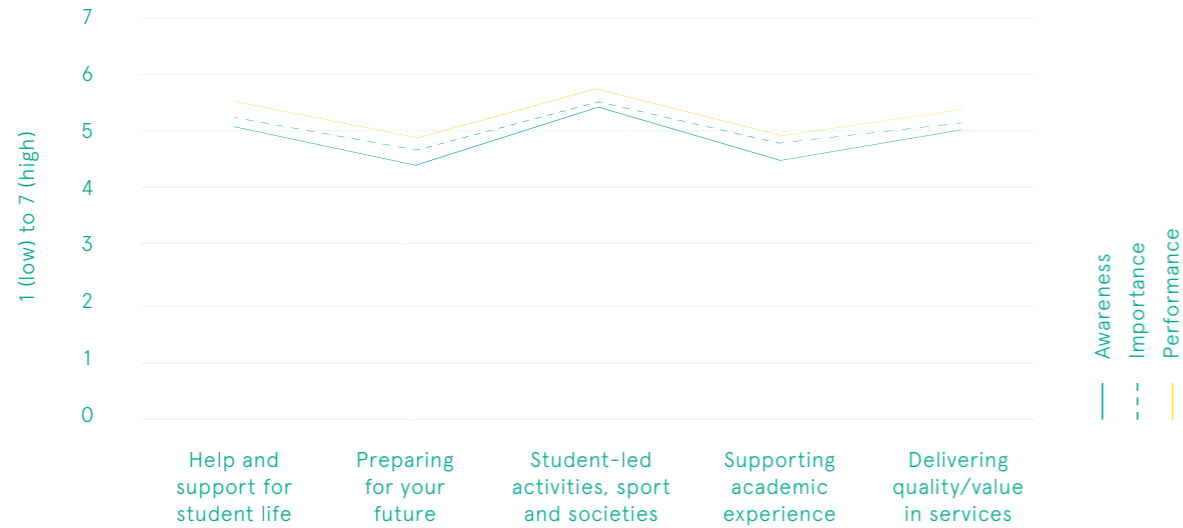
These members feel LUU meets their expectations for help and support with student life and the student-led activities on offer. But they want to see us doing more to prepare them for their future, support their academic experience and deliver quality and value. To do this, **we first need to raise awareness**, which would be the first focus in improving these services.



Chinese Students

Chinese members think LUU is performing well above expectations and although they had a low awareness of our objectives, this did not affect their overall satisfaction. Each objective that they identified as important to them they felt we were over performing on and **overall they were pleased with what LUU were doing**, which was great to hear.

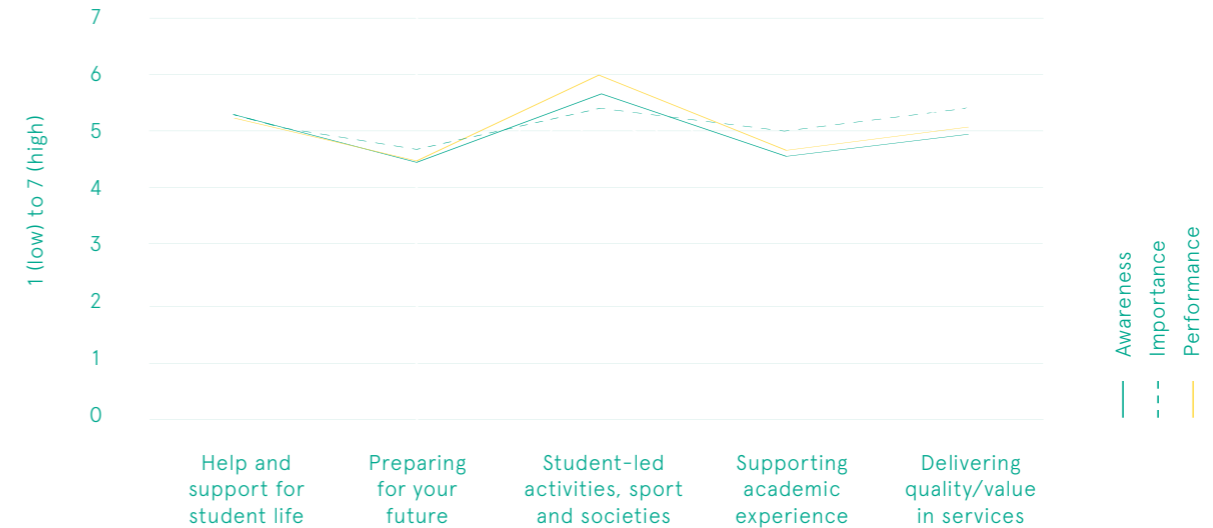
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Postgraduate Students

Taught and research postgraduates think LUU is meeting their expectations with the help and support they get and above expectations when it comes to student-led activities. But on all other objectives postgrads think LUU is underperforming, especially when preparing them for their future and supporting their academic experience, which they think is **too focused on undergrads**.

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Students told us that our priorities should be to:

- ♥ Manage pricing across the Union
- ♥ Grow more mental health provision and access
- ♥ Focus on access to LUU services across campus
- ♥ Continue to improve the Union building
- ♥ Improve the marketing of sustainability across LUU and the campus focusing on junk food projects, community engagement and involvement
- ♥ Improve the social aspect of University, the more involved students are the more they will engage with us.

Students told us that the University should prioritise:

- ♥ Organisation and care for students at a more departmental level
- ♥ Budgets spent of facilities desired in student feedback
- ♥ Water fountains across campus
- ♥ Mental health provision and access
- ♥ Demonstrating that the University is listening
- ♥ Better integration of services in one system
- ♥ Enhancing long-term care, especially after graduation.

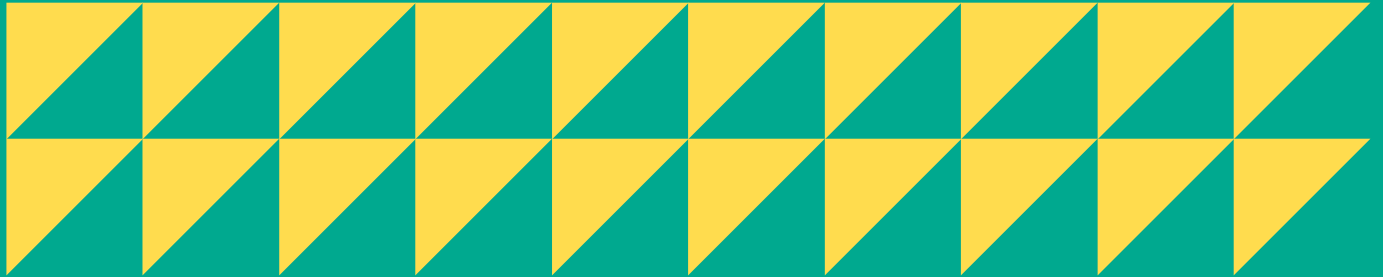
What's Next

Students have given us their priorities and across LUU we can deliver our ideas for the next four years. We know from the students accessing our services that mental health and wellbeing is important to them. We know from our Course Reps that academic support is a key priority. And we're aware that when graduating from University, our members want the skills they need to be successful in life.

We're not surprised by what our students have told us but it does reiterate and confirm what we already know and gives us the green-light to create a Strategic Plan that we know will make sure **students love their time at Leeds.**



If you would like to partner with or work with us, please contact Aidan Grills on a.p.grills@leeds.ac.uk.



luu.org.uk

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