

Speak Week Feedback Summary

Additional Themes

Introduction

Speak Week is an annual campaign run by the Students' Union, where we give all students the opportunity to provide feedback on the changes that they want to see at Cardiff University. All comments received during Speak Week are reviewed by the Sabbatical Officers, and support in lobbying the university for positive change.

This year we amended our Speak Week process and looked to gain concentrated feedback from students in five areas that had been identified as areas for improvement, whilst also providing schools with the opportunity to gather feedback on areas they wanted to explore further. The five areas we asked for specific feedback on during 2023-24 were:

- Accessibility on Campus
- The Clinical Placement Experience
- The PGR Experience
- Cardiff University as a Welsh University
- International Student Support

The feedback provided in each of these areas was used within the individual Student View documents created by the Sabbatical Officers, which have been passed onto the university to review.

To allow for the opportunity to provide feedback on other aspects of their university experience, students were also asked, in line with previous years, what they would keep and what they would change about their university life. A total of 603 individual free-text comments were provided, in addition to feedback in the above areas. These individual comments were themed and provided an overview of the main areas that students wanted to provide feedback on.

An overview of these additional themes has been provided below, along with a summary of the number of comments within different themes.



Comment Analysis

Although many themes were identified within the dataset, there were four themes that received over 50 individual comments each. These were:

1. Campus & Facilities – *79 individual comments*
2. Academic Course – *231 individual comments*
3. Students' Union – *165 individual comments*
4. Student Support – *52 individual comments*

The comments within each individual theme have been reviewed and a brief analysis included below.

1. Campus & Facilities

A high number of comments shared regarding the campus and facilities referenced individual buildings (*25 individual comments*). These comments primarily noted the need for renovation and better maintenance, especially the older buildings on campus, although some positive feedback was left about the infrastructure and building aesthetic. Students also noted that there is a need for additional female and/or gender-neutral toilets in certain buildings (*7 individual comments*), as well as more water fountains (*5 individual comments*) and prayers rooms (*5 individual comments*) available across both Cathays and the Heath Park campus.

Students expressed dissatisfaction about the disruption of a working life in the Centre for Student Life (*4 individual comments*), and commented that the lack of plugs across lecture theatres is unhelpful for those who wish to engage in course content using a laptop or other device (*4 individual comments*).

There was specific mention of campus safety within the dataset, with more than one student citing how they felt unsafe on or around campus, and that they did not feel reassured that the university was working to tackle this (*3 individual comments*).

2. Academic Course

Students across the university left comments about the teaching on their course (*55 individual comments*), many of which were to provide positive feedback about the quality of lectures and staff in various schools. However, comments also highlighted a desire to continuing returning to in-person teaching where possible, and a need for greater clarity from lecturers (including PhD supervisors) about additional reading and learning material. The data also highlighted that demand for a wider variety of optional modules across courses, and positive feedback from those courses who have a wide range already (*11 individual comments*).

Many comments also cited the need for additional resources, or for digital resources to be better organised, to support the learning content (*13 individual comments*). This included a number of individual comments referencing the poor organisation and layout of Learning Central (*10 individual comments*), and the need for more tailored support for individual students, through mechanisms such as tutorials or guided discussion time (*12 individual comments*).

Comments about assessments (*15 individual comments*), feedback (*11 individual comments*), and exams (*15 individual comments*) raised specific concerns, almost all of which called for changes to be made. These areas of feedback highlighted a desire for better organisation and communication around assessment



scheduling, which would allow students to better understand what is expected of them. There were calls for fewer exams, as well as feedback that is more accessible, more thorough, and delivered in a more timely manner.

One sub-theme that received a high volume of feedback was course timetabling (*43 individual comments*). There were various comments regarding timetabling, of which there was emphasis on a desire for more contact hours but shorter lecture times. Students also commented on a preference for lectures that are neither scheduled first thing in the morning, nor too late in the afternoon, and the need for better organisation of timetables, so students received them further in advance.

3. Students' Union

The Students' Union received a high number of individual feedback comments, a number of which provided positive responses about the Union in general. Comments about Union events (*36 individual comments*) showed a desire for more events, including a wider variety of events throughout the year aimed at different demographics such as postgraduate students. Comments also highlighted the need for more alcohol-free events for students to engage in.

There was a lot of attention in the dataset about activities (*40 individual comments*), of which many focused on societies (*21 individual comments*) and sports (*9 individual comments*). Most comments expressed concerns about the cost of joining societies and sports clubs, and requested further funding be extended to make such opportunities more affordable. Students highlighted the value of student groups for fostering community, but noted that the cost makes these inaccessible for many. General comments also added positive feedback about the range of activities on offer, as well as the openness and inclusivity of activities.

Student representation (*23 individual comments*) also received a number of individual comments, of which many could be further broken down into specific areas such as campaigns (*9 individual comments*) and democracy (*9 individual comments*). Within these areas, feedback highlighted appreciation of student-led wellbeing campaigns and outreach, and left positive comments about the representation structures of the Students' Union. However, comments did show that many students were confused by the democratic processes such as the Annual General Meeting, and highlighted the need for greater clarity of communication for all students.

4. Student Support

Within the dataset, student support was also referenced frequently. Feedback was generally positive about the student support services provided by the university, with almost as many students citing areas to keep as those who noted what they wanted to see changed. However, comments did highlight the need for greater availability of services (*4 individual comments*) to allow as many students as possible to access them.

Many students highlighted specific areas that they felt needed some further attention. Comments regarding mental health support (*11 individual comments*) referenced the need for better accessibility and advertising of services, and students felt the Extenuating Circumstances process (*3 individual comments*) was neither extensive nor efficient enough. Feedback also demonstrated students' desire for international student



support (*9 individual comments*) that was easier to navigate, that provided greater clarity around visa restrictions, and more communication about how to settle into the course and city.

Within the theme of Student Support, many comments also noted where equality, diversity and inclusion could be improved (*3 individual comments*), to allow more students to feel comfortable accessing support. However, the opportunities provided to students, including careers information and the Student Futures team, received positive comments (*3 individual comments*).



Summary of Themed Comments

Please note that individual comments that contained feedback on multiple themes have been included more than once in the following breakdown.

Theme	Number of Comments	Section	Additional Breakdown
Academic Course	231	Change: 101 Keep: 70 Not specified: 60	Teaching: 55 Timetabling: 43 Assessments: 15 Exams: 15 Content: 13 Support: 12 Feedback: 11 Modules: 11 Learning Central: 10 Opportunities: 7 Communication: 5 Other: 34
Accessibility	28	Change: 16 Keep: 6 Not specified: 6	
Accommodation	9	Change: 7 Keep: 0 Not specified: 2	
Campus & Facilities	79	Change: 40 Keep: 25 Not specified: 14	Buildings: 25 Toilets: 7 Prayer Room: 5 Water Fountains: 5 Sports Facilities: 4 Plugs: 4 Lifts: 4 Safety: 3 Other: 23
Careers	4	Change: 3 Keep: 0 Not specified: 1	
Catering	35	Change: 14 Keep: 9 Not specified: 12	Cost: 15 Variety: 6 Microwaves: 4 Other: 10
Cost of Living	44	Change: 32	Fees: 18



		Keep: 3 Not specified: 9	Food: 15 Postgrad: 3 Other: 8
Heath Park Campus	21	Change: 14 Keep: 1 Not specified: 6	
Libraries	32	Change: 9 Keep: 20 Not specified: 3	
Partnership	3	Change: 3 Keep: 0 Not specified: 0	
PGR	3	Change: 1 Keep: 1 Not specified: 1	
Placements	16	Change: 3 Keep: 1 Not specified: 12	
Study Spaces	25	Change: 11 Keep: 8 Not specified: 6	
Students' Union	165	Change: 49 Keep: 162 Not specified: 28	Events: 36 Societies: 21 General Activities: 10 Campaigns: 9 Democracy: 9 Sports: 9 Taf: 7 Representation: 5 Other: 59
Student Support	52	Change: 26 Keep: 19 Not specified: 7	Mental Health Support: 11 International Student Support: 9 Availability: 4 Opportunities: 3 EDI: 3 Extenuating Circumstances: 3 Other: 19
Sustainability	4	Change: 3 Keep: 0	



		Not specified: 1	
Transport	17	Change: 14 Keep: 1 Not specified: 2	
Welsh	10	Change: 6 Keep: 3 Not specified: 1	
Other	29	Change: 15 Keep: 11 Not specified: 3	

