



Cardiff Students' Union
Undeb Myfyrwyr Caerdydd

Speak Week 2024
Report

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1.0 Purpose of the report:

To present the principal findings of the 2024/25 Speak Week campaign in order to help inform decisions on changes and improvements in response to student feedback.

2.0 Executive summary:

Speak Week took place in November 2024. 4,230 students participated and 7,072 individual comments were submitted.

The four areas that received the highest number of comments can be seen in table 1 along with a summary of what students wish to keep and change about these areas.

Table 1. Summary of key topics

Area	Keep	Change
Facilities	296 comments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 24/7 libraries• General maintenance and buildings	674 comments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More 24/7 Libraries and extended Study Space hours• Additional plug sockets in communal spaces and study areas
Teaching	267 comments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching staff• Course format	349 comments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More in-person teaching and smaller class sizes• Improved online resources and interactive teaching• Increased contact time with personal tutors/mentors• Shorter lectures



Study Space	234 comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of 24/7 study spaces • Quality and variety of study spaces • Centre for Student Life (CSL) 	242 comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased study space capacity • More study spaces across campuses (including more 24/7 study spaces)
Student Support	212 comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic support • Friendly and helpful staff • Career support 	257 comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded mental health and well-being support • Increased academic support from educators and mentors

3.0 Introduction

3.1 Speak Week is an annual campaign organised and run by the Students' Union, giving students the opportunity to share their feedback on the changes they want to see at Cardiff University. All comments that are made during Speak Week are reviewed by the Sabbatical Officers so that they can advocate for positive changes to be made within the university.

3.2 This year's campaign (2024/25) took place in November 2024 and ran over the course of a week. It included a series of in-person stands across the Students' Union and university campuses where students could write and submit physical feedback cards. Additionally, students had the option to share their feedback through an online form available on the Students' Union website. A total of 107 students provided feedback online, and 4,123 students participated in person, resulting in a total of 4,230 feedback forms.

3.3 Last year, the 2023/24 Speak Week focussed on gathering targeted feedback from students in five specific areas identified as needing improvement. While this approach provided detailed and in-depth responses, overall participation was much lower than in previous years and didn't give the broad view of the change's students want to see across the university. As a result, in 2024/25 Speak Week reverted back to an open format, allowing students to provide feedback on any areas.



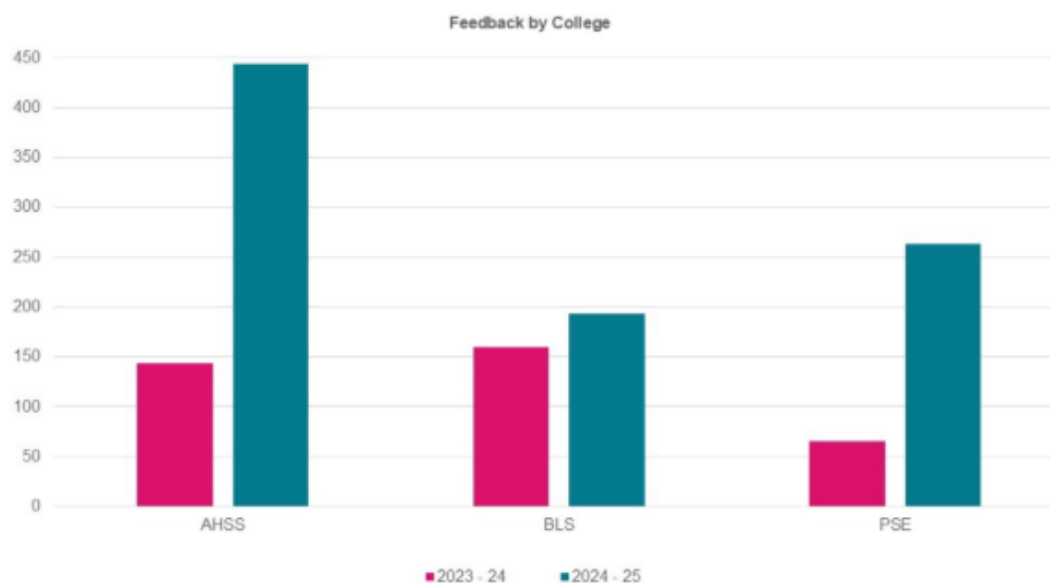
3.4 Students were asked, "If you ran the University, what would you keep and what would you change?" In total, 7,072 individual comments were submitted comprising of 3,313 'keep' comments and 3,759 'change' comments. Students were also asked to provide information about their school, year of study, year group, and whether they were a member of the Athletic Union or the Guild of Societies.

3.5 As in previous years, students were asked to indicate their agreement with the following statement using a likert scale "The Students' Union has had a positive impact on my student life". With five response options— 'strongly disagree,' 'disagree,' 'neither agree nor disagree,' 'agree,' and 'strongly agree'. A total of 2,790 students answered this question, representing just over 65% of all those who completed a Speak Week form. More information on this can be found within the Students' Union section of this report (page 16).

4.0 Demographic information

4.1 Graph 1 shows the number of students who provided feedback during Speak Week by **College**. It also compares student engagement with this campaign across each college to last year.

Graph 1. Respondents by college



4.2 While overall engagement numbers increased, the rise in student participation from BLS was minimal. Additionally, 3,336 students did not specify their college, meaning only around 900 students answered, accounting for just over 21% of all students who completed a feedback form.

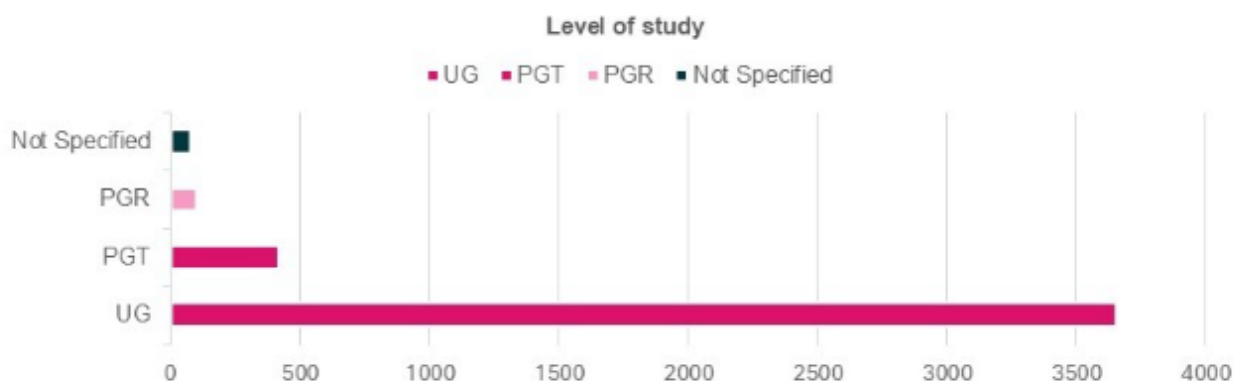
4.3 Given that AHSS students make up just under half of the Cardiff University student body, it was expected to have the highest engagement rate. However, it is surprising that PSE, which makes up a smaller amount of the student body than BLS had a higher number of responses.

(Data from the Academic-Future Data Pack provided by Cardiff University - November 2024).

The data suggests that there is a lack of engagement by BLS students in Speak Week and this should be examined, including overcoming barriers to participation before next year's campaign. One reason for limited engagement with this group could be that many of them are on placement and not on campus during the campaign. Next year, it would be beneficial to explore other ways to reach these students.

4.4 Graph 2 shows the student demographic of those who submitted feedback, categorised by **level of study**

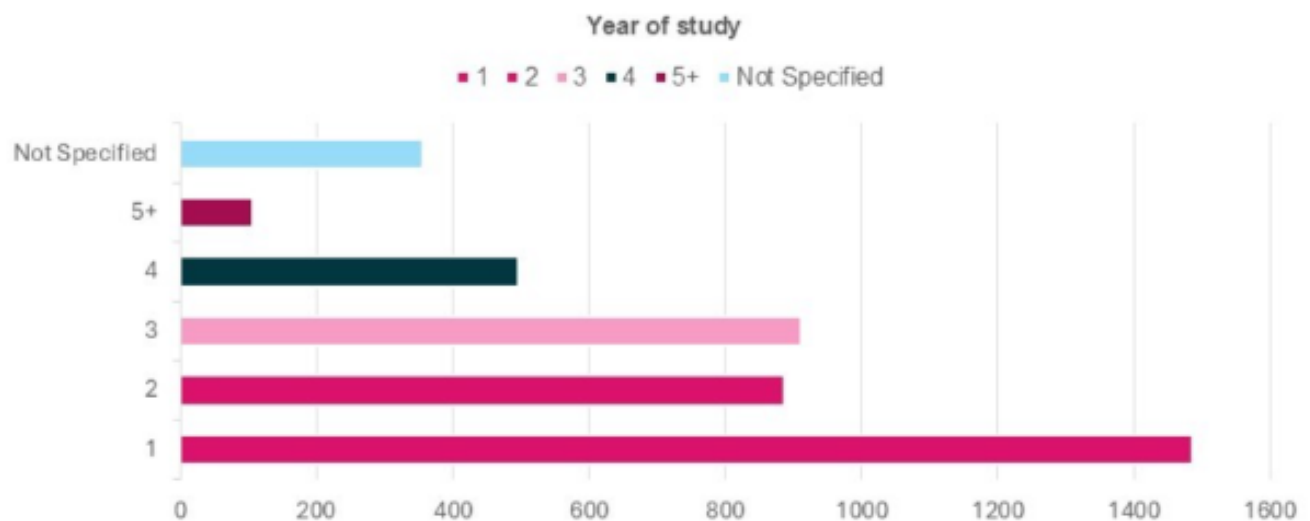
Graph 2: Respondents by level of study



It's not surprising that the vast majority of students were undergraduates. Undergraduate students typically spend more time on campus and in the Students' Union, meaning they were more likely to be present for us to interact with compared to postgraduate students. A separate analysis could be conducted on the responses from postgraduate students if that would provide useful insights.

4.5 Graph 3 presents the student demographic of those who submitted feedback, categorised by **year of study**.

Graph 3: Respondents by year of study



5.0 Analysis

5.1 Speak Week data was processed by individual comment, meaning comments on a single feedback card could be categorised under more than one theme where relevant. Data was grouped using a mix of pre-determined themes and new themes that emerged directly from student feedback, only those with significant representation in this year's data were included. All data was processed and analysed by the Student Voice team.

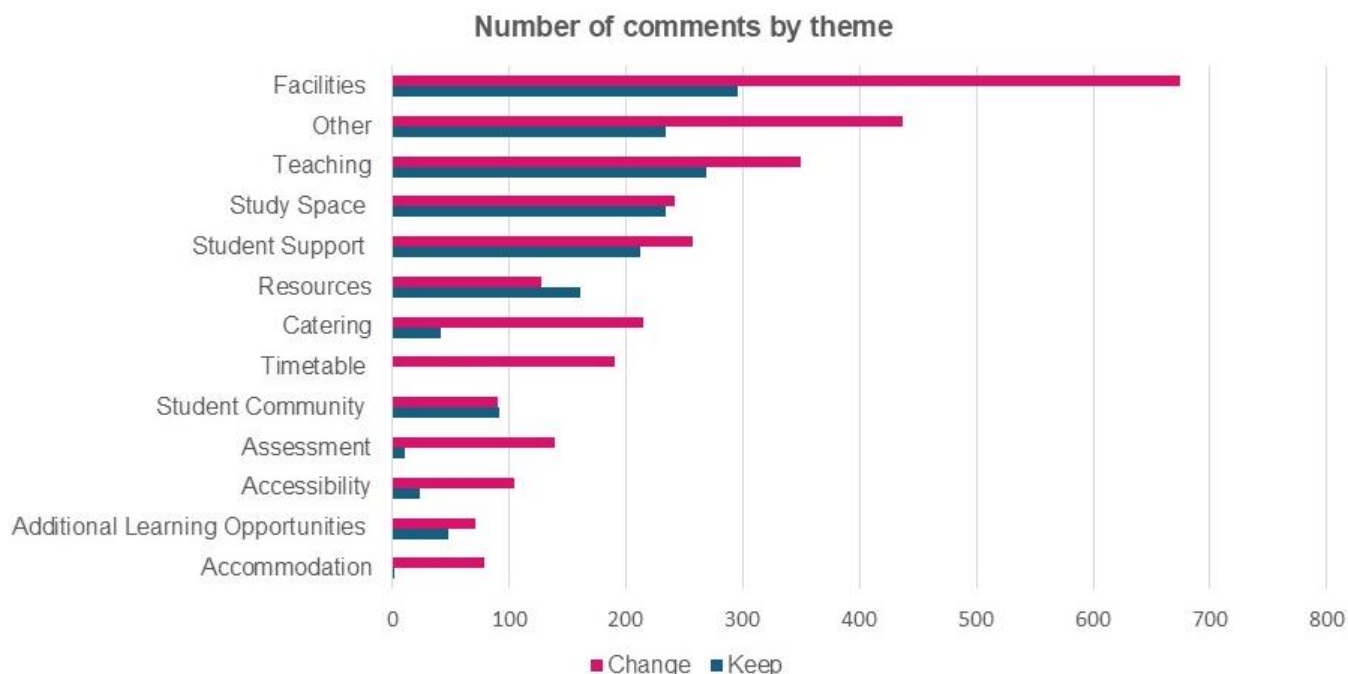
5.2 Graph 4 presents the number of comments recorded for 13 of the 14 identified themes (No Students' Union' comments have been included).



5.3 Feedback on the Students' Union is included separately at the end of this report (Page 16).

5.4 Whilst the theme 'Other' received a lot of comments this was removed from the top four key themes due to the range feedback received within this category, including 264 students (40% of 'Other' comments) who wrote 'Everything' to keep or 'Nothing' to change.

Graph 4: Comments received by theme



6.0 Key themes

6.1 The top four themes by number of comments received are shown in Table 1 (page 3).

6.2 These top four themes were included in 58% of all comments submitted (excluding 'Other' and 'Students' Union' comments), highlighting their significance to students. A detailed analysis of the top four individual themes is provided in the following section of the report.



7.0 Analysis

Facilities

7.1 Libraries

219 comments focused on the opening hours of university facilities', with a specific emphasis on libraries. Within these comments, students valued the current 24/7 libraries.

120 comments specifically requested extended opening hours across campus, alongside a need for expanded 24/7 library access and longer operational hours at the Centre for Student Life (CSL).

The open hours were frequently mentioned in comments regarding the CSL study space.

See also section **Study Spaces**.

7.2 Building Aesthetic

Students appreciated the university's historic buildings and requested that they be properly maintained and preserved.

The Centre for Student Life (CSL) received high praise from 47 students, whose 'keep' comments highlighted both its facilities and services, as well as the modern building and physical space. The CSL in total received around 88 'keep' comments across all themes showing its value to students.

7.3 Microwaves

27 Students requested more microwaves and/or kettles throughout campus especially in communal areas with 3 students showing appreciation for the current appliances. This is a theme that was raised in previous years.

7.4 Seating in communal areas

There was also a repeated focus on the need for additional seating and tables in shared spaces, with 53 comments highlighting this issue. The student feedback indicated that communal spaces in popular buildings frequently experience overcrowding and lack sufficient seating to meet student needs.

7.5 Electric outlets

The feedback also included 89 comments which showed a strong demand for more electrical outlets and charging sockets in communal areas and educational spaces including lecture halls.



The need for additional seating and plug sockets has appeared repeatedly in previous Speak Week surveys.

7.6 *Security*

14 comments were received regarding campus security, with students requesting improved lighting at night and others highlighting the need for additional security measures within the 24/7 areas on campus.

7.7 *Parking*

31 students provided feedback regarding parking issues both on campus and across Cardiff. Notably at the time of the survey, Cardiff Council was discussing the potential removal of student parking permits, which may have contributed to the prominence of this issue. Many students specifically mentioned the Heath campus, calling for better and more affordable parking options across university sites.

Teaching

7.8 We received 616 comments from students on teaching, with 43% of them praising 'teaching' across the university. Many students highlighted the strong support from lecturers and mentors and satisfactory course delivery. 47 also expressed satisfaction with the current teaching format including lesson structure and delivery method.

7.9 *Interactive teaching methods*

Whilst 47 students do appreciate current course delivery methods many expressed interest in more varied teaching methods. 68 students requested a 'change' in said methods with many asking for more class discussions, interactive workshops and practical activities with 11 students specially asking for more 'interaction'/'engagement' in lessons.

26 students are wanting a 'change' in course content with some students commenting that modules felt outdated and 'irrelevant,' recommending that these modules be reviewed and updated.

7.10 *In person and online sessions*

While students appreciate the flexibility of online lectures, 24 comments requested more in-person sessions. This request was also highlighted during 2023/24 Speak Week. That said, the flexibility



of online learning remains beneficial to many students, with online teaching praised in several 'keep' comments.

Regarding online learning, concerns were raised about the slow uploading of online recordings, with students requesting quicker access and for all lectures to be recorded.

7.11 Contact hours

43 comments requested increased contact hours and direct support from academics. Additionally, 8 students advocated for smaller class sizes in both lectures and practical sessions.

7.12 Reading Week

There was also a small demand for more courses to include reading weeks, with an additional 9 'keep' comments praising the current reading weeks, suggesting they should remain in place. Further feedback on timetabling can be found within the Additional Comments section (page 13).

Students are requesting more interactive classes with increased engagement opportunities. There is still a demand for more in-person classes, as seen in previous Speak Week reports. Students believe their academic performance would improve from more contact time with academics / tutors , smaller class sizes, and the introduction of reading weeks across more courses.

Study Space

7.13 A total of 476 comments were received regarding study spaces, meaning this topic was included just under 11% of all feedback (excluding "Other" and "Students' Union" comments). This highlights the importance of study spaces to students. Feedback was generally positive about current study spaces, with almost as many students citing areas to keep as those who noted what they wanted to see changed.

7.14 Opening Hours

234 students shared positive feedback, particularly appreciating the availability of 24/7 study spaces, with several expressing gratitude for having access to these facilities and recognising their value. However, 31 students requested extended opening hours for existing study spaces, with 21 of these students specifically asking for additional 24/7 study areas to better accommodate their needs and more flexible schedules.



7.15 *Increased and improved study space*

The most common request for change was the need for more study space, with 177 comments highlighting this concern. Students also emphasised the importance of upgrading current study areas, particularly by adding more plug sockets (see page 9).

7.16 The demand for additional seating and tables was a recurring comment, as many felt the existing study spaces were inadequately furnished and lacked enough tables and chairs to accommodate everyone. **This theme was frequently highlighted in comments about the CSL study space.**

7.17 Though fewer comments mentioned specific locations for additional desired study spaces, 28 students did suggest particular areas, with the Centre for Student Life, ABACWS, and ASSL being the most requested. Additionally, 20 students expressed a desire for more quiet study areas, with some suggesting private pods to help with focus.

Overall, students are clearly invested in the availability and quality of study spaces. There is a strong demand for more space, better facilities, extended hours, and quiet areas to meet the needs of those with varied schedules. The feedback reflects a strong desire for environments that support their focus and academic success.

Student support

7.18 469 comments were received regarding student support, accounting for 10% of all feedback (excluding "Other" and "Students' Union" comments) during Speak Week. While this was the fourth most commented-on issue, it still received around 180 more comments than the fifth highest, highlighting just how important access to student support is to the current student body.

7.19 *Wellbeing and mental health support*

The majority of feedback focused on university well-being services, with 138 comments addressing concerns about mental health support. Students cited long wait times and a lack of clear guidance on available services. Of these, 48 specifically requested more mental health resources.

7.20 *Academic support from personal tutor / mentor*

A total of 104 comments were received concerning academic support, with 48 students noting the existing support they receive is beneficial to their learning. Additionally, 56 comments suggested



needed changes, including 19 individual requests for more support from their personal tutor or mentor. Students also expressed a desire for increased contact hours with tutors and mentors. For further details, refer to the Teaching section (page 10).

7.21 *International students*

Support for international students was also commented on with 15 comments total. 12 students highlighted the need for better assistance with visas, passports, and clearer information on international student fees.

7.22 *Career Support*

A total of 31 students mentioned career support within 'keep' comments including mentions about CV help. This suggests that students recognise the value of these services and find them beneficial in helping them prepare for their future careers.

There is a clear demand for expanded well-being services, which would help to reduce wait times for mental health support. Additionally, students are calling for greater one-to-one academic support. Improving service clarity across all areas of student support will be key to better meeting students' needs.

8.0 **Additional Mentions**

The following section briefly covers additional comments that, although not part of the top four most commented-on themes, still received considerable feedback and warrant further exploration beyond their main themes.

8.1 *Timetable*

Although the Timetable theme received only 190 comments, all of them fell under the 'change' category, indicating a clear demand from students for adjustments to the current timetable.

Among the feedback, 11 students requested the removal of 9 a.m. lectures on Thursdays, while 12 others suggested removing all 9 a.m. classes altogether. Additionally, 21 students commented on lecture lengths, requesting they be shortened or have longer breaks in between.

Students also expressed concerns about the central timetabling system, highlighting frequent room changes that disrupt consistency and are often poorly communicated. Many students pointed out that the rooms assigned were frequently too small for the class size. Overall, there was a clear call for improvements to the timetabling system.



8.2 *Assessment*

10 students requested that the current assessment methods be maintained, expressing specific appreciation for online assessments and open-book exams. However, 29 students want changes specifically to assessment methods, with many asking for more coursework modules and for exams and deadlines to be spaced out more evenly across the academic year.

42 students noted that too many exams and deadlines were clustered together, creating unnecessary pressure and stress, and suggested better spacing to alleviate this.

Additionally, students provided comments on delayed feedback for submissions requesting faster responses. Many also called for more guidance and better communication on the mode of assessment and submission, with a particular request for more structured support on essays.

8.3 *Catering*

The key changes students want to see in Catering include expanding services and outlets across campuses, particularly with a café in the Bute Building. While 5 students praised the cost of food options, 92 students raised concerns about the high prices of food and drinks on campus, requesting more affordable choices.

8.4 *Transport*

65 students suggested improvements to the transport access between campuses. Many students requested free transportation from halls to campus, as well as buses to and from the Students' Union. There was a strong desire for a 24/7 bus route connecting all campuses to make transport more convenient and enable access to facilities during late hours.

6 students expressed the need specifically for better transport options to the Heath campus. Additionally, 7 students on placement have raised concerns about the need for improved transportation to their placement locations. Overall, students expressed a clear demand for free, reliable transport across Cardiff University campuses and halls of residence.

8.5 *Accommodation Support*

Within the 'student support' and 'accommodation' comments, 15 students expressed the need for better assistance in finding suitable housing, managing bills, and arranging essential amenities. Students highlighted that this was their first time handling these responsibilities and felt they needed more guidance in navigating the process and understanding their finances.



8.6 *Welsh language*

Students are not only asking for the continuation and expansion of Welsh modules but are also seeking greater opportunities to learn the Welsh language. 13 students have requested an increase in access to Welsh language classes across the University.

Students are calling for the provision of Welsh language modules, with a demand for more resources and learning materials to be made available in Welsh. This would help support the broader goal of enhancing Welsh language education and accessibility for students.

Students want to see a change in their timetabling asking for more consistency and routine. Assessments should be spaced out across the academic year with less focus on exams. Food sold on campus needs to be cheaper with more catering outlets throughout. Students want better public transport to and from campus requesting an updated bus schedule. Students have also expressed a need for additional support regarding accommodation and managing the responsibilities that come with it. Lastly, students are expressing a desire to learn Welsh and for teaching materials to be available in Welsh.

9.0 Underrepresented Students

While the issues within this section may not have received a large volume of comments, they are especially important as they reflect the experiences of students from underrepresented backgrounds. It is crucial to highlight these issues alongside broader concerns to ensure that all student voices are heard and addressed.

9.1 *Halal catering options.*

15 students requested a wider selection of Halal food choices at campus catering outlets.

9.2 *Gender-neutral toilets.*

5 students expressed a desire for additional gender-neutral toilets across all campuses.

9.3 *Prayer Rooms.*

While students appreciate the current prayer rooms available, 23 students requested more prayer rooms across campuses, with others suggesting updates to the existing facilities.



9.4 Accessibility concerns (lifts & campus access)

17 students commented on their appreciation of the current accessibility features across the university, however, 26 students did raise concerns about accessibility issues. Some mentioned broken lifts and limited ramp access, making it difficult to attend events and classes. One student described the campus as "inaccessible."

Students are requesting increased Halal catering options, gender-neutral toilets and prayer rooms and to also update existing prayer rooms. The accessibility of all campuses needs improving with increased lifts and ramp access.

10.0 Cardiff Students' Union

10.1 Overview

The Students' Union (SU) received the highest number of comments during Speak Week, with 2,657 comments. 1,720 of these were 'Keep' comments, while 937 were 'Change' comments.

The following is an overview of the key feedback and recommendations presented by students regarding the SU, with the most commented on areas identified.

Desired changes

10.2 YOLO

While 216 students expressed their appreciation for YOLO, 126 students provided feedback on desired changes. Among them, 51 students specifically mentioned the current queuing issues. Many suggested that the queues could be managed more efficiently, with a common recommendation to adjust the timing, including some requests for the queue to open later and others suggesting separate queues for students who are members of the Athletic Union.

10.3 Membership Cost

Affordability of memberships was also a central issue. 110 students pointed out that membership prices for societies and the Athletic Union (AU) were too expensive, limiting access and involvement. Students evidently wish to see more affordable options, so that all students have an equal opportunity to get involved with the activities offered by the SU.

10.4 Events

Diversity and inclusivity of events were also prevalent themes with students requesting more diverse events that cater to a wide range of interests beyond nightlife, with specific ideas including daytime events, themed socials, and events that involve various student groups. 32 students specifically asked for more 'sober social' events.



Within these 6 students have requested for the SU to bring back full building take overs.

10.5 Study Space

Another area of concern was study space quality and availability in the SU building. Several students called for additional quiet study space in the SU, with some suggesting an increase in the number of study pods. Students also called for improved furnishing of the spaces to make them more comfortable and conducive to studying. This finding reflects that of study space in university buildings (page 11).

10.6 Communication

Improved communication was another theme that emerged strongly. Students indicated that they would like more clear, effective communication about events and services provided by the SU. Many indicated that information needs to be more easily accessible, especially through email and social media, to keep students informed about what's upcoming and what's on offer.

10.7 Societies

Provision for smaller societies and clubs was mentioned in 9 'change' comments with students calling for more funding and support for these societies with the hope that more support would allow them to hold more events and increase engagement with the general student body.

10.8 Heath campus

As we are aware, many students have previously expressed a desire for a greater SU presence at the Heath Campus. Specific comments highlighted the need for improved accessibility and a wider range of activities to engage students at the Heath campus. During Speak Week, 14 students specifically called for the SU to increase outreach and support in this area, demonstrating a demand for a more inclusive experience of core SU services across campuses.

Requested to be kept

Despite these desired changes there were many positive comments about the SU.

10.9 Societies

150 students praised the wide range of societies within the SU. This is a point of pride, as it ensures that within the diverse range of societies there is something for everyone.

10.10 Affordable food and drink

Students praised the affordable food and drink options available within the SU, particularly at outlets like the Taf, which received over 140 'keep' comments alone. Many students noted that the prices at the Taf are low and affordable. In addition, several students requested more



promotions like that seen at the TAF and a greater variety of food options at the same price points.

10.11 Events

85 students highlighted their appreciation for the diverse range of events held at the SU, from poster sales to international student socials, catering to a variety of interests.

10.12 Access and space

Additionally, students expressed praise for the SU space, with 38 students specifically highlighting the lounge area as a desired 'keep' within comments. Students also showed their appreciation for the extended opening hours of the SU with 5 'keep' comments on the 24/7 access of the facility specifically.

Student Union impact on student life

On a Likert scale of 1-5, with 5 indicating strong agreement that the SU had a positive impact on student life, the average score was 4.01. A total of 2,243 students rated the SU's impact on their experience as 4 or higher, meaning that 80% of respondents felt the SU had a positive influence on their student experience.

Table of comments

Excluding Students' Union comments.

Speak Week data was processed by individual comment, meaning comments on a single feedback card could be categorised under more than one theme where relevant.

Area	Number of comments	Additional breakdown
Accommodation	Keep:1 Change: 79 Total: 80	Laundry service / Cost: 8 Maintenance: 15 Accommodation support: 15 Other: 42
Additional Learning Opportunities	Keep: 48 Change: 71 Total: 119	Global opportunities: 17 Welsh language: 13 Language classes: 15 Postgraduate opportunities: 8 Other: 66
Accessibility	Keep:24	Campus accessibility: 43



	Change: 104 Total: 128	Disability services: 16 Student transport: 69
Assessment	Keep:10 Change: 139 Total: 149	Assessment timetabling: 42 Format: 38 Assessment support / communication: 48 <i>Other: 21</i>
Student Community	Keep: 91 Change: 90 Total: 181	Atmosphere & inclusivity: 55 Student safety: 11 Welsh culture: 7 <i>Other: 108</i>
Timetable	Keep:0 Change: 190 Total: 190	Communication: 8 Central Timetabling: 14 Schedule: 152 <i>Other: 16</i>
Catering	Keep: 42 Change: 215 Total: 257	Cost: 97 Outlets: 79 Variety: 30 Halal options: 15 <i>Other: 36</i>
Resources	Keep:161 Change: 128 Total: 289	Online resources: 49 Library resources: 41 Learning central: 25 IT Services: 17 Room booking: 15 Printing: 13 <i>Other: 129</i>
Student Support	Keep:212 Change: 257 Total: 469	Wellbeing services: 138 Academic support: 104 Career support: 36 International student support: 15 <i>Other: 176</i>
Study Space	Keep:234 Change: 242 Total: 476	Facility / Amount: 202 Opening hours: 53 "Study space": 89 CSL: 16 <i>Other: 116</i>
Teaching	Keep: 267 Change: 349 Total: 616	Format: 115 Contact hours: 108 Content: 40 Online learning: 35 Lecture length: 25 <i>Other: 293</i>



Facilities	Keep: 296 Change: 674 Total: 970	Opening hours: 219 Buildings: 121 Microwaves and kettles: 30 Communal area capacity: 53 More electrical outlets: 89 Other: 458
Other	Keep: 235 Change: 437 Total: 672	“Everything” / “Nothing”: 264 All other: 407

