

Students' Union Annual Survey 2008

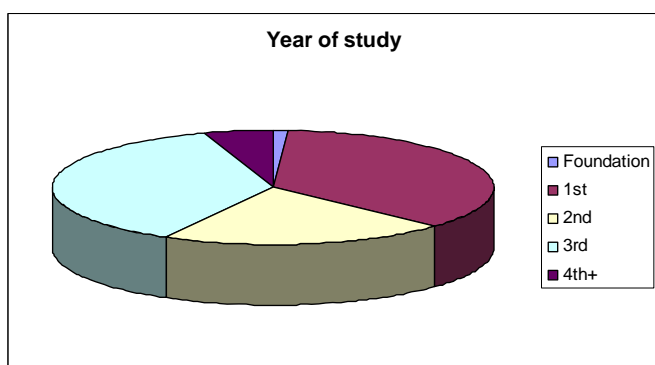
Survey Results

Introduction

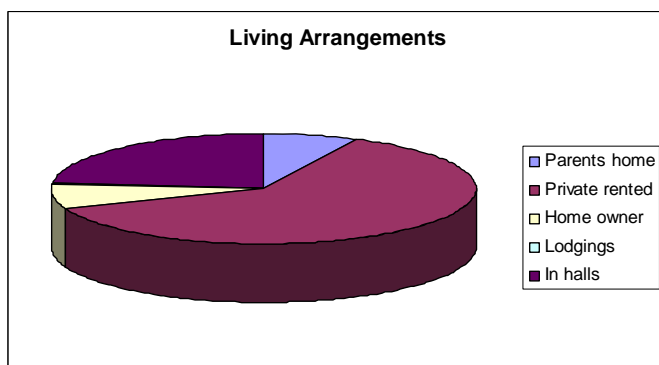
For the second year running, all students at York St John University were invited to take part in an online survey about their experiences and views of York St John University and York St John Students' Union. Students were also asked some questions about their work and social lives. 421 students responded to the survey (an increase of 16 responses from 2007) which was kept open for 4 weeks in May 2008. All responses received were put into a prize draw for the chance to win a ticket to the Summer Ball.

Section One: General Demographics

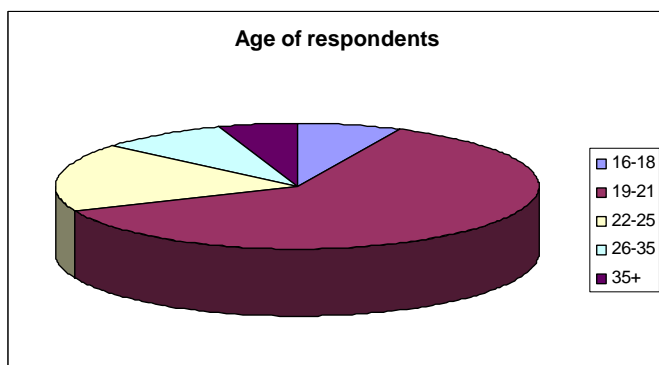
Of the 421 students who responded to the survey, 1% were Foundation students, 35.9% were 1st years, 21.1% were 2nd years, 37.1% were 3rd years and 5% were 4th years.



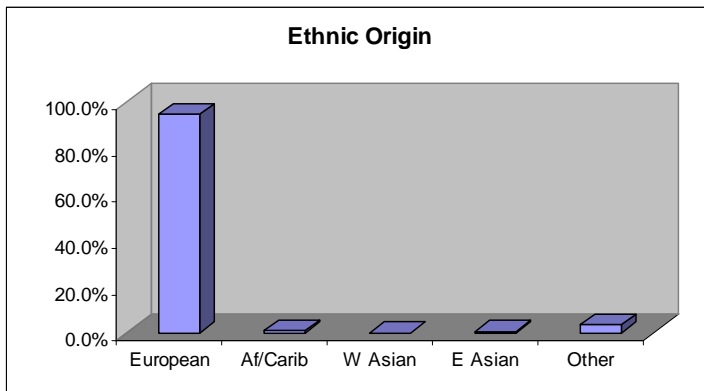
The majority of students who responded live in private rented accommodation (62%). 23.3% live in halls; 7.1% live with parents, 7.4% are homeowners and 0.2% live in lodgings with a family.



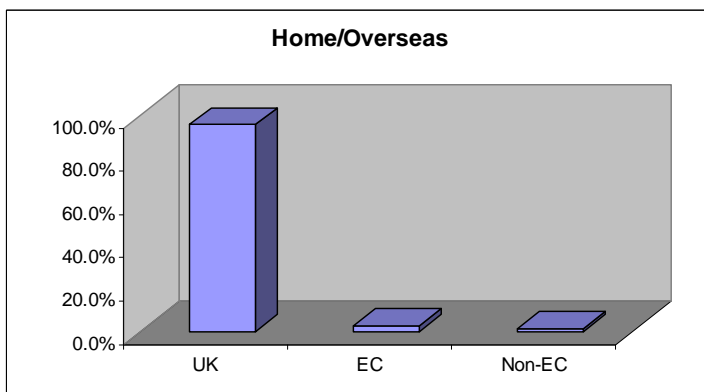
The majority of students who responded were aged 19-21 (61.8%). 17.3% were aged 22-25; 5.2% were over 35; 8.8% were aged 26-35 and 6.9% were aged 16-18.



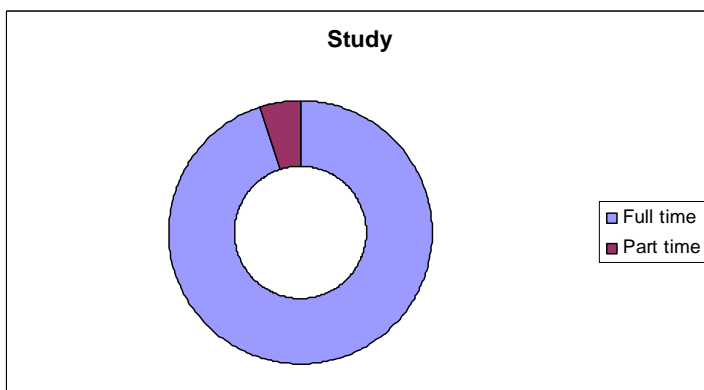
Almost all students who responded described their ethnic origin as European including UK/Irish (94.5%); 1% were African/Caribbean; 0.2% were West Asian (e.g. Indian); 0.7% were East Asian (e.g. Chinese) and 3.6% described themselves as "Other".



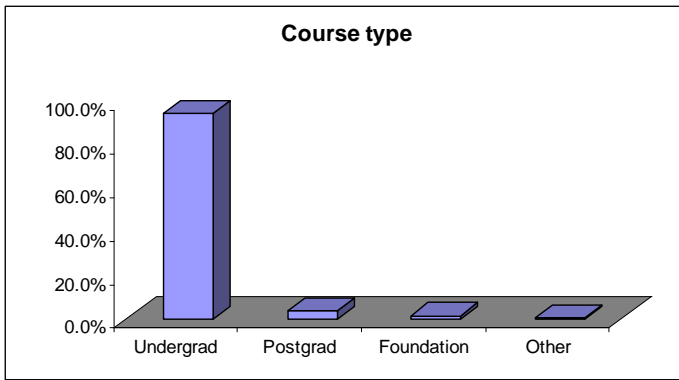
Almost all students who responded were UK students (95.7%). 2.9% were from the EC and 1.4% were from a non-EC country.



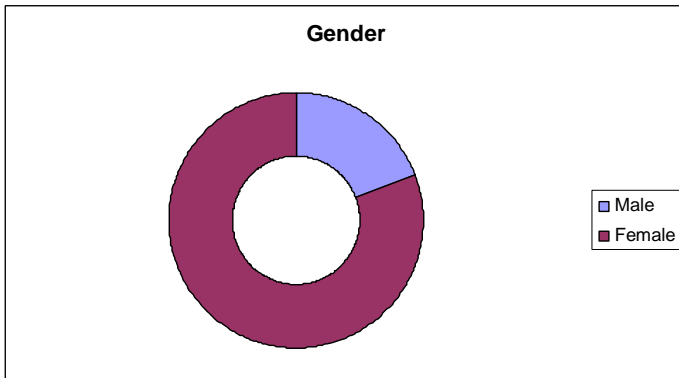
Almost all students who responded studied full time (95%). 5% studied part time.



The majority of students who responded were undergraduates (94.3%). 3.8% were postgraduate, 1.4% were foundation students and 0.5% were "other".

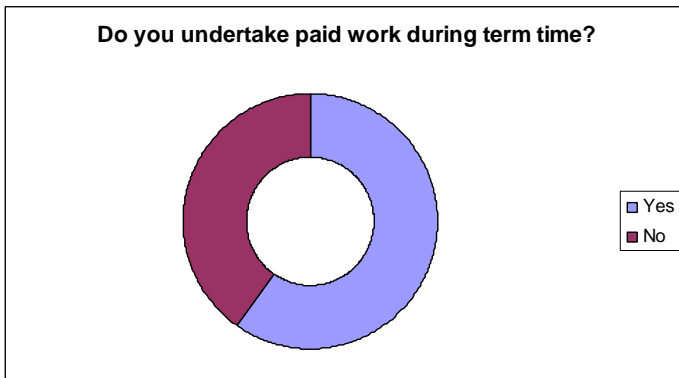


The majority of the students who responded were female (80.8%). 19.2% were male.

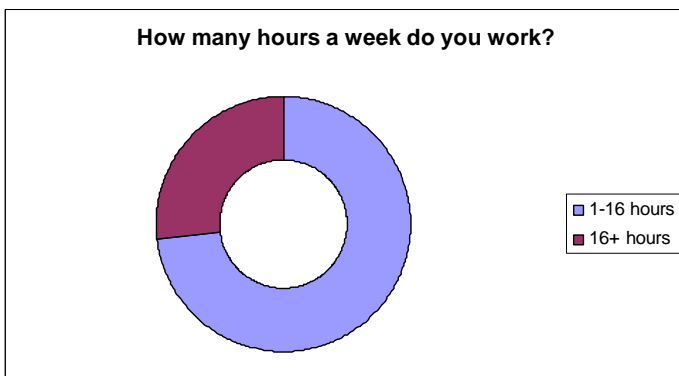


Section Two: Work during Term Time

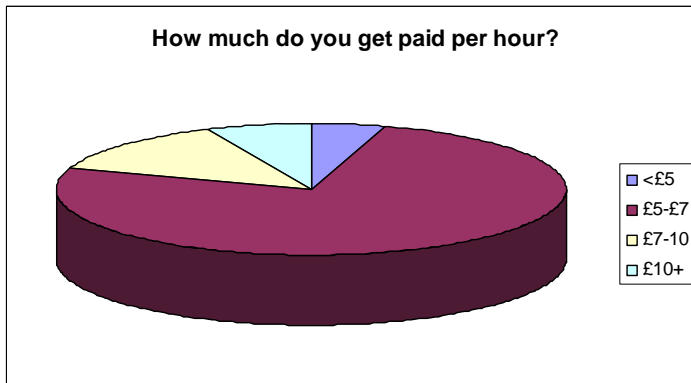
Students were asked if they undertook paid work during term-time. 59.8% replied yes. 40.4% said no.



Of the students who said that they undertook paid work during term time, the majority of them (73%) worked from 1-16 hours per week. 27% worked 16 hours or over.

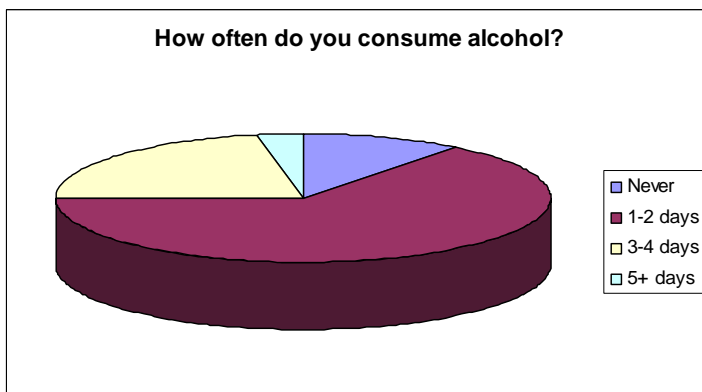


Of the students who undertook paid work during term time, 75.4% were paid between £5 and £7 per hour; 13.1% were paid between £7 and £10 per hour and 6.7% were paid £10 and over. 4.5% were paid under £5 per hour.



Section Three: Alcohol

Students were asked how often they consumed alcohol. Of the 411 who responded to this question, 10.5% said they never consumed alcohol; 64.7% consumed alcohol 1 or 2 days a week; 21.9% consumed alcohol 3 or 4 days a week and 3.2% consumed alcohol 5 or more days a week.

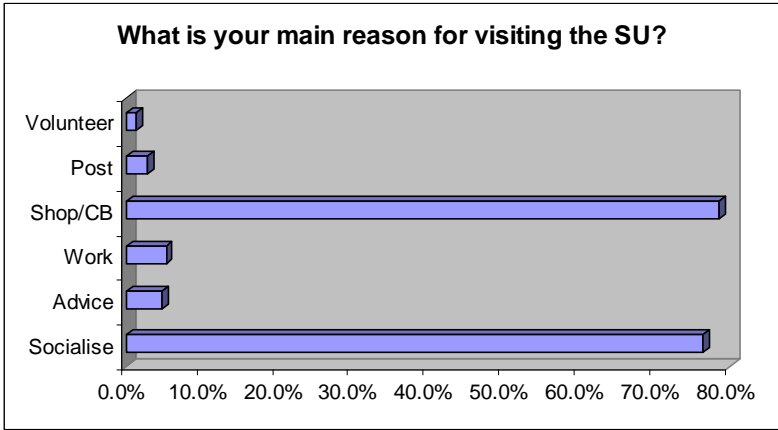


Of the students who said that they consumed alcohol, 46.8% said they spent no more than £15 a week on alcohol; 33.6% said they spent between £15 and £30 each week; 15.6% said they spent between £30 and £45 per week and 4.2% spent over £45 a week.

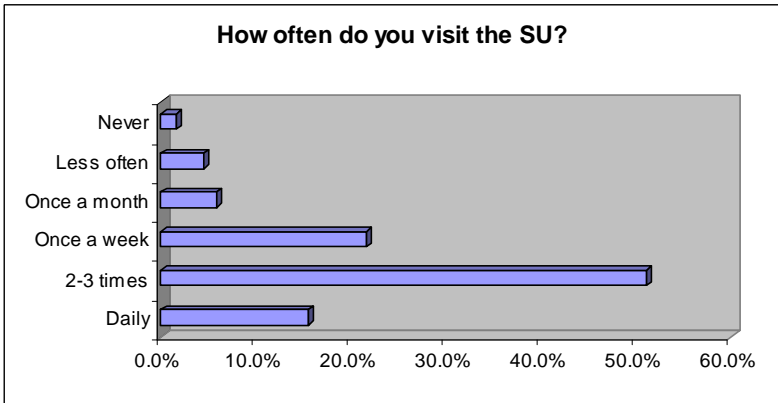


Section Four: The Students' Union in General

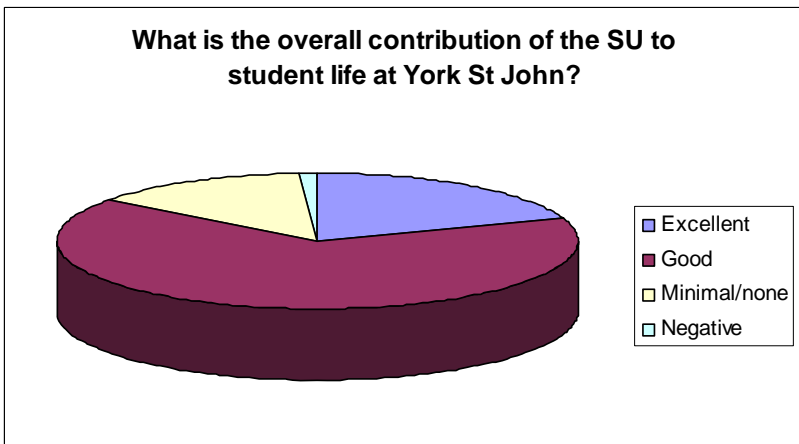
Students were asked why they mainly came into the Students' Union. Most students (78.7%) came in to use the shop or coffee bar; 76.6% came in to socialise; 5.3% came in to work; 2.9% came in to collect post; 1.3% came in to volunteer; and 4.7% came in for advice.



Students were asked how often they visited the Students' Union. 51.1% visited the SU 2 or 3 times a week; 21.6% visited once a week; 5.8% visited once a month; 15.5% visited daily; 4.5% visited less often than once a month and 0% visited at the weekends only. 1.6% never visited the Students' Union



Students were asked what they thought of the contribution the Students' Union made to student life at York St John. 65.5% thought that it was good; 19.7% thought it was excellent; 13.7% thought it was minimal or made no contribution; 1.1% thought it made a negative contribution. This is excellent news that 85.2% (a slight increase on last year of 2.1%) think that the Students' Union make a good or excellent contribution to student life. However, we will need to investigate what needs to be done to improve our contribution for the 14.8% who disagreed.



Students were asked to rate the Union's various services in terms of importance. Below is a list of the services in order of importance from most important to least important:

1. Shop
2. Coffee Bar
3. Bar
4. Ents
5. Clubs and Societies
6. RAG
7. Taking issues to the University
8. Representation
9. Advice/Welfare
10. Campaigns
11. YJSU Website
12. Programme Rep System
13. Volunteering Opportunities
14. Reception services
15. We'll Fix It
16. START
17. The Saint

Section Five: Students' Union Activities

Students were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a variety of statements as follows. Last year's figures are in italics for comparison.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Union is too commercialised and places a higher priority on profit than students.	3.2% <i>5.8%</i>	19.2% <i>16.6%</i>	62.4% 68.5%	15.5% <i>9.1%</i>
The Union is somewhere I feel I could turn to for help and advice.	5.3% <i>6.9%</i>	53.9% 56.5%	32.1% <i>30.6%</i>	6.1% <i>9.2%</i>
In general, the Union effectively represents my interests and concerns.	7.1% <i>5.2%</i>	64.2% 65.7%	22.9% <i>23.8%</i>	5.8% <i>5.2%</i>
It is easy for me to be involved and have a say in the running of the Union.	6.1% <i>4.7%</i>	41.6% <i>41.9%</i>	45.8% 42.7%	6.8% <i>10.7%</i>
I could talk to a Sabbatical Officer if I needed to.	10.5% <i>10.2%</i>	57.9% 59.8%	27.9% <i>24.9%</i>	4.5% <i>5.0%</i>
On the whole, the Union provides a good service for YSJ students.	18.9% <i>18.3%</i>	68.7% 69.5%	8.7% <i>10.5%</i>	3.7% <i>1.7%</i>
Being involved in SU activities enhances students' job prospects (e.g. committee work, volunteering)	18.2% <i>18.8%</i>	65.3% 62.0%	15.3% <i>16.9%</i>	1.3% <i>2.2%</i>
The Union prioritises the welfare of students.	12.9% <i>10.2%</i>	74.2% 75.4%	10.5% <i>11.3%</i>	2.6% <i>3.0%</i>

Breaking this down (last year's figures in italics for comparison):

- 77.9% (*77.6%*) of students disagree or strongly disagree that the Union is too commercialised and places a higher priority on profit than students.
- 59.2% (*63%*) of students either agree or strongly agree that they can turn to the Union for help and advice.

- 71.3% (*70.9%*) of students either agree or strongly agree that the Union effectively represents their interests and concerns.
- 52.6% (*53.4%*) disagree or strongly disagree that it is easy for them to be involved and have a say in the running of the Union.
- 68.4% (*70%*) of students agree or strongly agree that they could talk to a Sabbatical Officer if they needed to.
- 87.6% (*87.8%*) agree or strongly agree that the Union provides a good service for YSJ students.
- 83.5% (*80.8%*) of students agree or strongly agree that being involved in SU activities enhances students' job prospects.
- 87.1% (*85.6%*) of students agree or strongly agree that the Union prioritises the welfare of students.

Overall this is very encouraging but we need to put a plan of action in place to address the concerns of those students who think we are too commercialised; and that we don't effectively represent their concerns; and who can't talk to a Sabbatical Officer etc.

The result of most concern is that more people think that it is difficult to get involved and have a say in how the Union is run than those who think it is easy. We will need to change this.

Students were then asked a variety of questions with the possibility of answering "yes" or "no" only. The results were as follows (last year's results are in italics for comparison):

	Yes	No
Do you know how to make a complaint or suggestion about the Union?	34.7% <i>25.5%</i>	65.5% <i>74.5%</i>
Did you know that the Union is totally separate to the University?	56.8% <i>43.9%</i>	43.2% 56.1%
Do you know who the Sabbatical Officers are?	46.8% 51.0%	53.2% <i>49.0%</i>
Do you know who the Union Councillors are?	17.4% <i>16.9%</i>	82.6% 83.1%
Did you know that the Union represents students to the University on any issue?	69.7% 61.6%	30.3% <i>38.4%</i>
Have you participated in a RAG event?	27.6% <i>23.3%</i>	72.6% 76.7%
Do you participate in a sports club?	26.1% <i>30.7%</i>	74.2% 69.3%
Are you a member of a society?	29.7% <i>35.2%</i>	70.3% 64.8%
Have you volunteered through the SU?	12.9% <i>14.4%</i>	87.1% 85.6%
Do you know who your Programme Rep is?	59.2% 51.1%	40.8% <i>48.9%</i>

	Yes	No
Did you vote in the SU elections this year?	53.7% 43.5%	46.8% 56.5%
Have you ever been to a START session?	7.4% 10.8%	92.6% 89.2%
Have you ever taken part in a We'll Fix It activity?	8.4% 4.7%	91.6% 95.3%

The results of this section seem to show a lack of knowledge about the Students' Union. The majority of students do not know how to make a complaint or suggestion and they don't know who the Sabbatical Officers are or who the Union Councillors are. We will need to publicise these areas more effectively to the student population.

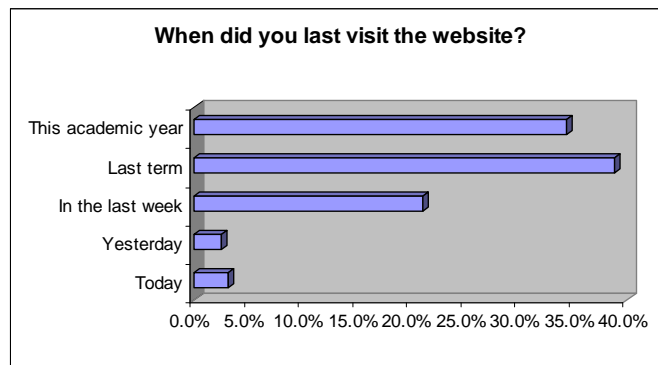
Encouragingly more students voted in the SU elections this year than they did last year. However, most students who responded are not members of a club or a society; they've not volunteered through the SU; they haven't been to a START session or taken part in a We'll Fix It activity.

Why aren't students getting involved? How do we increase the numbers of students involved in these areas?

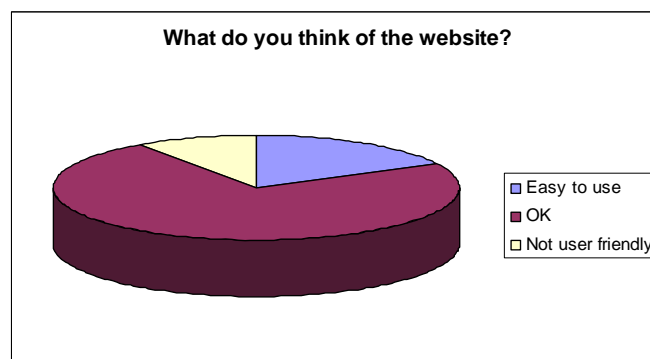
Section Six: Students' Union Website

Students were then asked about the Students' Union website at www.ysjsu.com

84.5% said that they had visited the website. The majority of students (38.8%) had last visited the website last term; 34.4% last visited last academic year; 21.1% visited in the last week; 3.2% visited that day; 2.5% visited the day before.



Most students thought that the website was OK (72.8%); 17.6% thought that it was easy to use and 9.6% thought that it was not user friendly.



Students were asked if there was anything not on the website that they would like to see. The major issue identified was that students wanted information on clubs and societies. Most students wanted:

- Up to date information
- More information particularly on clubs and societies
- More photographs
- More event information

We must plan to plan to meet these requests and ensure that the website is kept continually updated.

Section Seven: What's the best thing about York St John University?

There were a whole range of answers and comments, the most popular of which were the friendliness/community feel (64%) and the size of the University (60%). 4% of students thought that the best thing about the University was the Students' Union which is encouraging given the state of the Students' Union building.

Section Eight: What's the worst thing about York St John University?

There were a whole range of answers and comments, the most frequently complained about were the lack of organisation (10%), the small size of the University (9%) and the lack of resources in the Library (9%).

6% thought that the worst thing about the University was the size of the Students' Union.

6% complained about their course.

6% cited tutors/lecturers.

5% complained about the lack of communication.

4% of students thought that the IT system was too slow and there were not enough computers.

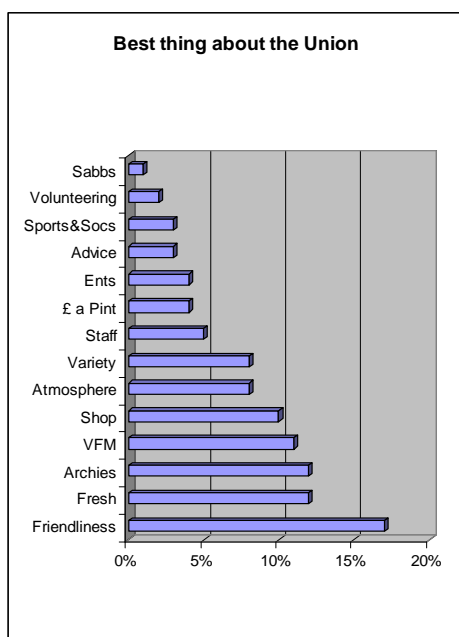
4% complained about Aramark Catering and particularly how expensive it is.

4% complained specifically about the classrooms and particularly that they were too small and uncomfortable.

Of the 37% "other" category the majority of complaints related to the lack of sports facilities; the lack of car parking; assessment and feedback; the University's academic reputation; the new building on Clarence Street corner; and the perceived lack of value for money in relation to tuition fees.

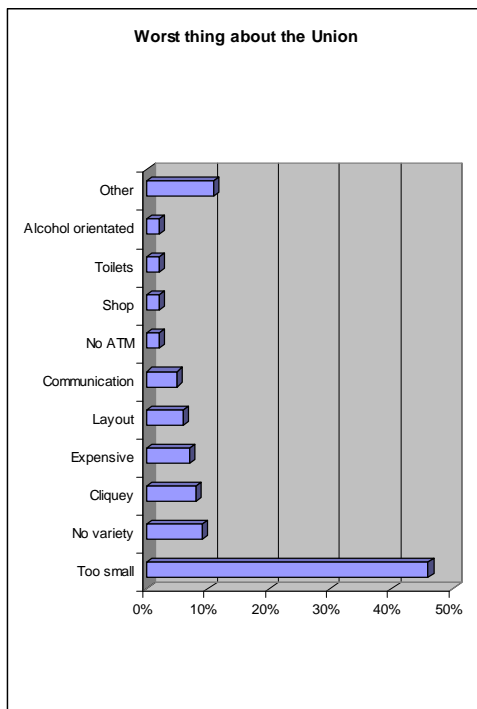
Section Nine: What's the best thing about the Union?

There were a whole range of answers and comments, the most popular of which were the friendliness (17%), Fresh and the food served there (12%), Archies Bar (12%) and general value for money (11%).



Section Ten: What's the worst thing about the Union?

Unsurprisingly the vast majority of respondents (just under 50%) said that the worst thing about the Students' Union was that the building was too small. Of the 11% who said "other" these included the offices being inaccessible and the lack of disabled access to the building.



Section Eleven: Any Other Suggestions

Finally, we asked students if there was anything else they would like to suggest or comment on – what we should be doing that we don't already do and what we should be doing better. The majority wanted a bigger students' union building. Other requests also included more varied events, entertainments and activities; activities for mature students; better advertising of all events and services; live music; an ATM; more accessible sabbatical officers/offices. Encouragingly 7% of respondents thought that there was nothing more the students' union could do to improve as we are great at what we do.

Nicky Goldthorpe
14th August 2008