

# TCSU SURVEY REPORT 2016-17

Of the TCSU Easter Survey 2016

## [Abstract](#)

The following is a summary of the most important points following on from the survey conducted by TCSU from March 21st to April 3rd 2016.

Report compiled Niclas Knecht & Martin Freimüller  
[treasurer@tcsu.net](mailto:treasurer@tcsu.net); [president@tcsu.net](mailto:president@tcsu.net)

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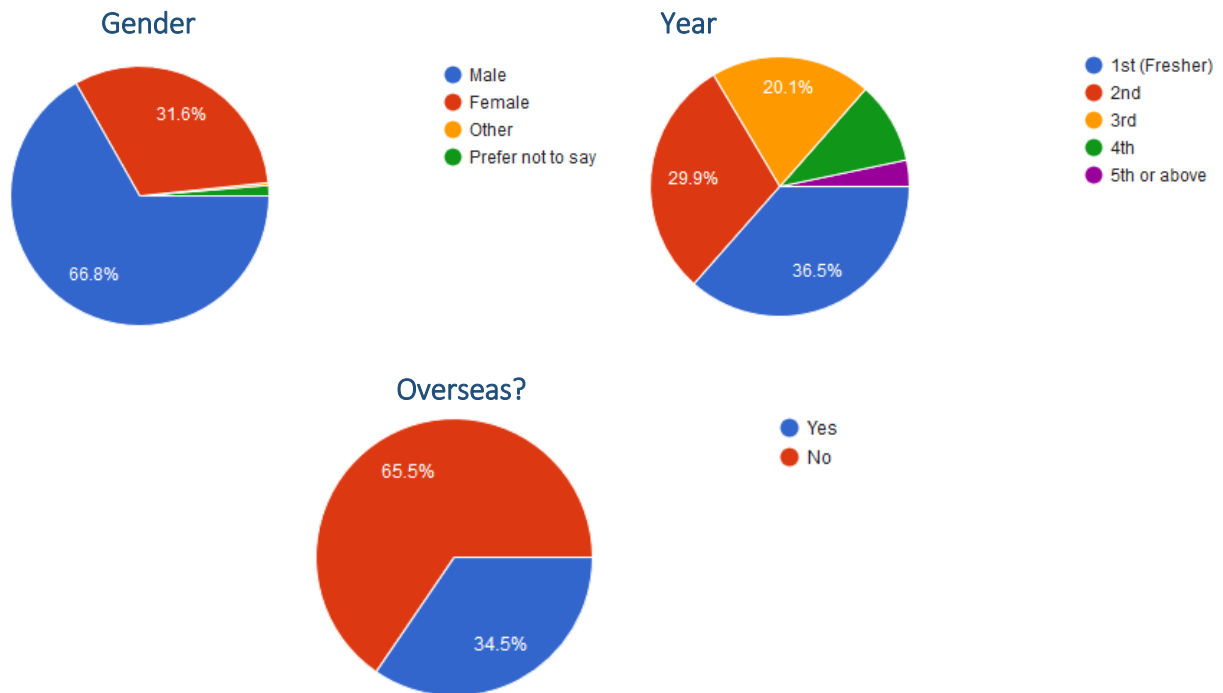
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# Introduction

In order to better be able to serve the student community, TCSU undertook a survey over the Easter Vacations 2016. Amazingly, a record 304 students participated in the survey. We are, of course, incredibly grateful to all those who took the time to provide us with feedback, though the lure of entering into a raffle for five BA formal tickets and three round-up emails may have done their part, too.

The sample we got seems largely representative of Trinity's student body in terms of gender and country of origin, though perhaps slightly (though not badly) skewed towards first- and second-years.



## Methodology and Evaluation

The survey was designed to canvass the opinions of Trinity's undergraduates on a wide range of issues in order to better represent them. Questions ranged from student feelings towards welfare provisions to the college bar. The 2014/15 survey served as blueprint for this year's, though multiple questions have been altered and updated. In addition, this year's survey included some new sections on the library, on event publicity and, most importantly, on gender experience.

The survey was sent electronically to all TCSU members, to be completed online at their earliest convenience. CRSIDs were collected for the raffle and to check each student only completed the survey once, though students were not forced to provide their CRSID. Naturally, all data has been anonymised.

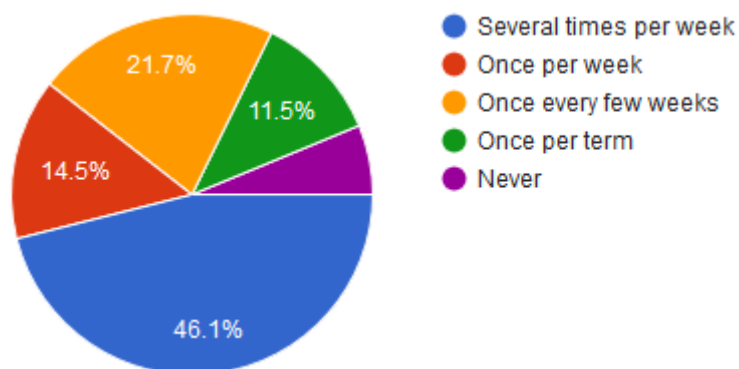
Students left huge amounts of feedback in the comments boxes. Though this feedback is hard to summarise, it will be consulted in depth when it comes to dealing with specific issues, such as hall food. The below only examines the most common and relevant themes in comments.

# College Facilities

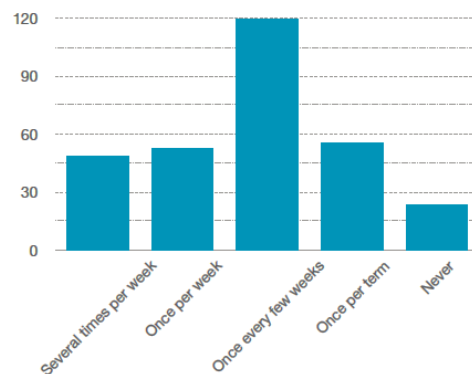
## College Bar

Most of the results confirmed what we expected - that is, the rise in popularity amongst Trinity students. According to the answers, at least 60% of students use the bar weekly, most of them in the afternoon and evening hours. The great majority is generally satisfied and one fact has been proven almost unanimously: we all just love the bar staff.

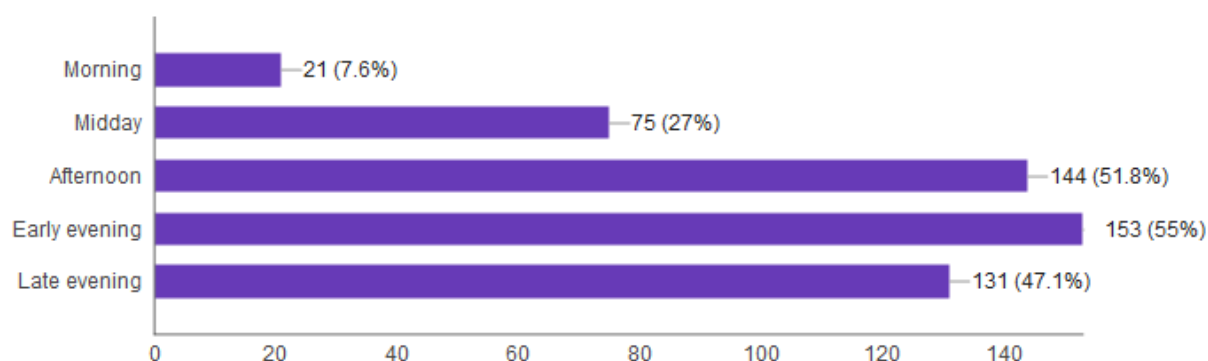
### How often do you use the bar?



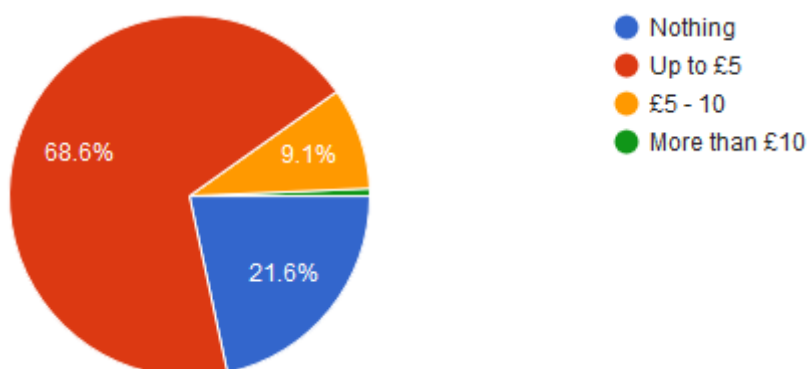
### As compared to the 2014 survey results:



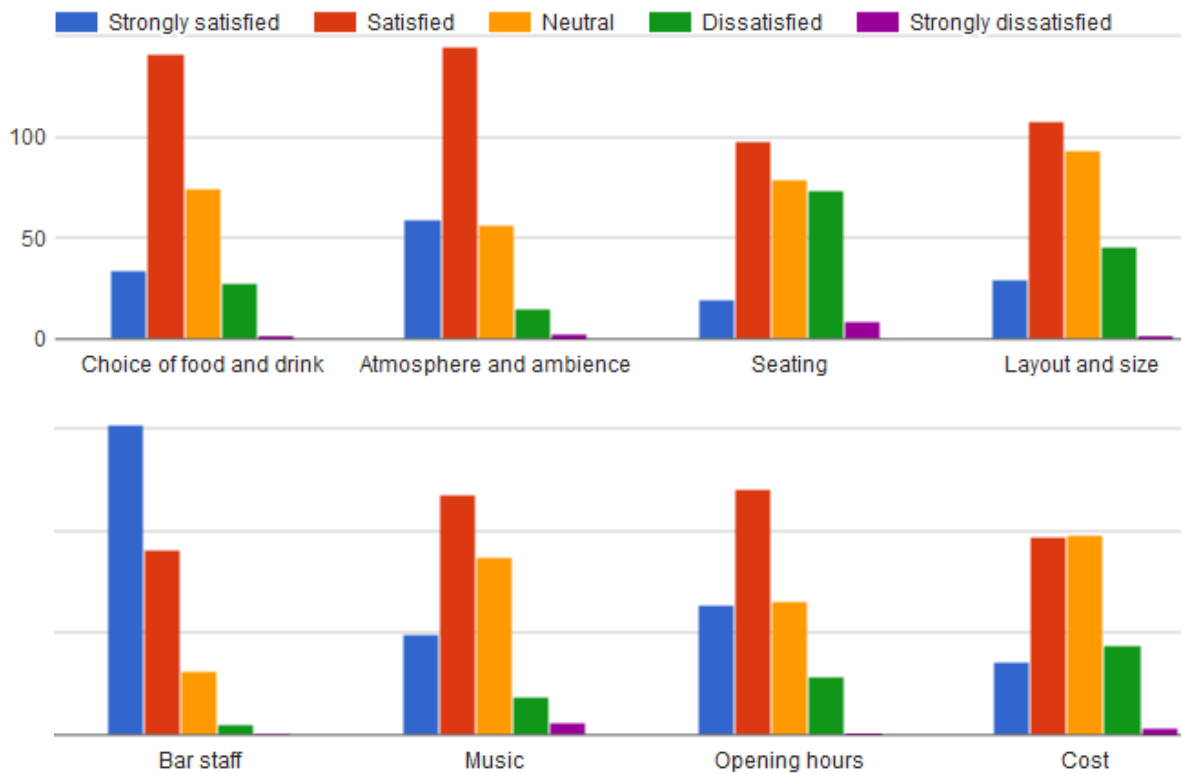
### What time of the day do you usually use the bar?



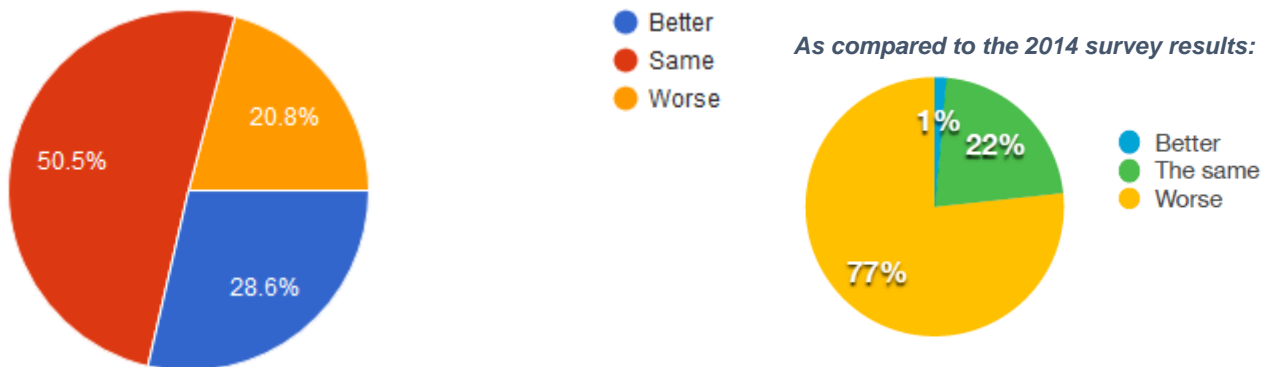
### How much do you normally spend in the bar per visit?



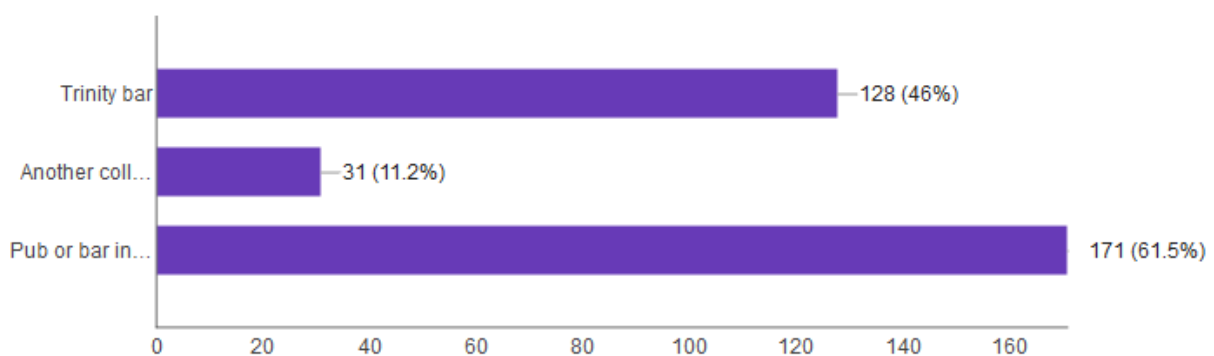
How satisfied are you with:



In your opinion, how does the Trinity bar compare to the majority of other college bars?



If you wanted to grab a quick pint with friends, would you go to:



Overall, *TCSU commends the hard-working and responsive bar staff* as well as all other's involved with reorganising the bar for causing this huge jump in the bar's popularity. Comments were overall very positive, the below are just minor themes in comments suggesting further possible improvements.

#### "The furniture should be replaced"

- The process of replacing the furniture is indeed under way and should be complete by Michaelmas 2016.

#### "Outdoor seating would be great"

- Whereas this might seem like a straight-forward issue to some (space is available), the proximity of about a dozen college offices as well as a good share of student accommodation makes this into a possibly irresolvable issue with regards to noise control. TCSU will work with college to assess the feasibility of seating outside the bar.

#### "We want a different selection of food items (esp. hot and vegetarian food)"

- The bar staff is committed to constantly improving the choice of food, so TCSU recommends voicing wishes straight with the bar staff.

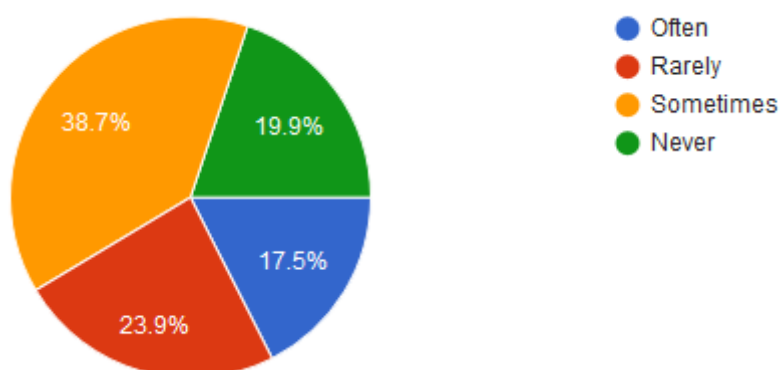
#### "The pool table should be free / replaced / etc."

- The bar is currently looking into removing the pool table permanently. Whereas many students have raised concerns about this, the issue is largely financial, as the pool table takes up a lot of space and does not provide the bar with any income. Nonetheless, this is not a decision that will be taken without a good degree of consideration and TCSU will try to balance different interests as much as it can.

### *Additional meeting space*

TCSU has taken immediate action on the overwhelming popular demand for easily bookable meeting space, as a consequence of which both Wolfson meeting rooms are now available for booking via the Accommodation without the need of tutor or head porter approval. We will continue to work on this issue and try to move the booking forms online in due time.

**If a meeting room (e.g. one of the Wolfson Seminar rooms) was to be made available for easy online booking, how often are you to make use of it?**

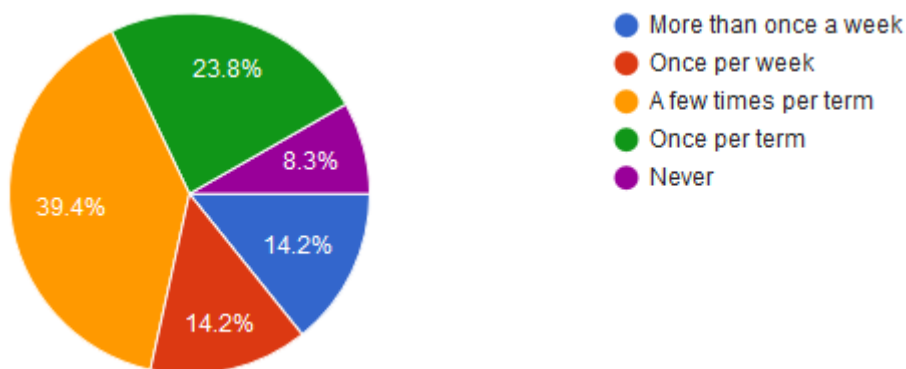


## JCR and College Rooms

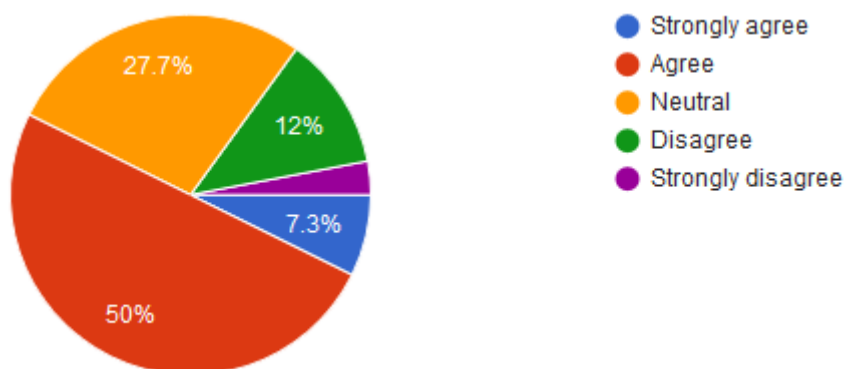
Only around 28% of students use the JCR once a week or more, though a large majority do use the JCR rooms at least a few times each term. A majority of respondents were also satisfied with the provision of communal rooms, though again a significant minority expressed dissatisfaction.

Complaints seem to vary from not liking the equipment of the room to finding it used by others who they do not want to join. There were suggestions to therefore have an informal board where plans could be written onto, preventing disappointment. More board games and better ping pong equipment was requested. Students have further complained about the lack of tidiness and the state in which the JCR is left by other students. To prevent this, TCSU will soon introduce a new rule to block access to the JCR for those students reported to leave mess behind after using the JCR (e.g. by not removing empty bottles or food).

How often do you use the JCR rooms, including the TV room?



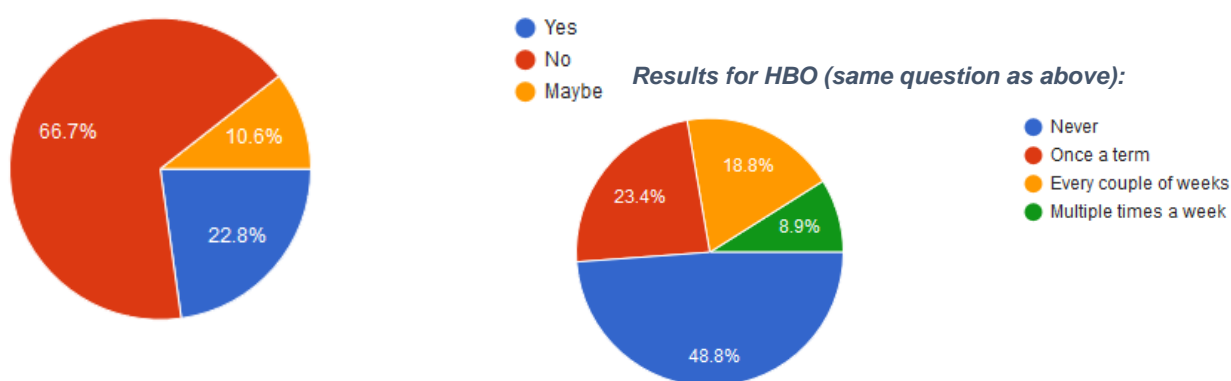
To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "I am satisfied with the college provision of communal rooms, such as the JCR and TV rooms"?



Students are split on **BT sports**, some would really like it, whereas others think it is a waste of money and would be counter-productive to the diversity of the JCR. This is an ongoing topic, which will be decided according to attendance of BT Sports broadcasted events. So far the result has been that a significant group of usually more than 30 people enthusiastically followed such events, with significantly more people watching major games. Having secured a good deal, TCSU looks set to continue purchasing a BT Sports subscription, though only for full term.

A similar question about the support for purchasing a **HBO** cable subscription did not garner much support, so TCSU will for now not follow up on this idea.

**If the TCSU were to purchase a subscription to BT sport (in addition to the existing Sky subscription) for the JCR TV room, would you make use of it?**



### Relevant quotes from the comments section

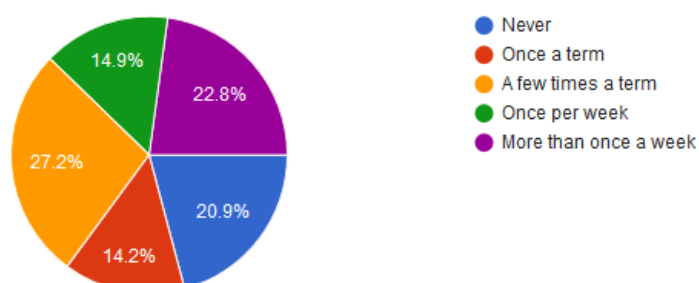
- *"There needs to be a place to work - neither upper nor lower JCR have any space for working, the bar can be too loud with not enough space (plus, it's definitely not suitable in the evening) and the library doesn't allow talking. Otherwise it's great."*
- *"A communal area to work would be very useful. Said area would not be as busy as the bar but still be a place to have conversations about work (unlike library)"*
- *"People should respect them more though obviously this is hard to enforce but I have come in and people are throwing the remote controls against the wall. People should clean up food when they leave."*
- *"BT sport absolutely necessary"*
- *"BT sport is extortionate. The TCSU has over 700 members, I guarantee most are not interested in this."*
- *"Really cool, could use a wider selection of board games though, and good ping pong balls"*
- *"Some kind of blackboard or online service for people to informally signal plans to use the TV room for a film etc would be appreciated so you don't turn up for a film when someone is already there!"*



## The Library

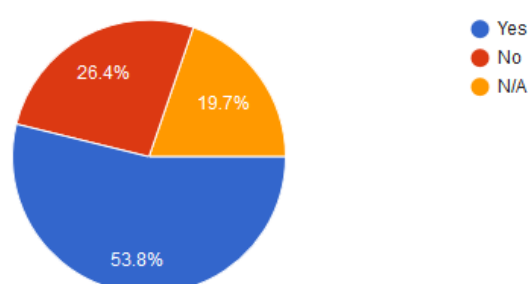
The survey was useful in providing insight into usage patterns of the library. It revealed that more than 41.4% of students use the library between once and a few times per term, while 37.7% use the library on a weekly basis and 20.9% never use the library.

### How often do you use the College library each week?

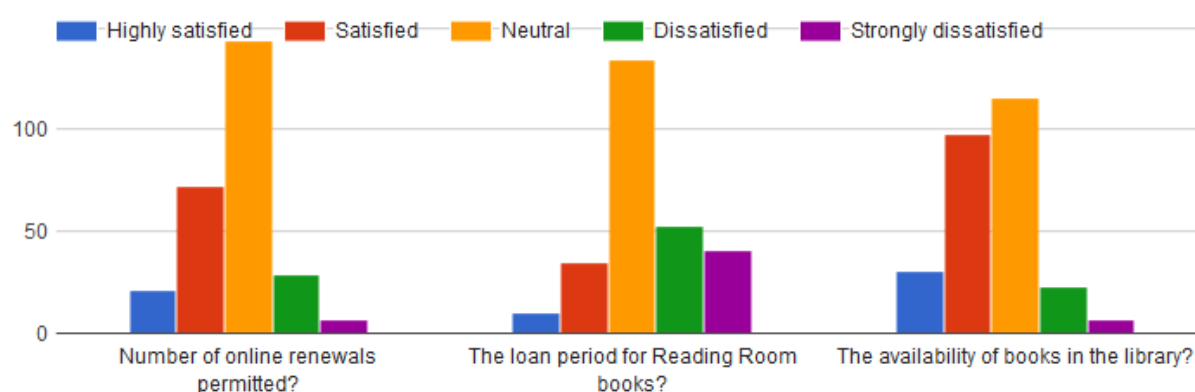


Students are largely satisfied with the college library, but the survey highlighted a few areas where there may be opportunity for improvement. While 53.8% of respondents indicated that the library was a comfortable space to work in and almost half (46.9%) stated that they were either satisfied or highly satisfied with the availability of books in the library, a significant minority comprising more than one in three students were dissatisfied with the loan period for reading room books.

### Do you think the library is a comfortable space to work in?



### How satisfied are you with the following:

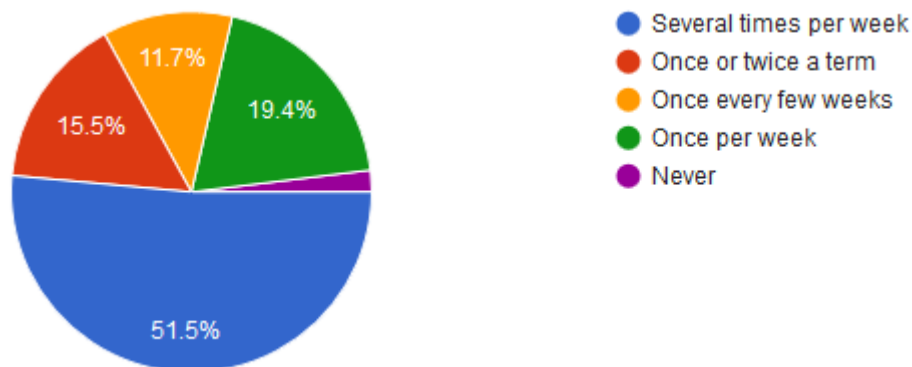


College is currently in the process of reviewing the operation of the library, and in Lent term we met with the librarians to discuss areas of potential change – including opening hours, fines and borrowing periods. Implementing any changes may take some time, but the results of this survey – including the finding that three times as many people would prefer it if the library closed earlier than if it were to open later – provide a useful roadmap for how we may move on from here.

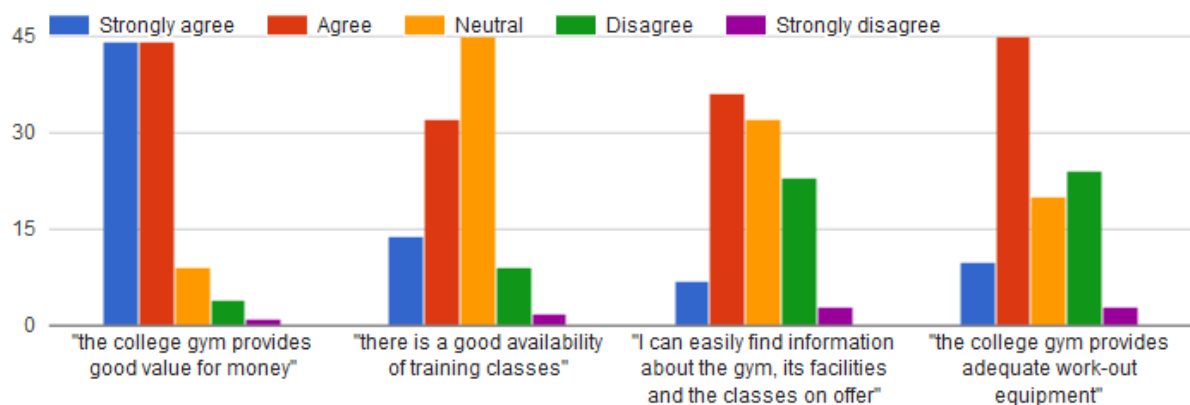
## Gym

Students are generally satisfied with the gym. Those who chose to provide feedback about the gym use it regularly, over 50% of the 33% who gave feedback use the gym several times per week. The vast majority thinks it is good value for money and is happy with the provision of training classes. Accessibility of information about the gym could be improved on the other hand, as around 25% are dissatisfied with it.

### How often do you use the college gym?



### To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



# Welfare

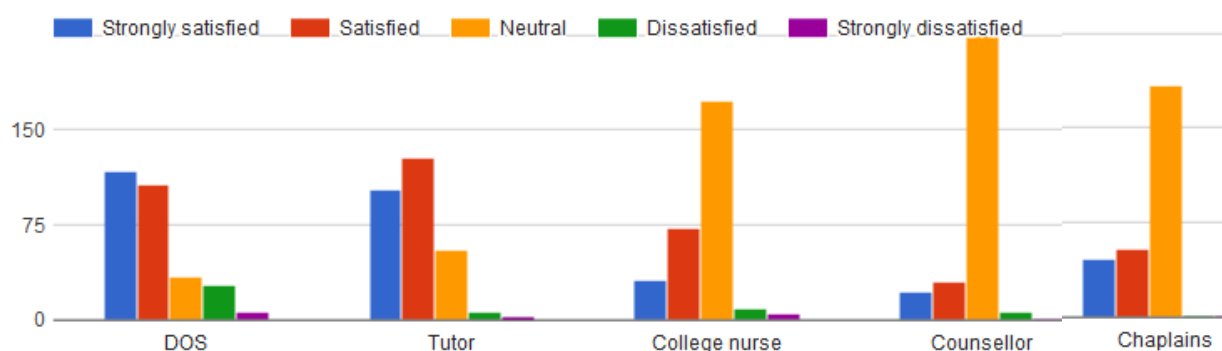
## Satisfaction with College Staff

It was good to see that students are mostly satisfied with College Staff. Encouragingly, strong dissatisfaction was particularly rare, though whatever level there is is certainly being taken seriously.

Directors of Studies received the most mixed responses - just over 11% of students stated that they were “Dissatisfied” or “Very Dissatisfied” with their DoS, whilst 40% reported strong satisfaction. Naturally, TCSU is aware that this may vary a lot between DoSes, and trusts in the college’s review procedures of academic staff.

Tutors got very good feedback overall. Other college support staff had a large number of “Neutral” responses, which however is likely due to lack of contact between students and, for example, the college nurse.

### How satisfied are you with the following college support staff?

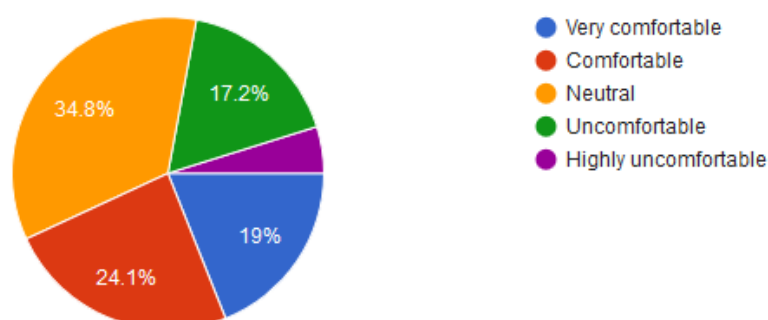


TCSU encourages all students to discuss dissatisfaction with College Staff with their tutors or representatives, so that issues can be resolved swiftly and without escalation.

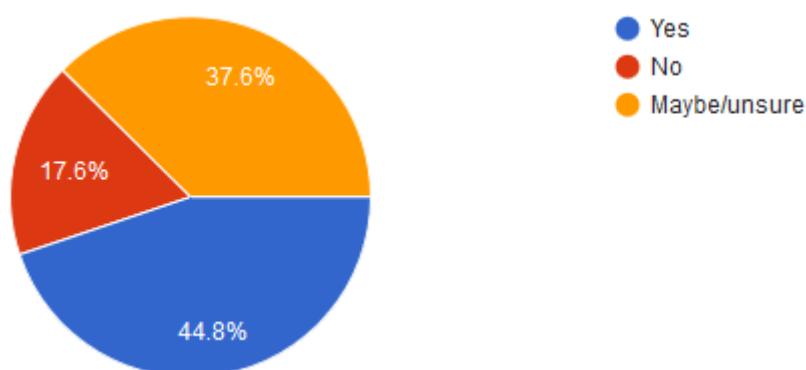
## Sexual Health

A potential issue with TCSU’s sexual health policy, 22% of respondents felt uncomfortable asking the welfare officers for sexual health supplies. A possible way to help address this may be by putting up a free condom machine in college. Currently there is a machine in the downstairs bar toilet that dispenses condoms for a small charge, though a possible issue is that this machine is inaccessible when the bar is closed. A significant share of students would like to see more dispensers installed.

### How comfortable do you feel asking our welfare officers for sexual health supplies?



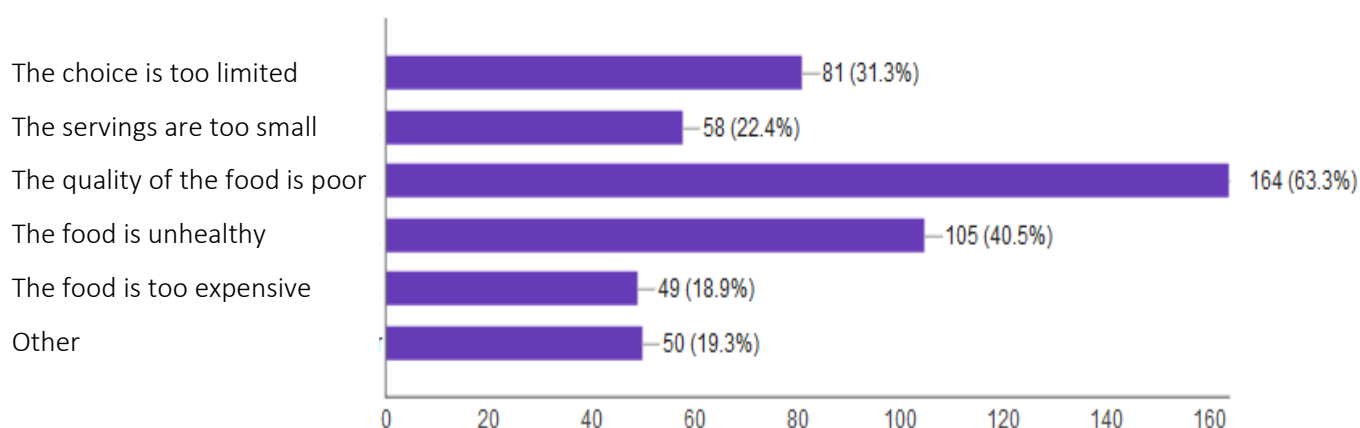
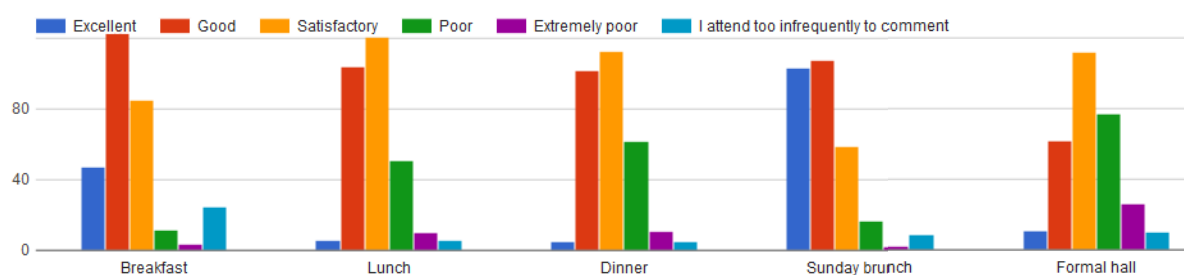
Would you like to see more condom dispensers or collection boxes installed around college?



## Food and Drink

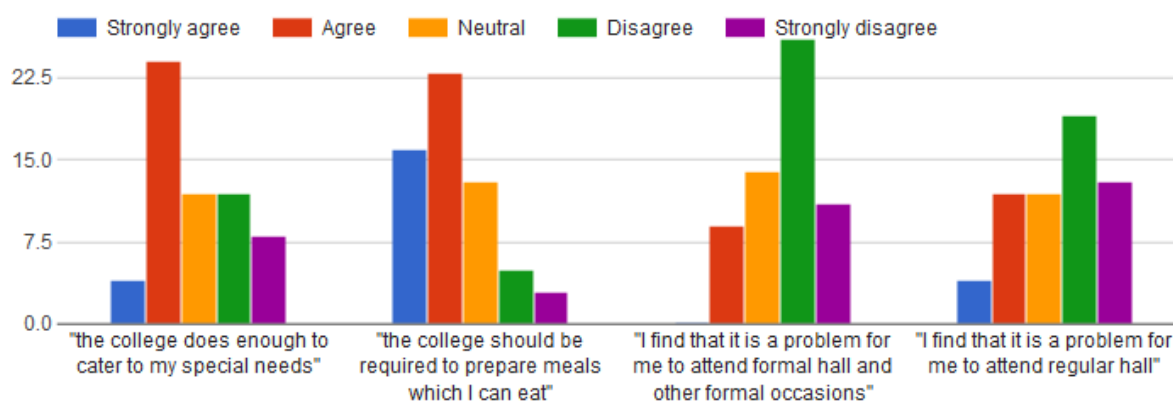
A majority of students reported being content with food at most meals, though there was a lot of variation. Sunday Brunch was by far the most popular meal, with close to 70% satisfied. The most common complaint seems to have been that the quality of food is insufficient, though choice, serving size, price and the lack of health choices also showed up as complaints frequently.

Formal hall, however was criticised for a number of reasons.



## Catering for those with dietary requirements

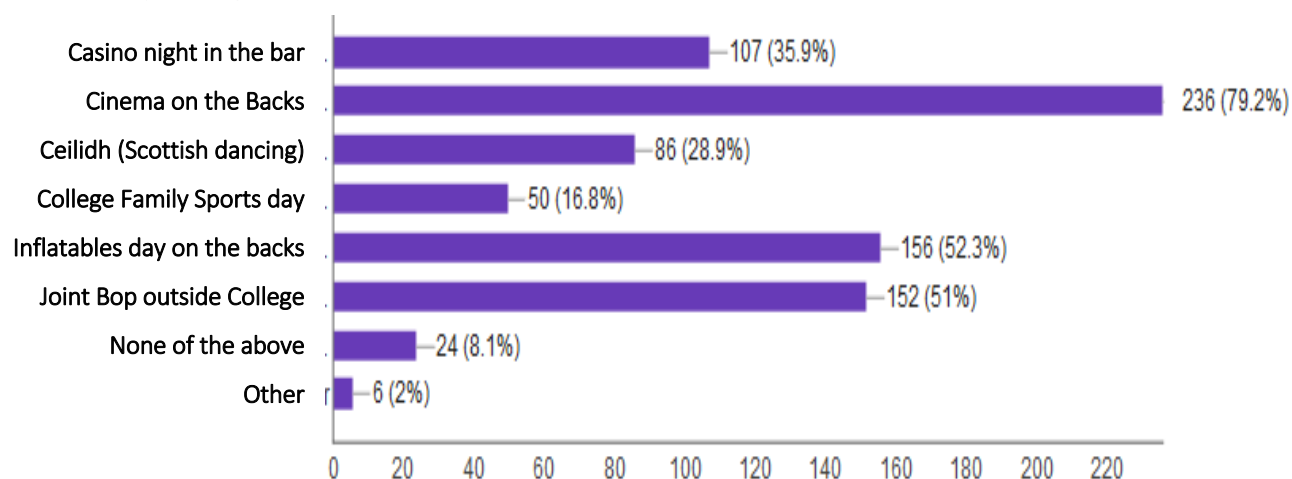
Most of the 59 students providing feedback in the special dietary requirements section also seemed to agree that college catered for their dietary needs, though some expressed that they felt barred from attending regular or formal hall. TCSU is working with the catering department to be able to better cater for dietary requirements.



## Events

Overall TCSU's larger events so far this year were quite popular, with between 25% and 40% attendance rate (representing 80-100 people!), depending on the event. Most events are very popular, with 66%-80% saying they were either satisfied or very satisfied with how the event went.

The most popular ideas for future events later this year were 1) Cinema on the Backs (79% approval), 2) Inflatables day on the backs (52%) and 3) Joint Bop outside college (51%). Generally students seem to like the idea of having more events outside and jointly with other colleges, which TCSU will take into account for planning future events.

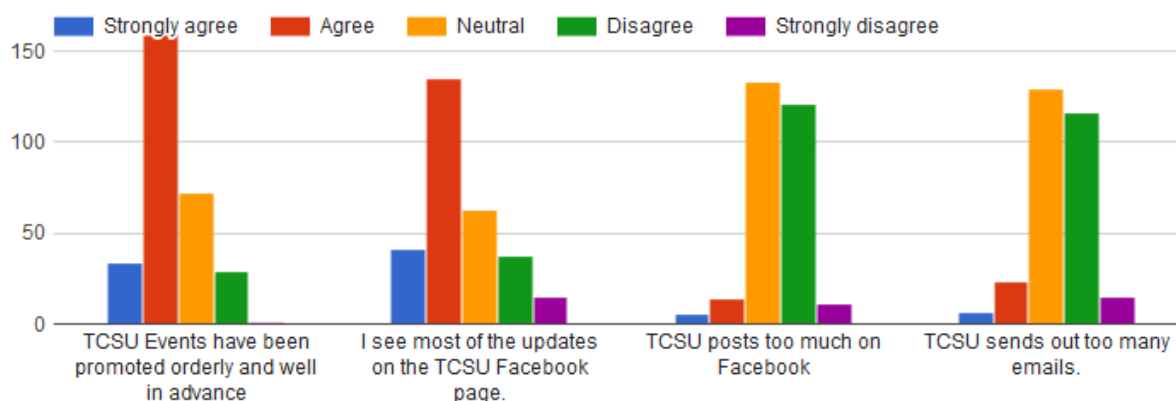


From the many comments we received, one of the most common themes was satisfaction with TCSU's ability to provide club night tickets at discounted prices. There was quite some disappointment that TCSU open-mic night did not go ahead in the end, so we will keep that as a fixture for Michaelmas 2016.

Some people urged for better publicity (see section below). While it seems this is not a majority opinion, we hope to improve further on publicity and eventually have a TCSU leaflet with details of everything that term ready by the beginning of term.

## Publicity

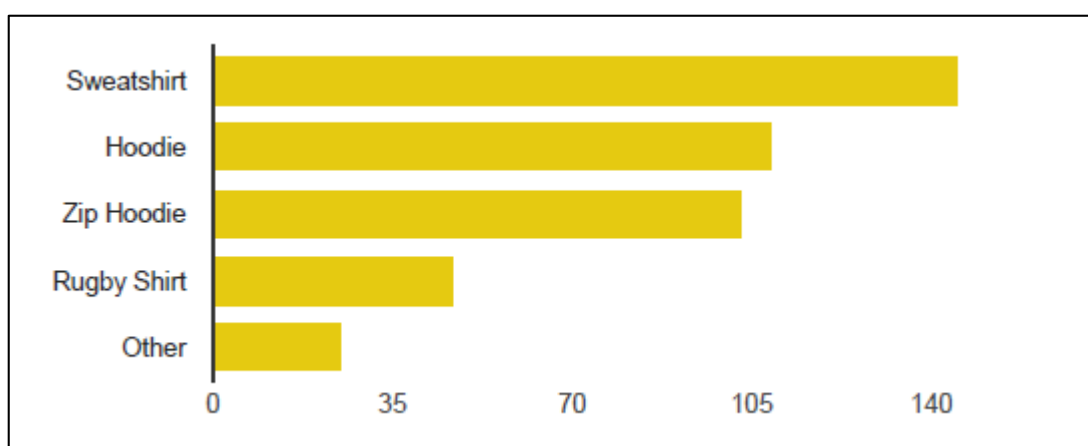
Generally students seem to be content with TCSU's current publicity strategy. We are pleased to see that we seem to be striking the right balance between putting out too much and not enough via email and Facebook.



## Miscellaneous

### Stash

On TCSU stash, there was a majority for sweatshirts, though if one assumes that a majority of those who opted for Zip Hoodies would prefer Hoodies to sweatshirts, then hoodies would win easily. Since some of you expressed the wish for us to vary the stash we are getting so as to get everyone's favourite at some point, we'll be ordering hoodies this year (as opposed to last year).

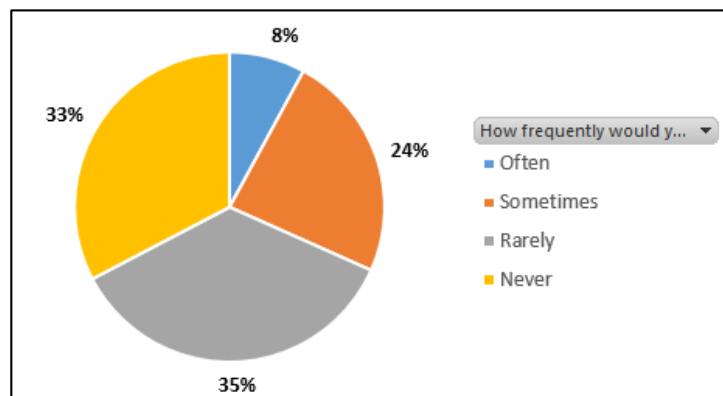


## Gender Experience

Questions regarding gender experience were aimed at gathering information to gauge whether self-identifying female/non-binary students not only felt safe and fully comfortable in college spaces, but also whether individuals would feel able to access and gain support should issues arise.

Whilst most students say that they have never experienced gender discrimination at university (a term which albeit lacks slight clarity/instigates a difference of opinion, as to what classifies as discrimination) with 60.4% saying that they have never experienced gender discrimination – the rest of the student body did identify themselves as having experienced discrimination on a gendered basis. What is alarming however is that of the female / non-binary respondents, only 33% claimed that they had never experienced gender discrimination. Whilst most individuals did not frequently experience gender discrimination – the fact that so many students within college feel undermined due to their gender identification is alarming – and something that the TCSU prioritises in tackling. The wellbeing of all students is of the utmost import, and not only is gender discrimination most importantly damaging for students' welfare, but also impacts their studies.

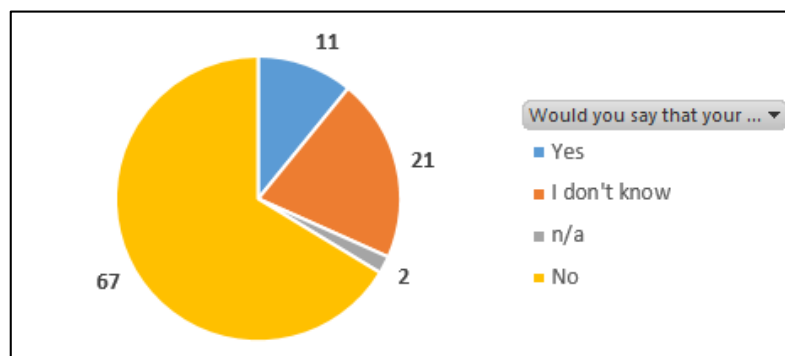
### How frequently would you say that you experienced gender discrimination at university?



Whilst most individuals did not frequently experience gender discrimination (with just under a third using the words “often”/ “sometimes” to describe the frequency that they faced gender discrimination – the fact that so many students within college feel undermined due to their gender identification is alarming – and something that the TCSU prioritises in tackling. The wellbeing of all students is of the utmost import, and not only is gender discrimination most importantly damaging for students' welfare, but also impacts their studies, with approximately 11% of non-male respondents stating that they felt the discrimination they faced affected their studies.

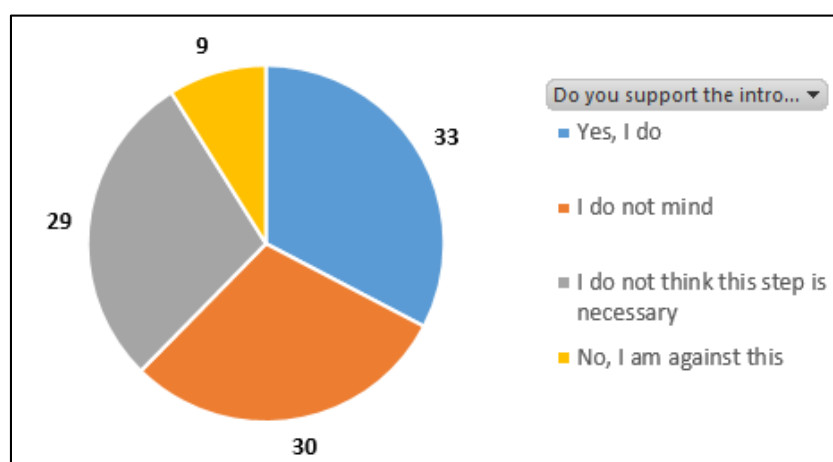
### Would you say that your experience of gender discrimination affected your studies?

*[note: charts in the rest of the gender experience section specify numbers of respondents, not percentages]*



As the issue is noted to TCSU representatives once in a while, the survey also asked whether respondents would support the introduction of safe-space hours (i.e. for self-identifying women and non-binary individuals only) at the college gym. The TCSU is aware that all students should be able to make use of available facilities, and was concerned that self-identifying women and non-binary individuals may not be making full use of the gym for reasons of discomfort. Opinion was clearly divided, with approximately 30% disagreeing with this step/thinking it was unnecessary, and only approximately 32% actively for this measure. Therefore, the TCSU will carefully consider before deciding whether or not to pursue a trial-period.

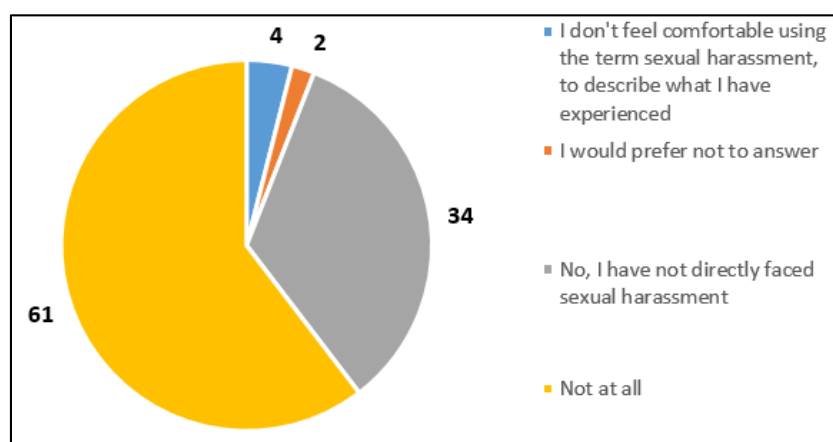
### Do you support the introduction of safe-space hours at the gym (for self-identifying women and non-binary individuals only)?



### Sexual Harassment

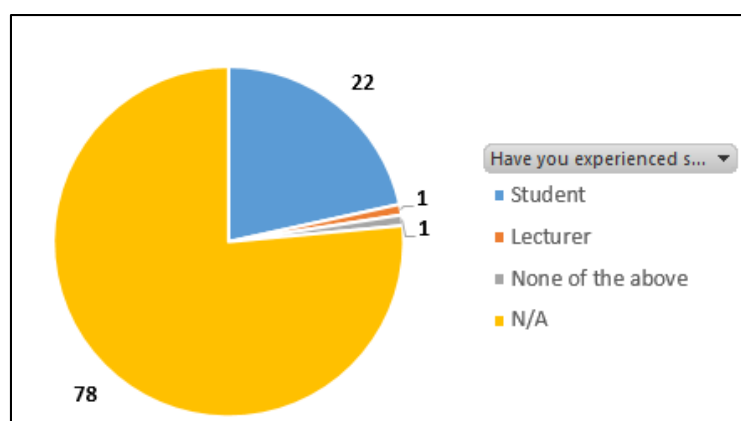
This is an appropriately sensitive area, and one that the survey attempted to handle with the greatest care and concern. It was very important and reassuring to note that there were minimal instances of sexual harassment from members of staff towards students, and that authority figures did not abuse their positions of power. However, it was incredibly alarming to note that a statistically significant proportion of respondents reported sexual harassment by fellow students.

### Have you ever experienced sexual harassment from a member of staff?





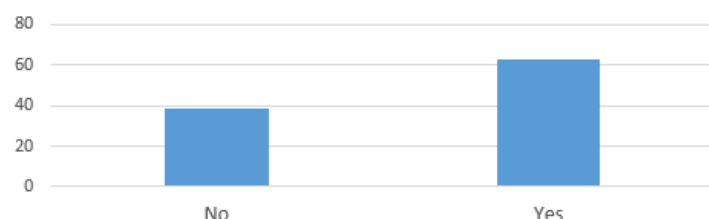
## Have you experienced sexual harassment in Cambridge from a:



All students are members of the community, and the college has a zero tolerance towards sexual harassment – throughout the University sexual harassment clauses are undergoing review to ensure that treatment across colleges, or in an inter-college issue is not disparate, and is handled with care. There is also an awareness that many of the participants engaging with this section of the survey felt unable to provide full answers, as they did not feel this knowledge was applicable to them.

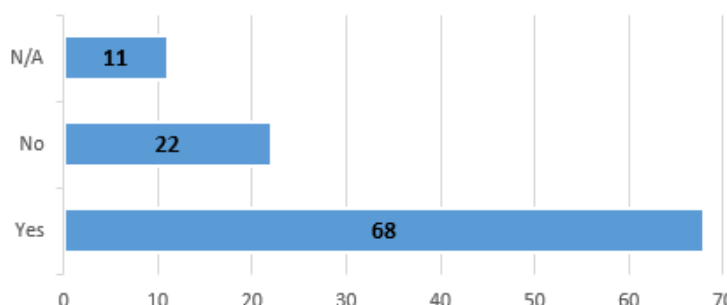
The awareness of support or accessible information regarding sexual harassment within college/available to all female/non-binary individuals was mixed. About 40% of non-male / non-binary respondents to the survey said they would not know where to get support from if they wished to. The TCSU will be updating all contact and welfare lists continuously to remind students of avenues of support and help.

## Were you to experience sexual harassment or assault in the future, if you wished to, would you know who to inform?



Overall, about two thirds of female/non-binary students believed that they were supported in their gender identity, or were aware of available support, were they to require it. Whilst many students may feel that this support is not necessary for them personally, it is alarming to note that a significant minority of students seem to feel unsupported in their identity. The TCSU will work closely with college to ensure that further progress is made on eliminating gender discrimination.

Overall, do you feel that identifying as female/non-binary, you have enough support in college/know how to seek support?

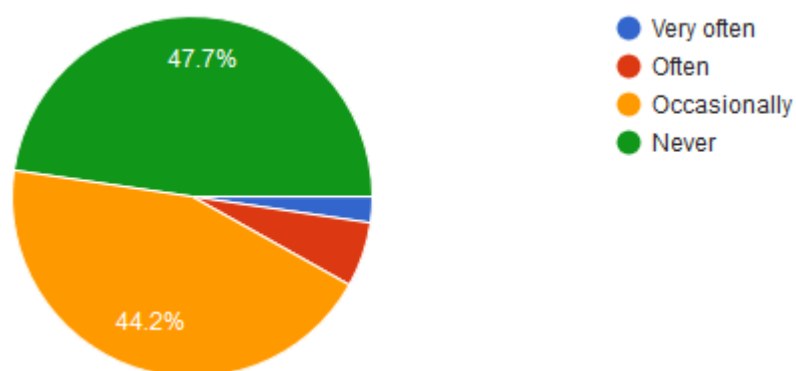


## Overseas Students

Questions in this section were only asked to students who identified as “overseas students”, though the TCSU did not check registered home addresses. 34.5% of students responded to this section. Among them, 74.3% do not have English as their first language, roughly the same result as in previous years.

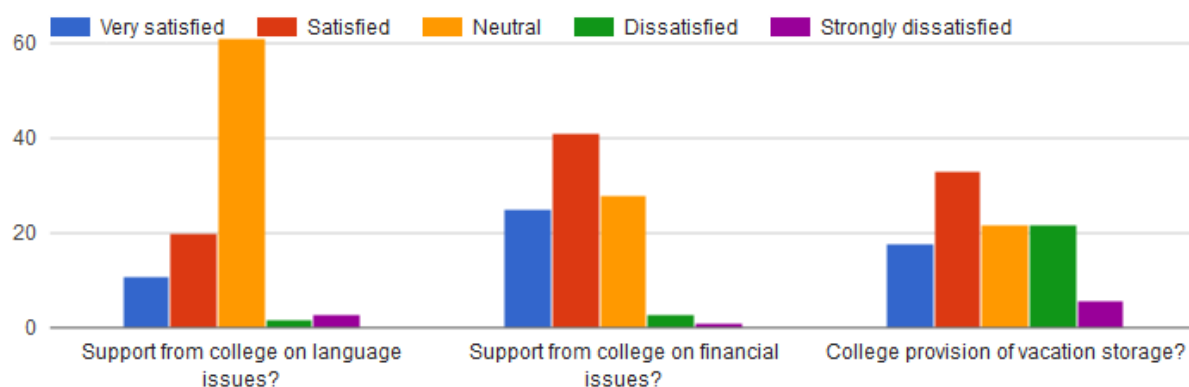
This section has been designed to address three issues that are major factors in the experience of all the international students in Trinity: the financial support offered by the college; the quality of the overseas storage; and, for those whose English is not their mother tongue, their adaptation to the everyday use of this language.

**How often do you feel that speaking English as a second language is a barrier to your studies or social life?**



These results are extremely encouraging. Almost half of the overseas students have managed to integrate themselves to the Cambridge life without any language problem whatsoever and 91.9% of the students haven't faced any “language barrier” problem. Of course, there still are a solid 8.1% of students who have indeed faced some linguistic problems but I do think that those are marginal cases that have to be treated at a personal level with the people involved.

**How satisfied are you with the following?**



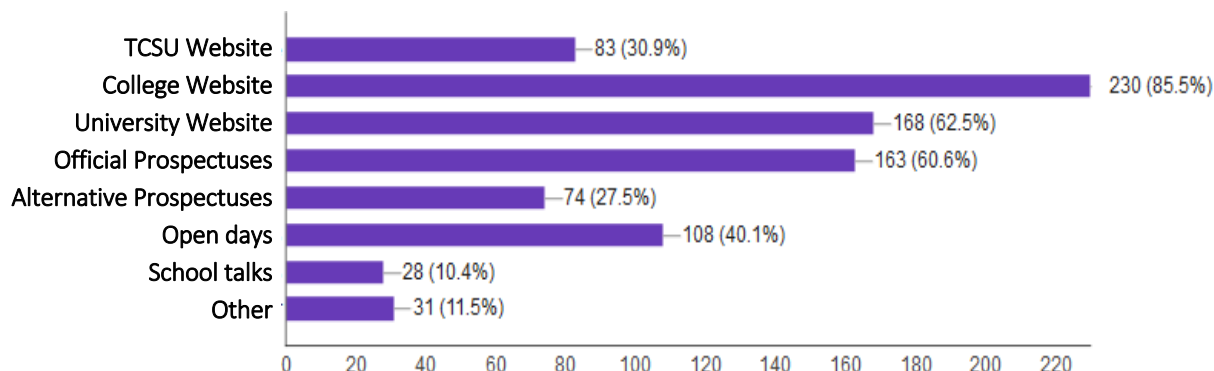
The overseas students who have taken this survey are largely satisfied with the support provided by Trinity and concerning financial issues. Furthermore, they are largely indifferent to the one regarding language issues, which is quite logical considering that the overwhelming majority of them do not have any. On the other hand, the vacation storage is quite polemical, with a large division of opinions. We are thus going to focus in the improvement of this particular factor by making it easier and quicker with a new box system and maybe with the utilization of new spaces such as the Wolfson Party Room.

## Access

Questions in this section were largely textual, so as to allow students to comment broadly 1) what their perception of Trinity was beforehand and how it changed and 2) to comment which access resources they found most helpful and why.

Responses as to which were the most helpful resources to find out about Trinity offered few surprises, except perhaps that a fairly large share of students manage to find the TCSU website before coming to Trinity and find it helpful.

What resources did you use to find out about Trinity and the University more generally?



Though the majority of comments garnered by the report are positive, exhibiting either a continuance in favourable views of Trinity once the students had arrived ('beautiful before and beautiful since' / 'I thought it was great and I still do') or an improvement of opinion since arrival ('more normal than expected' / 'more relaxed' etc.), there were, however, some more troubling responses.

Misogyny and gender imbalance were raised as an issue, as were issues of wealth and class differences ('I thought I might fit in here more than I do' / 'I realised its very posh since getting here'). Such comments show just how far access still has to go to ensure not only do we improve intake from non-traditional backgrounds, but also that we ensure Trinity is a warmer and more inclusive community upon arrival and consistently throughout the experience of being here. Access continues to work towards demythologising Trinity both from without and from within, and to move towards engendering a more positive, friendly atmosphere that will benefit everyone.

## General Feedback

About 100 students chose to provide some open feedback, though the content of many of these is either covered by the above or not very relevant. Some very specific requests were forwarded to relevant College Offices right away. Two common themes were:

### Better, cheaper and more modern laundrettes

We will enter discussion with housekeeping over this issue to ask about the lifecycle of these machines and see if they can be replaced as soon as possible. However, inventory purchases are for the most part do not fall into TCSU's responsibility.

### Price of Accommodation and living costs more generally

Trinity does provide the on average 6th cheapest accommodation around Cambridge and does heavily subsidise the actual cost of living. College realises that accommodation is a major expense for many, but tries to soften the blow for those who need it with bursaries. Students who are interested to know more about accommodation pricing are asked to try to see the Junior Bursar in his open hours.

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For more information, please see: [www.tcsu.net](http://www.tcsu.net)

***If there are any questions or issues, please contact:***

President (Martin Freimüller):  
[president@tcsu.net](mailto:president@tcsu.net)

Vice President (Finn Kristensen):  
[vice-president@tcsu.net](mailto:vice-president@tcsu.net)

Treasurer (Niclas Knecht):  
[treasurer@tcsu.net](mailto:treasurer@tcsu.net)

Secretary (Claudia Dickinson):  
[secretary@tcsu.net](mailto:secretary@tcsu.net)

Publicity & Computing Officer  
(Jagraj Bhandal):  
[publicity@tcsu.net](mailto:publicity@tcsu.net)

Access Officer (Lauren Brown):  
[access@tcsu.net](mailto:access@tcsu.net)

Ents Officer (Ryan Whiteley):  
[ents@tcsu.net](mailto:ents@tcsu.net)

Overseas Officer (Agustin Braun):  
[overseas@tcsu.net](mailto:overseas@tcsu.net)

Environmental & Domestic Officer  
(Laura Hildt):  
[environment@tcsu.net](mailto:environment@tcsu.net)

Junior Steward (Petr Dolezal):  
[junior-steward@tcsu.net](mailto:junior-steward@tcsu.net)

Female Welfare Officer  
(Olivia Aaronson):  
[female-welfare@tcsu.net](mailto:female-welfare@tcsu.net)

Male Welfare Officer  
(Toby Henley Smith):  
[male-welfare@tcsu.net](mailto:male-welfare@tcsu.net)

Mental Health & Disabilities Officer  
(James Riseley):  
[mental-health@tcsu.net](mailto:mental-health@tcsu.net)

BME Officer (Richelle George):  
[bme@tcsu.net](mailto:bme@tcsu.net)

Women's Officer (Raniyah Qureshi):  
[women@tcsu.net](mailto:women@tcsu.net)

