

# CSD Student Satisfaction Survey 2014

**The CSD Student Satisfaction Survey was designed to identify best practice in design education, as well as highlighting aspects that require improvements.**

This Spring the Society focused its resources on surveying the services provided for design students at universities within the UK. We conducted a number of case studies and in depth interviews of students in a range of design fields, to get their views on the aspects of design education that they think need improvement, as well as highlighting successes and where progress has been made. These interviews identified some areas of concern that we will be addressing with those in design education under the umbrella of the CSD Course Endorsement Programme (CEP).

Crucial points taken from these interviews pointed towards a lack of contact hours on design courses. Some students documented poor structure within their courses. They also highlighted contact hours and career guidance as areas that they felt required improvement.

*"I am very disappointed with the lack of support provided for after University. The tutors did not offer any advice or direction and there was too much focus on assignments and not enough preparation for the future."*

Textile Design Student, London

It was also noted that there was little awareness of the external resources available to students of design, one student said:

*"I feel I have missed a lot of opportunities through lack of information from the course tutors"*

Fashion Illustration Student, London

The survey was conducted across a wide spectrum of design courses in all subjects (Fig 1) in order to gauge students' satisfaction. We received responses not only from students on CSD Accredited courses, but also from design courses accredited by other bodies and courses with no accreditation.

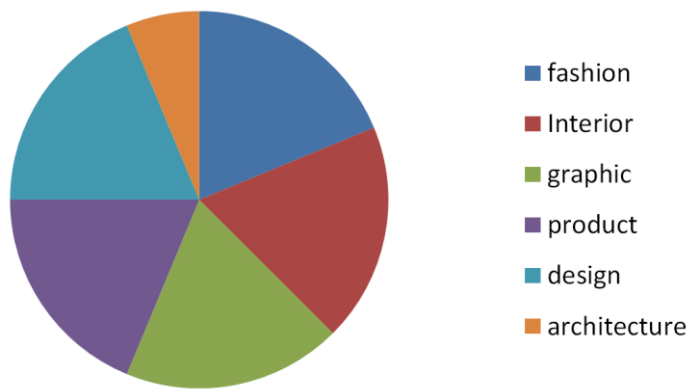


Fig 1: survey participants by design field

With the recent increase in University fees in 2012, we were aware that the value of University courses is under a degree of scrutiny by prospective students. We specifically asked design students whether they were satisfied with the amount of contact hours they received on their course and found that 53.4% were not satisfied. When considering the career guidance on offer to them through their University, more than half of respondents (54%) were not satisfied with the quality or quantity of information they had received.

When investigating the actual content on design curriculum we found a gap in the awareness or knowledge gained in respect of designers' rights, legal matters and in particular intellectual property rights. These aspects have become increasingly important in recent years, inespically with the introduction of the Intellectual Property Act 2014 in May, strengthening protection for the UK's design sector. From our survey we found 100% of respondents who attended CSD Accredited or CSD Recognised courses had gained awareness of these issues on their course, but from the overall data less than 40% of design students had received any guidance on designers' rights and IP. As part of the CSD Accreditation programme, each course is mapped against the criteria of the CSD Genetic Matrix, and developing an awareness of intellectual property is an integral requirement of the course content. The Society believes that an understanding of intellectual property, at an early stage of a design career, is paramount in understanding the legal issues that designers in their working environment and in monetising their creativity.

A number of other student surveys have been carried out this year. The Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey 2014 polled 14,300 students on their satisfaction of 21 features of University life. These factors included facilities, cost of service, staff, social life and accommodation, with all factors identified and selected by the students themselves. This year's top spot was taken by the University of Sheffield, having secured excellent ratings across all areas, with notably strong scores in students' social life, student union and the quality of facilities and accommodation. Looking at more traditional indicators, the University ranked highly across academic aspects, coming third behind Cambridge and Oxford as a result of the structure of its courses, proving itself to be a good all-rounder University. The improvements in Sheffield University life came after an initiative to involve students more in the decision making process and clearly worked.

The Chartered Society of Designers works alongside universities and formally recognises excellence in both design teaching and study throughout design education within its CEP and currently accredits and recognises 11 design courses in the UK within five universities; of these Nottingham Trent University (NTU) climbed an impressive 18 places from last year, becoming one of the top 40 universities in the UK according to the Times survey. NTU and Plymouth University achieved above average scores of 20 out of 22 and 15 out of 22 of the considered criteria (respectively). All of the universities within the CSD CEP achieved above average scores for 'good relationships with teaching staff', and 75% scored above average for satisfaction of the campus environment, security, and work load.

The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), an independent charity devoted to higher education, conducted a further Student Academic Experience Survey in 2014 (Fig 2). It revealed details on students' wellbeing and experiences in English institutions. According to the survey more than one third of students believed that their course represented 'very poor' or 'poor' value for money. When asked their priorities 55% (of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students) chose reducing fee levels as their number 1 priority (48% overall) whilst 35% chose teaching hours and smaller group sizes. The results showed that hours of study can vary by up to 25 hours a week depending on the course, with the average number of contact hours being 14.2 hours per week, which is less than three quarters of the 40 hours a week set out in the Quality Assurance Agency Guidelines.

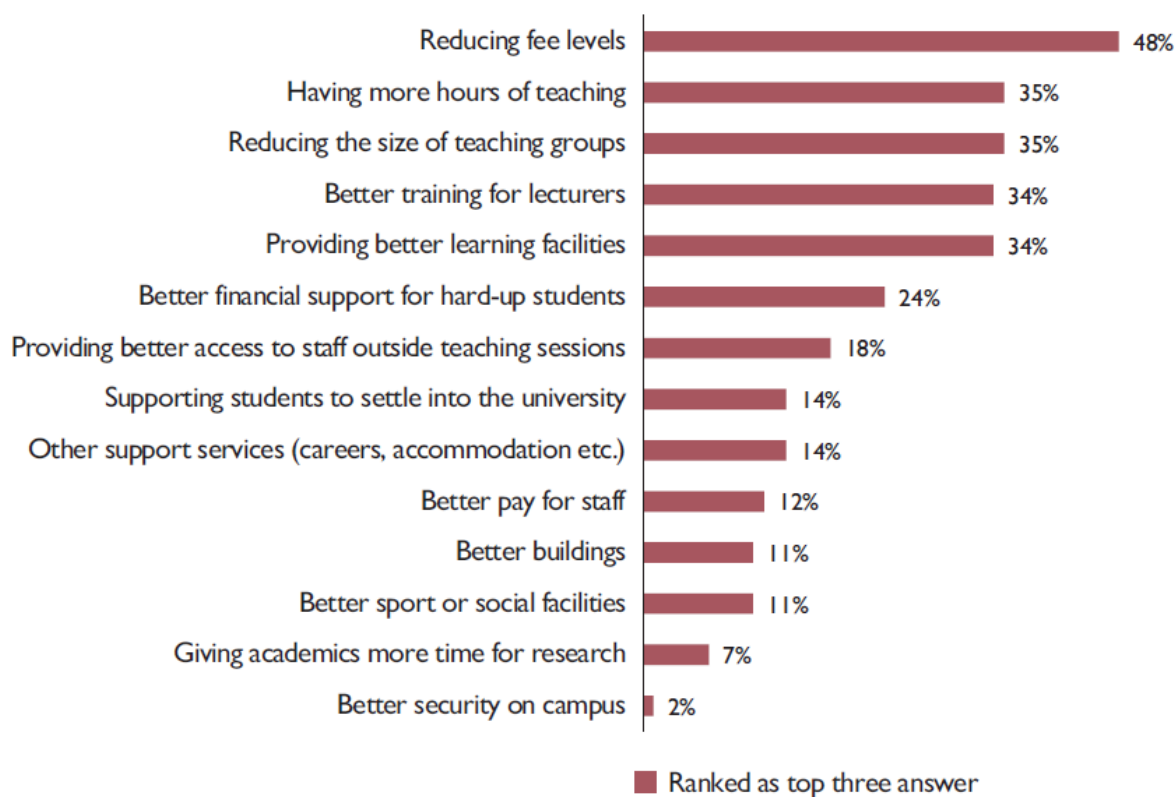


Fig 2: HEPI Student Academic Experience Survey 2014

Better training for lecturers was identified as a priority by 34% of respondents and is an area the Society is keen to help support, requiring structured staff CPD as part of its accreditation proposition as well as promoting research active staff. The Society also recommends students to request staff CVs as part of their research into deciding which design course to apply for.

As the professional body for design, the Society provides an accreditation program that meets the needs of the profession and the industry, encouraging, supporting and enabling design education to deliver fit for purpose design learning for the benefit of all those involved. By ensuring that design courses meet this core criteria value is added to the academic qualification and the student experience.

For further details about the CSD CEP please email [cep@csd.org.uk](mailto:cep@csd.org.uk)

For the full results of the HEPI survey click [here](#)

For The Times survey results click [here](#).