

Student Opinion Monthly Survey Recent findings

Introduction

Student Opinion is a NUS monthly online survey, which we offer to our internal colleagues. Each monthly survey covers a range of different topics every month.

Student opinion is a quick and straightforward way to get you some of the information and answers you want and it's a taster of the insight we can gather.

The following slides give a taste of some of the recent topics we have covered.

The survey is promoted via the NUS extra student database, with a prize draw offered to participating students as an incentive.

We aim for a national representative sample of at least 1,000 students per survey.

Research Findings November 2017

- To provide the NUS extra team with media content around students' spending habits at Christmas
- Representative sample of 2,050 Students

Summary

Christmas 2107



The majority of students
plan to celebrate
Christmas

90%

Average spend on gifts is
£203

£203

Average spend on
decorations is £28

£28

Average spend on party
clothes is £68

£68

The majority of students plan to celebrate Christmas

Plans to celebrate Christmas this year



Yes: 90%



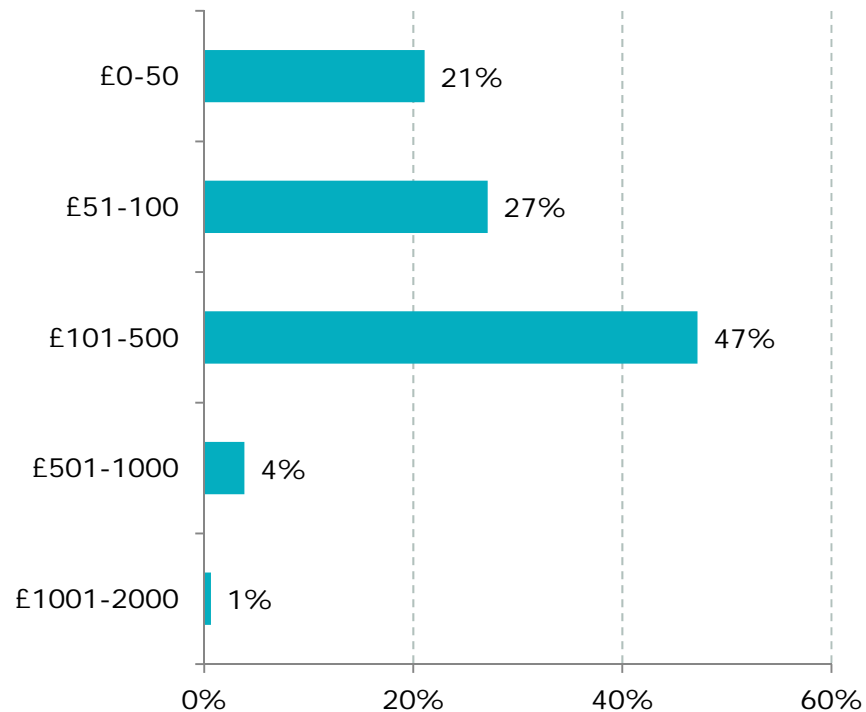
No: 6%

Base: 2048 Balance: no response. 4% don't know

C1. Do you plan to celebrate Christmas this year?

Students plan to spend an average of £203 on gifts this Christmas

Gift spend



Average
spend:
£203

Base: 1689 Balance: those not celebrating Christmas

C2. Thinking about Christmas ahead, approximately how much, if anything, do you plan to spend on gifts in total?

East of England have the highest average spend on gifts; London the lowest

Average gift spend across the regions

N.Ireland
£198

Scotland:
£225

Wales:
£211

North
West:
£231

North
East
£223

Yorkshire
and
Humber:
£202

West
Midlands:
£185

East
Midlands:
£218

East of
England:
£235

London:
£191

South
East:
£183

South
West:
£198

In a little more
detail...



Women and those aged 30+ spend the most on their Christmas gifts

Average gift spend across
men / women

Men:
£178

Women:
£232

Average gift spend across age
groups

16-19:
£123

26-30:
£246

20-25:
£156

30+:
£353

In a little more
detail...



Just over half will be having a pre-Christmas meal with housemates, with an average spend of £36

Christmas/festive meal with your term time housemates/friends before the Christmas break



Yes: 51%



No: 25%

**Average
spend:
£36**

Base: 1839 Balance: those not celebrating Christmas.
24% don't know

C5. Do you plan to celebrate by having a Christmas/festive meal with your term time housemates/friends before the Christmas break?

Base: 822 Balance: those not celebrating Christmas and/or those not having a Christmas meal

C6 And, how much, if anything, do you plan to spend on your Christmas meal?

nus
Insight

Spending time with family is what students are most looking forward to, with seeing friends, going home, having time off and presents being other key themes

Most looking forward to about Christmas this year

Main themes

- Spending time with the family
- Seeing friends
- Going home
- The holiday/time off
- Presents

"going home and spending time with my family"

Female, 18-19 HE

"Close friend home for holidays"

Male, 18-19, FE

"5 weeks at home not having to think about teeth!"

Female, 20-21, HE

"Giving presents and seeing their reactions"

Male, 18-19, HE

"having some time off college and relaxing"

Male, 16-17, FE

Base: 1799 Balance: those not celebrating Christmas

C7. In a few words, please tell us what you are most looking forward to about Christmas this year?

Financial worries are the biggest concern for many students at Christmas time, with other themes being family tensions and arguments, study work to be completed, having to work, and season travel issues

Biggest concern about Christmas this year

Main themes

- Financial worries and the cost of Christmas
- Family tensions and arguments
- Study work to be completed over the holidays
- Having to work at their job over Christmas
- Seasonal travel problems

*"Cost of christmas.
Lack of money
because I am a
student."
Female, 36-40, FE*

*"Assignments for
university"
Male, 18-19, HE*

*"Family troubles"
Male, 16—17, FE*

*"Travel! The trains
never run!"
Female, 18-19, HE*

*"Christmas shifts at
work"
Male, 18-19, HE*

Base: 1762 Balance: those not celebrating Christmas

C8. And now, in a few words, please tell us your biggest concern about Christmas this year?

Pigs in blankets are by far the single most favourite foody treat for students. Mince pies, chocolate, turkey, stuffing, Christmas pudding and roast potatoes are also popular

Single most favourite Christmas foody treat



Base: 1790 Balance: those who don't plan to celebrate Christmas this year and no response

C9. And finally, what is your single most favourite Christmas foody treat?

Research Findings December 2017

- To provide the NUS extra team with media content around perceptions vs reality of going to University
- Representative sample of 1,569 students.

Summary

University life

Thought they would find university studies difficult

74%

Thought that managing their own finances would be a challenge

61%

Thought that making new friends would be easy

43%

Before University, looking forward to an independent life away from home

78%

Have found university studies difficult

61%

Have found that managing their own finances has been a challenge

48%

Have found that making new friends has been easy

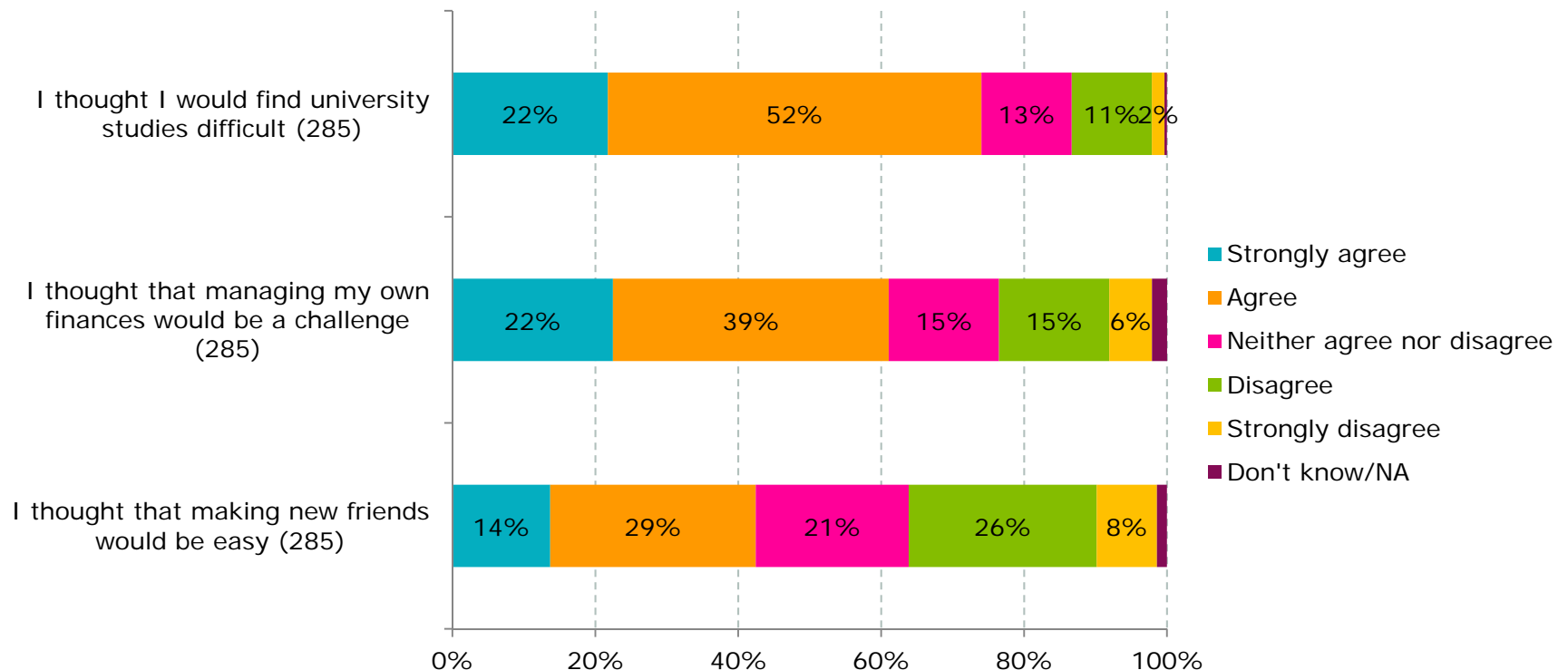
58%

At University, enjoying an independent life away from home

75%

Almost three quarters (74%) thought they would find university studies difficult, over half (61%) thought that managing their own finances would be a challenge and less than half (43%) thought that making new friends would be easy

Expectations of University life

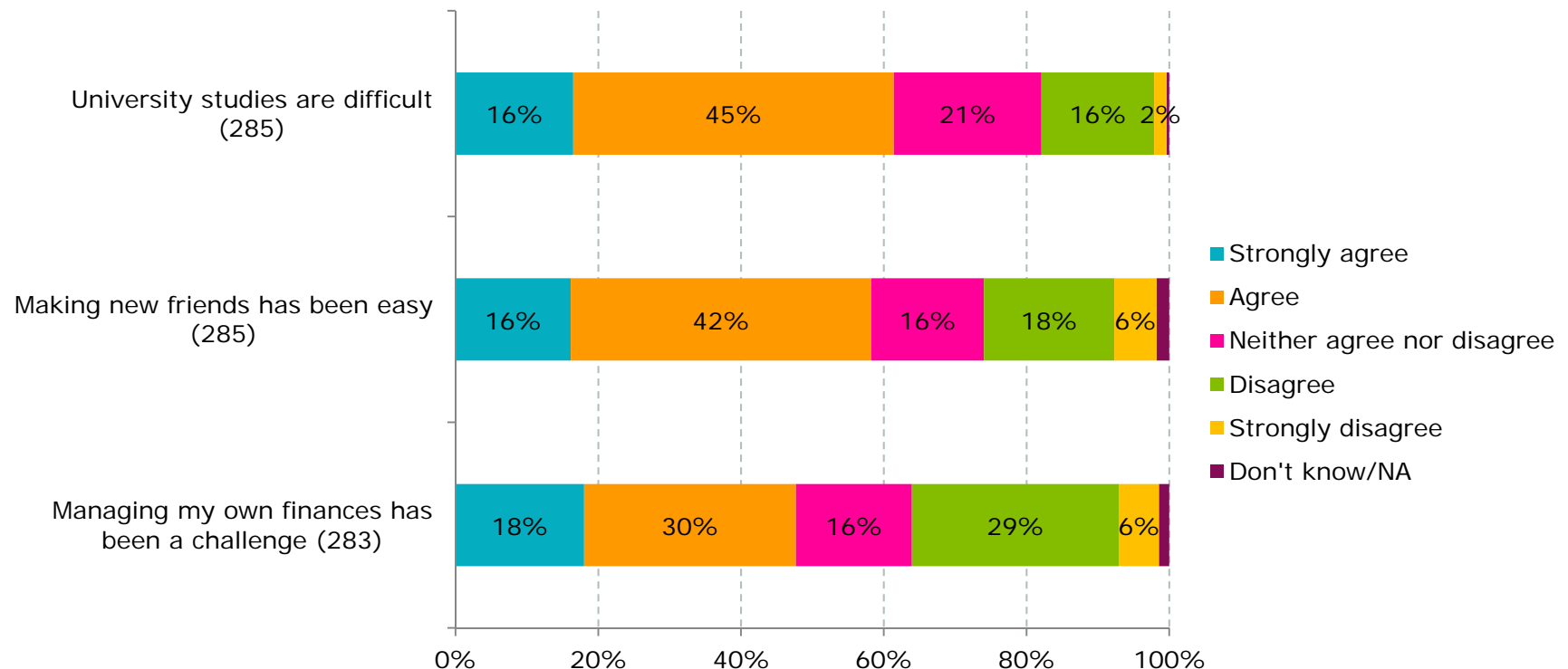


Base: (figures in brackets) Balance: those who are not 1st year undergraduates NB Low base size

B1. Thinking back to before you started University, to what extent do you agree with the following statements about your expectations of University life?

More than three out of five respondents (61%) have found university studies difficult, almost three out of five (58%) respondents have found that making new friends has been easy, almost half (48%) have found that managing their own finances has been a challenge

Reality of University life

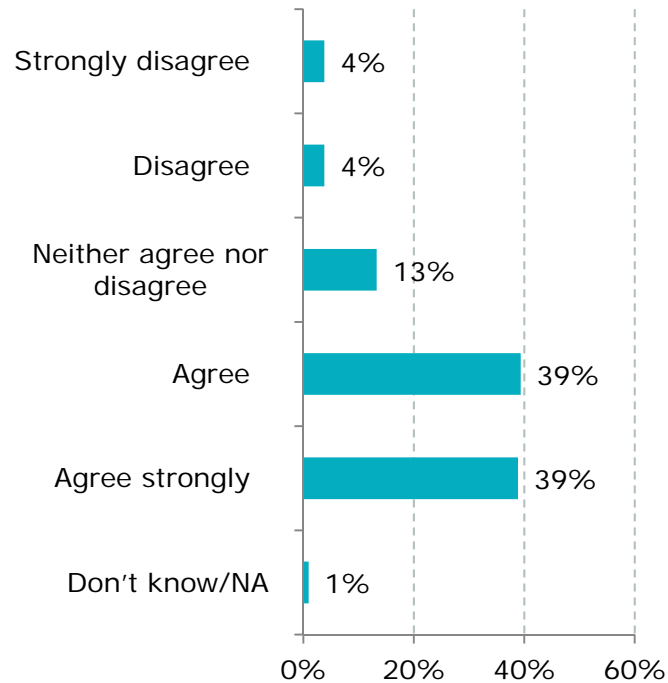


Base: (figures in brackets) Balance: those who are not 1st year undergraduates **NB Low base size**

B3. Now, thinking about how you feel as you near the end of your first term at University, to what extent do you agree with the following statements about University life?

Before University, over three quarters (78%) were looking forward to an independent life away from home and, now that they're at University, three quarters (75%) enjoy an independent life away from home

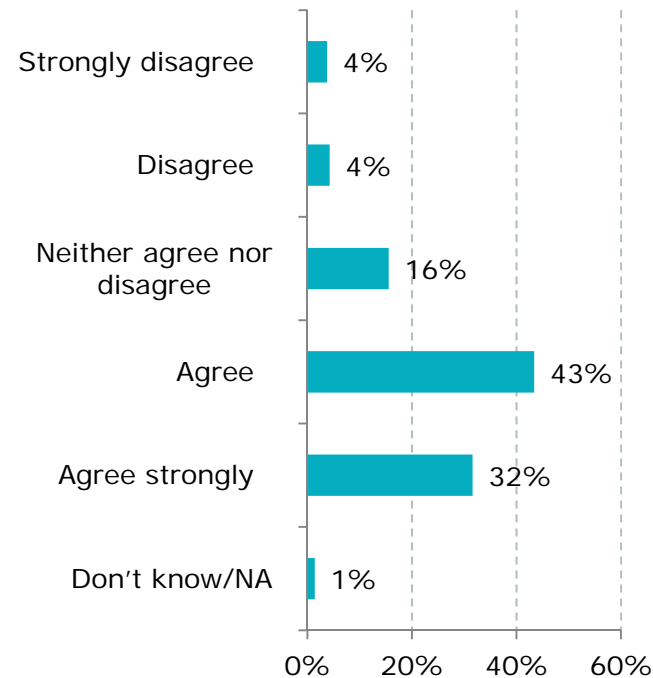
"Before I went to University, I was looking forward to an independent life away from home"



Base: 211 Balance: those who didn't move away from home when they started University **NB Low base size**

B2. To what extent do you agree with the following statement "Before I went to University, I was looking forward to an independent life away from home"?

"Now that I am at University, I enjoy an independent life away from home"



Base: 212 Balance: those who didn't move away from home when they started University **NB Low base size**

B4. To what extent do you agree with the following statement "Now that I am at University, I enjoy an independent life away from home"?

Expectations that resulted in positive reality were around studies being easier, appreciating independent living and finding it easy to make friends.

Life at University: expectation versus reality

Positive themes

- **University course and workload**
- **Independence**
- **Social – making friends easier than anticipated**

"I thought that university would be very full on and a lot of hard work, however the university ease you in to ensure you are not overwhelmed"
Female, 18-19

"I thought living independently would be almost impossible for me but it turned out to be fairly easy!"
Male, 18-19

"It was very easy to make friends"
Male, 18-19

"I didn't expect my course to become such a community that everyone was a part of but everyone is really social"
Male, 18-19

With regards to less positive reality compared with expectations, others found coursework hard and struggled to manage finances and struggled to make friends. Some indicated the difficulty in balancing their work, studies and life.

Life at University: expectation versus reality

Less positive themes

- **University work - harder than expected**
- **Finances**
- **Social – making friends, fitting in, loneliness**
- **Time management, responsibility and work life balance**

"I thought it was all fun, one of the best experiences of a lifetime, but there is far more work and pressure than I expected"
Male, 18-19

"Finances have been difficult"
Female, 20-21

"Still struggling to make friends"
Male, 18-19

"Just the emotional experience of being away from home and that detachment. It was much harder than expected"
Female, 18-19

"Time management"
Female, 36-40



Base: 244 Balance: those who are not 1st year undergraduates **NB Low base size**

B5. In a few words, please tell us about the aspect of University life where you have experienced the biggest difference in the reality against your expectations?



Student Opinion Survey

