Guild of Students

Useful Information For Your Written Statement

Officer Elections Candidate Training 2021

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What Does the Guild Offer for Students?

- Guild Advice
- Student groups, societies and associations
- Student Representation System
- Jobs and volunteering
- Joe's Bar
- Community Wardens
- Student Mentors Scheme

- Club nights & events like Freshers' Fest and Grad Ball
- Guild Elections & Campaigns Pot
- Halls Reps
- Not On Campaign
- Events for PG & International Students
- MedSoc

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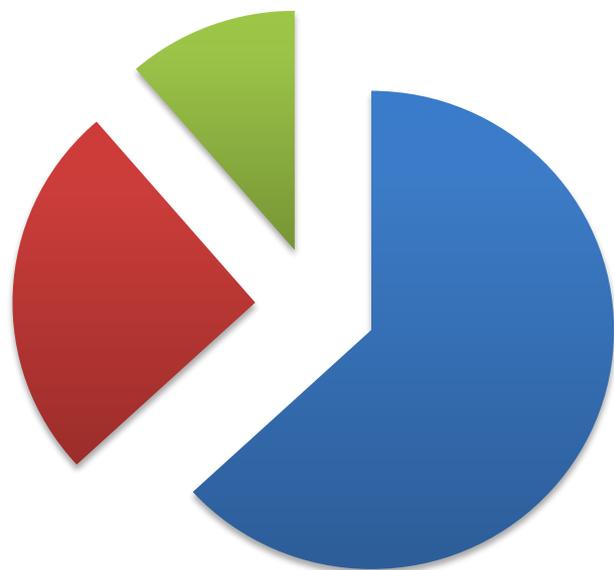
What Do We Know About Students At UoB?

This presentation includes further detail on:

- Student demographic data

- Data on Student Issues, including: *Speak Week Data, NSS, PTES & PRES Data, Issues raised by Reps/Previous Rep Impacts & Your Ideas*

- Other Useful Information: *Officer Priority Campaigns, Impacts of COVID-19 & Minority/Underrepresented Groups*

We recommend that you include information that is relevant to the role that you are applying for

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Student Demographic Data

As of 30th September 2020, we currently have 36,345 students

Students by "Type of Study"
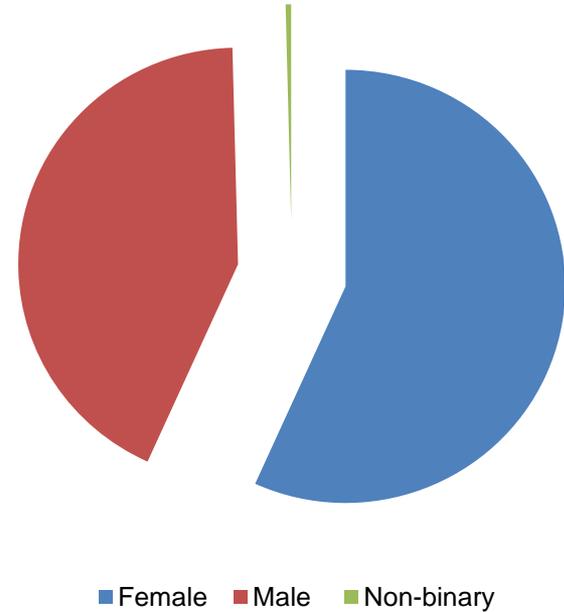
Undergraduate	24,390 (67.11%)
Postgraduate Taught (23.38%)	8498
Postgraduate Research	3457 (9.51%)

The majority of our students study one of over 500 undergraduate programmes available at UoB.

- ■ Undergraduate
- ■ Postgraduate Taught
- ■ Postgraduate Research

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Student Demographic Data

Students by "Sex"

Female   21,223 (58.39%)

Male   15,090 (41.52%)

Non-Binary   32 (0.06%)

■ Female   ■ Male   ■ Non-binary

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Student Demographic Data

Students by "Age"

16-17	182 (0.5%)
18-21	21,858 (60.14%)
22-25	7360 (20.25%)
26-30	2702 (7.43%)
Over 30	4232 (11.64%)
Not Known 11 (0.03%)	

Legend: ■ 18 - 21 ■ 22 - 25 ■ Over 30 ■ 26 - 30 ■ 16 - 17 ■ Unknown

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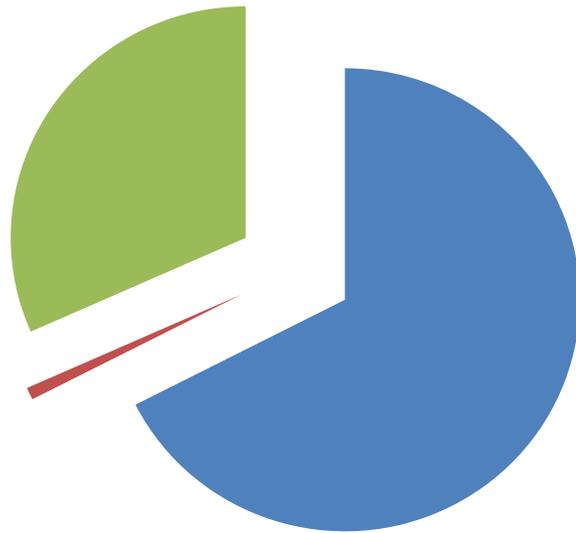
Student Demographic Data

Students by "Nationality"

UK	23,967 (65.94%)
Non-UK	12,030 (33.1%)
Not Known	348 (0.96%)

■ UK ■ Unknown ■ Non-UK

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Student Demographic Data

The majority of our Non-UK students come from China which make up 12.99% (4720) of the student population here at Birmingham.

Birmingham is also really diverse having students from over 140 nations.

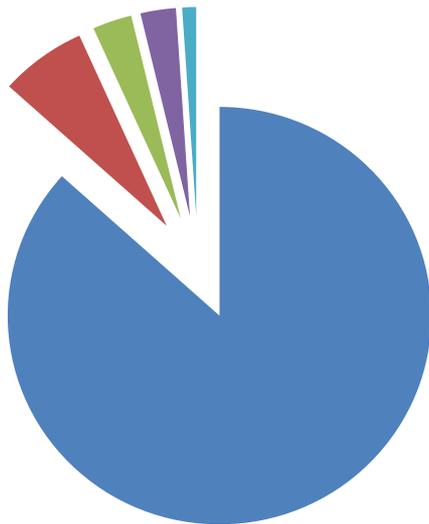|	
China: 4,720 (12.99%)	USA: 358 (0.99%)
Singapore: 511 (1.41%)	Irish Republic 231 (0.64%)
India: 488 (1.34%)	Saudi Arabia 226 (0.62%)
Nigeria: 373 (1.03%)	Romania: 220 (0.61%)
Italy: 359 (0.99%)	Canada: 219 (0.60%)

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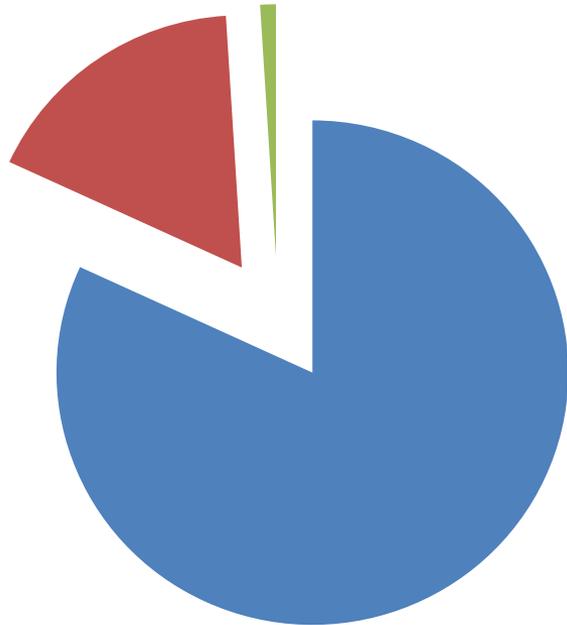
Student Demographic Data

**Students by
"Mode of Study"**

Full-time	31,926 (87.84%)
Part-time	4399(12.10%)
Other	20 (0.06%)

Student Demographic Data

On Campus   Distance Education   Totally Taught Abroad
Joint Institutions   Other

Students by "Study Location"

Birmingham   32, 278 (88.81%)
(This includes satellite sites).

Distance Education   2,354(6.48%)

Totally Taught Abroad   661 (1.82%)

Joint institutions   483 (1.33%)

Dubai   236 (0.65%)

Unknown   110 (0.30%)

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Student Demographic Data

Students by "Year of Study"

Foundation Year	127 (0.35%)
1st Year	15,542 (42.76%)
2nd Year	9,278 (25.53%)
3rd Year	7977 (21.95%)
4th Year	2626 (7.23%)
5th Year	578 (1.59%)
6th Year	109 (0.30%)
7th Year	68 (0.19%)
8th Year	27 (0.07%)
9th Year	13 (0.04%)
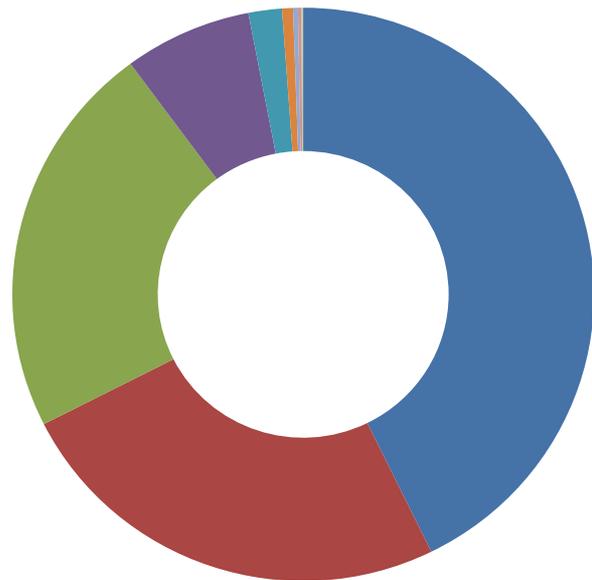
Legend: ■ 1st year ■ 2nd year ■ 3rd year ■ 4th year ■ 5th year ■ Foundation year ■ 6th year ■ 7th year ■ 8th year ■ 9th year

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Student Demographic Data

Students by "Department"

Birmingham Business School: 4951 (13.62%)	Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS): 1166 (3.21%)
Birmingham Medical School: 2063 (5.68%)	School of Biosciences: 1142 (3.14%)
Law: 1598 (4.40%)	History: 1119 (3.08%)
Computer Science: 1327 (3.65%)	Chemical Engineering: 927 (2.55%)
School of Psychology: 1325 (3.65%)	Geography: 890 (2.45%)

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How Involved Are UoB Students With The Guild?

N.B. Data for this year is not yet complete – the below data is from the 2019/2020 academic year

Student Reps	1,039 students
Student Group Committee Members	1,290 students
Student Group Members	10,909 students
Elections Voters	9,070 voters
Volunteers	8,089 students
Jobs service users	2,409 students found jobs
Fab n Fresh tickets	61,000 tickets sold

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Data on Student Issues

There are lots of ways that students can communicate, or have been able to communicate issues at the Guild and University.

<u>These include:</u>
- Speak Week Data
- National Student Survey (NSS) Data
- Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)
- Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)
- Issues raised by Reps/Previous Rep Impacts
- Ideas/Policy that were passed through last year's Your Ideas/GPDG

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National Student Survey (NSS) Data

The NSS is a survey that all final year Undergraduate students at UK Universities complete

The survey asks these students for feedback on different areas of University life (e.g. teaching, University services etc)

Data from this survey shows that students are mainly happy with "Teaching on my course" and the overall experience at Birmingham.

Areas where students show they are not as satisfied include:

- Assessment and feedback
- Learning opportunities
- Academic support
- Learning community
- Student voice (listening to student feedback)
- Provision of welfare services
- University's responsibility for student safety

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

Responses to this year's Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey were mostly positive – 85% of PGTs are satisfied with their overall experience at Birmingham.

However, areas for concern include:

- Course organisation (particularly being involved with how the course is run)
- Timetabling
- Dissertation support from supervisors
- Access to the Guild's services for Distance Learners
- Access to opportunities at the Guild for commuter students

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Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

Responses to last year's Postgraduate Research Experience Survey decreased in almost every area, showing there is lots of work to be done! Areas for concern include:

- Facilities – a lack of adequate work space and IT issues
- Programme – uncoordinated communication within Schools/Colleges about programme structure
- Lack of training on method skills
- Research culture

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Speak Week Data

- Last year, Speak Week was during the 1st week of December 2019

- The purpose was to gather students' views about six areas of their student experience - Academic Experience, Welfare and Safety, The Guild of Students (Your Students' Union), Sports and Societies, Student Community, Campus Facilities

- Students' views were gathered via an online survey and physical comment cards, and could include general views, positive views, negative views, ideas for change etc

- The themes were chosen by the Guild's Full-Time Officer Team

- 3,056 comments were received in total (highest received)

- Most comments were received about Campus and Facilities (600) and least comments were about Student Community (452)

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Speak Week Data

Most Common Comments Received For Each Theme:

- Academic Experience – "Strike – lack of communication, loss of teaching hours" (39)

- Welfare & Safety – "Feeling unsafe in Selly Oak and on Campus" (111)

- Guild of Students – "Not engaged with the Guild/not sure what they do" (55)

- Sports and Societies – "Sports too elitist/cliquey" (26)

- Student Community – "More inclusive/sober events on campus" (16)

- Campus & Facilities – "Study spaces – not enough (particularly silent spaces)" (122)

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Issues Raised By Reps & Rep Impacts

The Most Common Issues Raised By Reps Include:

- Timetabling

- Assessment timing/structure

- Teaching resources

- Personal tutoring

Rep Impacts are when Reps raise an issue and the issue is resolved - see the next two slides for examples

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Rep Impacts

Biosciences Student Reps listened to and represented their fellow students' academic interests by investigating a class on canvas that had been causing confusion. They wanted to know a) what the class was about, b) if it was a workshop or practical, and c) which group it was for, and so they raised it at a Staff Student Forum. Based on their work, University staff took action, making it easier for students to find the information they needed on canvas and link classes to their timetabled slots.

A Student Rep received feedback around the accessibility of lectures and seminars - so in response they raised the issue with their student experience officer to improve the situation. As a result, students have really noticed a change in their lectures and seminars and have fed back that they feel better assisted.

Biomedical sciences cohort had an exam moved to January instead of December as their cohort felt the exam was too soon after learning the content

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Rep Impacts

Student Reps identified issues with exam timetabling for medical students who followed Islamic and Jewish faiths with Ramadan and Passover taking place during exams, respectively.

The Reps raised this issue at meetings with staff, following which a quiz was announced on canvas for students to identify their preference of when they want to have their exam (e.g. afternoon or morning) and asked for any other requirements for consideration.

The response rate was high.

From raising this issue it was also noted that students had not received communication from the University about religious observation forms - the Reps therefore communicated and encouraged students to fill this in if applicable.

Had this topic not been raised, students would not have been aware of the Religious Observation Forms and so would not have filled it out.

Students fed back that they were grateful that this issue was raised.

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Your Ideas & GPDG

Your Ideas was our old idea submission system, where students could submit ideas for things they wanted to change in the Guild, University or local community.

The submitted ideas were discussed and voted on by the Guild Policy Development Group (GPDG), or were voted on during an online student vote

Ideas that were passed, by GPDG or online voting, included:

- Decolonising Group Activities
- More Transparent Guild
- More Lockers in the Guild
- Low Efficiency of Work in the Student Hub
- Set Escosia as the Default Search Engine on All University Computers
- Lobby the University to Declare a Climate Emergency
- More Halal Catering on Campus
- Supporting the UCU Strikes
- Guild to Adopt IHRA Definition of Antisemitism

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Student Feedback on the Guild

Last year's Student Survey told us…

- Students are most satisfied with the range of activities, our services and representation on academic matters
- Students are less likely to know how to influence decisions in the Guild and how to access support.
- Half of students know who the officer team are and what they do!
- Students are most satisfied with Joe's Bar and the range of student groups and activities available

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Other Useful Information

Other Useful Information Includes:

- Impacts of COVID-19
- Officer Priority Campaigns
- Minority & Underrepresented Groups

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Impacts of COVID-19

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on various areas of the student experience, including:

- Welfare

- Money

- Housing

- Teaching & learning

- Placements, jobs & years abroad

- Social experience

- Accessibility of university services

You may want to talk about this in your written statement, if applicable.

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Officer Priority Campaigns

- Each year, Officers host 2-3 Priority Campaigns

- Last year's Officer Priority Campaigns included the Not On Campaign and Black Voices Campaign

- This year's Priority Campaign is the Black Voices campaign

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Minority & Underrepresented Groups

Students from the following groups often say that election candidates don't explain how they can represent them:

- Disabled Students
- Ethnic Students
- LGBT+ Students
- Trans Students
- Mature Students
- International Students
- Commuter Students
- International Students
- Postgraduate Students
- Medics
- Care Leavers

It is important to consider this for your written statement!

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General Tips For Written Statement Ideas

- Think about the information we have given you in today's session
- Talk to your friends, classmates, current Officers and Guild staff etc. about what they feel is important to students
- Talk to current Officers about what issues the Officers & Guild are working on
- Think about the Guild's strategic aims
- Ensure your ideas are relevant to your role, relevant to the students you will represent & reflect that you understand the role
- Reflect on any previous experience, skills, knowledge, and what you can bring to the role
- Ensure that your ideas are inclusive and accessible
- Be creative and ambitious, but ensure your ideas are realistic and achievable!
- Remember election rules and the Guild's Zero Tolerance Policy

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Thank-you for reading & Happy Applying!

For more information about the information included in this presentation, please email elections@guild.bham.ac.uk

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