

# UWS STUDENTS' UNION

Society Committee Members  
Feedback Survey April 2022



## INTRODUCTION

This feedback is from the survey sent to UWS Students' Union Society committee members in April 2022.

There were 11 responses to the survey

The 2020 and 2021 surveys received 16 responses but the impacts of covid restrictions resulted in fewer active societies this year. As in previous years, approximately half of active societies were represented in the feedback.

The Microsoft Forms survey was sent to society committee members by email and posted on the "Students' Union: Society Committee Members" Microsoft Teams page.

The survey was anonymous. It was made up of a mixture of 9 written, multiple choice and ranking questions. Students were also given the option of providing additional feedback.

## UWS Students' Union: So what do you think about your society?

This year you've been involved with setting up or helping run a student society at UWS.

Now it's your chance to share your thoughts on this:

- What have you thought about your role?
- What about the support you receive from the Students' Union?

Complete the 9 quick questions below (it takes 5 minutes)

- Your society will then be entered into a prize draw to win £60!
- Your response to this is anonymous

We are asking this information for two main reasons:

- To understand how we can improve the support we provide you and your society
- To evidence the impact that societies can have on student experience (which is essential for securing our funding)

Thank you contributing towards this and for being an important part of your Students' Union.

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



Despite the last three academic years functioning in very different ways as a result of covid (2019/20: pre-covid, 2020-21: lockdowns and restrictions, 2021-22: gradual easing of restrictions), student responses have been largely consistent and shown that the most important function of societies is to “bring people together”. In 2020/21 students were almost entirely limited to online learning, and society committee members showed a determination to take the lead on supporting students through the issues this caused. 2021/22 has proved to be more complicated, with less clarity on what societies can and can’t do. Longer-term social effects of lockdowns have also started to emerge, with noticeably less engagement in running societies from students who have no experience of university pre-covid.

Students want to make friends at university and enjoy being able to create opportunities for themselves and others to do this. They also believe that working to create these communities and experiences provides themselves with skills and experiences to improve their job prospects. Therefore, societies continue to play an important role in creating a holistic and positive university experience.

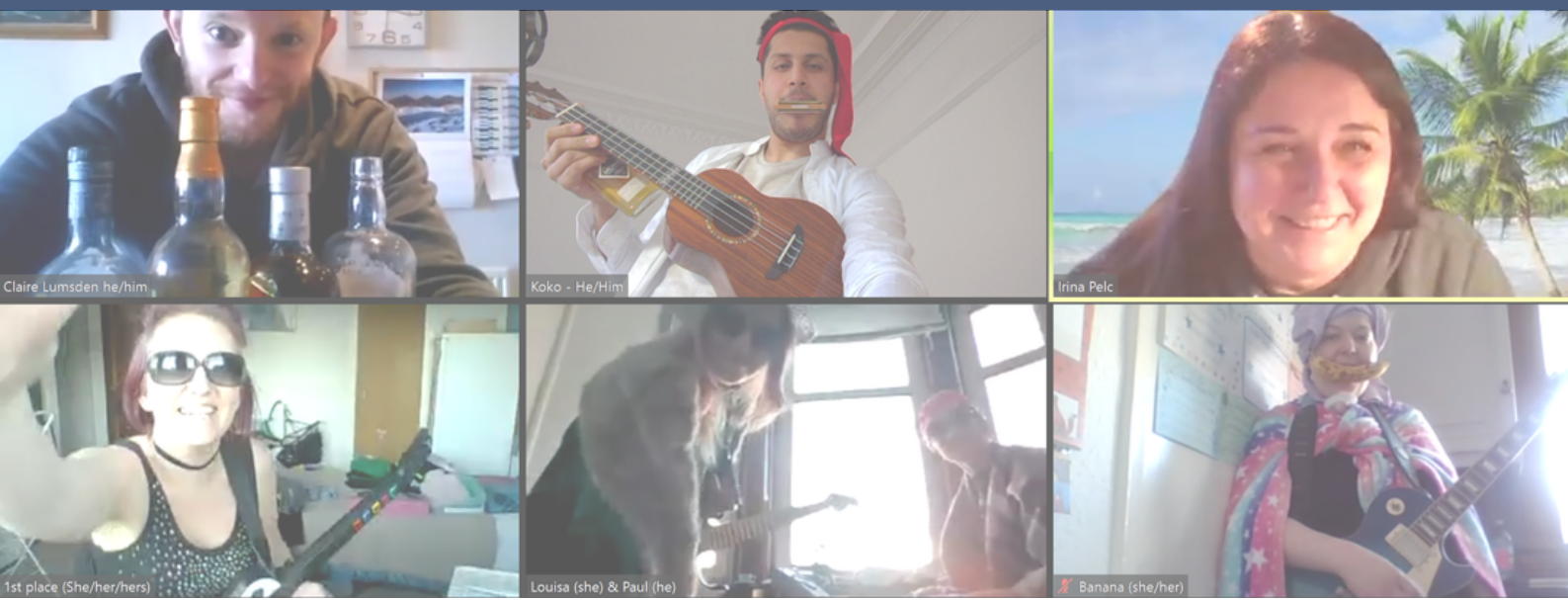
Feedback for how the Students’ Union supports societies was very positive, with almost every aspect receiving a clear majority of positive responses. Despite this, setting up and running societies has become more difficult this year. This is a result of both ongoing covid restrictions and the development of their longer-term effects, and has meant that rather than viewing their roles as an enjoyable part of their university experience, committee members have seen it as an extension of their workload.



# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Gaining new members and increasing engagement remains their main priority for improvement, as well as a desire to increase in person activities. While some online services have been effective, and should continue to be used where appropriate, societies must be supported to regain the social aspect of their groups. This was identified as a key factor for their success before, during and after covid restrictions. Based on responses given this can be achieved by providing:

1. Prioritise the facilitation and support of in person activities in order to “bring people together”
2. Clearer and easier to use society section of the Students’ Union website, including forms and the societies list
3. Clearer guidance for accessing Students’ Union funding
4. More consistent communications through Societies Committee Members Teams page
5. Clear guidance on what social spaces are available for societies on each campus
6. Development of the Societies Council to ensure it helps committee members feel part of a wider society community
7. Development of the Societies Executive Committee to ensure they are able to lead the planning and delivery of joint society events
8. Increased partnership working with the UWS Careers and Skills Services through the Societies Committee Members Teams
9. Encourage all committee members to register for relevant UWS and Students’ Union awards



# STUDENT RESPONSES



## 1. Why did you decide to take on this role?

### Personal development

- “Learn new skills, enhance on already existing skills”
- “To add a valuable experience to my CV”

### Meet new people

“the social aspect of being with people with similar interests and then the amazing outcome of making new friends”

“meet new people and experience uni life”

### Share an interest and provide opportunities for student

• “to create a space where we can celebrate and share our cultures”

“I love chess”

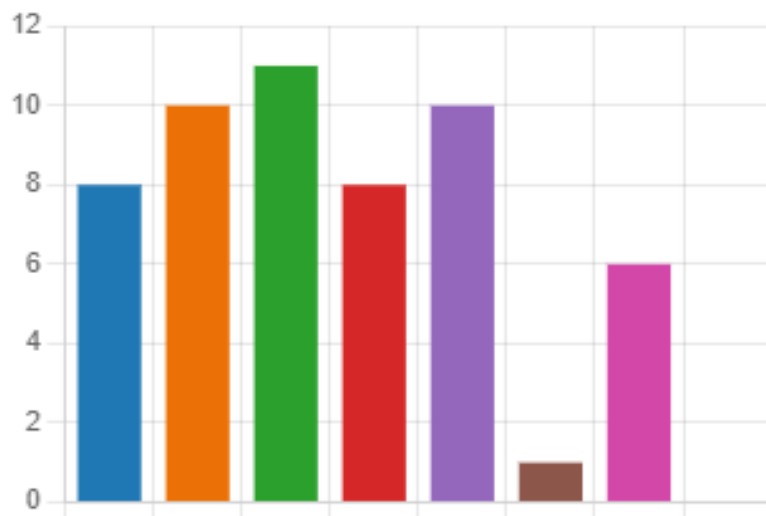
### Revive or develop the society

“To revive the society”

“UWS Paisley didn't have a proper tabletop and RPG society, so I decided to make it”

## 2) What have you enjoyed within this role? (select any that apply)

● making friends	8
● learning new skills	10
● bringing people together	11
● helping others	8
● getting to enjoy my interests an...	10
● building of what I learn through...	1
● taking on a leading role in my g...	6
● Other	0

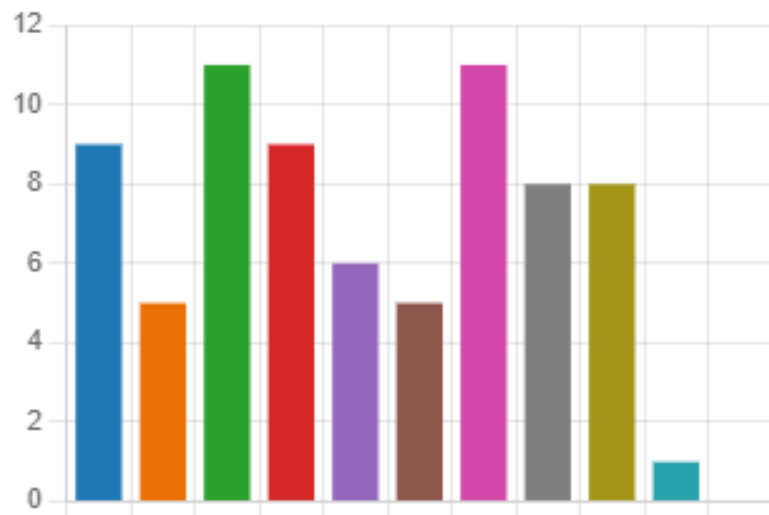


# STUDENT RESPONSES



## 3) What skills have you gained or developed from your role? (select any that apply)

teamwork	9
creativity	5
organisation	11
time management	9
resilience	6
empathy	5
communication	11
confidence	8
leadership	8
it's helped me with my coursew...	1
Other	0



## 4) What's been your favourite thing about your role in your society this year?

### Bringing people together

- "It has been fun and rewarding! Helping other students i feel we have helped people socialise learn and grow as a society"
- "Creating relationships with new people and showing them the importance of making friends and helping each other out when needed."

### Meeting new people

- "Meeting some amazing people"
- "Meeting new people on my course whether a committee or society member and finally getting to organise and partake in face to face activities."

### Organising events

- "Getting to organise frank morton"
- "Organising a society quiz"

### Sharing an interest or passion

- "Bringing people together for a love of an artistic medium/animation style"
- "An opportunity to use poetry to raise awareness about student's mental health crisis."

# STUDENT RESPONSES



## 5) What's been the most difficult thing about your role in your society this year?

### Time and balancing the role with uni work

- “Trying to juggle my role as the Vice President of the society alongside my studies”
- “managing to make events and stick to them while juggling a lot of coursework”
- “Time!!!! Not enough hours in the day”

### Getting engagement from members

- “Trying to keep my members engaged whilst balancing university work.”
- “The times when no-one came, sometimes it was disappointing”

### Organising committees and communications

- “Communication was certainly the hardest especially with students who are busy with just general university life.”
- “The most difficult thing for my role in the society was effectively leading and assembling my committee. I feel like I could've improved upon that aspect.”

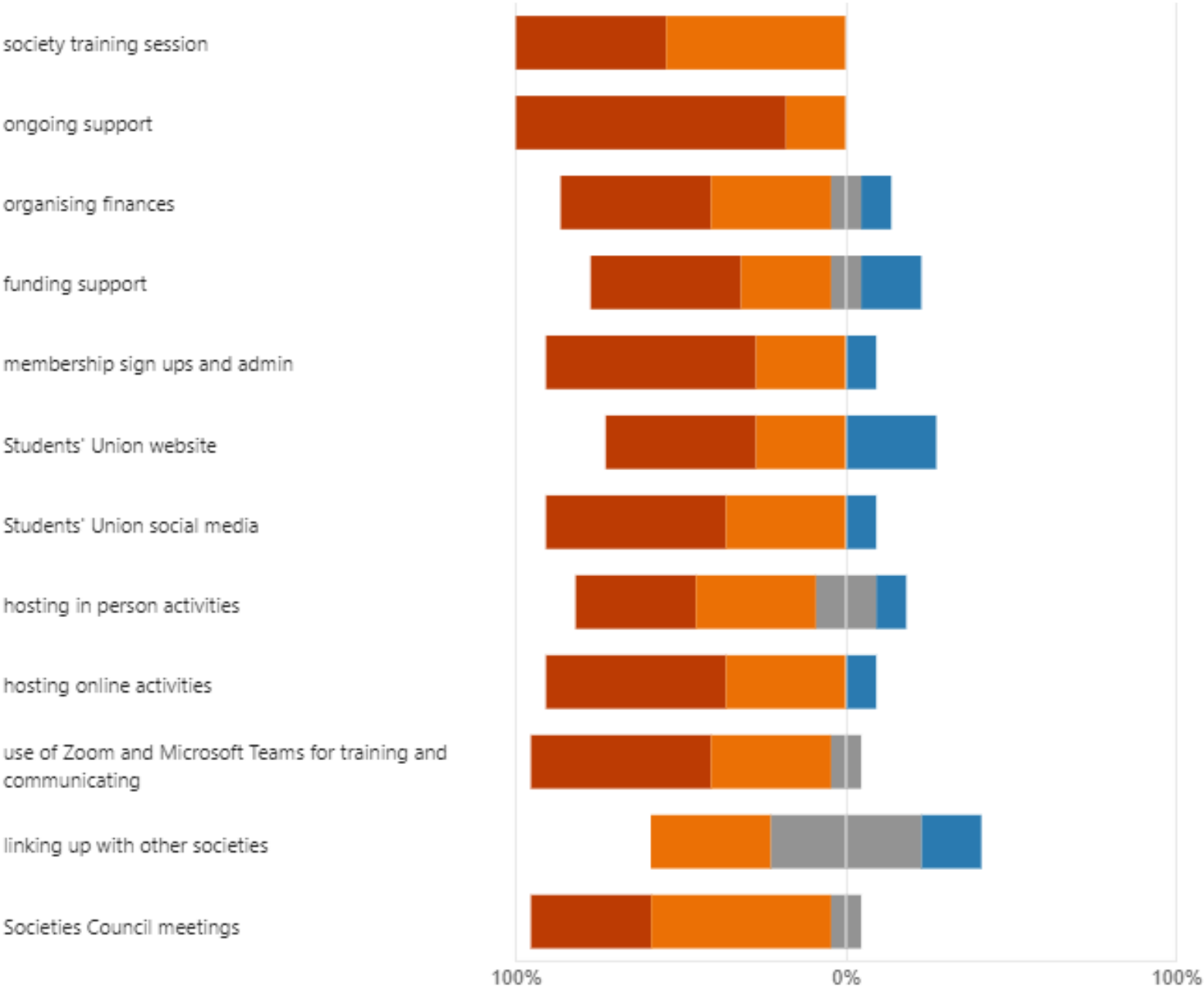


# STUDENT RESPONSES



6) How would you rate these Students' Union services in relation to your society?

■ very good   
 ■ good   
 ■ not applicable   
 ■ needs some improvement   
 ■ needs significant improvement



# STUDENT RESPONSES



## 7) In what ways can we improve or change our services to better support your society?

I don't know / everything is good

- "You guys have been good when we have needed you"
- "Nothing comes to mind"

More support with organising and promoting activities

- "Maybe at the start of the year push each society to organise an event in the union."
- "Helping to promote the society on campus"

Help structure committees

- "Possibly have a governing body to help if other committee members aren't pulling their weight"
- "provide more training for individuals in leadership positions (i.e. committee)"

Improve funding and finances

- "You guys were great I'm concerned about funding going forward and may need to charge for events so some help around planning and promoting"

Help bring societies together

- "Look into ways societies can organise joint activities."

## 8) In what ways can we improve or change our services to better support you as an individual?

I don't know / everything is great

- "I would say the standards you set are fantastic"
- "I think we were good this year did not need to much support but you were there when we needed you guys"
- "Nothing comes to mind"

Improve communication

- "Letting me know in advance if union is unavailable for meetups"
- "Introduce each society presidents/so forth to each other societies representatives to allow them to share times for fundraising , event organisation."
- "monthly check in emails"



# STUDENT RESPONSES



9) What's the main development or improvement you want to see in your society over the next 12 months?

## Increase in membership

- "I want to see it grow!"
- "To get more members involved especially younger years so the society keeps active."
- "More people joining and enjoying what we do."

## Increase engagement from new members

- "More engagement from new members, as well as expanding the range of games we play on a regular basis"
- "To be able to continue without me and open up a new generation of students to the world of Anime"

## More in person activities

- "More academic and social interaction hopefully in person as too many people now used to being indoors and not engaging with each other"
- "get people out and about engaging more due to the rough few years"
- "organise more face to face activities"



# ANALYSIS



This analysis looks at results of the 2021/22 survey while also making comparisons to the equivalent surveys from 2019/20 and 2020/21, which can be found on the Students' Union website:

<https://www.uwsunion.org.uk/societies/policies/>

## Why students take on lead roles in societies

Students' main reasons for taking on leading roles in their societies were to meet new people, bring people together and personal development. They want to have a fuller university experience beyond academic work and view societies as a valuable opportunity to gain skills and experience. 100% of responses said they enjoyed "bringing people together" and 91% enjoyed sharing an interest with others. This is similar to previous years and there is a clear desire to return to having more opportunities to socialise and enjoy hobbies.

However, the number of responses who enjoyed "making friends" and "taking on a leading role" decreased from previous years, indicating that running societies has been less enjoyable and rewarding this year. There was an increased percentage of students who identified personal development as the main reason for taking on their role, which also suggests a decreased focus on enjoyment. Students have shown a determination to return to in person activities and socialise but ongoing covid restrictions have made this more difficult to achieve. There were fewer 1st and 2nd year committee members than in previous years. The majority were 3rd and 4th year students who started before the pandemic, which may explain the increased references to reviving societies and personal development.

## Views on their roles

Students identified clear benefits when asked what skills they had gained from their role; organisation 91%, communication 91%, teamwork 82%, time management 82%. Responses to this question have been similar across the last three years. Taking on a leading role in a society provides an excellent opportunity for students to develop valuable life and employment skills.

Less obvious skills (creativity 45%, empathy 45%, resilience 55%) are still the lowest scoring skills. Work is still required to increase the guidance and support provided to help committee members identify how their experiences can transfer support personal and professional development.

# ANALYSIS



When asked what the most difficult aspect of the role was, engagement form members and organising communications and committees has been prominently identified in each of the last three years. However, this year saw a noticeable increase in references to managing time and balancing their role alongside university work. Ongoing impacts of covid restrictions have made it increasingly difficult to set up and maintain societies. This has reduced the potential benefits to students and has made it less rewarding to those running the societies. As a result, committee members have viewed their roles as an addition to university workload, rather than helping to provide a fuller, balanced university experience.

## Views on Students' Union services

Feedback on Students' Union services was overwhelmingly positive. 100% of responses gave positive feedback for ongoing support, with 82% considering it "very good" (the highest rating). Societies training also had 100% rating of "good" or "very good". Highly positive responses to personal support provided by the Students' Union has been consistent across the last three years. Use of online platforms for activities and training both received 91% positive feedback, which shows that these can be effective and should continue to be used for appropriate purposes. Feedback on membership sign ups (91% positive), social media (91%) and website (72%) have all improved significantly since 2019/20.

However, website and funding received the highest percentage of negative feedback (27% and 18% respectively), showing that continues work is required to make these services easier to access and understand. "Linking up with other societies" was the only service which did not have a clear majority of positive feedback (36% "good" and 46% "not applicable"). This is partly a result of covid restrictions limiting the ability to deliver on plans to bring societies together in person but also suggests further work is required to ensure the Societies Council supports this. 91% rated Societies Council as "good" or "very good" but part of its purpose is to help establish joint society activities. Further development of the Societies Executive Committee would help deliver council ideas for joint activities.

# ANALYSIS



## Support for individuals

As with previous years, the most common response when asked how committee members can be better supported as individuals was either that everything is good as it is, or they don't know (55%). Despite the increased percentage saying they took up their role for personal development, there was no reference to this in the responses. This could be because of a lack of clarity in the question but continues to suggest that more should be done to help students understand what experiences and skills they have gained, and how they can use this to support their personal and professional development. Increased awareness and registration to relevant university awards could help enable this.

Three answers were related to improved communications with the Students' Union. A more consistent approach to communications and further development of the Societies Council and Executive Committee is required to improve communications.

## Societies' aims for the next 12 months

This question has also provided consistent responses over the last three years, with 73% saying growing the society is the main aim, followed by increased engagement and more in person activities. Several responses specifically mentioned improving engagement from new students, which has proved to be much more difficult as a result of covid restrictions. There is also a strong desire to provide more opportunities to socialise in person. Committee members have worked hard to sustain societies and find ways to continue to bring students together but in order for this to be maintained, it is essential that priority is given to re-establishing the social aspect of societies after what has been a "rough few years".