

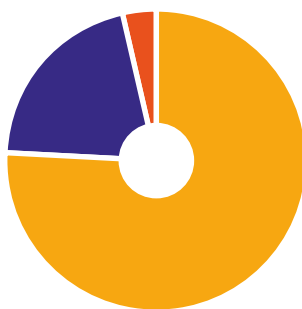
Student Counselling Service Review

The aim of this research was to gather feedback on waiting times, usefulness and recommendations from users of the Student Counselling and Mental Health Advice service.

The research revealed that many students found their counselling experience useful, but nevertheless have suggested important recommendations. Data was collected through dissemination of a self-selecting online survey via social media platforms using mixed methods research.

DEMOGRAPHICS

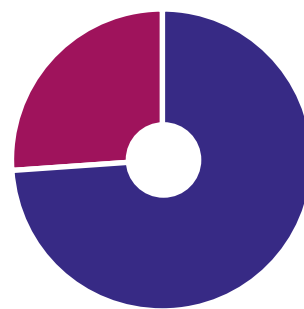
Overall, we received 58 responses to our survey completed to a useable level.* The demographics of respondents were as follows:



Gender

- 44 women
- 12 men
- 2 non-binary people

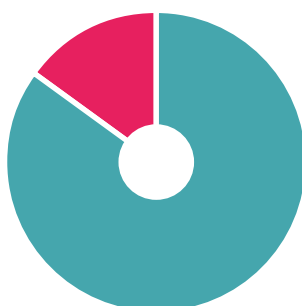
22% indicated their current gender is different to their birth gender.



Disability

- 26% identified themselves as having a disability.

Student status



- Year group:
- 85% Undergraduate
- 15% Postgraduate



- 7 Undergraduate - Year 1
- 5 Undergraduate - Year 2
- 20 Undergraduate - Year 3
- 9 Undergraduate - Year 4
- 7 Undergraduate - Year 5
- 1 Undergraduate - Year 6
- 3 Postgraduate - Taught
- 1 Postgraduate - Research
- 5 PhD

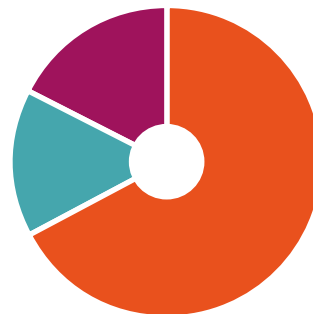
*useable response indicates responses with complete demographic information and partially to fully complete feedback

DEMOGRAPHICS CONTINUED



Faculty

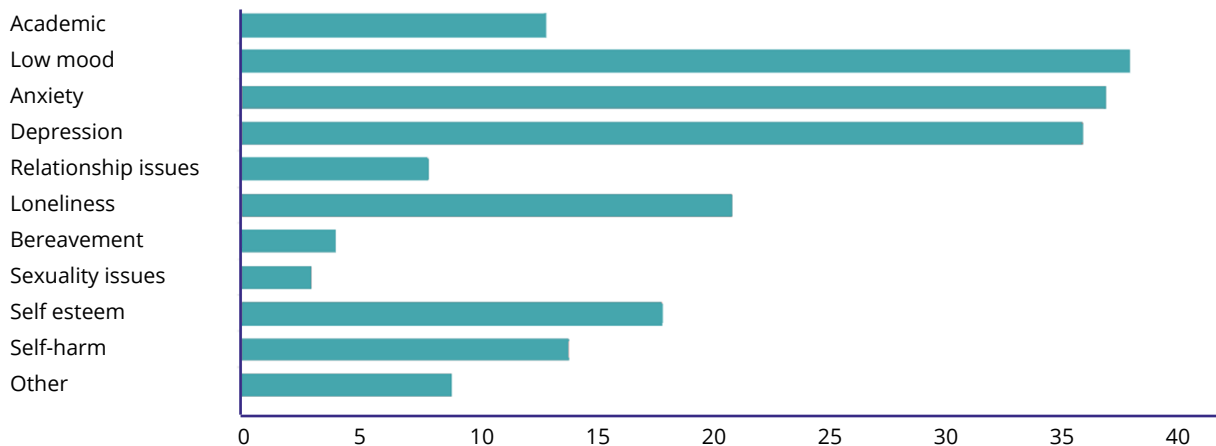
- 26 Faculty of Medicine
- 15 Faculty of Engineering
- 16 Faculty of Natural Sciences
- 1 Business School



Fee status

- 39 Home Student
- 9 EU Student
- 10 International Student

REASONS FOR APPROACHING COUNSELLING



WAITING TIMES & SESSION COUNT

	Mean (weeks)	Mode (weeks)
Registering to Intro Session	3	1-2
Intro to 1st Session	3	1-2
Number of Sessions	4 - 5	4

86% attended all sessions allotted to them. Of the students that didn't attend all sessions, the reasons for non-attendance were:

- Not finding it useful (3)
- Illness / forgetting when the session was (3)
- Counsellor not attending (1)

Number in brackets indicates the number of times this suggestion was made

FEEDBACK



Positive Feedback

Good starting point
Helpful to talk to someone
Taught good coping strategies
Felt listened to
Counsellors were kind and supportive



Negative feedback

Not enough sessions
Waited too long from registration
Didn't connect with counsellor
Sessions felt rushed
Didn't address the core issues

Suggested improvements

- More sessions (17)
- Shorter waiting times (12)
- More counsellors (5)
- Aftercare provisions for longer term counselling elsewhere (2)
- Specialisation (2)
- Able to choose counsellor - specific counsellors or male/female (2)
- Email service with counsellor for when someone is in a crisis (1)
- More discrete location (1)

Number in brackets indicates the number of times this suggestion was made

FEEDBACK CONTINUED

Overall, our research identified key strengths and weaknesses of the Student Counselling and Mental Health Advice service.

Students on the whole received 4-5 sessions, with a mean wait time of 3 weeks between registration and the first introductory session; this matches the advertised numbers on the student counselling website.

Whilst perceived usefulness of the service was varied, the vast majority of students attended all sessions and felt able to talk to their counsellor.

The main issues identified from our research are not enough sessions offered, with too long a wait time from registration to counselling beginning. However, students felt the sessions offered a good starting point, and benefitted from having someone to talk to.

We hope to use these data to support a request to College to increase funding for the service. Our research shows students greatly benefit and appreciate the service, but would further benefit from more sessions in a shorter time frame, which can only be achieved through increased funding.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase staff funding to facilitate employment of additional counsellors, in order to reduce waiting times and increase number of sessions offered
 - a. Hire a generalist / counsellor rather than the specialisation – specialists are more expensive
2. Improve pre-counselling triaging, potentially through hiring an administrator to triage requests, freeing time for counsellors to offer more sessions
3. Increase awareness of symptoms of low mood, anxiety and depression (top 3 reasons for approaching counselling) to allow students to recognise an impending crisis and seek help earlier