STUDENTS, ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SURVEY
2022-23
National Survey
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<td>71-79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY
We asked students in higher education about their experiences of drugs and alcohol during their time at university. 931 respondents completed an online survey in November 2022.

Respondents’ perceptions of student drug use prior to starting university is slightly higher once they become a student, but overestimates reported use...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of use</th>
<th>Prior to University</th>
<th>Since University</th>
<th>Reported Use (All Frequencies)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students use drugs occasionally</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top reasons behind drug use are...

- 56% Recreation
- 24% Enhance social interactions
- 19% Escape reality

Cannabis is the most frequently reported drug used by respondents who currently use or have previously used drugs as student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every/most days</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to once a week</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only on special occasions</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have used in the past but no longer do</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thinking of drugs and their place of study...

- 44% say they don’t know if their university has a drug policy
- 40% say they feel confident that if they turned to their university for support with drug use that it would be dealt with appropriately.
- 43% say their university / college should not be punishing students who take drugs

Reflecting on the impacts of drug use, respondents who currently (or previously) use drugs say...

- 21%...it has resulted in a missed lecture / seminar / class
- 36%...it helped them make new friends
- 25%...it’s improved a mental health condition but...
  - 14% say it has made a condition worse
- 21%...they enjoyed the experience of sex on drugs
- 17%...they took risks with their personal safety they would not have otherwise
- 44% say they don’t know if their university has a drug policy
- 40% say they feel confident that if they turned to their university for support with drug use that it would be dealt with appropriately.
- 43% say their university / college should not be punishing students who take drugs
Considering their experiences with alcohol whilst a student in higher education, respondents told us...

44% Before going to university, half of students surveyed thought students got drunk most/all of the time.

74% agree that drinking and getting drunk is part of university culture.

38% Over one third of students regularly drink at home or a friend’s house before going out for the night.

40% of students surveyed think getting drunk means they’ll have a good night out.

32% report drinking alcohol once a week or more.

83% say they don’t have to get drunk to have a good night out.
The Sample

- 66% of respondents are undergraduates
- 68% of participants are White British, and under three quarters are UK citizens who study in the UK.
- One fifth of students live in university owned halls of residence
- 42% of participants are 18-22 years old
- 46% of undergraduates are undergraduates in their first year
- 931 HE students completed the survey
- 46% of students live in the South of England (inc. London)
- 68% of participants are White British, and under three quarters are UK citizens who study in the UK.
NOTABLE CHANGES
(FROM 2021-2022 RESEARCH)
Drugs: Changes in key findings between 2021-22 and 2022-23 research

The following changes between respondents to research carried out in 2021-22 and 2022-23 are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. Respondents in 2022-23 are...

- Less likely to agree they do not have a problem with students taking drugs recreationally
  - 51% (2021-22) vs. 44% (2022-23)

- Less likely to report they are currently using drugs
  - 14% (2021-22) vs. 10% (2022-23)

- More likely to say they don’t know if their university/college has a drug policy
  - 35% (2021-22) vs. 44% (2022-23)

- More likely to say that drug use has improved their day-to-day experience with an existing mental health condition
  - 19% (2021-22) vs. 25% (2022-23)
**Alcohol: Changes in key findings between 2021-22 and 2022-23 research**

The following changes between respondents to research carried out in 2021-22 and 2022-23 are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. Respondents in 2022-23 are...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in Behavior</th>
<th>2021-22</th>
<th>2022-23</th>
<th>Statistically Significant Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less likely to report starting drinking at home or a friend's house before going out</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less likely to think that getting drunk means they'll have a good night out</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less likely to regularly get drunk at home before a night out</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less likely to report missing a university seminar/lecture/class following alcohol consumption</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABOUT THE RESEARCH
About the research

This report presents research completed as part of the Drug and Alcohol Impact and Alcohol Impact programmes. The programme is a whole-institution approach and embeds social norms of responsible drinking on our campuses, refocusing the conversation on drugs to be about reducing harm, and building healthier, safer, more productive student communities, involving action by local partnerships of students’ unions, universities and community organisations. The programme includes an annual survey, designed to identify students’ relationship with alcohol and drugs at participating institutions as well as students across the UK more widely. The survey is intended to provide a means for understanding changes in attitudes and behaviours.

A total of 1193 responses were achieved in 2022-23 through promotion of the survey locally by universities and students’ unions. The survey was promoted by NUS to students in the TOTUM database and to other universities and students’ unions wishing to gather data on their students’ relationship with drugs. 931 responses from students in higher education were received.

When reading the results, it is worth bearing in mind the characteristics of the respondents, outlined in the following chapter.

Variations between students with different characteristics, such as gender or nationality, are also drawn out throughout the report. Significant differences are reported where base size is greater than 30 and are valid at confidence level of at least 95%.

About Drug and Alcohol Impact

Our student wellbeing programme Drug and Alcohol Impact embeds social norms of responsible drinking on our campuses, and refocuses the conversation on drugs to be about reducing harm, and building healthier, safer, more productive student communities.

The programme builds upon the success of Alcohol Impact, which since 2015 has supported 30 university and students’ union partnerships to create lasting positive change around responsible alcohol consumption. Although progress has been made in improving drinking cultures on campus, there’s still work to be done, and institutions are supported to build on and improve practices in this area.

Drug and Alcohol Impact recognises that despite most universities taking a zero-tolerance approach to drug use, many students still choose to use drugs. The programme supports institutions to explore their own students drug use and design bespoke interventions to identify, educate and reduce harm.

For more information visit our website or email hello@sos-uk.org
RESEARCH FINDINGS: DRUGS
Perceptions of student drug use and campus drug culture
When asked to reflect on their perceptions of student drug use before starting university/college, over half of respondents say they thought students used drugs occasionally. This is similar now they’re at university/college with nearly two thirds of respondents, based on their experiences, saying students use drugs occasionally. However, less students say that students never use drugs.

**BEFORE STARTING UNIVERSITY/ COLLEGE**

- Never used drugs: 32%
- Used drugs occasionally: 51%
- Used drugs most of the time: 8%
- Used drugs all of the time: 2%
- Don’t know: 7%
- Rather not say: 1%

**AFTER STARTING UNIVERSITY/ COLLEGE**

- Students never use drugs: 7%
- Students use drugs occasionally: 57%
- Students use drugs most of the time: 14%
- Students use drugs all of the time: 2%
- Don’t know: 19%
- Rather not say: 1%

Q. Please select the phrase which best describes your perceptions: Before starting at university/college, did you believe that students... [Base: 912 Balance: No response]

Q. And now you’re a student at university/college, which of the following best matches your experiences of drug use? [Base: 912 Balance: No response]
Nearly half of the respondents say they think students take drugs to fit in with their peers, however the majority do not feel pressured to take drugs at university/college. Over a third feel that students who take drugs do less well in their studies. Under a quarter of students say taking drugs is part of university/college culture, and under one fifth say the drug culture is problematic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Neither</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
<th>% Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students take drugs to fit in with their peers (n=903)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have a problem with students taking drugs recreationally (n=906)</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who take drugs do less well in their studies (n=906)</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student drug use isn’t as problematic as is widely thought (n=906)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking drugs is part of university/college culture (n=906)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a problematic drug culture at my university/college (n=904)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel under pressure to take drugs at college/university (n=906)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statements? [Base: c.1453 Balance: No response, rather not say]
Attitudes and experiences towards drug use at university or college vary according to respondent characteristics...

Taking drugs is part of university/college culture

- UK students and international students from the EU are more likely to agree that taking drugs is a part of university/college culture than non-EU international students.

I do not have a problem with students taking drugs recreationally

- Undergraduate students are more likely to agree than postgraduate students.
- UK respondents studying in the UK are more likely to agree than international student respondents from outside the EU.

Students take drugs to fit in with their peers

- Respondents who are international students the EU are more likely to say agree that students take drugs to fit in with their peers than UK students or non-EU international students.
- PhD students are more likely to agree than postgraduate students that students take drugs to fit in with their peers.

Student drug use isn’t as problematic as is widely thought

- UK respondents are more likely to agree than international student respondents
- Students who identify as disabled are more likely to agree than students who do not identify in this way.

Q. To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statements?

STUDENTS ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SURVEY 2022-23
Student drug use
88% of respondents do not currently use drugs. 17% say they have used drugs whilst being at university, with 10% saying they are using drugs currently, 1% of whom are using drugs most days.

Q. Which of the following best describes your current frequency of drug use? [Base:915 Balance: No response]

- I have never used drugs: 66%
- I don’t use drugs but have used them in the past - before I started university: 15%
- I don’t use drugs but have used them in the past - while I have been a student at university: 7%
- I use drugs occasionally: 8%
- I use drugs regularly: 1%
- I use drugs most days: 1%
- Don’t know: 1%

Has used drugs whilst being at university: 17%

Currently use drugs: 10%

Do not currently use drugs: 88%

- UK respondents are more likely to say they use drugs occasionally than international student respondents from and outside the EU.
Over half (56%) of respondents who said they currently use or have used drugs in the past whilst they were students, say they do so for recreation and almost a quarter (24%) do so to enhance social interactions.

Q. Which of the following best describes why you use / have used drugs? [Base: 163 Balance: No response, and never have used drugs]

- International students from the EU are more likely to have used drugs for recreation than UK students or non-EU international students.
- Women respondents are less likely to have used drugs to deal with stress than men respondents.
- Disabled students are more likely to self-medicate for an existing physical or mental health problem, compared to those who don’t identify in this way.
Cannabis is the most frequently used drug reported by respondents who currently use or have previously used drugs. Under one fifth of students use cannabis during special occasions.

Q. Still thinking about your time at university/college, which of the following best describes your frequency of particular drug use? [Base: 163 Balance: No response, and never have used drugs]

- Every/most days
- More than once a week
- Once a week
- Only on special occasions
- Have used in the past but no longer do
- Once a year
- More than once a month
- Once a month
- Only used in the past
- Never
When looking at drugs that are used **every or most days**, cannabis (8%) is the most frequently reported drug, followed by ketamine and novel psychoactive substances/legal highs (1%). This is the same for most used drugs up to once a week or more than once a week.
1% of students use LSD weekly (once a week or more) and 1% use it monthly (once a month or more). 4% of students use non-prescribed opiates - excluding heroin - on special occasions. 19% of students said they have used amphetamine/‘speed’ in the past but no longer do.
1% of students use mephedrone weekly (once a week or more) and 5% of students have used it in the past but no longer do. 1% of students use GHB/GBL on special occasions. 1% say they used methamphetamine/‘crystal meth’, testosterone or heroin in the past but no longer do.
Under half of respondents who currently use or have used drugs whilst being a student say they have never used two or more drugs at the same time. Over one fifth of these respondents use two or more drugs occasionally.

Q. Thinking about your time at university, approximately how often, if at all, do you use two or more drugs at one time? [Base: 165 Balance: No response and never have used drugs]
Drug use is most prevalent in respondents’ homes or accommodation with almost one third (30%) of respondents saying they use drugs here up to once a month or more often. 19% of respondents say they use drugs at house parties on this basis.

Q. Thinking of the time since you have been at university, approximately how often do you tend to take drugs in each of the following places? [Base: see graph, Balance: No response, rather not say and never have used drugs]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>No longer use drugs</th>
<th>Once a year</th>
<th>Special occasions</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>More than once a month</th>
<th>More than once a week</th>
<th>Every/most days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stay at home / in my</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accommodation (n=161)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House party (n=162)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local nightclub (n=159)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local bar/pub (n=161)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ union nightclub</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ union bar</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. Thinking of the time since you have been at university, approximately how often do you tend to take drugs in each of the following places? [Base: see graph, Balance: No response, rather not say and never have used drugs]
The most common method of procuring drugs is through friends/family without payment (51%), followed by purchases from friends or family (41%).

Q. Thinking of your experiences since you started university, which of the following describes where or how you acquire drugs? [Base: 165 Balance: No response, other and never have used drugs]
The most common approaches used by respondents to reduce harm when taking drugs include staying in a safe environment (76%), finding out about drugs before using them (70%) and avoiding dehydration (69%). 53% of respondents are aware of drug testing kits/services but only 7% have used them.
Impacts of drug use
Amongst respondents who currently or have previously used drugs whilst a student, the most commonly reported academic impact is missing seminars, lectures or classes (21%). 15% report missing social engagements and 13% report arriving late to a university seminar/lecture/class.

Q. Which of the following have you experienced since you have been at university / college during or following taking drugs? [Base: 165  Balance: No response and never used drugs]
Amongst respondents who currently or have previously used drugs whilst a student, getting into an argument with people they know (7%) or strangers (6%), being searched by security/police (6%) are the most commonly reported impacts related to crime and anti-social behaviour.

Q. Which of the following have you experienced since you have been at university / college during or following taking drugs? [Base: 165 Balance: No response and never used drugs]
Amongst respondents who currently or have previously used drugs whilst a student, 36% say this has led to making new friends or becoming closer to existing friends or family. For a small proportion of respondents, the reverse was reported with 8% reporting to have lost relationships with friends or family.

Q. Which of the following have you experienced since you have been at university / college during or following taking drugs? [Base: 165 Balance: No response and never used drugs]

- Became closer to existing friends or family: 36%
- Lost relationship with friends or family: 8%
- Became less close to existing friends or family: 7%
- Made new friends: 36%
- None of these: 48%
- Rather not say: 1%
Amongst respondents who currently or have previously used drugs whilst a student, a quarter say this use has improved an existing mental health condition. However, 14% say it has made a mental health condition worse.

- **Improved your day to day experience of an existing mental health condition**: 25%
- **Made an existing mental health condition worse**: 14%
- **Improved your day to day experience of an existing physical health condition**: 12%
- **Caused a new mental health condition**: 2%
- **Caused a new physical health condition**: 2%
- **Made an existing physical health condition worse**: 1%
- **None of these**: 64%
- **Rather not say**: 1%

Q. Which of the following have you experienced since you have been at university / college during or following taking drugs? [Base: 164 Balance: No response and never used drugs]
Amongst respondents who currently or have previously used drugs, nearly a quarter say they were unable to remember what happened the night before (22%) and enjoyed the experience of having sex on drugs (21%).

Q. Which of the following have you experienced since you have been at university / college during or following taking drugs? [Base: 164 Balance: No response and never used drugs]

- Was unable to remember what happened the night before: 22%
- Enjoyed the experience of having sex on drugs: 21%
- Took risks with your personal safety you otherwise would not have: 17%
- Had unprotected sex: 12%
- Injured yourself: 9%
- Experienced unwanted sexual attention from a stranger or someone I know e.g. catcalls, whistles, comments or jokes: 9%
- Regretted a decision to engage in sexual activity: 8%
- Felt glad about a decision to engage in sexual activity you otherwise would not have: 7%
- Lost a valued possession / had something stolen (e.g. phone or wallet): 5%
- Experienced negative attention from a stranger or someone I know because of my personal characteristics e.g. race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation: 5%
- Been given drugs without my knowledge e.g. through drink or needle spiking: 5%
- Were refused entry to a club or bar for being on drugs: 3%
- Experienced sexual assault: 3%
- Experienced verbal abuse: 3%
- Been a victim of crime: 2%
- Experienced physical abuse: 2%
- None of these: 57%
- Rather not say: 1%
Ex-drug users
For those that don’t currently use drugs but have done previously, reasons for stopping using drugs are concern about the long-term health impacts drugs will have on them (50%) and worry about the effect of using drugs (45%).

- UK respondents and international respondents from the EU are more likely to state that they are worried about the effect using drugs will have on them than non-EU respondents.
- Students who identify as disabled are more likely to say they are worried about the legality of using drugs than students who don’t identify in this way.

[What would you say are your main reasons for not using drugs or stopping using drugs? Base: 202 Balance: No response, and currently use drugs]
Most respondents who don’t currently use drugs but have done previously say they have never felt pressure to use drugs when socialising with friends at university (79%).

[Q. Thinking about the most recent university term, when you were socialising with other students, how often did you feel that your friends expected you to use drugs? Base: 203 Balance: No response / Currently use drugs]

• PhD students are more likely to say they have never felt pressure to use drugs when socialising with friends at university than undergraduate students.
Drug advice and support
Over half of respondents say they know where to access advice and educational information about drugs, either formally or informally, but don’t need it. 6% would like advice or information but don’t know where to access it.

Q. Which of the following statements best describes your access to advice on drugs? Base: 908 Balance: No response
Of those who know where to access advice and information about drugs and have used it, under half (48%) gain advice and information from peers and online discussion forums.

Q. Which of the following best describes where you access drug advice and information? Base: 93 Balance: No response, and not aware of drug advice and information
Whilst respondents previously indicated they had accessed drug advice and support, around half said their reason for not using university or students’ union support services was a lack of need. Other reasons include accessing support elsewhere and not being aware of support available.

Q. Which of the following reasons best describes why you haven’t used drug information and advice services offered by your university/students union? Base: 66 Balance: No response
University or college drug policy
Respondents show low levels of awareness of the details of their institution’s drugs policy. Almost a half of students do not know if their institution has a drugs policy.

- **I don’t know if my university/college has a drugs policy** 44%
- **I know my university/college has a drugs policy but I don’t know what it says** 27%
- **I know my university/college has a drugs policy and know a little of what it says** 19%
- **I know my university/college has a drugs policy and know most of what it says** 6%
- **I know my university/college has a drugs policy and know all of / a lot of what it says** 4%

[Q. How much, if anything, do you know about the policy/policies your university/college has on drugs? Base: 1468  Balance: No response]
The majority (81%) of students agree that their institution should provide support to students who take drugs but only half of that figure (40%) say they feel confident that their university would deal with their drug use appropriately if they required support. A similar proportion (43%) agree their institution should not be punishing students who take drugs.

Q. To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statements? [Base: see graph   Balance: No response, rather not say]
RESEARCH FINDINGS: ALCOHOL
Patterns and practices of alcohol consumption
Almost one third of students drink less than once a week (30%). 2% of students say they drink every/most days.
38% of respondents regularly start drinking before they go out for the night (pre-drinking), however just over a half of respondents (51%) say they would not consider getting drunk at home deliberately before a night out.

Q. Do any of the following describe your drinking behaviour? Weighted base: (in brackets) Balance: No response
Approximately half of respondents get drunk less often than once a week, either with (49%) or without (55%) the intention to. 6% report getting drunk more than once a week with intention and 3% get drunk without intention more than once a week.
83% agreed that drinking too much too quickly can cut short a great night out and that they don’t have to get drunk to have a good night out. 82% say they don’t like socialising with people who get very drunk and ruin the night for others. However, 43% say it can be difficult not to drink too much on a night out, and 40% say getting drunk means they’ll have a good night.
Respondents who indicated they found it difficult not to drink too much on a night out (48%) were asked why. 67% stated that drinking alcohol helped them to relax / socialise. The practice of buying drinks in rounds was also identified by over half of respondents. Over a third cited pressure from friends.

Q. You agreed it can be difficult not to drink too much on a night out - why do you think that? Weighted base: 242 Balance: No response, non-drinkers and those who did not agree it can be difficult not to drink too much
39% of respondents say that they never feel that the friends they were socialising with expected them to drink alcohol. 20% say they have taken part in drinking games some of the time they drink.
Further analysis of the survey data has shown significant differences in practices between different groups of respondents. The key differences identified include:

**Differences by gender**

- Women respondents are more likely to report drinking alcohol less than once a week compared to men respondents (34% compared with 23%); but men respondents are more likely to report never drinking to get drunk than women respondents (40% compared to 28%).
- Women and non-binary respondents are more likely to agree that pacing themselves when drinking allows them to have a better night for longer than men respondents (80% and 100% respectively compared to 73% of men respondents).
- Men respondents are more likely to report that they never drink alcohol without the intention of getting drunk, but get drunk anyway, than women respondents (37% compared to 23%).

**Differences by study level**

- Undergraduates are more likely to report regularly getting drunk at home before a night out than postgraduates and PhD students (21% compared to 5% and 4%). They are also most likely to report starting drinking alcohol in their house/friend’s house before going out for the night (46% compared to 26% postgraduates and 26% PhD students).
- Undergraduates are least likely to report never drinking with the intention of getting drunk compared to postgraduates and PhD students (27% undergraduates compared to 39% postgraduates and 48% PhD students).
- Undergraduates are also least likely to say that they never deliberately don’t eat before a night out so that they get more drunk compared to postgraduate and PhD students (67% undergraduates compared to 86% postgraduates and 91% PhD students).

**Differences by nationality**

- Respondents from outside the EU are more likely to report never drinking alcohol, but have done in the past, than those from the UK (27% non-EU compared with 17%).
- Respondents from outside and from the EU are less likely to report regularly drinking alcohol at a friend’s house before they go out for the night and regularly deliberately getting drunk before they go out compared with respondents from the UK (31% and 18% of EU and non-EU respectively compared to 41% UK).
- Respondents from the UK are less likely to never take advantage of drink offers such as happy hours than international respondents from outside the EU (31% compared to 45%).
- Respondents from the UK are more likely to agree that it can be difficult not to drink too much on a night out (423 compared to 33% international respondents from the EU and 23% from outside the EU).
37% of respondents report that they do not currently drink alcohol, including those that have never drunk alcohol, and those who have in the past. This is most commonly due to religious or cultural reasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never, but I have drunk alcohol in the past</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never, I have never drunk alcohol</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a week</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 days a week</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 days a week</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every / most days</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. How often, if at all, do you drink alcohol?
Weighted base: 1464  Balance: No response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious or cultural reasons</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The long term effects of alcohol on my health</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t like the taste</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t like the effect it has on me</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A current health condition</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of my friends drink</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s too expensive</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. What would you say is your main reason for not drinking, or stopping drinking, alcohol?
Weighted base: 343  Balance: No response
Half of non-drinkers reported that not drinking had a positive influence on their life at university in general. 45% say they never feel like their friends expect them to drink alcohol.

Q. Thinking about your most recent university term, when you were socialising with other students, how often did you feel that your friends expected you to drink alcohol?

**Q. On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 = a very negative impact and 10 = a very positive impact, how do you think that not drinking alcohol has impacted on the following?**

- **Your ability to enjoy nights out**
  - 19%: 1 to 3
  - 37%: 4 to 7
  - 25%: 8 to 10

- **Your ability to meet new people**
  - 13%: 1 to 3
  - 47%: 4 to 7
  - 23%: 8 to 10

- **Your ability to settle in at University**
  - 13%: 1 to 3
  - 39%: 4 to 7
  - 28%: 8 to 10

- **Your life at University in general**
  - 12%: 1 to 3
  - 32%: 4 to 7
  - 50%: 8 to 10

- **Non-drinker only**
  - 55 students alcohol and drug survey 2022-23

- **STUDENTS ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SURVEY 2022-23**
Perceptions of alcohol consumption on campus
Almost half of respondents (44%) report that prior to starting university they believed that students got drunk most of the time. There is a shift now they are at university, with 30% saying students get drunk most of the time and 10% saying students never get drunk.

Q. Please select the phrase which best describes your perception... Before arriving at University, did you believe that students...? And now you’re a student at university, which of the following best matches your experiences of students. Balance: No response and non-drinkers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions</th>
<th>Before starting university (n=913)</th>
<th>Since being at university (n=913)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Got/get drunk all of the time</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got/get drunk most of the time</td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got/get drunk occasionally</td>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never got/get drunk</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather not say</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STUDENTS ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SURVEY 2022-23
76% of respondents agree that few students worry about damage to their health from alcohol. The majority of respondents agree to some extent that students drink to fit in with their peers (77%) and drinking and getting drunk is part of university culture (74%).

Q. Thinking specifically about drinking alcohol at university, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: c.908  Balance: No response and non-drinkers
Further analysis of the survey data has shown significant differences in perceptions between different groups of respondents. The key differences identified include:

**Perceptions of peer expectations**

- UK students are least likely to disagree strongly that their university friends expect them to drink regularly and get drunk than EU and non-EU international students (43%, compared to 57% of EU and 52% of non-EU respondents.)

**Experiences of peer pressure**

- UK respondents (31%) are less likely to agree they feel pressure from their friends to drink more alcohol than they would like compared to Non-EU (45%).
- Students who identify as having a disability are less likely to agree that they feel pressure from their friends to drink more alcohol than they would like compared to students who don't identify in this way (27% compared to 35%).

**Perceptions of student drinking practices before starting university**

- Undergraduate respondents are more likely to believe that students got drunk ‘all of the time’ before starting university than postgraduates (13% compared to 6%).
- Women respondents are more likely to believe that students got drunk ‘all of the time’ before starting university than men respondents (12% compared to 7%).

**Experiences of alcohol consumption culture on campus**

- Undergraduates are more likely to agree that drinking and getting drunk is part of university culture than postgraduates (77% compared to 67%).
- Women respondents are more likely to agree that students drink alcohol to fit in with their peers than men respondents (80% compared to 72%).
Impacts of alcohol consumption
28% of students reported that they have missed a university seminar/lecture/class and 17% reported missing social engagements as a result of alcohol consumption. However, 59% reported not experiencing any of these impacts related to academics following alcohol consumption.
The most common experience related to crime and anti-social behaviour reported during or following drinking alcohol was getting into arguments, with 25% reporting this either with people they know or with strangers. However, 74% reported not having experienced any aspect.
Over half of respondents reported making new friends during or following the consumption of alcohol (52%). 37% reported becoming closer to friends and family. However, 7% becoming less close to friends and family.

Q. Which of the following have you experienced since you have been at university, during or following the consumption of alcohol? Weighted base: 570. Balance: No response and non-drinkers

- Made new friends: 52%
- Became closer to existing friends or family: 34%
- Became less close to existing friends or family: 7%
- None of these: 38%
- Rather not say: 0%

STUDENTS ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SURVEY 2022-23
Almost one fifth of respondents (16%) identified that drinking alcohol (during or following) had made an existing mental condition worse however 7% found that it improved their day-to-day experience of an existing mental health condition.
37% of students reported being unable to remember what happened the night before, 23% took risks with their personal safety they otherwise would not have and 22% experienced unwanted sexual attention from a stranger or someone they know.

Q Which of the following have you experienced since you have been at university, during or following the consumption of alcohol?

- Were refused entry to a club or bar for being under the influence of alcohol: 9%
- Lost a valued possession / had something stolen (such as a mobile phone or wallet): 9%
- Experienced sexual assault: 7%
- Been given drugs without my knowledge e.g. through drink or needle spiking: 6%
- Been a victim of crime: 3%
- Experienced physical abuse: 3%
- None of these: 41%
- Rather not say: 1%

Q: Which of the following have you experienced since you have been at university, during or following the consumption of alcohol?

- Was unable to remember what happened the night before: 37%
- Took risks with your personal safety you otherwise would not have: 23%
- Experienced unwanted sexual attention from a stranger or someone I know e.g. catcalls, whistles, comments or jokes: 22%
- Injured yourself: 20%
- Enjoyed the experience of having sex whilst under the influence of alcohol: 17%
- Experienced verbal abuse: 13%
- Had unprotected sex: 13%
- Regretted a decision to engage in sexual activity: 13%
- Felt glad about a decision to engage in sexual activity you otherwise would not have: 13%
- Experienced negative attention from a stranger or someone I know because of my personal characteristics e.g. race/ethnicity, religion,...: 9%

STUDENTS ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SURVEY 2022-23
Further analysis of the survey data has shown significant differences in experiences after drinking alcohol between different groups of respondents. The key differences identified include:

### Health and wellbeing

- Women and non-binary respondents are more likely to report an existing mental health condition becoming worse compared to men respondents (18% and 25% respectively compared to 12%).
- Respondents who identify as disabled are more likely to report an improvement in their day-to-day experience of an existing mental health condition than respondents who don’t identify this way (12% compared to 4%).
- Respondents who are undergraduates are more likely to report not being able to remember what happened the night before compared with respondents who are postgraduates (40% compared to 29%).
- Women respondents are more likely to have experienced sexual assault (10%) than men respondents (2%).

### Paid work and study

- UK respondents are more likely to report getting into an argument with people they know after alcohol consumption than non-EU international respondents (30% compared to 17%).
- Women respondents are less likely to report arriving late to a university seminar/class/lecture as a result of alcohol consumption than men respondents (16% compared to 28%).
- Undergraduates are more likely to report missing a university seminar/lecture/class after alcohol consumption than postgraduates (30% compared to 19%).

### Relationships

- UK respondents are more likely to report getting into an argument with people they know after alcohol consumption than non-EU international students (17% compared to 4%).
- Men respondents are more likely to report getting into an argument with strangers after alcohol consumption than women respondents (15% compared to 7%); women respondents are more likely to report getting into an argument with people they know after alcohol consumption than men respondents (17% compared to 12%).
Reducing impacts through responsible consumption
A third of students are aware of communication related to staying safe while you drink at their university. Almost half of the respondents (49%) say there are enough social events at their university that don’t involve drinking. However, over half of students (52%) say they don’t know of any responsible drinking campaigns, projects or activities at their university.

Q. Are you aware of any safe or responsible drinking campaigns, projects or activities at your university? Weighted base: 897 Balance: No response, Other

Q. Do you feel that there are enough social events for you at university that do not involve having to drink or get drunk? Weighted base: 915 Balance: No response
Safety and cost of living
When socialising, respondents most commonly report feeling safe at local cafés (78%), at a house party of people they know (67%) and at their students’ union café (64%). A third of students feel unsafe at house parties in the home of people they don’t know.

Thinking about the different places where you might socialise with friends/peers whilst you are at university, how safe do you feel? Weighted base: see graph. Balance: no response, don’t know
Nearly two thirds (62%) of students agree that they plan to go out less this academic year and 37% of students agree that they think they will drink less alcohol due to the cost of living crisis. 35% report planning to engage in more social activities this year that don’t involve alcohol due to the cost of living crisis.

The cost of living crisis means that I plan to go out less this academic year (n=902)

62% Agree
16% Disagree
8% Don't know
13% Not applicable - I don't drink alcohol/use drugs

Due to the cost of living crisis, I think I'll drink alcohol less this academic year (n=901)

37% Agree
17% Disagree
9% Don't know
37% Not applicable - I don't drink alcohol/use drugs

As a result of the cost of living crisis, I plan to engage in more social activities that don't involve alcohol (n=903)

35% Agree
20% Disagree
16% Don't know
28% Not applicable - I don't drink alcohol/use drugs

The cost of living crisis has affected an existing health issue (mental or physical) which has made me more reliant on the drugs I use (n=901)

9% Agree
21% Disagree
6% Don't know
64% Not applicable - I don't drink alcohol/use drugs

Due to the cost of living crisis, I think I'll use drugs less this academic year (n=902)

9% Agree
7% Disagree
3% Don't know
81% Not applicable - I don't drink alcohol/use drugs

Due to the cost of living crisis, I think I'll drink alcohol more this academic year (n=902)

5% Agree
51% Disagree
6% Don't know
38% Not applicable - I don't drink alcohol/use drugs

Due to the cost of living crisis, I think I'll use drugs more this academic year (n=902)

3% Agree
17% Disagree
3% Don't know
76% Not applicable - I don't drink alcohol/use drugs

Q. We’re interested in hearing how your experiences related to the cost of living crisis may have influenced your attitudes and behaviours related to alcohol and drugs. To what extent do you agree or disagree, if at all, with the following statements? [Base: see graph Balance: No response, don’t know, never used drugs]
Respondent demographics
The majority of respondents were aged under 30 years old

AGE

18-22: 42%
23-29: 24%
30-39: 18%
40-49: 9%
50-59: 6%
60+: 1%

[Base: 915 Balance: No response]
The majority of respondents were 1st or 2nd year undergraduates

The majority of respondents were 1st or 2nd year undergraduates.
Respondents were mostly full-time students, with 41% based in the south and west of England.

### STUDY LOCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and the Humber</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STUDY TYPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance learner</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


STUDENTS ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SURVEY 2022-23
Nearly three quarters of respondents were UK citizens based in the UK, and one fifth live in institution owned halls

**NATIONALITY**

- I am a UK citizen studying in the UK: 72%
- I am an international student from within the EU studying in the UK: 7%
- I am an international student from outside the EU studying in the UK: 21%
- I would prefer not to say: 1%

**ACCOMMODATION TYPE**

- Institution owned halls of residence: 20%
- Privately rented house or flat - shared with friends: 19%
- In own home (mortgaged or owned): 14%
- With parent(s) / guardian(s): 13%
- Privately rented house or flat - on my own: 11%
- Privately rented house or flat - with family: 10%
- Privately owned halls of residence: 9%
- Other: 2%
- Prefer not to say: 2%
56% identify as women and almost two thirds of participants identified as heterosexual.

**GENDER IDENTITY**

- Woman: 56%
- Man: 39%
- Non-binary: 2%
- Prefer not to say: 2%
- Agender: 1%
- In another way: 0%
- Non-gender: 0%

**SEXUALITY**

- Heterosexual / Straight: 65%
- Bisexual / Bi: 16%
- Prefer to self describe: 6%
- Queer: 4%
- Asexual: 3%
- Gay: 3%
- Lesbian: 2%
- Prefer not to say: 6%
68% of participants identify as white ethnicities

**RACE / ETHNICITY**

- **White - English**
- **White - British**
- **Any other white background**
- **Asian or Asian British - Indian**
- **Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African**
- **Any other Asian / Asian British background**
- **Asian or Asian British - Pakistani**
- **Asian or Asian British - Chinese**
- **White - Welsh**
- **White - Scottish**
- **I would prefer not to say**
- **Arab**
- **White - Irish**
- **Any other ethnic group**
- **Latin/South/Central American**
- **Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean**
- **Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi**
- **Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background**
- **Mixed / multiple ethnic - White and Asian**
- **Mixed / multiple ethnic - White and black Caribbean**
- **White - Northern Irish**
- **Mixed British and Latin/South/Central American**
- **White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller**
- **Jewish**
- **Any other Black/African/Caribbean/Black British background**
- **Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - British**
- **Mixed / multiple ethnic - White and black African**

[Base: 914 Balance: No response]
A third of respondents identify as disabled. Half of these respondents experience mental health difficulties.

DISABILITY

- No: 61% (Base: 913 Balance: No response)
- Yes: 32%
- Prefer not to say: 3%
- Don’t know: 4%

STUDENTS ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SURVEY 2022-23
For more information about our drugs and alcohol research and programmes, please visit our website or get in touch at: hello@sos-uk.org