

May 2026

KSU Insight & Policy Update



**Kingston
Students'
Union**

www.kingstonstudents.net

KSU activities in May

Kingston, Have Your Say! Survey

We received 1,069 completed responses for the 2026 Kingston, Have Your Say! Survey. We are currently analysing the results (initial findings are on the next page), and will publish the report on the KSU website in the summer.

KSU Awards

We celebrated Kingston's outstanding students, societies, and sports clubs with the KSU Awards ceremony at the Town House on 22nd May. It was a fantastic evening accompanied by drinks, canapés, DJ music, and a performance of Southern Indian traditional dance by two Kingston students.



KSU insight this month

2026 Kingston, Have Your Say! Survey Initial Findings



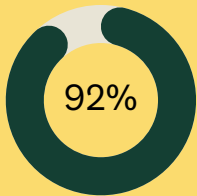
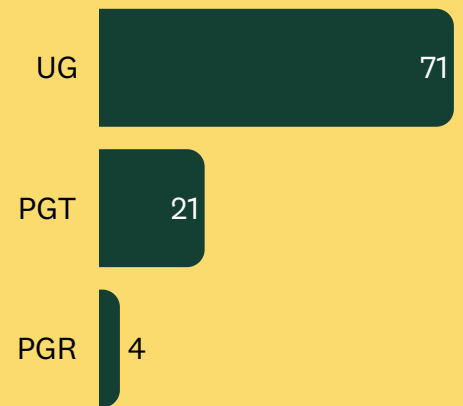
1,069

**Students
completed the
survey**

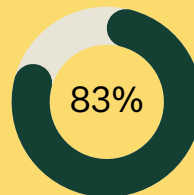
**% of students
by faculty**



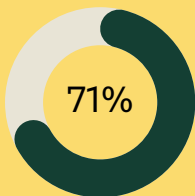
**% of students
by level of study**



**are satisfied with
their experience
with KSU**



**feel that KSU
has represented
their needs**



**say KSU
presence is
visible in their
campus**



**feel that they
trust KSU**



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What's going on across the HE sector?

KSU submission for Student Loans Inquiry

We submitted evidence to the Treasury Select Committee's inquiry into student loans and the broader taxation of graduates, which has now been published. Below are some key points from our submission:

Should the interest on a student loan be dependent on income?

Regardless of whether interest on a student loan is dependent on income or not, we believe it is paramount that salary thresholds are reviewed regularly in line with inflation. This is a similar issue to the one affecting students accessing maintenance loans: if average salaries increase year-on-year due to inflation, whilst thresholds stay the same, the agreed standard slips. This reduces access to financial support for some of the most financially challenged students, pertinent to students here at Kingston University who rely on this support to access Higher Education.

What proportion of a student's university education should be funded by the student versus being subsidised by the state?

- A student's university education does not just consider the cost of tuition. Our 2025 survey about the experiences of students who work shows that for most students, doing paid work alongside their studies is a necessity. 64.9% of respondents stated they do paid work "to pay the bills." Our 2024 survey on cost of living shows that most students (76.3%) were very concerned or concerned about managing financially and almost half of students (47.5%) reported they felt their income was not sufficient to cover their living costs.
- The University provides high-impact bursaries and other forms of financial support to students, particularly from low-income households. KSU empowers over a thousand student leaders build key skills that help them grow as people and prospective graduates entering the job market.
- Education is a public good, and the state should therefore provide more funds through progressive taxation. We want to see a fairer balance between state and student payments, lifting the burden of repayment from the poorest graduates meanwhile providing greater financial stability to the sector. Alleviating the severity of financial pressures currently placed on all parties within the sector would enable students, students' unions, and universities to sustainably ensure the public good we provide continues to grow.





What's going on across the HE sector?

Friends and Belonging

Wonkhe published a report on belonging that is based on two waves of survey of 18,590 students from 178 institutions. The report makes two central arguments:

- Belonging to a community involves three different things: having close friends, feeling they have a place at the institution, and feeling they are a recognised part of academic life.
- The strongest predictor of belonging is the relational quality of teaching staff. But what matters as well is what's underneath it: the friendships and course structures that enable students to approach staff in the first place.

The report analyses students' friend-network, or where their friends come from, and how the different kinds of friendships affect their feeling of belonging to a community. The conclusion is as follows:

- For close friendship, both course friends and off-course friends can provide the feeling.
- For feeling that they have a place at the institution, off-course friends carry 79% of students to a positive belonging answer against 87% for course friends.
- For feeling that they are a recognised part of academic life ('academic citizenship'), only course friends can provide this.

The implication is that students who have off-course friends and but no course friends, for example, may still score their belonging as positive, but this masks their lower score for freedom to speak in academic settings. On the other side, students with only course friends are academically integrated, but report daily loneliness rate closer to those who have no friends at all.

In Kingston context, KSU's annual student survey asks a question about students' friendship groups. The 2025 survey showed that students who did not have course friends were more likely to disagree to the statement 'I feel part of a community at Kingston.'



What's happening in the summer?

The KSU Awards marked our last event of 2025/26.

In the summer we will be busy preparing our events, activities, and programmes for next year, including Welcome Week to welcome the new 2026/27 cohort.

This concludes the KSU Policy & Insight Update for 2025/26. We'll be back in autumn with fresh insight and updates from across the Union.

