

UNiDAYS

**UNiDAYS x
ALLKND**

A Good Mate Study

January 2025



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Methodology

- Quantitative interactive survey sent via The Counsel to UNiDAYS members and boosted by CRM to ensure sample size.

Region: AUS

Sample size: 880 UNiDAYS members

In-field: 13th January - 20th January 2025

Introduction

- The purpose of this survey is to gain insight into 'start of year' sentiment of new and returning students.
- The survey is focused on understanding university students' mental health as they begin the new academic year, as well as their attitudes and concerns regarding mental health support.
- All questions were optional to allow students to skip any that they did not wish to answer, hence the sample size for each question may vary. Due to print deadlines, the responses for "How would you rate your mental health as you begin the new year?" were taken from an aggregated data source. The remaining data was taken from crosstabs to provide comparisons between different cohorts.



Hey Martin,

Welcome to the ALLKND x UNiDAYS Good Mate Survey!

This survey aims to understand the start-of-year experiences, concerns, and mental health perspectives of university students just like you.

Your input will help create meaningful resources and digital content to support student wellbeing - which we think is pretty important.

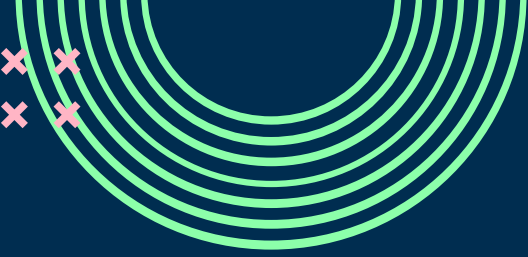
Content Warning: Some questions touch on mental health and personal concerns, which may feel sensitive. Participation is voluntary, and you can skip any questions. If you feel distressed, please reach out to Lifeline (13 11 14) or Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636).

Your responses will remain private and de-identified. Thank you for helping us support students like you. Thanks for being a Good Mate!

[Click here to get started](#)

Key points

- Students are split over the assessment of their own mental health – less than half (**49%**) of students rate their mental health as “Excellent” or “Good”.
- **Two thirds** of male students rate their mental health as “Excellent” or “Good”, compared to **around half** of female students. This is a **consistent theme** throughout the responses that male students typically score themselves higher. However, it is to be considered whether this is an accurate representation of better mental health or whether male students are simply more likely to score their mental health as higher than female students do.
- More than half (**54%**) of students are concerned that disclosing mental health issues could have an impact on how other students, faculty, and/or staff perceive them. This highlights that there is still significant work to be done in terms of breaking down barriers and combating negative preconceptions that could prevent a student from disclosing a mental health issue.
- The majority (**79%**) of students are aware of the mental health resources available on their campus. However, they are clear that more support is required and have their own suggestions as to what this should be.
- Only **1 in 3** students feel that they have a good support system of friends and family at university and fewer than half (**42%**) of students always, or mostly, tell someone about a problem or worry affecting their mental health. This emphasises that there is still significant work required to support students at university and ensure that they have the resources to maintain, and improve, their mental health.

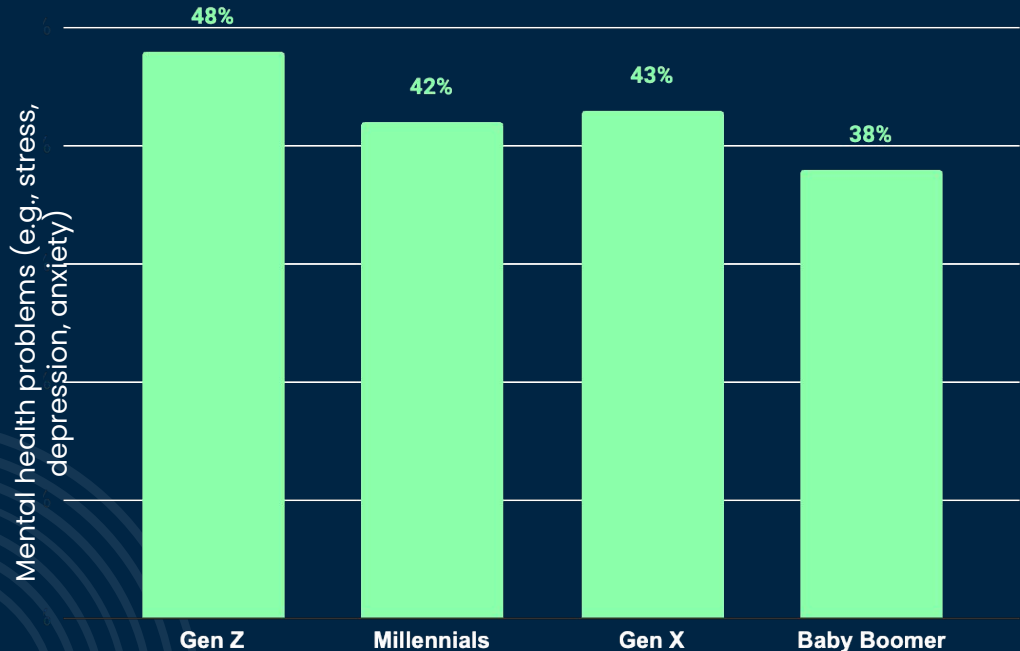


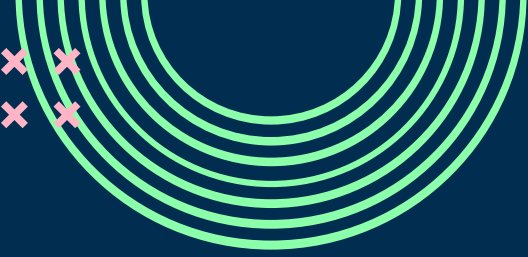
Mental health

Less than half of students rated their mental health as “Excellent” or “Good”.

Have you experienced any of the following medical symptoms in the past 12 months? (multi-pick)

- This split, with approximately half of young people feeling positive about their mental health and half not feeling positive is **reflective of wider trends** and supported by independent data.
- Statista report that **48%** of Gen Z in Australia have experienced a mental health problem, such as stress, depression or anxiety, the **highest** of all generations.



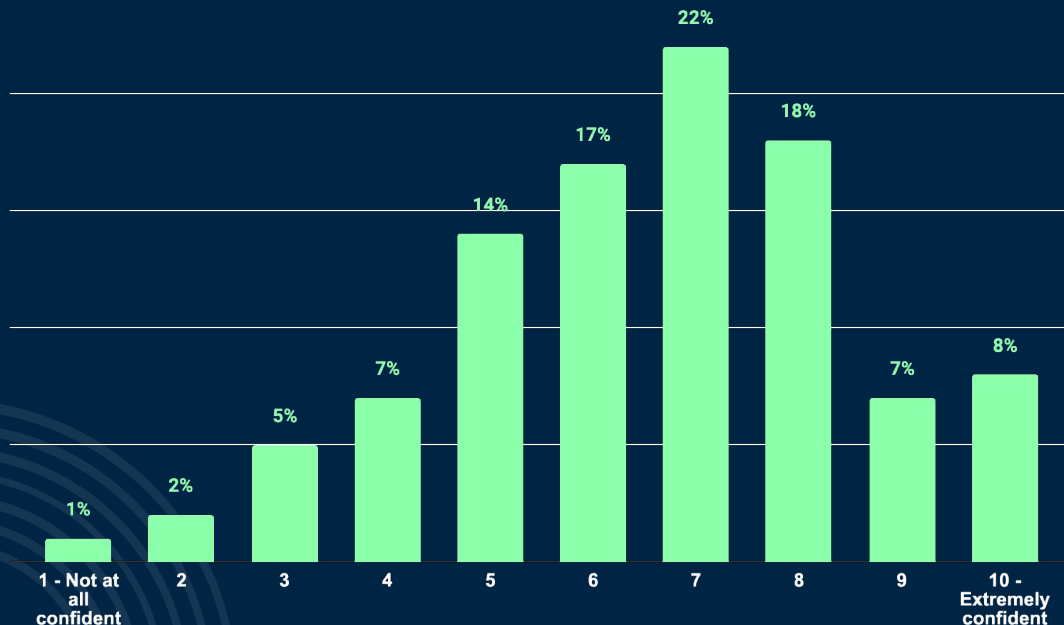


Adjusting to university life

Students are mostly confident that they can adjust to university life.

How confident are you in adjusting to university life? Please rate on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being 'Not at all confident' and 10 being 'Extremely confident'.

→ Over half of students (**55%**) rated their confidence in adjusting to university life as a 7 or higher.

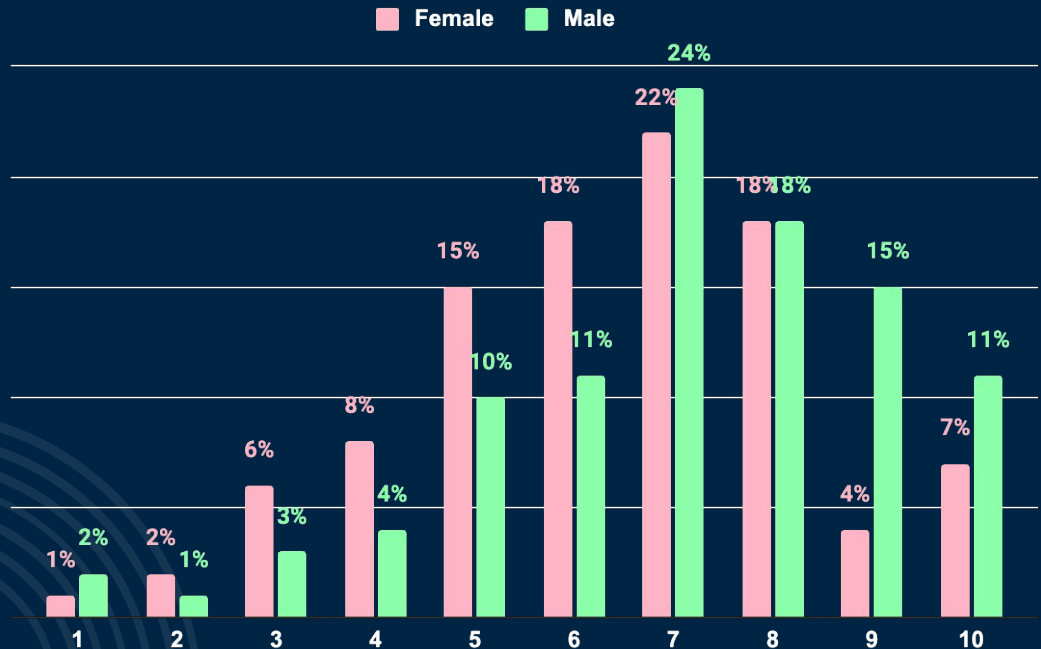


Base: 878 responses

Male students stated that they were more confident than female students about adjusting to university life.

How confident are you in adjusting to university life? Please rate on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being 'Not at all confident' and 10 being 'Extremely confident'.

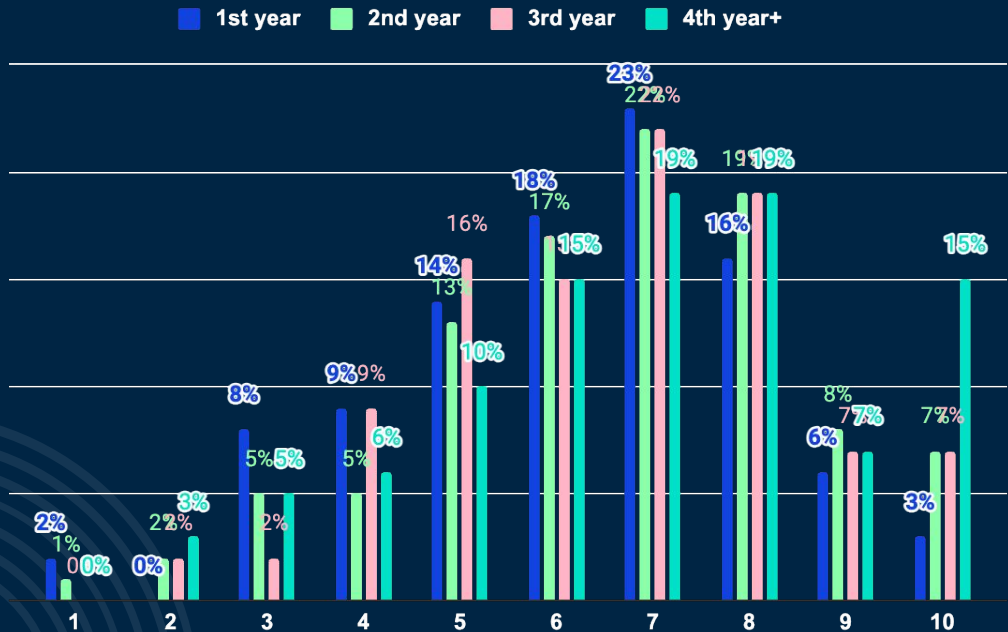
- More than 1 in 4 (**26%**) of male students rated their confidence as a 9 or 10, compared to **11%** of female students.
- Potentially, this could be attributed to female students perhaps being more willing to disclose any apprehensions about adjusting to university life.



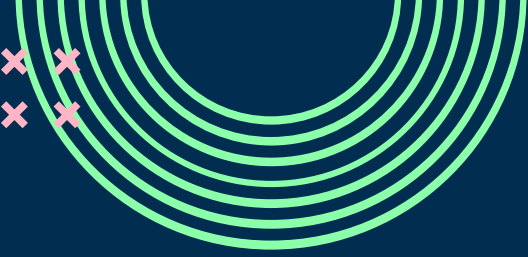
First year students are the least confident about adjusting to university life.

How confident are you in adjusting to university life? Please rate on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being 'Not at all confident' and 10 being 'Extremely confident'.

→ This is a natural result of first year students experiencing university for the first time, whilst returning students have a higher level of confidence about going back to their studies.



Base: 1st year 298, 2nd year 264, 3rd year 138, 4th+ year 149

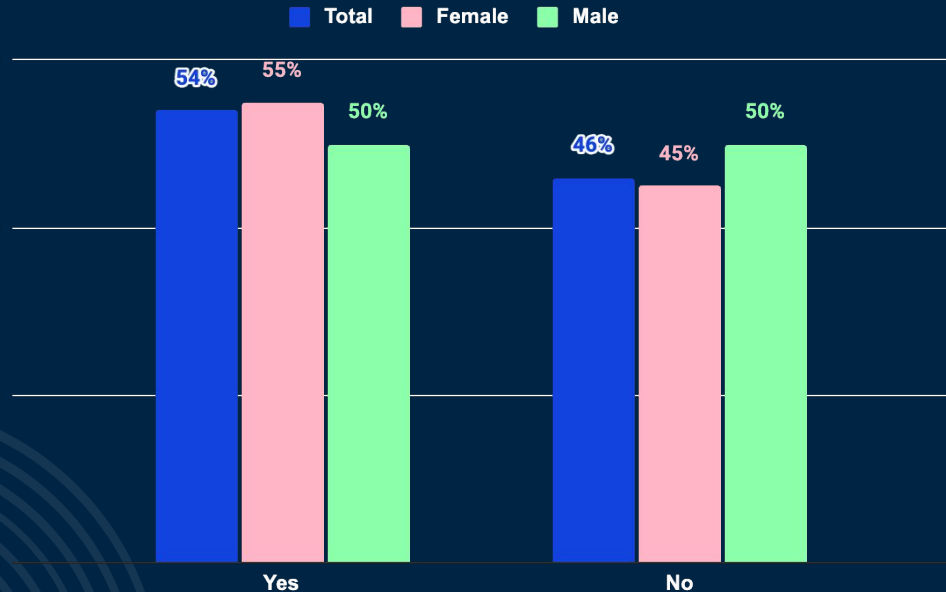


Mental health perceptions

More than half of students are concerned that disclosing mental health issues could have an impact on how other students, faculty, and/or staff perceive them.

Are you concerned that disclosing mental health issues could have an impact on how other students, faculty, and/or staff perceive you?

- This is particularly the case for female students, with **55%** stating that they were concerned, compared to **50%** of male students.
- This highlights that significant work is required at universities to ensure that students feel confident in disclosing mental health issues.

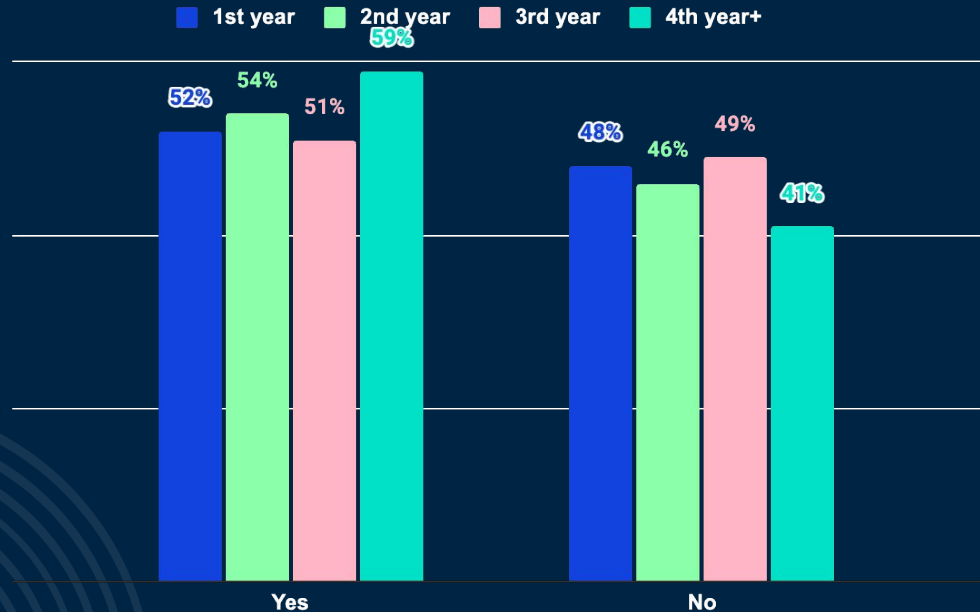


*2% of respondents are non-female/male identifying.

Students in their 4th+ year of study are most likely to be concerned about the perception of their mental health.

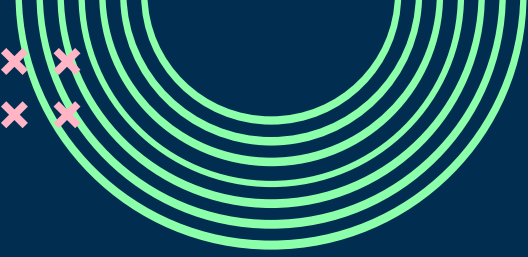
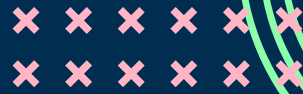
Are you concerned that disclosing mental health issues could have an impact on how other students, faculty, and/or staff perceive you?

→ This is potentially because the 4th+ year of study may include postgraduate studies, either a taught course or as part of a postgraduate research study. There are potentially concerns from these students about how a PhD supervisor would react to a disclosure or how it may affect their employment.



*2% of respondents are non-female/male identifying.

Base: 1st year 298, 2nd year 263, 3rd year 138, 4th+ year 148



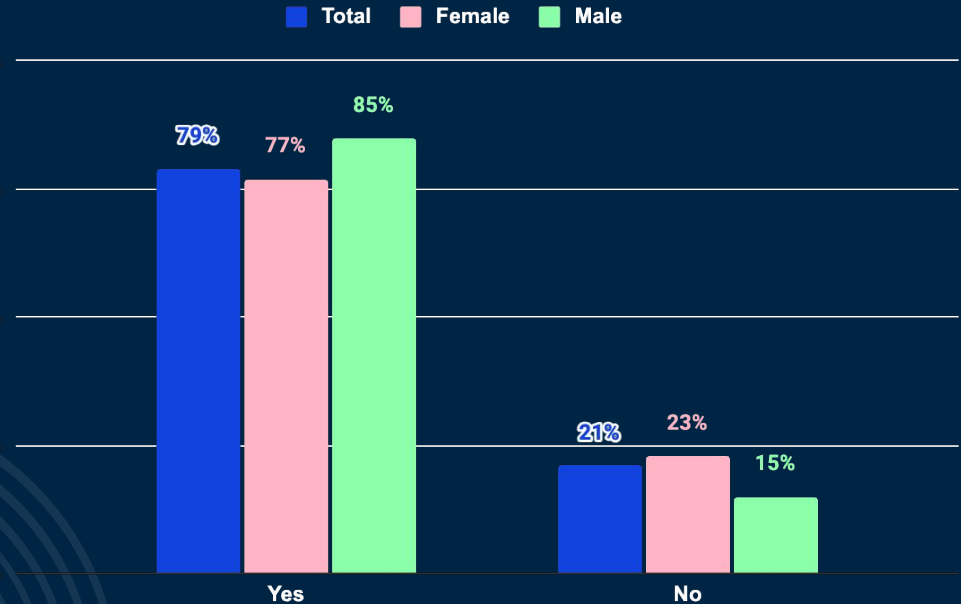
Mental health resources

The majority of students are aware of the mental health resources available on their campus.

Are you aware of the mental health and well-being resources available on your campus?

→ However, around 1 in 5 students state that they are not aware of the resources available to them.

→ There is a correlation between awareness of campus resources and how students rated their mental health. **45%** of students unaware of campus resources rated their mental health as "Excellent" or "Good", compared to **60%** who were aware of campus resources.

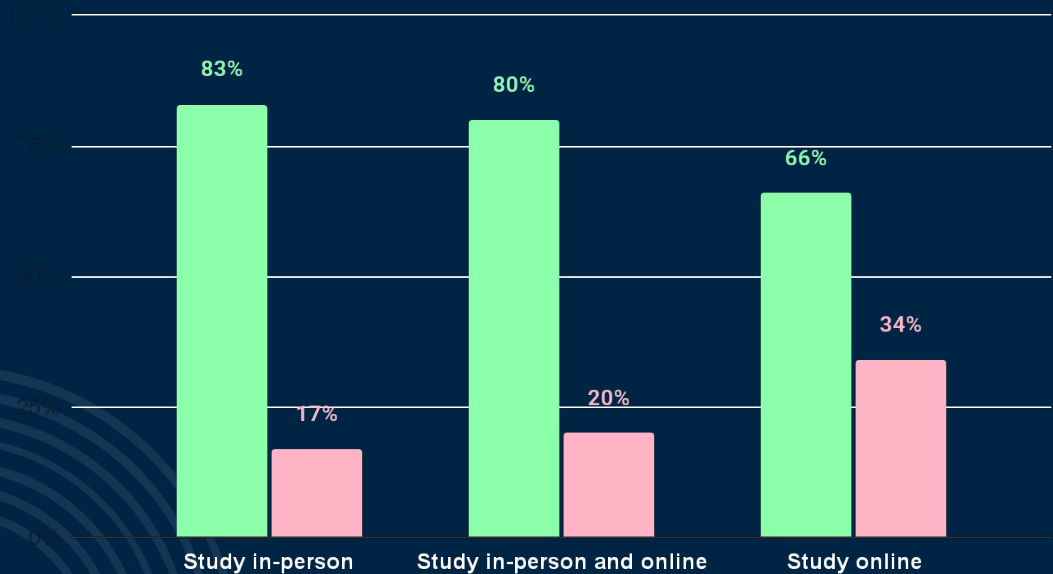


*2% of respondents are non-female/male identifying.

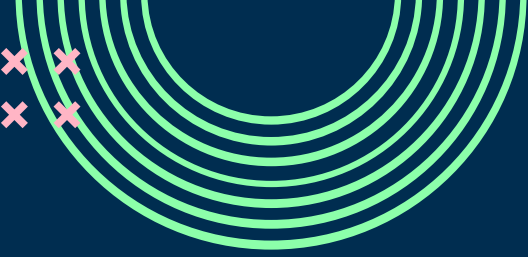
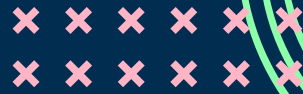
Students studying online are less likely to be aware of campus resources to support their mental health.

Are you aware of the mental health and well-being resources available on your campus?

Yes No



→ As such, universities need to make a particular effort to reach their cohorts of students studying online to promote their services.

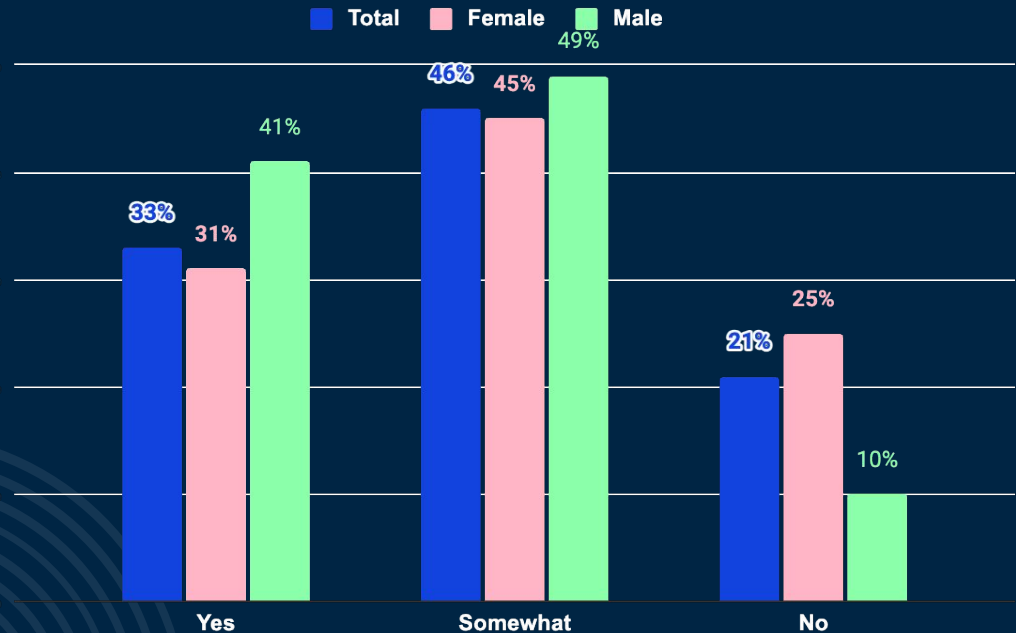


Support systems

Only 1 in 3 students feel that they have a good support system of friends and family at university.

Do you feel you have a good support system of friends or peers at university?

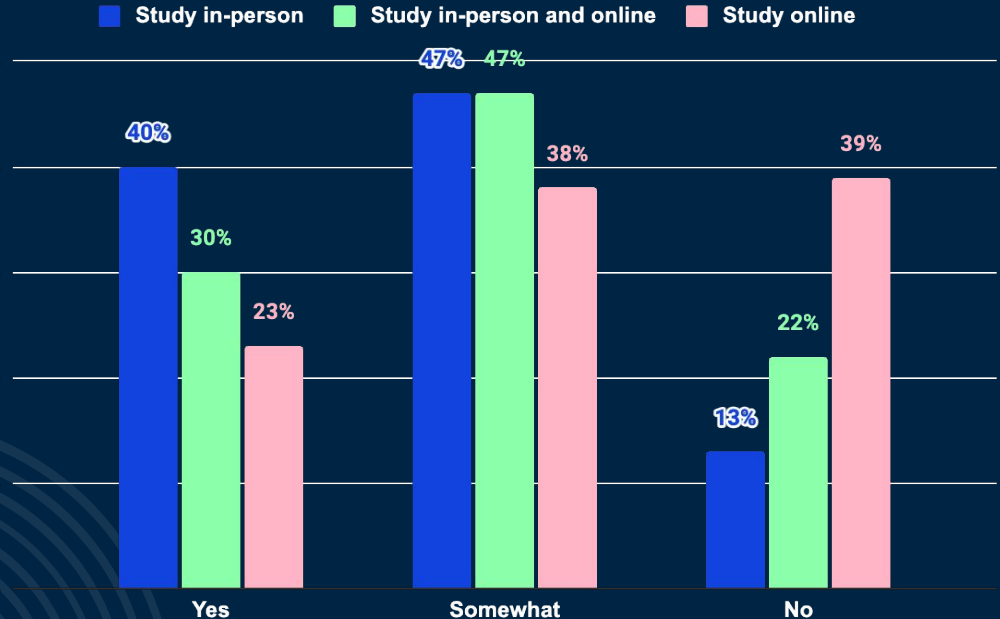
- Close to half of students (**46%**) feel they somewhat have a good support system whilst around 1 in 5 (**21%**) feel they do not have a good system of support.
- Female students are far more likely than male students to feel that they do not have a good support system at university (**25%** v **10%**).



Students studying online are far more likely to feel that they do not have a good support system at university.

Do you feel you have a good support system of friends or peers at university?

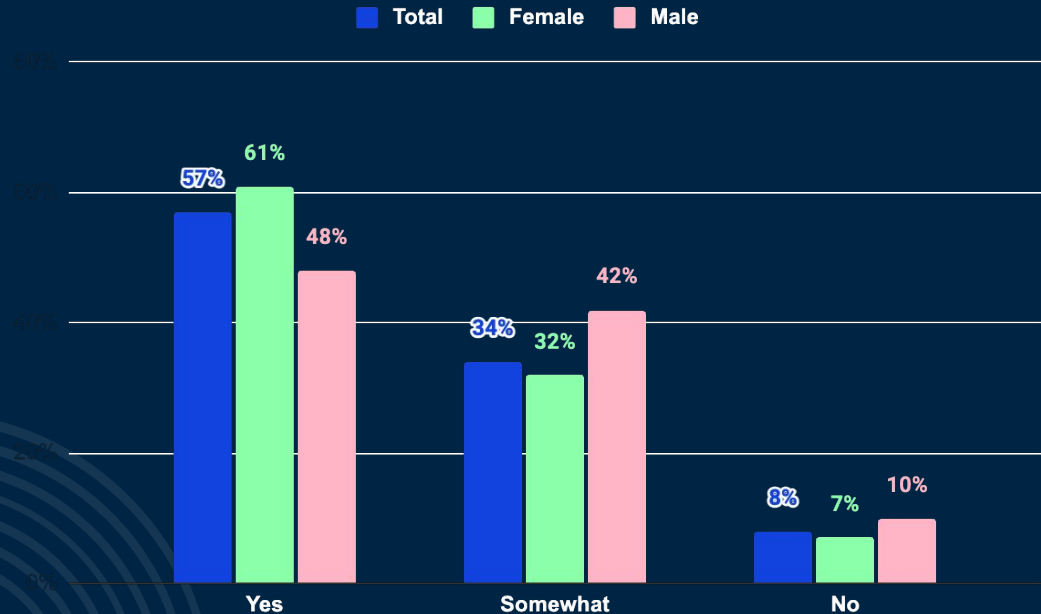
- **39%** of students studying online feel that they do not have a good support system, compared to just **13%** of students studying in-person.
- Universities need to pay particular attention to these cohorts to ensure that they can build support networks during their studies.



Most students feel that they have a good support system outside of university.

Do you feel you have a good support system outside of university?

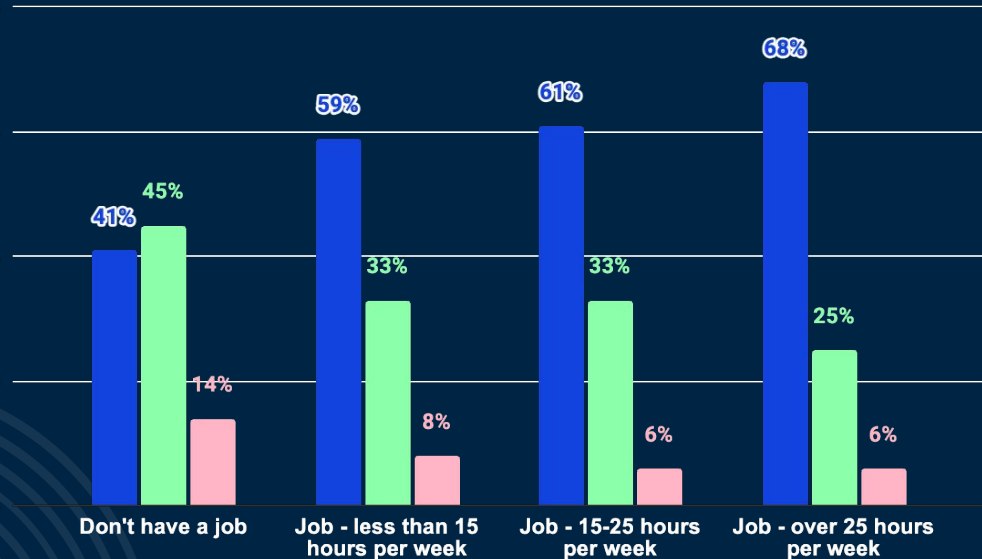
- This is particularly the case for female students compared to male students (**61%** v **48%**).
- Nearly twice as many female students feel that they have a good support system **outside** of university compared to at university (**61%** v **31%**). This is a clear area where universities need to improve to support students.



Students are likely building support networks through their jobs whilst at university.

Do you feel you have a good support system outside of university?

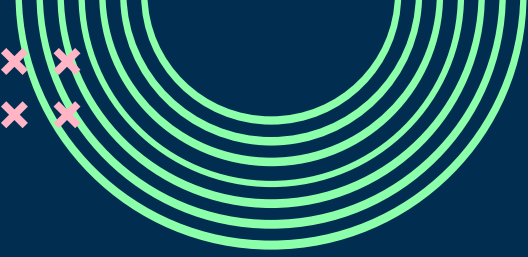
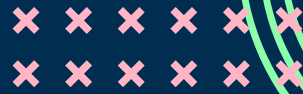
Yes Somewhat No



→ The more hours a student works in a job, the more likely they are to feel that they have a good support network outside university. This implies that their work colleagues and work friendships play an important role in university life.

→ **41%** of students who do not have a job feel they have a good support system outside university, compared to **68%** of students who work over 25 hours per week.

Base: Don't have a job 203; Job - less than 15 hours per week 229; Job - 15-25 hours per week 271; Job - over 25 hours per week 174

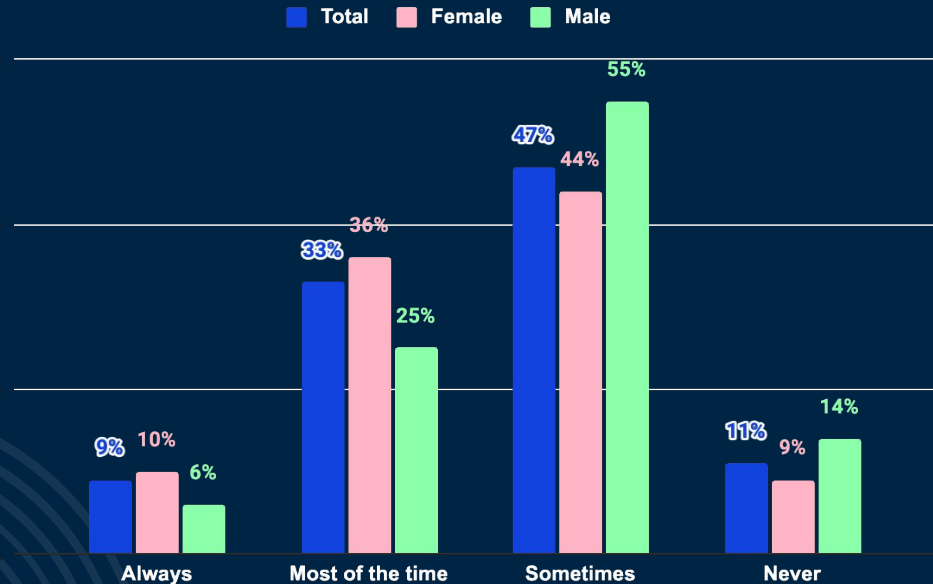


Disclosures

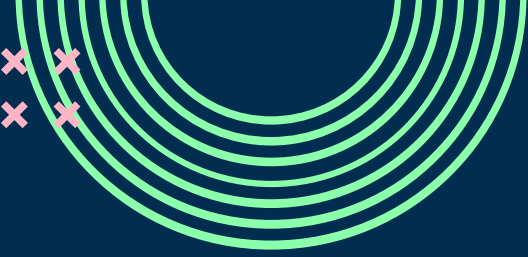
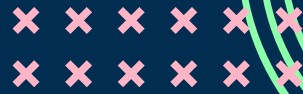
Fewer than half of students always or mostly tell someone about a problem or worry affecting their mental health.

When you have a problem or worry that affects your mental health, how often do you let someone in your personal life know about it?

- In particular, whilst male students state that their mental health is better, they are **less likely** to tell someone about a problem or worry.
- **46%** of female students always, or mostly, tell someone about something affecting their mental health, compared to **31%** of male students.



*2% of respondents are non-female/male identifying.

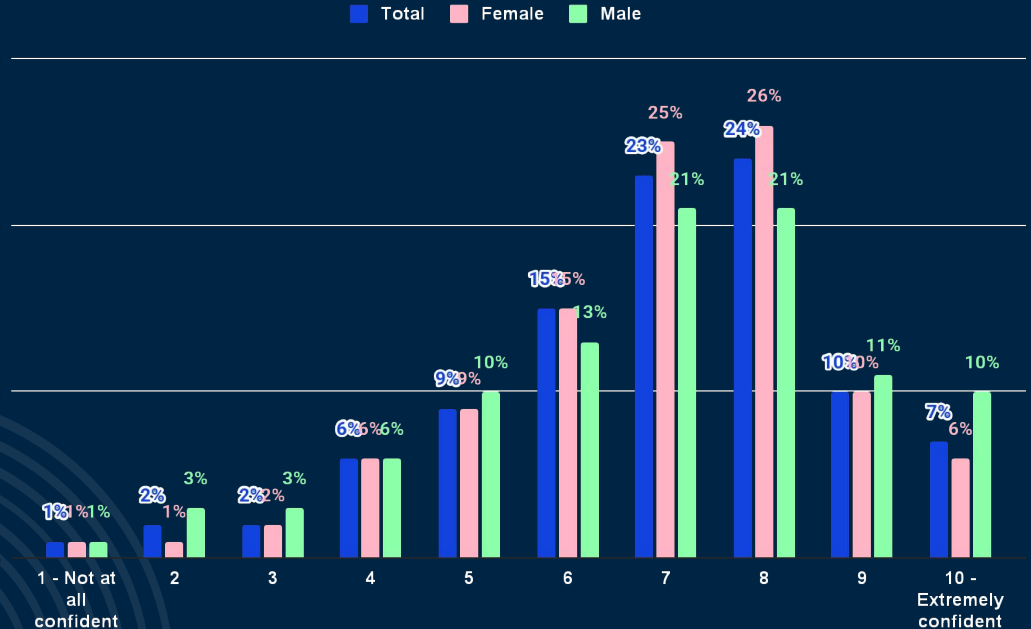


Supporting others

Students feel relatively comfortable in supporting a peer going through a mental health challenge.

How confident do you feel in supporting a peer going through a mental health challenge? Please rate on a scale from 1-10, with 1 being 'Not at all confident' and 10 being 'Extremely confident'.

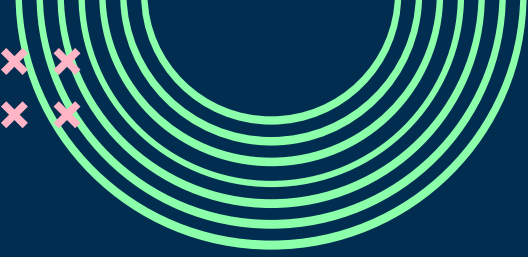
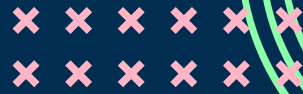
→ Nearly 2 in 3 students (**64%**) rated themselves as a 7 or higher for their confidence in supporting a peer through a mental health challenge.



Base: Total 778, Female 565, Male 186

*2% of respondents are non-female/male identifying.





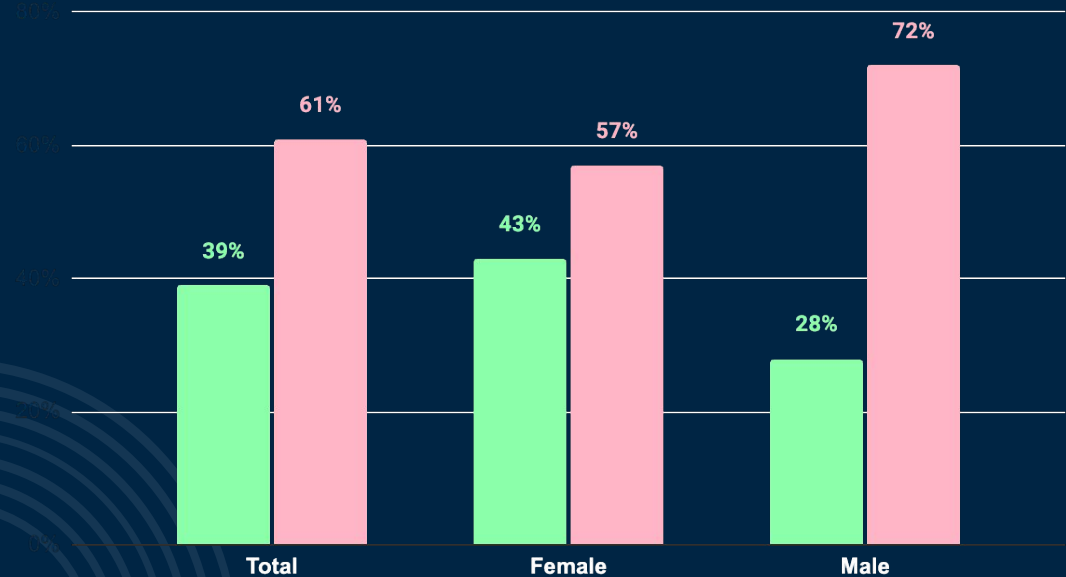
Social media

Close to half (43%) of female students have used social media to improve their understanding of mental health.

Do you use social media as a tool to improve your understanding of mental health?

Yes No

→ Just over 1 in 4 (**28%**) of male students have used social media to improve their understanding of mental health.



Base: Total 876, Female 636, Male 208

Students use social media and engage with different forms of content to improve their knowledge of mental health.

How do you use social media in this way?

Examples:

“Reflecting on myself through short forms of media to gain confidence and relieve anxiety.”

“Following accounts relating to the mental health diagnoses I have.”

“View content from people with similar problems

“By distracting myself for a few minutes”

“To help identify things to do when you’re experiencing symptoms of mental health disorders”

“All of the ads and stuff you see particularly around mental health days such as ‘r u ok day’ that show how to support someone, or yourself.”

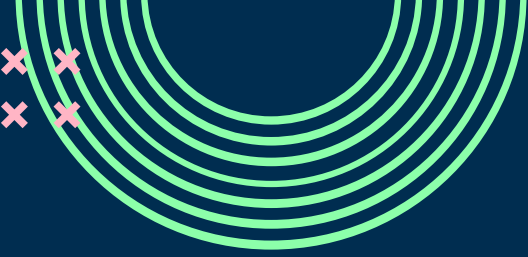
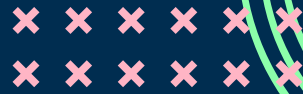
“Learning about the links between things, signs of struggles in others, tips for managing or maintaining”

“Reddit threads relating to mental health and other people’s experience for validation and for some useful strategies, also instagram pages that pop up relating to mindfulness and some tips or how to avoid burnout etc”

“I read quotes posted by motivational pages on instagram”

“When i watch other ls facing same circumstances but how they come through bravely, this gives me motivation that i’m not only one and give me confidence to face it”

“I follow lots of mental health accounts that post ways to cope, and how to understand other people’s mental health issues. Helps me find out ways to support friends



Comments

Students have many concerns ahead of the academic year, including time management, stress, making friends, health, money and workloads.

What are your top three concerns as the new university year begins?

Examples:

"1. Managing time effectively to balance studies and personal life is a priority. 2. Adapting to new academic challenges and expectations can be daunting. 3. Building strong connections with peers and faculty is essential for a successful year."

"Not being able to manage time properly, not being able to save enough money, missing my close friends as I have moved away and they stayed in the NT"

"Managing income while studying to hopefully make a better income one day. Staying on top of study load while working. Getting enough sleep."

Balancing work, university studies, and social life can be challenging as each demands significant time and energy. Managing work commitments alongside academic responsibilities often leads to stress and potential burnout, especially with tight deadlines and exams.

Additionally, sustaining a social life amidst these obligations can feel overwhelming, resulting in limited time for personal relationships and self-care.

These competing priorities require effective time management and a careful balance to avoid compromising well-being and performance.

"Less time for work and savings reducing; less time for exercise and physical health reducing; low flexibility with deadlines and no opportunity to get ahead during the uni break."

"Financial pressures, keeping up with study and academic performance and maintaining a social life"

"Balancing work, making new friends, getting good grades"

"Mental health management, stress and time management, work life balance"

"Keeping on top of school work, finding a balance with work for financial stability, maintaining good mental health"

"Financial pressures, keeping up with study and academic performance and maintaining a social life"

New students are particularly concerned about making friends and academic success.

If you're a new student, what is your biggest concern?

Examples:

"concerned about adjusting to the new environment, making new friends, understanding the academic expectations, and managing time effectively."

"Not being able to adjust to the difference in academic level"

"My biggest concern is socialising naturally with my new peers within this new environment."

"Not being able to complete assignments as a huge workload plus work"

"Making friends, stepping outside of my comfort zone and being unorganised for school"

"Getting used to the different culture and navigate around study and life"

"Working on fitting in uni environment and doing daily work to keep studies on track"

"Finances because I will be moving from full time to part time, and my rent will be 80% of my income"

"Study load fitting into work and family commitments"

"To get a job in future and to manage work life balance"

"The stress from the uni work load and working"

Returning students are particularly concerned about finances, workloads and their work/life balance.

If you're a returning student, what is your biggest concern?

Examples:

"I am a returning student, taking on more subjects and study so concerned about delivering my best work whilst trying to live life and work full time."

"Being too busy and tired with work to do my studies but I can't afford not to work."

"The increase of workload and expectations in second year"

"Having enough money to pay for rent for the year while doing placement"

"My biggest concern as a returning student is maintaining motivation while juggling increased academic demands. Staying consistent with time management and avoiding burnout are key challenges. I also want to ensure I continue building strong relationships within the university community."

"My finances because I pay my fees upfront but with the rising costs of living, it's getting hard."

"Added pressure since nearly done - maintaining grades"

"Travel to campus. It's 3 hours either way by bus or 1.5 hours by car. We only have one car and we both have reasons to need it daily. Fuel costs are compounding the struggle as well. My degree cannot be entirely online. In fact it's almost 100% in person"

"Having the time to maintain friendships from last year and making new friends"

"Staying on top of my work. Struggling to stay motivated"

"The possibility that my degree won't lead to a decent job"

Students would like to see more mental health support on campuses, particularly more information, better signposting, exam considerations, events and affordable therapy options.

What would you like to see on your university campus to support student mental health?

Examples:

“Improved policy on student mental health, including considerations for assessment”

“Constant student support and guidance with therapy sessions”

“More information about the services available, break out and sensory rooms”

“Therapist and Psychiatrist/Psychologists instead of counsellors and online AI ‘therapy’”

“help with organising tasks and assignments. i really struggle with making sure everything is done and submitted on time which is really stressful and daunting”

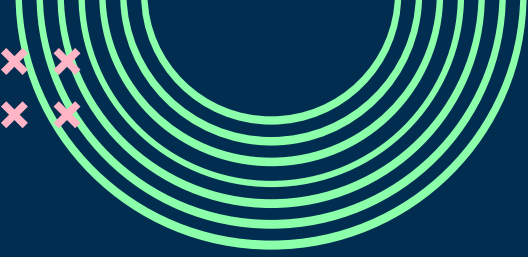
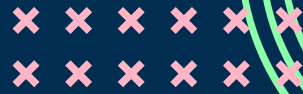
“i feel if the university could have a pick up date prior to online class starting like in school where you collect all your textbook & what you'll need for the year including all assignment sheets etc it would make it less stressful for those who don't understand all the online basics but allow us to do our assignment's online & submit online”

“Fun activities to bring joy during the term. We have had food trucks, animals (therapy dogs!), craft etc. these are all great”

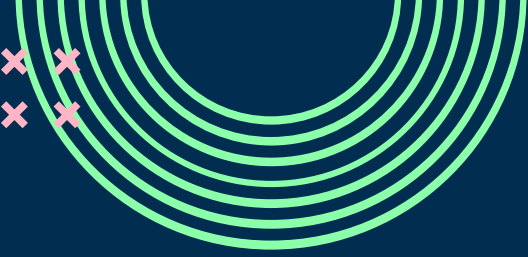
“Mental health training for the supervisors and student leaders so they are aware and aren't making things worse for students

“Posters and safe spaces encouraging mental wellbeing and seeking support”

“Completely anonymous private chats to guide students whom wish to speak about their concerns”



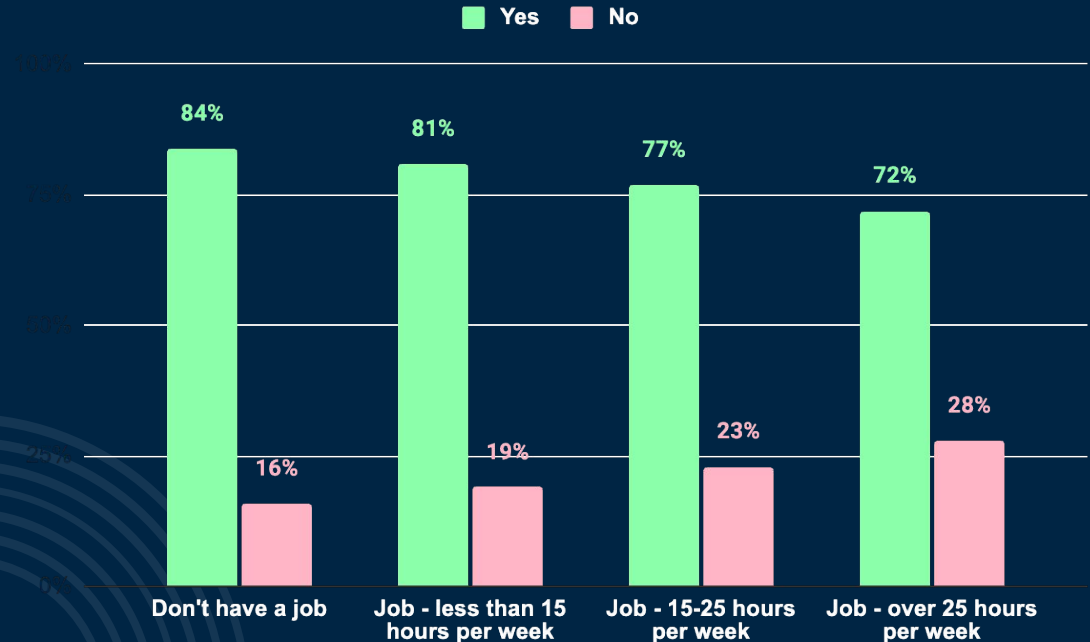
Appendix



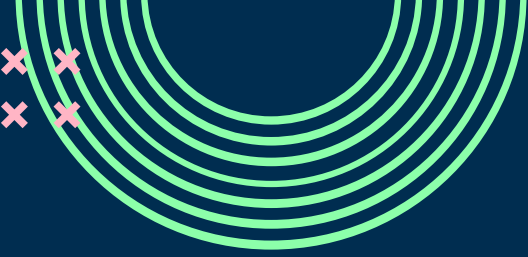
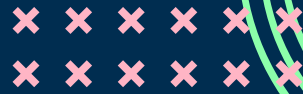
Mental health resources

The more a student works whilst studying, the less likely they are to be aware of services to support their mental health.

Are you aware of the mental health and well-being resources available on your campus?



Base: In-person 372, Online 144, Both 334

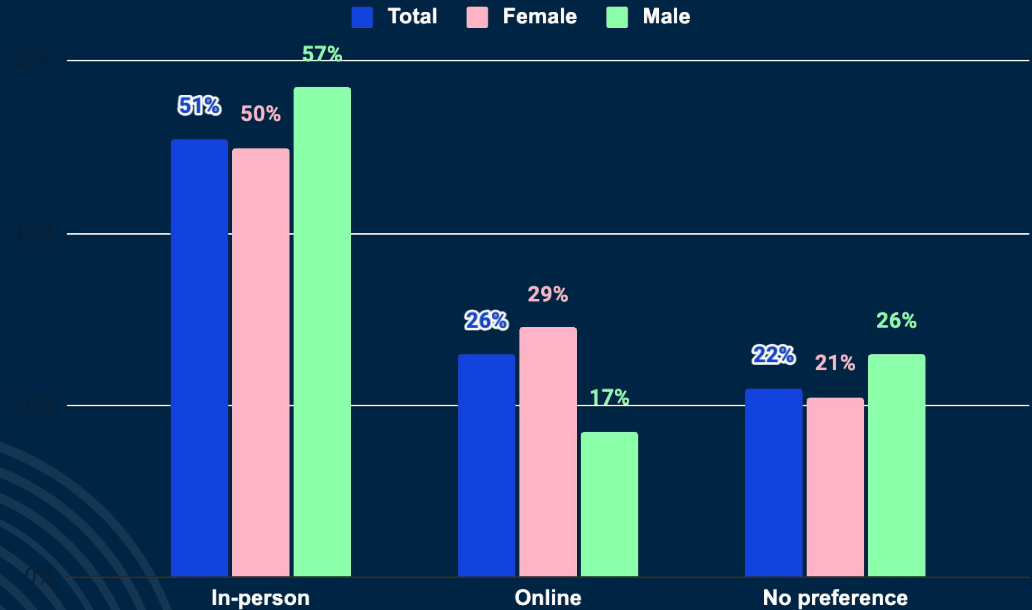


Online v offline studies

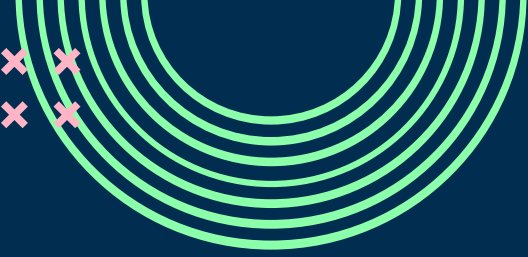
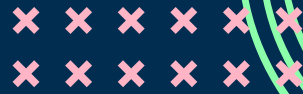
Students typically prefer to study in-person rather than online, particularly male students.

Do you prefer learning online or in-person?

→ However, around 1 in 4 students, and close to 1 in 3 female students, prefer studying online.



*2% of respondents are non-female/male identifying.

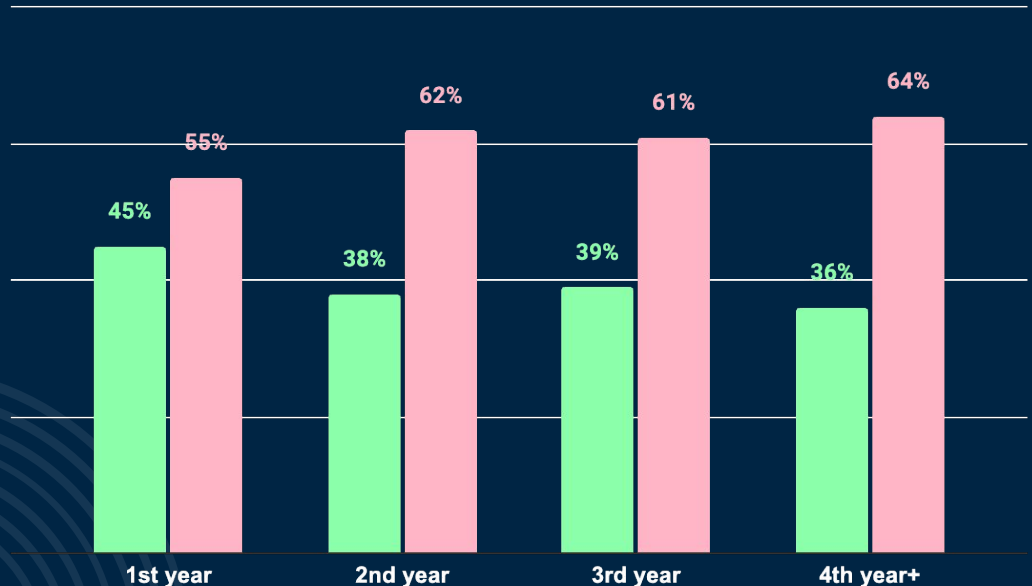


Social media

First year students are most likely to use social media to improve their understanding of mental health.

Do you use social media as a tool to improve your understanding of mental health?

Yes No



- This is possibly an indication that younger students are increasingly accessing mental health information via social media – a trend that should be monitored going forward to engage with young people in the best format.

Base: 1st year 299, 2nd year 264, 3rd year 137, 4th year 148