

Annual Project Report 2017

Project Title: Campus Space Group

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Aims

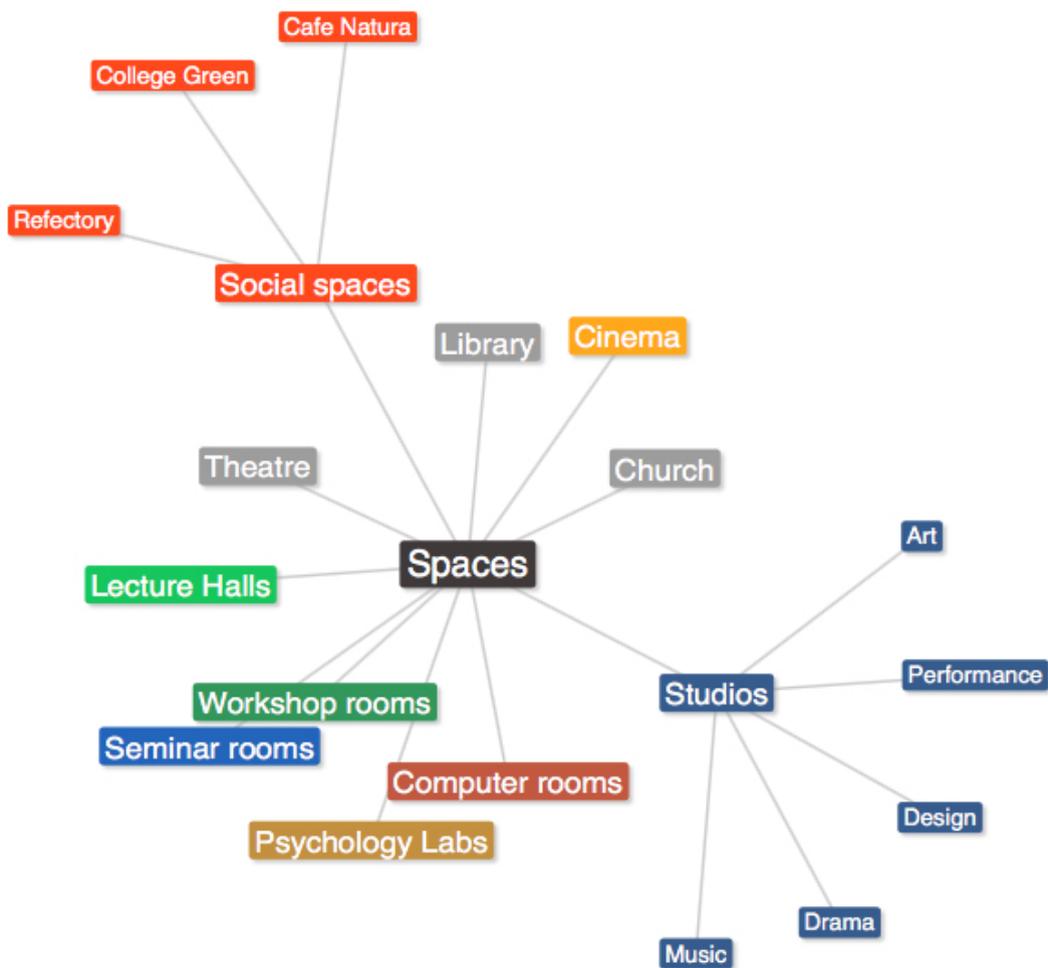
Our section of the Annual Project aims to:

- Determine the overall student experience of space on campus, for both academic and extra-curricular needs.
- Examine the main concerns from students
- Highlight good examples of space use within the college
- Focus on accessibility for disabled students and identify infrastructural changes that could be made to improve their university experience.

Overview

Goldsmiths' campus is comprised of a wide range of spaces, from academic study areas to cafes, which are used by different students for different activities. This means that experience of space on campus can vary greatly across the student body.

The spider diagram below illustrates the variety of campus spaces that Goldsmiths has to offer and which were mentioned in the survey both positively and in terms of suggested improvements.



Methodology

Our primary method of obtaining information was from the Annual Project Survey, consisting of questions on 6 areas of concern, compiled by all DSCs according to our group topics. Each group submitted 5 questions. In total, the survey received 1322 responses, 1049 of which provided answers to all of our questions concerning Campus Space. We have analysed this information by examining the hard data as well as the remarks and suggestions made within the accompanying comment boxes, and looking for common trends.

Our survey responses provided quantitative results for our 5 questions, as well as allowing for qualitative text responses. The questions predominately took the format of Yes/No/Don't Know and, in the case of Q4 regarding accessibility, scaled from 1-5 (agree/disagree).

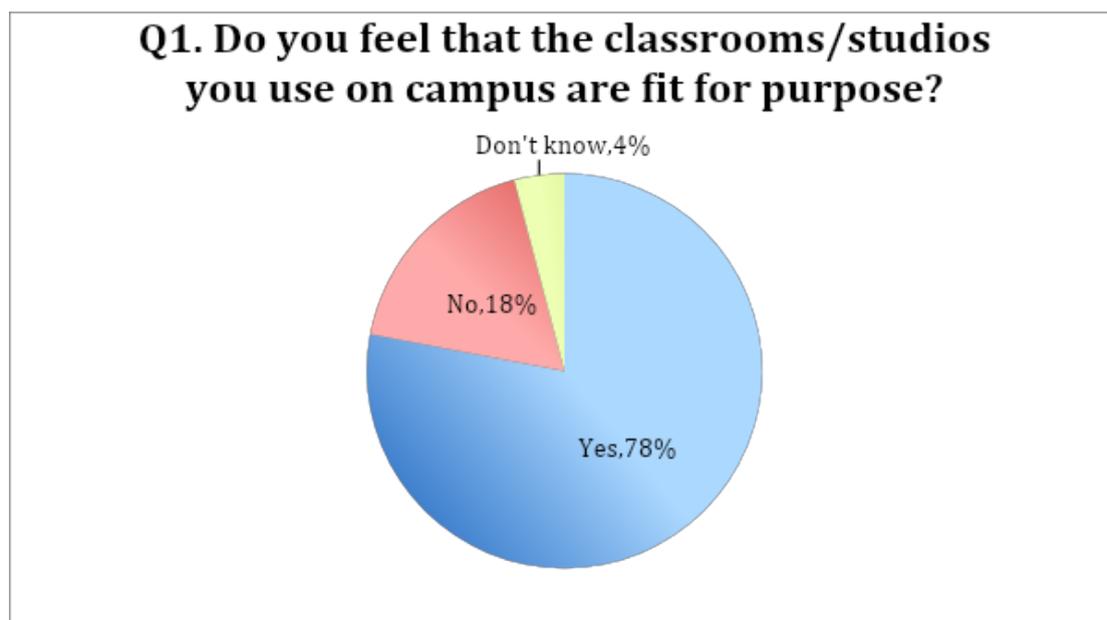
In addition to the survey, we have arranged face-to-face interviews with students to gain further testimonies and qualitative responses. We spoke to three students from the Design department and asked them questions regarding their feelings on safety around campus, the library and the New Cross area. Additionally, we arranged a meeting with SU Disabled Officer Shona Walne, who is also a DDSC, to

discuss issues concerning students with disabilities and examine and compare both the results of the DSC Annual Survey and the DDSC Annual Survey.

As well as this, one of our group members visited the University of East Anglia in Norwich, to gain an insight into what a much larger institution has been doing to improve accessibility for disabled students. Correspondence was then made with two members of staff at UEA, Professor Tom Shakespeare of the Norwich Medical School and Dr Katherine Deane of the School of Health Sciences.

Findings and results

Prior to our findings, it is important to note that there was no difference between overall Undergraduate and Postgraduate experience in the results of the Annual Survey, showing that students have experienced issues collectively across the university rather than by a particular faction. However, student satisfaction decreases with each year of Undergraduate study; 1st year reports 67% satisfaction, with a significant drop to 47% by 3rd year.



Overall, 78% of students feel that the campus spaces are adequate and fit their purposes. This result shows that Goldsmiths' constant improvements and changes provide students with well-organised and structured spaces. However, there are a number of specific areas around campus that require development and change.

Positive improvements that have already been made in the last couple of years include:

- Well-equipped studios and workshops.

- Easily movable chairs and tables in seminar rooms, which have allowed Learning and Teaching spaces to become more adaptable and enabled greater class interaction and discussion.

In terms of issues, students from the following practice-based departments made the majority of suggestions and complaints:

- Design
- Performance
- Art
- Computing
- Politics

Students in the departments of Design, STaCs, Visual Cultures, Politics, Theatre & Performance and CCS were 60% satisfied and feel that the spaces are fit for purpose. By contrast, students in the departments of Psychology, Media & Communication, English & Comparative Literature, Art, Sociology, Educational Studies, IMS and ICCE are between 80% and 90% satisfied with their provided campus spaces.

The feedback and comments allowed us to identify three common concerns:

1. Unsuitable room capacity

- Room capacity does not always suit the number of students attending. This recently occurred in Term 1 in RHB 137a, when the Music department was told that the room was suitable for capacity for all 2nd Year students taking 'Aesthetics, Meaning and Culture', but during the module students resorted to sitting on the floor due to a lack of seating.
- Similar issues have occurred in RHB 342 and 300, the Victorian English Literature lectures and Maths rooms
- Broken chairs and tables have been reported across campus as an important safety issue that requires attention.
- Flip down desks do not provide enough space for laptops, notebook, stationery etc.
- Lecture theatres being used for seminars: unmovable chairs and desks, meaning that it is difficult to repurpose the room for smaller classes.

Finding rooms that accommodate all students in class comfortably with their own chair and desk space should be the minimum requirement for a high quality learning and teaching environment. Therefore, the room booking system needs to be urgently improved so that more suitable rooms and spaces are allocated.

2. Lack of space, both practice based/ physical workshop spaces and socialising areas

Design Department: Suggestions of improvement in the design department concentrate on the 1st and 2nd year studios as well as the PhD rooms. Workshop rooms have become crowded.

Music practice rooms: Music students have requested an expansion of the existing practice facilities; there are only 4 rehearsal rooms for all music students, which is problematic during assessment periods.

Performance/Drama Studios: Students have suggested developing shared studio space and more drama studios. Drama students have also requested improvements to studio mirrors and sprung flooring, commenting that brick flooring is a safety issue.

Technology: Demand for more computer rooms campus-wide.

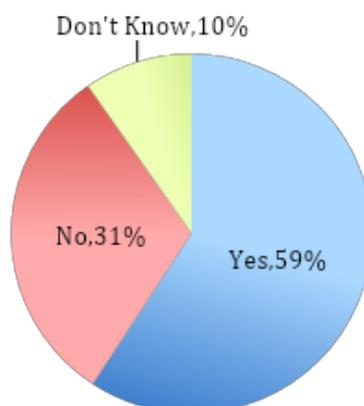
Accessibility: Some comments also highlight unequal access to learning facilities due to departmental boundaries. For example, MA Art Psychotherapy students would like access to other fine art studios and PGCE students would like permission to use the design building during term time.

3. Heating

The heating system and room temperature regulation across campus remains a reoccurring issue. The comments disclose the following spaces as the most problematic, either being too hot or too cold:

- St James Hatcham
- Ben Pimlott Lecture theatre
- PSH LG02
- RHB

Q2. Do you feel that campus has enough space for both study and extra-curricular activity?



As shown in the pie chart above, the students surveyed were predominately of the view that campus is adequately provisioned in terms of space for study and extra-curricular activity. However, further examination of the 240 comments made in the accompanying 'additional information' box has highlighted some issues:

1. Library

35% of the comments made surrounding this question were specifically related to a lack of study space in the library. Students noted particular difficulties regarding the following:

- Finding available computers and seats during the daytimes of term, as well as in examinations periods
- Social Anxiety: Those with this condition have stated that the library becomes increasingly uncomfortable to navigate and use at busy times.
- A 'struggle for access to resources', such as printers and photocopiers.

Other issues related to the library were:

- Plug sockets frequently not working
- Computers missing equipment
- Computers slow and in need of software updates
- Heating in some parts of the library, but not others
- The ground floor has become a social space rather than an area for group work.

2. Increased Student Intake

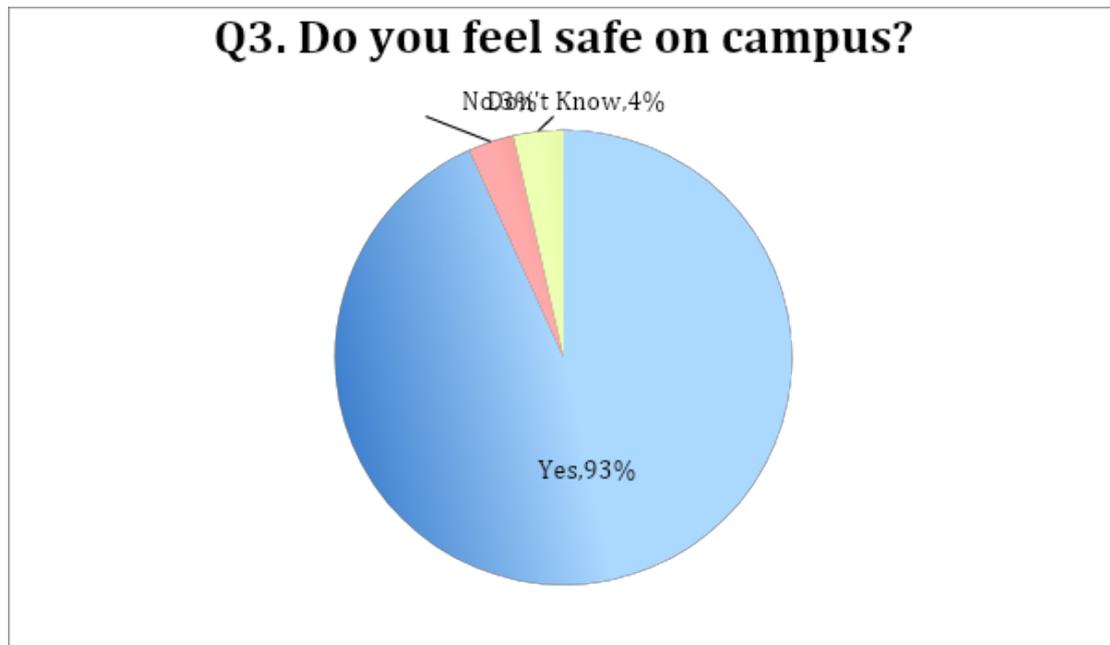
Closely related to overcrowding in the library was a general feeling that campus is busier than in previous years, due to the higher intake of students across all courses. Of course, it is irrelevant to reiterate the arguments concerning university growth here. However, it is important that the impact of this in terms of both space and resources should be considered and acted upon. Students have noted:

- Frequent queues for loos and the Refectory in the Richard Hoggart Building
- Difficulty in finding places to sit and eat during mealtimes, especially as you are required to buy food to sit in Loafers or Thirty Five.
- More space has been made available in the Students' Union in light of the larger student body, which has been greatly beneficial.

3. Extra-Curricular activity: Sport

In terms of extra-curricular activities, 10.83% of comments were directly related to space available for sporting activities:

- Students noted that societies and team sports training sessions frequently have to take place off campus, including Football, Basketball and Volleyball, due to a lack of resources on-site.
- In cases where Sports activities do take place on campus, other students commented upon the available rooms not being suitable for the training involved.



Out of 1,049 answers, 93.23% answered that they do feel safe on campus, 3.24% answered no and 3.53% answered do not know. This is a positive result for the college, reflecting that an overwhelming majority of students consider Goldsmiths as a place in which they feel comfortable and protected.

When looking into groups who answered the survey we found that 88% of International students feel safe on campus, as opposed to 94% of Home students. From analysis of the survey's accompanying comments, students were concerned by:

1. Lighting

- Students noted a lack of lighting in areas such as the back entrance of campus, the Professor Stuart Hall building, around the design studios and the College Green
- As a result, students finishing lectures in the evening in PSH often do not feel comfortable walking to the main entrance of Goldsmiths.

2. Security

- The majority of students surveyed are happy with the security staff on campus and state that they see them often.

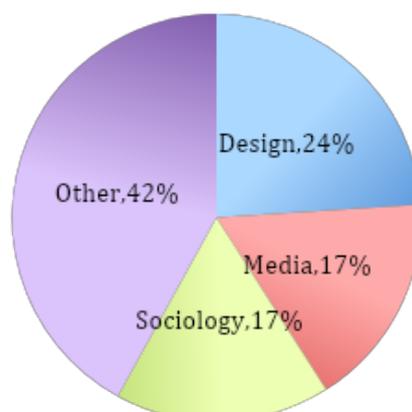
- They additionally appreciate the presence of security staff in the library 24 hours a day.
- However, students have noted that anyone can walk onto campus and access some areas of the college freely despite the prevalence of security, suggesting that more card barriers might be beneficial close to areas that should only be used by Goldsmiths students.
- Students are also unsure of who they should contact if they see something that looks suspicious on campus.
- Many say that they do not feel safe in the New Cross area after dark, especially walking out from the library late at night.
- There were also concerns regarding the possibility of sexual assault and that students do not feel safe at night because of this.
- Several students commented about the increase of anti-Semitic incidents on campus, with one reporting that 'with the increase of discriminatory graffiti, including symbols linked with the far-right, it's hard to feel safe'. In spring 2016 the Student Union reported that 'repeated instances' of anti- Semitic graffiti have occurred, including swastikas, showing that this is an on-going problem that needs further tackling in order to make sure that students do not feel victimised on campus.
- We are pleased to hear that a Hate Crime reporting centre is due to open at the SU.

3. Thefts

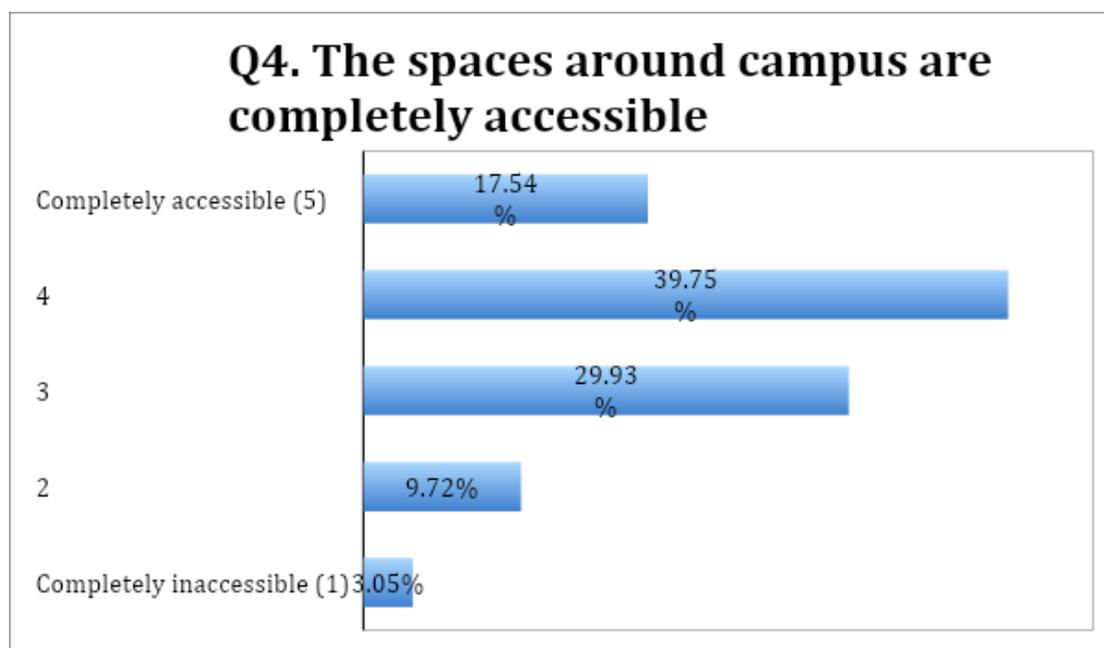
Students have noted a significant number of thefts from departments since the beginning of the year:

- A laptop was stolen from the BA Design 3rd Year studio, from a door with a passcode lock.
- Two saxophones were stolen from the Music department instrumental storage cupboard in January; again, the lock required a passcode.
- A television was stolen from the Visual Cultures Society
- Students have remarked concern over rooms that are locked with a passcode lock, as it is difficult to track who knows the code and where it is being shared, particularly when rooms are used by people from a range of departments (such as the studios used by the Design department and Art Joint Honours course).

Departments most affected by safety concerns:



Of those who reported that they do not feel safe on campus, 24% were from the Design department, 17% from Media and 17% from Sociology. It is vital to note that both the Design and Media departments hold lectures in the Professor Stuart Hall building, where students have particularly noted poor lighting. Moreover, the Design department was also affected by the recent college thefts.



On a scale of 1 (Not accessible at all) to 5 (Completely accessible), the weighted average returned by 1,049 students was 3.59 (out of 5). Alongside the results of the DSC Annual Survey, additional consultation of this year's DDSC survey was also made, particularly questions 39, 40, and 41, with thanks to Owain Talbot and the other DDSCs.

Over half (57.29%) of respondents rated the campus's accessibility at 4 or above. However, a large proportion of the 113 comments that were offered in addition to survey responses highlighted that many students were unaware of the accessibility needs that disabled students may have. One comment in particular highlights this: 'I don't know about accessibility because I am able-bodied'.

This lack of awareness perhaps sheds light on why the weighted average is so high. Unfortunately, we did not preface the question by firstly asking if the respondents identify as disabled, so the responses can't be filtered accordingly.

However, following analysis of the DDSC Annual Survey we were able to obtain some further results. In Q39 of the survey, 'How accessible do you find the teaching spaces in the university?', 25.21% of respondents answered less than 'Reasonably accessible'. In Q40, 'How accessible do you find the university in general?', 25.21% answered less than 'Reasonably accessible'. Accessibility is therefore clearly an issue, especially amongst disabled students.

1. Consultation with Disabled Students Officer and Secondary Results from the DDSC Survey

Discussion with the Disabled Students Officer confirmed that the feelings amongst disabled students do not correspond with as high a weighted average as 3.59.

Richard Hoggart Building

The Richard Hoggart Building was highlighted as being particularly inaccessible, both in the survey results and by individual anecdotal testimony. This is due to its design, featuring:

- Many thin staircases
- Tight corners
- Non-automatic doors

Unfortunately, as RHB is a listed building, the College is limited as to how much retrofitting can be done.

Signage

- Both in survey comments and in anecdotal testimony, signage was highlighted as being poor, particularly in the RHB.
- Additionally, in Q41 of the DDSC Annual Survey, 'How helpful do you find the signage in university?', 44.01% of students answered less than 'Somewhat helpful'.
- There are two lifts in the RHB but it is incredibly hard to find them without having them pointed out by somebody else.
- This poor signage is compounded by the fact that there is no map of the floor plan of the RHB, only a birds-eye-view map of the whole campus.

Implementing accessible routes and improving signage/maps: practice of other institutions

One of our group members visited the University of East Anglia to see what actions another institution has taken. The campus at UEA is very inaccessible to the naked eye. Its New Brutalist architecture includes many steps, split levels, tight corners and elevated walkways, which are of course highly inaccessible for disabled students, most notably wheelchair users.

Professor Tom Shakespeare at UEA pointed out that there are painted access routes on the ground throughout the campus, which are wheelchair accessible:

As well as this, Tom highlighted the importance of access in terms of emergency egress. It is vital that students and staff with accessibility needs can leave a building for obvious health and safety access.

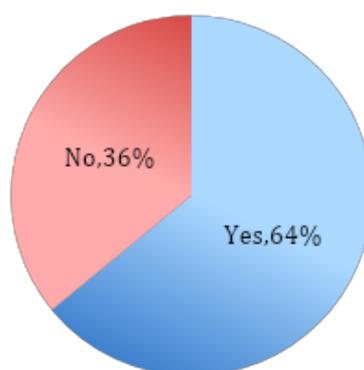
Another academic at UEA, Dr Katherine Deane, mentioned plans for a navigation app for all students and staff, which would also feature accessible routes for those with specific physical disabilities.

Katherine also mentioned that UEA have hearing aid loop channels in all lecture theatres, and that there is a designated facilities contact number for jobs that are specifically to do with disability access.

Clearly, then, UEA are doing a lot in terms of access, and Goldsmiths could learn a lot from their example.



Q5. Do you stay on campus after your classes? (e.g for events and/or socialising)



Out of the 1,049 answers submitted in the survey, 64.06% of students reported that they do stay on campus after classes, with 35.94% stating that they do not. We can therefore deduce that the majority of students do participate in the extra-curricular and social aspect of the college as well as the academic.

University provides an opportunity to develop personal skills, as well as for academic enrichment.

Students have described the extra-curricular life of Goldsmiths as a 'good opportunity to socialise' and explore a 'wide variety of new and interesting events'. Some of the most popular social activities that students remain on campus for include:

- Meeting with friends in spaces such as Natura, Loafers and Thirty Five
- SU events and socialising in the bar
- Concerts
- Student exhibitions
- Film screenings + Curzon
- Gym
- Societies such as Hacksmiths, Music Society and ActingSoc.

In addition, students remain on campus for academic study-related purposes, such as:

- Attending departmental talks
- Working in Art and Design studios
- Working in the Goldsmiths Music Studios and Electronic Music Studios
- Rehearsing for musical and theatrical performances
- Studying in the library

However, students making up the nearly 36% of those who do not stay on campus after their lectures stated their reasons as follows:

- Work commitments – affecting both full-time and part-time students
- Family commitments and child care
- Long commutes to and from college; students prefer not to travel at peak times
- A lack of awareness regarding events – they could be better publicised
- Few events catered specifically for students aged over 21
- Long contact hours and exhaustion by the end of the day. One student noted that 'classes last from 10am – 5pm' and that they therefore 'don't want to stay in the same place for any longer than that'.
- Social anxiety: students feel that spaces are crowded after lectures as well as during the daytime, and thus remaining on site would be uncomfortable.
- Expense: restaurants off campus are cheaper than those on site.
- Security: students feel uncomfortable travelling at night alone after events

Conclusions and recommendations

Following our analysis of the space available on campus, we are able to make the resulting recommendations:

1. Campus Space

- More bins around the campus spaces
- Improved WiFi coverage across all college buildings, for continuous Internet access.
- Plugs in lecture rooms and a greater number in the library. More USB plugs would also be beneficial, following their recent addition to some learning spaces.
- Better signage for water fountains and bike rails
- Coat hooks in RHB: Students have requested to put up coat hooks in the RHB rooms, especially, for performance lectures so that there is more space available for practical work.
- Church as an overall concern: A number of students have requested that some funding needs to be spend on improving the church space especially the toilets, the heating system and the noise which are all reoccurring issues from past years. Additionally, it was suggested to have a snack and drink machine in that space.
- *Social spaces*: greater seating spaces in the Refectory. The Refectory functions as both a canteen and socialising area and thus it has been suggested to provide additional rooms for the purpose of socialising that are neither coffee shops nor eating places.
- Designated study area for Postgraduate students
- More studio space for those studying Art and Design
- More booths for quiet and group study, such as those in the upstairs Refectory of the Richard Hoggart Building
- Increased study space during deadline/examinations periods, e.g booking out classrooms to be used as study areas during these times

2. Security

- More safe storage spaces (lockers), such as those used for small instruments in the Music department
- Studios and storage spaces to be accessed by swiping your Goldsmiths card, rather than using a passcode.
- Clearer point of contact to bring issues to regarding security
- Offer self-defence workshops to students to support those who feel vulnerable in London, particularly late at night.

3. Accessibility – Longer-term strategy

The College and the Students' Union have a responsibility to disabled students, disabled staff, and disabled visitors; and the infrastructure of the College should reflect the needs of the growing proportion of disabled students.

Anxiety

- Greater number of 'quiet spaces' on campus (similar to the Liberation Room in the SU) for those suffering from anxiety and other mental health conditions.
- Create a "sleeping room" where students have the possibility to relax and rest between lectures, especially for those who commute.

Increasing awareness

- Events such as UEA's Disabled Access Day on March 12th bring attention to the issues, and can help in leading a shift in thinking and an increase in awareness and thoughtfulness. A similar event could very easily be established at Goldsmiths.
- Tom Shakespeare also added that the UEA Students Union's marking of Disability History Month and other relevant national and international events helps to raise awareness.
- If both the College and the SU did more to highlight Disability History Month and other important dates, this would help bring attention to disabled students and their specific needs.

Consultation

Any construction of new buildings or retrofitting of existing buildings should only be done after consultation with a forum or focus group consisting of disabled students and staff, DDSCs, and the Goldsmiths SU's Disabled Students Officer.

A designated 'Disability Access Jobs' contact at Estates.

Estates and facilities currently have a standard contact and an emergency contact, but a third contact could be added that deals directly with Disability Access Jobs. This designated contact for issues of disability access could be established simply and cheaply, and would both speed up process and improve efficacy. This would not lead to an increase on the workload of the Estates team as these access jobs and issues exist already; it would simply separate jobs pertaining to access so that they may be prioritised if necessary.