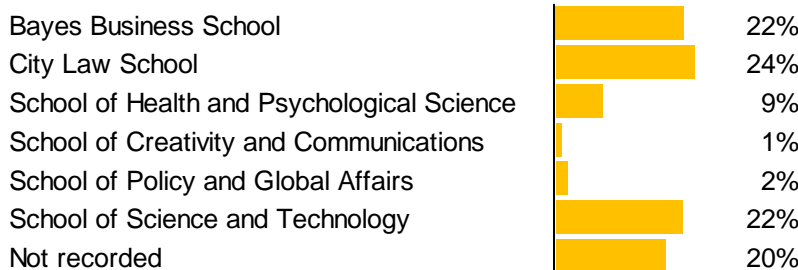


Introduction

Background: City Students' Union conducted the Pre-arrival survey before the Welcome induction period to gather insights on the first year City students' pre-arrival experience. The survey aimed to identify issues encountered in the pre-arrival journey to City, acting as a check-in point and direct signposting opportunity to students. Feedback was also collected on first year student's priorities and interests for their ultimate student experience to help develop a profile of the new student cohort. This summary highlights the key findings from the 2023/24 Pre-arrival survey by the Union on the pre-arrival experience of new City students.

Survey promotion: The survey was open from the beginning of Clearing (end of August 2023) until the start of Welcome week (end of September 2023) to registered City students in their first year of study, including undergraduate and postgraduate level. Promotion of the survey was shared centrally and locally within schools as part of induction email communications to new students.

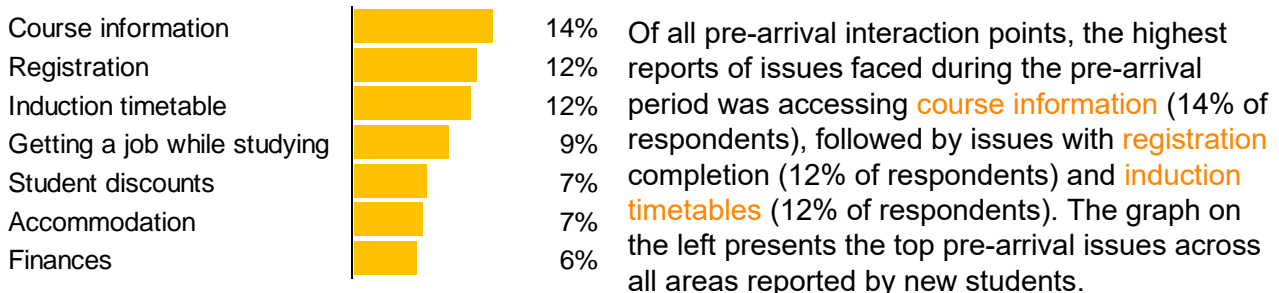


Response rate: 609 students completed the Pre-arrival survey, with all students being in their first year of study. Below are the breakdowns of respondents by schools, with students from City Law School having the highest response rate. 20% (n=124) of students who completed the survey didn't record which department/school they were from.

Summary

1) Reported pre-arrival student issues

New students were invited to feedback on areas of their pre-arrival that they found challenging. This reporting aims to help identify where issues may arise that can impact their initial experience at City. Students who selected any issues in the survey, were met with further signposting help information in this area. **31%** of students stated that they faced at least one issue or difficulty in their pre-arrival period, and a total of **509 issues** across various areas of pre-arrival were logged.



Areas where >5% of respondents indicated difficulty or issues in the pre-arrival period related to visa and immigration, health and wellbeing and IT.

Course and induction information: Across various areas of the pre-arrival period, students mostly shared that they found difficulty in preparing for their course. Readiness to arrive at City was hindered by these students who had delays in receiving confirmed timetables, allowing for less time to organise other responsibilities like work and childcare, and creating uncertainty on how their initial weeks would look like. Some students found it difficult to find and navigate their online personalised timetables. Students also wanted more academic-related course information to be available before induction such as module information, staff and personal tutor details, as well as access to required readings ahead of induction.

Registration: Students who mentioned issues with completing registration generally reported confusion with registration instructions. Timing expectations of proceeding to the next stages of registration was unclear to some students, including for when ID checks were to run and when they would receive ID cards. During registration, some students reported trouble with logging into the students' union website with City logins to book event tickets.

International students highlighted worries for not acquiring their required ID and immigration documents in time for their course start date. International students and UK settler status students who were required to complete in-person registration highlighted that the organisation of ID checks time slots could have been more simplified for students.

Working while studying: 9% of reported issues linked to students finding it challenging to secure a job, with financial costs being the main reason for considering to work alongside study. Many indicated a need for paid work opportunities that is convenient around timetable availability to support living costs. Delayed access to timetables meant students who were job hunting were waiting to confirm their availability before being able to work.

Student discounts: The main feedback on issues with student discounts were students not knowing how to apply for discounts schemes available to them and wanting more communications on where to receive discounts. There was particular interest in wanting more awareness on travel discounts such as Oyster cards.

Accommodation: Students who selected that they were having difficulty with accommodation before arriving at City agreed that there was generally limited availability for university nominated halls. Most comments in this area related to there not being enough affordable options to choose from, an additional difficulty for students who were unable to secure halls accommodation and in search for private accommodation alternatives.






Finances: Issues on finances in student's pre-arrival to City mainly related to worries of affording living costs while studying. Students cited financial support like bursaries or paid work as a way of helping to support them financially.

An additional 6% of issues that were reported in the survey related to tuition fee payments and loans. There was a consistent experience for students who faced issues with self-financing their tuition fees around reaching the correct team regarding payment and awaiting confirmation of completed payment in time for registration. Students wanted more clarity on fee payment details such as instalment options and upcoming payment dates. International students in particular felt time pressure and uncertainty due to waiting to apply for grants and loans from City or for loans from banks once fully registered on their course.

Overall, students stated that they would like more support information for potential issues that may arise in their pre-arrival, and for earlier communications to allow for preparation and time to resolve for any preliminary issues ahead of starting at City.






Findings on the pre-arrival experience by schools are summarised below. Survey data with <12 responses at school level have not been included due to low response rate (SPGA and SCC). 20% of students who completed the survey didn't record their department information.

Bayes Business School

Getting a job while studying		15%	22% (135 students) of students who responded to the survey were from Bayes. 34% of Bayes students indicated that they encountered an issue/s relating to their pre-arrival experience. Of these students, 99 issues were reported ranging from various areas of pre-arrival.
Registration		12%	
Induction timetable		12%	
Course information		9%	
Accommodation		9%	






The highest reports of issues faced during the pre-arrival period for Bayes students were concerns on securing a job while studying, with students wanting greater availability of part-time job opportunities. Feedback on registration highlighted that more clarity on the timescales for proceeding onto the next stage of registration and instructions regarding ID was needed.

City Law School

Registration		17%	24% (144 students) of students who responded to the survey were from CLS. 47% of Law students indicated that they encountered an issue/s relating to their pre-arrival experience. Of these students, 196 issues were reported ranging from various areas of pre-arrival.
Course information		15%	
Induction timetable		14%	
Tuition fees and loans		6%	
Getting a job while studying		6%	






The highest reports of issues faced during the pre-arrival period for Law students were regarding registration completion. Students felt a lack of clarity on registration timelines and progression onto the next stage. Feedback on course and induction information related to delays in personalised timetables and little support information on accessing timetables.

School of Science and Technology

Course information		15%	22% (135 students) of students who responded to the survey were from SST. 32% of SST students indicated that they encountered an issue/s relating to their pre-arrival experience. Of these students, 113 issues were reported ranging from various areas of pre-arrival.
Getting a job while studying		12%	
Student discounts		9%	
Registration		9%	
Induction timetable		9%	

The highest reports of issues faced during the pre-arrival period for SST students were regarding access to course information such as timetables, module information and reading materials. There were worries among students searching for paid work on finding part-time opportunities and balancing this with their studies and timetable availability.

School of Health and Psychological Sciences

Course information		16%	9% (52 students) of students who responded to the survey were from SHPS. 46% of SHPS students indicated that they encountered an issue/s relating to their pre-arrival experience. Of these students, 49 issues were reported ranging from various areas of pre-arrival.
Finding your way around City		14%	
Getting a job while studying		12%	
Induction timetable		10%	
Student discounts		10%	

The highest reports of issues faced during the pre-arrival period for SHPS students included not having earlier access to course information, such as timetables, Occupational Health appointments and personal tutor details. SHPS students reported that campus navigation between buildings was particularly difficult on their initial days on campus.

Generally,
70%
of new students
stated they had
no concerns
about starting
their first year.

Students who were concerned about starting their journey at City had worries of not making friends, coping with the workload, and adapting to university academia level and campus life.



2) Student priorities and interests

- Students are most looking forward to the **academic learning and education** at City. Students prioritised the below areas for their time at City.
 - 41% Academic learning and education
 - 28% Professional development
 - 21% Gaining new experiences
 - 7% Social activities
 - 4% Making friends
- Our survey found that students had various interests and hobbies, with more than half of students (60%) enjoying **sports and fitness** as a hobby or interest. Other high interest areas of the new student cohort included travelling, watching films, social activity and outdoors activity.

3) Building student community

- In response to ways students can feel more supported in becoming a part of a community at City, students expressed wanting more opportunities to bring similar likeminded people together. This mostly included making connections through **societies, communal spaces** with both socially active and quieter spaces on campus, and frequent **events** with focus on course, department and inter-department level. Students stressed the importance of knowing where to go for support if ever needed and being checked-in by others in the community to boost their belonging to City.

“*Clearer information will make me feel seen and wanted.*”

Other suggestions for building community at City included having networks for new students who have returned to studying after a long time, specifically for mature and postgraduate students. To help engagement with this community, some students highlighted the need for more targeted and relevant communications.