

Professional Services DSS Feedback 2023/24

You Said We Did



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Overview

University of Birmingham Dubai campus annual Dubai Student Survey collects feedback across a range of areas relating to teaching and learning.

Professional Services, are not themselves formally surveyed in the questions. However, open text comments will often include aspects of feedback which relate to professional services, which the teams will interrogate and respond to, including embedding into the coming academic year's schedule of work.

The 2024 feedback showed some improvements in areas which previously received negative feedback, such as the Careers Service and the Food & Beverage provider; however, some of the comments are similar to those received in previous years, highlighting these areas of specific importance to students, such as response times, finance, careers service opportunities and facilities.



Admissions

Summary following 2023 feedback

Following the feedback received in the 2023 DSS feedback the team implemented a range of activities to support applicants in understanding the application process, the delivery and content of programmes and general expectations of student life at the University of Birmingham. Primary activity including a website review, making pages clearer and easier to navigate, a simplified contact form and range of advertised email addresses and a ChatBot.

Through liaising with College teams in the UK, information on Programme pages was reviewed and improved.

Theme	Response
Lack of clarity around admissions process and programme information	<p>Review of webpages has already been initiated and continues to improve clarity of information and processes.</p> <p>Review of the communications shared with students throughout the admissions process has begun in collaboration with various teams involved in the admissions and enrolment process.</p>
Advertised content on the MSc International Business was different from what was delivered	<p>This issue occurred whilst the University was awaiting CAA approval for the revised content. Students were informed of changes to the programme but not specific details, which could have led to dissatisfaction. The current programme page has the updated modules and content.</p>

Finance (inc. Scholarships)

Summary following 2023 feedback

Many improvements have been actioned to support the continued efforts to improve and streamline finance processes and the student experience with finance. Regular collaborative meetings with the Finance Team, based in the UK, have been implemented to ensure that Dubai's student experience and specific needs are considered. A single point of contact for student enquiries has been introduced and reinforced, the Finance Portal, which now incorporates the majority of finance queries. Student Statements are being rolled out in 2024/25 to provide students with a financial history and breakdown of fees and other related financial information, such as scholarship and Visa fees.

Theme	Response
Scholarship for 4 year programmes	A more specific policy was worked on before the start of September 2024 intake, that addresses the issue that was raised in 2023, which is also visible on the programme page. The Student Recruitment Team will make it clear to students when discussing programmes with years of study in Edgbaston the implication on scholarship, and outline fees that will be incurred whilst in Edgbaston.
Accurate recording and implementation of scholarship	Scholarships have been more accurately recorded since 2023. However, there is acknowledgement that there continued to be errors. This year the scholarship upload process has been streamlined and scheduled to prevent such errors and ensure information is available to students in advance of fee payment due date. Scholarship uploading and implementation will continue to be reviewed to further streamline and make accurate the process.

Finance cont.

Theme	Response
Inaccurate financial records	A student statement review has taken place and a roll out of the new student statements will begin in December 2024. The new statements will provide detailed information on outstanding amounts and aims to clarify a student's financial position.
	A process of providing students with unique IBAN numbers was implemented in 2023/24 academic year to ease account reconciliation and speed up time that students accounts reflect payment.
Delay in response time – related to Finance enquiries	Moving the majority of finance related enquiries for Dubai students to the Finance Portal, providing students a single point of contact. This enhances the accuracy of the response and improved response times.
	Improving the knowledge of staff at The Student Hub and ensuring information made available to them to improve signposting and initial response to finance related queries.
Issues making payment	The University is committed to improving and streamlining the payment process, particularly the payment link process. The University are currently exploring options to improve the student experience.

Administration (inc. The Student Hub)

Summary following 2023 feedback

2023 DSS feedback primarily centered around dissatisfaction with response times. The team committed to responding to 70% of queries within 5 days (the agreed response time) and achieved a response rate of 82.9%. There were noticeable positive comments relating to the service students received at The Student Hub, and the University is committed to continuing to improve this service. Wider university projects focusing on improved administrative processes, such as MyDetails will further simplify and streamline administrative processes.

Theme	Response
Response times continue to be highlighted	A slide visible at the Student Hub indicating current response rates available for students to offer transparency.
	Increased 'on the spot' resolutions available at The Student Hub; including upskilling the team on providing initial resolutions to issues such as Finance.
	Introduction of the Mobility Officer post in 2023 to strengthen advice and guidance around Visa and Immigration and Student Mobility.
Timetables (gaps)	Timetabling is always done to maximise building capacity and student experience. Through continued improvements and amendments to facilities and on campus experiences, it is hoped that students will be able to utilise the time between classes for recreation or study.



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Facilities

Summary following 2023 feedback

The opening of DIAC Park has led to access to a greater range of facilities. Student Experience have introduced a range of loanable equipment to utilize in the Parkland, as well as increased facilities in the student space. A new Food and Beverage (F&B) provider was identified, which included student consultation and there were positive comments received throughout the feedback. The new F&B provider are working closely with the University to ensure that the services provided are responsive to student need and wants for their on campus F&B offering.

Theme	Response
Vending Machine	The F&B provider has been asked to provide a vending machine and have committed to implementing this.
	Opening hours of the kiosks are being reviewed to establish whether different opening hours are required to support the campus community.
Food Variety	The F&B provider have agreed to broaden their cuisine choices, including during periods of celebration, such as Diwali, Chinese New Year celebrating with traditional foods.
Food Price	Student discounts, 'combo' deals and loyalty cards will be introduced in the 2024/25 academic year
	The University continues to explore the possibility of implementing a multi-function room on campus. Whilst one is not available on campus, an external venue is being rented.

Facilities cont.

Theme	Response
Covered Bus Stop and Shaded Parking	The University has requested shaded bus stop from the RTA, who operate the external bus stop. The University is liaising with TECOM to review the landscaping of the carpark and planting more trees to facilitate shading in the car park.
Transport to and from the nearest Metro Station	Whilst currently this is not feasible, were demand high enough the transport provider would implement a service, at a charge. The demand of this service will remain under review.
Mic and sound quality in teaching rooms to be improved	The University regularly tests the quality and function of the audio visual equipment in the teaching rooms. If any are found to be faulty or ineffective these will be addressed.
Equipment available in student spaces	New pool table has been procured and sticks repaired. Additional gaming tables and board games introduced along with a video games console and additional games.
Access to a gym on campus and sports facilities	The team are working closely with TECOM to ensure that University of Birmingham students have suitable access to the facilities in DIAC Park. Where facilities are not available in the park, external facilities are hired for student use based on timings given by student clubs and groups.



Student Experience and Community

Summary following 2023 feedback

2023/24 saw the introduction of the ‘This Week @ UoBD’ Newsletter, a weekly newsletter that was sent at the same time and date each week, enabling students to predictably know where they can find out what is going on at the university in terms of events, activities and key dates. The University also worked considerably on improving how programmes and students could arrange events that were purposeful and focused on community building. A great deal of effort went into driving a student experience that was responsive to student feedback and student need, as relates to supportive services such as Wellbeing Service (introducing an on and off campus outsourced counselling service, student Mental Health First Aid training).

Theme	Response
Sense of community and activity on campus	Ensuring an ongoing programme of activities that is clearly and effectively publicised through appropriate channels
	Continued 1-to-1 consultation with Student Reps and Leaders and monthly focus groups for students to input into activity
	Introduction of an Events Page and platform where students can review available events – including PG specific events, of which there were 7 last year
Funding for clubs and process for students to arrange events	Following the 2023 DSS feedback we introduced Clubs Conference in 2023/24 to enable Student Clubs and groups to be better prepared to plan and deliver events for their clubs and the wider community, this has continued in 2024/25, including accessing and managing club budgets

Student Experience and Community cont.

Theme	Response
Response times by the Experience team	Auto response on emails to inform students of expected response times, along with clear information on the process of arranging an event and timelines students should adhere to (on the Student Association webpages).
Equality Diversity and Inclusion matters raised (working students, English proficiency, cultural diversity)	Working with the Student Leadership Team to improve their awareness of ED&I issues and how they can support the student body
	Introduce student ED&I ambassador roles into the Student Association and work collaboratively on any student initiatives (such as female only spaces)
	Schedule a review of the campus accessibility (digital and physical) to be undertaken with the Health and Safety Committee and Digital Leads
	Cultural Awareness session and UAE Cultural induction delivered for International Students and Mobility students during welcome week to introduce and support understanding of UAE customs, cultural and legislation
Engaging with students from different cultures and celebrating different cultures (+ comment)	Embedding cultural events through the curriculum and events programme, such as National Day, Global Day / Showcase 2024 saw our inaugural Global Showcase. Students led on the delivery of National Day in 2023, which was a great success.



Careers Service

Summary following 2023 feedback

DSS feedback highlights that students felt that there had been improvement in the Careers Service delivered to the University of Birmingham students at the Dubai campus, including in the variety and number of opportunities available. A significant enhancement to the Careers Service in the 2023/24 academic year was the introduction of the Birmingham Dubai Award for Undergraduate students. The Award enables students to be recognized for the employability activities that they engage in, via an enhanced transcript.

Theme	Response
More Careers opportunities	An additional careers Fair, in Semester 1, has been introduced to the schedule of careers activity to support the employer engagement opportunities available to all students
	An annual calendar of alumni activity has been introduced, increasing opportunities for recent graduates to engage with more established alumni and network
	Targeted activity alongside academic teams for underrepresented programmes to identify key industry links and opportunities

Summary

The Senior Professional Services Leadership Team will regularly review the DSS feedback and actions that they have identified following the feedback received. This feedback will feed into strategy and planning reviews to move forward key areas of work.

Progress made to comments in the DSS feedback will be shared through the Student Staff Forums and the Student Representative system and our Student Leadership Team.

As well as working closely with the Student Leadership Team and Student Representatives, the Senior Professional Services Leadership Team will collaborate with colleagues throughout the university to improve the student experience on campus, as well as TECOM and external partners to improve University of Birmingham students' experience in Dubai.





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