

Drawing the line(s)

Free speech, harassment and adult PSHE

WONKHE SUs | MEMBERSHIP SERVICES 2023 | [WONKHE.COM/SUS](https://www.wonkhe.com/sus)
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Stereotypes are harmless to others

	Gender				Public school				Private school		
	Total	Male	Female	Other gender	Total	Male	Female	Other gender	Total	Male	Female
Agree	14%	20%	8%	0%	12%	18%	8%	0%	26%	36%	10%
Disagree	70%	55%	80%	84%	73%	60%	81%	84%	48%	31%	77%
Net	-56%	-35%	-72%	-84%	-61%	-42%	-73%	-84%	-22%	5%	-67%

Being able to explain what constitutes sexual consent to a friend

	Gender				Public school				Private school		
	Total	Male	Female	Other	Total	Male	Female	Other	Total	Male	Female
Very confident	44%	38%	49%	67%	45%	40%	49%	67%	33%	26%	47%
All Confident	78%	73%	82%	100%	78%	72%	83%	100%	76%	75%	80%
All Not confident	3%	4%	3%	0%	3%	4%	3%	0%	6%	7%	5%
Net confidence	75%	69%	79%	100%	75%	68%	80%	100%	70%	68%	75%

Confident in what constitutes sexual harassment

	Gender				Public school				Private school		
	Total	Male	Female	Other	Total	Male	Female	Other	Total	Male	Female
Very confident	40%	43%	38%	83%	41%	45%	37%	83%	37%	33%	44%
All Confident	83%	84%	83%	100%	84%	85%	82%	100%	81%	78%	86%
All Not confident	13%	12%	15%	0%	13%	10%	16%	0%	17%	19%	11%
Net confidence	70%	72%	68%	100%	71%	75%	66%	100%	64%	59%	75%

Confident in communicating sexual consent clearly

	Gender				Public school				Private school		
	Total	Male	Female	Other	Total	Male	Female	Other	Total	Male	Female
Very confident	47%	46%	48%	67%	48%	48%	48%	67%	41%	34%	54%
All Confident	86%	83%	88%	100%	87%	83%	90%	100%	81%	82%	80%
All Not confident	11%	12%	9%	0%	10%	12%	9%	0%	15%	16%	14%
Net confidence	75%	71%	79%	100%	77%	71%	81%	100%	66%	66%	66%

Confident in what constitutes sexual consent

	Gender				Public school				Private school		
	Total	Male	Female	Other	Total	Male	Female	Other	Total	Male	Female
Very confident	59%	55%	61%	83%	60%	58%	62%	83%	46%	37%	60%
All Confident	91%	87%	93%	100%	91%	88%	94%	100%	84%	79%	90%
All Not confident	7%	9%	5%	0%	6%	7%	4%	0%	15%	20%	7%
Net confidence	84%	78%	88%	100%	85%	81%	90%	100%	69%	59%	83%

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Net confidence	84%	78%	88%	100%	85%	81%	90%	100%	69%	59%	83%

England OfS H&SM

- “Single document” on approach to prevention and handling allegations
- Ensure students understand the content of the document explaining the provider's approach.
- Deliver credible and effective training for students.
- Mandatory training for all students.
- Must include awareness of and preventing sexual misconduct.
- Bystander training for potential witnesses.
- Training based on credible evidence and evaluation.
- Show measurable changes in attitudes and behaviors post-training.
- Allocate appropriate time for mandatory training.
- Provide opportunities for attendees to ask questions.
- A brief online session at the start of a student's education without the chance for discussion is not sufficient.

England OfS H&SM

- Staff must receive appropriate and effective training.
- Address prevention of harassment and sexual misconduct.
- Address reporting and investigatory processes.
- Cover definitions of harassment and sexual misconduct.
- Staff should be trained to challenge harassment and sexual misconduct.
- Engage in discussions about what may or may not constitute harassment in connection with freedom of speech.
- All staff should understand the provider's approach to harassment and sexual misconduct.
- Staff training should be evaluated for robustness and credibility.
- A brief online course during induction might not be suitable for most staff.

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- Freedom of speech principles.

Free speech interactions

Proposal

Require providers to comply with the requirements of the condition in a manner which is consistent with the freedom of speech principles. 'Freedom of speech principles' means the following requirements:

- a. Irrespective of the scope and extent of any other legal requirements that may apply to the provider, the need for the provider to have particular regard to, and place significant weight on, the importance of freedom of speech within the law, academic freedom and tolerance for controversial views in an educational context or environment, including in premises and situations where educational services, events and debates take place.
- b. The need for the provider to apply a rebuttable presumption to the effect that students being exposed to any of the following is unlikely to amount to harassment:
 - the content of higher education course materials, including but not limited to books, videos, sound recordings, and pictures
 - statements made and views expressed by a person as part of teaching, research or discussions about any subject matter which is connected with the content of a higher education course.

Free speech act

- Duty to promote the importance of freedom of speech and academic freedom
- The governing body of a registered higher education provider must promote the importance of—
 - (a) freedom of speech within the law, and
 - (b) academic freedom for academic staff of registered higher education providers and their constituent institutions,
- in the provision of higher education.”

Arif Ahmed

Dr Arif Ahmed: 'Free speech so important it should be taught alongside consent'

Arif Ahmed explained why he believes freedom of speech is 'progressive and radical', but worries it's under threat



Ahmed believes people self-censor on issues like Brexit, the Israel-Palestine conflict and trans rights
ARIF AHMED



Why I'm teaching free speech to Cambridge students

Philosophy professor Arif Ahmed reveals how he's fighting back against campus cancel culture

Arif Ahmed

- Freedom of speech should be taught at universities alongside training on consent.
- University should be an environment where almost anything can be expressed without restriction.
- Students should be prepared to be offended, and being offended shouldn't be grounds for complaint.
- There is a natural tendency to suppress opposing views, hence the need for training.
- A proposal to “respect” opinions offers scope for censorship.
- "Tolerate" allows for freedom of speech while preventing harassment and suppression.
- Universities should only prevent speech if it incites violence or breaches legal confidentiality.
- Power dynamics play a role; those in power often dictate what is "acceptable" speech.
- Universities aren't doing enough to champion free speech, potentially showing "double standards".
- Universities (and SUs) should avoid taking “political” stances that could alienate their members.
- Universities aren't inherently moral institutions and shouldn't try to determine the collective views of their members.

Dr Arif Ahmed: ‘Free speech so important it should be taught alongside consent’

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What's changing?

- The fundamental shift is from events and speakers to culture and education
- On both H&SM there is a shift into making a difference not just through rules but through teaching and learning
- Development of understanding to shift behaviours and judgements across a university community
- Also a shift into "compulsory soft skills" on basis important for graduates and students
- Explicitly dropping "leaving this to immersion" and extra curricular

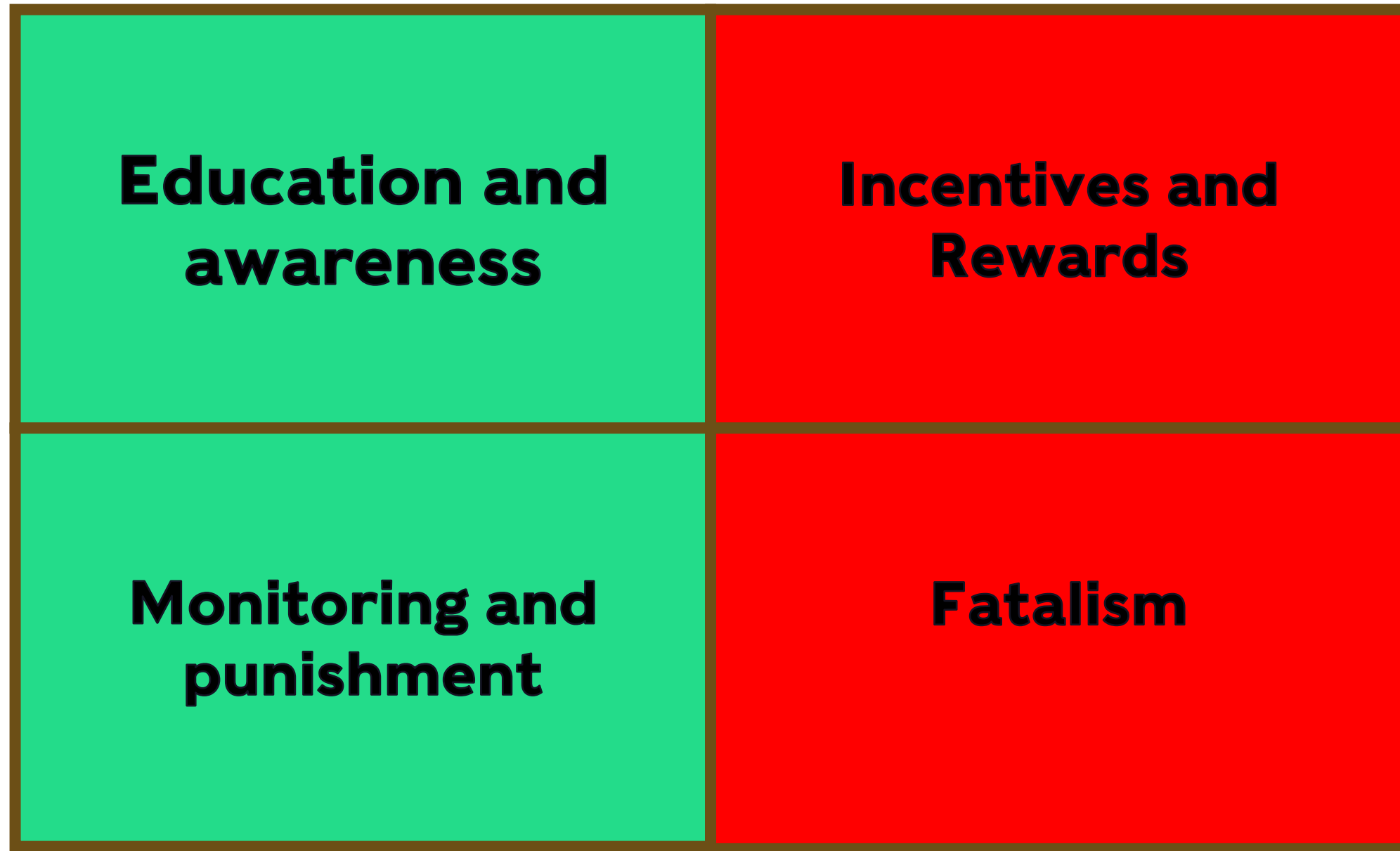
Getting people to do things

- Egalitarian: Establish understanding and awareness. Policy as **education**.
- Individualist: Establish incentives to behave “better”. Policy as **rewards**.
- Authoritarian: Establish power (often to punish). Policy as **deterrent**.
- Fatalist: We can’t control this at all. Nor should we try.
- All have significant limitations

Combination is key

Education and awareness	Incentives and Rewards
Monitoring and punishment	Fatalism

Combination is key



Combination is key

Education and awareness The actual teaching and learning	Incentives and Rewards The classification and graduation ceremony
Monitoring and punishment Rules on academic (mis)conduct, attendance, etc	Fatalism A lot of the “soft skills” benefits from HE

**SUs have a key role
to play in shaping,
influencing and
delivering this
aspect of
education**

As well as the subject...

- Employability skills and attributes
- How to access and navigate services
- How to learn at university
- Equality and diversity
- The climate? Gambling? Self-care?
- "Adulthood" ...

Most: making friends, depending on myself, adapting to a new life. The problem with self-catered accomodation is the increased need to cook, which can take a lot of time, especially if you have multiple societies to go to, or you're not a very exceptional student.

I feel like I'm gonna be the stupid one in my course

I'm a little worried about how I'm gonna make friends at uni (I start first year after the summer), especially since I'll be living at home. I really wanted to move out into student accommodation as it seems so fun and such an easy way to make friends! Did anyone else stay home during uni? How did it go for you?

I'll be going to uni in September and I'm really excited, but I'm nervous about making friends. Im not the best with social situations so was wondering what's the best way to make some friends??

dunno how to properly explain it, i'm a quiet, not-so-friendly, unsociable guy until someone talks to me and genuinely wants nurturing friendships, i want more of these people around me but that's not really been the case in my uni

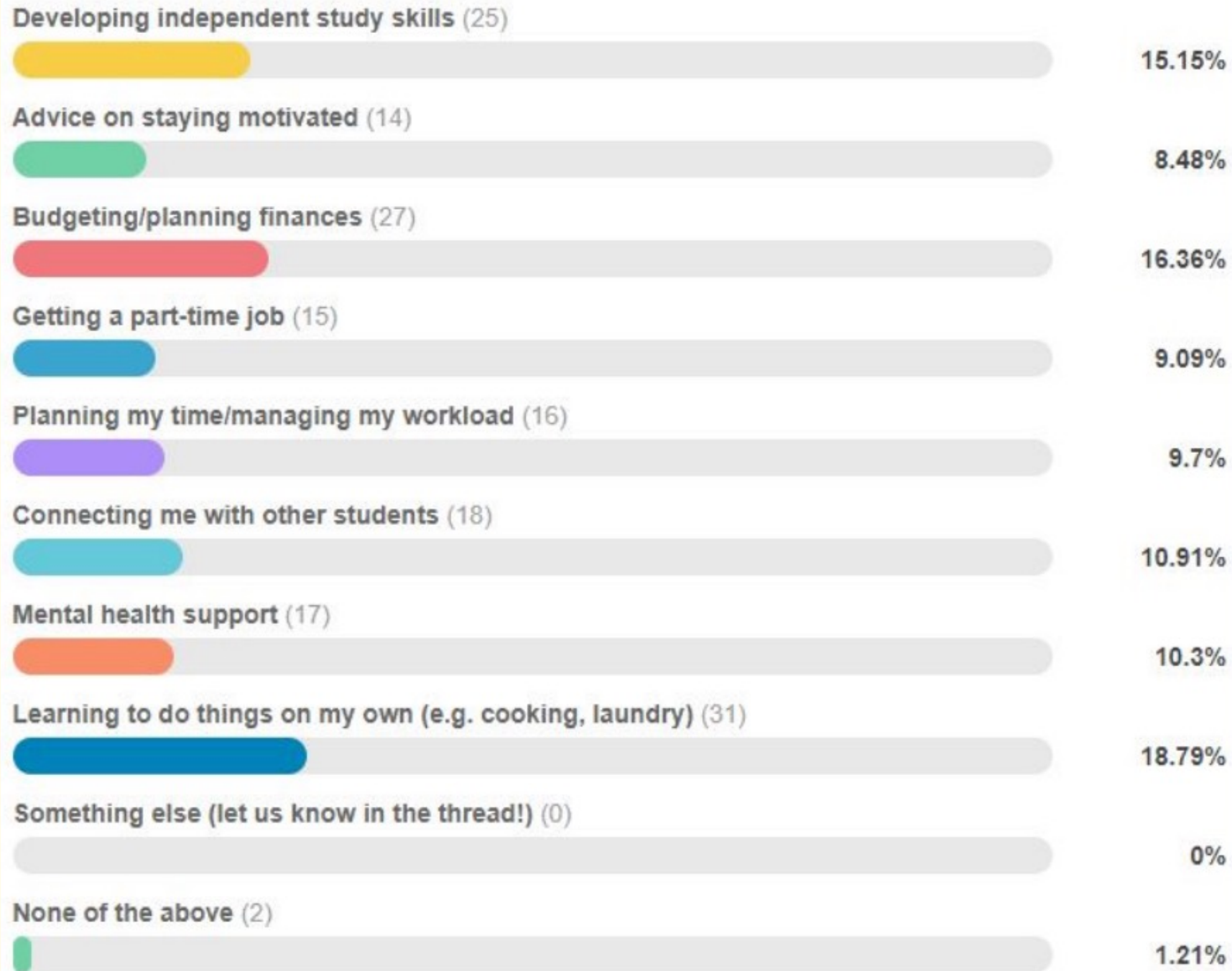
Skills students want

- Budgeting and coping on no money, plus...

Other comments on developing “life skills” and what has or has not been covered in schools include students talking of a need to update the SRE (Sex and Relationships Education) curriculum to cover LGBTQ+ topics, demonstrating a desire for inclusivity.

Students also have a “long list” of skills that should be taught in schools – including DIY, cooking, food hygiene, self-defence, basic first aid, and meditation – illustrating a broader perspective on education. They reflect a comprehensive view of preparedness for adult life, focusing not only on intellectual development but also on practical, physical, and emotional well-being.

 **Poll:** What support do you think would be useful for students starting university?



I'm a third year, but when I started uni I could've done with a lot more help in actually how to write an essay / some kind of structure. We really were thrown into the deep end with the whole 'be analytical, there IS no structure' idea which was not very helpful. Having said that, I voted for budgeting help because it's important to understand the concept of money and how far it goes

I wanted to vote for more than one... I would have chosen mental health as well as study skills. Clearly mental health support should not solely be provided by universities, and no other agency or organisation, but it should be something they are aware of and involved in imo.

...I think that it should be the responsibility of schools and not unis to be teaching pupils how to Cook, Budget, do Laundry etc. I'd like to see the educational system changed so that learning about life skills (cooking, cleaning, doing taxes, budgeting, first aid etc) are part of the educational system (at secondary school and lower only, not university).

“Readiness”

- The admissions system as a generator of “readiness” and “capability”
- Mixed with social homogeneity (at least within providers)
- Academic, social and cultural capital to cope
- Survive to thrive – welcome to the deep end!
- What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger, etc
- Trial and error, clip around the ear, get there in the end (on a three year highly immersive degree)

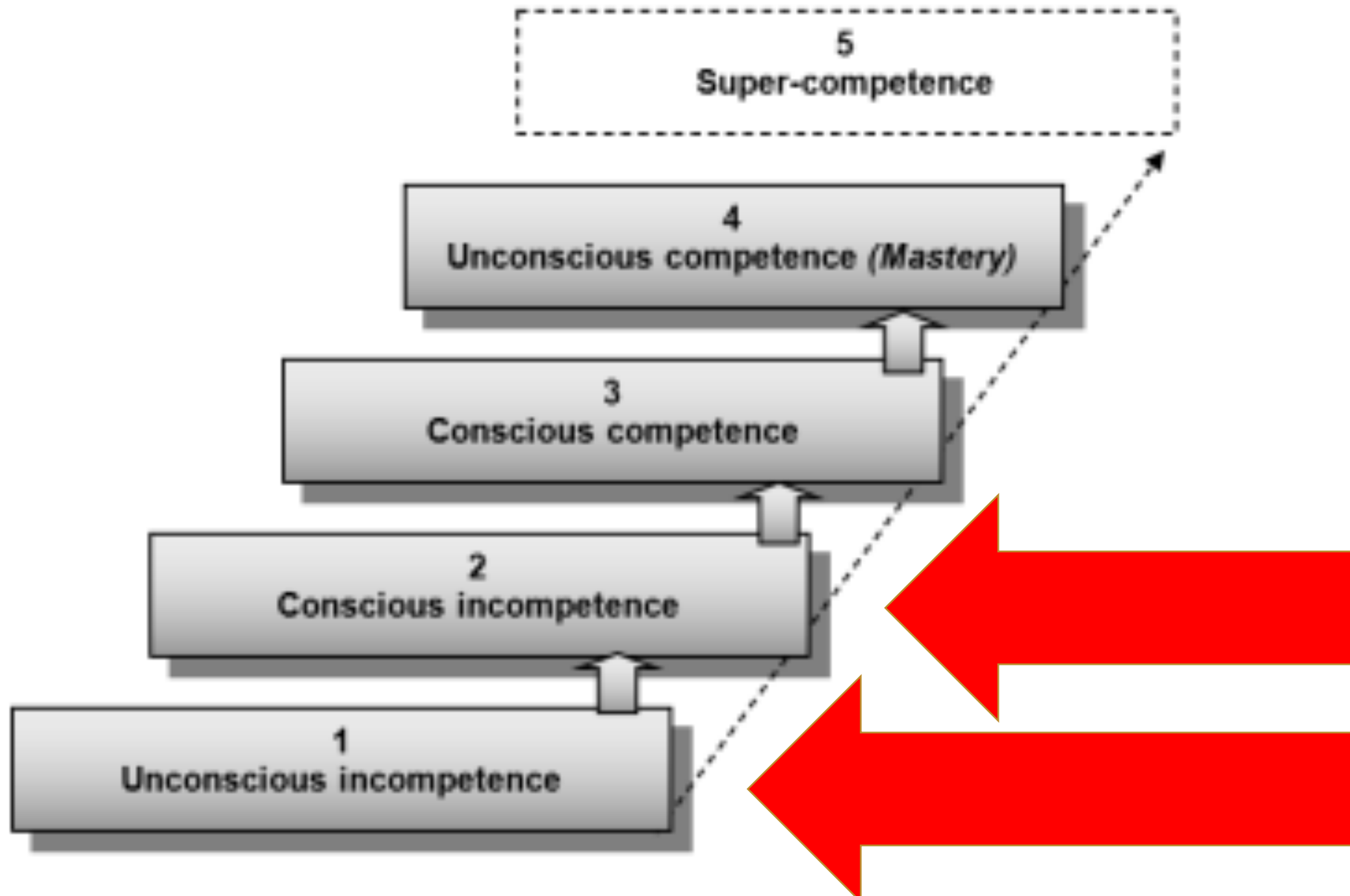


— here’s how to survive freshers week

— Written by: [Ava Patel](#) | Published: 04 Aug 2021 | 5 Min Reading Time



BUT



Not ready?

- More socially diverse, and more varied in their educational backgrounds.
- Recruited on the basis of potential than achievement, suggesting that we need to help them convert that potential into our frameworks of achievement.
- Environments they enrol into are much more complex than before – they're bigger, more impersonal, more expensive and more demanding.
- More risks to getting things wrong.
- Less immersion.
- High levels of anxiety.

When I got to the uni, I was really confused because I didn't know where to go. I had attended an online welcome week webinar but that really didn't help me with getting to the university. I really struggled with enrolment so went to the Hub who really helped. It took me 1 month to finally fully enrol. I applied to be an ambassador before I even started the course in September. I really wanted to improve my English and get my confidence up speaking in a second language. It has really helped and I have made friends. When I had to come to the UK, I had to arrive within a certain period. The air fares during this period substantially increased so this is money I had to find on top of everything. When I was in Covid19 isolation, I was just thinking about getting through the period and how I would cope. So I had to be careful and take actions to not get sick.



My studies are going well. When I arrived on the first day, I went to the wrong room. So it wasn't the best start. On my course, there are many Indian students so I can socialise easily and make friends. They are living with family near where I live. It is the cheapest way to do it. The challenge is that it takes 1.5 hours to travel to the university from home. As an ambassador, I need to get onto campus at 8am which means I have to be up at 5.30am and on the train by 6.30 to get here in time. I don't like being late and I try to be on time but it isn't always possible. I see the challenges facing other new students so if I can help them in anyway I will. The worry about not fully enrolling, getting the status letter to allow us to get a job and open a bank account in the UK is really stressful. It took 1 month to open a bank account in the UK. And you cant find a job without the status letter. I am really excited to visiting the UK because it is a different atmosphere and environment, I am looking for a new opportunity here. I might stay if I get a good opportunity here.



Not ready?

- If not all of them are ready, do we apply “fixes” before they arrive?
- Are there fixes that we apply “on arrival”?
- Are both of those approaches hopeless, too universal?
- If we knew what (who) we were getting, we could adapt
- If they knew what they needed to do to become a student, they could adapt

How does HE get ready?

- Those engaged in teaching tend to refine and review their materials and plans to make them more up to date, and to respond to feedback.
- Those engaged in service delivery tend to refine and review their plans to tweak to make them more smooth/efficient and to respond to feedback.
- There's little evidence that there's a response to who's coming outside of megatrends and "village people" characteristics cliches.

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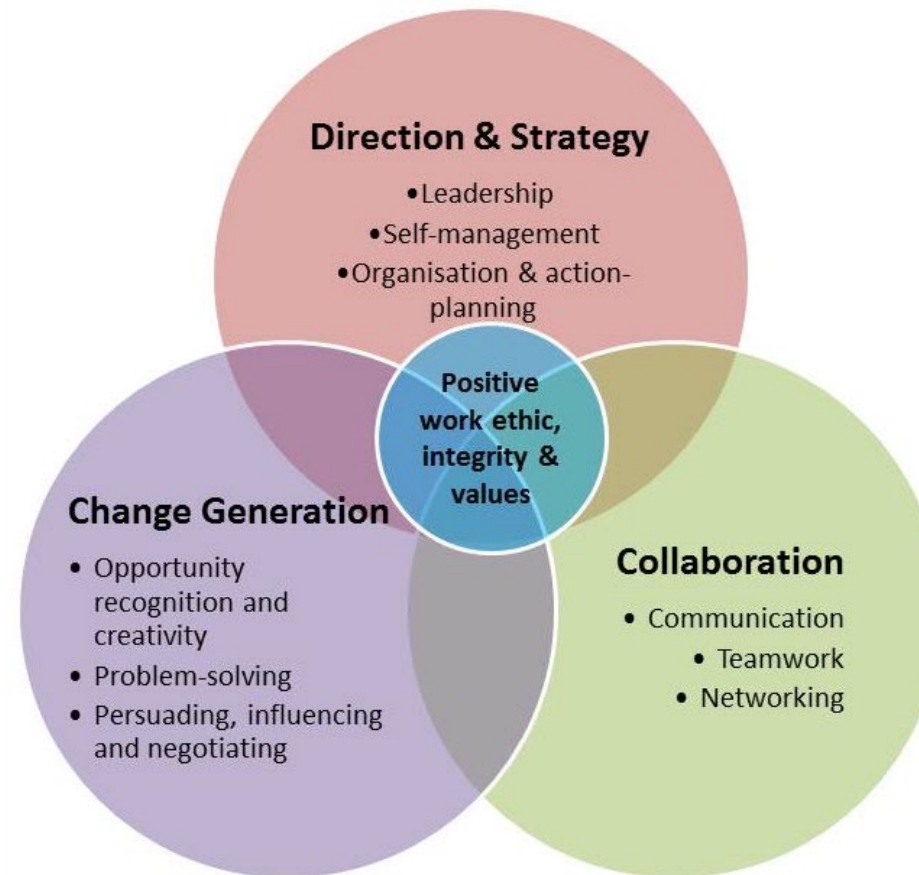
Concern	
Studying online	52.9%
Lack of information about how to study at university	44.2%
Coping with the level of study	37.1%
Fitting in with new class mates	33.0%
Lack of confidence about ability to study	30.4%
Getting used to moving away from home for the first time	26.3%
Concerns about getting into debt	22.2%
Getting on with fellow students	21.9%
Sufficient funding	15.8%

Becoming

- Identify the prior learning experiences of our students, whether new or returning to inform planning and support.
- Recognise how pre-university qualifications were achieved and summatively assessed during this period and bridge any gaps in students' assessment experiences accordingly.
- Provide targeted and scaffolded support to bridge skill, knowledge and confidence differences for all students.
- Avoid a one-size-fits-all approach to learning and support, acknowledging diverse experiences.
- Avoid overwhelming new and returning students within the first two weeks with excessive information.

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Scaffolding and curriculum



GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

UCC core values and graduate attributes are the bedrock of our student experience. Graduate attributes refer to the skills, knowledge and abilities of our graduates beyond disciplinary knowledge, that are applicable in a range of contexts in their lives.

ATTRIBUTES

- Creators, evaluators and communicators of knowledge
- Independent and creative thinkers
- Digitally fluent
- Socially responsible
- Effective, global citizens who recognise and challenge inequality

Combination is key

Education and awareness	Incentives and Rewards
Monitoring and punishment	Fatalism

What about a student attributes framework?

See if you can identify:

- What do students need to know
- What do students need to be able to do
- What your university's approach is to getting students there
- What could the approach be?

- To what extent do you think all UG students meet the criteria by Week 2?
- How about by Year 2?
- Are some students left behind on your uni's current model?

Combination is key



What about a module with credits

- Student self- evaluation against the model
- Range of interventions designed to close gaps
- Some delivered by academics, some PS, some SUs, some other students, some outside specialists
- Blend of in-person and online
- Assessed on a pass-fail basis
- Student incentive to not fail
- University incentive to increase pass rates

Drawing the line(s)

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