

Volunteer Survey 2023 Report

Compiled by Karl Henry, Communications Coordinator



Introduction

The Volunteer Survey is an organisation wide survey sent to all volunteers and academic reps in order to gain their honest feedback on their volunteer experience and allow the organisation to determine the areas that are successful and which areas could be improved.

The Volunteer Survey has been conducted in 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023. Within our Strategic Plan 2025 we have strategic goal to develop leaders and volunteers to bring positive change in our communities and the strategic objective to improve students' employability by providing opportunities to lead sports clubs, societies, groups and develop students as volunteers.

Survey Response Rate

The 2023 survey opened on 30th January 2023 and closed on 24th February 2023. There was a total of 180 responses to the 2023 survey (2021: 114; 2019: 156; 2017: 68). This is an increase of 66 responses from 2021 and makes up c25% of volunteers within the Students' Association. This increase could be attributed to better promotion of the survey and a higher number of volunteers. The most significant decrease we see in the response rate from a particular group is Society Committee Members. Not all respondents in the survey selected a volunteer role which appears to be an issue with the Survey Monkey platform as this was a required question. We are communicating with Survey Monkey to ascertain why respondents were able to not answer the question.

The 2021 survey was conducted during the Coronavirus pandemic (14th December 2020 and closed on 25th January 2021) when not all volunteering opportunities were operational (ie Nightline and GCU London Volunteers). It is important to remember during the academic year 2020/21 that all volunteering, training and support would have been online only due to the pandemic.

	2021	2023	Diff
Class Rep (GCU Academic Rep)	14	51	+37
Department Rep, PGT or PGR Rep (GCU Academic Rep)	5	15	+10
Societies Committee Member	48	21	-27
Sports Committee Member	26	26	0
Sports Council	1	4	+3
Societies Council	3	1	-2
The EDIT Committee Member	3	0	-3
Radio Caley Committee Member	2	2	0
Freshers Volunteer	0	0	0
Nightline Volunteer	0	7	+7
GCU London Volunteer	0	0	0
Student Voice Officer	4	8	+4
Student Trustee	3	3	+1
Unknown/didn't Answer	5	42	+37

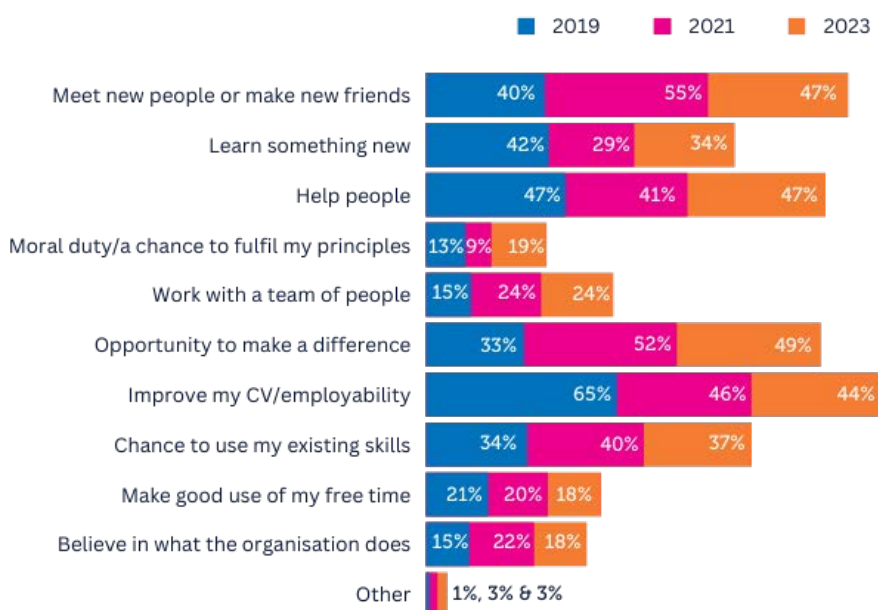
Survey Responses Analysis

What inspired you to start volunteering? Choose up to 4 reasons. (156 responses)

	2021	2023	Diff
I wanted to meet new people or make new friends	55.26%	47.44%	-7.82%
I wanted to learn something new	28.95%	33.97%	+5.02%
I wanted to help people	41.23%	46.79%	+5.56%
I felt it was my moral duty/a chance to fulfil my principles	8.77%	18.59%	+9.82%
I wanted to work with a team of people	23.68%	24.36%	+0.68%
I saw it as the opportunity to make a difference	51.75%	48.72%	-3.03%
I wanted to improve my CV/employability	45.61%	43.59%	-2.02%
I thought it would give me a chance to use my existing skills	39.47%	36.54%	-2.95%
I wanted to make good use of my free time	20.18%	17.95%	-2.23%
I really believe in what the organisation does	21.93%	17.74%	-4.19%
I wanted to give people a voice	16.67%	23.72%	+7.05%
Other:	2.63%	3.21%	+0.58%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was asked by module leader I wanted to give back to the Uni through taking on roles that I feel would improve the student experience. It was also a good opportunity for me to improve my confidence through meeting staff members and students who are on different courses. To ensure the club was able to keep going After lockdown I felt I wasn't too sure about the inner workings of the uni and I wanted to be involved in them. To work with my friends 			

The main reasons students volunteered with the Students' Association were: they saw it as an opportunity to make a difference (48.72%), to meet new people or make new friends (47.44%), to help people (46.79%) and to improve their CV/employability (43.59%). Overall, we see the same four motivating reasons in 2023 as we did in 2021.

The following diagram shows the differences between 2019, 2021 and 2023 on this question.



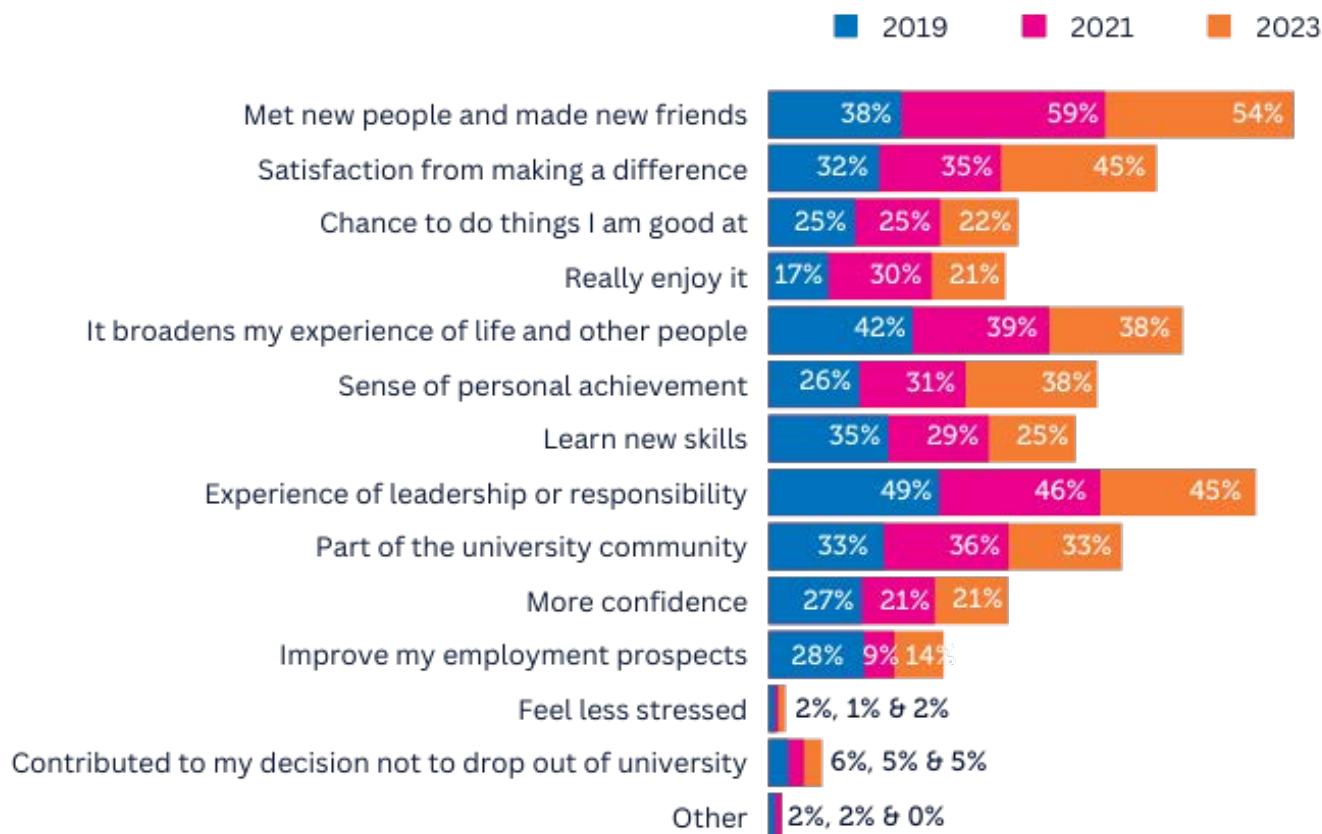
What have you gained from volunteering? Choose up to 4 reasons. (156 responses)

	2021	2023	Difference 2021-2023
I've met new people and made new friends	58.77%	54.49%	-4.82%
I get satisfaction from making a difference	35.09%	44.87%	+9.78%
It gives me the chance to do things I am good at	24.56%	22.44%	-2.12%
I just really enjoy it	29.82%	21.15%	-8.76%
It broadens my experience of life and other people	39.47%	38.46%	-1.01%
It gives me a sense of personal achievement	30.70%	37.82%	+7.12%
It gives me a chance to learn new skills	28.95%	25.00%	-3.95%
It gives me experience of leadership or responsibility	46.49%	44.87%	-1.62%
I feel part of the university community	35.96%	32.69%	-3.27%
It gives me more confidence	21.05%	21.15%	+0.10%
It helps to improve my employment prospects	8.77%	14.10%	+5.33%
It makes me feel less stressed	0.88%	1.92%	+1.04%
It contributed to my decision not to drop out of university	4.39%	5.13%	+0.74%
Other	1.75%	0%	-1.75%

The main things students have gained from volunteering are that they have met new people and made new friends (54.49%), gained satisfaction from making a difference (44.87%), gives me experience of leadership or responsibility (44.87%) and broadens their experience of life and other people (38.46%).

The most significant change we see concerning this question in responses in 2023 versus 2021 is that feeling part of the university community has dropped to the fifth most popular result compared to fourth in 2021. While getting satisfaction from making a difference has moved to become the second most popular reason.

The following diagram shows the differences between 2019, 2021 and 2023 on this question.



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (152 responses)

With a few exceptions, there has been little to no change in the quality of support volunteers received since 2021 and the responses show that we have maintained a very high level of satisfaction.

95% of our volunteers would wholeheartedly recommend GCU Students' Association as a good place to volunteer (2021: 94%; 2019: 93%; 2017: 85%). This is one of our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within our Strategic Plan 2025 and our strategic target of 90%+ was surpassed.

We also scored extremely well in "I feel that I can be myself when volunteering at GCU Students' Association" (98%), "I understand the standards of behaviour and performance that are expected of me" (96%) and "My volunteering role is clear and I know what I'm doing" (95%). The lowest positive score was "The students' association gives a high priority to volunteer welfare and health and safety" (78%).

	Agree Strongly/Agree		
	2021	2023	Diff
My volunteering role is clear and I know what I'm doing	93.8%	95.4%	1.6%
I am given the training necessary for me to carry out my volunteering role effectively	79.6%	92.1%	12.5%
I am given the materials and tools necessary for me to carry out my volunteering role effectively	87.6%	89.5%	1.9%
I am kept up to date with changes or development which affect my volunteering work	92.9%	87.5%	-5.4%
I am treated with fairness and respect at the students' association	95.6%	92.8%	-2.8%
I understand the standards of behaviour and performance that are expected of me	97.4%	96.1%	-1.3%
The students' association gives a high priority to volunteer welfare and health and safety	87.3%	78.3%	-9.0%
I know where to go to access support about my volunteer role	90.3%	94.7%	4.5%
I would wholeheartedly recommend this organisation as a good place to volunteer	93.8%	94.7%	0.9%
I am able to plan my volunteering comfortably around my studies and other commitments	90.2%	87.8%	-2.3%
I feel comfortable with the amount of volunteering I am asked to do	93.8%	93.9%	0.2%
I feel that I can be myself when volunteering at the students' association	97.3%	98.0%	0.7%
I have the opportunity for personal development and growth through my volunteering role	94.6%	96.0%	1.3%
I feel I make an impact through the volunteer work I do	83.9%	89.9%	5.9%
I enjoy my volunteer work	95.5%	93.9%	-1.6%

In comparison to the 2021 survey, the following three statements saw an increase in agree with scores; "I am given the training necessary for me to carry out my volunteering role effectively" (+12.5%), "I feel I make an impact through the volunteer work I do" (+5.9%) and "I know where to go to access support about my volunteer role" (+4.5%). We also saw small increases in the following areas:

- My volunteering role is clear and I know what I'm doing (+1.6%)
- I am given the materials and tools necessary for me to carry out my volunteering role effectively (+1.9%)
- I would wholeheartedly recommend this organisation as a good place to volunteer (+0.9%)
- I feel that I can be myself when volunteering at the students' association (+0.7%)
- I have the opportunity for personal development and growth through my volunteering role (+1.3%)

The areas that had the highest disagree scores were; "I am able to plan my volunteering comfortably around my studies and other commitments" (10.1%), I am given the materials and tools necessary for me to carry out my role effectively (7.2%), "I feel I make an impact through the volunteer work I do" (6.8%) and "I am kept up to date with changes or developments which affect my volunteering work" (6.6%). Overall, we have marginally reduced the already low number of students dissatisfied with volunteering with the Students' Association.

	Disagree Strongly/Disagree		
	2021	2023	Diff
My volunteering role is clear and I know what I'm doing	5.3%	2.0%	-3.3%
I am given the training necessary for me to carry out my volunteering role effectively	13.3%	4.0%	-9.3%
I am given the materials and tools necessary for me to carry out my volunteering role effectively	8.9%	7.2%	-1.6%
I am kept up to date with changes or development which affect my volunteering work	5.3%	6.6%	1.3%
I am treated with fairness and respect at the students' association	0.9%	0.7%	-0.2%
I understand the standards of behaviour and performance that are expected of me	1.8%	2.0%	0.2%
The students' association gives a high priority to volunteer welfare and health and safety	3.5%	5.9%	2.4%
I know where to go to access support about my volunteer role	6.2%	2.6%	-3.6%
I would wholeheartedly recommend this organisation as a good place to volunteer	3.5%	3.3%	-0.3%
I am able to plan my volunteering comfortably around my studies and other commitments	7.1%	10.1%	3.0%
I feel comfortable with the amount of volunteering I am asked to do	3.6%	4.6%	1.0%
I feel that I can be myself when volunteering at the students' association	2.7%	0.7%	-2.0%
I have the opportunity for personal development and growth through my volunteering role	3.6%	2.7%	-0.9%
I feel I make an impact through the volunteer work I do	8.9%	6.8%	-2.2%
I enjoy my volunteer work	4.5%	2.7%	-1.8%

Several statements saw a decrease; however, this is not something to be overly concerned about as we had a significant increase in the number of volunteers who completed the survey this year compared to 2021 (+66) yet we only saw a net increase in volunteers selecting disagree or strongly disagree of (+3).

The biggest negative increase we saw was "I am able to plan my volunteering comfortably around my studies and other commitments" (3%); to contextualise this, the 3% equates to approximately 5 volunteers out of the 148 who answered the question. One reason as to why we see this increase is due to the cost of living crisis with volunteers having less free time due to work commitments.

The other statements where we saw a negative increase are as follows:

- I am kept up to date with changes or development which affect my volunteering work (1.3%)
- I understand the standards of behaviour and performance that are expected of me (0.2%)
- The students' association gives a high priority to volunteer welfare and health and safety (2.4%)
- I am able to plan my volunteering comfortably around my studies and other commitments (3.0%)
- I feel comfortable with the amount of volunteering I am asked to do (1.0%)

A full breakdown of 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023 scores can be found in Appendix 2.

The following table outlines how the different volunteer areas responded to the statements, against the overall positive score in percentages (strongly agree and agree), excluding those who answered “Don’t Know/Not Applicable have been excluded. The table shows that the majority of Volunteers receive a good service, and in many instances, we have scored 100% satisfaction rate. While we have scored very highly across the board there are instances where this service may not be consistent across all volunteering areas.

It should be noted that when the data is broken down into volunteer roles there are some instances dealing with a very small number of respondents. For example, only two Radio Caley volunteers answered questions 4 & 5, because one of them selected dissatisfied to the question ‘I am kept up to date with changes or developments which affect my volunteering work’ that equates to a negative 43% score against the overall score of 93%. This is true across the dataset when we see abnormally high negative scores.

	All	Academic Reps	Nightline	Radio Caley	Societies Council	Sports Council	Societies Committee Members	Sports Committee Members	Student Voice	Student Trustee
My volunteering role is clear and I know what I'm doing	98%	-1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	-3%	2%	2%	2%
I am given the training necessary for me to carry out my volunteering role effectively	96%	2%	-10%	4%	4%	4%	4%	-13%	4%	4%
I am given the materials and tools necessary for me to carry out my volunteering role effectively	93%	1%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	-5%	-31%	7%
I am kept up to date with changes or developments which affect my volunteering work	93%	-1%	-7%	-43%	7%	7%	7%	7%	-7%	7%
I am treated with fairness and respect at the students' association	99%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	-3%	1%	1%
I understand the standards of behaviour and performance that are expected of me	98%	0%	-12%	2%	2%	2%	2%	-2%	2%	2%
The students' association gives a high priority to volunteer welfare and health and safety	93%	-1%	7%	7%	7%	7%	1%	7%	-5%	7%
I know where to go to access support about my volunteering role	97%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%	-2%	-1%	3%	3%
I would wholeheartedly recommend this organisation as a good place to volunteer	97%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%	-2%	-1%	-9%	3%
I am able to plan my volunteering comfortably around my studies and other commitments	90%	1%	10%	10%	10%	-15%	-14%	2%	10%	10%
I feel comfortable with the amount of volunteering I am asked to do	96%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%	-10%	-4%	4%	4%
I feel that I can be myself when volunteering at GCU Students' Association	99%	-1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
I have the opportunity for personal development and growth through my volunteering role	97%	0%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
I feel I make an impact through the volunteer work I do	93%	1%	7%	7%	7%	7%	-7%	7%	-18%	7%
I enjoy my volunteer work	97%	0%	3%	3%	3%	3%	-7%	3%	3%	3%

What is the best thing about volunteering at the Students' Association? (127 responses)

Whilst there were 127 responses some with many different comments in one response, below are the main themes that emerged:

Theme	Number Of Comments
Community	29
Develop Skills	28
Friendship	14
Influence the University	9
Making a Difference	50
Networking	20
Opportunities	7
Social	31
Support from the Students' Association	11

There is also a call for better communication, where volunteers would like more communication or update throughout the term regarding their specific area of volunteering. (E.g. all class rep updates, and information on what other societies are working on. etc.).

Likewise, with better communication, some of our volunteers would like the opportunity to network with each other.

"As a society committee member, I would like more opportunities to connect with other committee members, particularly fellow presidents, to share ideas and receive additional support through challenges. But overall, the team is amazing and I feel very comfortable seeking advice and support."

"Create something specifically for student reps to meet each other, I know what's expected of me and regularly ask for feedback from my classmates. Being in a group with other reps once a month could be an opportunity to make connections and share ideas with individuals in the same situation."

The final major theme to emerge from this portion of the survey was regarding promotion. This covered everything from promoting society events to promoting societies in general to highlighting to the student body at large the function of class reps.

Broadly speaking as an organisation, we have already taken steps to address many of these issues. A tool which allows students to easily find out who their class rep is has been launched. Work is ongoing to launch new mechanisms for students to input towards the work of the Students' Association called Raise your Voice. We are also in the early stages of discussions on how we might better raise the profile of Societies and Sports Clubs. Launching in Trimester A of the 2023/24 academic year, we will be trialing the use of Microsoft Teams for student committees, to allow them easier access to information and as a way to communicate with each other. If this proves successful we may roll it out to other volunteer groups under consultation. The information and feedback received in this report will also help shape our Communications Strategy going forward; highlighting the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of volunteering with the Students' Association.



Summary

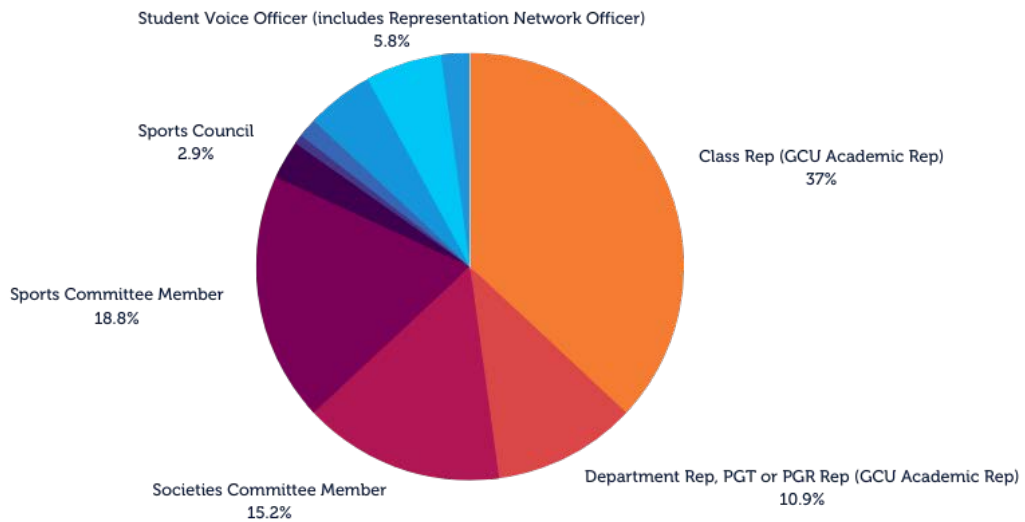
Overall, the organisation performed well in the survey and has maintained a very high standard of service for volunteers. We see an increase in the number of students volunteering for altruistic reasons, but the most predominant reason volunteers vote is to meet new people or make new friends.

Further to this, it has been demonstrated that volunteers feel they have developed skills and leadership attributes and that volunteers feel that they can make a difference and help others. Another significant highlight is meeting the organisation's KPI (90%+) in that 95% of volunteers would wholeheartedly recommend the Students' Association as a good place to volunteer; an increase of 0.9% since 2021. Finally, volunteers feel they are treated fairly and can be themselves when volunteering with the Students' Association.

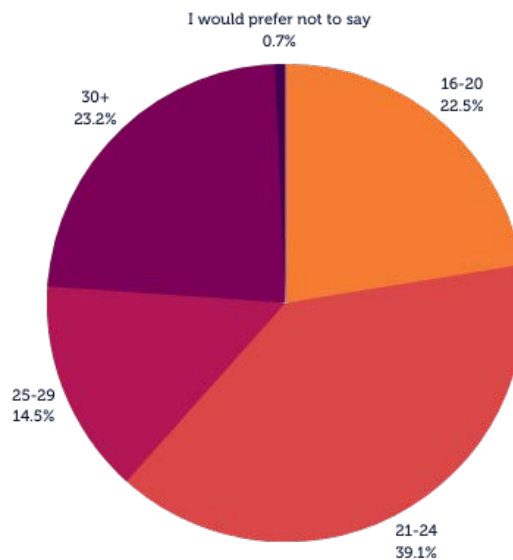
Alongside these highlights, there were also areas which could be developed. These were; improved training for volunteers, improved materials and tools to carry out the role and lastly prioritising volunteer wellbeing.

Appendix 1: Volunteer Survey 2023 Demographics

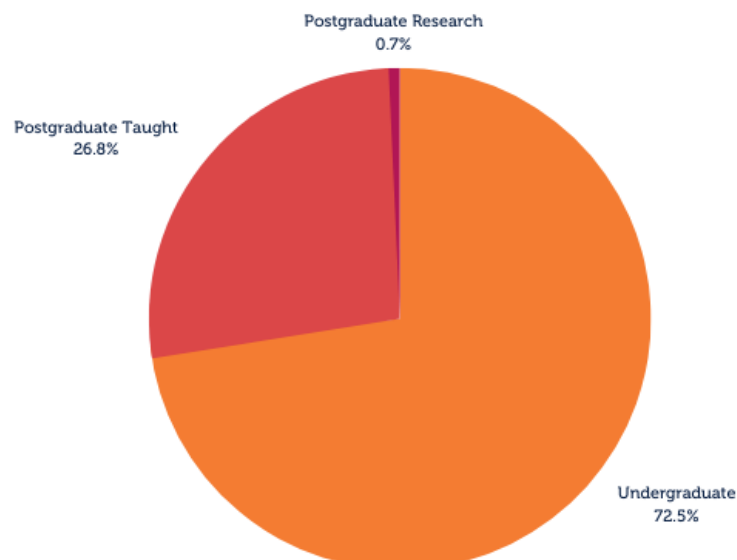
Question 8 - What is your (main) volunteering role? (138 responses)



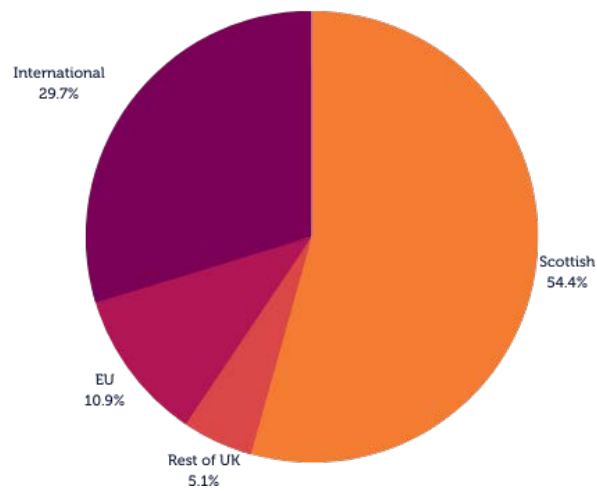
Question 9 – How old are you? (138 responses)



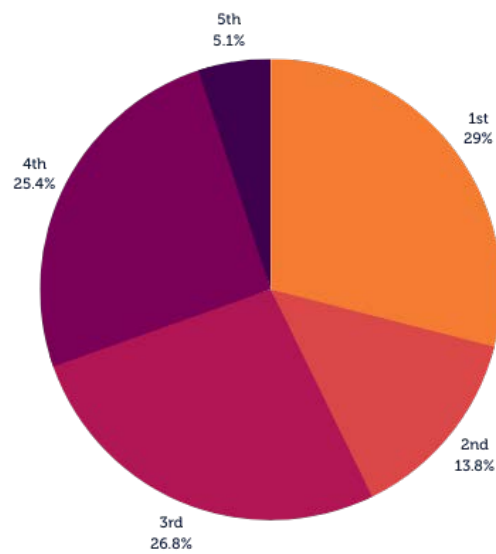
Question 10 – What is your level of study? (138 responses)



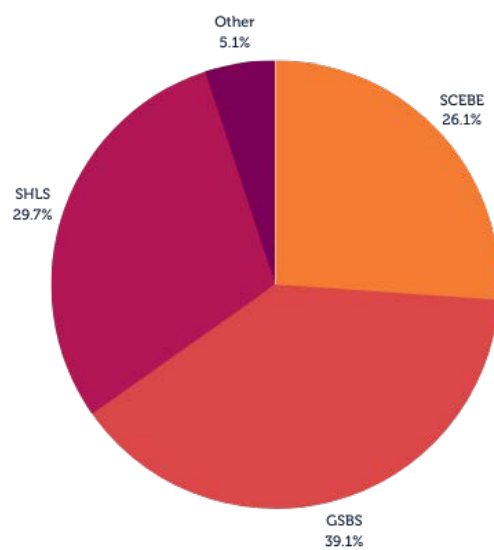
Question 11 – What is your nationality? (138 responses)



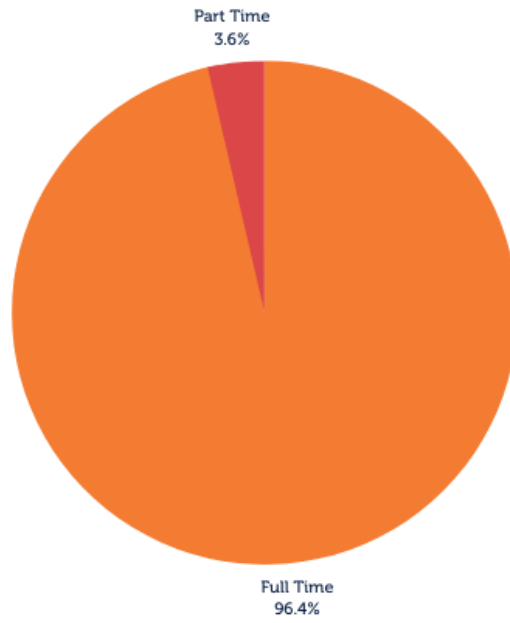
Question 12 - What is your year of study? (138 responses)



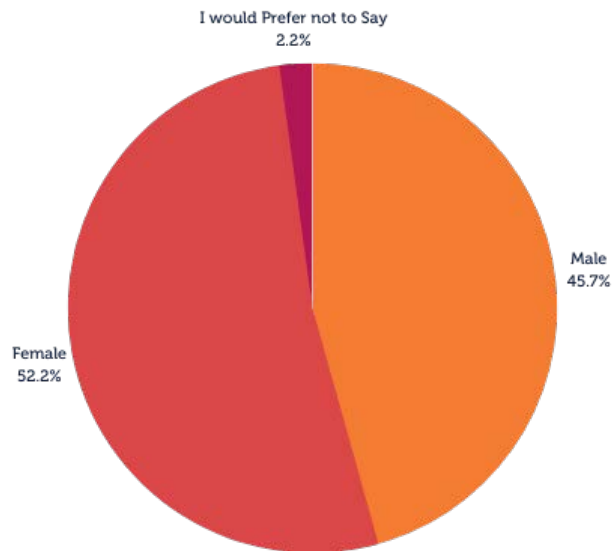
Question 13 - Which academic school do you belong to? (138 responses)



Question 14 - What is your method of study? (138 responses)



Question 15 - What is your gender? (138 responses)



Appendix 2: Volunteer Survey Trends

	2017	2019	2021	2023	Difference 2021 & 2023
What inspired you to start volunteering? (Choose up to 4 reasons)					
I wanted to meet new people or make new friends	45.60%	40.38%	55.26%	54.49%	-1%
I wanted to learn something new	47.10%	41.67%	28.95%	33.97%	5%
I wanted to help people	42.60%	47.44%	41.23%	46.79%	6%
I felt it was my moral duty/a chance to fulfill my principles	20.60%	13.46%	8.77%	18.59%	10%
I wanted to work with a team of people	22.10%	15.38%	23.68%	24.36%	1%
I saw it as the opportunity to make a difference	41.20%	33.33%	51.75%	48.72%	-3%
I wanted to improve my CV/employability	58.80%	64.74%	45.61%	43.59%	-2%
I thought it would give me a chance to use my existing skills	33.80%	34.62%	39.47%	36.54%	-3%
I wanted to make good use of my free time	27.90%	21.15%	20.18%	17.95%	-2%
I really believe in what the organisation does	19.10%	14.74%	21.93%	14.74%	-7%
I wanted to give people a voice	13.20%	24.36%	16.67%	23.72%	7%
Other (please specify)	1.50%	1.28%	2.63%	3.21%	1%
What have you gained from Volunteering? (Choose up to 4 reasons)					
I've met new people and made new friends	63.20%	38.46%	58.77%	54.49%	-4%
I get satisfaction from making a difference	30.90%	32.05%	35.09%	44.87%	10%
It gives me the chance to do things I am good at	27.90%	25.00%	24.56%	22.44%	-2%
I just really enjoy it	23.50%	17.31%	29.82%	21.15%	-9%
It broadens my experience of life and other people	42.60%	41.67%	39.47%	38.46%	-1%
It gives me a sense of personal achievement	29.40%	26.28%	30.70%	37.82%	7%
It gives me a chance to learn new skills	25.00%	34.62%	28.95%	25.00%	-4%
It gives me experience of leadership or responsibility	55.90%	49.36%	46.49%	44.87%	-2%
I feel part of the university community	32.40%	33.33%	35.96%	32.69%	-3%
It gives me more confidence	16.20%	26.92%	21.05%	21.15%	0%
It helps to improve my employment prospects	35.30%	27.56%	8.77%	14.10%	5%
It makes me feel less stressed	4.40%	1.92%	0.88%	1.92%	1%
It contributed to my decision not to drop out of university	2.90%	5.77%	4.39%	5.13%	1%
Other	0.00%	1.92%	1.75%	0.00%	-2%
To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements (% Strongly Agree + Agree)					
My volunteering role is clear and I know what I'm doing	94.00%	95.00%	94.00%	95.39%	1%
I am given the training necessary for me to carry out my volunteering role effectively	84.00%	87.00%	80.00%	92.10%	12%
I am given the materials and tools necessary for me to carry out my volunteering role effectively	85.00%	88.00%	88.00%	89.47%	1%
I am kept up to date with changes or development which affect my volunteering work	75.00%	87.00%	93.00%	87.50%	-6%
I am treated with fairness and respect at the students' association	91.00%	95.00%	96.00%	92.76%	-3%
I understand the standards of behaviour and performance that are expected of me	96.00%	98.00%	97.00%	96.05%	-1%
The students' association gives a high priority to volunteer welfare and health and safety	87.00%	85.00%	88.00%	78.28%	-10%
I know where to go to access support about my volunteer role	79.00%	89.00%	90.00%	94.74%	5%
I would wholeheartedly recommend this organisation as a good place to volunteer	85.00%	93.00%	94.00%	94.74%	1%
I am able to plan my volunteering comfortably around my studies and other commitments	87.00%	92.00%	91.00%	87.84%	-3%
I feel comfortable with the amount of volunteering I am asked to do	N/K	95.00%	94.00%	93.91%	0%
I feel that I can be myself when volunteering at the students' association	91.00%	92.00%	97.00%	97.98%	1%
I have the opportunity for personal development and growth through my volunteering role	N/K	93.00%	95.00%	95.95%	1%
I feel I make an impact through the volunteer work I do	85.00%	88.00%	96.00%	89.86%	-6%
I enjoy my volunteer work	96.00%	95.00%	96.00%	93.92%	-2%