

10 things we found out from the Food for Thought survey...



Earlier this year over 1200 Bristol students and staff took part in the Food for Thought Survey, telling us their thoughts about food on campus and helping us shape the brand new Food Court and Bristol SU Bar/Café that will be opening in Senate House in September 2020. Read on to find out the top 10 things we found out from the survey, and how we've put your feedback into action...

1) Affordability was very important...

Only 35% of staff and 21% of students agreed they were currently receiving value for money from the university's catering outlets. 74% of students and 47% of staff put affordability as their number one incentive for using a new food court on campus.

2) Respondents wanted to see more food options...

Students and staff wanted to see a greater variety of food options on campus, and particularly wanted more hot food options. 71% of staff and 50% of students disagreed that current provision offered a good choice and variety of food on campus. Hot food options were particularly important for students and staff based in Langford, who have less external catering options.

3) Students and staff wanted more spaces on campus to eat...

While 86% of staff and 92% of students felt the university's current catering outlets were conveniently located, many felt that the spaces could be improved with more space to sit down and more places to eat packed lunches.

4) Our catering staff are brilliant...

86% of staff and 81% of students agreed that the friendliness of staff and good service were a benefit of current catering provision at the university. Respondents praised staff for bringing 'cheer to your day' and always being 'happy & helpful'.

5) Students and staff have quite different taste...

In the food court, students most wanted to see a pizza bar (45%) and an all-day breakfast bar (42%). Students were also keen on grab and go options (39%), a deli bar (39%) and Asian cuisine (39%). Meanwhile the most popular options for staff were a salad bar (59%), a deli bar (50%) and grab and go (46%).

6) A third of respondents were vegetarian or vegan...

22% of respondents were vegetarian and 11% were vegan. 3% had halal dietary requirements and 1% had kosher dietary requirements. 27% of staff and 24% of students disagreed that the current university provision catered for their dietary requirements.

7) A lot of students had never heard of our Balloon Bar deals...

47% of students had never heard of any of the Balloon Bar's deals and 32% had heard of them but never used them.

8) Students wanted to see more food options in the Balloon Bar...

55% of students wanted to see more Italian cuisine in the Balloon Bar, 42% wanted more Mexican options, 38% wanted more British options, and 36% wanted more Chinese, Japanese and Middle Eastern options. Students also wanted more flexibility with the menu, with the option of swapping out breakfast items.

9) Students wanted Balloon Bar discount and loyalty cards...

72% of students wanted a discount card, 57% wanted a loyalty card and 40% wanted to see more daily offers.

10) Students' 'dream SU bar/café' on campus was cheap, relaxed and cosy...

77% of students ranked low cost food and drink as the biggest incentive that would make them use a new SU bar/café on campus. When asked to describe their 'dream SU bar/café' students asked for a 'cheap and cosy' space which could be used to relax in the day and socialise in the evening.

How UoB are responding to your feedback...

Food quality and affordability...

- A review of food offered at Source Cafes is currently underway, to provide more variety and more affordable options.
- In the meantime, a meal deal has already been introduced at £3.15 for a seeded baguette, drink and crisps or fruit. Grab and go options have also been increased to include a greater variety of sushi and hot meals at the café at Priory Road.
- The feedback you gave in the survey on what food options you'd like will be fed into plans for a new large food court with SU bar/café at Senate House, which gets underway this year.

Dietary requirements...

- Catering for students and staff's dietary requirements will be a crucial part of the new food court in Senate House. All cafes already have vegan and gluten free options available.
- At Langford more vegetarian and vegan options have already been introduced, including a vegetarian soup, vegan wraps and paninis.

Student and staff tastes...

- Students' desire for pizza and all-day breakfast and staff's desire for a salad bar and quick grab and go options have all been taken into account and incorporated into plans for the new large food court in Senate House, which we expect will have something for everyone.

How Bristol SU are responding to your feedback...

Improving the Balloon Bar...

- New specials have been introduced to provide a wider variety of options and cover the kinds of cuisines that students want to see. Grab and Go options have also been expanded to include items such as Sushi.
- A new menu will be introduced after Easter 2019 which focuses on Breakfast and Burgers but is supplemented by a specials menu (2 meat and 2 veggie/vegan options) to offer variety. Students will be able to 'build' their own breakfast and burger to choose the bits they like best.
- To cater to dietary requirements the Balloon Bar has a vegan menu and three kinds of non-dairy milks.

Promoting the Balloon Bar...

- The Balloon Bar's offers have been further promoted through Bristol SU's newsletters and the Balloon Bar Facebook page. Students have to 'check in' to the Balloon Bar to get their 'midweek markdown' £1 chips – hopefully spreading the word to their friends!
- A breakfast loyalty card has also been introduced, and students can get a 10% discount in the bar with their NUS Totum card.

Space to relax...

- The Bristol SU Living Room on the fourth floor of Senate House gives students a valuable space to sit and eat their own lunch without having to buy anything.
- Free tea and coffee is also provided in the living room, and there are microwaves which all students can use in the student kitchen down the hall.

A new SU bar/café...

- We used your feedback to shape the design of the new Bristol SU Bar/Café that will be opening in Senate House in September 2020. We're working on a menu that ensures you can get good food at great value on campus.
- To create a cosy and welcoming space we've made sure the bar/café has lots of sofas and soft seating to make you feel at home.
- You loved the feel of spaces like the White Bear, White Rabbit, and Café Nero on Clifton Triangle, so we've taken inspiration from these spaces to inform the look and feel of the space. Watch out for a first look at the designs!

A bit about the survey...

The Food for Thought survey was a partnership research project between the University of Bristol and Bristol SU. The survey ran for two weeks from the 12th November 2018. 1,290 students and staff filled out the survey – 863 students and 427 staff members. Response rates were a little lower for the Balloon Bar and new SU bar section, as some chose to skip these pages – overall 450 students and 56 staff members responded to these sections.

This executive summary was prepared by Alice Phillips, Research and Evaluation Coordinator at Bristol SU, with additional information provided by Darren Tooley, Suzanne van Maurik, Chloe Maughan and Nicola Haydon.