



University Learning Spaces Survey Analysis

Learning spaces in the broadest sense have been a regular topic of discussion over the past year, as the campus environment has changed and expanded, such as the development of Library 1.5; previous College Officers have considered this topic in their area, and the 2016-17 Vice President Academic Affairs has identified this as an important discussion to be continued this year.

The University Learning Spaces survey sought to gather student feedback about how independent study and taught learning space across campus is being used; opinions on the current provision; and how space could be developed for the future to meet students' needs. The Survey received 3,022 responses, this being 22% of the student population.

Headline Statistics

- 78% of students do University work on-campus
 - 72 percent of these are Undergraduates
 - 84% of these do so in the Library
- Over 73% of students find silent independent study space the most beneficial
 - 65 percent specifically wish to see more silent independent spaces developed
- Weekday afternoons (12-5pm) and weekday evenings (5-9pm) are the most popular times at which students use university learning spaces
- 73 percent of students actively travel to campus to study outside of timetabled learning
 - Of these, over 73% find challenges accessing learning spaces, with one third of these challenges relating specifically to parking provision
- Over 74% of students feel that on-campus spaces enable them to learn and study effectively
- 70 percent of students specifically reference the Great Central Warehouse Library when asked how they would improve existing campus learning spaces
 - 35% stated that the Library is their least favourite learning space, despite the fact that it is the largest, most varied and, arguably, the most in-demand
- Nearly 75 percent of respondents feel that securing a commitment to the extension of the Library is important or very important

Key Recommendations

Short-term recommendations, to be actioned within one year:

- The University will ensure learning spaces in all campus buildings can be accessed on weekdays between 5pm and 9pm (these, particularly, because they are traditionally non-working hours) to ensure the provision of space meets the volume of students wishing to learn at these times
- The University will increase parking provision on-campus, and make available parking cheaper
- The University will create PG-specific private learning spaces on-campus

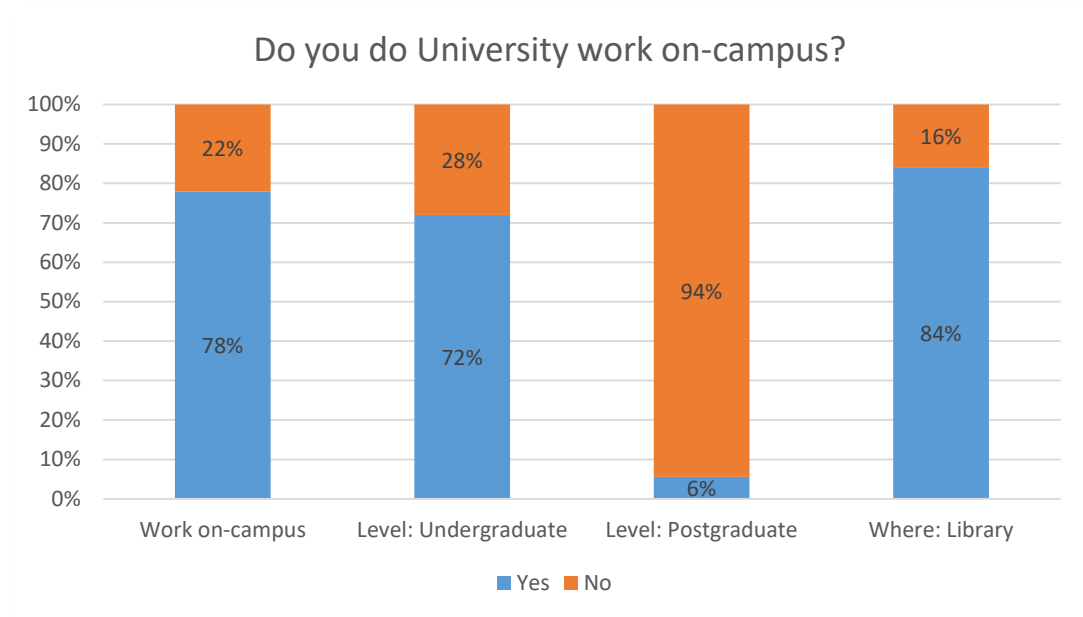
Medium-term recommendations, to be actioned within three years:

- The University will commit to the extension of the Great Central Warehouse Library, to include a development of its facilities and the variety (or suitability) of spaces, up to and beyond the original 'Library 2.0' plans
- The University will expand and develop current buildings, and learning spaces therein, ensuring a variety of types of space are offered
- The University will build and develop new buildings, and learning spaces therein, ensuring a variety of types of space are offered
- The University will establish partnerships with relevant businesses, such as NCP, in order to make parking around the city cheaper for its students
- The University will promote the 16-25 Railcard, through its marketing materials and support/information services, as a way for students to save money when travelling
- The University will create more School-specific learning spaces, so that all students have a bespoke space available to them, which will help to foster a community within Schools and support the University's larger strategic commitment to ensuring there is a true 'community' at Lincoln
- The University will develop the *Find My PC* app to allow actual bookings to be made for computers in the Library and elsewhere if necessary

Long-term recommendations, to be actioned within five years:

- The University will build an extension of the Great Central Warehouse Library, to include a development of its facilities and spaces, up to and beyond the original 'Library 2.0' plans
- The University will consult with students about what kinds of space, facilities, equipment, and opening times they require for the Library, and for other on-campus learning spaces, working in partnership with the Students' Union to gather the student voice
- The University will ensure all buildings allow 24-hour access, in line with the University of Lincoln Strategic Plan 2016-21 and its commitments to being 'a 24/7 campus'
- The University will build a multi-storey carpark on or near campus to facilitate student parking

Graph showing percentage of respondents who work on campus, incl. by-Level, and percentage who do so in the Library.

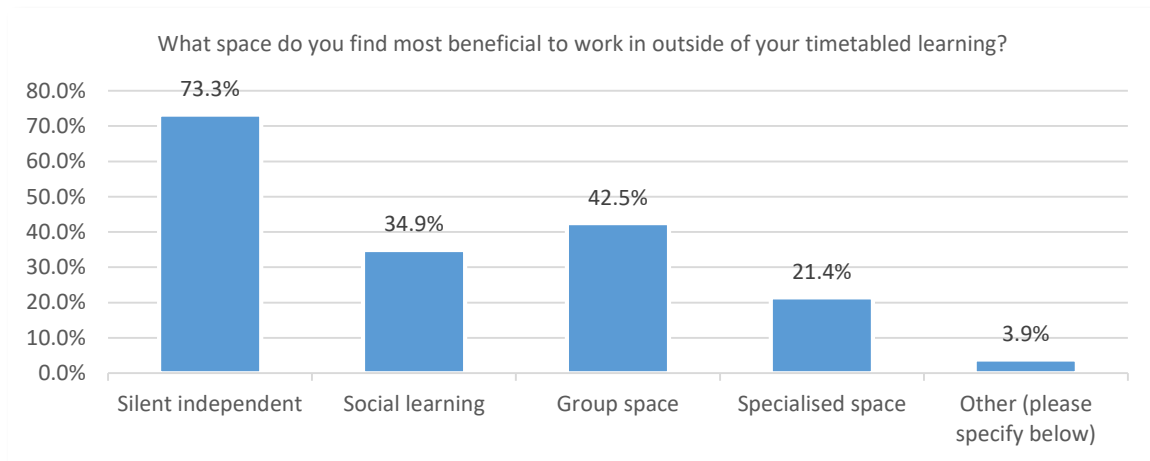


Of all respondents, 78% stated that they do University work on-campus; over 70 percent of Undergraduate respondents study on-campus, while only six percent of Postgraduate respondents do the same.

84% of total respondents referenced the Great Central Warehouse Library (some see it as the 'only space' available) when asked where they study; a not-insignificant figure, and the most frequent reference of all. This would suggest that significant attention should be given to the Library as a learning space, to ensure that its facilities, opening times, size, and resources meet students' needs. Other selections include a variety of locations chosen on the basis that they are the standard teaching location for a given student (the distance to JBL means it is often chosen for the sake of convenience).

For those respondents who do not study on campus, justifications include insufficient or unsuitable space, issues with noise and distraction on-campus, being a distance learner, and having another space which is, simply, preferred. There are also a small number of respondents who experience anxiety in loud, busy, or unfamiliar spaces; it would be worthwhile considering if more comfortable, quiet spaces should be made available to support students with these and similar issues so that they can study in an environment in which they feel comfortable.

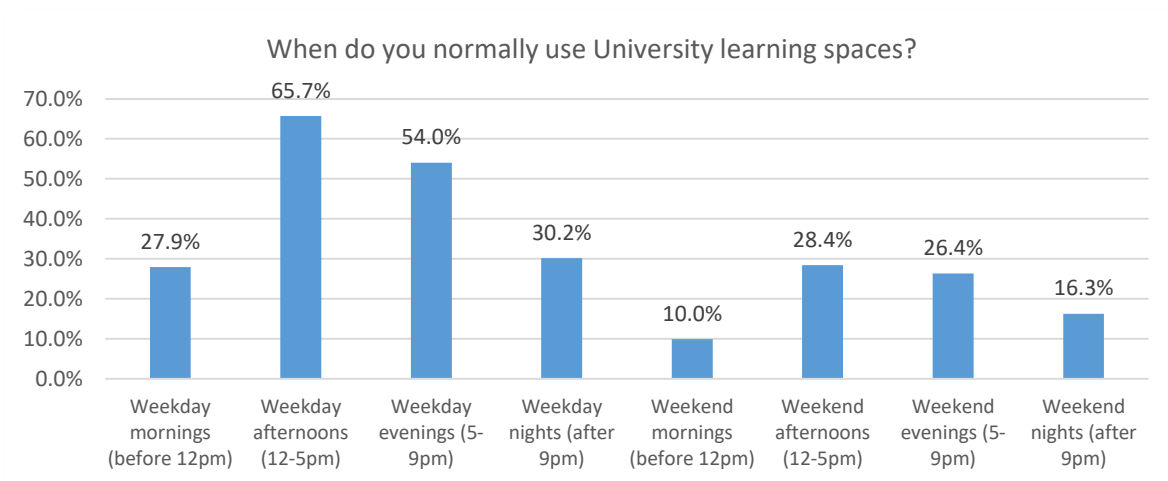
Graph showing which types of space are considered most beneficial to use for study outside of timetabled learning.



Of the options provided, ‘silent independent’ space is considered the most beneficial for studying outside of timetabled hours, being selected by almost 75% of respondents. Given that the third floor of the University Library is the only truly (that is, officially) silent space, consideration should be given to whether the current provision of silent study space is sufficient.

To be expected (considering the above), ‘social learning’ space is only third-most-popular of all options, yet buildings across campus contain space which can be described as such. ‘Specialised space’ comes fourth out of five options, though given that very specific sections of the University populations need (and have) such space, this is unsurprising.

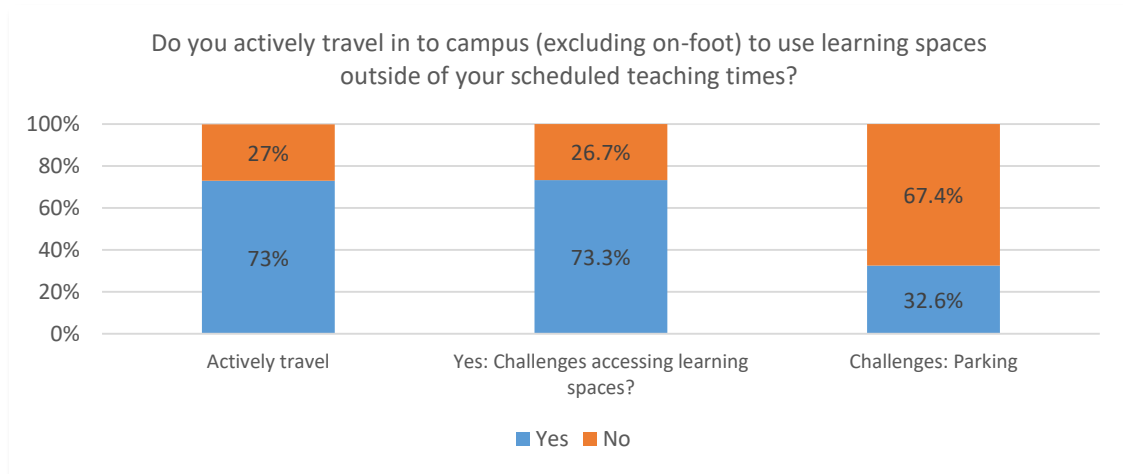
Graph showing times of day in which University learning spaces are most commonly used.



By a significant margin, ‘Weekday afternoons (12-5pm)’ and ‘Weekday evenings (5-9pm)’ are the most popular times for students to make use of available learning spaces. For the former, the popularity is most likely owed to standard timetabled hours, the availability of space (buildings being open) and the nature of the student lifestyle (which favours afternoons and evenings); by and large, it is fair to assume that there is a reasonable amount of space available. In considering the 5-9pm period, there

may be a question regarding how much space is available within these times; equally, it is also worth considering the availability of additional facilities at these times (such as on-campus food and drink offerings) of which students may wish to make use. In playing our part in this, the Students' Union may wish to actively promote our venues as great places to eat and drink while, or between, studying in the evening – the same may also be said for 'Weekday nights (after 9pm)'. In the interest of convenience and time-saving, the Union may also wish to consider its venues' take-away offerings (both hot and cold, both food and drink) to ensure there is a range to suit all students; this would do well to be coupled with a conversation with the Library about where hot food (or food in general) can be consumed therein; success has been seen in other institutions, such as Sheffield.

Graph showing percentage of respondents who travel to campus for independent study, those who find challenges in doing so, and the percentage of these challenges which related to parking.



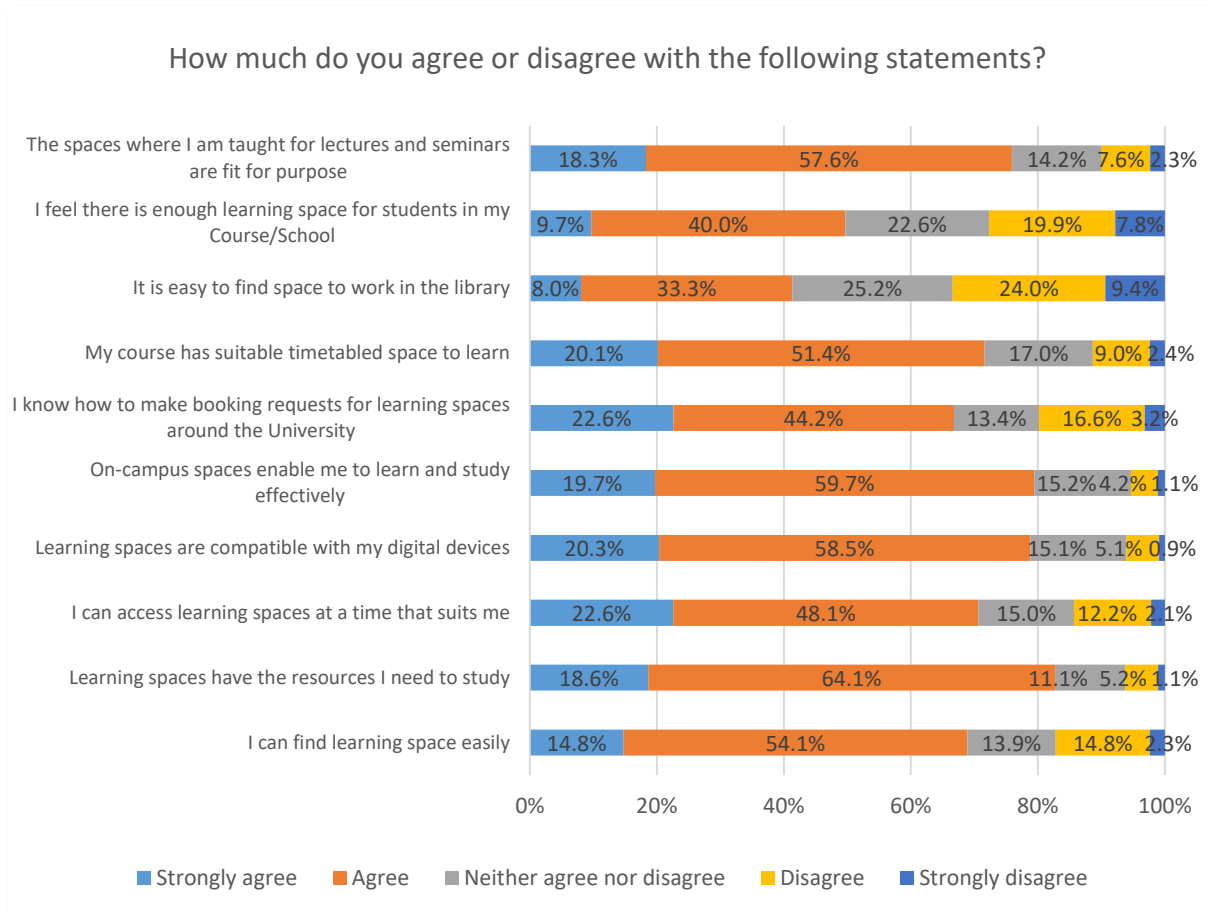
Given the demographic turnouts for this research (see Appendix), the above is surprising. 75 percent would represent over 2,200 students responding to this survey alone who travel by car or public transport to study outside of teaching time; this may well mean that up to approximately 9,700 members of the entire student population do the same.

Given that parking is sparse in Lincoln, and trains and taxis costly, there are numerous opportunities to be taken here: for the Union to discuss the possibility for more parking on-campus with relevant University colleagues, to actively promote purchasing of '16-25 Railcards', and to partner with a local taxi firm or firm (as is done at other institutions) in the interest of establishing reliable transport links and, if possible, cheaper travel.

More than 73 percent of respondents who actively travel to campus for non-timetabled study experience issues accessing learning spaces; approximately one third of respondents specifically note that parking is a factor in the issues they experience; as noted, parking is limited and may therefore need significant consideration. Of those who do not experience issues, a small number offer the caveat that they do not have problems as long as the space (usually the Library) is not busy, which may suggest an issue with capacity of available space.

Current Space

Graph showing levels of agreement with statements relating to learning space accessibility, facilities, availability, etc.



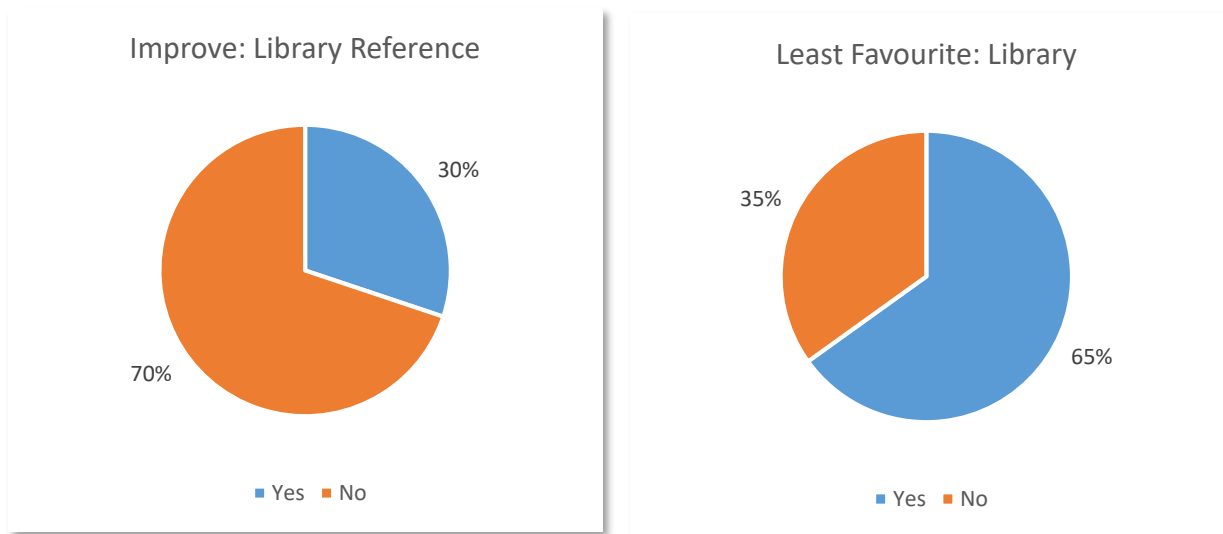
Approximately 76% of respondents agree that their lecture and seminar spaces are fit for purpose. On the other hand, less than 50 percent feel that there is enough learning space for students in their course and School cohorts; given that not all Schools have a truly designated space, and considering that a number of Schools share spaces, this is unsurprising. Planned relocations across numerous Schools and in various buildings (in Summer 2017) may go some way to alleviating this issue, though some work may still be needed to ensure all Schools have access to sufficient space for taught and independent learning.

Over 41% of respondents feel it is easy to find learning space in the Library specifically; almost 69 percent agree that it is easy to find learning spaces across the campus. Given the University's interest in digital education and innovation, it is also positive to see that approximately 79% of respondents agree that available learning spaces are compatible with their digital devices. Nearly 67% also state that they know how to make room booking requests. These booking processes could be expanded in conjunction with, or specifically from, the *Find My PC* app by way of enabling students to book computers for specific time slots, with regulations in place which do not allow devices to remain out-of-action when others could make use of them; again, Sheffield have seen success here.

Perhaps the most important statement in this question, 'On-campus spaces enable me to learn and study effectively', sees over 74 percent of respondents choose 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' as their answer. Given that meaningful, effective and useful learning should be the primary purpose of any on-campus learning space at the University of Lincoln, this is a positive outcome; that said, there is still room for improvement.

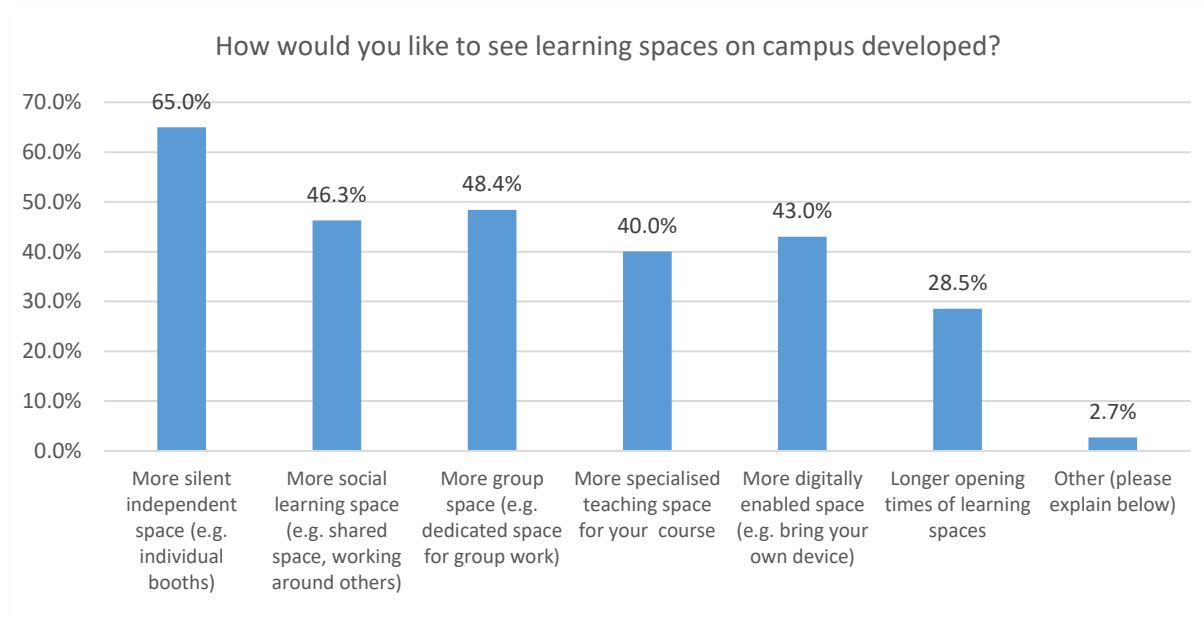
Respondents were asked 'How would you improve current and existing learning space on campus?' in an opportunity to provide only open comments. 30 percent of respondents specifically mentioned developments to the Library in their comments; in addition, there are a small number of references to bespoke Postgraduate space, which is lacking across campus, and frequent references to the simple need for increased space (which often also relates, specifically, to more computers). There are various references to the need to make more buildings 24 hour access, as well as comments regarding the need to make the Library 24-hour at more times of year.

Graph showing the percentage of improvement comments which references the Library, and the number of respondents who commented that the Library is their least favourite on-campus learning space.



Developing New Space

Graph showing respondents' preferences for the development of on-campus learning spaces.



Responses to this question present some parallel to responses seen previously about which types of space are preferred; 65 percent of respondents wish to see silent independent space included in any developments made to on-campus learning spaces. As with the preference question seen previously, social learning space is the third most popular choice, with dedicated group-work spaces being selected second most often. Evidently, attention should be given to the amount of silent spaces available on-campus; given that less than 50% of respondents feel there is sufficient space for their Schools and Courses, these conversations may need to focus specifically on the availability of silent space in School-specific buildings, in order to address two issues and, as seems likely, provide the ideal additional space for students.

Details for 'Other' responses include interesting comments and suggestions which may be worth consideration, including 'Space for English students other than the Library' (School specific areas have been mentioned variously in qualitative comments throughout, including in reference to those studying History courses); supporting the desire for silent study space, there is also a comment which reads 'Silent study but not individual booths'. Given the University's interest in digital learning and digital literacy, 'More virtual learning facilities for studying off campus' is a significant comment; it also speaks directly to the Union's work to better understand, support and engage Distance Learners, making it even more notable.

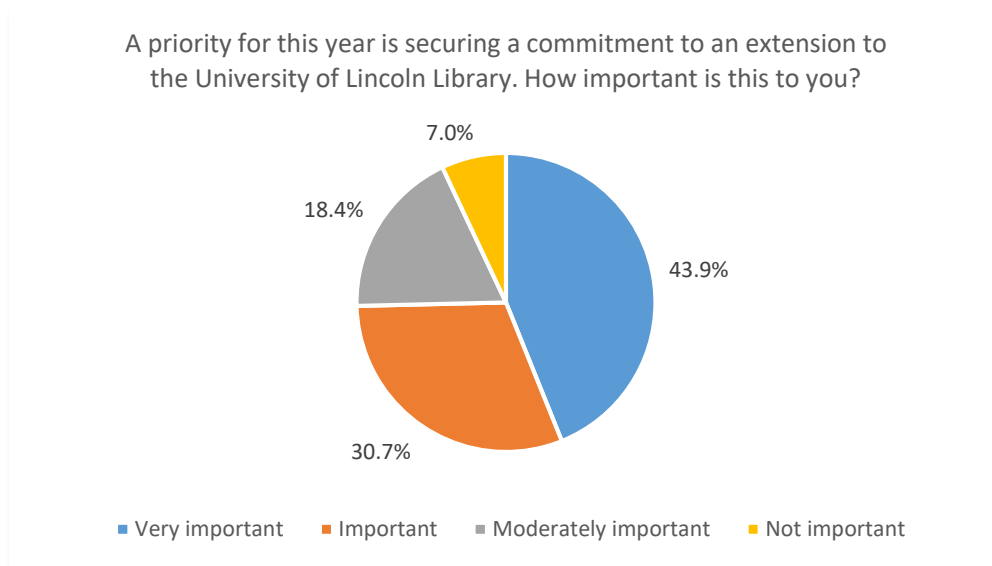
As has been seen elsewhere, there are also references to PG(R)-specific spaces, important given the University's growing PG community: 'More spaces for PGR and for research work', 'Postgraduate learning area with plenty of room, that cannot be accessed by Undergraduates', 'More Postgraduate-only learning spaces'. The comment 'We don't have many specific computer rooms that

students can use freely whenever they want, other than the Library’ (supported by other, similar comments) is interesting; there is a notable lack of non-Library computer spaces across campus buildings, the addition of which would reduce pressures on space in the Library, give those who do not enjoy studying in the Library somewhere else to do computer-based work, and may be the right opportunity to make the best use of current (and potential future) School-specific spaces.

There are some basic references to facility development, such as ‘Better toilets’, ‘Closer, free parking’, ‘More printers’ (and ‘Printing facility in Minerva’), and ‘Vending machines for snack, drinks, etc.’, as well as ‘Maybe a café area? With an actual café’; one respondent also comments that lockers would be useful. There are also a number of the expected comments about a need to expand the Library, and a specific note which reads: ‘enforcing Library rules for quiet study’.

When asked ‘What other future developments should the university prioritise in terms of learning space?’ responses follow patterns seen in other qualitative and quantitative questions throughout: that the Library needs to be extended, a varied list of types of required space (important in the interest of meeting the variety of students’ needs), a need to expand all available space, and ‘School-specific work space’; the overwhelming message is of ‘more’.

Graph showing the level of importance given to securing a commitment to the extension of the University Library.



Approximately three quarters of respondents view an extension of the Great Central Warehouse Library as important (44% of which consider it very important). Given that this space offers a variety of types of learning space (silent, group, open space, computers, etc.) to meet students’ needs, as well as having various resources to the same end (such as plotters, printers, books, and copying facilities), this is to be expected; it is the largest study space and has the broadest appeal.

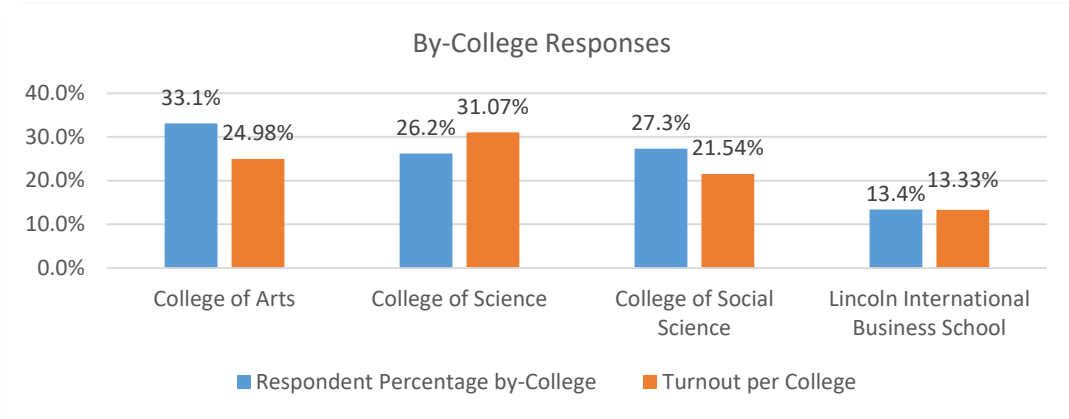
In consideration of the above, it would be wise to focus attention on the expansion of the Library space, building on the success of ‘1.5’ and other such facilities based in the library. A

commitment to extending the Library would be wise, also, because the University's student numbers have increased each year (approximately 1,500 in four years, with only the addition of half of the planned Library extension to meeting this increase) and will continue to do so as the University's reputation builds.

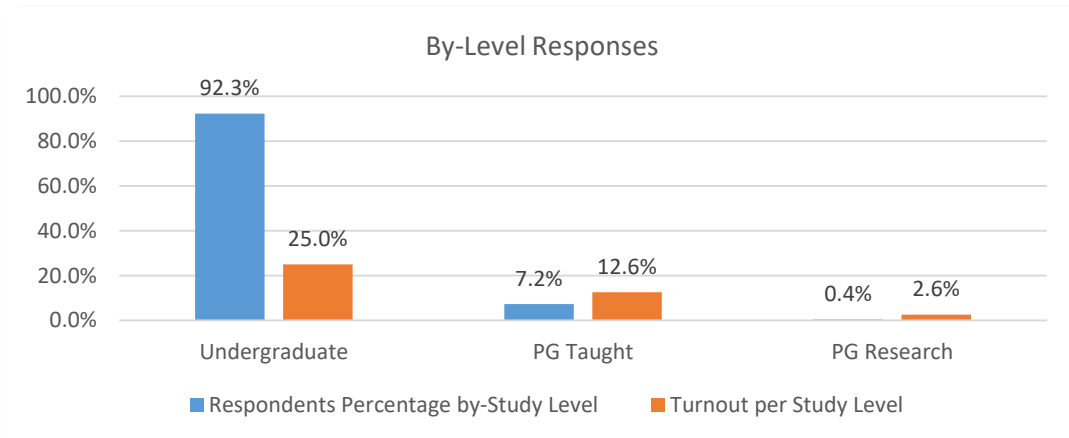
Those respondents who view a commitment to extending the Library as 'Important' or 'Very important' note, unsurprisingly, that an insufficiency of space is their justification (especially considering the University's ever-increasing student numbers), with some specific references to the variety of types of space which could be facilitated should the remainder of the originally-planned Library extension occur. Some respondents also note that issues with space have, or have the potential to, negatively affect learning and, ultimately, academic outcomes; 'Never enough space; means you have to rush assignments when you do finally get space'. Most respondents who view the commitment to a Library extension as 'Not important' feel this way because they rarely, or never, use the Library, or are not concerned with it because they will no longer be University of Lincoln students when Library developments occur and therefore will not reap the benefits.

Appendix – Demographic Analysis

Graph showing percentage of survey respondents by-College, and the percentage this represents of each whole group in the student population.



Graph showing percentage of survey respondents by study level (UG or PG), and the percentage this represents of each whole group in the student population.



Graph showing percentage of survey respondents by year of study, and the percentage this represents of each whole group in the student population.

