

## **New study delves into the student experience and importance of university facilities.**

Research released today shows that facilities are key for two thirds (67%) of UK students when choosing university. As expected, course (79%) and location (69%) were marginally more important with reputation (47%) and the student Union (18%) making up the top five. The research, commissioned by AUDE, surveyed two thousand students on their university choice and the facilities that are most important to them.

The library is the most used university facility for 64% of UK students with IT facilities, often located in the library, coming in second for 48% of students. Students are spending more time on their studies than ever and with high numbers of students competing for a finite number of graduate jobs, achieving a first class degree is more important than ever.

Universities are certainly looking after their most popular facilities as a large majority (77%) of students described their work facilities including libraries and IT Facilities as either good or excellent. These facilities are well looked after because they influence 62% of UK students when choosing university.

Of all students surveyed, 85% said they are learning, socialising and living in clean and well maintained university buildings. This indicates a high level of care and maintenance for university buildings all year round and with 71% of students agreeing that the look of a university is important you can see why university facilities teams spend so much time on upkeep and improvement of their buildings.

Sue Holmes, Chair, Association of University Directors of Estates and Director Of Estates and Facilities Management at Oxford Brookes University, commented: "Choosing a university is one of the most important decisions a person can make and we are acutely aware that facilities play an important role. As the cap on student numbers is lifted and a free market emerges having excellent and well maintained facilities is going to be a key driver for all universities. These statistics indicate students are, on the whole, happy with their universities facilities, especially the learning environments, such as libraries and IT facilities. With students spending more time in the library it's no wonder universities have extended opening hours to meet student needs. We are especially pleased with the high percentage of students living in well maintained university buildings. This is testament to the fantastic work university facilities teams achieve year in, year out at universities around the country. In a climate where income is reducing in real terms, universities are having to become even more efficient to enable them to continue to invest."

Alistair Bourne, student at University of East Anglia (UEA), commented: "It's quite an investment going to university today, fees have gone up in the last few years so I want value for money. I chose UEA as it's great for Drama, isn't too cold and has awesome facilities, especially the halls of residence - I had an ensuite in my first year. I had high expectations for what university life would be like and I wasn't disappointed, in fact, I was surprised by how big the library was, 24 hour IT facilities, comfortable socializing zones and how everything on campus was really green and leafy, even more so now it's summer."

University facilities are so much more than just a university's buildings. Estates are one of the university's largest assets – from strategic management, capital planning, facilities services such as cleaning, security and maintenance services through to space planning and management, legislative compliance, car parking, traffic management and asset management, university facilities really do play a big role in all aspects of a student's time at university.