

Creating confidence

International student
safety survey

2015–16

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Preface

Personal safety in the UK for students, their dependants, visitors and workers coming to the UK is a duty of care we take very seriously and we all work together to help them take care of themselves and settle happily into their local community. In 2014–15, the principal factors underpinning the decision of international undergraduate students to study in the UK were (in order of significance): the reputation of their selected institution, the specific course of study, earning potential and personal safety.* The British Council leads in this area and is represented on the National Student Crime Group and ProtectED Stakeholder Board and works closely with organisations in the UK to exchange knowledge, keep up to date with crime trends, legislation and other safety issues to help prevent international students and their dependants, visitors and workers coming to the UK and becoming victims of crime.

Helen Clews

Adviser – External Relations
British Council

* *International Undergraduate Students: The UK's Competitive Advantage* HE International Unit December 2015 report
www.international.ac.uk/media/3663524/UG-Competitive-Advantage-report.pdf

Foreword

Time spent in the UK and gaining an education should be a memorable and enjoyable time. Education provides us with knowledge about the world. It paves the way for a good career. It helps build character, it leads to enlightenment. It lays the foundation of a stronger nation. In the United Kingdom we have some of the best educational establishments in the world which strive to provide all of their students with the opportunity to learn, grow and succeed within a challenging educational programme.

As National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Student Crime I am committed to protecting the general welfare of all students within the UK. The findings within this document are notable as they provide valuable information regarding student experiences, thoughts, opinions and perceptions. I welcome this information as it allows me to take these findings and work alongside key stakeholders for the benefit of student safety and security.

Research such as this is of importance to both students and those involved throughout the student experience, be it service providers, such as the British Council, the police or the educational establishments. It helps us to be able to see ourselves from another perspective, both what we do well and what we could improve upon, and enables us as providers to review our provision in order to provide a service that meets the needs of all who reside within this

country. It is of importance to students as it serves to help them prepare for their time studying within the UK, and will assist them in adjusting to the customs of the land and in recognising the UK as a great place to study.

For many international students not only is this their first time in a new country it is often also their first time away from home. Lack of familiarity with an area, culture and in some instances language often leave students feeling vulnerable and exposed to risk. We as service providers have a duty of care to ensure that students feel safe both on and off campus and as hosts we have a level of responsibility to create a safe environment.

The UK is generally a safe place to live, work and study, which is reflected in the findings of this study. Our actions in the support we offer can help ease international student integration into domestic student communities; enhance overall perception and create a feeling of safety.

It is hoped that all who read this data find it useful and take the time to review their own security measures through the eyes of an international student and take steps to ensure safety messages are reaching the intended audiences.

Garry Shewan



Garry Shewan

Garry Shewan is Assistant Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, and National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Restorative and Community Justice, as well as Stalking and Harassment.



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Introduction

The UK continues to be a major player in international education. In spite of the availability of courses that can be taken remotely in various ways, especially through the internet, there are still very large numbers of young people who want to study full-time at institutions outside their own countries. The UK hosts over one million international students each year and they contribute £12.75 billion to the UK's economy https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/340600/bis-13-1081-international-education-global-growth-and-prosperity-revised.pdf. The investment made by these students is not just financial; it includes a great deal of personal and emotional commitment as well.

There are many factors of importance in the selection of the country for study or Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) work experience (Tier 5). For the UK, its reputation as a multicultural society, the fact that people do not carry guns, low crime rates and a high police presence, and a language that is shared by so many are all important considerations. International and Tier 5 GAE students have a temporary status in the UK and they are mostly unfamiliar with how we live. Many are away from home for the first time and institutions have a duty

of care to them. Personal safety is another major factor in the choice of where to study and was placed fifth in the recent British Council Insight Survey 2015 <https://ei.britishcouncil.org/reports/products/student-insight>. It is therefore a matter that must be taken very seriously. Whatever efforts institutions think they are making in this area, the opinion of the students themselves is of vital importance.

The British Council report *Integration of international students: a UK perspective 2014* also notes the increasing importance of safety to international students: www.britishcouncil.org/education/ihe/knowledge-centre/student-mobility/report-integration-international-students

In view of these considerations, it is important to consult students and keep an up-to-date record of their opinions, feelings and experiences. Two previous surveys on international students were conducted in 2007 and 2010. The present survey gives added perspective to the views on safety and was needed to determine whether there has been any significant shift on student opinion.

Dr TJ Seller



Methodology

This survey was conducted through an online questionnaire. A large number of international students and Tier 5 GAE students were invited to participate, including those who are administered by the British Council, those sponsored from other sources and self-funded students; their responses were not separated. The returned questionnaires constituted a UK-wide representative sample of students, both undergraduates and postgraduates. The sample was sufficiently large to allow reasoned conclusions about attitudes to the questions asked. The questions were aimed specifically at safety issues and were divided into the following sections.

- **Basic statistics:** country of origin, gender, age group, the time since their arrival in the UK, whether it is their first visit to the UK, whether they were accompanied by a family member, the region within the UK in which they are living and whether their visit was administered by the British Council.
- **Visa:** the length of their stay in the UK, the type of visa they hold.
- **Police registration:** whether they registered with the police. Comments on the process were invited.
- **Personal safety:** whether they attended a safety briefing before they left home or since arriving in the UK, their feelings about personal safety in the UK.

- **Accommodation:** the type of their accommodation, their feelings about their safety in that accommodation, comments were invited.
- **Institution and workplace:** their feelings of safety at their institution or workplace, comments were invited.
- **Local town:** similar to the previous section, with additional questions comparing the feelings of safety during the day and after dark.
- **Crime:** whether they had been the victim of any crime, whether it had been reported to the police or authorities at their institution, the type of crime.
- **Safety publications:** whether they had read the British Council *Creating Confidence* (for students) and *Safety First* (for dependants of students, visitors and GAE workers) publications, whether the British Council could do anything more to promote the personal safety of students.

Information and comments generated by the survey were analysed, tabulated and comparisons drawn where appropriate. In the few places where it was necessary the name of an institution has been hidden. This report is an evaluation of the results and offers analyses and conclusions from the data.

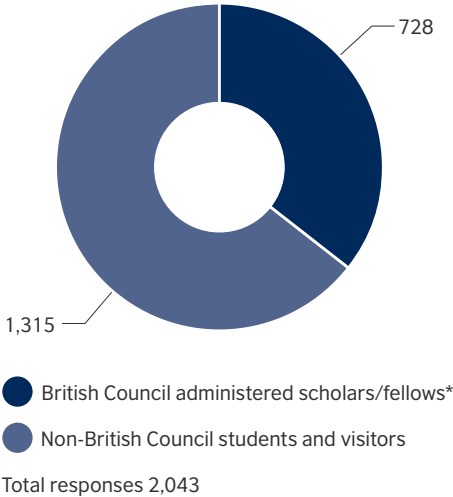


Basic statistics

The present survey was completed by 2,043 respondents. This compares with 1,666 in 2007 and 2,600 in the 2010 survey. As mentioned in the previous section, the aim of this survey was specifically to discover views on safety issues. In the present survey, there was no question concerning subject and level of study. British Council administered students were identified separately and represented 35.6 per cent (728) of those responding. For most of the analyses, all the respondents were grouped together and this added to the statistical robustness of the data set. The data from the survey is substantial and gives a detailed view of the situation and thoughts of a significant group of students studying in the UK.

Respondents in this survey came from 125 different countries (112 in 2007; no data in the 2010 survey), indicating the continuing and widespread attractiveness of the higher education sector in the UK. Of these, just over half of the countries (69) had responses from less than ten students. At the other extreme, nearly three quarters (71.6 per cent) of those completing the survey came from just 20 countries (Table 1). Those countries were spread around the world with six from Europe, five from East and South East Asia, four from the Americas, two each from the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent and one from Africa.

Figure 1: Number of respondents

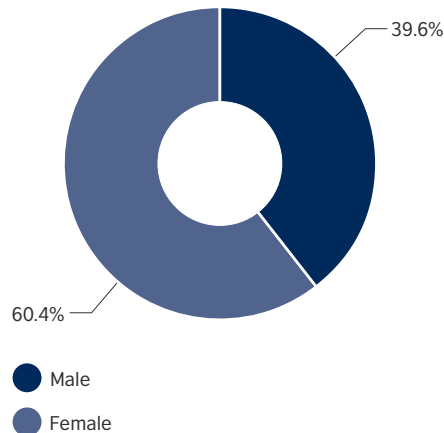


* In figures 1 to 16, this refers to scholars and fellows who are administered by the British Council and includes Tier 5 GAE students.



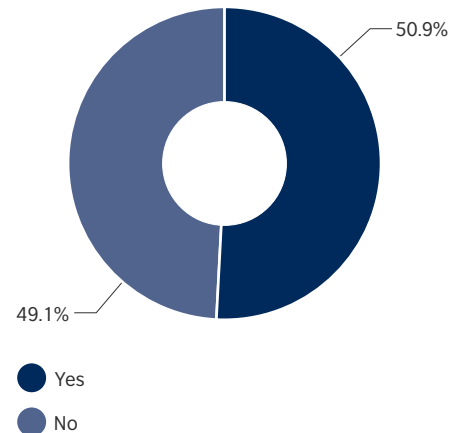
Unlike previous surveys, there were significantly fewer men who responded, compared with women (39.6 per cent to 60.4 per cent). In the previous surveys the male/female ratio was nearly 50/50. It is unfortunate that the numbers were not close to being even, but this does not detract from the value of the information that was collected. There was a slight majority of students visiting the UK for the first time: 50.9 per cent against 49.1 per cent. This is a pattern similar to the two previous surveys.

Figure 2: Gender of respondents



The age groups of the respondents showed that most were between the ages of 19 and 25 (62.6 per cent overall) indicating study at undergraduate level. There were fewer younger students and the numbers declined steadily above 25 years. However, there was a marked difference when male and female students were compared. Two thirds of the female students were between the ages of 16 and 25, with just over 16 per cent aged 26 to 30. By contrast the male students were more widely spread by age. The largest

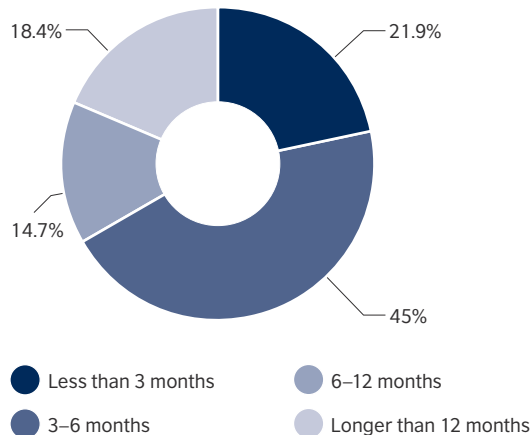
Figure 3: Is this your first visit to the UK?





group were 19 to 25 years (56.4 per cent), but there were rather more in the older age groups. It appears that the majority of female respondents were in the UK to study for first degrees and that they were rather less likely to stay on for higher qualifications than were the men. The data set does not allow speculation on a possible reason for this difference. These results are similar to those recorded in the previous surveys. Very few of the present sample of students reported that they were accompanied by a family member.

Figure 4: How long is your stay in the UK?



Only 16.4 per cent (298) of those who responded to this question were accompanied. This represents a small decline compared with 18 per cent in each of the previous surveys in 2007 and 2010. As noted previously, accompanied students might be expected to have had more concerns about safety than others. The continuing decline in accompanied students can be ascribed to the increasing cost of living, especially housing, in the UK and the difficulty of securing satisfactory places in large conurbations.

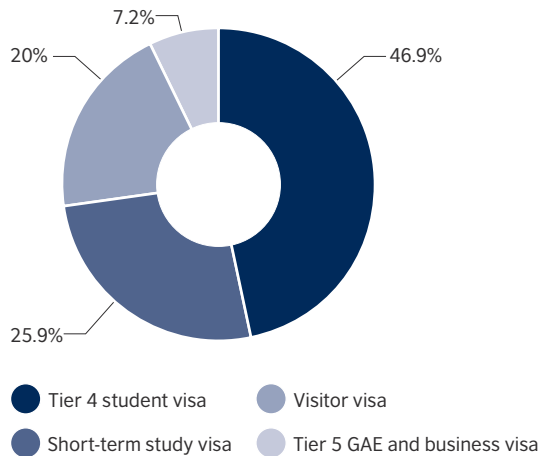
Visa

All but 166 replies gave information about the length of their stay in the UK. The largest group (45 per cent, 844) reported that their stay in this country was between three and six months. About one fifth (21.9 per cent, 411) were here for less than three months. The rest were divided between those here for six to 12 months and longer than a year. This data was reflected in the types of visas held by the respondents. Nearly half (46.9 per cent) had Tier 4 student visas. The next largest group reported short-term study visas (25.9 per cent) and visitor visas (20 per cent). There were few Tier 5 GAE student and business visas. Data on the latter was not gathered in the previous surveys. However, length of stay was recorded and this time there were many fewer (at less than 20 per cent compared with around one third) who had been in the UK for longer than 12 months.



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Figure 5: Type of visa



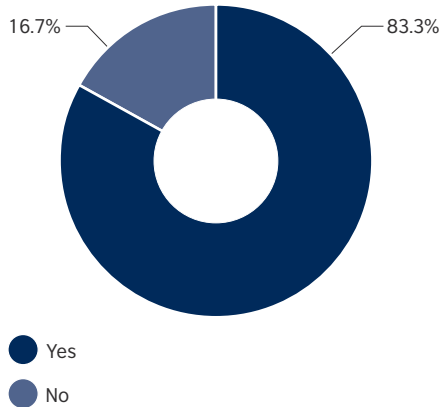
Police registration

Students from specified countries (Table 2) have, by law, to register either with the Overseas Visitors Record Office in London or their local police. Students have to register within seven days and it costs £34. Only about one quarter of the sample responded to this question (534, 26 per cent), most of whom (445, 83.3 per cent) reported that they



had to register. This is substantially fewer than in the 2010 survey that showed over 1,000 registering and rather more than the 394 who registered in 2007. The significant majority (nearly three quarters) of the current students went to register at their local police station (264, 61.4 per cent) or the Overseas Visitors Record Office in London (47, 10.9 per cent). The others were able to register at their institution (119, 27.7 per cent).

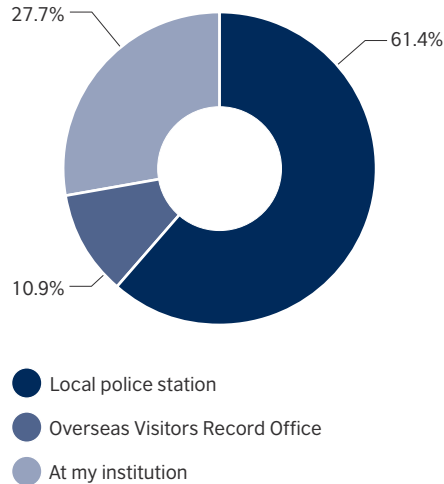
Figure 6: Have you registered with the police since your arrival in the UK?



Total responses 534

The process of registration was reported to be 'easy' or 'OK' for 96.5 per cent of the students. In the present survey, only 16 individuals commented that registration was difficult or very difficult. This result, together with the two previous surveys shows a significant and continuing increase in this positive statistic; in 2007 it was around 75 per cent and in 2010 slightly more. The very high proportion who found the process satisfactory might be seen as surprising

Figure 7: Where did you register?





since most students are now expected to visit a police station and there has been a marked decline in the number of institutions that offer registration 'in house'.

The reasons given for not registering were either that their stay was less than six months, or the entry stamp in their passport did not require them to register. It is encouraging to note that there was no repetition of the actions of two students from the 2010 survey who refused to register on principle.

From the responses received, the process of police registration works well for most students. Only just over one third (165, 37.1 per cent) of those who had to register gave an opinion on the process and these were mostly very positive. Comments such as *'it was very easy'*, *'local police station was very nice'*, and *'it was new to me because it's my first time here however I found it so easy and I really like the idea because I felt safer'* are pleasing and represented the majority of respondents.

Long queueing times were a cause of concern for some: *'we need to book in advance and wait for a long time'*, *'long queues, students sleeping on the floors inside the office and nearly seven hours to wait for a very simple procedure'*, *'it took long time, there were many people in the queue'*, *'it was the long queue that took me almost five hours to register'*. Others were not so affected: *'just took [me] ten*

minutes', *'the process was very fast'*, *'the registration procedure ... was carried out smoothly and took a short time.'*

As in previous surveys, a few respondents took issue with the need to register and its cost: *'if I already have the visa why should I have to register with the police? Just make no sense'*, *'the cost is a little unexplainably high, since we've already paid for the visa'*, *'I do not really want to. Because I need to pay £34 which I think it is totally not fair. What does this money go for? Why should I pay for my safety just because of my nationality?'* There were noticeably less of these comments than in previous surveys.

Personal safety

The issue of personal safety, particularly for younger people, has become more important. Media reports of offences against younger age groups are all too frequent. It is therefore both surprising and disappointing that the number of students in the present survey who had attended safety briefings in their home country or institution remains low. Slightly less than half of those responding to the question (894, 47.6 per cent) had received a pre-departure safety briefing and 52.4 per cent had not. When the students whose visit was administered by

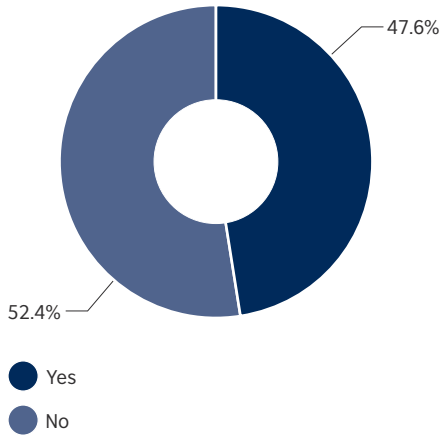


the British Council were analysed separately, the percentages were reversed: 54.8 per cent had attended a briefing, 45.2 per cent had not. This data means that just 43.1 per cent of those not administered by the British Council received an in-country briefing.

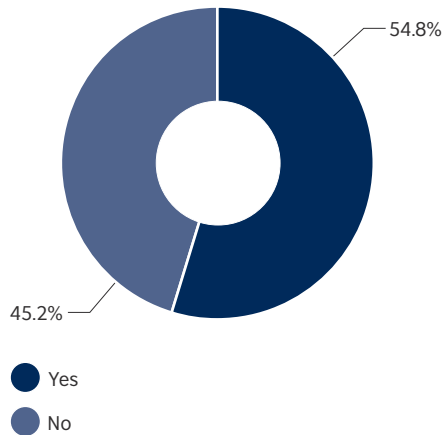
Since arriving in the UK only 594 (31.6 per cent) of the students who responded to the question had attended a personal safety briefing either from the police or (for the majority of students) at their institution or place of work.

Figure 8: Did you receive a pre-departure safety briefing?

All students



British Council administered



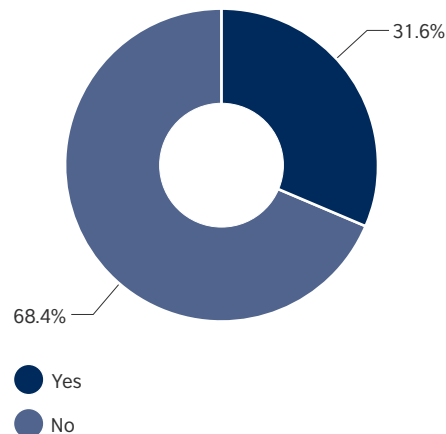


In this case the percentages were similar whether the student's visit was administered by the British Council (33.2 per cent) or not (30.1 per cent).

The aggregate figures show that only 47.1 per cent of those responding had attended a safety briefing either before their departure or since their arrival in the UK. This represents only a very slight (and probably not statistically significant) increase compared with the 2010 survey where the figure was 44 per cent, itself a small increase on the 34 per cent result in 2007.

The above data is disappointing both in the low number of students attending safety briefings and the lack of a significant increase in that number since 2007. It is apparent that British Council administered students were more successfully encouraged to attend briefings in their own countries than other students. There is no indication from the survey of why individuals did not receive a briefing: whether it was indifference, inadequate advertising or some other factor. However, it is matter of some continuing concern and it should be investigated because the reasons need to be understood before effective action can be contemplated.

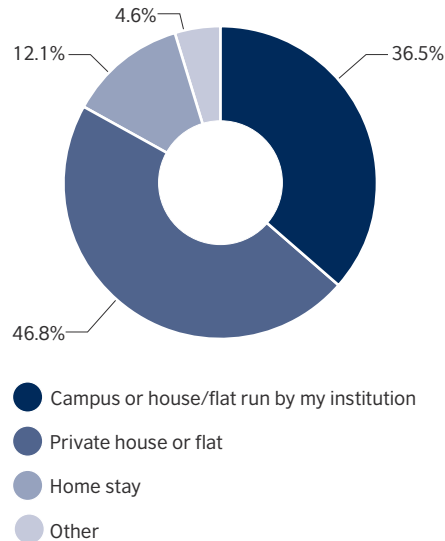
Figure 9: Since arriving in the UK have you attended a safety briefing?



Accommodation

The proportion of students living in accommodation owned or administered by their institution continued to fall compared with the previous surveys. The current results showed that 36.5 per cent were living on campus or in a house or flat off campus run by their institution. In 2010 the figure was 47 per cent, and in 2007, 57 per cent. For universities, housing is expensive both to purchase and maintain. These factors, together with the continuing increase in student numbers, probably accounts for the downward trend. In the present survey nearly one half of the students (46.8 per cent) were living in a private house or flat; most of the remainder (12.1 per cent) classified themselves as 'home stay'. These results emphasise the important role of the institutions' accommodation offices for all students, but especially those coming from overseas – of particular value is their local knowledge of the private rented sector. It seems unlikely that the provision of university accommodation will increase in the future therefore the current reliance on private sector accommodation will inevitably increase.

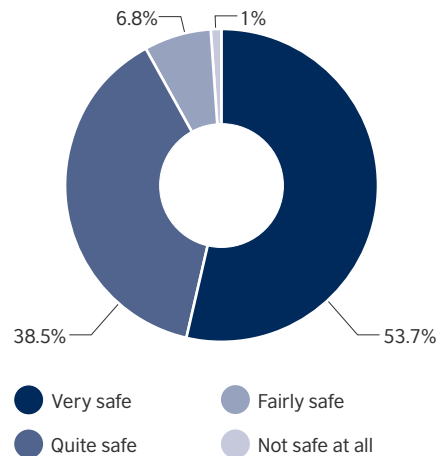
Figure 10: Where are you living?





A very high percentage (92.2 per cent) of the students felt very or quite safe at their accommodation. This encouraging figure represents an increase on the two previous surveys where this figure was around 85 per cent in both cases. Of the remainder, 6.8 per cent (121) were fairly safe and only one per cent (18 individuals) reported feeling not safe at all. These latter groups need to be taken seriously even if they are only few in number. Some of the reasons given for their lack of security were alarming: *'first I share a house with two girls ... but they drank and sleep very late ... different people come back ... it was messy, it's not safe'*, *'some room-doors (even the front-door) are very old, easy to break in'*, *'old house with lots of things that look as if they fall apart any second including ceiling and windows'*, *'street is very unsafe ... it is said in my contract that my landlord does not advise me to walk on the street in the darkness alone'*. Others had experienced crime, for example: *'laptop was stolen'*, *'there have been some robberies and break-ins in my apartment blocks and the vicinity'*, *'I was mugged not far from my house on the way from the institution where I work'*, *'someone stole our stuff when we back home on holiday'*.

Figure 11: Do you feel safe in your accommodation?



Compared with the previous surveys, there were many fewer complaints about landlords who owned student accommodation. However, it is clear that there are problems faced by some: *'I have to change four landlords ... first two landlords they kept harassing me over petty issues which were not reasonable and feasible', 'the landlord first told us that he was affiliated with the university, but then we found out that he wasn't ... the furniture is old as the house, and things break easily', 'I ended up in housing that was not suitable for habitation', 'old house with lots of things that look as if they will fall apart any second including ceiling and windows'*. Unfortunately places such as those described do exist, but it was depressing to read: *'even though I communicated to the students' union [about the condition of my accommodation] ... no one was able to help and university accommodation was full so did not have any other option'*.

There was little information on how any of these problems were handled. Each should have been reported to the appropriate housing office or police station. In one case, at least, nothing was done to help. The impression gained from the comments received is that most of them were not pursued. This is not right and will be mentioned again later in the Report.



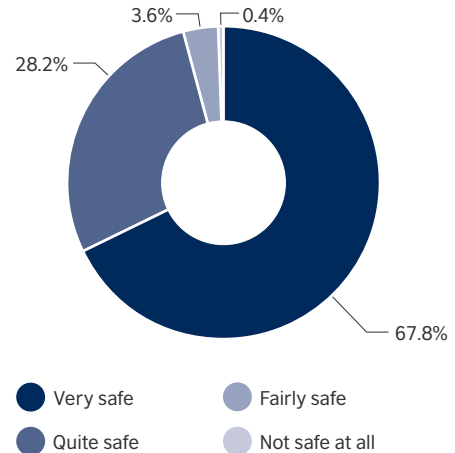


Institution or workplace

Respondents were asked about their feelings of safety where they study or work. Compared with the previous section, the results show an even higher percentage feel very safe (67.8 per cent, compared with 53.7 per cent). When the quite safe group was included the positive rate increased to 96 per cent. This is the same proportion as in the 2010 survey when 94 per cent reported being very or quite safe. While this could be seen as encouraging, there would be serious cause for concern if students felt at all unsafe at their place of study or work.

The number of respondents who felt fairly safe was 63, and not safe at all seven, both figures at half of those reported for accommodation. Many of these assessments were not substantiated as there were only six comments given. However, these comments ought to be noted and some reported back to the relevant institution. They included: *'not many street lights in adjacent park'*, *'we are near Morrisons and anyone can just enter and exit the building without anyone noticing'*, *'I have been harassed in some or the other way'*, *'the entrance for [...] college does not have security measures in place'*. More than one student gave the impression that they were not properly briefed on the security measures in place, their function and their benefits: *'there are security cameras everywhere ... I was worried I was constantly being watched, and I still worry about hidden cameras'*.

Figure 12: Do you feel safe at your institution or place of work?



One student commented that they had reported their concerns to the university authorities, but no action was taken: *'I am being forced by my colleagues to act according to their way ... there is a lot of harassment ... I have already discussed this matter with the university and my tutor, however no help'*. It is not acceptable for any student to receive the impression that their situation is not being dealt with properly.

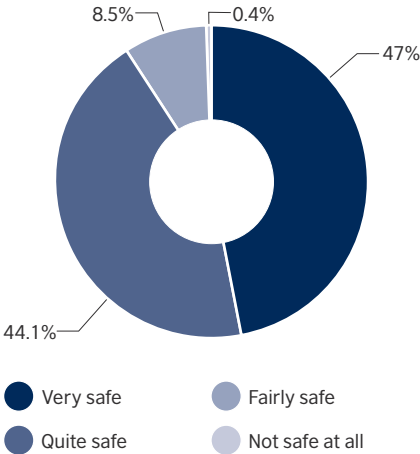


Local town

The results in the section on accommodation showed that fewer students now live on campus, compared with previous surveys. This means that more students have to travel to and from their place of study, which in turn adds to the safety problems they might have to face. During the day time, the number of students who felt very safe or quite safe was still 91.1 per cent. Although the very safe category was lower at 47 per cent, those feeling quite safe were much higher at 44.1 per cent. These results were similar to the previous surveys.

There was a proportionate increase in the number reporting a lack of safety (fairly safe and not safe at all) and ten comments were made. These included reports of experiences that unfortunately could be encountered in any conurbation, such as: *'[...] has a high percentage of people drinking on the streets' which can be very unnerving*, *'there have also been many reports of attacks in the parks surrounding the university and in the surrounding residential areas'*, *'cars in London seem like they want to kill cyclists'*, *'people drive very fast and it's impossible to walk down to town without a car'*. Other comments are more relevant to the section below on crime: *'one of my housemates was assaulted in the street'*, *'my phone had been snatched on a bright Sunday morning in a nearby park'*, *'friends have [had] their house ... burgled in a broad daylight'*.

Figure 13: Generally, how safe to you feel while in the town/city around your institution during the day?

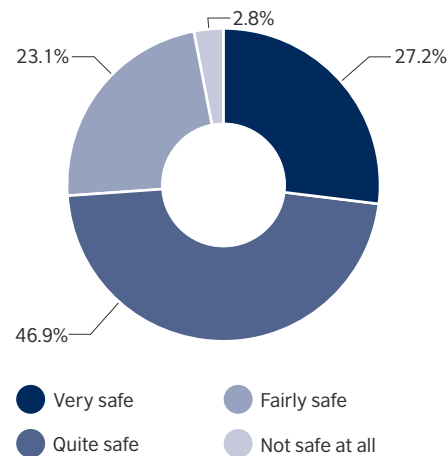




The survey asked separately for feelings of safety after dark, during that period of the day less than three quarters of respondents reported feeling very or quite safe. The percentage who felt very safe fell to 27.2 per cent. The shift was due mainly to an increase in those feeling fairly safe at 23.1 per cent; while not safe at all were 2.8 per cent. This was nearly three times the number in those categories during the day. The reasons given for these changes were alarming, the majority being due to crime or drunkenness. Examples from these comments are: *'I was victim of an assault', 'my friends got mugged in the street after she went to the cash machine', 'things have been stolen', 'I was mugged not far from my house', 'lots of drunk people around'*. Additionally many are concerned because of what they have seen: *'there has been a lot of criminal activity within the city'*. Others think that their area's reputation causes concern: *'The main city centre area is a criminal-active zone', 'It is a very poor and rough area'*. The other main concern is the lack of adequate street lighting: *'street lighting is dim and roads are empty after 7.00 p.m.', 'they turn off the street lights at night', 'no light at night in the streets'*. There were similar complaints in each of the previous surveys.

The responses to these questions indicate that students are conscious of the need for greater caution when moving around after dark. Of course this is not a problem that is confined to UK towns and cities. However, generally students are not reluctant to go out after dark and accept the dangers in pursuit of an enjoyable life.

Figure 14: Generally, how safe to you feel while in the town/city around your institution after dark?



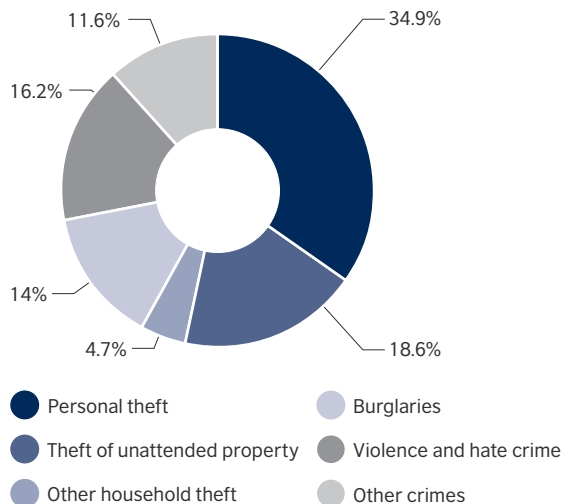
Crime

In some ways this section is a continuation of the two previous ones because the reasons given for feeling unsafe were often due to criminal acts. However, overall it was encouraging to read that very few students reported that they had been the victims of crime – just 4.9 per cent of the total comprising 86 individuals. This was nearly half the nine per cent reported in 2010 and one third of the 14.3 per cent in 2007. This trend is encouraging and may reflect the overall reduction in reported crime in the country at large.

By far the most frequent crime was theft from the person (34.9 per cent), including loss of money in all its forms and mobile phones. Added to this were losses of property that was left unattended (18.6 per cent, 16 students) and other household thefts (4.7 per cent, four students). There were 12 burglaries reported (14 per cent). The incidents of other crimes were low, but of most concern were violence and the hate crimes that accounted for 14 incidents (16.2 per cent). No detail on these was provided so further analysis is not possible but this does not reduce the attention that is required to be given to these incidents. The types of crime were broadly similar to those seen in the previous surveys.

It is unfortunate that the survey indicated that only just over half (57 per cent) of those who experienced crime reported it to the police. Another seven reported it to others in authority, making only 65 per cent in total.

Figure 15: Have you been a victim of crime?



86 respondents reported that they had been a victim of crime



Again there is no information on why others failed to report the crime. It is possible that individuals were reluctant to expose themselves to further trauma. An absence of confidence in the police would be an unacceptable reason that should be addressed.

However, this is not the complete picture. In the previous sections on safety a significant number of reports were made of criminal acts against students including drunkenness, muggings, harassment, and assault. In addition it is clear that numbers of student go in fear of such incidents and those associated with alcohol. The level of these crimes was not high but of great significance to the victims. Institutions must continue to encourage reporting of all criminal incidents and take appropriate action in support of their students. The British Council has produced a booklet *Interview with a Door Supervisor* that should be made available widely.



Safety publications

The British Council has taken a lead in the production of booklets and issuing advice on living safely in the UK and how visitors can enjoy their stay in the UK. Booklets such as *Creating Confidence – Making sure that your time in the UK is safe and enjoyable* and *Safety First – Making sure your visit to the UK is safe and enjoyable* have been regularly updated and made available for many years. In an effort to ensure that they reach the widest number of students, they are produced in both print and electronic form.

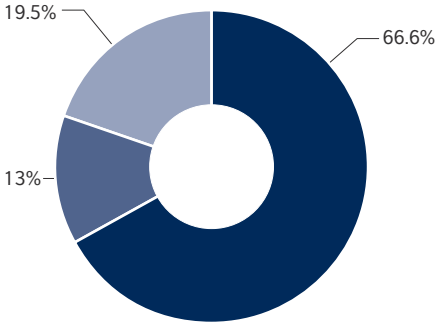
The booklets are available from www.educationuk.org/global/articles/safety. Thus it is both disappointing and not a little dispiriting for the authors that around two thirds of students responding to the survey reported that they did not know about these publications. A further 14 per cent had heard about the booklets but had not seen them. Thus four out of five of all students had not seen either of the publications.

It was much more likely that students whose visit was administered by the British Council would have seen the booklets. *Creating Confidence* was seen by 27.7 per cent of those students and 32.8 per cent had seen *Safety First*. Unfortunately this means that only just over ten per cent of the non-administered students had seen either of the booklets.

This negative data was emphasised by responses to the question asking whether there is anything else the British Council could do to help address issues relating to personal

safety. There were several comments made asking for such information to be provided. Clearly these useful booklets need to be advertised and seen more widely. However, there is no indication from the present survey that there is any failure in this area. Of course the availability of material is no guarantee that it will be read.

Figure 16: Are you familiar with British Council publications on personal safety?



- Did not know about these publications
- Have heard of these publications but not seen them
- Have seen copies



This is not a new situation since previous surveys have seen similar results. However, the current data indicates a reduction in the proportion of students who have not seen a British Council safety document. In all the surveys to date, British Council scholars and those administered by them were much more likely to have seen and read a safety document. One of the reasons may well be that access to these students is more direct and effective. The problem is how it can be extended to all students coming to the UK. Unfortunately nothing in the current survey gave an indication of a solution. Comments such as *'maybe inform us about the British Council publication'*, *'the British Council should provide flyers and brochures in all accredited institutions and schools, in order to inform the students about safety and security measures'*, and *'British Council must check and deliver the needed information and required awareness for internationals ... in UK'* merely highlight the problem.

All that can be done is for British Council staff worldwide to increase their efforts to make their publications as widely available as possible and continue to advertise them in all education institutions. The short safety and security videos produced by Greater Manchester Police and available on the Education UK website are very useful additions to the information online.



Conclusions

This survey is most useful for being the third in a series that tests the opinion of international students and visitors especially in the area of their personal safety. Many of the results are positive in that they show positive trends towards greater feelings of security among the substantial majority of respondents.

In spite of a continuing trend towards living outside university accommodation, many respondents (most of whom were in the younger age groups) found living and working in this country a safe and enjoyable experience. There was more concern expressed about the situation after dark but most respondents indicated that they were able to deal with it, even if they were worried by possible consequences of going out late at night.

The main areas to highlight from the responses received revolve around increasing the proportion of those who access safety information and briefings, and how to deal with criminal activities experienced. With respect to information, the British Council and other agencies work hard to produce a great deal of useful and high quality material in a variety of forms. The problems are to convince the majority of new international students and visitors that the material is available and of importance to them. There are no obvious answers and all that can be recommended is that all the agencies continue to maintain their efforts.

The most disappointing result from the survey was that many respondents who experience crime do not report it. The fact that there were fewer victims from this survey compared with the previous ones is not the issue. It seems that many of the respondents who visit the UK seem to accept that crime happens and that nothing can be done about it. This is in spite of other surveys that showed one of the major factors attracting respondents to the UK to study, visit and work was a high police presence. Initiatives by the National Police Chiefs' Council, the National Student Crime Group and the newly established ProtectED Stakeholder Board will help to improve the situation. However, encouraging the reporting of crime and criminal acts is part of the duty of care all institutions owe to their students and visitors.

Overall the results of this survey are encouraging and allow educational institutions to engage confidently with prospective students in the area of their personal safety. This is a matter of interest not just to the students themselves, but to their parents and possibly wider families as well.



Table 1: Top 20 countries represented by students completing the survey.

Country	Number
France	250
China	210
USA	156
Germany	133
Brazil	100
Nigeria	93
India	68
Spain	63
Hong Kong	55
Italy	43
Pakistan	43
Saudi Arabia	41
Japan	30
Switzerland	30
South Korea	28
Canada	26
Mexico	25
Malaysia	24
Libya	23
Austria	22
Total	1,463

Table 2: Countries from which students are required to register with the police.

Afghanistan	Lebanon
Algeria	Libya
Argentina	Moldova
Armenia	Morocco
Azerbaijan	North Korea
Bahrain	Oman
Belarus	Palestine
Bolivia	Peru
Brazil	Qatar
China	Russia
Colombia	Saudi Arabia
Cuba	Sudan
Egypt	Syria
Georgia	Tajikistan
Iran	Tunisia
Iraq	Turkey
Israel	Turkmenistan
Jordan	United Arab Emirates
Kazakhstan	Ukraine
Kuwait	Uzbekistan
Kyrgyzstan	Yemen



The UK means the United Kingdom and consists of England, Scotland, Wales (Great Britain) and Northern Ireland.

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