



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

What is Value for Money?

What do students think?

Rhiannon Birch



Sheffield Leader 4

- Residential leadership programme
- Strategic Improvement Groups
- A range of leadership backgrounds:
Engineering, Medicine, Social Sciences
and Strategic Planning
- One question: what do our students think
is value for money?



Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills
by Command of Her Majesty

November 2015

15. *“Students are concerned about value for money ... 1/3 believe their course represents poor value for money”*

20. *“Not all universities assign teaching the same significance that they give research....”*

Some rebalancing of the pull between teaching and research is undoubtedly required: this should not be at the expense of research, but through additional incentives to drive up teaching quality. ”

21. *“TEF will increase students’ understanding of what they are getting for their money and improve the value they derive from their investment”*



The University Of Sheffield.



Our University. Our Future. Our Plan.

Our Mission

To educate others and ourselves and to learn through doing so, thereby improving the world.

Our Identity

A civic institution proud of its urban character, driving growth and vibrancy for the city, the region, and the globe.

Our Vision

That research, teaching, and learning together create a positive culture of higher education.

Our Guiding Principles

Excellence, ambition, engagement, collegiality, resourcefulness, resilience, agility, diversity.

Our University. Our Future. Our Plan

Education and Student Experience

We want to offer the highest-quality education and student experience.

Key challenges

Demonstrating that we provide the highest quality education which equips students for their future.

Maximising employability, innovation and globally-recognised graduate skills.

Ensuring value for money, including providing excellent facilities.

Developing new routes to degrees and new forms of access.



“Ensuring value for money” is a challenge



The Challenge of Resource

We understand that our ambitions for the quality and quantity of our education, scholarship and research will bring challenges in both the availability and the optimal use of our resources.

An increasing number of students wish to benefit from the best possible higher education experience, and the shift of the funding burden for home students from the public purse to the individual student requires our acknowledgement and response.

Further, we recognise other external challenges: reductions in public funding arising from the UK government's approach to global economic pressures, accompanied by a scaling-back of research and development undertaken by business; widespread concern about UK immigration policy and controls and their impact on international student numbers; and increasing competition for the best students and staff.

In order to meet these challenges, we will:

- Seek new and diverse types of income from public, private and business sources.
- Ensure that all of our student experiences and research partnerships provide value for money.
- Allocate resources across the University in a principled, transparent and clear way, so that the best spending decisions are taken by those best qualified to do so.
- Make fully evaluated choices on the priorities of proposed capital projects.
- Raise funds from diverse philanthropic sources to sustain, widen and enhance the quality of those research, teaching and other publicly-responsible activities which we would otherwise be unable to afford through core-funding streams.
- Build a community of engaged alumni and other supporters whose time and gifts of other non-financial resources provide advice, expertise and opportunities for staff and students.
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all our supporting structures and processes.

We recognise that when new, creative and developmental activities arise, they may require additional flexible resources to ensure that they achieve their maximum potential reach and impact. We will continue to advocate for sustainable and appropriate levels of funding.

Only by being prudent, innovative and open with our students, partners and staff, can we create a supportive environment in which resources are effectively applied.

“Ensure that all of our student experiences and research partnerships provide value for money”



RESEARCH



Universities UK

BIS | Department for Business
Innovation & Skills

BIS RESEARCH PAPER NUMBER 45

The Returns to Higher Education
Qualifications

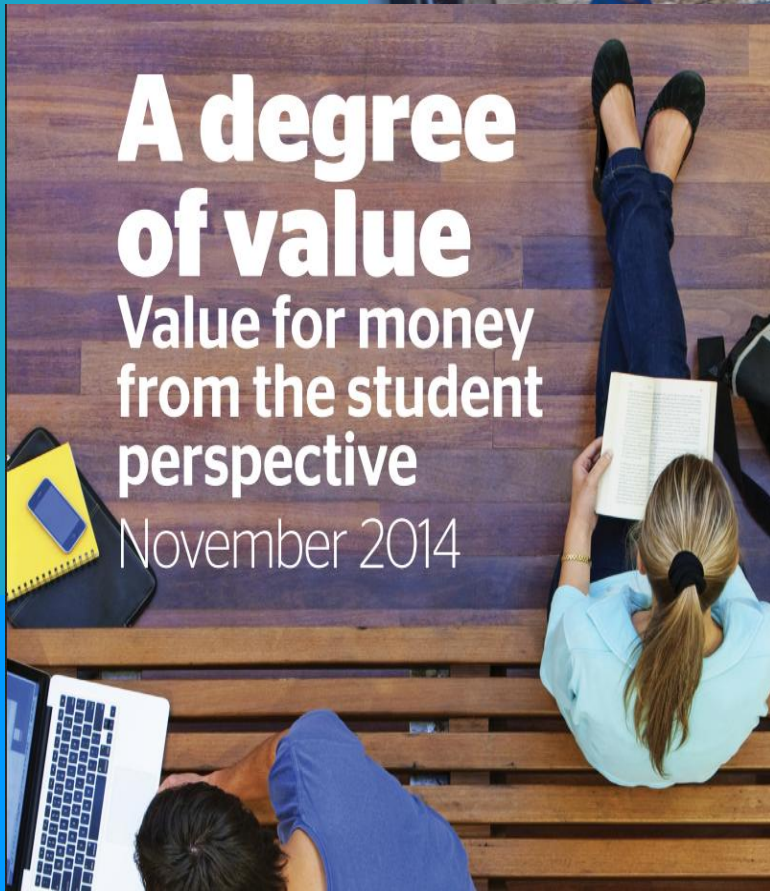
JUNE 2011

Where student fees go

A degree of value

Value for money from the student perspective

November 2014



Higher Education Policy Institute



The 2016 Student Academic Experience Survey

Jonathan Neves & Nick Hillman



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Buy my
own
textbook -
that's
ridiculous!

We must be paying
about £150-£200 for
each lecture

On the whole I think I'm
getting my money's worth,
but there are some things
that are annoying, such as
having to pay for printing
and photocopying

A student told me he was
disappointed with his low
grade because he had "paid
so much money".

£9,000 a year makes you more
aware of what you're getting for
your money.

"I pay you to teach me what's in the
article, not the other way around."



Student perceptions of value survey

- Enthusiastic amateurs
- Questionnaire run via Survey Monkey
- Consulted with Psychology about survey form, Ethics clearance obtained



What do students really value?

- Asked questions designed to elicit what students value and how they feel about what they pay
- Chose not to use the phrase 'value for money'





6 areas of questioning

- Teaching quality and experience: comparisons with school
- Course: contact time and amount of independent study
- Different fee levels: perceptions of value
- Perceptions of investment to support teaching
- Getting a job: career salary expectations
- Expectations of loan repayments



Survey respondents

- 9 Departments, 5 Faculties
- 150 responses, 19% response rate
- 67% went to state school
- 46% were female
- 14% had other responsibilities including full-time or part-time work and caring responsibilities
- 17% were overseas students
- 29% were students over 21



How do you rate the quality of teaching

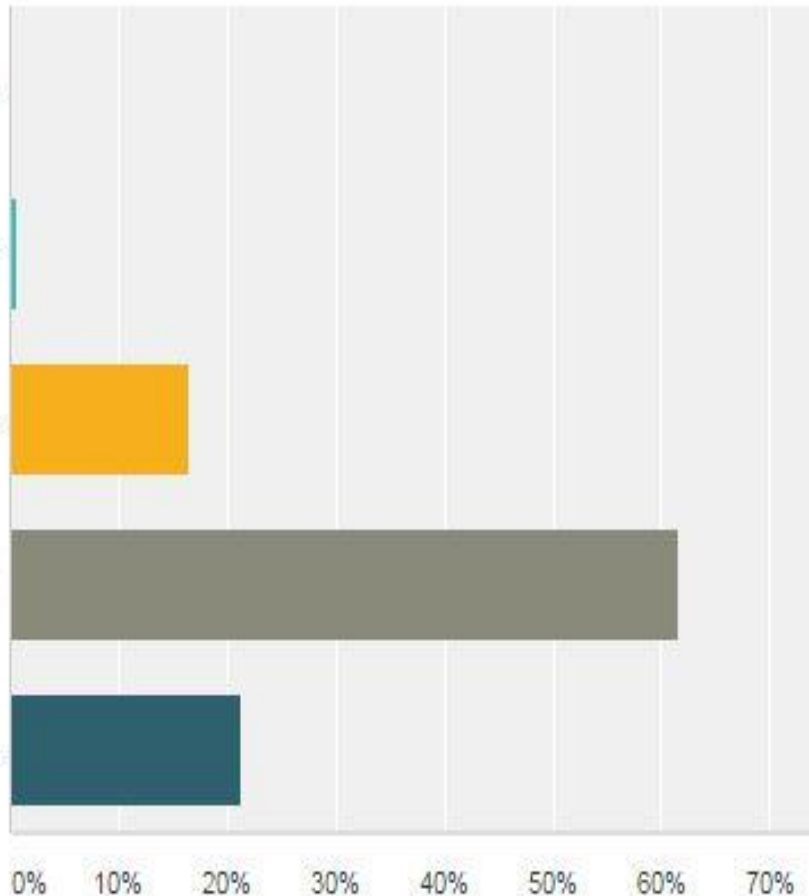
Very poor

Poor

Fair

Good

Excellent



How does the quality of teaching compare with school?

42.5% of private school students say University teaching is better/much better

50% of state school students say University teaching is better/much better

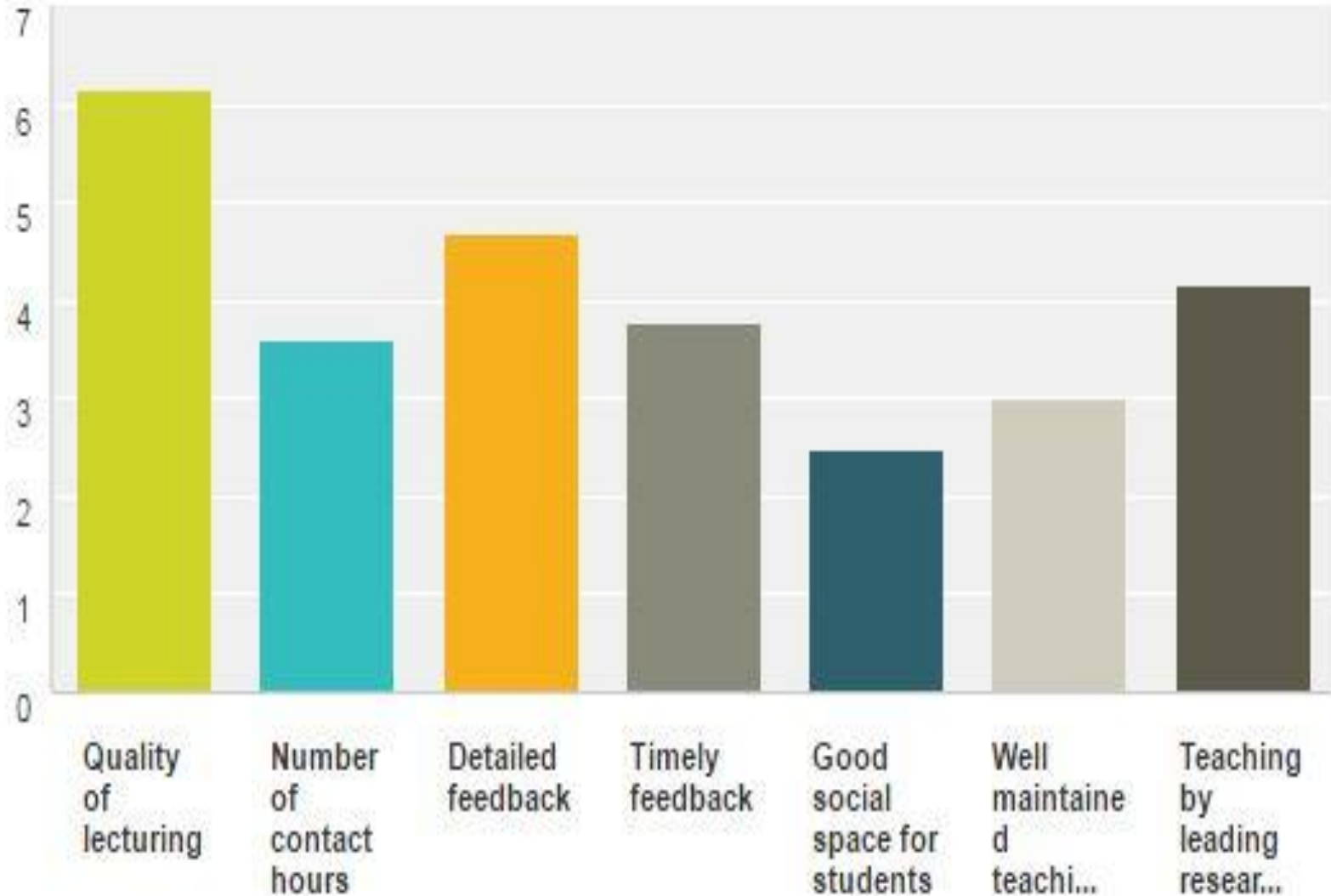
25% of private school students say University teaching is worse

12% of state educated students say it is worse or much worse



The University
Of
Sheffield.

What is important?





Contact and Study Hours

- 37% fewer than 10 hours study per week
- But 42% are doing more than 15
- 18% had fewer than 10 hours contact but 61% had more than 15 per week





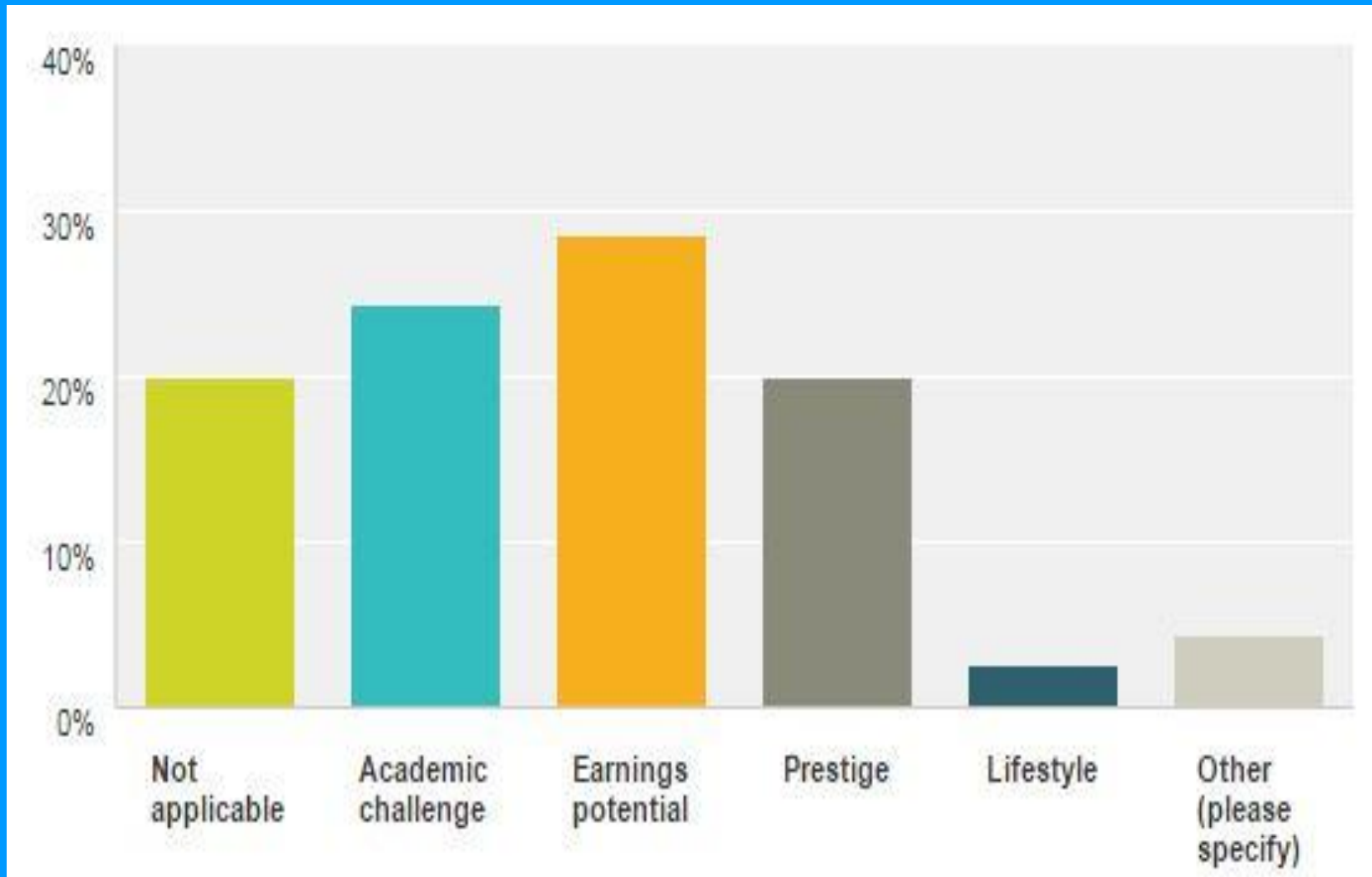
Willingness to pay

- A Russell group university: 36% would be willing to pay a maximum of £9k; but 25% would pay more
- A New University: 33% would never choose a new university; only 5% would pay more than £9k
- An elite University (UK or anywhere else in the world): 42% would pay over £9k; 2% would pay over £30k



The University
Of
Sheffield.

Why would you pay more?





The
University
Of
Sheffield.

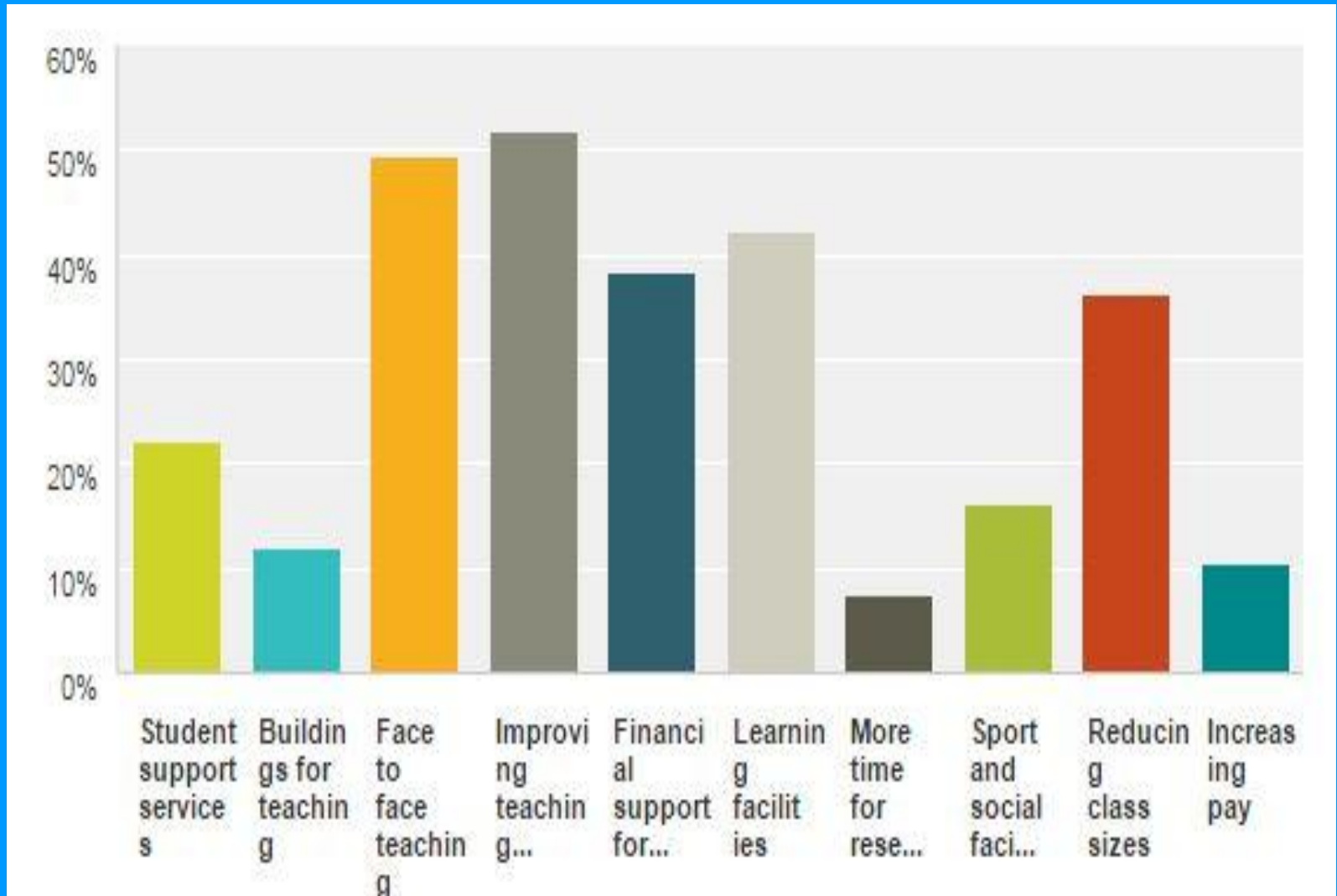
Where should we invest?

- Student support
- Financial support
- Facilities
- Class size
- Teaching skills





Areas for investment





The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Non-academic reasons to choose Sheffield



- Living cost
- Safety
- Vibrant city

- Peak District
- Close to home
- Central location



Student perceptions of potential earnings and loan repayments

- Students had an accurate idea of what they are likely to earn on graduation
- Slightly over-optimistic on their maximum career earnings
- A third of students expect that it will take longer than 20 years to repay their student loan.



Learning 1: Working as a SIG

- Working co-operatively took us quite far
- Individuals led various parts
- Collective commitment to the cause
- Met mild/moderate resistance



Learning 2: So what?

- Wanted to test UoS perceptions and provide an evidence base for future direction
- The clicker test
- Validated much of the wider literature
- Follow up survey and senior interest

