

## Scholarship Candidates Survey Summary Report 2022

### 1. Introduction

- The Foundation surveys its scholarship candidates as an annual exercise
- The results enables the continuous refinement of organisational strategy
- The data presented here could be of use to university partners, as well as wider stakeholders

### 2. Methodology

- A total of **173 candidates interviewed** between 8th February and 4th August 2022 as part of the Masters scholarship programme
- All candidates were asked to take the survey, with **51 completed surveys returned (29%)**
- Respondents attended UG courses at **36 different intuitions** across the sector
- **Survey design:** both open qualitative and closed, scalar /quantitative questions

#### ➤ **Key areas explored**

##### **A. The Student Experience (Q1-6)**

- i) Faith provision
- ii) Student Activities
- iii) Curriculum content
- iv) Religious literacy of academic staff

##### **B. Student Support Services (Q7-10)**

- i) Welfare services
- ii) Career Services

##### **C. Expectations and Challenges (Q11-12)**

- i) Feeling inhibited in academic progression
- ii) Identifying factors inhibiting access to PG Education
- iii) Expectations of postgraduate study

##### **D. Equalities monitoring**

- i) Gender
- ii) Ethnicity
- iii) Household Income

### 3. Main Findings

- **Part A: The Student Experience**
- **Quantitative themes**

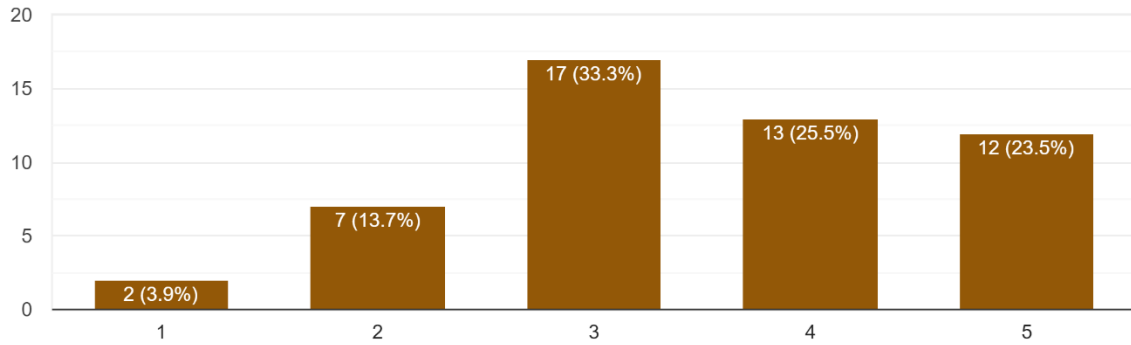
- Positive perceptions are at their highest in relation to faith provision with **49% strongly or moderately agreeing** with the statement that there are excellent faith services in place at their university (**Fig. 1**)
- High degree of participation in Student Activities (SU and Societies) with involvement at 59% amongst respondents (**Fig. 2**)

- Less satisfaction around curriculum content, **with 23.5% strongly or moderately disagreeing** with the statement that the curriculum they were taught reflected the contribution of different cultures and worldviews (**Fig. 3**)
- **Substantial minority of respondents (21.5% or one in five)** thought academic staff were not faith literate enough (**Fig 4**)

2. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: 'My university has excellent faith provision and services in place for Muslim students'

51 responses

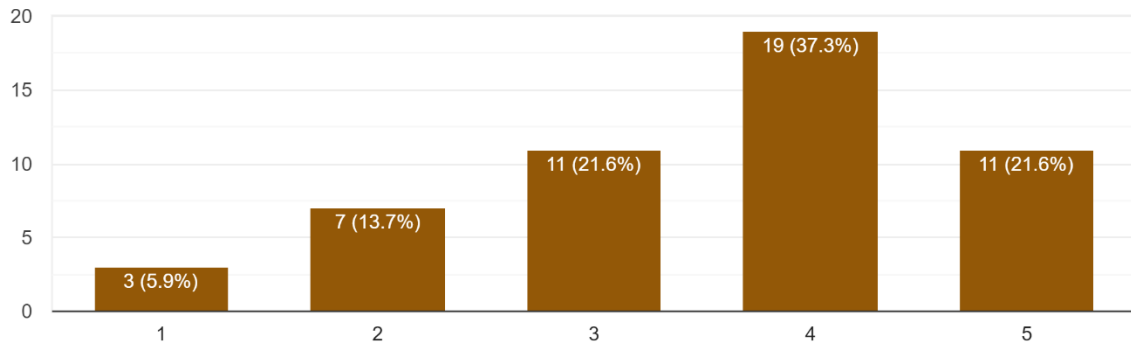
**Fig. 1**



3. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: 'I was fully involved in the activities run by my Students' Union and participated in Student Societies at my University'

51 responses

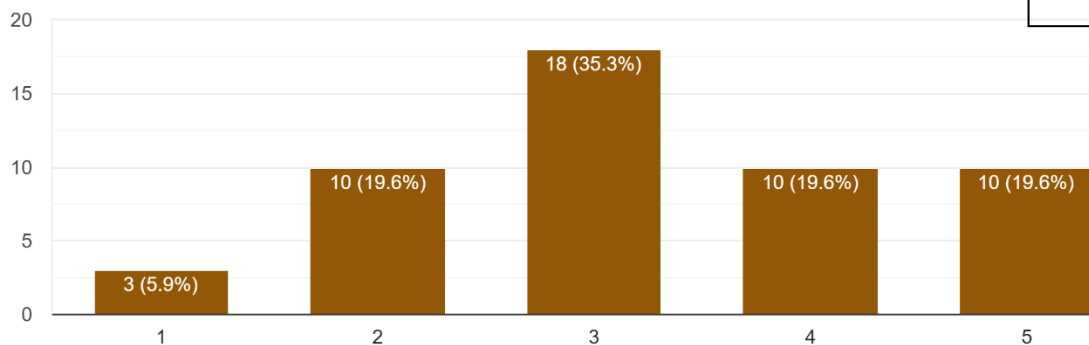
**Fig. 2**



4. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: 'The curriculum taught on my academic programme reflected the contribution of different cultures and worldviews to the discipline.'

51 responses

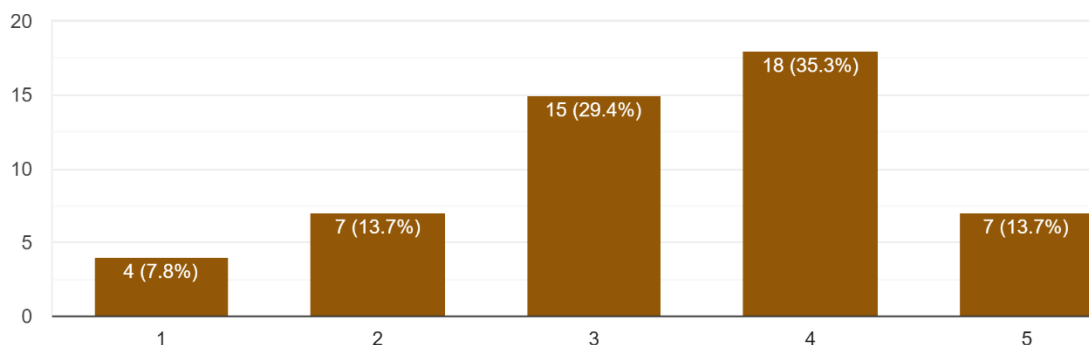
**Fig. 3**



5. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: 'Academic staff at my university were faith literate and demonstrated sensitivity to the faith practices of Muslim students.'

51 responses

**Fig. 4**



➤ **Qualitative themes**

- *A feeling amongst British Muslims students that there was a lack of EDI and WP provision for them*
- *Comments suggest a **homogenising approach** to minority students still taken; a disaggregation of 'BME' needed to occur*
- *Issues raised by Muslim students seem to take considerably longer to address as their claims **not strategically prioritised** by institutions*
- *For many respondents, a **sense of belonging revolved around faith services***
- *Accessibility to **prayer spaces and participation in student activities** (such as, for example, involvement in the Islamic Society) critical to feeling accepted*

**Sample of answers to Q6: ‘Overall, please describe how you found your student experience. What are the significant factors that affected your experience?’**

- *“Muslims are not individually provisioned for; however I feel that we should be. We are currently provisioned for under the umbrella of diverse students. If black students are separately provisioned for under the umbrella of Black Lives Matter then Muslims should be provisioned for separately...”*
- *“I have noted in particular, that any small issues raised by Muslim students take a long time to resolve.”*
- *“Their [sic] is an attitude of protecting ones image rather than fixing the problems that are discriminative towards Muslim student.”*
- *“One of the most significant things I really apricated [sic] about the...[university]...Campus was, we had a wonderful Prayer room, which was tranquil and calming. A great space to pray and reflect.”*
- *“Society work and organisations were the main things that affected my experience positively”*
- *“The sports clubs and societies were inclusive and made my student experience all the better.” “isoc helped my greatly”*

**Qualitative themes continued...**

- Concern that there was a lack of cultural awareness amongst academic staff
- Not enough diversity within the academic community; this is closely associated with a curriculum still seen as Eurocentric and out of date
- Respondents place emphasis on EDI interventions as a necessary corrective, and developing the tools needed to critically engage with the curriculum

**Sample answers continued...**

- *“Universities in the UK could do more to make underrepresented groups feel more included in the institutions, be more aware of the religious and cultural needs.”*
- *“Overall my experience as a student was satisfactory in terms of workload and stress factors. However, I was extremely unsatisfied with some lecturers unconscious bias and lack of a range of cultures being taught.”*
- *“I felt that my university teachers were not of different ethnic backgrounds or of different faiths so sometimes struggled to explain certain points to them due to lack of cultural awareness”*
- *“More implementation of equality and diversity, not many opportunities surrounding this area had been implemented into the university.”*
- *“Overall, the course structure provided allowed me to objectively deconstruct systematically racialised constitution[s]. Both nationally & and internationally[,] truthfully I had a great experience research[ing]...independently.”*

➤ **Part B: Student Support Services**

➤ **Quantitative themes**

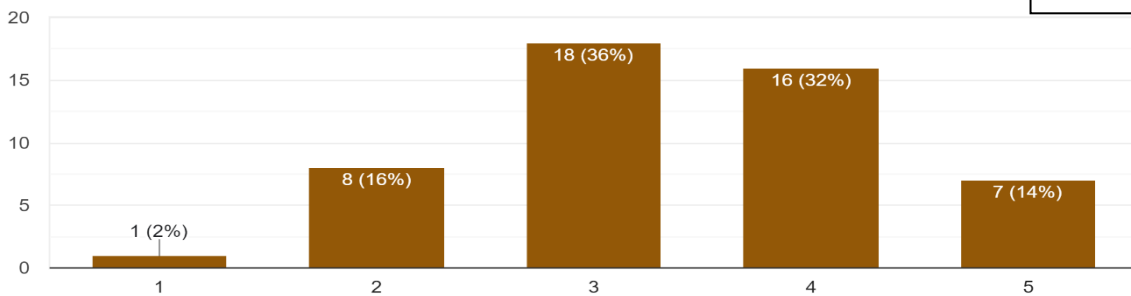
- Respondents satisfaction rises to 46% in respect to **welfare and counselling services (Fig. 5)**
- Enthusiasm falls to 40% on the matter of **access to career services (Fig. 6)** and to 41% on whether **EDI schemes were impactful and well run** (with 20% disagreeing) **(Fig. 7)**

7. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: 'The welfare services, including counselling provision, at my university were accessible and met my needs.'

50 responses

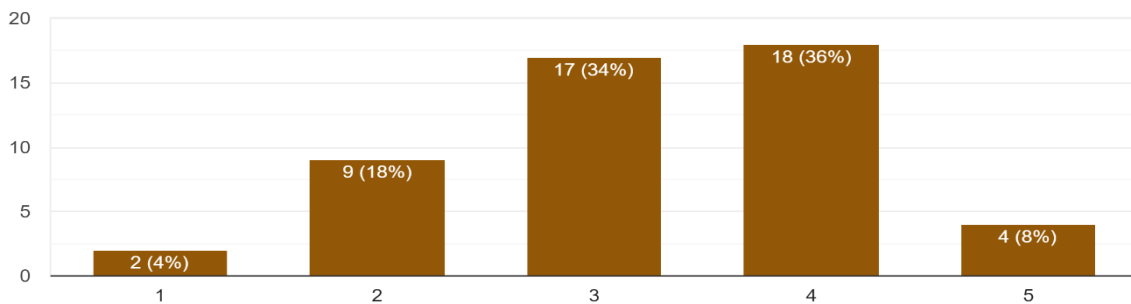
**Fig. 5**

**Fig. 6**



8. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: 'The career services at my university were accessible and met my needs'

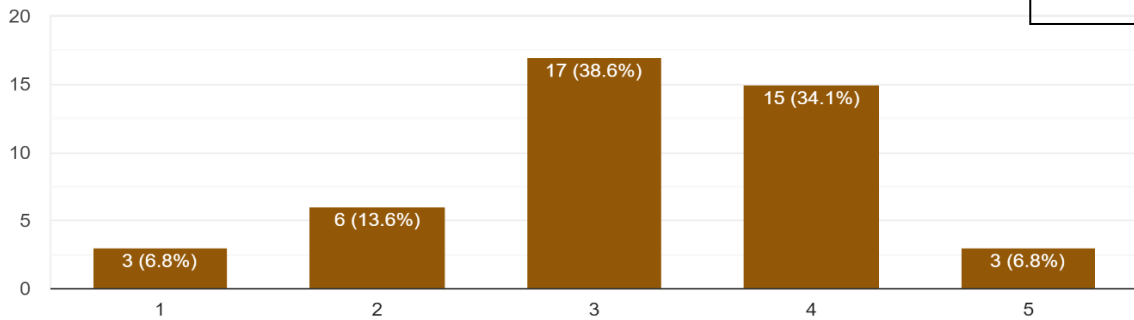
50 responses



9. If you have come across any Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and/or widening participation schemes, tell us to what extent you agree with the ...es and schools etc.) were impactful and well run.

44 responses

**Fig. 7**



➤ **Qualitative themes**

- Respondents were generally complimentary in terms of student services
- Comments centre on the need for more tailored provision, taking faith into account
- Many stated there was lack of British Muslim input into the design of schemes of support

**Sample of answers to Q10: ‘Overall, tell us about your experiences accessing student support services – in particular, did they cater to the sensibilities of British Muslim students?’**

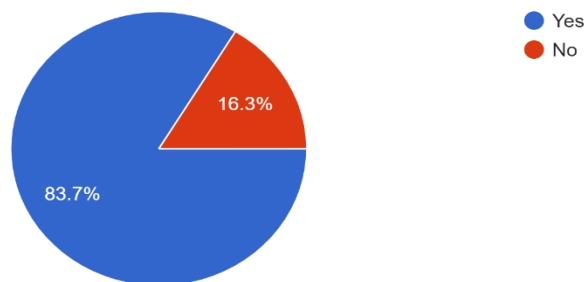
- “...I have had appointments with the Talent Team that help graduates with life after university. The individual I had meetings with took my faith into consideration when providing me options for future study and work.”
- The student support services were generally very good, any issues were dealt with really well. However, I wouldn’t say they went out of their way to cater to the sensibilities of British Muslim students.
- “I think there was plenty of resources and services we could access. However, I felt that they did not always cater to the sensibilities of Muslims students”

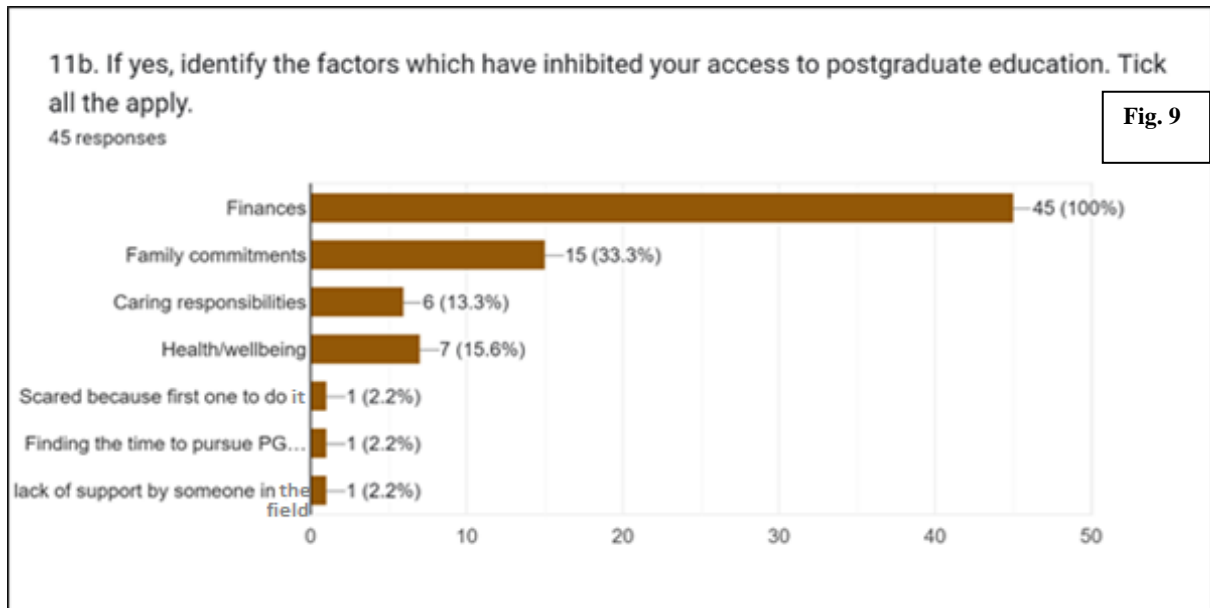
➤ **Part C: Expectations and challenges**

11a. Have you felt in anyway inhibited in pursuing postgraduate education?

49 responses

**Fig. 8**





**Synthesised answers to Q12: ‘What are your expectations of postgraduate study? What do you expect to gain from it?’**

- Develop skills, professional expertise and experience
- Stand out in the labour market and generate employment opportunities
- Networking and social capital
- Gain advanced and specialist knowledge
- Improve confidence and for empowerment purposes
- Increase employability
- Academic and professional credibility
- Community benefit and address social challenges facing British Muslims
- Stepping stone to a PhD
- Necessary professional qualification
- Important for changing careers
- Help to tackle Islamophobia
- “A new life”

➤ **Equalities Monitoring**

