# Unitu Summary Report 2020-2021

This report documents Unitu activity over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year, with a particular focus on five core areas:

* Engagement data
* Unitu posts increasing the visibility of student perspectives
* Student-Staff Partnership Grant update
* Staff feedback
* Summary

# Engagement data

This section highlights levels of engagement over the course of this academic year. The data below is taken from Week Fourty-Five (20th August 2021).

**Posts by board**

619 posts have been created by staff, students and Year Reps this academic year. The majority of posts have been on the Medicine board. (351 posts/57%).

**Total Views**

Posts have been viewed 76,906 times on Unitu. This figure represents ‘unique views’. For example, if a student views a post five times this will count as one view. 68% of all views (51,947) have been from posts on the Medicine board. The UG Science board has the second most with 10,068 (13%).

**Posts by feedback type**

The vast majority of posts we have seen so far have been issues and questions, representing 36% of posts on Unitu respectively.

**User retention**

User retention refers to users who have logged in to Unitu over the past week. User retention at monthly intervals shows that, on average, 575 to 710 users access Unitu on a weekly basis during term time.

**Account activations**

65% of all possible users (64% students, 86% Year Reps & 88% staff) have activated their accounts. Returning students did not lose access to their account which explains why activation rates are significantly higher compared to the first month of implementation in 2019-2020. Overall account activation has increased from 49% at the start of the academic year to 65% now.

**Account activation by programme**

The tables below illustrate activation data per programme up to 30th March 2021 (new data has been requested, although account activation has not increased significantly overall since March 2021). The activation rates of programmes which have witnessed high engagement rates have been highlighted in green with full-time Undergraduate/Post-grad Pre-reg programmes highlighted in yellow.

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| **Departmental Board** | **Course** | **Activation rate** |
| Allied Health and Nursing | BSc Paramedic Science | 81.29% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration) | 72.41% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | Undergraduate Healthcare Practice Module Only | 7.59% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | MRes Clinical Research - Full Time | 66.67% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | MSc Healthcare Practice - Module Only | 6.06% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy | 58.08% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy | 57.83% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | Diagnostic Radiography | 46.32% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | BSc Therapeutic Radiography | 42.86% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | PG Cert Healthcare Practice - Part Time | 33.33% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | MRes Clinical Research - Part Time | 33.33% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | Integrated Degree Appr Adv Clinical Practitioner | 26.09% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | BSc Paramedic Science in Service 2 years | 21.43% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | FD in Healthcare Practice | 18.75% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | MSc Healthcare Practice - Part Time | 16.95% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | Postgraduate Diploma Advanced Clinical Practice | 16.67% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | Graduate Cert Healthcare Practice - Part Time | 14.29% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | BSc (Hons) Healthcare Practice - Part Time | 12.50% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | BSc Paramedic Science in Service 3 years | 50% |
| Allied Health and Nursing | MSc Advanced Clinical Practice (Degree Appr) | 20% |

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| **Departmental Board** | **Course** | **Activation rate** |
| Medicine | MBBS5 | 87.22% |
| Medicine | MBBS4 | 83.83% |
| Medicine | International MBBS | 88% |

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| **Departmental Board** | **Course** | **Activation rate** |
| Postgraduate School | MRes in Biomedical Sciences | 57.69% |
| Postgraduate School | MSc in Global Health FT | 54.05% |
| Postgraduate School | Genomic Medicine Modules | 44.04% |
| Postgraduate School | PG Cert Global Health PT | 33.33% |
| Postgraduate School | MSc Genomic Medicine Full Time | 33.33% |
| Postgraduate School | MSc Physician Associate Studies - Full Time | 26.68% |
| Postgraduate School | MSc Physician Associate Studies - Part Time | 27.27% |
| Postgraduate School | PG Cert Healthcare Research Skills | 22.22% |
| Postgraduate School | MPhil/PhD | 17.39% |
| Postgraduate School | PG Certificate Genomic Medicine Part time | 16.67% |
| Postgraduate School | MSc Sports Cardiology Part Time | 13.33% |
| Postgraduate School | PG Certificate in Sports Cardiology Part Time | 100% |
| Postgraduate School | MSc Genomic Medicine Part Time | 50% |
| Postgraduate School | MSc Translational Medicine | 20% |
| Postgraduate School | PG Cert Healthcare Practice - Part Time | 10% |

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| **Departmental Board** | **Course** | **Activation rate** |
| UG Science | Intercalated BSc | 91.2% |
| UG Science | MSc Biomedical Science | 76.92% |
| UG Science | BSc Biomedical Science | 75.96% |
| UG Science | BSc Healthcare Science | 73.44% |
| UG Science | BSc Clinical Pharmacology | 61.25% |

Activation rates across programmes range from 7% to 100%. For full-time undergraduate programmes, where the overwhelming majority of engagement has occurred activation rates have ranged from 42.86% (Therapeutic Radiography) to 91.2% (Intercalated BSc).

Unitu is most frequently used by MBBS4/MBBS5 and Biomedical Science students with sporadic usage across the Centre for Allied Health. It is not surprising that MBBS4 (83.83%), MBBS5 (87.22%) and Biomedical Science (75.96%) have high activation rates.

# Unitu posts increasing the visibility of student perspectives

As demonstrated by the statistical data above, Unitu has been widely used by St George’s over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year. Below is an overview of some of the key posts which have had a significant level of engagement or required a more detailed response from staff across the institution. The vast majority of the posts included are from the University Board.

**Title:** Library Space

**Board:** University

**Link:** <https://sgul.unitu.co.uk/feedback/sg-23982>

**Post created date:** 23rd March 2021

**Summary:** Students commented that space was at a premium in the library, with students leaving their belongings behind in order to reserve space. The post was quickly responded to with colleagues from the library being more vigilant and requiring students to pick up a ‘Study Break Pass’ should they need to leave their desk.

The issue of study space was also raised at the Return to Site Ops Group, as it is likely that students will want to revise on-site in preparation for their end of year assessments.

**Title:** Graduation

**Board:** University

**Link:** <https://sgul.unitu.co.uk/feedback/sg-23060>

**Post created date:** 24th February 2021

**Summary:** Several responses were created in response to the University’s cancellation of 2021 Graduation Ceremonies. The main grievance was the way in which messages where communicated as they coincided with the optimism created by the release of the government’s roadmap.

A survey regarding graduation was shared with students after the original communication and subsequent Unitu posts. This will provide colleagues from ERCM with a strong evidence base when making future decisions regarding graduation.

**Title:** No detriment policy

**Board:** University

**Link:** <https://sgul.unitu.co.uk/feedback/sg-21769>

**Post created date:** 20th January 2021

**Summary:** Students asked whether a no detriment policy would be introduced this academic year. This prompted an open forum conversation involving staff, students and the Students’ Union. There have been previous examples of when feedback or questions gathered from Unitu have been used to inform Q&A sessions. However, this was the first time that students were formally invited to the session and it led to a better flow of conversation between students and staff.

**Title:** Please open more rooms

**Board:** University

**Link:** https://sgul.unitu.co.uk/feedback/sg-24502

**Post created date:** 21st April 2021

**Summary:** Students have requested for additional space to be made available for revision sessions in preparation for spring exams. Colleagues were first alerted to this post at BCP Education on Thursday 22nd April and a core group made of staff from BCP Education and RTS Ops Group have been tasked with formulating a response.

**Title:** No where to eat

**Board:** University

**Link:** <https://sgul.unitu.co.uk/feedback/sg-21106>

**Post created date:** 4th January 2021

**Summary:** In response to student feedback, the SU bar was opened so that students were able to have their lunch.

**Title:** Refunding accommodation

**Board:** University

**Link:** <https://sgul.unitu.co.uk/feedback/sg-19120>

**Post created date:** 6th November 2020

**Summary:** Students were advocating for a partial refund on accommodation due to a lack of onsite teaching and in response to rent strikes across the UK. This allowed colleagues from Registry and Student Services to understand the depth of student feeling regarding this issue.

**Title:** Anyone else struggling to work?

**Board:** Medicine

**Link:** <https://sgul.unitu.co.uk/feedback/sg-21235>

**Post created date:** 6th January 2021

**Summary:** In this post, a student explained that they were struggling to study online, other students were also having a similar experience. In response, the MBBS Student Support Manager was able to provide links to academic support. This prompted further conversations about how CIDE could use Unitu to view student feedback and tailor academic support to student needs.

**Title:** 24 hour exams for third year biomed exams

**Board:** UG Science

**Link:** <https://sgul.unitu.co.uk/feedback/sg-23479>

**Post created date:** 6th March 2021

**Summary:** This post coincided with additional feedback from Third Year Biomedical Science students regarding their exams. A wider discussion was held between University Senior Leadership, Students’ Union, the Course Team and Year Reps. This allowed Year Reps to have a better understanding of institutional decision-making and prompted the University to think about additional time given to LAQ exams.

**Title:** 2021/22

**Board:** University

**Link:** <https://sgul.unitu.co.uk/feedback/sg-25561> and <https://sgul.unitu.co.uk/feedback/sg-25656>

**Post created date:** 27th June and 5th July 2021

**Summary:** Students were asking about the University’s return to site plans following government relaxation over the summer. A response was crafted by colleagues from the Communications and Senior Management Team, which has been shared on the University website.

# Student-Staff Partnership Grant (SSPG) update

Colleagues from the Student Experience Team, Students’ Union and Year Reps undertook a SSPG over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year to better understand student perceptions of Unitu. The full report can be seen [here](https://sgul365-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/jsadding_sgul_ac_uk/EYl_GNV1VwBEi0OC4CL9kX8BiwKR1XrVaIHdHbjgzew8WQ?e=YCfNR5).

249 students participated in a survey and 22 students attended focus groups to unpick some of the initial findings of the survey. The vast majority of participants studied Medicine or Biomedical Science. Most respondents used Unitu on a weekly basis or when their was a post they wanted to interact with.

73% of respondents felt that Unitu is a good thing for St George’s and 65% of students believed that Unitu has allowed them to have their voices heard. This reflects a positive overall perception of the platform. However, its usefulness can be questioned as only 41% of respondents agreed that posts on Unitu had led to positive change and 36% of respondents believed that feedback on Unitu was acted upon. Respondents also felt that Year Reps and staff could play a more proactive role in promoting the platform.

Students were positive about Unitu because it gave them a voice, direct contact with staff, helped them to feel part of a community and there were also positive comments regarding anonymity. Students were also negative about anonymity, unprofessional usage of the platform by their peers, feedback not being acted upon and the app not being user friendly. In order to improve Unitu, students asked for improved staff responses, the removal of anonymity, improved student resources and wider usage and an improved user interface. The contradictions between positives, negatives and improvements is not surprising as there is not one sole student voice, there is a multiplicity of student voices with differing expectations, demands and experiences.

There was no clear consensus regarding student’s perception of anonymity. For example, 72% of respondents felt that anonymity led to rude comments, 22% of respondents suggested that rude comments discouraged them from using the platform, however,83% of students felt that posting on Unitu was a good thing. One of the key recommendations from the SSPG was for the University Board to be de-anonymised. We would be the first Unitu partner institution to do this, but it could be a useful way to ensure that a positive, professional and constructive culture is created. This recommendation needs to be approved by the Unitu Steering Group and the Unitu technical team need to confirm whether this change is possible.

Additional recommendations included Year Reps and staff having a more proactive presence on the platform, feedback workshops for staff, educating students regarding feedback processes, comprehensive induction materials and ongoing promotion of Unitu throughout the 2021-2022 academic year.

# Staff feedback and survey

Feedback from the Unitu Working Group and ad-hoc staff feedback regarding Unitu has largely been negative, especially regarding anonymity and rude content posted on the platform. To coincide with the SSPG, a staff survey was also circulated to illicit staff feedback in a formal manner. The full staff survey report can be found [here](https://sgul365-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/jsadding_sgul_ac_uk/EZeh7oT1DS1IviVMJ8R96WsBTmV08nwPAVYE-VXRu9PIQQ?e=Tdeqig).

30 staff members responded to the survey, 28 of whom had an active role as part of Unitu; whether that as a member of the Working or Steering Group, Course Director, Board Admin or Member of a departmental or University Board.

The key difference in how Unitu is perceived between students and staff is differing perspectives regarding anonymity. 83% of students thought that Unitu was a good thing compared to 20% of staff. Some students saw anonymity as a positive for allowing them raise issues which they might not have been able to do so. Whilst some other students acknowledged that anonymity lead to rude content being created which discouraged them from engaging with the platform, whereas virtually all staff respondents had a negative perception of anonymity.

Generally speaking, staff were more negative about Unitu compared to students. For example, 53% of staff respondents considered Unitu to be useful, compared to 71% of students. Similarly, 27% of staff and 73% students agreed that Unitu is a good thing for St George’s. This difference in perception of Unitu can lead to tension, particularly if students are keen to engage with the platform and staff members are reluctant to do so.

Staff feedback regarding the culture of kindness, usefulness of the platform, feedback resulting in positive change was all overwhelmingly negative and qualitative comments frequently referenced the ‘toxic’ and ‘poisonous’ nature of the platform. Some staff members also commented that the platform should be closed.

The results from the staff survey were not surprising and largely reflected the feedback received from staff members over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year.

# Summary

Over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year, engagement with Unitu has been consistent and sustained, particularly amongst Medicine and Biomedical students. Aside from a surge of engagement in January 2021, student engagement with Unitu has not reached the levels attained between March and May 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a significant increase in engagement.

Student perceptions of the platform have largely stayed positive with the SSPG highlighting that 73% of students felt that Unitu is a good thing for St George’s and 65% of students believed that Unitu has allowed them to have their voices heard. This reflects a positive overall perception of the platform. However, its usefulness can be questioned as only 41% of respondents agreed that posts on Unitu had led to positive change and 36% of respondents believed that feedback on Unitu was acted upon.

As indicated by the staff survey, staff perceptions of the platform are very negative. Staff were more negative about Unitu compared to students. For example, 53% of staff respondents considered Unitu to be useful, compared to 71% of students. Similarly, 27% of staff and 73% students agreed that Unitu is a good thing for St George’s.

The usefulness of Unitu can certainly be improved with 43% of students and 27% staff currently believing that Unitu has led to positive changes. Although engagement levels have been relatively high over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year, Unitu has not led to a plethora of changes which have benefitted the student experience.

Hopefully, the recommendations outlined in the SSPG and additional on-campus activity will lead to improvements in the perception of the platform, a more positive, professional and constructive culture and closer relationships between staff, Year Reps and students.