

RES INSIGHTS | ISSUE 1

RAISING THE STANDARD



RESIDENTIAL
EXPERIENCE
STANDARD

FOREWORD

It was a genuine pleasure and a privilege to work with the six founding members of the Residential Experience Standard (RES) pilot.

From the preparatory work and introduction of a new question set, modelled on the success of the award winning UK Investor in Students (IIS) accreditation programme, to running the survey and then presenting the results back, we were delighted with the engagement and passion shown by all of the teams involved.

Out of those survey results, we discovered some fascinating themes that we'd love to share with you. We introduced a new pillar for RES (Personal Safety) that brought out some interesting stats and trends around those students who'd witnessed and/or reported incidents of hazing or sexism. These are included within this paper along with some thematic analysis of the free text comments submitted.

We spotted some differences between the experiences of international and domestic students in Australia and, in addition, we've highlighted differences between Australian based students and those in the UK.

We hope you find it all interesting too and would love to discuss further with you once you've had the chance to digest!



Rhys Thomas, Director of Residential Experience Standard

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**It was a genuine pleasure
and a privilege to work
with the six founding
members of RES.**

”

PERSONAL SAFETY

PERSONAL SAFETY

Personal Safety is at the very core of student accommodation and is the driving force behind the very existence of the Residential Experience Standard. If students can't feel safe in their home, no matter the quality of the service offering elsewhere, you haven't met their most basic of needs.

Throughout this section, we will look into the impact of personal safety on the overall experience of students in accommodation, with particular focus on hazing and sexism. I think we all know intuitively the impact issues like this will have on students, however, we now have the numbers to prove it.

HAZING

The topic of hazing at university is a hot one. So, to start with we needed to really understand the prevalence of hazing, as well as how well incidents are reported and dealt with.

As you can see, the data shows 6.9% of the students surveyed have either witnessed or experienced hazing within their accommodation, with more than half of those being female. Within those numbers, 30% of students reported the incident with 70% of them believing the issue was inadequately dealt with.

“I have witnessed or experienced incidents of Hazing in accommodation”

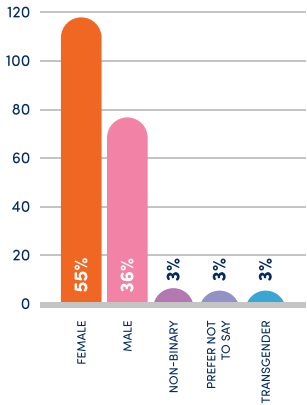


Yes

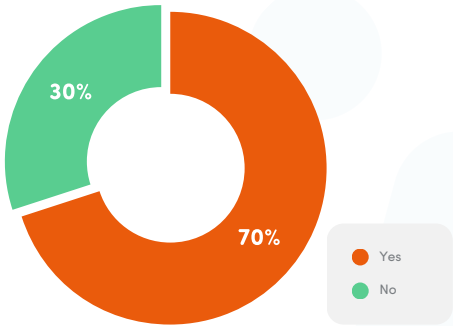


No

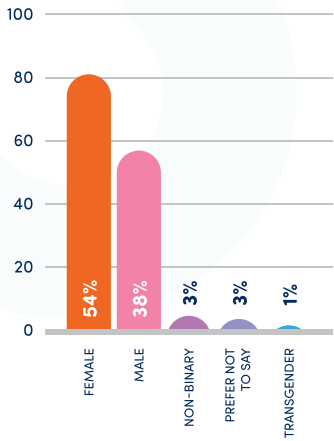
GENDER BREAKDOWN OF THOSE WHO HAVE WITNESSED HAZING



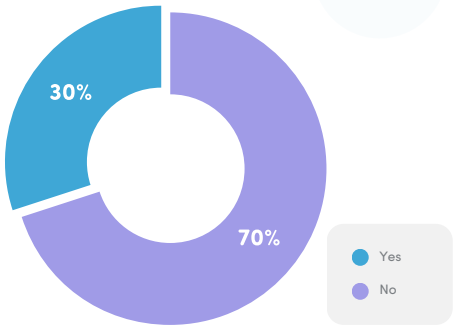
“I reported it”



GENDER BREAKDOWN OF THOSE WHO REPORTED HAZING



“Was this adequately dealt with by staff?”



THERE TO HELP?

With 70% of students feeling hazing incidents haven't been well dealt with by staff – work needs to be done to train staff to really help

SEXISM

The issue of sexism is another that needs to be fully understood to enable appropriate action to be taken.

Here we can see that 7.3% of students have witnessed or experienced incidents of sexism within their accommodation. Probably unsurprisingly, almost 70% of those that have witnessed sexism are female, and they were also far more likely to report the incident than their male peers. Sexism was far better reported than hazing across all students however, and there is also a slight improvement in staff support as well. It appears the issue of sexism is slightly better understood or at least less accepted in the student population than hazing. The lack of reporting and awareness in the male population suggests more work needs to be done with regards to allyship and advocacy.

“I have witnessed or experienced incidents of Sexism in accommodation”

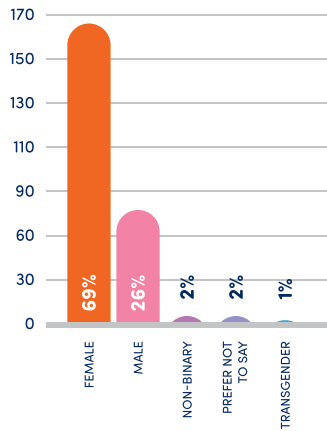


Witnessed Sexism

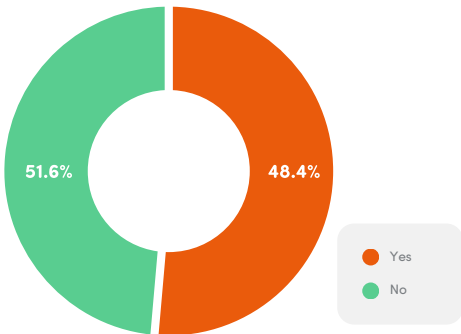


Did Not Witness Sexism

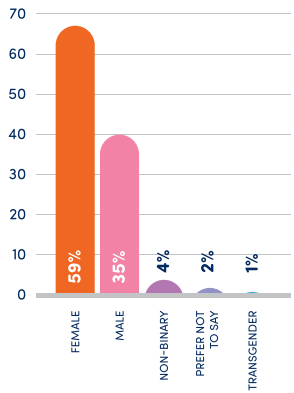
GENDER BREAKDOWN OF THOSE WHO HAVE WITNESSED SEXISM



“I reported it”



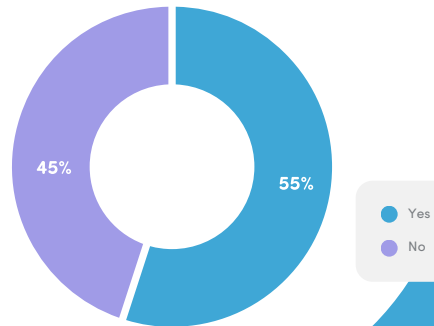
GENDER BREAKDOWN OF THOSE WHO REPORTED SEXISM



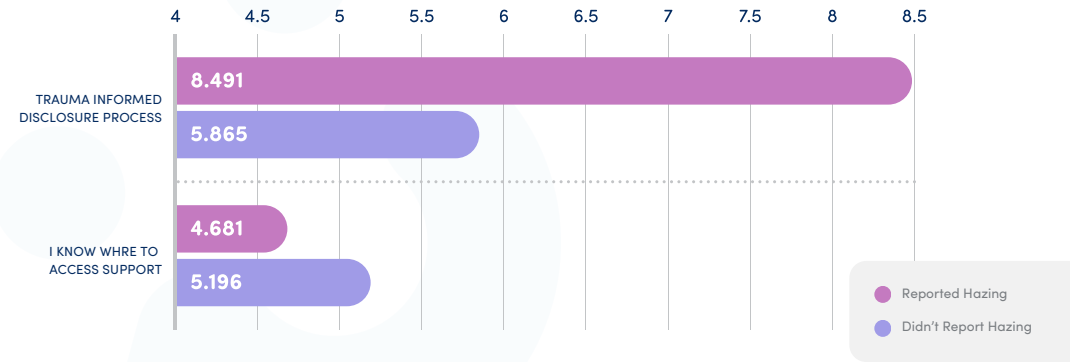
ONLY 26% OF SEXIST INCIDENTS WERE WITNESSED BY MEN...

Is there an issue with allyship, or at least a blind spot?

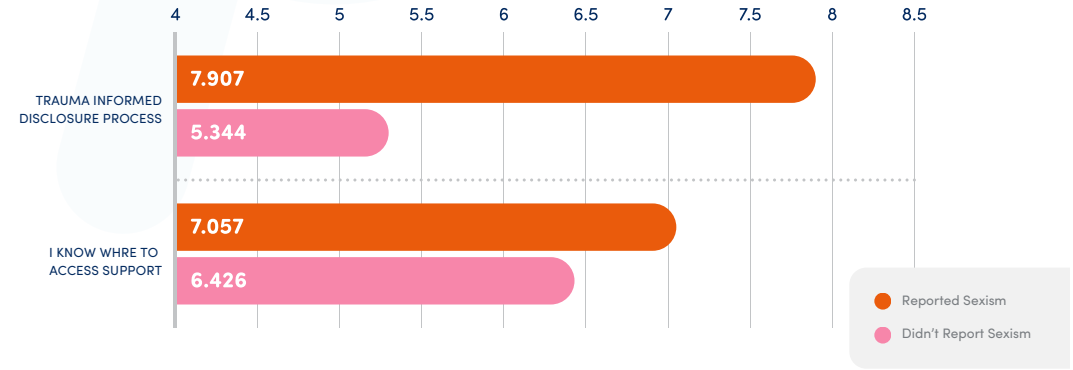
“Was this adequately dealt with by staff?”



HAZING – IMPACT ON PERCEPTION OF SUPPORT SERVICES



SEXISM – IMPACT ON PERCEPTION OF SUPPORT SERVICES



Students who report hazing or sexism have higher overall satisfaction scores than their counterparts who don't report it.

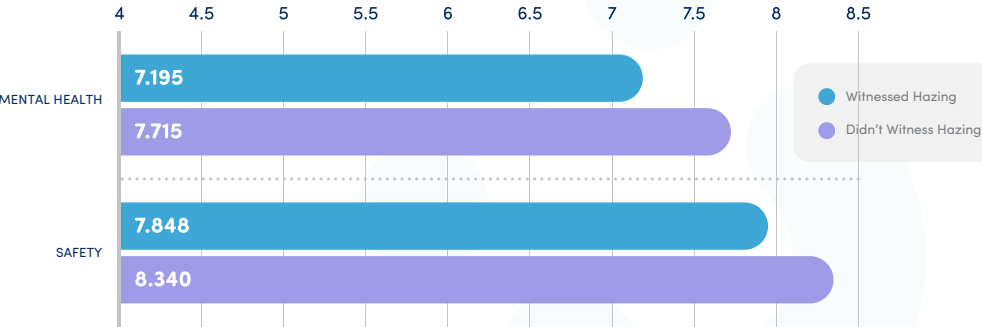
Maybe more initiatives stating how to report incidents of sexism and hazing and the importance of doing so are needed?

THE IMPACT

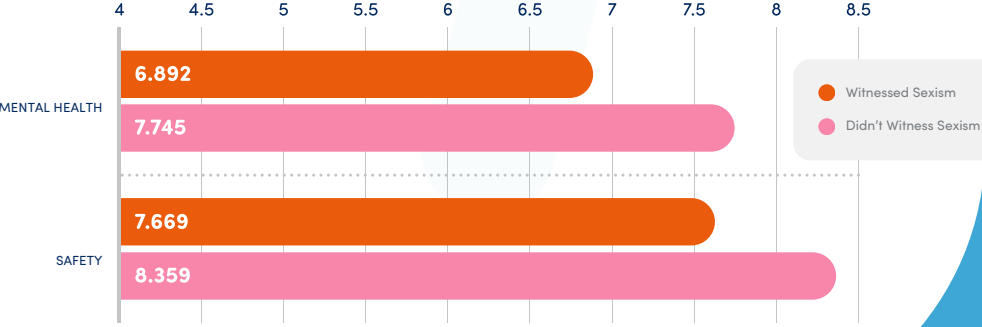
The data highlights the presence of hazing and sexism within student accommodation. While not widespread, the figures show that more students are affected than should be, underscoring the importance of continued efforts to eliminate these behaviours.

Here we look further into the impact that acts of hazing and sexism have on the student experience, with a particular view on mental health and feelings of safety. As you can see, students who witness hazing, sexism, sexual assault, or harassment have significantly worse feelings of safety and poorer mental health.

THE IMPACT OF HAZING



THE IMPACT OF SEXISM

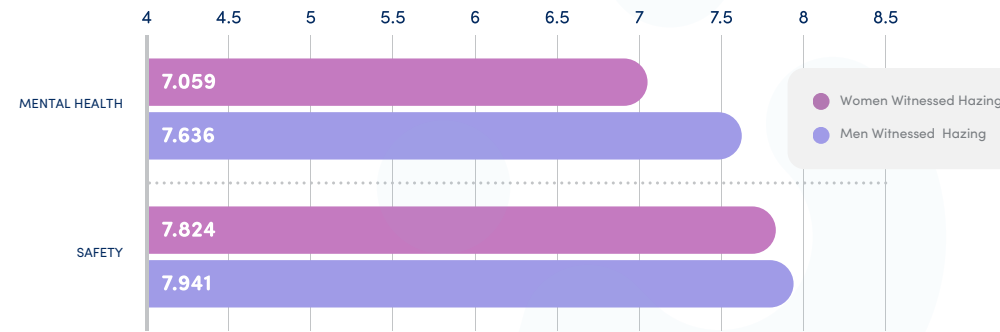


THE GENDER DIVIDE

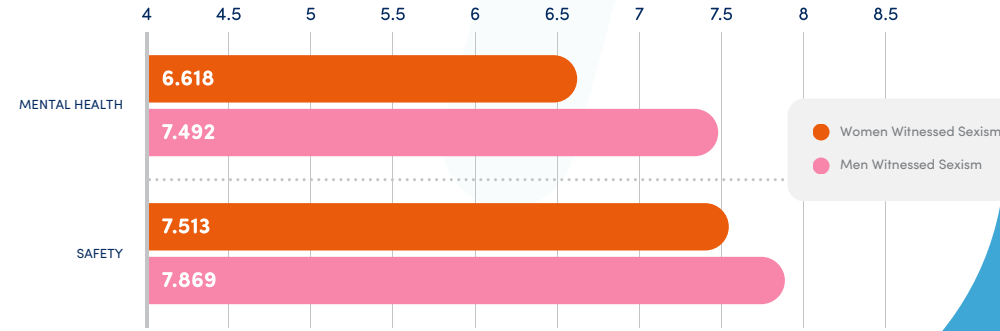
As we previously mentioned, female students are far more likely to experience these acts and are also far more likely to report them.

Here we look to understand the impact of these instances across the gender divide to properly understand the risk these experiences pose on the overall accommodation experience. As you can see, with both hazing and sexism men are less impacted in terms of their mental health and safety than women when exposed to sexism and/or hazing.

HAZING – SPLIT BY WOMEN AND MEN WITNESSING



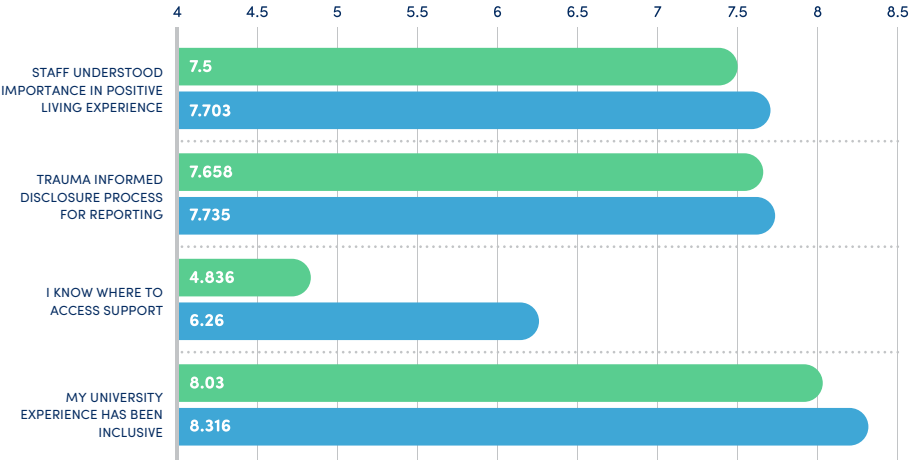
SEXISM – SPLIT BY WOMEN AND MEN WITNESSING



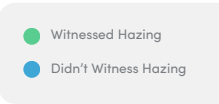
THE SUPPORT NETWORK

How much does witnessing hazing and/or sexism impact perceptions of the role of staff and support services?

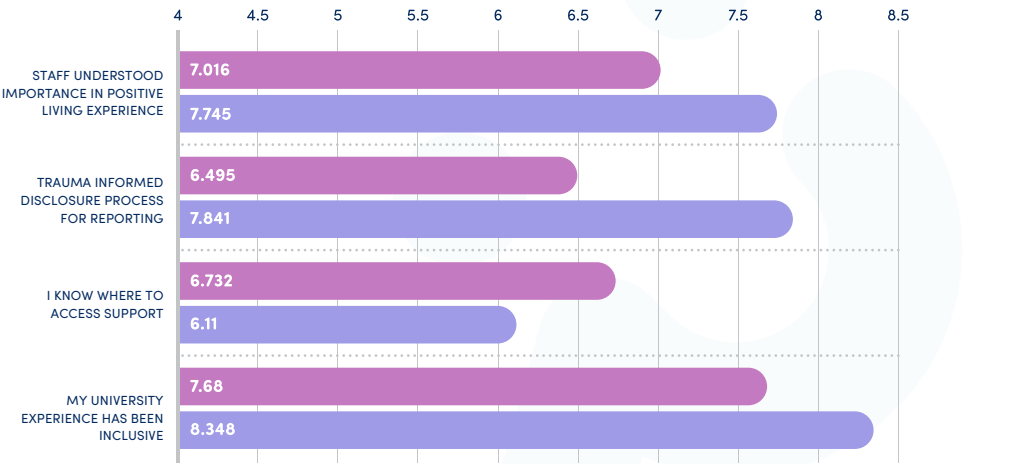
STUDENTS WHO WITNESSED HAZING VS THOSE WHO DID NOT



Staff and inclusive experience scores are slightly lower when students witnessed hazing. Hazing doesn't impact the disclosure process for sexual assault. Witnessing hazing has a major impact on whether students know where to access support for issues.

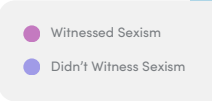


STUDENTS WHO WITNESSED SEXISM VS THOSE WHO DID NOT



Perceptions of staff scores are significantly lower for students who witnessed or experienced sexism, sexual assault, or harassment in their accommodation. Students are also significantly less satisfied with their accommodation's disclosure process for reporting and the inclusivity of their accommodation having experienced sexism.

However, these students have far better knowledge of where to access support than those who haven't witnessed sexism, suggesting those who have needed to report have found the route to do so.



STUDENT FEEDBACK



“What could be improved when dealing with incidents of Hazing?”

Staff Involvement and Response

- **Proactive Staff Intervention**
 - Lack of timely action taken by staff when issues were reported.
 - Staff need to go out of their way to actively help students subjected to hazing.
- **Staff Awareness and Training**
 - Staff, including Residential Managers (RMs) and support staff, were sometimes unaware of hazing incidents.
 - Calls for better and consistent staff training to handle hazing-related issues.
- **Accountability and Consequences**
 - Staff participation in bullying or hazing cited as a serious concern.
 - Suggestions for real warnings or sanctions against staff or students involved.

Policy Enforcement and Preventative Measures

- **Preventing Hazing Activities**
 - Stronger efforts needed to stop hazing activities before they occur.
 - Requests to prevent students not residing on campus from engaging in hazing on site.
- **Monitoring and Mediation**
 - Suggestions for mediation sessions between involved parties.
 - Regular evaluations or staff assessments proposed to ensure a safer environment.

Community Culture and Safety

- **Alcohol and Party Management**
 - Need for improved management of drinking activities to ensure safe environments.
 - Acknowledgement that off-campus behaviour impacts on-campus culture.
- **Building Supportive Communities**
 - Emphasis on Residential Managers (RMs) fostering inclusive, safe communities.
 - Encouragement of a culture that actively discourages bullying and hazing.
- **Communication and Reporting Channels**
 - Students highlighted delays or ineffective responses when initially reporting hazing.
 - Calls for more transparent, responsive reporting and feedback loops.

STUDENT FEEDBACK



“What could be improved when dealing with incidents of sexism, sexual assault or harassment?”

Staff Handling and Response to Reports

- **Lack of Immediate Action**
 - Reports of delayed or insufficient responses when incidents were reported to administration.
 - Staff advising students to "email later" perceived as dismissive.
- **Need for Sensitivity and Training**
 - Staff handled situations with inexperience and lack of fairness.
 - Calls for more careful, sensitive, and stronger approaches when responding to sexism complaints.
- **Proper Consequences for Perpetrators**
 - Staff perceived as reluctant to take strong disciplinary actions.
 - Suggestions for clearer punishments, including expulsion where necessary.

Support for Victims

- **Believing and Listening to Victims**
 - Victims felt unheard and unsupported when coming forward.
 - Strong recommendations for staff to listen actively and validate the experiences of victims.
- **Creating Safe Reporting Environments**
 - Students mentioned that peers were scared to tell residential staff about incidents.
 - Emphasis on fostering a culture where reporting is encouraged and safe.

Preventative Training and Education

- **Training Residential Leaders**
 - Suggestions to inform and train residential leaders on how to properly deal with issues of sexism.
 - Recognition that proactive education for staff and students can reduce incidents.
- **Broader Cultural Change**
 - Students noted persistent "minor sexism" within residences.
 - Calls for addressing underlying cultural attitudes, particularly during sporting and social events.
- **Safety Beyond Residence**
 - Incidents of stalking and harassment mentioned, particularly affecting female students.
 - Need for broader campus safety initiatives in addition to internal residential measures.

NATIONALITY

DOMESTIC VS INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

This chapter focusses on the different experience had by students, dependant on their country of origin. Does being an international student result in a different experience than that of a domestic one?

The questions asked are the same for all students, regardless of where home is, therefore we can get a very clear view of the different experience and perceptions of these groups.

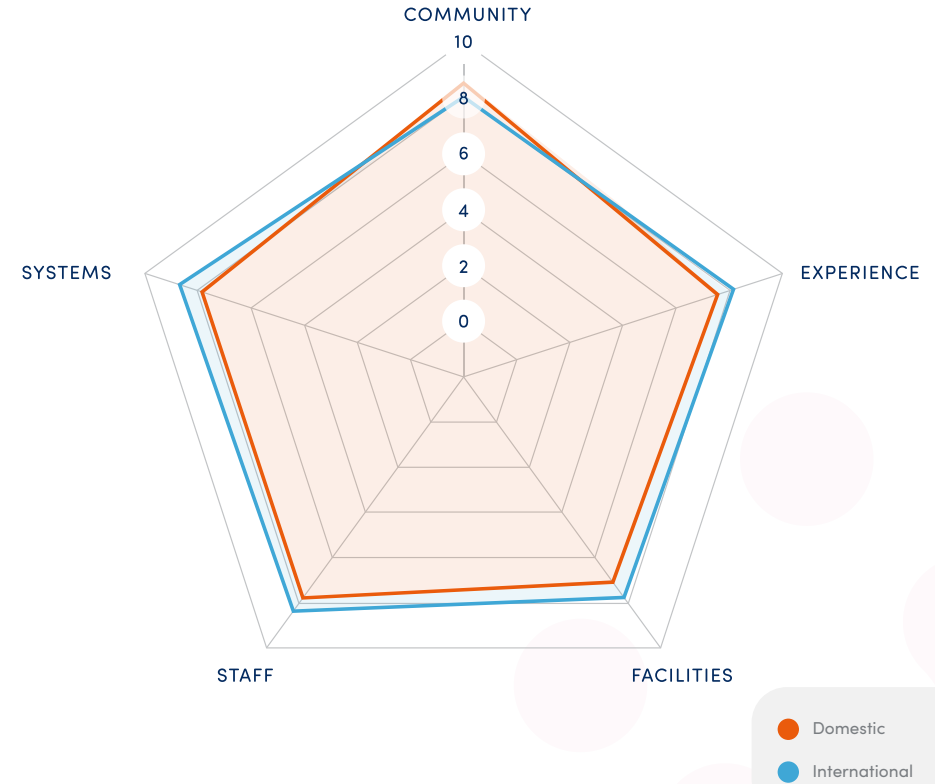
DOMESTIC DISAPPOINTMENT?

The spider chart opposite shows the international v. domestic experience across the themes of community, experience, facilities, staff and systems.

Here we can clearly see that, in general, international students have a better perception of their accommodation than domestic students do. Why is this? It could be down to expectations v. reality, maybe Australian students have a clearer idea of what they expect, so exceeding this is more difficult? However, when community comes into question, international students are more likely to struggle to find their place – one thing we should really consider when supporting them on their student journey.

It's worth reminding ourselves however, the delta isn't vast and the overall scores remain strong, so incremental gains are what we are looking for here, not wholesale change.

THE INTERNATIONAL V DOMESTIC EXPERIENCE GAP



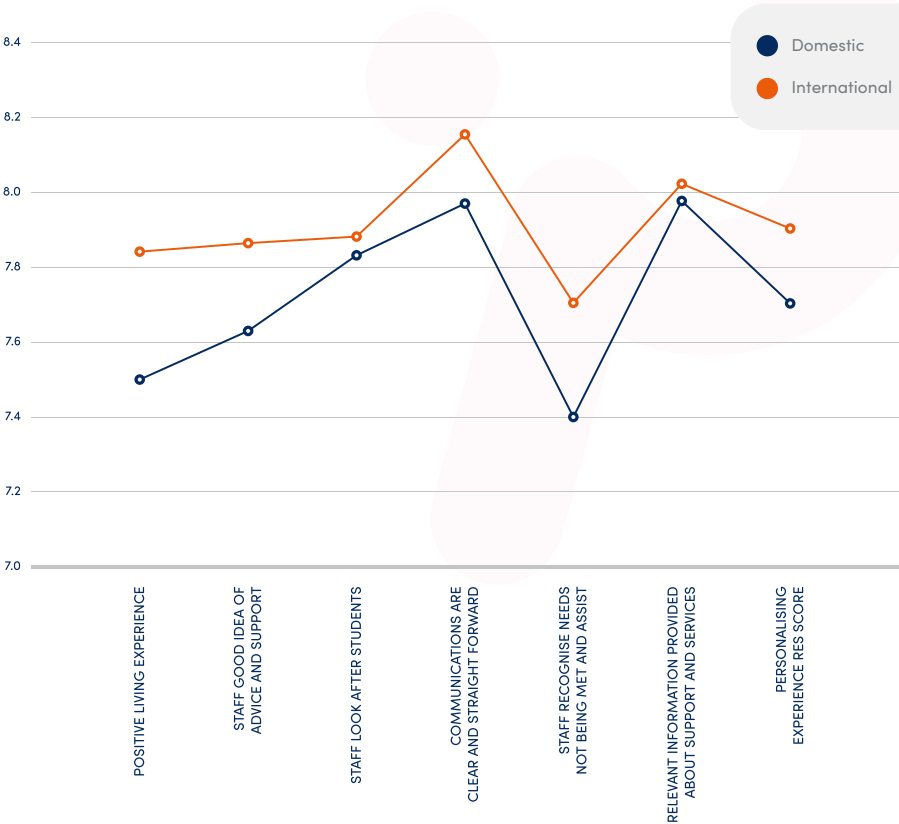
PERSONALISING THE EXPERIENCE

The RES survey works by focussing on 5 core pillars to better understand the depth of sentiment students have (more on that in the methodology in the back of this book). This chart looks at the pillar ‘Personalising my Experience’ and how international and domestic student experiences differ.

Here we can see that across each of the questions within this pillar, international students rate their experience higher than their domestic peers.

Areas such as having a positive living experience, the advice and support available by staff and their recognition of the needs of students have the most significant gaps. The experience gap closes to a negligible level regarding staff looking after students and the provision of relevant information about the support available to them.

PERSONALISING MY EXPERIENCE



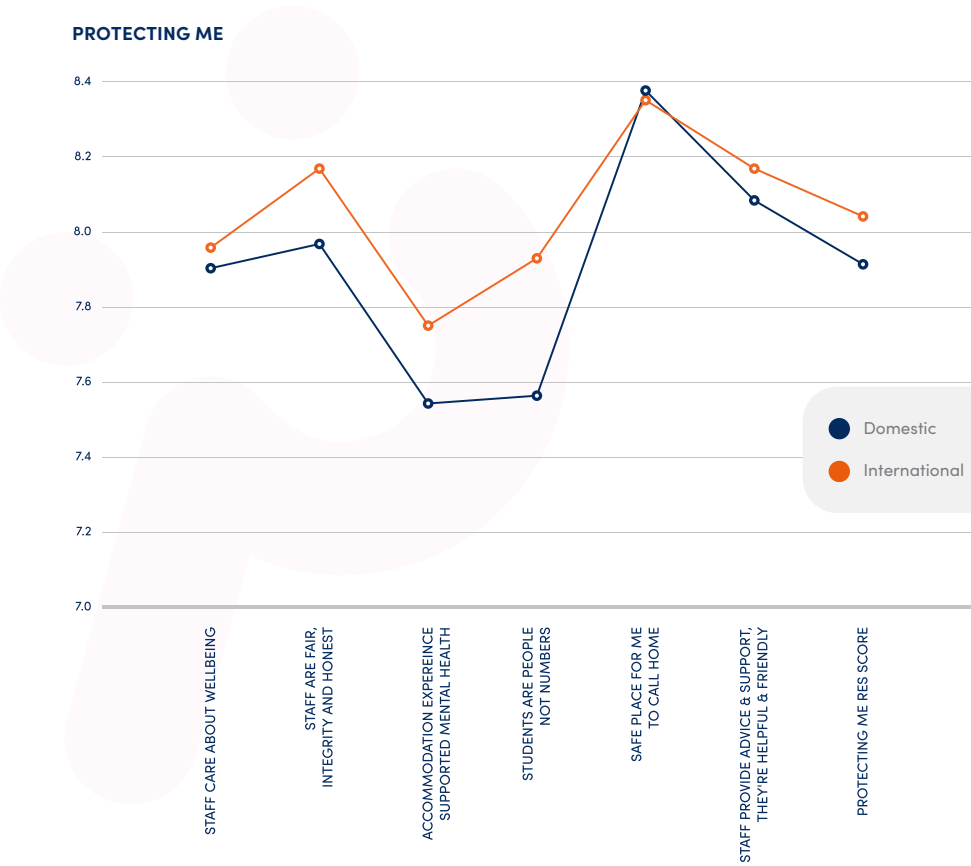
PROTECTING ME

As with the graph before, we are looking at another one of the core RES pillars here, 'Protecting Me'. This pillar is designed to properly understand how far you go to make students feel safe and supported. Not necessarily by superb CCTV and excellent lock systems (which are super important, but more of a facilities issue), but more about personal and emotional support issues they may need.

Here we can see a very similar trend, with international students outscoring their domestic peers in all but one question. A safe place for me to call home is that one question, which is understandable when we think that the additional familiarity domestic students have with their surroundings is likely to breed feelings of safety.

On all other questions, international students score better, with the feeling of not just being a 'number' having the largest gap of them all. With international offices and increased levels of support in many institutions, this could well be because there are more points of contact for these students and more bespoke support available.

It's worth remembering though, as is the case throughout this report, the scores across the board are extremely positive.



UK VS AUS

A GLOBAL VIEW

Now we love a bit of competition, especially when it's with the old enemy... but not only does it show how well we compare, it shows where we can learn and improve from what is happening elsewhere.

With the Residential Experience Standard (RES) being partnered with Investor in Students (IIS) in the UK and Ireland, the upcoming chapter focusses on the comparisons between the experiences students have across these globally comparable markets.

THE OVERVIEW

It's time to pat yourselves on the back. It turns out it's not only on the sports field Australian dominance prevails, it's also evident in student accommodation.

The spider chart opposite shows average scores across IIS and RES in five core question categories; community, experience, facilities, staff and systems. Whilst in many of these categories the scores are very close, RES outperforms IIS across the board and in areas such as community, the gap is much larger. This comes to show, that whilst facilities matter, they are not the be all and end all in providing an excellent place to call home.



BATTLE OF THE HEMISPHERES

Student feedback shows students in accommodation are happier overall in Australia than their peers in the UK and Ireland.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Quality and Variety of Events

- **Desire for More Events**
 - Requests for more sporting events to diversify available activities.
 - Calls for an increased number of social functions to enhance community engagement.
- **Event Content and Selection**
 - Suggestions to improve the selection and quality of residential events.
 - Interest in having a broader range of events catering to varied student interests.

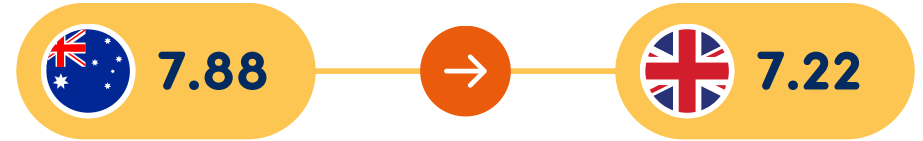
Role of Residential Assistants (RAs) in Social Life

- **Engagement and Reliability of RAs**
 - Concerns raised about some RAs not being as engaged or enthusiastic in fostering social life.
 - Students noted the importance of RAs being reliable and proactive in organising and supporting events.

Inclusivity and Accessibility of Social Events

- **Catering to Diverse Interests**
 - Students expressed a desire for events that cater to a broader range of backgrounds and preferences.
 - Recognition that some current events may not appeal to or include all residents equally.

“There is a great social life in my accommodation”



Social life outperforms in Australia but there are still some improvements to be made looking at the student freetext responses.

The comments about RA's are especially interesting

Sense of Belonging and Inclusion

- **Difficulty Integrating**
 - International students and late arrivals reported feeling isolated and less included.
 - Some students requested more opportunities for social connection to foster a sense of community.
- **Diversity and Representation**
 - Comments indicated a need for greater emphasis on diversity and cultural inclusion to enhance feelings of belonging.

Physical Comfort and Accommodation Design

- **Room and Facility Comfort**
 - Students highlighted that small room sizes, poor air conditioning, and outdated appliances detracted from comfort.
 - The overall design of some accommodations was seen as lacking in offering a "homely" feel.
- **Safety and Security**
 - Concerns raised about too many people (e.g., contractors) accessing personal rooms, impacting feelings of safety and personal space.

Emotional and Psychological Comfort

- **Need for Personalisation and Connection**
 - Some students expressed a wish for more personal touches or freedoms, such as room choice continuity year-to-year.
 - Lack of emotional attachment or personalisation was linked to feelings of temporary living rather than a "home."
- **Affordability and Financial Stress**
 - High accommodation costs contributed to emotional discomfort and reduced sense of stability.

“My accommodation feels like home”



Australia outperforms the UK by over 0.5

Dissatisfaction in a feeling of home amongst RES respondents were mostly centred around the sense of belonging and physical space.

Building a Stronger Community Environment

• Improving Inclusion and Involvement

- Students expressed a desire for Residential Support Officers (RSOs) and Residential Assistants (RAs) to be more proactive in creating inclusive spaces.
- Requests for a greater focus on involving all students in college activities to foster a sense of belonging.

• Welcoming Atmosphere

- Some students noted the community felt welcoming but stressed the need for continual improvement to maintain that environment.
- Specific calls for management and staff to sustain a warm, engaging atmosphere.

Opportunities for Social Connection

• Facilitating Friendships

- Feedback included a strong wish for more structured opportunities to meet peers and form friendships, particularly early in the academic year.
- Students emphasised the value of events that promote small group interactions to deepen social ties.

• Cross-Community Engagement

- Suggestions made to create more opportunities for students from different residential areas to mix.
- Emphasis on building a wider sense of campus community beyond individual residences.

Challenges to Feeling a Sense of Belonging

• Barriers to Connection

- Some students described difficulty feeling connected due to cliques or insufficiently inclusive event structures.
- Calls for more mindful planning of social activities to ensure they are accessible to a broad range of personalities and interests.

• Isolation and Adjustment Difficulties

- International and late-arriving students reported challenges integrating into established communities.
- Recognition that isolation is still a risk despite existing community-building efforts.

“I feel a sense of community and belonging in my accommodation”



The NPS score for students for feeling a sense of community and belonging is **12.7**, which is **1.4** points higher than the UK's average score of **11.3**.

Most improvements suggested were focused around inclusion, community and diversity

Study Environment and Quietness

• Disruption Due to Noise

- Students reported that noise levels, particularly at night, negatively impacted their ability to study and rest, affecting academic performance.
- Requests made for better enforcement of quiet hours to support academic focus.

• Need for Dedicated Study Spaces

- Suggestions for more "Shut Up and Write" sessions and access to dedicated quiet areas to enhance academic success.
- Comments indicated that communal or social spaces sometimes blurred with study needs, creating distraction.

Balancing Academic and Residential Life

• Time Management Challenges

- Some students noted that residential events occasionally clashed with their academic schedules, particularly evening functions impacting early morning classes.
- Requests for more consideration of academic obligations when planning social or formal events.

• Academic Stress and Accommodation Support

- Positive feedback noted that well-planned residential activities helped with stress relief, indirectly supporting academic success.
- Some calls for more academic-related programming, such as workshops or study support sessions within residences.

Facilities and Resources for Academic Success

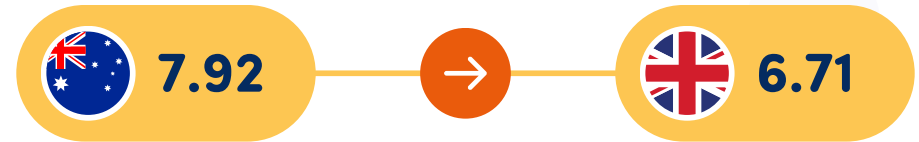
• Access to Learning Resources

- Students highlighted a need for easier access to libraries, study rooms, and better internet connectivity within accommodations.
- Reliable infrastructure was linked closely to academic productivity and satisfaction.

• Physical Comfort Affecting Academic Focus

- Poor room conditions, such as inadequate heating or air-conditioning, were cited as impacting students' ability to concentrate on studies.
- Comfort in accommodation was seen as foundational to maintaining academic discipline and motivation.

“I believe living in this accommodation has helped me achieve my academic objectives this year”



The delta here stretches far further.

The accommodation supporting academic outcomes shows one of the biggest gaps between nations. Does the support available to students focus more on their academic studies? Afterall, it's why students are here...

RES GOLD VS IIS GOLD



“Protecting me”



RES scores gold in protecting me and personal safety, the UK doesn't ask the personal safety questions, so we can't compare, however RES outperforms in everything else apart from staff fairness, and students are seen as people not numbers.

Mental health and belonging is better in Australia. Students feel cared for and at home.

CLOSING REMARKS & METHODOLOGY



CLOSING REMARKS

Through every wave of the Residential Experience Standard (RES), the data we gather will grow, making the value of the insight grow exponentially.

In conjunction with APSAA, our members remain the lifeblood of the Standard. The insight we collate through this process, not only helps provide sector wide insights, but also enables members to look at their own accommodation experience in detail. This allows us to provide comprehensive action plans and support to enable investment in student experience at an institutional level, providing insight that delves into the roots of the experience and allows for efficient and effective action.

We'd love to continue to support you in supporting your students. So, if the Residential Experience Standard sounds like something that would benefit you, your institution and your students, please do get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

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**RESIDENTIAL
EXPERIENCE
STANDARD**

**RES provides a 360°
understanding of your students
living experience.**

MEASURING STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The Residential Experience Standard (RES) empowers operators of student accommodation to measure and evidence the experience they provide to their students.

With a new and innovative approach, RES provides a huge breadth of data and insights on how students feel about their living experience and the impact this has on their time at university.

Members and participants of RES have access to sector wide benchmarking results to enable them to understand how they are performing and enabling the spread of best practice on a peer-to-peer basis.

Based on the market leading Investor in Students (IIS), RES members will join a global student accommodation community covering over 150,000 students from 29 members across Australia, the UK, Ireland and Europe.



TESTIMONIALS



RES has provided the team with valuable insights into student sentiment and sense of belonging. The ability to not only benchmark our offering but to receive insights, trends and tangible recommendations from the extensive data collected has allowed the team to truly reflect on our student experience framework and focus on key areas to enhance our delivery for all residents.

Marion Grey

CEO, Deakin Residential Services



We were thrilled to be a part of the pilot RES program. Receiving timely and relevant feedback from our residents is vital in ensuring we maintain our focus on continuous improvement and act on matters that mean the most to our students. I encourage any other student accommodation housing providers to be a part of this important, focused and beneficial process.

Jess Rokobaro

Senior Manager, Student Living, University of Newcastle



I've seen first-hand the impact of the Investor in Students programme in the UK, which played a key role in helping providers who participated lift their standards of service. Now available in Australia as the Residential Experience Standard (RES), the insights it delivers not only highlight where your team excels but also provides a clear roadmap for where to focus your efforts to continually improve service and product delivery.

Rob Moyle

Executive General Manager, Student One



PILOT MEMBERS

The Residential Experience Standard (RES) pilot took place at the end of the 2024 Academic Year and comprised of six members in total:

**DEAKIN**
UNIVERSITY


UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA


THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

**UNSW**


Mannix College

STUDENT ONE


OUR GLOBAL MEMBERS

**ABODUS**
STUDENT LIVING




UNIVERSITY OF
BATH


UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM


University of
BRISTOL


Charles Sturt
University


COLLEGIATE


Coventry
University


DEAKIN
UNIVERSITY


DOWNING
students


DUCHESSNE
COLLEGE


Emmanuel
College


University
of Exeter


FUSION
STUDENTS


University
of Glasgow


Here!


Homes
for Students


UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER


UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN


LSE
THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE


UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON


Mannix College


UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA


The University of
Nottingham


now


QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST


scape


University of
Sheffield


University of
Southampton


StudentCastle


STUDENT ONE


THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY


UNIVERSITY OF
TASMANIA


YOUR
TRIBE


ual: university
of the arts
london


UCL


Universal
Student Living

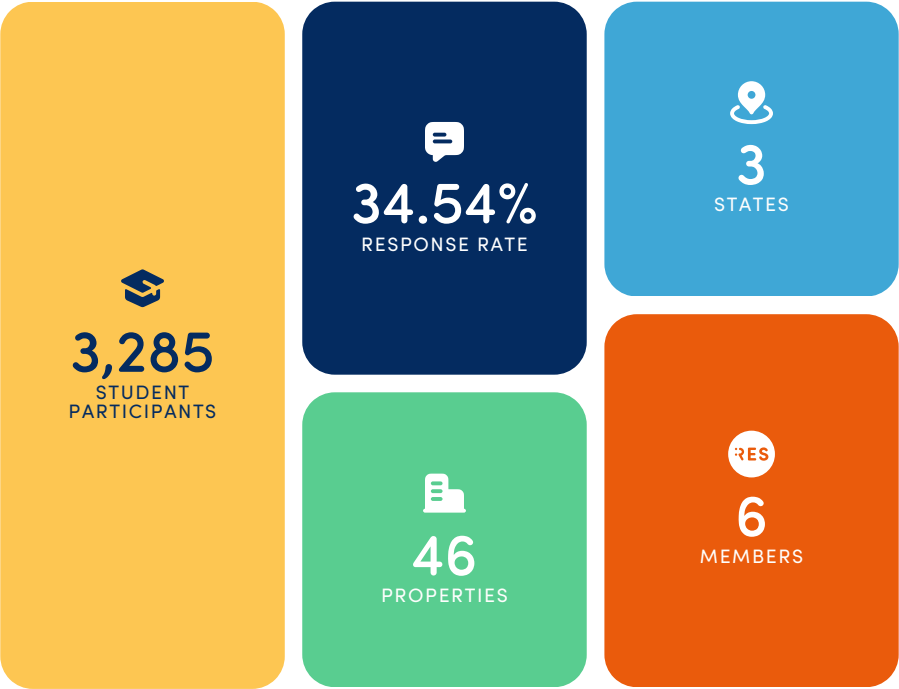

UNIVERSITY HALL
THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM


UNSW

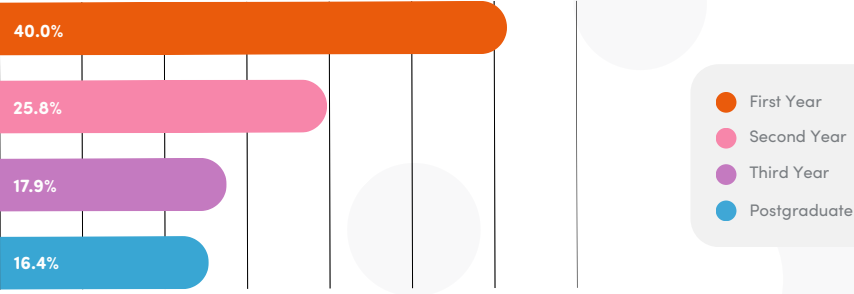

UNIVERSITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON

RESPONSES

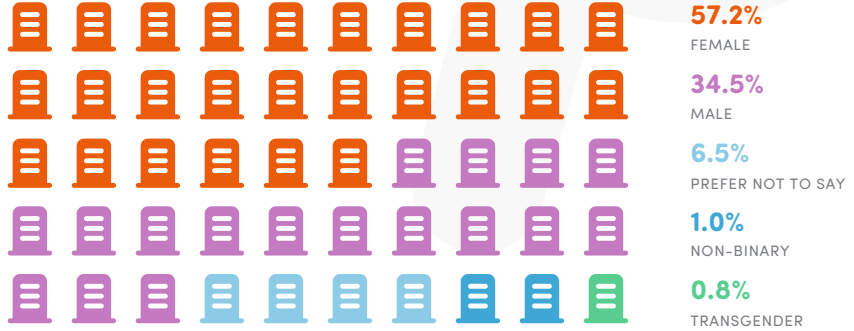
This research is comprised of one RES accreditation survey wave, conducted Spring 2024 working in collaboration with Residential Experience Standard members across Australia.



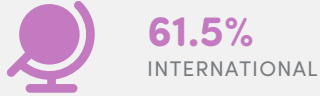
YEAR OF STUDY



DOMICILE



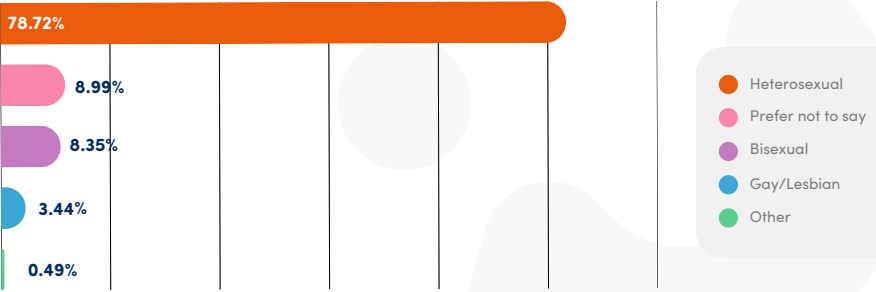
NATIONALITY



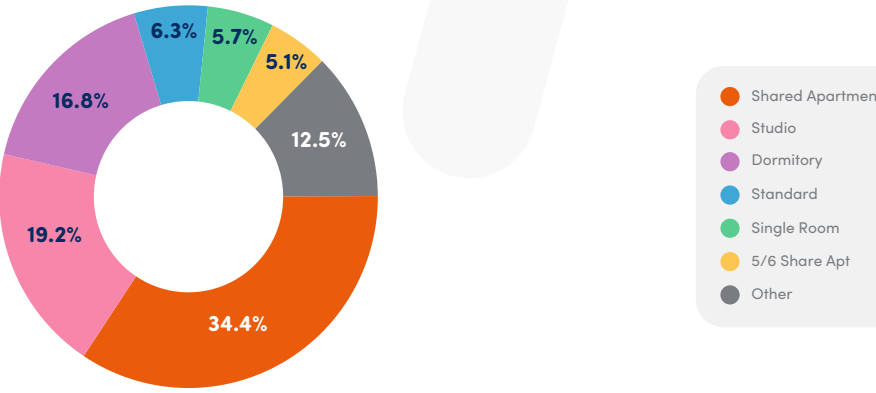
ETHNICITY



SEXUAL ORIENTATION



ACCOMMODATION



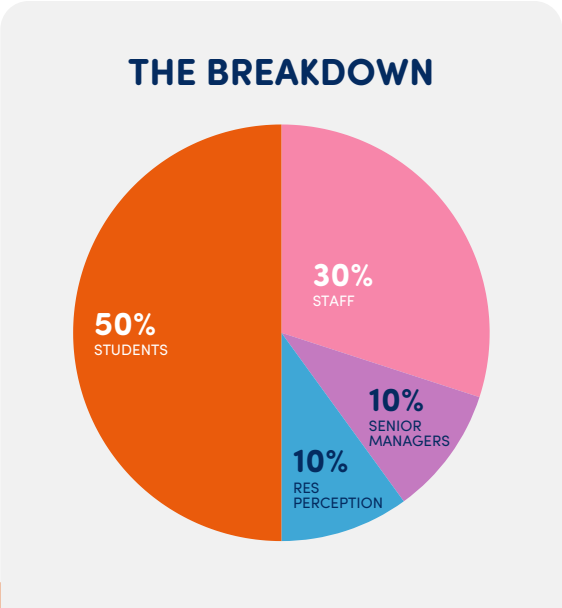
METHODOLOGY

THE ACCREDITATION

Our Residential Experience Standard measures sentiment across your student customers, your front line staff and your senior management team to capture the most in depth perspective on the success of your student experience.

Each of these audience results hold a weighted value towards your final standard.

Additionally, we analyse the alignment of scores between your Students, Staff and Senior Management. Your response rate also counts toward your accreditation result. These two elements combined, are your 'RES Perception'.



THE FIVE CORE PILLARS

For each audience, results are collated into a single view against which the accreditation is awarded.

- MEETING MY EXPECTATIONS
- PERSONALISING MY EXPERIENCE
- DELIGHTING ME
- PROTECTING ME
- PERSONAL SAFETY



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