



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25

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INTRODUCTION



The Student Advice Service, established in 2010 and existing within the Students' Union, provides free, confidential, and independent advice, information, and representation to all University of Cambridge students both undergraduate and postgraduate across all 31 Colleges. Students can approach the Service with any issues they encounter during their time at Cambridge. Support is also available to students who are intermitting or who have recently graduated.

Advisors work within a code of practice that assures students they will receive free, confidential, and impartial advice delivered without judgement. As a generalist service, the Advice Service complements more specialised University providers such as the Counselling Service and the Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre, which offer support in specific areas. Advisors bring expertise in both University and collegiate processes, and can work closely with tutors, other University or College services, and departmental staff members if the student feels this would be helpful.

ADVICE WORK



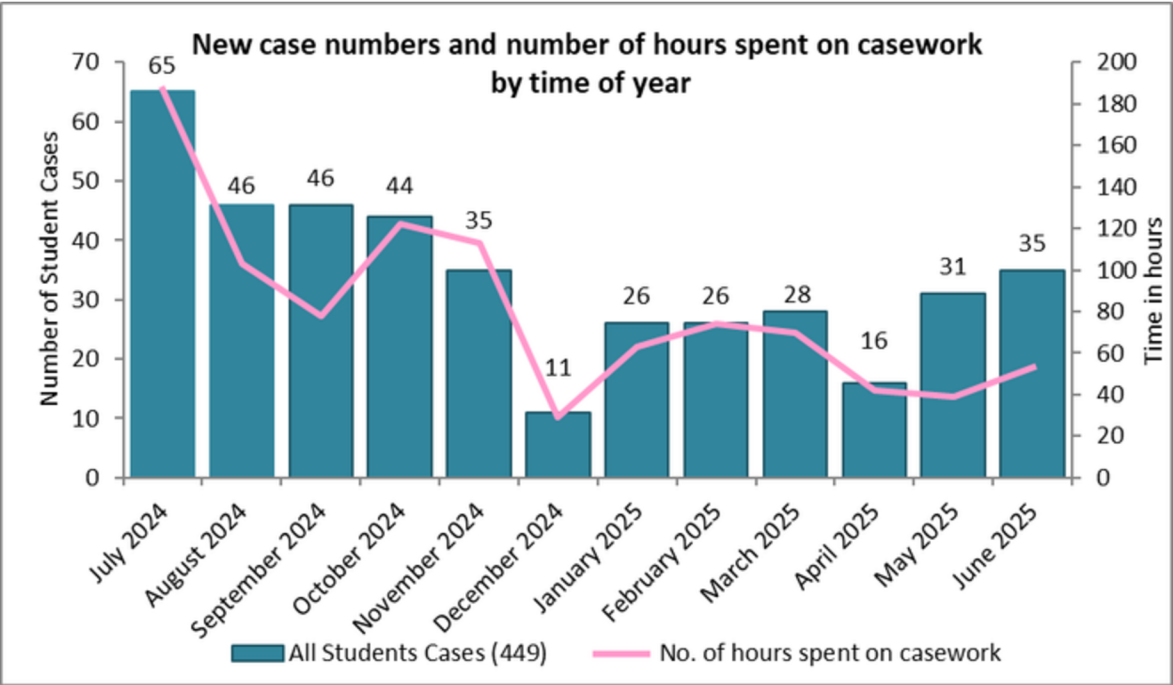
The Advice Service supports all University of Cambridge students with any academic or welfare issue they encounter. Our independence from the University means that we can offer impartial guidance across a wide range of concerns. Student situations are often complex and interconnected; although students usually approach us with one issue, additional concerns frequently emerge as we work together, since challenges in one area of university life often affect others.

The Advice Service primarily supports current Cambridge students, though contact from non-students such as past or prospective students, offer holders, intermitting students, those off the register, and visiting students is common. We also receive enquiries from non-student users, including parents, relatives, and friends seeking guidance on how to support a student. While we offer limited advice in these cases, our focus is always on working directly with the student. We also welcome informal contact from tutors, staff, and other service providers across the Collegiate University who wish to discuss support options for students.

The Service is part of the wider national advice community through its membership of Advice UK, the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE), and UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA), and benefits from the training, resources, and shared practice these networks provide.



STATISTICS AND TRENDS

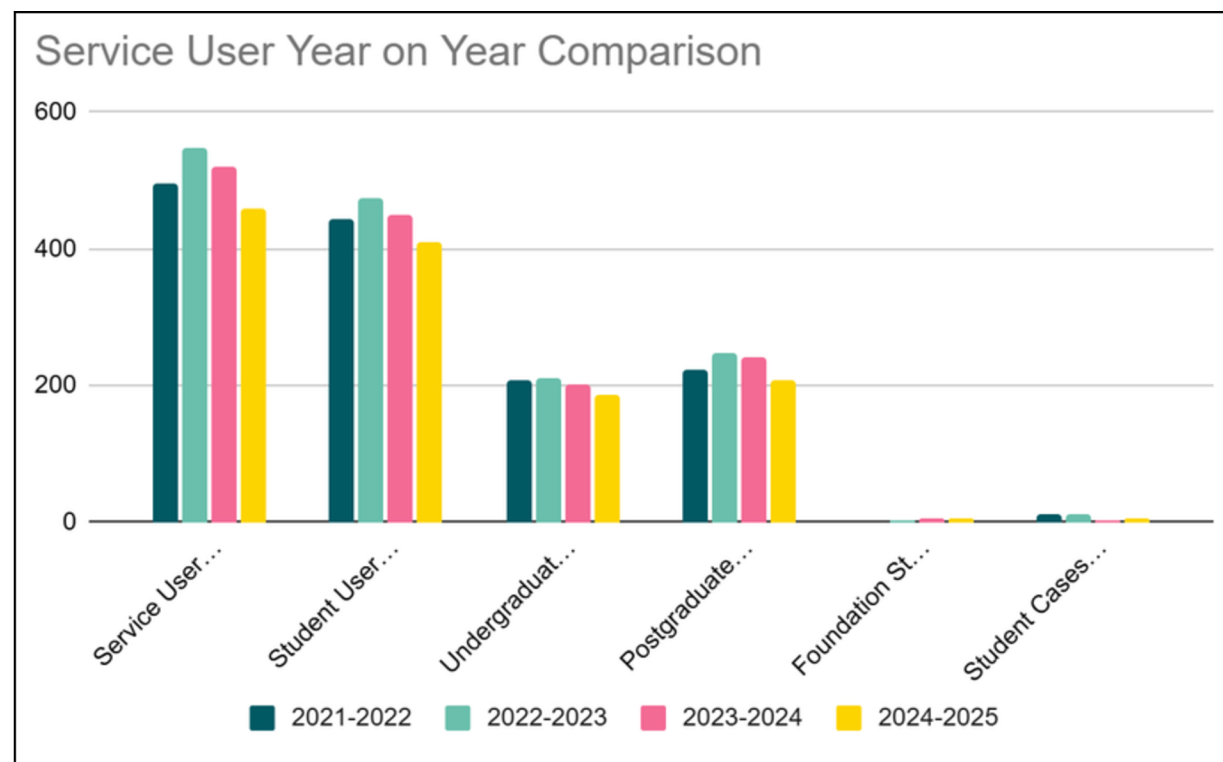


The figures presented throughout this report relate to the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

Service user data is collected through the registration and monitoring forms completed by students. As this information is provided voluntarily, we do not hold a full set of personal data for every service user.

The Student Advice Service operates year-round, including outside of academic term time. The accompanying graph illustrates how demand for support fluctuated across the reporting year. The most notable increase in cases occurred in July, when students received their exam results and sought guidance on examination allowances, examination reviews, disciplinary matters (such as plagiarism), and the options available to them in light of their outcomes.

SERVICE USERS



In 2024-25, the Student Advice Service engaged with a total of 460 service users, 409 of whom were students. This group includes current students, those who were intermitting or off the register, former students, visiting and exchange students, and individuals enrolled through the Judge Business School or Professional and Continuing Education (PACE).

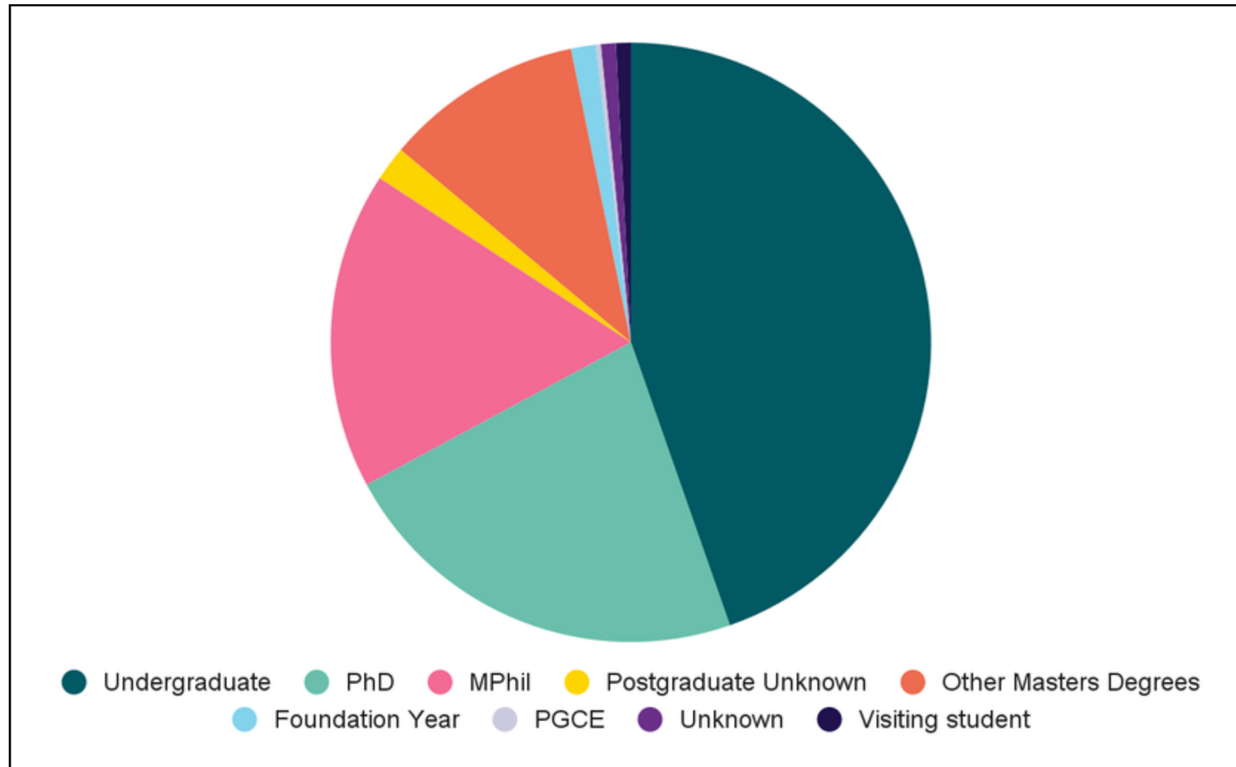
In addition to supporting students across these varied profiles, the Service also provides information to non-students such as relatives or friends of students, as well as JCR/MCR Officers, Liberation Campaign Officers, and Sports Welfare Officers who may contact the Service to discuss their responsibilities or any concerns regarding students within their communities.

A total of 35 students accessed the service more than once.

Among them:

- 1 student accessed the service three times
- 1 student accessed the service six times

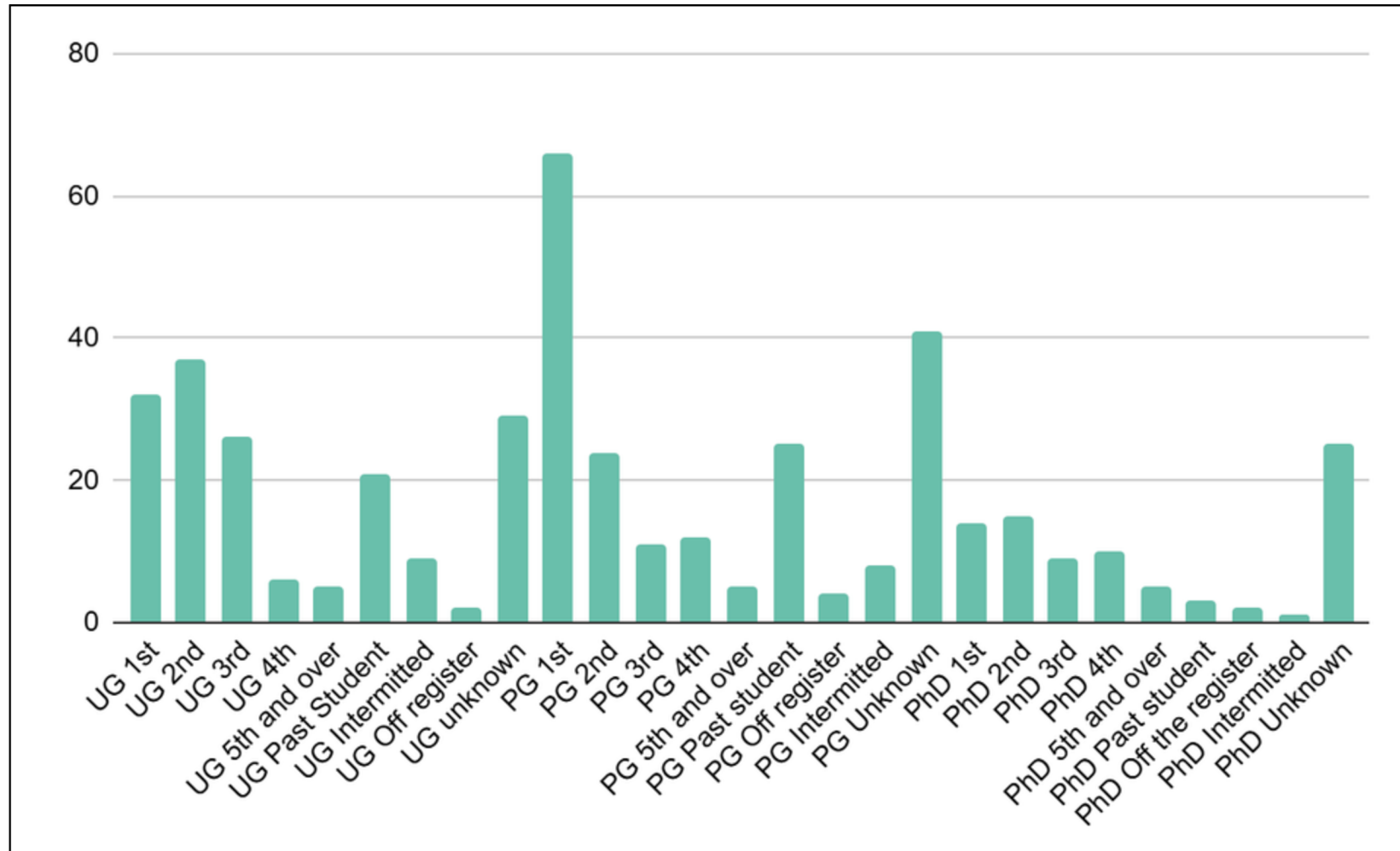
STUDENT STATUS

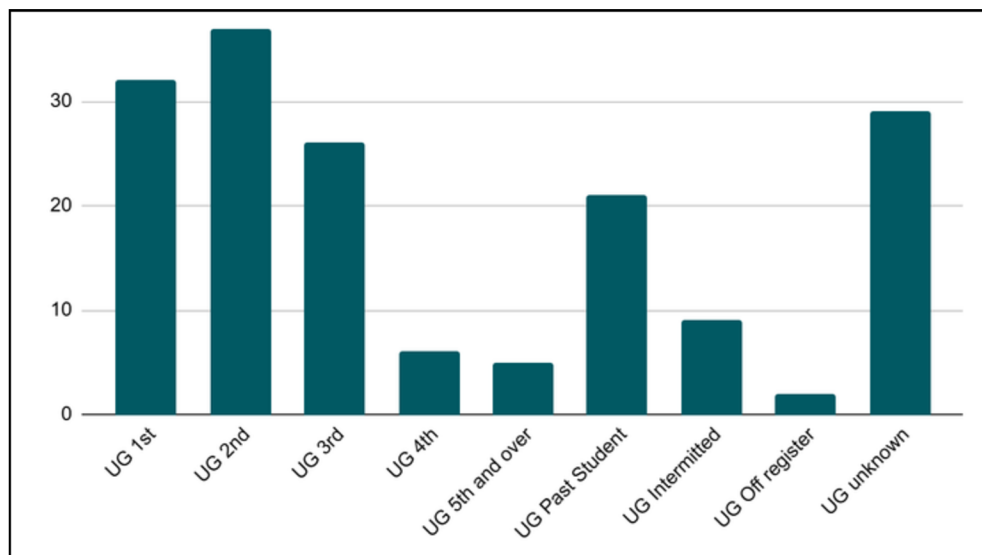


The Student Advice Service continues to support students across a wide range of courses. In the 2024-25 academic year, 45% of students who accessed the service were undergraduates. A further 50% were postgraduate students- 22% were PhD candidates, 17% were MPhil students, and 11% were studying for other master's degrees. The remaining 5% of users included students on foundation years, PGCE programmes, and visiting students

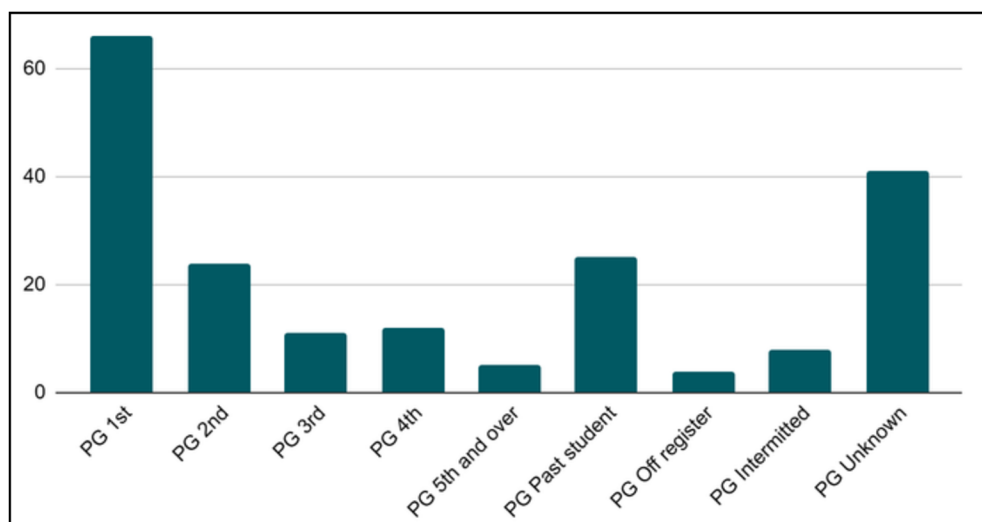


YEAR OF STUDY



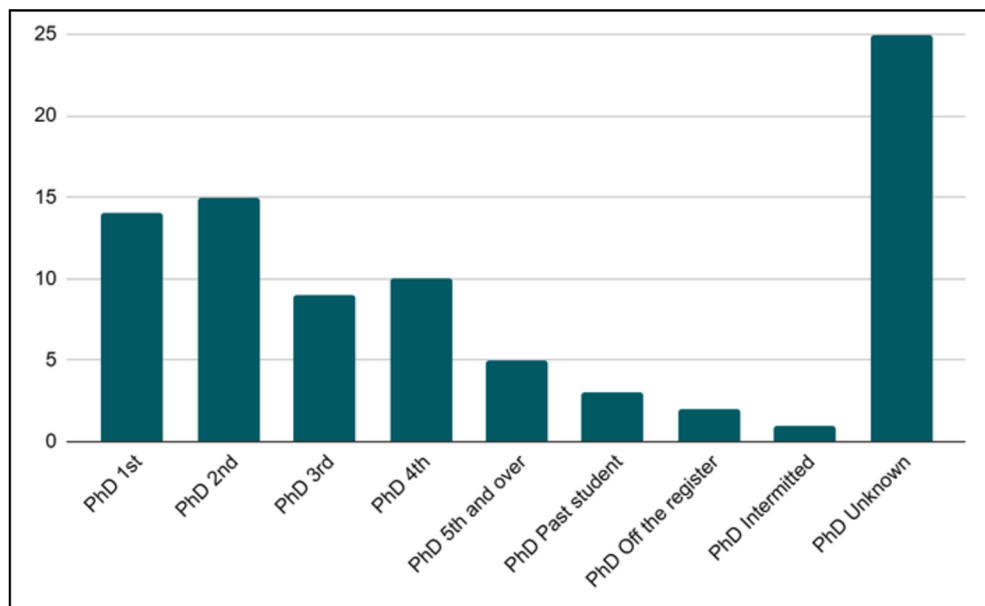


In 2024-25, 45% of the students who accessed the Service were undergraduates. Among those who disclosed their year of study, 23% were in their first year, 27% in their second year, and 19% in their third year. A further 6% were in their fourth year, and 4% were in their fifth year or beyond. In addition, 15% were past undergraduate students, and 7% were students on intermission.



Compared with 2023-24, the proportion of first- and second-year undergraduates increased (from 15% to 23% and from 25% to 27% respectively), while the proportion of third-year students decreased notably (from 34% to 19%). The percentage of students in their fourth year also fell (from 8% to 6%), whereas those in their fifth year or above rose slightly (from 2% to 4%). The proportion of past undergraduate students increased from 6% to 15%, while the proportion of students on intermission decreased from 9% to 7%.

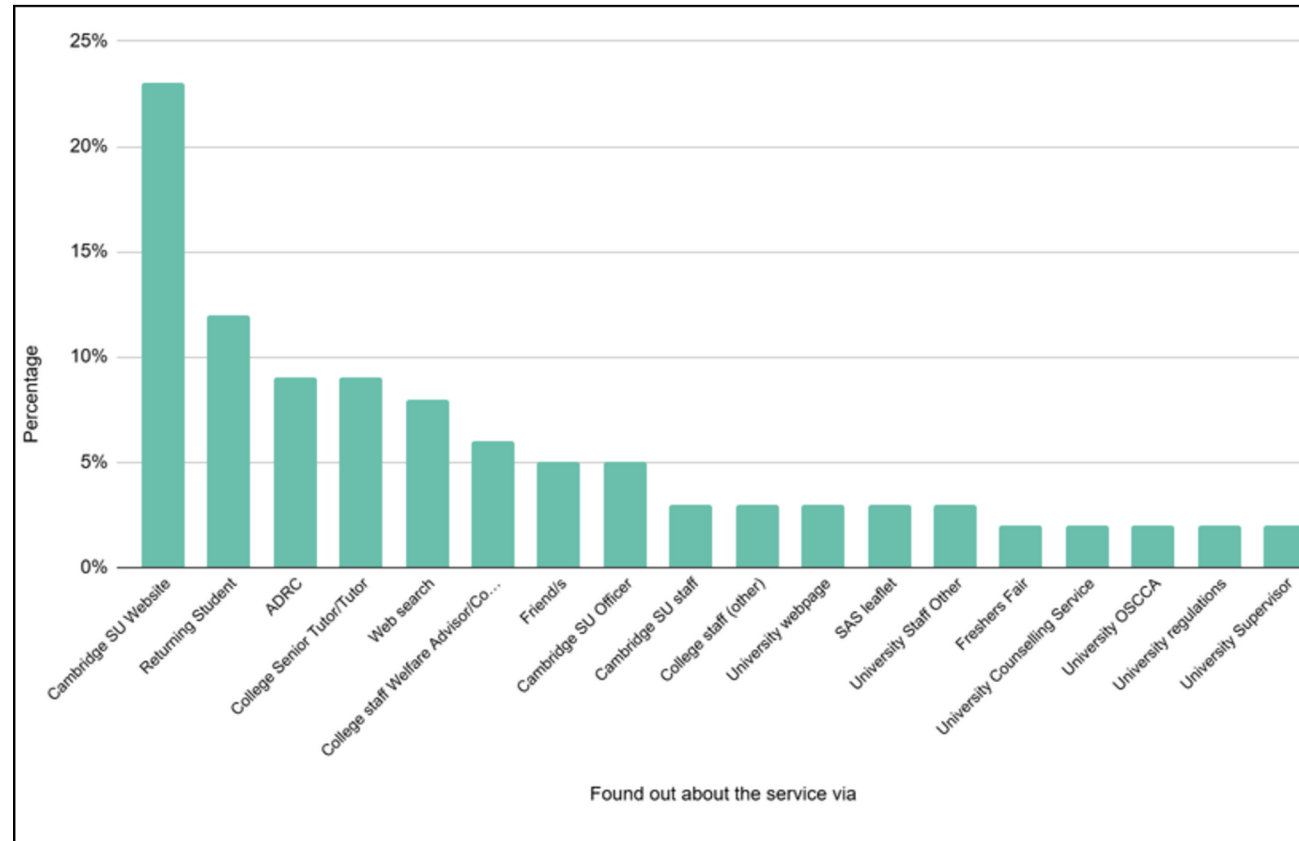




Of the postgraduate students who disclosed their year of study in 2024-25, 43% were in their first year. This continues the downward trend in first-year postgraduate engagement with the Service, compared with 45% in 2023-24 and 73% in 2022-23, although the figure remains higher than the 29% recorded in 2021-22. A further 15% of postgraduate students were in their second year, 7% in their third year, 8% in their fourth year, and 3% in their fifth year or beyond. In addition, 16% were past postgraduate students, and 3% were off-register. The category of 'postgraduate' includes students enrolled on PhD, MPhil, MFin, MBA, MRes, MSt, MEd, LLM and PGCE programmes. Usage of the Advice Service varies across these sub-groups.



AWARENESS OF THE SERVICE



Of the students who disclosed how they first heard about the Student Advice Service

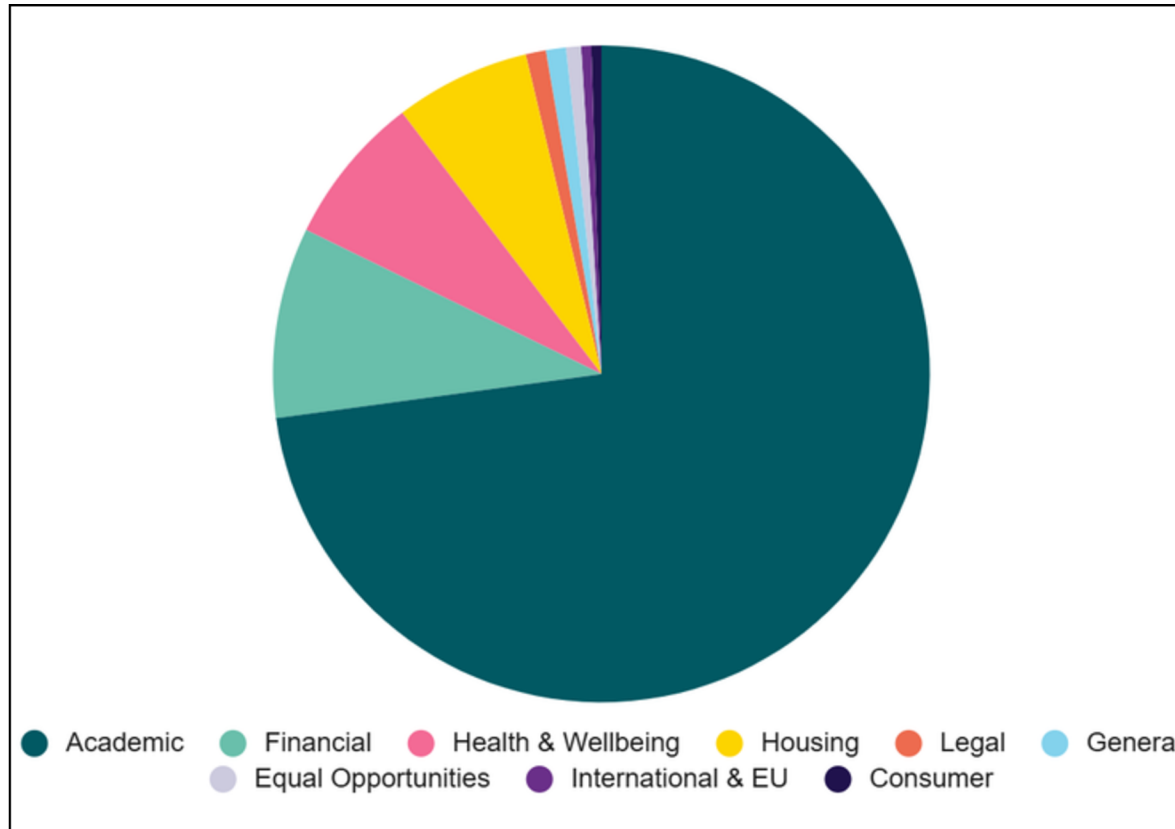
36% Signposted by Cambridge SU officers, staff members, events or advertising

23% Students who have previously used the service

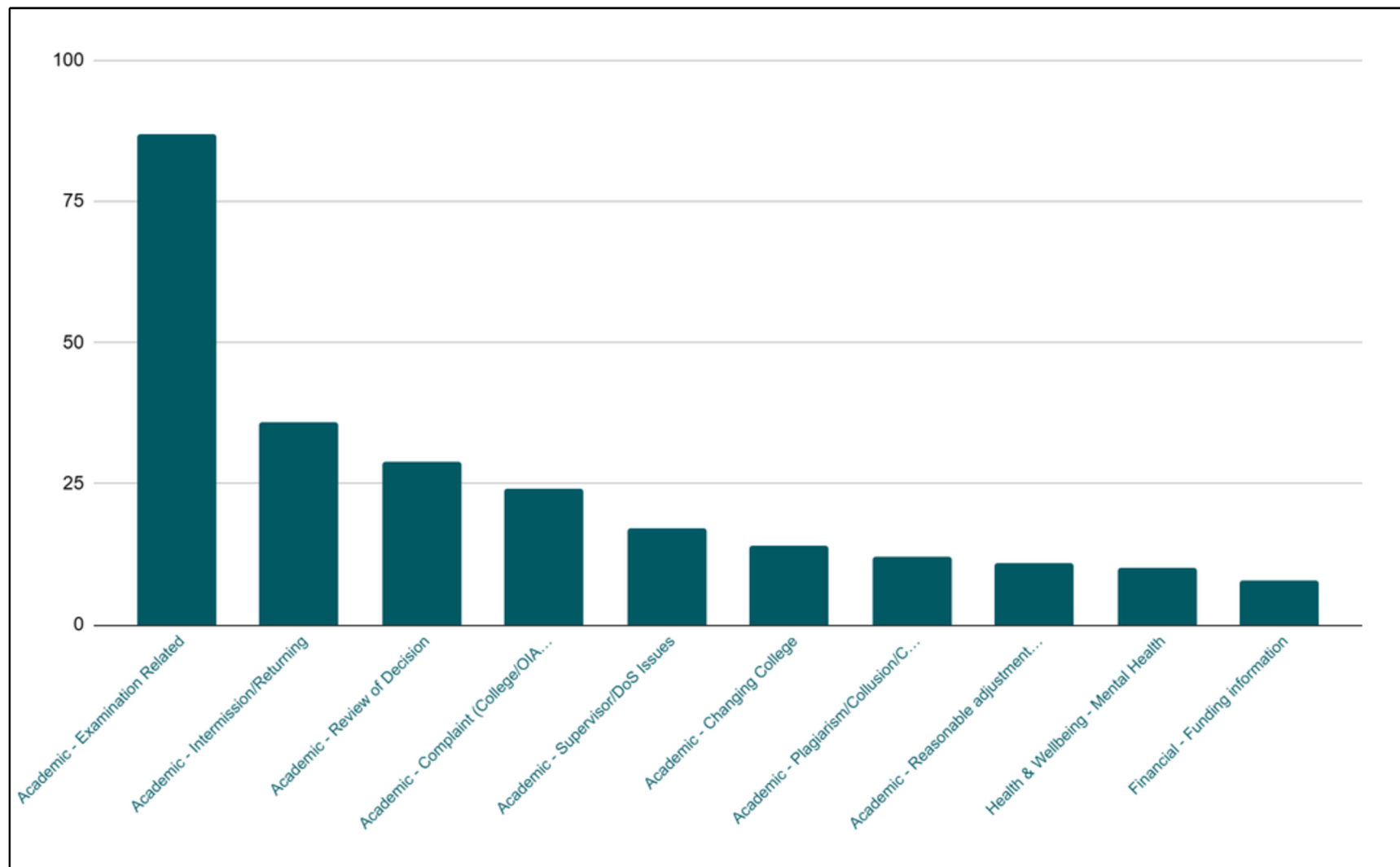
23% Signposted by a University service provider, staff member or resource, such as the Disability Resource Centre, Counselling Service, OSCCA, or departmental administrator

18% Signposted by a College service-provider or staff member, such as Tutor, Senior Tutor, Nurse, Chaplain

STUDENT CONCERNS



The Student Advice Service supports students with a wide range of issues each year, from exam concerns, seeking advice about intermission, challenges within student-supervisor relationships or concerns about their finances. Students often approach the Service with a single, specific problem (for example, an exam failure). However, during conversations with an Advisor, it frequently becomes clear that additional, interconnected issues are also affecting their situation. Our broad expertise means that we are well placed to support students with the different concerns that they may bring to us, and where specialist help is needed, to signpost them to the most appropriate University, College or external services.



STUDENT CONCERNS



The Student Advice Service supported 460 Service Users in the 2024-25 academic year, a 13% decrease from the previous year. Of these over 295 related to academic matters such as examination allowances, intermission, and potential complaints. Academic issues accounted for 73% of student cases, up from 64% in 2023-24.

There have been notable shifts in the primary concerns raised by students this year. Examination-related issues have remained the most common area of enquiry, with students seeking advice on exam worries, examination allowances, results, and reviews. Concerns relating to complaints, however, have decreased in prominence, moving from the second most frequent issue brought to the service to the fourth. In contrast, Review of Decisions has become more prominent, rising from the sixth most common concern students seek advice on to the third most common concern. Enquiries about changing College have also increased, moving from ninth to sixth, despite the formal process for changing college no longer being available. A new issue appearing in the top ten this year is plagiarism, collusion, and cheating, now the seventh most common concern.

Demand for the Service continues to peak in July, when students seek support with exam-related queries. In 2024-25, advisors recorded 973 hours of casework.



SERVICE DEVELOPMENT



In Michaelmas Term 2025, a comprehensive review of the Student Advice Service was undertaken. This included stakeholder interviews with 18 members of collegiate and central University staff, alongside analysis of five years of service-delivery data. The findings, informed by both internal evaluation and stakeholder feedback, confirm that the Student Advice Service occupies a distinctive and highly valued position within the collegiate University. Staff across central services and colleges consistently emphasised the service's unique role as an independent and impartial source of guidance for students navigating Cambridge's complex academic environment. Advisors were recognised for their specialist expertise across a broad range of academic and welfare issues, enabling them to provide timely, informed support particularly for students at risk of academic failure or withdrawal. This expertise underpins the service's ability to intervene effectively and contribute to improved student outcomes and wellbeing.

In response to the review, the service has strengthened its approach for the 2025-26 academic year. It has shifted from a purely non-directive model to a more directive one, allowing Advisors to draw more explicitly on their subject-matter knowledge when guiding students toward appropriate options. The service has also introduced clearer boundaries around the duration of support, including earlier withdrawal where appropriate, to maximise reach and overall effectiveness.



RESOURCES



The Student Advice Service has developed comprehensive online guidance pages on the Cambridge SU website, clearly outlining the options available to students facing difficulties and directing them through relevant university processes, including providing proforma paperwork. During the 2024-25 academic year, the Information and Guidance page received 36,852 visits from 16,412 different viewers. More detailed topic-specific pages also saw substantial engagement, with the highest numbers of visits to the Exams and Assessment pages. This high level of interaction with our online resources demonstrates that the reach and impact of the Advice Service extends well beyond students who work directly with an Advisor.

SEXUAL HEALTH SCHEME



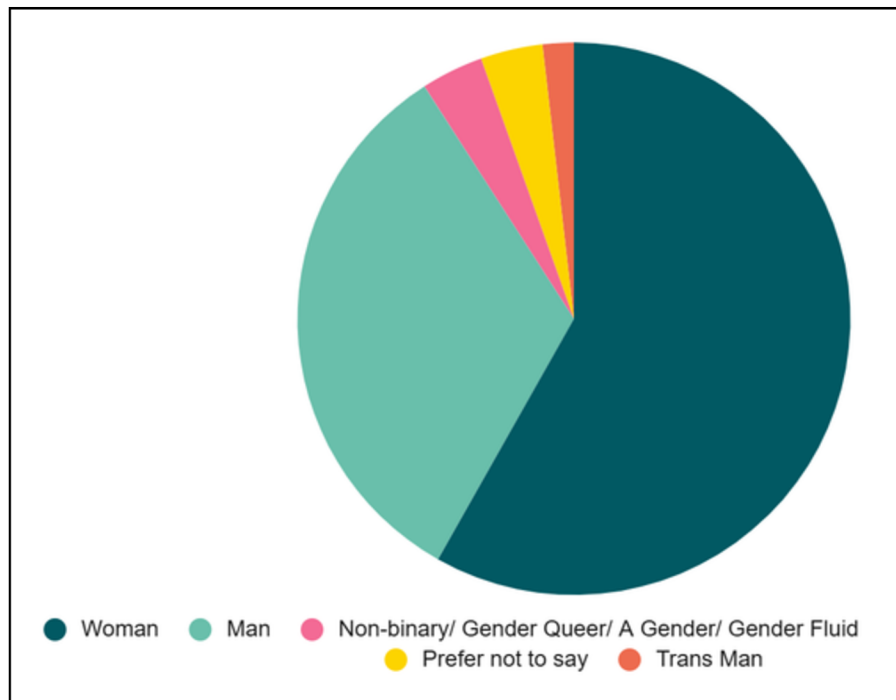
The Sexual Health Scheme is delivered by Cambridge SU and exists to enable students to engage in safer sex by distributing a variety of free sexual health products to colleges via J/MCR officers. Colleges can request up to 2 packs at a time, and each pack contains over 200 sexual health items including a variety of condoms, dental dams, lubricant and pregnancy tests. The ability of Cambridge SU to provide free sexual health products through the SHS ensures that J/MCR welfare budgets can be used on alternative and specific college welfare initiatives; it also allows all colleges to have equal and fair access to the same products.

Following requests from J/MCR committee members the scheme has been extended to allow colleges to request additional items that promote the feeling of safety to members of their members such as drinks covers, or bike lights.



DEMOGRAPHICS

In the academic year 2024-25 we were reliant on students completing a monitoring form to obtain information on student demographics, the following data is based on the students who updated us with their demographic data.

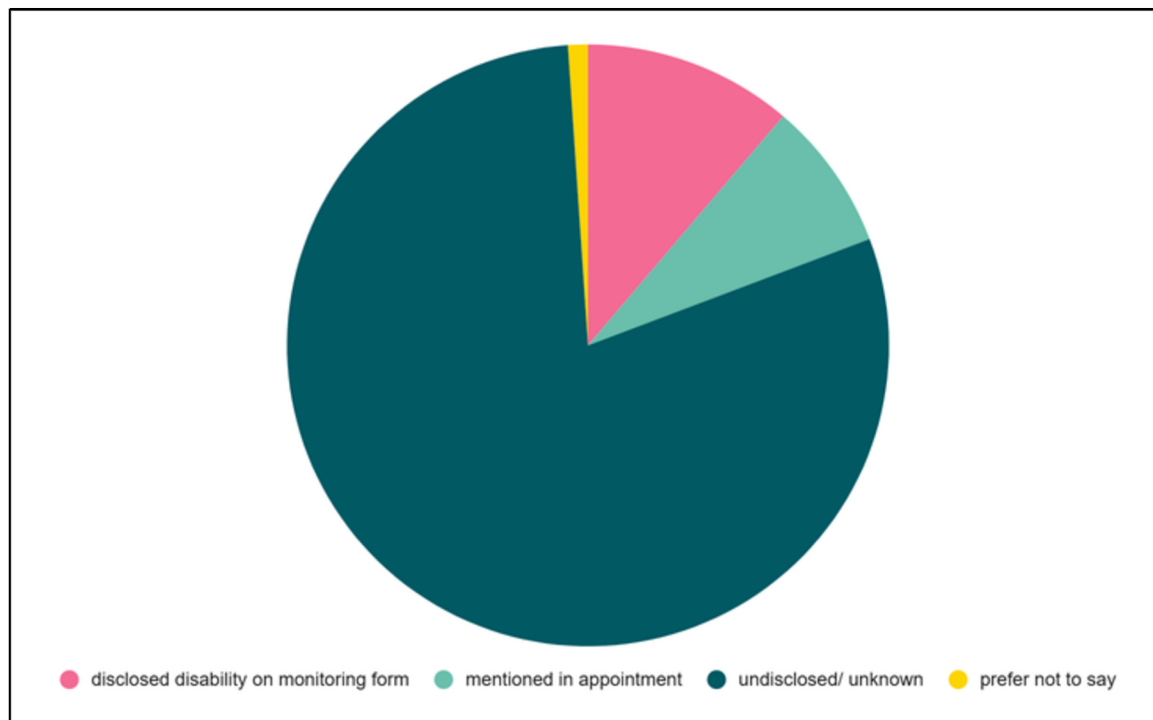


Gender of students where the information is known

GENDER

Of the students who disclosed their gender to us, 58% of them were female, 33% male, 4% non-binary/ gender queer/ A gender or gender fluid, 4% preferred not to say, and 2% trans man. This is a higher ratio than the number of females studying at the university which in 2023-24 information report reported 50% of students as female, 48% as male, and 2% as other.

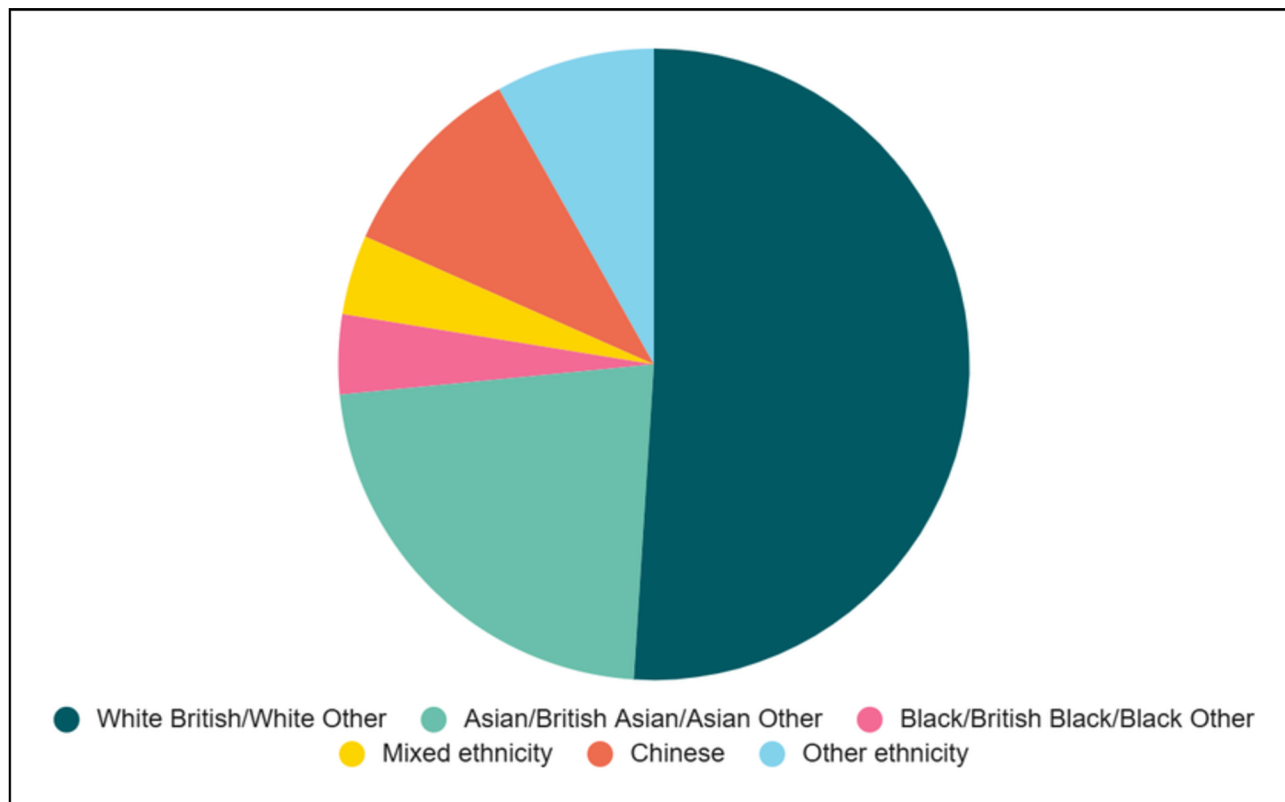
https://www.equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/edi_information_report_2023-24_.pdf



DISABILITY

At the point of engaging with the service, 11% of student service users disclosed a disability. When including the students who mentioned their disability at a later date, this number totaled 19%. This percentage figure is around the same number of students (18%) who disclosed a disability to the university for the academic year 2023 - 2024.

https://www.equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/edi_information_report_2023-24_.pdf



ETHNICITY



When students disclosed their ethnicity to us 51% reported that they were white British/ White other, 22% reported that they were Asian/ British Asian or Asian other, 4% Black/ Black British/ Black other, 4% mixed ethnicity, 10% Chinese, and 8% other ethnicity.

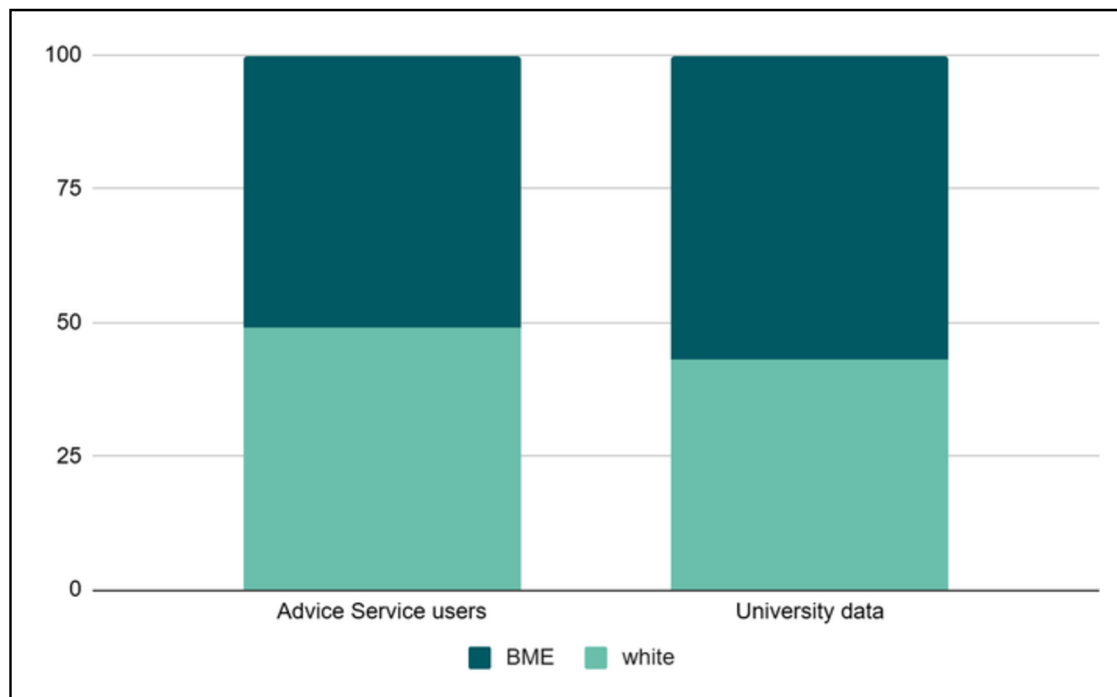


BME SERVICE USERS

The Cambridge University Equality and Diversity Information Report 2023-2024 reports that Cambridge student membership is made up of 39.3% BME students at undergraduate level, 45.7% at Postgraduate Taught, and 42.1% at Postgraduate Research, totaling 41% students identifying as non-white. The advice service figure sitting above all these measures would indicate that BME students are experiencing more issues than white students, or that BME students are more aware of the service. The Student Advice Service has a specialist BME Student Advisor who alongside working on general cases the role is there for students who

wish to speak to someone from a BME background for whatever reason. For example, this could range from a student preferring to speak with someone who has a similar lived experience, to a student wanting support with reporting a racist incident through the available processes.

[The Cambridge University Equality and Diversity and Information Report 2023 24edi_information_report_2023-24_.pdf](#)



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