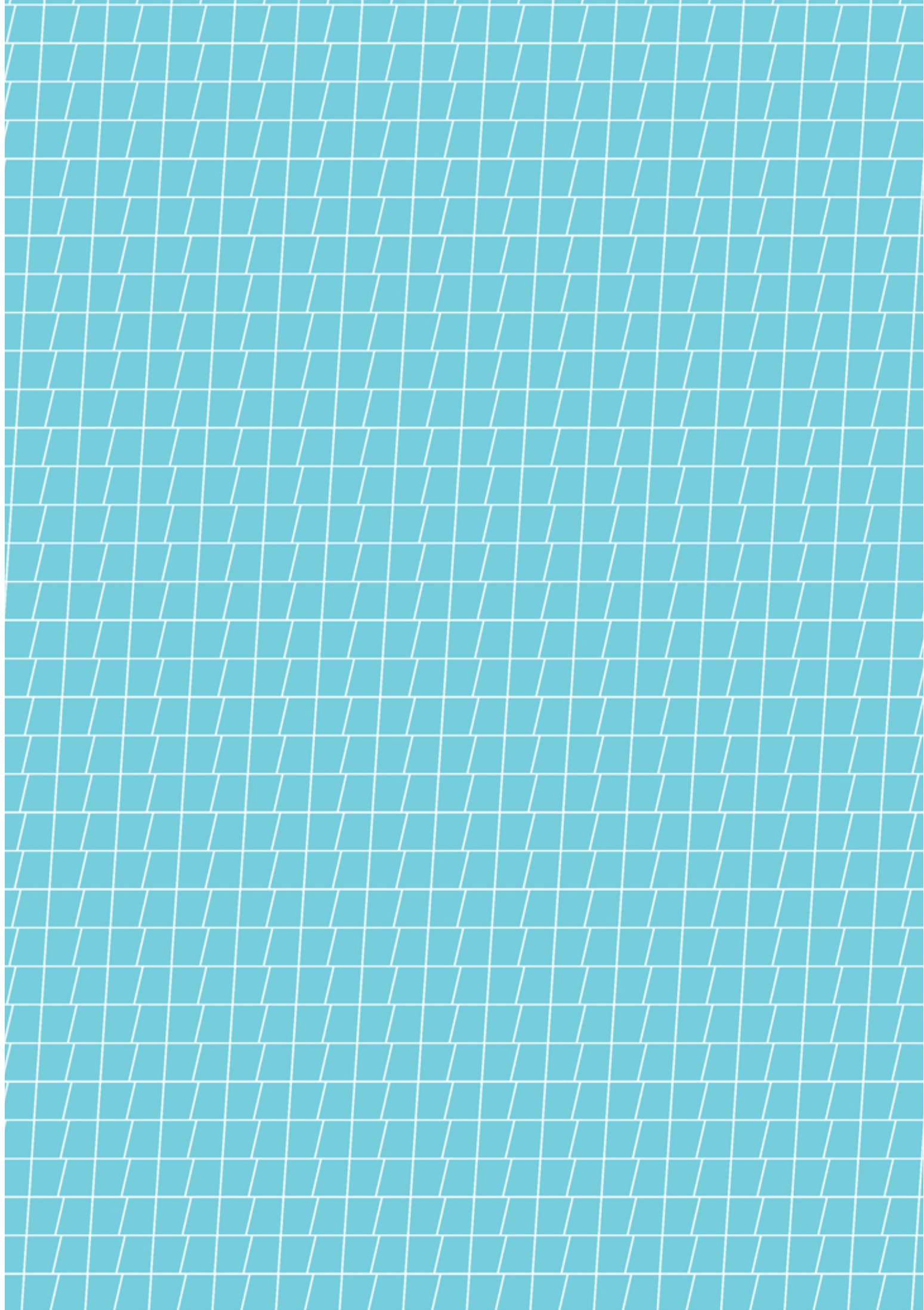


# The experience of Jewish students in 2016-17





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“Without understanding  
there is no knowledge,  
and without knowledge  
no understanding.”

Rabbi Eliezer

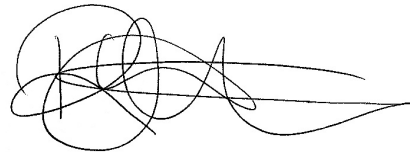
## Foreword

In chapter 3 of the Jewish holy book *Pirkei Avot* (the Ethics of the Fathers), Rabbi Eliezer is quoted saying, "without understanding there is no knowledge, and without knowledge no understanding."

This research aims to improve our knowledge of the Jewish student experience in 2017, to help our understanding. It has been conducted against a backdrop of increased antisemitism and reports of hate crime against Jewish people following the rise of the far right after the Brexit vote and in America and Europe more widely. The research offers the student movement significant insight in understanding Jewish students' experiences within higher education. I am particularly encouraged to see that many Jewish students are highly engaged in their students' unions, through membership of societies and sports clubs; participating in student elections and debates. However, the overall picture leaves some concerns about how Universities, NUS and students' unions are creating the right environment to ensure the full involvement of Jewish students in university life.

The next step for NUS will be to work with key stakeholders, students' unions and universities to implement the recommendations in this report to ensure we are creating a learning environment that is inclusive and welcoming for all Jewish students.

I look forward to working with Jewish students, students' unions and the HE sector to act on these recommendations.



**Robbie Young**

Vice-President Society & Citizenship, NUS

# Acknowledgements

NUS thanks respondents who completed the online survey and would like to acknowledge the support of the following people in the production of this research:

- Members of the research steering group: Robbiie Young, Vonnie Sandlan, Deborah Hermanns, Izzy Lenga, David Malcolm, Fenella Bramwell, Libby Brookes, Holly Townsend, Josh Nagli (UJS) for their work in developing and overseeing the research project;
- the Union of Jewish Students for their guidance developing the survey and promoting the survey to their networks;
- Alison Fernandes for her work on the high level analysis of the survey responses and drafting of the report;
- David Malcolm for his work finalising the report;
- NUS Insight team for their work in managing the survey responses and initial analysis;
- members of the NUS Institutional Racism Steering Group: Mandeep Rupra-Daine, Minda Burgos-Lukes, Jean McLean for their critical readership and help shaping the final report;
- and Jeremy Pilkington for designing the report.

# Executive summary

This report summarises the findings of a survey of Jewish students conducted by NUS between November 2016 and February 2017. We aimed to take stock of the experience of Jewish students in higher education at a time when the number of recorded anti-Semitic incidents has increased, both on and off campus, and because it is critical that NUS, students' unions, universities and the wider higher education sector understand the needs of Jewish students.

Some 485 self-defining Jewish students responded to the survey. The vast majority of the respondents were in full time education (96 per cent), aged 17-24 (91 per cent), studying at undergraduate level (86 per cent) and were UK citizens (87 per cent). For more detail on the demographics please see section 2.

The key findings of the report can be summarised as follows:

## **Provision**

- A plurality of students reported there was no kosher food on or near campus (42 per cent)
- The majority of students surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed that their university avoids scheduling classes and exams during Sabbath and Jewish religious festivals (59 per cent).

## **Academic coverage of Judaism**

A plurality of students surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that:

- They feel comfortable with the way in which issues relating to Jewish people/Judaism are covered in class (36 per cent).

The majority of students surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that:

- They have not experienced negative issues in classes related to Judaism (57 per cent).

## **Engagement with Students' Unions**

- Respondents showed a high level of engagement with their students' unions including being members of a society or a sports club (69 per cent) and voting in student elections (75 per cent)
- Almost half of students felt they were always or usually able to participate in student politics (47 per cent).

A plurality or the majority of students surveyed either disagreed or strongly disagreed that:

- As a Jewish student they felt their SU understands their needs (43 per cent)
- As a Jewish student they feel represented by their SU (51 per cent).
- Their SU policy reflects the views of Jewish students (45 per cent).

### **Engagement with NUS**

- Almost half of students surveyed either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would feel comfortable attending NUS events (49 per cent)
- Two fifths either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would feel comfortable engaging in NUS policy-making processes (42 per cent)
- The majority of students either disagreed or strongly disagreed that NUS would respond appropriately to allegations of antisemitism if they arose (65 per cent).

### **Israel/Palestine**

- In an academic context, over half of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable engaging in debate on Israel/Palestine (55 per cent).

Either a plurality or the majority of students surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed that:

- As a Jew they felt confident to voice their opinions on Israel/Palestine in class (45 per cent)
- They felt comfortable engaging in debate on Israel/Palestine in their SUs or in a society context (54 per cent)
- They felt comfortable engaging in debate on Israel/Palestine on campus (50 per cent)
- The vast majority of students whose Students' Union had a BDS policy or campaign did not feel comfortable or comfortable at all with it (68 per cent).

### **Hate Crime**

The majority of students surveyed:

- Were not very or not at all worried about being subject to verbal abuse, physical attack, vandalism, property damage or theft because of their Jewish belief (73 per cent)
- Had not experienced any crime whilst they have been students at their current place of study (65 per cent)
- Over a quarter have experienced personal abuse through social media or other communication (28 per cent)
- Of those who had experienced crime the majority believed these incidents were motivated by the perpetrator's prejudice towards them based on their Jewish belief (66 per cent).

We are incredibly grateful to the Jewish students who completed the survey for their time and input. From these important results we have developed a number of recommendations for NUS, students' unions and the wider HE sector. These are summarised in the *Recommendations* section. NUS commits to taking these findings forward, to working with Jewish students and their representatives, and ultimately to improving the lives of Jewish students.



# Introduction

There are around 8,500 Jewish students in higher education in the UK, according to the Union of Jewish Students (UJS)<sup>1</sup>. Although a relatively small group, Jewish students are a key part of many campus communities, and both individually and through Jewish Societies and other bodies, contribute enormously to academic and extra-curricular life at universities across the country.

In turn, NUS has a long and proud record of working with Jewish students and UJS across a range of issues. Several Jewish students have been elected officers of NUS and many more have been involved as activists, volunteers and representatives, to say nothing of the wider student movement. Over the years, NUS has worked together with UJS and other organisations to improve the experience of Jewish students, to help universities and students' unions understand their Jewish student population, and to tackle antisemitism wherever it exists.

This research aims to continue that work, and to help NUS to identify those issues which affect Jewish students in particular. We want to understand the student experience in 2016 through the eyes of Jewish students, and by doing so, ensure NUS focuses on the right areas.

There were a number of reasons it was important for NUS to carry this research out at this time. Firstly, concern around antisemitism in society is higher than it has been for many years. There are a number of reasons for this: following the vote to leave the EU in last year's referendum, and the rise of far-right political movements in Europe and America – among other factors – a number of marginalised communities have seen an increase in hate crimes and hate incidents<sup>2</sup>. The Community Security Trust (CST), who monitor antisemitism in the UK, recorded 1,309 anti-Semitic incidents in 2016<sup>3</sup>, the highest total it has ever recorded. Moreover, CST believes many other such incidents continue to go unreported. The incidents include physical attacks, verbal abuse, the distribution of anti-Semitic literature and incidents on social media.

The higher education sector has not been immune to this rise: CST recorded 41 incidents involving students, academics or other student bodies in 2016, compared with 21 the year before. Seventeen of the 2016 incidents were on campus. The role of universities as forums for academic debate give an added dimension to these concerns, in particular because of the complex and

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<sup>2</sup> <http://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/increases-in-hate-crime-incidents-driven-by-better-reporting>

<sup>3</sup> Anti-Semitic Incidents Report 2016, Community Security Trust

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ujs.org.uk/current/about/](http://www.ujs.org.uk/current/about/)

<sup>2</sup> <http://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/>

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often difficult and heated debates around Israel/Palestine, both in and outside the classroom. Universities must ensure freedom of speech, but also guard against any such debates becoming anti-Semitic.

With Israel/Palestine being a highly emotive issue for many involved in student politics, the role of NUS and the wider movement is under intense scrutiny. Not only do policy decisions like affiliating to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement attract attention from lawyers and activists, high-profile incidents of antisemitism, like those relating to the Oxford University Labour Club receive significant media coverage. Politicians have also taken an interest: the Home Affairs Committee at Westminster published a report on antisemitism in the UK in October 2016, which made several criticisms of incidents on university campuses in the UK and in NUS.

This included some criticism of the current NUS President, due to comments she had made prior to taking up office. Since taking up office, our President has said that she is listening to the concerns of Jewish students and the Jewish community and NUS has introduced a programme of work to tackle Hate Crime, detailed in Section 5. It was never her intention to cause offence and she has apologised and revised her language accordingly. In addition, Universities UK coordinated a taskforce looking at hate crime against university students, including Jewish students, during 2015/16, of which NUS was a member. The taskforce reported in November 2016 and UUK is now working with universities to

address its findings. This research aims to inform both the NUS and UUK programmes and their vital initiatives. We recognise Jewish student representatives continue to have concerns about NUS and are determined to take action.

In addition, this report will help encourage understanding among students and staff, of Jewish students' needs more generally and help ensure universities and students' unions provide the right facilities and services. This includes recognising the diversity and intersectionality of Jewish students, whether in distinguishing between different religious movements within Judaism, or the wide variety of political opinions, or the unique ways in which Jewish women experience campus life.

Ultimately, we hope it contributes to an environment where Jewish students feel welcome on campus and able to participate in all that higher education can offer.

### **Survey methodology**

This report contains the results of an online survey of Jewish Students in Higher Education in the UK, carried out between 28 November 2016 and 10 February 2017 and a sample of 485 was achieved. The survey was co-branded with the Union of Jewish Students, and was promoted in relevant press, social media and via relevant groups and societies. An incentive was offered to students of a prize draw to win a cash prize of either £150, £50 or £25. The survey was developed in full consultation with the Union of Jewish Students, as well as Jewish students elected to the NUS National Executive Council. A copy of the survey questions is contained in Appendix 1.

“Over the years, NUS has worked together with UJS and other organisations to improve the experience of Jewish students.”

# Report findings

## 1. Background of students

The largest single group of students surveyed identified their denomination of Judaism as Orthodox (41 per cent). Over a fifth of students identified as Secular/culturally Jewish (22 per cent) with Reform (13 per cent), Masorti (10 per cent) and Liberal (8 per cent) denominations in smaller numbers. Some students identified their denomination as Other (2 per cent) highlighting Neolog, Post-Denominational, Russian Judaism and Jewish Agnosticism as some examples of further denominations. A small number preferred not to say and a minority regarded their denomination as not Jewish.

The vast majority of students surveyed are:

- In full time education (96 per cent)
- Aged 17-24 (91 per cent)
- Studying at undergraduate level (86 per cent)
- Are UK citizens (87 per cent).

A smaller number of respondents described their study as either part time or other (4 per cent), aged 25 and above (9 per cent), studying at Postgraduate (12 per cent) or Foundation (1 per cent) level, and are international students from both within (8 per cent) and outside the EU (5 per cent).

There were roughly equal proportions describing themselves as men (46 per cent) and women (49 per cent), with a smaller number identifying in another way (2 per cent) or who prefer not say (3 per cent).

The highest region of the UK where respondents reported to study is London (25 per cent) with sizable numbers in the North of England (23 per cent), the Midlands (20 per cent) and the South East (10 per cent). Less than 10 per cent of Jewish students surveyed studied in the Nations.

The majority of students surveyed did not identify as BAME (71 per cent) with a minority preferring not to say (5 per cent). However, almost a quarter identified as BAME, as they identify as an ethnic minority because of their Judaism (24 per cent). For further discussion on this point please see section 4.

## 2. Provision for Jewish students on campus

NUS has long advocated for better provision for students of faith and belief on campus. This includes looking at the practicalities of faith on campus, such as food provision, space to pray and adequate timetabling. Respondents were asked about provision for kosher food on or near campus, prayer space, chaplaincy provision, access to kosher accommodation, timetabling and safe space on campus.

### **Kosher food on or near campus**

The largest single group of students reported there was no kosher food on or near campus (42 per cent). One third reported there was kosher food (35 per cent) whilst one fifth did not know (21 per cent). A small minority did not feel this was applicable to them (2 per cent). When asked what other facilities or services students would like to see, increasing the availability of kosher food was the primary response. Students made a range of suggestions as to what type of kosher food they would like to see on campus from sandwiches and hot meals to frozen produce and dry goods. Due to the preparation required, kosher food can be expensive so the availability of “*kosher food at reasonable price*” was another concern for students.

Current NUS welfare campaign policy does include improving the catering provisions on campus for students with dietary requirements, however, this focuses on allergies and intolerances rather than

religious dietary requirements. Nonetheless, affordable religious dietary provision could be looked at alongside this policy. NUS itself ensures kosher food is recognised as a dietary requirement for its own events.

A further point of note is the potential impact of BDS policies on the availability of kosher food on campus. As one student highlighted, “*BDS...It's xenophobic and prevents kosher food being sold in SU outlets as most Kosher food is made in Israel*”. Further research is needed to determine if BDS policies do stop the sale of kosher food on campus and therefore what guidance students' unions may require to ensure that the dietary needs of Jewish students are not negatively impacted by such policies.

### **Prayer space**

Over half of students surveyed reported that there is prayer space/a synagogue on or near campus (54 per cent). A quarter of students reported that there was not this provision (25 per cent) whilst a fifth did not know (19 per cent). A small minority did not feel this was applicable to them (2 per cent). Whilst a large number of students had access to a prayer space on campus, the space did not always sufficiently meet the needs of Jewish students. Students cited shoes not being allowed in multi-faith spaces meaning the room cannot be used to pray, the setup of multi-faith rooms catering to particular faiths, rooms allocated for prayer being constantly changed and problems with accessing the prayer room on festivals where entrance is by use of an electrical card. For some women students finding a space that is

both suitable and comfortable to pray in can be a further challenge.

Additionally students would like “*less obviously Christian prayer spaces*” and to see more visible signs of their faith on campus such as “*Jewish books in the faith centre*” and “*winter festival (and decoration) to not be exclusively Christian*”. Whilst it is positive to see a high percentage of students with access to prayer space, multi-faith spaces need to be managed appropriately so they can meet the needs of all students of faith and belief. There is guidance on how to manage multi-faith spaces available on NUS Connect.

### **Jewish chaplain**

Around half of students reported that the university employs a Jewish chaplain (49 per cent) with a quarter of students reporting they did not (27 per cent) and just under a quarter that did not know (23 per cent). A small minority did not feel this was applicable to them (1 per cent). Whilst there is Jewish chaplaincy provision for half of students surveyed, this does not mean that all denominations are catered for. Having an interdenominational Jewish chaplain or chaplaincy support for all Jewish denominations was an important factor for students. As one student highlighted, having a chaplain who “*shows respect for variance in gender, sexuality, observance/denomination, age and emotional and cognitive diversity*” was an important requirement and exemplifies the diversity of the Jewish faith.

The location of chaplains is another area of concern for some Jewish students.

Having a chaplain located in a building that is primarily for another faith, for example, a church, can be off putting for students seeking support and may be a barrier to developing relationships with students. Visibility of chaplains is another factor raised in the findings. If students do not see their chaplain engaging with fellow students then they may not be aware of the provision available to them. Further guidance on chaplaincy is available from NUS.

### **Access to accommodation**

While just over a quarter of students reported that their university provided kosher accommodation (26 per cent) with the majority reporting they did not (45 per cent). A further quarter did not know (26 per cent), with a small minority who did not feel this was applicable (3 per cent). Furthermore, only 17 per cent reported that their university provided an alternative method of accessing accommodation for observant Jews who cannot use electronic key fobs on the Sabbath or during festivals. Over a third reported that their university did not provide an alternative method (37 per cent), with a large number who did not know (42 per cent).

Chaplains, with their wide range of expertise and knowledge, could be better utilised by the university in matters of religious observance. For example, by working with the accommodation office Jewish chaplains could ensure that kosher accommodation meets the needs of students observing the Sabbath and that kosher accommodation is allocated appropriately to students who require it.

### **Timetabling**

The majority of students surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed that their university avoids scheduling classes and exams during Sabbath and Jewish religious festivals (59 per cent). Only 16 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with similar numbers who neither agreed nor disagreed (12 per cent) or who did not know (12 per cent). Students reported difficulties with lecturers and tutors not understanding the needs of Jewish students who observe Sabbath. One student gave the example of *"being told I would be marked down in a module if I left early for Shabbat because the university is a 'secular institute'"*.

Students gave numerous examples of scheduling issues with religious festivals including the start of the term falling on Rosh Hashanah, mandatory freshers' talks on Yom Kippur with no alternative dates given, exams scheduled on Yom Tov, requests to delay work due on religious festivals denied. For students who are made to choose between their studies and religious observance, the impact is significant. As one student highlighted, *"They don't get that it's not my fault if I can't attend lectures etc. due to religious observance"*. The timetabling issues that students report can be productively worked upon by institutions with the input of students' unions, who should raise issues where they are identified. These include using calendars with key dates of religious festivals to be considered before scheduling exams and events, recording of classes so students can catch up if they need to leave early or cannot attend, and better flexibility given without penalty to students who

require time off for religious observance. Chaplains can play a further role in assisting institutions to understand the needs of students of faith and belief. NUS has further guidance on timetabling available on its website.

### **Safe space**

Almost half of students surveyed (47 per cent) felt there was a safe space or forum for Jewish students to talk about issues that affect them on campus. Over a quarter did not feel there was a safe space (29 per cent), with around a quarter who did not know (23 per cent) and a small number who preferred not to say (1 per cent). The Jewish Society (or "JSoc") was the most widely used example of a safe space or forum where Jewish students can talk about issues which affect them but chaplaincy, Jewish organisations, Hillel house, interfaith forums, private spaces, student advice centres, students' unions and elected officers were also mentioned. Furthermore, some students expressed that they *"feel safe across campus"*, which is positive and an ideal for all campuses. Despite JSoc being the predominant example given, some students expressed concern that this may not be the best space *"as it is not representative of all streams of Judaism"*. It is important to remember that there are multiple denominations and perspectives within Judaism and not all students will feel comfortable or represented by their Jewish Society. This is common amongst many student faith and belief societies however.

Over half of students' surveyed felt safe being involved in general policy and debate

on campus (53 per cent). One quarter either disagreed or strongly disagreed (26 per cent) with smaller numbers who neither agreed nor disagreed (17 per cent) or who did not know (4 per cent). Examples given for not feeling safe included the perception that students *“will be ignored and misunderstood as a Jewish student purely because I am Jewish”*, *“fear of being targeted”* and the *“threat of bullying because of your views”*. For some students, their opinion about their safety was informed by their own experiences including experiencing antisemitism, facing hostility, being accused of having a Jewish bias and being ridiculed or patronised when voicing opinions. Students also cited the experiences of other Jewish students in institutions where incidents have occurred as reasons for feeling unsafe.

### 3. Academic coverage of Judaism

A plurality of students surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that they feel comfortable with the way in which issues relating to Jewish people/Judaism are covered in class (36 per cent). A large number neither agreed nor disagreed (28 per cent), whilst one fifth disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (20 per cent). Smaller numbers did not know (16 per cent) or preferred not to say. For some students, issues relating to Jewish people or Judaism do not come up in class because of the subject or course studied. Some students cited examples where lecturers made comments for example:

- *“A couple of Maths academics are happy to make anti Israel generalisations in lectures where it is really not relevant”*
- *“I have been in classes when the professor makes an off-handed anti-Semitic remark. Example: “the only reason he was thrown in jail is because he was taking money from Jews and they are resourceful”*
- *“A lecturer made a joke about a gas chamber during a lecture about atmospheric gases and climate change”*
- *“I spoke up to a lecturer about holocaust memorial day and the response given was what about the genocide in Palestine”.*



The majority of students surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that they have not experienced negative issues in classes related to Judaism (57 per cent). One quarter (26 per cent) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Smaller numbers neither agreed nor disagreed (14 per cent), did not know (3 per cent) or preferred not to say. Examples of negative issues students raised included:

- *"Tokenism by professors of the 'Jewish' student"*
- *"People on my course have been exceptionally anti-Semitic by refusing to sit next to me. Some claimed it was in the name of Palestine but they don't even know my opinion, they just know I am Jewish"*
- *"Being seen as the de facto 'voice' of Israel or the holocaust"*
- *"I found out one of my lecturers, for whom I was supposed to write an essay, has written an article in favour of Holocaust revisionism for a notoriously anti-Semitic magazine".*

Whilst it is positive to see that the majority of students surveyed have not experienced negative issues in class related to Judaism, it is clear that there are still problems to be overcome for Jewish students. In particular, the attitudes of lecturers and the way in which issues relating to Jewish people/ Judaism are covered in class presents a challenge to be addressed. A policy which outlines the procedure, indicating the steps that would be followed from a student reporting a discriminatory concern or incident to it being addressed at institution level would be useful. This should include clarity on the spaces as to where this policy

applies, for example in classrooms, lecture theatres, social spaces, or online platforms. Alongside this, clear communication and guidance for students on how to report discrimination would be beneficial. The policy should be complimented by a policy/agreement on student and staff conduct that offers clarity on expectations and behaviours of those who are part of the institution, with clear guidance and examples of appropriate/inappropriate behaviours, in line with any relevant equality and diversity, safe space, or liberation policies.

## 4. Engagement with students' unions

Positively, respondents showed a high level of engagement with their students' unions (SU) from attending events at an SU bar (53 per cent) and showing their support for a campaign (45 per cent) to voting in student elections (75 per cent).

A large number of students surveyed are members of a society or a sports club (69 per cent) and have attended an event or activity as part of the sports clubs/societies (57 per cent); a third have been involved in organising a students' union event or activity (32 per cent); almost one fifth sit on an SU committee (18 per cent); and a small number have set up a society or a sports club through the SU (12 per cent). The majority of respondents felt they were always or usually able to participate in SU societies (69 per cent) and sports (61 per cent).

Over half of students surveyed have read the SU website (53 per cent) with two fifths having read the SU weekly email (42 per cent). The majority of respondents felt they were always or usually able to participate in producing student media (56 per cent).

A smaller number of students surveyed had used the SU advice centre (13 per cent); volunteered with the SU (11 per cent) and are academic representatives (10 per cent). The majority of respondents surveyed felt they were always or usually able to participate in volunteering/community action (70 per cent).

### Barriers to participation

Students reflected upon some of the barriers they have found to participation in their students' unions. These included experiences common to many students such as:

- Cliquiness
- Lack of free time
- Not being interested in what is being offered.

Barriers common amongst students of faith and belief such as:

- Events on the Sabbath or during religious festivals
- Lack of kosher food
- Being in a minority.

Barriers specific to being Jewish such as:

- Identifying as a Zionist
- Being asked and judged for their stance on Israel/Palestine
- Being both Israeli and Jewish
- As one student highlighted, *"You're never quite sure how people are going to react if they find out you're Jewish, which means you often feel like you have to hide part of your identity"*.

### Student politics

Almost half of students surveyed felt they were always or usually able to participate in student politics (47 per cent). One fifth felt they were sometimes able to (21 per cent) and similar numbers felt they were rarely or never able to participate (17 per cent).

Students who would feel comfortable running for positions of leadership were split between those who:

- Agreed or strongly agreed (40 per cent)
- Disagreed or strongly disagreed (41 per cent)
- 39 per cent of men and women agreed or strongly agreed
- 40 per cent of men and 42 per cent of women disagreed or strongly disagreed
- Two thirds of those surveyed who describe their gender identity in another way disagreed or strongly disagreed (63 per cent).

Almost a fifth of respondents have stood as a candidate in union elections (17 per cent), these being mostly final year or postgraduate students (64 per cent). Of those who stood, over two thirds either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable as a Jewish student standing in a students' union election (65 per cent). However, over one fifth either disagreed or strongly disagreed (21 per cent). Reasons cited included:

- *When I stood, I felt the need to hide it*
- *I wasn't sure whether to make it a part of my speeches or whether I would be seen as different for it and not as someone who could represent students who aren't Jewish*
- *Last time I ran people stuck "boycott Israeli goods" stickers on my posters even though I had never even been to Israel or spoken about it*
- *When running in elections, I feel that assumptions about my views on the Israel-Palestine Conflict prevent people from voting for me regardless of my policies. Also there are difficulties in*

*standing as a Jewish student with campaign periods often occurring during Jewish festivals*

- *In the end it just alienated me further, and broke lots of relationships. There was an air of suspicion that because I was Jewish I could hold the 'right' politics. Even amongst people who I had previously worked with.*

Despite a large number of candidates feeling comfortable standing as a Jewish student, it is clear that there are barriers to address to ensure Jewish students can participate fully in student politics. Simple actions, like consulting a multi-faith calendar before scheduling election timetables, mean unions can avoid campaign periods during any religious festivals and demonstrate inclusivity towards students of faith and belief. By working to increase healthy debate and respectful campaigning, unions can ensure that a diversity of opinions are heard without personal repercussions, which is particularly needed for Jewish students who may face stigma for their Jewish identity. NUS or other organisations may be able to provide training or guidance on debating religion and politics, or the complex issues around Israel/Palestine, such as the work with student journalists on reporting the conflict undertaken in 2012. Part of the work within the Wellbeing and Welfare programme of the NUS100 strategic framework includes establishing safe and cohesive communities. This provides an opportunity to revive and further work NUS has done on campus cohesion and faith and belief, with the intention to specifically consider what constitutes

healthy and respectful debate and opinions online and offline and to further explore partnerships with other organisations focusing on this area of work to maximise support and guidance available to the education community on this.

A plurality or a majority of students surveyed either disagreed or strongly disagreed that:

- As a Jewish student they felt their SU understands their needs (43 per cent)
- As a Jewish student they feel represented by their SU (51 per cent)
- Their SU policy reflects the views of Jewish students (45 per cent).

However, a quarter either agreed or strongly agreed that:

- As a Jewish student they felt their SU understands their needs (25 per cent)
- As a Jewish student they feel represented by their SU (25 per cent)
- With lower numbers who though their SU policy reflects the views of Jewish students (18 per cent).

Less than a quarter of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the above statements and smaller numbers either didn't know or preferred not to say.

- As a Jewish student they felt their SU understands their needs (neither agreed nor disagreed 24 per cent, did not know 7 per cent)
- As a Jewish student they feel represented by their SU (neither agreed nor disagreed 17 per cent, did not know 7 per cent)

- Their SU policy reflects the views of Jewish students (neither agreed nor disagreed 23 per cent, did not know 14 per cent).

Women respondents felt less represented by their students' union than men. Gender was fairly balanced between men and women for the other statements. No respondents who identify in another way agreed or strongly agreed to any of the statements. The majority of those who preferred not to say either agreed or strongly agreed with these statements.

It is clear from the survey findings that although Jewish students are engaged with their students' unions there are still barriers to be overcome. Critically understanding the needs of Jewish students both religiously and culturally, understanding issues that are important to them and ways in which they wish to be represented are areas for improvement. Unions could begin by including training on barriers for students of faith and belief, such as timetabling during newly elected clubs and societies committee training. Women's officers and LGBT+ officers could actively reach out to students of faith and belief to increase representation of such students in their campaigns.

### **Jewish students who define as BAME**

Some students mentioned the lack of recognition for those who define as BAME because of their Jewish identity in comments made in the survey such as:

- *“Jewish students are not recognised as a BMe minority and are portrayed/branded as white by liberation groups. Also not allowed to define the terms of our own oppression like any other minority is”*
- *“Not being considered an ethnic minority, and hence anti-Semitic comments not taken seriously by fellow students and staff”.*

The Institute of Race Relations defines BAME as “the terminology normally used in the UK to describe people of non-white descent”<sup>4</sup>. In student politics, different definitions can apply in certain contexts. For example, one of the NUS liberation campaigns is the Black Students’ Campaign, which represents all students of African, Arab, Asian and Caribbean heritage – also described as political Blackness. The definition is determined by the students involved on a democratic basis.

Students’ unions can often have BME or BAME officers rather than Black Students’ Officers. A question is therefore raised about the inclusion of Jewish students (as a group and where they do not otherwise define as Black) as an ethnic minority in such campus campaigns. One student who had run for such a position commented they *“felt excluded*

*as I was a Jew running for BME and I do not think they accepted that”*. Where students’ unions have BME/BAME as opposed to Black Students’ Officers, unions should give clear guidance on their definition of BME/BAME and identify which elected officer represents Jewish students, particularly where the definition of BME/BAME used in that students’ union does not cover Jewish identity. Just as importantly, whichever elected officer has this responsibility should be given adequate training and supported to work with the Jewish Society and Jewish students to ensure Jewish student representation and inclusion. This in turn may mean additional training for the staff who support those officers.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.irr.org.uk/research/statistics/definitions/>

## 5. Engagement with NUS

NUS has a long and proud record of working with and supporting Jewish students. Presently, however, the research indicates that:

- Almost half of students surveyed either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would feel comfortable attending NUS events (49 per cent)
- Two fifths either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would feel comfortable engaging in NUS policy-making processes (42 per cent)
- The majority of students either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the NUS would respond appropriately to allegations of antisemitism if they arose (65 per cent).

Conversely, a third of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they would feel comfortable attending NUS events (31 per cent), and would feel comfortable engaging in NUS policy-making processes (36 per cent). However, only 15 per cent agreed or strongly agreed NUS would respond appropriately to allegations of antisemitism if they arose.

Smaller numbers neither agreed nor disagreed that they would feel comfortable attending NUS events (14 per cent) or did not know (6 per cent); they would feel comfortable engaging in NUS policy-making processes (16 per cent) or did not know (6 per cent); that the NUS would respond appropriately to allegations of antisemitism if they arose (8 per cent) or did not know (11 per cent).

While there have been concerns raised around antisemitism and the current President and other elected leaders of NUS, this was not reflected widely in the survey, with only 2 per cent of respondents mentioning it. Disengagement with NUS extends much further as one student highlighted, *“There is a tendency for NUS representatives to make blanket statements about Jews, including presumptions about their motives. This is very belittling and indicates that issues of Jewish students are not seriously considered.”*

NUS have historically had good relations with and representation from Jewish students. Though figures do indicate a lack of trust in NUS, this is not a surprising finding, and a programme of work has already been identified to address this including:

- An apology from the current NUS President around past statements, including a revision of language<sup>5</sup>
- Following a change to custom and practice and a number of discussions at the National Executive Council, a constitutionally recognised reserved place for a Jewish member on the ARAF committee
- Launching the Institutional Racism Review with current work being done on the implementation of the recommendations and creating a race equity plan that includes the views and experiences of Jewish staff, officers and volunteers in NUS

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/no-place-for-hate-no-place-for-antisemitism>

- A National Summit focusing on hate crime and discrimination which included a session on tackling antisemitism held in March 2017
- A roundtable on *Hate Crime: Antisemitism* as part of a series of roundtables on tackling hate crime and discrimination held which were held between January and March 2017 Building on NUS' stakeholder relationships with various organisations and individuals who work on understanding and tackling prejudice and hate, including those who specifically focus on antisemitism
- Prioritising work around hate crime, including antisemitism, within the Wellbeing and Welfare programme of NUS100, the organisation's 6-year strategic framework
- Continuing to support students' unions to become third party hate crime reporting centres and seeking partnerships to explore all reporting mechanisms, on and offline
- Undertaking specific work to tackle online hate and bullying – #NoSpaceForHate – of which reporting on and tackling antisemitism forms part of this
- Launching an online hub with the resources for SUs and groups to tackle antisemitism and all hate on campuses
- Working with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to develop resources for students' unions and activists on commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day and launching these along with blogs on NUS Connect.

We will evaluate this work and the findings of this survey demonstrate there is much more work to do. Greater understanding of the needs and concerns of Jewish students is an important step forwards in rebuilding relationships and trust between NUS and Jewish students. Staff members may be better placed to broker relationships between NUS' elected officers and national student faith and belief groups and also provide consistency beyond elected terms of office. This survey, or a version of it, should be repeated after a reasonable period to identify progress or further areas of work for NUS. In the meantime, we will review and amend where necessary our current procedures to deal with all forms of racist incidents, including anti-Semitic incidents. We will also work to address the concerns of those who do not feel our democratic spaces allow for healthy debate, both as part of the work on social media as part of NUS100 and the wider review of our democratic structures.

## 6. Israel/Palestine

As Sheldon<sup>6</sup> states, the Israel/Palestine conflict has unsettled British campus life at multiple levels for over four decades. In an academic context over half of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable engaging in debate on Israel/Palestine (55 per cent). One third disagreed or strongly disagreed (33 per cent) with smaller numbers who neither agreed nor disagreed (9 per cent), did not know (3 per cent) and preferred not to say (1 per cent). More Jewish men felt comfortable engaging in debate on Palestine than women whilst those whose gender identity is defined in another way equally agreed or disagreed they felt comfortable. Respondents felt confident in the ability of lecturers to mediate the debate, and that both students and lecturers would debate fairly based on facts not emotion. Some students reported a positive experience of such debates, citing being treated respectfully and as an individual with regards to their opinion on the situation. However, some students reported being marked down by certain lecturers for having a pro-Israel stance.

Though the majority of students felt comfortable engaging in debate on Israel/Palestine, 45 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed that as a Jew they felt confident to voice their opinions on Israel/Palestine in class. Reasons given

included fears of being “*branded a racist for my pro-Israel views*”, or being told, “*I am not really Jewish, or ...that I am a self-hating Jew*” for a pro-Palestinian stance. A third agreed or strongly agreed (34 per cent) with this statement with lower numbers who neither agreed nor disagreed (12 per cent), who did not know (8 per cent) and who preferred not to say.

A third of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the way in which issues relating to Israel/Palestine are covered in class is fair (32 per cent). 27 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed whilst a fifth either agreed or strongly agreed (19 per cent), or did not know (21 per cent). Whilst some students found academic discourse on Israel to be unbiased others reported both a pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli bias and laxity in “correcting student contributions of false facts”.

The majority of students surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed that they felt comfortable engaging in debate on Israel/Palestine in their SUs or in a society context (54 per cent). Reasons given included:

- “*When I am discussing Israel/Palestine... within the student union it can quickly morph into abuse and outright intimidation*”
- “*Any policies with Israeli politics involve an uncomfortable discussion about Judaism. You can't say anything about Israeli politics without being accused of bias for being Jewish*”

<sup>6</sup> Sheldon, R (2016) *Tragic Encounters and Ordinary Ethics: Palestine-Israel in British Universities*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.



- *"In a debate about whether the university should boycott Israel, the Jews in the room were accused of being Israeli spies working for the Israeli government"*
- *"Anyone who shows support for Israel is immediately branded oppressive, racist, even genocidal"*
- *"Israel-Palestine dialogue can be very intimidating. And really it's because dialogue does not exist"*.

A third agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable engaging in debate on Israel/Palestine in their SUs or in a society context (32 per cent). Smaller numbers neither agreed nor disagreed (11 per cent) or did not know (3 per cent).

Half of students disagreed or strongly disagreed that they felt comfortable engaging in debate on Israel/Palestine on campus (50 per cent). Over a third agreed or strongly agreed (35 per cent) with smaller numbers who neither agreed nor disagreed (13 per cent) or who did not know (1 per cent). Reasons that students did not feel comfortable engaging in debate on Israel/Palestine were primarily based around identity. Many students highlighted that Judaism and Israel are important parts of their identity and that Judaism's relationship with Israel is not understood, including a lack of understanding of what Zionism is, therefore *"Jewish students are targeted for having a relationship with Israel"*. This can affect the wellbeing of Jewish students as respondents reported feeling *"judged and alienated"* or being treated *"like a privileged minority"*.

Research published by City University in 2015<sup>7</sup> on the attitudes of British Jews towards Israel identified that for 93 per cent of those surveyed, Israel forms some part of their identity as Jewish people with 59 per cent who consider themselves to be Zionists. Discourse on Israel/Palestine can use terminology like Zionism yet there is a lack of understanding about what the term means for many Jewish students. As one student highlighted, *"I'm a Zionist and for so many in the SU, that is a dirty word"*. By better understanding Jewish students' identity with Israel, including what Zionism means to many Jewish people, the experience of debates on Israel/Palestine could vastly improve for Jewish students. NUS has long advocated dialogue not debate and there are exemplary models within students' unions for productive conversations about sensitive topics. Sheldon<sup>8</sup> describes the 'Israel-Palestine Forum' as one such example where students 'collaborated to create an ethical practice which offered a non-violent response to the tragically entangled histories at stake in Palestine-Israel policies,' based on 'linguistic practices of speaking and listening [that] entailed risk-taking, acknowledgement of the unknown, cultivating trust and care, reflexivity, speaking from experience, dialogism and the capacity for open-ended relationships'.

<sup>7</sup> <http://yachad.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/British-Jewish-Attitudes-Towards-Israel-Yachad-Ipsos-Mori-Nov-2015.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Chapter 5 in Sheldon, R (2016) *Tragic Encounters and Ordinary Ethics: Palestine-Israel in British Universities*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

## **BDS**

Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) is a Palestinian-led movement for freedom, justice and equality, according to its website<sup>9</sup>. The BDS movement is supported by a number of organisations and individuals including NUS. Almost two fifths of students surveyed knew their students' union had a BDS policy or campaign (38 per cent) whilst a quarter knew their students' union did not (26 per cent). Over a third of students did not know (36 per cent).

The vast majority of students whose students' union had a BDS policy or campaign did not feel comfortable or comfortable at all with it (68 per cent). However, just under a quarter felt comfortable or very comfortable with it (24 per cent). A small number felt neither comfortable nor uncomfortable with it (8 per cent). Students from across the range of denominations, including those who preferred not to say, had a mixed response to how they felt about their union's BDS policy with all denominations represented as feeling comfortable or uncomfortable. Students who did not feel comfortable or comfortable at all gave reasons for their belief including it *"threatens safety of Jews on campus"*, *"Doesn't build towards peace or understanding"*, *"it seems like a front to get rid of Jewish culture in campus"*.

It is important to remember that there are Israeli students in the UK who may feel BDS policies or campaigns isolate them, which can affect their emotional wellbeing. As one Israeli student stressed *"I feel like the minority and it's difficult to be myself and feel confident in who I am because of the hatred that Israelis and Jews get on campus"*. International Students' officers could be offered guidance on how to support Israeli students during BDS campaigns and also Israeli Apartheid Weeks. Guidance could be given to BDS campaigners on how to constructively engage with differing opinions to create emotionally and physically safe and inclusive spaces for dialogue on such topics, which may alleviate some of the emotional strain felt by Jewish students.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds>

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## 7. Hate crime

In 2012 NUS<sup>10</sup> conducted research that explored the extent and nature of hate incidents amongst students of faith and belief across the UK. Whilst the number of respondents who identified as Jewish was low at 0.8 per cent, the research showed that 32 per cent of Jewish respondents were very or fairly worried about being subject to abuse because of prejudice against their religion or belief, and 16 per cent of Jewish respondents reported experiencing verbal abuse or threats of violence.

Current research on the experiences of Jewish students shows that 26 per cent were very or fairly worried about being subject to verbal abuse, physical attack, vandalism, property damage or theft because of their Jewish belief, which is a decrease from 2012. The vast majority of students surveyed were not very or not at all worried (73 per cent) with a minority who preferred not to say (1 per cent). The majority of students surveyed had not experienced any crime whilst they have been students at their current place of study (65 per cent). Smaller numbers have experienced vandalism (7 per cent), property damage (3 per cent), personal theft (3 per cent), property theft (3 per cent), robbery and burglary (2 per cent). However, a significant number have experienced personal abuse through social media or other communication

(28 per cent). Though data suggests an increase from the findings of 2012 this could be attributed to the wording of the questions and the increase in social media since 2012.

Of those who had experienced crime the majority believed these incidents were motivated by the perpetrator's prejudice towards them based on their Jewish belief (66 per cent). One fifth did not think this (20 per cent) with smaller numbers who did not know (12 per cent) or preferred not to say (2 per cent). The most common reasons students believed incidents were motivated by prejudice were:

- The perpetrators made statements and/or gestures before, during or after the incident which displayed prejudice against their belief (67 per cent)
- Hate words or symbols were present (57 per cent)
- They believed the perpetrator was a member of a group known to have committed similar acts (29 per cent)
- They were engaged in activities promoting a social group or event when the incident occurred (25 per cent)
- They had a feeling, instinct or perception without specific evidence that the incident was motivated by prejudice (18 per cent).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/no-place-for-hate-religion-and-belief-report-may-2012>

<b>The perpetrators made statements and/or gestures before, during or after the incident which displayed prejudice against my belief</b>	67%
<b>Hate words or symbols were present (e.g. offensive names, a swastika or other graffiti)</b>	57%
<b>I believe the perpetrator was a member of a group known to have committed similar acts</b>	29%
<b>I was engaged in activities promoting a social group or event (e.g. handing out leaflets)</b>	25%
<b>My feeling, instinct or perception, without specific evidence</b>	18%
<b>Someone else suggested that the incident was prejudiced</b>	13%
<b>The incident coincided with a holiday or event of significant date (e.g. Rosh Hashanah)</b>	10%
<b>The incident occurred at or near a location, place or building commonly associated with the Jewish belief (e.g. synagogue)</b>	7%
<b>Investigation by police confirmed that the incident was motivated by dislike of a particular group</b>	6%
<b>Other</b>	3%
<b>I don't know</b>	2%

When broken down by gender Jewish men experienced more vandalism, property damage, theft, robbery and personal abuse than Jewish women or those who identify in another way. Jewish men reported 57 per cent more personal abuse than Jewish women. Additionally students from all major denominations of Judaism had experienced vandalism, property damage and personal abuse.

If students did experience an anti-Semitic incident almost half said they would report it to the Community Security Trust (47 per cent), the most common answer given. The next most common was the police (43 per cent). Around a third would report it to another member of the university or students' union staff (31 per cent). Over a quarter would report it to a student welfare officer (28 per cent) or a member of the academic staff (26 per cent). A smaller number would report it to another source (8 per cent) and 13 per cent would not report it at all.

If allegations of antisemitism arose over half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their university would respond appropriately (56 per cent) whilst one fifth disagreed or strongly disagreed (19 per cent). Equal numbers either agreed or strongly agreed that their students' union would respond appropriately (34 per cent) or disagreed or strongly disagreed (34 per cent) with this. One fifth did not know (19 per cent).

The majority of students surveyed did not know if there is a hate crime reporting centre in their students' union, university or local community (79 per cent). Smaller numbers knew there were (14 per cent) or there were not (7 per cent)

Whilst the majority of students surveyed have not experienced any crime nor are worried about crime due to their Jewish belief, it is troubling that two thirds of those who have experienced crime believe it was motivated by their Jewish belief. Having strong reporting mechanisms and trust that allegations made will be investigated is important to students. The Community Security Trust, who students felt most confident in reporting antisemitism to, has a guide to antisemitism for students, which is a useful starting point for students' unions<sup>11</sup>.

**“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews.”**

## 8. Antisemitism definition

NUS believes antisemitism is best defined by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), formerly the EU Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), working definition<sup>12</sup>. However, this definition was withdrawn in 2013. The working definition is:

***Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.***

The EUMC website goes on to say that, *"in addition, such manifestations could also target the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for "why things go wrong." It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.*

*Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:*

<sup>11</sup> [https://cst.org.uk/docs/Keeping\\_it\\_kosher.pdf](https://cst.org.uk/docs/Keeping_it_kosher.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.antisem.eu/projects/eumc-working-definition-of-antisemitism/>

- *Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion*
- *Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective – such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions*
- *Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews*
- *Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust)*
- *Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust*
- *Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.*

*Examples of the ways in which antisemitism manifests itself with regard to the State of Israel taking into account the overall context could include:*

- *Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour*
- *Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or*

*demanding of any other democratic nation*

- *Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis*
- *Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis*
- *Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel*
- *However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic.”*

In 2016 the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance<sup>13</sup>, of which the UK is a member, adopted a definition of antisemitism based on the EUMC working definition. NUS should consider whether its policies and work around antisemitism can be effectively carried out using a definition which has been withdrawn. If so, NUS should note with caution that the definition its uses may differ from institutions and other organisations and agencies such as the UK Government. This could cause a disparity between advice and guidance given on tackling antisemitism on campus.

If not, NUS should consider which definition of antisemitism should be adopted, though this must be done with the involvement and guidance of Jewish students and will require a democratic decision by National Conference. Further advice on this issue could be sort from organisations such as the Pears Institute, CST and UJS.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://antisemitism.uk/definition/>

## Conclusion

Jewish students, in their diversity, continue to experience a range of issues that affect their time at university. Like many students of faith and belief, Jewish students have reported that they do not feel their institution understands their needs. NUS have long advocated for better provision for students of faith and belief on campus including food provision, adequate prayer space and suitable timetabling. This survey evidences that there is still further work to be done on supporting students to gain the best possible provision from their institutions. In particular access to affordable kosher food on campus including whether BDS policies affect the availability of kosher food; as well as the timetabling of classes, exams and union events such as elections, so that students can observe Sabbath and religious festivals are key areas to improve. It is important to note that in some cases where the institution does not provide suitable facilities, there may be existing provision in place from the local community or Jewish organisations. NUS has a range of support and guidance on these good campus relations issues for Students' Unions seeking to advocate on behalf of students of faith and belief available on its website.

The attitudes of lecturers and students towards issues relating to Jewish people and Judaism, as well as Israel/Palestine present a challenge to be addressed. Effective methods of reporting and tackling antisemitism are important steps towards this. Furthermore, better understanding of Jewish students' identity with Israel, including what Zionism means to many Jewish people, could foster a culture of healthy debate and respectful campaigning around what are often divisive issues. NUS has long advocated dialogue not debate and there are exemplary models within students' unions for productive conversations about sensitive topics.

Ultimately students' unions and institutions need to engage with Jewish students to understand their needs, issues that are important to them and ways in which they wish to be represented. Sabbatical officers have an important role to play in actively supporting Jewish students. Identifying which elected officer is responsible for engaging with Jewish societies and ethnic minority Jewish students is key as each union is different. Training is available to better understand the needs of Jewish students such as the annual free conference UJS offers on this topic. UJS have also been providing training on Jewish students' inclusion and antisemitism at NUS training events.

Though NUS have historically had good relations with and representation from Jewish students this research indicates a significant lack of trust at present. Although work is either planned or being undertaken to address this, this research demonstrates NUS must not only deliver on its commitments but consider further how to regain the trust of Jewish students. Relationships are being developed and maintained between NUS and stakeholders who will play a role in helping NUS understand and tackle prejudice and hate. NUS' work on antisemitism needs to be underpinned by a clear understanding on what antisemitism is therefore keeping up-to-date with latest developments in this field is essential.

**“This survey evidences that there is still further work to be done on supporting students to gain the best possible provision from their institutions.”**



## Recommendations

The recommendations arising from this report can be summarised as follows, with separate sections for NUS, the wider higher education sector, and for students' unions.

**For NUS, it is recommended that:**

- NUS reaffirms its commitment to actively challenging antisemitism by
  - A. Reviewing the current definition of antisemitism it adopts to ensure it is fit for purpose
  - B. Supporting students' unions and associations to adopt a definition of antisemitism
  - C. With input from Jewish students and Jewish representatives, provide guidance, or signpost to external guidance, to help students' unions and others better understand where criticism of Israel can become anti-Semitic
  - D. Reviewing any motions, policies and procedures it is mandated to uphold, including any information and guidance produced, to ensure they uphold the definition of antisemitism NUS adopts as part of NUS 100 work on healthy debate and respectful campaigning
  - E. Continuing the variety of work being done on antisemitism including prioritising this in NUS 100
  - F. Ensuring the work NUS does on hate crime includes guidance on how unions respond to incidents related to Jewish students
  - G. Continuing to implement welfare policy W15305 to provide educational training on antisemitism as part of sabbatical officer summer training and throughout the year
  - H. Continue the work on Anti-Racism and Anti-Fascism (ARAF) via the NUS ARAF Committee and campaign which includes a reserved Jewish place
  - I. Review and amend where necessary how NUS deals with anti-Semitic and all forms of racist incidents, including critical examination of the full-time officer code of conduct.
- The resources NUS has on good campus relations are proactively promoted to its membership
- NUS hosts a bi-annual interfaith meeting to strengthen partnerships with NUS and students of faith and belief
- NUS works with organisations such as UJS to provide or promote training to its membership on supporting the needs of Jewish students
- NUS explore example models of dialogue around Israel/Palestine and disseminate good practice guidance to its membership
- NUS look at affordable religious dietary provision as part of its welfare campaign work
- Research is undertaken to assess whether NUS and campus BDS policies prevent the supply of Kosher food to students' union and association shops

- NUS further examines the experiences of Jewish women students and undertakes work to address the issues raised
- NUS implement the IRR recommendation of employing a staff member whose role is to deal with supporting issues of faith and belief. In the absence of such a staff member, external organisations such as 3FF, Joseph Interfaith Foundation and All Faiths and None are signposted to members seeking further support and guidance where appropriate
- NUS engages with Jewish students involved in its democratic structures to further understand issues relating to participation within NUS and how these can be addressed
- NUS considers how to promote models of respectful debate as part of its review into NUS democracy and its work on social media
- NUS Leadership, staff and volunteers, elected and appointed, to receive training and guidance on antisemitism, within training on equality/race equality
- The NUS Race Equity plan includes the views and experiences of Jewish staff, officers and volunteers in NUS.
- To take forward the work of the UUK taskforce on hate crime and discrimination so these issues are tackled in the HE context
- To ensure that Jewish (and other) religious festivals are taken into account when timetabling exams and other important events
- That the availability of kosher food and accommodation on campus is reviewed and improved where necessary
- The provision of prayer space and chaplaincy support for Jewish students is reviewed and improved where necessary, especially taking into account the needs of Jewish women students
- Joint work is undertaken to provide further guidance and models of good practice for debating issues around Israel/Palestine.

**For the wider HE sector, it is recommended that:**

- NUS works with Universities UK, GuildHE, the Equality Challenge Unit and other relevant bodies to issue guidance to higher education providers on the needs of Jewish students, and to discuss how issues relating to academics raised in this report can be addressed

**For students' unions, it is recommended that:**

- Students' unions identify an officer who is responsible for engaging with Jsocs and Jewish students who identify as ethnic minorities and that this officer is given suitable training to carry out their role, and consider whether staff supporting officers need further training in addition
- Students' unions commit to actively support and engage with their Jewish societies by actively showing how Jewish students are represented in their union

- Together with their parent institution, students' unions should ensure Jewish students have a space in which to talk about issues which affect them, where this does not already exist
- SUs take forward issues on campus for Jewish students using the guidance and resources developed by NUS and other organisations.

# Appendix 1: Survey questions

# Student research

## Jewish Students Experience

Winter 2016

**CONFIDENTIAL**

## Survey introduction

There has been significant attention paid to the experience of Jewish students on university campuses in recent months, both by those working in higher education and by the media. However, there has not been recent research undertaken to capture the views of Jewish students more generally.

NUS wants to understand the experience of Jewish students in higher education in the UK in 2016/17 from the student perspective, so that we can identify what we and others can do to address any issues, and so we can ensure that higher education is inclusive and welcoming to Jewish people. Your views will be vital in helping us to achieve this.

We have developed this survey in full consultation with the Union of Jewish Students as well as Jewish students elected to our National Executive Committee. We will use the findings to develop a set of recommendations for NUS, students' unions, universities and colleges and other agencies to take forward in the coming months and years.

*The survey is straightforward and will take around 10 minutes to complete, and on completion, you will be in with a chance of winning a cash prize of £150, £50 or £25.*

*Please be assured that all your answers are confidential. There are no right or wrong answers, we are just keen to understand your experiences as a Jewish student, so please be honest. Your individual answers will only be seen by the project team involved in preparing the report, but they will never be attributed back to you personally. We are an independent market research agency that follows the Market Research Code of Conduct.*

*The survey closes at 11am Tues 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2017 so click 'next' to start.*

## SECTION A – BACKGROUND/DEMOGRAPHICS

Firstly, we would just like to know a little more about you...

### A1. What is your religion, faith or belief?

*Please pick one*

Buddhist
Christian (including Catholic, Church of England, Church of Scotland, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
Hindu
Jewish
Muslim
Sikh
Spiritual
Agnostic
Atheist
Any other religion or belief (Please specify)
None
Prefer not to say

### A2. How old are you?

*Please pick one*

Under 16
16
17-18
19-20
21-22
23-24
25-26
27-30
31-35
36-40
41-45
46-50
51-60
61-70
71-80
81+
I would prefer not to say

A3. **Which of the following best describes your current level of study?**

*Please pick one*

Foundation year
1 <sup>st</sup> year undergraduate
2 <sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate
3 <sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate
4 <sup>th</sup> year undergraduate
5 <sup>th</sup> or more year undergraduate
Postgraduate – studying for a Masters, Diploma, PGCE etc.
Postgraduate – studying for a PhD
I have already graduated and am no longer a student
Other

A4. **Which of the following best describes your gender identity?**

*Please pick one*

Man
Woman
In another way
Prefer not to say

A5. **Which university or college do you attend?**

A6. **In which region do you study?**

*Please pick one*

North East
North West
Yorkshire and the Humber
East Midlands
West Midlands
East Anglia
South West
South East
Scotland
Wales
Northern Ireland
London
East of England



A7. **Which of the following statements best describes you?***Please pick one*

I am a UK citizen studying in the UK
I am an international student from within the EU studying in the UK
I am an international student from outside the EU studying in the UK

A8. **Are you classed as a part-time or full-time student by your institution?***Please pick one*

Full-time study
Part-time study
Other ( <b><i>please specify</i></b> )

A9. **And which of the below most closely matches with your course subject?***Please pick one*

Architecture
Arts, drama and music
Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
Biological sciences
Business and management
Classics
Computer Science & Technology
Earth Sciences & Geography
Economics
Education
Engineering
English
Global studies
History
Human, Social and Political Science
Land Economy
Law
Mathematics
Medicine
Languages and linguistics
Music
Philosophy
Physics & Chemistry
Psychiatry
Public Health & Primary Care

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Theology and religious studies
Sports
Veterinary Medicine
Other (please specify)

**A10. What denomination of Judaism, if any, do you most identify with?**

*Please pick one*

Orthodox
Masorti
Reform
Liberal
Secular/culturally Jewish
Not Jewish
Other (please specify)
Prefer not to say

**A11. Do you identify as a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) student because of your Judaism?**

*Please pick one*

Yes
No
Prefer not to say

## SECTION B – FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Next we'd like to ask you about your experience at university.

### B1. Does your university provide the following for Jewish students?

*Please pick one option per question*

Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable
-----	----	------------	----------------

Kosher food on/near campus
Prayer space/a synagogue on or near campus
A Jewish chaplain employed by the university
An alternative method of accessing accommodation for observant Jews who cannot use electric key fobs on the Sabbath / festivals?
Kosher accommodation

### B2. What other facilities or services would you like to see provided for Jewish students by your university?

*Please type your answer in the box below*

### B3. To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statements about your time at university so far?

*Please select one option for each statement*

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Prefer not to say
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The university avoids scheduling classes and exams during Sabbath and Jewish religious festivals
I feel comfortable with the way in which issues relating to Jewish people / Judaism are covered in class
I think that the way in which issues relating to Israel and Palestine are covered in class is fair
As a Jew I feel confident to voice my opinions on Israel/Palestine in classes
I have not experienced negative issues in classes related to Judaism

### B4. Can you tell us a bit more about these issues you have faced with your university?

## SECTION C – STUDENT EXPERIENCE, STUDENT UNIONS AND STUDENT POLITICS

Now we're going to ask a bit more about how you feel on campus and your experience, if any, of your Students' Union

**C1. Which of the following activities, if any, have you ever been involved in at your Students' Union?**

*Please select all that apply*

I have voted in the student elections
I have stood as a candidate in the student elections
I have shown my support for a campaign
I have been involved in organising a Students' Union event or activity
I have set up a society or a sports club through the Students' Union
I sit on a Students' Union committee
I volunteer with the Students' Union
I am an Academic Representative
I have attended an event at a SU Bar
I have attended an event/activity as part of the sports clubs/societies
I have attended a trip or activity as part of Freshers
I am a member of a society or a sports club
I have used the Students' Union Advice Centre
I have read the Students' Union weekly emails
I have read the Students' Union website
None of the above

**C2. To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statements about your time at university so far?**

*Please select one response per statement*

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Not applicable
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------	------------	----------------

As a Jewish student, I feel my Students' Union understands my needs
As a Jewish student, I feel represented by my Students' Union
My Students' Union policy reflects the views of Jewish students
NUS understands the needs of Jewish students

I would feel comfortable attending NUS events
I would feel comfortable running for positions of leadership
I would feel comfortable engaging in NUS' policy-making processes.

C3. **Do you feel that there is a safe space or forum for Jewish students to talk about issues which affect them on your campus?**

*Please pick one option*

Yes
No
Don't know
Prefer not to say

C4. **Can you tell us what this safe space or forum is?**

*Please type your answer in the box below*

C5. **To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statement: "I feel safe being involved in general policy and debate on campus"?**

*Please select one*

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
Don't know
Prefer not to say

C6. **Can you tell us why you say that?**

*Please type your answer in the box below*

- C7. **Again, thinking specifically as a Jewish student, how often, if at all, do you feel that you are able to fully participate in the following activities?** (If you are not interested in a particular activity please choose 'not applicable')  
*Please select one response per statement*

Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't know	Not applicable
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Sports
SU societies
Volunteering/community action
Producing student media
Student politics

- C8. **Please tell us more about the barriers you have found to participation**  
*Please type your answer in the box below*

- C9. **As a student who has stood in a Students' Union election, to what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statement: "I feel comfortable as a Jewish student standing in a Students' Union election"?**  
*Please select one option*

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
Don't know
Prefer not to say

- C10 **Can you tell us why do you feel that?**  
*Please type your answer in the box below*

- C11 **To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statement in the contexts below "I feel comfortable engaging in debate on Israel/Palestine"?**  
*Please select one response per statement*

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Not applicable
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------	------------	----------------

An academic context
In my Students' Union/in a Society context
On Campus

**C12 Can you tell us why do you feel that?**

*Please type your answer in the box below*

**C13 Does your Students' Union have a Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions policy or campaign?**

*Please pick one*

Yes
No
Don't know

**C14 On a scale of 1 to 5 to what extent do you feel comfortable with your SU Boycott, Divestment and Sanction policy or campaign?**

*Please pick one*

1 – Not comfortable at all
2
3
4
5 – Very comfortable

**C15 Please tell us a little more about why you feel this**

*Please type your answer in the box below*

## SECTION D – HARASSMENT, HATE INCIDENTS AND HATE CRIME

In this final section we'd like to ask a few questions about any experiences you have had of harassment or hate crime

**D1 How worried are you about being subject to verbal abuse, physical attack, vandalism, property damage or theft because of your Jewish belief?**

*Please pick one*

Very worried
Fairly worried
Not very worried
Not at all worried
Prefer not to say

**D2 Have you experienced any of the following while you have been a student at your current place of study?**

*Please tick all that apply*

Vandalism – someone deliberately defacing or doing damage to your house, flat or halls of residence – or to anything outside it
Property damage – someone deliberately damaging, tampering with or vandalising your property. For example, your personal belongings (purse, computer, etc), car, bicycle, wheelchair or other property
Personal theft – personal belongings stolen out of your hands, bag, pockets or locker
Property theft from outside your home – for example, from the doorstep, the garden or the garage
Robbery – someone taking or attempting to take something from you by force or threat of force
Burglary – someone illegally entering your residence to steal or attempt to steal your belongings, inflict bodily harm or cause criminal damage
Personal abuse through social media or other communication
I have not experienced any of the above



D3. **Do you believe that any of these incidents may have been motivated or partly motivated by the perpetrator’s prejudice towards you based on your Jewish belief?**

*Please pick one*

Yes
No
Don’t know
Prefer not to say

D4. **For what reason do you believe the motivation behind this incident, or part of the motivation, was the perpetrator’s prejudice?**

*Please tick all that apply*

The perpetrators made statements and/or gestures before, during or after the incident which displayed prejudice against my belief
Hate words or symbols were present (eg offensive names, a swastika or other graffiti)
The incident occurred at or near a location, place or building commonly associated with the Jewish belief (eg synagogue)
I was engaged in activities promoting a social group or event (eg handing out leaflets)
The incident coincided with a holiday or event of significant date (eg Rosh Hashana)
I believe the perpetrator was a member of a group known to have committed similar acts
Investigation by police confirmed that the incident was motivated by dislike of a particular group
Someone else suggested that the incident was prejudiced
My feeling, instinct or perception, without specific evidence
Other
I don’t know

D5. **What other reason do you have for believing that the motivation was the perpetrator’s prejudice?**

*Please type your answer in the box below*

D6. **If you did experience an anti-Semitic incident, who would you report it to?**

*Please tick all that apply*

Student welfare officer
Member of the academic staff
Another member of university or student union staff

The police
The Community Security Trust (CST)
Other (please specify)
I would not report it

D6a **Who else would you report an anti-Semitic incident to?**

*Please type your answer in the box below*

D7 **To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statements?**

*Please select one response per statement*

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Not applicable
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------	------------	----------------

The SU would respond appropriately to allegations of anti-Semitism if they arose
The university would respond appropriately to allegations of anti-Semitism if they arose
The NUS would respond appropriately to allegations of anti-Semitism if they arose

D8 **Is there a hate crime reporting centre in your Students' Union, university or local community?**

*Please pick one*

Yes
No
Don't know

Thank you for completing our survey, we really appreciate you taking the time.

Your responses are completely confidential and will not be used for any purpose other than for this research. NUS will never use this data outside of this research and you will not be identifiable personally.

To be in with a chance to enter the £150, £50 or £25 prize draws, please enter your name and email address into the boxes below so that we can contact you if you win.

Name  
Email Address

Please click the 'tick' button to finish!

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