

DECEMBER 2025

MAIN BAR SURVEY RESULTS

MAIN QUESTION SET (about me questions removed)

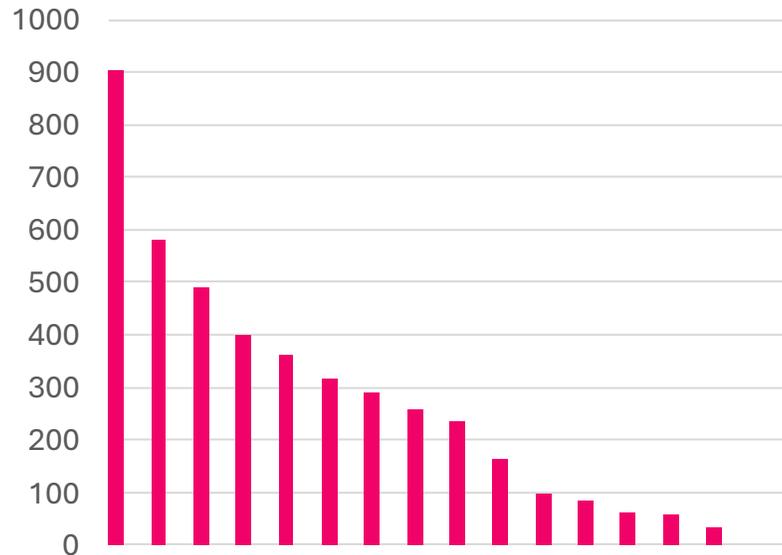
1602 responses collated

YOUR  UNION

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

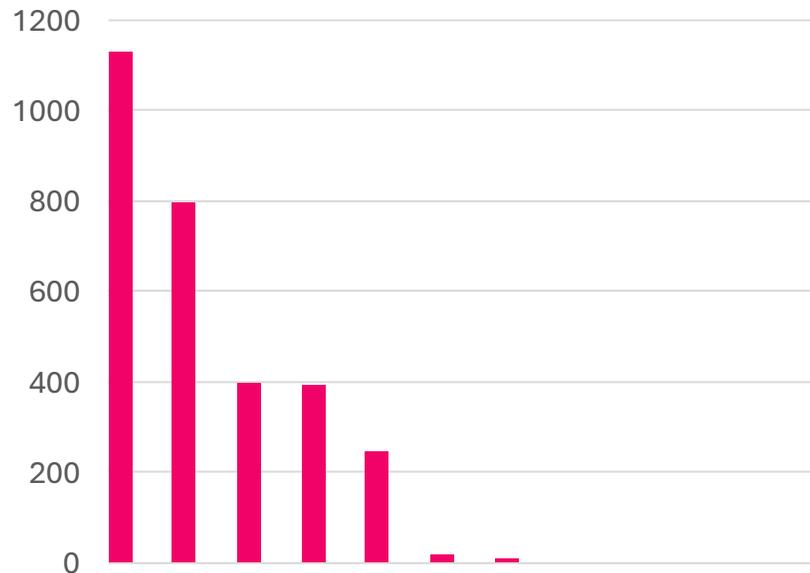
Scottish Registered Charity, no.SCO19883

1) Please select the **three key factors** that would make you attend Main Bar more often.
(Select at most 3 options)



- Cheaper drinks prices (902)
- Cheaper food prices (578)
- Better vibe/atmosphere (488)
- More free entertainment i.e live music etc (398)
- Busier atmosphere (361)
- Better playlist (314)
- Refreshed décor (291)
- The kitchen being open more often (257)
- Better beer garden (235)
- Breakfast menu (161)
- Different menu (97)
- Themed food days (81)
- Better service (60)
- Don't know (56)
- Different clientele (31)

2) What do you primarily want to use Main Bar for? (Select at most 2 options)



Socialising (1131)
Drinking (798)
Events (quizzes, live music, sports, etc.) (398)
Studying (395)
Eating (245)
Other (17)
I don't want to use it (8)

3) What type of food and / or drinks options would you like to see in Main Bar? (Open text box question)

Key Insights

Top 5 High-Demand Items

- Cheap food + drinks
- Breakfast / brunch (especially all-day)
- Cocktails + themed drinks
- Vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free options
- Pub-style comfort food (burgers, fries, nachos, pizza)

Top Drink Priorities

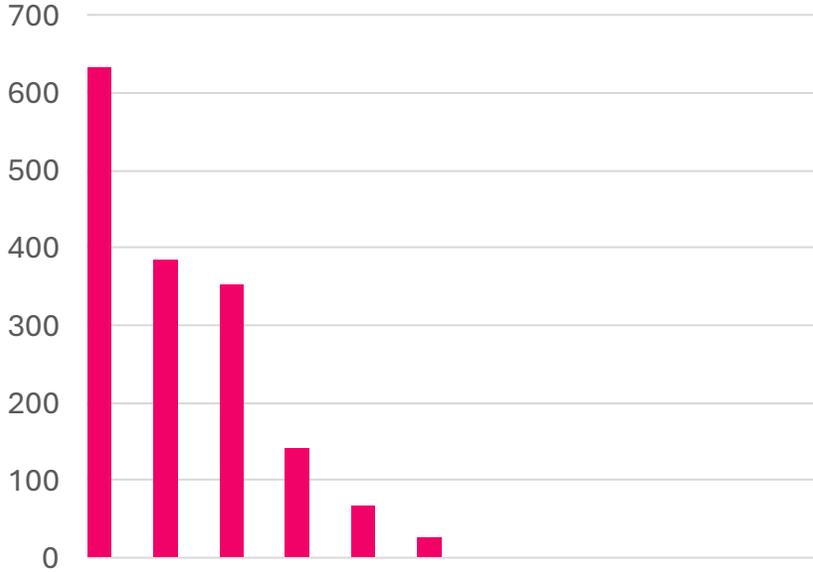
- Cocktails
- Beer variety
- Non-alcoholic options
- Tennents on tap
- Mocktails

Top Food Priorities

- Toasties
- Nachos
- Chips / loaded fries
- Burgers
- Breakfast rolls
- Healthy bowls/salads
- Pizza

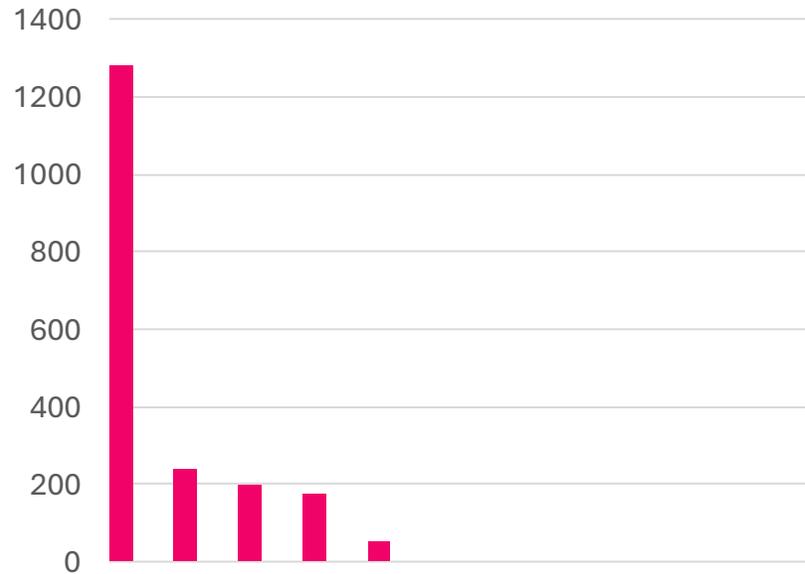
4) What kind of atmosphere should Main Bar have?

(Select 1 option)



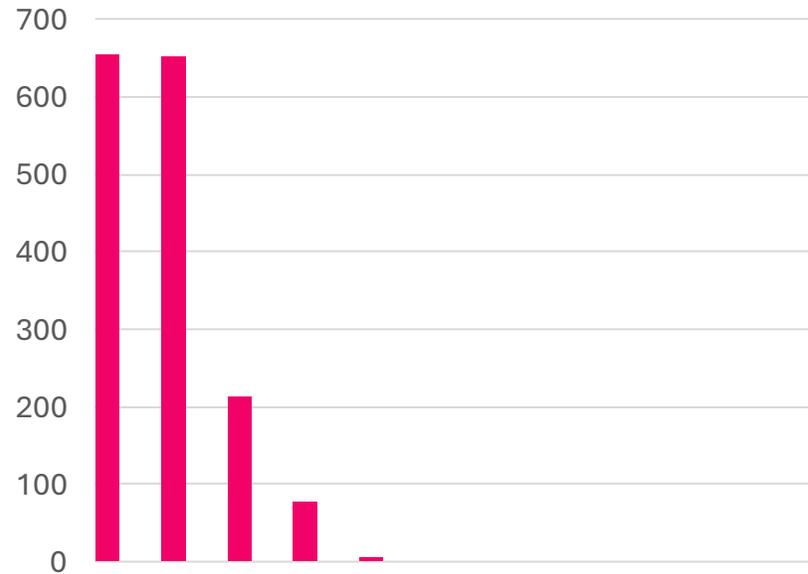
Lively social space (632)
Study-friendly during the day (384)
Relaxed bar (352)
Café Vibe (142)
Sports Bar (67)
Other (25)

5) What would help you feel safe and comfortable in Main Bar? (Select at most 2 options)



I already feel safe and comfortable (1282)
Good Lighting (236)
Clearer code of conduct (198)
Informed about staff training (176)
Other (53)

6) Do you feel part of a student community when you come to Main Bar?
(Select 1 option)



Yes, somewhat (654)
Yes, definitely (652)
Indifferent (213)
Not particularly (76)
Absolutely not (7)

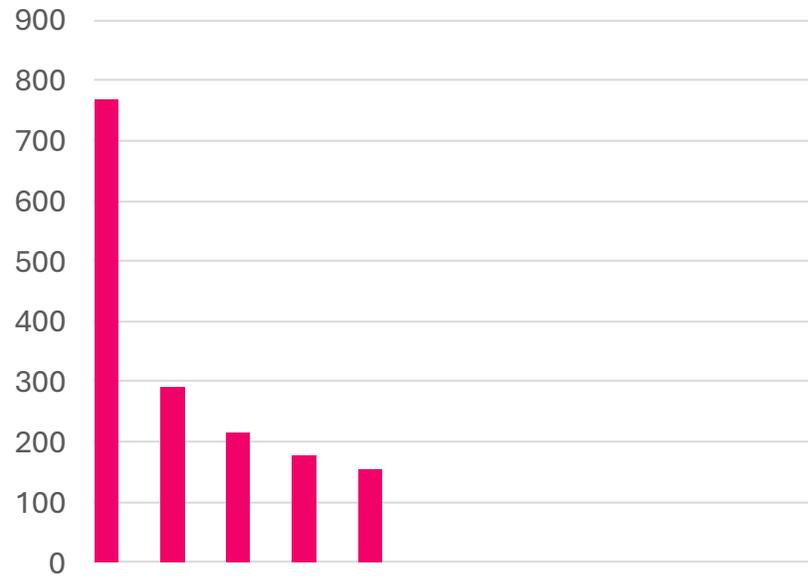
7) How can we make the space welcoming for students who don't drink alcohol? (Open text box question)

The single strongest theme is: “More (and better) non-alcoholic drink options.”
Almost **half of all categorised responses (48.6%)** mentioned this explicitly.

Themes identified:

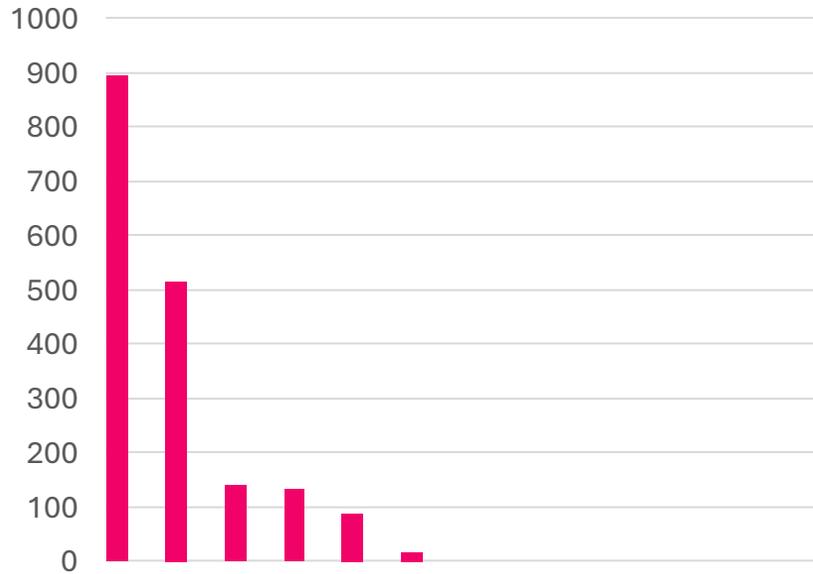
- High-quality, interesting, visible non-alcoholic drinks
- Mocktails that feel intentional, not an afterthought
- Events and activities not centred on drinking
- Clear signage and visibility of non-alc options
- A cosy, café-like daytime vibe and relaxed evening areas
- Affordable soft drinks
- More food options (especially snacks) later into the evening

8. If Main Bar became a franchised pub how would you feel? (Select at 1 option)



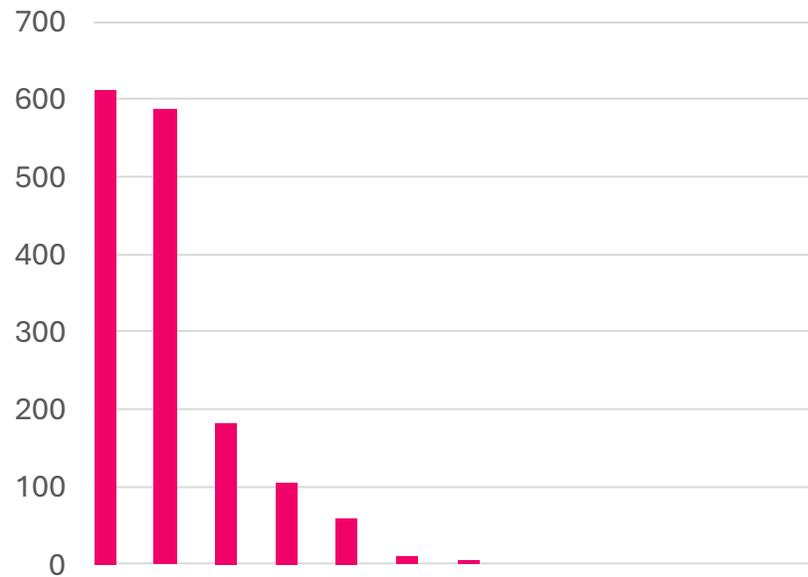
Very unhappy (769) 48 %
Unhappy (289) 18 %
I don't care (214) 13.4%
Very happy (176) 11%
Happy (154) 9.6%

9. If Main Bar were to be franchised which would you prefer? (Select at most 2 options)



Wetherspoons (894) 50.1%
Other (513) 28.7 %
BrewDog (140) 7.9 %
Greene King (133)7.5%
Belhaven (86) 4.8%
Marstons (17) 1%

10. Which franchise have you visited the most in the last 6 months? (Select 1 option)



Wetherspoons (611)
I've not visited any (591)
Greene King (181)
BrewDog (104)
Belhaven (58)
Other (53)
Marstons (4)

11. Was your experience of visiting the franchise positive? (Select 1 option)



12. Please tell us what you liked or didn't like (Open text box question)

Examples of answers below by theme. Each quote is verbatim from respondents.

1) Price & affordability (dominant driver)

Like: "Cheap prices, quick service"

Like: "Affordable prices and cosy atmosphere"

Dislike: "Too expensive" / "Didn't like how expensive the drinks were" (minority view)

2) Atmosphere & vibe

Like: "Great atmosphere, good vibes"; "Busy atmosphere... very social"

Dislike: "Too busy, bad vibes" / "Unpleasant atmosphere" / "Soulless corporate chain"

3) Food quality & variety

Like: "Good food... wide variety"; "Vegetarian choices... drink menu also very varied"

Dislike: "Poor quality" / "didn't like the food options" (isolated)

4) Crowding / busyness

Like: "Busy and lively... easy to socialise"

Dislike: "Too busy... overwhelming"

5) Drink selection & specials

Like: "Pitches ❤️" / "Good real ales on tap" / "Lots of options"

6) Safety & behaviour

Like: "It feels much safer than some other pubs" / "Security were always effective"

Dislike: "Not feeling safe... rowdy atmosphere, fight broke out" / "Hostile bouncers" (rare but critical)

12. Please tell us what you liked or didn't like (Open text box question)

6) Safety & behaviour

Like: "It feels much safer than some other pubs" / "Security were always effective"

Dislike: "Not feeling safe... rowdy atmosphere, fight broke out" / "Hostile bouncers" (rare but critical)

7) Brand / franchise sentiment (polarised)

Positive: "I LOVE SPOONS... cheap prices... great atmosphere"

Negative: "No franchise" / "Owner's political opinions not welcome in student space"

8) Service speed & staff

Like: "Fast service and food" / "Friendly staff... attentive even on busy nights"

Dislike: "Rude staff" (few mentions)

9) Ordering & app / table service

Like: "App ordering... easy" / "Loved the QR-code table service"

Dislike: "Didn't like ordering from phone, please have a barman"

10) Clientele & student-only access

Positive: "Student vibe... very social"

Negative: "Too many non-students / older clientele... creepy old men"

11) Music & sound

Positive: "Good music/playlist"

Negative: "No music... boring" / "Don't like the absence of music"

12) Cleanliness & maintenance

Negative: "Sticky and dirty" / "Not very clean"

13. What is your favourite pub or place to socialise in St Andrews?

(Open text box question)

Key Insights

1. The Rule is the most popular choice

By a significant margin. It appears in multiple forms (“the rule”, “rule”, “the rule beer garden”), making it the dominant favourite.

2. Aikmans and BrewCo form a strong top 3

These three (Rule + Aikmans + BrewCo) collectively account for **over 400** mentions — the vast majority of responses.

3. Central & Main Bar form a strong middle tier

“Central”, “The Central”, and Main Bar all appear frequently and consistently.

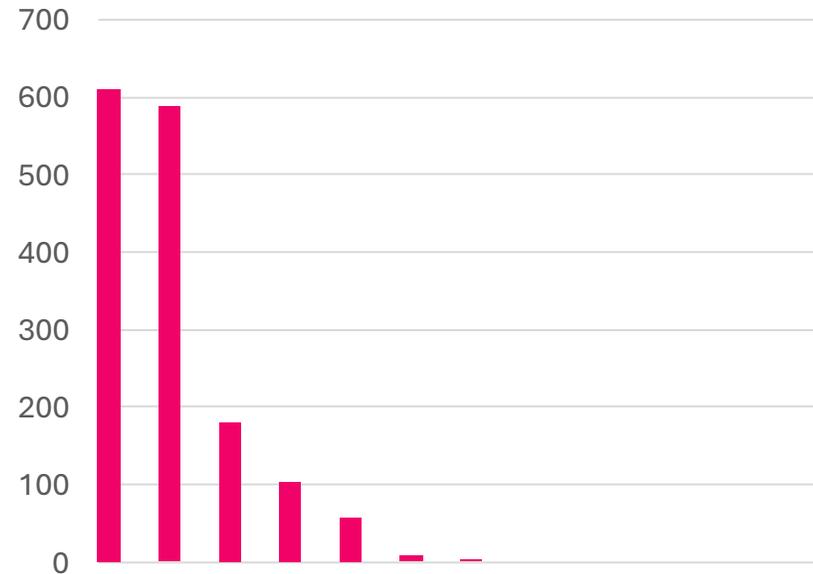
4. Greyfriars, Whey Pat, Molly Malones, and Criterion are notable secondary favourites

These have strong but smaller loyal followings.

5. The Union itself appears steadily

Between “union”, “the union”, “main bar”, and “601”, students clearly see the Union as a core social space — especially for events and affordability.

14. Please tell us why (Select up to 2 options)



Atmosphere (801)
Affordability (539)
Know that's where my friends will be (470)
Good Vibes (442)
Good range of food and drink (274)
Not applicable (132)
Good location (122)
The Place to be Seen (19)
Other (85)

15. Do you have any new name suggestions for Main Bar at the present time?

(Open text box question)

Top Name Suggestions by Frequency

Spoonion 8

Wetherspoons 7

Main Bar (as an explicit suggestion to keep it) 8

602 5

Union Bar 4

wetherspoons (lowercase variant) 4

The Bubble 3

The Common Room 3

Spoons 3

Keep it as Main Bar 2

The Lounge 2

1413 2

Saints Bar 2

Andy's 2

Bubble Bar 2

St Spoons 2

(all remaining unique entries)1 each

15. Do you have any new name suggestions for Main Bar at the present time?

By theme

Location / University / St Andrews-themed

Saint's Bar / Saints Bar
Saint Pub
Standie's / Andie's / Andy's / Andrews'
The Thistle
The Royal Hawthorn
The Thistle & Scholar
The Town and Gown
The Red Gown
The Red Lion
The Green Side Bunker
Doubledykes Bar
Gulls Landing
Tentsmuir
The Cardinal Beaton
The Knox / The John Knox
The Piping Plover
The Hamish McHamish / Hamish's Bar
The Drunken Caddie
The 3 Beaches
St Anbrews / St Anbrews
The Apple Tree & Boar (from coat of arms)
Cill Rimhinn (Scots Gaelic for St Andrews)
Mapstone Key / The Map and Stone
The Lion Rampant's
The Saint / Saintz Spritz

Academic / "Student Life"-themed

The Library
The Student Tab
The Common Room (several times)
The Centre
Student Hub
Students' Bar / Student Pub / The Students Bar
The Matriculation House
The Scholars Rest
The Lounge
The Cool One
Social
Center Stage
BAAR
Study Break
The Midnight Oil
The Syllabus / Office Hours / The Honor Roll

Number-based (601-adjacent)

602 (multiple)
1413 (multiple)
60Pub
60Fun
60yum

Humorous / Meme Names

Bary Mc Bar Face
Baree mc bar face
Spoons Mcspoons face
Ye Olde Drinking Shack
Gaggy gag gag
Bib boss
Bar-mitsva

"Bubble"-themed (very common)

The Bubble
Bubble Bar (several times)
Heart of the Bubble
Buzz of the Bubble

15. Do you have any new name suggestions for Main Bar at the present time?

By theme

More Traditional Pub-Style Names

The First Draught
The First Draft
The Meet
The Union House
The Union Tap
The Main Pour
The Crucible
The Mashie
The Cloisters
Taberna Principalis
Trad Corner
The Hearth
The Bonfire Bar
The Bookshop
The Crypt / Sallies Crypt
The Topsy Scholar
The All-Nighter
The Prince William
The Drunken Martyr

Creative Names

Pubble (pub + bubble)
The Hive
The Hubble
Piping Plover
The Philosopher's Dog
Pier Pressure
The Onion
Stan's / Hamish's / Mapstone Bar
Café Chic
Hidalgo's
Aderyn's Bar
Clearway
Market House
Franchiseeee
Social
The Loft
The Common Room (multiple mentions)
The Lumsden Lobby
The Centre

16. Is there anything you'd like to tell us about Main Bar or pubs in St Andrews in general? (Open text question)

Overarching insight if you combine all themes, the message is:

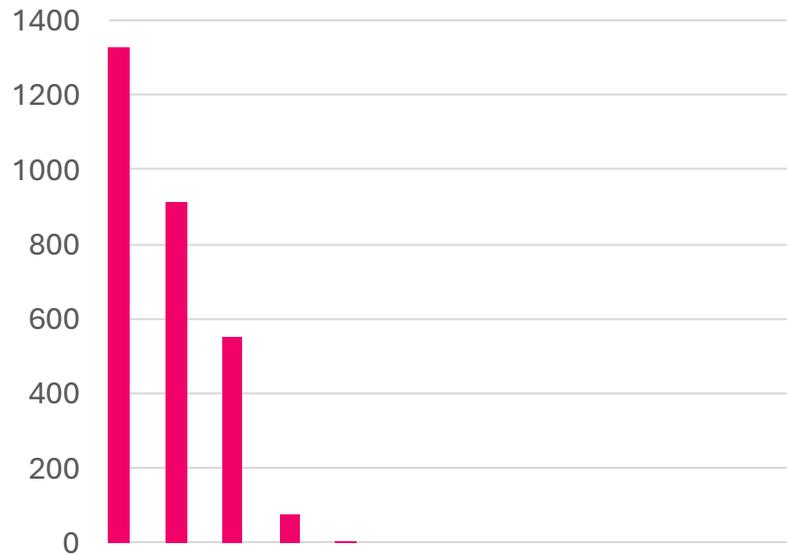
Students want Main Bar to be affordable, student-run, safe, cosy, and consistent.

The clear top feedback:

- Keep prices low
- Preserve student-only access
- Improve atmosphere, décor, and seating
- Offer more consistent food + better advertising
- Preference against franchising
- Strengthen events and identity

27. What do you think the most important factors of a student pub should be

Could submit up to two



Affordability (1328)
Atmosphere (914)
Safety (548)
Food Quality (73)
Other (4)