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SCOTTISH STUDENT SPORT RESEARCH REPORT

INTO THE EFFECTS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ON STUDENTS' WELLBEING,
SOCIAL INCLUSION, ACADEMIC SUCCESS & EMPLOYABILITY



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Introduction

Attending further and higher education is a life changing journey leading to many new experiences and opportunities. Many students will move away from home (HESA, 2016)¹ to a new area and form new social groups and routines. It is important that during these changes students have the opportunity to maintain and even improve their health and wellbeing.

The promotion of a physically active lifestyle, with a recommended 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a week (Department of Health, 2011)², can help to prevent and manage numerous conditions such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and mental health problems (World Health Organization, 2010)³.

The guidelines for physical activity can be met by taking part in a range of activities, exercises or sports. Sporting options can be vast whilst studying, with the choice of multiple sports clubs, teams and gyms both at university or college and externally.

Previous research has looked at the long-term impact of regular physical activity on academic attainment (Booth et al., 2013)⁴ and employability – with graduates who participated in sport earning more than those that did not (Allen et al., 2013)⁵. With such an emphasis on the importance of regular physical activity and participation in sport it is vital that the wider wellbeing of further and higher education students is understood.

The aim of this research was to investigate how different physical activity levels and methods of activity influence key variables related to a student's wellbeing, social inclusion, academic success and employability.

1 HESA (2016). Students and graduates. <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students>.

2 Department of Health. (2011). Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers. London. Retrieved from https://www.sportengland.org/media/388152/dh_128210.pdf

3 World Health Organization. (2010). Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health. World Health Organization. Switzerland.

4 Booth, J.N., Leary, S.D., Joinson, C., Ness, A.R., Tomporowski, P.D., Boyle, J.M. and Reilly, J.J., (2013). Associations between objectively measured physical activity and academic attainment in adolescents from a UK cohort. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, pp.bjsports-2013.

5 Allen, K., Bullough, S., Cole, D., Shibli, S. and Wilson, J., (2013). The impact of engagement in sport on graduate employability. *British Universities and Colleges Sport*, 2013, pp.1-59.

Foreword from Mark Beaumont – Athlete, Broadcaster, Ambassador, Honorary President, Scottish Student Sport

As Honorary President of Scottish Student Sport it is a pleasure to welcome the publication of this important report, linking physical activity and sport to many key aspects of the student experience.

Including activity as a central part of student life is a profoundly important choice – both for the years spent studying and for embedding behaviours for adulthood. It is great to have the powerful results of the Scottish Active Students Survey (SASS) so as to really begin to understand the impact, in ways that will speak directly to students and to their institutions.

I hope that this publication will provide an opportunity for university and college decision makers to underline their commitments to sport, and to providing active lifestyle opportunities on campus. I hope also that increasing numbers of students will be encouraged to do a little more physical activity, a little more often. Not only is this a powerful antidote to many of the health pitfalls facing students today, but it is enriching, enjoyable, and enhancing to the overall student experience.

On behalf of Scottish Student Sport I would like to convey thanks to our colleagues at Precor and ukactive, and commend this report to the reader. Wishing you a happy and active life, whatever your ambitions.



Foreword from Justin Smith, Head of UK, Precor

Higher education, whether it's college or university, is a time of growth – mentally, physically and emotionally. Exercise can play a crucial role in how students deal with this life changing period and while college can be a daunting experience, it can often provide a way to meet other like-minded individuals.

The already active student population along with millennials has high expectations from their fitness regime and keeps up with the latest fitness trends. They are the next generation of exercisers and are in-tune with technology, which plays an integral role in their workout schedule, whether it's in the gym or as part of a team sport. They are constantly connected and expect to be continuously communicated with digitally.

Offering options is the key to successfully driving engagement and encouraging all students to become active and that's why Precor believes in the importance of ensuring the availability of fitness for all. This is supported by providing them with technologically advanced equipment and tools, such as Preva networked fitness that enables them to set goals, log and track their fitness activities. With a versatile, high-quality product range across all areas; cardiovascular, strength and functional training, Precor can provide every facility with choices to help them find the right solution for their needs and their students' needs.

From self-help guides on machines to aid those new to exercise or the gym environment, to fun classes and even specific programmes, such as the University of Edinburgh's Support for Physical Activity Programme (SPA), which encourages students to become more active, it's clear the gym experience is having a positive impact on students' lives. In fact, a participant of the SPA commented: *"If you'd told me when we started that I would love the gym, I would tell you - you were having a laugh, but I do!"*

However students are inspired to take up fitness and sport, we can see from the research findings it not only helps boost their overall self-esteem across a number of areas, but also gives them confidence to achieve strong grades and succeed. At Precor we are dedicated to partnering with educational facilities to ensure students have access to the latest equipment that delivers an exercise experience to support and complement their academic learning.

We work closely with our education customers to learn how we can keep optimising and improving their facilities in order to continue positively affecting students' lives through our personalised fitness solutions. Jim Aitken, Director of Sport and Exercise at the University of Edinburgh states: *"We live in an increasingly digital world with technological innovation all around us. The Precor P82 console and supporting Preva management software are prime examples of how technology has transformed our fitness experience and outlook. It's really intuitive, engaging and easy to use, and our gym members now view it as key to enhancing every workout. They love it."*



"As we are dealing with a predominantly 18- 21 year-old market that use the latest technology in everything they do, it was imperative that we communicate with them effectively and Precor, and specifically Preva networked fitness, provides us with the perfect solution."

Nick Beall – Facility Services Manager at Newcastle University

"The facilities provided by the Charterhouse Club play a significant role in creating a lifelong passion for sport, activity and wellbeing for its pupils. The club is also at the heart of sport and leisure provision in the local community and we wanted to build a long-term relationship with Precor to help us develop the offering and not just supply us with great equipment."

Tim Ostle – Commercial Director at Charterhouse

Overview

Over 5,000 students from colleges and universities across Scotland took part in the survey which ran in November 2016.



The survey established how much activity students were doing. The majority of students were classified as active or fairly active. This means they reported doing at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week. Throughout this report the scores for active and inactive students are compared.

Students who took part in physical activity scored themselves higher on a series of self-assessment questions measuring:



Attainment



Employability



Personal
Wellbeing



Mental
Wellbeing



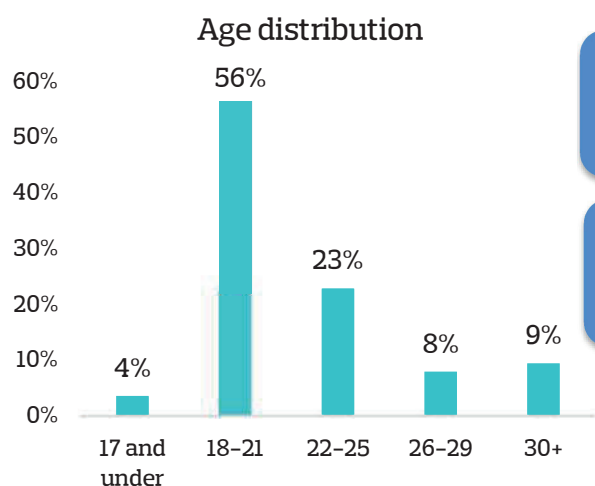
Social
Inclusion

Demographics

The survey was disseminated using social media and targeted mailing as well as being distributed directly to the institutions. Responses were collated using an online survey tool. Analysis of responses was done using MATLAB and Microsoft Excel.

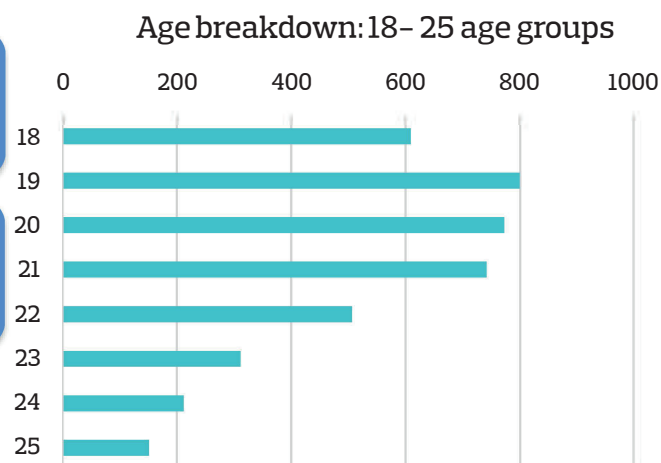
The following section gives an overview of the overall characteristics of the 5,178 students who took part in the survey. The majority of survey respondents were aged between 18-25 (79%), with 19 the most common age. There were more female respondents than male, with a split of 60% to 40%. Students responding to the survey were predominately White (89%).

Survey responses were received from 30 institutions. The top 5 responding institutions (by percentage of overall student population) are on the next page. 11% of respondents were from colleges, with 89% from universities.



Mean age:
22.6 years

Modal age:
19 years



Ethnicity of respondents

Ethnicity	Survey	Scotland ⁶
White	89.1%	96.0%
Mixed	2.6%	0.4%
Asian or Asian British	6.0%	2.7%
Black or Black British	0.8%	0.1%
Other	1.5%	0.8%

Gender

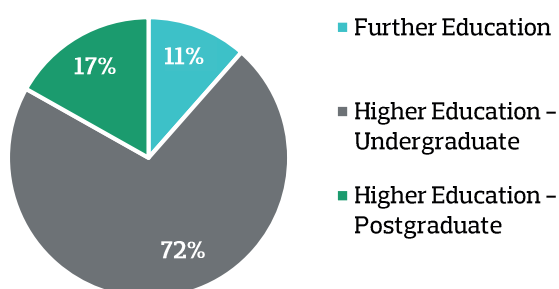
	FEMALE	MALE
Survey respondents	60%	40%
Scotland Overall ⁶	52%	48%

⁶ Scottish Census 2011

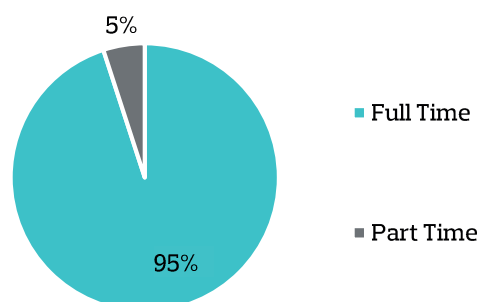
Response by institution

RANK	INSTITUTION	FTE ⁷	RESPONSES	RATE
1 st	University of Dundee	10,973	747	6.8%
2 nd	University of Strathclyde	17,088	1,036	6.1%
3 rd	University of St Andrews	8,850	524	5.9%
4 th	Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	964	36	3.7%
5 th	University of the Highlands and Islands	10,471	347	3.3%

Level of study



Full time/ Part time split



Key Findings

- The survey was completed by more females than males (60% vs 40%).
- The students participating were mostly in higher education, with only 11% in further education.
- The students were nearly all full time (95%).
- The age range of participants was 15-79, with 79% between 18 and 25.
- The participants were predominately White, but the Asian, Black, Mixed and other ethnic groups made up a far greater percentage of survey respondents (11%) than the equivalent in the general population of Scotland.
- The University of Dundee had the highest response rate of any establishment, with the highest number of responses coming from the University of Strathclyde.

⁷ Scottish Funding Council figures 2014-15

Physical Activity

Background

Students were asked questions relating to the amount of moderate intensity physical activity they had done during the past week and what format this took. The questions in the survey were adapted from the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) and directly relate to the Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) physical activity guidelines for adults. These guidelines state adults should undertake a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a week. The students were asked:

In the past week, how much moderate intensity physical activity have you completed in total?

Results

The CMO guidelines classify adults according to how many minutes of moderate intensity activity they do per week, with those doing less than 30 minutes 'inactive', those over 150 minutes 'active' and those in between 'fairly active'. These classifications will be used for the rest of the report to group the students based on the answers they gave. For the purpose of the report all respondents were classed as adults and analysed against the CMO guidelines for adults.

Inactive <30 mins	Fairly active 31-149 mins	Active > 150 mins
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Breakdown by minutes of moderate physical activity

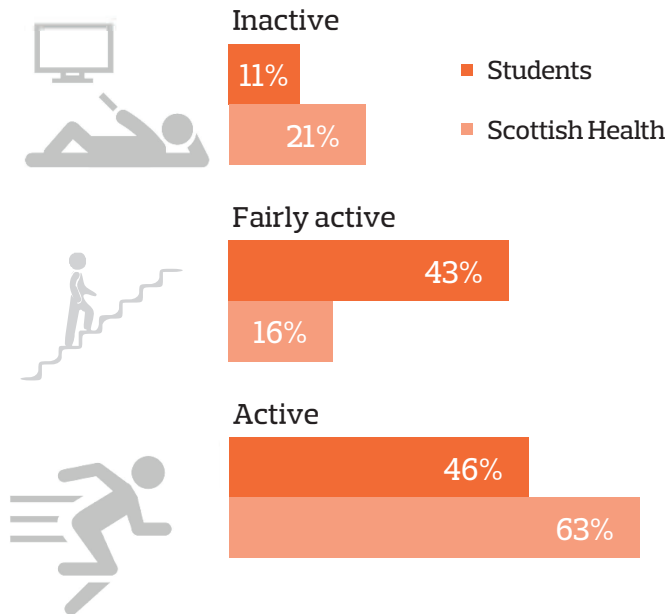
Minutes Physically Active	Students	Percentage
Under 30 minutes	590	11%
31-90 minutes	1,234	24%
91-149 minutes	980	19%
150+ minutes (2.5 hours)	2,374	46%

Just under half of students (46%) were meeting the CMO guidelines for physical activity that would class them as active. This is less than the percentage of the active population from the Scottish Health Survey 2015 (63%). Over one in ten students fell into the lowest category of activity, with 11% classed as inactive. This is also less than the percentage of inactive people from the Scottish Health Survey (21%). Whilst this is a useful comparison, the two surveys differed greatly in their methodology and coverage, with the Scottish Health Survey including all ages and occupations.

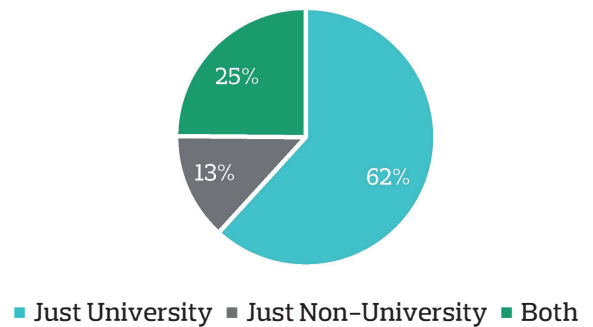
Nearly half of respondents (49%) were both gym members and sports club members, the biggest group in the survey. These students made up 65% of the 'active' segment. The percentage who were only gym members was 18%, a little higher than the sports club only percentage of 14%. The remaining 19% of students were members of neither gyms nor sports clubs. These students accounted for 56% of the inactive segment.

Of those students who were members of a gym, 74% were members at their university or college facility. Of those students who were members of sports clubs, 62% were members just at university or college with only 13% members solely outside of university or college. Team sports were popular at university and college, with hockey, rugby and football the three most frequently played sports overall.

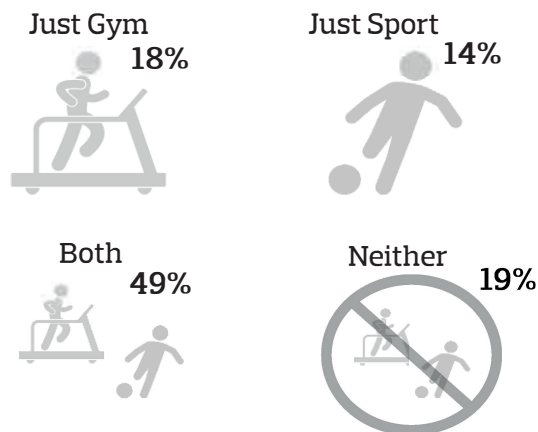
Activity Classification



Sport Participation Type



Sport Type



Top Six Sports at university/ college



Key Findings

- Just under half of students (46%) were meeting the CMO guidelines for moderate intensity physical activity (>150 minutes per week).
- 11% of students were classed as inactive according to the CMO guidelines (less than 30 minutes moderate intensity physical activity per week).
- Nearly half of students (49%) surveyed were members of both gyms and sports clubs.
- University/ college gyms were by far the most popular, with 74% of gym members attending the gym at their educational facility.

Attainment

Background

Undergraduate students were asked a simple question about the grade they expected to receive at the end of the current year. Postgraduate students were asked for the grade they had already received at undergraduate level. This question was only asked to students in higher education (university level).

What grade do you expect to achieve at the end of this year?

Results

This question was answered by the 89% of students (4,584) who were in higher education. 41% of respondents felt it was too early to judge their predicted grade and have been excluded from the results. Of those who did answer, over half (54%) believed they were in line to secure a 2:1 grade. Only 11% believed they would achieve a 2:2 or 3rd class grade.

Expected attainment of respondents

Grade	Students	Percentage
1 st	951	35%
2.1	1,479	54%
2.2	232	9%
3 rd	61	2%



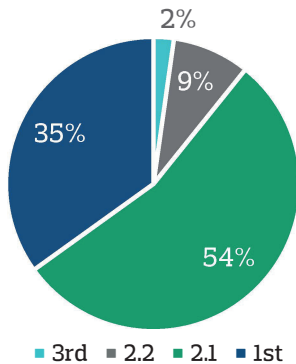
The percentage of inactive students anticipating a low grade (2:2 or 3rd) was 19%, far higher than the percentage of active students expecting these grades (7%). 93% of active students were expecting a high grade (2:1 or 1st) compared to 81% of inactive students.

Students who were members of both gyms and sports clubs had the highest expectation of gaining a high grade (92%). In the group of students who were members of neither gyms or clubs, the expectation of a low grade was highest at 18%. There was no noticeable difference in the likelihood of achieving high or low grades for the gym only or sports club only groups.

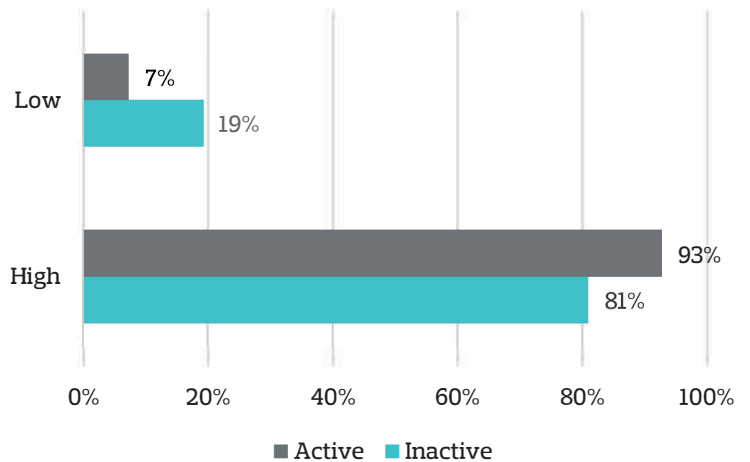


Students were also asked how long they studied for each week in classes and private study. The most popular answer was more than 30 hours. There was minimal difference in study times between those who were active and inactive, or between those who were members of gyms, clubs, or neither. The data would seem to suggest that active students are more likely to achieve high grades and will do so without their sport and exercise activities impacting the time they spend studying.

What grade do you expect to achieve at the end of this year?



Expected grade split by activity level

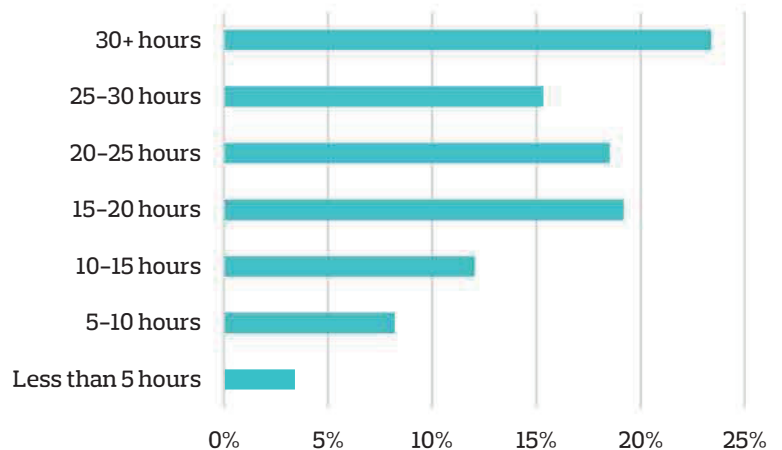


Expected grade by activity type

High	
Just Gym	88%
Just Sport	89%
Both	92%
Neither	82%

Low	
Just Gym	12%
Just Sport	11%
Both	8%
Neither	18%

Hours studied per week



Key Findings

- A higher proportion of active students (93%) than inactive students (81%) expected to achieve a high grade.
- The student group with the highest percentage expected to achieve high grades was those who were members of gyms and sports clubs (92%).
- Nearly one in five students (18%) who were members of neither clubs nor gyms expected to achieve a low grade.
- Nearly a quarter of students studied for more than thirty hours a week. Active students did not study for a significantly different time from inactive students.

Employability

Background

Students were asked a range of questions around employability, which explored three key themes:

1. Self-assessment of their own key employability skills
2. Confidence that they would be employed within six months of graduating
3. Impact of physical activity on their own employability

Results

Students were asked to rate themselves for two sets of key employability skills. Table 1 shows the average scores of the group for the first set of metrics, where students were asked to rate their individual skills on a scale of 1 to 5. The active student group scored higher on all measures. This is not a definite indicator that active students are indeed 'better' at all the attributes described- the nature of self-assessment means we can only tell that active students believe they are better. Students who are members of both sports clubs and gyms scored marginally higher than students who are neither on most metrics, but lower on some (graph on next page).

Table 1: Average scores for self-assessment of key employability skills

Skill	Inactive	Active
Teamwork	4.12	4.40
Drive	3.97	4.31
Flexibility	4.06	4.16
Analysing & Investigating	3.97	4.18
Planning and Organisation	3.93	4.19
Initiative/self-motivation	3.82	4.15
Written Communication	3.81	4.01
Verbal Communication	3.91	3.99
Commercial Awareness	3.67	3.74

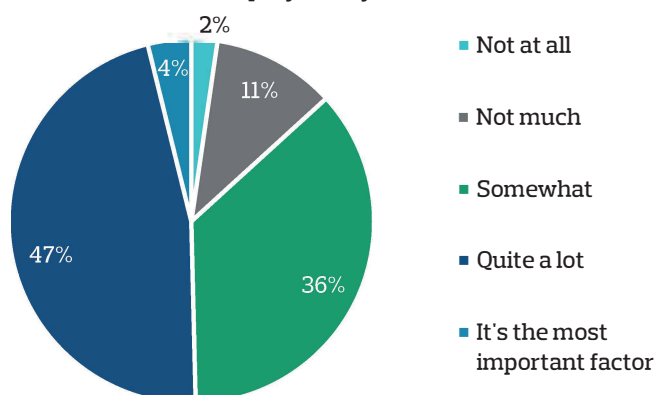
Table 2: Percentage of positive responses (3 or 4 on a scale of 1-4) to key employability skills rating

	Inactive	Active
Communication	85%	92%
Time Management	81%	86%
Leadership	73%	88%
Creativity	73%	73%
Self-Promotion	53%	54%

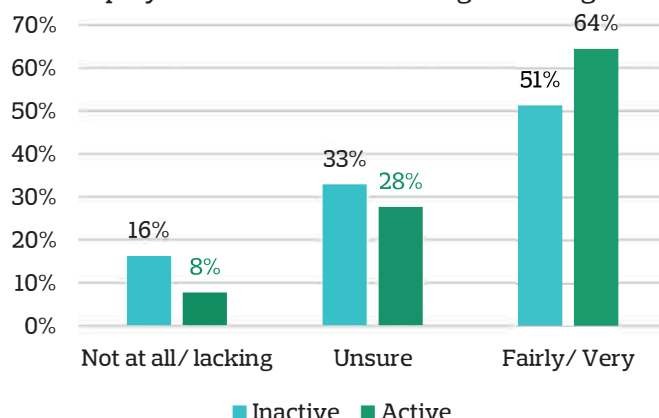
For the employability traits shown in Table 2, students were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 or 2 being classed as negative and 3 or 4 as positive. Table 2 shows the percentage of positive answers received. For all questions the overall percentage of positive responses was higher than negative. For some metrics there was little or no difference between the active and inactive groups. Leadership showed the biggest differential with 88% of active students giving positive ratings for this metric against 73% of inactive students.

64% of active students were fairly or very confident they would be employed within six months of graduating, while the percentage of inactive students with the same confidence was 51%. A higher percentage of inactive students lacked confidence in their ability to find a job within six months compared to active students. When applying for jobs, 54% of students said they were likely or very likely to mention their involvement in physical activity. This increased to 66% for active students. The perceived value of participating in sport and exercise is shown in the responses to the question on exercise and employability, with 47% of students believing that participation increases their employability 'quite a lot', and a further 36% 'somewhat'.

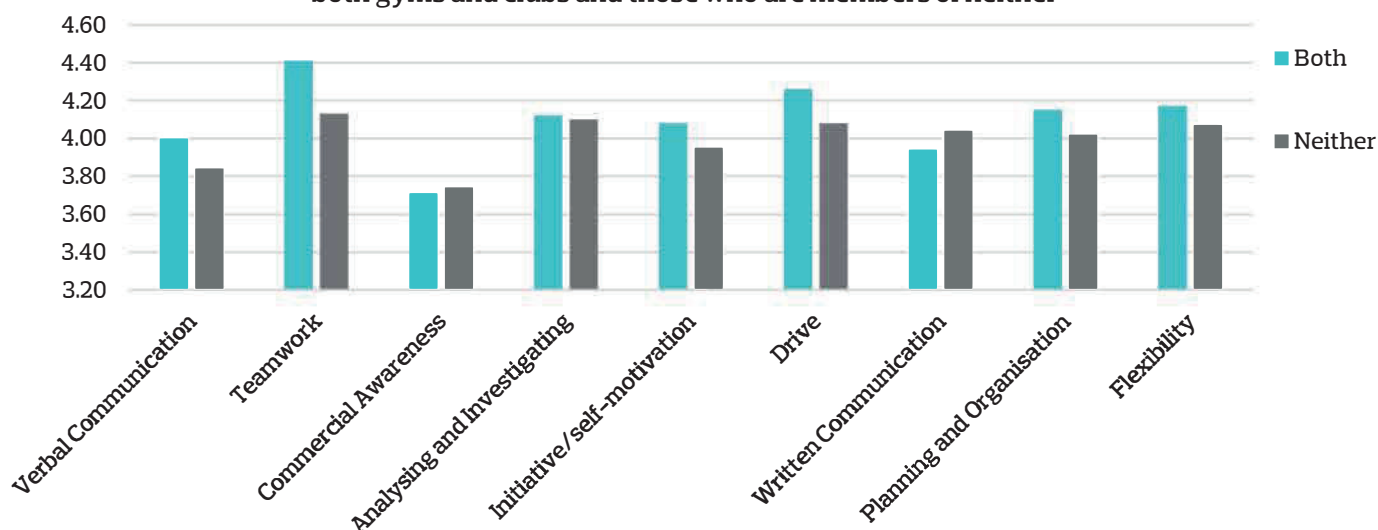
To what extent do you feel that participating in physical activity or exercise improves employability?



How confident are you that you will be employed within six months of graduating?



On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being 'not at all' and 5 being 'very', how would you rate how well you meet the following employability skills- answers are for those who are members of both gyms and clubs and those who are members of neither



Key Findings

- 47% of students believed participating in physical activity would increase their employability 'quite a lot'.
- A higher percentage of active students (64%) were confident they would be employed six months after graduating compared to inactive students (51%).
- When asked to rate their employability skills, active students rated themselves higher than inactive students for all skills.
- Teamwork was the skill that got the highest rating from both active and inactive students.
- Self-promotion was the skill that the smallest percentage of both active and inactive students rated positively.

Personal Wellbeing

Background

Students were asked four questions to determine their personal wellbeing. The ONS personal wellbeing questions were used, which allowed for comparison to national statistics so that the outcomes could be benchmarked and contextualised.

Students scored the following questions on an 11-point Likert scale from 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely).

How satisfied are you with your life at the present?

To what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

How happy did you feel yesterday?

How anxious did you feel yesterday?

Results

Average scores for personal wellbeing questions

	Inactive	Fairly Active	Active	Scotland Average	UK Average
Life Satisfaction	6.34	6.94	7.23	7.67	7.66
Feeling things in your life are worthwhile	6.62	7.10	7.42	7.82	7.84
Happiness	5.92	6.58	6.91	7.42	7.48
Anxiety	5.07	4.56	4.27	2.88	2.90

Across all four questions the students surveyed had average scores that were worse than the Scottish national average⁸. The scoring is reversed for the question about anxiety so a lower score indicates lower anxiety levels. However, the Scotland average is based on the entire population and is not exclusive to students. It cannot be treated as a direct like for like comparison but is useful as a guide.

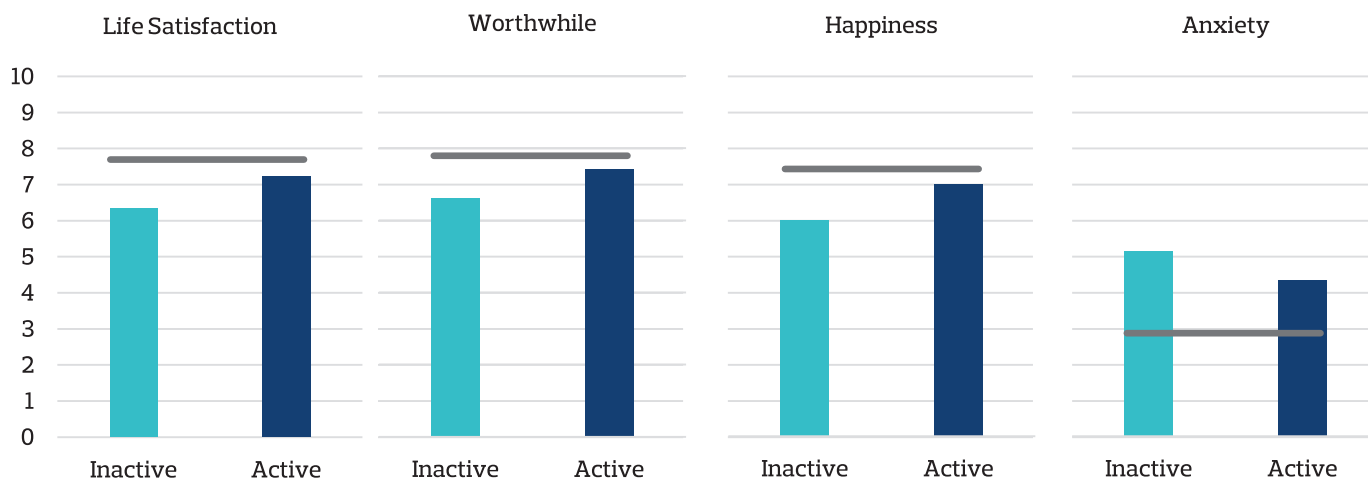
Students who were active scored better on all four metrics than students who were inactive. Students who were members of both sports clubs and gyms also scored better across all four metrics than students who were members of neither. For the three metrics where a high score was desirable, it was the groups who were members of neither sports clubs nor gyms that scored lowest.

When asked 'Have your thoughts and feelings about your life/future changed positively as a result of being involved in physical activity?' the response showed a clear split between active students and inactive students. 73% of active students indicated their feelings had changed positively 'a little' or 'a lot', compared to 32% of inactive students. Likewise only 11% of active students answered 'not at all' or 'not really' compared to 47% of inactive students.

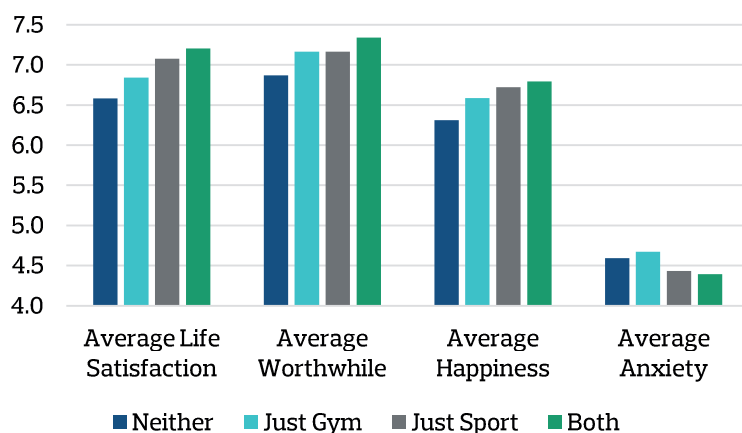
⁸ Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics, October 2015– September 2016

Average scoring of personal wellbeing questions by activity level

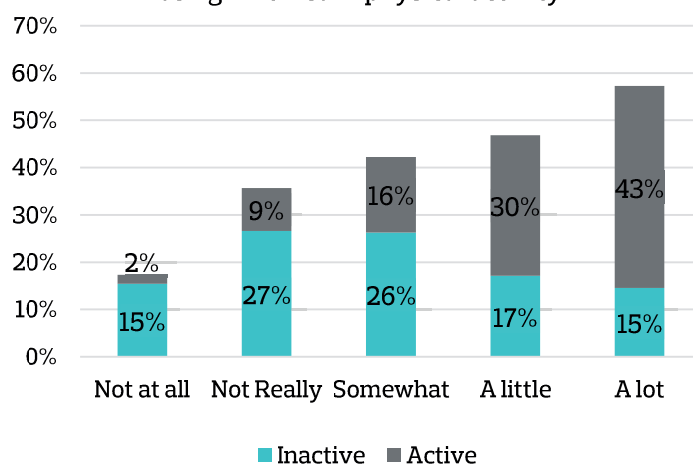
Scottish average —



Average scoring of personal wellbeing questions by activity type



Have your thoughts and feelings about your life/future changed positively as a result of being involved in physical activity?



Key Findings

- Active students scored better than inactive students across all metrics measuring personal wellbeing.
- Looking at activity type, students who were members of both sports clubs and gyms scored best across all metrics.
- Students scored feeling 'things in your life are worthwhile' highest of the three positive metrics.
- Nearly three quarters of active students felt their feelings about their futures had positively changed a little or a lot as a result of physical activity.

Mental Wellbeing

Background

Students mental wellbeing was assessed using the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS). This is based on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, which was developed to enable the monitoring of mental wellbeing in the general population and the evaluation of projects, programmes and policies that aim to improve mental wellbeing. The shortened version used in the survey contains seven positively worded statements, which are scored from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all the time). The combined results are scaled to produce an overall SWEMWBS score which can be used to compare against results that are already published or to compare different cohorts within the survey. The seven statements that make up the scale are:

1. *I've been feeling optimistic about the future*
2. *I've been feeling useful*
3. *I've been feeling relaxed*
4. *I've been dealing with problems well*
5. *I've been thinking clearly*
6. *I've been feeling close to other people*
7. *I've been able to make up my own mind about things*



Results

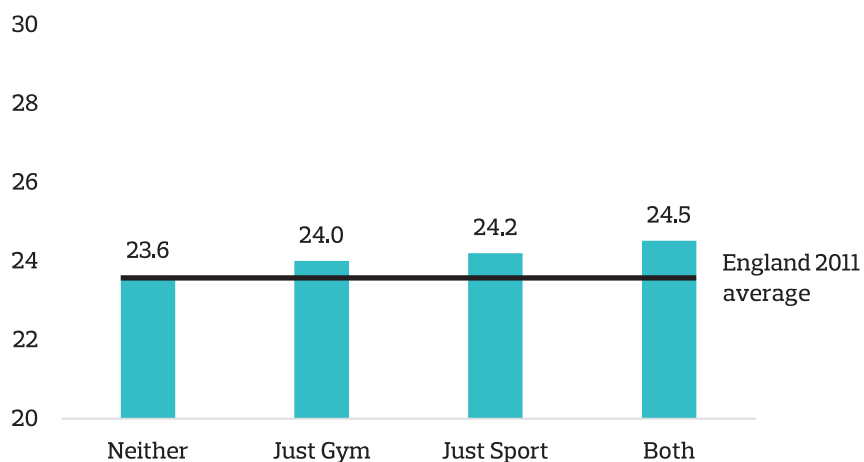
The average SWEMWBS score for the students was 24.2. The average score for England 2011⁹ was 23.6, so students average wellbeing is slightly above the average for England. There are limited published SWEMWBS scores to compare against and although England 2011 is not a perfect comparison it gives reassurance that the score for the Scottish students is within a sensible range. There is no Scottish data available to compare this against directly.

The average by activity level shows that active students scored this question higher than inactive students. The difference was 2.1 points or a 9% higher score for the active group. Active students were above the England 2011 average, and inactive students were below this figure.

Students who were members of both sports clubs and gyms had the highest mental wellbeing score of 24.5. The lowest score came from the group of students who were members of neither sports clubs or gyms (23.6). There was a very minimal difference in scores between those who were members of either just a gym or just a sports club.

⁹ Health Survey for England 2011

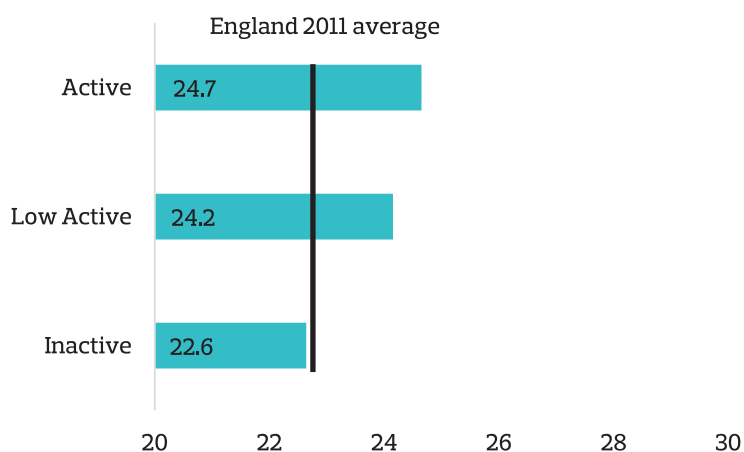
Average SWEMWBS score by activity type



Average SWEMWBS score for
survey respondents
 24.2 ± 5.1

Average SWEMWBS score for
England
 23.6 ± 3.9

Average SWEMWBS score by activity level



Key Findings

- Students' mental wellbeing (24.2) was slightly higher than the average for England (23.6).
- Active students scored their mental wellbeing higher than inactive students.
- Active students were above the England 2011 average, and inactive students were below this figure.
- Students who were members of sports clubs and gyms scored their mental wellbeing higher than those who were members of just one or neither.

Social Inclusion

Background

To measure social inclusion, students ranked the following statements on a five point scale from 'never' to 'always'.



I feel left out

I feel that people barely know me

I feel isolated from others

I feel that people are around me but not with me

These statements are taken from the PROMIS Social Isolation item bank to assess the feeling of social isolation. This includes perceptions of being avoided, excluded, detached and disconnected from, or unknown by, others.

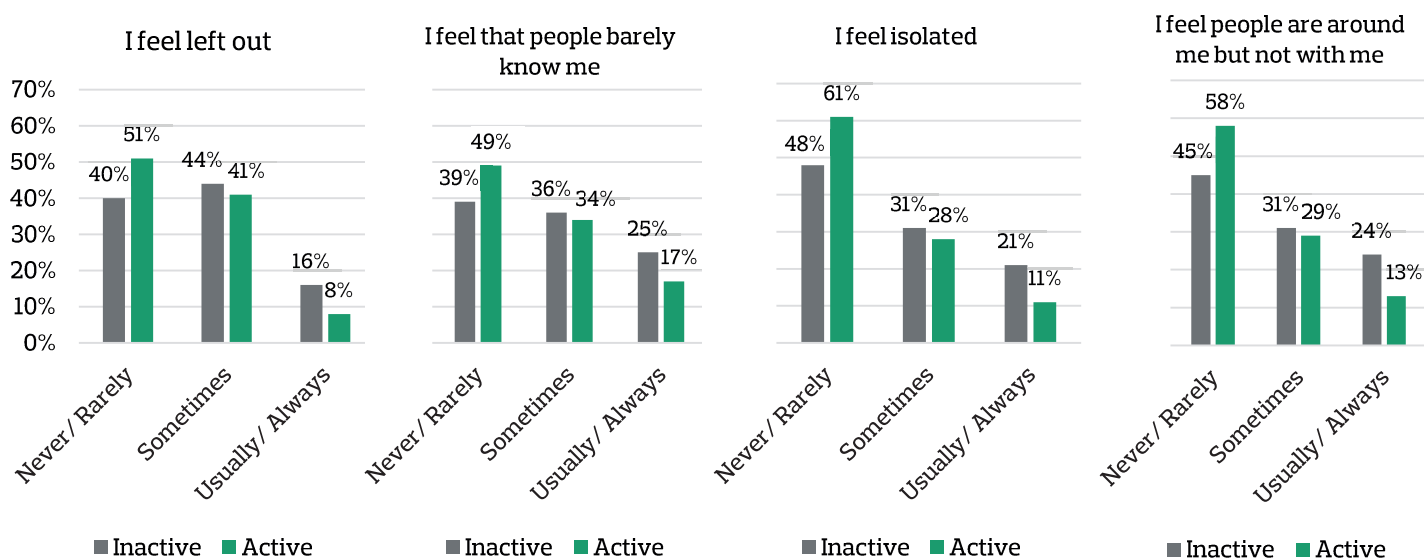


Results

For these statements, answering 'never' or 'rarely' signified higher levels of social inclusion. For each statement over 40% of students answered with one of these options. The two statements with the highest percentages of students answering 'never' were '*I feel isolated from others*' and '*I feel that people are around me but not with me*'. For each of these, one in five students answered 'never'. For every statement no more than 3% of students answered 'always', the option signifying the lowest level of social inclusion. For '*I feel left out*' just 1% of students answered 'always'. The split of answers by active and inactive students are graphed on the following page. Active students had a higher percentage of positive answers (never/ rarely) for each statement.

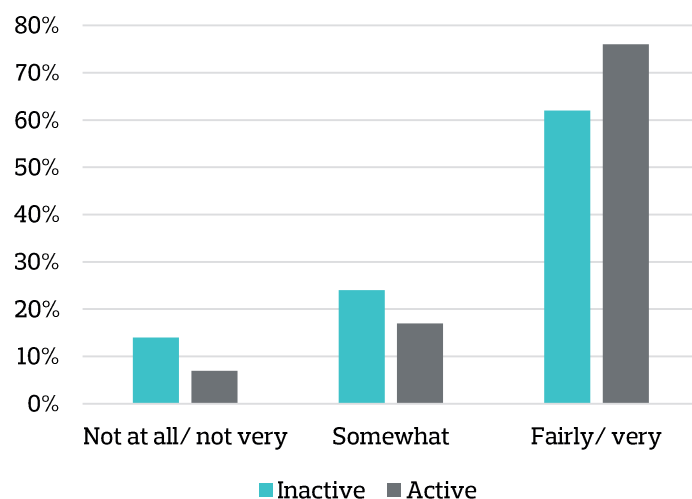
I feel...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Left out	11%	37%	42%	9%	1%
That people barely know me	12%	34%	35%	16%	3%
Isolated from others	20%	38%	30%	10%	2%
That people are around me but not with me	20%	35%	30%	12%	3%

Students were also asked about their sense of belonging at their university or college. Overall, 73% of students answered this question with 'fairly' or 'very'. In terms of activity levels, 77% of active students answered in this way, with 62% of inactive students also doing so. At the other end of the scale 8% of total respondents answered this 'not at all' or 'not very'. This was made up of 14% of the inactive students and 6% of the active students.



Breakdown of answers to 'I feel like I belong at my university/ college/ course'

	Inactive	Active
Not at all	4%	1%
Not very	10%	5%
Somewhat	24%	17%
Fairly	35%	40%
Very	27%	37%



Key Findings

- Active students had a greater sense of belonging at their university or college than inactive students, with a higher percentage of these students scoring this question 4 or 5 out of 5 (fairly or very).
- For each statement that was asked, a higher percentage of active students than inactive students recorded positive answers (positive being never or rarely).
- Feeling isolated had the highest percentage of positive answers (never or rarely) with 58% overall.

Conclusion

Active students scored better than inactive students across all of the areas reported in the survey.

- **Attainment:** Had a higher expectation of achieving high grades
- **Employability:** Rated their key employability skills higher
- **Personal Wellbeing:** Had better personal wellbeing scores
- **Mental Wellbeing:** Had higher mental wellbeing scores
- **Social Inclusion:** Had better social inclusion scores

When looking at the student population by the combination of activities they do, those who were members of sports clubs and gyms consistently scored higher than those who were only members of one, or neither. The results highlight the importance of developing and maintaining easy access to sports facilities and gyms for all students, as well as the importance of engaging in various forms of exercise. There was no consistent differentiation between those who were members of sports clubs only and those who were members of gyms only, showing as long as students are taking part in a form of physical activity or exercise the method is not critical. Whilst traditional team sports such as hockey, football, rugby and netball were the most popular amongst students, there was a huge variety of over 50 different sports being played.

As expected, university and college facilities were very popular, with students mainly using the gyms and clubs available to them at their institutions to participate in exercise. This places a strong emphasis on the importance of maintaining university and college sports facilities and equipment to a high standard as these are the first choice for most students.

The barriers preventing the inactive from accessing these facilities need to be identified, whether financial, educational (too much work) or social (pressure of peer group behaviour). Whilst the range of sports clubs that are on offer is already extensive care should be taken to identify and address the preferences of the students who are not currently engaging with exercise to ensure there are relevant and attractive fitness options for them.

Although 54% of students were not hitting the CMO guidelines for physical activity, only 11% were classed as completely inactive (less than 30 minutes of activity a week). This leaves a large group of 'fairly active' (43%) who would need to complete only a little more activity to move into the 'active' cohort. As these students already show a little interest in health and fitness it may require less of a lifestyle change to convert them into 'active' students than it would to get the inactive students moving.

In the competitive job market post-graduation, active students may be ahead in the chase for jobs as they rate themselves higher on all employability skills. By taking part in sport during their education students are not only improving their physical and mental wellbeing but also taking steps to improve their future prospects when they complete their education. Further analysis could be undertaken to establish what happens to the exercise behaviour of students once they have left university or college and have different pressures and priorities in their lives.



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