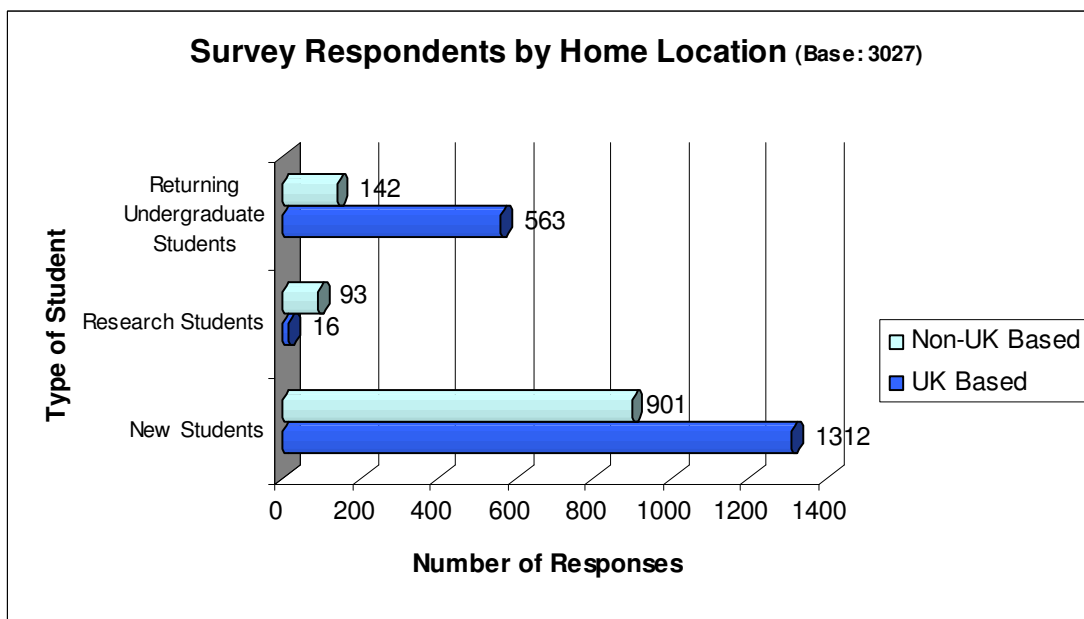
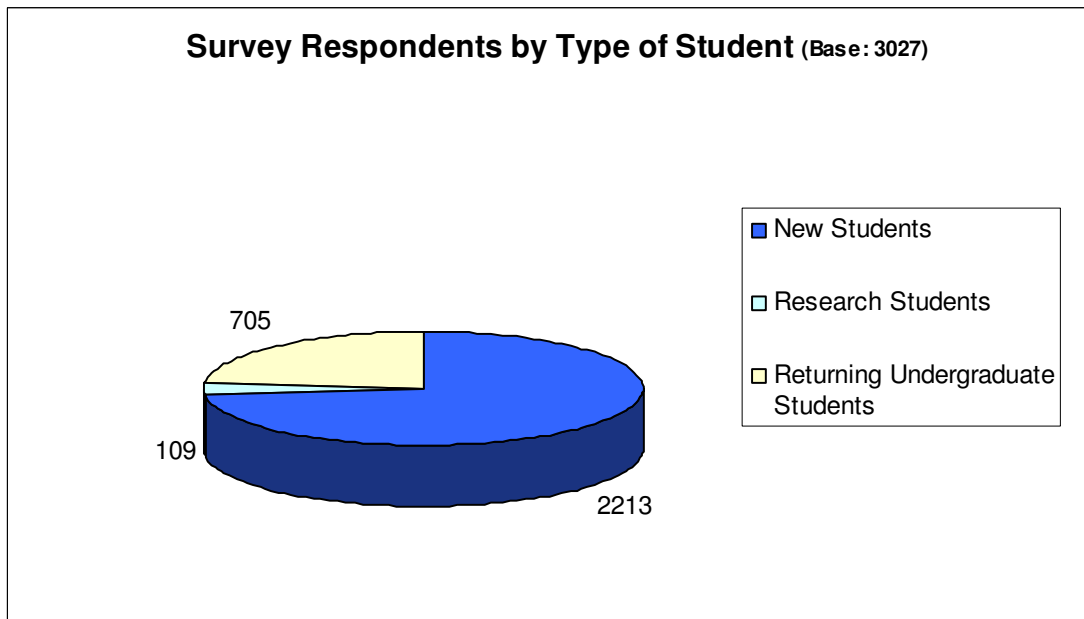


# Accommodation Office Survey Results 2008

The Accommodation Office survey was emailed to 4546 resident students across the campus. 3027 were completed and returned (1827 online and 1200 face-to-face in the Accommodation Office and door-to-door in Residences). An overall response rate of 67% was achieved this is an increase of 7% on the previous years response rate (60% - Survey 2007). The campus residents are broken down into three groups, new students, returning undergraduate students and research students. The results below demonstrate the combined results of these three groups including specific group questions. The survey was available for residents to complete during the month of November 2008.

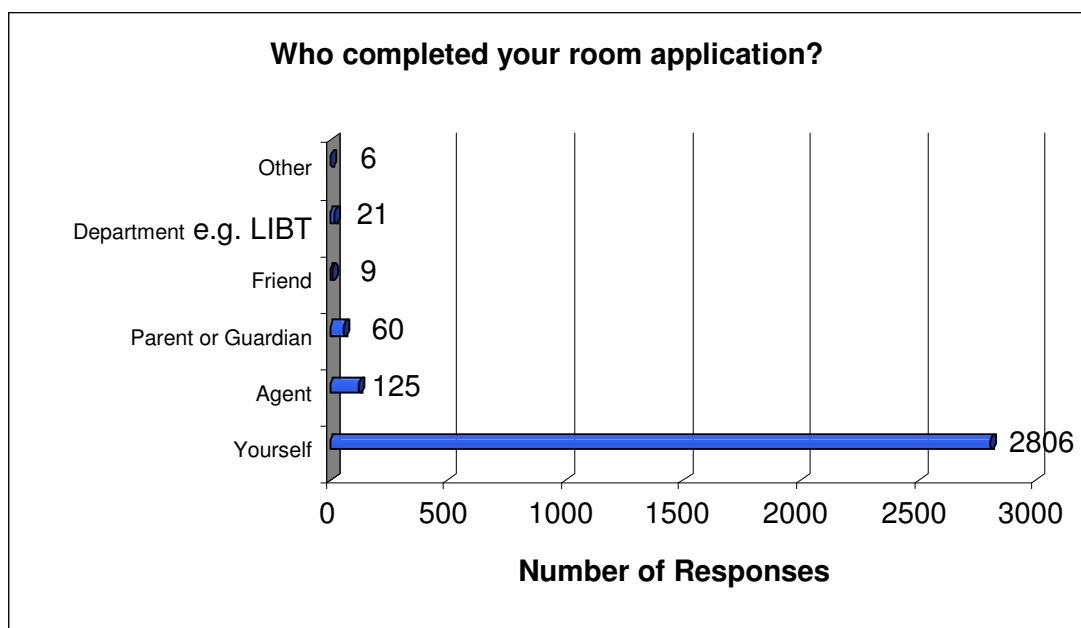
## Respondent Demographic:



- 85% of the residential researchers completed the survey. 68% of new student residents completed the survey and 60% of the Returning Undergraduate Students.

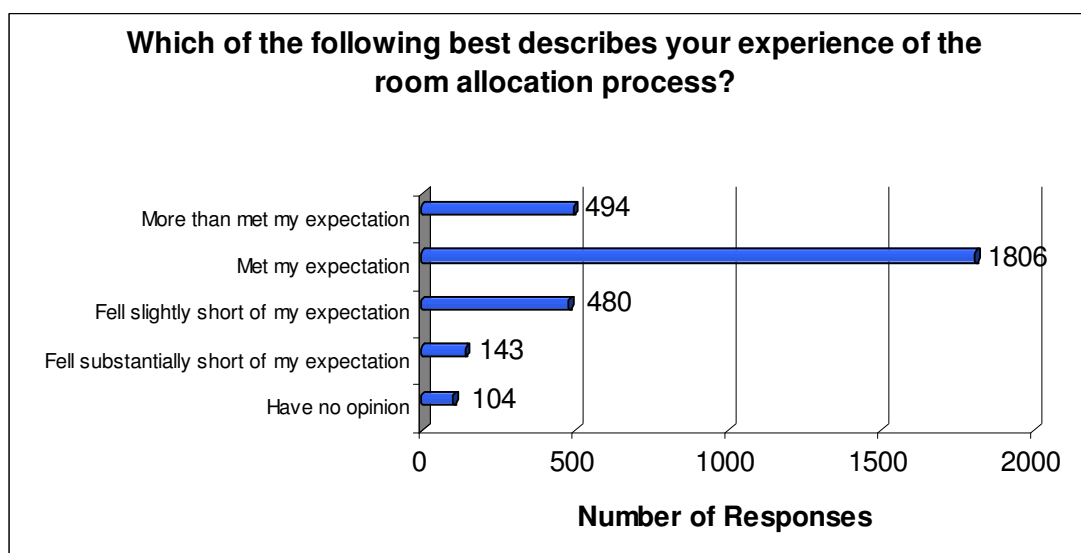
## Section 1: Room Allocation

### Question 1



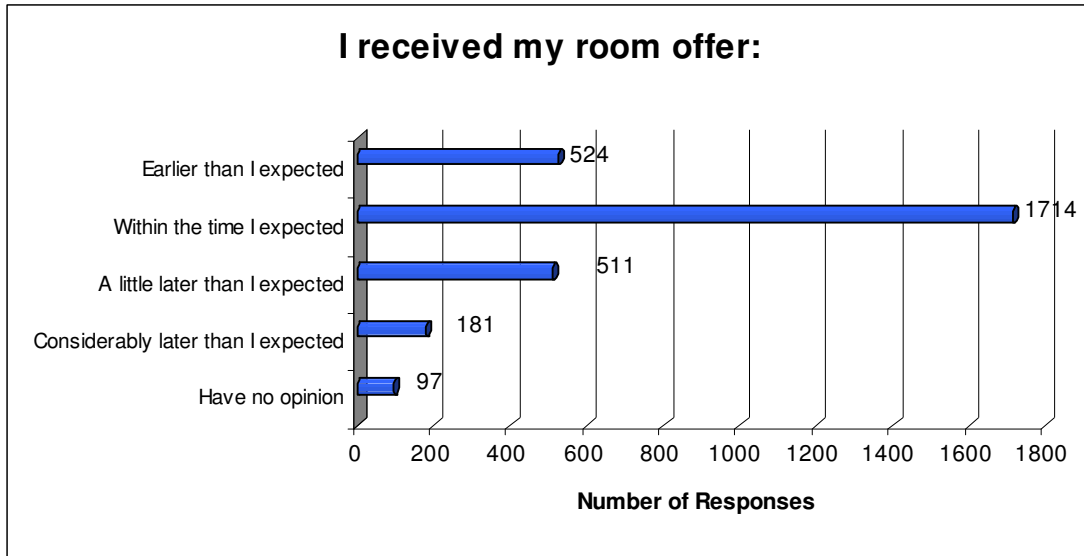
- The purpose of this question was to identify whether students were completing the room application or using a third party. The majority of the information/publications are aimed at the students. 93% of the respondents completed the application for their campus accommodation themselves. Extra information will be included in our publications to assist parents complete the documentation.

### Question 2



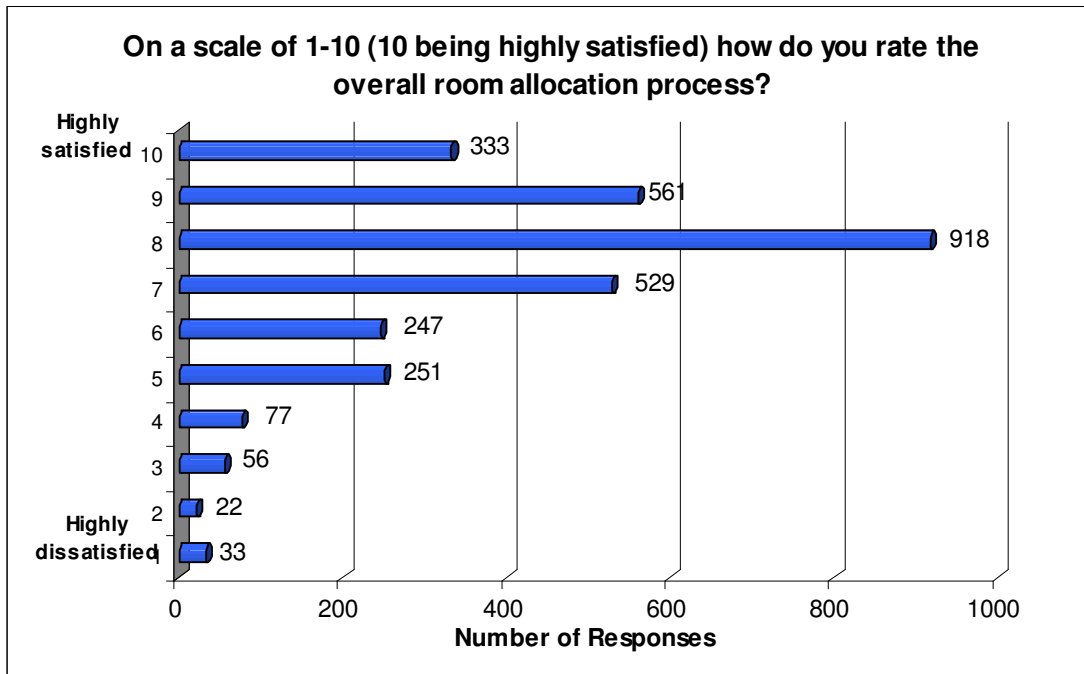
- 76% of respondents rated their allocation experience as either meeting their expectation or more than meeting their expectation and 3% had no opinion. 5% rated their experience as substantially short of their expectation. Negative comments included on this came mainly from students entering via the Clearing route.

### Question 3



- 74% of students received their room offer within the time they expected or earlier than expected. 3% had no opinion 17% felt they received their room offer a little later than expected and 6% considerably later than expected.
- During 2008/09 the Accommodation Office increased communications with students to keep them informed of when they should expect to receive allocation information from the Accommodation Office e.g. students on the waiting list for accommodation during the session receive monthly updates to ensure they are updated with their progress. This has contributed to the Accommodation Office meeting a higher proportion of students' expectations.

### Question 4



- Of 3027 respondents 2839 (94%) rated their satisfaction level with the allocation process as between 5-10 (10 being highly satisfied). 1812 (60%) rated their satisfaction level as between 8-10.
- Overall the Accommodation Office achieved a mean score for this question of 7.5 with a maximum target of 10 to be achieved.

## Question 5 (New Students and Researchers) and Question 6 (Returning Students)

1464 respondents provided a comment; the table below shows a sample of their comments:

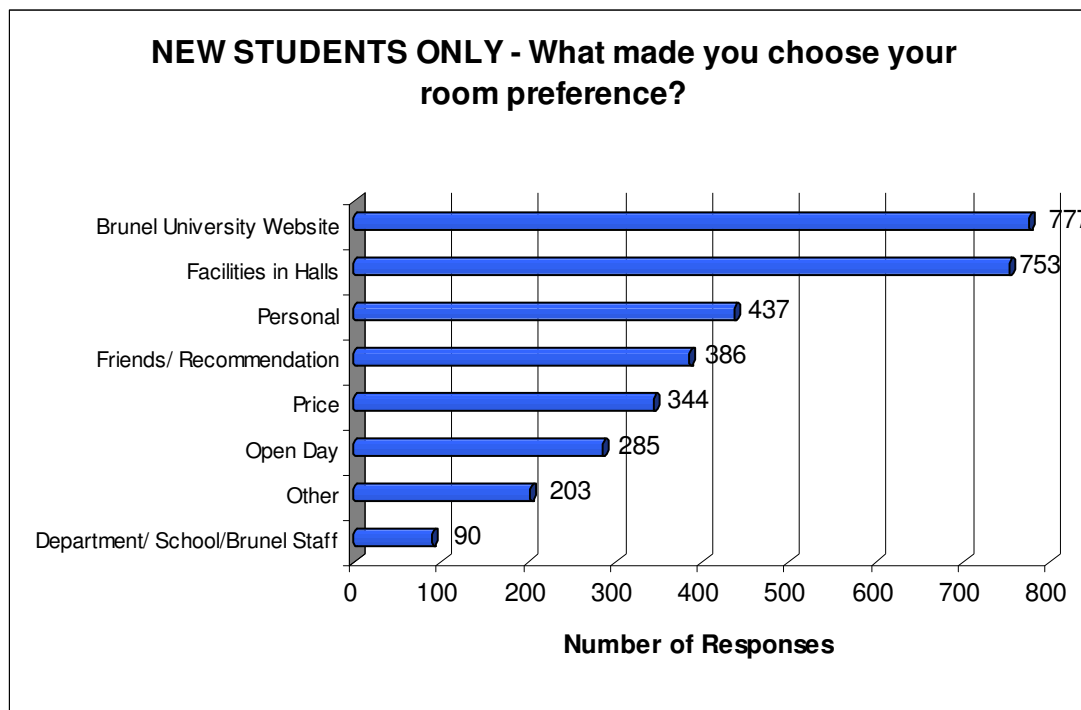
### If there was one thing we could do to improve the booking experience for you what would it be?

New Student	Researchers	Returning UG Student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was all dead easy!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give a layout of the floor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make it free to apply.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowing people doing the same course in the same flat.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be able to choose our flatmates or stay in the same room for 3 years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You could use first come first serve process.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should let us choose our room and flat that we want to live with our flat mates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I had a good experience with this issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A choice of which room on the floor you could have.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definitely give more time for the £250 deposit to be paid. I remember receiving my offer on Thursday and the deadline for the deposit was the following Monday.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Probably attach a file giving us a brief idea as to how the room looks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowing the car drop off to Isambard halls outside my block, I moved in early and was not allowed to take the car to Isambard halls so had to park at Mill hall car park and move my items from there.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer people that ask for ensuite an ensuite room.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give 5% discount for full payment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I feel that the existing system is good.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The whole process was very perfect and nothing needed to improve that booking process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For someone who doesn't have a specific preference the room booking experience was quite promptly responded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow us to put down name/s of people who we definitely do not want to live with, so that there is no chance of being in the same flat.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maybe have a choice of where to stay on campus, instead of just choosing en-suite or standard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparency in process. Student should know his number in queue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I feel that the payment of £250 should be slightly lower as it is a lot of money to find in a short space of time.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was a bit unsure when we would be expecting certain information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telling to us the exact date when the new room is being ready.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow you to know the % of the chance of you getting the room you want.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show me a picture of my room.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You should always separate PhD from masters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowing who is in the flat before moving in.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Double bed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The heater is on during light time and night.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give me a choice of halls.</li> </ul>

- The most popular request from students is to be able to choose which building they are placed in. Unfortunately we are unable to offer accommodation in all areas across the campus due to maintenance commitments and the need to group students of the same level together. We encourage students to provide as much information as possible at the application stage. Preferences/comments are taken into consideration when offering accommodation and wherever possible we will try to meet these requests.

## SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR SPECIFIC STUDENT TYPES SECTION 1

### Question 6 – New Students Only



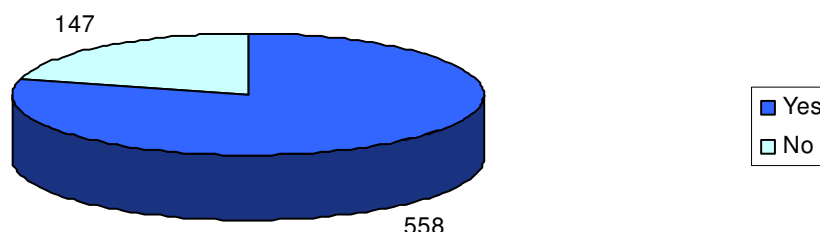
- ❑ The two most popular influences on why a student chooses their preference for accommodation are the University website and the facilities in the halls.
- ❑ Similar to previous surveys the website has always been highlighted by our residents as an important source of information. We continue to regularly review and implement updates and improvements. This year the Accommodation Office with the assistance of residential students and Student Mentors produced a video of the halls of residence and campus facilities which can be viewed on the website.
- ❑ Some of the comments made under the 'other' option are included in the table below:

❑ Cheapest	❑ Close to my classes
❑ Had no preference	❑ I accepted what I was offered because I came to Brunel through Clearing
❑ YouTube clip with in and outside of the halls and rooms	❑ That i didn't have to share a bathroom
❑ No time to look for off-campus housing	❑ Safety

## SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR SPECIFIC STUDENT TYPES SECTION 1

### Question 5 - RETURNING STUDENTS ONLY

**RETURNING STUDENTS ONLY - We cannot meet the demand for rooms for all returning students - do you think the ballot was a fair method of deciding for all those who applied by the deadline? (Base:705)**

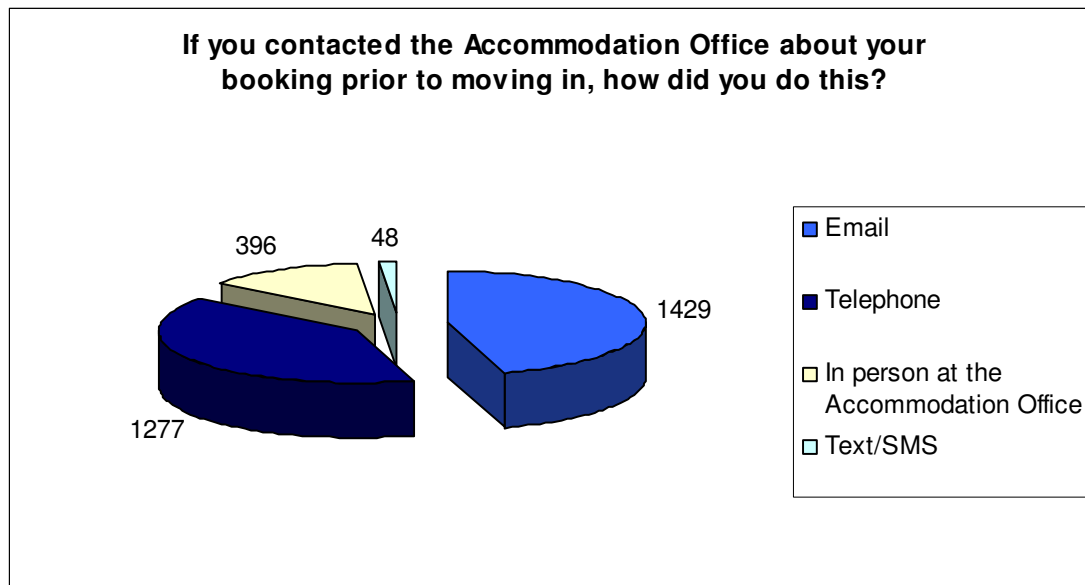


- New first year students are the highest priority group for campus accommodation. Thereafter in order of priority 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year finals are next and returning 2<sup>nd</sup> years after this. Unfortunately we are unable to provide accommodation for every student who applies by the deadline date. 2008/09 was the first year that the Accommodation Office was in a position to invite all returning undergraduate students to apply for campus accommodation.
- The respondents who thought the ballot system was an unfair method were asked to provide an alternative. The most popular alternative suggested was first come, first served where 59 of the 147 respondents had put this as their preferred method. Setting a deadline date does actually mean that every student has an equal opportunity to apply for accommodation.
- A table of sample responses can be seen below:

■ Priority for committee members of clubs/societies	■ First come, first served
■ I think international student must have the priority.	■ Personal Circumstances should have been taken into account.
■ Priority for smallest groups and individuals	■ International students should be guaranteed accommodation
■ A points system where students who take part in University activities get more points. Like for example a member of a sports team or any society should get a few points	■ Income assessment and time it takes to travel into University

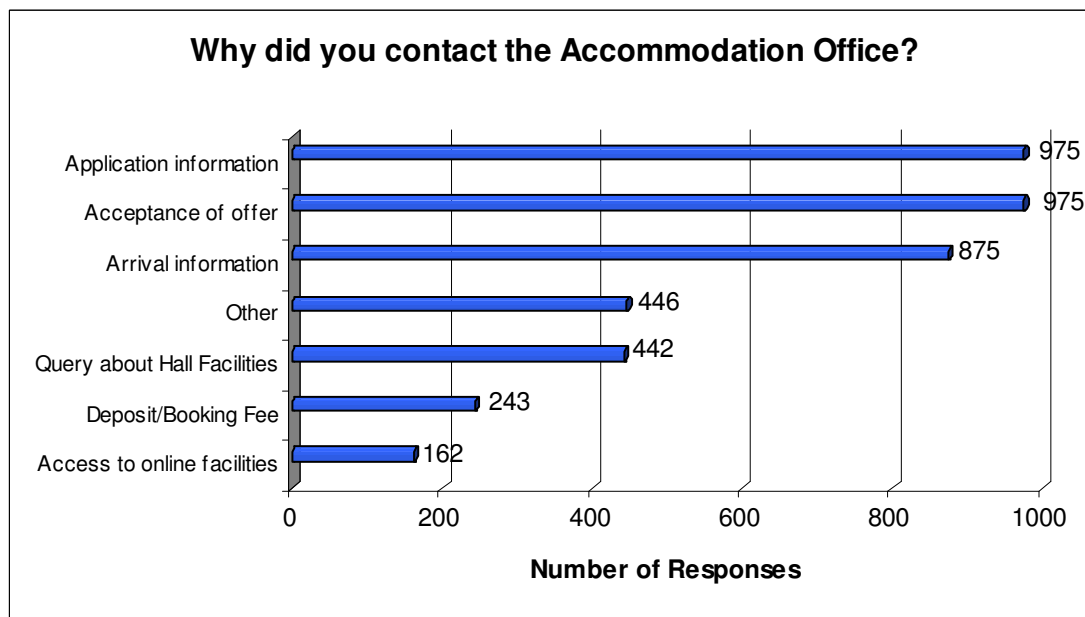
## Section 2: Communication

### Question 7



- As expected the top two methods of contact are by email and telephone. Our group email [accom-uxb@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:accom-uxb@brunel.ac.uk) provides a 1 working day response time which may contribute to this option being popular with students.

### Question 8



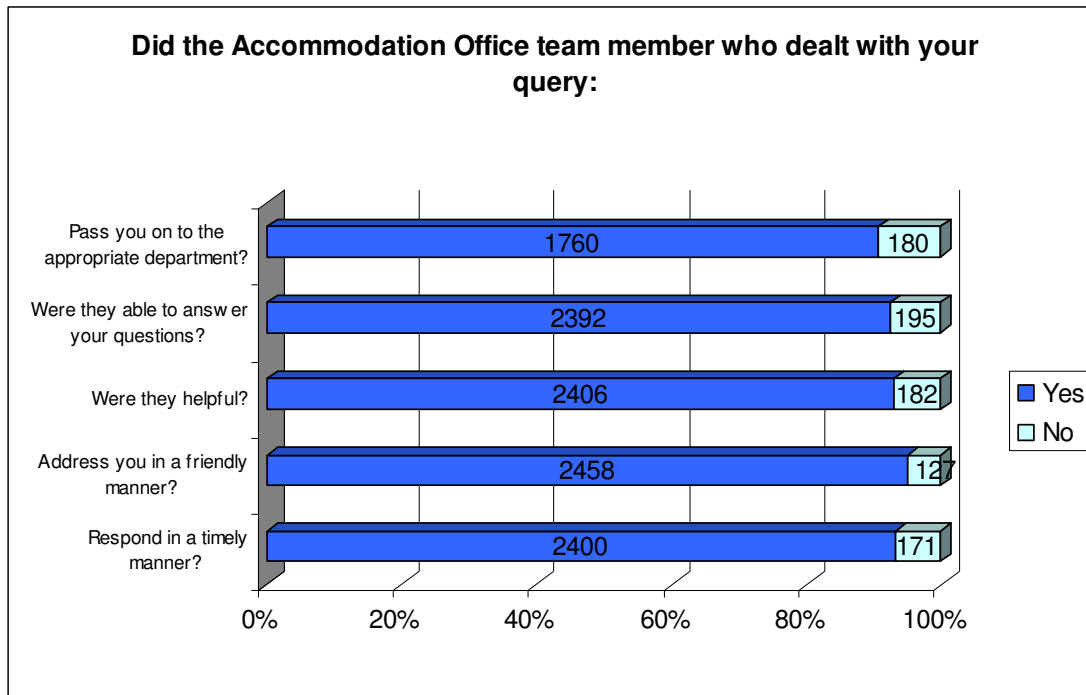
- The top 3 reasons for contacting the Accommodation Office are arrival information, acceptance of offer and application information.
- This information will identify areas that the Accommodation Office will aim to provide more/better information for students in the future.
- Some of the comments made by students selecting the 'other' option can be seen in the table below:

Changing Halls/Room	Early Arrival
Just checking	Payment details/methods
To check if there were any Ensuite rooms left	When some information is not clear to my understanding

■ Option of moving in late

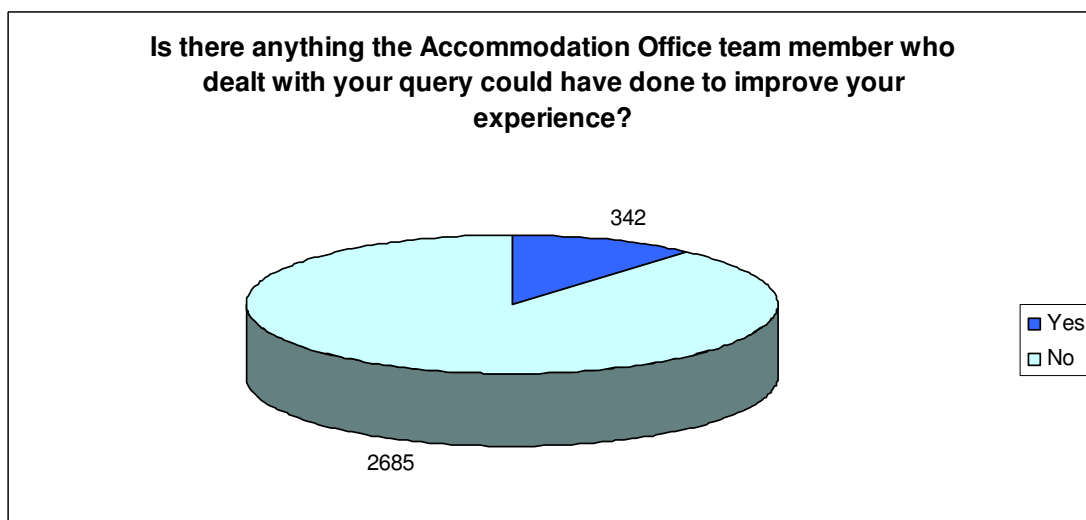
■ I had to move into a different room because there was a fire in the flat I was going to move into

### Question 9



- The above chart demonstrates that the overall scores/percentages for the 5 questions were similar. The purpose of asking this question is to identify whether the Accommodation Office should set targets for improving our service and increase the number of positive responses.
- The above chart demonstrates that the majority of the residents who completed the survey believe that the Accommodation Office deals with their queries in a friendly, helpful and timely manner. Only 7% of the respondents selected 'no' to the above questions.
- The Accommodation Office achieved a mean score of 9.37 for this question. A maximum of 10 can be achieved.

### Question 10



- 11% of the respondents said that we could have done more to improve their experience.

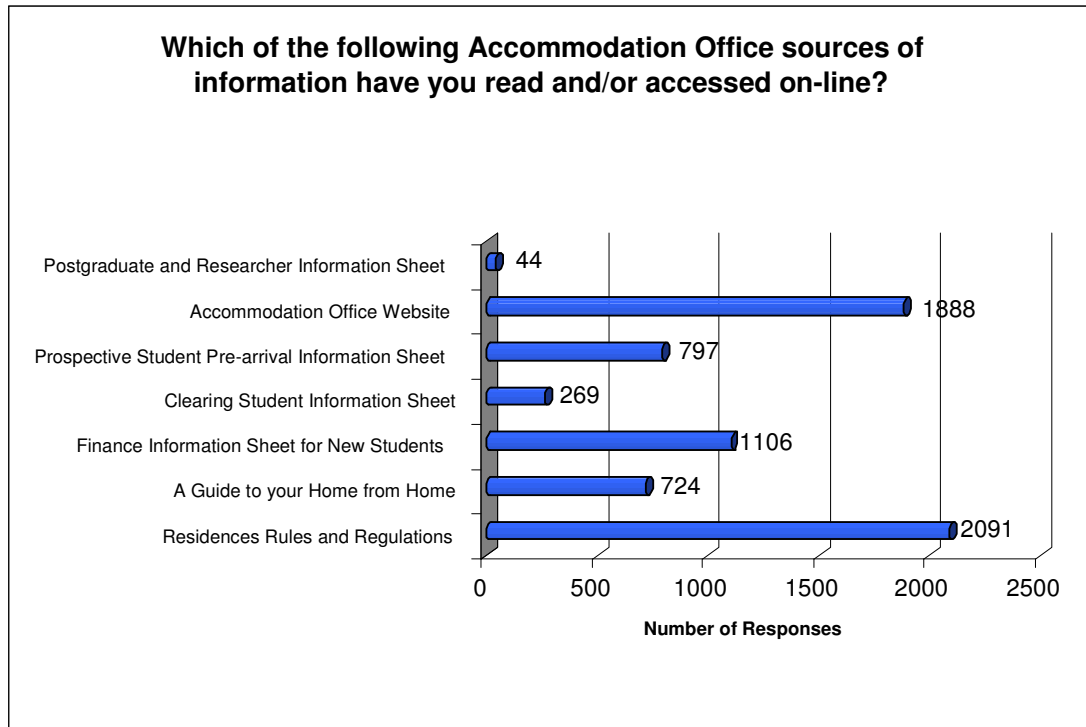
- The 11% who selected 'no' were asked how we could improve their experience. A sample of their comments can be seen below:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Could be in a little bit more friendly manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Allow me to see state of rooms before entry.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ They didn't have enough information on Payment status... Direct Debit. I had to go to students centre and check my status.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ This may sound stupid, but it needs to be stressed on more occasions that the rent is paid in instalments. The website led me to believe it was paid by the week. Daft I know but it left me in an awkward situation!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Whenever I called I was passed onto another officer, I think if it would be the same person who deals with people, though I know it is a lot of us, but still, for me it seems that would make a better expression than to having to explain our situation to more than one person.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Feel the situation of an overseas student if room not booked by him/her, then check up with Department (School) right away.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Don't put me on the ground floor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Be more understanding of personal situations.</li> </ul>

- Our aims for the future would be to decrease the number of students who feel we could have done more to improve our service by taking into consideration the comments that you have made.

## Section 3: Accommodation Office Information

### Question 11



- All residents are required to read the Residences Rules and Regulations when accepting/signing their Tenancy Agreement and cannot proceed with their application unless they sign/accept that they have read and understood the Residence Rules and Regulations.
- During 2008 the Accommodation Office introduced some new campus accommodation publications for students including 'A Guide to your Home from Home' and 'Prospective Student Pre-arrival Information Sheet'.
- A number of students commented that they would have liked to know where they could access copies of these publications. The Accommodation Office will ensure in the future that links to these documents are highlighted in all our allocation communications.

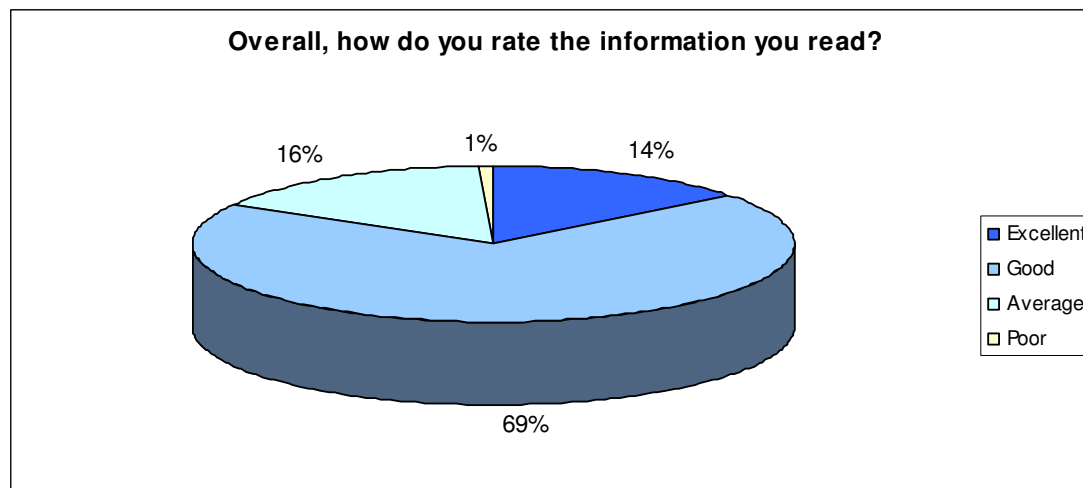
### Question 12

What information not provided during the allocation process would you have liked?

The results to this question can be found in the table below:

■ An image of my room in comparison to others.	■ Can't think of anything.
■ Cost of washing facilities.	■ Details on prices and payment dates prior to application.
■ The website information was very clear. I didn't have any problems.	■ I feel that I was fully prepared by the university's provision of information.
■ For couples accommodation I wasn't told what my partner would need on arrival which lead to him not getting a key immediately.	■ Some information about where the nearest Tesco, Post Office, etc are? And also what tenants can find around the university? (not in Uxbridge).
■ Personal experiences of previous residents.	■ More detailed information about kitchen items.

### Question 13



### Question 14

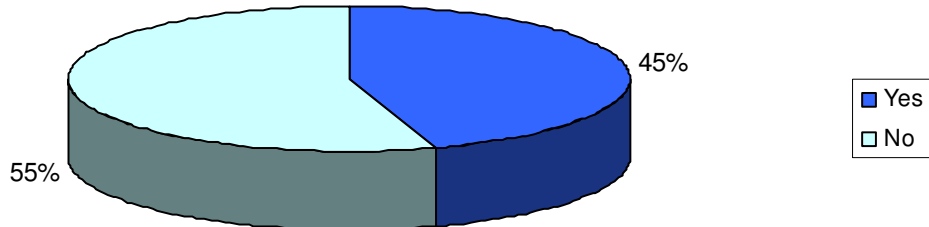
What 3 words best describe your room booking experience?

Positive	Indifferent	Negative
Easy (898)	Acceptable (18)	Confusing (27)
Quick (617)	Consistent (2)	Anxious (14)
Fast (313)	Okay (70)	Terrible (1)
Simple (261)	Agreeable (2)	Awful (1)
Helpful (227)	Alright (9)	Stressful (39)
Friendly (134)	Fair (44)	Long (40)
Brilliant (5)	Satisfactory (46)	Un Clear (11)
Convenient (95)	Average (34)	Slow (41)
Smooth (31)	Adequate (17)	Poor (6)
Reliable (73)	Understandable (26)	Rushed (6)
Thoughtful (3)	Automated (2)	Boring (6)
Fantastic (11)	Familiar (1)	Uncertainty (13)
Great (19)	Uneventful (2)	Unfair (9)
Professional (36)	Online (8)	Vague (6)
Cool (4)	Not bad (13)	Hectic (1)
Un-stressful (8)	Fine (16)	Hurried (1)
Happy (14)	Random (11)	Expensive (27)
Effortless (10)		
Organised (82)		
Exciting (43)		
Hassle-free (37)		
Clear (62)		
Well organised (14)		
Lovely (3)		
Awesome (4)		
Painless (15)		
Excellent (51)		
Prompt (23)		
Punctual (9)		
Pleasant (53)		
Very good (21)		
Precise (17)		

## STUDENT TYPE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR SECTION 1

### Question 13 - FOR RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY

**As a Researcher would you be interested in being appointed an individual member of the Accommodation Office team to be your personal contact for campus room enquiries?**



- Nearly half of the Researchers on-campus said that they would like to have an individual member of staff deal with their accommodation throughout their stay in campus accommodation at Brunel.
- For session 09/10 the Accommodation Office will be in contact with Research students living on-campus to inform them of the details of their personal contact.

## Summary

### Room Allocation

The majority of students (93%) completed the accommodation application themselves. However, a small percentage of mainly international students were assisted by their agents in completing the application form and an even smaller percentage of applications were completed by the student's parent/guardian. As a result of this information the Accommodation Office is planning to produce some extra guidelines to assist agents in completing applications for specific groups of students, e.g. pre-sessional students.

Residents were asked about their experience of the overall room allocation process. 76% said that the Accommodation Office either met or more than met their expectations. 5% rated the experience as falling substantially short of their expectation. Further research into this rating revealed that the majority of those who gave a poor rating fell within the group of students who entered the University through the Clearing system. Applications from students entering through the Clearing system tend to be later than main scheme students, and therefore notification of their allocation will usually reflect this. Clearing students are also not guaranteed accommodation and they may have to wait longer for their specific room preference. Despite the majority of our rooms now providing ensuite facilities, the demand for this type of room is still oversubscribed which inevitably leads to some students being disappointed that their expectations of a room of their choice was not met.

### Communication

Communication systems within the Accommodation Office are regularly reviewed including its Call Centre functionality to facilitate changes to help improve information flow to students. The self-service function of the Call Centre, (which enables students to track details of their allocation), received the highest recorded number of students accessing the system for session 2008/09, following the release of the A-level results. Figures show there were 4 times more students using this facility compared to 2007/08.

The top three reasons residents gave for contacting the Accommodation Office were: arrival information; queries about acceptance of a room offer; and application information. Although this information is included within the Accommodation Office application packs and University brochures, feedback from students indicate that many students like to have extra personal reassurance regarding their campus accommodation. The Accommodation Office appreciates for many new students moving into University Accommodation is often a major change in lifestyle and the team are happy to talk on a one-to-one basis with students on any aspect of their accommodation. This does however, mean that our Call Centre becomes exceptionally busy at specific times of the year and it may not always be possible for the caller to get through to a team member immediately. For 2009/10 the Accommodation Office is reviewing information distribution and will look at ways of introducing a system for the release of information throughout the summer months leading up to the start of the academic session.

The Accommodation Office website is the preferred method for distributing information to potential students and year-on-year more of our customers source information via the website, e.g. the majority of students in residence indicated that they made their preference for a room based on website information. Also 98.5% of students were allocated and accepted their room allocation on-line.

The majority of resident responses indicate that they felt the Accommodation Office dealt with their queries in a timely and friendly manner and that the team member was helpful. Although this result is excellent for the Accommodation Office the team will nevertheless continue to seek to improve our service to our customers.

### Accommodation Office Information

Residents were also asked to provide three words which best described their room booking experience. There was an overwhelming response to this question with the majority of descriptions proving to be very positive. There was however a number of negative responses and these together with the positive ones are listed in question 14 table.

## Mean Scores

Brunel University for the first time during session 2008/09 was able to accommodate a greater number of types of students (i.e. new undergraduates; returning undergraduates; final years and postgraduates) in campus accommodation. In order to obtain meaningful data on the room allocation experience from each of these groups the Accommodation Office redesigned its annual survey and included specific questions for the different categories of students living in campus accommodation. The booking process varies slightly for each group and therefore the survey this year cannot be fully compared to previous survey results. However by setting a new benchmark mean score this year we aim in future years to set targets for continued improvements to the student allocation experience. The Accommodation Office achieved a mean score of 7.5 for question 4 and 9.37 for question 9. The maximum score for both of these questions is 10.

## Thank you

The Accommodation Office is interested in receiving all feedback from students throughout the academic year as information provided by you is taken into consideration when reviewing future policy and procedures. The Accommodation Office works closely with other University departments and where appropriate we also pass relevant feedback to them for review purposes.

The Accommodation Office would like to thank all those who took the time to complete the 2008/09 Accommodation Office Survey. If you have any further points you would like to raise please contact us at the Accommodation Office in person, by email to [accom-uxb@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:accom-uxb@brunel.ac.uk) or via our comments page on our website.

The winner of the £200 worth of Chimes vouchers was Mr B - Bishop Complex.

Accommodation Office Team  
December 2008