



ACADEMIC TRANSITIONS: NAVIGATING UNIVERSITY LIFE

BILT and the Student Inclusion Team launched a longitudinal study in February 2025 following the journey of 36 undergraduate students throughout the entirety of their degree programmes.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THE STUDY?

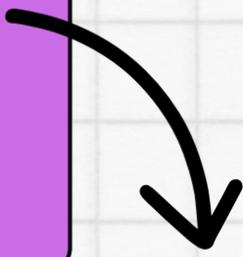
- To identify trends in experiences throughout an undergraduate university journey.
 - To identify if there were commonalities in moments throughout a student's journey they may need additional support and what that support may be.
 - To understand a longitudinal view of how students experience their academics, assessments, community, communication and transitions throughout their undergraduate degree.
 - To identify what created a student's 'sense of belonging'.
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WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS?

The participants are from a wide range of backgrounds including: home and international students, mature students, commuting students, Global Majority students and disabled students. One participant has dropped out of the study since it was launched.



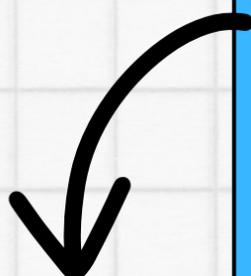
WHAT ARE THE KEY RESEARCH THEMES?

- Transitions
 - Academics
 - Assessment
 - Communication
 - Community
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HOW OFTEN DO YOU MEET AND WHAT DO YOU DO?

The current data collection points have been February 2025, May/June 2025 and January 2026. There are plans to meet three more times - once again in second year and twice in their third year.

Students are asked to join for a focus group where we discuss how things have been since we last met and we ask students to complete a journal entry with the following questions:

- How is everything going for you at Bristol?
 - Who and what has been supporting you in your university experience so far?
 - Do you feel a part of the university community?
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WHAT ARE THE FINDINGS SO FAR?

The major trends we have discovered so far are:

- Students who were delayed in arriving at their first year accommodation felt a significant impact in making friends
 - Highly stressful first exam period, not clear understanding or what good looks like or how much work is needed to achieve it
 - Improvement in wellbeing from beginning of first year to end
 - Academic transition into second year needs more support - students feeling like they need help to maintain their grades and manage time efficiently
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