



**Durham**  
University

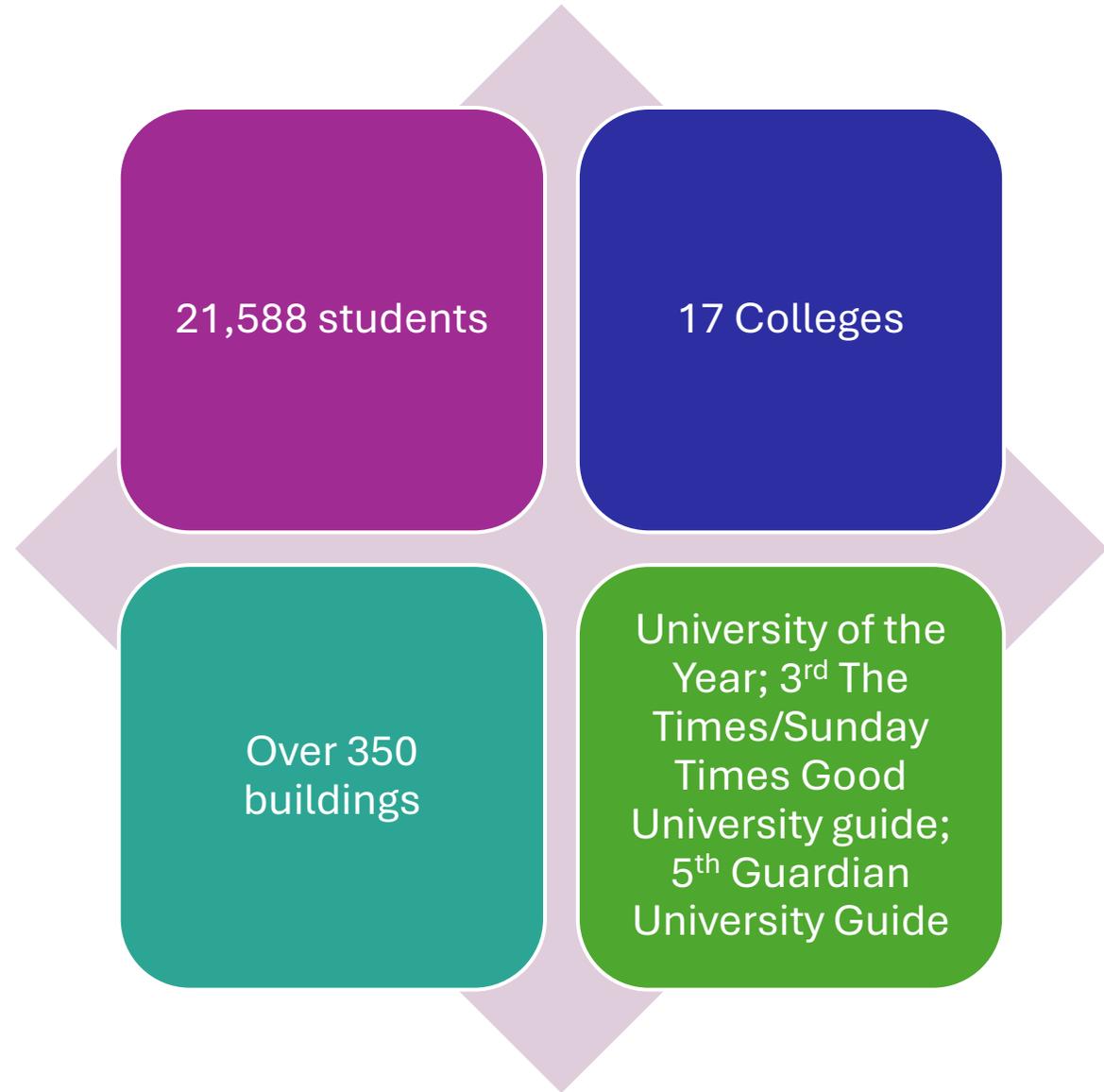
# Students and study space habits

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# Durham University



## Where are our study spaces?

**Bill Bryson Library\*** (1800)

Barker Research Library (75)

Teaching & Learning Centre (440+)

Calman

Elvet Riverside



**Waterside\*** (Business School)

Maths Computing Science

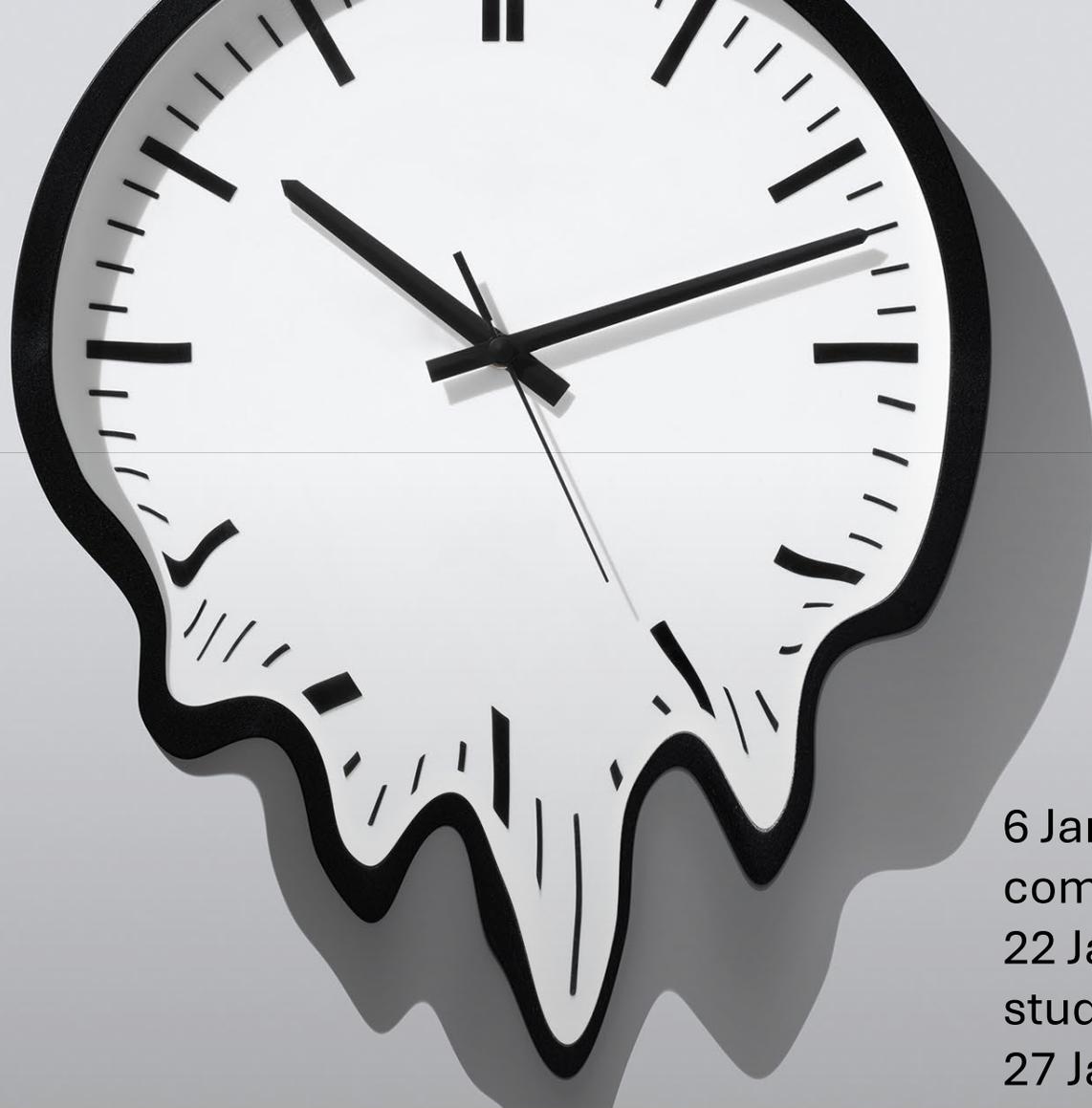
Student Union

Departments

**Colleges\***

\*24/7 study space provision





24/7

January 2025 – it all changed

6 January - Directive  
communicated to SMT  
22 January - Comms to  
students  
27 January - Midnight opening

# Initial student reaction and feedback

- *“yet another poor university executive decision”*
- *“I go to the Billy B to escape my housemate... please don’t do this to me”*
- *“paying more for less”*
- *“also love it [the library] at night as well, but oh well”*
- Open letter / petition (2k signatures)
- *“My main feedback would be why the current student cohort weren’t consulted...”*

# Dialogue with students – study space habits



## Engagement

- Student Voice Committees
- Student Study Space Habits survey
- Guerilla interviews

## Themes

- Where do prefer you study?
- When do you prefer to study?
- Why?

# Guerilla interviews - Quantitative

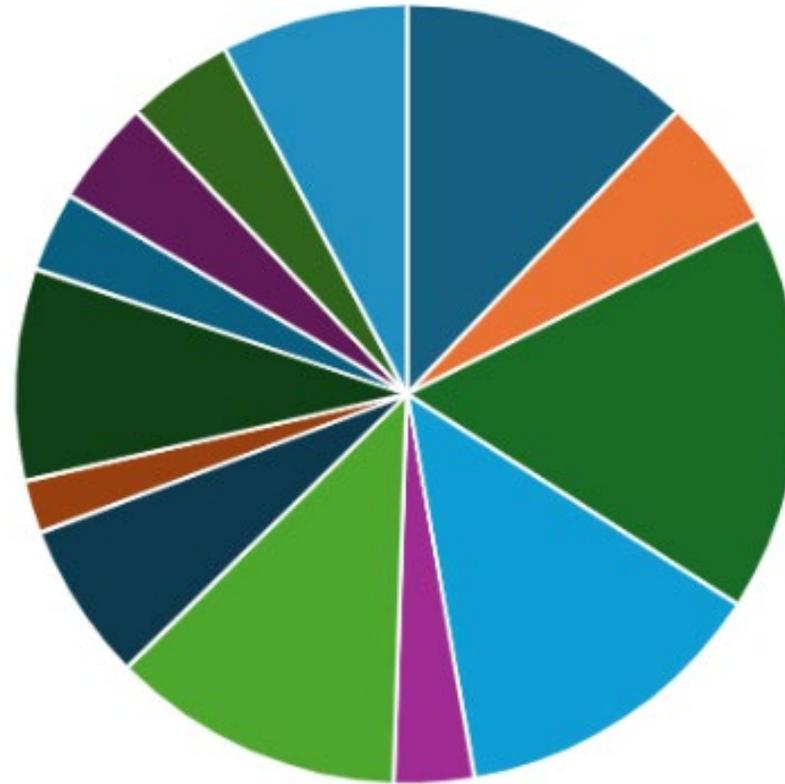
## What we did

- User Experience feedback technique
- Individual conversations with 47 students
- Different locations
- Different times, including after 10pm

## What we asked

- What time do you prefer to study?
- If you can't go to [location], where do you choose to study?
- When would you prioritise having access to 24/7 study space?
- What's the most important aspect to you in a study space?

# What is important in a study space?



- Variety of study spaces
- Charging points
- Booths / corners / screen ie to limit distractions
- WIFI
- Temperature

- Access to IT, especially monitors
- Access to drinking water
- Cafe
- Space to move around and not feel too close to people

- Quiet / choice of noise levels
- Light / windows
- Social environment eg bigger desks, people around me
- Comfortable chairs

# When would you prioritise access to 24/7 study space?

- *“Easter term. But I kind of like when the library closes at night, it pushes people to go to bed, so I don’t want to push 24/7. “*
- *“All throughout the year as I feel that if people are in the library at 2am then they have a need to be there so this should be available to them.”*
- *“Surprisingly I didn’t miss 24/7 much when it was unavailable, when I was working on my dissertation. I think it’s good to have a limit to when it’s open. “*
- *“I appreciate 24/7 at the moment but also I know I need to sleep! “*
- *“I have made use of 24/7 in the past as it’s nice to be somewhere on an evening where you feel safe so think it should be available throughout the year.“*

# Student Voice Committees - Quantitative



What time do you prefer to study and why?



If you can't go to the library, where do you choose to study?



Does this differ depending on the time of year?



If you don't have to come onto campus, where do you choose to study?



Anything else you'd like to tell us?

*'Although there were complaints about the shorter opening hours last term, in truth it didn't seem to really affect anyone that much'*

*'The longer opening hours are good for summative-based work'*

*'Early morning opening (pre-8am) are more useful to some than later night opening'*

*'The lack of 24/7 didn't affect people as much as they made out. They were aware of the petition but didn't support it as they didn't feel it impacted on them'*

# Student Study Space Habits Survey – Quantitative and Qualitative

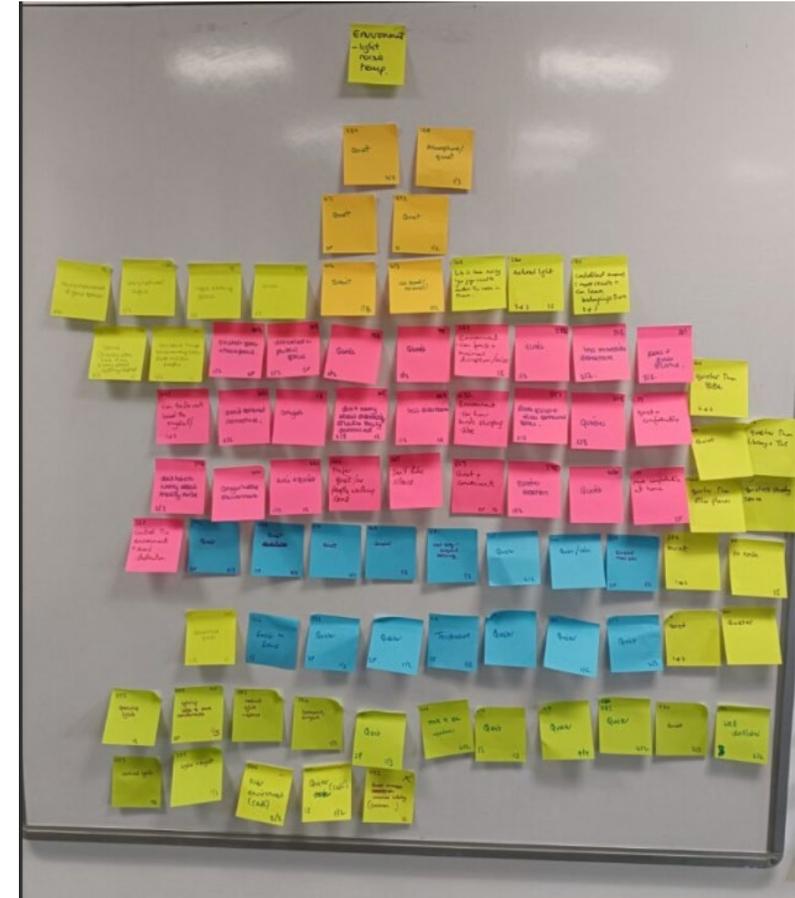
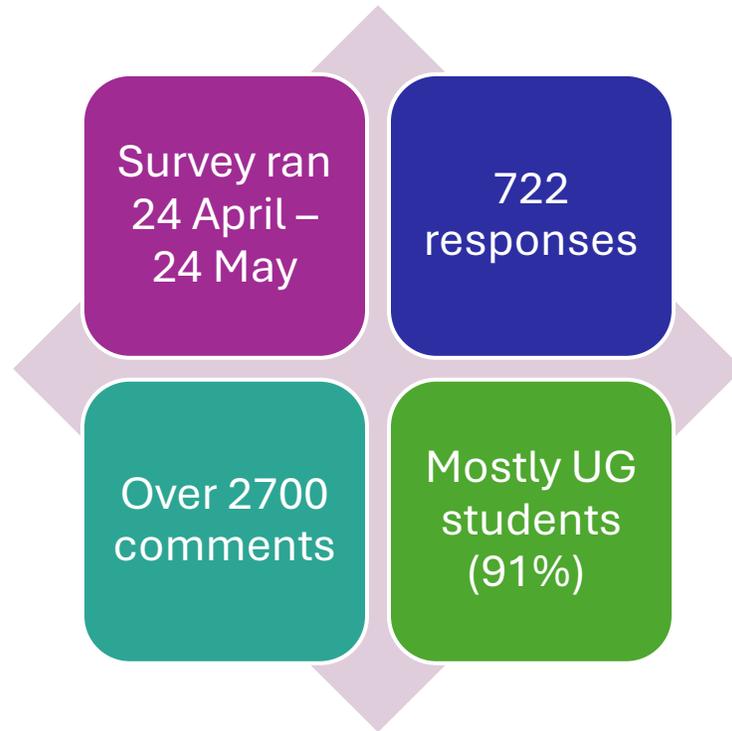
5. Where is your preferred study location \*

- Bill Bryson Library
- Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC)
- Barker Research Library
- College library or study space
- Your room / house / accommodation
- Other University campus study space
- Off campus public space (e.g. cafe, pub, public library)
- Other

6. Please tell us where \*

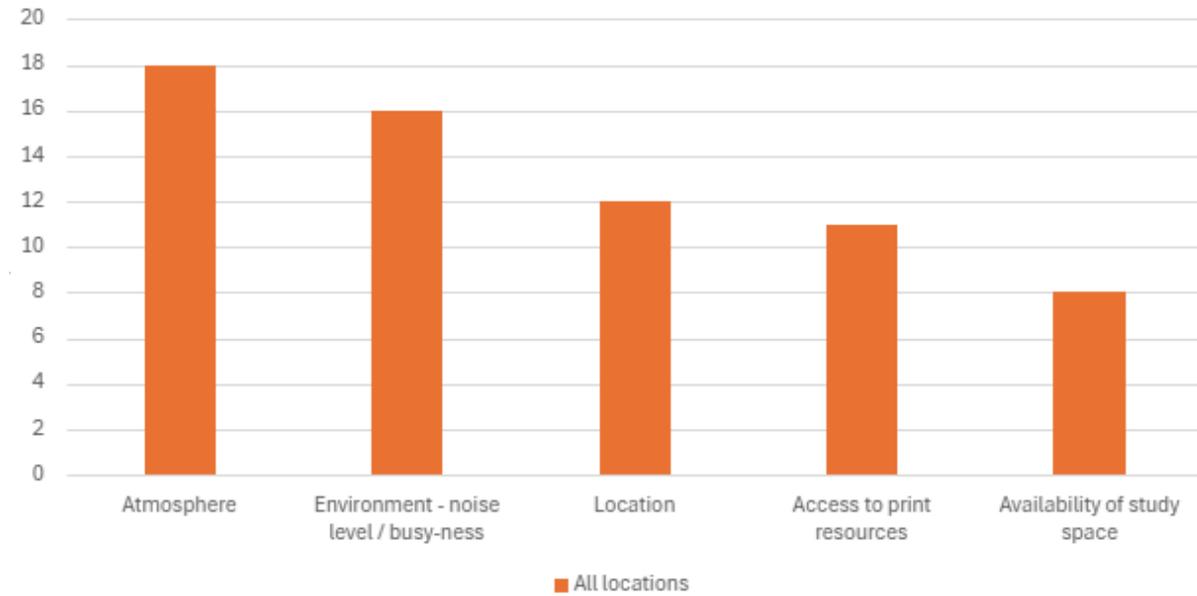
7. Why is this your preferred study space location? \*

8. Does your preferred location change at any times of the year? If so, please tell us when and where you prefer to study instead.

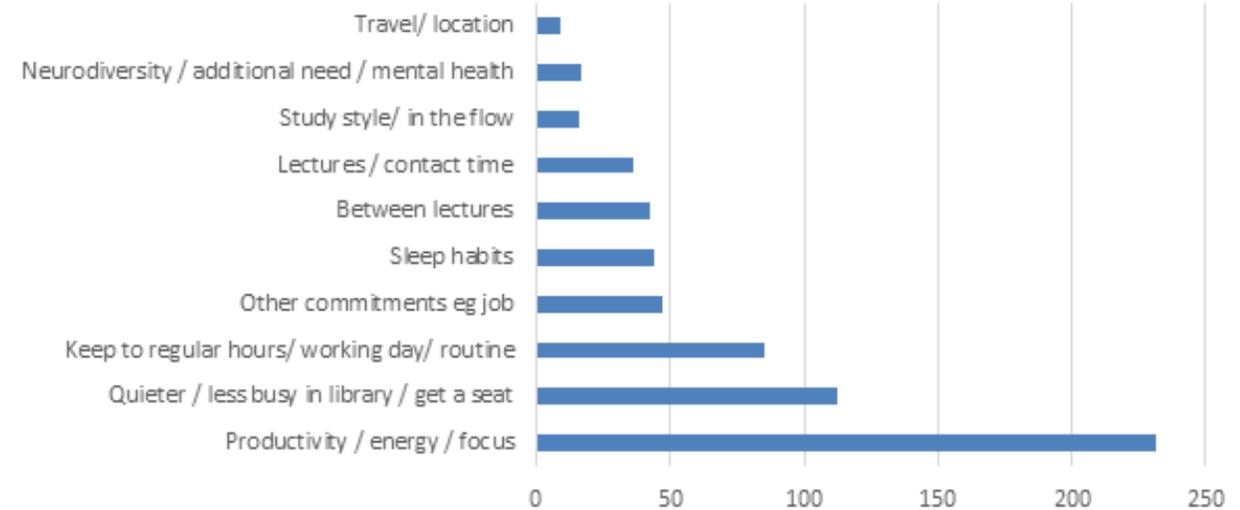


# Survey: Quantitative data examples

Top five reasons for choosing a location by %



Reasons why students chose to study at a particular time



# Survey: Qualitative data examples

It's pretty

*"Access to hunger-  
quenching  
confectionery"*

*"Atmosphere"*

*"By like 8pm the time pressure  
is enough that I can start doing  
the task that's due the next day,  
meaning I often end up having to  
study until about 3 am."*

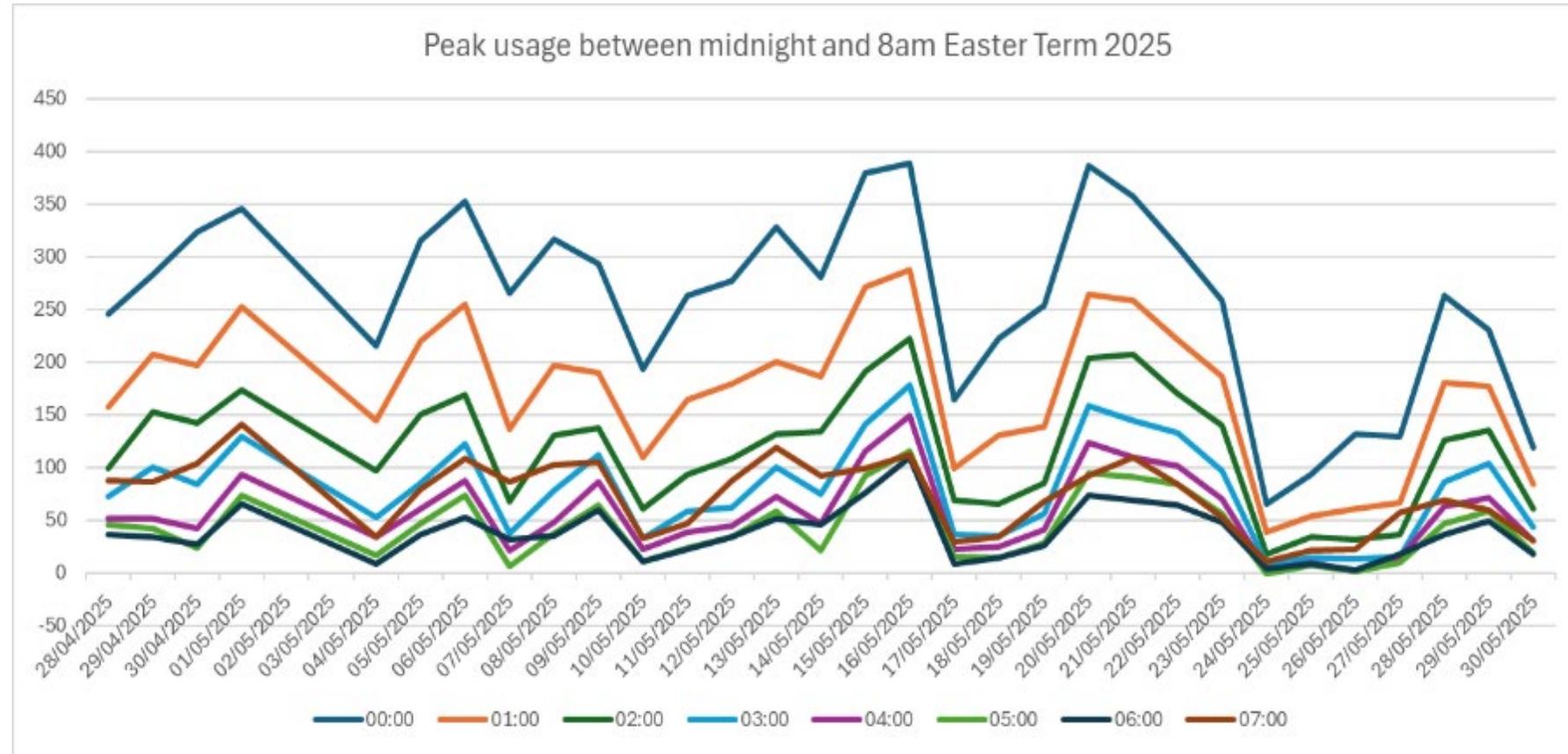
*"Modern"*

I love the library, it is so beautiful and the opening times are realistic. I then use the Bill Bryson Library at night from around 7-11.

I know 24hrs might be unrealistic with your budget but I really appreciate the Bill Bryson Library being open at this time.

*"From an anxiety point of view, the TLC is the best place for me. There are single cubicle toilets (as in, toilet and sink are in one room rather than a row of cubicles that you have to exit to get to sinks) and this stops me from getting stuck in a spiral because of some mental health issues I have."*

Using our  
usage data



# Reflections

- Consider who the messaging comes from eg University or Library
  - Involve University Marketing Communication team
  - Brief your own teams, including how they should respond, where to direct feedback
  - Be open and honest about the reasons for the change
  - Discuss the 'retreat line'
  - Give as much notice as you can!
- Consider terminology – consultation / understand impacts / discussion / feedback
  - What is the most meaningful way to engage with your students?
  - Provide a listening space / outlet
  - What data / information is genuinely useful?