



## **HUMEN University Mental Health Rankings Methodology Document – produced by Advance Pro Bono**

### 1.1. Context

- The last year has placed an unprecedented additional burden on the mental health of students at University. Lockdown restrictions, remote learning and uncertainty around exams, among other factors, have placed students in challenging situations. This has had a negative mental health impact for many and reduced access to in-person support services
- Recognising this crisis, the mental health charity HUMEN felt it was vital to take action. Therefore, we conducted a detailed assessment of the mental health landscape at universities, informed by expert interviews, a student survey and University-provided data
- To assess the status and success of mental health support at universities, five major categories were constructed based on multiple criteria as detailed below
- The criteria were determined through interviews with students and mental health experts. The first three were assessed through the survey, while the latter two were assessed through University provided data, obtained through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests
  - *1<sup>st</sup> category: Satisfaction* of students regarding:
    - Overall level of mental health support
    - Range of mental health services provided
    - University engagement in helping prevent and address mental health problems
    - The quality of mental health services
  - *2<sup>nd</sup> category: Engagement* of students
    - Proportion of students who would use a University mental health support service, if needed
    - Willingness to engage with mental health support services thanks to University communication
  - *3<sup>rd</sup> category: Awareness* of students
    - Proportion of students who know where to go to get support
    - Sentiment that the University has made students more aware of available mental health services

- 4<sup>th</sup> category: **Financing** of mental health services by the University
  - Mental health budget per student
  - Mental health spend as a % of total University expenditure
- 5<sup>th</sup> category: Level of mental health **provision** by the University
  - Proportion of University staff who have received mental health training from the University, specifically the Mental Health First Aid certificate
  - Number of students per designated mental health staff member
  - Average student wait time for counselling

## 1.2. Survey methodology

- The survey commenced in May 2021, with the majority of the survey sample collected after July 2021, through a partnership with Grape Data who assisted with sourcing respondents
  - A total of 7385 respondents have taken the survey, with 7209 responses analysed
  - A cut-off of 80 respondents per University was applied when deciding whether to include a University in the analysis, as a means of ensuring the statistical significance of the results
- To determine students' satisfaction, engagement and awareness of University mental health, the perspectives of students were captured by asking them about their agreement with certain statements which assessed these three categories
- The survey output was subsequently converted into a quantifiable score to allow comparison between different Universities. This was done by defining three metrics:
  - **Student agreement score:** Reflects the extent of agreement/disagreement of a respondent regarding a particular *statement* in the survey
  - **University agreement score:** Reflects the extent of agreement/disagreement regarding a particular *statement*, across all respondents within the same University
  - **University category score:** Reflects the extent of agreement/disagreement regarding a particular *criterion*, across all respondents belonging to the same University

### 1.2.1. Determination of the students' agreement scores

- First, statement agreement scores were converted to a numerical score out of 100 based on a linear scale as depicted below

Statement	Student agreement scores (out of 100)
“Strongly disagree”	0
“Mostly disagree”	17
“Somewhat disagree”	33
“Neither agree nor disagree”	50
“Somewhat agree”	67
“Mostly agree”	83
“Strongly agree”	100

### 1.2.2. Determination of the University statement and category scores

- To work out an overall score for a specific statement for a University, a weighted average of the answers of all students (of the same University) for that statement was taken
- Finally, to determine category scores, within each category, a straight average of the relevant statement scores was calculated

### 1.3. FOI methodology

- Universities were also assessed on mental health financing and provision based on the FOI data they provided
- A total of 80 FOI requests were submitted during July 2021 and data was gathered over a period of 4 months until the cut-off period of 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021
  - 70 out of 80 universities responded with information within the cut-off date
  - Public authorities are required to respond to FOI requests no later than 20 working days after they were made. The law itself says “a public authority must comply with section 1(1) promptly and in any event not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt.”
- An ‘ideal University’ was then devised through primary and secondary research, which was used to rank all universities against i.e., a theoretical University that would score 100 across all criteria. This was defined as follows:

Criterion	Description	Ideal University	Scale out of 100
Mental health budget per student (£)	Adequate requirement as set by Psychology Today is £50/student. We defined the ideal University to have 2x the minimum requirement	£100/student	A University receives a score out of 100 based on its budget e.g., £55 gets a score of 55
Mental health spend as a % of total University expenditure	Largest value in the dataset was 0.6%, so we defined the ideal University as having 1% of its total University expenditure go to mental health	1%	Defined scale is 0-1 so a University receives a score equal to its value times 100 e.g., 0.4% gets a score of 40
Proportion of University staff that have received training	Maximum number of trainable staff are all of the University staff so we defined the maximum to be 100%	100%	A University receives a score out of 100 directly based on its value e.g., 30% gets a score of 30
Number of students per designated mental health FTE	Minimum requirement set by British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy is 3000 students per FTE	<3000 students per FTE	A University below 3k gets 100. Universities above 3k get a score based on a linear scale between 0 and 1/3000 e.g., 6k would get a score of 50
Average student wait time for counselling	The shortest possible waiting time is 0 days, while the longest was defined as 100 days	0	A University receives a score equal to 100 minus its value e.g., 50 days of waiting time receives a score of 50

### 1.3.1. Missing values

- There were instances where universities did not provide data for certain requests. These broadly fell under two categories:
  - The University did not track the data for a specific criterion, or criteria
  - The University tracked the data but not in a format which could be analysed
    - For example, the University tracked the total number of staff trained but not across different training modules e.g., half-day awareness course, 2-day full mental health course etc
- If a University did not track the data, it was awarded a score of 0 for that specific criterion

- The rationale behind this was that we believe the data we requested forms the basis of necessary KPIs universities need to be tracking systematically to assess their offering
- Universities are therefore encouraged to focus on tracking the above metrics to further improve their ranking in the future
- If the University tracked the data but not in a format which could be analysed, an estimate of the missing value was calculated
  - The estimate was based on the University's performance across other criteria:
    - For each criterion where data existed, the University's position in terms of percentile was calculated e.g., 45% in the budget per student segment
    - The University's overall percentile rank across financing and service provision categories was then calculated using available figures e.g., 60% financing
    - The missing value was then estimated by looking at how many points a University would receive at that percentile rank in the missing criterion e.g., *60% percentile of the mental health spend as a percent of total University expenditure criterion*

#### 1.4. Overall methodology

- The overall ranking was calculated as a weighted sum of all the scores received for each criterion for each University. The criteria had the following weightings. These weightings were informed by discussions with students and mental health experts
  - Survey scores (60%)
    - Satisfaction: 30%
    - Engagement: 15%
    - Awareness: 15%
  - FOI scores (40%)
    - Financing: 20%
    - Service provision: 20%

#### 1.5. Closing remarks

- The aim of this project was to raise awareness across Universities on improvements that need to be achieved to ensure adequate mental health provision across Universities

- The ranking aims to have a dynamic character, allowing universities to improve year-on-year based on the set of metrics they are being assessed on every year
- Our ambition is that this study will motivate universities to begin tracking these metrics systematically, which will result in a positive impact through:
  - greater understanding of the level of mental health provision in a particular University and improvements needed to perform better
  - improvements in reporting and automation of the data gathering process to ensure lower lead times every year the study is conducted
- Universities are also encouraged to reach out to HUMEN if they want to delve deeper into the results and understand their rankings