

## **2012 occupational stress survey – the Peer Support and Managerial Support stressors in HE**

The Peer Support stressor measures the respondent's level of stress, or well-being, relating to their level of support, help and respect at work from colleagues.

The Managerial Support stressor measures the respondent's level of stress, or well-being, relating to their level of support, help and encouragement at work from their manager.

### **Headlines – Peer Support stressor results for higher education**

- The lowest level of well-being, or highest level of stress, on the Peer Support stressor – which relates to employees' level of support, help and respect at work from colleagues – at a UK HEI in the 2012 UCU occupational stress survey was 3.07, on a scale where 1=lowest well-being and 5=highest well-being.
- The highest level of well-being, or lowest level of stress, at a HEI was 3.67.
- The average level of well-being on the Peer Support stressor of UCU members in HE in the 2012 UCU occupational stress survey was 3.39, which was slightly lower than the average well-being score of UCU members in HE in 2008, of 3.40. So stress levels for UCU members in higher education relating to Peer Support have risen slightly in the last four years.
- The average level of well-being on the Peer Support stressor in the British working population, as measured by the Health and Safety Executive's 2008 study *Psychosocial Working Conditions in Britain*, was 3.88.
- In other words, UCU members at UK HEIs on average showed lower well-being – or higher stress – on the Peer Support stressor than the British working population as a whole.

### **Headlines – Managerial Support stressor results for higher education**

- The lowest level of well-being, or highest level of stress, on the Managerial Support stressor – which relates to employees' level of support, help and encouragement at work from their manager – at a UK HEI in the 2012 UCU occupational stress survey was 2.53, on a scale where 1=lowest well-being and 5=highest well-being.
- The highest level of well-being, or lowest level of stress, at a HEI was 3.32.
- The average level of well-being on the Managerial Support stressor of UCU members in HE in the 2012 UCU occupational stress survey was 2.91, which was slightly lower than the average well-being score of UCU members in HE in 2008, of 2.94. So stress levels for UCU members in higher education relating to Managerial Support have risen slightly in the last four years.

- The average level of well-being on the Managerial Support stressor in the British working population, as measured by the Health and Safety Executive's 2008 study *Psychosocial Working Conditions in Britain*, was 3.68.
- In other words, UCU members at UK HEIs on average showed lower well-being – or higher stress - on the Managerial Support stressor than the British working population as a whole.

## The data

The data in this survey (conducted 16 April – 4 May 2012) are based on responses by UCU members to the Health and Safety Executive's questionnaire, the Management Standards Indicator Tool. The MSIT seeks to measure the level of well-being of respondents at work on the basis of their response to statements in the questionnaire.

The MSIT contains 35 statements, which are grouped under seven 'stressors': Demands (for which there are eight statements in the MSIT), Control (6 MSIT statements), Managerial Support (5 MSIT statements), Peer Support (4 MSIT statements), Relationships (4 MSIT statements), Role (5 MSIT statements) and Change (3 MSIT statements). There are five potential responses to each statement, ranging from 'Never' through to 'Always', or from 'Strongly disagree' through to 'Strongly agree'. For example, responses to the statement, 'I can decide when to take a break', under the Control stressor, are given a numerical value, ranging from 1 for 'Never', through to 5 for 'Always'.

An individual respondent's overall score for each stressor is calculated, based on the mean average of that individual's responses to each of the statements under a particular stressor, ranging from 1, for lowest well-being, to 5, for highest well-being.

To protect respondents' anonymity and promote data quality, in reporting results from UCU's 2012 occupational stress survey, UCU has been guided by the methodology of the UK's Higher Education Statistics Agency, that:

- Percentages based on 52 or fewer individuals must be suppressed
- Averages based on 7 or fewer individuals must be suppressed

The stress survey data make use of percentages and average data. Percentages are given when reporting the responses to a single item in the questionnaire. For example, in the higher education sample, 17.6% of respondents to the statement 'Different groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine', relating to the Demands stressor, responded 'Always', 36.7% said 'Often', and so on.

In calculating the results for a given stressor, in this example the Demands stressor, a numerical value (for example, 1 for 'Never' through to 5 for 'Always', or vice-versa, and 1 for 'Strongly disagree' through to 5 for 'Strongly agree', or vice-versa) is given to each response by an individual – for example, a response of 'Never' to the statement 'Different groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine', relating to the Demands stressor, would be given a score of 5. The average of an individual's response scores to the questions relating to a particular stressor is then calculated. Then the average of the average responses for respondents from a particular college or university is calculated, to give the stressor value for all respondents from a particular college or university.

Although, in the HESA methodology, averages based on 7 or fewer individuals should be suppressed, in higher education, UCU has not published averages for a particular higher education institution (HEI) based on 52 or fewer individuals, in the interests of robust data. Where any individual's response to one or more of the survey questions relating to a stressor is missing, then the average stressor for that individual is not calculated.

## The Peer Support stressor – higher education

The Peer Support stressor measures the respondent's level of stress, or well-being, relating to support from their peers at work. This 'stressor' measures the respondent's level of stress, or well-being, relating to their level of support, help and respect at work from colleagues.

There was a total of 14,510 respondents to the UCU survey working in higher education who provided responses about peer support. Of those respondents in HE who provided information about their job, 76.3% were academics (including teaching-only, research-only and teaching-and-research) and 23.7% were academic-related (including managers, administrators, librarians and computer staff).

The HEIs are grouped by score as follows:

**Group A: UCU survey well-being highest 20 / stress level lowest 20**

**Group B: UCU survey average or above average well-being / average or below average stress level**

**Group C: Below UCU survey average well-being / above average stress level**

**Group D: UCU survey well-being lowest 20 / stress level highest 20**

Stressor score range: 1.00 = lowest well-being / highest stress, 5.00 = highest well-being / lowest stress.

Peer Support range, UCU 2012 survey: HEI highest score 3.67; lowest score 3.07. Peer Support: 2012 UCU HE respondents' mean average: 3.39; 2008 UCU HE respondents' mean average 3.40. Health and Safety Executive 2008 mean average for British working population <sup>1</sup>: 3.88.

The Top and/or Bottom 20 may include more than 20 HEIs where there is a tied position.

### Peer Support – the statements

- **If work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me.**
- **I get the help and support I need from colleagues.**
- **I receive the respect at work I deserve from colleagues.**
- **My colleagues are willing to listen to my work-related problems.**

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<sup>1</sup> HSE (2008) Psychosocial Working Conditions in Britain in 2008, pp 26-27. The 'not target' group.

<b>PEER SUPPORT STRESSOR – Higher Education</b>	
<b>No HEI scores for the Peer Support stressor out of a total of 95 HEIs were above the HSE 2008 average of 3.88.</b>	
UCU HE 2012 average = 3.392 (N=14,510)	
1.00 = lowest well-being (or highest stress), 5.00 = highest well-being (or lowest stress). Within each group, HEIs are ranked alphabetically.	
N = number of respondents. Averages are not shown where there were fewer than 53 respondents at a HEI.	
<b>Group A: UCU survey well-being highest 20 / stress level lowest 20 (Range of averages 3.482 to 3.669)</b>	
Birmingham City University	88
Brighton, The University of	100
Cumbria, University of	68
Edinburgh, The University of	279
Hertfordshire, University of	81
Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine	83
Institute of Education	69
Leicester, The University of	165
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	65
Northampton, The University of	81
Nottingham Trent University	205
Open University	367
Plymouth, The University of	152
Reading, The University of	116
Sheffield Hallam University	154
Strathclyde, The University of	164
Surrey, The University of	102
University of the West England, Bristol	118
York St John University	67
York, The University of	148
<b>Group B: UCU survey average or above average well-being / average or below average stress level (range of averages: 3.397 to 3.472)</b>	
Aberystwyth University	137
Anglia Ruskin University	75
Bristol, The University of	184
Canterbury Christ Church University	73
East Anglia, The University of	111
Keele, The University of	79
King's College London	168
Leeds, The University of	414
Manchester Metropolitan University	138
Manchester, The University of	461
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, The University of	246
Nottingham, The University of	216
Oxford Brookes University	67
Oxford, The University of	226

<b>PEER SUPPORT STRESSOR – Higher Education</b>	
<b>No HEI scores for the Peer Support stressor out of a total of 95 HEIs were above the HSE 2008 average of 3.88.</b>	
UCU HE 2012 average = 3.392 (N=14,510)	
1.00 = lowest well-being (or highest stress), 5.00 = highest well-being (or lowest stress). Within each group, HEIs are ranked alphabetically.	
N = number of respondents. Averages are not shown where there were fewer than 53 respondents at a HEI.	
	N
Portsmouth, The University of	109
Salford, The University of	189
Southampton, The University of	202
Sunderland, The University of	74
Sussex, The University of	174
Wolverhampton, The University of	131
<b>Group C: Below UCU survey average well-being / above average stress level (range of averages: 3.282 to 3.387)</b>	
Aberdeen, The University of	146
Aston University	54
Bath, The University of	88
Bournemouth University	93
Bradford, The University of	108
Cambridge, The University of	151
Cardiff University	170
Central Lancashire, The University of	140
City University	109
Cranfield University	88
De Montfort University	127
Dundee, The University of	119
Essex, The University of	101
Exeter, The University of	167
Glamorgan, University of	82
Goldsmiths College	59
Kent, The University of	185
Kingston University	83
Lancaster, The University of	140
Leeds Metropolitan University	148
Liverpool John Moores University	128
Liverpool, The University of	277
London School of Economics and Political Science	145
London South Bank University	96
Loughborough University	156
Northumbria at Newcastle, The University of	122
Queen Mary and Westfield College	140
Royal Holloway and Bedford New College	98
Sheffield, The University of	219
Staffordshire University	64

<b>PEER SUPPORT STRESSOR – Higher Education</b>	
<b>No HEI scores for the Peer Support stressor out of a total of 95 HEIs were above the HSE 2008 average of 3.88.</b>	
UCU HE 2012 average = 3.392 (N=14,510)	
1.00 = lowest well-being (or highest stress), 5.00 = highest well-being (or lowest stress). Within each group, HEIs are ranked alphabetically.	
N = number of respondents. Averages are not shown where there were fewer than 53 respondents at a HEI.	
	N
Stirling, The University of	87
Teesside, The University of	86
University College London	273
University of the Arts, London	101
Warwick, The University of	218
<b>Group D: UCU survey well-being lowest 20 / stress level highest 20 (range of averages: 3.071 to 3.271)</b>	
Bangor University	66
Birkbeck College	78
Birmingham, The University of	211
Brunel University	102
Coventry University	54
Derby, University of	83
Durham, University of	162
East London, The University of	90
Glasgow, The University of	226
Greenwich, The University of	88
Heriot-Watt University	85
Hull, The University of	90
Lincoln, The University of	65
London Metropolitan University	126
Queen's University of Belfast	239
School of Oriental and African Studies	53
St Andrews, The University of	77
Swansea University	116
Ulster, University of	170
Westminster, The University of	80

Source: UCU 2012 occupational stress survey



Data from the following HEIs were not used in this report because there were 52 or fewer respondents from them:

<b>HEI</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Glyndwr University	49
Huddersfield, The University of	49
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	49
Roehampton University	48
Bedfordshire, University of	47
Glasgow Caledonian University	47
Middlesex University	46
University for the Creative Arts	46
Buckinghamshire New University	45
Gloucestershire, University of	45
Bolton, The University of	44
Abertay Dundee, University of	43
Southampton Solent University	42
Chester, University of	41
Edge Hill University	41
Worcester, The University of	41
Leeds Trinity University College	37
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	37
Liverpool Hope University	36
University Campus Suffolk	32
Bath Spa University	29
Newman University College	26
University of London (Institutes and activities)	25
University of West London	25
Writtle College	25
University College Falmouth	24
Wales, Newport, The University of	24
Winchester, The University of	23
Harper Adams University College	21
Swansea Metropolitan University	20
Chichester, The University of	19
University College Birmingham	19
Robert Gordon University	18
University College Plymouth St Mark and St John	18
Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts	16
Wales (central functions), The University of	15
Arts University College at Bournemouth	13
Central School of Speech and Drama	13
Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln	12
St Mary's University College, Twickenham	12
Glasgow School of Art	10
Rose Bruford College	10
St George's Hospital Medical School	10
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance	10
Royal Veterinary College	9
Wales, Lampeter, The University of	9

St Mary's University College	8
UHI Millennium Institute	8
Royal College of Art	7
Norwich University College of the Arts	5
Ravensbourne	5
Courtauld Institute of Art	4
Heythrop College	4
Stranmillis University College	4
West of Scotland, The University of the	4
Royal Northern College of Music	3
School of Pharmacy	3
Edinburgh College of Art	2
Edinburgh Napier University	2
Leeds College of Music	2
Royal Academy of Music	2
Trinity University College	2
Buckingham, The University of	1
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama	1
Institute of Cancer Research	1
Royal College of Music	1

Source: UCU 2012 occupational stress survey

## The Managerial Support stressor – higher education

The Managerial Support stressor measures the respondent's level of stress, or well-being, relating to support from their manager at work. This 'stressor' measures the respondent's level of stress, or well-being, relating to their level of support, help and encouragement at work from their manager.

There was a total of 14,440 respondents to the UCU survey working in higher education who provided responses about managerial support. Of those respondents in HE who provided information about their job, 76.3% were academics (including teaching-only, research-only and teaching-and-research) and 23.7% were academic-related (including managers, administrators, librarians and computer staff).

The HEIs are grouped by score as follows:

**Group A: UCU survey well-being highest 20 / stress level lowest 20**

**Group B: UCU survey average or above average well-being / average or below average stress level**

**Group C: Below UCU survey average well-being / above average stress level**

**Group D: UCU survey well-being lowest 20 / stress level highest 20**

Stressor score range: 1.00 = lowest well-being / highest stress, 5.00 = highest well-being / lowest stress.

Managerial Support range, UCU 2012 survey: HEI highest score 3.32; lowest score 2.53. Managerial Support: 2012 UCU HE respondents' mean average: 2.91; 2008 UCU HE respondents' mean average 2.94. Health and Safety Executive 2008 mean average for British working population <sup>2</sup>: 3.68.

The Top and/or Bottom 20 may include more than 20 HEIs where there is a tied position.

### Managerial Support – the statements

- I am given supportive feedback on the work I do.
  - I can rely on my line manager to help me out with a work problem.
  - I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me at work.
  - I am supported through emotionally demanding work.
  - My line manager encourages me at work.
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<sup>2</sup> HSE (2008) Psychosocial Working Conditions in Britain in 2008, pp 26-27. The 'not target' group.

<b>MANAGERIAL SUPPORT STRESSOR – Higher Education</b>	
<b>No HEI scores for the Managerial Support stressor out of a total of 95 HEIs were above the HSE 2008 average of 3.68.</b>	
UCU HE 2012 average = 2.91 (N=14,440)	
1.00 = lowest well-being (or highest stress), 5.00 = highest well-being (or lowest stress). Within each group, HEIs are ranked alphabetically.	
N = number of respondents. Averages are not shown where there were fewer than 53 respondents at a HEI.	
<b>Group A: UCU survey well-being highest 20 / stress level lowest 20 (Range of averages 3.007 to 3.319)</b>	
Birmingham City University	87
Bristol, The University of	185
Cumbria, University of	67
Edinburgh, The University of	280
Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine	83
Institute of Education	68
Leeds, The University of	409
Leicester, The University of	166
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	64
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, The University of	247
Northampton, The University of	81
Open University	364
Oxford, The University of	225
Plymouth, The University of	148
Sheffield Hallam University	153
Sheffield, The University of	218
Strathclyde, The University of	163
Westminster, The University of	79
York St John University	65
York, The University of	148
<b>Group B: UCU survey average or above average well-being / average or below average stress level (range of averages: 2.915 to 3.006)</b>	
Aberdeen, The University of	150
Aberystwyth University	134
Aston University	53
Bath, The University of	87
Brighton, The University of	99
Cambridge, The University of	143
City University	108
Cranfield University	88
Durham, University of	162
East Anglia, The University of	110
Essex, The University of	98
Goldsmiths College	59
Heriot-Watt University	84
Keele, The University of	80

<b>MANAGERIAL SUPPORT STRESSOR – Higher Education</b>	
<b>No HEI scores for the Managerial Support stressor out of a total of 95 HEIs were above the HSE 2008 average of 3.68.</b>	
UCU HE 2012 average = 2.91 (N=14,440)	
1.00 = lowest well-being (or highest stress), 5.00 = highest well-being (or lowest stress). Within each group, HEIs are ranked alphabetically.	
N = number of respondents. Averages are not shown where there were fewer than 53 respondents at a HEI.	
	N
King's College London	167
Lancaster, The University of	141
Liverpool, The University of	274
London School of Economics and Political Science	141
Manchester, The University of	458
Northumbria at Newcastle, The University of	121
Nottingham, The University of	213
Oxford Brookes University	68
Portsmouth, The University of	110
Reading, The University of	116
Royal Holloway and Bedford New College	99
School of Oriental and African Studies	53
Southampton, The University of	193
Surrey, The University of	101
Sussex, The University of	174
University College London	273
Wolverhampton, The University of	130
<b>Group C: Below UCU survey average well-being / above average stress level (range of averages: 2.780 to 2.909)</b>	
Bangor University	66
Birkbeck College	78
Bournemouth University	93
Bradford, The University of	106
Canterbury Christ Church University	71
Cardiff University	172
De Montfort University	124
Dundee, The University of	120
Exeter, The University of	166
Glamorgan, University of	81
Hertfordshire, University of	82
Kent, The University of	184
Kingston University	85
Leeds Metropolitan University	144
Lincoln, The University of	64
Liverpool John Moores University	125
Loughborough University	157
Manchester Metropolitan University	141
Nottingham Trent University	206

<b>MANAGERIAL SUPPORT STRESSOR – Higher Education</b>	
<b>No HEI scores for the Managerial Support stressor out of a total of 95 HEIs were above the HSE 2008 average of 3.68.</b>	
UCU HE 2012 average = 2.91 (N=14,440)	
1.00 = lowest well-being (or highest stress), 5.00 = highest well-being (or lowest stress). Within each group, HEIs are ranked alphabetically.	
N = number of respondents. Averages are not shown where there were fewer than 53 respondents at a HEI.	
	N
Staffordshire University	63
Sunderland, The University of	75
Swansea University	116
University of the West England, Bristol	118
Warwick, The University of	220
<b>Group D: UCU survey well-being lowest 20 / stress level highest 20 (range of averages: 2.530 to 2.778)</b>	
Anglia Ruskin University	71
Birmingham, The University of	208
Brunel University	99
Central Lancashire, The University of	139
Coventry University	53
Derby, University of	82
East London, The University of	92
Glasgow, The University of	227
Greenwich, The University of	88
Hull, The University of	88
London Metropolitan University	125
London South Bank University	93
Queen Mary and Westfield College	141
Queen's University of Belfast	235
Salford, The University of	189
St Andrews, The University of	78
Stirling, The University of	85
Teesside, The University of	86
Ulster, University of	171
University of the Arts, London	100

Source: UCU 2012 occupational stress survey

Data from the following HEIs were not used in this report because there were 52 or fewer respondents from them:

<b>HEI</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Glyndwr University	49
Huddersfield, The University of	49
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	49
Roehampton University	48
Bedfordshire, University of	47
Glasgow Caledonian University	47
Middlesex University	46
University for the Creative Arts	46
Buckinghamshire New University	45
Gloucestershire, University of	44
Abertay Dundee, University of	43
Bolton, The University of	43
Edge Hill University	43
Southampton Solent University	43
Chester, University of	42
Worcester, The University of	41
Leeds Trinity University College	37
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	37
Liverpool Hope University	36
University Campus Suffolk	32
Bath Spa University	29
University of West London	28
Newman University College	26
University of London (Institutes and activities)	25
Writtle College	25
University College Falmouth	24
Wales, Newport, The University of	24
Winchester, The University of	23
Harper Adams University College	21
Swansea Metropolitan University	20
Robert Gordon University	19
University College Plymouth St Mark and St John	19
Chichester, The University of	18
University College Birmingham	18
Wales (central functions), The University of	16
Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts	15
Arts University College at Bournemouth	13
Central School of Speech and Drama	13
Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln	12
St Mary's University College, Twickenham	12
Glasgow School of Art	11
Rose Bruford College	10

<b>HEI</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
St George's Hospital Medical School	10
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance	10
Royal Veterinary College	9
St Mary's University College	9
UHI Millennium Institute	8
Wales, Lampeter, The University of	8
Royal College of Art	7
Norwich University College of the Arts	5
Ravensbourne	5
Courtauld Institute of Art	4
Heythrop College	4
Stranmillis University College	4
West of Scotland, The University of the	4
School of Pharmacy	3
Edinburgh College of Art	2
Edinburgh Napier University	2
Leeds College of Music	2
Royal Academy of Music	2
Royal Northern College of Music	2
Trinity University College	2
Buckingham, The University of	1
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama	1
Institute of Cancer Research	1
London Business School	1
Royal College of Music	1

Source: UCU 2012 occupational stress survey