

International Forum 29th October 2020

The SU held its first International Forum of 2020/21 on 29th October 2020. International Forums are a monthly engagement event advertised to all international and EU students as an opportunity to come together to share experiences and highlight concerns or issues for The SU to represent to the University or within The SU itself.

18 students attended the International Forum on 29th October 2020. The theme of the forum, as it was the first forum of the year, was open and an opportunity for international students to give feedback on what was working well and what they were concerned about at the time. Attendees were also asked about their plans for the Christmas vacation and for ideas for events and activities for students remaining in Bath over Christmas.

What is going well?

Most attendees who gave feedback talked about their learning and teaching experience commenting on courses going well (MSc Management and Biology specifically referenced). For a PGT students in attendance they appreciated the communications they had received from lecturers and highlighted that staff had taken the time to get to know them (ensuring that they know their names) and ask for their feedback.

One attendee had yet to travel to Bath to start their course in person so had been accessing everything online, they highlighted the virtual events which had been delivered by the Careers Service as helpful.

Attendees commented on Freshers' Week, commenting that it was clear that The SU and University had tried their best to make it as enjoyable as possible and that the events which had been run were good. Screening of films (David Attenborough was mentioned) and online workshops and webinars were highlighted as events which were enjoyed.

Concerns

An attendee was not sure what services were available for international students who were studying remotely and clarification was needed of what services could be accessed and how. All support services at this time can be accessed remotely and links were shared for the SU Advice and Support Service and University Student Services <https://www.thesubath.com/advice/>
<https://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/student-services/>

Another attendee was still in quarantine arriving in Bath from overseas, they were looking forwards to being able to explore campus soon and details of self guided tours and walks around campus were shared with attendees <https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/walks-on-campus/>

Feedback related to learning and teaching focused on expectations of lectures which attendees had expected to be in person but were only happening online. Attendees also found Moodle pages difficult to keep track of completed viewings and work due to the amount of material/resources/tasks and a suggestion of check boxes was made to help students tick off what they had completed.

One attendee asked how to join SU Societies, a link was posted in the chat to the memberships page to help students understand the new membership structure and how to join individual societies and

student groups <https://www.thesubath.com/groups/societies/newsocietiesmembership/> Another PGT attendee commented that due to in class teaching for PGTs taking place on Wednesday afternoons it was difficult for PGT students to join societies and sports clubs and were concerned that this would be the same all year.

When asked if attendees had any specific concerns related to Covid-19 one attendee commented that they found it hard to feel safe going into Bath city centre as no one was wearing masks when out and about in the city.

Christmas plans

Attendees were asked to vote using Menti on their current plans for the Christmas vacation period

7 intending on staying in Bath

1 intending to return home

4 Haven't made a decision yet

1 Something else (did not elaborate)

Ideas for University/SU activities over the Christmas vacation for those in Bath

Attendees were asked to post on Menti ideas for events and activities for students remaining in Bath over the Christmas vacation. Ideas suggested were:

- Socials with different cultural traditions to share a diverse Christmas
- Movie nights on campus
- Winter fair on campus
- Secret Santa (x2)
- Not sure what to expect but anything that encourages social interaction would be good
- Sight seeing
- Dinners
- Christmas lights everywhere
- Christmas party with Covid safe measures