

MENTAL HEALTH PRESSURE POINTS IN THE STUDENT JOURNEY

1

Applying to study

Options are shaped strongly by exam results, which may limit where students can apply.

Transition involves leaving established support networks, home, and familiar environments – sometimes for an entirely new place.

Preparation can be intensive, including financial planning, buying resources, researching part-time jobs, securing accommodation, organising travel and funding, and managing visa requirements for international students.



FRESHERS' FAIR



2

Year one

First-year pressures, with students more likely to experience mental-health difficulties during their initial year of study according to research.

Campus culture, including making new friends, the structures and policies in place, as well as navigating new systems, can feel overwhelming.

Continuity of support for existing mental-health conditions can be disrupted, requiring students to seek new services.

Accommodation logistics, including availability, bills, travel, accessibility, relationships, and safety, can be challenging.

Balancing responsibilities between studying, friendships, and part-time work can be difficult to navigate.

3

Breaks within the academic year

Juggling employment during breaks can be stressful, especially when balancing work, study, and time with family/friends.

Accommodation changes, such as leaving term-time housing and finding temporary places to stay/store belongings, can create pressure.

Readjustment to home life, changing friendships, and pauses in campus connections can be difficult.

Accessing support may change when returning home, and continuity of care between university and home GPs/services can be challenging.



4

Second/third year



Academic workload intensifies, often with more deadlines and exams.

Financial pressures increase due to accommodation costs, student debt, and study materials.

Support services often focus on first-years, leaving other students feeling less connected.

House moves outside of university accommodation can be stressful and feel isolating.

5

Exam and assessment times

Exam periods are identified as peak pressure points for students, with fears about failure and impact on future opportunities.

Working students may struggle to balance employment and studying.

Students with caring responsibilities may face additional pressures trying to juggle everything.

Students with additional needs may face added pressures if their needs are poorly understood or unmet.



CAREER ADVICE



6

Final year

Pressure to achieve good grades increases as students plan for their future.

Decisions about next steps and job opportunities can add to the emotional load.

Pressure to be 'successful' can intensify and impact wellbeing.

Creating CVs and competing for roles can feel overwhelming alongside final assessments.

Concerns about employability and whether their degree provides workplace-ready skills are common.

7

Graduation

Transition and change can be unsettling as familiar structures fade.

Graduation-associated costs can be an unexpected financial burden.

Readjusting after university can be emotionally challenging.



think+
positive about
student mental health