



2015 RIBA Student Finances Survey

The pilot Student Finances Survey was conducted by the RIBA Education Department in March 2011, and has been run every two years since then. The intentions of the studies are to track any changes in the financial situation of students as well as their opinions and attitudes to financial hardship.



Attitude to financial hardship

53% of the respondents to our survey described themselves as experiencing 'basic financial hardship' (69% in 2013; 67% in 2011). This is described in the following broad terms:

22% described it as having to budget carefully

- x There is a general consensus that applicants are not made aware of realistic costs prior to starting the course.
- x As in previous years, the amount available through student loans remains an issue – students still raise the point that a maintenance loan only just covers the costs of rent, leaving very little for bills, food, travel, and course-related costs.

21% describe it as being unable to afford extracurricular activities and 22% described it as being unable to afford entertainment

- x When asked if there were any aspects of student financial hardship which this survey did not cover, one respondent stated 'Social pressures and exclusion if unable to afford activities.' (Part 1, Year 1, London)
- x Some students also point to the lack of time as well as money available for



9% described it as being unable to afford essential course -related costs

x The issue of course costs were raised several times by respondents. It was felt that there was huge pressure to spend money on course materials/trips, and many students felt that additional funding should be available either through Universities or through Student Finance.

5% described it as struggling with everyday expenses and 3% as being unable to afford to eat W2st



Numerous students pointed to issues in the professional landscape of securing paid experience at Part 1 or 2 level and then to the salary expectations once qualified. Many of the students felt that they should be being paid more for their Stage 1 and Stage 2 experience. If a student is already struggling financially at Part 1, and is then unable to identify strong future career prospects, it may well result in increased drop-out rates



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- x We can provide guidance to students on the costs of studying architecture, on how to secure additional funding, and direct them to resources on how to budget accordingly.
 - x We can encourage good practice in schools of architecture specifically providing information on how the costs of field trips, materials and equipment impact financially on students.
 - x The Education Department will repeat this survey in 2017 and every two years thereafter to provide a statistical backing to ongoing research on the impact of the increased tuition fees and general student experience, and to help the ETFC to evaluate the impact of the grants and bursaries programme.

Currently the RIBA Student Hardship Funds are performing an important role, but without increased funding, the ability of this scheme to make a real difference to