

Press Release
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Rockwool Research on Students Reveals Surprising Results

Stereotype of noisy, hard-partying students crumbles when records show that only one noise complaint is made every 557 students.

Universities across the UK recorded just 3,522 noise complaints over the last academic year, against a UK student population of 1.96 million(1) students, 27 UK universities have no records of any noise related complaints at all. These findings follow Ucas figures showing 8% rise in student applications in recession.

Student towns beware: stereotyped views of students as noisy, louche living, party-loving neighbours could be under threat as new research(2), conducted by Rockwool (www.rockwool.co.uk), the world's leading manufacturer of non-combustible thermal and acoustic stone wool insulation, reveals that complaints about noisy undergraduates are running at around one for every 557 students.

The findings, based on analysis of Freedom of Information requests, has revealed that UK universities recorded just 3,522 complaints about noise caused by students in the 08-09 academic year, just one complaint per 557 students when averaged out across the UK's 1.96 million student population.

The Rockwool study follows Ucas figures(3) which showed an 8% increase in university applications in 2008 / 2009 and an increase in mature student applications across England and Wales of 17.9% and 19.7% respectively, widely interpreted as a reflection of student concerns about the availability of jobs in the current recession.

Hans Schreuder, Rockwool Managing Director, commented: "It appears the traditional stereotype of wild partying, hedonistic students creating noise and havoc in student towns up and down the UK is less accurate than perhaps it once was. Our research demonstrates that rather than keeping the town awake with noisy parties, students are just as likely to be quieter neighbours, and arguably may have more to fear from the noise generated by the rest of the town.

"While it may be unrealistic to regard today's students as bookish introverts, the reality is that recession and job worries are cited as a reason for the rise in student applications and current unemployment levels, particularly among young people, are likely to focus student's attention on working hard and gaining a good degree.

"However, if town residents are concerned about noise from student parties, they appear reluctant to complain to the university, something they should do if noise from students is bothering them as most universities will have a number of sanctions they can bring against students who fail to behave responsibly. Ultimately if student noise is a problem it should be reported to the local council, which can take action and even confiscate students' music systems or other noise-causing equipment.

"For householders who are disturbed by noisy neighbours (whether they are local residents or students), there are now also a number of ways to gain grants to improve home insulation. While the aim of this financial assistance is to cut carbon emissions and improve home energy efficiency, choosing the right product will also improve acoustic insulation in the home – so we encourage homeowners to look at the options available to them."

Details of the grants available can be obtained from the Energy Savings Trust:
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Rockwool's research revealed Loughborough University, Leicestershire, as recording the highest ratio of complaints to students in the UK, with an average of one noise complaint to every 42 students during the 2008 – 2009 academic year. Famed for its sporting prowess, Loughborough was voted one of the most popular universities in 2009's The National Student Survey, and it would appear the level of noise complaints has not hampered its 18,220 students' happiness, with the university recording a student satisfaction score of 85% – second only to Oxford – in the Times Good University Guide 2010.(4)

Surprisingly universities in big cities such as London, Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham, where you would expect noise disturbance to be as frequent as pound-a-pint nights, recorded a surprisingly low number of noise complaints, arguably because the noisier city environment makes it more difficult to isolate noise coming from student activities.

Universities with the highest noise complaints in 08/09 academic year

Rank (students per complaint)	University	Number of students	Noise complaint / student ratio	Total noise complaints	Times University Rank
1	Loughborough	18,220	42	436	17
2	Hertfordshire	23,725	45	529	66
3	Surrey	15,705	59	265	37
4	Northumbria	29,850	71	423	64
5	Anglia Ruskin	20,300	98	208	103
6	Greenwich	24,915	105	237	106
7	UWCN Newport	9,630	109	88	107
8	Stirling	8,940	128	70	48
9	Reading	14,680	155	95	31
10	Gloucestershire	8,745	182	48	68

(Source: Rockwool, 2009)

Schreuder concluded: "University chancellors should be aware that excess noise pollution can affect their university's reputation and there are pro-active steps they can take to reduce unwarranted noise. Installing loft, cavity wall and external insulation can significantly reduce nuisance noise coming from university properties while also cutting energy bills and fuel costs through better thermal insulation."

For more information visit www.rockwool.co.uk.

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Notes to editors:

(1)Figures from The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills:
news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7859034.stm



(2) Figures compiled from the 92 responses to the Freedom of Information Act requests issued to the UK's 114 universities (81% response rate) in August 2009.

(3) Ucas figures sourced from: news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/8014542.stm

(4) Figures sourced from The Times University Guide 2010:
www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/good_university_guide/

About Rockwool

Rockwool insulation is created from naturally occurring volcanic Diabase rock with the ore smelted and spun into fibres to create a wide range of insulation materials, ranging from loft insulation rolls to impact-resistant roofing boards. It is also bonded to produce high performance panels.

Rockwool provides a four-in-one insulation solution, providing high grade thermal insulation, noise insulation, non-combustibility and sustainability. This year alone, the insulation products produced by Rockwool will save more than 200 million tonnes of CO₂. Rockwool insulation is also completely recyclable and can be re-smelted and spun into new stonewool insulation products.

Rockwool was founded in 1937 in Denmark, its largest shareholder is The Rockwool Foundation.

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