

Reynolds Bar Refurbishment Project

Consultation results



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Introduction

In November 2015 it was announced that Imperial College Union had committed to invest in a substantial refurbishment of the Reynolds social space for the benefits of our members. We wanted to make sure that the end result reflected student needs and in particular provided an enhanced social space to all the ICSM student population. That's why we created an online survey with a set of questions designed to give us as much information as possible and allow students to influence how the project came together.

The ultimate aim is to to make the Reynolds Bar somewhere where students want to come and enjoy themselves any day or night of the week - to do this we asked for your help, calling on not just current users but all students to give us the best chance of completely transforming the space for the better. 430 students responded to at least 1 question and this report details our findings.

This report will analyse the responses, summarise the feedback given and draw some conclusions about the direction you think we should be going in. It will highlight key areas we believe we should invest in, and suggest the kind of style and design the survey responses back up. It is important to remember that we are not trying to present the final plans, but want to hear you response to our thoughts and 'action points' to make sure we are on the right track.

Foreword



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This survey has revealed in great depth the student opinion towards the bar space. Every student has had the opportunity to describe what this social space might look like and the issues we need to address to get there.

We are extremely fortunate to have such a fantastic facility and this investment will deliver its true potential.

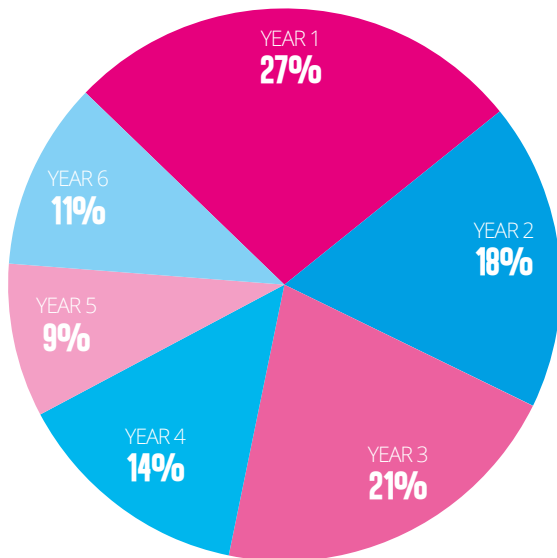
Thank you to everyone who has participated in this stage. It's vital we continue to hear your thoughts throughout so please continue giving your input into your new bar.

The Respondents

Who answered the survey

The vast majority of respondents were students currently studying Medicine. Overall, we received 290 responses from Medics and 29 from students studying in other faculties. More details about the respondents are below.

Year of Study



There was a wide spread from across all the year groups showing particularly strong engagement from especially 1st and 3rd year students.

Which Clubs, Societies and Projects are respondents involved in

Respondents had the option to choose as many groups as they wished.

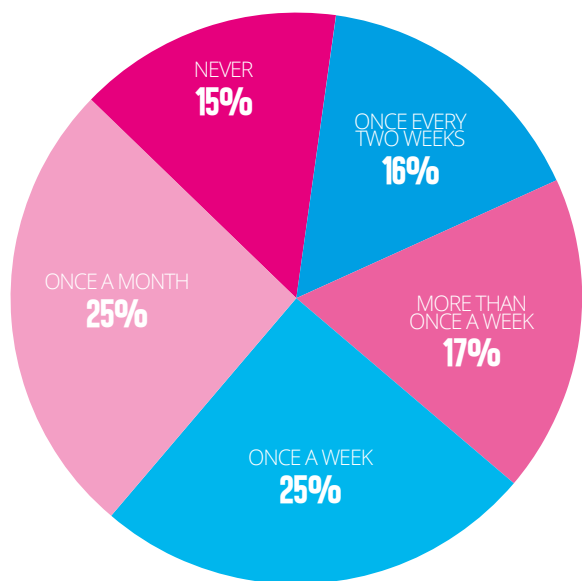
Activity	%
Sports	72%
Arts & Entertainment	26%
Charitable	22%
Cultural	13%
Departmental	16%
Faith	16%
Indoor	3%
Martial Arts	4%
Media	1%
Outdoor	10%
Social	26%
Academic Related	43%

A large proportion of respondents were members of sports clubs which is something we expected; however there is a fair spread of responses across all groups.

Students were then asked taking these images as stimuli; what kind of look would you prefer for the Reynolds Bar. The percentages below the preferences of the respondents.



How often did the respondents use the Reynolds Bar



Interestingly we saw another fairly even spread here. It's important to note that 15% of respondents had never been to the bar with 26% only currently visiting once a month. 25% were the most regular customers visiting at least once a week. The wide range of responses is important in ensuring that the project caters for the needs of current users as well as groups who we have traditionally struggled to attract.

Who do the respondents prominently use the bar with

Option	%
Friends for a 'non event' get together	26%
Sports Club Social	51%
Arts Club Social	7%
Society Social	15%
Bops	43%
Cocktail Night	5%
Other	19%

Again, respondents had the option to select as many as options as they wished. A high proportion of respondents currently use the space for Sports Nights (51%) and Bops (43%). This is a predictable response, considering the bars current and historic use; however the relatively high 26% of respondents who have indicated they use the bar for a 'non event' get together is positive; one of the key aims of the project is to create a better social space for non-event trade.

Their suggestions and feedback

Respondents were asked a number of questions designed to give us a strong steer on which direction we should go. Below we have drawn out what we think are key and representative suggestions and ideas from a selection of the questions asked; however not every response is listed. Please look to Appendix 1 for the list of further responses.

In your own words could you explain what you would like the Reynolds Bar to look like.

Example Responses

Nostalgic - “medical memorabilia etc but without the stickiness and feeling of a cheap airport cafe - get rid of the cheap plastic and the lime green”.

“A traditional pub with a sense of history and heritage - with booths”.

“More upmarket whilst keeping it student - Wood”

“Booths and furniture warm colours, comfortable seating with lots of ICSM memorabilia to make it feel homely for the medical school”

“Cool and modern, but in a kind of retro-chic way you know? Not like a cafeteria”

“Less airy and cold. It feels like a continuation of the hospital wards! I want it to be somewhere you could have a drink with a friend in the evening instead of going to a coffee shop or a little pub”.

“Warm friendly and comfortable, wooden tables and leather chairs”.

“Stylish / comfy / cosy / warm / a cross between a comfy cafe and bar for evenings”.

Taking the feedback from the question as a whole three key themes emerge:

1. More like a pub

The need to be less clinical; not like a canteen, less airy and cold, not like a macdonalds, less like a continuation of the hospital wards and rather be more cosy, like a little pub, comfortable, homely, warm, rustic with softer, decent lighting and warmer colours. 13 respondents directly indicated that space should be more like a pub

2. Focus on heritage

Its important we create a sense of history and heritage with as much medic memorabilia up on the walls to connect people to the space. We need to make sure the bar feels like the home of ICSM with many signatures as possible in what is essentially a medical themed bar.

3. Wooden style

The most repeated suggestion is that the bar should use a wooden style with 35 out of 138 respondents directly suggesting that wood is the way to go.

Another area which was highlighted was the need for the space to be flexible. A small number of responses indicated that it was important that the bar area could be used for different events like sports nights and bops, as well as casual drinking, social gatherings and for lunch time. It was highlighted that it was important to make provision for a space to dance in the evenings.

There were also two responses which indicated discontent with the bars current position and the motivation behind the project; suggesting that the bar will never be a nice place that people visit to grab a beer. It is important that we acknowledge these comments, however we believe that the refurbishment will be able to change the perception of the bar and help build casual trade. Some of the activities highlighted in these comments as the key desire for the bar would not be in line with the our organizations values or licensing legislation.

Conversely two responses indicated that the current problem with the bar is that it is too heavy drinking, exclusively for drinking and is not accommodating, open, clean and inviting for a casual gathering.

What kind of furniture do you think would be best for the Reynolds Bar?

Example Responses:

“Wood, booths, dark brown leather. Avoid white plastic and metal at all costs”

“More bar stools. some booths but not clogging up the dance floor bit. Tables, Chairs (comfy ones and wood looks a bit nicer than plastic for tables)”

“Anything but green”

“Need a mix of tables and chairs that can be easily rearranged for sports night and bops while also have a nice place to sit and have a drink.”

“Older, wooden, good quality furniture. oak, beech etc.”

The responses to this question built upon the three key areas highlighted above; suggesting that “wooden, good quality” furniture was the best way forward to create a more comfy and bar like environment, whilst maintaining the multiuse nature of the space. Some of the specific ideas highlighted are below:

Booths, wood and leather

The most popular suggestions for furniture were booths, which was mentioned 25 times, wood which was mentioned 22 times and leather or leather effect which was mentioned 10 times. It should also be noted that booths were positively mentioned 10 times in the previous question and leather suggested 5 further times.

Pub like and versatile

The general steer was again towards more pub like furniture, with bar stools and wooden tables of a variety of sizes. It was indicated nine times directly that the plastic look future was not appropriate in the space and that the furniture should be more like a pub which was mentioned 17 times.

It was indicated that a combination of different furniture would be desired with a mixture of normal bar style and more conferrable seating, easily moveable tables and chairs, sofas, stools and high chairs,, bays, more solid tables, seats at the bar and booths around the edge of the room. It was highlighted that large as well as smaller tables could be included. The idea that the space should be differentiated from the cafe as well as being ale to accommodate bigger events like sports night and casual drinking trade is a theme through the responses.

Easy to clean

It was also indicated a number of times that furniture should be easy to wipe down and easy to clean, particularly for events held in the space.



An image uploaded by a student of their favorite pub, showing the kind of furniture and style they prefer.

Favourite pubs, bars and venues

Respondents indicated a large number of favorite venues. Below are all that were mentioned more than once.

Venue	# of responses
Weatherspoons	20
Crabtree	15
The Slug	14
Be at One	14
Osp Hammersmith	13
Distillers	6
The Blue Boat	4
The Union Bar	4
Ministry of Sound	3
FiveSixEight	3
Southern Bell	3
Belushis	2
Mahiki	2
Peartree	2
h-bar	2
Sindercombe Social	2
Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese	2
Roxy	2

With the exception of Be at One which is a more modern cocktail bar, all of the top five venues fall in line with the three conclusions from the questions above in particular with regard to the more traditional, wooden, 'pub like' style. The biggest steer being that Weatherspoons is a favorite student haunt. It's also worth noting here that developing a cocktail offer, like Be at One, is another area of growth for the bar.

What is it about your favourite pub, bar or venue that attracts you to it?

Respondents indicated a large number of favorite venues. Below are all that were mentioned more than once.

Answer	%
The style	67%
The furniture	47%
The music/entertainment	43%
The lighting	26%
The staff	21%
The customer base	24%

Interestingly, 'style' and 'furniture' come out on top as the main reason that respondents like their favorite venue from the previous question. This demonstrates the importance of getting these aspects right in the Reynolds Bar refurbishment and is why we have focused on these throughout the report. It is also important to note that 'music/entertainment' came a close third and that investment in improvements to the bars music system is already underway.

Conclusions

It is clear that there are a substantial amount of students who take an active interest in the future development of the Reynolds Bar. The varied spread of responses across regular and less regular users which produced such a variety of comments, suggestions and ideas across multiple questions demonstrates the potential to really transform the space. Although through this process it would be disingenuous to suggest we will please all students, what is clear is that there are a number of areas of convergence which show us the direction the bar needs to go. These can be summarised in the following statements:

- 1.** A sense of history and heritage is vital to the success of the bar with additional memorabilia integrated into the refurbishment.
- 2.** There is a demand for a ICSM social space with a more traditional 'pub like' style and atmosphere which is an escape from the clinical 'hospital like' current design. Lighting will also play a key role in creating a more 'cosy', 'welcoming' and 'warm' space.
- 3.** The Reynolds Bar must be versatile and capable of sustaining a variety of different types of events from casual trade to sports nights, bops and live music.
- 4.** Wooden, good quality furniture as well as comfy areas, booths and high and low seating, are strongly favoured.

Moving forward

- ▲ Using the results from the initial survey as detailed in this report as well as discussions with ICSMSU representatives, students and other stakeholders we will now work with a contractor to come up with a design for the space.
- ▲ As we do this it is your opportunity to feedback your thoughts on this report and let us know anything else based on what we have suggested so far.
- ▲ It's your chance to let us know if we are going in the right direction so don't miss out on having your say!

How can you send feedback

- ▲ Send through any comments, suggestions or feedback on this report or the project in general to Carl Salton-Cox, Reynolds Bar Manager at c.salton-cox@imperial.ac.uk by 10 February. Using this information we will continue to develop some draft designs with our contractor.
- ▲ Once we have the draft designs, these will be published online and you'll have a final chance to directly effect the outcome - we will be asking really specific questions such as 'which colour scheme is best', 'what colour booths would you like' and 'what memorabilia matters most?'. You will be welcome to come and attend an open meeting with the bar management team to go through the designs and share final ideas.

The project will be officially signed off as of the 25 February when the final designs will be approved.

The work will then be carried out between 25 March and 9 May in time for a Relaunch Party on 13 May 2016.

We look forward to receiving your feedback and seeing you at the launch party in May!



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