



## More students stay home to study

**Debbie Andalo and agencies**

**Thursday March 9, 2006**

**Guardian Unlimited**

One-fifth of students at new universities choose to live at home while they study to avoid falling into debt, according to the results of a survey published today.

Researchers found that 18% of students at older universities were also making the same choice to continue to live with their parents while they study for a degree.

Although the decision to stay at home may save students' money, it means that 15% of them are spending up to four hours a day commuting to their university for lectures, the research revealed.

More than half of these students, 54%, juggle a part-time job alongside their studies, compared with 12% of students who live in university catered halls, it said.

Students who stay at home have a quieter social life than those living in university halls or in rented accommodation, the study found.

A third of students living at home spend two hours or less a day socialising compared to 20% of students in halls, the research discovered.

But most of the students who live at home socialise away from the university, with 65% of them admitting they do not spend their free time on campus.

Commenting on the survey results, Stuart Sanderson, associate dean at Bradford University school of management, said students are increasingly basing their choice of university according to preferred lifestyle.

He said: "There is a clear group of students who worry more about being saddled with a huge debt when they graduate, and have adapted the traditional university lifestyle."

These stay-at-home students he said "are missing out on the wider aspects of a university education, while better-off undergraduates can spread their wings and whoop it up a little with their peers".

The National Union of Students said it was worried that results of the research suggest that students might be choosing a university close to where their parents live in order to stay at home and avoid debt, rather than selecting a university according to their preferred course.

The union's vice-president for welfare, Veronica King, said: "For those students who do not have a stable home life, but feel they couldn't afford to go away, university might be out of the question altogether.

"We also know that these students are often unable to take part in extra-curricular activities offered by the students' union, such as volunteering and clubs and societies.

"How are these students going to learn the 'soft skills' that graduate recruiters were bemoaning only a few months ago when they are stuck on a train trying to get to their lecture?"

The University Lifestyle survey, published for the second year running, was based on the results of 2,000 students at 112 universities. It was carried out on behalf of the Times Higher Education Supplement and the catering company Sodexo.

EducationGuardian.co.uk © Guardian Newspapers Limited 2006