Pearson

Smarthinking™

Impact on Student Experience, Confidence and Progression

2019–2020

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Research Summary
and Context

About the resource

Smarthinking's on-demand, online tutor service provides students with **24/7 access to expert academic support with their written assignments** – whenever and wherever they need it. It is designed to complement existing academic support services within institutions, offering a **scalable** way for students to receive support off and on campus. Tutors provide detailed, **high-quality feedback** on students' written assignments, or CVs and cover letters, and are also available to answer subject-specific questions for a range of disciplines.

Key findings

- Students rated their experience with Smarthinking highly and on average we found that **9/10 would recommend it.**

- The overall user experience was positive:
    – **93%** rated the 'User experience' as 'good' or 'excellent'
    – **90%** rated 'Ease of navigation' as 'good' or 'excellent'
    – **94%** rated 'Accessibility' as 'good' or 'excellent'

- One institution was able to show Smarthinking impacted confidence giving a **rating of 3.7/5** for the statement **'I feel more confident in my academics writing as a result of using Smarthinking'**

- We observed usage of Smarthinking outside of typical office hours:
    – On average, **55%** of all students used the service between **5pm and 9am**.
    – On average, **17%** accessed the service **at the weekend**.
    – Students distributed their hours of use **relatively evenly over an entire 24-hour period** meaning peaks of usage could equally be at 3am or 3pm.

- Students rated the feedback they received highly, considering it to be:
    – fast
    – specific
    – meaningful
    – allowing for future improvement.

- When asked about improvements to their experience, students essentially wanted **more time, more specific subject advice and more types of feedback per submission.**

"This is such an amazing service and review!! Thank you so much for your help."

"Would have had it available throughout my whole university experience."

Introduction

This study is intended to provide insight into the use and impact of Smarthinking as it was employed across six anonymous UK Higher Education institutions at various times between September 2019 and May 2020. The findings are based on usage data, in-service and institutional surveys, and focus groups across those six institutions. However, a majority of the findings and qualitative data are derived from three of those institutions where the service was integrated to a more significant depth, referred to throughout at #1, #2 and #3 on charts and in the text are expanded as Institution #1 etc.

"It's a no-brainer as a student as you have nothing to lose. The service provides fast and helpful feedback"
– Student, UK

To provide some detail, students:

- studied across the UK, in the South and North of England, and Scotland
- studied one of a variety of modules in Psychology, Business, Nursing and Biological Sciences
- were provided with Smarthinking by their institutions who gave access codes to anywhere from 600 up to 3000 students
- were provided with access throughout the year at all levels – Foundation, Years 1, 2 and 3
- at one institution were 90% international (primarily Chinese) and others comprised a more typical mix of international and home.

Challenges and implementation

While the institutions had varied reasons for implementation, they broadly agreed that Smarthinking could augment their existing provision, offering students increased academic writing support at crucial times. It was expected to:

- support international students
- provide flexible access to academic writing support
- help students to gain confidence as they build academic writing skills
- have an overall positive impact on performance and experience.

At each institution, students could request support via two main Smarthinking services: *Work with a Tutor* and *Submit My Writing*. The institutions paid for a specific number of minutes access per student. Those minutes could be spread over more or fewer students.

The goals of the research were to:

1. Explore the impact Smarthinking had on students with specific regard to the above intended support outcomes.
2. Assess the impact it has on student experience.

Findings Part 1 – On-demand Support Available 24/7

Value

Students are increasingly balancing part-time work, caring responsibilities and/or commuting to university whatever age they are or personal responsibilities or backgrounds they may have. Students aged from 18–80 could be equally in need of support when it comes to editing, reworking and submitting assignments at appropriate levels of academic competence and content.

> *"It's a service that can benefit your assignments and sheds another perspective on the assignment in an unbiased view which you or your friends may not of thought of or have the knowledge to criticise in that way"*
> *– Student, UK*

Thinking about how or why students access and use a service like Smarthinking, we began by looking at why students perceived the service to be of value to them.

Themes which arose throughout our research included:

- speed of feedback
- support with the 'technical' aspects of writing
- timing / planning
- unbiased, impersonal critique.

Student Comments – what students valued and why:

As an older student and not studied for a while it really helped me get organised.

*It is **like a best friend** giving me pointers of where to go to next. I feel it has **improved my writing** as I have learnt and remembered tips from it. I really hope we can continue to be able to use this through my studies.*

*The **quick turnaround of feedback was amazing**,*

*The feedback related to the assignment but also pointed out minor grammatical errors that can be applied to all work. **Brilliant programme.***

Great way to get help when your tutors are not allowed to give it to you, which is usually just before a deadline.

I found it a very useful tool and it helped me build up my grade by 20% more than happy with the service.

'Smarthinking would be better if...' *I had more minutes on it and could use it for the next three years.*

One of the reasons students reported liking Smarthinking was that they considered it unbiased; a non-judgmental safe space in which to get their feedback. They also felt that feedback was quick and helpful.

In the charts below for Institution #1, you can see that **61.5% of students engaged overall** and in terms of the services they choose to engage with, there was a clear **preference for 'submit my writing' (94%)** which is an impersonal option. Students who did use the other services rated them highly, though the clear advantages of 'Submit my writing' are that it is quick, easy and non-contact.

#1 How many students accessed Smarthinking?

■ #1 Have you used the Smarthinking service? Yes
■ #1 Have you used the Smarthinking service? No
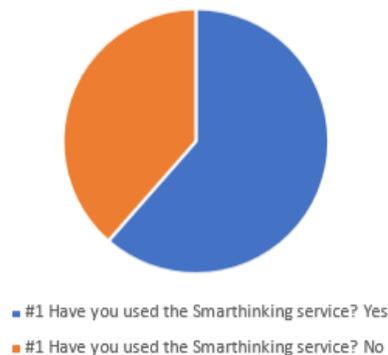
#1 Smarthinking services accessed

■ Submit my writing   ■ Work with a tutor   ■ Submit a question

It is clear from the chart above left that not all students chose to access Smarthinking, but this is not necessarily based on perceived value. Understanding the reasons why students did not use the service, however, was important to fully assessing its impact. Based on student feedback from all 6 institutions, there were five broad reasons for not using Smarthinking:

- Didn't know / forgot about the service.
- Left it too late to submit work.
- Didn't think it would be useful / misunderstanding relevance for everyone.
- Students sometimes felt that it wasn't advertised enough.
- Some others felt that the service simply wouldn't add value to them, and they would rather stick with existing support.

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Student Comments – non engagement:

*I **forgot** about it whilst in the stress of writing the essay and realised after that it would have been useful if I had remembered it existed.*

*Left it **too last minute** to post an essay as I would not get feedback from it until after I had to submit my assignment.*

*Because **I didn't think it would be useful** for me. If it's just for sentence structure … I get why the service might be useful for international students.*

*I **never really thought about it**. As I'm in final year it's a new tool and not something that comes to mind straight away.*

My only concern was that their feedback may have been slightly different to feedback I would receive from the uni itself. They didn't pick on some things I was marked down for by the uni marker.

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With this in mind, institutions might support user engagement further by:

- providing clear explanations of how the service is relevant to the module / year group
- sharing advocate feedback regarding any anxiety around making use of the resource
- integrating suggested revision alongside submission deadlines
- giving a clear timeline of when best to use the service in the lead up to assessments
- ensuring lecturer engagement.

![Pearson logo]

Usage

Level of use

Across all 6 institutions, there were 858 distinct users consuming over 1,100 hours of the service. On average, that was 1hr and 20 minutes of tutor feedback per student. This feels like a significant contribution to an individual student's sense of the support and contact time received as part of their course.

Naturally, this varied by institution. For Institution 6 we can see that 231 distinct users used 382 hours of the service – over 1 and a half hours each. At Institution 5 we can see that 319 users used 306 hours or just under 1 hour each.
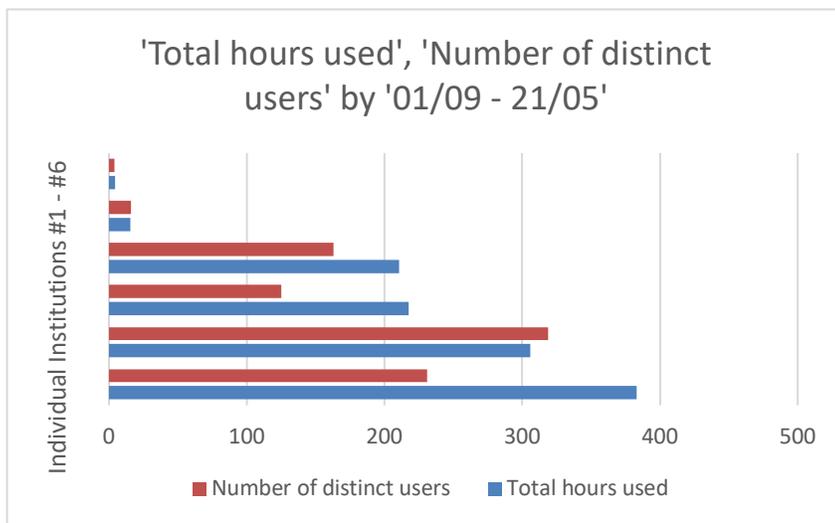
Time of use

We found that many students who accessed the service did so outside of the traditional 9am–5pm support hours; they were **using the support around the clock, both on campus and at home**.

Smarthinking is designed to support students at a time which suits and this flexibility is an important consideration for students who may also have their time assigned to part-time work, commuting or caring responsibilities. We see an increasing number of students who work. The 2020 Student Academic Experience Survey[1] found over the past few years a 6% increase in the proportion of students who spend any time in employment, and particularly those who spend 10+ hours a week working.

The charts on the next page clearly demonstrate that.

- On average, **55% of all students used the service between 5pm and 9am, outside of traditional campus support hours.**
- On average, **17% accessed the service at the weekend**.
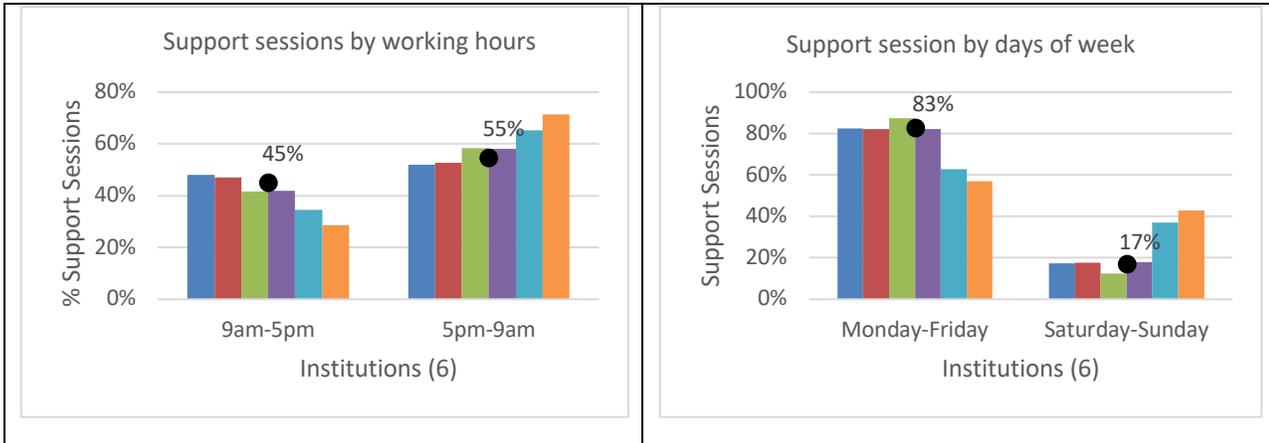
Each bar represents one institution using Smarthinking.

These usage patterns were fairly consistent across institutions, despite variations in:

- Integration of Smarthinking.
- Student demographics.
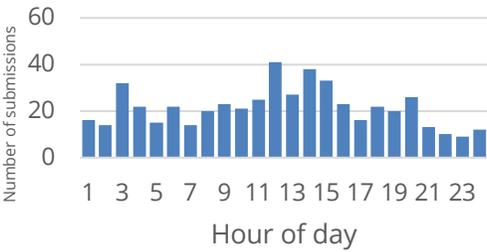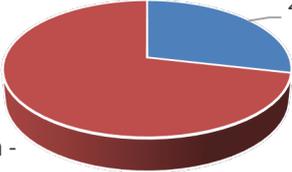- Course subject or level.

Distribution of use

From the data we saw that students distributed their hours of use relatively evenly over an entire 24-hour period. The following charts present the average distribution of usage across the 6 institutions and then Institution #1 as an individual example. At Institution #1, unexpectedly, this is representative of the peaks on average. It's no more uncommon for a student to be online at 3am as to be online at 11am.

We could speculate that this is because of lecture or study hours, working patterns or other responsibilities. The salient point here is that student behaviour clearly demonstrates a requirement to access the service flexibly, at any time. The reasons for this, be it because of lecture or study hours, working patterns or other responsibilities, is a secondary concern.
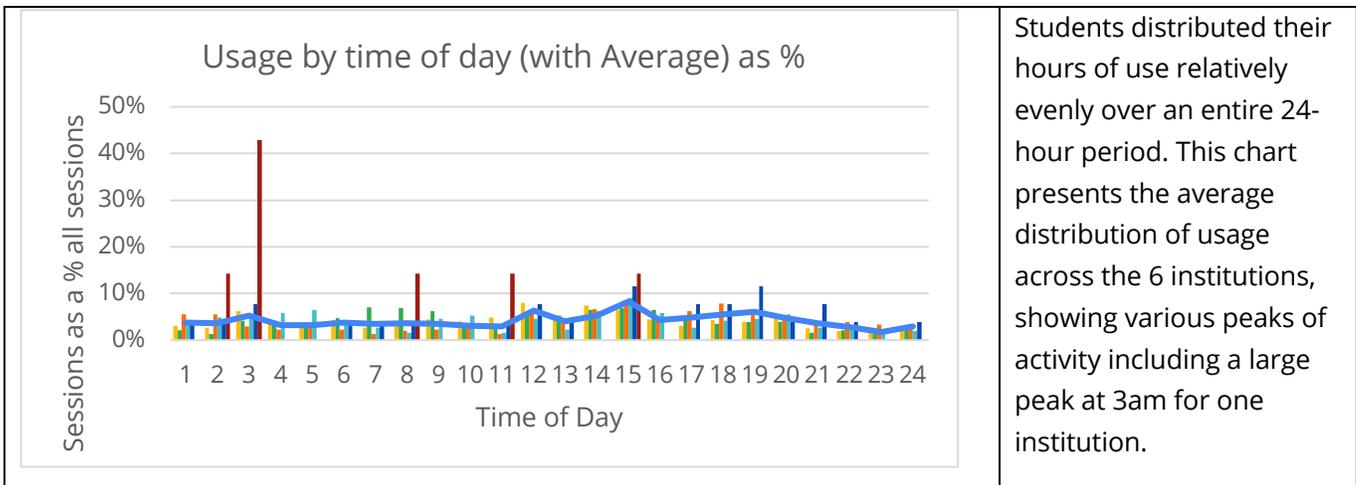
Students distributed their hours of use relatively evenly over an entire 24-hour period. This chart presents the average distribution of usage across the 6 institutions, showing various peaks of activity including a large peak at 3am for one institution.

	At Institution #1, 71% of students used the service between 5pm and 9am, with a notable peak in usage at 3am. The other peaks are at more 'traditional' times – midday, 2pm and 3pm.
#1 Use by hour of day / **#1 Use by time of day**	
#2 Student access by year of study	At Institution #2 Foundation and Year 2 students were more actively engaged with the resource and, while not generalisable, this of some interest.

A few students commented on their level of use and the benefit of 24/7 access.

> ## Student Comments – user experience:
>
> ***I used this tool as much as I possibly could***, *it's very helpful and easy to use.*
>
> *Quick feedback* ***easy access when not living on campus***.
>
> *It was easy to use and* ***accessible 24 hours*** *– including weekends – very convenient.*
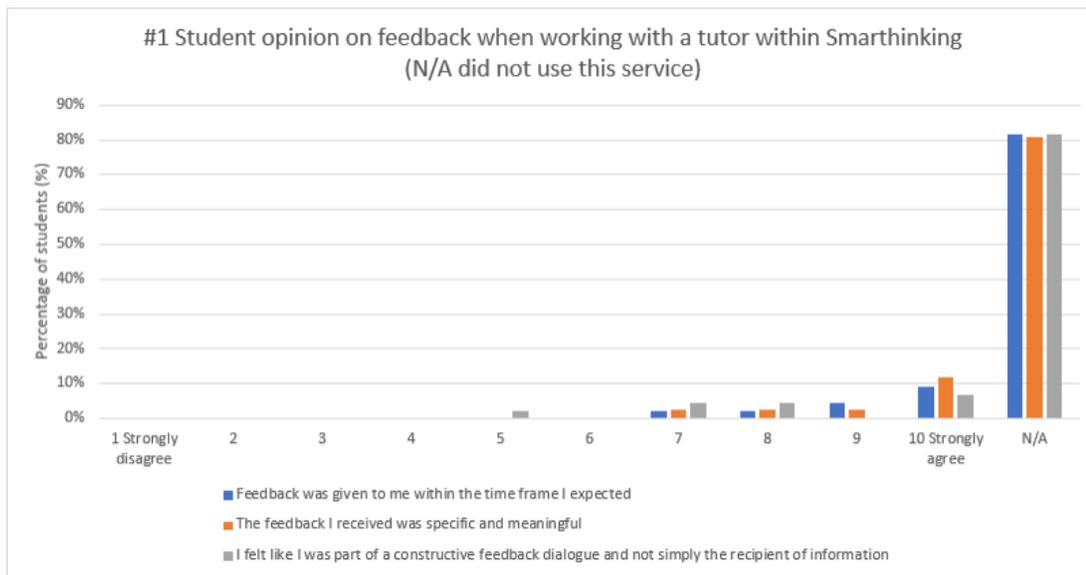
Complementing existing support

There are some students for whom existing on-campus services are either difficult to access (for example, due to time available) or they don't feel comfortable using them and prefer the anonymity of Smarthinking. Therefore, the service is a good complement to the great work that university teams already do.

The tutor service section of Smarthinking was rated very positively, although fewer students chose to use this more active and personal part of the service. At Institution #1, for example, a majority of students rated it as 9 or 10.

There were some interesting comparisons to existing support structures at institutions. One student in particular noted that it was helpful for those unable to be present on campus when support is being provided: *"very easy to use and really helped as a substitute for feedback if you are unable to attend a drop-in session."*

Institution #2 asked a specific question comparing Smarthinking to the availability of existing services:

- **I found the online support to be useful as it is difficult for me to get face to face support on campus at a convenient time – 3.5/5**

Students who used the service perceived the benefits as:

- a more specific, personal approach which explains what to do and what **not** to do
- access to additional experienced academic advice (90% of Smarthinking tutors are PhD level of qualification, not first-time essay writers.)
- offers additional perspectives which enhance feedback from lecturers or existing academic and study skills support services.

Student Comments – supplementing institutional support:

The uni had essay-writing skills, it tells you how to do it, but, for example, it doesn't tell you what not to do. Whereas with Smarthinking, you can send it and they can say, 'No, why are you going for an argument, an essay should not be this way.'

To have a good structure you have to have someone reading your essay, not telling you how to do it. So, I think that's what students need and that's what Smarthinking does.

I looked at the uni support on essay-writing... but I feel like those are very broad, general, kind of first-time-I-write-an-essay kind of thing.

Findings Part 2 – Feedback, Progress and Confidence

Impact on feedback and progress

The importance which students place on feedback has been well documented through the years. Students perceptions of value and experience on their university courses are closely connected to the provision of feedback on their formative work. According to the most recent Student Academic Experience Survey[1], workload and value are connected – **student perceive higher value alongside more summative or formative assignments.** When you consider that alongside the evidence that students are expecting faster and faster turnaround times in marking assignments of **1–2 weeks or even less**, the challenge for institutions is clear. While providing more assessments, can they keep pace with rising student expectations in terms of even faster feedback?

The Student Academic Experience Survey showed that *quality of feedback* was one of the areas which **increased** more than any other in terms of exceeding expectations of university life (from 2019 to 2020) – increasing from **29%** (2019) to **37%** (2020) of students stating it as a reason.

When reflecting on Smarthinking's performance in this area, students rated the *feedback* they received highly, considering it to be:

- fast
- specific
- meaningful
- **allowing for future improvement.**

For context, here are two examples of average timeframes and survey ratings which illustrate that the Smarthinking 24/7 service delivered far beyond student expectations of 'fast' feedback:

Institution #1

- Average essay return time: **21 hrs**
- Average wait for a drop-in session: **2.6 mins**
- The statement *'Feedback was given to me within the time frame I expected'* was rated **7.83/10**.

Institution #2

- Average essay return time: **6.1 hrs**
- Average wait for a drop-in session: **3.3 mins**
- The statement *'Feedback was given to me within the time frame I expected'* was rated **9.29/10**.

The majority of learners used the 'Submit my writing' service.

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Student Comments – overall usefulness:

*I have been using Smarthinking, and it been **exceptionally useful** for me, especially for grammar and sentence structure for the OL assignment.*

*I thought that Smarthinking was a really useful tool for double checking your grammar in all the assignments for this academic year and **wish I had the tool earlier**.*

*It's a useful tool for **proof-reading** assignments, especially those that are highly weighted.*

*It was a very helpful service and there is **no reason to not use the service** as it can only help improve your writing.*
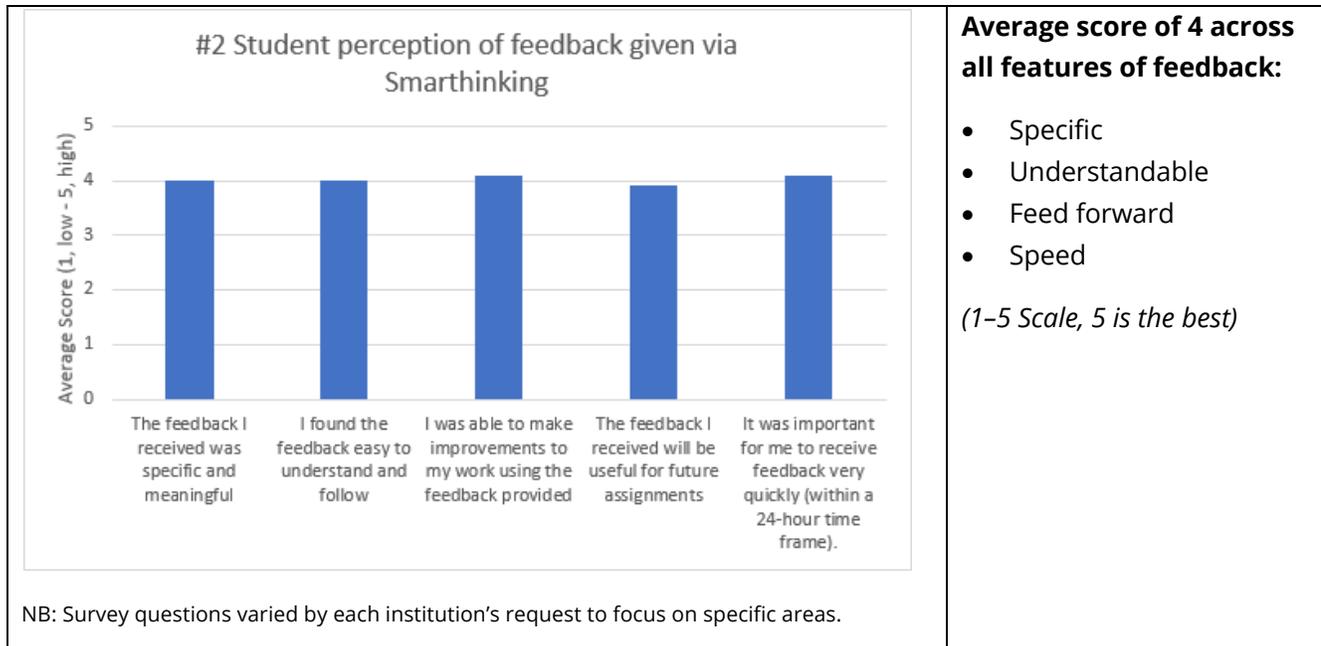
***Helped me get a 1:1**.*

*The feedback was **prompt**, and much more **thorough** than initially anticipated.*

*Thank you [Smarthinking Tutor], was really helpful and **focussed** on what I requested to look at.*

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The next three charts expand on the *feedback* scores at two institutions to demonstrate parity.

#2 Student perception of feedback given via Smarthinking

NB: Survey questions varied by each institution's request to focus on specific areas.

Average score of 4 across all features of feedback:

- Specific
- Understandable
- Feed forward
- Speed

(1–5 Scale, 5 is the best)

#1 Student perception of feedback given via the Smarthinking Writing Service
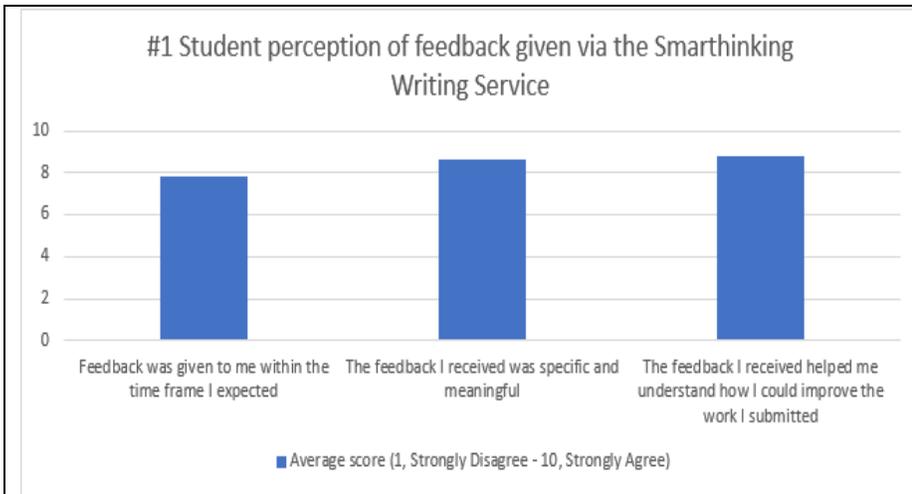
The majority of students felt like the writing feedback was specific and meaningful.

(8.61/10)

The majority of students felt like the feedback could help them understand how to improve their work.

(8.78/10)

Expanding on the findings from Institution #1, when using the Submit my Writing service students said:
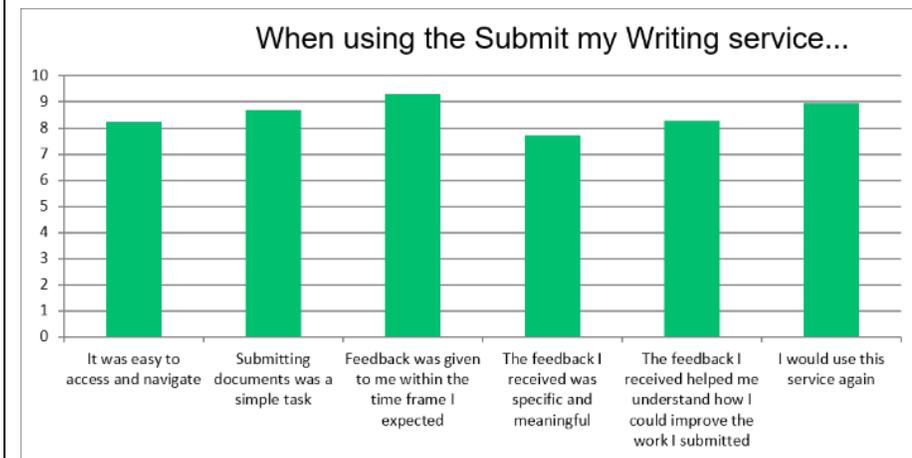

Easy to access and navigate. **(8.23/10)**

Submitting documents was simple. **(8.68/10)**

Feedback within expected time frame. **(9.29/10)**

Feedback was specific /meaningful. **(7.74/10)**

I would use this service again. **(8.94/10)**

The following student comments give greater depth to these findings:

> "

Student Comments – *Feedback helped learners to improve their essay structure or flow:*

*[Smarthinking] was very **constructive** and brought to my attention **things I overlooked** when writing. The feedback was **transferable** across to other units where I still bear it in mind. The support was timely, concise and well laid out to understand.*

*It helped me be more concise and **address the question more accurately**.*

*The feedback helped me to create a clearer structure and **brainstorm for more ideas** to include in my argument.*

*[Smarthinking tutor] gave me **really good advice** which **I can now use to improve my essay**. I definitely will be using in the future!*

*Very very very helpful!!!! Helped me with significant errors that would have made me lose a lot of marks so taught me a lot, especially concerning referencing (this was very **valuable as this is my first year referencing**) and grammar.*

*It was really helpful in making **improvements** to my current essay and the feedback will also **help me be more precise when I write future essays**.*

Impartial, fast feedback helped students improve their work *(Smarthinking aim for a 24-hour turnaround):*

*The tutor I was assigned gave a great **impartial perspective** and pointed out things I naturally overlooked.*

*I was very **impressed** by how quickly I got my paper back!*

Really helpful, the speed of response was amazing, ... a matter of hours!

*This tutor was super helpful and positive with **clear explanations** – just what I needed! Thank you so much.*

*It was really helpful to have **a second opinion** on my work – I particularly found it useful to check flow of sentences, intro and conclusions and relevance to the topic title.*

Helpful service that enabled me to improve my writing. It was very easy to use and they responded within 24 hours.

Feedback enabled and encouraged clear, effective planning:

*...all of the ones I submitted came back **way earlier than 24 hours**, so I had plenty of time to make all the changes.*

*...**the 24-hour thing also motivates you** to finish your essay before the same day, the morning of. ...you have to plan it in advance, and that will also help you in some indirect way.*

*I used the service when...I'd come up with a first draft that I was pretty happy with, about just under a week before it was due. And I didn't really know where I was going to go from there... **I knew it needed work but I didn't really know exactly where to start**.*

*I **really appreciated having this tool available to me in my final year** of university. It really helped finalise my work and ensure that it was to of a high standard. ...really helpful in completing my dissertation and assignments.*

"

Increasing student confidence

From our data we observe Smarthinking **influenced student confidence**.

Only Institution #2 asked a question with a score for confidence: it revealed that students *did* feel that using the service had boosted their confidence for the most part.

- ***I feel more confident in my academic writing skills as a result of using Smarthinking – 3.7/5***

Other comments directly or indirectly connect with building learner confidence:

> *"...very helpful especially for those with anxiety who aren't comfortable speaking one on one in drop ins!!!! please let us use this next term!"*

> *"It's so nice to have someone read your work before submitting it."*

The focus group students at another institution elaborated on this outcome and felt it built their confidence in various ways. One international student said they found it easier to communicate their need for more specific help on essay writing (rather than their English level) through Smarthinking.

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Student Comments – *The feedback itself provided confidence:*

*I feel this has **built some of my confidence** in my academic writing as it has taught me correction in my grammar that I was getting wrong throughout my essay and it also **encouraged me** to elaborate more in my writing.*

*Yes, it did [help build confidence]. I was provided with clear feedback on **what to improve and how**.*

*...the feedback helps in building **confidence in the work in progress** and helps in the structure of assignments*

Feeling reassured that someone else had checked their work and they're on the right lines:

*It made me more confident in myself. ... there is **someone that's not a marker**, that's only reading your essay about that topic, and doesn't have another 300 essays to compare it to, and [say] this structure is good, you should do this to improve.*

*...just the **second pair of eyes** having a look at something.*

...you feel either confident that you've done something right, or confident that you know what to do to make it better.

*I would say I mainly used it for **reassurance** on paragraph structures at the end of my assignment.*

Potential positive impact for international students:

*My parents do not speak English, and... **I don't have anyone** that could read my whole essay and go, 'it makes sense', or like, 'you're actually saying very disconnected things that do not make sense together'. For me, the most valuable thing, is to have someone else read it. ...whether the feedback is very thorough or very general.*

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# Findings Part 3 – Student Experience

User experience

Our research also considered the user experience of Smarthinking. Where institutions surveyed their students on this area, the majority rated their user experience as "excellent" or "good" overall, as they did for navigation and accessibility specifically.

Combined averages from the two charts below record that:

- **93%** rated the **'User experience'** as 'good' or 'excellent'
- **90%** rated **'Ease of navigation'** as 'good' or 'excellent'
- **94%** rated **'Accessibility'** as 'good' or 'excellent'

> *"Easy to use and no point in not trying it out, advice is definitely worth it"*
> *– Student, UK*
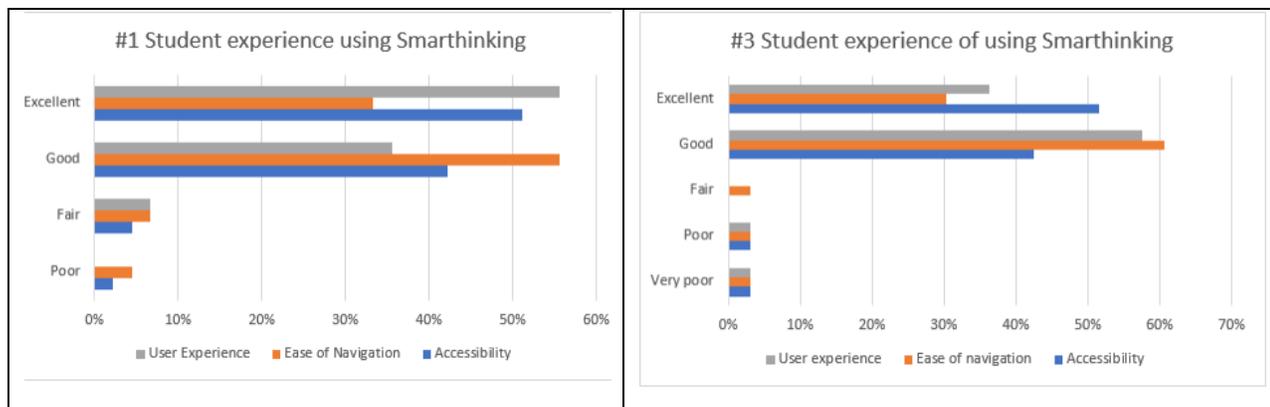
Institution #2 asked slightly different questions relating to user experience:

- **How would you rate Smarthinking in terms of accessibility and ease of access? – 4.3/5**
- **How would you rate your user experience with Smarthinking? – 4.25/5**

Other institutions did not specifically ask for these ratings. However, there were open comment boxes for students to complete and many referred to their experience:

Student Comments – *User experience overall:*

This is such an amazing service and review!! Thank you so much for your help.

*I was **really pleasantly surprised** with the experience, as it helped identify small issues with my work that were beneficial before I submitted pieces of work.*

Was quick, comprehensive, and ultimately helpful.

...the platform is really easy to use.

Technical, transferable skills:

*We change subjects every term, so maybe in developmental psychology they want them [the essays] a certain way, but then in something else they want them another way... So through Smarthinking I **can establish the basic essay-writing skills, so that I can improve**...before sending it, I'll have someone else read it, and if I'm writing something completely off, they'll say.*

Safe space / impartiality:

*It's nice to have someone who **cannot hurt your feelings**.*

*...**they've got no vested interested in how well I do** or any personal opinion on me that they don't want to upset me or whatever. They're just like, this is an essay, this is my opinion on it, do with it what you will, it doesn't matter to me either way.*

It was easy to access, and it helped me improve my weaknesses critically without bias.

What did students think would improve their experience?

Students felt they would benefit from improvements to the service or its implementation as follows:

- Subject specific advice e.g. veterinary science.
- Tutors to be able to access marking rubrics (the tutor service might have been more helpful in these cases).
- More time purchased per student.
- More choice of category under which to submit essays.

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Student Comments – improvements:

It is a good idea, the feedback I received was helpful, but for a general piece of writing (the feedback was not domain-specific).

*Perhaps having a **subject-specific** tutor.*

***More minutes** should be given as I would have quite liked to submit my essays a couple of times to get improvements and feedback but couldn't due to the lack of minutes.*

*...at first I was so **scared** to submit one because I was using one of the seven, eight, I don't know, or six, I don't know how many....So I was like, I'm using one of those, I need to be very conscious about it, I need to be 100% sure. But in the end, I used it. And I didn't use all of them, actually, because I was too scared.*

When you submit a piece of writing you can only choose two topic areas.

*I was **limited to 3 options** e.g. grammar, referencing etc, I wish that I could have selected all of them and they checked my essay as a whole.*

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Student recommendation

This section is devoted to whether students felt their experience with the service warranted a recommendation for Smarthinking. Of those students asked, it broadly did. The same questions were not asked at all universities; however, the chart below combines similar representative questions in order to present a more cohesive view of the level of student recommendation.

The subsequent qualitative comments demonstrate genuine student reactions beyond a survey result. There were no recorded instances in which a student said they would *not* recommend Smarthinking. There were many recommendations including *"Would have had it available throughout my whole university experience"* to the worst recommendation it received: *"the only thing I would recommend it for it is checking spelling and grammar"*.

All other comments below are from different institutional surveys which asked whether they would recommend the service to a friend.
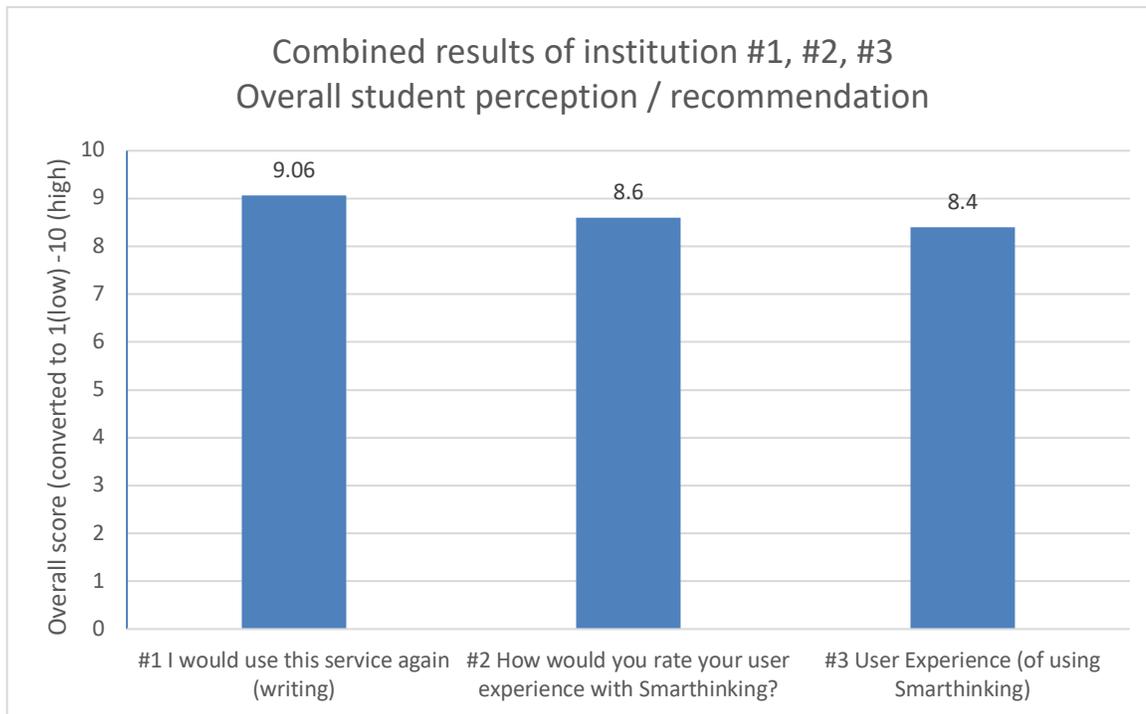
In addition to the above, analysis was done on behalf on Institution #1 midway through their academic year to understand whether their students would recommend Smarthinking. The results were very positive:

- *Considering your complete experience with Smarthinking, how likely would you be to recommend it to a friend on your course?* **9.09/10**
- That gives an **NPS score of 66** *('Good' on the verge of 'Excellent')*
- **In Service survey:** *Would you recommend to a friend?* **98%** said '*Yes*'

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Student Comments – recommendations:

- ***I think this is an excellent resource to invest in!***
- *I would definitely recommend using it as personally it was really helpful for **enhancing the quality** of my work. Also, it's always good to get a fresh pair of eyes so I think it would be helpful simply from a SPAG, sentence structure, and referencing perspective. Contrastingly, if you're really stuck on an assignment, there is guidance on idea generation so there is something for everyone.*
- *I hope the university will invest in this service as it is **extremely valuable** to students.*
- *I really hope the department continues to provide access to Smart Thinking.*
- ***Please continue doing this service in our 2nd and 3rd years** because it was extremely helpful. Thank you!*
- *I have **already recommended it** to my friends. I found the service extremely useful as I was able to get **detailed feedback** on my essay, which is something that you cannot get from your lecturers.*
- *It helped me improve my essay a lot and helped me **improve my writing skills** overall. I wouldn't (sic) definitely recommend smart thinking to a friend so it can help them.*
- ***I actually did recommend this service** to one of my housemates!*
- *I would continue to use Smarthinking as I do feel that it has helped me previously in my essays to improve the way I am writing.*
- ***I would use it again**. I feel like the more you progress through uni, the more your essays are worth. So for example, now, one of my essay exam things I need to submit is 100% of my module. So that one, I would submit it and if they send me feedback, **I will submit it again and again, because it's all or nothing, I'm putting all my efforts into that***.
- *Yes! I will use it to get feedback on my essays (as long as I have minutes left).*

Impact of remote learning on Smarthinking

We were able to explore how the current pandemic, and the move to remote learning, had impacted views on Smarthinking via a timely focus group at Institution #1. **For one (UK based) student, it didn't make a difference**:

> *"Knowing it's there probably hasn't made a whole lot of difference to me in that I never really went, in person, to talk to lecturers about essays anyway. So it's obviously been stressful having to do all lectures and things like that at home, where my entire family is downstairs making however much noise all the time. So that's the bit that's been stressful, but the rest of it, I just normally work on essays at home by myself anyway, so knowing it's there hasn't really made a difference to me, because for essays I'm just working in the way I normally would, just in a different house."*

However, for one international student, **the service value has increased**:

> *"...when I was in [university location], I could have my housemates reading a paragraph, reading something that I wrote, whereas now it's a bit odd if I just send them an email saying, hey, can you read this by any chance? I know you're very busy with your own exams but can you do this? So it's a bit... for me, that my parents cannot read my essays, it makes it less socially-awkward to have someone else read my essays, and it also makes it so that I am more confident when I submit it."*

And another international student said it **helped them feel more supported**:

> *"It helped me a lot! I plan to get feedback on my essays that I'm working on at the moment and it has helped me feeling more supported in my degree."*

Conclusion

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Students who used Smarthinking found it to be a flexible and accessible safe space in which to receive a professional, unbiased critique of their work, while others simply wished they had remembered it was there. Throughout, the data paints a positive picture, but with room for improvement when thinking about how to ensure engagement by integrating the service and publicising it to the student body.

Students rated their experience with Smarthinking highly and they would recommend it. They perceived the service to be valuable due to:

- The 24/7 availability of the service.
- Ease of access / simplicity.
- Speed and usefulness of feedback to support their progress.
- Specific but impartial advice.
- Helping to increase their confidence.

We observed usage of Smarthinking **outside of typical office hours**, meaning that it provides a **complementary service** to the support typically offered on campus by an institution.

When asked about improvements to their experience, students essentially wanted more time, more specific subject advice and more types of feedback per submission. This is a good indication that the service is already valuable to them – they simply want more of it, and perhaps to be reminded that it's available.

> *"This is such an amazing service and review!! Thank you so much for your help."*
>
> *"Would have had it available throughout my whole university experience."*
>
> *"I would definitely recommend using it as personally it was really helpful for enhancing the quality of my work."*
>
> *– Students, UK*

References

Student Academic Experience Survey 2020 by Advance HE and HEPI. Accessed: https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/The-Student-Academic-Experience-Survey-2020.pdf