

Aston Students' Union – A new building, a new future

The brief

Aston Students' Union will be moving to a new location in 2016/17. With a blank canvas in front of them, the Students' Union commissioned Alterline to conduct a piece of market research to help clarify the needs and expectations of current and future students, and gain insight from other students' unions that have been in a similar situation in the past.

The Project



We asked students to name a place the new building should aspire to be like. Aston University Library was the most popular choice.

Students felt the ground floor was an inviting and great space for socialising with friends.



Collaborative workshop

A collaborative workshop, bringing together key Union staff, University staff, sabbatical officers and students helped develop and refine the brief and subsequent research activity.

Open day interviews

Parents and prospective students were interviewed at a University open day to explore their perceptions of the Union and the impact it had on their view of the University.

CEO and senior managers' survey

We used our contacts in the students' union sector to survey chief executives and senior managers across the UK to investigate their views.

Student survey

A quantitative survey enabled us to capture the experiences, perceptions and expectations of students at Aston.

Student focus groups

Focus groups conducted with students explored attitudes and behaviours in more detail, unpicking key themes which emerged from the quantitative survey.

"We had loads of really positive feedback. Everyone felt the information was well presented, backed up by solid research/evidence, and provided clear guidance on what we need to incorporate in the designs. Thanks again to you and the rest of the team for all your great work!"

George Dowding
Marketing and Media Manager
Aston Students' Union



Results

Using our findings we generated a set of key recommendations which were presented to the Union, University and the new building design team. The recommendations are being used to create a new building that meets the students' needs.