

SERVING UP **RESILIENCE**



WINTER CONFERENCE 2026

SERVING UP
RESILIENCE
TUCO WINTER CONFERENCE 2026



The logo features a stylized hand in shades of red and pink, holding a purple fork and a yellow knife. The text 'SERVING UP' is in white, 'RESILIENCE' is in large white bold letters, and 'TUCO WINTER CONFERENCE 2026' is in smaller white letters below. TUCO logo includes 'The University Careers Organisation'.



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

MATTHEW MEALING & ANDY FLOWERS

**Strengthening Campus Experience:
Salford's In-House Catering
Comeback**

Strengthening Campus
Experience:

Salford's In-House Catering
Comeback



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INTRODUCTIONS



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Matthew Mealing
Associate Director Campus Experience
TUCO chair of joint North Region



Andy Flowers
Head of Food and Drink

UOS TIMELINE

Mar – Start business case for future of catering and investment
June – Decision on Subway outlet and retail provider awarded



Jun - Research into different models

Oct/Nov – Student/Staff surveys, 1:1 sessions with stakeholders

Dec – Business Case starts internal process

July – Business case presented

Aug – Soft launch of retail outlets

Sept – Launch of stacked in welcome period



2023

2024

2025

Jan – Business case approved at UoS council to bringing catering in house

Feb – Announcement to contractor and consultation with 52 staff

Mar – TUPE process and recruitment of Head of Food and Drink, Executive Head Chef, Finance team and

WHY THE CHANGE?



Bridges and barriers to incorporating food into built environment

- Senior leadership team interviewees recognised that food had not been part of their strategic thinking: “This is the first time I've talked about food” was a common theme.
- Poorly Managed Contract; although this has improved since Matt joined, it may be unsalvageable.
- The Campus Connectivity Plan does not currently address (or even mention) food;
- The campus-based geography was described by many interviewees as a barrier to effective catering delivery (fragmented, out-of-town, siloed).

Food wasn't considered in Salford's development plans, and that this was short-sighted.

Food can be used to bolster student experiences considered.

An equalities impact assessment would be a good way to review changes systematically.

Some thought that food subsidies should be a formalised part of the student offer to build a sense of place and encourage interaction.

Subsidising food, providing vouchers and restricting sales of products like bottled water all have an impact on any commercial model and will need careful consideration.

Bridges and barriers for meeting the needs of students

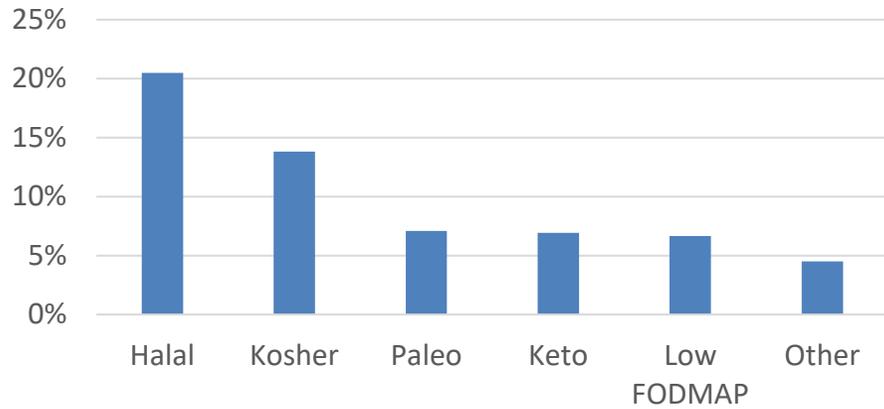
Bridges and barriers for catering, retail and vending

- **Cost**
- **Quality**
- **Range**
- **Availability**
- **Consistency**
- **Space**

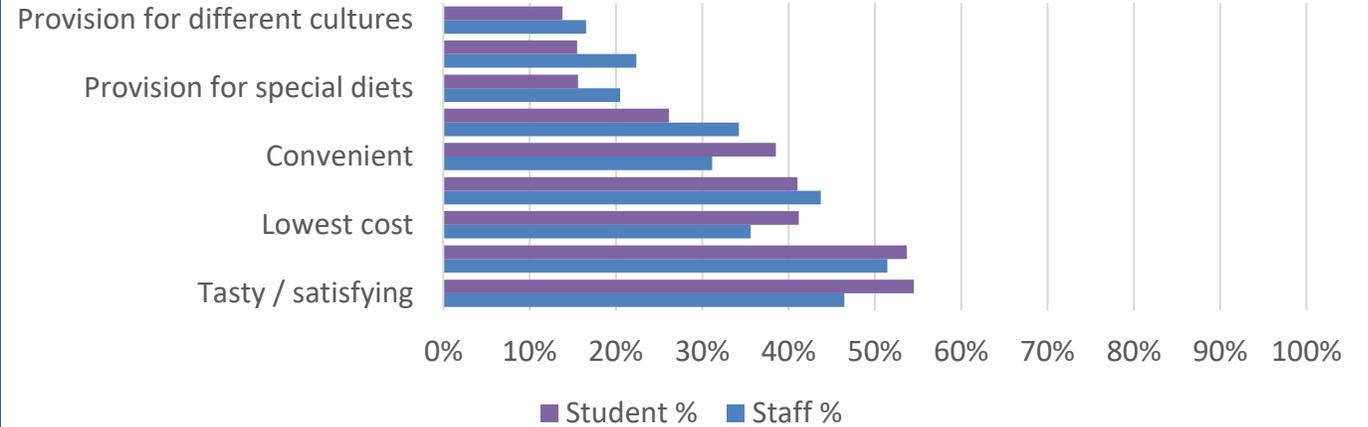
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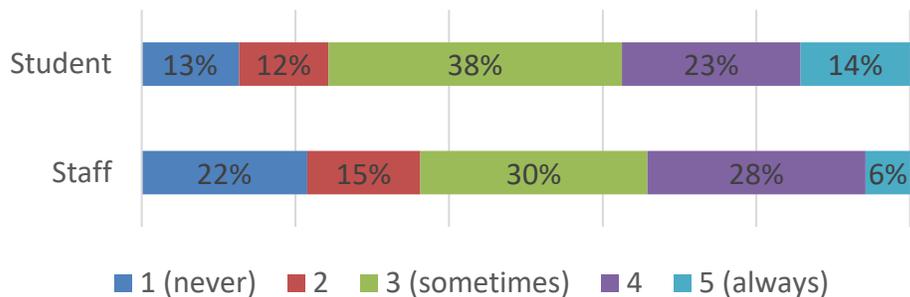
Percentage following a special diet



Purchase decision - most important issues



Respondents who worry they cannot afford a balanced diet

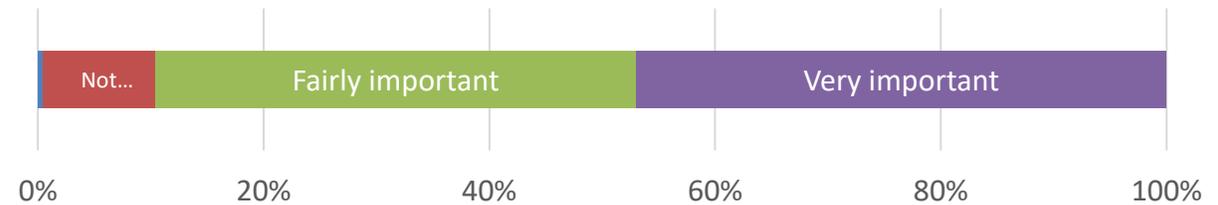


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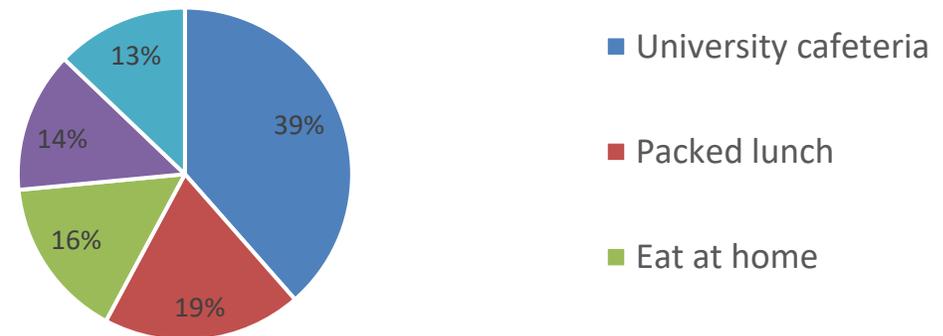


Prospective student open
day feedback

How important is the catering provision / food shops and cafés in choosing a university?



If you come to Salford, which of the following would usually do for lunch?



THE CHANGE?



- Salford had an opportunity to start with a blank sheet of paper and to define a new catering service that better meets the needs of students and staff.
- Expectations were high, particularly among staff, that food will improve dramatically.
- Stakeholders needed to have trust in those appointed to lead the food and beverage function to implement significant but necessary changes.
- The change will be rooted in feedback and best practice and will not take place overnight. The provision needs to be dynamic and responsive to change quickly based on need, without onerous sign-offs and approvals to go through.
- Expectations are high that a renewed food offer can enable aspirations for students visiting campus more often and staying for longer.
- Food and beverage needs to be considered early, consistently and at a strategic level if it is to form part of transformative change.
- Establishing a governance mechanism (we've called it a 'strategic food forum') that is representative of the students and staff and empowered to make decisions. This board should be used to inform the future catering delivery and to hold whichever organisation(s) that provide it to account.
- Building a continuous improvement culture by regularly reviewing, planning, developing and monitoring the performance of the hospitality and catering services across campus.
- Agreeing with stakeholders a vision and set of values for the delivery of hospitality and catering and using these to evaluate future plans and approaches.
- Incorporating the 'voice' of catering at the most senior decision-making and strategy-setting forums at Salford, to ensure it is considered as part of the future evolution of the Salford campus.
- Incorporate food into other services, especially those enabled by tech; consider developing an 'everything app' for Salford that could support ordering and paying for food, gym membership, wayfinding, library, academic timetables etc



Food and Drink is at the heart of everything Salford offers. It addresses the cultural, social and wellbeing needs of all students, staff, and visitors. The way it is sourced and delivered is fair, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable.

The provision of sustainable, vibrant, and high-quality food and drink services aligned to customers and shareholders needs that deliver's value for money.

- **Value**
- **Quality**
- **Range**
- **Ethical**
- **Responsive**
- **Accountable**

TUCO AND UOS



Advice and support
Partnership
Collaboration



Data and insights
Shared ideas
Networking



Tenders

- 11 in 2024
- 2 in 2025



- Level 2 Food Safety
- Level 3 Food Safety
- Level 2 Allergens



- Study tour - Chicago



TUCO Online

- Reporting
- Allergen information
- Digital Menus



- Managers essential course
- Finance for nonfinancial managers

OUR SUCCESS SO FAR



- Returned catering to the agenda at Salford
- Worked closely with the Sustainable team to write a Sustainable Food Policy that included initiatives such as the removal of plastic bottles from food outlets on Campus and gaining an accreditation - achieved a 2 Star Rating for the Sustainable Restaurant Award.
- Implementation of a digital food safety management system which contributed to the award of a 5-star Food Safety Rating across Campus by EHO.
- Opening of Stacked
- Increased the amount of Halal products on campus and restored student confidence.



OUR SUCCESS SO FAR



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- Re-wrote menus for hospitality and food outlets, moving to a six-day cycle.
- Digital signage installation across Campus that allows for menus & marketing alongside additions such as My Emissions.
- Engaged with and procured local suppliers Dunsters, Direct Seafood, Salford Roasters
- Launched Brotherton Beans
- Increased feedback, responses and positive comments – Health School, Student Recruitment, Hospitality.
- Increased engagement with internal and external stakeholders through give aways & sampling on campus.



OUR FUTURE



University of
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2026:

- Rebranding of every unit
- £1m investment into a Central Production Unit
- Move Stacked to a larger unit in the centre of campus
- Students Union to operate an outlet
- Two external vendors operating counters in outlets
- Launch of the Eat & Drink app

2027:

- Opening of Health Building Café and teaching kitchen
- Opening of professional services building and cafe

