What do prospective applicants expect from your events?

HELOA National Conference

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About Us

The Student Room

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Our Mission

Imagine a world where every student discovers, and reaches, their potential.

At The Student Room, that's our vision.

We're the UK's largest online student community, a friendly place where everyone can discuss and discover together.

Big Autumn Term survey

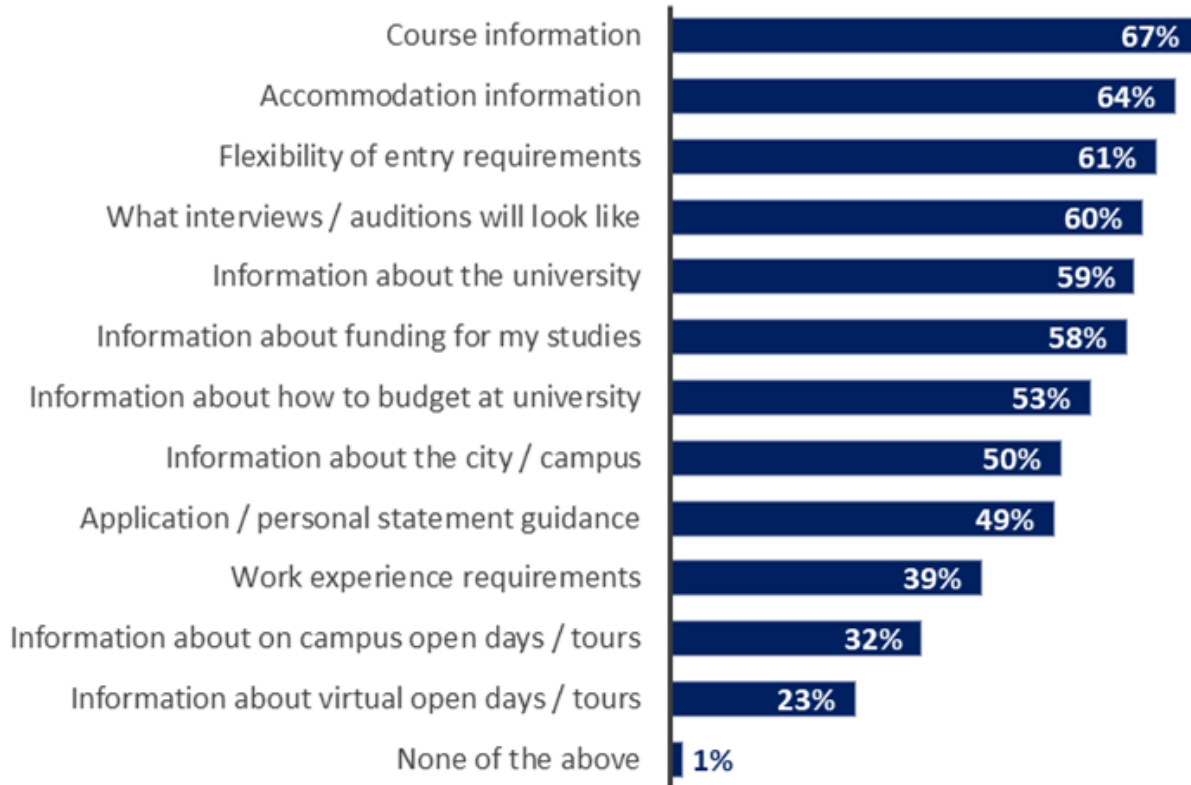- Fieldwork October/November 2022

- Focus on 2023 entry prospective UGs

TSR Asks Monthly Omnibus survey

- December 2022

- 2023 and 2024 entry prospective UGs

Which of the following are important when choosing universities to apply to?

70%   Course Content

62%   University Atmosphere

61%   Student Satisfaction

58%   Accommodation Offered

53%   Achievable Entry Requirements

Q: Which of the following are important to you when choosing universities to apply to? Multiple choice (Base 403)

The Details That Matter

Course information — 67%
Accommodation information — 64%
Flexibility of entry requirements — 61%
What interviews / auditions will look like — 60%
Information about the university — 59%
Information about funding for my studies — 58%
Information about how to budget at university — 53%
Information about the city / campus — 50%
Application / personal statement guidance — 49%
Work experience requirements — 39%
Information about on campus open days / tours — 32%
Information about virtual open days / tours — 23%
None of the above — 1%

Q: What information do you want from universities now? (Multiple choice) (Base 402)

The Potential Barriers

67%   The cost of living while at university

54%   Making the right university choice for me

46%   Not being able to keep up with the workload

44%   My future employability

44%   Repaying my student loan

Q: Do you have any reservations about applying/going to university? (Multiple choice) (Base 394)

How will the Cost of Living impact recruitment?

47% more likely to change their university plans

12% said their parents wanted them to defer

43% worried about whether they can afford uni

58% wanted information about scholarships and bursaries

What help do applicants need?

72%   **Include course essentials (uniforms, equipment etc) in tuition fees**

70%   **Be upfront about any additional course costs (software, trips etc)**

69%   **Help them find part time jobs or paid opportunities at university**

68%   **Be upfront about other costs (utilities, societies etc)**

65%   **Provide budgeting and cost-cutting information**

Q: Do you have any reservations about applying/going to university? (Multiple choice) (Base 394)

Open Days

So what is stopping prospective students from going to on-campus open days?

Money

Time

Distance

The universities I am interested in are all outside of the city I live in, and thus it would be too expensive to travel all the way to an open day

I'm broke man

No time to, I've seen the cities I'm applying to already

Most of the university's doing my course are far (over 4 hours away) and I don't think visiting all of the options is necessary until I have chosen 5 which I will then visit to pick 1

I'm busy and I don't have transport

The universities are too far and I don't think my parents have the time to take me to see them or have the funds to buy public transport tickets for me to go too

Q: Please tell us why you aren't planning to attend an on campus open day? Open comment (Base: 40)

Most had already visited a virtual or on campus open day

Which have you attended so far?

A Virtual Open Day	35%
An On Campus Open Day	76%
None of the above	16%
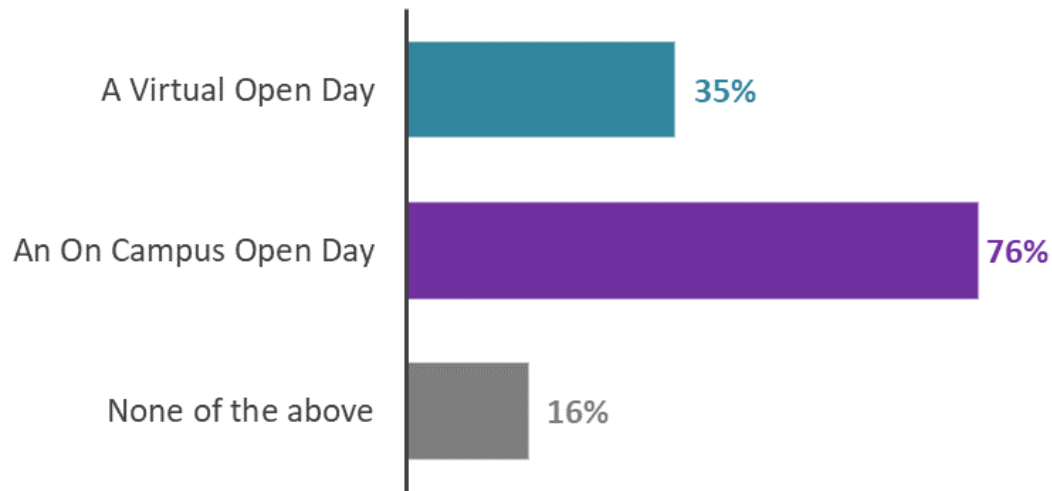
Of those who attended
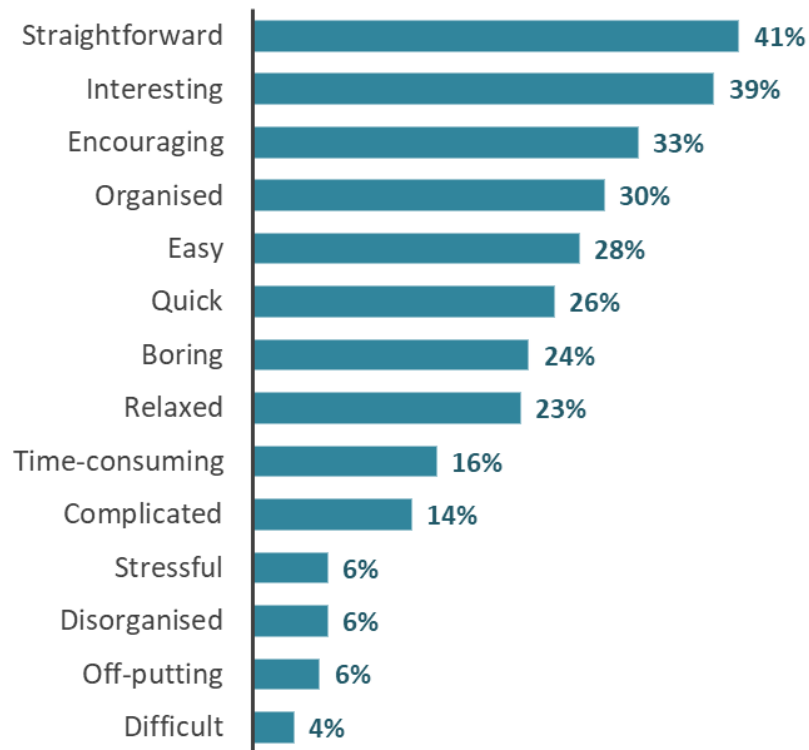
90% found the **virtual open day useful**

98% found the **on campus open day useful**

Q: Have you visited any of the following so far? Multiple response (Base: 392)
Q: Were the Virtual / Online Open Days(s) you have attended useful? Single response (Base: 140)
Q: Were the On Campus, in person Open Day(s) you attended useful? Single response (Base: 292)

Virtual Open Days

Description	Percentage
Straightforward	41%
Interesting	39%
Encouraging	33%
Organised	30%
Easy	28%
Quick	26%
Boring	24%
Relaxed	23%
Time-consuming	16%
Complicated	14%
Stressful	6%
Disorganised	6%
Off-putting	6%
Difficult	4%

Virtual Open Days were most often described as

- **Straightforward (41%)**
- **Interesting (39%)**
- **Encouraging (33%)**

Q: Which of the following words, if any, would you use to describe your experiences of attending virtual open day(s) so far? Multiple response (Base: 140)
Q: Which of the following words, if any, would you use to describe your experiences of attending On Campus Open Day(s) so far? Multiple response (Base: 294)

The most important thing I want to find out at virtual open days is …

Course information - more than half of all comments

Then

- Information about the university
- Application process/entry reqs
- Hearing from current students
- Accommodation info

*What the university has to offer, what the course i am applying for consists of*

What students think

The entry requirements and course content

Opportunities while at university and application process info

What the campus is like, and accommodation- everything else can be found on a website. The only reason I'd do virtual is because I can't access an irl open day so I need to irl experience
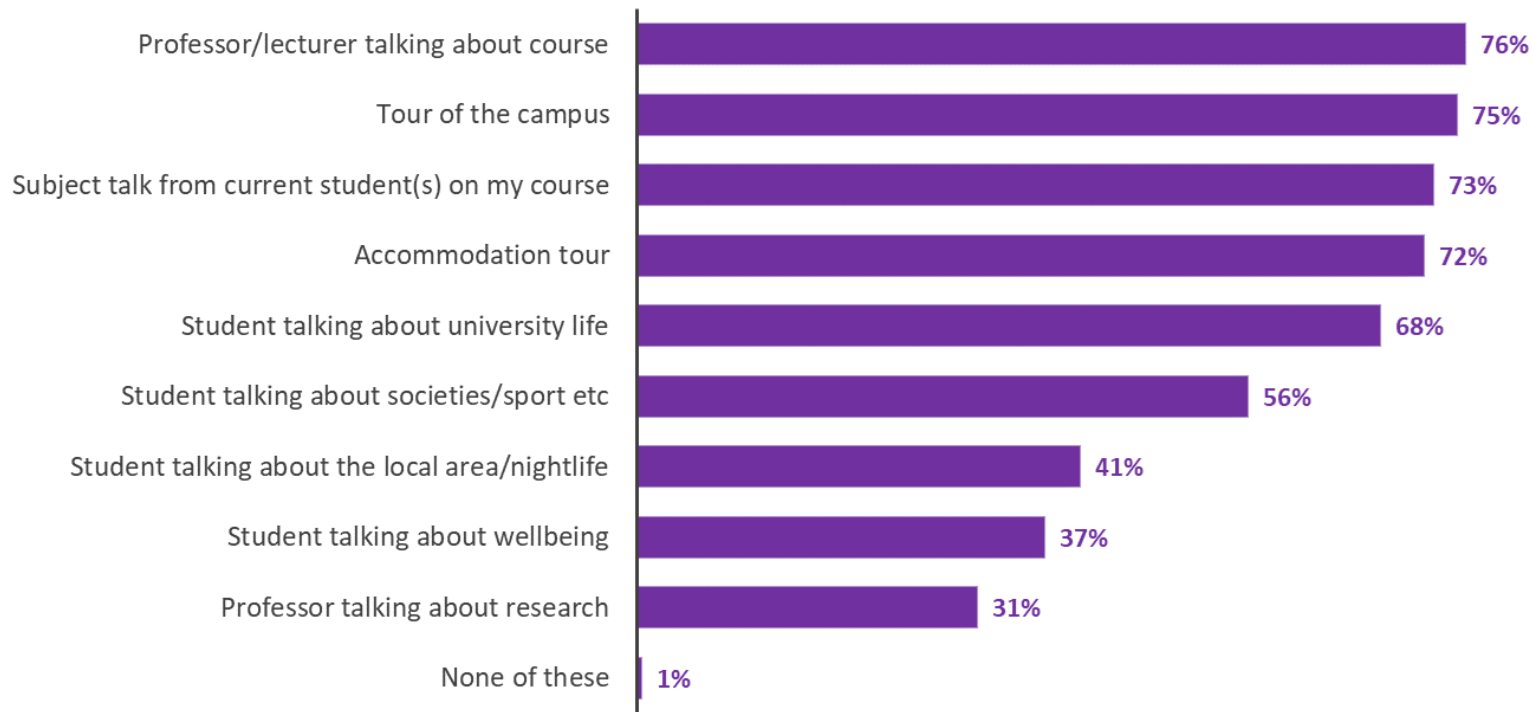
Q: The most important thing I want to find out at a virtual open day is…? Open comment (Base: 283)
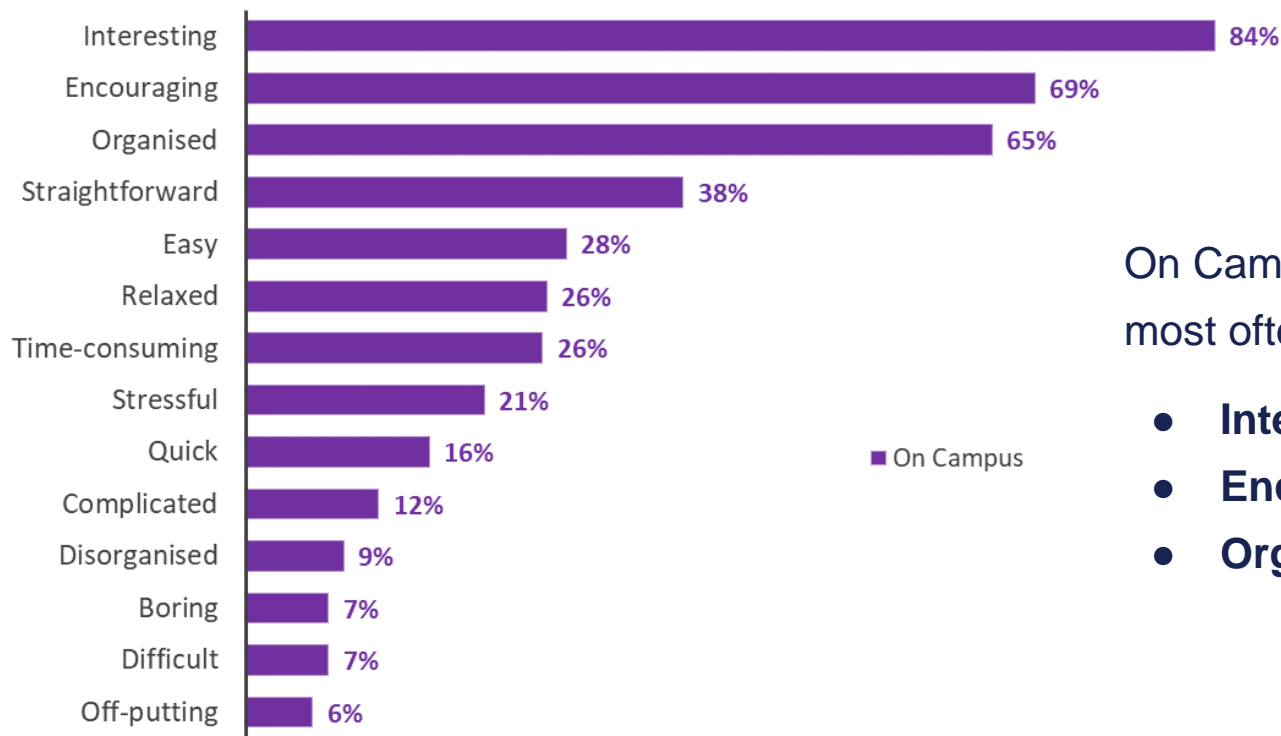
On Campus Open days

On Campus Open Days were most often described as

- **Interesting (84%)**
- **Encouraging (69%)**
- **Organised (65%)**

Interesting — 84%
Encouraging — 69%
Organised — 65%
Straightforward — 38%
Easy — 28%
Relaxed — 26%
Time-consuming — 26%
Stressful — 21%
Quick — 16%
Complicated — 12%
Disorganised — 9%
Boring — 7%
Difficult — 7%
Off-putting — 6%

■ On Campus

Q: Which of the following words, if any, would you use to describe your experiences of attending virtual open day(s) so far? Multiple response (Base: 140)
Q: Which of the following words, if any, would you use to describe your experiences of attending On Campus Open Day(s) so far? Multiple response (Base: 294)

What prospective students would find useful at On Campus Open days

Professor/lecturer talking about course	76%
Tour of the campus	75%
Subject talk from current student(s) on my course	73%
Accommodation tour	72%
Student talking about university life	68%
Student talking about societies/sport etc	56%
Student talking about the local area/nightlife	41%
Student talking about wellbeing	37%
Professor talking about research	31%
None of these	1%

Q:Now thinking about on campus events, which, if any of these, would you find useful at a general open day, before I apply? Multiple response (Base: 371)

The most important thing I want to find out from an On Campus Open day is…

- **The atmosphere**
- See the accommodation
- The course
- Experience the campus
- Facilities
- Understand where everything is
- Find out about student life

What life is like there and how it will work

What the vibe of the uni and my course is like in particular the personalities of the tutors and lecturers.
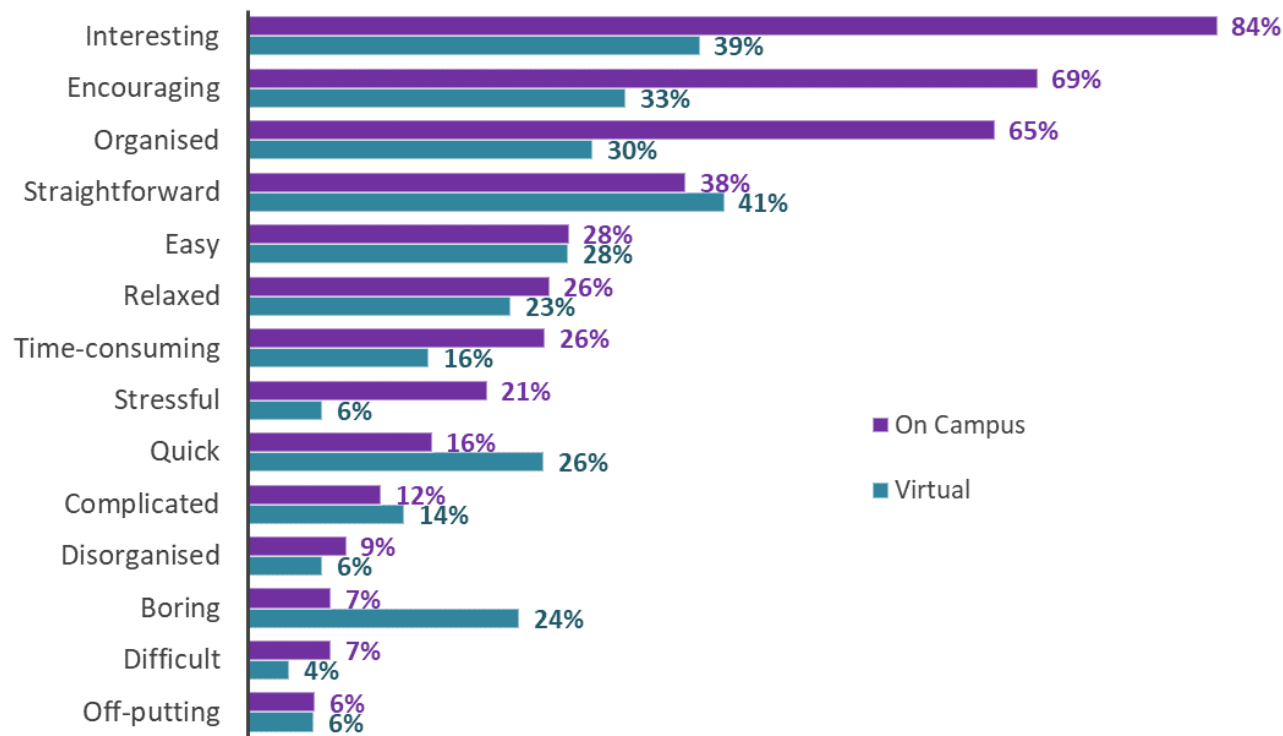
Atmosphere of the campus and if I can see myself living there

Course content, meeting professors, setting and feeling of uni and people there, accommodation and campus
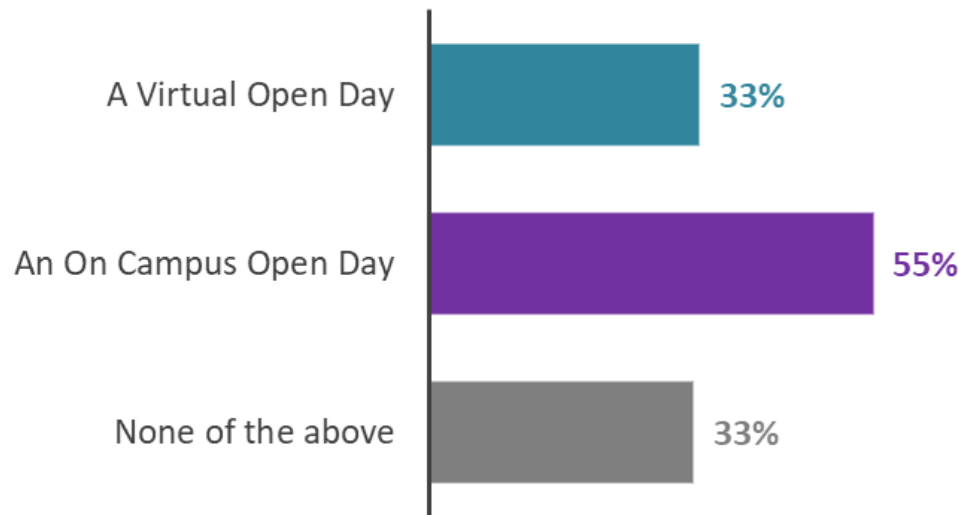
Campus size, distance from teaching buildings to accommodation, teaching rooms, resources for students, extracurricular activities, distance to other activities (e.g local gym, shops, restaurants)

Q: The most important thing I want to find out at an on campus open day is….? (Base: 303)

A Direct Comparison

Horizontal bar chart comparing "On Campus" (purple) and "Virtual" (teal) open day experiences:

Word	On Campus	Virtual
Interesting	84%	39%
Encouraging	69%	33%
Organised	65%	30%
Straightforward	38%	41%
Easy	28%	28%
Relaxed	26%	23%
Time-consuming	26%	16%
Stressful	21%	6%
Quick	16%	26%
Complicated	12%	14%
Disorganised	9%	6%
Boring	7%	24%
Difficult	7%	4%
Off-putting	6%	6%

■ On Campus
■ Virtual

Q: Which of the following words, if any, would you use to describe your experiences of attending virtual open day(s) so far? Multiple response (Base: 140)
Q: Which of the following words, if any, would you use to describe your experiences of attending On Campus Open Day(s) so far? Multiple response (Base: 294)

More than half planned to attend On Campus Open Days in the future

Which do you plan to attend?

A Virtual Open Day — 33%

An On Campus Open Day — 55%

None of the above — 33%

53% wouldn't attend a **Virtual Open Day at all**

20% wouldn't attended an **On Campus Open Day at all**

Q: And do you plan to attend any of the following in the future…? Multiple response (Base: 392)

When is the best time? (2023 entry)

Legend: ■ Virtual Open Days ■ On Campus Open Days

	Autumn Term Year 12	Spring Term Year 12	Summer Term Year 12	Summer Holidays between Year 12 and Year 13	Autumn Term Year 13	Spring Term Year 13	Summer Term Year 13	Summer Holidays after Year 13
Virtual Open Days	42%	55%	66%	74%	71%	33%	19%	18%
On Campus Open Days	22%	37%	62%	81%	69%	26%	13%	13%

Y12 → Y13

Q: When do you think are the most appropriate times for universities to host….? Virtual Open Days/On Campus Open Days Multiple response (Base: 374/383)

Applicant Visit Days

How many applicant days will you attend?
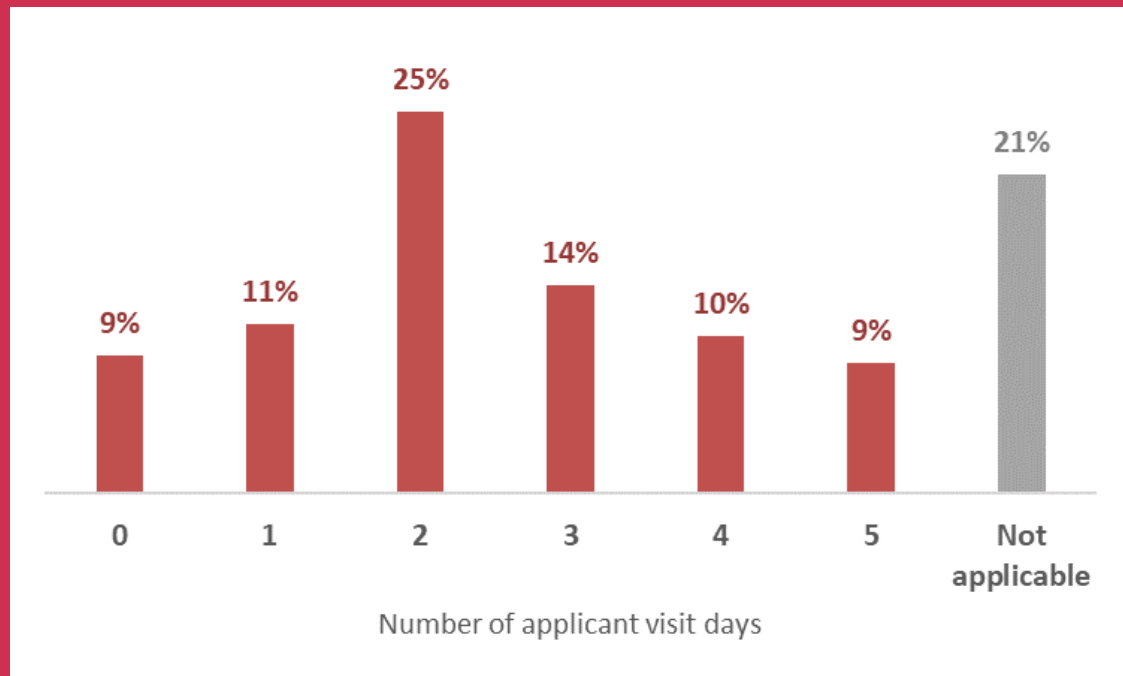
25% planned to attend
2 applicant days

Q: How many applicant visit days do you plan to attend? Single response (Base: 382)

So what is stopping prospective students from going to applicant visit days?

- No need to

- Lack of awareness

- Expense

If I have been offered a place at a good university, seeing the university in real life is not something which would make or break any decisions

I do not see any point

Don't know anything about them and the universities I've applied to haven't told me about them

Main reasons for choosing a university is not based on its environment/location so no need for physical visit
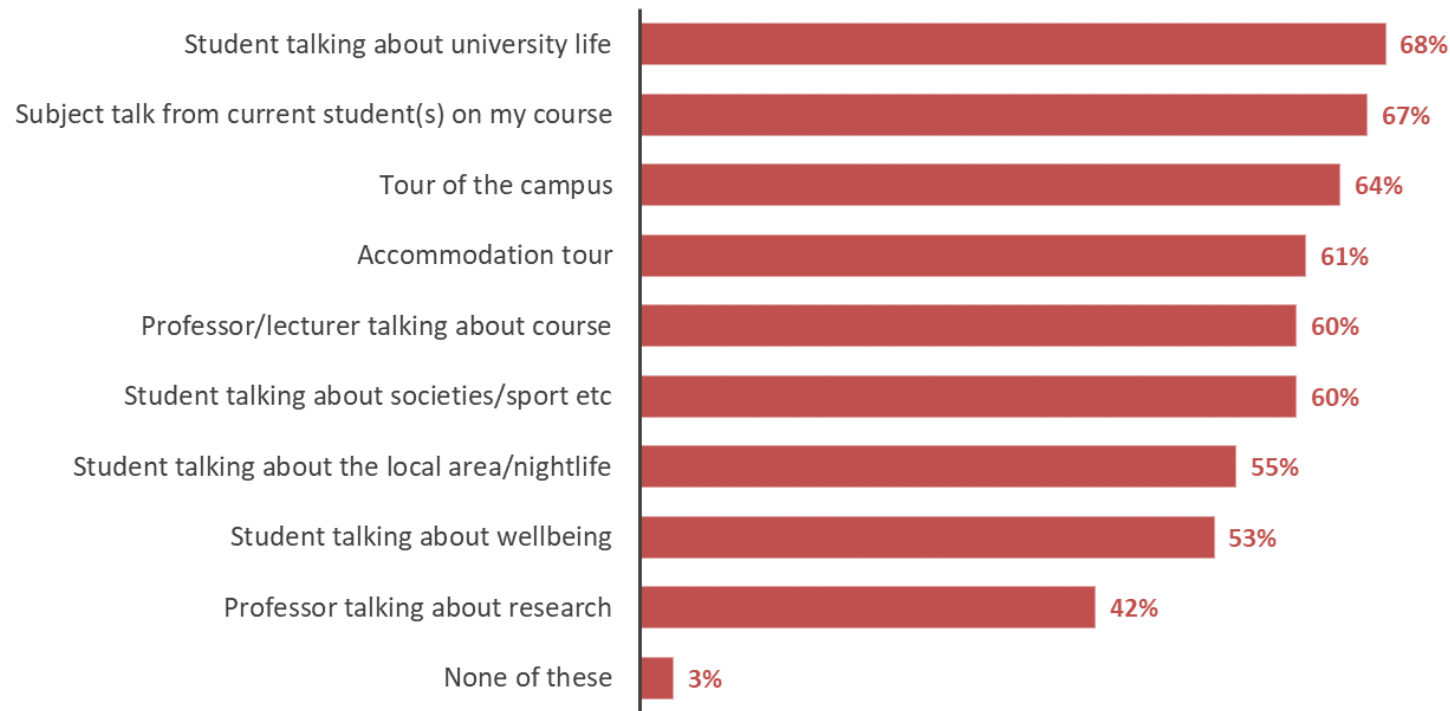
Too expensive to travel there

I think I have attended sufficient open days at this point

Which will be more important when choosing a university?
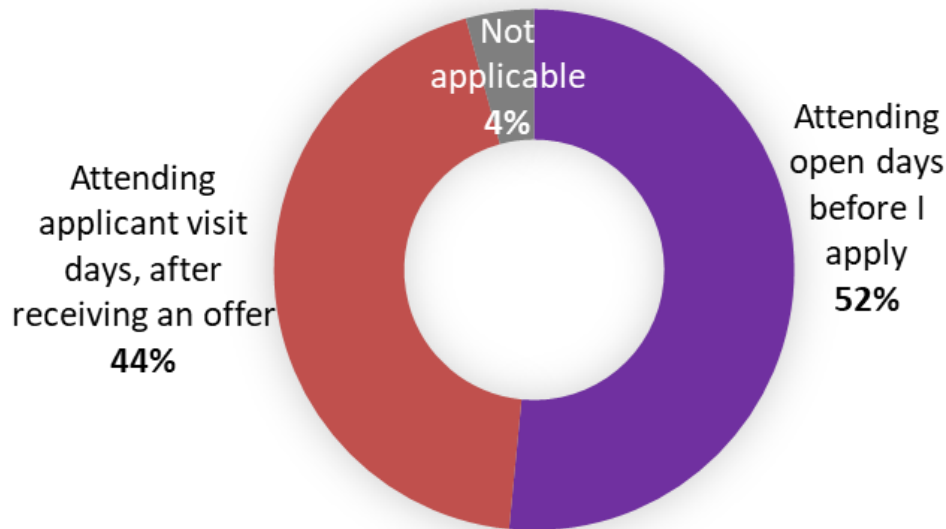
More than half felt **open days pre application** would be more important when choosing a university

What prospective students would find useful at applicant visit days

Student talking about university life	68%
Subject talk from current student(s) on my course	67%
Tour of the campus	64%
Accommodation tour	61%
Professor/lecturer talking about course	60%
Student talking about societies/sport etc	60%
Student talking about the local area/nightlife	55%
Student talking about wellbeing	53%
Professor talking about research	42%
None of these	3%

Q:Now thinking about on campus events, which, if any of these, would you find useful at an applicant visit day, after being offered a place? Multiple response (Base: 357

The most important thing I want to find out at applicant visit days is …

- Detailed course information, modules, structure
- Is it the right choice for me? What's it like?
- What are the people like?

Is the course in this university the right one for me?

A more personalised version of an open day, meeting potential classmates

if I actually see myself studying there

What the vibe of the uni and my course is like in particular the personalities of the tutors and lecturers.

Gaining more information that may not have been specified on open days

How people that look like me are treated

How current students adapted to uni life at that course and how they are finding the content

Key Takeaways

- Events need to stand alone - each may be the only time a prospective student 'visits'
- They also need to be subtly different for those who do attend multiple events
- Virtual events - focus early in the decision cycle and provide course information
- General Open Days - showcase university, the atmosphere and orienting on campus
- Applicant Days - focus on detailed course information, people and ensuring applicants feel they will belong

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