

Converting Student Prospects: How to connect from enquiry to enrolment

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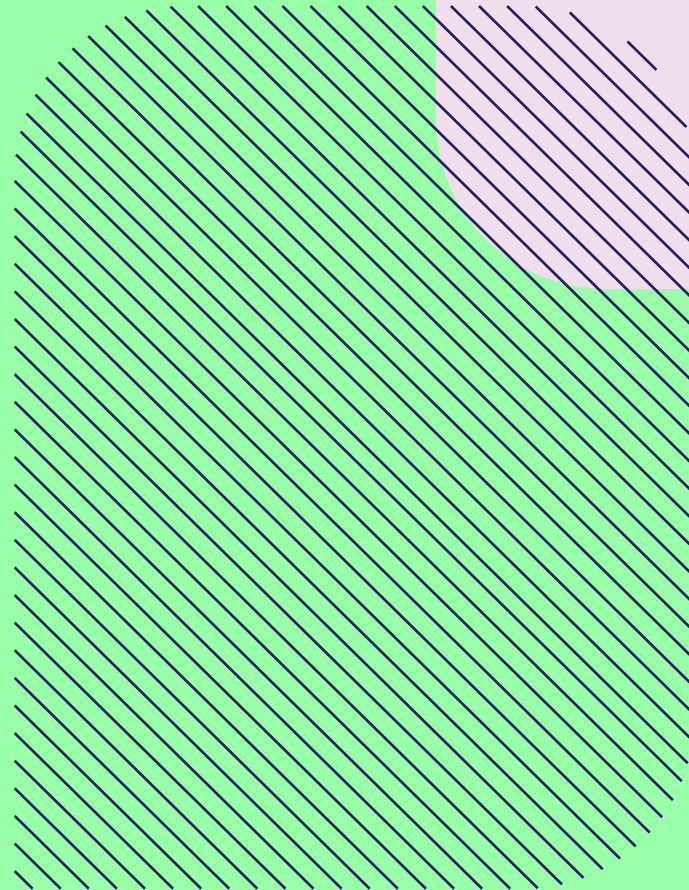
The Student Room is here to help every student discover, and reach, their potential.

On our forums, we host the UK's largest online student community.

In this friendly and welcoming space, everyone is free to share their knowledge, find support and guidance, and to connect with a world of educational opportunities.

We help students connect with each other and with education experts, so they can make richly informed pathway decisions at each step of their academic journey.

Community conversation



What we are seeing on site

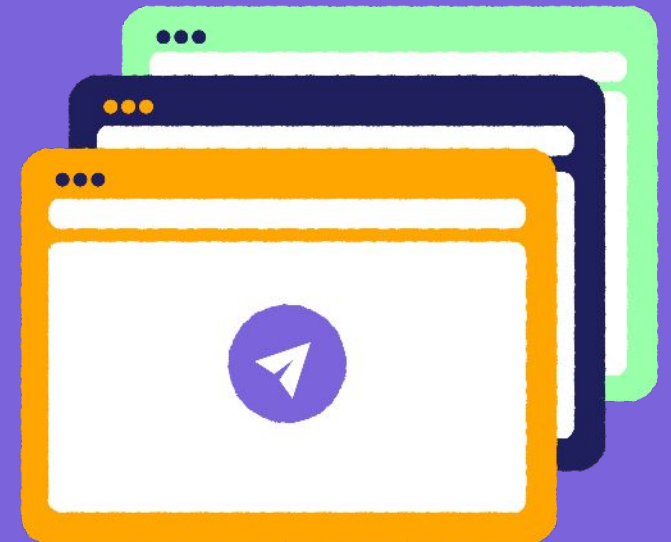
Since the beginning of September, The Student Room has attracted over 30 million pageviews across all areas of the site; with more than 18 million of those visiting the Study Help, University and University courses areas alone.

Trends in topics of conversation on site currently includes:

- Seeking personal statement support
- Offer making queries and concerns
- Grade boundary worries
- Financial worries and money-management

"It's currently the 19th and I have made minimal progress on my UCAS statement. The reason I'm procrastinating is because I feel there is so much I can talk about regarding my background but little in terms of achievements or work experience, which I feel might make my application inadequate for universities?"

"I've received an offer 16 points below the quoted offer level, It's not stated whether it's a contextual offer or not. I expected the text in the email to be generic copy/paste and the same for everyone, but some of it seemed specific to my situation. Could it be a low offer because I'm the right type of candidate for this uni/course?"



"Does having a learning disability affect your chances to get into the top ten Russell Groups? (I have ADHD and Dyslexia)"

"How can I get into a good university if I am retaking my A-levels in Summer 2023? If I reapply through my school I will have to use my old grades, with which it is highly unlikely that I will get into a good uni. So what is the point of retakes? Will I have to go through Clearing? How possible will it be for a Law course?"

"I'm not from an especially affluent background, more middle-class. I knew that all the prices at London universities would be a lot more, but I'm looking at some of these rent prices - almost everything is at £200+, some reaching £250 pw - and I wonder how it's even possible for people who live outside of London to afford this? Not to mention the cost of living with food and amenities prices already being extortionate in the capital."

"Do you guys think UCAS will use an AI detection tool to see if people have "plagiarised" using ChatGPT or other AI?"

Worries of applicants

Sense of belonging is still high on the agenda for students, as meeting people and making friends is frequently mentioned as a top worry related to starting university.

Another common theme we see each year is that of financial concern and uncertainties with managing their finances at university.

With the cost-of-living crisis, changes to loan repayments and the ever-changing economic landscape in the United Kingdom students are calling out for new, targeted and relevant support and advice that goes above and beyond recipes for cheap meals.

How university Official Reps have been helping on The Student Room

Student reps provide peer to peer support and showcases universities student life offering.

Student reps can talk about own experiences and relate them to actionable points.

Provides valuable human to human interaction in a situation that the poster is finding stressful is so valuable.

Official Reps from CCCU, LJMU and LSBU all replied with tips and reassurance. Some of the reps were current nursing students.

<https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/show>

"I'm aware that this is completely my fault for putting myself in this situation, but over the course of this year, i haven't been able to find work experience and I'm struggling with what i should do as I'm an applicant for 2024. it's something I'm really passionate about but i don't know how to express that in my personal statement without evidence of experience. I'm feeling very stressed out and guidance would be much appreciated."

"Don't stress you still have time to gain work experience before you submit your personal statement and start your Nursing course...However, work experience does not necessarily need to relate to your chosen degree as any work experience will be beneficial. For example, getting a part-time job in a supermarket or cafe can teach you basic communication skills that you'll use when you are a student nurse. It will also demonstrate you are a caring person who enjoys communicating with the public."



"I didn't quite get the grades I needed on results day and ended up applying through clearing - at the time I was really uncertain about what the future held for me! Fast forward 5 years and I'm in my 4th year of my MBBS degree and I couldn't be happier!..."

"I would say my best advice is, as I changed my mind a lot, that when it comes to deciding what you want to do go with your gut feeling. Striking a balance between what you are passionate about, what you excel in, and what will lead you down a decent career path is hard work. In all honesty you may get it wrong a few times - I still wonder about that!... Try to remember; you are capable, you will find your own path, and you have plenty of time to figure out some of the answers!"

"Starting university is such a big change, so my advice is to just take it one step at a time. It can be hard to get back into a routine, but I'm sure you'll find a new routine that works really well for you... I know it can be daunting and scary, but adjusting to uni life and finding a routine and making new friendships is a process!"

TSR Asks Monthly Omnibus surveys

Enquirer to applicant

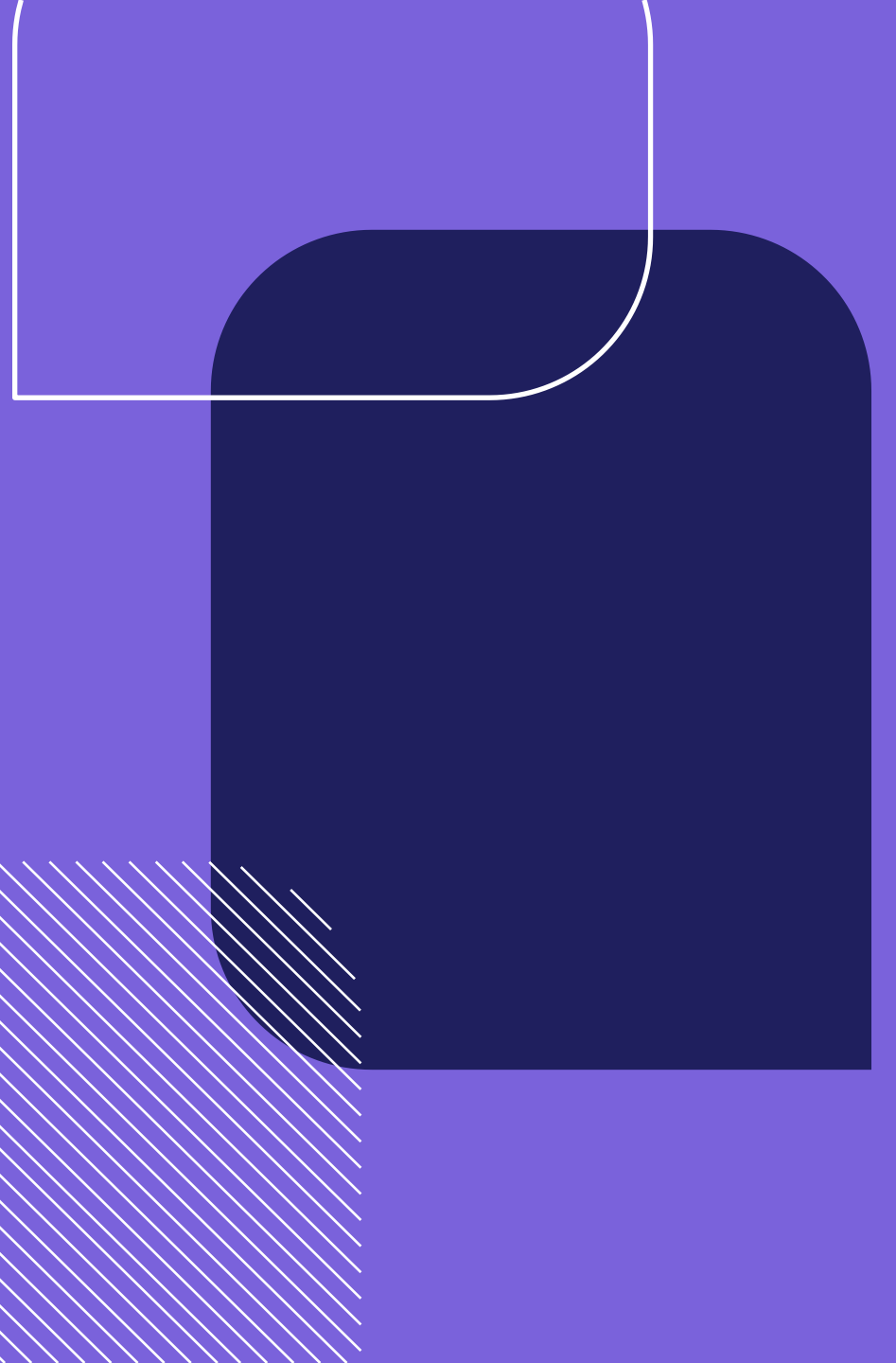
- November 2023 – 2025 entry
- December 2023 – 2024 entry

Applicant to enrolment

- September 2023 – 2023 entry
- October 2023 – 2023 entry

Enquirer to Applicant

2024 and 2025 entry prospective undergraduates



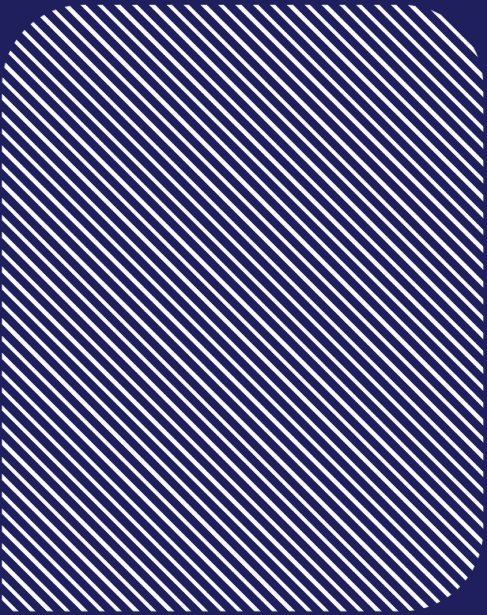
Information needed from universities – 2025 entry



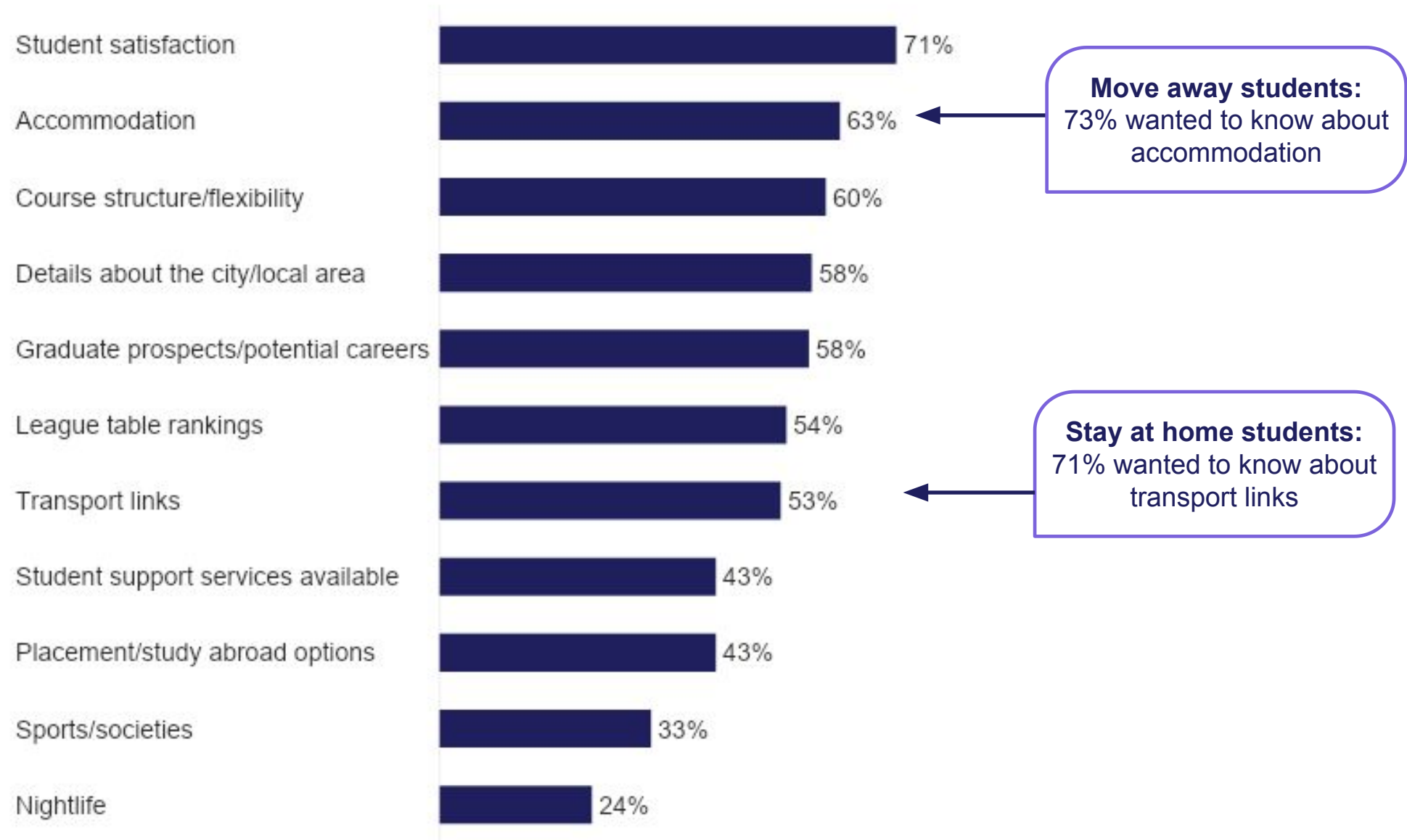
Q: What information do you want from universities now? (Multiple choice) (Base, 2025 entry 390)

The Potential Barriers – 2025 entry UGs

- 57%** Making the right university choice for me
- 57%** The cost of living while at university
- 52%** Choosing a course I'll enjoy
- 52%** My future employability
- 49%** Repaying my student loan



The Details That Matter... before applying to a university - 2024 entry



How
are
they
getti
ng
the
mos
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usef
ul
info
rma
tion
?



71%

University's own
website



57%

UCAS website



52%

Attending open
days



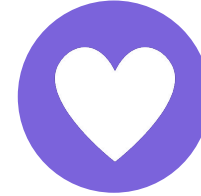
44%

Online forums (e.g.,
The Student Room)



41%

Social media



41%

Friends/family
members



41%

University league
tables



40%

Comparison sites
(e.g., The Uni Guide)



40%

University
prospectuses



36%

School guidance
(e.g., careers
advisor, teacher)



32%

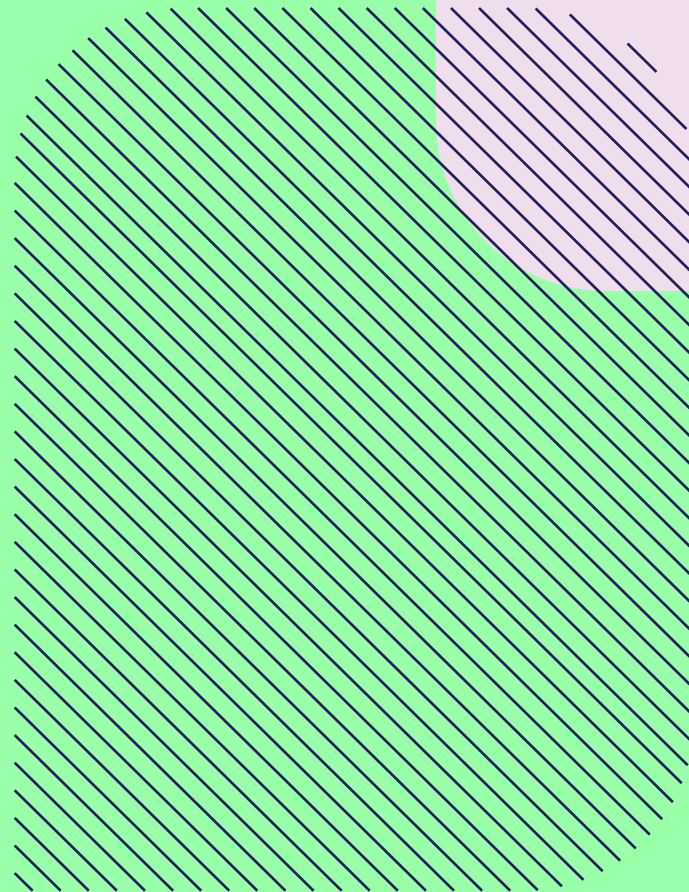
Reading
student
reviews



30%

Current or
previous students
at the unis I'm
considering

Applicant to enrolled student



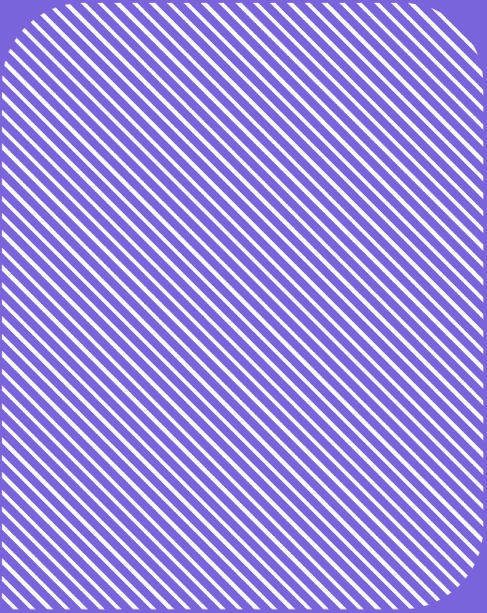
The details that matter.... when selecting Firm Choice - 2024 entry



Move away students:
62% wanted to know about accommodation

What information would you have found useful after accepting your firm choice university?

- Logistics, timings and how everything works
- Accommodation, campus and local area
- How to connect with other students



Q: What information would you have found useful after accepting your firm choice university? (Base: 78)

“More detailed instructions of what will happen as a way to comfort nerves about uncertainty’s”

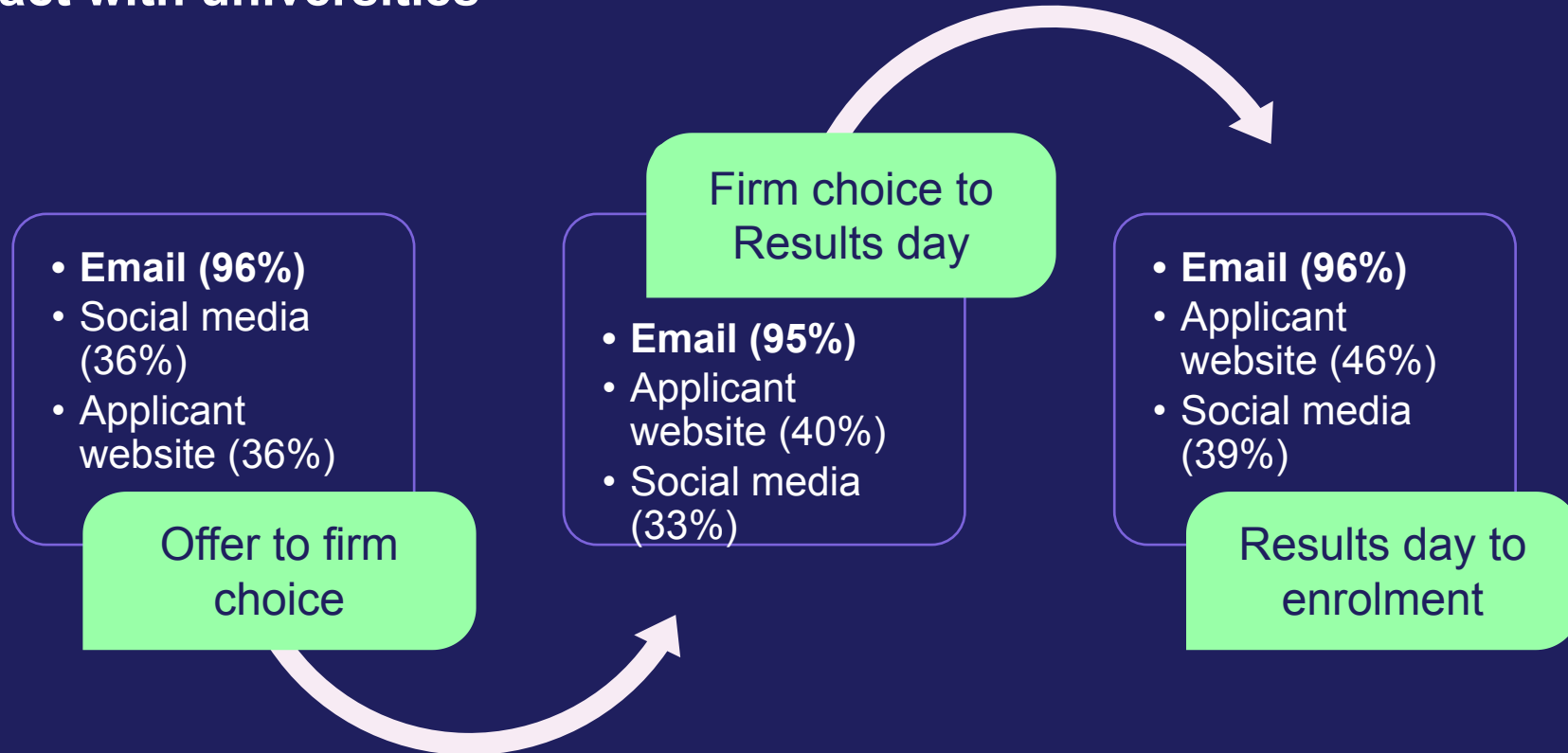
“In depth information about the starting process i.e. registration, matriculation, modules”

“Detailed information about accommodation and about travel around the city/campus”

“More detail on what specific accommodation already comes with.”

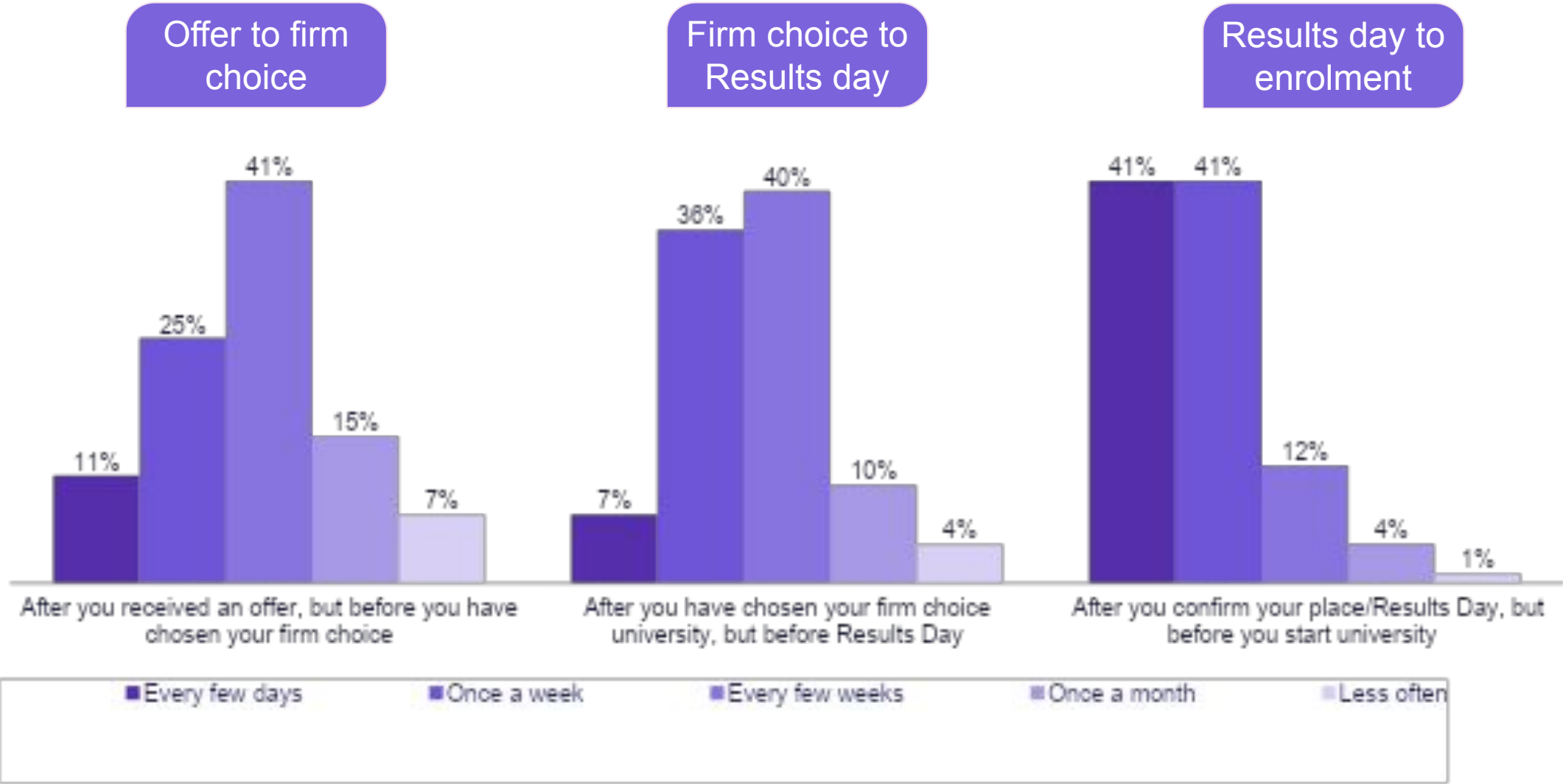
“How you meet different people in the university and what the community is like”

Email isn't dead – throughout their journey students wanted email contact with universities



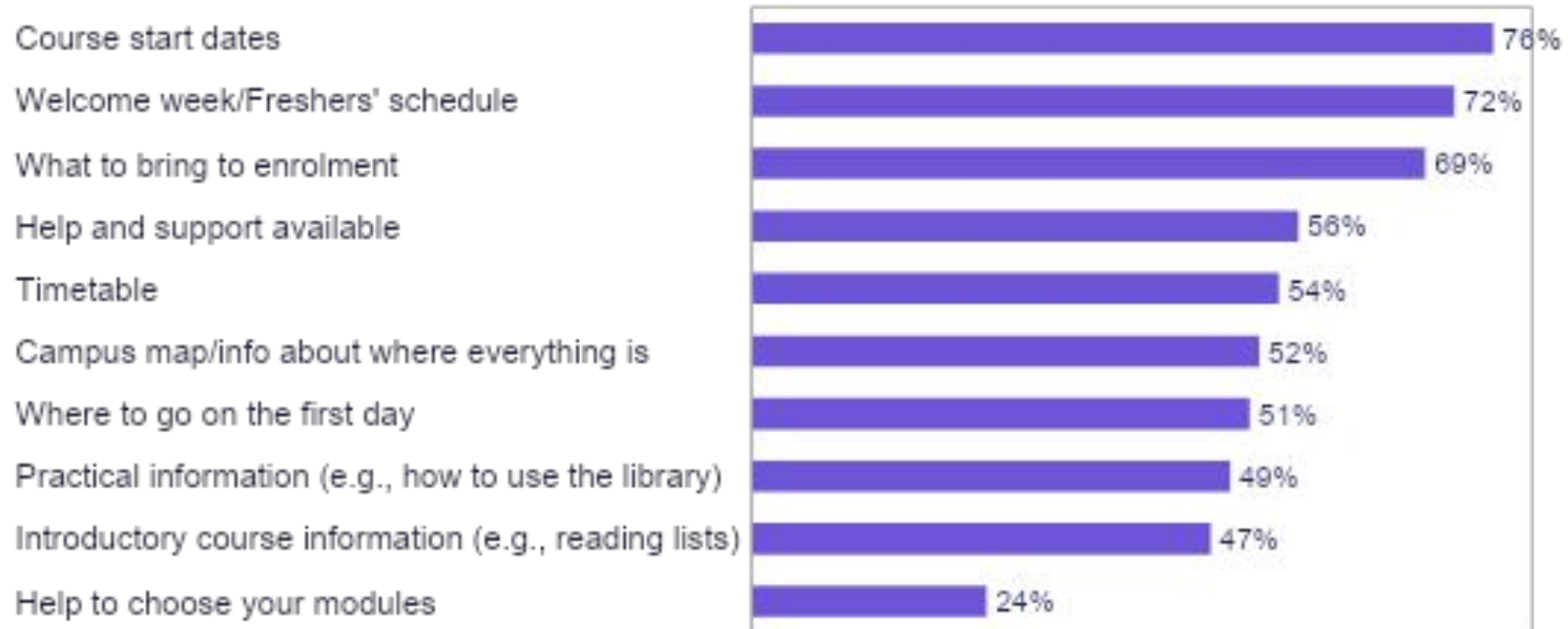
Q: Through what methods/platforms would you expect to hear from universities you are considering after you received an offer, but before you have chosen your firm choice?/ after you have chosen your firm choice university, but before Results Day? / after you confirm your place/Results Day, but before you start university? (Multiple responses) (Base: 163)

They wanted regular contact from universities



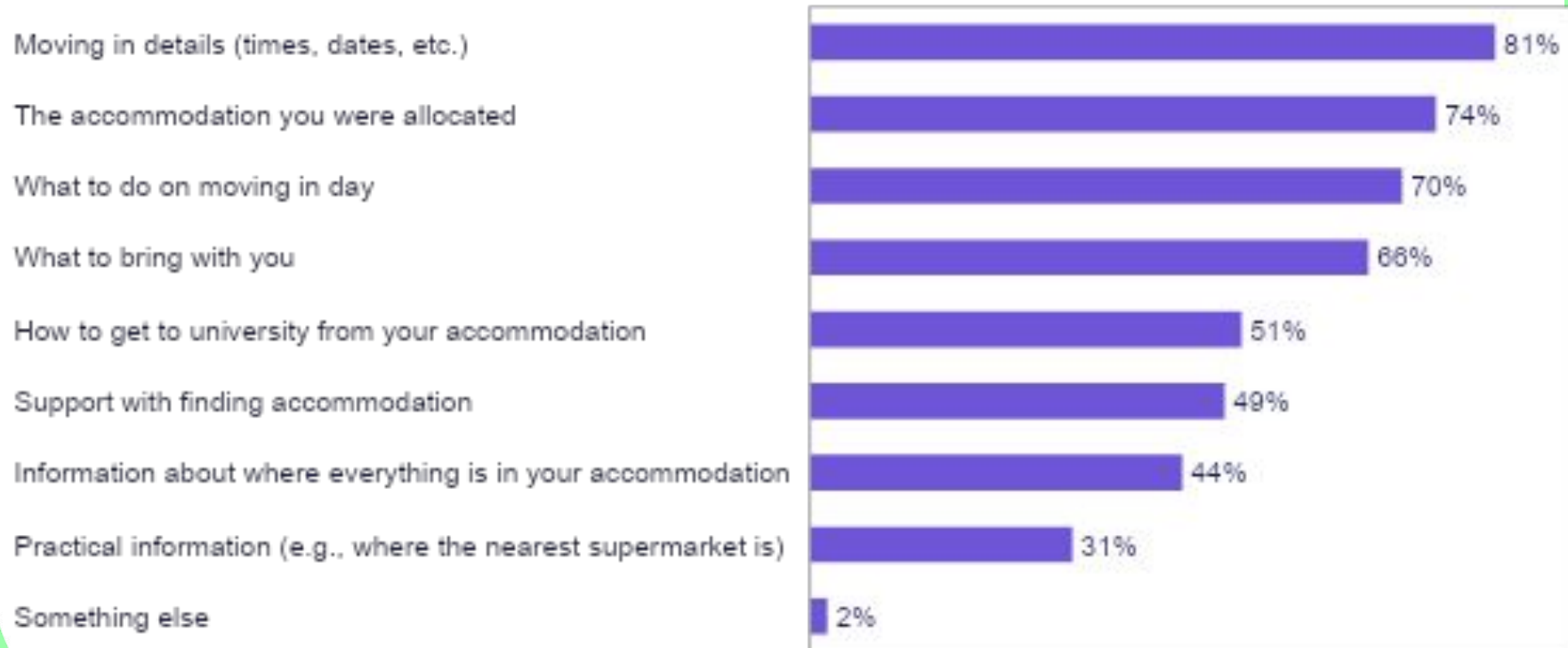
Q How frequently, if at all, would you expect to hear from universities at each of the following stages? (Base: 162)

Getting the information they needed



Q: Now thinking about the time after you had confirmation of your place at university (e.g., after Results Day)...Did your university provide you with the following information in good time? (Multiple response) (Base: 172)

Settling into accommodation



Q: Did you receive the following accommodation information in good time? Please select all that apply (Multiple response) (Base: 118, all starting university and living away from home)

What one piece of advice would you give to students in the year below about applying to university for next year?

- Stay on top of uni communications
- Research thoroughly and go to open days
- Think beyond rankings
- Be open and try new things at uni
- DON'T STRESS



“research your options, the course they offer, modules, location, size of town, accommodation available”

“Do not ignore any university emails, however much you think they can be sorted later. I didn't realise the accommodation booking slot was at end of induction and nearly didn't get a time slot to move in”

“Do lots of research on unis you're interested in- try to go to open days so you can really get a feel of the area”

“Throw yourself into everything at the start so that you can find out what you enjoy and what you don't and meet new likeminded people.”

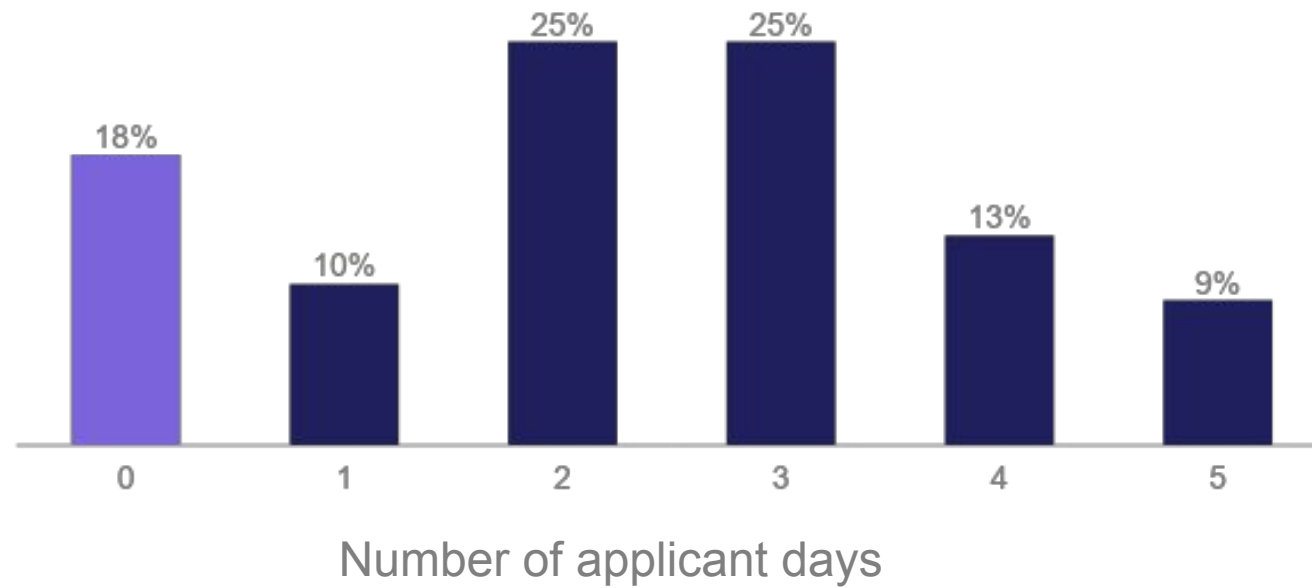
“Enjoy the experience to the fullest”

The single most influential information

- 25% University website
- 21% Open day before I applied
- 18% Applicant day / other visit after I applied
- 11% League tables
- 9% University prospectus

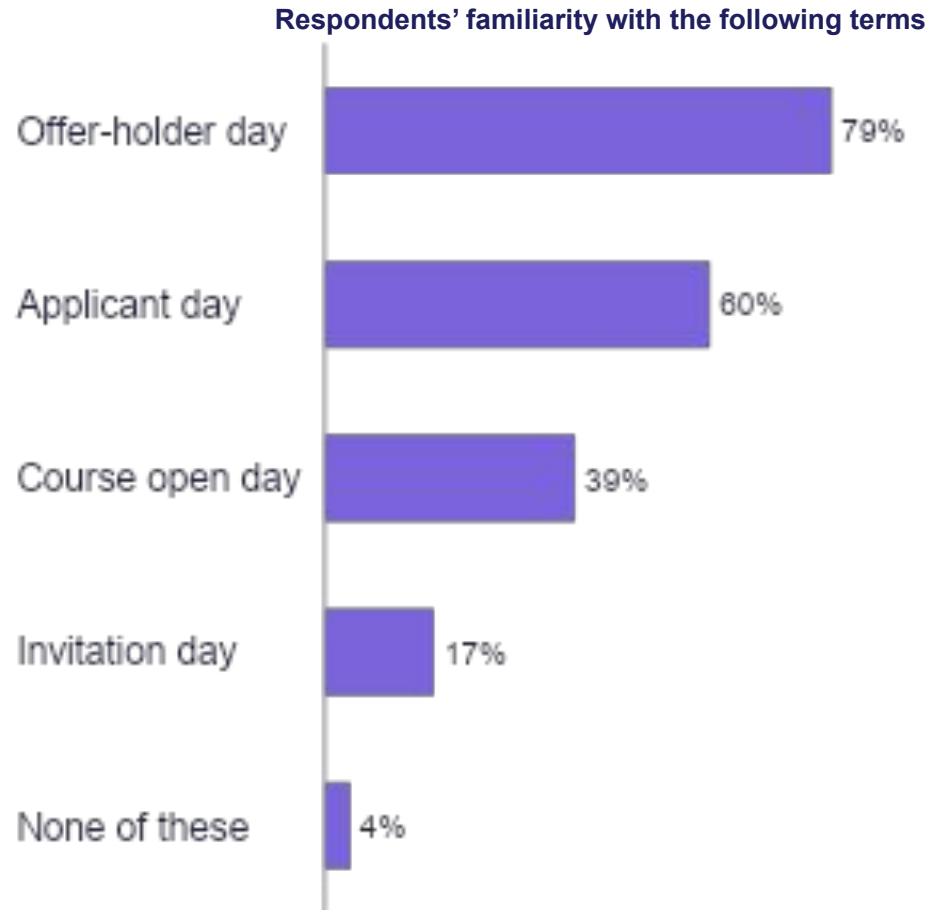


Half of 2024 entry would attend 2 or 3 applicant days but almost one in five didn't plan to attend any



Q: How many applicant visit days do you plan to attend? (Base: 191)

When asked about events post application, respondents were most likely to be familiar with the terms Offer-holder day (79%), and Applicant Day (60%) and least likely to have heard of Invitation day (17%)



Respondents who planned to move away for university were more likely than those attending university locally to have heard of the term **offer-holder day** (85% cf. 63%)

Top 5 useful elements of an applicant day

70% Subject talk from current students on the same course

70% Professor/lecturer talking about the course

69% Tour of the campus

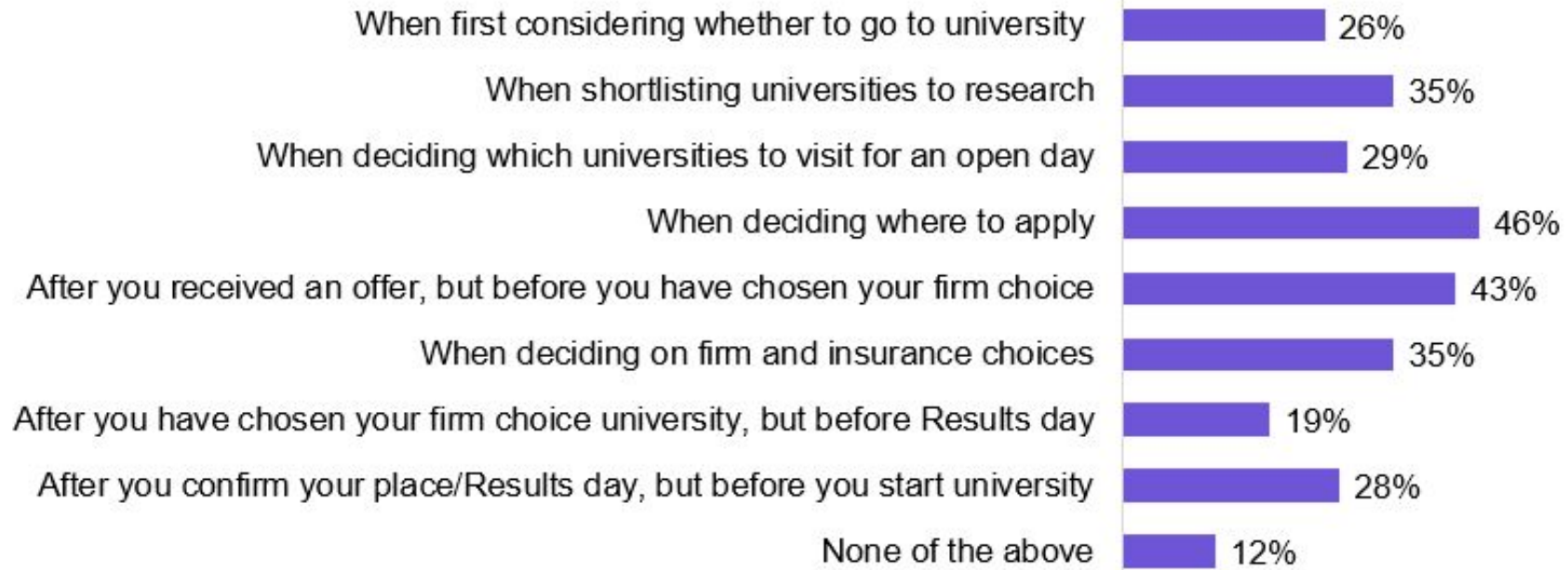
64% Accommodation tour

63% Student talking about university life

First in family students:
79% wanted to hear from a lecturer about the course

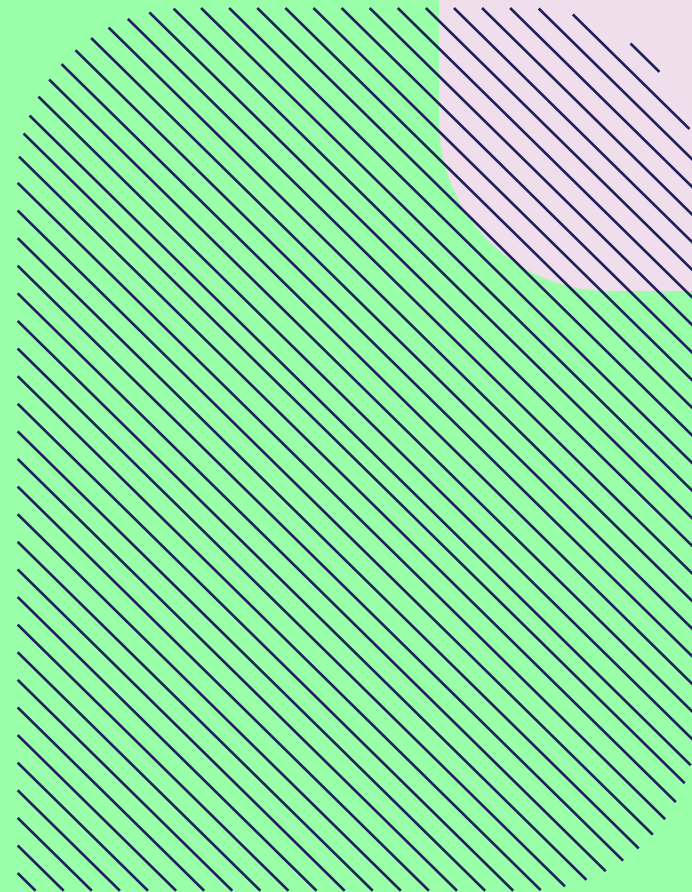
Move away students:
74% wanted an accommodation tour

When Peer to Peer support is needed



Q: At what points in the application process have you/will you seek peer-to-peer support e.g., from current university students at a university, in person or online. Multiple response) (Base: 418)

Key takeaways



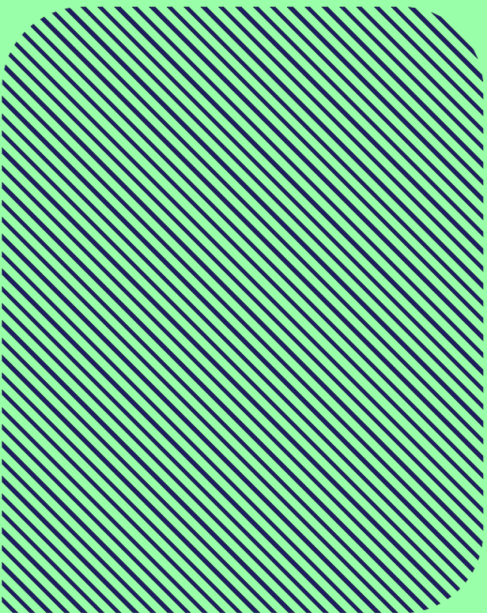
Key takeaways...

Universities are doing a lot of great things and students are getting the essentials – can more support be provided to alleviate concerns

There is scope to keep in touch after results day and provide more info that will help with settling in

Applicant days aren't a given most won't attend all five and lots won't attend any

Try to link applicants with others joining their course or current students to help them feel part of the community



Final tip: Use your Official Reps!

Many students come to The Student Room with worries, concerns and sometimes frustration over not hearing anything for so long.

Community building on places like The Student Room, social media and other areas for applicants and offer holders is incredibly important when it comes to students feeling supported ahead of university, along with clear and consistent communication.

“That makes plenty of sense, thank you so much for your help I feel so much more confident.”

“Thank you both so much for your great advice, it’s genuinely been a great help, now I feel even better about myself!”



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