

Student Advisory Group

**Applicants appetite and decisions
– understanding their research and their application pre Jan 15th**

18 November 2020



We spoke to 21 thousand applicants about...



Where applicants are in the application process



How they are experiencing your virtual events

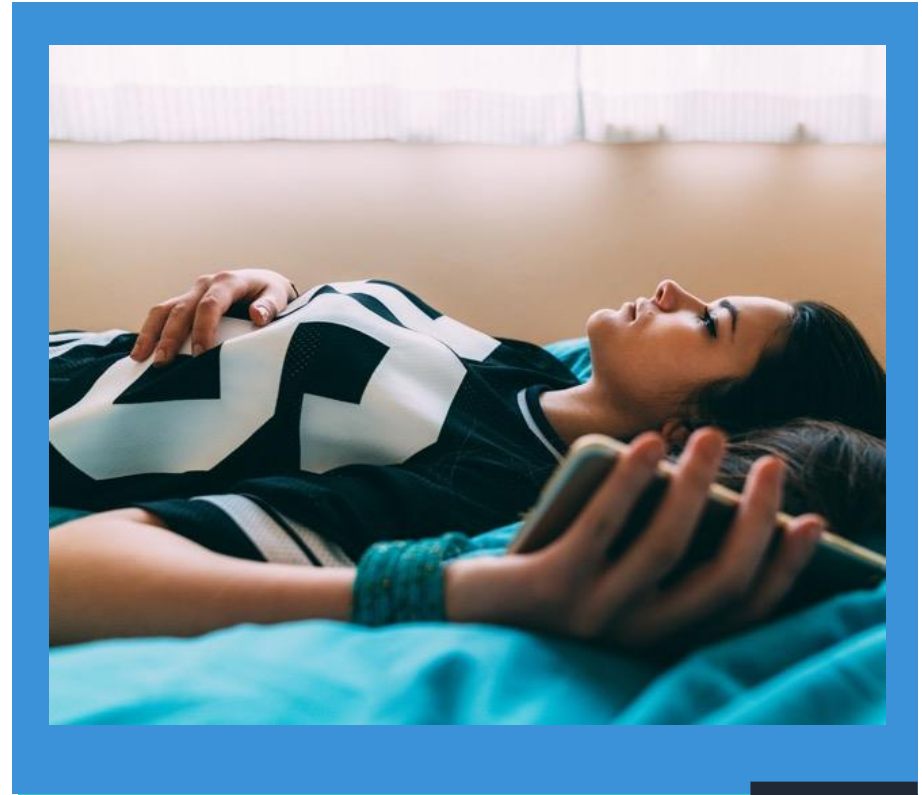


What is going to influence their final decision making

Applicants are still researching their options

Only **40%**

have decided on their final choices, up from 27% in the last wave of research

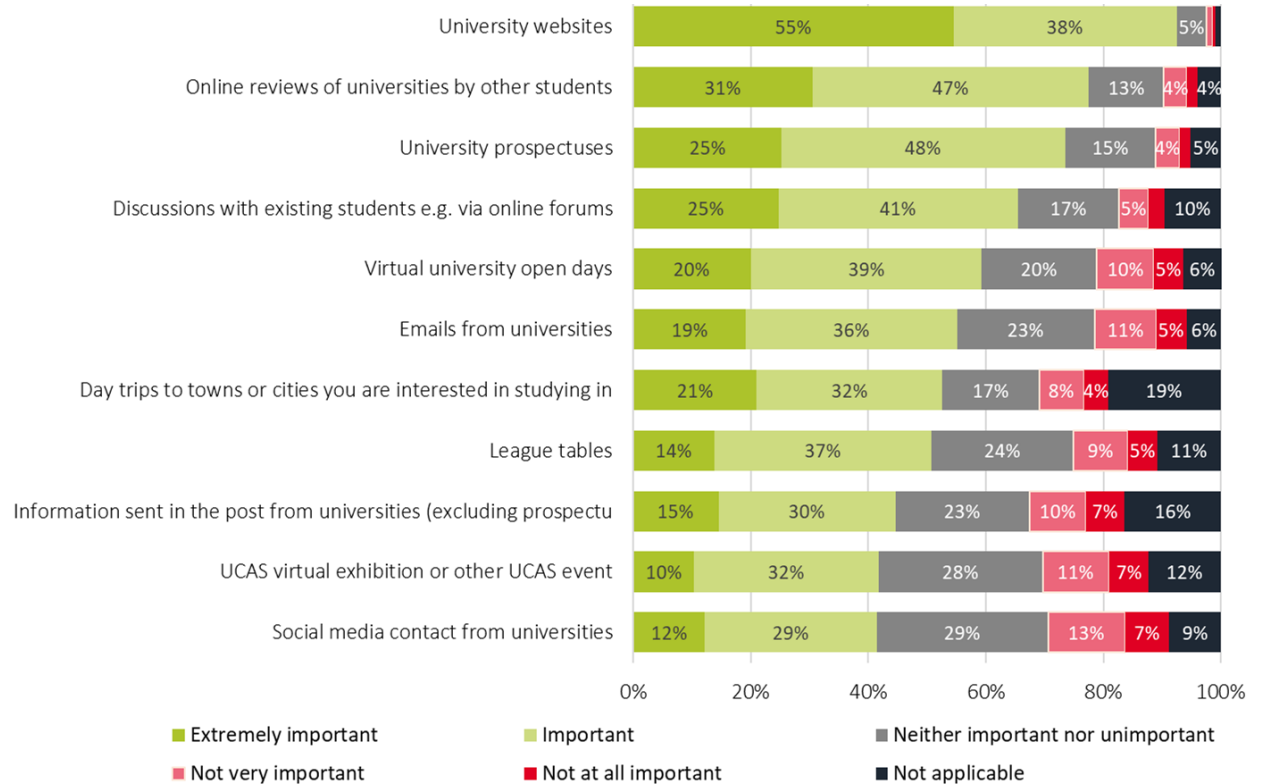


Applicants are considering a range of sources, but university websites and virtual open days remains crucial

Resources and activities

Q: When deciding which unis and colleges, and which courses, to apply to, how important have the following resources and activities been?

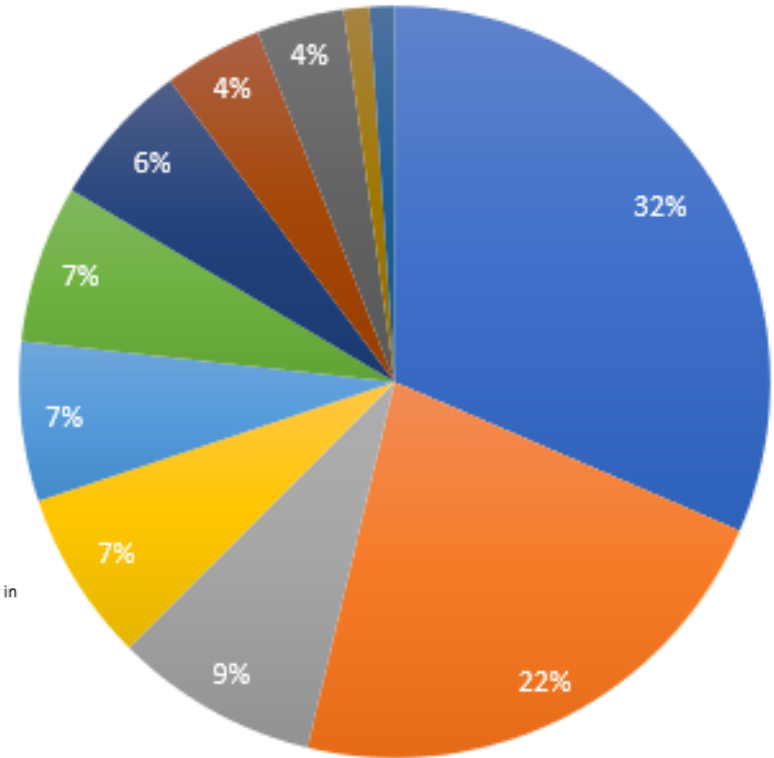
Aside from your website and prospectus, students' reviews are very important



Resources and activities

Q: When deciding which unis and colleges, which of these has been the most important?

Over 1/5 of applicants now say it's **virtual open days** that are the most important



- University websites
- Virtual university open days
- University prospectuses
- Day trips to towns or cities you are interested in studying in
- League tables
- Online reviews of universities by other students
- Discussions with existing students e.g. via online forums
- Emails from universities
- UCAS virtual exhibition or other UCAS event
- Information sent by post from unis (excl. prospectuses)
- Social media contact from universities

“I think that most people choose their uni for the ‘vibe’ and the course.”

What do they want from virtual open days?

- Hearing from alumni and future applicants (feeling that 'fit')
- More subject-specific information
- More location information (campus and also more info about the general location)
- Information on sports, clubs and student support



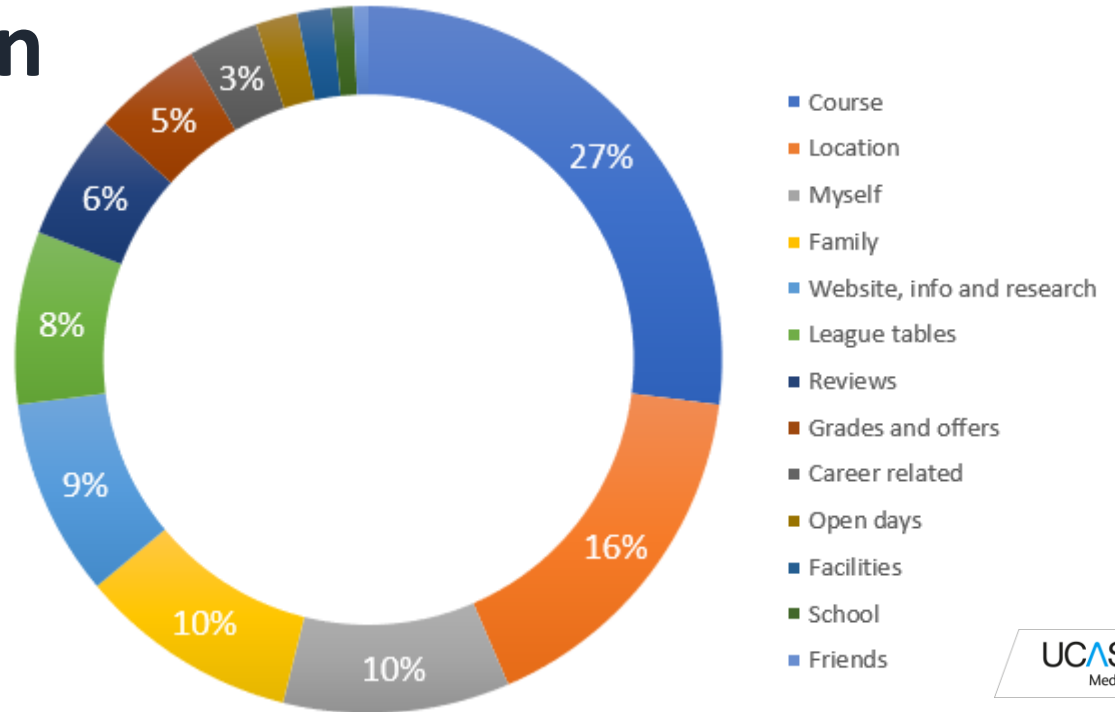
What was most memorable at virtual open days?

- Really detailed subject information and sample lectures
- Those where it was easy to navigate the content or were innovative (eg welcoming video)
- Hearing from your students (past and present)
- Detailed info on accommodation (look, cost, location, options)
- Advice on how to apply and what that uni is looking for



Parents, location, and courses are most influential to applicants making their decisions

43% of responses mentioned either the course or location



Q: Which of the following has the most influence in you deciding which universities and colleges to apply to?
(Free text response)

**Covid itself is not directly
influencing decisions**

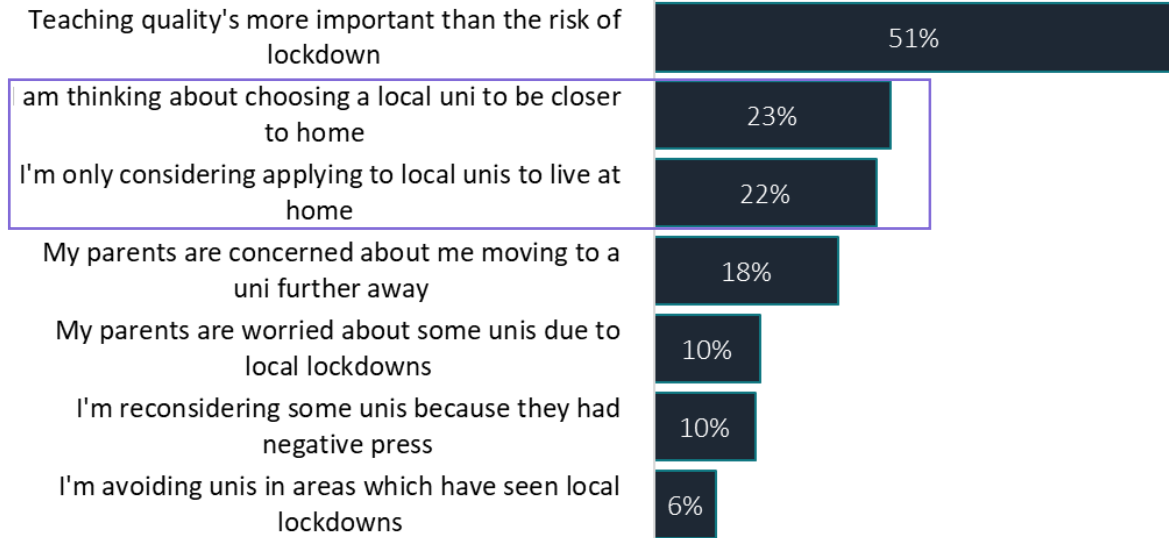
Only
5 people

said Covid was the main
influence on their choice of
university



Teaching quality is more important than local lockdowns, but many do want to remain local

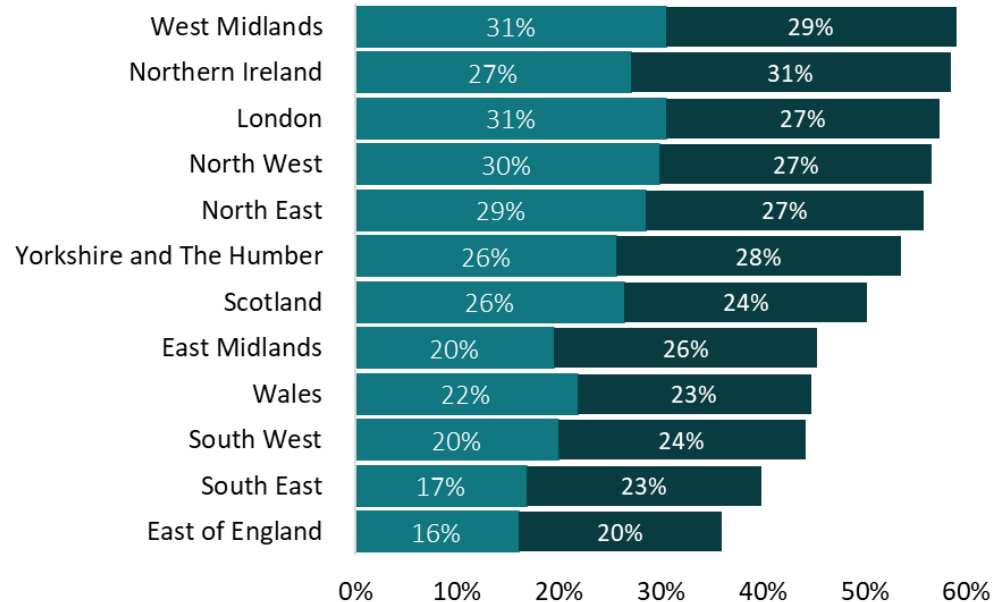
Q: Have the recent reports of students in coronavirus-related lockdowns within their student halls had any impact on your choice of unis to apply to?



There are clear regional differences regarding the importance of location and proximity from home

Q: Have the recent reports of students in coronavirus-related lockdowns within their student halls had any impact on your choice of unis to apply to?

- I'm only considering applying to local unis to live at home
- I am thinking about choosing a local uni to be closer to home



70%

said they were fairly or very confident they would make the right choice even if they can't physically visit the campus or location.

Has a potential vaccine impacted applicants decision making?

No.

72%

said they were happy
with their choices

