



# Planning for 2021

Understanding the mindset of the 2021 cohort and where they are in their decision making

September 21<sup>st</sup> 2020

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Security marking: PUBLIC

# Partnering to bring value to the sector

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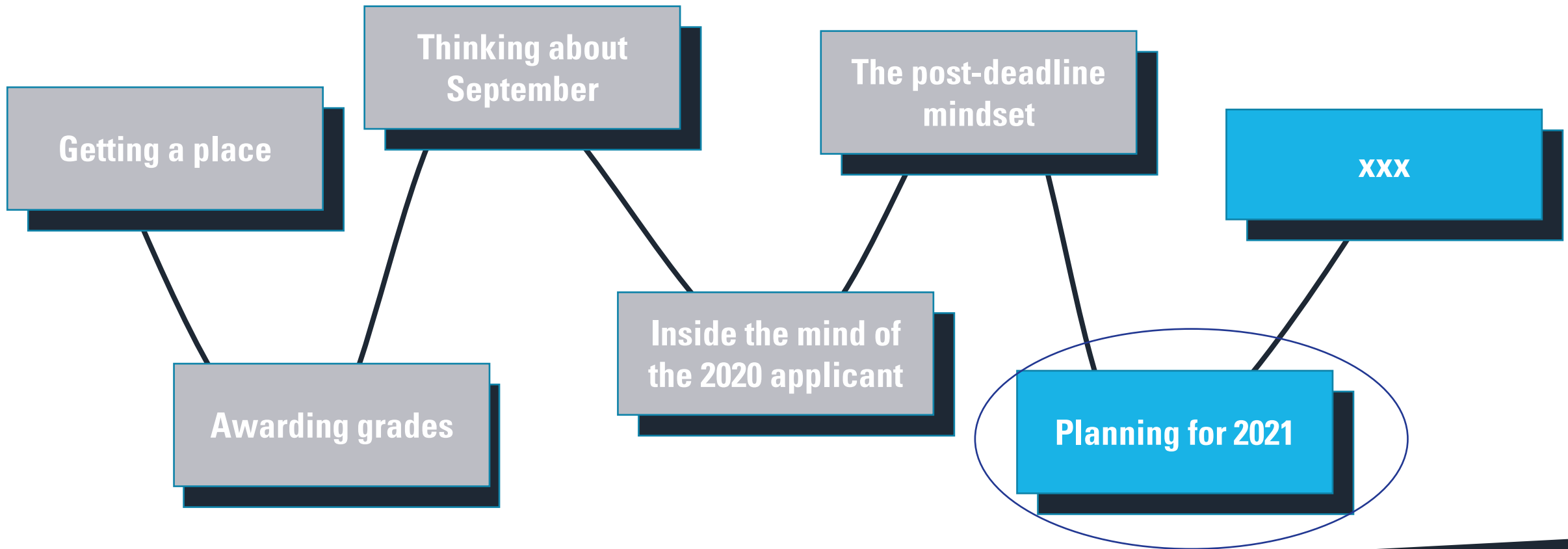
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# UCAS x YouthSight webinar series



# A reminder of our methodology

Online survey

**743**

Year 12 university  
pre-applicants  
planning to go to  
university in 2021

Representative sample of  
Year 12 pre-applicants by gender

All sample from **UCAS's pre-applicant database**, from across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Fieldwork **25<sup>th</sup> August – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

Please note: All Year 12's will now be in Year 13, fieldwork was carried out before the start of term

# We explored...



Stages of university  
decision-making



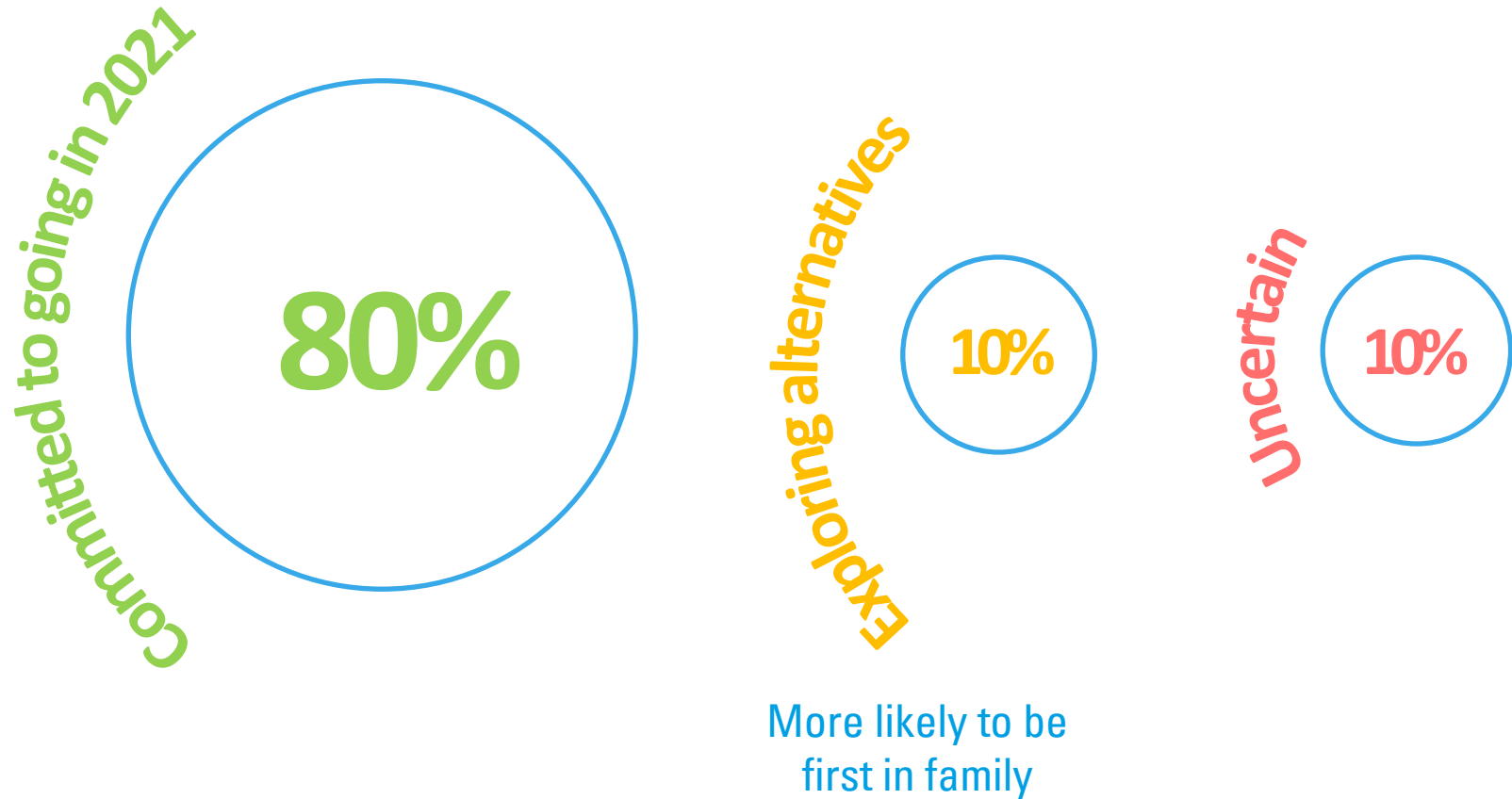
Information sources  
used in decision-making



Worries about going to  
university in 2021



# 4 in 5 are committed to going to university in 2021

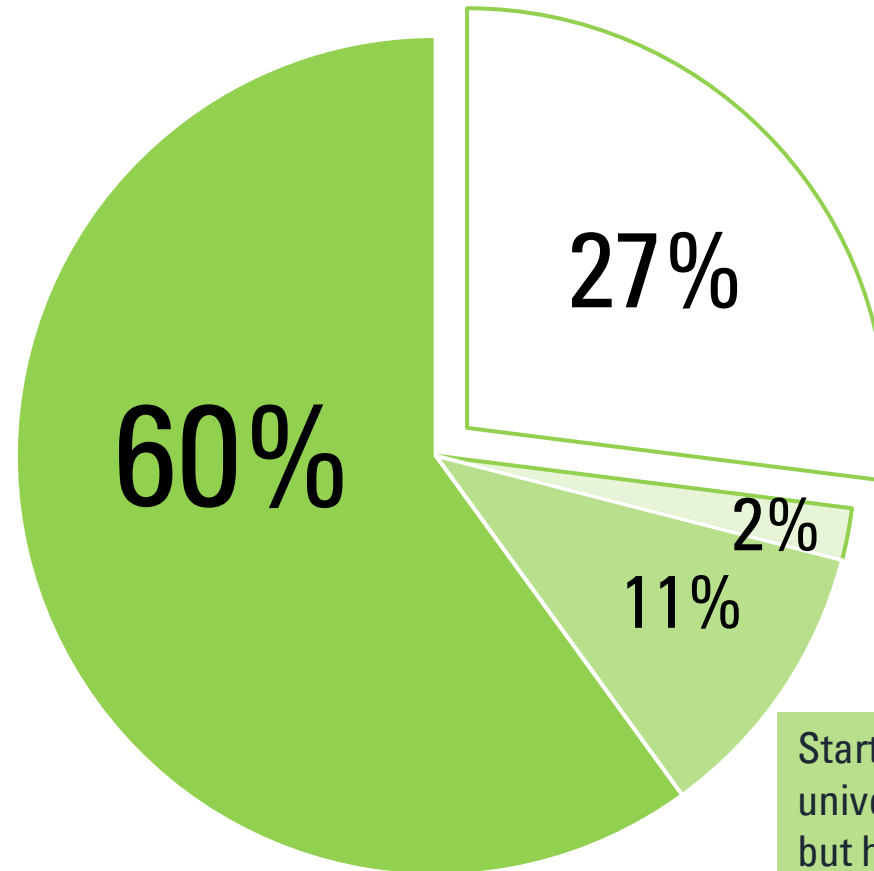


Q3. In light of the Coronavirus pandemic and its impact on education, how do you feel about your plans to go to university in 2021?  
Base: All respondents (743) Sept 21<sup>st</sup> 2020

# 87% of pre-applicants have already done some advanced research

Identified some courses/universities, but no final decision

- More likely to have changed course since Corona



Decided on five choices to apply to

Haven't decided on any universities or courses to apply to yet

Started researching which universities and courses to apply to but haven't made any decisions yet

September 21<sup>st</sup> 2020

# 83%

Have **not** changed their course since the start of the pandemic.

More likely to say they have the right information – this is key to cementing choice

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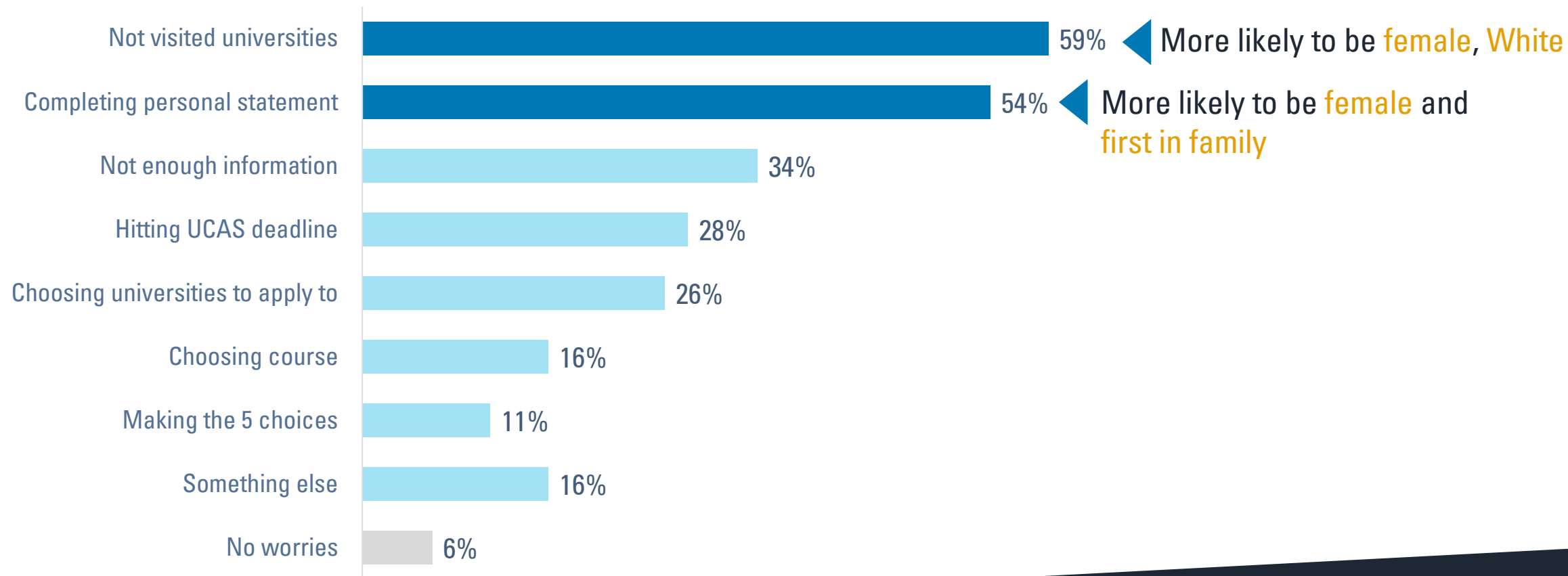
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# Pre-applicants are worried about not being able to visit their chosen universities in person

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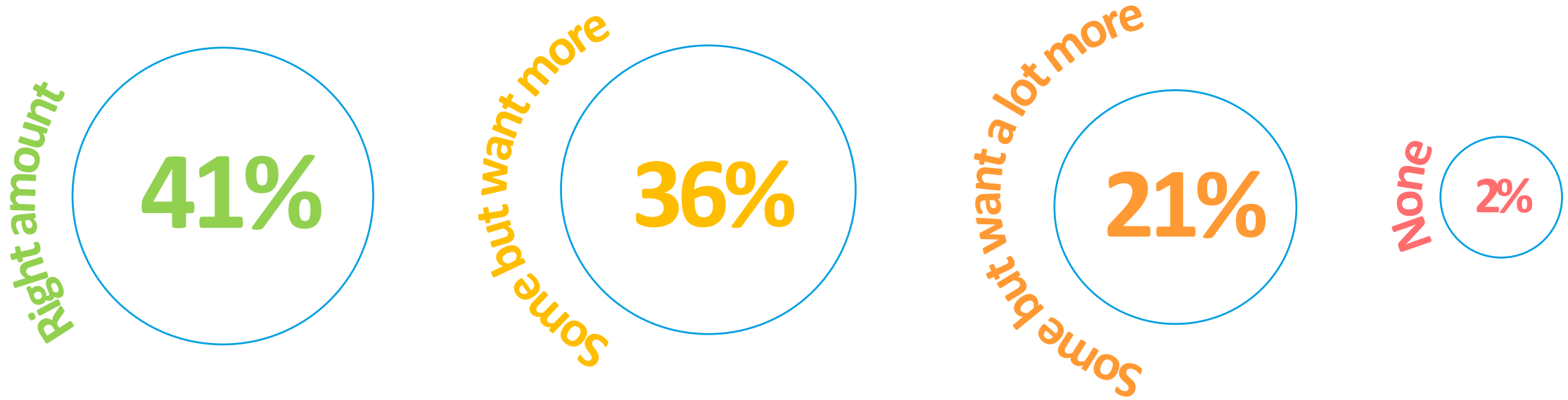
% worried about these when applying to university



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# The majority already have the information they need



September 21<sup>st</sup> 2020

99%

of pre-applicants have  
researched using a  
university website

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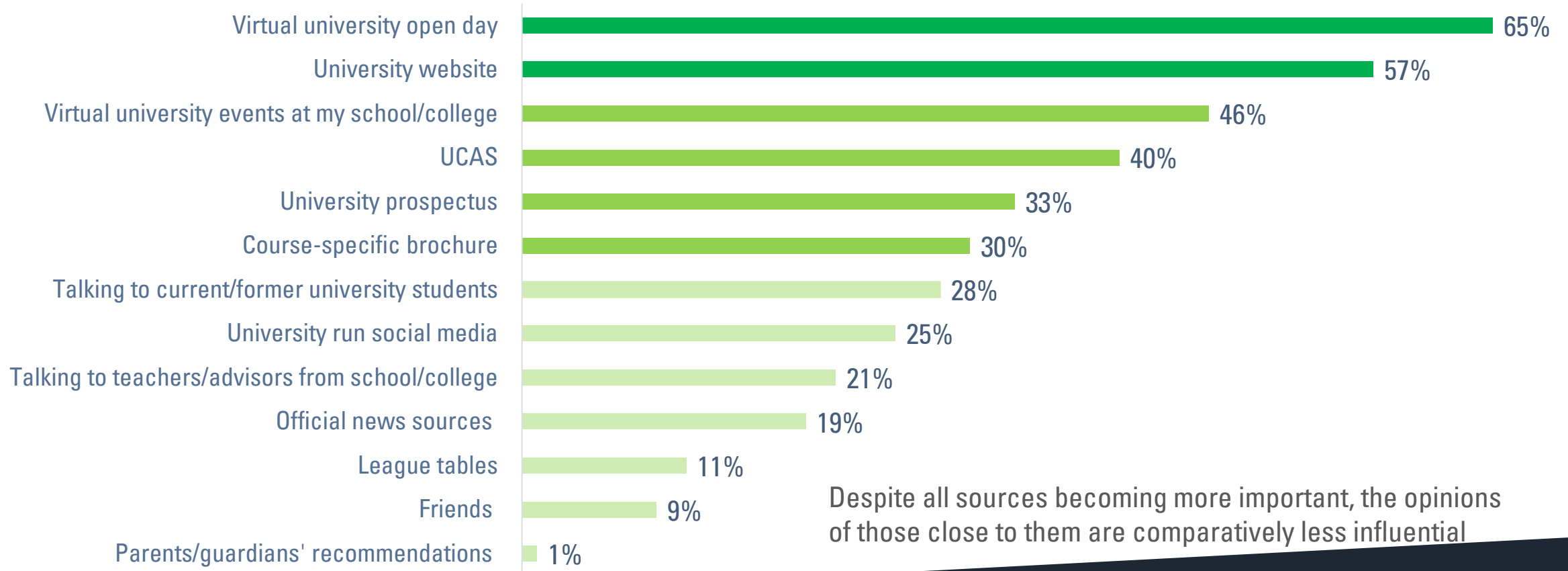
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Q7. Thinking about the information sources you've been using to help decide which universities to apply to, have any become more or less important to you since the start of the pandemic?

Base: All respondents (743) Sept 21<sup>st</sup> 2020

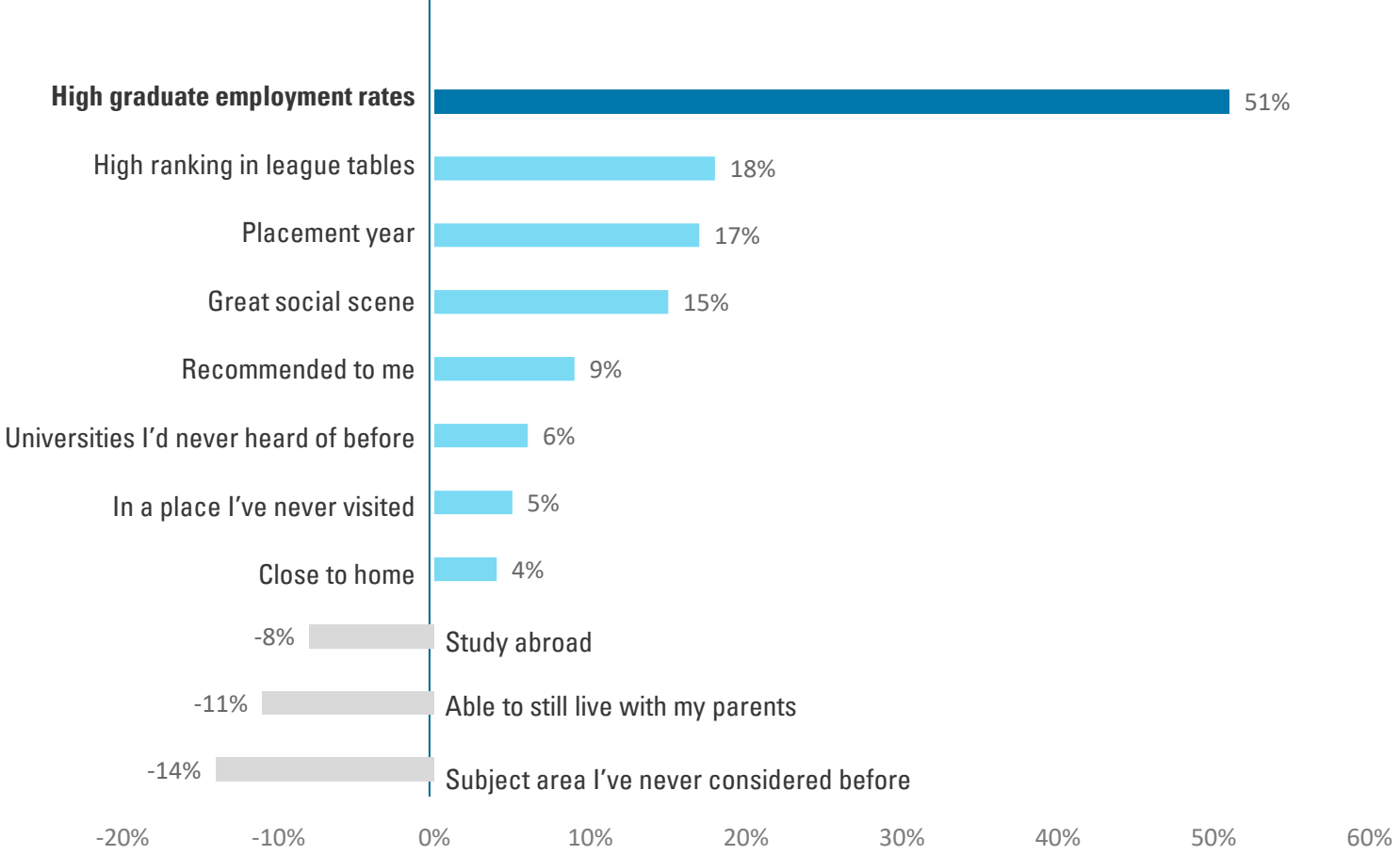
# Overall, virtual university open days and university website September 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 have increased in importance with more than 50% of pre-applicants

% NET increase in importance (taking 'less' important away from 'more' important)



# Graduate employment has increased in importance with more than 50% of pre-applicants

% NET increase in importance (taking 'less' important away from 'more' important)



Q8. Since the start of the pandemic, do you feel differently about the following in terms of their importance?  
Base: All respondents (743) Sept 21<sup>st</sup> 2020



## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PROVIDERS

Providing more information about your graduate's employability is the easiest change you can make at the moment

The 2021 cycle is far from over as regards recruitment – pre-applicants are still researching their choices

In addition to physical info, your virtual events also need to showcase other students so applicants can visualise themselves with you

It's crucial to reassure applicants that they won't be disadvantaged by a high deferral rate from 2020

80% of the UCAS pre-applicant audience want to go to university in 2021

Only 27% have decided on their 5 choices – the rest are still open to new information and possibilities

59% are worried about making their university choice if they can't visit in person

Your website is the most important recruitment tool you have at your disposal

Graduate earning potential is now more important for over 50% of applicants

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