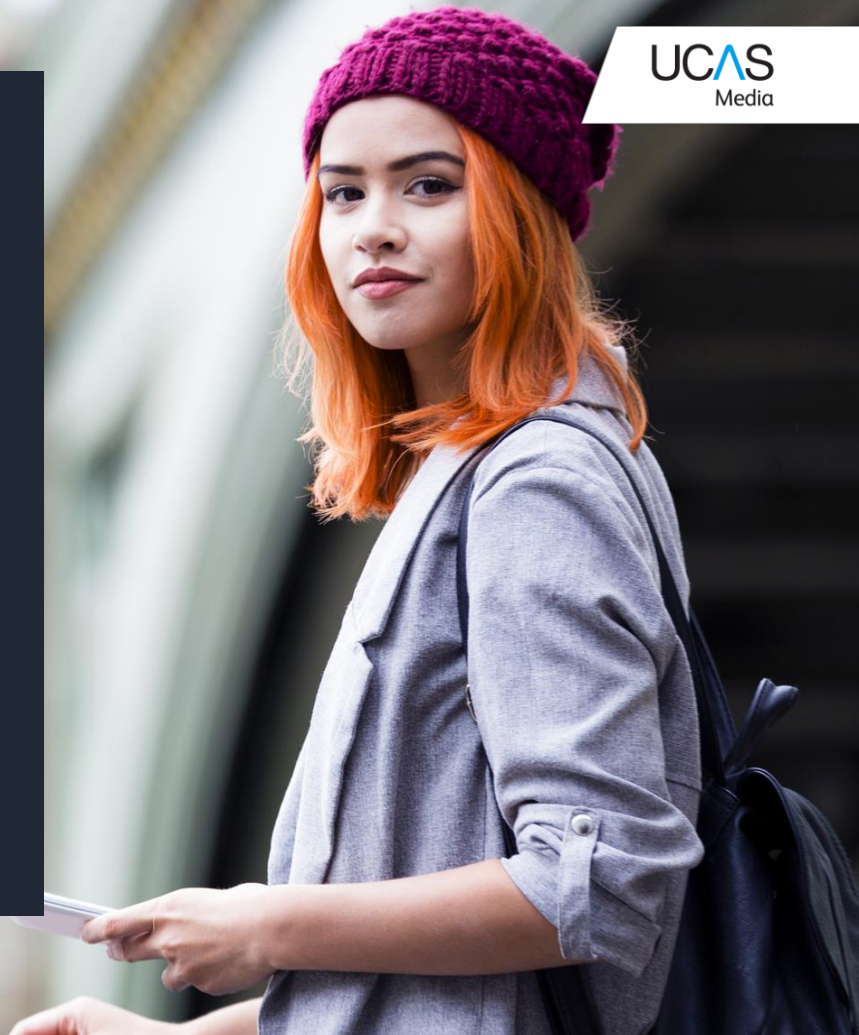


MARCH 2022

# UCAS INSIGHT NEWSLETTER



## Welcome to the UCAS Insight Newsletter – March 2022.

It's late March and almost time for open day season to get started once again. As the days get longer, exhibition halls get set up, and campuses open their doors to hopeful students; pre-applicants begin their tours of the country to assess all of their options. And for existing applicants it's already crunch time, as the early offer-holders narrow down five choices to two.

Amidst all this decision-making, and with a turbulent period behind us, this month we're diving deep into the 2022 student mindset.

**Let's get stuck in.**

# What are students doing?

On [ucas.com](https://ucas.com)

# WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

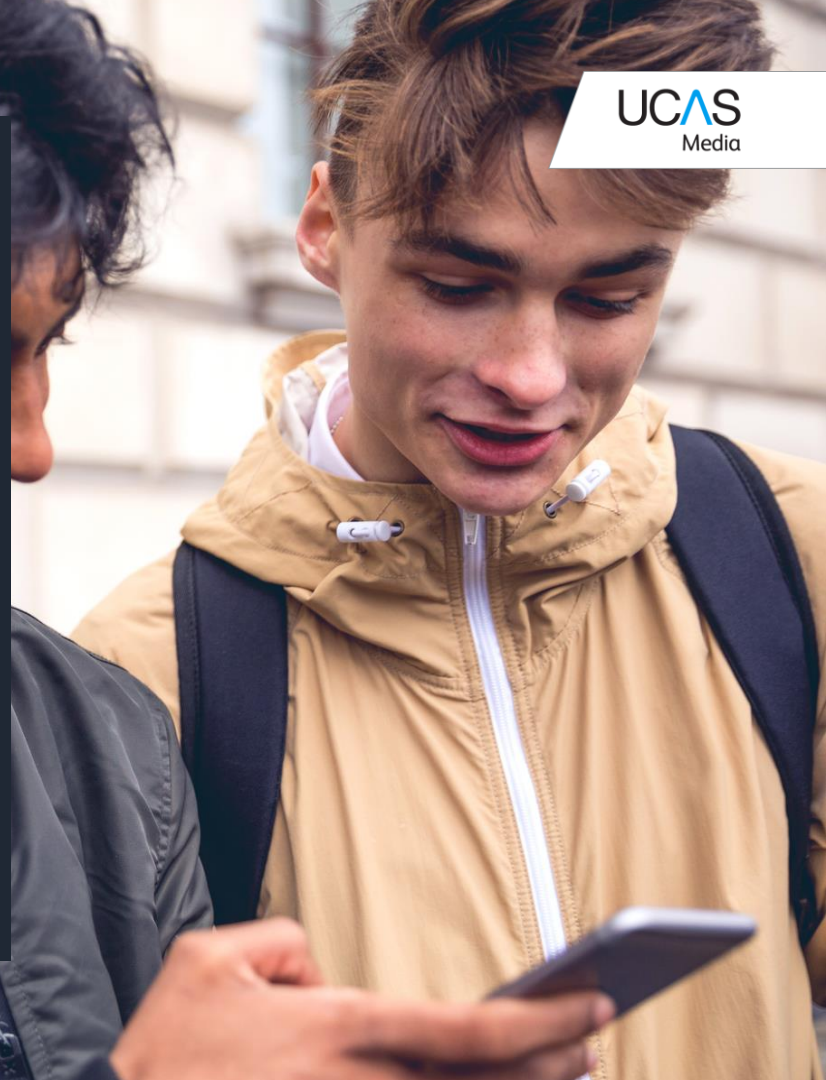
TOP SEARCHED FOR SUBJECTS ON UCAS SEARCH IN FEBRUARY 2022

Position for  
February 2022

=	1	Medicine
▲ <sup>1</sup>	2	Psychology
▼ <sub>1</sub>	3	Law
=	4	Nursing
▲ <sup>1</sup>	5	Business

▲ <sup>7</sup>	6	Computer science
▲ <sup>1</sup>	7	Social work
▼ <sub>1</sub>	8	Physiotherapy
▼ <sub>4</sub>	9	Midwifery
=	10	Architecture

▲  
Change in  
position since  
February 2021



## WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

UCAS.COM USERS: TOP 10 NON-UK COUNTRIES IN FEBRAURY 2022



Position for  
February 2022

▲ <sup>1</sup>	1	India
▼ <sup>1</sup>	2	United States
▲ <sup>1</sup>	3	China
▲ <sup>2</sup>	4	Nigeria
▼ <sup>2</sup>	5	Ireland
▼ <sup>1</sup>	6	Hong Kong
▲ <sup>4</sup>	7	France
▼ <sup>3</sup>	8	Pakistan
▲ <sup>4</sup>	9	Singapore
▲ <sup>1</sup>	10	United Arab Emirates

Change in  
position since  
February 2021



# WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

UCAS.COM USERS: TOP 10 UK CITIES IN FEBRUARY 2022



Position for  
February 2022

=	1	London
=	2	Birmingham
=	3	Glasgow
▲ <sup>11</sup>	4	Croydon
▼ <sup>1</sup>	5	Manchester
=	6	Leeds
▲ <sup>1</sup>	7	Liverpool
▲ <sup>2</sup>	8	Edinburgh
▲ <sup>5</sup>	9	Belfast
▼ <sup>5</sup>	10	Bristol

Change in position  
since February 2021

POSTCODE DISTRICT MAP



# WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

TOP UG PAGES ON UCAS.COM IN FEBRUARY 2022

Position for  
February 2022



=	1	Tracking your UCAS application
▲ <sup>2</sup>	2	Applying to university
▲ <sup>4</sup>	3	Extra choices
▲ <sup>2</sup>	4	How to write a personal statement
=	5	UCAS undergraduate: When to apply

▲  
Change in  
position since  
February 2021

# The 2022 student mindset

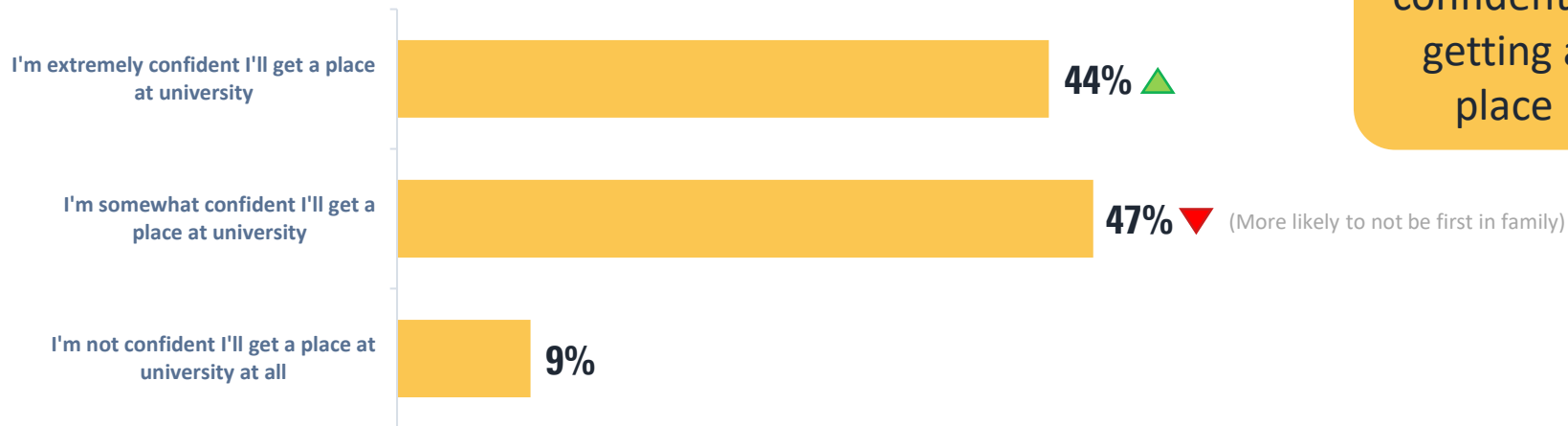
Key findings from our Feb 2022 applicant and registrant surveys  
with YouthSight



# The applicant mindset

# Overall, confidence of getting a place at university/college is stable, and to a greater extent compared to 2021

Q: How are you feeling about getting a place at university this year?

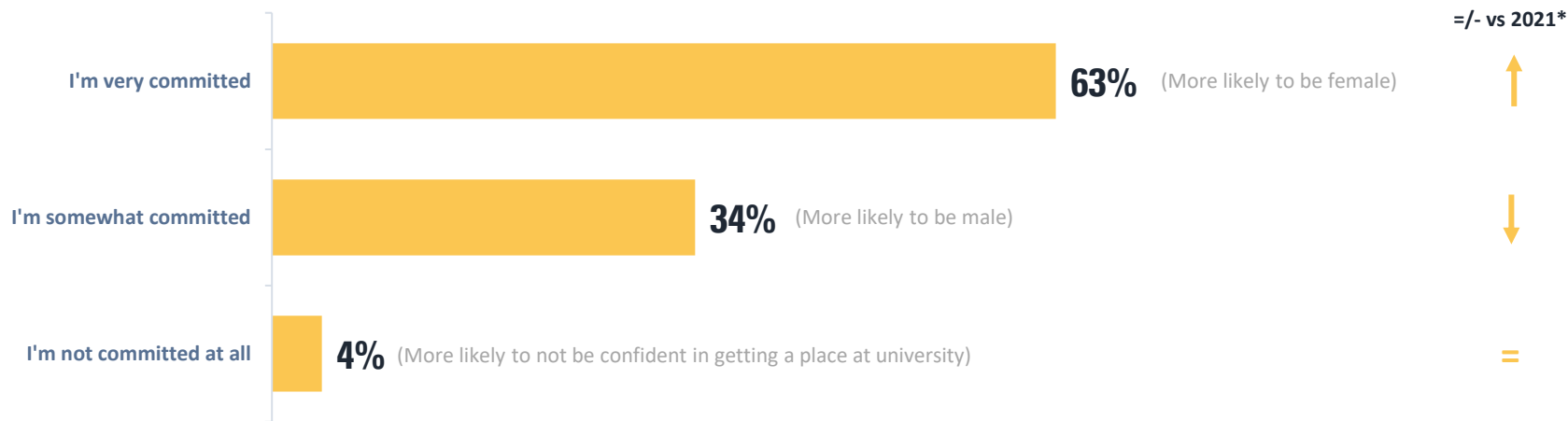


**91%** are confident in getting a place

Significant difference vs 2021 at 95% confidence level

# More applicants are very committed to their first choice university this year

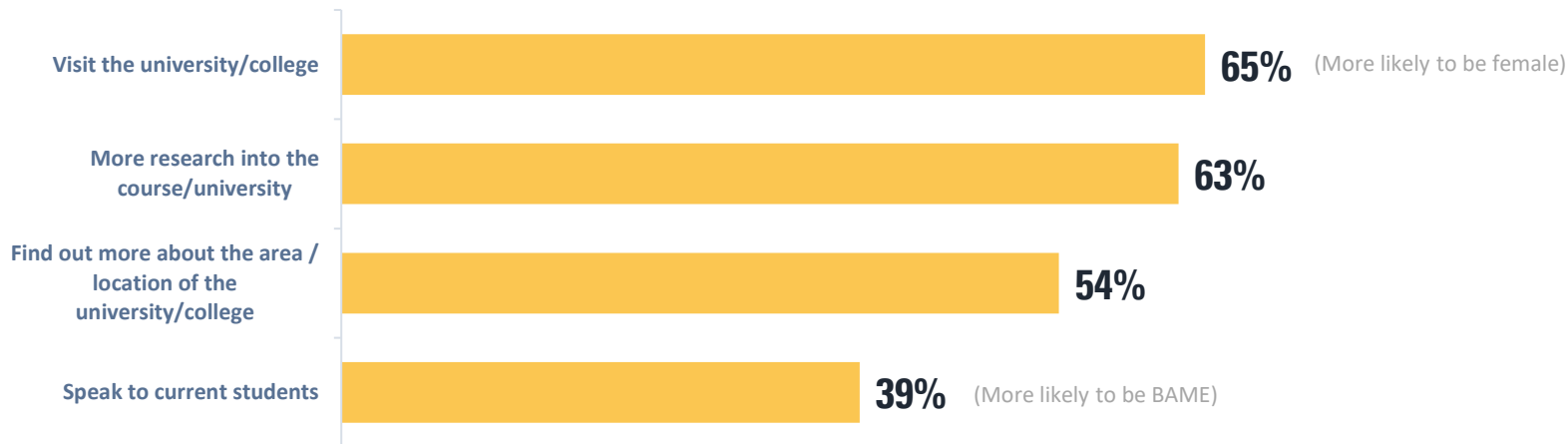
Q: How committed are you to your preferred university choice having not visited it in person?



\*Last year this question was framed around in-person visits

## Applicants still want to find out more, largely through visits and researching the course/university

What will applicants do now in the application process



# Summary

As COVID restrictions have eased, applicants are feeling more confident about getting a place and are also more certain in their decision making

While students are in a positive place, we need to be mindful that this may not reflect the reality of results

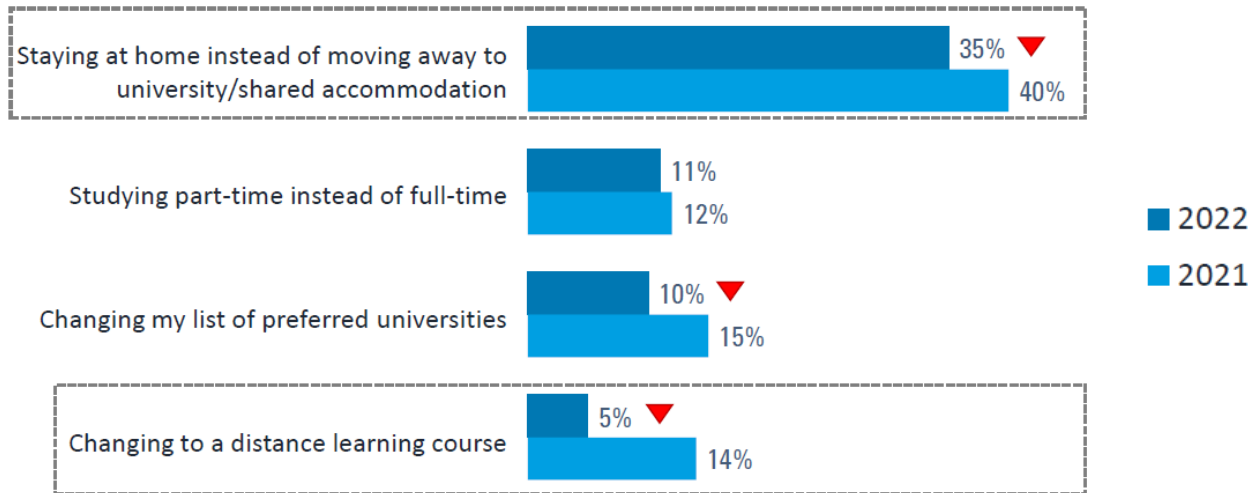
Many feel ready for university, but encouraging university visits and giving information will make them feel more prepared



# Assessing alternatives

# Far fewer applicants are considering switching to a distance learning course or staying home to study

Q: At this point, are you thinking about changing any of your decisions about university? (% who responded yes)

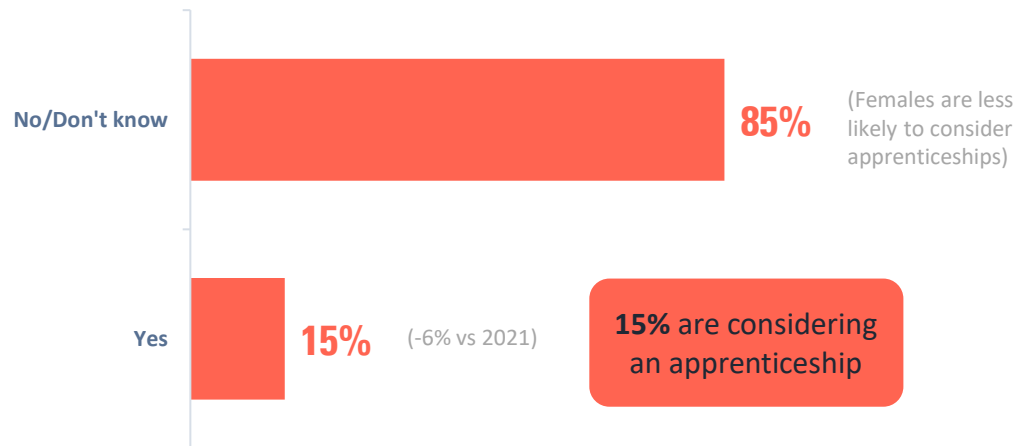


▼▲ Significant difference vs 2021 at 95% confidence level

# Consideration of apprenticeships declines, and females are much less likely to think about this option

## Consideration of changing decisions about university (% who said yes)

(NET: I'm seriously considering this, I'm thinking about this)



# 18%

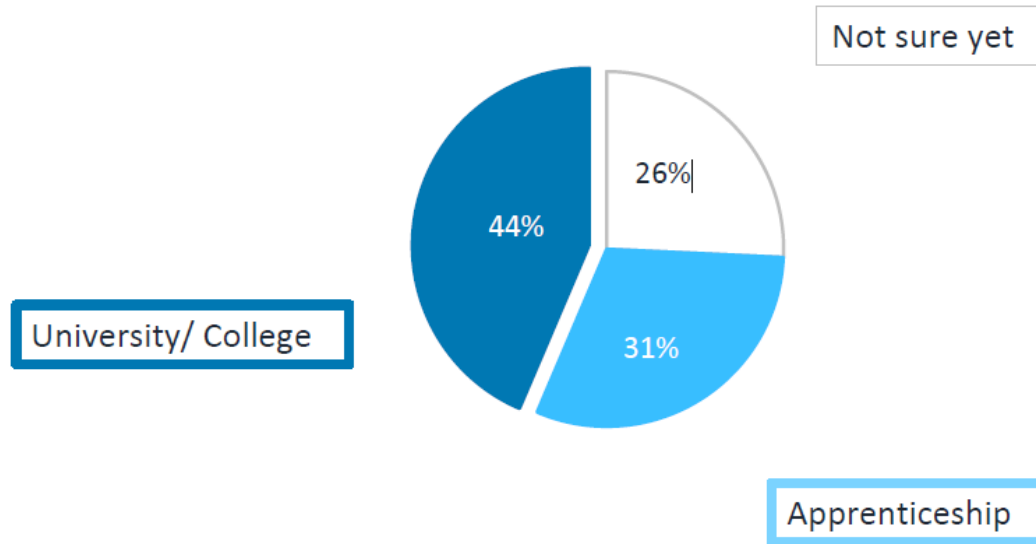
Are thinking about studying a higher technical qualification

# 15%

Are thinking about studying modules individually while in employment

# Of those interested in both options, university is the preferred option

Preference, apprenticeship vs university/ college  
(Base: Those considering an apprenticeship)



# Summary

Applicants are feeling more secure in their decision to go to university/college which is reflected in a decline in the proportion considering alternatives

Students considering moving away has increased – your accommodation could help to sway their decisions

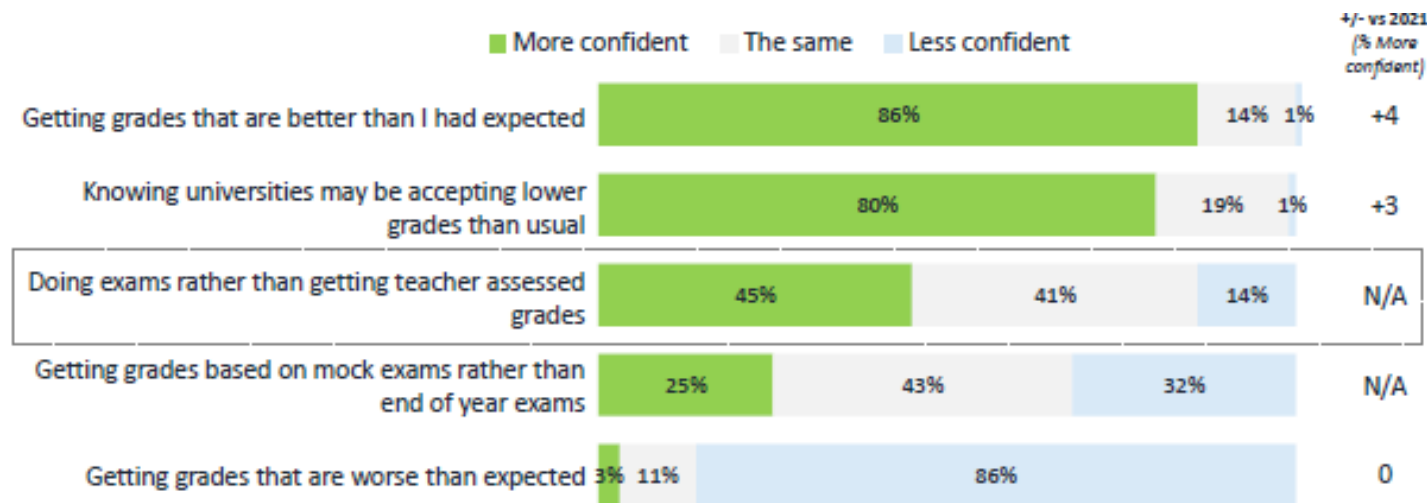
Although the volume interested in an apprenticeship has declined, a third with serious interest would choose an apprenticeship



# Impact of exams and assessments

## 45% of applicants feel more confident doing exams rather than getting teacher assessed grades

Q: How, if at all, would any of the following scenarios affect your confidence in getting a place at university this year?





# Keeping applicants informed on their options will boost confidence for many

Q: How, if at all, would any of the following scenarios affect your confidence in getting a place at university this year?



# Summary

Applicants largely feel more confident being assessed based on exams, as they will be this year, which appears to be aiding their university decision making

There is a proportion who would have been more ambitious with teacher assessed grades – Clearing could be a mix of under and over achievers

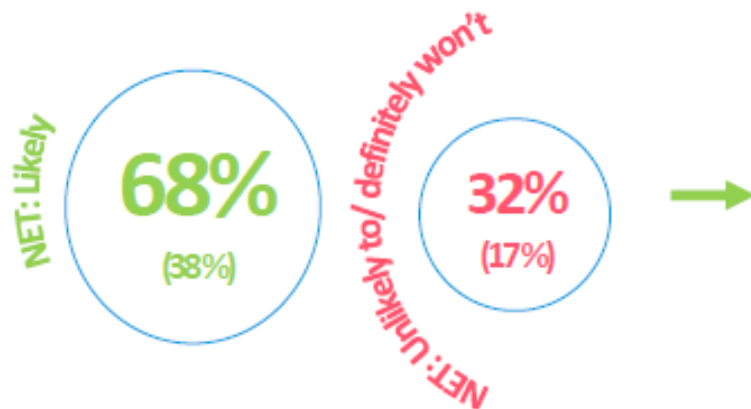
Applicants still want reassurance and flexibility, so making sure they know about all of the options available to them is crucial

# The registrant mindset



# Many registrants are still likely to apply to university/college and have made their decisions

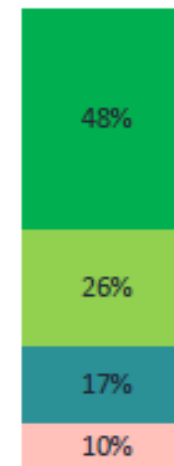
## Likelihood to apply



## Status of those likely to apply

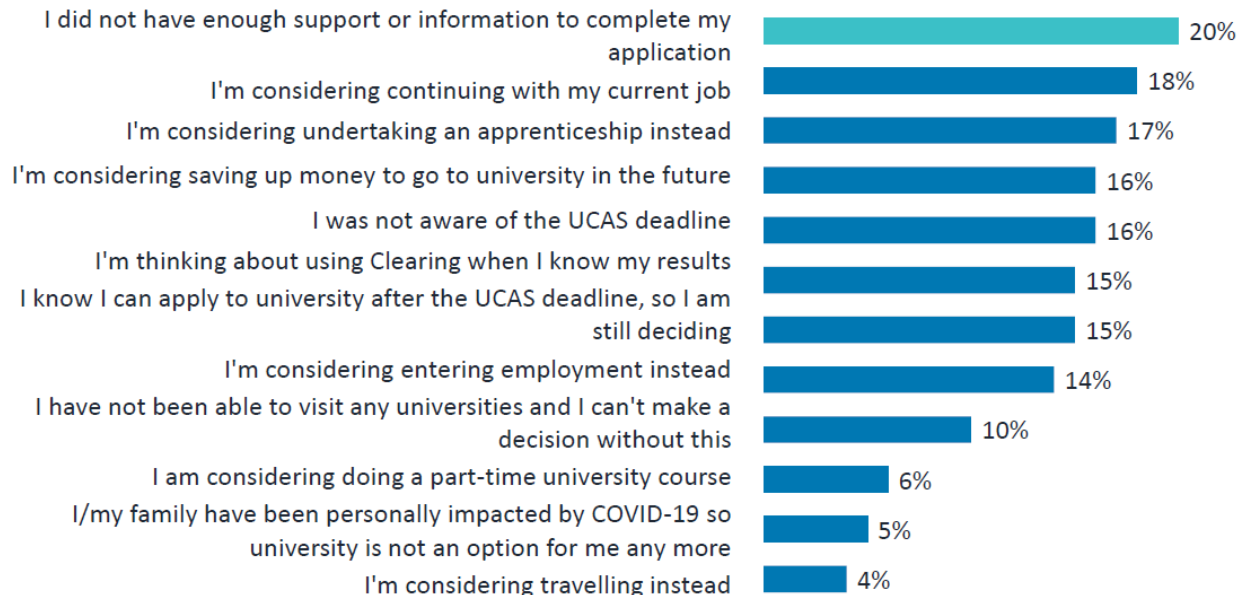
(Base: Those likely to complete app)

- I've firmly decided on universities/courses
- Identified some I'm interested but haven't made my final decisions
- Started researching, but haven't made any decisions yet
- Undecided on universities or courses





## Ensuring they have all necessary information is key in getting these applications over the line



## Summary

Registrants generally still want to apply to university/college and have made all of their decisions

However, some feel there are gaps in their knowledge which need to be filled in order to complete their applications

There's opportunity to convert late applications – with an upward trend this year

# THE 2022 STUDENT MINDSET

## KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

- **91%** are **confident they will get a place** and are more committed to their choices
- Fewer are concerned about needing to change their plans compared to 2021
- **39%** are still deciding between their choices and want **more information** from universities/colleges
- **45% feel more confident doing exams** than getting teacher assessed grades, and 19% said they would have been more ambitious with teacher assessed grades
- Consideration of apprenticeships has decreased from 21% to 15%. However, 31% of applicants considering both university and apprenticeship would choose an apprenticeship if offered both (44% would choose university/college, 26% are not yet sure)
- **40% are considering living away from home** – up 5% from 2021
- 68% of registrants are **still likely to apply**

[Watch the webinar playback](#)  
[or view the full presentation](#)

## Knowing their mindset, we're halfway there...

Now that we understand what students are thinking and how they're feeling, we can start using this information to help them:

For those deciding between choices, there's opportunity to influence their decision with **positive, reassuring** communication. **Clear steps and actions** will help alleviate any **nerves and anxiety**.

For that greater number who are considering moving away, hearing from accommodation providers **may help sway the decision** and drive decisions.

For those seeking reassurance, **more information from universities and colleges** about process, expectations and alternative options would be a welcome addition.

And as ever, if you need more data and insight like this, [get in touch](#).

We'll be back next month, with more insight, from March. See you then!

# Get in touch

For further information and insights contact your UCAS account manager or email us at [ucasmediaeducationteam@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:ucasmediaeducationteam@ucas.ac.uk).