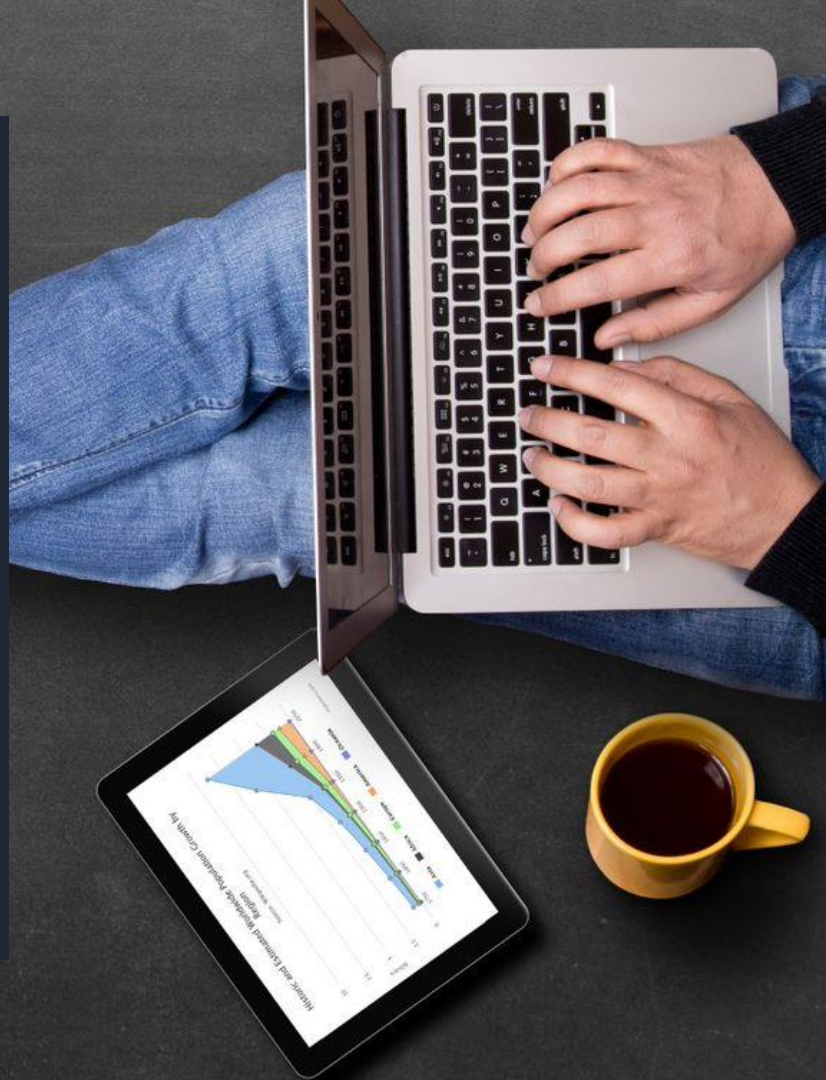


Insight Newsletter

November 2022

UCAS



Welcome to the UCAS Insight Newsletter – November 2022

As 2023 appears around the corner, so does a welcome chance to reflect on another year of big changes. And as Gen A reaches secondary school (whilst some Gen Z start to approach their 30s), might 2023 mark the start of a whole new marketing strategy for higher education?

But for now, this year's **undergraduates** are busy chipping away at their December deadlines and getting ready to return home for the holidays. For **applicants** and **pre-applicants**, there's a calm before the storm, as the start of 2023 will see application deadlines come thick and fast, as well as the first offers come trickling out to hopeful learners.

Here at UCAS HQ, we've been busy dissecting the findings of our *Placed Applicant Survey 2022*, which comes after surveying more than 6000 students in the summer. With their results in, offers received, and decisions made – we asked them about the biggest influential factors on what, why, and where they chose. Aside from showing us that, in many ways, we're finally leaving the logistics of COVID behind – there are plenty of other changes that need discussing.

Let's get stuck in.

What are students doing?

Across ucas.com

WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

Top ten searched for subjects on UCAS Search in October 2022

Position for
October 2022

▲ ¹	1	Psychology	▲ ⁴	6	Pharmacy
▼ ₁	2	Medicine	▲ ¹	7	Computer science
=	3	Law	▼ ₂	8	Physiotherapy
=	4	Nursing	▲ ²	9	Economics
=	5	Business	▼ ₃	10	Criminology

▲
Change in position
since October 2021



WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

Top ten visited Subject Guides on ucas.com in October 2022

Position for
October 2022

=	1	Psychology	=	6	Biological sciences
▲ ²	2	Law	New page	7	Criminology*
▼ ₁	3	Business, management and administrative studies	▼ ₁	8	Architecture, building and planning
▼ ₁	4	Medicine and allied subjects	=	9	Accounting
=	5	Computer science	▲ ³	10	Aerospace engineering

Change in position
since October 2021

*Please note that the Criminology Subject Guide went live late in October 2021.



WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

Top ten visited City Guides on [ucas.com](#) in October 2022



Position for
October 2022

=	1	London
▲ ³	2	Birmingham
=	3	Manchester
▲ ⁵	4	Liverpool
▼ ³	5	Bath
▼ ²	6	Bristol
=	7	Edinburgh
▼ ²	8	Leeds
▲ ⁶	9	Glasgow
▲ ²	10	Cardiff

POSTCODE DISTRICT MAP

Change in position
since October 2021



WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

Top five undergraduate pages on ucas.com in October 2022

Position for
October 2022

=	1	How to write a UCAS Undergraduate personal statement
=	2	Applying to university
=	3	Filling in your UCAS Undergraduate application
=	4	When to apply
▲ ¹	5	How to choose the right Undergraduate course for you

Change in position
since October 2021



Introducing Course Feasibility

In October we launched Course Feasibility – your quick and easy data insight tool for launching successful courses

Make informed decisions on new courses – and launch with confidence

12% of new courses are dropped or remodelled within their first 3 years (based on courses that were new in 2018)

27% of new courses, which weren't dropped or remodelled in their first 3 years, received fewer than 10 acceptances in their first 3 years combined

Courses can fail when the market appetite doesn't exist. Course feasibility provides you with data insight to evaluate and assess new course ideas.

Backed by our data and consultancy function, it takes into account market health, competitors and course sizes, demographics, and overlapping courses to help you understand the propensity for success of new course ideas.

- **Minimise costly mistakes by launching unsuccessful courses**
- **Make evidence driven decisions**
- **Get ahead of your course planning for 2024**



What the report will help you understand

- Competitors
- Sector demand
- Most common titles
- Applicant preferences
- Demographics
- Average course sizes
- Applicant tariff
- Qualifications applied with

- Overlapping subjects
- Local demand
- Competitiveness
- Who is successful in the market
- Changes over time
- Application route



Reports delivered in 5 days

Number of reports	Price per report (excluding VAT)
1 keyword report	£2,000
5 keyword reports	£1,800
10 keyword reports	£1,700
15 keyword reports	£1,600
20 keyword reports	£1,500

Don't have data experts?

We can offer training to:

- Support to upskill faculty staff
- Support to embed a more robust process for opening new courses
- Ensure you always have the data and the skills to use it to back up decisions and help drive marketing decisions.

You give us the title of the courses you want to start



Using our custom keywords algorithm combined with applicant overlap we cluster suitable courses together



We'll send you your report within 5 working days

Find out more at [on ucas.com](https://ucas.com) or speak to your Customer Success Director

Placed applicant survey 2022

Key findings from this year's survey relating to decision making and open days

Key findings

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Almost a third

decided on their
subject BEFORE sixth
form/ college



A quarter

decided on their university
after visiting them



Location the most
important factor when
choosing a university



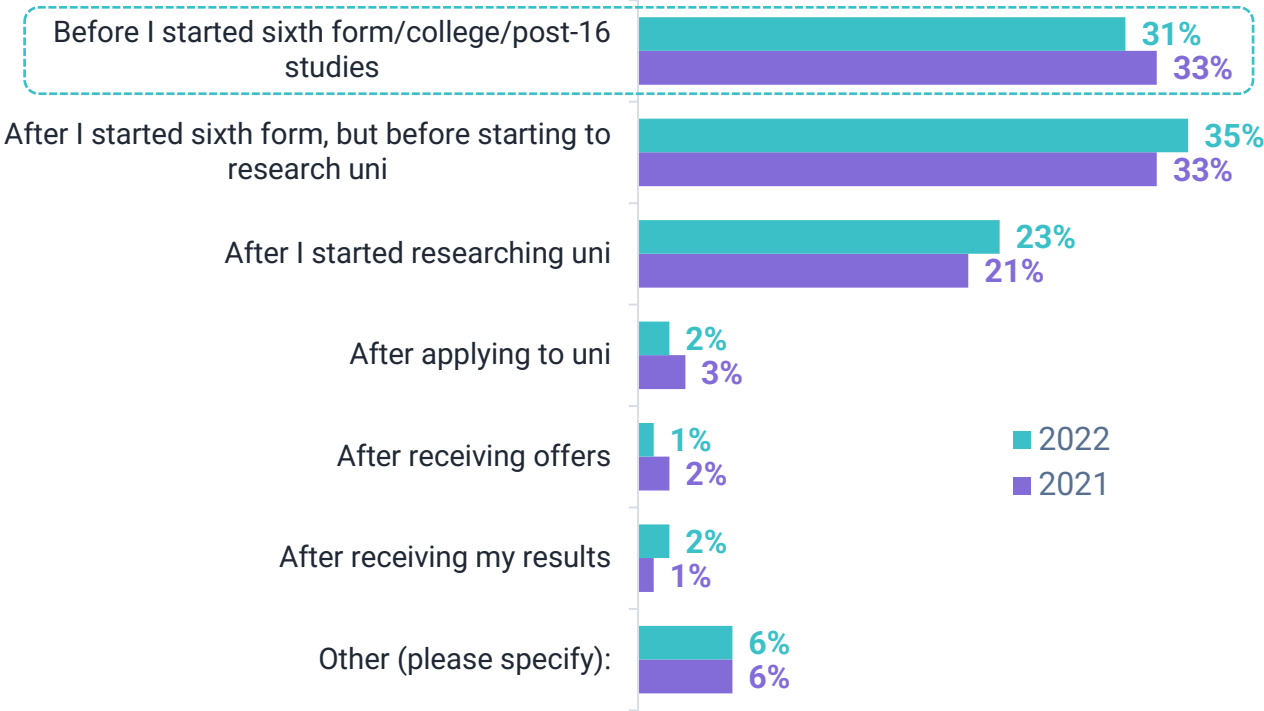
Travel and expense key

barriers to attending in person
open days



Over a third didn't
attend virtual open days,
because they didn't think
they'd be useful

Almost a third of students are making their subject decisions before sixth form/college

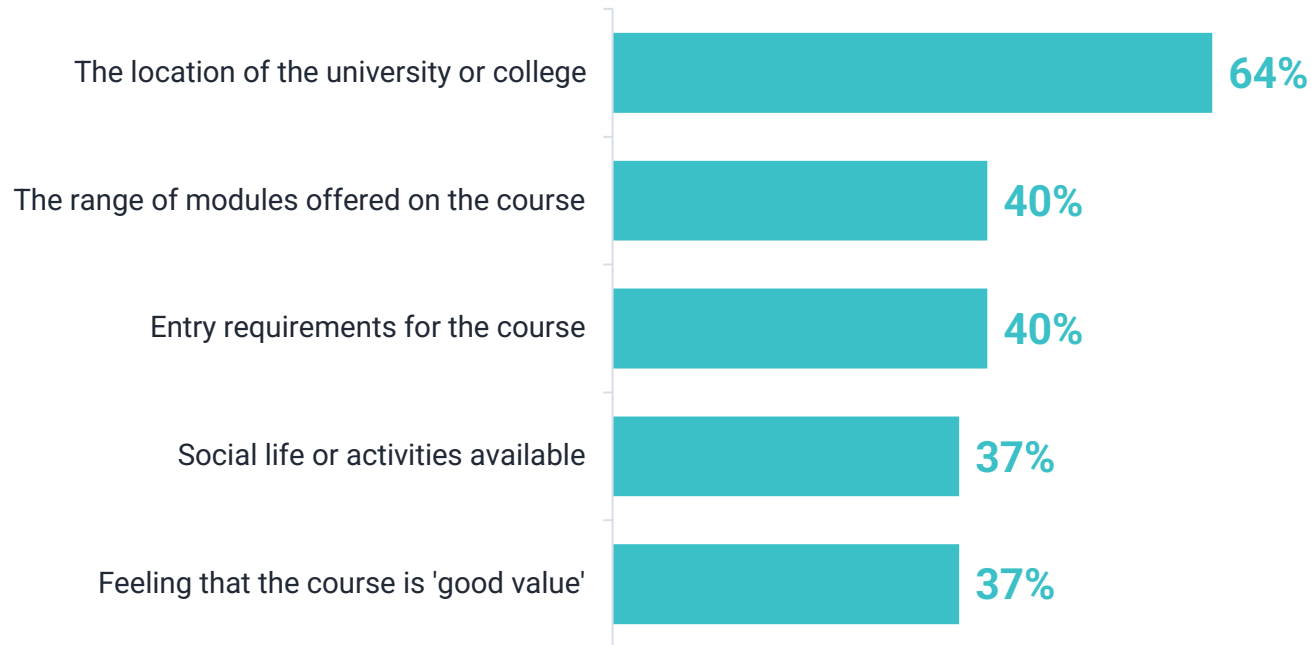


We can contact prospective applicants for the 2024 cycle on your behalf now to facilitate your early engagement campaigns.

No. respondents: 5,863

The location of the uni or college was the most important factor when deciding where to study

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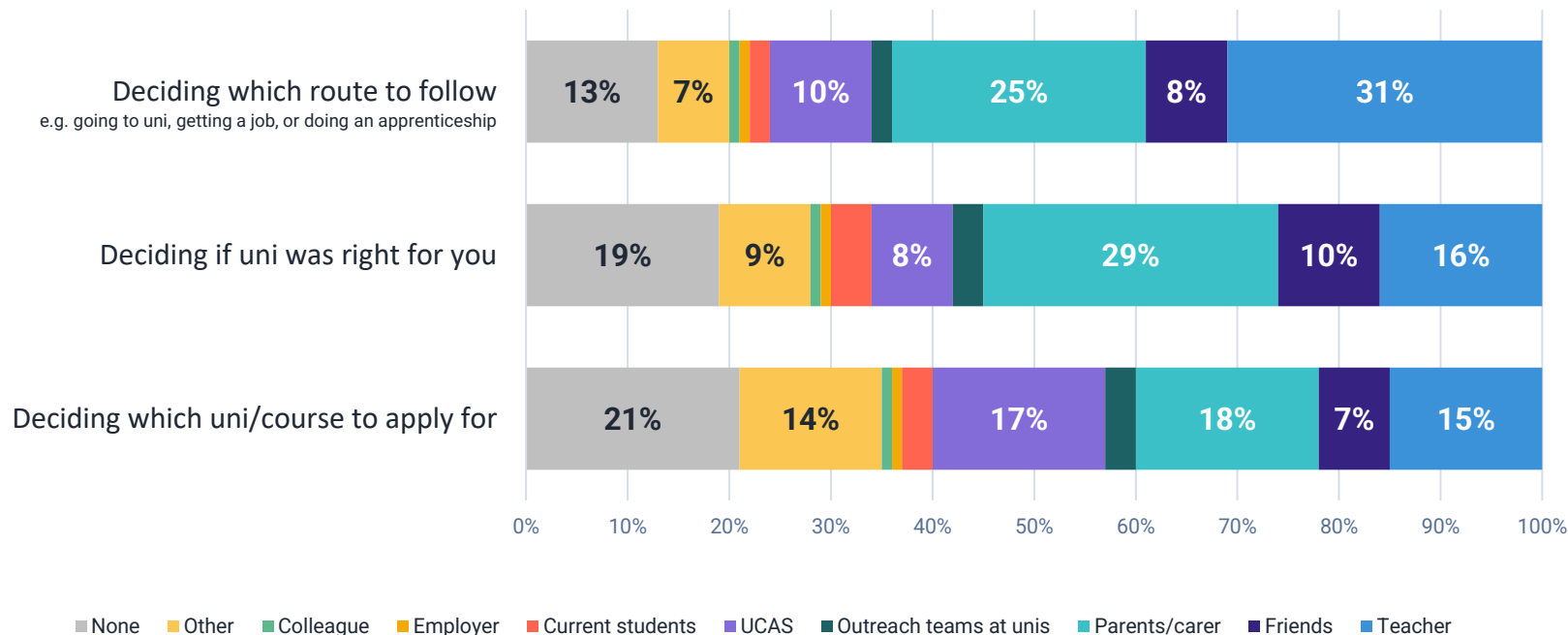


We offer location targeting across our marketing channels, ensuring that you can contact prospective applicants in relevant locations to you.

No. respondents: 5,844

Teachers and parents are most important to students in the early stages of their decision making

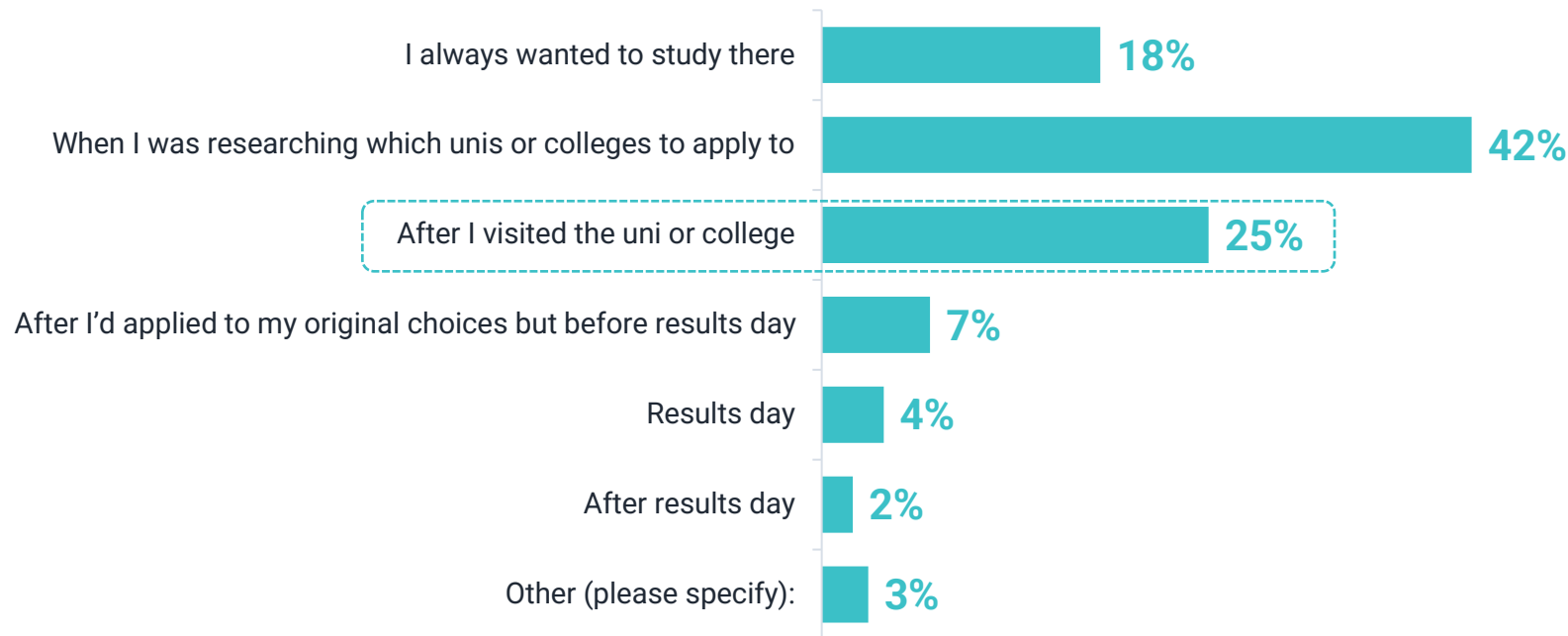
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No. respondents: 6,253

A quarter of placed applicants decided which uni or college to study after visiting them

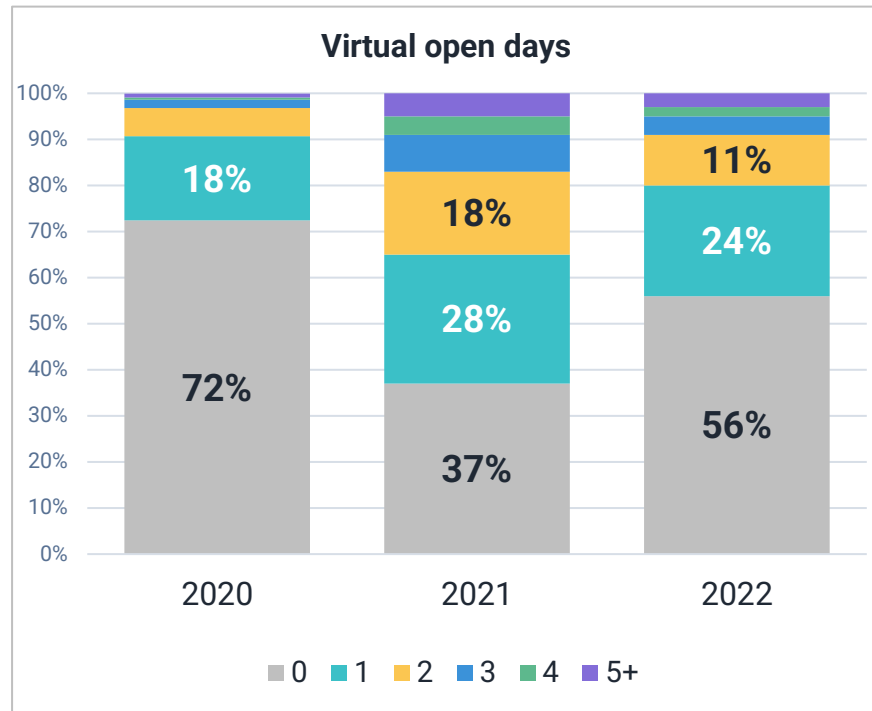
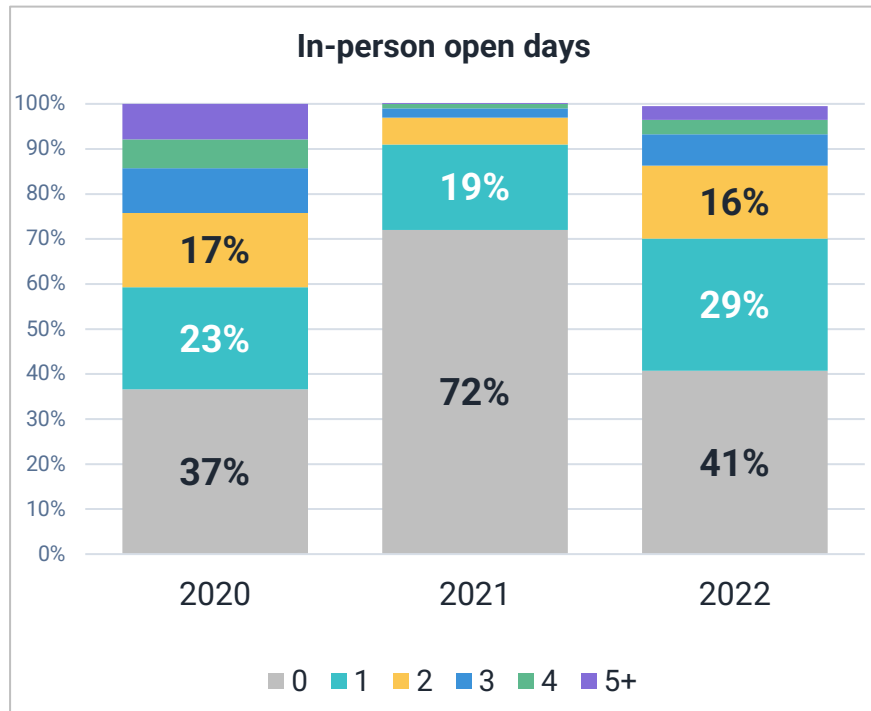
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No. respondents: 5,862

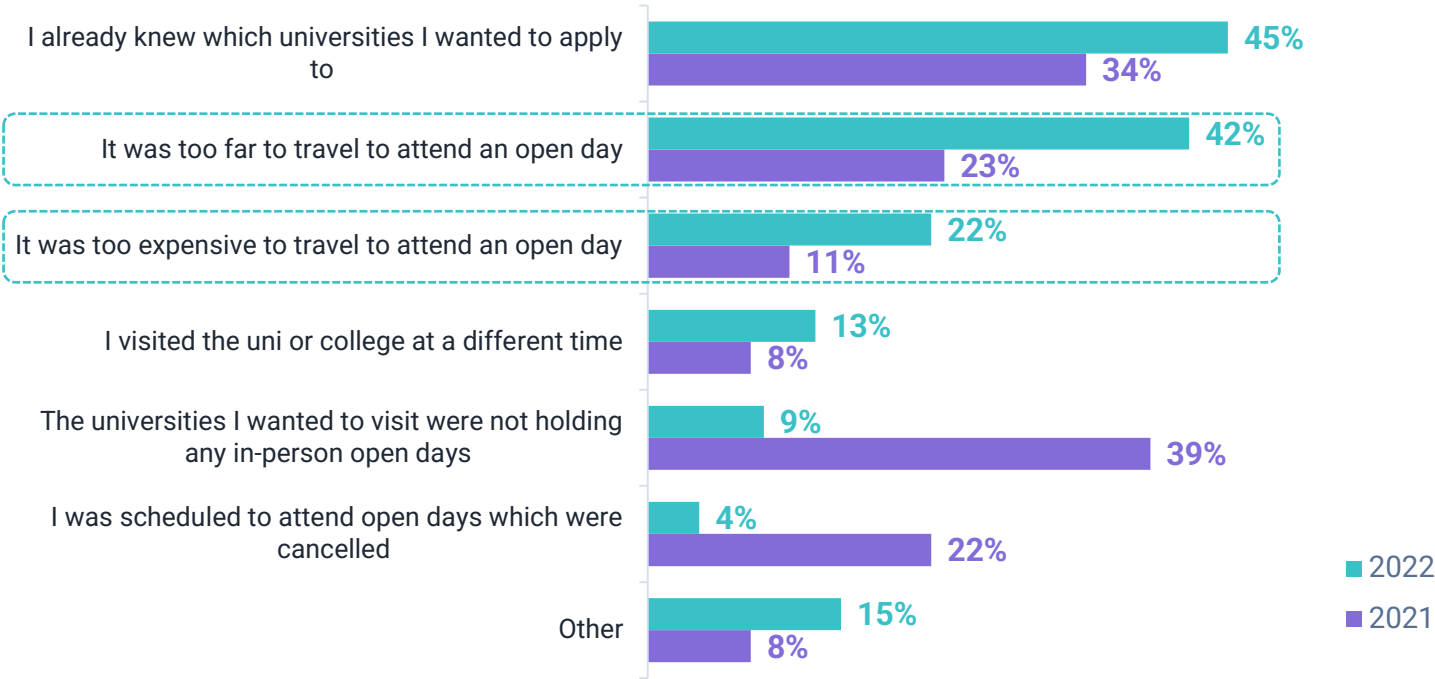
In-person open day attendance is back to pre-Covid levels at the expense of virtual open days

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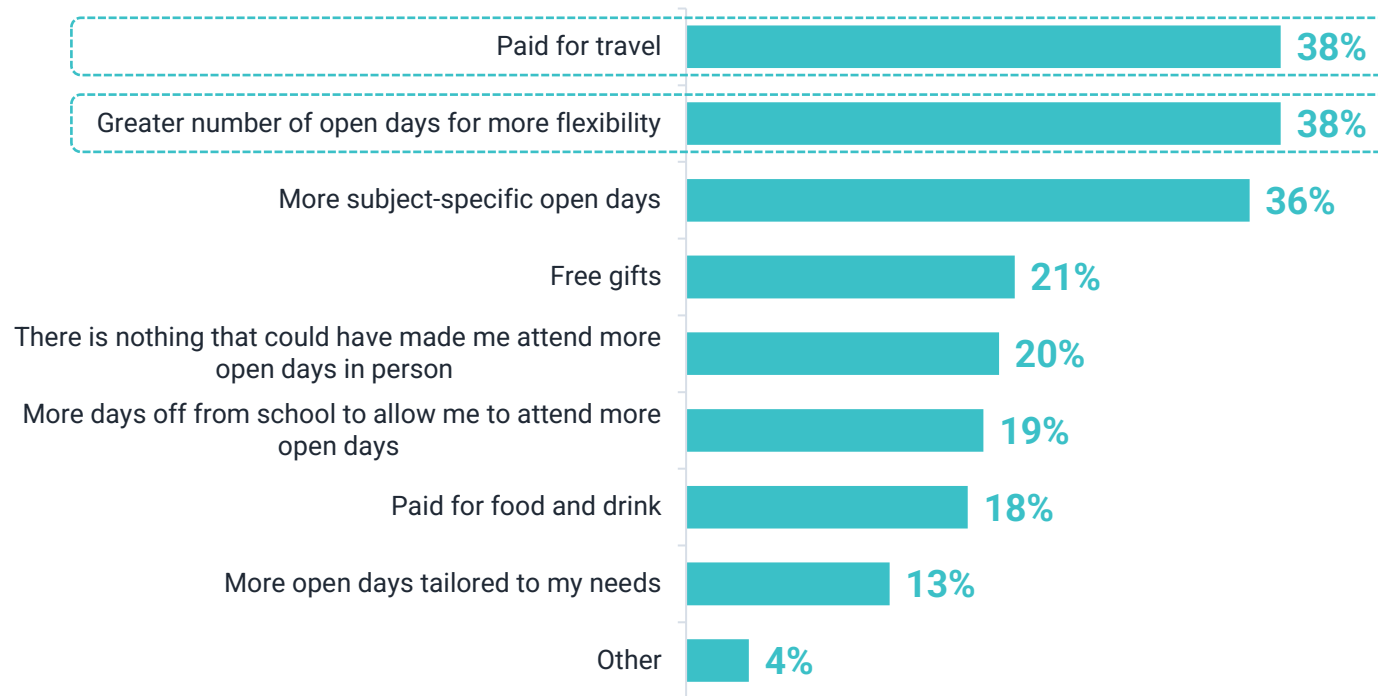
No. respondents: 5,899

Distance and cost of travel were key reasons for applicants not attending in-person open days



No. respondents: 2,185

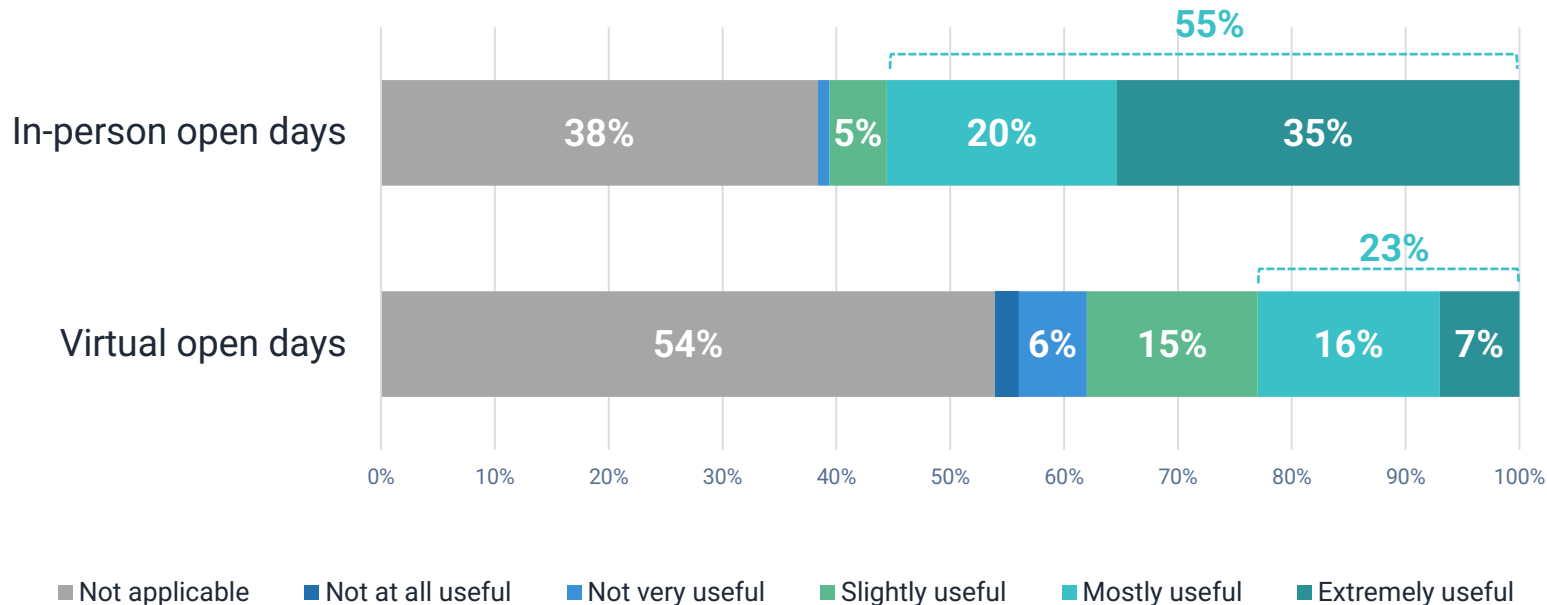
Applicants would have attended more in-person open days if travel had been paid for and if they were held on more dates



No. respondents: 5,814

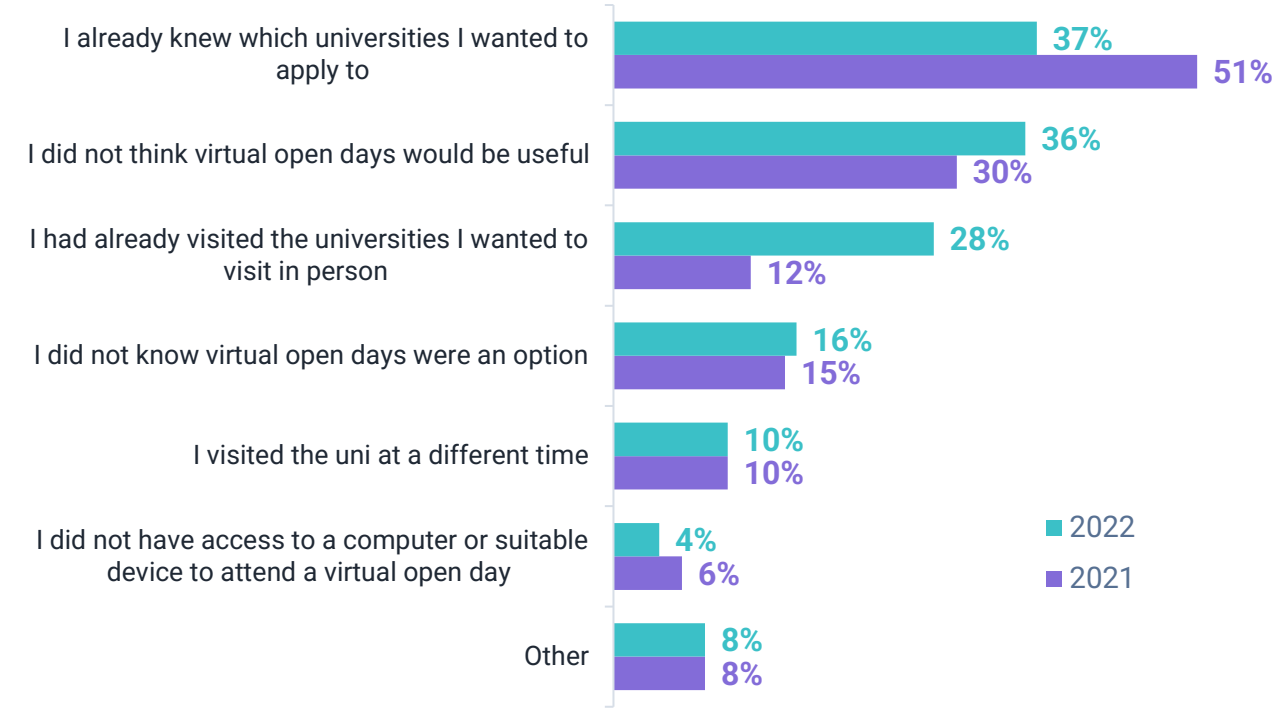
Applicants generally found in-person open days more useful than virtual open days

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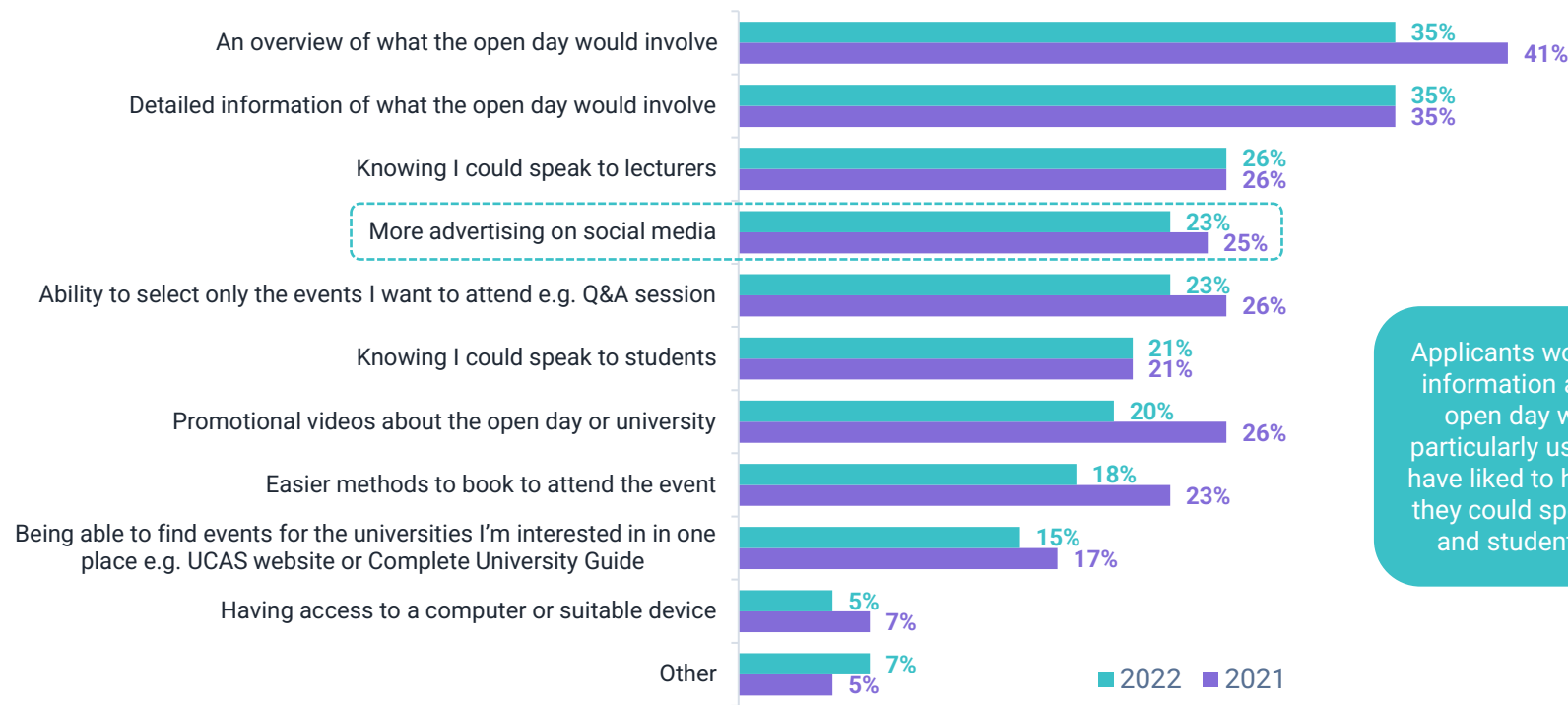
No. respondents: 5,853

36% didn't attend a virtual open day because they didn't think they would be useful



No. respondents: 3,209

Almost a quarter would have attended more virtual open days if had seen more advertising on social platforms



Applicants would have found information about what the open day would involve particularly useful, and would have liked to have known that they could speak to lecturers and students on the day.

No. respondents: 5,373

What this means for you

Students are making decisions early
– consider early outreach and awareness campaigns so they're aware of your institution when it matters

Teachers and parents are primary influencers in their decisions – your comms strategy to these groups is key

Your location and open days / campus visits are a deciding factor – make it easy for them to get there and know it'll be worth the visit

Virtual open days still have a place
– tell prospective students how useful they are and what to expect to gain more attendees

Turning lessons from 2022 into actions for 2023

Consider the passions of Gen Z (and perhaps even **Gen A**) and **engage early on emerging subjects** that align with these groups.

Technology subjects (*like AI and Data*), Finance (*like Crypto and Fintech*), Environmental (*like Sustainable Fashion and Circular Economy*) start as core interests from childhood.

And we know that a third choose their subjects before sixth form, so **getting into secondary schools with your portfolio of emerging subjects** (or niche topics) could engender students to your provision and build brand loyalty from a young age.

It will also **raise awareness among teachers and advisors**, who **may not be up-to-speed** with the growing popularity of these pathways.

Double down on your **location targeting** and **geographic marketing**.

More than two thirds of students say that location is the most important thing about a university – but outside of the big cities, **what does location really mean?**

When a student reads Gloucestershire, they might think of the beauty of the Cotswolds. But do they know about the **direct train to London**, or that **Birmingham, Cardiff, and Bristol** are all **within 90 minutes?**

When they hear Guildford, they know it's more or less in London. But do they know it's only **an hour from the beach, or the New Forest?**

Location is about more than just your campus.

Don't put all your eggs into one virtual basket.

Open Days proved to be influential for those who made the trip in person this year – but **over a third didn't attend any virtual ones**.

Remote access might be a COVID revolution that sticks around, yet there's nothing as evocative and influential as seeing things for yourself.

But students need your help to get there. Consider **subsidising travel costs** and providing **free lunch**, as well as giving them **more dates and times** to choose from.

In-person open days were useful for twice the number of applicants when compared to virtual ones. And with a quarter making their minds up after a visit, it could be a cost worth bearing.

There are some things that even a global pandemic can't change.

2023 will hopefully be the first year that we can comfortably call 'post-pandemic'.

But for all its welcome changes in digital learning and remote access – there's still nothing quite like the power of a real conversation in the right setting. We know that students can more easily make big decisions after seeing things for themselves (like open days) or sharing a coffee with somebody in the know (like meeting course leaders at subject specific events).

And so, with the rising cost of living, we must now make sure that every student can fairly access these kinds of important resources. Making sure students have both physical and virtual tools when learning and decision-making, and that these provisions are affordable, is going to be a one of the biggest themes for 2023.

And we'll be right by your side.

See you again soon.

Get in touch

For further information and insights contact your UCAS Customer Manager or email us at educationservices@ucas.ac.uk.