UC/S

STUDENT 2025 MINDSET CONFERENCE

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THE BIG TRENDS SHAPING STUDENT MINDSET IN 2025



KEY THEMES DENTIFIED:

- 1. Uni preparation starts earlier
- 2. Placements=employability
- 3. Increased parent and student dissonance
- 4. Money worries are the new norm
- 5. Community dents everything
- 6. "Decline my place" is a no mercy mindset



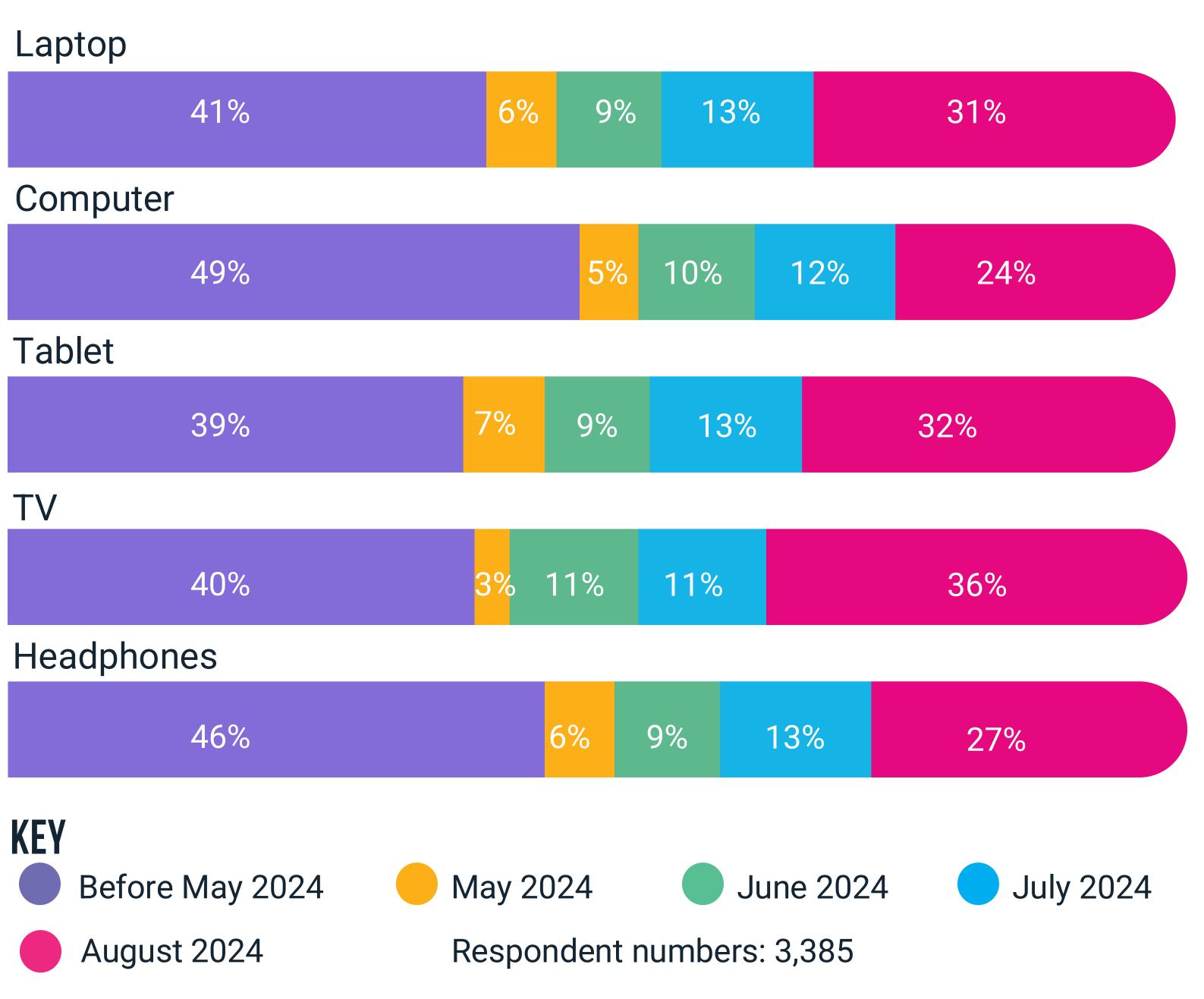


PREP STARTS BEFORE MAY — SUMMER IS THE RAMP,

NOT THE START

- Preparation starts earlier than we assume and happens in iterations, not one big moment.
- This shows headspace opens in spring before most providers start talking.
- Support is back-weighted; large information lands at arrival and overwhelm.

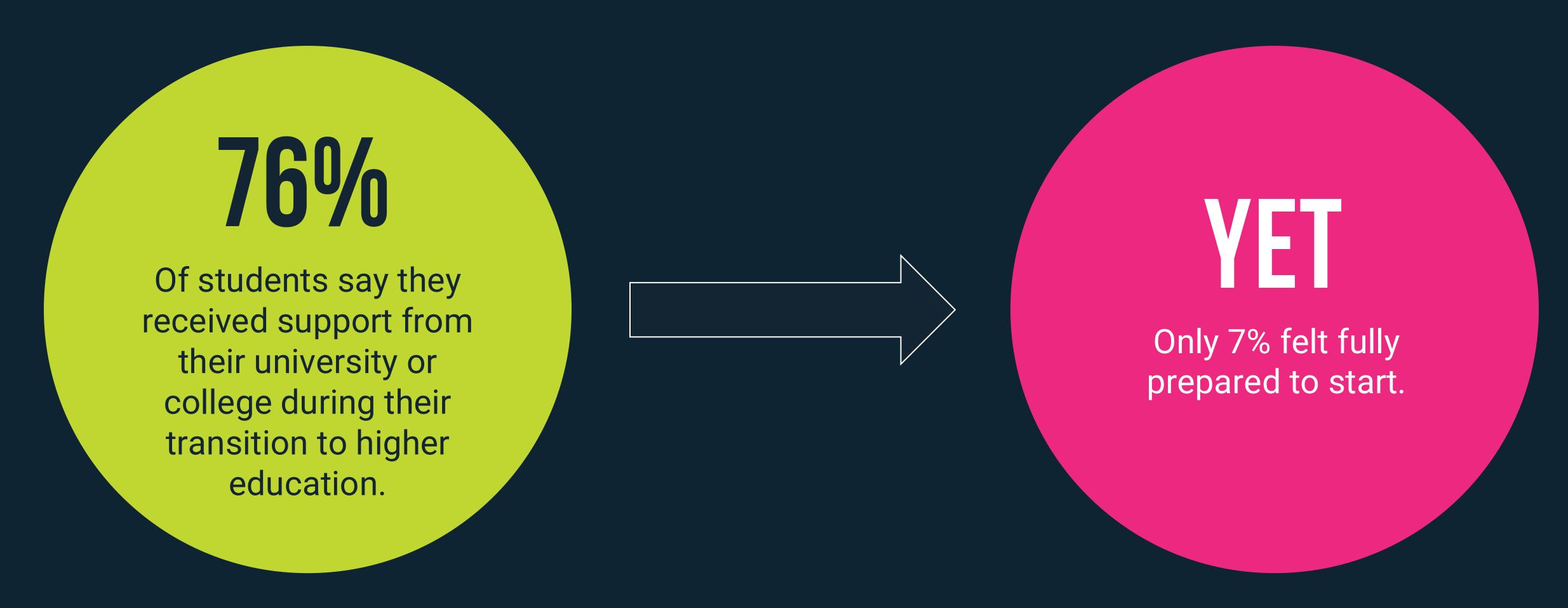
WHEN DID YOU START THINKING ABOUT MAKING THOSE PURCHASES?





SUPPORT IS BROAD — DELIVERY IS NARROW

The support paradox: lots given, little stands



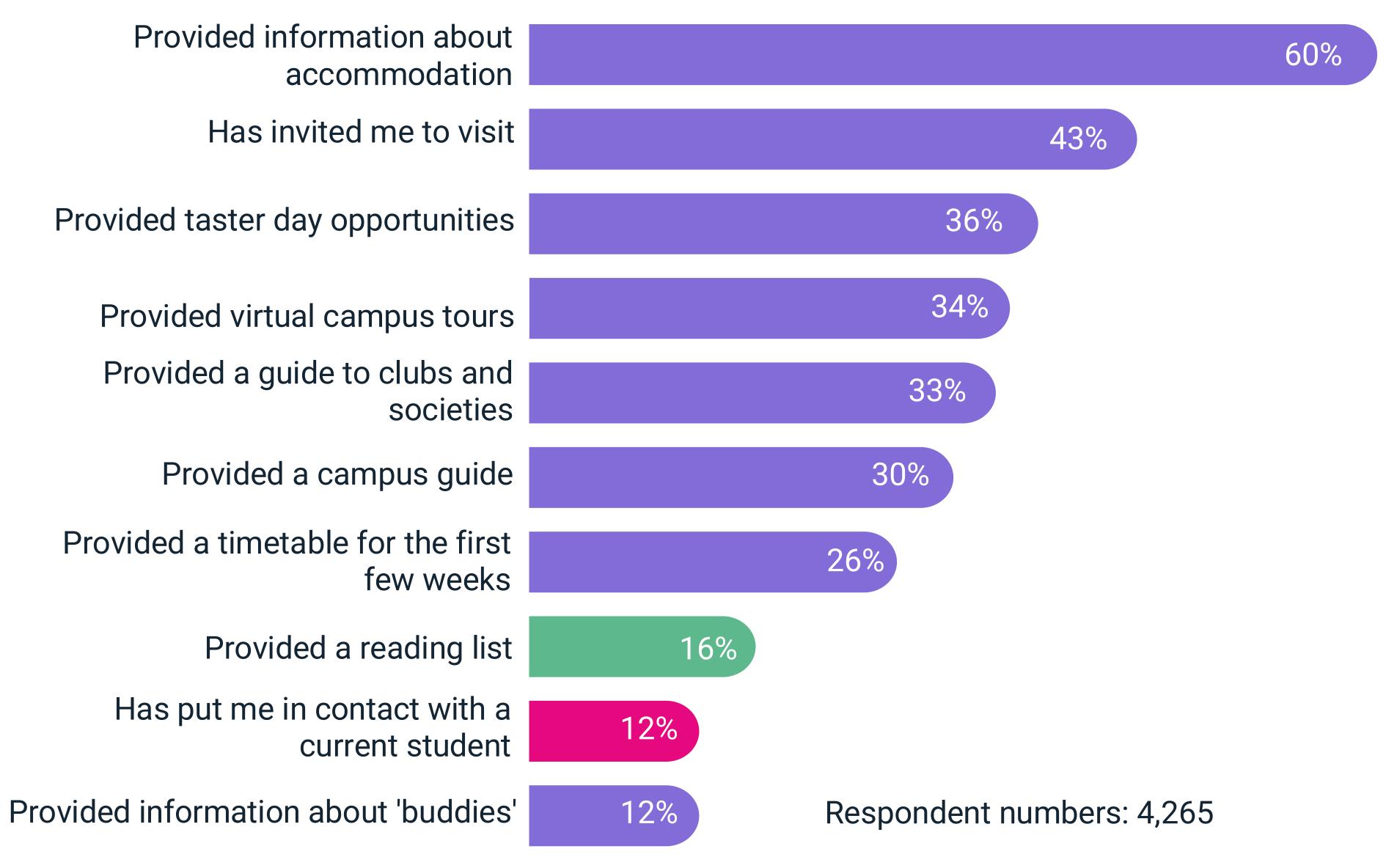
The gap is scope and timing – not effort



WHAT STUDENTS GET FROM UNIVERSITIES

- 60% get clear, early support on accommodation - timely and useful for those moving away.
- Far fewer receive academic prep or peer-connection opportunities.

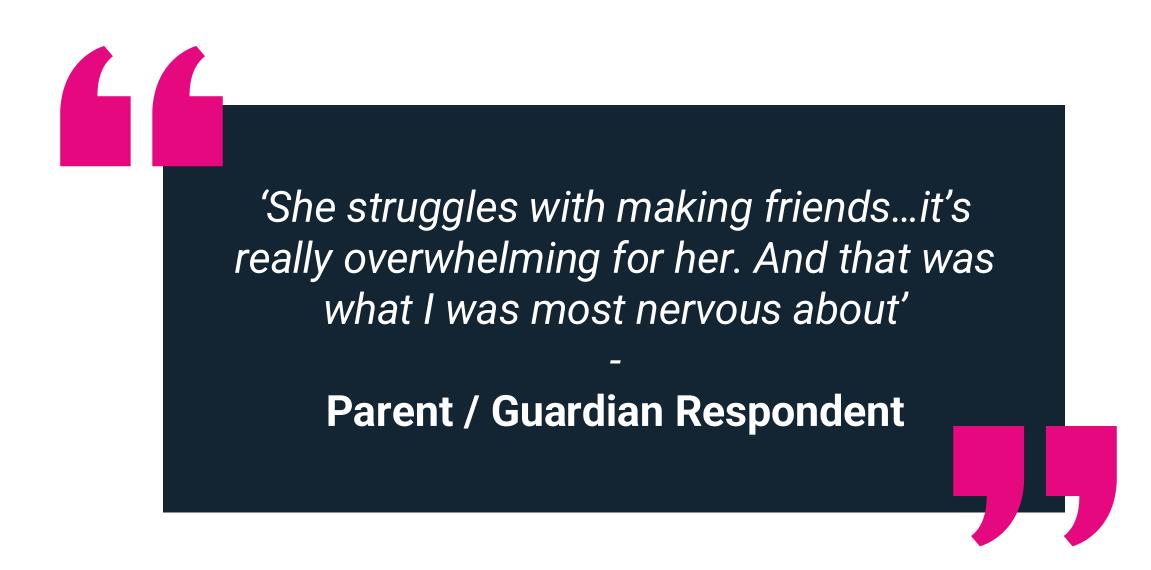
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAS YOUR CHOSEN UNIVERSITY DONE IN ADVANCE TO HELP YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR STUDIES?

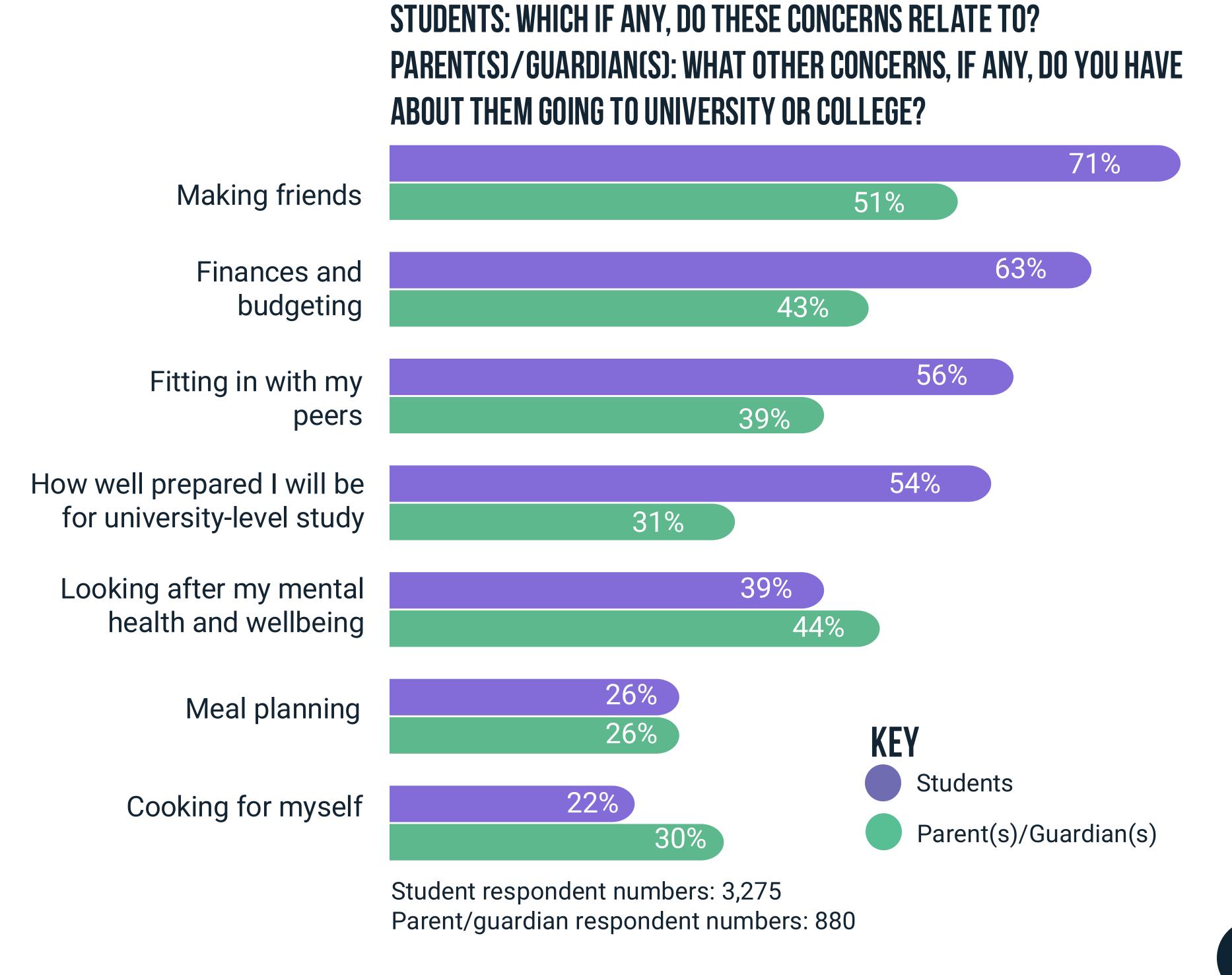




WHAT PARENTS AND STUDENTS VALUE

- The big three: friends, finances, fitting in. Parents share these worries.
- Next in line: confidence about uni-level study.
- Parents lean harder: mental health, wellbeing, life skills.







MONEY IS A CONSTANT MENTAL LOAD (BEYOND THE OBVIOUS)

- In term, 58% still worry about money; 40% struggle with budgeting after moving.
- 68% plan part-time work, but few use uni support: 7% job centre; 2% careers.
- Working students report a ~£40/week gap: £99 earned vs £139 needed.

Amount needed to earn per week

£139

Amount earned per week

f99

-Student Respondent

'I have a student loan and a part-

time job, but I'm still worried

about how to make it last the

whole term'

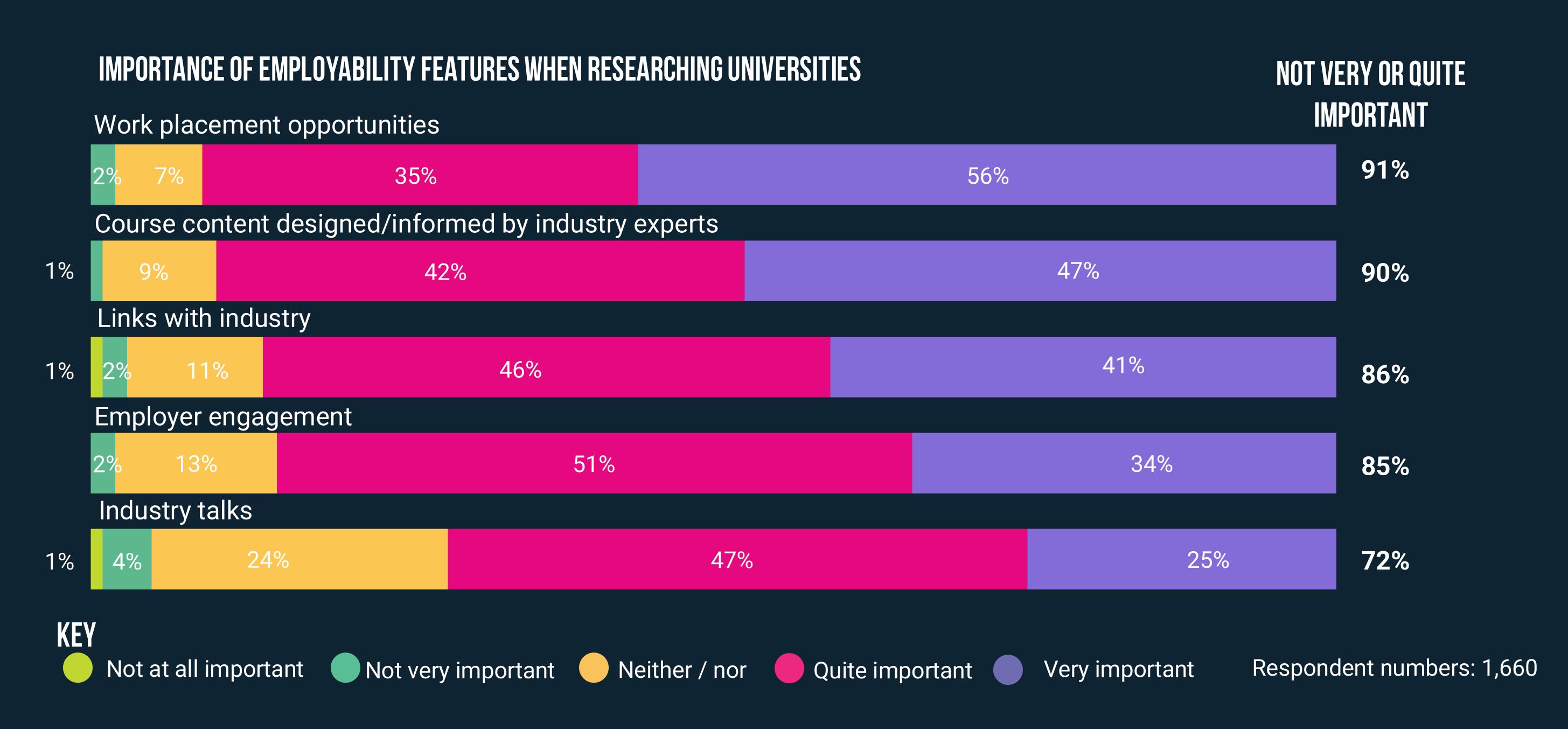
How Much Do You Earn: Respondent Numbers: 279

How Much Do You Think You Need to Earn: Respondent Numbers: 256



PLACEMENTS ARE THE PROOF STUDENTS LOOK FOR

• 91% judge employability by placement opportunities





EMPLOYABILITY WORKS WHEN IT'S BAKED IN

• Almost all (99%) said at least one of the employability 'offers' was appealing to them.

	APPEAL OF EMPLOYABILITY 'OFFERS'	
Universities that collaborate with industry to develop courses / course content which employers are looking for	$^{\prime}$ 2 $^{\prime\prime}$	
Students can gain practical experience through collaborative projects with business/industry	/ -J <i>0</i> /	
Universities that provide support to secure relevant work placements	69%	
Students have opportunities to connect/network with industry professionals	67%	
Academics teaching the course have spent time working in industry	61%	
Guest speakers from industry deliver sessions (lectures, tutorials or practical sessions) as part of the course	44%	
	Q: Which, if any, of the following are appealing to you? Please select all that apply. Respondent numbers: 1,674	



STUDENTS WANT CLEAR PATHWAYS TO SECTORS

1	Healthcare, social care	31%
2	Science and pharmaceuticals	24%
3	Law	19%
4	Teacher, education, childcare	18%
5	Business, consulting and management	18%
6	Accountancy, banking and finance	17%
7	Creative arts and design	16%
8	Engineering and manufacturing	16%
9	Media and internet, journalism	14%
=10	Digital	11%
=10	Charity and voluntary work	11%

TOP TEN SECTORS CONSIDERED/OPEN TO WORKING IN

- Top interest areas: Health, Science, Law, Education, Business.
- International lean towards Business/Tech; UK towards Teaching/Media.
- Clarity on where courses lead drives choice.

FUTURE ROLES SHAPE TODAY'S CHOICES

sture company

- Supportive environment (70%)
- Positive workforce culture (67%)
- Pay rises based on performance (59%)
- Flexible working hours (55%)

Future role

- Fair pay (70%)
- Job security (65%)
- A role where I can help people (62%)
- Progression (56%)

Ideal working day

- Collaboration with colleagues (64%)
- Making decisions as a group (46%)
- Variety working on multiple projects (45%)
- Time alone to think/reflect (45%)

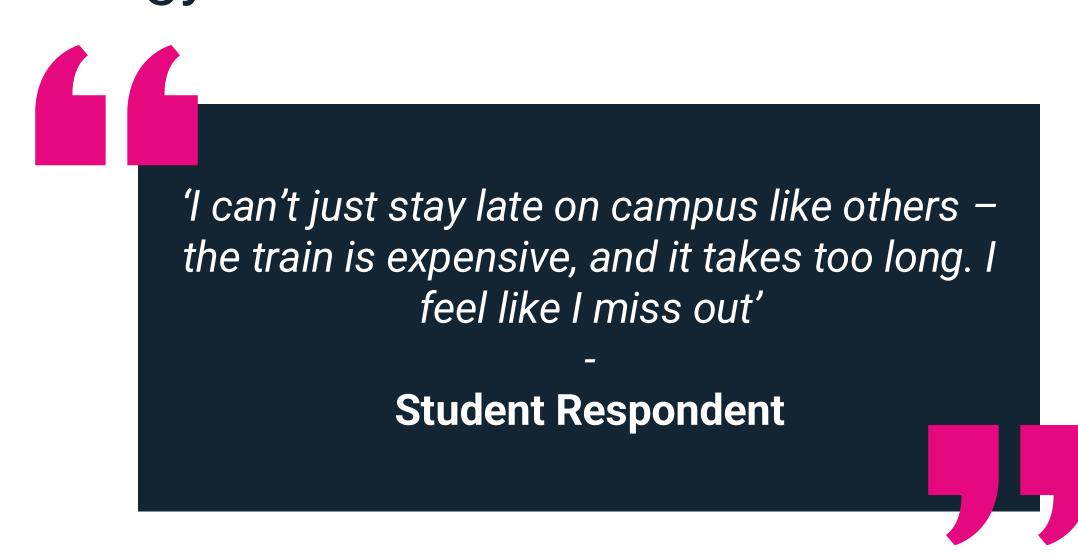
Q: Thinking about the type of company you'd like to work for in the future, which, if any, of the following are important? Please select all that apply Respondent numbers: 1668

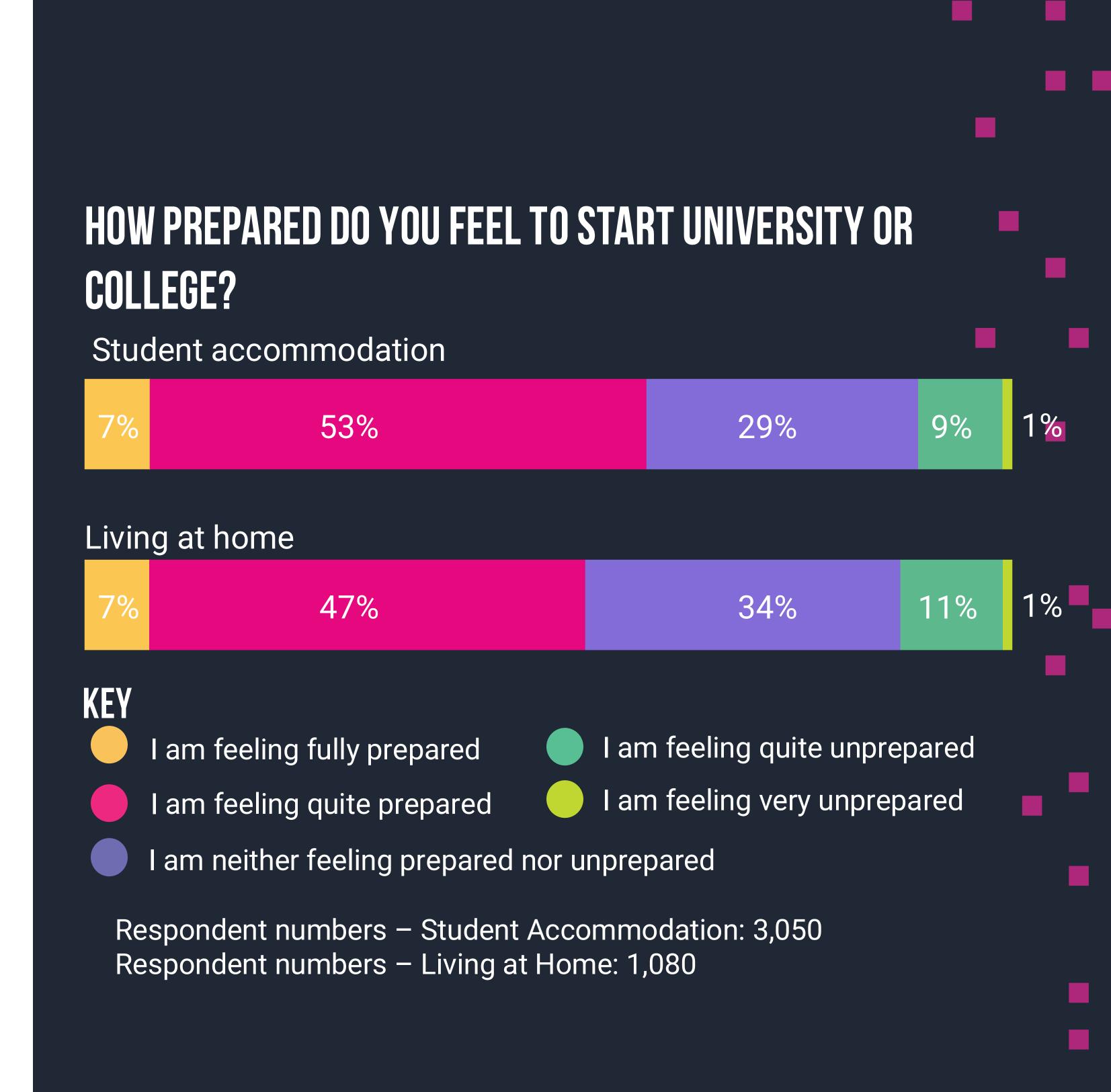
Q: Thinking about a future role, which, if any, of the following are important to you? Please select all that apply Respondent numbers: 1693

Q: What does an ideal working day look like to you? Select all that apply Respondent numbers: 1682

THE FORGOTTEN COMMUTERS

- Only 54% of living-at-home students felt prepared vs
 60% in halls.
- 45% researched travel before term commuting is a real mental load.
- Commuting dents attendance, belonging, and day-today energy.



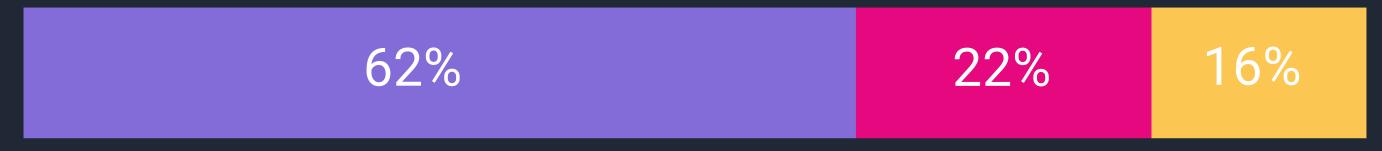


LIVING AT HOME: THE HIDDEN BELONGING GAP

- Only 54% feel prepared vs 61% in halls.
- Just 50% connect with peers before arrival vs 62% in halls.
- 27% don't connect at all vs 22% in halls.
- This can leave them starting university with weaker social networks and a reduced sense of belonging.

HAVE YOU CONNECTED WITH OTHERS WHO WILL BE GOING TO THE SAME UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE AS YOU?

Student accommodation



Living at home

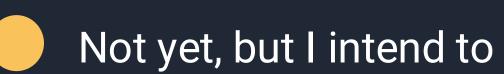


KEY









Respondent Numbers – Student Accommodation: 3,025

Respondent Numbers – Living At Home: 1,065



STUDENTS WANT A FRIENDLY FACE ON DAY ONE

- Routes exist; scaffolding doesn't
 - **58**% connect digitally pre-HE; only **12**% were offered a buddy/linked to a current student.
 - 36% say their university gives limited chances to bring students together before, during & after first term.
 - Only 15% found pre-uni workshops/orientation or online groups useful once they'd started.

710/0

Reported making friends
as their top concern
when starting university
– more than any other
priority.

38%

of students experience homesickness and loneliness.

"It has been a bit lonely getting used to not having my family around. For a while I hadn't met all of my flat-mates and it felt awkward to speak with them."

Student Accommodation

"It's quite overwhelming and isolating, particularly as my flat isn't very social."

Student Accommodation



FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

DIFFERENTIATE WITH EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT COMMS

Reflect two audiences: students & parents

Speak to belonging, independence, and practical worries

BUILD EARLIER, STRONGER CONNECTIONS

Start in Mary/June

Create visible routes for commuters and pre-arrival peer groups

CLOSE GAPS BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS & PREPAREDNESS

Be transparent on study realities

Provide practical scaffolding: budgeting, academic readiness, peer support

PUT EMPLOYABILITY FRONT-OF-HOUSE

Showcase placements, embedded industry links, and employer pathways

Market careers outcomes and value-based futures as central to course choice

DECLINE MY PLACE: WHAT REALLY DRIVES DECISION REVERSALS

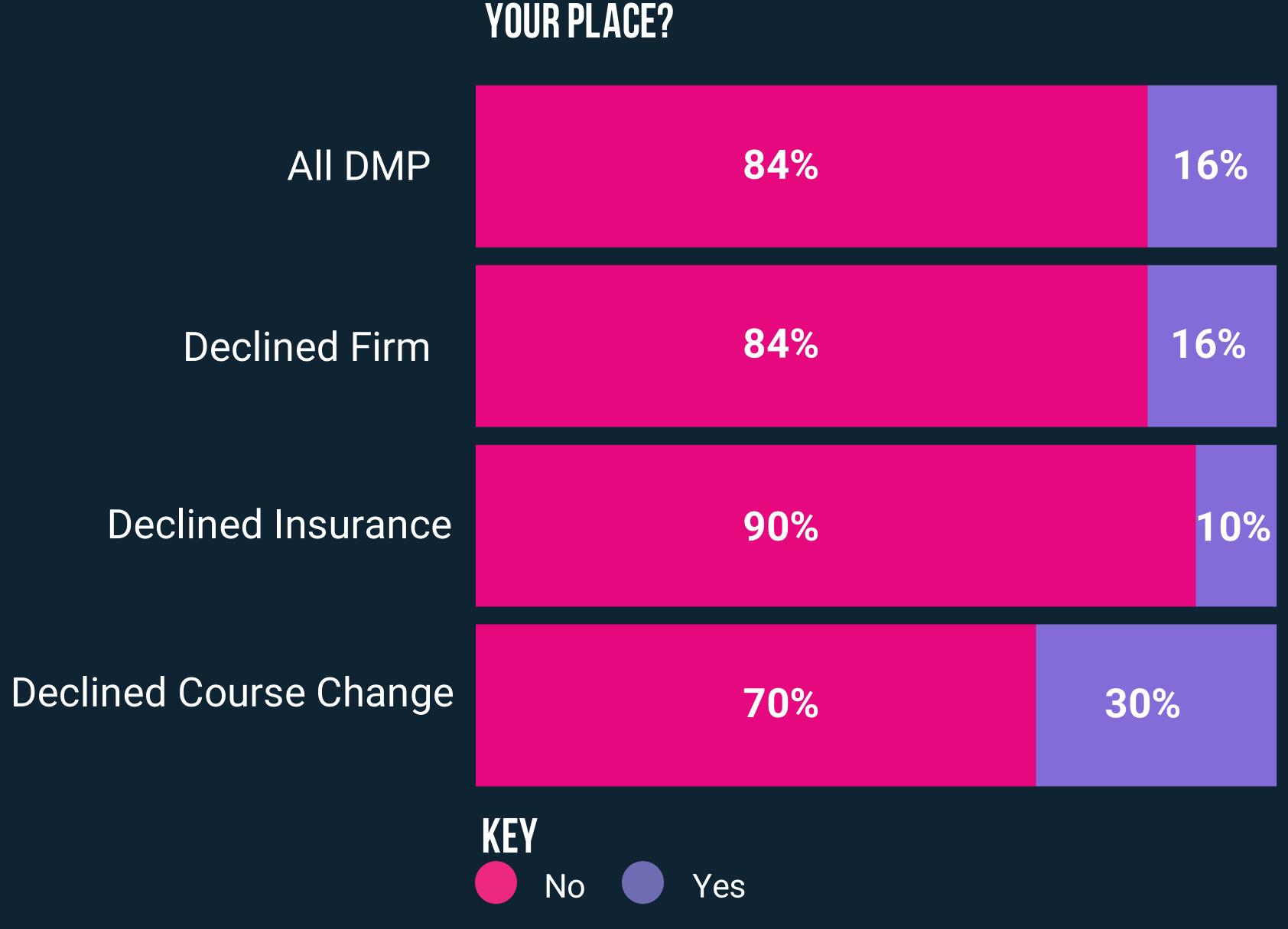






ONCE THEY'VE GONE, THEY'VE GONE

- 84% say nothing could have stopped them declining.
- Some mention finance, communications, or accommodation.



Respondent numbers : All 1458, Firm 855, Insurance 438, Course change 142

WAS THERE ANYTHING YOUR PREVIOUS UNIVERSITY

COULD HAVE DONE TO ENCOURAGE YOU NOT TO DECLINE

NOT EVERYONE IS READY TO COMMIT

- Many apply before they're ready to decide.
- Process isn't linear.
- Firm/insurance offers don't always feel 'final'.

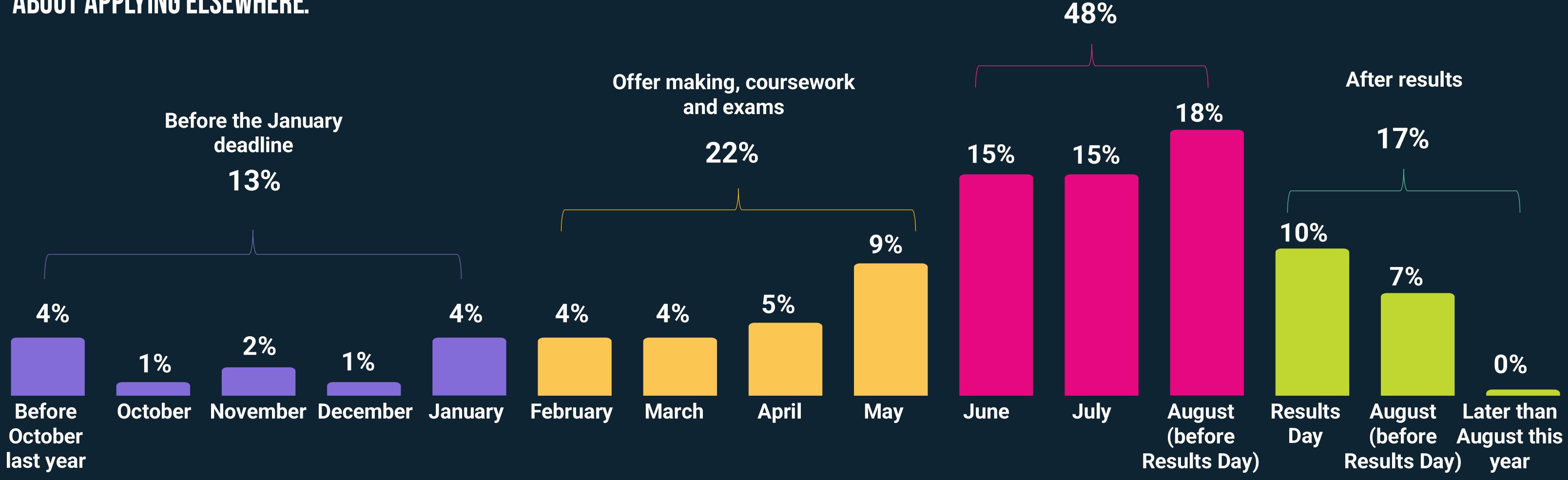
I applied for all the same course at 5 different unis that I'd never been to and hadn't actually read the modules of what I would be studying... I rushed the entire year making impulsive decisions and not actually researching that this would be 3 years of my future. So I then took the time over the summer.

I chose sociology and I chose that just cause the exams officer at my school was just really rushing me to make a decision. Cause I've done all of the Application stuff last minute because I had no idea what I wanted to do at university and I just thought that I picked a random university and I thought sociology would be sort of a subject that I couldn't go wrong with but, when I look more into it, I really didn't like it, so I've changed to something that I think I like a lot more.



WOBBLES PEAK IN SUMMER





Q: When did you start thinking about applying somewhere else? Respondent numbers declined firm choice 852

Note: Not all respondents were school leavers, approx. school timetable provided for context

Summer / after exams and

coursework deadlines

THANK YOU & QUESTIONS