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Press release

Almost two thirds of students influenced by north-south divide in university choice

www.thestudentroom.co.uk

Regional prejudices and the north-south divide are still having an impact on where students choose to attend university. This is according to new research from The Student Room, which found two thirds of students say it would influence their choice of academic institution.

Universities in the south are most popular – almost two thirds (62%) of students who expressed a preference would prefer to study there, compared to just a third (38%) opting for the north.

Students believe universities in the south of England are safer, with a lower crime, fairer weather and better academic reputations.

One student said: “I applied almost exclusively to southern universities because the difference in weather is heavenly. I’m from the north and was fed up of the rain and cold and the sun rising at 12pm and setting at 12:05pm”.

A third of respondents said they would feel safer in a southern university town or city. Safety ranked lower for students aiming to study in the north – just 23% cited it as a reason.

For students opting for northern unis, the cheaper cost of living was the biggest attraction (54% listed it as their biggest influence). Academic reputation ranked lower as a motivation for students heading north, less than a quarter identified it as a significant influence, compared to almost half (45%) of students hoping to study in the south.

Anecdotally, students spoke of wanting to study up north because “northerners are more friendly” and because of a perceived lack of “posh twats”.

For students born in the south, 62% said they wanted a university that allowed them to stay close to their mum and dad. Northern students are much more eager to fly the nest – 33% listed getting away from home as important, compared to just 12% of southerners.

Hannah Morrish, university community manager at The Student Room, said: “It’s quite shocking to see how much old regional rivalries impact where students aspire to study. Old-fashioned ideas about the grim north and the posh south might seem tongue in cheek - but it’s clear from our research that geography still plays a part in shaping social mobility and young people’s confidence about the future.

“From working with our community of students, we know there is a huge range of factors that contribute to a positive university experience. The best way to get a feel for a place is to attend an open day and experience it for yourself! Students feeling anxious about choosing a university can check out our Uni Match search tool at: www.thestudentroom.co.uk/university”

The reputation of a city is a huge factor in students’ decision-making process. Two thirds (69%) of students said a city’s bad reputation would influence their choice of university – with a quarter saying they’ve ruled out institutions based purely on the city they are located in. Cities that rated low for students included Bradford, Hull and Birmingham.

A high crime rate or unsafe reputation topped the list of factors that put students off a particular university town or city. This was followed by a reputation for poor nightlife or being boring.

Students have until 15 January 2017 to apply to their chosen university through UCAS, with most open days and campus tours taking place throughout the autumn and new year. The Student Room is the UK’s largest online student community, and its UniMatch search tool compares student reviews for more than 150 universities and HE colleges.

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

**The Student Room surveyed 2,718 students currently researching their future university, from 27 Oct to 1 Nov 2016.*

About The Student Room thestudentroom.co.uk

Founded in 2001, The Student Room is the world’s largest online student community and the UK’s no.1 education website according to ComScore data. The Student Room has over 3 million registered members, primarily aged between 14-24 and attracts over 8 million visitors a month. It provides student-to-student advice on studying, educational career choice and lifestyle issues. The Student Room works directly with most UK universities as well as a wide range of leading brands and companies.

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