What students think about ChatGPT; how Year 12s are boosting their uni applications; uni accommodation and revision

Student sentiment update by The Student Room

6 March - 2 April 2023

Sharing the student voice

As the UK's largest online student community, we are privileged to witness the support, reassurance and advice young people share with one another everyday. What we learn about their experiences and concerns guides us in the support we provide.

We started writing these student sentiment updates back in January of 2021, when schools were closed to most students and traditional exams were cancelled. In 2022 we shared 13 of these updates, showcasing 108 community polls, with over 23,000 votes from students.

We have an incredible opportunity (and responsibility) to raise the voice of students and share it with people like you who are there to support them. It's by listening to students and working across every sector together that we can make a real difference in students' lives.

NB: polls discussed here are open to TSR members of all ages. The results are not specific to a single year level unless specifically indicated
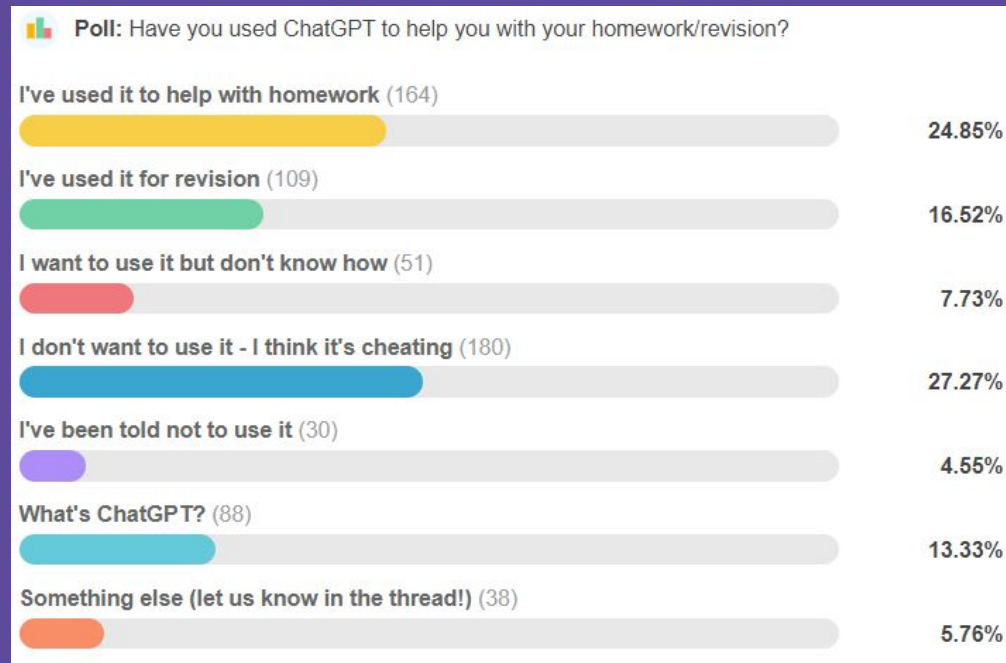
Highlights in this update

- A quarter of students use **ChatGPT** for their homework; another quarter think it's cheating. Students explain why it's helpful

- Year 12s are boosting their **uni applications** with work experience and summer school

- Over half of students go for uni halls for top choice **university accommodation**

- By Easter 90% of Year 11s and 13s will be **revising** for their exams

- **Past papers and mark schemes** are the way most students like to revise

A quarter of students use ChatGPT for their homework; another quarter think it's cheating

Opinions are very divided amongst students on TSR when it comes to AI chatbot, ChatGPT. It's no wonder. In the news there are reports of some want universities to embrace it, some have banned it, others think it'll help revolutionise school exams, while Italy's just banned it over privacy concerns. Phew!

I find it particularly interesting to see 16% have used it for revision and to read why students are saying this is helpful. Suffice to say, this will be a space to watch.

Poll: Have you used ChatGPT to help you with your homework/revision?

I've used it to help with homework (164) — 24.85%

I've used it for revision (109) — 16.52%

I want to use it but don't know how (51) — 7.73%

I don't want to use it - I think it's cheating (180) — 27.27%

I've been told not to use it (30) — 4.55%

What's ChatGPT? (88) — 13.33%

Something else (let us know in the thread!) (38) — 5.76%

A quarter of students use ChatGPT for their homework; another quarter think it's cheating

i love chatgpt when it comes to revision. i can give questions and quickly understand something. i try not to do it for homework as thats about my understanding and if i did, then i would have a false sense of knowledge and may not revise properly. In my opinion, i think it is cheating when it comes to submitting actual work but if its for your understanding, that thing is my holy grail. its been a game changer

Yeah chatGPT is specifically mentioned in tools we can't use for courseworks because it could get flagged on turnitin

I like to copy and paste some of my lecture notes into it and ask it to simplify it etc... Really good esp with scientific concepts.

It could be very useful, however it will be getting information from somewhere and I don't think it adequately references its sources, plus I'm not sure whether ChatGPT even has permission to use some of the information in terms of original authors of articles.

I haven't used it, but my professors have warned us about using it and it being considered as plagiarism. Don't use it. Besides, it's scary how advanced new AI are and seriously don't want to know what would happen if they keep on improving them

A quarter of students use ChatGPT for their homework; another quarter think it's cheating

I've had a play with it and it might have some uses, but it's also got some problems as a homework doing system. First (and obvious) you're supposed to be benefiting from the process of doing your own homework - you don't benefit, or not nearly as much if you're just getting it completed for you. Second it doesn't seem very good at knowing when it doesn't know something, but it will make stuff up to fill gaps and seem extremely confident about the made up stuff being true... rather like certain politicians.

I use it to summarise articles/research which is beyond my level of understanding (of a higher level) which can help me gain extra insight into my work so I can understand those a bit more. I would never use it to cheat though, it probably wouldn't do a great job anyway

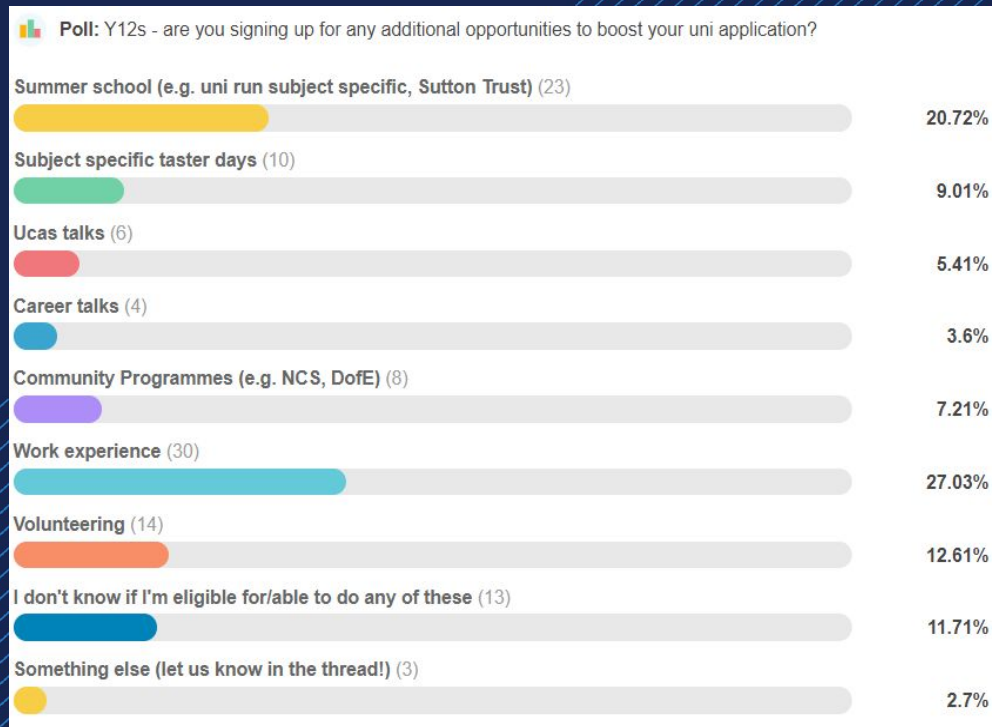*I've been using it a lot lately to help learn python.*
It's been tremendous in this capacity. I can ask it to write really elaborate code snippets to perform really specific functions, and then I can ask it for specific details about what certain lines do and why. It's code usually doesn't work fully when it is run, but it gets me close and really is helping me to understand the language better.

This is currently making me successful in my Postgraduate teaching course. Highly recommend. Not even turnitin or a plagarism tool can detect it.

Year 12s are boosting their uni applications with work experience and summer school

While uni applications are still a little while away for Year 12s, there are important opportunities these students can take up, especially over their summer breaks, to help boost their chances. So we asked Year 12s what they're hoping to take part in. More than a quarter said work experience, and a fifth said summer school.
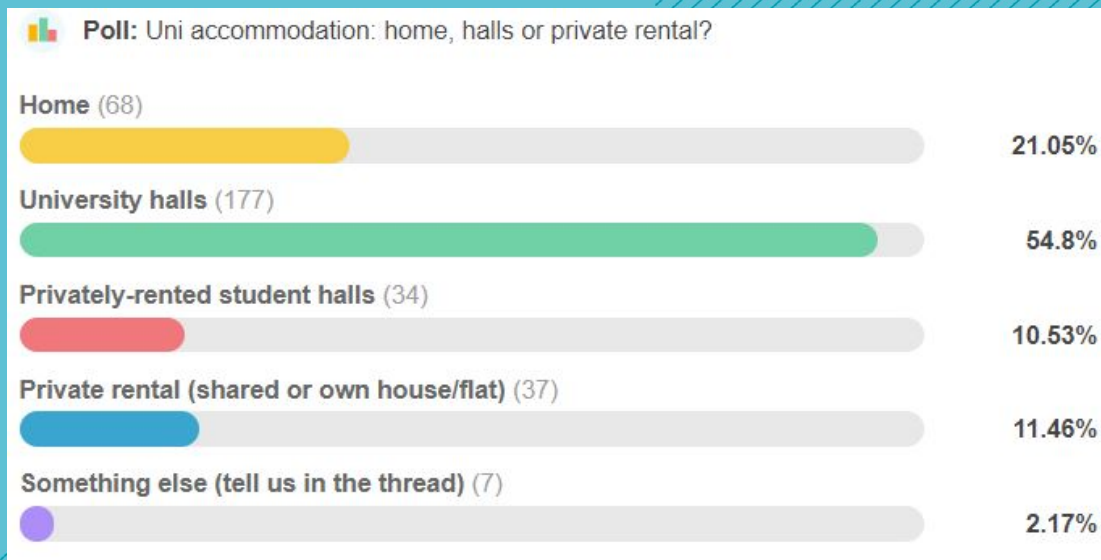
This desire for work experience is something we saw twice in polls in 2022 (1, 2) so it's understandable that this is something Year 12s are seeking out.

Poll: Y12s - are you signing up for any additional opportunities to boost your uni application?

Option	%
Summer school (e.g. uni run subject specific, Sutton Trust) (23)	20.72%
Subject specific taster days (10)	9.01%
Ucas talks (6)	5.41%
Career talks (4)	3.6%
Community Programmes (e.g. NCS, DofE) (8)	7.21%
Work experience (30)	27.03%
Volunteering (14)	12.61%
I don't know if I'm eligible for/able to do any of these (13)	11.71%
Something else (let us know in the thread!) (3)	2.7%

111 votes. Promoted 3 - 9 March 2023

Over half of students go for uni halls for top choice university accommodation

55% of TSR members voted for university halls when it comes to their student accommodation.

Interestingly, over a fifth selected living at home, which is more than both private rentals or private halls. These are similar results to 2022 when we asked the same question, though with slightly more students selecting 'home' as their top option this year. In 2022 we found some students were considering universities closer to home due to cost of living so I wonder if this could be behind this slight change.

Poll: Uni accommodation: home, halls or private rental?

Option	Votes	Percentage
Home	(68)	21.05%
University halls	(177)	54.8%
Privately-rented student halls	(34)	10.53%
Private rental (shared or own house/flat)	(37)	11.46%
Something else (tell us in the thread)	(7)	2.17%

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I'm from a different country to UK so probably going into halls at least for 1st year, maybe 2nd/3rd if they allow it. It is quite exciting, university. You can move out from family, live independently (mostly, you may still need financial support), start your life as a young adult, much more life flexibility, and the experience of uni would shape you well as a person (growing up). All at once, which makes it even exciting!

It won't been the first time I live away from home (I'm a boarder) but still, university would be much freer and I'm looking forward to manage my time however I like! I'll be living in uni accommodation so hopefully my years of boarding experience would prepare me for this
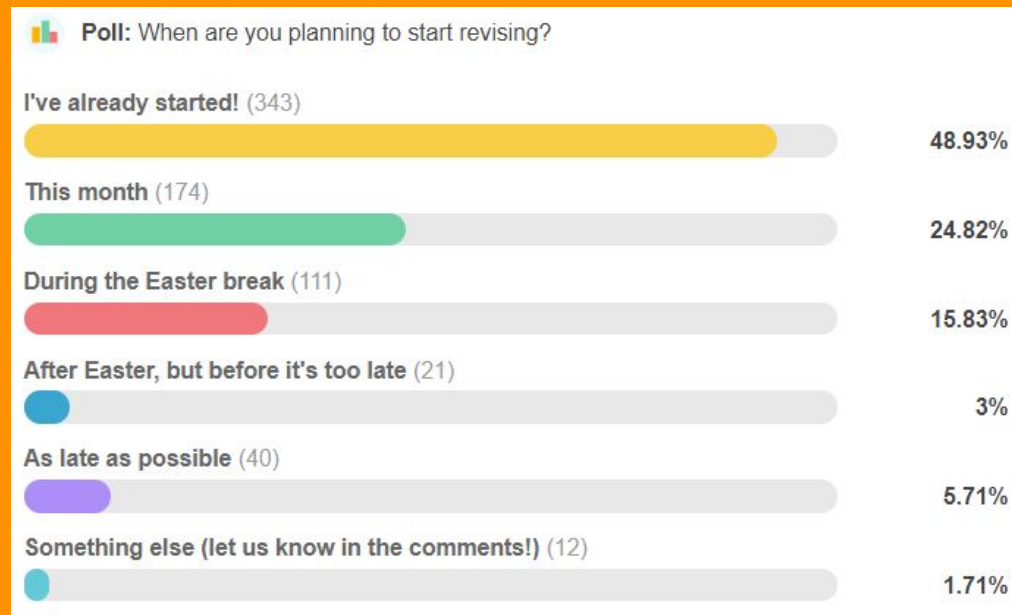
The accommodation search has been exhausting! I'm going for privately rented student accommodation. Currently have a place secured for one of my top choices but my other choice doesn't have many options within my price range that suit my needs. I did try uni halls but I'll have to re-apply for extended summer stay which isn't even guaranteed. I'm also too far away from home to move back each summer. So, the search continues.

Hey! I'm a third-year student and I absolutely loved staying in halls in my first-year. I really recommend halls as itchy are a great way to make friends straight away. Moving away from home is a huge step and it can be very daunting at first, so living with people who are going to be in the same situation as you is a great way to eliminate some of the worries of moving away. I loved halls for my first year, but in second and third year most people I knew decided to live in houses, which are slightly better once you have settled in to the city and made friends, as they're quieter and more homely and they also tend to be quite a bit cheaper.

By Easter 90% of Year 11s and 13s will be revising for their exams

Maybe it's not surprising, but half of students on TSR have already started their revision if they're sitting exams this year. And if not, most of them are going to be hitting the books by the end of the Easter break.

We've got lots of discussions happening in our A-level and GCSE exam threads and we'll be supporting students over the coming months as they work toward their exam goals.

Poll: When are you planning to start revising?

I've already started! (343) — 48.93%

This month (174) — 24.82%

During the Easter break (111) — 15.83%

After Easter, but before it's too late (21) — 3%

As late as possible (40) — 5.71%

Something else (let us know in the comments!) (12) — 1.71%

701 votes. Promoted 14 - 20 March 2023

By Easter 90% of Year 11s and 13s will be revising for their exams

I've kind of started but it's hard because all my teachers are still setting me homework that in my opinion is not as useful as the revision I would otherwise do in the time. My school has also decided that we need to do a second set of mock GCSEs which is fun because I'm now revising content for exams I will have in June instead of revising for exams I have before half term in May...

I started 16th January which was straight after the last mocks, feeling fairly confident!

Still haven't started yet cause these [teachers] think doing trashy textbook exercises (that are nothing like actual exam questions) takes priority

I started in January and made a revision schedule but it's so hard to keep track of everything 🥲🥲🥲 I take A level Psychology, Biology and Music and I guess my teachers weren't kidding when they said their subject is content heavy

Past papers and mark schemes are the way most students like to revise

As we head ever closer to exams, students have told us it's still the tried and true past papers and mark schemes they rely on most when it comes to their revision. But it's often underpinned by a good foundation of other methods too.

I tend to spam past papers once I have a strong foundation on the content. Before that, tutorials, revision, class notes, and some exam questions on specific topics. Textbook questions can also help, especially for weak areas.

personally working in a mix of stuff is the best way rather than only doing a single type of revision. eg. ill watch a video on a topic, make and do some flashcards, and then do practice questions

Poll: What's the most effective revision method?

Method	Votes	Percentage
Past papers and mark schemes	(302)	58.64%
Revision cards and flashcards	(57)	11.07%
Looking over class and course notes	(23)	4.47%
Revision guides	(13)	2.52%
Making mind maps	(17)	3.3%
Practising exam questions	(80)	15.53%
Using memory tricks (making rhymes or sentences around a topic)	(17)	3.3%
Something else (let us know in the comments!)	(6)	1.17%

515 votes. Promoted 27 March - 3 April 2023