

Students' hopes for the future; cost of living drives uni choice changes; and prospective students' receive uni replies

Student sentiment update by The Student Room

3 - 30 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.

Highlights in this update

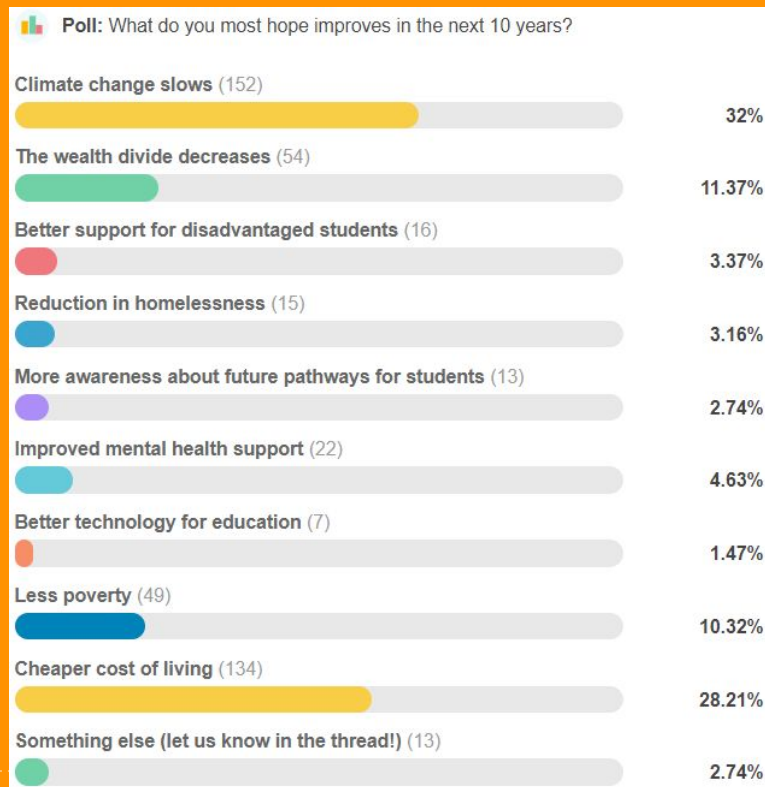
- Improvements to climate change and cost of living dominate students' hopes for the future
- Cost of living impacts 38% of students' plans on where to go to university
- More than 80% of 2023 applicants had responses from three or more universities in April
- Local elections in May prompt conversation about compulsory voter ID

Improvements to climate change and cost of living dominate students' hopes for the future

It's a big question for a simple poll, but it's clear where students' hopes lie when it comes to the future of society. While improvements to climate change and cost of living top the list, there's been a robust debate about which matters more.

One student also made the astute point that a number of these poll options relate to economic factors, and these had cumulatively received most of the focus.

These are similar results to this time in [2022](#), though we do see an increase in the focus on cost of living in 2023, which tallies with much of the student sentiment we've shared so far this year.



Improvements to climate change and cost of living dominate students' hopes for the future

Can't really help the homeless and poor if we and everything else go extinct from not being able to adapt to the new environment that quick

I do think that economical reasons are a bigger issue for our generation (cost of living, wealth divide which personally i think is the greatest point of divide in our society) than climate change. whats the point caring about the environment when you cant even care for yourself or family?

I'd like a lot of things to improve but the way our society's going I don't think anything will. We're too distracted by phones and technology in general-we aren't living in an era of advancement and improvement anymore, we're living in an era of repetition and oppression.

No surprise climate change has got the most votes. There are basically two other main options apart from it, but they've been separated into lots of particular options. I think these options are:

Education, with the poll options of:

- Better support for disadvantaged students
- More awareness about future pathways for students
- Improved mental health support
- Better technology for education

These cumulatively add up to 15

And **Socio-Economic Structures**:

- The wealth divide decreases,
- Reduction in homelessness,
- Less poverty and
- Cheaper cost of living

These cumulatively add up to 59

Cost of living impacts 38% of students' plans on where to go to university

Fortunately, the majority of students say they're able to cope with the increased cost of living, but for almost 40%, it's more complicated. Choosing a university closer to home was the most likely scenario for those struggling, but 5% are now taking a gap year to save, and a further 5% can no longer afford to attend university.

These results are similar to the same poll we ran this time in [2022](#).



What students are saying about cost of living

hey im going to UoM in september and i literally have no idea how to budget for it because i dont think my loans are gonna cover rent and food, nvm anything else 😭😭 does anybody have any tips who already goes to uni plss 😞😞

hey to all the muslim students out there - how do you get around the problem of interest on student loans? i dont want to take on out but i have no idea how to afford it, could anyone give any tips or companies that help out?

It is crazy renting, I am paying 700 a month just for a room. Will anything change in the future?

Im paying 1000+ for a room in London as a student 😊 the living price is CRAZY

I was never taught about finances as a kid and it's something I hate about my childhood now. Because of me not being taught about finances as a kid, I used my money stupidly and I'm now in £2,000.00 worth of debt. I want to be financially responsible and become debt free, this is important to me as I'm living in a one bedroom flat and I really don't want to become homeless.

What students are saying about cost of living

I'm going to start my placement year in July and I will be living at home with my mum and earning about 20k for a year in industry. I'll obviously still be classified as a full time student because this is a part of my course but it also means our household income will change. My mum is completely on means-tested benefits and we live in a council house so I was wondering if/how my placement income would affect that as I would be getting a salary from work but still be classified as a full-time student/dependent. If anyone knows about this or has gone through this before, any input would be appreciated!

I'm sure its not just me or my family who are struggling during this cost of living crisis. at home we are finding it hard to put on the heating and we haven't been able to get a carpet installed for some while now because of the cost (and there are more things such as this which the government don't offer financial support for because its not deemed as essential) I feel really sorry for my mum and helpless as I'm only 16 and don't have a full or part time job... my mum really encourages that we work hard in school and in our extra curricular activities so that in the future we can be in a better off situation than her in the future. I'm trying hard to not let this situation distract me from my schoolwork or personal life or worsen my mental health but it can just be so so hard. I would be grateful to hear how others have been coping in these hard times.

95% of prospective students need more info from universities about finances

In our recent survey conducted by **TSR Insight** of prospective 2023 and 2024 applicants, almost all needed more help from universities when it comes to finances.

Knowledge is power. By providing prospective students this support, we increase their chances of forging the path they desire in a safe and informed way.



Costs associated with **studying at the university**
75%



Scholarship / bursaries available
70%



How much a graduate of my course is **likely to pay back** 63%



Key dates / milestones
62%



How to **submit the application**
54%



Where to go if I have **questions**
48%

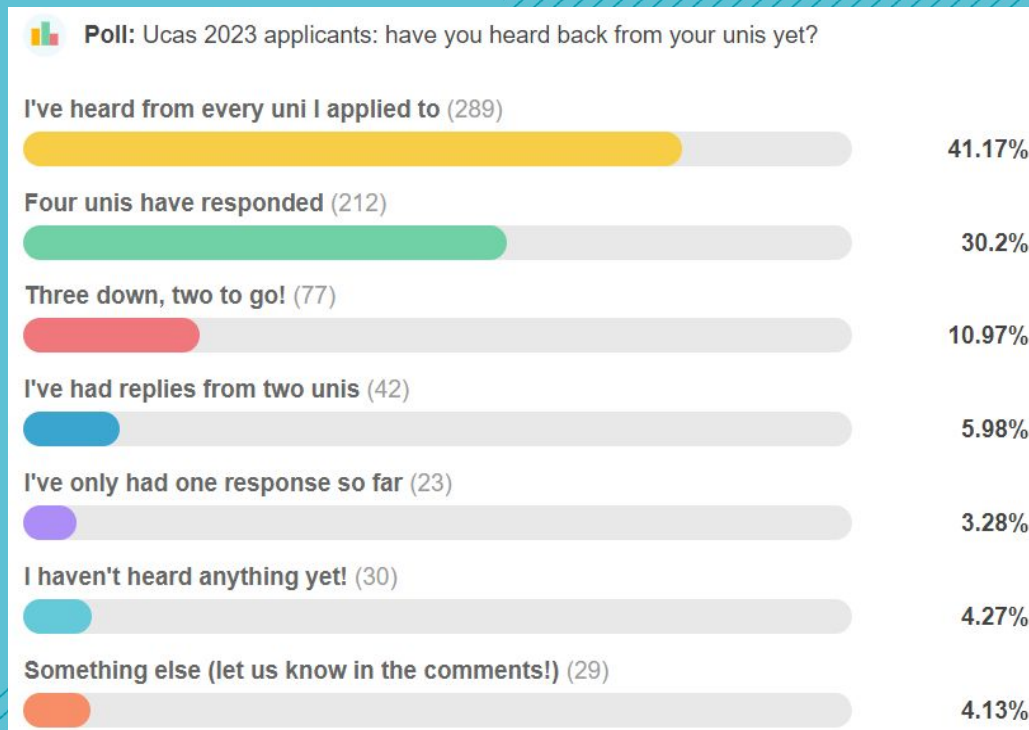


I wouldn't want **any information**
5%

More than 80% of 2023 applicants had responses from three or more universities in April

Around a month before the deadline for universities to reply to students, more than 80% of applicants on The Student Room had heard back from three or more universities. This is similar to [this time in 2022](#), though more students have heard from all five universities already this year.

Given the financial challenges many students are facing this year, it's clear students appreciate hearing back sooner rather than later so they're able to apply for scholarships and bursaries far enough in advance.



More than 80% of 2023 applicants had responses from three or more universities in April

I got all 5 replies pretty quickly Although I didn't apply to extremely competitive unis... so take it with a grain of salt (especially if you're apply for extremely competitive unis)

if the replies are quick you can plan much more easily. You'd have a lot more time to plan, apply for scholarships etc.

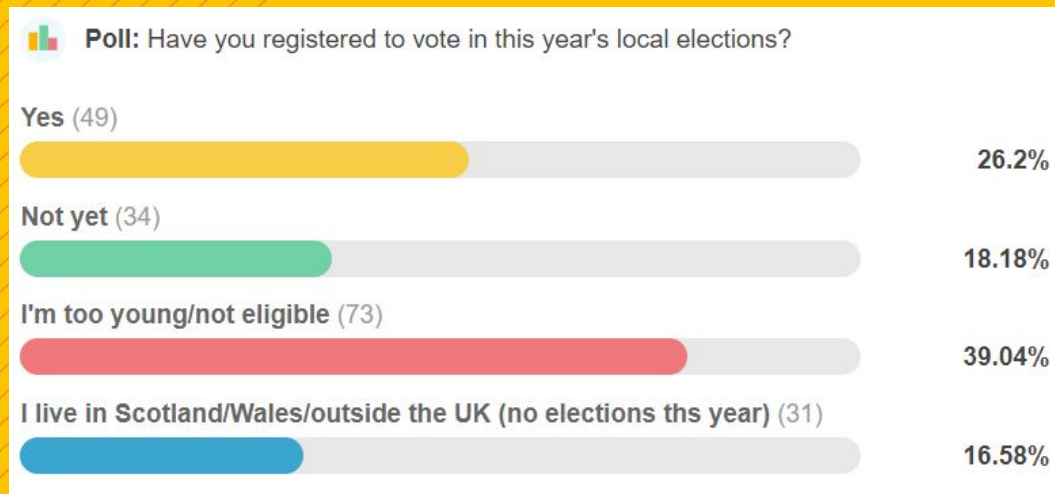
I received 2 Unconditionals from the same uni for two different courses before even hearing from the other 2 unis I had applied to!! By the time one of the other unis had got in touch with an offer to interview, I had already decided to accept one of my offers. Never ever heard from my third uni - not even an acknowledgement of my application.

Got a rejection from Edinburgh within a week, got offers from Newcastle (2 courses) and Birmingham within 3 weeks and after almost 5 months of waiting, I got an offer from Durham. All offers are conditional.

I'm only waiting for a reply for Newcastle Uni for their fine art course after sending my portfolio back in January every other Uni replied already

Local elections in May prompt conversation about compulsory voter ID

While for many these elections aren't relevant, it's interesting to note the conversation about the introduction of compulsory voter ID this poll brought about. Meanwhile, [HEPI's](#) most recent research shows 61% of students think voter ID is a good idea.



And make sure you have a correct form of photo ID if you want to vote in person.

Had my polling card and I have photo ID so I will be voting. However I do think it is a disgrace that this photo ID mandate has been brought in. Nobody was asking for it and it is not needed (voted fraud in this country is a non-issue). It will only serve to make it harder to vote and deter people who don't have photo ID

I completely agree; it's totally unnecessary and will likely reduce turnout further. It's always appalling for local elections without further barriers!