



# 2023 Results edition

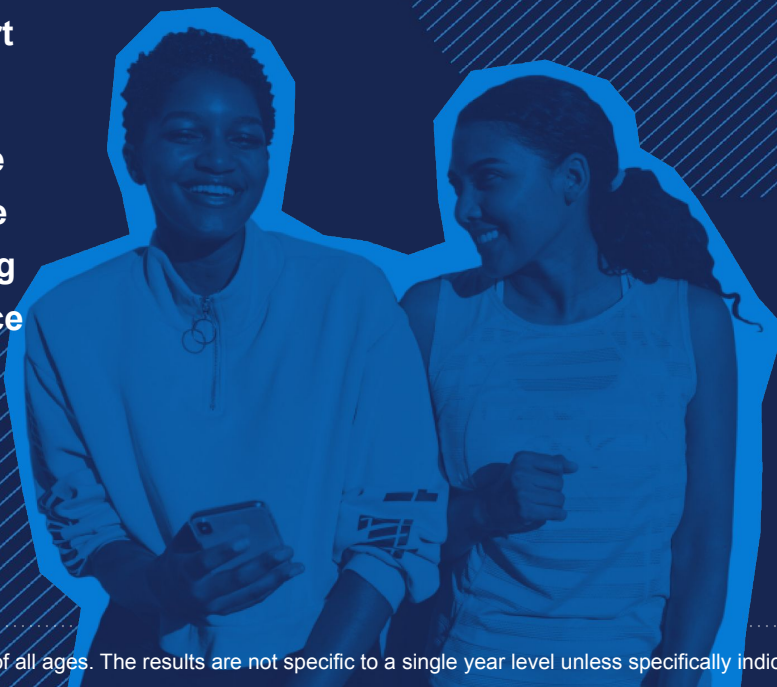
How students felt before,  
during and after receiving  
results; and the support  
freshers need now

Student sentiment update by The Student Room  
7 August - 1 September 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 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

- **Before Results:** Nerves ran high for students in lead up to Results Day and 25% of poll respondents were expecting to use Clearing due to missing their required results.
- **Results:** 57% of A-Level (and equivalent) students had grades lower than expected, GCSE (and equivalent students) seemed to be more of a mix with 63% achieving what they expected or better.
- **Looking ahead:** Students voted university league tables as the top decision maker in uni choice but our community conversations say otherwise.

# Before results



# Students felt a range of emotions with nerves being most common

Perhaps expectedly, the main emotion in the lead up to Results was nerves, with 25% of students saying they were feeling nervous, and another 19% saying they were feeling scared.

After a few years of relative normality, it's easy to forget the experiences of different student cohorts caused by the pandemic, and how it may still be impacting them as they go through their educational journey. For the cohort receiving results, this is the first time they will have received results based on exams they've completed, following teacher assessed grades for GCSE.

They were also impacted by the long tail of absences in Year 12 when students were missing class due to their own illness and had to try and keep up from home while isolating. A poll we ran in October of 2022 found over 80% of students said their schooling had been disrupted that academic year.

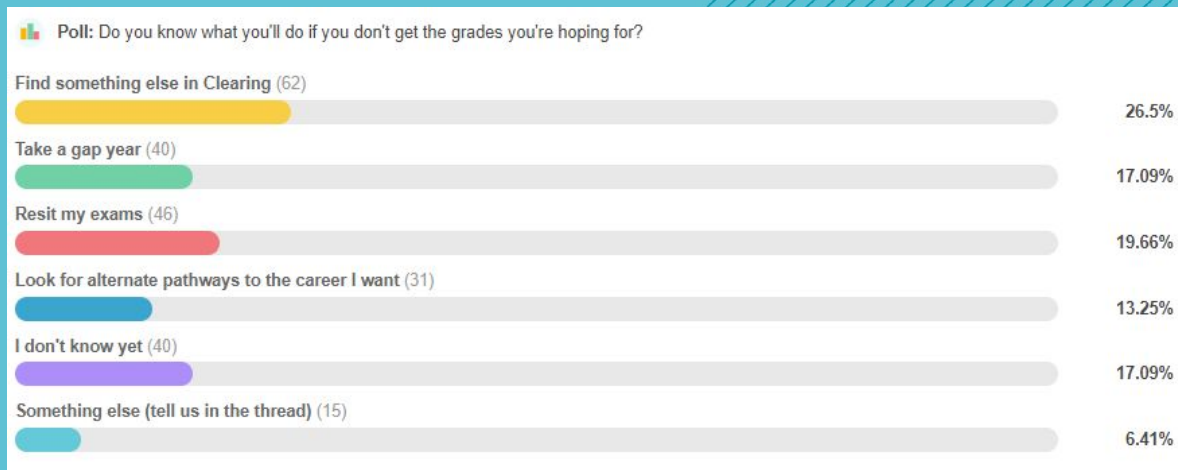


*"So very scared now. Just want it to be over with"*

# 26% of students would look to Clearing if miss required grades

Ahead of A-Level, BTEC and T-Level Results Day, we saw 26% of students polled said they expected to find something in Clearing if missed their grades. This was followed by resits as the next option.

In the weeks leading up to results, we also started to see students asking about Clearing or what they could do if they didn't get the grades they wanted.



*Which clearing unis 2023 are good for biochemistry?*

*I need some help deciding which uni I should apply for Clearing for Accounting and Finance. Does anyone here have any recommendations? Or would you suggest I take a gap year?*

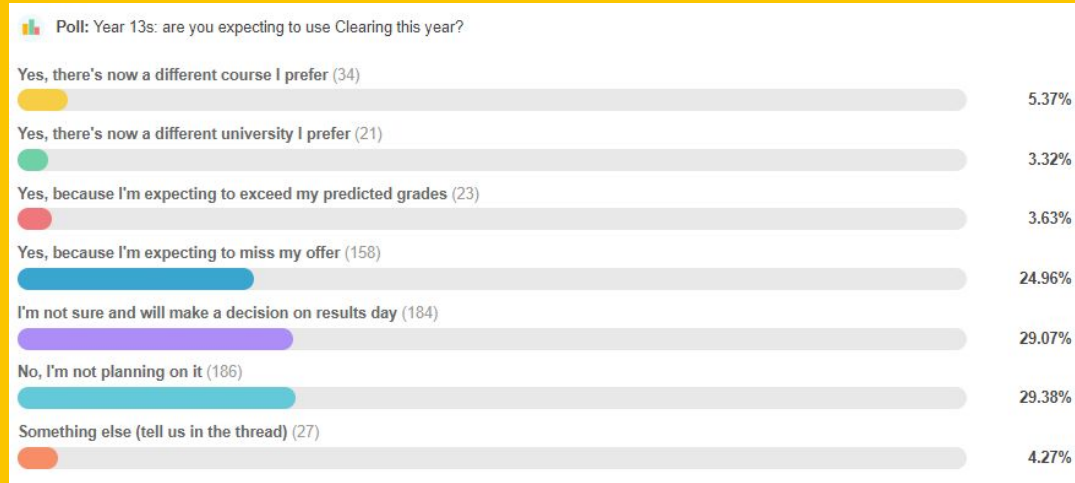
*If I get rejected by my firm am I able to call them up for clearing to ask to be on the foundation course of the course I already got rejected from?*

# Pre-results - nearly a quarter of students polled were expecting to use Clearing due to missed offer grades

While the majority of students before Results weren't anticipating using Clearing, nearly a quarter of students who responded to our poll over the weekend prior to 17th August were expecting to miss their offer.

To us, this wasn't surprising as we saw [in July](#) that over 40% of students felt concerned they weren't going to reach the grades they were hoping for.

The third of students who are unsure in this poll shows there were students who remained open-minded about what might happen on Results Day, and perhaps felt as though it could go either way. These students shouldn't be mistaken as uncertain or uninformed, but simply waiting for all the information before they make their final choice.



*"I'm worried about unis and grade boundaries being harsh, even compared to 2019 standards."*

Over the weekend prior to Results Day (11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>) the most viewed articles were [Guide to A-level Results day 2023](#), [University phone numbers and contact details for Ucas Clearing and Exam Results 2023](#). Much discussion was centralising around the [Results Day Countdown thread](#), with 25,000 pageviews across the weekend prior to A-level results day.

*"What is a reasonable way to start a call to uni about a course in clearing? It may be obvious to some people, but I know I'll panic and not know what to say. Especially if I'm upset about missing my firm offer."*

*"I'm really nervous for results day. Can someone give me tips on what to do when I ring up for Clearing? like do I just call up and say "hi I've not met my offer is it possible if I'd be accepted with these grades\_\_\_\_\_". I'm not sure what to say"*

*"If a uni didn't give you an offer can u still apply to that same uni for clearing?"*

*If I get rejected by my firm am I able to call them up for clearing to ask to be on the foundation course of the course I already got rejected from?*

*I need some help deciding which uni I should apply for Clearing for Accounting and Finance. Does anyone here have any recommendations? Or would you suggest I take a gap year?*



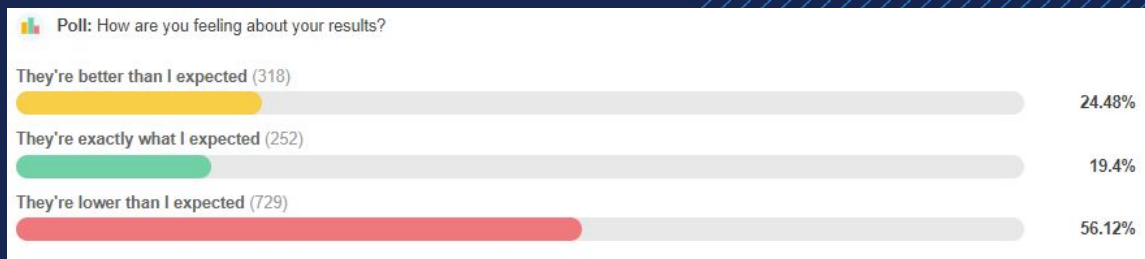
# Results



# Compared to 2022, A-level results were lower than expected

On Results morning we saw a concerning trend with a number of students having missed their offers and receiving lower grades than they thought they would.

This sentiment then continued throughout the day and the poll we ran shows more than half of respondents receiving grades lower than expected. We expected this in comparison to 2022 especially, when more students received higher grades than usual. However, when we look back at a [similar poll](#) on The Student Room before the pandemic in 2019, we can still see a lower level of disappointment back then.



# More than 257,000 words written on-site on Results Day

*Got my a level results and idk what to choose now. I originally had a City university of London offer for business management, however due to my grades they offered me a foundation year instead. I also have my insurance which is westminster for Business Management ( Marketing). What would you recommend I choose. I was not open to foundation year at all. I have four days to choose! Send help please*

*Just got my a levels: A psychology, A biology, B philosophy (2 marks of an A so considering a remark), C in chemistry. I'm feeling ok just a bit rubbish about reapplying for psychology, as I've decided on a gap year, with AAB when I know all the psychology courses I looked at and am interested in are AAA or AAA\*. Does anyone know any good courses that accept AAB or would maybe accept me as I have the fourth a level too. Thanks!*

*I achieved A\* in maths B in physics and A in chemistry and didn't get into either firm or insurance choices. If I take a year out and resit physics as well as doing further maths, what are my chances of receiving an offer from a top university such as Imperial, UCL or Bath for mechanical or aerospace engineering?*

*Anybody on here planning to retake their A levels and re-apply to uni next year? Thinking of doing so and feel a bit scared tbh*

*I spent so long preparing for clearing yesterday, and honestly still have no idea how it works. I'm so lucky I didn't have to go through that race, and got into my firm. Good luck to all that are going through the trials and tribulation of clearing, be proud of what you've achieved!*

# Lots of conversation around remarks

Conversations indicated that students were having success with remarks with lots of conversation between students awaiting remarks/asking if they should apply for one.

*I got 97/200 on my exam this morning and got a C. The grade boundary for a B is 100/200. Is it worth getting it remarked?*

*I did OCR A A level physics and got 3 marks of an A. Is it worth requesting a remark?*

Also around resits:

*Anybody on here planning to retake their A levels and reapply to uni next year? Thinking of doing so and feel a bit scared tbh*

*Hello, I've just received my a levels results and I could say that I was very disappointed with my results and that I know I can achieve much better grades so I'm considering a resit but I'm wondering if I do it and I get my results for next year, do I go into uni starting from 2024 or do I have to wait another year to get in. And also what grades do I have to put in if I'm resitting my exams?*

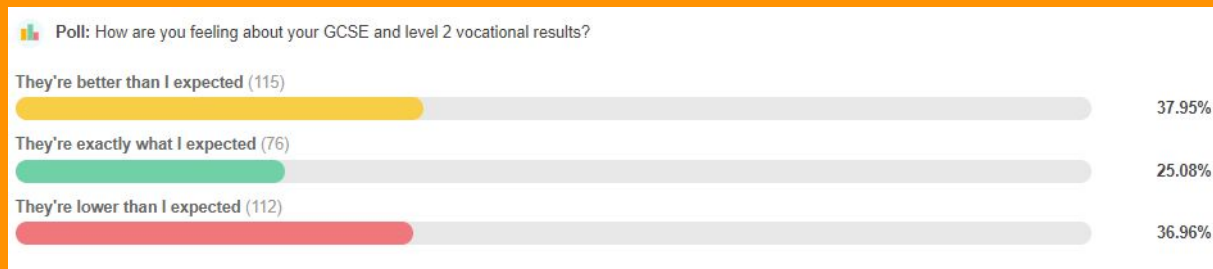
*Hi, I achieved ABB and planning to resit my 2 subjects that are B's (Maths and CS). However, I would like to start university in 2024 so when applying at the end of this year again, is it possible to still apply to courses that require something like AAA and make them aware that I am resitting or something like that? I don't wanna resit and end up having to take 2 years off.*

# GCSE and equivalent students had mixed reviews with their results



GCSE students were feeling largely okay with their results across the board, with the disappointment we saw with the A-level cohort not being mirrored for our Year 11's.

We did however see a few students who were very surprised by their results and seemingly unprepared for any difficult decisions around college or subject choice. We have also seen in the last week students beginning to worry about the highly competitive universities and courses and there is a level of anxiety around their GCSE grades and how they may impact university applications further down the line.



*"Geography ocr b was so weird; predicted a 9 for the entire course and i barely scraped a 7 so that was a bit disappointing everything else very happy with"*

*"My results are really good! Hard work does pay off in the end. Sixth Form, here I come!"*

# Looking ahead



# Uni sorted...what next?

Discussions continued following Results day from students who missed their offers and were navigating Clearing. The great accommodation shuffle also started with lots of students chatting in our uni accommodation forum to ensure they've secured a place to live as they confirm their plans for September.

For students who received a place for September, there's lots of questions about life at university and how to prepare - now starts the panic of organising their new lives! Practical tips are high on the list, but so are things like making friends, which we know is a key worry for this cohort starting in September, alongside physical and mental health.

*"Advice for making friends at university? I recently got my offer and I was wondering if there is any advice on what to do. I've heard joining societies is good?"*

*"Heading to KCL for Law, wondering what things I should need. Any tips or advice for things I should do in my remaining month of holiday?"*

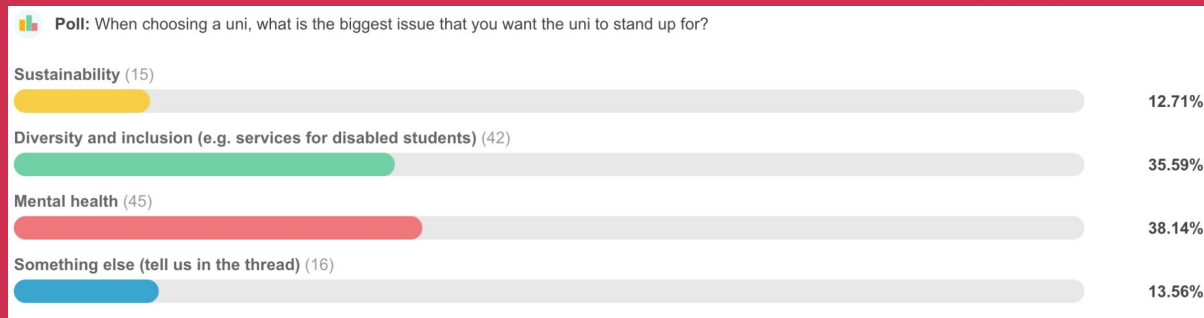
*"Will a macbook be fine for an accounting and finance degree?"*

*"I have a severe phobia of illness (in part due to the fact I have autism as well), and as university gets closer I'm becoming increasingly more scared of sharing accommodation. I'm in shared kitchen and shared bathroom and wanted to know how other people have coped with this. I don't drink alcohol because of my anxiety but I've heard things about 'freshers flu' is this real? I don't want to come home because I can't cope. Or am I worrying about nothing?"*

# Mental health is biggest issue students look for uni's to stand up for

While not immediately relevant for results day, these poll results are an important indicator of where students are feeling their priorities lie when it comes to support provided by their universities.

It's clear that mental health and diversity and inclusion are big factors when it comes to students feeling comfortable and confident with their choice of university. If students ended up in clearing, these factors may drive certain choices. They are also important to note for 2024 applicants.



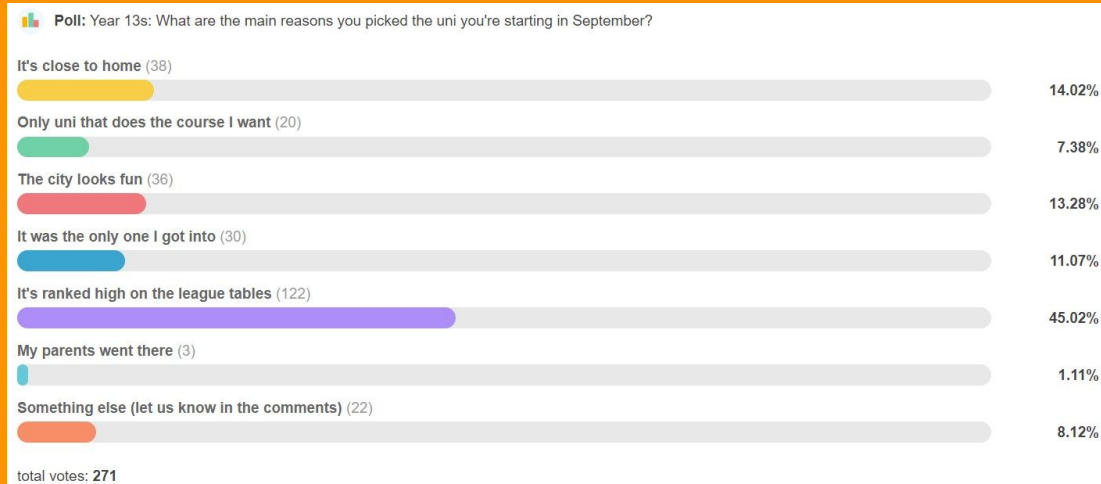


# Students vote university league tables as top decision maker, but is this reflective of how they told us they're feeling after results day?



Although 45% of students cited league tables as their primary factor in university choice, this doesn't fully reflect the conversations we've been seeing on site. With grade boundaries returning to those of pre-pandemic levels and the rising cost of living becoming an ever-more prevalent topic of discussion, conversations across TSR reflect students reassessing their priorities.

While on this poll, league table rankings undoubtedly hold weight, it is important to note that decision making factors such as their university being close to home, student life in that city and more notably, the university being the only one they got into, are all also contributing factors from the votes. These findings underline the multifaceted nature of the university selection process where personal circumstances, location, and individual experiences play pivotal roles alongside academic considerations.



*"I went for the course content, very few universities provide topics on biological anthropology."*

*"Mine was a doubly happy coincidence: it was local ish and I was a carer at the time so couldn't go too far, and it had a really strong phil programme with a 3rd year choice to specialise in Indian philosophy"*