

Firm and insurance choice decision making

We asked prospective undergraduates what influenced their decision-making when choosing firm and insurance choice universities

Methodology:

TSR Asks monthly omnibus survey of students currently planning to start university in 2024, aged 16+

Fieldwork:

1st – 4th March 2024

Base:

268 responses

How informed do 2024 entry undergraduates feel about making their firm and insurance choices?

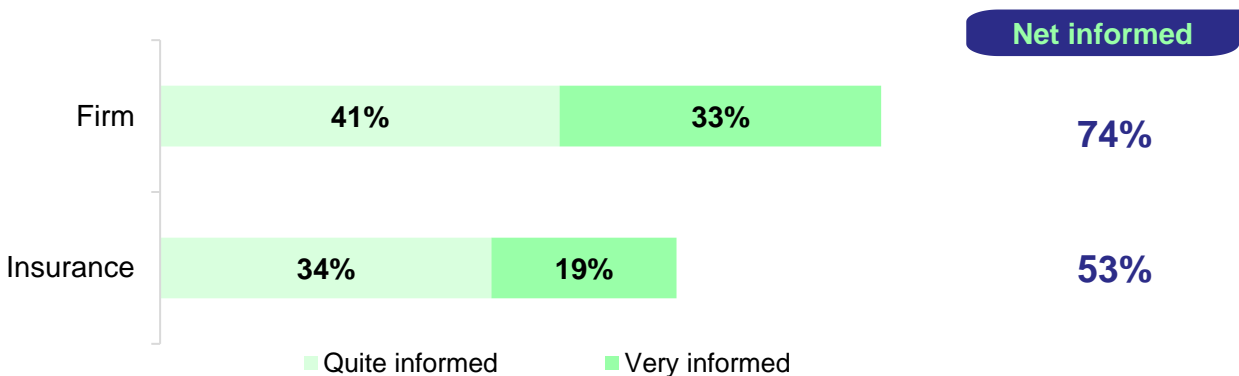
Positively, almost half of 2024 entry UG respondents (47%) had received guidance from their school or college about selecting their firm choice. However, at the point of the survey (March 2024) more than half (52%) said their school or college had not yet provided advice or guidance about how to select either their firm choice or insurance choice university.

Q: Have your school / college provided advice or guidance about how to select your...
(multiple choice)



Respondents were more likely to feel informed about the specific university and course they had chosen for their firm choice (74%) than for their insurance choice (53%). However, only one third (33%) said they felt *very informed* about the university they planned to choose for their firm choice institution, and fewer than one-fifth (19%) felt *very informed* about their insurance choice.

Q: Overall, how informed do you feel about the specific university and course you have chosen/will choose as your Firm Choice?/ Insurance Choice? (multiple choice)



How are insurance choice universities chosen?

When selecting their insurance choice institution, respondents made comparisons to their firm choice in terms of entry requirements and league table performance. For some their insurance choice decision was reflective of their individual order of preference choosing their second favorite institution as insurance choice. Factors such as university location and their experience of open days also influenced decision making.

Q: Please tell us how you have chosen your insurance choice university (Open comment)
(Base: 158, Respondents with an insurance choice)



Entry requirements: Respondents were more inclined to select a university as their insurance choice if the course offered lower entry requirements than their other choices. This reassured them that if they didn't get the grades they expected, they could still secure a place at university.



Second favourite university: For some respondents, the decision was driven simply by their insurance choice university being their second favourite university of those they had applied to.



Reputation and league table performance: Choosing the university or course with the best ranking or reputation after their firm choice was mentioned.



Location: in a similar way to firm choice decision making, some respondents discussed location as having an impact on which university would be selected as their insurance choice. Some chose universities as they liked the location. Others wanted to remain either close to home or stay at home for university, with a few suggesting this was to avoid the costs associated with moving away for university.



Open day experience: Having visited the university and had a positive open day experience was discussed by a few respondents. Campus atmosphere and layout were suggested as motivations for selecting universities as insurance choice options.

Grades seem more achievable.
Course looks good, looks like a nice and safe area with a lot of opportunities.

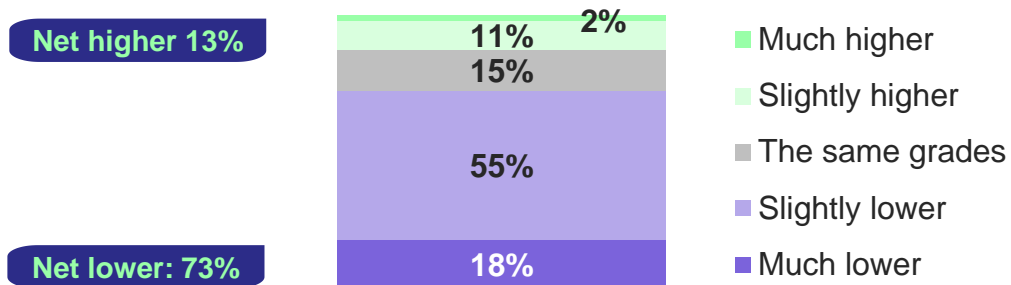
I chose the one that I'd still be happy to go to if I didn't get into my firm choice and one with slightly lower grade requirements

The course itself appealed to me. The open day was very informative.

How do respondents feel about their insurance choice university and its entry requirements?

While on the most part, respondents' insurance choice universities had lower grade requirements (72%) than their firm choice, more than a quarter (28%) selected an insurance choice with grade requirements the same or higher than their firm choice option. Perhaps surprisingly, those who had received support from their school/college about insurance choices were no more likely to have chosen a university with lower grades than those who had not received information on this.

Q: Does/will your Insurance choice University have...? (than my Firm choice university)
(Single response) (Base: Respondents with an insurance choice)



Positively, two-thirds (67%) agreed that their insurance choice university had grade requirements they knew they would meet comfortably, and over half (58%) described their insurance choice as somewhere they would be happy to go.

Q: Which of the following do you agree with? My insurance choice university..... (Multiple response) (Base: Respondents with an insurance choice)

67%
Has grade requirements I know I could comfortably meet

58%
Is somewhere I'd be happy to go to

2 **47%**
Is my second favourite university

*None of these 6%

Despite only 58% feeling their university choice was somewhere they would be happy to go, 73% said they would enrol at their insurance choice in the event they missed the grades for their firm choice, suggesting possible future retention concerns for these students. 27% would explore alternative options such as clearing and gap years.

Q: If you missed the grades for your Firm, but met the grades for my Insurance, would you...? (Single response) (Base: Respondents with an insurance choice)

