

Perceptions of higher education

We asked The Student Room Community members about their views and perceptions of higher education

Methodology:

TSR Asks monthly omnibus survey of Year 11s, Year 12s, Y13s and 1st Year UGs (aged 16+)

Fieldwork:

31st October – 4th November 2024

Base:

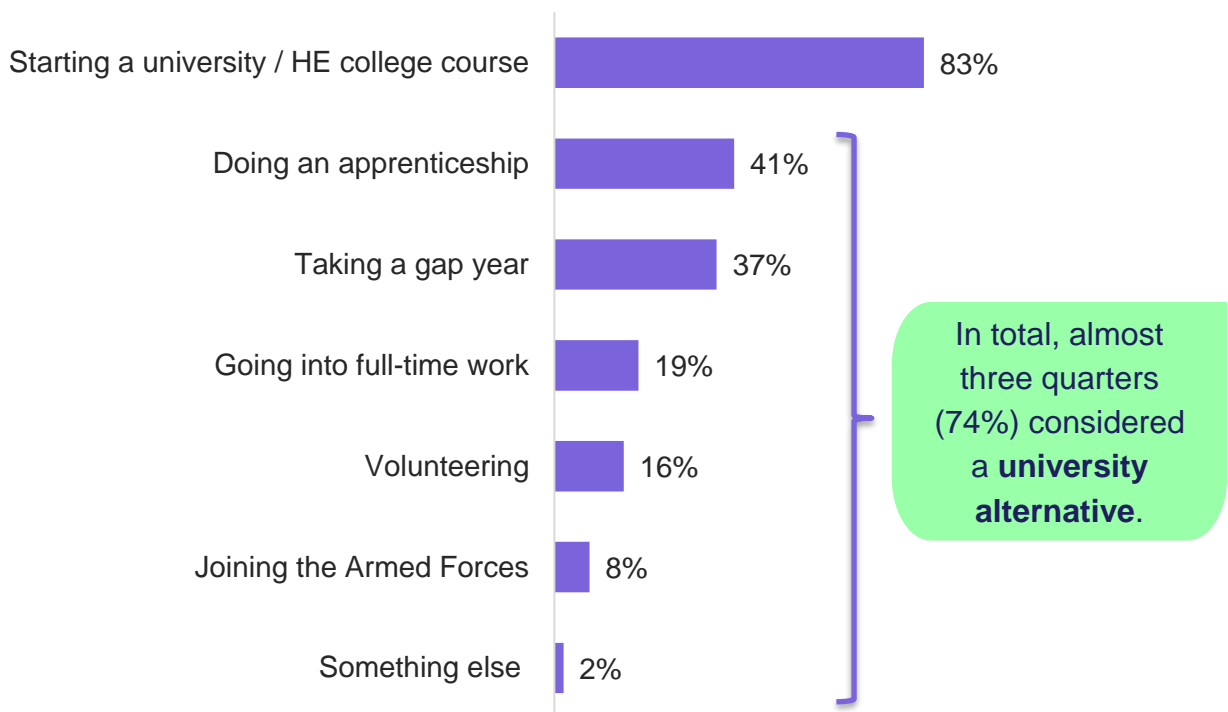
959 responses

Planned post-18 choices

Thinking about their post-18 choices, 83% of survey respondents considered or would consider a **university or HE college course** (83%). More than two fifths (41%) considered an **apprenticeship**, and more than a third (37%) a **gap year**.

Each respondent considered an average of around two different post-18 options.

Q: Which of the following did you consider / would you consider for your post-18 choices?
(Multiple response question)



Year 13 (or equivalent) respondents were more likely to have considered taking a **gap year** (44%) than Year 11 (27%) or Year 12 respondents (34%).

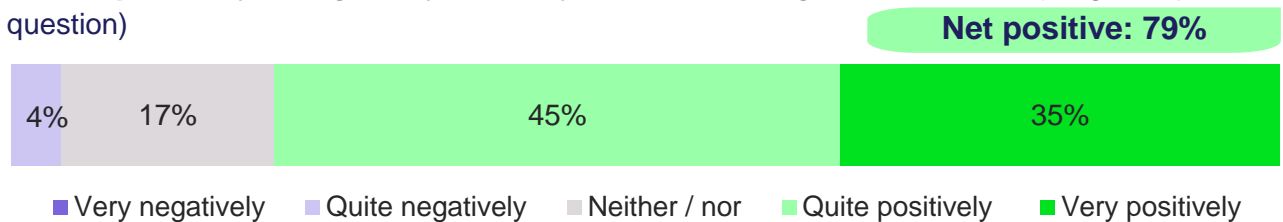
Those whose parent(s)/carer(s) attended university were more likely to consider a **gap year** (40%) than first in family respondents (31%). Whereas first in family respondents were more likely than those whose parent(s)/carer(s) went to university to consider doing an **apprenticeship** (47% cf. 37%) or going into **full-time work** (24% cf. 16%).

How do respondents and their parents feel about HE

How they feel:

In total, **79% of survey respondents felt positively about higher education, including 35% who felt very positively.** Just 4% of respondents felt either quite or very negatively about higher education.

Q: How positively or negatively do you feel about Higher Education? (Single response question)



Respondents in the South of England were more likely to feel positively about higher education (83%) than those in the Midlands (73%).

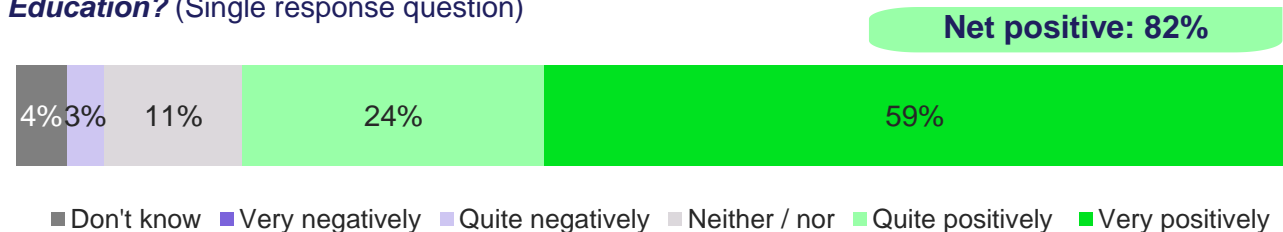
Those whose parent(s)/carer(s) went to university were more likely to feel positively about higher education than first in family respondents (84% cf. 72%).

How their parent(s)/carer(s) feel:

82% thought that their parent(s)/carer(s) felt positively about higher education, including more than half (59%) who felt they were very positive, a higher proportion than respondents who felt very positively about higher education themselves (35%).

Interestingly, only a small proportion (4%) reporting not knowing how their parent(s)/carer(s) felt about higher education, suggesting this may be something respondents have regularly spoken with their parent(s) about.

Q: And how positively or negatively would you say your parent(s)/carer(s) feel about Higher Education? (Single response question)



Respondents whose parent(s)/carer(s) went to university themselves were more likely to report they felt very positively about higher education (65%) than those whose parent(s)/carer(s) did not attend (50%).

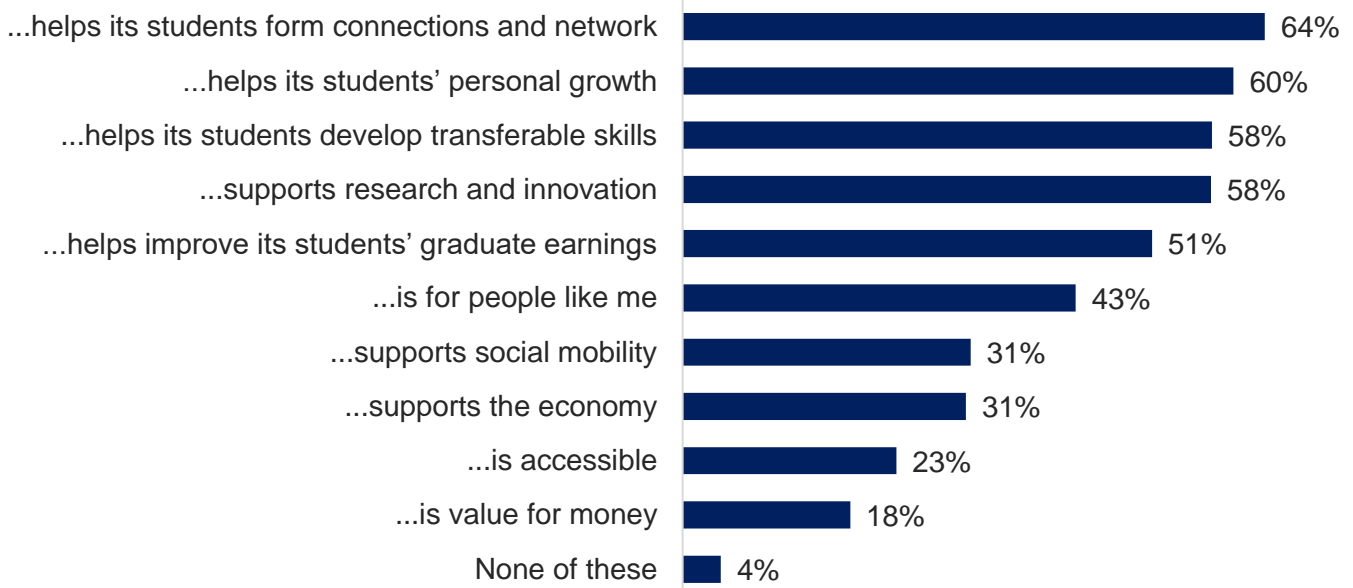
The value of HE

We asked respondents to select from a list which statements about the value of HE they agreed with.

Positively, 96% of respondents agreed with at least one statement listed about the value of higher education. Almost two thirds of respondents (64%) agreed that higher education **helped its students form connections and networks**, and three fifths (60%) felt higher education **supported its students' personal growth**.

Less than half of respondents (43%) felt that higher education was **for people like them**, and just 23% believed that **higher education was accessible**. Less than one in five (18%) believed that higher education offered **value for money**.

Q: Which of the following statements, if any, do you agree with? Higher Education... (Multiple response question)



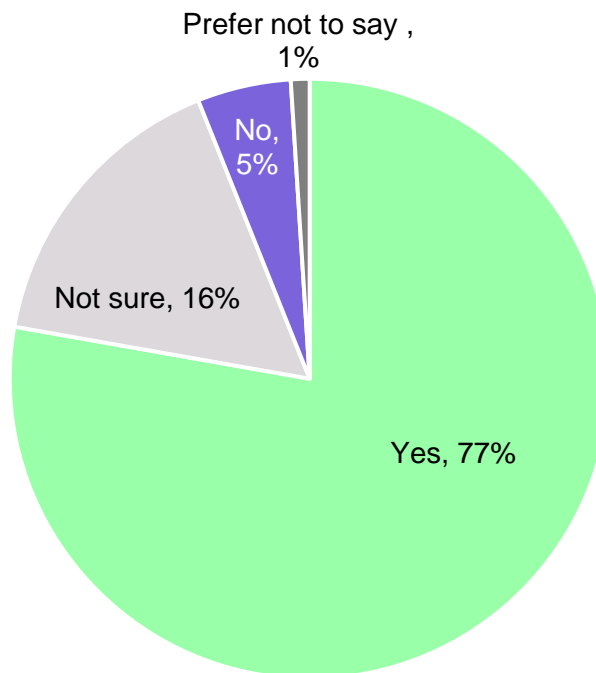
There were several differences between in perceptions between those whose parent(s)/carer(s) went to university and first in family respondents, with those whose parent(s) went to university more likely to feel that higher education supports research and innovation (62% cf. 51%), helps improve its students' graduate earnings (55% cf. 45%), was for people like them (49% cf. 32%), and was value for money (20% cf. 15%). There were also some regional differences. Those in the South of England were more likely than those in the Midlands to agree that higher education helps improve its students' graduate earnings (55% cf. 44%) and supports the economy (34% cf. 24%).

Tuition fees

In research conducted prior to the announcement, we asked respondents how they would theoretically respond if undergraduate tuition fees increased.

If tuition fees were to increase by 5%, 77% of respondents felt that they still would have made the same decision to go to university. One in twenty (5%) said they would not attend, and a further 16% were unsure.

Q: Theoretically, if tuition fees rose by the following amounts, would you still make / have made same decision to attend university? 5% (Single response grid) (Base: 763 UK students in Y11, Y12, Y13 (or equiv) planning to go to university in the future or first year UK UGs)



First in family respondents were twice as likely to report they would not attend if fees increased by 5% (8%) than those whose parent(s)/carer(s) attended university (4%).

Interestingly, 11% of survey respondents on a university or HE college course felt they would not have attended if fees had increased by 5%.