

Student Sentiment

November 2024

As the UK's largest online student community, we witness daily the valuable exchange of support and advice among young people. Learning from their experiences guides us in providing meaningful support.

We have the opportunity and responsibility to amplify students' voices, sharing their perspectives with those like you who aim to support them. By listening to students and collaborating across sectors, we strive to make a genuine impact on their lives.

Highlights in this update

- Just under half of those polled are still to submit their Ucas application
- Making friends has been the biggest challenge for first year undergraduates since starting uni
- Almost half of students polled are frustrated at the announced rise in tuition fees
- 59% of respondents said student debt and costs would be the main thing to put them off applying to uni
- TSR Insight look at perceptions of Clearing and of Higher Education
- We asked students how a change in fees would influence decision-making

Year 13s: where are you at in your university decision making?

The results of this poll tell us that most Year 13 students are feeling confident about their university applications; with over two-thirds saying that they have either already applied or are ready to submit at this time in the cycle.

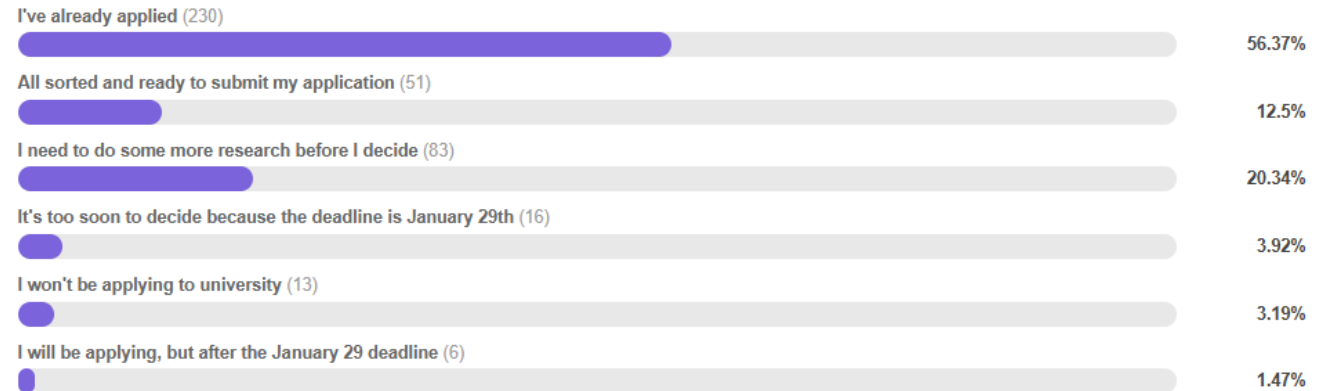
However, 20.3% have said that they need to conduct more research before deciding and 3.9% saying that at the time this poll was running, it was too early to decide, with the equal consideration deadline being set for the 29th January.

A small minority of voters (3.19%) say that they will not be applying to university, while 1.4% say that they will be applying, but after the 29th January deadline.

Overall, these students demonstrate a proactive approach to their next steps, presenting an opportunity for universities to sustain this momentum and keep them engaged and interested.

We also ran this poll last year in November 2023. Interestingly the shift YoY is really in a 11% drop in 2024 of those already applied and a 10% rise in those still researching their options – good news for those recruitment teams looking to run some December and Jan pre-app campaigns.

📊 Poll: Year 13s: where are you at in your university decision making?



408 Votes – 01/11/2024 - 08/11/2024

“I'm not in Year 13, but I'm in the equivalent year in Scotland (S6/Sixth Year) and I've filled out all my info on UCAS. I still haven't finished my personal statement yet though.”

“I applied to get it out of the way, and I know a lot of people at my 6th form have also done this. I heard from many people that the first term in year 13 is very stressful and I didn't want the UCAS form stressing me out over half term. I applied on the 17th and have already had all my responses back so now I'm not stressed at all.”

“I've only applied to Oxford so far but planning on doing the rest before the Jan deadline”

1st Years: what's been your biggest challenge of university so far?


Starting university is a whirlwind of new experiences, and a recent poll sheds light on what first-year students find most challenging.

Unsurprisingly, 'making new friends' (19.3%), highlights the social pressures of building new connections in a new environment. Following closely behind is 'adjusting to the workload' (17.5%), showing that the jump to university-level academics can be a taxing adjustment for many.

A significant 22% of respondents are grappling with regret—whether over their university choice (12.8%) or their course choice (9.9%). These figures suggest that earlier, more tailored support during the application process could help students feel more confident in these life-changing decisions.

11.1% of students report difficulty balancing academics and social life, which ties directly into the first and second top concerns 'making friends' and 'adjusting to the workload' further highlighting the challenges of balancing these priorities for first years.

It's notable that 'managing finances' (10.5%) reflects students tackling broader life skills as they adapt to university life, whilst there are lower concerns for 'feeling homesick' (6.4%) and 'navigating campus' (3.5%); indicating that students feel confident in their independence and adapt quickly to the new physical environment compared to social and academic hurdles.

 Poll: 1st Years: what's been your biggest challenge of university so far?



[171 Votes](#) – 08/11/2024 - 15/11/2024

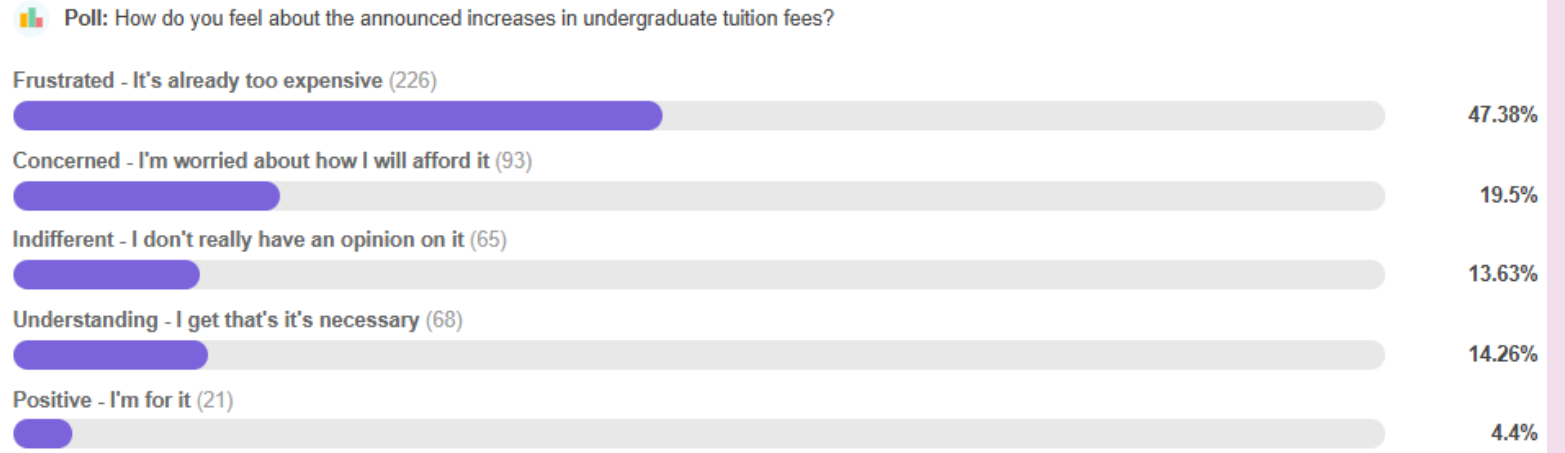
How do you feel about the announced increases in undergraduate tuition fees?

These poll results show a largely negative sentiment towards the announced increased to undergraduate tuition fees.

The largest group of respondents, 47.3%, expressed frustration and that fees are 'already too expensive'. 19.5% said they felt concerned about how they will afford the increases, meaning 1 in 5 respondents for this poll are worried about affordability after tuition fees rise.

A small fraction (4.4%) are selected 'I'm for it', while a further 14.2% expressed an understanding that the increases may be necessary. This suggests that while few people actively support the increases, a somewhat larger group is willing to accept or acknowledge the reasoning behind them.

Notably, 13.6% said that they are feeling indifferent, this group represents a sizable portion of the respondents, indicating that while the issue is significant for most, there are still a moderate number that aren't concerned either because they are either not particularly affected by the changes or simply do not have strong opinions on the matter.



"I don't see why it's such a problem for most people since uni, at least as an average working class person, is technically free assuming you don't include deposits on houses/homeware and workbooks. It's called student debt for a reason so none of us will really need to worry until we earn a certain amount in years to come and even if we do earn enough to pay it back it's so little each people won't notice it.

Maybe if you are able to pay for it yourself then yeah, it'll be tough, but I'm sure that if you can afford it upfront then you're also probably rich enough not to notice. I could be wrong tho. Charging more for it will only prolong the debt which only few pay back in it's entirety anyways."

"I might be being naïve here, but if Scottish students can get free university and other countries too, surely it should be possible here? (I know "should" is not the same as "will realistically happen"). I sometimes wish I was born in Scotland... The increase is definitely going to hurt people financially and put people from low economic backgrounds off applying for university, which is detrimental to society as a whole..."



What, if anything, might put you off going to uni?


When we asked our users what their main reason would be for not going to university, the results were clear.

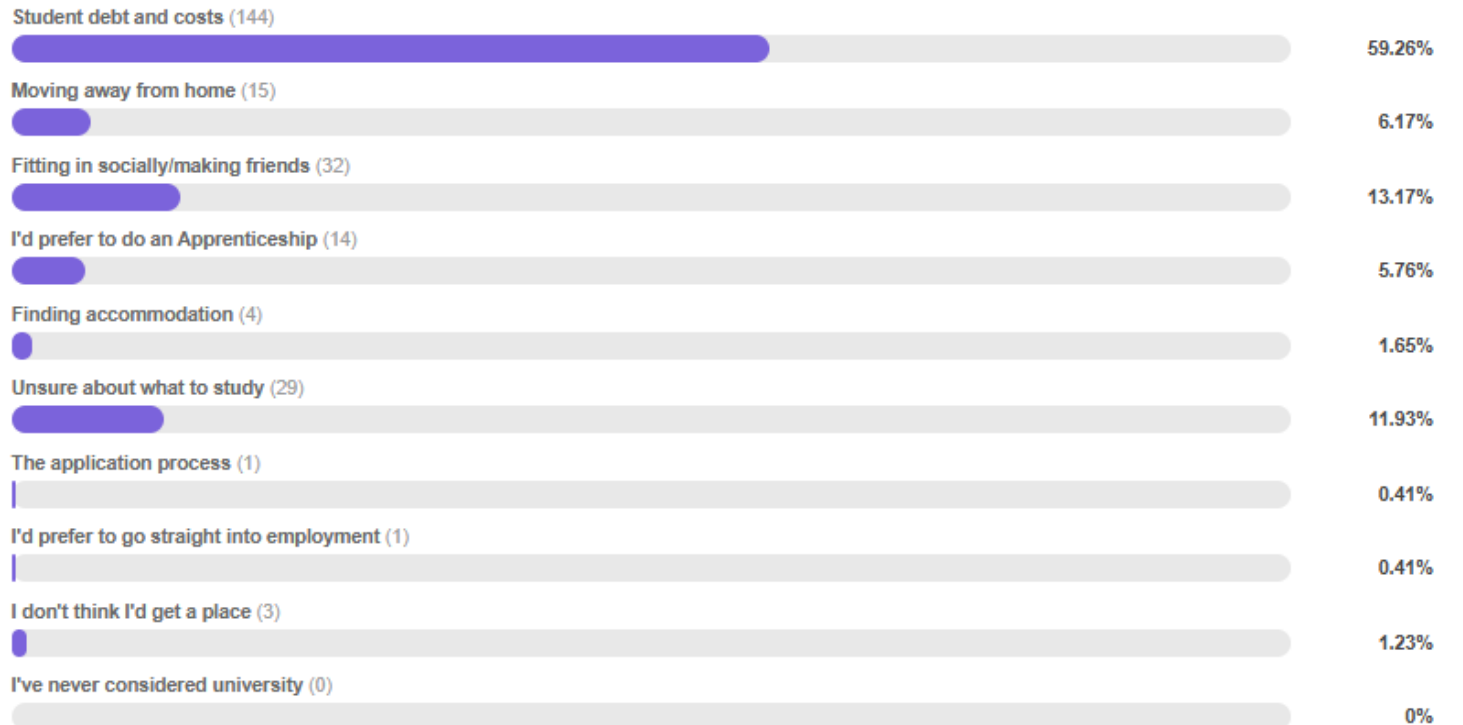
More than half of the responses (59.6%) said that 'student debt and costs' would be the main reason they would be put off going to university. This is significant because of the recent announcement of tuition fee increases for undergraduate students in England.

'Fitting in socially' follows, with 13.1% of voters expressing concerns over fitting in, signifying the importance of social environment at university for prospective students. 11.93% say they are unsure what to study, indicating a need of better support for those who are overwhelmed by the vast course choices available to them.

6.1% selected 'moving away from home' further echoing that apprehension around fitting in and making friends in a new environment or associated costs that comes with living independently at university, however only 1.6% shared concerns around finding suitable accommodation. This is followed closely by those that said they'd prefer to do an apprenticeship (5.7%) over university, tapping into the audience that feels vocational learning is better suited to them.

Finally, even fewer (1.2%) are worried they'd not get a place and a further 0.41% are put off by the application process or consider immediate employment as their most viable option. Overall, the results indicate that, while social and logistical concerns play a role, the primary deterrent to university is financial.

 Poll: What, if anything, might put you off going to uni? Select your main reason

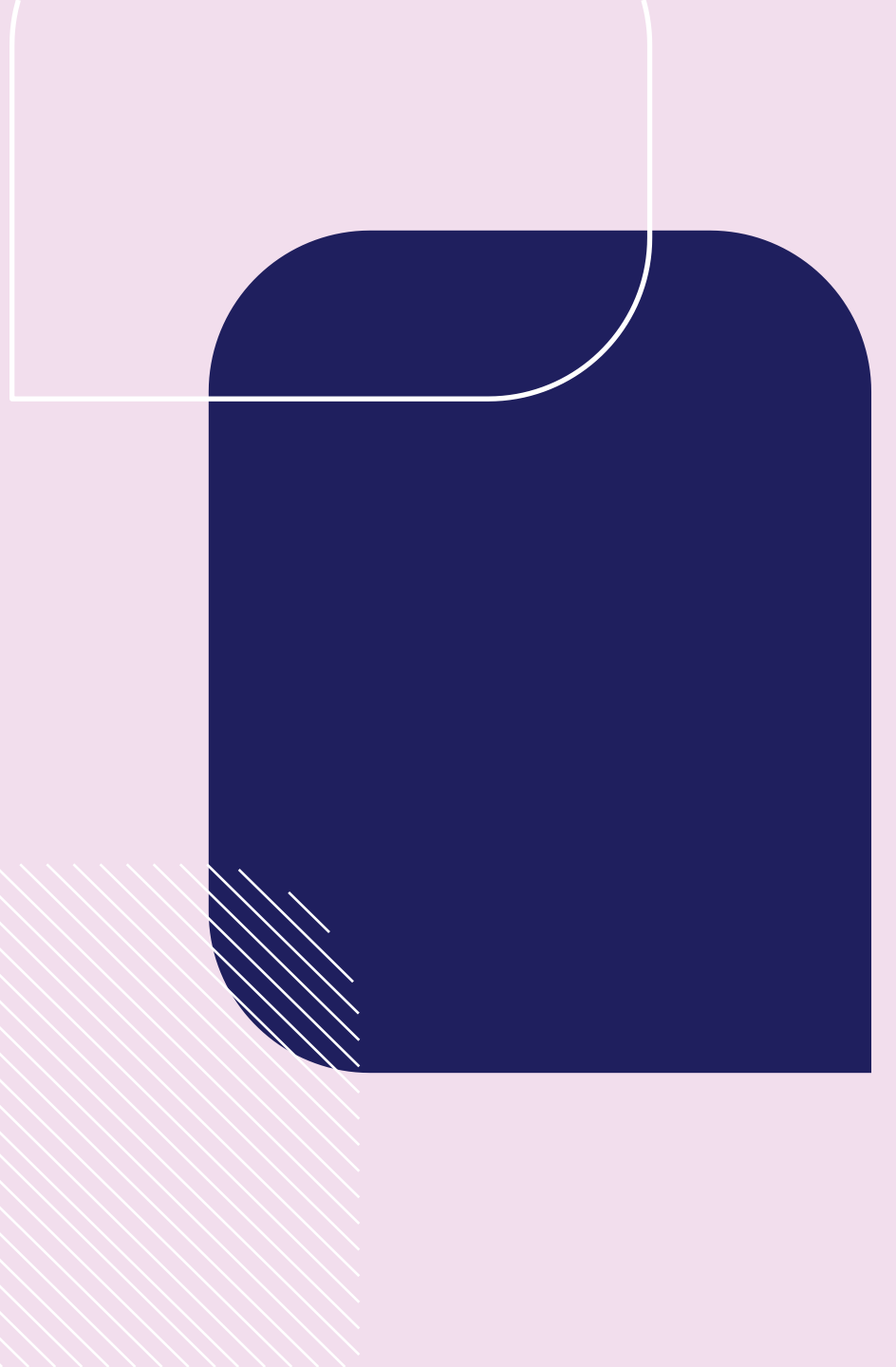


243 Votes – 22/11/2024 - 29/11/2024



**The
Student
Room**
Insight

Summaries

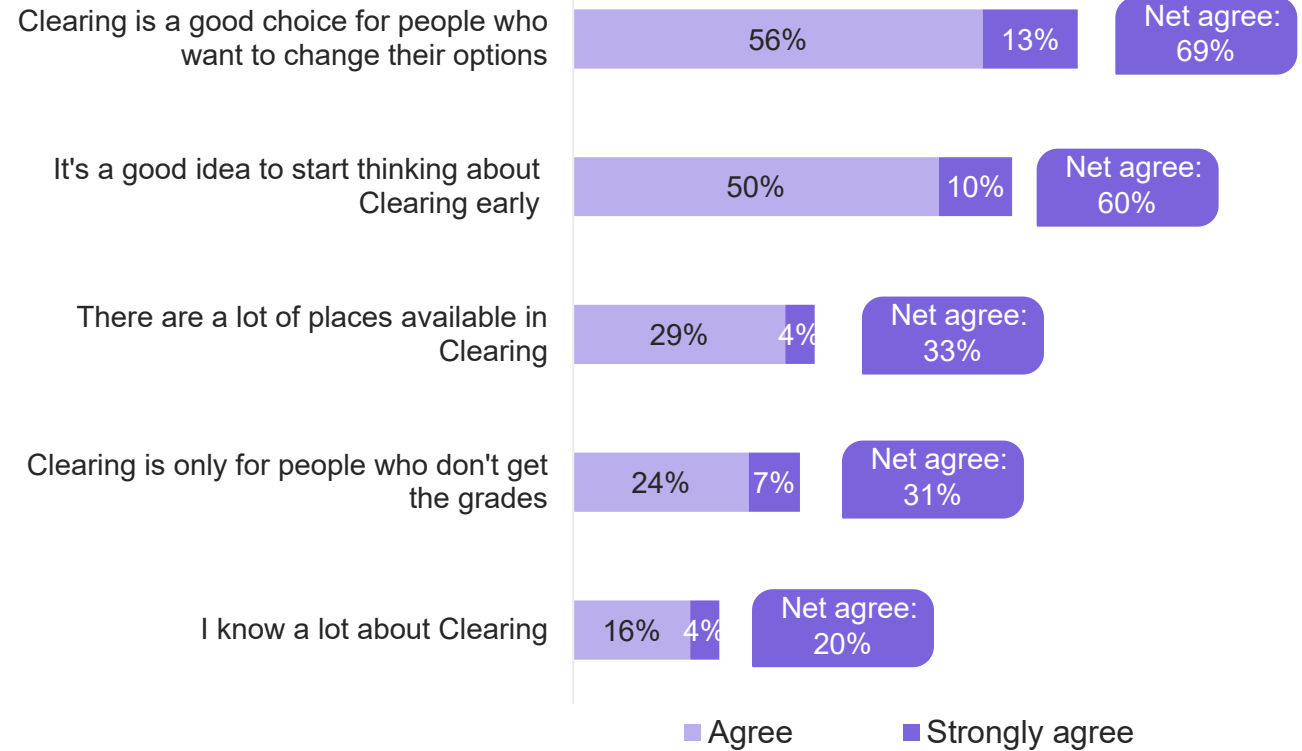


2025 entry respondents: Clearing perceptions

When asked about their perceptions of Clearing, 69% of 2025 entry respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Clearing was a good choice for people who wanted to change their options, and three fifths (60%) agreed that it was a good idea to start thinking about Clearing early.

However, there appears to be a lack of knowledge. At this stage (October 2024), just one in five (20%) 2025 entry respondents agreed that they knew a lot about Clearing.

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Clearing? (Single response grid)



Perceptions of Higher Education

We asked respondents which of a list of statements about the value of higher education they agreed with. Positively, 96% of respondents agreed with at least one statement listed.

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.

You can read more about respondents' perceptions of Higher Education in our summary [here](#).

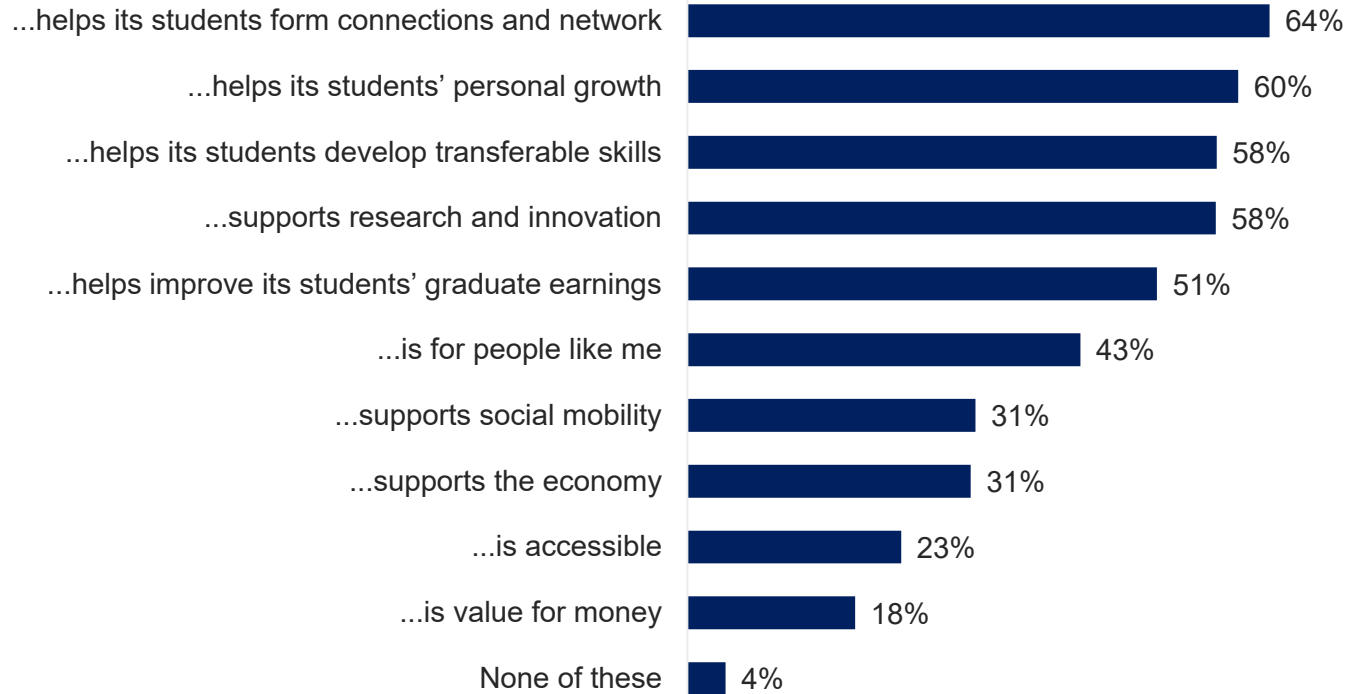
Methodology: Online survey

Audience: UK students in Y11, Y12, Y13 or first year UGs (aged 16+)

Fieldwork: 31st October – 4th November 2024

Base: 959 responses

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



University tuition fee increases

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 respondents (5%) said they would not attend, and a further 16% were unsure.

First in family respondents were more likely to report they would not attend if fees increased (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%.

Methodology: Online survey

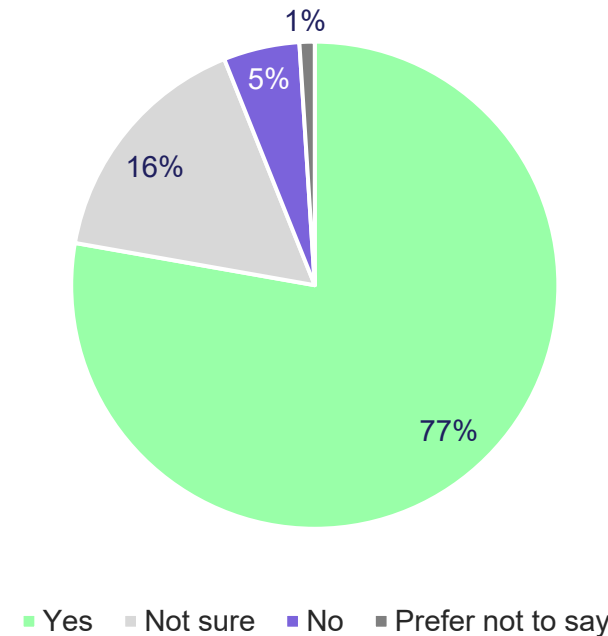
Audience: UK students in Y11, Y12, Y13 planning to go to university in the future or first year UK UGs (aged 16+)

Fieldwork: 31st October – 4th November 2024

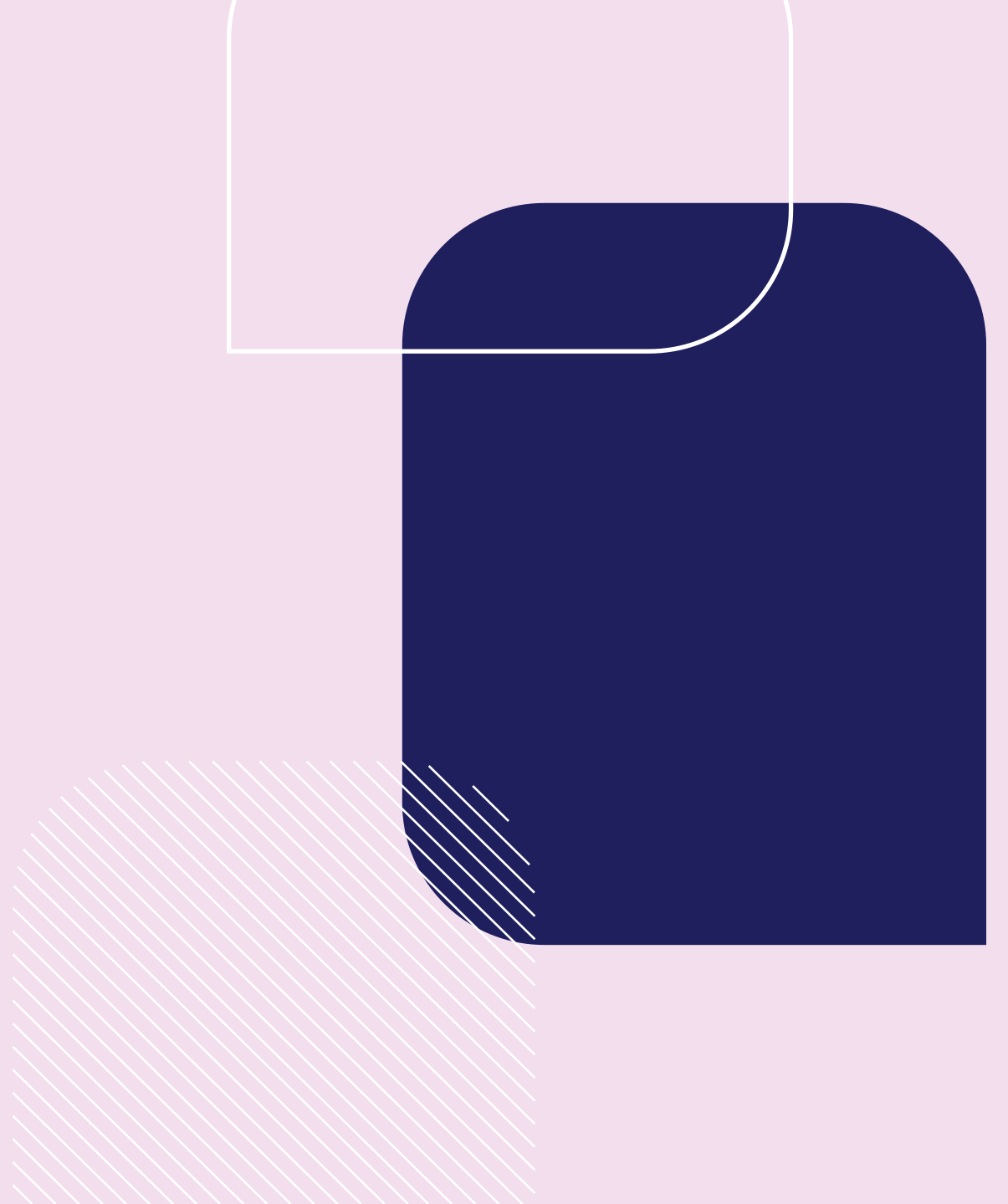
Base: 763 responses

*Research conducted prior to announcement

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)



Product news



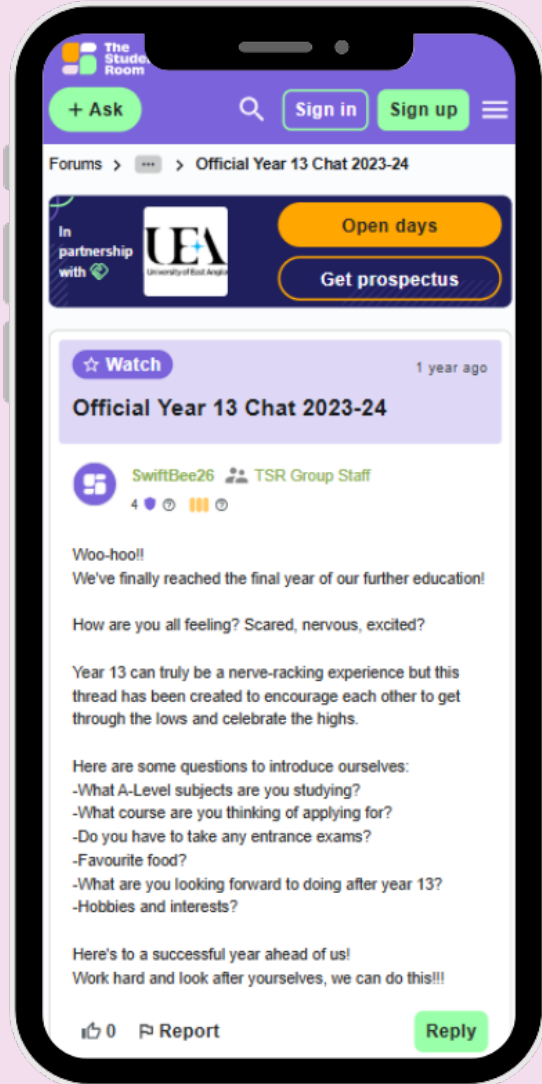
**November
registrations on site**

7,338
Year 11

6,006
Year 12

10,819
Year 13

Discussion Partnerships



Discussion Partnerships offer an exciting new opportunity to build recognition and affinity through key conversations on The Student Room.

Giving you exclusive partnership status for key university application discussions in your subjects or regions of focus, your brand awareness will be boosted, driving engagement all year long.

With an **“In Partnership with...”** space on both the site and app, this partnership delivers extensive brand visibility and long-term association with high-intent student discussions, helping your institution stand out in a competitive market.

Choose from the below options in your content block:

- Your active lead gen buttons (e.g. open days)
- Reviews from The Uni Guide and Did You Know facts
- Your own CTA with link

You will have ownership for 50 weeks of the year (excluding Results Week and following week)

**Clearing packages
and media pack for
2025 are now live**

**Early bird rates
apply for bookings
prior to 31st
January 2025**



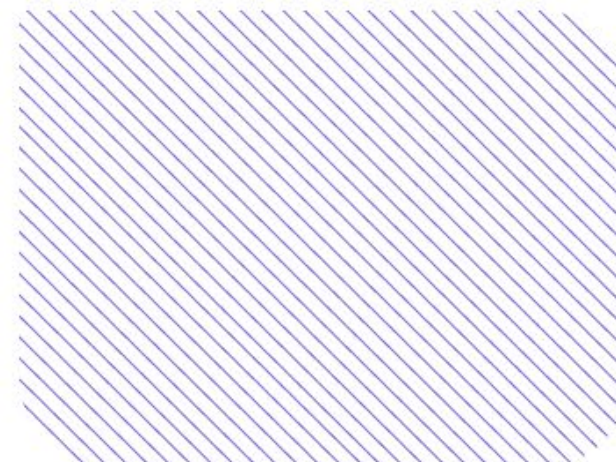
Solution-focused packages

Our Clearing packages are designed to reach applicants that match your recruitment criteria during the peak window on and around A-level results day.

National bundle - 2 available

- Email to Clearing database in results week
- SMS to Clearing database in results week
- Search boost on The Uni Guide
- Sponsorship of Clearing focused content article on The Uni Guide
- Topic sponsorship (Premium only)
- Targeted on-site display impressions

Packages start from £30,000



Subject-targeted bundle - 33 available

- Email in results week
- SMS in results week
- Topic sponsorship in core subject during results week
- Targeted display impressions both on and off site

Subjects start from £7,500

Location-targeted bundle 12 available

- Email in results week
- SMS in results week
- Topic sponsorship in core location during results week
- Targeted display impressions both on and off site

Locations start from £6,500

Download our media pack here