

State of Student Recruitment 2024



Recruitment trends
in 2024 plus student
preferences and
barriers to studying
abroad

www.keg.com

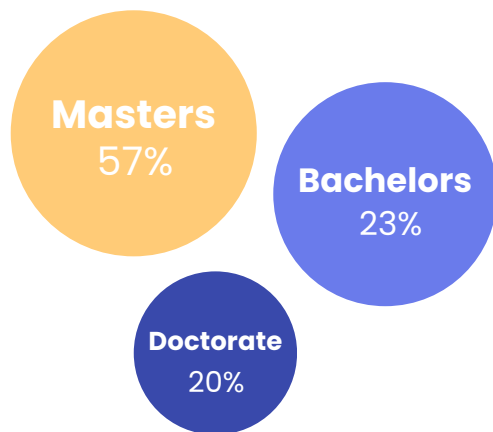
OUR DATA

27,497

student respondents in 2024

DATA BREAKDOWN

Study level interest:



Study abroad?



86%

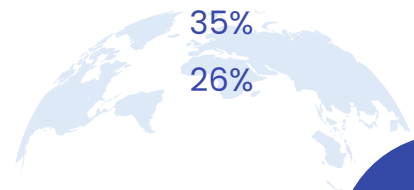
of students want to study internationally

Represented nationalities:

Africa	38%
Asia	34%
Europe	19%
North America	7%
Latin America	2%
Oceania	1%

Age of respondents:

24 and under	39%
25-34	35%
35+	26%



DATA COLLECTION

Our annual **State of Student Recruitment Report** provides increasingly crucial insight into the world of prospective students. How are students thinking about studying abroad, and how can we help them make their study dreams come true?

Take a look behind the scenes of the student journey with data from over 27,400 prospective students representing 195+ countries. They shared their motivations for studying abroad, first considerations, financial and safety concerns, and how they find institutions and programs.

Our year-on-year comparisons can help you understand how student behavior is changing. What has changed for students in 2024? **Let's find out!**

February 2024



Data collection opened

19 April 2024



Survey closed

May 2024

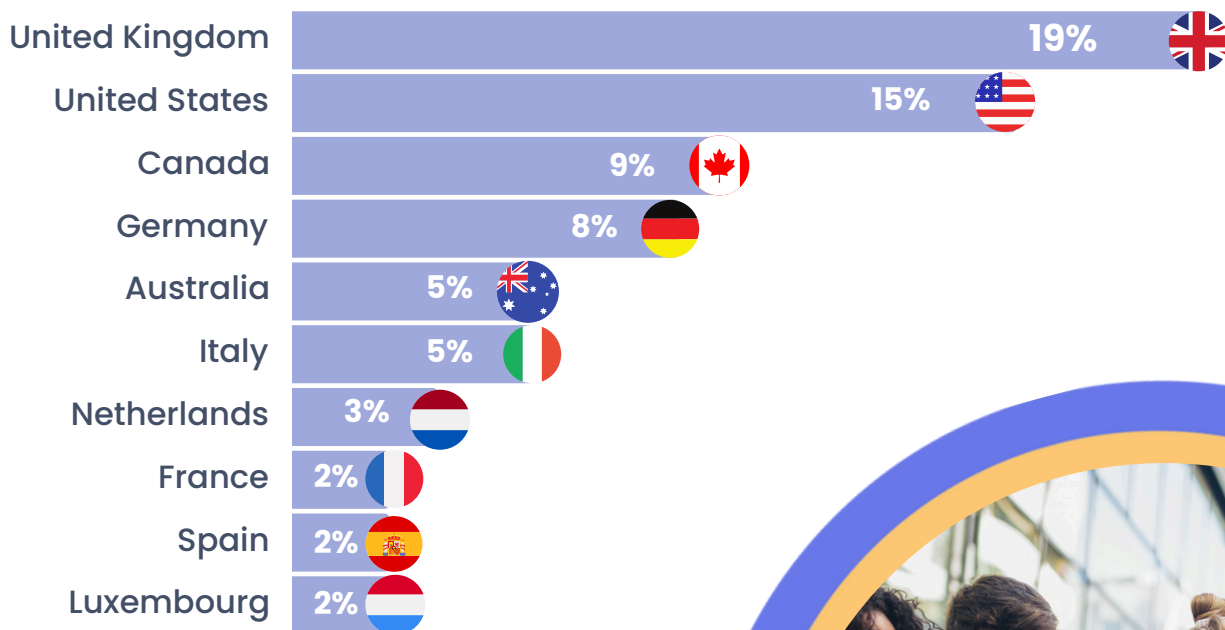


Survey analysis

1 Student study preferences

WHERE DO STUDENTS WANT TO STUDY

Top Study Destinations 2024



FURTHER ANALYSIS

- 44%** Canada drops 2 places from 2023 to 2024.
- +32%** UK increases in popularity from 2023.
- +10%** The US stays 2nd from 2023 to 2024, and has increased in popularity by 10% from 2022.



1 Student study preferences

WHERE DO STUDENTS WANT TO STUDY

Top Study Destinations 2022–2024



Year-on-year trends











continues next page...

1 Student study preferences











Top Study Destinations

Undergraduate

2023











	United States	20%
	Canada	16%
	United Kingdom	12%
	Germany	6%
	Italy	5%
	Australia	4%
	Netherlands	3%
	France	3%
	Spain	3%
	Finland	2%

2024

	United States	15%
	United Kingdom	11%
	Canada	9%
	Germany	7%
	Italy	4%
	Australia	4%
	Netherlands	3%
	Japan	2%
	France	2%
	Spain	2%

Postgraduate

2023

	United Kingdom	18%
	Canada	15%
	United States	14%
	Germany	7%
	France	3%
	Netherlands	3%
	Norway	3%
	Spain	2%
	Finland	2%
	Switzerland	2%

2024

	United Kingdom	20%
	United States	14%
	Canada	9%
	Germany	7%
	Italy	5%
	Australia	4%
	Netherlands	3%
	Luxembourg	3%
	France	2%
	Spain	2%

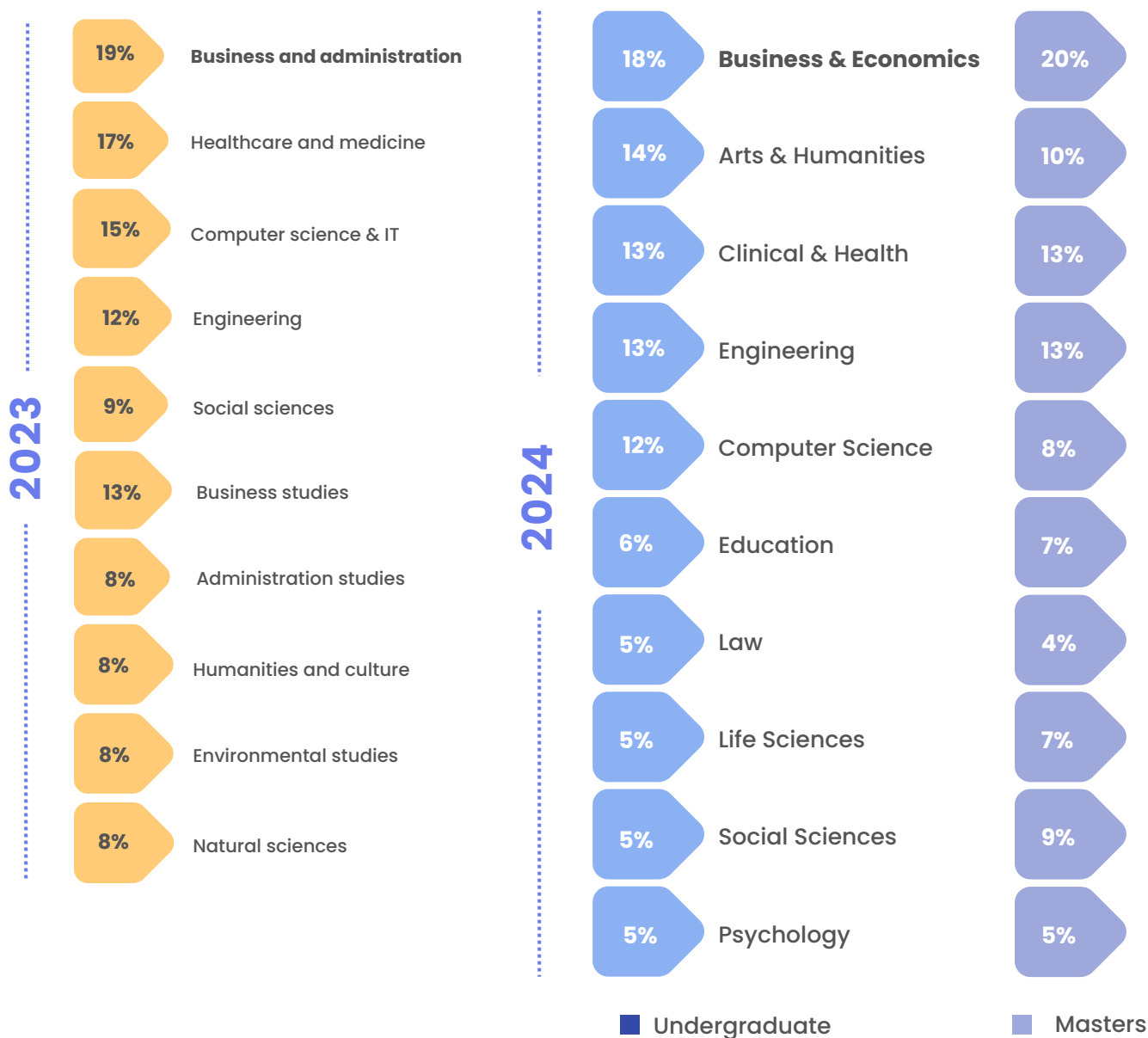
ANALYSIS

For the first time since 2022, we saw the Nordic countries drop out of the top 10, while Japan entered the top 10 at undergraduate level for the first time since data collection started.

We also saw Italy, Australia and Luxembourg increase in popularity at PG study level in 2024.

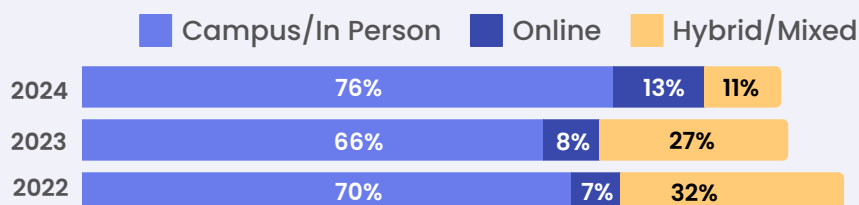
Top Subjects in 2023 & 2024

BUSINESS SUBJECTS STILL ON TOP



CLASS MODE

How would you prefer to study?



2 Student motivations

WHY STUDENTS WANT TO STUDY INTERNATIONALLY

Motivations to study abroad

- 1 Career progression 45%
- 2 Qualify for further study 43%
- 3 Qualify for a specific career 34%
- 4 Interest in the subject 31%
- 5 For a challenge 27%
- 6 To have an adventure 26%
- 7 To better my earnings 22%



ANALYSIS



50% of students want to study in Canada to **'qualify for further study'**.



'Interest in the subject' is more important to students from the UK with 49%.



34% of students want to study in Australia to **'have an adventure'** – higher than other top 10 countries.



Students from India are motivated by **'improving their earnings'** more so than students from Europe or Asia.



'Have an adventure' matters most to students interested in Bachelor study.



African students put a greater emphasis on **'qualifying for further study'** – 51% compared to 44% globally.



'Qualifying for a specific career' was more important to students who want to study in Spain with 39%.



34% of students from the US & Canada are studying abroad **'for a challenge'**, compared to 27% globally.

2 Student motivations

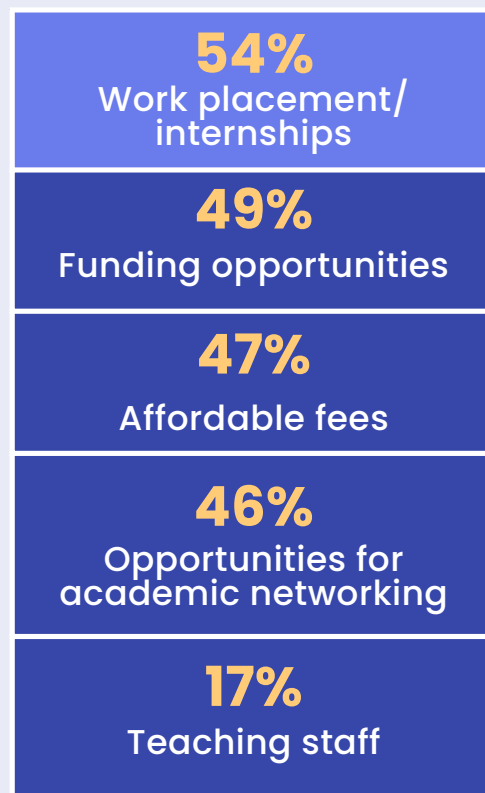
We asked students:

What are the most important factors...

...in a school



...in a program



ANALYSIS

Internships

Prospective students have a greater interest in internships and work placements, with its popularity growing by **46%** from 2023 to 2024.

Accommodation & campus life

This is significantly more influential for students interested in studying internationally, when compared to the segment of students who want to study in their home country.

Sports/athletics

This wasn't in the top 5 list of influencing factors on student decision-making, but it was twice as important for students interested in Bachelor study compared to postgraduate.



3 First considerations

PROGRAM, SCHOOL OR COUNTRY

We asked students:

What do you consider first?

Program
46%

School
28%

Country
26%

ANALYSIS

We had been seeing **the program** maintaining its importance as the top consideration for students up until 2023. We put this down to students being more focussed on the practical and individual skills they can get from programs. However, for 2024, we have seen a slight dip in its influence. In turn, we saw **the school** gain some 'lost ground' from 2019, and it experienced increase in importance from 2023 to 2024.

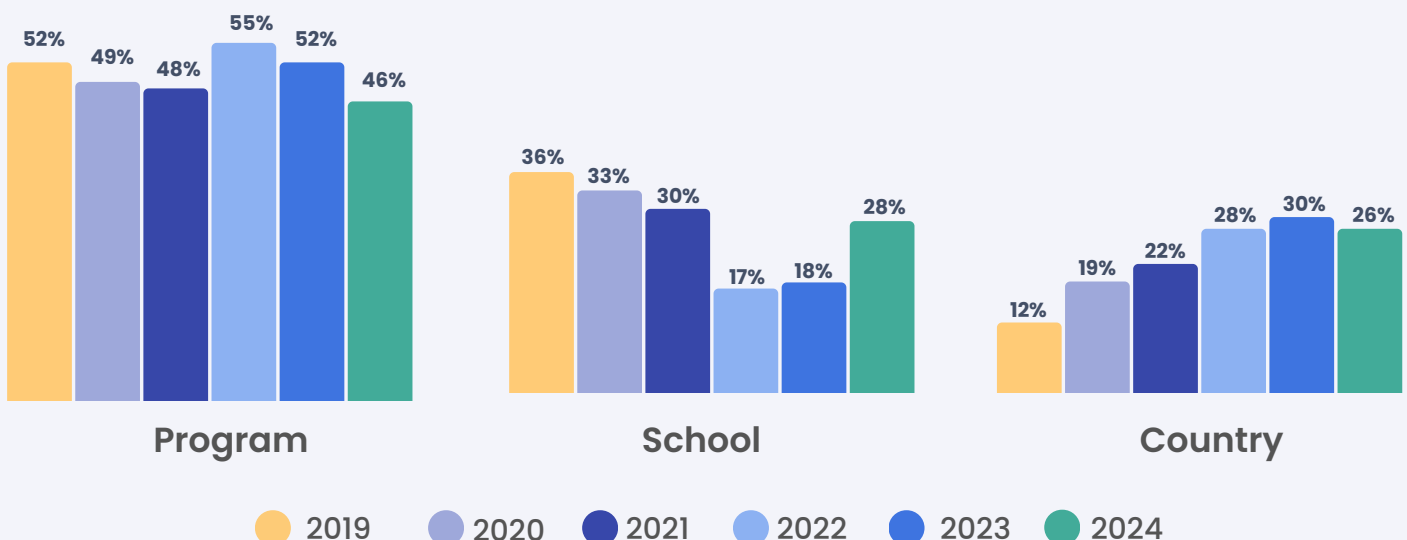

117%

Increase in 'Country' as first consideration from 2019 to 2024


22%

Decrease in 'School' as first consideration from 2019 to 2024

CHANGING CONSIDERATIONS OVER TIME



What do you consider first?

BREAKDOWN BASED ON WHERE STUDENTS COME FROM



	All students	US & Canada	Europe	The UK	Asia	India	Africa
Program	48%	52%	53%	55%	39%	40%	48%
School	28%	29%	25%	27%	32%	38%	27%
Country	26%	20%	20%	18%	29%	22%	25%

ANALYSIS

The **'school'** is almost as important as the program to students from India.

British students are less concerned about their study-country and place more importance on the 'program' (55%) compared students from India (40%), Asia (39%) and Africa (48%).

Students from the US and Canada consider the study country less, while Asian students consider the country most.

SUBJECT LEVEL BREAKDOWN

	Undergrad	Masters	Doctorate
Program	39%	48%	48%
School	34%	26%	27%
Country	27%	27%	35%

ANALYSIS

The **'school'** is more important at Bachelors level, while the **'program'** is more important when studying at Masters or Doctorate level.

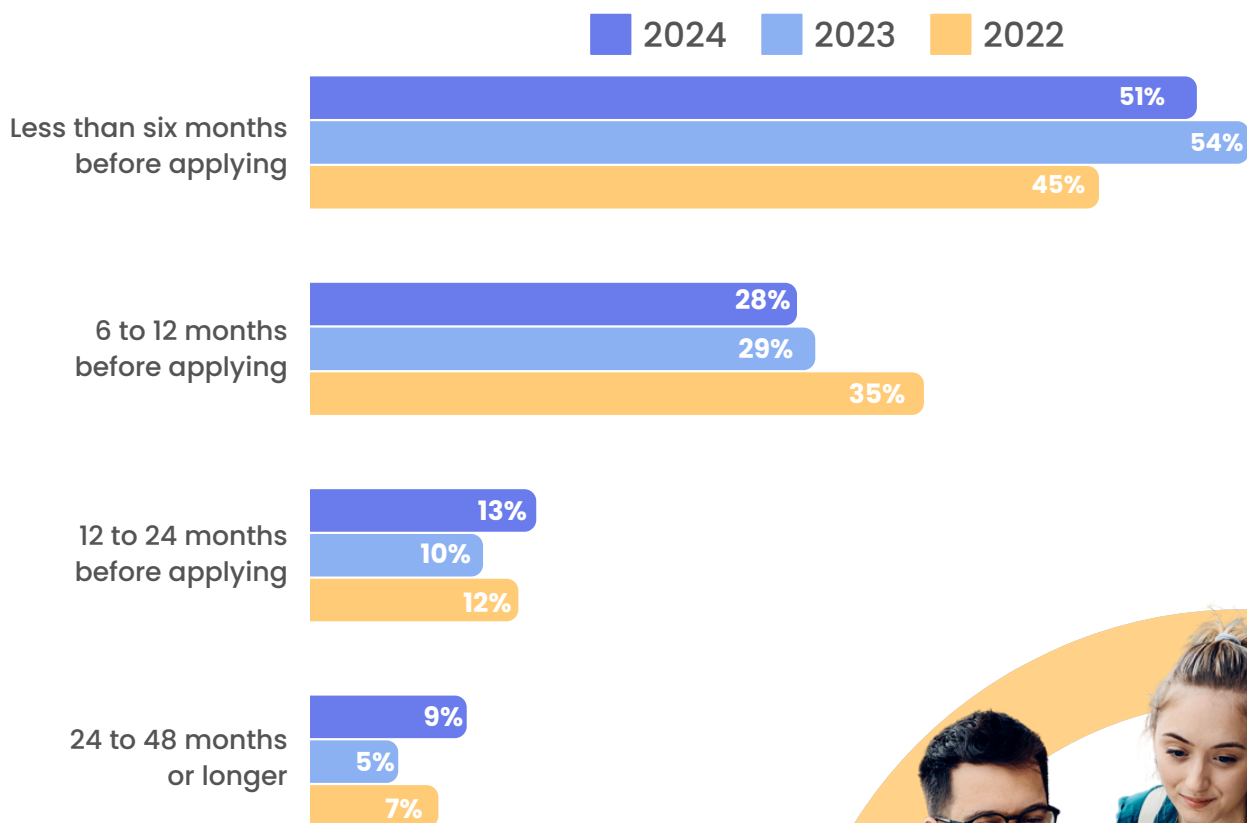


4 The student journey

A LONGER STUDENT JOURNEY

We asked students:

How long do students research study options before applying?



ANALYSIS

50% more students are taking 1-2 years to research study options, when comparing 2023 to 2024 – **decision-making is becoming slightly slower.**

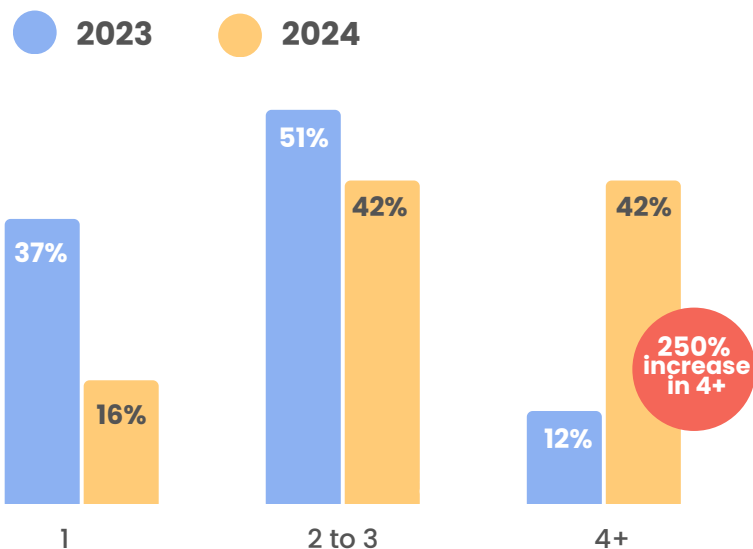
Students interested in a Bachelors program have a shorter research pipeline, with 54% researching study options for 6 months or less.



4 The student journey

We asked students:

How many universities are you applying to?









42%



ANALYSIS

23% of students interested in Bachelor study will apply to only one universities, compared to just 15% of Masters and 13% of Doctorate students.

This year, we have seen **students intending to submit more applications** than before, with a 250% increase in students applying to 4+ universities. *Note: This could be across countries.*

	All students	 US & Canada	 Europe	 The UK	 Africa	 India	 Asia
1	16%	22%	23%	29%	18%	11%	14%
2-3	42%	42%	48%	45%	46%	33%	35%
4+	42%	37%	32%	26%	36%	45%	51%

ANALYSIS

Only **11%** of students from India will apply to **one** program, while students from the UK are more likely than others to only apply to 1 university – **29%**.

And, 51% of students from Asia will apply to 4+ applications.

5 Research phase

HOW ARE STUDENTS FINDING YOUR PROGRAMS

We asked students:

What tools do you use to research study options?

2024

42%

Online search engine
i.e. Google

17%

University listings platforms
i.e. masterstudies.com

13%

Social media

8%

Word of mouth

7%

Ranking websites
i.e. THE

2023

54%

Online search engine
i.e. Google

10%

University listings platforms
i.e. masterstudies.com

9%

Social media

5.3%

Word of mouth

3.2%

Online advertisements



+44%

44% more students are using social media to research study options in 2024 than in 2023.

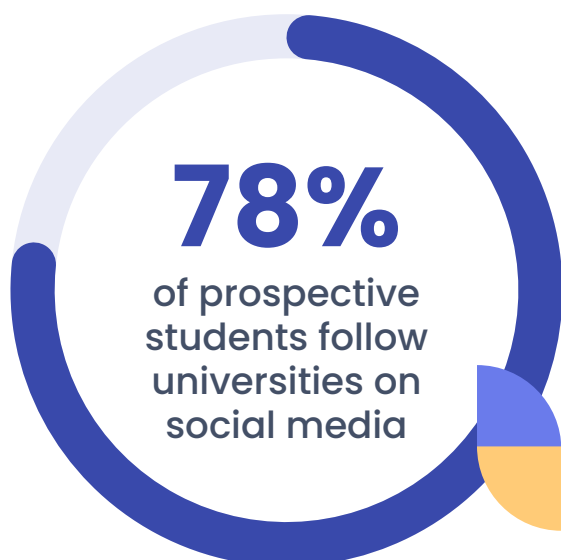
+70%

There has also been a big increase in students using listings platforms.

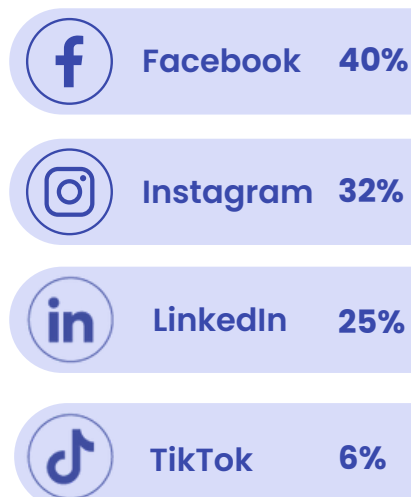
FACEBOOK IS FAR FROM DEAD

We asked students:

Do you follow a university on social media?













WHICH CHANNEL DO THEY FOLLOW



ANALYSIS

We may be quick to write off **Facebook** in 2024, but according to our data, students are still using it. And, if your target market is **Africa**, then Facebook should still play a substantial role in your social media strategy.

Indian students are also using **LinkedIn** to look at universities, while **TikTok** is the most popular with students **from the US, Canada and Europe**.

				
 US & Canada	34%	29%	19%	6%
 Europe	39%	23%	23%	5%
 The UK	30%	26%	23%	5%
 Africa	23%	49%	25%	6%
 India	45%	17%	32%	1%*
 Asia	36%	38%	26%	2%*

*TikTok banned in India



6 Student Communication

Top Channels for Prospective Students



of prospective students want to be contacted by email



12%

want to be contacted via instant messenger i.e. Facebook messenger, WhatsApp



36%
increase in
popularity

ANALYSIS

Email is still the overwhelming favourite when it comes to communication. *However*, it has **decreased in popularity slightly from 2023.**

In its place, **instant messaging** (such as Facebook messenger and WhatsApp) has **increased in popularity by 36%.**
















+70%

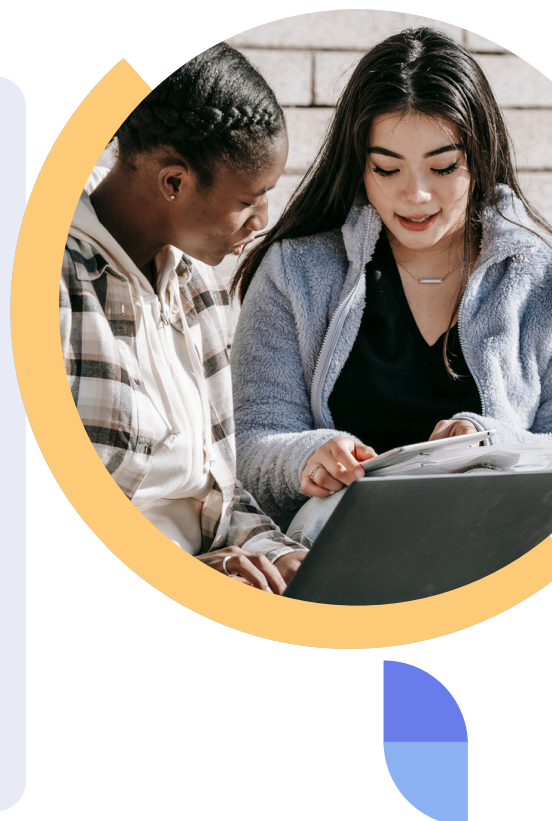
increase in **instant messaging** popularity for students interested in Bachelor level study



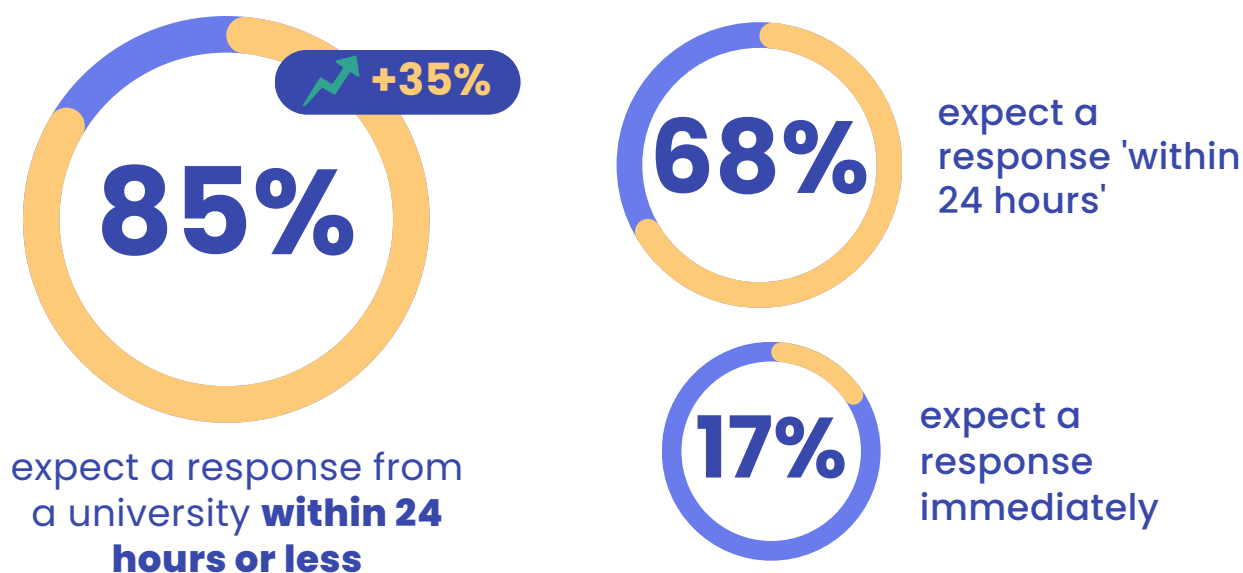
Top Channels for Prospective Students

PREFERENCE BASED ON STUDENT NATIONALITY

	 Email	 Instant messaging	 Video call	 Phone	 Live Chat	 In-person
 Global	70%	12%	6%	5%	3%	2%
 US & Canada	63%	9%	10%	8%	4%	5%
 Europe	67%	9%	8%	6%	5%	5%
 The UK	65%	7%	6%	8%	6%	6%
 Africa	73%	11%	5%	5%	2%	2%
 India	59%	12%	10%	10%	5%	3%
 Asia	67%	12%	6%	6%	4%	2%



The “Need for Speed”



ANALYSIS

There is a greater expectation on speed of response. **35%** more students expect a response within 24 hours or less compared to 2023. While **55% more students** expect a response **immediately**.

African students have the quickest expectations, with 20% expecting a response immediately, compared to European students who expect slightly slower responses with only 8%.

INFORMATION PREFERENCES

We asked students:

What information are you most interested in receiving?

Scholarship & funding assistance

65%

58%

Undergrad

64%

Masters

Tuition fee rates

42%

42%

Undergrad

44%

Masters

Visa & immigration info

41%

43%

Undergrad

44%

Masters



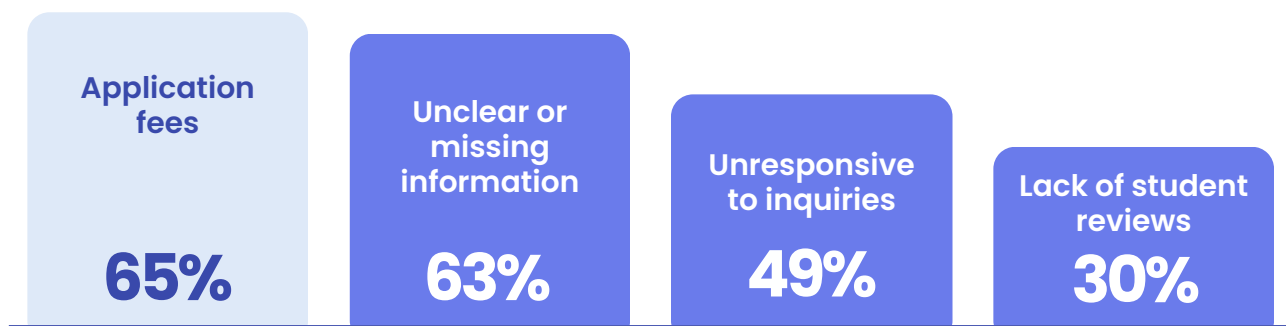
+61%

There has been a 61% increase in the demand for information on scholarship and funding assistance.

7 Funding & barriers to studying abroad

We asked students:

What would prevent you from applying?



ANALYSIS

The good news for universities is that 'unclear or missing information' is the second biggest barrier to students – and that is an easy fix.

When we segmented the data into students who want to study in their home country versus students who want to study abroad, there was little to no difference in these barriers. **Jackpot!** If you solve barriers for one, then you'll solve the barriers for the other.

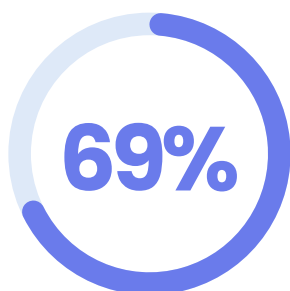
Top tips to help students complete their application

- ✓ Check the content of your website and landing pages. Is the information up to date and complete?
- ✓ Qualify students and discuss how big a barrier the application fee would be. Consider waiving it for students from certain target markets or for specific program start dates.
- ✓ Gather your student reviews – prospective students trust current students.

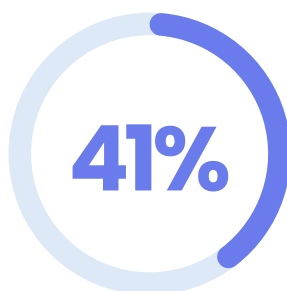


We asked students:

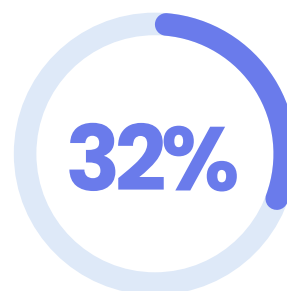
What are your biggest concerns while applying in 2024?



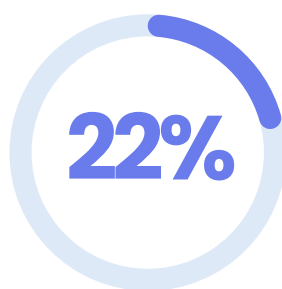
Cost
unsure of affordability



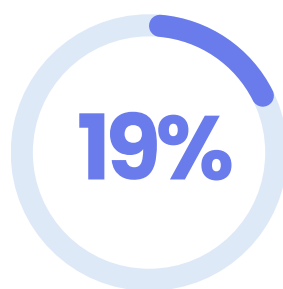
Eligibility
unsure of eligibility



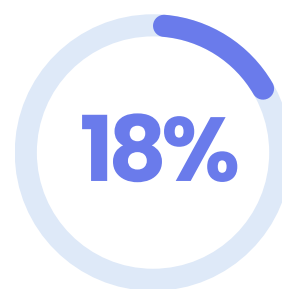
Confidence
not sure of capability



Time
time vs other commitments



Safety



Political Concerns

ANALYSIS

Students who are interested in studying abroad are **up to two times as worried about 'political concerns'** compared to students who want to study in their home country.

And, African students are nearly **4x** as concerned about the political environment as students from the UK.

Students from the US and Canada aren't quite as worried about the cost of studying (59% compared to 69% globally), while students from the UK have the least confidence in their academic ability (45% compared to 32% globally).



We asked students:

How will you fund your studies?

01 Scholarships & university funding

02 Government funding

03 Work while studying

04 Savings/family

05 Charitable grants

06 Employer contribution

87%

of students want to or plan to do an **internship**





KEYSTONE
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