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State of Student Recruitment 2023

Recruitment trends in 2023, plus student preferences and barriers to studying abroad

Introduction

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 dreams come true?

Take a look behind the scenes of the student journey with data from over 23,800 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 2023?

Let's find out!

Jan 2023

Data collection started

Apr 2023

Survey closed with 23,856 respondents

May 2023

Analysis of data and year-on-year trends

Insights within this report are prepared for illustrative purposes only and are not intended for use as scientific evidence of causation or behavior. Data points do not add up to 100% when a selection of multiple options were available.

Student Data Overview

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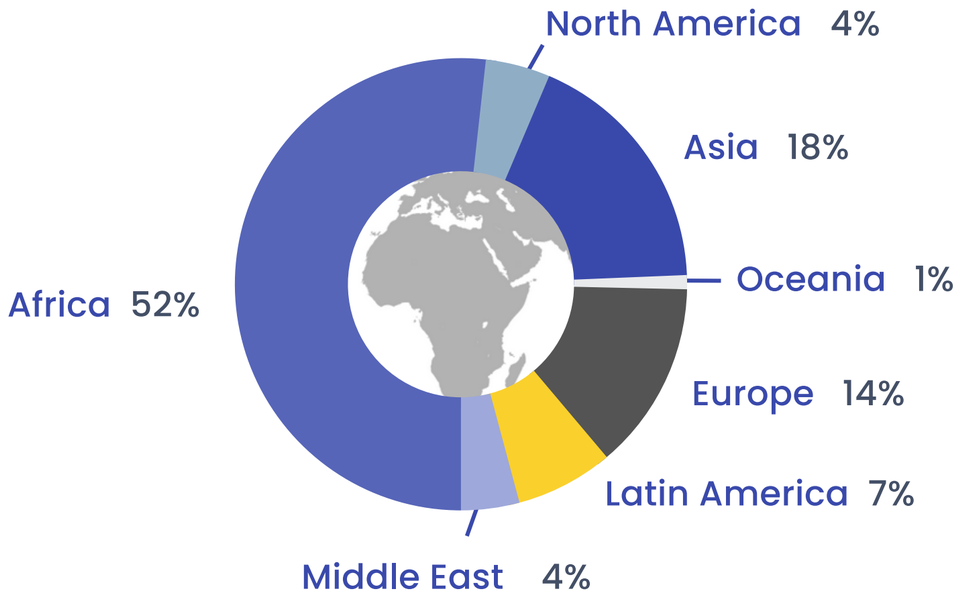
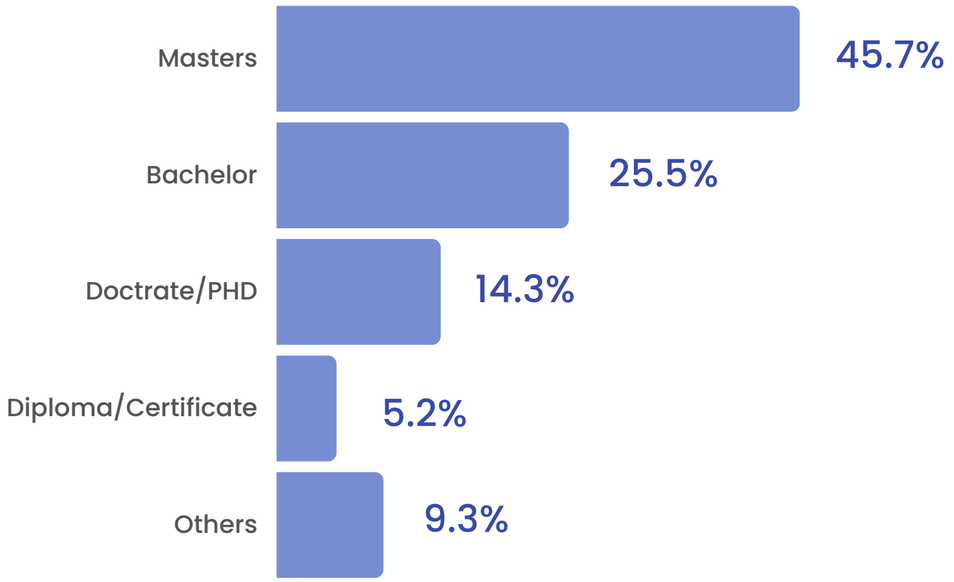
23,856

Total Respondents

Represented nationalities



Study Level



Age

21 and under	27.5%
22-35	51.8%
36+	20.1%

Study Preference

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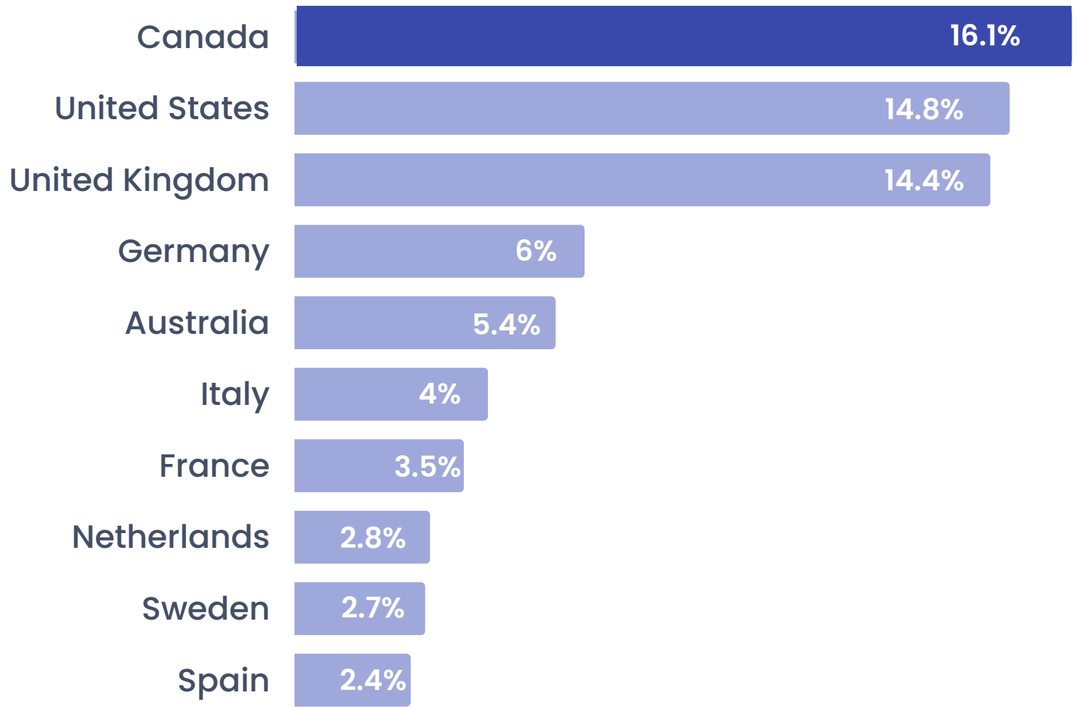
Top Study Abroad Destinations



+29%

Canada replaces the UK as the top study abroad destination - 29% increase in popularity from 2022

+8%

USA up in popularity from 2022

-20%

UK drops by 20% from 2022

-29%

Germany also down in popularity

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Top Study Abroad Destinations

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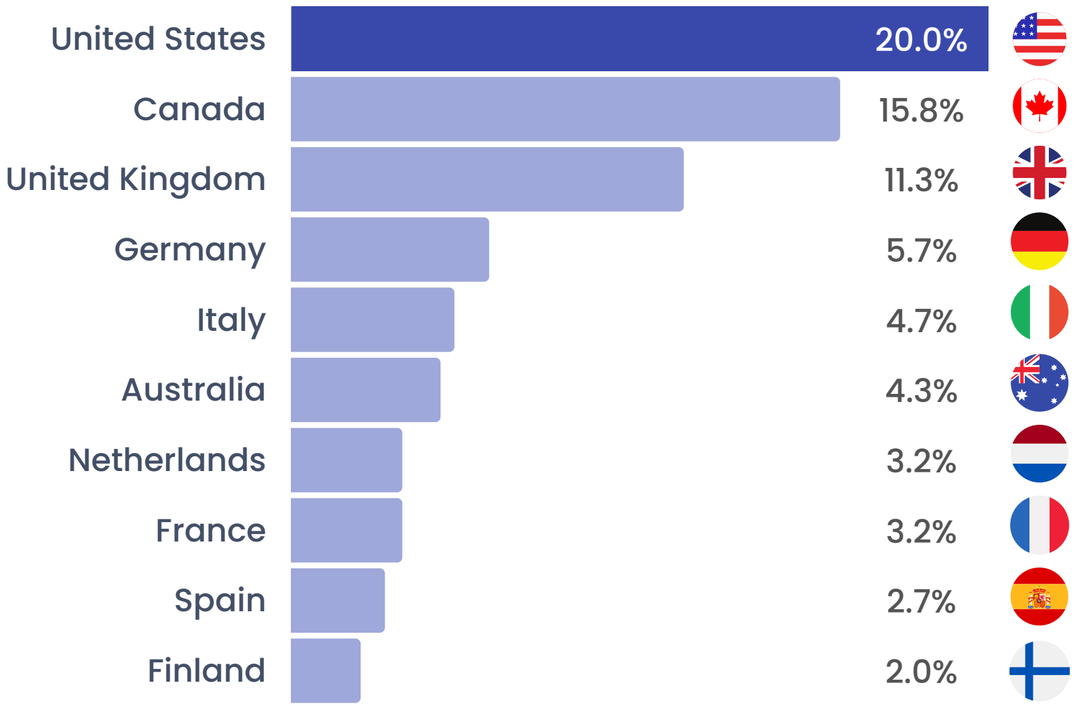
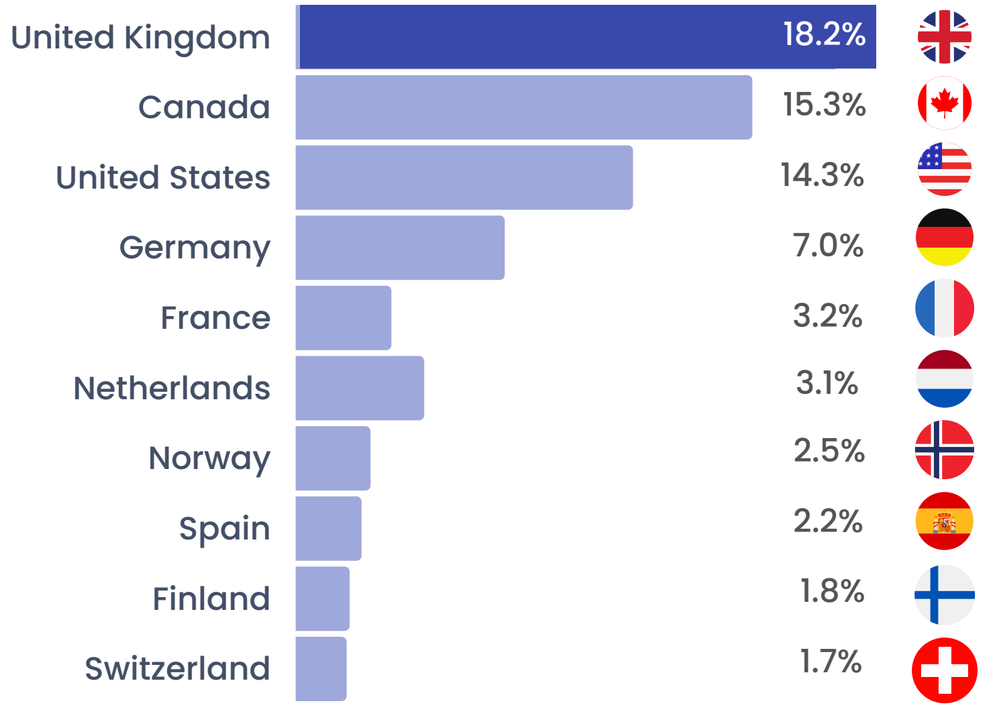
Undergraduate top countries

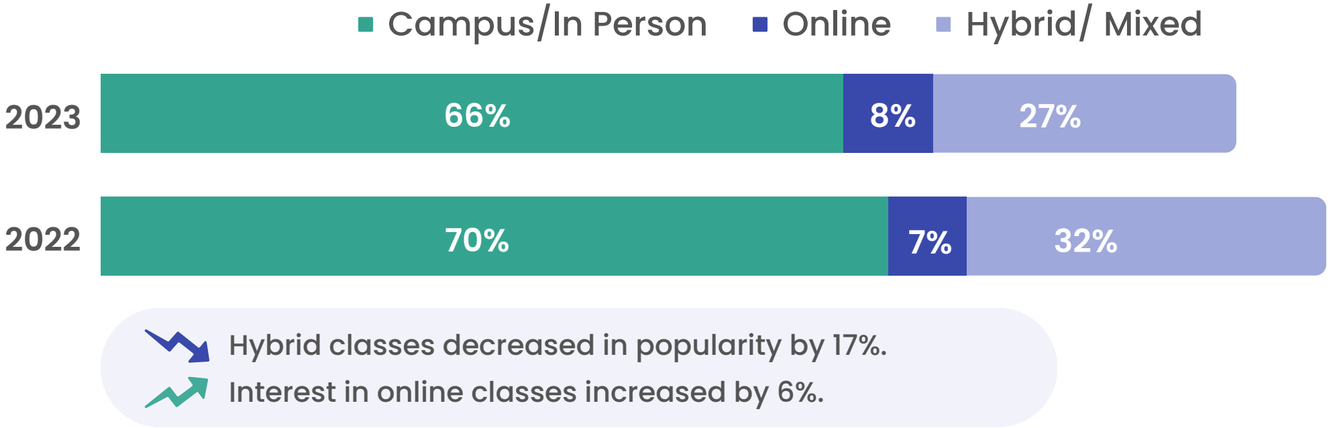


Postgraduate top countries



Study Preferences

Which class mode is preferred by students?

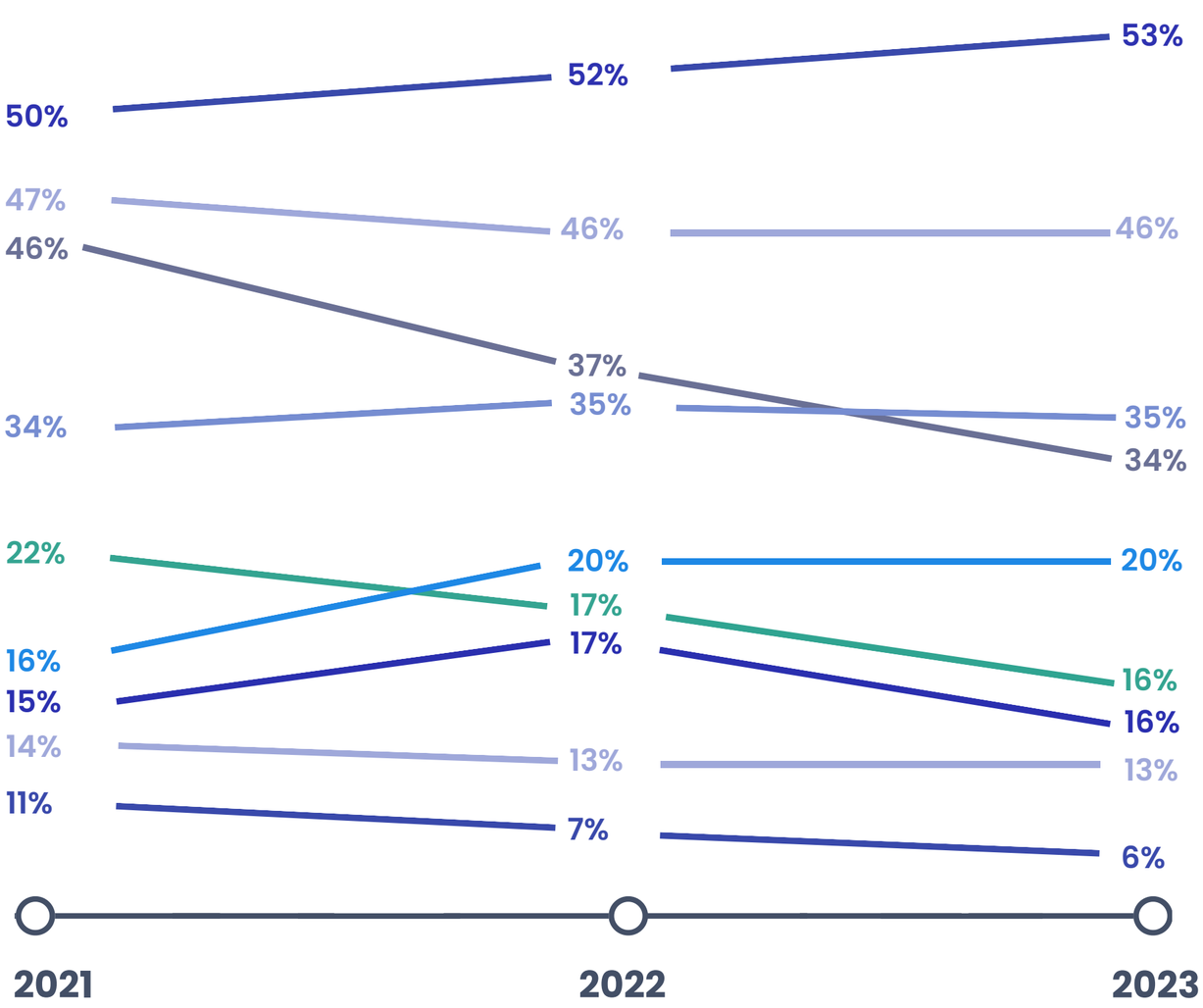


Hybrid classes decreased in popularity by 17%.
Interest in online classes increased by 6%.

Top study languages

English	**85%**
French	6%
Spanish	2%
German	2%

Top Motivations to Study Abroad



Achieve my career goals

Develop myself personally

Access higher quality teaching

Experience a new culture

Study for free or less

Widen my network

Attend a top-ranked university

Get a visa to live in another country

Have an adventure

2022 to 2023 comparison

7.3%

decrease in experiencing a new culture

6.4%

decrease in widening my network

22%

decrease in having an adventure

10.5%

decrease in having more study options

Top Subjects in 2023

#1	Business and administration	18.8%
#2	Healthcare and medicine	17.4%
#3	Computer science and IT	14.5%
#4	Engineering	12.0%
#5	Social sciences	9.2%
#6	Business studies	8.8%
#7	Administration studies	8.0%
#8	Humanities and culture	7.9%
#9	Environmental studies	7.6%
#10	Natural sciences	7.5%

2022 to 2023 Comparison

10.7%

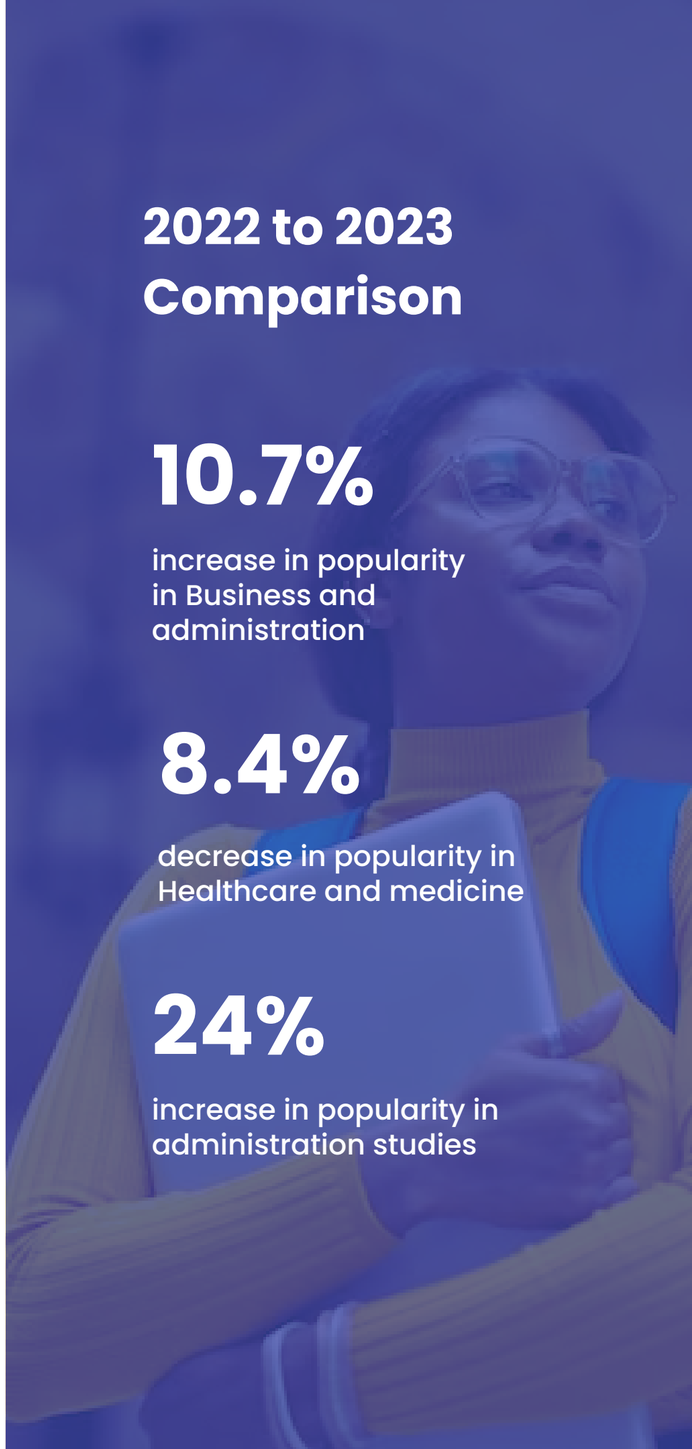
increase in popularity in Business and administration

8.4%

decrease in popularity in Healthcare and medicine

24%

increase in popularity in administration studies



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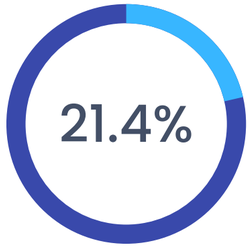
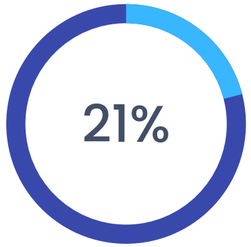
Top Subjects

Undergraduate versus postgraduate

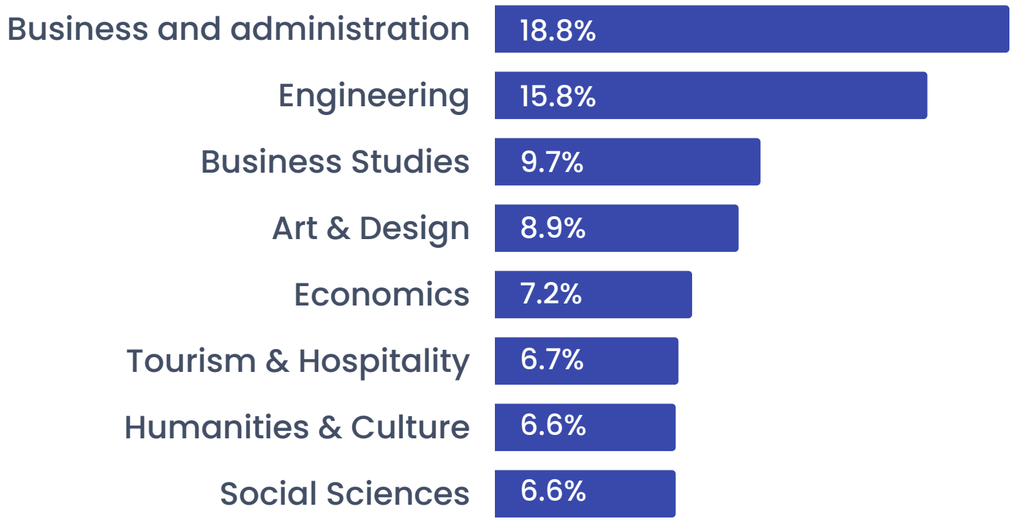
Undergrad



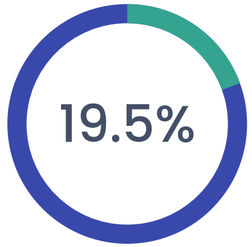
Computer science and IT



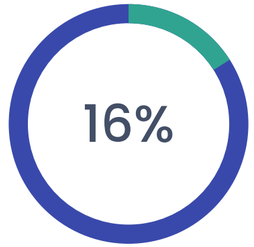
Healthcare and medicine



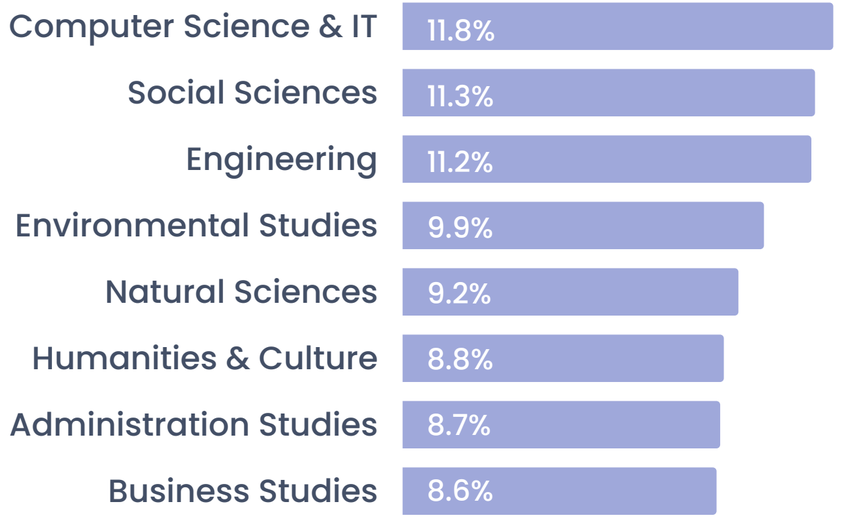
Masters & PHD



Business and administration



Healthcare and medicine



First Considerations

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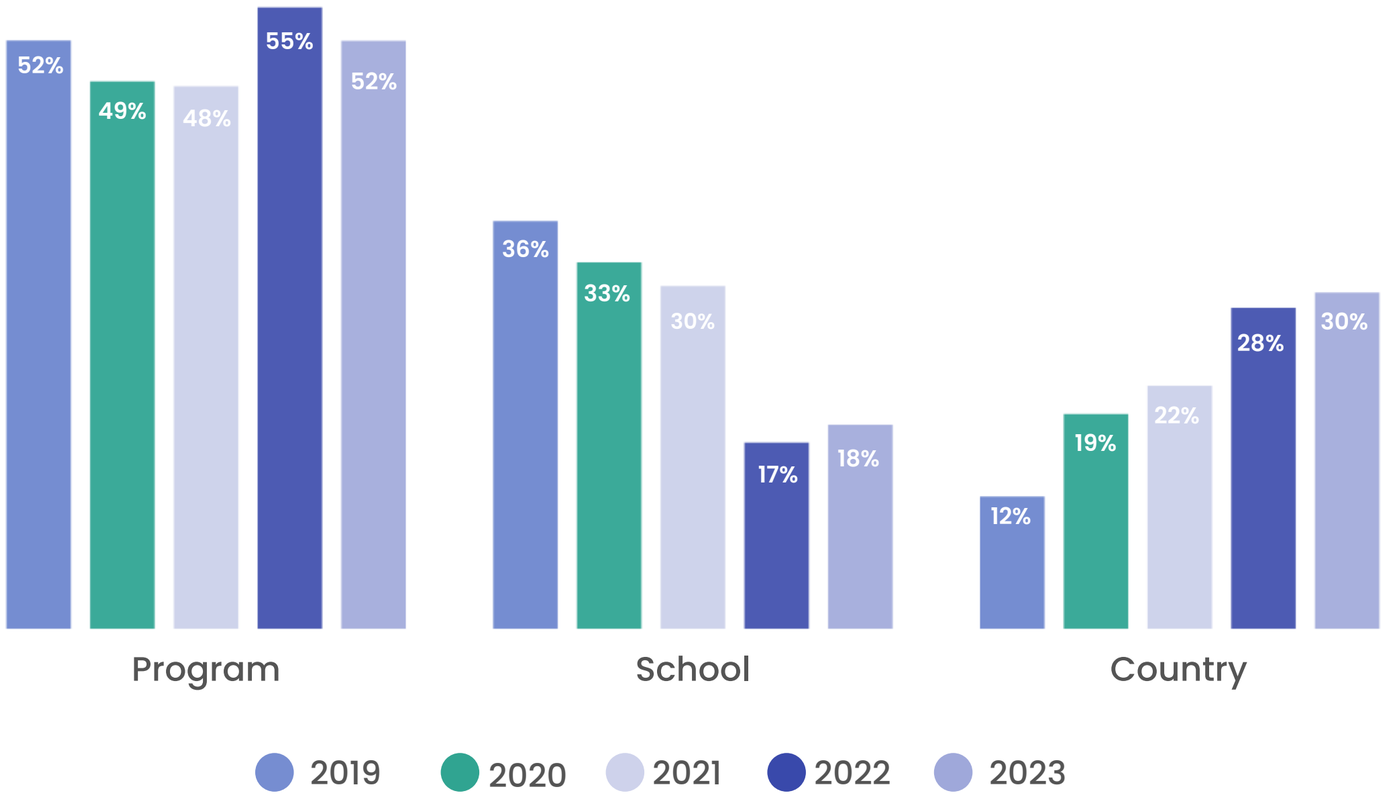
What do you consider first?

Program, school or country?



150%

increase in 'Country' as first consideration from 2019 to 2023

50%

decrease in 'School' as first consideration from 2019 to 2023

2023 breakdown

	Undergrad	Postgrad
Program	43.1%	58.4%
Country	33.3%	26.9%
School	22.6%	14.8%

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What do you consider first?

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... when picking a Bachelors?

1. Scholarship and available funding
2. Cost of tuition
3. University ranking and reputation
4. Career preparation and employment outcomes
5. Quality of teaching
6. Student facilities and resources
7. Quality of campus life experiences

... when picking a Masters?

1. Availability of funding
2. Facilities and resources for my research (e.g. laboratories, libraries, etc)
3. Professional development and training opportunities
4. University ranking and reputation
5. The university's values and the real-world impact of its research
6. Reputation of specific academics
7. Support for my mental health and wellbeing

... when picking a PhD?

1. Availability of funding
2. Facilities and resources for my research (e.g. laboratories, libraries, etc)
3. Professional development and training opportunities
4. University ranking and reputation
5. The university's values and the real-world impact of its research
6. Reputation of specific academics
7. Support for my mental health and wellbeing

Most important factors...

...in a program

36.9%
Internship opportunities

23.6%
Practical curriculum

17.2%
A resume-enhancing program

...in a school

59.7%
Quality of education & teaching

45%
Ability to work & study simultaneously

43.1%
Reputation of the school

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The Student Journey

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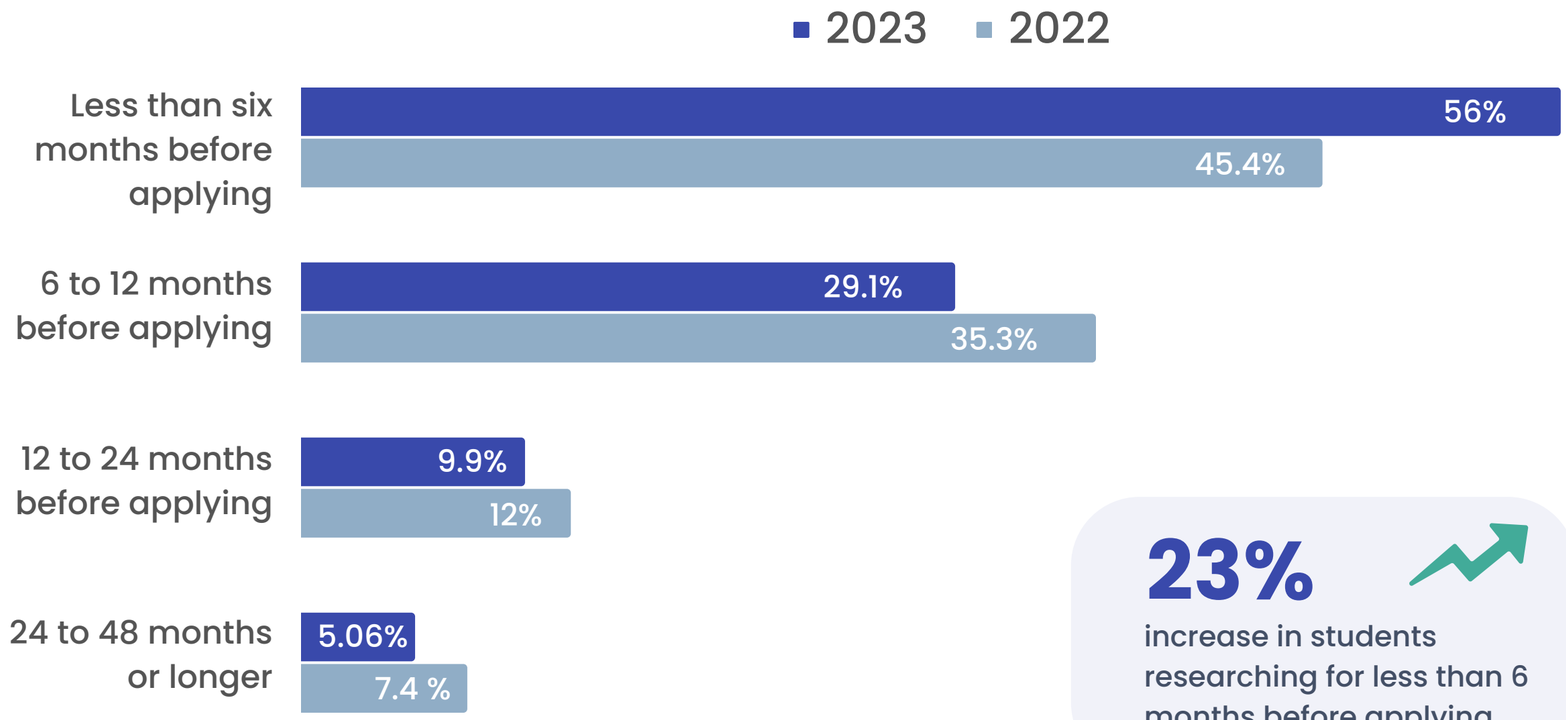
A shorter student journey

How long did you begin researching before applying?



23%

increase in students researching for less than 6 months before applying

When will you begin your studies?

62.8%
This year

26.1%
increase in
this year' for 2023

29.4%
Next year

-22%
decrease in 'next year'
compared to 2022

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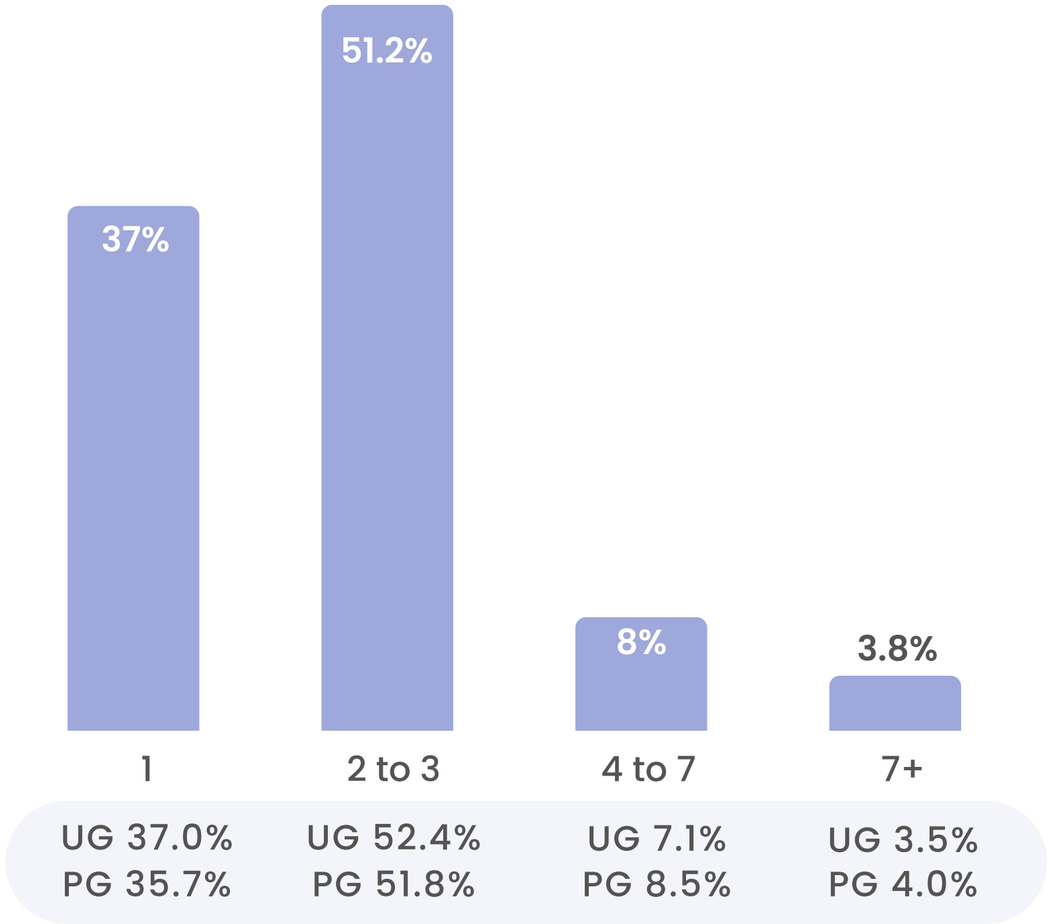
How many programs are you applying to?

+7%

in applying for 1 program from 2022

-11%

in applying for 4-7 programs from 2022



UG - undergraduate | PG - postgraduate

Use of Agents

55.1%

of Asian students said they plan on using an agent

52.8%

of Africa students plan on using an agent

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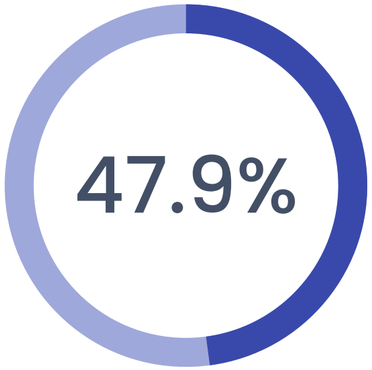
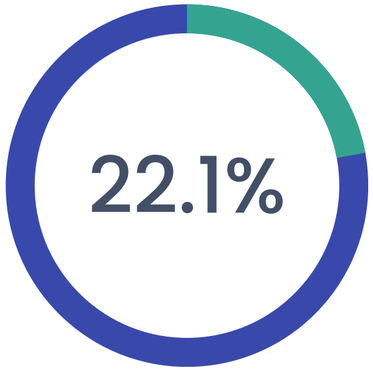
How many universities are you applying to?



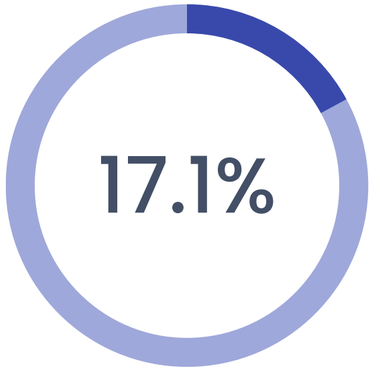
2-3

UG 44.4%
PG 49.5%



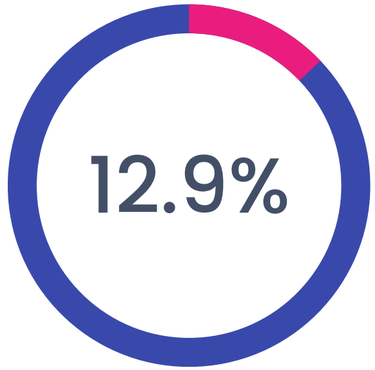
4-7

UG 24.0%
PG 22.9%



1

UG 16.4%
PG 14.9%



7+

UG 15.2%
PG 12.7%

UG - undergraduate | PG - postgraduate

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Research Phase

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What tools do you use to research study options?

01 **Search online**
i.e. Google

02 **University listings platforms**
i.e. masterstudies.com

03 **Social media**

04 **Online webinars/sessions**

05 **Online community groups**
i.e. Facebook, Quora

+6%
in using social media 2022 to 2023

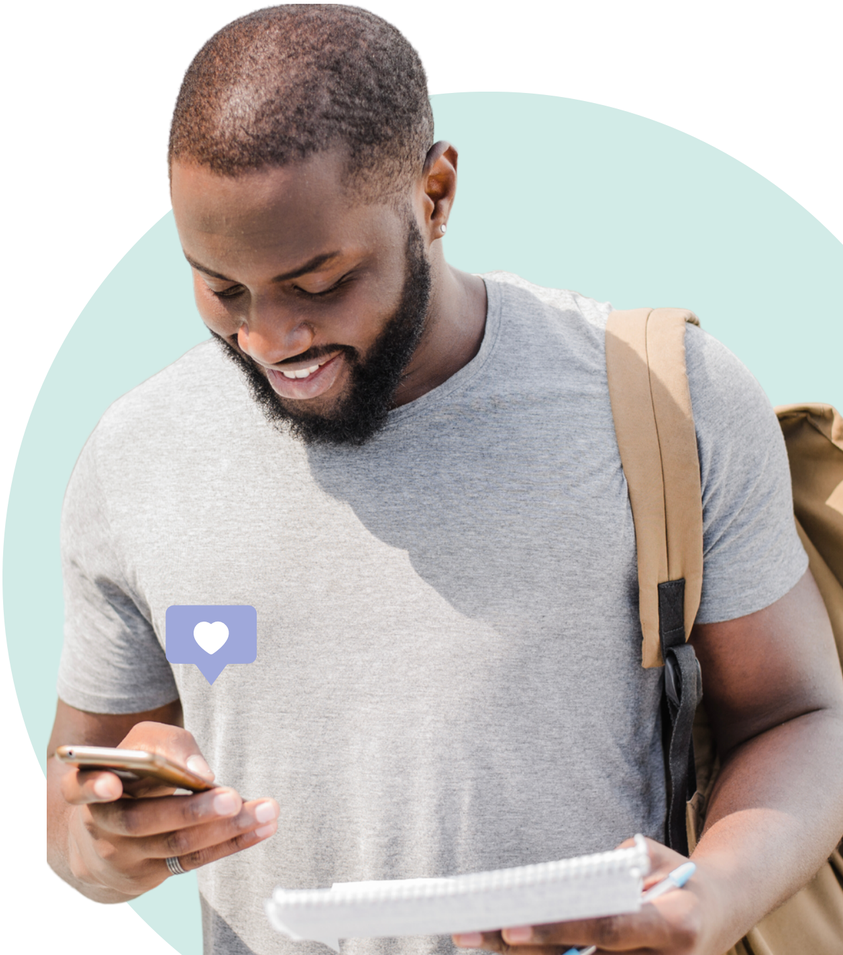
81%
use online modes of research

Which social media channel is the most useful during research phase?

Instagram	27.5%
Facebook	26.5%
LinkedIn	17.1%
YouTube	8.8%

+26.3%
increase in YouTube compared to 2022

-8.7%
decrease in Instagram compared to 2022



Communications

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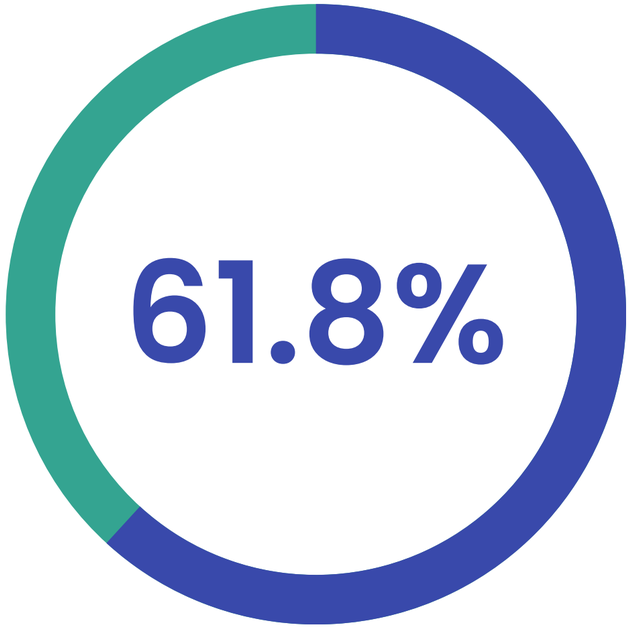
Need for Speed



expect a response from a university within 24 hours or less

11%

expect a response immediately

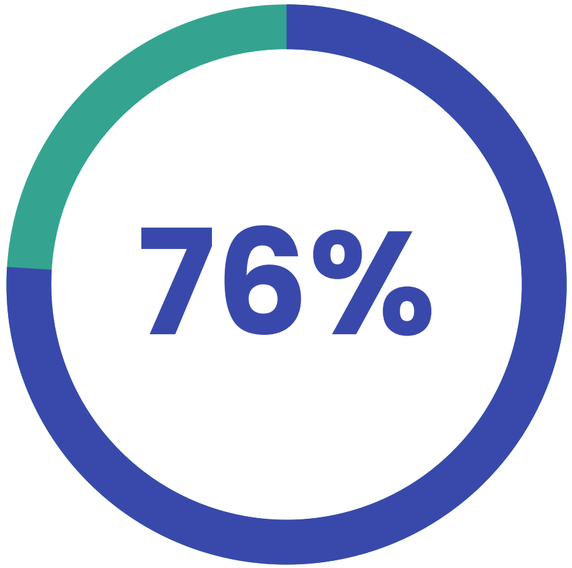
30%

expect a response 'within 24 hours'

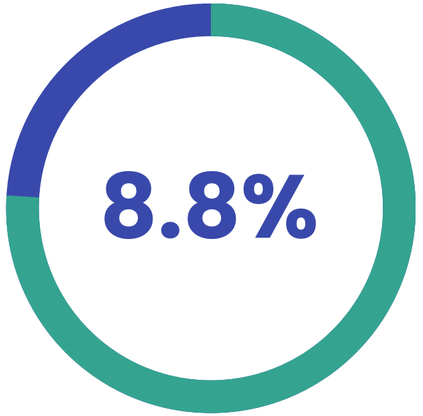
+21%

increase in expecting a response immediately from 2022 to 2023

Modes of communications



prefer to be contacted by email



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

How can a university improve their communications?

25.9%
Quality of response

24.0%
Availability of information

23.8%
Speed of response

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Information preferences

What information are you most interested in receiving?

40.4%

Scholarship & funding assistance

Undergrad	Postgrad
40.8%	42.9%

11.7%

Visa & immigration information

Undergrad	Postgrad
12.0%	10.4%

8.3%

Cost of living & practical information

Undergrad	Postgrad
9.5%	9.4%

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What do you find most helpful when deciding where to study abroad?

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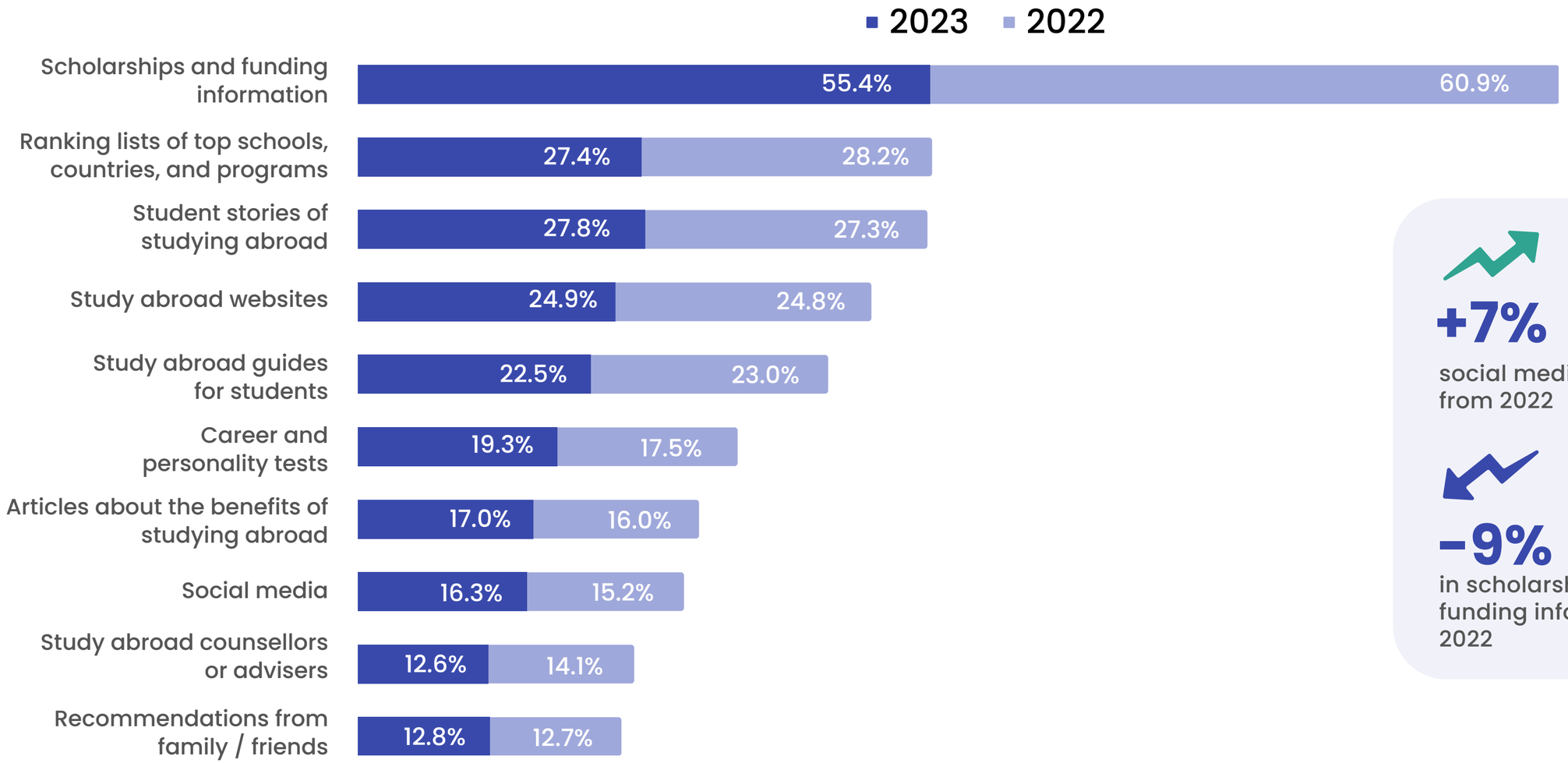

+7%
social media from 2022

-9%
in scholarships & funding info from 2022

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Most important resources for students

46%	Informative guides
45%	Workshops
39%	Dedicated lecture time for discussions
37%	In-Person counselling
37%	Counseling via email

Funding

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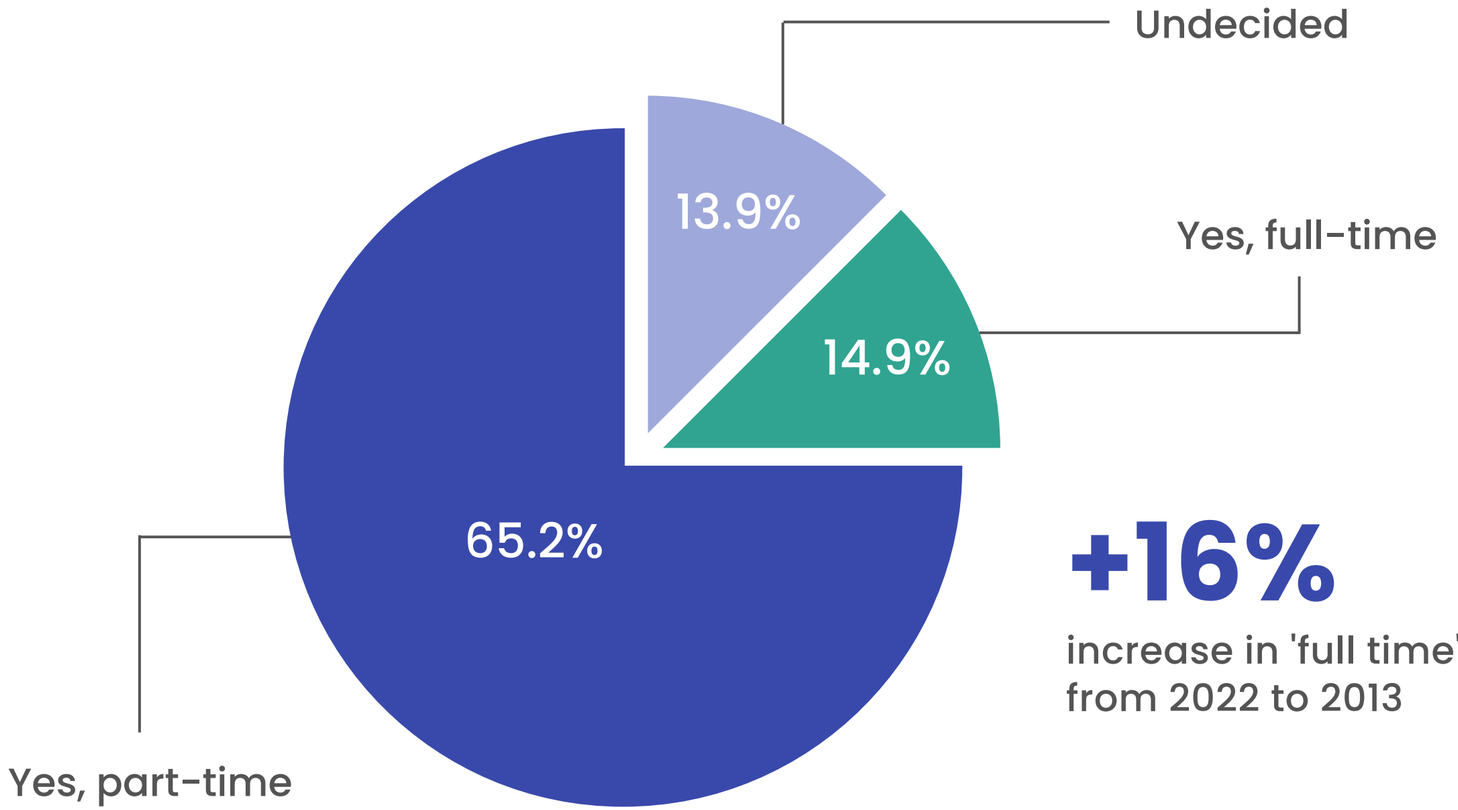
Working & scholarships while studying

Will you work or plan to work while studying?

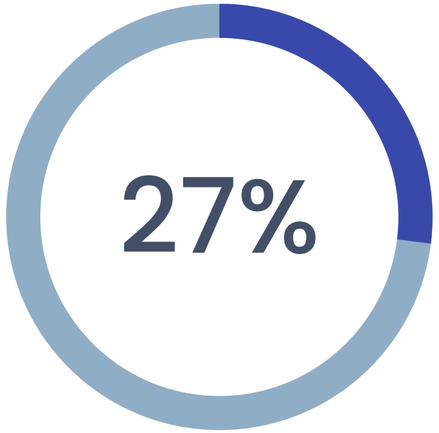


+16%

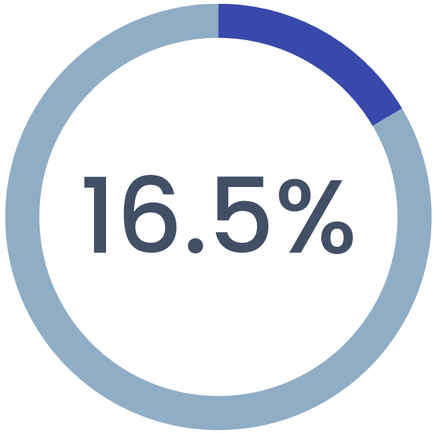
increase in 'full time' from 2022 to 2013

Too expensive to study abroad?

Why don't you want to study abroad?

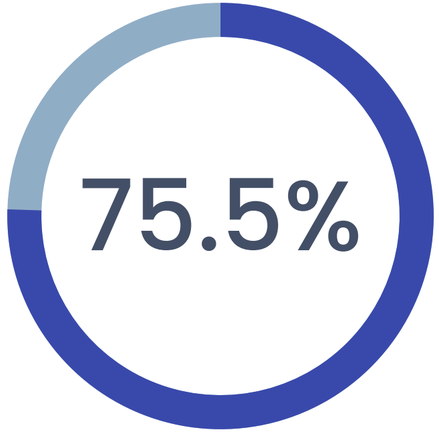


said it is 'too expensive'



said they 'don't want to leave their friends and family'

What might stop you applying for a program?



said 'expensive tuition fees'

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What are you most concerned about?

+9%

increase in visa requirements & immigration compared to 2022

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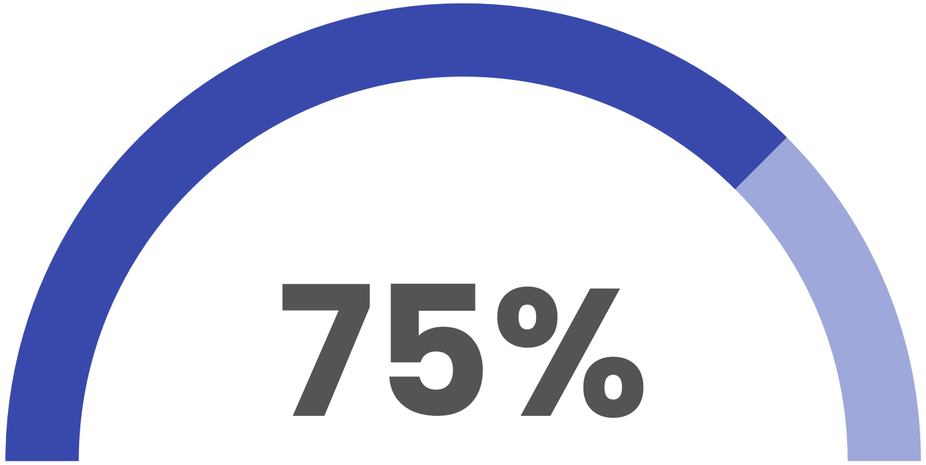
Are you concerned about your safety?



38.1% **Top Concern:**
Racial discrimination

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85%
Yes

Safety concerns highest among African students

50%
Yes

Lowest among European students

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