UAC

STUDENT LIFESTYLE REPORT 2021





CONTENTS

WELCOME

WELCOME 03

EDUCATION

BIG DECISIONS: WHERE TO STUDY? 05
BIG DECISIONS: CHOOSING A COURSE 06
A WHOLE NEW WORLD 07
FRIENDS, FREEDOM, FULFILMENT 08

SPEND

INCOME AND SAVINGS 10
TOP-SHOPPED STORES 11
MAIN SPENDING CATEGORIES 12
FAVOURITE BRANDS 13
LOOKING GOOD, FEELING GOOD 14
SPENDING INFLUENCES 15
PRE-UNI SPENDING 16

LEISURE

RELAX AND RECHARGE 18
LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU 19
HEALTH AND WELLNESS 20
WATCH AND LISTEN 21

TECHNOLOGY

TECH TITANS 23
HOT HANDSETS 24
DOWN THE SCROLL HOLE 25
TEXT, DON'T CALL (OR WRITE) 26

FUTURE

HOPES AND FEARS 28
GETTING AWAY 29
PLANS FOR 2021 30
A YEAR OF OPTIONS 31

WELCOME

Welcome to the Universities Admissions Centre's first annual Student Lifestyle Report.

Each year UAC helps tens of thousands of Year 12 students on their journey to higher education.

So, we know something about their preoccupations, goals and concerns.

With this report we have dug deeper and unearthed some fascinating insights about their habits, hopes and frustrations in the areas of education, leisure, spending and brands, technology and the future.

We hope this report reveals more about the rich and complex world of school leavers and contributes to greater awareness and understanding of the challenges and opportunities they face.

In addition to the usual ups and downs of life as a young adult, this group has had to face a global pandemic and a year of significant uncertainty and social disruption.

Already they represent around 20% of Australia's population; within a decade they will be the largest generation of active workers in the country.

They've told us what they think; I hope we're all listening.



Kim Paino
General Manager
Marketing and Engagement

WHO ARE THEY?

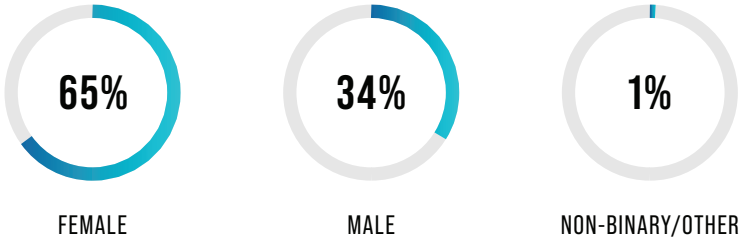
We surveyed Year 12 students completing their secondary schooling in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory during 2020.

The survey received **7,572** responses.

Students were surveyed between November 2020 and February 2021.

AGE AND GENDER





The data presented throughout this report has been weighted to remove any imbalances due to differences in gender participation rates.

EDUCATION



Students need to make some significant decisions during their final year of school. One of the biggest is choosing whether to undertake higher learning at a university or college.

Around 50,000 Year 12 students each year decide to apply for a place in one of the thousands of courses offered through UAC.

We asked students to tell us about the key factors they consider as they work through what to study and where.

FACE TO FACE WITH A TERTIARY FUTURE

Students said they are overwhelmingly planning (97%) to enrol in university. Two-thirds (64%) have a strong preference for on-campus learning.

PASSIONATE FRIENDSHIPS

Four out of 5 students (79%) said they are most looking forward to finally pursuing their passions.

Almost three-quarters (70%) are excited to meet new friends with common interests.

MONEY, THAT'S WHAT I WANT

Eight in 10 students (81%) base their course selection decisions on the employment outcomes in their chosen field.

PRESTIGIOUS AND EASY

When choosing where to study, students balance how far they'll have to travel each day (60%) against institutional reputation (53%).

BIG DECISIONS: WHERE TO STUDY

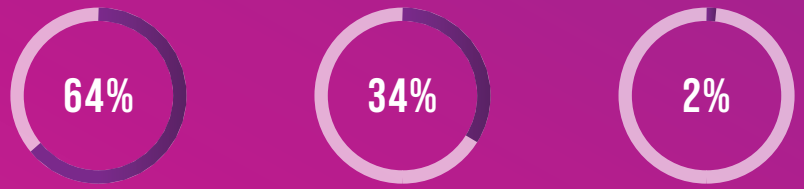
Some of the factors students consider when choosing a uni or college:

> Having friends who attend the same university.

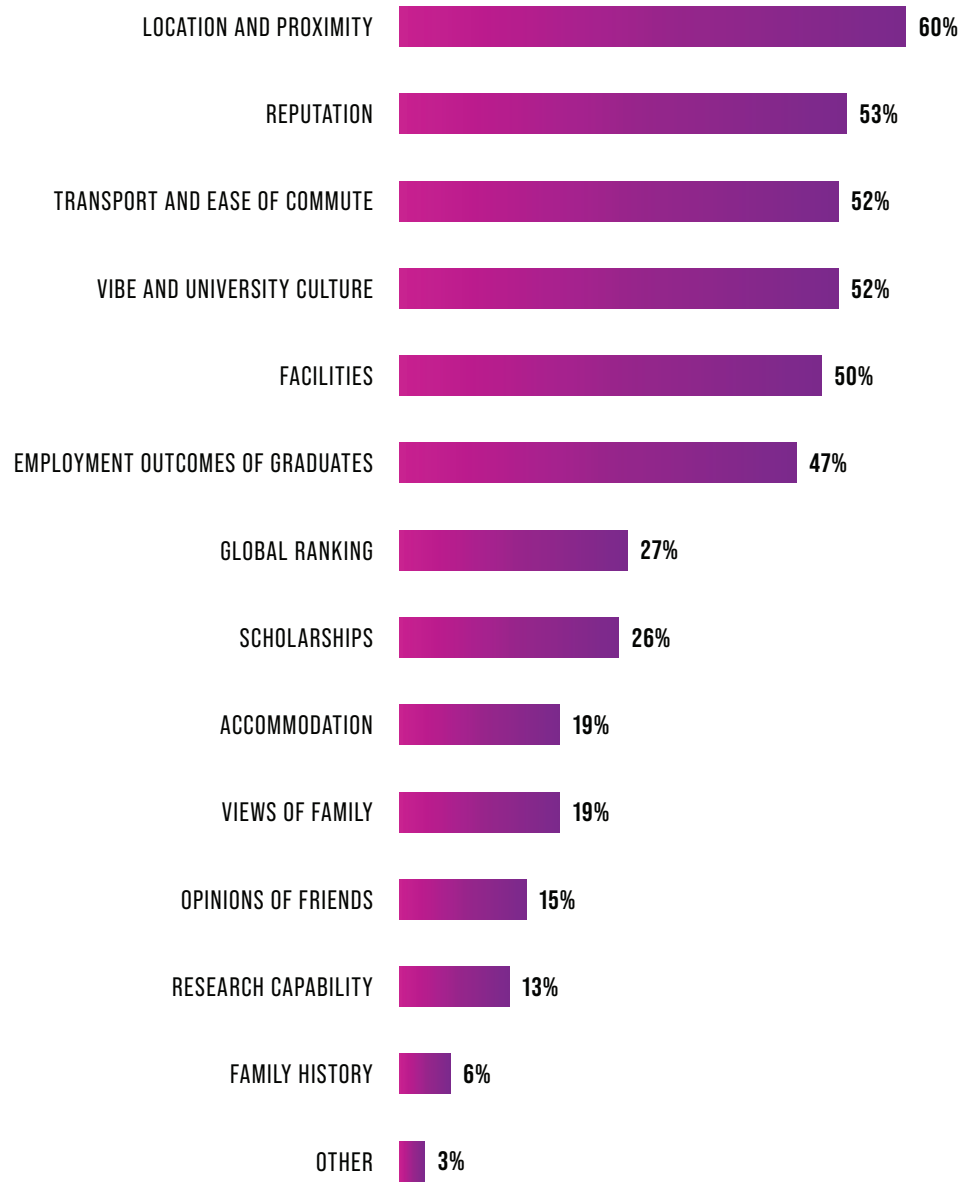
> Quality of the campus ... clubs/societies ... has a bar.

> Reputability and qualifications of professors.

APPETITE FOR FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING



CHOOSING AN INSTITUTION: TOP CONSIDERATIONS



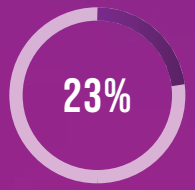
BIG DECISIONS: CHOOSING A COURSE



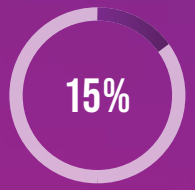
Today's Year 12 graduates are thinking three years ahead. Before choosing a course they consider the career outcomes to make sure there's a job at the end of their studies. They also assess the entry requirements and opportunities for work experience or internships.



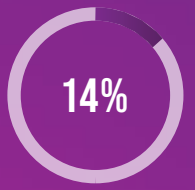
WILL LEAD TO MY CHOSEN CAREER



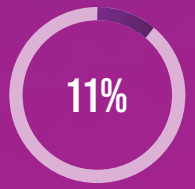
EMPLOYABILITY OUTCOMES OF GRADUATES



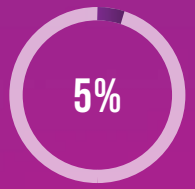
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/ SELECTION RANK



WORK EXPERIENCE/ INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



QUALITY OF TEACHING



INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM



OTHER

Students change their course preferences **four** times on average, weighing up several factors as they firm up their choices.

A WHOLE NEW WORLD

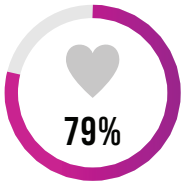
Students are enthusiastic about the many ways university will change their lives and expand their horizons. They look forward to meeting new people, following their interests and the uni atmosphere.



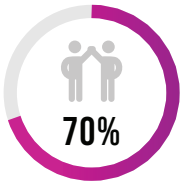
Following their passions is an exciting prospect for **79%** of students heading to university.

Finding a new community of friends made **70%** of students keen to start their studies.

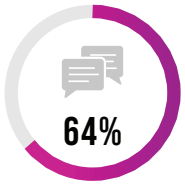
WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO AT UNI?



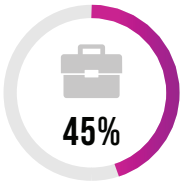
PURSUING MY PASSIONS



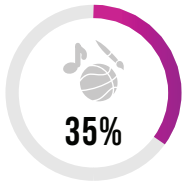
MEETING NEW PEOPLE



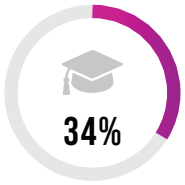
SOCIALISING/UNI LIFE



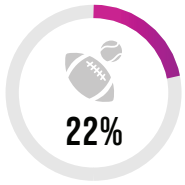
NETWORKING FOR FUTURE CAREER



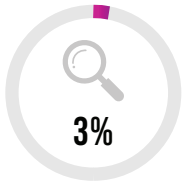
GETTING INVOLVED IN CLUBS/SOCIETIES



STUDYING AT A TERTIARY LEVEL



SPORTING ACTIVITIES



OTHER

FRIENDS, FREEDOM, FULFILMENT

Students share what they are looking forward to as they start university.



PERSONAL PASSIONS

'Being able to focus on what I am passionate about.' *Mosaab, 18*

'Learning new things that are closer to my areas of interest.' *Karen, 18*

'Exploring new opportunities and learning new things that I am interested in.' *Arabella, 17*



INDEPENDENCE

'Taking that next step into adult life.' *Caitlyn, 18*

'Having more flexibility, freedom and independence.' *Mary, 17*

'Wearing whatever I want.' *Antoinette, 17*



CAREER

'Graduating and being able to start working to earn money to provide for my family.' *Wooree, 18*

'Being able to have a career that I know will help people.' *Maella, 18*

'Building my creative portfolio and making bigger things.' *Tina, 17*



PERSONAL GROWTH

'Moving out of home and being my own person.' *Lily, 17*

'Growing and starting a new chapter.' *Taylee, 19*



NEW BEGINNINGS

'A different environment where I don't know people and I can get to know them.' *Sam, 17*

'Starting a new stage in life.' *Dean, 18*

SPEND

They say money comes and money goes. But students' unique relationship with earning, spending and saving goes far deeper than that.

Students were happy to share with us where they shop, what they're buying and the types of things that influence their spending decisions.

We asked them about their income sources, saving habits and what they look for when choosing one brand over another. For good measure, we also dug into the effects of discounts and what they are buying before starting university.

WORKING FOR THE WEEKEND

Just over half (55%) of students fund their expenses through a casual or part-time job.

BANK OF MUM AND DAD

Over one-third (37%) of students rely on their family to support their spending.

SAVVY SHOPPERS

Discounts are rated as either extremely important or very important by two-thirds (67%) of students.

SPEND IT IF YOU GOT IT

Students are putting their money to work going out with friends (71%), eating out (51%) and the latest fashions (43%).



INCOME AND SAVINGS

93% of students try to save money each week.

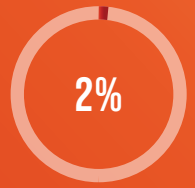


PRIMARY SOURCES OF INCOME

55% – INDEPENDENT



PART-TIME/CASUAL WORK



FULL-TIME WORK

45% – DEPENDENT



PARENTS



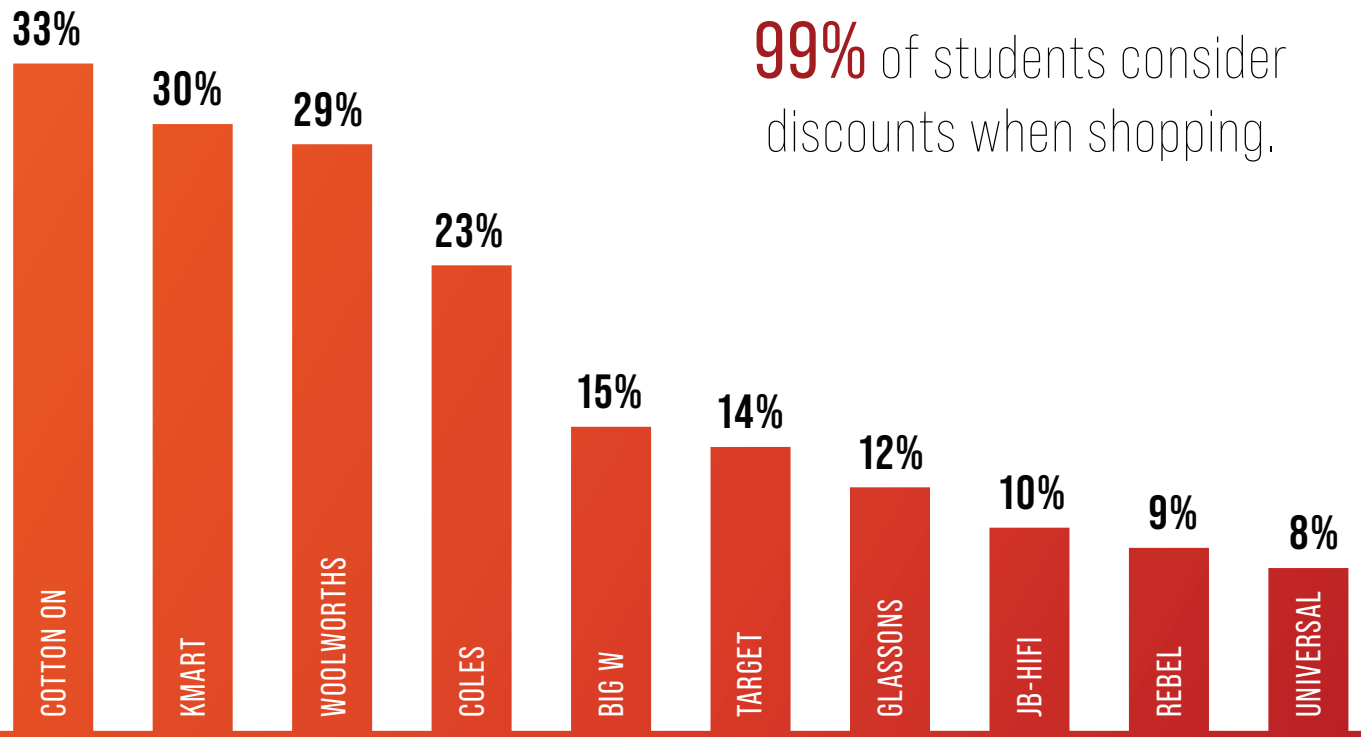
GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE



SAVINGS/GIFTS

TOP-SHOPPED STORES



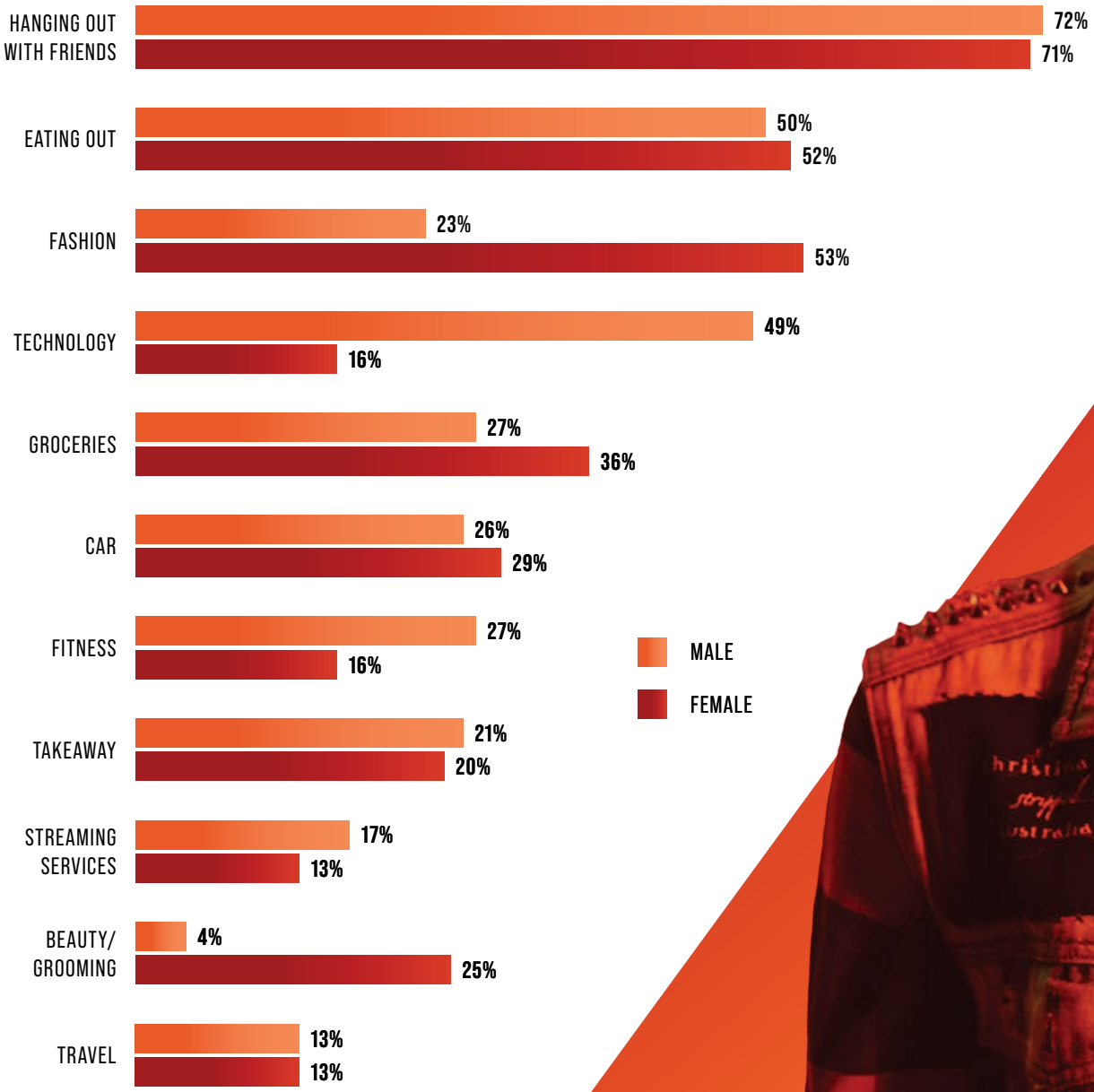


99% of students consider discounts when shopping.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU SHOP FOR GROCERIES?



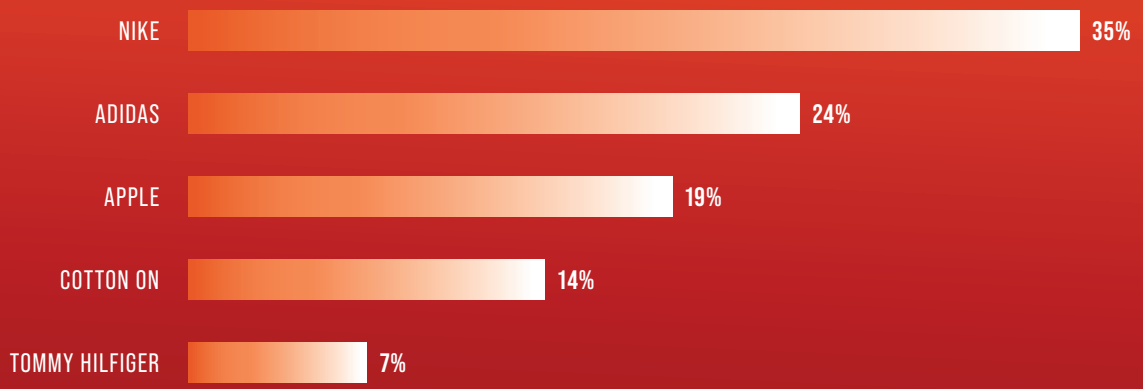
MAIN SPENDING CATEGORIES



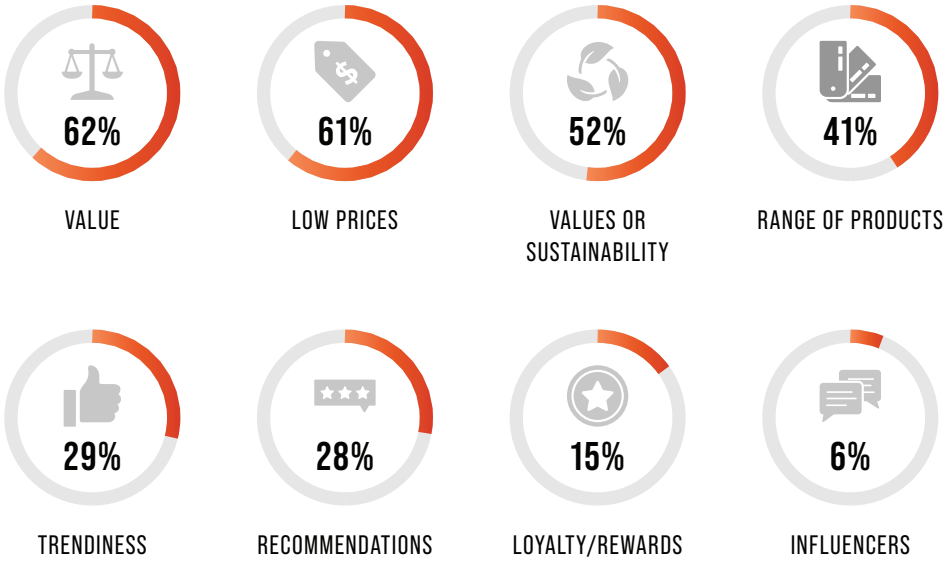
FAVOURITE BRANDS



TOP 5 BRANDS



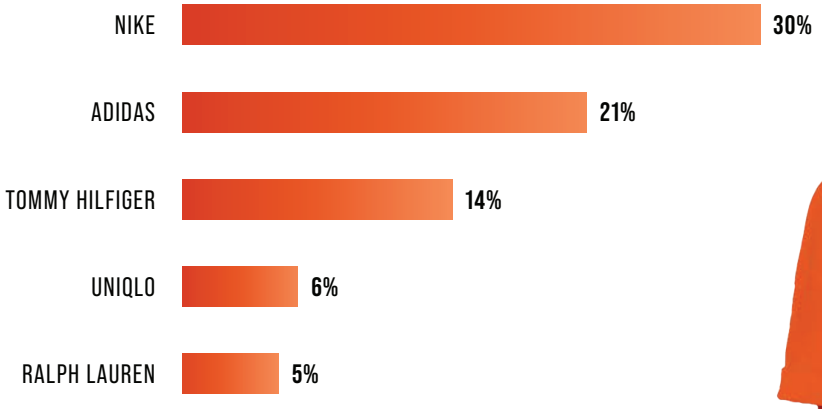
TOP BRAND CONSIDERATIONS



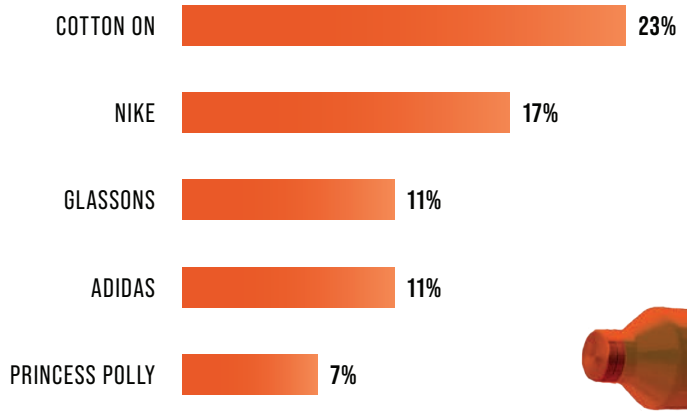
LOOKING GOOD, FEELING GOOD

POPULAR FASHION BRANDS

MALES



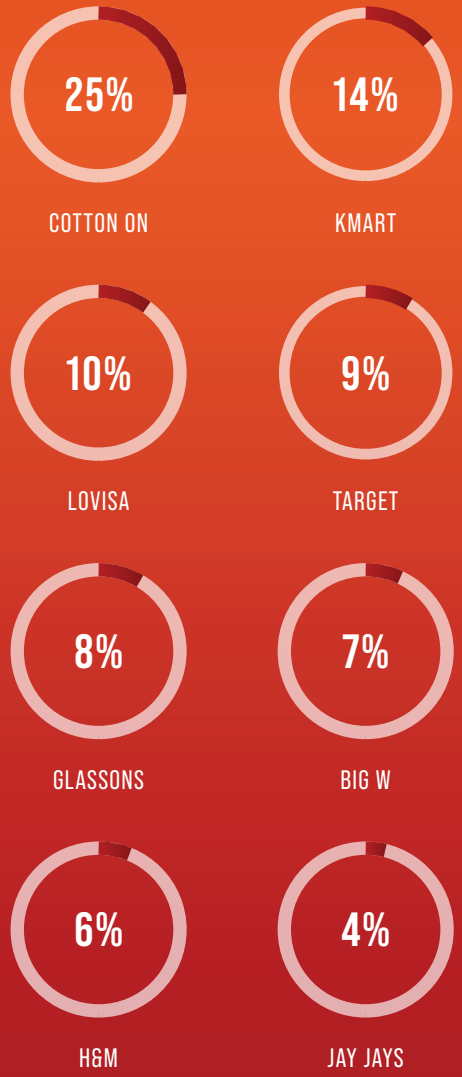
FEMALES





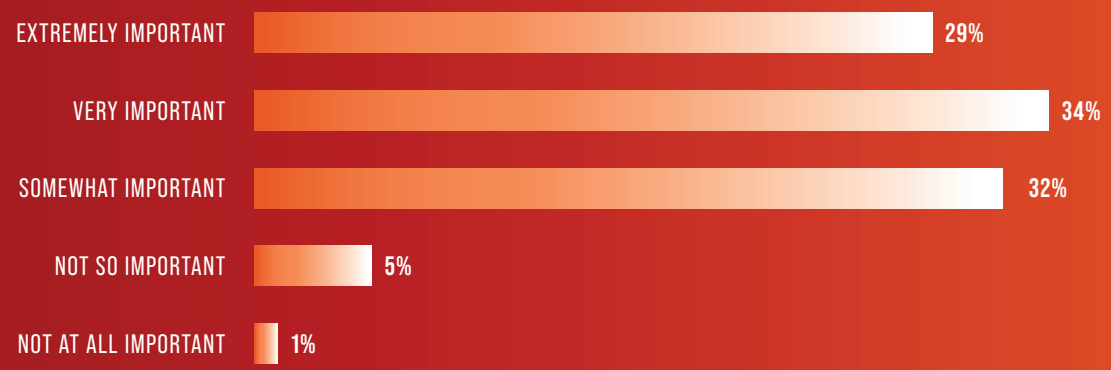
14% of students shop for accessories online.

TOP ACCESSORY BRANDS



SPENDING INFLUENCES

IMPORTANCE OF DISCOUNTS



With limited incomes, students say that value and discounts are major factors in their purchasing decisions. Savvy and thrifty, students prioritise value and good deals when deciding where to shop or what to buy.



KEY SPENDING DRIVERS



PRE-UNI SPENDING

Some of the purchases students intend to make prior to starting uni or college:

> A lightweight but good backpack.

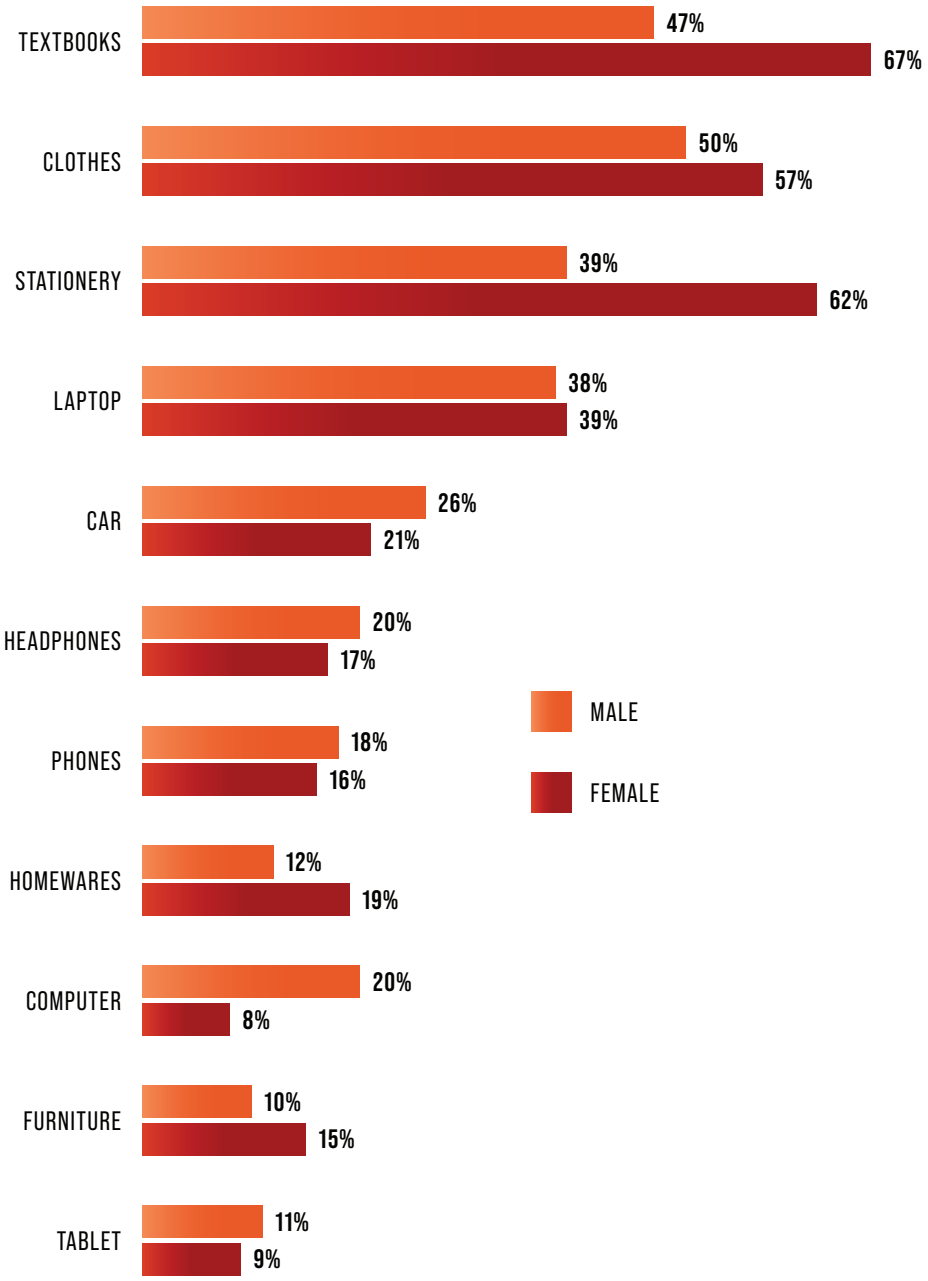
> Nintendo Switch, cream to treat my eczema, plushies.

> Online textbooks as I want to go paperless.

THE PURCHASING TIMELINE



WHAT WILL YOU BUY BEFORE UNI STARTS?



LEISURE

Keeping fit, socialising and streaming music and videos are some of the main ways students spend their spare time.

We asked them to tell us about their hobbies, their attitudes to health and fitness, and the online services they're loyal to.

FIT AND FABULOUS

A third of students (34%) say they exercise one or two days a week, with another third (33%) sweating it out three or four days a week.

WE HEAR YOU

In the music streaming realm, 8 in 10 students (82%) choose Spotify as their favourite platform.

Roughly 3% don't use any music streaming services, instead choosing to listen to CDs or the radio or download their music.

NETFLIX CAN CHILL

Netflix was crowned the top tech brand for students.

In the video-on-demand space, Netflix (83%) bested YouTube (81%) in a closely run race.

GREAT MATES

Students enjoy a range of hobbies and interests, but 8 in 10 (82%) say social activities with friends is their favourite way to spend time.



RELAX AND RECHARGE



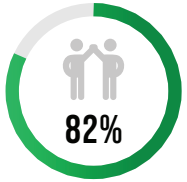
Watching anime and eating snacks.

Cooking and experimenting with food.

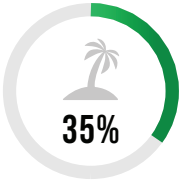
Mustering cattle, riding horses and shopping.

An incredibly diverse range of hobbies and activities occupy students in their spare time. Here's a small sample of some of the favourite pastimes: photography, drawing, reading, producing short films, karaoke, writing, seeing theatre, sewing, sleeping, making clothes, cliff jumping, volunteering, doing puzzles, playing guitar, thrifting and cosplaying.

FAVOURITE PASTIMES



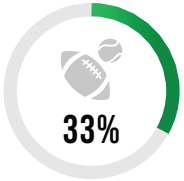
GOING OUT WITH FRIENDS



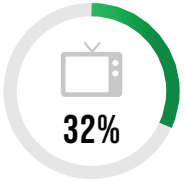
WEEKEND AWAY



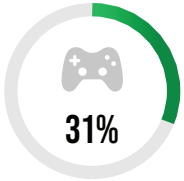
EXERCISING



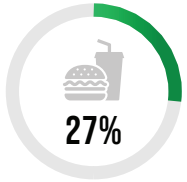
PLAYING OR WATCHING SPORT



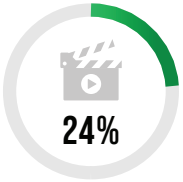
WATCHING TV



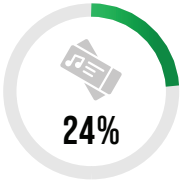
GAMING



FOODIE ADVENTURES



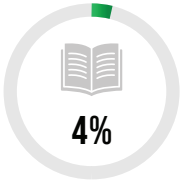
GOING TO THE MOVIES



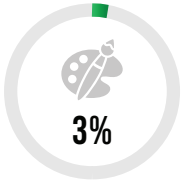
MUSIC FESTIVALS OR CONCERTS



ORDERING IN



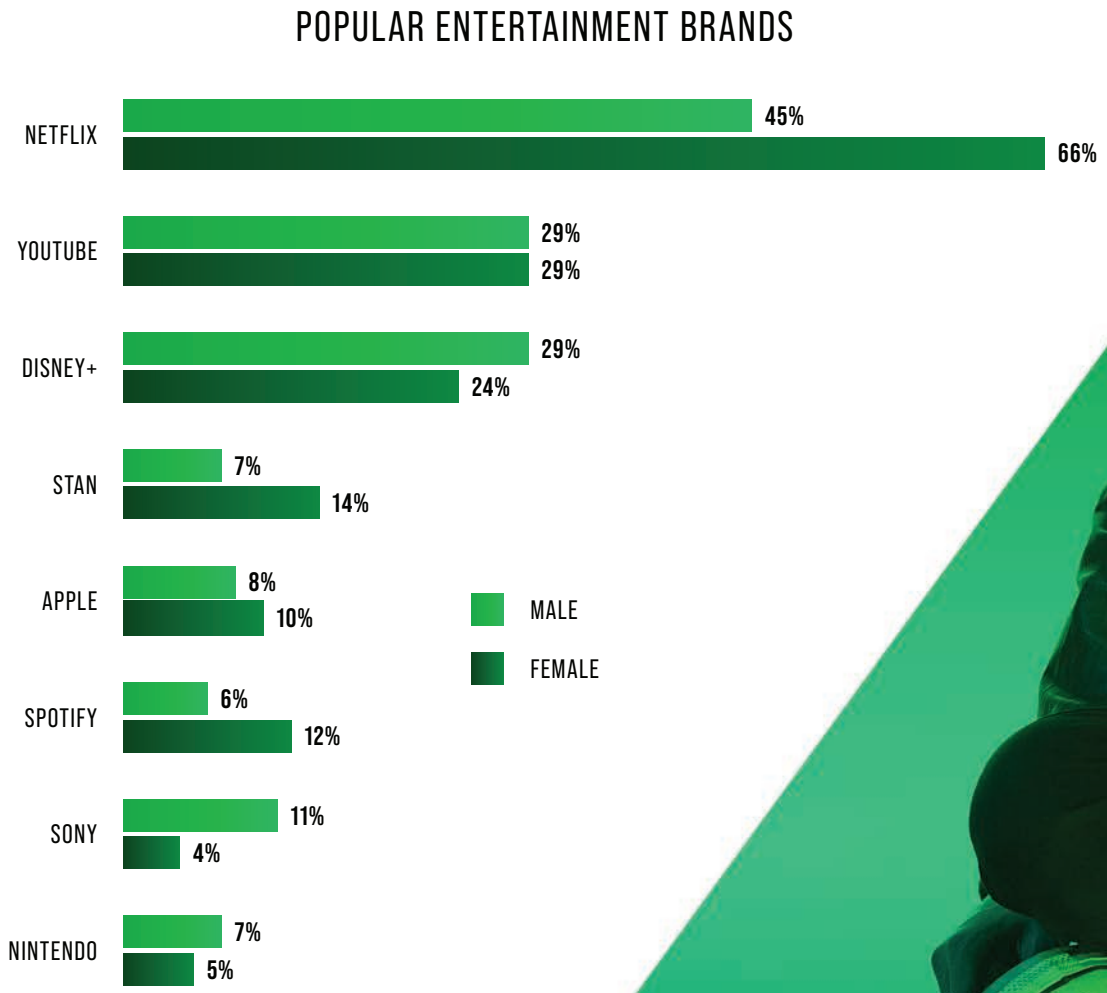
READING



ARTISTIC PURSUITS

LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU

Netflix is the favourite entertainment brand for **66%** of female students and **45%** of male students.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

68% of students don't belong to a gym.

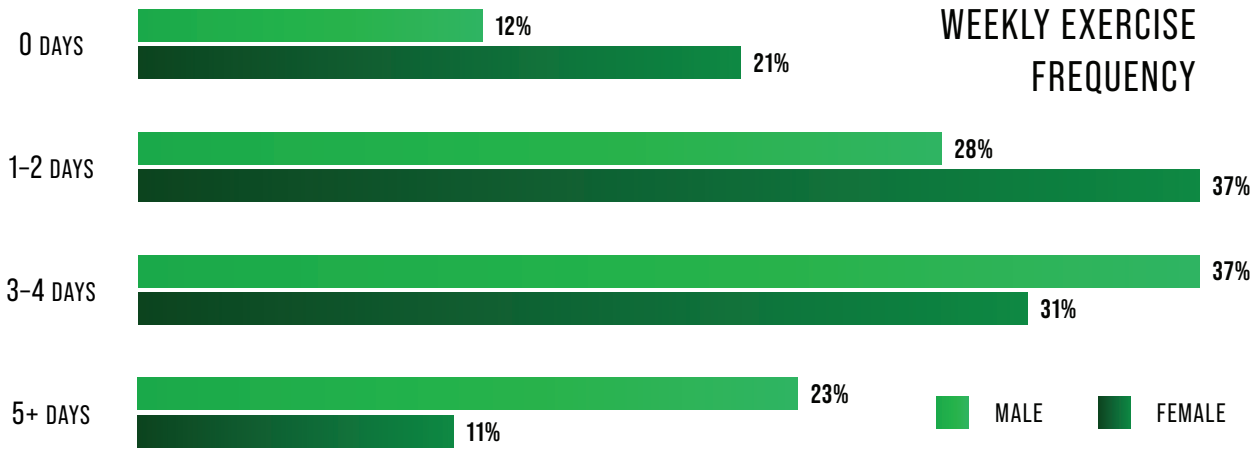
25% are planning to join one.

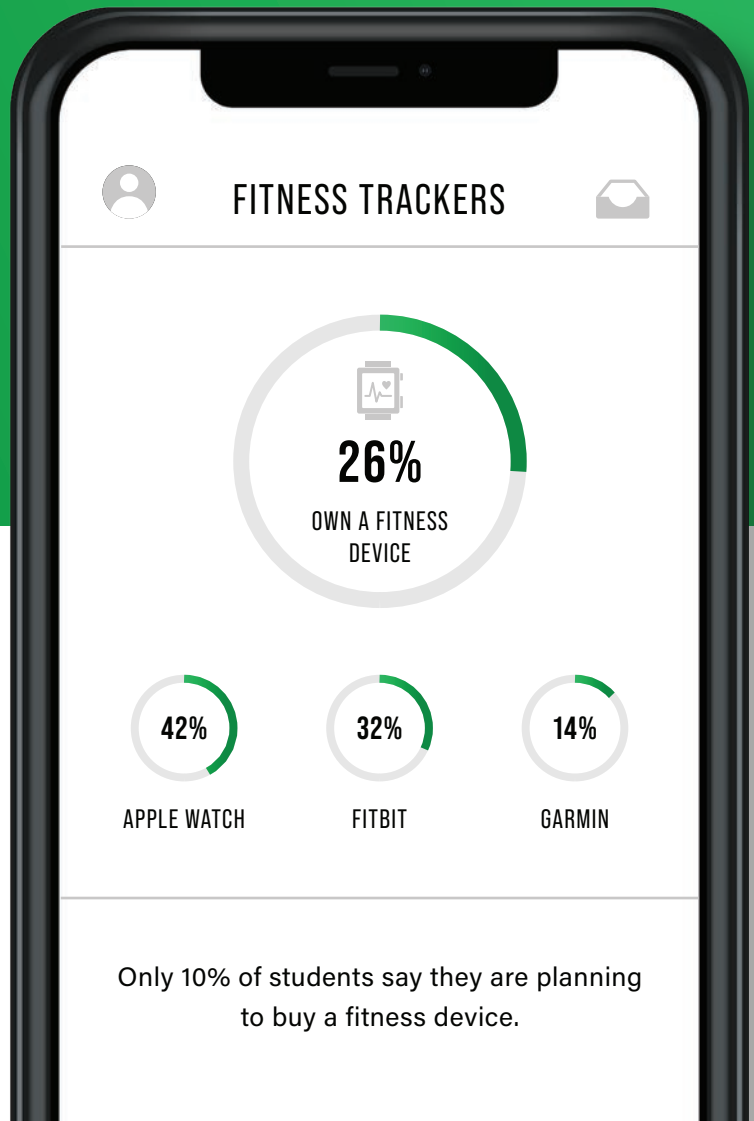
POPULAR FITNESS ACTIVITIES

- 61% WALKING
- 56% RUNNING
- 43% WEIGHTS
- 22% SWIMMING
- 19% CYCLING
- 15% DANCING
- 15% OTHER SPORTS*
- 14% GYM CLASSES
- 14% ONLINE CLASSES
- 7% MARTIAL ARTS
- 5% HOME WORKOUTS

*Other sports include: ice skating, rollerblading, netball, soccer, rugby.

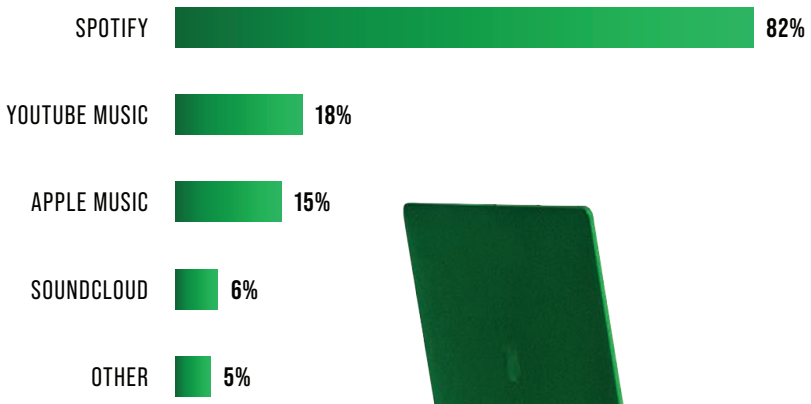
WEEKLY EXERCISE FREQUENCY





WATCH AND LISTEN

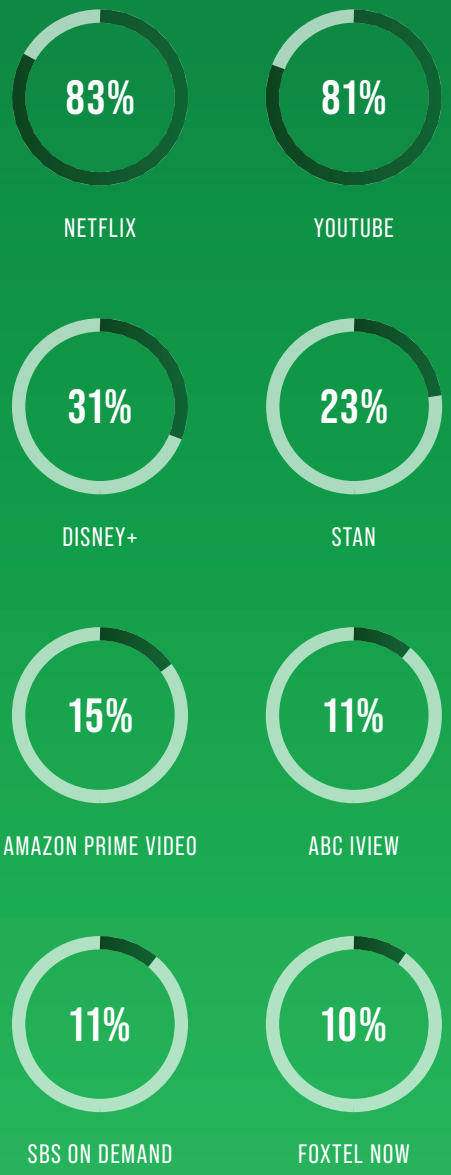
LEADING MUSIC PLATFORMS



3% of students don't stream music.

They listen instead to physical formats like CDs or records, tune in to the radio or download music.

TOP VIDEO STREAMERS



TECHNOLOGY



It'd be a difficult task to find a more digitally switched-on group than school leavers.

We asked these students about their social media habits, their favourite tech brands, their attitudes towards mobile phones and how they like being contacted.

AN APPLE EACH DAY

Chosen by 82% of female students and 58% of male students, Apple takes out the top spot as the most popular tech brand.

Apple also owns the smartphone market among school leavers, with 75% of students owning some model of iPhone.

INSTA-FANS

Instagram is the top choice for students, with 8 in 10 (82%) spending their social media time interacting with content on the photo and video sharing social network.

NOMOPHOBIA

Phones don't spend much time in pockets or purses, with almost three-quarters (71%) of students using their mobiles between two and five hours each day.

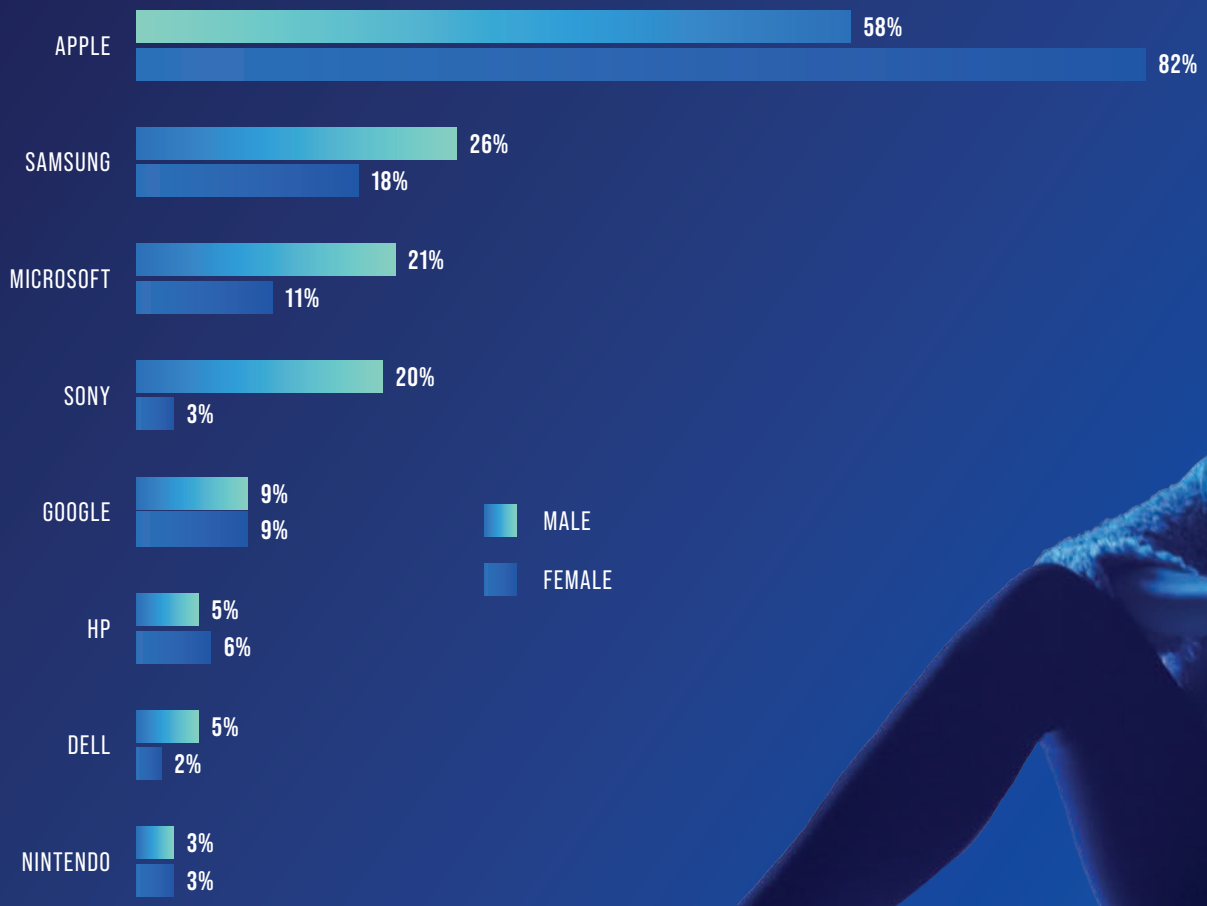
They also have limited lifespans, with half of students planning to upgrade their current phone within two years.

160 CHARACTER CUT-THROUGH

Over half of students (53%) say receiving text messages is their preferred way to be contacted. Very few (1%) enjoy receiving snail mail.

TECH TITANS

POPULAR TECH BRANDS



HOT HANDSETS

MAIN CONSIDERATIONS WHEN BUYING A NEW PHONE

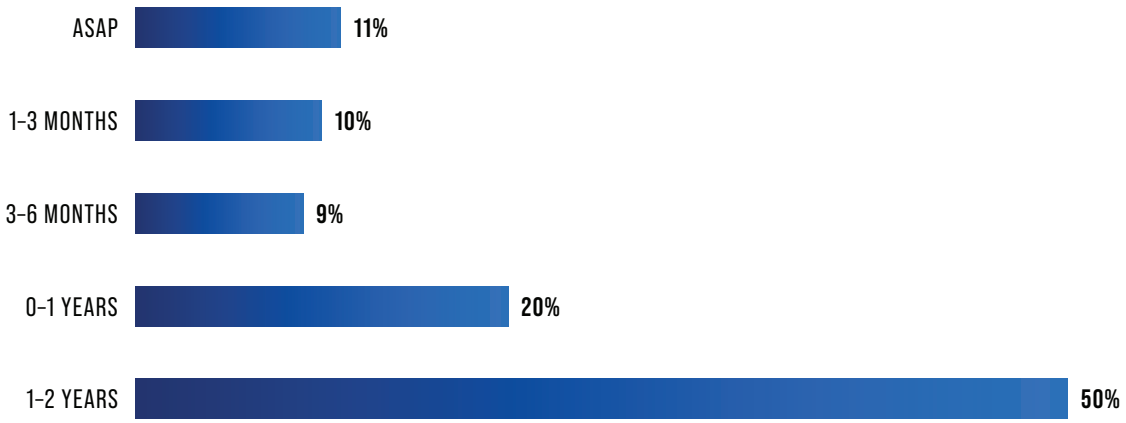
- 28% FEATURES*
- 28% PRICE
- 27% BATTERY LIFE
- 16% BRAND

*The most desirable features students seek include: large storage capacity, excellent camera quality and snappy, responsive performance.

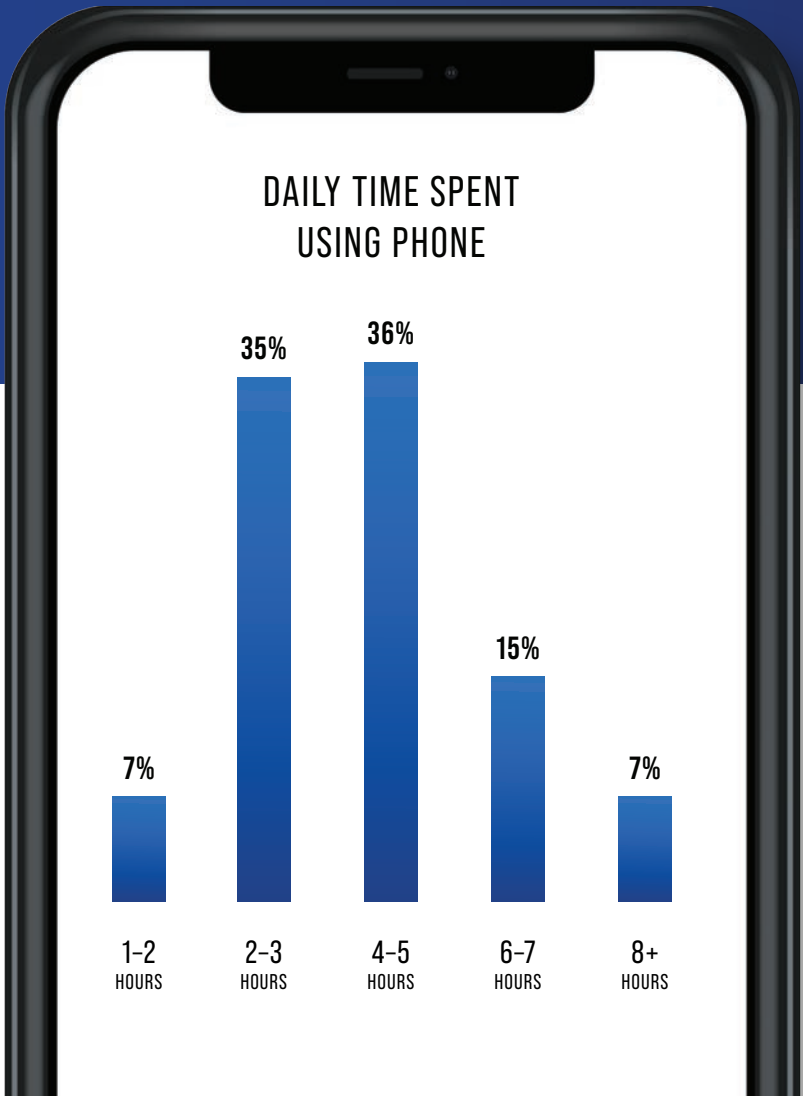
75% of students own an Apple iPhone.

14% own a Samsung phone.

NEW PHONE UPGRADE TIMELINE



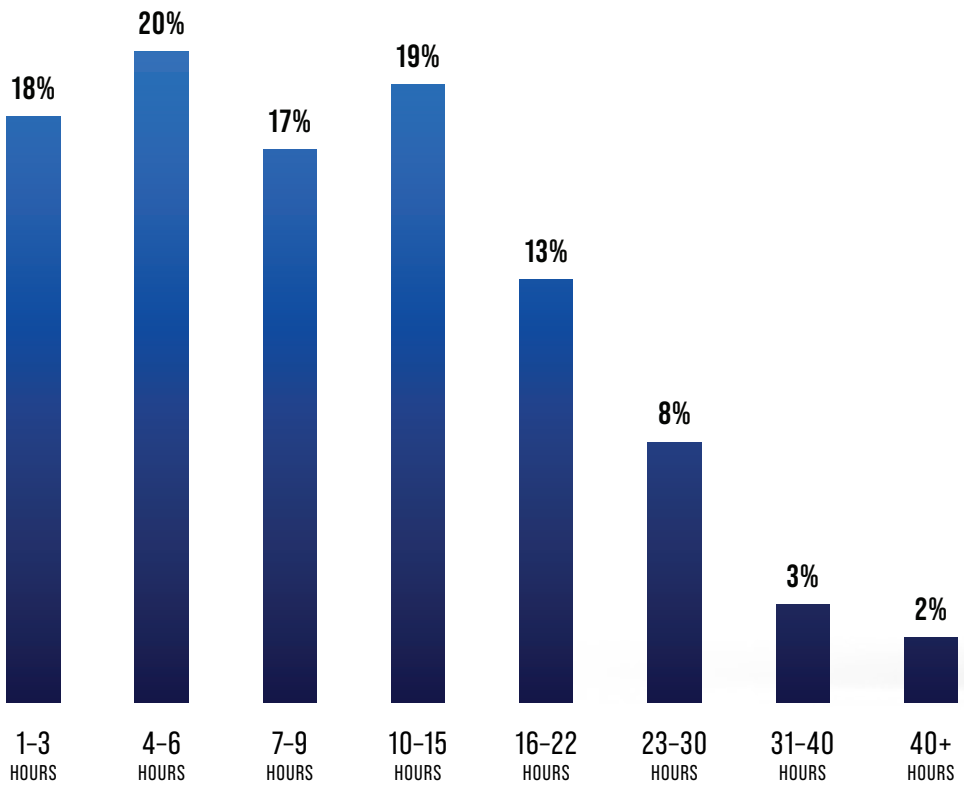
DAILY TIME SPENT USING PHONE



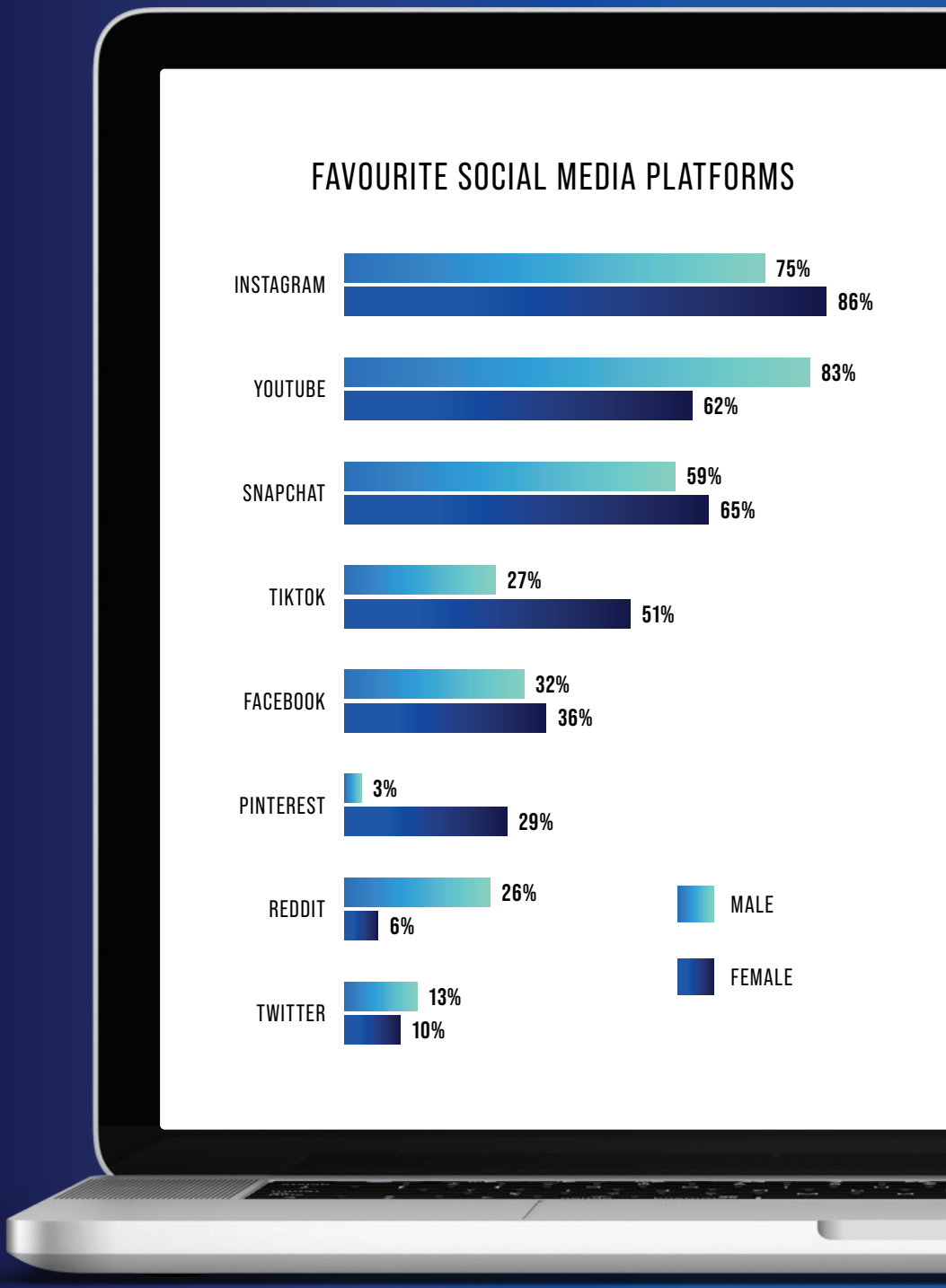
DOWN THE SCROLL HOLE

It's official: Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat are the most popular online platforms among school leavers. But when it comes to social screen time, over half use social media less than nine hours per week.

WEEKLY TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA



FAVOURITE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

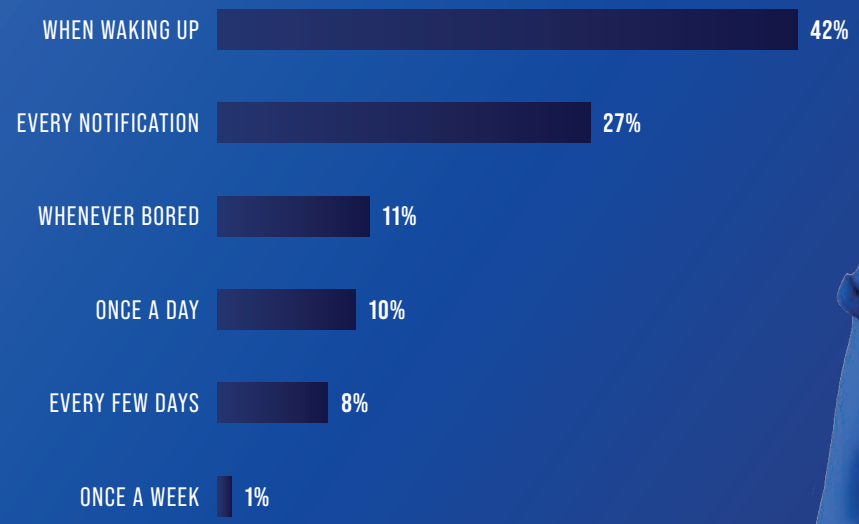


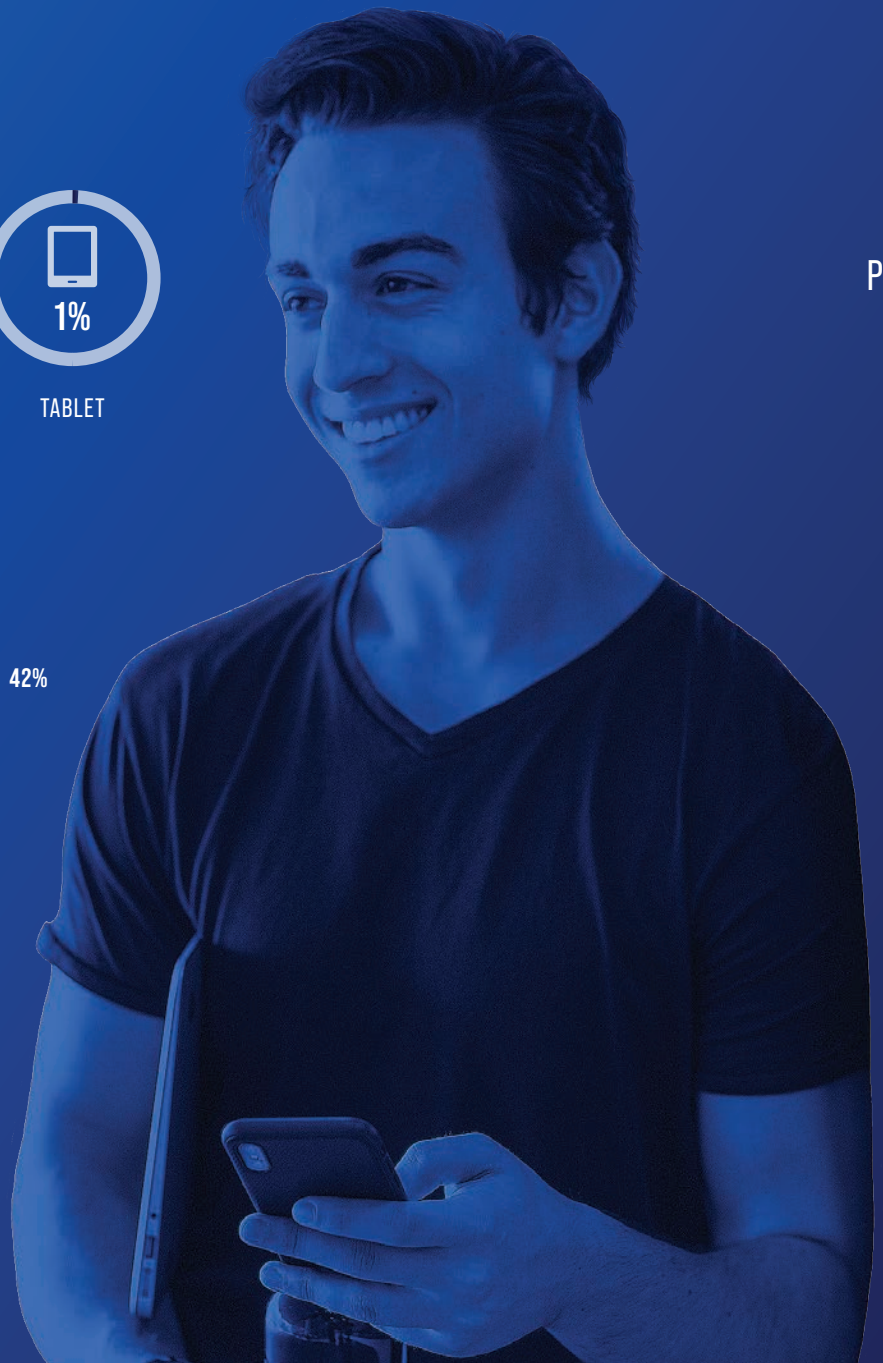
TEXT, DON'T CALL (OR WRITE)

WHERE EMAILS ARE READ



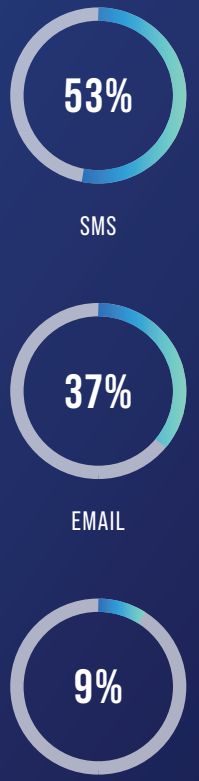
WHEN EMAILS ARE READ





Less than **1%** of students want to be contacted by post.

PREFERRED CONTACT METHOD



FUTURE

We asked students what they were excited about, what they worried over and what they hoped to achieve in 2021 and beyond.

They responded with enthusiasm about moving out, finding like-minded friends, and discovering more about themselves and their unique place in the world.

WE CAN DO BETTER ON MENTAL HEALTH

Tempering this optimism are some disturbing findings.

Asked about their biggest concerns, 44% of students identified mental health, and almost 4 in 10 (38%) said struggles with their body image.

FULL-TIME STUDY TAKES POLE POSITION

Over three-quarters (76%) planned to study full-time, compared to only 6% considering part-time study. Only 4% thought a gap year made sense given the realities of a world battling COVID-19.

READY FOR ADVENTURE

Only 3 in 10 (29%) school leavers weren't planning to travel within the next six months.

ANY PORT IN A STORM

Those who are preparing to pack their bags are increasingly looking to domestic holiday destinations.

Just over one-third (38%) were planning intrastate trips while 32% were set on an interstate escape.



HOPES

WHAT ARE YOU EXCITED ABOUT?

'Meeting new people, starting fresh, pursuing a career that I've chosen and I'm passionate about, becoming an adult, working on myself and becoming more independent.' *Bronwyn, 18*

'I am excited to start a new chapter of learning in an adult environment where I am respected and treated as an adult. I'm excited to meet new people with different interests and backgrounds.' *Victoria, 18*

'I'm really excited to start this new journey and chapter in my life, and I'm prepared to start expanding my social circles and start creating new relationships, and to gather an entirely new perspective of the society I am immersed in.' *Ibrahim, 17*

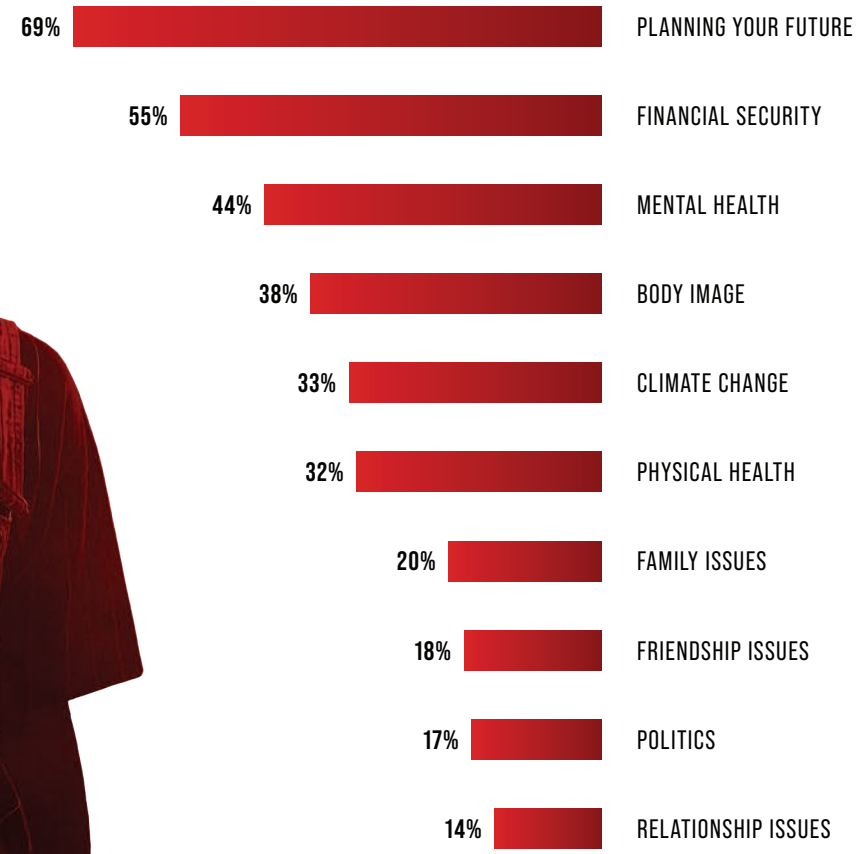
'I'm excited to be able to do things away from my family. To go out and do things without asking for permission and to just be able to learn the things that I want to learn.' *Teagan, 17*

'Being able to evolve as a person and become the definitive version of myself. I came to terms with my sexual orientation this year, and I'm determined to fully embrace my identity as a proud gay man.' *Zachary, 18*



FEARS

WHAT ARE YOUR CHIEF CONCERNS?



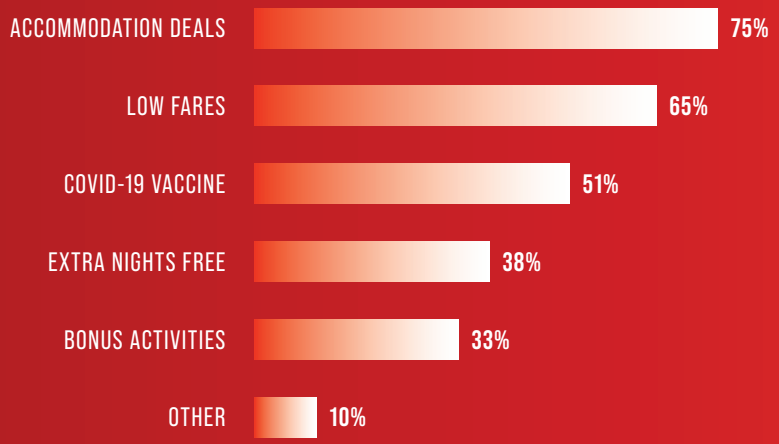
Students expressed high levels of concern over their mental and physical health and negative perceptions of body image. They also worry about their future, their finances and climate change.

GETTING AWAY



WHERE DO YOU PLAN TO TRAVEL?

KEY MOTIVATORS TO TRAVEL



While frustrating, COVID-19 travel restrictions have barely dampened students' desire to travel. Only 29% say they are not planning a trip in the next six months.

Price-conscious students seek value, but say they are also hungry for new cultural experiences and eager to visit family and friends interstate and overseas.

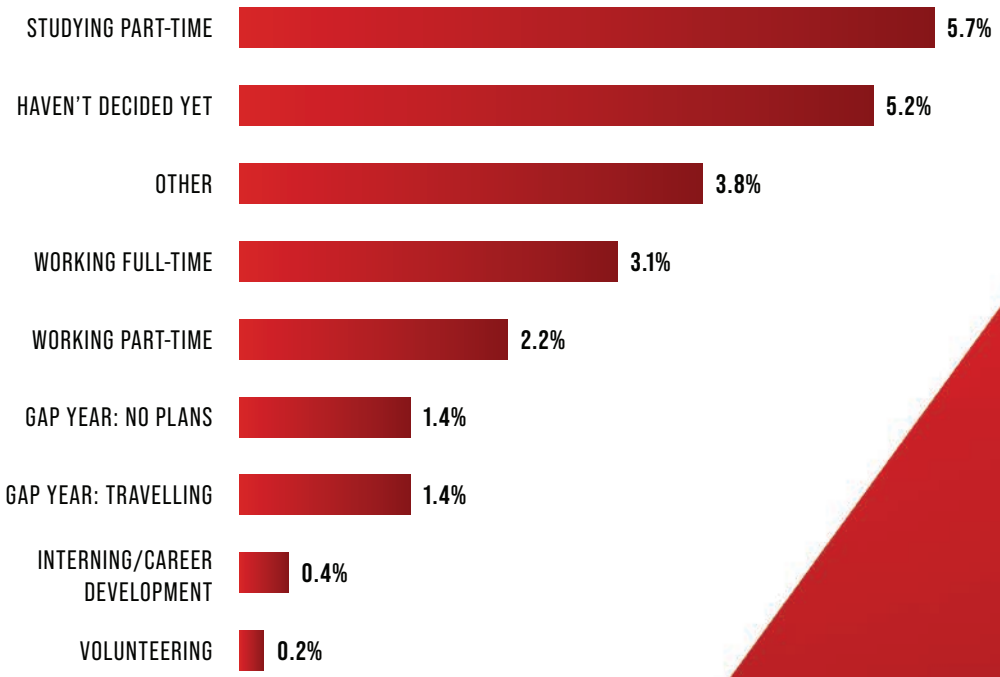
MOST LIKELY ACCOMMODATION FOR NEXT HOLIDAY



PLANS FOR 2021

Studying full-time was by far the most popular plan, with **77%** of students choosing to focus exclusively on their studies.

THE ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS



COVID-19 travel restrictions put many students' gap year plans on ice. With borders closed for the foreseeable future, full-time study now seems the most sensible option for many.

A YEAR OF OPTIONS



STUDYING

'Studying full-time, potential medicinal chemistry research and development, and if possible, military reserves.'
Alex, 17

'Study, work part-time, and train hard to pursue my dream of fighting professionally.'
Jordan, 17

WORKING

'Work for 6 to 18 months before applying to join the NSW Police Force.'
Kane, 18

'Work full-time as an apprentice and start studying by distance in 2022.'
Finnlay, 17

GAP YEAR

'Gap year, working, doing artworks and creating a fashion design portfolio.'
Kristelle, 17

'A gap year working full-time to save for university the year after and preparing through my own studies.'
Ellie, 17

UNSURE

'Deciding between taking a gap year and working or going to both university and TAFE.'
Tahlia, 18

'I haven't decided but I'm going to start YouTubing and maybe TAFE and an internship.'
Paris, 18

UNIVERSITIES ADMISSIONS CENTRE.

THANK YOU

If you would like to discuss any of the findings or information presented in this report, please contact:

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ABOUT UAC

UAC is the largest tertiary admissions centre in Australia. We believe in the value of education and are committed to facilitating access to lifelong learning for all members of our community.