



Enquiry Experience Tracker

Enquiry Experience Tracker

UK Results 2021

Introducing the Enquiry Experience Tracker

A syndicated mystery shopping programme designed to help universities understand how well they respond to enquiries from prospective students.

Delivered in partnership by Edified and UniQuest.

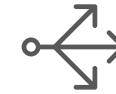
54

Universities



4

Enquiry channels



14

Assessment criteria



6

Student personas



Delivered in partnership by Edified and UniQuest

The Enquiry Experience Tracker is reassuringly powered by education experts Edified and UniQuest, the student engagement specialists.



Edified is a specialist research, consulting and delivery company focused exclusively on the education industry. We are dedicated to assisting education providers and promoters globally to dramatically improve results in student acquisition, student retention, student experience and student success.

Our partners each have 20+ years of experience working within education providers, government and service providers to the education sector. We are results oriented, using our expertise, energy and partnerships with curated service providers to help our clients gain ground quickly.

edified.com.au



UniQuest partners with higher education institutions to bring all the capabilities needed to deliver personalised student engagement journeys at scale and without interruption, no matter what.

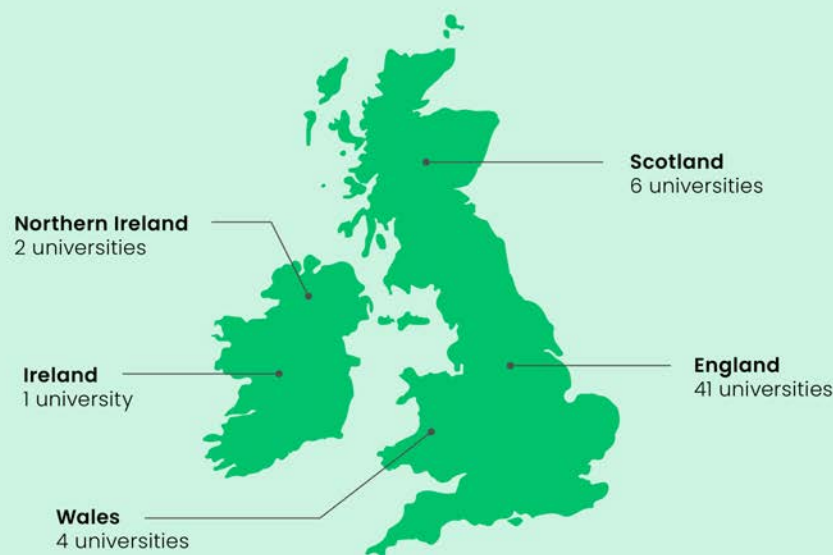
Acting as an extension of your Student Recruitment team, we apply the insights, an expert team, and the technology platform to deliver proactive and personal support for every student. Our proven approach maximises conversion at every step from enquiry to enrolment.

uni-quest.co.uk

Research methodology

Research methodology

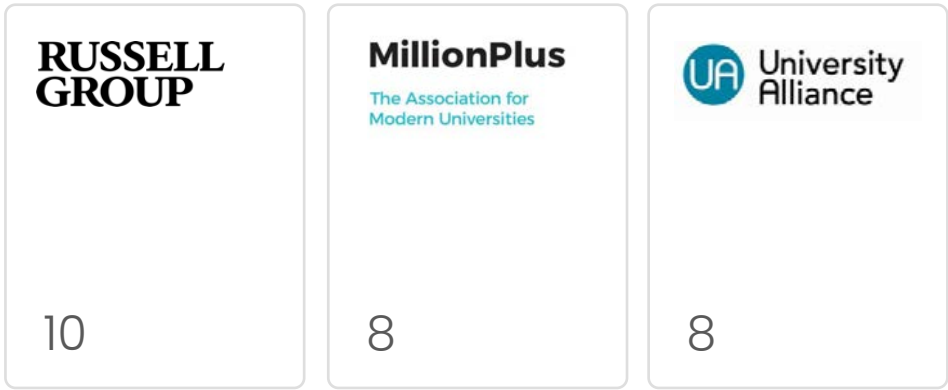
Sample



The Enquiry Experience Tracker is a syndicated research programme involving mystery shopping and benchmarking.

The 2021 research round included a total of 54 universities. 53 of these are UK institutions, representing approximately 40% of all UK universities. There was 1 university from Ireland.

The sample has a broad geographic spread and includes institutions of different sizes and areas of specialisation, and from various university groupings.



Refer to the Appendix for a list of universities.



















Research methodology

Mystery shopping

Mystery shopping was conducted during June to July 2021 using six prospective student personas representing both Home and International student types.

Enquiries were placed with each university using key enquiry channels, including live chat, phone, email and/or webform.

Mystery shoppers were allocated a student persona and list of universities. They posed as the student and made an enquiry to each institution, following scripts and guidelines provided by Edified to evaluate the process. These evaluations were compiled, validated and scored by Edified.

					
SCHOOL LEAVER	MATURE AGE	PROFESSIONAL	SCHOOL LEAVER	COLLEGE STUDENT	PROFESSIONAL
					
UK	UK	UK	NIGERIA	USA	INDIA
					
LIVE CHAT	PHONE	WEB FORM	EMAIL	WEB FORM	LIVE CHAT

Refer to the Appendix for further detail on personas and enquiries.

Research methodology

Scoring

Mystery shopping outputs have been analysed and assessed against 14 criteria including findability, responsiveness, clarity and personalisation.

The scoring methodology has been informed by insights from over 1 million student journeys and reflects the UniQuest standard for effective student engagement.

Scores for each criterion are weighted according to the model on the right, and are indexed to 100 to provide an overall enquiry experience score for each university.

Refer to the Appendix for definitions and our assumptions.

Enquiry Experience Score



Communication quality
Clarity, relevance, personalisation, persuasiveness and mobile friendliness of the university's response
Scored from 0 to 50



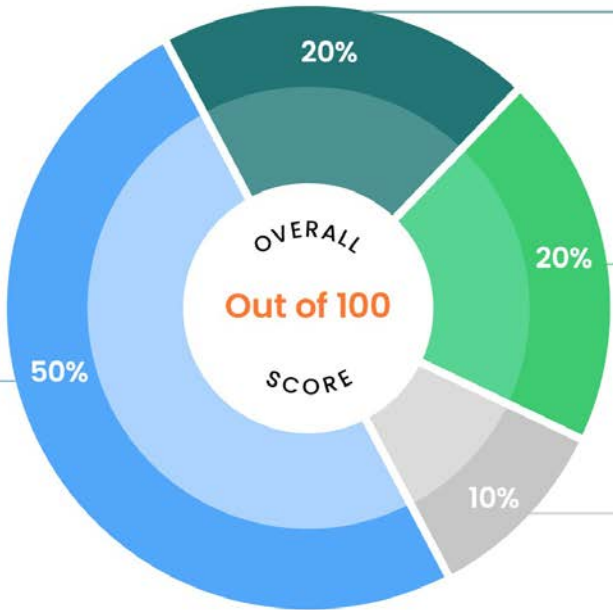
Enquiry channels
Availability and findability of key enquiry channels
Scored from 0 to 20



Responsiveness
Time between initial enquiry and response from the university
Scored from 0 to 20



Follow-up
Receipt of a timely follow-up message from the university after the initial response
Scored from 0 to 10



Research methodology

Benchmarking

The Enquiry Experience Tracker includes benchmarking so that universities can understand their performance compared to the sector and the UniQuest standard of excellence.

UK average

This is the primary benchmark used in this report. It represents the mean Enquiry Experience Score of all UK-based universities in the sample.



Group averages

This benchmark is included when it is relevant to show the performance of a group of universities. It represents the mean Enquiry Experience Score of all universities in the sample that are members of the relevant university group.



Country averages

This benchmark is included when it is relevant to show the performance of a particular country. It represents the mean Enquiry Experience Score of all universities in the sample that are located in the relevant country.

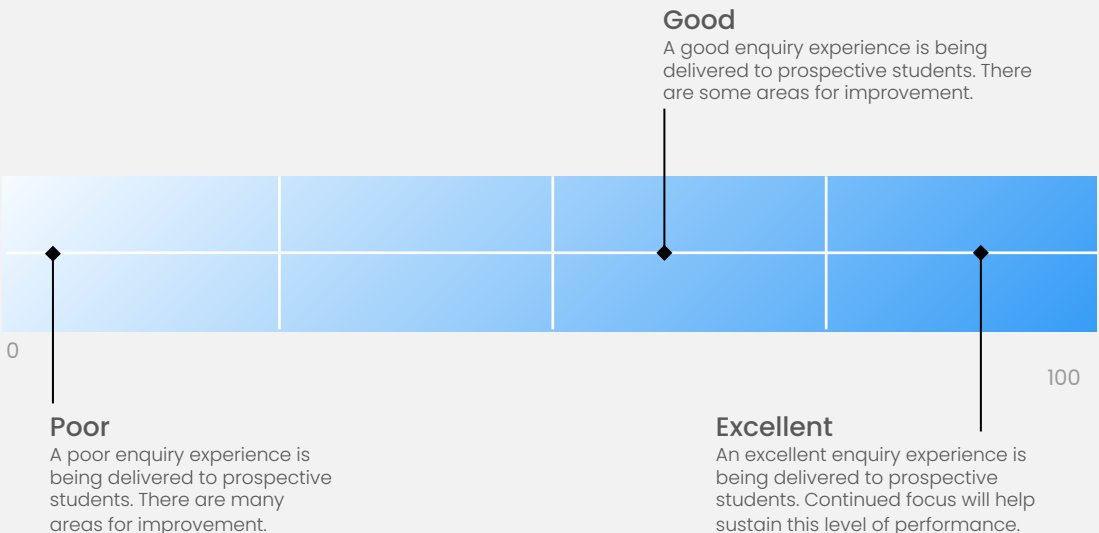


UniQuest standard of excellence

The overall Enquiry Experience Score ranges from 0 to 100.

The maximum score of 100 indicates an optimal enquiry experience is being delivered for prospective students.

This standard has been developed by drawing on insights from over 1 million student journeys managed by UniQuest, and Edified's specialist expertise in student acquisition.



Research methodology

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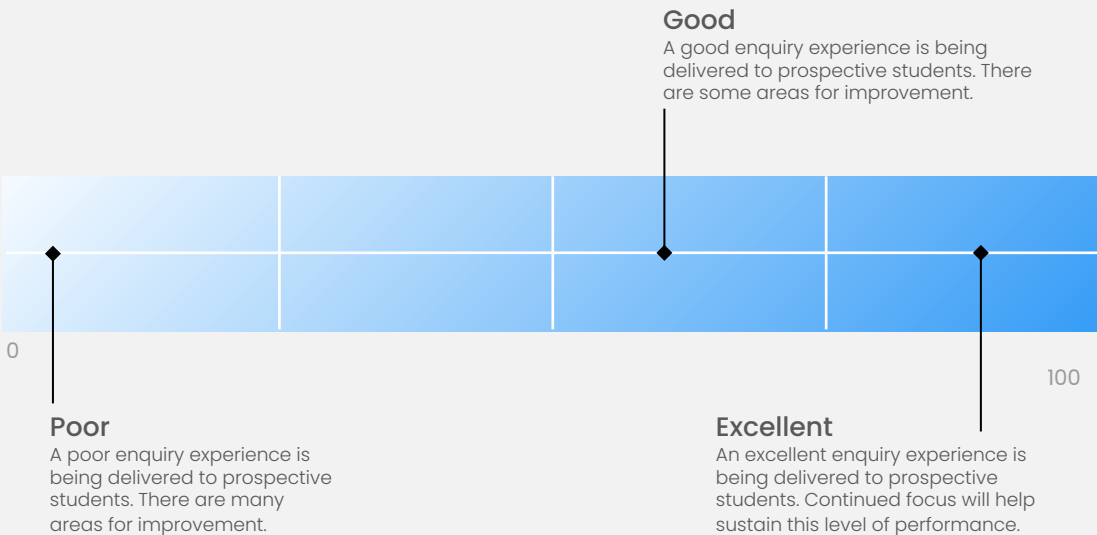


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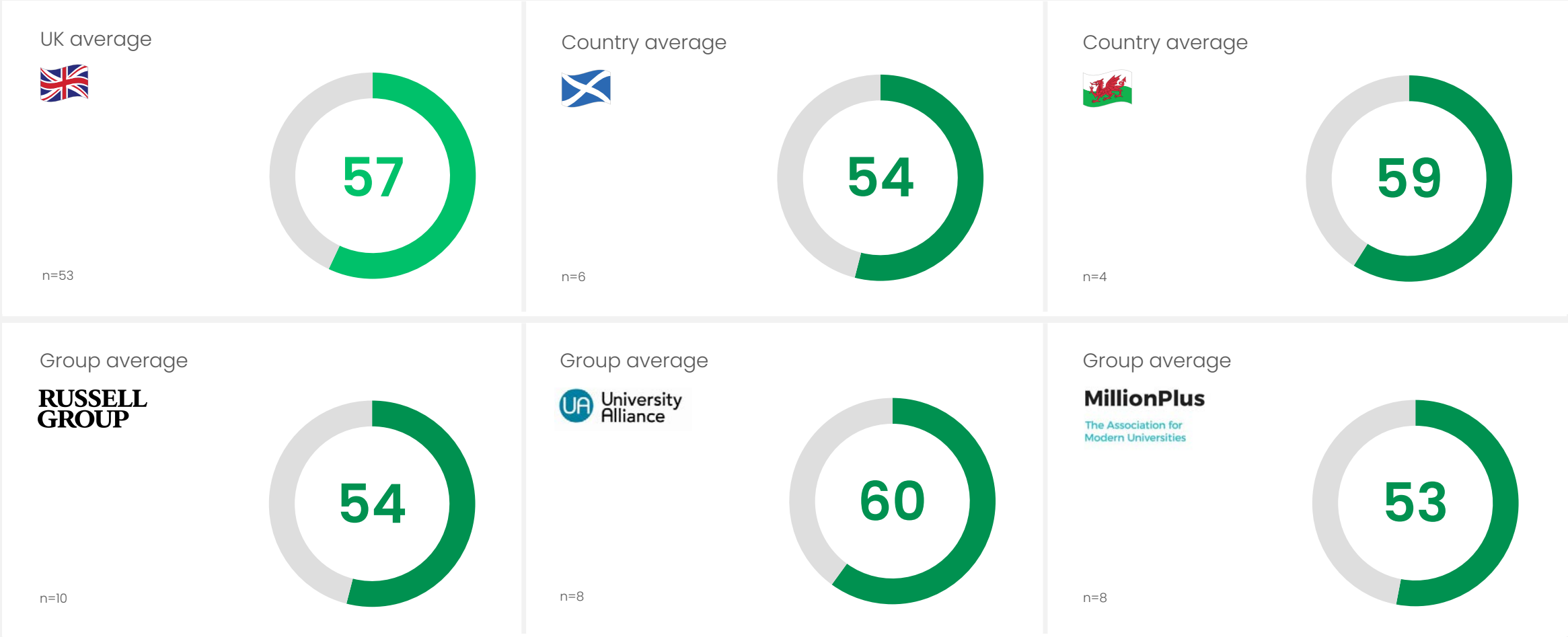
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Results and key findings

Summary of overall results



Distribution of university results



the 2021 Enquiry Experience Tracker included 54 universities.

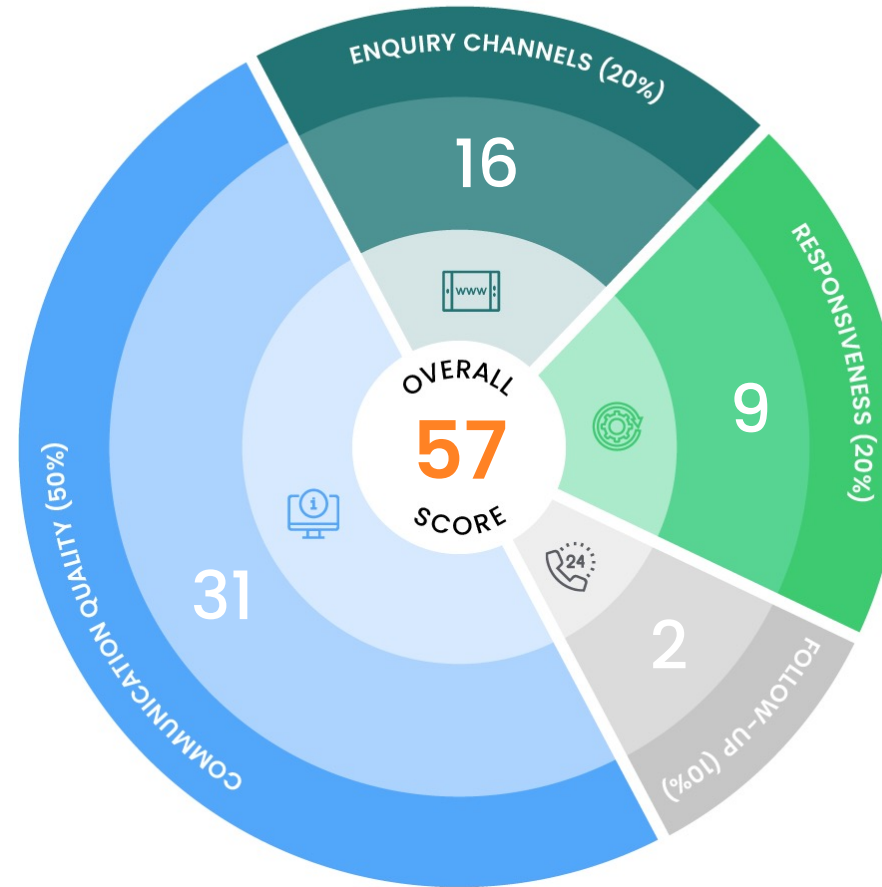
Most scored between 40 and 70 out of 100.

Universities with very low scores typically received these ratings because mystery shoppers did not receive responses to most or all their enquiries.

UK Enquiry Experience Score

The 2021 UK Enquiry Experience Score is **57 out of 100**.

It represents the average of the Enquiry Experience Scores achieved by each UK university in the study.



n=53



Key findings

- Universities generally scored well for enquiry channels offering a range of options that were mostly easy to find.
- The lowest scoring area was follow-up, meaning most mystery shoppers did not receive further contact from universities after their initial enquiry was resolved.
- An average score was achieved in responsiveness, brought down because of enquiries that did not receive a response.
- There is an opportunity to improve communication by increasing persuasiveness and personalisation.

UK results by persona

The average scores across the UK for each persona



UK — School leaver
Live chat
Undergraduate

UK average 50

n=20



UK — Mature age
Phone
Undergraduate

UK average 48

n=32



UK — Professional
Web form
Postgraduate

UK average 60

n=32



Nigeria — School leaver
Email
Undergraduate

UK average 56

n=31



US — College student
Web form
Postgraduate

UK average 55

n=53



India — Professional
Live chat
Postgraduate

UK average 67

n=19



Key findings

- Across the UK, postgrads recorded slightly higher scores than undergrads.
- Email-based enquiry responses were rated more consistently than enquiries through real-time channels like live chat and phone.
- There was high variability in the experiences recorded by mystery shoppers over phone and live chat. Remote working may have impacted these channels in 2021.

Note: persona scores do not include the channel availability rating but have been indexed to 100 for comparative purposes.

Postgraduate students generally had a better experience than undergraduates

The average score recorded for postgraduate personas was 59 out of 100, seven points higher than the average undergraduate score.

Key findings from the 2021 UK Enquiry Experience Tracker

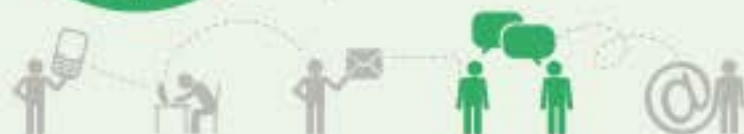
International students typically had a better experience than home students

The average score recorded for international personas was 57 out of 100, four points higher than the average home score.



1 in 4 enquiries did not receive a response

The maximum allowable time frame was 3 weeks for email/web form and 15 minutes for phone and live chat.



Around 1 in 5 communications were rated as cold or overly administrative

Only 1 in 3 communications were described by mystery shoppers as warm and engaging.



4 out of every 5 communications were fully optimised for mobile

Live chat tools tended to be the exception and did not always offer users a great mobile experience.

Only 1 in 6 enquiries received a follow-up message

Very few universities kept in touch with students after responding to the initial enquiry.



Welsh universities were the most responsive

Over 40% of enquiries to Welsh universities were responded to within an excellent time frame according to the UniQuest standard of excellence.



University Alliance

universities rated highest for the quality of their communication

Almost 90% of enquiry responses from University Alliance universities were rated easy to understand and more than half of responses rated as very detailed or fully personalised.



Only 1 in 8 phone enquiries were rated as 'excellent'

Across the UK, the average score for enquiries made by phone was lower than enquiries through other channels.



Over 80% of universities offer peer-to-peer communication

Tools such as Unibuddy and The Ambassador Platform (TAP) were commonly found.



More than half of universities offer live web chat

Live chat and peer-to-peer channels are now commonplace

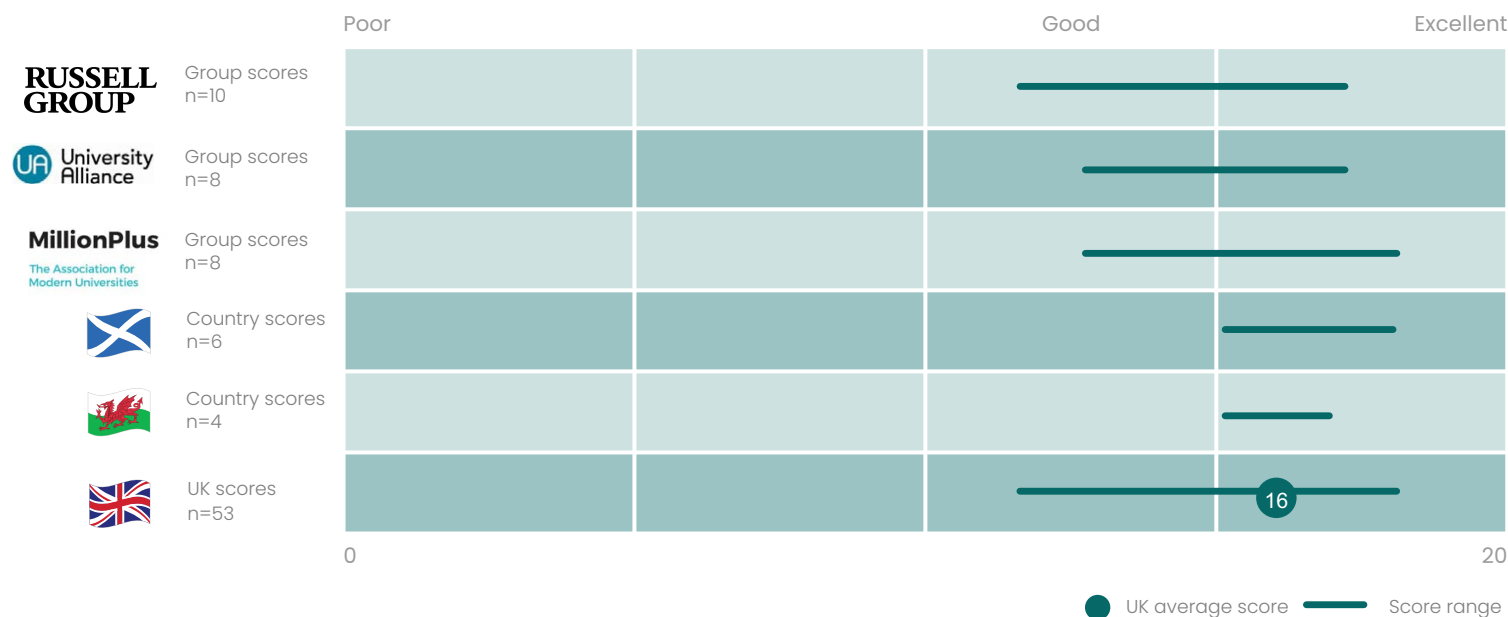
This criteria measures the availability and findability of student enquiry channels.

Consideration was given to email, web forms, phone, live chat, peer-to-peer channels and options for mobile messaging.

Key findings

- All universities offered traditional enquiry channels like email and phone, but the details were sometimes difficult to locate.
- Peer-to-peer and live chat have become common enquiry channels. More than half of universities offer live chat, and over 80% provide a peer-based option.
- Only 6% of universities offered mobile messaging. There is a clear opportunity for universities to better align services with the way generations Y and Z like to communicate.

How enquiry channel scores compare



"The enquiry form was quite hard to find because it wasn't on the 'contact us' page or the 'postgraduate study' page, rather it was under the general 'study' page."

– UK Professional mystery shopper

"The email was rather easy to find, it was straight under the international students' page, but I had to scroll all the way down to find the email."

– Nigeria School Leaver mystery shopper

Unanswered enquiries are a lost opportunity

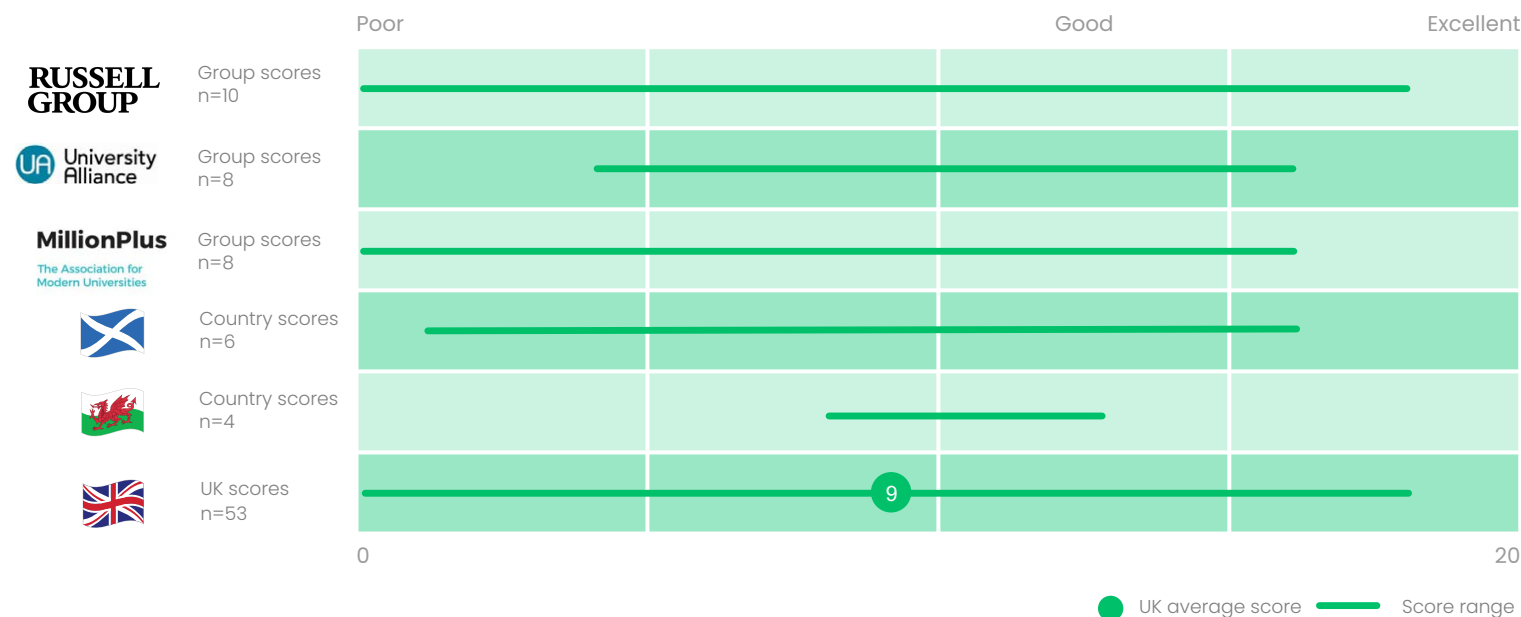
This criteria measures how quickly universities respond to prospective student enquiries.

Maximum points were awarded for instant connection by live chat or phone and responses within four hours to email or web form enquiries.

Key findings

- Around 1 in 4 mystery shopping enquiries did not receive a response. This indicates a huge lost opportunity for UK universities.
- Welsh universities were the most responsive with an average of 11 out of 20.
- Universities tended to be more responsive by live chat, with 62% of enquiries responded to within an excellent timeframe. Only 29% of emails received the same maximum rating.

How responsiveness scores compare



"Initially a bot came up. Then after a minute a live chat started, and they were very responsive to my questions."

– India Professional mystery shopper

"Switchboard put me through to admissions, went to a recorded message to say they are busy, call back later."

– UK Mature Age mystery shopper

Universities are missing the chance to sell themselves

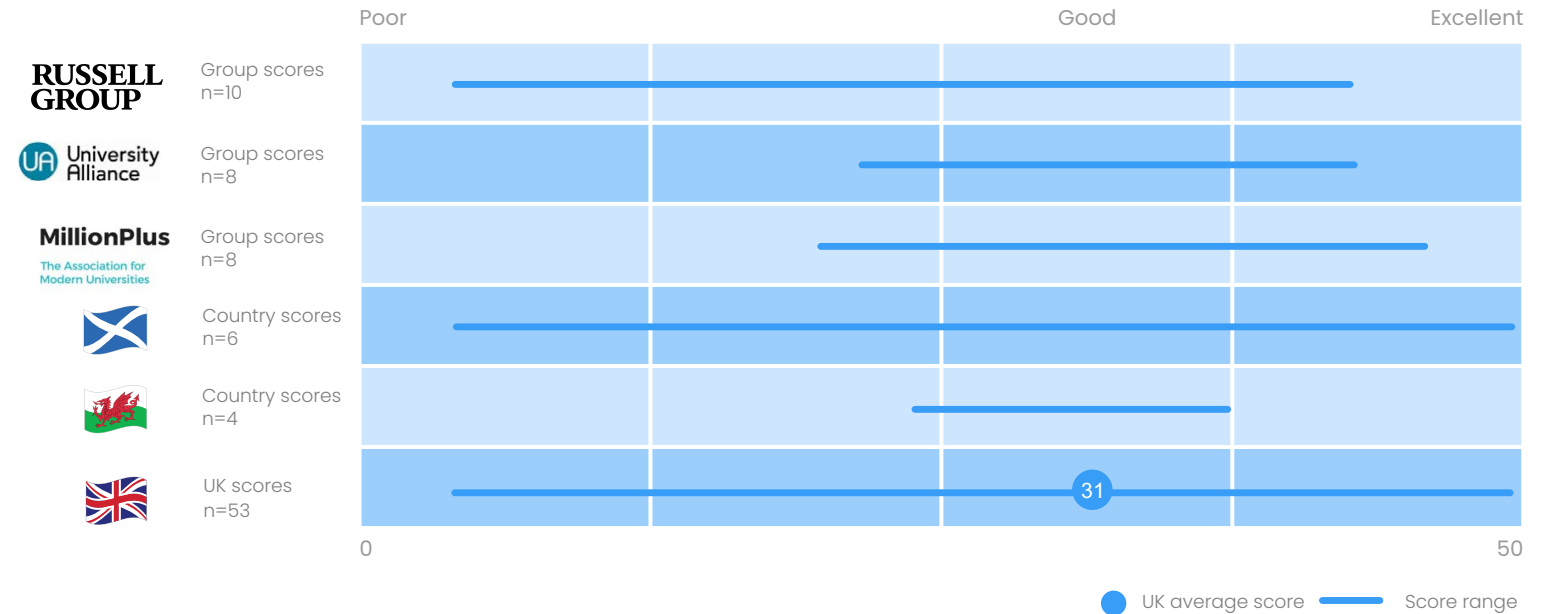
This criteria measures the standard of the content in university communications.

Consideration was given to the clarity, relevance, personalisation, persuasiveness and mobile friendliness of each communication.

Key findings

- UK universities generally scored well in the area of mobile responsiveness, with 4 out of every 5 relevant communications awarded full points in this criteria.
- The lowest scoring area for UK universities was persuasiveness. The majority missed the chance to explain why a student would benefit from studying with their university.
- On average, University Alliance universities rated highly for the quality of their communications, with an average score of 34 out of 50.

How communication quality scores compare



"Asked me lots of questions as well rather than just providing stock answers. Promoted open day. Referred to sales points and one of the few that introduced their name."

– UK Mature Age mystery shopper

"There was no tailoring or personalisation whatsoever, and this response doesn't feel like it was even written by someone. It felt cold."

– US College Student mystery shopper

Email marketing is not always well executed

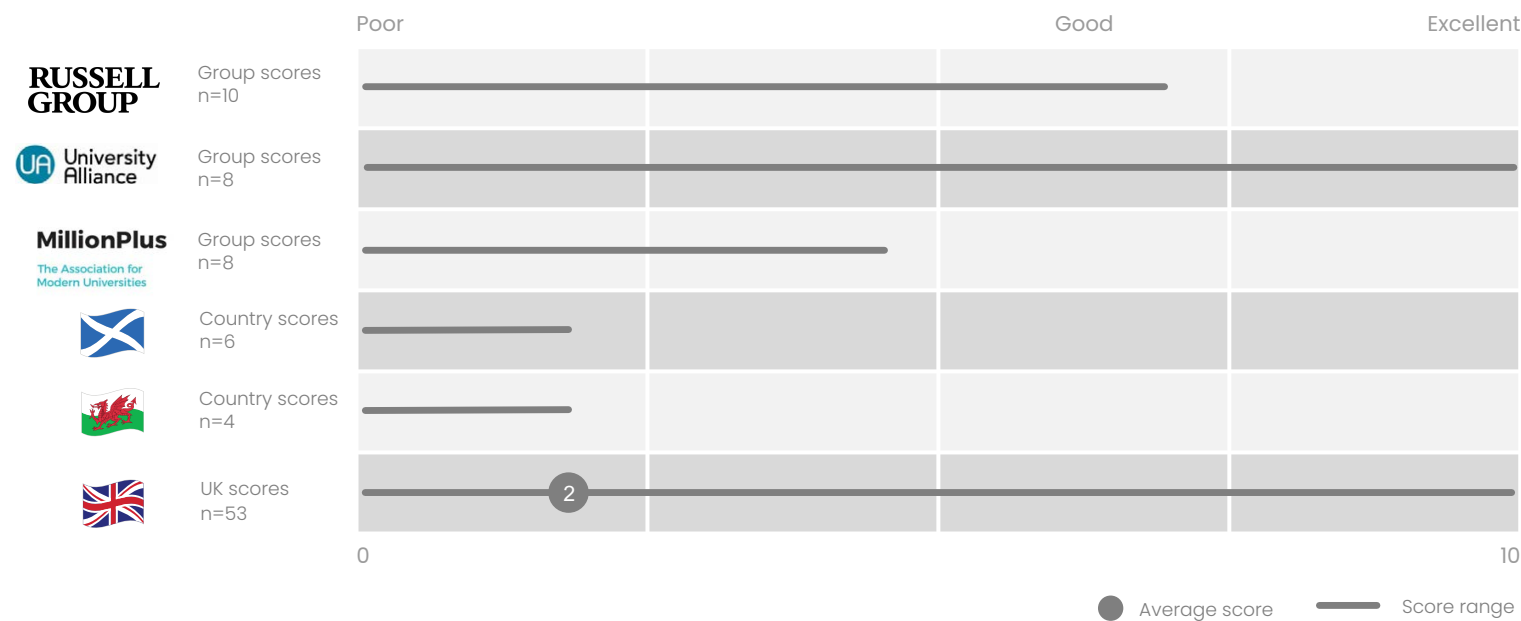
This criteria measures whether a university follows up on prospects in a timely way after responding to an initial enquiry.

Mystery shoppers recorded whether any follow-up communication was received within a week of each university's initial reply.

Key findings

- Practices for enquiry follow-up appear to vary widely.
- Only 18% received a follow-up communication within one week.
- Phone enquiries were the least likely to be followed-up by universities.
- Few universities were consistently good at follow-up, suggesting that different practices are in place across different teams and/or systems.

How follow-up scores compare



"I received an email asking me to update my communication preferences, then one about a student directory and another about a NACAC Fair. But nobody replied to my actual enquiry!"

– US College Student mystery shopper



What does good look like?

Good practice in action



Live chat with an advisor — ✕

You
I have a few questions?

Alexis
Yes, MSc in Data Science will be available for the January 2022 intake.

Alexis
To better assist you, can you provide the following details:
Full Name: Nationality: Country: Residence: Email Address:

Live chat with an advisor — ✕

Advisor typing...

Alexis
As of the moment, we do not have the details yet about the course fee and scholarships.

Alexis
For your reference, the fee for the Postgraduate Master's Degree for September 2021 intake is £14,000.

You

Your message...

Dear Pavish,

Thanks for your enquiry via Live Chat and your interest in studying with us at

Following our conversation, MSc in Data Science will be available for the January 2022 intake.

And again, we do not have the details yet about the fees and scholarships for the 2022 intake, but for your reference, the fee for the Postgraduate Master's Degree for September 2021 intake is £14,000.

All International applicants will be automatically considered for our scholarships. You will not be expected to complete a separate application, we will automatically consider students for one of the scholarships when we receive your application, and confirmation of scholarship will be included in your offer letter. To know more you can click [here](#).

I am delighted to explain how to submit your application.

If you haven't chosen a course yet, please look at the list of our [postgraduate courses](#).

Once you have chosen your course, you are welcome to apply in one of the following ways:

- **Apply directly** to the university by an [online application](#)

You can start a new application by clicking on the Search courses or make a new application.

- **Apply directly** to the university by completing the [International Student Application Form](#).

While filling out the application form, please refer to the [International Application Guidance Notes](#), as it takes you through the information that you need to provide.

"I got all the information I needed!"

– India Professional mystery shopper



Enquiry experience

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Live chat



Instant response



Wales

- Answered instantly by a human who was able to provide knowledgeable and personal service.
- Friendly and proactive. The operator clarified the student's country and study interests early in the conversation and used this information to provide responses tailored to the student's country and study interests.
- Followed-up on the same day with a personal email summarising the key points of the conversation, encouraging the student to apply and assuring them they would be warmly welcomed at the university.

Good practice in action



"The reply they gave was very detailed and clear in answering all of the questions asked [and] included a list of 'reasons to study with us'."

– UK Professional mystery shopper

Hello Jessamy,

We are delighted to hear that you are interested in studying with us here at [\[University Name\]](#) if you are ready to you can fill in an online [application form here](#) for PGCE teaching courses or [our online application system](#) for our other postgraduate courses. If you want to have a look at our courses in more detail, including details on entry requirements, you can go directly to our [course information page](#) or if you'd also like a postgraduate study guide you can [visit this page](#) and we'll happily post one to you.

Provided that you meet the entry requirements the PGCE course is 1 year in length. You can find a full list of our tuition fees [here](#).

There are many reasons why being a student with us is a fantastic experience. Here are some of them:

- Top 10 for Student Satisfaction – NSS 2019
- Top 20 for Graduate Prospects – Guardian Good University Guide 2020
- 9th for Research Quality – Complete University Guide 2020
- High quality teacher education programmes accredited by the [\[Accreditation Body\]](#) delivered as part of the innovative
- We have well-established partnerships with Primary and Secondary Schools to provide varied and supportive training environments
- We have a purpose built [Design and Technology Centre](#) to train [Design and Technology](#) teachers and to teach [Product Design](#) degree students. The centre comprises a well equipped IT/lecture room, a fully equipped workshop with a comprehensive range of CNC machinery and equipment, stores and offices.

You can find details of [scholarships](#), [studentships](#) and [bursaries](#) [here](#) that may help you fund your studies.

If you would like to talk to student administration (e.g. about timetabling, modules) then please contact [\[Contact Info\]](#) we're committed to providing you with the best information we can to help you decide if studying with us is right for you, so don't hesitate to ask us any questions you may have.



Enquiry experience



Web form



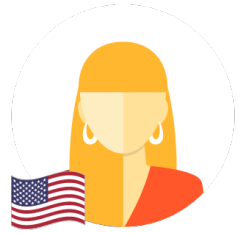
2-day response



Wales

- Acknowledgement email received upon form submission, including virtual tour of the university
- Extremely warm response. Clear answers to each question asked by the student.
- One of the few responses that included a list of reasons to choose the university. Bonus points for being tailored to the student's area of interest!
- Finishes with an offer to help with any other questions.

Good practice in action



Thank you for your enquiry.

We will respond to your enquiry as soon as we can.

Best Wishes,
The Course Enquiries Team.

Hi Hailey,

Thank you for your enquiry. You can view our journalism related courses here:

If you're interested in one, please let us know and we can advise you further on entry requirements and fees. We can also pass your email over to the course leader to discuss any questions you may have about the curriculum.

We have a wide range of scholarships available to students who can demonstrate academic and personal excellence, however we do not offer any full Scholarships.

As an International student you should be eligible for the International Bursary, w We also offer the Merit and Excellence Scholarships for high achievers. The Mer discount off your tuition fees if you meet the criteria and the Excellence Scholars! your tuition fees if you meet the criteria. You can view your Country's criteria here [international/find_your_country.php](#)

Please note that you can only be eligible for the Merit or Excellence, you wouldn't eligible for the International Bursary and the Merit or Excellence. Please note tha Scholarships, they are automatically applied to your application.


Further information regarding all available Scholarships and Bursaries can be fox here:

Excludes the following programmes:
Distance learning | Blended learning | Postgraduate research | Pre-session:

Our entry requirements, fees and scholarships are reviewed every year. This info available by September 2021. Applications for September 2022 will also open in

How to apply (when applications open):

Thank you for enquiring about postgraduate study



Dear Hailey

Thank you for registering your interest to study with

Our vibrant and diverse student community is ready to welcome you.

With us, you can expand your knowledge, enhance your skills and maximise your career potential on one of our [postgraduate courses](#), all of which combine theory and practical application.

We are continuously investing in your future. Our campus is growing every day and our new Student Centre, which opens in 2021, offers modern study areas and new social spaces. And it doesn't stop there, our student support is second-to-none - in fact we have recently come [top of the national league table for student wellbeing](#) ranking first for the money invested into student wellbeing services.

Our [guide to student life](#) gives you a flavour of what to expect at University, including how to make use of your free sports membership.

Why choose us?

"Overall, they gave full explanations that are very useful. They also added extra information about how to apply. The response was very engaging and personalised."

– US College Student mystery shopper



Enquiry experience

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Web form



Same day response



England

- Instant acknowledgement email upon webform submission followed by an actual response within the same day.
- The reply included complete responses to each question asked by the student, and offered to put them in touch with the course leader for more detail.
- The email directs the student to apply as a next step and includes information on documents required.
- A series of highly relevant follow-up emails followed the enquiry response, starting with information on 'why choose us' specific to postgraduate students.

Where to from here?



Recommendations

The Enquiry Experience Tracker indicates that UK universities are meeting many student needs at the time of enquiry.

However, there is a wide gap between current practice and excellence.

There are some simple tactical improvements universities can make to deliver a better enquiry experience and positively impact conversion.

Gain visibility of response times across channels and student types.



Communicate the benefits of studying with your university.



Explore new channels like live web chat and mobile messaging.



Follow-up with prospective students within 5 days of their enquiry.



2022 Enquiry Experience Tracker

You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.

All UK and Irish higher education institutions are invited to join the 2022 Enquiry Experience Tracker.

Mystery shopping will be conducted in May and results released in October 2022.

Register now
edified.com.au/eet

Registration

The cost to participate is £2450, which includes mystery shopping by six personas and a personalised report with sector benchmarking.

An early bird discount of £250 is available for registration by 31 December 2021.



Thank you



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Appendices


List of universities











UK – School Leaver



Addison
17 years old
Home student

Lives in the Midlands, looking to move for the right university

Completing A Levels in 2021, predicted grades BBB in Biology, Chemistry, Maths. Has not yet made a UCAS application.

Interested in undergraduate health courses, ideally radiography but considering physiotherapy or nursing as backup options.



Enquiry channel
Live chat (desktop)



Enquiry timing
June 2021



Enquiry topics

- Course information
- Entry requirements
- How to apply
- Accommodation

UK – Mature Age



Chris
23 years old
Home student

Has been working in retail and sales since completing sixth form back in 2013.

Lives within a 20 mile radius of the university.

Received CCD (Sociology, Business Studies, French) and didn't feel motivated to go to university, but now wants to get on track for a more fulfilling career. Hasn't made a UCAS application yet, knows there are some deadlines soon and feels a bit anxious about missing the window.

Interested in undergraduate psychology, counselling or social work courses.



Enquiry channel
Phone



Enquiry timing
June 2021



Enquiry topics

- Course information
- Entry requirements
- How to apply
- Fees and funding
- Dates and deadlines

Appendix 2: Persona and enquiry details

UK — Professional



Jessamy
28 years old
Home student

Has a BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science from University of Suffolk.

Graduated with second class honours (2:1) and has been working as a lab clinician for the past four years.

Interested in postgraduate study to become a secondary school teacher.

Note: if a web form was not available, the enquiry was placed by email instead.



Enquiry channel
Web enquiry form



Enquiry timing
June 2021



Enquiry topics

- Study options
- Entry requirements
- Tuition fees
- Scholarships

Appendix 2: Persona and enquiry details

Nigeria — School leaver



Oladele
18 years old
International student

Completing final year of high school and preparing for WASSCE in August.

Lives in Lagos, Nigeria.

Interested in undergraduate management and commerce courses.

Note: if an email address was not available, the enquiry was placed by web form instead.



Enquiry channel
Email



Enquiry timing
July 2021



Enquiry topics

- Scholarships
- Course information
- Entry requirements
- Tuition fees

Appendix 2: Persona and enquiry details

US – College student



Hailey
22 years old
International student

About to begin her final year at University of Delaware, taking a history major. Class of '22. Current GPA 2.5

Looking to begin a Masters Degree in the UK after graduation.

Lives near Philadelphia, USA

Interested in postgraduate communication and journalism courses.



Enquiry channel
Web enquiry form



Enquiry timing
July 2021



Enquiry topics

- Study options
- Entry requirements
- Scholarships
- Dates and deadlines

Note: if a web form was not available, the enquiry was placed by email instead.

Appendix 2: Persona and enquiry details

India — Professional



Pavish
25 years old
International student

Has a B.Tech from NIT Trichy (National Institute of Technology in Tiruchirappalli) and graduated with 7.5 GPA.

Has been working as a software test engineer and looking to improve career opportunities.

Lives in Chennai, India.

Interested in postgraduate data science. courses
Looking to begin study in January 2022 if possible.



Enquiry channel
Live chat (mobile)



Enquiry timing
July 2021



Enquiry topics

- Course information
- Tuition fees
- Scholarships
- Entry requirements
- Intakes

Appendix 3: Definitions and assumptions

Research scope

How were mystery shopping personas and scenarios developed?

Mystery shopping personas were informed by UniQuest trend data based on a sample of approximately 340,000 prospective student enquiries handled on behalf of UK universities in 2020.

Personas were based on analysis of market trends and insights, focusing specifically on:

- 2020 top enquiry markets
- 2020 top study areas
- 2020 top enquiry topics
- 2020 top enquiry channels

Here is an example of the insights used to build the persona 'Hailey':

- The United States was one of the top three enquiry markets in 2020 and generally converts strongly from enquiry to enrolment.
- Most prospects from the US enquired about postgraduate study. Writing and journalism was one of the most preferred study areas indicated.
- Digital forms were the most popular enquiry channel used by prospects from the US, accounting for 75% of all first-time enquiries from this market in 2020.
- Students from the US frequently enquired about course information, entry requirements, scholarships, credit transfer and application deadlines.

Please get in touch if you'd like to know more about the other personas or about other UniQuest student insights.

Why wasn't China included?

The research focused on the markets that generally produce the most international enquiries for UK universities. Even though China is a key recruitment market, Chinese students don't typically enquire to universities at the same rate as other markets, preferring to use education agents, local offices and social media communication.

The 2021 Enquiry Experience Tracker focused on the US, India and Nigeria, which not only account for the largest volume of prospects but also result in the largest number of enrolments coming from international student prospects.

Why has the Enquiry Experience Tracker only focused on universities in the UK and Ireland?

This year (2021) is the first time the Enquiry Experience Tracker has been produced. The scope was limited to universities located in the UK and Ireland to concentrate efforts and establish a meaningful sample size that would provide a credible sector benchmark.

We are in the process of rolling out to other countries, such as Canada and Australia. In time, we intend to deliver country-based benchmarking to enable comparison across study destinations.

Appendix 3: Definitions and assumptions

Methodology

Which contact details did the mystery shoppers use when making enquiries to universities?

Mystery shoppers were asked to review university websites and locate the contact details they believed would be most relevant. Additional desk research was conducted by Edified to complement and validate the mystery shopper findings.

For future research rounds, universities will be asked to nominate the contact details for mystery shopping.

Why were email and web enquiry form enquiry channels interchanged at times?

In conducting this research, we identified that some universities offer both email and web form enquiry methods to prospective students, while others only offer one option.

If a web form was stipulated for a persona, and was not offered by the target university, email was used instead.

If email was stipulated for a persona and was not offered by the target university, a web form was used instead.

This substitution was permitted because both channels can deliver a comparable experience for students and can therefore be evaluated side by side.

How was live chat defined?

Live chat was defined as any tool that delivered a synchronous and immediate chat experience within the university's website. This included chatbots.

Tools such as Unibuddy or The Ambassador Platform (TAP) were not included due to their asynchronous nature.

Mobile apps (e.g. WhatsApp) and social media messaging (e.g. Facebook Messenger) were not included because the interactions take place on a separate platform to the university's website.

How were scores calculated if live chat was not available?

For several universities, live chat was not offered as an enquiry channel. In these cases, personas using live chat were excluded, and the research focused on personas using channels that were available.

For universities without live chat, the overall Enquiry Experience Score is calculated using the personas that did not use live chat.

Appendix 3: Definitions and assumptions

Methodology

How long did the mystery shoppers wait for a response?

A maximum allowable response time was set for each channel. After this time was exceeded, mystery shoppers abandoned their enquiry and scored the university 0 for responsiveness, communication quality and follow-up.

The response time was counted as the time between when the enquiry was initiated until the time the mystery shopper was connected with someone who could help with their enquiry (i.e. an actual response, not an automated reply).

The maximum allowable response time was set by channel:

- Live chat and phone: 15 minutes
- Email and web form: 3 weeks

Live chat and phone enquiries were only placed during UK business hours.

Where technical or connection errors were encountered, a second attempt was made.

How was the 'mobile friendliness' criteria measured for phone-based enquiries?

Mobile friendliness was not assessed for phone-based enquiries because it was not relevant to the experience. Scores for this persona were indexed to the same level as other personas for comparative purposes.

How were responses scored if a university sent multiple responses to an enquiry?

On occasion, mystery shoppers received more than one email reply from a university in response to their enquiry. In this situation, only the first personal response was evaluated for communication quality.

Any subsequent response was recorded as a follow-up communication.

Why are there differences in the sample sizes listed for each persona?

The sample size noted against each persona varies because not all personas were mystery shopped for every university. This is due to two different reasons:

1. Live chat was not available for every university. Therefore, these universities were not included in the sample for personas requiring live chat.
2. Some universities were admitted to the Enquiry Experience Tracker research as a result of a special offer made available through the 2021 BUILA Conference. The offer included mystery shopping of one international student persona. These universities were included in the sample for the US persona and were not included in the sample for the other personas.