



Student
Lifestyle
and
Learning
Report 2024



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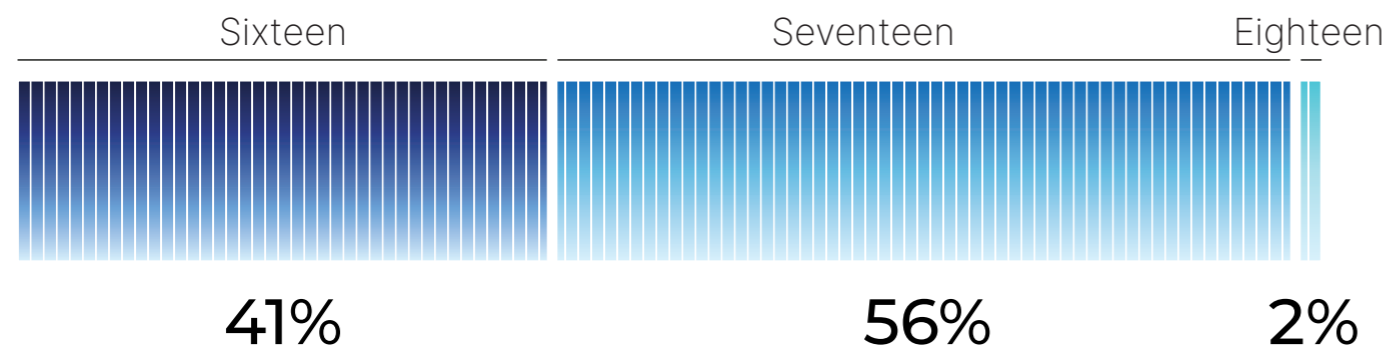
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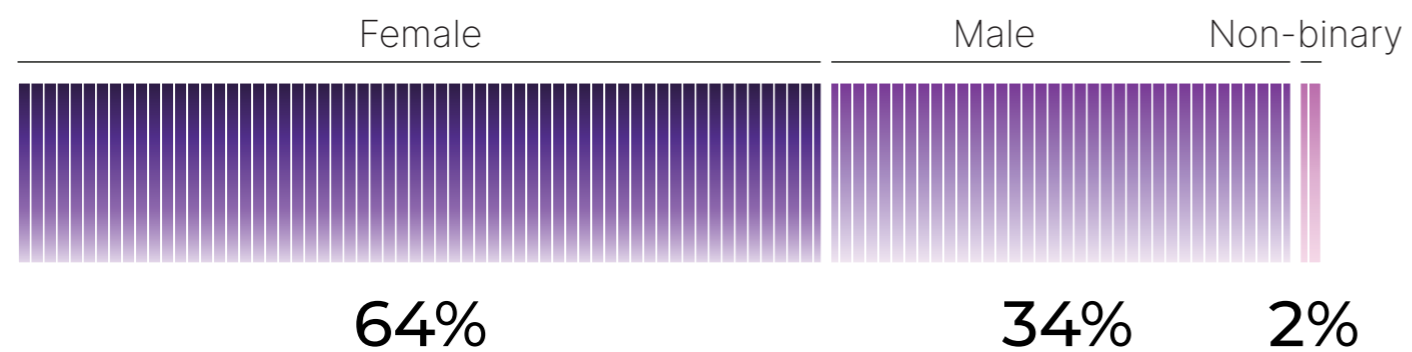
Who we surveyed

Between November 2023 and February 2024, we surveyed 16,759 Year 12 students completing their secondary schooling in every state and territory in Australia.

Age



Gender



Takeaways for educators

64%

of students value employability outcomes

Career focus is significantly up this year when choosing a course: employability outcomes have risen by seven percentage points to 64%, work experience and internship opportunities have increased by seven percentage points to 46%, and the quality of teaching saw a five percentage point lift to 42%.

80%

of students make course decisions based on passion

Passion leads course decision-making by a wide margin. Students are also guided by an expectation that their institutions have close partnerships with industry (56%) that will provide opportunities to expand their professional networks and prepare them for a seamless transition to employment after completing their studies.

41%

of students prefer blended learning

Students' preference for blended learning (meaning a mix of on-campus and online components) has increased from 38% in 2023 to 41% in 2024. Respondents preferring on-campus study is down to 56% from 60% in 2023.

#1

factor when choosing where to study is the course

Students say that their main consideration when choosing where to study is the university's course offering. This is followed by campus location and culture.

3 in 4

students will quit a brand they love after two or three bad experiences

Strong brand affinity can be shattered by just a few negative customer experiences. Bad experiences are also likely to be shared, with 61% of students saying they will vent a poor experience with their friends and family.

42%

of students are worried that AI will surpass human intelligence

Students are uncertain about the risks AI poses. In 2024, 70% of students are concerned that AI could lead to fewer jobs and 42% worry that AI will surpass human intelligence. That noted, this cohort accepts that they'll have to work with AI, despite the risks.

10%

drop in concern for mental health

In a positive development, mental health is less of a concern this year, dropping a full 10 percentage points from 50% in 2023 to 40% in 2024.

33%

of students are worried about affordable housing

Students are more concerned about cost-of-living pressures (such as the cost of housing and rent) than previous cohorts. In 2024, cost is an issue for 43% of students choosing where to study, up from 34% in 2023. Course fees, accommodation costs, transport options and proximity to campus are all significant factors.

What students think



These students are ready to immerse themselves in new opportunities, eager to expand their friendship circles and looking forward to more active social lives.

This excitement co-exists with an astute awareness of the challenges they face.

While they're steeling themselves for the inevitable cost-of-living pressures, they are energised by the opportunity to chart their own paths and take charge of their lives.

At UAC, we're passionate about helping young people access their potential through tertiary education.

By understanding their values, ambitions and expectations, we can work to better support and empower them as they embark on their journey into tertiary education and beyond.

Bouncing back.

In uplifting news, mental health has fallen as a concern for students by 10 percentage points this year. While it is still a concern for **40%** of respondents, this marks the best mental health score in the survey's four-year history.

The result tallies with another metric: students feel stressed less frequently in 2024 compared to 2023.

Down to brass tacks.

This pragmatic group of students are most concerned with traditional dinner table issues like supporting their family (**42%**), affordable housing (**33%**) and job security (**29%**).

Alternative options.

In 2024, **79%** of students plan to pursue full-time studies, up two percentage points from 2023.

The number of students opting for a gap year following graduation also increased by two percentage points to **9%**. As a result, fewer are opting for part-time study and volunteering.

What students are excited for in 2024

69

'Working on a healthier and more productive version of myself.'

Jaidika

'The freedom of being 18, enjoying life more with less stress, getting my life together and becoming

more organised and active, having a successful uni experience, making new friends, a better year in general.'

Elena

'Growing as a person and becoming more independent. Adventures and overseas trips, the spontaneity in life and what creative practices I will indulge in.'

Ginger

'Studying at uni, the ability to self love and love others, and improving my badminton skills.'

Xihao

'Becoming independent as I start uni, gaining more experience in all aspects of life and becoming a better and more valuable person as a whole as I begin my self-improvement journey.'

Kashish

'Continuing to go out with my best mates and high school friends once in a while. I'm looking forward to having the most fun I can, being able to connect and chat up a storm. I'd like to get to know a whole lot of new people at university and navigate unique relationships that I will cherish throughout my studying years. I would also like to take my family out to more dinners.'

Bruce

'Taking a gap year to volunteer with an orangutan sanctuary in Malaysia.'

Ella

'Being more independent and growing into the person I've always wanted to be. I want to take care of myself and work hard, which is what I've been dreaming for since I was young.'

Kellie

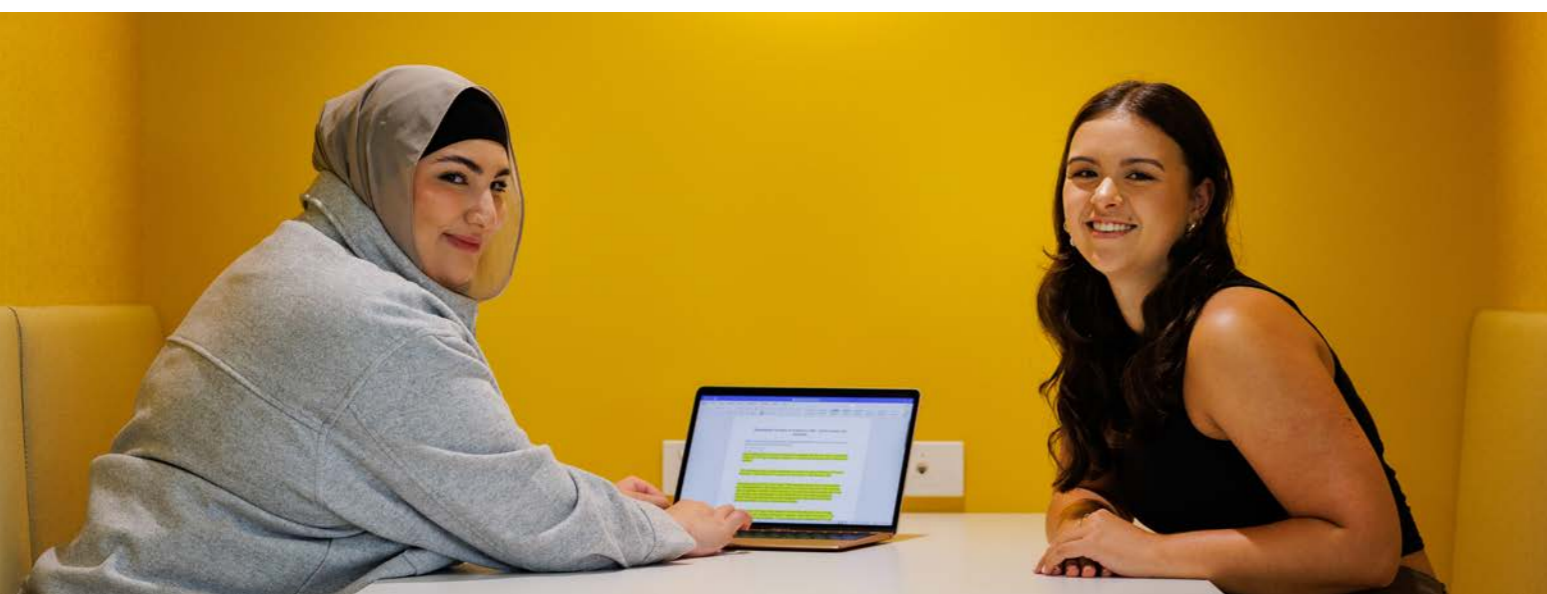
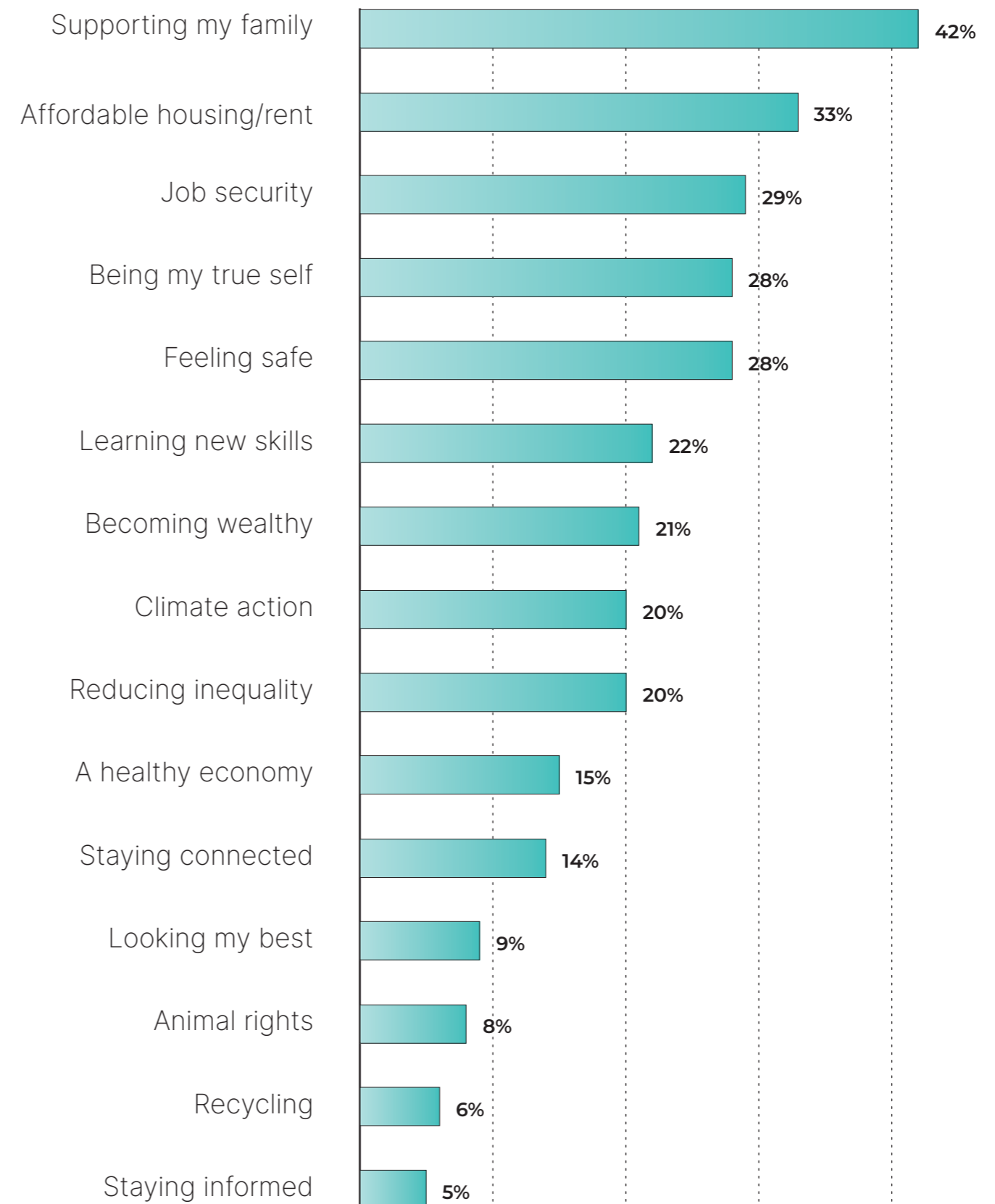
'Studying a degree I'm extremely passionate about and meeting new people through uni.'

Sinadi

'Buying stuff that I like since I finally have a part-time job now. Hanging out with friends and starting new relationships.'

Shruti

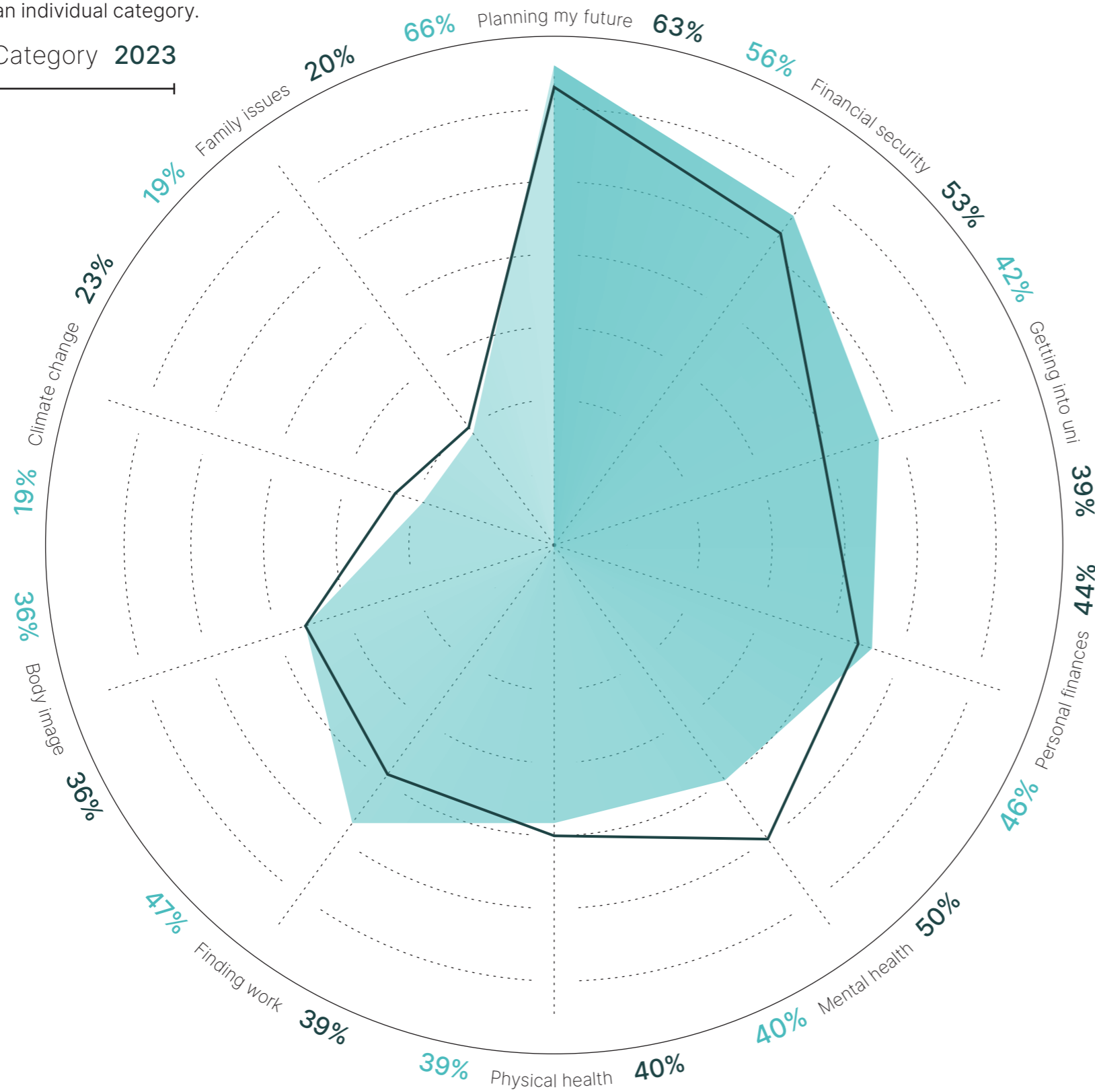
What matters most



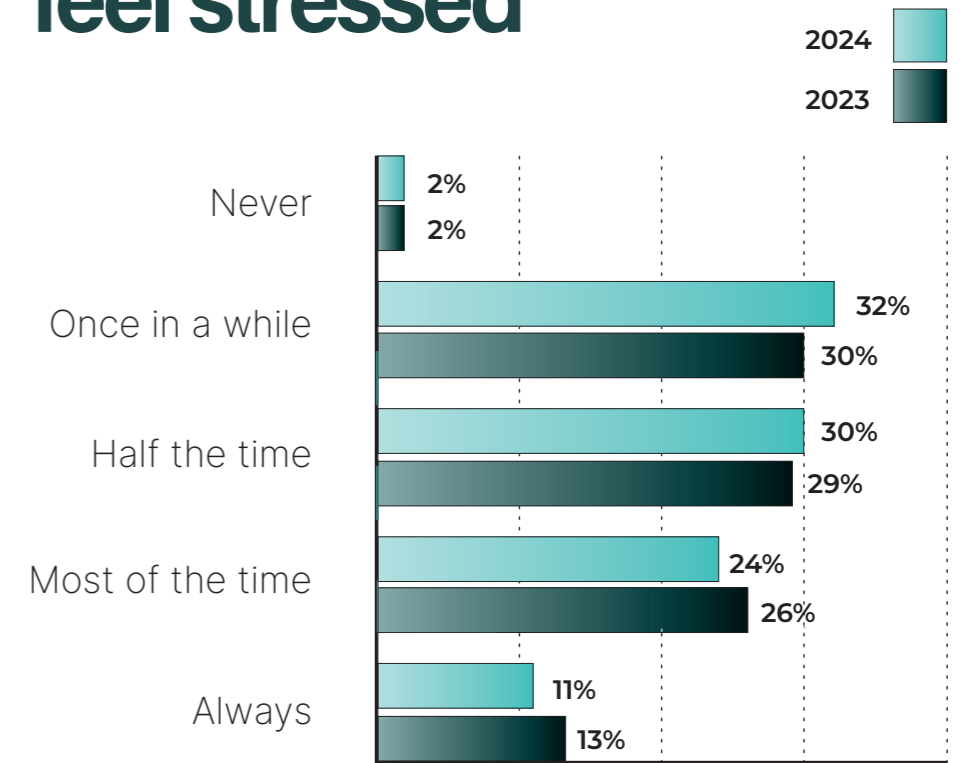
Biggest concerns

Legend
Each point on the central shapes represents an individual category.

2024 Category 2023



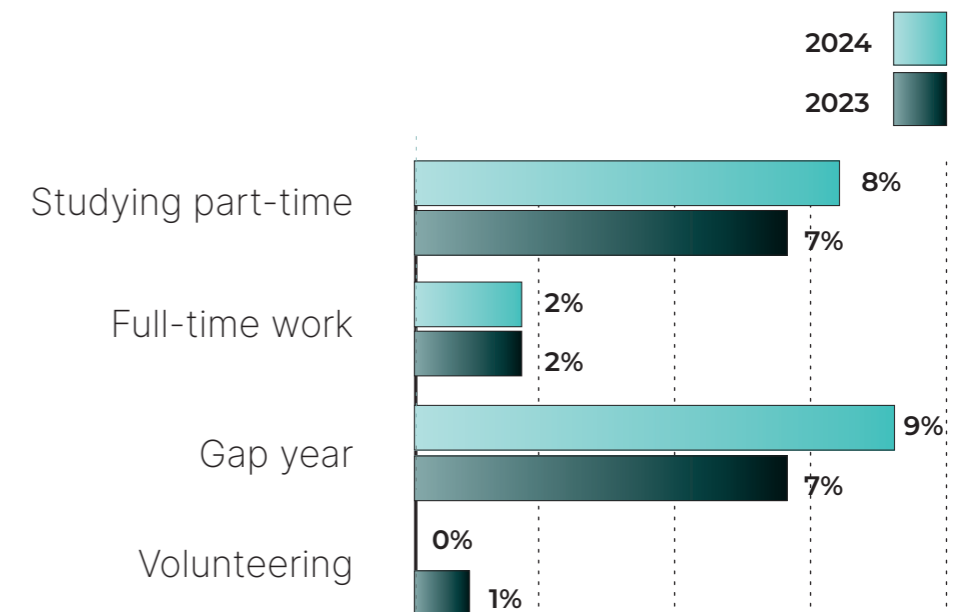
How often students feel stressed



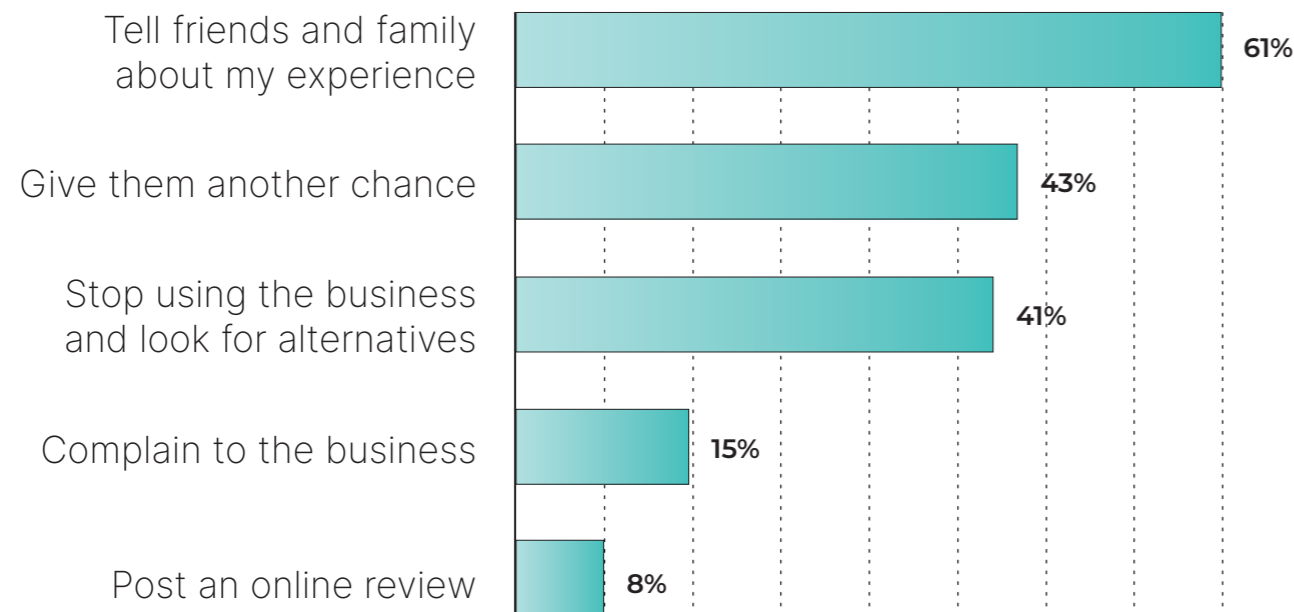
Alternative options

In 2024, a significant 79% of students planned to pursue full-time studies, up two percentage points from 2023.

Students are increasingly opting for a gap year after school, increasing by two percentage points in 2024 compared to 2023.



Next step following a bad customer experience



From love to loss

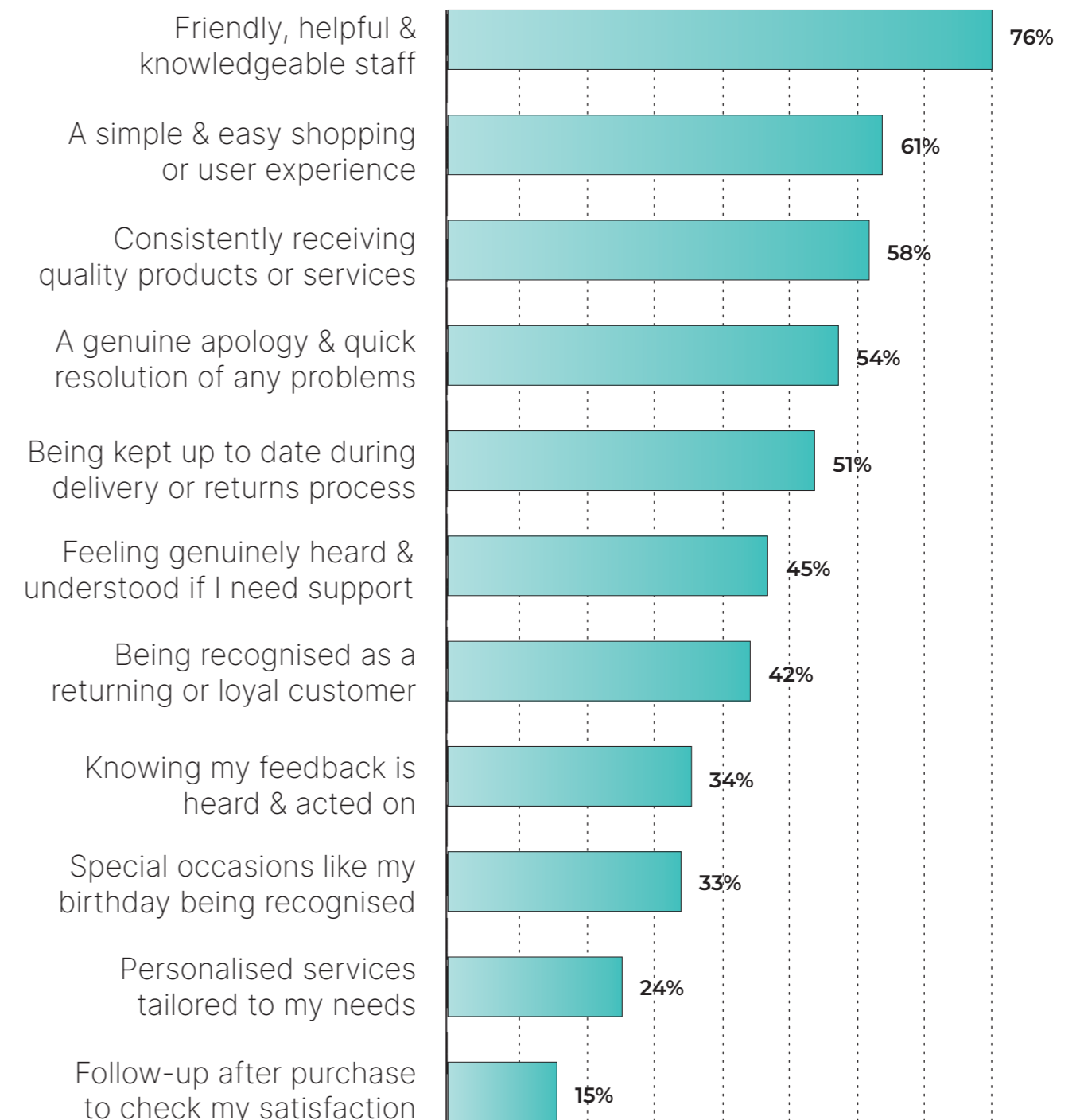
78% say it takes a few bad experiences before they quit a brand they love.

14% say one bad experience and they're out.

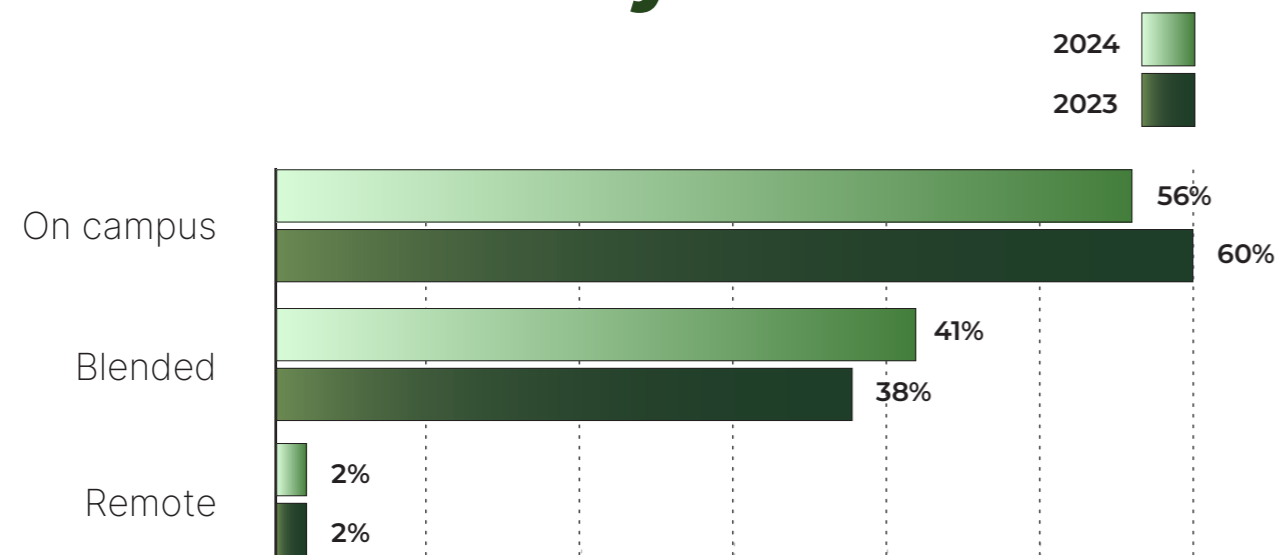
4% of students will stay loyal to a brand they love that consistently provides a poor customer experience.

Most students (78%) will give a brand they love two or three chances before they switch to a competitor. However, 14% will dump a brand after just one negative interaction. Given that 61% will tell friends and family about their negative experiences, the impact of a poor experience can quickly multiply. The flipside is that 76% of students say they value a brand that delivers a helpful and friendly customer experience, and 61% value a brand that provides a seamless experience.

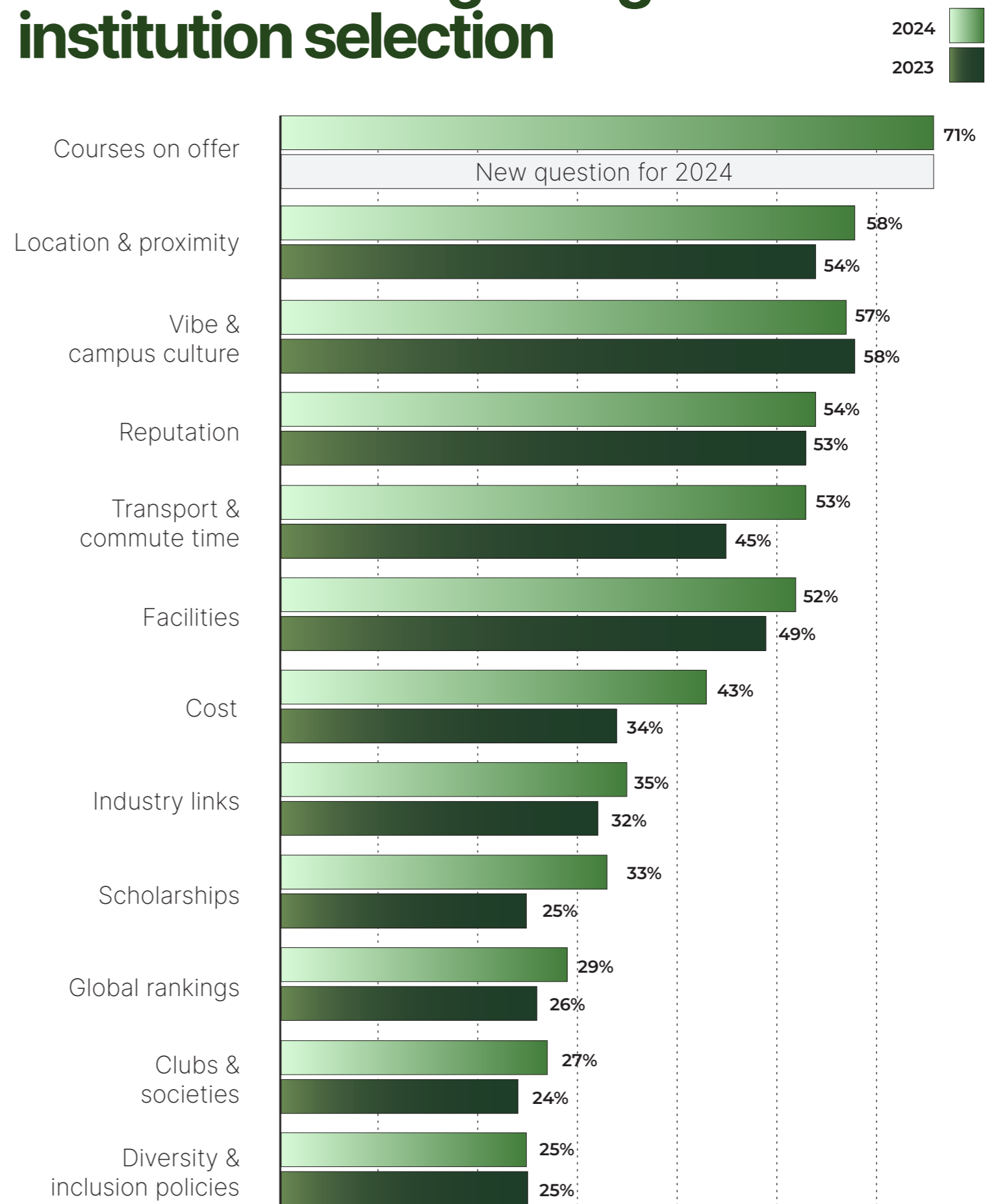
What rates as five-star service



Preferred study mode



Considerations guiding institution selection



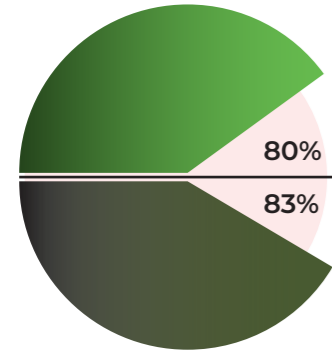
Scholarships

33% of students applied for scholarships.



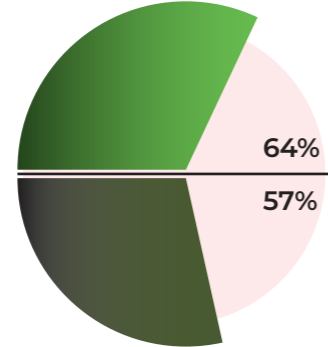
Course selection: key factors

Passion for the subject matter

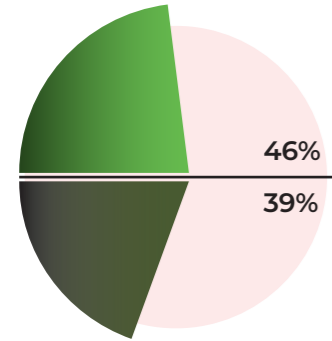


2024
2023

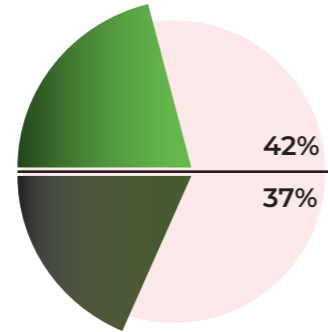
Employability outcomes



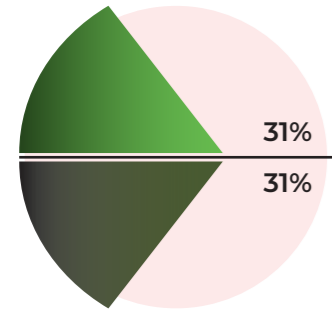
Work experience and internships



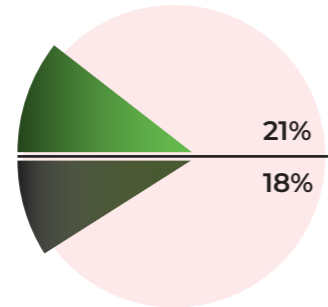
Quality of teaching



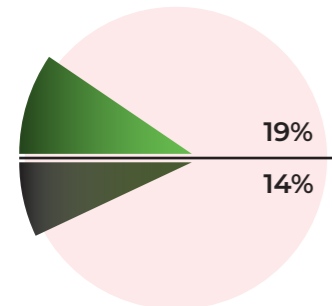
Entry requirements and selection ranks



World university rankings



International exchange opportunities



The data show upticks in focus on career and international opportunities by this pragmatic group of school leavers.

Passion for the subject matter is still the guiding light when school leavers choose a course, with 80% identifying it as the number one factor in 2024, 83% in 2023 and 81% in 2022.

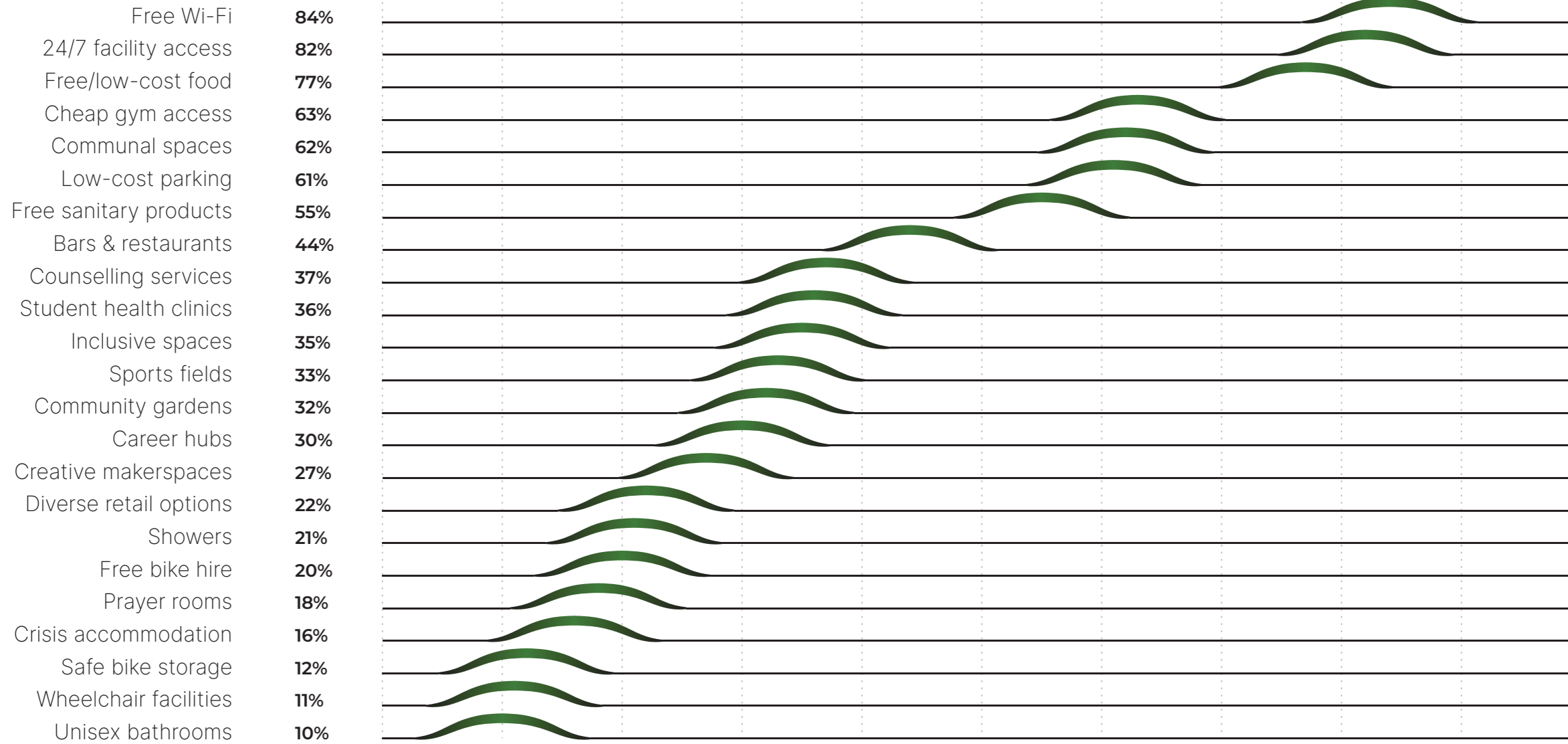
The importance of graduate employment outcomes has surged again this year, increasing from 44% in 2022 to 57% in 2023 and 64% in 2024.

This shift reflects the growing emphasis students place on securing employment after completing their studies.

Students are also increasingly valuing internship opportunities, recognising them as crucial for gaining real-world skills for their chosen profession.



Campus facilities students expect



“I think calming down and sensory rooms would be cool. Maybe located in or near the library? I think it would be great for neurodivergent individuals, those who have ADHD, autism etc. Even just for anyone to relax.’
Akanksha

‘An academic program with access to study hall sessions, academic workshops, subject-specific support, academic consults and student-to-student tutorials.’
Cyan

‘Spaces that support everyone and their diverse needs.’
Emily-Kate

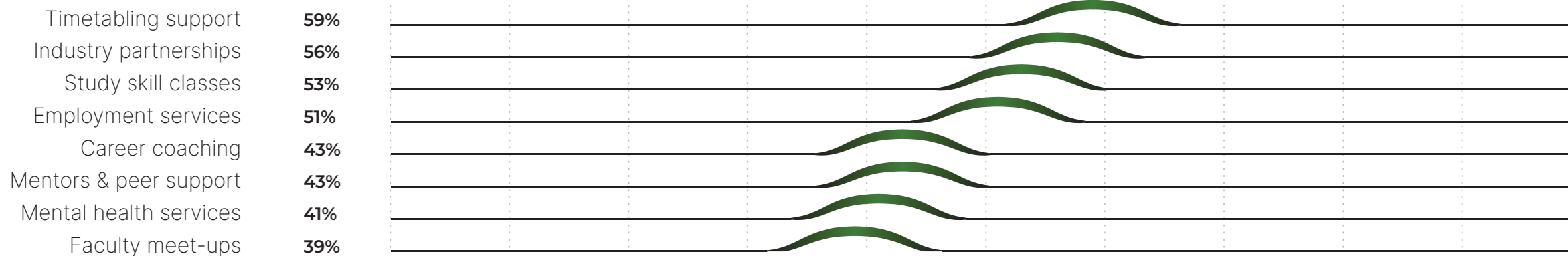
‘Mentoring by real-world professional employees and employers. Interactive and hands-on experience embedded within and across courses to give insight and understanding into what the career is really like.’
Daniel

‘Feedback from markers for my drafted assignments at a punctual time.’
Sadaf

‘Financial support services for students from lower income backgrounds.’
Khadeejah

‘I just want to add extreme emphasis on the timetabling and class selection support because I’m currently enrolling at university and I’m very much struggling!’
Caitlin

Campus services students want



Life starts now

Students embarking on their university journey anticipate far more than just lectures, textbooks and exams. They approach this new chapter with eagerness and excitement, prepared to embrace a multitude of new experiences and opportunities. University life promises fresh discoveries and chances to learn and evolve every day.

Seize the day

'I'm going to have an overall great time that I can reflect upon in the future with nothing but a smile on my face.'

Abraham

'I'm excited to take on adult responsibilities as I plan to move away for tertiary education.'

Ankita

'In 2024, I am looking forward to the new possibilities and experiences that come with joining a new university and college. I am excited to meet new people and get involved in new sports and social events.'

John

'I'm thrilled about the new-found freedom and the opportunity to create a well-structured schedule for my life. The prospect of university is not just about academics; it's also a chance to expand my social horizons and forge meaningful connections with a diverse group of people. I look forward to the vibrant social atmosphere that university life promises, where I can engage in various activities and build lasting friendships. This chapter of my life holds the promise of both personal growth and enriching social experiences.'

Anoj

Nice to meet you

'I want to elevate my social skills, make new friends, experience a new chapter in my life and achieve my goals.'

Ahmed

'I'm quite excited to embark on a more sophisticated learning journey. I feel ready to expand my knowledge and skills as a student and with socialising.'

Chloe

Pursuing my passions

'Hoping to receive new skills that will allow me to develop as an individual to catalyse my journey to success in business or entrepreneurship.'

Adity

'Pursuing my music career.'

Fiona

'The overall uni experience: from friends to exploring subjects, passions, and actually having a life to work and socialising.'

Nabeeha

Big moves

'I'm moving from the Gold Coast to Sydney; super excited to make new friends at uni and experience a lot of new things.'

Jett

'Excited to move to Melbourne city from the country to start uni.'

Jennifer

Real work skills

'I hope to develop real-life skills outside what is taught in the classroom that can be applied to any occupation, such as problem solving skills, critical thinking, hard work, and perseverance.'

Cameron

'I have a love of knowledge and education so I can't wait to study full-time in the areas that interest me and will help me in my future career!'

Audrey

'Self-fulfillment: not only considering my career paths, but also considering whether the degree would allow me to be where I see myself in the future. Additionally, whether this degree would align with my goal to help others in one way or another and support my human rights activist goals.'

Tasnim

'I'm fairly excited yet nervous about my upcoming university experience. The prospect of new-found independence and the chance to work on personal growth is thrilling. University offers a unique opportunity to delve into niche areas of study and develop specialised skills, which I'm eager to explore in pursuit of my career. I'm also looking forward to honing my pre-existing abilities, as university life encourages critical thinking and expression through various experiences. I see university as the gateway to self-discovery, personal growth, skill development, and enhanced communication, and I'm sure it is as promising as it seems.'

Ranita

69

Spend

As first-year university students transition into adulthood, many prioritise financial independence as a key component of their new-found freedom.

Whether they relocate or remain close to home, many of these students are experiencing the challenges of managing their finances for the first time.

With their budgets often stretched by essential expenses like accommodation, food and transportation, they strive to preserve entertainment funds, which are crucial for maintaining their social lives.

This snapshot of their spending habits reveals how students are coping with the cost-of-living crisis, while also highlighting their gradual increases in discretionary spending.

Bank of mum and dad.

While a majority of students are financially independent (**55%**), the number of students funded exclusively by their parents has risen five percentage points to **22%**.

Buy now, pay now.

Students aren't rushing to buy now, pay later services. Only **3%** of respondents pay this way regularly and **83%** steer clear of it altogether.

Discounts reign.

Nothing drives spending more than discounts. Discounts jumped 10 percentage points to **75%** as the biggest spending influence for students.

Student budget breakdown.

Students are spending more on discretionary expenses such as socialising (**60%**), dining out (**45%**) and fashion (**34%**). When you're young, live in the moment.

Savings and superannuation accounts

91% of students try to save money each week.

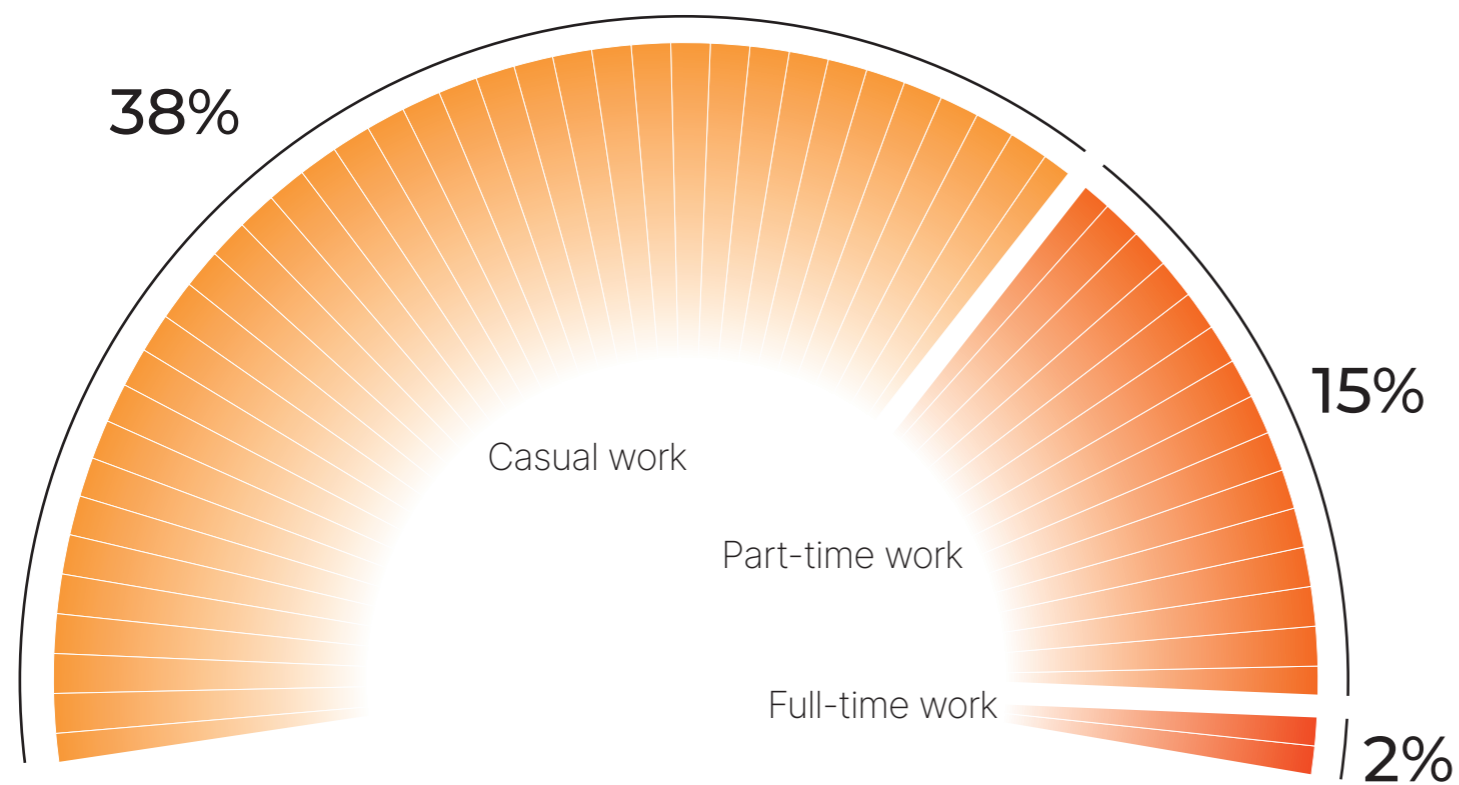
47% have a superannuation account.

16% are unsure if they have a superannuation account.

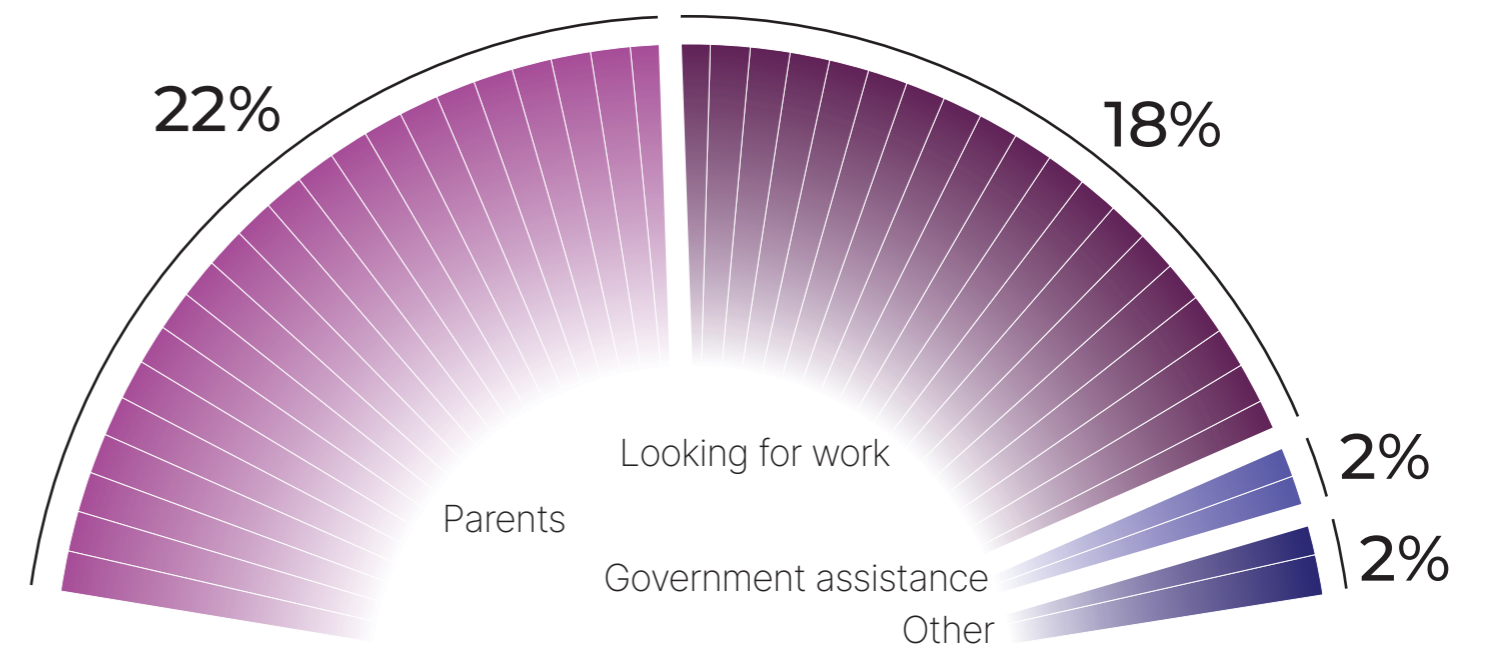
17% have considered changing superannuation funds in the last 12 months, seeking lower fees or stronger investment returns.

Student income sources

Financially independent



Financially dependent

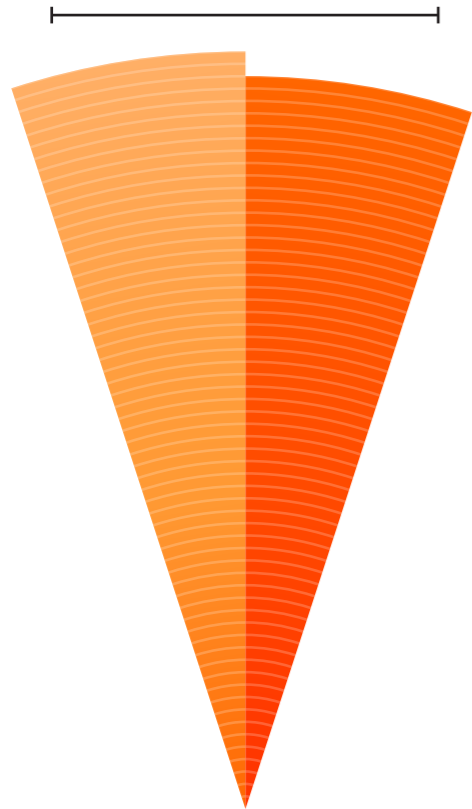


Student budget breakdown

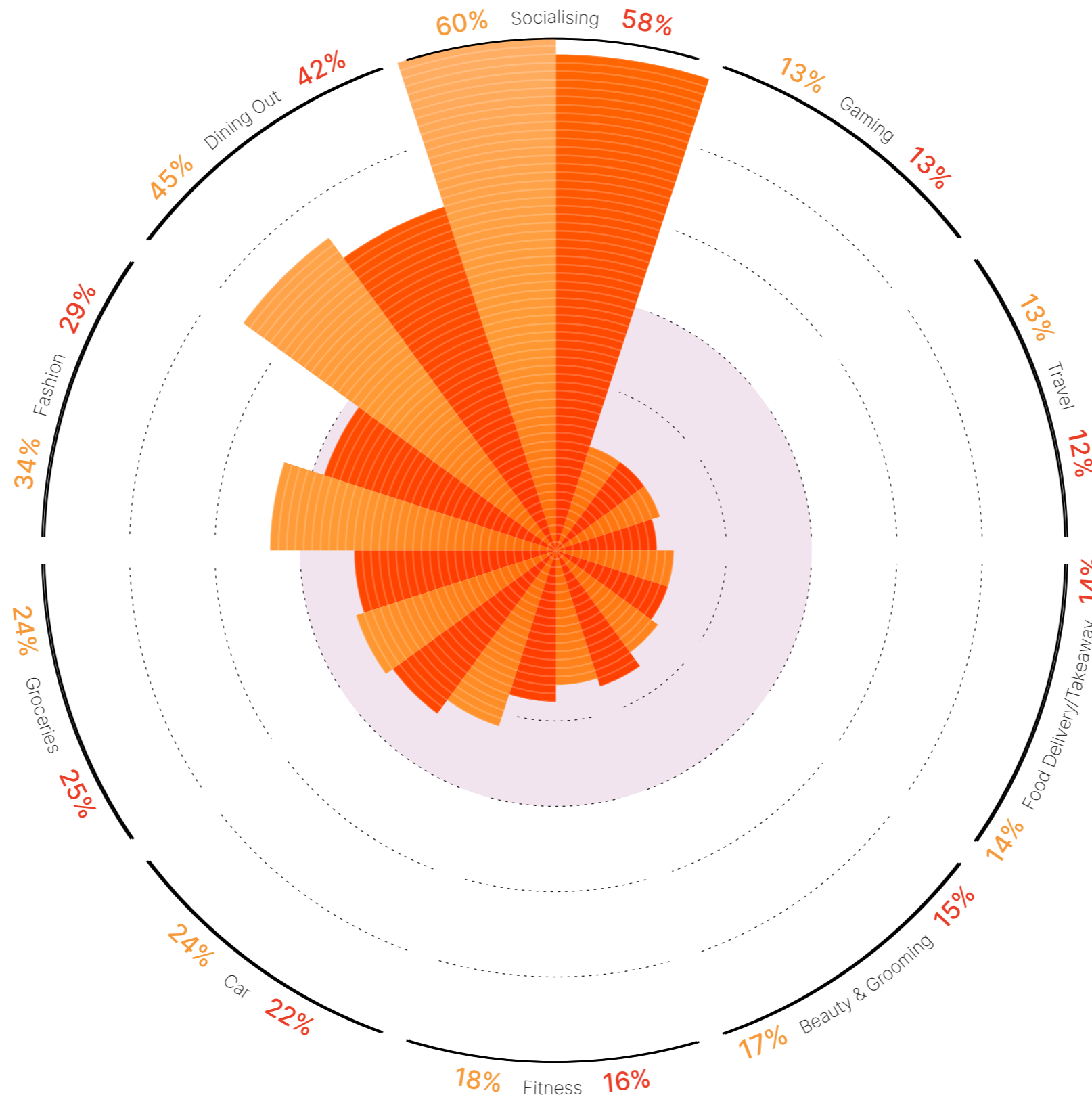
Legend

Each wedge is a budget breakdown category

2024% Category 2023%



The size of the wedge = percentage of students who have indicated this is important to them



Uni essentials



'I'll be purchasing noise-cancelling headphones, not for music but to help me concentrate on my work while studying at home.'
Lia

'I also would like to buy the package deal of Microsoft Office with PowerPoint etc for my education.'
Eman

'I may purchase a computer or tablet if I have the funds by the time I start (uni).'
Hanana

'I don't have the money for the things I need such as textbooks and stationery.'
Jane

'A nice fuzzy blanket.'
Braith

'All of the requirements for my degree (ie police checks, working with children check and first aid certificate).'
Rommi

'A new backpack to replace the schoolbag that I've been using for three-and-a-half years.'
Victor

'A lot of caffeinated energy drinks to keep me awake and the studies consistent.'
Kai

'A pink scientific calculator.'
Lilla

Leisure

Leisure activities are vital for students, aiding in stress management, integrating them into their local communities, and bringing joy and balance to their hectic lives.

Common outlets like sports, hobbies and socialising not only serve as relaxation but also enhance personal growth by boosting confidence and resilience.

This section delves into how students make the most of their time outside of study. We explore their leisure pursuits, including how they consume media, maintain fitness, and enjoy downtime away from both the classroom and family obligations.

Casual fitness is in.

Exercise participation among students has increased from **46%** in 2023 to **51%** this year. Notably, the most significant rise occurred among students who exercise one to two days per week, which increased by 11 percentage points. It's encouraging to see more students taking on the fitness challenge.

News is social.

Almost three-quarters of students (**72%**) obtain their news from social media, a rise of three percentage points from last year. Consumption of traditional news sources such as radio and printed newspapers continues to decline, with just **19%** tuning in to the radio (down three percentage points) and a mere **6%** relying on newspapers (down one percentage point).

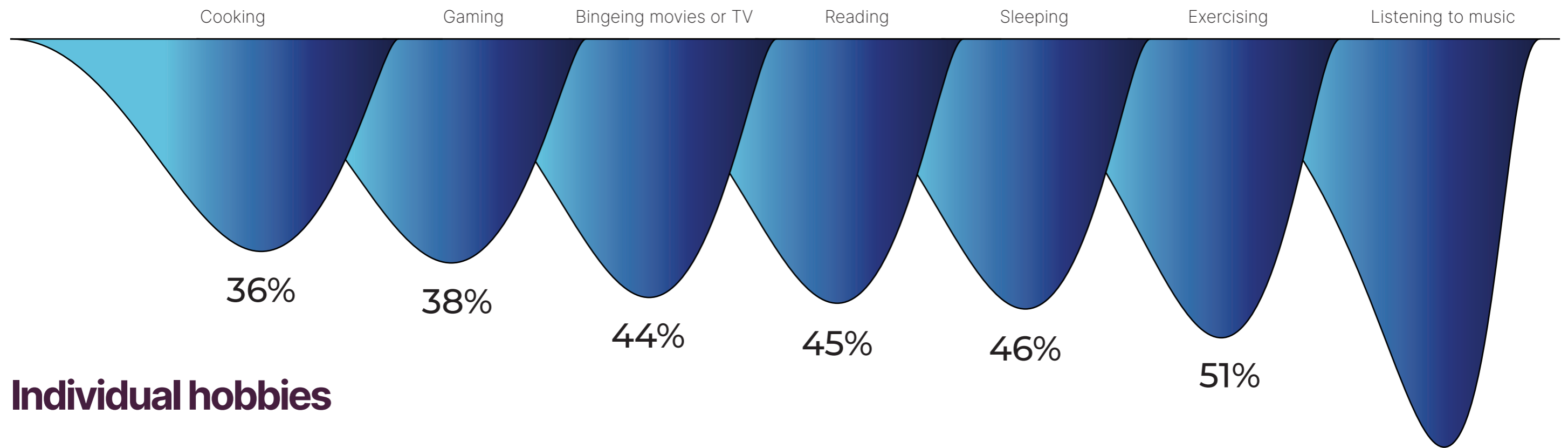
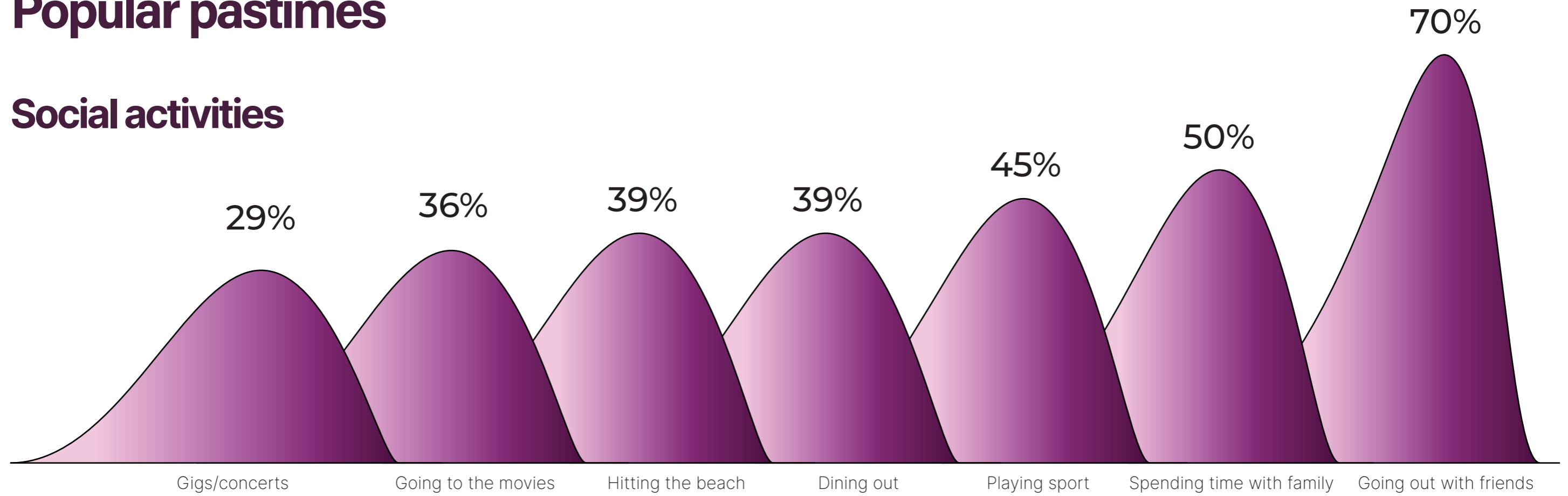
Friends foremost.

Going out with friends is the leading social activity for students (**70%**), followed by spending time with family (**50%**). Listening to music is the most popular individual activity (**70%**), with exercising coming in second (**51%**).



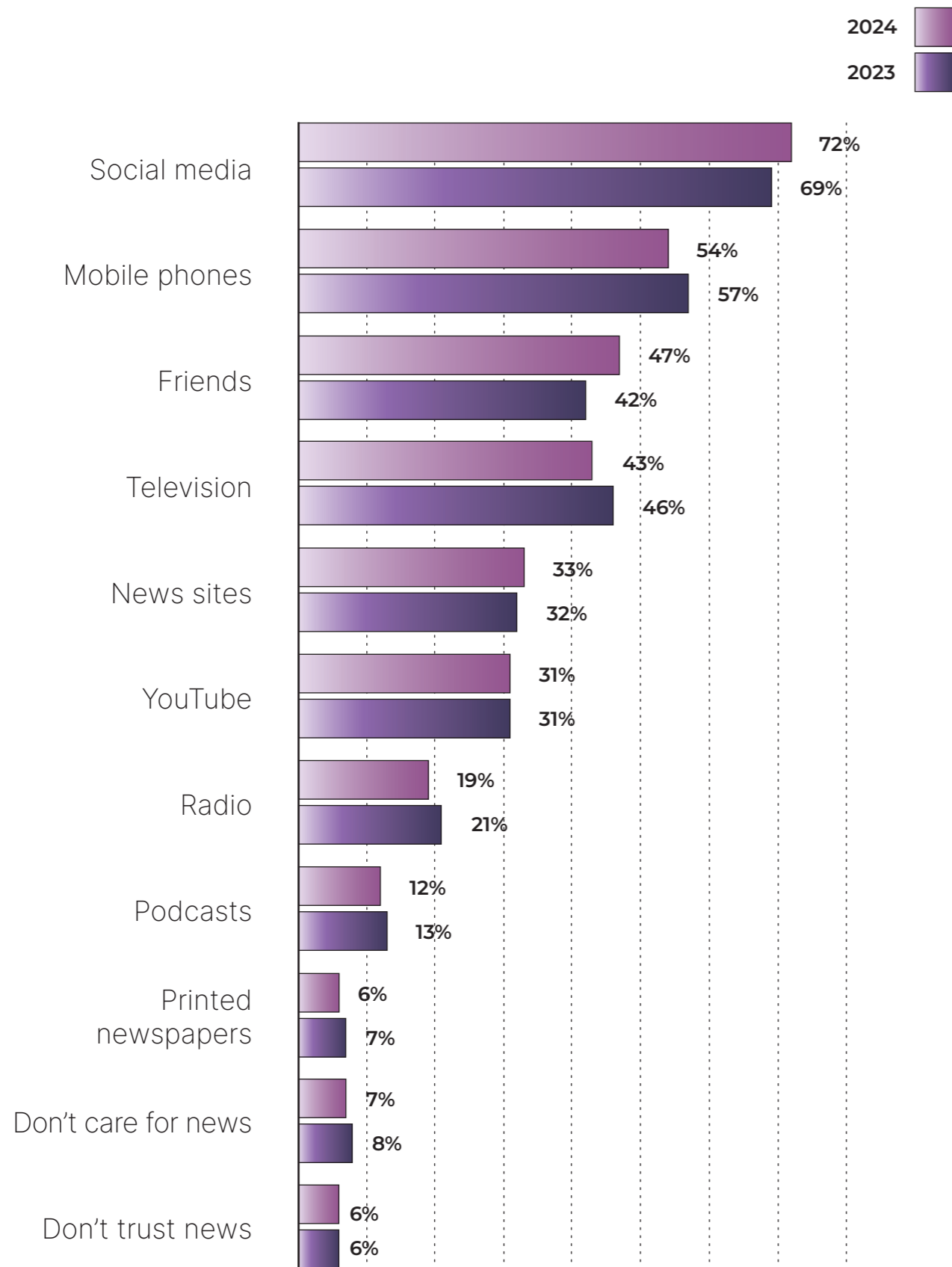
Popular pastimes

Social activities



Individual hobbies

Where students turn for news



Read all about it

'My mum quite literally bursts into my room updating me on the current news of the world. Absolutely traumatising.'

Yara

'I don't trust the news for subjects surrounding politics, hence why I try to absorb information from as many possible sources.'

Kate

'I tend to ignore most news because it is most likely negative and will not impact me in any way besides putting me in a worse mood. If I do get news, it is generally from friends, social media and somewhat reliable news sites like Al Jazeera and Reuters.'

Omer

'Generally I try to avoid looking at the news because it's usually negative.'

Marika

'I try to listen to a bit of everything since many sources can be quite biased or unreliable, so if I hear about something I try to check numerous sources so I can get a well-rounded gauge on the situation.'

Jacqueline

'YouTube comments and TikTok.'

Jonathan

'After hearing about news on social media, I turn to various mainstream news sites to verify information and gain deeper insight.'

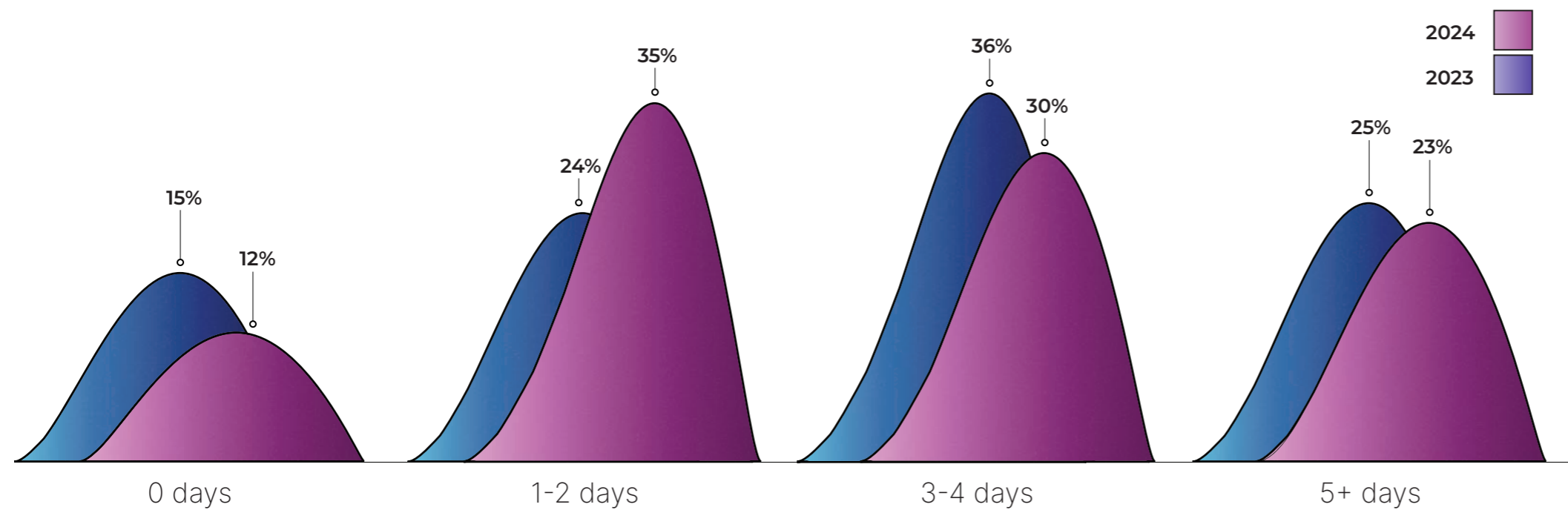
Sam

'I don't watch the news. I don't need to hear about the negativity in the world.'

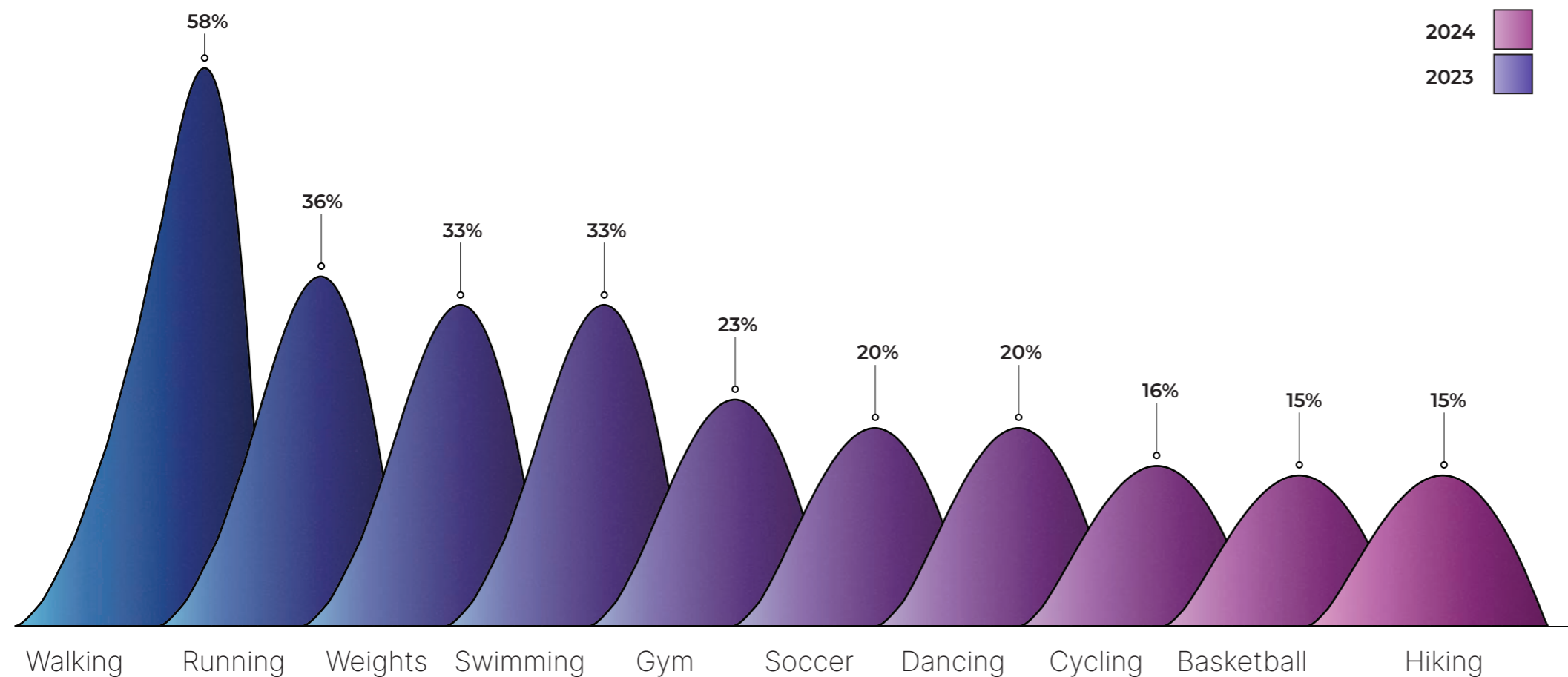
Lucy



How often students exercise



Most popular sporting activities



Activities of choice

'I'm very passionate about women in sport and trying to create a safe supportive place for women of all ages to play socially and professionally.'

Sophie

'My fitness isn't great. I'm looking to improve and try more sports.'

Monique

'I would like to apply for a gym membership in the following year if my financial position allows for it.'

Melody-Yagmur

'Playing video games that cause me to do a range of fitness activities.'

Mark

'Basketball, when there are courts available, is easily the most accessible sport for me and my friends.'

Riley

'In 2024, I am looking forward to the new possibilities and experiences I will be accustomed to joining a new university and college. I am excited to meet new people and get involved in new sports and social events.'

Sophie

'I am looking to engage in more physical activity since I have finished my high school studies.'

Katerina

'Body weight exercises such as push-ups, pull-ups and planks.'

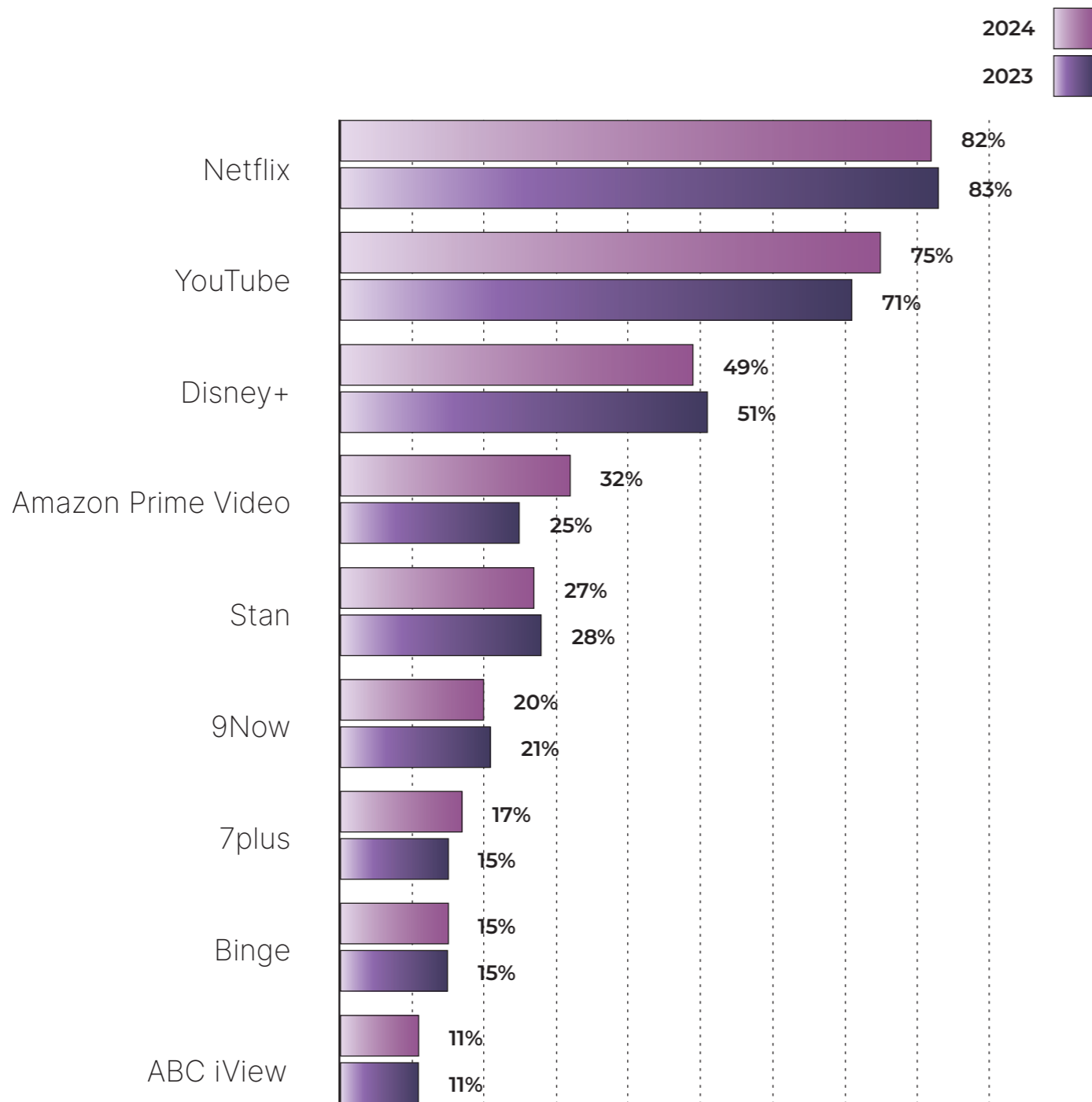
Jacob

'Manual labour. It's paid exercise.'

Lachlan

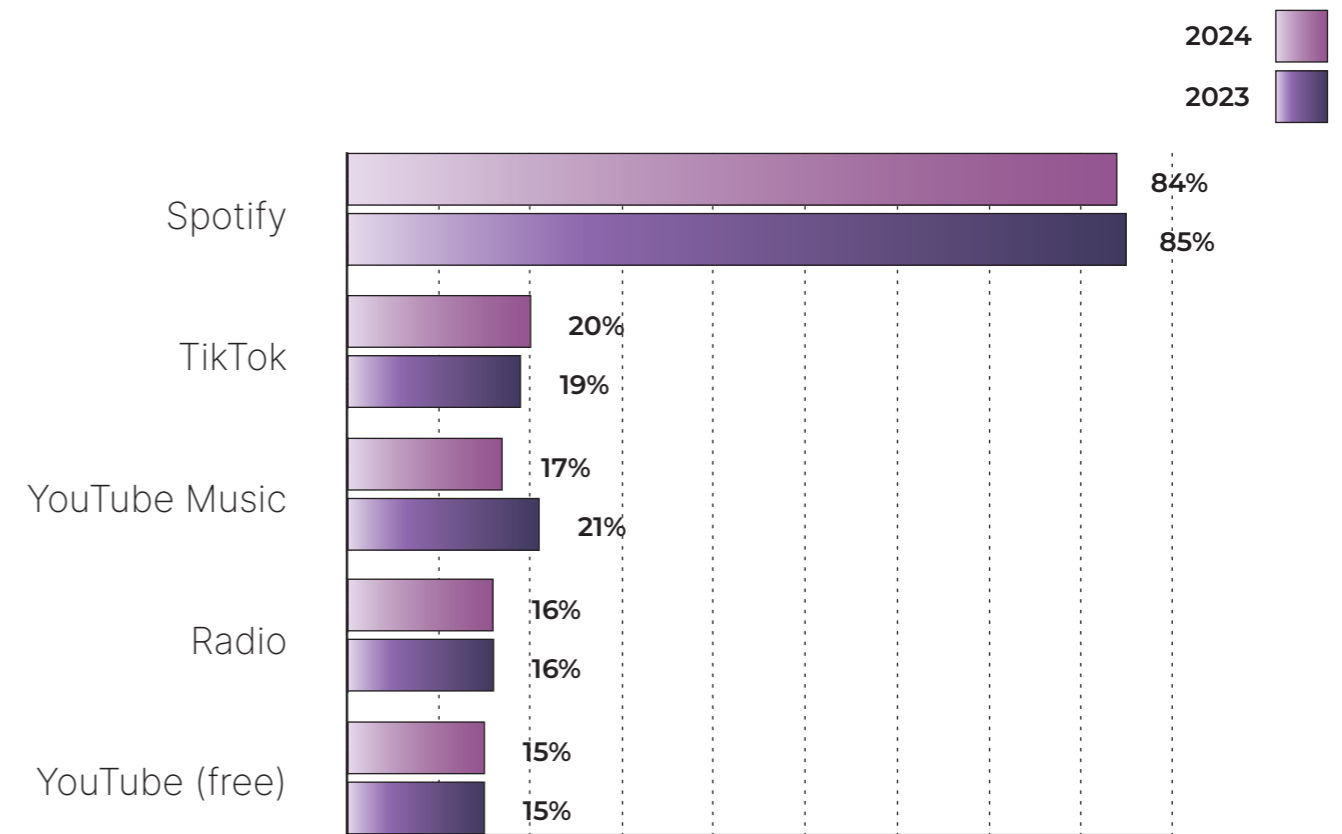


Favourite streaming services



Netflix retains its video dominance in 2024 with 82% of students saying it's their favourite platform. Amazon Prime Video has had the greatest increase in popularity over the 12 months to 2024, jumping seven percentage points to 32%.

Preferred music platforms



It's a major concern

69

'My bank account recently got hacked. And currently I have found many of my details on the dark web: usernames, emails and passwords.'

Louis

'We can't trust anyone online.'

Arshdeep

'Once I turn on the phone, they know everything. I can't hide it.'

Lachlan

'Extremely concerned, but also resigned to that ship having sailed.'

Joel

'I am very safe with my privacy so I become less concerned because I know it's hard to get any of my information that I do not want people to get.'

Ashton

'Concerned enough to block people but not concerned enough to have a private account.'

Matthew

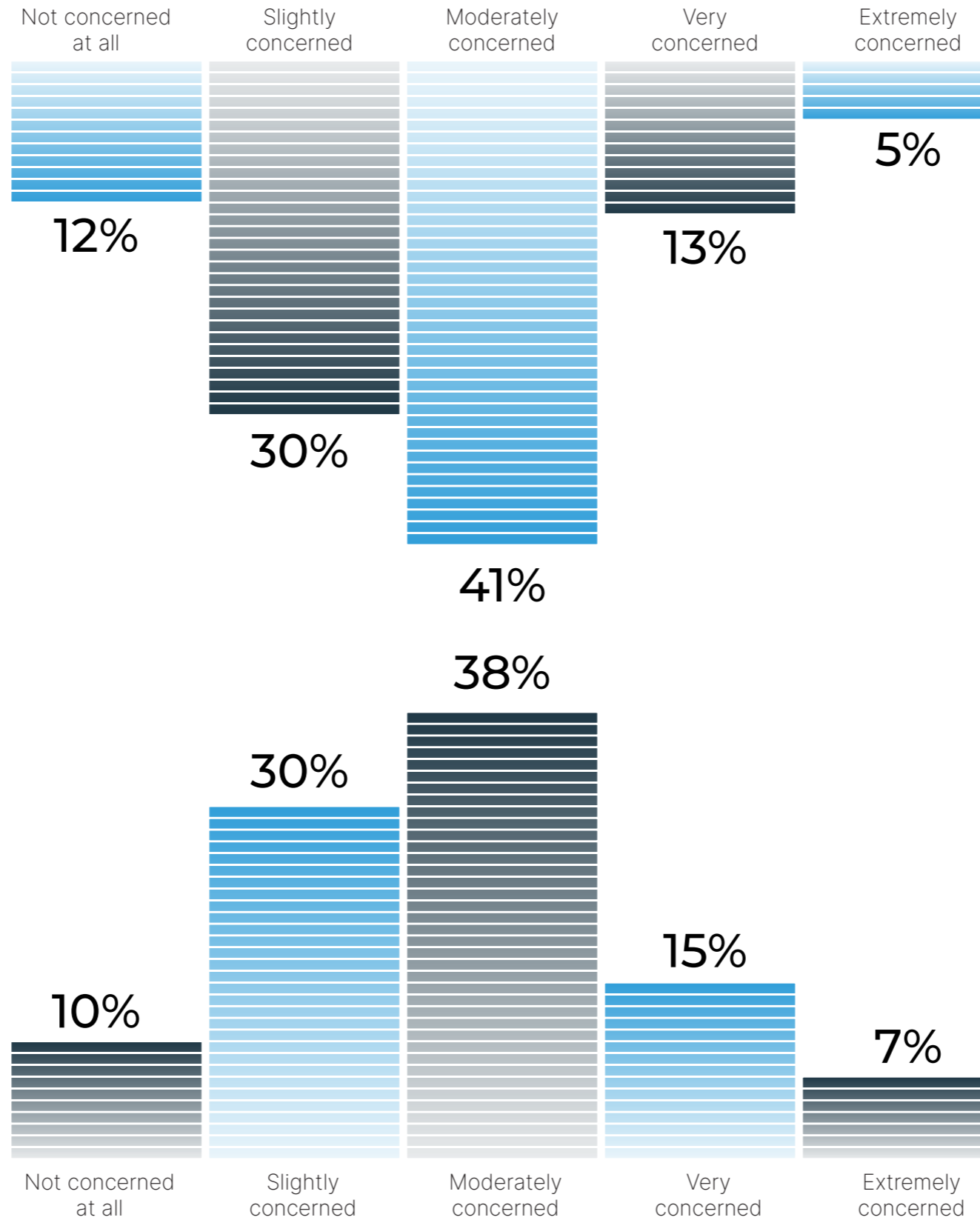
'Concerned isn't the right word; acutely aware.'

Alessandro

'It's literally 1984.'

Sebastian

Concern about online privacy



It is what it is

69

'I kind of just figure that through whatever means of social media/app/phone usage or the terms and conditions that all the corporations know a lot about me and possibly some sensitive information. But hey; nobody lives in the digital age without being at constant risk of being digitally compromised and having an enormous digital footprint.'

Dexter

'Not really concerned, but prefer to use privacy-centric services like Proton Mail as I prefer to have a lack of digital footprint.'

Daud

'C'est la vie [that's life].'

Madeleine

'Not as concerned due to understanding that the moment I started using the internet countless gigabytes of data has been stored on me. No company can collect anymore information on me than other companies have already.'

Mark

'I grew up with internet and have quite good knowledge regarding it. I know how to properly safeguard my own information.'

Kate

'I am quite concerned but avoid thinking about it.'

Tahlia

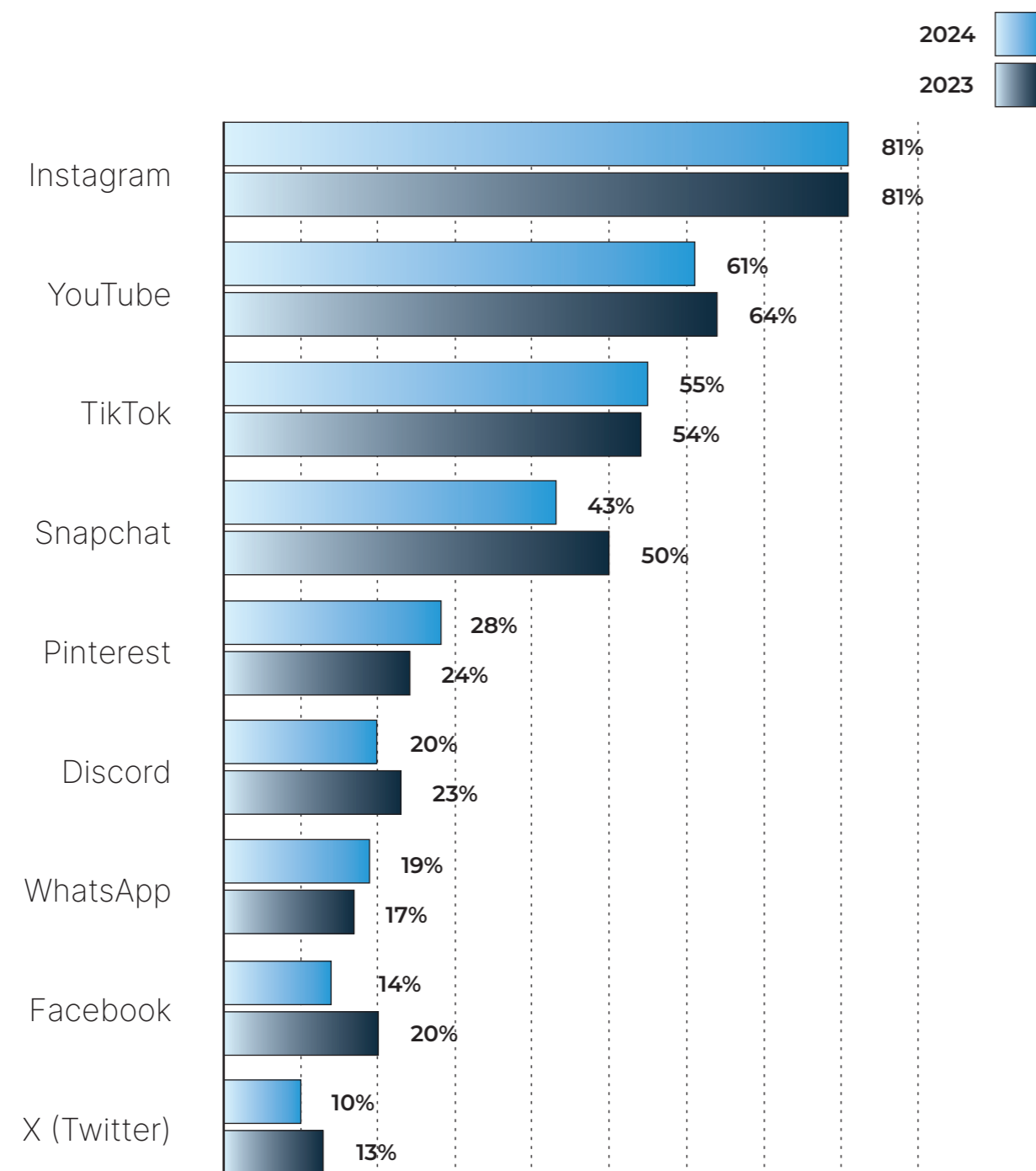
Concern about data collection

Favourite social media platforms

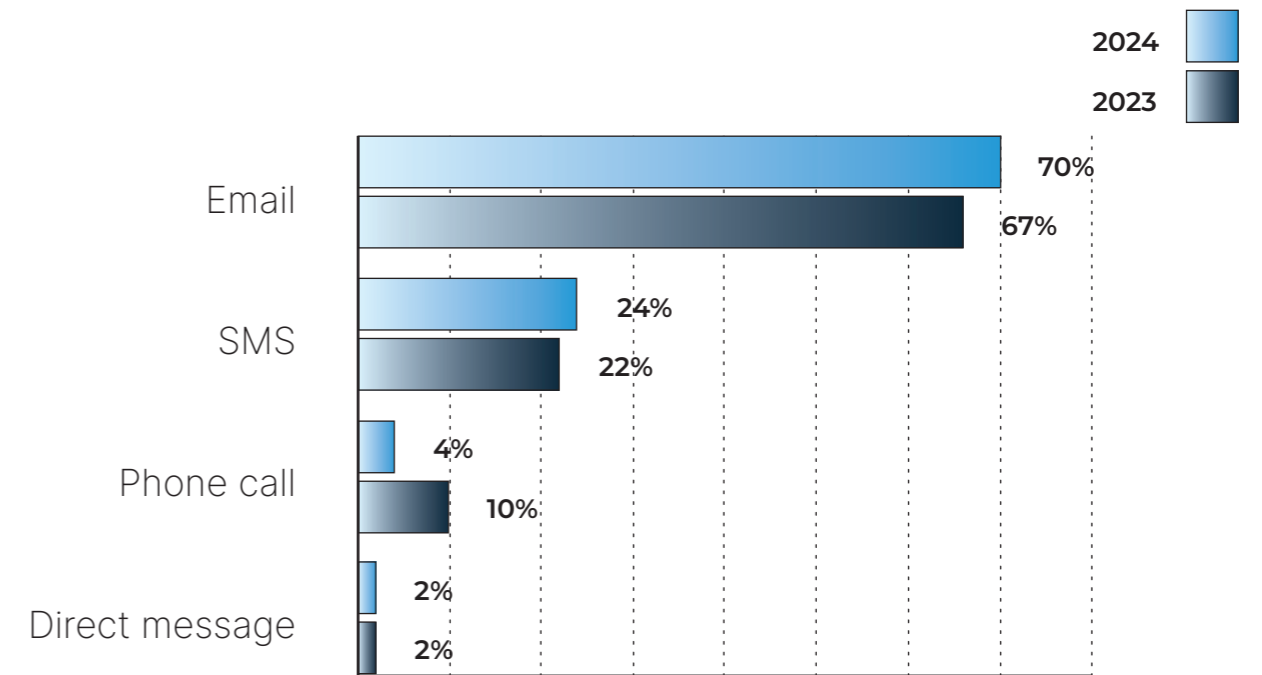
Instagram maintains its top ranking this year, followed by YouTube in second place. In third place, TikTok is slowly gaining on YouTube, which slipped three percentage points in 2024.

Snapchat continues to lose popularity, favoured only by 43% of respondents in 2024 compared to 50% in 2023 and 58% in 2022.

Pinterest continues its steady rise, and WhatsApp has also picked up some more users. Meanwhile, young people continue to abandon Facebook and move away from Discord and X.



How students want to be contacted



Feeling threatened by AI

'I'm afraid that one day we won't be able to tell the difference between AI and human work.'

Jake

'AI realising the flaws in humanity.'

Dylan

'AI destroying the world and enslaving humans.'

Tahlia

'Implementations of AI in warfare and in highly advanced weaponry and machinery, which will not be openly revealed to the public. The future applications of AI for death and destruction by those nations who have the financial means.'

Aalia

'Large companies developing AI tech, outsourcing, underpaying workers and tech carbon emissions.'

Suha

'The death of human creativity.'

Theodore

'AI falling into the hands of someone who might use it for a wrong agenda.'

Amy

'Deepfaking in AI is also an ethical concern due to movie companies recycling the faces of deceased actors and actresses in their latest films. In addition to this, adult websites are also deepfaking faces of celebrities into their mature videos, ignoring the requirement of consent and endangering other people whose faces may be used in pornographic content without their permission.'

Ayesha

'Loss of individualism and uniqueness in society.'

Mia

'We shouldn't let AI surpass our own abilities.'

Flynn

'Terminator-style AI-tech development.'

Isabella

'Replacing human emotive art making, copyright laws surrounding creative fields, actors and voice actors' rights to their brand/image, potential criminal actions such as more advanced deepfakes or AI voices, proof of human-made work.'

Camilla

'AI has such a terrible impact on artists of all sorts, as it uses such wide datasets of real people's time and effort in order to emulate these artists. Many artists are uncomfortable with this as they don't have any authority over the inclusion of their art in these datasets, despite the many hours they devote to their craft. This becomes morally ambiguous as there are many who make their livelihood off their artistry. Many creative industries are already hard enough to thrive in; the additional over-saturation due to subpar AI-generated work could be detrimental to many artists. There is an inexorable link between art and culture, and perhaps in the future AI could possibly hinder cultural and creative development.'

Jacqueline

'At my school we were taught how to use AI like ChatGPT in an ethical way beneficial to our learning, but I am worried not all will have this skill in uni and there will be cheating. Also, the low accuracy rates of AI detection services such as Turnitin.'

Tamarah

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