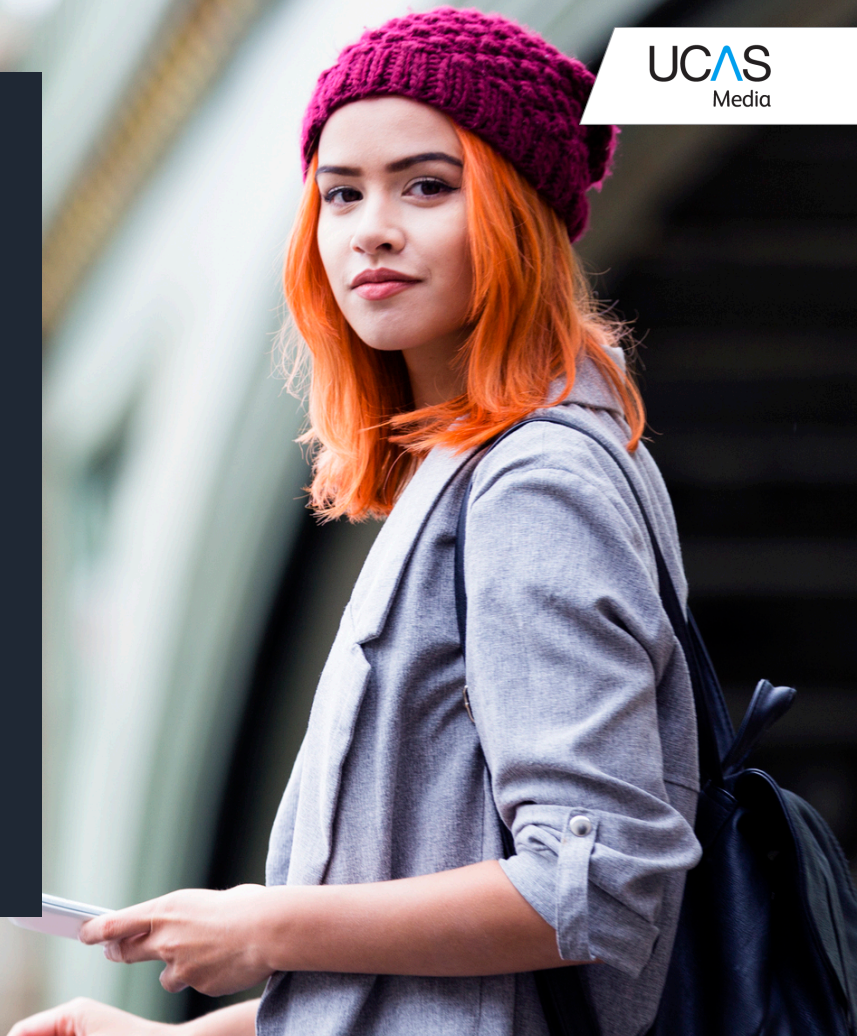


APRIL 2021

UCAS MEDIA INSIGHT NEWSLETTER



Welcome to April's newsletter

Welcome to the first of our monthly newsletters, designed to provide a snapshot of student behaviour and insight to inform your strategies.

March marked a full calendar year since the UK went into its national lockdown, and since the traditional student lifestyle changed significantly for the first time in decades. Social distancing, remote learning, hospitality curfews, and all of the knock-on behaviour that came with it. It's been quite the year, with quite the impact.

We've seen changes in decision-making, like younger audiences starting their research earlier; we've seen social media buck some trends, like an ageing giant holding its own against the upstarts; and we've seen a complete revolution in how the next generation of students want to give back.

Let's get started.

What are students doing?

ON UCAS.COM

WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

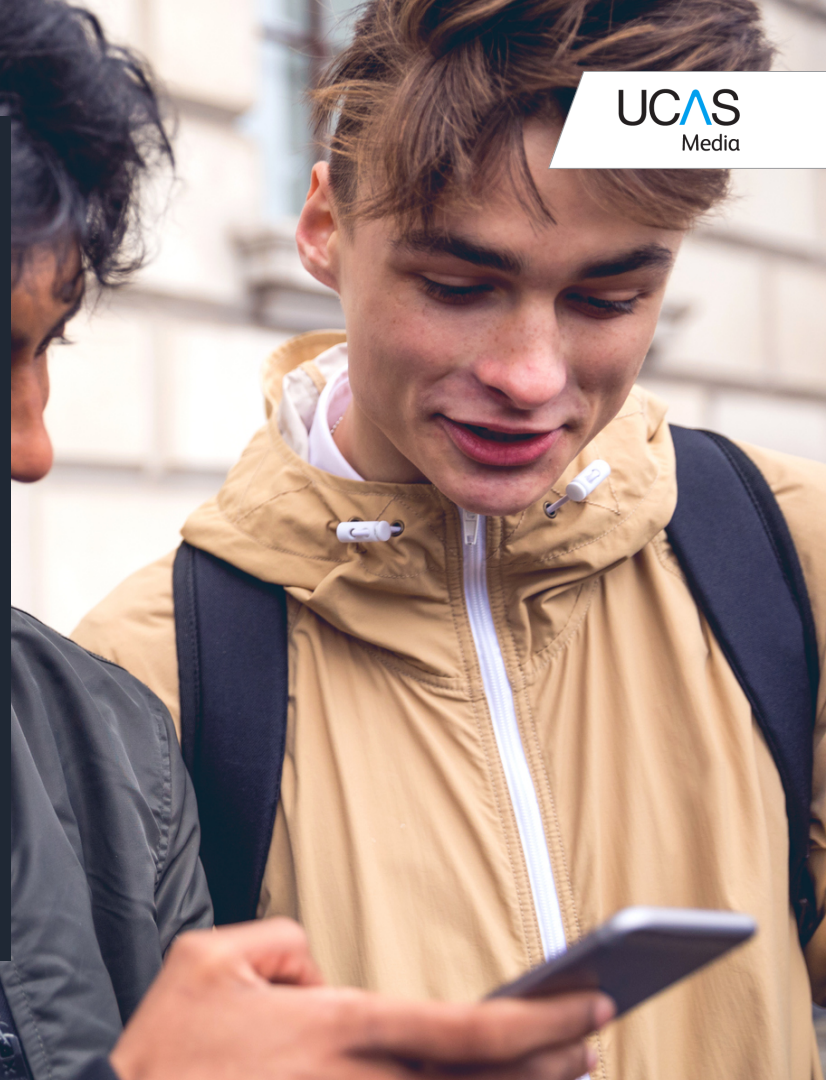
TOP SEARCHED FOR SUBJECTS ON UCAS SEARCH IN MARCH 2021

Position for
Mar 2021

=	1	Medicine
▲ ²	2	Nursing
=	3	Psychology
▼ ²	4	Law
=	5	Midwifery

=	6	Business
=	7	Physiotherapy
▲ ⁵	8	Computer science
▲ ³	9	Engineering
▼ ¹	10	Economics

▲
Change in
position since
Feb 2021



WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

UCAS.COM USERS: TOP 10 NON-UK COUNTRIES IN MARCH 2021



Position for
Mar 2021

▲ ¹	1	United States
▼ ₁	2	India
=	3	China
▲ ¹	4	Ireland
▲ ¹	5	Nigeria
▲ ²	6	Hong Kong
▲ ⁴	7	Pakistan
▲ ²	8	South Africa
▲ ⁴	9	United Arab Emirates
▼ ₆	10	France

▲
Change in
position since
Mar 2020

WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

UCAS.COM USERS: TOP 10 UK CITIES IN MARCH 2021



Position for
Mar 2021
▼

=	1	London
=	2	Birmingham
▲ ¹	3	Glasgow
▼ ₁	4	Manchester
=	5	Bristol
=	6	Leeds
▲ ¹	7	Nottingham
▼ ₁	8	Newcastle
▲ ¹	9	Edinburgh
▼ ₁	10	Liverpool

▲
Change in position
since Mar 2020

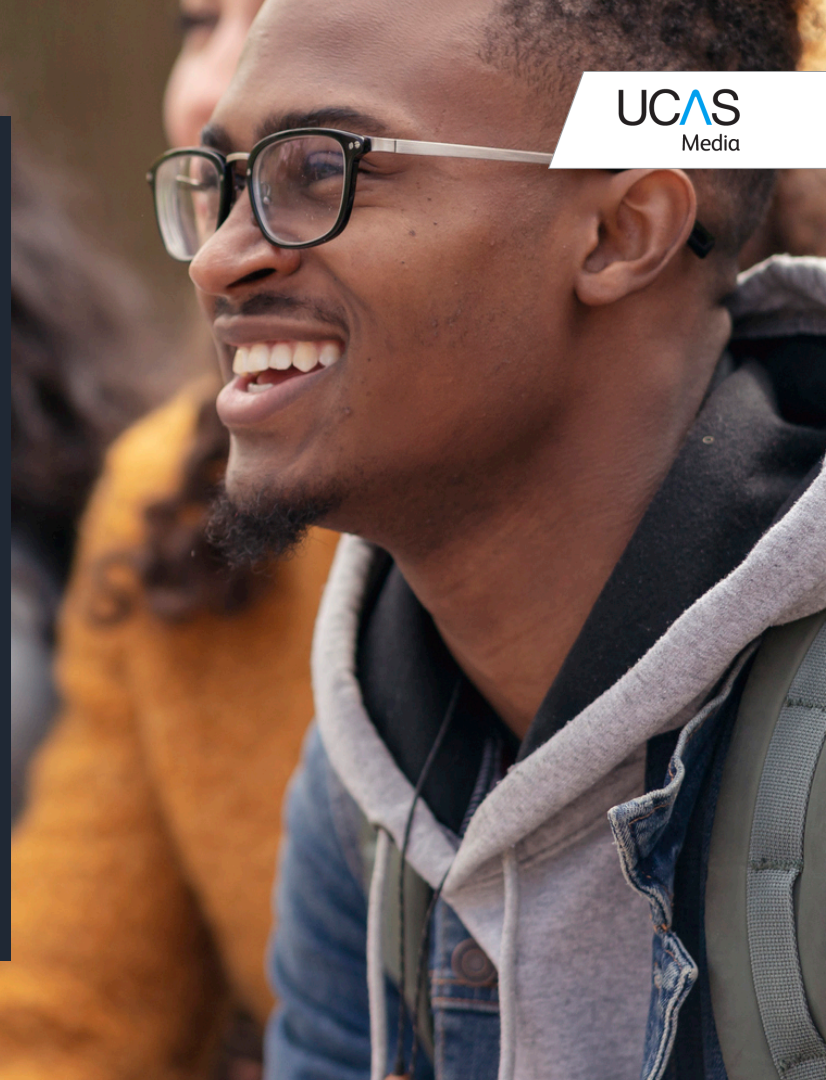
POSTCODE DISTRICT MAP



WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

TOP UG PAGES ON UCAS.COM IN MARCH 2021

1	Track your UCAS application
2	Replying to your UCAS Undergraduate offers
3	Applying to university
4	When to apply
5	How to write a UCAS Undergraduate personal statement



What are students doing?

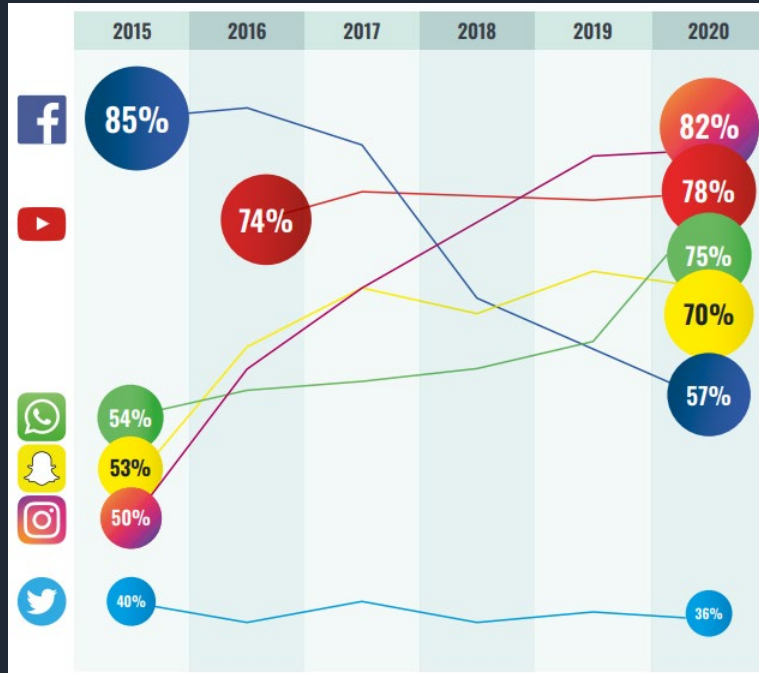
SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS FROM OUR 2021 LIFESTYLE REPORT

STUDENT LIFESTYLE REPORT 2021

SOCIAL MEDIA

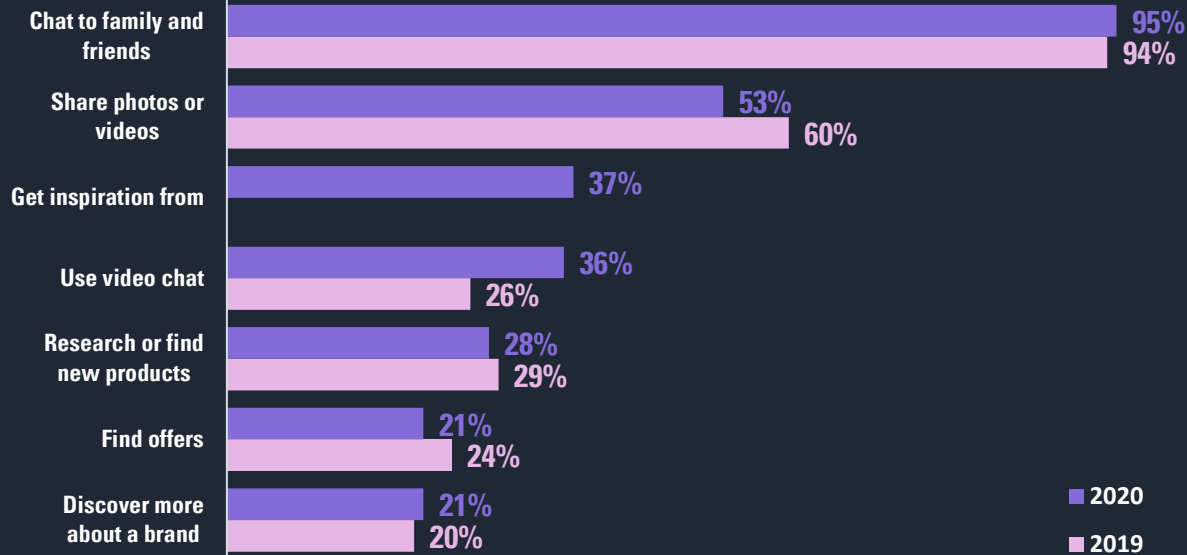
Our social media lifestyle report chapter launched last month, where you can find out which social platforms are most popular among 1st year students.

WHEN IT COMES TO A POPULARITY CONTEST AMONGST THE BIG SIX, **THREE ARE UP** AND **THREE ARE DOWN**.



STUDENT LIFESTYLE REPORT 2021

SOCIAL MEDIA: WHAT DO 1ST YEARS USE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR?



STUDENT LIFESTYLE REPORT 2021

SOCIAL MEDIA

So, what for 2021?

Before the events of last year, it seemed like social media might be about to crest its wave.

And whilst we're not clear of the pandemic and its impacts yet, there's no evidence to suggest that students are about to settle into a quieter, indoor life once the world gets going again.

With the rise of interactivity (TikTok's duets, Instagram's Reels, and Clubhouse's stage), and so many users preferring private messengers over more traditional 'open' channels, we could be approaching the end of the age of hyper-public online profiles, and the start of something new.

If this comes to pass, brands are going to need to adapt quickly.

How will they reach their market in a world of encrypted messaging, and how will they track their effectiveness when the conversation is all happening behind the scenes?

It will be interesting to watch, at least.



Audience in focus

AUDIENCE IN FOCUS: POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

TOP PREFERRED SUBJECTS FOR THE PAD22 ENTRY COHORT SO FAR

Position for
31/03/2021

=	1	A1 – Medicine	1	6	I1 – Computer Science
=	2	N1 – Business studies	1	7	B7 – Nursing
=	3	C8 – Psychology	1	8	L1 – Economics
2	4	M1 – Law by Area	1	9	N4 – Accounting
1	5	C1 – Biology	1	10	Q3 – English studies

Change in
position since
31/03/2020



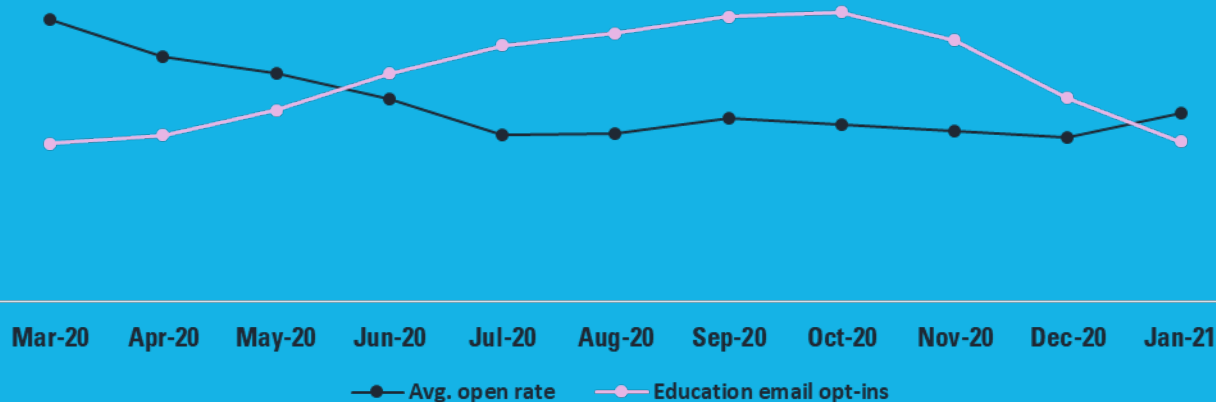
AUDIENCE IN FOCUS: POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

WHO ARE THEY AND WHEN CAN YOU CONTACT THEM?



Our potential applicants database (PAD) consists of 16-17 year olds researching their HE options. You can contact them from March each year. Engagement with emails is typically highest earlier in the year.

Average PAD21 open rates and Education email opt-ins



AUDIENCE IN FOCUS: POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

HIGH PERFORMING PAD21 SUBJECT LINES BETWEEN MARCH AND APRIL 2020

>

%%FIRSTNAME%%, visit [University] at stand [number]

>

Here's your applying to university student toolkit from 'University'

>

Now more than ever, your creativity matters.

>

%%firstname%%, explore [University] today

>

A career in healthcare – how about osteopathy?

Before the first lockdown in the UK, pre and post exhibition emails achieved particularly high open rates. During the lockdown, these then changed to be related to virtual events e.g.:

- Hi %%FIRSTNAME%%, join our Virtual Information Fair at [University]
- Discover Virtually Everything about [University]
- Sorry we didn't get to meet you, %%FIRSTNAME%%

AUDIENCE IN FOCUS: POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

In a recent focus group, some potential applicants told us what they liked and disliked about a variety of email creative designs. Lists of courses or linked course buttons were a popular feature that they highlighted stood out to them.

”
“

‘Clear list of the courses’

”
“

‘everything is easily accessible’

”
“

[I like it because it’s] ‘organised’

”
“

[I like it because it’s] ‘not just clumped up paragraphs’

”
“

‘The different boxes make it easy to pick apart different bits’



So what does this all mean?

For providers looking to engage with pre-applicants, it means following some of the most frequent yet important advice we give. The earlier you engage, the higher your chances of fostering loyalty, engagement, and affinity with today's and tomorrow's students.

For marketers looking to allocate their social media resources most effectively, it means that you need to look deeper than the headlines. Facebook may be falling in almost every metric tracked for Gen Z impact, but we can see it remaining a hugely important channel. Both for students themselves, but also their parents, advisors, teachers, and more.

For universities looking to recruit efficiently across their portfolios, it means being cognisant of this caring generation. The pandemic has sparked a resurgence of numbers for medical degrees, but it will also have had a wider impact across other courses. There will be plenty of computing, business, and literature students who have developed the same empathy which led so many towards careers in nursing. It's not often that the emotional triggers of an entire market are so universally changed.

We'll be back next month, with fresh findings from April 2021.

Get in touch

For further information and insights contact your UCAS Media account manager or email us at ucasmediaeducationteam@ucas.ac.uk.