



FUTURETRACK is following a cohort of students from UCAS application until they get their first job in order to build a 'real-time' picture that reveals how, when and why students make decisions.

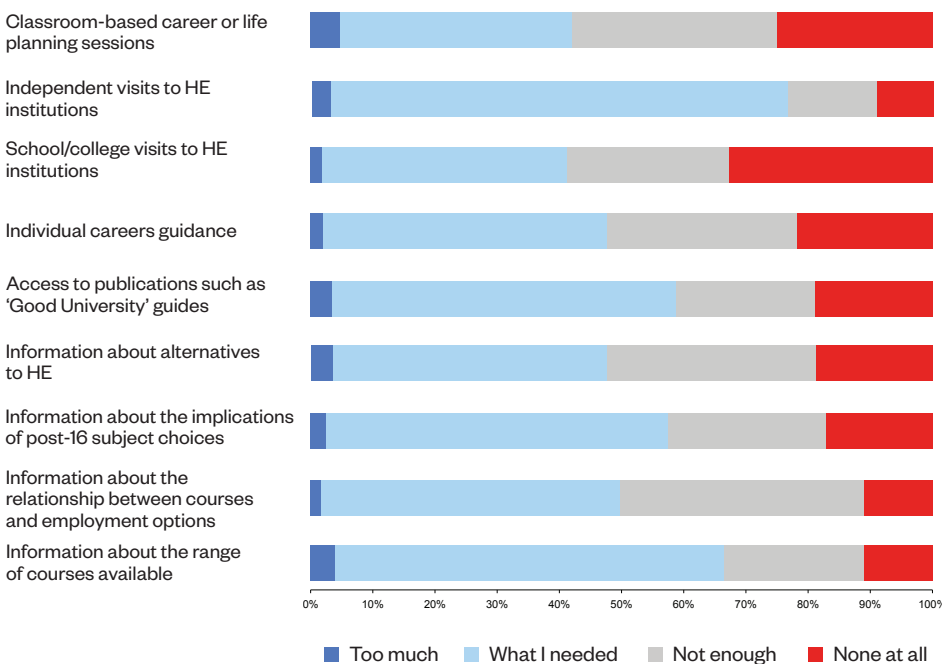
The study is helping the government, careers advisers and education professionals to provide the best possible information and guidance to students throughout their academic careers.

Futuretrack is funded by the Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HECSU) and conducted by the Warwick Institute for Employment Research.

# Pre-He Advice & Guidance

## Access to careers information

### WERE APPLICANTS ABLE TO ACCESS ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR OPTIONS?



Previous research on graduate outcomes suggests that those who drift into higher education without having made clearly-articulated choices are more likely to leave having had a less positive experience than those who made a positive choice to enter higher education, either for instrumental or intrinsic reasons.

Pre-HE advice and guidance has an important role to play in ensuring applicants are well informed about their options before they make any decisions.

### APPLICANTS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

'I felt that in my sixth form an unfair amount of time and effort was given to those applying to Oxford or Cambridge over other students and I felt this lowered morale and led to quite a few people who were borderline on the decision of going into HE giving up on the idea. I think a better attempt should be made to ensure that each student has the same amount of help and time spent on them regardless of their ideas and choices'

**Female, 18 and under, managerial/professional background, creative arts and design**

'Information on anything else other than doing a degree after A levels is not provided by schools - [my school implied] that university really is the only option and that it is fine to study something completely pointless so long as you go to university'

**Female, 19-20, independent fee-paying school, managerial/professional background, historical and philosophical studies**

'I feel I did not get enough general advice in what would suit me. I jumped into a course I no longer wish to pursue, due to a lack of careers advice'

**Female, 18 and under, independent school, languages**

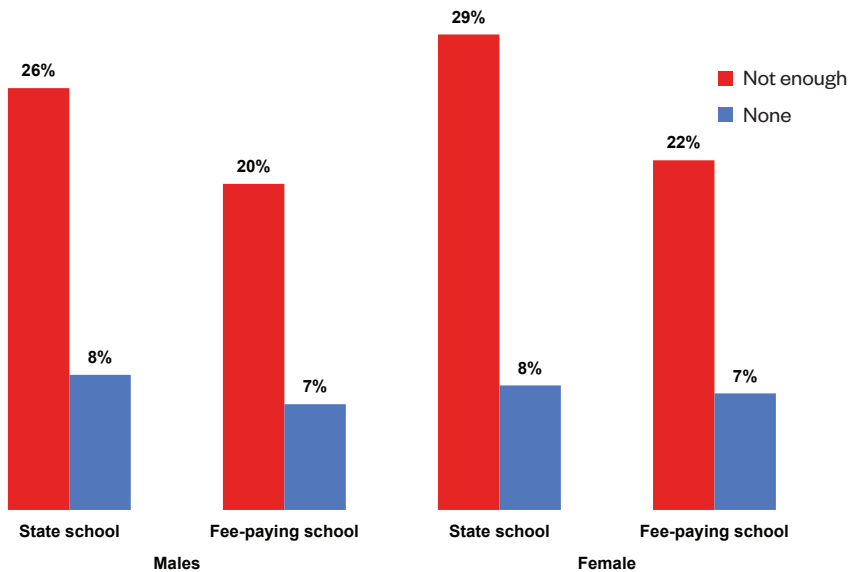
'A lot of the information is aimed at college/6th form leavers - I am a mature student and found it difficult to find help and support'

**Female, 26-30, routine/manual background, languages**

# Pre-He Advice & Guidance

## Information about choices and options

**% OF APPLICANTS WHO FELT THEY DID NOT RECEIVE ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THEIR POST-16 SUBJECT CHOICES (BY GENDER)**



## POST-16 SUBJECT CHOICES

For many areas of higher education study, entry to courses is restricted to those who possess educational qualifications which provide evidence of prior achievement in that subject. Failure to study the 'right' subjects post-16 means that candidates are then unable to apply to study on some higher education programmes.

The problem of applicants discovering too late that they had chosen the 'wrong' post-16 subjects was first raised by the participants who tested the pilot Futuretrack questionnaire.

Findings from the Stage 1 survey suggest that schools and colleges need to do more to ensure that pupils are made aware of the implications their post-16 subject choices may have on their higher education options.

## THE IMPLICATIONS OF POST-16 AND HIGHER EDUCATION SUBJECT CHOICES

- Over 40% of applicants felt they had not received enough (if any) information about the implications of their post-16 subject choices, although applicants from professional and managerial backgrounds (38%) were less likely than applicants from routine and manual backgrounds (45%) to complain that they had not received enough guidance about the implications of their choices.
- Applicants who had attended schools which were experienced at supporting students applying to higher education were less likely to report that they had received inadequate information or guidance.
- Over two-thirds of applicants agreed that they had received enough information about the range of courses they could choose from, but only around half felt they had received enough information about the relationship between higher education courses and subsequent

employment options. Older applicants (aged 25 and over) were more likely to report that they needed more help in choosing which course to study when making their application.



## APPLICANTS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

'Information about further education after post-16 should be given before post-16 options are chosen. Some universities require certain A Level subjects, some require specific grades at GCSE in certain subjects and others may not accept vocational courses for non-vocational degrees. This information is vital to students when choosing their A Levels'

**Male, 18 and under, state school, professional/managerial background, social studies**

'Need better advice on entry requirements for specific university courses before choosing A Level choices. I was not advised that many universities do not offer chemistry degrees to students without a Maths A Level'

**Male, 18 and under, state school, managerial/professional background, physical sciences**

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- More information about the project [www.hecsu.ac.uk/current\\_projects\\_futuretrack.htm](http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/current_projects_futuretrack.htm)
- Download research reports in full [www.hecsu.ac.uk/futuretrack\\_research\\_reports.htm](http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/futuretrack_research_reports.htm)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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