



U Matter Results: Transformation Team

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Prepared by Penny Zipfel, Debbie Smith, Vicki Li

U Matter Team, Business Intelligence

Reports 1/2 in the U Matter series (Abridged)



About the 'U Matter' Project



- U Matter is a lifestyle project that aims to help Unitec better understand our students – the core question for our team was **'Who are the people that walk through our gates everyday?'**
- This presentation includes **an overview of student wellbeing and lifestyle, and a student segmentation for Unitec**

Research Approach



- An initial online questionnaire exploring a range of lifestyle areas was sent out to students in September 2016 – a total of 1,964 students completed it
- The segmentation (section two) focuses on domestic students only (n=1,513) only – drivers and motivations to undertake tertiary education in another country has a layer of complexity that requires dedicated analysis. Research approach for the segmentation is as follows:
 - In-depth qualitative interviews were undertaken with 20 students to explore their responses, life-stage and realities of study in more depth
 - To identify the segments the team analysed the psychographic and demographic attributes of each U matter participant (key motivations to undertake tertiary, attitude towards study, level of programme being studied, age and dependents)
 - It is important to note that the segmentation is of our 'current students' and is not a 'market segmentation'



Executive Summary



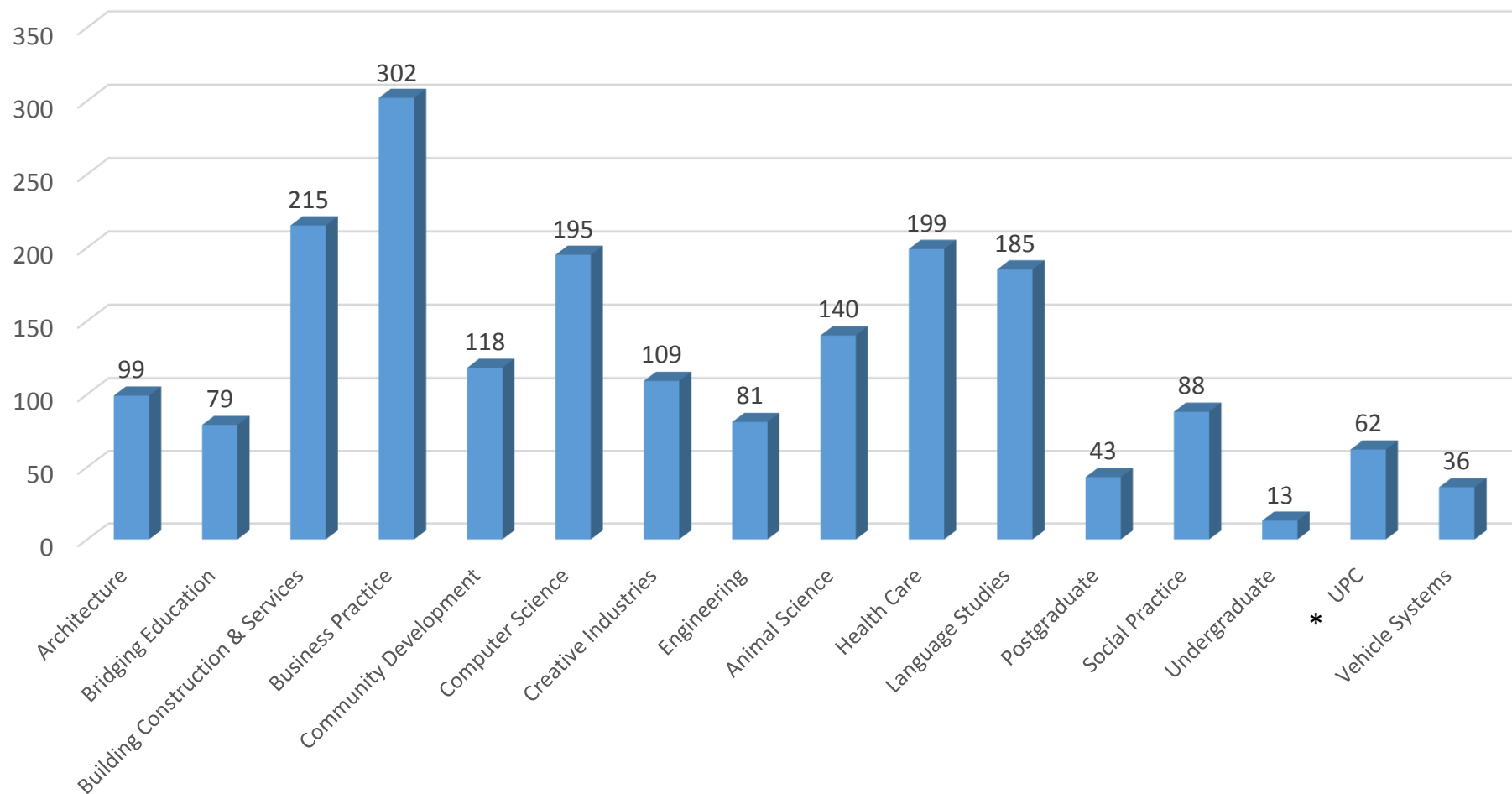
- U Matter provides us with a greater understanding of our students lifestyles, realities and concerns. It has also provides us with the means to segment our student cohort
- Key findings from the research include:
 - 5 student segments have been identified within our student cohort (Family Providers, Career Switchers, Knowledge Seekers, Starters and Study Builders). This gives us another lens through which to consider acquisition and retention. It is important to note this is not a market segmentation. We hypothesize that an additional intellectual segment exists, these students may gravitate more to university brands known for leading research e.g. UoA
 - At the time of the research, a third of participants had considered stopping their study in the past 12 months. The key reason given is their financial situation. The research shows that a number of our students are struggling financially, 31% state they have gone without food or other necessities as they cannot afford them. It is likely retention could be improved if we can better understand the financial realities of students
 - Approximately a third of our students are the first in their family to study at a tertiary institution. Unitec is a first step into the higher education environment. These students are likely to have a lot of pressure on them to succeed and may lack the support that other students receive from tertiary educated parents
 - Our student cohort is very diverse, 35% of our students have a child financially dependent on them; 56% of our students were not born in New Zealand. This research challenges the view that students tend to be single, young and highly social



Section 1: Our student community

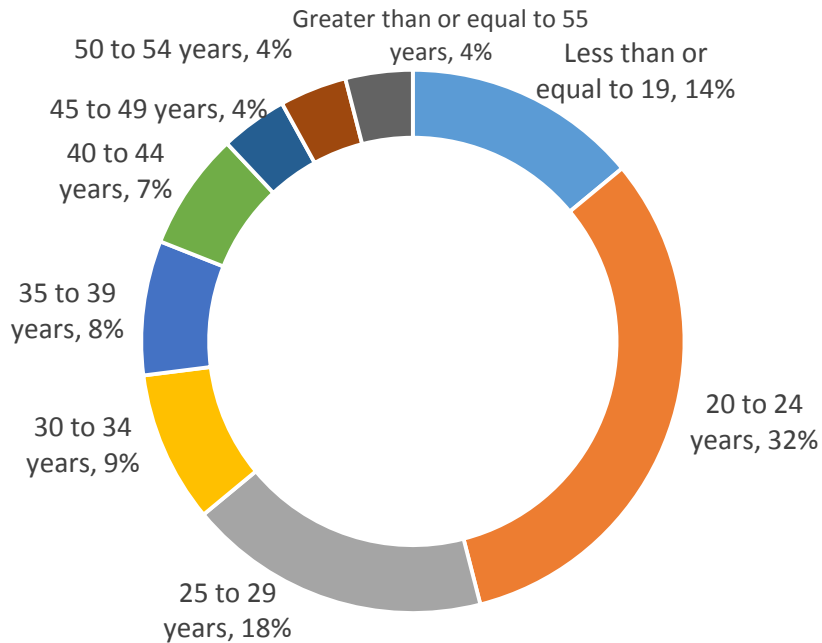


U Matter participants by pathway



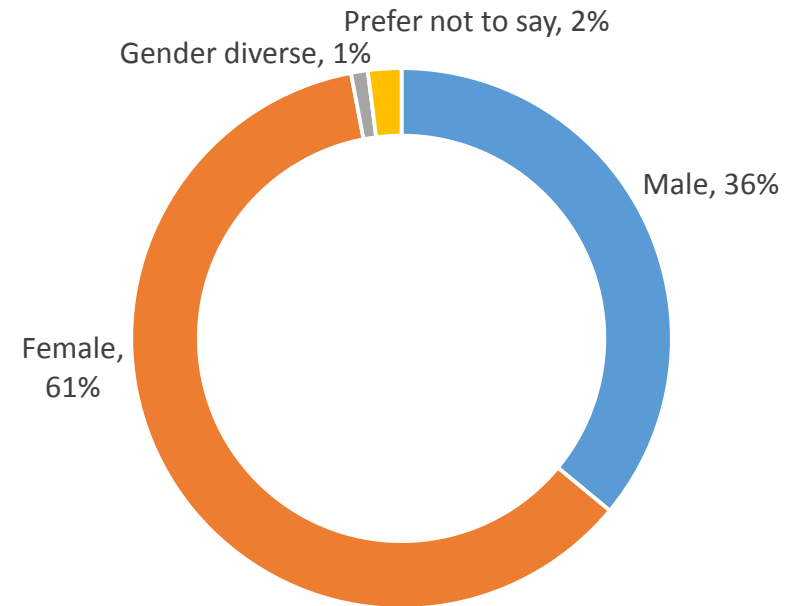
* UPC = Certificate of Proficiency, Short course etc.

Age of participants varied from under 19 years to 55+ years – most are aged 20-29 years



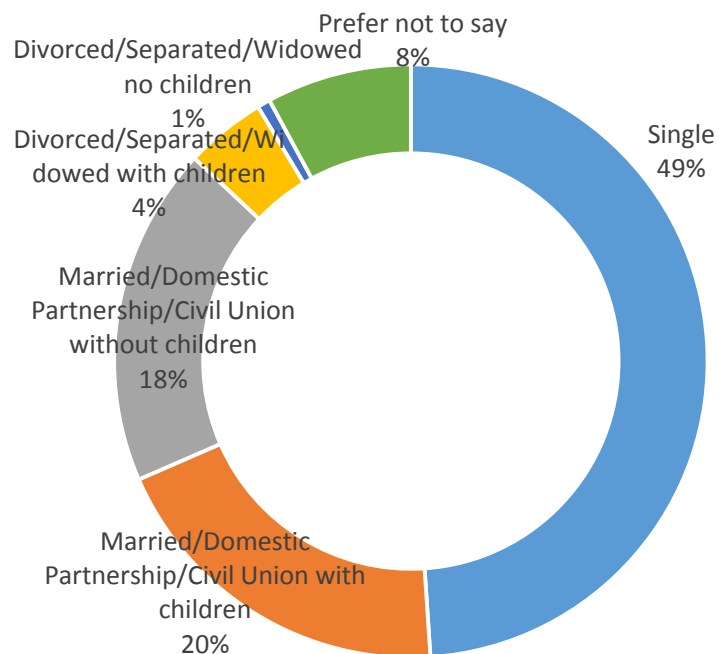
Q. Age n=1,964

The overall Unitec student population is comprised 46% female and 54% male – however, more female students responded to the U Matter project than males



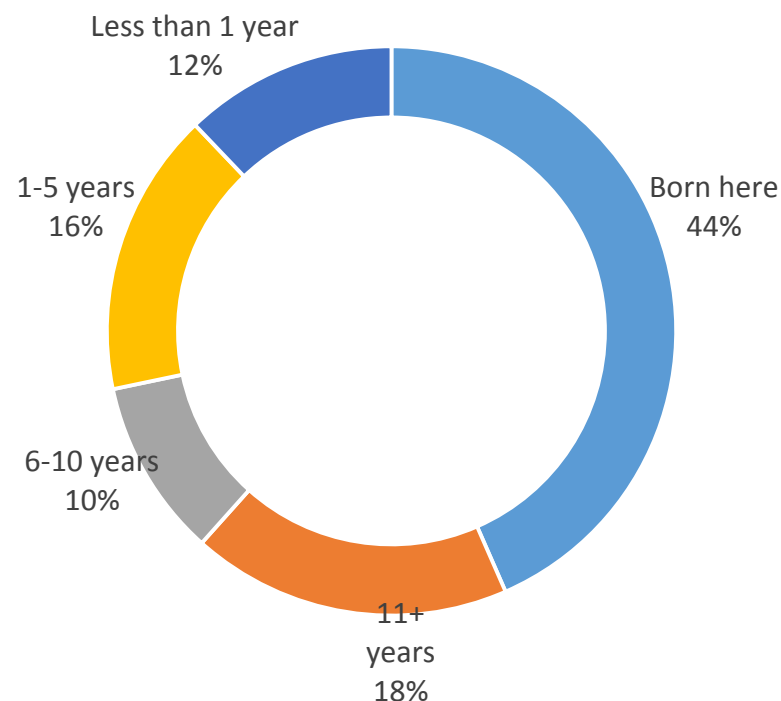
Q. Which gender do you identify with? n=1,644

A large portion of our student population is currently single – but some would like a partner



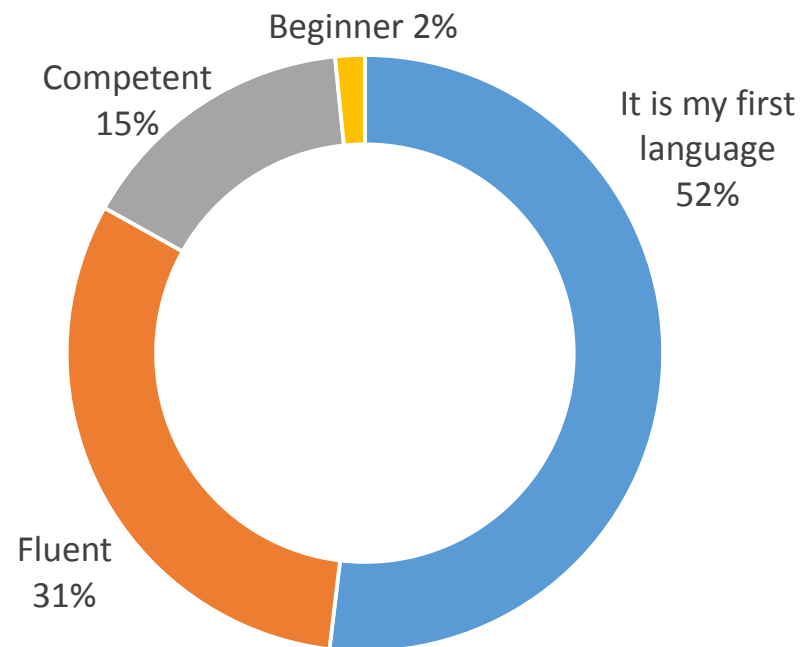
Q. What is your relationship status? n=1,641

A culturally diverse environment - 56% of students are not born in NZ, 28% are new to NZ and have been here 5 years or less



Q. How long have you lived in New Zealand? n=1,828

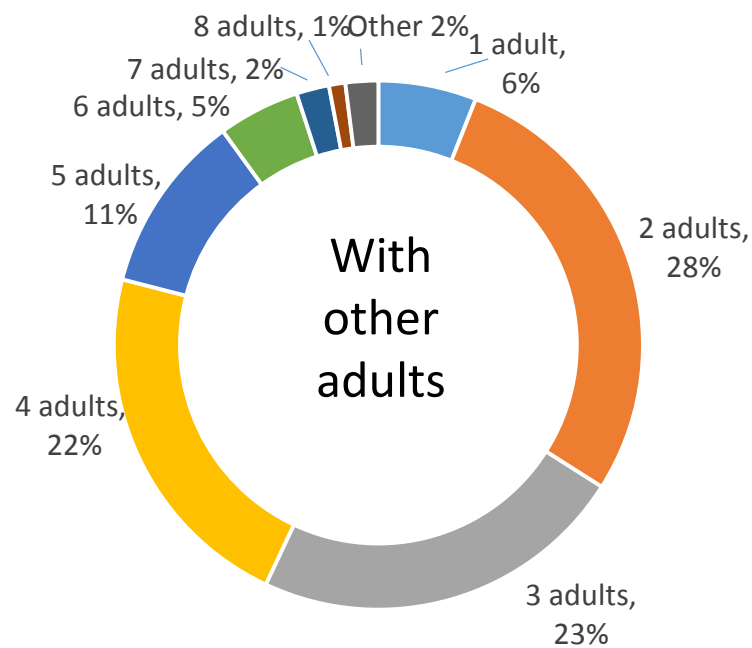
English is **not** the first language for nearly half of our students (48%), and for some the inability to express themselves is a concern



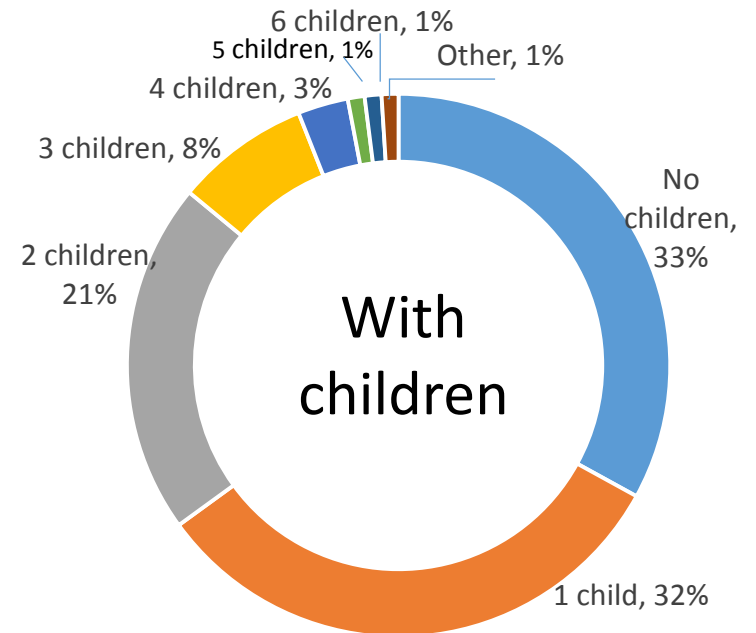
- 41% of **International** students described their communication in English as 'competent', whilst 4% were 'beginner'
- 13% of **Pacific** students described their communication in English as 'competent'
- Students in the following **pathways** were more likely to state their communication was 'competent' - Computer Science (25%), Language Studies (22%), Business Practice (21%) and Building Construction (21%)

Q. Which best describes your communication in English? n=1,820

The majority of students live with at least one other adult, 43% live in households with 4 or more adults

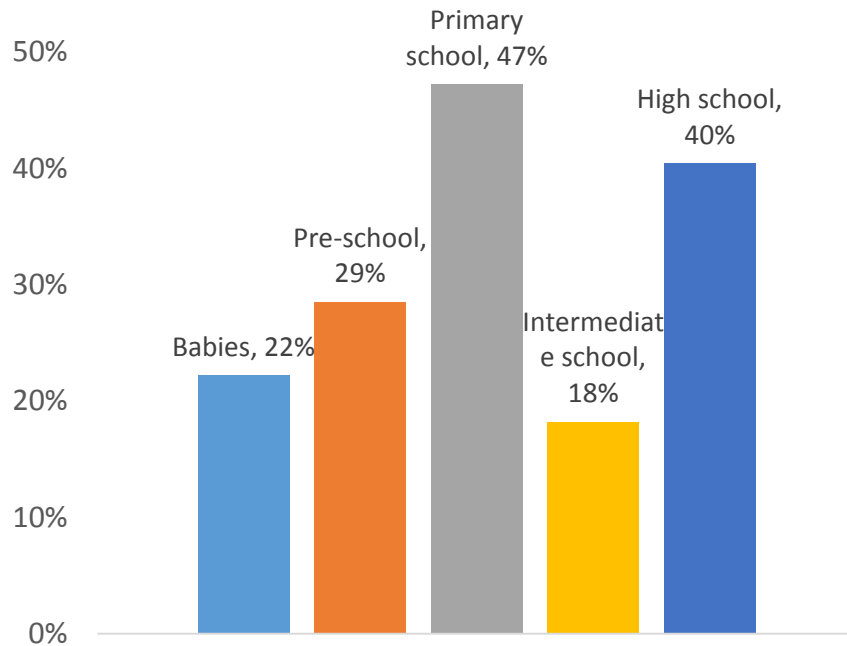


67% of our students live in a household with children

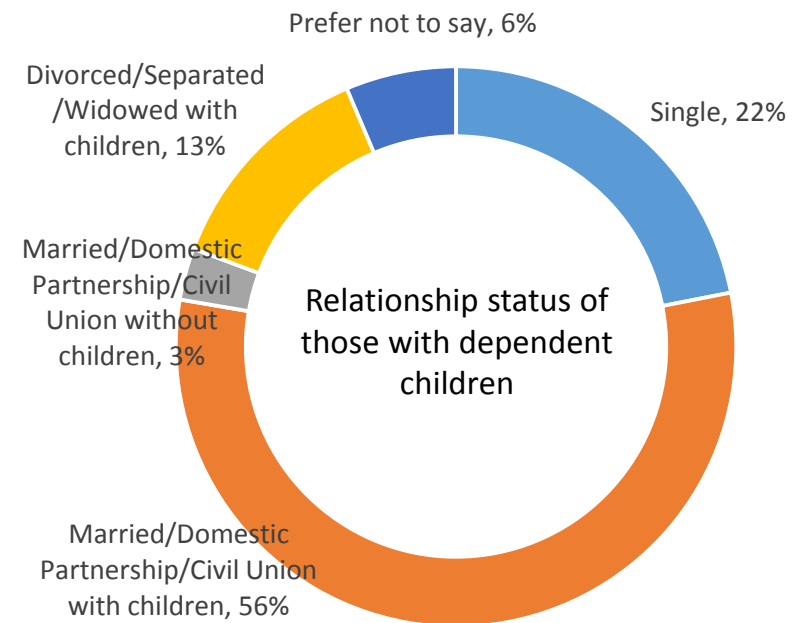


Q. How many people live in your house (including yourself)? Adults n=1833 Children n=1068

35% of students have children who are financially dependent on them – some have more than one child they are financially supporting, 22% are single parents



Q. How old are the children? n=396 Multi response
Those with financially dependent children



Q. Relationship status of those with financially dependent children
n=376

Section 2: Unitec Student Segmentation (domestic students only)

Five segments have been identified within the Unitec student cohort



Family Providers



Career Switchers



Knowledge Seekers



Starters



Steady Builders

Family Providers – 18% of our students



Family Providers...



- The needs of the family come before the needs of the individual
- Work/study/family balance is hard to achieve. Family Providers talk about being time deprived and having a number of competing demands. Words used to describe their life include:
 - Responsibility – “Meeting the promises I’ve made to other people”
 - Busyness, juggling, plate-spinning - tired, burnt out, stressful
 - Sacrifices (minimal leisure/exercise time)
- When investing time in study, the trade off for parents is reduced family time – they are very reliant on others to pick up the daily tasks they can no longer do e.g. in particular caring for children
- Financial stability is important - others are relying on them:
 - 60% have children financially dependent upon them, again, this is the highest of all the segments
 - 19% are single with dependent children
- Who are they:
 - Family Providers are mature students (all 25 years+) who see study as a way to improve household income and family life
 - 67% of Family Providers opt to study full-time
 - 72% are studying Bachelor degrees
 - 21% of Family Providers are within the Business Practice pathway

What are the key motivations to study?



- The decision to study is a ‘partnership’ or ‘family’ decision as Investing in tertiary education is an investment of both family money and family time - 95% agree that their education is an important financial investment
- Key motivations to undertake tertiary education include:
 - Increasing the earning potential for the household – providing a better life for the family
 - Future-proofing household income from redundancy (may mean upskilling and/or a career change)
 - Increasing their chances of being short-listed for their job of choice
 - Role modelling family values towards tertiary education to children and inspiring them to study in the future

“I do see study as being good for my career, as well as being an investment in my career – which is good for my family too. It isn’t just me. It’s insurance against redundancy”



Career Switchers – 26% of our students



Career Switchers

"I just didn't feel fulfilled in my previous career. I just felt absolutely empty. Soulless"



- Their values and aspirations are no longer align with their current employment - dissatisfaction is a key driver to retrain
- Seek to modify their work life to improve alignment or fully change their career and enter a new industry – may look to an unfulfilled dream
- Switchers tend to be mature adults who are likely to have an established career, hold a tertiary qualification
- Willing to step back to move forward again in a career that has more meaning and personal relevance but note time is their enemy
- Switchers may be walking away from a \$70-100K+ salary to follow their passion - a drop in income means sacrifices' need to be made by everyone in the household
- Who are they:
 - Mature students - 61% being 30 years+
 - 48% have children financially dependent on them
 - Prior to study, 49% were wage or salary earners, and 25% are still working full-time
 - 64% of Career Switchers opt to study full-time, 64% are studying Bachelors

What are the key motivations to study?

- Key motivation is move away from a job where they are just 'going through the motions' and fulfil an unmet dream and to
- Feelings of unhappiness in their current employment situation drive the desire to retrain
- Switchers are aware they will temporarily have a reduction in income while studying and first entering a new industry. However, given their maturity and previous life/business experience they *expect the step back to be short-lived as they accelerate in their chosen field*
- Comment that *time is their enemy*
- Motivations to undertake tertiary education include:
 - Securing a more fulfilling career
 - Future proofing their income – often shift into industry areas that will allow them to work in small centres and/or value maturity (reducing chances of redundancy as they age)

"If we are going to continue working until, I'm going to say into our 70s, we both wanted to make sure we future proofed ourselves into careers that we were happy to continue in as long as we were mentally and physically capable"

Knowledge Seekers – 9% of our students



Knowledge Seekers



"I thought recently about going back and looking at the prospectuses at Continued Education ...I always liked Latin at school...its one of those things I'd like to go back and revisit and maybe things like Greek mythology which I never studied or philosophy"

- Knowledge Seekers tend to (98%) **undertake short courses** with Unitec e.g. 70% are from Language Studies (Te Reo)
- **Education can be for education's sake**, studying topics of interest or where they feel they lack knowledge. Self describe as self-motivated and self-directed
- **Some identify as lifelong learners** and speak about an array of areas they have studied and/or intend to study e.g. languages (Latin), history (Greek), floristry etc.
- They differ from other segments in that the **course they are undertaking with us will add to their knowledge base but not necessarily be part of dedicated retraining or a planned pathway** to higher education
- Who are they:
 - This segment has the largest proportion of 55+ years (16%)
 - 85% of Career Switchers are studying part-time
 - Often working part/full-time during the day and fitting study around employment

Knowledge Seekers are also influencers

- Knowledge Seekers may not engage with Unitec for very long and their **investment with us can be in terms of time rather than money**, therefore they struggle to talk to their 'ideal' tertiary institution
- Knowledge Seekers **speak very highly of the short courses they are undertaking** (e.g. Te Reo Māori and Free4U Computing) – those interviewed had told others about the course they attended:
 - Welcoming environment
 - Knowledgeable teachers
 - Short block courses (Te Reo) that fit within a working week
- **They are influencers – potential 'word-of-mouth' advocates for Unitec.** The more mature students openly talk with family about their positive experiences with us – this can include grandchildren/children who may be considering tertiary education



Steady Builders – 20% of our students



Steady Builders

“When I came here I didn’t know basic things you should know from school. I only have life skills...They helped me understand what things are in the learning world”



- Steady Builders can come to Unitec with **lower level qualifications** after leaving school at a young age – because of this they **may have gaps in their education**
- May have **experienced set backs in their life** (bullying, abuse, foster care, drug dependency, homelessness)
- Steady Builders have moved in and out of situations e.g. lived in different cities, dipped in and out of short courses and low-skilled work. This implies when things get tough they may move on
- **Before study, 17% were unemployed or a beneficiary, 23% secondary school students** and 32% wage or salary workers. Steady Builders spoke of working in low-skilled repetitive working environments e.g. courier driver, hospitality – KFC, McDonalds
- Who are they:
 - 64% of Steady Builders are 29 years or less
 - **44% have children who are financially dependent upon them**
 - Lowest proportion of European students and the highest proportion of Samoan students (7%) and includes 9% NZ Māori and 9% Chinese students
 - **More likely to be found in Bridging Education**, Building Construction and Services and Business Practice
 - 79% are studying full-time, **99% are studying Certificates**

What are the key motivations to study?



“Having a career will make you stable in life...You have a better pay than \$15.75 an hour and whether its an extra \$100 a week or an extra \$200, its still more than what you get on the minimum wage”

- Key motivation is to ‘have a better life’ – to raise themselves (and their families) out of a lifestyle that they feel no longer serves them
- Some speak in terms of finding a ‘good job’ – one that they enjoy and feel fulfilled in, others who are planning on moving up to Bachelors level, talk about having a ‘career’

*“It (tertiary study) means I won’t have to do a job that I f***en hate. I want to be doing something that I love. Not in the office...out in the field and with decent pay”*

- Motivations to undertake tertiary education include:
 - Making positive life changes – *“Getting my life back on track”*
 - Being respected and valued by others
 - Earning a ‘decent’ income
 - Fulfilling their potential
 - Working in a role that that they enjoy and/or will benefit others who have experienced similar set-backs to themselves



Starters – 27% of our students



Starters

*“Trying to discover what’s best for me
and what I really want to do”*



- Starters tend to be **our younger students**
- This stage in life is about **growth, new experiences, first steps, big decisions and transitioning**
- The transition into tertiary education sees them making some big decisions, often for the first time e.g. deciding on a future career, what and where to study – can feel stressful
- **Taking their first steps into adult life:** first serious relationship, first time living away from home, first time shopping for food, cooking, paying bills and for some the first time they have lived in Auckland
- During interviews, Starters speak about paying down debt, saving for a first home and starting a family in the future (mostly young males) – they compare themselves to other generations and talk about feeling at a disadvantage
- Who are they:
 - Largest proportion of younger students - **32% less than 19 years** and 68% 20-24 years
 - **58% come to us straight from school**, a further 16% from working; 51% are working part time
 - **65% are single** and are the segment with the least people financially dependent upon them
 - **92% are studying full-time, 81% are studying Bachelors**

What are the key motivations to study?



“Coming out of school you’re limited in what you can do if you don’t further your education. And then following on from that, your job opportunities are limited”

- Starters are focused on **establishing a career and ensuring greater financial stability** both immediately post graduation and in the future when they start a family and/or secure a first home
- Starters talk about tertiary education in terms of establishing a career, rather than securing a job
- Motivations to undertake tertiary education include:
 - **Enhancing employability**
 - Showing employers you have applied yourself
 - Gaining a skill set (practical and theory) inline with industry needs
 - Ensuring a financially secure future:

“It’s not about jet setting and buying everything. It’s about being able to live comfortably really”

- Being a role model to younger siblings and/or making parents proud:

“I’m going to be the first sibling out of my two brothers because they didn’t graduate. I will be the first to graduate, so there’s a bit of pressure...Not only making them (parents) proud but it’s a proud moment for myself as well”

Sizing the five identified segments



**Career
Switchers,
26%**



**Knowledge
Seekers, 9%**



**Steady
Builders,
20%**



**Family
Providers,
18%**

**Starters,
27%**



Section 3:

Understanding why some students have seriously considered stopping their studies and leaving Unitec

*90% consider their education an important
financial investment*

BUT

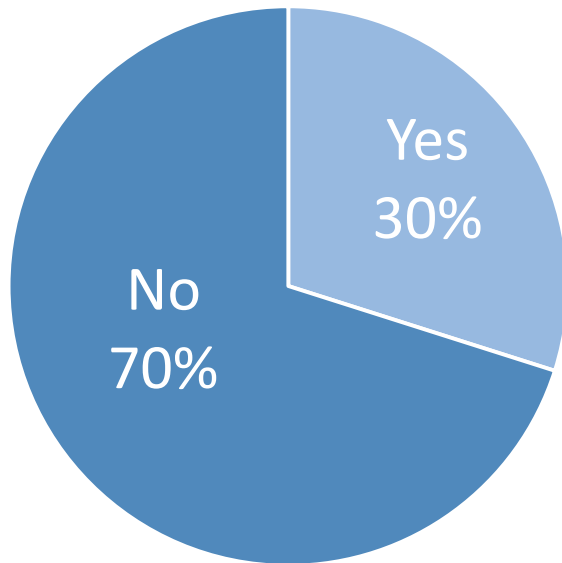
*1/3 of students have seriously considered stopping
their study in the last 12 months
(before the end of their course)*

*NB: This excludes those that did actually leave,
therefore the rate of considering to leave at any
point in time would be higher*

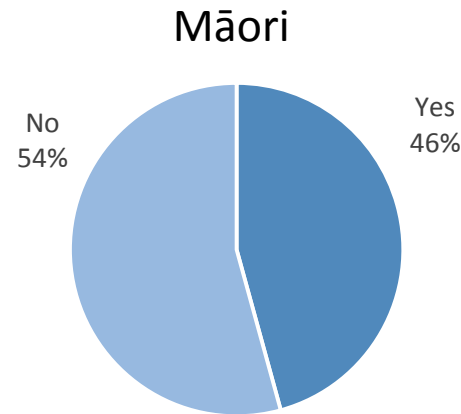
Q. "Thinking about your financial situation. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: I consider my education an important financial investment?" n=1,648

Q. "Have you seriously considered stopping your study in the past year (before the end of your course)?" n=1,653

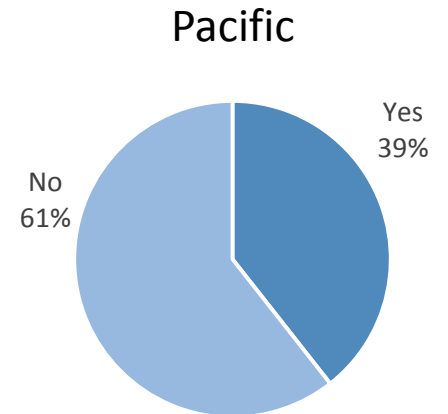
More Māori and Pacific students have seriously considered stopping their study in the past 12 months than the total student population



Q. "Have you seriously considered stopping your study in the past year (before the end of your course)?" Total n=1,653



Q. "Have you seriously considered stopping your study in the past year (before the end of your course)?" Māori n=176 & Pacific n=246



What is driving this?

Financial reasons



56%



22%

Work, life, study pressures and commitments



Financial pressures is a key contributor



Almost seven out of ten students agree that their 'financial situation is often a worry for me' (68%)

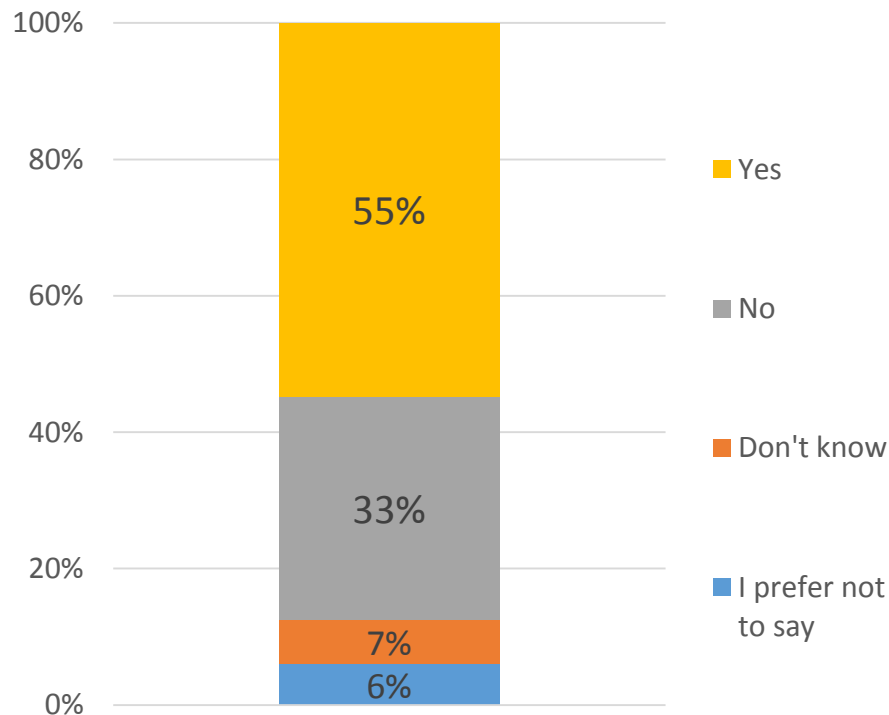
Almost one-third of students agree that they 'regularly go without food or other necessities because I cannot afford them' (31%)

Q. "My financial situation is often a worry for me?" n=1,648

Q. "I regularly go without food or other necessities because I cannot afford them?" n=1,648

Agree = Strongly agree/Somewhat agree/Agree

Over half of students state that their income has **NOT** covered their living costs at some stage in the last 12 months (55%)

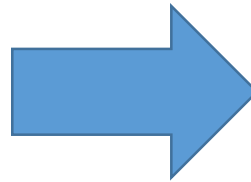


- 68% of Māori students have found that their income has not covered their living costs at some time in the last 12 months
- Family Providers and Switchers were more likely than the other segments to have found that their income has not covered their living costs at some time in the last 12 months – 64% respectively

Q. "Sometimes people find that their income does not quite cover their living costs. In the last 12 months, has this happened to you?" (Excludes those that 'don't have any personal income') Total n=1,506; Māori n=170; Family Providers n=257; Switchers n=280

Over half the students (56%) have a key worry or concern. Financial struggles were the **top overall worry or concern** for 57%, followed by balancing commitments 56%

One Biggest Worry or Concern	
Finding a job after graduation	23%
Balancing study, social, work and family commitments	20%
Financial struggles	19%
Passing my study assignments	15%
Achieving desired qualification	8%
Amount in debt after graduation	5%
Meeting my family/employer expectations	2%
Feeling of loneliness	2%
Homesickness	1%
Other	5%



Overall Worries or Concerns	
Financial struggles	57%
Balancing study, social, work and family commitments	56%
Finding a job after graduation	53%
Passing my study assignments	53%
Achieving desired qualification	39%
Amount in debt after graduation	33%
Meeting my family/employer expectations	26%
Feeling of loneliness	17%
Homesickness	9%
Other	11%

Q. Do you have any worries or concerns n=1745

Q. Please select your one biggest worry or concern n=965

Q. Please select your one biggest worry or concern and any other worries or concerns (multiple response) n=968



“My children and I are struggling to survive and live some weeks. It becomes quite disheartening that you’re trying to do all you can to better your future, but you still need to live and eat” (Health Care)

*“In order to survive while studying I have to work a full weekend and any days off, which leaves little time for studying and getting assignments done, let alone excelling and growing within my chosen field. Whereas if I had abandoned my studies (already 20k in debt) I would be able to find full-time work and support myself financially”
(Creative Industries)*

“Sometimes there's no money to buy text books. It's either buy text book or starve until the next pay” (Architecture)



Case study: Aroha – Bridging Education

- Aroha came to Unitec after leaving a low paying job in the regions
- She had very little money when she arrived in the city and lived in her car for 3 weeks
- She rented a house when she first started at Unitec, but after paying all the expenses she was left with \$10 a week
 - *"I went on Trade Me and saw a good house and out of the 200 that applied I got it. I stayed there for starting Unitec. I was living off \$10 a week. I was going to Auckland City Mission (for food). I was walking to Unitec"*
- This situation wasn't sustainable and with the assistance of Unitec she got an accommodation allowance and shifted to somewhere more affordable
 - *"So now instead of \$10 a week for everything, I have \$45 a week – which is a huge change. Even though its not much, I'm grateful for it. It's gets me through"*
- Aroha's key challenge is financially surviving while studying:
 - *"Just trying to get a meal is a struggle"*
- She is keen to start a degree next year but is aware that she can't keep living on \$45 a week:
 - *"I can't survive on \$45 a week. I've done it for 16 weeks and its hard...I'm on such a tight budget. I have to pay for my washing, m bus, all on \$45. So when I do eat I try to make my meals big and stretch it out (mince and pasta). You just learn to run off hunger. You pass the starvation point and that's not okay because when you do eat you get quite sick"*
- *Small course related expenses can mean less food*
 - *"Having to pay 10 cents for a piece of paper, 20 cents to print out material...that 10 cents is off a \$1 that can go towards bread for me. I have been 10 cents off a dollar and they still wouldn't give me bread. These are the struggles some real people face"*

A third of our students are the first in their family to study at a tertiary level

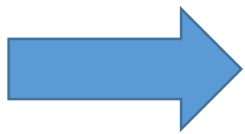


35% of students are the first in their family to study at a tertiary institution

Almost half of Māori students are the first person to study at a tertiary institute (45%), whilst 40% of Pacific students are the first

Being the first in the family to study at a tertiary level can increase pressure on the student

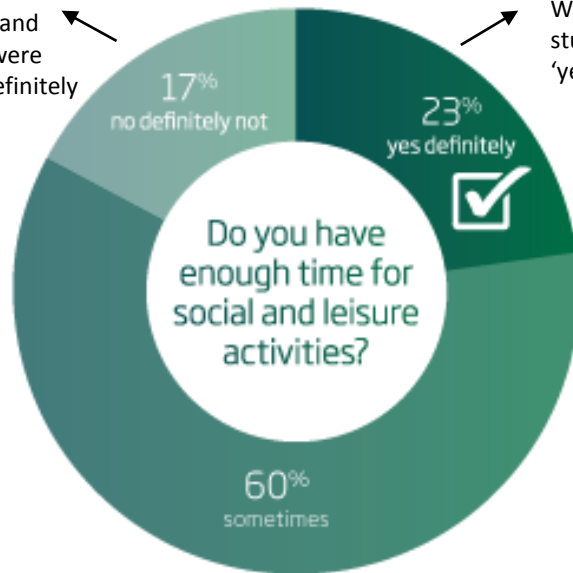
36% of Steady Builders are the first in their family to study at a tertiary institute compared to 29% of Starters



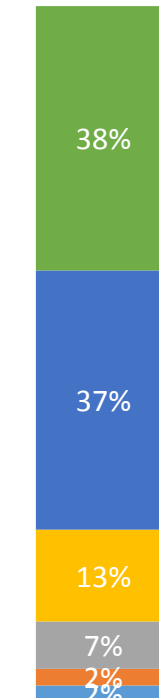
May experience a lack of understanding and support or they may be put under increased pressure to succeed by the family

75% of students spend 10 hours or less on social and leisure activities per week

- 77% of these students socialised fewer than 5 hours per week
- **Health Care (27%), Postgraduate (26%) and Architecture (25%)** were **most likely** to say 'definitely not'

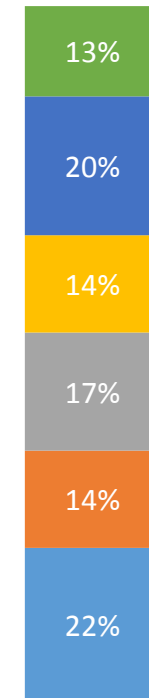


Socialising hours per week



Q. On average, how many hours per week do you spend in social or leisure activities n=1,782

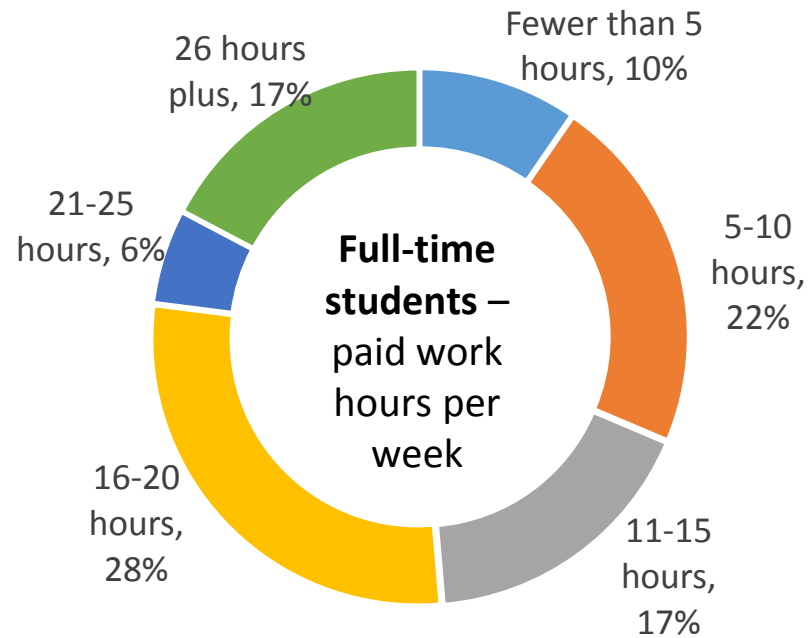
Studying hours per week



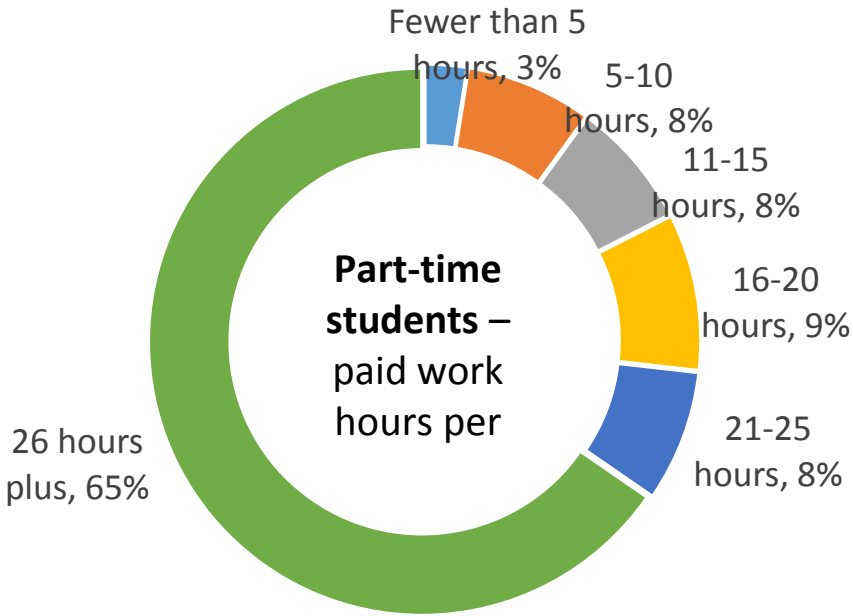
Q. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on course related studying at home, on campus etc.? n=1,789

n=1,783

17% of students are employed in full-time paid work, whilst 42% work in paid part time work



Q. How many hours per week on average do you work?
Full time students n=701
Q. Thinking now about work. Are you currently employed in paid work? Part time and Full time n=1,751



Q. How many hours per week on average do you work?
Part time students n=321



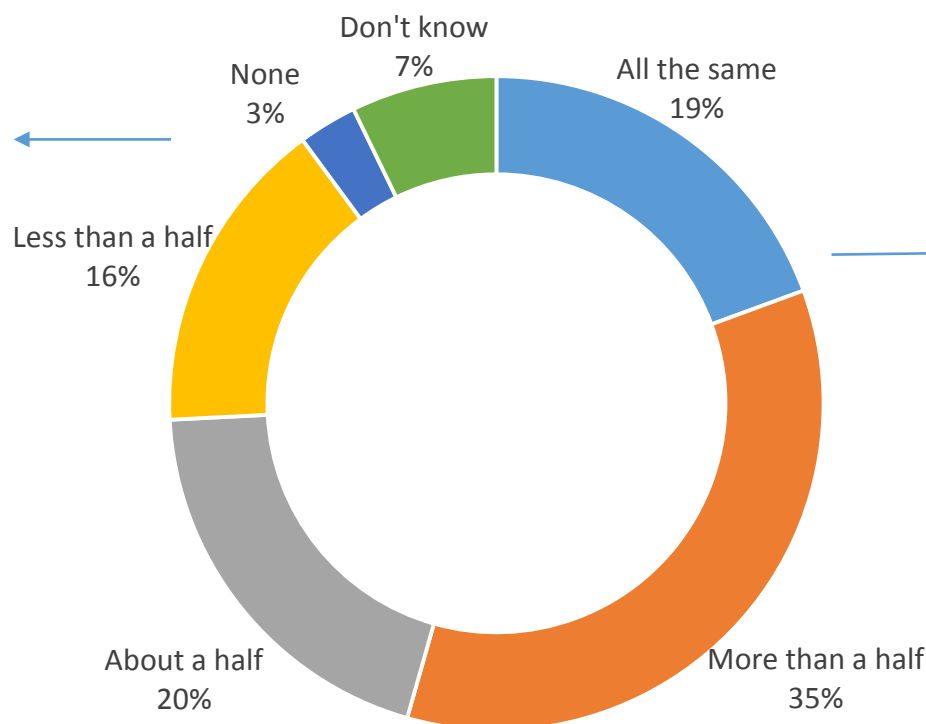
Section 4: Student Life

20% of students self identify with having at least one psychological/emotional condition, physical impairment or learning difficulty

Q. Do you have any of the following long-lasting conditions or difficulties? Total n=1,615 Multi response

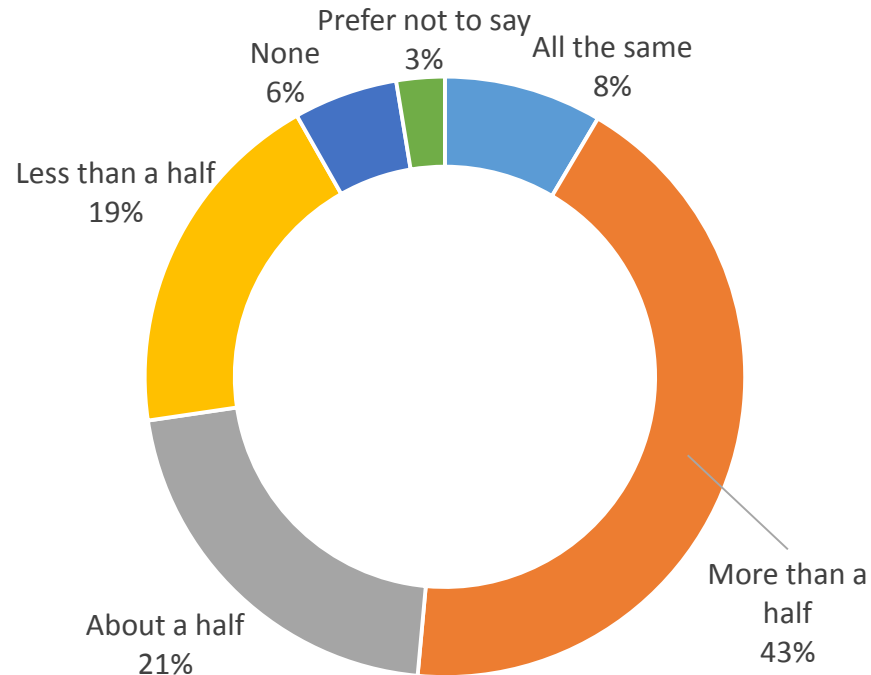
Our students' friendship groups are more likely to include people who have a similar level of education as they do...

Those students who have **seriously considered stopping** their study are more likely to have more **friends without** a similar level of education (25%)



Students in Architecture, Computer Science, Creative Industries and Engineering are more likely to have friends **with a similar** education

...and are from the same ethnic groups

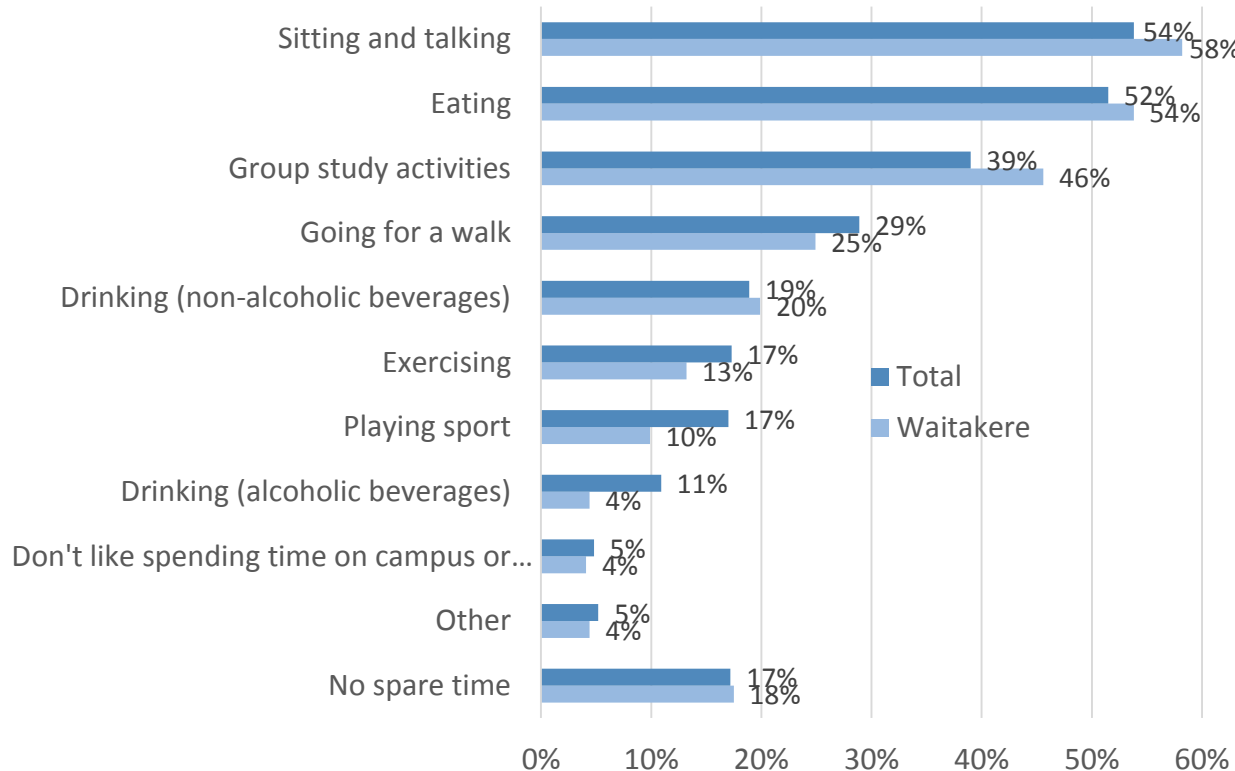


International students tended to have 'more than half' of their friends from the same ethnic group (63%)



73% of Chinese students' friends were either 'more than half' or 'all the same' ethnicity

Low key activities are preferred when spending time with friends on campus e.g. sitting and talking, eating



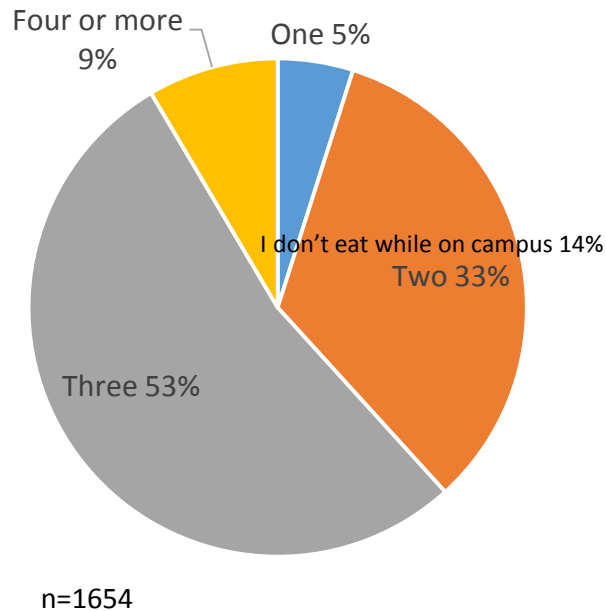
- Waitakere students are more likely to spend time in 'group study activities'
- Older students are more likely to not have 'spare time' (this is likely due to work and family commitments)

Q. How do you like to spend time and socialise with others on campus?

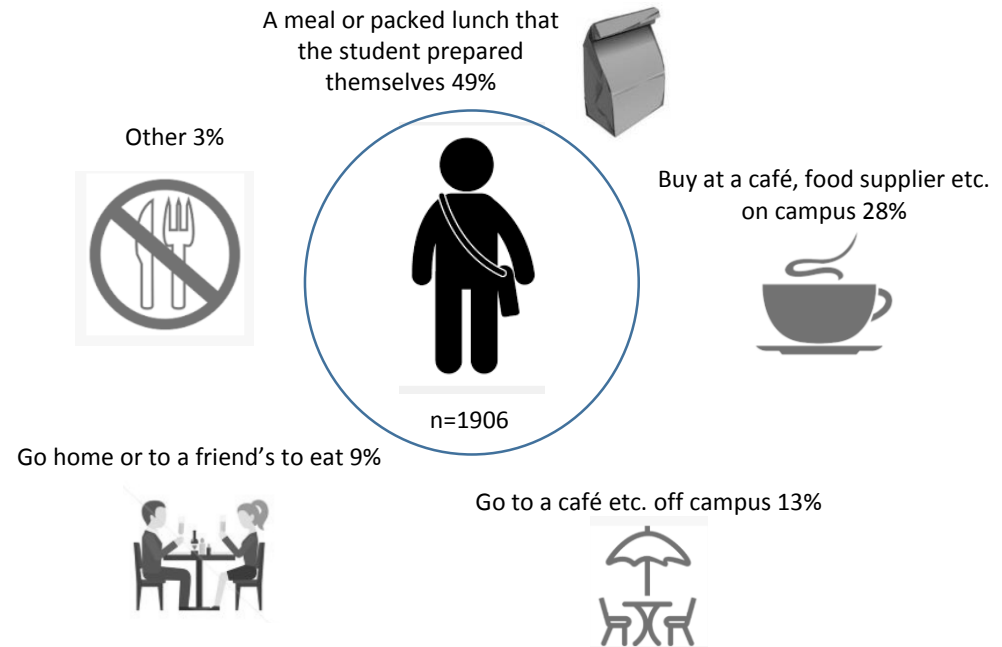
Total n=1,766 Waitakere n=342 Multi response

Half of the students eat three meals a day, international students eat fewer meals than domestic students

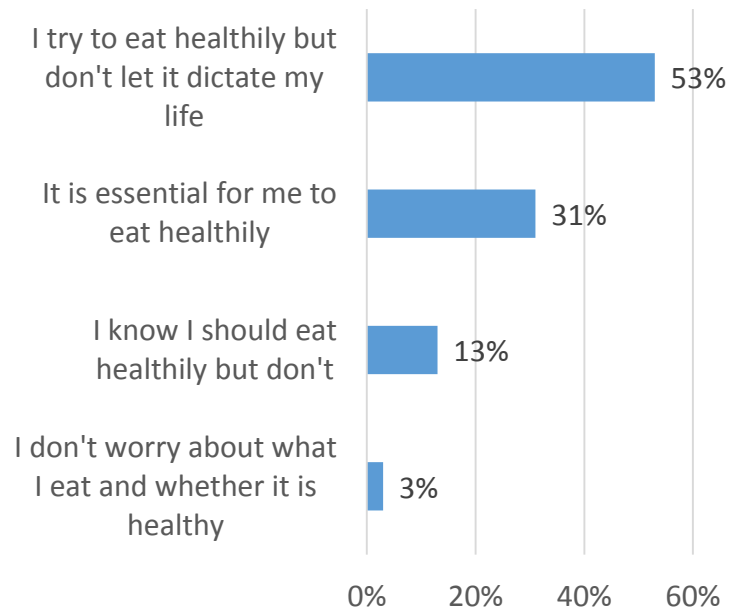
How many meals a day do you usually eat?



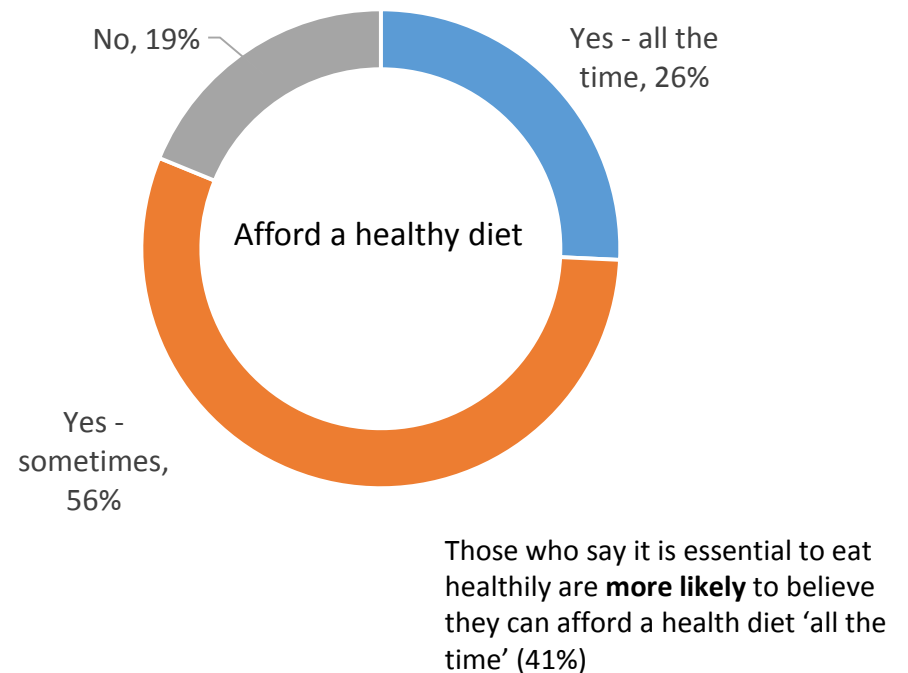
What do you usually eat when studying on campus?



Student's food choices align with their attitude to healthy food
– for 1/3 of students it is essential they eat healthily but
affordability can impact this

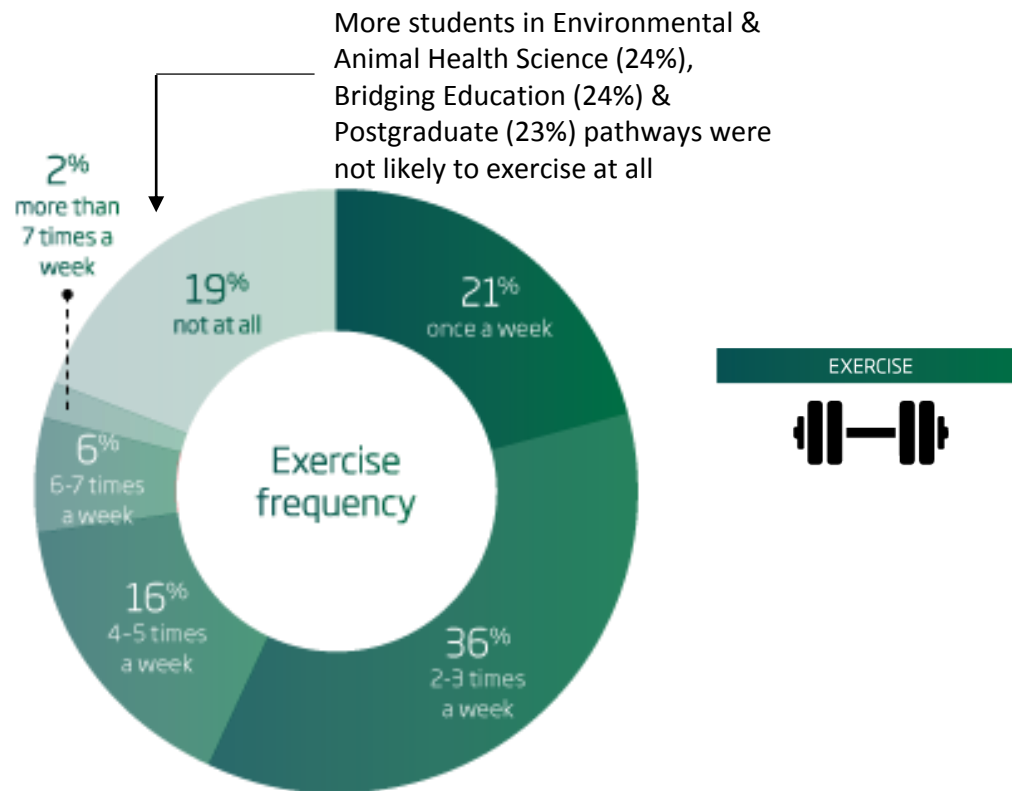


n=1647 Please select which statement best describes your attitude towards healthy eating



n=1642 Do you believe you can afford a healthy diet?

57% of students exercise 1-3 times a week, whilst 19% do not exercise at all



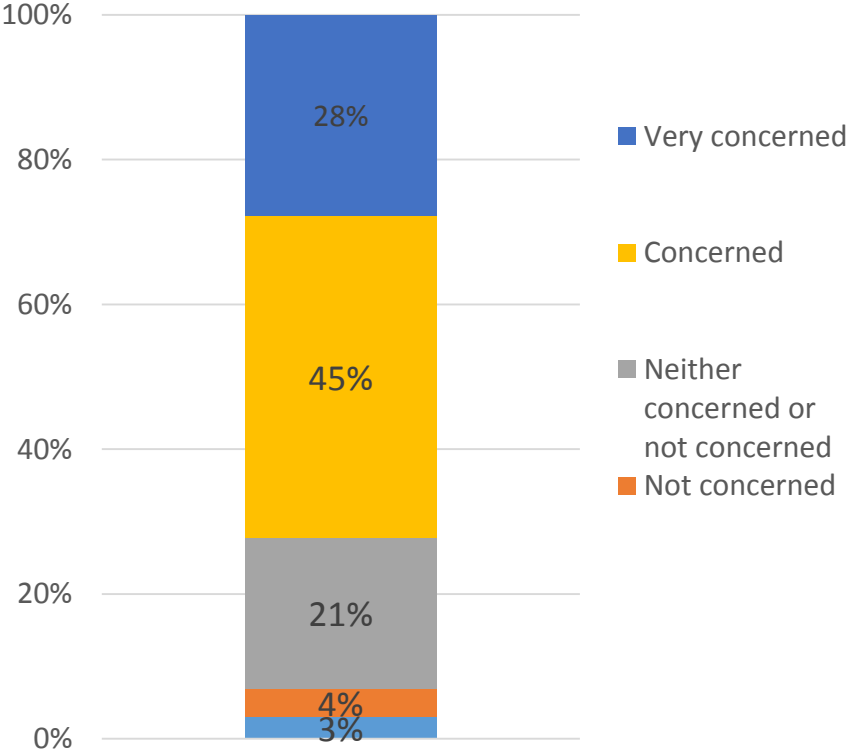
The **most popular** sports or type of exercise were:

Walking
Gym/Circuit Training/Boot camp/Weights
Running
Football/Soccer
Swimming
Basketball
Yoga
Cycling/Mountain biking
Badminton
Netball
Cricket
Group classes (e.g. Zumba)
At home exercise
Volleyball

Q. How often do you exercise in a typical week? n=1,768

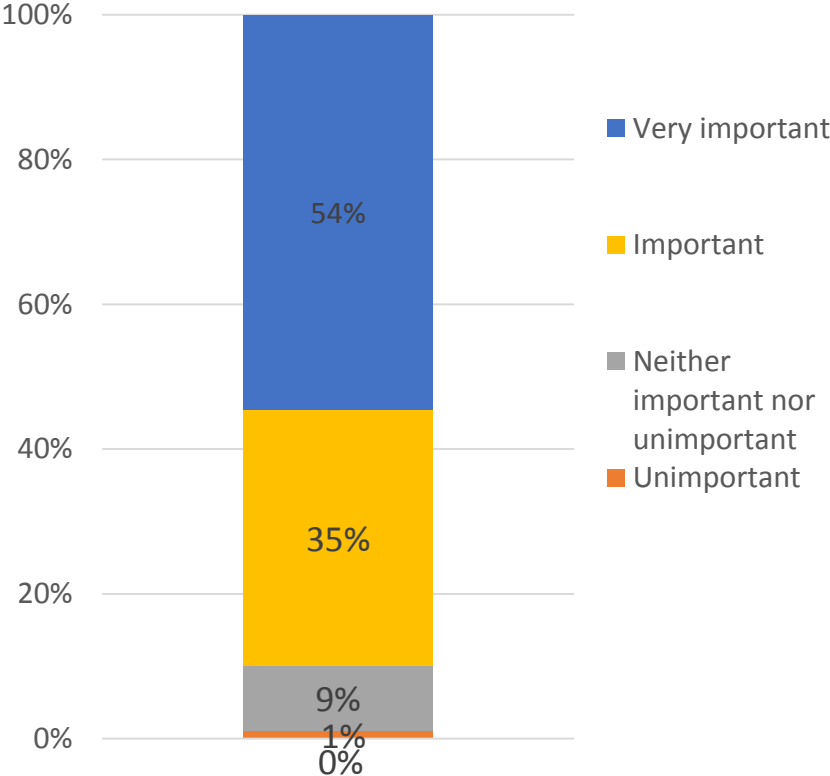
Q. What sports or type of exercise do you enjoy doing? n=1,647
Multi response Those sports shown n=50 & greater

The majority of students are concerned/very concerned about climate change and the environment (73%)



Q. "How concerned are you about climate change and the Environment" Total n=1,726

Just over half of students consider a **knowledge of sustainable practices** to be 'very important' for future employment (54%). Those in Architecture, Building Construction, Engineering and Vehicle Systems & Materials were more likely to state it was 'very important'



Q. "How important is a knowledge of sustainable practices for your future employment" Total n=1,235



Conclusion

- U Matter has enhanced our understanding of our students at a lifestyle level and given an indication of their attitudes to study and key concerns
- The segmentation has provided another lens through which to view our students, from both an acquisition and retention perspective
- Staff that work closely with students have said that while they were aware of some of the issues raised in the research, they lacked evidence-based data, U Matter has been able to supply this
- We intend the findings from the research to be shared with Student Support Services, Marketing, Transformation, Pacific Services, Te Puna Ako, Maia and International - the findings will also be tailored for individual Networks



Thank you

(Note: More depth information is available if required)

Business Intelligence / U Matter Team

Penny Zipfel, Vicki Li, Debbie Smith