*AdvanceHE



STUDENT ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE SURVEY

The Student Academic Experience Survey 2025

Jonathan Neves, Advance HE Josh Freeman, HEPI Rose Stephenson, HEPI

Perceptions of value-for-money have declined from last year, but trends are relatively flat over the medium term, "AdvanceHE with 'good value' perceptions well ahead of 'poor value'

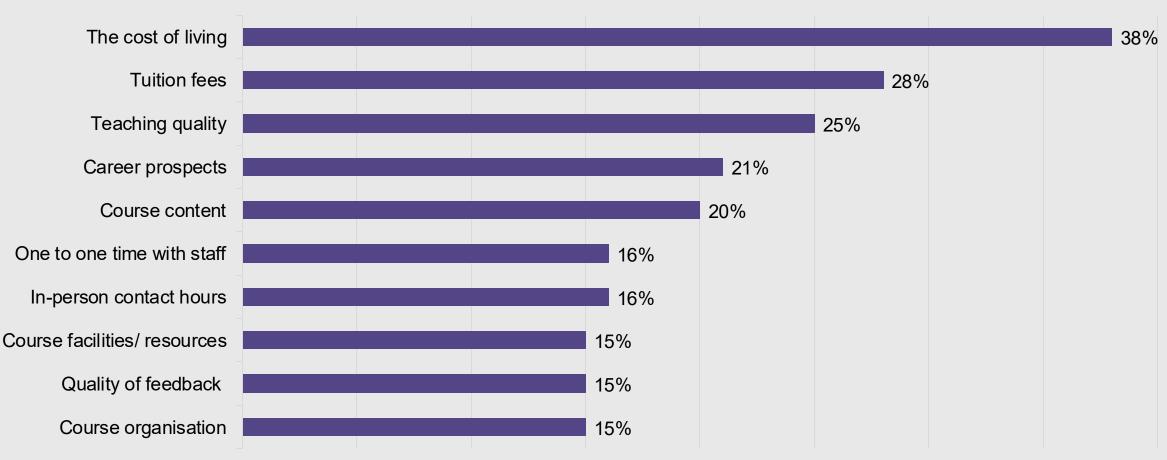
70% 60% 50% 44% 44% 41% 40% 39% 39% 38% 37% 37% 37% 40% 35% 35% 34% 30% 32% 32% 32% 31% 31% 29% 29% 27% 29% 26% 26% 20% 10% 0% 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 Good / Very Good Poor / Very Poor

Value for money of your present course

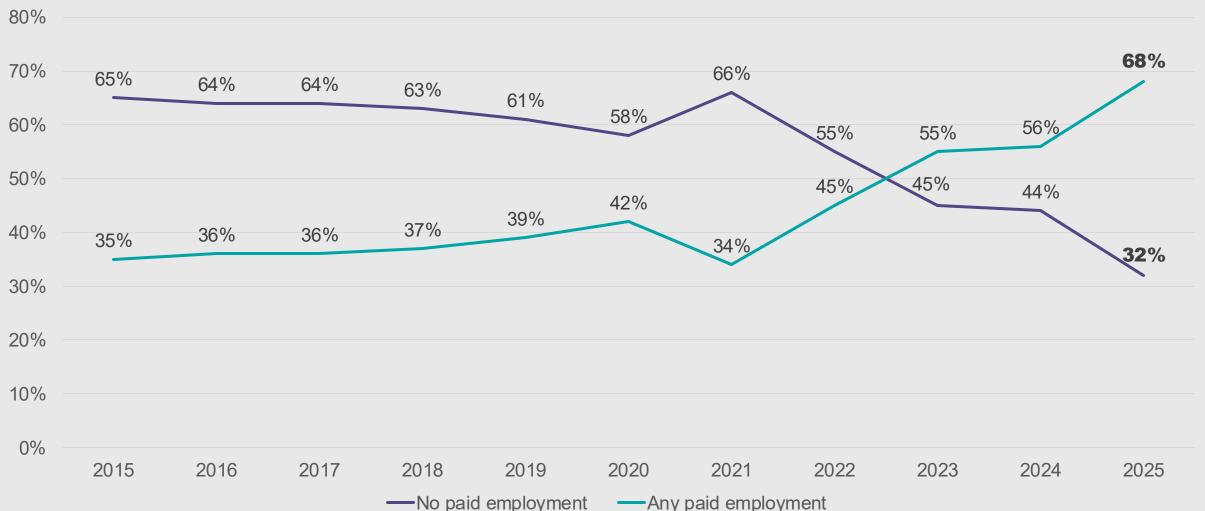
hepi)

Cost of living concerns are the main driver of perceptions of 'poor value' – now well ahead of other factors

When saying you received poor value / very poor value, what were you thinking about?



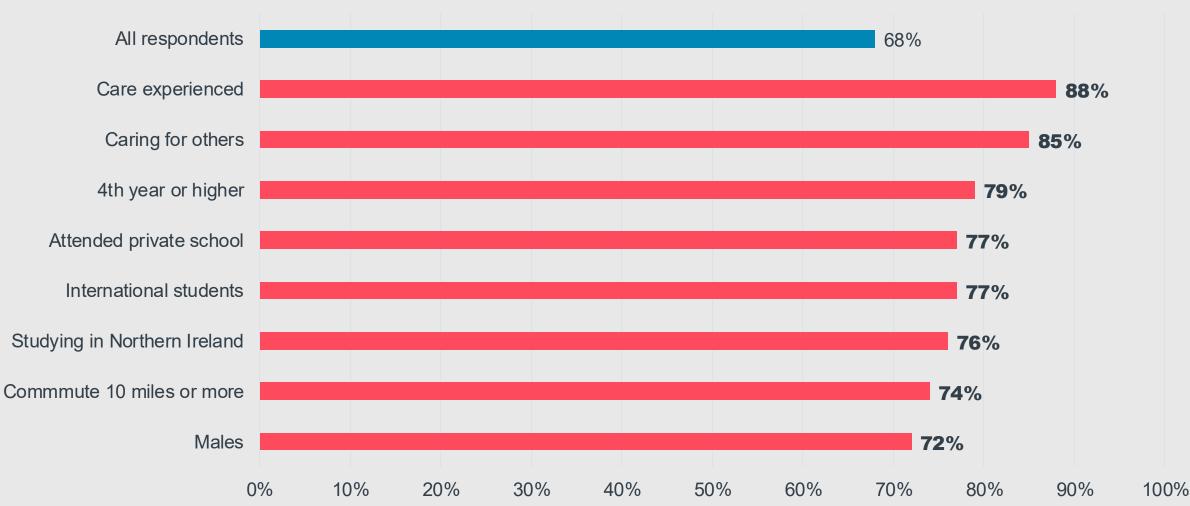
As a likely link to cost concerns, paid employment during term time has become the norm rather than the exception



Students in paid employment in term time

"AdvanceHE hep

Propensity to work for pay is even higher among particular demographic groups

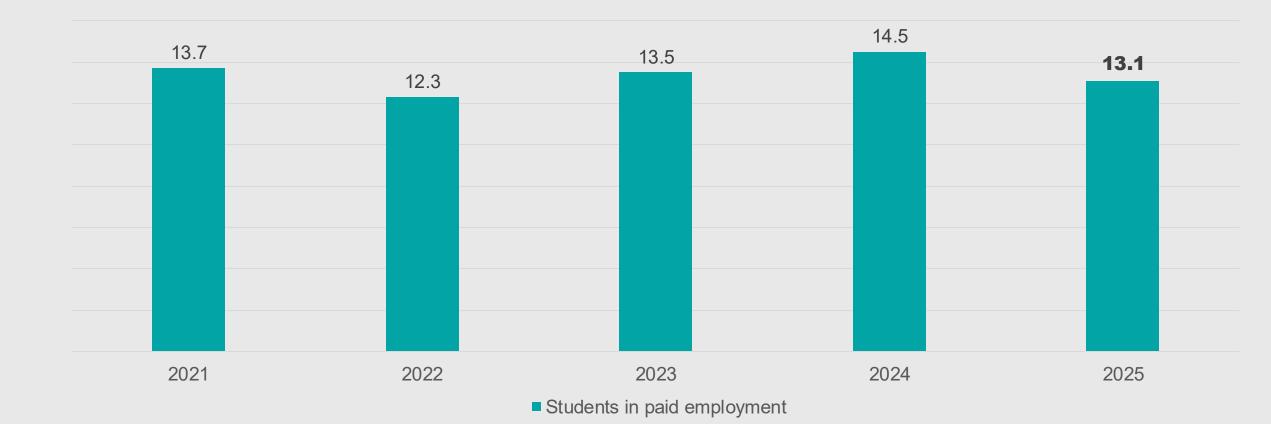


Selected cohorts with a high propensity to be in paid employment

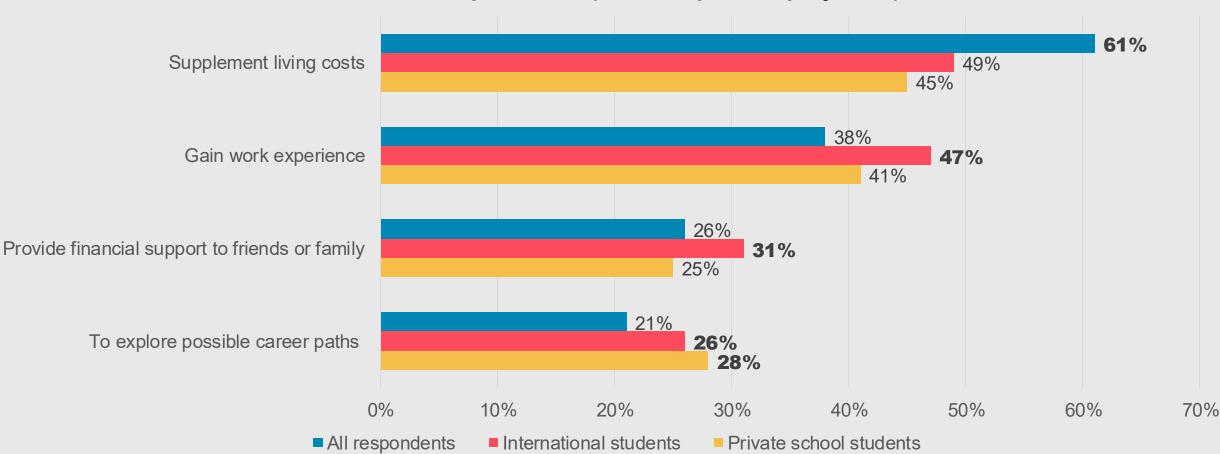
However, the average hours worked among those students has fallen – indicating more students are working but in some cases at slightly lower intensity

Paid employment – mean hours per week term time

"AdvanceHE



Reasons for paid work are principally economic, although career-related drivers also play a role for international students as well as those from private schools



Reasons for paid work (those in paid employment)

Increased paid employment looks to have had an impact on the time available for independent study, which has "Advance HE hepity fallen significantly

	Total study workload hours (in a typical week)	Timetabled hours attended	Independent study hours	Placements or fieldwork hours
2022	30.7	11.3	14.8	4.6
2023	33.4	13.4	14.5	5.6
2024	33.5	13.3	13.6	6.6
2025	30.8	13.1	11.6	6.2

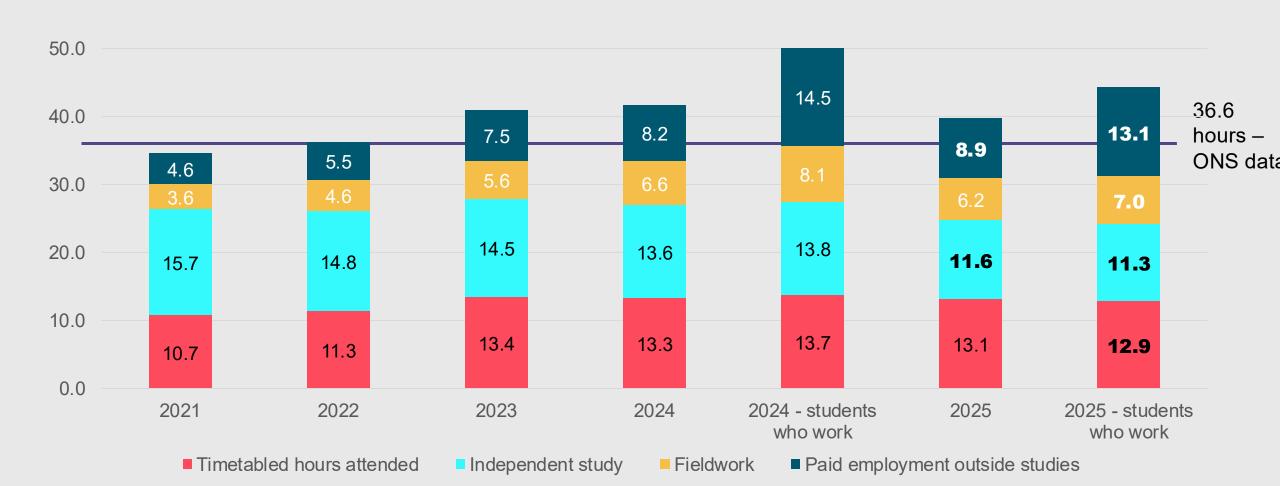
Workloads are still high, but appear to have reached a tipping point for now, with students in employment finding less time for classes or independent study

60.0

Average number of hours spent studying or in employment

***Advance**HE

hepi



Significantly, paid employment was not highlighted as something unexpected, with other factors cited instead when the experience did not meet expectations

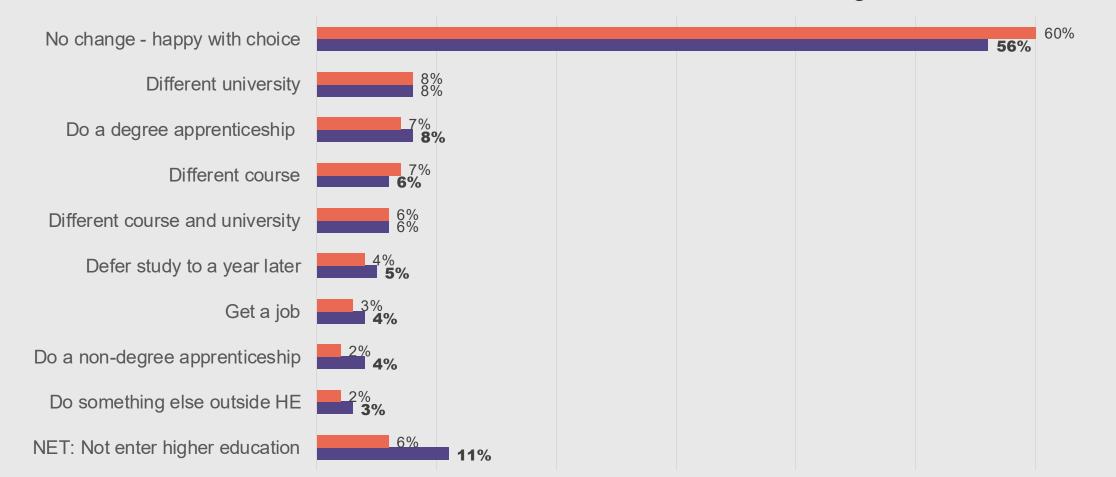
Teaching quality worse than expected 23% Don't feel supported in independent study 23% Have less disposable income than expected 23% Course is poorly organised 20% Feedback is poor 19% I have not put in enough effort myself 18% I have taken on more debt than expected 18% I spend more time commuting than expected 17% 11%

Why was your experience worse than expected?

*AdvanceHE

I spend more time in paid employment than I wanted / expected

With the benefit of hindsight, fewer students this year would make the same choice, with a clear increase in those considering options outside higher education



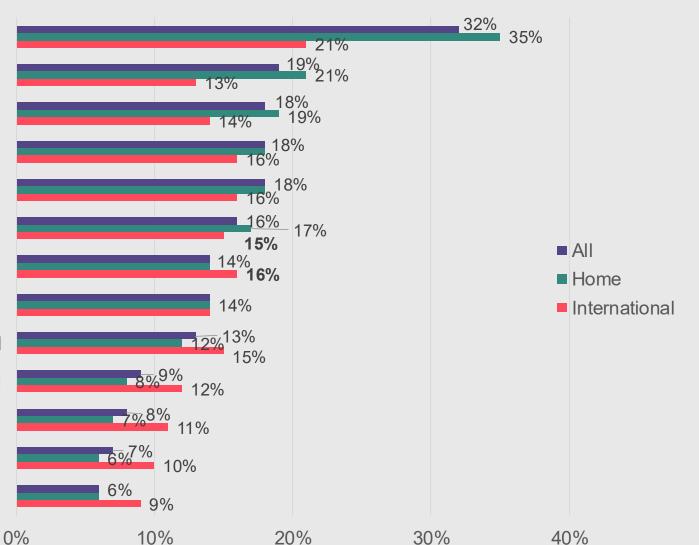
Whether students would make the same choice again

"AdvanceHE

Cost-of-living effects unchanged, but students have less disposable income and taking more debt than planned "AdvanceHE

Impacts of financial challenges

Less disposable income than expected Taken on more debt than planned I buy fewer books or equipment for my course than planned Took part in fewer sports & societies than planned I spend more time & money commuting than planned I spend more time in paid employment than planned I have different living arrangement than planned I spend less time on campus than planned Fewer course trips, fieldwork or placements than planned I spend more time caring for others than planned Selected a different institution than planned Selected a different course than planned Selected a different qualification type than planned

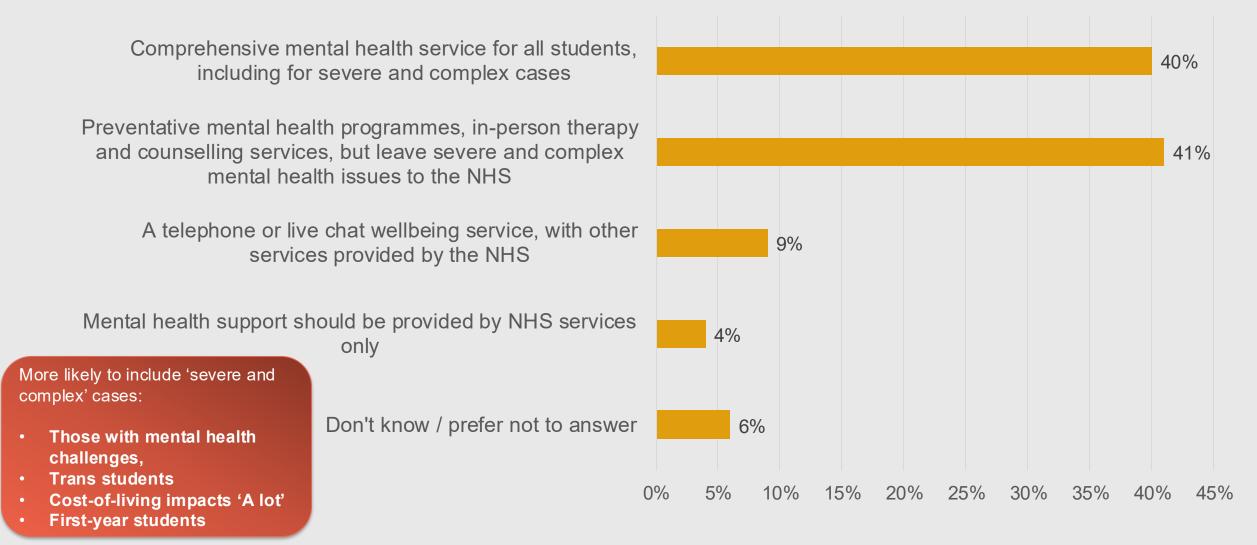


hepi

Students want 'comprehensive' mental health services, even for 'severe and complex' cases



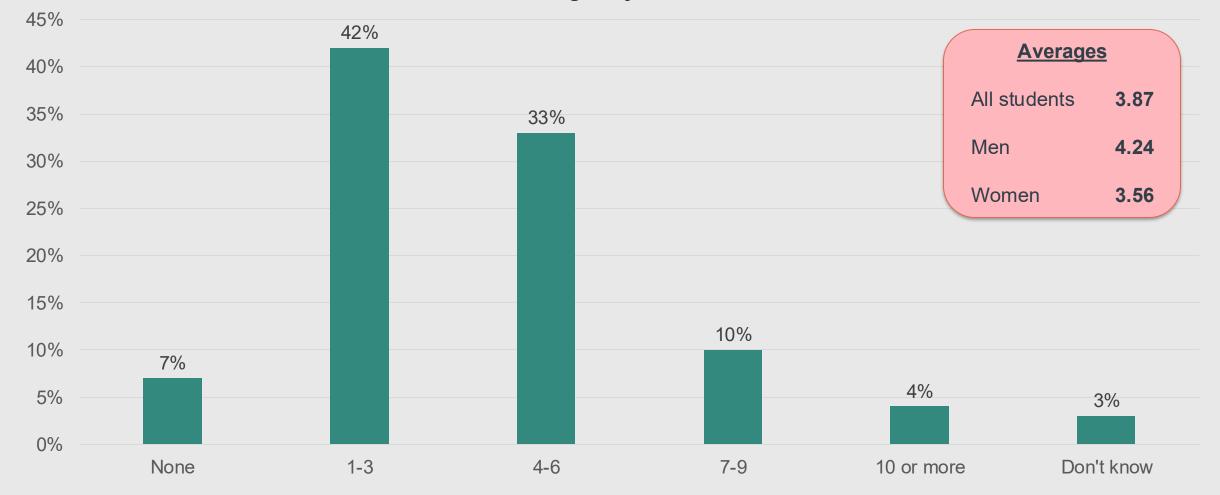
My institution should provide...



On average, about four academics know students' names and course progress

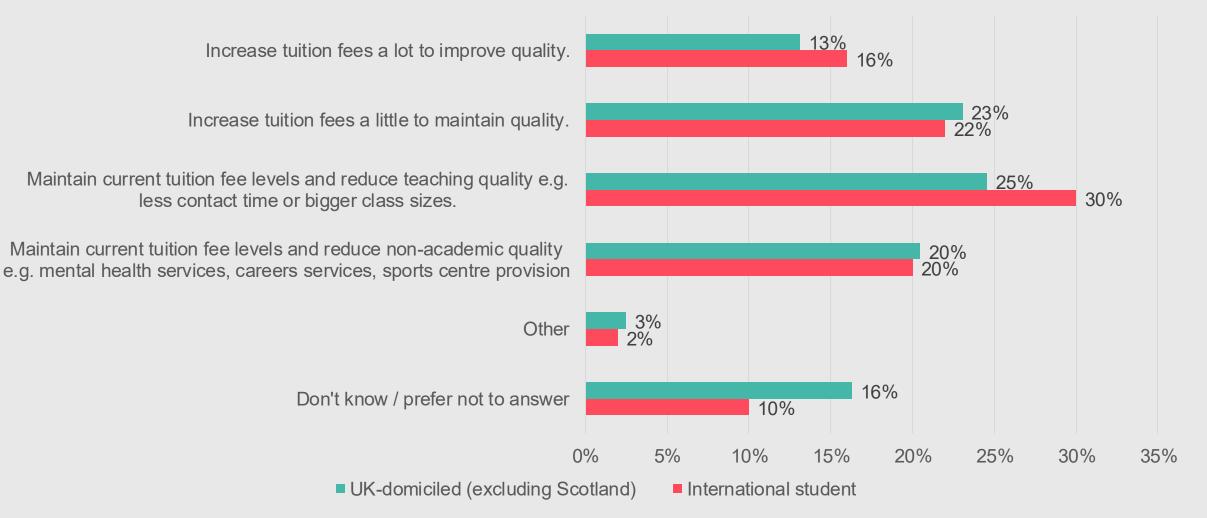
"AdvanceHE hep

How many academics know your name and have some idea of the progress you are making on your course?



Nearly half of students would accept lower quality if it meant lower fees

How to address financial challenges in UK higher education



Increase informed choice upon application & choice during study Measure completion & awarding rates in relation to paid work

Improve pre-arrival guidance

Increase maintenance
support

Incentivise take up of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement

Monitor assignment rates

Clarify who is responsible for mental health provision & fund it appropriately

Weave increased debate into higher education curricula Increase crosscurricula, problembased study