

# Next Steps: what is the experience of disabled students in education?

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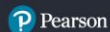


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## NEXT STEPS

WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE OF DISABLED STUDENTS IN EDUCATION?

In collaboration with



## NEXT STEPS

WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE OF LGBT+ STUDENTS IN EDUCATION?



## NEXT STEPS

WHO ARE THE 'FUTURE NURSES'?



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## WHERE NEXT?

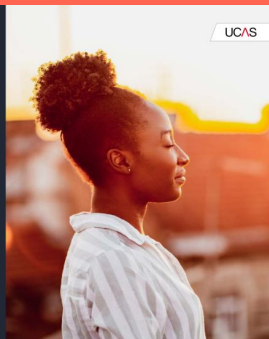
WHAT INFLUENCES THE CHOICES INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS MAKE?

CollegeBoard



## STARTING THE CONVERSATION

UCAS REPORT ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH



## WHERE NEXT?

WHO DOESN'T PLAN TO START A FULL-TIME UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN AUTUMN?



## WHERE NEXT?

THE EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS CONNECTING TO UK HIGHER EDUCATION



## WHERE NEXT?

IMPROVING THE JOURNEY TO ESCORING AN APPRENTICE



## WHERE NEXT?

What influences the choices school leavers make?



## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE COVID COHORT?

Lessons for levelling up in 2021 and beyond



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[www.ucas.com/about-us/news-and-insights/ucas-reports](http://www.ucas.com/about-us/news-and-insights/ucas-reports)

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The Next Steps series: A snapshot of applicants about to take their next steps

Survey data shows:

- experiences in education to date
- the decision-making journey – research, support and the UCAS application
- what they are looking forward to or worried about

UCAS data shows:

- intersectionality with other characteristics
- applicant preferences and behaviour

## NEXT STEPS

WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE  
OF LGBT+ STUDENTS IN  
EDUCATION?



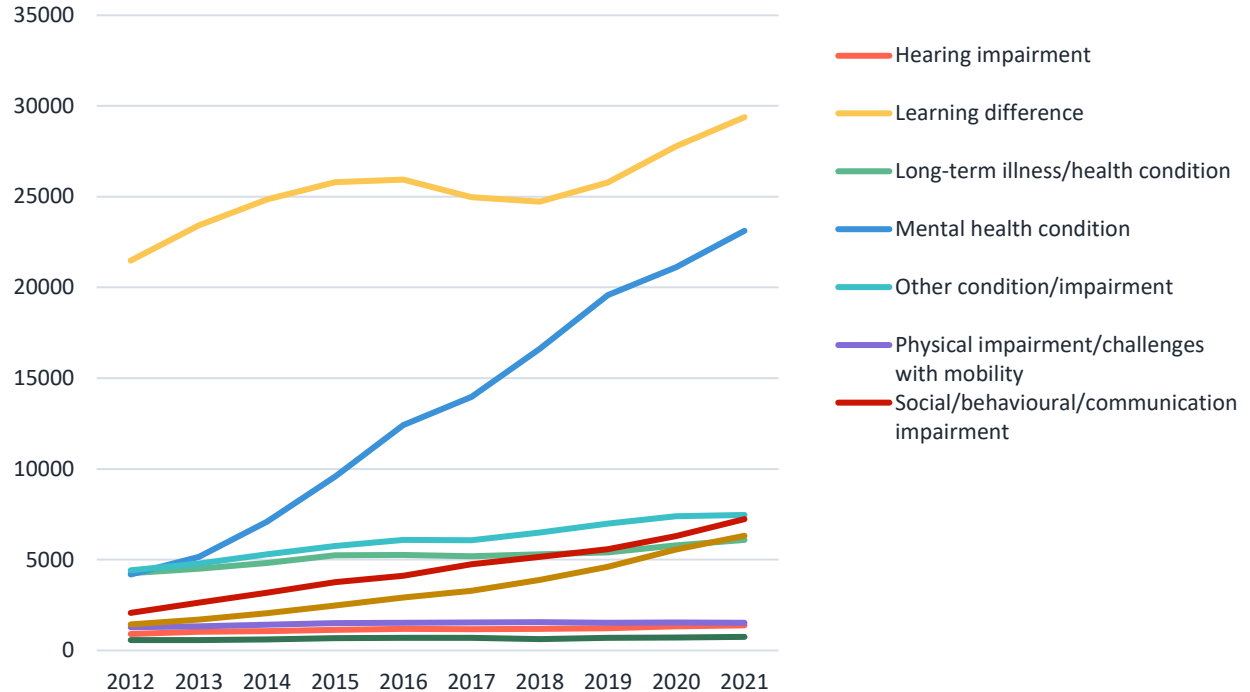
# Next Steps: What is the experience of disabled students in education?

- UCAS 2022 applicant data – intersectionality and trends in behaviours
- Survey data – nearly 5,000 applicants starting HE in 2022
- Comparison to third-party research and national data
- Identification of hidden or potential barriers
- Recommendations for UCAS, the HE and secondary education sectors, government and other organisations
- In partnership with Pearson, and with support from the Disabled Students' Commission



# 105% increase in applicants sharing a disability since 2012

- 1 in 7 UK applicants shared a disability via UCAS - over 83k in 2021
- Over a third share a learning difference (5% of all UK applicants)
- Greatest increases seen for:
  - Mental health conditions +453%
  - Two or more impairments +339%
  - Social, communication and behavioural impairments +249%



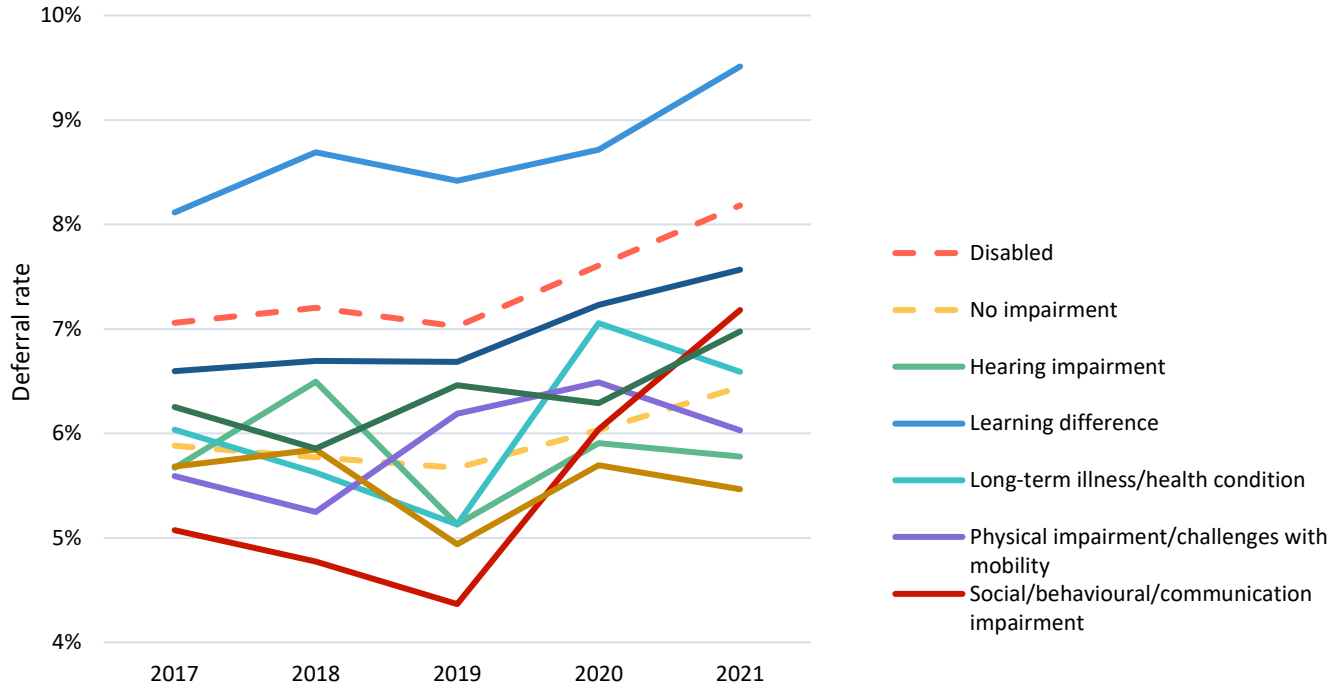
UK applicants sharing a condition, impairment, or mental health condition in the UCAS application 2012-2021



# UCAS student mental health report

[www.ucas.com/file/513961/download?token=wAaKRniC](http://www.ucas.com/file/513961/download?token=wAaKRniC)

# Disabled applicants 23% more likely to defer entry to HE



# Intersectionality is important ...

**GENDER**



**AGE**



**SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
DISADVANTAGE**



**ETHNICITY**



Lower women:men ratio than for non-disabled students (1.3:1)

More likely to be in the 19-29 age category

A higher proportion of people from the most advantaged areas

Much more likely to be from the White ethnic group

**LGBT+**



**CARE EXPERIENCE**



**QUALIFICATIONS TO  
ACCESS HE**



**A LEVEL ATTAINMENT**



Almost twice as likely to identify as LGBT+

1.7 times more likely to be care experienced

Study a wider range of Level 3 qualifications

Fewer achieve the top grades in their A levels



# ... but impairment category is vital



Physical impairments or challenges with mobility

More likely to achieve **higher A level grades** but enter **lower tariff** providers



Visual impairments

Most likely to apply **closer to home** and less likely to take a **variety of post-16 qualifications**



Social, communication or behavioural impairments

Twice as likely to be **men** and be care-experienced



Learning differences

Significantly more likely to come from the **most advantaged backgrounds**



Hearing impairments

More likely to study **alternative Level 3 qualifications**



Long-term illnesses or health conditions

More likely to be **mature** students apply for **medicine and healthcare courses**

# UCAS data: so what?

Key issues for higher education:

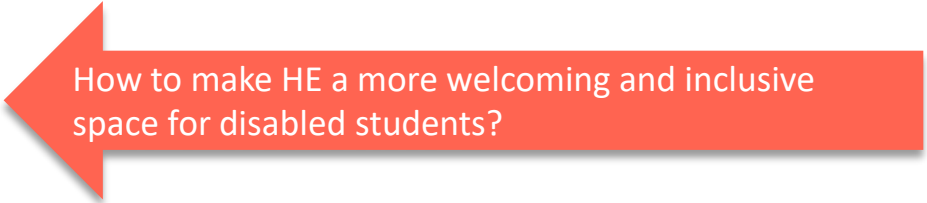
1. Each category of impairment brings different behaviours and support needs, as does intersectionality with other characteristics.
2. Disabled applicants are more likely to delay applying or defer entry.
3. Disabled applicants are under-represented in HE.



How to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach? How to accommodate multiple support needs?



How to ensure parity of experience for all?



How to make HE a more welcoming and inclusive space for disabled students?

# Disabled applicants told us:

## Their expectations for HE exceed experiences in school or college

- 53% valued the **educational support** they received at school or college
- 48% felt they received good **general or pastoral support** at school or college
- 61% expected the **educational support** to be good in HE
- 65% expected the **pastoral support** be good

## Information and research is key

- 56% **researched support** for disabled students before applying
- 20% **encountered problems** when researching support
- Most influenced by a provider's **reputation for equality and diversity**

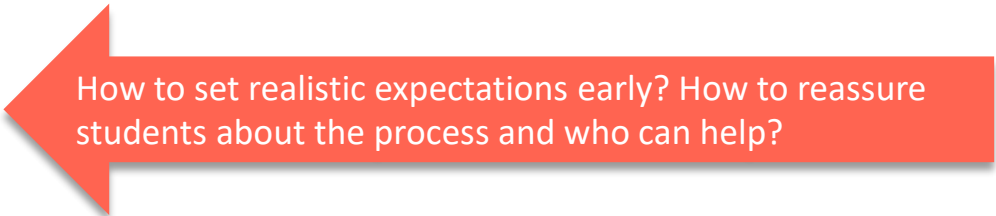
## Sharing continues to cause anxiety

- 13% **felt uncomfortable** sharing an impairment or condition
- 29% were worried that sharing would impact their chance of **receiving an offer**

# Student survey data: so what?

Key issues for higher education:

1. Students struggle to understand what support will look like, whether it will be received as described, and if it will be sustained.
2. Those with hidden disabilities are more likely to have had negative experiences and feel uncomfortable sharing.
3. Misconceptions about how disability information is used by HE admissions.



How to set realistic expectations early? How to reassure students about the process and who can help?



How to address concerns and individual needs of those with hidden disabilities?



How to improve transparency and build confidence?

# Recommendations

1. Extend the DWP's Access to Work Adjustment Passport scheme to ease the transition of students into HE and across their education lifecycle
2. The progression journey for disabled students needs to start earlier
3. Greater transparency and detail about support in HE for disabled students, to ensure informed decision making
4. Equity of access for all children, regardless of background, to diagnostic assessment of learning differences and support

# Thank you

# Any questions?

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