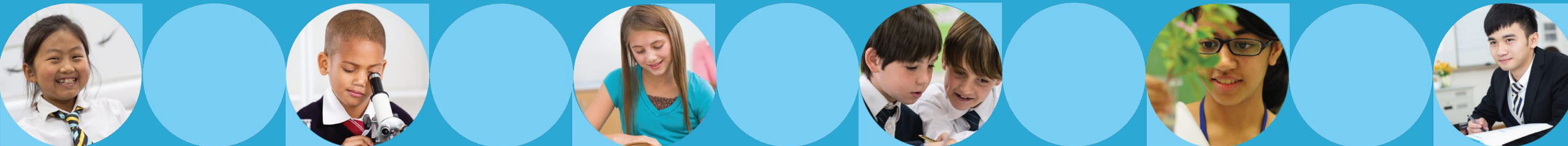




**Cambridge Assessment  
International Education**

# Student destinations survey 2020

Cambridge International, July 2021



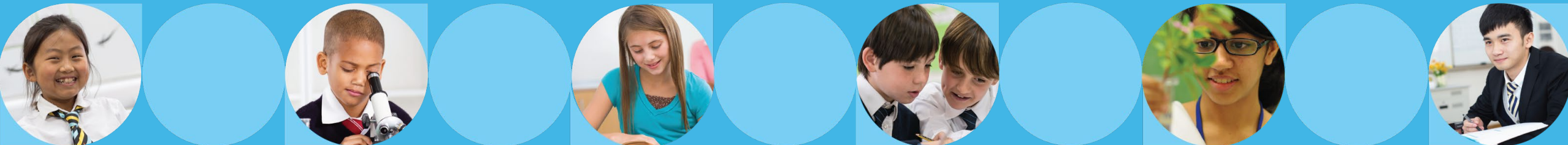
# Introduction

Every year, we invite all schools with recent Cambridge International AS & A Level graduates to complete our Student Destinations survey and tell us about where these students went on to study. The most recent survey about the 2020 cohort also included questions about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on destination choices. Thank you to all 296 schools from 55 countries who took part – we really appreciate your contribution! We would hereby like to share a summary of the key findings based on this sample which may be of interest to Cambridge schools.

## How are the findings used?

- ▶ While the sample is limited, the responses that we do get give us a good picture of the top destinations for our students, and an idea of how the trends are evolving and changing over time in line with the impact of major global influences such as Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. This informs the Recognitions team of emerging destinations such as Canada, Japan and Turkey becoming increasingly popular in recent years. This helps focus their recognition efforts and resource development to support Guidance Counsellors in schools through destination country webpages, brochures and college fair participation.
- ▶ The Destinations survey also informs the Recognitions team about how useful schools find our existing resources, such as the Recognition database which allows students to access which universities from around the world accept Cambridge qualifications, so they can apply with confidence. The findings also provide greater insight into which qualifications students apply to university with, so the team can use this information to inform conversations with both schools and universities. Finally, the survey results serve as a useful indicator when considering how the trends compare with national and global student migration data provided identified by organisations such as UCAS, QS and the British Council.

# Key facts & figures



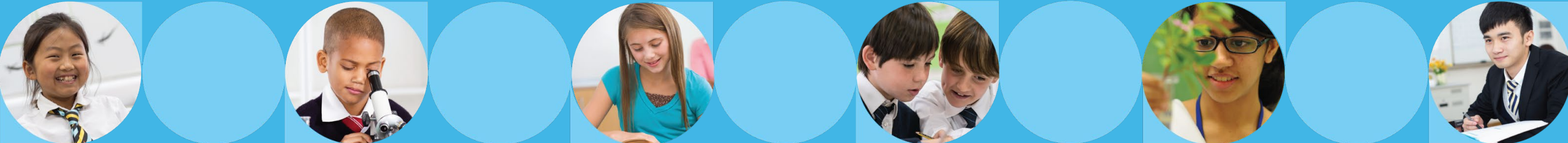
# Key facts & figures

- ▶ It is estimated that 94% of Cambridge students progressed to university in 2020\*.
  - ▶ An estimated 57% of the cohort progressed to a university in their own country\*
  - ▶ An estimated 36% of the cohort progressed to a university outside their own country\*
- ▶ In 2020, it is estimated that 70% of Cambridge students went on to attend a top-500 ranked university, compared to 68% in 2019\*\*.
- ▶ In 2020, Cambridge students progressed to at least 337 of the world's top 500 universities (compared to progressing to 285 in 2019).

\*Figures based on the findings from 296 Cambridge schools with a combined student cohort of approximately 17,380 students.

\*\*Estimated that 7,740 students out of 11,042 where a named university was given went on to attend a Top 500 university, as defined by the QS world rankings.

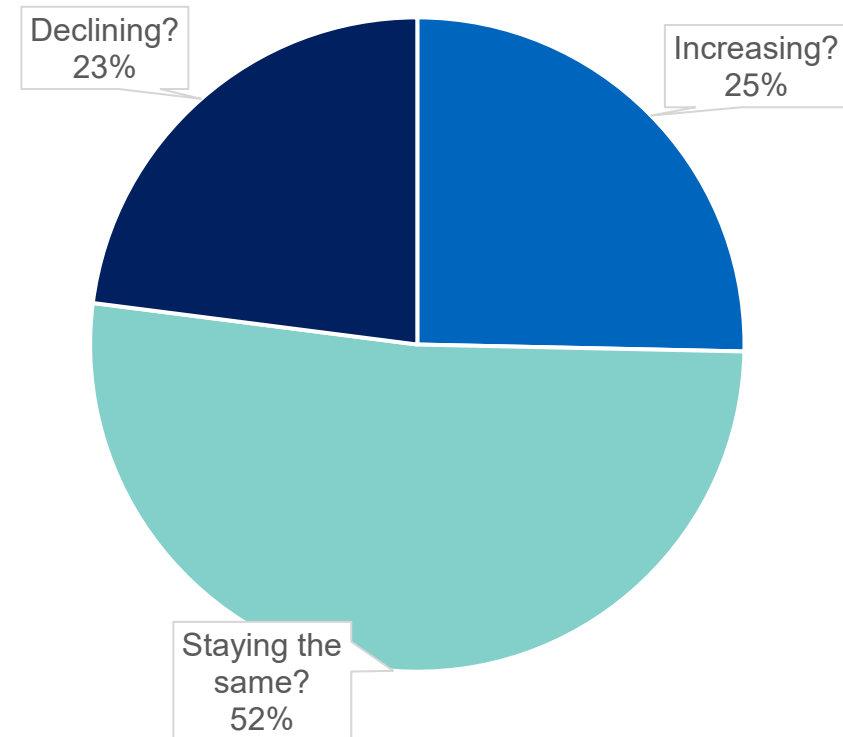
# Key trends



# Going to university outside their country

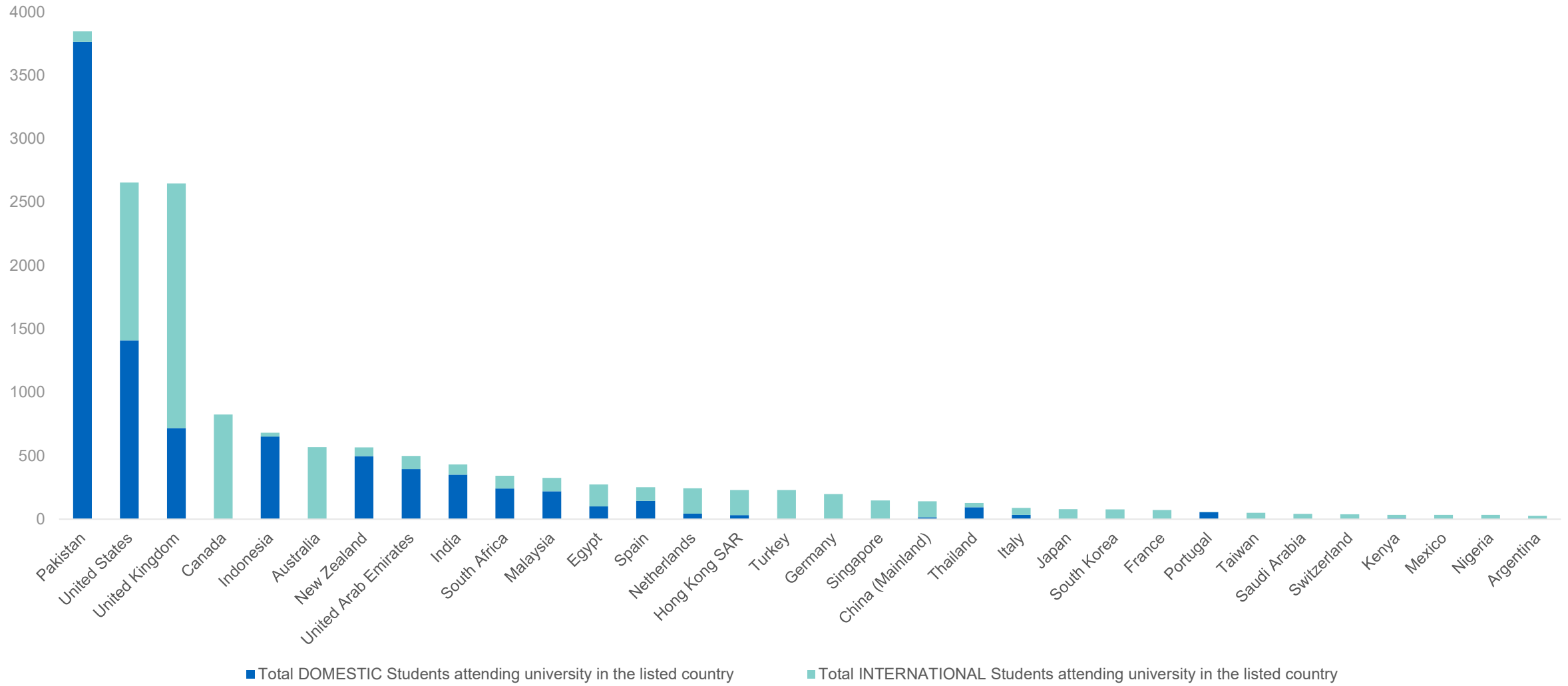
- ▶ 25% of schools say the trend for their Cambridge students going to university outside their own country is increasing. 23% say it is declining – a significant increase on previous years and likely caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ▶ Those who say the trend is declining say this is due to:
  - ▶ Covid-19 pandemic
  - ▶ Brexit (for applications to the UK)
- ▶ Those who say the trend is increasing say this is due to:
  - ▶ Greater awareness of international education and the greater choice of courses and wider career opportunities it offers
  - ▶ Greater awareness of scholarships and funding which makes going to university abroad more financially viable

Is the trend for your Cambridge students going to university outside your own country...



Base: 296

# Domestic vs international students by destination country



These numbers are based on a survey of 296 Cambridge schools. The total number of Cambridge students who attend university in these countries will be much higher.

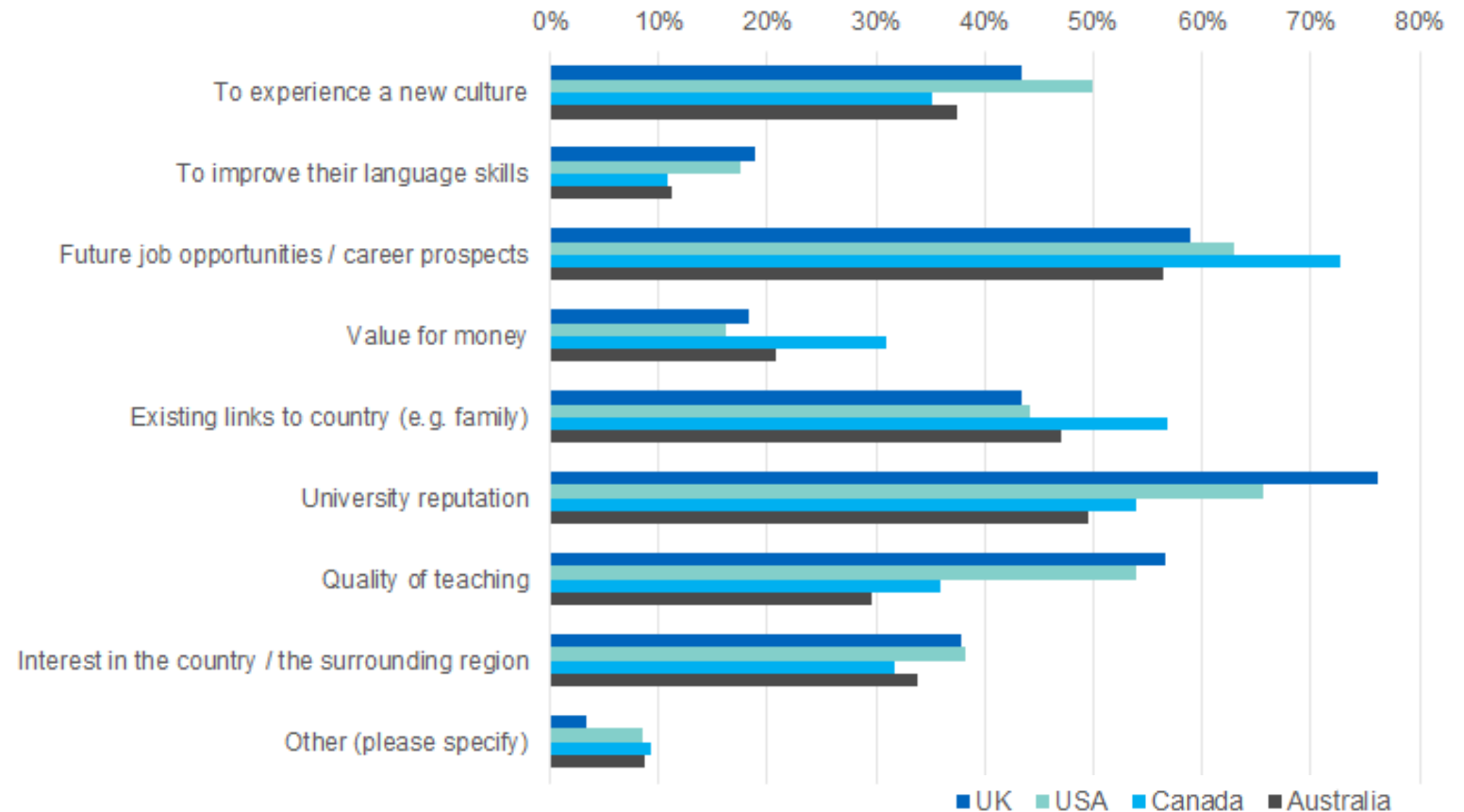
# Top 3 destinations by school region

School region	Most popular university destination	2 <sup>nd</sup> most popular university destination	3 <sup>rd</sup> most popular university destination
UK	UK	USA	Italy
Europe	UK	Spain	Netherlands
Latin America	<i>[sample size too small]</i>		
N. America	USA	Canada	-
Middle East & N. Africa	UAE	UK	Egypt
Pakistan	Pakistan	UK	USA
Sub-Saharan Africa	South Africa	UK	USA
S. Asia	India	USA	Canada
E. Asia	UK	USA	Australia
SE Asia & Pacific	Indonesia	New Zealand	UK



# Reasons for studying in top 4 international destinations

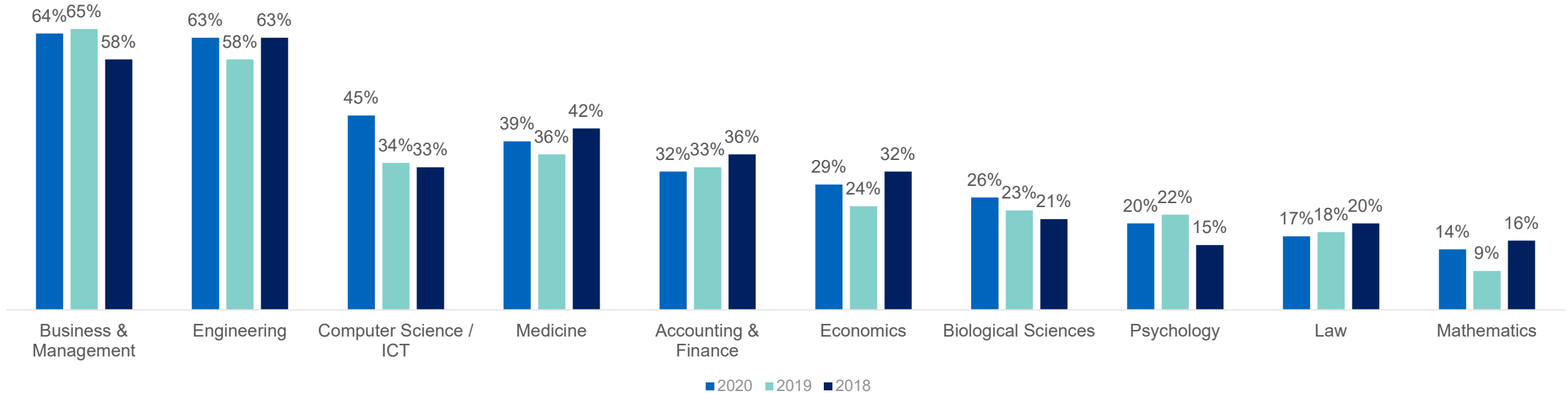
- ▶ Canada and Australia are most attractive for future job opportunities/career prospects
- ▶ UK and USA are most attractive for university reputation
- ▶ Canada scored relatively highly on value for money compared to other destinations.
- ▶ These findings are broadly the same as the 2018 and 2019 surveys, suggesting the reasons students are attracted to these destinations has changes little year on year.



Base: UK 180; US 154; Canada 139; Australia 115

# Most popular subjects – year on year trends

- ▶ Respondents were asked to choose the 5 most popular subjects for students to study at university.
- ▶ There is little change in the top subjects, although accounting & finance has seen year on year decline in popularity. The chart shows the top 10 subjects.
- ▶ Computer Science/ICT has shown an increase this year, compared to previous years.

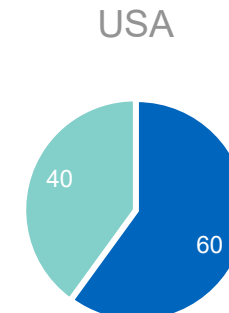
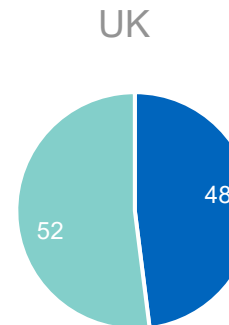
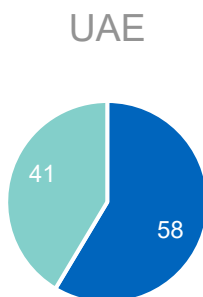
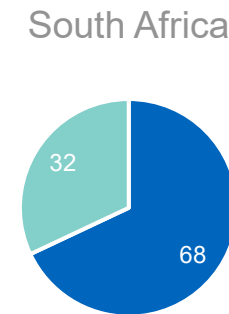
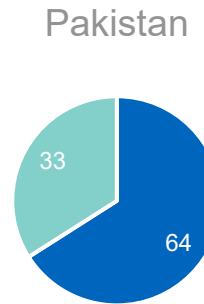
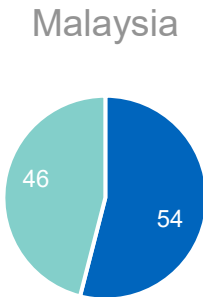
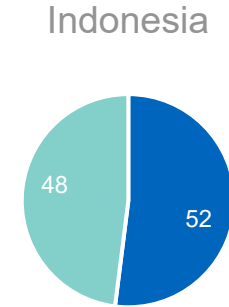
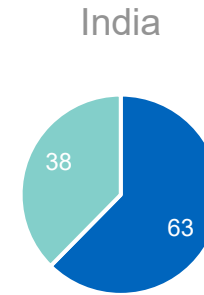
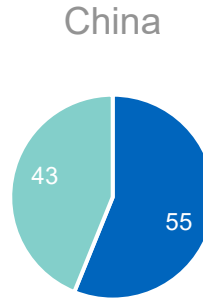
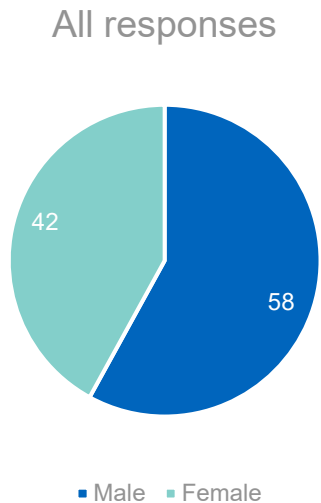


For purposes of comparison, data shows percentage of schools who selected subject as one of the top five their students go on to study.

Base: 2020: 296 schools 2019: 288 schools 2018: 470 schools

# Students studying STEM: gender split

- ▶ Participants were asked what proportion of students who went on to study STEM (science, technology, engineering & mathematics) subjects were male and female.
- ▶ Across all responses, the average split was:
  - ▶ Male 58% Female 42%
- ▶ The charts show the splits in some of the key countries.



# Changes in student destination or subject

Trends remain similar to those observed over the last couple of years, although with the added factor of the Covid-19 pandemic, which is addressed in the following section in this report.

## ▶ Covid-19

The pandemic was mentioned as a reason for changes to student destinations, although many respondents perceive this a temporary blip rather than a sustained trend at the moment.

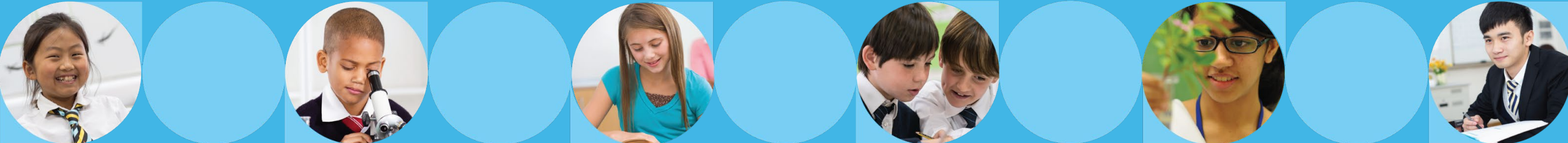
## ▶ UK – Brexit and increased fees make it less attractive

Brexit and the corresponding loss of the home-fee status, leading to increased tuition fees for EU students is a big issue for the UK. Many European respondents, and some from elsewhere, report students looking at more financially attractive alternatives to the UK, with Netherlands and Republic of Ireland both benefitting from students considering other options.

## ▶ US

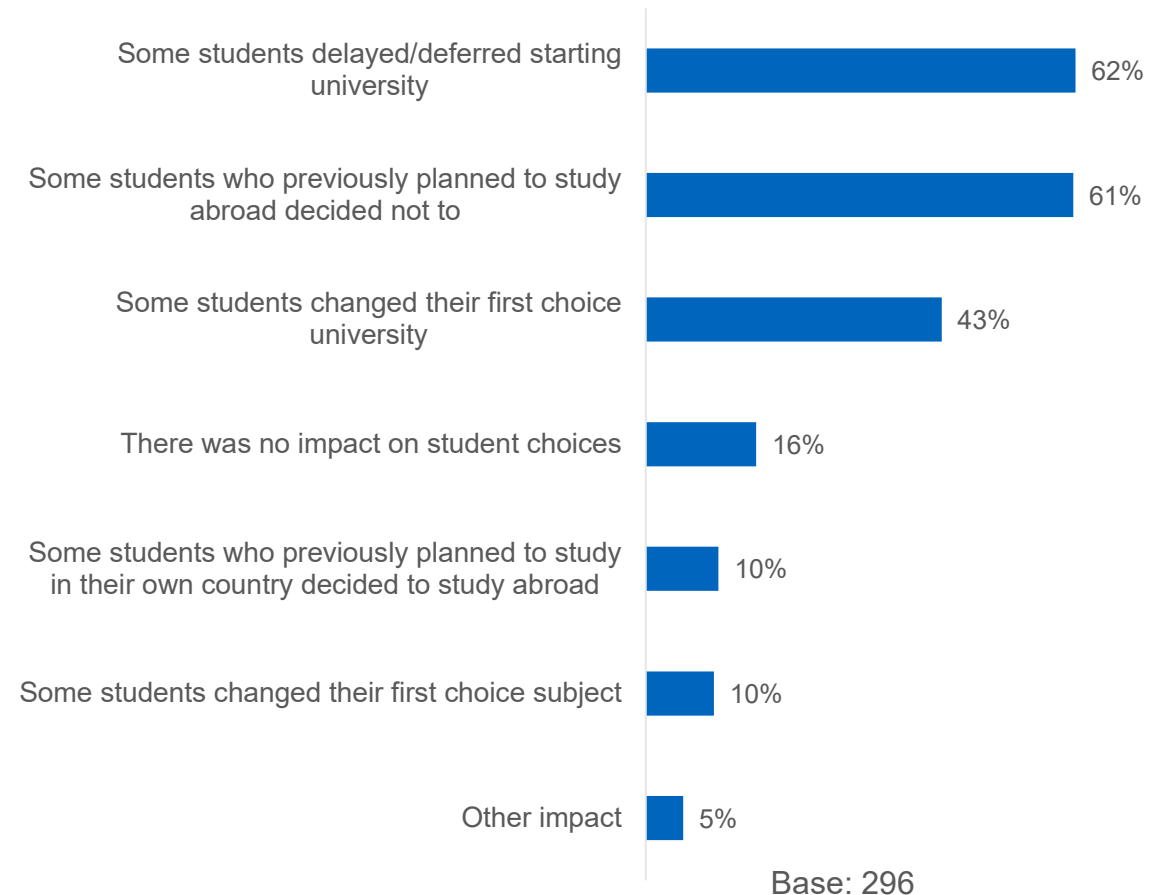
Several respondents report the US as being less attractive – some put this down to the current political situation (although the specifics of this are unclear) and high Covid-19 rates, which make this a less attractive destination. Canada appears to benefit from decreased interest in US study.

# Impact of Covid-19

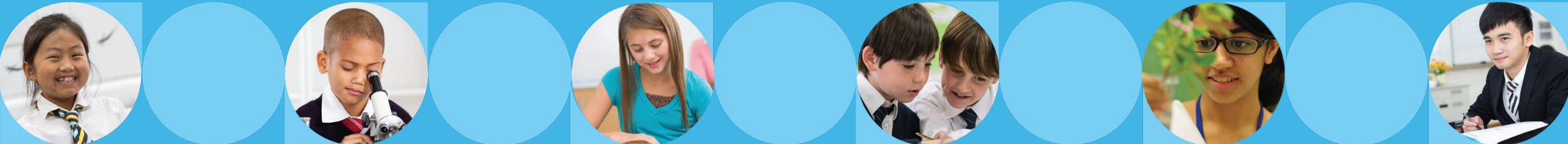


# What impact, if any, did the Covid-19 pandemic have on your students' choices?

- ▶ Only 16% of respondents said that the pandemic did not have an effect on student choices.
- ▶ The main impacts were students delaying starting university and deciding not to study abroad.
- ▶ Other impacts were:
  - ▶ Students beginning their studies online but staying at home
  - ▶ Choosing to delay exams due to the disruption
  - ▶ Some students who had planned a gap year chose to go to university immediately because they could no longer travel etc.
- ▶ Europe, North America and South Asia schools were least likely to report a Covid-19 impact.
- ▶ Pakistan and South Asia were more likely than other regions to report students deciding not to study abroad.
- ▶ UK, Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia were most likely to report students deferring university.



# Spotlight on individual countries of origin



# Schools in Pakistan

39 schools responded

## Top 3 destination countries

1. Pakistan
2. UK
3. United States

## Top 5 universities

1. LAHORE UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES (LUMS)
2. NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY (NUST) ISLAMABAD
3. INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (IBA), KARACHI
4. GHULUM ISHAQ KHAN INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY
5. AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

## Top 5 subjects

1. Engineering
2. Business & Management
3. Computer Science / ICT
4. Accounting and Finance
5. Medicine

## Comments & trends

- More likely to stay in Pakistan due to pandemic
- More cost conscious and looking for scholarships – partly as a result of the pandemic



# Schools in Malaysia

11 schools responded

## Top 3 destination countries

1. Malaysia
2. UK
3. Australia

## Top 5 universities

1. TAYLOR'S UNIVERSITY
2. IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON
3. LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (LSE)
4. THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
5. KINGS COLLEGE LONDON

## Top 5 subjects

1. Engineering
2. Medicine
3. Economics
4. Law
5. Accounting & Finance / Mathematics / Psychology

## Comments & trends

- Preferring to stay in Asia because of the handling of Covid-19 in the West
- Avoiding US universities because of high Covid-19 rate.

# Schools in India

34 schools responded

## Top 3 destination countries

1. India
2. USA
3. UK

## Top 5 universities

1. ASHOKA UNIVERSITY
2. FLAME UNIVERSITY
3. NMIMS UNIVERSITY
4. CHRIST UNIVERSITY
5. AMITY UNIVERSITY

## Top 5 subjects

1. Business & Management = 1
2. Engineering =1
3. Computer Science / ICT
4. Economics
5. Liberal Arts / Studies

## Comments & trends

- Rise in interest in Canada and Australia
- Some broader range of subjects being studied

# Schools in the USA

22 schools responded

## Top 3 destination countries

1. USA
2. Canada
3. -

## Top 5 universities

1. UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
2. FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
3. FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
4. UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
5. FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY

## Top 5 subjects

1. Engineering
2. Business & Management
3. Medicine
4. Nursing & Social Work
5. Biological Sciences

## Comments & trends

- Some increase in number of schools being applied for
- Staying in state and closer to home

# Schools in China

20 schools responded

## Top 3 destination countries

1. UK
2. USA
3. Canada

## Top 5 subjects

1. Economics
2. Business & Management =2
3. Mathematics =2
4. Engineering
5. Accounting & Finance

## Top 5 universities

1. UCL (UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON)
2. THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
3. IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON
4. KING'S COLLEGE LONDON (KCL)
5. UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

## Comments & trends

- More likely to choose the UK over the US because of Covid-19 rates.
- More likely to take a gap year this year
- Increase in interest in other Asian universities

# Schools in Indonesia

24 schools responded

## Top 3 destination countries

1. Indonesia
2. USA
3. Singapore

## Top 5 universities

1. BINUS UNIVERSITY
2. UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
3. UNIVERSITY OF INDONESIA
4. UNIVERSITAS GADJAH MAJA
5. MONASH UNIVERSITY

## Top 5 subjects

1. Business & Management
2. Computer Science / ICT
3. Engineering
4. Accounting & Finance
5. Medicine

## Comments & trends

- Some conflicting trends reported – some say more likely to stay at home, others say more interest in overseas universities.

# Schools in South Africa

15 schools responded

## Top 3 destination countries

1. South Africa
2. USA
3. UK

## Top 5 universities

1. STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
2. UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
3. UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
4. UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
5. UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

## Top 5 subjects

1. Engineering
2. Business & Management
3. Accounting & Finance
4. Law
5. Medicine

## Comments & trends

- Few trends observed – one noticed trends in subjects related to Covid-19.

# Schools in UAE

15 schools responded

## Top 3 destination countries

1. UAE
2. UK
3. Canada
4. Pakistan
5. Egypt

## Top 5 universities

1. MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY (UAE)
2. AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH
3. ABU DHABI UNIVERSITY
4. CANADIAN UNIVERSITY OF DUBAI
5. AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN DUBAI

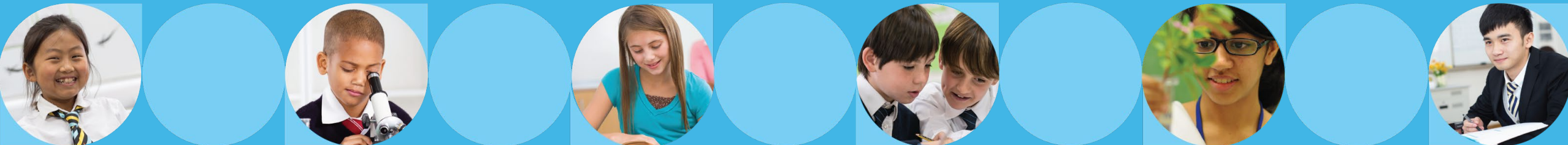
## Top 5 subjects

1. Engineering
2. Medicine
3. Accounting & Finance
4. Business & Management
5. Computer Science / ICT

## Comments & trends

- One says Canada increasing in popularity
- One says more likely to choose UAE or their home country

# How schools track and advise their students





# Maintaining records

- ▶ 74% of schools maintain an alumni network
- ▶ 78% of schools maintain a record of student placements
- ▶ 82% of schools maintain a school profile

Base: 347 schools



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# Thank you

Any questions?

Contact [marketresearch@cambridgeinternational.org](mailto:marketresearch@cambridgeinternational.org)

