



UniSmart: Giving Students a Head Start
United Kingdom Surveys Report

September 2010

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1 Introduction and design

The first year at university can be daunting for students. The transition from secondary school to tertiary education involves learning about new ways of living as much as new ways of learning.

The UniSmart presentation has been designed to help students manage that transition. Built around a high energy blast of street theatre tactics, straight talking, music, comedy and visuals, the UniSmart presentation is specifically designed to engage and empower students.

For many students struggling with a major life change, the presentation has been described as “a lifesaver”. The presentation covers such important topics as:

- Culture shock
- Living with diversity
- Coping with isolation and shyness
- Making friends
- Sex, drugs, alcohol, and rock and roll
- Staying safe
- Studying smart.

UniSmart is currently delivered on university campuses in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and Canada. This document reports the results of the student evaluations of the UniSmart presentations run at United Kingdom Universities in 2010 and provides a snapshot of what concerns students have, their social habits and personal situations when they start their university careers.

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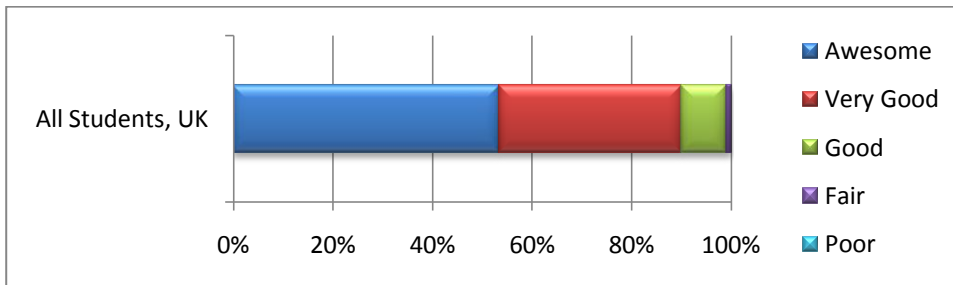


2 How well did UniSmart do?

2.1 Rating of UniSmart

Students from all universities who saw the UniSmart presentation gave it high marks. 88% of those students rated the presentation as 'awesome' or 'very good' (on a five point scale that ranged from 'poor' to 'awesome').

Chart 2.1: United Kingdom students' rating of UniSmart, 2010



The students who saw the UniSmart presentation gave it high marks. 91% of those students rated the presentation as 'awesome' or 'very good'

Chart 2.2: United Kingdom Students' rating of UniSmart, 2010

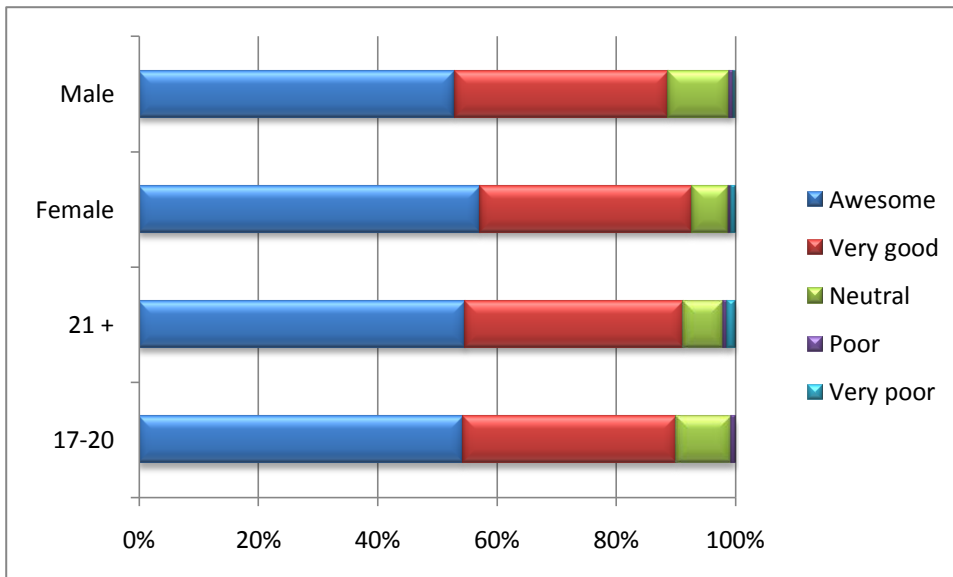
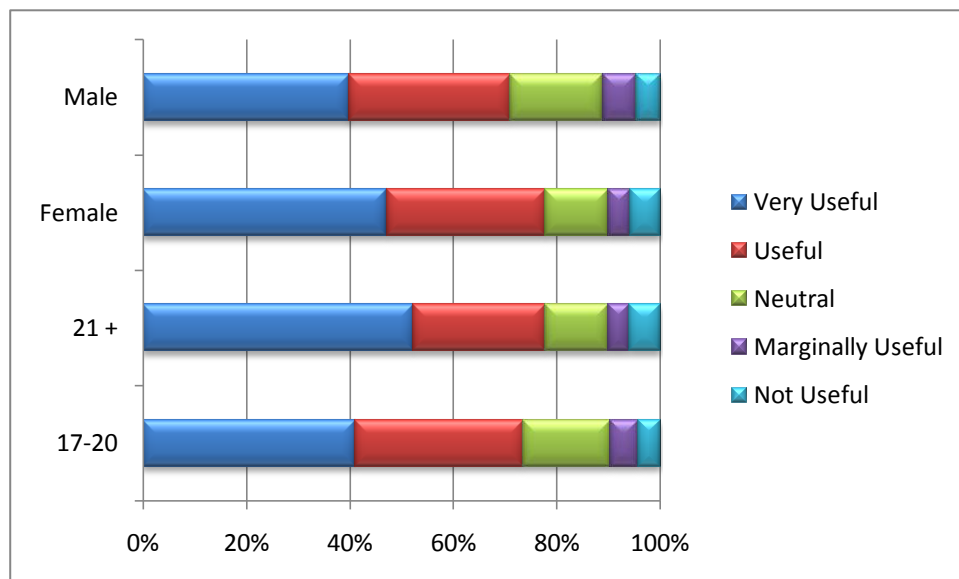


Chart 2.3: United Kingdom Students' rating of UniSmart, 2010



Three quarters of all students found the presentation to be “very useful” or “useful”

On average, three-quarters of students found the presentation to be useful, with only one in twenty thinking that it was “not useful at all”. 93% of students questioned felt that **UniSmart should be an integral part of induction** to the university.

More than nine of every ten students questioned felt that UniSmart should be an integral part of induction

When asked why they had rated UniSmart in this way, the most common reasons students gave were that the presentation was:

1. “Great”
2. “Entertaining”
3. “Educational”
4. “Interesting”

In addition, the students noted the **quality of the presenter** and the way the presentation worked hard to engage students. The fact that the presentation was **different** from other presentations they had seen also resonated with the students.

Descriptions of the the UniSmart presentation included:

... very interesting and helps you learn in an exciting way.

... better than a book or a boring talk.

2.2 What are United Kingdom students most concerned about?

As noted at the start of this report, the first year at university can be daunting for students. The transition from secondary school to tertiary education involves learning about new ways of both living and learning. But alongside these are concerns about managing money while studying, making new friends, creating appropriate support networks, and even their physical health.

Table 2.1: Students' Top 10 concerns when starting university

Concerns	UK Average
Passing exams	1
Studying	3
Money while studying	2
Making new friends	4
Having support	5
Moving away from friends	6
My course choices	9
Finding my way around uni	7
My physical health	8
Paying back student loan	10

UK university students consistently rank the UniSmart presentation highly. By far the most common student rating of the presentation is 'awesome'

3 About the students

The UniSmart evaluation survey also collects information about the students and their lifestyles. This information is used to constantly update and fine-tune the presentation.

3.1 Living circumstances

The majority of students at United Kingdom were living in “university residence” (60%), followed by “with parents” (19%).

Table 3.1: Students’ living circumstances, 2010

	UK Average
University residence	60%
With parents	19%
Private board	10%
Flatting	4%
Own home	6%
Other	1%

Over a quarter of all students at the presentations were international students, while almost six out of every ten had relocated for the purpose of studying.

Table 3.2: Relocated students, 2010

	UK Average
International student	27%
Domestic student	73%
Relocated (overall)	57%
Did not move to study	43%

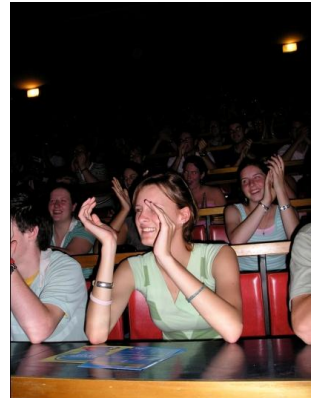
‘[UniSmart] gave me useful information, was very entertaining, and different to how I expected it to be’

3.2 Funding study

The most common way that United Kingdom students were funding their study was by a student loan (nearly 60% of students receive nearly 40% of their funding from the student loan scheme). The next most common form of funding was “family support”, used by a similar number of students, but for a lower total level of funding.

Table 3.3: How students funded their studies, 2010

Funding Source	UK Average	
	% who have some funding from source	Average % of funding
Student loan	56%	38%
Family support	55%	31%
Own savings	23%	6%
Part time job	19%	4%
Credit card	3%	1%
Grants/ scholarship	21%	7%
Not sure	9%	-



3.3 Career aspirations

Nearly six out of every ten United Kingdom students knew their intended career.

Table 3.4: Career aspirations, 2010

Know my intended career	UK Average
Yes	59%
No	41%

3.4 Lifestyle risk factors

An important aim of the UniSmart presentation is helping students address a range of risk factors associated with university study. This includes the use of alcohol, smoking and recreational drugs. When asked about these behavioursⁱ, the United Kingdom survey shows that:

- 21% **never** or rarely consumed alcohol
- 28% consumed alcohol three or more times per week
- 8% smoked cigarettes
- 72% had **not** tried marijuana.

However, of the 28% of students who had tried marijuana:

- 26% (that is 7% of the population) did not use while studying
- None were using daily.

92% of United Kingdom students had not tried other drugs, just below the national average.

Table 3.5: Alcohol and drug use

Percentage of Respondents		UK Average
Drink alcohol	Never	21%
	Only occasionally	48%
	Weekends only	24%
	Three or more days per week	24%
	Daily	4%
Don't drink due to religious reasons	Yes	35%
	No	65%
Smoke cigarettes		8%
How many per week		40
Tried marijuana	Never	72%
Of those who have tried marijuana	Tried it once	18%
	Use marijuana rarely	8%
	Use marijuana monthly	2%
	Use marijuana weekly	1%
	Use marijuana daily	0%
Tried other drugs	None	94%
	Ecstasy	4%
	LSD	2%
	Speed	3%
	Cocaine	4%
	Other	1%

'It is important for young adults to know themselves and the choices they make; I wish I knew this earlier'

4 Internet usage

Students were asked to estimate how many hours they spent online each week. On average UK students spend 25.6 hours on the internet per week. The largest amount of their time is spent studying (7.9 hours). The next largest category for the UK average was social networking sites (6.6 hours).

Table 4.1 Internet usage

Option	UK Average
On social networking sites	6.6
Studying	7.9
E-mailing	2.6
Gaming	2.5
General surfing	5.3
Trading	0.7
Total	25.6

The UniSmart presentation is 'very interesting and helps you learn in an exciting way'

5 Who took part in this survey?

A total of 2,056 surveys were completed at various universities around the United Kingdom.

Table 4.1: Age of survey respondents

Age	UK Average
17-20	74%
21-25	18%
25-30	3%
Over 30	5%

Table 4.2: Gender of survey respondents

Gender	UK Average
Male	56%
Female	44%