



UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

2023 EVALUATION

The Student Community Team in the Students Association is responsible for recruiting a team to enter the selection process for the UK television programme University Challenge. A team of five Open University students is formed – comprising of four team members and one reserve team member. The team then applies for the programme and may be invited to interview and then filming if successful.

The Students Association's application period for Series 30 of University Challenge in 2023 was open from Monday 3 October until Sunday 30 October 2022. **118 applications** were received which was more than double the number received in 2021 (56 applications).

The application process involves applicants completing an application form, an online quiz of 10 questions for their chosen subject area (Arts & Literature, History & Politics, Science & Maths), an online quiz of 10 questions on general knowledge if successful in the previous quiz, and finally an online audition on Microsoft Teams if successful in the general knowledge and subject specific quizzes. There were five online auditions with applicants asked questions to answer individually and some to answer in teams of students.

This report consists of results from a feedback survey sent to applicants, of which there were 18 respondents, and analytics from social media content.

Key findings

Most survey respondents were **returning students** (a registered student prior to the October 2022 intake) at 78%.

On the stages of the application process, **72.2% found the information on how to apply 'Excellent'** and 16.7% 'Good' (with 5.6% of respondents selecting 'Fair' and 'Poor' each). **70.7% found the communications from the team 'Excellent'** and 23.5% 'Good' (with 5.9% selecting 'Fair', and not including the respondents who selected 'not applicable').

For the majority, it was their **first time applying for University Challenge (61%)**. For 44% of respondents it was the first time they had engaged with the Students Association.

Not including those that selected 'not applicable' for the following statements, **70.7% agreed with the statement 'I feel taking part has made a positive contribution to my student experience'** (29.4% selected they felt 'Neutral' towards this statement).

"It was a fun experience but it also gave me a chance to meet fellow students. The online audition in particular was good fun and a confidence booster even though I was ultimately unsuccessful"

In response to the question 'How did you hear about our University Challenge process?', a third of respondents answered the **Students Association website oustudents.com and StudentHome**, which were the most popular options.

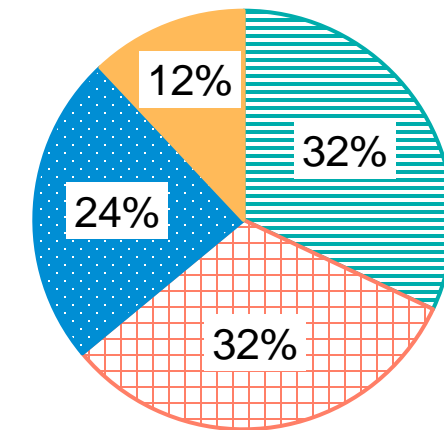
89% would 'Definitely' recommend the process to fellow OU students, with 11% selecting 'Maybe'.

Feedback survey results – the applicants

18 applicants completed a feedback survey to share their thoughts on how they found the application process. This is the first formal feedback survey for this project and is planned to be a recurring feature.

- Most survey respondents were **returning students** (a registered student prior to the October 2022 intake) at 78%.
- For the majority, it was their **first time applying for University Challenge (61%)**. For 44% of respondents it was the first time they had engaged with the Students Association.
- In response to the question ‘How did you hear about our University Challenge process?’, a third of respondents answered **the Students Association website oustudents.com and StudentHome**, which were the most popular options. The next most popular was our Facebook page, Twitter account, and the University Challenge programme itself, at 17% of respondents each. 11% of respondents heard about applications through our monthly newsletter.

Motivations for applying for University Challenge



- To test my knowledge
- To try something new
- For a chance to be on the TV show
- To meet with fellow OU students

- On the stages of the application process, **72.2% found the information on how to apply 'Excellent'** and 16.7% 'Good' (with 5.6% of respondents selecting 'Fair' and 'Poor' each).
- **70.7% found the communications from the team 'Excellent'** and 23.5% 'Good' (with 5.9% selecting 'Fair', and not including the respondents who selected 'not applicable').

All respondents were based in the UK when taking part in the application process.

- Of those that answered that they completed each of the remainder of stages, **62.5% found the application form 'Excellent'** and 31.3% 'Good' (with 6.3% of respondents selecting 'Fair').
- **58.9% found the subject specific quiz round 'Good'**, and **23.5% found it 'Excellent'** (11.8% answered 'Fair' and 5.9% 'Poor').
- **40% found the general knowledge quiz round 'Good'** and the same for 'Excellent' (20.1% answered 'Fair').
- **Finally, 63.7% found the online audition 'Excellent'** and 18.2% 'Good' (9.2% selected 'Fair' and 'Very Poor' for each).

- Not including those that selected ‘not applicable’ for the following statements, **70.7% agreed with the statement ‘I feel taking part has made a positive contribution to my student experience’** (29.4% selected they felt ‘Neutral’ towards this statement).
- **58.9% agreed with the statement ‘I feel that taking part has improved my confidence’** (29.4% selected they felt ‘Neutral’ towards this statement and 11.8% selected ‘Disagree’).
- **53% agreed with the statement ‘I feel that taking part has increased my sense of belonging to the OU student community’** (41.2% selected they felt ‘Neutral’ towards this statement and 5.9% selected ‘Disagree’).



Team Open 2022

Feedback survey results – barriers to participation part 1

The survey asked if any applicants experienced barriers in participating and if they had any suggestions of how students' experience of applying for University Challenge could be enhanced. Below are the responses, followed by any actions to be taken or comments if applicable.

Two respondents requested more **choice of specialist subjects** and another requested **more questions** to be asked to enable even wider knowledge to be tested.

- The questions used in the online quizzes and auditions are provided by University Challenge, and we aim to include as wide a range of subject areas as possible. The breadth and number of questions and subject categories will be assessed to see if this can be improved further, please see the recommendations.

One respondent suggested **an audio option for the questions** to be read out loud for the subject specific and general knowledge quiz rounds, better replicate the TV show.

- Student Community Team to assess options for this, please see the recommendations.

“None. For me, it was easily accessible at all stages.”

Feedback survey results – barriers to participation part 2

The survey asked if any applicants experienced barriers in participating and if they had any suggestions of how students' experience of applying for University Challenge could be enhanced. Below are the responses, followed by any actions taken or comments if applicable.

One respondent suggested making the initial email that applicants receive more succinct.

“I think it was incredibly well organised and the team should be very proud of their efforts.”

One respondent had an issue with their sound for the online audition, another mentioned a **technical difficulty** meaning they could not 'buzz in' in time, and another mentioned a general technical difficulty with using Microsoft Teams.

- We aim to mitigate technical difficulties as much as possible by familiarising applicants with Microsoft Teams at the start of the auditions, including a practice question, and dealing with any issues as they arise throughout.

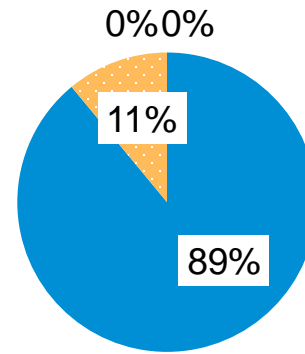
Feedback survey results – final thoughts

“Easy and clear communication and timely responses. Very well put together and easy to understand”

“The process was very well organised and fun”

“It was really good fun made all the better by making the team”

Would respondents recommend applying for University Challenge at the OU to a fellow student?



■ Definitely ■ Maybe ■ Not sure ■ No

“Enjoyable experience, managed well”

“I found it a fun thing to do and a good challenge”

“The whole process was really clearly laid out and well communicated and I particularly enjoyed the quiz over Microsoft Teams - great fun! No suggestions for improvement, I think the whole experience is pretty much nailed on as it is”

Social media analytics

Social media analytics show that University Challenge is popular among our audience.

August 2022

- Our second and third highest performing tweets, and our third highest performing Instagram post, were relating to Series 29 of University Challenge and the appearance of the 2022 team on the show.

October 2022

- Our most popular Instagram post related to applications opening for the 2023 team **reaching more than 1000 people**.
- Our second most popular article on The Hoot was 'Could you be in #TeamOpen 2023?'
- Our third and seventh most popular tweets were also relating to applications opening for the 2023 team.

September 2022

- Our most popular article on The Hoot was 'Introducing... #TeamOU 2022!'
- Our third most popular Facebook post, and our fourth, fifth and sixth most popular tweets were all relating to the 2022 team's appearance on the show.

Recommendations

1.

Increase social media and website content: Since University Challenge related social media content has proven popular, it is recommended to increase the social media content and communications for University Challenge, including the creation of a webpage on oustudents.com for University Challenge which will be available all year-round.

2.

Audio option for online quizzes: Student Community Team to assess options for questions to have an audio option for the initial subject specific and general knowledge online quiz rounds, to better replicate the TV show.

3.

Assess breadth and number of questions and subject categories: Student Community Team to consider an even wider range of questions in the online quizzes and auditions, and to reassess the specialist subject categories.