



REPORT ON THE NEW STUDENT SURVEY 2022-2023

JULY 2023

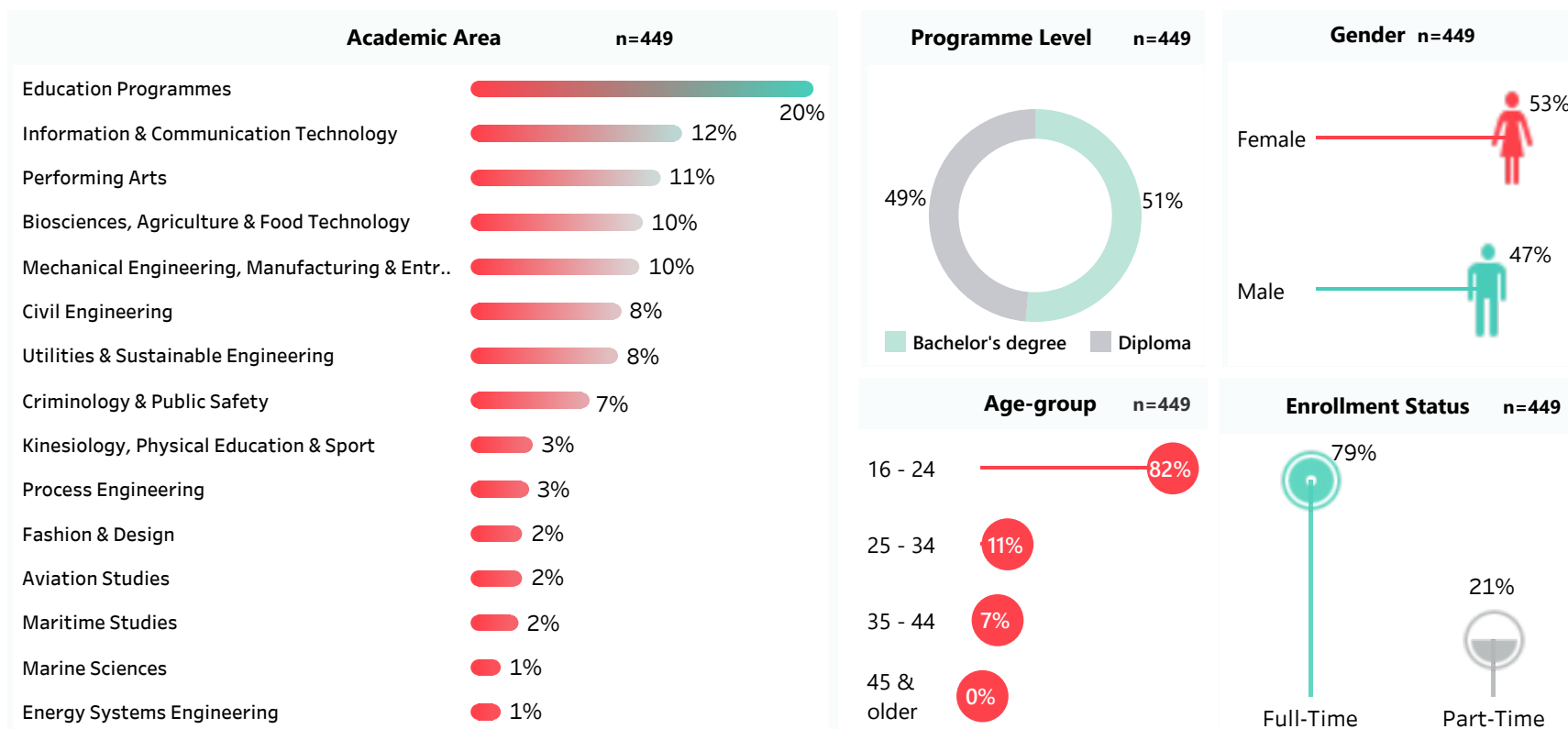
THE OFFICE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (QA&IE)

About the New Student Survey: 2022-23 Intake

The New Student Survey (NSS), developed by the Office of Quality Assurance and Institutional Effectiveness (QA&IE), is an annual assessment administered to new undergraduate students. It gathers feedback on a range of factors, including new students' admission decisions, programme funding, socio-economic backgrounds, support needs, skills, university expectations, and adaptation to post-pandemic learning environments, focusing on issues like access to reliable computing devices and internet connectivity.

Conducted from December 20, 2022, to March 7, 2023, the survey targeted all first-time registrants for bachelor's or diploma programmes in the 2022-23 academic year (AY). Of the 849 eligible students, 449 completed the survey, resulting in a 59% response rate and a +/-3% margin of error. The respondents were broadly representative of the study population's key demographic characteristics, which are illustrated below.

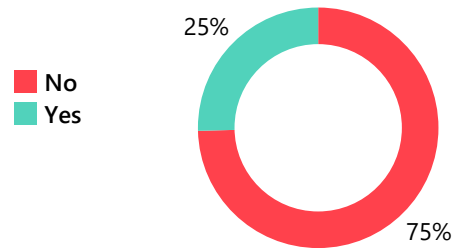
Respondent Profile



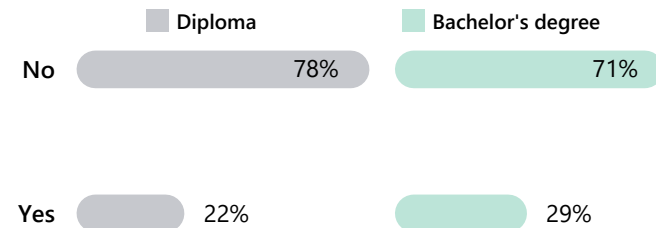
New Student Recruitment

The survey inquired how new students learned about UTT's programmes and whether they had interacted with a UTT recruiter prior to enrolling. Findings revealed one in four new students (25%) had contact with a UTT recruiter before enrollment. When disaggregated by programme level, a slightly higher proportion of bachelor's entrants had prior recruiter contact compared to their diploma counterparts (29% to 22% respectively). When rating the usefulness of various UTT information sources, students cited the university website (56%), insights from friends and relatives (42%), and information from teachers or guidance counsellors (31%) as the top three most valuable aids in deciding to apply. Information from TV and Newspapers were cited as the least helpful sources of information. Results were largely consistent across bachelor's and diploma students when analysed by programme level.

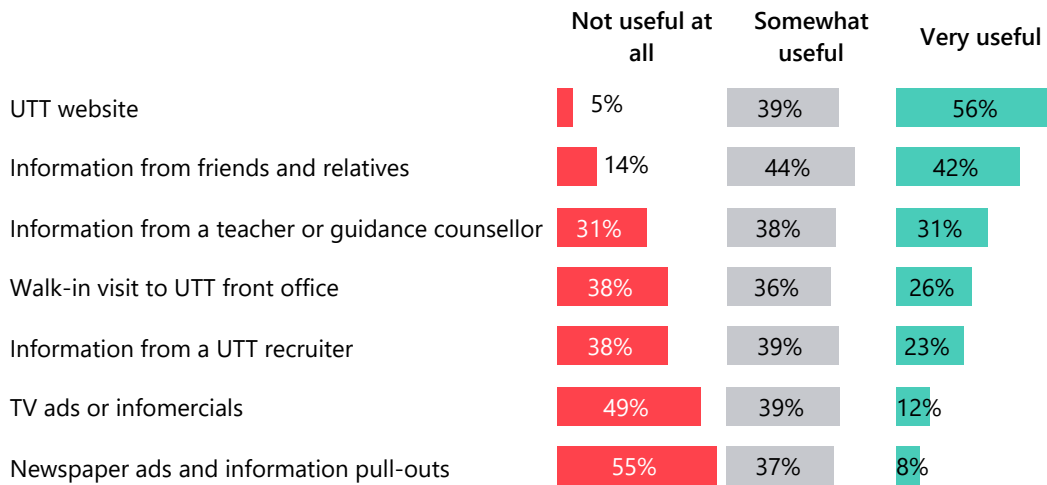
Prior to enrolling at UTT, did you have contact with a UTT recruiter? n=449



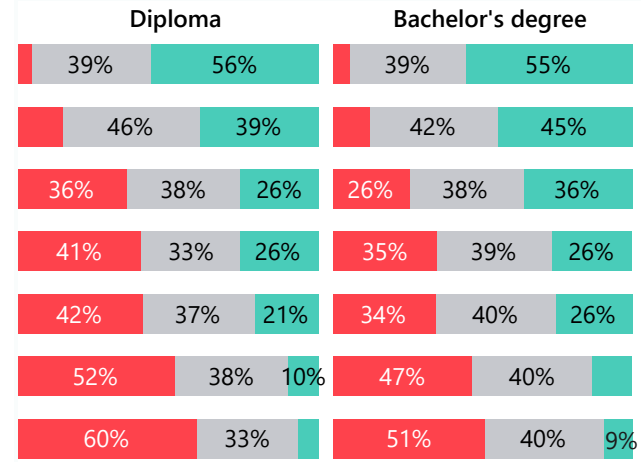
Prior contact with UTT recruiter by programme level n=449



Usefulness of various UTT information sources n=449

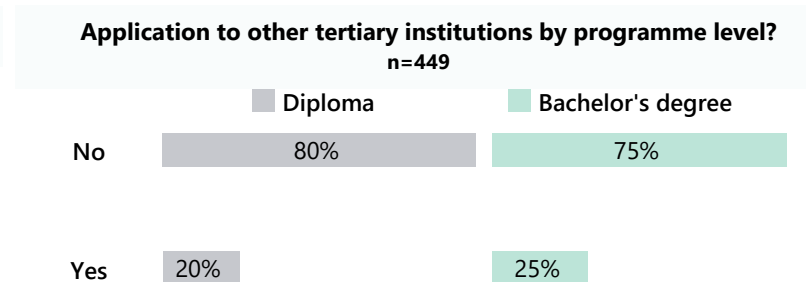
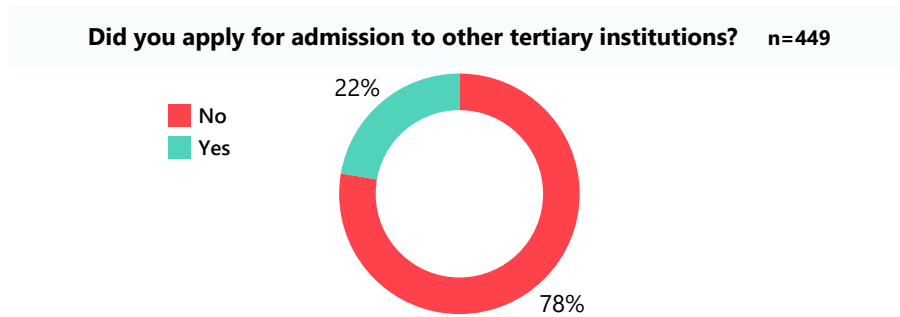
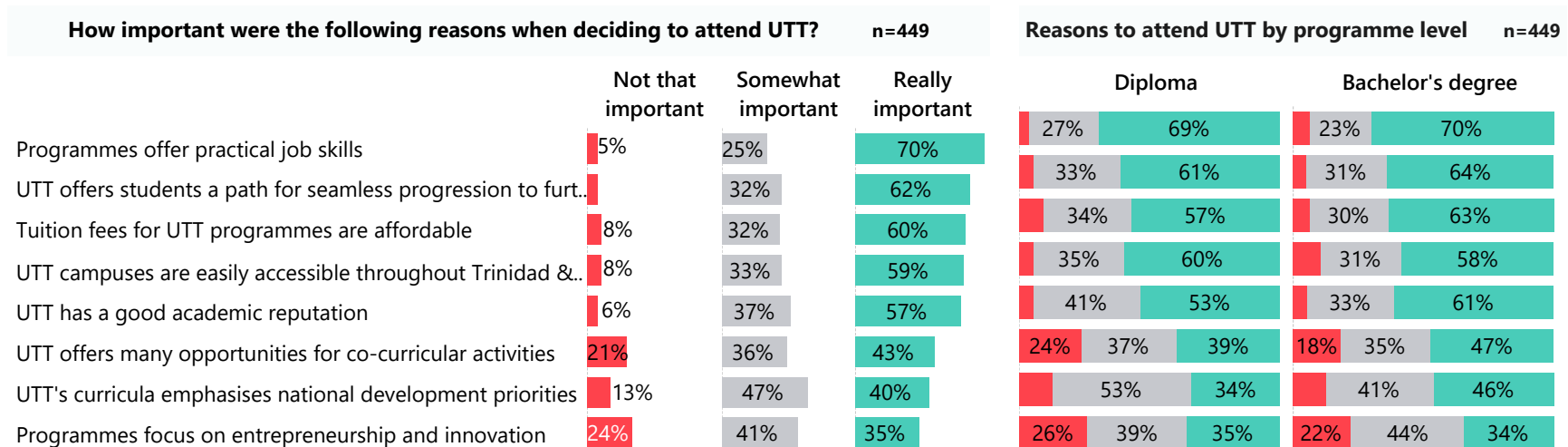


Usefulness of UTT information sources by programme level n=449



New Student Admission Decisions

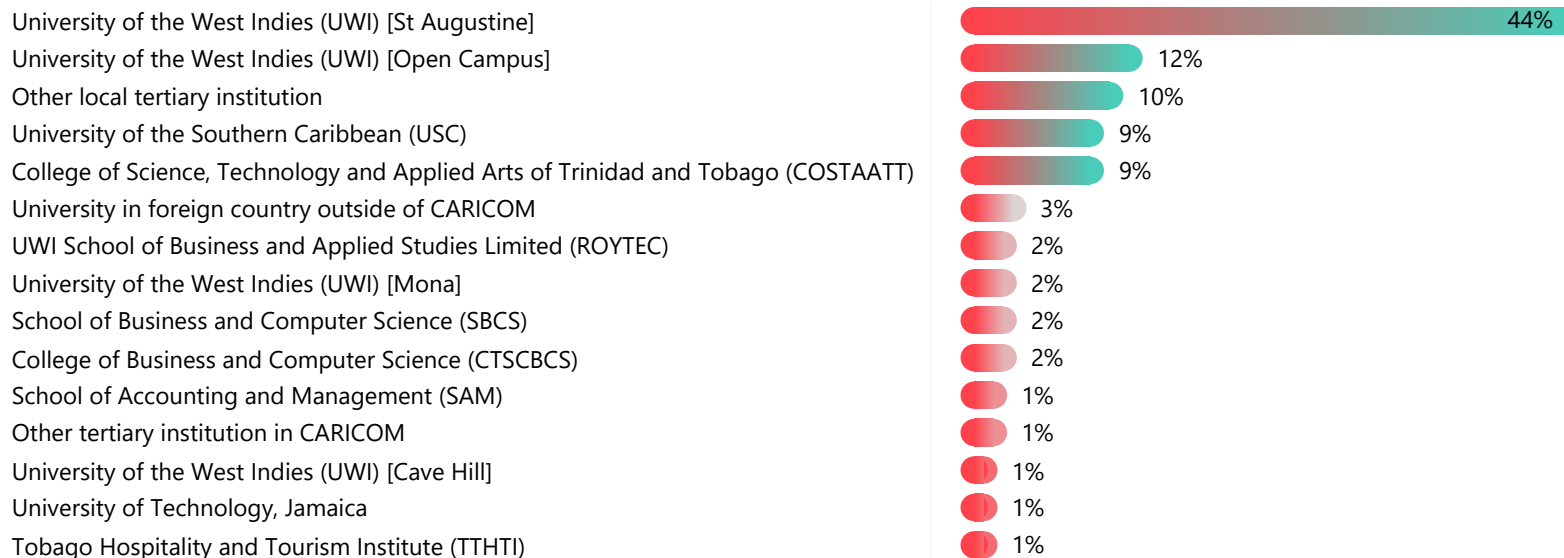
The survey provided insights into UTT's appeal to prospective students, revealing the importance of various university features in their enrollment decisions. In AY 2022-23, new students rated programmes offering practical job skills (70%), seamless opportunities for further study (62%), affordable tuition fees (60%), campus accessibility (59%), and academic reputation (57%) as top reasons for choosing UTT. While overall responses were similar for diploma and bachelor's students, bachelor's students placed greater importance on UTT's academic reputation and its national development-focused curriculum (61% to 53% and 46% to 34%, respectively). Moreover, the survey found that a significant majority of new students (78%) exclusively applied to UTT, with a higher proportion of diploma students (80%) solely applying to UTT compared to bachelor's students (75%). This may suggest that UTT maintains a competitive advantage in its sub-baccalaureate programme offerings.



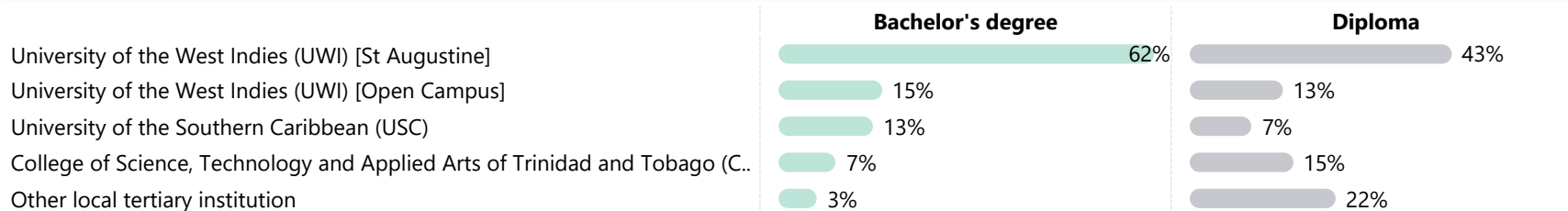
New Student Admission Decisions

The survey prompted students to identify other tertiary institutions they had applied to for admission. Findings revealed UWI St. Augustine was the most popular (44%) alternative to UTT for new students entering in AY 2022-23. The UWI Open Campus (12%), other local tertiary institutions (10%), the University of the Southern Caribbean [USC] (9%), and the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago [COSTAATT] (9%) followed as popular alternatives among new students. Notable differences emerged when disaggregating data by programme level. Though UWI St. Augustine remained the top alternative for both groups, it proved more popular among bachelor's than diploma students (62% to 43% respectively). Moreover, while the UWI Open Campus and USC were the second and third most favoured alternatives for bachelor's entrants, COSTAATT and assorted local institutions ranked next for diploma students.

What other tertiary-level institutions did you apply to? n=100 [r = 138]



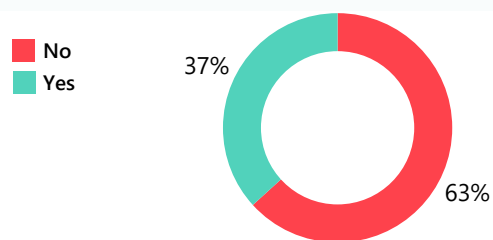
Top 5 other tertiary institutions students applied to disaggregated by programme level



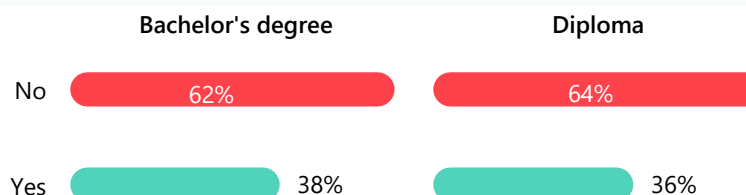
New Students' Socio-Economic and Family Background

The survey additionally sought to glean insights into new students' socio-economic and family backgrounds to better understand their support requirements. The results indicated that over one-third (37%) of new students enrolling at UTT in AY 2022-23 had previously undertaken tertiary education coursework or programmes, with similar findings across programme levels. Among the new cohort, 73% reported neither parent having completed an undergraduate degree or higher qualification, a trend consistent across programme levels. The majority (73%) of new students described their family's financial status as middle-income, while nearly one-third (27%) identified as economically disadvantaged. Notably, bachelor's degree students were more inclined than their diploma counterparts to characterise their family's economic situation as middle-income (76% to 69%), while diploma students were more likely to self-identify as economically disadvantaged (31% to 24% respectively).

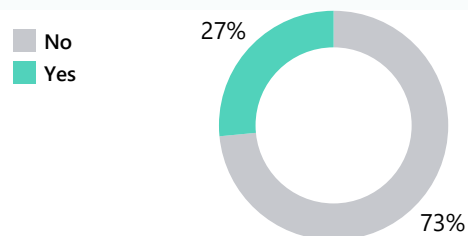
Previous enrolment in higher education? n=449



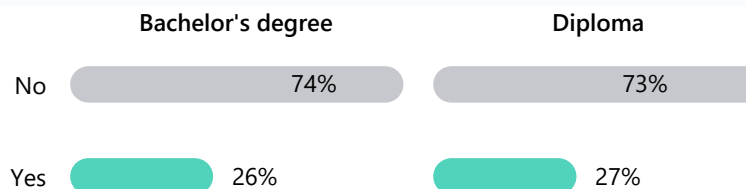
Previous enrolment in higher education by programme level n=449



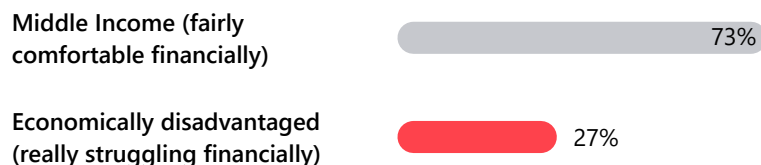
Has at least one of your parents attained higher education? n=449



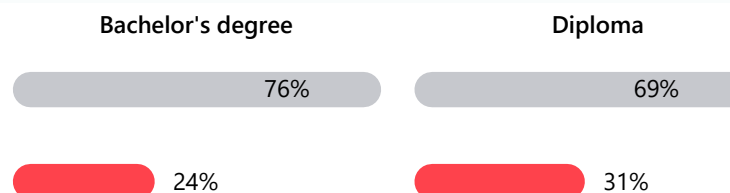
Parents attained higher education by programme level n=449



Family's current financial status? n=449



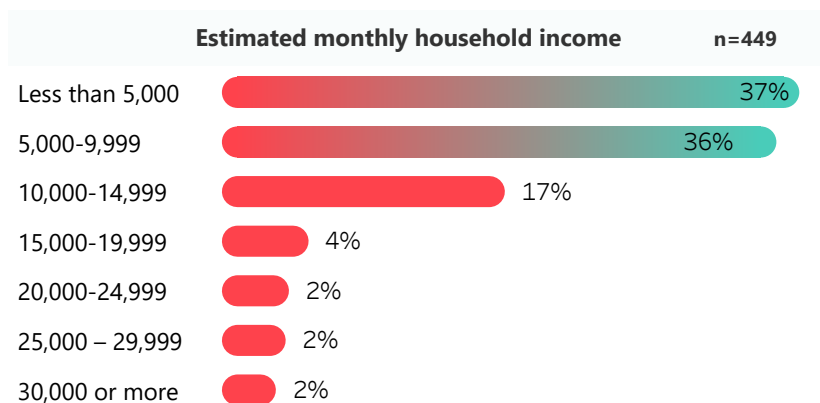
Family's current financial status by programme level n=449



New Students' Socio-Economic and Family Background

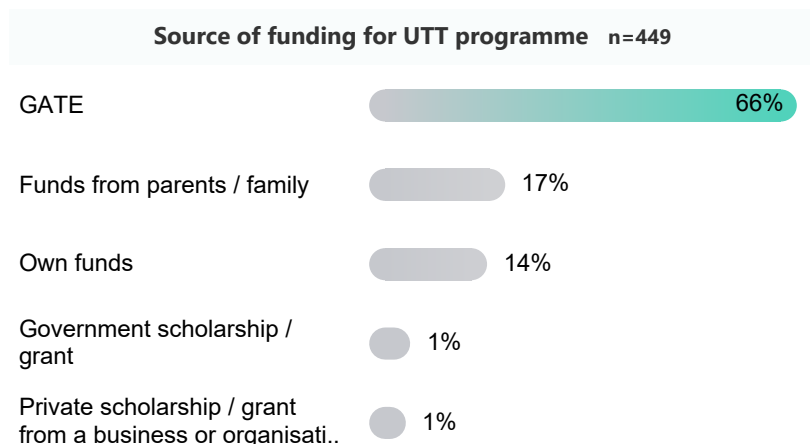
The survey also prompted new students to approximate their family's monthly household income. The majority (73%) of respondents reported an estimated family income below ten thousand dollars (10,000 TTD) per month. Twenty-one percent (21%) cited an estimated monthly family income between 10,000 - 19,999 TTD, while only 6% reported a monthly household income of 20,000 TTD or higher.

Among all respondents the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses Programme (GATE) was the primary funding source for their basic study expenses (66%). Thirty-one percent (31%) stated that funds from parents/family and their personal income comprised the second and third largest sources for university-related expenditures. Results were fairly consistent across programme levels.



Estimated monthly household income by programme level
n=449

	Bachelor's degree	Diploma
Less than 5,000	39%	35%
5,000-9,999	35%	36%
10,000-14,999	16%	18%
15,000-19,999	2%	6%
20,000-24,999	3%	2%
25,000 – 29,999	3%	1%
30,000 or more	1%	2%



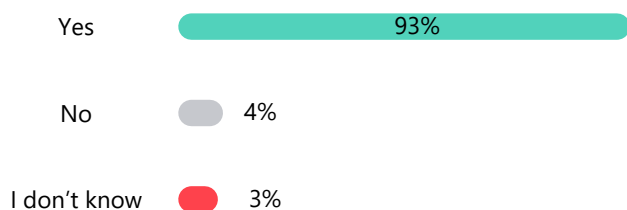
Source of funding for UTT programme by programme level
n=449

	Bachelor's degree	Diploma
GATE	68%	64%
Funds from parents / family	16%	19%
Own funds	13%	15%
Government scholarship / grant	2%	1%
Private scholarship / grant from a business or..	1%	1%

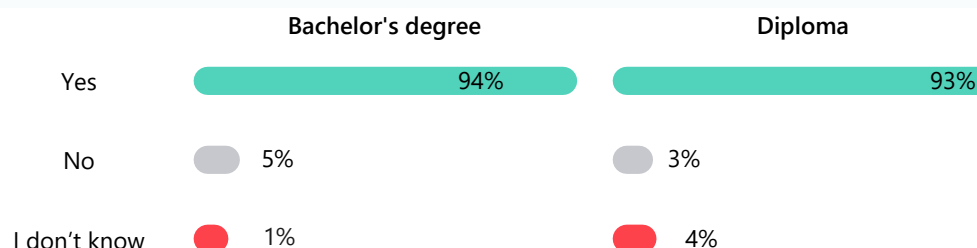
Blended Learning Post-Pandemic

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the university transitioned to emergency remote teaching, making students' access to digital devices and reliable internet connectivity indispensable for effective teaching and learning. In the post-pandemic environment, where blended teaching and learning have become ubiquitous, these resources continue to be essential. Our survey data from AY 2022-23 reveals that a significant majority of new students had consistent access to reliable internet (93%) and digital devices (94%). This consistency in accessibility was evident across various programme levels. However, the survey also uncovered a notable gap in digital infrastructure as less than half of the students (45%) reported having access to a reliable printer at home. This highlights a continuing need to address aspects of digital access beyond just internet connectivity and computer devices.

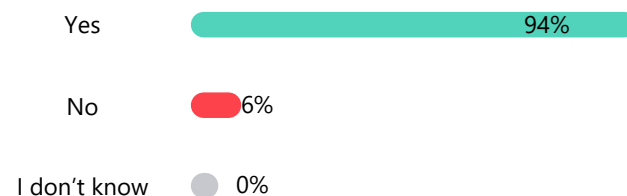
Access to reliable internet n=449



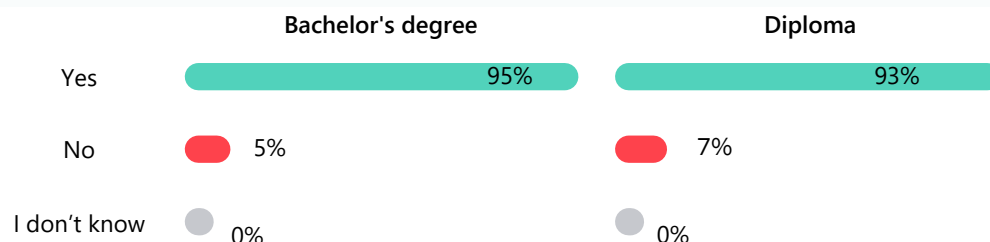
Access to reliable internet by programme level n=449



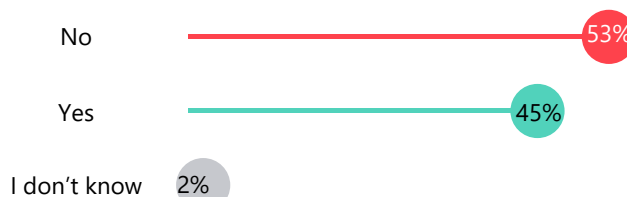
Access to digital devices n=449



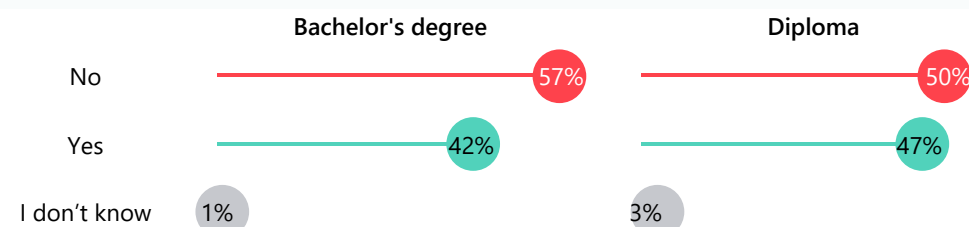
Access to digital devices by programme level n=449



Access to a printer at home n=449



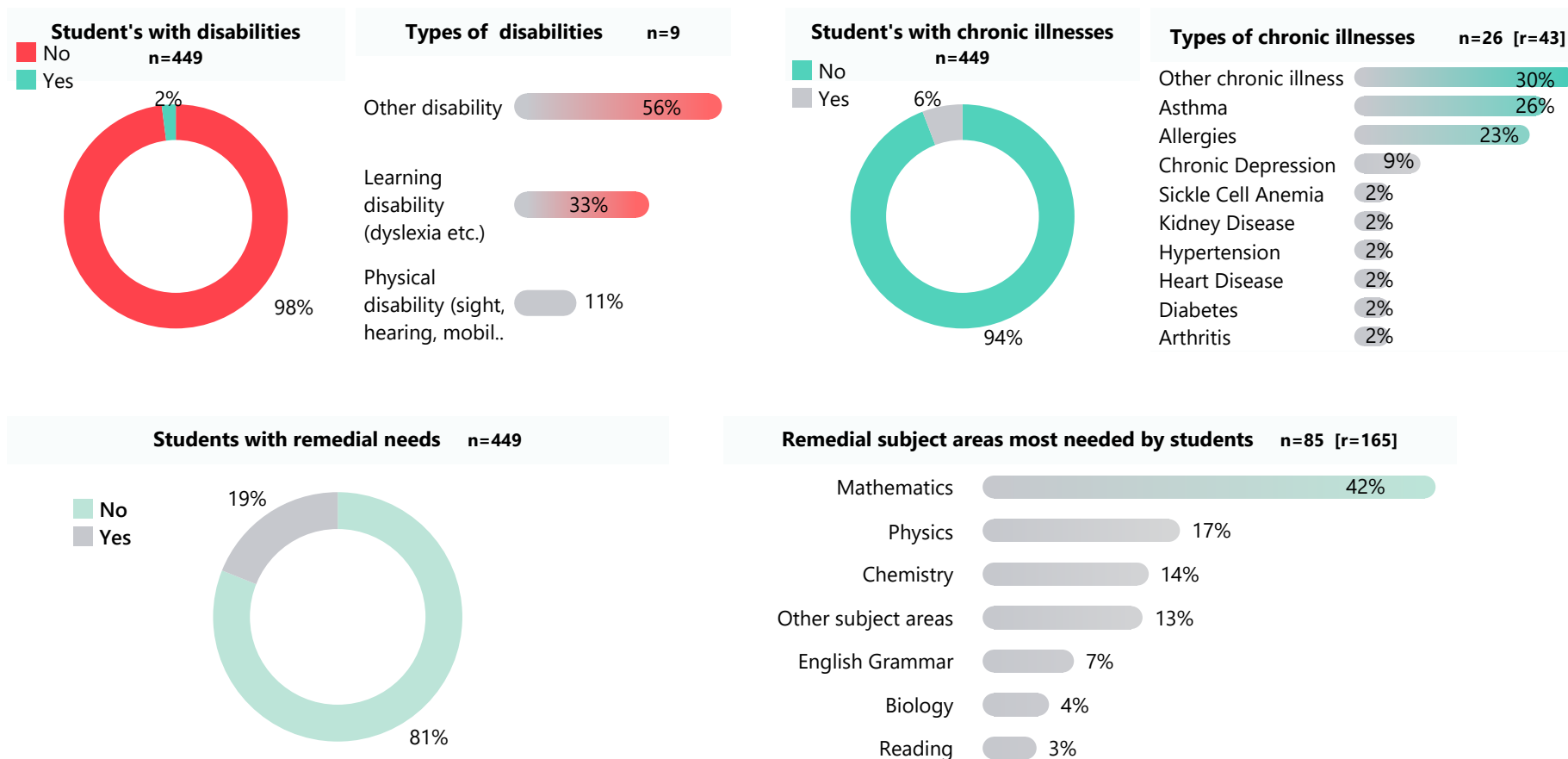
Access to a printer at home by programme level n=449



Students With Disabilities & Chronic Illnesses

The survey explored the impact of disabilities or chronic illnesses on new students in AY 2022-23 to better tailor support services to their specific needs. Among the respondents, only 2% reported a disability that necessitated special accommodations from UTT. Within this group, one-third (33%) reported learning disabilities and 11% had physical disabilities, while the majority (56%) identified other types of disabilities, including cognitive, sensory, speech, and psychological conditions. Additionally, six percent (6%) of respondents disclosed chronic illnesses that might require special provisions from UTT. The most frequently reported chronic conditions included asthma (26%), allergies (23%), and chronic depression (9%), with 30% citing various other chronic illnesses.

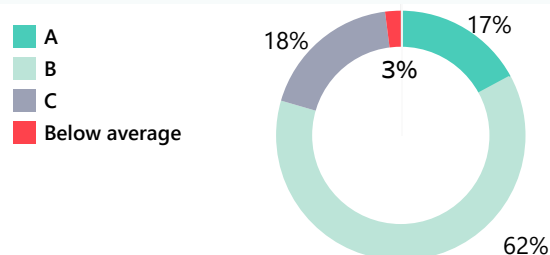
The survey also assessed the need for remedial support among these students, to aid their progress towards graduation. Nineteen percent of respondents felt they required additional help to manage their academic workload. The areas most commonly identified for remedial support were Mathematics (42%), Physics (17%), and Chemistry (14%).



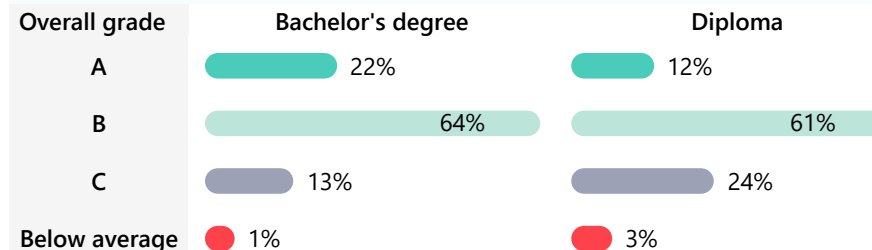
Students' Academic Self-Concept

When asked to evaluate their academic performance, 62% of students rated themselves as grade B. Seventeen percent of new students considered their academic abilities deserving of a grade A, 18% assigned themselves a grade C, and only 3% felt that their academic capacity was below average. Upon disaggregating the results by programme level, bachelor's degree students were more inclined to rate themselves as grade A compared to those pursuing diplomas (22% versus 12% respectively). The survey further explored students' academic self-concept by asking them to assess themselves on various characteristics. Academic self-concept is a key predictor of potential university performance and can be improved with appropriate support. Among respondents, more than 60% considered themselves above average in traits such as open-mindedness (70%), cooperativeness (67%), drive to succeed (63%), and creativity (60%). More than half of the respondents viewed their skills in mathematics (59%) and writing (52%) as average. When the results were broken down by programme level, students pursuing bachelor's degrees were more likely to consider themselves above average in various skills compared to those enrolled in diploma programmes.

Students' academic self-grade based on previous studies (n=449)



Students' academic self-grade by programme level (n=449)



Students' Academic Self-Concept Rating (n=449)

	Above average	Average	Below average
Open-mindedness	70%	27%	3%
Cooperativeness	67%	31%	2%
Driven to succeed (financially)	63%	31%	6%
Creativity	60%	31%	9%
Persistence	56%	36%	8%
Empathy	55%	38%	7%
Intelligence	49%	49%	2%
Methodicalness (step by step)	47%	47%	6%
Risk-taking	45%	38%	17%
Writing Skills	41%	52%	7%
Social self-confidence	38%	37%	25%
Academic self-confidence	36%	47%	17%
Mathematical Skills	27%	59%	14%

Students' Academic Self-Concept Rating by programme level (n=449)

	Bachelor's degree			Diploma		
	Above average	Average	Below average	Above average	Average	Below average
Open-mindedness	74%	66%	23%	30%	3%	4%
Cooperativeness	67%	66%	30%	31%	3%	3%
Driven to succeed (financially)	68%	57%	28%	34%	4%	8%
Creativity	61%	58%	32%	29%	7%	13%
Persistence	62%	49%	32%	39%	6%	12%
Empathy	63%	47%	32%	44%	5%	10%
Intelligence	54%	43%	44%	53%	2%	4%
Methodicalness (step by step)	50%	44%	45%	50%	5%	6%
Risk-taking	50%	39%	37%	39%	13%	22%
Writing Skills	45%	37%	50%	55%	5%	9%
Social self-confidence	40%	36%	37%	37%	23%	27%
Academic self-confidence	37%	34%	48%	45%	15%	21%
Mathematical Skills	28%	27%	65%	52%	7%	21%

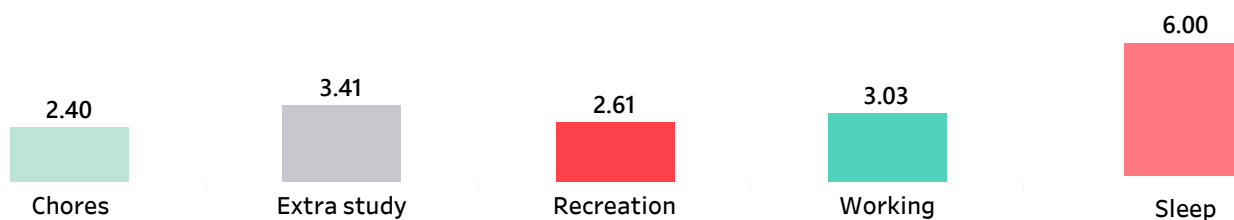
Students' Personal and Study Expectations

The survey further examined the learning habits of new students, as these habits are closely linked to academic success. Over 60% of respondents reported that during their programme they were likely to regularly accept work-related criticism from their instructors as a part of their learning process (69%), and to seek information from sources beyond their main textbooks to enhance their understanding of a topic (67%). Nearly half (49%) of the respondents expressed a willingness to frequently discuss school-related work outside of class, while 37% indicated they would often complete multiple drafts of assignments before final submission. Additionally, 31% planned to regularly seek feedback from teachers outside of class to improve the quality of their work, and 26% intended to actively ask questions during class sessions.

New students were also questioned on how they intend to distribute their time across various study and non-programme-related activities during a typical 24-hour period. On average, respondents anticipated spending six hours sleeping, three hours on additional study, three hours working to earn income, two hours on recreational activities, and two hours on household chores.

Students' Study Expectations (n=449)			
	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely
Accept a mistake with your work or criticism from a teacher as part of the learning process	69%	28%	3%
Seek information from sources other than the required text books to improve your understanding of a topic	67%	29%	4%
Discuss ideas about your work with persons outside of class	49%	36%	15%
Complete several drafts of your written assignments before you submit them to your teachers	37%	41%	22%
Seek feedback from your teachers outside of class to improve the quality of your work	31%	50%	19%
Ask questions in class	26%	57%	17%

How many hours per day do new students plan to spend on various activities? (n=449)



Students' Programme and University Expectations

Among respondents, skills such as problem-solving (78%), opportunities for practical work attachments (77%), and communication skills (77%) were highly valued as expected outcomes from their programme of study. Additionally, 68% of respondents highlighted the importance of using technology in a modern business office and staying abreast of the latest developments in science and technology as critical learning outcomes. Skills related to community enrichment (64%), navigating virtual learning environments (62%), proficiency in working with numbers and statistics (62%), and conducting experiments and research (61%) were also deemed very important by these new students. Over half of the respondents felt it was essential for their UTT programme to support blended learning (58%), provide opportunities for virtual teamwork with peers and instructors (54%), impart skills related to entrepreneurship and business development (51%), and offer basic knowledge of global current events and their national impact (51%). However, the survey findings indicate that becoming involved in volunteerism (35%), participating in religious activities (31%), and engagement in the student guild (28%) were considered less important by the new students.

Students' expectations of their UTT programme of study (n=449)

	Really important	Somewhat important	Not that important
I will learn how to better analyse and solve complex problems	78%	21%	1%
I will have opportunities for work attachments and internships	77%	20%	2%
I will learn how to communicate more effectively, orally and in writing	77%	21%	3%
I will learn how to better use digital technology in a modern business office	68%	26%	6%
I will develop a better understanding of key concepts and developments in science and technology	68%	27%	5%
I will develop skills which will help me to make a difference in my community and country	64%	32%	4%
I will be able to use technology to collaborate and interact with teachers and students in a virtual online ..	62%	33%	4%
I will improve my ability to work with numbers and statistics	62%	33%	6%
I will learn how to conduct experiments or do research	61%	33%	6%
I will be able to have a mix of face-to-face and online classes in my programme	58%	34%	8%
I will have opportunities to collaborate and learn with other students and teachers as part of a close co..	54%	40%	6%
I will learn about entrepreneurship and starting a business	51%	37%	13%
I will understand major global issues and their implications for Trinidad & Tobago	51%	42%	8%
I will better understand the ethnic and cultural diversity in Trinidad & Tobago	45%	37%	17%
I will have opportunities to participate in recreational sport and social activities	40%	41%	18%
I will learn about art and artistic expression in Trinidad & Tobago	37%	36%	27%
I will have the opportunity to become involved in a university-based volunteer or community service pro..	35%	46%	19%
I will have the opportunity to participate in religious events in which I have an active interest	31%	37%	32%
There will be an active Student Guild and or system of student representation in which I can be involved	28%	46%	26%

Summary and Conclusion

The 2022-23 NSS provides valuable insight into new students' experiences and expectations at UTT, spanning three key areas:

Recruitment and Admissions

One in four new students engaged with a UTT recruiter before enrollment, but the UTT website was the most valued information source, with 56% rating it highly. For new students in AY 2022-23 the top attributes of UTT included programmes with practical job skills (70%), seamless progression to further study (62%), affordable tuition (60%), and campus accessibility (59%). Most new students (78%) applied exclusively to UTT, though UWI St Augustine (44%) and UWI Open Campus (12%) were popular alternatives. These findings underscore the need to bolster recruitment strategies and enhance the UTT website and marketing efforts to bolster future admissions. There is also an opportunity for UTT to distinguish its offerings and student experience from those of its competitors.

Support Needs

About 25% of new students have a parent with a tertiary education degree. A significant portion (27%) reported financial struggles, with 73% indicating a household income below \$10,000 per month. Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) funded two-thirds of their basic study expenses, highlighting the economic vulnerability of many new UTT students. Additionally, 2% declared a disability, with 33% citing a learning disability and 11% a physical disability, requiring specific accommodations for academic persistence.

Moreover, while most new students perceived themselves as above average in traits such as open-mindedness (70%), cooperativeness (67%), drive to succeed (63%), and creativity (60%), fewer saw themselves as above average in math skills (27%), academic self-confidence (36%), social self-confidence (38%), and writing ability (41%). Furthermore, 19% felt they required remedial instruction in subjects such as mathematics, which 42% identified as a challenge. These insights indicate a need for robust support services and initiatives to help students develop habits crucial for academic success and to navigate the challenges of higher education.

Desired Learning Outcomes and Expectations

Students rated improving problem-solving skills (78%), communication skills (77%), and digital literacy (68%) as highly important learning outcomes. Similarly, enhancing understanding of science and technology and promoting civic advocacy were each valued by 68% of respondents. The desire for practical experiences was evident, with 77% emphasizing the importance of work attachments and internships. Additionally, 62% highlighted the significance of virtual collaboration, and 58% supported blended learning. These preferences suggest that UTT should consider adapting its curriculum to better meet the evolving needs and expectations of new learners, particularly in fostering key skills and providing relevant practical experiences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 2022-23 New Student Survey (NSS) has highlighted significant insights into the needs and expectations of new students at UTT, emphasising the importance of tailored recruitment strategies, enhanced support services, and a curriculum that aligns with current student demands. The survey underlines the necessity for UTT to refine its approaches in these areas to not only meet but exceed the evolving requirements of its students, ensuring their success and bolstering the institution's reputation as a leader in higher education. This strategic focus will be crucial for UTT as it seeks to optimise educational outcomes and strengthen its competitive edge in a dynamic academic landscape.