

UCAS

THE STATE OF STUDENT EMAIL

2023

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STUDENT EMAIL



INTRODUCTION



“EMAIL IS DEAD...”

OR IS IT?

It's a common misconception that students don't read their emails, leading marketers to believe that the effort outweighs the benefit.

But – they read them. They digest them. They make life-changing decisions based on them. We know, because we see it in our campaign attribution.

The youth market enjoys a good email. It helps them get to know a university's personality and find the answers they're after – right when they're looking for them – and importantly, to see how they're treated as an individual.

To get an impartial view, we asked Kyle Campbell, Founder of Education Marketer, to research the role email plays in student recruitment.

The results? A well-planned email strategy is proven to create cut-through, increase engagement and convert.

Enjoy.



DAVID PENNEY
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
UCAS

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FOREWORD

“STUDENTS DON’T READ EMAIL.”

You’ve heard this before, right? I used to hear it every couple of weeks in my past life as a university marketing officer:

“ We have to send students 15 emails before they do anything. My teenager only uses Snapchat. Email marketing is DEAD! ”

Of course, it didn’t take long to work out why stakeholders thought this way – it’s all they heard.

Go to the average youth marketing conference and there are sessions on TikTok, creators and how to spend more than your competitor on Google ads, but email marketing? It’s become a footnote, the butt of a joke at student panels.

I was at a conference recently where an audience member asked five young people, *“Is email dead?”*

“OH GOD,” I THOUGHT, “HERE IT COMES...”

“I don’t check my email,” says one student. I watch as around a third of the room takes down a note... *“I don’t have time for email,”* says another. *“I have 100,000 unread emails.”* Laughter and the sound of me hitting my head against the wall. But the crowd is happy, the students have spoken – email marketing is dead.

ONLY, IT ISN’T.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kyle is the Founder and Managing Director of Education Marketer. Every week on a Tuesday, he publishes the Education Marketer Newsletter, a quirky overview of higher ed news, analysis and demand gen strategies. He is one of The Pie’s top 50 voices in international education, and brings over a decade of experience for education marketers looking to build and monetise student audiences. He likes Nintendo.



LONG LIVE EMAIL MARKETING



Two-thirds of content marketers use email to engage audiences and, yes, that includes students too.

According to the **Keystone Education Group** and QS, email is the no.1 way that students want to hear from universities. In a recent report by **Enrollify**, email is recognised (by student marketers) as the no.1 channel for reaching their marketing goals.

But no.

Because one student said on stage that they didn't check their email – that's what's brought back to the marketing office. That's what gets remembered, and why we have thousands of marketers (during the cookiepocalypse no less!) sleeping on one of the best and most enduring marketing channels in history.

Email isn't dead, higher ed is just helping it **get there faster**.

Over the next 14 pages, I'm going to share insight from 14 one-to-one student conversations; a dive into UCAS's email campaign data; 6 expert practitioners targeting student audiences; a truck load of third-party data, and some best practices based on my own experience as an email marketer and newsletter creator.

If you're curious about the potential of email to build, engage and engender trust from student audiences, I think you'll like this report.

It's not just facts and figures, but wisdom from students and education marketers alike.

We all love a good underdog story in marketing, and in 2023, The State of Student Email might just be it.

KYLE CAMPBELL,
MANAGING DIRECTOR & FOUNDER OF EDUCATION MARKETER

1. A QUIET PLACE

In 1997, Steve Jobs called a meeting to unveil his new vision for marketing at Apple. *“This is a very complicated world,” he said. “It’s a very noisy world, and we’re not going to get a chance for people to remember much about us.”*

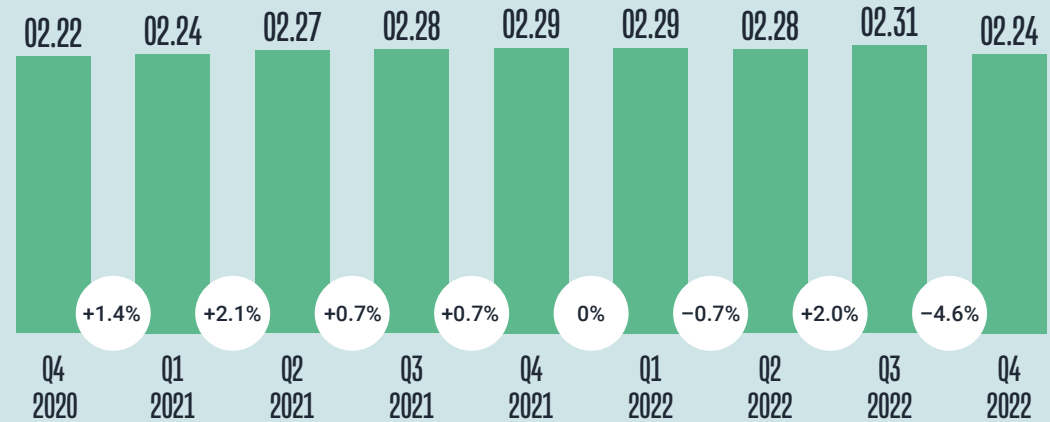
Of course, by today’s standards, this seems quaint. Things were a lot quieter before the age of the iPhone and social apps, but still, the sentiment endures. If anything, it’s more relevant than ever. Social media is the greatest cacophony the world has ever known, and it won’t be quietening down any time soon.

According to a global survey by GWI, the average time spent on social media has plateaued. In fact, ‘time’ has been maxed out since 2020.

APR 2023: DAILY TIME SPENT USING SOCIAL MEDIA (QOQ)

AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME (IN HOURS) THAT INTERNET USERS AGED 16 TO 64 SPEND USING SOCIAL MEDIA EACH DAY

Note: GWI have revised their methodology. Please read the important notes on comparing data at the start of the report before comparing data on this chart with previous reports.



Source: GWI (Q4 2022) Figures represent the findings of a broad global survey of internet users aged 16 to 64. See GWI.com for full details. Comparability: Starting with their Q4 2022 wave of research, GWI introduced a revised survey methodology. As a result, data for Q4 2022 and any subsequent periods may not be directly comparable with data points for prior periods.

For students, this means one thing: fiercer competition over their attention. And for most marketers, it means TURNING UP THE VOLUME.

In 2023, long after the age of ‘content is king,’ MOST marketers still believe that the key to marketing success is publishing MORE content MORE frequently.

“ In a survey with over **1,700 marketers**, Semrush asked, “*What factors lead to success in marketing?*” **45% of marketers** said, “*Publishing more content, increasing posting frequency.*”

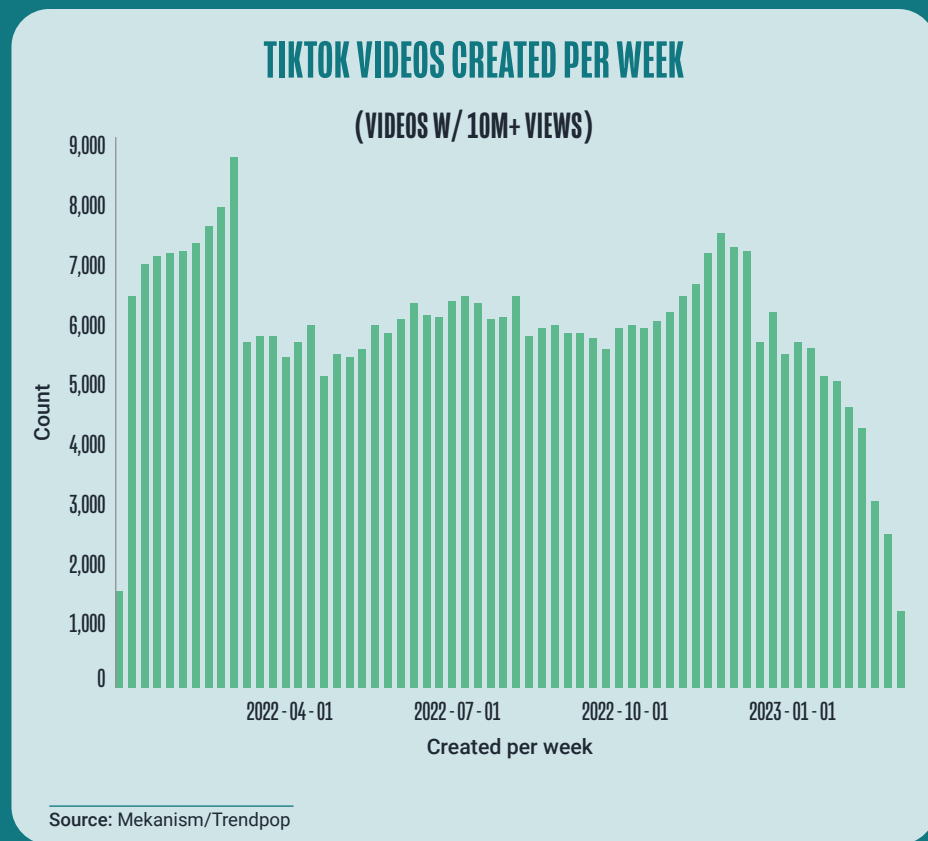
Semrush asked, “*Which tactics help the most to boost your visibility?*”

55% of marketers said, “*Creating more content and posting more often.*” ”

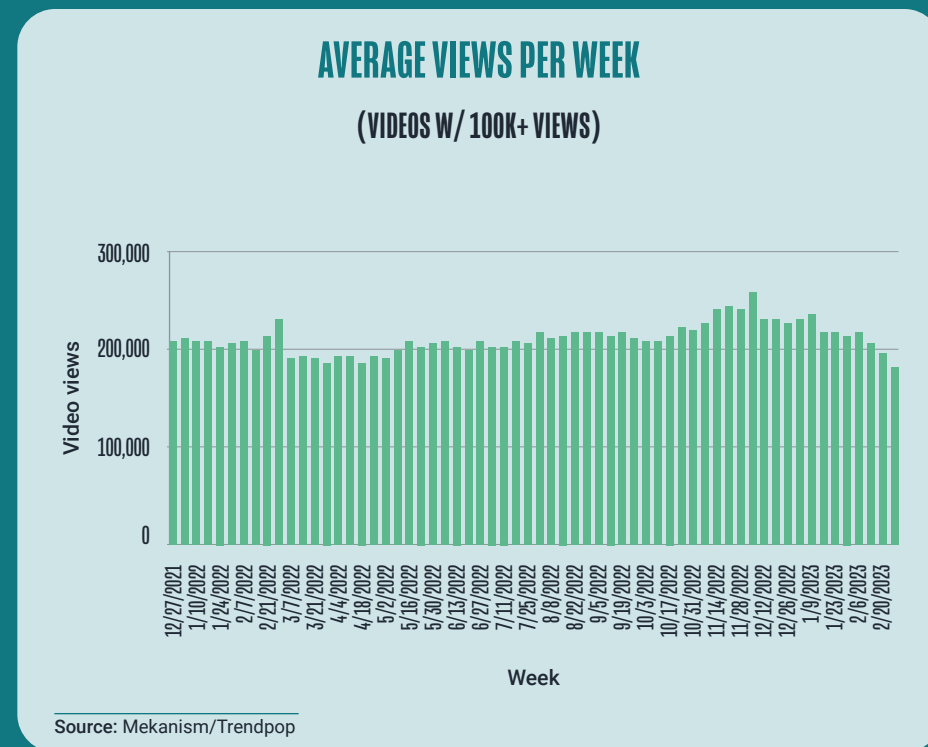
Put differently, we’re publishing so much content, so often that it’s getting hard to be heard.

Even TikTok is starting to feel the brunt.

There're more videos than ever, but the number of videos published per week that reach **10m views** is in sharp decline:



And it's the same for smaller channels, like university accounts too:



We've convinced ourselves that by adding to the noise, by peddling the same content hamster wheel (just a little bit faster and a little bit better) than everyone else, we'll yield results. And yes, if you can keep up the pace, budget, and relentless pursuit of relevance, you might...

But for how long?

It's getting tougher to connect with audiences via social media, web content and advertising alone.

So, ask yourself, do you want to be part of that world where you're constantly dicing with algorithms and paying networks to be found, or, do you want to invest in channels where students expect (and actually want) to hear from you?

ONE OF THE BEST-KEPT SECRETS IN MEDIA

Attend the average youth media conference and it sounds like the majority of marketers have given up on email because it isn't as shiny as TikTok, Threads or Yarn.

That last one I made up, but you were curious for a second, weren't you?

Look, here's a well-kept secret that you never hear on student panels. You know those influencers and creators making a business out of our attention? You know what their **most used channels** are after social media?

Websites and email.

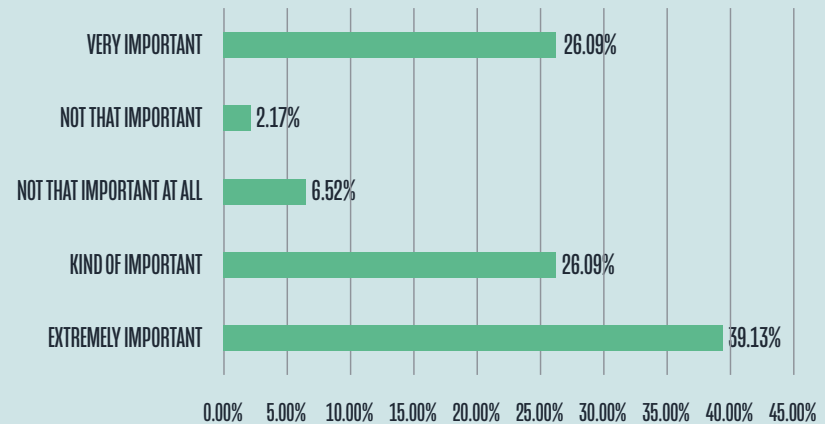
Yep, two technologies that have been around since the 80s are still just as relevant today for reaching young people as they were then.

Here's why creators use them:

1. They get better insight on their audience (first-party data).
2. Because they control access to their audience (no algorithms!).
3. Young people consume them in a trusted environment (their inbox).

“ In a snap survey with UCAS's prospective student audience, asking *“How big of a deal is email as a tool for managing your uni research?”* – email was *“very important”* or *“extremely important”* for 65% of students. ”

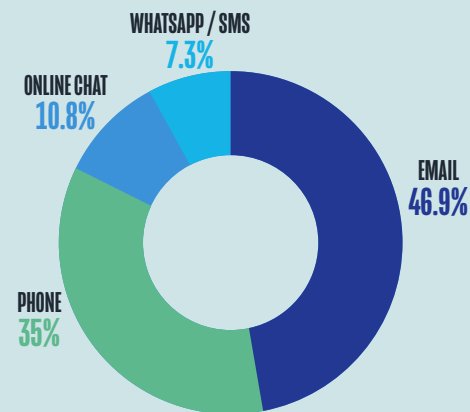
UCAS PRE-APPLICANT DATABASE 2024



Source: UCAS

Even in the run-up to Clearing, a time of pressure when students are anxious and need answers within hours of an enquiry, **email is the most preferred channel**.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO COMMUNICATE WITH UNIVERSITIES DURING CLEARING?



Source: Education Cubed and Uni Compare

So as a medium, email doesn't sound very dead, does it?

If anything, it's in demand and a quiet place students choose to consume 'important' information without distraction.



EMAIL, THE OASIS

First-year apprenticeship student Samantha Croucher says, “[I first visited] university websites and then defaulted to their mailing list to get updates. And once I was on their mailing list, I would rarely check their websites again.” A lot of students I spoke with used email as a filter, almost like a social feed in their inbox, free from ads and interruption.

Specifically, many students create separate email accounts so they can consume the work experience and/or university content **they want**. In some cases, email also acts as a coping mechanism. “*Some people just use one email for absolutely everything, whether it’s signed up for scam websites or university or work or whatever, they just use one, and I can’t deal with that,*” says Millie Gallimore, prospective student. So yes, the legends of the unwieldy student inbox you’ve heard are true, but it only applies to their personal email.

Surprisingly, a student’s ‘university’ inbox is often quite ordered – messages are typically dealt with when they arrive (most students I spoke with left notifications on!) or by regular checking of the inbox.

“*I receive around 7 emails a day – maybe one of them is for my job, and then the rest of them are just from a variety of universities emailing me,*” says Chloe Kedem, post-16 student considering several universities. “*My most recent [email] was from the University of Derby, telling me about the undergraduate open day which I’m going to tomorrow, so it’s useful to have updated information.*” That might sound like a lot of email,

but Chloe values these communications. Plus, she picks and chooses what to read: “*I like to hear about what to do in cities – it’s really useful because one of my main focuses in choosing a university isn’t just what goes on inside the University, but what goes on outside. I don’t want to be miserable for three years!*”

According to Hubspot, 77% of marketers have seen an increase in email engagement over the last 12 months, with email marketing revenue estimated to reach almost \$11 billion by the end of 2023, and 99% (!) of email users check their inbox every day, with some checking 20 times a day. For students, it’s no different. Far from being dead, students see email as a utility, guiding them on their path to university and/or making student decisions.

It’s also viewed (largely) in a positive light.

Search TikTok and it doesn’t take long to find the ‘life before phone’ trend, where teens are getting nostalgic (**even melancholic**) for a time before social media. By comparison, email seems like a relatively happy place. At best, a highly curated feed around niche topics and interests. At worst, a bit irritating when you receive spam.



Far from being dead, students see email as a utility guiding them on their path to university and/or making student decisions.

SET SPAM FILTERS TO MAX

For the little control they have over their social feed, students make up for it with their inbox. Every student I spoke with was highly attuned to spam, and if you break the rules of their email oasis – you're out.

Here are the top reasons for eviction:

1. You send too many emails (daily).
2. You are a stranger (they didn't opt-in).
3. The content is irrelevant/ not personalised.

"I think I've ended up unsubscribing purely because they have inundated the inbox," says Medical student Abhishek Saha at Oxford University. *"It gets to a point where it's like 'I don't want to see these guys anymore.'"*

In fact, according to industry benchmarks by GetResponse, your audience will reward you with higher open and click rates **if you DON'T** send more than five communications in a week.

This doesn't just apply to commercial offers targeting students, it also applies to careers and student services. Even the most committed students, highly engaged in their careers and valuing information provided by universities, will

unsubscribe if emails stray into unrelated territory. *"Anything that could open more avenues to me, I'll subscribe to those, but I'll unsubscribe if they are spammy, like sending information that isn't relevant to me,"* says Maya Blackmore, Psychology and Sociology student.



Even the most committed students, highly engaged in their careers and valuing information provided by universities, will unsubscribe if emails stray into unrelated territory.

This isn't anything new. Students like content that's relevant and timely, but what's more interesting is understanding their email hierarchy. *"The most important email for me is when I get a message back,"* says Maya Salem, prospective student, *"then it's the university ones obviously... not the adverts and not things that aren't really tailored to me."* It's important to note, the students I spoke with STILL READ promotional emails (who doesn't like a good deal?) – it's just the LAST thing they deal with. So taking a wide window to assess tactical performance i.e. open/click-through rates is advisable.

Essentially, students prioritise based on trust and relevance, in this order:

1. Someone they have emailed personally.
2. A university they have opted into hearing from.
3. A brand that shares updates because they exchange their email for an offer e.g. 10% off.

Maybe having conversations with students over email, rather than always directing students back to your website, isn't a bad way to go. One provider I spoke with actively encourages it, including CTAs to **reply and "have a conversation"** via every automated email they send. Every conversation puts them at the front of the inbox queue.

Available insights:

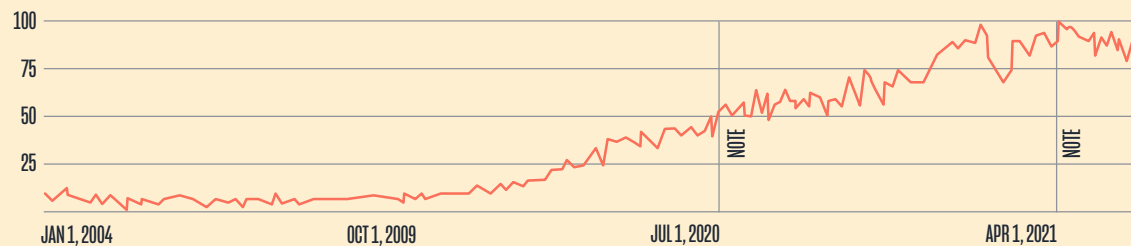
- ▶ Email is a quiet place, a remedy to social's cacophony.
- ▶ Students preferred communication channel with universities is email.
- ▶ Students want to keep their tailored inboxes clean, one wrong move and you're out.



2. YOU HAVE MY TRUST

In 2020, you couldn't move for the influx of company and creator newsletters. People were stuck indoors and content marketing (with email at the heart of growing an 'owned audience') saw a significant spike.

INTEREST IN CONTENT MARKETING OVER TIME



Source: Google Trends

While most company newsletters bit the dust with the return to the office, those that stuck around gave the medium a much-needed renaissance. More brands now realise the **loyalty of email** audiences when compared with other acquisition channels, but despite the pandemic, email has been one of the stickiest channels for a while.

Vox readers spend an average of **110 seconds on the site**, compared to just 40 seconds for Facebook visitors.

Vanity Fair readers consume **2X more content** than any other segment.

Category Pirates publishes 5,000 to 10,000+ words weekly and is a Substack top five **most subscribed** business newsletter. Yes, 10,000 words in a NEWSLETTER.

"But young people don't subscribe to newsletters!" Actually, they do. Substack (the world's largest email newsletter provider) has **20m active subscribers**. **18% of them are aged 18-24.**

Additionally, as social media continues to fragment, the need for quality curation has increased dramatically. The reason that platforms like Substack are growing, and **newsletters** like Morning Brew have become **educators**, is that people (students!) are often overwhelmed by too much information.



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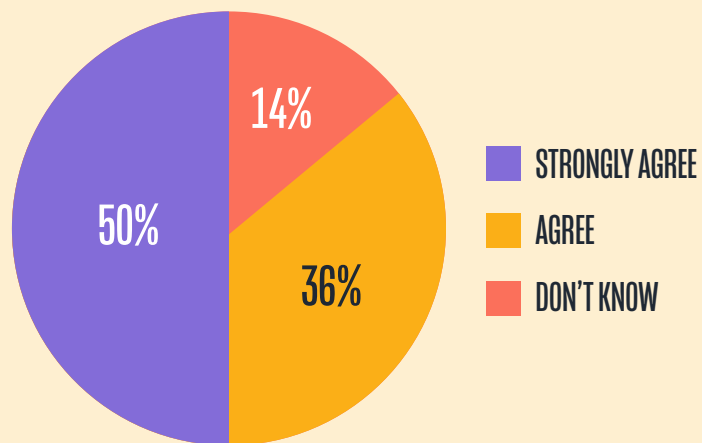
In a recent report by Olark and Enrollify, the majority (38%) of education marketers cite email as the **best channel for helping them reach marketing and recruitment goals**. Above paid social (30%) and SEO (25%). So despite the hundreds, even thousands of new channels entering the market over the last 20 years, an email audience remains a LOYAL audience. In fact, look in your CRM and you'll likely see this story, students on mailing lists are a) more likely to convert, b) make decisions quicker and/or c) buy.

Why students trust email

"Over the 8 years I've conducted focused groups with students, email was always the preferred channel," says Vicky Hayhurst, CEO of Hayhurst and Co and ex Chief Strategy Officer at Education Cubed. *"It's the easiest channel for universities to strike a balance between being approachable, yet professional – that's what students expect."*

When asked to what extent students agreed with the statement *"I am more likely to trust information that comes via email from institutions or brands"* – almost all either "strongly agreed" or "agreed."

I AM MORE LIKELY TO TRUST INFORMATION THAT COMES VIA EMAIL FROM INSTITUTIONS OR BRANDS



Source: Qualitative Student Interviews with Kyle Campbell

Not one student said that email was less trustworthy than social media, likely the result of having **greater control** over what they see in their inbox. *"It's less algorithmically driven,"* says Kris Achten, marketing lead for KdG University. *"It ends up being a place of trust, a place to return to... We noticed that our conversion emails are opened up to four times by each student."*

For a medium that students are meant to ignore, email is surprisingly sticky. Not only is Kris' university getting an eye-watering 73% open rate, but students keep going back to the content long after it arrives in their inbox. *"The secret to our emails is that we use them as an executive summary of our website,"* says Kris. *"We treat those emails like a key to a specific topic that students care about."*

HOW MIAMI UNIVERSITY BUILDS TRUST WITH UGC IN EMAILS

In recent years, user-generated content has been overshadowed by creator and influencer hype, but for middle and bottom-of-the-funnel activity – it's alive and well.

According to Entribe's State of User-Generated Content report:

- ▶ **86%** of consumers trust a brand using UGC over influencers.
- ▶ **90%** prefer content from actual customers.
- ▶ **29%** find influencer posts untrustworthy.

Few institutions understand this better than Miami University which uses UGC to boost its email open rates as high as 90%.

"We wanted to tell first-person student stories as much as possible," says Nate Jorgensen, Senior Director of Strategic Academic Marketing and Communications on the [Higher Ed Marketer Podcast](#). "I went to a panel at the AMA Conference... and the thing that kept coming back (from students) was that they were not sure, they were scared and uncertain."

In marketing, we've had it drilled into us that you should focus on benefits over features to such an extent that we rarely (if ever) give empathy any consideration. But Miami is leaning into the latter and it's paying off. Out of 22,000 emails sent, 21,000 were opened with 77,000 (!) total opens.

Yep, students are going back to the content, but they are also forwarding it to their parents.



EMAIL TIP:

Rather than separate parent comms, consider a parent email that students can forward to their parents. KdG does similar and gets: **50% opens, 12% clicks** and its **opened 4x more than it's received.**



CONTRIBUTORS

So, we know how effective email can be, but how do we get there? What goes into creating the ideal email or sequence of emails? How can we ensure students find our communications useful and trustworthy?

I spoke to the following expert practitioners for their views and recommendations:



Kris Achten, Marketing lead at KdG and Chief of Story at People Like You



Vicky Hayhurst, CEO of Hayhurst & Co



Cheri Toyne, Salesforce Marketing Cloud CRM Manager at UCAS



Dan Sanchez, Director of Inbound Marketing at Element451



Phillip Smith, Founder of Education Marketing Agency

3. HOW TO CREATE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

1. CREATE FOCUSED COMMUNICATIONS

This doesn't necessarily mean 'short' (look at the Category Pirates example earlier) but focusing on one topic per email won't hurt your chances. *"The other week I signed up to over 40 institutions' mailing lists, and I only got a handful of good email experiences,"* says Phillip Smith, Founder of Education Marketing Agency. *"In the most part emails were too long and tried to achieve too much in one communication, and in a lot of cases it was just content copied and pasted from the website."*

For context, this doesn't mean you shouldn't repurpose content from elsewhere for your communications (it's great for efficiency) but be aware that what works in one channel rarely seamlessly transfers to another. You must design for the channel. Email is no different.

For the best performance:

- ▶ One topic per email.
- ▶ Ensure your email content is scannable.
- ▶ Include one CTA/action you want someone to take per email.

2. LISTEN TO YOUR AUDIENCE

The best way to understand what to put in your emails is to examine the enquiries you receive. What are the most common questions? What do you have to keep typing out time and time again despite it being on your website? *"I constructed my email tracks based on two things – 1) what students asked and 2) what students needed to know,"* says Dan Sanchez, Director of Inbound Marketing at Element451. *"It's that simple – most institutions just lead with themselves and wonder why students aren't reading."*

"Reviewing enquiries gave us powerful insight into what questions students really had," says Kris Achten, marketing lead at KdG, *"and what struck me is that we had ZERO questions about programme content – so now we don't put that in emails, that's what the website is for."*

By using this simple technique, KdG has halved its email enquiries and doubled its applications. Better than putting a Q&A on the website, right?

For the best performance:

- ▶ Review the most common enquiries.
- ▶ Answer common questions in concise emails.
- ▶ Balance this with information students need to know.



3. BE PERSONALISED FROM THE START

The no.1 way students determined if an email is relevant to them is a) the subject line and b) the preview text. *“Some of them are very generic... and I’m just ‘no, that’s not happening.’”* says Maya Blackmore, Psychology and Sociology student, *“but if the title’s quite specific I’ll click into it.”* No revelations here, but the majority of the students I spoke with laboured that personalisation, even to the extent that it’s included in the subject line, is key for engagement.

When personalisation is deployed is also critical. *“Use automation to get a conversation going, but when students reply, come in with your bespoke and personalised conversation,”* says Phillip Smith. *“Automation alone cannot personalise and nurture the sale.”*

For best performance:

- ▶ Spend time crafting personalised preview text.
- ▶ Introduce personalised elements into the subject line.
- ▶ Use automation to strike up personal exchanges via email.

4. TOP AND TAIL WITH SALES

An unused tactic across both brands and higher ed institutions is combining ‘nurture’ flows with sales-orientated comms. *“The most effective window for sales messaging is two weeks after the lead comes in and two weeks before the course is meant to start,”* says Phillip Smith. *“Between that, you can run a standard nurture flow.”* Sales messaging can include messages like ‘book a 1:1 chat’, ‘attend our open day’ and ‘engage via peer-to-peer chat’ – anything that strikes up a conversation.

“In the run-up to the application deadline, we’d reduce students’ application fees from \$50 to \$5 depending on how long they’d been in the funnel,” says Dan Sanchez. *“Once they became an inquiry, it triggered a 30-day count down and their discounted app fee expired after that time. It was one of our most effective conversion tools.”*

For best performance:

- ▶ Have discrete strategies for sales and nurture.
- ▶ Prioritise sales messages for the first two weeks.
- ▶ Have one final conversion push two weeks before key deadlines.

5. USE EMAIL WITH OTHER CHANNELS

How do you create an engaged list? If it's through short-term offers, your loyalty may suffer over time. The majority of students I spoke with either a) put promotional content at the back of the queue, or b) had little interest in the follow-up comms from the brand after unlocking the offer, or c) unsubscribed once the frequency of communications became excessive.

It was **no different for universities**, but the loyalty of audiences isn't just determined by the relevance and the quality of the content they receive, but by how email as a channel is used.

"The mistake people make is just using email," says Cheri Toyne, Salesforce Marketing Cloud CRM Manager at UCAS. *"It's at the bottom of the funnel activity, so combining it with other channels like paid media is essential for discovery."* Similarly, campaigns should be measured holistically – often it isn't one channel driving conversions, but all of them working together.

For best performance:

- ▶ Use email as a channel for relationship-building and conversion.
- ▶ Using other channels with email makes your audience more likely to engage.
- ▶ Measure the performance of your entire campaign, not just individual channels.

6. BE FAST

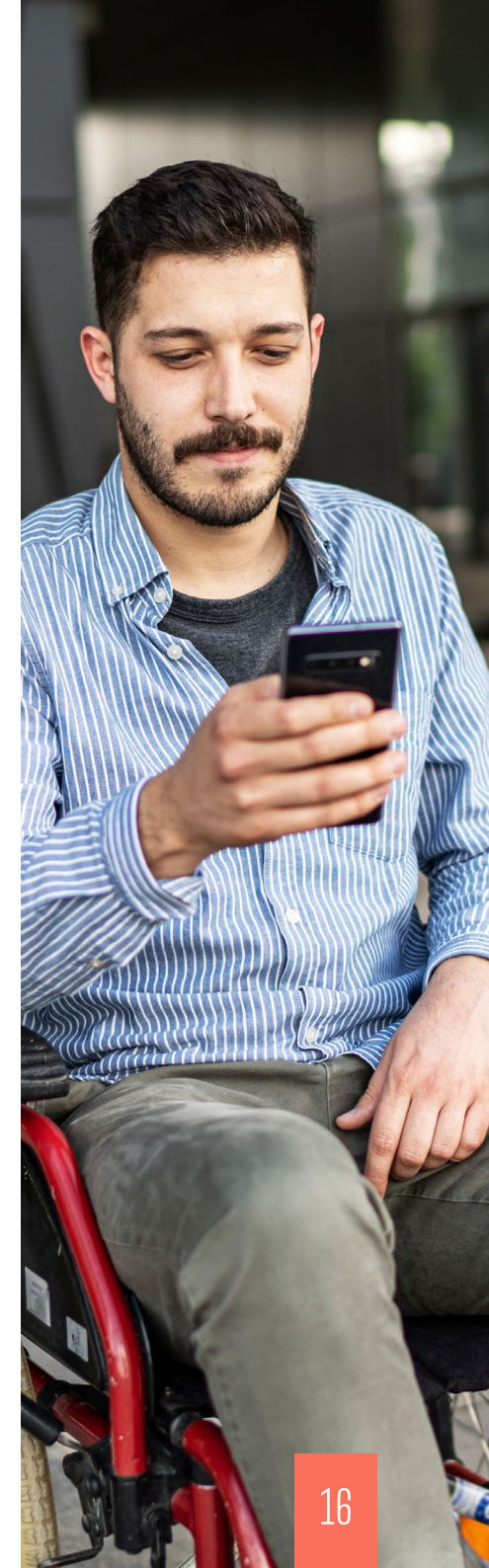
According to the Keystone Education Group, only **5% of students expect to be responded to in less than a day**, 40% expect to be responded to in 1 to 3 days, 40% expect a response within a week, and 15% expect a response in over 2 weeks. This is a shame, because the same survey revealed that 41% of institutions did not respond at all. Ironically, only 5% of students expecting a response in a day is EASY STREET when compared with commercial sectors. One survey by Super Office revealed that nearly half of all customers (46%) expect companies to **respond faster than 4 hours**. Just imagine.

"The longer you take to reply, the lower the chance of someone applying," says Phillip Smith. *"A lot of institutions don't realise that it isn't about who's the best institution, it's who's the fastest institution. If I apply to five universities and only one gets back to me with a personalised email... I'm much less likely to even reply to the other universities as I've already made a commitment to that institution."*

In marketing we worry about our branding, messaging and USPs, but speed too is a powerful differentiator. In fact, students go as far to say that they prioritise a fast **response over quality content**.

For best performance:

- ▶ Respond quickly and personally.
- ▶ Prioritise a fast response over high-production content.
- ▶ The longer you wait to respond the lower the chance a student will convert.



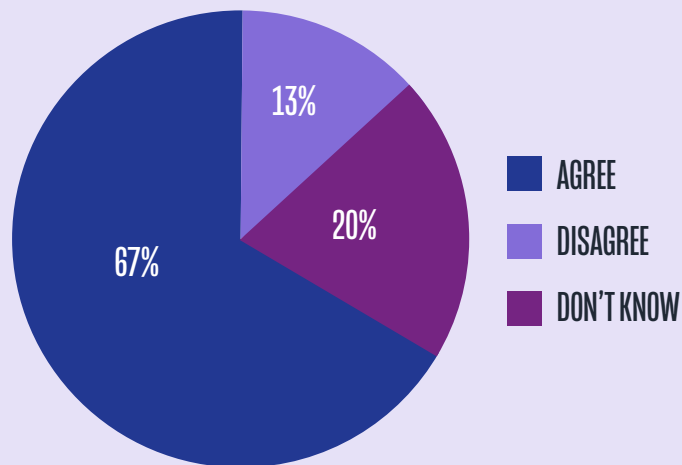
4. EMAIL AS ACTION

As part of qualitative interviews, I asked 14 students to score on a scale of 1 to 5 (five being strongly agree) to what extent they agreed with the statement:

"I frequently take action (like attending an event, signing up for a service, etc.) based on the content of the emails I receive."

I was expecting 1s and 2s all around, with the sentiment *"I'm not influenced!"* but I was dead wrong.

I FREQUENTLY TAKE ACTION (LIKE ATTENDING AN EVENT, SIGNING UP FOR A SERVICE, ETC.) BASED ON THE CONTENT OF THE EMAIL I RECEIVE



Source: Qualitative student interviews with Kyle Campbell

The quantitative stats play out at scale too. Speaking with Steve Minney, Head of Undergraduate Recruitment at Swansea University, students are undoubtedly engaged with email as a channel.

The university exceeds pre-applicant open rate benchmarks throughout the cycle and sends emails on a wide range of topics, including summer schools, open days and subject-specific activity.

So what's their secret?

How Swansea drives action

Partnering with UCAS, Swansea has revolutionised how it uses email to engage with undergraduate prospects and applicants. I interviewed Steve for the detail.

AI-assisted delivery

While email is celebrated as having unparalleled resilience to algorithms and mediation (essentially, you have the direct dial for your contact) there are some non-obvious uses for AI technology. *"We use AI to send emails at times individuals are most likely to open them,"* says Steve. *"Just by doing that, our open rates went up to 70%."* The University also uses Salesforce's 'Einstein filters' to target its most engaged prospects, enabling Swansea to focus on the students most likely to convert.

Content, structure, and personalisation

"Over time, our emails have become much shorter," says Steve. *"Based on testing, we've also noticed some nuances, like if you put a chevron in front of an action button, twice as many people click it."*

Testing is critical, but it's important to note that Swansea's high engagement isn't just a result of good email marketing tactics. It uses [UCAS's Student Decision Report](#) to inform the content it shares, and when.

It's not an unfamiliar strategy – brands already use 'lifecycle' email marketing programmes to great effect. Yes, triggered email can boost engagement by 4%, but carefully curating content based on insights throughout an annual cycle can **boost effectiveness by almost 9%**.

Personalisation is a similar story. By simply putting the student's name and a topic of interest in the subject line/preview text, Swansea smashes industry benchmarks for higher-ed email performance, exceeding pre-applicant open rates by up to 12% monthly.

Results

By running an email-centred campaign with UCAS for Clearing 2022, Swansea generated **250 applicants** and **214 accepts** for the cost of **£25,000**.

That's an ROI of just over **7,000%**, based on students enrolling for at least one year.

How email works with other channels

"You see very serious, clued-up people saying students don't read emails..." says Steve.

"My personal experience is that it's a very effective tool within a wider toolkit, and all our numbers bear that out." Steve runs campaigns across social media, display and third-party channels to realise email's full effectiveness, and he's absolutely right to do so.

Media lifts media. Channels work in collaboration, not isolation.

This is true for AdGen's Drew Crawford when working with university marketing campaigns. *"I recently saw a presentation by EA Games where they were seeing the best results on Reddit, YouTube and Twitch,"* says Drew, *"but they only got those results when all three were running concurrently."*

Taking out just one of those channels, resulted in the collapse of the others. It's the same for email marketing too. CMI, and both Robert Rose and Joe Pulizzi (thought leaders in content marketing and huge proponents of email) agree that three channels is the magic number. Those who receive your content in three different places are:

1. more likely to convert
2. make decisions faster
3. are likely to stick around longer.

If you were to assess the effectiveness of any individual media channel, it would likely come back as a failure. Students won't convert to your message after hearing from you in just one place. It's more likely that they see multiple pieces of your media over time – via social channels, entertainment platforms and even via creators.

Look holistically. Assess the effectiveness of your media strategy over time, rather than by the direct performance of individual channels.

Available insights:

- ▶ Students are more likely to take action from information presented in emails.
- ▶ Email campaigns are more effective when run concurrently with media.
- ▶ Email isn't dead (at least not yet.)





5. HOW UCAS CAN HELP

Target the right students at the right time

We have the data, reach and expertise to put you in front of the right students throughout their discovery and application journey.

Drive engagement using hundreds of data points – including age, gender, location and academic subject interest – to target the students you want, and have your email delivered alongside the UCAS brand for maximum engagement.

Our latest pre-applicant emails delivered:

- ▶ Click-through rate **more than double** the education sector benchmark**
- ▶ **45.3%** unique open rate* **
- ▶ **Over 1 million** unique opens and **62k+** unique click throughs* ***

Boost email performance using AI

Ensure each email to each student is sent at a specific time based on their preferences using Einstein. This revolutionary AI feature analyses the behaviour of our hundreds of thousands of email recipients and gets insights that help improve engagement.

- ▶ **81%** average increase in open rates* ****
- ▶ **105%** average increase in click through rates****

Create your own package

No matter your requirements or budget, we have you covered. We can offer you a multi-channel package of media products suitable to your goals and budget.

Connect using:

- ▶ Email
- ▶ Paid media
- ▶ An enhanced provider page
- ▶ Direct mail
- ▶ **ucas.com** display ads.

*Email open rates may be skewed by some mail clients' privacy settings following an iOS update

**PAD24 emails, October 2022 - June 2023

***PAD emails, September 2022 - January 2023

****For UCAS emails using send time optimisation compared with standard UCAS emails

CONNECT WITH YOUR FUTURE STUDENTS

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