



# **Student of the Future: understanding students and their expectations**

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# Joanna Kumpula

20 years in international higher education

Professional interests: service design,  
international student recruitment, student  
journey mapping, content marketing

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University staff trainer since 2010



# Content

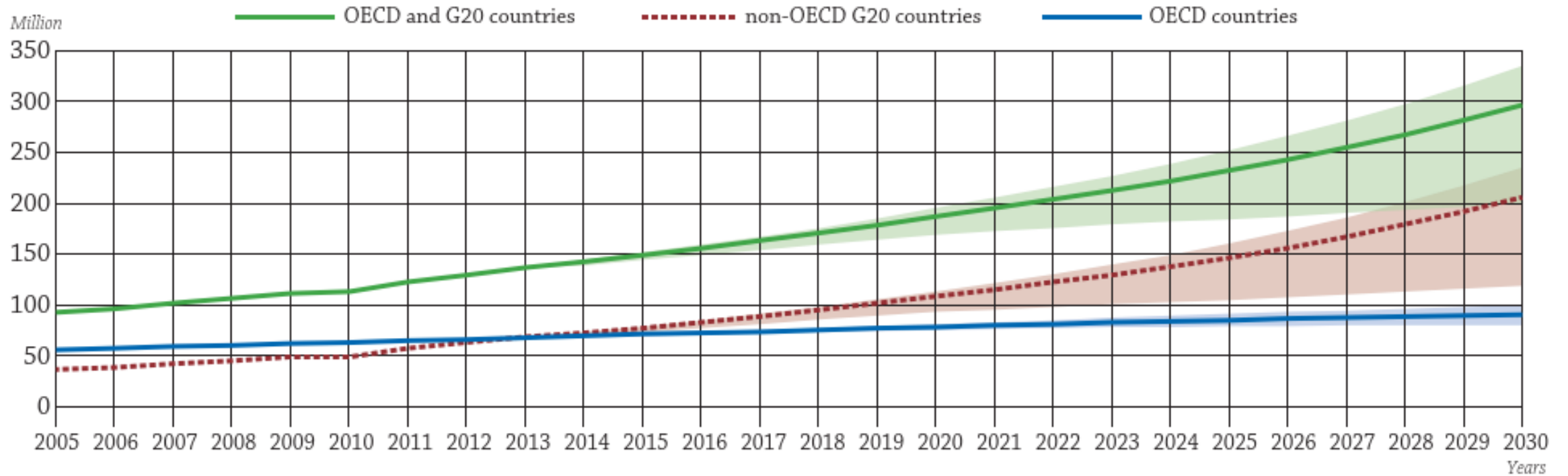
1. Global tertiary education trends
2. Generation Z – student of now
3. Generation Alpha – student of tomorrow
4. International student motivations
  - How TAU understands student motivations and interests i.e. motivational profiles

# Global education trends

- 2005: only 14% of the young people in OECD and G20 countries had a tertiary education
- 2030: estimations are that 45% will have a tertiary qualifications
  - Biggest growth will come from non-OECD countries (Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa)
  - **China and India** are expected to supply more than 60% of the G20 workforce with a qualification in science, technology, engineering and mathematics by 2030.
- From mass production to knowledge economy
  - Algorithms and complex systems replacing repetitive manual labour work



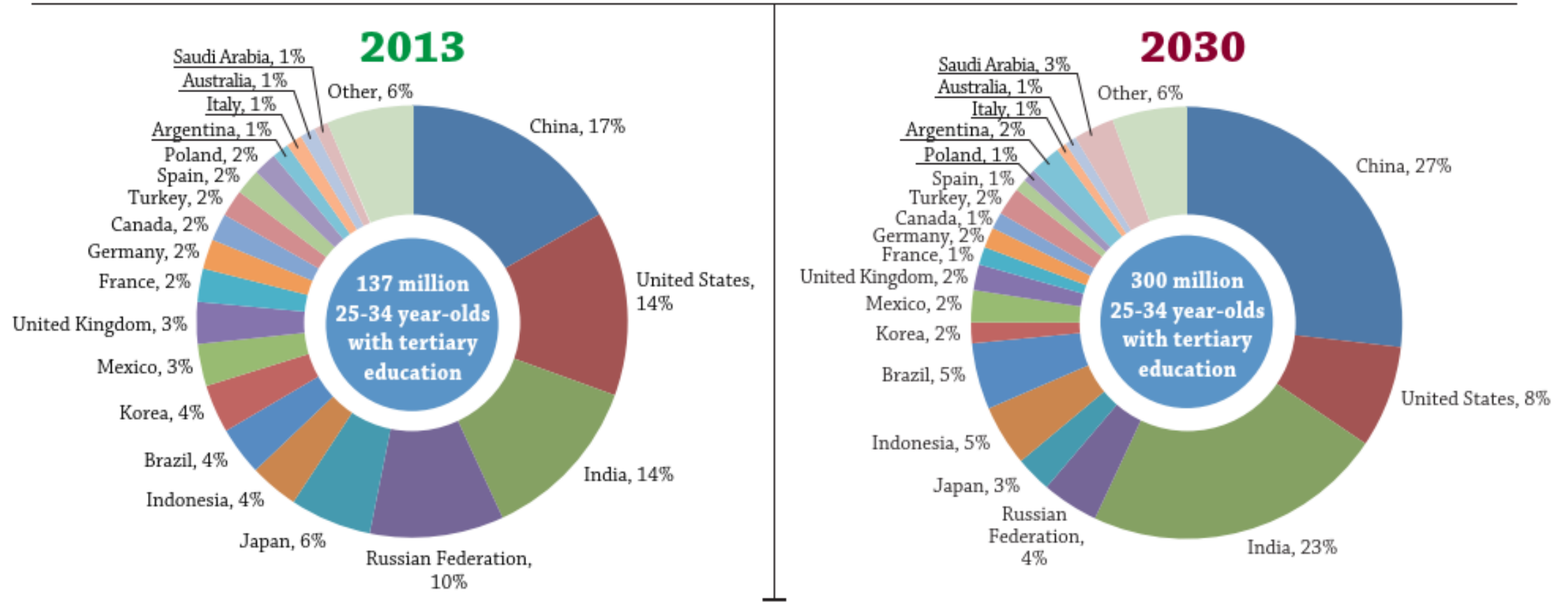
Figure 1. **Projections of the number of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education, 2005-2030**



**Note:** Figures in this graph are estimates based on available data. The population estimations are based on the OECD annual population projections (<http://stats.oecd.org/>).

**Sources:** OECD database, UNESCO and National Statistics websites for Argentina, China, India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa.

Figure 2. **Share of 25-34 year-olds with a tertiary degree across OECD and G20 countries (2013, 2030)**



**Note:** Figures in these graphs are estimates based on available data. The population estimations are based on the OECD annual population projections (<http://stats.oecd.org/>).

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# Generation Z “Zoomers”

No generation is a monolith!

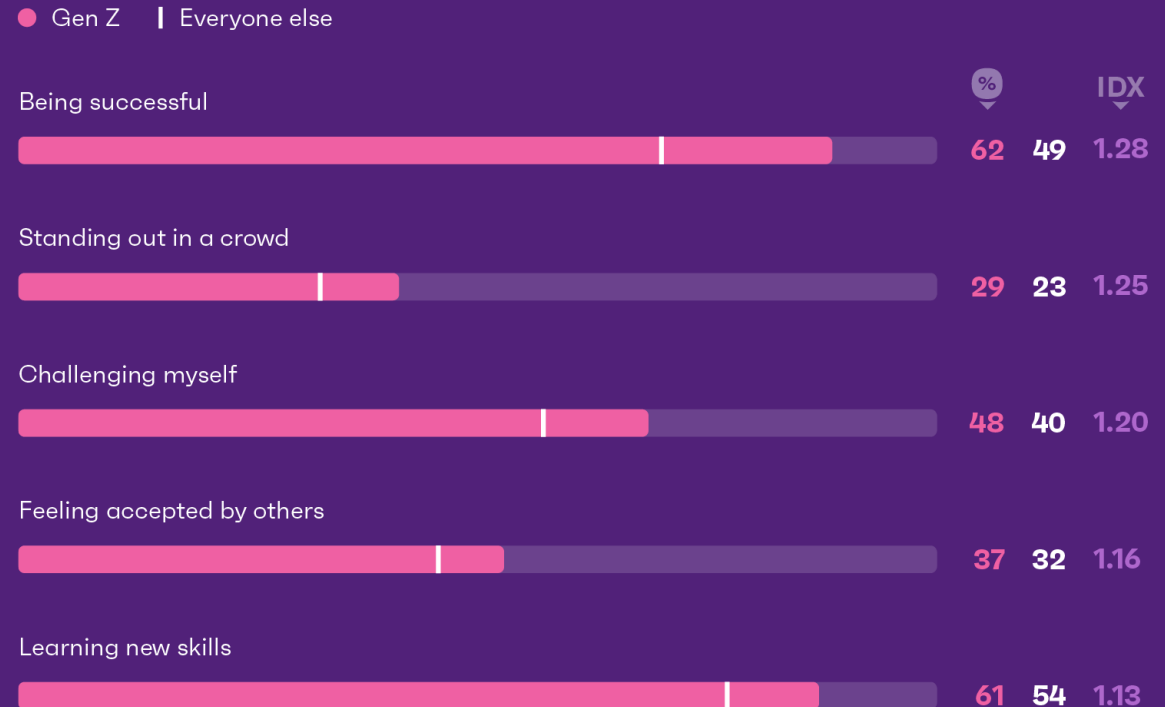
- Gen Z (born around 1997 to 2012) is more careful with **money**, value **diversity** in everything and is the most **tech proficient** of all previous generations.
- They focus on value and relevancy of their degree and want support services over campus amenities.
- More sceptical of the university system than previous generations, as they have seen the recessions hitting also those with university degrees.
  - Still more likely to go to university than previous generations

As technology and learning develops faster than ever, Gen Z is keen to keep up and learn more.

6 out of ten Gen Z professionals say that they want to learn more, but do not have the time. 48% prefer self-study and independent learning. (survey by LinkedIn, 2018)

## They've got their eyes set on success and upskilling

% of Gen Z and non-Gen Z who say the following are important to them (sorted by top over-index against everyone else)



? Which of the following things are important to you? © GWI Core Q4 2021

👥 51,269 global Gen Z internet users aged 16-24 & 173,973 internet users aged 25-64

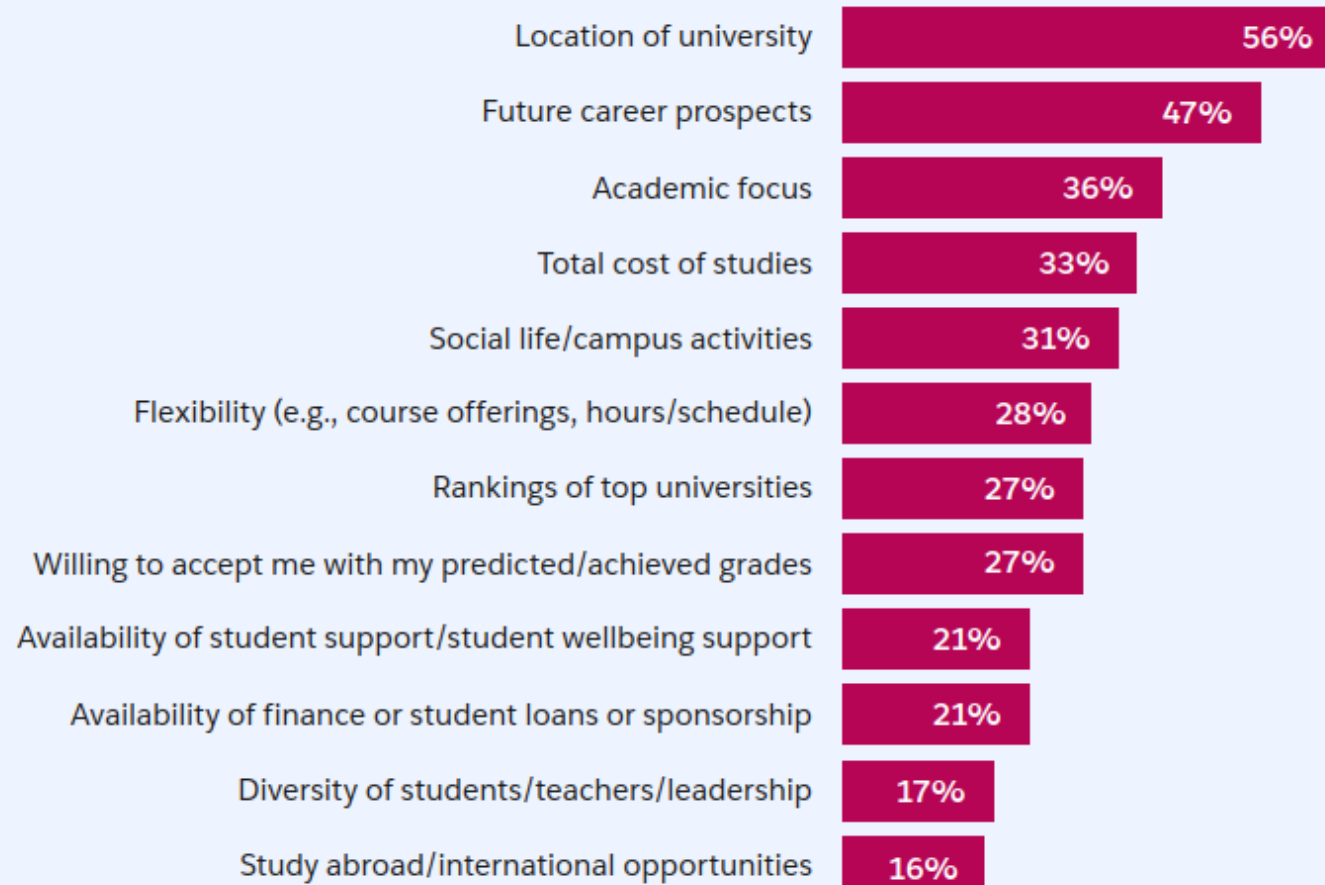


# Money conscious generation who need guarantees

- They have seen the recessions and that (higher) education does not mean a steady career anymore
  - Personal safety and security for the future
- Return on investment for the degree
- Known for their entrepreneurial spirit
- Want to have a positive impact on the world, meaningful (study) careers

## Location and career prospects draw students in.

What factors were most important in deciding to enroll in your university?



Salesforce: Connected Student report,  
3<sup>rd</sup> ed, 2022

# Expecting inclusion of everyone from everyone

- recognising the variety of different ethnicities, genders, backgrounds, languages etc
- More demanding of what is **international** education
- Sense of belonging to a community
- Sustainability and climate change
- Tolerant generation?



# Grew up together with the social media giants

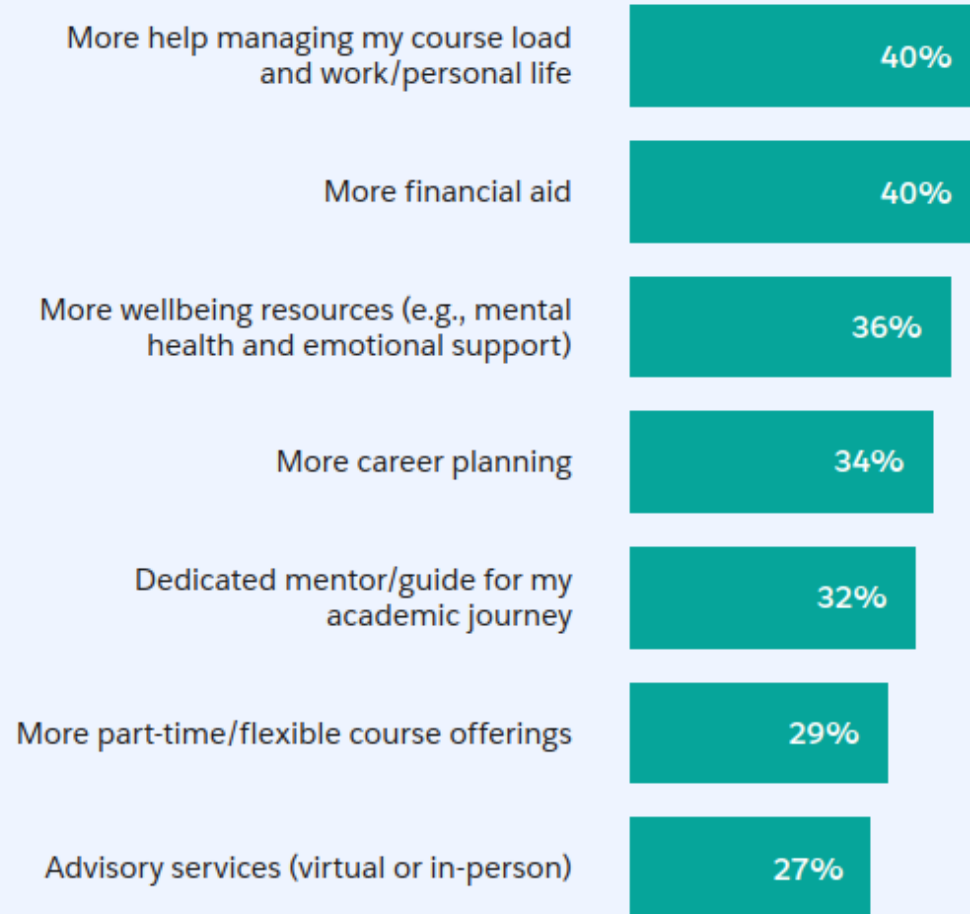
- Focus on innovation, startup company boom
- Technology is there to make life less complicated, convenient
- The world is connected 24/7
- Online communities, attachment to digital devices
- Lacking skills in face2face communication?

# Students supporting and looking for support

- Student support as a holistic approach, importance of the First Year Experience to graduation and overall satisfaction
- More focus on wellbeing and health (esp mental health), financial aid, career development, etc.
- Managing the work-life balance
- Rapid rise of demand for support services,
  - Covid-19 response

## Students want help managing school with work and life.

What resources do you need from your university in order to be successful as a student?



Salesforce: Connected  
Student report, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, 2022

# Generation Alpha

**born after 2010, they have started learning with Siri and Alexa, their whole life is digital**

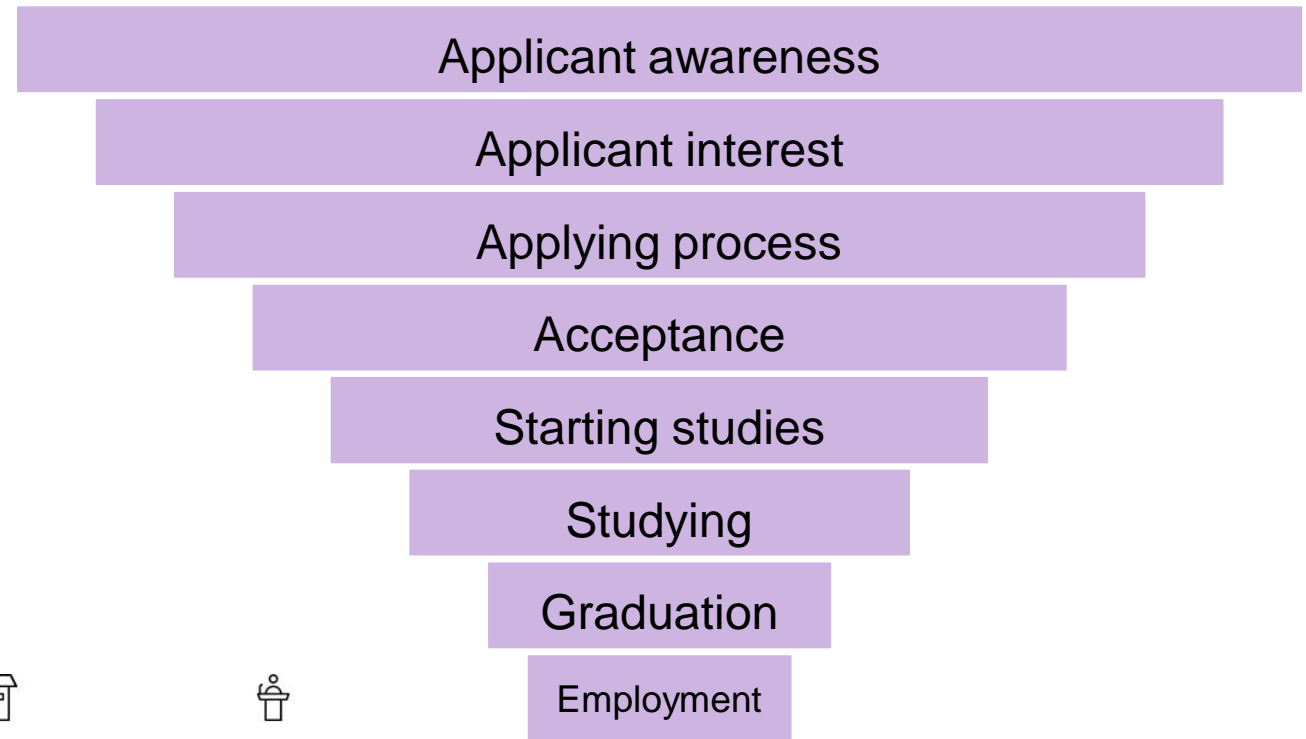
- Covid-19 children will probably be better at distance learning
  - Social-emotional learning support
- They will be the most educated generation
  - need skills in separating “important” information from the overflow of data
  - visual learners
  - used to immediate access to information



# Tools for work

## Motivational student profiles

# Understanding students' expectations and building student-centric university services require understanding of the student journey i.e. the recruitment funnel



## Discover / compare

Applicant explores opportunities for future studies and identifies relevant study programmes and countries.

## Apply and decide

Applicant communicates hers/his competence and achievements, and chooses a place to study.

## Prepare and settle

Student prepares oneself for moving to a new country. Student gets settled to the new country and academic environment

## Study

Student achieves relevant competencies and creates networks

## Graduate

Student graduates and continues towards PhD or a job outside university

# Strategical work on international student expectations

**Create profound insight on international student's motives, needs and expectations.** TAU first did value proposition mapping on all English-taught programmes, then continued into student profiles.

**Help to build more relevant services.** Outcomes of the project are used to recognize the **most potential** international student profiles, and most importantly learn how to attract them with **relevant communication** and **services**.

In addition, motivation profiles are an excellent tool for empathy when developing **student centric mindset and procedures** through the organization.



# How to read the motivational profiles

**Motivational profiles are based on individual values, motives, and behaviour.** In this case, different motivational factors that applicants have when they consider choosing Tampere University.

They are not based on demographic segments and **the purpose of the profiles is to break stereotypes, not enforce them.**

Motivational profiles are **not tied to academic success.** All motivational profiles can do well when there is a match between needs and what is offered.

*Motives are fuel for our behaviour. We might be motivated by what we want to achieve, and on the other hand, by what we try to avoid.*

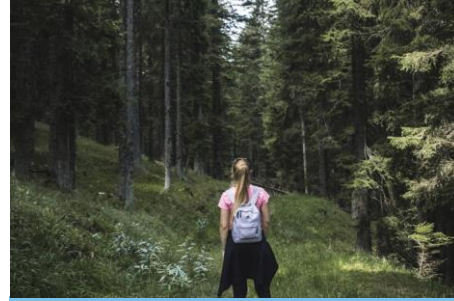


# Summary of the profiles and their motivations



## Career driven

- **Looking to deepen expertise in their chosen field/profession.**
- Passion for their topic
- Looking forward to next steps in their career
- Often coming back for further studies after time spent in work-life



## Good life searcher

- **A need for personal safety and security**
- Good work-life balance
- Long term stability, including finding employment, and looking to stay in Finland or abroad



## Socially active networker

- **New social situations, international experiences**
- Future working life is based on the networks you create now
- Having fun, enjoying life
- They may still be seeking their path, field of study and future plans.



## Goal oriented seeker

- **Finding a job after studies**
- Economic balance and independence
- Good position at work (not necessarily a managerial position, but respectable enough)



## Value driven change-maker

- **Want to create a positive impact on society**
- Help others
- Concentrate on subjects they are passionate about
- A need for safety and security both personally and in society as a whole



# Good Life searcher

Looking to live and study in a safe and stable environment. Knows Finland by reputation – good education, beautiful nature, equal and peaceful society.

## Provide support and services



Motivated by:

Living in cosy and safe environment

Taking care of my family/closest ones



# Good Life searcher

## Motivation

Good life searchers are looking for balance between work or studies and personal life in a happy, orderly society. **They value working systems where there is sufficient support and things are reliable.** Help with getting settled, providing support throughout studies and making sure students have opportunities to find a job all play a role in getting good life searchers to stay in Finland after their studies.

### What are their motives:

- **A need for safety and security**
- Good work-life balance
- Long term stability, including finding employment, and looking to stay in Finland or abroad.

*“Working culture in Finland is quite open. I am treated like a proper employee, not an intern.”*

*“In ten years time? I will be in Finland – I don’t have big dreams, but I want to have a good role in my career, to travel...”*

### What brings value:

- **Finland’s reputation plays a big role in choosing to come here.**
- Quality education in terms of content, but also good teaching and pedagogy.
- Ease, well organised services and clear instructions – a sense that things work.
- Nature, calm and sparse living conditions.
- Equality in society.

### What are negative experiences related to:

Unmet expectations be it in the university or in society in general are a let down for good life seekers. Difficulties with immigration leave a lasting negative impression. Changes in course content or timetables which lead to not being able to plan and foresee are not appreciated.

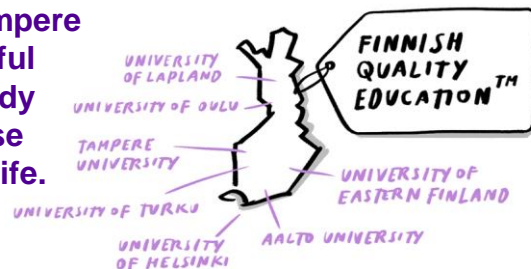


# Good Life searcher Communication

## How to design for them:

Playing up the real, positive sides of life in Finland can attract students searching for balance and safety. Clear and timely communication and reliable systems keep many good life searchers happy with the university. Making life in Tampere familiar before arrival is also appealing.

**Stability of Finnish society, but also Tampere as a safe and beautiful place to live and study are attractive to those searching for good life.**



## Where and how to reach them:

- Through Ambassadors and exchange students
- Word of mouth
- Piggybacking on Finland's national brand

## Why would they choose Tampere University:

- **Tampere as an international student city, beautiful and close to nature**
- Finnish Covid situation is relatively good, proper handling of situation by university
- Applying is easy and clear, and gives a good image of the university
- Finnish society's support of family life and quality of primary education

*"I wanted to move away from my home country and Finland sounded nice. [...]  
I wanted to study engineering, I started to look for programmes and Tampere checked all the boxes. A degree in Finland is a good investment."*

*"I like Tampere, it has been a good experience. I'm not sure about other cities, but there are lots of students from all over, it makes it feel more comfortable."*

*"I like the country, it's more peaceful and there is a less competitive academic sector here."*

# How does TAU use motivational profiles

- Part of the **planning and design process** for marketing, recruitment and new student services
  - Used by different teams, also collaboration/virtual teams
- **Induction** of new staff members, new service providers and partners, etc.
- the common understanding that we are talking about the same students, same challenges and expectations

# Managing current students' expectations

- How do we know that students expectations are met and they are happy students?
  - Student surveys and interviews
  - Tampere University took part in the International Student Barometer (ISB) in 2020 and 2022
    - ISB 2022: covered all international students at all levels, incl. exchange students who were not included in 2020

# For discussion points

- What changes would Generation Z want to see in higher education?
- How does the ideal student support system for Gen Z music students look like?