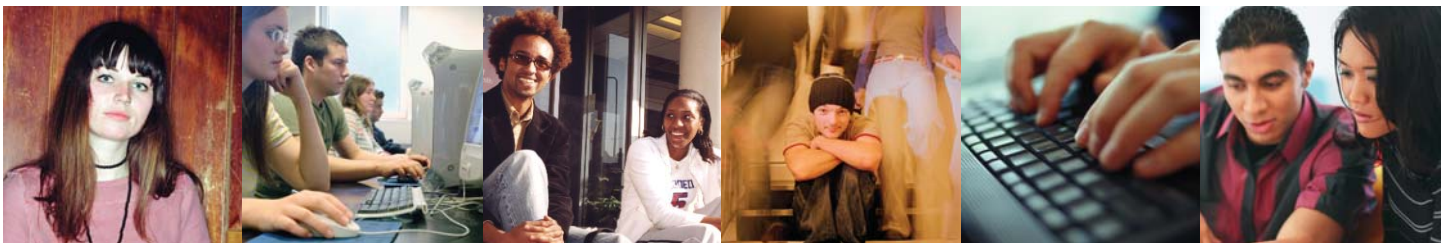


OpinionpanelResearch
The Student Panel

**University Competitors
and Decliners Study 2005/6**



Syndicated research prospectus

Fieldwork: November 2005

Report publication: April 2006

Selecting a university and course is a life-changing choice for students. Attracting and converting the right applicants is crucial to the reputation and financial future of a university. The stakes could not be higher. This report provides the evidence that marketing professionals need to make the right decisions.



Competitors and Decliners Study 2005/6

In the highly competitive university recruitment market of 2006, the Competitors and Decliners Study provides a marketing road map based on the attitudes and opinions of over 11,000 new first-year full-time undergraduates.

By interviewing both the students who accepted your offer and those who declined, the Study gives a new dimension to your marketing intelligence. Our results provide the evidence you need to build and support your marketing strategy and refine your marketing tactics.

Building on success

Now in its second year, 'Competitors and Decliners' has been widely welcomed. This year's Study is substantially improved with regard to analysis and guidance. Existing subscribers get discounts and time-series reporting.

Timely research

All respondents were invited to take the questionnaire in the first weeks of their first term of their first year. Their university selection process was still at the front of their mind. All panellists have verified ac.uk e-mail addresses.

“The Study provided interesting insights which we are still drawing on a year later for marketing and recruitment strategy.”

Diane McKenna, Research Manager, University of Salford

“We found the reports to be very detailed and well presented, providing a wealth of interesting and valuable information that we would not be able to acquire ourselves.”

Dr Russell Davies, Marketing Manager, The University of Wales, Aberystwyth

“The Opinionpanel survey brought us valuable fresh insights, which we were immediately able to incorporate into our marketing strategies.”

John McGovern, Director of Marketing & Recruitment, Lancaster University

Opinionpanel Research operates The Student Panel, the largest dedicated research panel of its kind in the UK

- Over 35,000 panellists
 - ac.uk e-mail address of every member verified
 - Exceptionally high response rates
 - Every institution included: genuinely represents the UK undergraduate population
 - Amazon gift certificates given for each completed questionnaire
 - Over 200 profiling characteristics
 - 142 subject codes
 - 127 nationalities
 - Feedback on survey results provided to panellists direct by e-mail
 - Regularly featured in UK press
- See us at www.opinionpanel.co.uk



HOW WE ANALYSE YOUR DATA

Your customised report is in **14** sections, analysing the key decision-making factors for applicants. Three questions run through the whole analysis. First, what kinds of student do you and your competitors* attract? Second, how does your institution compare with your competitors and against the national picture? And third, which institutions are addressing the important issues most successfully?

Central to our analysis is the comparison between your current students and those to whom you offered a place but who declined your offer in favour of your competitors.

SEGMENTATION

From our own analysis of the data, we have produced a needs-based cluster analysis that allows you to quantify the types of student you attract. Each cluster has defining characteristics and a clear profile, helping you segment, target and position your marketing effort.

BENCHMARKS - LEAGUE TABLES YOU CAN USE

You may know who your competitors are, but can you quantify how well you perform against them? Or where you come in the national picture? For each of the 37 performance criteria underlying the key decision-making factors, we index your performance against that of your competitors and the national picture.

Our **'Best in Class'** analysis provides a full ranked list of UK institutions for each of the 37 performance criteria, identifying your and your competitors' relative positions. You will be able to see what strategies these 'Best in Class' institutions are using to perform so well – and these are frequently not the leading academic institutions but smaller and newer universities, which may have particularly innovative web sites, open days or application processes.

Not another set of league tables!

No, this is a professional tool. It does make the market more transparent but you can't disclose anything to press – and we won't either* (within the limitations set out in Usage of findings below).

IMPORTANCE / PERFORMANCE

Success in any marketing campaign depends on getting the important things right. So, in addition to examining how different groups of students rate you and how you perform against your competitors, we also index the importance of each attribute of the decision-making process – so you can focus resources on what really matters.

* Who are your competitors?

You can either nominate a list of competitors or use our data to determine which institutions your applicants most frequently put you up against on their application forms.



REPORT CONTENTS

Each section in your customised report analyses your results according to our your key Benchmarks and the Importance / Performance appraisal of competitive effectiveness.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. STUDENT PROFILE

You versus your competitors on key elements covering UCAS points, demographics and Widening Participation attributes.

3. FACTOR SUMMARY

Here we highlight your overall and competitor scores on key factors and asses the relative importance of each factor:

- Performance and importance matrices
- Best-in-class tables for each factor

4. LOCATION FACTORS

As well as helping you assess the relative importance of proximity for you and your competitors, we will also help you understand other prized location-based features.

Key measures:

- Distance from home
- Proximity to resources / communities
- Geography, e.g. access to seaside, country, big city, hills, etc.
- Cultural life
- Transport links
- Where friends are going

5. OPEN DAYS

Open days are one of the elements most under your control. What proportion of students attend? And how highly were you rated compared to the competition? Which groups of students go? What role do open days play in choice? How can they be improved?

Key measures:

- Activities participated in
- Open-day organisation
- Information provided
- Buildings and facilities
- Staff met
- Students met
- City / location

6. APPLICATION PROCESS

As with open days, the application process is largely within your control and can offer either a valuable image enhancer or an important barrier to acceptance.

Key measures:

- University seemed interested during the application process
- Web site
- Helpful administration
- Prospectus

7. CAMPUS LIFE

Facilities are becoming a key differentiating factor for student applications. How do you rate against your competitors?

Key measures:

- Quality of accommodation
- Guaranteed place in halls
- Campus overall
- Friendly campus feel
- Sports facilities
- Student union
- Social life

8. SOCIAL LIFE

Some students look for a hectic nightlife, but many don't. A deeper understanding of what your applicants are looking for can help you focus your marketing message.

Key measures:

- City / town I want to be in
- Exciting city
- Nightlife

9. COSTS

The onset of fees will transform higher education. Price sensitivity may become the key parameter in student decision-making, making this year a crucial baseline.

Key measures:

- Cost of living
- Ease of finding part-time work
- Fees
- Bursaries / scholarships

10. RECOMMENDATION / REPUTATION

We asked students how the reputation and recommendation of institutions affected their application.

Nine key measures:

- Recommendation by teachers and careers advisors, family and friends
- Reputation of course / department / lecturer
- League tables
- Prestige

11. EMPLOYABILITY

What factors indicate to applicants that they'll improve their job prospects by accepting your offer rather than that of your competitors?

Key measures:

- Reputation with potential employers
- Placement sourcing
- Cutting-edge
- Industry links

12. COURSE

Course suitability is obviously a critical factor in accepting or declining offers. Are your courses effectively designed and marketed to applicants?

Key measures:

- Course content and structure
- Teaching
- Facilities

13. SEGMENTATION

Overview of the national segments. An understanding of how they vary among your students and your competitors':

- Your strengths and weaknesses
- Segment descriptions
- Segmentation profile for you and your competitors

14. APPENDICES

Include the Study methodology, sample sizes and a full copy of the questionnaire.

Opinionpanel Research

We're well placed to conduct this research for a number of reasons.

The largest independent student panel

With over 35,000 panellists, The Student Panel is the largest dedicated research panel of its kind in the UK. All panellists' student status is checked, we achieve exceptionally high response rates and we give good incentives to panellists for participating in our research.

A pure play market-research business

Because we exist solely to supply independent market research, we put all our resources into recruiting and maintaining the highest-quality student panel. Panellists are paid in Amazon certificates and are not subjected to any marketing, selling, subscriptions or spam.

Fresh commercial thinking

Many universities are adopting the models of marketing long embraced by leading companies. Both Spring and Opinionpanel work extensively with major global brands and bring that commercial thinking to this Study. We focus on your key strengths and weaknesses, and highlight potential strategies.

Recent Opinionpanel clients include:

Asda	<i>The National Student</i>
Britvic	NatWest
Carlsberg	Network Research
Centrica	News International
Continental Research	Oxfam
Coors	Red Bull
Greenwich University	Scholarest
<i>Guardian</i>	Sodexho
Higher Education Policy Institute	University of Southampton
HSBC	<i>Times Higher Education Supplement</i>
<i>The Independent</i>	Three (Mobile)
Kerry Foods	Wilkinsons
MORI	

Competitors and Decliners 2005/6 - a comprehensive Study

Designed after extensive research with university marketing directors and students alike, the Competitors and Decliners Study 2005/6 reflects the real views in a market. That is both diverse and complex. This Study allows you to drill down to the issues that matter most to your institution.



Key Personnel



Ben Marks

MD and founder, Opinionpanel. Ben's mission is to ensure that

Opinionpanel attracts the right panellists and customers. He has ten years' experience in sales and market research, is a graduate of Manchester University and City University (MBA), and is a full member of the Market Research Society (MRS).



Martin Collins

Chairman, Opinionpanel. Martin is a Fellow and former Chair of

the Market Research Society. He is a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and former Professor of Marketing Research at City University (now Cass Business School). He has unrivalled experience in commercial and academic market research and is a pre-eminent authority on survey sampling. He has published widely and speaks frequently in the UK and abroad.



James Clutterbuck

Data Processing Manager, Opinionpanel.

James has ten years, experience in market research at Opinionpanel, as a Senior Analyst at Quaestor Research in Leeds and at Kudos Research in London. He is an experienced trainer and market researcher.



Steve Philips

Steve is Managing Partner at Spring Research. He recently won the Market Research Society award for Best New Thinking

(based on his 2005 MRS conference paper). Spring also just won the British Market Research Association (BMRA) award for Innovation 2005. He designed the Study. His team will write your customised report and he will personally deliver the de-brief to you and your team.

Tariff

Customised Competitors and Decliners 2005/6 Study

Customised report. Contains 14 sections, each analysed with regard to applicants' key decision-making factors.

Based on a detailed picture of your current students, the report compares them to those to whom you offered a place but who declined your offer in favour of your competitors. Includes the Segmentation, Benchmarks and Importance / Performance analysis.

You will be asked to approve of modify our nominated competitor list.

Report output

2 x full-colour hard copies, bound

Report in pdf format

Approximately 150 pages

PLUS

The Overseas Student Report (see below)

The Widening-Participation Report (see below)

Total cost

£5,000

On-site presentation

Up to half a day presenting to you and your team, on your premises. Includes pre-presentation briefing and full question-and-answer on the day.

£2,000

Total data file - and training

You can examine the full data set underlying the Study, producing cross-tabs for your own in-house reporting. We will supply you with a perpetual licence for the easy-to-use **Merlin Fast Tabs** software together with half a day's training, enabling anyone in the marketing department to become expert at producing well-designed tables.

£2,500

Generic reports

These are included free of charge within the customised Study. If you don't wish to purchase the customised Study, these can be purchased separately.

Overseas student report – based on a sample of 1,000 overseas applicants, this 40-page report compares the key decision drivers of overseas applicants to those of home students. The graphs and detailed tables in this report will provide a unique national benchmark for this increasingly important market segment.

£495

Widening-Participation report – respondents tell us about their social grade, friends and familial experience of higher education and ethnicity. How do students from WP backgrounds differ in their needs and expectations of a university education?

£495

Usage of findings

All findings are issued for the sole and confidential use of the subscriber organisation and each subscriber must take reasonable precautions to protect the confidential nature of the documents and data sets supplied to them. All intellectual property rights, including without limitation all copyright and know-how in research techniques, research specifications, proposals, completed questionnaires and any other survey materials provided to the subscriber by Opinionpanel, shall remain the property of, and confidential to, Opinionpanel and information contained therein may not be revealed to third parties without permission. Material from the Study may be used by a subscriber or third party only for publicity purposes if it refers solely to the subscriber's ranked position within a category, e.g. 'First for Campus Life'. Publicity must not make reference to any other institution. All findings, when quoted, must be attributed to Opinionpanel – Competitors and Decliners Study 2005/6. Opinionpanel may refer to the Study in its own publicity material but may not name any specific institutions below a top-twenty ranked position and may not disclose any more than four ranked categories overall.

Order form

YES – I want to order

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Complete customised Competitors and Decliners Study 2005/6 (approximately 150 pages) and pdf copy, plus the Overseas and Widening-Participation Reports | £ 5,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | On-site presentation | £ 2,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Total data file and training (only available with complete customised Study) | £ 2,500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Widening-Participation Report (included free with complete customised Study) | £ 495 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Overseas Student Report (included free with complete customised Study) | £ 495 |

Available from April 2006

I am:

Contact Name

Position

Organisation / Institution

Telephone

e-mail

Address

Postcode

Signature

Date

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Cheque enclosed for

£

or

Please send invoice

Purchase-order number, if required on invoice

Please send your order by post, fax or scanned e-mail to:-

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Aberdeen House
Highbury Grove
London N5 2EA

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