

# Enquiry Experience Tracker



## Enquiry Experience Tracker

2026 domestic student research round  
**Institution information pack**

# Introducing the Enquiry Experience Tracker

The Enquiry Experience Tracker is a successful global research program that helps higher education institutions understand how well they respond to enquiries from prospective students.

Launched in 2021 in the UK, EET expanded globally in 2022 and has generated five years of insights and recommendations that have helped institutions lift service quality.

The 2025 research revealed that negative enquiry experiences have halved in the past four years and that more institutions are delivering 'excellent' service levels than ever before.

**5**

**Years of global benchmarking data**



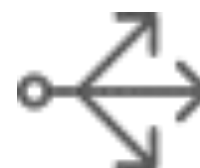
**250+**

**Institutions around the world**



**51**

**Assessment criteria**



**20%**

**Institutions rated excellent for enquiry experience in 2025**





# You never get a second chance to make a good first impression

When prospective students reach out with an enquiry, it offers institutions a chance to engage directly, build connection and influence student study decisions. It's a key moment that can make the difference between winning or losing a student.

The Enquiry Experience Tracker (EET) is a global mystery shopping program that helps institutions understand how well they engage students at this critical stage of the journey.

Edified employs real students as mystery shoppers, who place study enquiries to institutions around the world and report back on their experiences.

We analyse the results and share personalised insights with institutions about their performance. Our reports show institutions how they compare with competitors and include recommendations to help them get better results from their enquiry pipeline.

## How you'll benefit from the Enquiry Experience Tracker



Understand how you're meeting the needs of different students



Gain confidence through objective data



See how you perform against competitors



Identify gaps in your performance



Finetune your competitive advantages



Inform targeted resourcing and investment

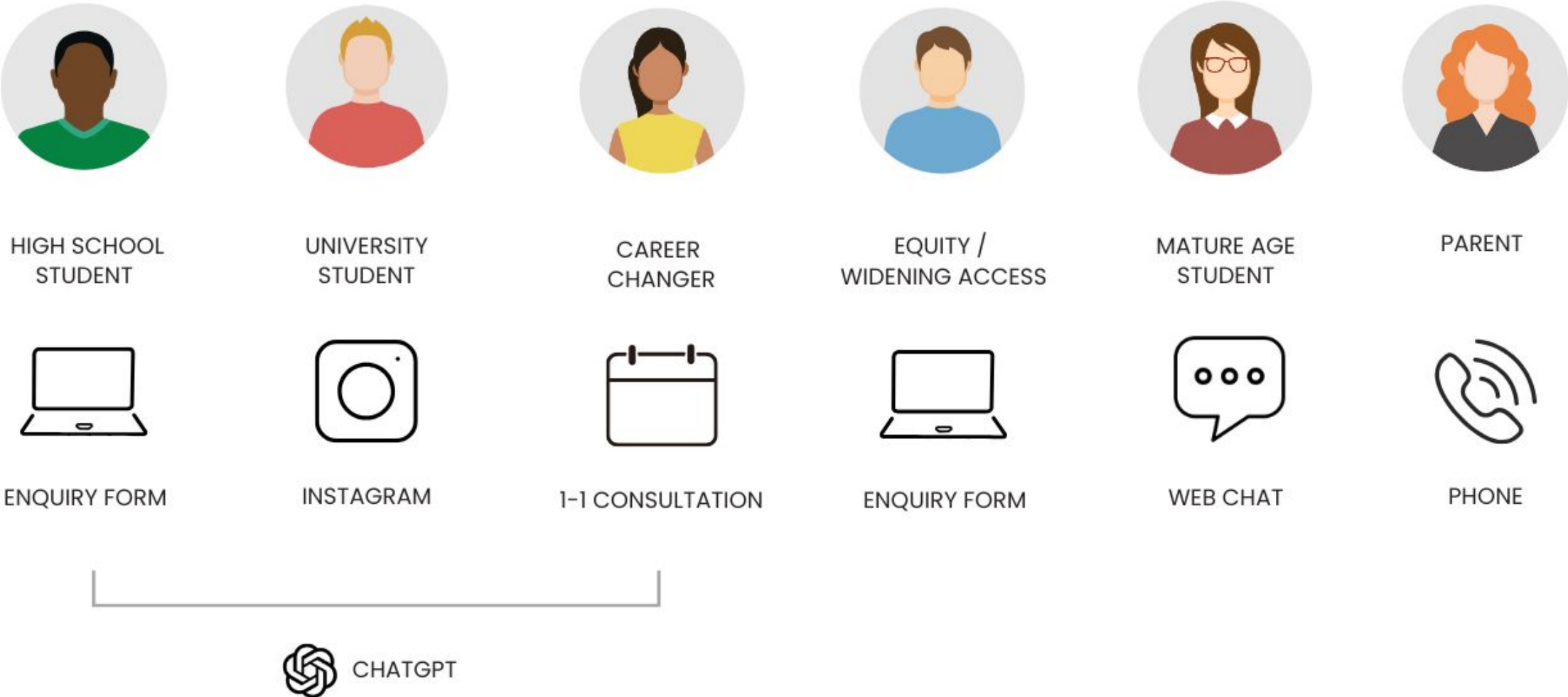
# You'll be evaluated against a range of personas and channels

Mystery shopping will be conducted between April and June.

In 2026, mystery shoppers will represent these prospective domestic students and will place pre-application enquiries using a variety of traditional and contemporary enquiry channels.

Enquiries will be tailored for your local context and will be adjusted to suit the study levels and courses nominated by your institution.

**Bonus feedback on AI tools**  
For the first time in 2026, we'll also be asking some students to submit an enquiry to ChatGPT and to share the results along with their impressions.



# A closer look at this year's mystery shopping personas



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT



ENQUIRY FORM

- This persona represents a prospect from within your local state or province. For UK institutions, the enquiry will be from your country (e.g. Scotland, Wales etc)
- The enquiry will be for UG study.



UNIVERSITY STUDENT



INSTAGRAM

- This persona represents a prospect studying at a another institution in your country.
- The enquiry can be for UG transfer or PG.



CAREER CHANGER



1-1 CONSULTATION

- This persona represents a degree holder, currently working but seeking a new direction.
- The enquiry can be for UG or PG.
- A 1:1 consultation refers to an appointment with an advisor, either by phone or video.



EQUITY / WIDENING ACCESS



ENQUIRY FORM

- This persona represents a prospect from an under-represented group, such as first in family, low SES, disabled, regional.
- The enquiry can be for UG or PG.



MATURE AGE STUDENT



WEB CHAT

- This persona represents a prospect aged over 25 with no prior university education.
- The enquiry can be for UG or PG.
- Web chat means a chatbot or live chat tool on your website.



PARENT



PHONE

- This persona represents a parent of a high school student.
- The enquiry will be for UG study on behalf of their child.



## Enquiries tailored to your context

At the beginning of the research, Edified will send you a questionnaire where you can provide the contact details for each enquiry channel and guidance on the courses you'd like the mystery shoppers to enquire about.



## Channel substitutions

If you don't offer one of the enquiry channels, you'll have the option to replace it with an alternative. If the replacement gives students a similar experience (e.g. email and enquiry form) it will be included in our channel benchmarks.





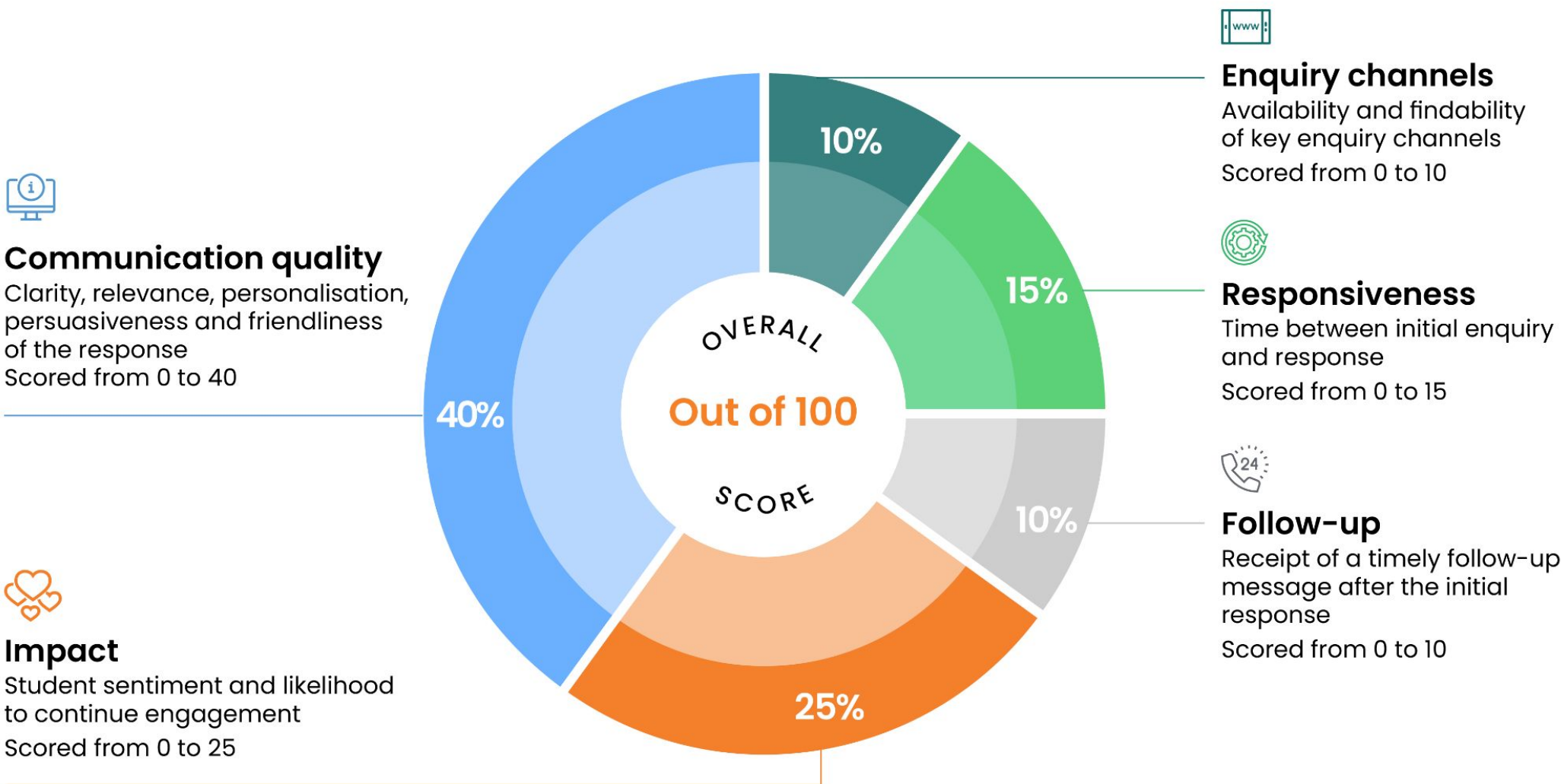
# You'll be scored against the global standard for effective student engagement

Mystery shopping outputs are analysed and assessed against 51 criteria, including responsiveness, clarity, relevance, friendliness and personalisation.

The scoring methodology has been informed by data from more than two million student journeys managed by UniQuest and reflects today's standard for effective student engagement.

Scores are weighted according to the model on the right, to provide an overall Enquiry Experience Score for each institution.

**Weightings have changed since the 2025 research.** Impact is now 25% (up from 20%) and responsiveness is now 15% (down from 20%) reflecting a greater emphasis on how students feel after interacting with institutions.




Developed by  
**Edified** & **UNIQUEST**  
A KEYSTONE COMPANY

# You'll gain perspective through benchmarking

The Enquiry Experience Tracker includes sector benchmarking so that institutions can understand their performance compared with local competitors and learn from global peers.

**Country averages**

Every report will include a benchmark representing the mean Enquiry Experience Score of all sampled institutions from the institution's country.



**State or regional averages**

We also offer the option to report on a localised benchmark of institutions from:

- Victoria
- Queensland
- NSW
- Ontario

- Scotland
- Wales
- ANZ

**Group averages**


We also offer the option to report on a benchmark of institutions in these groups:

- Russell Group
- Post-92
- Group of Eight
- ATN

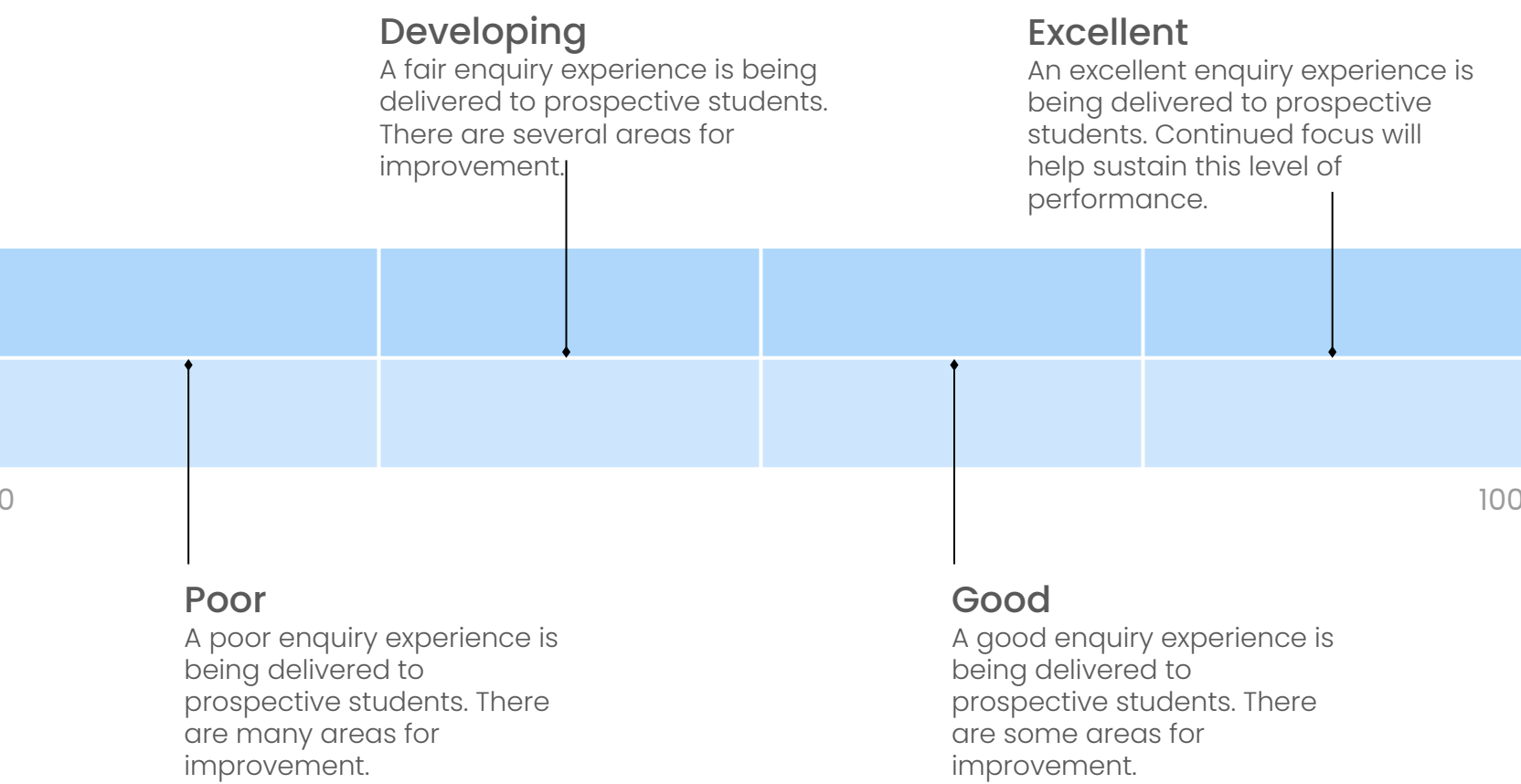
- RUN
- IRU
- U15

**Global average**

Every report will include a global benchmark representing all institutions in the global sample.



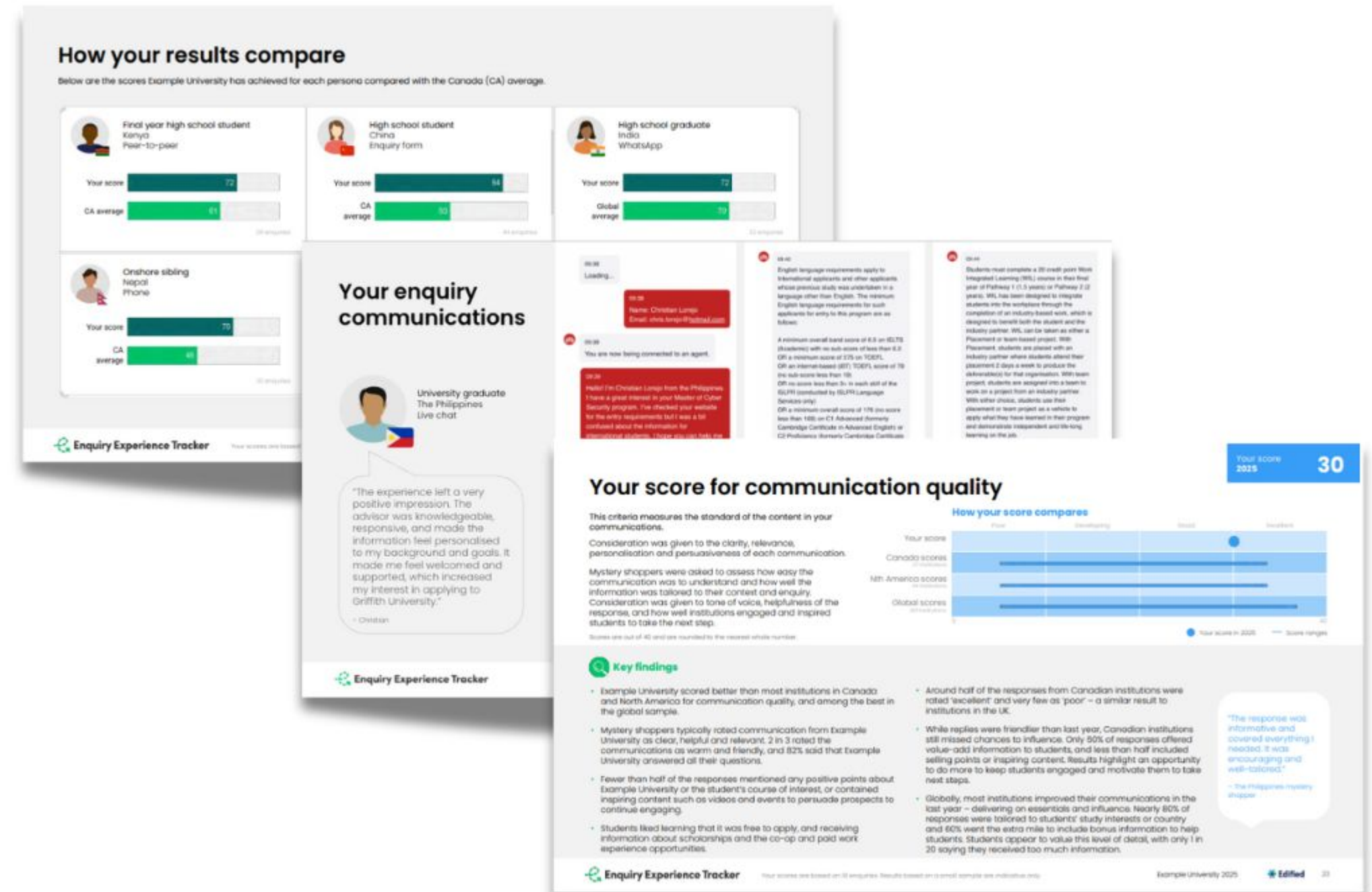
Best practice benchmarking helps you understand your performance relative to our standard of excellence. This measure is informed by our expertise in student communication and insights from UniQuest's conversion and student satisfaction data.



# You'll get a personalised report to help understand your performance and identify opportunities

- ✓ Benchmark your service levels against local competitors and global peers
- ✓ Get objective qualitative feedback from a range of different students
- ✓ Understand how your responses impact student sentiment and likelihood of conversion
- ✓ Learn from trends and insights gained from our analysis of 100+ institutions
- ✓ Get recommendations to optimise the prospective student experience

[View a sample report \(pdf\)](#)







# You'll also get new insights about the emerging role of AI in student enquiries

## Student perspective

For the first time, we'll ask a selection of mystery shoppers to submit enquiries to ChatGPT and to report back on the results.

We'll ask them to compare the ChatGPT response with the reply given from the institution and to share their impressions on trustworthiness, helpfulness and warmth. We'll also ask them which served their needs best.

In the 2026 research, we will include a total of three ChatGPT enquiries for every institution, using the following personas:

- High school student
- University student
- Career changer

The intention is to surface new insights on student preferences and engagement that bring immediate value to institutions and help to inform development of the EET program.

## Institution perspective

We'll also survey participating institutions to understand if and how they are using AI in enquiry management. We'll explore:

### How institutions are using AI for content and communication

- Automating responses to common enquiries
- Drafting personalised email or chat replies
- Improving tone, clarity or readability of replies
- Suggesting replies during live chat or email
- Assisting staff to find information to respond faster
- Creating or updating scripts or knowledge articles

### How institutions are using AI for prioritisation and conversion

- Triaging and routing enquiries to the right teams
- Analysing sentiment or urgency within enquiries
- Auto-categorising enquiries for reporting
- Predicting peaks in enquiry volume
- Creating dashboards or workflow reports
- Identifying students most likely to convert
- Recommending next-best-action workflows

# Participation is simple, and we'll keep you informed every step of the way

How does it work?

- 1. Register your institution at [edified.com.au/eet](https://edified.com.au/eet)
- 2. Complete a short questionnaire
- 3. Edified conducts the field work and evaluation
- 4. Edified analyses the results and writes up your personalised report
- 5. You'll receive your institution report and invitation to a webinar to hear the global results

Edified will share regular updates to keep you informed through the process.



Shweta Chandan  
EET Project Manager



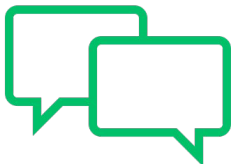
**31 March**

Registration deadline



**March – April**

Institution questionnaire



**April – June**

Mystery shopping field work



**July – August**

Analysis and  
results preview



**September – October**

Report delivery and  
global results








ANZ



# Choose a package to suit your goals

	 Essentials	 Standard	 Premium
Mystery shopping enquiries placed to your institution	6 One enquiry for each persona	18 Three enquiries for each persona	24 Four enquiries for each persona
Three ChatGPT enquiries	✓	✓	✓
Country benchmark	✓	✓	✓
Region or group benchmark	–	✓	✓
Anonymised benchmarks for three nominated competitors	–	–	✓
Personalised institution report	✓	✓	✓
Qualitative student feedback	✓	✓	✓
Raw data sheet with every enquiry	–	–	✓
A presentation of your report	–	✓	✓
Global results webinar	✓	✓	✓
<b>Costs</b>	<b>A\$ 5,950</b> + gst	<b>A\$ 8,950</b> + gst	<b>A\$ 12,950</b> + gst

## Offers

### Early bird discount

Sign up on or before 31 December 2025 and get a 10% discount.

OR

### Two-year lock in discount

Secure a lower price if you register now for both the 2026 (domestic) + 2027 (international) research

Essentials – A\$ 5,250/year

Standard – A\$ 7,950/year

Premium – A\$ 11,250/year

OR




### Group discount

Join as a groups of 6+ institutions and get a special price.





# Choose a package to suit your goals

	 Essentials	 Standard	 Premium
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Global results webinar	✓	✓	✓
<b>Costs</b>	<b>£ 2,950</b>	<b>£ 4,450</b>	<b>£ 6,450</b>

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OR

### Two-year lock in discount

Secure a lower price if you register now for both the 2026 (domestic) + 2027 (international) research

Essentials – £ 2,550/year

Standard – £ 3,750/year




Premium – £ 5,490/year

OR

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# Choose a package to suit your goals

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Offers

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“

Participating in the Enquiry Experience Tracker for the past three years has provided highly valued insights that would not be so apparent without utilizing this tool.

Providing superior service and support to our future students is paramount to our success and having the ability to benchmark ourselves both nationally and globally through the EET has proven to be a great investment.

—

**Gary Torraville**

Senior Director, Global Business Development, Niagara College Canada



“

We have used EET for a few years to help us to benchmark how we manage enquiries and to surface opportunities for improvement.

The team at Edified are very supportive and help to bring the detailed report to life and act upon suggestions for the development of the EET.

We've certainly found the tool to be beneficial and the team have responded positively to the recommendations

—

**Nick Hull**

Director of Admission  
University of Birmingham  
United Kingdom



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

“

Being part of the Edified Enquiry Experience Tracker has given us the ability to take a deep dive into our enquiry space, identify areas for improvements but also see how our omni-channel operation is working in comparison to similar institutions across ANZ.

We greatly value our partnership with the Edified team, and look forward to continuing this in the years ahead to further improve the service we provide prospective students.

—

**Simon Duffy**

Head of Conversion  
University of Waikato  
New Zealand



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WAIKATO  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

“

The Edified Enquiry Experience Tracker is a pivotal tool that provides an independent review of our team's success and hard work to upper management.

EET's reporting and feedback acts as a helpful guide to improve processes, practices and contact channels for the year ahead. Our team's success can be directly contributed to the EET and we will certainly endeavour to join the study each year that it is available.

—

**Sharni Cantatore**

Team Leader, International Enquiries & Conversions  
James Cook University





# Summary of results from our 2025 international students research





# Key findings from the 2025 global research

In 2025, international students mystery shopped 103 institutions across major study destinations.

## Competition is fiercer than ever



Institutions worldwide are raising the bar in how they engage prospective students.

**+10%**

Enquiry service levels improved by an average of 10% compared with 2024, with most regions recording an uptick.

## Pockets of excellence exist in each region



**Wales, NSW and Alberta** deliver the strongest enquiry experiences in their respective regions, setting the standard for how prospective students are engaged locally.

## Quality beats speed in student engagement

While quick answers might tick a box, they don't win hearts.



**7x**

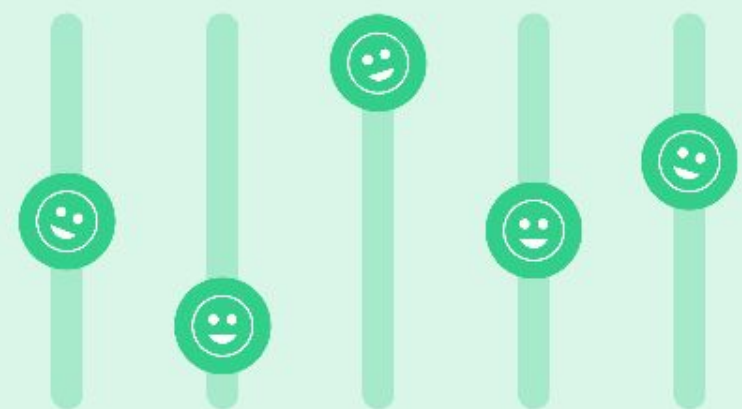
**Warm and tailored replies** were far more effective, with students rating their likelihood to continue **7X** higher than after receiving a quick, impersonal response.



## Students reward universities that personalise



Nearly 80% of responses were tailored to students' country or interests and 60% included bonus information.



Students valued the extra detail, with only **1 in 20** saying they received too much.

## A proactive sales approach puts Australia ahead



## 4 in 5 Australian replies included bonus details



## 3 in 5 highlighted selling points



## Over 90% gave clear next steps



No other country matched this proactive approach to guiding prospects.

## Chatbots have gotten smarter fast, thanks to AI



**6 in 10 chatbot** responses were rated as excellent – on par with responses by humans. Students described bot interactions as **intelligent, personalised and genuinely supportive**.



## WhatsApp wins on reliability, speed and student satisfaction



Students were **most satisfied** after engaging by WhatsApp. Every enquiry got an answer and 80% within two hours.

**Two-thirds** of students said they'd be likely to continue engaging after their WhatsApp experience – more than any other channel.

**2x**

**Utilisation has doubled** in the UK, where half of institutions now take enquiries through WhatsApp.

## Prospects slip away when universities don't log caller info



Phone enquiries are the black hole of student recruitment. Institutions ended **90% of calls** without collecting student contact details, losing the opportunity to stay in touch with qualified leads.



# Institutions mystery shopped in 2025

Australia





# Institutions mystery shopped in 2025

Canada





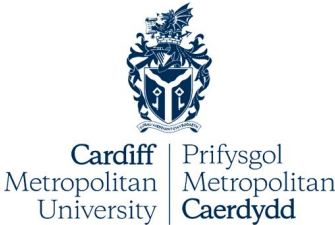
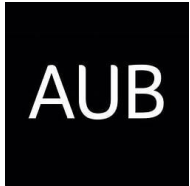






# Institutions mystery shopped in 2025

United Kingdom



# Institutions mystery shopped in 2025

United Kingdom (cont.)

University of  
**Southampton**

University of  
South Wales  
Prifysgol  
De Cymru

University of  
St Andrews

UNIVERSITY of  
**STIRLING**

University of  
**Strathclyde**  
Glasgow

**US**  
UNIVERSITY  
OF SUSSEX

**UWE**  
**Bristol**

**WARWICK**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Prifysgol **Wrexham**  
**Wrexham University**

New Zealand

**AUT**  
AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY  
OF TECHNOLOGY  
NEW ZEALAND

UNIVERSITY OF  
**AUCKLAND**  
Waipapa Taumata Rau  
NEW ZEALAND

**UC**  
UNIVERSITY OF  
**CANTERBURY**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha*  
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF  
**WELLINGTON**  
TE HERENGA WAKA  
NEW ZEALAND

United States

**BINGHAMTON**  
UNIVERSITY  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**FORDHAM UNIVERSITY**

**HOFSTRA**  
UNIVERSITY

**QUEENS** | Global Student  
COLLEGE Success Program

**SUNY**  
**ONEONTA**

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**  
**PLATTSBURGH**

**SUNY** The State University  
of New York

**THE NEW SCHOOL**  
**PARSONS**

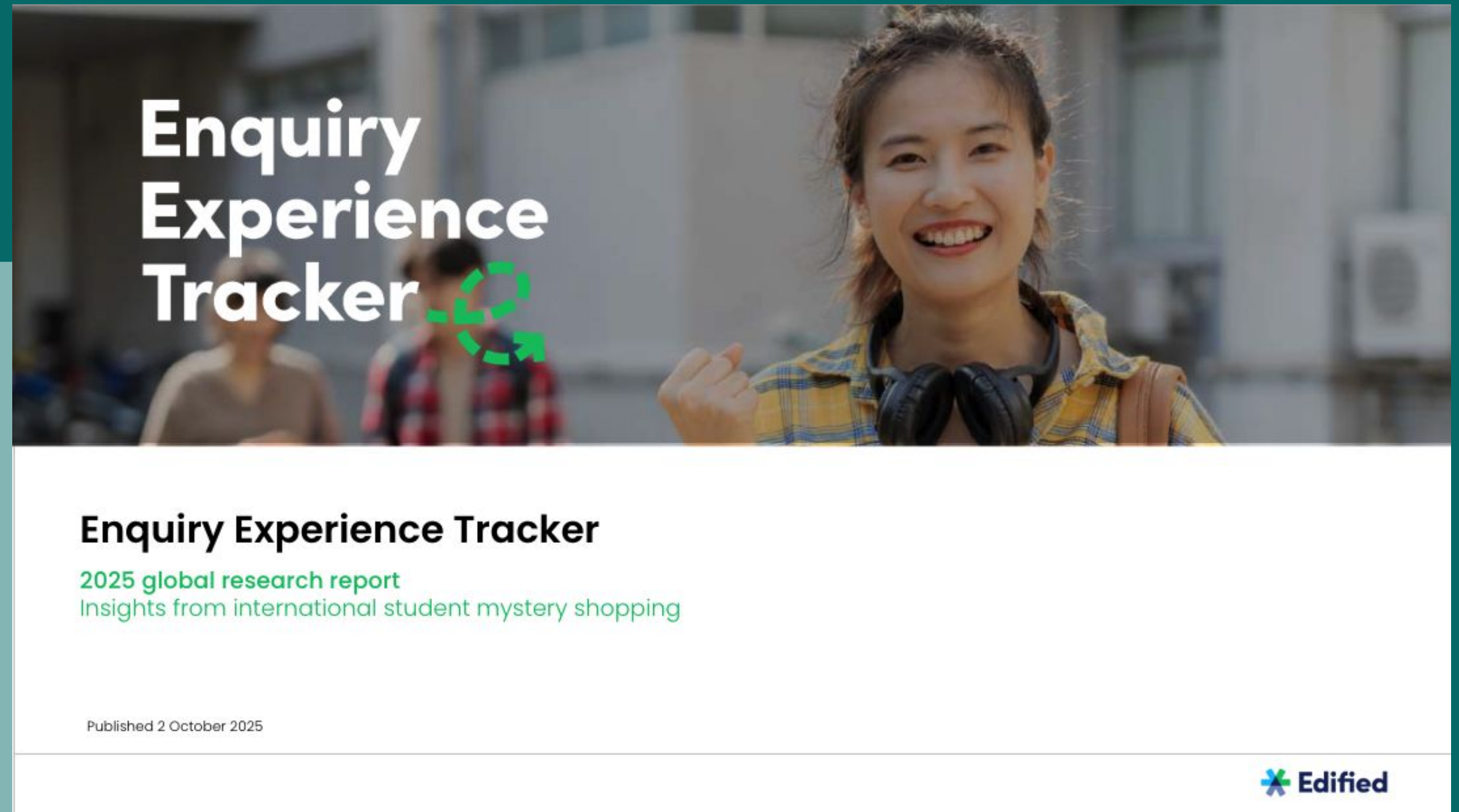


# Get the 2025 Global Report

Scan to download



Or visit  
[edified.com.au/post/eet-2025](https://edified.com.au/post/eet-2025)







# More information



# Frequently asked questions

## Who is Edified?

Edified is a specialised consulting firm focused exclusively on the education industry. We 'get' the business of education like no-one else, helping education providers and government bodies solve a wide range of challenges.

From marketing and admissions to pricing and student experience, we'll untangle your most complex problems and give you the confidence and clarity to take action. Learn more at [edified.com.au](https://edified.com.au)

## Who is UniQuest? How are they involved?

UniQuest partners with higher education institutions around the world to deliver enquiry and enrolment management services. Learn more at [uni-quest.co.uk](https://uni-quest.co.uk)

The Enquiry Experience Tracker was developed by Edified and is informed by the latest student behaviour data and conversion insights from UniQuest. Edified delivers the Enquiry Experience Tracker.

## How much effort is involved for institutions?

Participation in the Enquiry Experience Tracker is simple. After registering, you'll receive a short questionnaire to complete on behalf of your institution. This will ask you to share some basic information about your institution, such as enquiry contact details. It will take around 20 minutes.

From there, Edified will manage all field work, analysis and benchmarking. You simply need to wait until September, when you'll receive a personalised report with your results.

## Is this a one-off or annual piece of research?

The Enquiry Experience Tracker is an annual research project. You can participate every year or less often if you prefer. The research focus alternates between international students and domestic students each year.

In 2026, the research is focused on mystery shopping by domestic students and in 2027 the focus will be on international students. Those who participate regularly will benefit from being able to measure the impact of any changes made and see year-on-year shifts in performance relative to competitors.

## When will I be invoiced?

Unless otherwise requested, you'll be invoiced by Edified shortly after registering. Please let us know if a purchase order number is required.

## What sort of report can we expect?

You'll get a personal report with your institution's results and benchmarking against competitors. You'll also get tactical recommendations that you can implement to improve your performance.

View a [sample Institution Report \(pdf\)](#) from 2025 for an indication of what to expect. The reporting template evolves each year but the core benchmarks and charts remain consistent to support year on year analysis.



# Frequently asked questions

## Which personas are included in the 2026 research?

In 2026, mystery shopping will be conducted by the student personas listed on pages 4-5 of this document. They represent different student types and enquiry channels.

Enquiries will be tailored for your local context and will be adjusted to suit the study levels and courses nominated by your institution.

## Can we customise the personas or other elements to meet specific needs of our institution?

Typically, institutions participate in the Enquiry Experience Tracker so that they can benchmark their performance against others. To achieve this, we need to ensure a level of standardisation across participating institutions.

We can accommodate small changes to personas (such as study interests and study level) and ask institutions for direction on this as part of our onboarding questionnaire. If you have more specific requirements, please get in touch via [eet@edified.com.au](mailto:eet@edified.com.au) so we can understand them. It might be necessary to scope a bespoke piece of research.

## How are the mystery shopping scenarios developed?

Mystery shopping personas are developed during co-design sessions we run with client institutions. In November 2025, 19 institutions across the UK, ANZ and Canada gave input to shape the personas, enquiry channels and enquiry topics to be covered in the 2026 research.

Enquiries are informed by UniQuest's student engagement data and are modelled on real enquiries placed by prospective domestic students to UK universities.

## Which contact details will the mystery shoppers use when making their enquiries?

Mystery shoppers will place enquiries using contact details specified by you. When you register for the Enquiry Experience Tracker, you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire to provide the necessary details.

## What happens if our institution doesn't have a particular enquiry channel (e.g. live chat)?

If you don't offer one of the enquiry channels, you'll have the option replace it with an alternative. Ideally the replacement should be something that offers students a similar experience:

- If a web form is not offered, an email address can be substituted.
- If live web chat is not offered, a chat bot can be substituted.
- If a 1:1 consultation is not offered, a phone call can be substituted.
- If Instagram is not offered, Facebook can be substituted.

Because these substitutions offer a comparable experience for students, the mystery shopping results will be included for competitor benchmarking.

If a comparable alternative is not available, you can substitute any channel with an email address or enquiry form. These mystery shopping results will not be included for competitor benchmarking.

If you have different substitution in mind, please get in touch via [eet@edified.com.au](mailto:eet@edified.com.au) so we can understand your needs. It might be necessary to scope a bespoke piece of research.

# Frequently asked questions

## How long do the mystery shoppers wait for a response?

There is a maximum allowable response time set for each channel.

After this time is exceeded, mystery shoppers abandon their enquiry and the institution will receive a null score for responsiveness, communication quality and follow-up criteria.

The response time is counted as the time between an enquiry being initiated and the time the mystery shopper is connected with someone who can help with their enquiry (i.e. an actual response, not an automated reply).

The maximum allowable response time is set by channel:

- Web chat and phone: 15 minutes
- Social media: 5 days
- Enquiry form: 3 weeks

Live chat and phone enquiries are only placed during business hours.

Time calculations do not include non-working days such as weekends or public holidays.

If any technical or connection errors are encountered, a second attempt will be made.

## Who will we be benchmarked against?

Institutions are benchmarked against Edified's standard of excellence as well as other institutions in your country. If you select a 'Standard' or 'Premium' package, you'll get additional benchmarks such as your group or state/province. 'Premium' registrations will also be able to nominate three competitors they would like to be benchmarked against – this will be presented in an anonymised format.

## Will my results be shared?

Institution-specific data and results are only shared with the entity that registers for the research. We publish aggregate data at a country level and, where relevant, we also publish group or regional averages.

Unless directed otherwise, Edified will only send an institution's report to the contact(s) nominated in the onboarding questionnaire.

## What do we do after getting the results?

Your report will include personalised recommendations to help you improve your enquiry services. If you'd like to discuss your results or have questions about the recommendations, get in touch via [eet@edified.com.au](mailto:eet@edified.com.au).

If you'd like assistance implementing recommendations or further advice, Edified provides a range of consultancy services in this area, such as student journey mapping and enquiry management reviews.

# Questions?

Please get in touch at [eet@edified.com.au](mailto:eet@edified.com.au)  
if you'd like to know more.



**Elissa Newall**  
Senior Partner



**Shweta Chandan**  
EET Project Manager