

# ADMISSION & FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTION SURVEY

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FALL 2018



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THE OFFICE OF STRATEGY MANAGEMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

# STUDY OVERVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

As part of its strategic plan to improve its admissions and financial aid processes, AUC is committed to ensuring that it provides the most effective services to its current students and potential applicants. To this end, a survey was conducted to capture satisfaction with current processes and collect suggestions for enhancement.

## METHODOLOGY

This survey was designed and conducted by the Office of Strategy Management and Institutional Effectiveness through emailing 3,174 potential respondents of students across three different stages of the application process: applied, admitted, and paid. Invitations were sent out on October 24, 2018, followed by two reminders on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October and the 5<sup>th</sup> of November to those who had not yet completed the survey. The survey was eventually closed on the 27<sup>th</sup> of December, yielding a total of 259 responses for a response rate of 8.1%. The achieved sample size yields findings and trends that can be applicable to the total intended population with a ±6% margin of error.

## REPORT STRUCTURE

This report is divided into the following sections:

### 01 – Executive Summary

A brief summary of the main take-away messages and evaluations in this report as a quick preview of the data, which goes into greater detail in the subsequent sections.

### 02 – Analysis of Results

Divided into the following sub-sections:

#### 2.1 Administrative Data & Classification

An overview of total invitations, completions, and response rates by admissions group (applied, admitted, and paid), as well as a breakdown of completions per group.

#### 2.2 University Application Process

A presentation of the importance of factors that affect the choice of university and universities considered alongside AUC

#### 2.3 AUC Admission Involvement

An evaluation of all stages/areas of applicant involvement in the admissions process, including campus visits, admissions processes, and financial aid applications, followed by enrollment intention in AUC.

#### 2.4 Overall Process Satisfaction

An overview of factors affecting satisfaction with the admissions and financial aid processes through a presentation of averages on an agreement scale.

#### 2.5 Suggestions

Community-provided suggestions from an open-ended question

### 03 – Appendix

# 01 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Key Findings

### Factors Affecting University Choice

While quality of education, programs, and overall university reputation are of high importance to students applying at AUC, this survey reveals that liberal arts and athletics are of less importance. Around 70% of AUC applicants are considering universities in Egypt, specifically other private universities (64%), while 15% are considering only public schools in addition to AUC. On the other hand, 30% have applied at universities abroad – chiefly in the UK (24%). Nevertheless, **the German University in Cairo is a strong contender for AUC applicants**, where 67% of applicants to universities in Egypt and 22% of applicants to universities abroad are considering it – **GUC continues to stand as the topmost considered university across regions, where 48% of all AUC applicants have applied**. Students considering universities abroad view GUC as strong potential, holding 22% of international considerations, while it has 67% of all universities locally considered.

Despite this, nearly 80% of students consider AUC as one of their top choices, with more than half confirming intention to enroll at AUC as their first choice. AUC enjoys strong equity through word of mouth, where almost 80% cited friends and family as their source of awareness.

### Satisfaction with Admissions

More than 60% of surveyed applicants are satisfied or very satisfied with the admissions process, with almost 90% having conducted mostly effective campus visits during their application process. While more than three-quarters of AUC applicants have fully completed their admissions process, those who have not, have mostly cited financial reasons for their incomplete applications. Nevertheless, AUC is a strong contender, where more than 50% consider AUC to be their top choice for enrollment. Overall, students appear to have a strong positive experience with AUC's online application, which they have rated with highest satisfaction. They were also able to find all required information on the website, in addition to being well-informed on the cost of attending AUC. Areas requiring some improvement include a better understanding of how admissions applications are assessed, as well as staff-provided information and support.

#### Areas of Strength

- Strong positive experience with the online application (avg: 4.04/5.00), as well as satisfaction with accuracy of admission information and requirements (avg: 3.80/5.00).
- The majority of AUC applicants have visited the campus during their admissions process with positive feedback overall (avg: 3.86/5.00), indicating strong potential for the role campus visits play in attracting prospects.

#### Areas of Improvement / Recommendations

- Improved clarity on how applications are assessed (avg: 3.44/5.00)
- Admission staff trainings could take a student-centric approach, geared towards answering students' level of questions (17% of open-ended responses).
- Enhanced recruitment effort to actively reach out to potential students through campus visit invites, for example.
- Useful to include financial aid and scholarships awareness through admissions office to aid with overall process.

### Satisfaction with Financial Aid & Scholarships

Around 41% agree that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the financial aid process. This is mostly driven by the amount of financial aid award driven, and frustrations and/or confusions about how the application is reviewed. On the other hand, students appear to be satisfied with staff knowledge, yet feel there may be room for improvement on staff being easily accessible to students (avg: 3.57/5.00). The main pain point for students remains the university's fees,

which is expressed clearly by students in the survey; they find it hard to afford. **In addition, close to a fifth (~17%) of surveyed students stated that they were unaware of any financial aid/scholarship opportunities and thus had not applied.**

#### Areas of Strength

- Staff are knowledgeable about policies and procedures (avg: 3.85/5.00) and are helpful (3.79/5.00)
- Financial aid award is very important to applicants, who feel they would not have been able to attend AUC without.
- Website provides accurate information enabling an easy understanding of scholarship application process.

#### Areas of Improvement / Recommendations

- Raise awareness in order to try to change student perceptions regarding the financial aid process, as some students express that they feel the amount of the award is not sufficient (avg: 2.72/5.00), and thus feel less satisfied with the overall financial aid process (3.23/5.00)
- Higher transparency with regards to the financial aid review process (avg: 3.06/5.00)
- Easier process for submitting applications/supporting documents (avg: 3.48/5.00)
- Consider giving higher awards to high caliber students with need to enable them to join AUC

# 02 – ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

## Glossary

**Applied:** students who have applied but not admitted (for any reason) at AUC during Fall 2018.

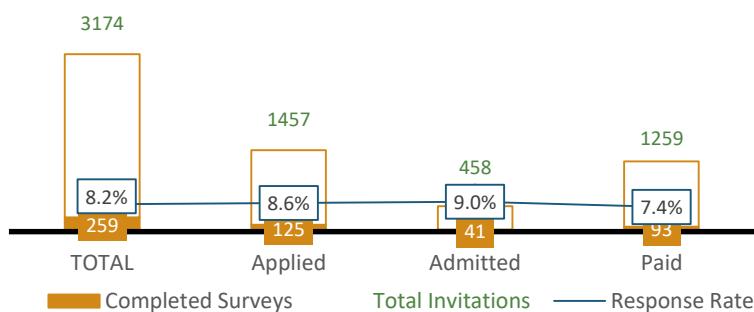
**Admitted:** students who have applied and have been granted admission at AUC during Fall 2018.

**Paid:** students who have applied, been admitted, and have also paid the deposit during Fall 2018.

## 2.1 Administrative Data & Classification

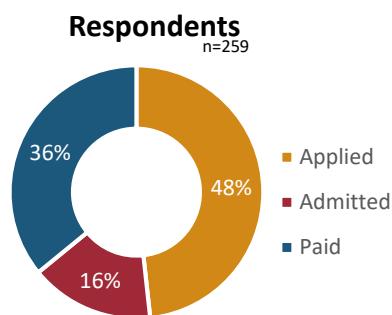
### Response Rate

Response rates are consistently low across all three groups invited to partake in the survey.



### Respondent Classification

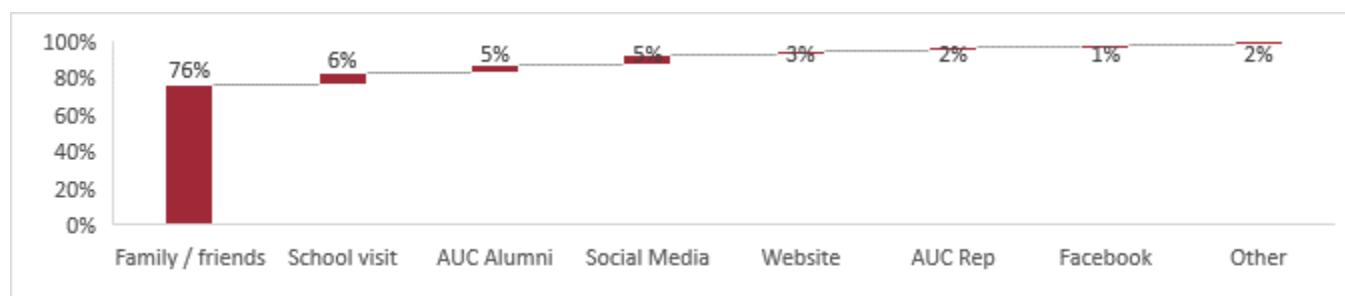
Most responses were received from students who have applied, yet have not been admitted, representing around half of the respondent population.



## 2.2 University Application Process

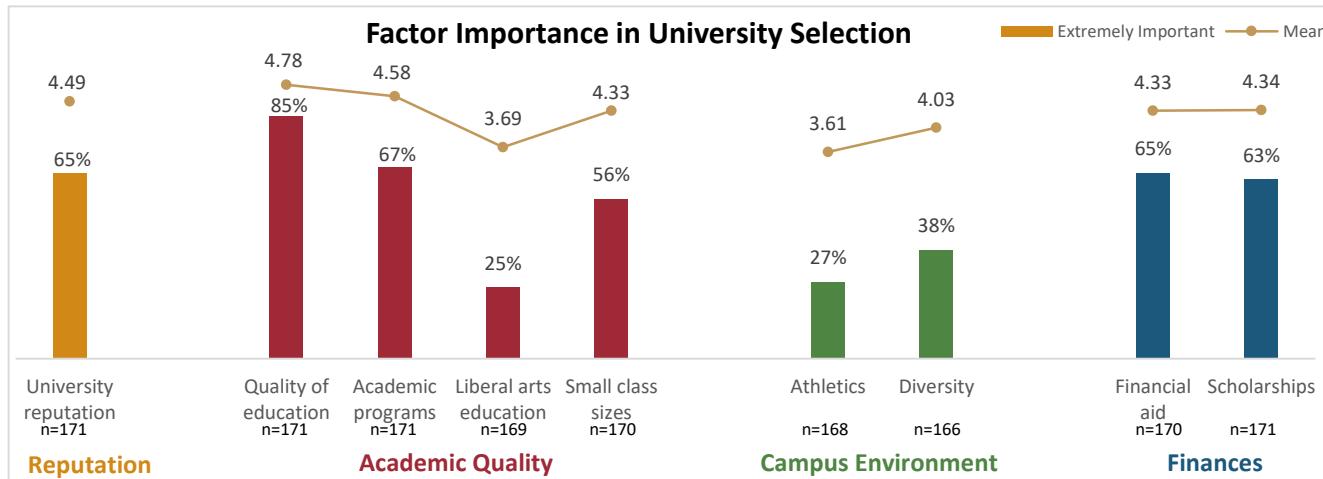
### Sources of Awareness

AUC enjoys strong equity through word of mouth among applicants surveyed.



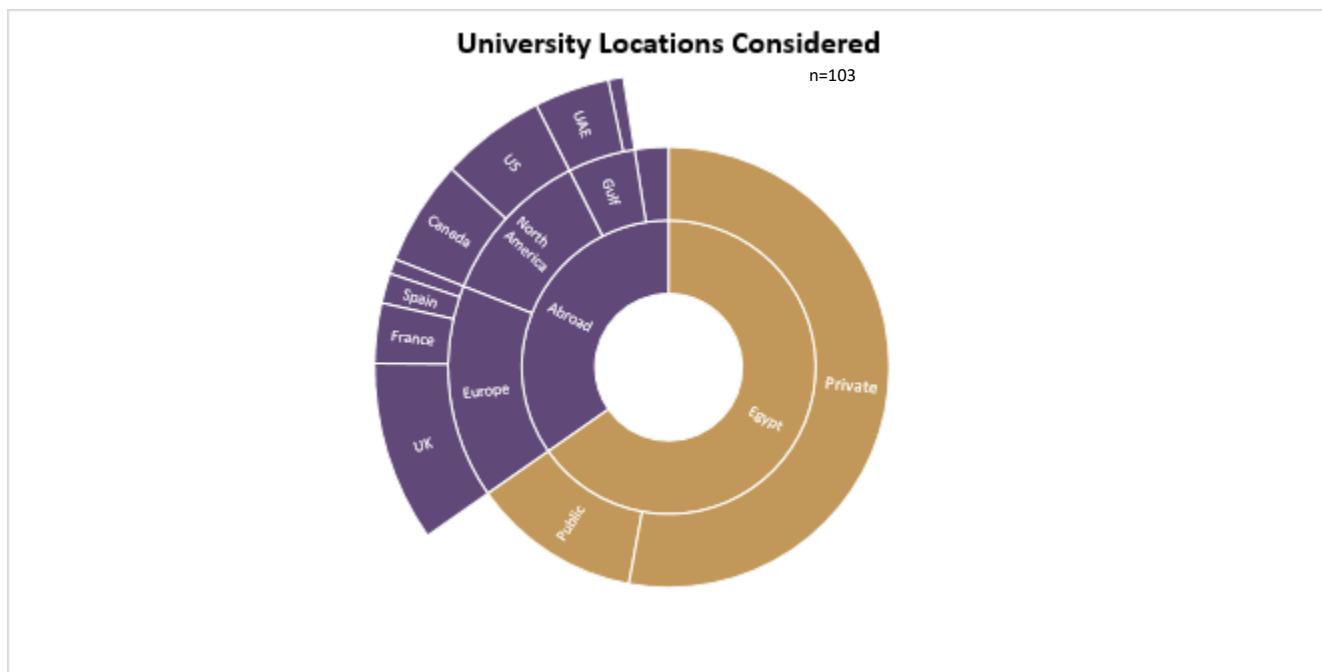
## Factor Importance

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of a set of nine factors with regards to their university selection on a five-point scale, which are reported using the averages of each factor. The results revealed strong dependence on academic quality factors, particularly quality of education and academic programs, followed by financial support tools.



## University Considerations

Students were asked to list all universities they had applied to in addition to AUC. Almost all applicants (around 94%) stated they were considering other universities both in Egypt and internationally, while for the remainder, AUC was their only choice. Around 70% were only considering universities in Egypt, specifically other private universities (64%), while 15% were only considering public universities in addition to AUC. Consideration for international universities is much smaller, where 30% had stated that they applied to universities abroad – chiefly in the UK (24%).



## University Glossary

**AAST:** Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport

**ASU:** Ain Shams University

**AUD:** American University in Dubai

**AUS:** American University in Sharjah

**BUE:** British University in Egypt

**CU:** Cairo University

**E-JUST:** Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology

**GUC:** German University in Cairo

**MIU:** Misr International University

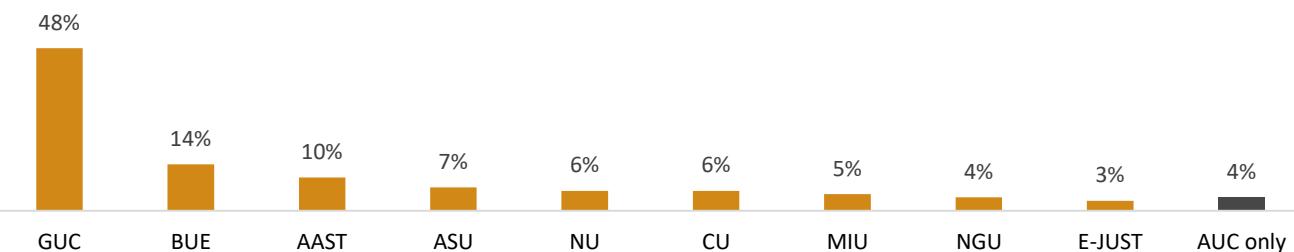
**NGU:** New Giza University

**NU:** Nile University

**UCL:** University College London

### Top 10 Universities Considered

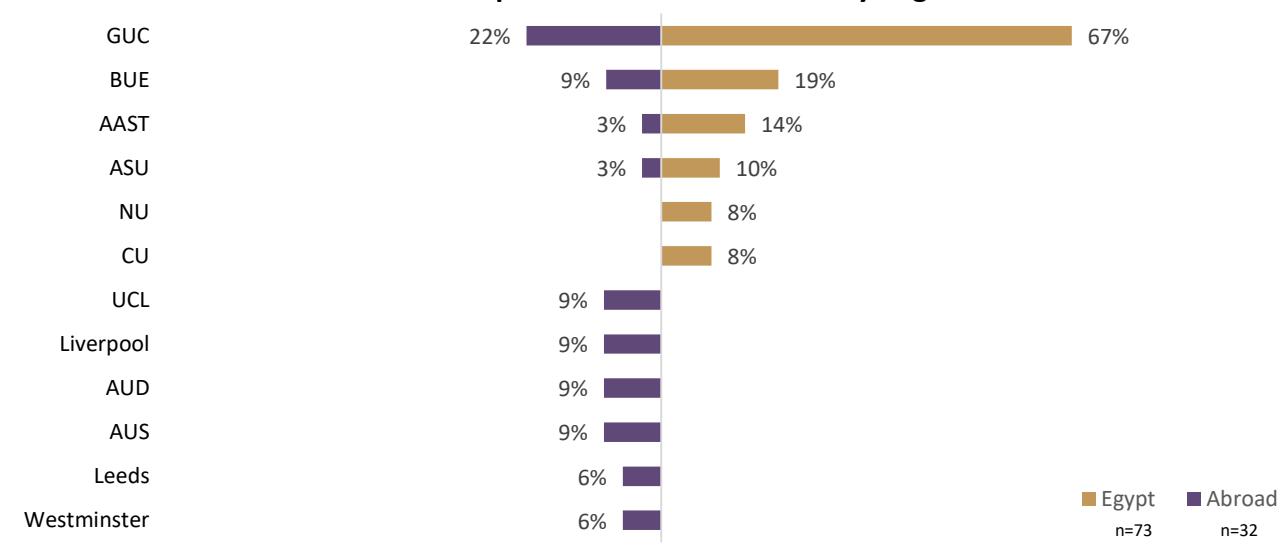
n=103



At a university level, GUC is the top considered university by all surveyed AUC applicants applying both in Egypt and internationally, where almost 50% have applied. On the other hand, only 4% of surveyed applicants have considered AUC only.

Another view considering the group of students applying in Egypt and abroad separately reveals GUC has a very strong appeal for applicants considering enrollment in Egypt, and is also the top choice among those who are considering going to international universities. Nevertheless, considerations remain mostly fragmented for international universities, where a clear preference is seen for the UK, followed by the U.S. and Canada at an aggregate level. Despite this, AUS and AUD specifically appear in the list of top universities considered.

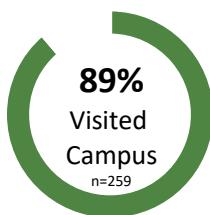
### Top Universities Considered by Region



## 2.3 AUC Admissions Involvement

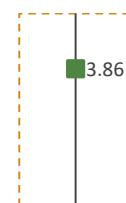
### Campus Visit

Almost 90% of applicants have visited the AUC campus as part of the application process (possibly based on invite or for the application), with overall positive feedback on the effectiveness of their visit.



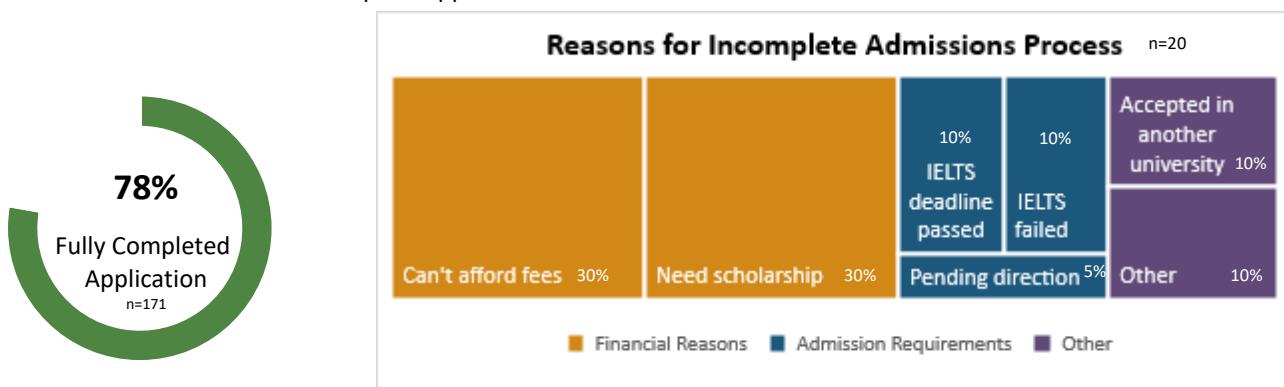
### Effectiveness of Campus Visit

n=225



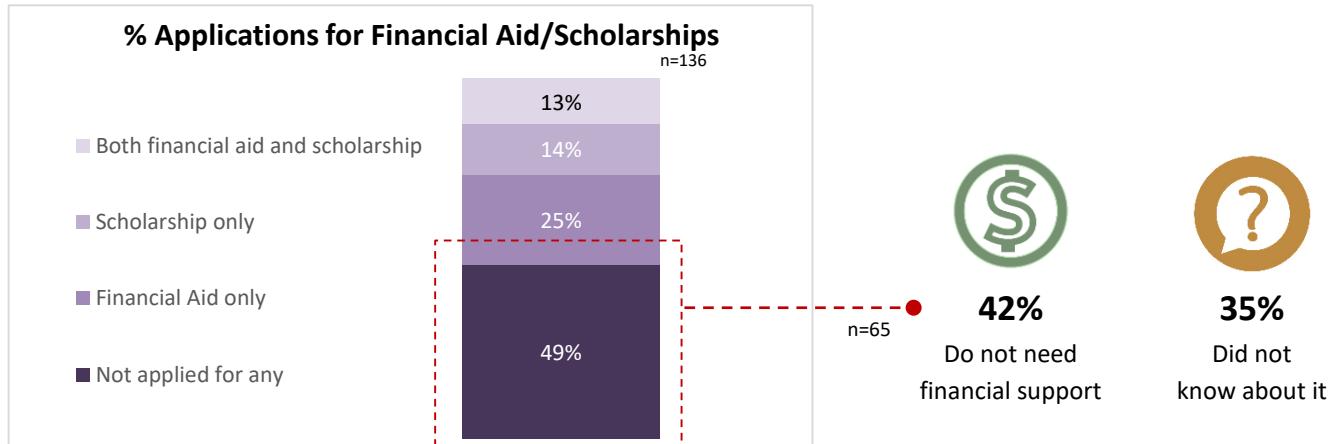
## Admissions Application Process

While more than three-quarters of AUC applicants have fully completed their admissions process, those who have not mostly cited **financial reasons** for their incomplete applications.

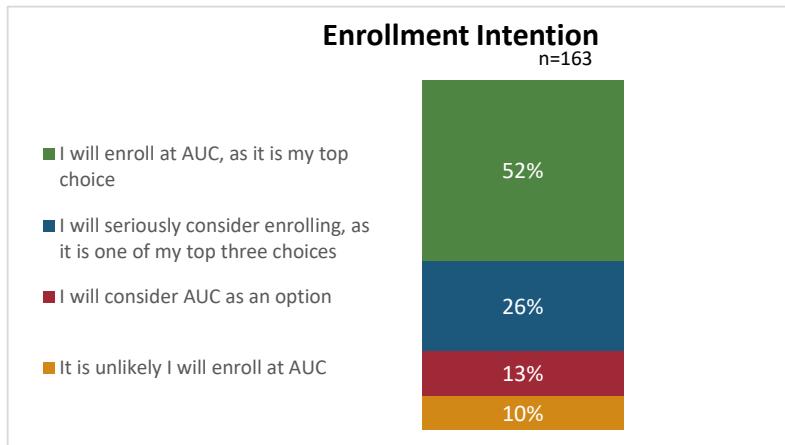


## Financial Aid/Scholarships Application Process

Around half of the surveyed students have not applied for any financial support, of which more than a third did not know about this facility being offered. This indicates a need for more efforts with regards to raising awareness and ensuring students are clearly informed of the financial options available to support their educational plans at AUC.



## Enrollment Intention



Around 80% of students consider AUC to be one of their top choices, with more than half confirming their intention to enroll, as AUC is their topmost choice.

Only around 10% stated they were unlikely to enroll, with financial reasons reported to be the mostly cited obstacle.

## Verbatim Samples for Reasons to not Enroll

*Because I can't afford the fees of the University and they cancelled many scholarships that I had intention to enroll in*

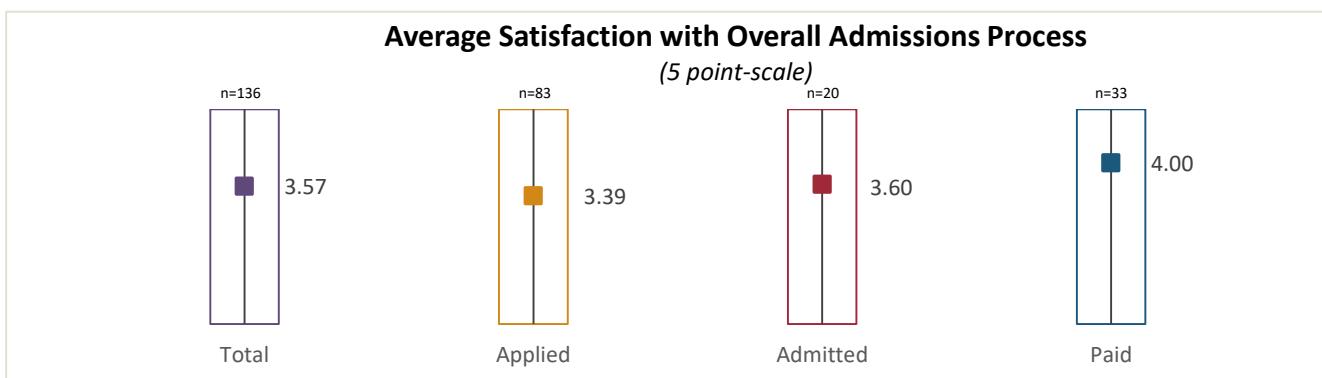
*I was targeting refugees' scholarship at AUC and possibly others available scholarship as I was instructed by CRS refugee agents at UN reception desk but it is quite difficult now how to get them*

*it's too expensive and I would rather study abroad for less (example: Germany)*

## 2.4 Overall Process Satisfaction

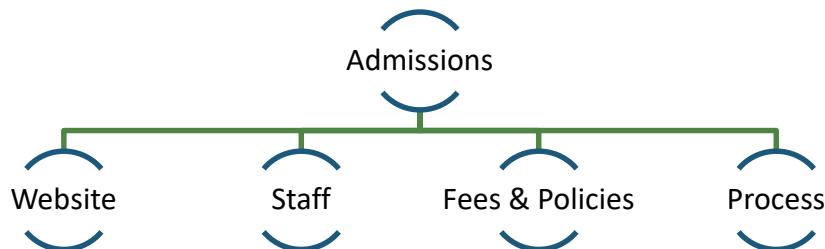
### Application/Admissions

At an overall level, satisfaction with AUC's admissions process is highest among students further along in the process (paid and indicative of strong intention to enroll) and lowest among those who have not yet been admitted.



### Classification of Factors Affecting the Admissions Process

A list of 14 factors that impact the admissions experience for students were evaluated and classified into the following categories:



### Average Agreement Scores of Each Factor – Admissions

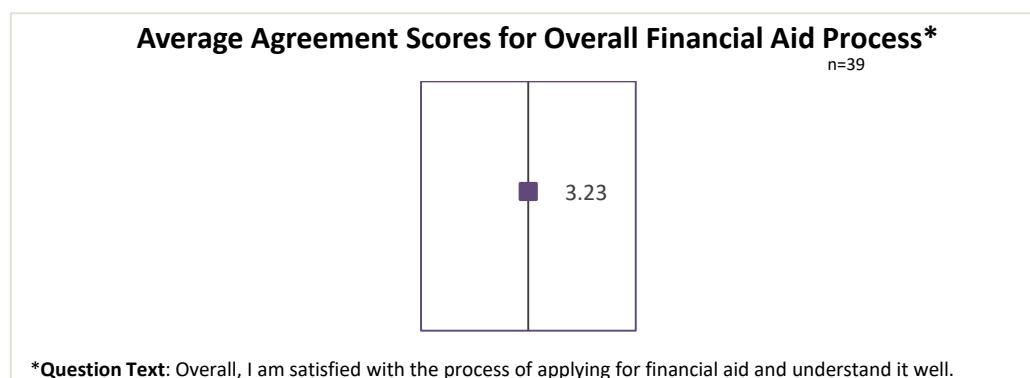
Surveyed respondents were asked to report on an agreement scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with regards to several factors affecting the admission process. Results indicate that students appear to have a strong positive experience with AUC's online application, as they were able to find the required information on the website, and as such are also well-informed with regards to the cost of attending AUC.

On the other hand, other factors that may not be entirely clear to students include an understanding of how admissions applications are assessed. In addition, students scored a slightly lower average regarding staff support, indicating there may be room to improve staff-provided information and support.



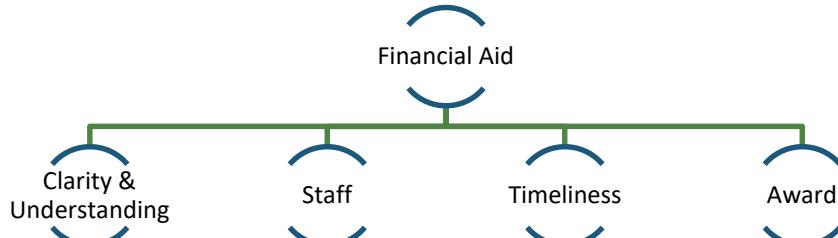
### Financial Aid

Students are less satisfied with the process of applying for financial aid than with admissions, where factors that contribute to this mostly revolve around the amount of the award itself.



## Classification of Factors Affecting the Financial Aid Process

A list of 12 factors that impact the financial aid application experience were evaluated and classified into the following categories:



### Average Agreement of Each Factor

Whereas most factors see an above average rating for the financial aid process as compared to overall satisfaction with the process, a clear drop in agreement with factors revolving around award package received is seen. Students find the award amount inadequate (lowest average score), and also seem to be discontent with the application reviews, which has the second lowest average score. A clearer process where students may feel that their applications are reviewed transparently might help improve this score.



## 2.5 Suggestions & Way Forward

Respondents were asked to share any suggestions or recommendations that they might have regarding the admission process and financial aid services at AUC. Top recommendations (out of around 11% who actually provided comments) included improvements to staff communication, better clarity on scholarship requirements, and more scholarship/aid opportunities.



**19%** Staff Knowledge & professionalism



**17%** Clarity on Scholarship Requirements

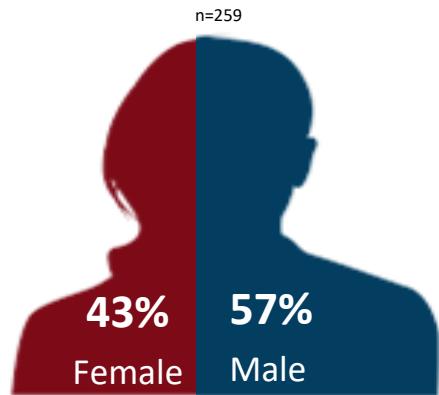


**14%** More scholarship/aid opportunities

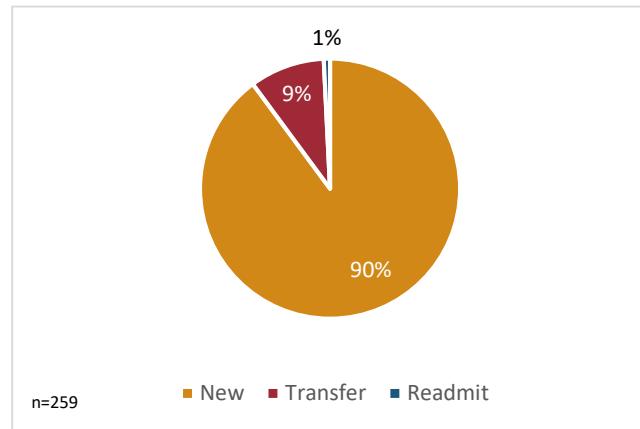
# 03 – Appendix

## 3.1 Applicant Information (as per AUC records)

**Gender**



**Admission Status**



**Top 5 Intended Majors**

