Guide to mapping

the student journey

Including a student
journey template

Studyportals at a Glance

9 portals

52+ million unique visitors every year

640,000 international enrolments

3,200+ participating institutions

250,000+ programmes listed

90% of English-taught programmes listed

studyportals

Table of contents

studyportals

Part One

What are journey maps?

studyportals

Introduction

It takes an average of 18 months from the moment a prospective student starts looking into for programmes, to the moment they enrol.

It's tempting to think about enrolment as a single moment, but in fact, a student's decision-making process could be better expressed as a timeline, spanning various touchpoints of information exchange and emotional micro-decisions. During this period, students will interact with your college across various channels. They will go back and forth as they move through the different stages of their journey to enrolment.

Mapping your students' journey to enrolment is the key to ensure your university's marketing and recruitment activities are following the student enrolment cycle in order to prioritise your outreach strategies. A deep understanding of the dynamic between your institution and prospective students – what is pushing them down the funnel or out of it – will help you to create an effective recruitment strategy.

Journey Maps 101

A journey map pinpoints the relationship between a user and an institution over time and across all channels that they interact with. It illustrates the experience of a user as they travel through the various stages of getting to know a brand. Against such a map, an organisation can check whether their promises and services help a user get a problem solved or succeed in bringing them a great user experience.

Student journey map elements

Student journey steps
Milestones of student decision making process

- Discover
- Shortlist
- Apply
- Commit
- Prepare
- Study

Student goals
What students want to achieve/complete at each step of their journey to enrolment

Touchpoints
Interaction points between students and your university

Pain-points
The experience related to each journey step or touchpoint

Each step of the journey to enrolment demands a different type of information. Programme information dominates the beginning of the timeline, while application guidelines dominate the end. You can address all of the student's questions by creating a content piece for each of their pain-points and pair it to the corresponding step of their journey
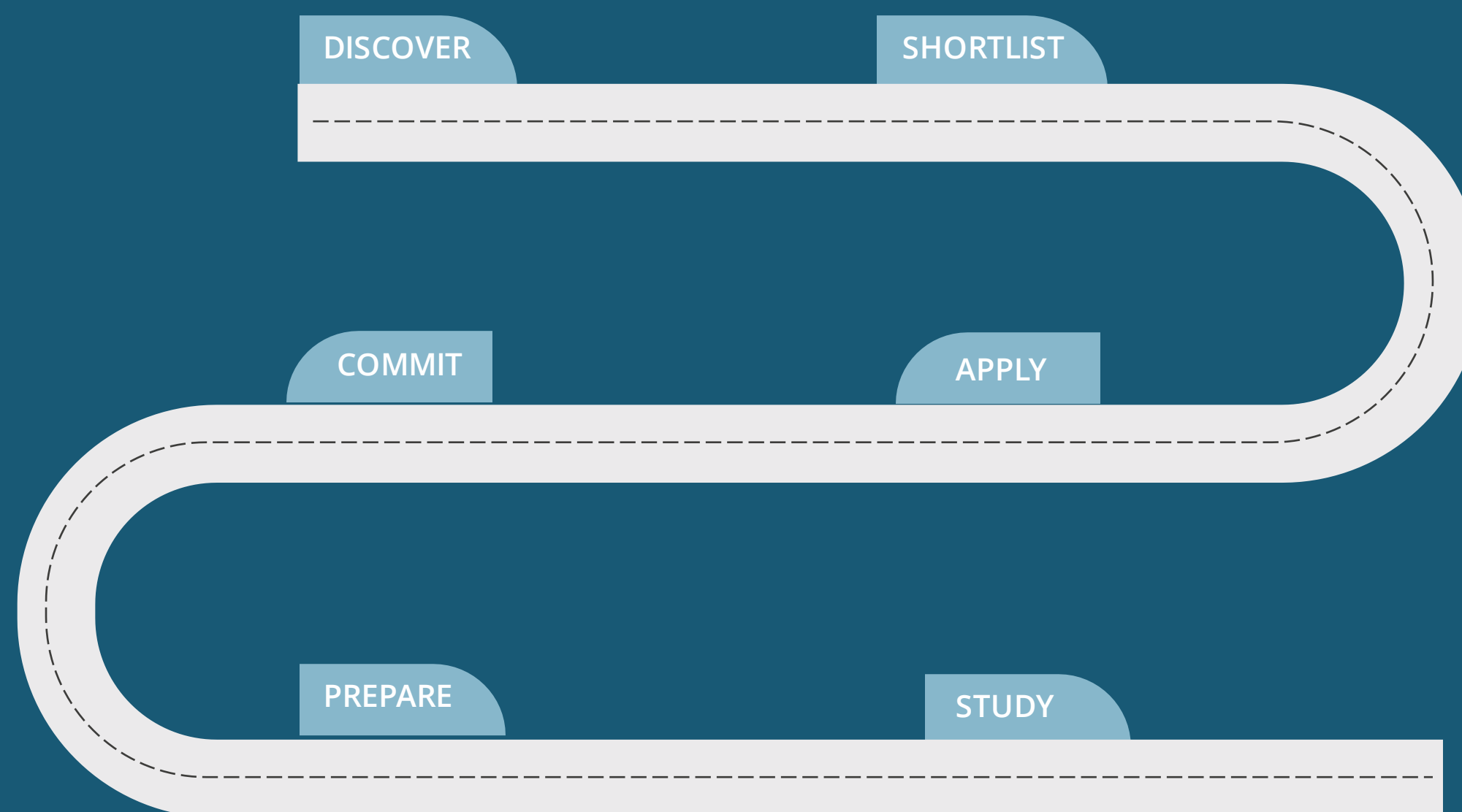
studyportals

Part Two

Approaching student journey mapping

studyportals

1

Identify the journey steps

Our research shows that, on average, a student would go through **6 steps** before enroling into a degree programme

DISCOVER

SHORTLIST

COMMIT

APPLY

PREPARE

STUDY

studyportals

2

Connect to students' goals

Each journey step corresponds to an information need or a question a student is trying to answer. For example, in the discovery phase, students are trying to find reliable sources of information, most often online. In the exploration phase, they are guided primarily by finding programmes and universities that offer education in their sphere of interest.

We were able to establish that the part of the journey students consider the hardest and messiest is the comparison stage. For example, some students use notebooks and excel files to note down requirements (IELTS/TOFEL, scholarship, etc.) and deadlines.

Making information easily accessible to students is critical to those first engagement moments.

studyportals

3

Map the interaction touchpoints

In this stage, you can make an audit of all the touchpoints your university can influence and map them out along the different steps of the student journey, to make sure no interaction slips through the cracks.

Make sure you always have a contact point open for maximum engagement!

4
Research pain-points

Pain-points reflect the experience a student has at each step of the journey and via a particular touchpoint, which your university should aim to resolve or improve.

A major benefit of mapping your prospective students' struggles down the journey to enrolment is that it can help you identify and repair blind spots in your strategy. Gaps and mismatches between your marketing activities and the experience of a student can be smoothened and transformed into a more intuitive experience for applicants.

studyportals

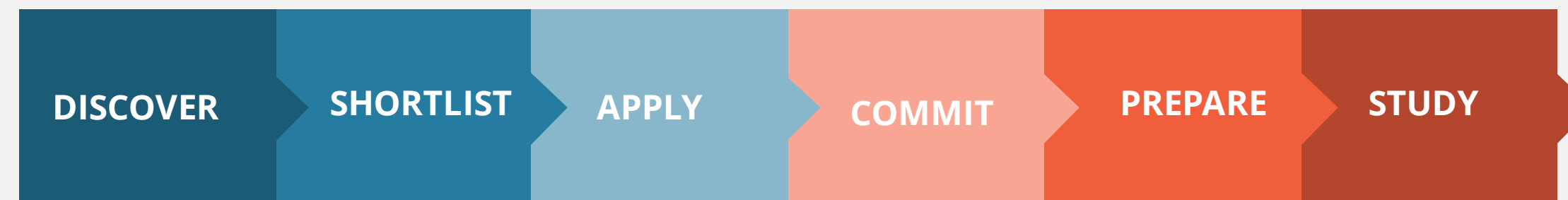# Student journey: template

studyportals

The student journey template

The student journey template lets you map each of the following elements across the different step of the journey – from discovery to referal:

- University Goals
- Student Goals
- Content
- Tools
- Timelines

Use this template to map out your strategic goals, and connect them with students' pain-points in order to prioritise your content and outreach strategies, identify and fix blind spots, and ultimately, build a better pipeline

The framework

DISCOVER > SHORTLIST > APPLY > COMMIT > PREPARE > STUDY

UNIVERSITY GOAL

STUDENT GOAL

TOUCH POINTS

CONTENT

TOOLS

TIMELINE

studyportals

University and student goals

UNIVERSITY GOAL

STUDENT GOAL

TOUCH POINTS

CONTENT

TOOLS

TIMELINE

Match up the strategic goal of your institution with what the student wants to achieve in this step of the journey.

EXAMPLES OF UNIVERSITY GOALS:

VISIBILITY, AWARENESS, CONVERSIONS, ENGAGEMENT, ESTABLISH TRUST, BUILD A RELATIONSHIP, LEAD GENERATION, REPUTATION, RETENTION, SATISFACTION, RECOMMENDATION

EXAMPLES OF STUDENT GOALS:

UNDERSTAND IF I FIT THE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS, FIND SCHOLARSHIPS, CONVINCE PARENTS, PREPARATION COURSES, CALCULATE BUDGET, FIND HOUSING, WRITE A MOTIVATION LETTER, FIND BEST-FIT PROGRAMME, SHORT LIST TOP 10 COURSES, MOVE, PREPARE APPLICATION

studyportals

Touchpoints

UNIVERSITY GOAL

STUDENT GOAL

TOUCH POINTS

CONTENT

TOOLS

TIMELINE

Add the relevant points of contact through which your students come into contact with your institution before, during, or after the enrolment cycle.

EXAMPLES OF TOUCHPOINTS:

AGENTS, SOCIAL MEDIA, ADS, FAIR, FAMILY & FRIENDS, ALUMNI, RANKINGS, REVIEWS, OWN WEBSITE, LEAD FORMS, COMPARISON WEBSITES, ADMISSIONS OFFICER, STUDY BROCHURE, TUITION FEES, APPLICATION PAGE, VISA INFO PAGE, SCHOLARSHIPS.

studyportals

Content

UNIVERSITY GOAL

STUDENT GOAL

TOUCH POINTS

CONTENT

TOOLS

TIMELINE

Identify what content is necessary to support each touchpoint of this step and pinpoint it to the timeline.

EXAMPLES OF CONTENT:

PHOTOS, ARTICLES, VIDEOS, SOCIAL MEDIA, SUCCESS STORIES, BRAND STORY, HOUSING INFO, WORK PERMIT INFO, PROGRAMME INFO, APPLICATION DEADLINE, INFOGRAPHICS, PRESS RELEASES, WORD-OF-MOUTH, APPLICATION DEADLINE, REMINDER

EXAMPLES OF TOPICS:

COST OF LIVING, SCHOLARSHIPS, TUITION FEES, ALUMNI NETWORK, VISA INFO, CAREERS, OWN WEBSITE, HOUSING, PROGRAMME INFO, LIFE ON CAMPUS, COUNTRY AND CITY.

studyportals

Tools and timeline

UNIVERSITY GOAL

STUDENT GOAL

TOUCH POINTS

CONTENT

TOOLS

TIMELINE

Display the tools you are using to deliver your content. Be aware of which channels students are using to look for interaction and information. How will you deliver and track your interactions with students at each step?

EXAMPLES OF TOOLS:

EMAIL, WEBSITE, CHATBOT, GOOGLE ADS, CRM, FACEBOOK ADS, NURTURE CAMPAIGN, MARKETING AUTOMATION, MESSENGER, FACEBOOK GROUP, LEAD FORM, WHATSAPP, APPLICATION SYSTEM, INSTAGRAM STORIES, RETARGETING WITH PIXELS.

Don't let student drop out of your funnel. Support them throughout their entire journey with a helpful, chronological and well-timed sequence of content. Here you can specify the timing of your activities or outline your institution's admissions cycle.
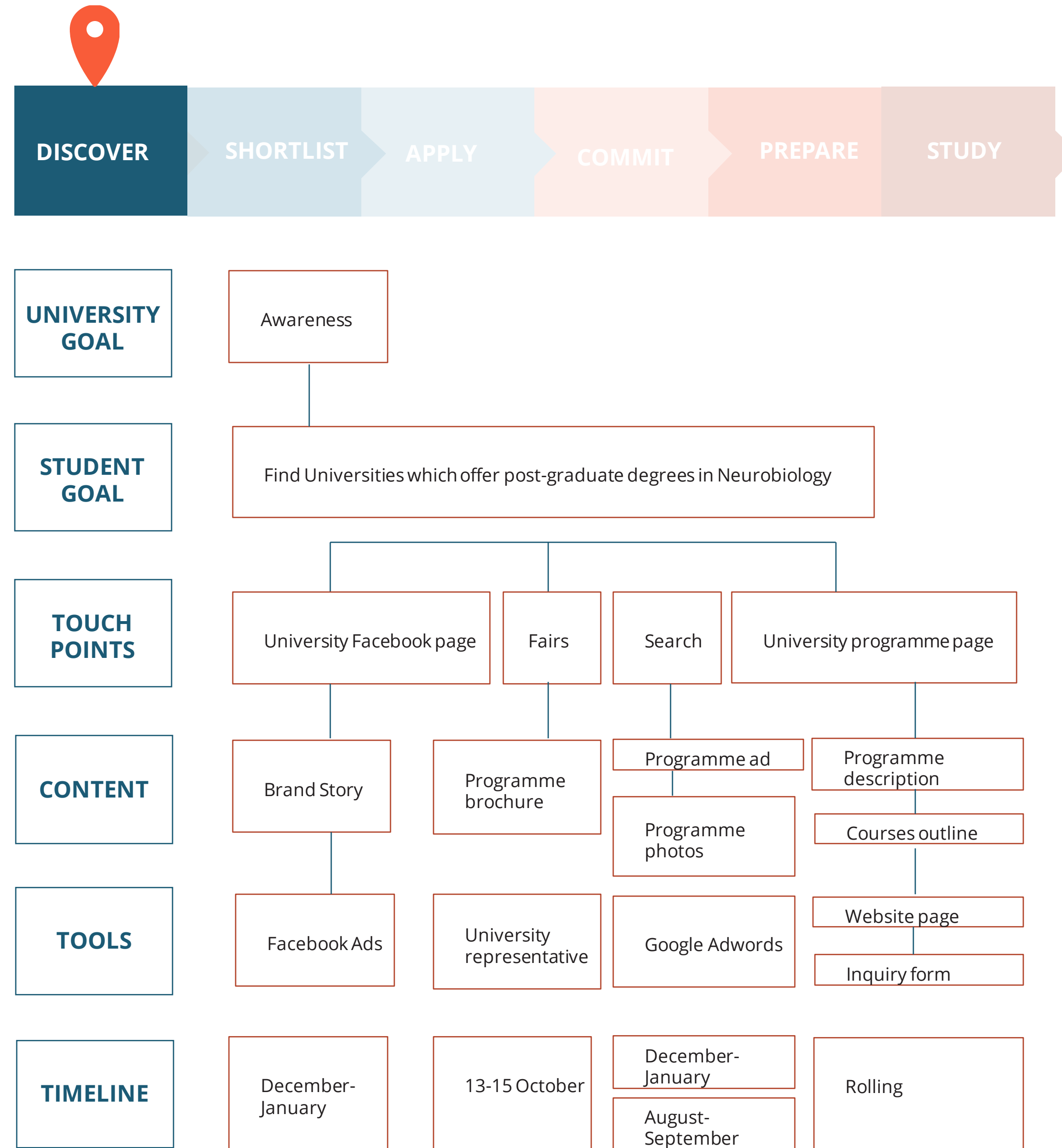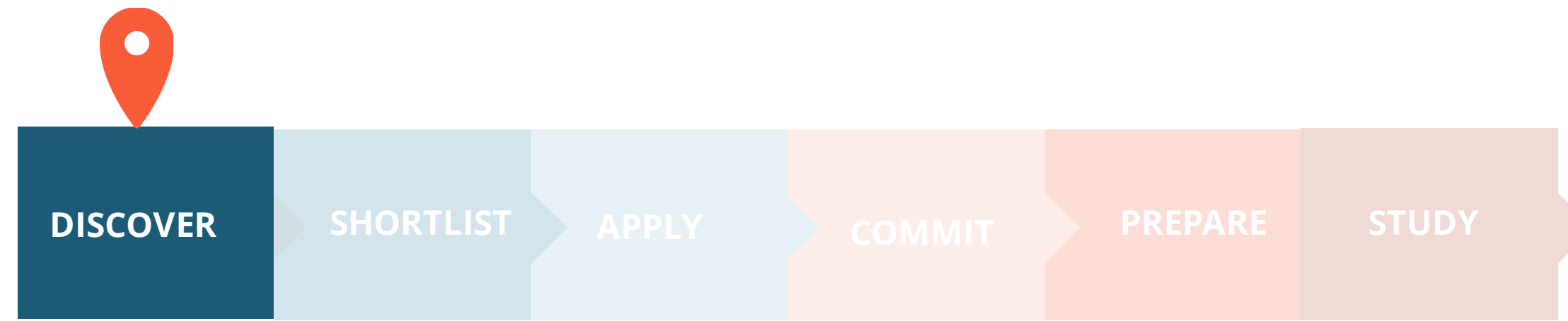
EXAMPLES OF TIMELINE:

SEMESTERS, ACADEMIC YEAR, ACADEMIC INTAKE PERIOD, PEAK SEARCH SEASONS

studyportals

Journey map: Sample

DISCOVER | SHORTLIST | APPLY | COMMIT | PREPARE | STUDY

UNIVERSITY GOAL	Awareness			
STUDENT GOAL	Find Universities which offer post-graduate degrees in Neurobiology			
TOUCH POINTS	University Facebook page	Fairs	Search	University programme page
CONTENT	Brand Story	Programme brochure	Programme ad / Programme photos	Programme description / Courses outline
TOOLS	Facebook Ads	University representative	Google Adwords	Website page / Inquiry form
TIMELINE	December-January	13-15 October	December-January / August-September	Rolling

studyportals

Journey map:
Step 1 discover

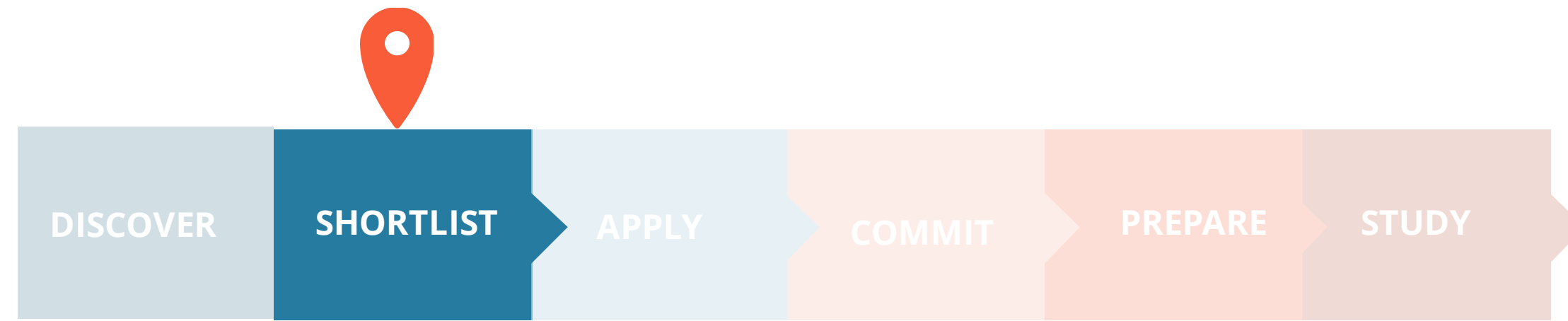| DISCOVER | SHORTLIST | APPLY | COMMIT | PREPARE | STUDY |

UNIVERSITY GOAL

Type in your goal

STUDENT GOAL

Type in your goal　　Type in your goal

TOUCH POINTS

Type in your goal　　Type in your goal　　Type in your goal

CONTENT

Type in your goal　　Type in your goal

TOOLS

Type in your goal　　Type in your goal

TIMELINE

Type in your goal

Journey map: Step 2 shortlist

DISCOVER **SHORTLIST** APPLY COMMIT PREPARE STUDY

UNIVERSITY GOAL
> Type in your goal

STUDENT GOAL
> Type in your goal
> Type in your goal

TOUCH POINTS
> Type in your goal
> Type in your goal
> Type in your goal

CONTENT
> Type in your goal
> Type in your goal

TOOLS
> Type in your goal
> Type in your goal

TIMELINE
> Type in your goal

studyportals

Journey map: Step 3 apply

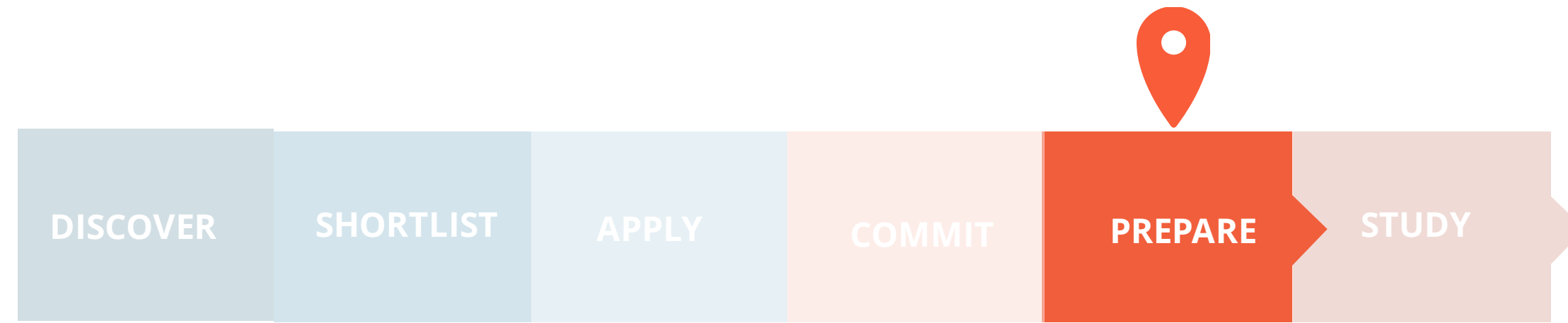| DISCOVER | SHORTLIST | APPLY | COMMIT | PREPARE | STUDY |

UNIVERSITY GOAL

> Type in your goal

STUDENT GOAL

> Type in your goal

> Type in your goal

TOUCH POINTS

> Type in your goal

> Type in your goal

> Type in your goal

CONTENT

> Type in your goal

> Type in your goal

TOOLS

> Type in your goal

> Type in your goal

TIMELINE

> Type in your goal

Journey map:
Step 4 commit

DISCOVER | **SHORTLIST** | **APPLY** | **COMMIT** | **PREPARE** | **STUDY**
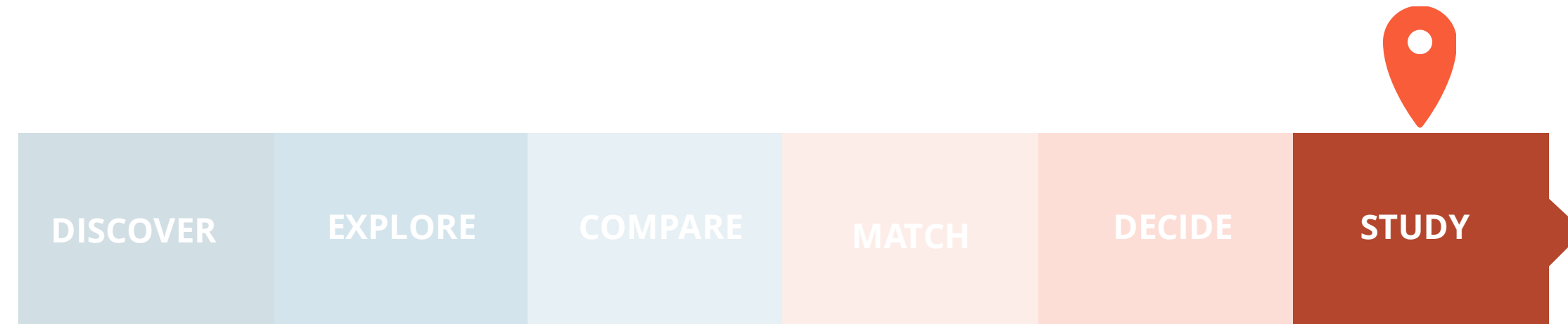
UNIVERSITY GOAL

Type in your goal

STUDENT GOAL

Type in your goal | Type in your goal

TOUCH POINTS

Type in your goal | Type in your goal | Type in your goal

CONTENT

Type in your goal | Type in your goal

TOOLS

Type in your goal | Type in your goal

TIMELINE

Type in your goal

studyportals

Journey map: Step 5 prepare

| DISCOVER | SHORTLIST | APPLY | COMMIT | PREPARE | STUDY |

UNIVERSITY GOAL

> *Type in your goal*

STUDENT GOAL

> *Type in your goal*   *Type in your goal*

TOUCH POINTS

> *Type in your goal*   *Type in your goal*   *Type in your goal*

CONTENT

> *Type in your goal*   *Type in your goal*

TOOLS

> *Type in your goal*   *Type in your goal*

TIMELINE

> *Type in your goal*

studyportals

Journey map: Step 6 study

DISCOVER	EXPLORE	COMPARE	MATCH	DECIDE	STUDY

UNIVERSITY GOAL

Type in your goal

STUDENT GOAL

Type in your goal

Type in your goal

TOUCH POINTS

Type in your goal

Type in your goal

Type in your goal

CONTENT

Type in your goal

Type in your goal

TOOLS

Type in your goal

Type in your goal

TIMELINE

Type in your goal

studyportals

How we can help you

Extend your potential reach to every corner of the world, inspiring ambitious students to apply and enrol no matter where they're from.

We offer multiple services and solutions to optimise your recruitment funnel for international students. From raising your exposure and brand awareness, to increasing traffic and leads from a specific country, to growing your number of applications and enrolments – every promotion with Studyportals is different and tailored to your goals and needs

If you are interested in increasing the number of student applications and enrolments, to highlight your programmes and products to a global audience, Studyportals is the place to be.

Ready to grow and diversify your international student enrolments?
Contact us: hello@studyportals.com

studyportals