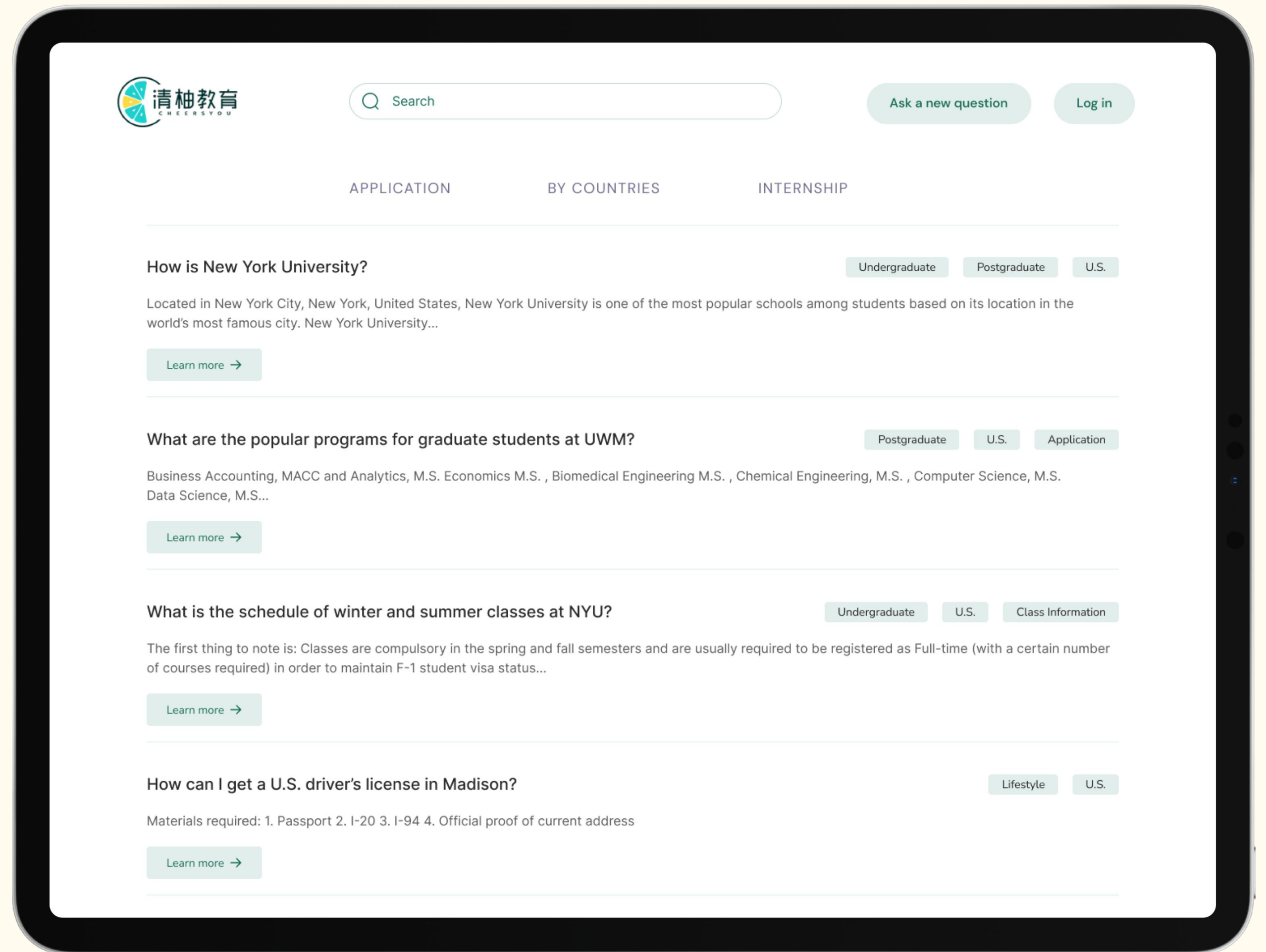


# CheersYou

## *Q&A Website Redesign*



Design and Presented by Tommy Tian

## Agenda

1 Background

2 Market research

3 User research

4 Problems

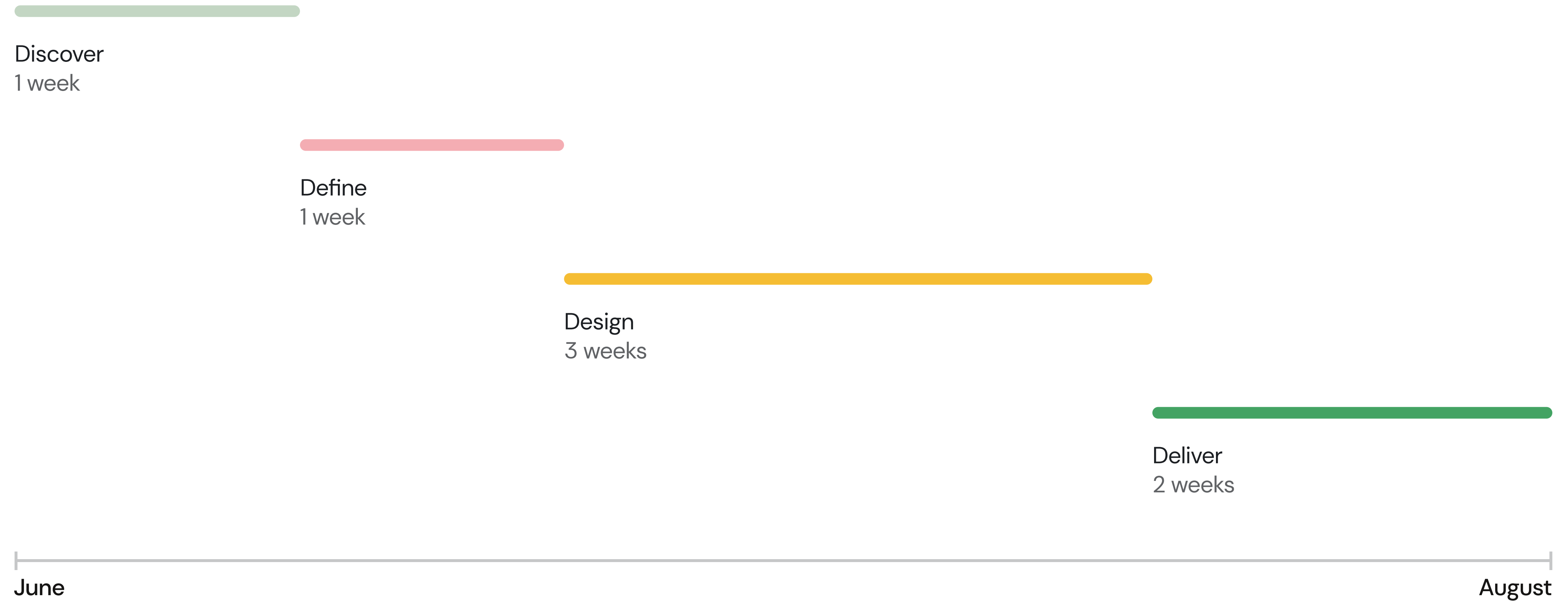
5 Information architecture

6 Wireframe

7 Interface

8 Conclusion

# Project timeline



# Background

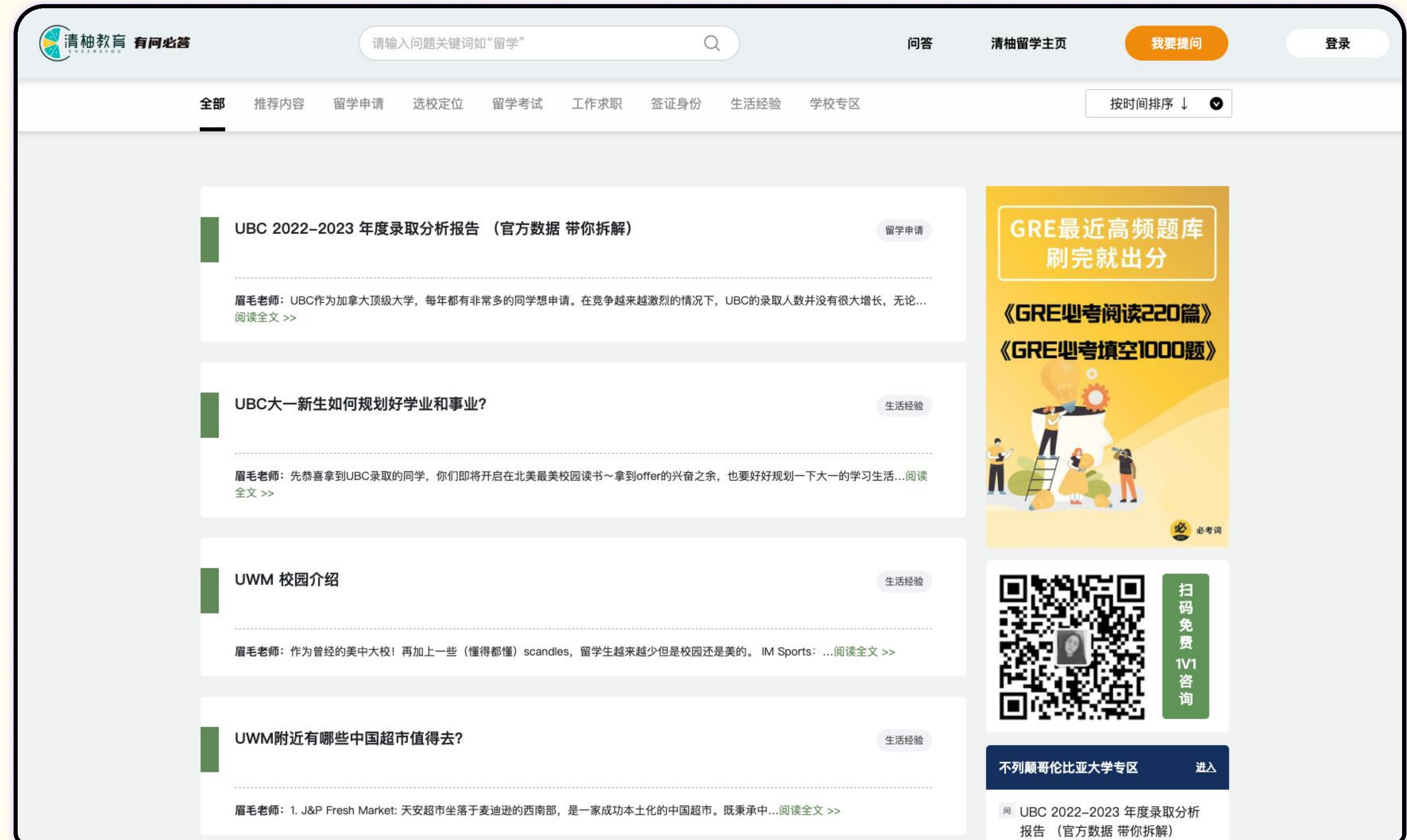
This project is aimed to redesign the information architecture, wireframe, and the UI of this website to make it easier for customer to navigate and enhance the interface.

The redesigned UX and UI have been delivered to the web development team of CheersYou Education so the new website design can be discussed and applied by CheersYou.

Project    Redesign

Role        Research, UX design

Duration    9 weeks



## Background

CheersYou Education is an education consulting company based in New York City, New York, USA which aims to provide consulting services for Chinese International Students in the Western Hemisphere about college application and internship/career preparation. Besides having a main page introducing its businesses and duties, it also provides students with a individual Q&A website that welcomes students to register and post their questions regarding college application, college life, and career development. However, regarding the structure and UI, there are some problems to be solved, and the best way for solving those problems is redesigning the website by fixing the information architecture, the wireframe, and the UI design of the website.



## Problem statement

## Design audit

1. The UI design of the website is not quite aesthetically acceptable. The website used a lot of rectangles but without round corners, which is not a quite good design idea. According to a design website called "logicdesign.co.uk", sharp shapes simply means more they "hurt" people's feeling more, and human brains tend to prefer round corners than those sharp ones. As a text-based website with information including numbers of school information, it is important to make customers easy to focus on what they are reading and decide what kinds of questions they should ask about the colleges they want to apply to or attend, and to make people easily focus on reading a text-based website, a key factor is to keep people's brains not feel intensified. so, by choosing more round corner designs, the website owner is able to make people feel less stressful while reading the website, and thus feel easier to focus on the texts.



2. The color choice of the website is also not very satisfying. Even though the texts are easy to read and understand, the color choice of the website is mainly white, which is too bright for people to watch for a long time. I decide to choose green and yellow as the main color theme for the new website design because green represents "nature" whereas yellow represents "cheerfulness", according to the website "WebsiteBuilderExpert". The owner of the website is called "CheersYou Education", which means it can choose yellow as the theme "cheering people" according to the name and goal of the company; it can also choose green as green is a comfortable color that represents nature, which can easily make people feel relaxed. What's more, the theme of CheersYou Education's logo used the color green and yellow, that's why I also decide to choose green and yellow and the newly-designed website's theme color, to more fit in the design theme of the company itself, like Apple used Titanim color for its new iPhone 15's introductory website.

# Research

For my project, I've done both market research and user research.

For the market research, I looked at several websites and compared them to figure out the kind of style I wanted to use.

On the user research side, I focused on understanding who the project is meant for. Since CheersYou Education is a company that helps Chinese students with college applications and advice for college life, the target audience is Chinese students studying in countries like the U.S., Canada, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand. To gather insights, I created a questionnaire to ask students some key questions.

## Market research

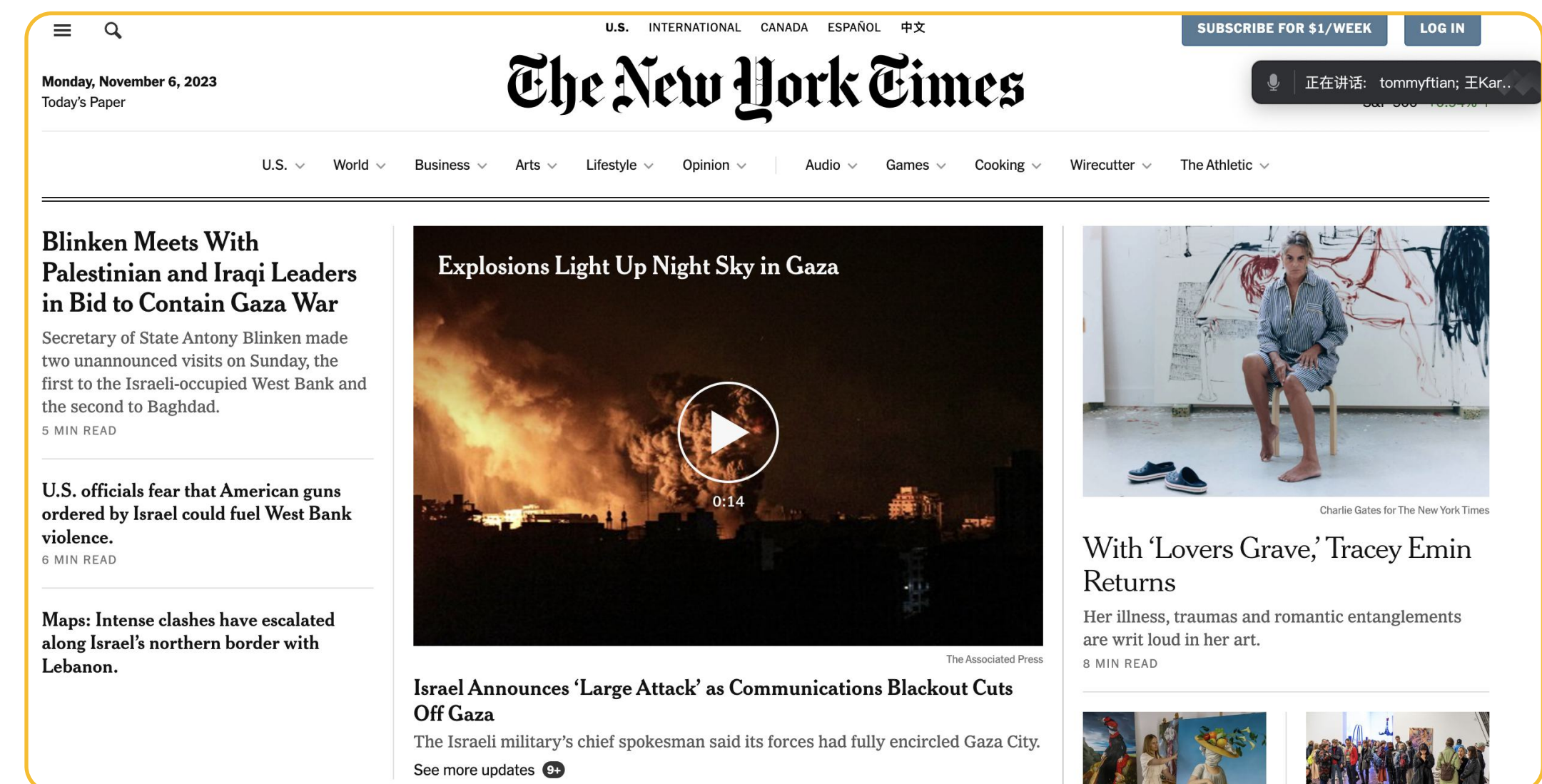
Wikipedia, The New York Times, NYU

The UI design of these websites is not aesthetically good. They use many rectangles without rounded corners, which is not an ideal design choice. According to the design website “logicdesign.co.uk,” sharp shapes can evoke discomfort, as they “hurt” people’s feelings more, while human brains tend to prefer rounded corners over sharp ones.

reference: <https://www.logicdesign.co.uk/blog/why-do-we-have-rounded-corners-website-design/#:~:text=Rounded%20corners%20are%20psychologically%20associated,and%20responsive%20to%20this%20shape.>



The screenshot shows the Wikipedia article for Rudy Giuliani. The page has a clean, structured layout with a search bar at the top, a navigation menu on the left, and the main article content on the right. The article text is left-aligned and uses a standard serif font. A prominent feature is the use of sharp, rectangular corners throughout the interface, including the search bar, navigation links, and article text blocks. The overall design is functional but lacks the rounded corners often associated with modern, user-friendly web design.



The screenshot shows the New York Times homepage. The page features a prominent masthead with the newspaper's name in a large, bold, serif font. Below the masthead, there are navigation links for various sections like U.S., World, Business, Arts, Lifestyle, Opinion, Audio, Games, Cooking, Wirecutter, and The Athletic. The main content area is divided into several columns, each featuring a large, high-contrast image and a headline. The layout is dense and uses sharp, rectangular corners for the content blocks and navigation elements. The overall design is classic and authoritative, but it lacks the rounded corners and softer aesthetic often found in modern digital products.

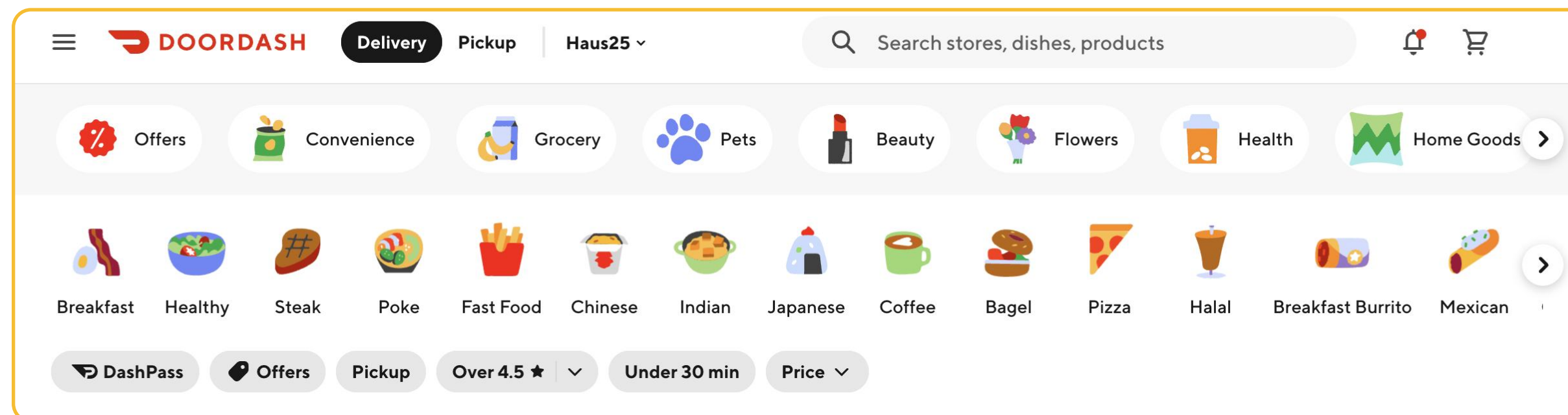
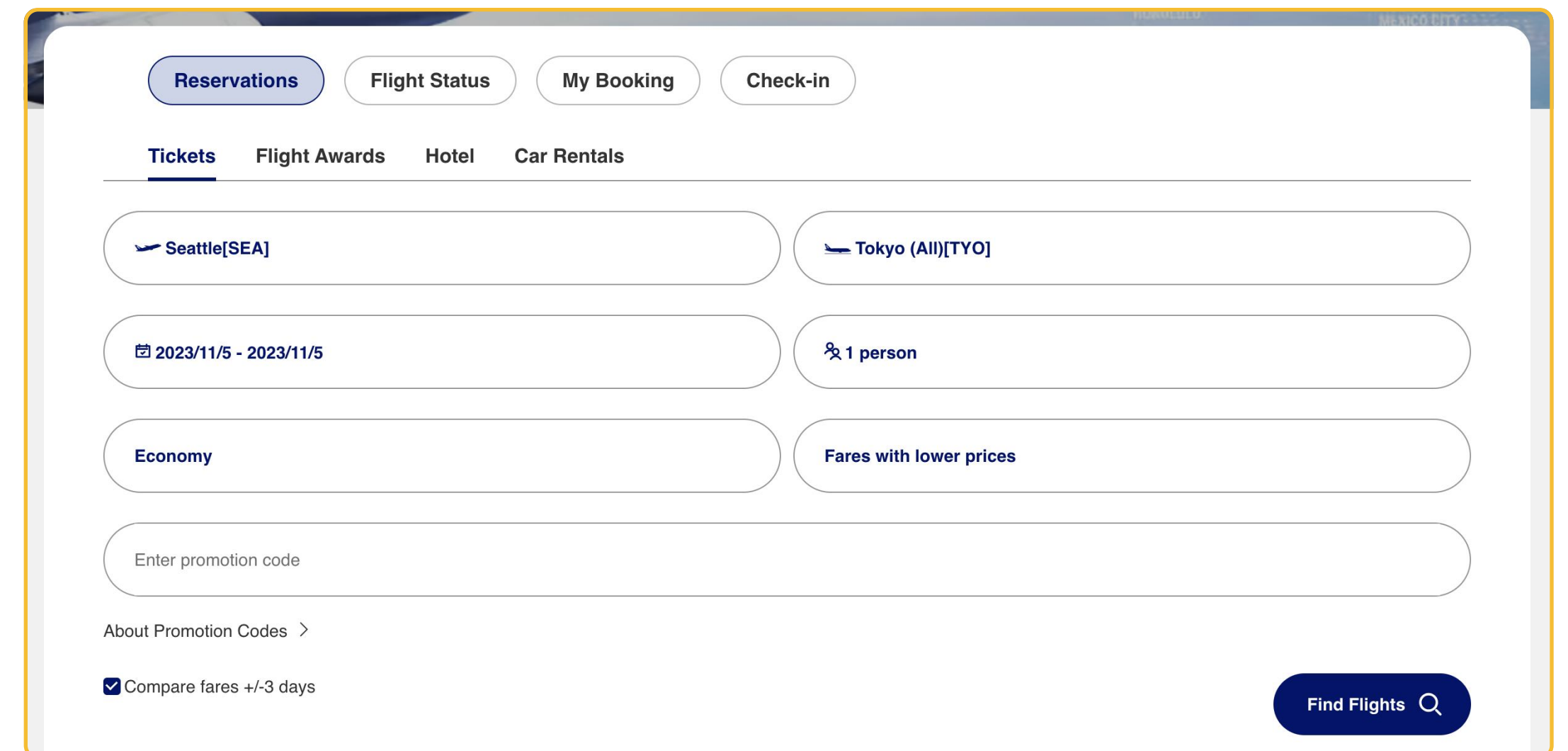
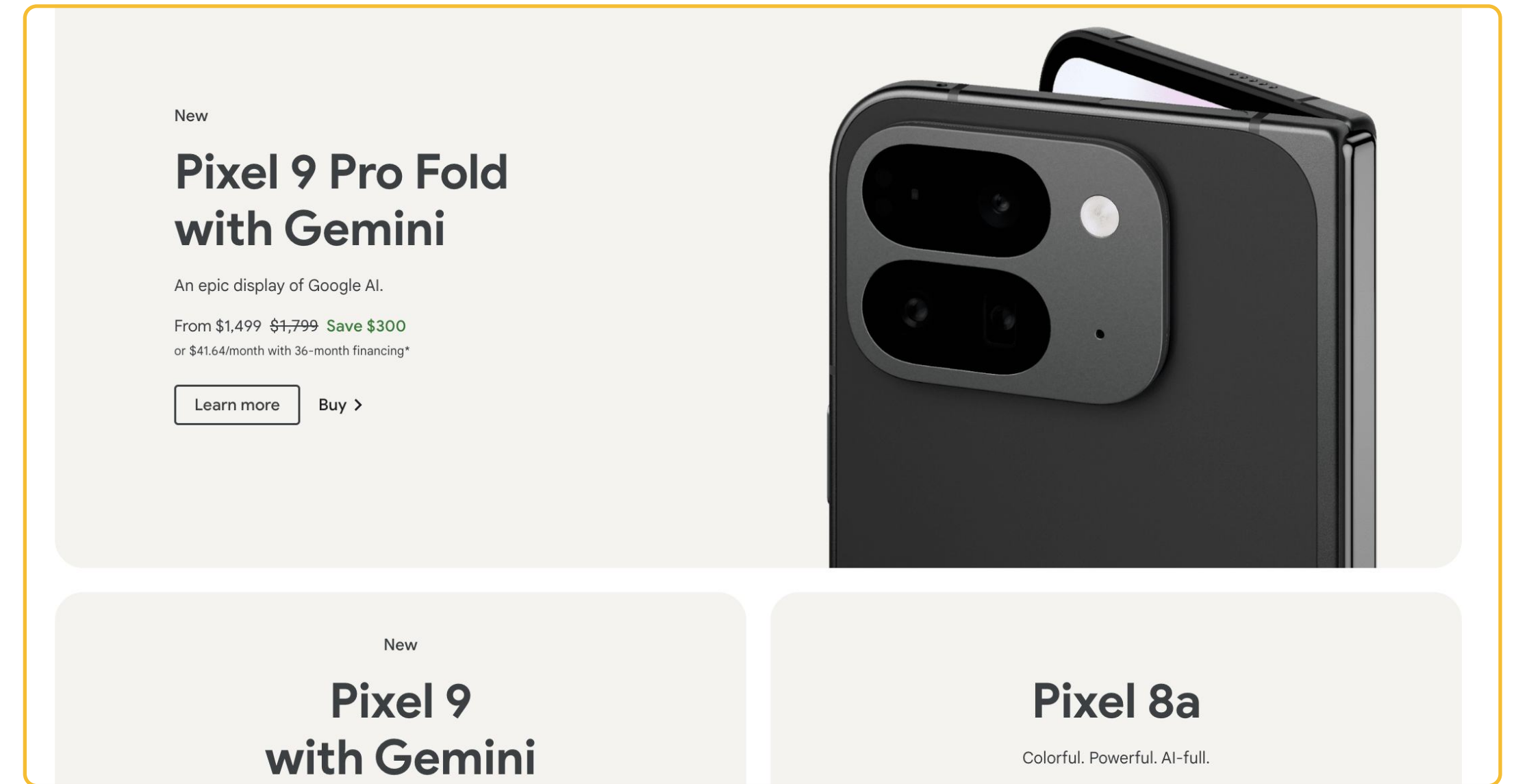


## Market research

# Inspirations

For a text-based website featuring school information, it's essential to help users focus on what they're reading and decide what questions to ask about the colleges they're interested in. To achieve this, it's important to design the website in a way that doesn't overwhelm the user. Using rounded corner designs can create a more relaxed and less stressful experience, making it easier for users to concentrate on the content.

reference: <https://www.websitebuilderexpert.com/designing-websites/how-to-choose-color-for-your-website/>



## User research

# Survey

To learn more and validate the use case from students around me, I created a survey to gather insights on user intentions and needs when students first arrive at school. The survey is divided into four sections, focusing on identifying who the respondents are and understanding which topics they are most interested in.

The goal of this survey will guide the next steps in the design process for me to understand the direction on pain point.

The survey is presented as a mobile application interface with four distinct sections, each with a purple header bar indicating its position in the sequence.

- Section 1 of 4:** Titled "Educational website design survey". It includes an introductory paragraph, an "Email" field with a validation message "Valid email address", and a link to "Change settings".
- Section 2 of 4:** Titled "About applying to schools". It contains a question: "Which of the following status are you in ? (Required) \*". The options are radio buttons for "Preparing to apply for a degree abroad", "Currently pursuing a degree at school", and "Both".
- Section 3 of 4:** Titled "About Study Abroad Life". It includes a description field and a question: "Which of the following problems do you pay most attention to? \*". The options are radio buttons for "Choosing classes and professors", "Internships and jobs", "Surrounding environment of your college/university", "Life, traveling destinations, and entertainments around your college/university", and "Other...".
- Section 4 of 4:** Titled "ABOUT YOU". It includes a description field and a question: "Which of the following countries do you want to apply for or are you already in (required)? \*". The options are checkboxes for "United States", "Canada", "United Kingdom", "Australia/New Zealand", and "Other...".

At the bottom of the fourth section, there is a question: "What is your gender? \*". The options are radio buttons for "Male", "Female", and "Rather not say".

## User research

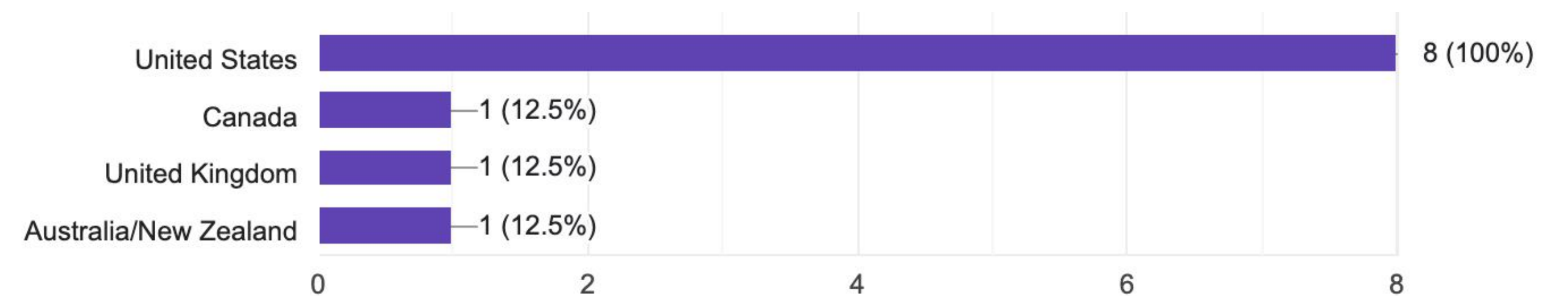
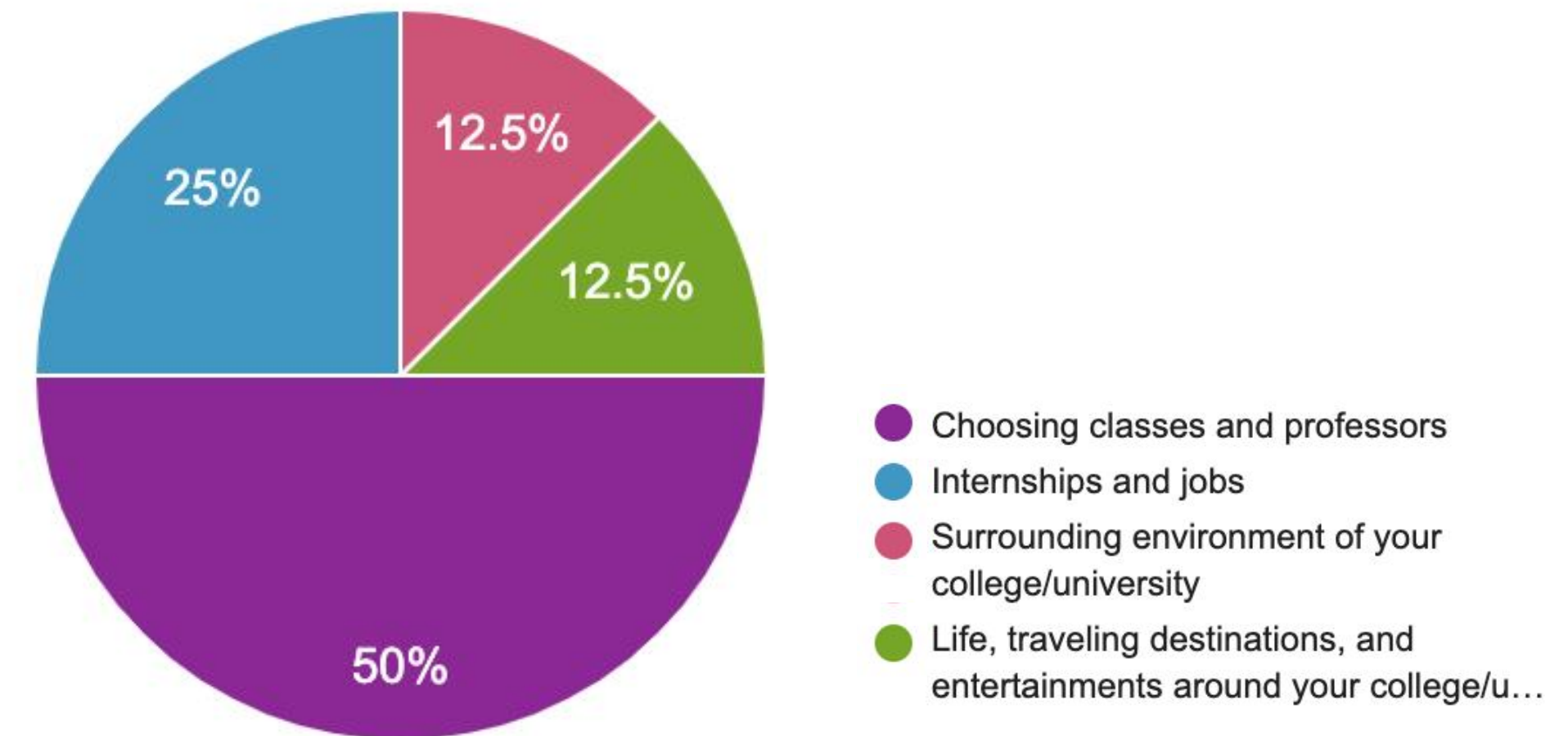
### Survey result

From the data analysis, we found the following insights:

- Most respondents are still pursuing their bachelor's degrees and prioritize choosing and comparing colleges when applying to new schools.
- Key interests include internships, job opportunities, selecting classes, and professor recommendations.
- U.S. colleges are the primary focus, while no interest was expressed in Australian colleges.

Based on these findings, the website redesign should emphasize:

- Highlight content for job and internship opportunities.
- Guidance on selecting classes and professors.
- Tips for living and studying in the U.S.



## Project scope

### Target audience

- Chinese students who want to apply for bachelor's and master's degrees in countries where the native language is English.
- Chinese students who have already been accepted but still want to learn more information about their colleges.

### User need

- Learn about application information regarding colleges in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia.
- Learn about internships and local jobs.
- Learn about professor reviews.
- Learn about the safety conditions of the surrounding environment and the lifestyle and traveling information of the surrounding environment.

### Problems

- Students currently use education services and university websites, which have spread and overwhelmed information.
- LinkedIn and schools' own job application websites only provide job posting information, not tailored reviews.
- Lack a full list of all professors' reviews from public review websites.
- All local site content is somehow unorganized and is usually not in Chinese; Chinese students tend to read organized Chinese information.

# Solutions

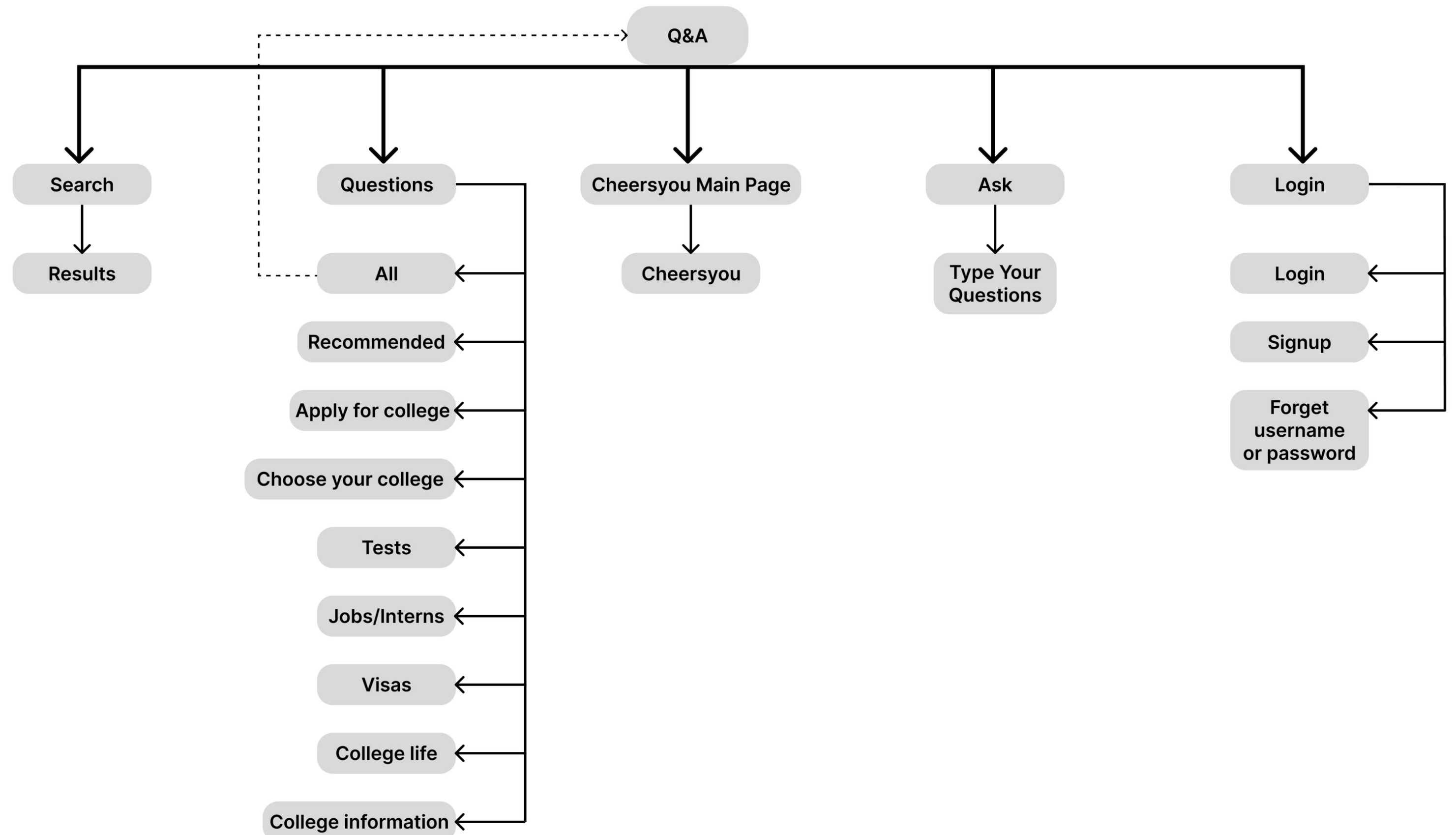
Chinese students who want to apply for school prefer a consolidated website in Chinese, offering summarized content and FAQs in their language. In addition to official information, they are also interested in hearing opinions and experiences from local students and teachers.

Chinese students who are already accepted, value practical insights over official content, such as advice from professionals in related fields and reviews of bad professors to help them choose classes efficiently. They also prioritize information about safety trends in their surroundings to make informed decisions about schools and communities. Additionally, they prefer detailed resources in Chinese, including maps, route visuals, and reviews, ideally organized into a single blog to simplify trip planning.

## Information Architecture

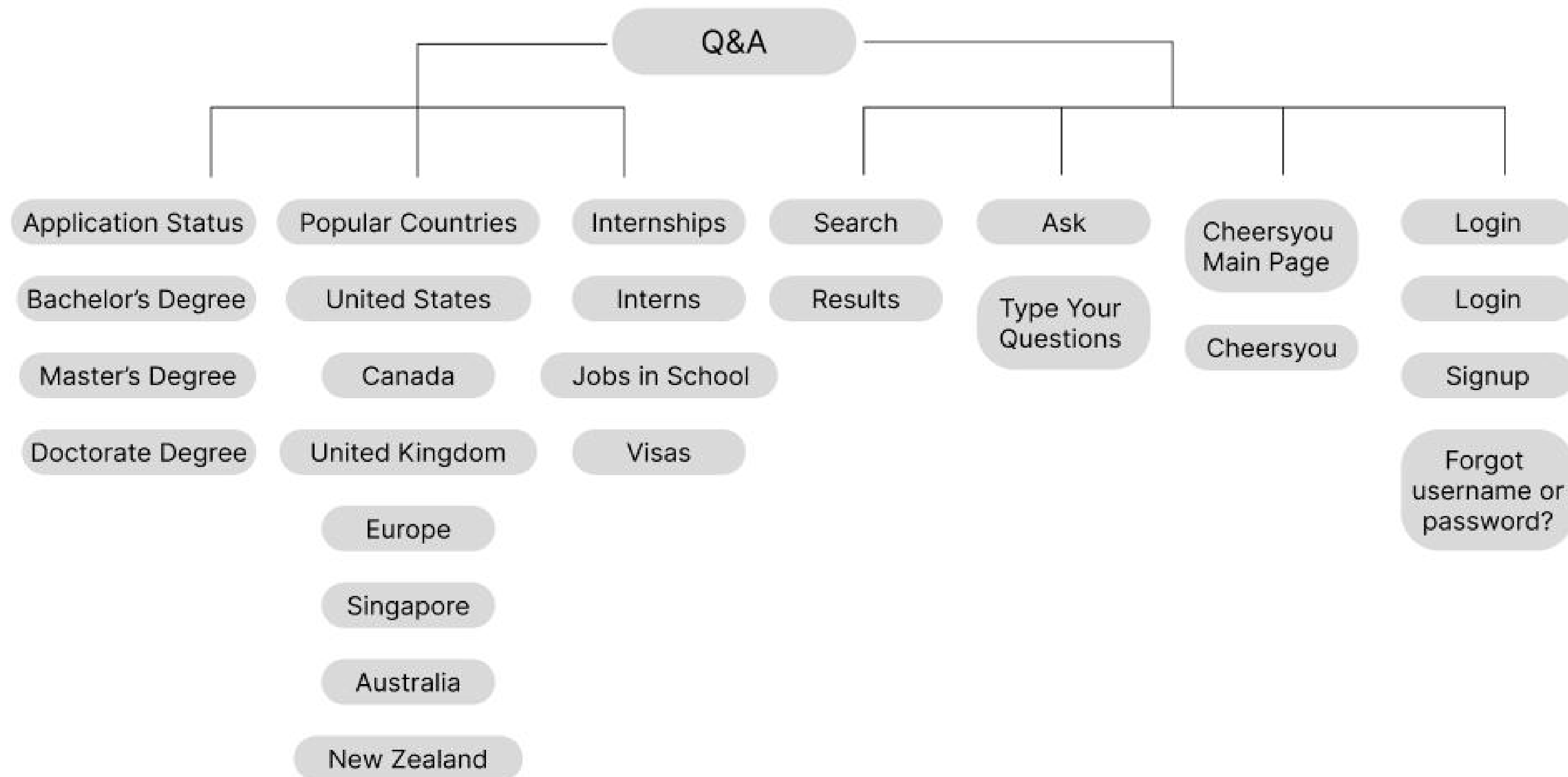
The original site structure has several issues:

- Lack of Clarity: It doesn't clearly highlight the information most relevant to international students. There are no detailed tabs or options for students to easily click on and find solutions to their specific concerns.
- Disorganized Content: The site groups all common problems faced by international students into a single section, which can feel overwhelming and confusing. The content needs to be reorganized into distinct categories of student life to make it easier for users to navigate and find relevant information.



## Information Architecture – Redesign

Based on the identified use cases, we have updated the information hierarchy to align with the specific needs and preferences of each user type.



# Wireframe

Wire-framing is one of the first steps in the design process because it establishes the foundational structure of the website or application before adding detailed design elements

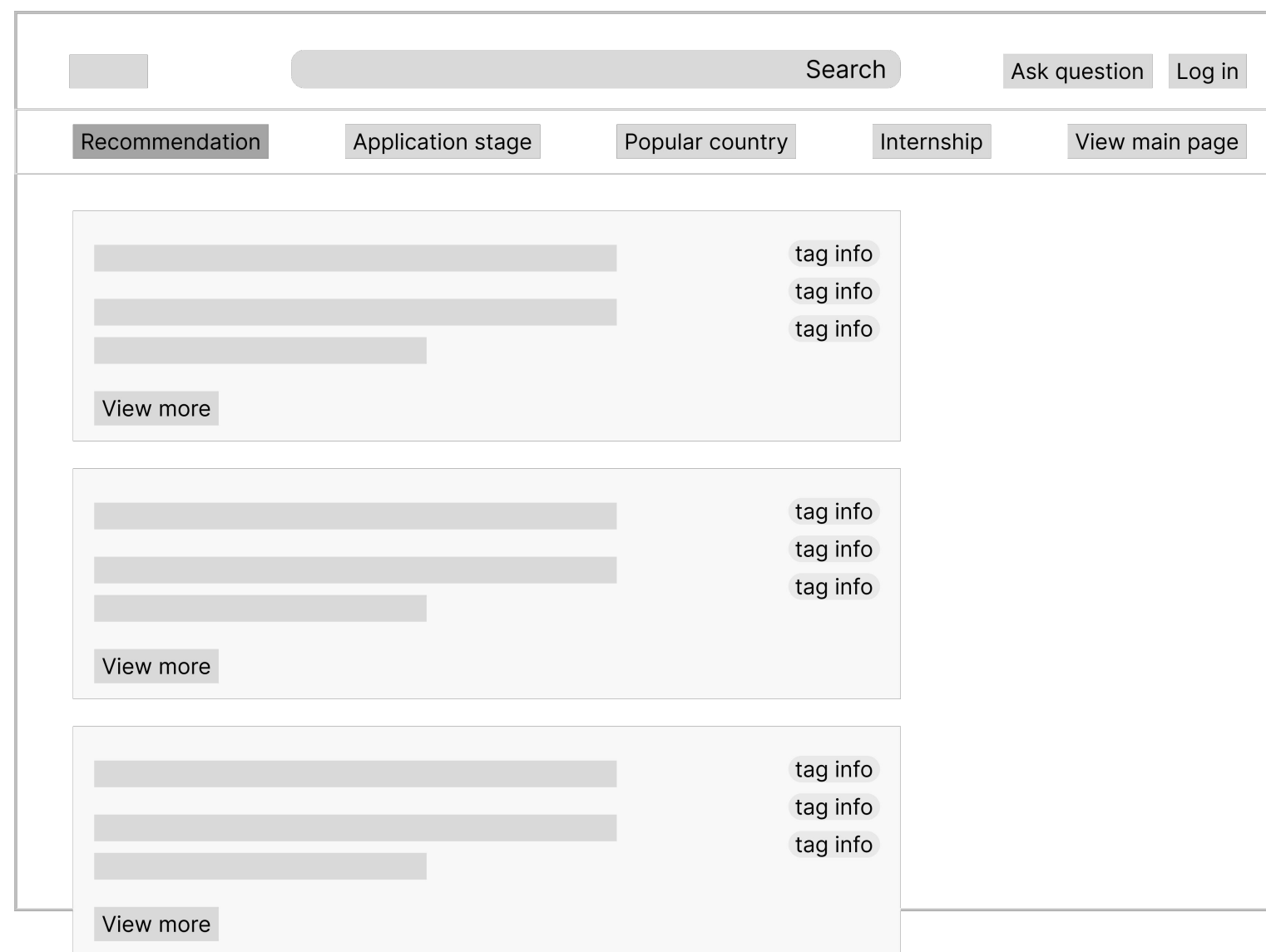
During the wireframe phase, I explored various solutions for organizing content, as the primary goal of this project is to improve information categorization. This phase focused heavily on designing navigation options and page layouts to create a more intuitive and user-friendly experience.



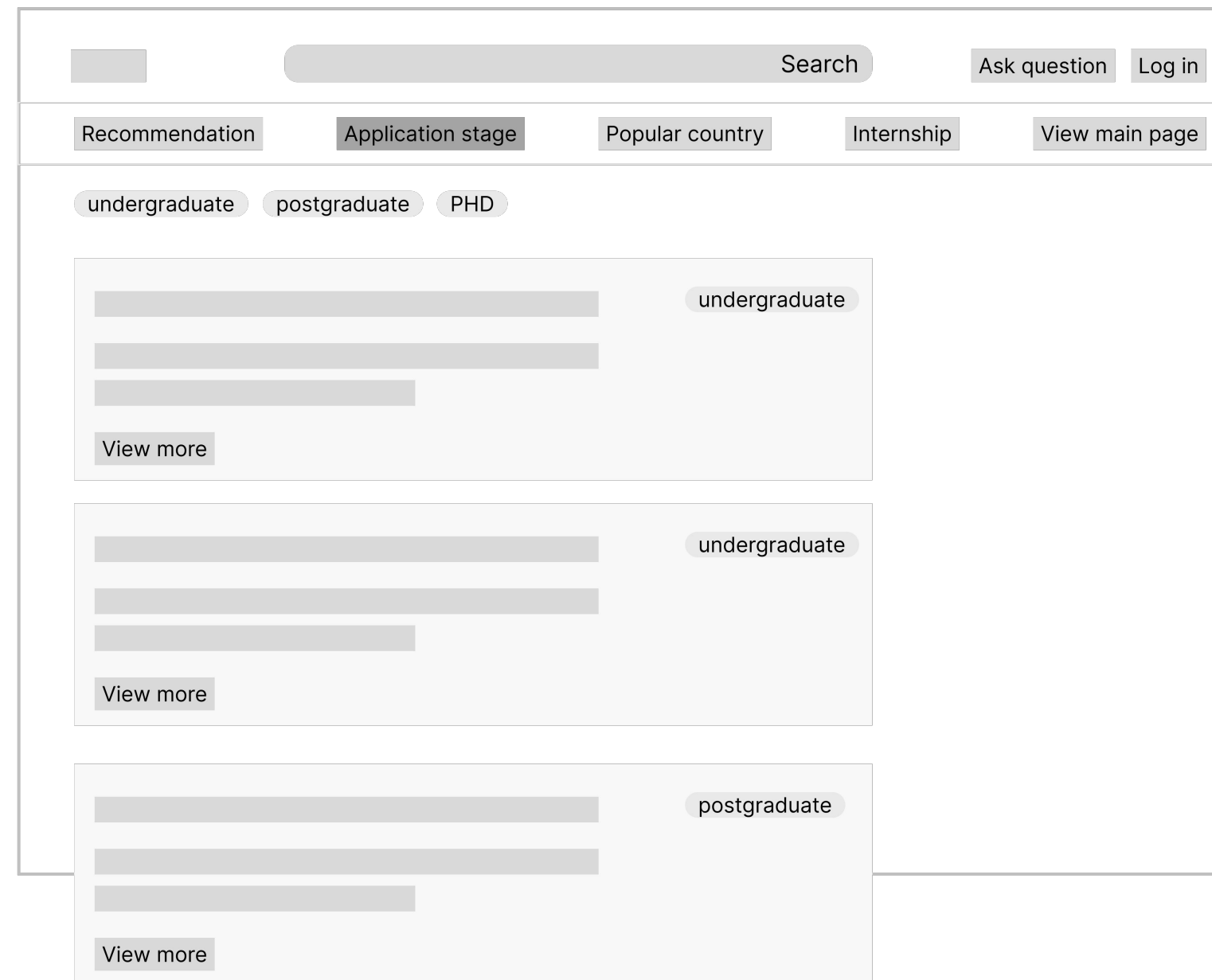
# Content hierarchy – sub navigation

Adding the layered navigation in tab format, along with introducing tags to each Q&A card, when users hover the tabs, the tabs will change color to let the users know what tabs they have hovered on. Allow them to read more details if needed.

Default screens on recommendation



Sub-layer navigation



Sub-layer navigation selected

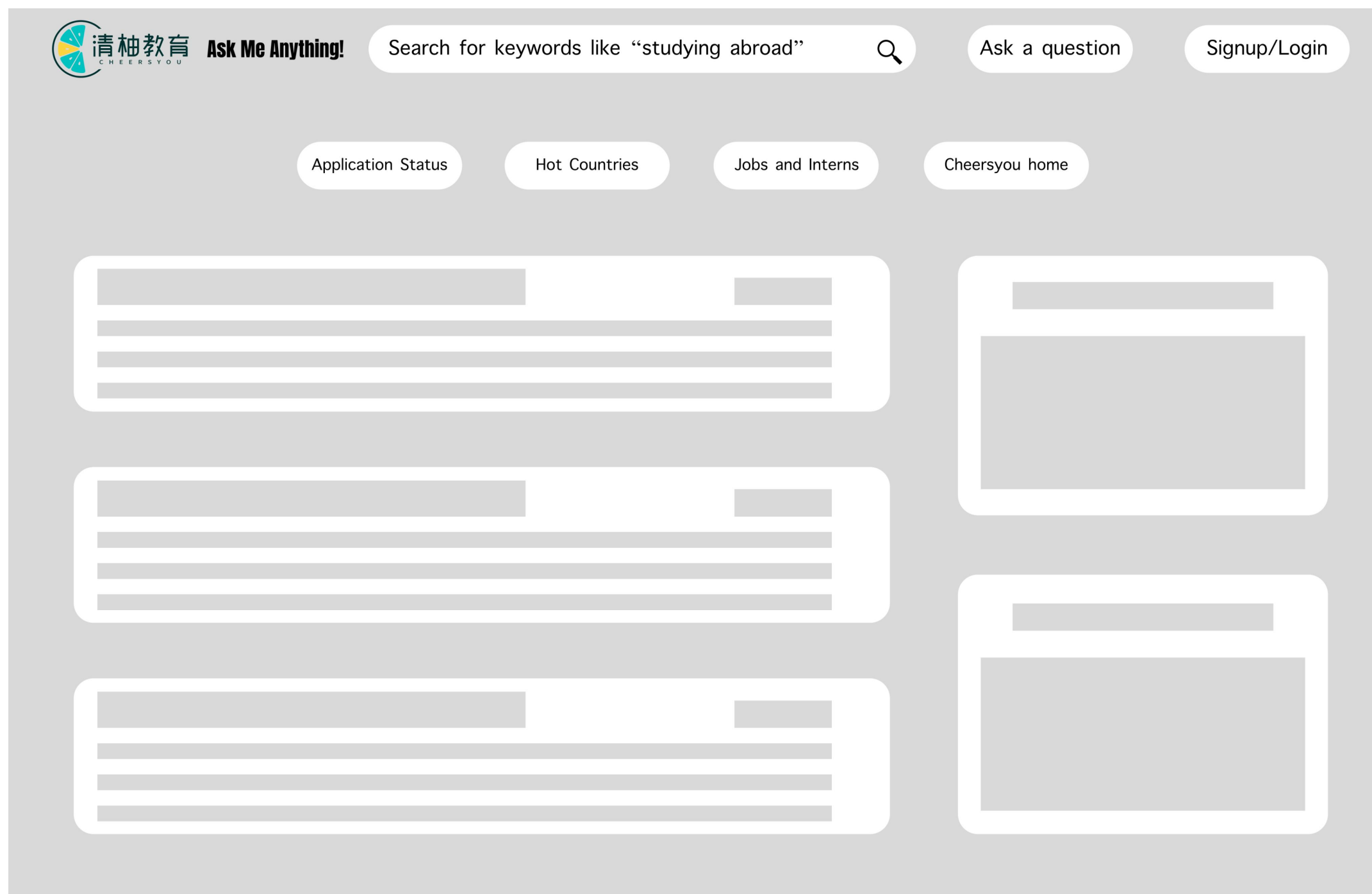


## Wireframe

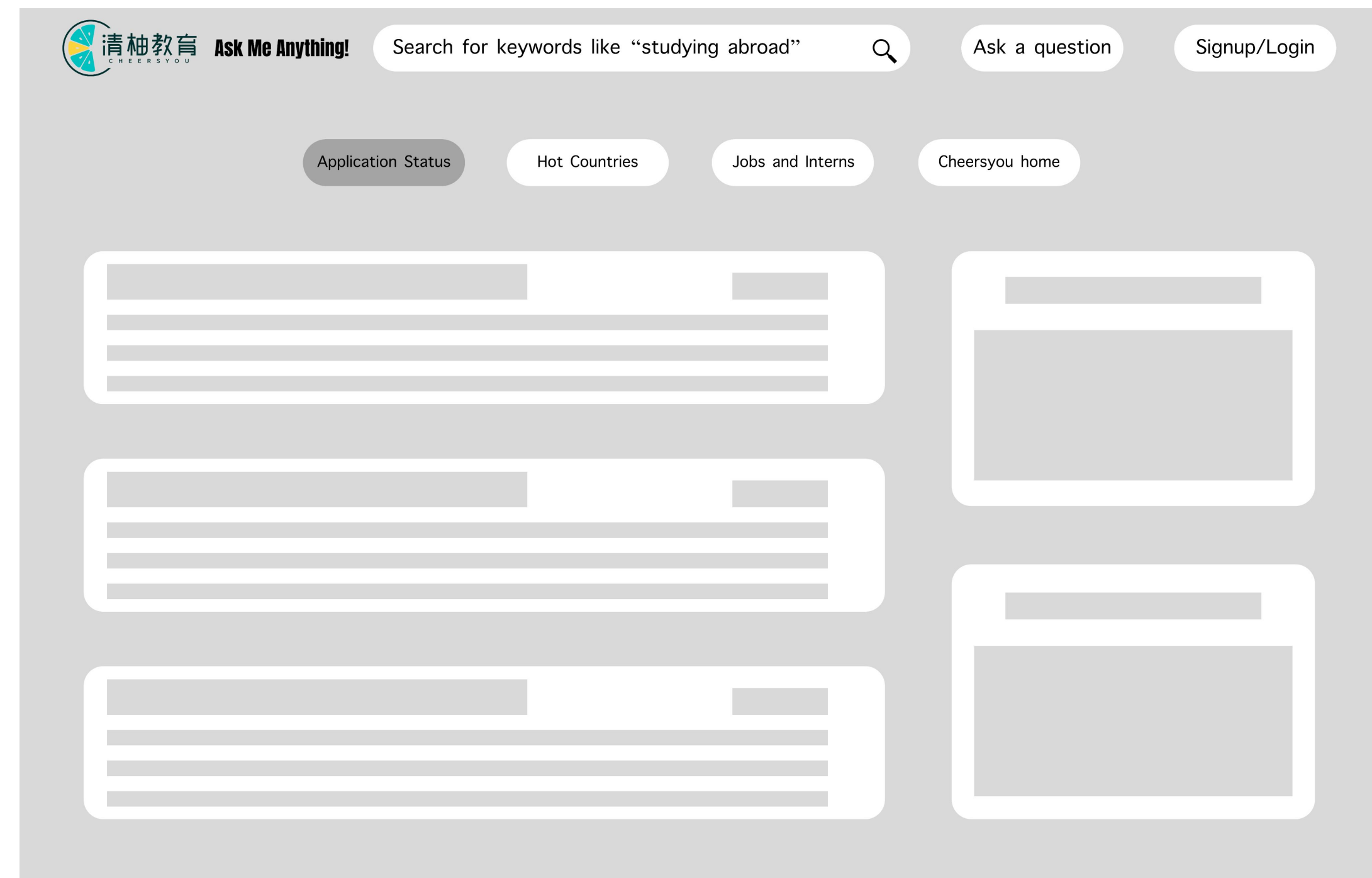
### Content hierarchy – single layer filter

For this version, I increased the distance between the search bar and the tabs, so users can immediately see the difference and won't feel messed. I also took the design idea of round-corner content display to accomplish my goal of making people feel more comfortable while reading the website.

With Promotional content



Filter applied



# Interaction

Interaction refers to how users engage with a website's elements—such as clicking buttons, navigating menus, or scrolling— and how the website responds to those actions to create a seamless and intuitive experience.

After completing the wireframe logic for the content hierarchy, I focused on refining the interaction details, specifically how each menu or navigation element should behave and respond. I conducted market research to gather insights and developed several versions of the interaction design, analyzing the pros and cons of each approach to identify the most user-friendly and effective solution.

## Learning from the market

# Navigation interactions

Through market research, I have explored various navigation interactions, including left navigation, tabs, and drop-down, to better understand how to present more information and options effectively.

The screenshot shows the Quora search results for 'design inspiration'. The top navigation bar includes the Quora logo, home, search, and notification icons. The search bar contains 'design inspiration' and a 'Try Quora+' button. On the left, there is a sidebar with 'By type' (All types, Questions, Answers, Posts, Profiles, Topics, Spaces) and 'By author' (All people, People you follow, Author search). The main content area shows three search results:

- Where can one find good interaction design inspiration?** by KC Oh (user experience designer · 13y). The answer discusses avoiding websites and focusing on other places like film. It has 23 upvotes and 2 comments.
- What are web designers' best sources for inspiration, e.g. websites, blogs, Tumblr, etc.?** with 61 answers, last followed Feb 21. It has 854 follows and a request button.
- What are some interesting playdecks to get creative/design inspiration?** by Seb Paquet (Open to whatever comes next... · Updated 11y). The answer lists 'MethodKit' and 'Group Works Card Deck'. It has 4 upvotes.

The screenshot shows the Common App website. The top navigation bar includes the Common App logo, 'FIND A COLLEGE', and several dropdown menus: 'Plan for college', 'Apply to college', and 'Support your students'. There are also 'Sign in' and 'Create an account' buttons. The main content area features a large teal banner with the text 'Explore more than 1,000 colleges on Common App' and a search bar with the placeholder 'Enter college name'. Below the search bar, there are filter buttons for 'Search by filter (optional)', including 'Accepts first-year applications', 'Accepts transfer applications', 'Public', 'Private', 'Small (2,000 and under)', 'Medium (2,001 to 14,999)', 'Large (15,000+)', 'Rural', 'Suburban', 'Urban', 'HBCU', and 'Hispanic-serving institution'.

The screenshot shows a Medium article feed. The top navigation bar includes a '+' icon and tabs for 'For you', 'Following', 'Creativity', 'Photography', 'Food', 'Sports', 'Travel', and 'Visto'. The main content area shows two articles:

- UX/UI Design Trends Going Into 2024** by Punit Chawla (in Prototypr · Dec 13, 2023). The article discusses design trends that are good, stick around, and influence other designers. It has a 'UX Design' tag and a '10 min read' indicator.
- Why your UX Portfolio is not getting interviews in 2024? Do's & Don'ts!** by UXGO in UX Planet (Jan 24, 2024). The article discusses the importance of a killer portfolio website and unique UX superpowers. It has a 'UX Design' tag and a '7 min read' indicator.

On the right side, there is a 'Staff Picks' section with three featured articles and a 'Recommended topics' section with tags for 'Programming', 'Data Science', 'Technology', 'Self Improvement', 'Writing', 'Relationships', and 'Machine Learning'.

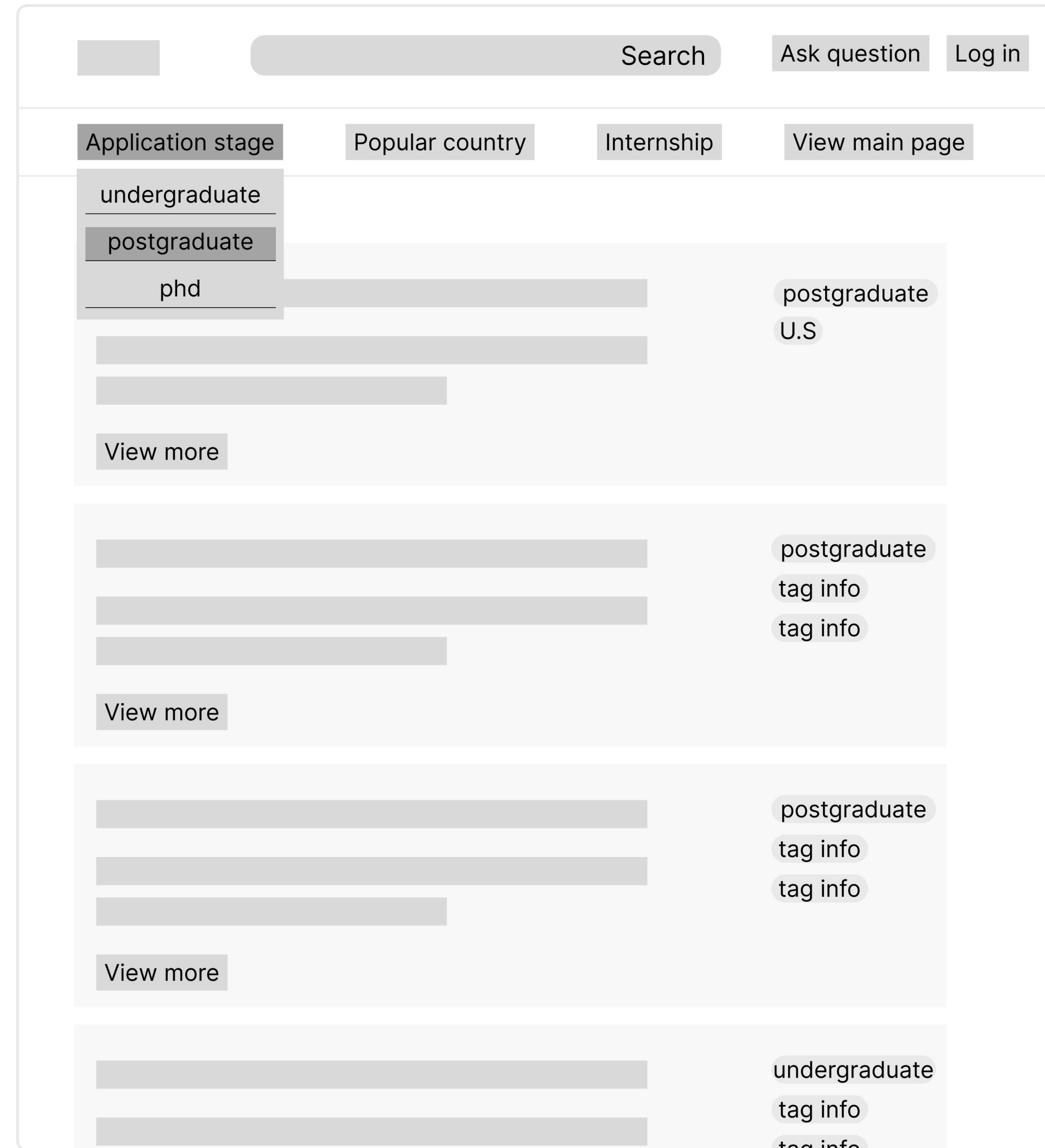
## Wireframe

### Dropdown menu

The advantage and disadvantage of the solution with hover

Advantage: When users hover their mouses above the sub-categories at the top, which are Application stage, Popular country, Internship, and View main page, there will be a pop-up window that also allows users to hover for exact sub-sub category they want to view under that sub-category, which creates a direct path to the exact contents the users desire to read.

Disadvantage: When users choose the exact sub-sub category, it can cost them some time to think about where exactly they want to navigate, which might cause a little waste of time for them to make decisions. What's more, in this method, the tags are unclickable because the exact category is already chosen by the users.



## Wireframe

### Breadcrumb navigation

The advantage and disadvantage of the solution without hover dropdown

Advantage: Users can directly click the sub-categories and directly go to the interface that contains all the Q&As from that sub-category, which can save them some time.

Disadvantage: Users still have to scroll up and down to find the exact content they want to access since all contents from that categories are there.



## Wireframe

### Board layout without additional level of navigation

The advantage and disadvantage of the solution with vertical layout

Advantage: Q&As with different lengths can be displayed in differently-sized boxes based on the different lengths, for some of the short Q&As, this methods can display the full text, while for the longer texts, this methods still offers "view more" choice.

Disadvantage: When displaying on mobile phones, there are likely to be a long and thin text box which force the users to scroll all the way down before reading the next.



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1 Logo of Cheersyou Education

2 The search bar, where users can type in the contents or kew words they want to search for

3 The “ask question” button, which allows the users click and type in the question(s) they want to ask.

4 The login button, which allows the users to click and choose whether to create a new account or to login, as well as reset passwords.

5 The sub-category buttons, which include “Application Stage”, “Popular Countries”, and “Internships”.

6 The “view more” button, which allows users to view the folded contents

7 The tag information display block, which are non-clickable but show the users what sub-categories do the posts belong to.

8 The main page button, which directs the users to the Cheersyou Education’s main page.



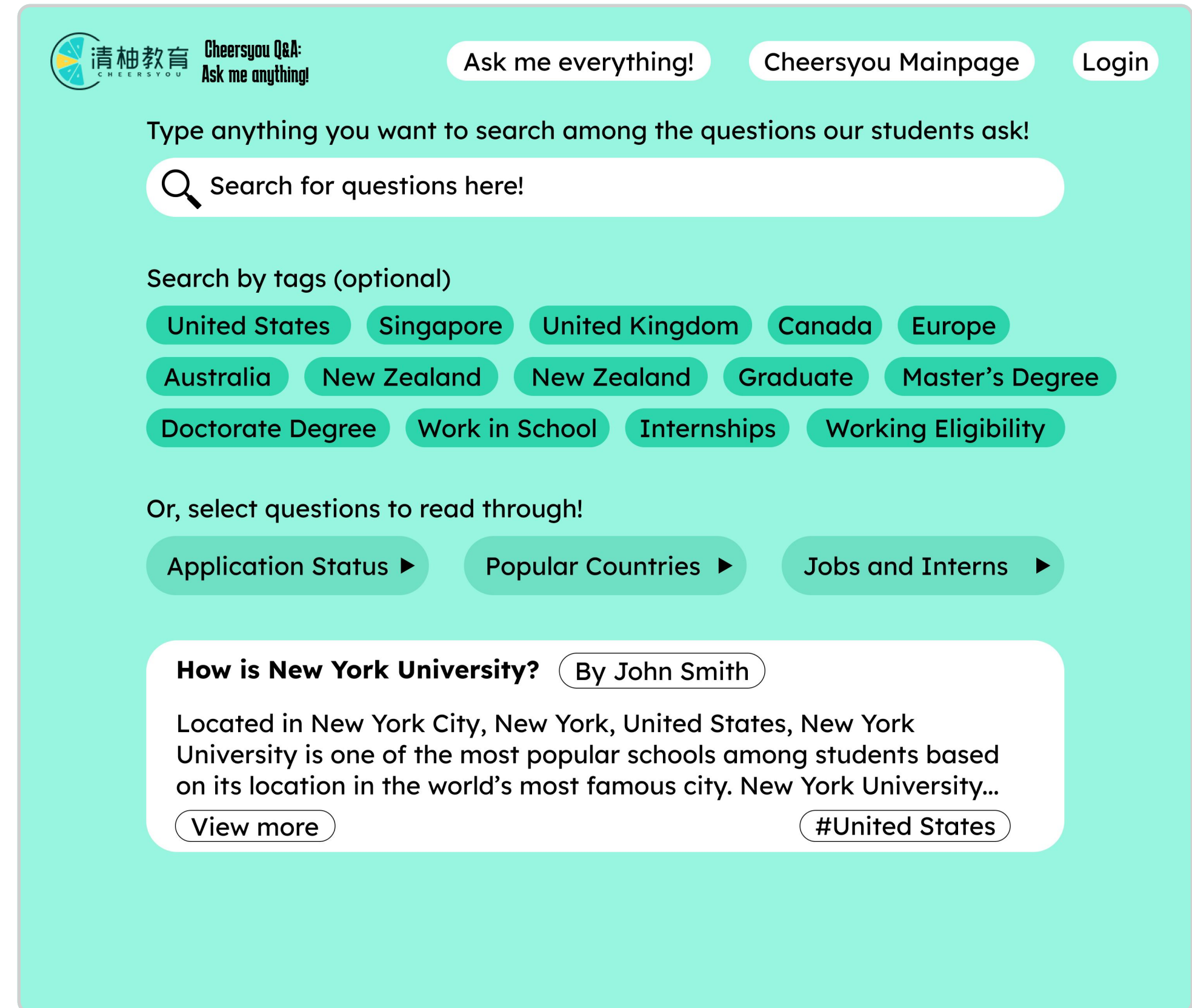
# Interface design

Here comes the final step of the project: designing the interface of the website. After showing a clear process of how I redesigned the information architecture, the wireframe, and the interactions, it is time to design the final outlook of the website.

For the interface design, I explored various styles of visual representation, focusing on elements like color, typography, and button designs while expanding my knowledge in these areas to create an engaging and cohesive user experience.

### Vivid and loud

Initially, I designed the website using vivid colors to reflect the character of the target audience, paired with bold, rounded-corner button styles. However, after gaining a deeper understanding of digital design components, interaction design, general guidelines, and accessibility standards, I realized this version had several issues. It did not align with the previously defined information architecture and wireframe structure, and the chosen colors were not suitable for effective webpage design, impacting both usability and visual harmony.



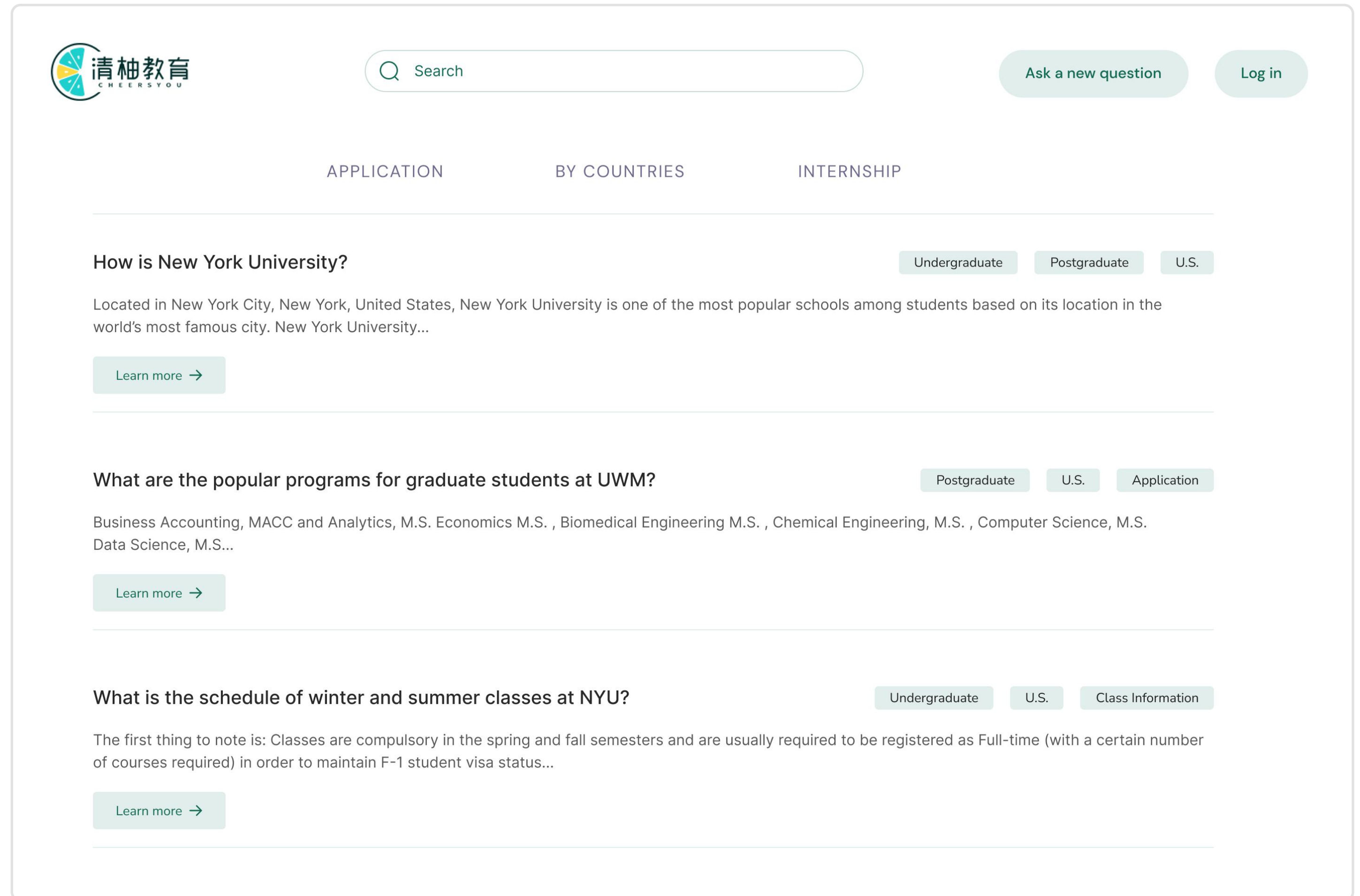
## Playful and simple

For the next iteration, I created a version with a more organized content structure and a simple layout that better aligns with web design guidelines. I also used a playful font to add character. However, after reviewing it with some friends, I received feedback that the design appeared somewhat childish and lacked a professional feel.



### Clean and casual

This version represents the final user interface design for the website. It adheres to modern web design standards with polished color choices and refined font styles. To enhance readability, I removed the background color and ensured that all key information is highlighted in a format that is clear and straightforward for users.



## Conclusions

## Learning

This is my first UI/UX design project so this time my goal is mainly familiarize with the functions of Figma, and learn the fundamental process of redesigning a website, from understanding the user needs by conducting customer and market researches, to design the interface and user experience based on the research and the refined information architecture and wireframe, as well as following the latest standards and styles of user interface design.

In the future, I will continue to use those skills, both inside my classes and for future careers, to develop deeper thinking about the UI/UX design process.

