



PGR Experience Survey 2026 Report

PGR Policy Team | Research Services Directorate

Dr Mikaila Jayaweera Bandara, PGR Policy Adviser

Contents

Executive Summary	4
Response Rates	5
Response Rates by College & School	5
Response Rates by Study Characteristics	7
Response Rates by Demographics	8
Awareness of PGR Information, Communication, & Events	11
Q1: Awareness of PGR information, communication & events	11
Confidence in Timely Completion	13
Q2: Confidence in completing research degree within agreed timescale	13
Satisfaction with Supervisory Support	15
Q3: Satisfaction with guidance and support from supervisory team	15
Research Integrity	17
Q4: Research integrity	17
Q5: Research Integrity Training	18
Q6: Experience of Research Integrity Training	21
Researcher Development	23
Q7: Researcher development	23
Q8: Development activities undertaken	25
Q9: Benefits of development activities	26
PGR Community & Belonging	27
Q10: PGR community & belonging	27
Q11: Awareness of PGR communities	30
Q12: What communities means to PGRs	31

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Experience	32
Q13: Languages spoken	32
Q14: Experiences of using English as an additional language	33
Q15: Further comments on EAL and multilingual experiences.....	34
Improvement Feedback	35
Q16: Improving the PGR experience.....	35
Student Satisfaction	38
Q17: Overall satisfaction with their research degree programme	38
Satisfaction by College & School	39
Satisfaction by Study Characteristics	40
Satisfaction by Demographics	41
Appendix	44

Executive Summary

The PGR Experience Survey 2026 was launched on 8th April 2026 and open for 8 weeks. The survey received 857 responses, an increase of 13% from 2025, offering insight into the experiences of postgraduate researchers across the University. Overall, the findings continue to show a positive PGR experience, with 84% of respondents satisfied. While this is slightly lower than the 86% reported in 2025, satisfaction remains high and is above the 83% reported in the 2025 national PRES.

Satisfaction remained high overall, although differences were evident across student groups. A notable difference was seen between PGRs registered with Disability Services and those who were not, with satisfaction levels of 69% and 86%, respectively. Feedback elsewhere in the survey also highlighted challenges relating to accessibility and the experiences of PGRs with disabilities. This suggests that the experiences of PGRs with disabilities and how effectively existing support meets their needs should continue to receive attention.

Support and inclusion emerged as the strongest area for improvement, ranking as the top improvement feedback topic overall and in each College. Comments covered a range of issues, including general and supervisory support, as well as support for different PGR circumstances. This reinforces the importance of ensuring that PGRs feel supported, included and able to access appropriate support throughout their research degree.

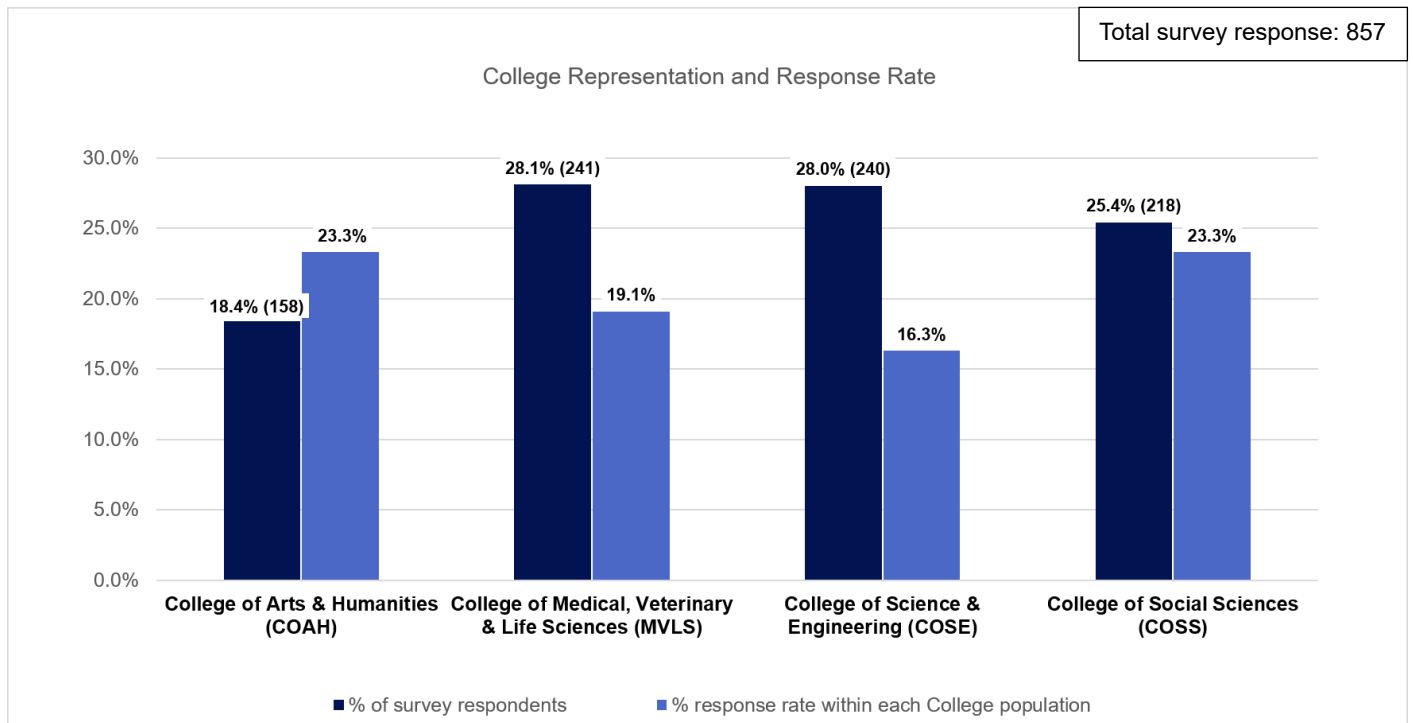
Community continues to be an important part of the PGR experience. PGR community and social interaction/events was one of the most frequently raised areas for improvement. The optional question asking what community means to students generated 257 responses (30%). The responses emphasised the importance of connection, shared experiences and feeling supported, while also noting some barriers to engaging with the wider PGR community.

The survey also provided new insight into the experiences of PGRs who use English as an Additional Language (EAL), with 53% of respondents (n = 451) indicating that they used English as an additional language. While many expressed the benefits of multilingualism, including bringing different perspectives to their research, others described challenges relating to confidence, academic writing and access to tailored support.

Overall, the findings demonstrate a positive PGR experience while identifying areas for continued attention. Support and inclusion, community and connection, communication, and access to appropriate opportunities and resources continue to feature prominently in students' feedback. The findings provide valuable evidence to inform ongoing work across the University and Colleges to strengthen the PGR experience.

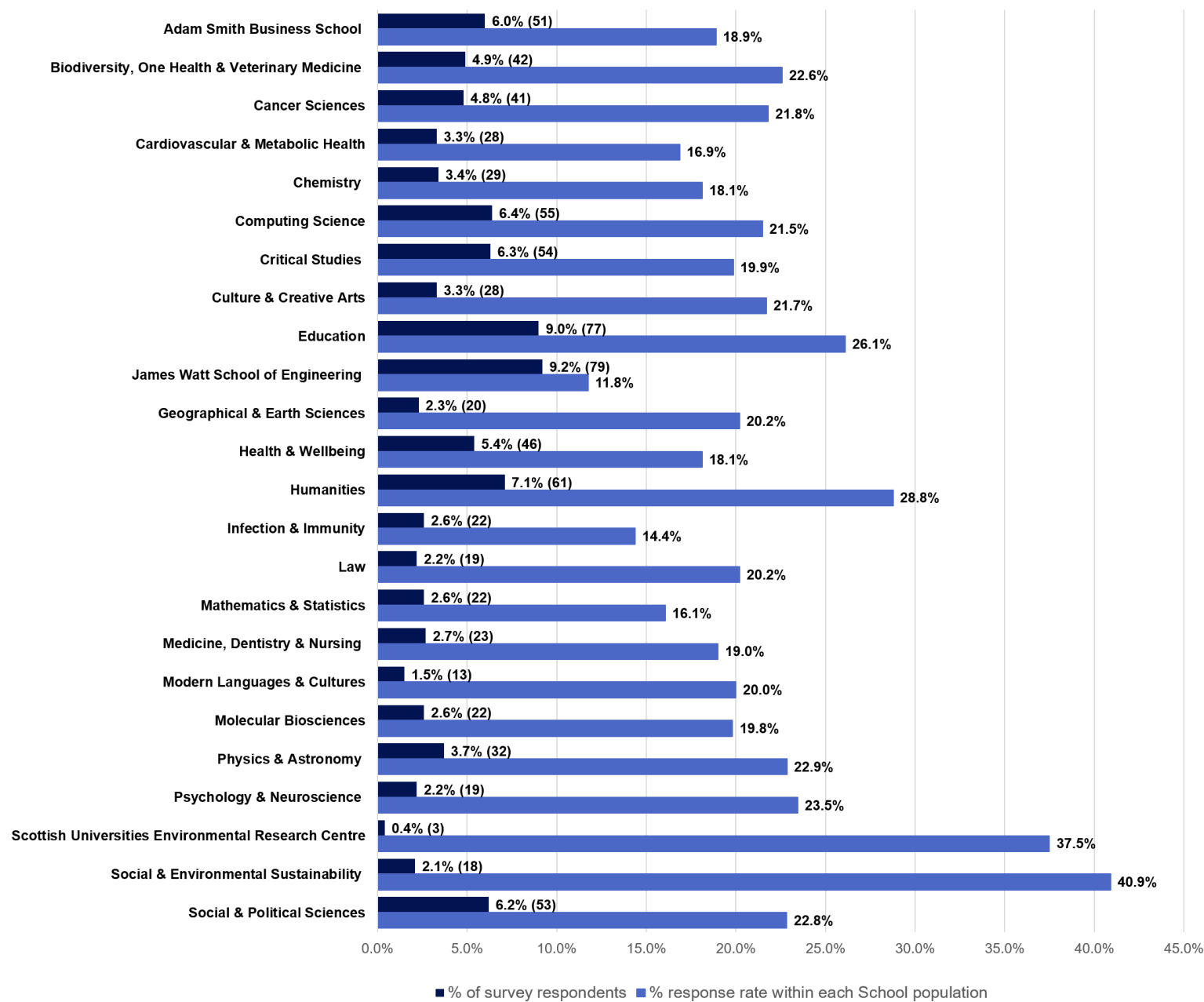
Response Rates

Response Rates by College & School



- A total of 857 PGRs completed the 2026 PGR Experience Survey, representing 19.7% of the overall PGR population (n = 4345). This is a 2.3 percentage-point increase compared with last year's PGR Experience Survey.
- MVLS and COSE accounted for the highest proportion of survey respondents (28.1% and 28.0%, respectively), while COAH had the highest response rate within its College population (23.3%).
- At School level, the largest proportions of survey respondents came from the James Watt School of Engineering (9.2%), Education (9%), Computing Science (6.4%), Critical Studies (6.3%) and Social & Political Sciences (6.2%).
- When considering response rates relative to each School's PGR population, Social & Environmental Sustainability had the highest response rate (40.9%), followed by the SUERC (37.5%), Humanities (28.8%), Education (26.1%) and Psychology & Neuroscience (23.5%).

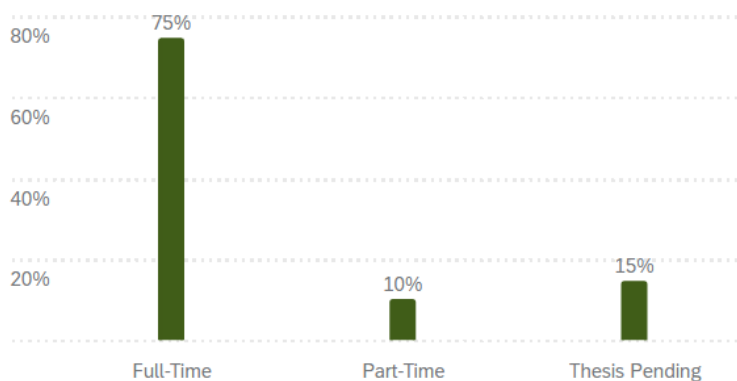
School Representation and Response Rate



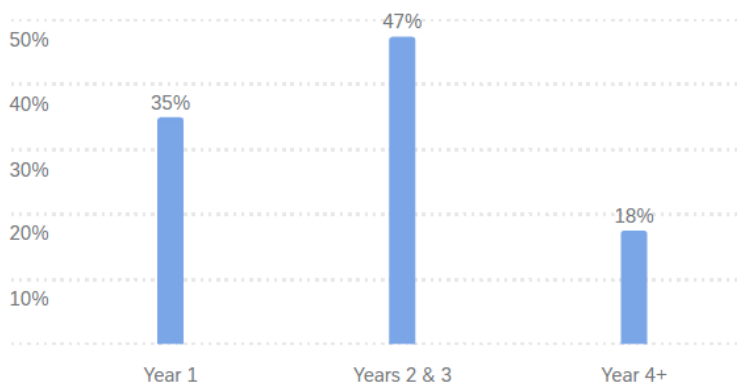
Response Rates by Study Characteristics

- The majority of respondents were studying full-time (75%), while 10% were studying part-time and 15% were thesis pending.
- To provide a clearer overview of the distribution of respondents across their stage of study, years of programme have been grouped into three categories: Year 1, Years 2–3, and Year 4+. This distinguishes students in their initial year, those in the main progression stage of their research degree (Years 2–3), and those in Year 4 or beyond, who are typically at the thesis-pending or writing-up stage.
- When grouped, 47% of respondents were in Years 2 & 3, compared with 35% in Year 1 and 18% in Year 4 and later.

Academic Load Response Rates 857



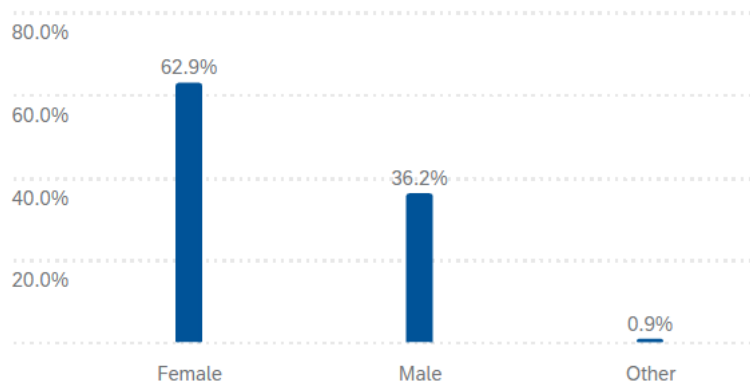
Year of Programme (Grouped) Response Rates 857



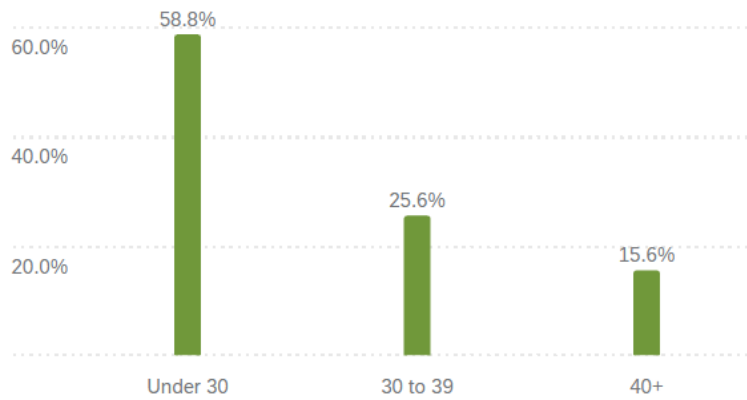
Response Rates by Demographics

- Almost two-thirds of respondents were female (62.9%) and 36.3% were male. The other category comprised of students who identified as other, unknown or intersex/unspecified collectively made up 0.9% of respondents.
- For analysis, age on entry has been grouped into three broader categories: Under 30, 30–39 and 40+. The majority of respondents were aged under 30 (58.8%), with 25.6% aged 30–39 and 15.6% aged 40 or over.
- In terms of disability registration, 14% of respondents were registered with Disability Services, while 86% were not registered.
- Respondents were relatively evenly distributed by domicile, with 52% classified as international students and 48% from the UK.
- Regarding ethnicity, 52% of respondents were White, 29% Asian, 5% Black and 12% Mixed & Other, with a further 2% recorded as Information Refused/Unknown.
- For analysis purposes, minority ethnic status has also been grouped, with 46% of respondents identified as Minority Ethnic.
- This year's survey asked students about their use of English as an Additional Language (EAL). Overall, 53% of respondents (n = 451) identified English as an Additional Language, while 47% (n = 406) did not.
- The proportion of EAL respondents varied across Colleges, ranging from 32% in COAH to 62% in COSS.

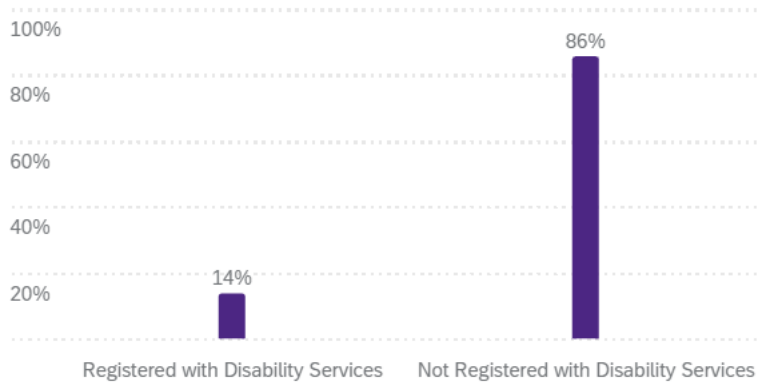
Gender Response Rates 857



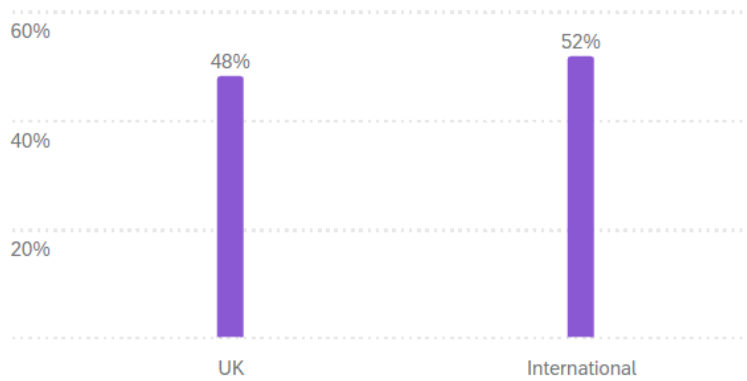
Age on Entry (Grouped) Response Rates 857



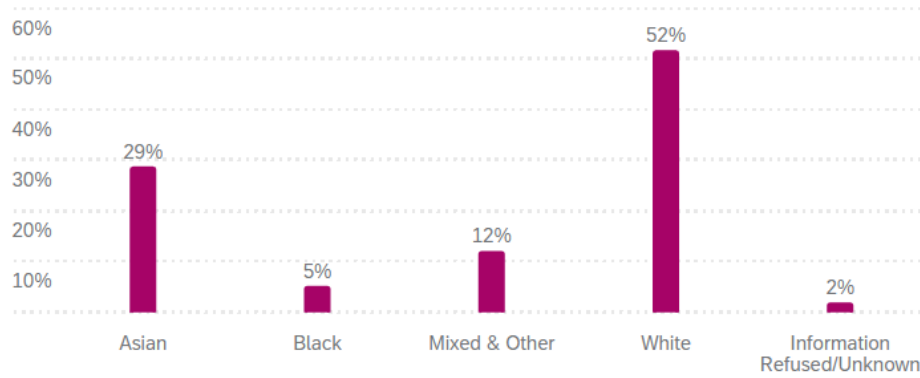
Disability Registration Response Rates 857



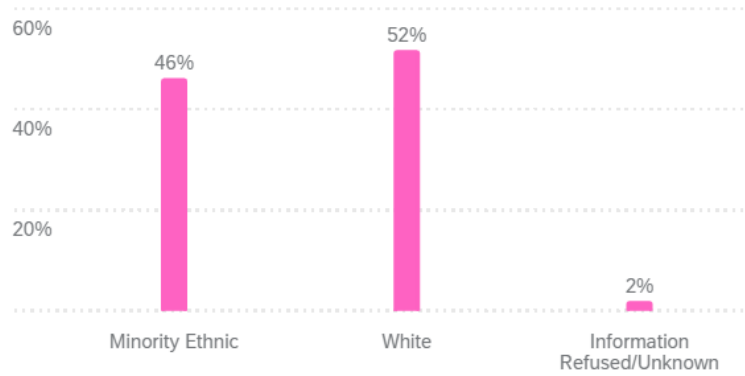
Domicile Response Rates 857



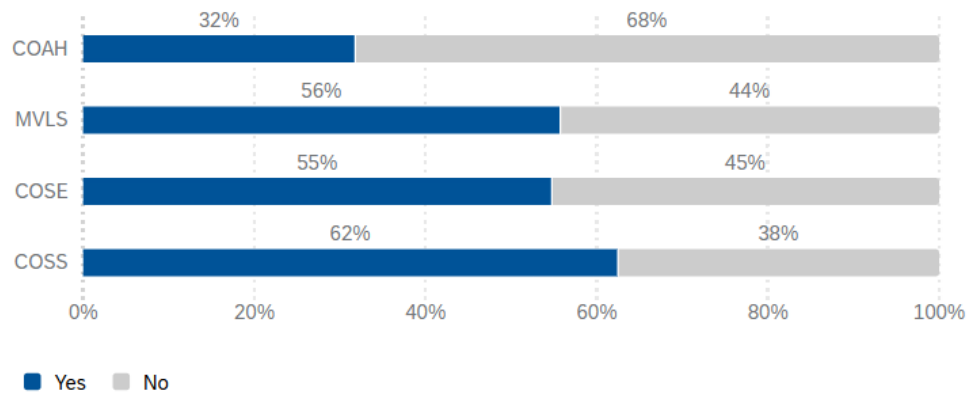
Ethnicity Response Rates 857



Minority Ethnic (Grouped) Response Rates 857



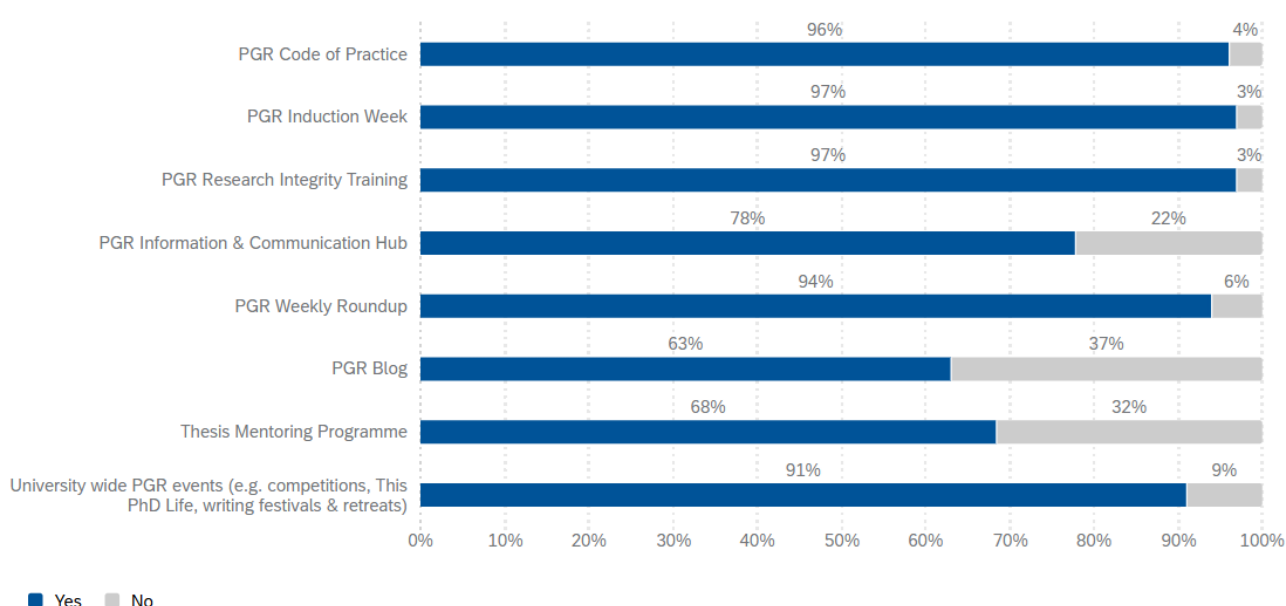
Use of English as an Additional Language (College Level) 857



Awareness of PGR Information, Communication, & Events

Q1: 'Since starting my research degree programme, I am aware of the following:'

Awareness of Comms, Info & Events (Overall) 857



- Similar to last year, overall awareness of the PGR Code of Practice (96%), PGR Induction Week (97%), and PGR Research Integrity Training (97%) was high.
- Awareness of University-wide PGR events, such as competitions, writing festivals and retreats, was also high at 91%.
- In terms of communication platforms, 94% of respondents were aware of the PGR Weekly Roundup, which is sent weekly to the PGR class mailing list, while 78% were aware of the PGR Information & Communication Hub (SharePoint site), which was launched in 2024 as a central space for updates, resources and guidance.
- Awareness was lower for the Thesis Mentoring Programme (68%) and PGR Blog, although awareness of the latter has continued to increase, from 45% in 2023 to 59% in 2025 and now 63% in 2026.

- Awareness was generally high across Colleges, particularly for PGR Induction Week, PGR Research Integrity Training and the PGR Code of Practice.
- The largest variation was seen for the PGR Blog, with awareness ranging from 53% in MVLS to 70% in both COAH and COSS. Awareness of the Thesis Mentoring Programme also varied, from 61% in COSE to 74% in COSS, while awareness of the PGR Information & Communication Hub ranged from 73% in COSE to 83% in COSS ([see Appendix Figure 1](#)).
- Across the grouped years of programme, similar patterns of awareness were observed for the PGR Code of Practice, PGR Induction Week, PGR Research Integrity Training and the PGR Information & Communication Hub.
- Greater variation was evident for the Thesis Mentoring Programme, where awareness increased from 57% for Year 1 respondents to 80% among those in Year 4+. This may reflect the increasing relevance of thesis-related support as students' progress towards the later stages of their research degree ([see Appendix Figure 2](#)).
- Awareness of the PGR Blog also increased with stage of study, from 61% among Year 1 respondents to 71% for those in Year 4+ ([see Appendix Figure 2](#)).

Confidence in Timely Completion

Q2: *'I am confident that I will be able to complete my research degree programme within the agreed timescale, including any additional time for agreed periods of extension or suspension.'*

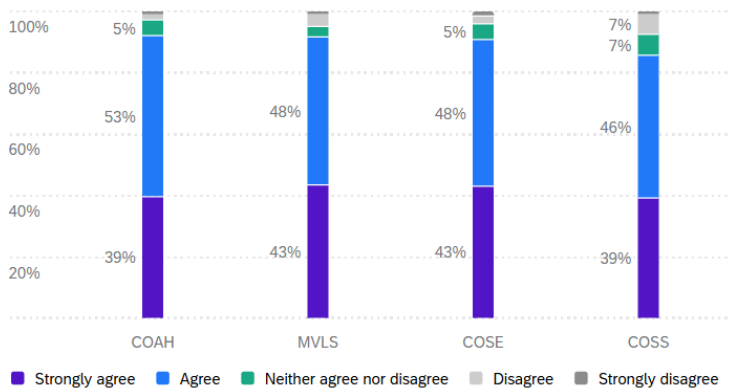
Timely Completion (Overall) 857



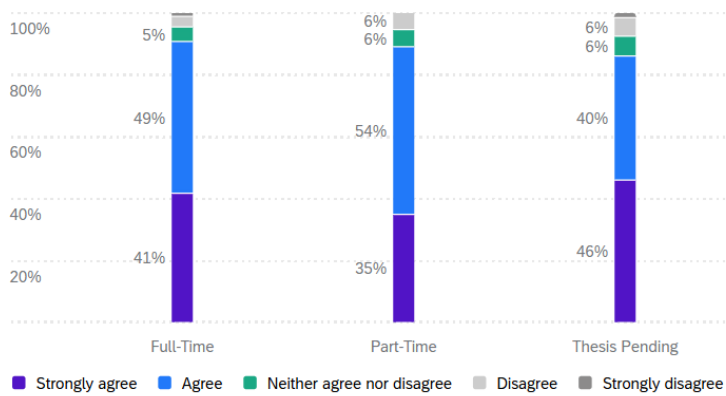
Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

- Overall, confidence in timely completion of the research degree was unchanged from last year, with 89% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.
- Confidence was also high across Colleges, ranging from 85% in COSS to 92% in COAH. MVLS and COSE were both at 91%.
- Regarding academic load, agreement with the statement was highest for full-time students (90%), although levels were very similar for part-time students (89%) and slightly lower for thesis-pending students (86%).
- At School level, there was greater variation in confidence, although most Schools recorded high levels of agreement. Psychology & Neuroscience had the lowest level of agreement at 79% ([see Appendix Figure 3](#)).
- Confidence remained high across the grouped years of programme, with 93% of Year 1 respondents, 89% of Years 2–3 respondents and 84% of Year 4+ respondents in agreement. Confidence was therefore highest for Year 1 PGRs and declined slightly with each subsequent stage of the research degree.
- When considering demographic characteristics, results were generally similar ([see Appendix Figure 4](#)). However, a notable difference was evident by disability registration. Among respondents registered with Disability Services, 76% felt that they were confident of completing within the agreed timescale, compared with 92% of those not registered.
- Furthermore, confidence in timely completion was fairly even between female (91%) and male students (89%). Although agreement levels were lower for those who identified as other (76%), it must be noted only 8 respondents identified in this category ([see Appendix Figure 4](#)).

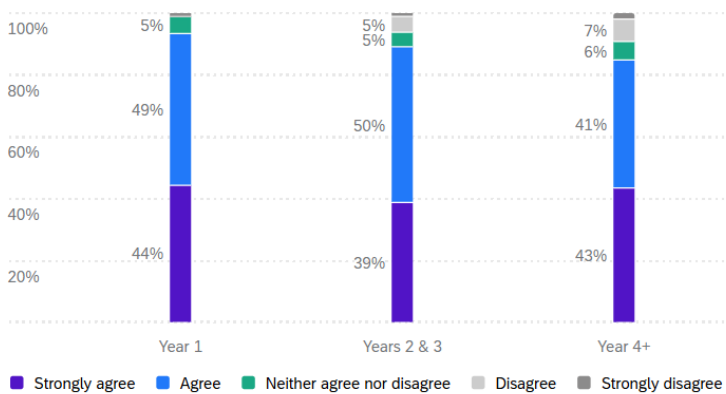
Timely Completion (College Level) 857



Timely Completion (Academic Load) 857



Timely Completion (Grouped Year of Programme) 857



Satisfaction with Supervisory Support

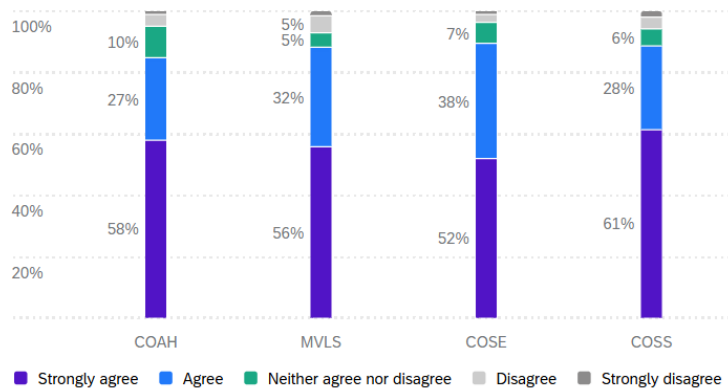
Q3: *'I am satisfied with the guidance and support provided by my supervisory team to help me complete my research on time.'*

Satisfaction of Supervisory Support (Overall) 857

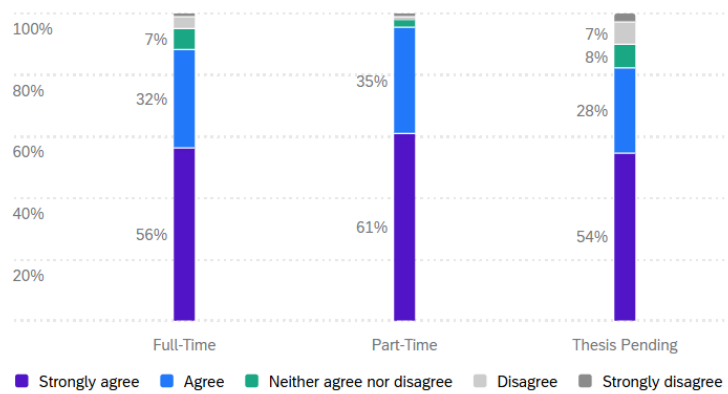


- While confidence in timely completion provides an indication of students' assurance in completing their research degree within the agreed timescale, the survey also explored the extent to which students were satisfied with the supervisory support provided to help them achieve this.
- Overall satisfaction with the guidance and support provided by supervisory teams to help PGRs complete their research on time remained high at 88%, which is marginally higher than last year at 87%.
- At College level, COSE had the highest satisfaction rate of 90%, and COSS & MVLS closely followed with 89% and 88%, respectively. COAH had the lowest satisfaction rate of 85%.
- Satisfaction with supervisory support was generally high across Schools, with agreement exceeding 80% in most Schools, although some variation was evident, ranging from 67% in SUERC to 96% in Mathematics & Statistics. Several Schools recorded 0% dissatisfaction (i.e. no respondents selected "disagree" or "strongly disagree"), although no School achieved 100% agreement ([see Appendix Figure 5](#)).
- Satisfaction was highest for part-time PGRs, with 96% in agreement, compared with 88% of full-time and 82% of thesis-pending respondents.
- Satisfaction was highest for Year 1 respondents (93%), compared with Years 2–3 (87%), and was lower for Year 4+ respondents at 80%.
- When considering demographic characteristics ([see Appendix Figure 6](#)), satisfaction was generally similar across groups, with the largest difference observed again by disability registration. Satisfaction was 71% for respondents registered with Disability Services, compared with 90% for those not registered.

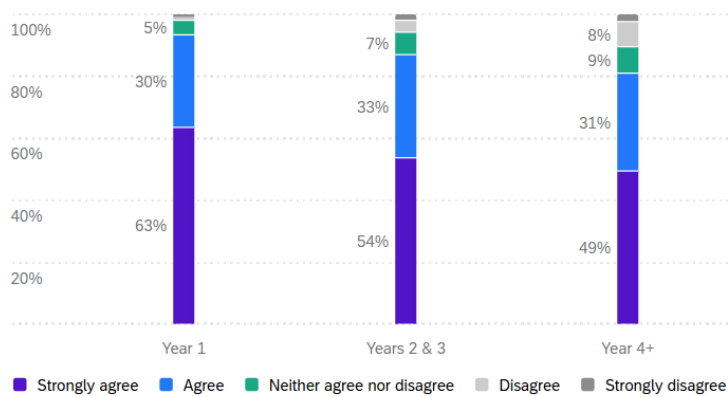
Satisfaction of Supervisory Support (College Level) 857



Satisfaction of Supervisory Support (Academic Load) 857



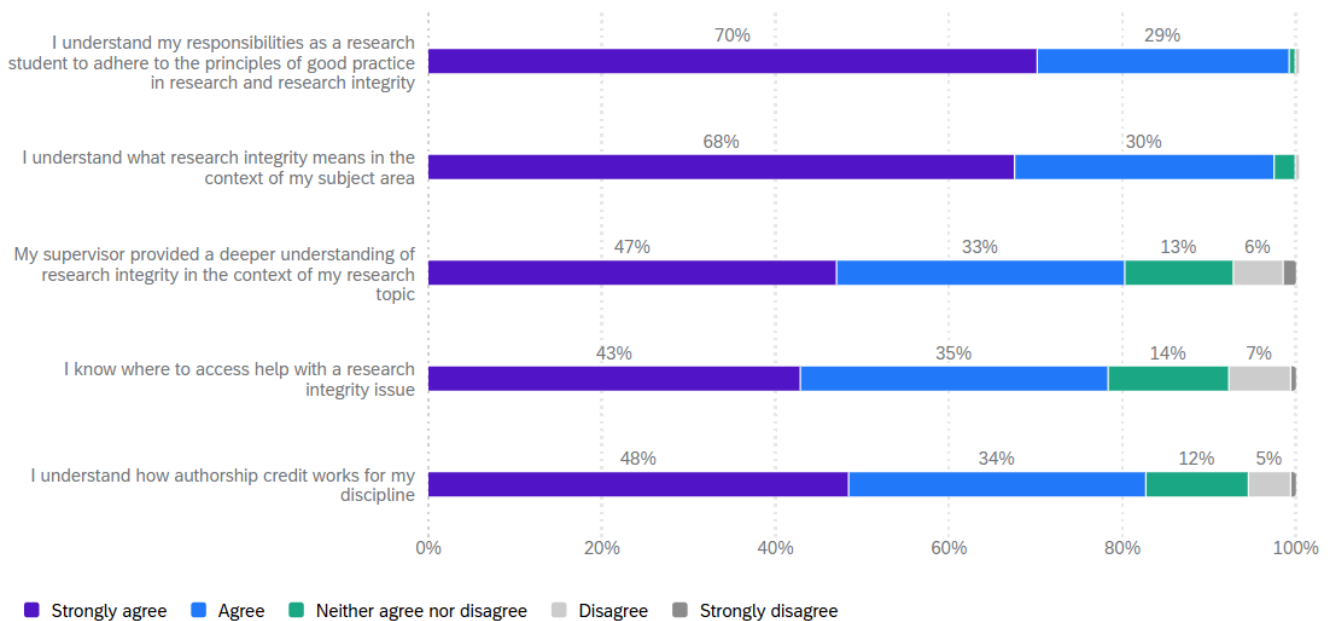
Satisfaction of Supervisory Support (Grouped Year of Programme) 857



Research Integrity

Q4: 'Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding researcher integrity:'

Research Integrity (Overall) 857

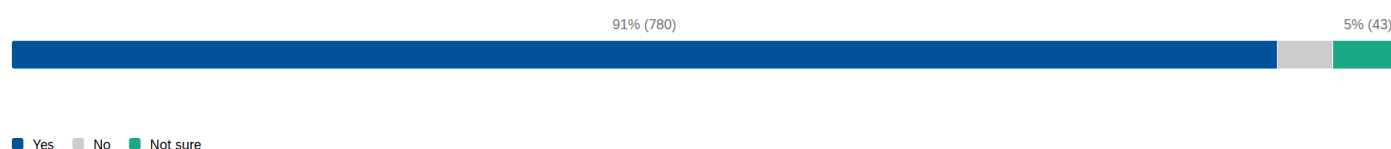


- Understanding of responsibilities was exceptionally high overall, with 99% of respondents indicating that they understood their responsibilities as a research student to adhere to the principles of good practice in research and research integrity. This was also mirrored across Colleges, ranging from 98% in COSS to 100% in COAH and COSE (see [Appendix Figure 7](#)).
- Similarly, 98% of respondents agreed that they understood what research integrity means in the context of their subject area. Awareness was consistently high across Colleges, ranging from 96% in COSS to 98% in COAH and MVLS (see [Appendix Figure 7](#)).
- In relation to supervisory support, 80% of respondents were in agreement that their supervisor had provided a deeper understanding of research integrity in the context of their research topic. At College level, this ranged from 79% in COAH and COSE to 82% in MVLS and COSS (see [Appendix Figure 7](#)).

- Overall, 78% of respondents indicated that they knew where to access help with a research integrity issue. COSS recorded the highest level of awareness (83%), followed by COAH (78%), MVLS (77%) and COSE (74%) ([see Appendix Figure 7](#)).
- 82% of respondents agreed that they understood how authorship credit works for their discipline. At College level, this was highest in COAH (87%), while understanding was lower in MVLS (79%) ([see Appendix Figure 7](#)).

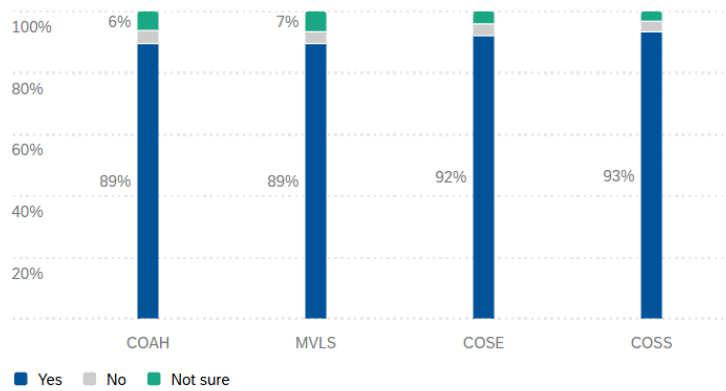
Q5: 'Have you completed the University's mandatory Research Integrity Training?'

Completion of Research Integrity Training (Overall) 857

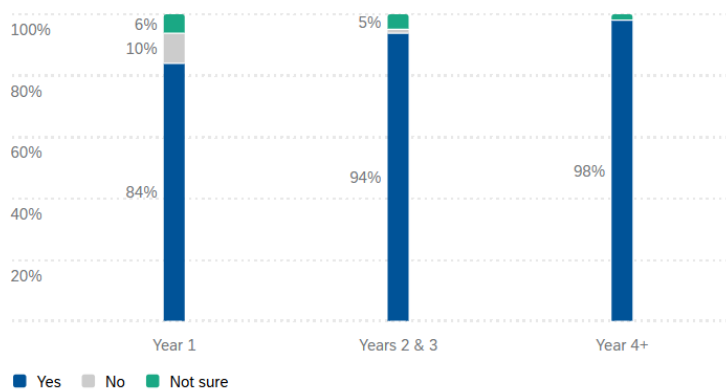


- This year, students were asked whether they had completed the University's Research Integrity Training, providing an indication of the extent to which PGRs had undertaken this mandatory training.
- Overall, 91% (n = 780) of respondents indicated that they had completed their Research Integrity Training, while 5% (n = 43) were unsure and a small proportion indicated that they had not completed the training (4%, n = 34).
- Completion was consistently high across Colleges, with 89%, 89%, 92% and 93% completion rates for COAH, MVLS, COSE and COSS, respectively.
- At School level, completion was generally high, although some variation was evident. Most Schools recorded completion rates of 89% or above, while the lowest rates were reported in Psychology & Neuroscience (58%) and Modern Languages & Cultures (69%).
- Completion increased with stage of study, from 84% for Year 1 respondents to 94% for Years 2–3 and 98% for Year 4+ respondents, suggesting that students are increasingly likely to have completed the training as they progress through their research degree.

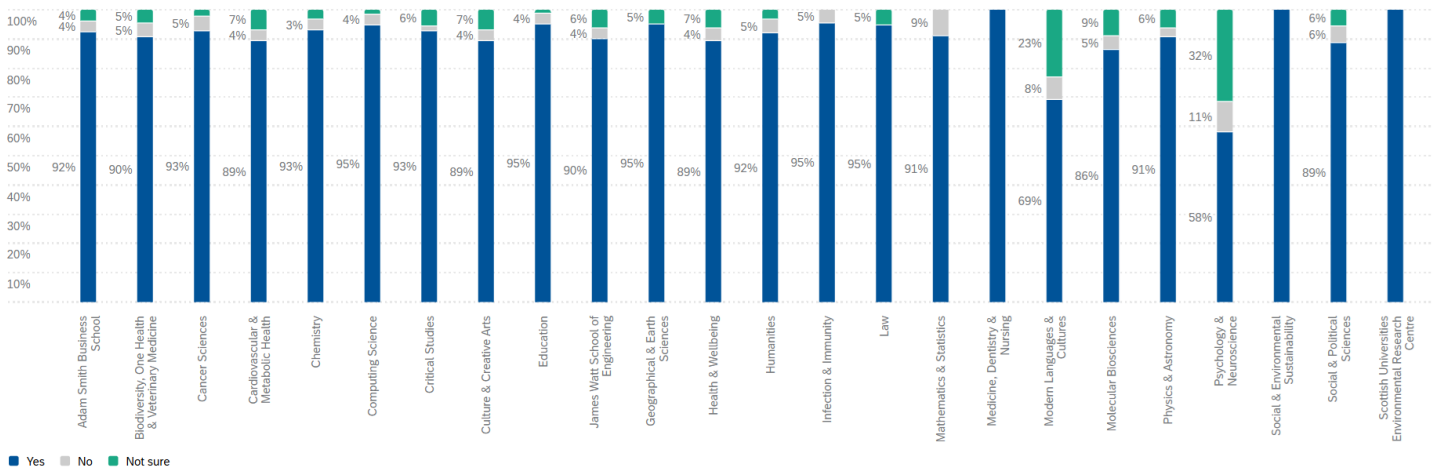
Completion of Research Integrity Training (College Level) 857



Completion of Research Integrity Training (Grouped Year of Programme)

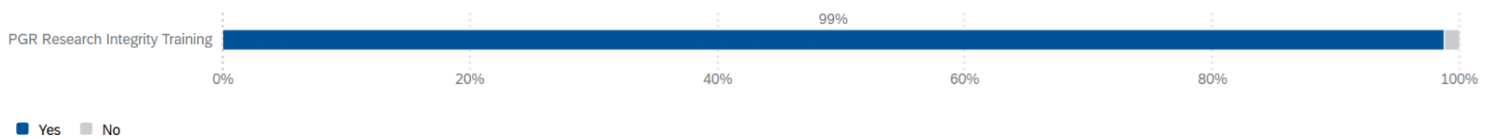


Completion of Research Integrity Training (School Level) 857

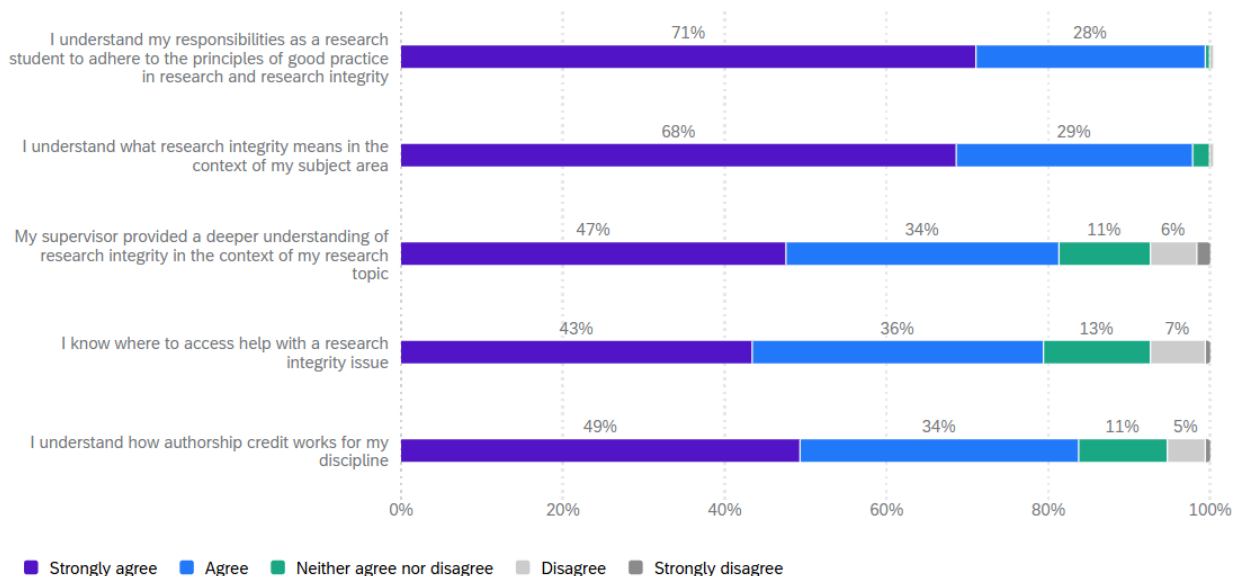


- To further explore the responses of students who reported completing the Research Integrity Training, their responses were cross-referenced with their awareness of the training (Q1) and their understanding of key aspects of research integrity (Q4).
- Of the 780 respondents who reported completing the Research Integrity Training, 99% also indicated that they were aware of the training. There was a small discrepancy, however, with 1% (n = 10) reporting that they had not been aware of the training despite agreeing that they had completed it.
- Understanding of research integrity was also very high among those who had completed the training. 99% indicated that they understood their responsibilities as a research student to adhere to the principles of good practice in research and research integrity, while 97% indicated that they understood what research integrity means in the context of their subject area.

Awareness of Comms, Info & Events (Training Completed) 780



Research Integrity (Training Completed) 780



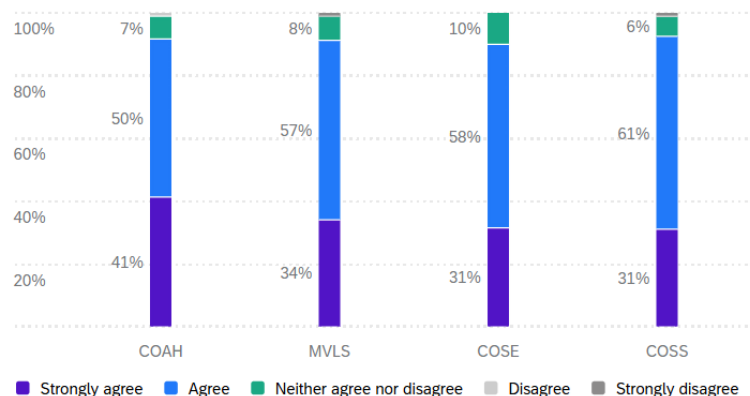
Q6: *'The University's Research Integrity Training provided me with a good general introduction to research integrity topics.'*

Research Integrity Training Effectiveness (Overall) 780

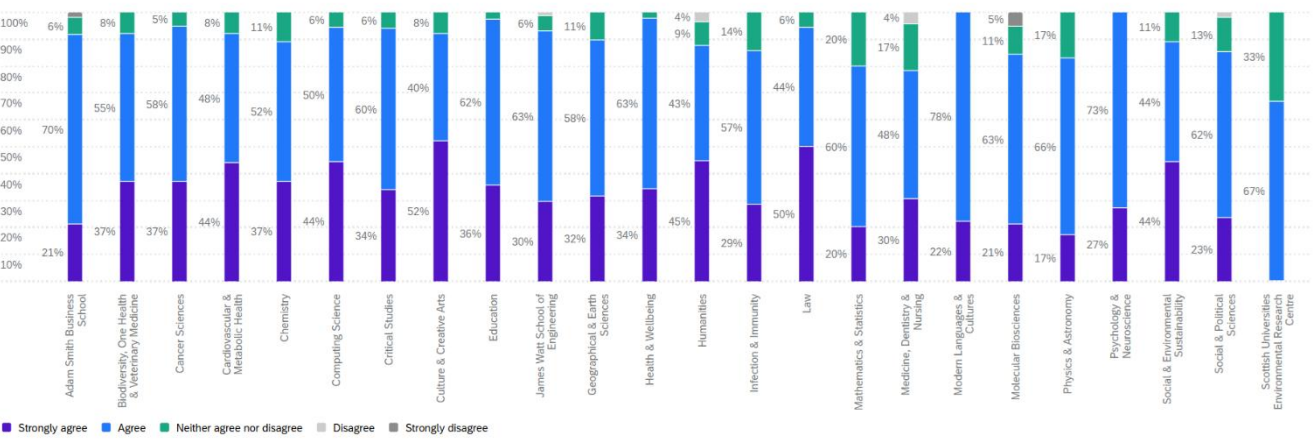


- Students who reported completing the Research Integrity Training were also asked to assess its effectiveness as an introduction to research integrity.
- Overall, 91% of respondents agreed that the University's Research Integrity Training provided them with a good general introduction to research integrity topics.
- At College level, agreement was highest in COSS (92%), followed by MVLS (91%), COAH (91%) and COSE (89%).
- There was greater variation at School level, although agreement was generally high. The highest levels were recorded in Psychology & Neuroscience (100%) and Modern Languages & Cultures (100%), while the lowest agreement was in SUERC (67%).

Research Integrity Training Effectiveness (College Level) 780



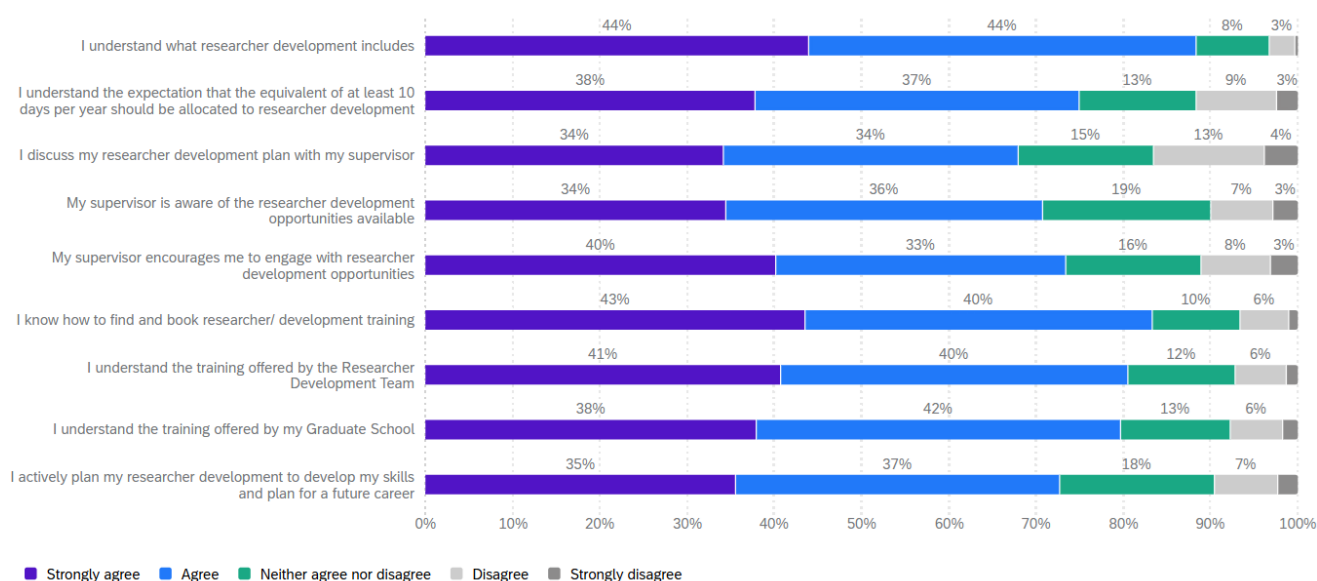
Research Integrity Training Effectiveness (School Level) 780



Researcher Development

Q7: 'Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding researcher development.'

Researcher Development (Overall) 857

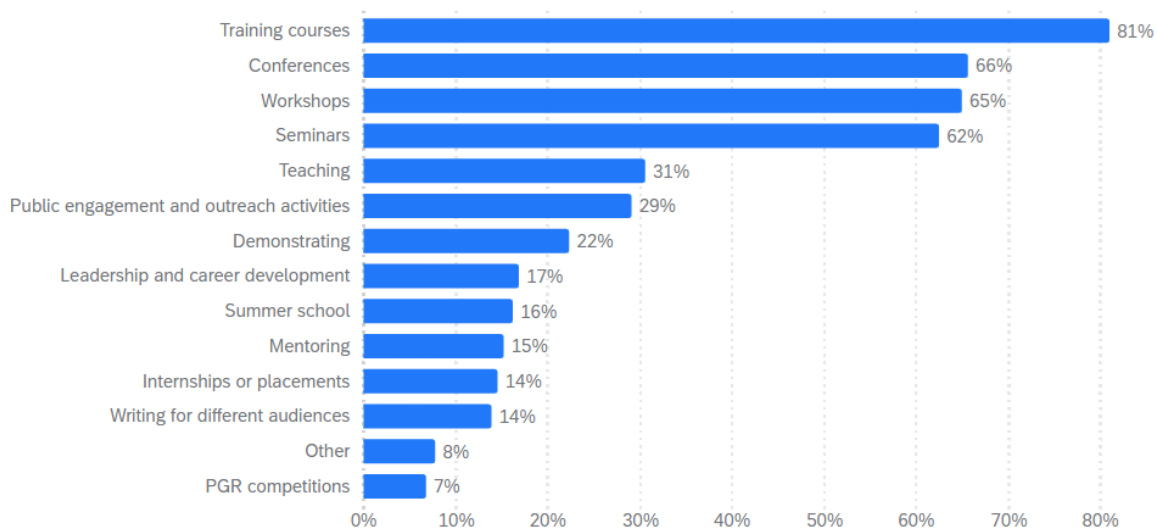


- Overall, 88% of respondents indicated that they understood what researcher development includes.
- 75% understood the expectation that the equivalent of at least 10 days per year should be allocated to researcher development, which is encouragingly higher than last year (68%).
- Regarding supervisors and researcher development, 68% agreed that they discussed their researcher development plan with their supervisor, down from 75% in 2025. In addition, 70% agreed that their supervisor was aware of the researcher development opportunities available, and 73% indicated that their supervisor encouraged them to engage with these opportunities. The latter also represents a decrease from 77% in 2025.
- 83% knew how to find and book researcher development training.
- 81% agreed that they understood the training offered by the Researcher Development Team and 80% agreed that they understood the training offered by their Graduate School.
- 72% actively planned their researcher development to develop their skills and plan for a future career.

- At College level, results were broadly similar across most areas, particularly in understanding what researcher development includes (87–89%) and knowing how to find and book researcher development training (81–84%). Greater variation was evident in understanding the expectation of at least 10 days of researcher development per year, ranging from 68% in COAH to 85% in COSE, and in discussing a researcher development plan with a supervisor, ranging from 63% in COSE to 74% in MVLS ([see Appendix Figure 8](#)).
- Awareness and understanding of researcher development remained high across years of programme, with 86% of Year 1, 90% of Years 2–3 and 87% of Year 4+ respondents indicating that they understood what researcher development includes ([see Appendix Figure 9](#)).
- Understanding of the expectation to undertake at least 10 days of researcher development was somewhat lower for Year 4+ respondents (68%), compared with 76% of Year 1 and 77% of Years 2–3 respondents ([see Appendix Figure 9](#)).
- Greater variation was evident in supervisor engagement. The proportion agreeing that their supervisor was aware of researcher development opportunities fell from 79% for Year 1 respondents and 71% for Years 2–3 to 54% for Year 4+ respondents ([see Appendix Figure 9](#)).
- Similarly, 62% of Year 4+ respondents indicated that their supervisor encouraged them to engage with researcher development opportunities, compared with 79% of Year 1 and 73% of Years 2–3 respondents ([see Appendix Figure 9](#)). This may, in part, reflect the different needs and priorities of students approaching the end of their research degree, when engagement with researcher development opportunities may be less prominent.
- There were some notable differences between UK and international respondents, particularly in relation to supervisor engagement and active planning of researcher development. International respondents reported higher levels of agreement that they discussed their researcher development plan with their supervisor (80%, compared with 56% of UK respondents), that their supervisor was aware of available researcher development opportunities (79% vs. 60%), and that their supervisor encouraged them to engage with these opportunities (82% vs. 65%) ([see Appendix Figure 10](#)).
- International respondents were also more likely to actively plan their researcher development to develop their skills and plan for a future career (82% vs. 62%) ([see Appendix Figure 10](#)).
- Similar patterns were also observed by ethnicity (Minority Ethnic vs White) and EAL status, with international, minority ethnic and EAL respondents generally reporting higher levels of agreement with researcher development statements than their respective comparison groups (data not shown).

Q8: ‘You have 10 days (70 hours) per year (FTE) to spend on your development as a researcher. What kinds of development activities have you engaged with as a PGR? Select all that apply:’

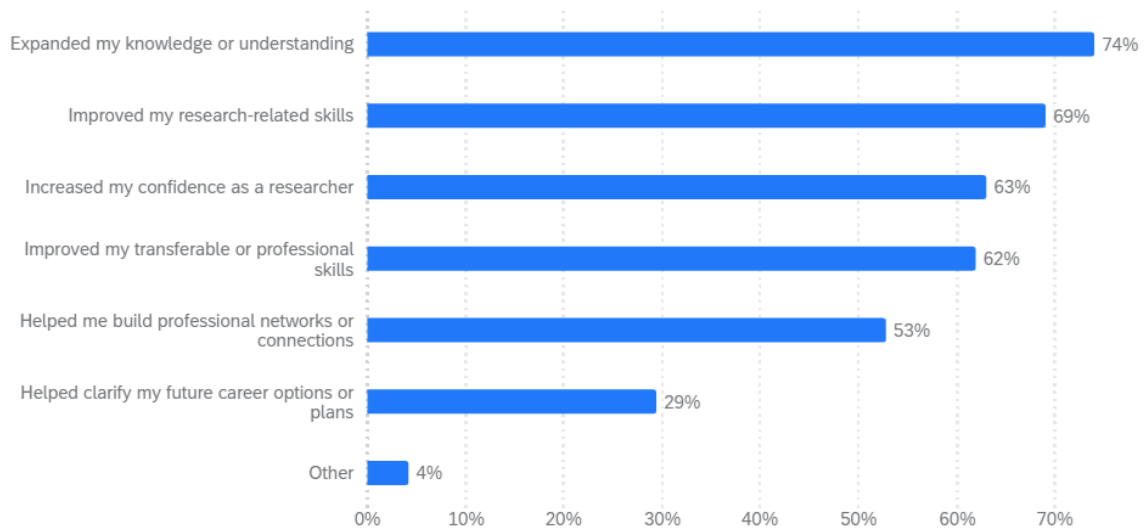
Type of Development Activities 857



- Training courses were the most common type of researcher development activity, with 81% of respondents demonstrating that they had engaged with these.
- Conferences (66%), workshops (65%) and seminars (62%) were also widely reported.
- Other activities were less commonly undertaken, including teaching (31%), public engagement and outreach (29%) and demonstrating (22%).
- Leadership and career development was reported by 17% of respondents, while mentoring (15%), internships or placements (14%) and writing for different audiences (14%) were also less frequently pursued.
- If students selected ‘Other’, they had the option to provide a free-text response. Analysis of 33 comments highlighted a range of additional researcher development activities, research carried out through employment, secondments, publishing, community engagement, PGR representation, and organising seminars and events. Some respondents also described engaging in development activities through their workplace or external organisations, particularly where they were working part-time.
- Others indicated that they had not participated in any additional activities, responding ‘None’, ‘N/A’ or similar. A small number of responses mentioned barriers to engagement, including limited time for part-time students and, in one case, a supervisor discouraging attendance at development courses due to the time commitment.

Q9: 'How have the development activities that you have engaged with benefited your research and future career planning? Select all that apply:'

Benefits of Development Activities 857

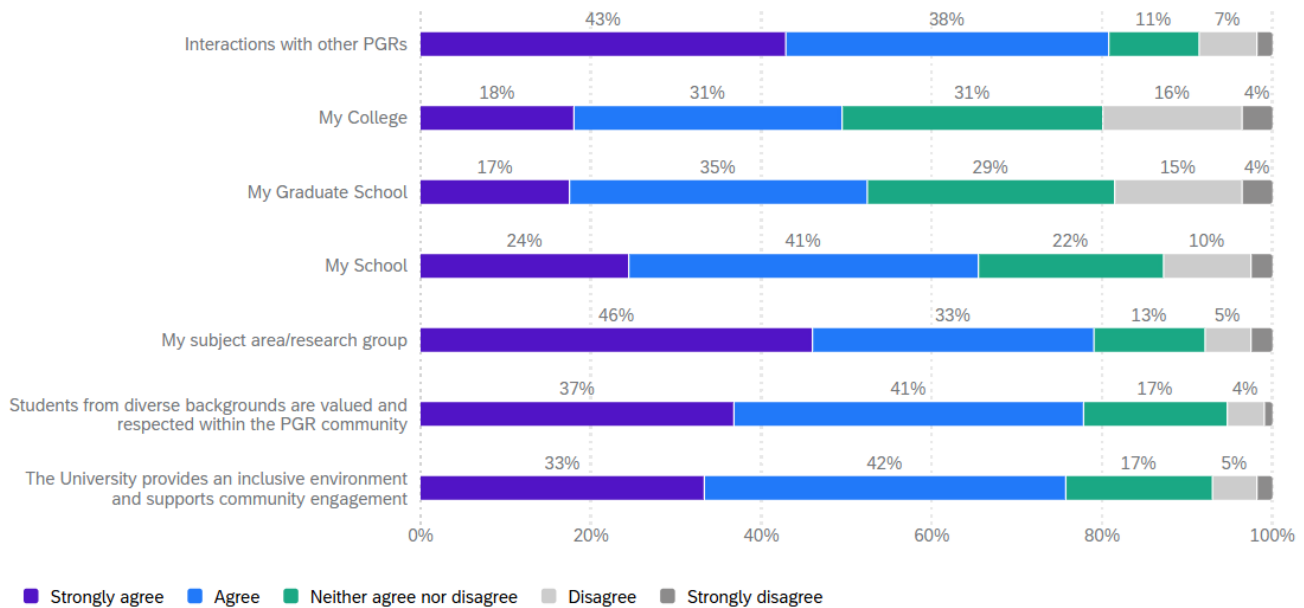


- Development activities were most commonly reported as benefiting students' knowledge and understanding (74%) and research-related skills (69%). They also contributed to increased confidence as a researcher (63%) and improved transferable or professional skills (62%). Over half of respondents (53%) indicated that development activities had helped them build professional networks or connections. However, fewer students reported that these activities had helped clarify their future career options or plans (29%).
- A small number of respondents selected 'Other' and provided additional comments. Several indicated that the activities had provided limited or no additional benefit, with some describing training as too introductory or surface-level.
- Others voiced more specific benefits, including improved approaches to research, writing skills and clinical skills. A small number noted that University-based development activities were less relevant to their existing or highly specialised careers.

PGR Community & Belonging

Q10: 'Using the scale provided which of the following contribute to your sense of PGR community & belonging to the University?'

PGR Community & Belonging (Overall) 857



- Respondents were asked which aspects of their PGR experience contributed to their sense of community and belonging at the University. Encouragingly, interactions with other PGRs increased from 76% last year to 81% this year. Furthermore, 79% of respondents indicated that their subject area/research group contributed to their sense of belonging.
- A further 78% felt that students from diverse backgrounds are valued and respected within the PGR community, an increase from 75% in 2025. In addition, 75% indicated that the University provides an inclusive environment and supports community engagement.
- Affiliation with their School (65%), Graduate School (52%) and College (49%) were less commonly acknowledged as contributing to their sense of belonging. School-level agreement remained broadly consistent with last year (66%), while agreement relating to their Graduate School increased from 46% to 52% and their College from 46% to 49%.
- At College level, interactions with other PGRs were particularly prominent in COSE (88%), compared with 82% in MVLS, 77% in COSS and 73% in COAH ([see Appendix Figure 11](#)).

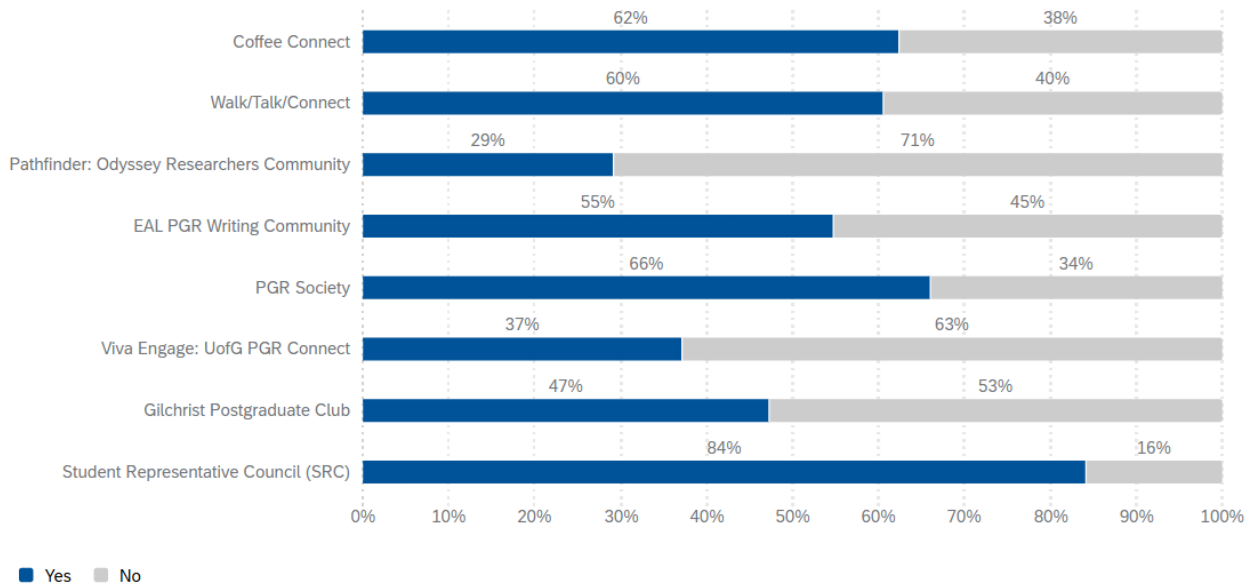
- A stronger sense of belonging through connections with their subject area/research group was reported in COSE (88%) and MVLS (83%), followed by COSS (73%) and COAH (68%) ([see Appendix Figure 11](#)).
- The proportion indicating that the University provides an inclusive environment and supports community engagement ranged from 70% in COAH to 79% in COSE, with MVLS and COSS at 78% and 73%, respectively.
- At College level, the results for their School, Graduate School and College were broadly similar to the overall findings, with these being less commonly identified as contributors to students' sense of community and belonging ([see Appendix Figure 11](#)).
- When considering whether academic load affects PGRs' sense of community and belonging, the most notable difference was in interactions with other PGRs, which was reported by 85% of full-time respondents, compared with 63% of part-time and 74% of thesis pending respondents ([see Appendix Figure 12](#)).
- Agreement that their subject area/research group contributed to their sense of belonging was highest for full-time PGRs (82%), compared with 73% of part-time and 70% of thesis-pending PGRs. Similarly, 79% of full-time PGRs felt that students from diverse backgrounds were valued and respected, compared with 73% of both part-time and thesis pending PGRs ([see Appendix Figure 12](#)).
- Concerning students registered with Disability Services compared with those not registered, students who were registered were less likely to agree their subject area/research group was contributing to their sense of belonging (64%, compared with 81%), that students from diverse backgrounds are valued and respected within the PGR community (68% vs. 79%), and that the University provides an inclusive environment and supports community engagement (63% vs. 78%) ([see Appendix Figure 13](#)).
- Furthermore, students registered with Disability Services were less likely to agree that connections with the University's structures contributed to their sense of belonging, particularly their Graduate School (37% vs. 55%), School (49% vs. 68%) and College (37% vs. 51%) ([see Appendix Figure 13](#)).
- There were some differences between UK and international respondents, with higher levels of agreement among international respondents that their College (60% vs. 37%), Graduate School (62% vs. 42%) and School (74% vs. 56%) contributed to their sense of belonging ([see Appendix Figure 14](#)).
- International respondents also reported higher agreement that interactions with other PGRs contributed to their sense of belonging (84% vs. 78%), and that students from diverse backgrounds are valued and respected (80% vs. 75%) and the University provides an inclusive environment and supports community engagement (80% vs. 71%) ([see Appendix Figure 14](#)).
- Similar patterns were also observed when considering ethnicity (Minority Ethnic vs White) and EAL status (EAL vs non-EAL), with minority ethnic and EAL

respondents generally reporting stronger connections with the University's structures and more positive perceptions of inclusion (data not shown).

- Regarding student's age, respondents aged under 30 generally reported stronger sources of community and belonging than older respondents. The clearest differences were for interactions with other PGRs (84% of Under 30 respondents, compared with 81% of those aged 30–39 and 67% of those aged 40+) and their subject area/research group (85%, 75% and 66%, respectively) ([see Appendix Figure 15](#)).
- Younger respondents were also more positive about the wider PGR community, with 83% of under 30 respondents agreeing that students from diverse backgrounds are valued and respected, compared with 71% of both 30–39 and 40+ respondents ([see Appendix Figure 15](#)).
- A similar pattern was seen for the University providing an inclusive environment and supporting community engagement, with 80% of under 30 respondents agreeing, compared with 68% of those aged 30–39 and 72% of those aged 40+ ([see Appendix Figure 15](#)).
- There was a clear pattern by year of programme, with Year 1 respondents generally reporting stronger sources of community and belonging than those in later years. This was particularly evident for interactions with other PGRs (84% of Year 1, 81% of Years 2–3 and 74% of Year 4+ respondents) and their subject area/research group (82%, 79% and 70%, respectively) ([see Appendix Figure 16](#)).
- The difference was also evident in perceptions of the wider PGR community and University environment, with 84% of Year 1 respondents agreeing that students from diverse backgrounds are valued and respected, compared with 77% of Years 2–3 and 69% of Year 4+ respondents ([see Appendix Figure 16](#)).
- The largest difference was for the University providing an inclusive environment and supporting community engagement, where agreement fell from 87% for Year 1 respondents to 71% for Years 2–3 and 64% for Year 4+ respondents ([see Appendix Figure 16](#)).

Q11: 'For each of the following PGR communities, please indicate whether you are aware of them:'

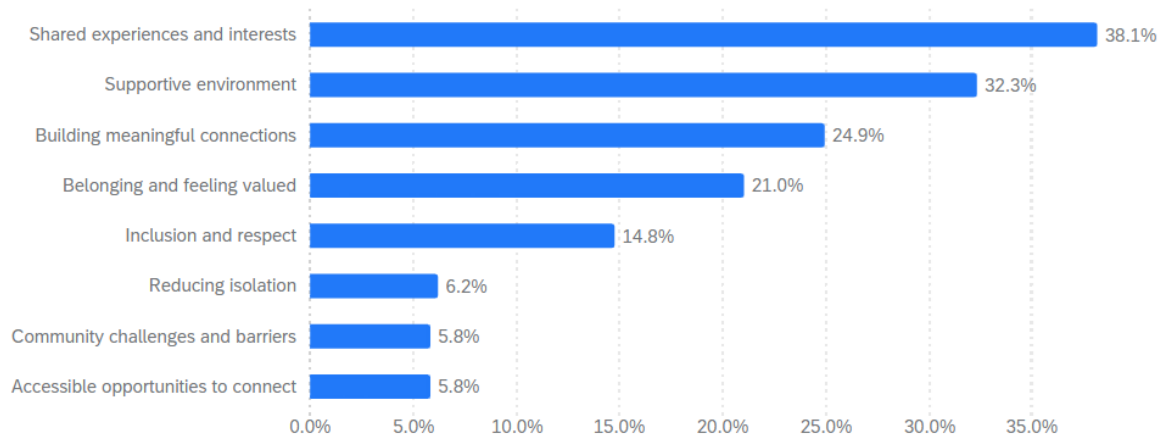
Awareness of PGR Communities (Overall) 857



- This year, respondents were asked about their awareness of a range of PGR communities and opportunities, primarily supported by the Research Culture and Research Development Team or the Student Representative Council (SRC).
- Overall, awareness was highest for the Student Representative Council (SRC), with 84% of respondents indicating that they were aware of it. Awareness was also relatively high for the PGR Society (66%), Coffee Connect (62%) and Walk/Talk/Connect (60%).
- Awareness was lower for the EAL PGR Writing Community (55%), Gilchrist Postgraduate Club (47%), UofG PGR Connect on Viva Engage (37%) and Pathfinder: Odyssey Researchers Community (29%).
- Awareness varied across Colleges and between the different PGR communities. COSE recorded the highest awareness for several communities, including Coffee Connect (65%), PGR Society (73%), EAL PGR Writing Community (61%) and the Pathfinder: Odyssey Researchers Community (32%). COSS had the highest awareness of Walk/Talk/Connect (68%) ([see Appendix Figure 17](#)).
- In contrast, MVLS tended to have lower awareness of several communities, particularly Walk/Talk/Connect (50%), EAL PGR Writing Community (45%), UofG PGR Connect (31%) and Gilchrist Postgraduate Club (34%) ([see Appendix Figure 17](#)).

Q12: 'In your own words, what does "community" mean to you?'

What Community Means to PGRs 257

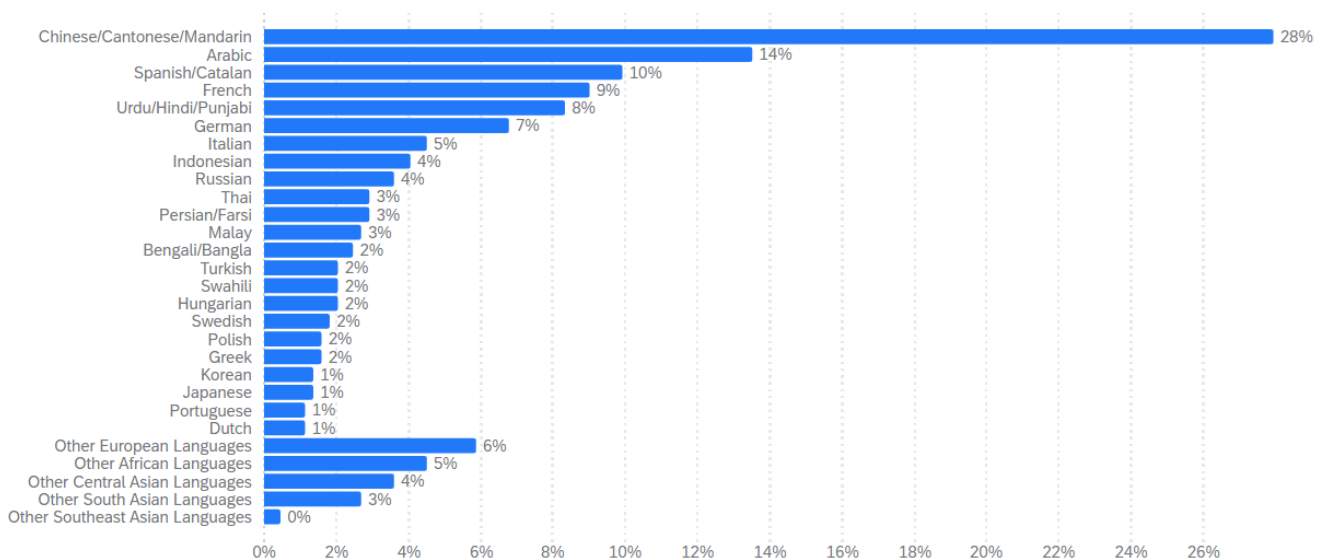


- This year, respondents were also given the optional opportunity to describe what community means to them. Of the 857 respondents, 257 chose to provide a response (30%).
- Shared experiences and interests were the most common theme (38.1%), with students describing community as being connected through their research, common interests or shared experiences of the PGR journey. As one respondent described it, *"Having people you can talk to about research, about PhD life challenges and just someone you can call on to support you."*
- A supportive environment (32.3%) and meaningful connections (24.9%) were also prominent, with students emphasising friendship, peer support, opportunities to share ideas and having people to turn to during the challenges of a research degree.
- Belonging, inclusion and feeling valued were also important (21% and 14.8%, respectively). Students frequently described community as a space where they could feel accepted, respected and comfortable being themselves. One respondent described it as *"a place where a person is fully accepted for who they are and is mutually cared for in their group."*
- The responses also highlighted challenges in accessing and experiencing community, particularly for remote, part-time and predominantly off-campus PGRs. Students described feelings of isolation and limited opportunities to participate in in-person activities. Others voiced the importance of hybrid and online opportunities to enable wider participation.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Experience

Q13: *'If you speak multiple languages, please list them beginning with the language or languages you consider to be your first language(s).'*

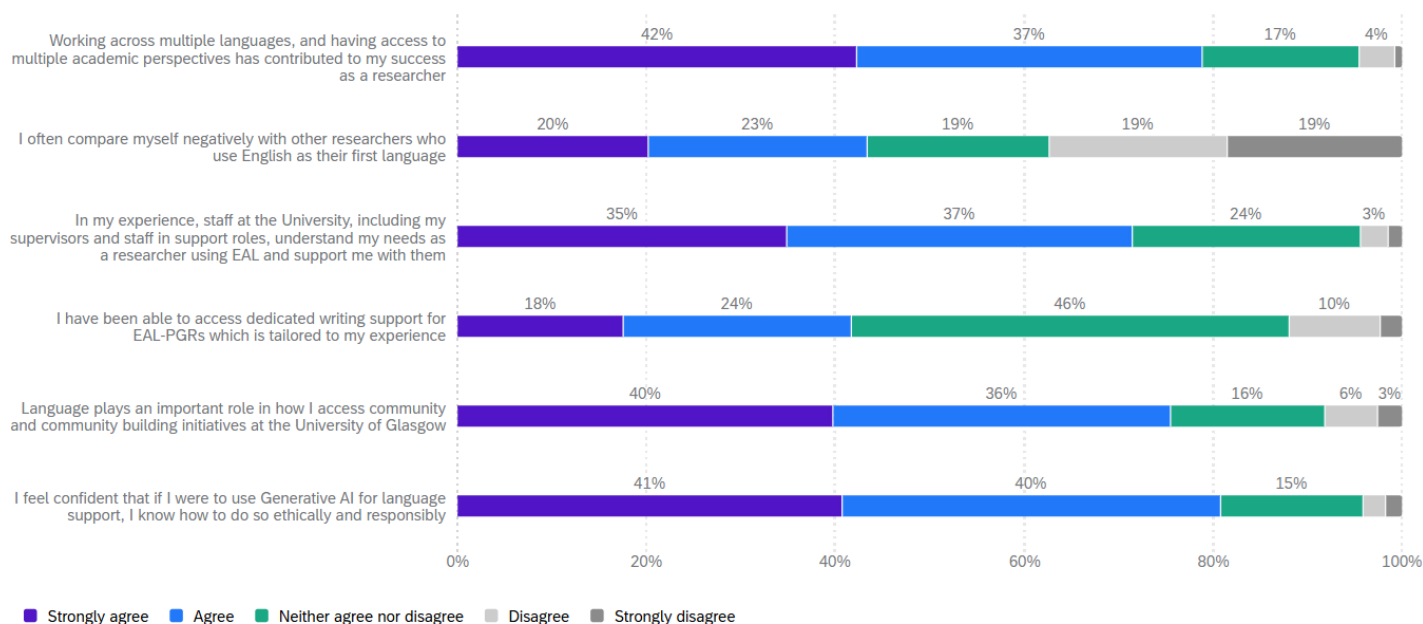
Languages Spoken 444



- Currently, there is limited data available on the languages spoken by PGRs at the University. To better understand the experiences of students who use English as an Additional Language (EAL), this year's survey asked respondents whether English was an additional language for them. Those who selected 'Yes' were then asked about the languages they speak and their experiences of studying and researching in English.
- Chinese/Cantonese/Mandarin was the most commonly stated additional language (28%), followed by Arabic (14%), Spanish/Catalan (10%), French (9%) and Urdu/Hindi/Punjabi (8%).
- Languages spoken by five or fewer respondents have been grouped into regional "Other" categories.

Q14: 'We'd like to understand more about your experience of using English as an Additional Language (EAL) as part of your research degree. Using the scale, please indicate how far you agree with the following statements:'

Experiences of EAL Students 451



- Overall, EAL respondents reported positive experiences of using English as an Additional Language, with 79% agreeing that working across multiple languages and having access to multiple academic perspectives has contributed to their success as a researcher.
- 72% agreed that University staff understand their needs as a researcher using EAL, while 76% agreed that language plays an important role in how they access community and community-building initiatives.
- Confidence in using Generative AI for language support was also high, with 81% agreeing that they would know how to use it ethically and responsibly.
- Access to dedicated writing support was less strongly reported, with 42% agreeing that they had been able to access support tailored to their EAL experience, while 46% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- Comparisons with researchers who use English as their first language were more mixed: 43% agreed that they often compare themselves negatively with other researchers, while 38% disagreed.
- At College level, COAH respondents were most likely to agree that working across multiple languages and having access to multiple academic perspectives

had contributed to their success (82%), compared with 81% in COSE, 80% in COSS and 74% in MVLS ([see Appendix Figure 18](#)).

- Perceptions of staff understanding EAL needs were highest for COSE respondents (77%), followed by MVLS (73%), COSS (70%) and COAH (60%).
- COSE and COSS respondents were most likely to agree that language plays an important role in accessing community and community-building initiatives (79% and 81%, respectively), compared with 70% in COAH and 68% in MVLS.
- Confidence in using Generative AI for language support was relatively high across all Colleges, ranging from 74% in MVLS to 86% in COSS.
- There were notable differences between Colleges in how far EAL respondents agreed that they compare themselves negatively with researchers who use English as their first language. Agreement was highest for COAH respondents (60%), compared with 46% in COSS, 40% in MVLS and 36% in COSE ([see Appendix Figure 18](#)).
- Access to dedicated EAL writing support was the least strongly endorsed statement across all Colleges, ranging from 33% in MVLS to 50% in COAH.

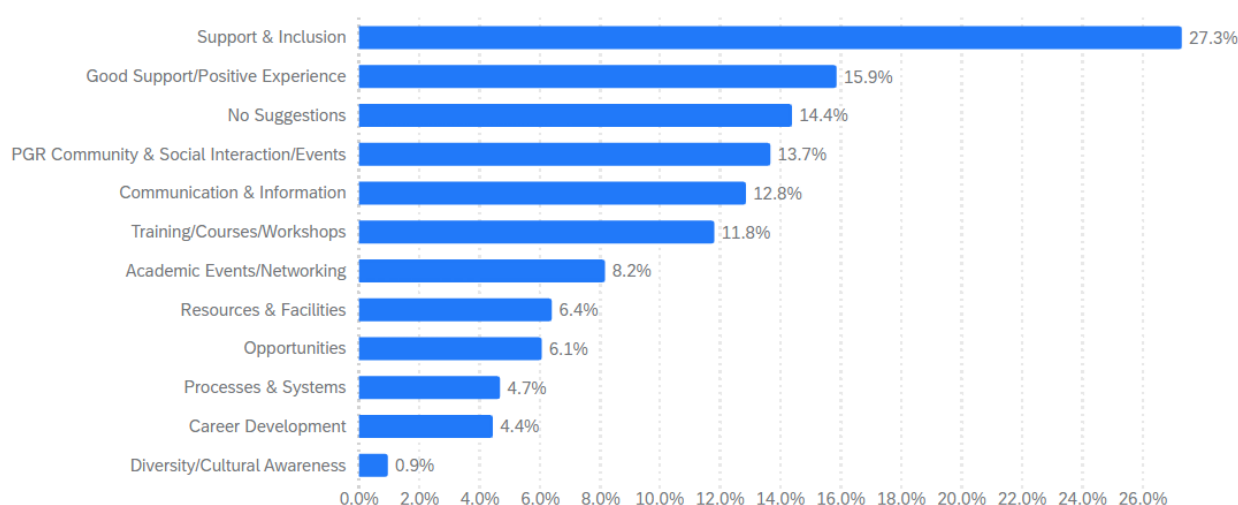
Q15: *'If you would like to share more detail around these statements, or about your experience of being a multilingual researcher more broadly, please use the box below.'*

- The 66 optional comments highlighted the diversity of EAL experiences. While some respondents described challenges with academic writing, speaking and confidence in English, others noted that they were highly fluent or had used English extensively throughout their education and professional lives, and therefore did not experience significant language barriers or feel that the statements fully applied to them.
- Several respondents also conveyed the benefits of being multilingual, including bringing different perspectives to research, accessing wider sources of knowledge and connecting with international researchers. One respondent described being multilingual as *"a strength"* that helped them *"think about my research from different perspectives"*.
- Some respondents welcomed the University's EAL support and asked for more practical and tailored opportunities, including academic writing, spoken English and guidance on using AI for language support. One respondent commented that EAL-PGR workshops had made them feel *"resonating and inclusive: I'm not alone"*, while suggesting that more practical, School-level support could be helpful.

Improvement Feedback

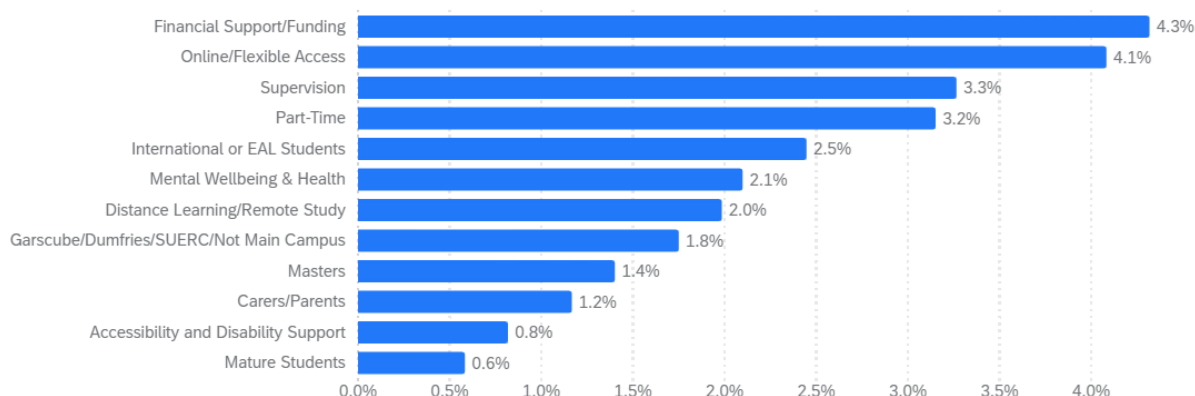
Q16: 'How could the Graduate School in your College improve your experience as a postgraduate researcher at the University of Glasgow?'

Improvement Feedback (Overall) 857



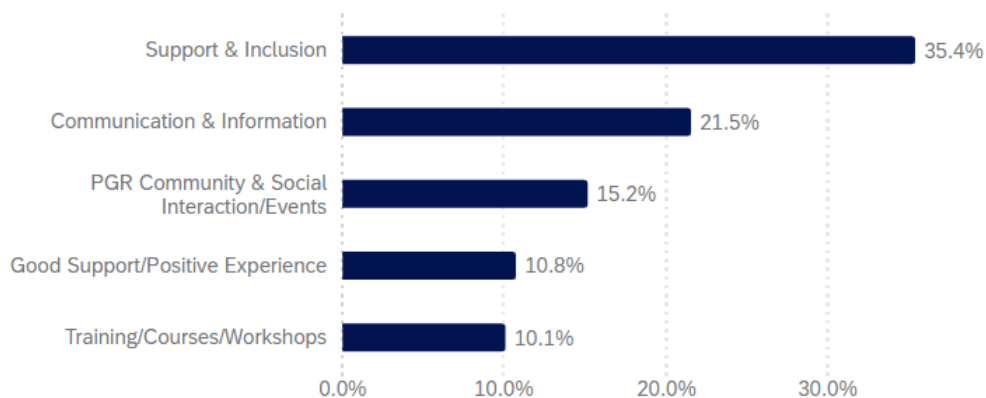
- Overall, support and inclusion was the top improvement feedback topic (27.3%), and this was also the most frequently mentioned topic across all four Colleges. Support and inclusion covered a range of areas, including financial support and funding (4.3%), online/flexible access (4.1%), supervision (3.3%), support for part-time students (3.2%) and support for international/EAL students (2.5%). A breakdown of the support and inclusion feedback can be found below.

Support & Inclusion Improvement Feedback (Breakdown) 857

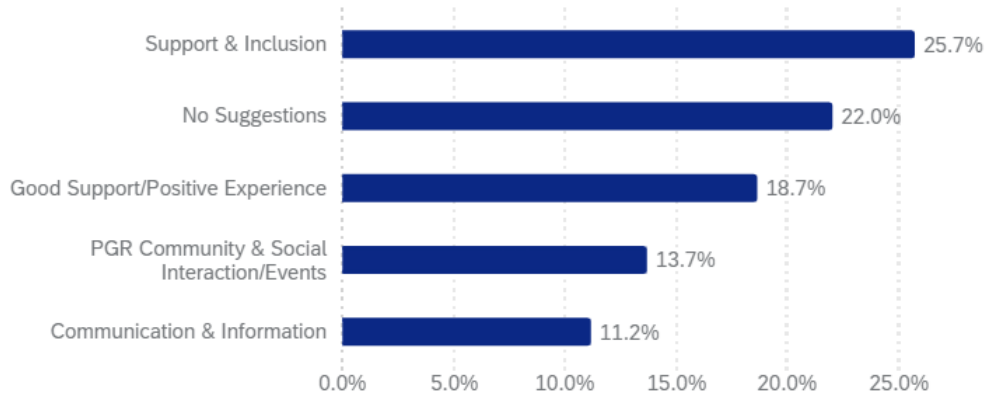


- The second most common feedback topic was positive experiences and good support (15.9%). These comments reflected students' appreciation of the support they receive and their positive experiences as PGRs, including supportive staff, supervisors, Graduate Schools and the wider PGR experience. This was particularly prominent in COSS (17%), where it was the second most frequently mentioned topic.
- A further 14.4% of feedback consisted of no suggestions for improvement, where respondents left the box blank, stated that they had no suggestions or indicated that they were satisfied with their experience. This was particularly evident in MVLS, where no suggestions accounted for 22% of feedback and was the second most common topic.
- PGR community and social interaction/events was also a prominent area of feedback (13.7%). Comments highlighted the importance of opportunities to meet and connect with other PGRs, social events and activities, and creating a stronger sense of community and belonging. This was particularly prominent in COSE (16.7%), where it was the second most frequently mentioned feedback topic.
- Communication and information was another noticeable area of feedback (12.8%). Most comments focused on the clarity, accessibility and availability of general information, while others expressed the need for clearer communication around University policies and processes.
- Training, courses and workshops accounted for 11.8% of the overall feedback, with research-specific training and research methods the most commonly mentioned need within this category. At College level, training, courses and workshops featured within the top five feedback topics in COAH, COSE and COSS.
- Although resources and facilities was not among the most frequently mentioned topics, 27 (49%) of the 55 comments in this category related to office or desk space, flagging this as a particular concern for some students.

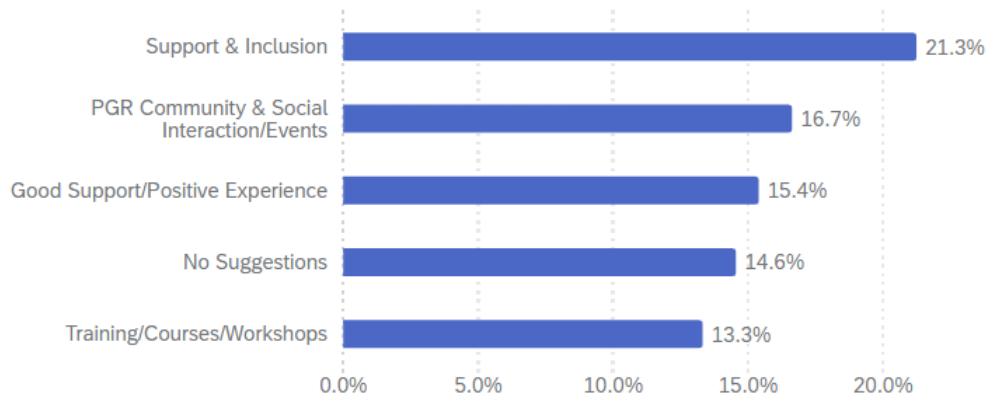
Top 5 Improvement Feedback (COAH) 158



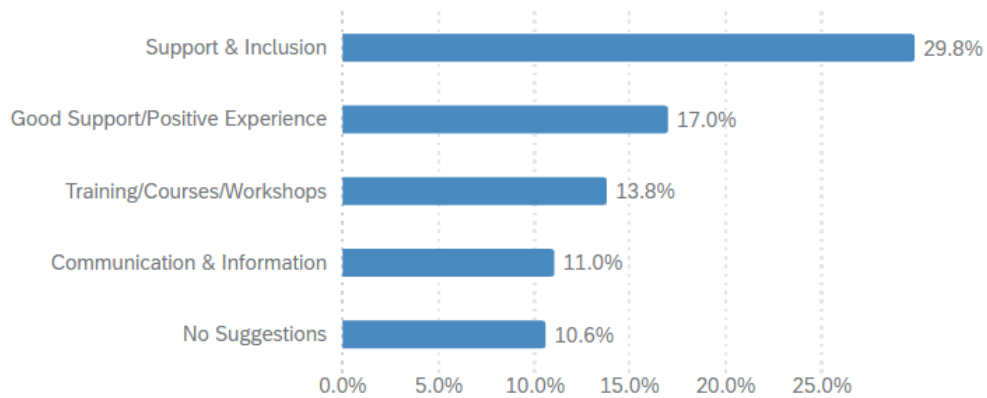
Top 5 Improvement Feedback (MVLS) 241



Top 5 Improvement Feedback (COSE) 240



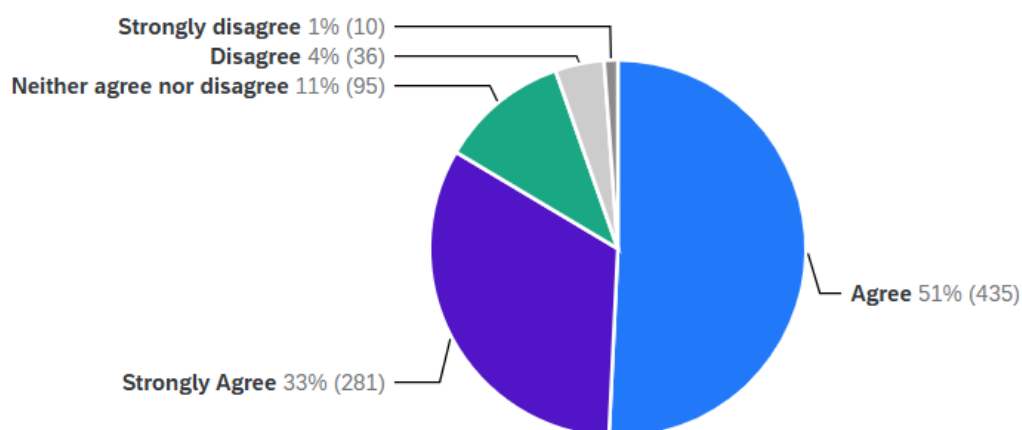
Top 5 Improvement Feedback (COSS) 218



Student Satisfaction

Q17: 'Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of my research degree programme.'

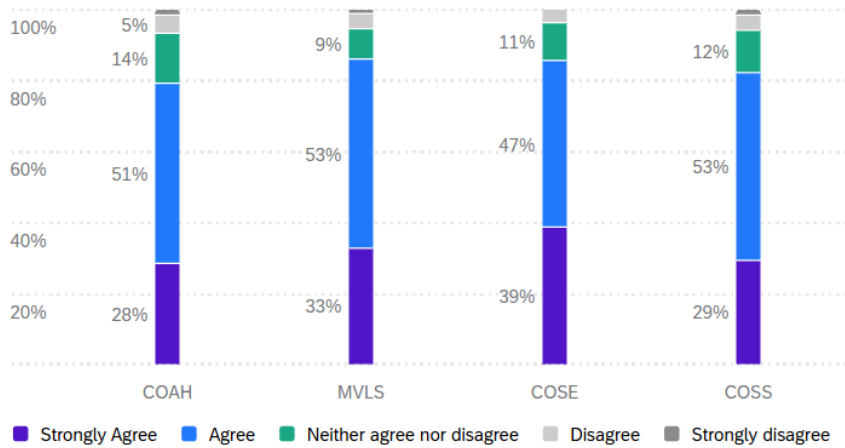
Student Satisfaction (Overall) 857



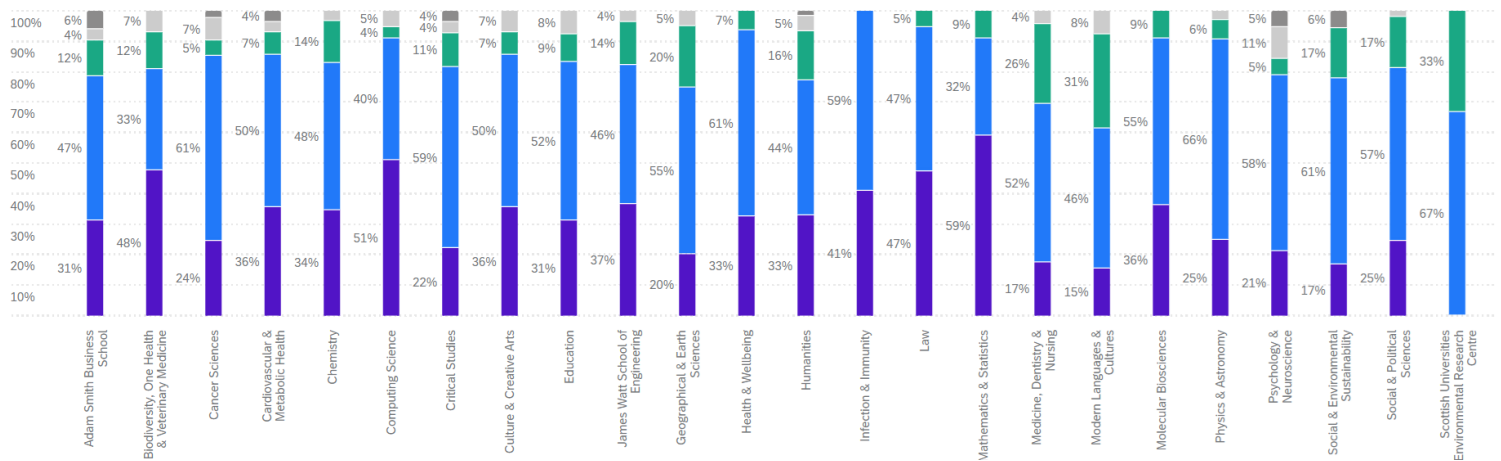
- Overall, 84% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with their PGR experience. This is slightly lower than last year (86%), although satisfaction remains high overall and is still higher than in 2021–2024.
- At College level, satisfaction was highest in MVLS and COSE (86% for both), followed by COSS (82%) and COAH (79%).
- At School level, satisfaction was highest for PGRs in the School of Infection & Immunity (100%), followed by the Schools of Health & Wellbeing and Law (both 94%). Satisfaction was also high in Computing Science, Mathematics & Statistics, Molecular Biosciences and Physics & Astronomy (91%). The lowest satisfaction rate was reported by PGRs in Modern Languages & Cultures (61%). Dissatisfaction remained relatively low across most Schools, with only two Schools recording a dissatisfaction rate of 10% or higher.

Satisfaction by College & School

Student Satisfaction (College Level) 857



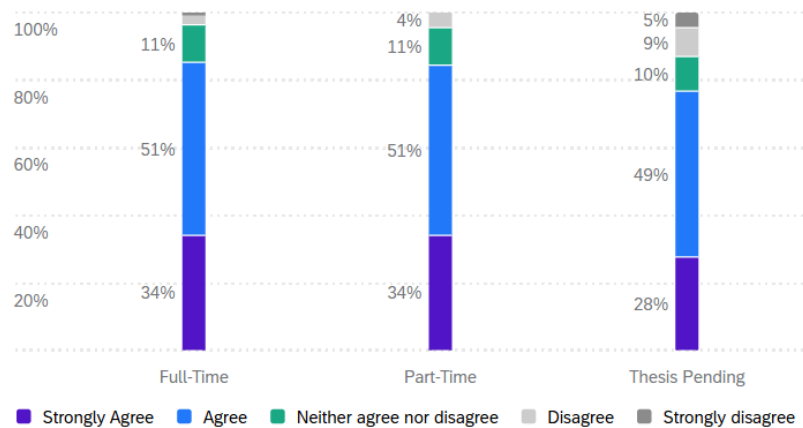
Student Satisfaction (School Level) 857



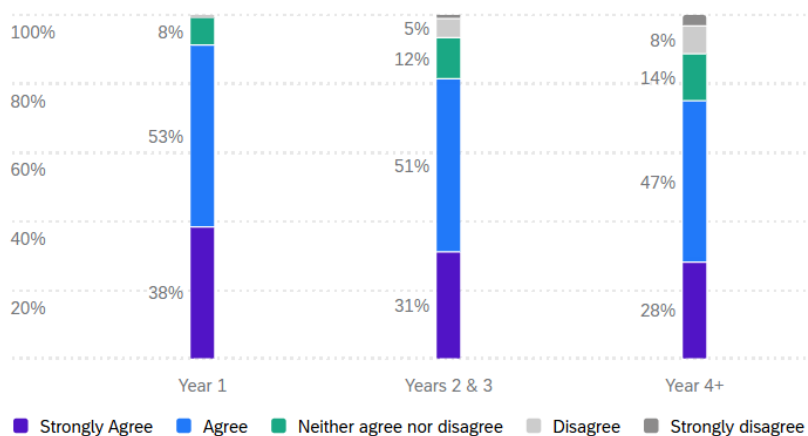
Satisfaction by Study Characteristics

- There were relatively small differences in satisfaction by academic load. Satisfaction was highest for full-time and part-time PGRs (both 85%), compared with 81% of thesis pending PGRs.
- Satisfaction varied more noticeably by year of programme. Year 1 PGRs reported the highest satisfaction (91%), compared with 82% of those in Years 2 & 3 and 75% of those in Year 4+. The proportion reporting dissatisfaction also increased with year of programme, from 1% for Year 1 PGRs to 6% in Years 2 & 3 and 11% for those in Year 4+.

Student Satisfaction (Academic Load) 857



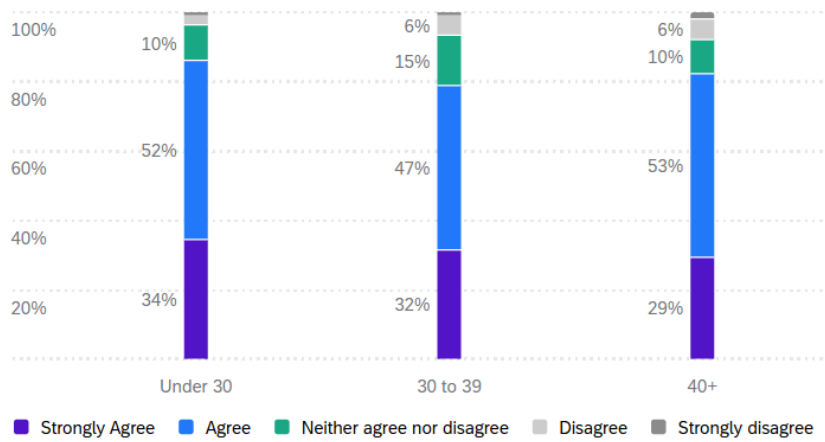
Student Satisfaction (Grouped Year of Programme) 857



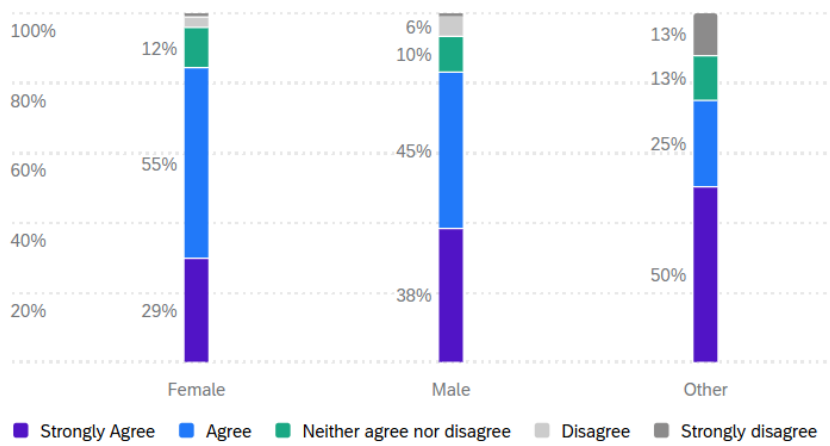
Satisfaction by Demographics

- When looking at satisfaction rates by demographic characteristics, including age, domicile, gender and disability, there were some differences between groups.
- Satisfaction was highest for PGRs aged under 30 (86%), compared with 82% of those aged 40+ and 79% of those aged 30–39. Dissatisfaction remained relatively low across all age groups, although it increased from 4% for under-30s to 7% for those aged 30–39 and 8% for those aged 40+.
- Satisfaction was similar for female and male students (84% and 83%, respectively), while satisfaction was lower for those identified as 'Other' (75%). Encouragingly, satisfaction for students identified as 'Other' increased from 66% in 2025, although the result should be interpreted cautiously given the small number of respondents in this category.
- There was a notable difference in satisfaction between students registered with Disability Services and those who were not. Satisfaction was 69% for students registered with Disability Services, compared with 86% for those who were not registered. This represents a larger difference than in 2025, when satisfaction was 82% and 87%, respectively. Dissatisfaction was also higher for registered students (12%) than those not registered (5%).
- International PGRs reported slightly higher satisfaction than UK PGRs (86% compared with 81%). Dissatisfaction was low for both groups, at approximately 6% for UK PGRs and 4% for international PGRs.
- Student satisfaction was broadly similar between EAL and non-EAL PGRs, at 84% and 83%, respectively.
- Students who were of Black ethnicity had the highest satisfaction with their PGR experience, with an agreement level of 93%, followed by those of Asian ethnicity (87%). Students of White ethnicity had a satisfaction rate of 82%, while those of Mixed & Other ethnicity had the lowest satisfaction at 77%.
- When grouped into Minority Ethnic and White respondents, those from minority ethnic backgrounds had a slightly higher agreement level (85%) than White respondents (82%) (data not shown).

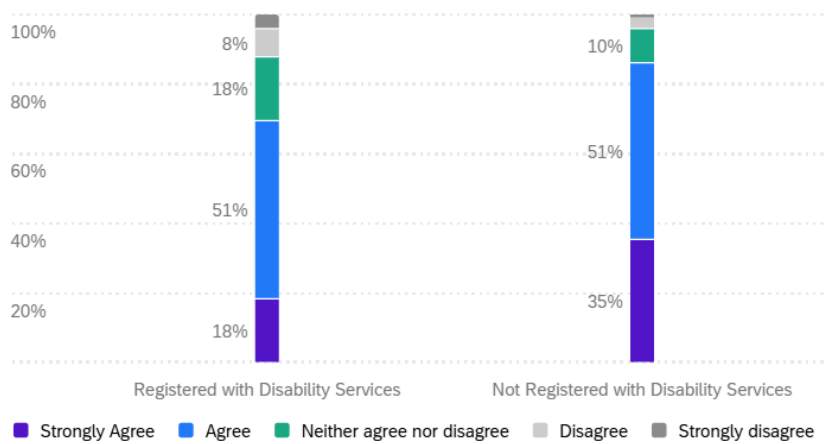
Student Satisfaction (Age Group) 857



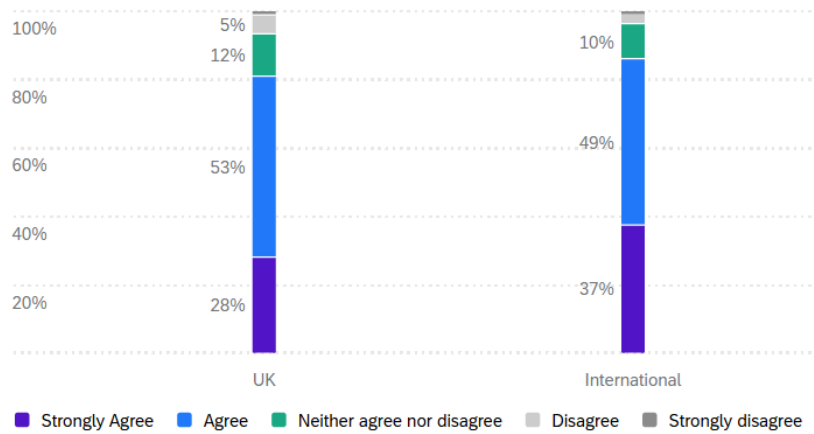
Student Satisfaction (Gender) 857



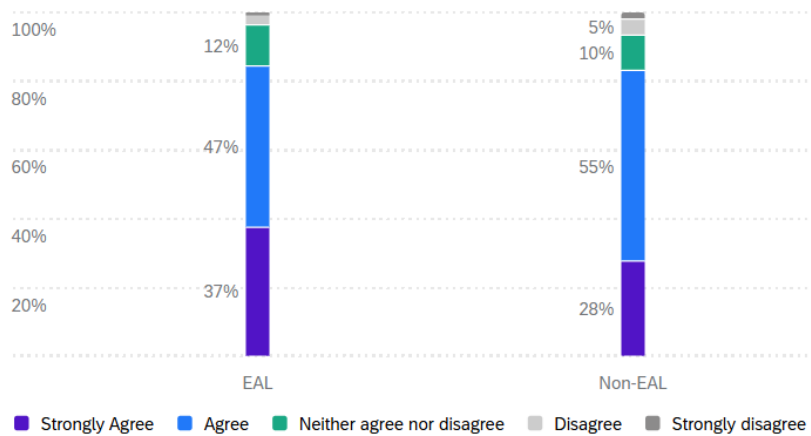
Student Satisfaction (Registered Disability) 857



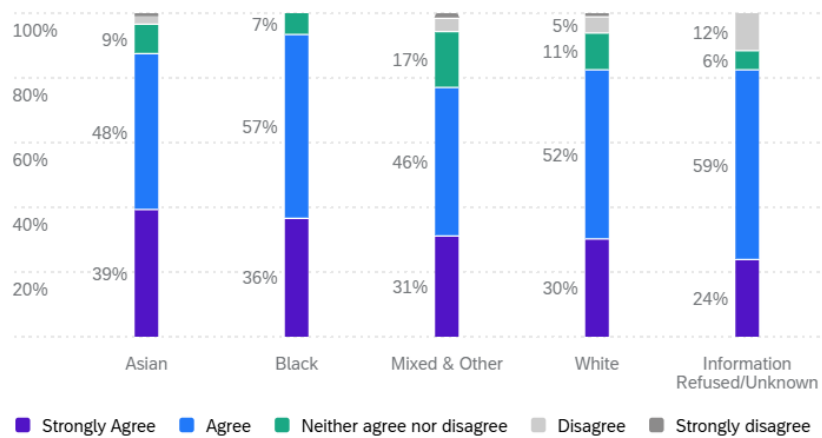
Student Satisfaction (Domicile) 857



Student Satisfaction (EAL Status) 857



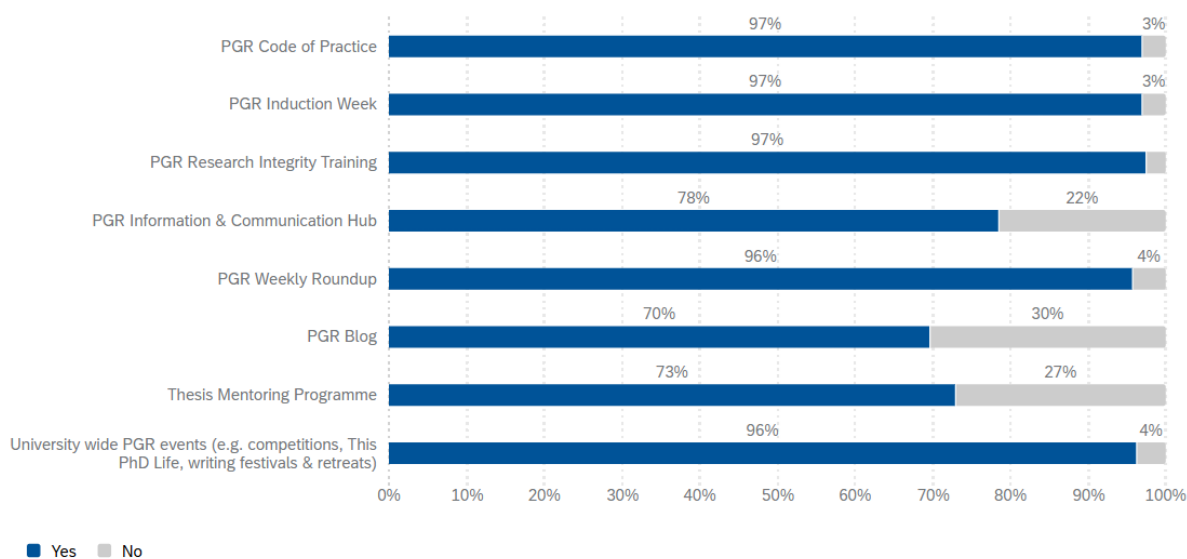
Student Satisfaction (Ethnicity) 857



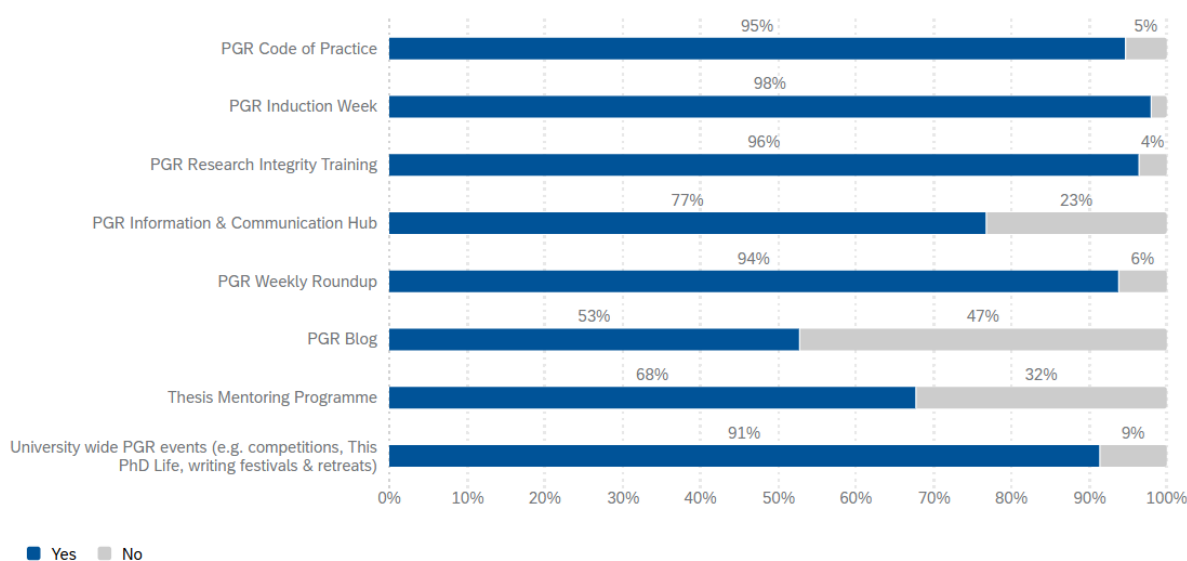
Appendix

Appendix Figure 1: [Awareness of PGR Information, Communication & Events](#)
(College Level)

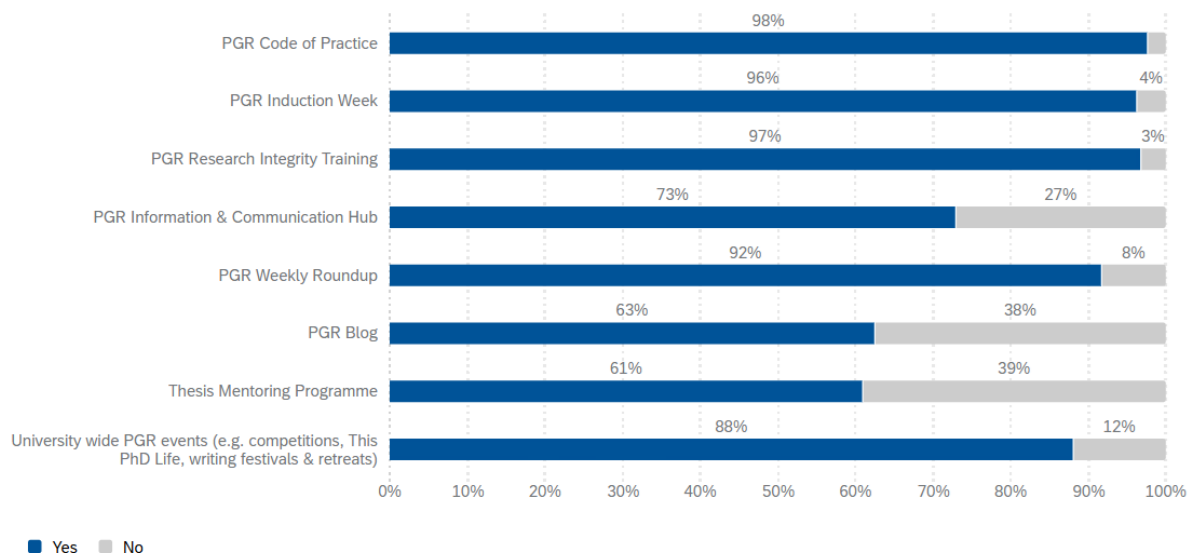
Awareness of Comms, Info & Events (COAH) 158



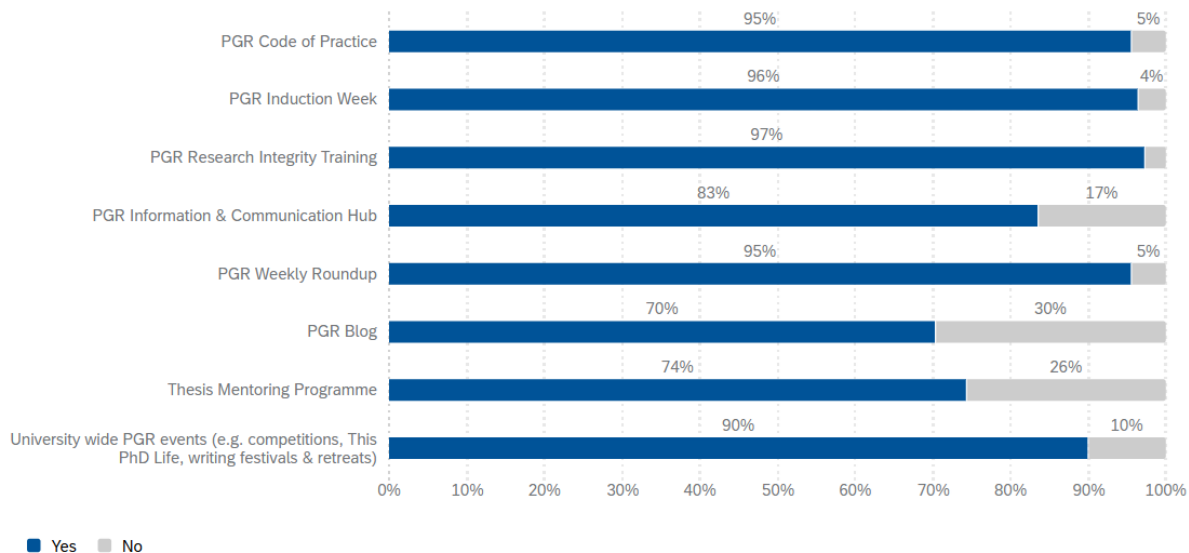
Awareness of Comms, Info & Events (MVLS) 241



Awareness of Comms, Info & Events (COSE) 240

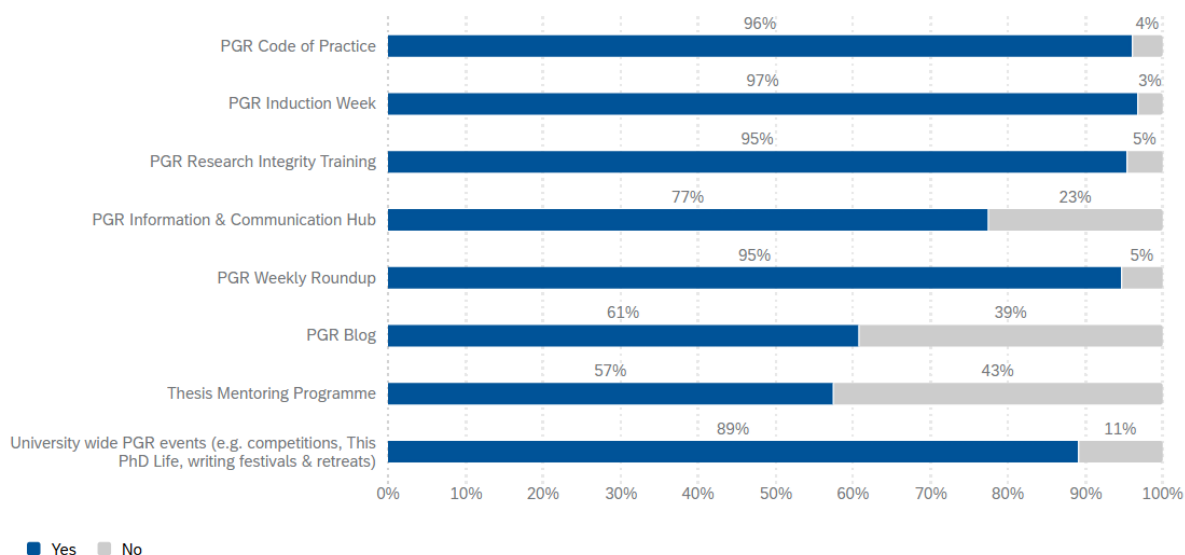


Awareness of Comms, Info & Events (COSS) 218

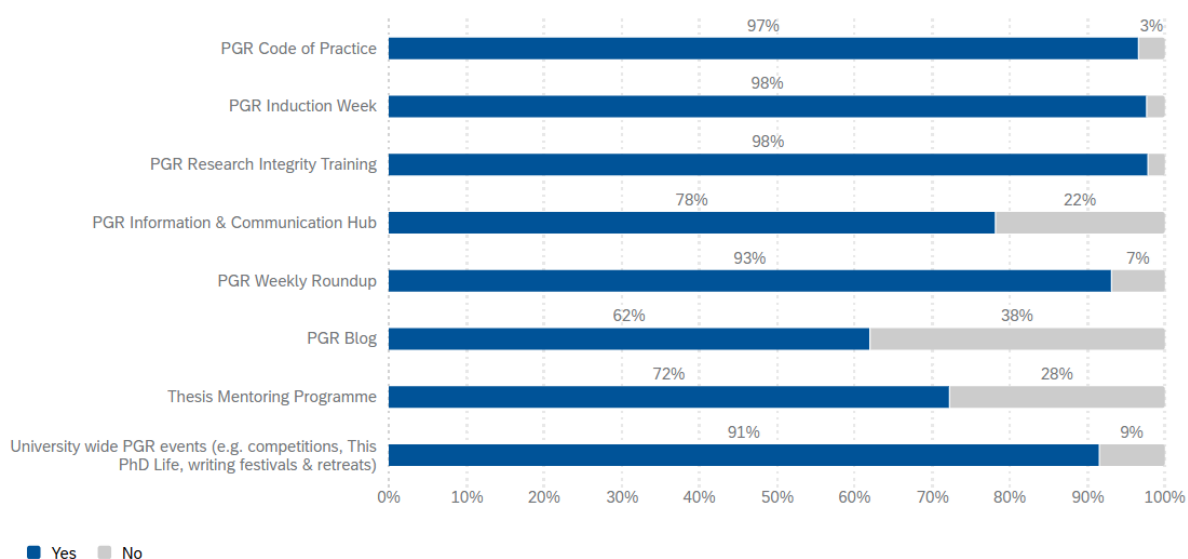


Appendix Figure 2: Awareness of PGR Information, Communication & Events (Year of Programme, Grouped)

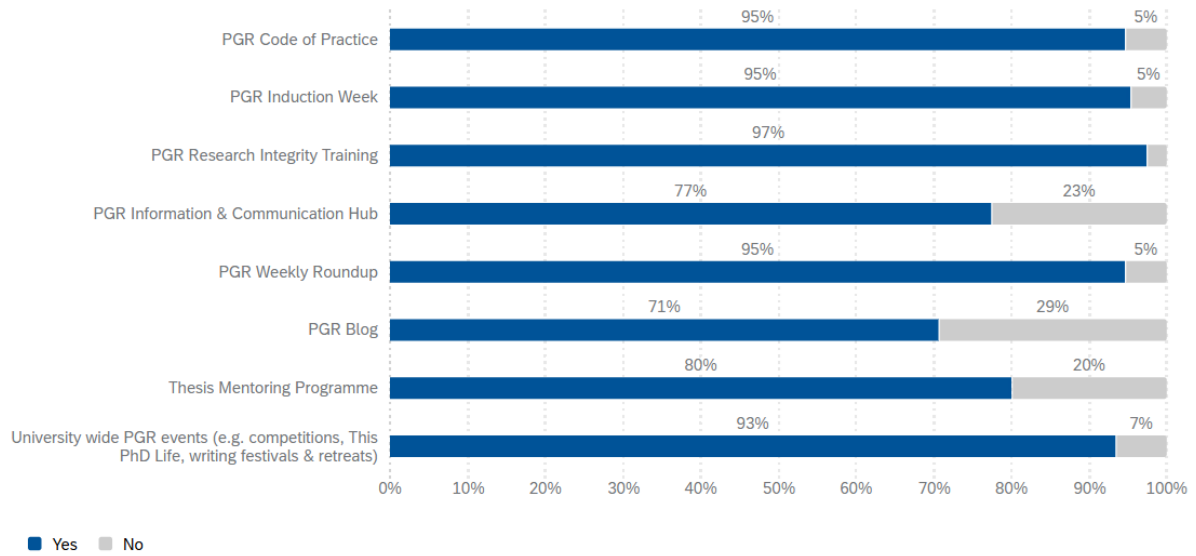
Awareness of Comms, Info & Events (Year 1 of Programme) 300



Awareness of Comms, Info & Events (Year 2 & 3 of Programme) 407

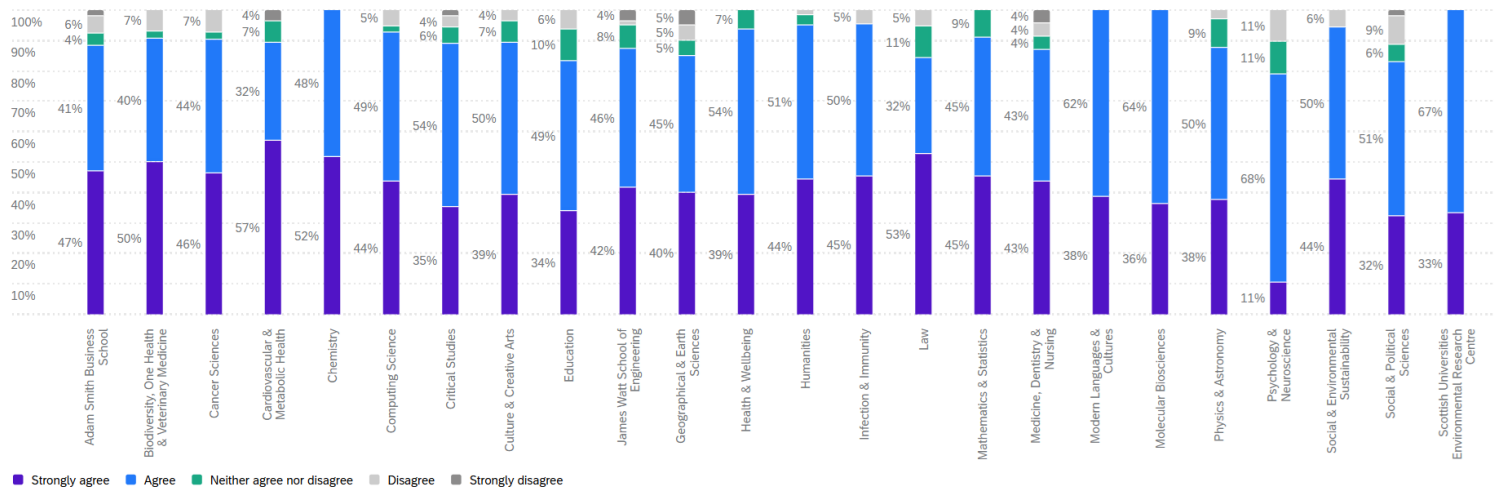


Awareness of Comms, Info & Events (Year 4+ of Programme) 150

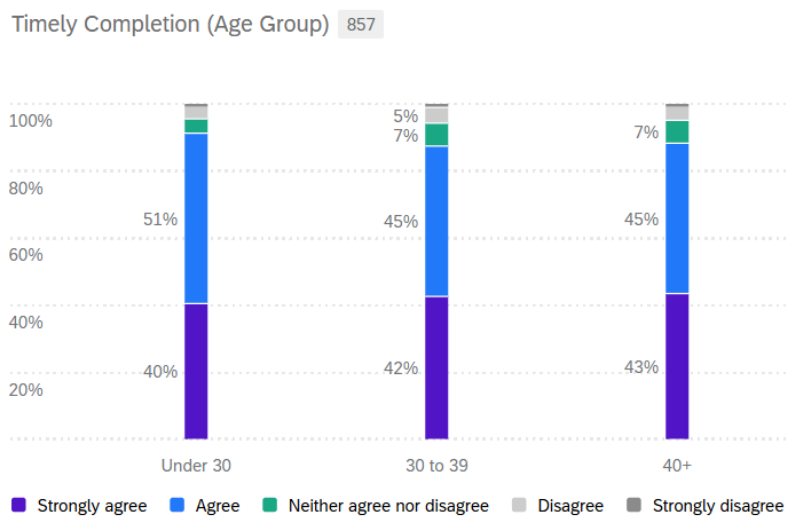
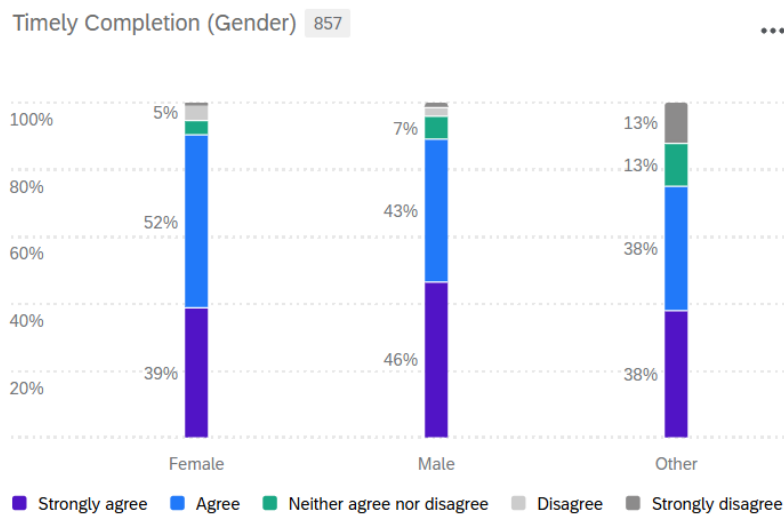
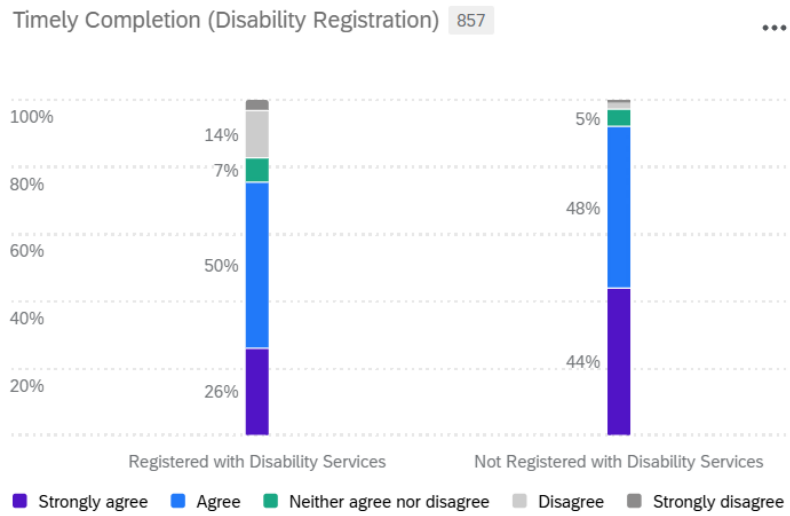


Appendix Figure 3: Confidence in Timely Completion (School Level)

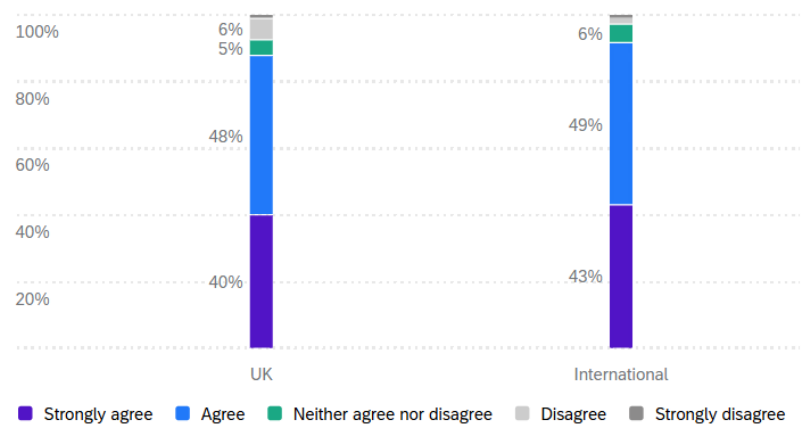
Timely Completion (School Level) 857



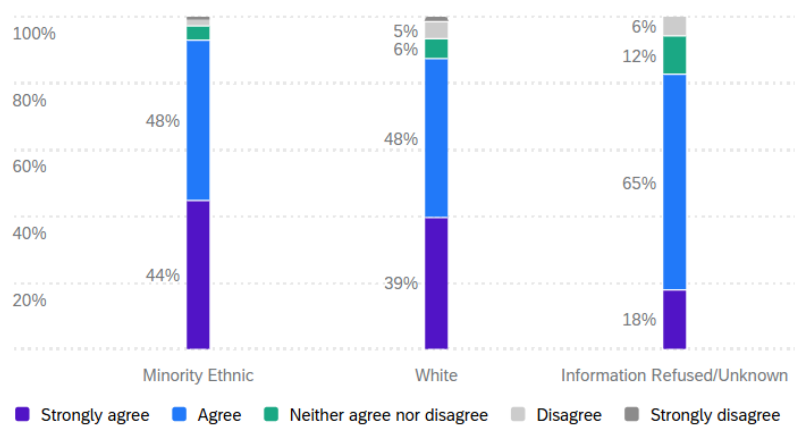
Appendix Figure 4: [Confidence in Timely Completion](#) (Demographic Characteristics)



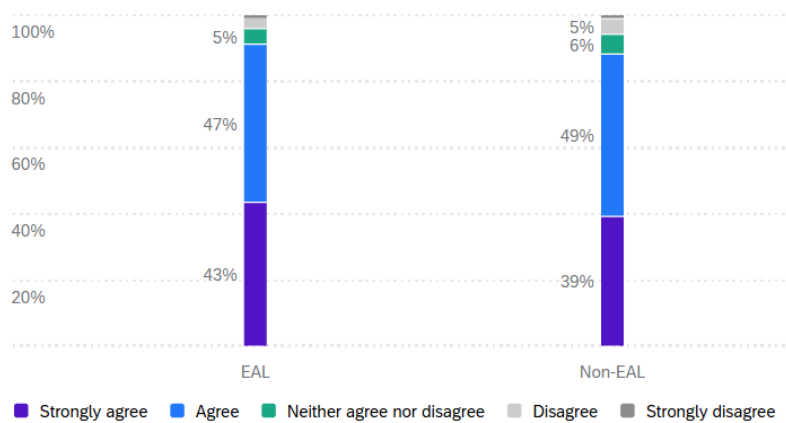
Timely Completion (Domicile) 857



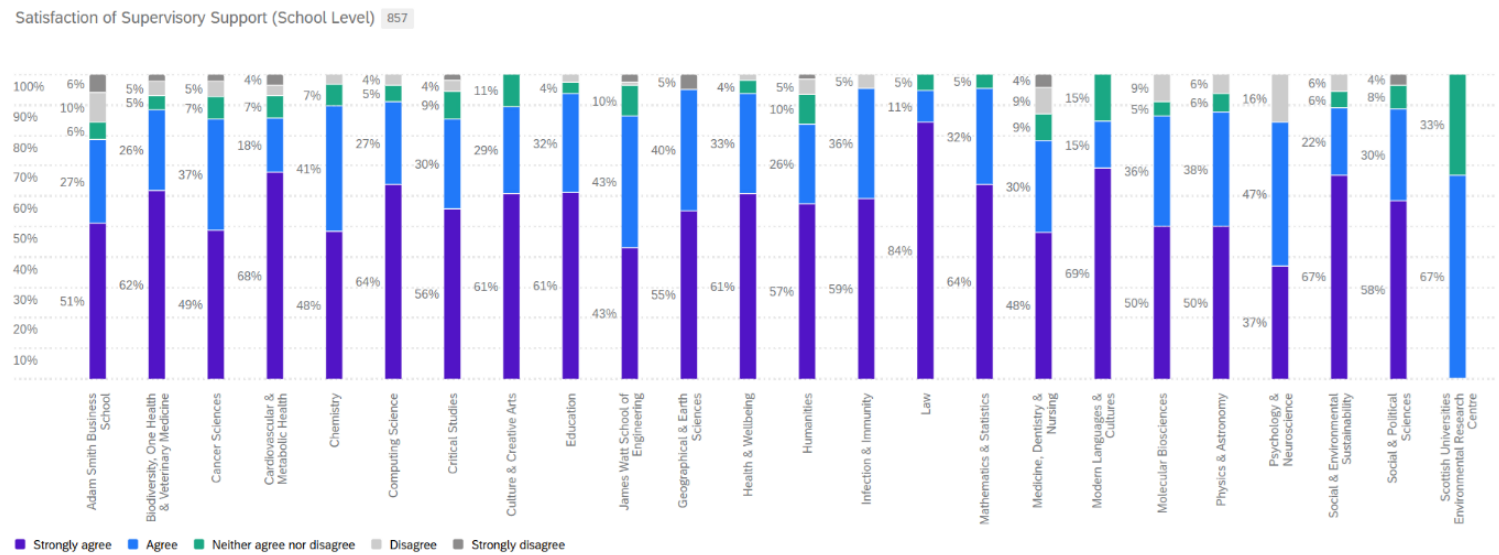
Timely Completion (Ethnicity Group) 857



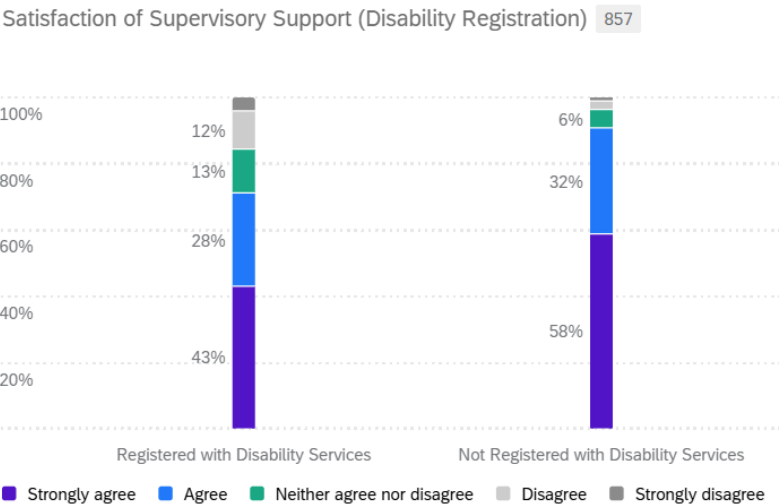
Timely Completion (EAL Status) 857



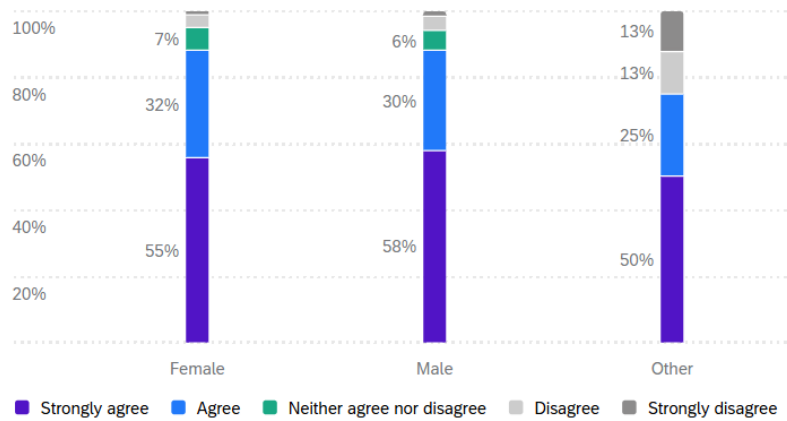
Appendix Figure 5: [Satisfaction in Supervisory Support](#) (School Level)



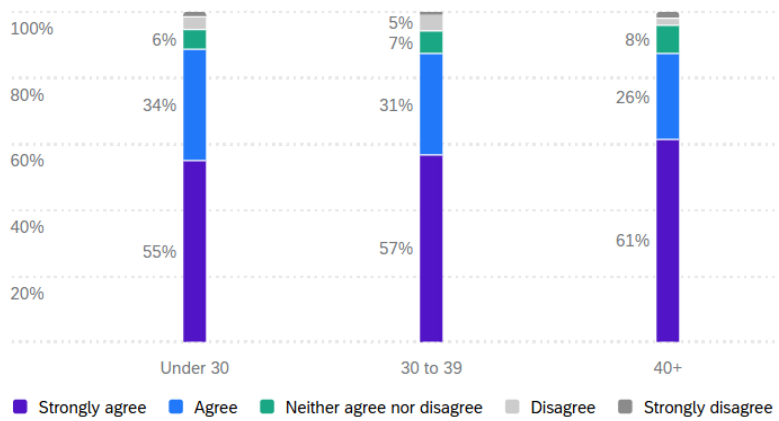
Appendix Figure 6: [Satisfaction in Supervisory Support](#) (Demographic Characteristics)



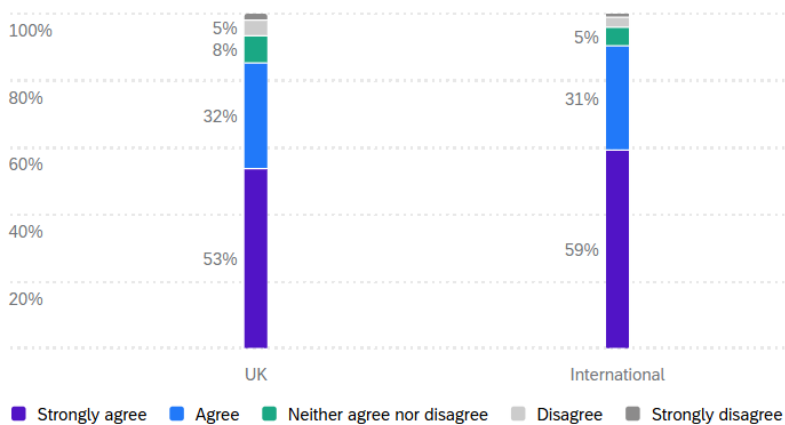
Satisfaction of Supervisory Support (Gender) 857



Satisfaction of Supervisory Support (Age Group) 857

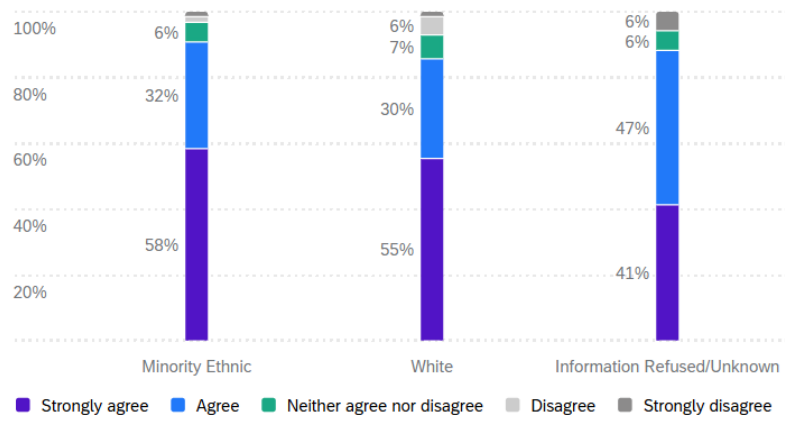


Satisfaction of Supervisory Support (Domicile) 857

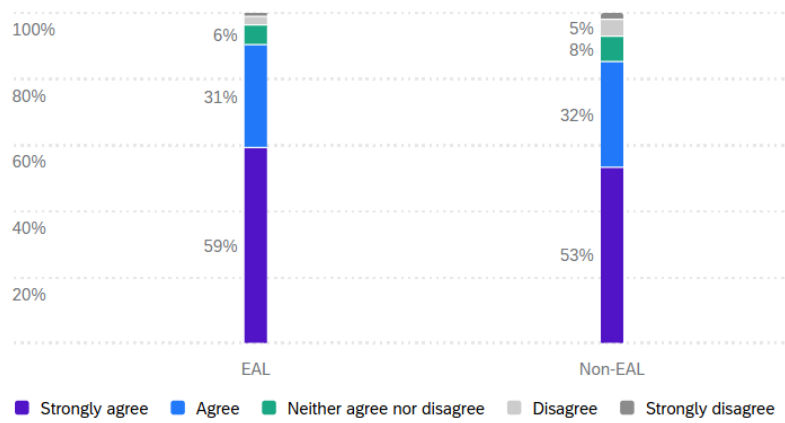


Satisfaction of Supervisory Support (Ethnicity Group) 857

...

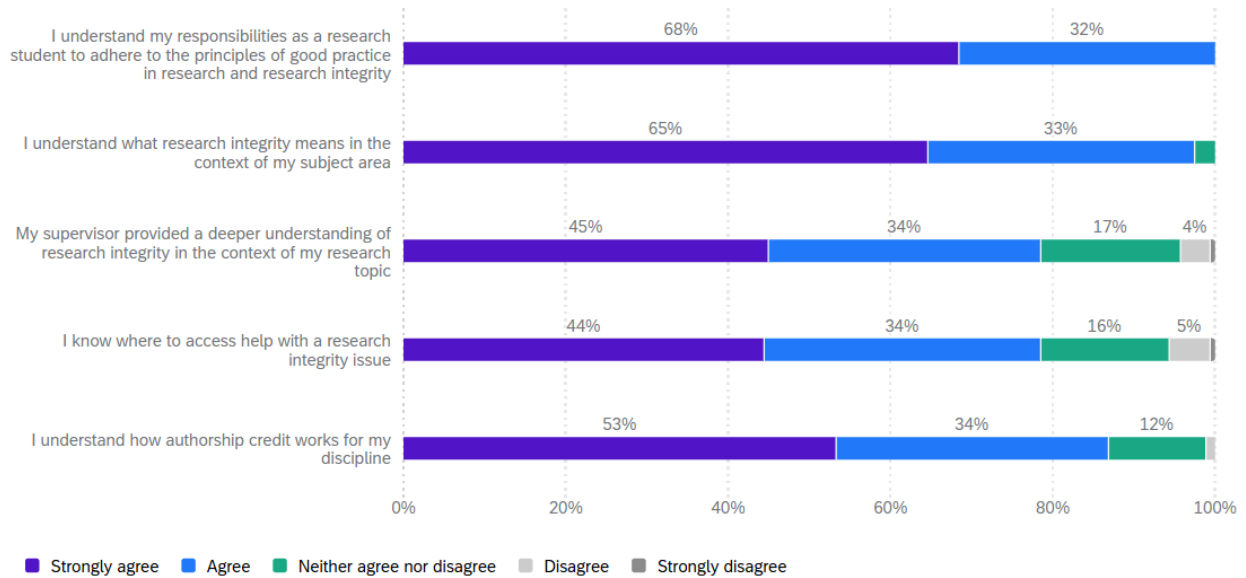


Satisfaction of Supervisory Support (EAL Status) 857

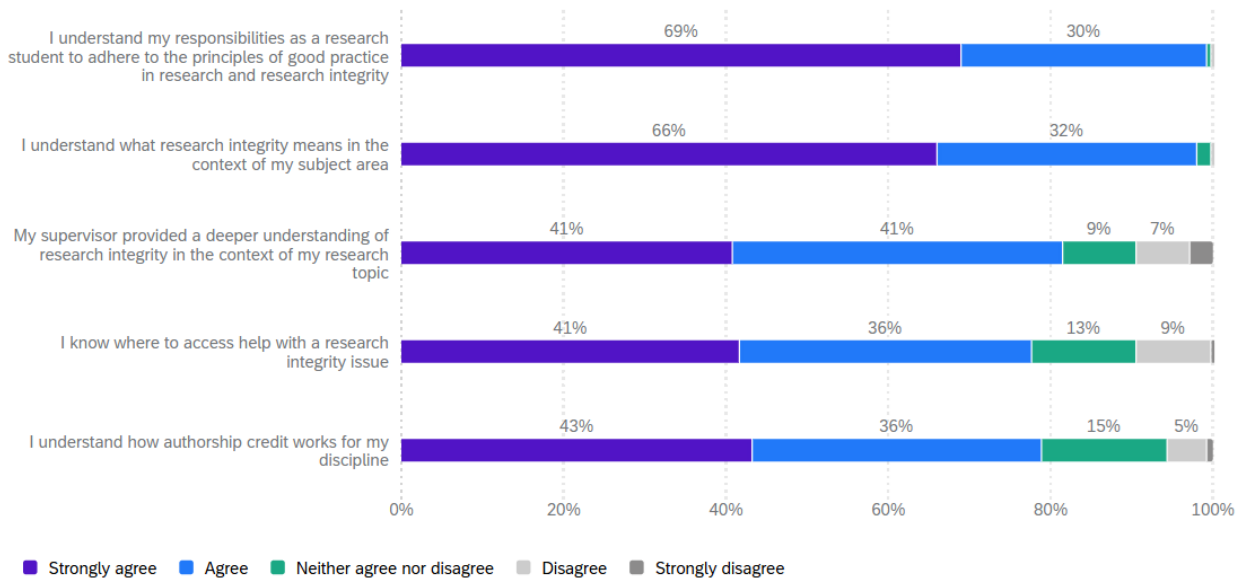


Appendix Figure 7: [Understanding of Research Integrity](#) (College Level)

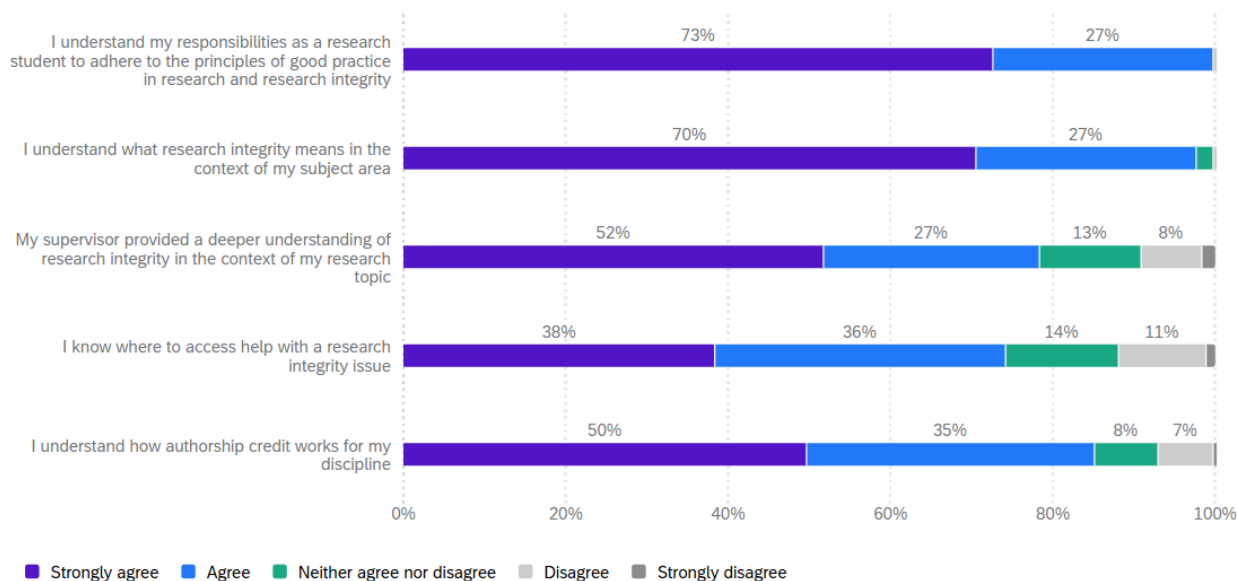
Research Integrity (COAH) 158



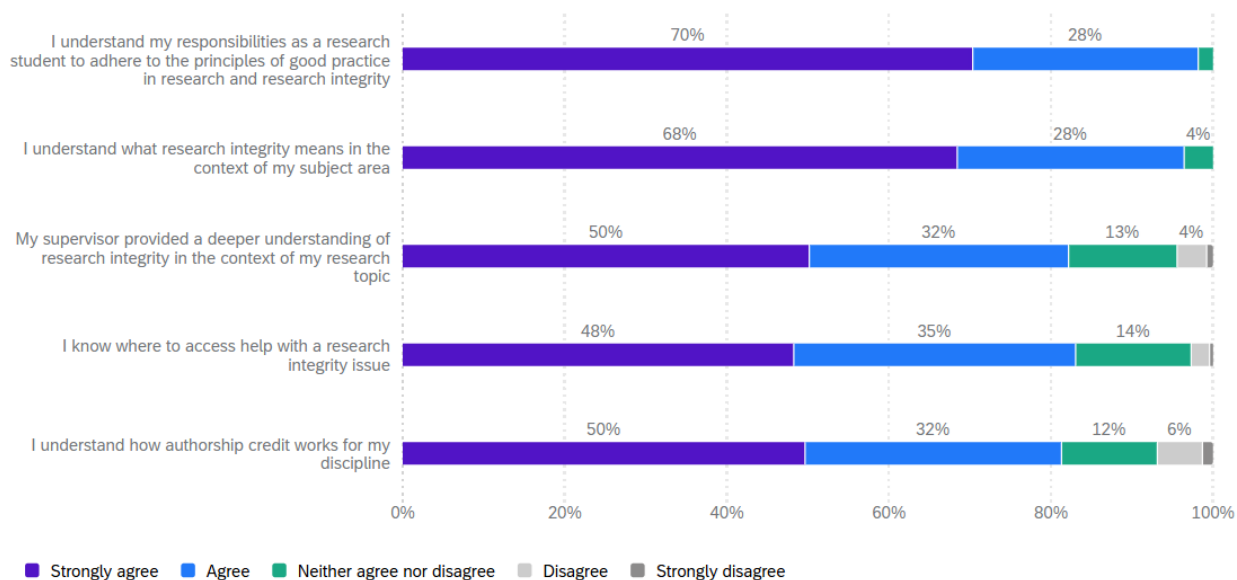
Research Integrity (MVLS) 241



Research Integrity (COSE) 240

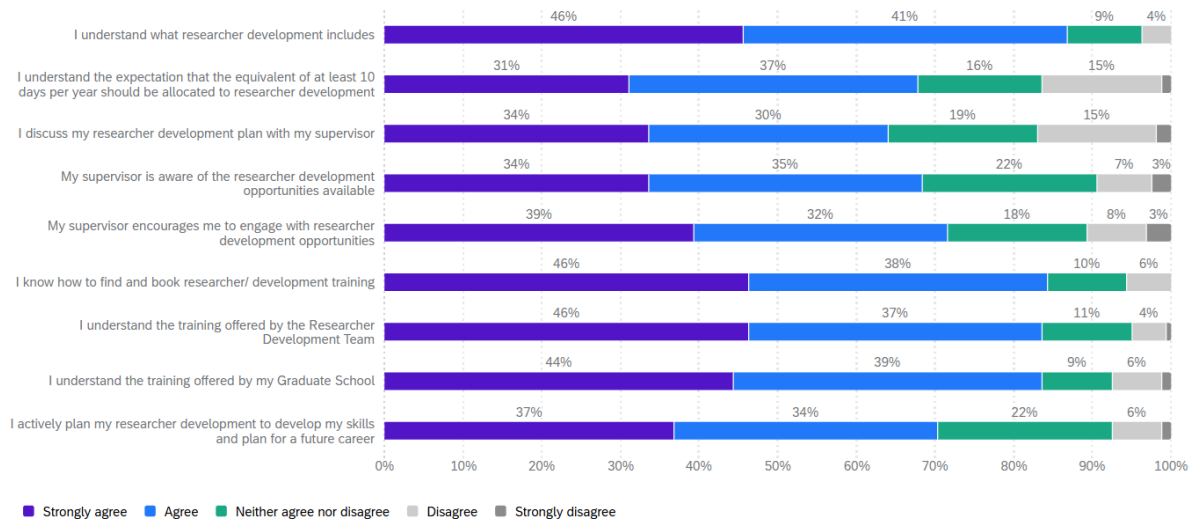


Research Integrity (COSS) 218

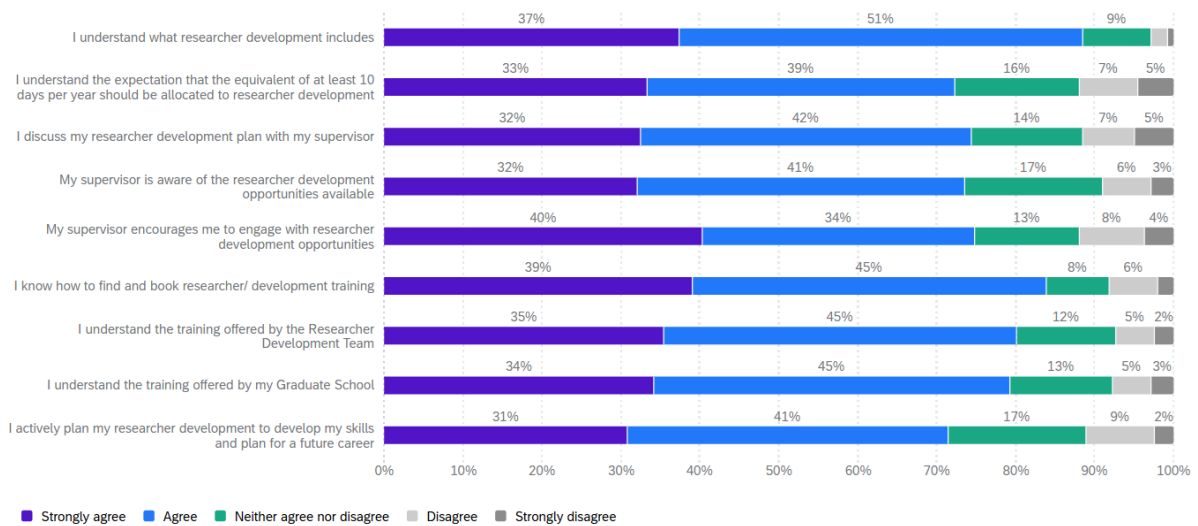


Appendix Figure 8: Researcher Development (College Level)

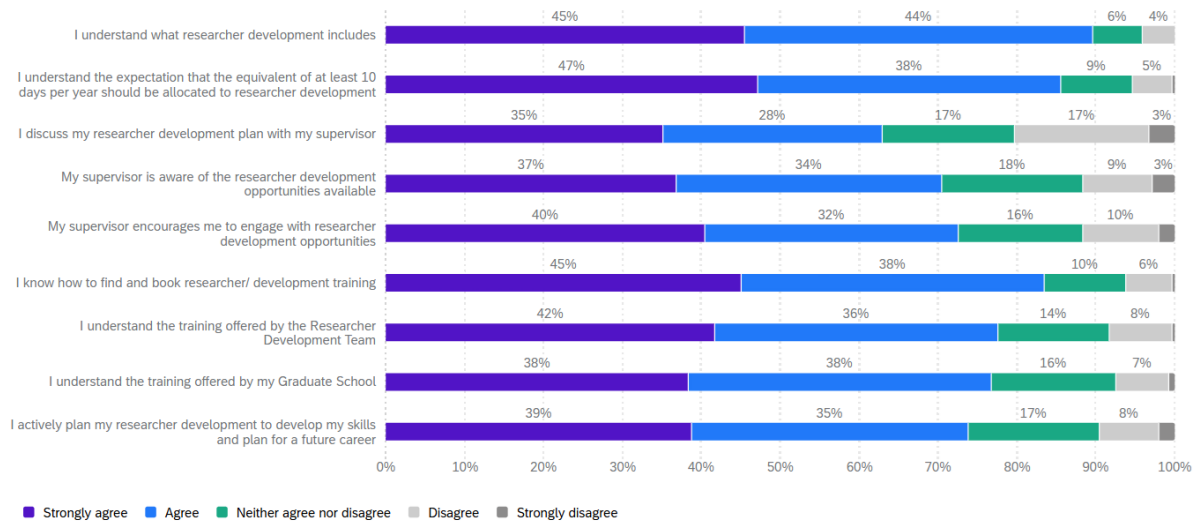
Researcher Development (COAH) 158



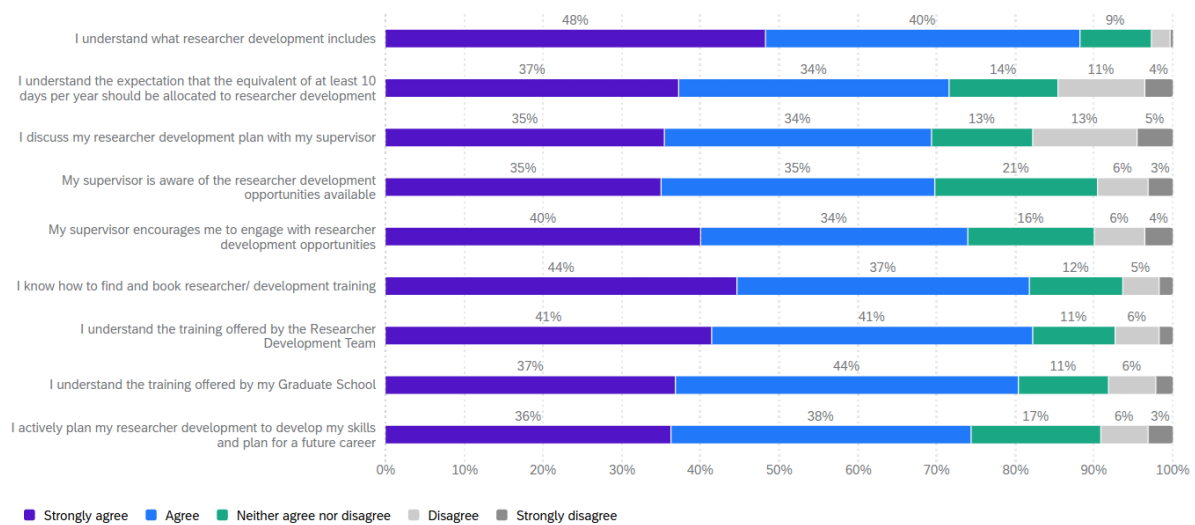
Researcher Development (MVLs) 241



Researcher Development (COSE) 240

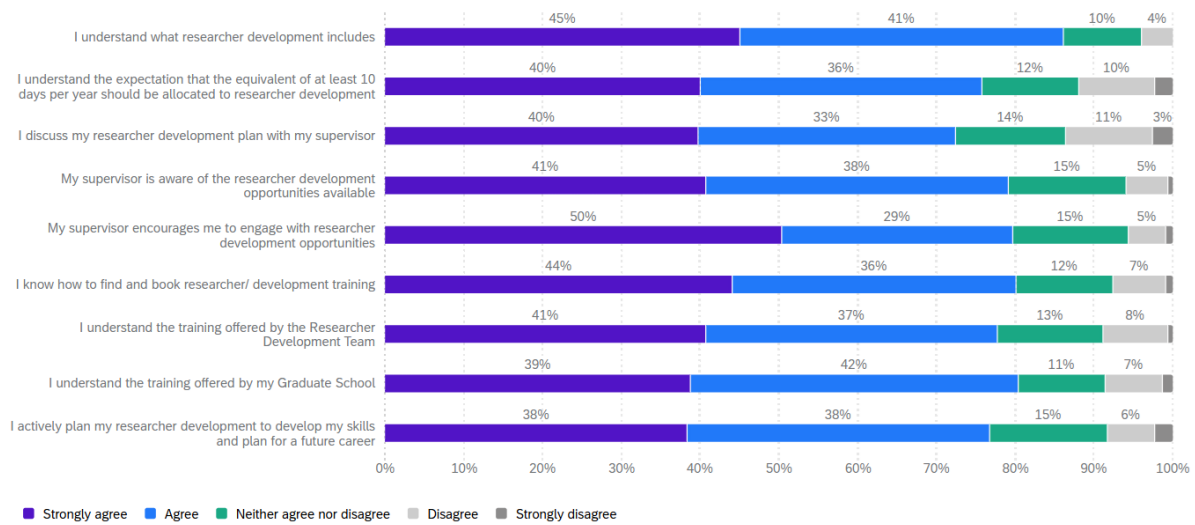


Researcher Development (COSS) 218

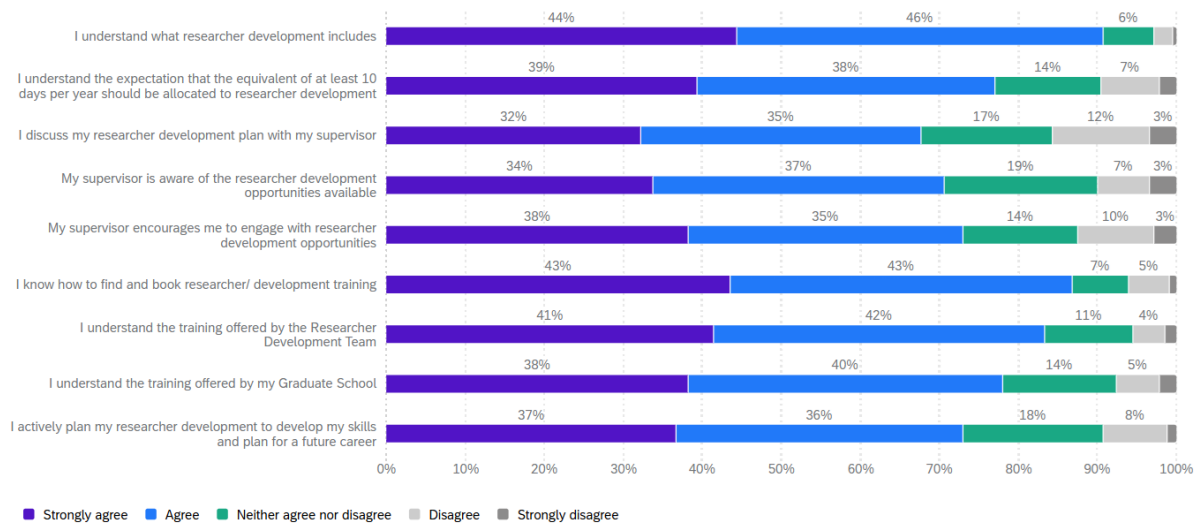


Appendix Figure 9: Researcher Development (Year of Programme, Grouped)

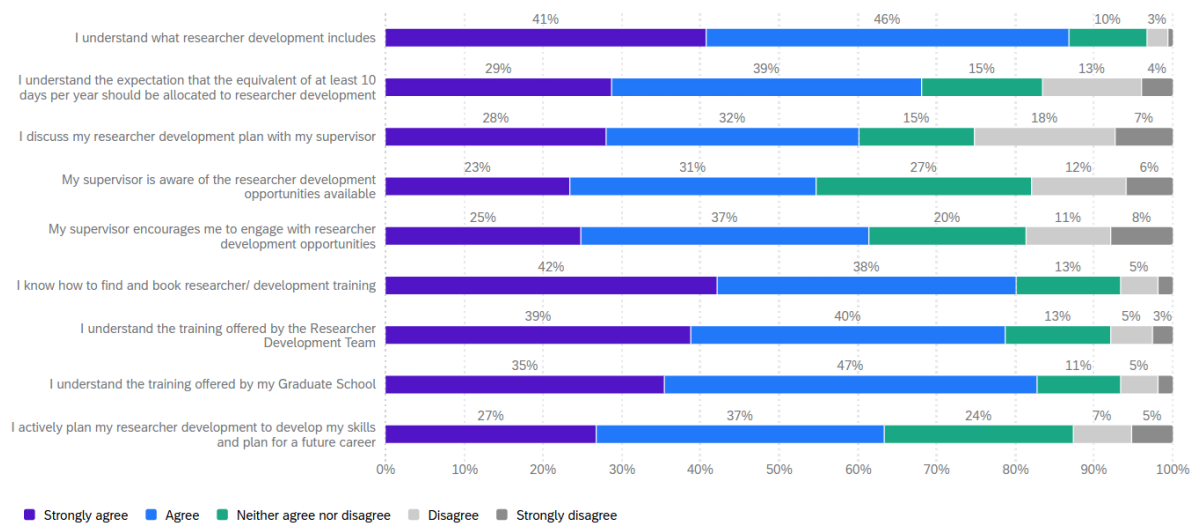
Researcher Development (Year 1 of Programme) 300



Researcher Development (Year 2 & 3 of Programme) 407

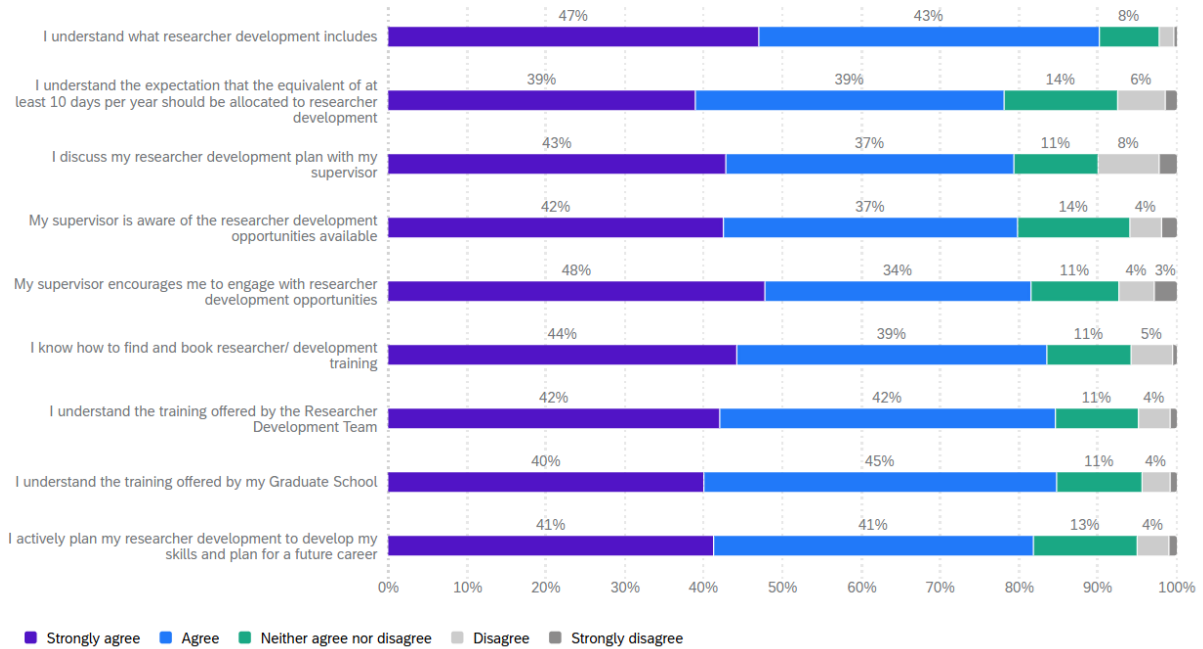


Researcher Development (Year 4+ of Programme) 150 ▾

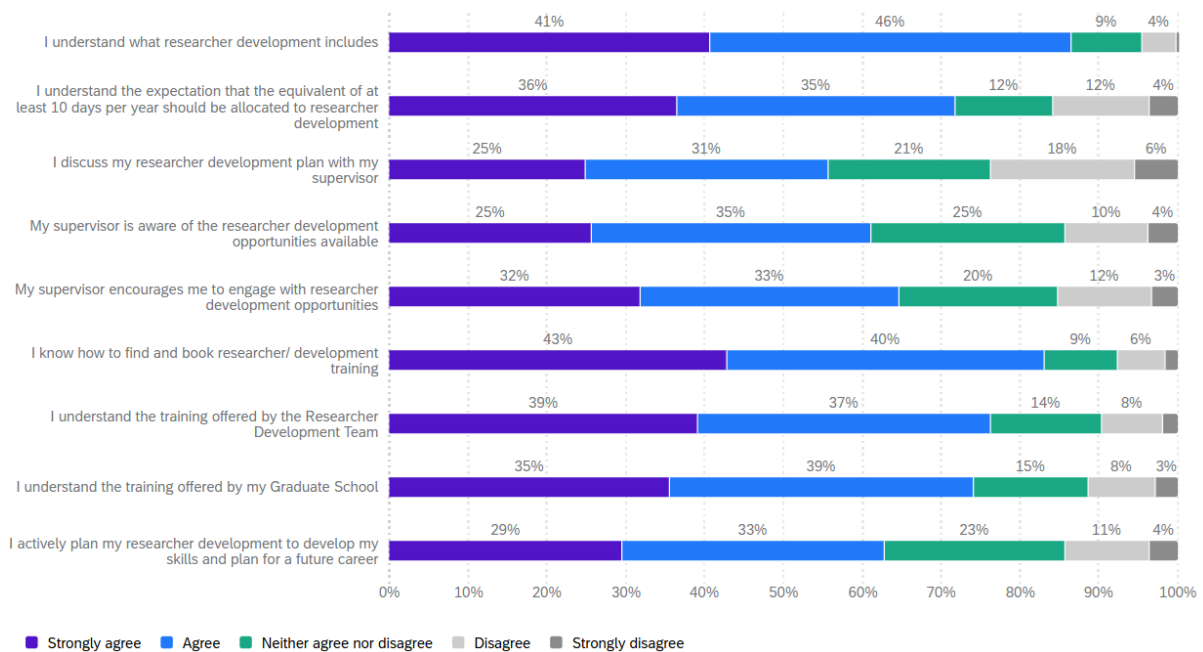


Appendix Figure 10: Researcher Development (Domicile)

Researcher Development (International) 445

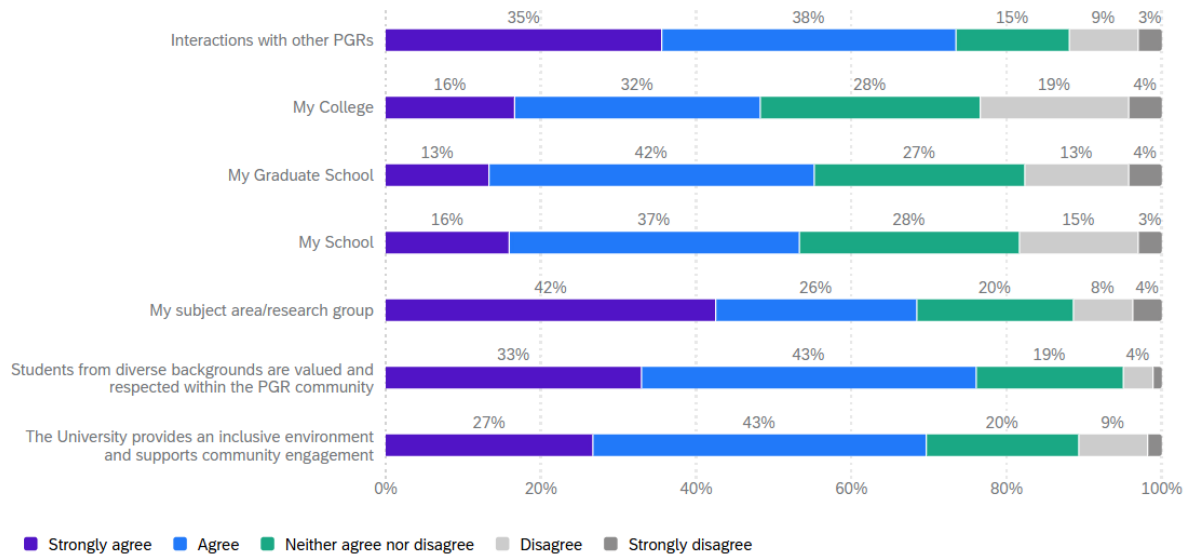


Researcher Development (UK) 412

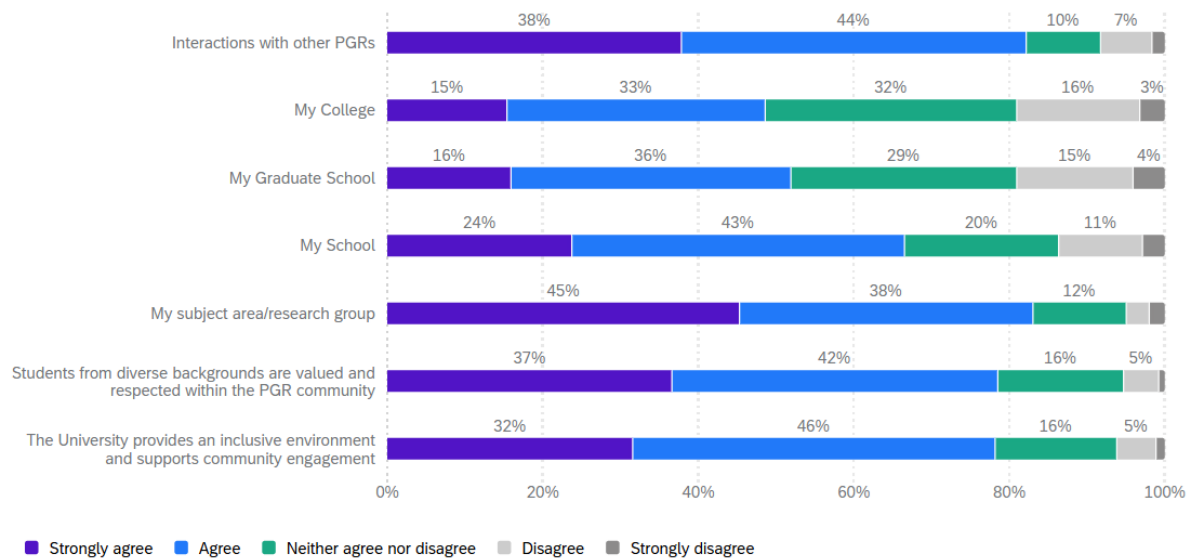


Appendix Figure 11: PGR Community & Belonging (College Level)

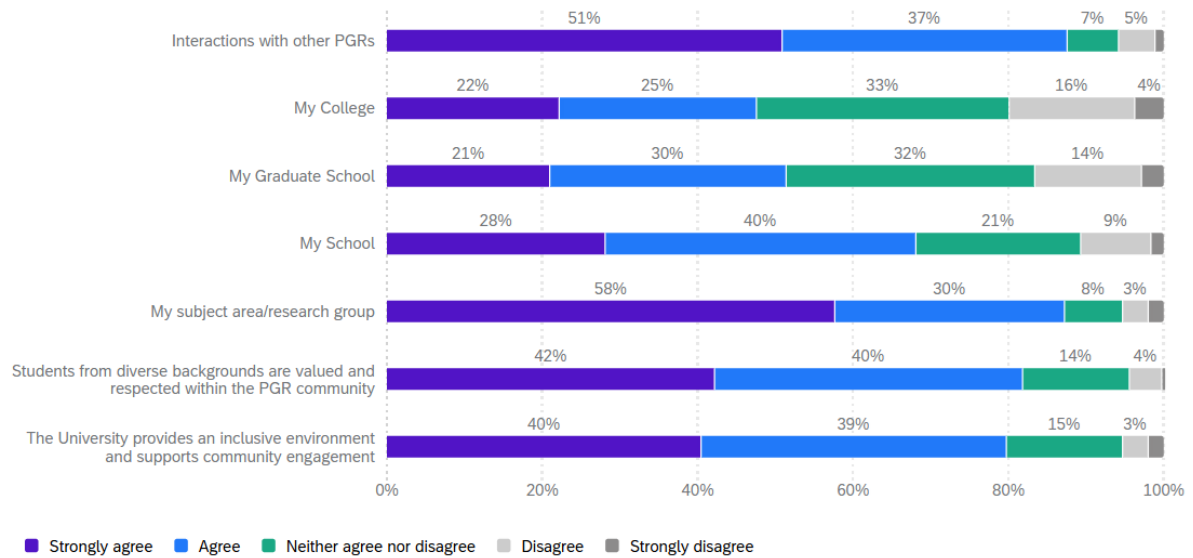
PGR Community & Belonging (COAH) 158



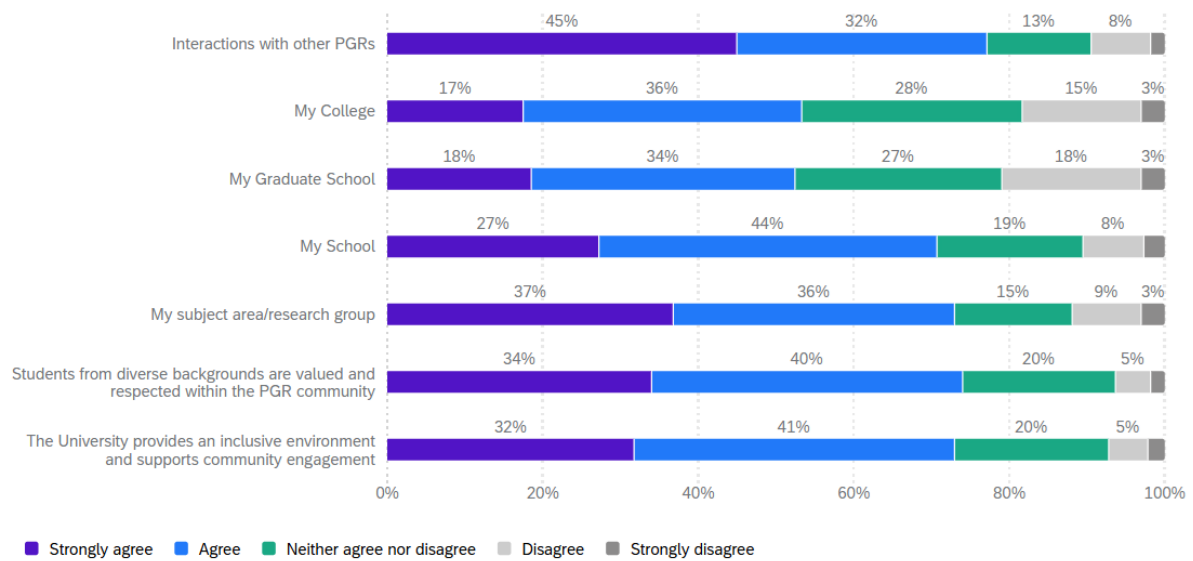
PGR Community & Belonging (MVLS) 241



PGR Community & Belonging (COSE) 240

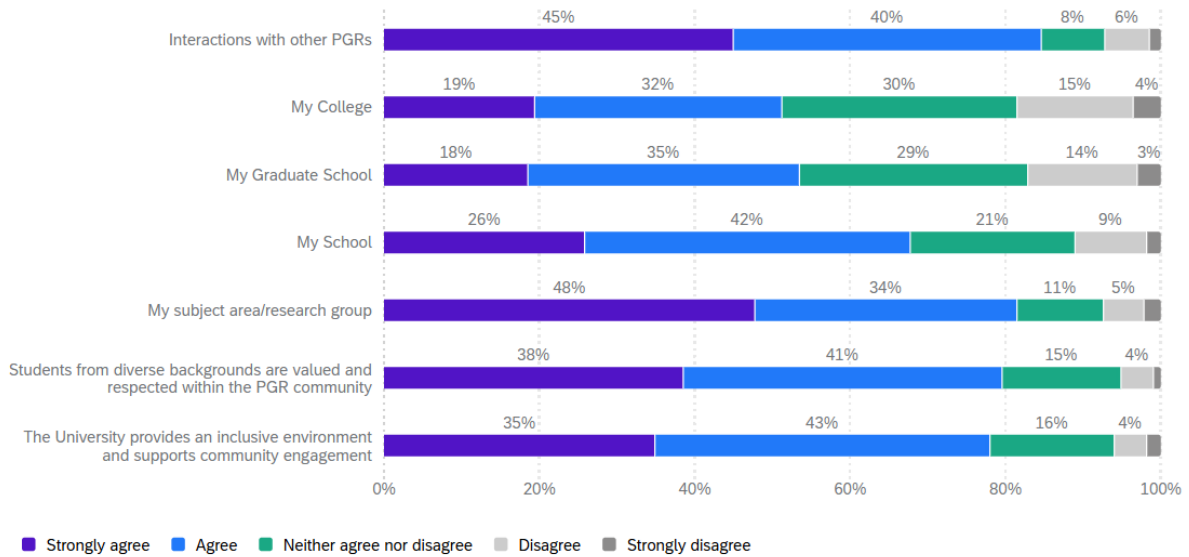


PGR Community & Belonging (COSS) 218

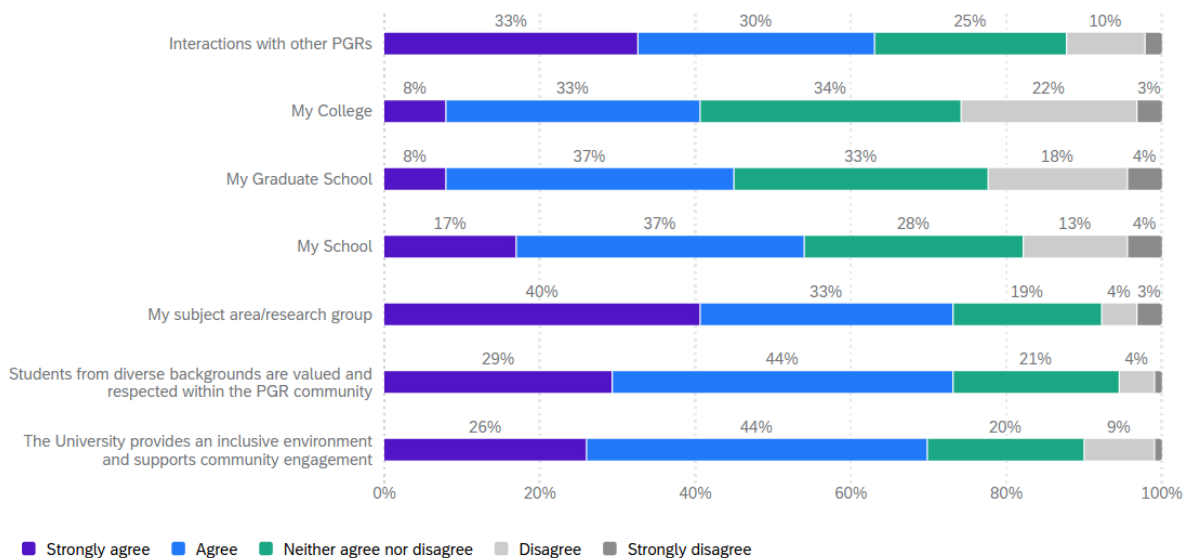


Appendix Figure 12: PGR Community & Belonging (Academic Load)

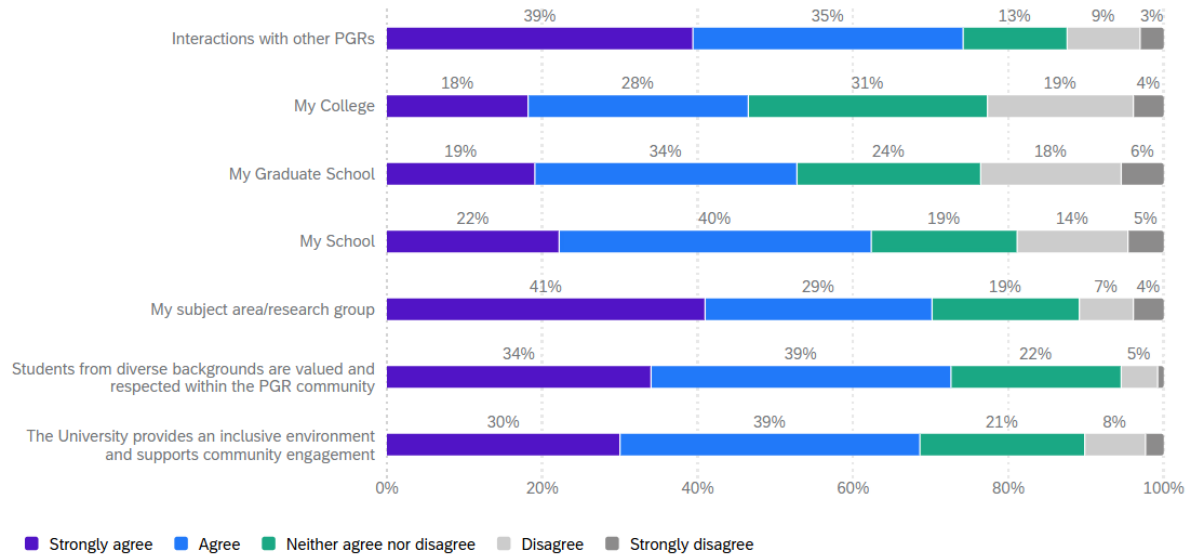
PGR Community & Belonging (Full-Time) 641



PGR Community & Belonging (Part-Time) 89

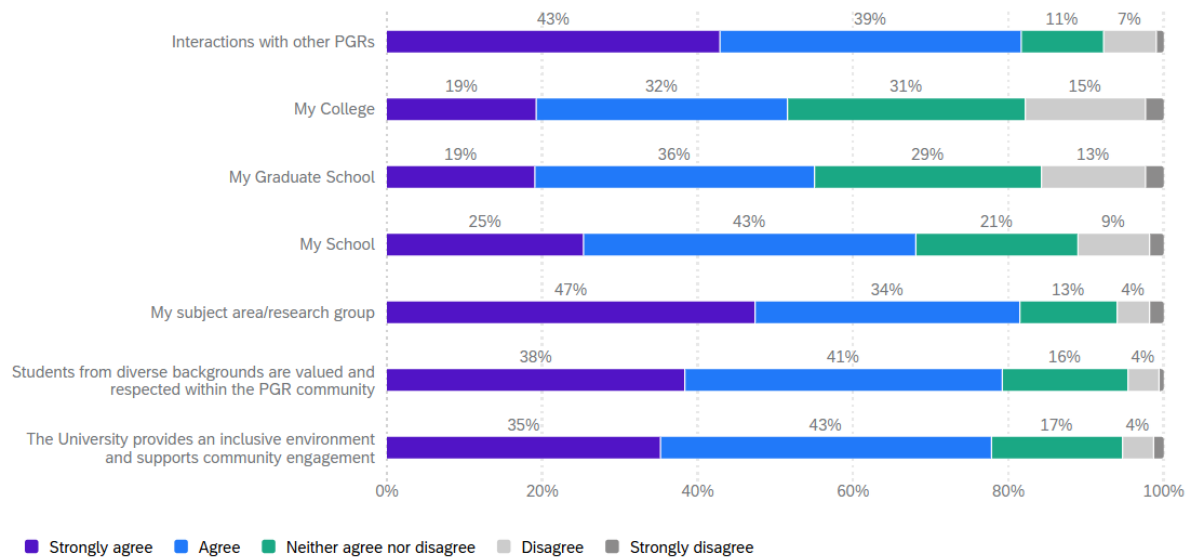


PGR Community & Belonging (Thesis Pending) 127

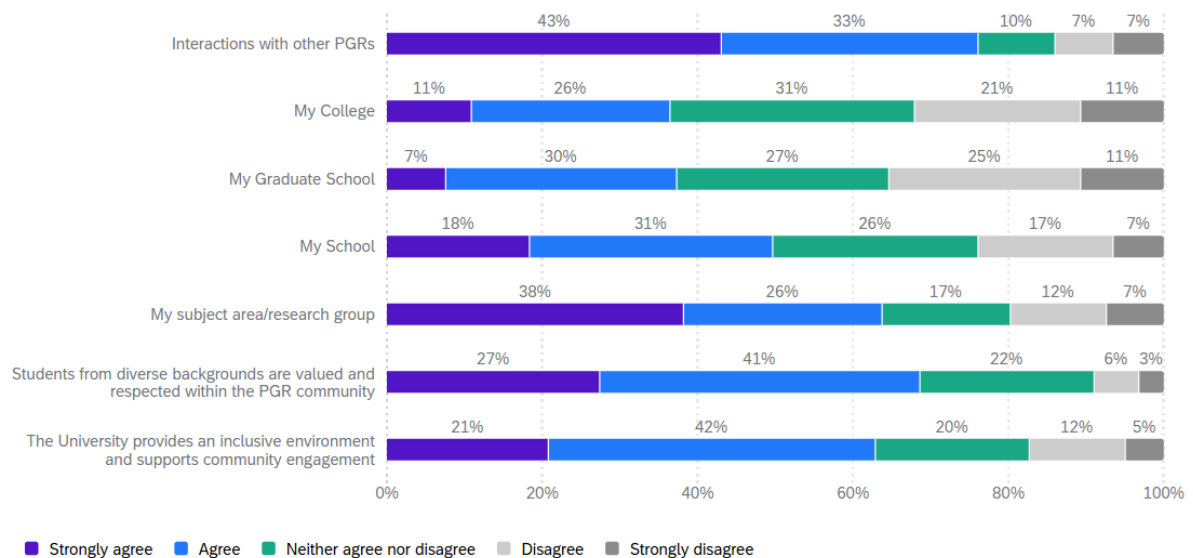


Appendix Figure 13: PGR Community & Belonging (Disability Registration)

PGR Community & Belonging (Not Registered with Disability Services) 736

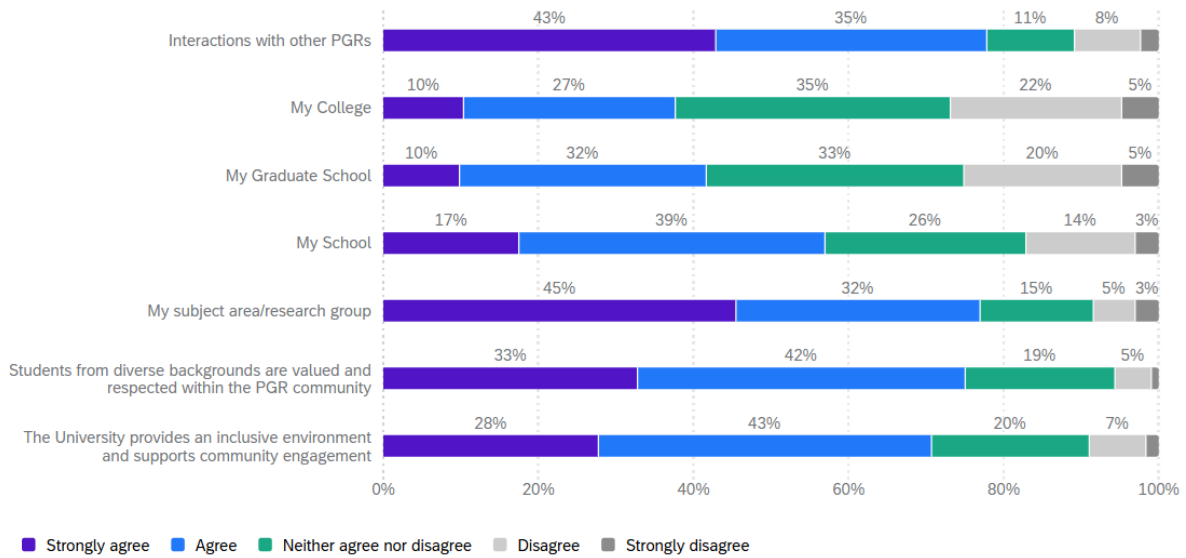


PGR Community & Belonging (Registered with Disability Services) 121

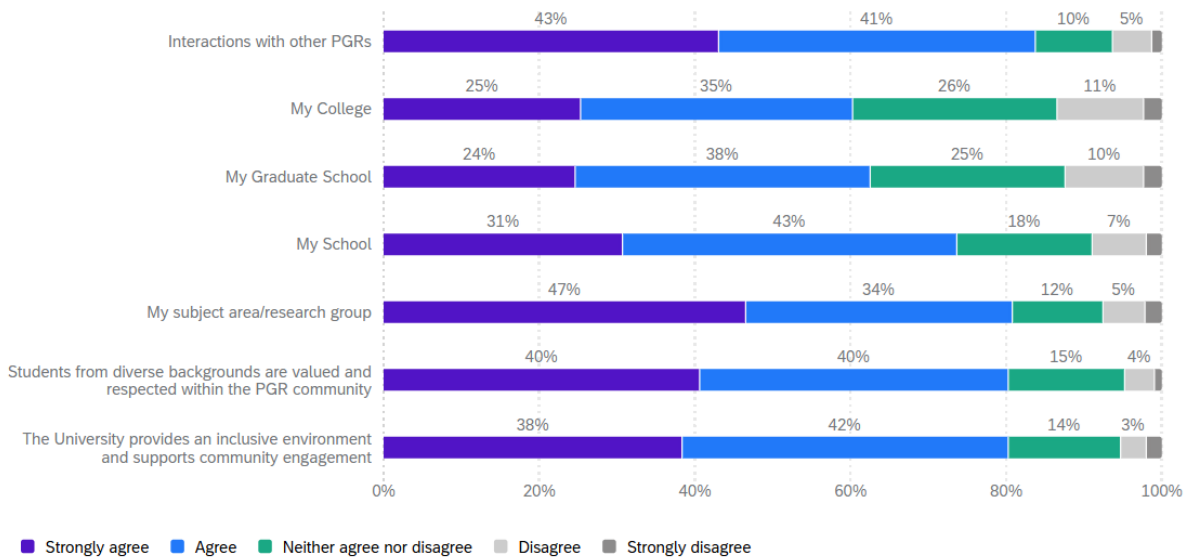


Appendix Figure 14: PGR Community & Belonging (Domicile)

PGR Community & Belonging (UK) 412

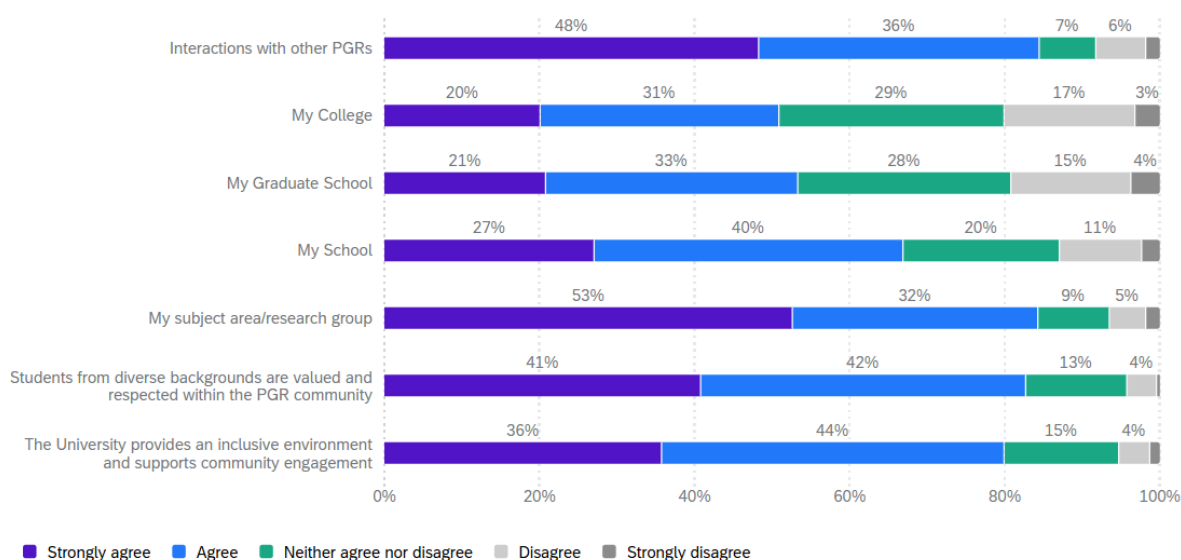


PGR Community & Belonging (International) 445

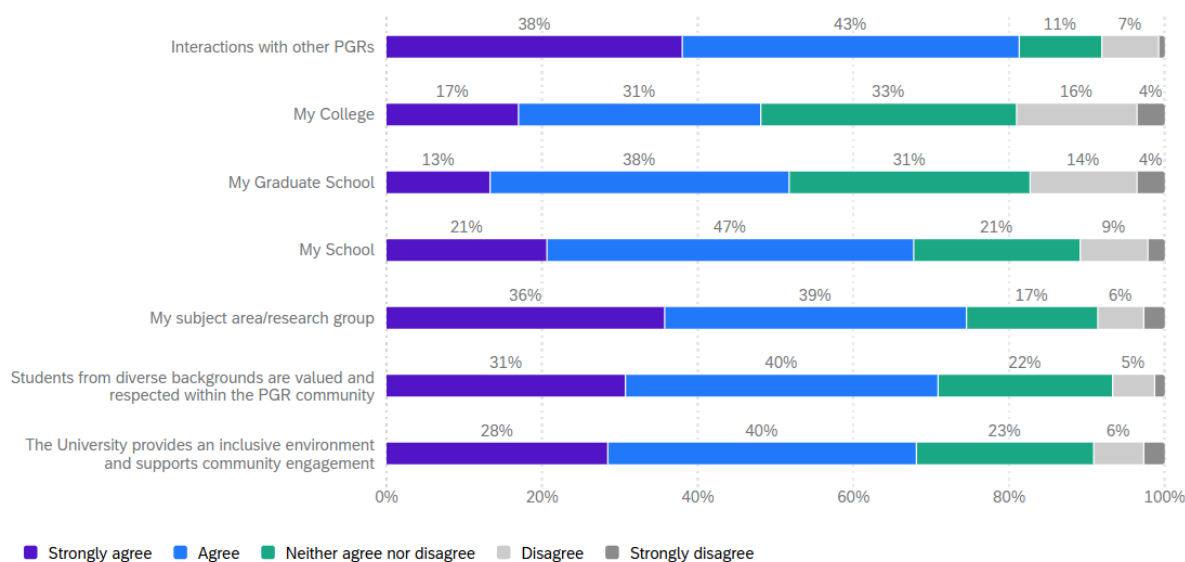


Appendix Figure 15: [PGR Community & Belonging](#) (Age, Grouped)

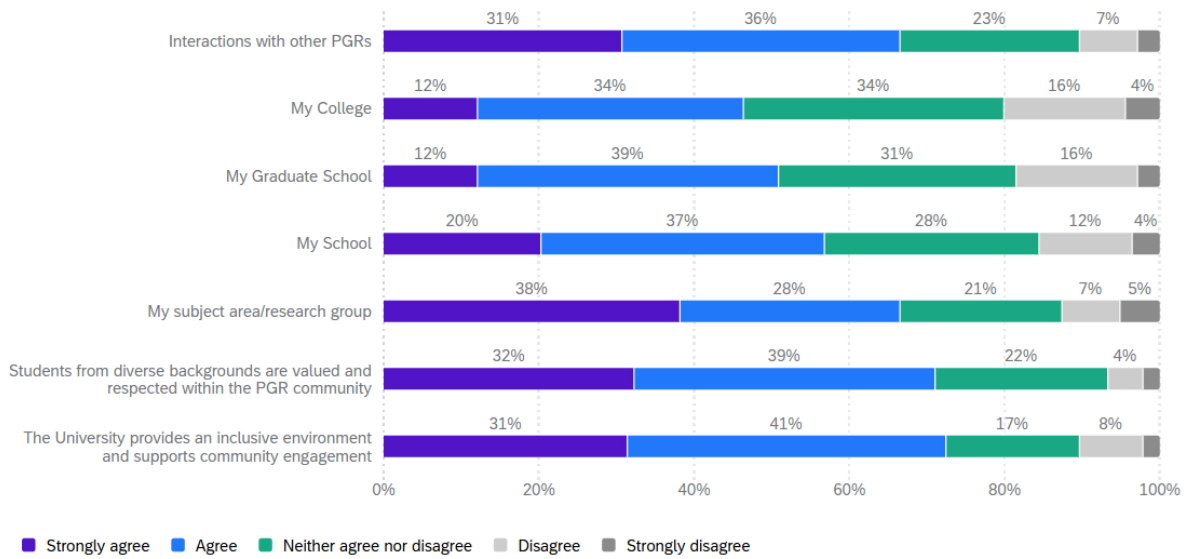
PGR Community & Belonging (Under 30 Age Group) 504



PGR Community & Belonging (30 to 39 Age Group) 219

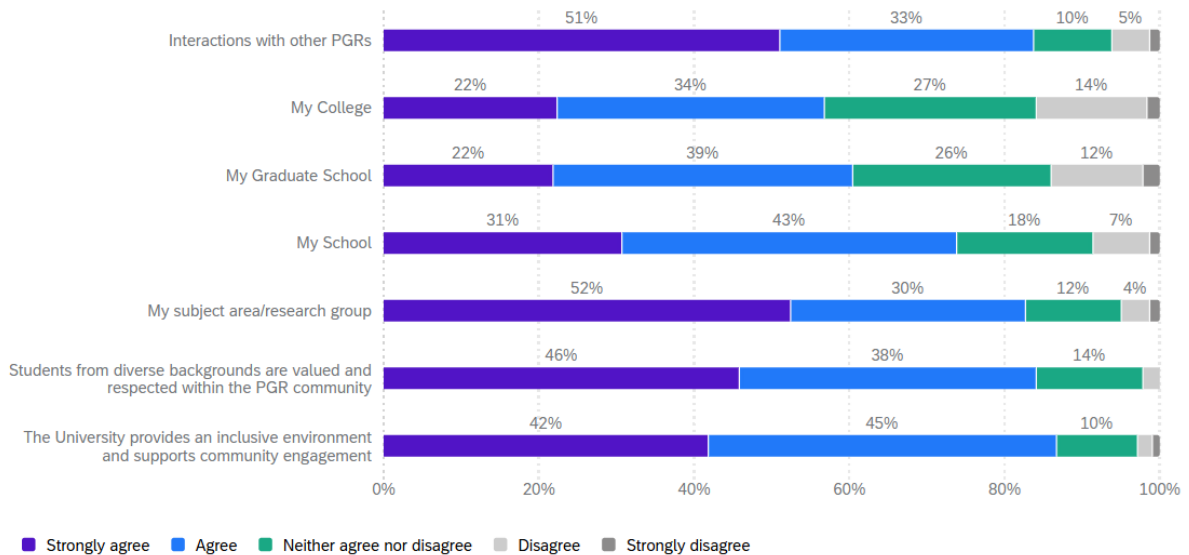


PGR Community & Belonging (40+ Age Group) 134

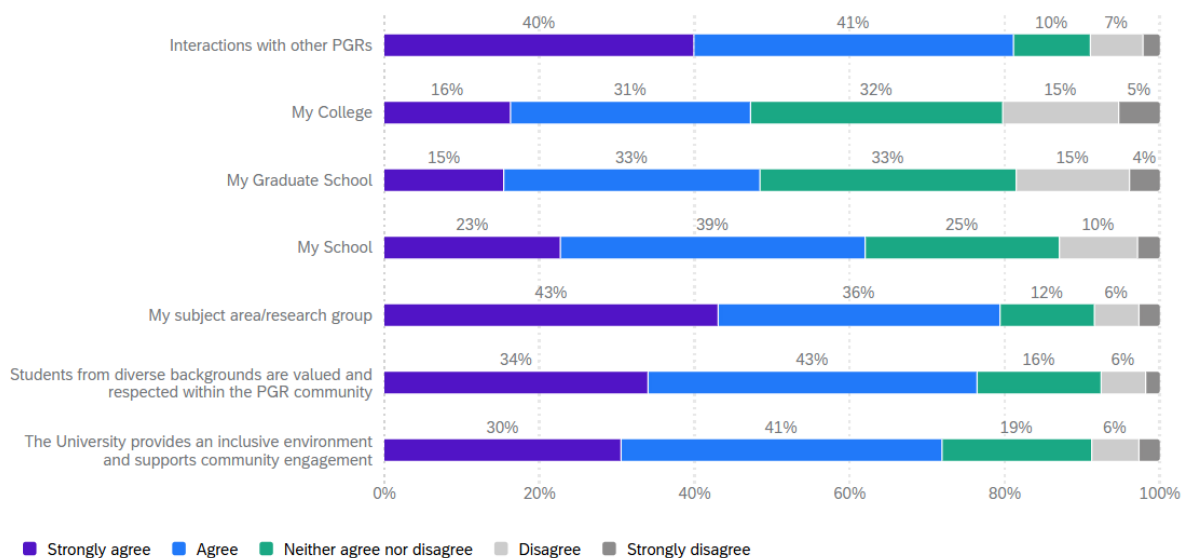


Appendix Figure 16: [PGR Community & Belonging](#) (Year of Programme, Grouped)

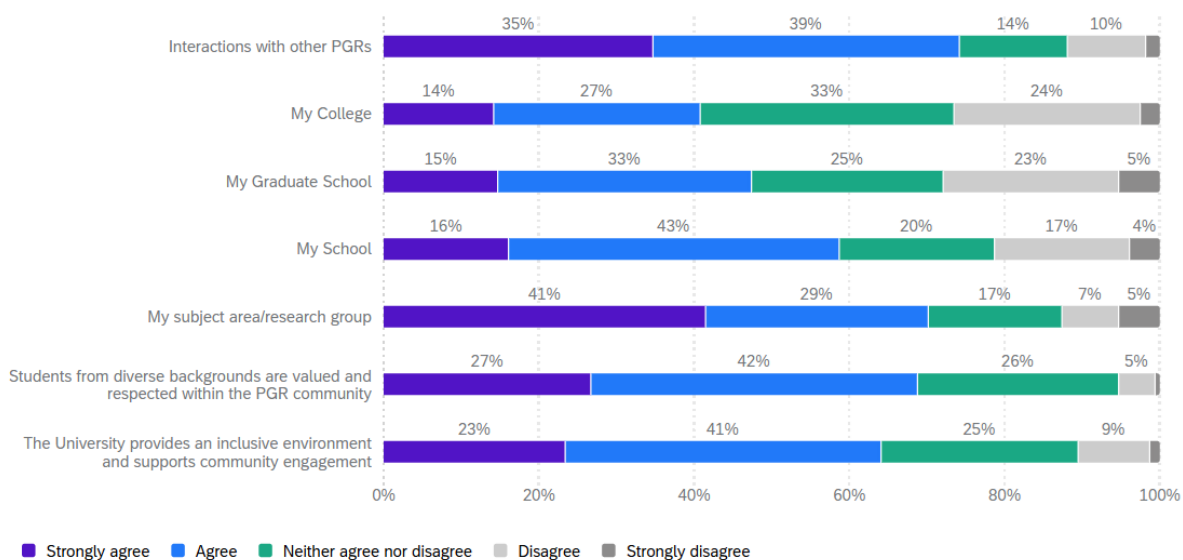
PGR Community & Belonging (Year 1 of Programme) 300



PGR Community & Belonging (Year 2 & 3 of Programme) 407

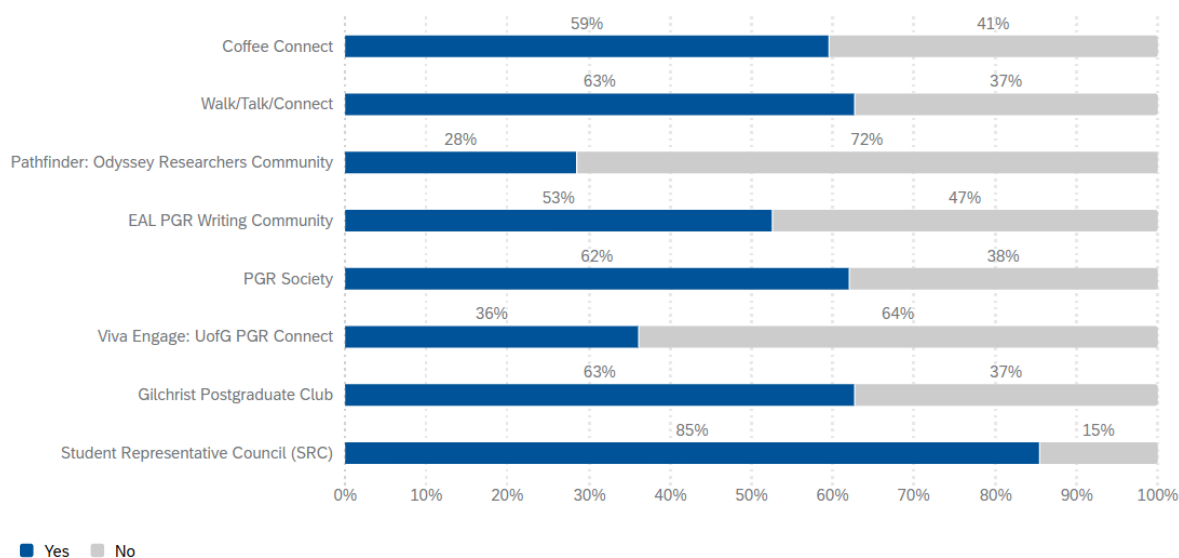


PGR Community & Belonging (Year 4+ of Programme) 150

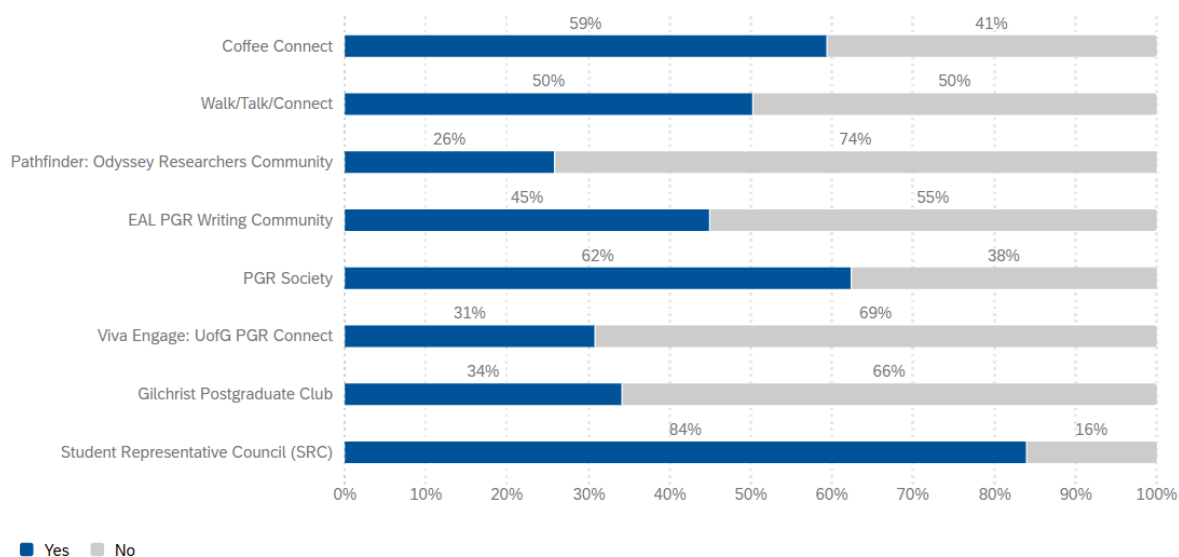


Appendix Figure 17: [Awareness of PGR Communities](#) (College Level)

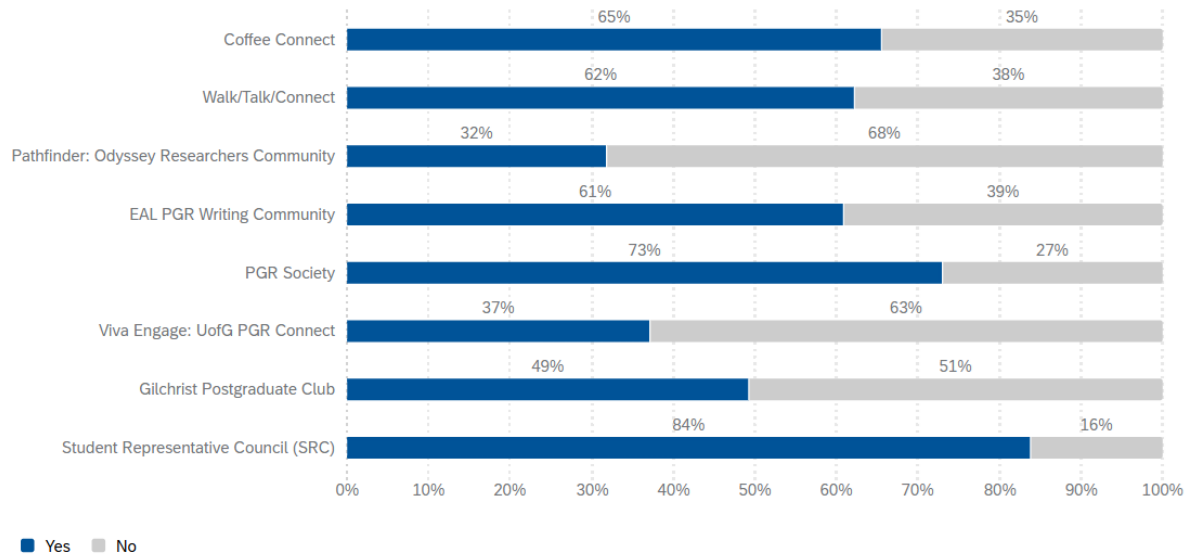
Awareness of PGR Communities (COAH) 158 



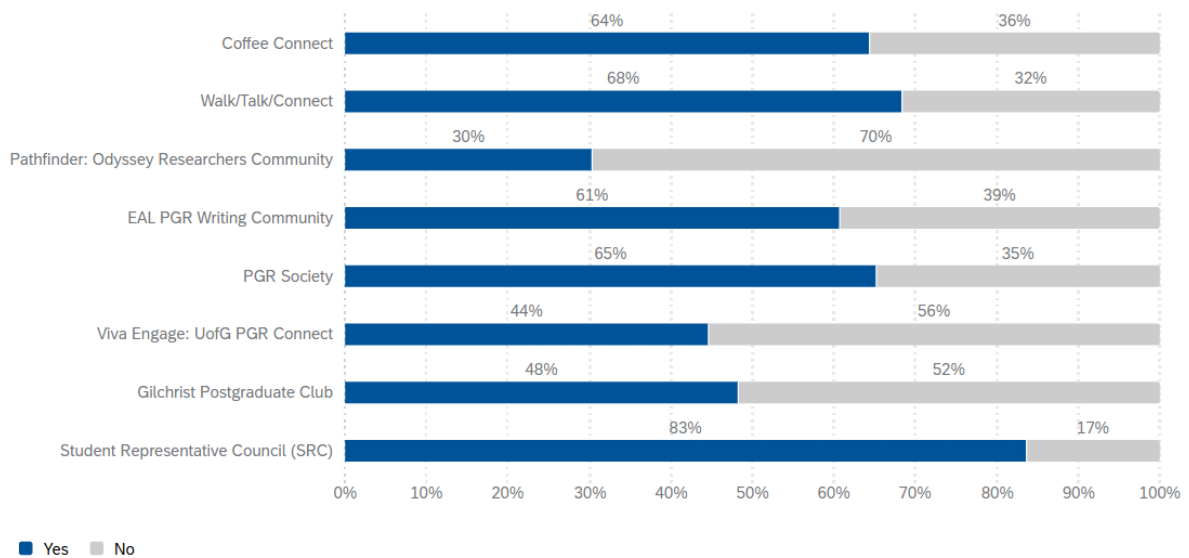
Awareness of PGR Communities (MVLS) 241 



Awareness of PGR Communities (COSE) 240

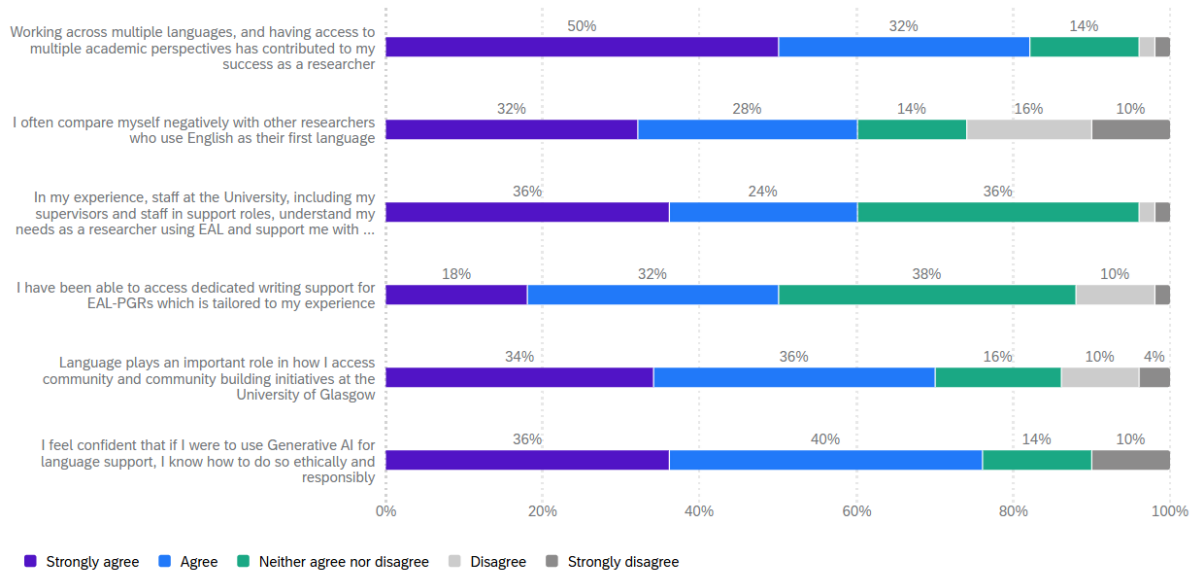


Awareness of PGR Communities (COSS) 218

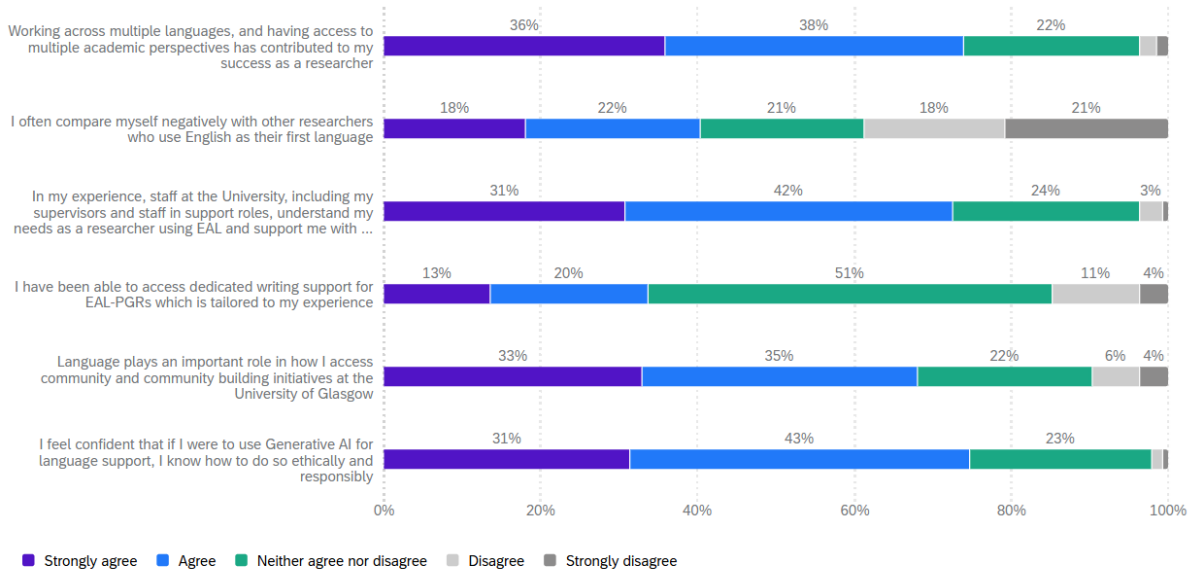


Appendix Figure 18: EAL Experience (College Level)

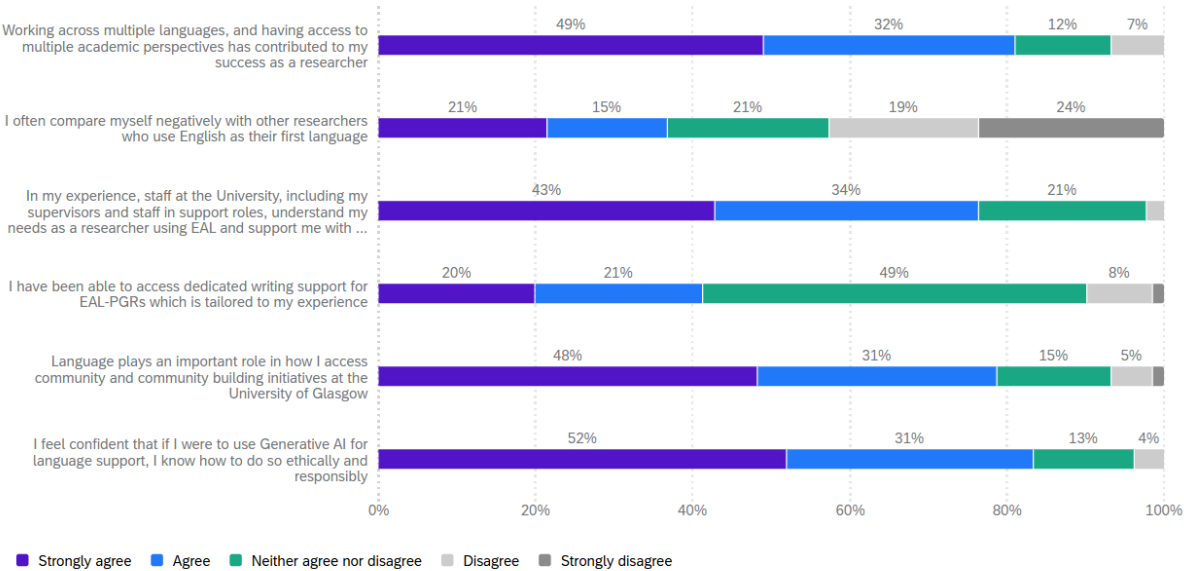
EAL Experiences (COAH) 50



EAL Experiences (MVLS) 134



EAL Experiences (COSE) 131



EAL Experiences (COSS) 136

