PGR Experience Survey 2025 Report

Mikaila Jayaweera Bandara (PGR Policy Adviser)

Kiran Faisal (PGR Policy & Strategy Manager)

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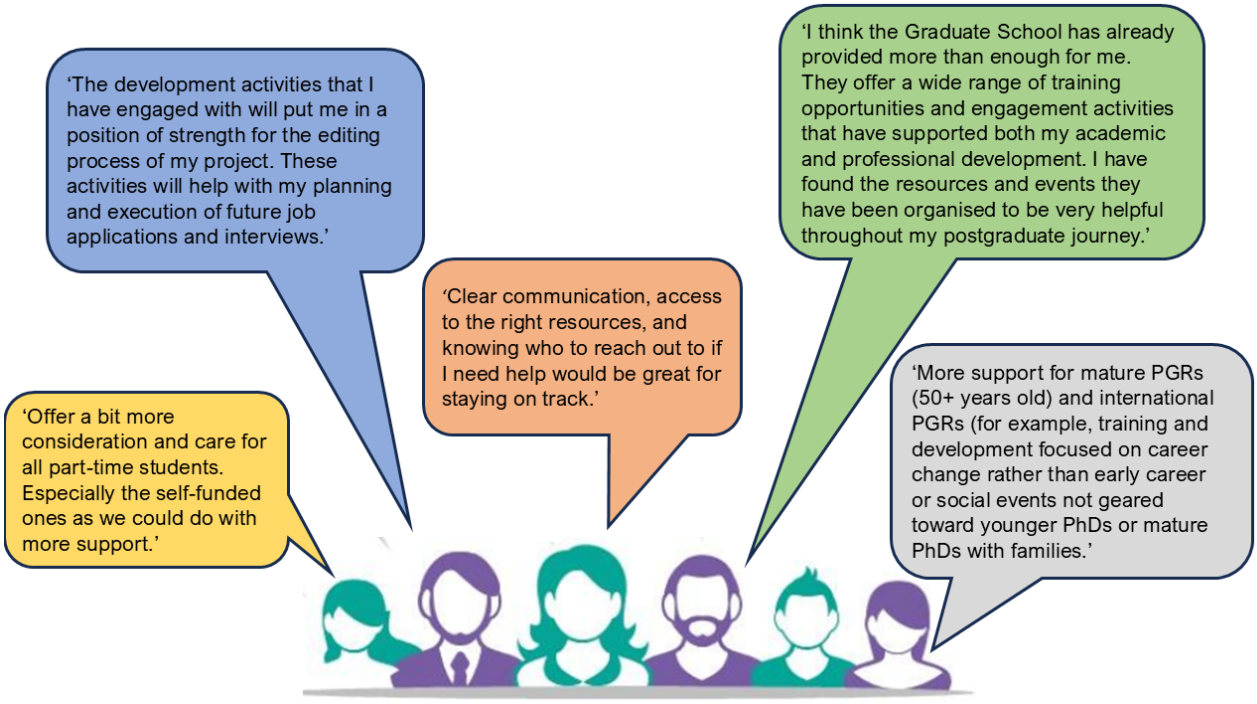
COMMENTS

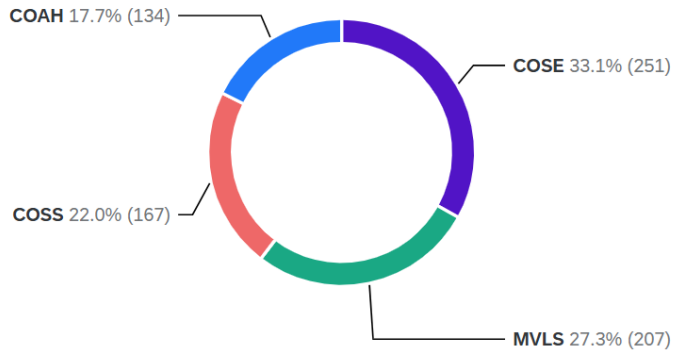
- The PGR Experience Survey 2025 was launched on 23rd April 2025 and closed on 4th June 2025. To increase response rates, this year the survey was live for a longer period of 6 weeks, students were offered the chance to win a £25 voucher if they completed the survey, and communication methods to promote the survey were amplified.
- Although the total number of responses was lower than anticipated, it was higher than the previous year.
- Optimistically, the overall PGR experience satisfaction rate (86%) across the University is the highest result since the survey was launched in 2021.
- While the top improvement feedback was 'no suggestions', it should be recognised that students still yearn for support, inclusion, community, and social interactions. Especially for part-time and distance learning students.
- PGR community is a recurring theme in survey feedback. Students feel a stronger sense of PGR community & belonging with their subject area/research group and/or interactions with other PGRs. However, students have a weaker sense of belonging with their Graduate School and College. There is a possibly a need to enhance visibility and impact of the Graduate Schools and Colleges.
- While the majority of PGRs are satisfied with their experience, it's essential that we remain attentive to those who are struggling. Students feedback provides valuable insights that should inform our ongoing efforts to improve support, inclusivity, engagement and communication across the University.



A few feedback comments expressed by PGRs

RESPONSE RATES

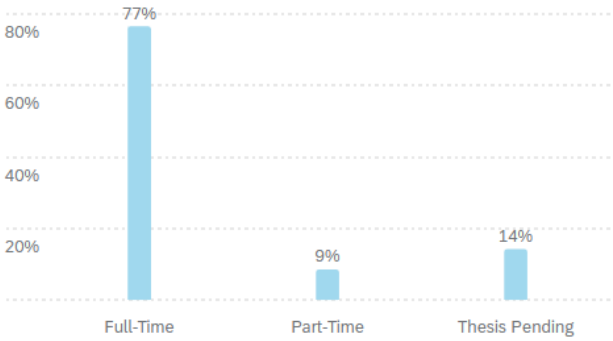
College Level Response Rates 759



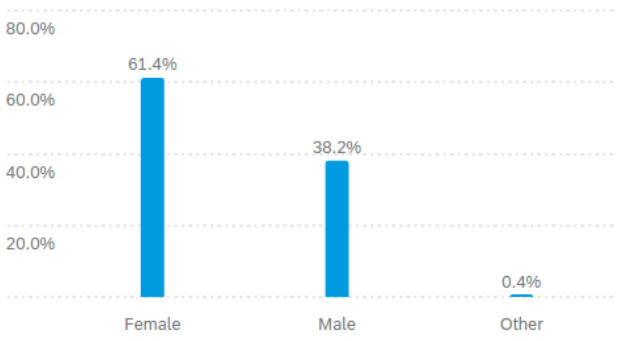
College	% of College Population
COAH	19.6%
MVLS	16.5%
COSE	16.9%
COSS	17.9%

- The PGR Experience Survey 2025 had 759 respondents which equated to 17.4% in a total population of 4357 PGR students at the time the survey was distributed.
- This is slightly higher than 2024, which had a 17.2% response rate.
- Respondent's academic load was predominantly full-time (77%).
- 61.4% of respondents were female and 38.2% were male. The other category comprised of students who identified as other, unknown or intersex/unspecified collectively made up 0.4% of respondents.
- 45% of students were international, followed closely by home students (41%).
- The James Watts School of Engineering (10.4%) had the highest response rates at School level; however, when comparing the no. of respondents to the total population within each school, SUERC had the highest proportional response.
- Majority of respondents (89%) did not have a disability declared.
- Regarding ethnicity, 53% of respondents were white, and 45% were of minority ethnicity (this consists of Asian, black and mixed & other ethnicities).
- 32% of students were in their 1st year and 29% and 24% in their 2nd and 3rd year, respectively.
- Respondents were mostly in the 21-24 or 25-29 age bracket.

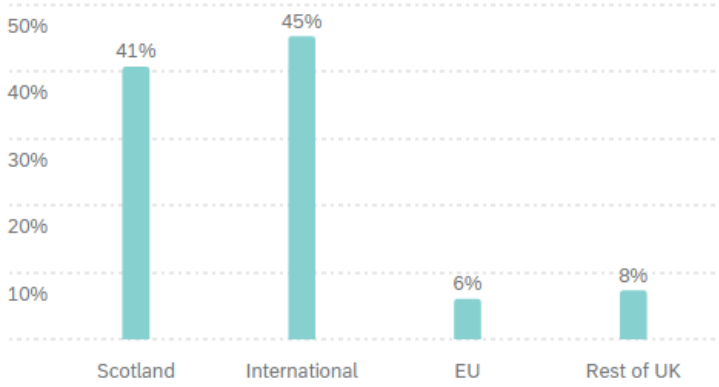
Academic Load Response Rates 759



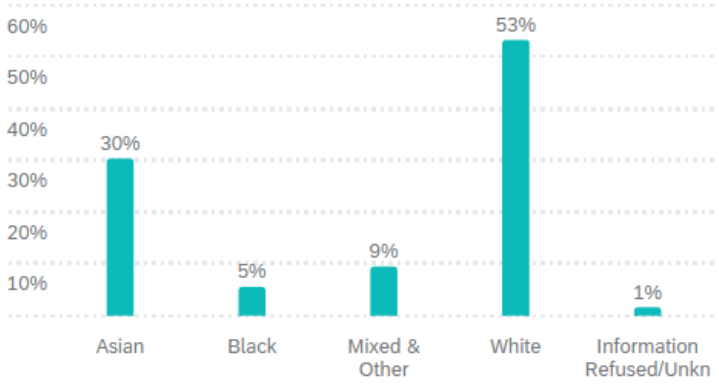
Gender Response Rates 759



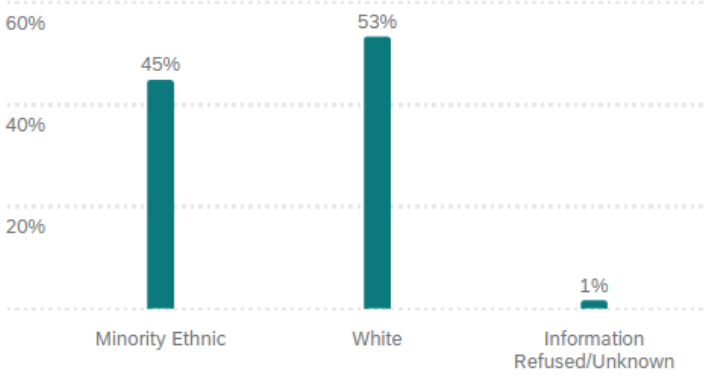
Domicile Response Rates 759



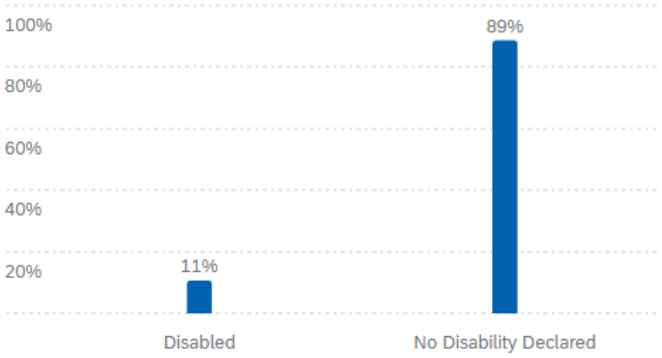
Ethnicity Response Rates 759



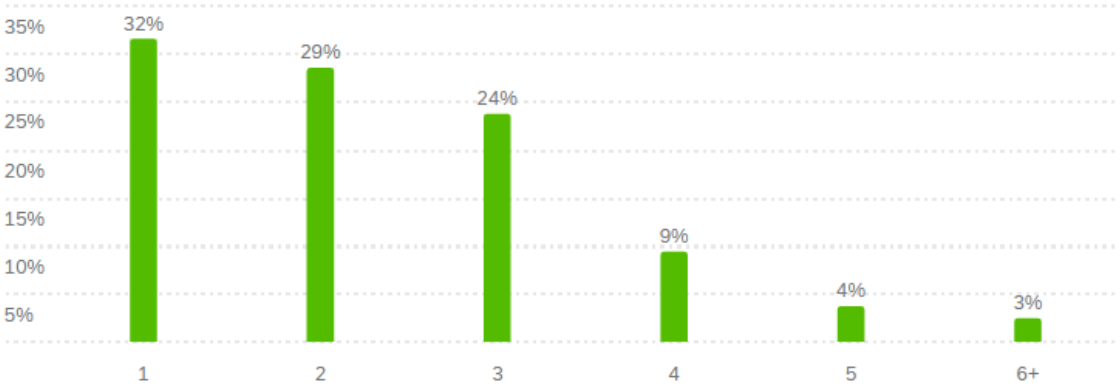
Minority Ethnic (Grouped) Response Rates 759



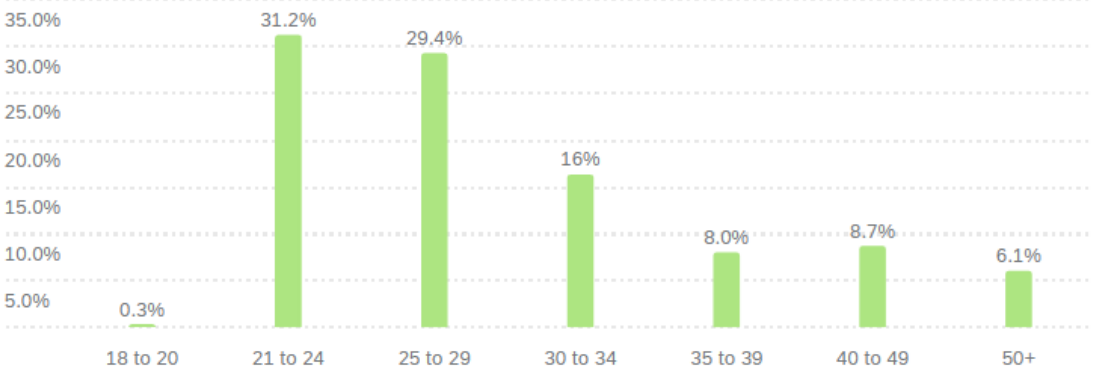
Disability Response Rates 759



Year of Programme Response Rates 759



Age on Entry (Grouped) Response Rates 759



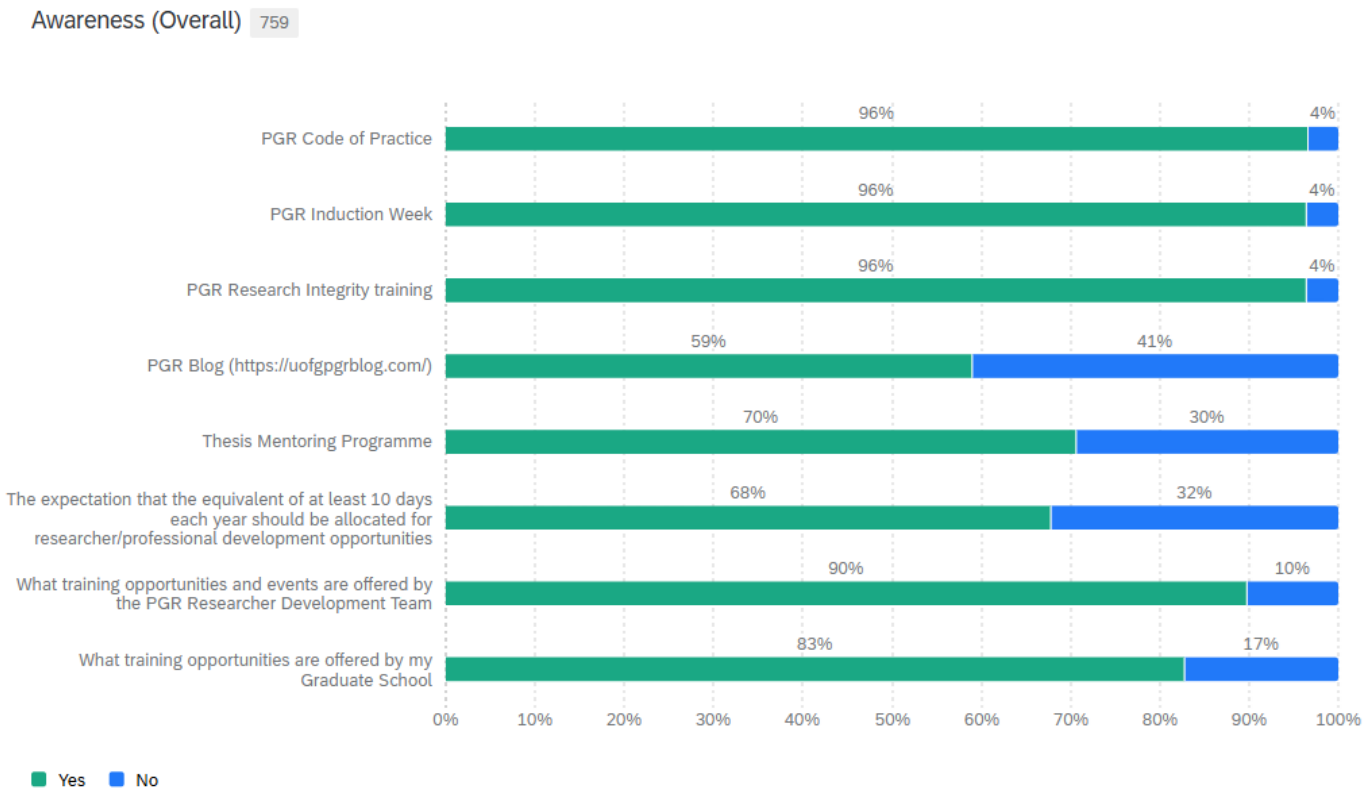
School Level Response Rates 759

School	↓ Count	Count
James Watt School of Engineering	79	10.4%
Education	54	7.1%
Critical Studies	52	6.9%
Adam Smith Business School	49	6.5%
Humanities	46	6.1%
Chemistry	45	5.9%
Computing Science	45	5.9%
Social & Political Sciences	44	5.8%
Biodiversity, One Health & Veterinary Medicine	43	5.7%
Health & Wellbeing	38	5.0%
Cancer Sciences	30	4.0%
Physics & Astronomy	29	3.8%
Mathematics & Statistics	28	3.7%
Culture & Creative Arts	27	3.6%
Infection & Immunity	27	3.6%
Molecular Biosciences	22	2.9%
Geographical & Earth Sciences	21	2.8%
Cardiovascular & Metabolic Health	17	2.2%
Psychology & Neuroscience	16	2.1%
Medicine, Dentistry & Nursing	15	2.0%
Law	13	1.7%
Modern Languages & Culture	8	1.1%
Social & Environmental Sustainability	8	1.1%
Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre	3	0.4%

School	% of School Population
Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre	25.0%
Chemistry	24.3%
Education	23.6%
Biodiversity, One Health & Veterinary Medicine	23.4%
Geographical & Earth Sciences	21.9%
Humanities	21.4%
Psychology & Neuroscience	21.3%
Mathematics & Statistics	20.7%
Critical Studies	20.3%
Physics & Astronomy	19.9%
Culture & Creative Arts	19.6%
Social & Environmental Sustainability	19.5%
Social & Political Sciences	19.4%
Computing Science	18.0%
Adam Smith Business School	17.4%
Cancer Sciences	16.9%
Molecular Biosciences	16.4%
Infection & Immunity	15.8%
Health & Wellbeing	15.8%
Medicine, Dentistry & Nursing	13.2%
Law	12.6%
James Watt School of Engineering	12.0%
Modern Languages & Cultures	11.9%
Cardiovascular & Metabolic Health	11.1%

AWARENESS OF PGR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION & EVENTS

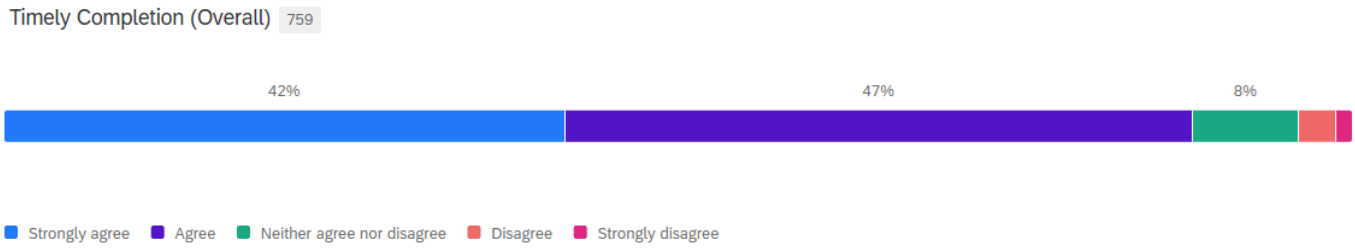
Q1: *'Since starting my research degree programme, I am aware of the following:'*

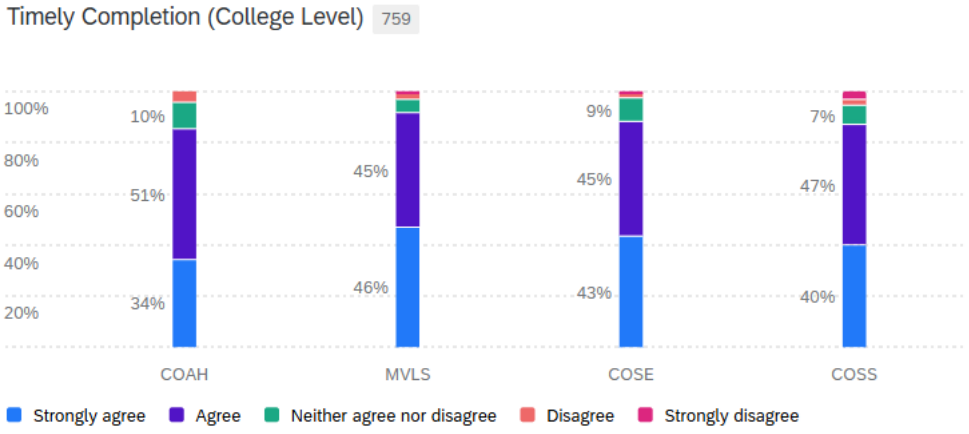


- Encouragingly, 96% of overall PGR respondents were aware of the PGR Code of Practice, PGR Induction week and PGR Research Integrity training. This was closely reflected for all four Colleges (Appendix Figs.1).
- 59% of respondents knew about the PGR Blog webpage, a community space for PGRs to share their experiences. This result is higher than 2023, where only 45% of respondents were aware of the PGR Blog.
- 70% of respondents were aware of the Thesis Mentoring Programme provided by the Researcher Development Team.
- It is strongly encouraged by the University for PGRs to set aside at least 10 days each year for researcher/professional development, which is reiterated in the PGR Code of Practice. 68% of respondents were aware of this, which is a 12% increase from 2023. COAH respondents were least aware (59%) of this guideline whereas COSE were the most aware (77%) (Appendix Figs.1).
- Overall, majority of respondents were aware of training opportunities provided by the PGR Researcher Development Team and by their Graduate School. High levels of awareness were also shown at College Level (Appendix Figs.1).

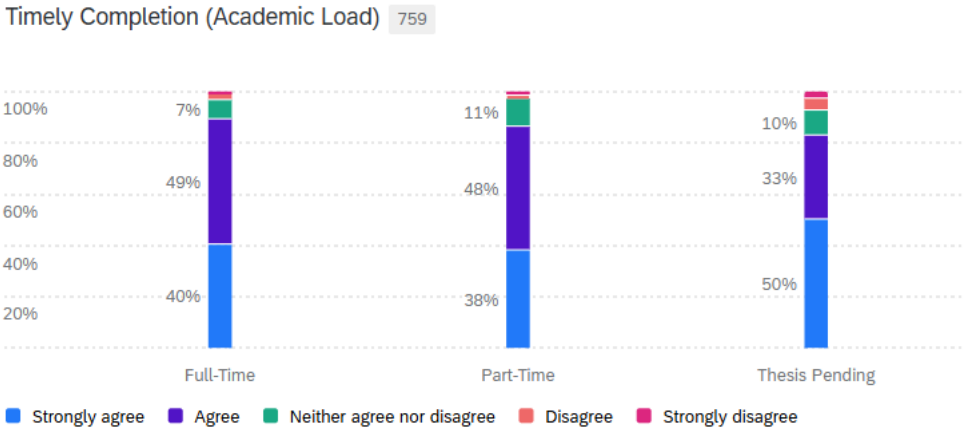
SUPPORT FOR TIMELY COMPLETION

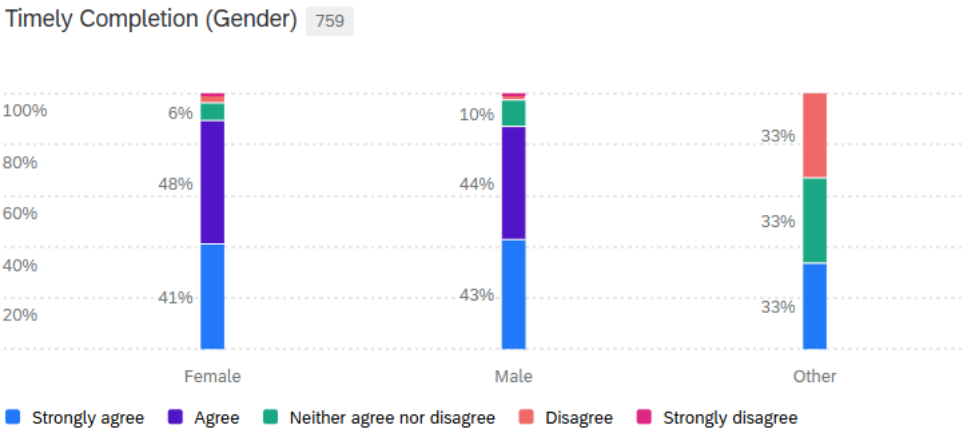
Q2: *'I am confident that I will be able to complete my research degree programme within the agreed timescale, including any additional time for agreed periods of extension or suspension:'*



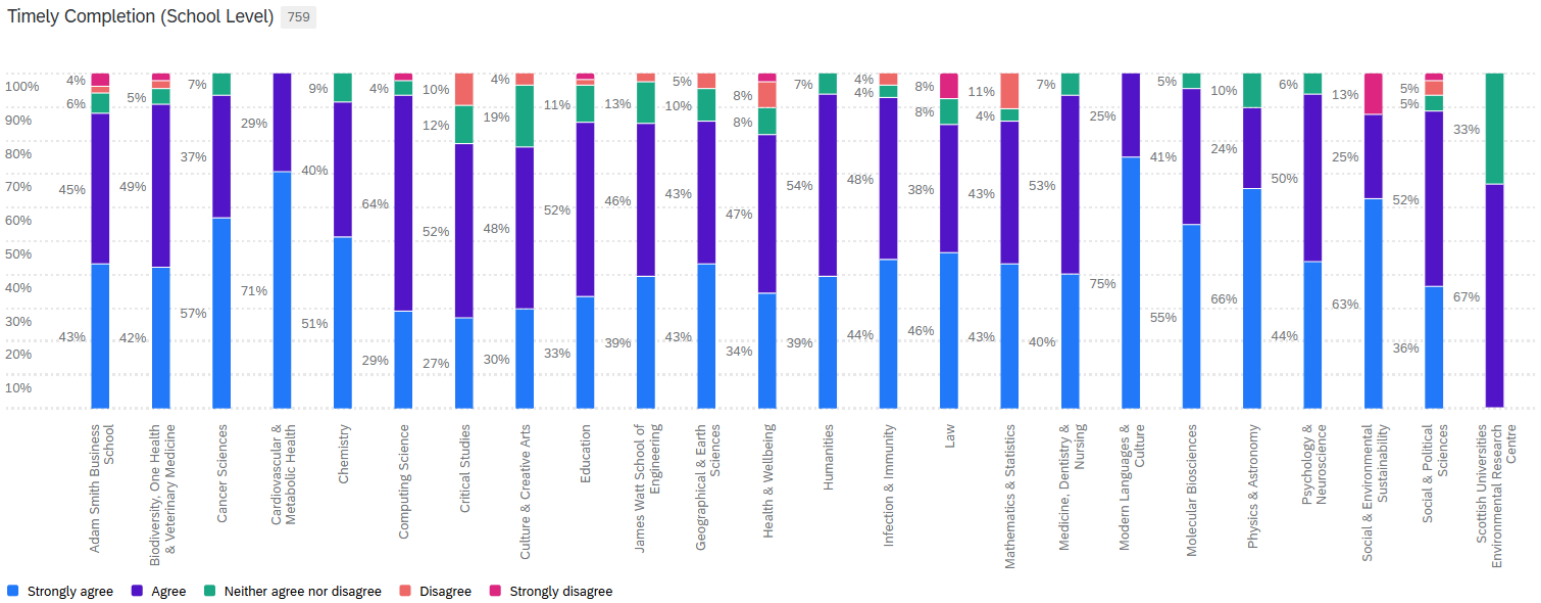


- Overall, 89% of respondents agreed they could complete their research degree within the agreed timescale.
- PGRs in MVLS (91%) were more likely to feel they will complete in time compared to COAH, COSE & COSS, which were 85%, 88% & 87%, respectively.
- Full-time (FT) students had the highest agreement (89%) followed closely by part-time (PT) students (86%).

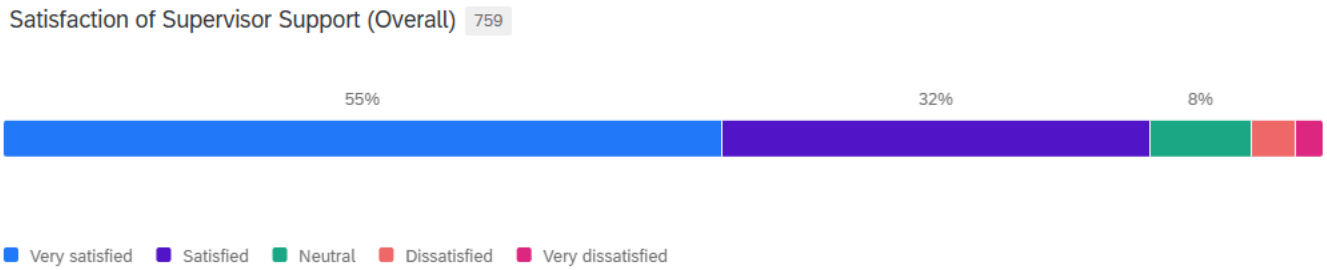




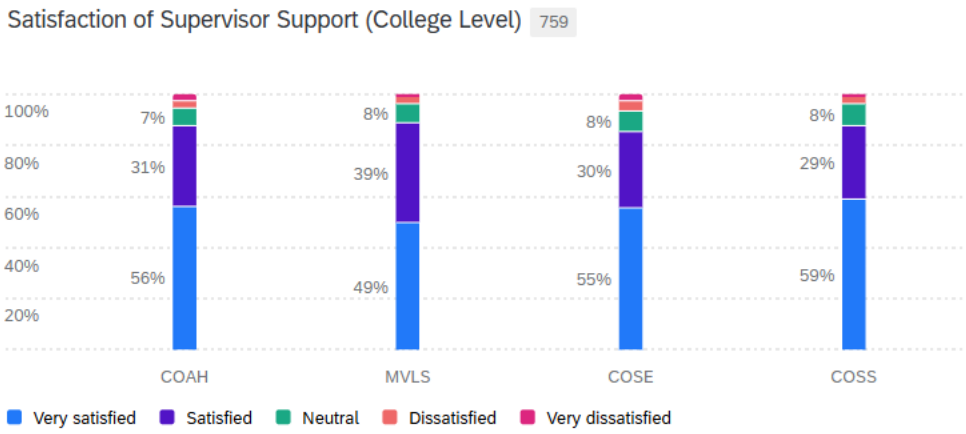
- Agreement of students identifying as female and male were fairly even. Although agreement levels are lower for students who identified as either other, unknown or intersex/unspecified, it must be noted that only 3 students identified in the other category.
- At School level, School of Cardiovascular & Metabolic Health and School of Modern Languages & Cultures both had the highest agreement rate of 100%.
- Scotland based students were least likely to feel they will complete on time (Appendix Figs. 2).
- 88% of students who do not declare a disability had a higher agreement compared to students who do declare a disability (82%) (Appendix Figs. 2)
- Students of minority ethnicity (90%) felt slightly more confident to complete on time in comparison to students of white ethnicity (86%) (Appendix Figs. 2).
- 1st years were the most confident to complete on time compared to the other years (Appendix Figs. 2).
- Students in the 50+ age group felt the least confident (Appendix Figs. 2).



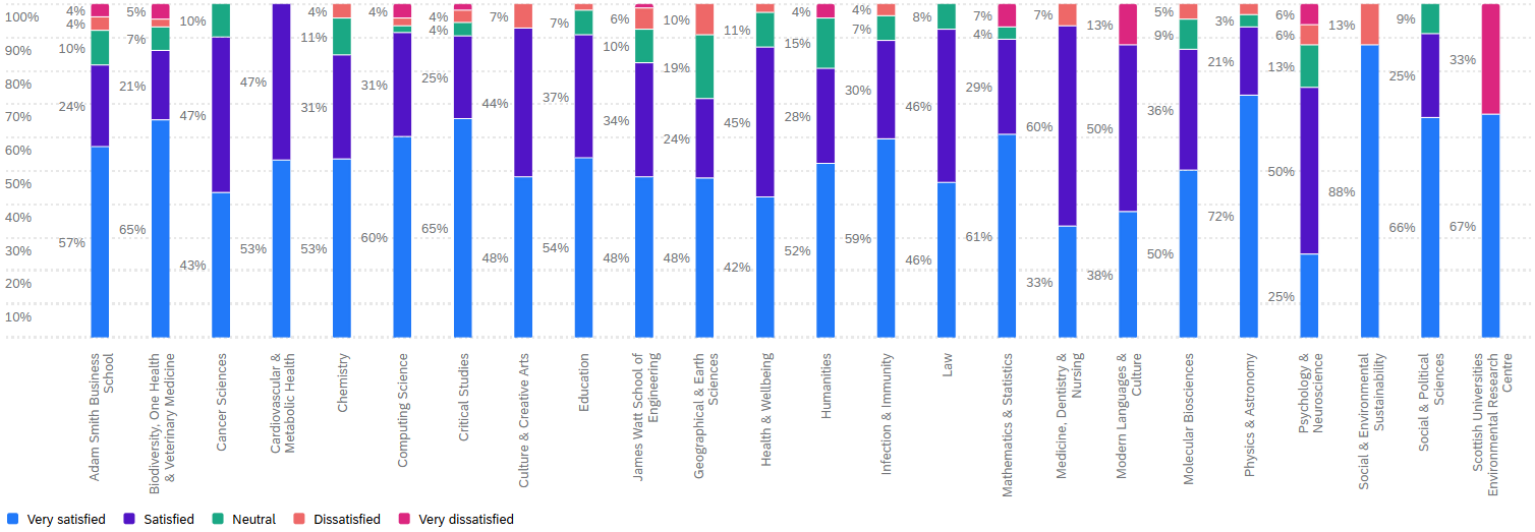
***Q3**: 'How satisfied are you with the guidance and support provided by your supervisor to help you complete your research on time?'*



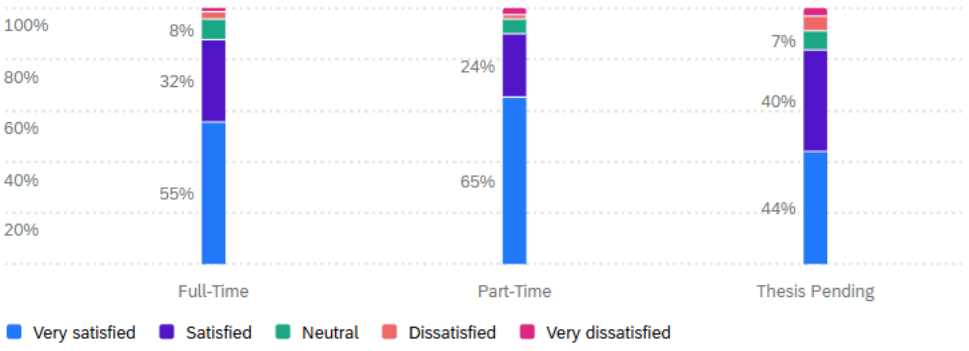
- Overall, 87% of respondents were satisfied with the guidance and support from their supervisor to help with timely completion of their research.
- At College level, MVLS & COSS had the highest satisfaction rates of 88%, and COAH & COSE closely followed with 87% and 85%, respectively.
- PGRs from School of Cardiovascular & Metabolic Health were 100% satisfied with support provided by their supervisor.
- Additionally, three other Schools had 0% dissatisfaction rates (Cancer Sciences, Law, and Social & Political Sciences). These Schools displayed neutrality ranging from 8-10%.
- PT students had the highest satisfaction rate (89%) in comparison to FT (87%) and thesis pending (84%).
- Male students were marginally more satisfied (89%) with support from their supervisor compared to female students (86%).
- International and rest of UK students had high satisfaction rates of 91% and 89%, respectively (Appendix Figs. 3).
- Non-disabled students had a satisfaction rate of 87%, whereas disabled students had a slightly lower satisfaction rate of 84% (Appendix Figs. 3).
- PGRs of white ethnicity were less satisfied (84%) with supervisor support compared to students of minority ethnicity (91%) (Appendix Figs. 3).



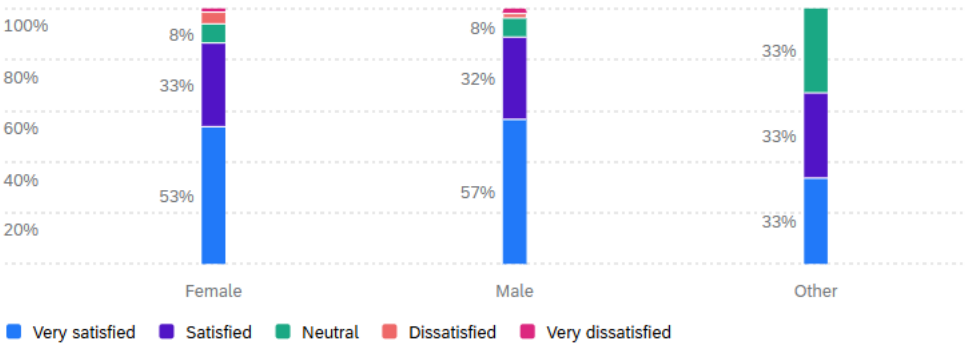
Satisfaction of Supervisor Support (School Level) 759



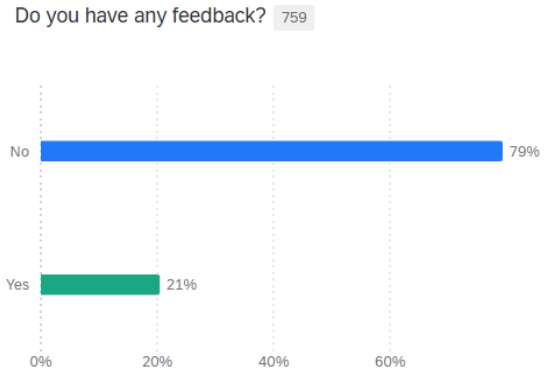
Satisfaction of Supervisor Support (Academic Load) 759

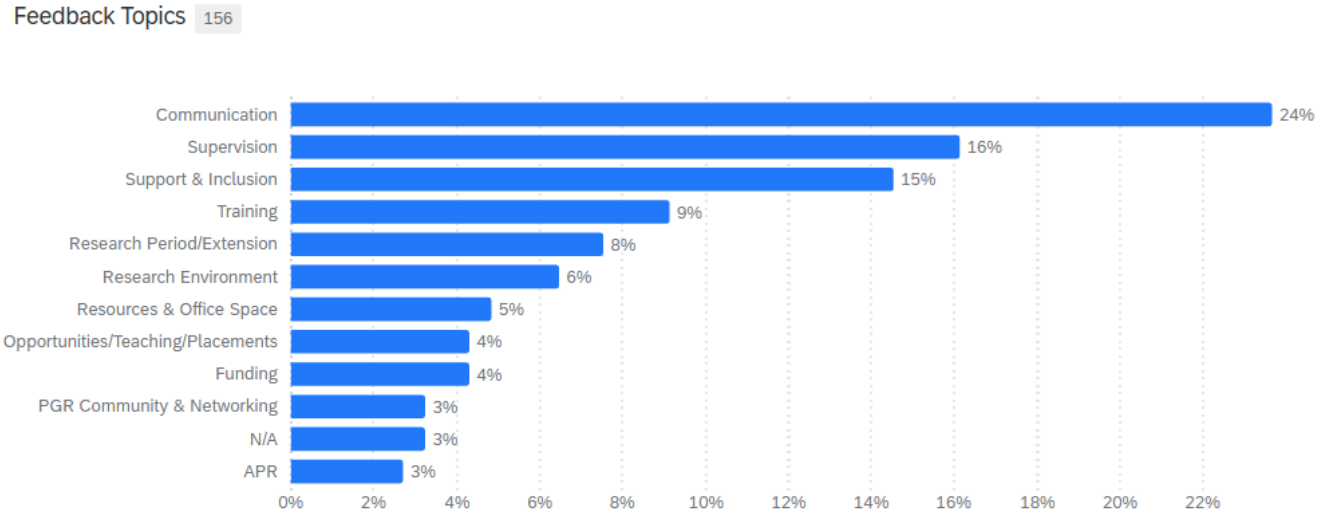


Satisfaction of Supervisor Support (Gender) 759



***Q4**: 'Do you have comments, suggestions, or feedback regarding how you could be better supported to complete your research on time?'*

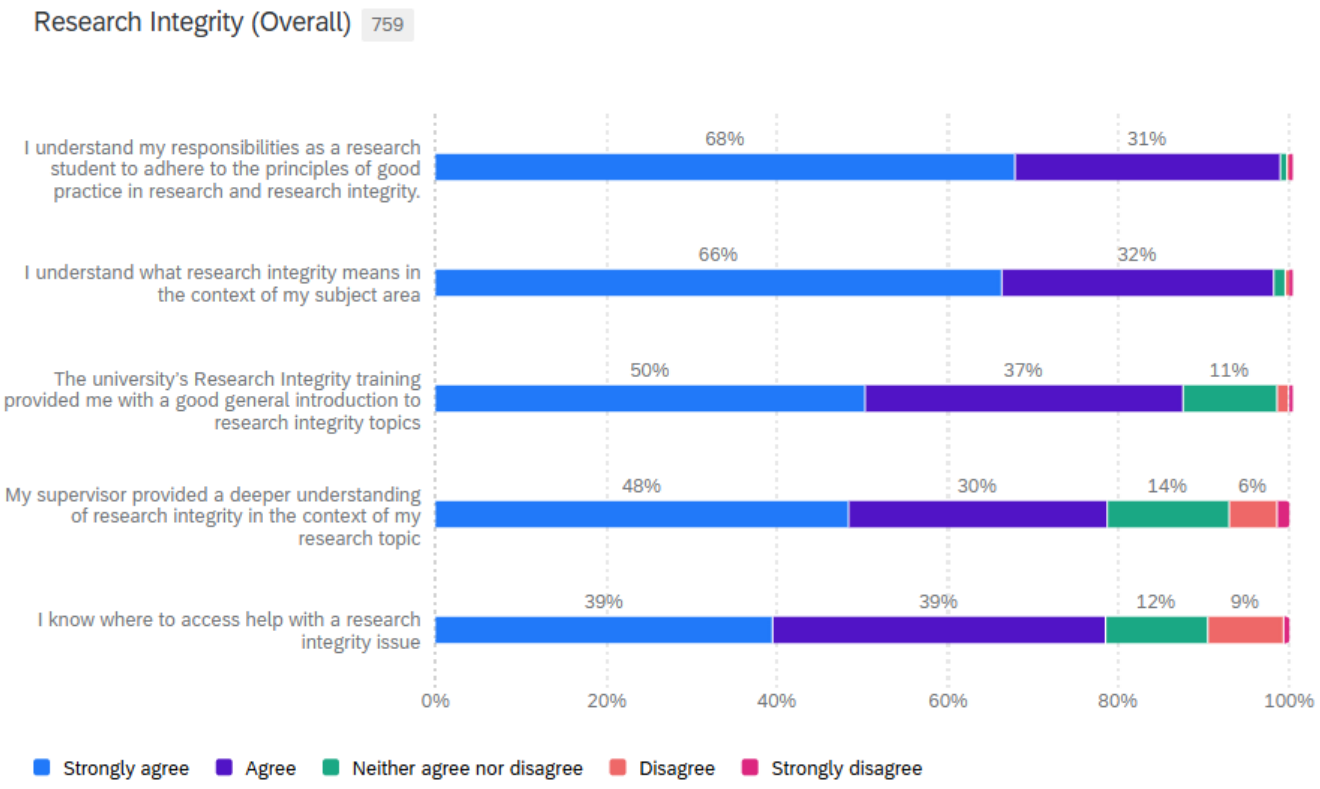




- Only 21% (156/759) of respondents wanted to give feedback about how they can be better supported to complete their research on time.
- The top feedback topic was regarding communication. When looking at the sublevel themes within communication, students mainly had concerns about policies & processes comms (Appendix Figs. 4).
- Although satisfaction was relatively high amongst respondents regarding support from their supervisors, the 2nd feedback topic was in relation to their supervisor or supervisory team. The general synopsis is that students want more frequent, structured supervision meetings and greater availability from their supervisors to support their progress and well-being.
- Overall support and inclusion were also greatly expressed. A breakdown of support categories can be seen in Appendix Figs. 4, where feedback concerning health & wellbeing support is the top category.
- Training focusing on research methods was voiced more than researcher development training (Appendix Figs. 4).

RESEARCHER INTEGRITY

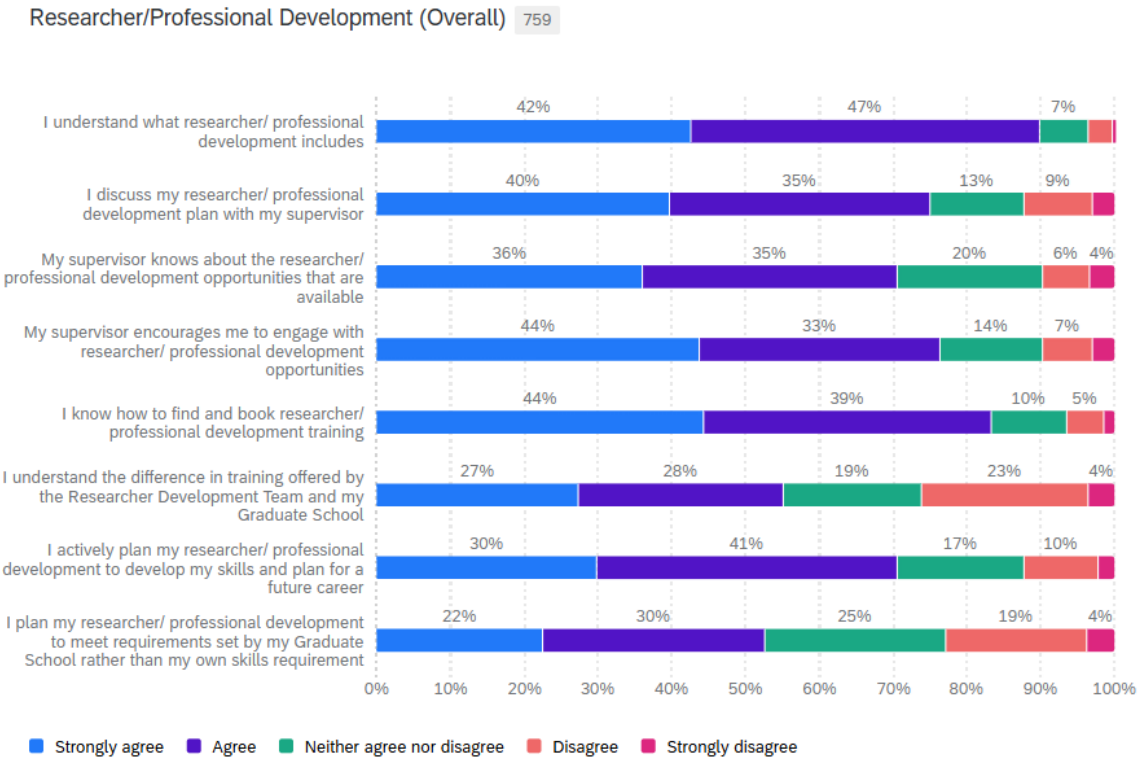
Q5: *'Using the scale provided, indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding researcher integrity:'*



- General understanding of research integrity was very high across the University, with 99% of students agreeing that they understand their responsibility to adhere to the principles of good practice in research and research integrity, and 98% of respondents agreeing they understand what research integrity means in the context of their subject area. This was also mirrored at College level with agreement ranging for 97-99% (Appendix Figs. 5).
- 87% of students agreed that the Research Integrity training provided them with a good introduction to the topic. COSS students agreed with this statement the most (92%) (Appendix Figs. 5).
- In terms of their supervisor providing students with a deeper understanding of research integrity, 78% of PGRs agreed with this. PGRs from COAH had the lowest agreement rate of 69% in comparison to MVLS (80%), COSE (80%) and COSS (82%) (Appendix Figs. 5).
- Furthermore, 78% of respondents knew where to access help with research integrity issues, with COSS students more aware (85%) compared to the other Colleges (Appendix Figs. 5)

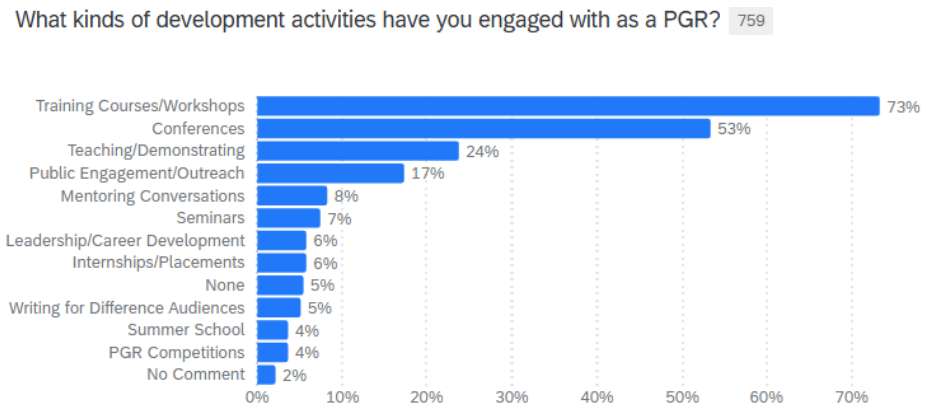
RESEARCHER/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Q6: *'Using the scale provided, indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding researcher/professional development:'*



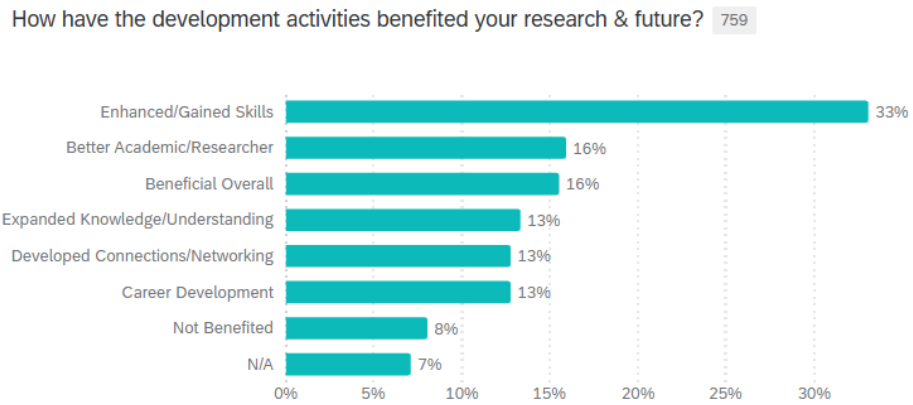
- Majority of respondents overall and at College level (Appendix Figs. 6) understood what researcher/professional development includes and knew how to find and book training.
- Regarding supervisors and researcher/professional development, 75% of PGRs agreed that they discuss development plans with their supervisor. MVLS were in agreement the most (80%) and COSE the least (70%) (Appendix Figs. 6).
- 71% respondents agreed that their supervisors knew about development opportunities available and 77% of PGRs did agree that their supervisor encourages them to participate, especially in MVLS (79% agreement) (Appendix Figs. 6).
- Overall, 71% of respondents agreed that they actively plan researcher/professional development to develop their skills and plan for a future career. Just over half of respondents agreed that they plan their development to meet requirements set by their Graduate School rather than their own skill requirements.
- 55% of respondents agreed that they understood the difference in training offered by the Researcher Development Team and their Graduate School. This is only 5% more than 2023, and therefore communication about the different trainings may need to be improved.

***Q7**: '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?'*



- When asked what development activities students have engaged in during their research programme, training courses & workshops were predominantly mentioned. Most students would not specify what these training courses or workshops involved, but sublevel categories of the type of course/workshop for those who did mention in more detail, can be seen in Appendix Fig. 7.
- Just over half of the respondent population attended and/or presented at conferences.
- It should be noted that 5% of respondents had either not engaged in researcher development activities or was not aware of the 10-day requirement.

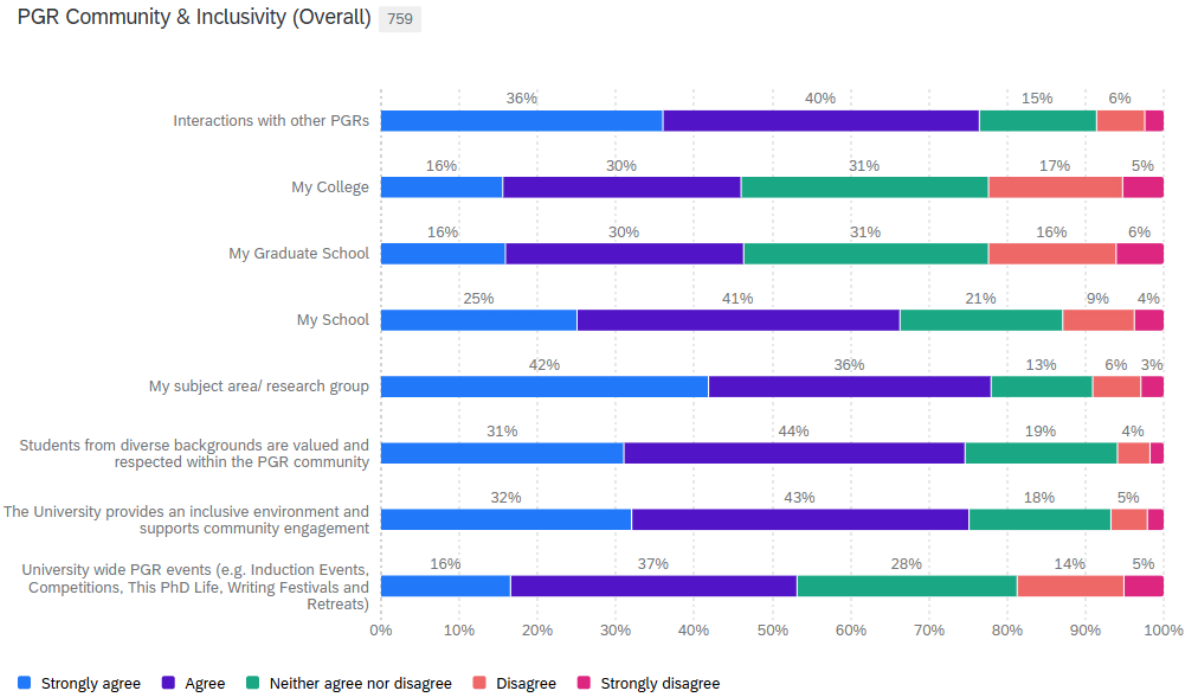
Q8: *'How have the development activities that you have engaged with benefited your research and future career planning?'*



- PGRs mainly expressed that the development activities that they have completed during their research has equipped them with a wide variety of skills or strengthened their skillset. Positively, students also voiced that the activities have helped them become a better academic and has given them valuable insight on how to conduct their research.

PGR COMMUNITY & BELONGING

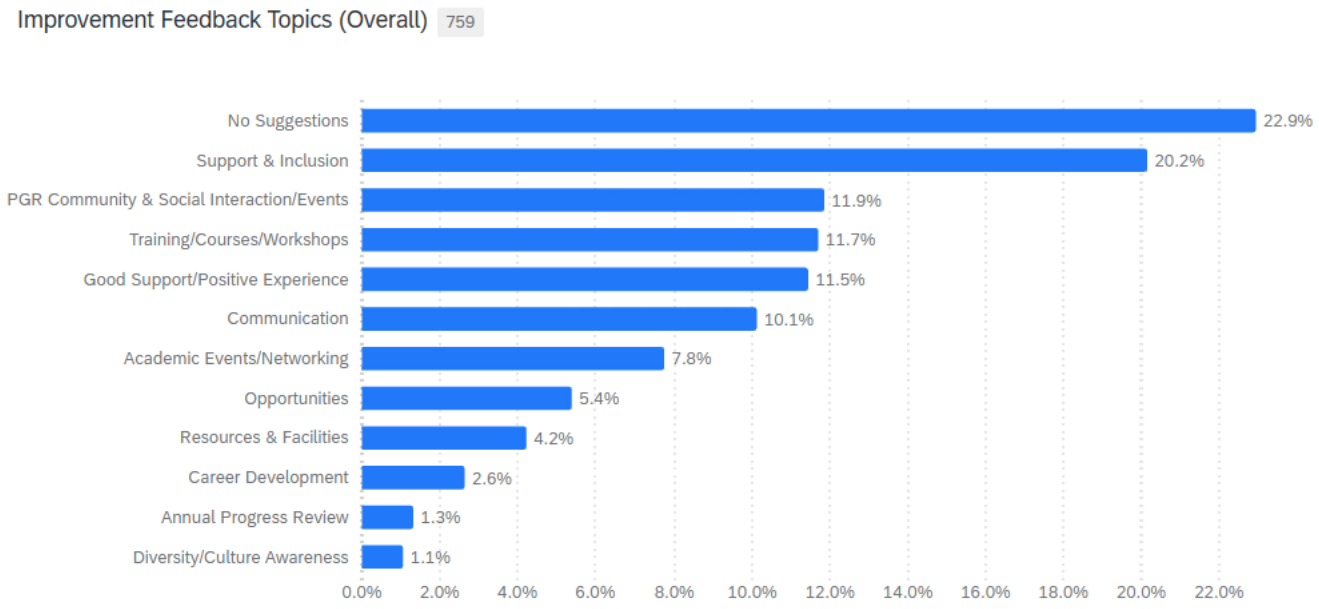
Q9: *'Using the scale provided which of the following contribute to your sense of PGR community and belonging of the University?'*



- 76% of students felt a sense of PGR community and belonging from interactions with other PGRs. Less than half of respondents (46%) felt this from their College and their Graduate School.
- However, 66% agreed that their School had fostered their feeling of connection and inclusion, and encouragingly, 78% experienced this with their subject area/research group.
- Similar results for sense of belonging from PGR interactions, their College, Graduate School, School, and their research group can be seen at College level (Appendix Figs. 8), apart for COAH, which had the lowest agreement levels in comparison for these categories.
- Positively, 75% of respondents agreed that students from diverse backgrounds are valued and respected, and felt the University provides an inclusive environment and supports community engagement. Interestingly, students of minority ethnicity agreed with these two statements (82% & 84%, respectively) more than PGRs of white ethnicity (69% & 68%, respectively) Appendix Figs. 9.
- Compared to FT respondents, PT students feel less of a sense of belonging and community for all the statements (Appendix Figs. 10). 58% of PT respondents agreed that University provides an inclusive environment and supports community engagements, which is 20% less than FT students. Furthermore, 80% of FT PGRs felt that interaction with other PGRs enhanced their sense of inclusion, however only 63% of PT students agreed with this statement.

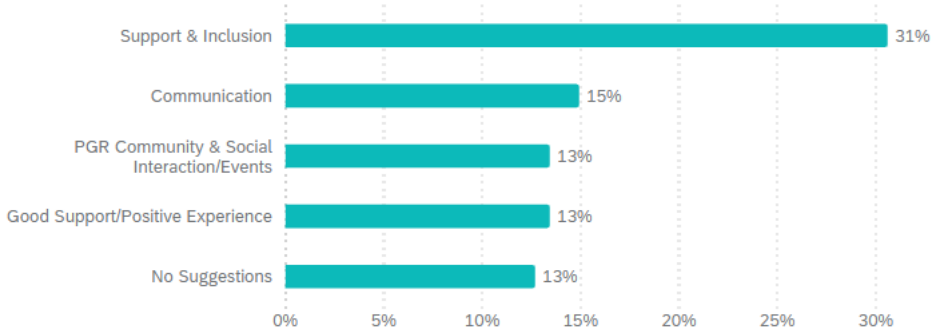
IMPROVEMENT FEEDBACK

Q10: *'How could the Graduate School in your College improve your experience as a postgraduate researcher at Glasgow?'*

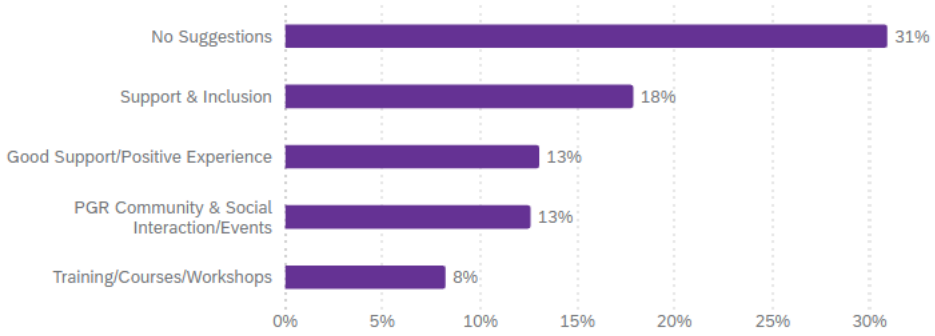


- Same as the previous year, the top improvement feedback topic (22.9%) from respondents was 'no suggestions', where students either stated that they had no comments, left the text box blank or wrote N/A. This was reflected at College level for MVLS & COSE.
- Overall, the 2nd feedback topic was support & inclusion, which was the same for MVLS & COSE, but the top feedback topic for COAH & COSS. This category included statements from students that mention overall support required, but also more specific support & inclusion e.g. from supervisors, for part-time students, for MRes students, etc. A breakdown of support and inclusion topics can be found in Appendix Fig. 11.
- PGR community (including social interactions & events) was the 3rd most talked (11.9%) about topic. This percentage is similar to previous years suggesting that students still desire a place where they feel included and are eager to connect with PGRs.
- Following closely were comments regarding training, courses or workshops (11.7%) and students articulating that they were having a positive experience and receiving suitable support (11.5%).

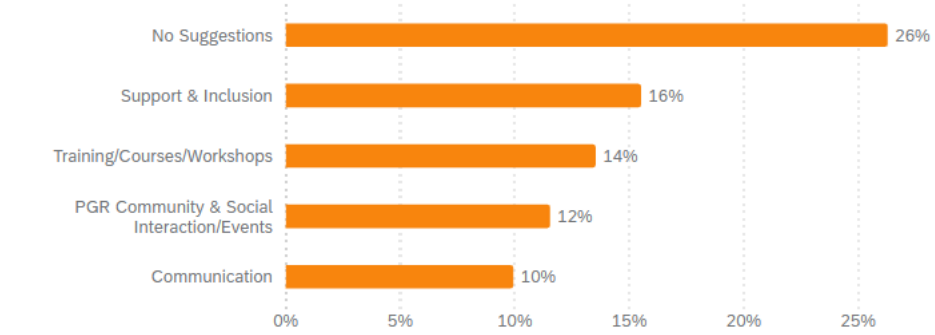
COAH Improvement Feedback Top 5 134



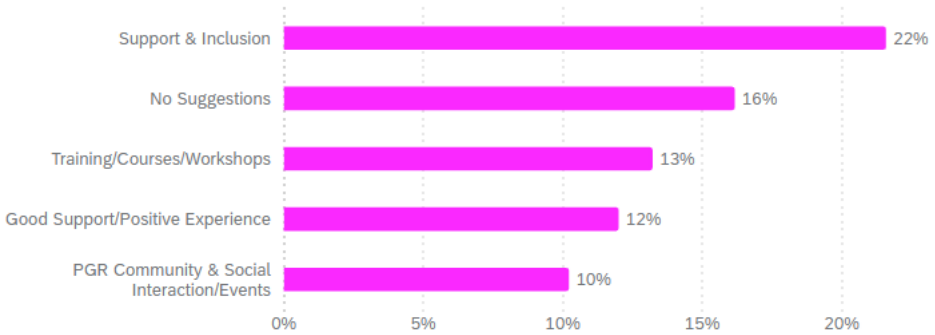
MVLS Improvement Feedback Top 5 207



COSE Improvement Feedback Top 5 251

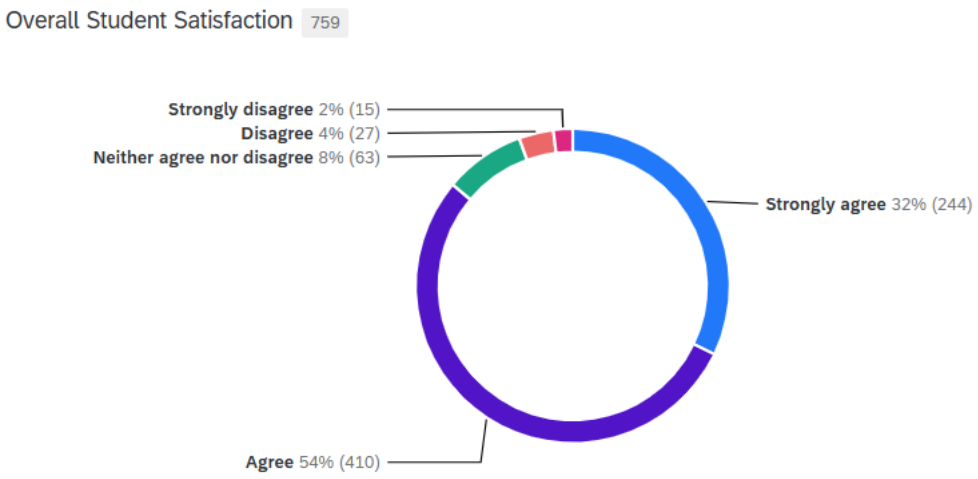


COSS Improvement Feedback Top 5 167



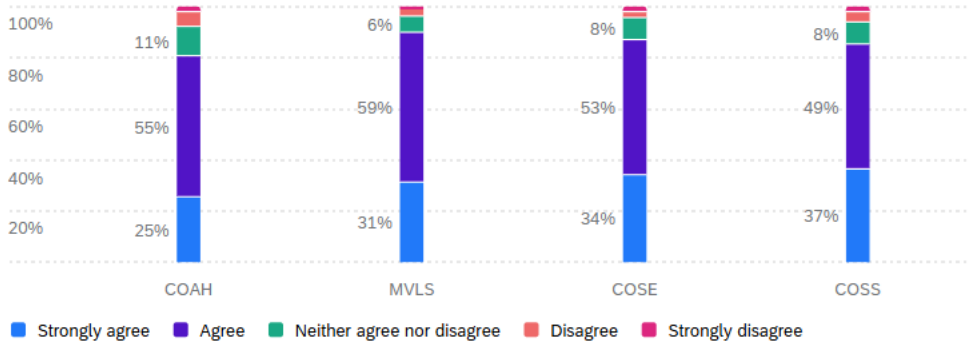
STUDENT SATISFACTION

Q11: *'Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of my research degree programme.'*

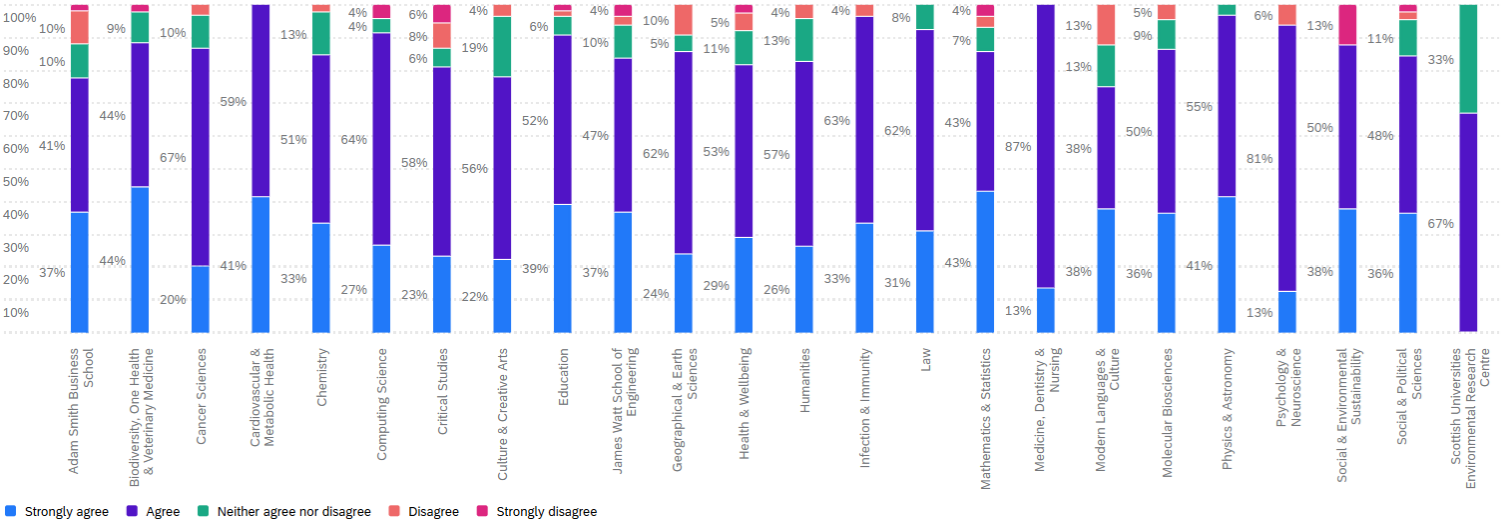


- Overall, 86% of respondents agreed that they were satisfied with their PGR experience. This outcome is 6% higher than last year and is the highest satisfaction result since launching the PGR Experience Survey in 2021.
- At College level, MVLS had the highest satisfaction rate of 90% compared to COAH, COSE & COSS, which were 80%, 87%, and 86%, respectively.
- School of Cardiovascular & Metabolic Health and School of Medicine, Dentistry & Nursing both had 100% satisfaction rates. The Schools with the 2nd highest satisfaction rate were School of Infection & Immunity and School of Physics & Astronomy with 96%. Only five schools had a dissatisfaction rate of 10% or higher.
- FT students were slightly more satisfied (87%) compared to PT students (84%). Promisingly, thesis pending students had a higher satisfaction rate this year of 80% compared to 2024 and 2023 which was 67% and 70%, respectively.
- Male students were marginally more satisfied (87%) with their PGR experience compared to female students (86%).
- International students had the highest satisfaction rate of 91%.
- Students who were of Asian or black ethnicity were highly satisfied with their experience with agreement levels of 91% and 90%, respectively. Students who were of mixed ethnicity or identified as other felt the most neutral about their PGR experience and had the lowest agreement of 80% in comparison to Asian, black and white.
- PGRs who did not have a declared disability were somewhat more satisfied (87%) compared to those with a disability (82%).
- Comparable satisfaction levels were displayed for the different age groups, with students in the 18-20 and 21-24 age brackets being the highest.
- In relation to year of programme, 1st year students had the highest agreement of satisfaction (92%) and 6+ year students the lowest (70%).

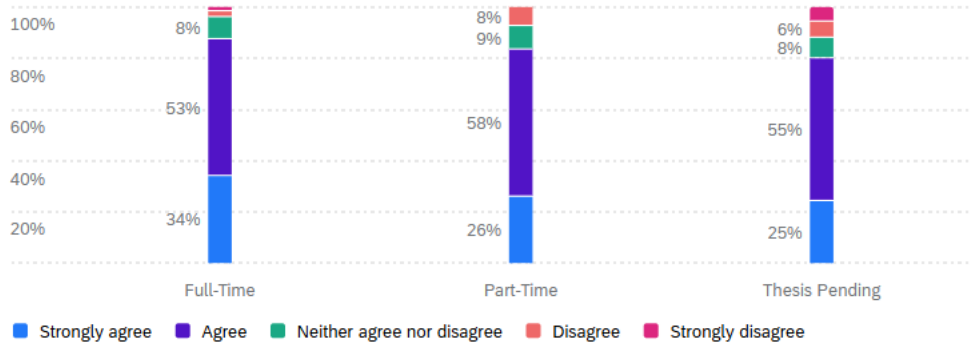
Student Satisfaction (College Level) 759



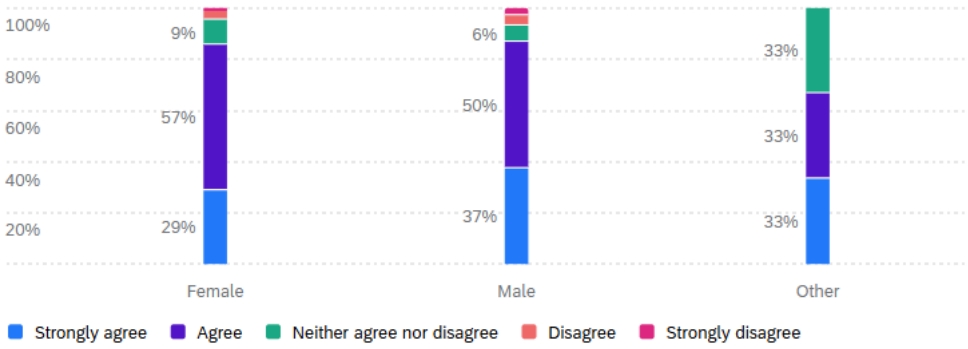
Student Satisfaction (School Level) 759



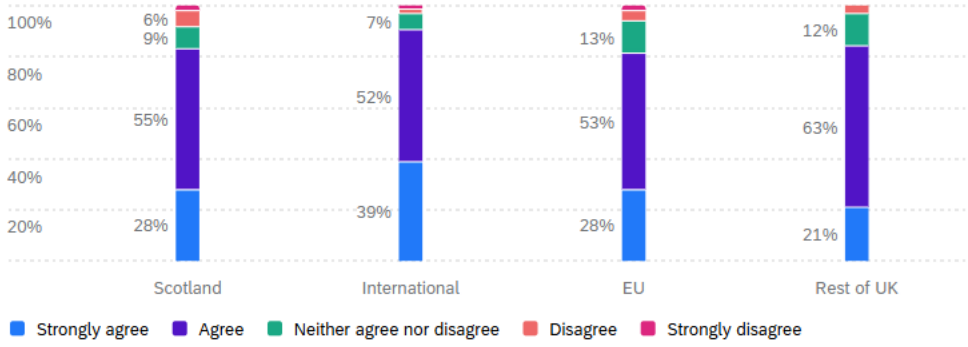
Student Satisfaction (Academic Load) 759



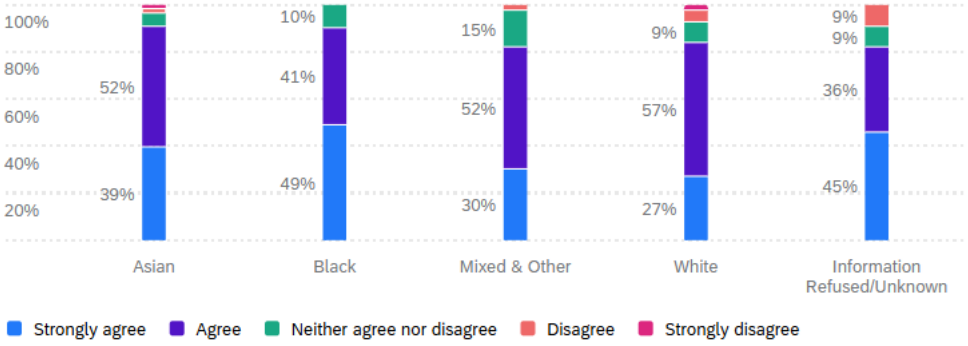
Student Satisfaction (Gender) 759



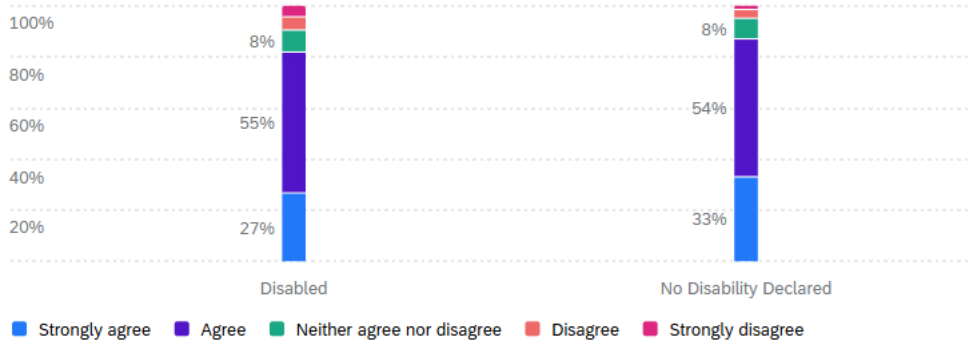
Student Satisfaction (Domicile) 759



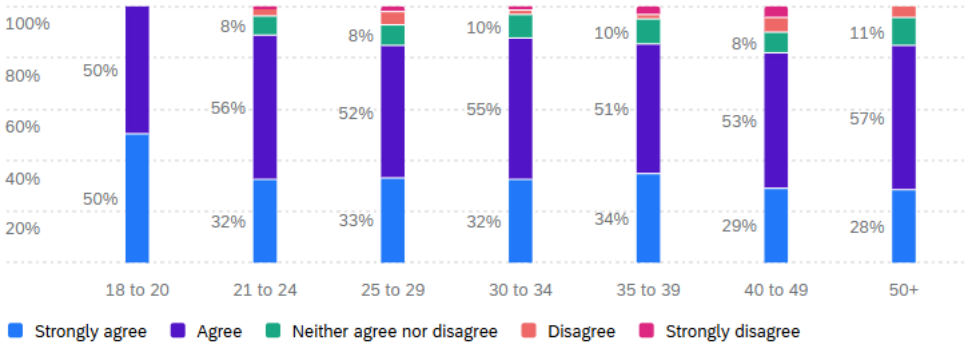
Student Satisfaction (Ethnicity) 759



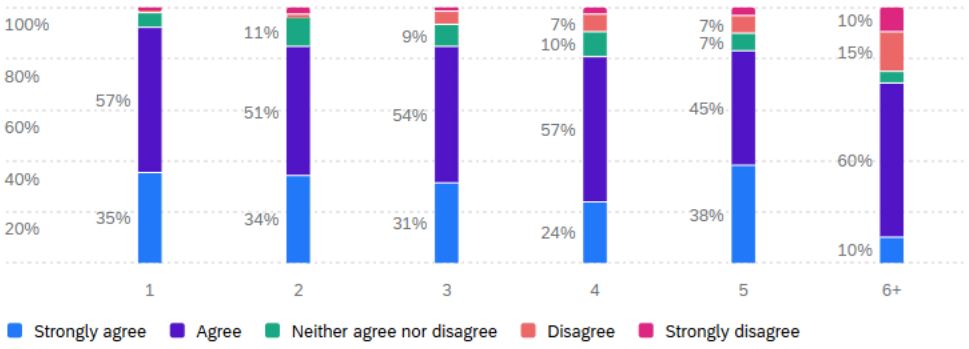
Student Satisfaction (Disability) 759



Student Satisfaction (Age Group) 759

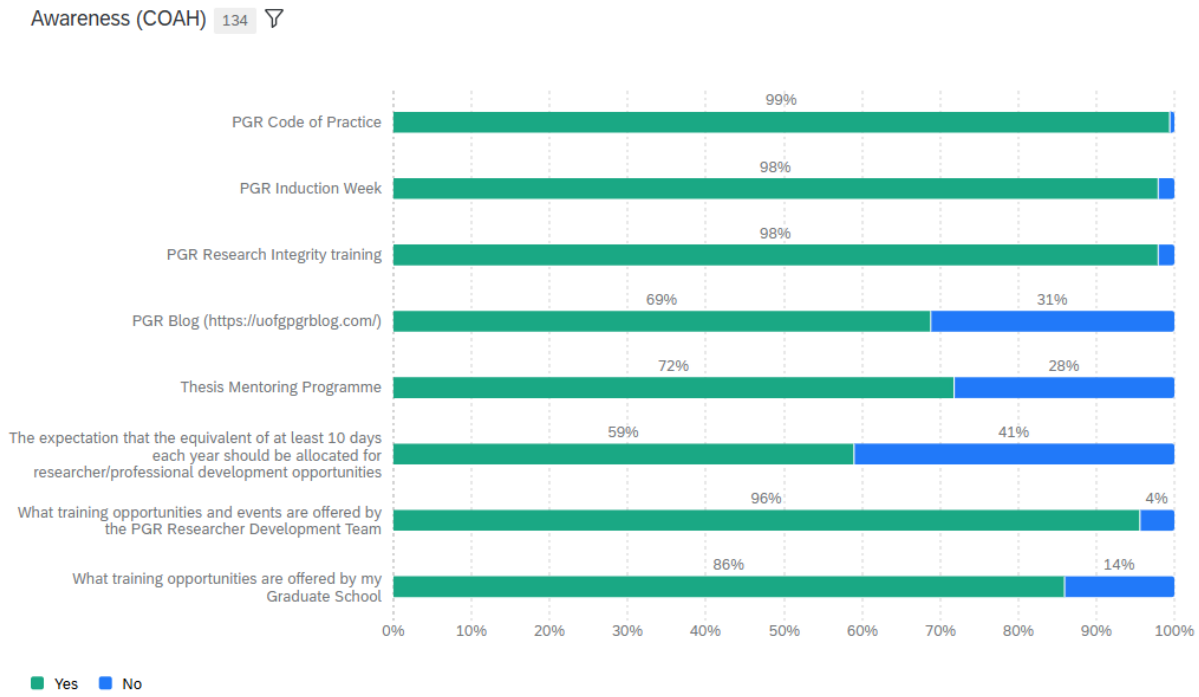


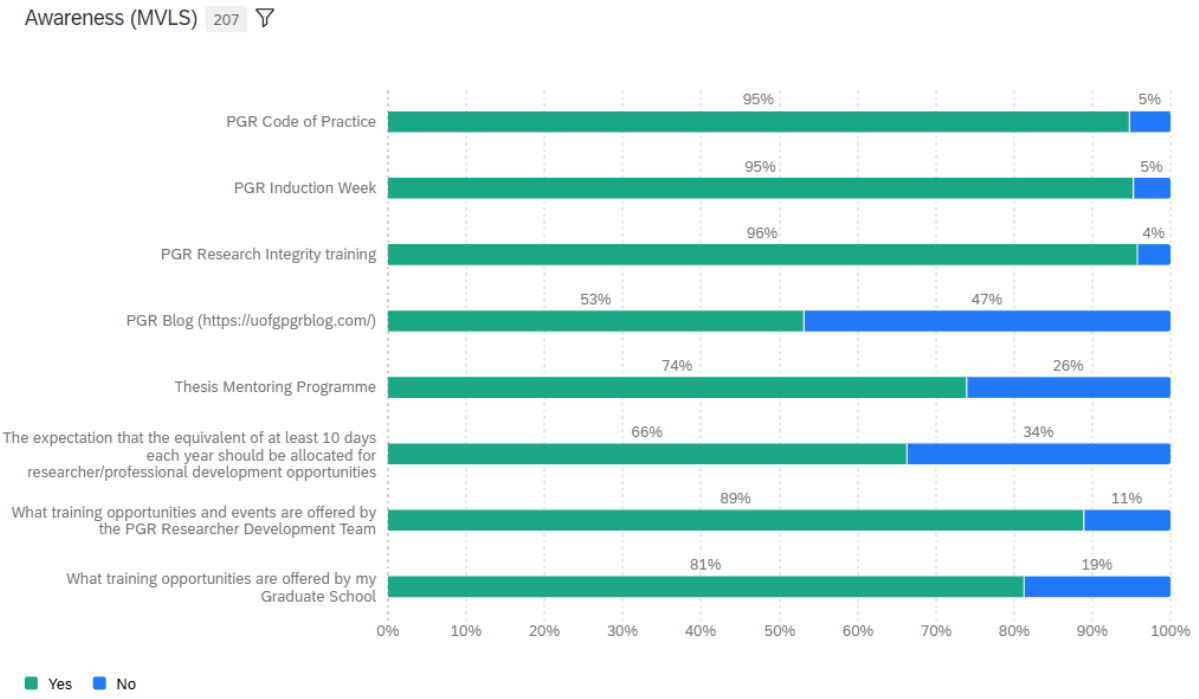
Student Satisfaction (Year of Programme) 759



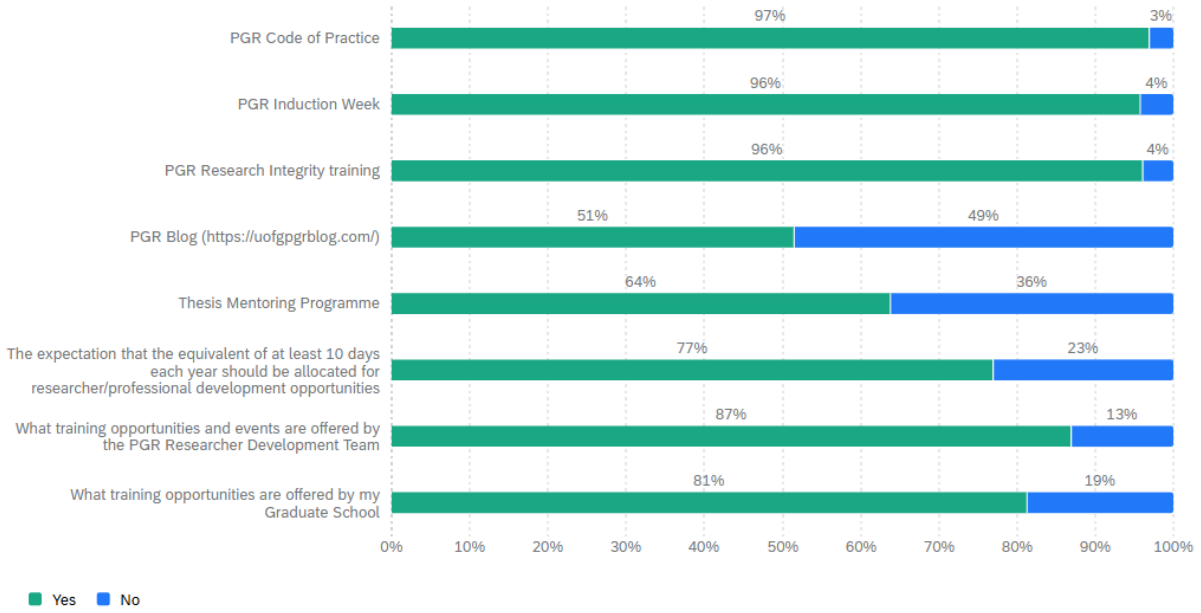
APPENDIX FIGURES

Appendix Figures 1. *Awareness of PGR Communication, Information & Events (College level)*

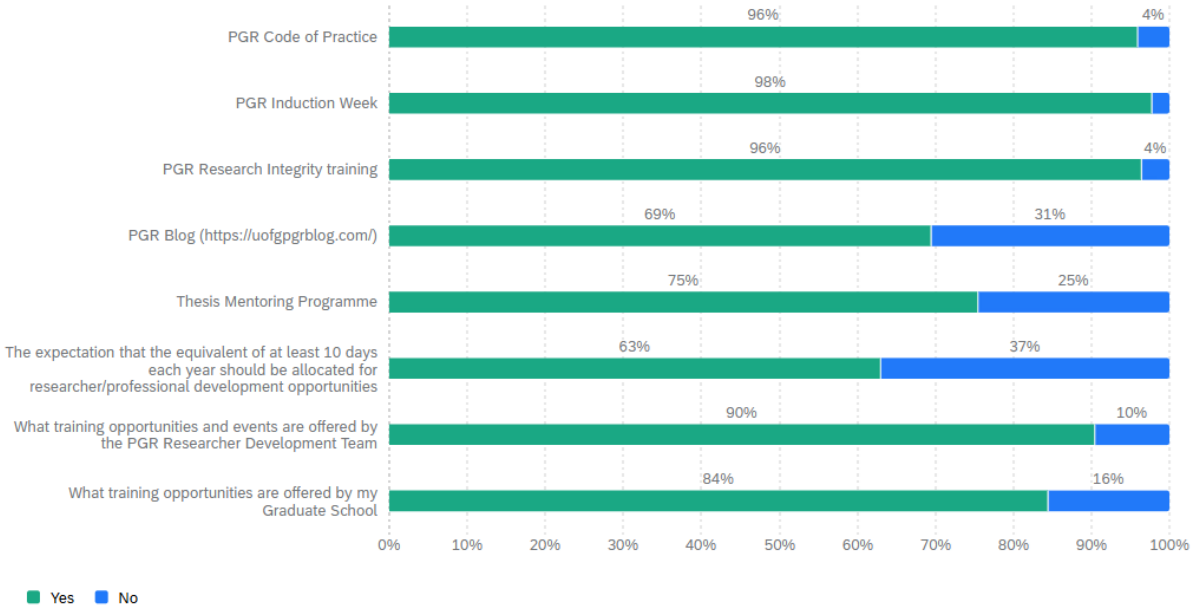




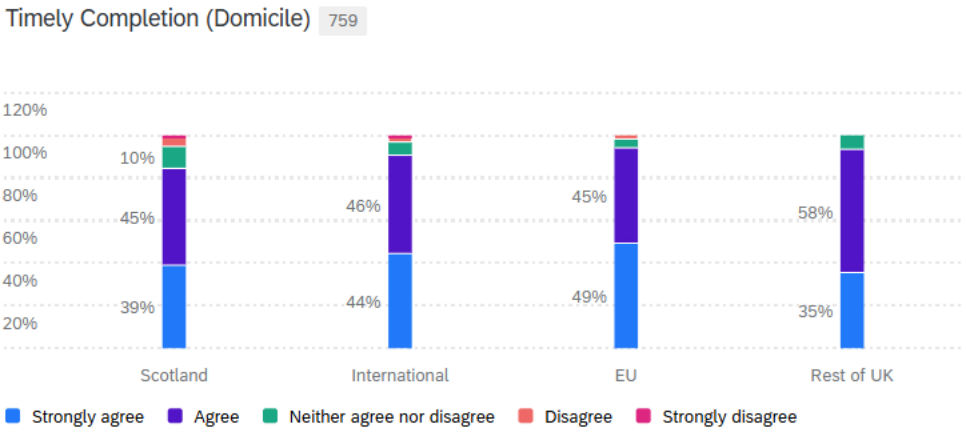
Awareness (COSE) 251

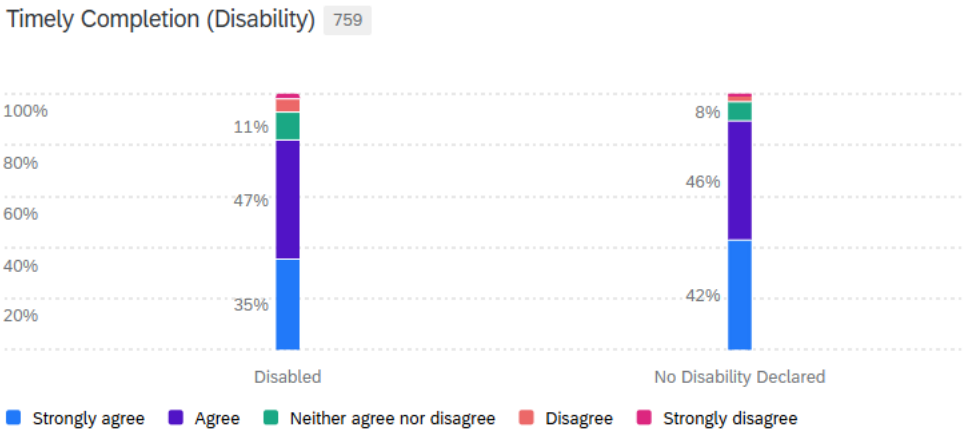


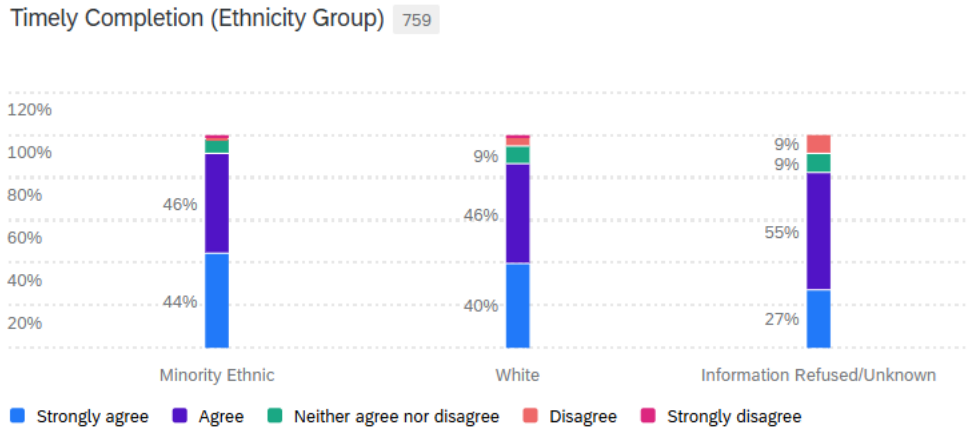
Awareness (COSS) 167



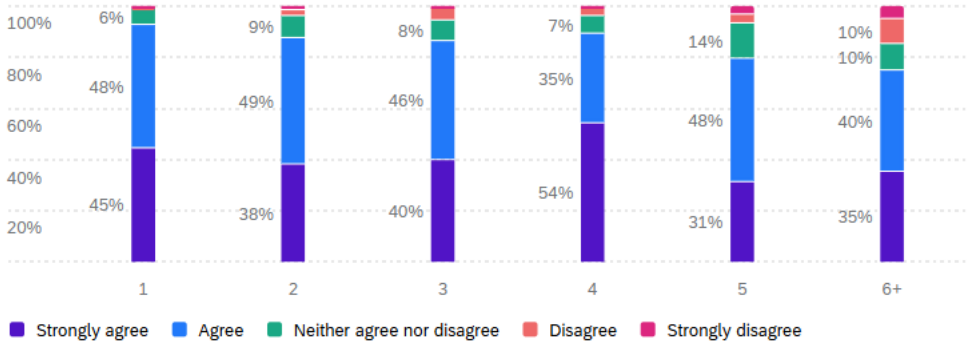
Appendix Figures 2. *Timely Completion*



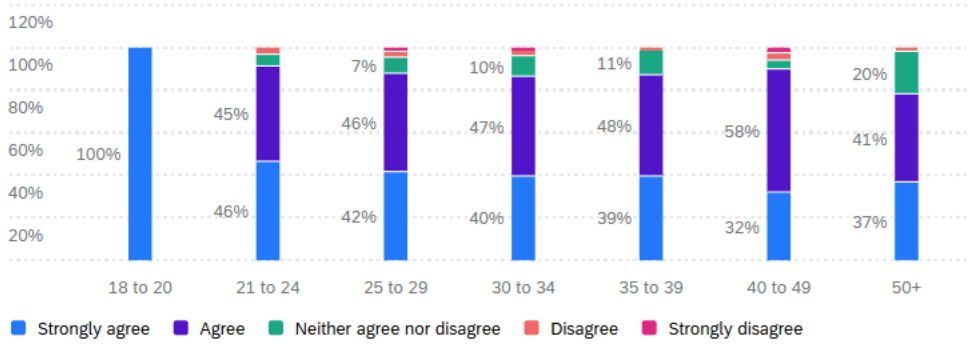




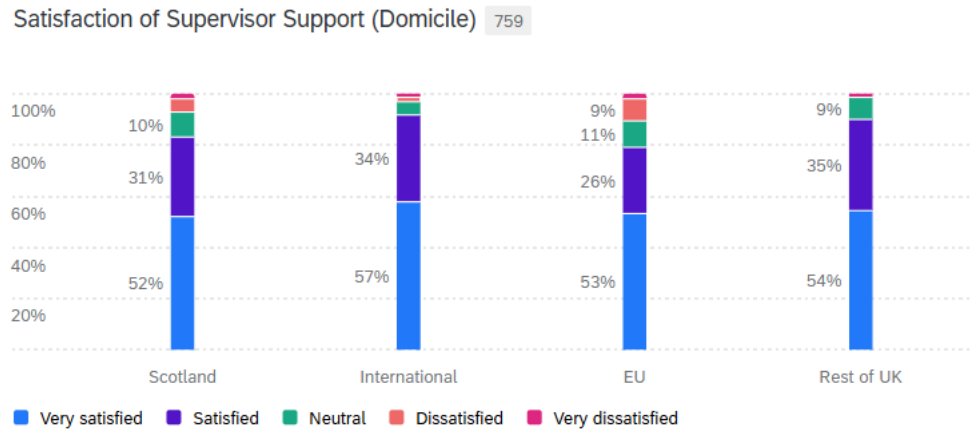
Timely Completion (Year of Programme) 759

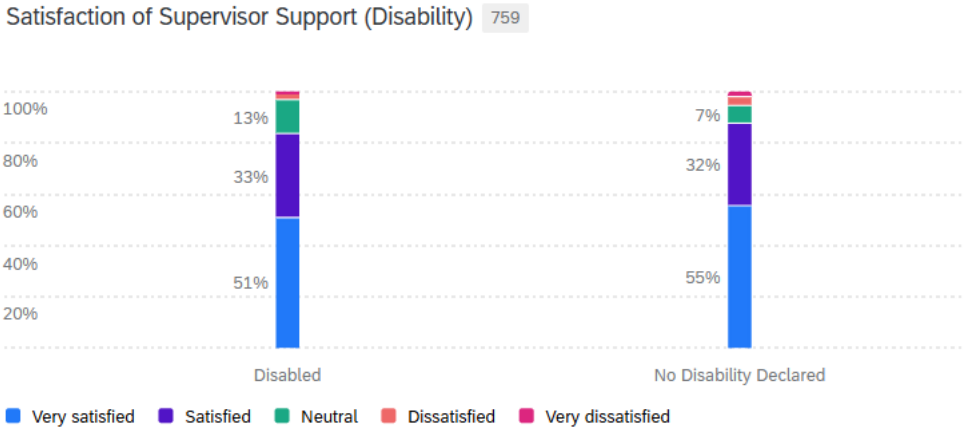


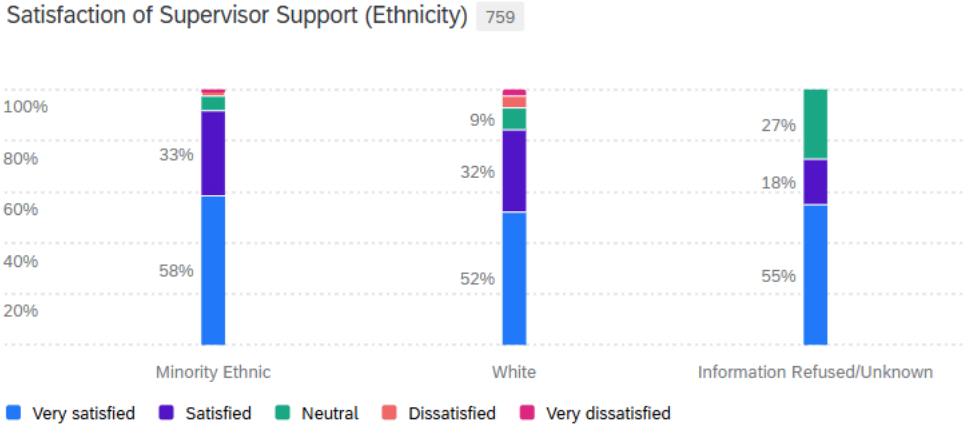
Timely Completion (Age Group) 759



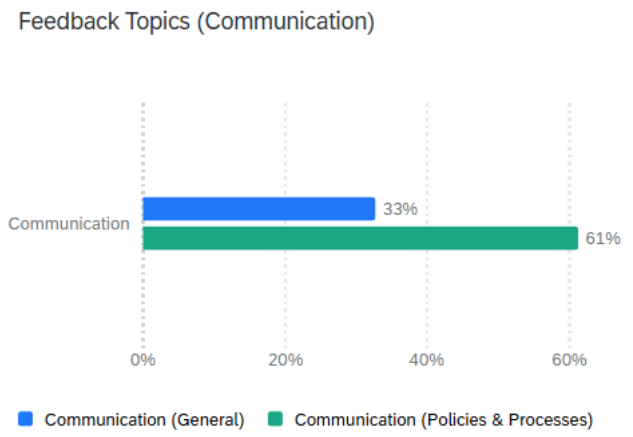
Appendix Figures 3. *Supervisor Support for Timely Completion*

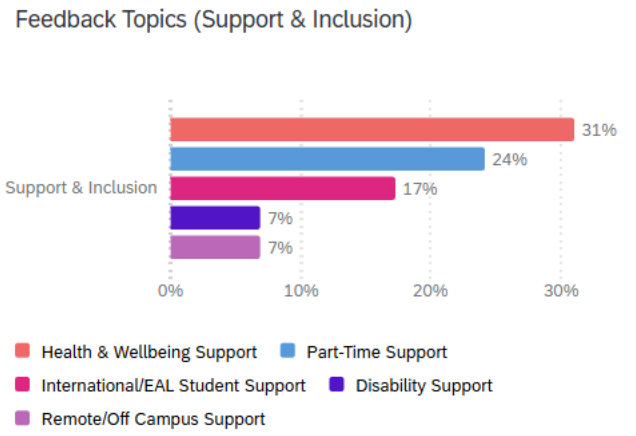


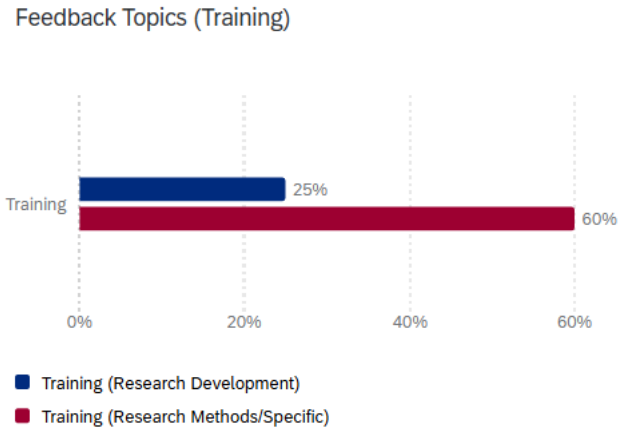




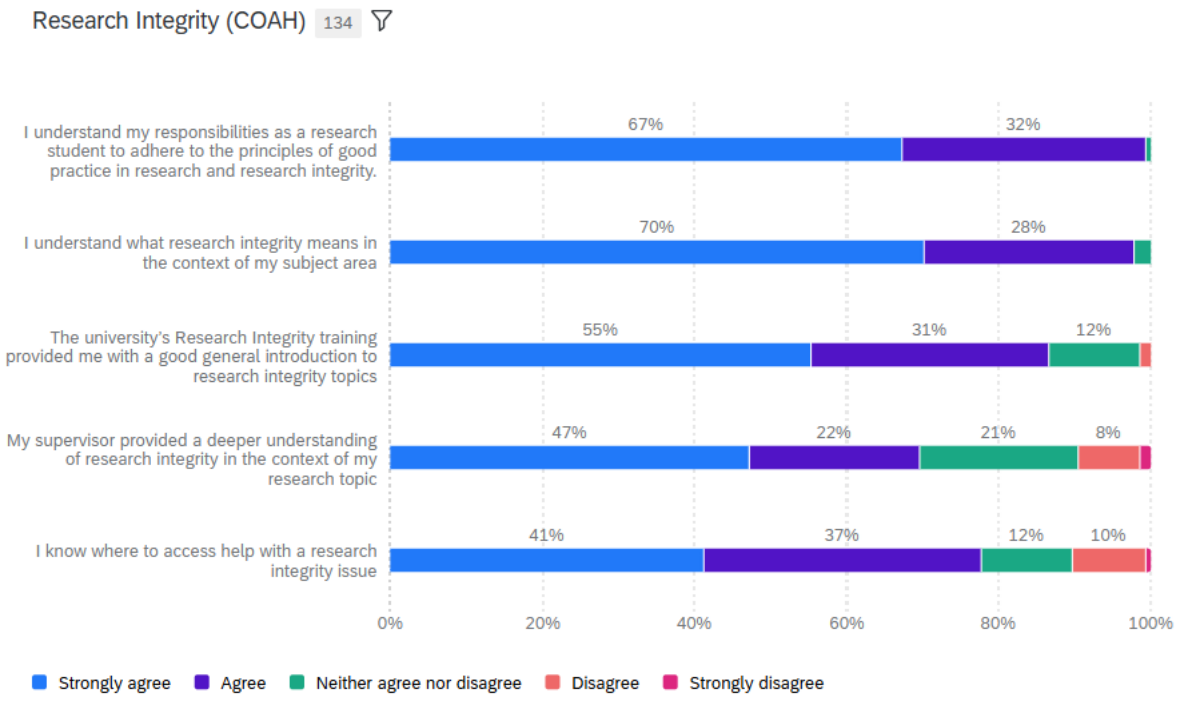
Appendix Figures 4. *Support Feedback (sublevel feedback topics)*

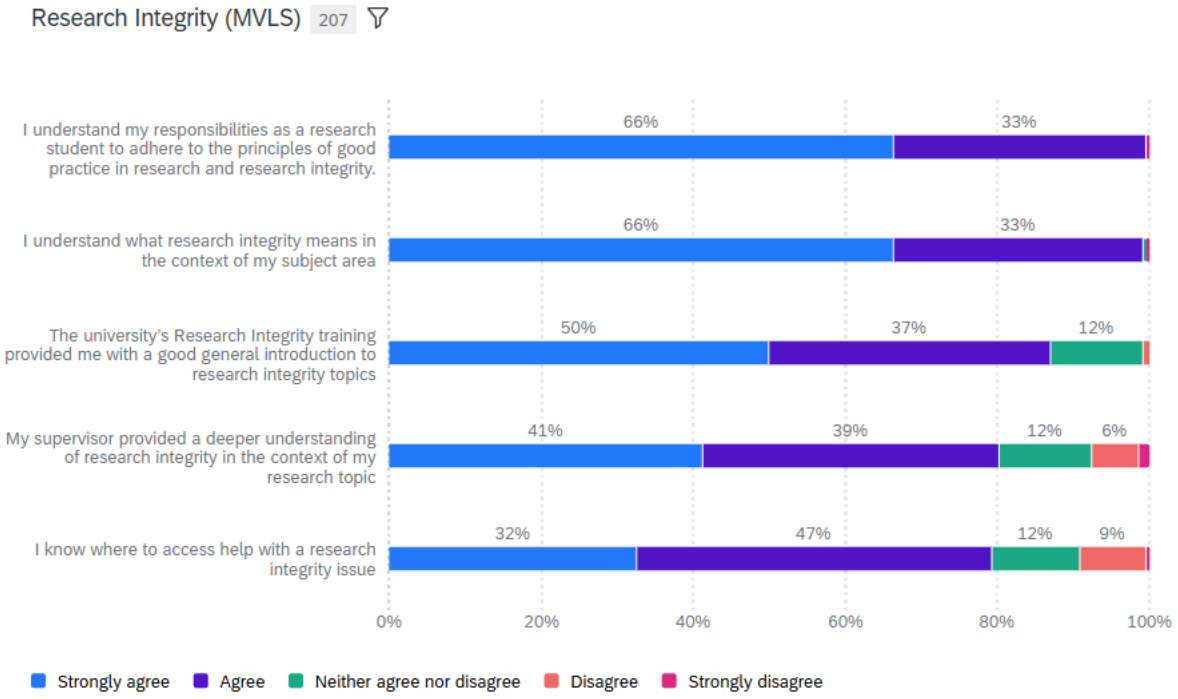




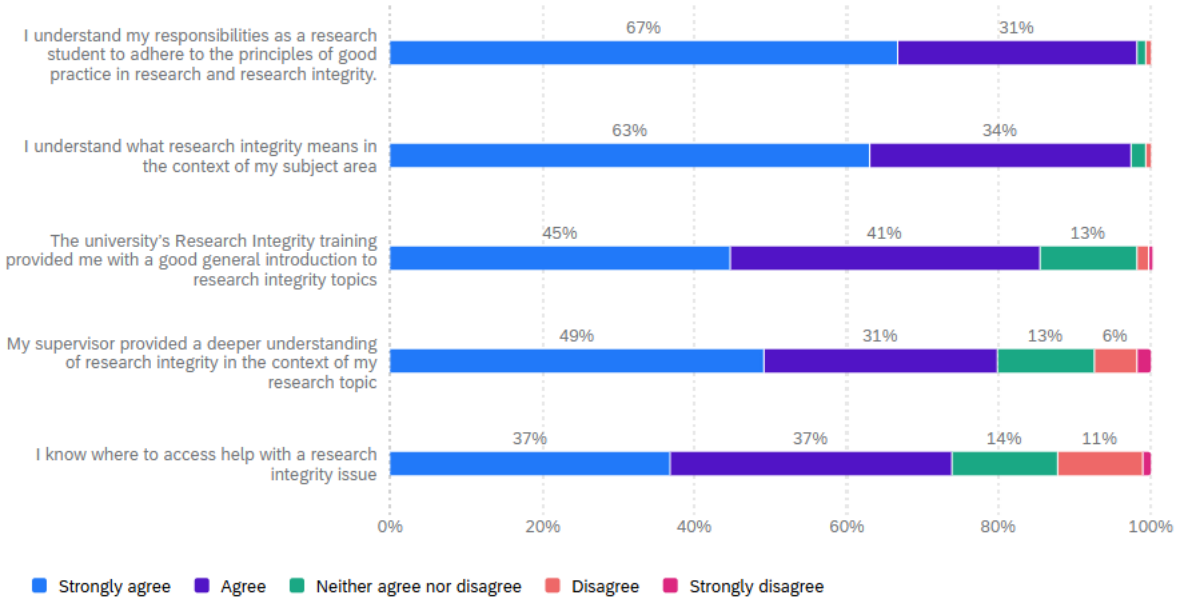


Appendix Figures 5. *Research Integrity (College level)*

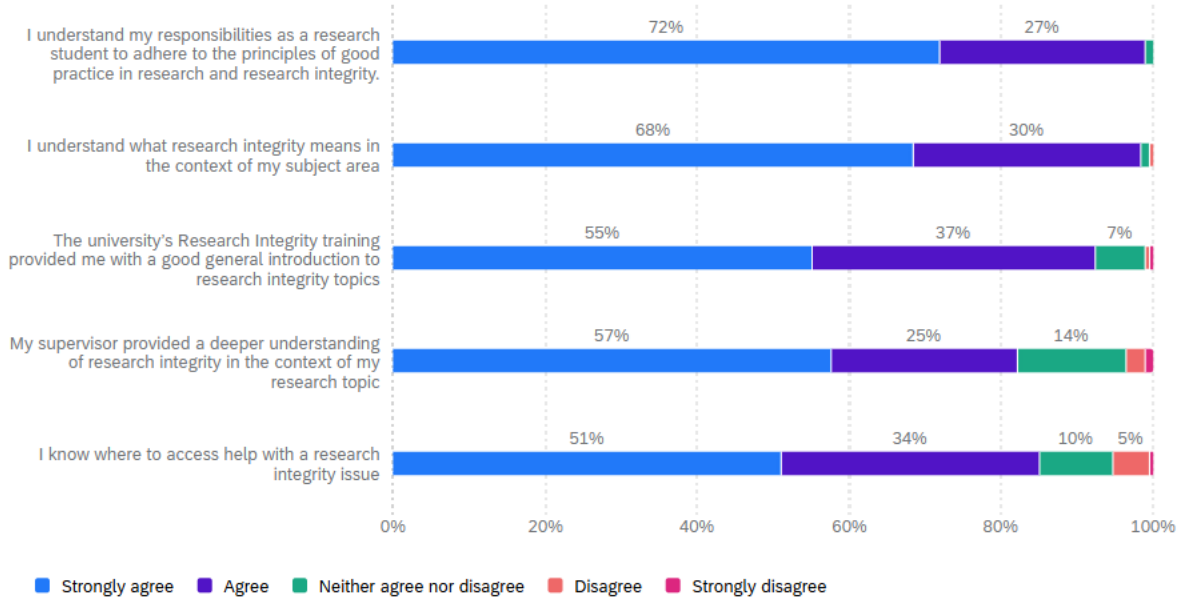




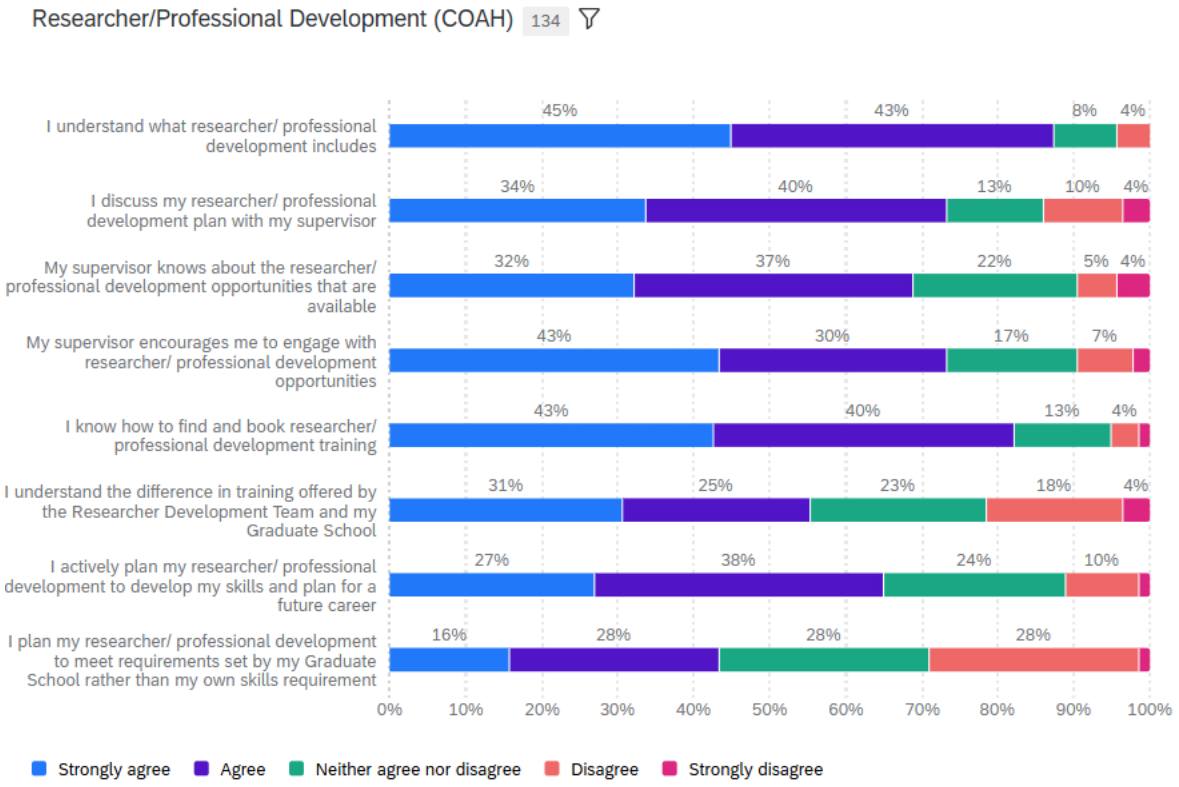
Research Integrity (COSE) 251

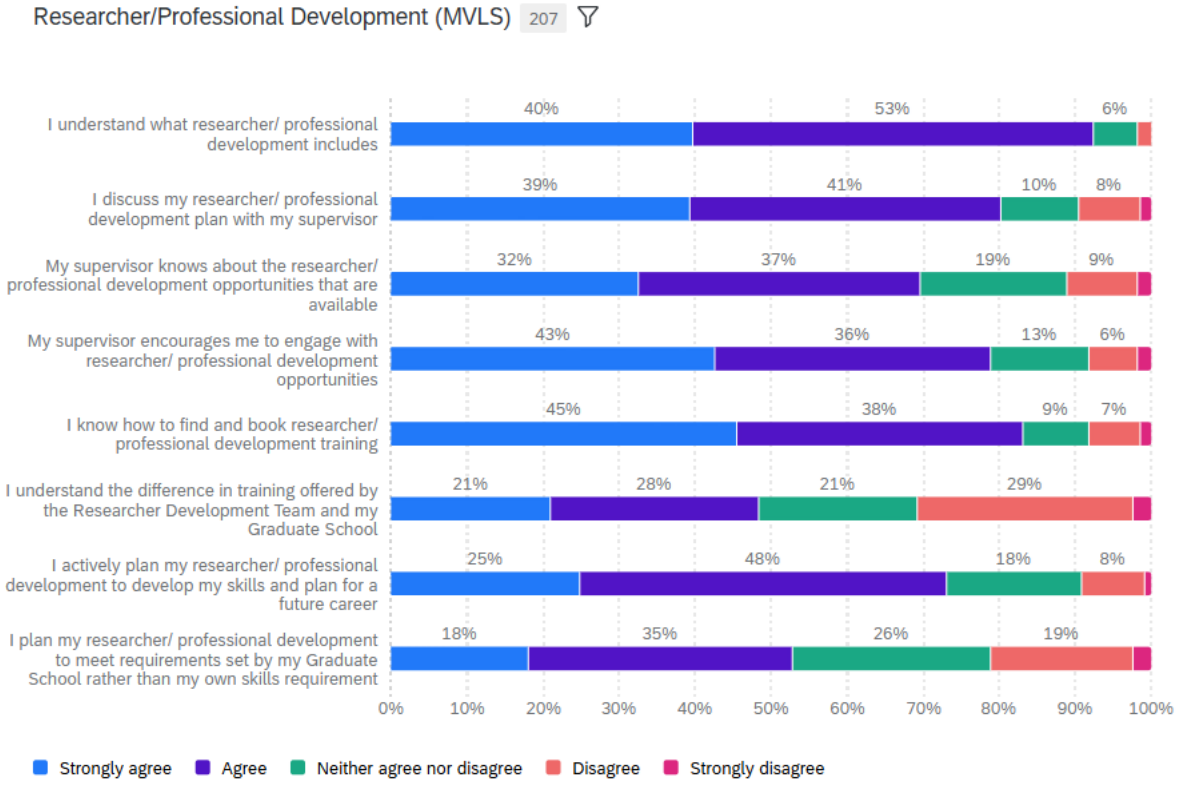


Research Integrity (COSS) 167

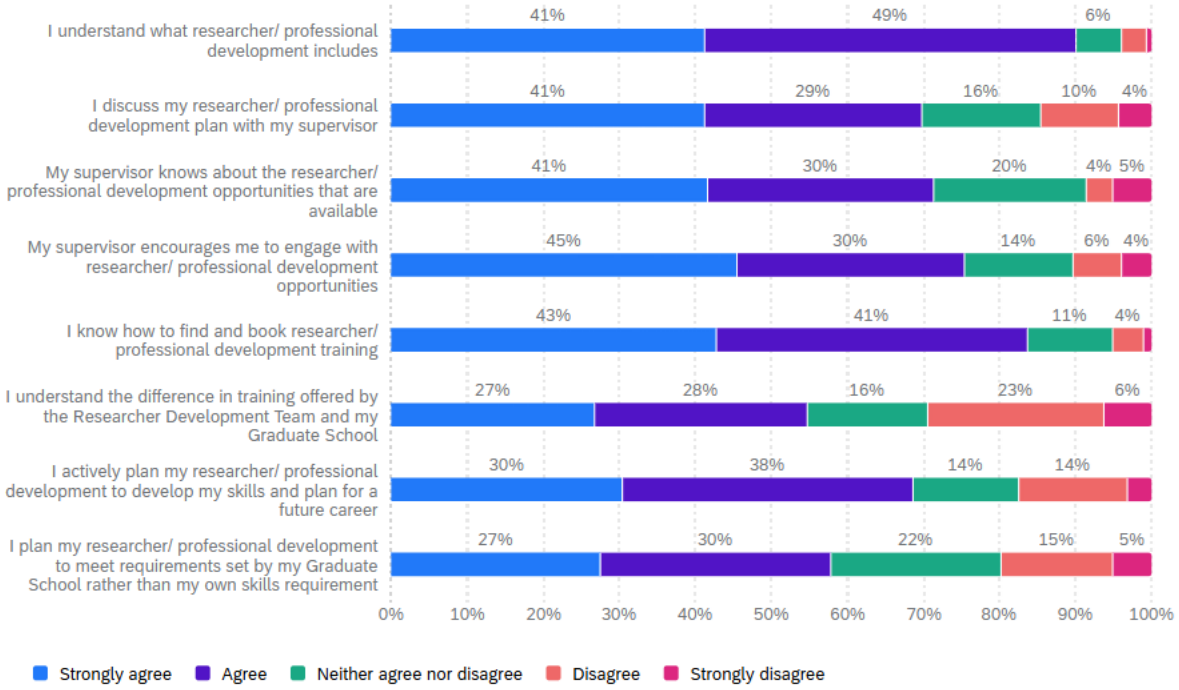


Appendix Figures 6. *Researcher/Professional Development*

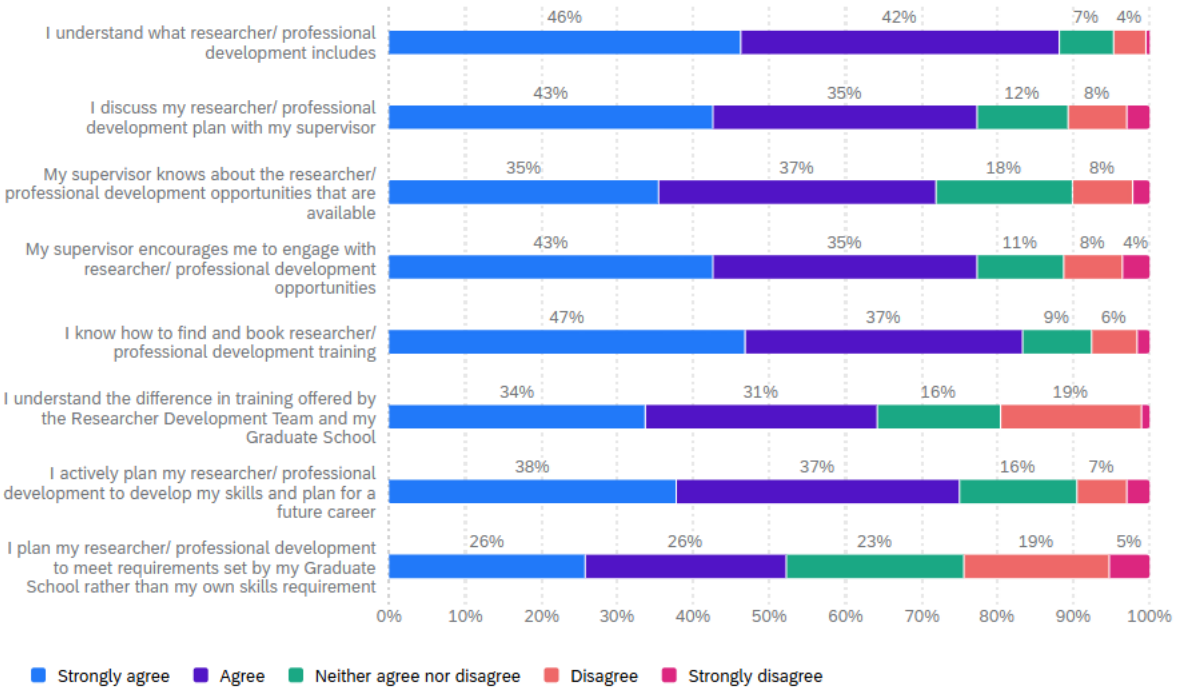




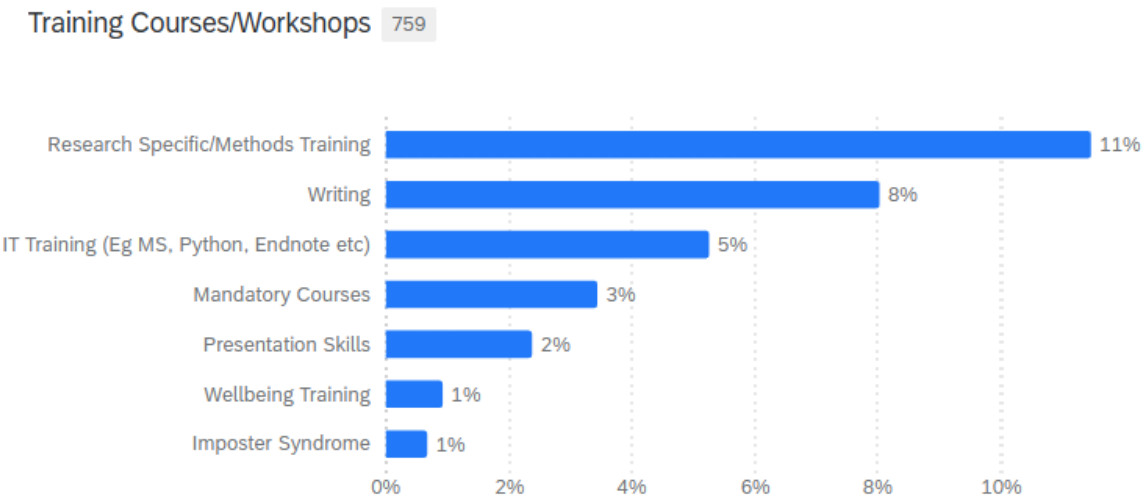
Researcher/Professional Development (COSE) 251



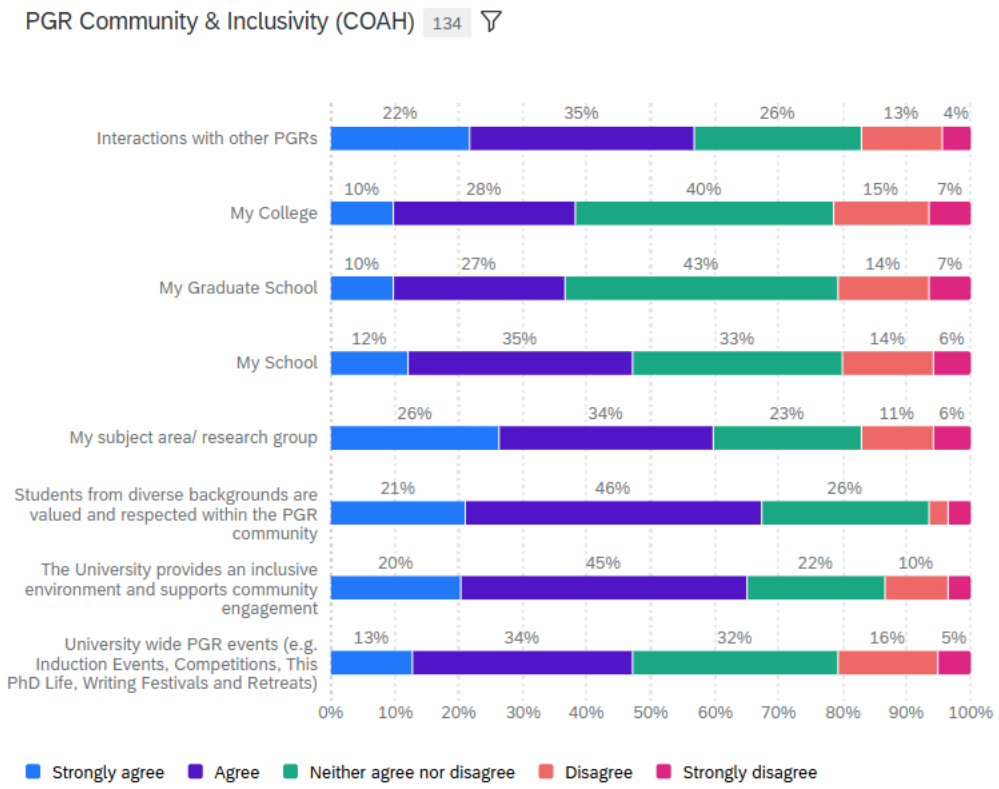
Researcher/Professional Development (COSS) 167

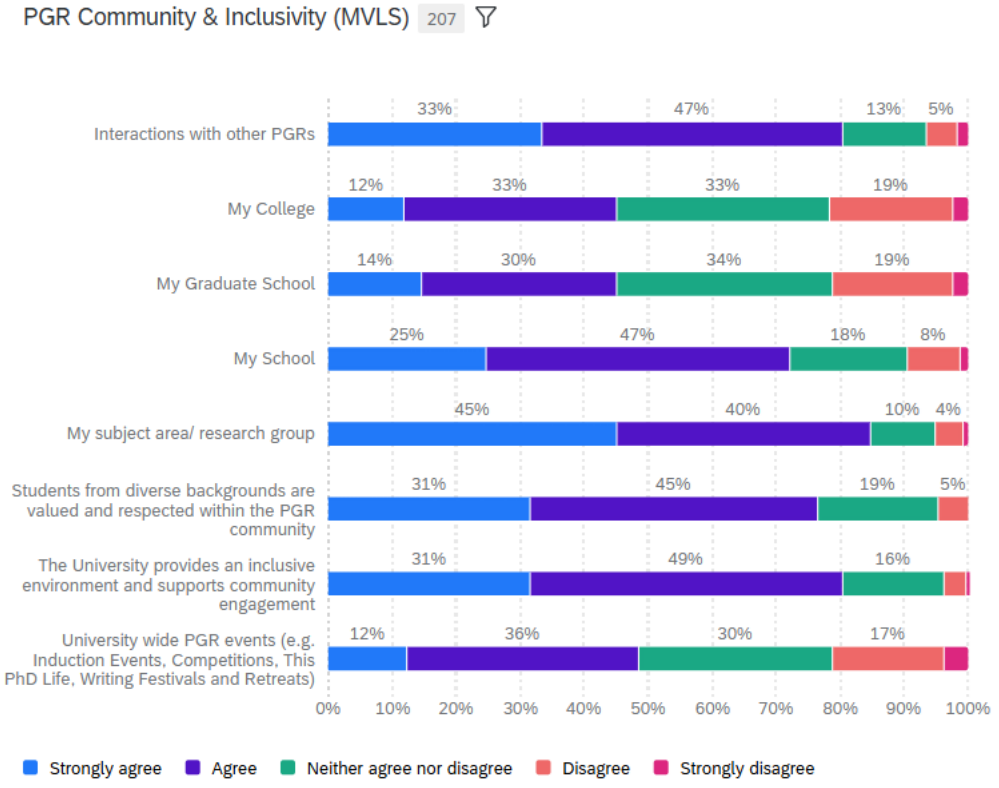


Appendix Figure 7. *Researcher Development (Training Courses/Workshops)*

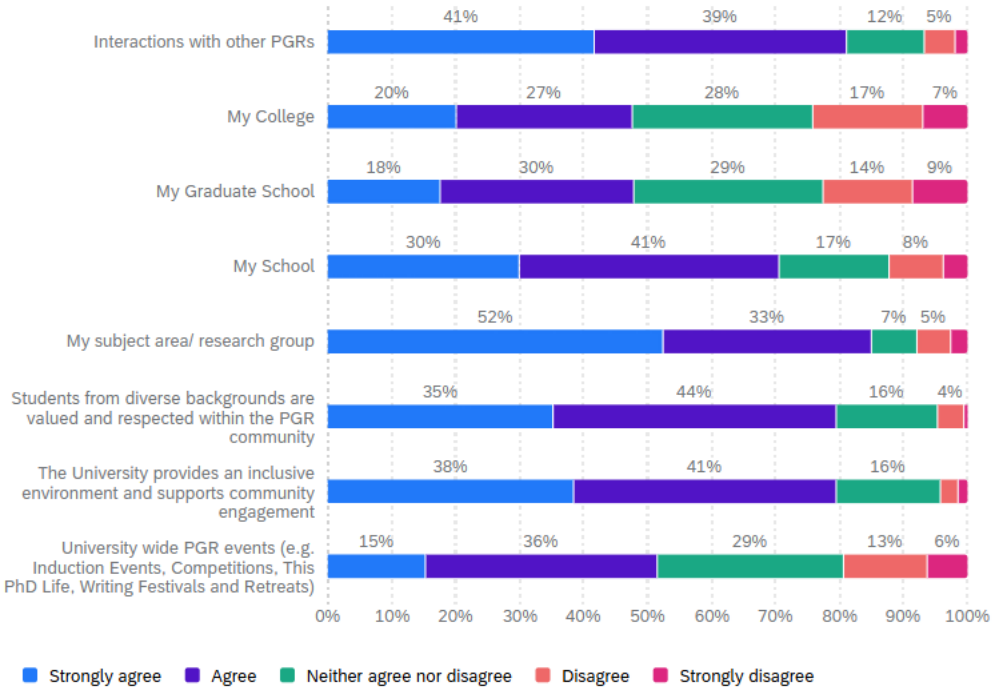


Appendix Figures 8. *PGR Community & Belonging (College Level)*





PGR Community & Inclusivity (COSE) 251



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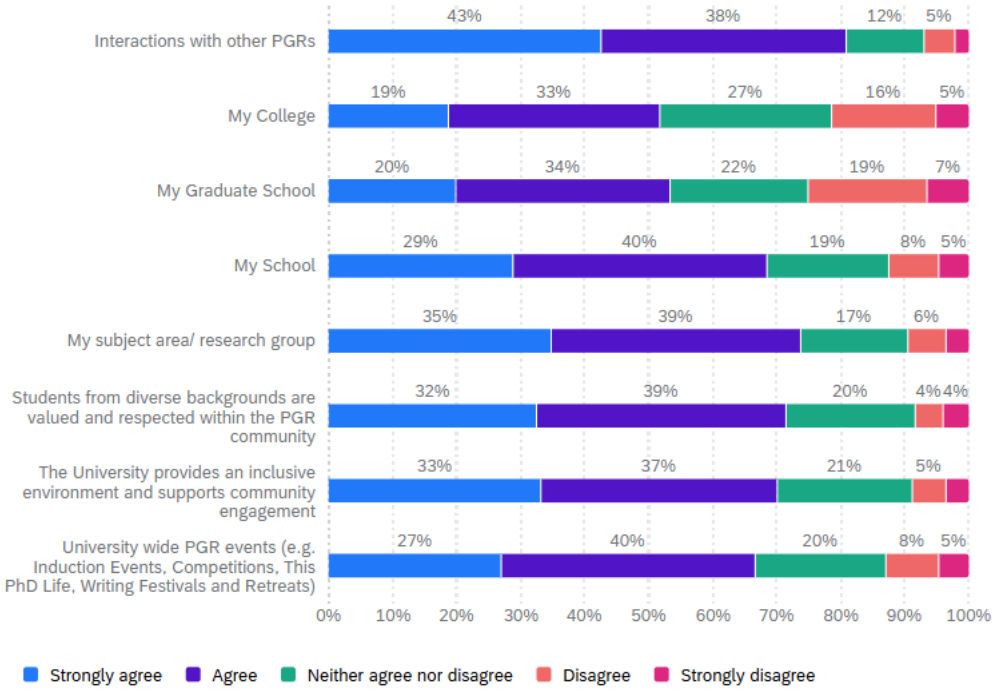
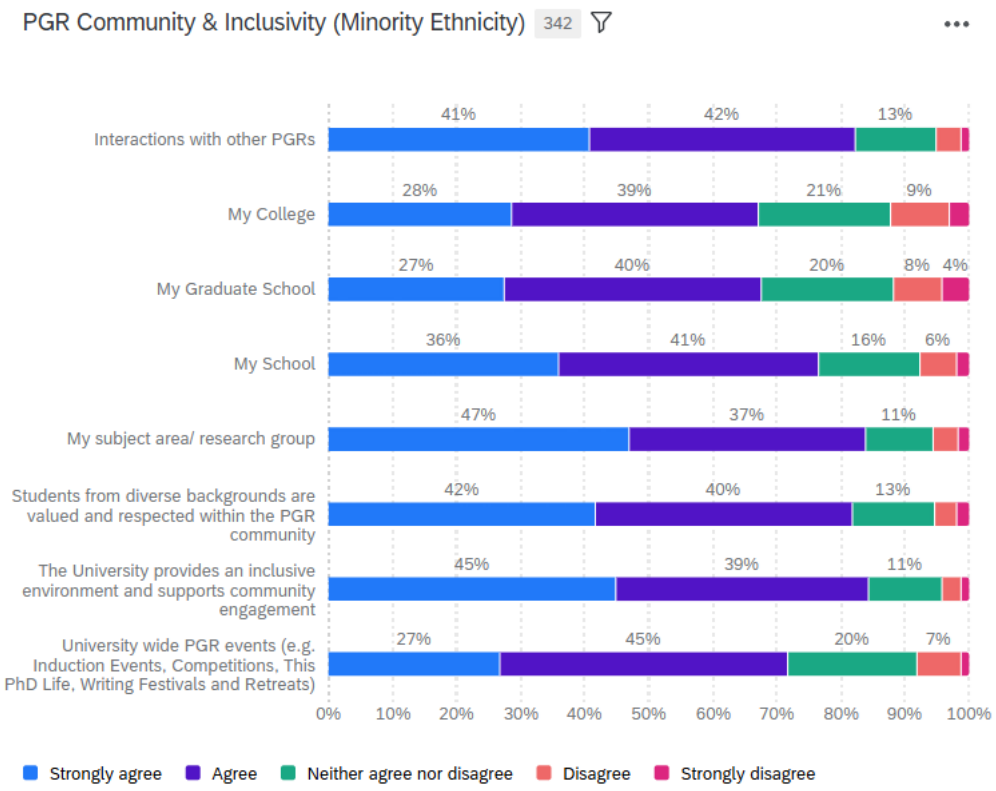
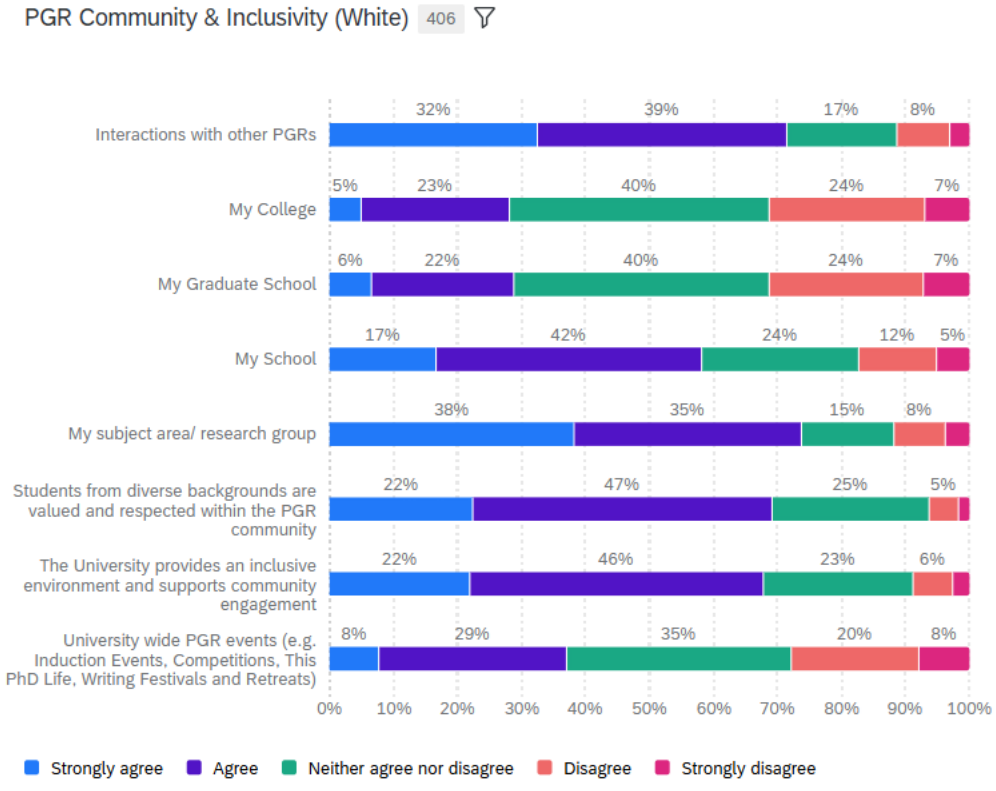
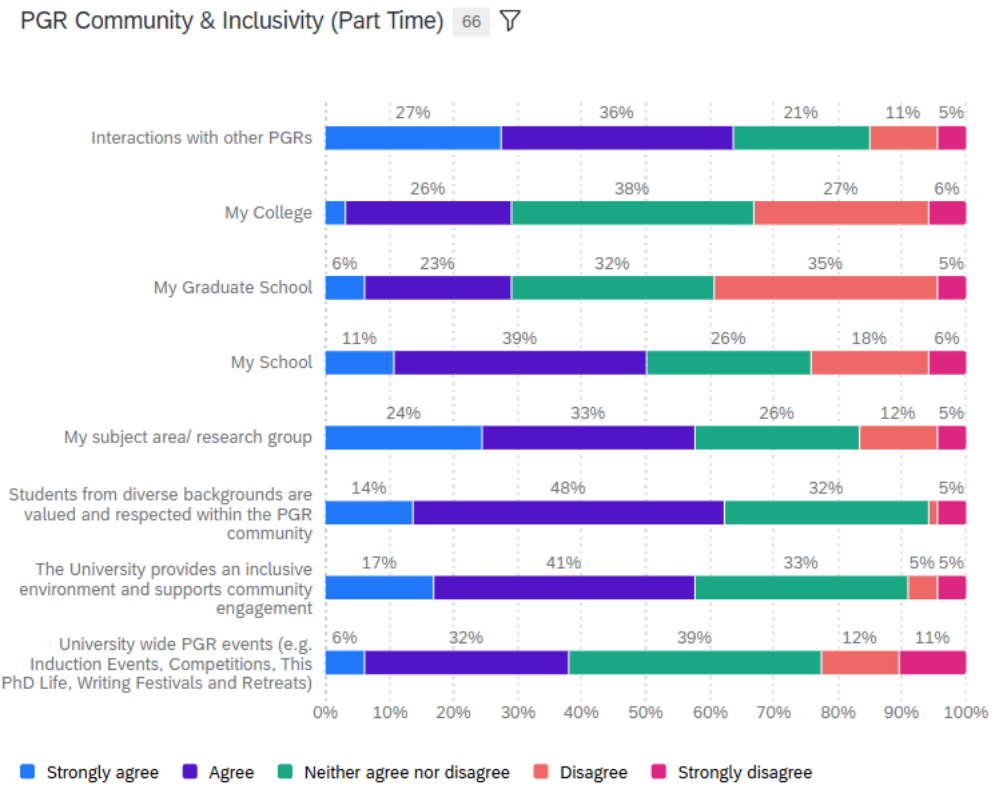


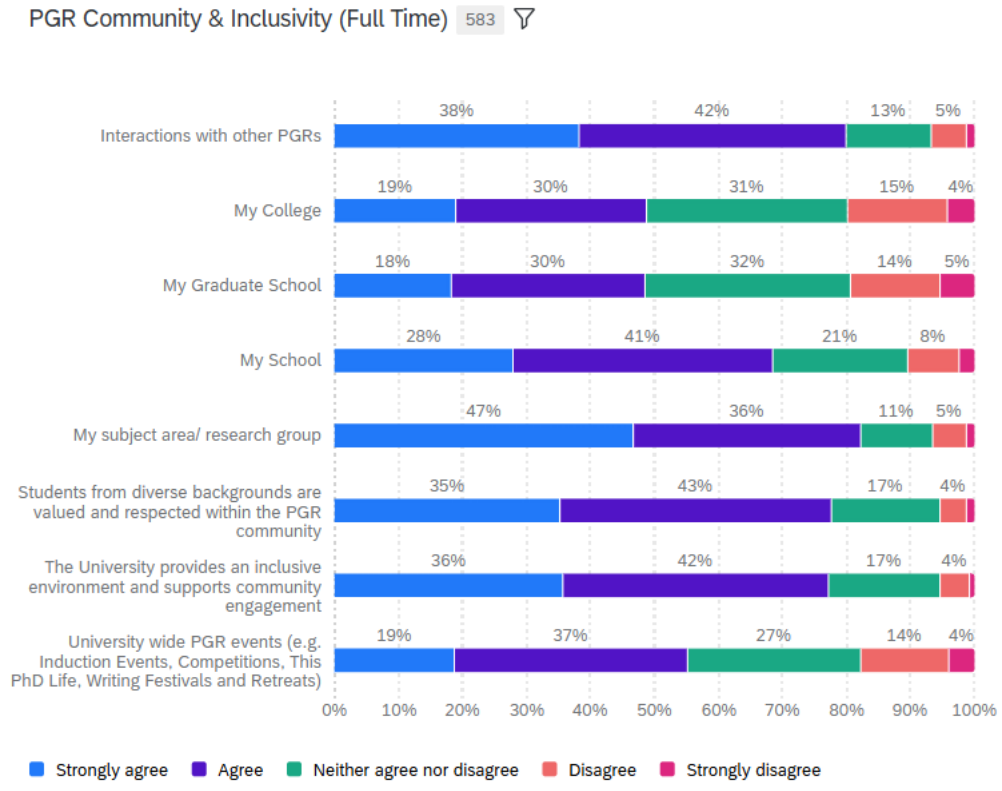
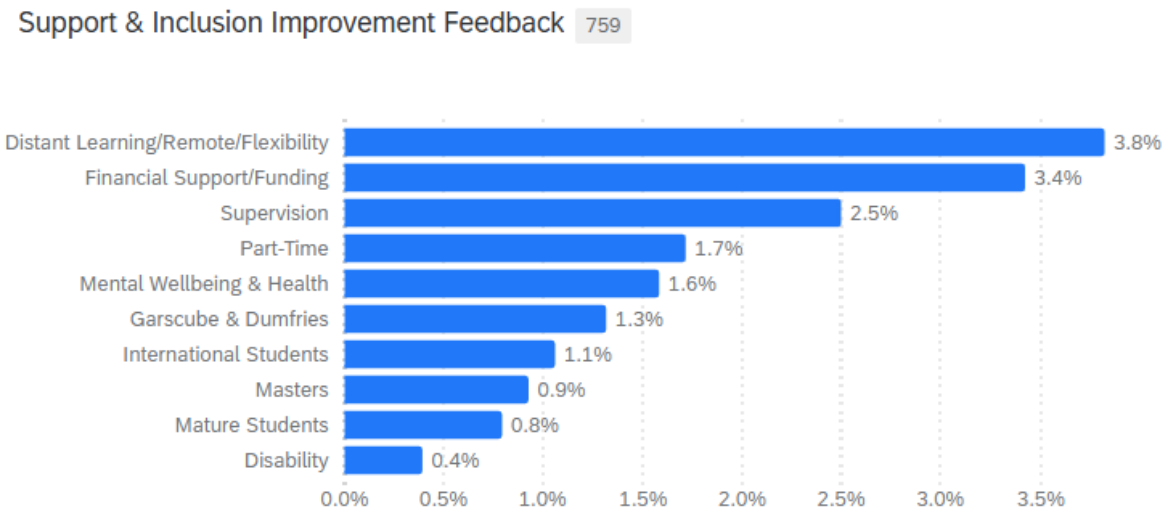
Appendix Figures 9. *PGR Community & Belonging (Ethnicity)*





Appendix Figures 10. *PGR Community & Belonging (PT vs FT)*





Appendix Figure 11. *Improvement Feedback*