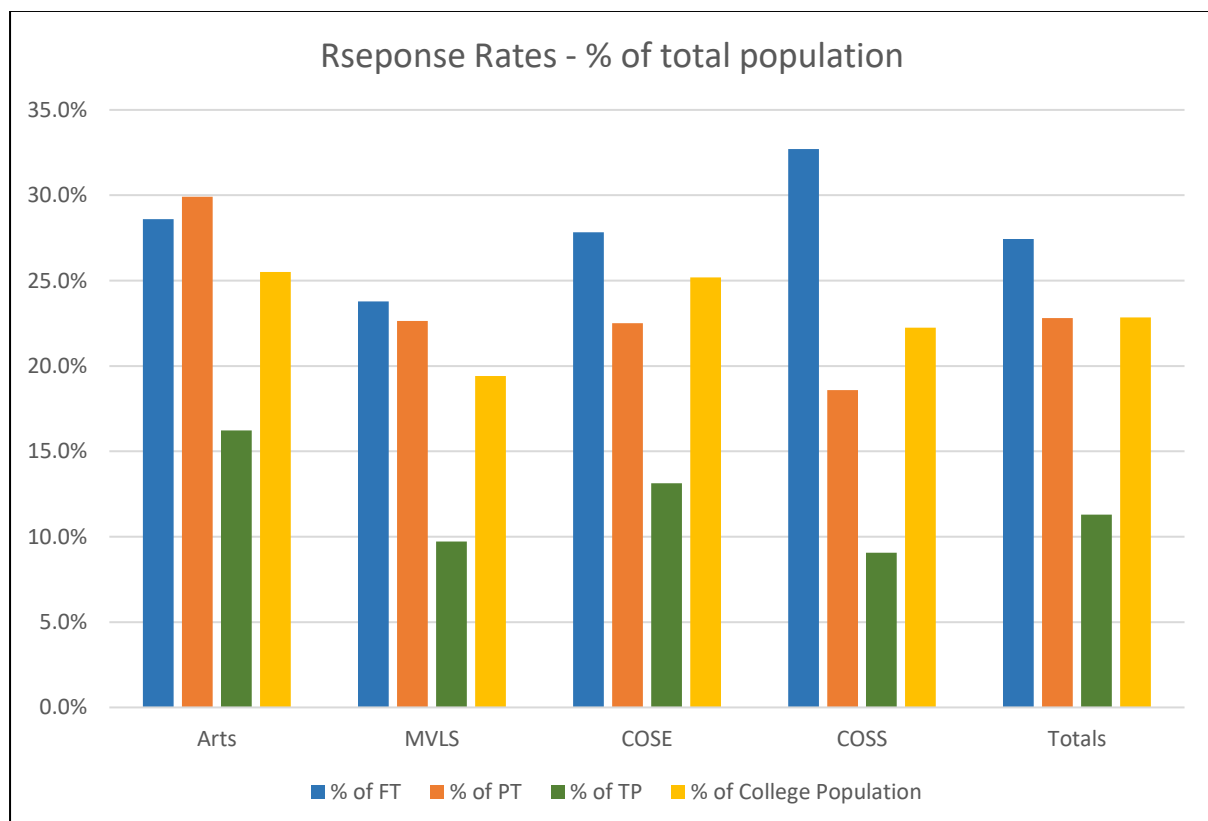


## PGR Survey 2021 – Final Report

### Comments:

1. While the individual challenges should not be underestimated, responses highlight both broad overall satisfaction and that the effects of the pandemic were highly variable as well as spread across all populations. Some students experienced a lot of difficult personal and professional challenges and others were relatively unaffected. This aligns with the University's approach to supporting PGRs with funded extensions which was on the basis of individual need rather than blanket extensions.
2. Students were clear about how much they missed working and learning together. There was much mention of loneliness and isolation, a desire for interaction with peers and staff for training, for research or learning, or simply for support and friendship.
3. Students were clear that their supervisors, and more broadly the academic community around them, were key support mechanisms as well as key to a positive experience.
4. Communication is a persistent issue. The University is complex, and students don't always know where to turn for information. The reduction in peer interactions due to the pandemic will have exacerbated this situation. Students get messages from many sources and it's clearly challenging to identify which ones are important, especially where information in different messages may conflict. There is frequent mention of having a single place to go with queries or a one stop shop for key information.

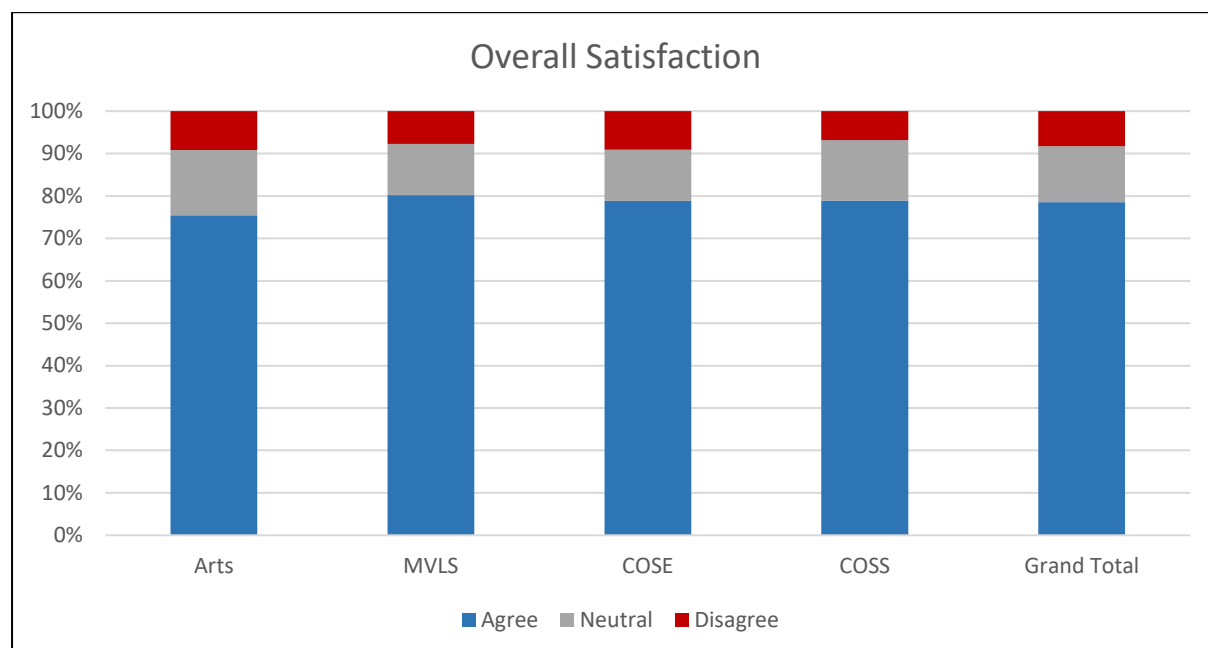
### Recommendations:



PRES 2019 had 1110 responses which equated to a response rate of 44.6%. Thesis pending students were not included in PRES 2019 making the overall pool of students much smaller. This survey had 942 responses which equated to **22.85%** in a total population of 4,123 PGRs at the time of the survey. It has been suggested that running the survey at a different time of year might also yield higher response rates.

**Q10: 'Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of my research degree programme'**

This report starts with the key question of satisfaction. The University views this question as a key performance indicator for PGRs.



Overall satisfaction as measured by this question is at just under 79% which is lower than in 2019 when it was 85%. This is not entirely unanticipated given the challenges of the past 18 months. Arguably this reflects the resilience and dedication of our PGRs as well as the hard work University staff put into supporting students through this difficult period.

PRES 2019	Agree	Overall	Arts	MVLS	COSE	COSS
Experience Q1	Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of my research degree programme	<b>85.0%</b>	83.5%	87.2%	83.9%	83.7%
	Change against 2021	<b>-6.44%</b>	-8.07%	-7.03%	-5.05%	-4.78%

In PRES 2019, there was a fairly even split between mostly agree and definitely agree (44%/41%) where there is a stronger tendency here to mostly agree (28% definitely agree, 51% mostly agree) reflecting a downward trend. In PRES 2019 7.4% of responses were neutral. This has nearly doubled to 13.2% also reflecting the same general downward trend in satisfaction. The overall disagree responses from PRES 2019 reflected 7.5% of the responses as opposed to the 8.3% in 2021.

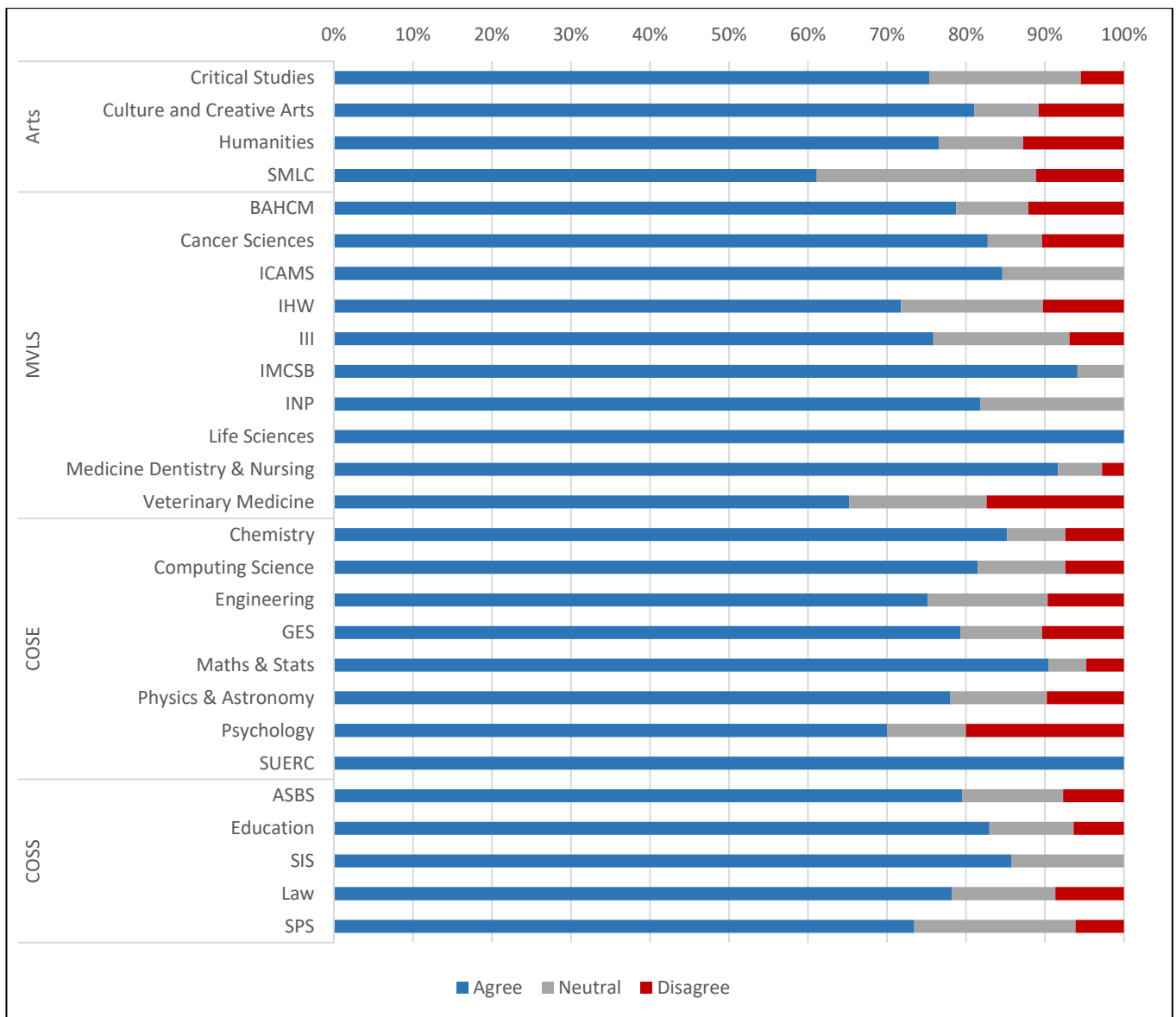
Even with this in mind, satisfaction remains fairly high as well as reasonably consistent across the institution. MVLS has the highest satisfaction and Arts the lowest; however, there is less than 5% between them. Several areas (5) had a satisfaction rate above 90% with only two below 70%.

High overall satisfaction (over 90% - Maths & Stats, Life Sciences, IMCSB, Medicine/Dentistry/Nursing) but areas of higher dissatisfaction (higher than 15% - Psychology, Vet Med) and high neutrality (higher than 20% - SPS, SMLC)

There was somewhat more dissatisfaction over time across the programme with thesis pending students /students in later stages expressing greatest dissatisfaction

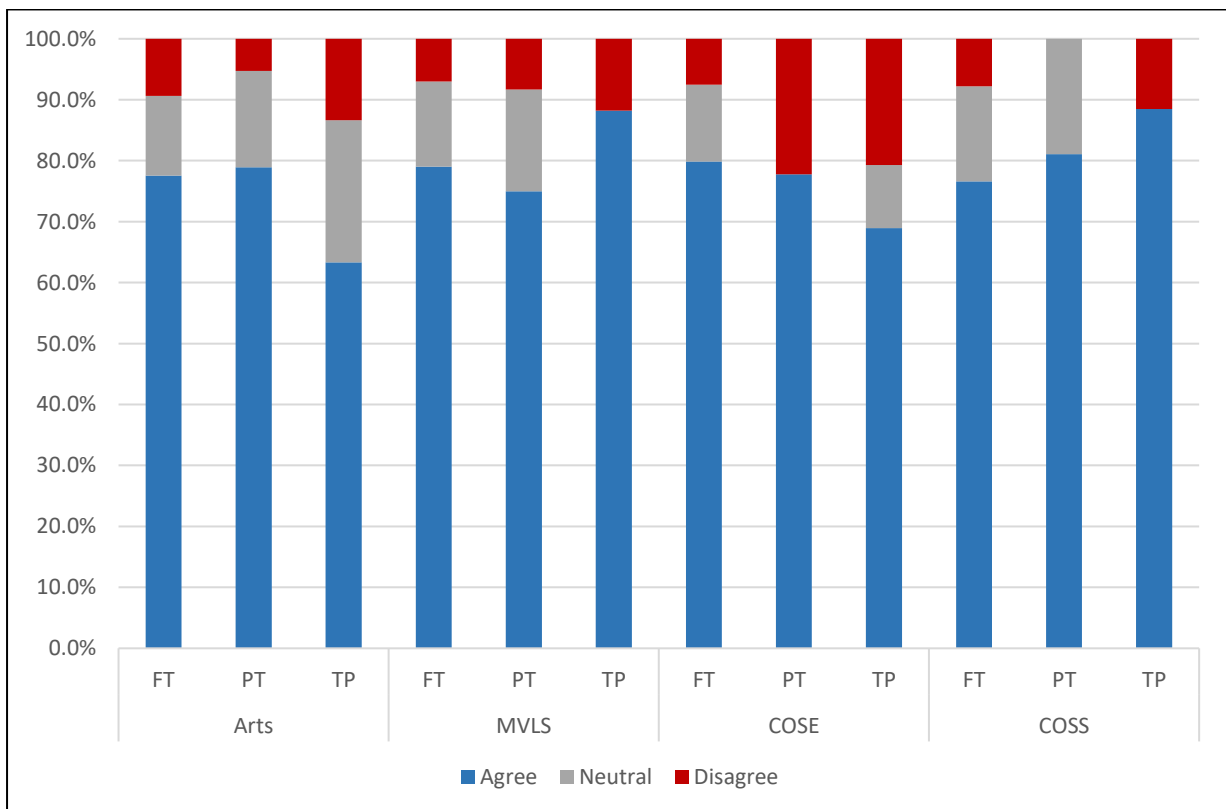
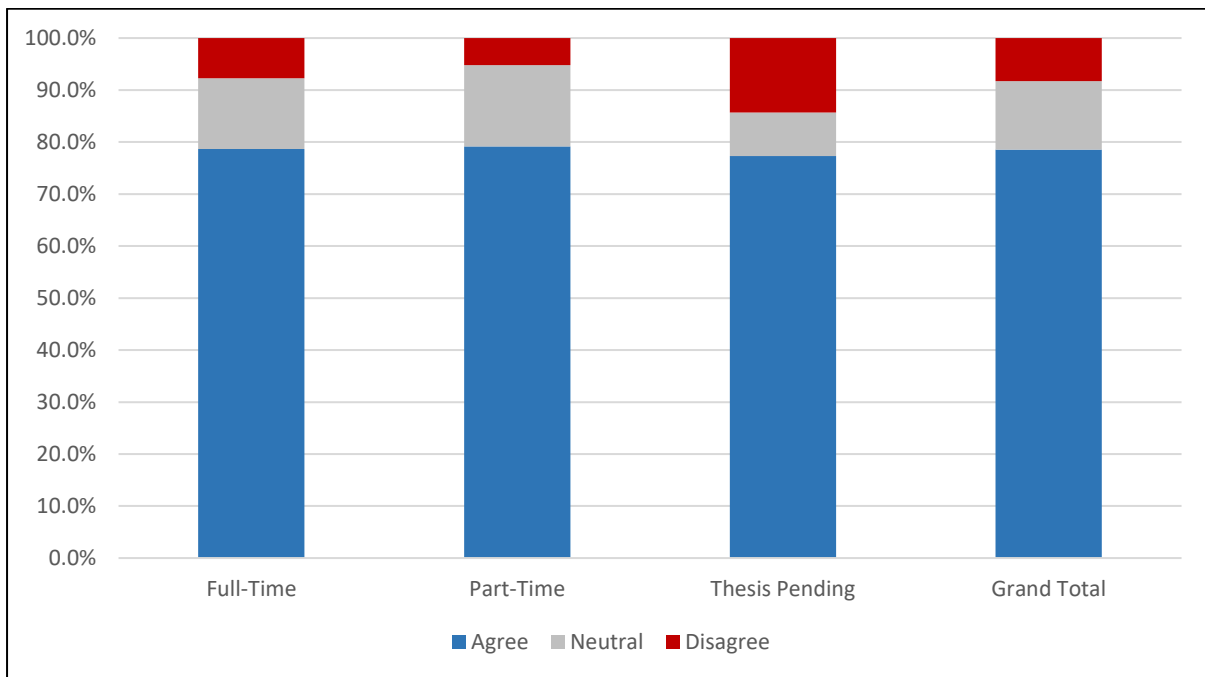
The following charts break the data down by school/institute FT/PT/TP, gender and year of programme.

### School level satisfaction results



These results show some variability in levels of satisfaction across the university but no trends that reflect specific institutional challenges although 8 units had a dissatisfaction rate of 10% or greater. This should be reviewed locally in schools or institutes to diagnose any issues which might be addressed. COSS overall has the lowest level of dissatisfaction even though MVLS, with more variable results, had the highest level of overall satisfaction.

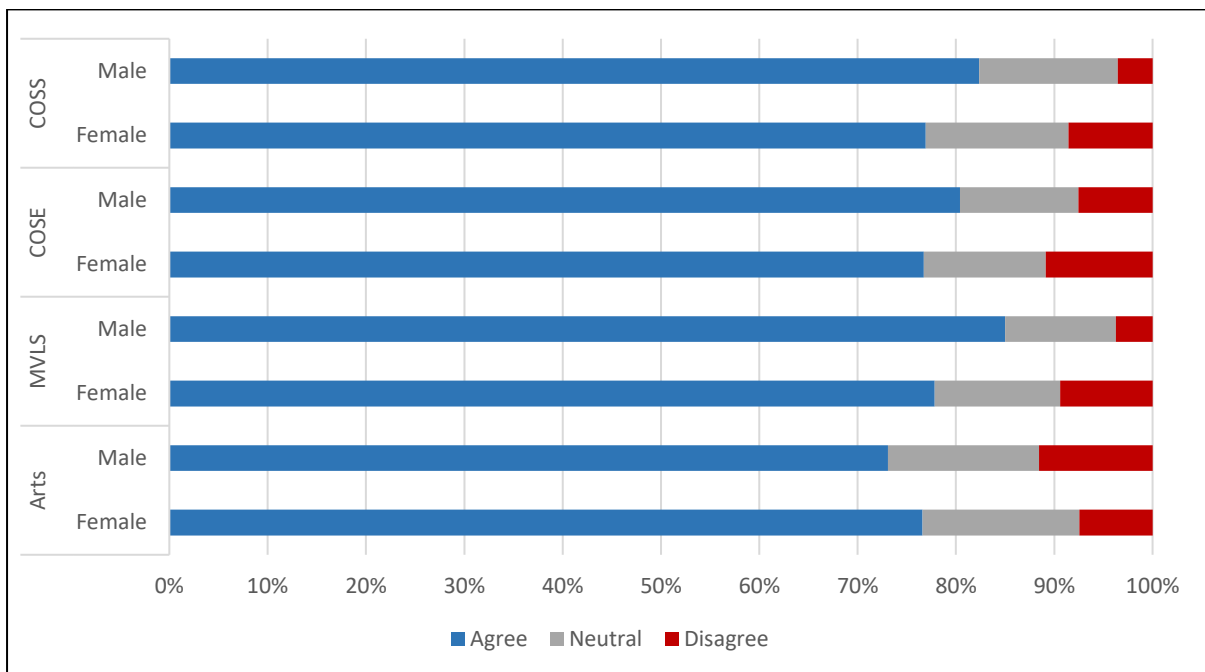
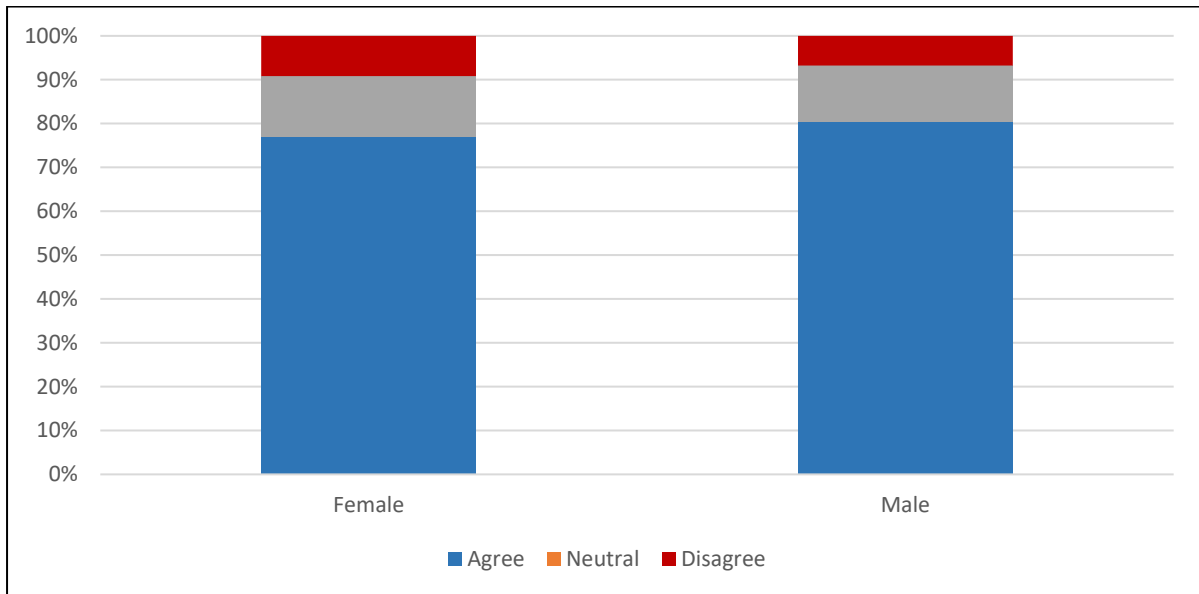
## Student Load



Agreement is variable across student loads. Part time students are most neutral about their satisfaction (except in COSE) and thesis pending students are less neutral about their experience. The highest levels of dissatisfaction are in PT and TP COSE students. Thesis pending students are under the greatest pressure to submit and may not have been eligible for funded extensions, so it is interesting that the greatest levels of satisfaction, neutrality and dissatisfaction are found in this student group.

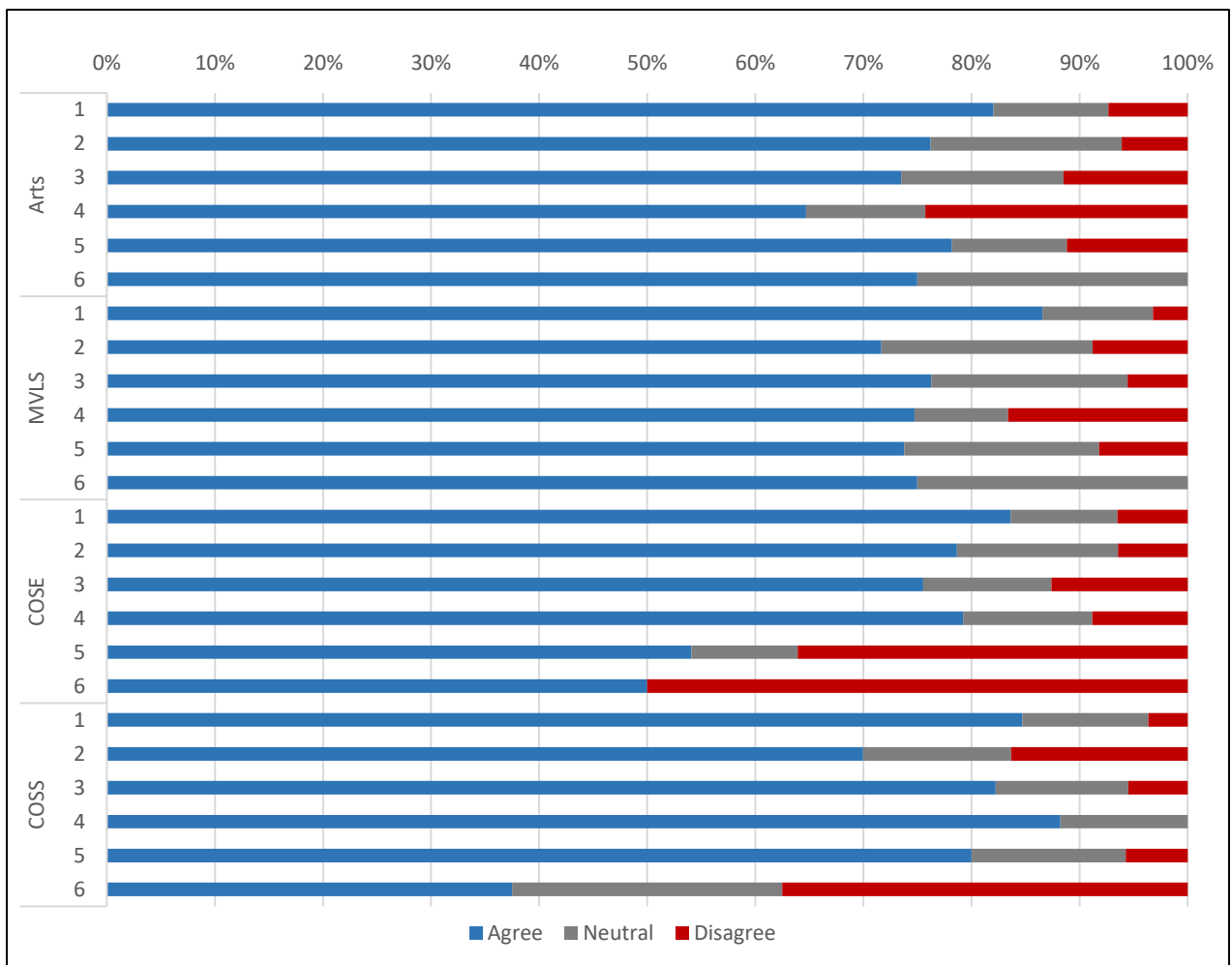
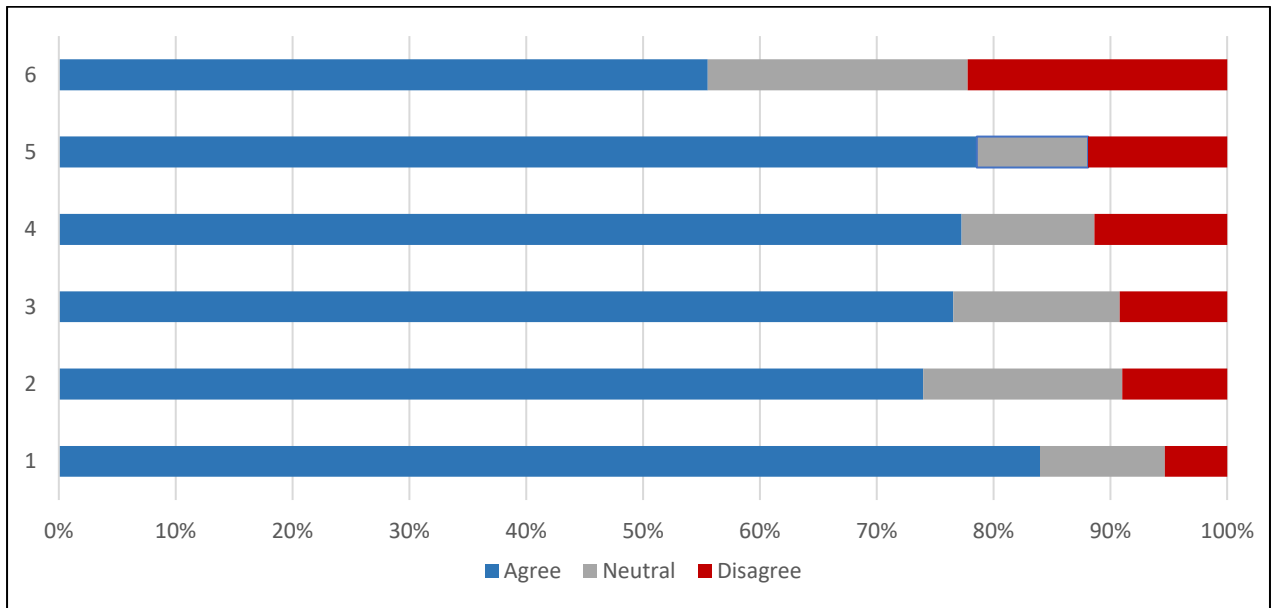
## Gender

Please note that categories with fewer than 5 responses omitted.



There is no discernible trend in satisfaction when looking at gender. Female students are slightly less satisfied except in Arts. Other gender categories replied in very small numbers and were thus excluded.

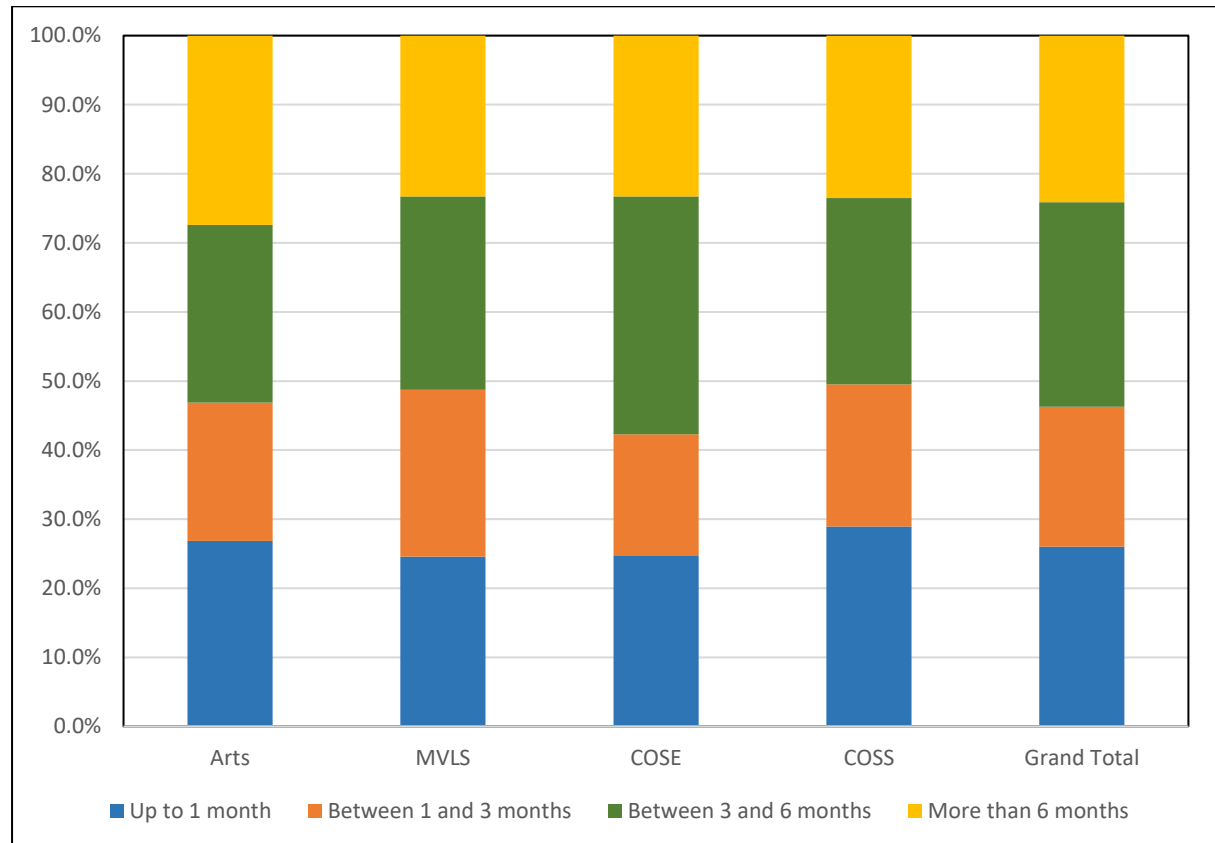
## Year of Programme



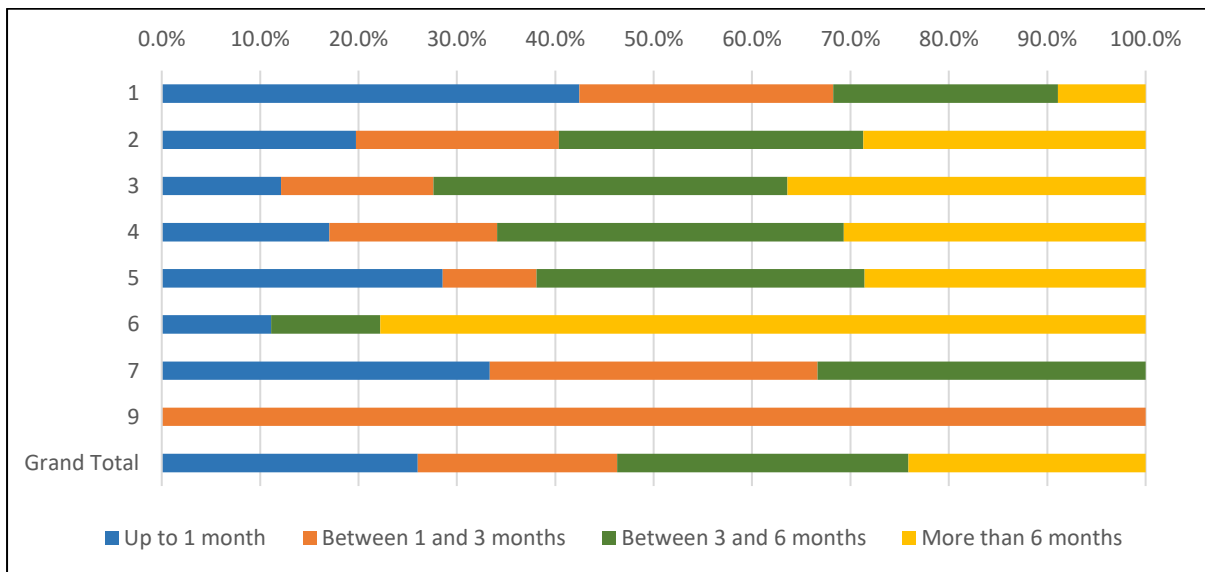
There is less satisfaction in later years of their programmes although there were only a small number of responses and all were in thesis pending. Arguably this reflects the pressure to submit and was exacerbated by pandemic-related delays to projects and personal disruptions.

**Q1: 'My ability to continue to work on my research degree has been significantly impacted by the pandemic, causing delays with my research or ability to submit my thesis by:'**

While there have been quite severe disruptions to students' ability to progress due to the pandemic and while this has been very, very stressful for many staff and students, the impacts in terms of the perceived delay to submission is quite variable. The largest disruption was for 'between 3 and 6 months' and the largest group here was in COSE. Clearly, the impact to students of the pandemic was very personal as were the reasons their work may have been halted or delayed due to the pandemic.

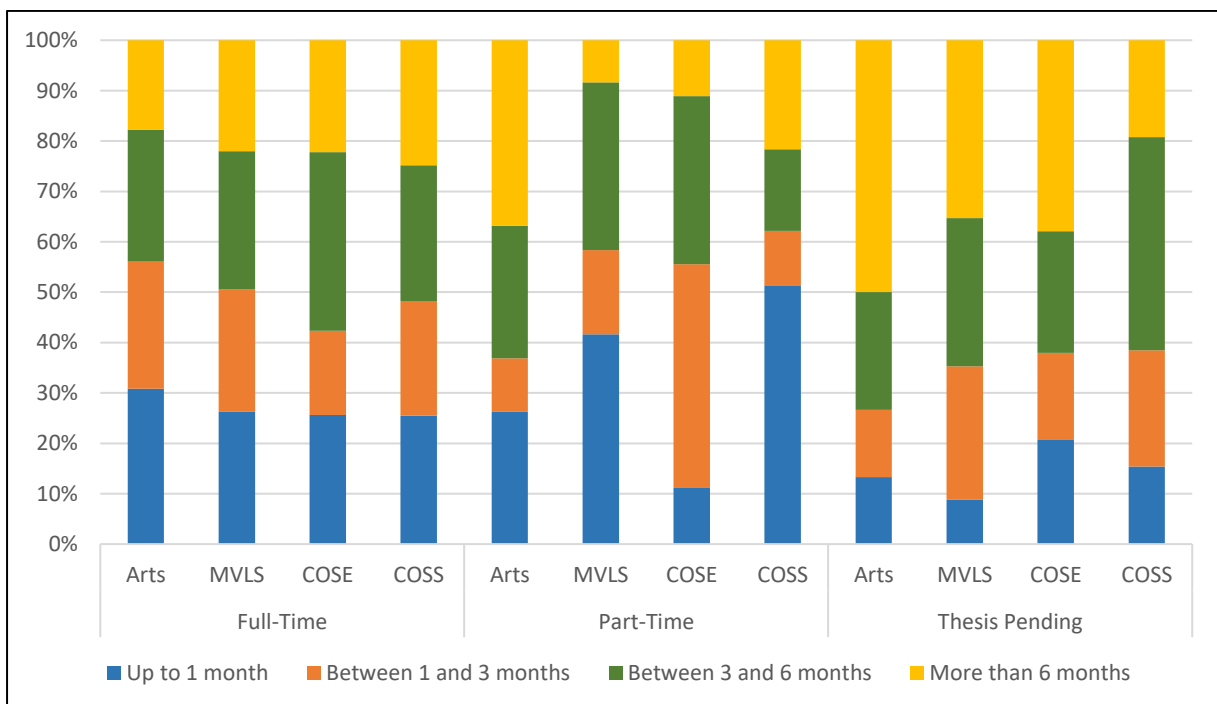


## Year of Programme



Students in year 6 onwards were a small population and were all in thesis pending status.

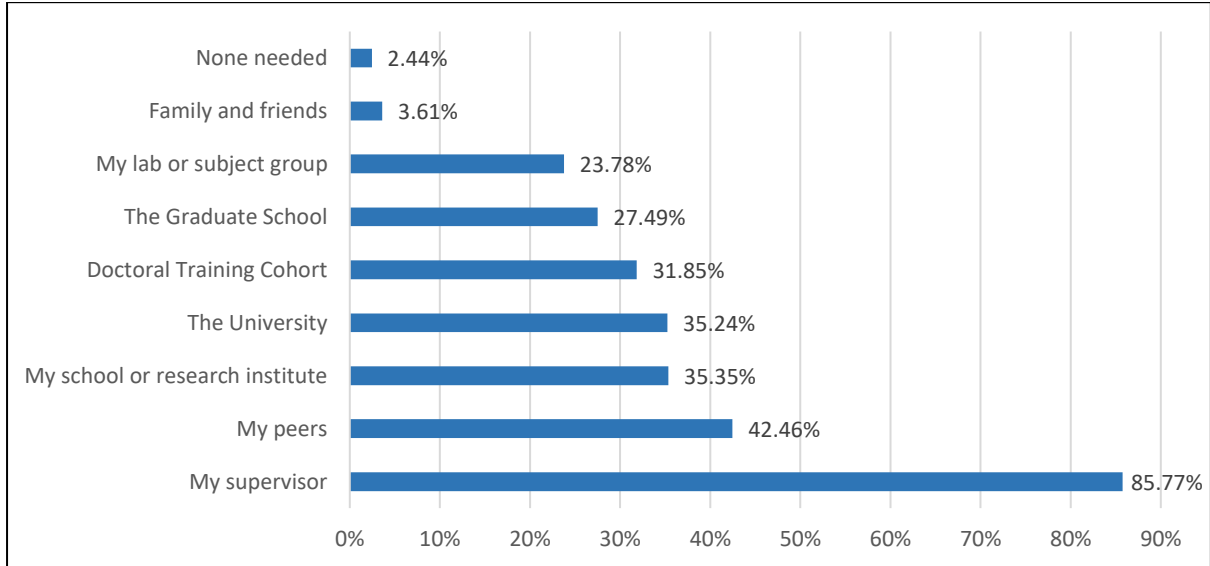
## Student Load



Breaking this down by college and load highlights the great variability in responses.

**Q2: 'I have found support that enabled me to continue with my research during the COVID-19 disruption from: (select all that apply)'**

Top 10 (percent of respondents making selection)

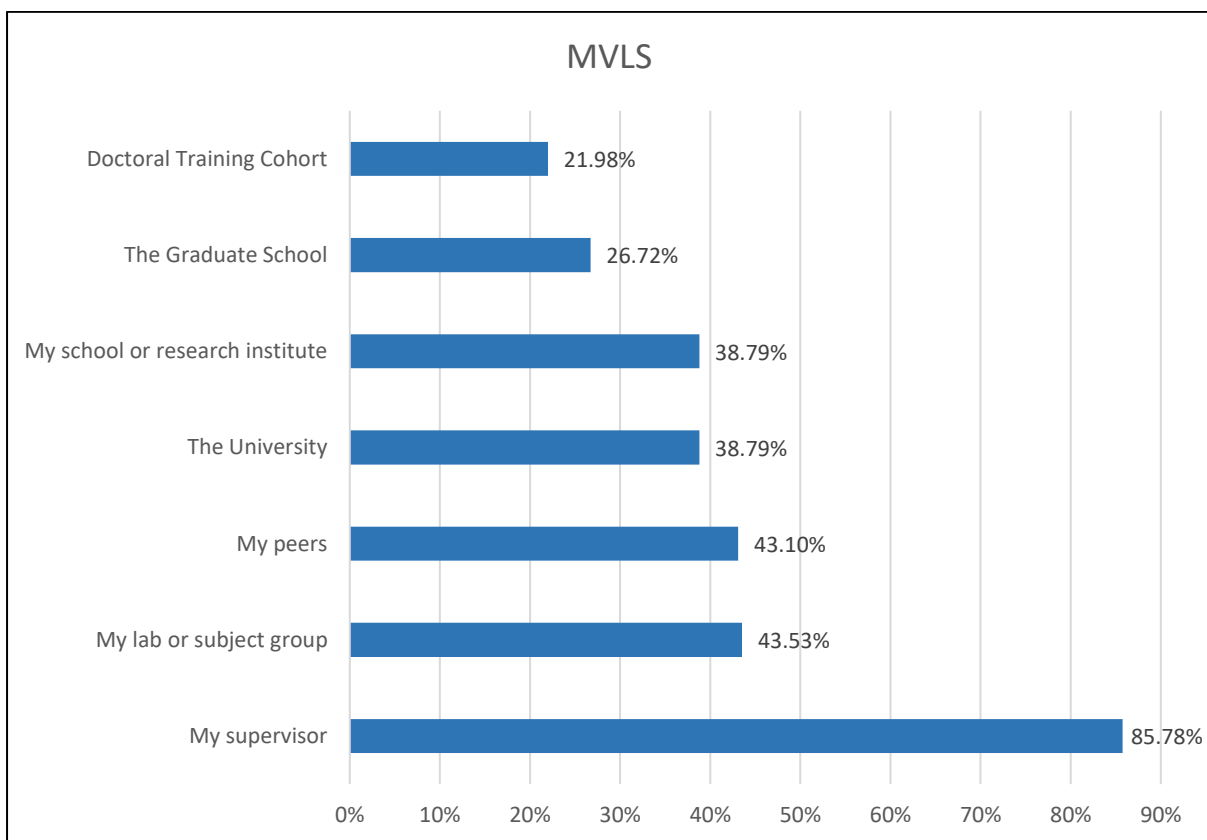
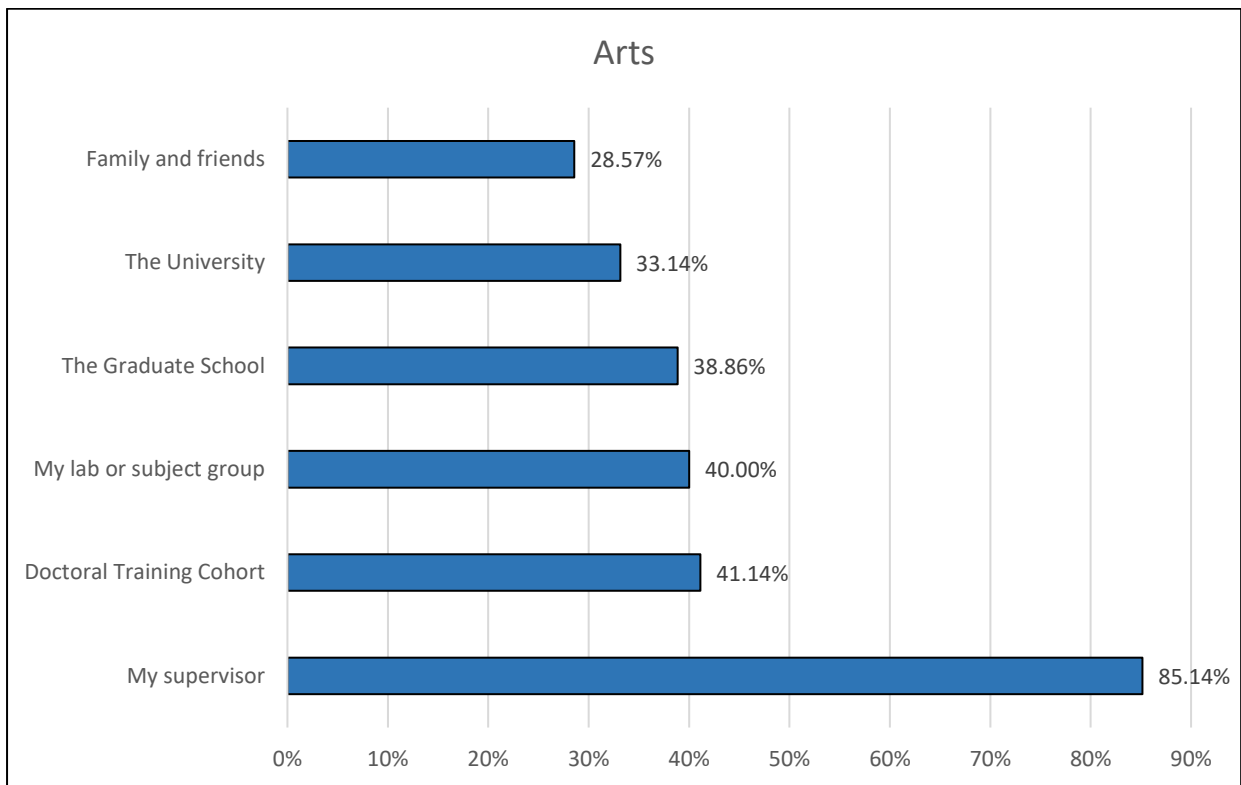


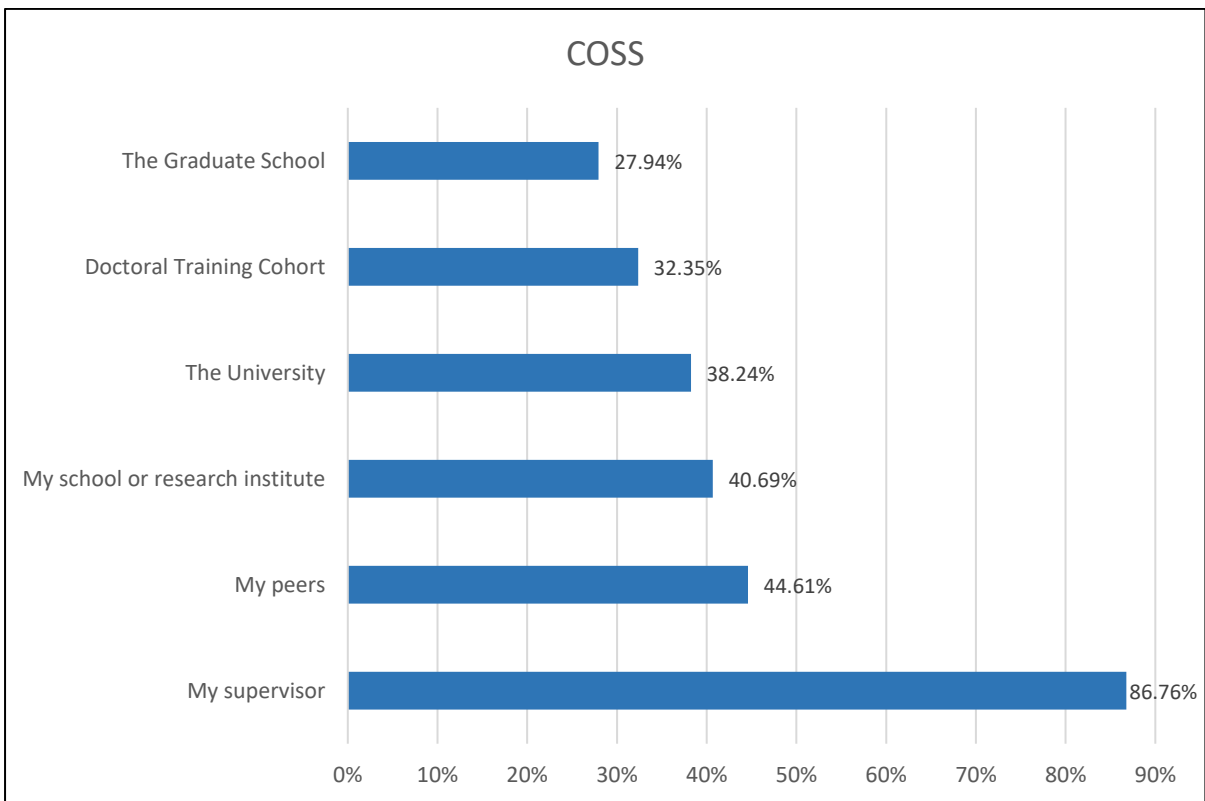
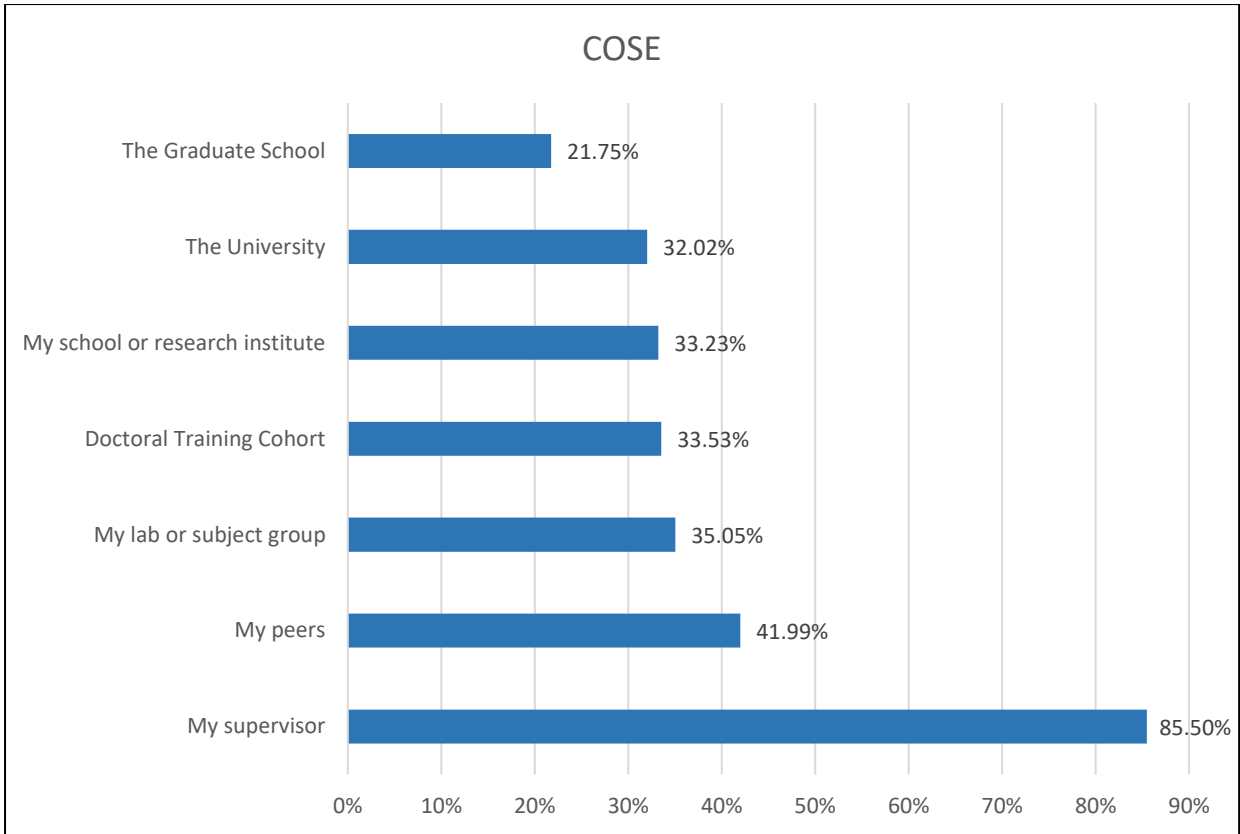
85.7% of the respondents selected their supervisor as a key source of support followed by their peers, their school/institute or the University. There was little variation between Colleges for this choice. The high volume of responses that reflect that value of individual or personal support is significant. This is reflected in other questions where answers suggested that students missed each other and that ability to work with others, suggesting the high value placed on support that is more personal rather than institutional.

The university itself may appear in the top 5, something of an outlier in terms of personal support, due to the profile of institutional and funder policy during the pandemic as well as the programme of university level funded extensions. Students, anecdotally, often fail to understand clearly what the different entities that support them are when they are engaged with several. 'The university' could in this case be shorthand for something beyond my school or institute.

Responses at College level are reported below for any response that was selected by more than 5% of respondents. This underscores the importance of personal / individual support for students.

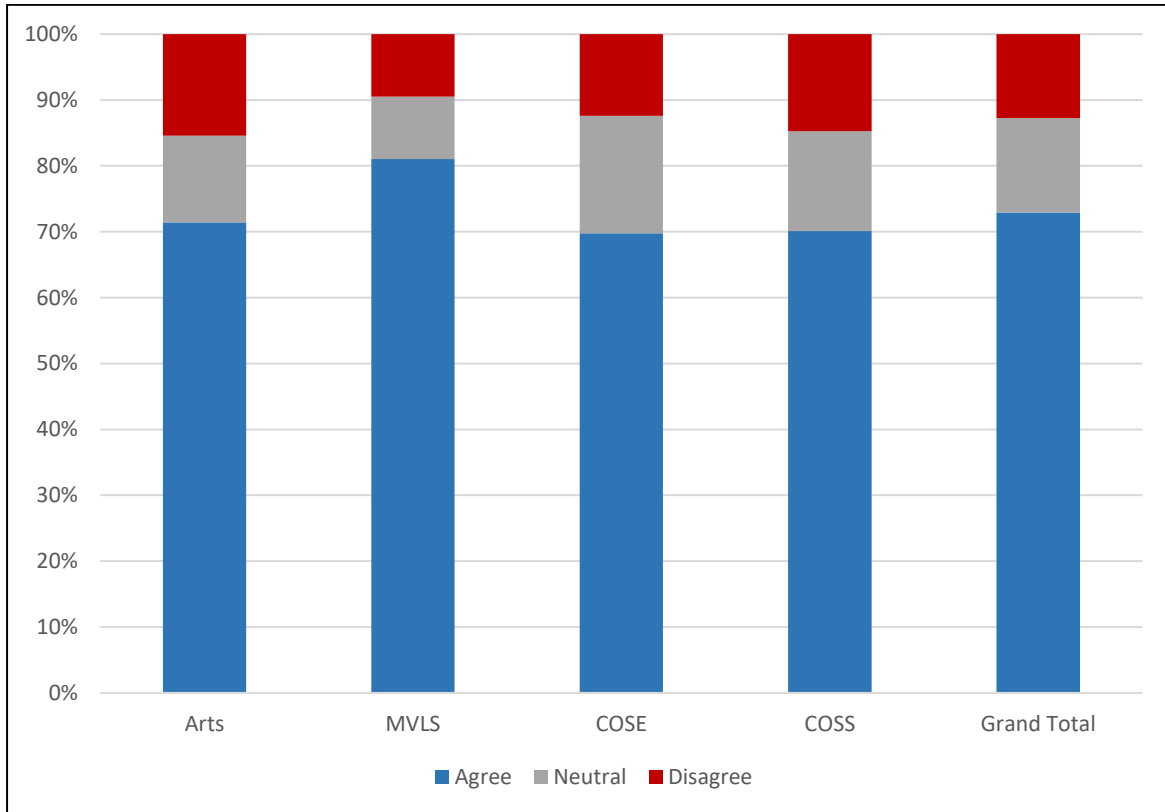
College level charts show selections by percent of respondents in that College



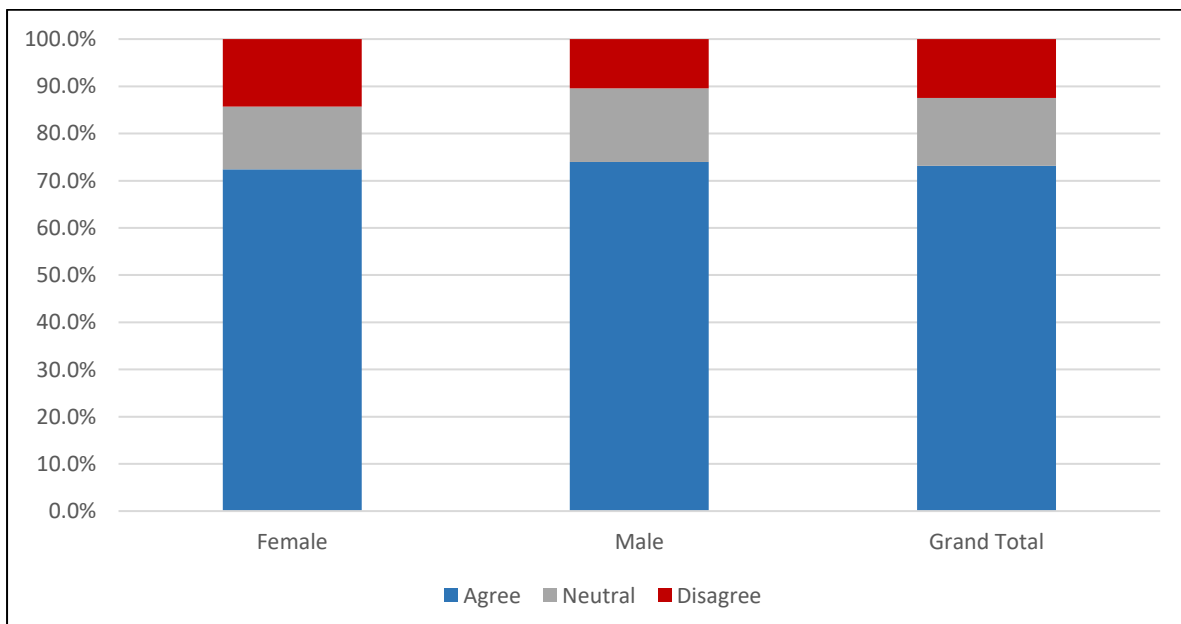


**Q3: 'I am confident that I will be able to complete my research degree programme within the agreed timescale, including any additional time added for changes I needed to make to my project due to the pandemic disruption and any agreed extensions.'**

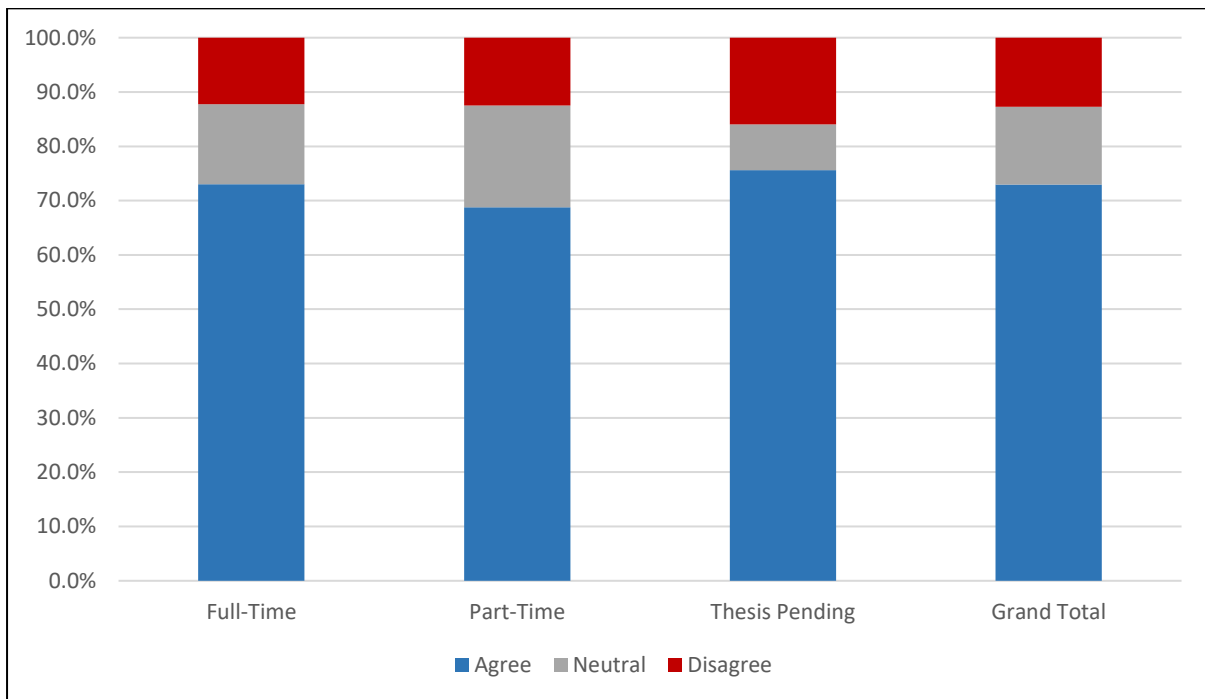
Agreement in this question is relatively high. PGRs in MVLS are most likely to feel that they will submit on time.



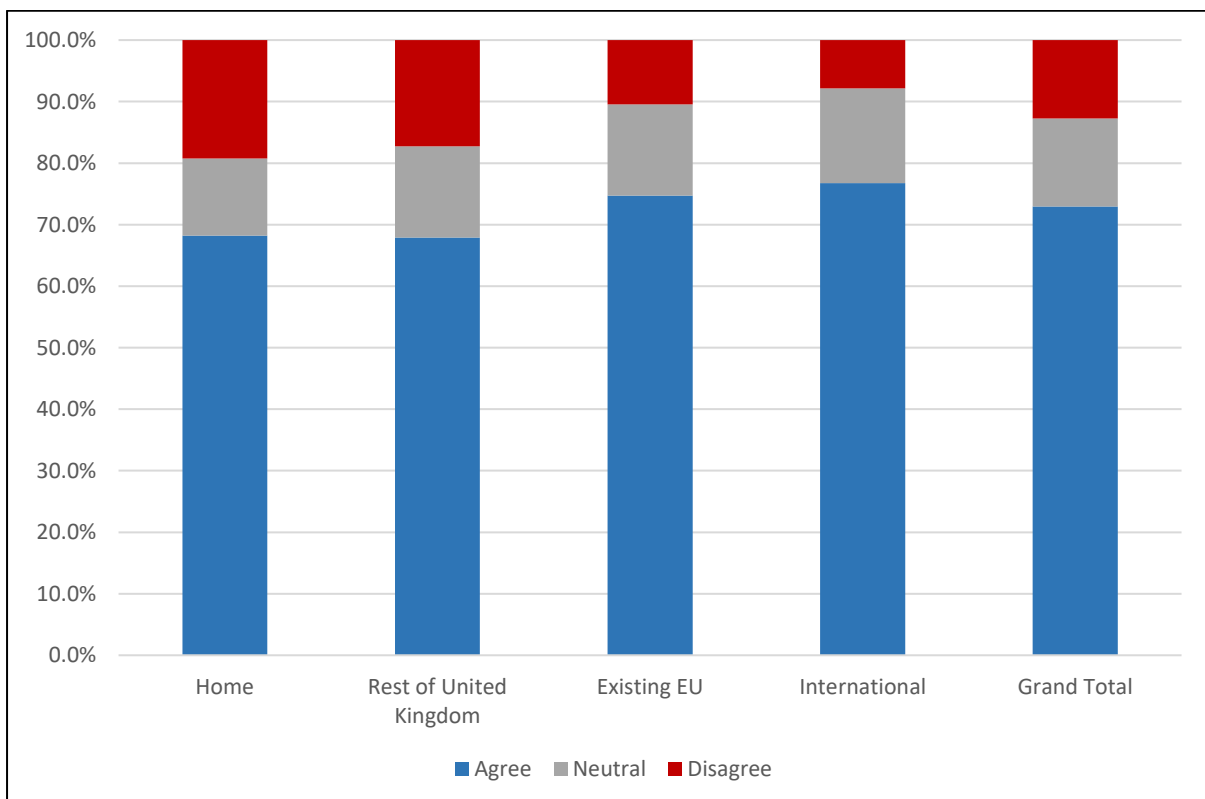
Agreement across gender is fairly even but students identifying as female are more likely to disagree.



PGRs in their thesis pending period both disagree and agree in the greatest numbers. They are also least neutral about this question, reflecting what is hopefully fairly sold assessment of their ability to submit.

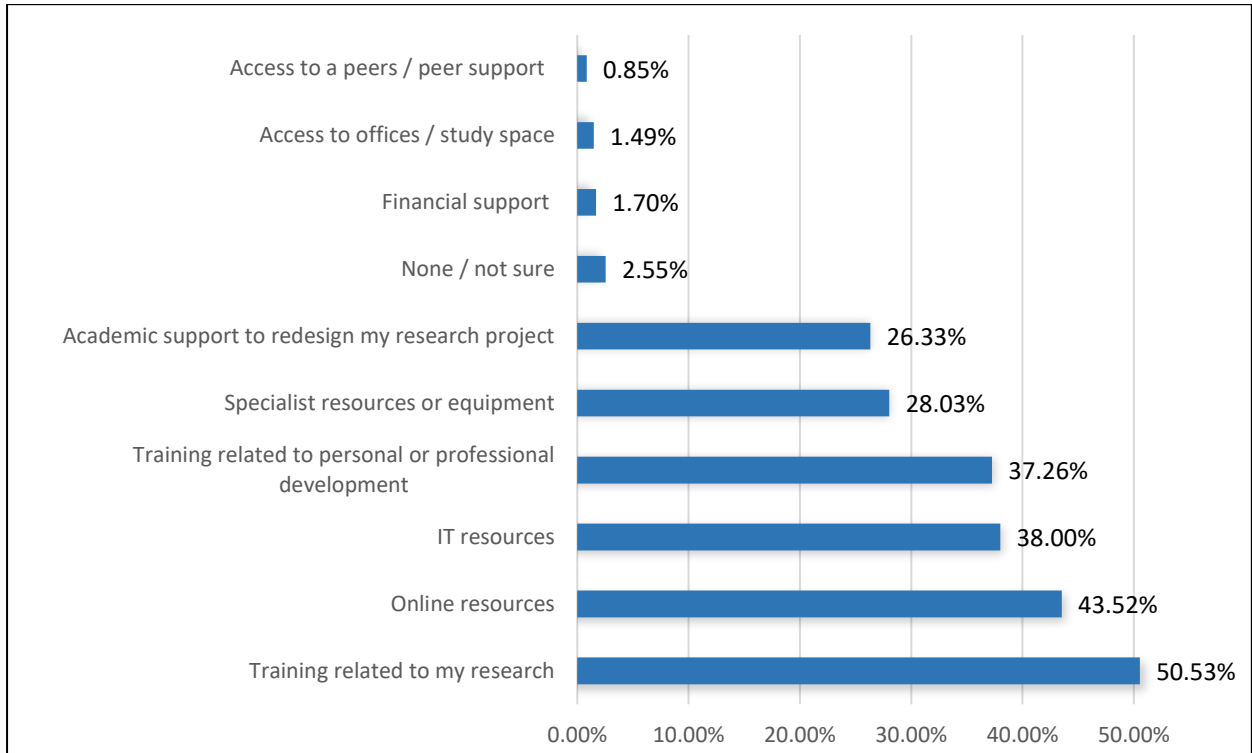


UK based students are least likely to feel that they will submit on time.

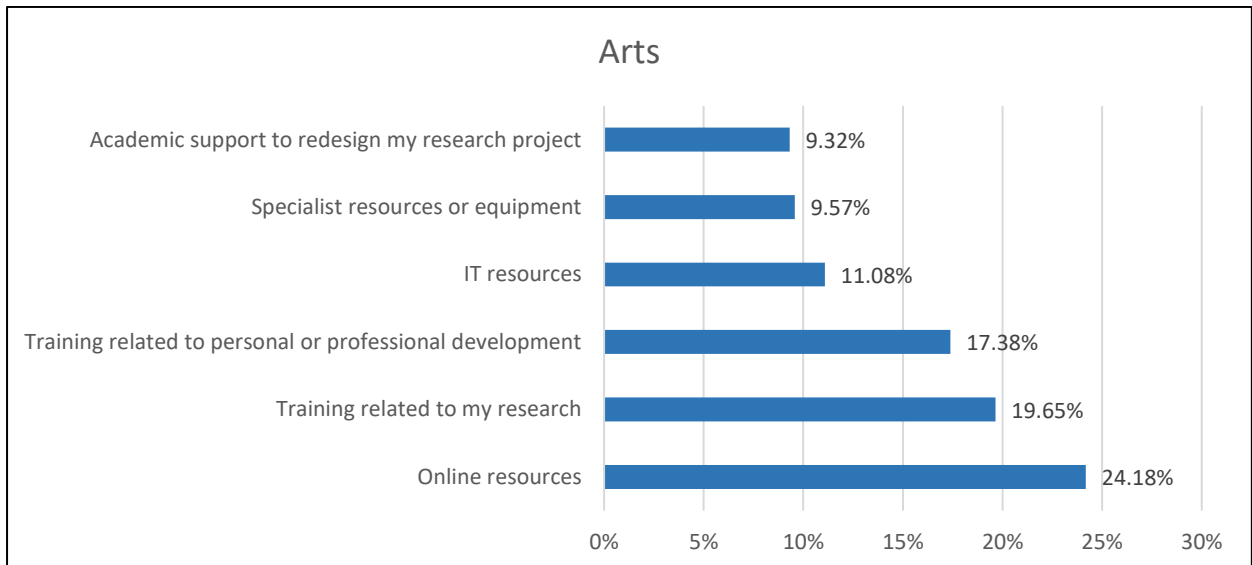


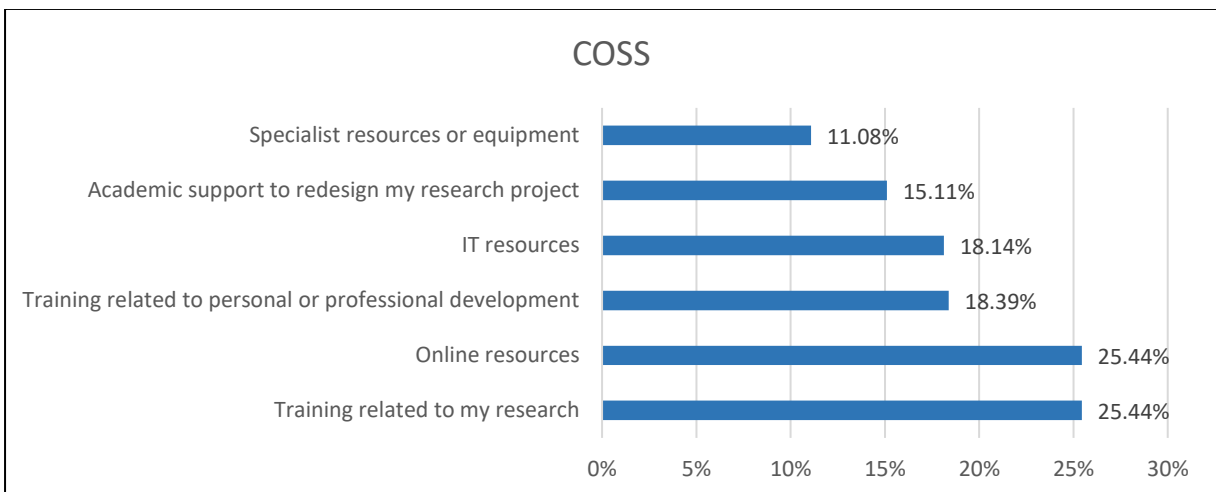
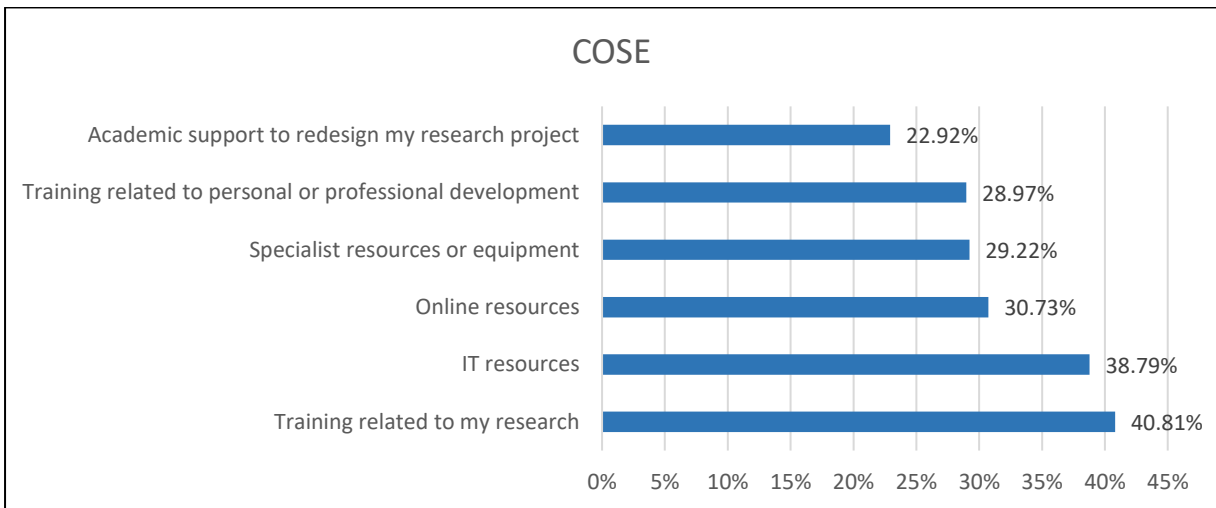
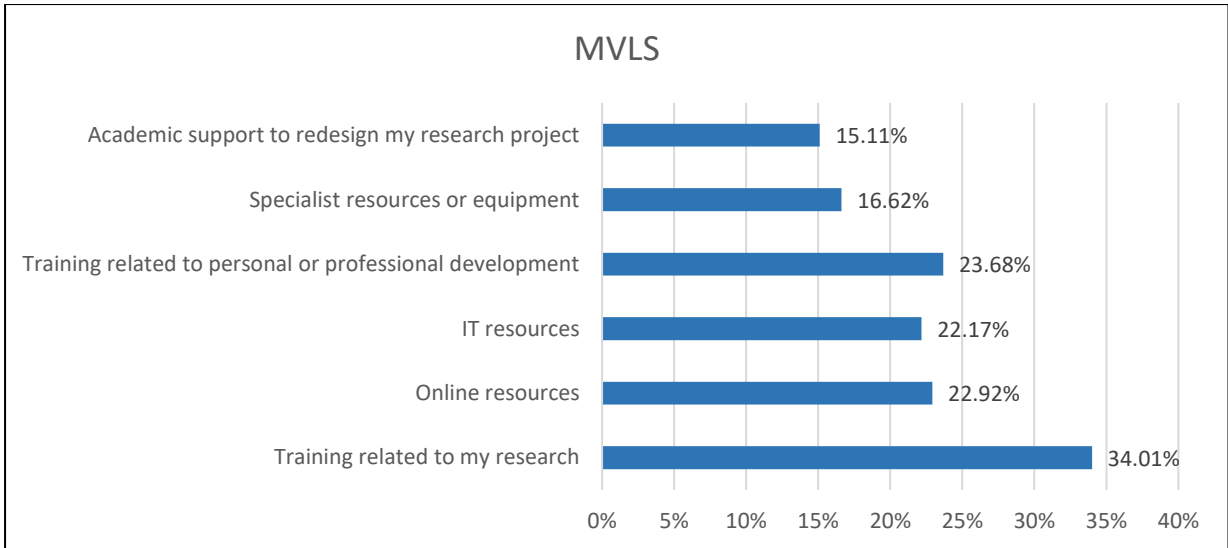
**Q4: The University could more effectively support my development as a researcher in the following ways with additional (select all that apply):**

Percent of respondents choosing each option - University



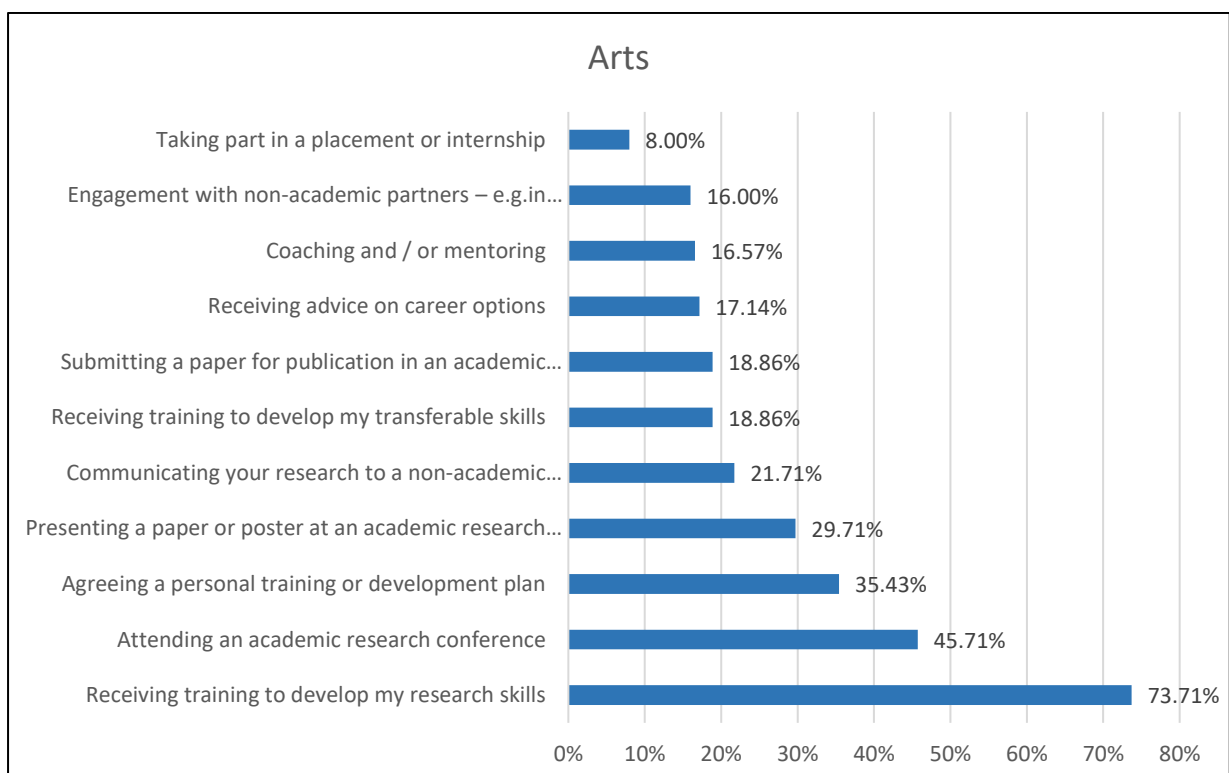
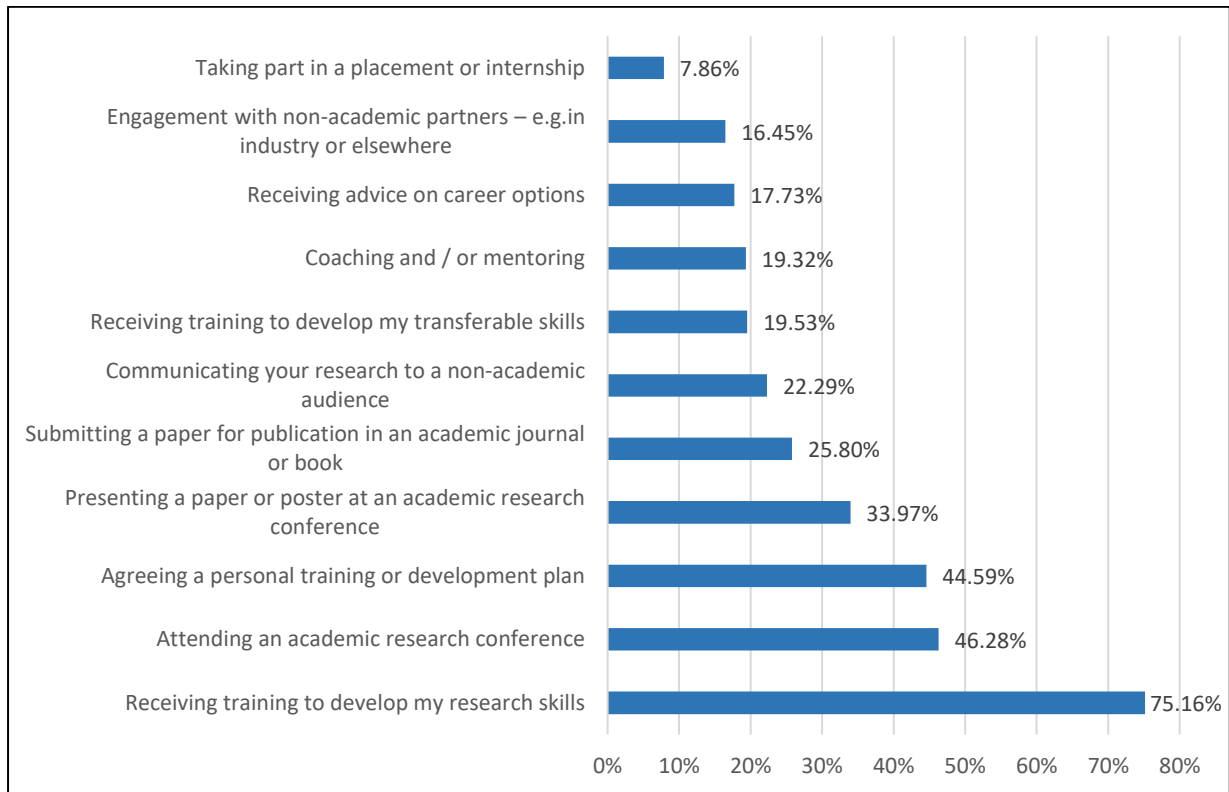
College level charts show percent of respondents in that College, responses above 5%



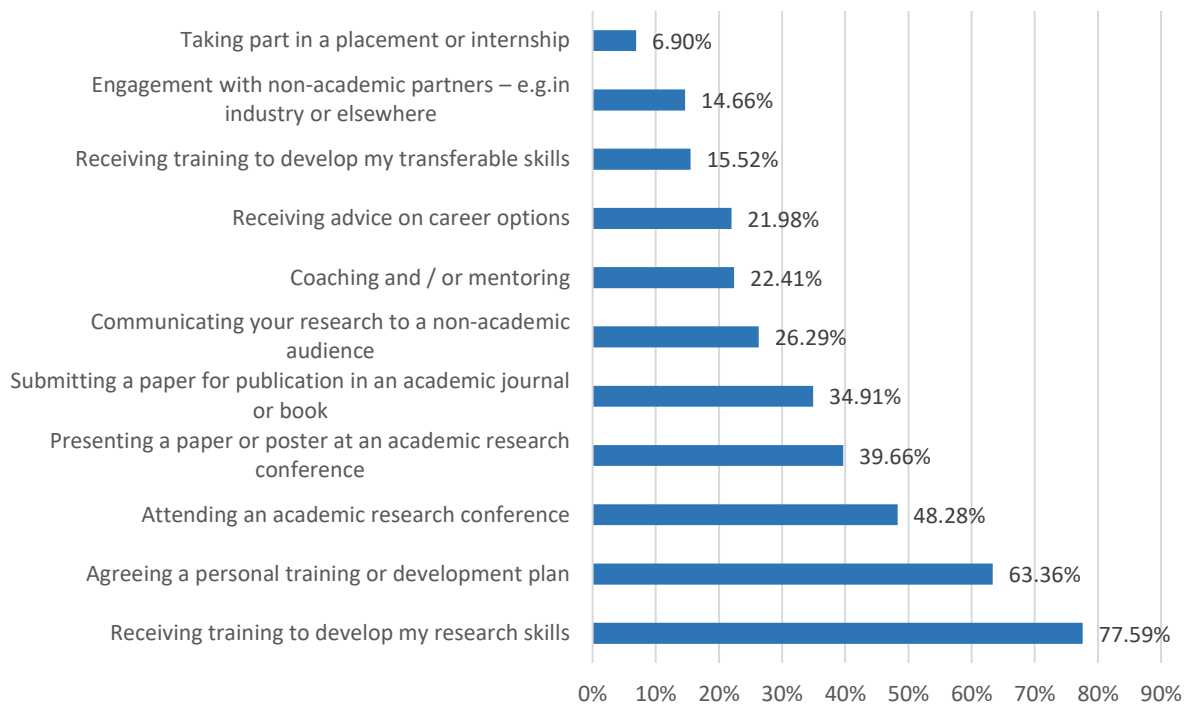


**Q5: 'Please indicate which of the following opportunities (including virtual and face-to-face opportunities) you have experienced during your research degree programme (select all that apply)'**

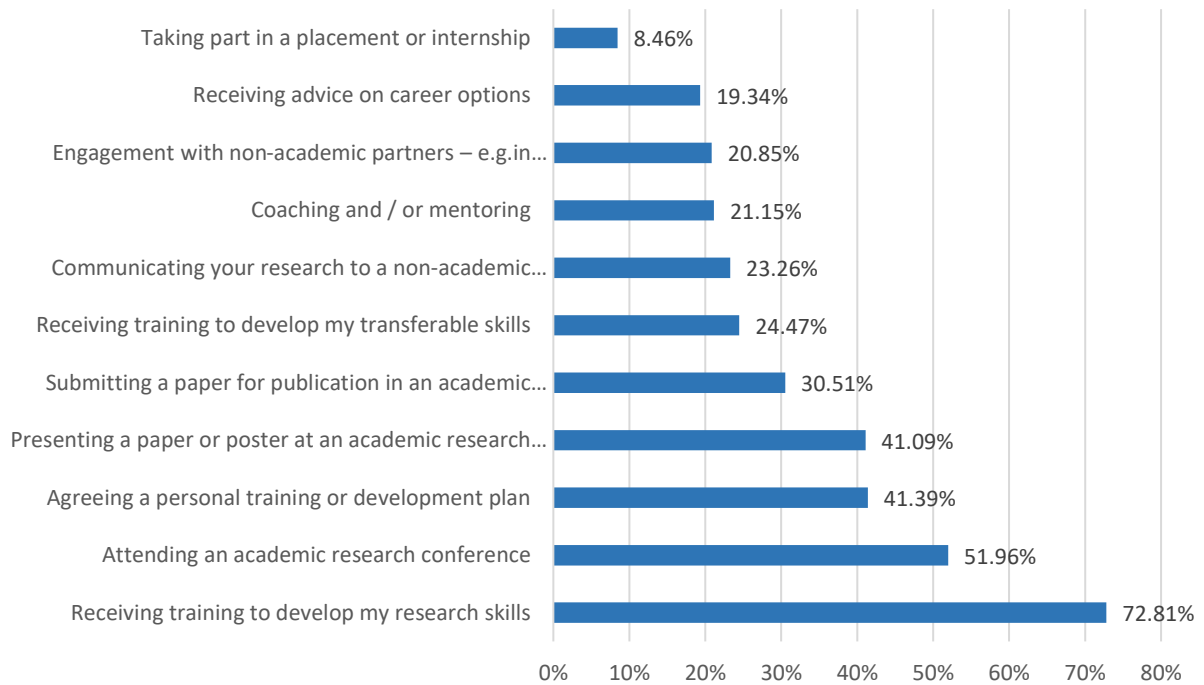
Percent of overall respondents choosing each option - University



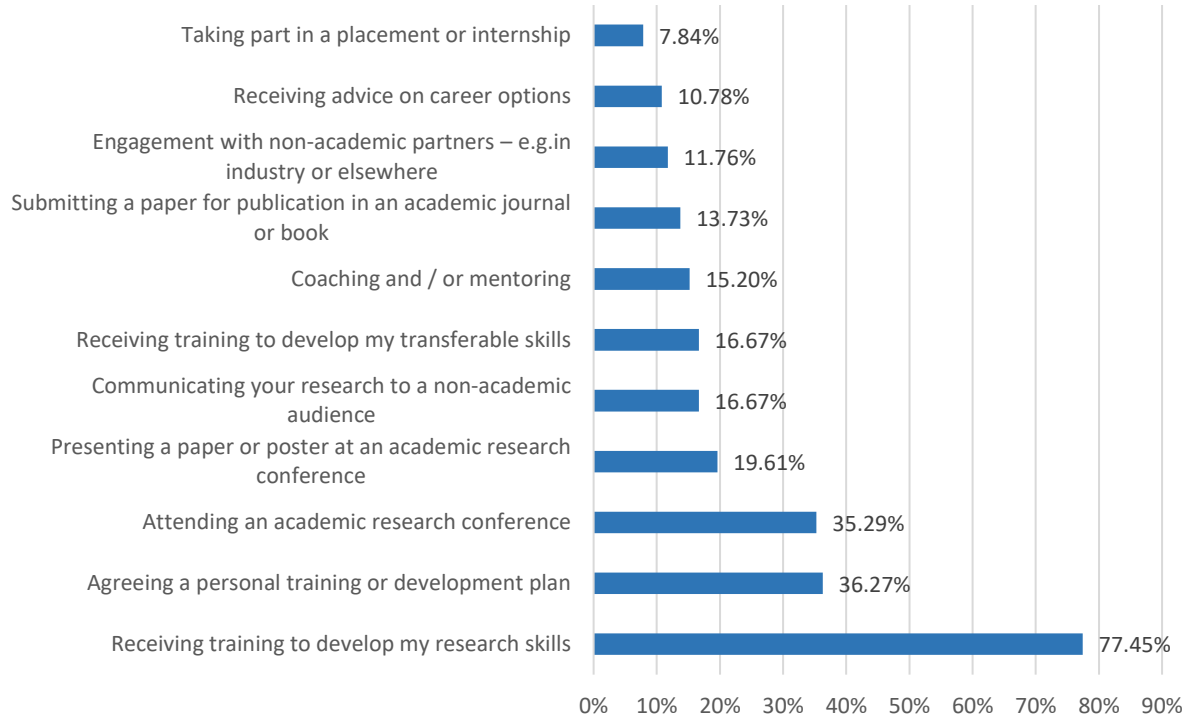
### MVLS



### COSE

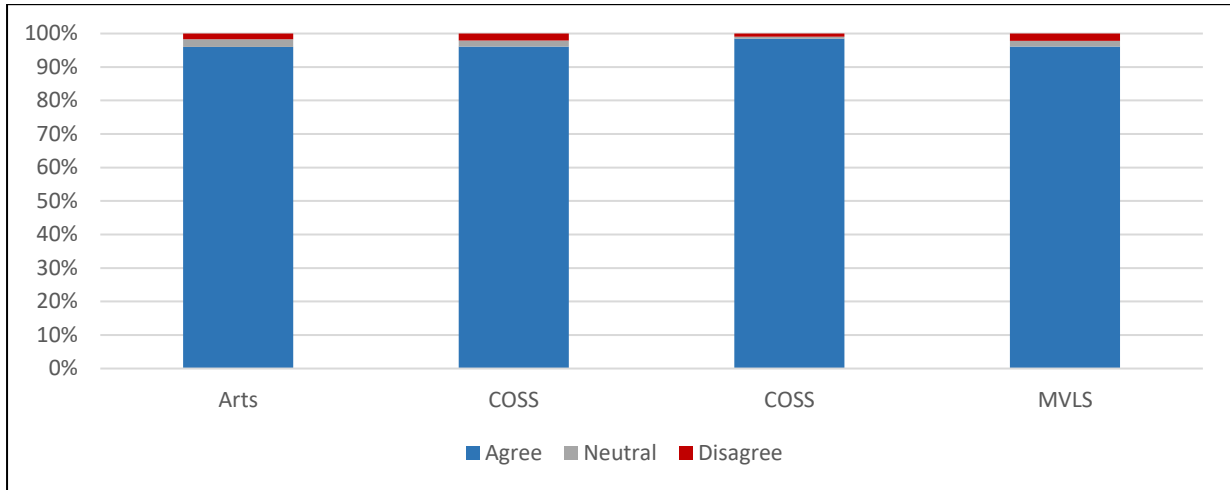


## COSS



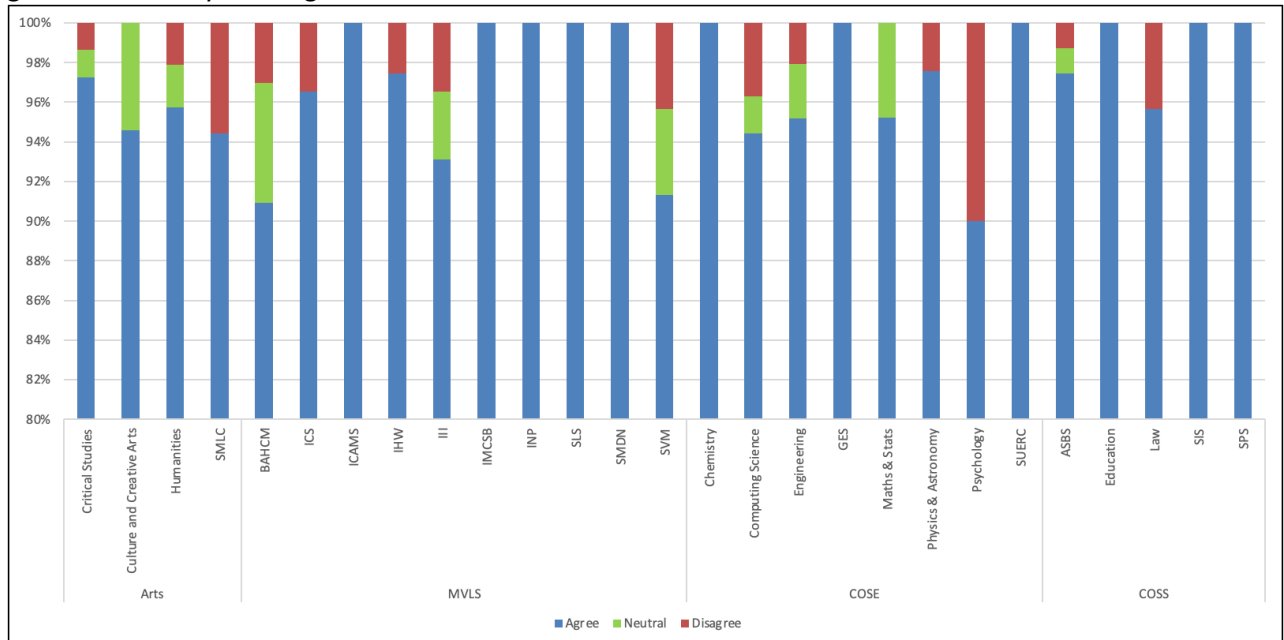
**Q6: I understand my responsibilities as a research student to adhere to the principles of good practice in research and research integrity.**

Understanding of responsibilities related to research integrity is very high.



	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Arts	96.00%	2.29%	1.71%
COSS	96.07%	1.81%	2.11%
COSS	98.53%	0.49%	0.98%
MVLS	96.12%	1.72%	2.16%

There is however some variation at School/Institute level with a small number of units showing greater neutrality or disagreement.

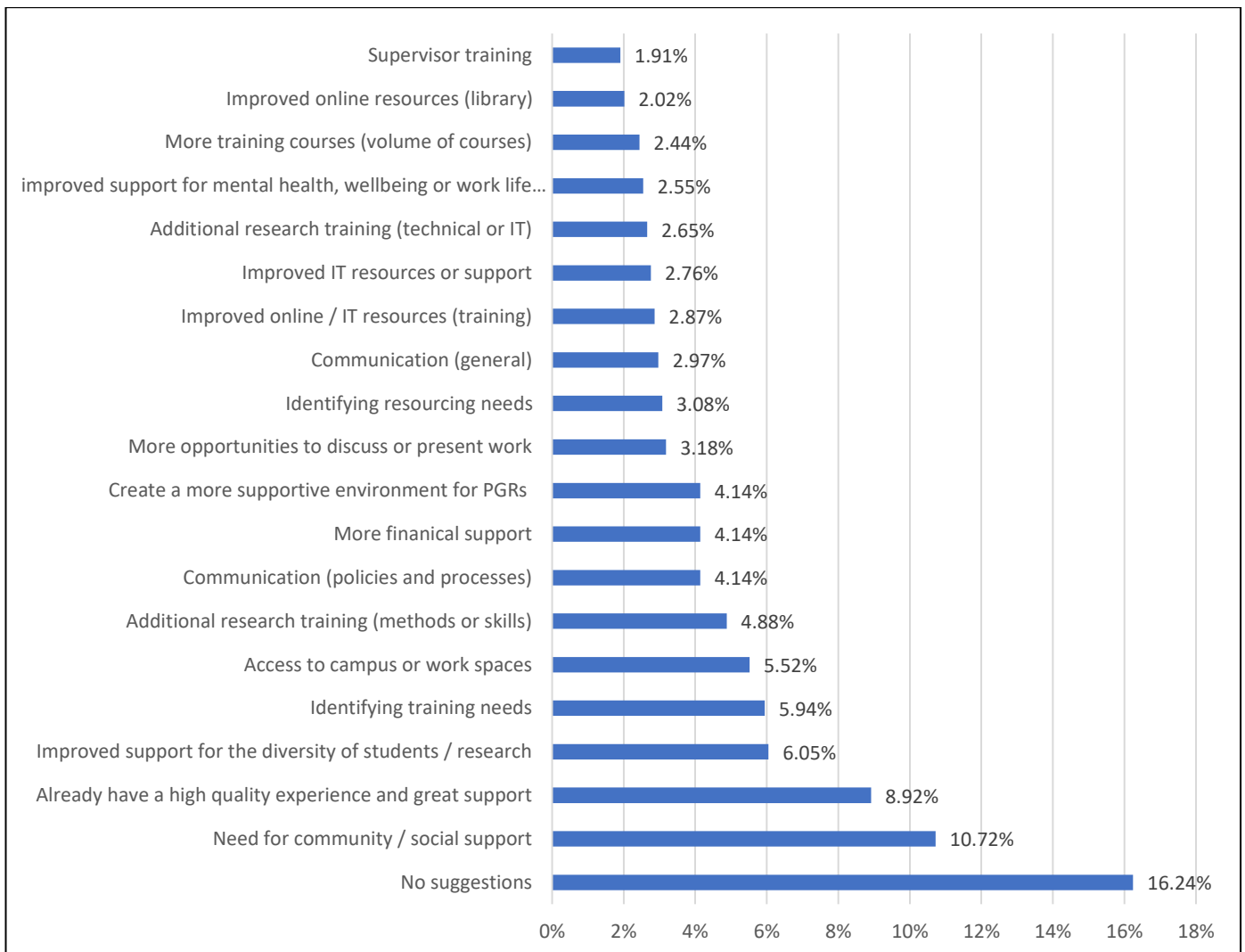


**Note:** Axis begins at 80% in order to highlight where differences exist.



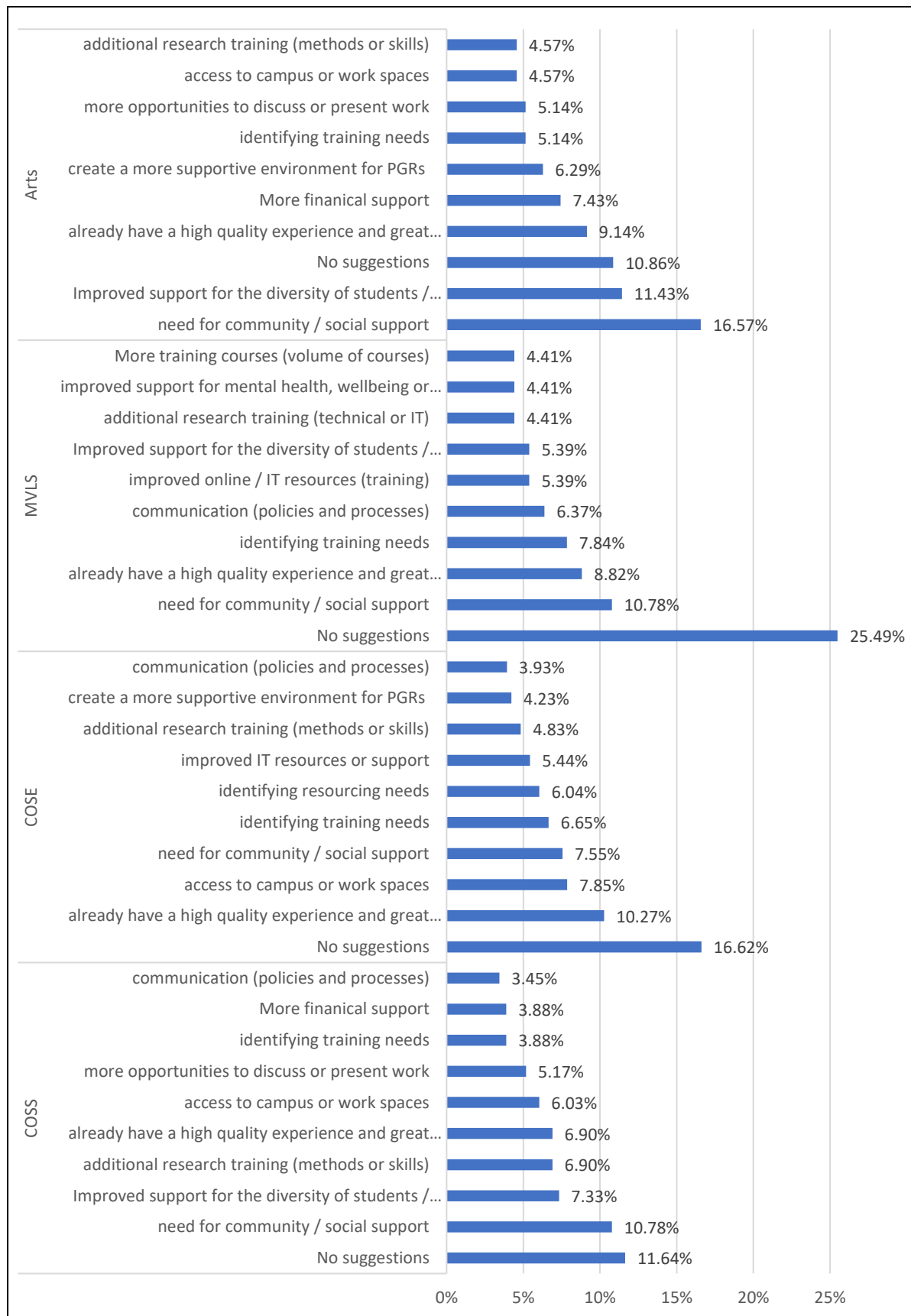
**Q7: How could the Graduate School in your College improve your experience as a postgraduate researcher at Glasgow?**

**Top 20 responses**



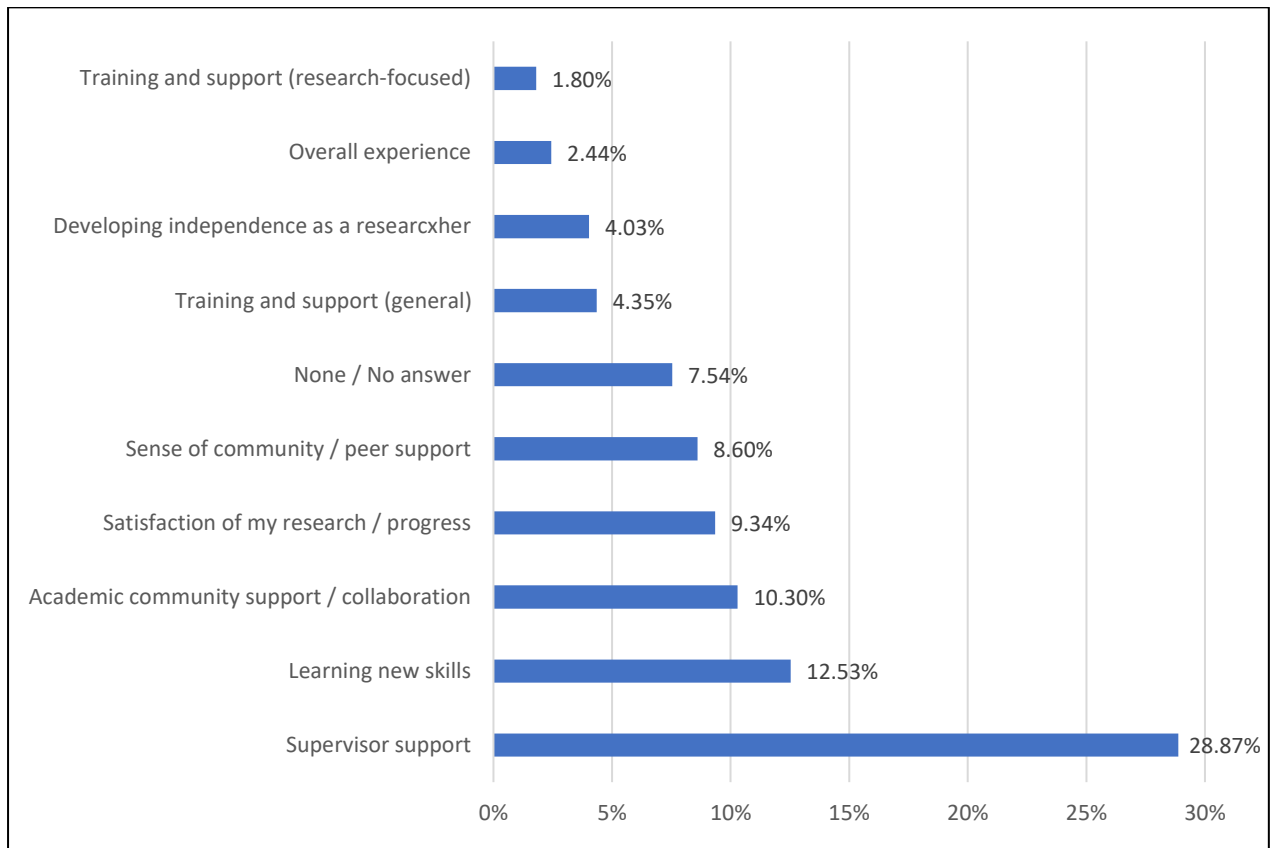
Notably, 2 of the top 3 answers were that students were having a great experience already or had no suggestions. The other key reply being that they missed working and learning together. 'Identifying training needs' refers particular types of training that were requested or general comments about training. Similarly, 'identifying resourcing needs' refers to broad comments about types of resources students suggested they needed.

### College Responses, Top 10



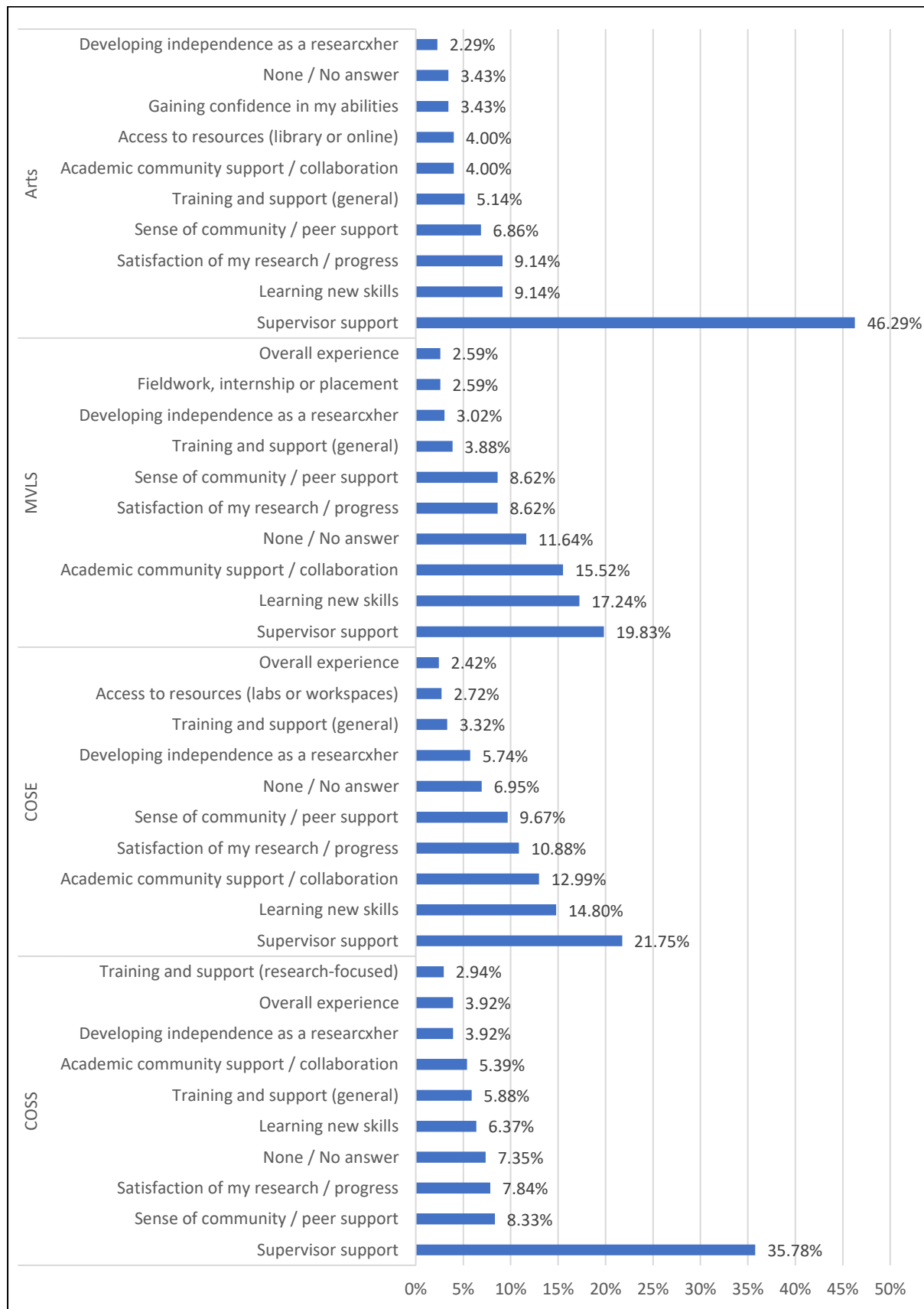
**Q8: What has been the most positive aspect of your research degree programme so far?**

**Top 10 responses**



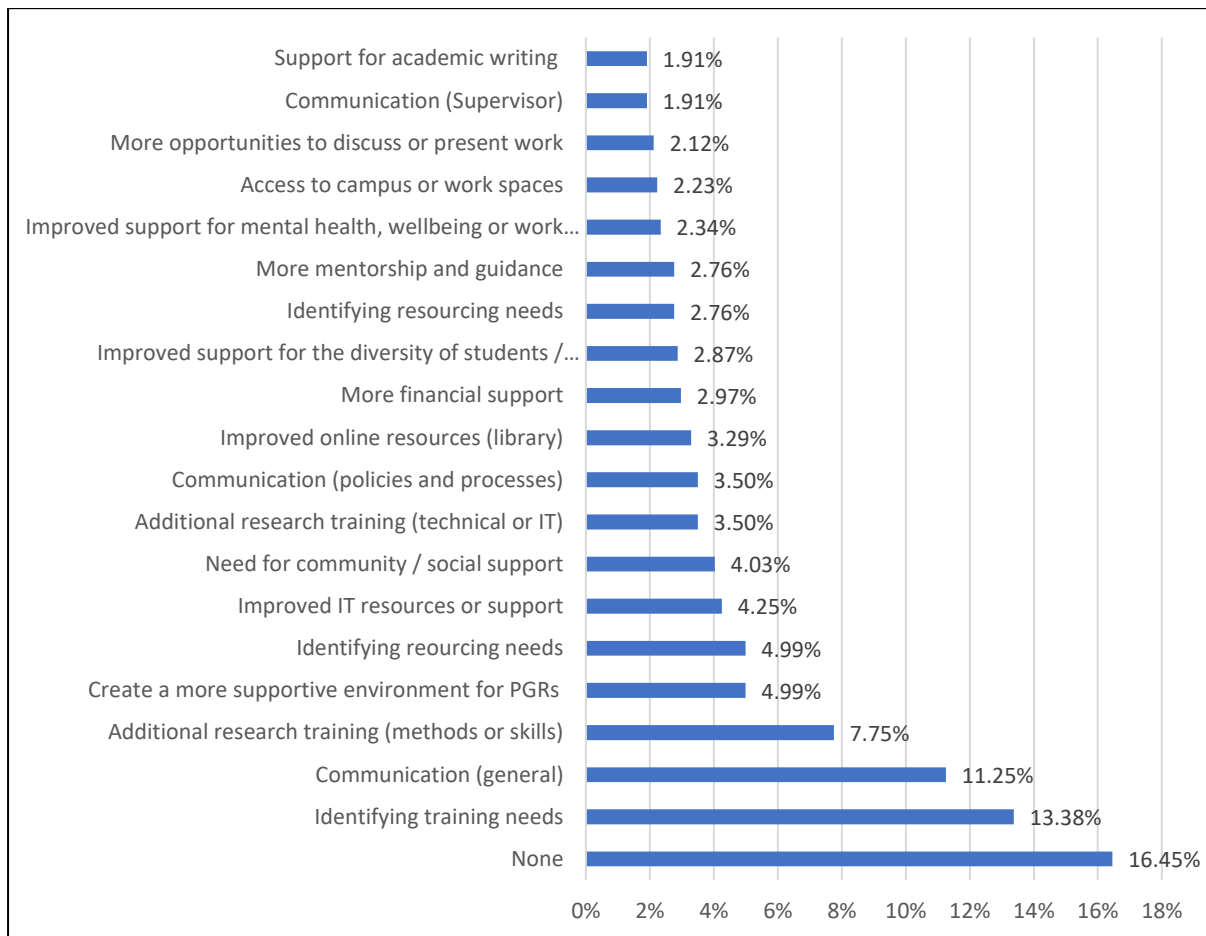
Echoing the responses to Question 2, support provided by supervisors was far and away the most positive aspect of the PGR experience. PGRs also highly valued the experience of learning and conducting research as well as the support of the academic community and their peers around them.

### College responses, Top 10



**Q9: What is one area (support, training, communications, resources, etc.) in which your experience of your research degree programme so far could be improved?**

**Top 20 responses**



## College Top 10

