Pearson/Wonkhe student expectations survey July 2020

Pearson

WONKHE

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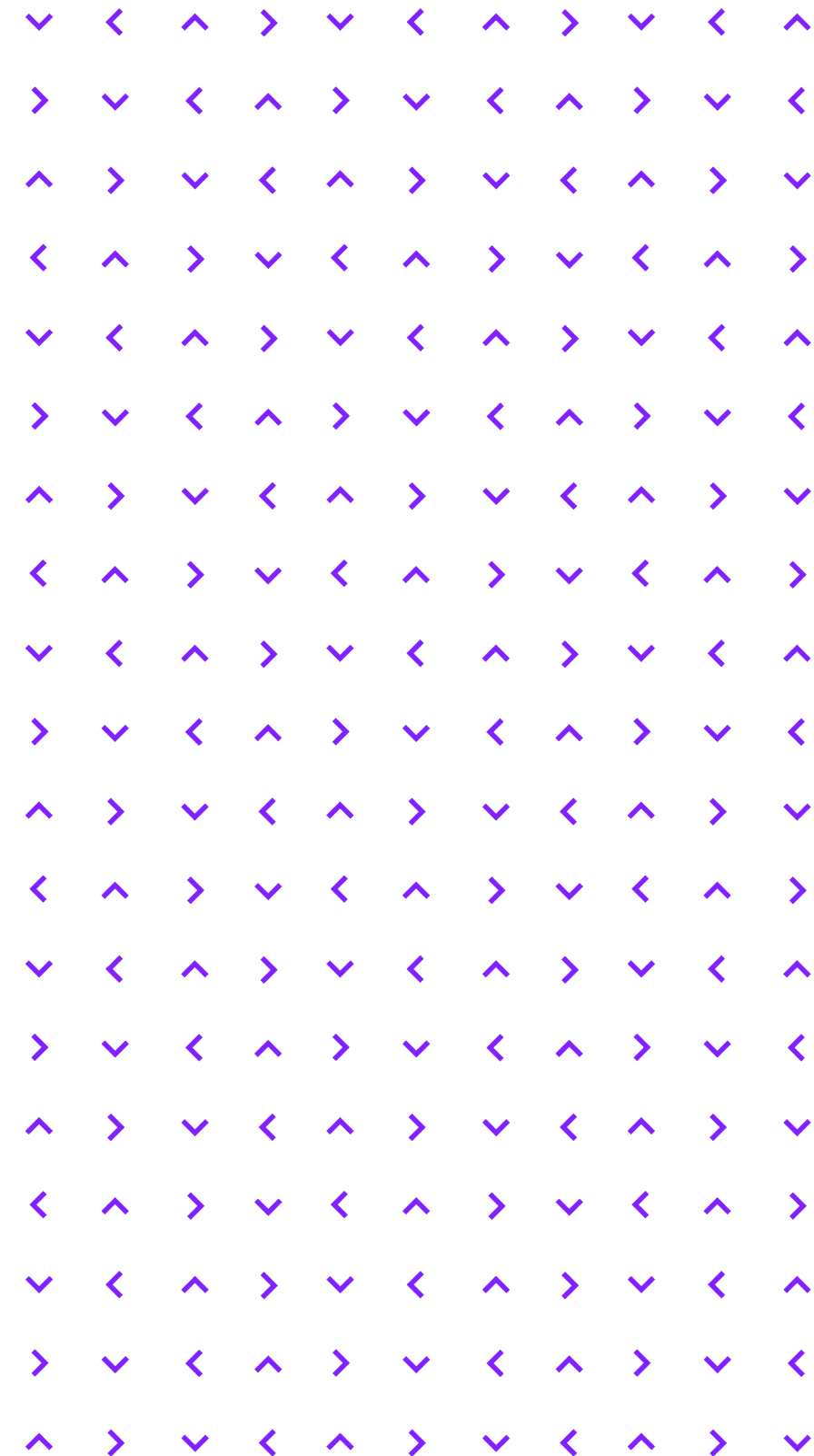
Global trends in learner expectations

Globally, learners – 55 per cent in the UK - believe that the world is shifting to a model where people participate in education over a lifetime, rather than education being primarily for the young in formal academic settings. 86 per cent of UK learners believe that people need to keep learning and retraining throughout their careers to keep up to date.

Globally, 78 per cent of learners believe they need to develop soft skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. In the UK, this is 66 per cent, and 79 per cent of UK learners agree that human skills will be even more important in the future.

Globally, 76 per cent agree that more college and university students will attend virtually vs a traditional education setting within ten years. In the UK this is 68 per cent.
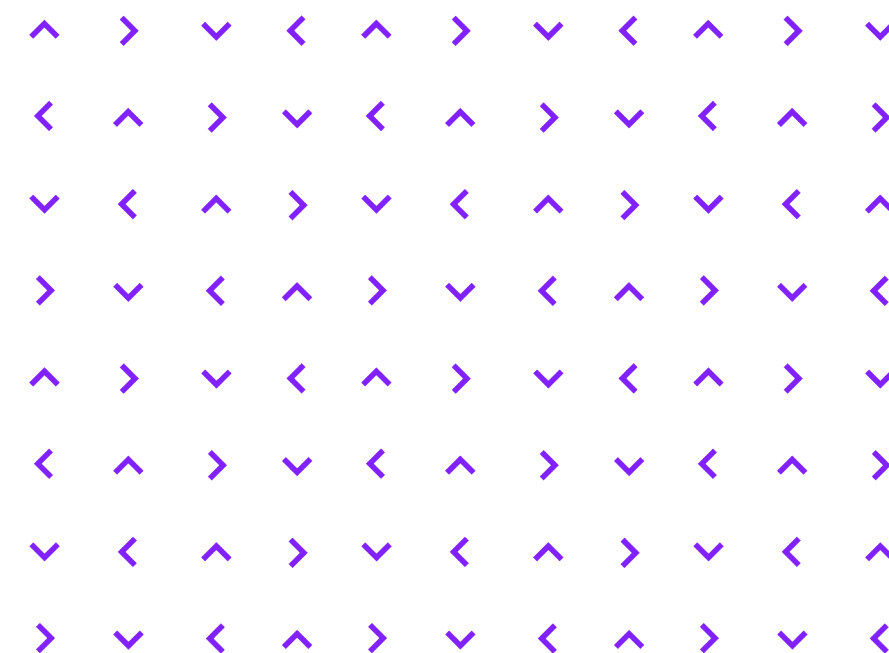
In the UK, 52 per cent of learners agree that university is getting more out of reach for the average person and 56 per cent agree that education systems are doing a good job of keeping up with latest trends in technology and a changing workforce.

In the UK, 59 per cent of learners agree that universities are concerned about ensuring that disadvantaged learners have equal access to education, but 74 per cent agree that universities focus too much on young students and should offer more opportunities for working adults.

Source: Pearson Global Learner Survey 2019

The global impact of Covid-19 on education

"The current crisis is reminding us how crucial public education is in societies, communities, and in individual lives. We have been reminded that public education is a bulwark against inequality—and of the importance of schooling in enabling lives of dignity and purpose. As we seize this exceptional opportunity to transform the world, and as we reimagine the organization of our schools and learning environments, we will need to think about what we want to become. We will need to enact our values and visions in the institutions and learning communities we rebuild."

"In the renewal of education, human interaction and wellbeing must be given priority. Technology— particularly digital technology that enables communication, collaboration and learning across distance—is a formidable tool and potential source of innovation.   Yet we should be increasingly concerned that a shift to remote on-line learning will exacerbate inequalities, not only in the Global South but even in the most well-resourced corners of the planet."

Source: A Joint Statement on the Covid-19 Crisis, International Commission on the Futures of Education, April 2020.
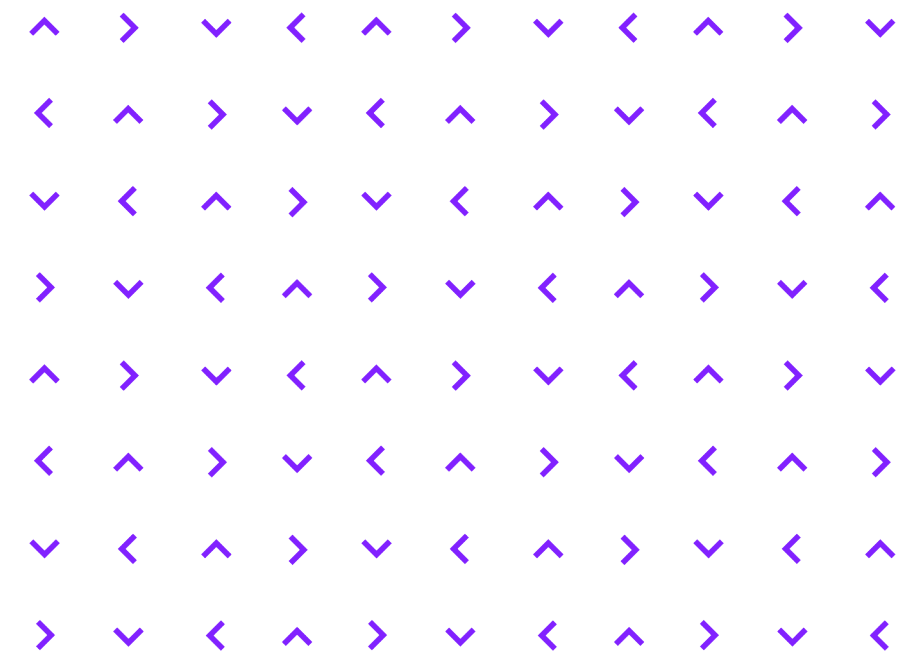
About the survey

SAMPLE: 3,461 students

Promotion via 13 participating students' union subscribers to Wonkhe SUs.

Of these, 8 are pre-92 (including one Welsh), and 5 post-92 (including two small/specialist).

Open from 18 June-2 July 2020

Supplemented with focus group with participating SUs
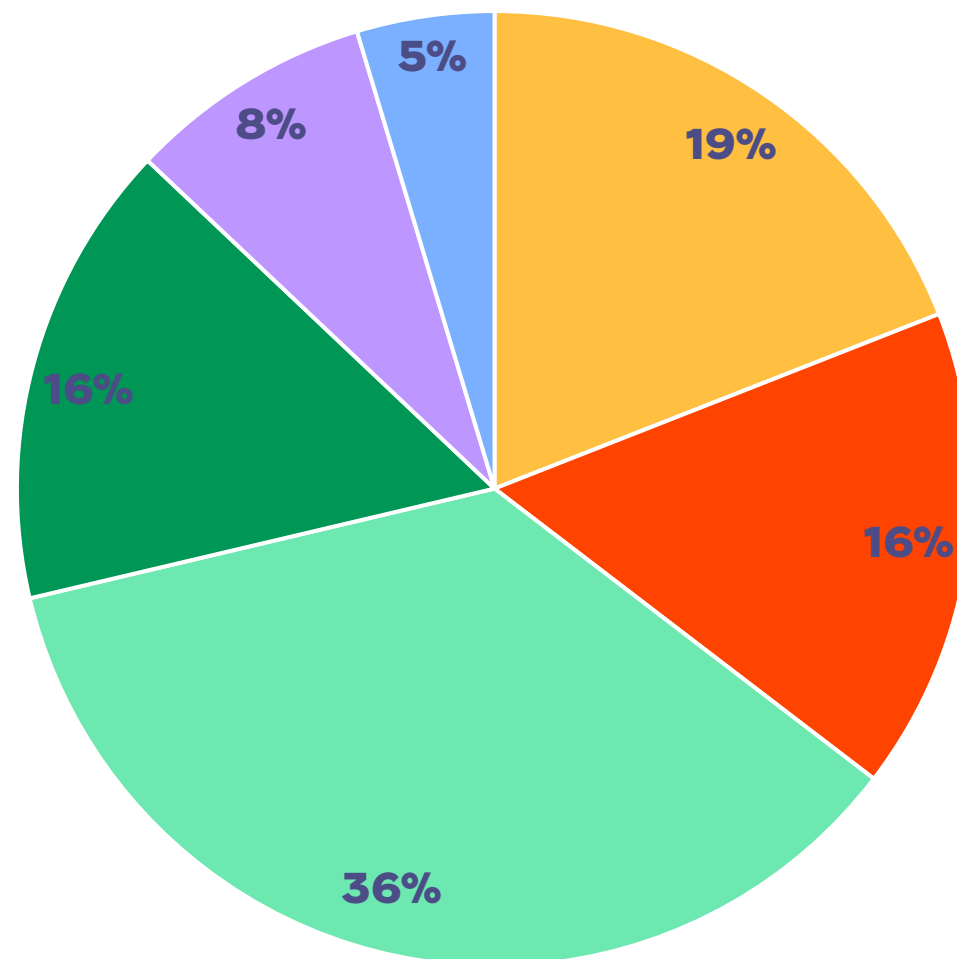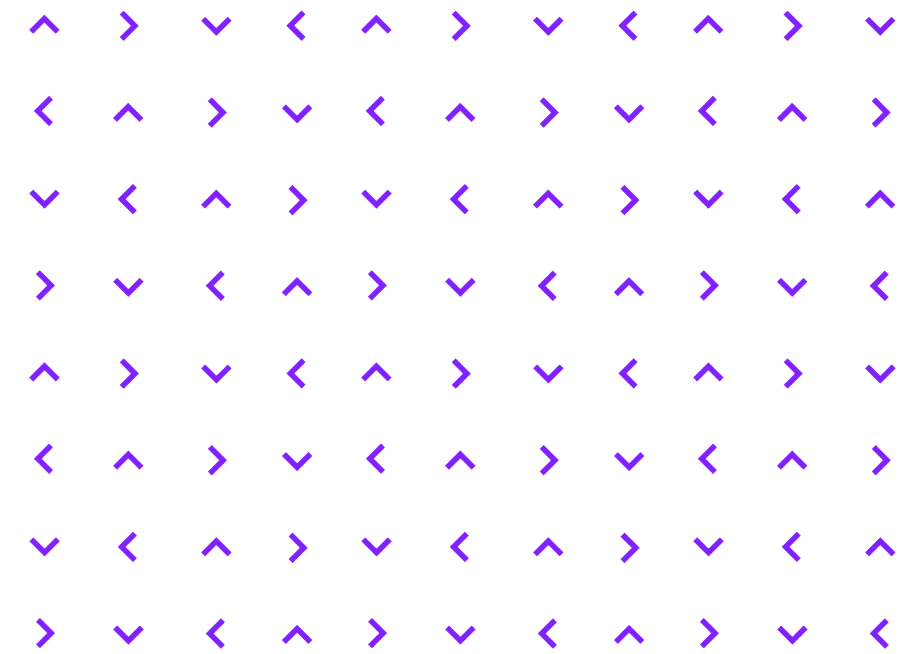
DEMOGRAPHICS (CF HESA 2018-19)

78 (76) per cent White | 19 (22) per cent BAME or mixed race | 3 (3) per cent other or unknown

82 (80) per cent UK | 6 (6) per cent EU | 12 (14) per cent international

90 per cent study full time, campus-based

79 (75) per cent undergraduate | 16 (20) per cent PGT | 6 (5) per cent doctorate

Living situation before lockdown

- Living in university halls of residence/accommodation
- Private halls of residence (student rental)
- Rented accommodation (House of Multiple Occupancy)
- Living at home with family (without dependents e.g own children or care of others)
- Living at home with family (with dependents e.g children or care of others)
- Other (please specify)

How have you found the transition to online learning?
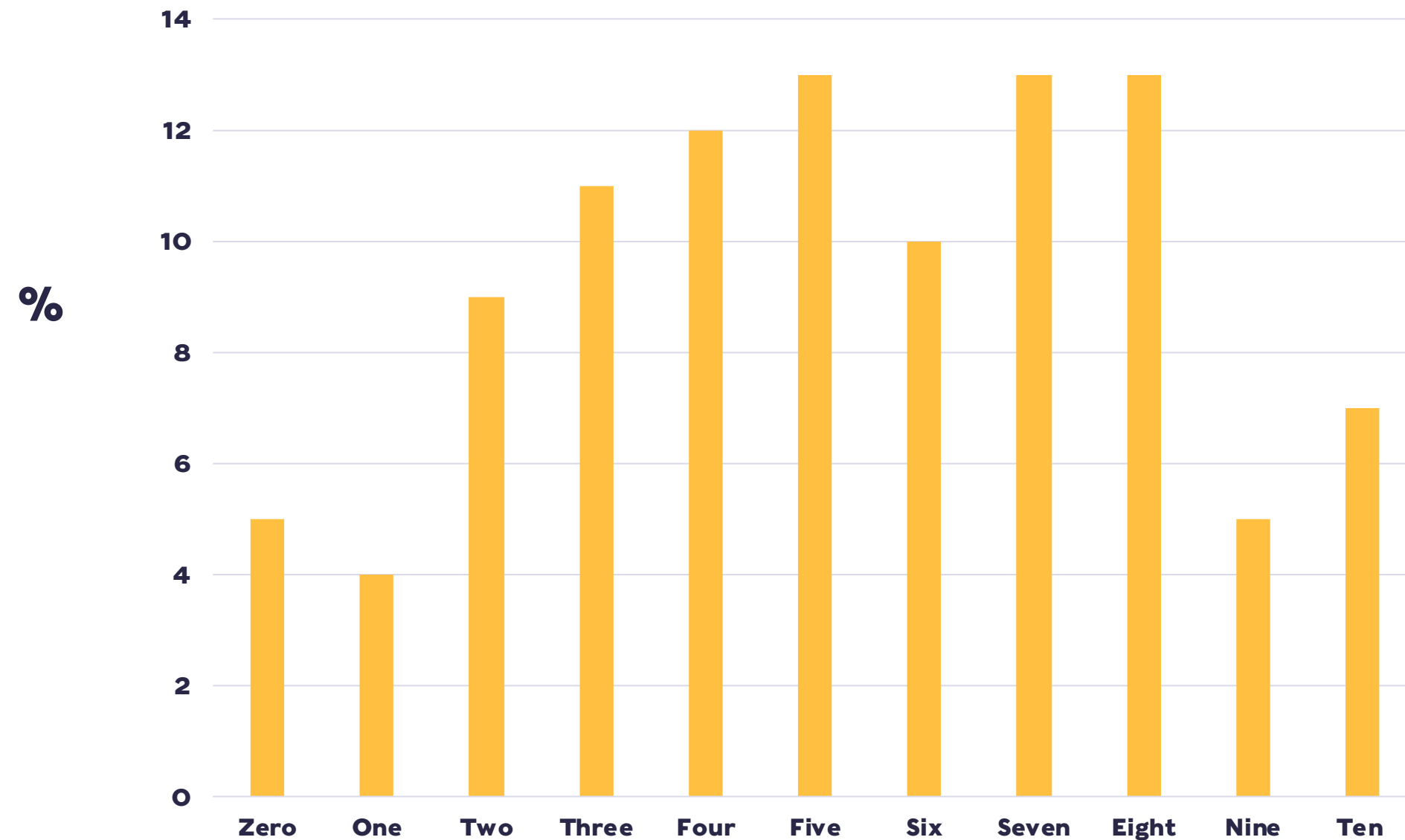
Rating 0-10 with 10 being best

"I think my university did an excellent job in transitioning. All learning online and support from the academic team was to a good level."

"Online lectures were just as good or even better than face-to-face lecturers."

"I've had one lecture and nothing else in the entire period."

"Actually having online classes and having the routine of a timetable would be helpful rather than giving two months with no lessons and having to keep up alone just to pass an exam."

What have you found difficult about the transition to online learning?
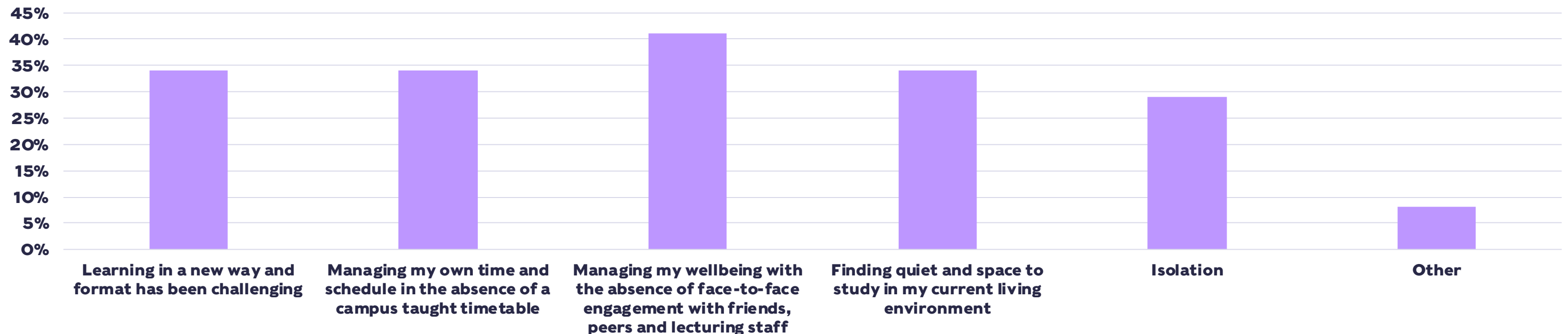
SUs SAY…

"Lack of interactive opportunities – students feeling undervalued because they are being given 'old' power points"

"Inequality in teaching staff access to tech/knowledge"

"Lack of space to study"

"Students are missing 'connecting' with staff and other students – the practical and emotional challenges of online can knock confidence"

"More students working at home means there is no place for them to escape to. The merging of work and social spaces is causing concern."

Learning in a new way and format has been challenging	Managing my own time and schedule in the absence of a campus taught timetable	Managing my wellbeing with the absence of face-to-face engagement with friends, peers and lecturing staff	Finding quiet and space to study in my current living environment	Isolation	Other

How do you think online learning could be improved for you?
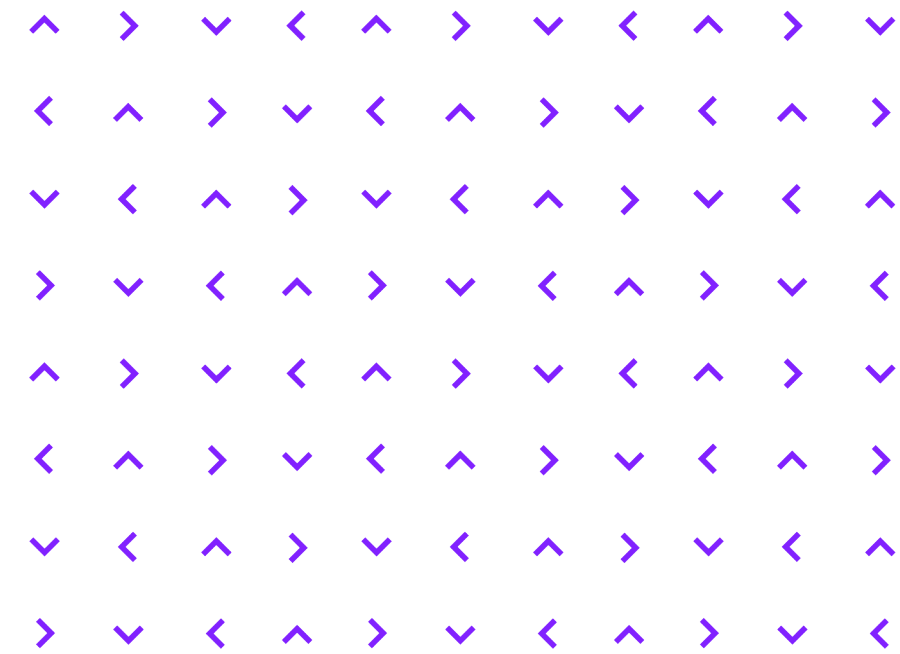
ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY/MATERIALS

Students referred to hardware and connectivity challenges in their answers, alongside software and learning resources

MORE INTERACTION

More opportunities to ask questions and discuss learning, and go beyond pre-recorded lectures and powerpoints.

COMMUNICATIONS

Both about university/faculty plans on Covid-19, and course-specific communications.

SUPPORT

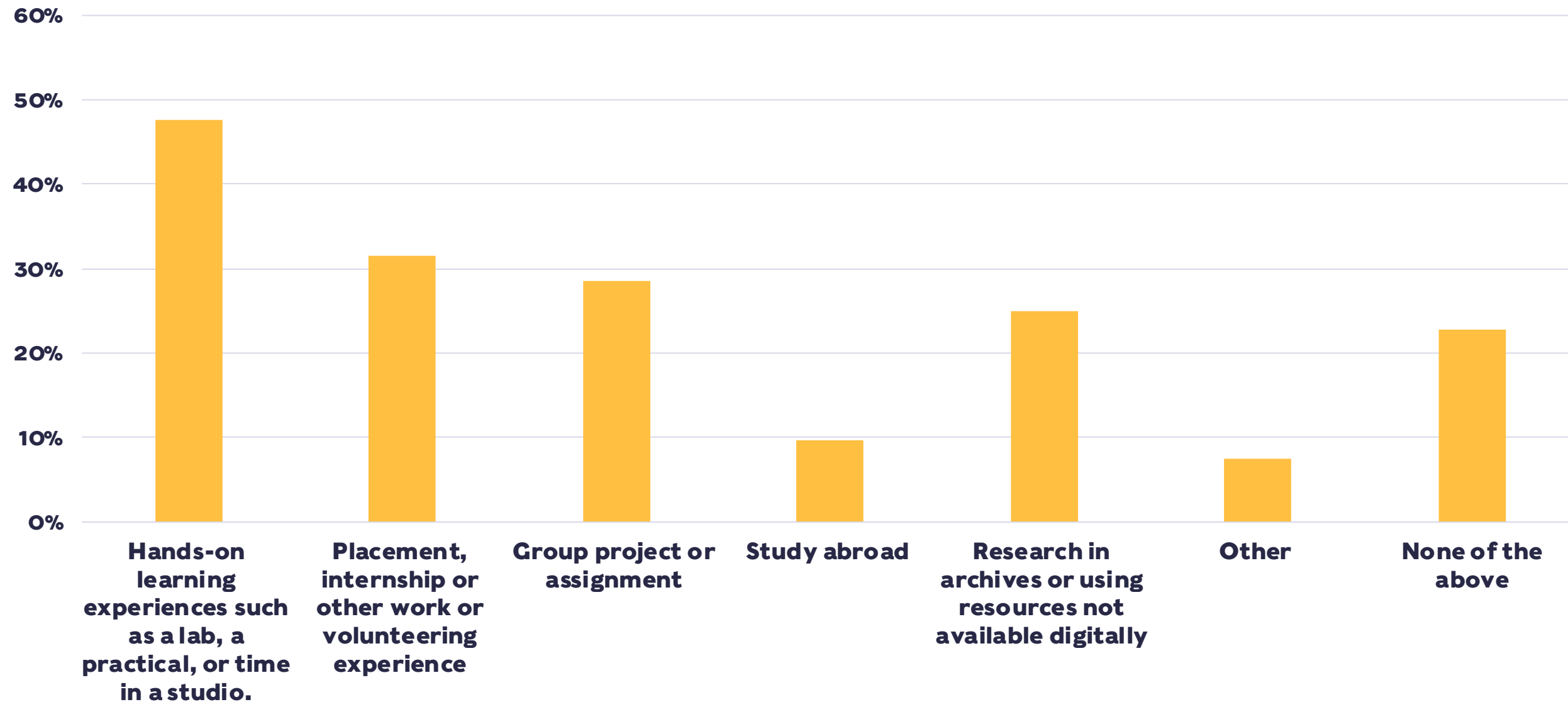Primarily academic support – more 1:1 time with tutors and lecturers

STRUCTURE

Some appetite for scheduled contact time – struggle to stay motivated and organised with pre-recorded lectures and online resources

What have students missed out on this term?

SUs SAY...

Access to archives, placements, labs, specialist equipment, study abroad, site visits.

| Category	Percentage
Hands-on learning experiences such as a lab, a practical, or time in a studio.	~47%
Placement, internship or other work or volunteering experience	~31%
Group project or assignment	~28%
Study abroad	~9%
Research in archives or using resources not available digitally	~25%
Other	~7%
None of the above	~22%

What do they want done about it?

"We're nervous about navigating calls for refunds – and student dissatisfaction if they can't be secured."

"Very high numbers of dissatisfied students wanting representation vs university as our only source of funding – difficult situation."

- 47%
- 25%
- 15%
- 10%
- 3%
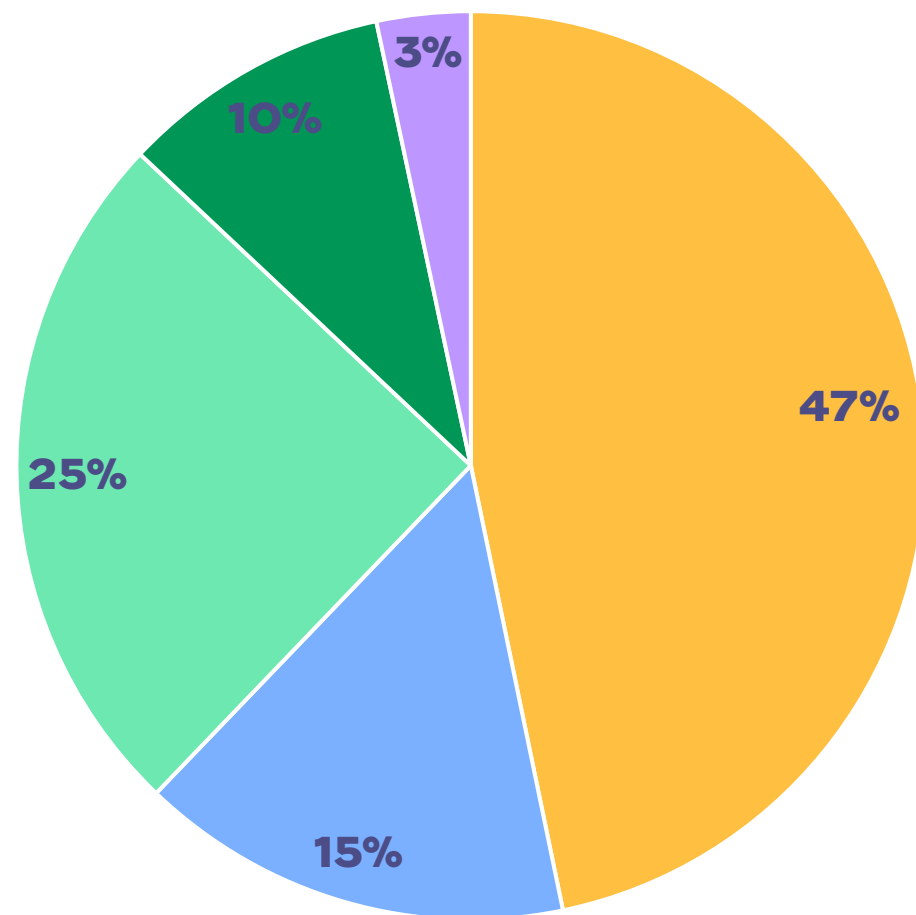
- I should get a reduction in fees/financial compensation
- I should get an online alternative of equivalent value
- I should get the experience in the future, when it's safe
- I don't think my university is responsible for handling it
- Other

Compared to how you felt pre-Covid-19 do you feel more or less confident that you are ready to progress to the next step in your education or career?

- Less confident
- Same level of confidence
- More confident

7%

49%

44%
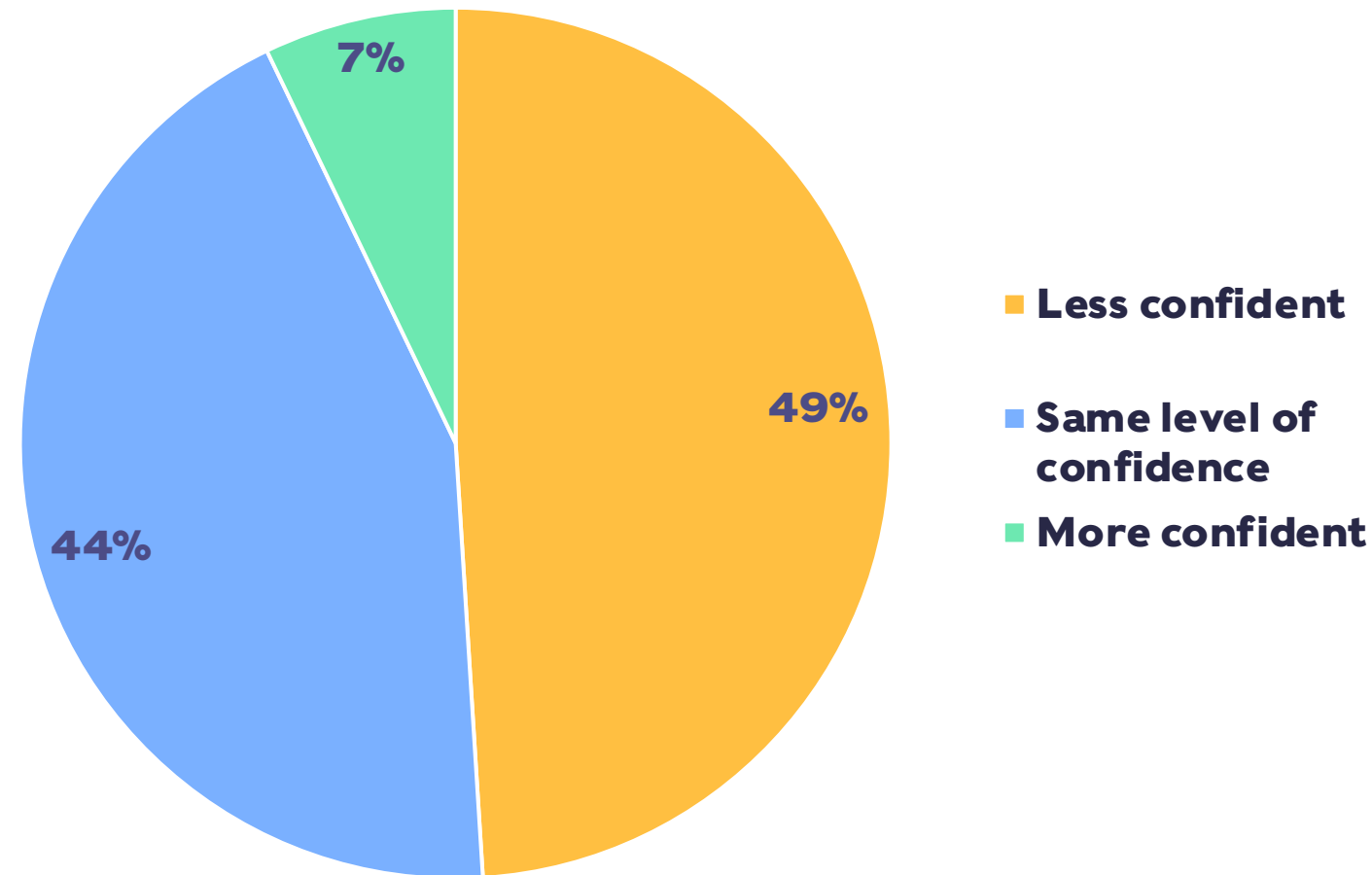
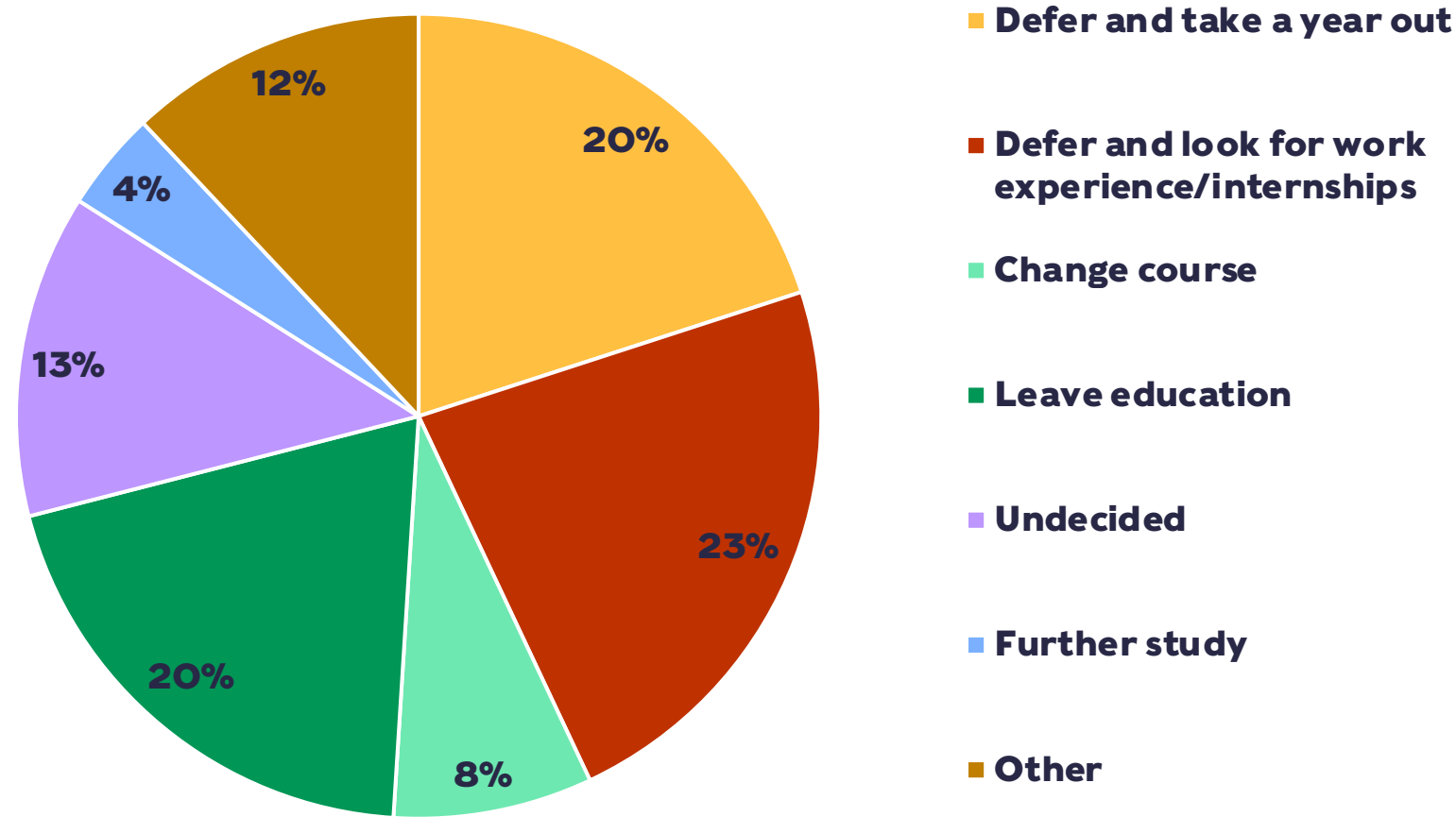## IF YOU FEEL LESS CONFIDENT, WHY?

➢ Uncertainty – of job market, research funding

➢ Lack of industry-relevant development – missed placements, studio time

➢ Quality of learning lower leaving them unprepared to progress

➢ Loss of practical skills – labwork, fieldwork

➢ Loss of contact time

➢ Poor communication and support for study and wellbeing

20 per cent have changed or are considering changing plans for September

Defer and take a year out 20%

Defer and look for work experience/internships 23%

Change course 8%

Leave education 20%

Undecided 13%

Further study 4%

Other 12%

N = 685

WHY ARE YOU CONSIDERING CHANGING PLANS?

➢ Do not want another semester or year of online learning

➢ Uncertainty – about teaching, housing, travel, etc.

➢ Loss of practical experiences decreasing value of the degree

➢ Finances

➢ Considering further study due to economic downturn/fewer job opportunities

If you were starting in September what skills would you prioritise?

SUs SAY...

"Students need preparing for online learning and teaching as much as lecturers do."

"It all comes down to how good an induction the university provides next term whether students are able to transition into this unfamiliar learning environment."
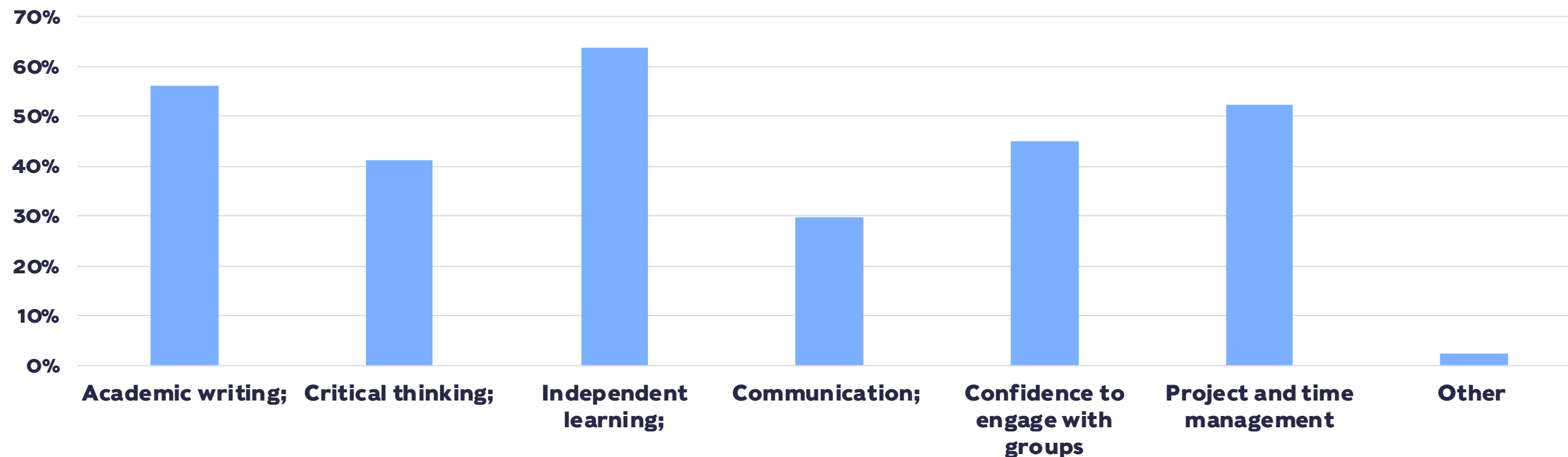
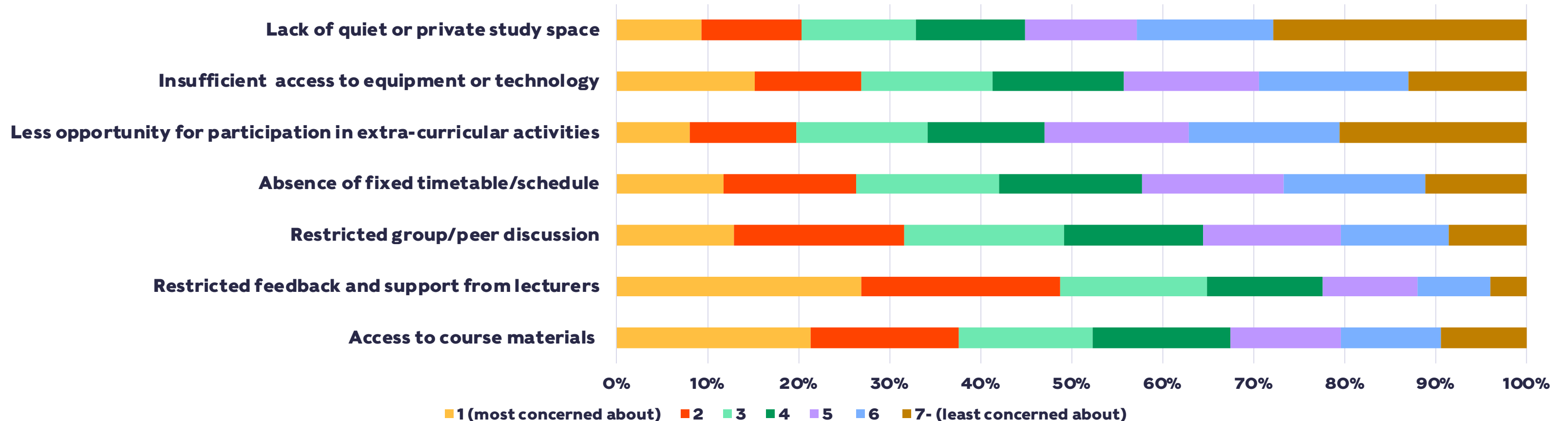# In a scenario of limited f2f teaching, what are you most concerned about?

SUs SAY...

"There's no real showing of what mitigating circumstances look like from September – this is important in informing students when they choose to come back"

"Module choice may be reduced"

"Plan A is to teach as usual if possible – unrealistic expectations and messaging"

"Navigating the possibility of face to face teaching seems to be prioritised over quality online teaching methods"

"Things are becoming 'termless' as events are postponed/extended to fit new digital era – if this continues there will be no 'off' space for students."

Legend: 1 (most concerned about), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7- (least concerned about)

Categories (top to bottom):
- Lack of quiet or private study space
- Insufficient access to equipment or technology
- Less opportunity for participation in extra-curricular activities
- Absence of fixed timetable/schedule
- Restricted group/peer discussion
- Restricted feedback and support from lecturers
- Access to course materials

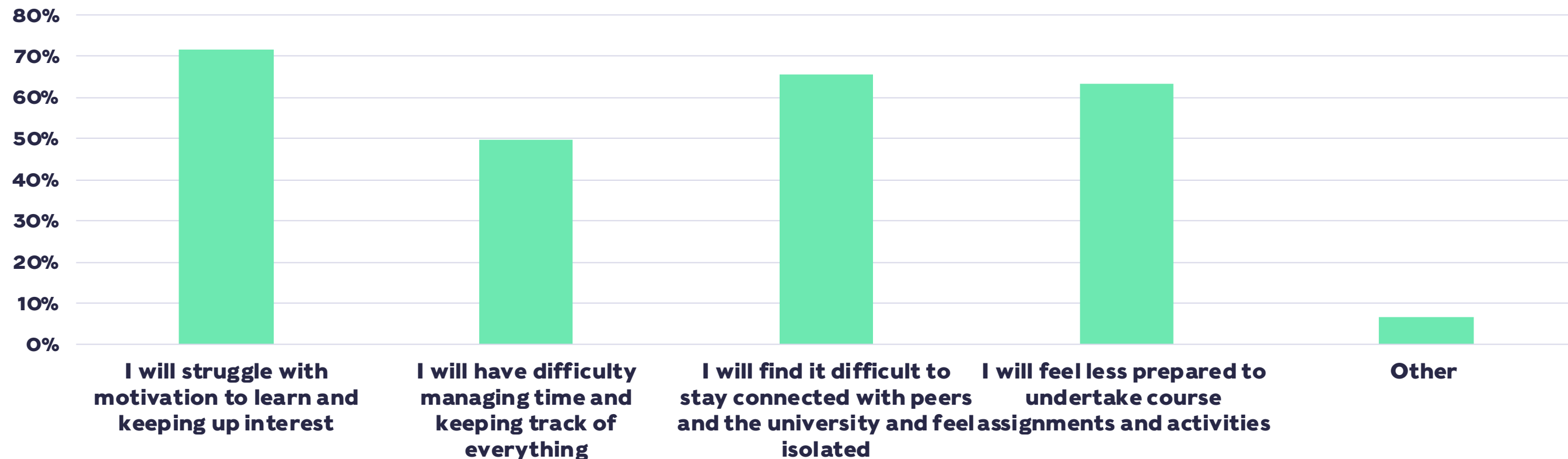# How would such a scenario impact you personally?

SUs SAY...

"Lack of planning from the uni in terms of students socialising in a safe/socially distanced way – only seem to be focusing on teaching and learning."

"Uni sending out over-optimistic messages which may not be delivered – potential for throwing SU under the bus."

"Differing expectations and behaviours from returners – who will know what they're missing - and new students."

"Expectation that the SU will provide opportunities for building friendships, creating a sense of community – yet very little idea of how the university's plans will look in reality."

"Blended still requires high quality online provision – especially for students who can't attend in person."

Bar chart categories:
- I will struggle with motivation to learn and keeping up interest — ~71%
- I will have difficulty managing time and keeping track of everything — ~49%
- I will find it difficult to stay connected with peers and the university and feel isolated — ~65%
- I will feel less prepared to undertake course assignments and activities — ~63%
- Other — ~7%

What can your university do to meet your expectations for next year?

SUs SAY...

"Some students are worried about the 'YouTube" degree they are getting while paying for face-to-face. Students want the university to succeed in the new blended approach as it means students will succeed."

"A majority of students believe 'quality' education is still possible under Covid adjustments."

1 - most important	2
3	4
5	6 - least important
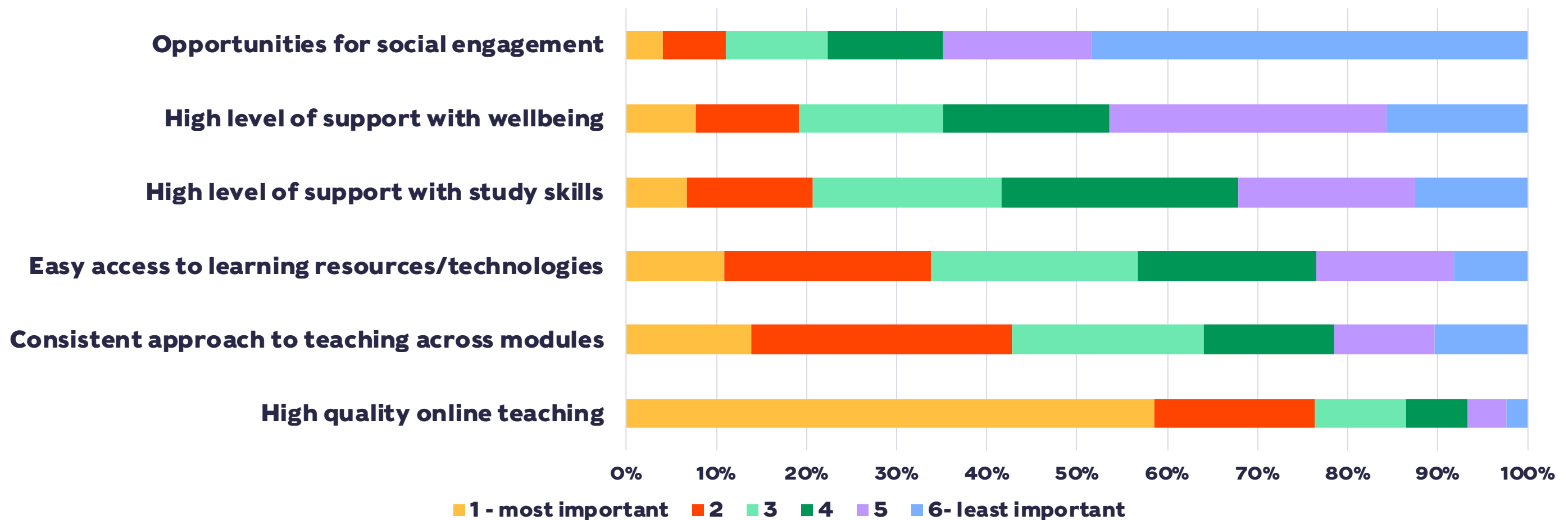
Is there anything else universities need to do to meet expectations/deliver value for money?

➢ Reduce or reimburse fees

➢ More academic support and time with tutors one to one

➢ Better and more regular communications

➢ Better quality of online teaching – less pre-recorded and more interaction

➢ Improve access to technology and learning materials

➢ It's just not possible to have value for money without face to face teaching

➢ Address challenges with practical work in labs, studios etc

➢ Improve feedback

What are SUs optimistic about?

"Opportunities for students to build better community habits – the rise of mutual aid groups in broader society has shown a real appetite for people to help each other out on the ground in practical ways during this crisis. Hope there is opportunity to help students engage and innovate in this space."

"Increased engagement with commuters/WP."

Being more creative in the way we engage with students, being more flexible in doing things online which will help engage some hard to reach groups eg distance learners."

"EDI being pushed as a priority and into the forefront of how we operate – hopefully this creates a wider permanent new outlook."
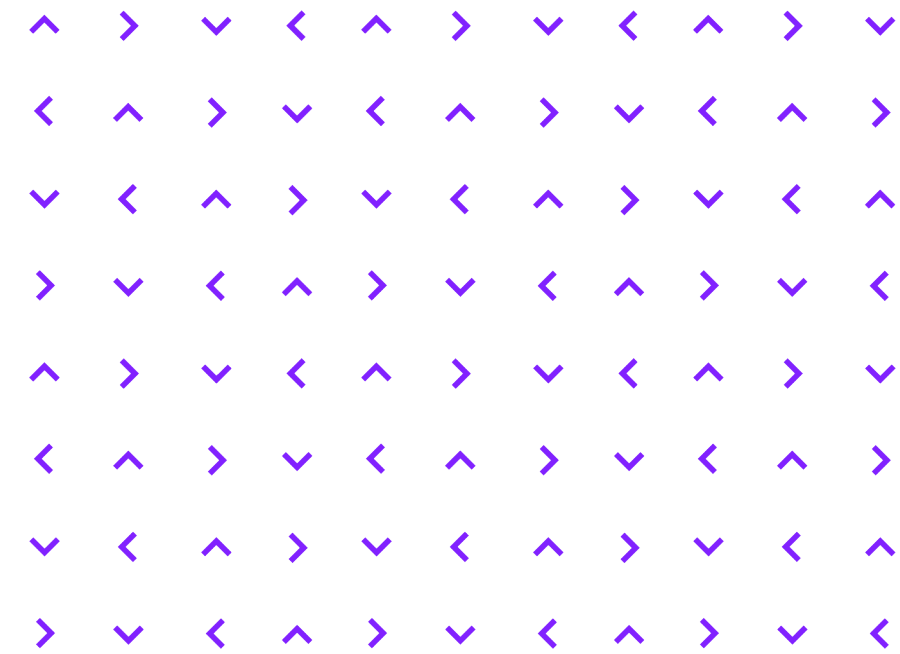
"Opportunity to go fully digital and rethink the way we use our very small space."

"Going fully digital and exploring new and different ways of doing things."

Opportunities for students to choose the learning pathway that suits them."

The changing of how we think about pedagogy to become more accessible – moving away from rigid traditional teaching and assessment techniques."

Thank you

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