nus charity
national union of students

Elections 2024 Playback

Content

- Big SU Survey: SU Election Report 2024
- RO recommendations
- Case studies
- Turnout
- Key survey insights
- Key candidate demographics insights

Our Support in 2023/24

- Returning Officer for 107 SUs over 150 elections
- Development webinars in December/January
- Daily drop-in triage over peak period in March
- 96% of survey respondents agreed/strongly agreed they felt supported by the elections service to run successful elections
- Feedback for 2024/25: we're moving the development webinars earlier, creating guidance for small SUs and updating the Connect webpages

- 73 SUs completed the Elections Survey
- 15 SUs used the Candidate Demographic Survey (162 candidates) & way more data collected in main survey

Big SU Survey: SU Election Report 2024

- Annual report
- Informed by the Elections Survey, shared in Spring 2024
- 73 SUs contributed
- SUs from across the UK

nus charity
national union of students

Big SU Survey: SU Elections 2024

VOTE
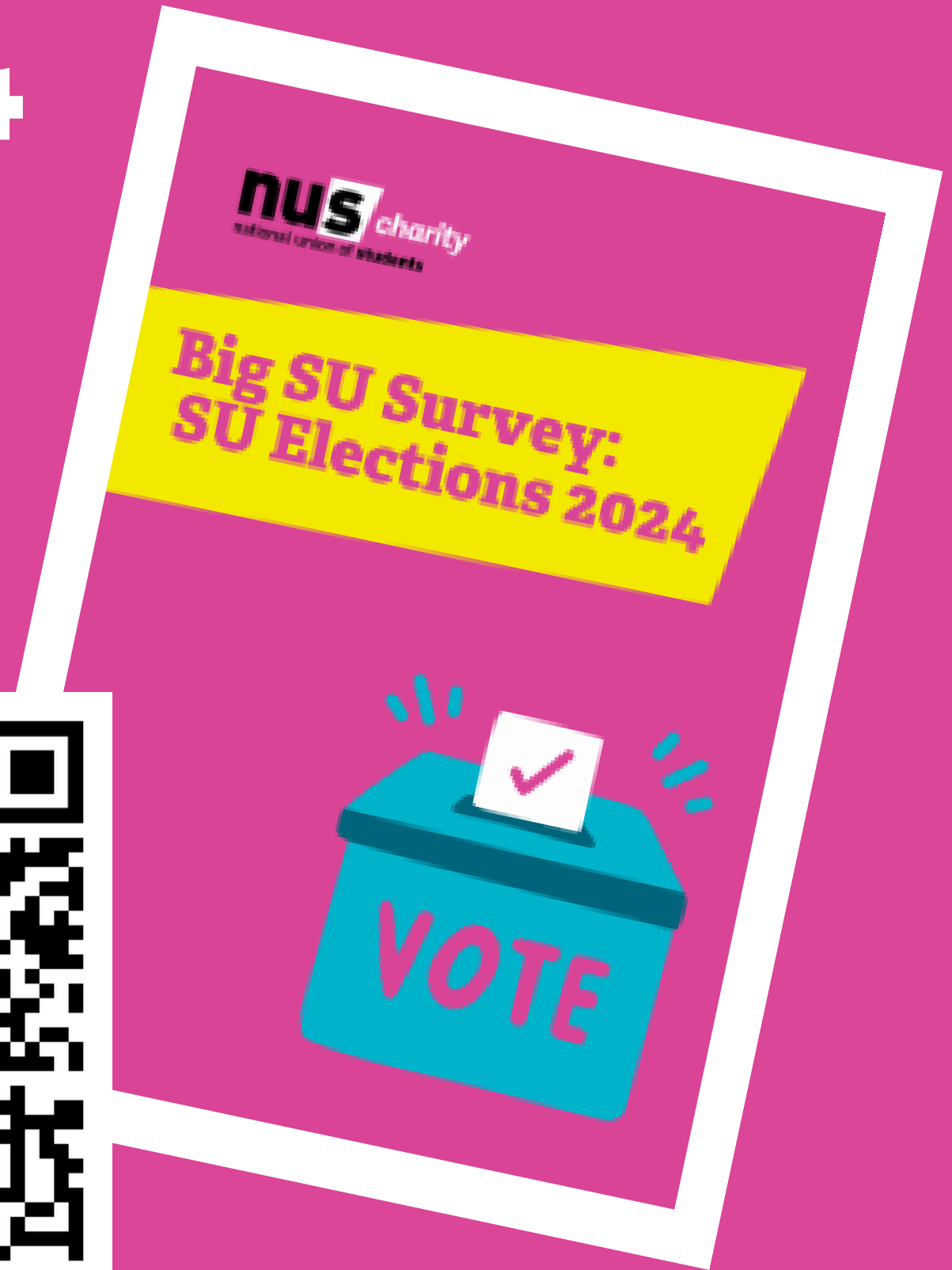
Returning Officer's Recommendations

- From Peter Roberston, NUS Charity Director & national Returning Officer
- Updated annually to reflect the common complaints & issues
- Covers: candidate behaviour, rules and regulations, complaints & more
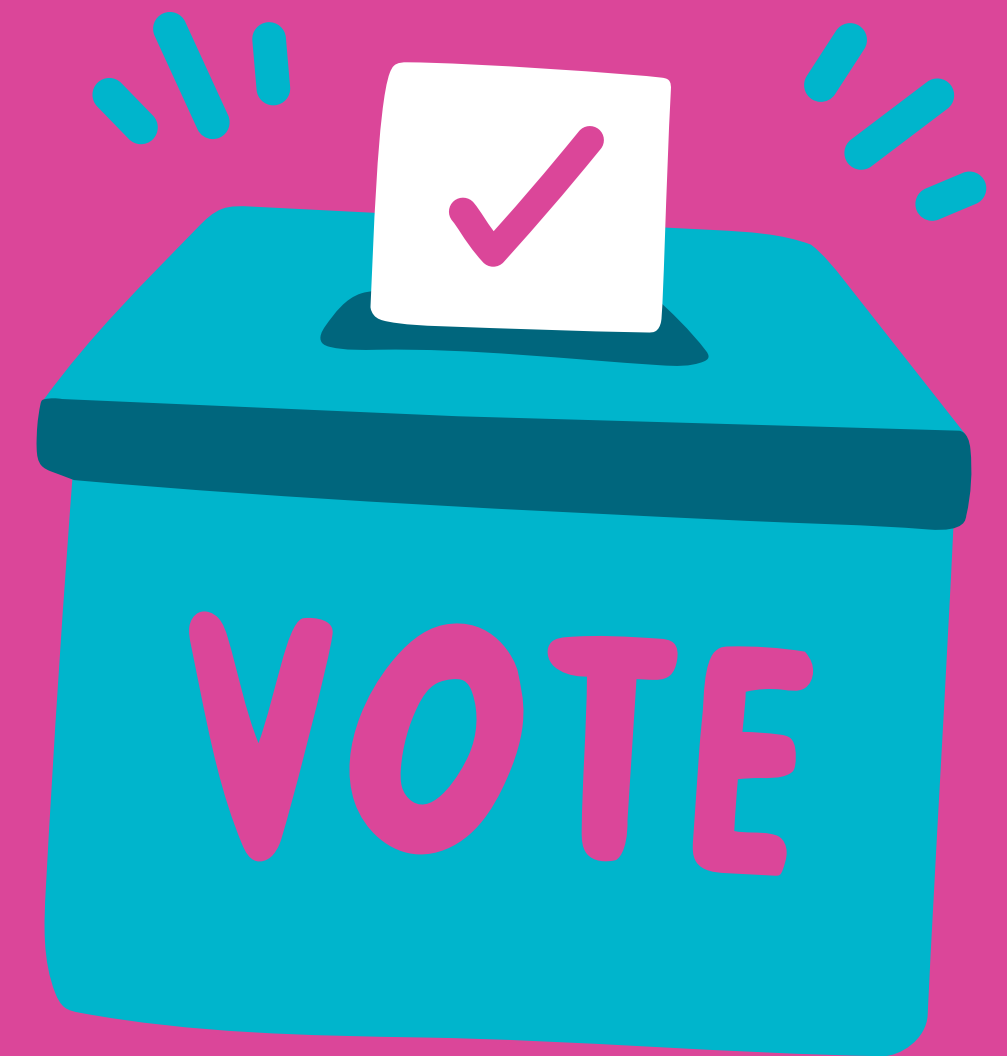
Top 2024 Recommendations

- Candidates should not campaign with personal devices and shouldn't touch any device used for voting

- AI should be considered as just another tool at candidate's disposal

- Eligibility criteria should be clearly communicated and checked at nominations

Case Studies

- x6 case studies from SUs
- Qualitative examples to accompany the quantitative data from the survey

- Worcester SU created a debrief event with candidate wellbeing in mind
- Huddersfield SU moved to a one day voting period & used lanyards to denote campaign team members
- University of Nottingham's SU focused on supporting student media and swapping QR codes for NFC tags
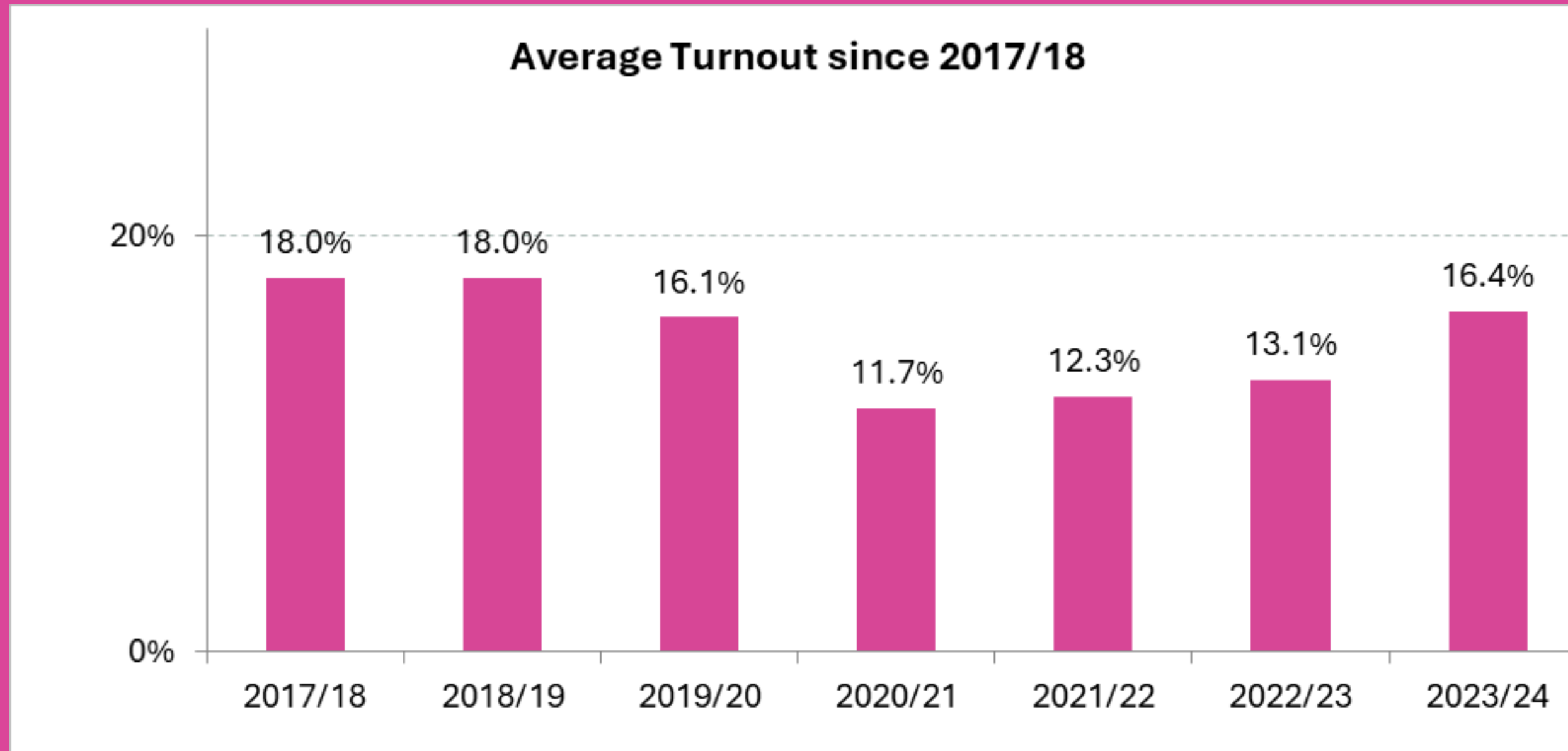- King's College London SU embedded their elections in a wider student leadership strategy

nus charity
national union of students

Survey & report highlights

VOTE

Turnout

- National turnout up to 16.4%, up 3.3% from last year.

Average Turnout since 2017/18

Year	Turnout
2017/18	18.0%
2018/19	18.0%
2019/20	16.1%
2020/21	11.7%
2021/22	12.3%
2022/23	13.1%
2023/24	16.4%

Turnout

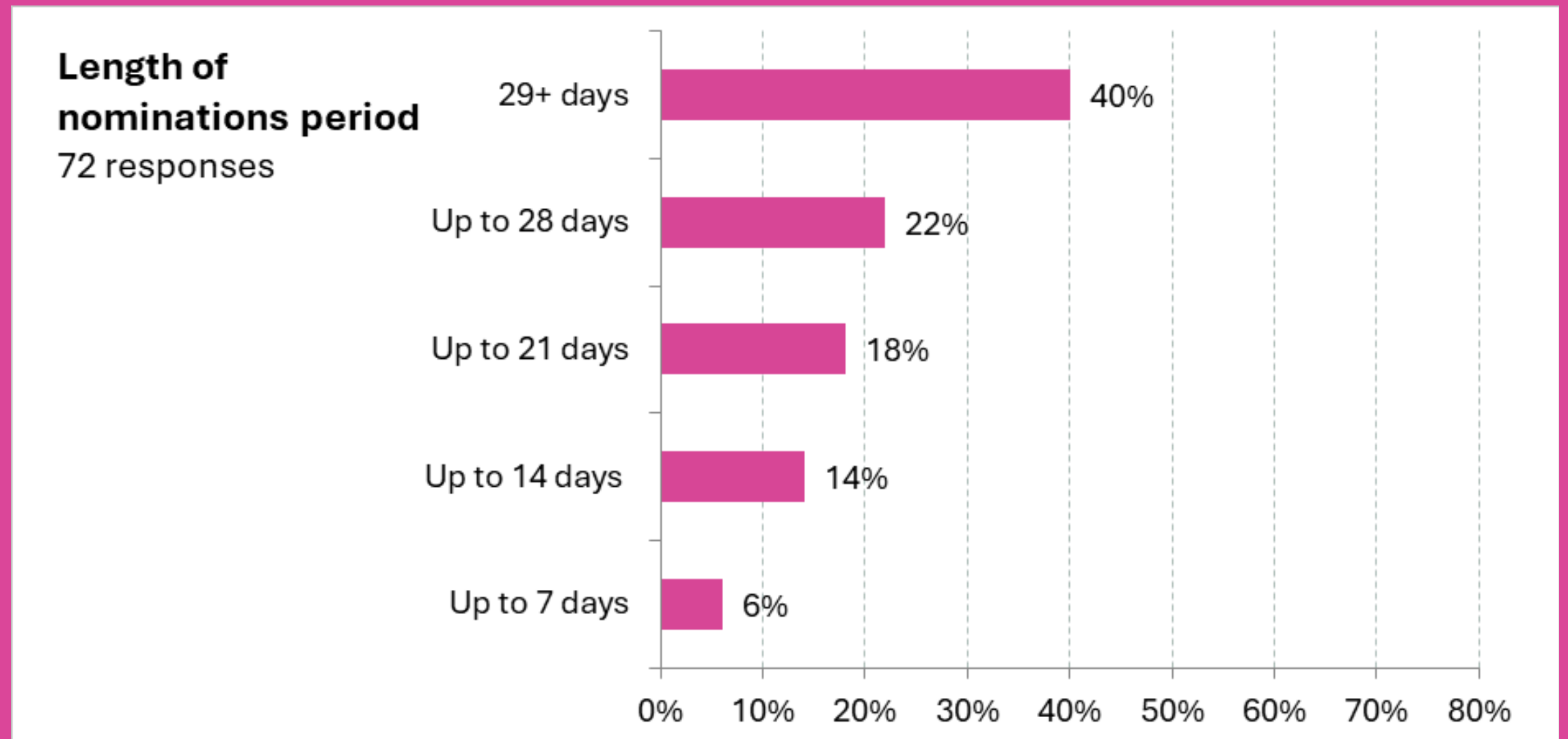- 70% of SUs saw increased turnout from last year

% reported turnout in 2023/24 compared to last year
66 responses

30%

70%

■ Increased from last year

■ Decreased from last year
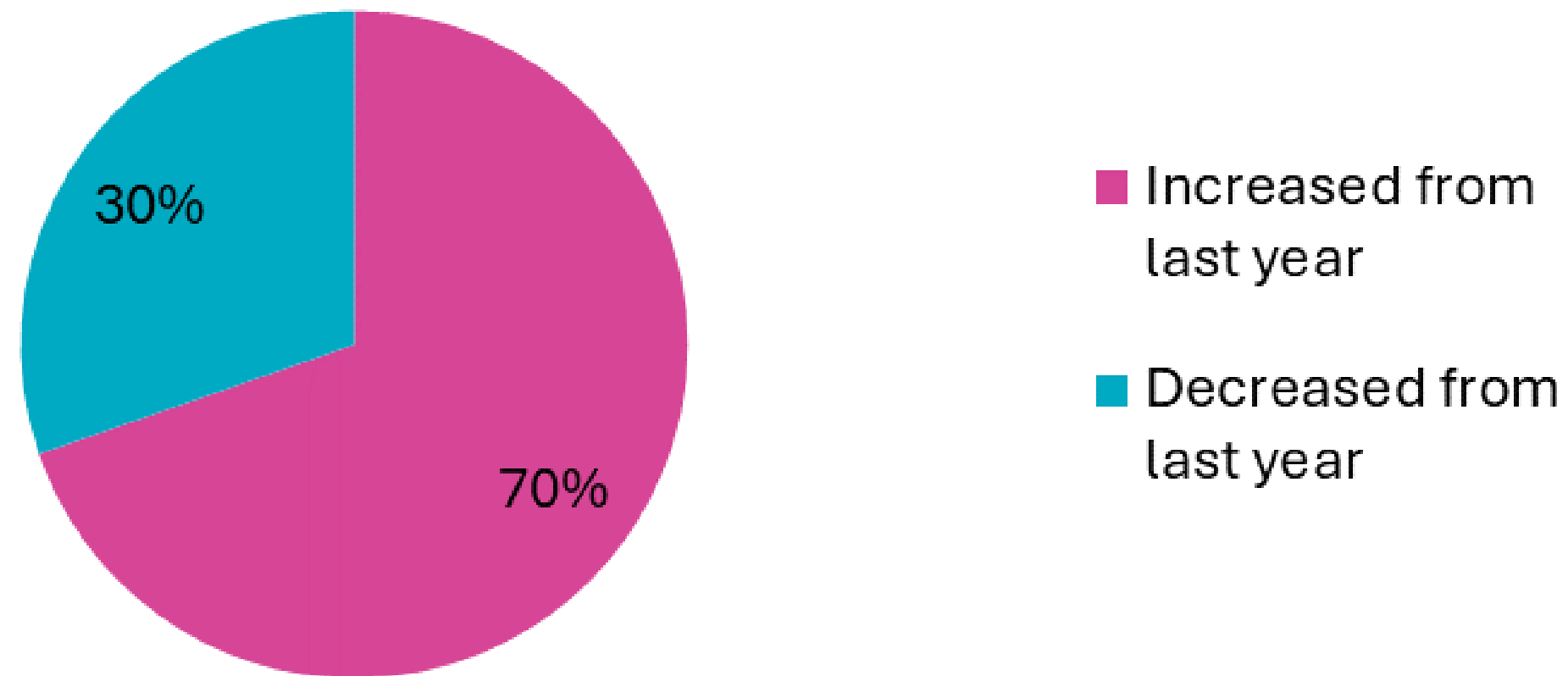
Nomination & Voting Periods
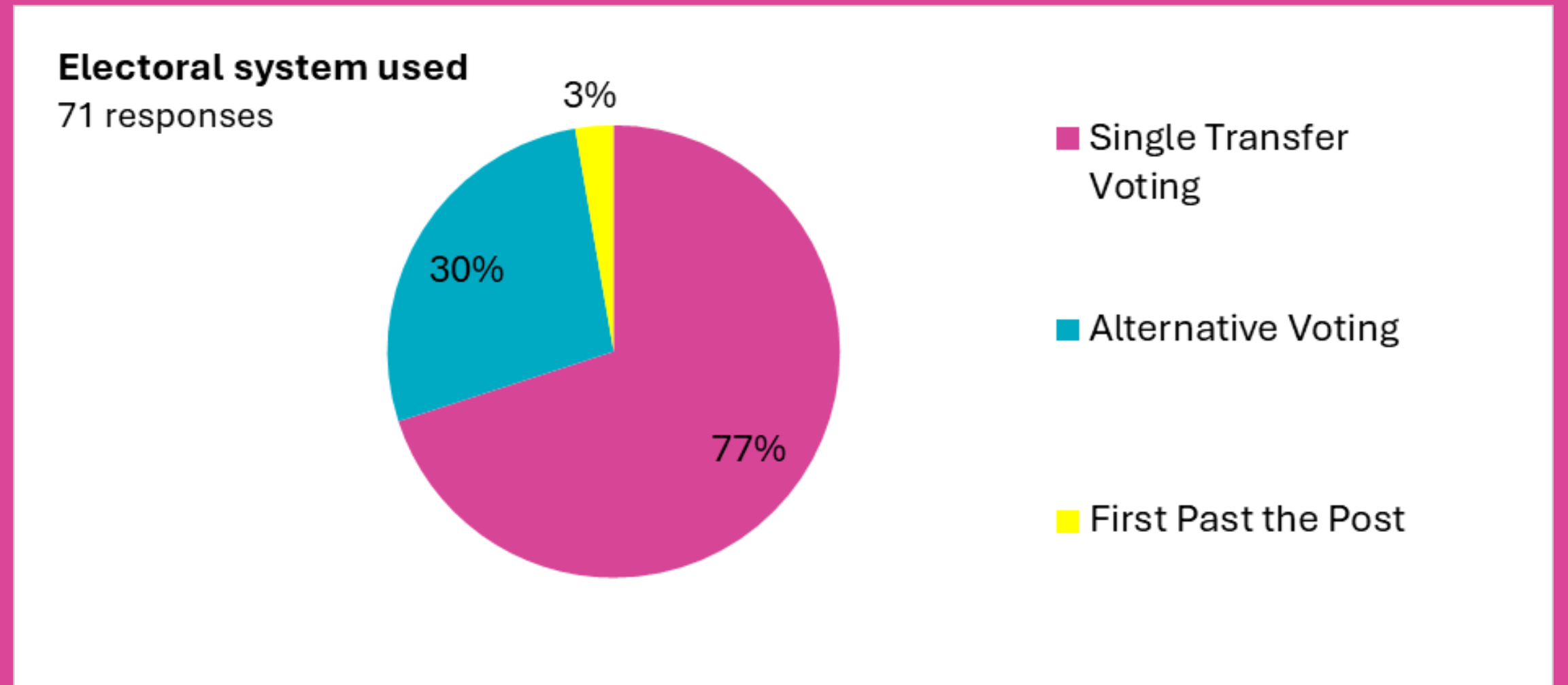
- Nomination periods are getting longer.
- In 2022/23, 26.3% of SU's nomination periods were open for 29 days or longer, which has increased to 40% this year, a jump of 13.7%.

Length of nominations period
72 responses

|	
29+ days	40%
Up to 28 days	22%
Up to 21 days	18%
Up to 14 days	14%
Up to 7 days	6%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%

Voting Systems

- The amount of SUs that use the single transferable vote (STV) method has increased in these recent elections, with 77% of using the system, up 22.6% from last year's 54.4% of SUs.

Electoral system used
71 responses

- Single Transfer Voting
- Alternative Voting
- First Past the Post

3%
30%
77%

Voting Platforms

- Exactly half of SUs use MSL as their voting platform (36 SUs). Another 26% used Union Cloud to run their elections.

Online platform used to run elections
72 responses

MSL — 50%
Union Cloud — 26%
SUMS — 15%
Other — 8%
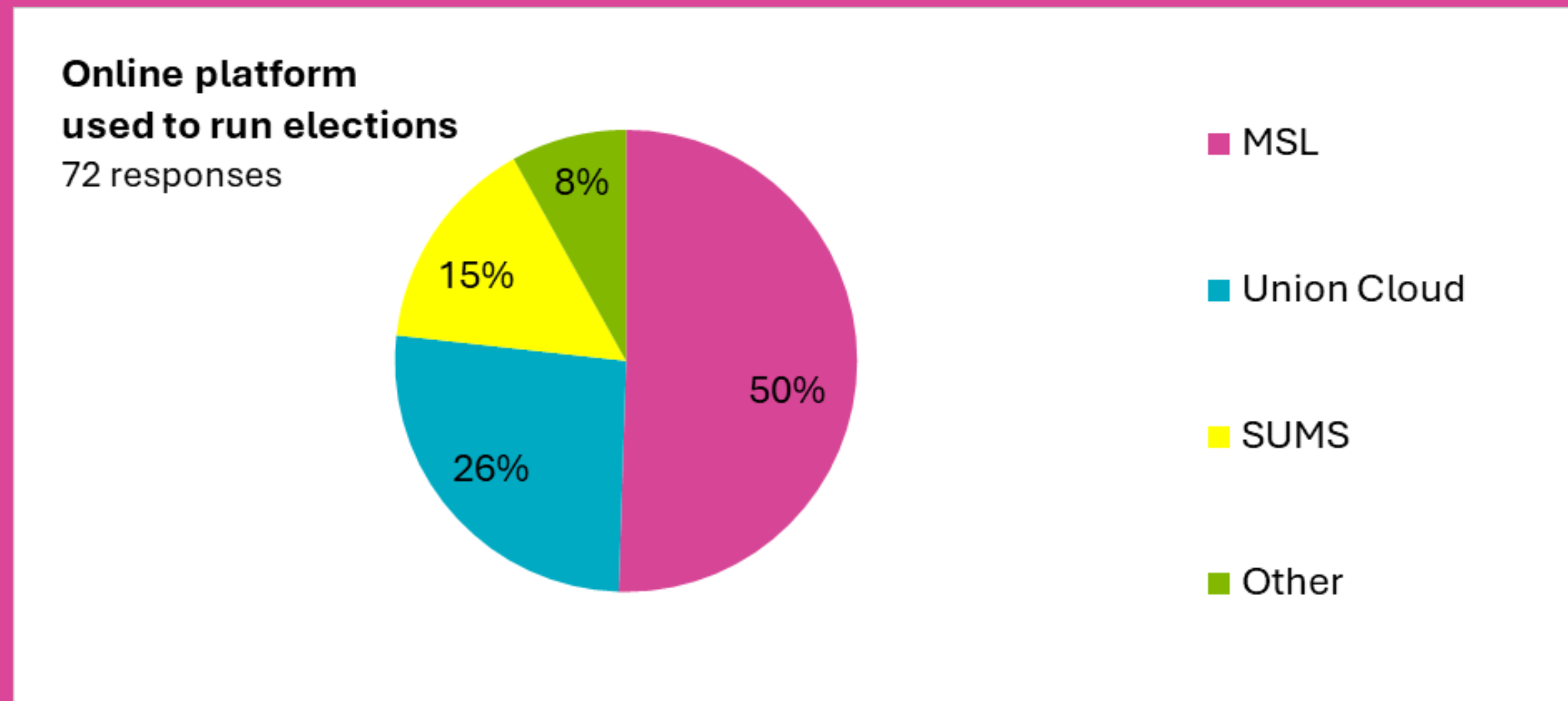
Voter Incentives

- The use of incentives continues to rise in SU elections, with 82% of SUs reporting that they use some form of incentives in their elections.

SUs that incentivise voting or not
72 responses

18%

82%

- Do incentivise
- Do not
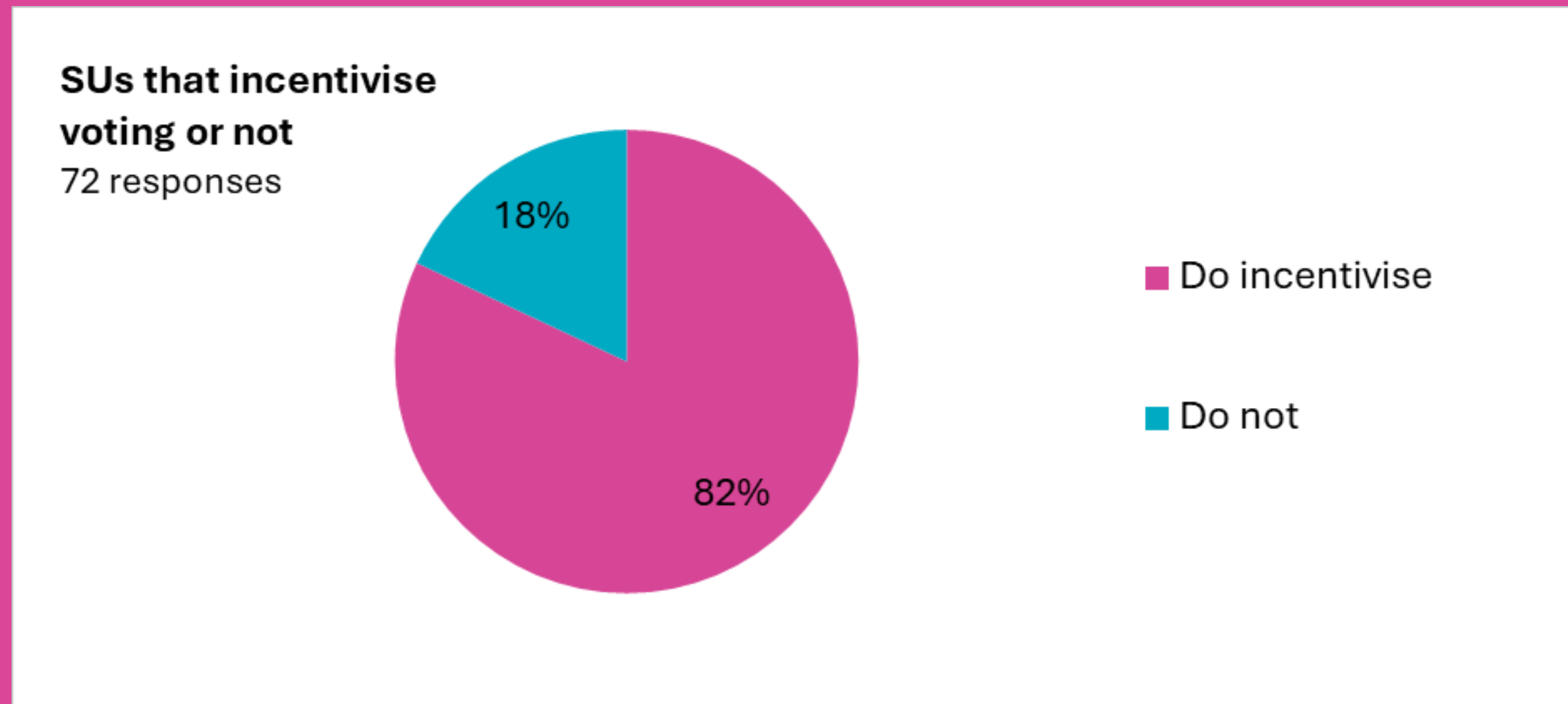
Voter Incentives

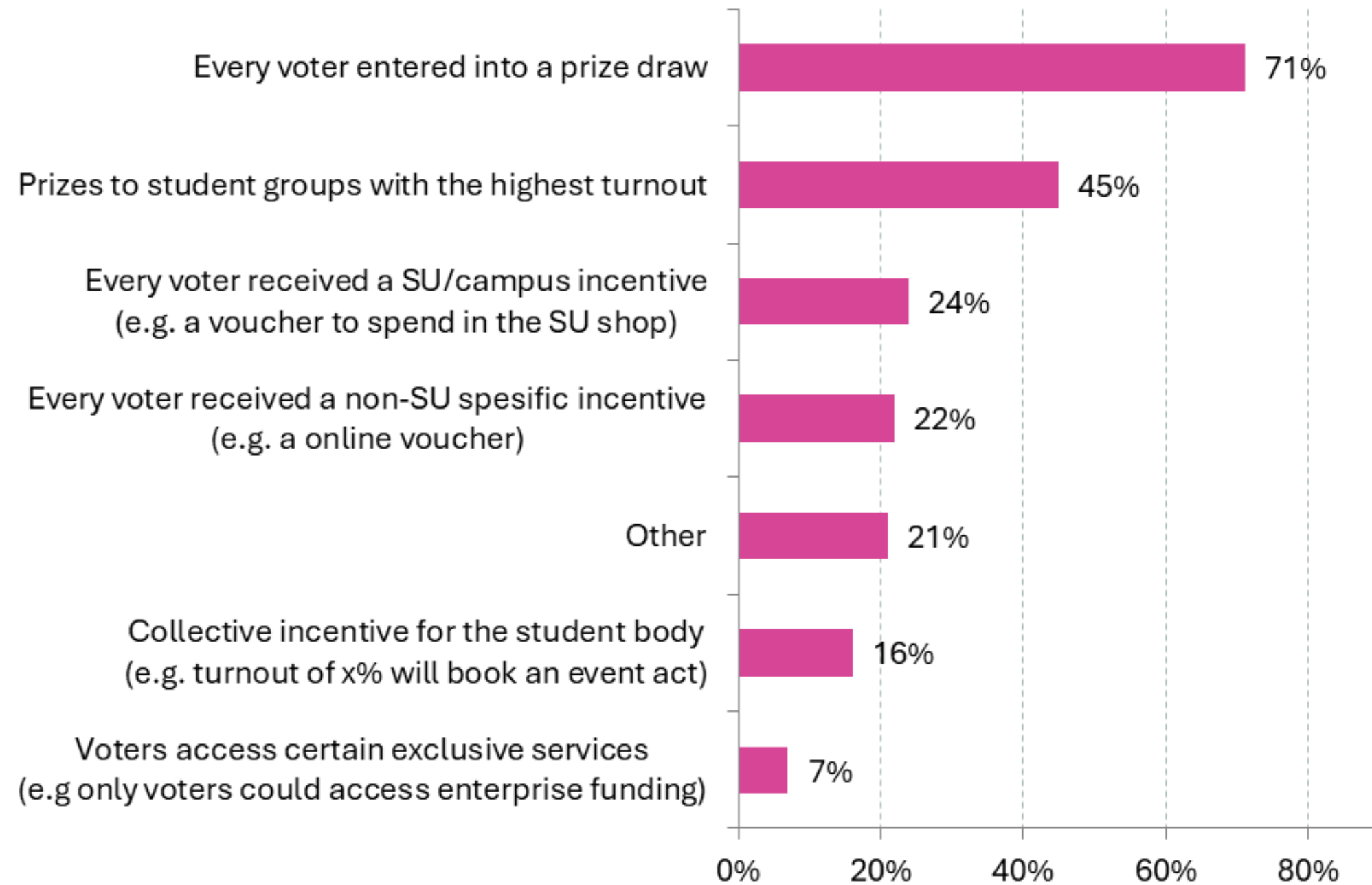**Methods used to incentivise voting**
58 responses

Method	Percentage
Every voter entered into a prize draw	71%
Prizes to student groups with the highest turnout	45%
Every voter received a SU/campus incentive (e.g. a voucher to spend in the SU shop)	24%
Every voter received a non-SU spesific incentive (e.g. a online voucher)	22%
Other	21%
Collective incentive for the student body (e.g. turnout of x% will book an event act)	16%
Voters access certain exclusive services (e.g only voters could access enterprise funding)	7%

Voter Incentives

- Increase in SUs using prize draws, spinning wheels and lucky dips.
- Many incentives remain food focused.

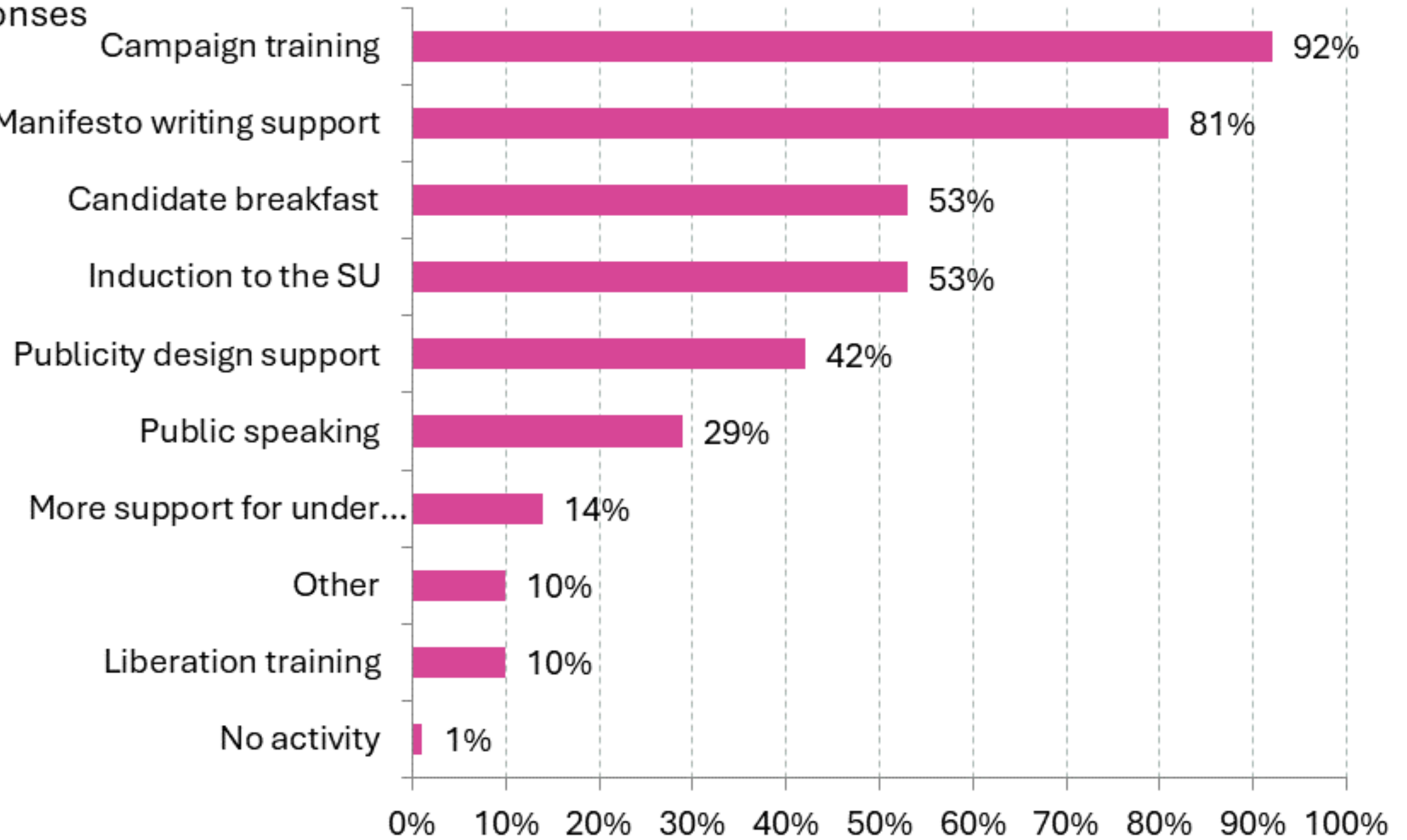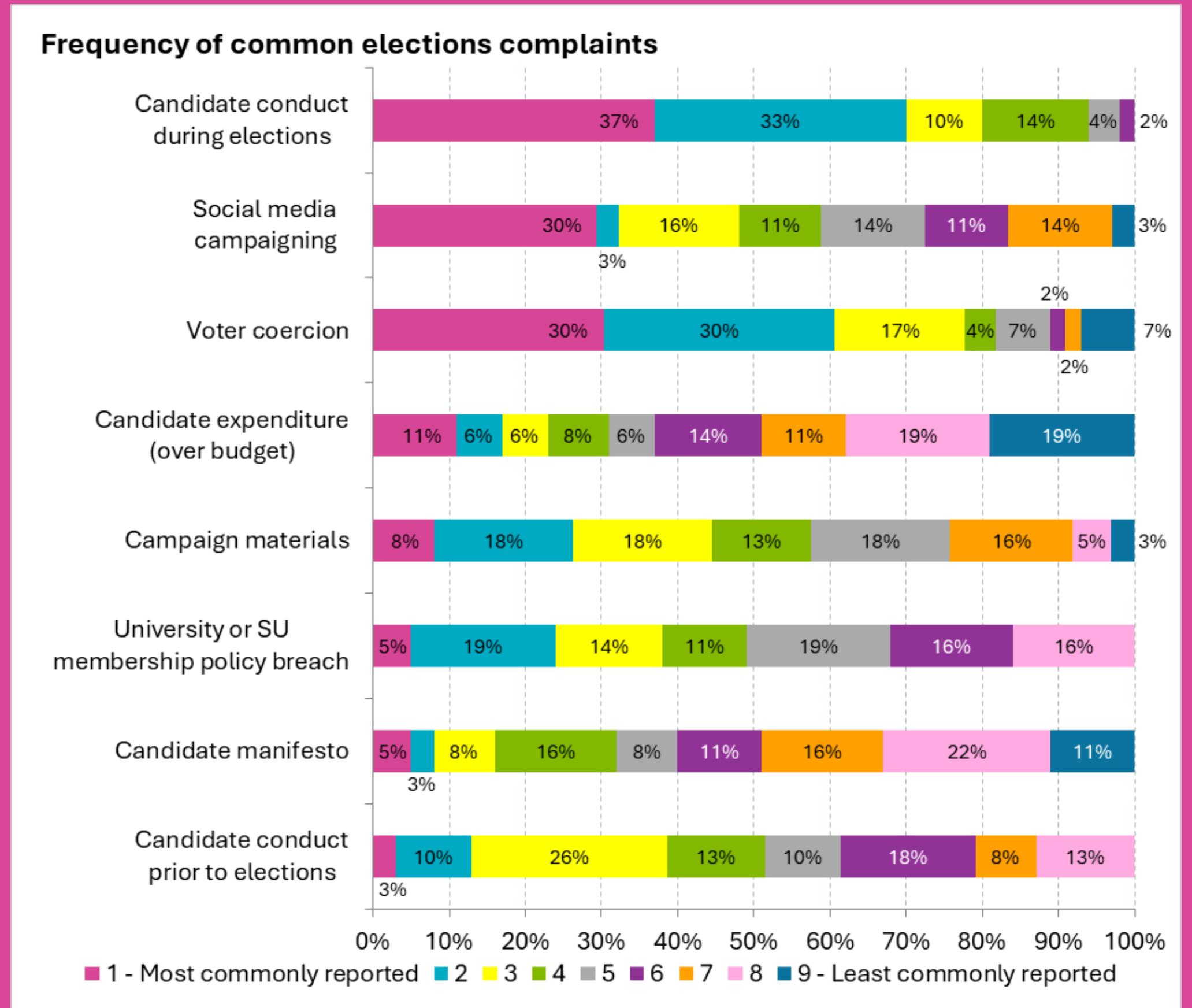# Candidate Support

Candidate Development activity

72 responses

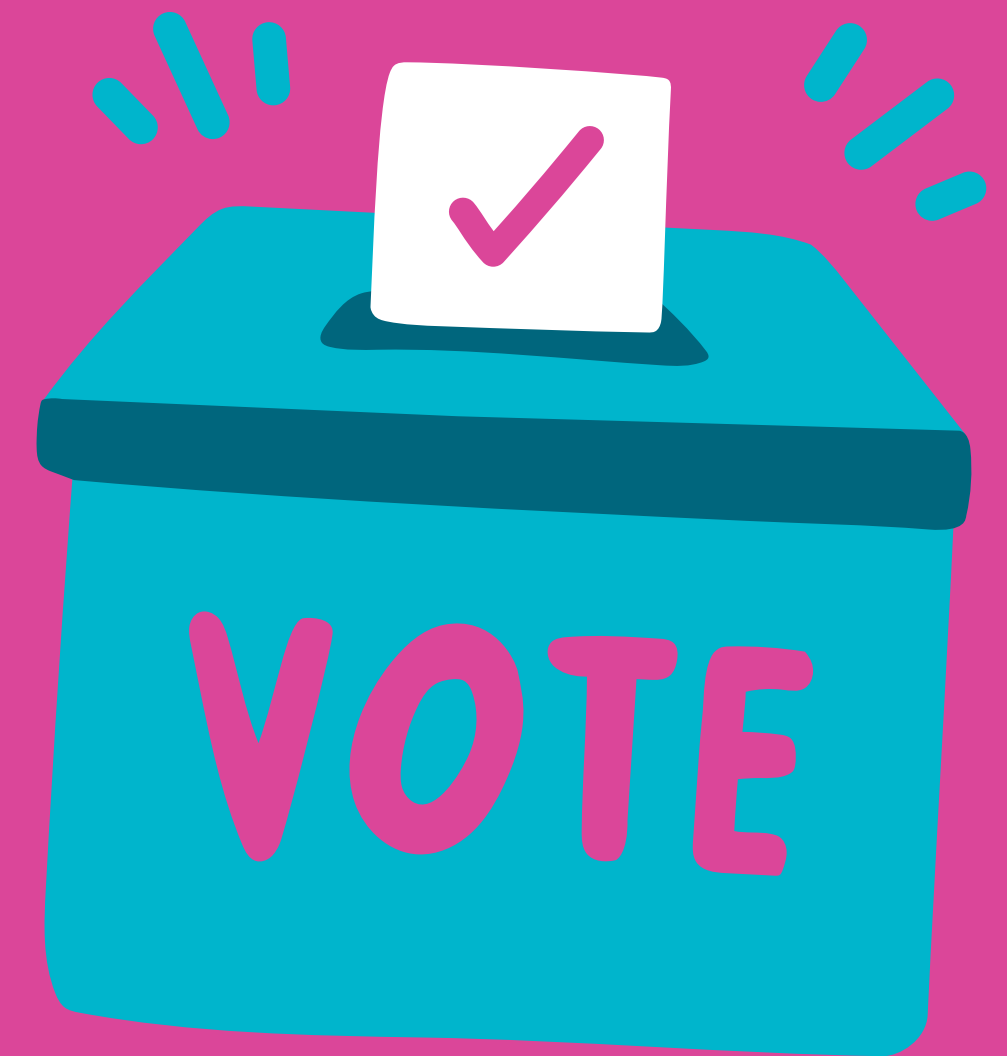| Activity	Percentage
Campaign training	92%
Manifesto writing support	81%
Candidate breakfast	53%
Induction to the SU	53%
Publicity design support	42%
Public speaking	29%
More support for under...	14%
Other	10%
Liberation training	10%
No activity	1%

Complaints & Conduct

- Vast majority of complaints still surround candidate behaviour (in personal and social media conduct) and voter coercion.
- Least reported complaints around expenditure (overspending budget).

Frequency of common elections complaints

Complaint	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Candidate conduct during elections	37%	33%	10%	14%	4%	2%			
Social media campaigning	30%	3%	16%	11%	14%	11%	14%		3%
Voter coercion	30%	30%	17%	4%	7%	2%	2%		7%
Candidate expenditure (over budget)	11%	6%	6%	8%	6%	14%	11%	19%	19%
Campaign materials	8%	18%	18%	13%	18%		16%	5%	3%
University or SU membership policy breach	5%	19%	14%	11%	19%	16%		16%	
Candidate manifesto	5%	3%	8%	16%	8%	11%	16%	22%	11%
Candidate conduct prior to elections	3%	10%	26%	13%	10%	18%	8%	13%	

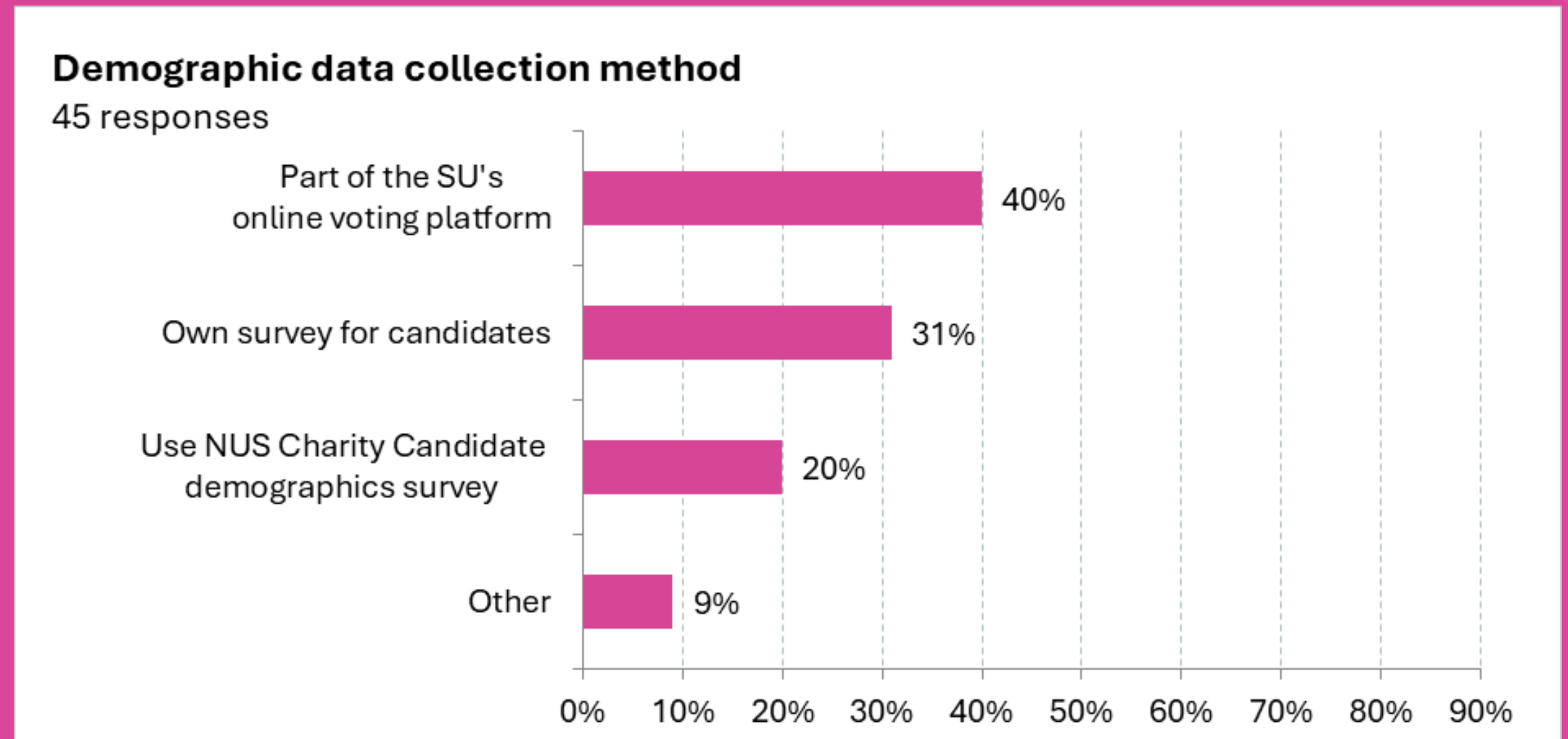1 - Most commonly reported ... 9 - Least commonly reported

Candidate Demographic Data

Collecting Candidate Demographic Data

- 63% of SUs who responded to our elections survey confirmed that they do collect data to better understand their candidates' demographics.

Demographic data collection method
45 responses

Method	Percentage
Part of the SU's online voting platform	40%
Own survey for candidates	31%
Use NUS Charity Candidate demographics survey	20%
Other	9%

Collecting Candidate Demographic Data

- New approach this year, we combined data from the Candidate Demographic Survey and the Elections Survey.
- Resulted in significantly more data for 7 key demographic questions.
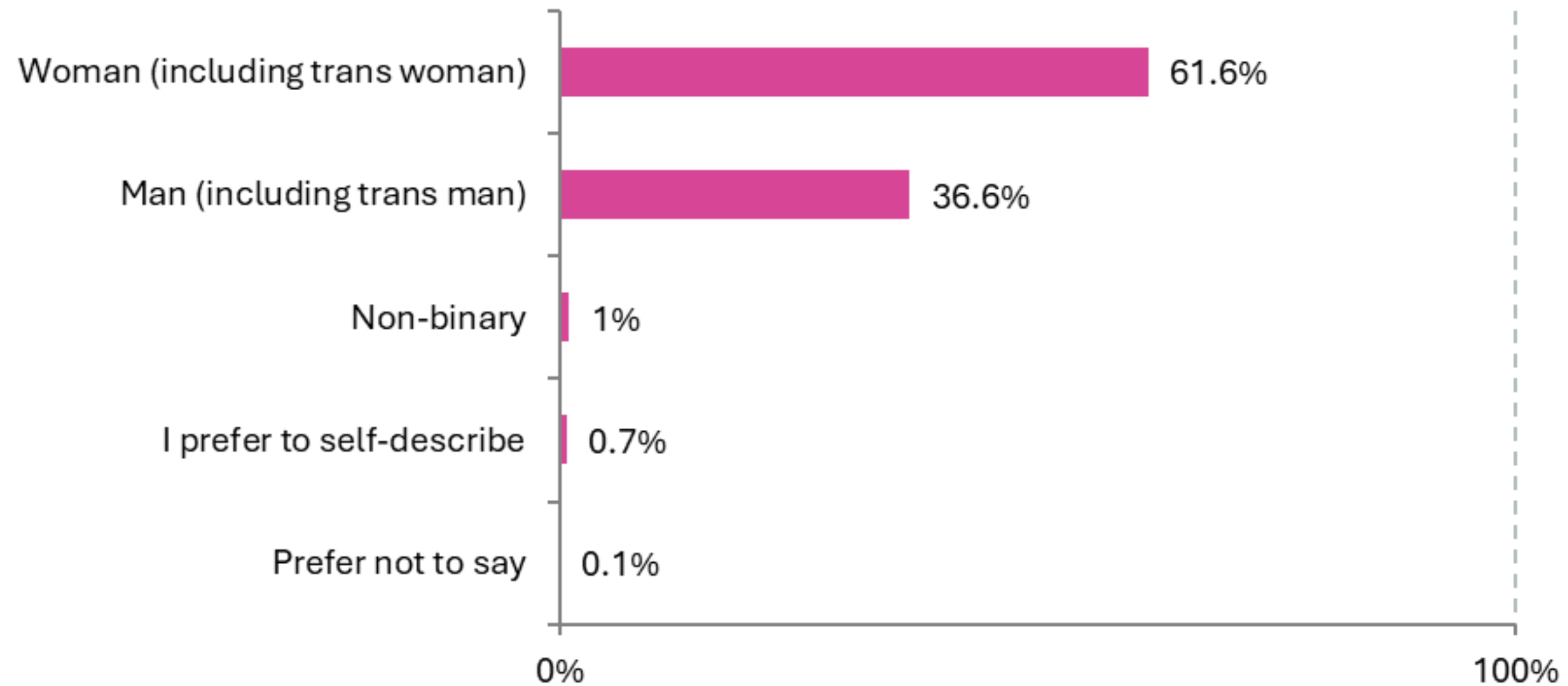- Between 380 - 3,300 candidate responses per question.
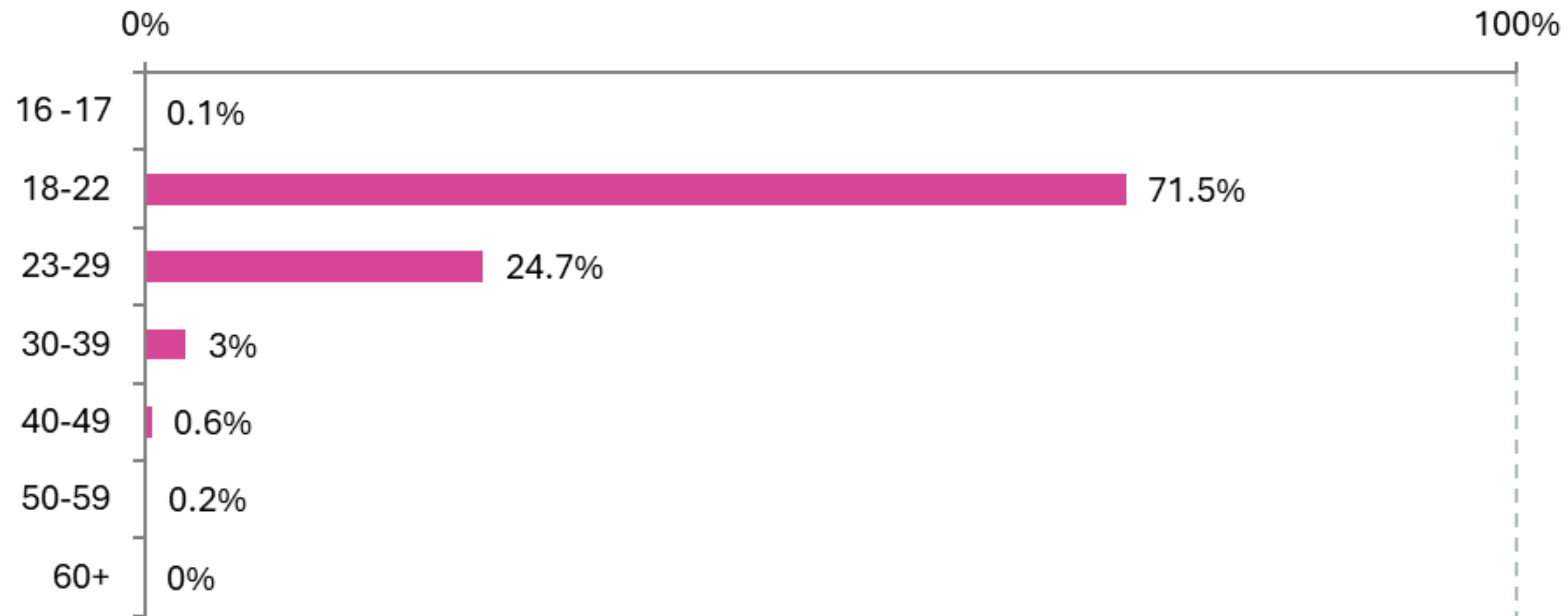
Candidate Gender

Candidate Age

Candidate Age

35 SU responses accounting for **3,083** candidates in total

20 SU responses accounting for 2,935 candidates via elections survey

15 SU responses accounting for 148 candidates via demographics survey

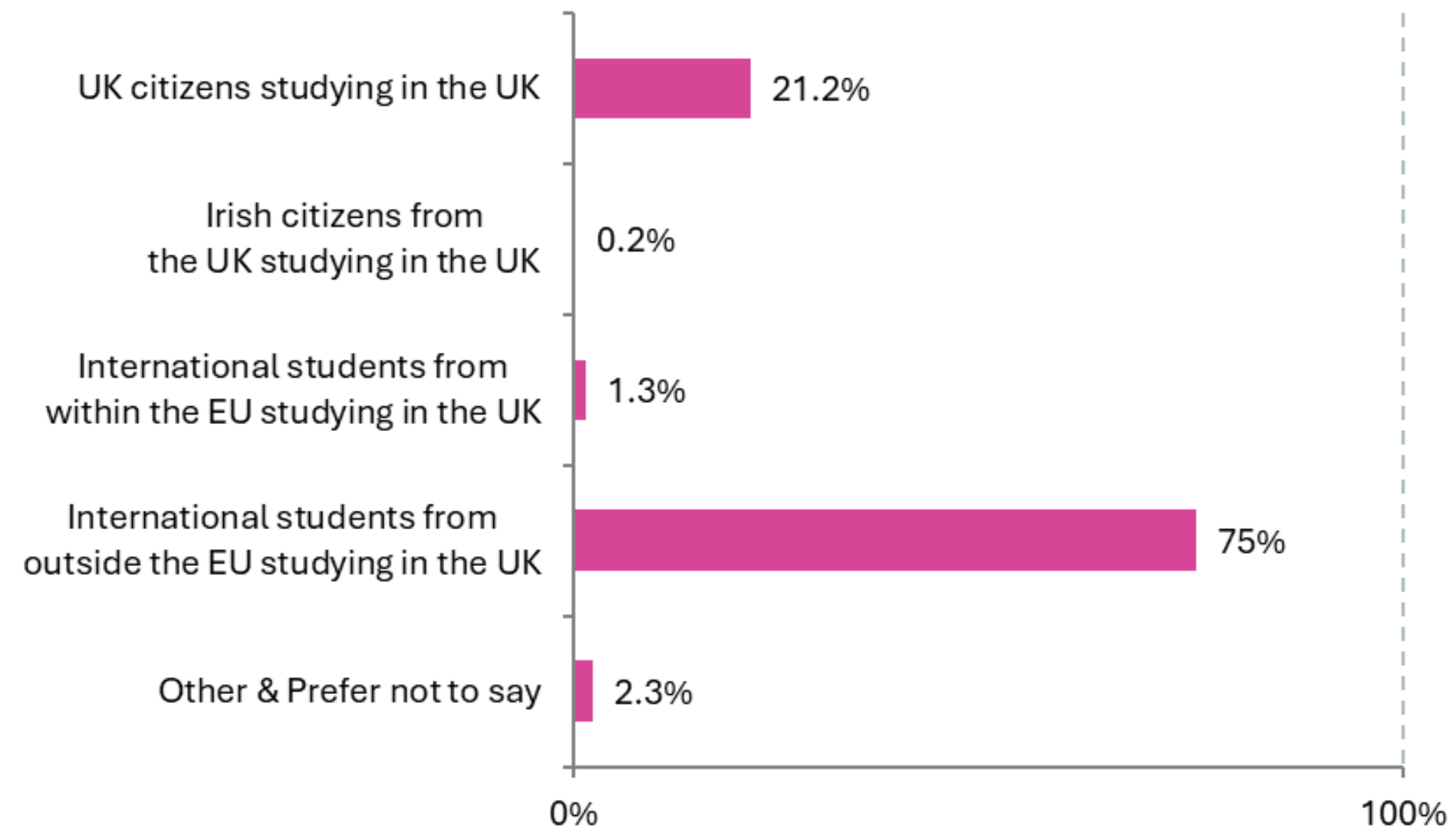| Age	0% — 100%
16 -17	0.1%
18-22	71.5%
23-29	24.7%
30-39	3%
40-49	0.6%
50-59	0.2%
60+	0%

Candidate Citizenship

Candidate Citizenship

35 SU responses accounting for **1,666** candidates in total
20 SU responses accounting for 1,519 candidates via elections survey
15 SU responses accounting for 147 candidates via demographics survey

Category	Percentage
UK citizens studying in the UK	21.2%
Irish citizens from the UK studying in the UK	0.2%
International students from within the EU studying in the UK	1.3%
International students from outside the EU studying in the UK	75%
Other & Prefer not to say	2.3%

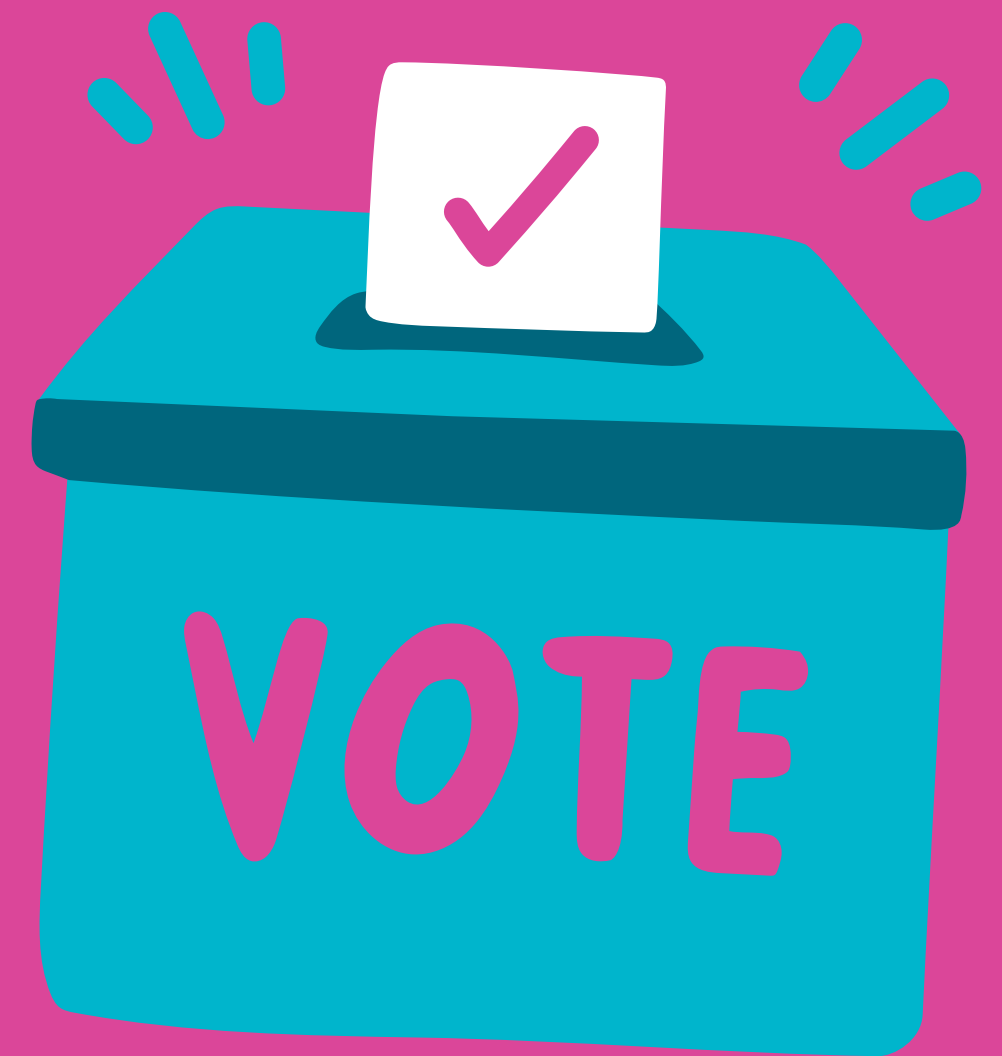0%   100%

More Candidate Demographic Data in report

- Gender
- Age
- Citizenship

- Sexual Orientation
- Religion, Faith or Belief
- Ethnic Group
- Disability

Handy Links

SU Elections
Report 2024

Election Service
webpages on
NUS Connect

Workplace
DRO Group

nus *charity*
national union of **students**

Thank you!
elections@nus.org.uk