

2020 Graduate Student Survey Report - All Respondents **Prepared by Institutional Research and Decision Support** **Last Updated: September 21, 2020**

Administration: The survey was administered between July 13, 2020 and August 10, 2020 to all graduate students (as of the spring 2020 census). Respondents were entered into a drawing to win 1 of 10 \$50 Amazon e-gift cards. Survey publicity and outreach was coordinated by IRDS with help from Graduate Division. The survey was promoted via emails to students.

Response Rate: Of the 684 students invited to complete the survey, 384 (56%) provided partial or complete responses. Because students could skip questions, response rates varied by question.

Respondent Characteristics: Please refer to Tables 1-3 below for respondent characteristics, including information about the representativeness of the respondent sample relative to the invitee population. The respondent sample was roughly representative of the invitee population. These tables are static and cannot be filtered.

Other Notes:

- Number of responses: Unless otherwise noted, respondents could answer each question on the survey; however, only certain respondents could complete some questions based on their prior responses or characteristics. Additionally, "not applicable" responses are not included in the tables and figures. See the question notes in this report and the survey instrument for more information. Additionally, respondents could skip questions. Thus, there will be discrepancies between the overall number of respondents and the number of respondents that answered particular questions.
- Free response questions: Free response question responses are not included in this report for several reasons. They require response coding to analyze, and coding schemes are often developed with a research question in mind. Additionally, in some cases free response data can inadvertently identify particular respondents who completed the survey, thus violating confidentiality. Interested parties should request these data from Dean Chris Kello or IRDS so that individual requests can be evaluated.

Table 1. Student Background/Demographics

Student Characteristic	# Invited (of 684 total)	% Invited	# Responded (of 384 total)	% Responded	Response Rate (# responded/# invited)
Gender					
Female	309	45%	190	50%	61%
Male	370	54%	191	50%	52%
Unknown	5	<1%	3	<1%	60%
Race/Ethnicity					
International	267	39%	149	39%	56%
Hispanic	129	19%	67	17%	52%
African American	12	2%	10	3%	83%
American Indian	0	0%	0	0%	0%
Asian	61	9%	32	8%	52%
Pacific Islander	1	<1%	1	<1%	100%
White	170	25%	98	2%	58%
Multi-racial	15	2%	9	5%	60%
Unknown	29	4%	18	0%	62%

% values may not sum to 100 for a particular characteristic due to rounding error

Table 2. Student Background/Demographics

Student Characteristic	# Invited (of 684 total)	% Invited	# Responded (of 384 total)	% Responded	Response Rate (# responded/# invited)
Advanced to Candidacy					
Not Advanced to Candidacy	473	69%	276	72%	58%
Advanced to Candidacy	211	31%	108	28%	51%
Residency Status					
Not a CA Resident	299	44%	165	43%	55%
CA Resident	385	56%	219	57%	57%

Student Characteristic	Invited (of 684 total)	Responded (of 384 total)
Average Age (Standard Deviation)	29.5 (5.9)	29.4 (6.2)

% values may not sum to 100 for a particular characteristic due to rounding error; undeclared students in a particular School are included in their respective Schools

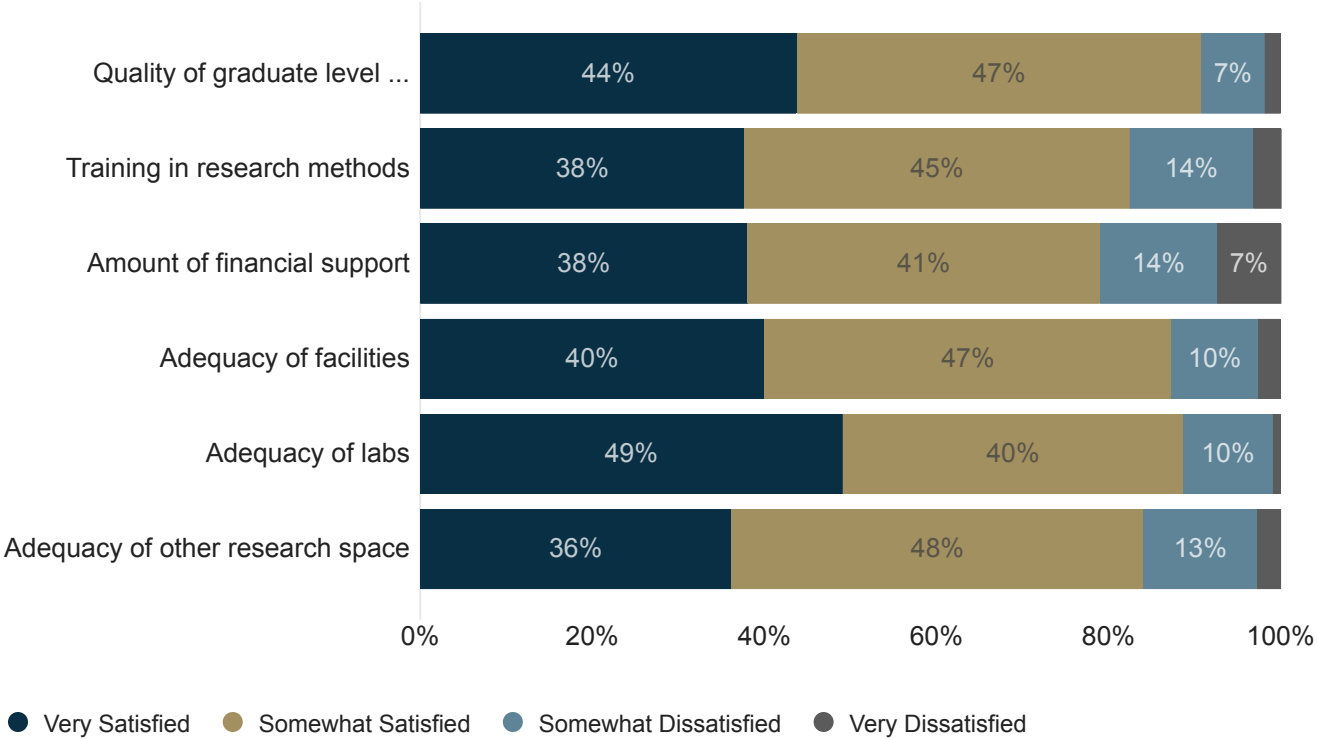
Table 3. Student Major/Program

Student Major/Program	# Invited (of 684 total)	% Invited	# Responded (of 384 total)	% Responded	Response Rate (# responded/# invited)
AMAT - Applied Mathematics	30	4%	21	6%	70%
BIOE- Bioengineering	10	2%	7	2%	70%
CCB – Chemistry & Chemical Biology	47	7%	25	7%	53%
CIS – Cognitive & Information Sciences	20	3%	17	4%	85%
EECS – Electrical Engineering and Computer Science	65	10%	30	8%	46%
ESYS – Environmental Systems	61	9%	32	8%	52%
IH – Interdisciplinary Humanities	55	8%	37	10%	67%
MBSE – Materials and Biomaterials Science and Engineering	24	4%	16	4%	67%
MCS – Management of Complex Systems	8	1%	3	<1%	38%
MECE – Mechanical Engineering	61	9%	34	9%	56%
MIST – Management of Innovation, Sustainability, and Technology	16	2%	6	2%	38%
PHE – Public Health	29	4%	14	4%	48%
PHYI – Physics	60	9%	30	8%	50%
POLS – Political Science	19	3%	8	2%	42%
PSYS – Psychological Sciences	40	6%	28	7%	70%
QSB – Quantitative & Systems Biology	111	16%	61	16%	55%
SOCL - Sociology	28	4%	15	4%	54%

% values may not sum to 100 for a particular characteristic due to rounding error; IH includes IH and IGWC; EECS includes EECS and IGEC; MBSE includes MBSE and IGBT

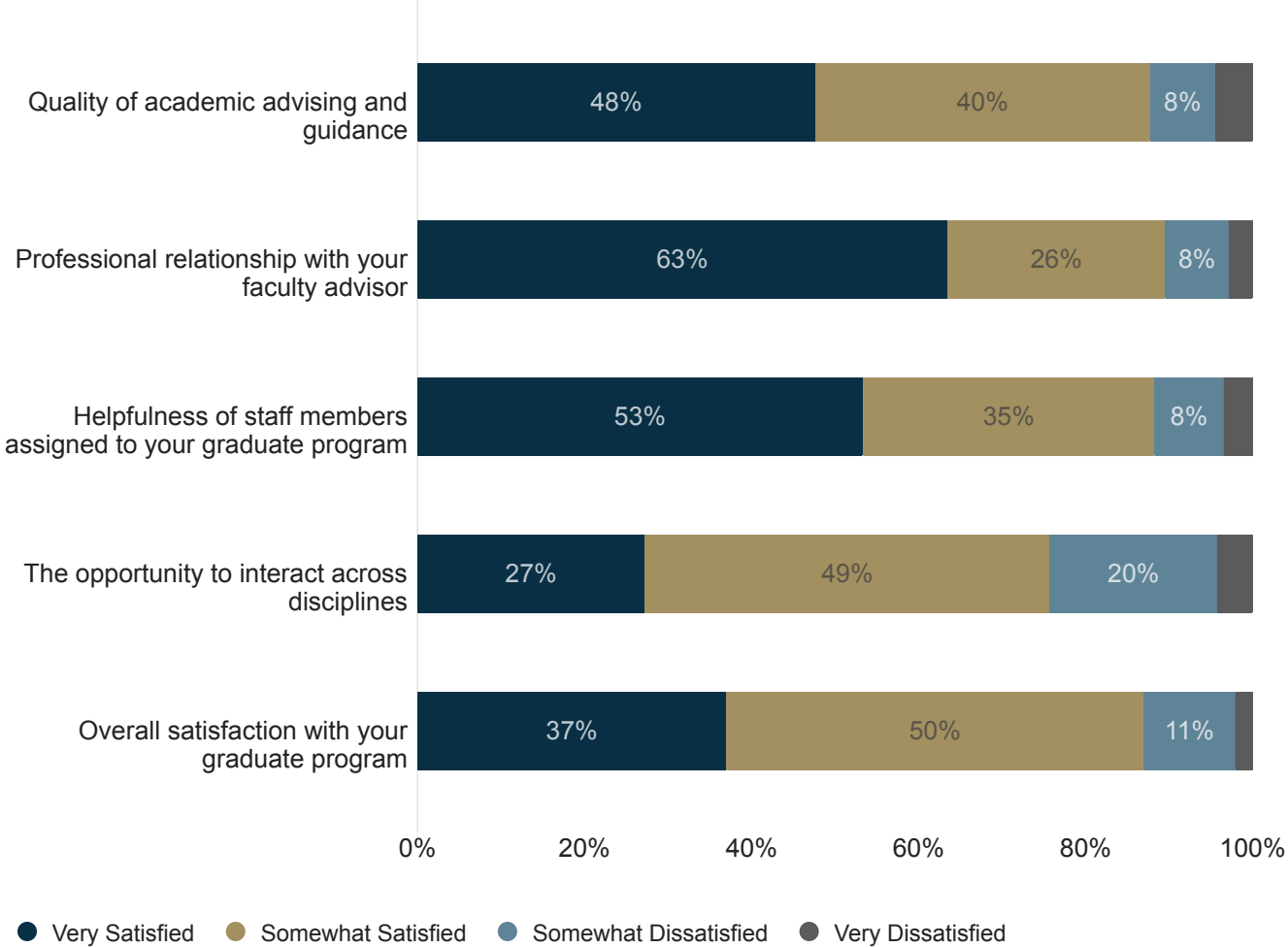
How satisfied are you with each of the following?

Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below.



Field	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Quality of graduate level teaching by faculty	166	178	28	7
Training in research methods	144	171	55	12
Amount of financial support	145	156	52	28
Adequacy of facilities	152	180	38	10
Adequacy of labs	165	133	35	3
Adequacy of other research space	132	175	48	10

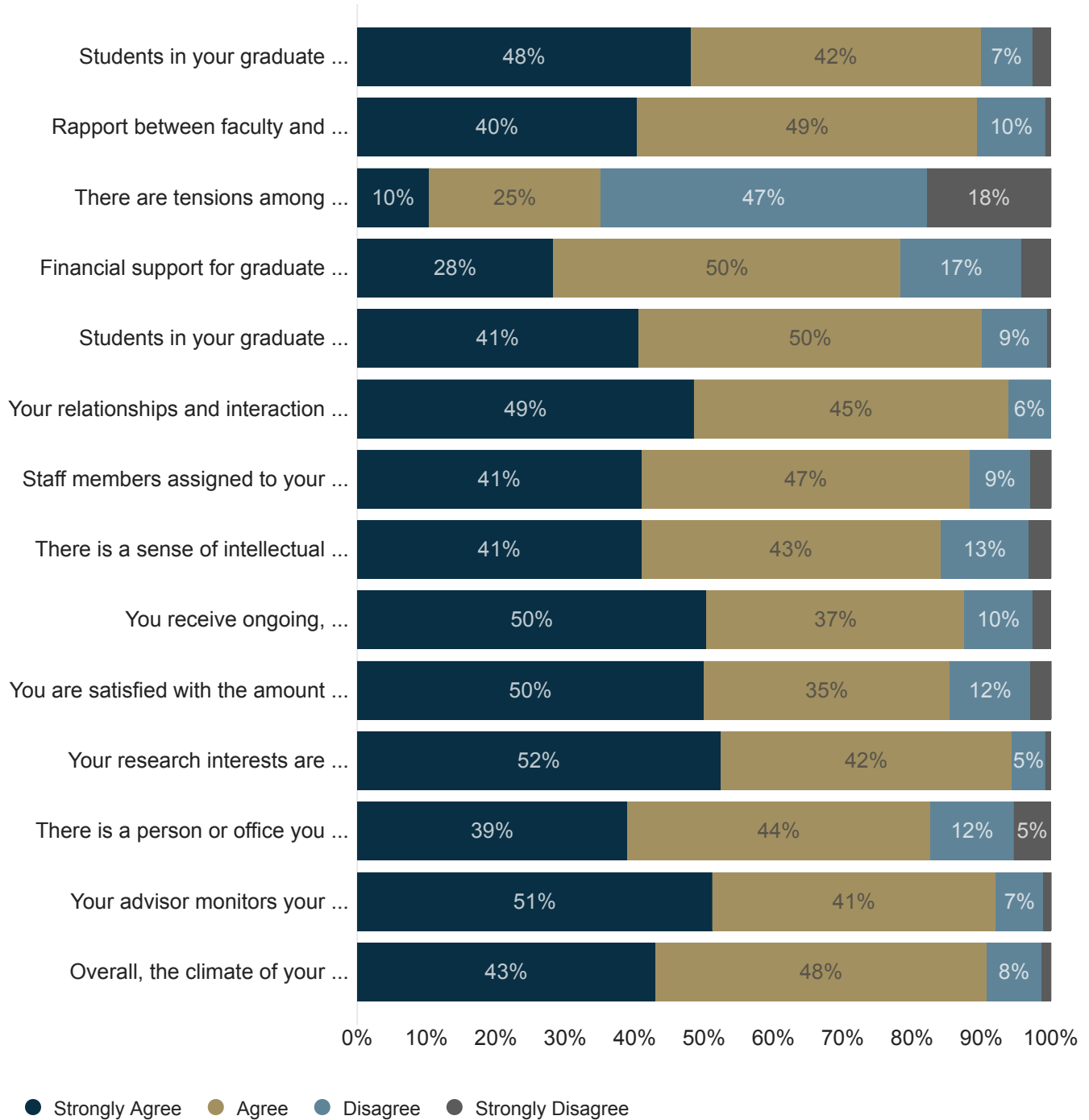
How satisfied are you with each of the following?



Field	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Quality of academic advising and guidance	182	153	30	17
Professional relationship with your faculty advisor	243	100	29	11
Helpfulness of staff members assigned to your graduate program	200	131	31	13
The opportunity to interact across disciplines	102	182	75	16
Overall satisfaction with your graduate program	142	192	42	8

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

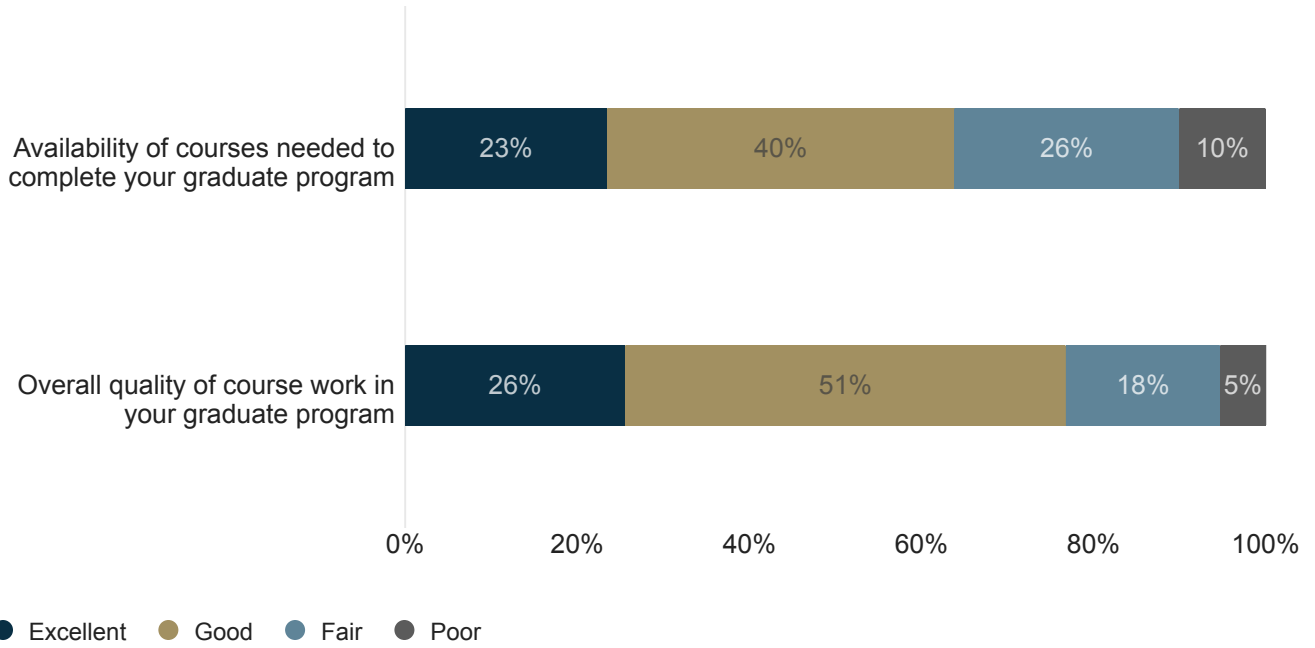
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To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Field	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students in your graduate program are treated with respect by faculty	182	158	28	10
Rapport between faculty and graduate students in your graduate program is good	153	186	37	3
There are tensions among faculty that affect students	39	93	177	67
Financial support for graduate students is distributed fairly	106	188	65	16
Students in your graduate program are collegial	152	186	35	2
Your relationships and interaction with other students in your graduate program are good	184	172	23	0
Staff members assigned to your graduate program are knowledgeable about rules and regulations that affect graduate students	155	179	33	11
There is a sense of intellectual community in your graduate program	155	163	48	12
You receive ongoing, constructive feedback on progress toward your degree from your advisor	191	141	37	10
You are satisfied with the amount of time spent with your advisor	189	134	44	11
Your research interests are incorporated into your thesis and/or dissertation work	197	158	18	3
There is a person or office you could trust to report perceived abuse or misconduct in your graduate program by your advisor or committee member	146	164	45	20
Your advisor monitors your progress and helps you advance through your program	194	155	26	4
Overall, the climate of your graduate program is positive	163	181	30	5

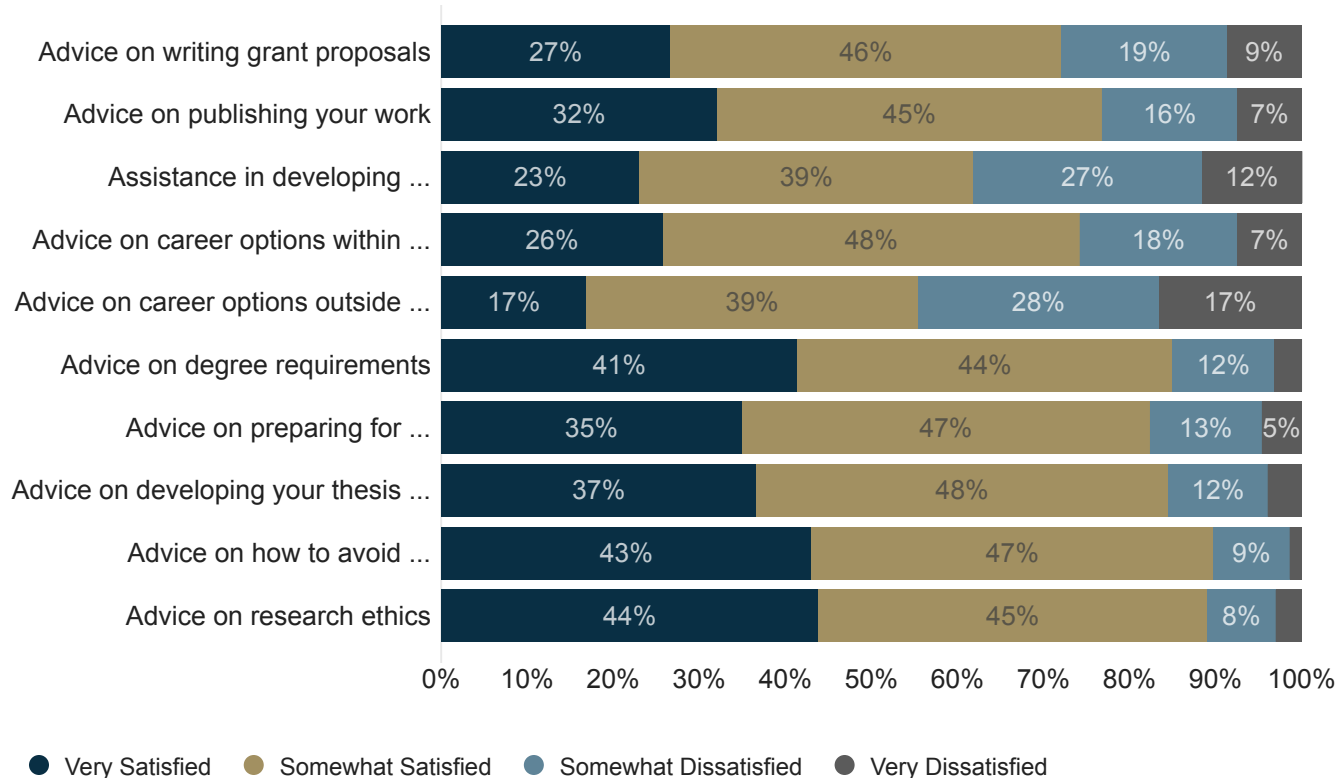
How would you rate each of the following?



Field	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Availability of courses needed to complete your graduate program	89	153	99	38
Overall quality of course work in your graduate program	97	194	68	20

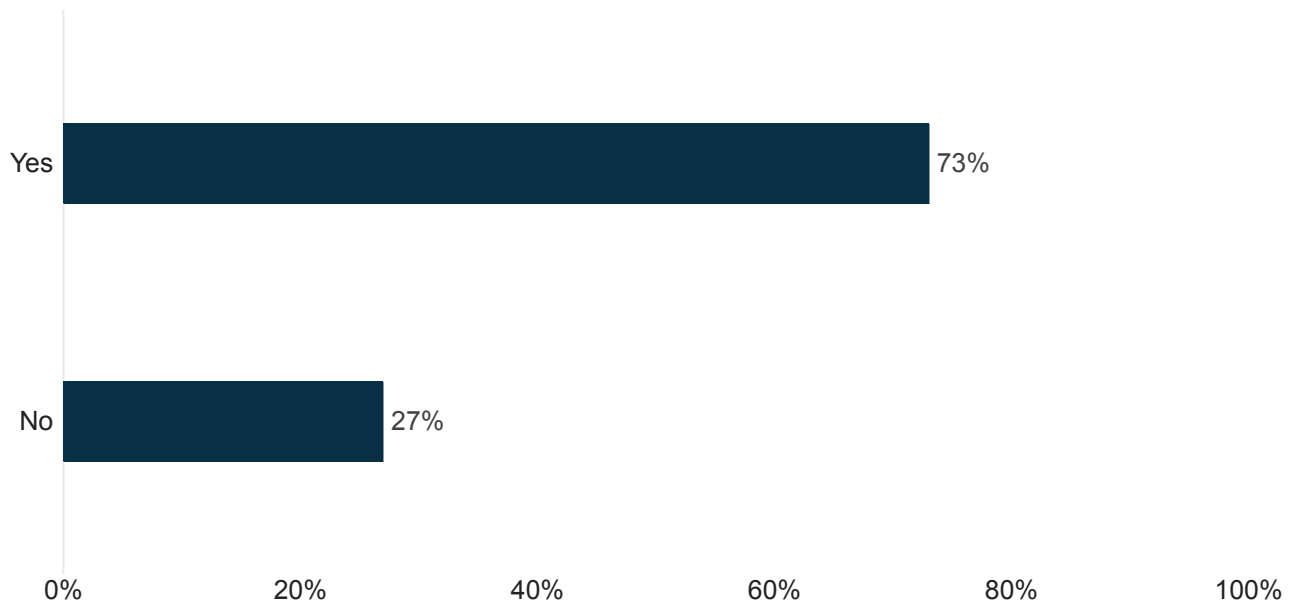
Please indicate (where applicable) your level of satisfaction in the following areas.

Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below.



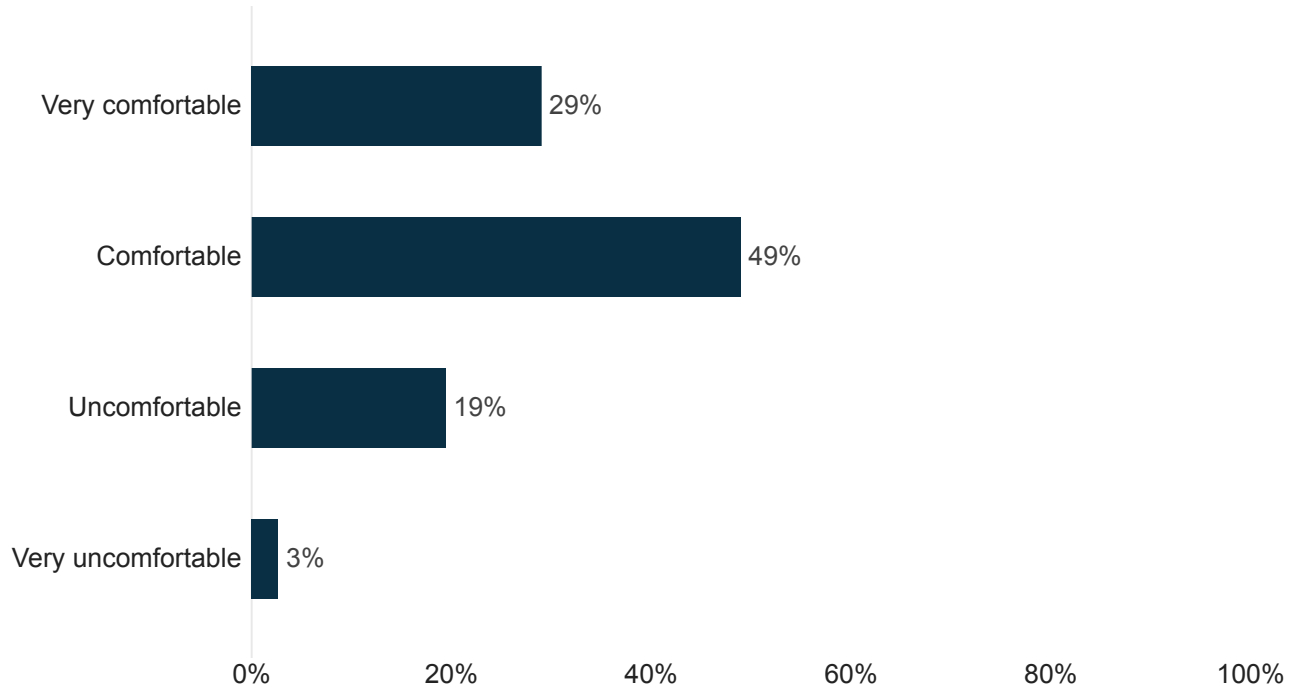
Field	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Advice on writing grant proposals	86	147	62	28
Advice on publishing your work	112	156	55	26
Assistance in developing professional contacts outside your graduate program	84	141	97	42
Advice on career options within academia	90	169	64	26
Advice on career options outside academia	59	135	98	58
Advice on degree requirements	155	163	44	12
Advice on preparing for examinations	121	164	45	16
Advice on developing your thesis or dissertation proposal	130	170	41	14
Advice on how to avoid plagiarism and other violations of the standards of academic integrity	155	168	32	5
Advice on research ethics	160	165	29	11

If you observed an activity that you believe would lead to the University being harmed (e.g., theft, fraud, lawsuit, fines, injuries, serious damage to reputation), are you confident that you could determine how to report the activity?



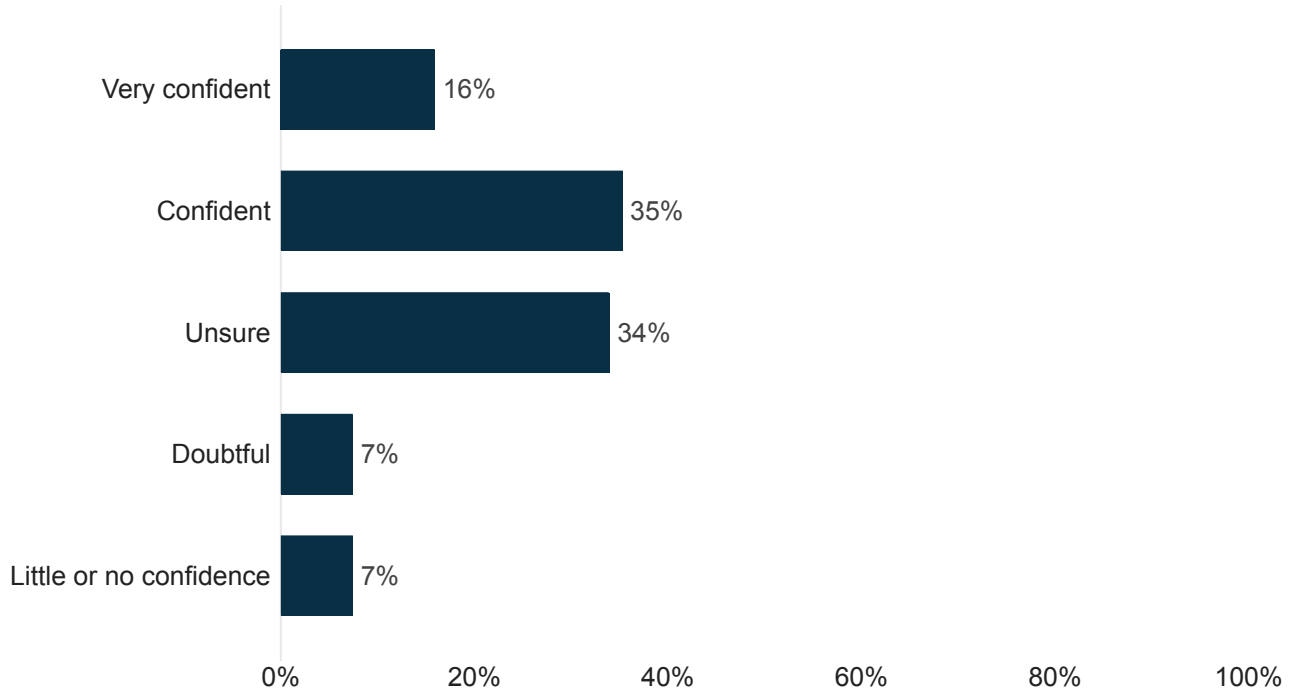
Field	Choice Count
Yes	276
No	102

How comfortable would you be reporting the activity?



Field	Choice Count
Very comfortable	109
Comfortable	184
Uncomfortable	73
Very uncomfortable	10

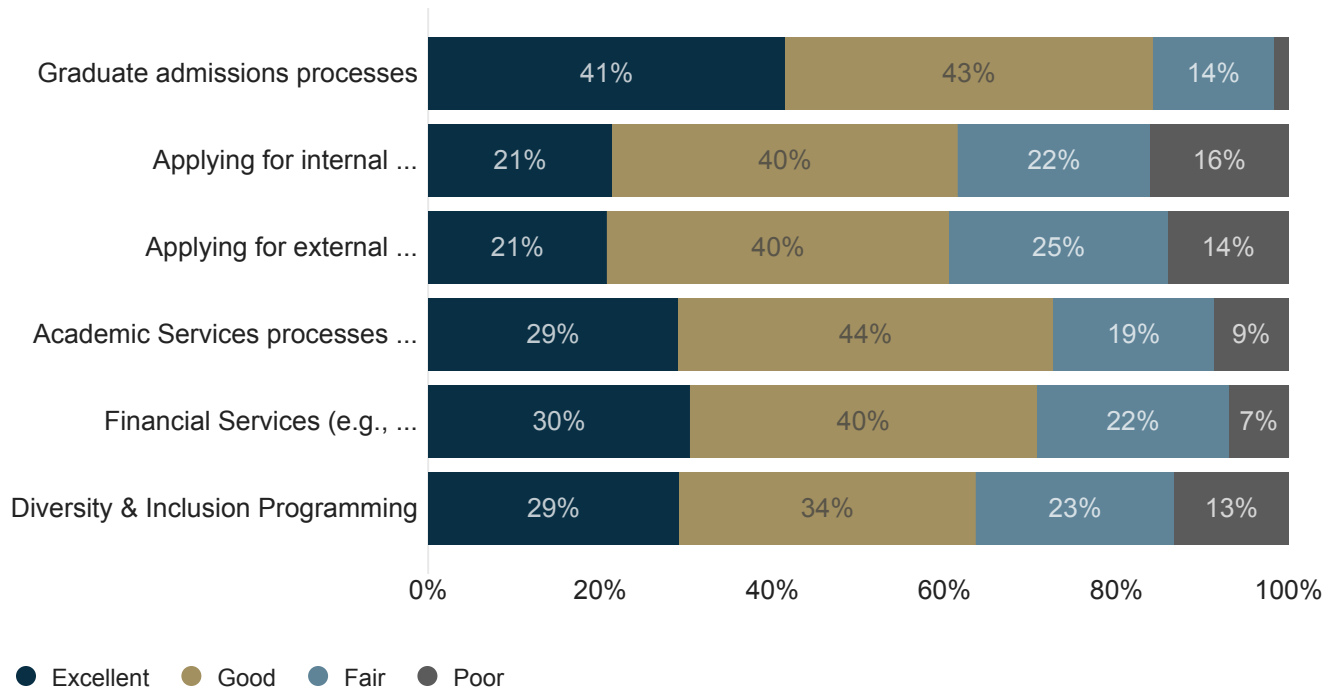
Assuming that you did report the activity, how confident are you that the University would respond appropriately?



Field	Choice Count
Very confident	60
Confident	133
Unsure	128
Doubtful	28
Little or no confidence	28

During the past academic year, please rate your experience with the following Graduate Division services:

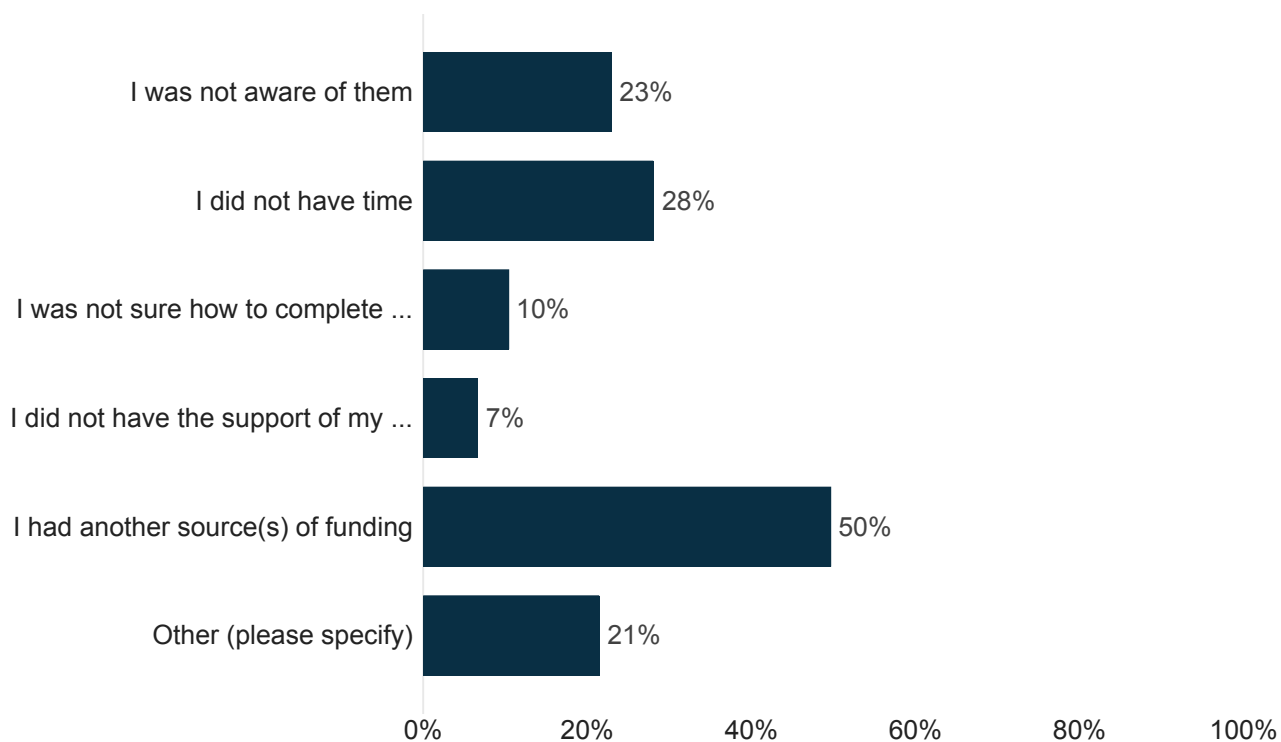
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Field	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Graduate admissions processes	100	103	34	4
Applying for internal fellowships/awards	64	120	67	48
Applying for external fellowships/grants	49	94	60	33
Academic Services processes (advancement to candidacy/change of major, etc.)	84	126	54	25
Financial Services (e.g., processing internal fellowships, tuition waivers)	101	134	74	23
Diversity & Inclusion Programming	77	91	61	35

You said you did not apply for external fellowships/grants. Please let us know why using the options below. (select all that apply)

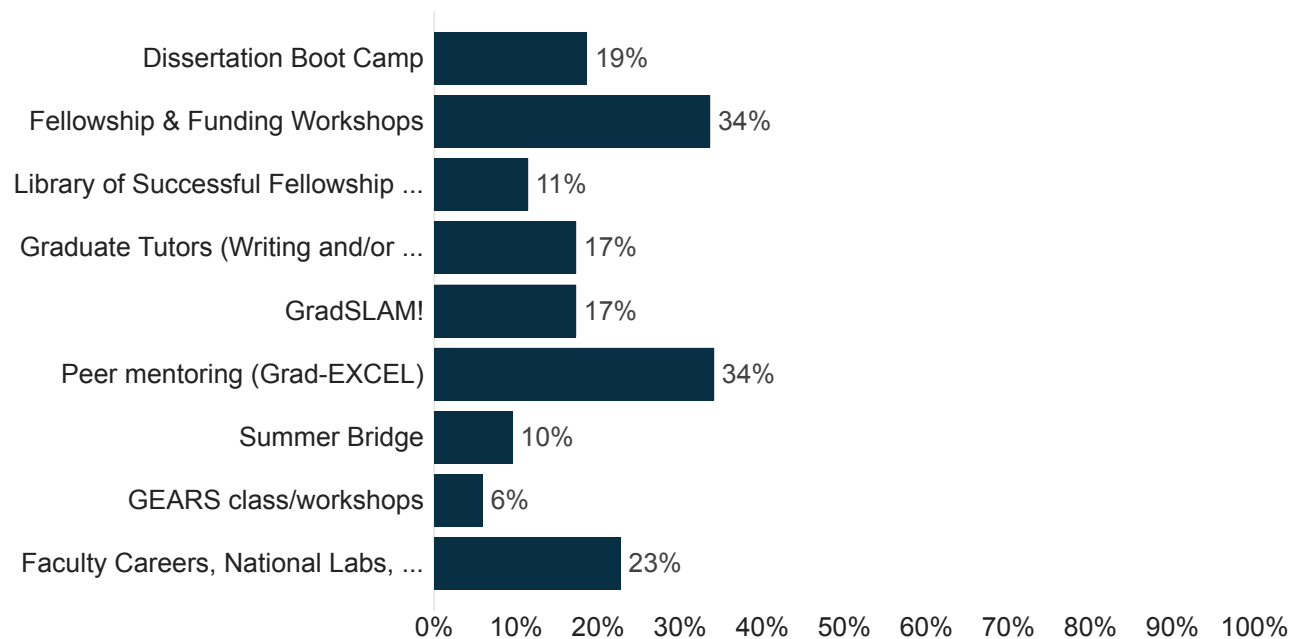
Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below. Only respondents who said they did not apply for external fellowships/grants could respond to this question.



Field	Choice Count
I was not aware of them	31
I did not have time	38
I was not sure how to complete the application materials	14
I did not have the support of my faculty mentor(s)	9
I had another source(s) of funding	67
Other (please specify)	29

Which of the following Graduate Division professional development activities and resources did you use and/or participate in during the past academic year? (select all that apply)

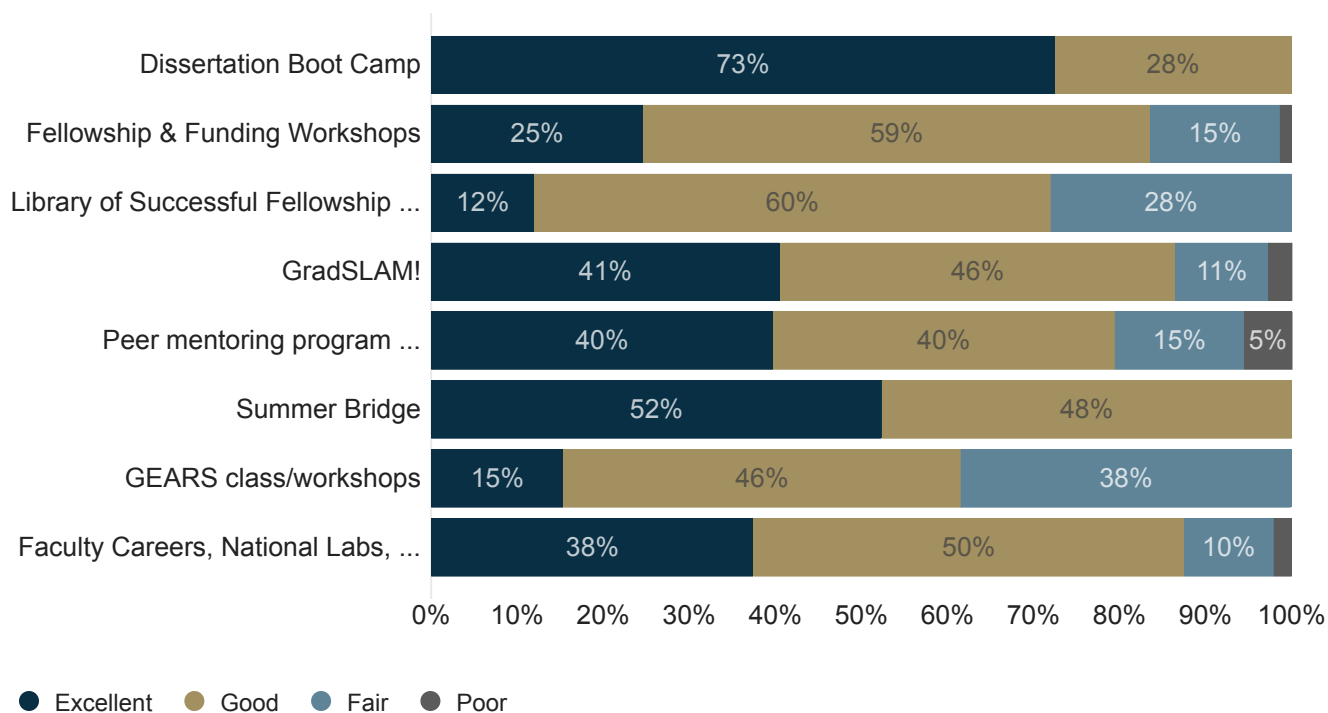
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Field	Choice Count
Dissertation Boot Camp	41
Fellowship & Funding Workshops	74
Library of Successful Fellowship Proposals	25
Graduate Tutors (Writing and/or Stats)	38
GradSLAM!	38
Peer mentoring (Grad-EXCEL)	75
Summer Bridge	21
GEARS class/workshops	13
Faculty Careers, National Labs, Data Science, and/or Humanities Day	50

During the past academic year, please rate your experience with the following:

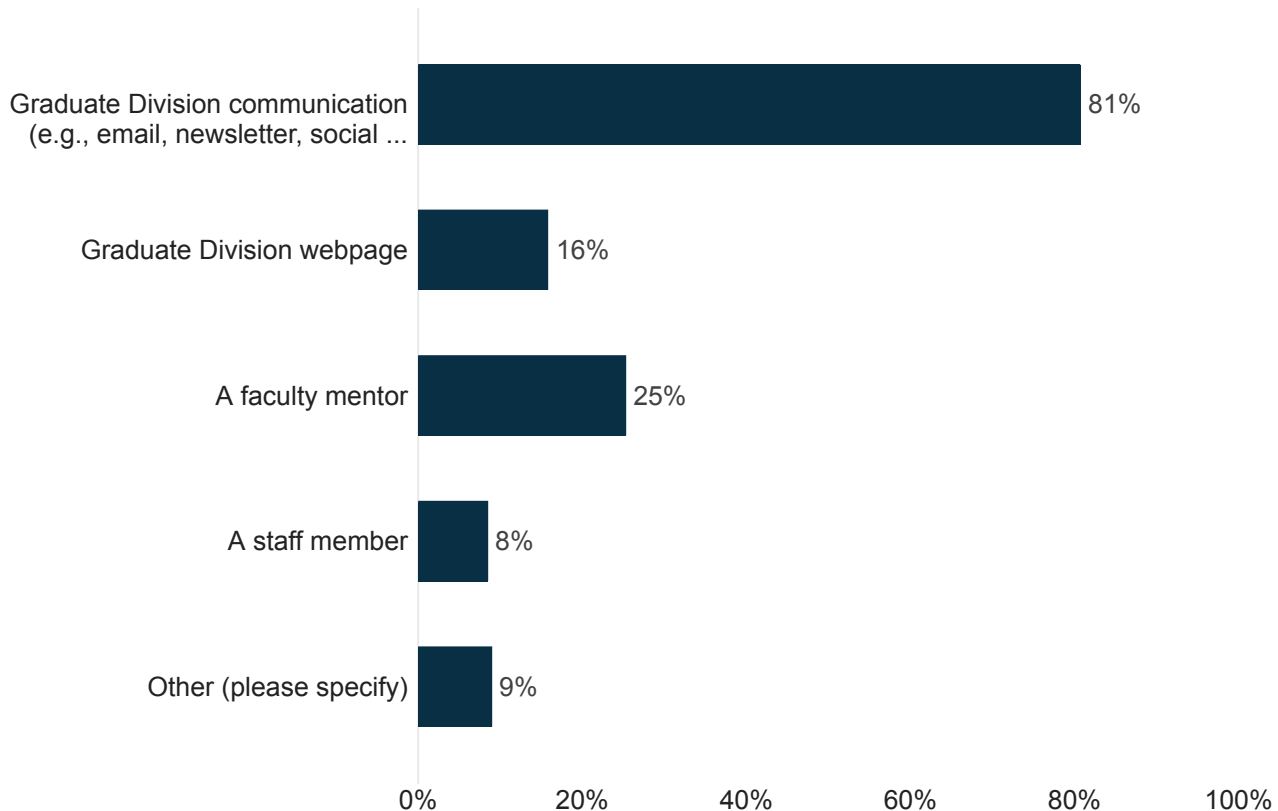
Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below. Only respondents who said they used that service could rate it.



Field	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Dissertation Boot Camp	29	11	0	0
Fellowship & Funding Workshops	18	43	11	1
Library of Successful Fellowship Proposals	3	15	7	0
GradSLAM!	15	17	4	1
Peer mentoring program (Grad-EXCEL)	29	29	11	4
Summer Bridge	11	10	0	0
GEARS class/workshops	2	6	5	0
Faculty Careers, National Labs, Data Science, and/or Humanities Day	18	24	5	1

How did you hear about the Graduate Division professional development activities and resources you used and/or participated in? (select all that apply)

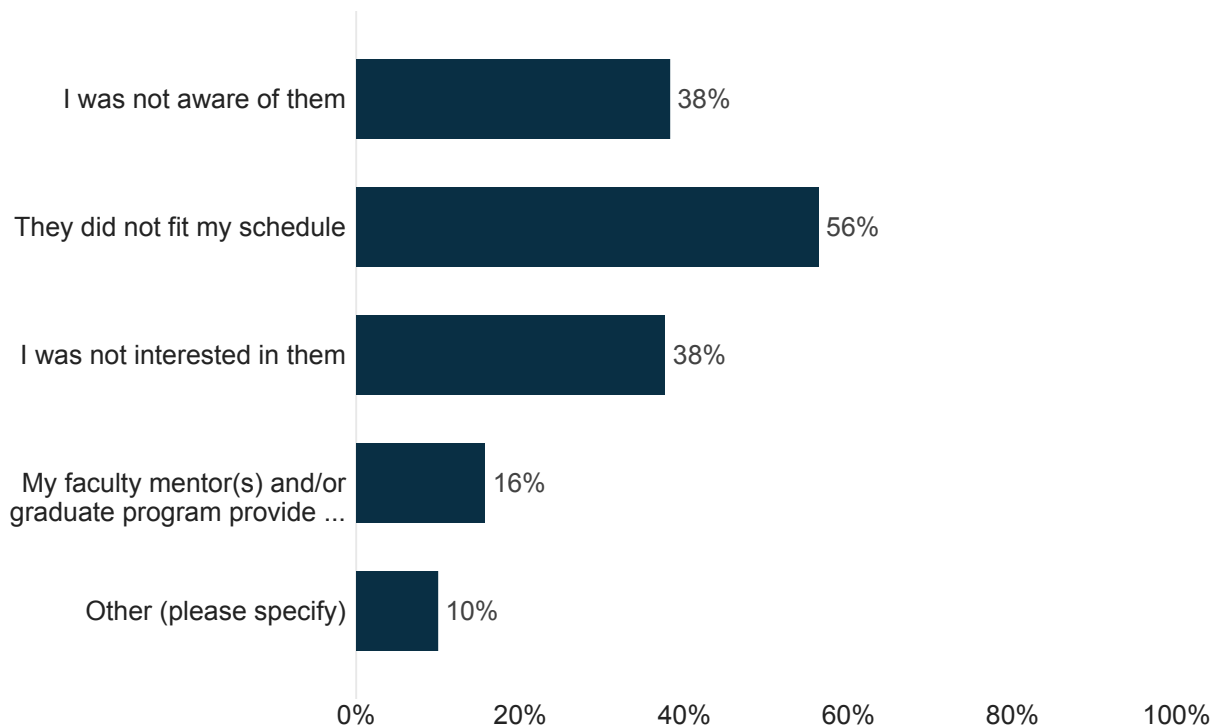
Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below. Only respondents who selected at least one activity could answer the question.



Field	Choice Count
Graduate Division communication (e.g., email, newsletter, social media)	163
Graduate Division webpage	32
A faculty mentor	51
A staff member	17
Other (please specify)	18

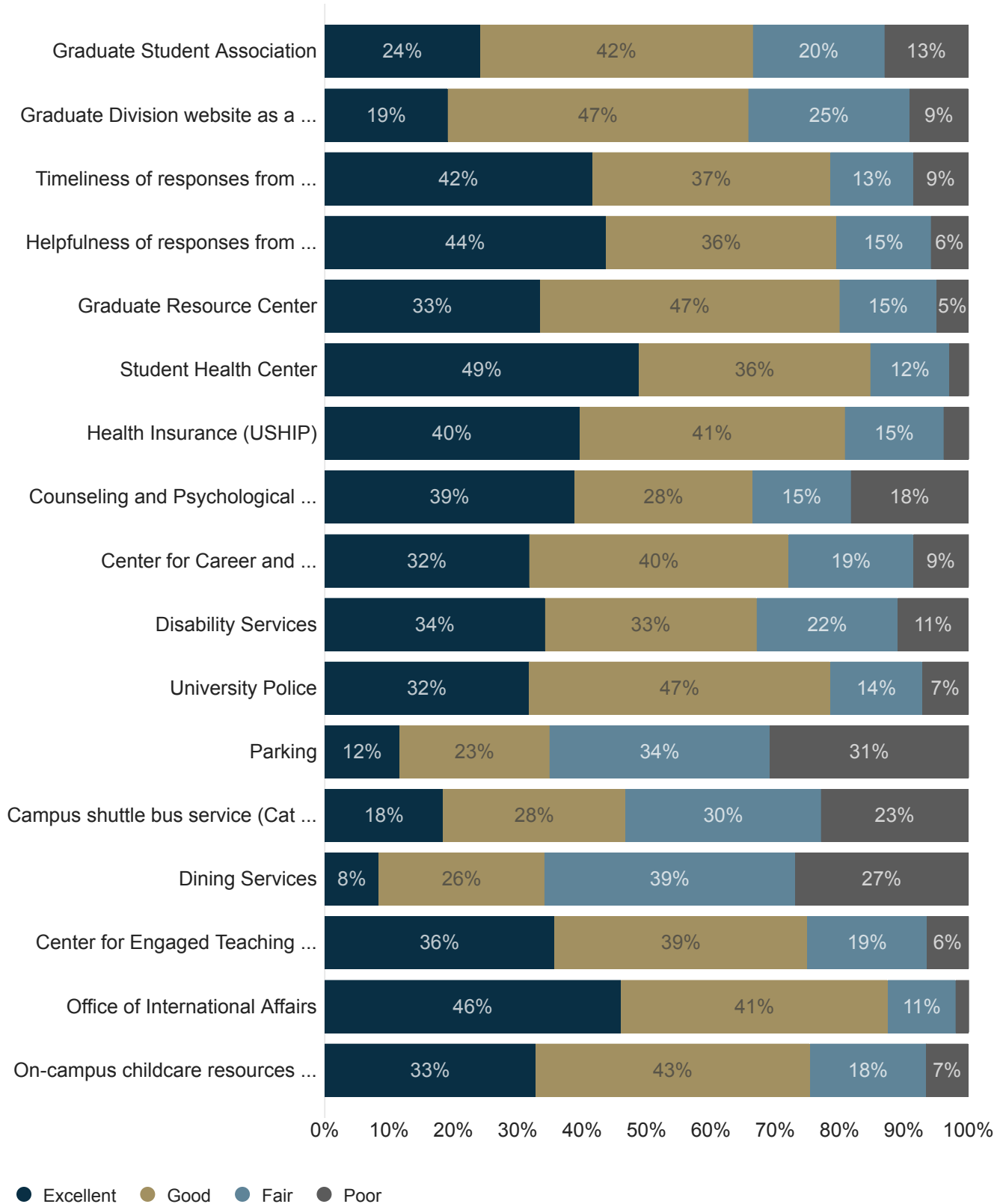
You said there were Graduate Division professional development activities and/or resources that you did not participate in or use. In general, please let us know why using the options below. (select all that apply)

Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below. Only respondents said they did not use at least one activity could answer the question.



Field	Choice Count
I was not aware of them	139
They did not fit my schedule	205
I was not interested in them	137
My faculty mentor(s) and/or graduate program provide adequate professional development opportunities and support	57
Other (please specify)	36

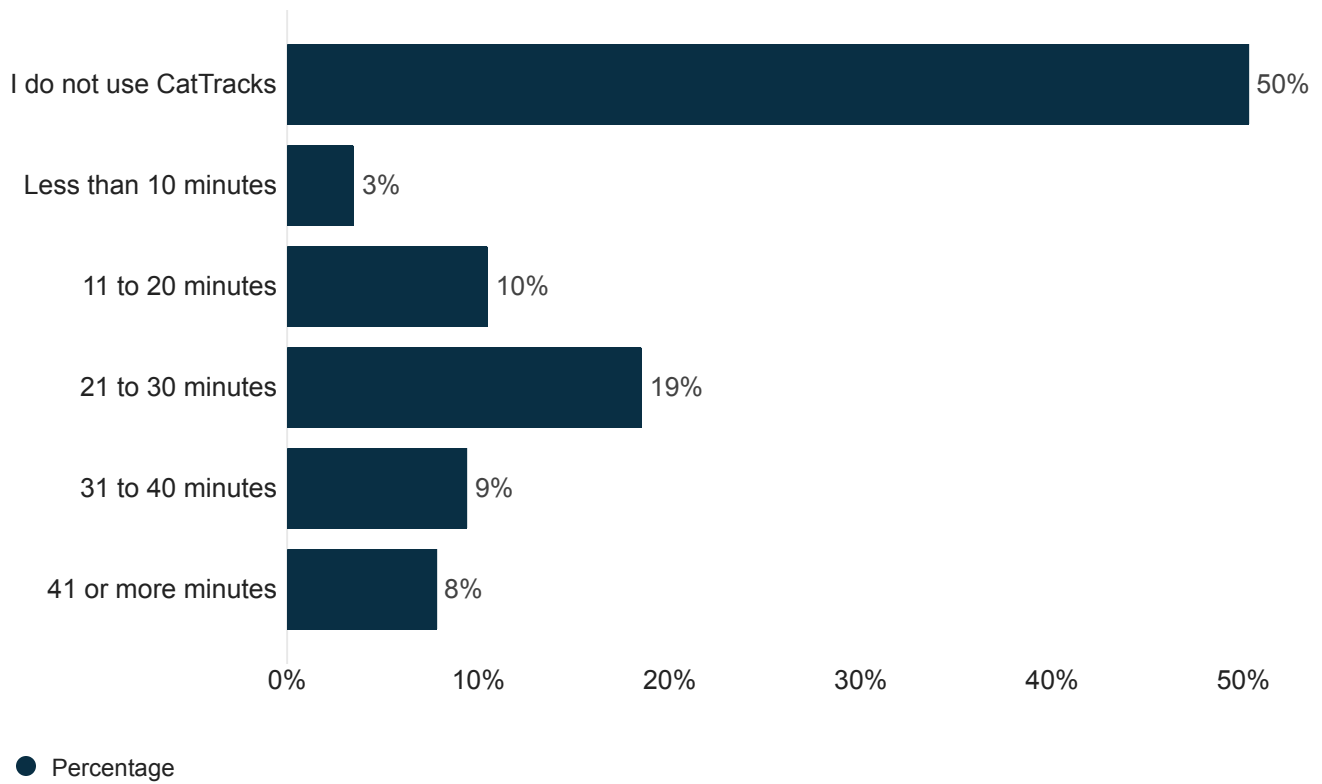
Please rate (where applicable) the following services based on your most recent year's experience.



Please rate (where applicable) the following services based on your most recent year's experience.

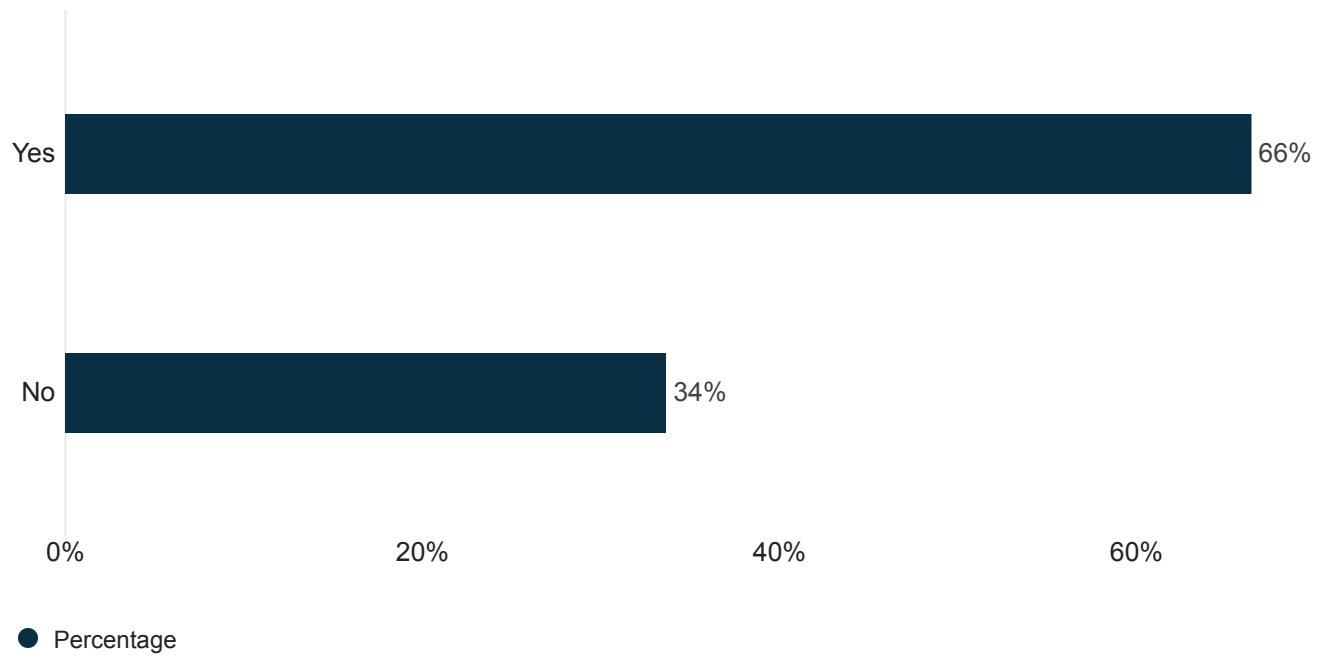
Field	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Graduate Student Association	65	114	55	35
Graduate Division website as a source for information	61	149	80	29
Timeliness of responses from Graduate Division staff to questions/concerns	136	121	42	28
Helpfulness of responses from Graduate Division staff to questions/concerns	143	117	48	19
Graduate Resource Center	82	114	37	12
Student Health Center	151	111	38	9
Health Insurance (USHIP)	124	129	48	12
Counseling and Psychological Services	66	47	26	31
Center for Career and Professional Advancement	41	52	25	11
Disability Services	25	24	16	8
University Police	40	59	18	9
Parking	34	68	100	90
Campus shuttle bus service (Cat Tracks)	37	57	61	46
Dining Services	21	64	97	67
Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETL)	50	55	26	9
Office of International Affairs	70	63	16	3
On-campus childcare resources (lactation rooms, changing stations, reimbursements)	20	26	11	4

How long does it typically take you to get to campus using CatTracks?



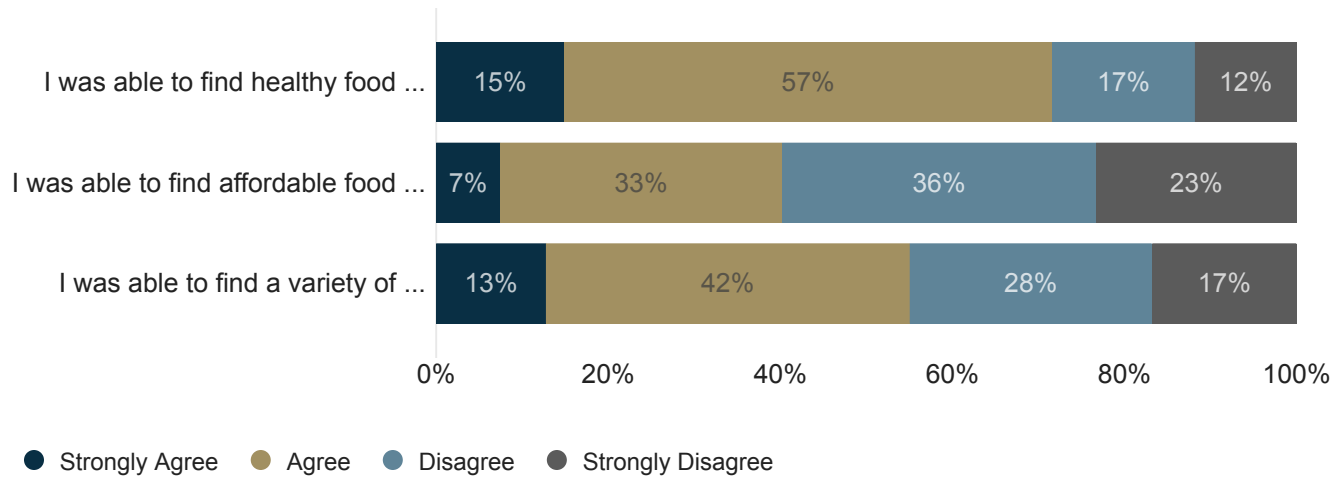
Field	Choice Count
I do not use CatTracks	187
Less than 10 minutes	13
11 to 20 minutes	39
21 to 30 minutes	69
31 to 40 minutes	35
41 or more minutes	29

There is a CatTracks stop within a 10-minute walk from where I live.



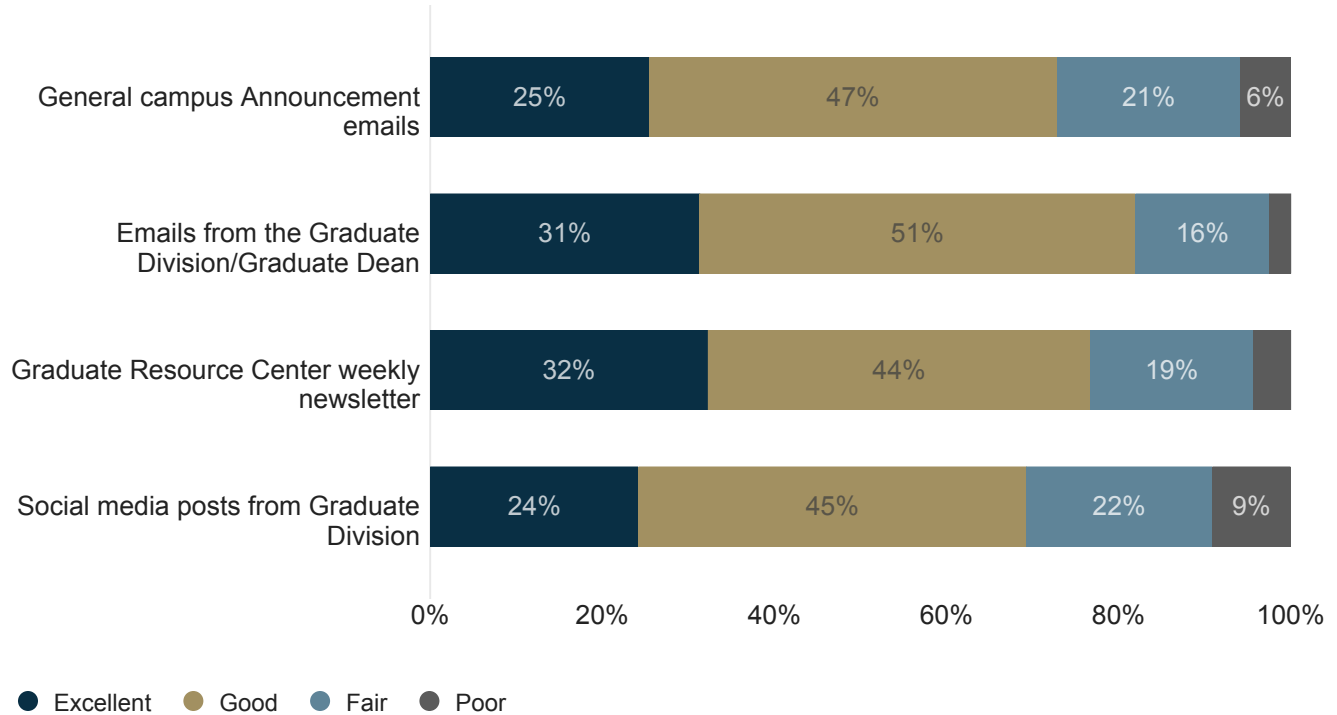
Field	Choice Count
Yes	239
No	121

I was able to find healthy food options.



Field	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I was able to find healthy food options.	44	168	49	35
I was able to find affordable food options.	22	97	108	69
I was able to find a variety of food options.	38	126	84	50

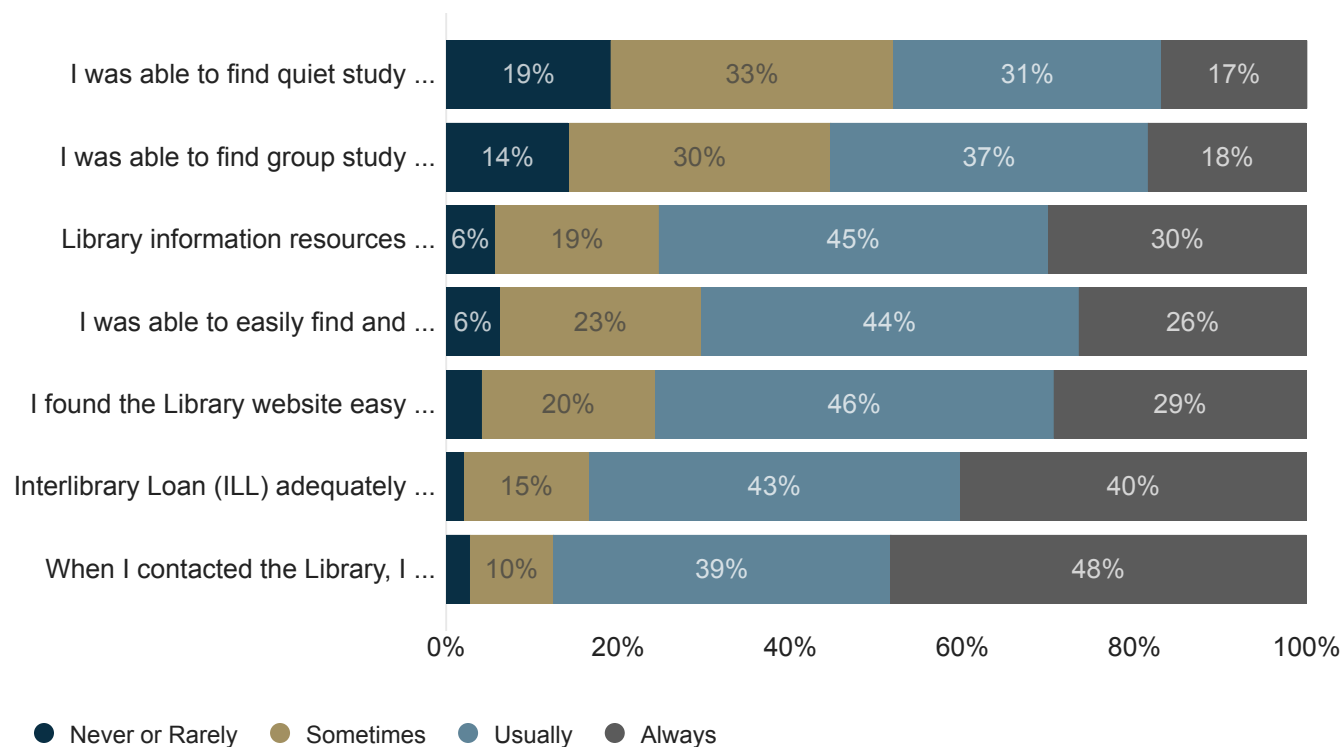
Please rate (where applicable) the quality of campus communications in the areas below based on your most recent year's experience.



Field	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
General campus Announcement emails	92	171	77	21
Emails from the Graduate Division/Graduate Dean	113	183	56	9
Graduate Resource Center weekly newsletter	111	153	65	15
Social media posts from Graduate Division	56	104	50	21

Please indicate how often the following statements about UC Merced's Library were true for you this past academic year. If you did not use a resource, please select "Not Applicable/Did Not Use".

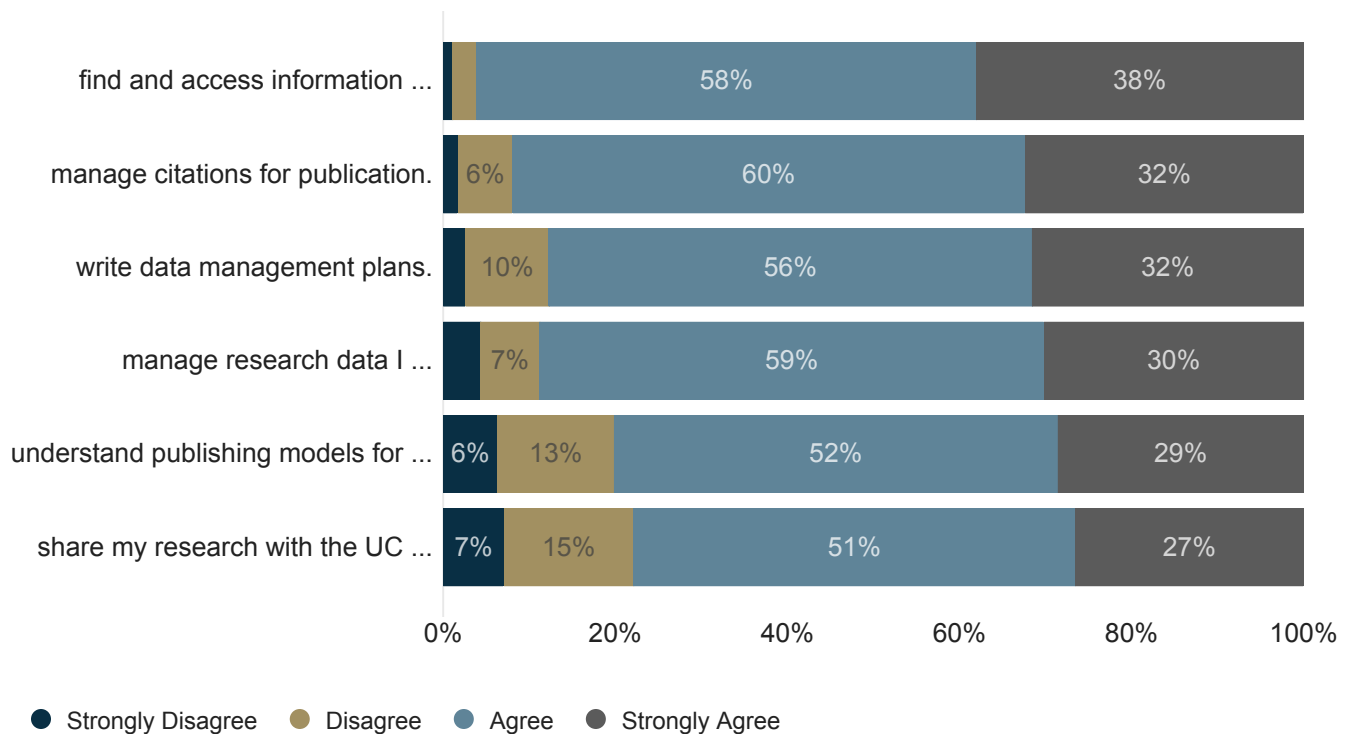
Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below.



Field	Never or Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
I was able to find quiet study space in the Library.	43	74	70	38
I was able to find group study space in the Library.	24	51	62	31
Library information resources met my research needs.	15	50	119	79
I was able to easily find and access ebooks.	18	67	126	76
I found the Library website easy to use.	13	63	145	92
Interlibrary Loan (ILL) adequately met my research needs.	5	35	104	97
When I contacted the Library, I received knowledgeable assistance from Library staff.	6	21	85	105

The UC Merced Library supported my ability to ...

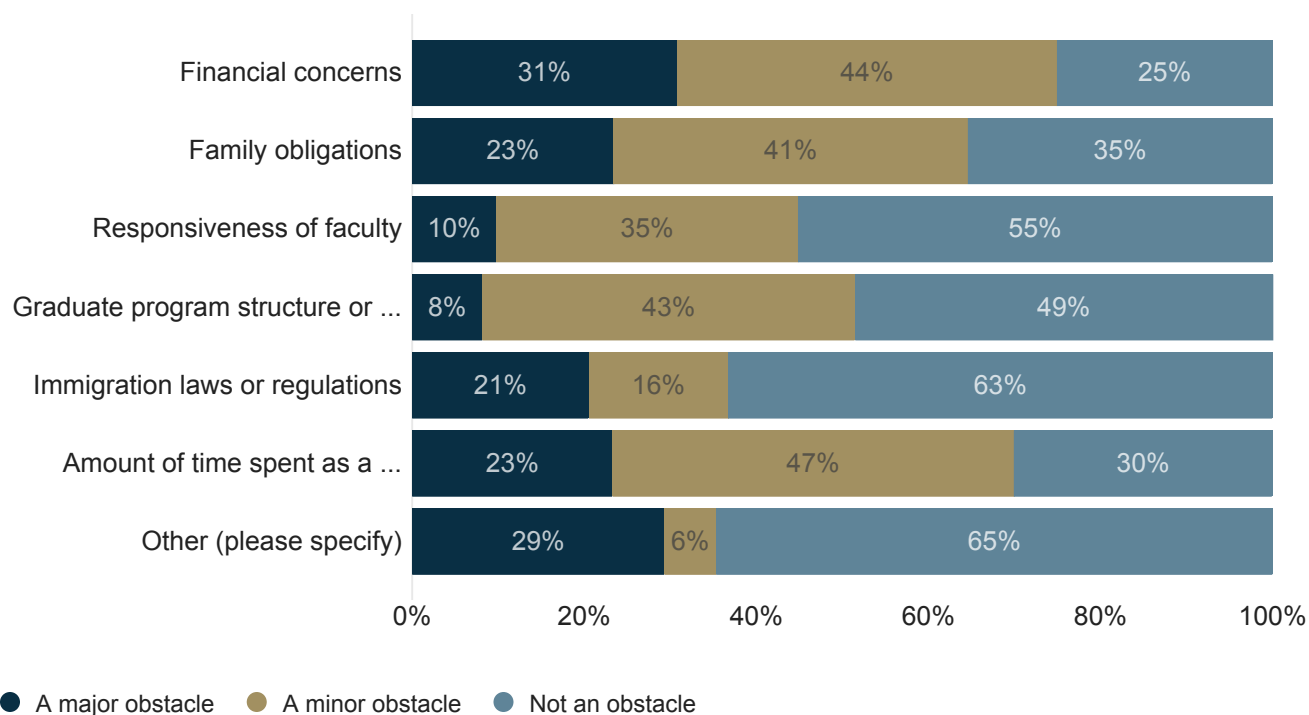
Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below.



Field	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
find and access information sources in my field of study.	3	8	163	107
manage citations for publication.	3	11	103	56
write data management plans.	3	11	64	36
manage research data I produced or used.	5	8	68	35
understand publishing models for disseminating my research.	8	17	65	36
share my research with the UC Merced community.	8	17	58	30

Please rate the extent to which these factors are or have been an obstacle to your academic progress:

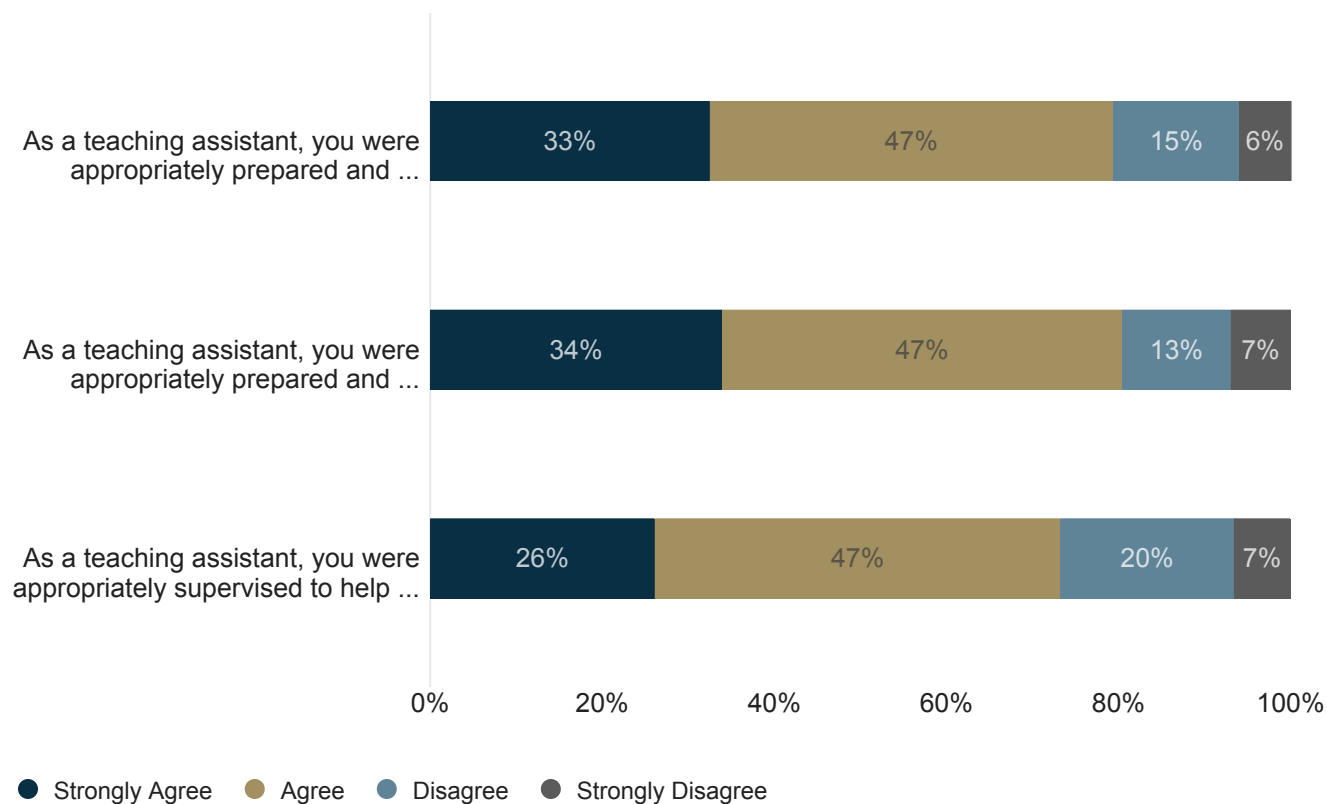
Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below.



Field	A major obstacle	A minor obstacle	Not an obstacle
Financial concerns	113	162	92
Family obligations	86	151	130
Responsiveness of faculty	36	129	203
Graduate program structure or requirements	30	159	178
Immigration laws or regulations	75	59	231
Amount of time spent as a Teaching Assistant	86	172	111
Other (please specify)	39	8	86

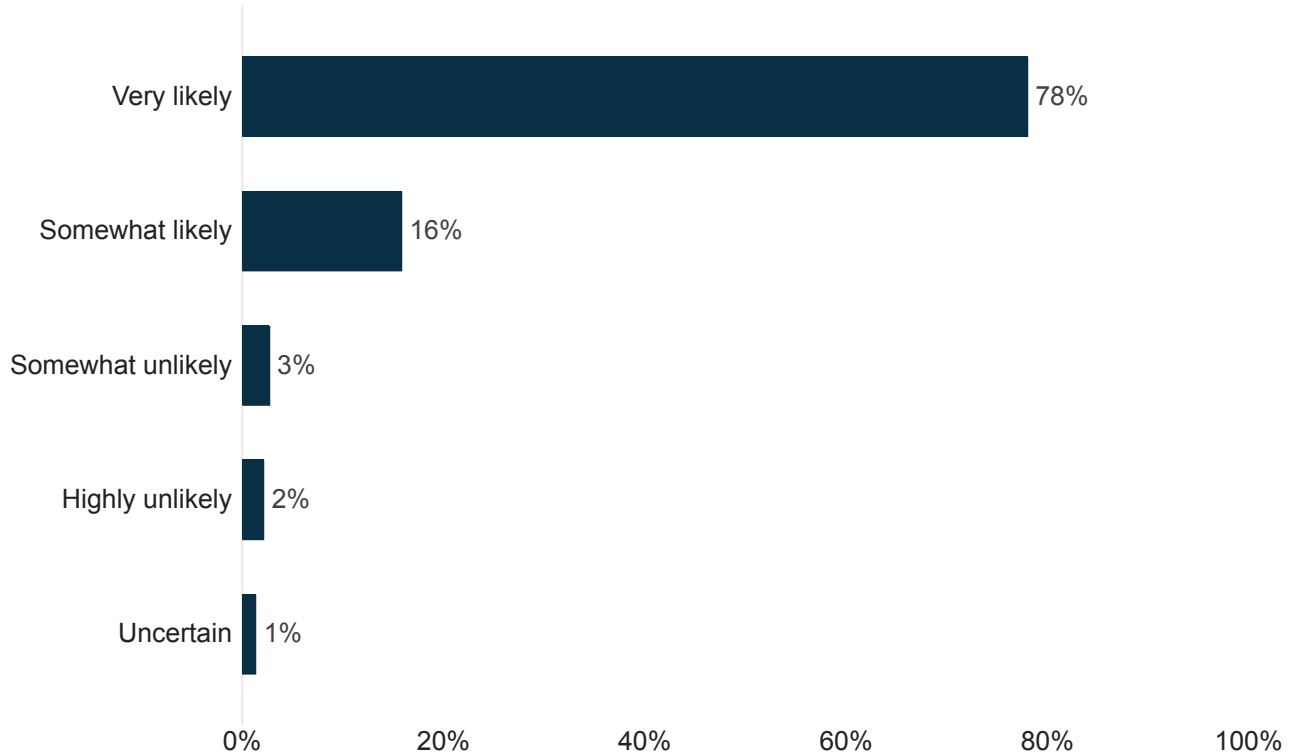
Please answer the following questions about teaching and your TA preparation.

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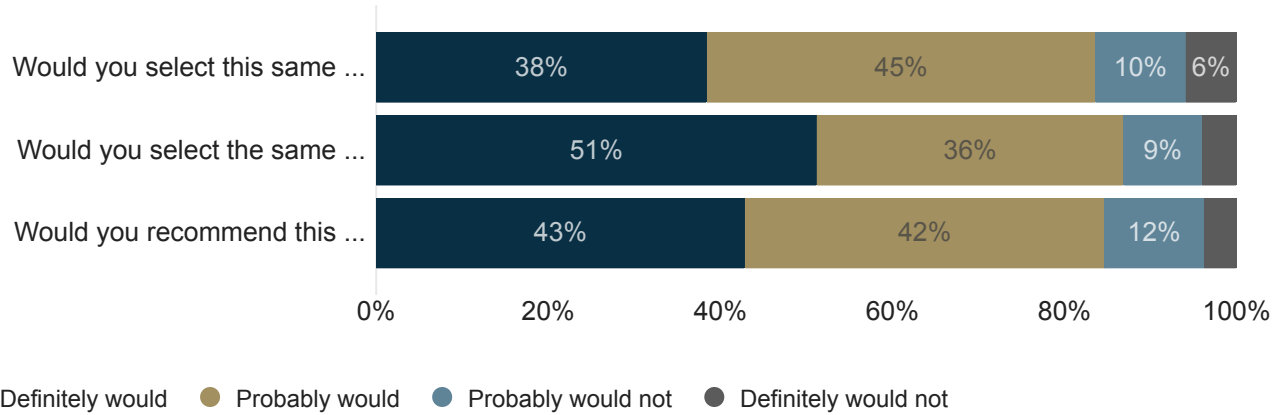
Field	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a teaching assistant, you were appropriately prepared and trained before entering the CLASSROOM	104	150	47	19
As a teaching assistant, you were appropriately prepared and trained before entering the LAB	78	107	29	16
As a teaching assistant, you were appropriately supervised to help improve your teaching skills	83	150	64	21

How likely are you to stay in your graduate program until you receive your ultimate degree objective?



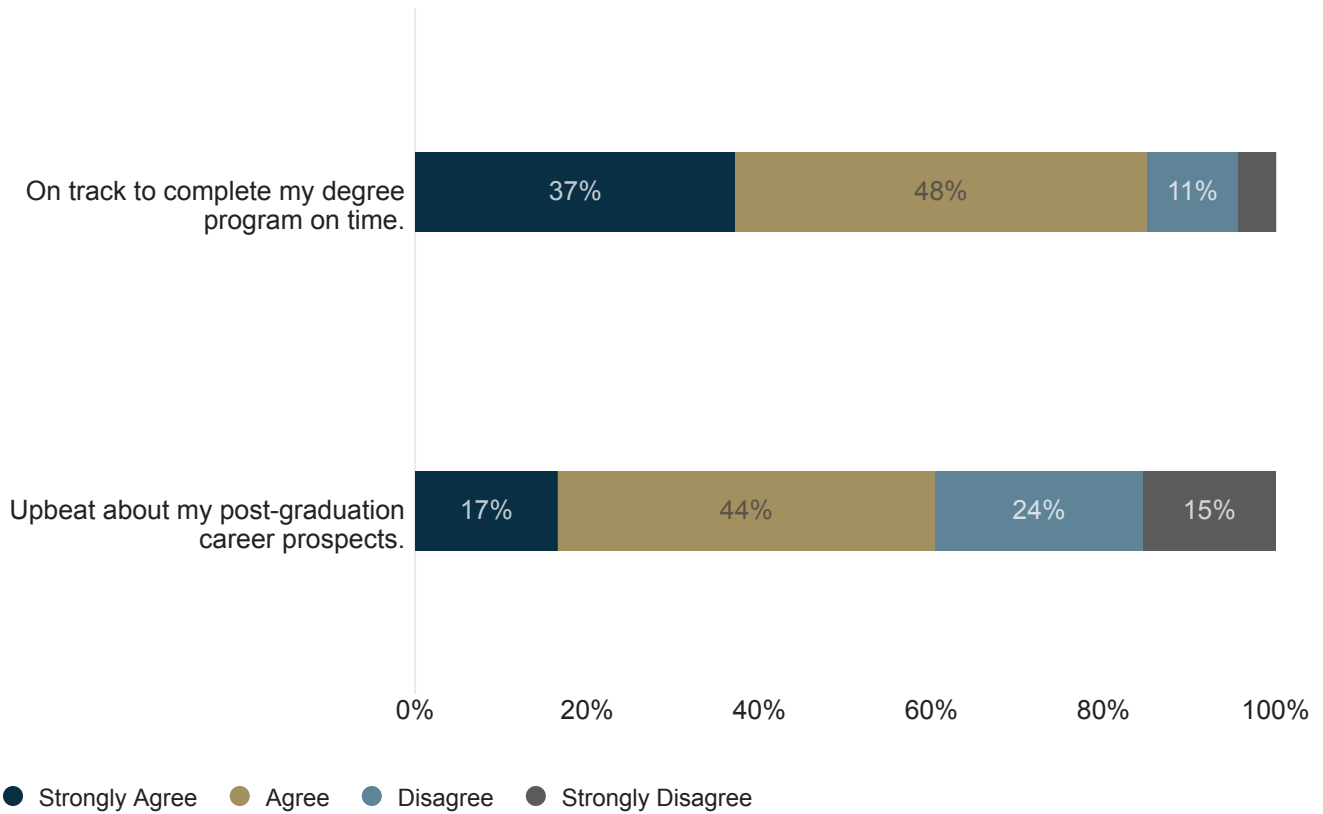
Field	Choice Count
Very likely	291
Somewhat likely	59
Somewhat unlikely	10
Highly unlikely	8
Uncertain	5

Please answer the following questions about the university and your graduate program. If you were to do it again:



Field	Definitely would	Probably would	Probably would not	Definitely would not
Would you select this same university?	143	168	39	22
Would you select the same graduate program?	191	133	34	15
Would you recommend this university to someone considering your graduate program?	159	155	43	14

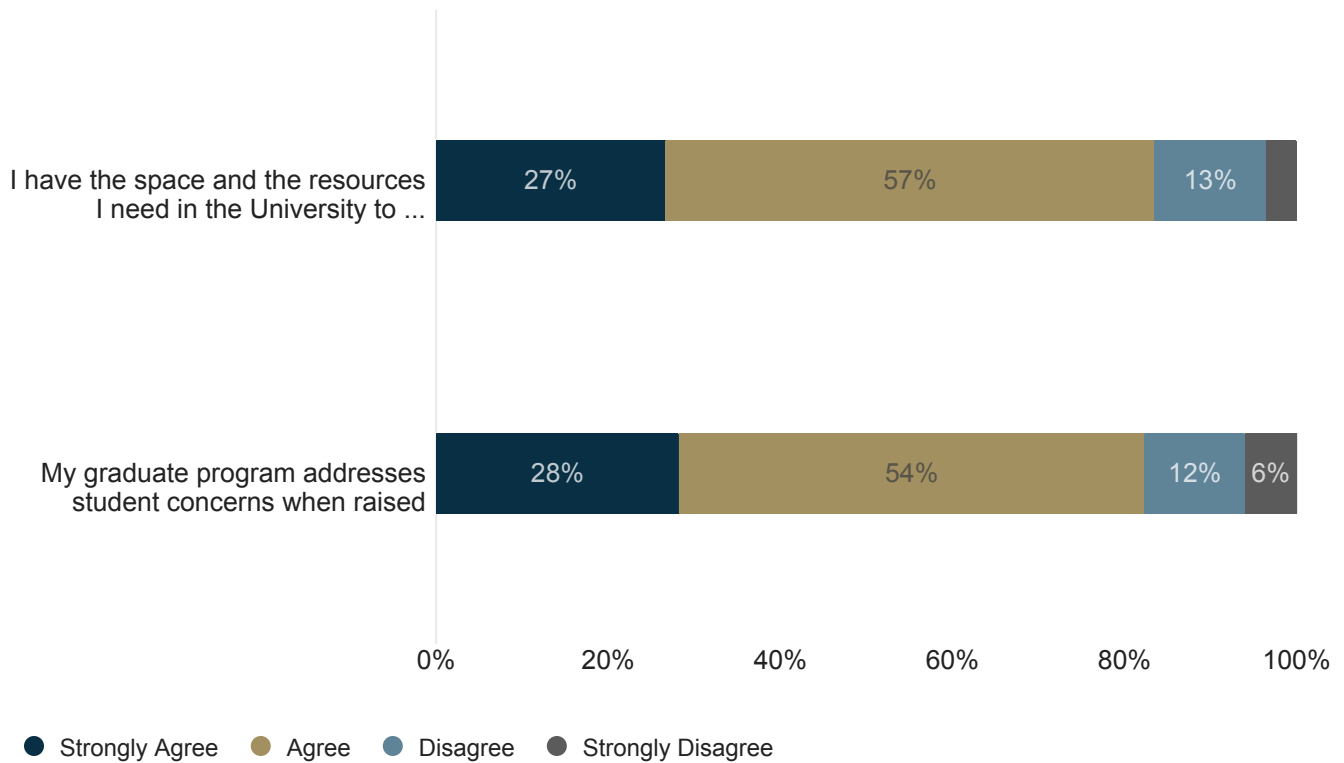
I'm:



Field	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
On track to complete my degree program on time.	137	176	39	16
Upbeat about my post-graduation career prospects.	57	151	83	53

Please rate your agreement with the following statements.

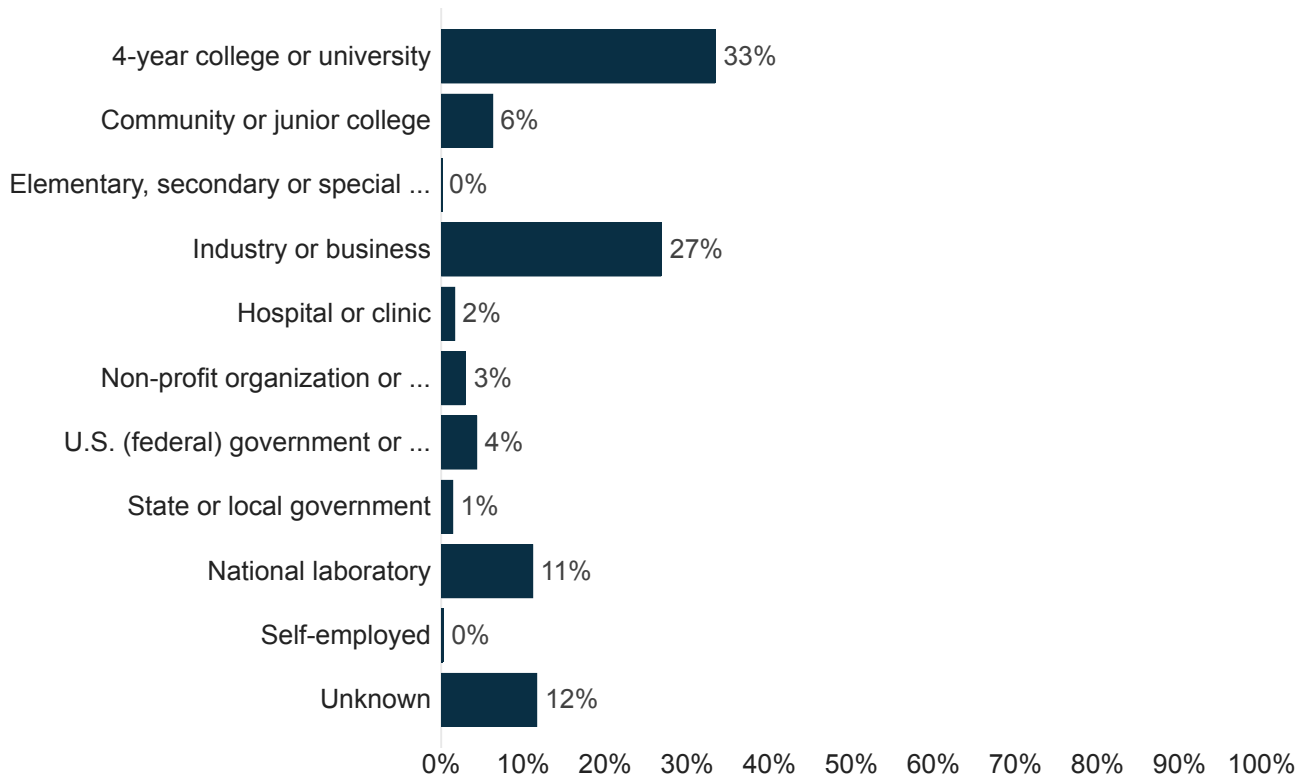
Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below.



Field	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have the space and the resources I need in the University to succeed academically.	97	207	47	13
My graduate program addresses student concerns when raised	99	190	41	21

How would you categorize the type of employer you expect to work for after you complete your final graduate degree?

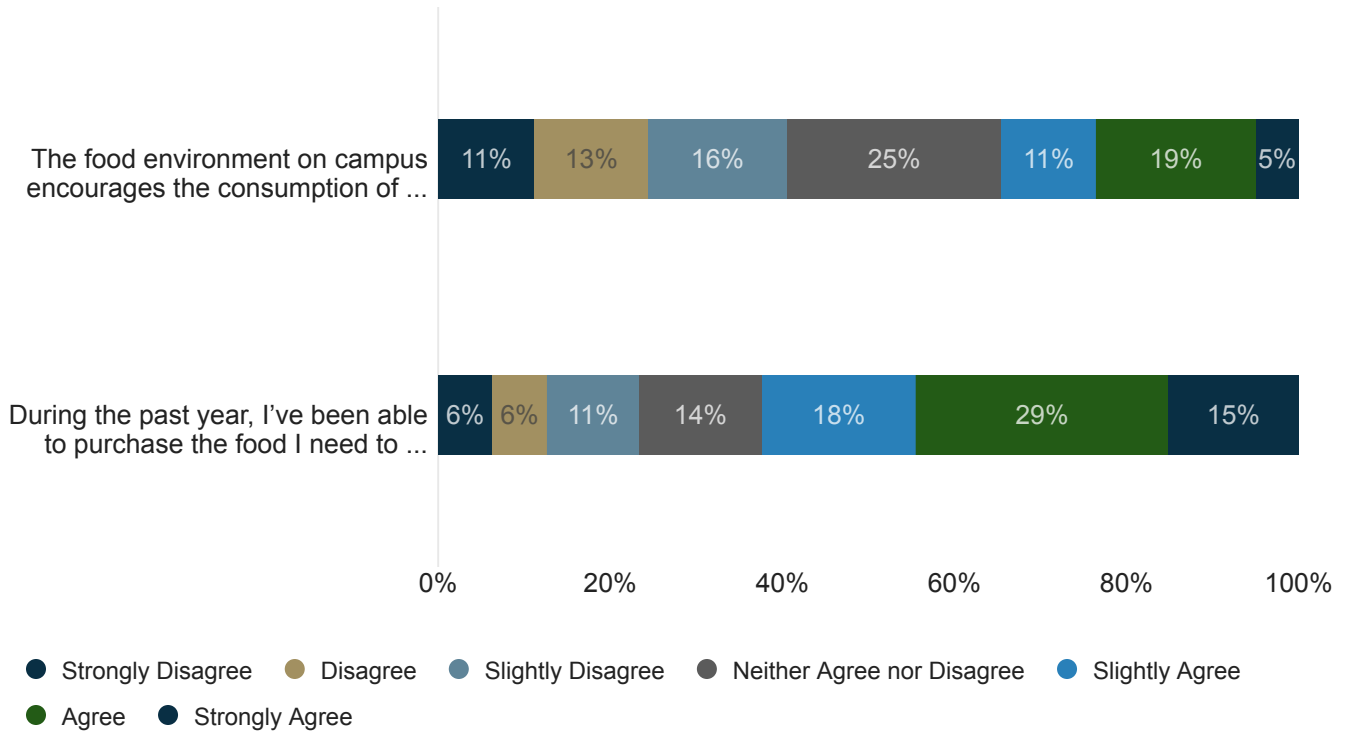
Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below.



Field	Choice Count
4-year college or university	123
Community or junior college	23
Elementary, secondary or special focus school	0
Industry or business	99
Hospital or clinic	6
Non-profit organization or foundation	11
U.S. (federal) government or your home country if not the U.S.	16
State or local government	5
National laboratory	41
Self-employed	1
Unknown	43

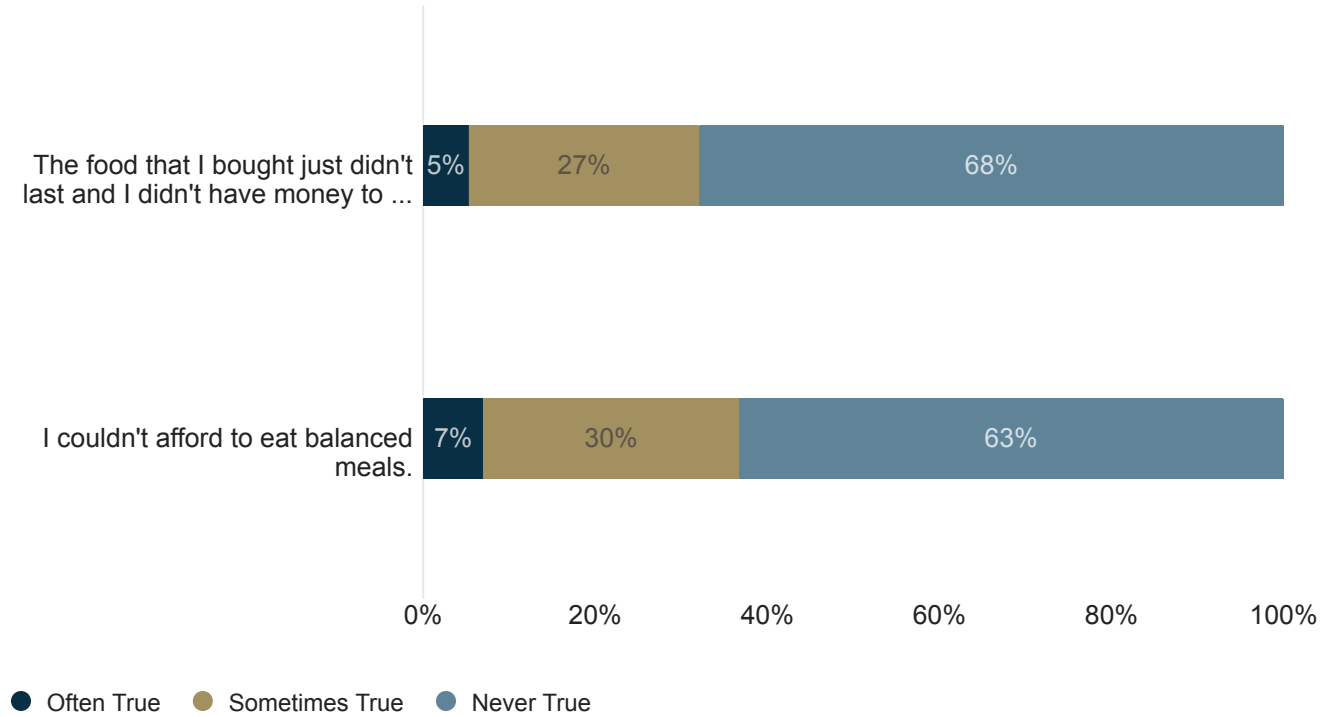
Please indicate your agreement with each statement.

Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below.



Field	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The food environment on campus encourages the consumption of healthy rather than unhealthy foods.	41	48	59	91	40	68	18
During the past year, I've been able to purchase the food I need to meet my nutritional needs.	23	23	39	52	65	107	55

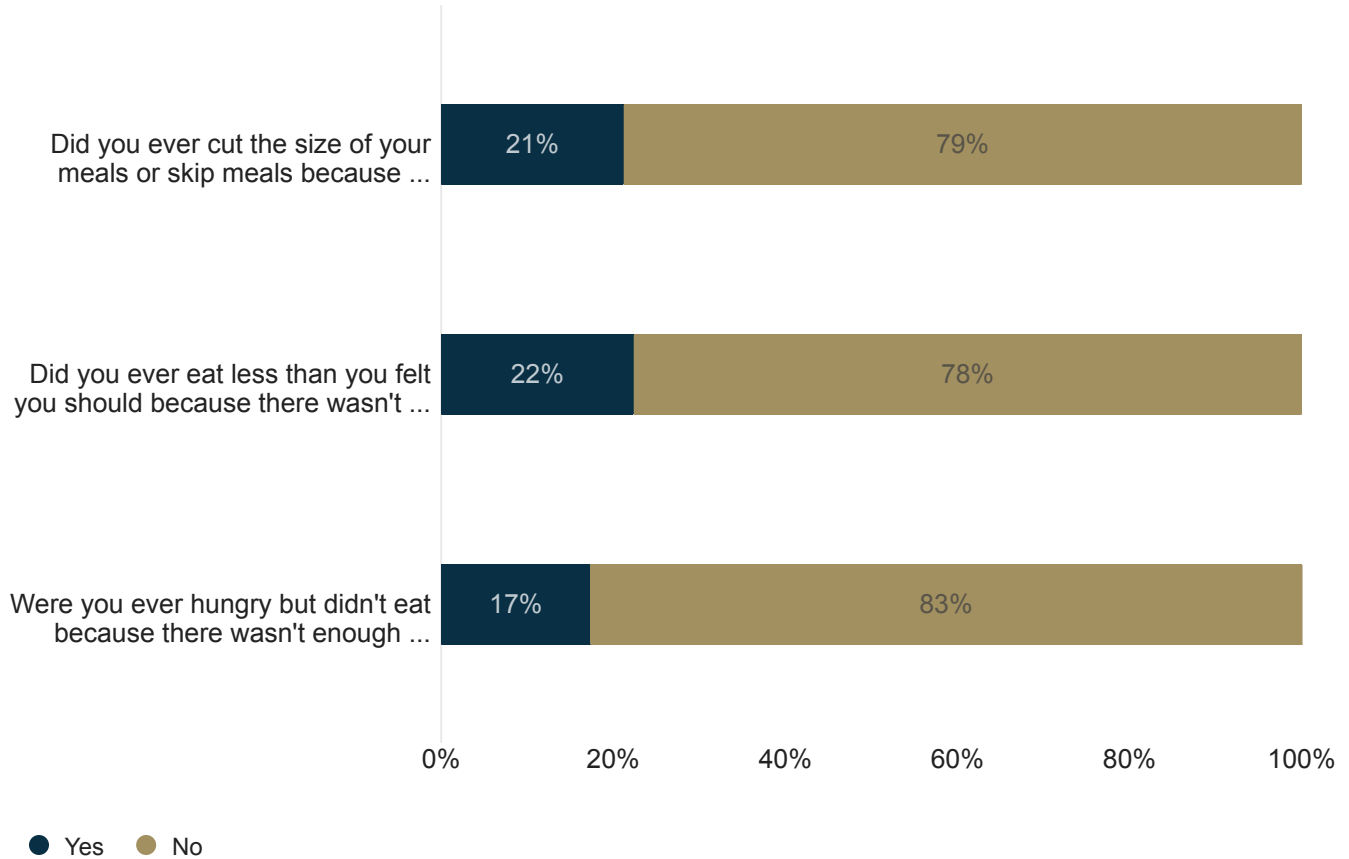
For the following statements, please say whether the statement was often true, sometimes true, or never true for you in the last 12 months.



Field	Often True	Sometimes True	Never True
The food that I bought just didn't last and I didn't have money to get more.	19	96	243
I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.	25	106	226

In the last 12 months. . .

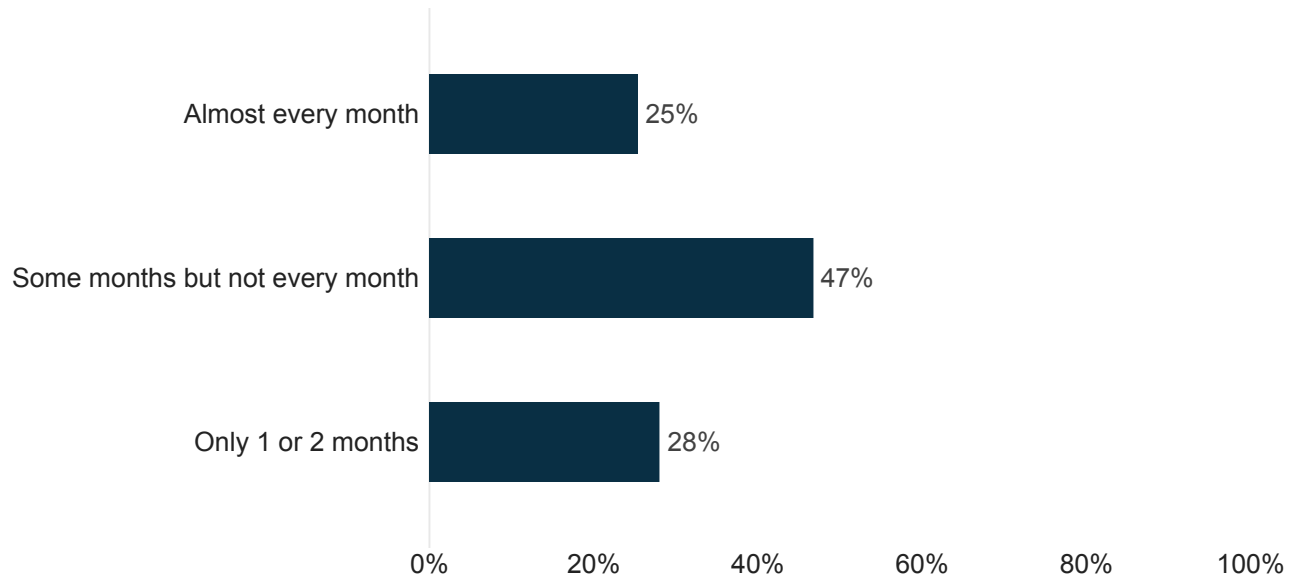
Note: Question text in the figure is truncated, but full text is included in the table below.



Field	Yes	No
Did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?	77	286
Did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?	81	281
Were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?	63	300

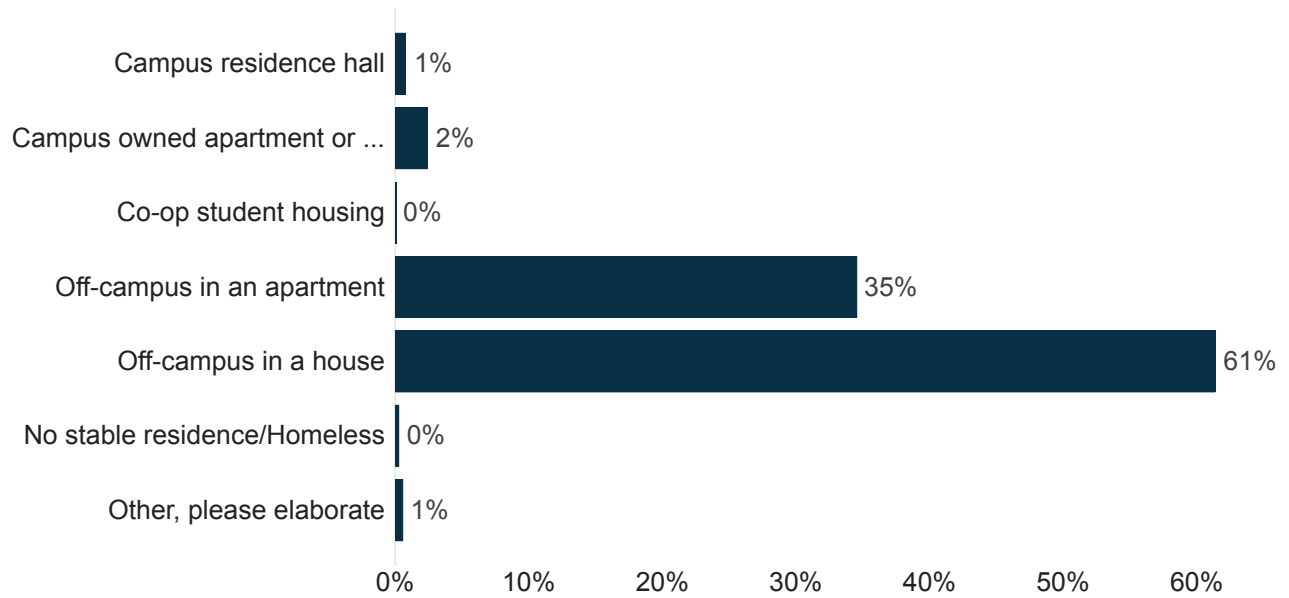
You indicated that you had cut the size of your meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food. How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

Note: Only respondents who said they had cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food could answer the question.



Field	Choice Count
Almost every month	19
Some months but not every month	35
Only 1 or 2 months	21

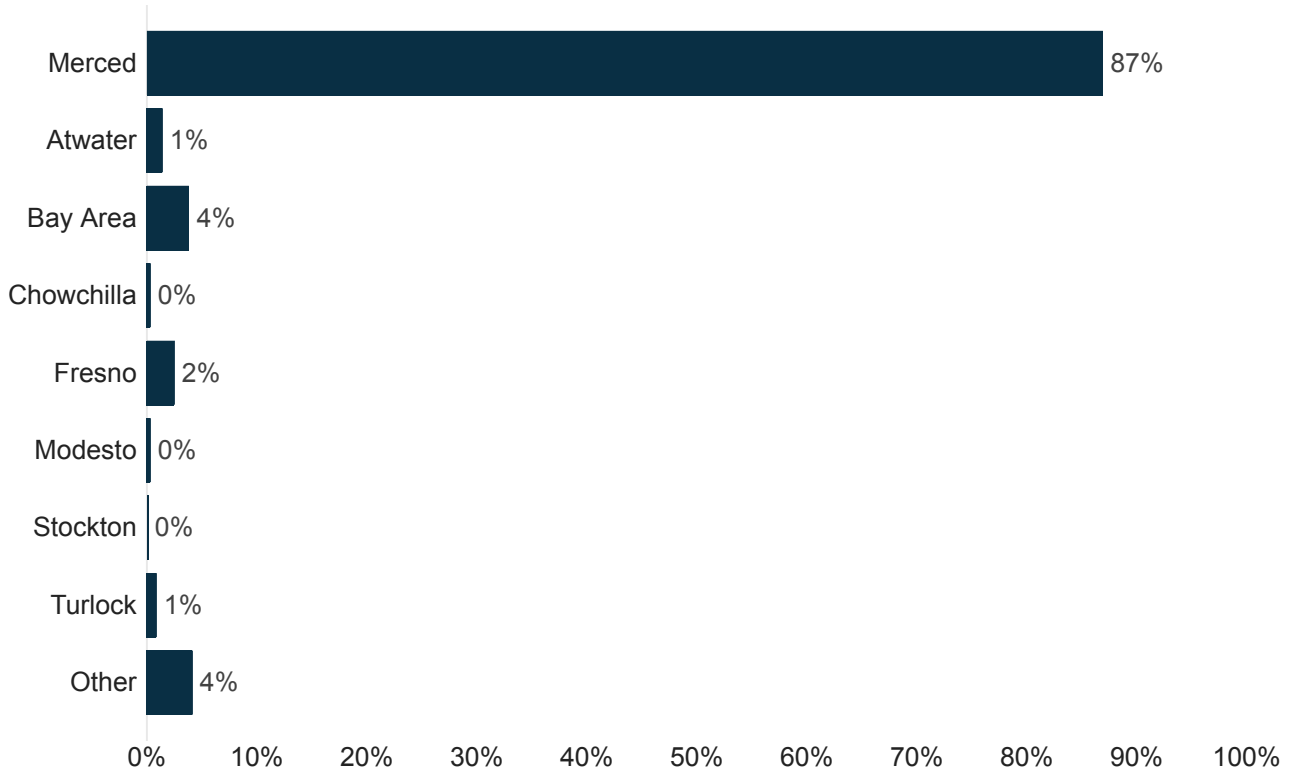
Where did you live in Spring 2020? (Check all that apply)



● Percentage

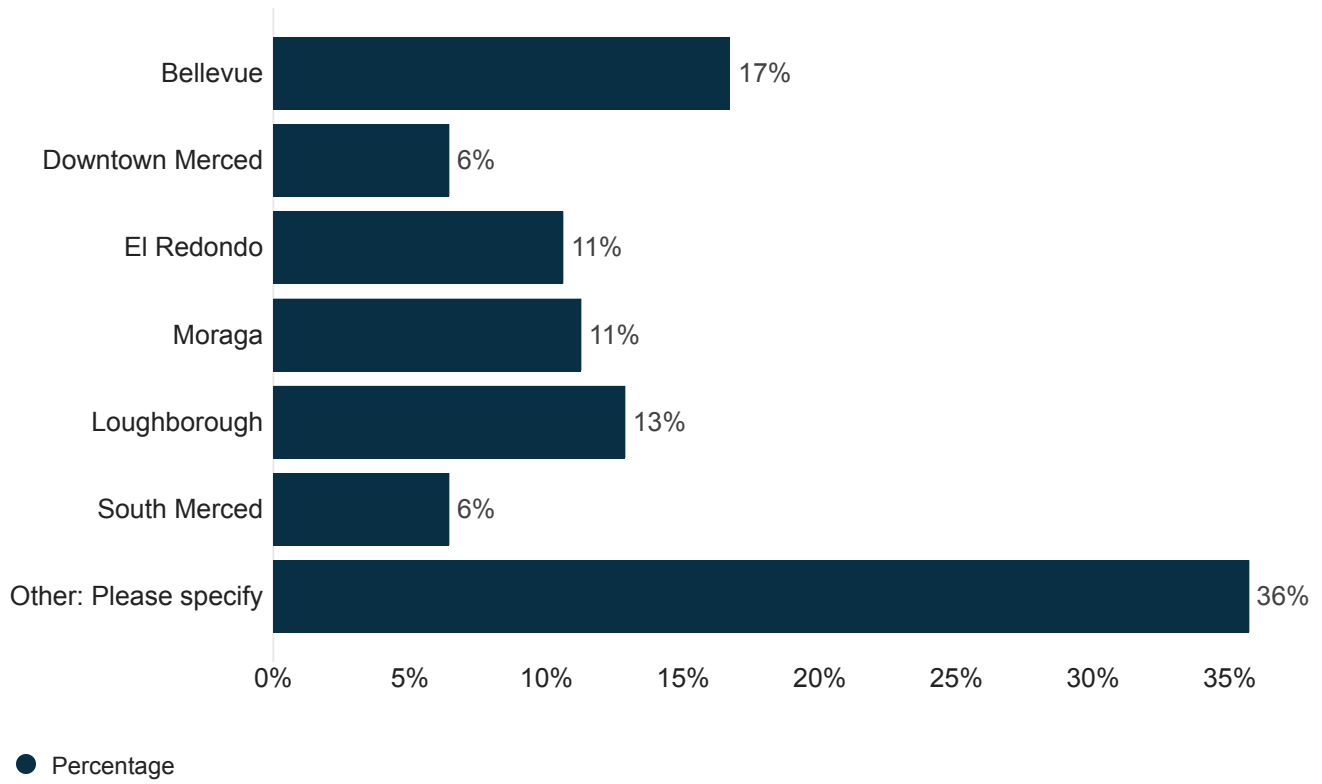
Field	Choice Count
Campus residence hall	3
Campus owned apartment or house (on- or off-campus)	9
Co-op student housing	0
Off-campus in an apartment	127
Off-campus in a house	226
No stable residence/Homeless	1
Other, please elaborate	2

While attending UC Merced this year, where do you live? (If you moved, select the location where you lived longer.)



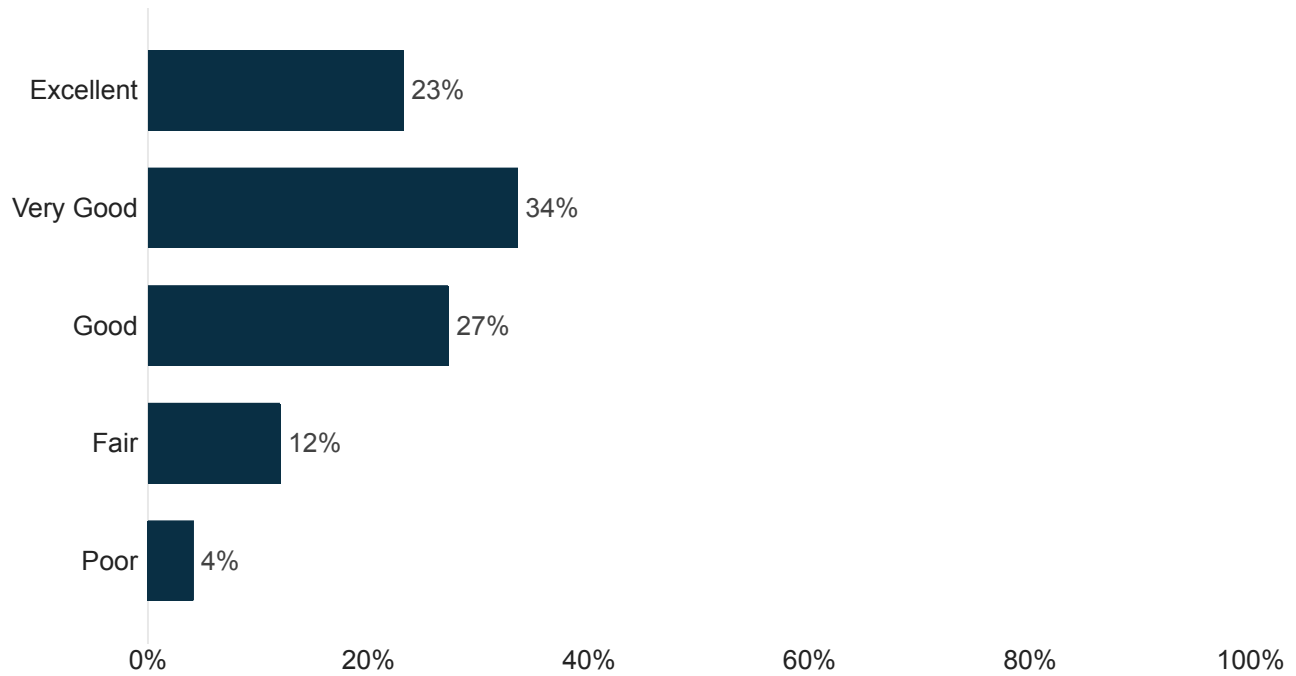
Field	Choice Count
Merced	318
Atwater	5
Bay Area	14
Chowchilla	1
Fresno	9
Modesto	1
Stockton	0
Turlock	3
Other	15

Which Merced neighborhood did you live in this year? - Selected Choice



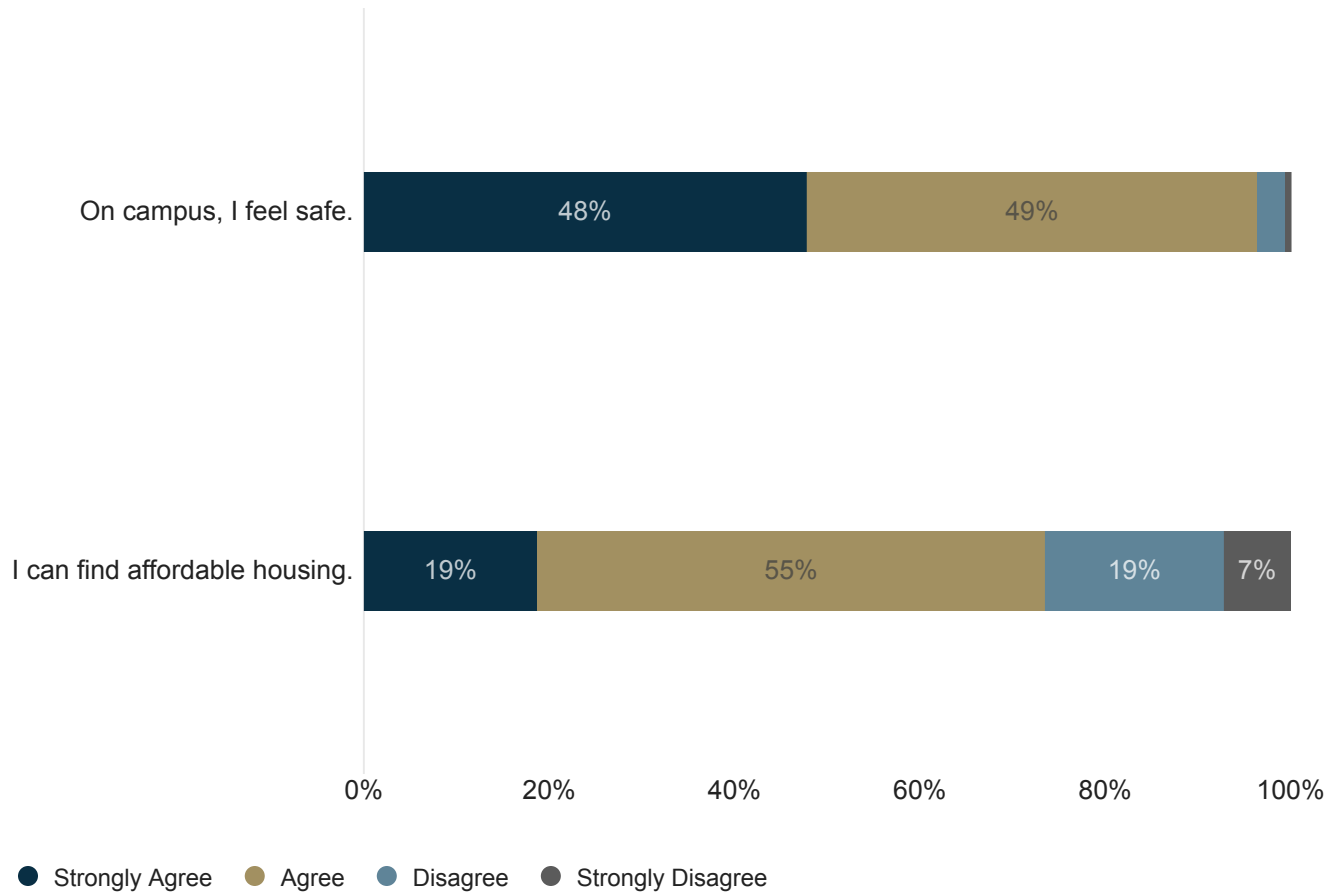
Field	Choice Count
Bellevue	52
Downtown Merced	20
El Redondo	33
Moraga	35
Loughborough	40
South Merced	20
Other: Please specify	111

Overall, how would you rate your living conditions this year?



Field	Choice Count
Excellent	85
Very Good	123
Good	100
Fair	44
Poor	15

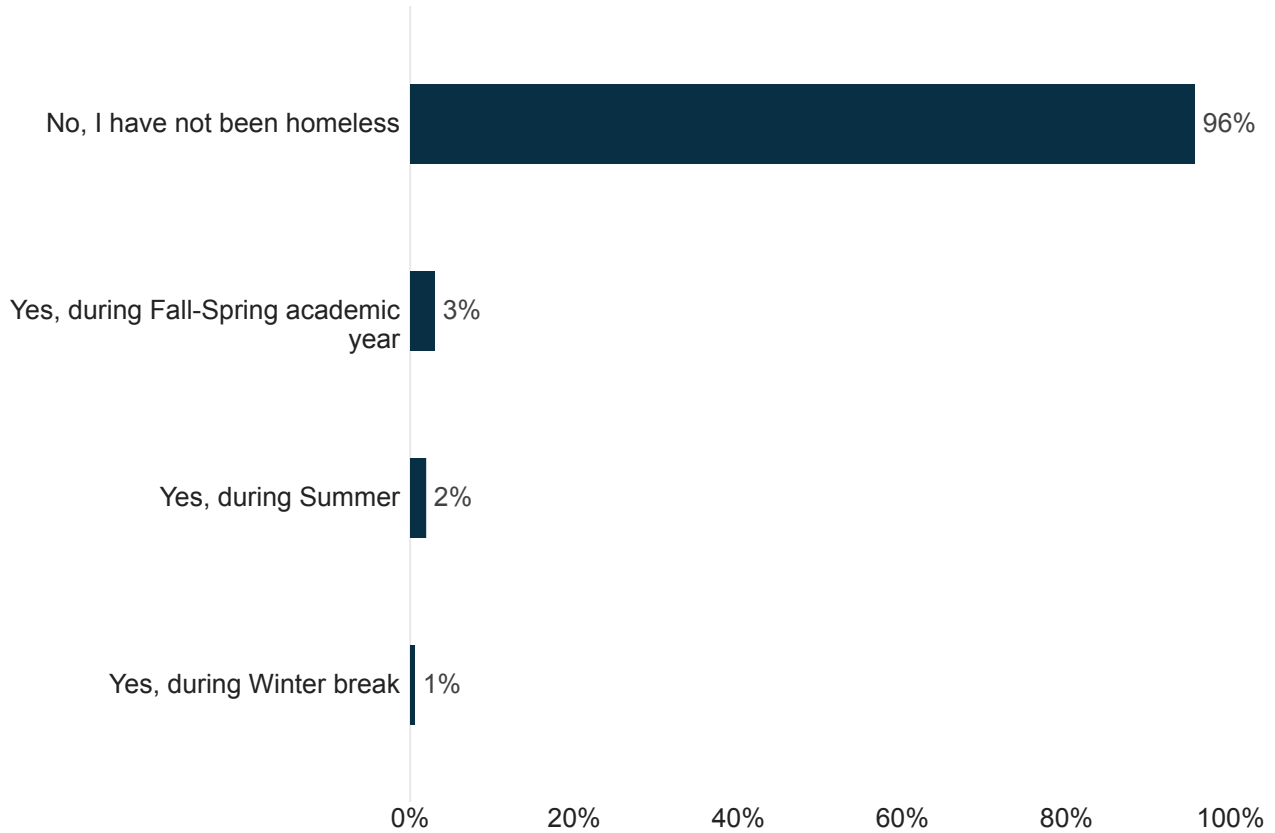
Please rate your agreement with the statements below.



Field	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
On campus, I feel safe.	173	176	11	2
I can find affordable housing.	65	190	67	25

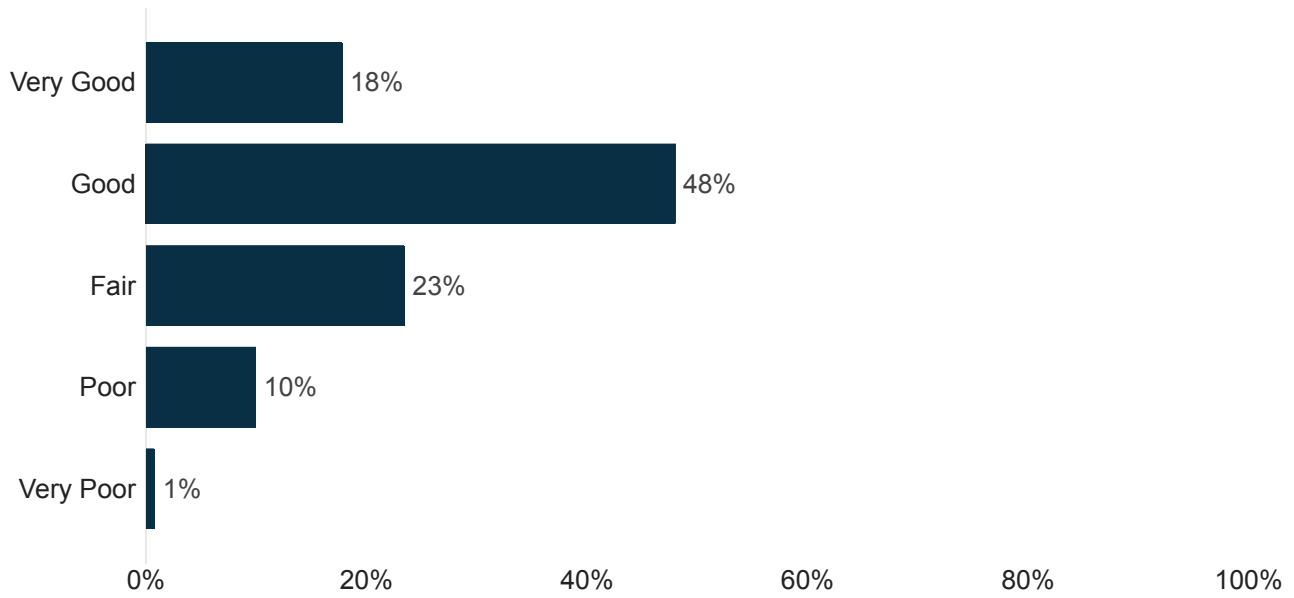
Since attending UC Merced, have you been homeless for any of the following lengths of time (select all that apply)?

Homeless means not having stable or reliable housing (e.g., living on the street, in vehicles, motels, camp grounds, single-occupancy facilities, or couch surfing in other people's homes for temporary sleeping arrangements).



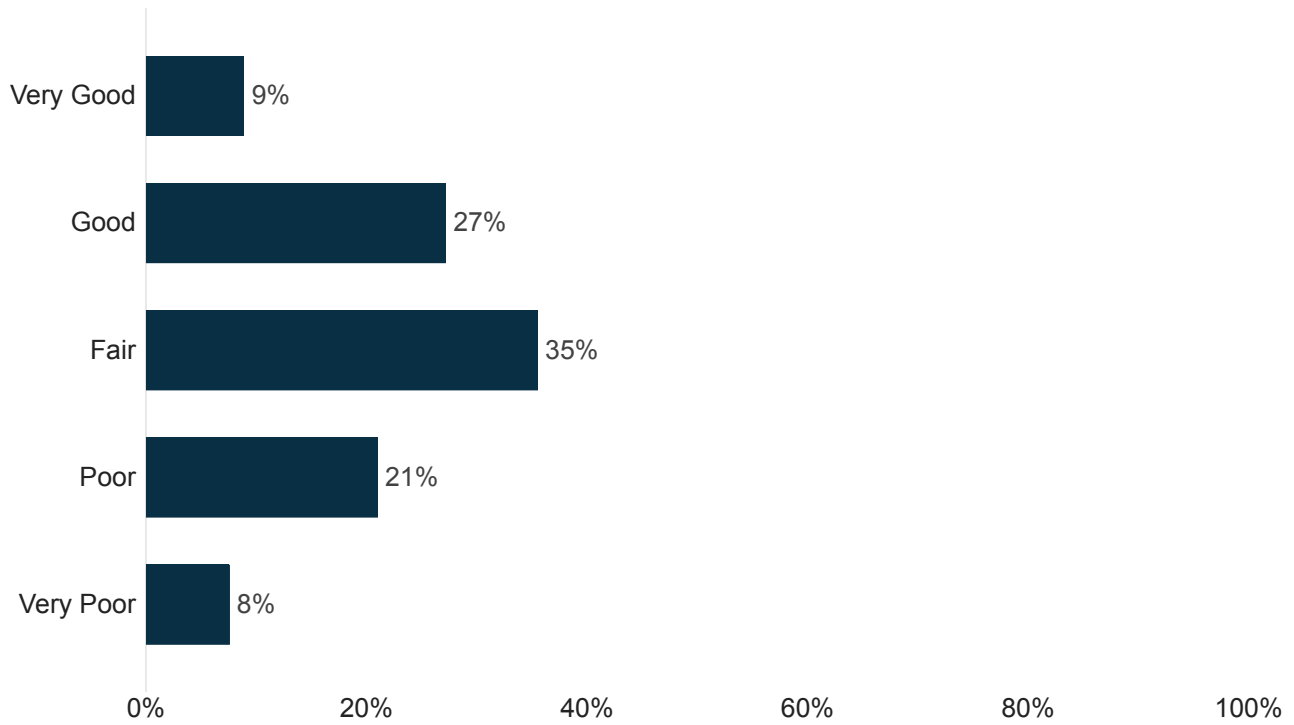
Field	Choice Count
No, I have not been homeless	351
Yes, during Fall-Spring academic year	11
Yes, during Summer	7
Yes, during Winter break	2

How has your physical health been this past academic year?



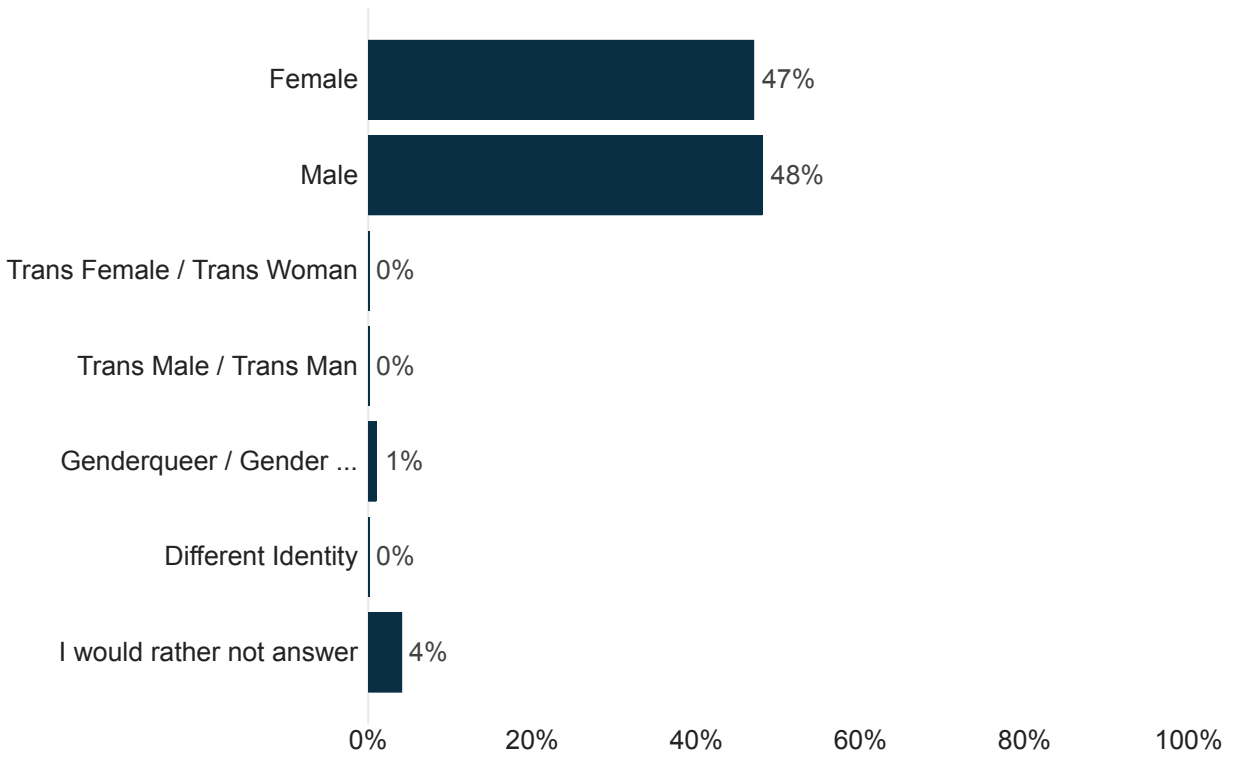
Field	Choice Count
Very Good	66
Good	178
Fair	87
Poor	37
Very Poor	3

How has your mental health been this past academic year?



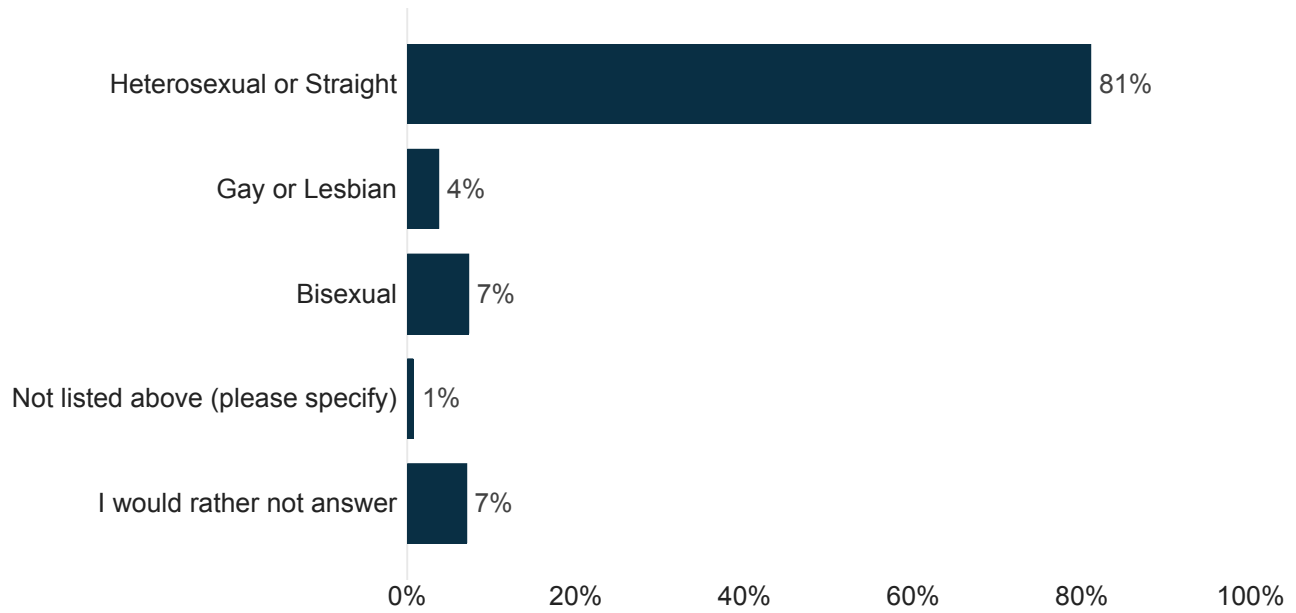
Field	Choice Count
Very Good	33
Good	101
Fair	132
Poor	78
Very Poor	28

What is your current gender identity?



Field	Choice Count
Female	175
Male	179
Trans Female / Trans Woman	0
Trans Male / Trans Man	0
Genderqueer / Gender Non-Conforming	4
Different Identity	0
I would rather not answer	15

What is your current sexual orientation?



Field	Choice Count
Heterosexual or Straight	300
Gay or Lesbian	14
Bisexual	27
Not listed above (please specify)	3
I would rather not answer	26