

**UCL Graduate School
Masters Student Survey
Summer 2009**

Data Presentation and Report

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Introduction

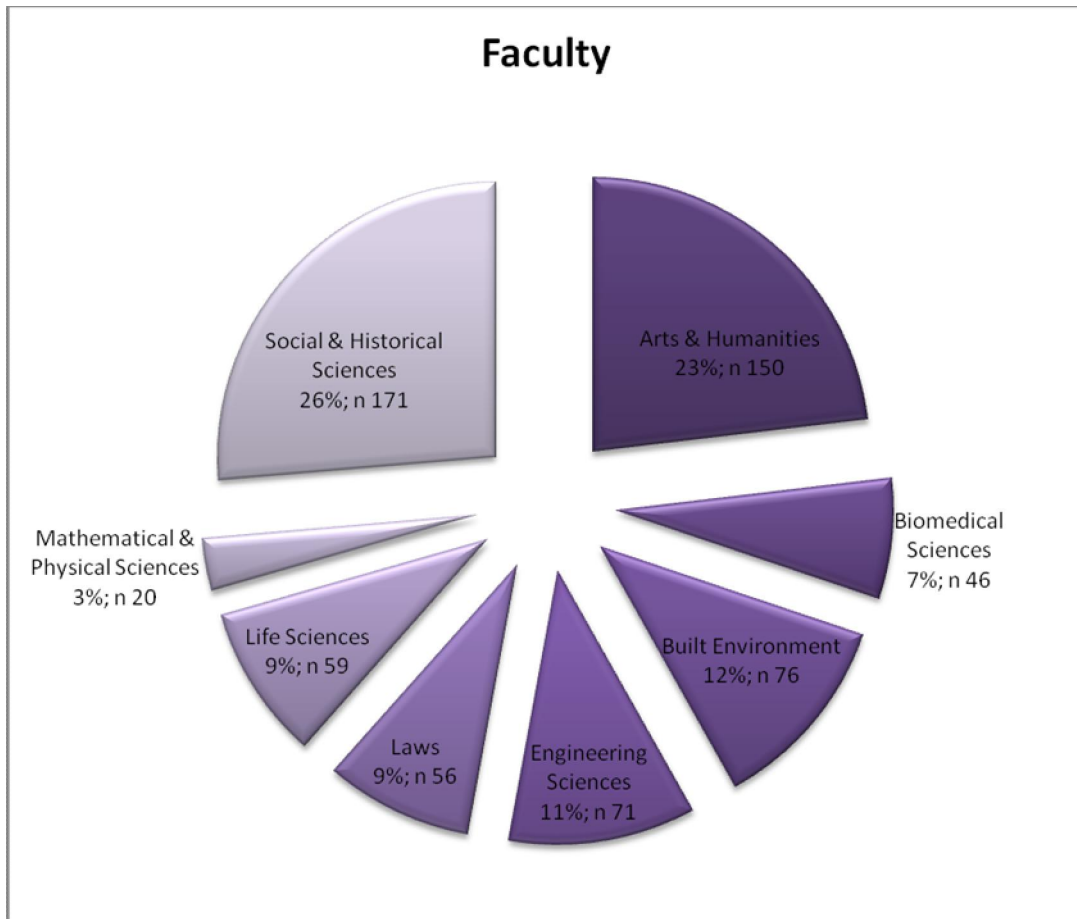
In July 2009 a survey was sent by the Graduate School to all Masters students at UCL. A total number of 650 responded out of a possible 5,385. The survey assessed levels of satisfaction across a number of areas.

This report presents the data from the survey, including selected additional comments. It also draws some conclusions where trends have been identified.

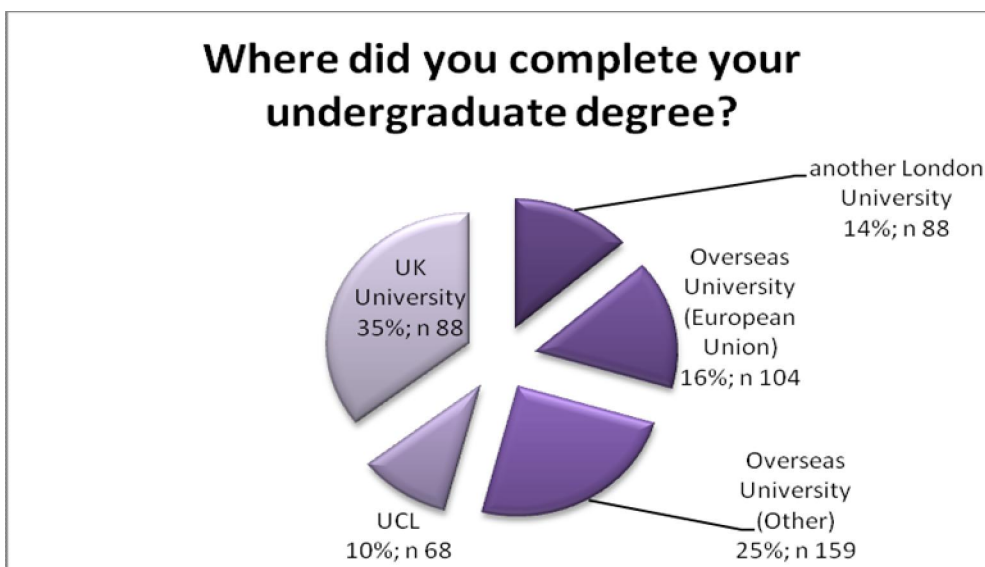
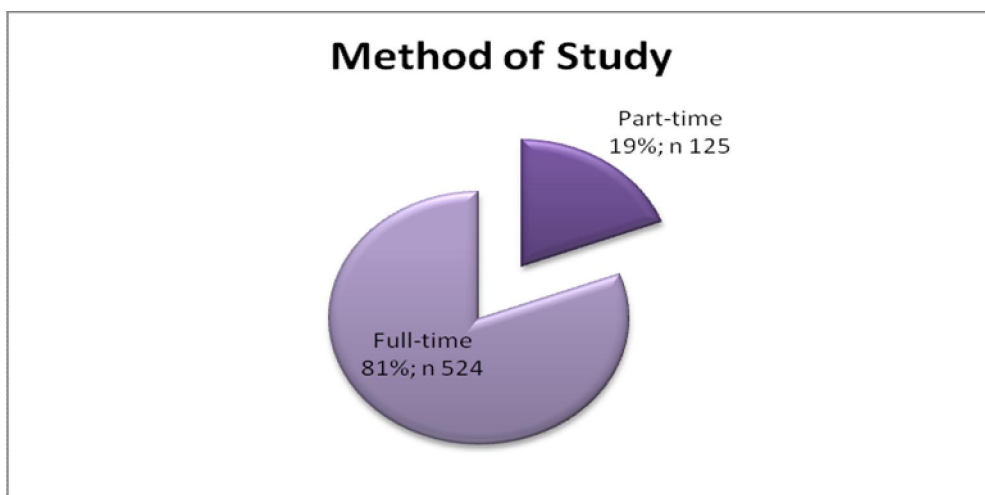
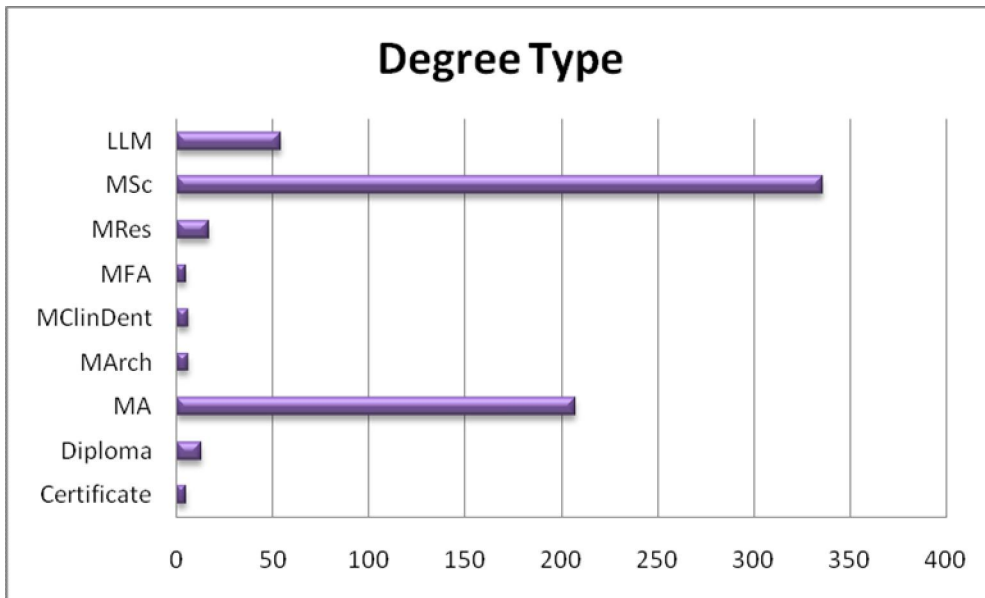
The authors of this report are two recent graduates of UCL. They would like to thank the Graduate School for providing them with the opportunity to give something back to the postgraduate community at UCL.

A: Information about your degree

Students from each faculty responded to the survey, with SHS and Arts & Humanities being perhaps over represented. The vast majority started in 2008/9.

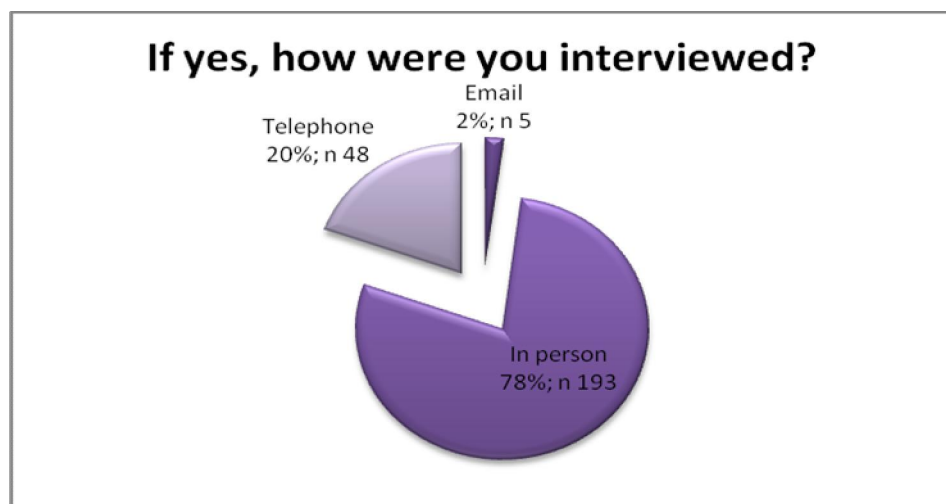
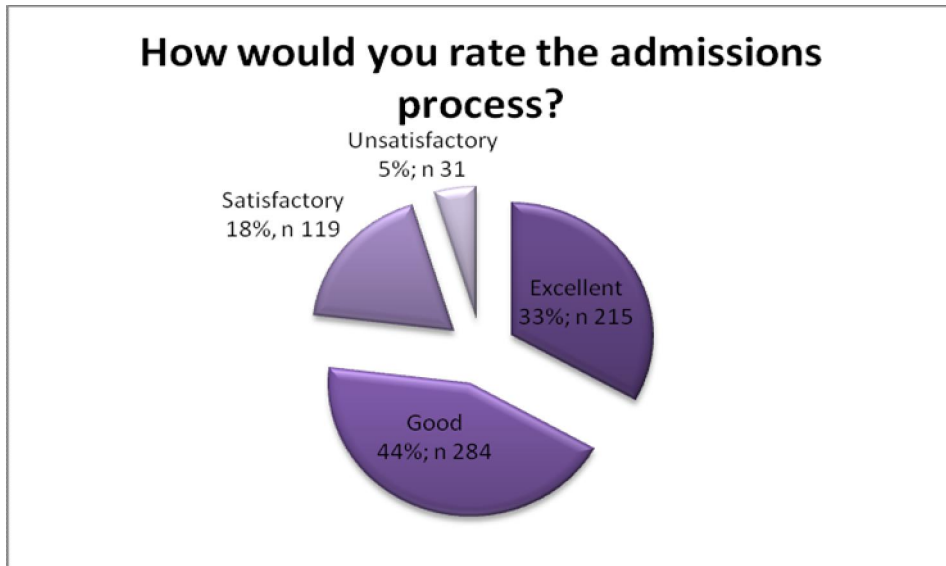


Most respondents were enrolled on either an MSc or MA programme and were full time students. Some 40% of the respondents had finished their undergraduate degrees abroad.



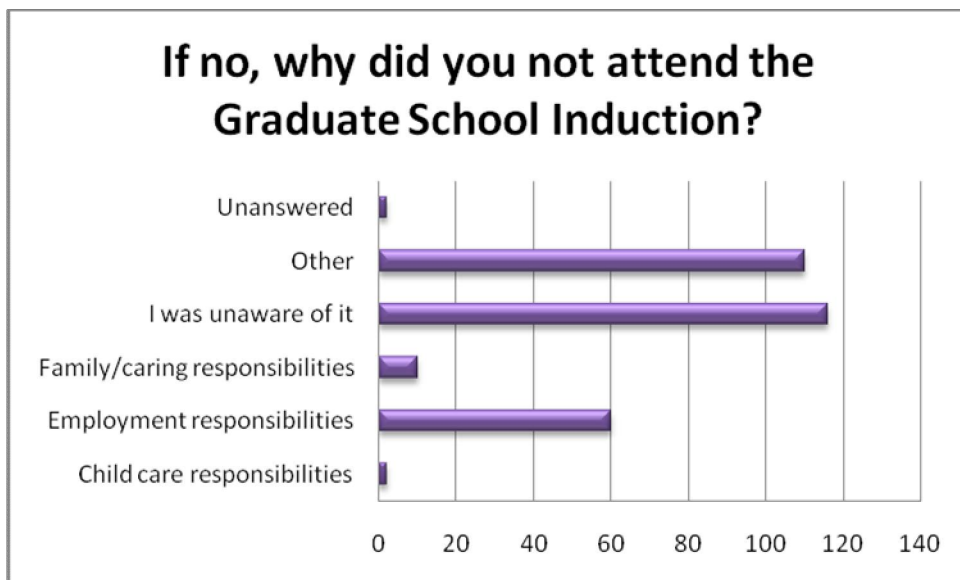
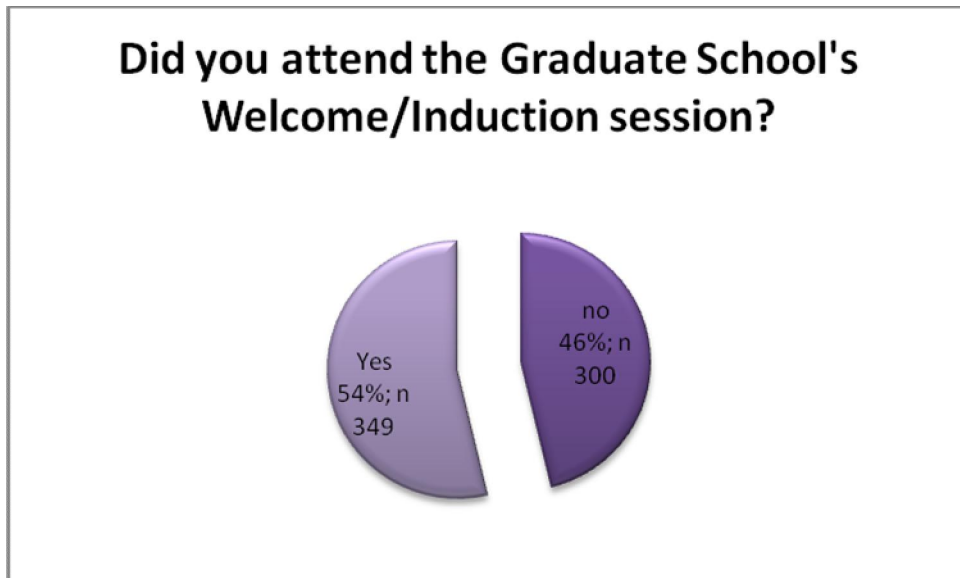
B: Admission and Selection

The vast majority of respondents rated the admissions process “Satisfactory” or higher. Of the 38% who were interviewed, 78% were interviewed in person.

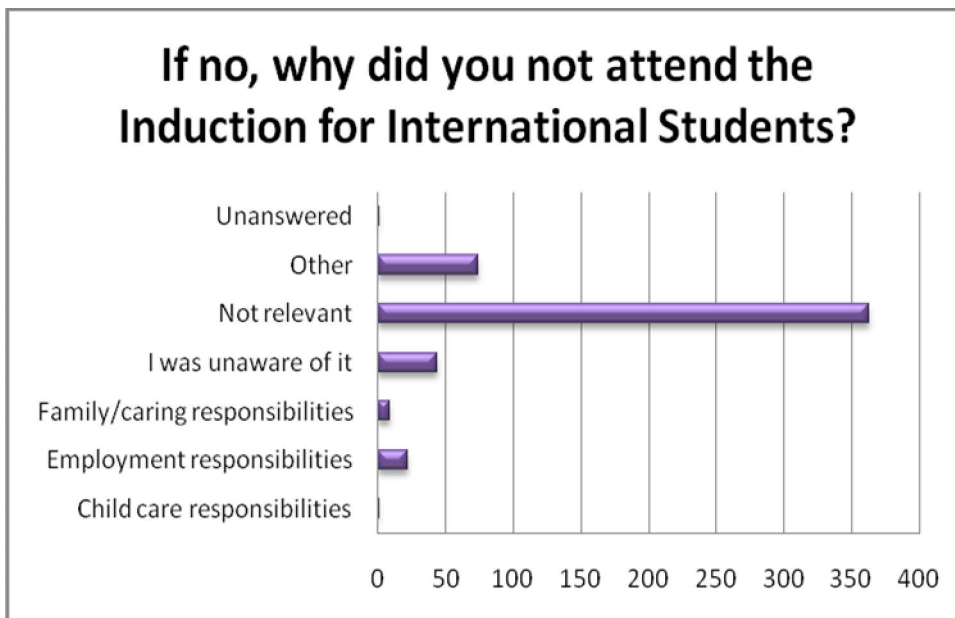
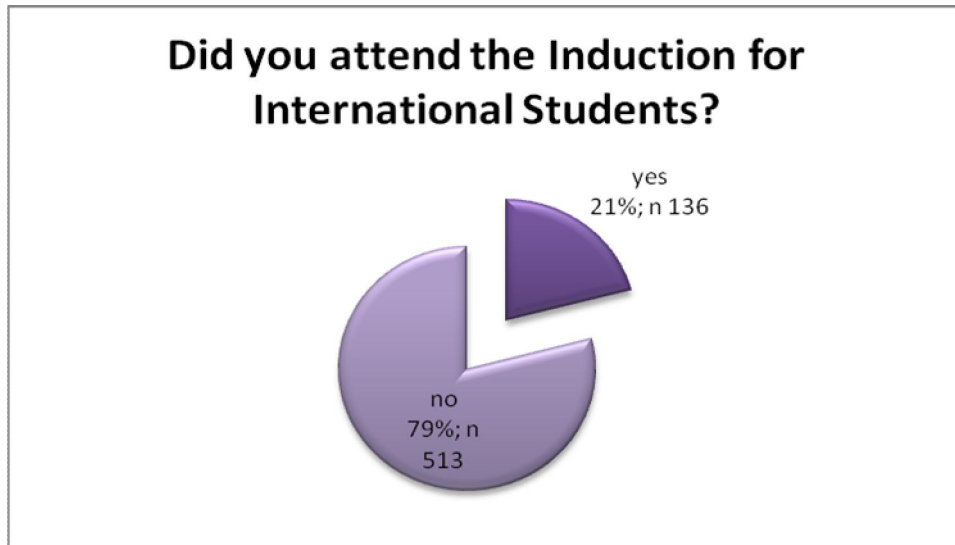


C: Induction

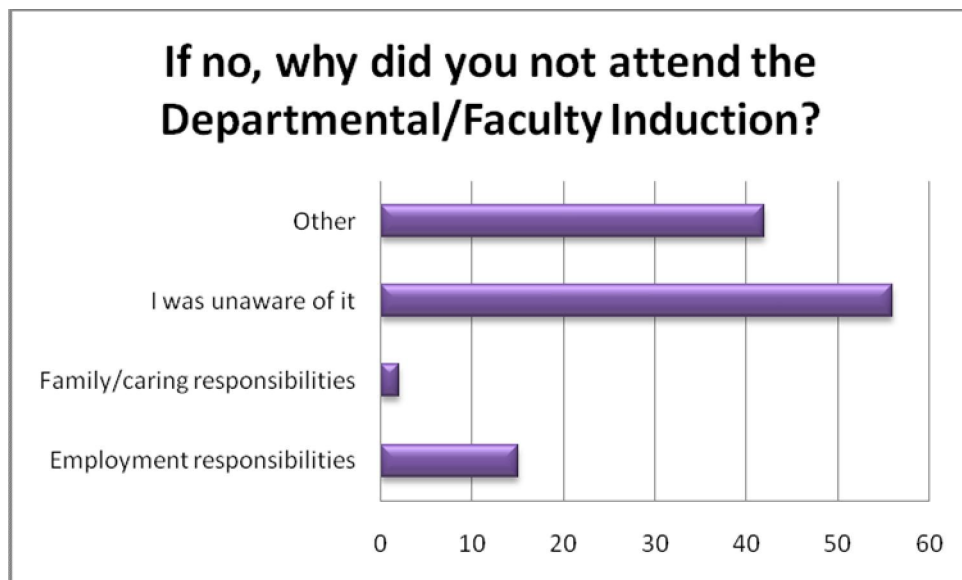
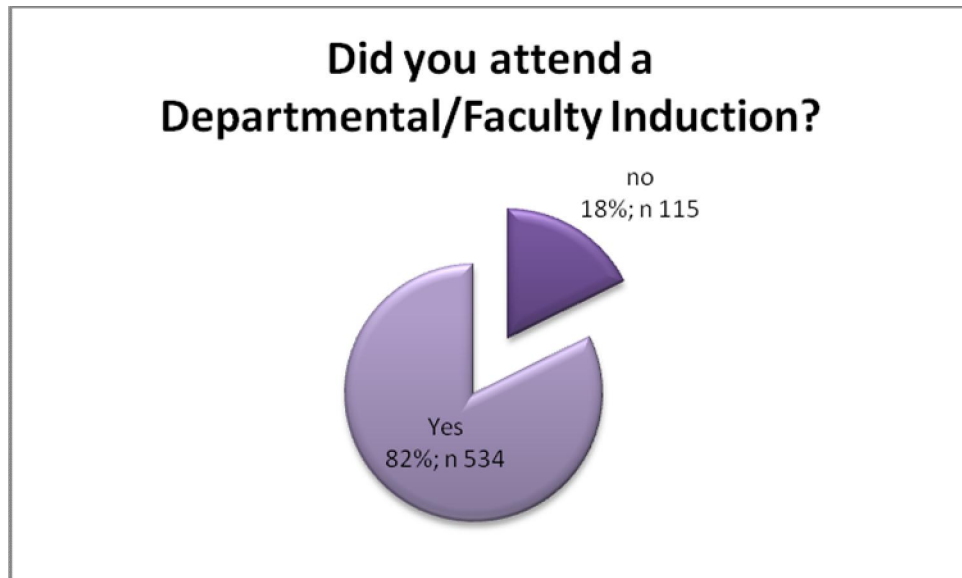
Just over half of students attended the Graduate School's induction session. Of those who didn't attend, the most common reason was that they were unaware of it.



Most students did not attend the Induction for international students. However, of those that didn't attend, the vast majority were UK students as they answered "Not relevant".



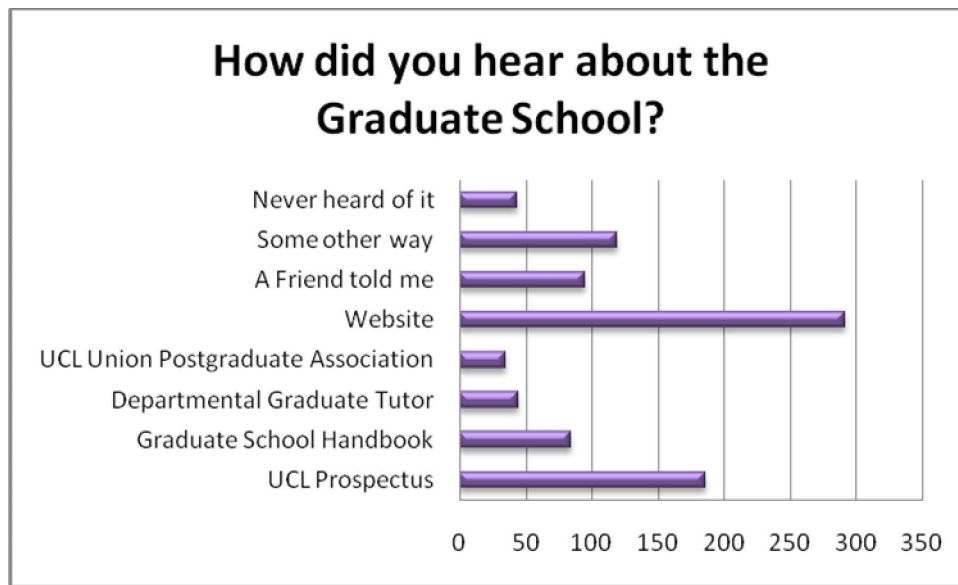
Almost all students attended a Departmental/Faculty Induction. The most commonly cited reason for non attendance was that respondents were unaware of it.



One respondent from ICH complained in the additional comments that they did not receive an induction. Another student explained that as they arrived in March, they weren't given one either. Finally, one respondent suggested a tour of campus would be useful, as part of the Induction.

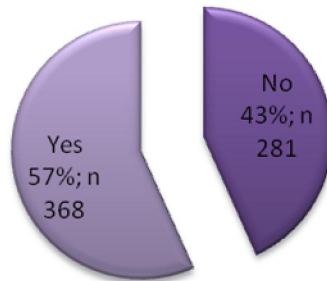
D: Graduate School

The most common medium for hearing about the Graduate School was its website, followed by the UCL Prospectus. Most respondents had never contacted the Graduate School, but out of those that did, the most common purposes were the skills courses and workshops, along with scholarships and help and advice.

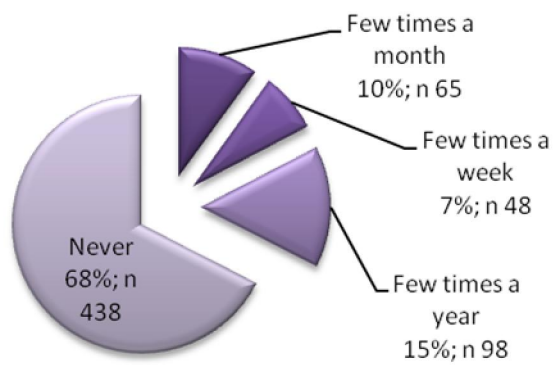


Just over half of respondents know where the Graduate Common Room is, although most never use it more than a few times a year, if at all.

Did you know that there is a Graduate Common Room?

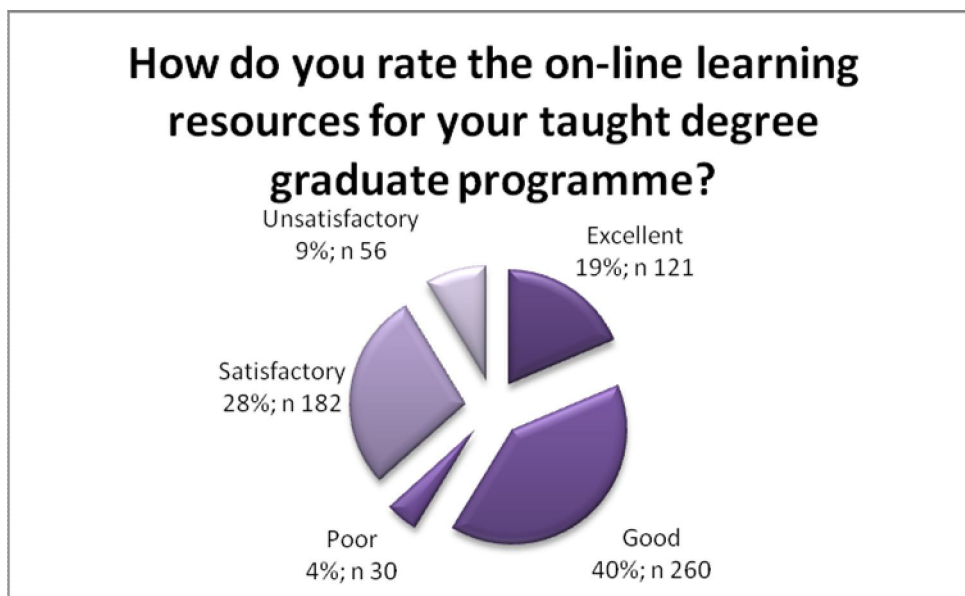
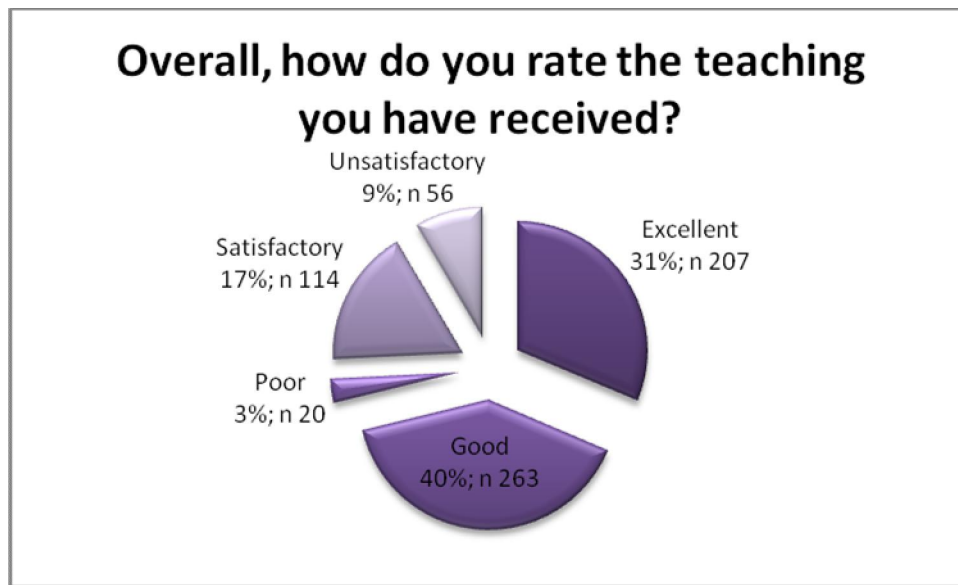


How often do you use the Graduate Common Room?



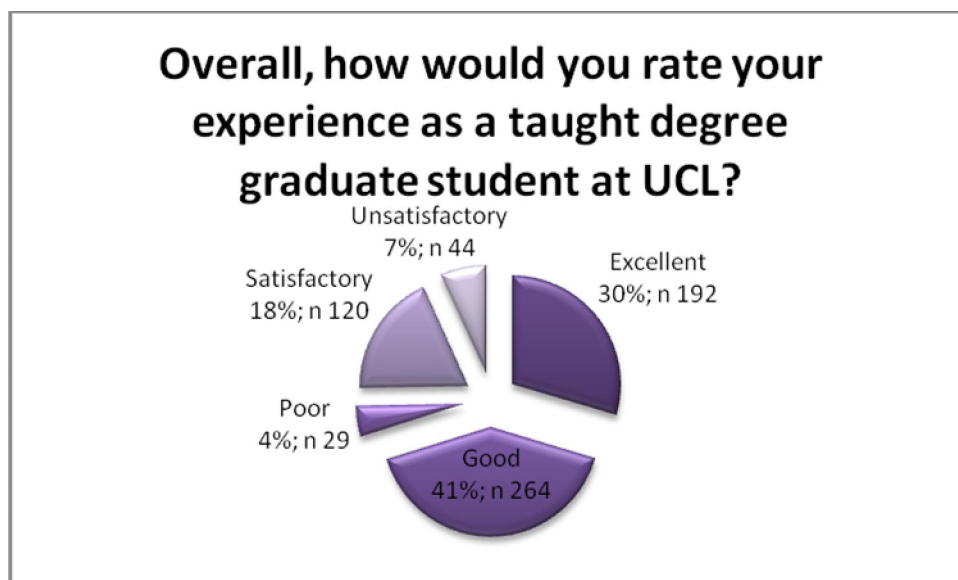
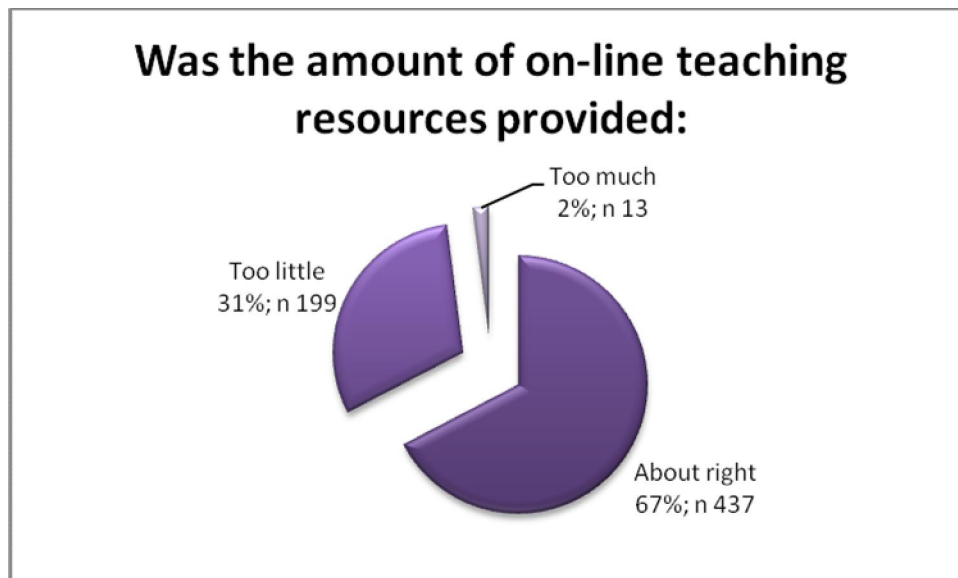
E: Teaching

The vast majority of students described teaching at UCL as “Satisfactory” or better. The same percentage of respondents rated the online resources as “Satisfactory” or higher; although here the data was less positive, with the scores for “Satisfactory” and “Excellent” being reversed.



A number of requests were made through the additional comments section, for more specialist courses such as on academic writing, especially for foreign students unfamiliar with the ‘House’ style at UCL or even the UK.

Two thirds of respondents felt the amount of online teaching resources provided was about right. The vast majority rated their overall experience as a taught graduate student at UCL as Satisfactory or better.



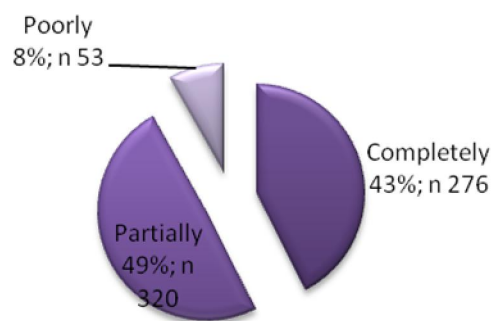
Most of the additional comments concerned teaching. Issues that were mentioned include:

- the perception that feedback was not listened to;
- communication to students was poor;
- courses weren't demanding enough;
- requests for more online content;
- little contact with staff;
- not enough support for international or part time students; and
- mixed teaching quality within courses.

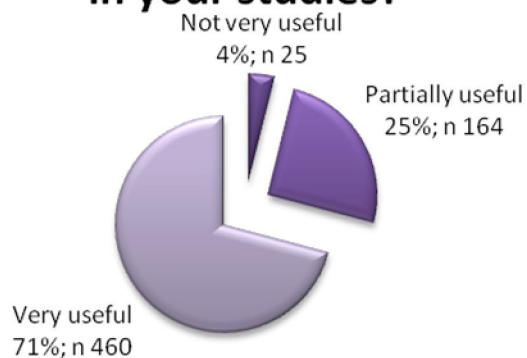
F: Library

A slight majority of respondents felt that UCL Library Services at best partially met their needs. On the other hand, most described the collection of both paper and electronic resources at UCL were very useful, suggesting that their perceived failings lie elsewhere – perhaps in opening times, as will become apparent later on in this section.

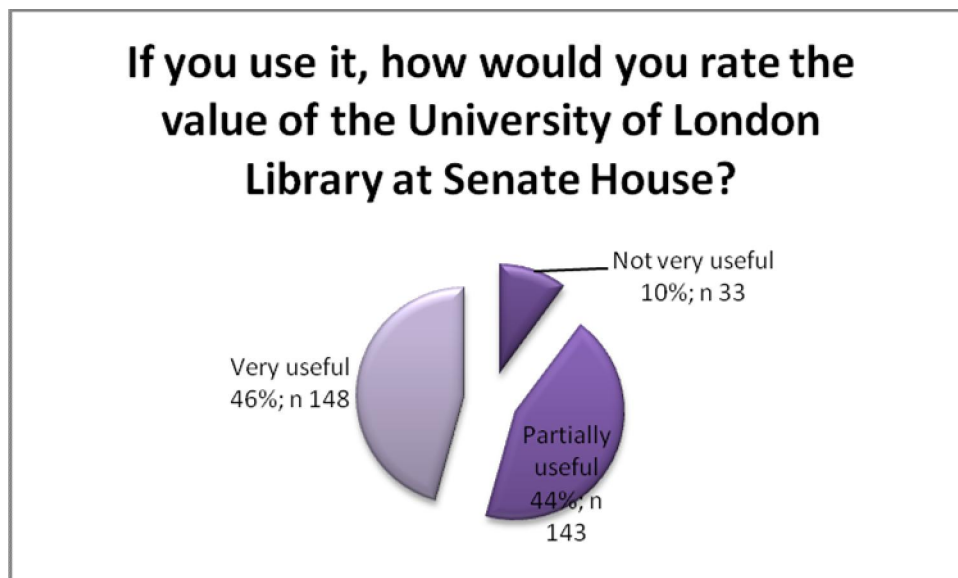
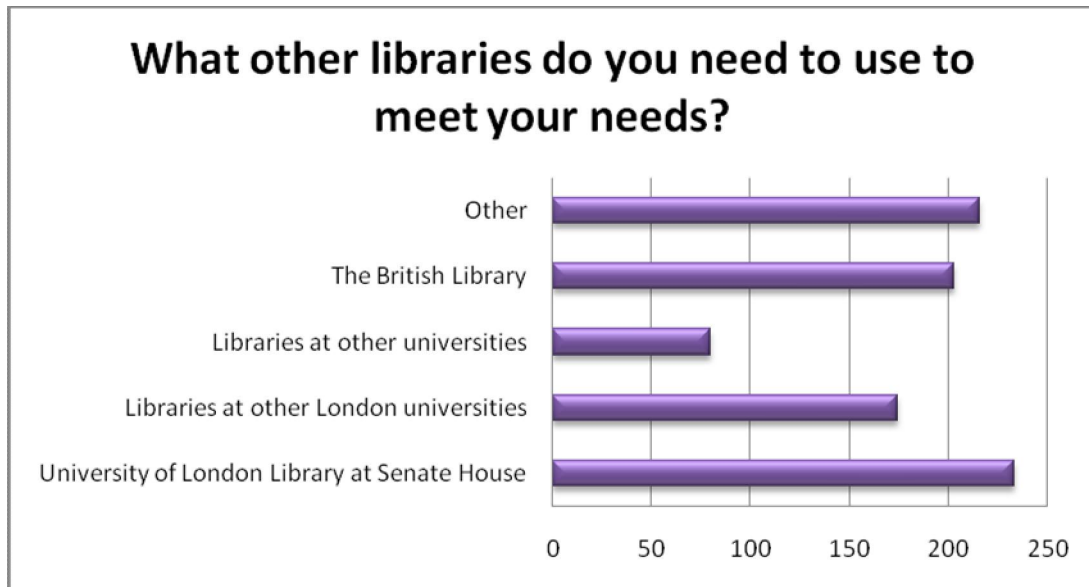
How completely does UCL Library Services meet your information needs?



How useful are UCL's collections of paper and electronic resources to you in your studies?

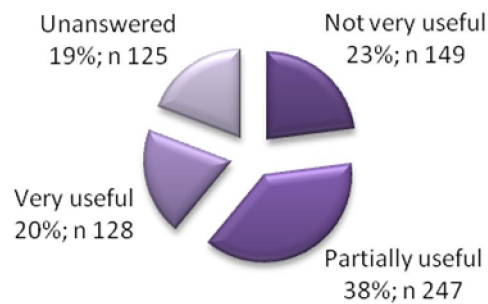


The most commonly used libraries outside of UCL include UL Senate House Library, the British Library and libraries at other universities (LSE Library was mentioned in the additional comments). The scores for the value of UL Senate House Library were similar to those for UCL's Libraries.

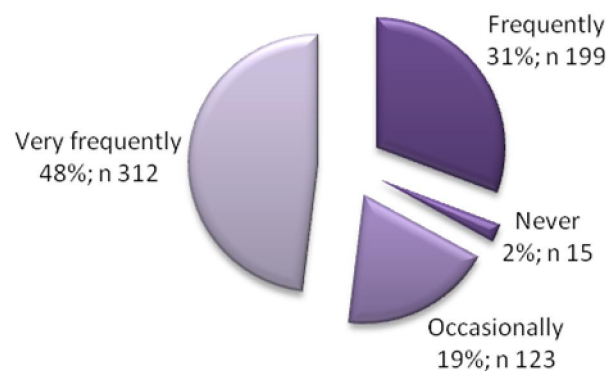


The information skills training offered by UCL Library Services was found to be mostly either partially or not very useful. Almost exactly half of respondents use the UCL Libraries very frequently.

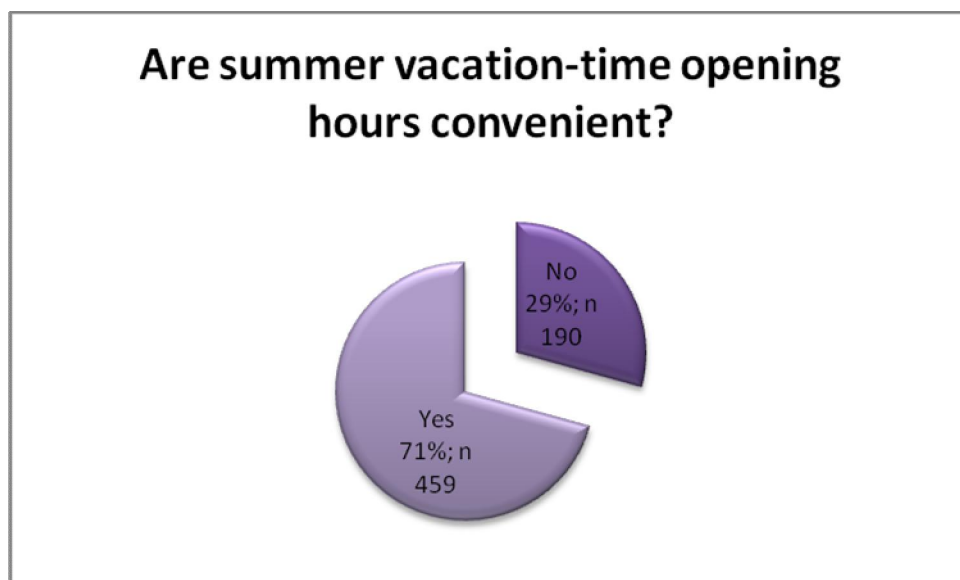
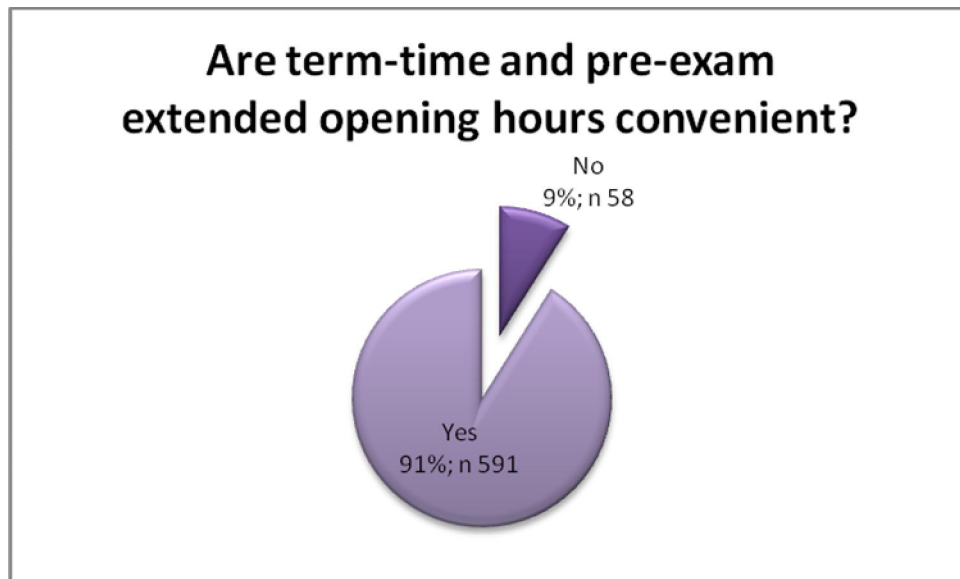
UCL Library Services offers information skills training to all its users. How useful has this training been?



How often do you use UCL Library Services?



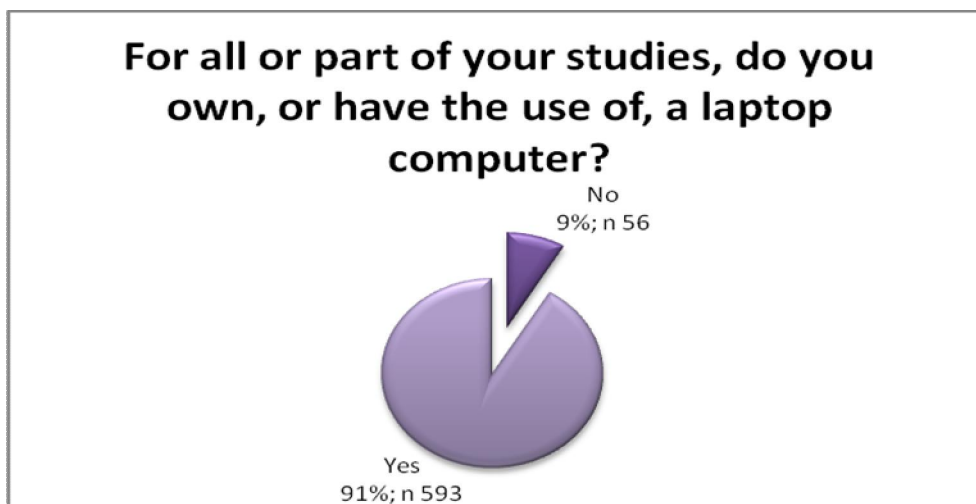
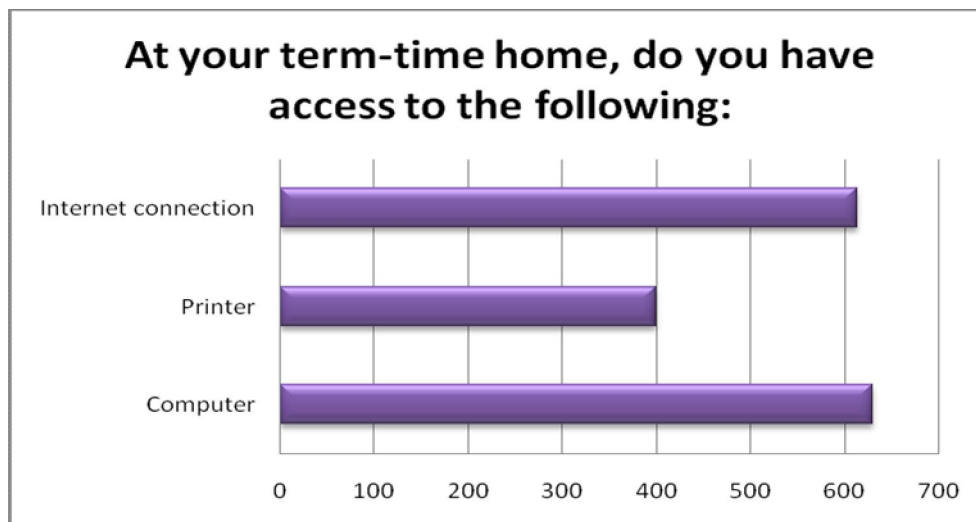
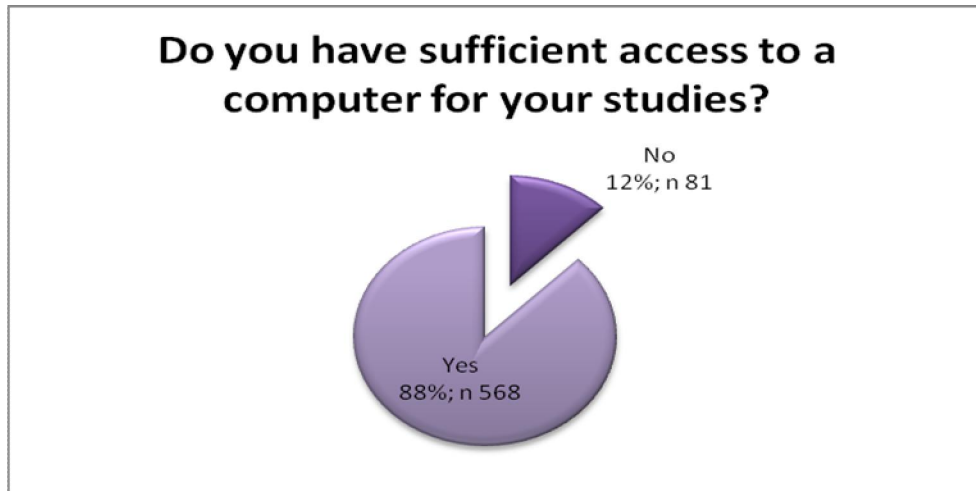
The vast majority of students found the extended opening hours during term-time and pre-exams to be convenient. A smaller majority found the summer vacation opening times to be convenient.



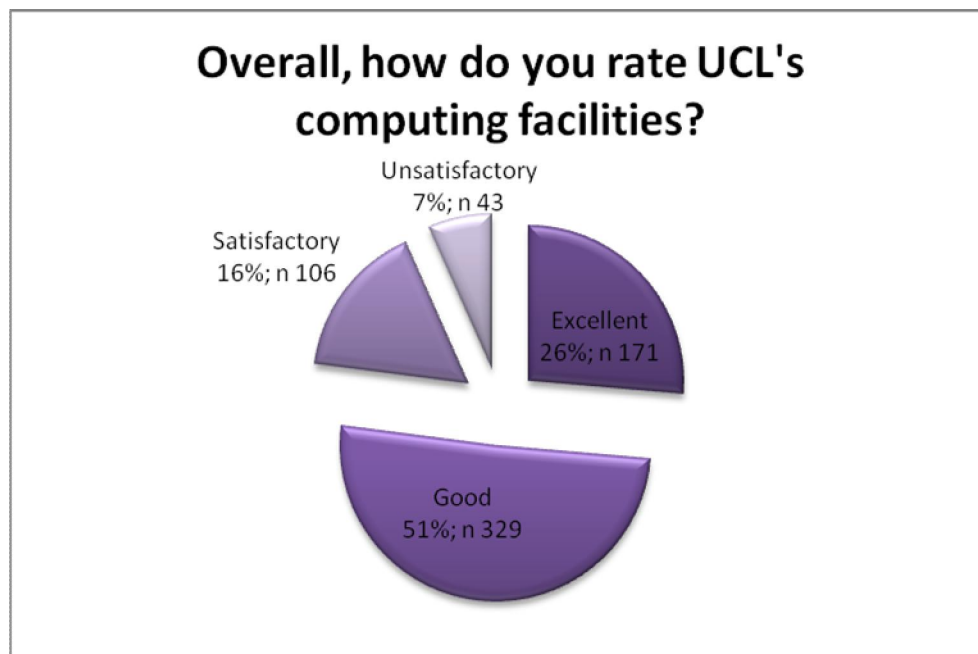
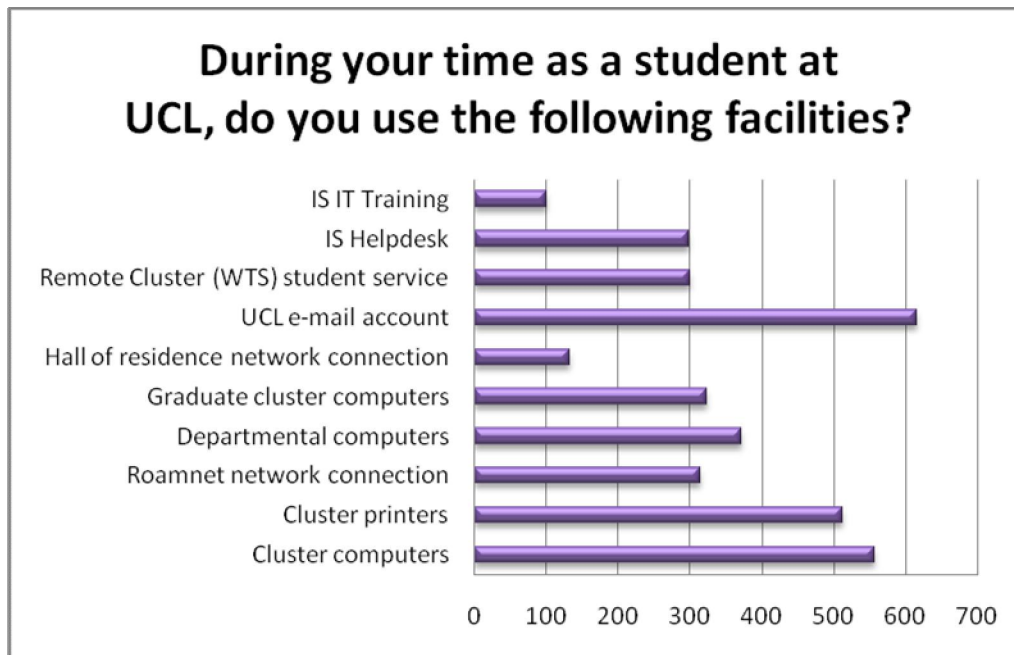
The libraries at UCL generated a lot of feedback in the additional comments. Limited opening hours were a particular cause for complaint, as was the condition of the libraries themselves, namely that they were often crowded and noisy. Finally insufficient access to some journals was mentioned.

G: Computing

Almost all students have sufficient access to a computer for their studies. Almost every student has both a computer (which includes a laptop) and an internet connection at their term-time home; most also have a printer.



The most commonly used computing facilities at UCL are email, cluster printers and computers. Almost every respondent rated UCL's computing facilities as "Satisfactory" or better.



There were a number of complaints about the UCL computing facilities in the additional comments. These described the cluster rooms as at times being loud and crowded, with insufficient colour printers and low 'free' print allowances.

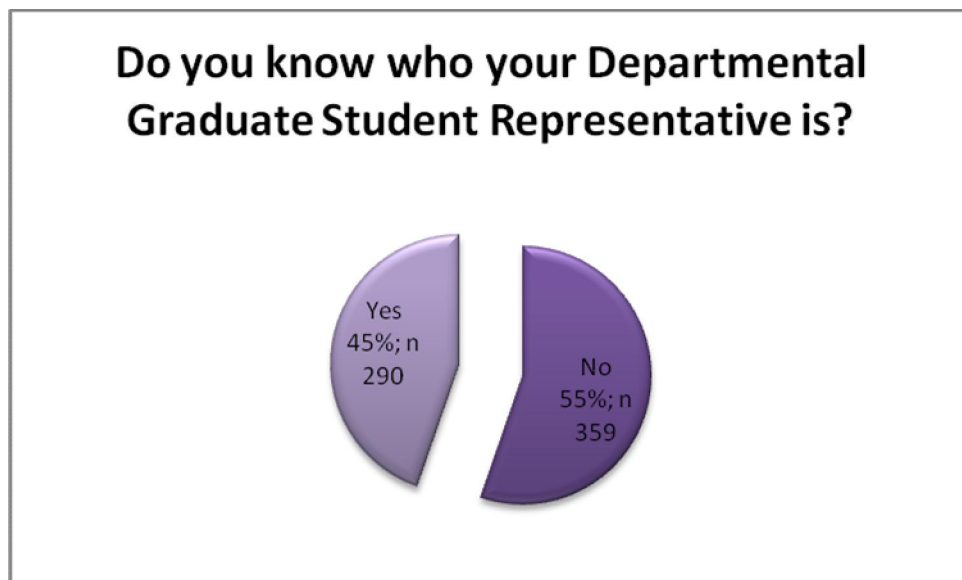
H: Ethics

The data for the survey shows that most research carried out does not involve human subjects, although a significant fraction does. Only half of respondents were aware of UCL's policy on Research Ethics.

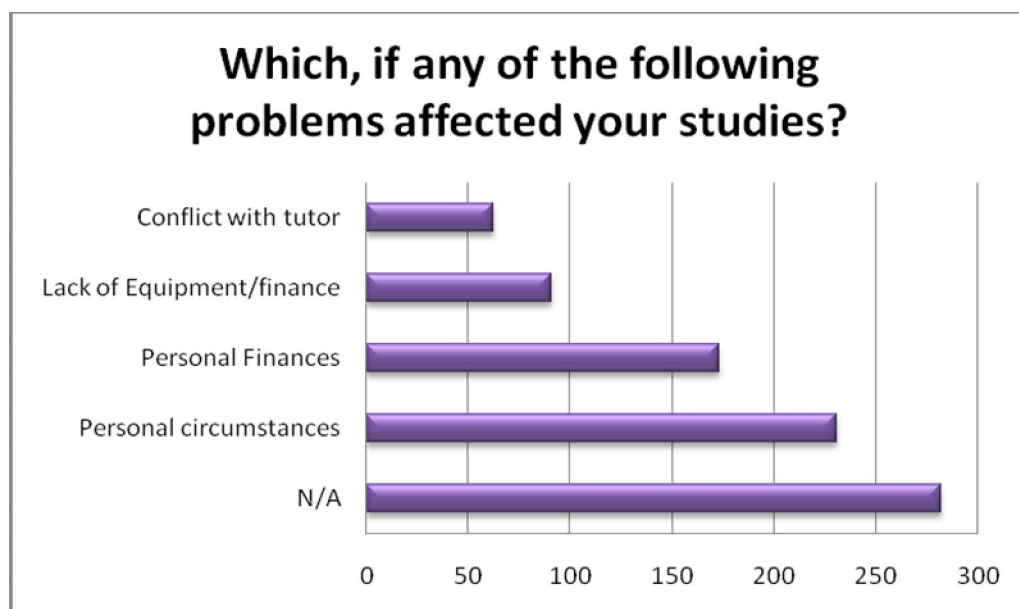
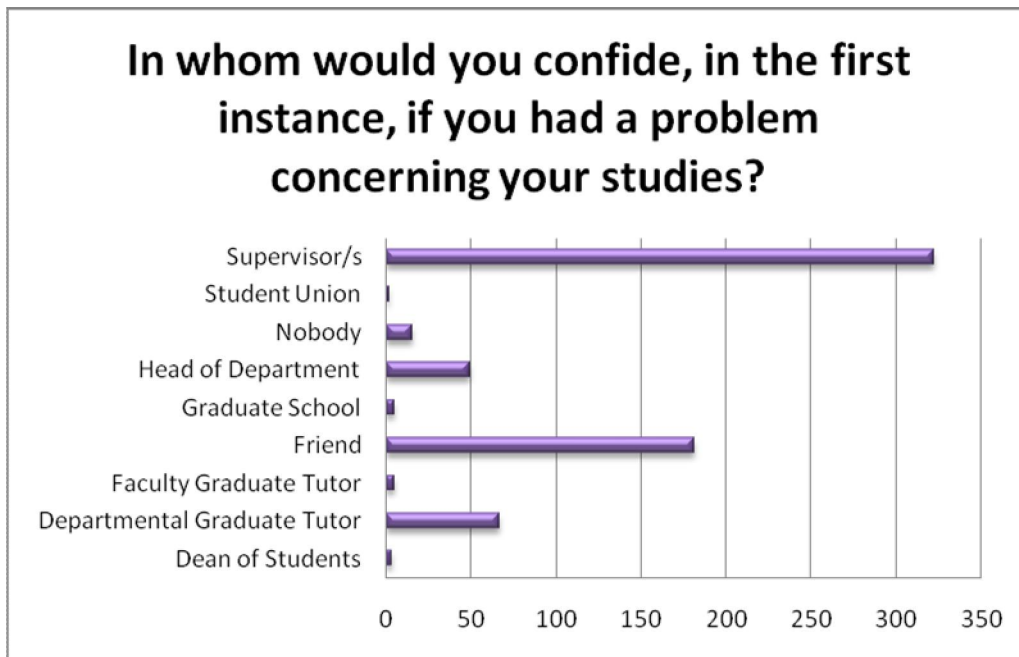


I: Welfare

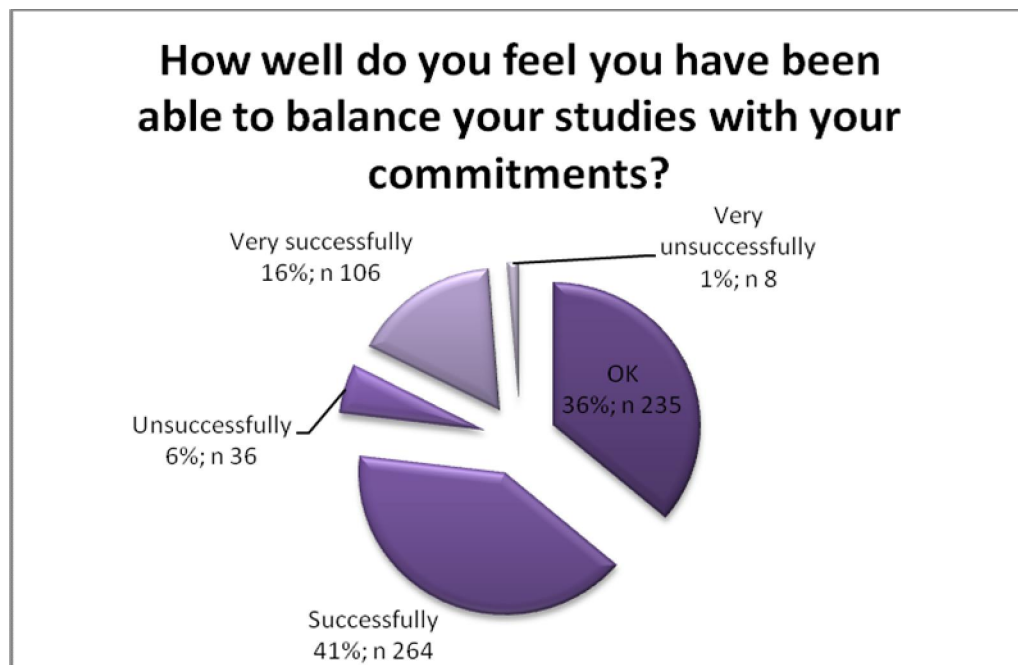
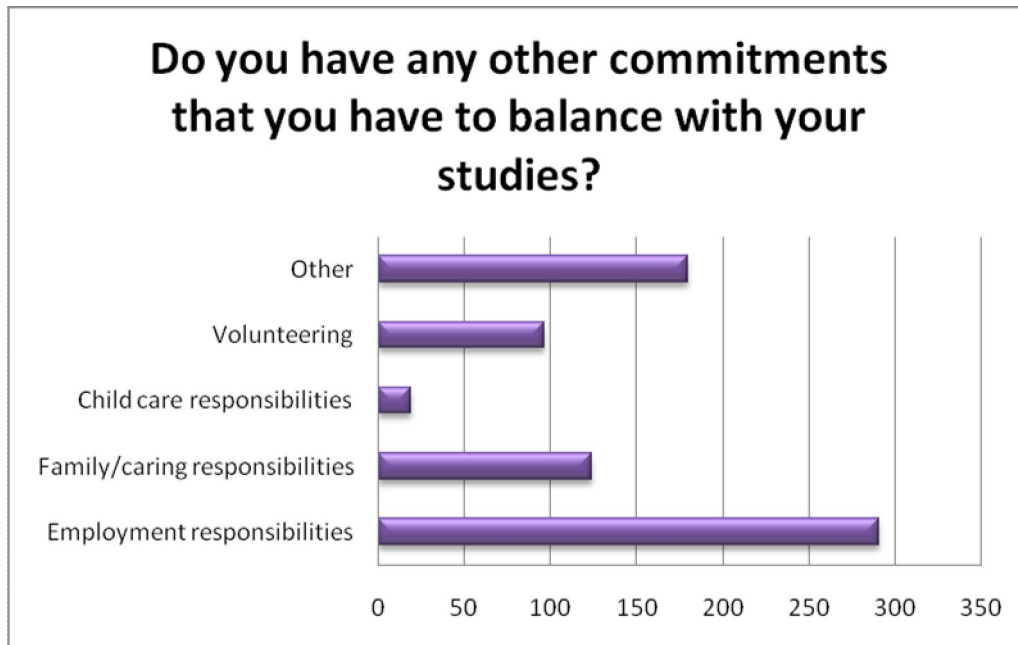
Most respondents know who their departmental Graduate tutor is, but far fewer who their Departmental Graduate Student Representative is.



Half of students would confide, in the first instance, with their supervisor, if they had a problem concerning their studies. A small majority of students experienced problems that affected their studies, the most common of which were personal circumstances and personal finances.



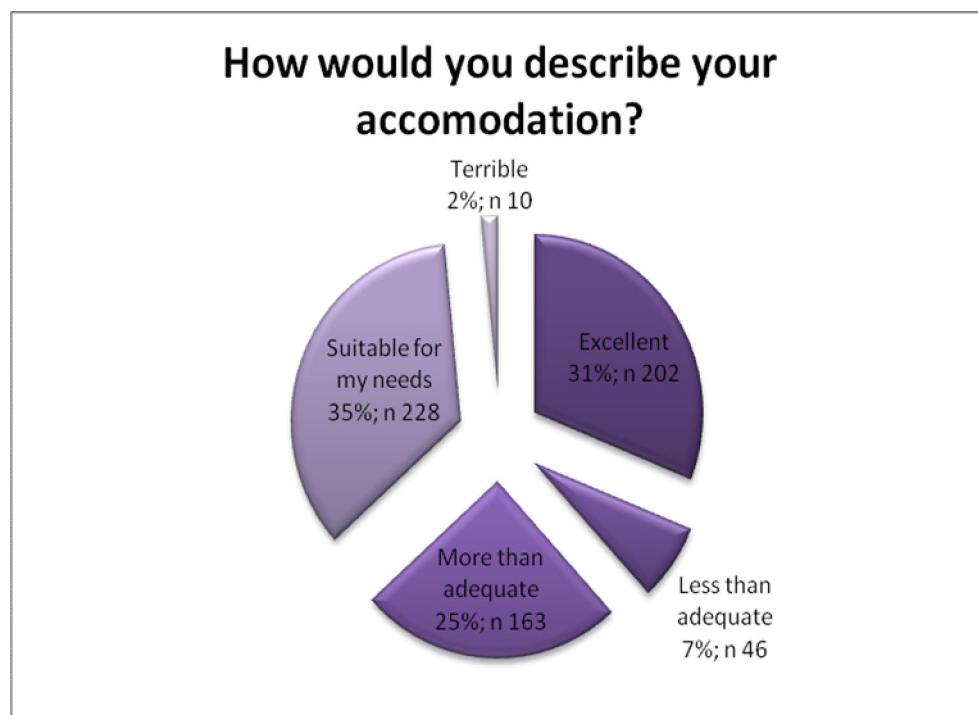
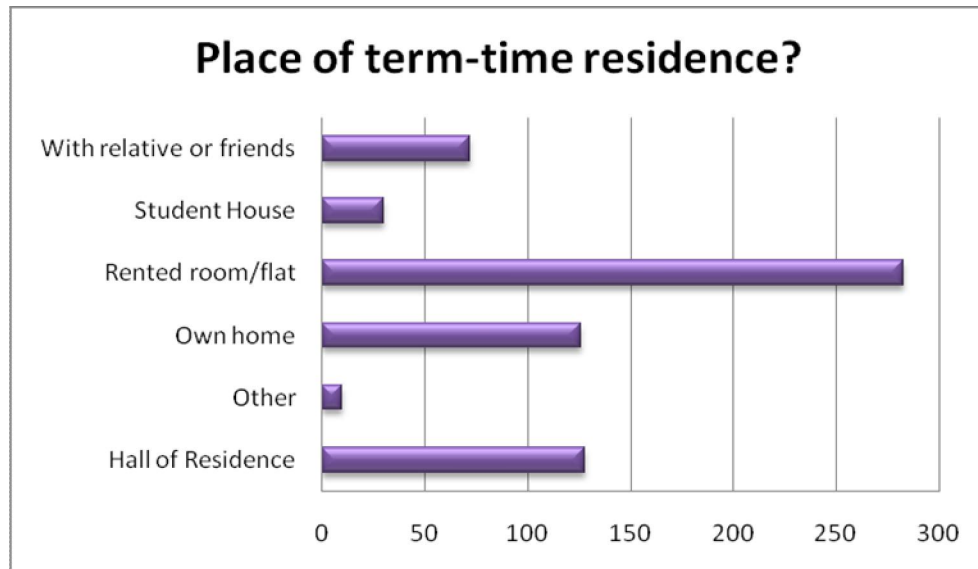
A substantial minority of students balanced their studies with other commitments, the most common of which were employment responsibilities. However, most respondents felt able to balance their studies with other commitments.



There were some suggestions that came out of the additional comments on welfare. These included requests for more help with visa extension, a child care room and the need to engage those students of a pensionable age. One respondent stated that they had had a good experience with the way in which UCL accommodated their dyslexia.

J: Housing

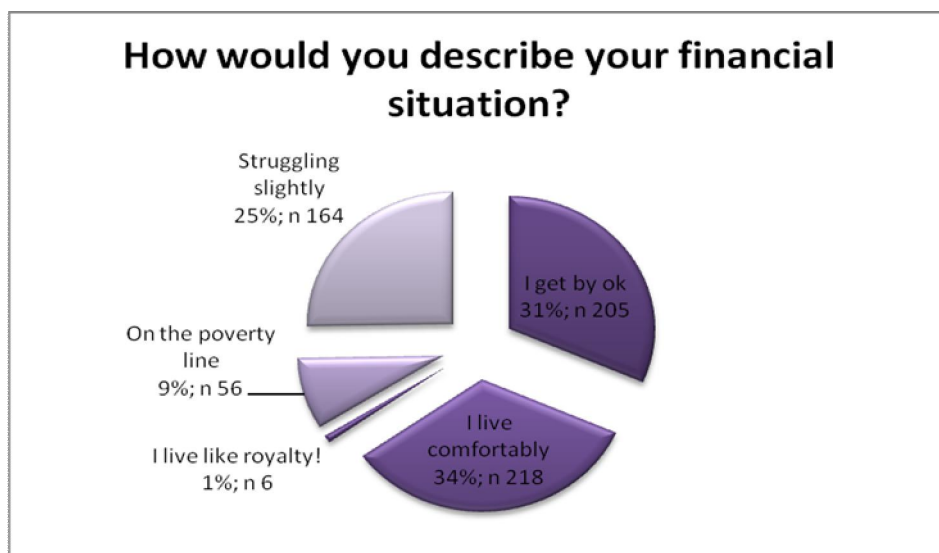
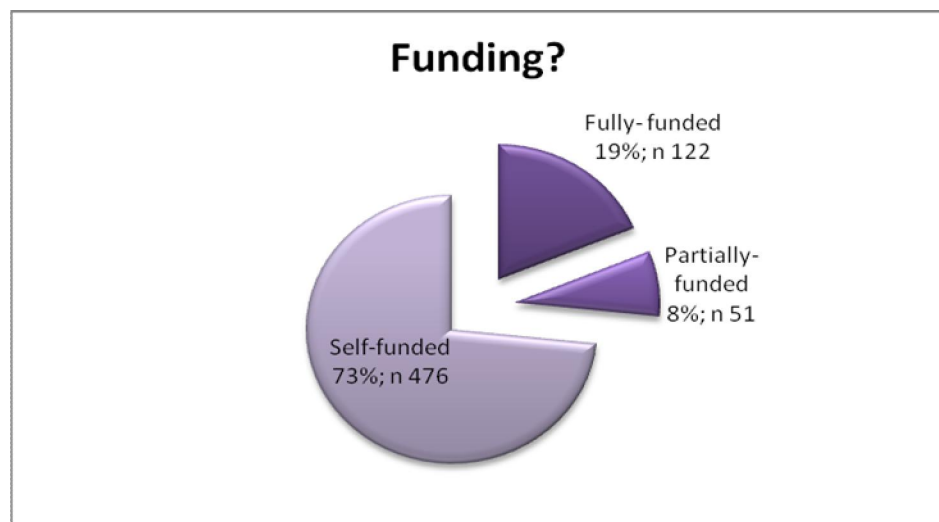
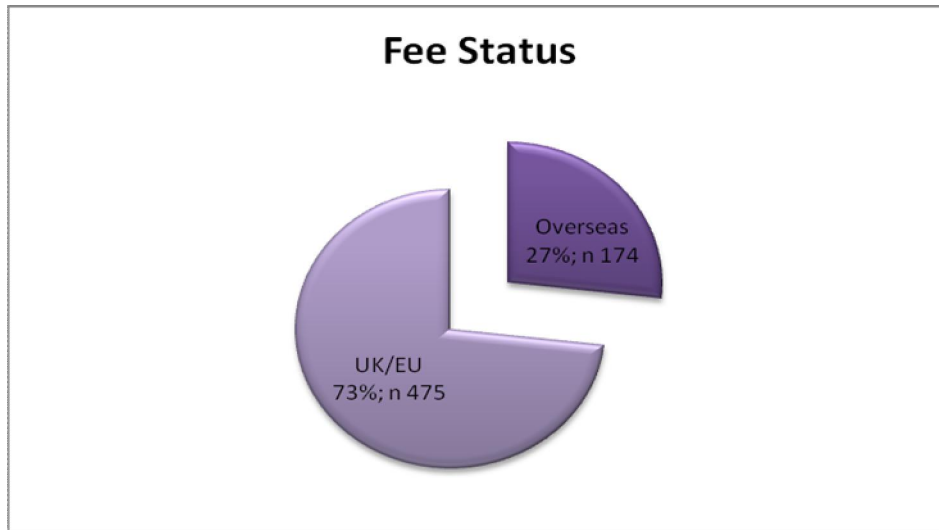
The most common form of residence for respondents was a rented room or flat. Almost everybody described their accommodation as suitable or better.



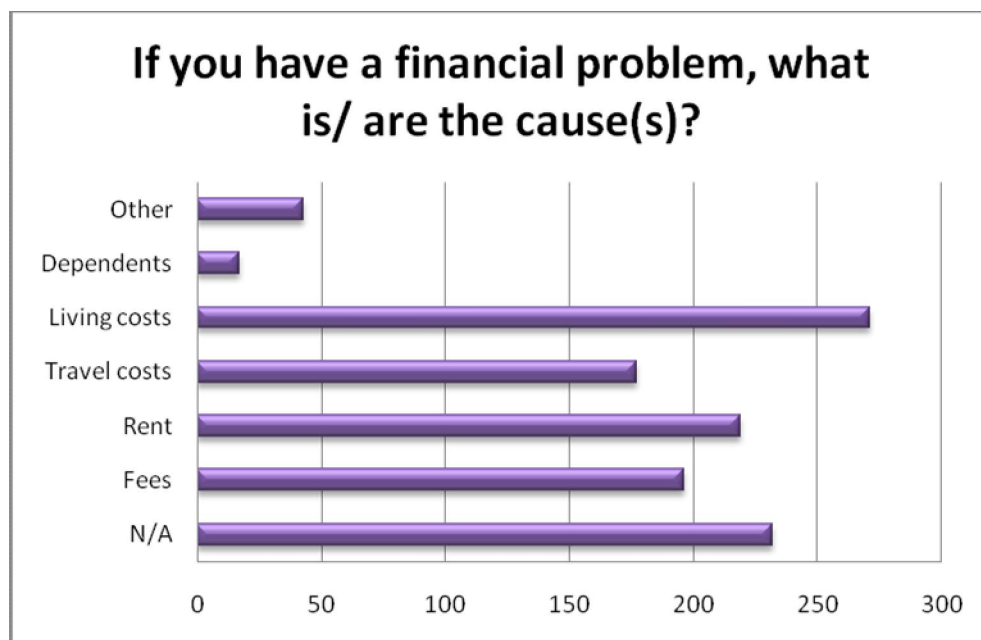
Among the additional comments on housing, the poor quality of halls of residence and the lack of places for UK postgraduates were both raised. Finally, a suggestion was made that a hall of residence exclusively for postgraduates would be appreciated, as it was hoped that it would reduce noise complaints and increase a feeling of community among postgraduates.

K: Finances

About a quarter of respondents paid international fees. A large majority of students were self-funded. A substantial majority described their financial status positively.



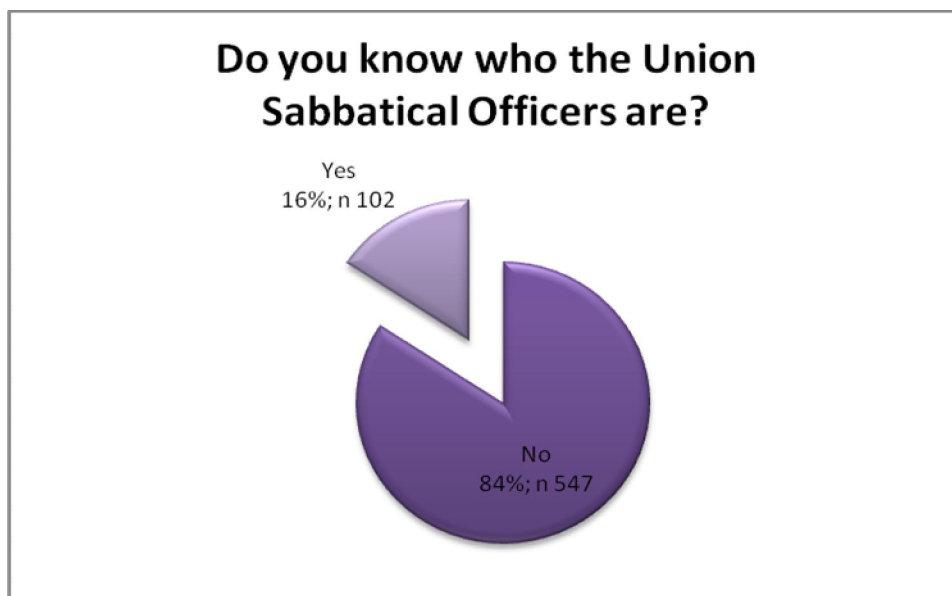
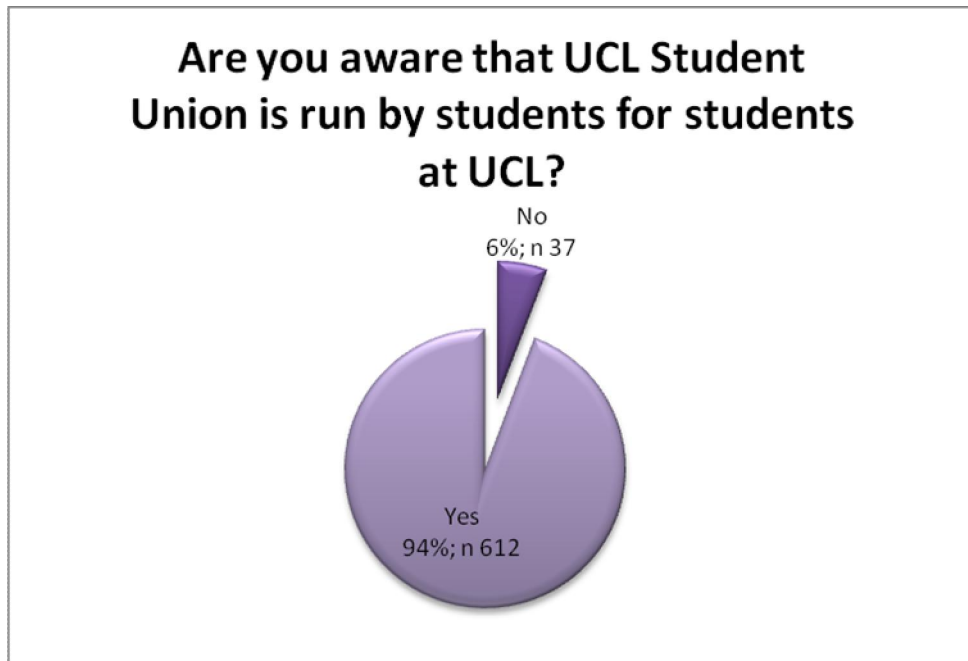
A large minority of respondents had part-time employment. The most common financial problem experienced was living costs.



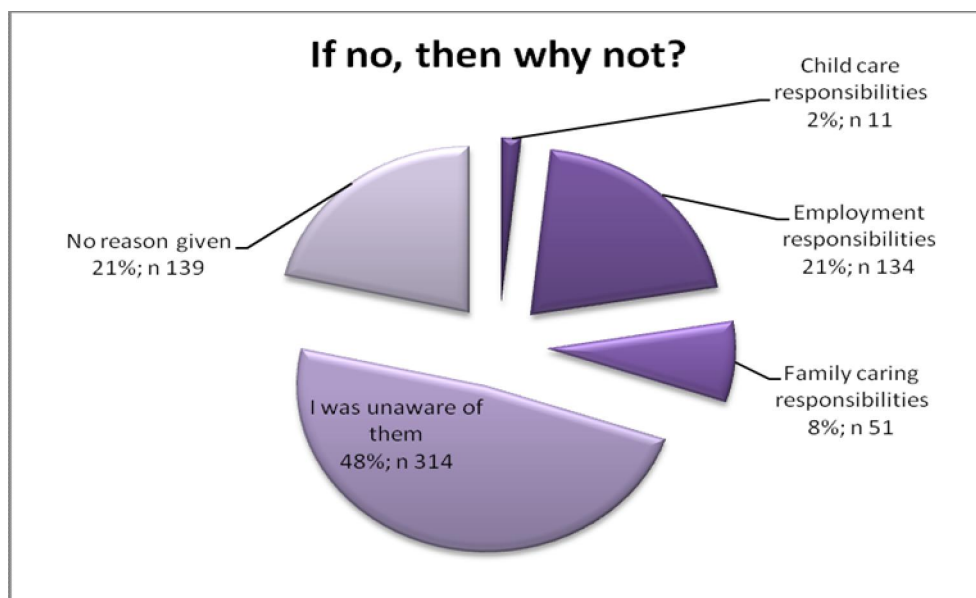
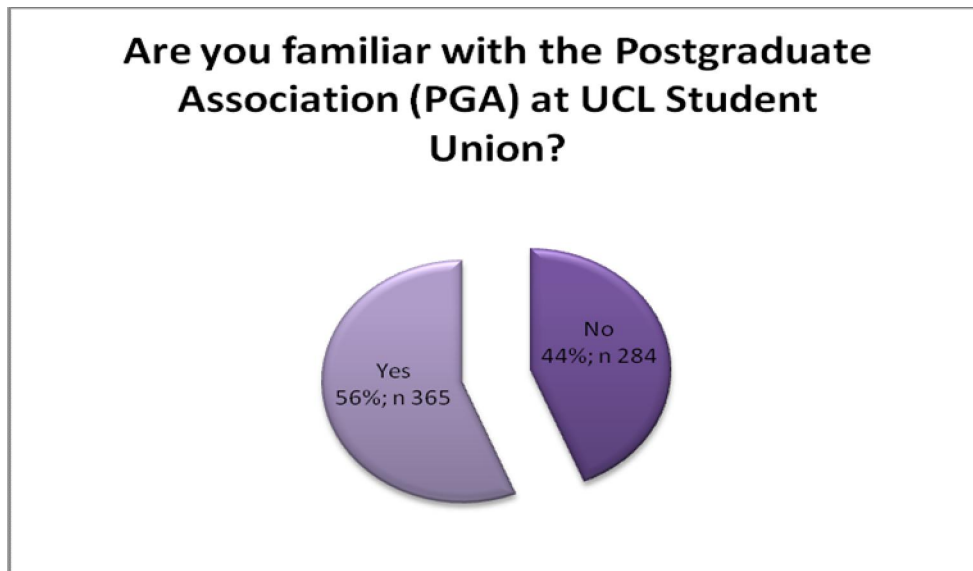
In the additional comments section a number of respondents felt that the international fees were too high. Others complained about the lack of scholarships for UK students. More generally, it was felt that more financial advice was needed.

L: Student Union

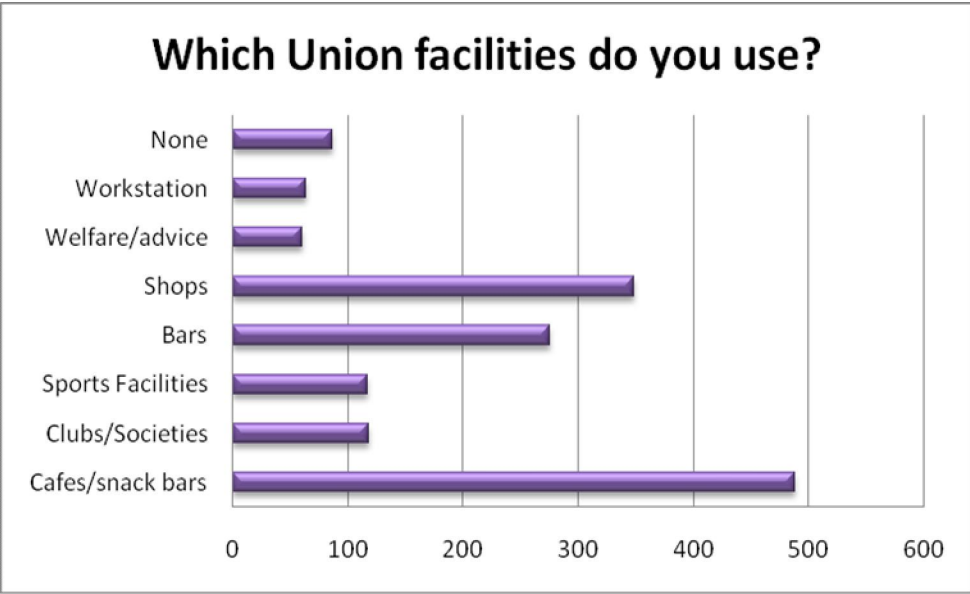
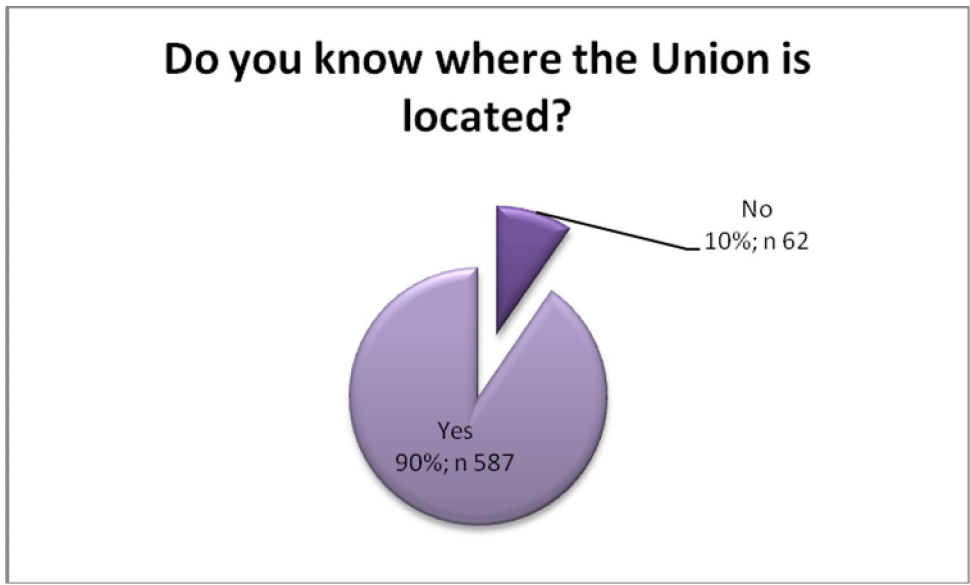
Almost every respondent is aware that UCL Student Union is run by students for students at UCL. On the other hand, almost nobody is aware who the Sabbatical Officers are.



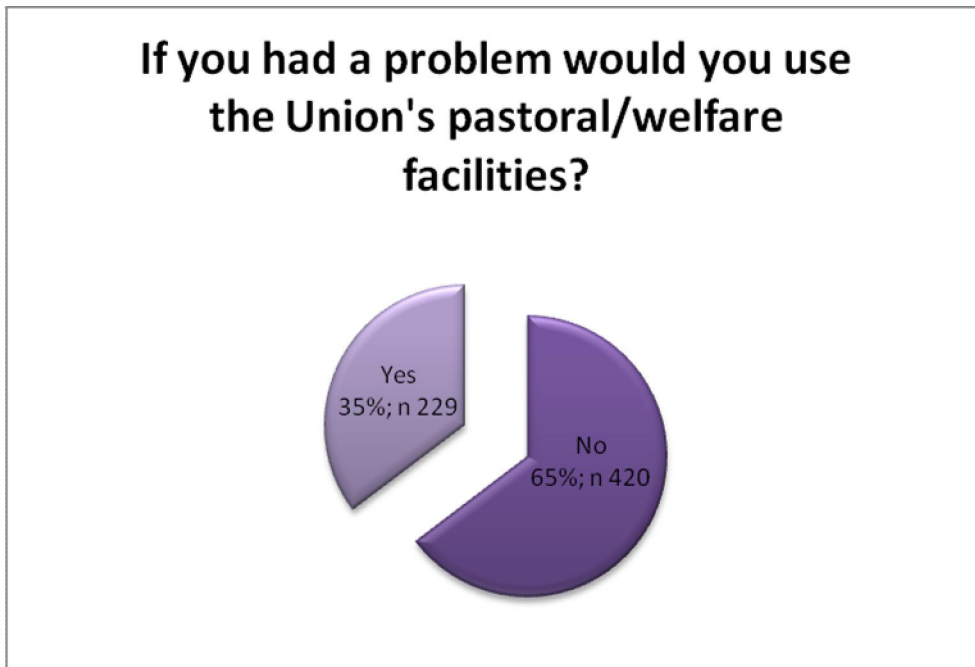
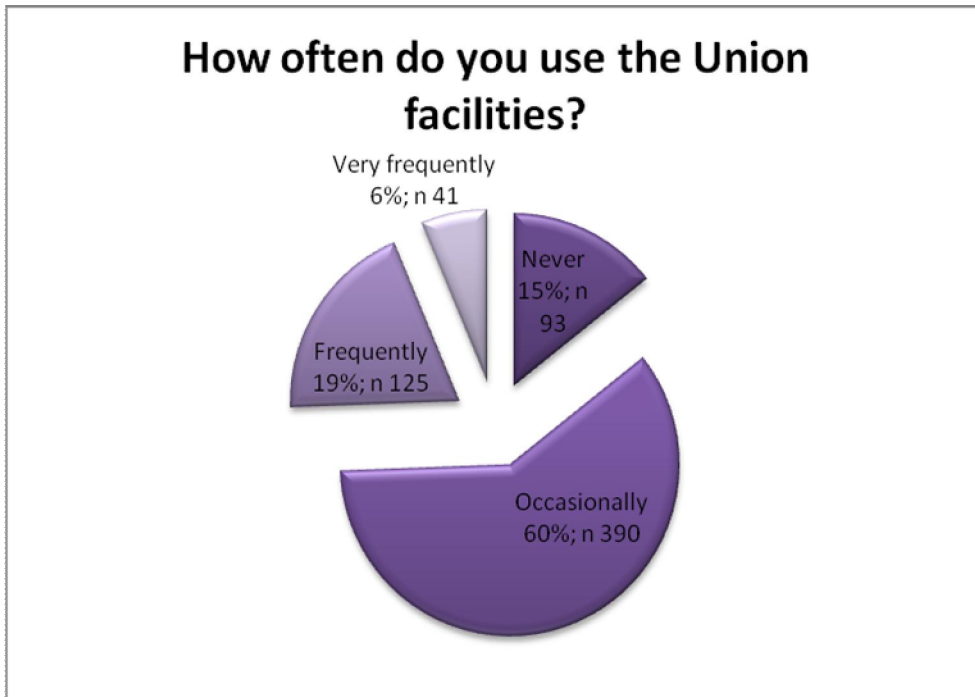
A slight majority are familiar with the Postgraduate Association. Most, however, have not attended any PGA events, mainly because they were unaware of them.



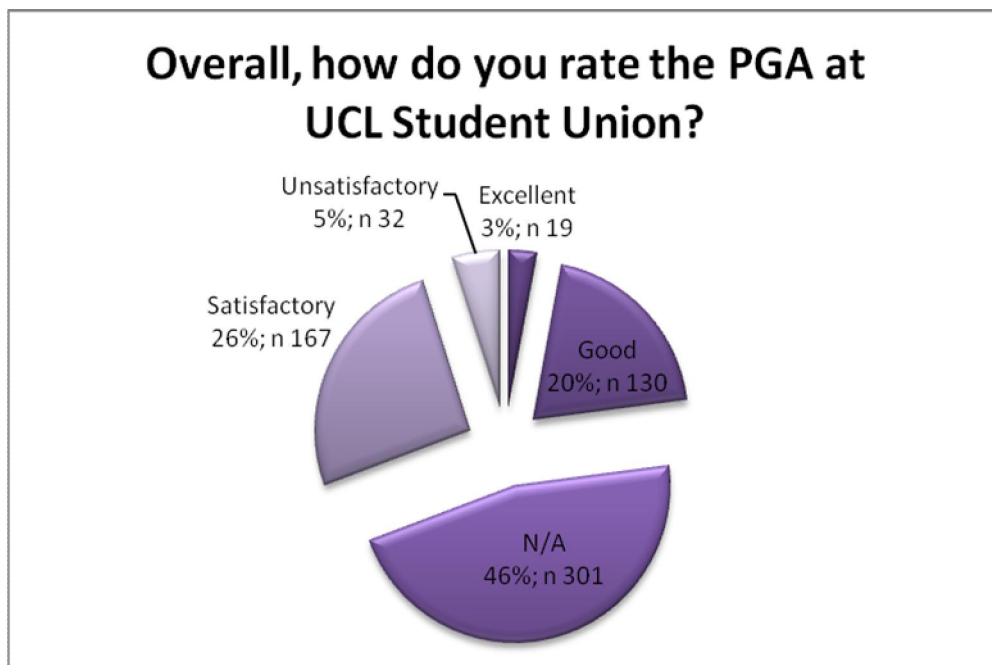
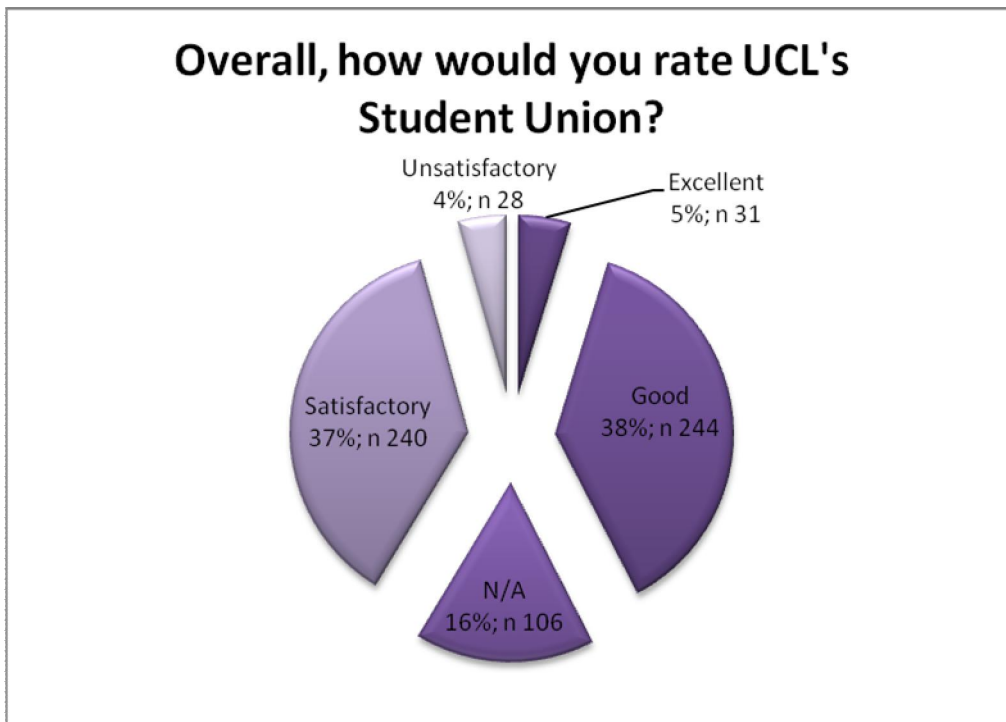
The vast majority of students know where the Union is located. The most popular Union facilities are the cafes, snack bars and shops.



Most respondents use the Union facilities occasionally. Most would not use the Union's pastoral/welfare facilities if they had a problem.



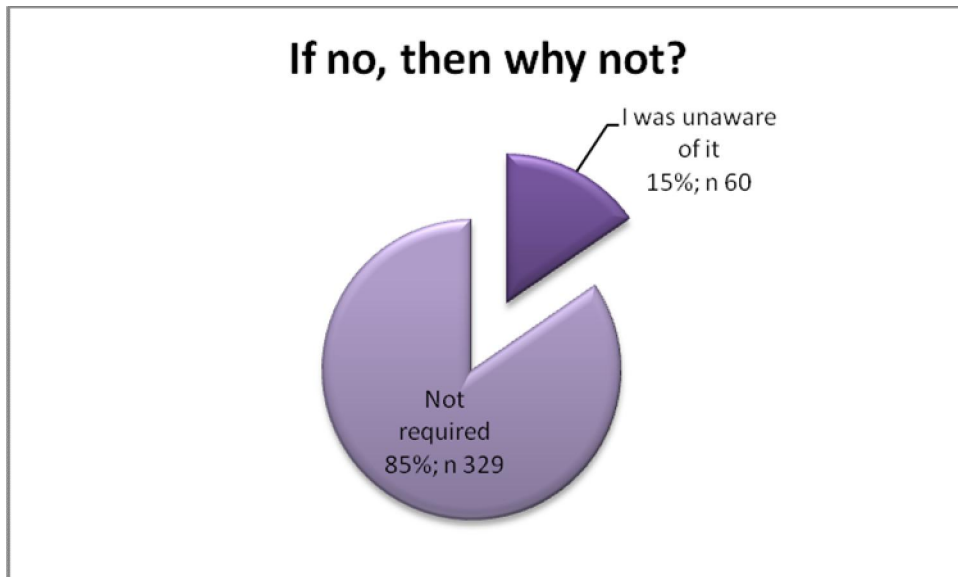
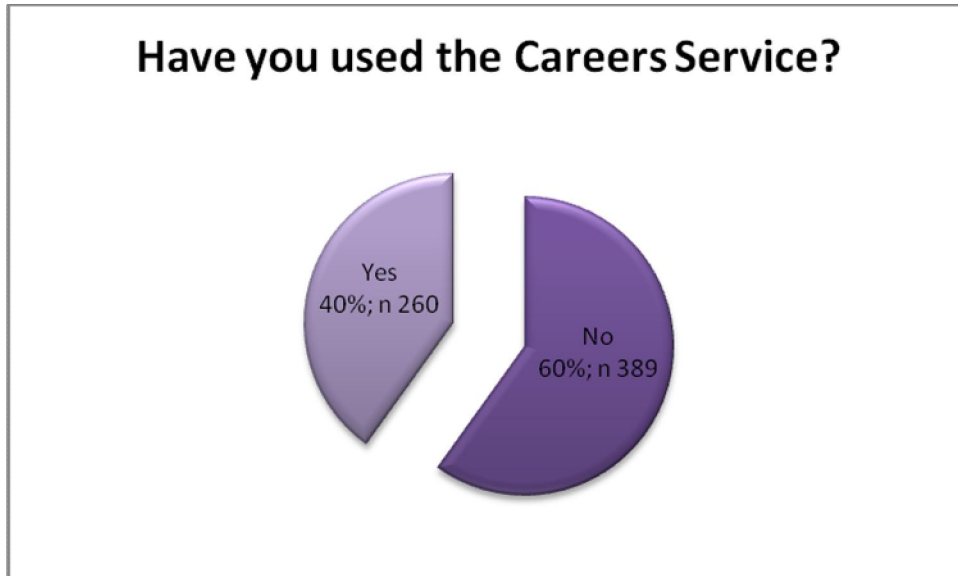
Almost every respondent rated the student union at UCL as “Satisfactory” or better. Of those who were aware of the PGA, a similar proportion also rated it highly.



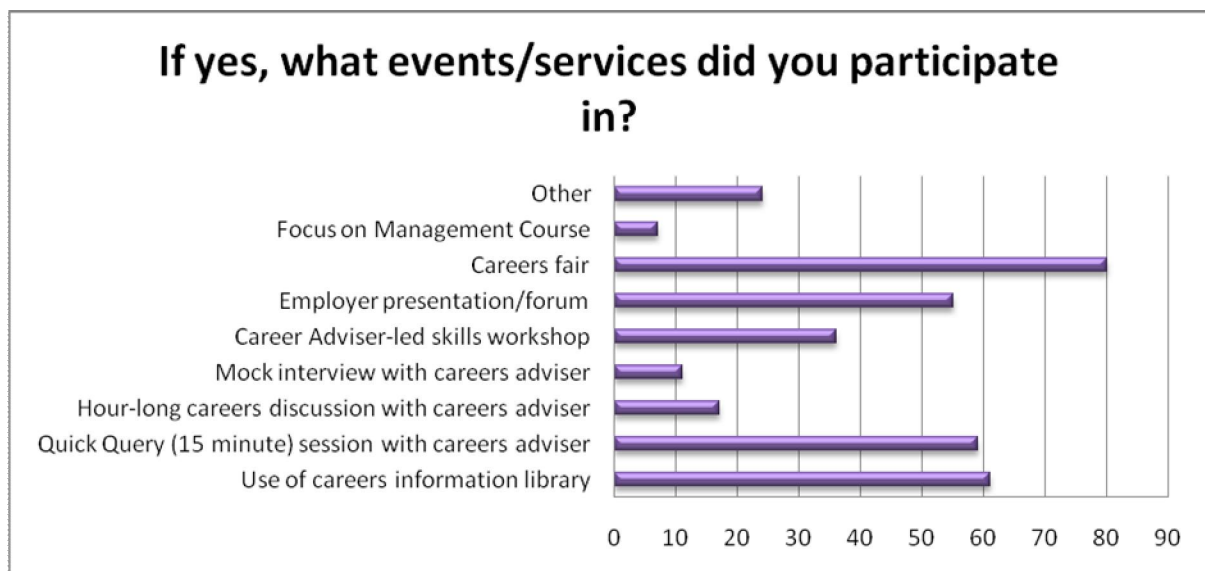
The message that came across most strongly out of the additional comments regarding the student union was that there should be more events not involving alcohol, such as day trips or sport events. Some part time students also felt that the student union did not represent them.

M: Careers

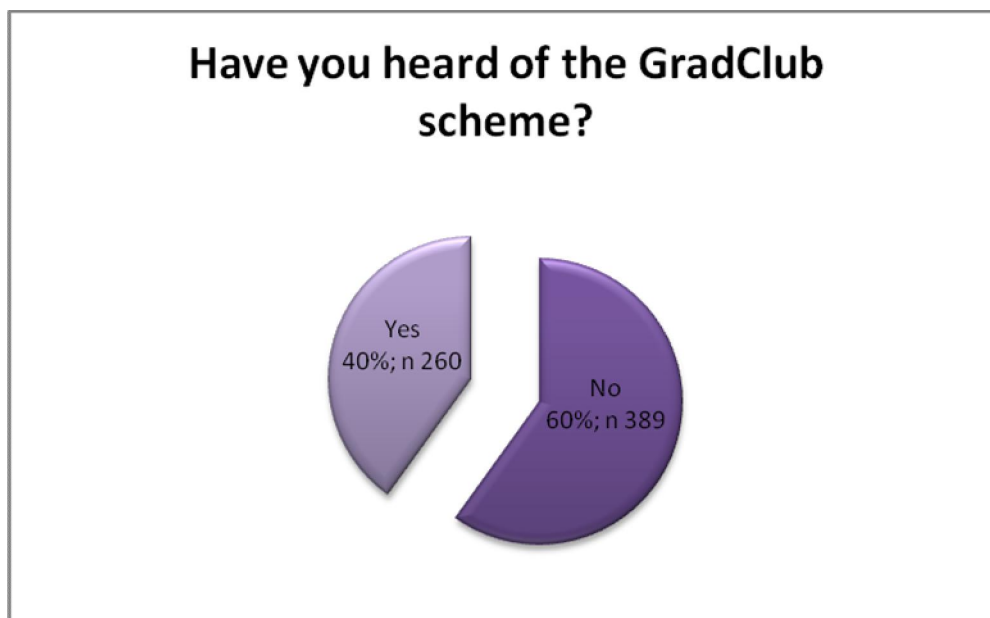
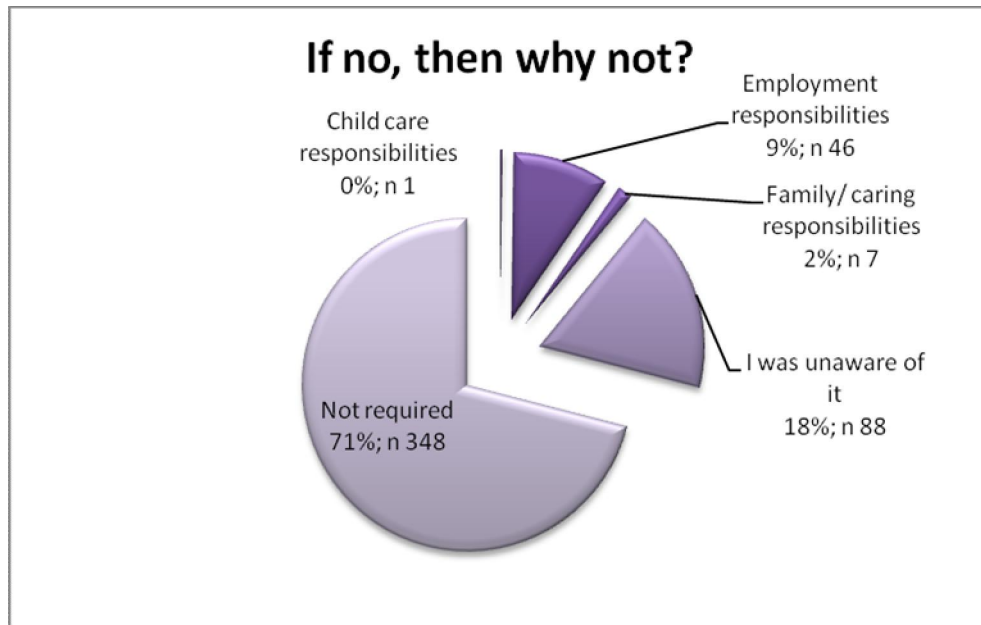
Most students who answered the survey had not used the Careers Service. The main reason cited was because they did not need to.



Most respondents had not engaged with the training or events offered by the Careers Service. Of those that did, the most popular event or service was the Careers fair.



The most common reason why respondents chose not to take advantage of the events and services offered by the Careers Service was because they felt they did not need to. Finally, a majority had never heard of the GradClub.



Although most had never heard of the GradClub, feedback from the additional comments suggested some would have used it, had they know about it. As for the sessions organised by the Careers Service, it was felt that they would be more popular if they were held outside working hours and if they were made more specific to certain fields.

Conclusion

Overall, the data in this survey is positive. The admissions process, housing and student union were generally rated highly. The teaching, library and computing facilities also scored very positively, even if they did generate a lot of negative feedback in the additional comments.

Indeed, although most of the additional comments were negative, only about a third of respondents left any comments at all. Furthermore, many of the comments were constructive in nature and mixed complaints with praise.

The value of this data will no doubt be enhanced if the survey is continued as the Graduate School will then be able to analyse trends over time.