

UCL GRADUATE SCHOOL RESEARCH STUDENT SURVEY JULY 2010

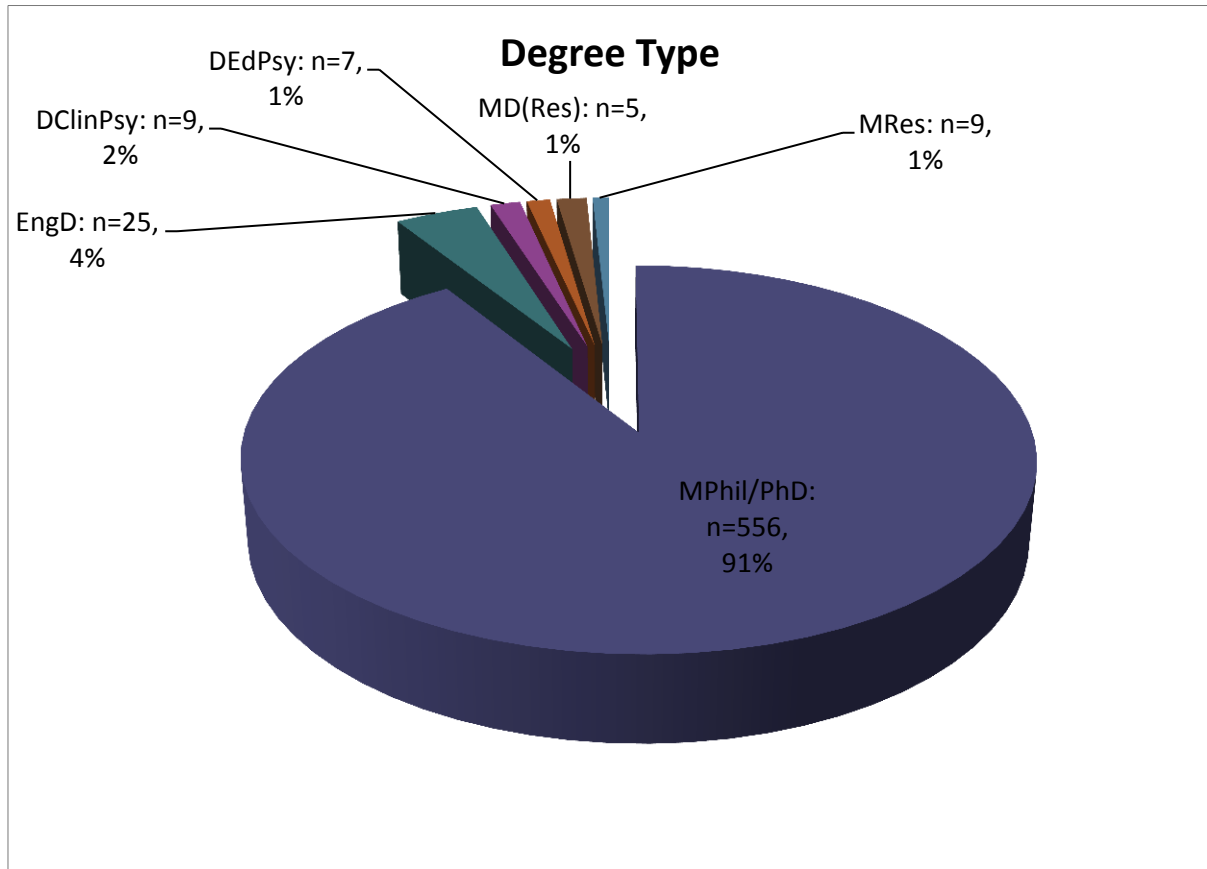
DATA PRESENTATION AND REPORT
Katharine Balolia
JANUARY 2011

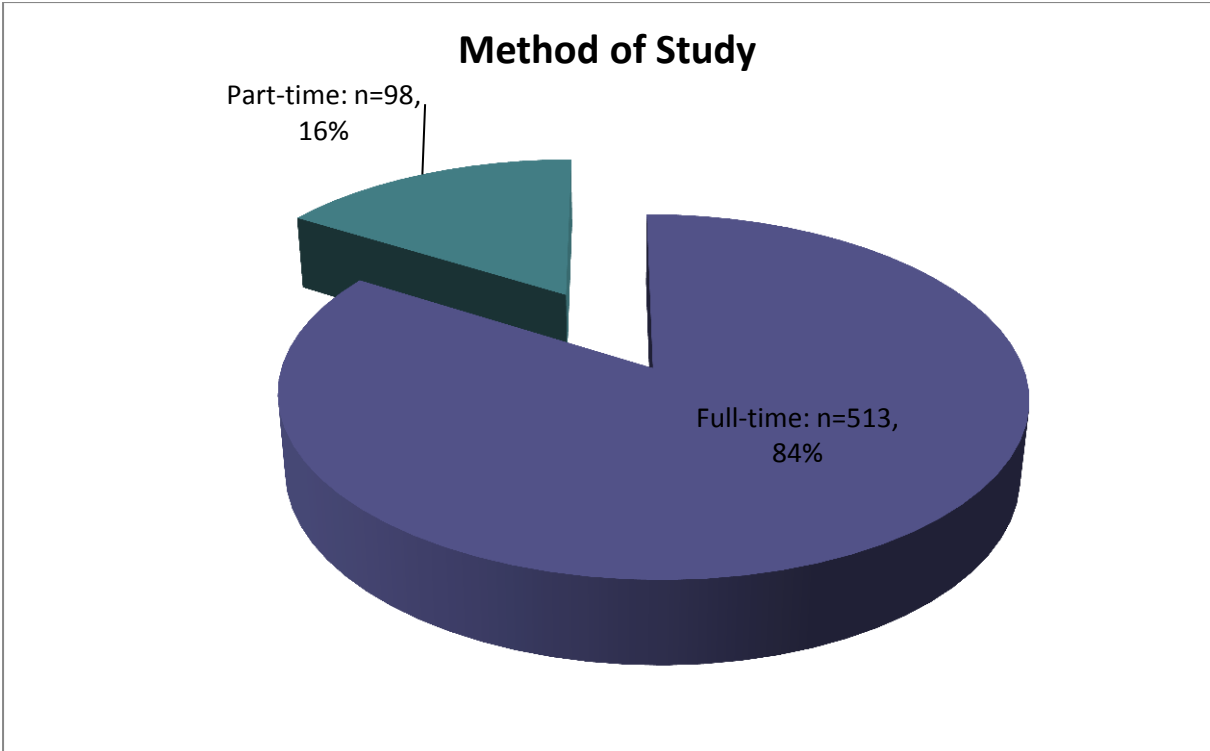
A total of 611 out of 3344 people responded to a research student satisfaction survey, representing 18.3% of the registered research student cohort when the survey was commissioned in July 2010. The survey sampled the student body in order to assess levels of satisfaction regarding the following aspects of the research student experience at UCL: admissions, induction, the Graduate School, research, finances, skills development, the research student log, libraries, computing, the Student Union, the Careers Service and ethics.

Summaries of the responses to each question are presented below, with the exception of questions that asked for additional comments on specific subjects. The total number of respondents is assumed to be 611 unless otherwise noted in individual charts and tables.

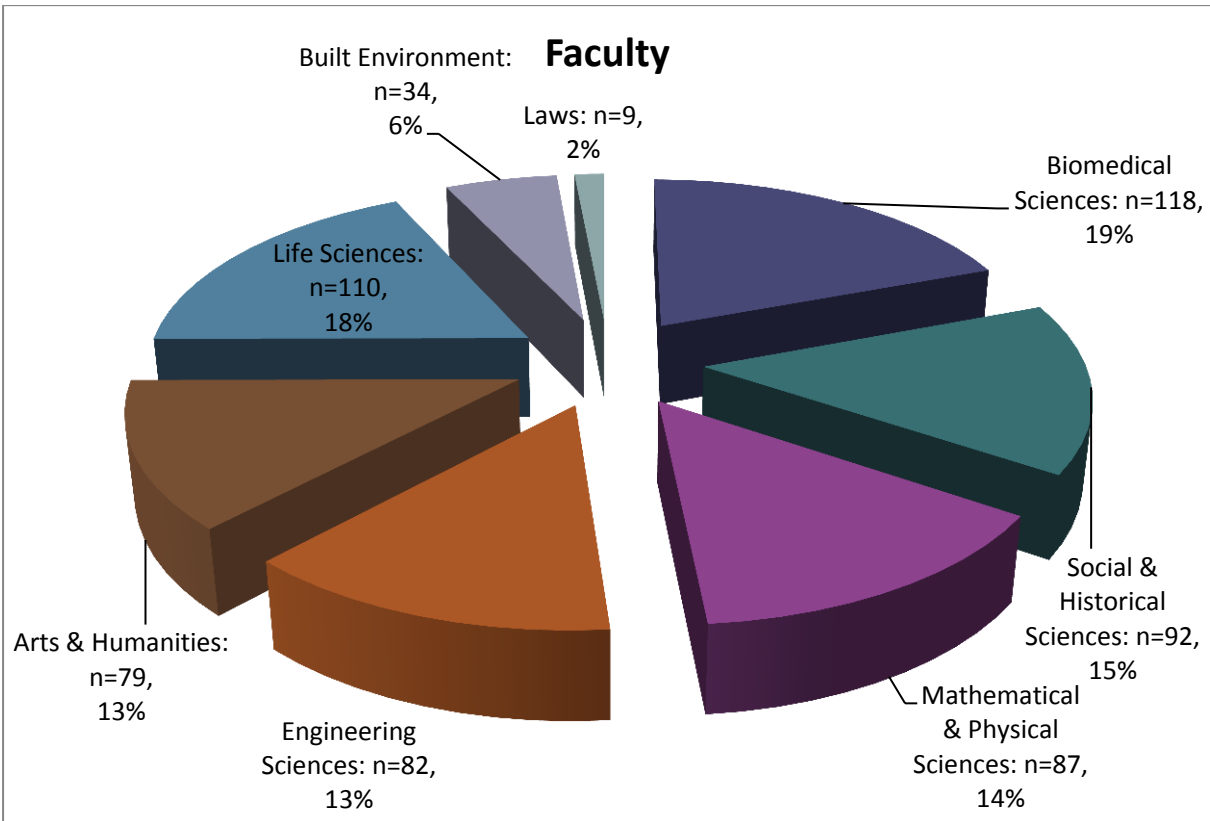
A. INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DEGREE

The majority of research students who responded to the survey are MPhil/PhD students (91%) and the remaining 9% are registered for five other research degree programs. The majority of respondents are registered full-time (84%).



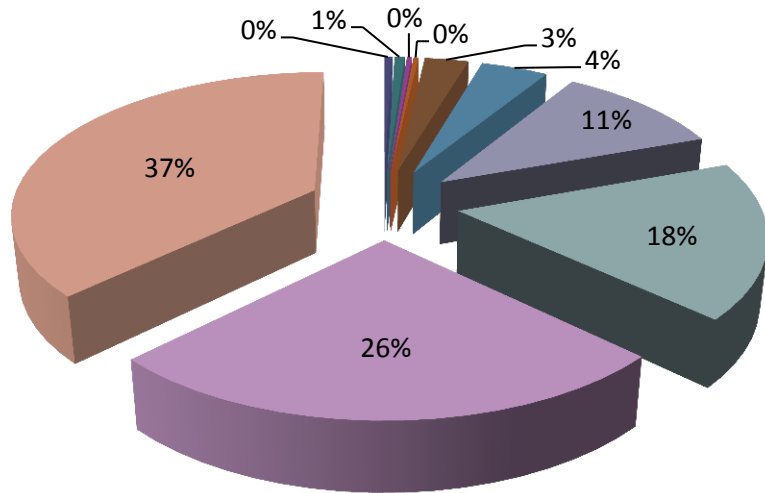


The respondents are registered in eight different faculties, and the majority (91%) began their studies between the 2006-2007 and 2009-2010 academic years.



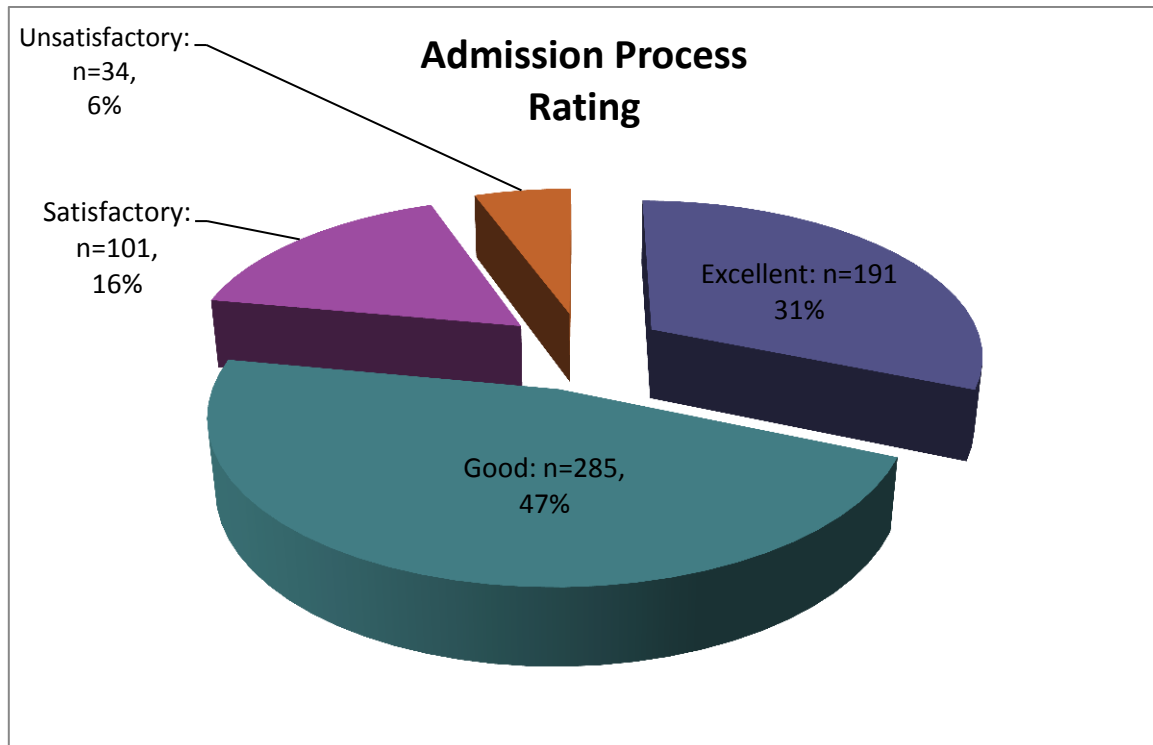
Year of Registration

- 2000/2001
- 2001/2002
- 2002/2003
- 2003/2004
- 2004/2005
- 2005/2006
- 2006/2007
- 2007/2008
- 2008/2009
- 2009/2010

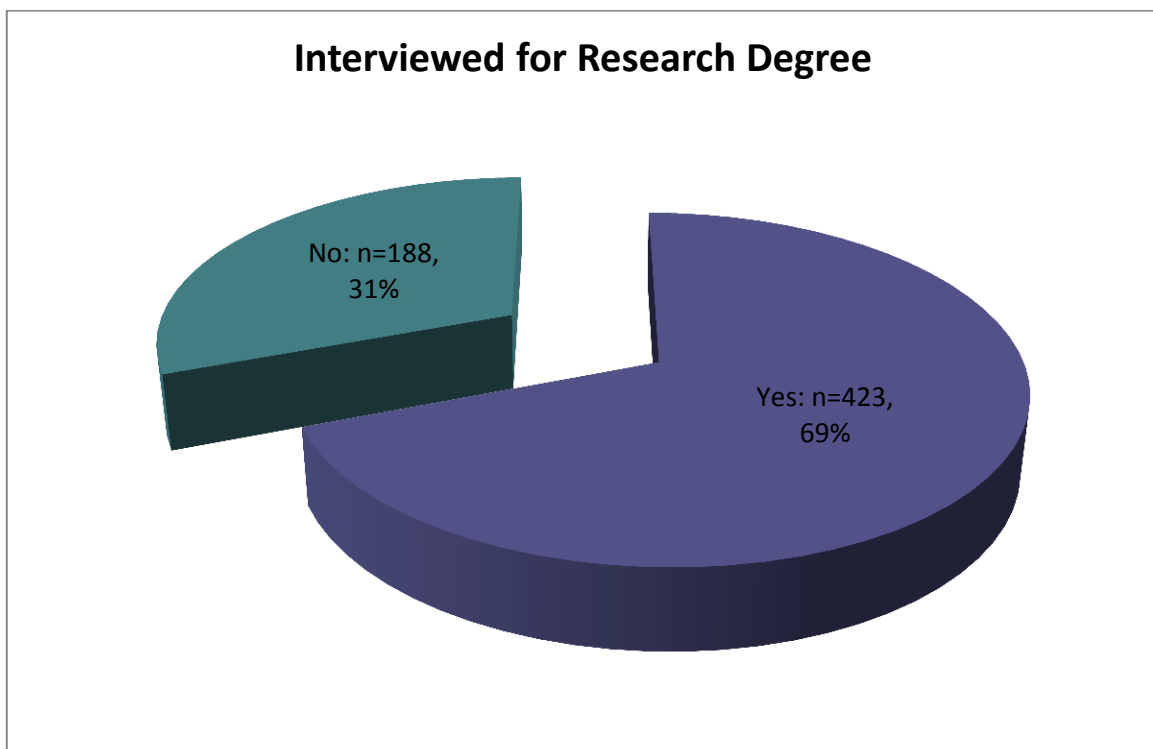


B. ADMISSIONS AND SELECTION

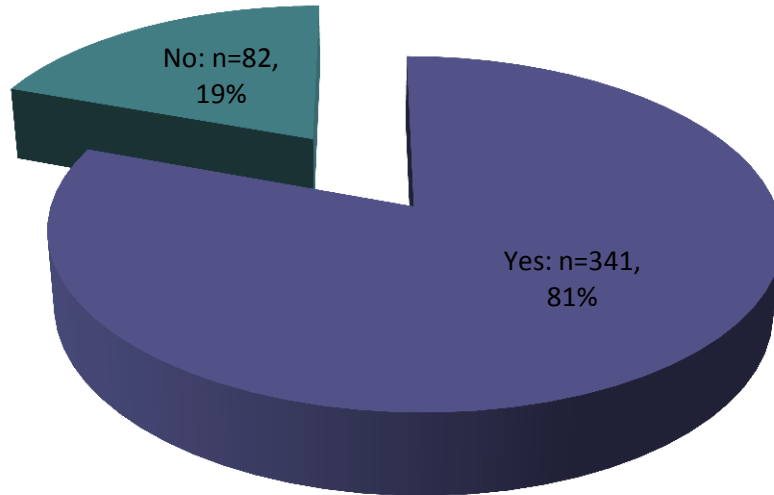
The majority of students (78%) rated the admissions process excellent (31%) or good (47%). Only 6% found that the process was unsatisfactory.



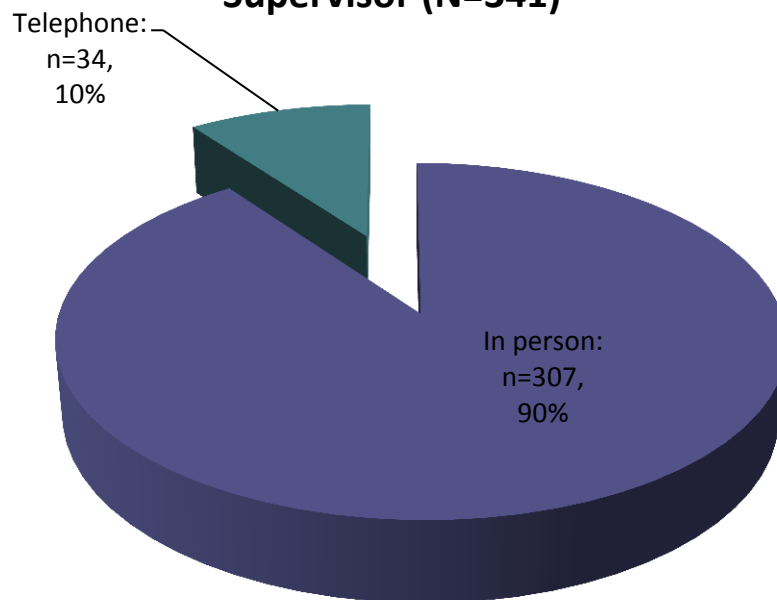
69% of students were interviewed during the admissions process. 81% of these students were interviewed by their supervisor. These interviews were mainly conducted in person (90%), with 10% of interviews being conducted by telephone.



Interview Conducted by Supervisor (N=423)

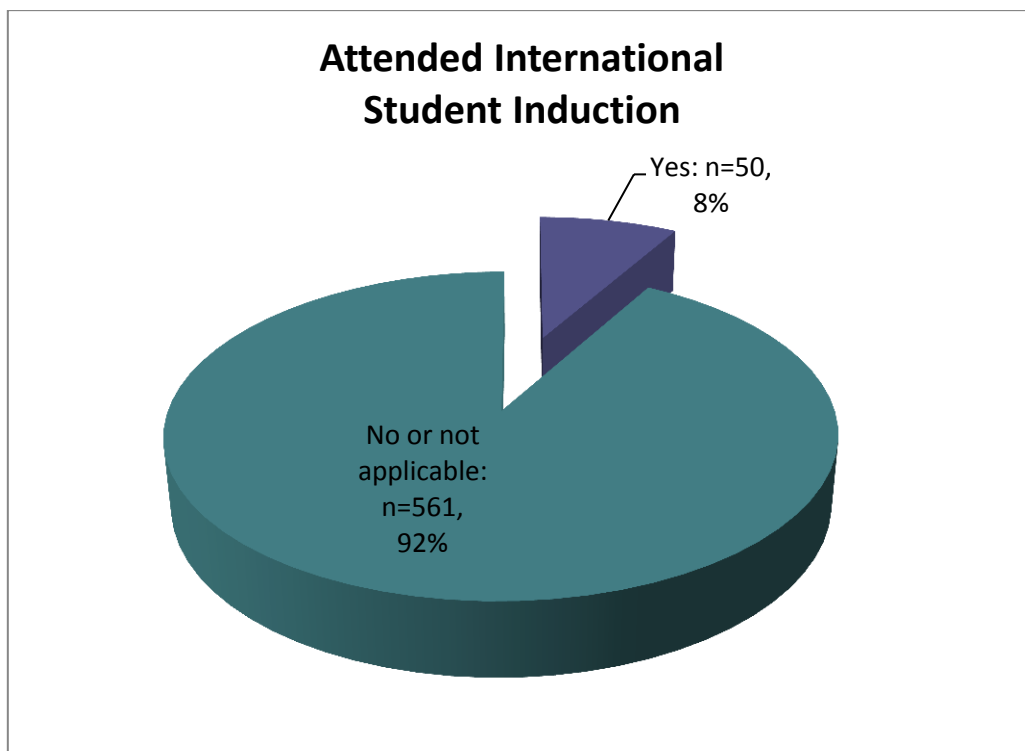
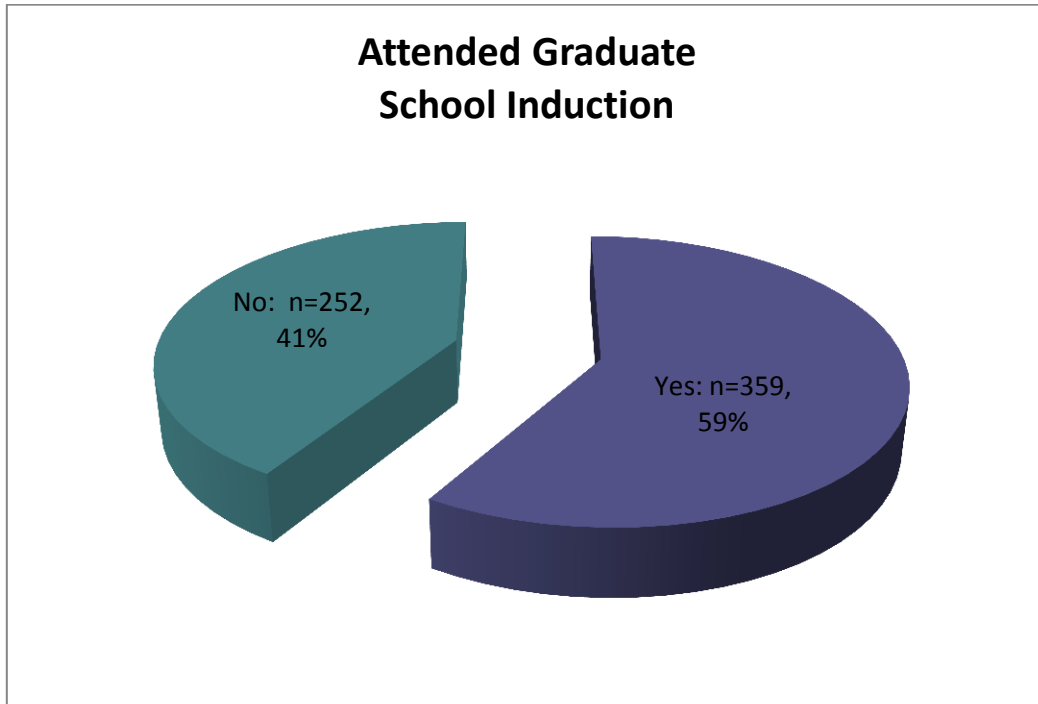


Format of Interview with Supervisor (N=341)

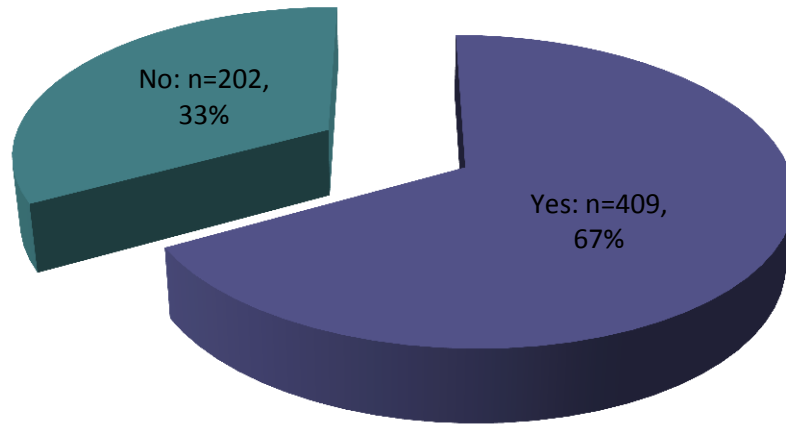


C. INDUCTION

59% of students who responded attended the Graduate School welcome/induction programmes. 8% of those who responded attended the international students induction (however please note that only 95, i.e. 16% of the total respondents are registered as international or overseas students – see Section F later in this report for these data). Departmental or Faculty induction programmes were attended by 67% of respondents.



Attended Departmental or Faculty Induction



D. UCL GRADUATE SCHOOL

The following table summarises the various ways in which the surveyed students had heard of the UCL Graduate School. Note that respondents could select every option that applied. Only 4.3% of the surveyed students had not heard of the UCL Graduate School.

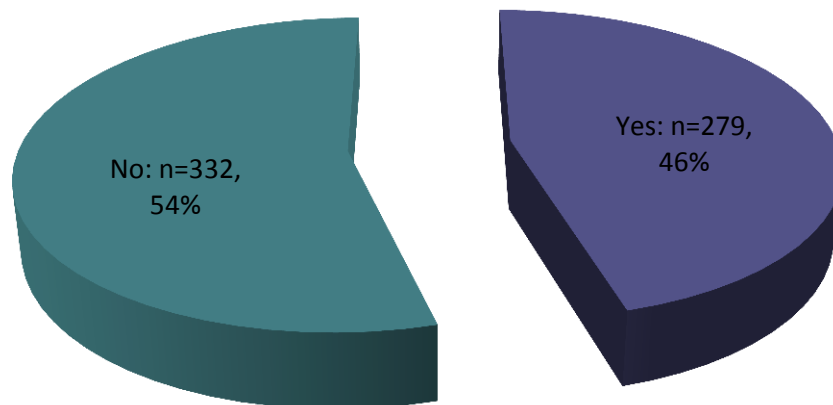
	N	% of 611
Website	237	38.8
Graduate School Handbook	158	25.9
Some other way	154	25.2
UCL Prospectus	137	22.4
Departmental Graduate Tutor	137	22.4
Friend	64	10.5
UCL Union Postgraduate Association	36	5.9
Never heard of it	26	4.3

The surveyed students have contacted the Graduate School for a number of reasons, which are summarised in the table below. Respondents could select all that applied. The most popular reason for contacting the Graduate School is for the skills courses and workshops offered (52.4%). 26.7% of students have never contacted the Graduate School.

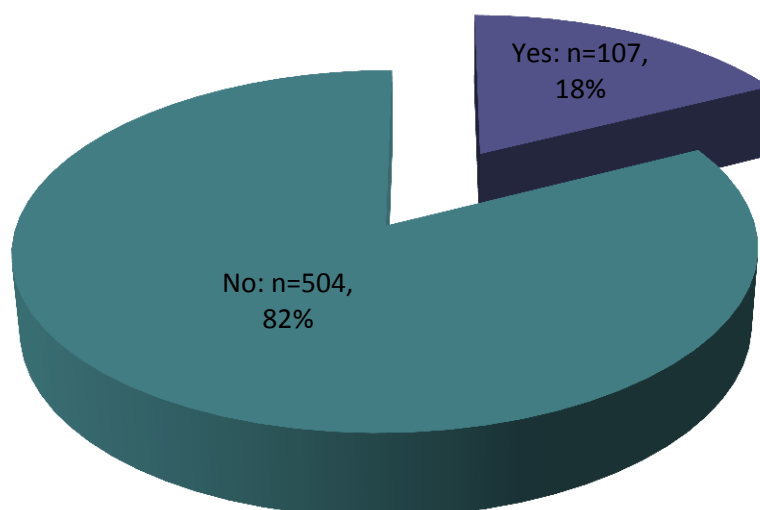
	N	% of 611
Skills Courses/Workshops	320	52.4
Funds	205	33.6
Never	163	26.7
Scholarships	147	24.1
Help/Advice	85	13.9
Regulations/Code of Practice	77	12.6
Poster Competition	67	11
Ethics	50	8.2
Research Images as Art Competition	36	5.9

The Graduate School supports a Graduate Common Room in the South Junction of the Wilkins Building at the central UCL campus on Gower Street. Approximately half of those who responded have heard of this room. 18% of students surveyed have made use of this room.

Awareness of Graduate Common Room

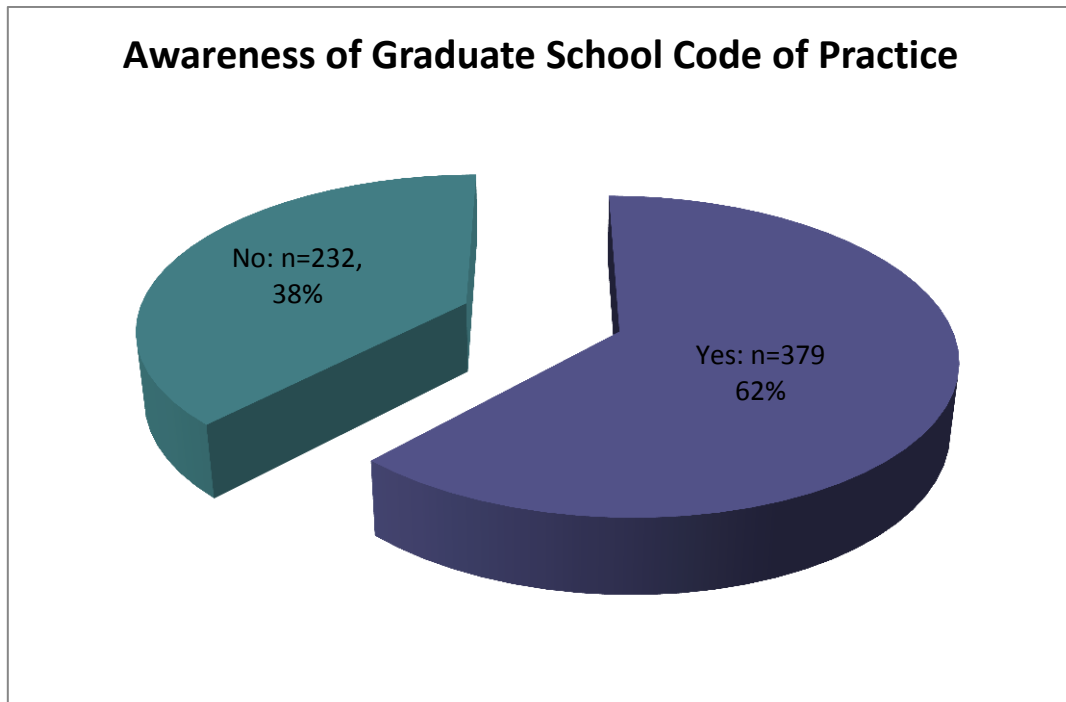


Use of Graduate Common Room



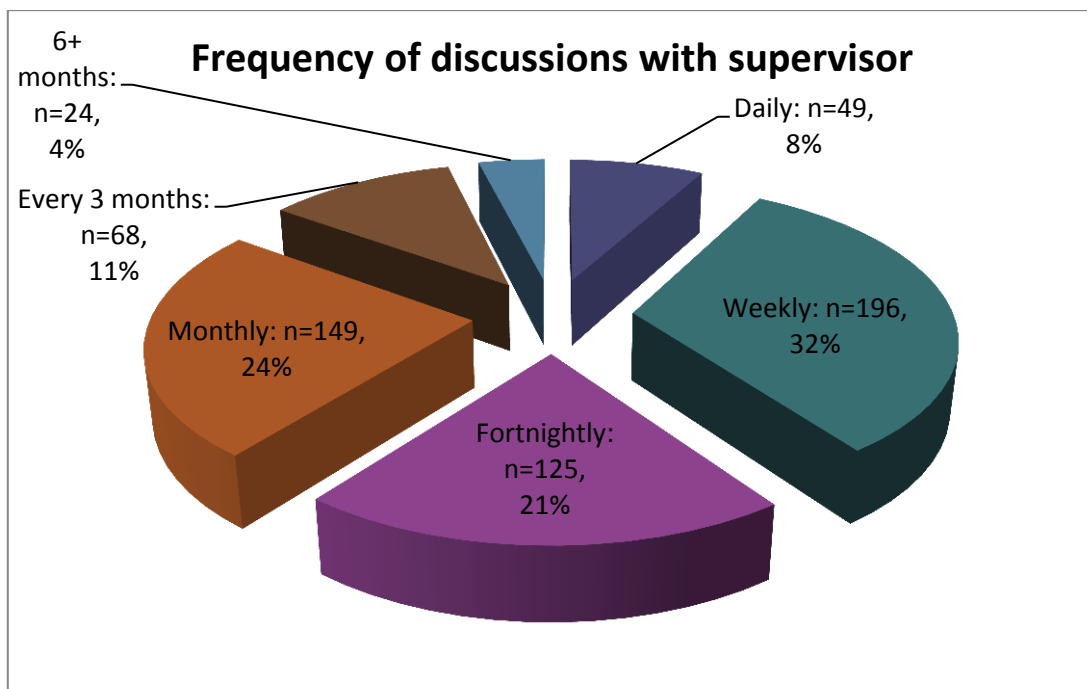
E. RESEARCH

Over half of the surveyed students (62%) who answered this question are aware of the UCL Graduate School Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees.



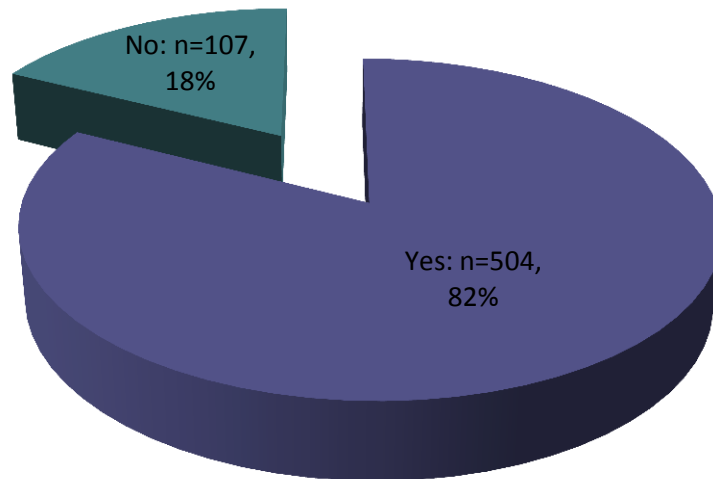
PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR

The majority of research students meet with their principal supervisor *at least* once a month (daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly), with only 15% meeting with him/her every three (11%) or six months (4%).

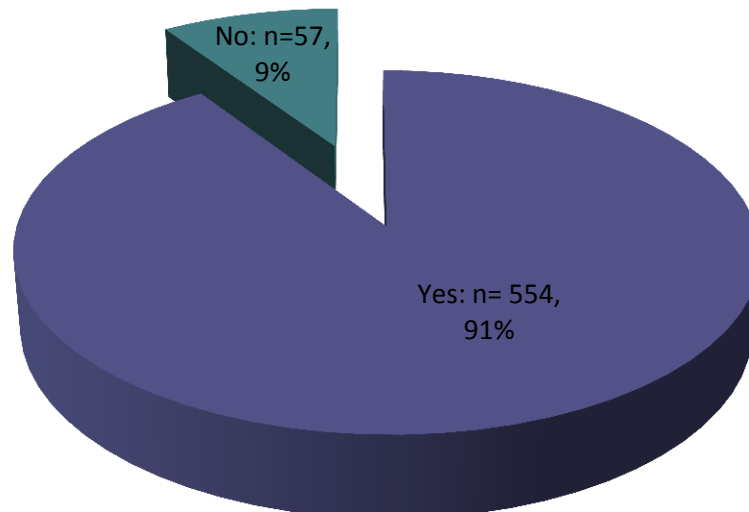


Feedback from the principal supervisor is described as frequent by 82% and constructive by 91% of respondents.

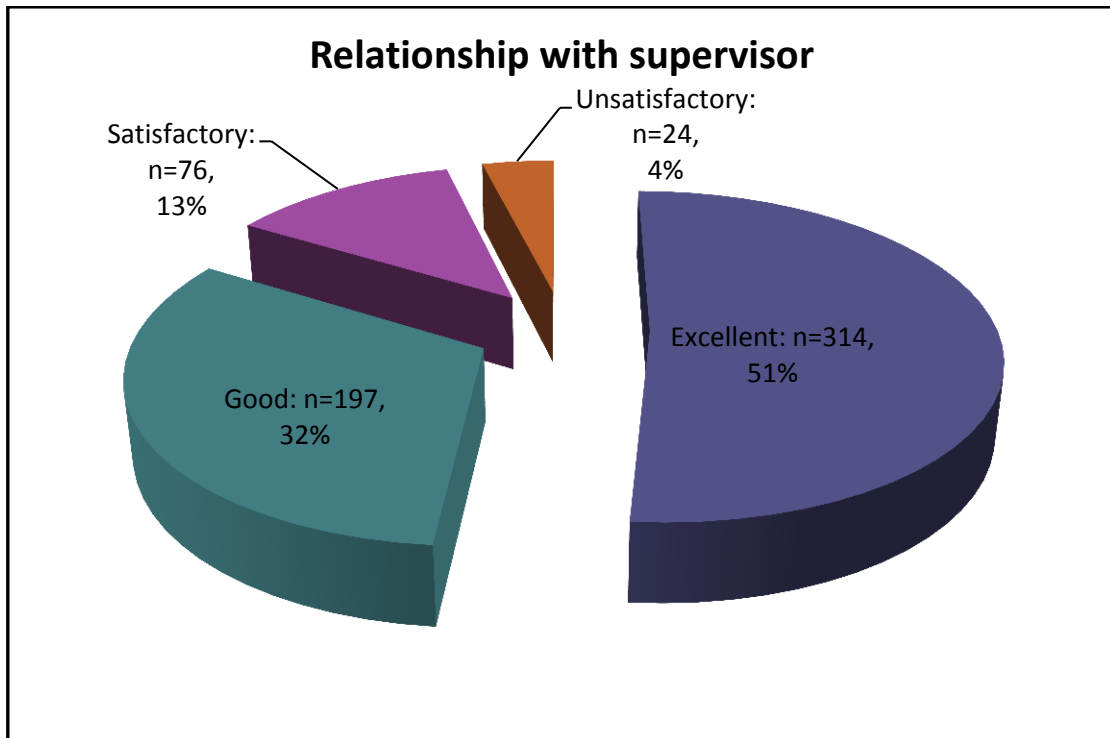
Frequent feedback from supervisor



Constructive feedback from supervisor

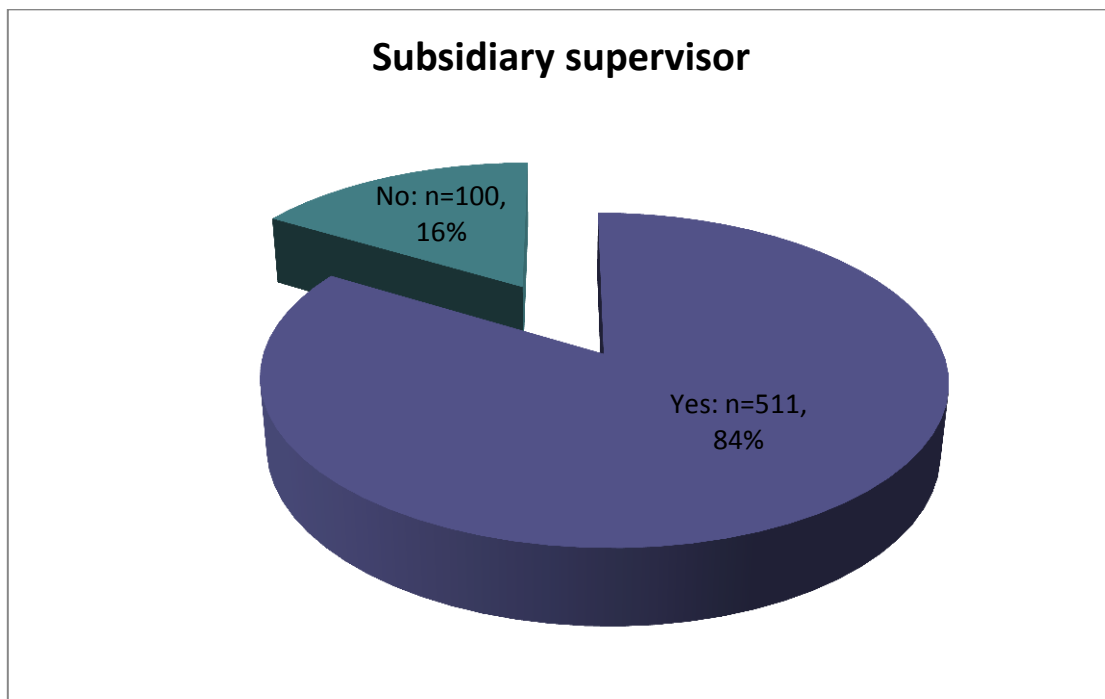


A total of 83% of students describe their relationship to their principal supervisor as either excellent or good and only 4% feel that the relationship is unsatisfactory.

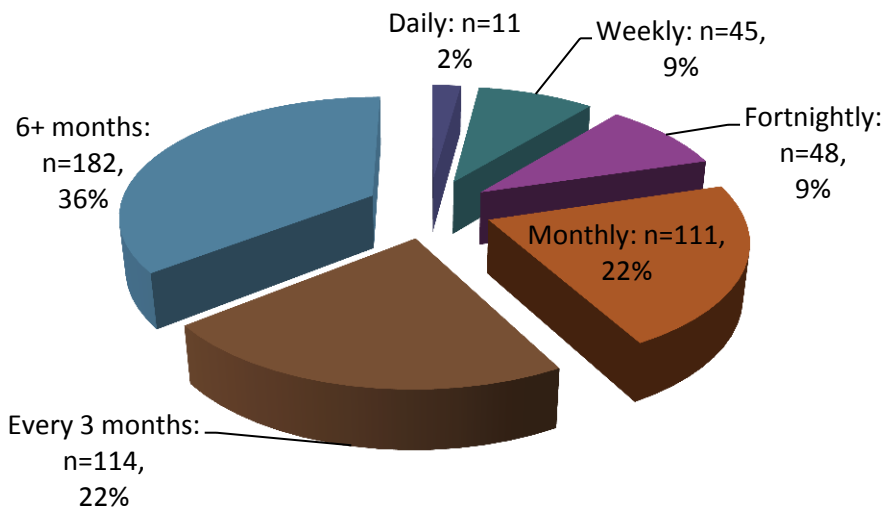


SUBSIDIARY SUPERVISOR

A total of 511 of the surveyed students have a subsidiary supervisor. They report that meetings occur less frequently than with the principal supervisor, with more than half (58%) meeting with him/her approximately every three (22%) or six (36%) months.

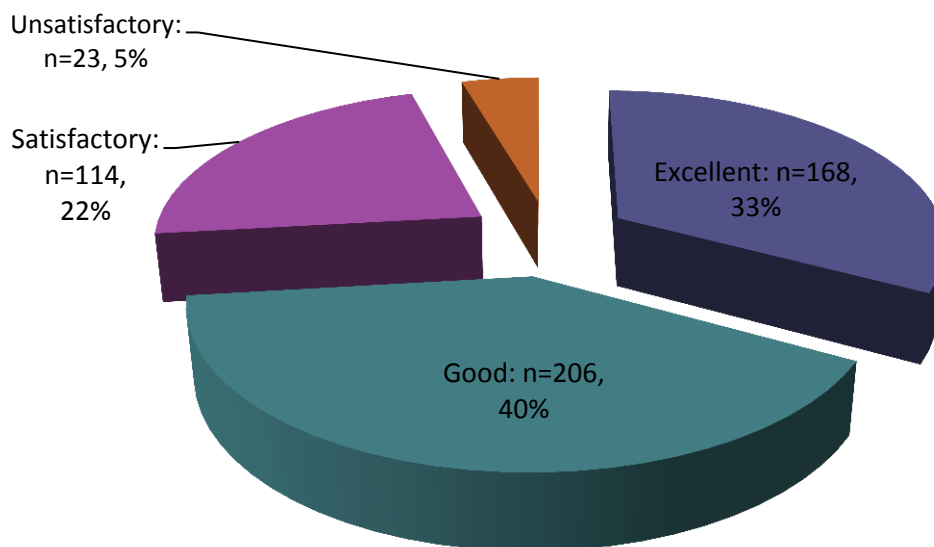


Frequency of discussions with subsidiary supervisor (n=511)



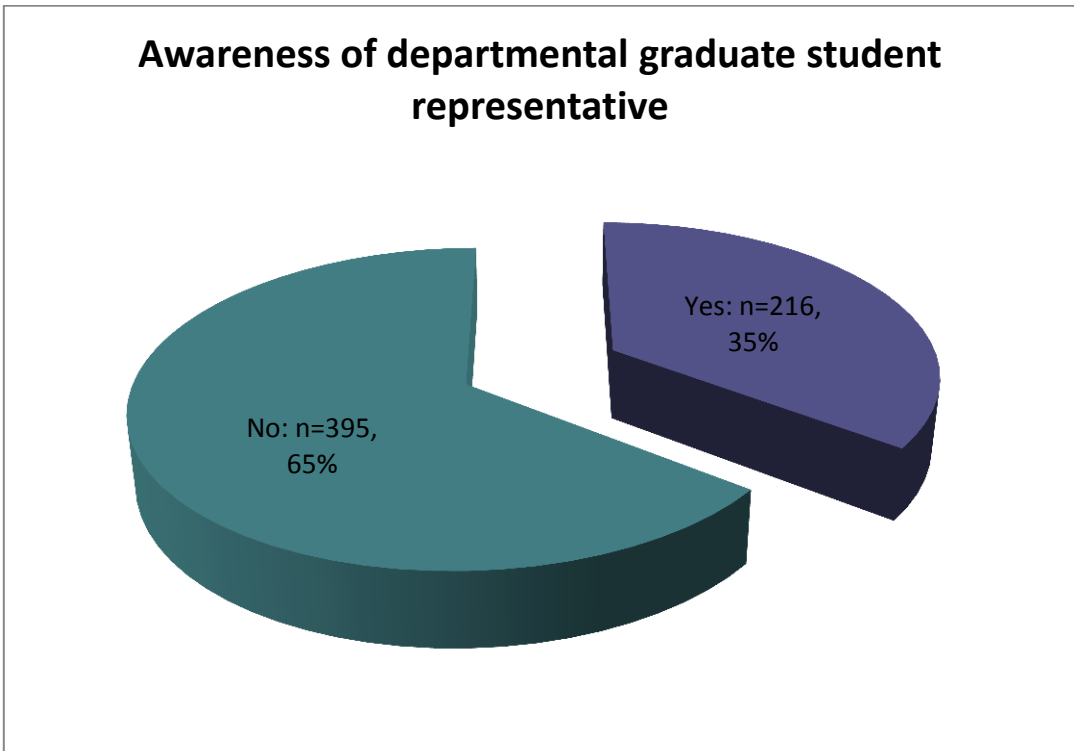
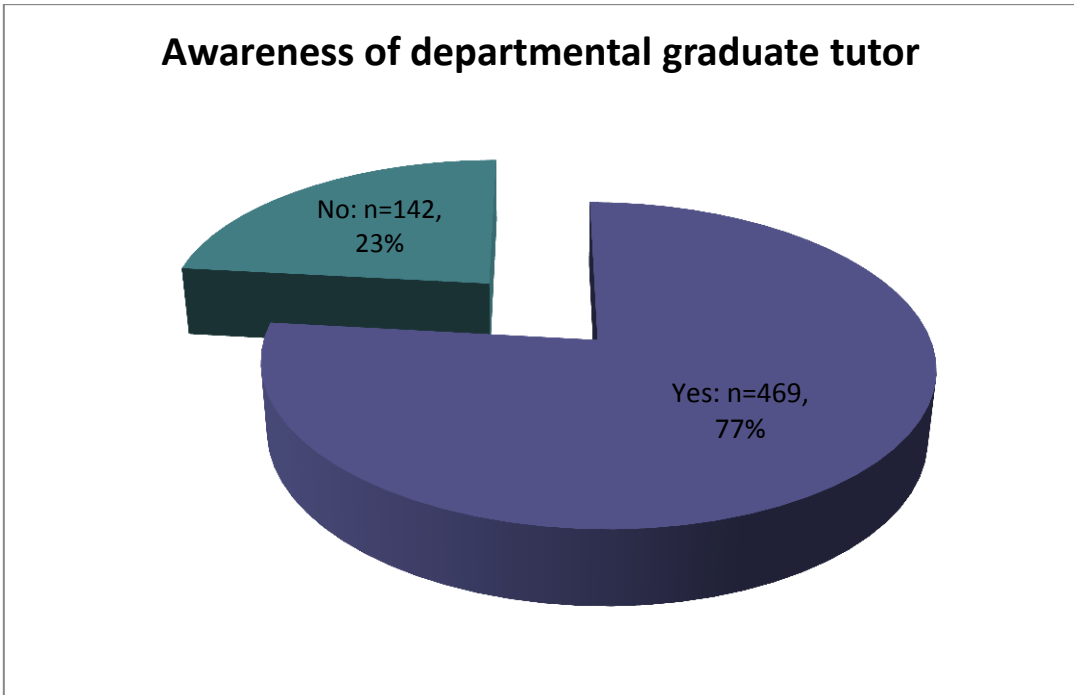
The relationship is described as either excellent or good by 73% of students. 22% feel the relationship is a satisfactory one, while only 5% feel it is not satisfactory.

Relationship with subsidiary supervisor (n=511)



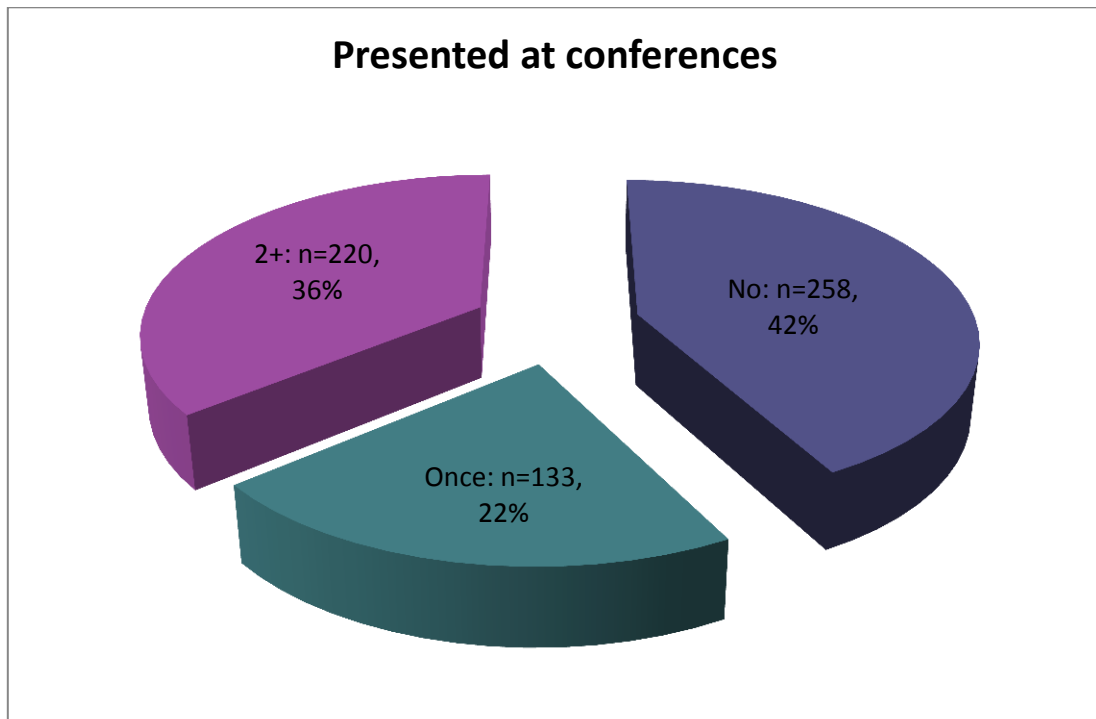
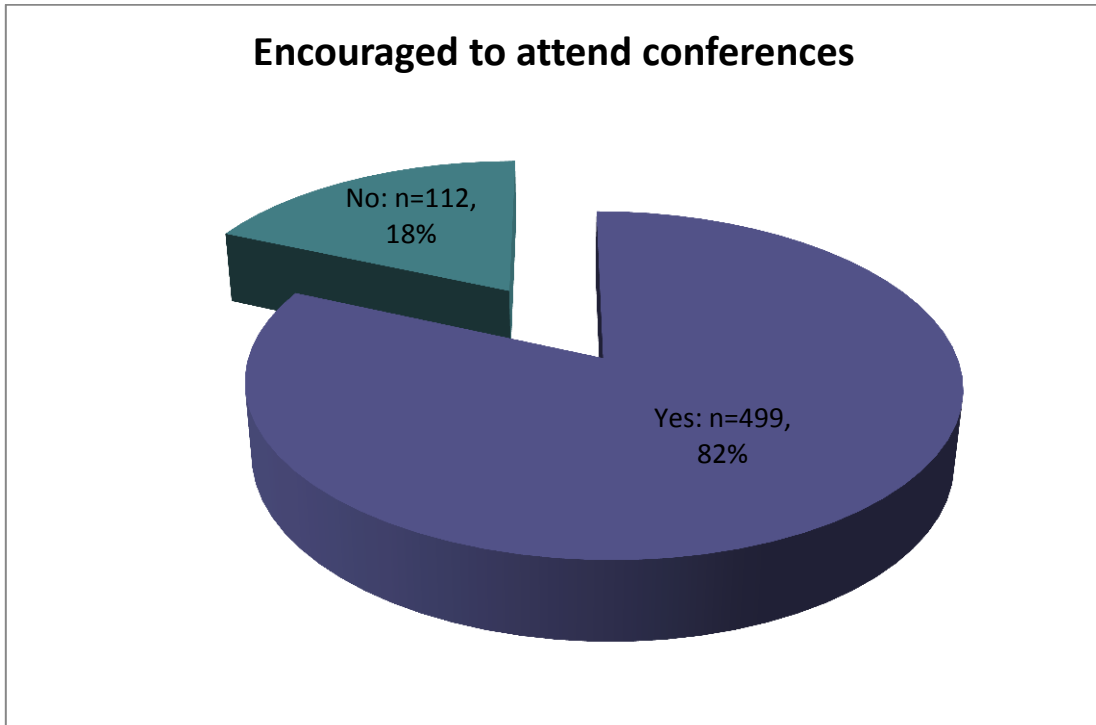
STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

77% of respondents are aware of their departmental graduate tutor, while only 35% are aware of their departmental graduate student representative.



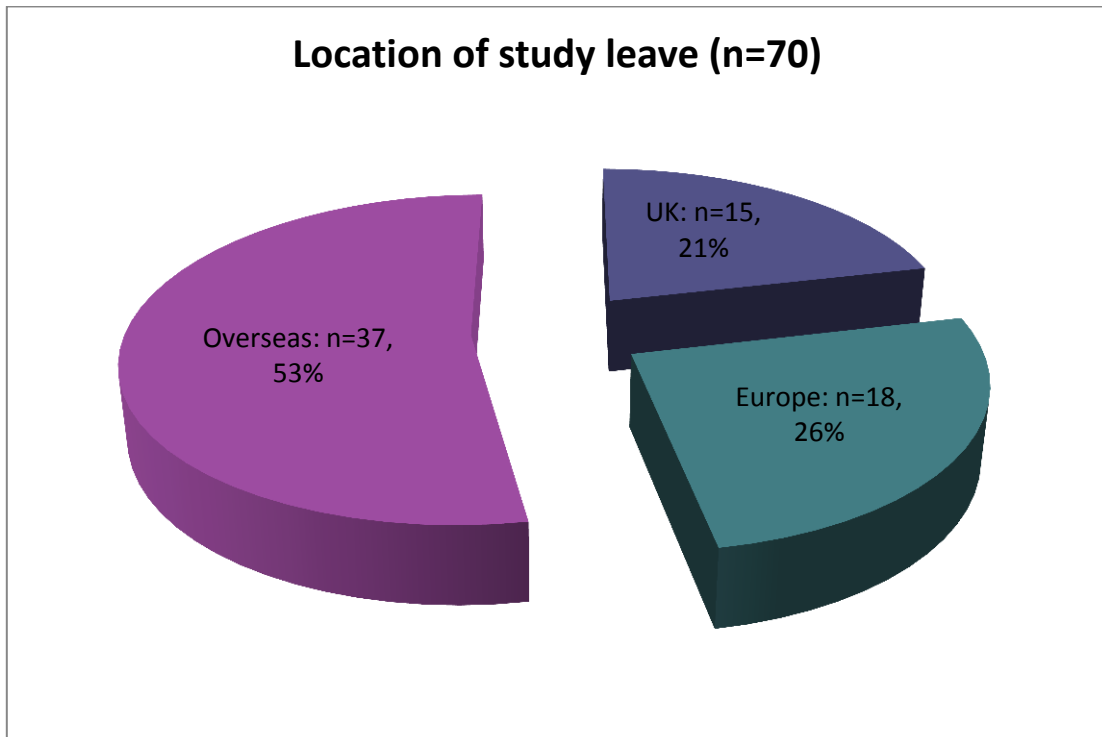
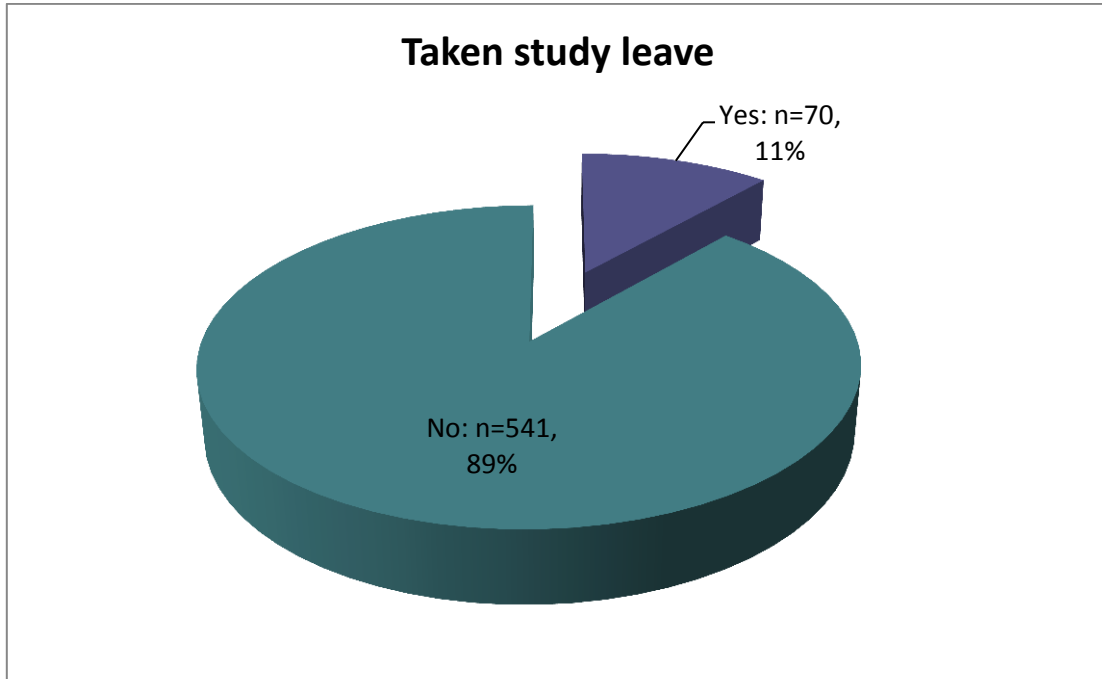
CONFERENCES

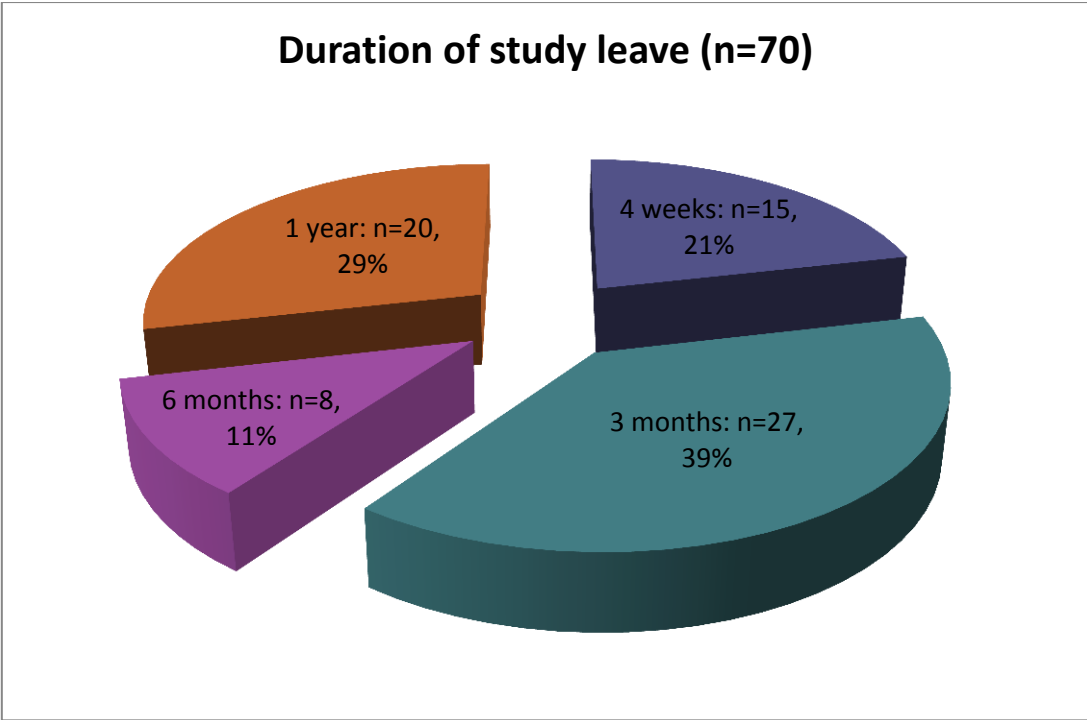
The majority of students (82%) feel that their supervisors encourage them to participate in conferences, but 42% of students have not done so. However, 36% of students have presented at or been involved in a conference on two or more occasions.



STUDY LEAVE

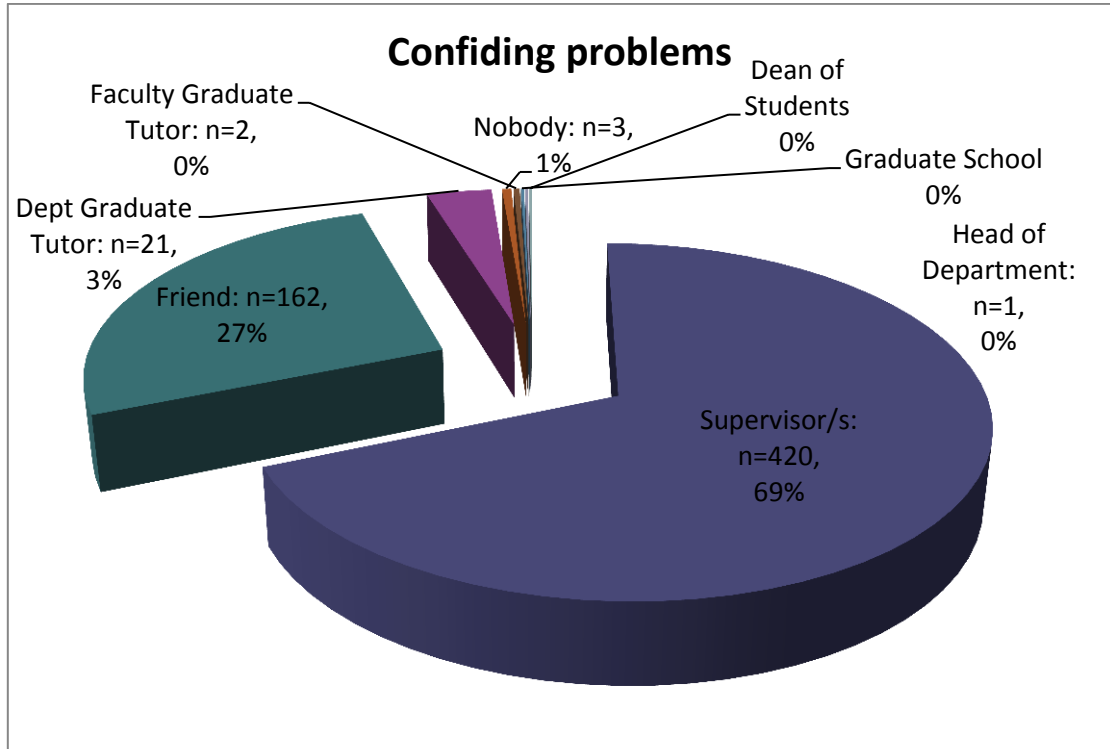
Only 11% of the respondents have taken study leave during the course of their research degree. Out of these 70 students, only 21% of them have remained in the UK during this time. Half of the students (50%) have taken study leave that lasted more than one but less than six months. 40% of the students have taken study leave between six months to one year.

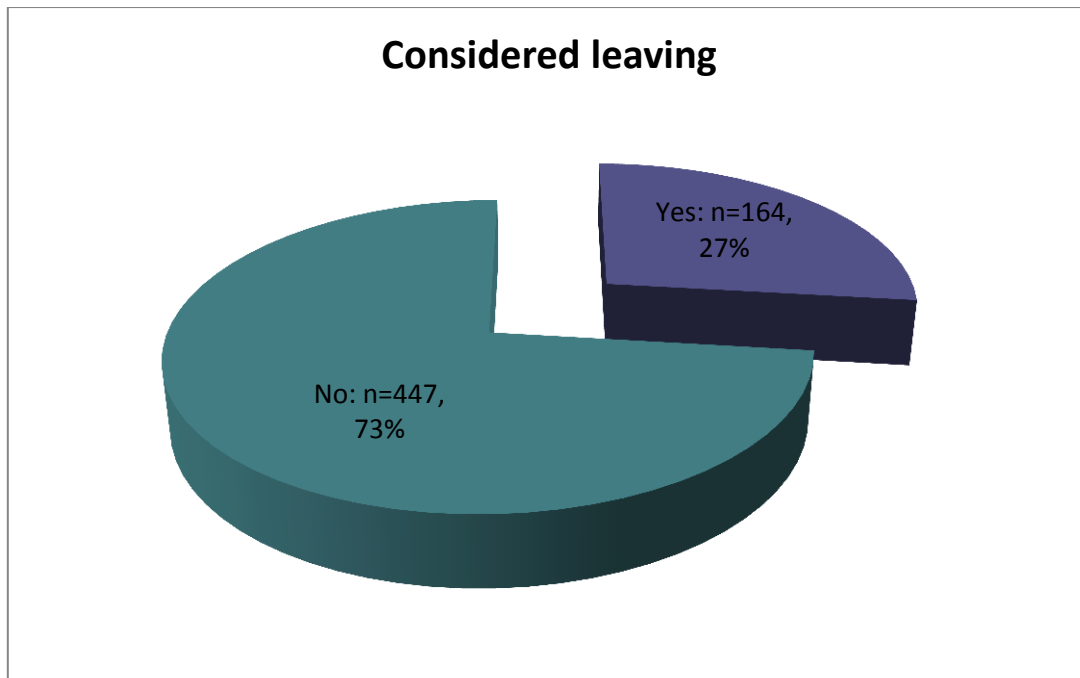




PROBLEMS WITH STUDY

The majority of students (69%) would confide in their supervisors if they encountered problems during their research degree. 27% would confide in a personal friend, while smaller numbers would seek help and advice elsewhere in the university. Just over a quarter of the students (27%) have considered leaving their course.



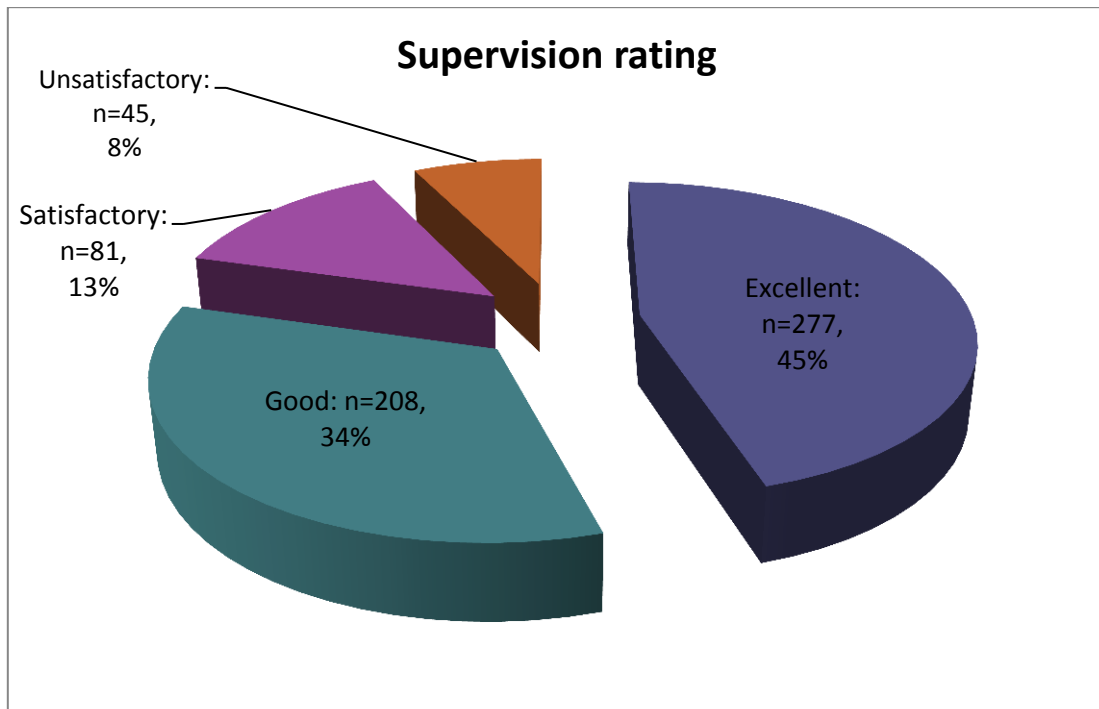
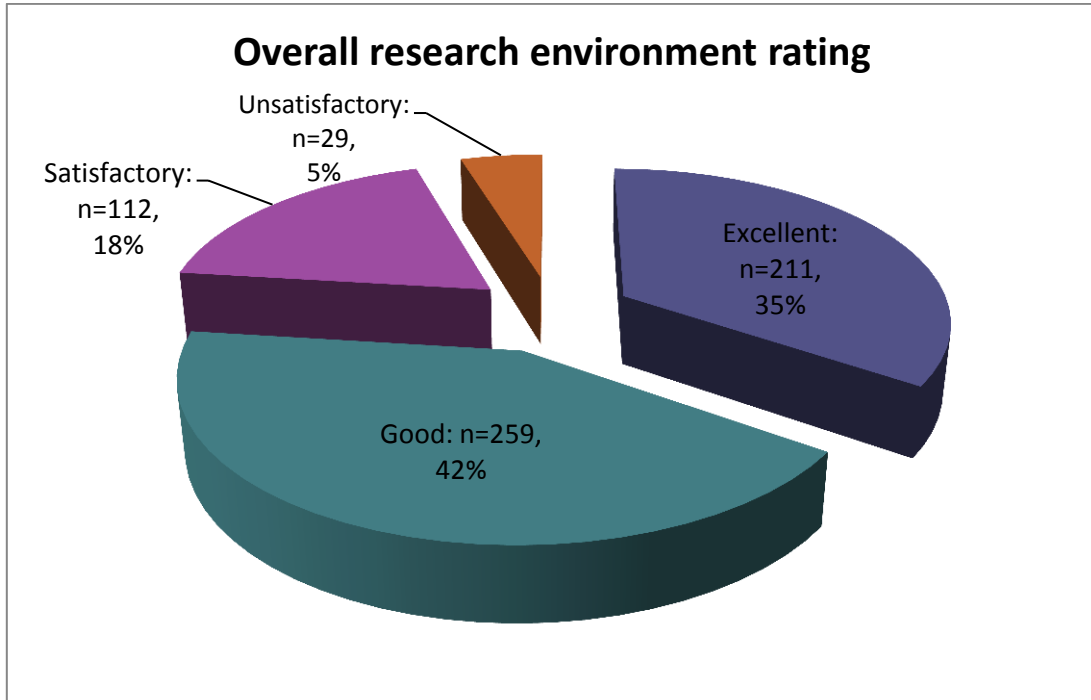


The table below summarises the problems that students feel have affected their research programme. Please note that respondents could select all options that applied. The most common difficulties experienced by 37.5% and 24.5% of the survey population, relate to personal circumstances and personal finances, respectively. Conflicts with supervisors have affected approximately 14% of the surveyed students.

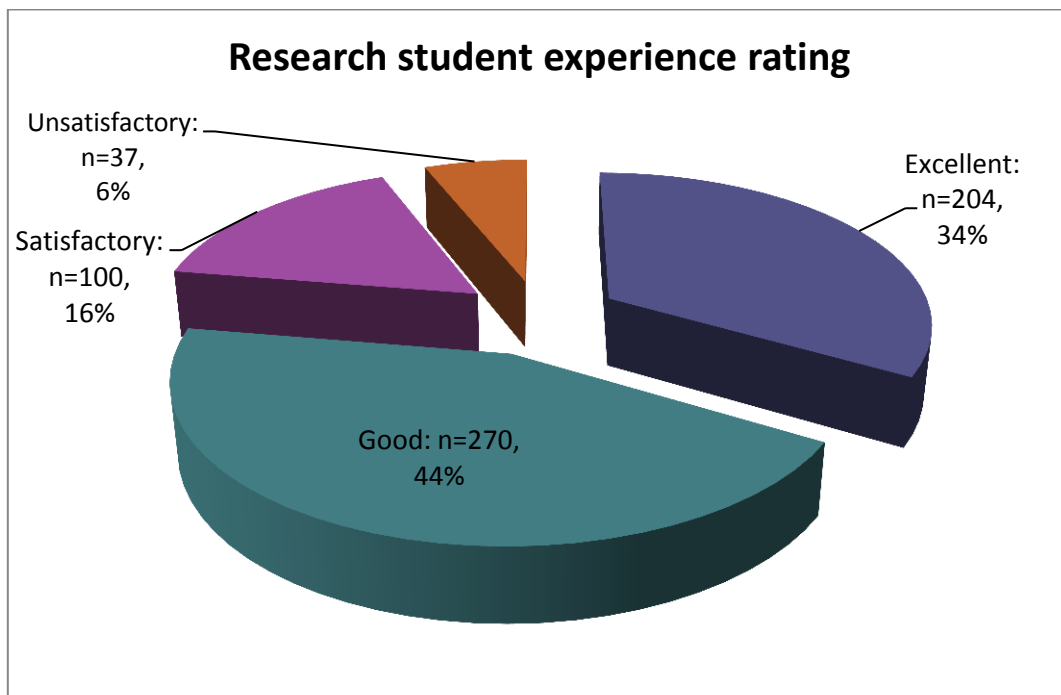
	N	% of 611
Personal circumstances	229	37.5
N/A	226	37.0
Personal finance	150	24.5
Lack of equipment/facilities	114	18.7
Conflict with supervisor	85	13.9
Project finance	66	10.8

OVERALL RATINGS

When considering the overall research environment at UCL the majority of the surveyed students feel that it is excellent (35%) or good (42%). Only 5% feel that it is an unsatisfactory. 79% would rate their experience with supervision as excellent or good. 8% of students would rate their supervision as unsatisfactory. (see also the sub-section regarding supervision above).

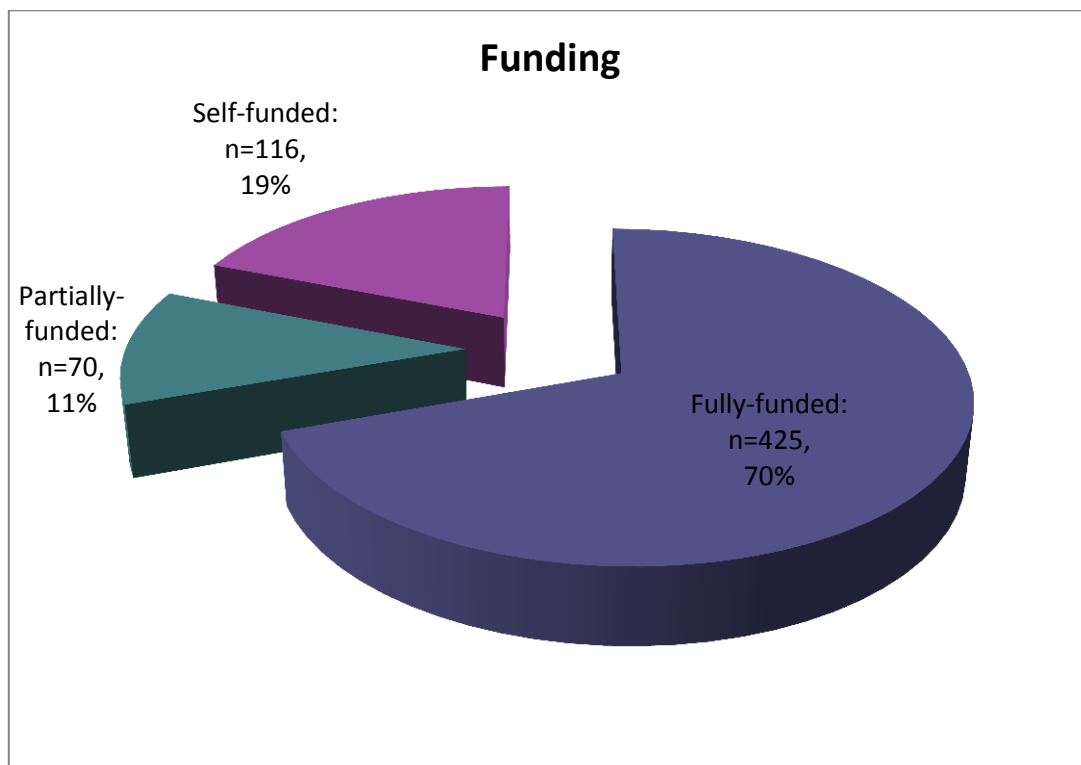
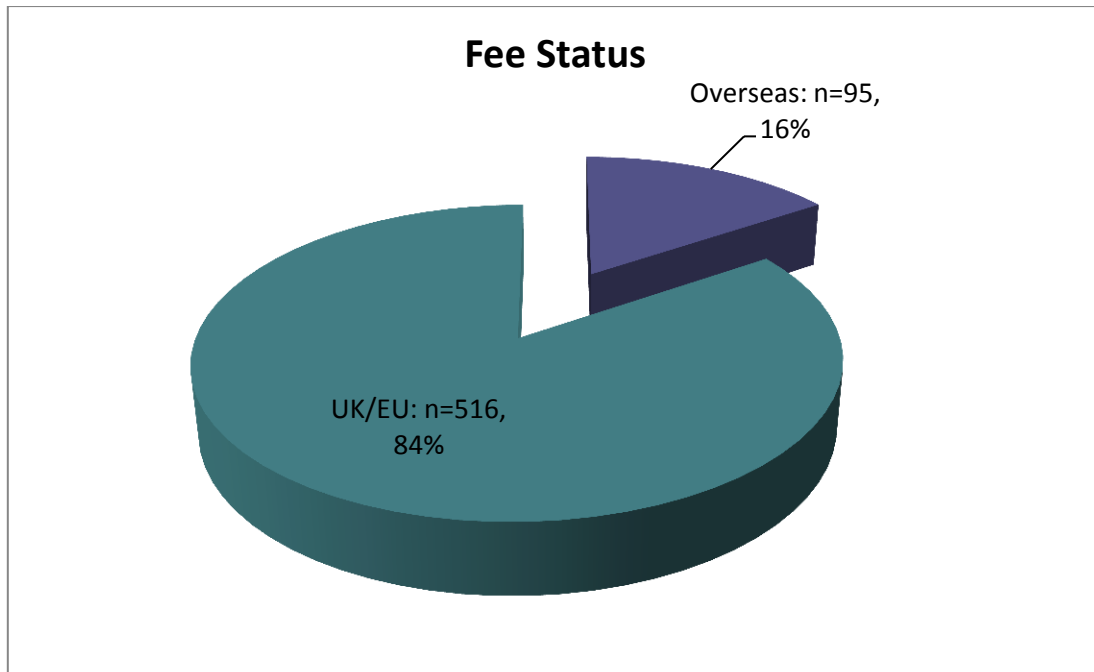


When asked to consider their overall experience as a research student, 78% of respondents report that it has been excellent or good. Approximately one-third (34%) rate their overall experience as excellent. Only 6% feel that it has been unsatisfactory.

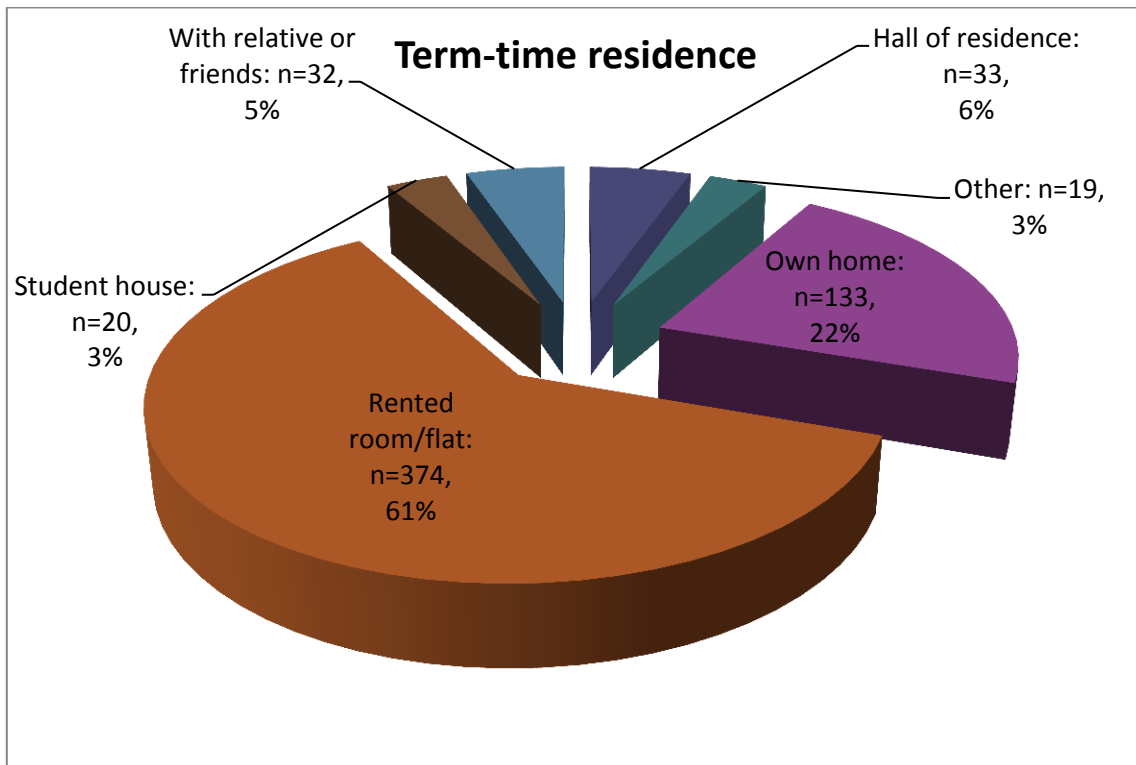


F. FINANCES

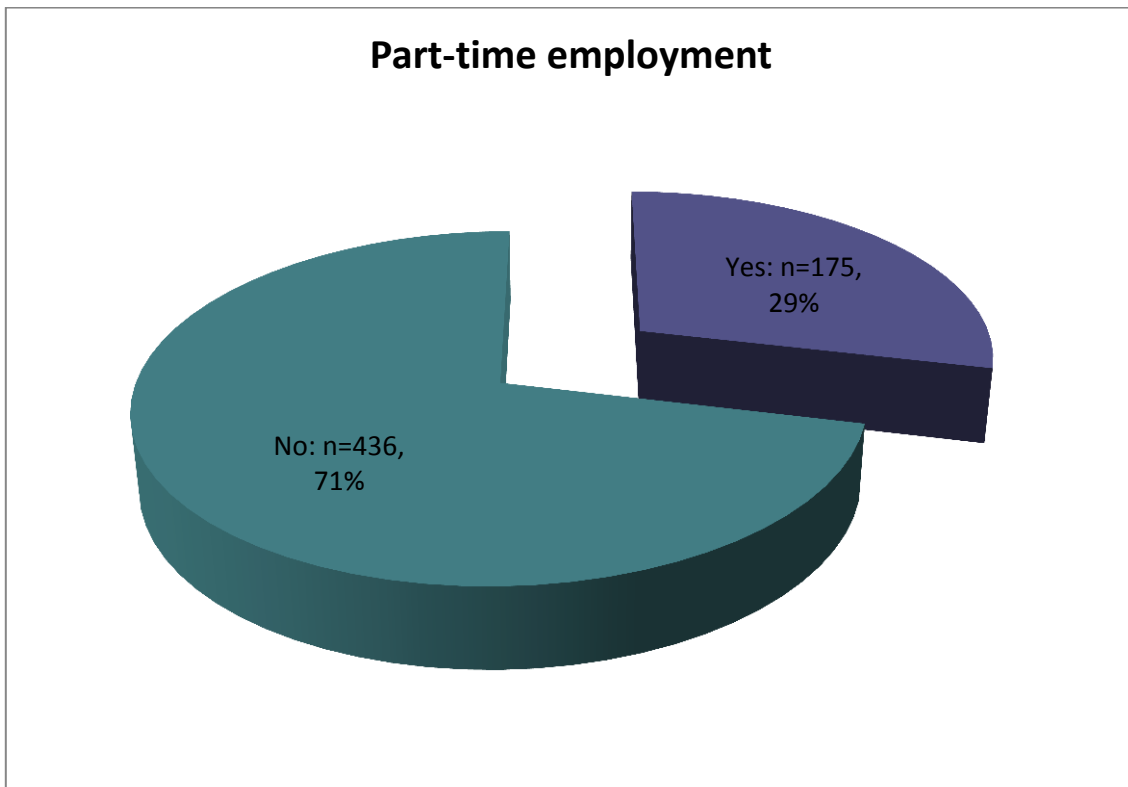
84% of the survey population are registered UK or EU students, while 16% are overseas students. The majority of students receive funding for their programmes, with 70% reporting that they are fully-funded and 11% partially-funded. 19% of the students are entirely self-funded.



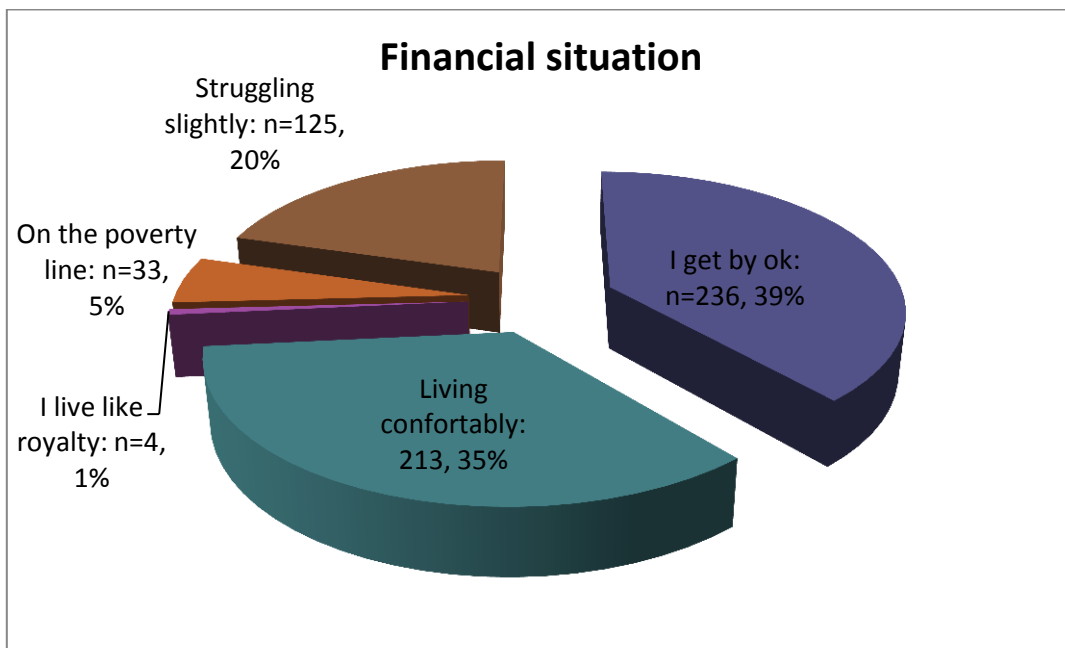
The majority of students live in a rented room or flat (61%) and nearly one-quarter live in their own homes (22%). Smaller numbers live in student houses (3%), halls of residence (6%) or with friends or relatives (5%).



Just under one-third (29%) of the surveyed students have undertaken part-time jobs during the course of their research degree.



The majority of respondents report on positive finances with 35% living comfortably, 39% “getting by ok” and a very small 1% living like royalty! 20% feel that they are struggling slightly and 5% are living on the poverty line.

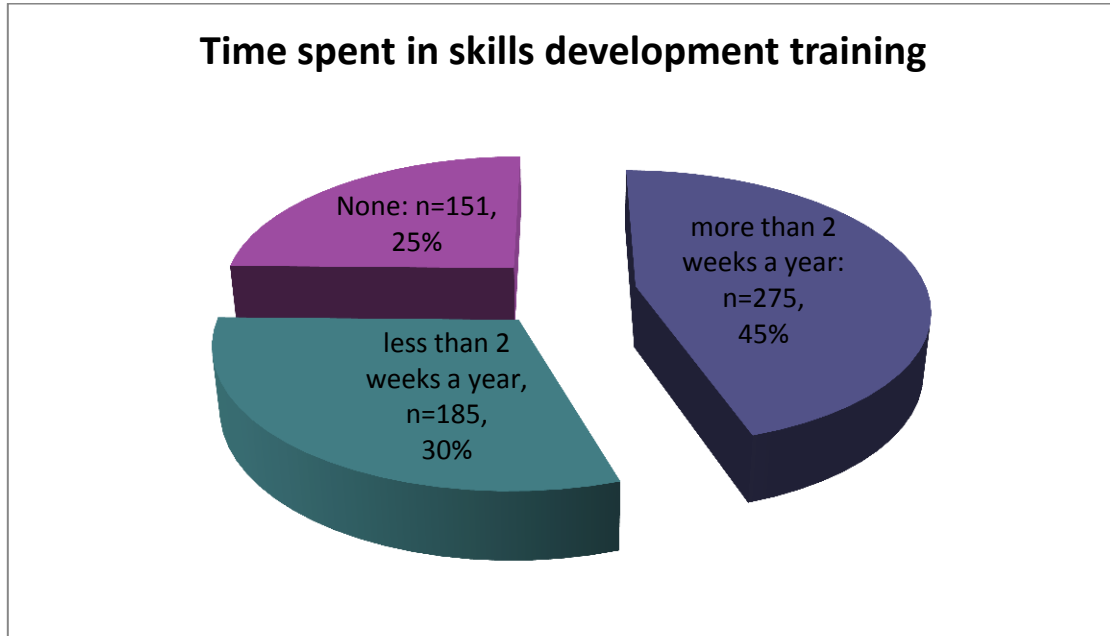


The following table summarises the financial problems that are faced by UCL’s research students. Note that respondents could select all options that applied. Although one-third report that they are not suffering any financial difficulties, approximately 38% and 35% are experiencing problems with the cost of living and paying rent, respectively. 12.8% have difficulties paying their fees and 21.3% in meeting the cost of travelling. Supporting dependents affects 6.1% of the students while other unspecified problems concern 6.7% of respondents.

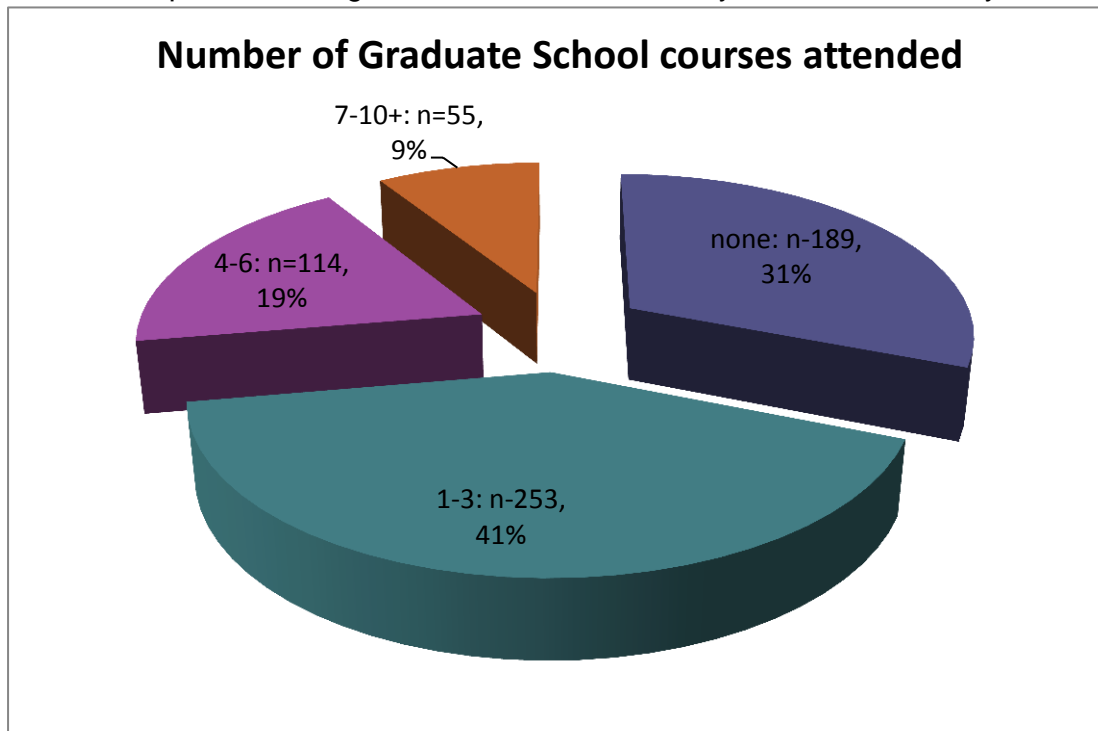
	N	% of 611
n/a	250	40.9
Cost of living	234	38.3
Rent	212	34.7
Travel costs	130	21.3
Fees	78	12.8
Other	41	6.7
Dependents	37	6.1

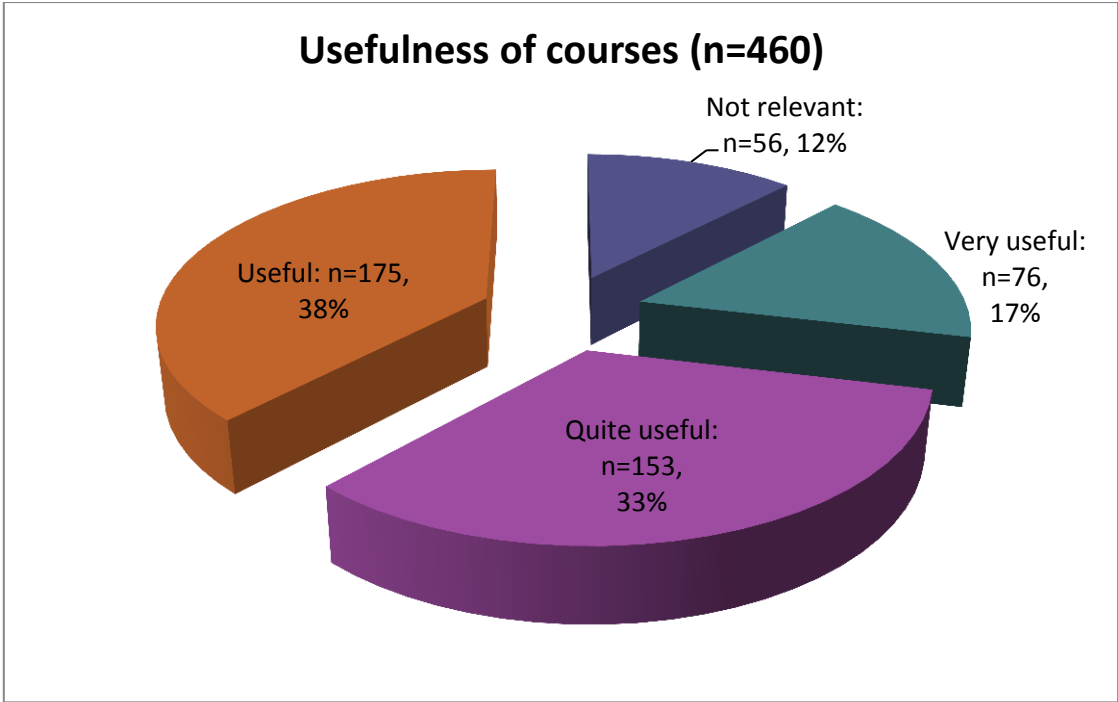
G. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

45% have spent up to two weeks a year and 30% have spent more than two weeks a year participating in such training. A quarter (25%) of the respondents have not spent any time engaged in skills development training.

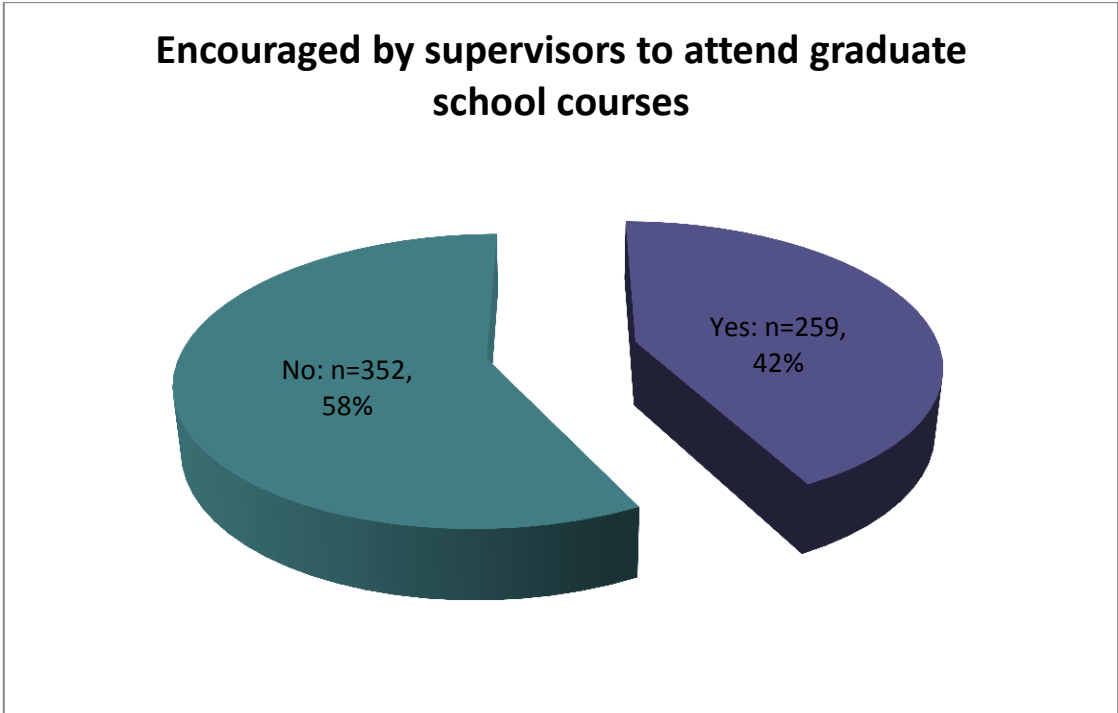


A total of 69% of students have attended at least one skills development training course offered by the UCL Graduate School. Of the 460 students who attended one or more skills development training courses, 88% felt that they were useful to very useful.





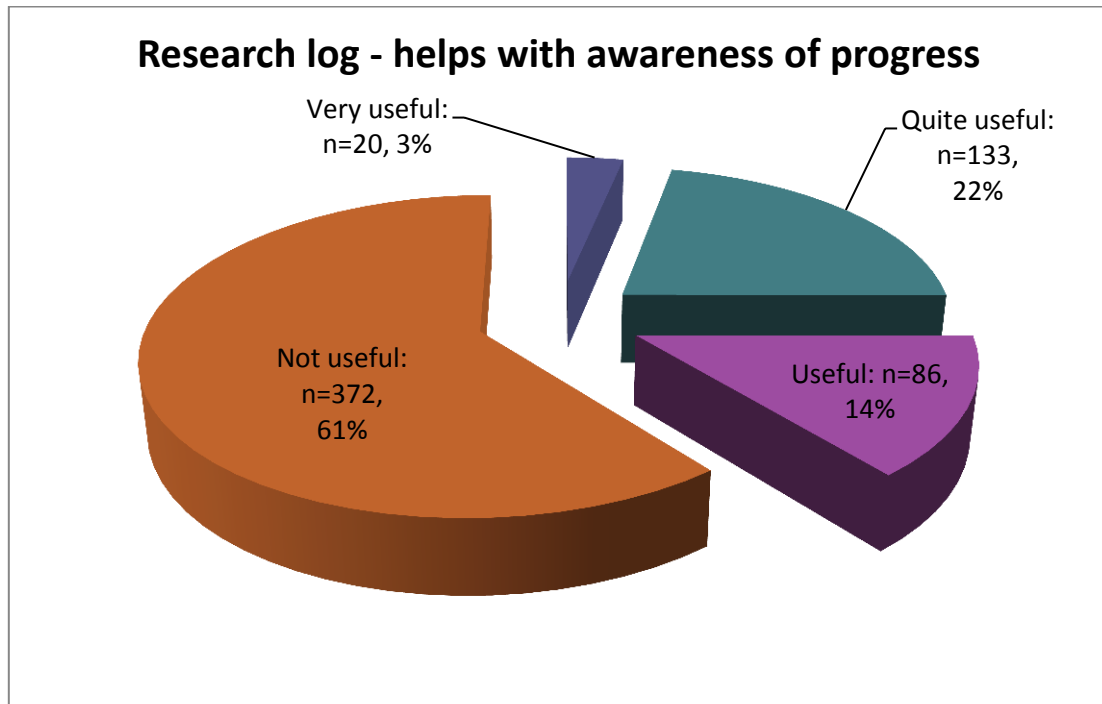
42% of students reported that their supervisors have encouraged them to attend the skills development courses offered by the Graduate School.



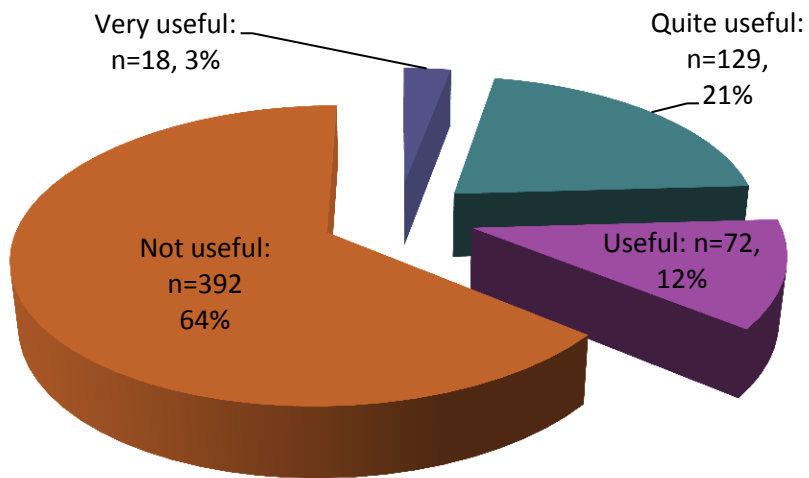
H. RESEARCH STUDENT LOG

More than a third of respondents report that they find the Research Student Log very useful (3%), quite useful (22%), useful (14%) in tracking progress. 61% of respondents report that they do not find the Log useful in tracking progress.

More than a third of respondents report that they find the Research Student Log very useful (3%), quite useful (21%), useful (12%) in planning and tracking skills development. 64% of respondents report that they do not find the Log useful in planning and tracking skills development.

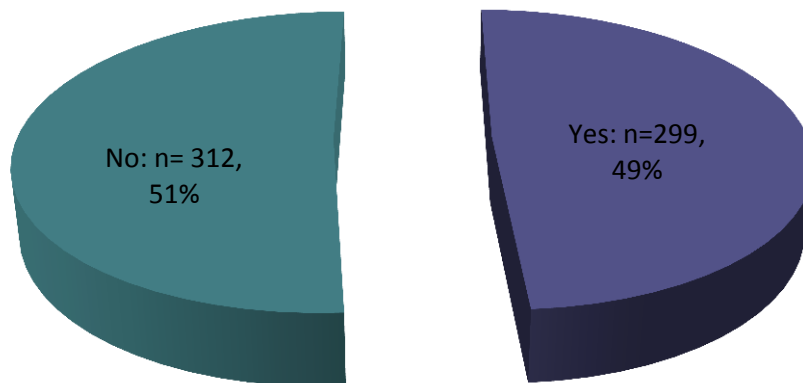


Research log - helps with planning of skills development



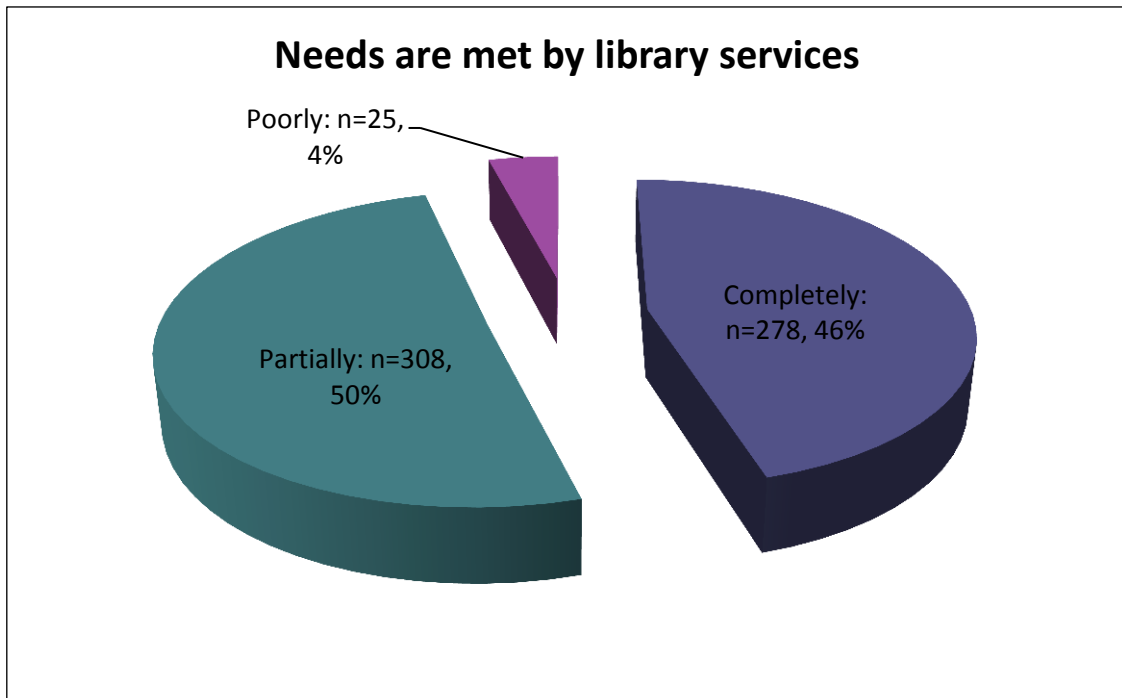
More than half of the students surveyed indicate that they are not encouraged by their supervisors to use the log.

Encouraged to use research log

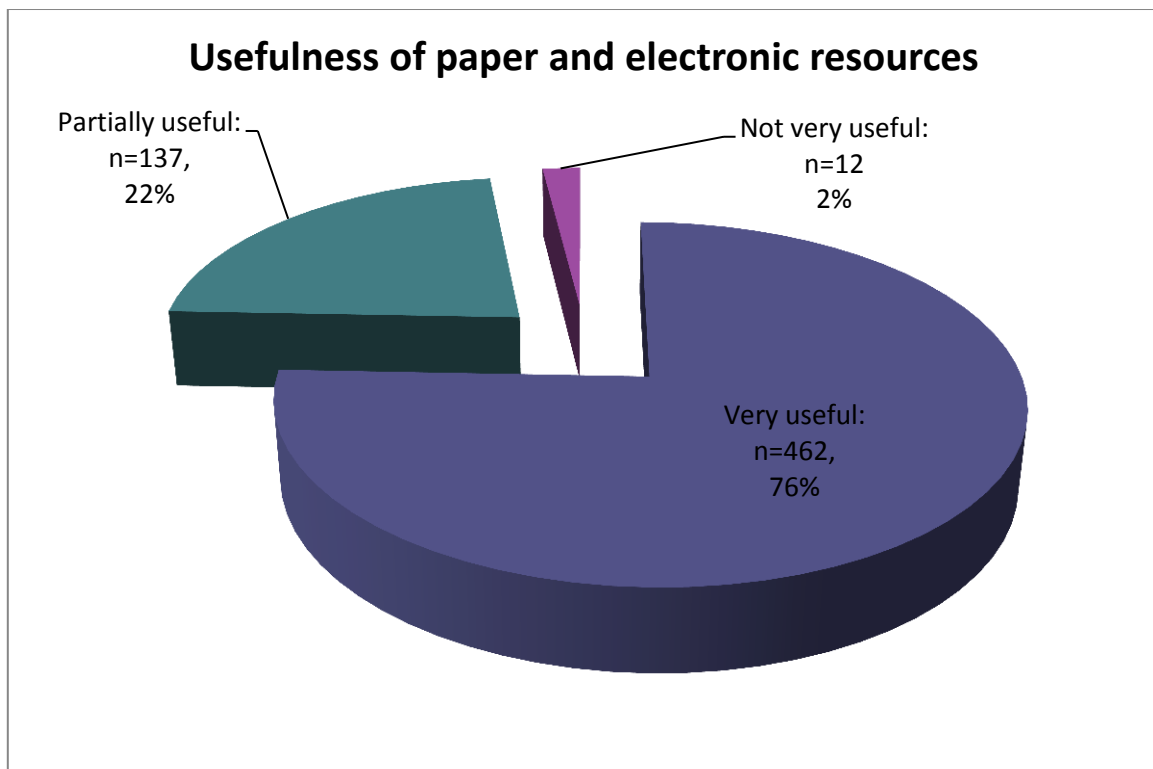


I. LIBRARY

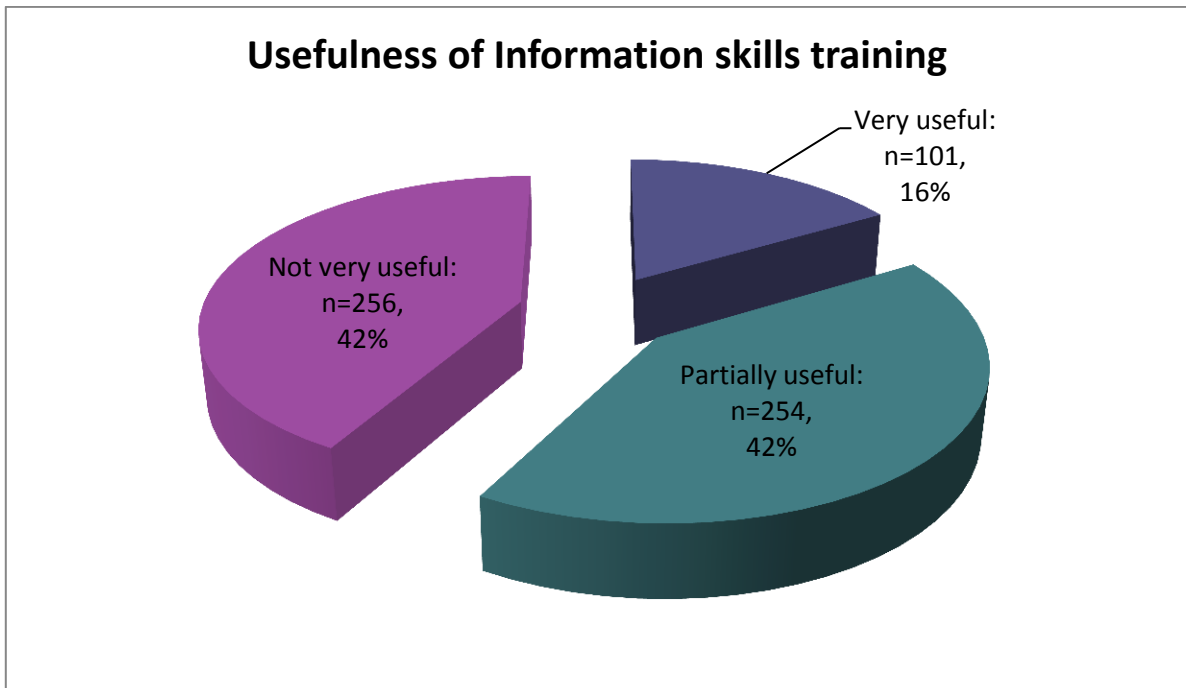
Almost all respondents feel that the UCL Library Services meets their research needs completely (46%) or partially (50%).



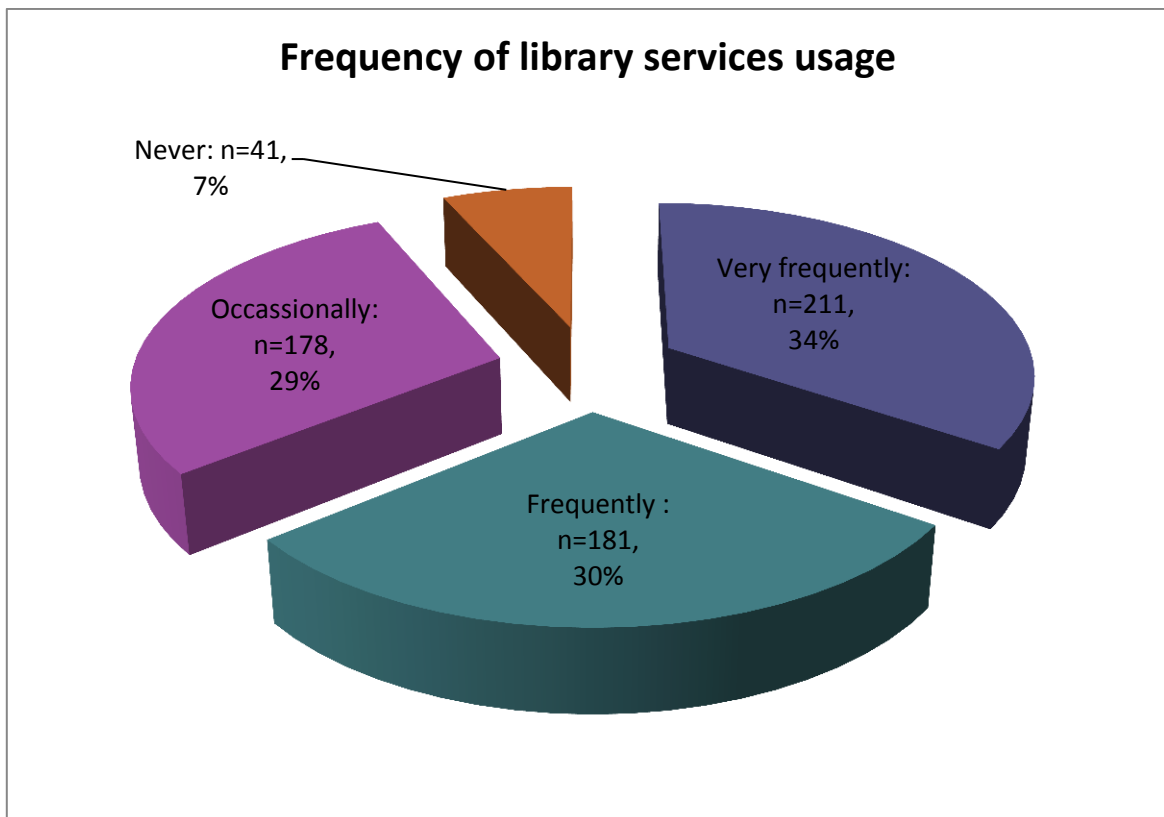
Most students also report that the paper and electronic resources are very useful (76%) and partially useful (22%).



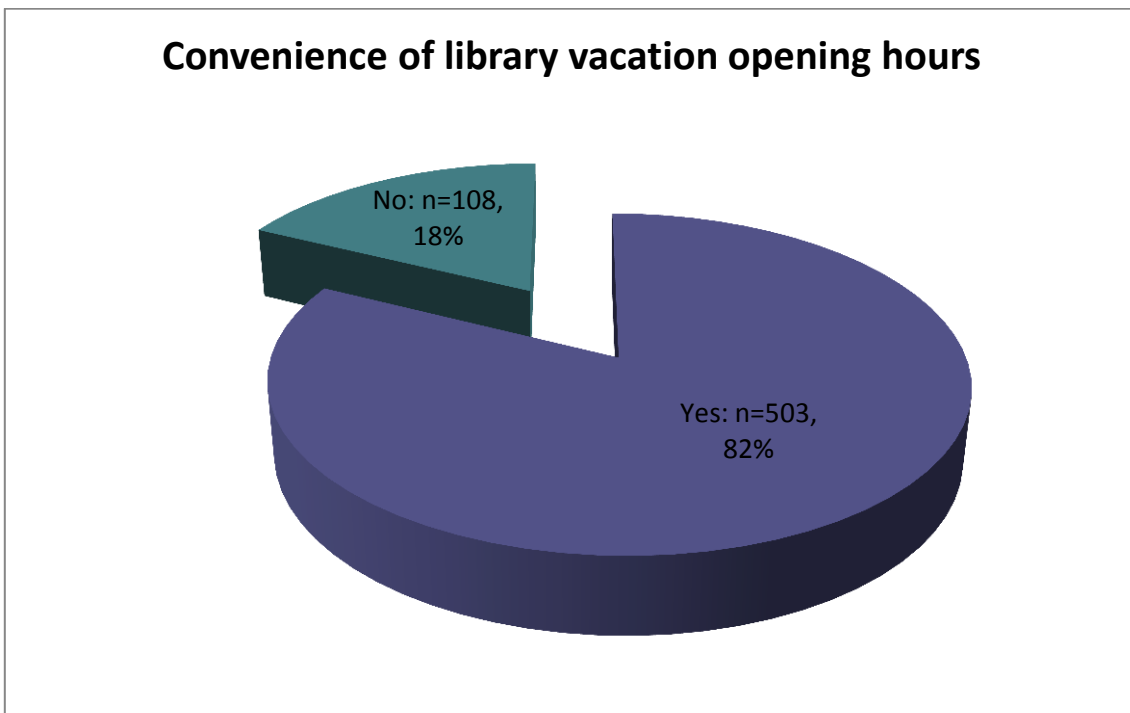
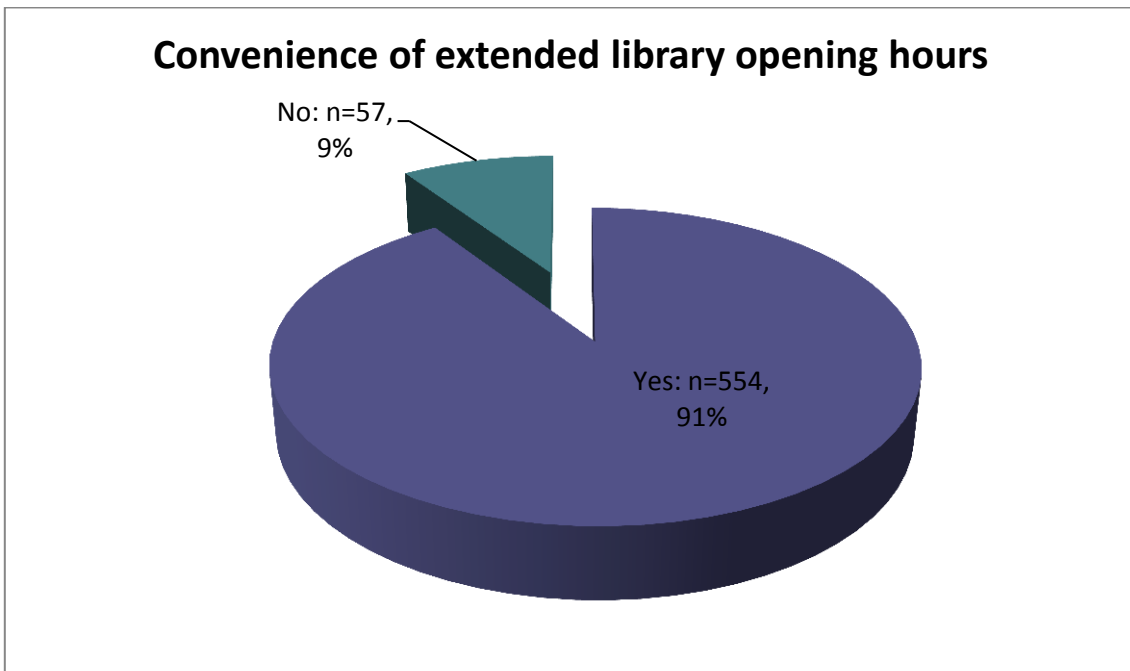
42% of students find the Information Skills training offered by the Library Services not to be very useful.



Approximately two-thirds of research students utilise the Library Services resources very frequently (34%) and frequently (30%). Only 7% never make use of them.

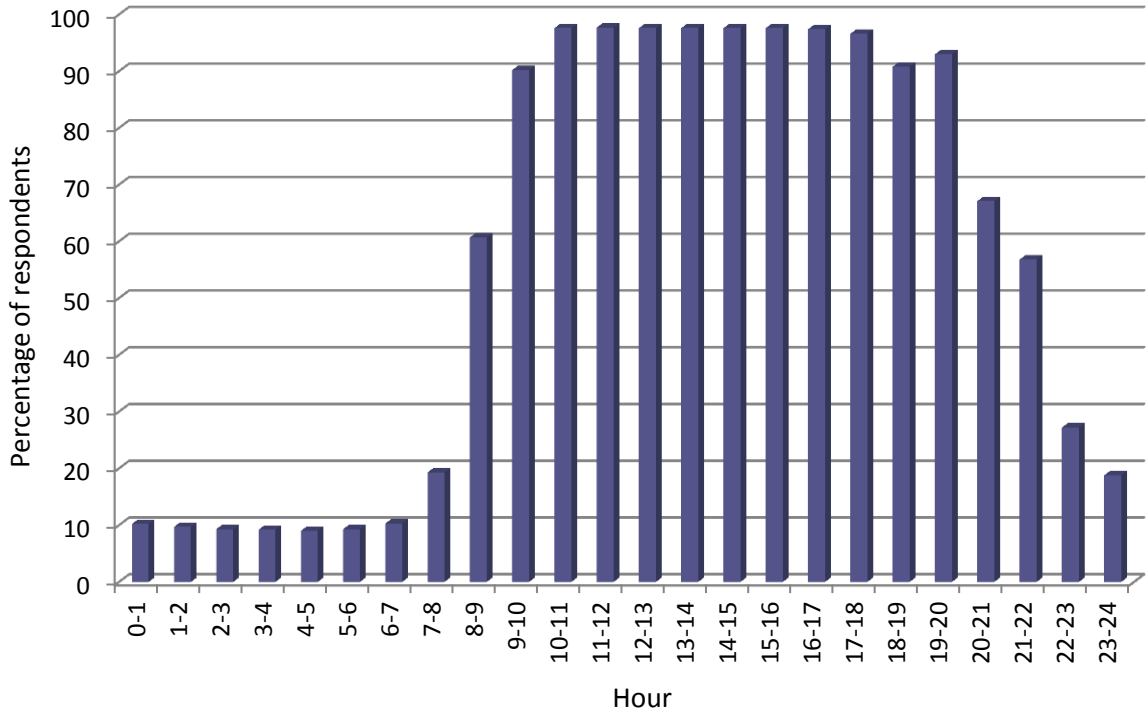


91% of students find the extended library opening hours convenient. However, the number of students that find the library's vacation opening hours convenient drops to 82%.

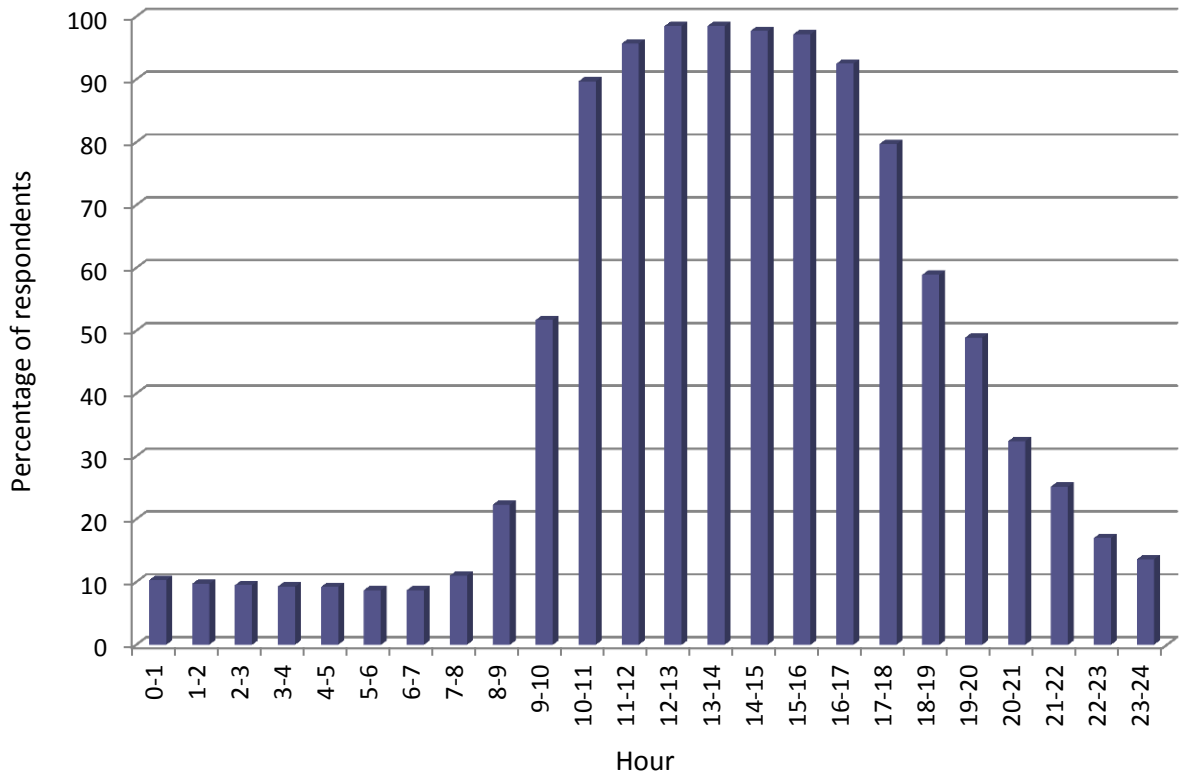


The following two charts summarise the hours during which research students wish to see the library opened on both weekdays and weekends. Nearly all students would like the library to open between 09:00 and 20:00 during the week and between 10:00 and 17:00 on the weekend. For every hour of the day *at least* 8% of the respondents would like to see the library open (i.e. 24-hour access).

Ideal Library opening hours - weekdays

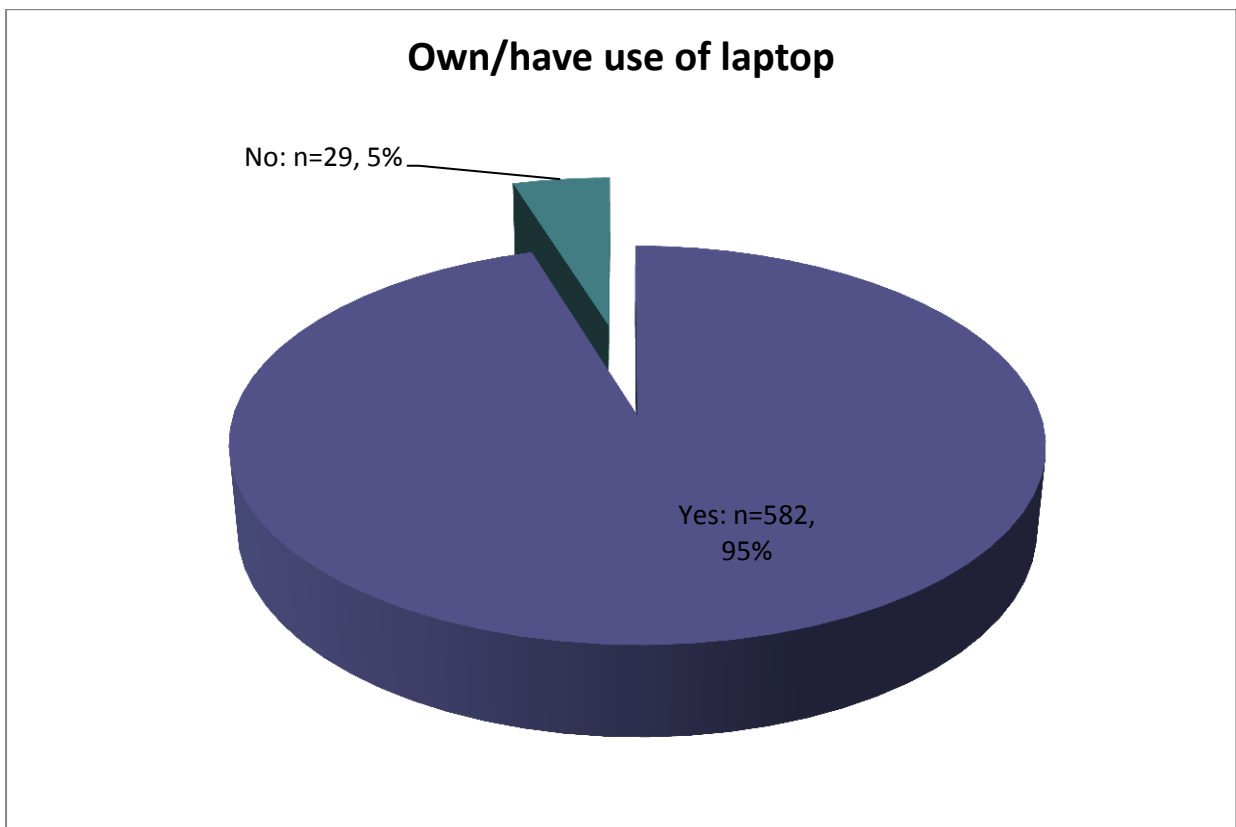
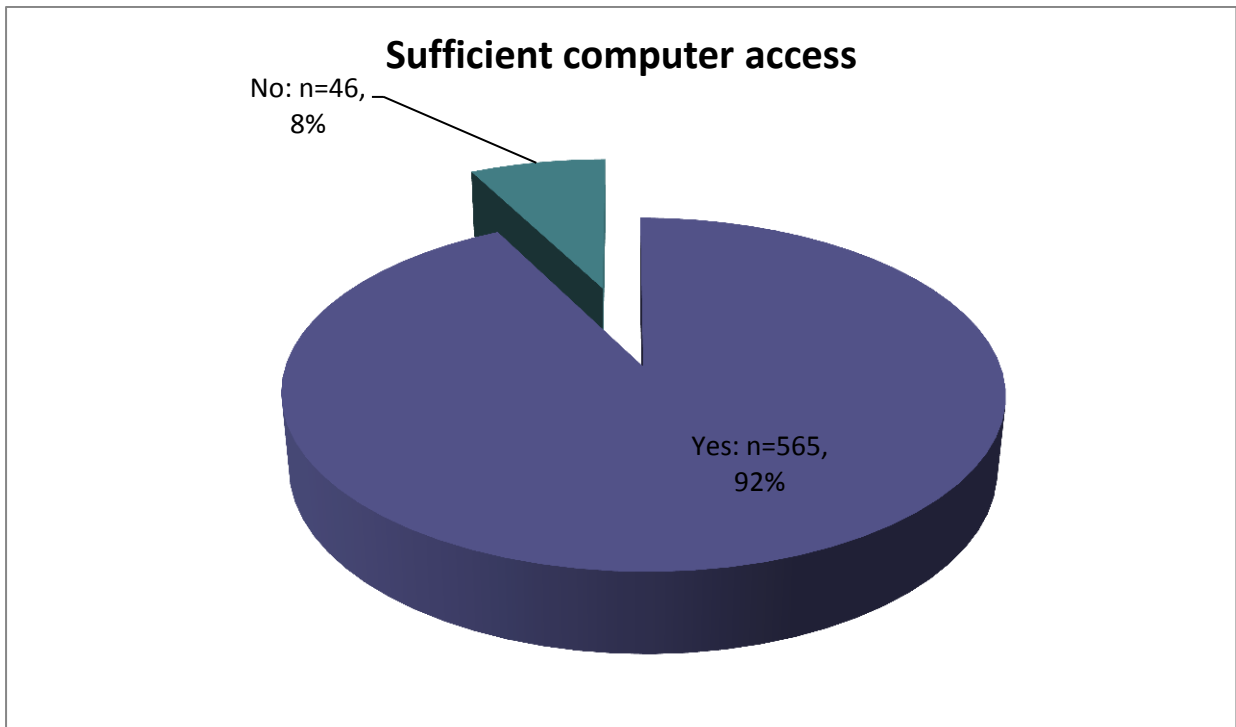


Ideal Library opening hours - weekends



J. COMPUTING

92% report that they have sufficient computer access for their studies. 95% own or have the use of a laptop.



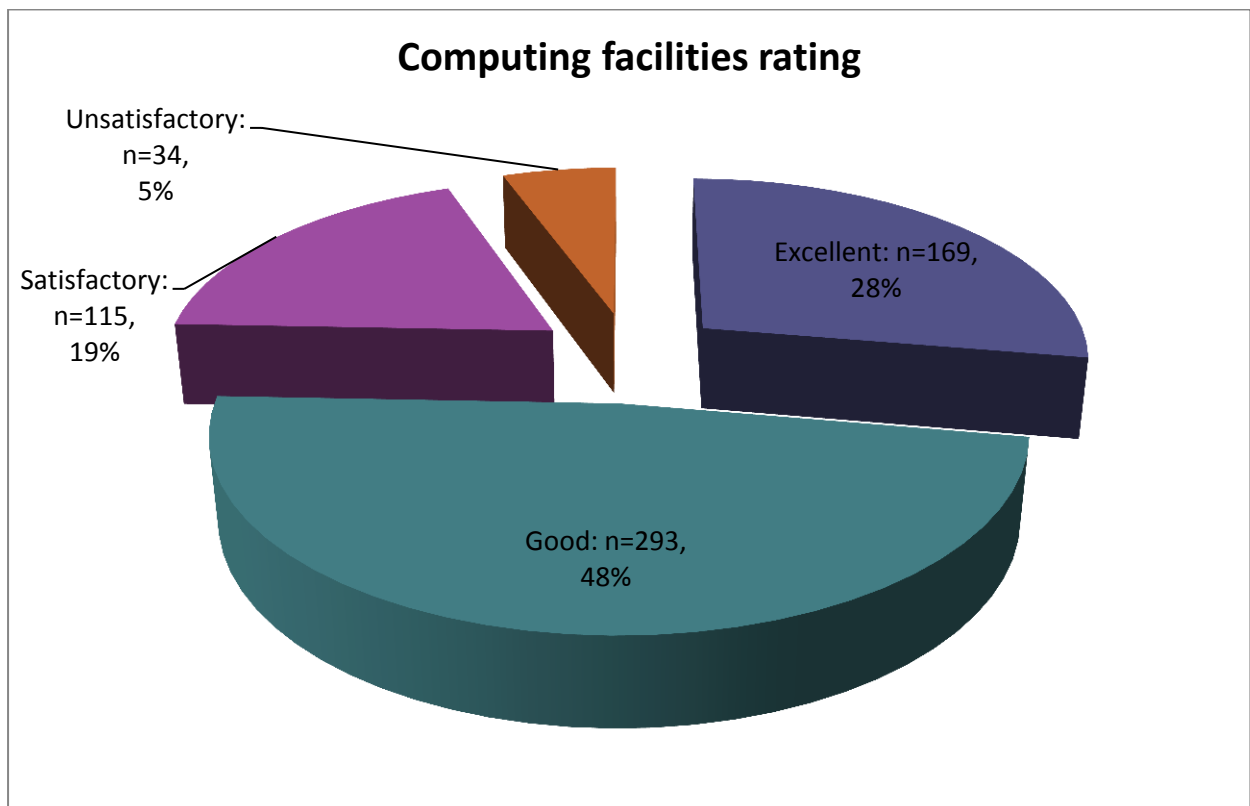
The following table summarises the computing facilities available to the surveyed students at home during term-time. Note that respondents could select all that applied. Nearly all students have access to a computer and the internet, however only approximately half (57.9%) have access to a printer.

	N	% of 611
Computer	595	97.4
Printer	354	57.9
Internet	578	94.6

The following table summarises the various computing facilities used by the students. Note that respondents could select all that applied. By far the most popular facility is a UCL email account (90.7%).

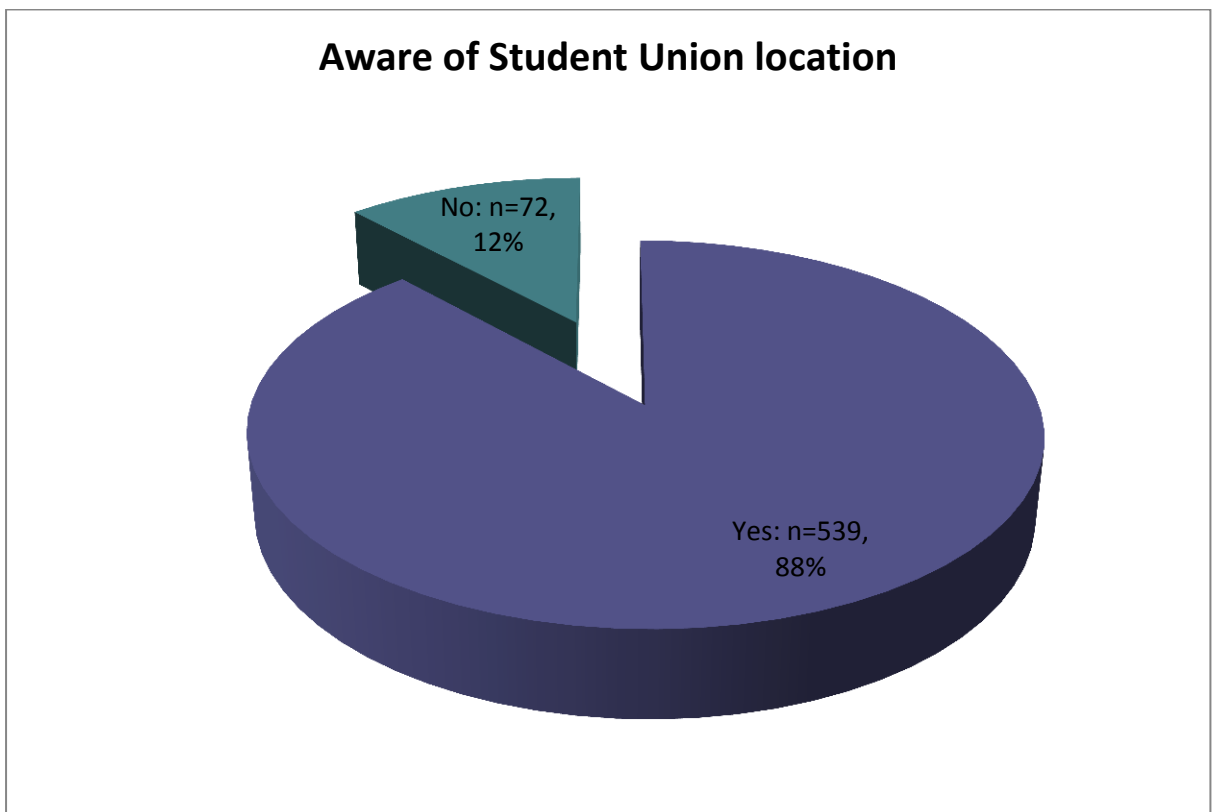
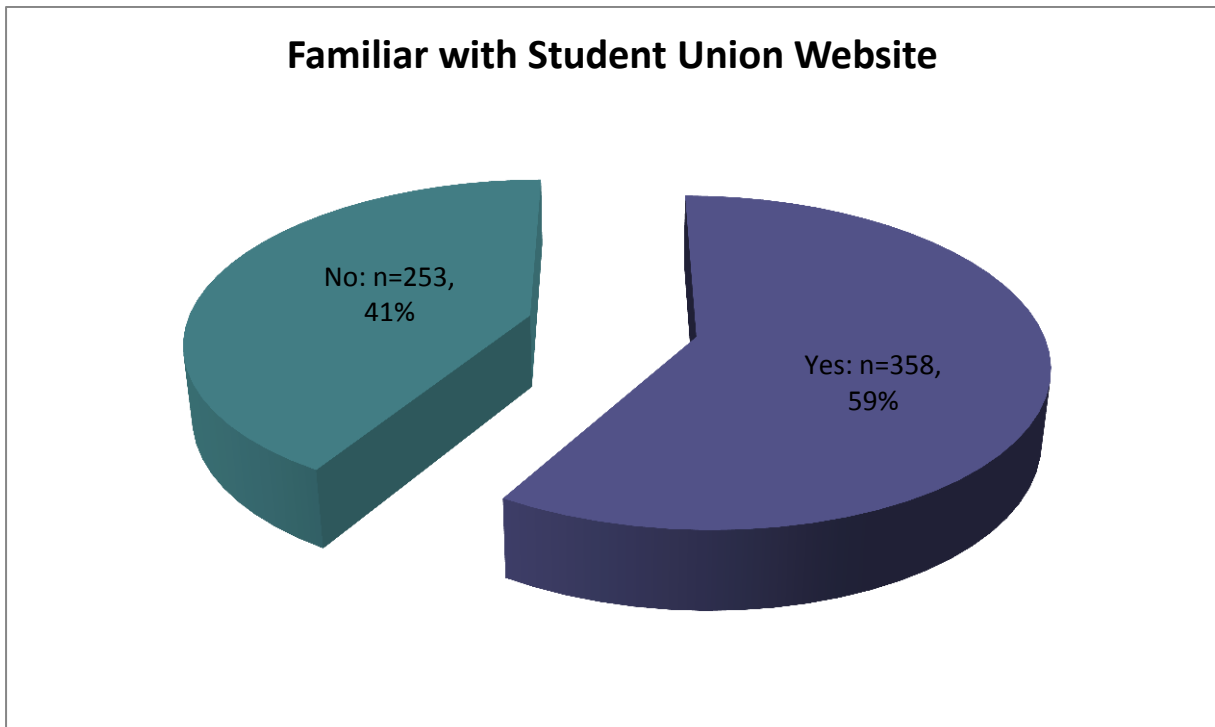
	N	% of 611
UCL email account	554	90.7
Departmental computers	377	61.7
IS Helpdesk	319	52.2
Cluster computers	315	51.6
Cluster printers	296	48.4
Remote cluster (WTS) student service	280	45.8
RoamNet network connection	275	45.0
IS IT Training	202	33.1
Graduate cluster computers	150	24.5
Hall of residence network connection	48	7.9

Overall, a total of 28% of the respondents rate the computing facilities as excellent. Just under half of students (48%) report that they are good and 19% rate them as satisfactory. Only 5% feel they are unsatisfactory.

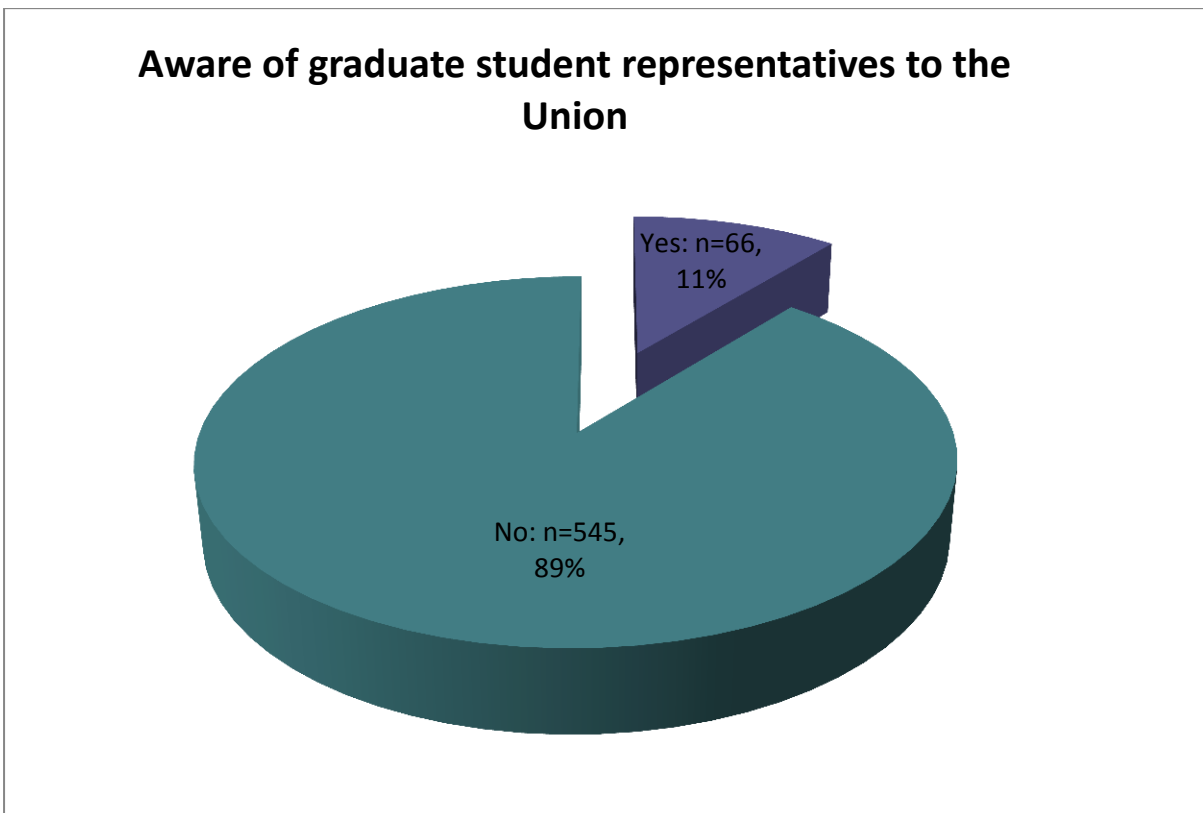
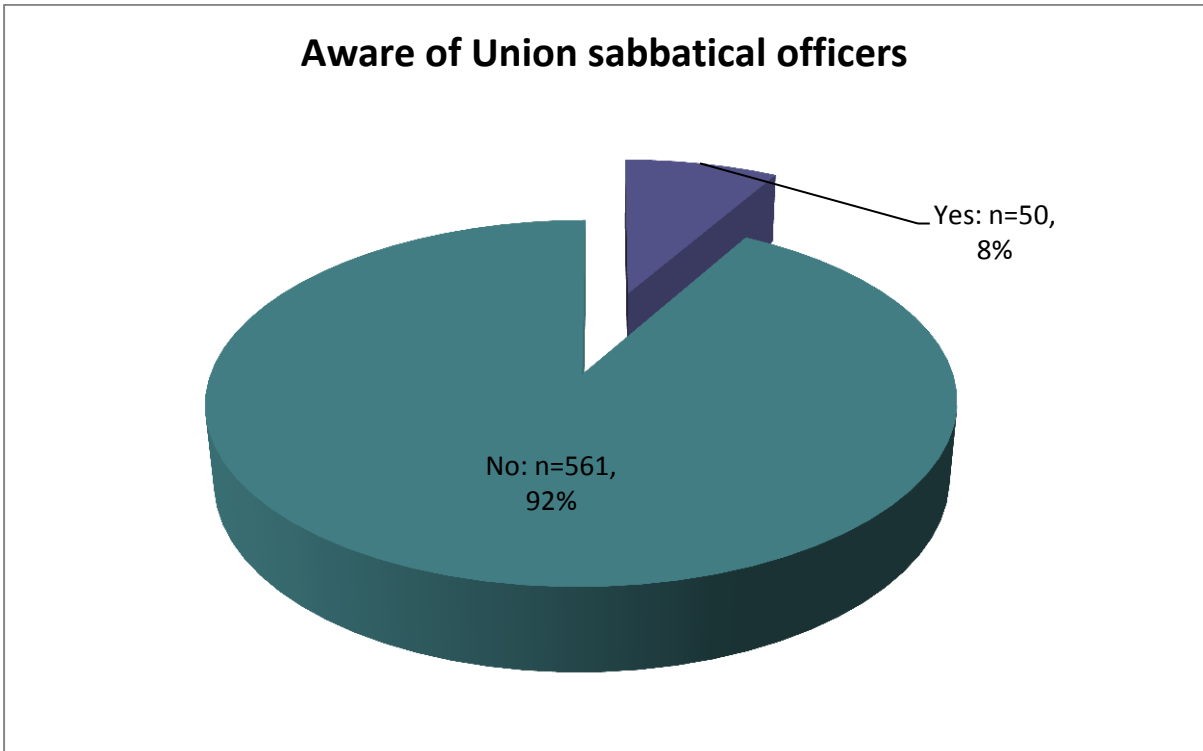


K. STUDENT UNION

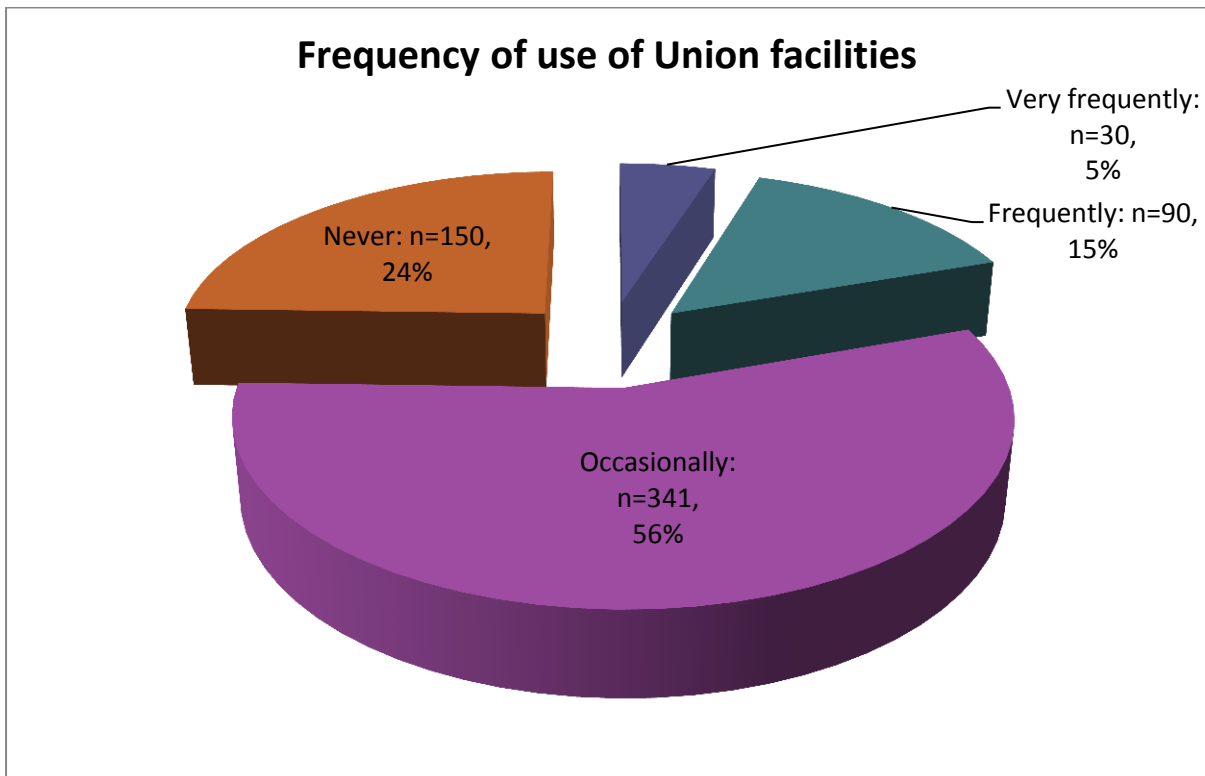
Over half of the research students are familiar with the UCL Student Union website (59%) and nearly all are aware of its location (88%).



Very few respondents are aware of the Student Union sabbatical officers (8%) or the graduate student representatives to the Union (11%).



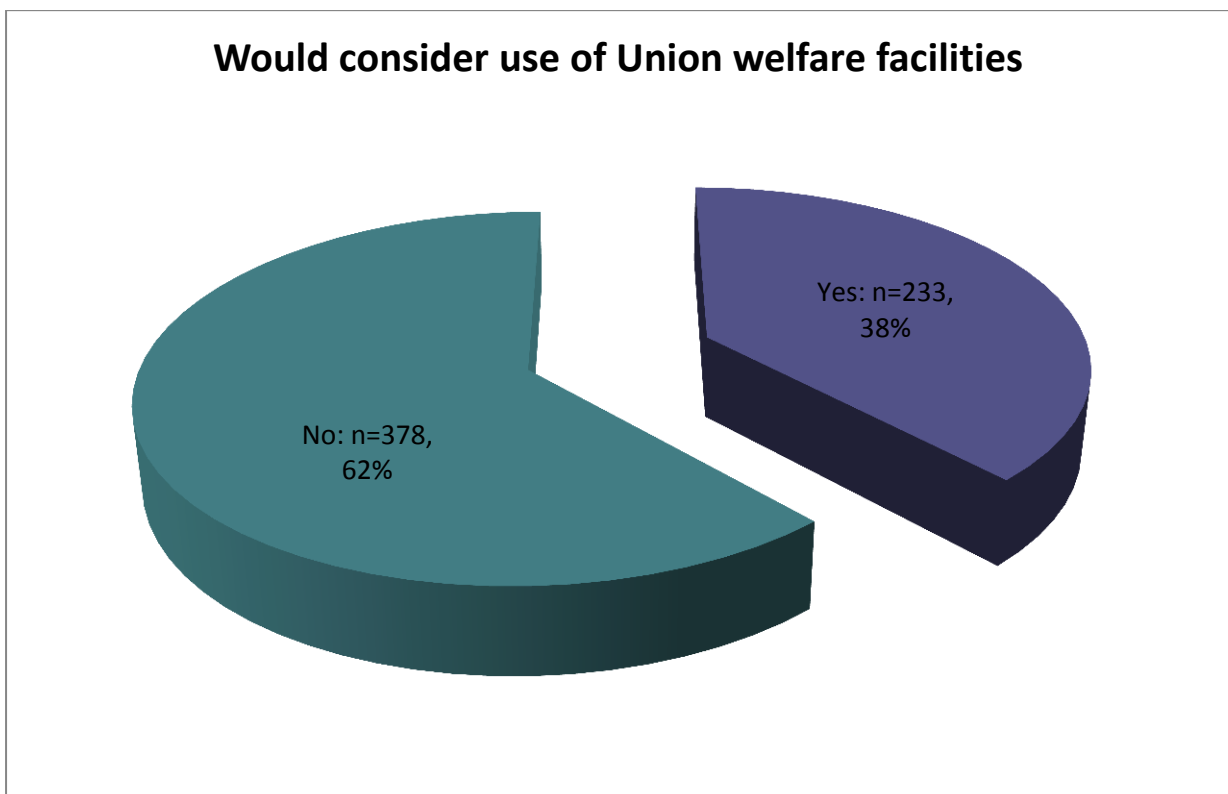
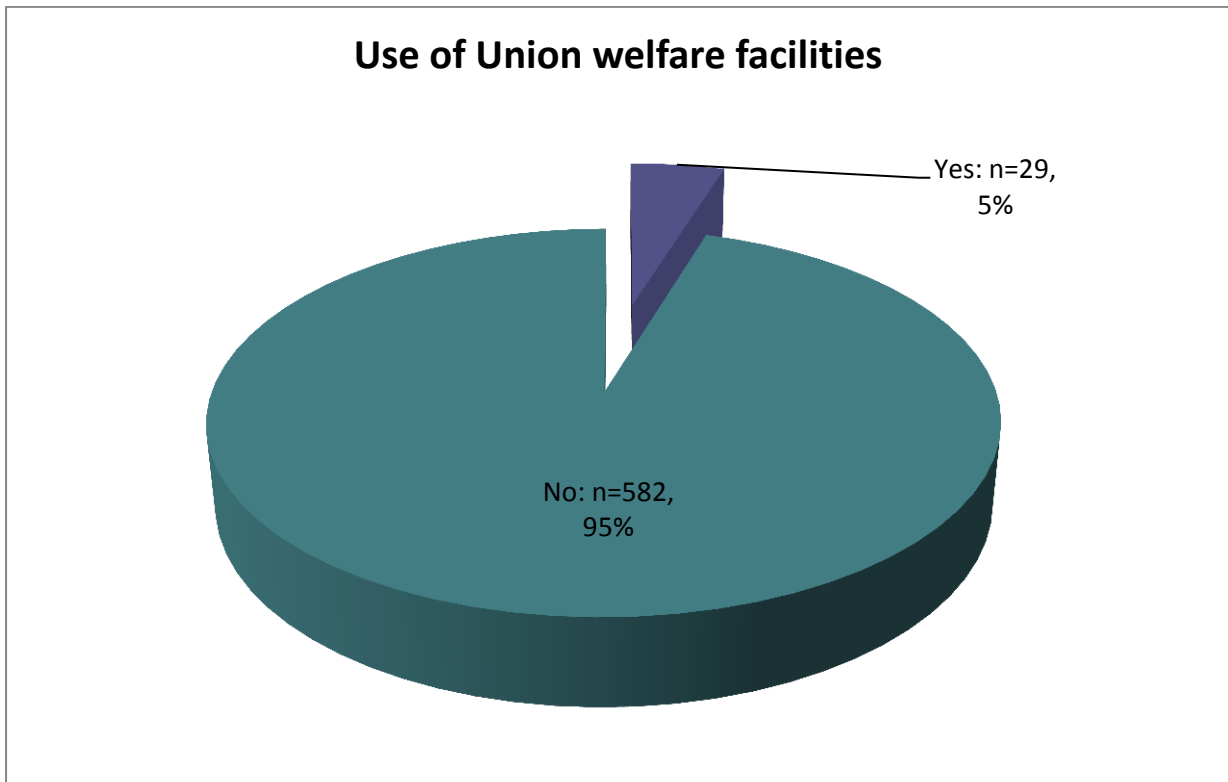
Approximately one-quarter of the surveyed students report that they never use the Student Union’s facilities (24%). 20% of students use it frequently or very frequently and just over half use them occasionally (56%).



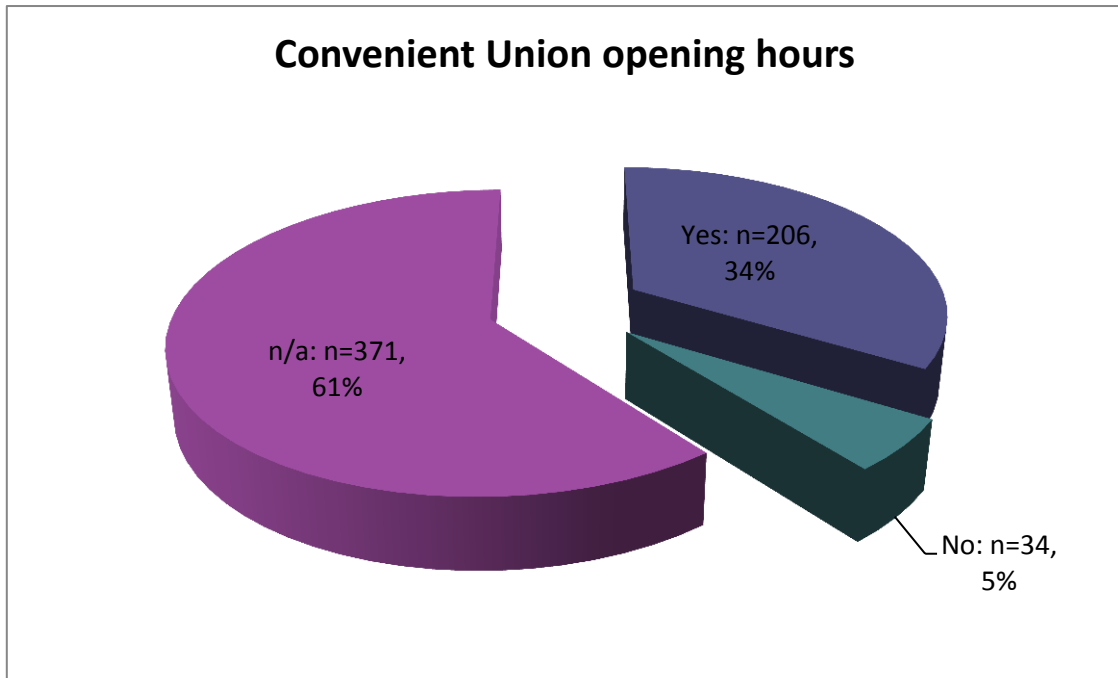
The table below summarises the Student union facilities used by the surveyed students. Note that respondents were allowed to select all that applied. The most popular services provided by the Union are cafés and snack bars, which are used by 64.2% of the respondents, followed by shops (46%).

	N	% of 611
Cafés/Snack bars	392	64.2
Shops	281	46.0
Bars	203	33.2
Sports facilities	114	18.7
None	109	17.8
Clubs/societies	94	15.4
Welfare/advice	42	6.9
Workstation	24	3.9

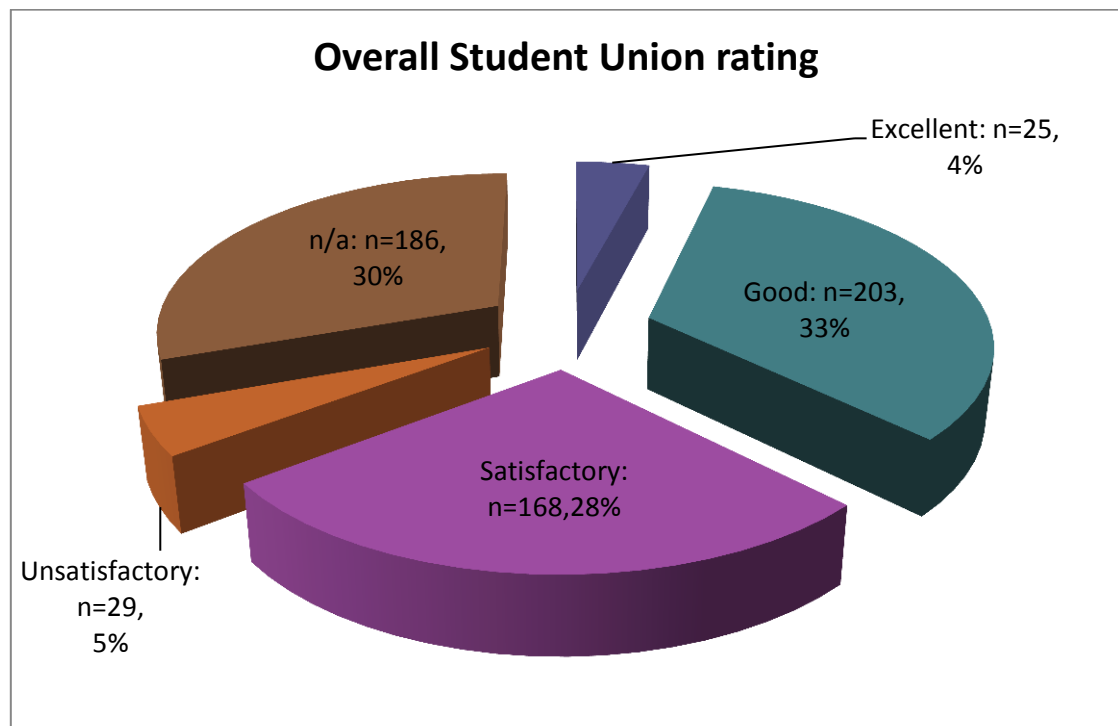
Only 5% of research students have used the Union's student welfare or pastoral care facilities, although 38% of students would consider doing so if necessary.



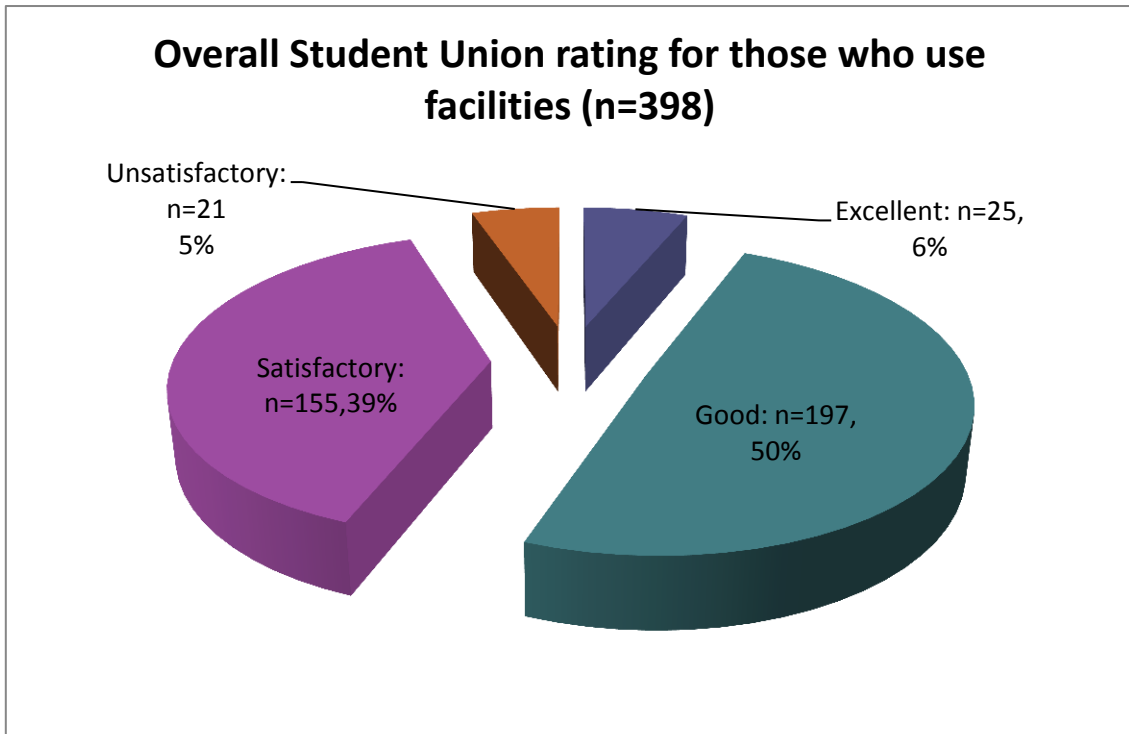
34% of respondents feel that the Student Union's opening hours are convenient and only 5% feel that they are not. More than half indicated that this question was not applicable (61%), which is perhaps surprising since only 24% indicated in a question above that they do not use the Union's facilities.



Just under two-thirds of research students would rate the UCL Student Union as either good (33%) or satisfactory (28%). However, only 4% rate it as excellent, while 5% feel it is unsatisfactory.

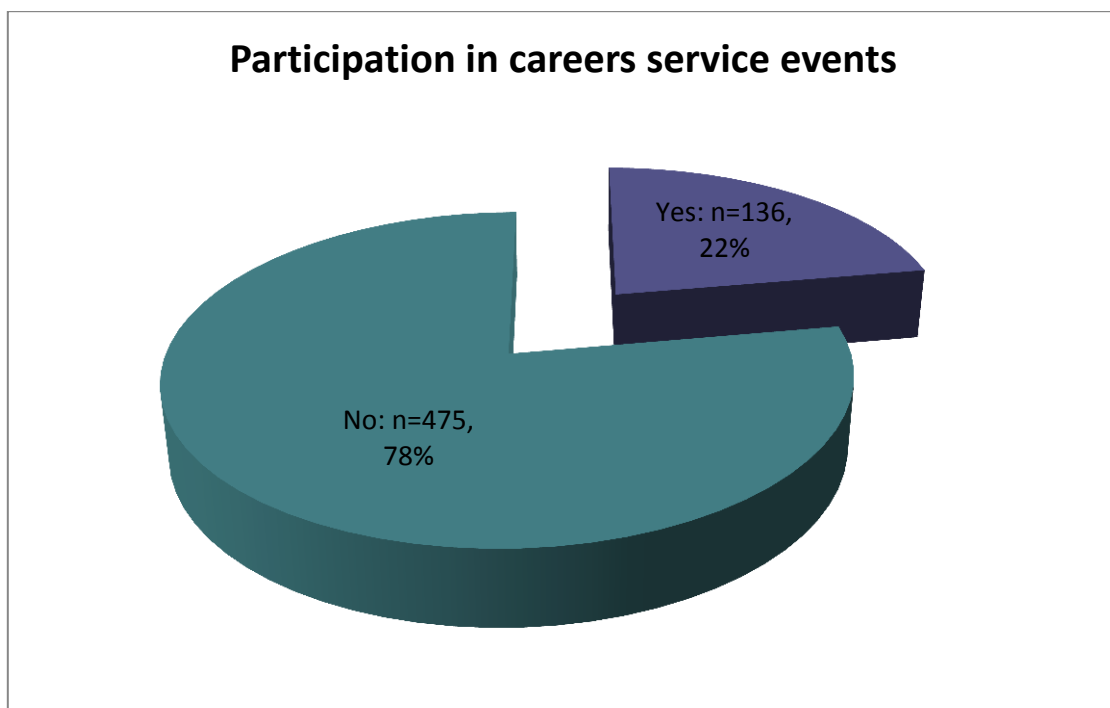
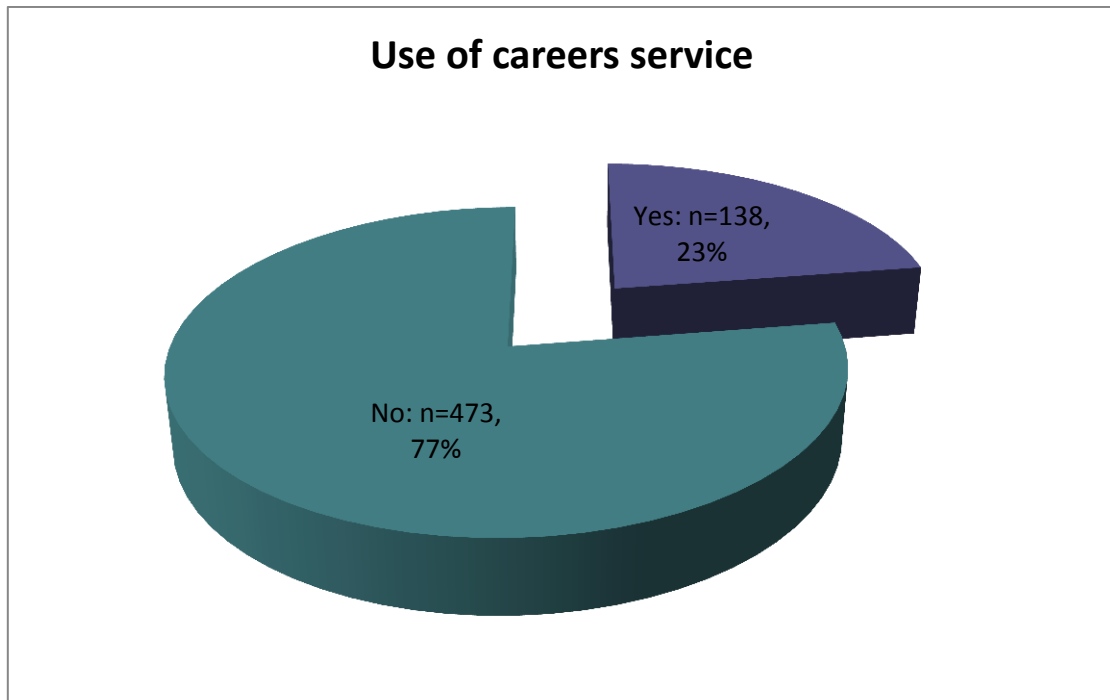


Considering only those research students who use the UCL Student Union's facilities and answered this question, the overall rating of the Union was reported as either good (50%) or satisfactory (39%) by a combined total of 89% of respondents. 6% rate it as excellent and 5% as unsatisfactory.



L. CAREERS SERVICE

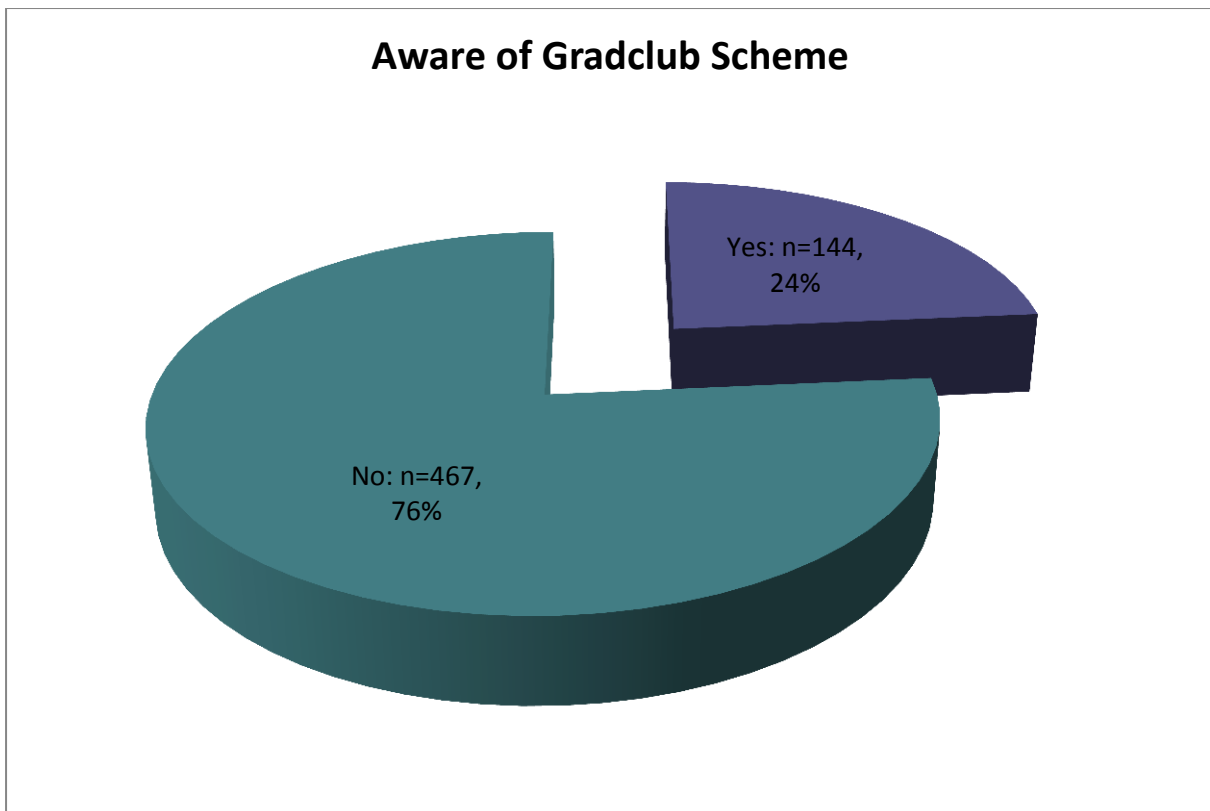
Just under a quarter of research students have used the UCL Careers Service (23%) or participated in a Careers Service event (22%).



The table below summarises the percentage of respondents who have made use of particular Careers Service facilities and events. Note that respondents could select all that applied. No more than 12.1% of students have participated in or utilised any one event or facility.

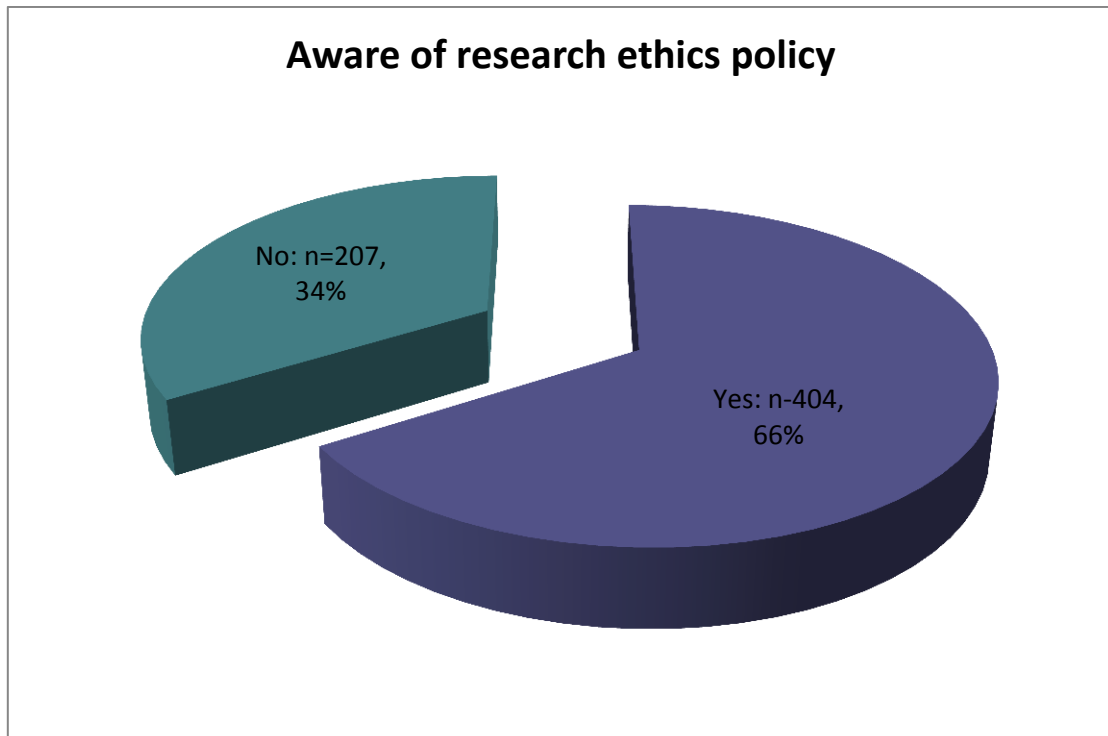
	N	% of 611
n/a	361	59.1
Adviser-led skills workshop	74	12.1
Quick query	50	8.2
Careers fair	49	8.0
Information library	38	6.2
Employer presentation	37	6.1
Employer-led skills workshop	36	5.9
Hour long discussion	18	2.9
Mock interview	8	1.3
Focus on Management Course	7	1.1

24% of respondents are aware of the Careers Service GradClub Scheme.



M. ETHICS

66% of the surveyed students report that they are aware of UCL's policy on Research Ethics.



One-third of UCL's research students involve human participants in their research projects.

