Annual Membership Survey
November 2020

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How did we conduct our research?

Research method

- An online survey hosted on Microsoft Forms and only available to students who could log on using their OU Student Microsoft Office 365 account. The survey was live between 16 November 2020 and 31 December 2020.

- The survey was designed to last around 15 minutes depending on how much details the participants decided to include in the free text fields.

- A mixture of quantitate and qualitative questions were used and covered; Association awareness, communications, services & resources, governance & democracy, volunteering and culture.

- The survey was incentivised to encourage participation. The prizes were as follows: 1st prize 1 x Apple iPad Air (64gb) with Beats Headphones, 2nd prize 1 x £150 gift card, 3rd x 3 prize £50 gift card.

Strategic aim

- The Annual Membership Survey is crucial to supporting our 4 year Strategy. The initial pilot of the survey in February 2020 was part of Strategic Project 1:

  - *Overall Scope: Improve our understanding of student needs, expectations and motivations. Conduct a regular review of our services, engagement activities and comms channels to identify improvement opportunities and increase participation.*

  - *Workstream 1A: Conduct membership research and analysis*
  - *Develop and launch the Annual Membership Survey to gain membership feedback on: our activities & services,; member expectations; study and volunteering motivations; awareness levels and comms preferences; engagement interests; Association culture. The survey will provide valuable on-going data for strategic KPI tracking, provide inputs for service/activity reviews and help to inform business decision-making.*

- The survey now forms part of the 'business as usual' activities for the Association and will be conducted each Autumn.

Sample

- The survey was sent to all Association members, excluding the 30,000 students who would have received the survey as part of the pilot in February 2020. Although excluded from the formal invites, it was decided that the results from any of the pilot participants who completed this round of surveying would be included but would not be eligible to take part in the price draw

- The invitation was sent out via CAMEL mailing by the Student Experience team during week commencing 16 November 2020 to 160,764 students. This coincided with the annual Student Voice Week hosted by the Open University.

Marketing

- In addition to the invitation e-mails, the Student Experience team arranged for 3 StudentHome bulletins to posted at intervals for the duration that the survey as live. The Association's Digi Comms team assisted with a marketing campaign through the Association channels including Hoot articles and regular, sponsored social media posts.

- Sharing of our social media posts was encouraged by the OU's faculty and regional accounts. Messages were also included on Tutor Home and OULife encouraging engagement by staff students and asking student facing staff to promote the survey through their own channels.

- Special thanks is given to the OU's Student Experience team and Student Research Project Panel, the Association staff and volunteers and all the students who took part in the survey.
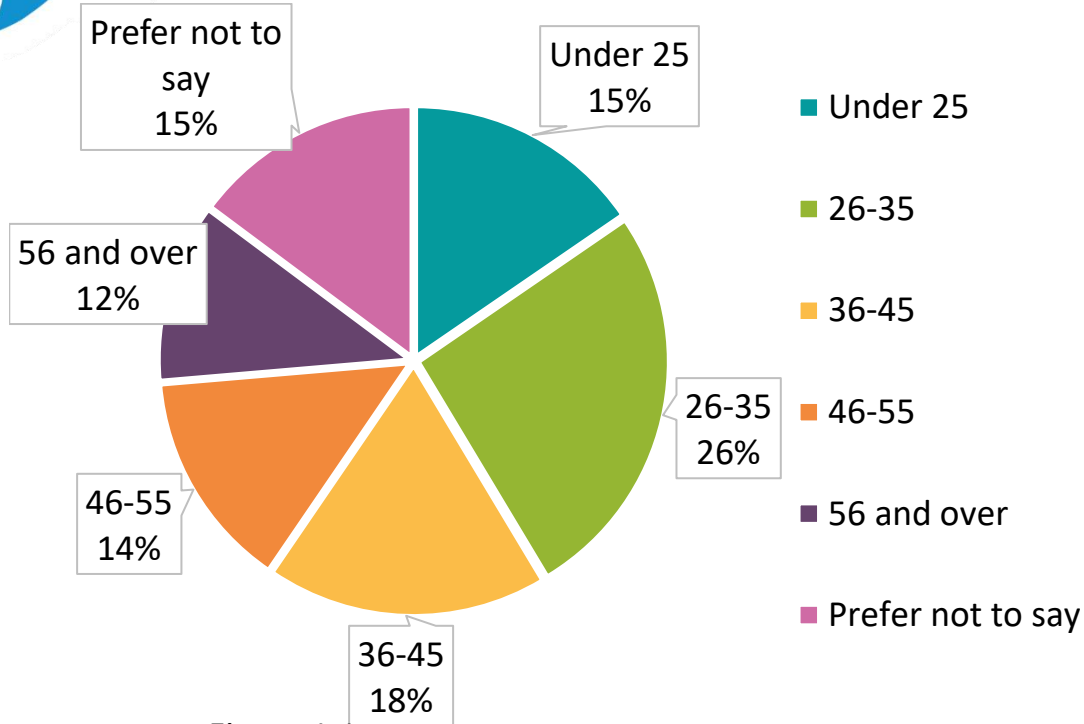
Demographics of participants
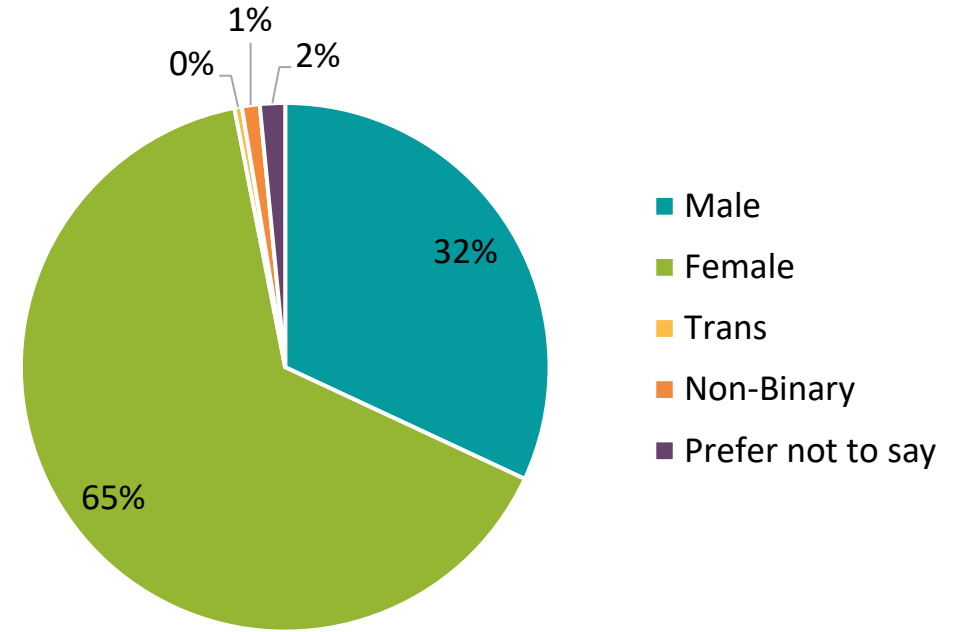
Age & gender

Figure 1.1

Under 25 — 15%
26-35 — 26%
36-45 — 18%
46-55 — 14%
56 and over — 12%
Prefer not to say — 15%

Under 25
26-35
36-45
46-55
56 and over
Prefer not to say

Figure 1.2

32%
65%
0%
1%
2%

Male
Female
Trans
Non-Binary
Prefer not to say

While there is a broad tracking of our results against the sample data, there is a slight under-representation in students under the age of 35 and an over-representation in students aged 56 and over. Of the students aged 25 and under 90.45% are studying an undergraduate degree.
Please note that the sample gender data from the OU only tracks female/male/prefer not to say.

Region of study

Broadly tracks the sample data provided by the OU with the exception of the 'prefer not to say' category.
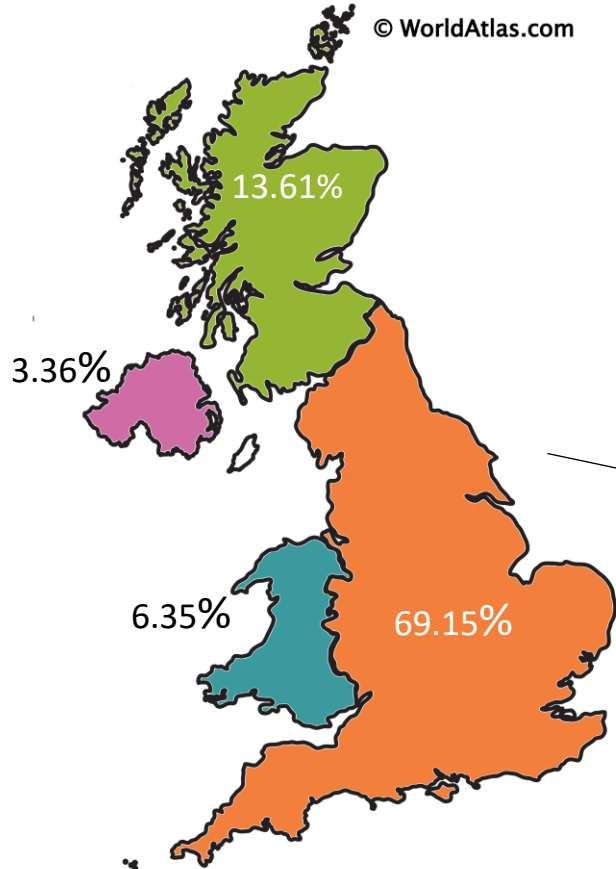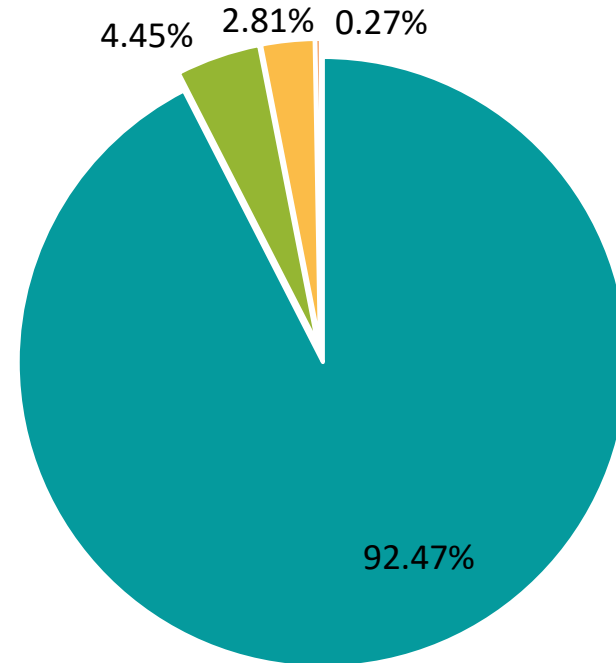
© WorldAtlas.com

13.61%

3.36%

6.35%

69.15%

Figure 1.3

4.45% 2.81% 0.27%

92.47%

■ The UK ■ European Union ■ Rest of the world ■ Prefer not to say

Figure 1.4

Ethnicity

The survey broadly tracks the sample data although black students are under represented. The sample data shows that 3.38% of the student population are black, yet only 1.55% of students selected this category on the survey. There is a larger cohort of students selecting 'prefer not to say', with 2.29% in the sample and 16.12% on the survey.

The bar chart below shows the ethnicity split by age. It is interesting to note the higher percentage of younger Asian students and the steady decline in numbers in the older age brackets. Conversely, the number of black students is higher in the older age groups.
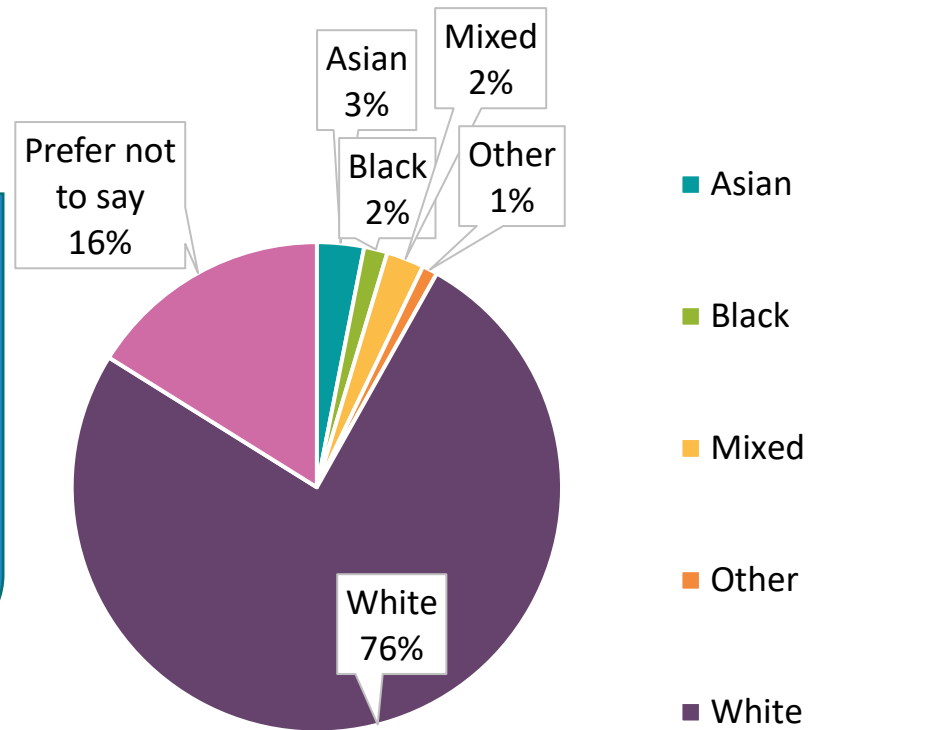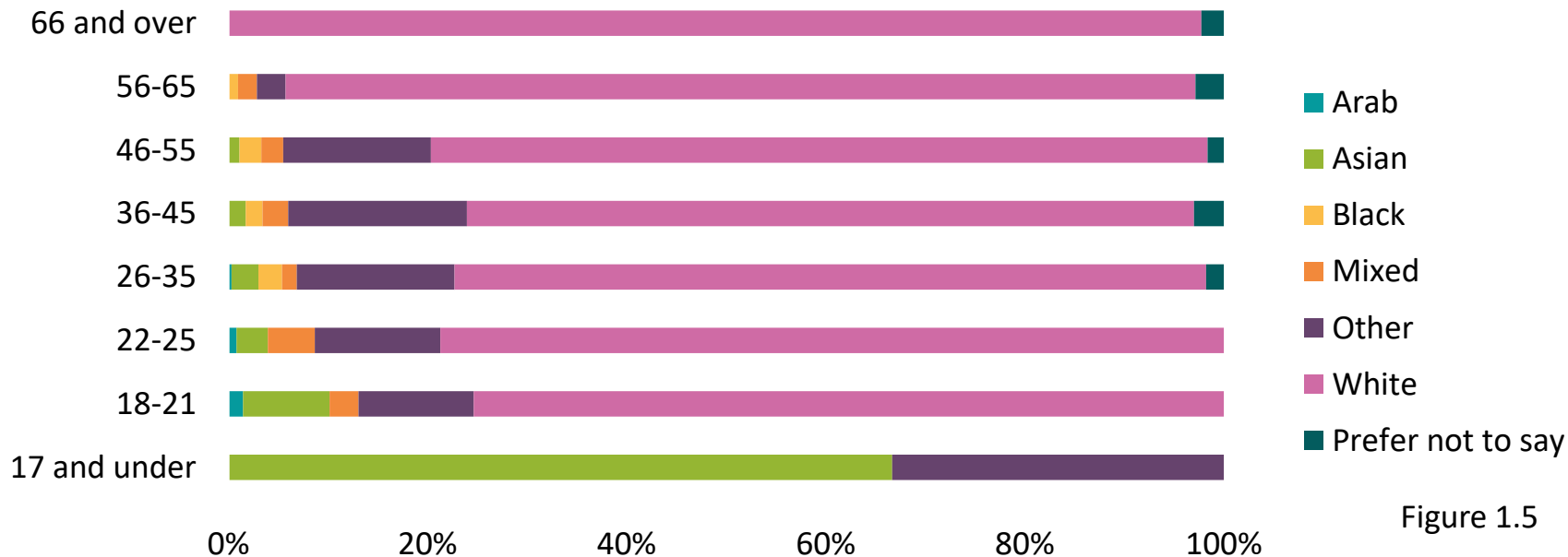
Figure 1.6

Pie chart legend: Asian, Black, Mixed, Other, White, Prefer not to say

Asian 3%
Mixed 2%
Black 2%
Other 1%
Prefer not to say 16%
White 76%

Bar chart legend: Arab, Asian, Black, Mixed, Other, White, Prefer not to say

Age groups: 66 and over, 56-65, 46-55, 36-45, 26-35, 22-25, 18-21, 17 and under

Figure 1.5

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Disability

Figure 1.7

Pie chart legend:
- Yes — 22.48%
- No — 59.92%
- Prefer not to say — 17.60%

Figure 1.7 shows the AMS responses. In the pilot survey, the number of students selecting yes to having a disability was double that of the sample data. In this survey, we amended the question to include a disability definition. This resulted in our sample and survey data matching more closely. However the percentage of those selecting 'prefer not to say' has increased significantly; 0.02% in the sample compared with 17.6% in the survey.

Figure 1.8 is from the Open University's Mychelle Pride who gave a talk on the mental health awarding gap during the Association's EDI Conference in May 2021. Mychelle focused on the affects mental health have on studying and how Covid-19 has intensified the issue. For future surveys, it may be prudent to ask for more detail on the type of disability, such as physical, mental health or learning difficulty. This will help us determine the level of support that students require and how to tailor our communication and resources to suit all needs.
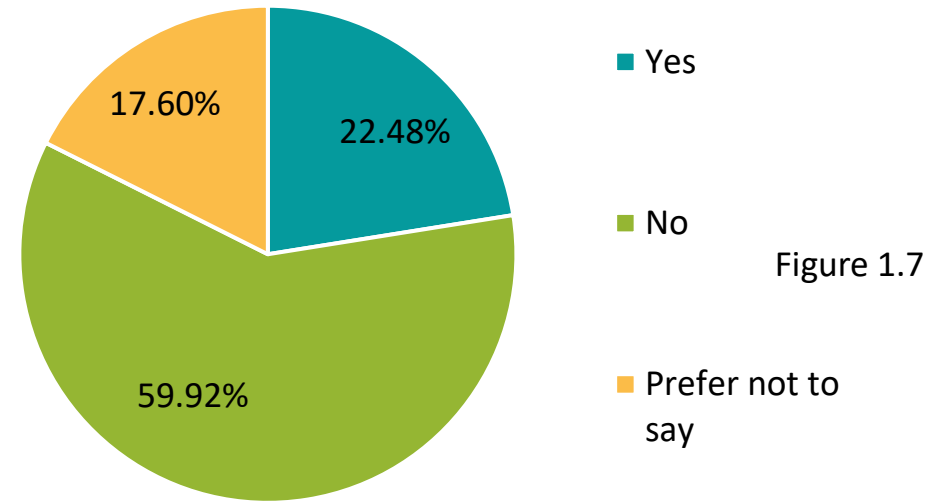
Open University Student Module Flow 2019/20

	Mental health	No disability	Gap
First assignment submission	82.1%	86.9	4.8
Module completion	62.6%	75.1	12.5
First time pass	60.9%	73.4	12.5
Complete to pass conversion	97%	97.5	0.5
Good pass	62.6%	65.4	2.8
Return to study	66.6%	65.7	

Figure 1.8

LGBT+
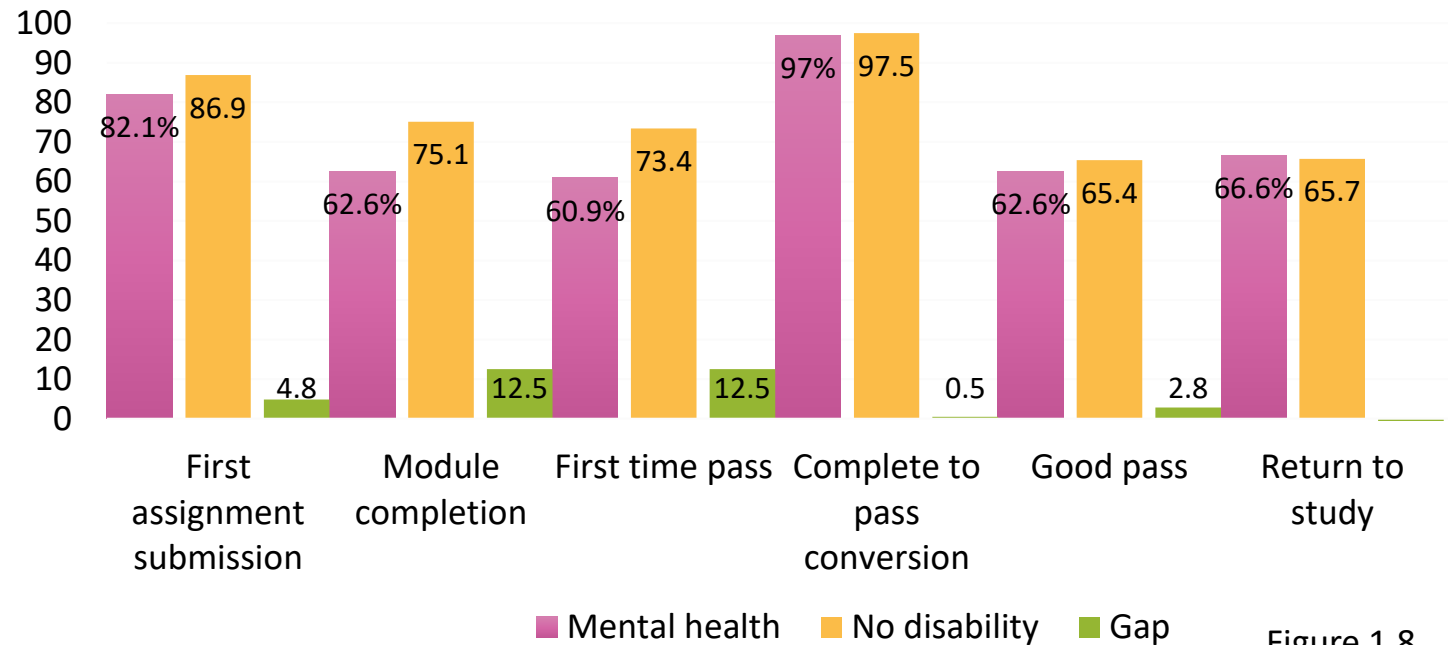
The OU do not currently hold this information on students, however the results of this survey track the results of the previous survey. The OU have confirmed that are looking into holding this information with the introduction of Core Systems Replacement.
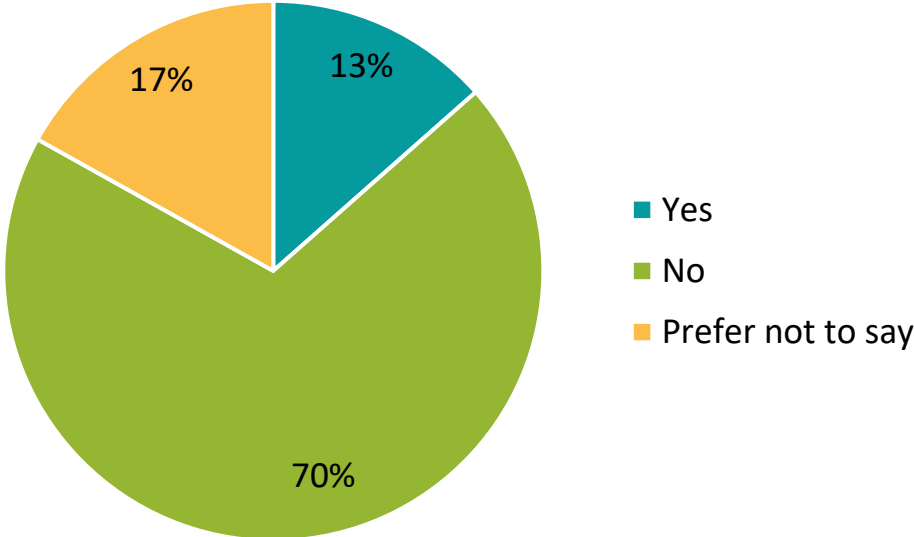

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

13%
17%
70%

Figure 1.9

About your studies

How long have you studied with the OU?

In our pilot survey, 46% of participants advised that they had been studying for under a year. In this round of surveying, the number has decreased to only 14.3%. This survey hears from a much larger percentage of students who have been studying 4+ years.

The timing of the survey being issued could have affected the shift in numbers from our pilot survey which was sent out close to February Freshers.
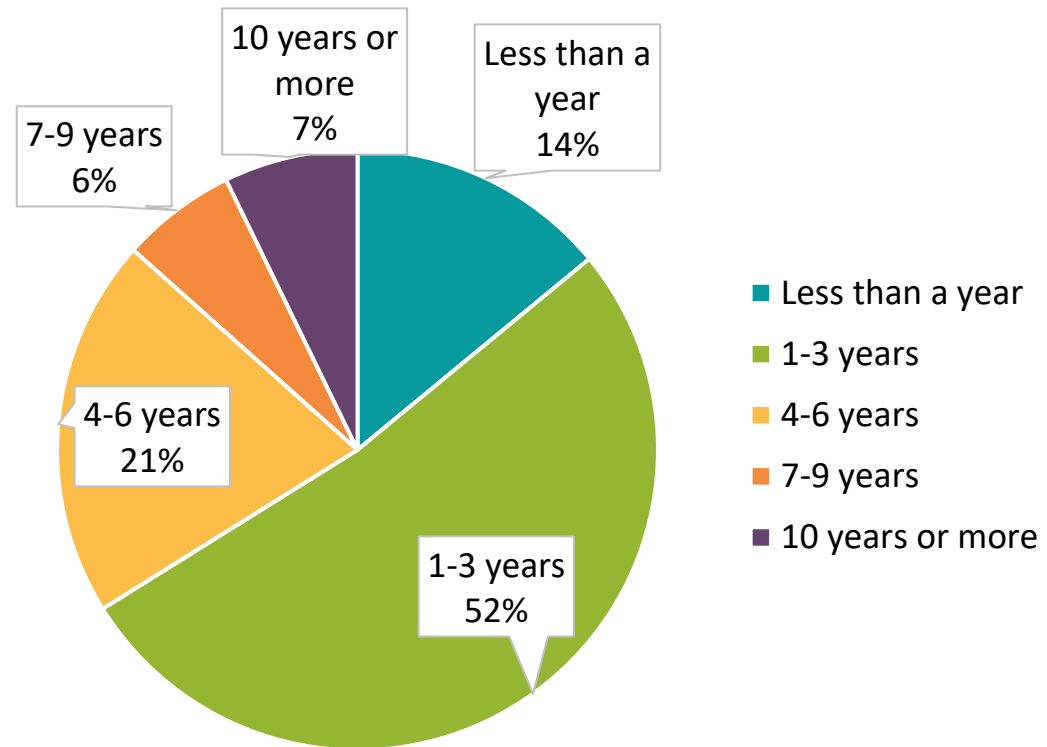
Pie chart labels:
- 10 years or more 7%
- Less than a year 14%
- 7-9 years 6%
- 4-6 years 21%
- 1-3 years 52%

Legend:
- Less than a year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- 10 years or more

Figure 2.1

Current level of study
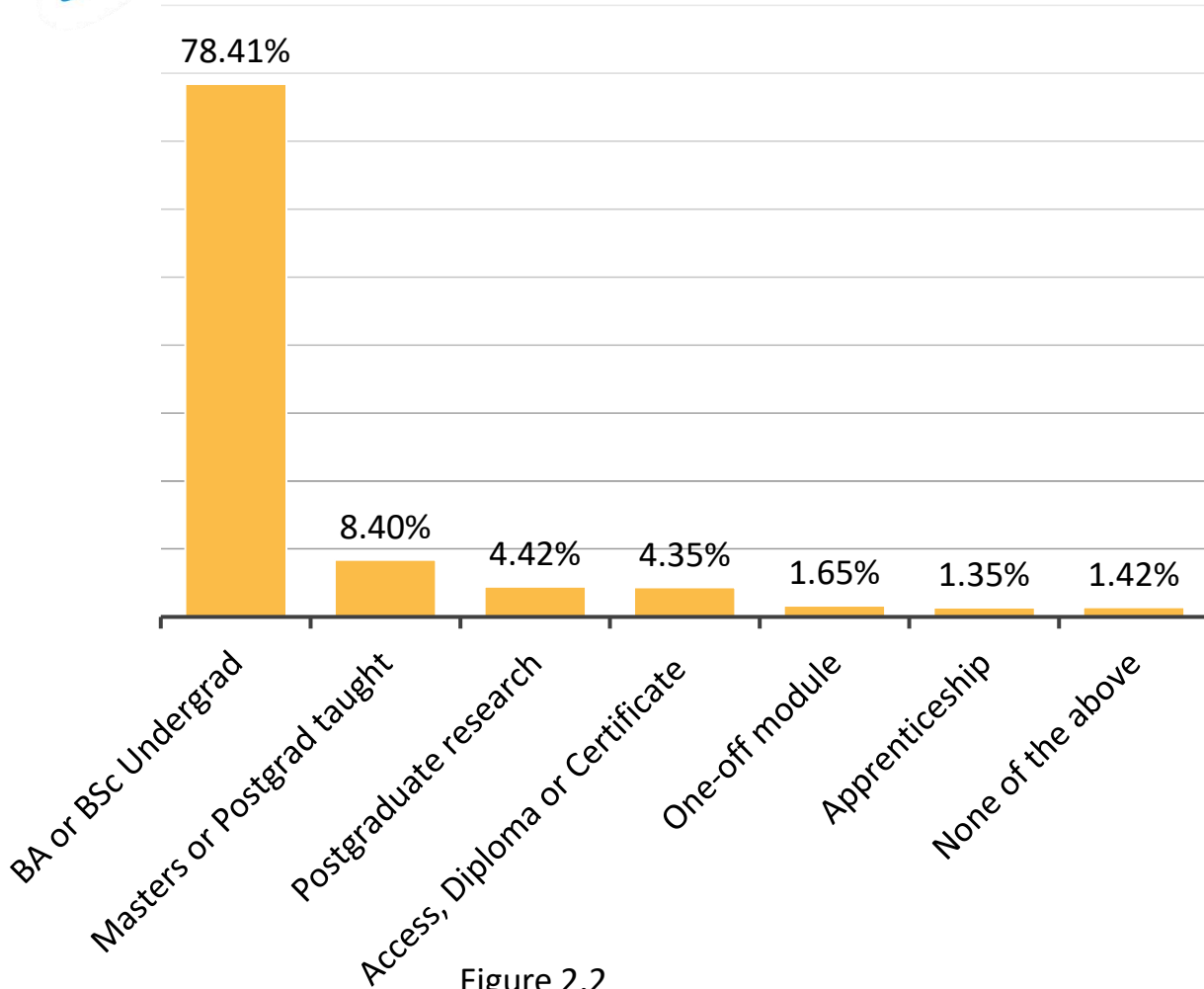
The level of study broadly tracks the results from the pilot survey. As expected, more participants are progressing an undergraduate degree. More work could be taken here to engage our Postgrad community, especially those who are based on the Milton Keynes campus.

78.41%
8.40%
4.42%
4.35%
1.65%
1.35%
1.42%

BA or BSc Undergrad
Masters or Postgrad taught
Postgraduate research
Access, Diploma or Certificate
One-off module
Apprenticeship
None of the above

Figure 2.2

50% of students studying a one-off module or apprenticeship identify as male.

64.4% of Postgraduate Research students identify as women

Figure 2.3

Current faculty

On the whole, the survey data matches the sample data with the exception of WELS which is under represented. This anomaly was seen in the pilot survey and may be attributed to the cross over between WELS and Access modules.

STEM and FASS are the most popular faculties.

Of our disabled students, 34.75% are enrolled on modules in FASS

No students identifying as Non-Binary or Trans are on modules from FBL, WELS, Open/Access
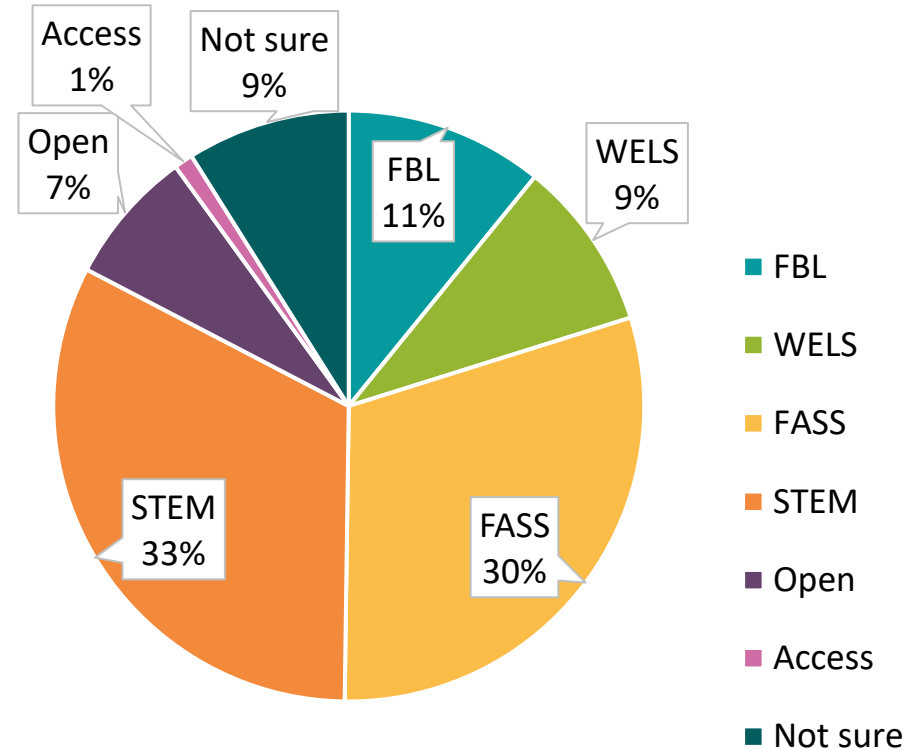

Figure 2.4
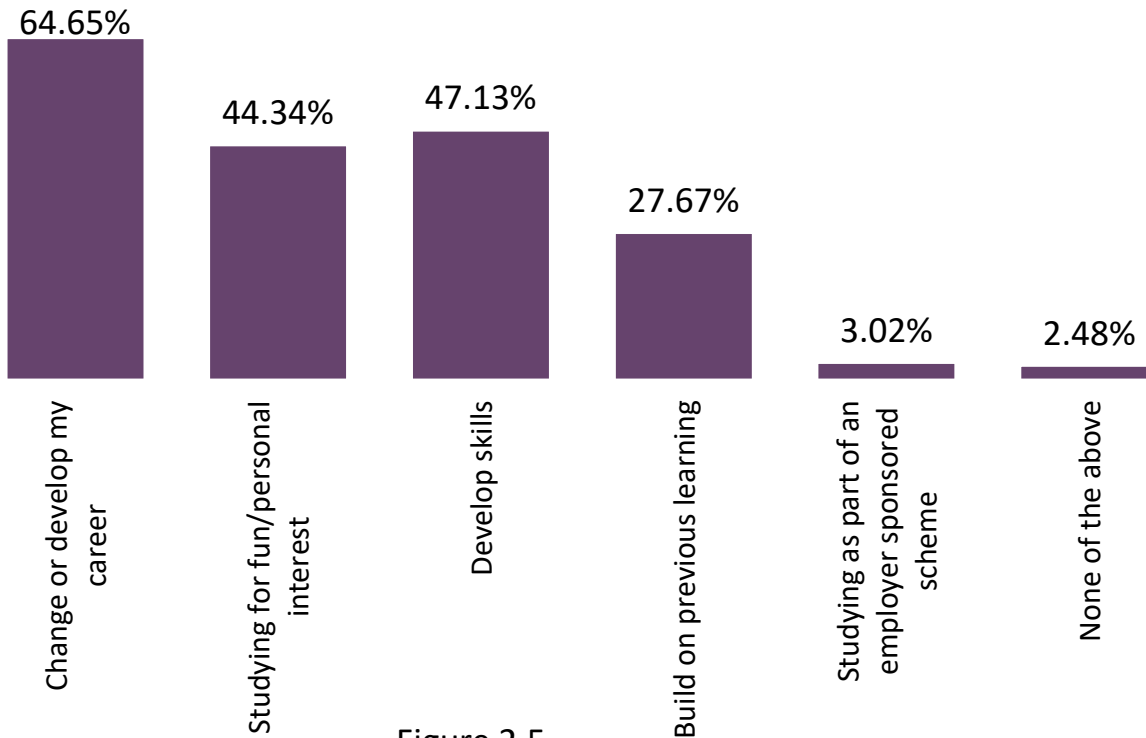
Figure 2.5

Time demands outside of your studies

Some of the options for this question have changed slightly since the pilot such as the hobbies and socialising being split into two options. The biggest shift here compared with the pilot is the increase from 4% to almost 9% on students who are focusing solely on their studies. This may have been driven by the global pandemic and restrictions on socialising and group hobbies.
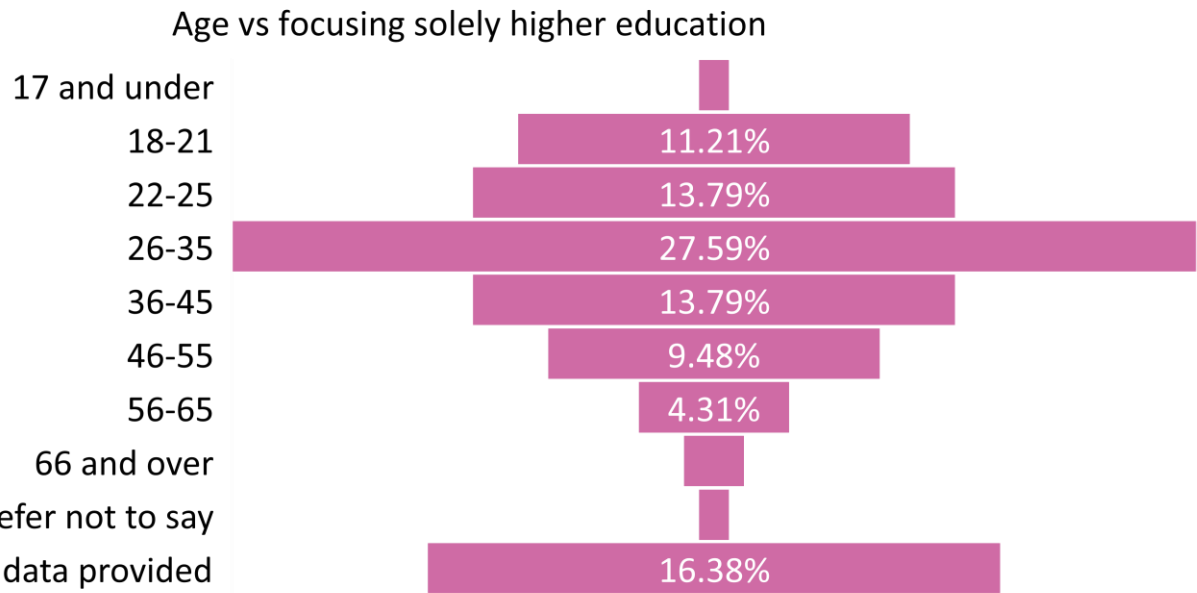

Age vs focusing solely higher education

Age	%
17 and under	
18-21	11.21%
22-25	13.79%
26-35	27.59%
36-45	13.79%
46-55	9.48%
56-65	4.31%
66 and over	
Prefer not to say	
No demographic data provided	16.38%

Figure 2.6

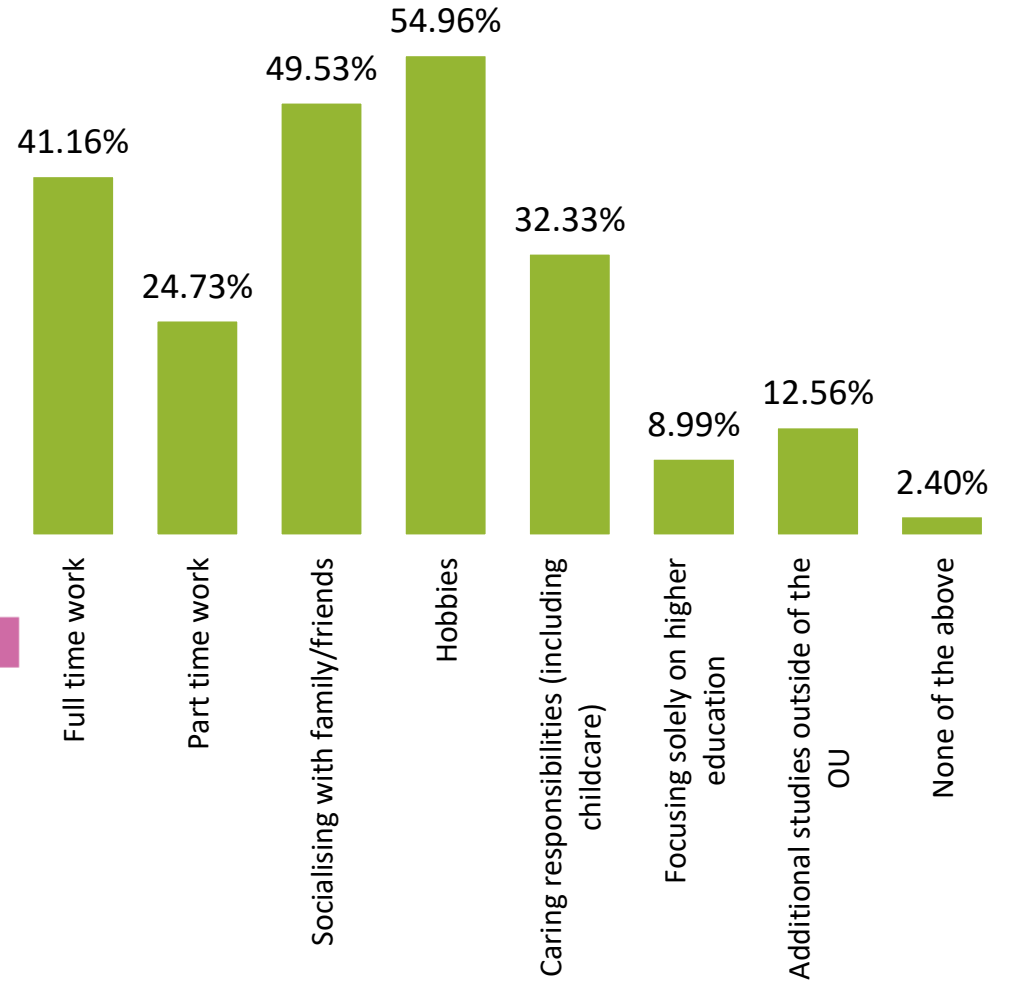| Category	%
Full time work	41.16%
Part time work	24.73%
Socialising with family/friends	49.53%
Hobbies	54.96%
Caring responsibilities (including childcare)	32.33%
Focusing solely on higher education	8.99%
Additional studies outside of the OU	12.56%
None of the above	2.40%

Figure 2.7

Awareness and Engagement

How did you hear about the survey?

A new question for this round of surveying to judge effectiveness of our marketing channels. Over 18% of participants did not select the invitation e-mail which was sent to all students in w/c 16 November. Figure 3.2 shows where this cohort of students were finding out about the survey. Social media and newsletter both score fairly highly here indicating some level of existing awareness of the Association. When looking at all survey participants, the StudentHome bulletin board scores fairly low, however this is where the majority of the students, who did not see the e-mail, saw the survey advertised. Interestingly, none of the students who confirmed they received the email mentioned seeing the advert on The Hoot.
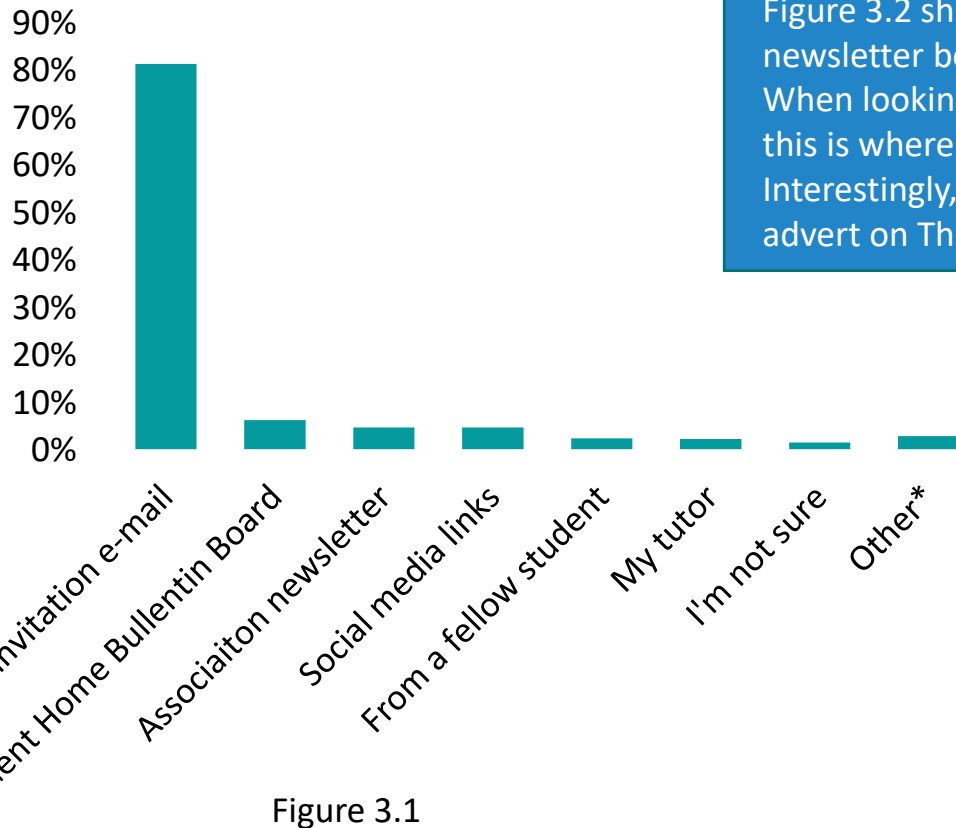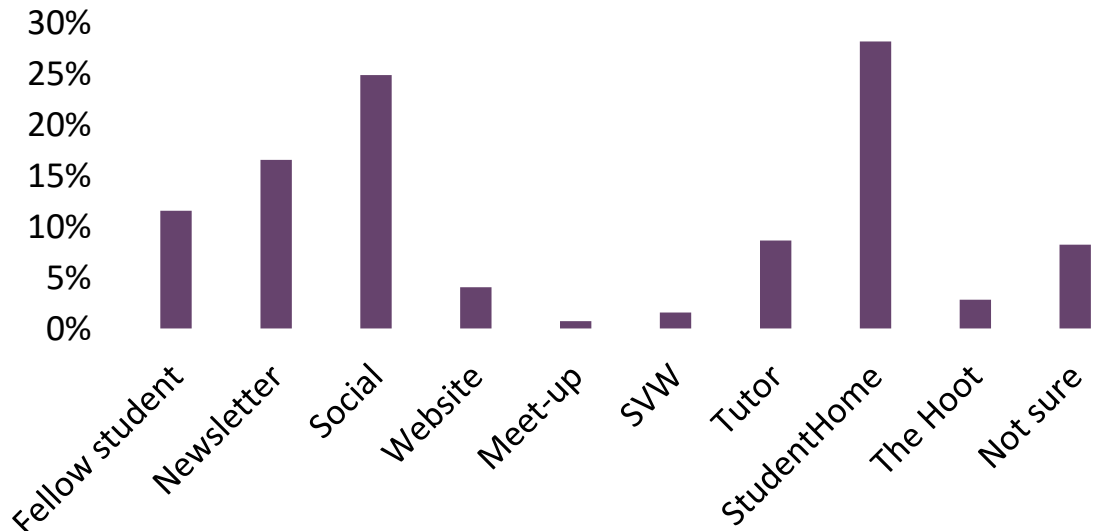

Figure 3.1

*Other includes; Association website (1.16%), Student Voice Week (0.85%), The Hoot (0.54%) and Association Meet-Ups (0.39%).
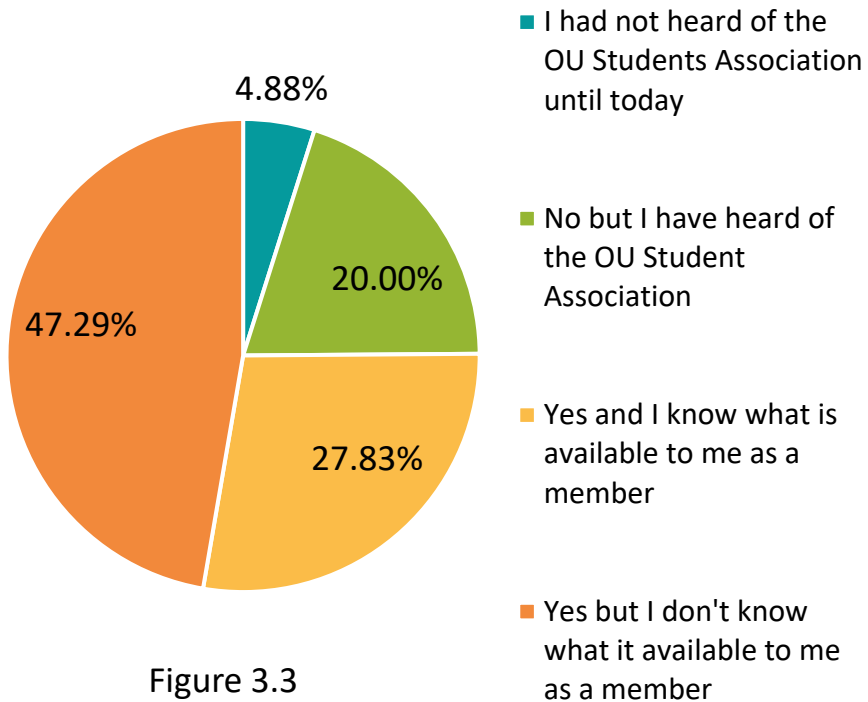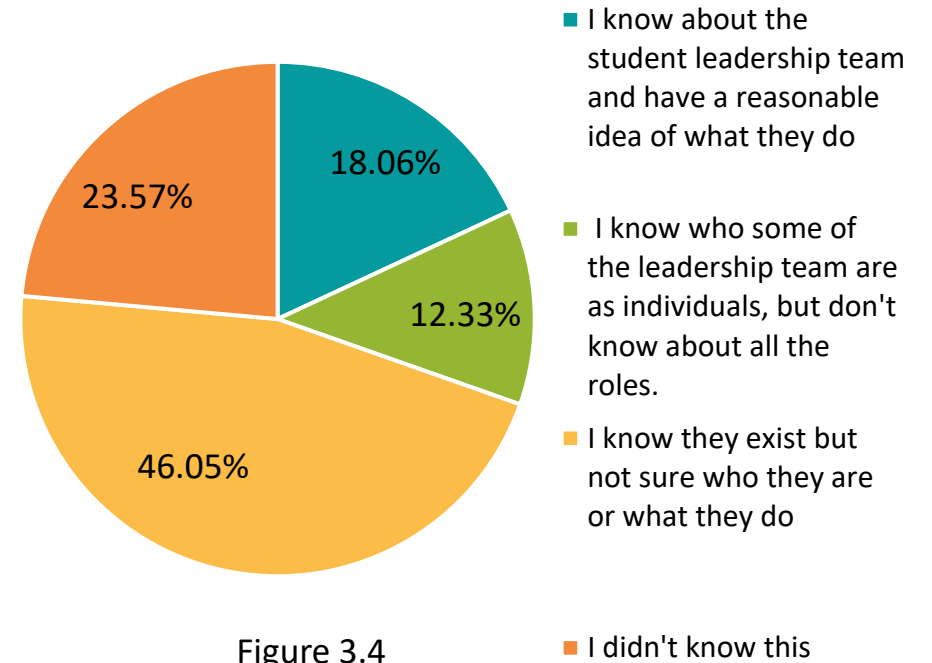

Figure 3.2

Association awareness

Survey participants responded favourably to the free text question 'What do you think we do?'. Many participants who were unsure of the Association's role were able to provide a correct response to the question. As with the pilot, students commented that the survey has prompted them to seek more information about the Association.

40.6% of students provided comments about support services

'I believe the organisation offers support and opportunities to students to develop and gain knowledge and skills'

'...looks after the students in terms of their development and well-being'

'...supports and informs the students...'

'I had not heard of the OU Students Association until today. No initial perceptions'

28.3% of students said that we represented the students on Open University matters

'giving a voice for students on giving input on the course materials and how they are taught'

'gives students the opportunity to have their say in the way things work at the OU. They can maybe make suggestions and tell the OU what they think works well or needs improving.'

'fight for our student rights when needed!'

24.5% of students mentioned community

'Gives students a place to come together and share problems or achievements'

'...association allows students to get as involved with other students as they want to in a variety of ways, whether it's just reading the Hoot, contributing on forums or joining quiz/film nights'

'...offer students an inclusive community and the chance to socialise and share experiences otherwise not available to us as distance learners.'

21.04% of students provided a negative answer, advising that they don't know the role of the Association

'I am not sure of anything material that this organisation can offer students'

'Not sure. I have followed on Facebook to find out.'

'I am not in the UK, so from my perspective joining clubs etc associated with the OU seems a bit pointless'

'I had not heard of the OU Students Association until today. No initial perceptions'

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Awareness word clouds

What do you think we do?

Awareness of CEC and BoT

Services

It is encouraging to see here that students would consider taking part in these activities in the future as well as the amount of students that would recommend the activities to a fellow student. Freshers is the most recommended activity here which may be due to the time of year that the survey was distributed. Freshers also received a high percentage point for 'it's not for me' which could be attributed to the fact this activity is only available to students once in their study journey.
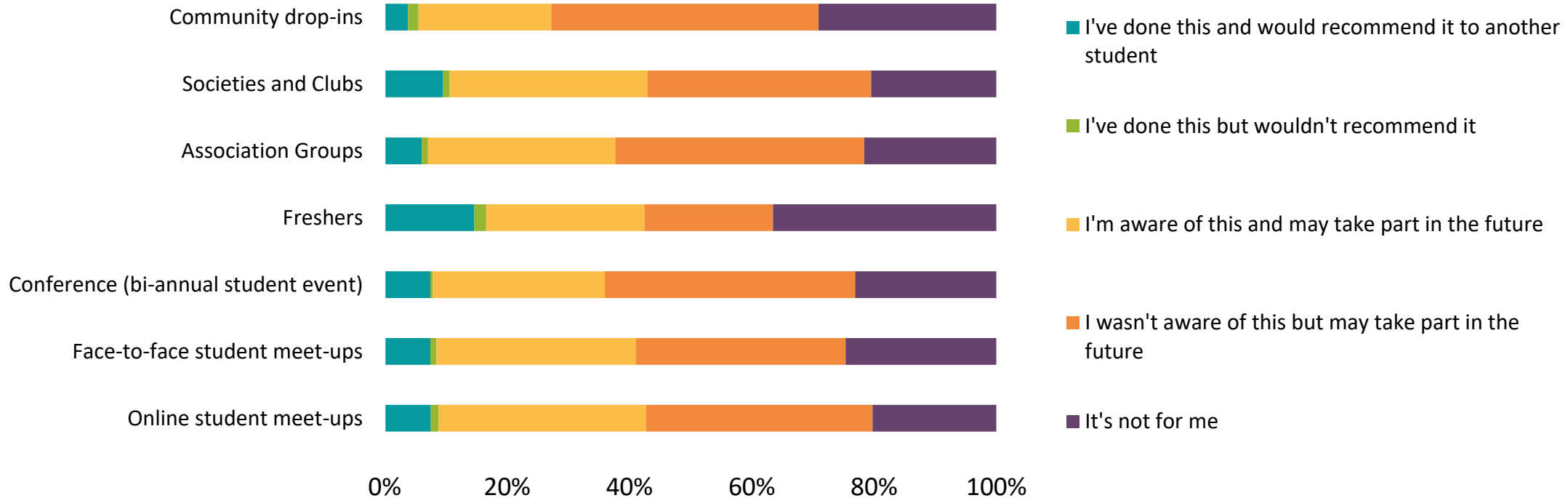
Figure 3.5

Awareness of services

Awareness levels of the services offered by the Association were generally good, however it was noted that many students who selected Black, Asian and Minority ethnicities had lower awareness than white students.

Figure 3.6

Figure 3.7

Resources

As expected, there is a large number of students selecting 'not for me' for this question. This is because many of the groups are set up for those with protected characteristics. More investigation needs to be done into the high numbers of students who would not recommend the student support videos and how to make these more appealing. The OU Shop preformed well here with many students commenting on the availability of past exam papers.
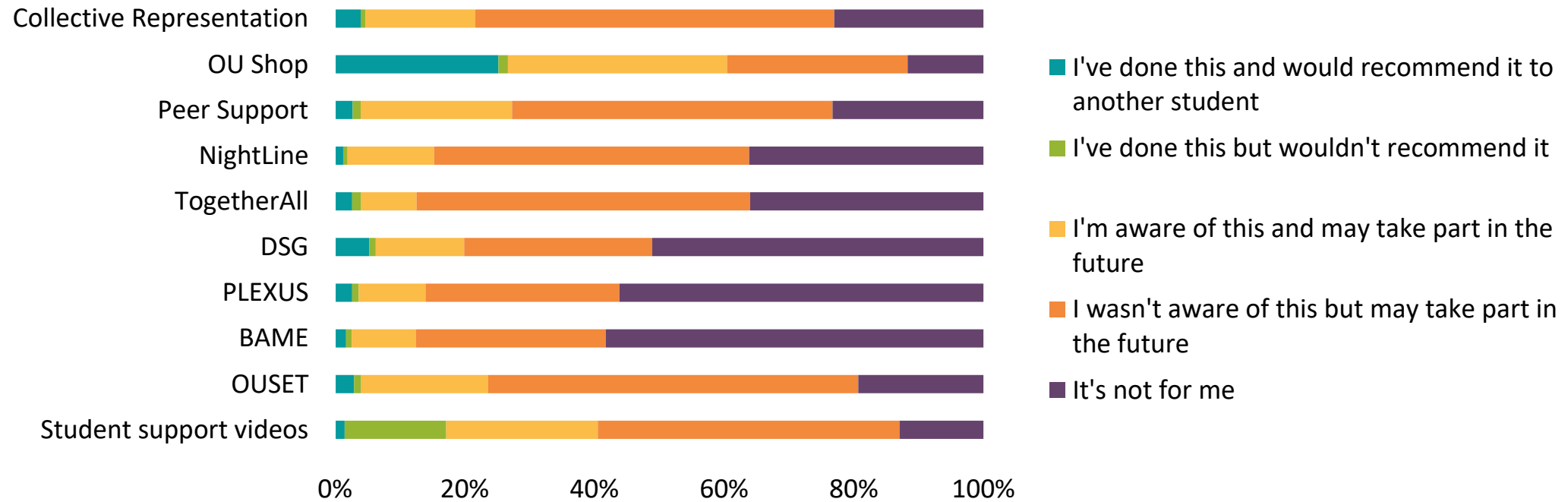
Figure 3.8

Awareness of resources by characteristic

The following charts show the awareness and relevance for groups which focus on certain characteristics. Here you can see that those selecting 'not for me' fall outside of the group characteristic.

OU Pride (formally PLEXUS)

Legend:
- Not for me
- Wasn't aware, but may take part
- Aware and may take part
- Wouldn't recommend
- Would recommend

Categories: Non-Binary, Trans, Identifies as LGBT+, Does not identify…

Figure 3.9

Disabled Students Group

Categories: No disability, Disabled

Figure 3.10

BAME Group

Categories: Arab, Asian, Black, Mixed, Other, White

Figure 3.11

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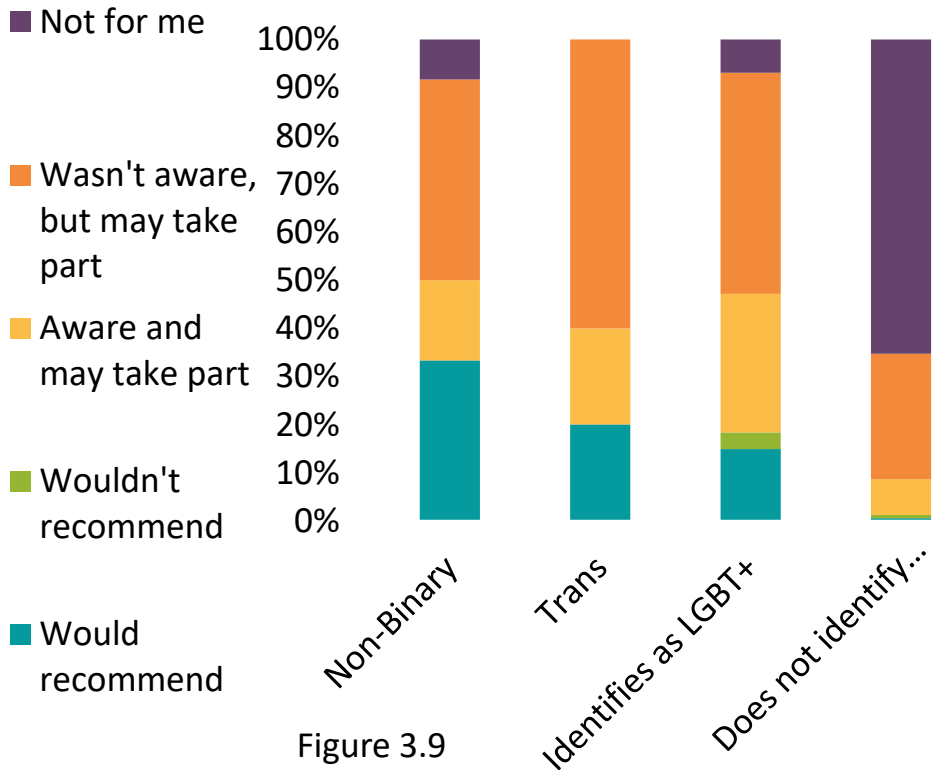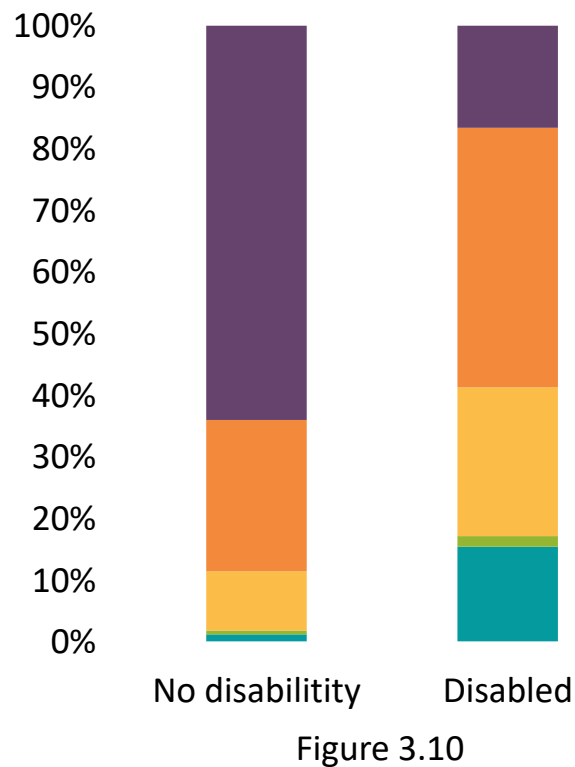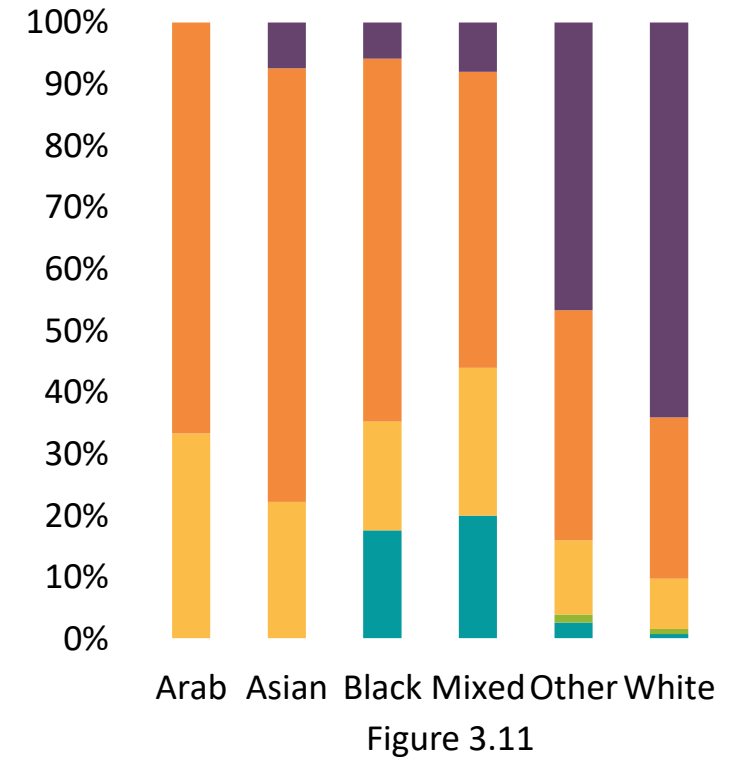
Best time to engage with the student community

We asked students what time of day they would prefer to engaged with the student community. Students were able to select more than one option. The majority of students would prefer to engage between 8pm and 11pm and this is pretty consistent across age groups and gender. The age exceptions was those aged 66 and over and those aged 21 and under. These student should a marginal preference to the earlier sessions.

Another group not following trend were those with caring responsibilities. This group (32.33% of participants) much preferred morning and dinner time sessions.

We specifically stated that timings we gave were in GMT to indicate that those outside of this time zone should select the option most appropriate for them. However, students who selected their region of study as Europe or Rest of the World, still indicated a preference for the twilight option.

Figure 3.12

Feedback on Services and Resources

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33.14% of students said that they would get involved if the offering was more relevant such as aimed at study area, personal interest and cultural background. Some students suggested group ideas which are already established highlighting the need for better communication.

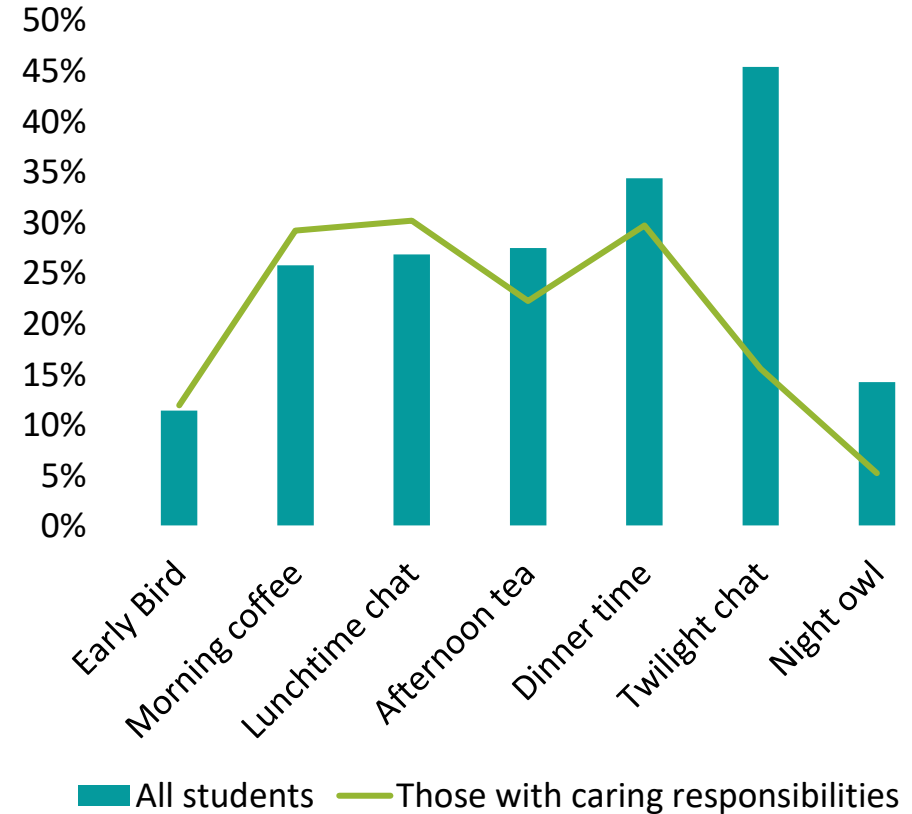'Seeing more people that look like me, women in hijabs, Muslims, people of colour and black people'

'The OUSA doesn't really seem relevant to postgraduate students and I hear from them so rarely that I forget they're there'

'Would love to see speed friending becoming a regular event. Would also like to see more events around specific study areas'

'Other formats besides "masterclass" and more panels or specialized conversations/advice would be good'

'Possibly a network of study related meet ups or fitness clubs for instance'

20.49% of students commented that time was their biggest barrier. This included time to actually engage as well as the timing of events.

'Honestly, time is the biggest constraint for me. Working full time and studying part time doesn't leave time for much else'

'I don't have a lot of time but I do really appreciate that the student community exists'

'I live in Asia so time difference is definitely a barrier.'

'Events at the weekend or evenings that work around full time work'

'I am Jewish and most of the student meet ups seem to take place on a Saturday'

16.86% of students mentioned that better communication would help in terms of increasing awareness of the offering and better advertising of events.

'easy to add calendar invites (if it's not in outlook calendar I'm not going)'

'I´m aware now (after doing this questionnaire) that I had little to none information about what this Association does'

'I would like to see more info posted within my module forums...I vaguely recall getting some emails, but sometimes these look the same and a bit generic so they also do not get my full attention.'

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Feedback on Services and Resources

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As expected, some students simply do not want to get involved with the student community. There were a number of comments about students finding social situations overwhelming and preferring to avoid them at all costs. Within these comments there a few with negative undertones regarding the culture at the Association, all of which are being addressed by the Association's Culture Review. Several student mentioned an interest in having a 'student buddy' to act as a guide and introduce new students to the student community.

'I'm not sure I want to engage with the SU. I'm a lone studier and like it that way'

'Get rid of the toxic / bully characters that supposedly promote the student community'

'Creating special groups for "diversity" only highlights the differences and perpetuates the divisions, and you only alienate the rest of society. Even positive discrimination is still discrimination, and is frankly insulting - I would rather be selected by the merit of my suitability for the task than because I tick some diversity box.'

'My little experience of the OUSA through social media is that it appears to be very cliquey.'

'Probably nothing. I don't mean this as a negative, I do my studies and get the grades I aim for, this is the goal behind my OU work'

'I feel a bit like everyone will know each other, a buddy system would be great for confidence'

'Nothing in particular, I'm studying with the OU because I enjoy studying on my own'

'Barriers: relevance - I get the impression it's more aimed at 18-30 year olds, those who work or want to change career. '

'It needs to be a lot less intimidating. The forums terrify me because you're dealing with the public, and strangers, and you don't know how they're going to respond. Some people love to start arguments and it is stressful'

I have social anxiety and find it hard to connect with others'

'I'm extremely shy and feel uncomfortable using the community. Maybe a buddy system or smaller events to ease you into it'

Services and resources word cloud

Volunteering

These results broadly track the pilot survey results with time being the biggest barrier to engagement. It is encouraging to see high interest levels for each of the volunteering opportunities along with many free text comments around wanting further information on the different roles. This highlights the importance of the survey as a marketing tool for the Association.

Student Community Volunteer
Take part in campaigns
Student Community Volunteer
Student Voice Volunteer
OU Student Shop Volunteer
Digital Communications Volunteer
Online Volunteer

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ I do this/I have done this
■ This sounds interesting
■ I don't have time to volunteer for this
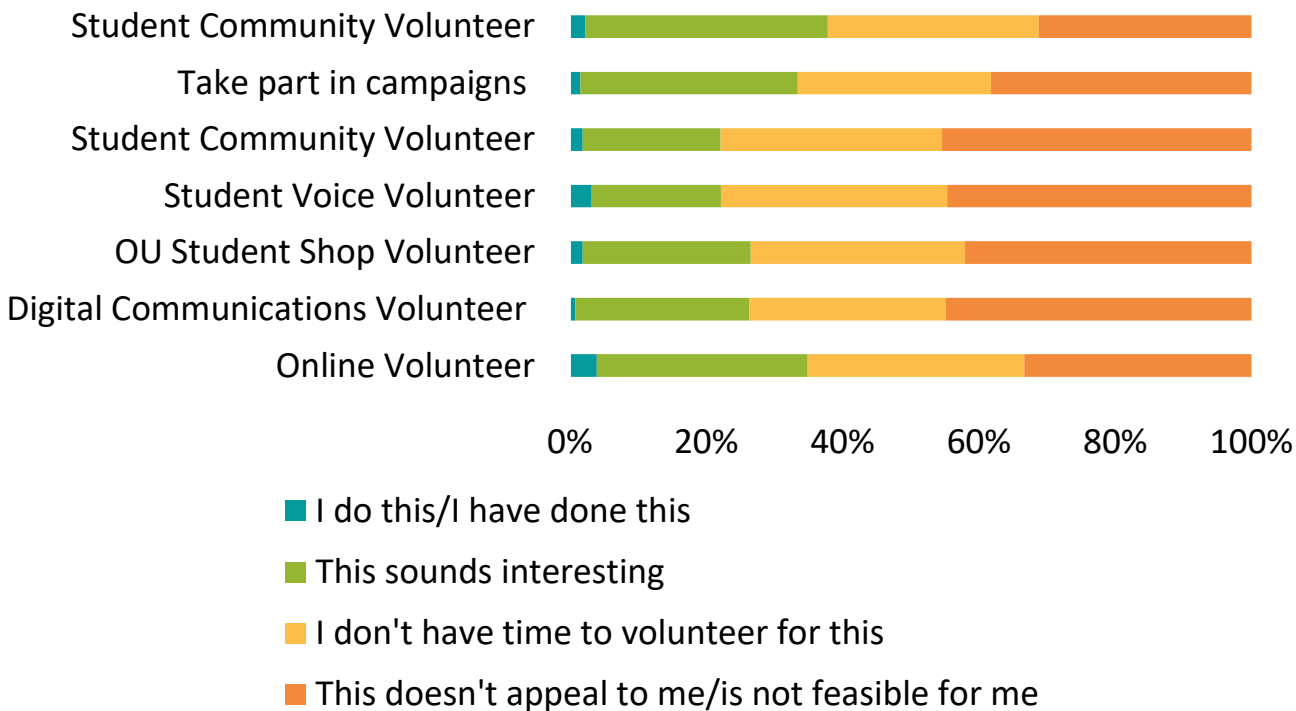■ This doesn't appeal to me/is not feasible for me

Figure 3.13

46.93% of students aged 18-25 would prefer to take part in online volunteering.

34.13% of students aged 36-55 preferred student support roles.

44.18% of students aged 26-35 were interested in volunteering roles around campaigning.

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Volunteering

These results broadly track the pilot survey results with many students wanting to gain new skills as a result of volunteering

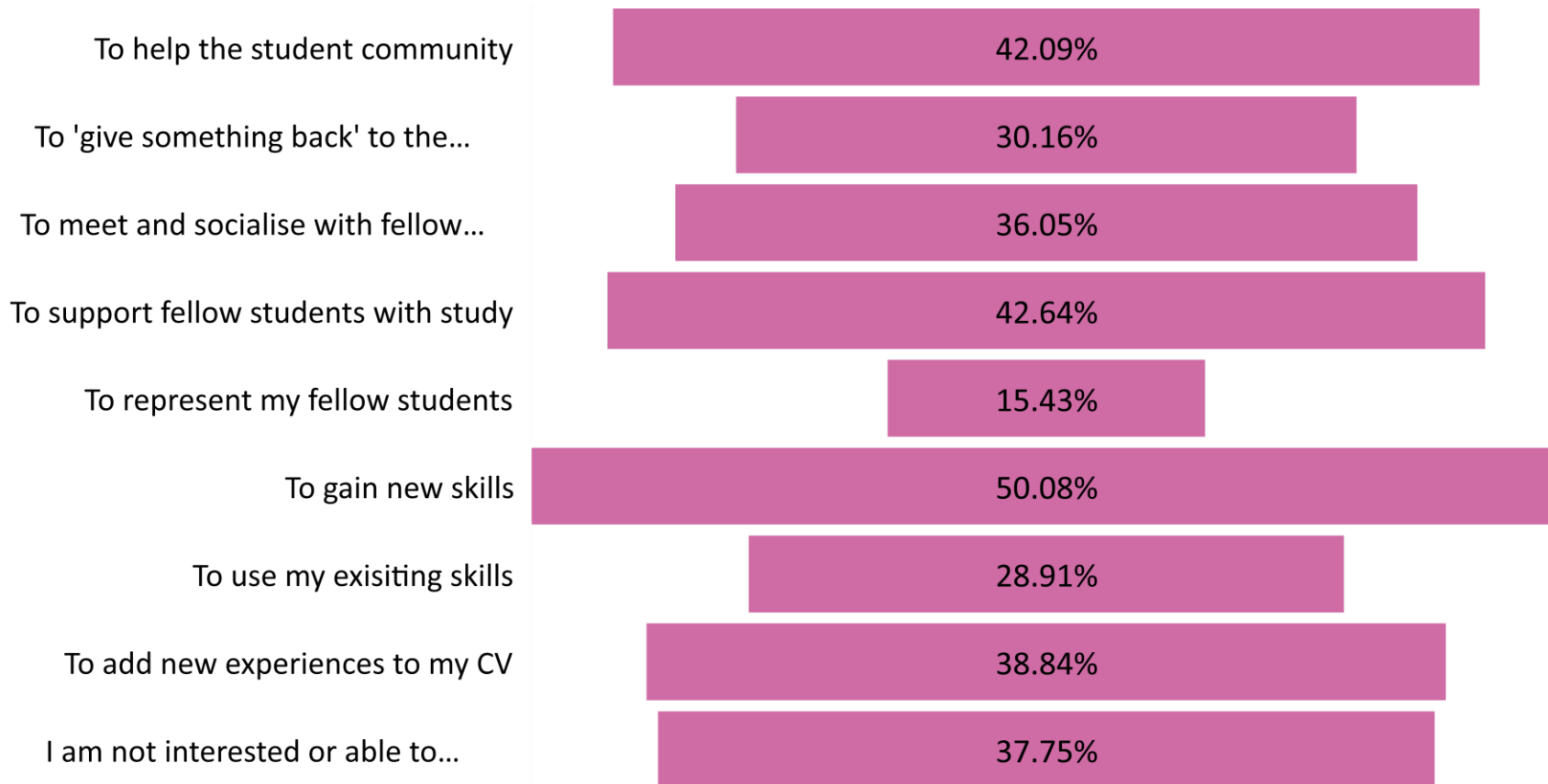| Category	Percentage
To help the student community	42.09%
To 'give something back' to the…	30.16%
To meet and socialise with fellow…	36.05%
To support fellow students with study	42.64%
To represent my fellow students	15.43%
To gain new skills	50.08%
To use my exisiting skills	28.91%
To add new experiences to my CV	38.84%
I am not interested or able to…	37.75%

Figure 3.14

39.04% of students aged 56-65 are interested in supporting fellow students.

79.71% of students aged 18-21 want to be able to add new experiences to their CV.

45.73% of students aged 25 and under would like to meet and socialise with fellow students.

Volunteering

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26.77% of students commented that time was their biggest barrier for engaging with volunteering.

'I feel this would be a huge commitment and with a busy family, work and uni life I'm not sure I would have the time or energy to commit to such a role'

'It would be great to see more roles that don't require too much time each week'

'I work full time, study full time and have a small baby'

'I'm not against volunteering especially if I can be of help, however, time is an issue with full-time work and studies.'

19.70% of students felt it was important to support fellow students and contribute to the community.

'I would like to do anything that involves teaching the fellow students or working with them on academic topics.'

'Giving back to the community is very appealing'

'sounds like a great opportunity to engage in a community'

'interested in education and seeing everyone overcome their challenges and emerge stronger and more capable and the OU has allowed me to do that'

14.39% of students would like to get involved in the future

'Would definitely love to do a podcast sharing mental health awareness for students, young and disabled people'

'I would very much like to volunteer online as I feel like it would add to my skills and make me more confident'

'I would like to volunteer, these sound like great opportunities'

'Wasn't really aware about them but sounds like a great opportunity to engage in a community and add experiences to my profile'

14.39% of students would like to be part of volunteering as part of their personal development.

'I don't have much free time so if I were to volunteer I would want to gain skills or experience that could help me get a job outside acidaemia afterward'

'I would like to volunteer for roles within the Student's Association that could help fellow students and improve my skills base'

'I would like to become a History teacher once I have graduated in a couple of years, so volunteering would be great to add to my CV'

Volunteering

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Further comments about volunteering from students.

'Support that would allow me to contribute in smaller bursts or less consistently due to my disabilities, or more virtually without physical elements.'

'I have very little association with the world away from the internet, and volunteering gives me both the opportunity and satisfaction'

'I feel that belonging to an association is a great idea, it creates team spirit, extra curricular interests, boosts your CV and also give students a purpose and a feeling of belonging, not to mention it's a good way to meet new people, and fill up free time and just try new fun things.'

'It would be great to see more roles that don't require too much time each week'

'I've really enjoyed my OU experience and wanted to do what I could to try to help others that were struggling'

'am very much looking for opportunities to bulk out my CV and also I want to hear the students voices and be able to help and make a change to everyone's experiences'

'I wouldn't have the confidence but would be willing to try'

'Involvement through volunteering strengthens sense of belonging, feeling part of something worthwhile, increases self-esteem - feel good about it/ sense of pride, it's interesting, strengthens sense of identity as an OU student'

'employers love that we are showing management of our career by volunteering we are helping other not for a pay but for experience or altruism'

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Volunteering word cloud

Communication

Communication and social spaces

Students were asked about the frequency that they use different social spaces. The results here broadly track the pilot survey with the exception of social media and Association forums which have increased in the 'one a week or more' category.
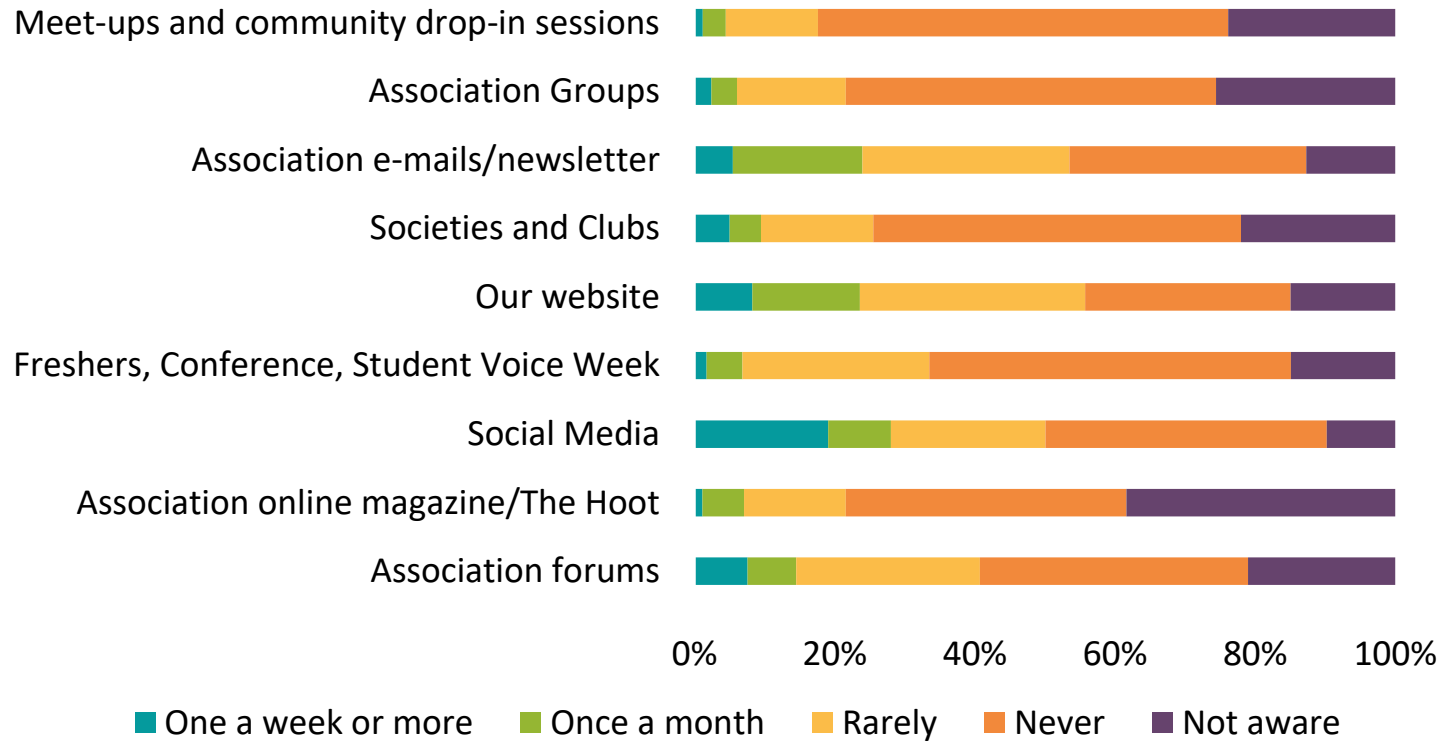

Figure 4.1

Legend: One a week or more, Once a month, Rarely, Never, Not aware

Categories (top to bottom):
- Meet-ups and community drop-in sessions
- Association Groups
- Association e-mails/newsletter
- Societies and Clubs
- Our website
- Freshers, Conference, Student Voice Week
- Social Media
- Association online magazine/The Hoot
- Association forums

Students who identify as female are one and a half times more likely to attend meet-ups than those identifying as male.

Students with a disability are twice as likely to be part of an Association group than those with no declared disability.

31.15% of students regularly engaging with our social media channels are aged 25 and under.

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Communication and Social spaces

This question was new for this survey and shows that Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp are the most popular ways for students to connect with the wider student community.
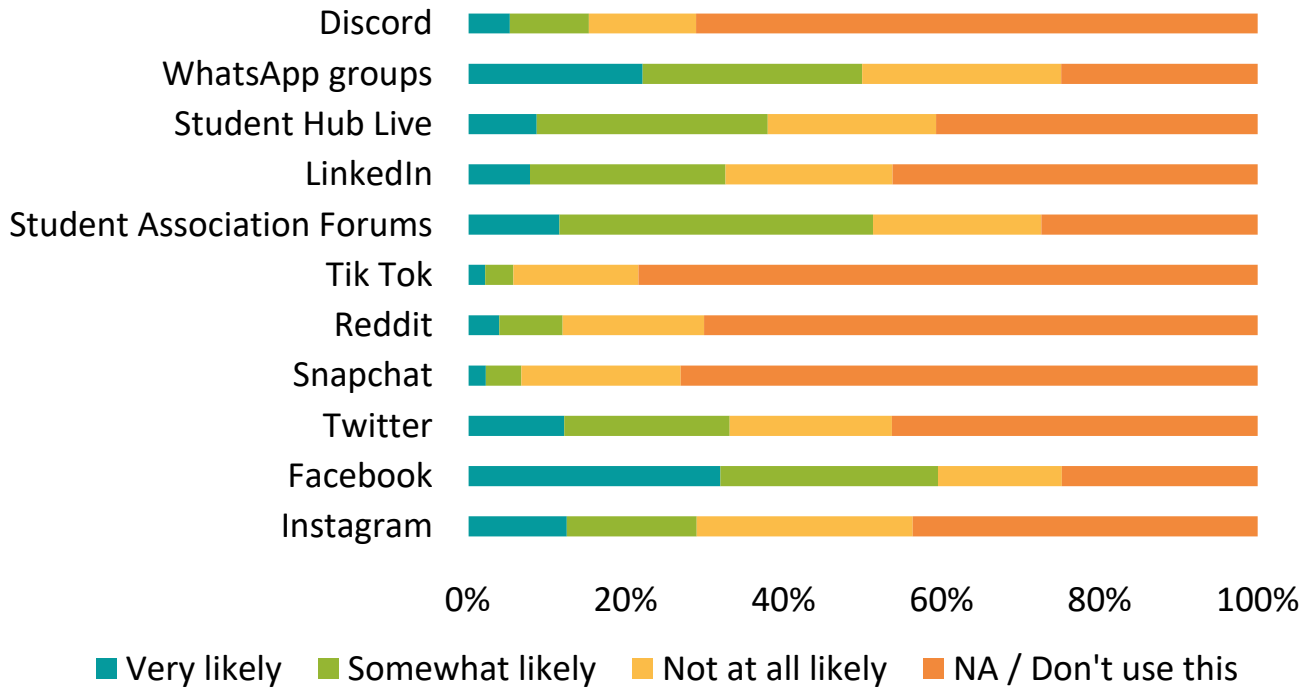
On average, 84.94% of students aged 66 and over are unlikely to use any form of social media, with 54.55% preferring to use forums.

68.06% of students aged 21 and under would prefer to connect with the student community via WhatsApp

The Association forums are most likely to be used by those aged 46-55 with 58.24% if these students in this age group selecting this option.

Facebook and Twitter most popular in the 35-45 age bracket with an average of 53.21% if those students selecting these platforms

Figure 4.2

Chart categories (top to bottom): Discord, WhatsApp groups, Student Hub Live, LinkedIn, Student Association Forums, Tik Tok, Reddit, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram

Legend: Very likely — Somewhat likely — Not at all likely — NA / Don't use this

Prizes and incentives

The graph below indicates that students would like to see more prizes offered as incentives to engaged with the Association. The most sort after prizes are tech prizes with 87.44% of students having a positive response. The least sort after prizes were streaming subscriptions with 17.21% of students having a negative response.

Tech prizes (most popular) and streaming subscriptions (least popular) had consistent popularity across all gender groups.
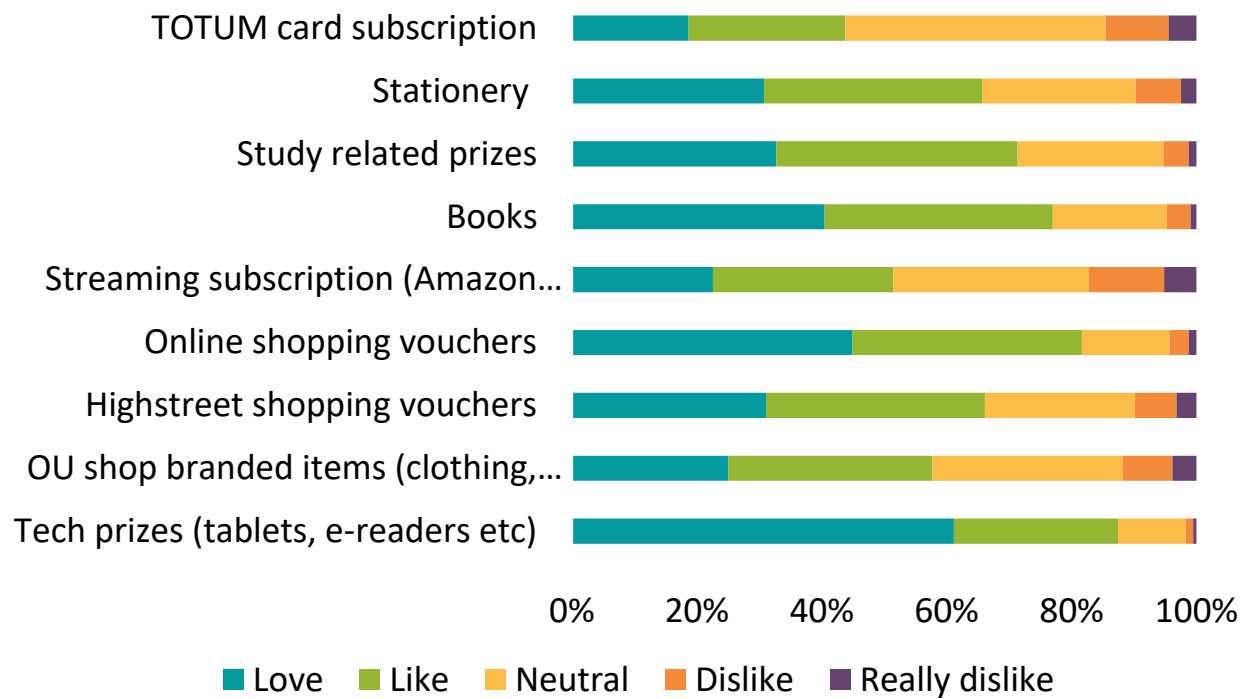
Stationery, TOTUM and tech prizes were most popular with the younger age groups with a steady decline in numbers up to age 66 and over.

Highstreet and online vouchers were most popular with students aged 18 to 25, with 93.36% of these students choosing online vouchers.

Figure 4.3

Communication preferences

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19.24% of students mentioned a preference for Facebook in the free comments.

'More students are available via Facebook than other platforms so a wider audience to connect with'

'Also Facebook is the social media platform I use the most, I find it the easiest to navigate and connect with other students and association staff'

'I like Facebook as a means to communicate with other students as I've been using this for the last 2 years with groups made for each module, it's good to talk to other members easily and most people have it!'

17.56% of students voiced their dislike over using any form of social media.

'Do not like unsocial media as so much of it seems like an electronic gossip column. I like the forums, where most of the chat is study specific and students support and encourage each other.'

'I believe that social media is addictive and can have a negative impact on mental health.'

'I don't use social media. I'm more likely to read a newsletter and be reminded about forums'

10.43% of students like to use platforms other than Facebook and Twitter.

'Reddit is a very interesting platform in itself I would certainly use for open uni '

'I think Reddit and linked in and Instagram are most like for me to engage in as I do use them so would be the easiest for me to connect. I also think you should establish a YouTube channel.'

'And I am an active member in the unofficial OU STEM club Discord server. I like Discord for its advanced features such as channels and bots and its real time chat with online presence'

12.51% of students specially mentioned the culture and privacy concerns relating when connecting with other students.

'some of the comments and conversations on WhatsApp were either nasty or almost breaking the OU anti plagiarism rules'

'...once you are out there, you can experience situations that can affect you emotion, feeling, values'

'I try to limit my use of many social media for privacy reasons'

'I was in a Whatsapp group, but the experience was horrid.'

Digi Comms word cloud

Culture

Culture

Overall the results have for this question have improved since the pilot with very few 'strongly disagree' responses recorded.

61.36% of students who have been studying for 1-3 years show the highest level of understanding for how the Association works with the University. An average of 19.39% of student gave a positive response to this statement for the other age groups.
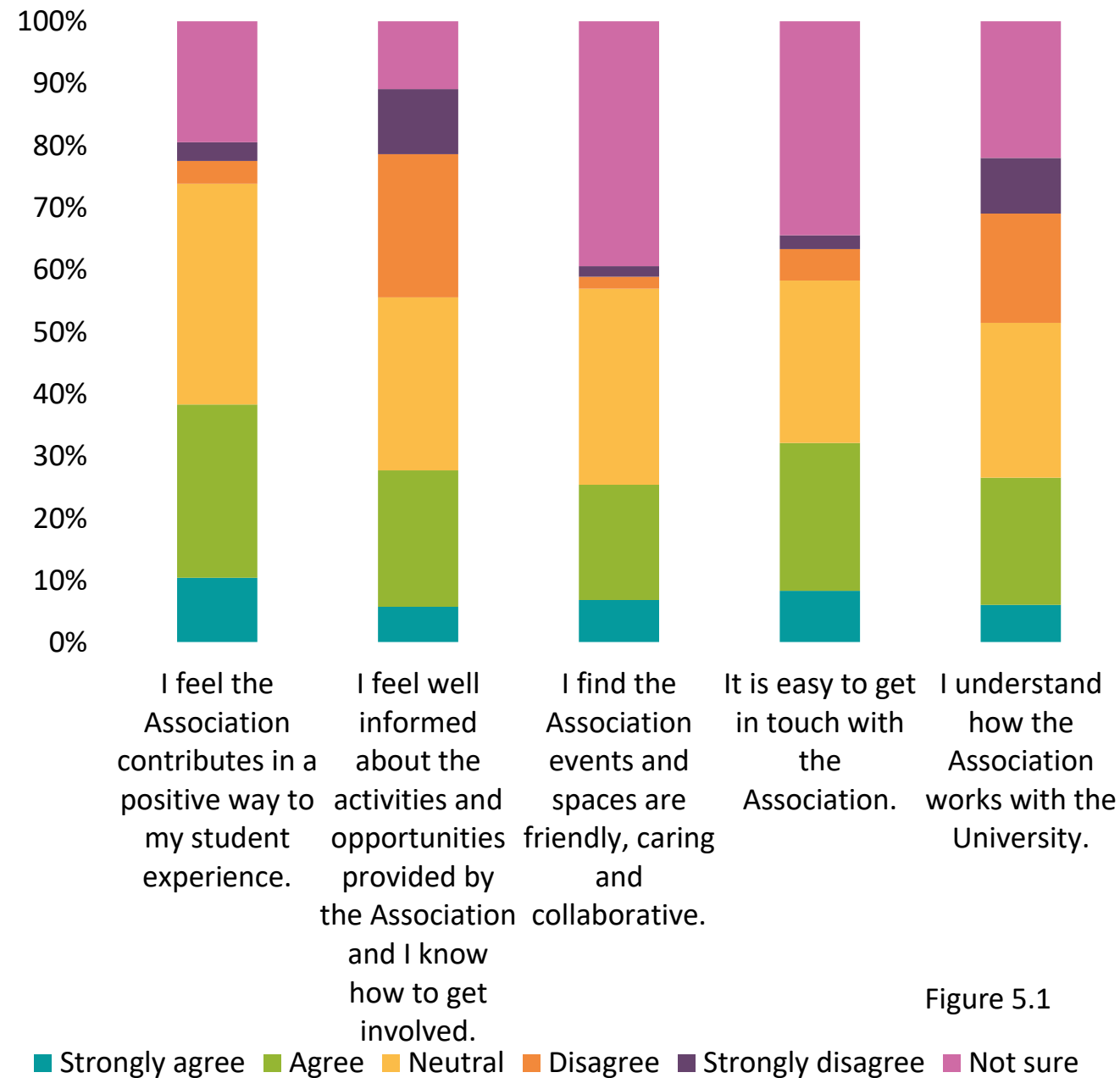
Figure 5.1

Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Not sure

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Culture

The following chart shows the correlation between positive reactions (students selecting strongly agree or agree) to culture statements and Association awareness.

Here you can see that there students with a greater awareness of the Association are more likely to have positive feelings towards the statements.

- I feel the Association contributes in a positive way to my student experience.
- I feel well informed about the activities and opportunities provided by the Association and I know how to get involved.
- I find the Association events and spaces are friendly, caring and collaborative.
- It is easy to get in touch with the Association.
- I understand how the Association works with the University.

Figure 5.2

Culture

Positive response for culture questions vs age

Figure 5.3 shows the age of students giving a positive response (strongly agree or agree) to our culture statements. Students under the age of 25 generally have more positive feelings towards each statement with the exception of feeling well informed which improves as age increases.

The opposite is true with the spaces and events statement which sees a decline in positive feelings from the younger students.

Overall, students in the 26-35 age bracket have the lowest positive feelings towards the culture statements.

Legend: Under 25s · 26-35 · 36-45 · 46-55 · 56-65 · 66 and over
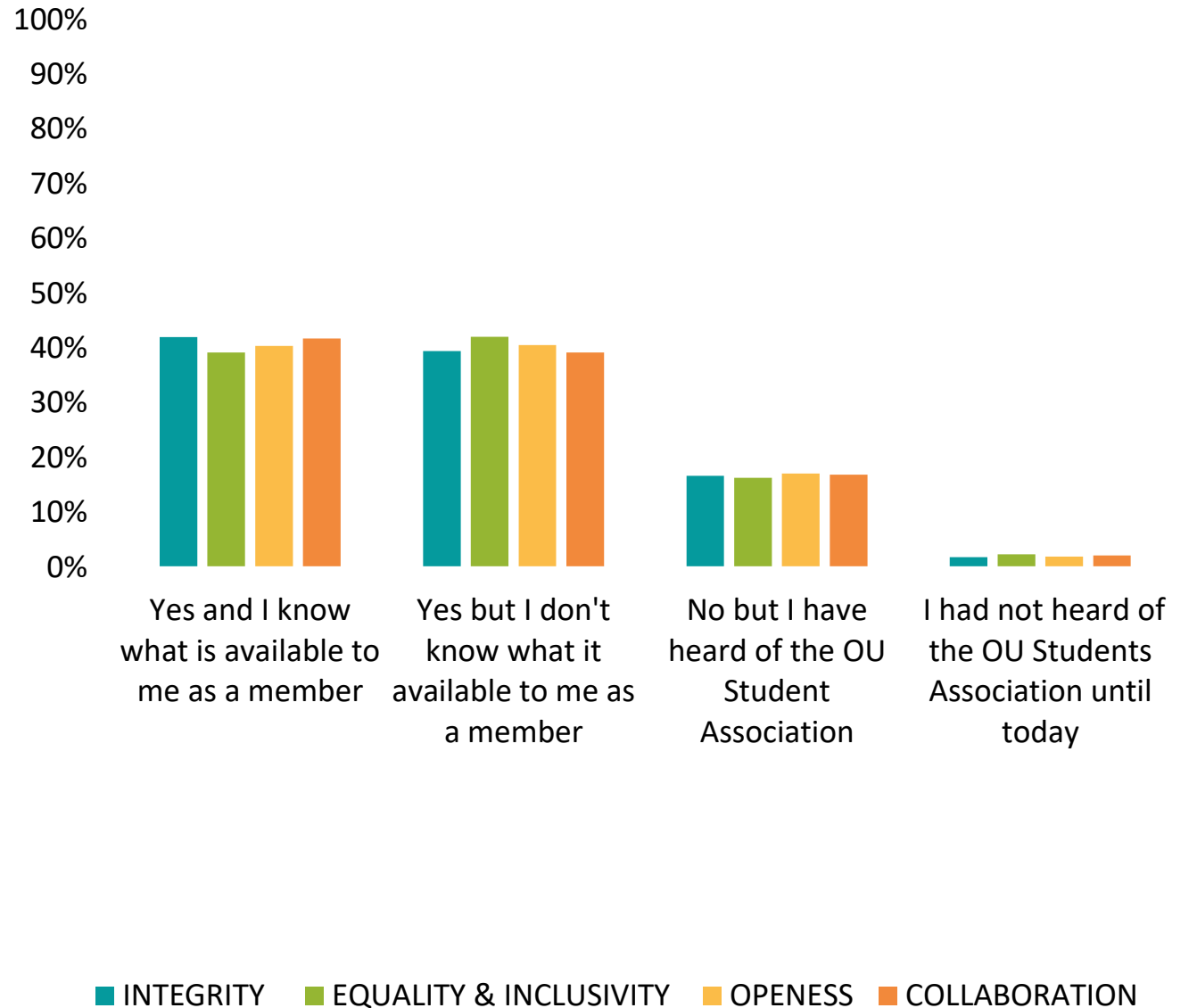
Figure 5.3

Figure 5.4

Figure 5.5

Culture

52.53% of students felt the did not have enough knowledge of the Association to comment on the culture statements.

'Because I simply don't know , however I will start to take more notice now'

'It's unclear how to get involved, a sort of welcome pack with all the info would be ideal.'

'I don't know enough about the association to have formed an opinion'

'Not understanding what OUSA does, after 3 years with the OU, I don't know how to answer this question'

18.48% of students made explicit comments regarding positive interaction with the Association.

I just love the student association

has enabled me to become a better person and provide a better life for my children.

'I don't know much about the Association's roles in details until now and have not actively participated, I believe that this opens up opportunities for OU students to have a voice and to interact with fellow students and share their experiences and concerns which makes to feel the community spirit and enjoy their learning journey with OU.

17.32% of students had limited knowledge of the Association but felt positively towards it.

'easier to pass on negative feedback than it is to pass on positive feedback; in that sense, I guess I can honestly say, I've not witnessed anything negative (and I'm one to spot these!)'

'Surveys would indicate that the association wasn't to improve'

'I don't really know enough about the association to know which values it represents. My initial impression is that it's very open and inclusive, though. '

5.45% of students gave examples of negative interaction with the Association.

'I haven't seen overwhelming evidence for inclusion and diversity within the Association in terms of BAME representation'

'it's quite cliquey and difficult to break into.'

'it is not transparent and open by default [...]there is a huge democratic deficit'

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Culture word cloud

Next steps

Annual Membership Survey 2021

- We are looking to launch the survey in October this year to avoid the Christmas period and increase engagement. This will also allow us to start some earlier marketing during Freshers.

- We attend to engage with the Associate Lecturer community earlier and ensure that the survey is mentioned in all student spaces which the Association does not have access to, such as tutor group forums.

- Previous surveys have been conducted using Microsoft forms which can make the data hard to manipulate. We will be looking into different, GDPR compliant, platforms for the next round of surveying.

- We will be contacting each staff team to ensure that the line of questioning for their team is still relevant. The National Student Survey has one adhoc question each year which is something we would like to introduce to align with different Association activities.

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