

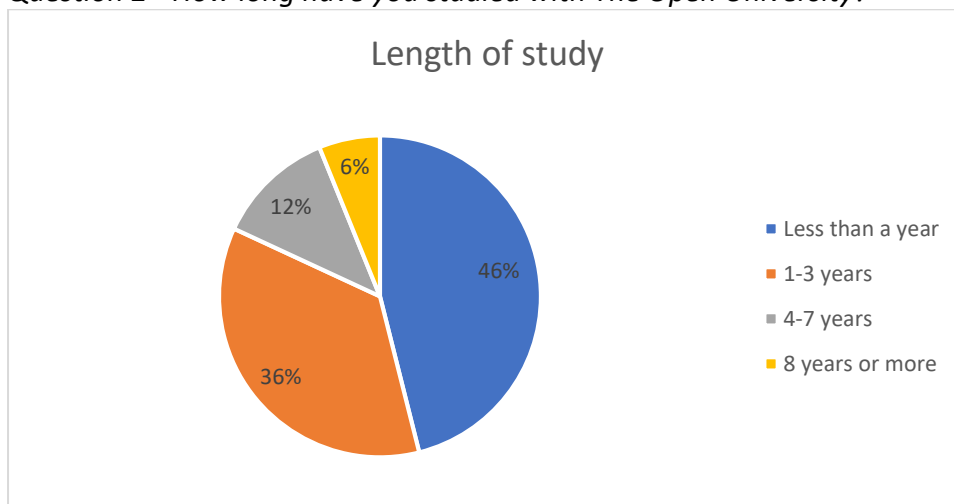
The Open University Students Association – Annual Membership Survey

In this document, you will find a selection of graphs providing high level analysis of the Annual Membership Survey (soft launch) February 2020. The survey was sent out to 30,000 students selected by the Student Research Project Panel (SRPP) as a representative sample of the student population.

The survey was open for 6 weeks and received a total of 293 responses. The response rate is disappointing but can be attributed to a number of issues;

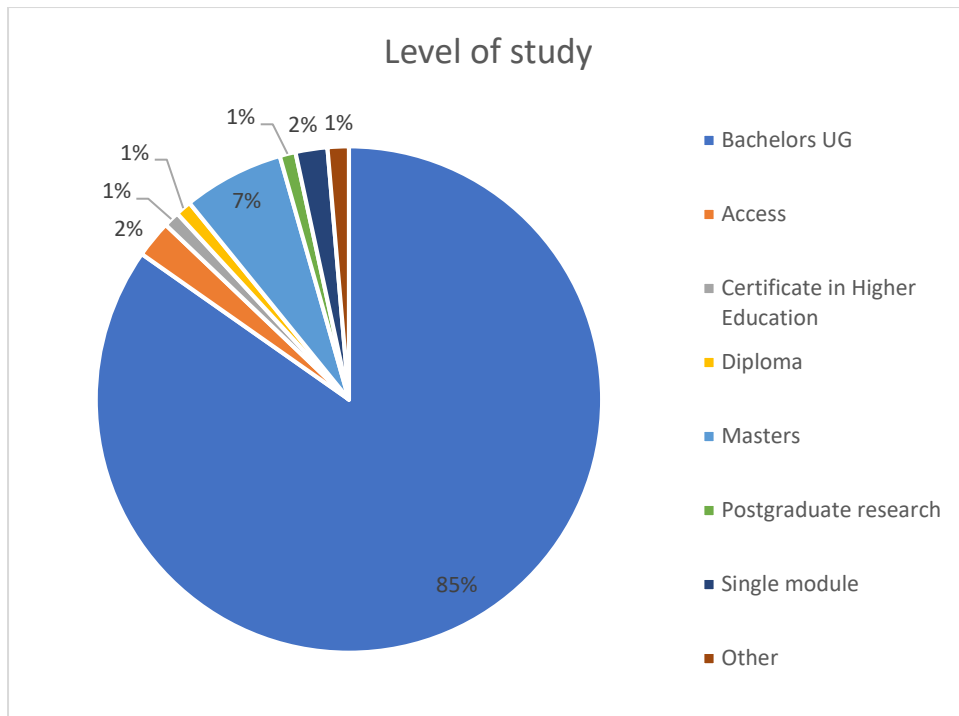
- E-mail sent by the OU using a basic CAMEL mailing programme which offers no options to creatively market the invitation with colours and images
- As the survey was sent to a small cohort of students, we were not able to market with an aggressive social media campaign
- Due to mass e-mail slots being reserved for Covid-19 alerts, the OU were not able to facilitate the sending of reminder e-mails
- Just after the survey launch, countries began to lockdown in response to the Covid-19 outbreak which could have had a significant impact on the number of responses.

Question 2 - How long have you studied with The Open University?



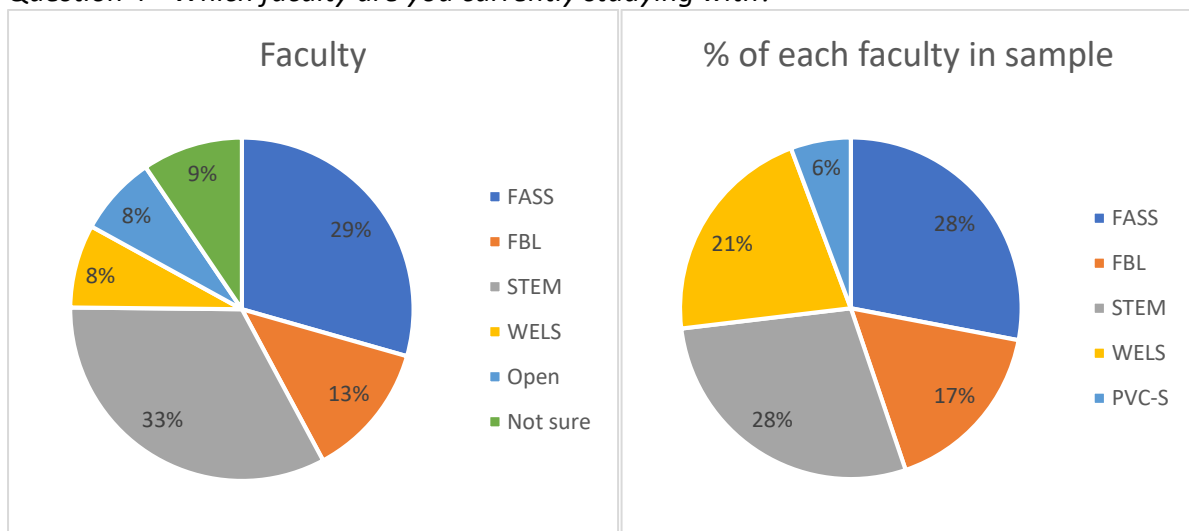
Interesting to see that 82% of participants have been studying with The Open University for 3 years or less. We could ask the SRPP to include length of study in their sample info for the full-scale AMS launch. If the survey timings and our social media comms coincide with Freshers, then we might continue to see more new students responding.

Question 3 - What level are you studying?



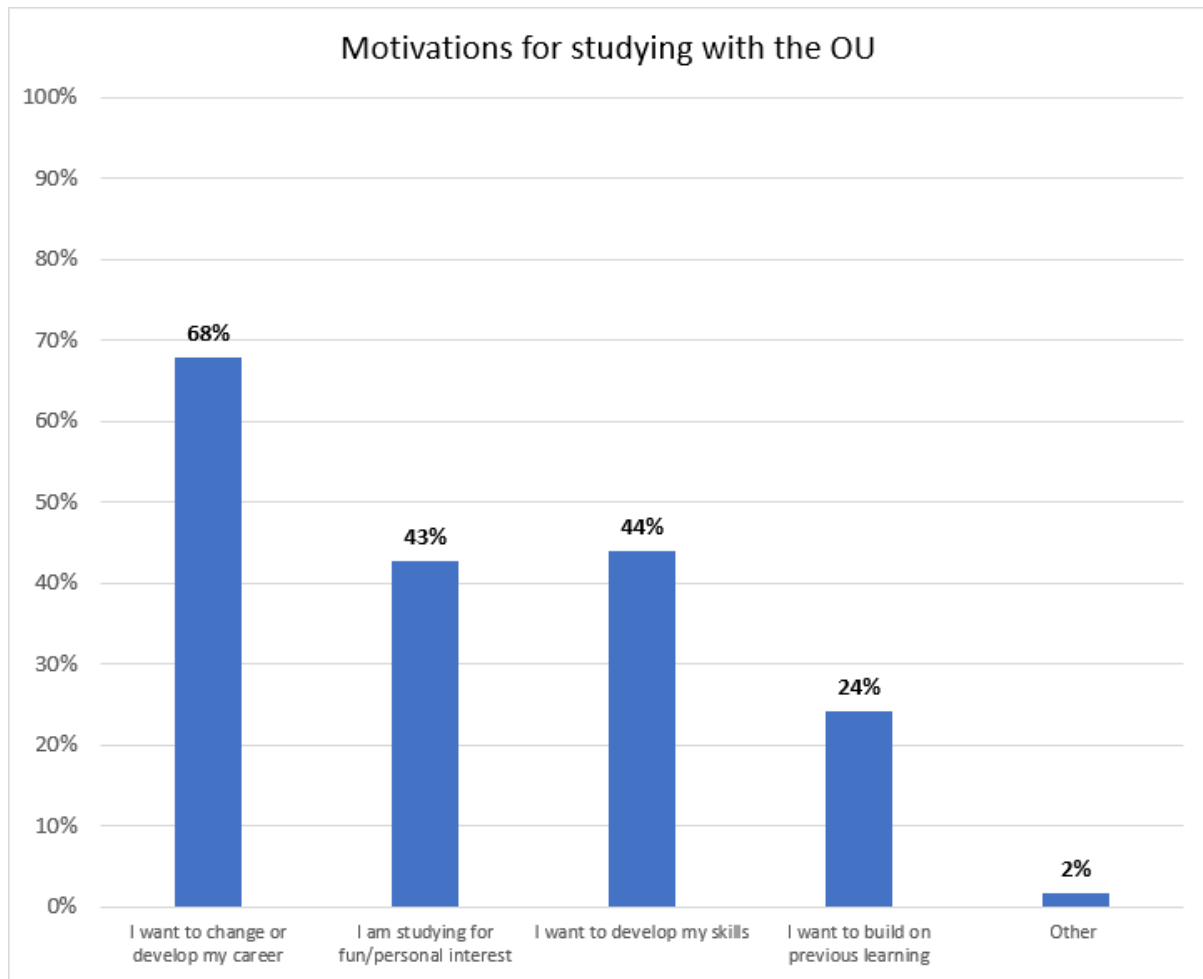
The small cohort of students (1% or 4 participants) who selected 'other', rather than a prepopulated option, advised they are studying Postgrad certificates, Undergrad Foundation or had completed their degree.

Question 4 - Which faculty are you currently studying with?



The faculty selected by participants tracks the representative sample provided by SRPP. The exception here is WELS, which recorded a significantly lower number of participants completing our survey.

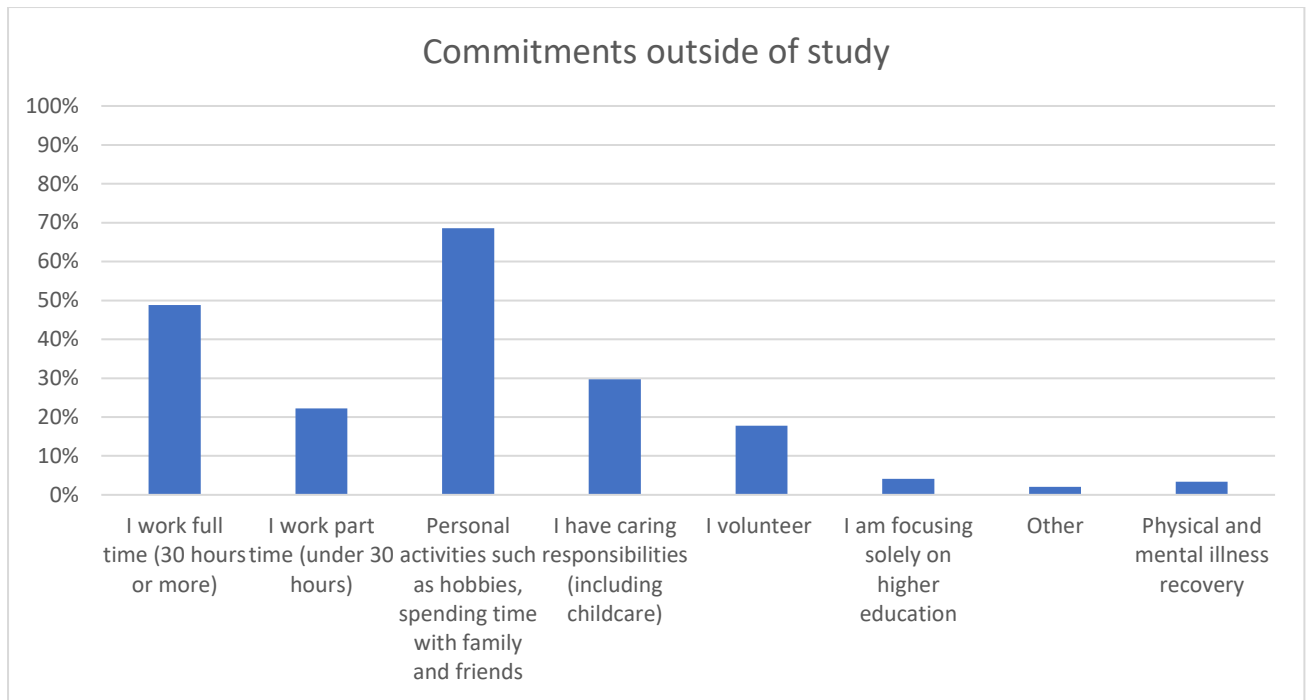
Question 5 - What motivated you to study with The Open University?



Options entered by students in the 'other' box included;

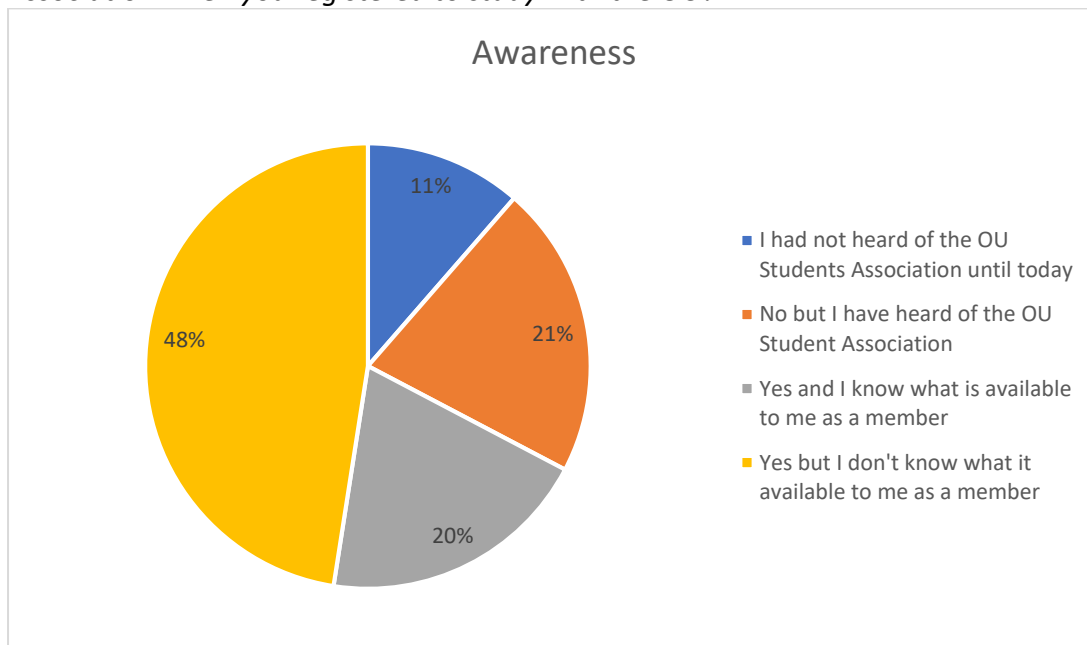
- I wanted to have a degree, just not to miss on future opportunities
- To help my mental health
- Traditional university wasn't working for me, but I wanted to get a degree
- Cheaper than brick universities
- I decided to learn something new as a back up as it looked like the place where I work was going to close in the future

Question 6 - Outside of your studies, what other demands do you have on your time?



Other responses included academic book writing and other studying (such as short online courses), with one person commenting that they study because they are unable to work.

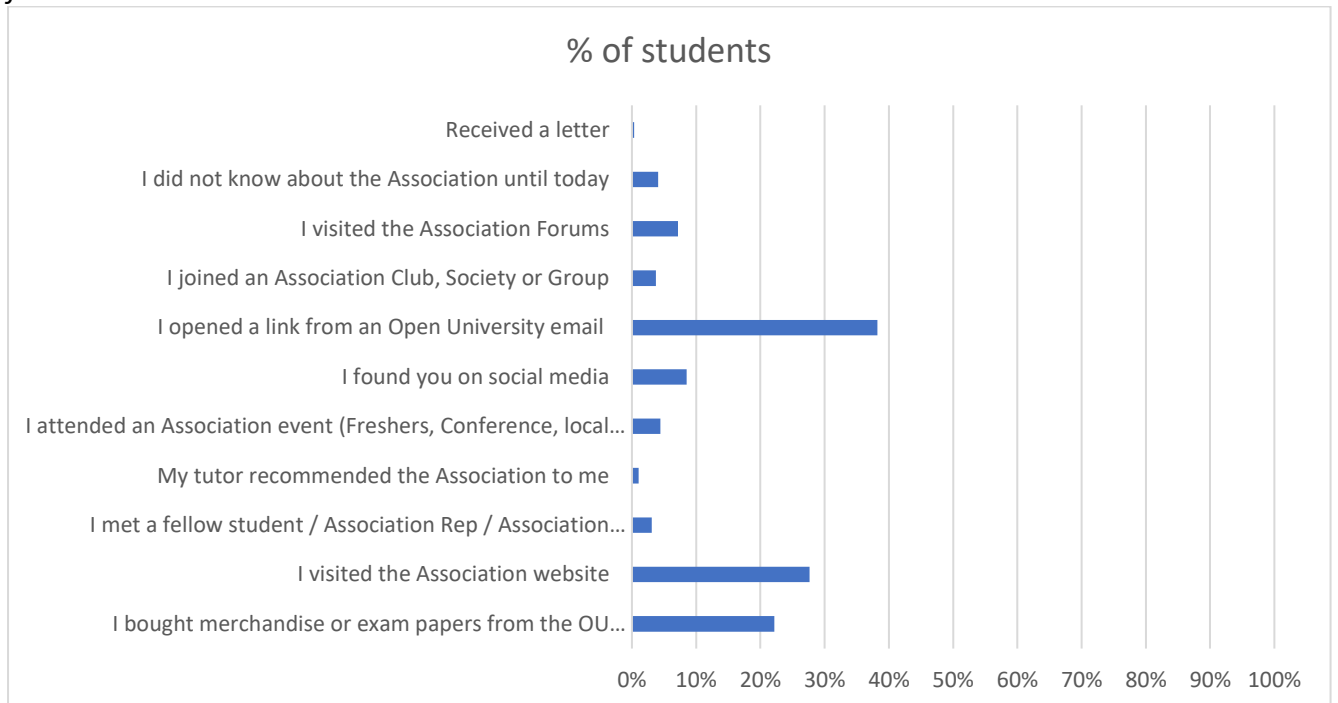
Question 7 - Did you know that you automatically became a member of the OU Students Association when you registered to study with the OU?



This graph shows that there is a good level of membership awareness with 68% of participants showing an awareness about their membership upon becoming an OU student. However, only 20% understand what it means to be a member of the Association. Suggests that more work needs to be done to raise awareness and signpost new students to the Association. There have been some discussions about the Association featuring more

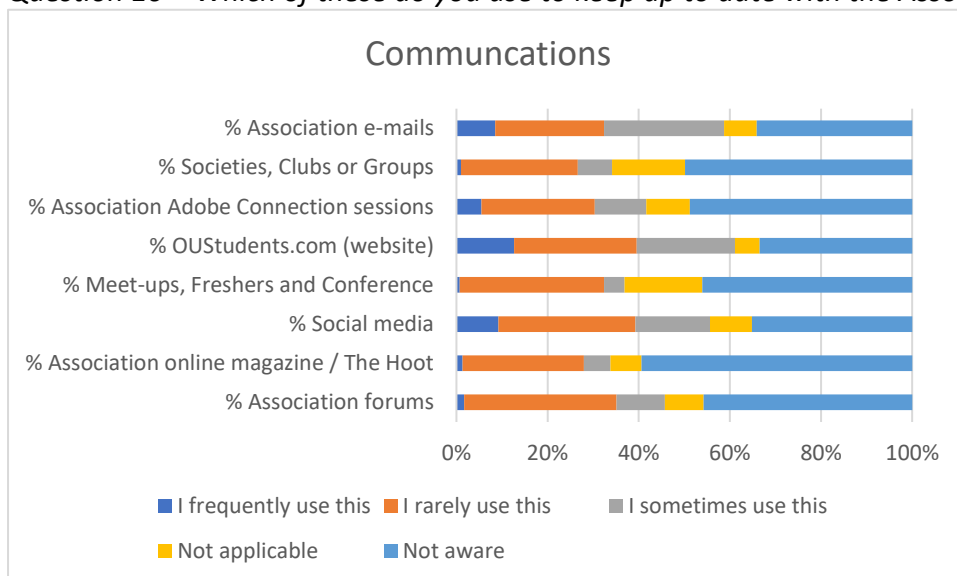
prominently in the induction packs sent to new students from the OU - this strengthens our case for such requests.

Question 8 - If you were aware of the Association before today, please let us know how you found out about us?



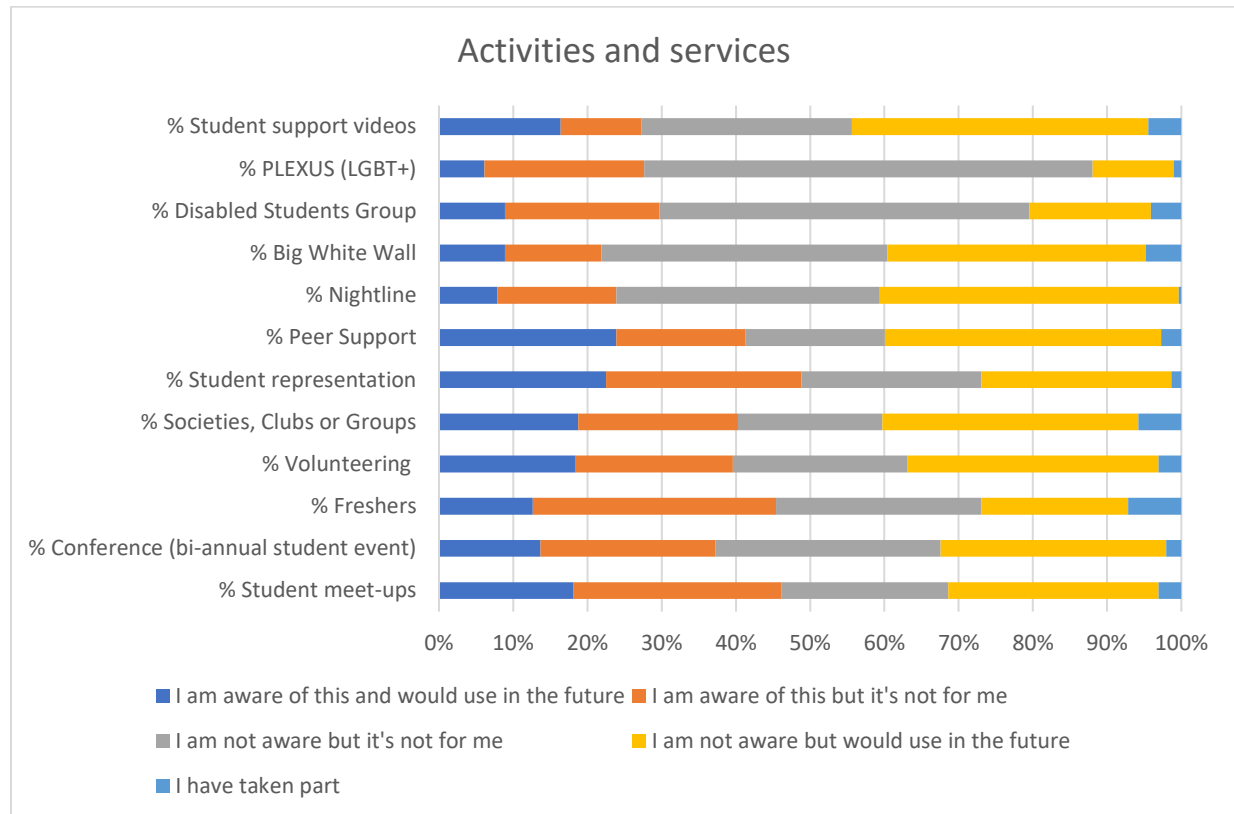
Encouraging to see that most participants found out about the Association from an Open University e-mail. However, we know from previous research that students often do not understand the difference between the Association and the OU communication channels.

Question 10 – Which of these do you use to keep up to date with the Association?



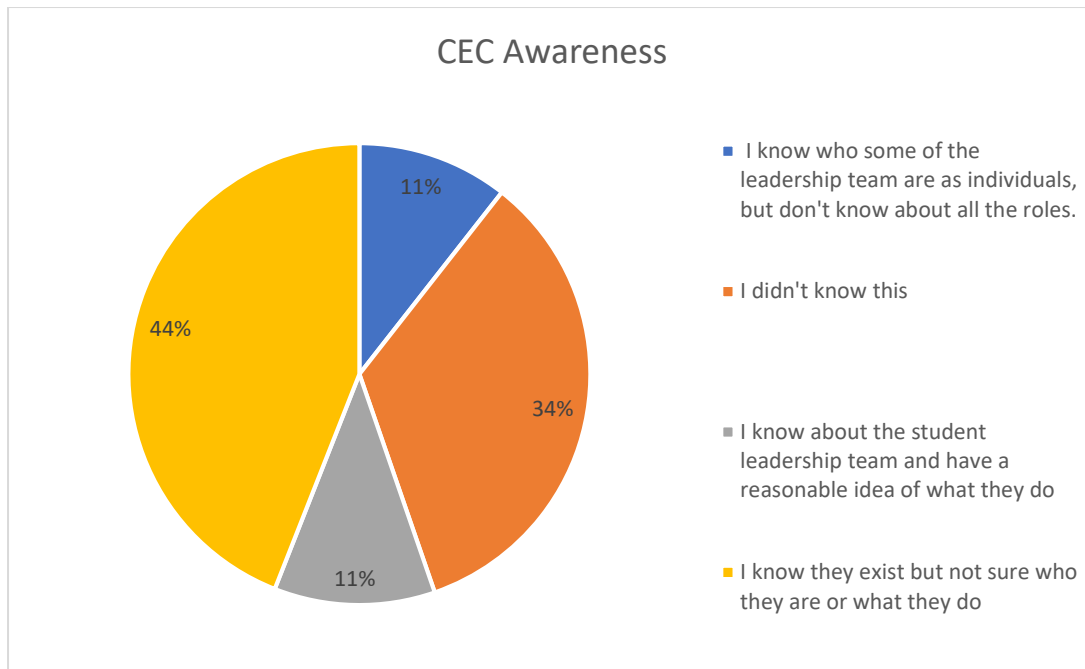
Awareness of most communication methods are low. Although results recorded for 'I frequently use this' were much lower than the other categories, the top communication methods were Association e-mails, the OU Students website and social media. Previous research has shown that students often mistake communications from the Association with those from the OU.

Question 12 - Here is a list of activities and services that the Association supports. Did you know about them?



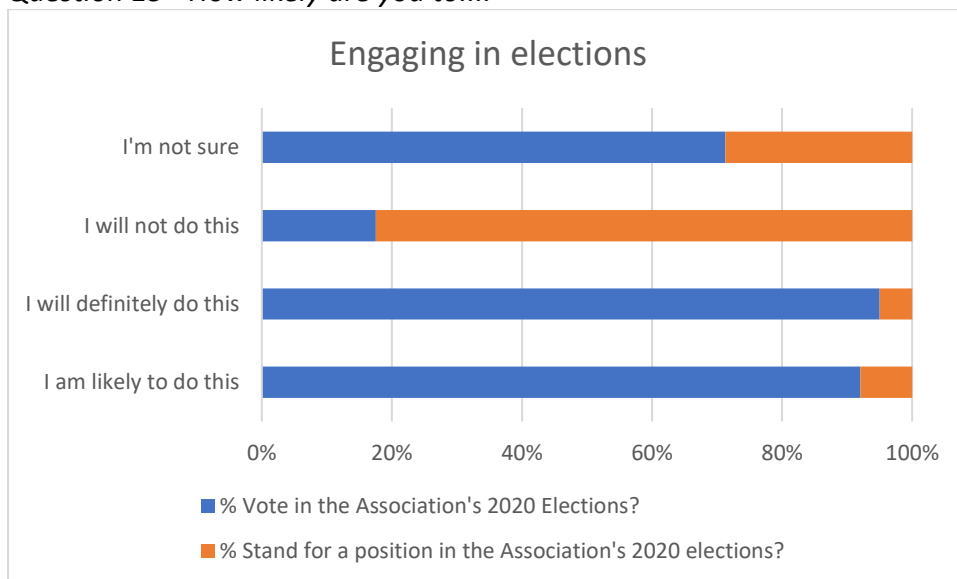
With such a high percentage of participants who have studied with the OU for less than a year, it's unsurprising to see low percentages for 'I have taken part' across all services. There are promising results for Peer Support and mental health initiatives such as Nightline and the Big White Wall with high results for both 'I am not aware but would use in the future' and 'I am aware of this and would use in the future'.

Question 14 - Were you aware that the Students Association is led by an elected student team (the Central Executive Committee)?



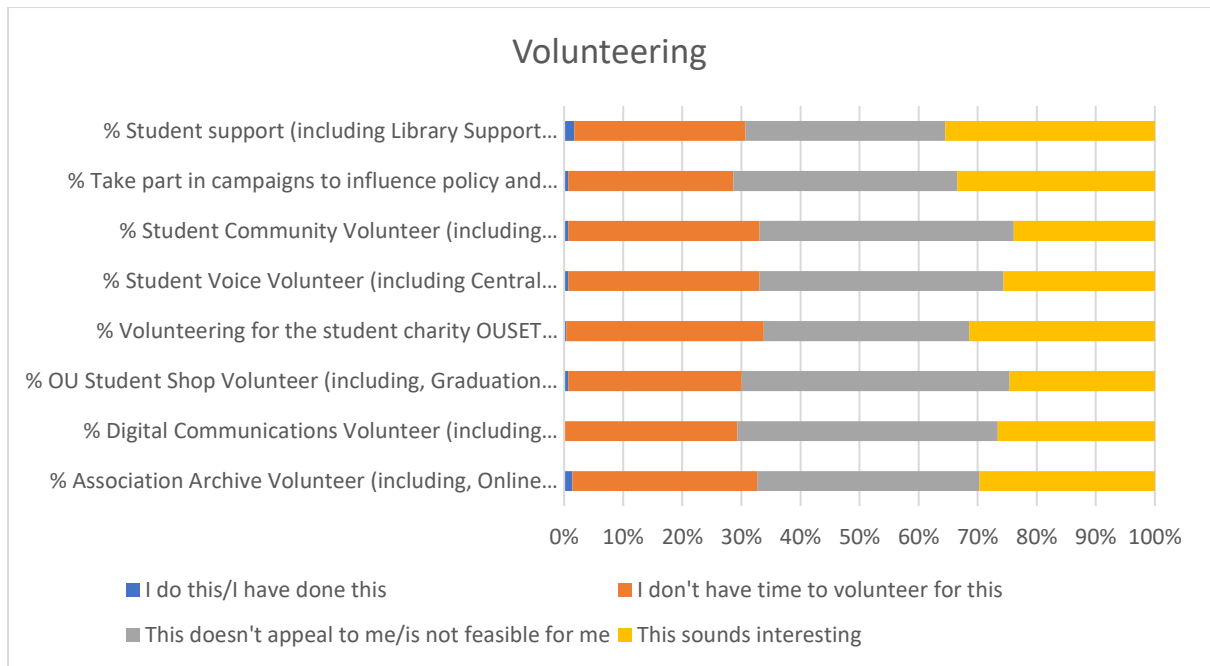
This chart shows that participants have a reasonable awareness of the CEC but a low awareness of who they are and their role in supporting the student community.

Question 15 - How likely are you to....



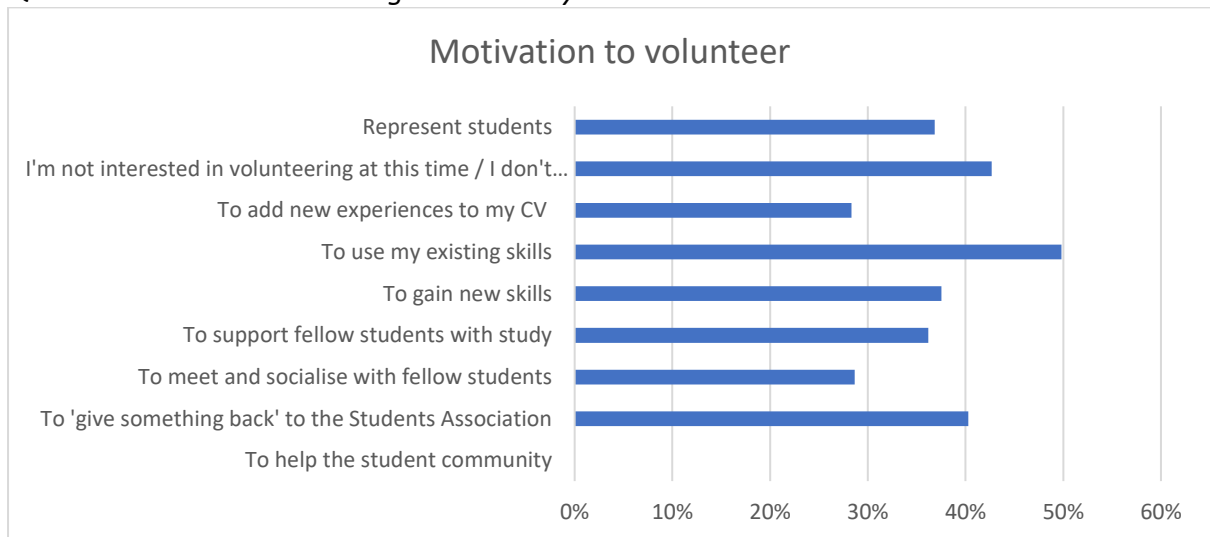
The high percentage of participants who selected 'not sure' for these questions indicates a possible lack of understanding in how elections and voting can impact the student community.

Question 17 - What do you think about these volunteering opportunities?



As with the Support Services, it is unsurprising to see low numbers of 'I do this/I have done this' against volunteer opportunities given the high percentage of newer students who took part in this survey.

Question 18 - What has or might motivate you to volunteer with the Association?

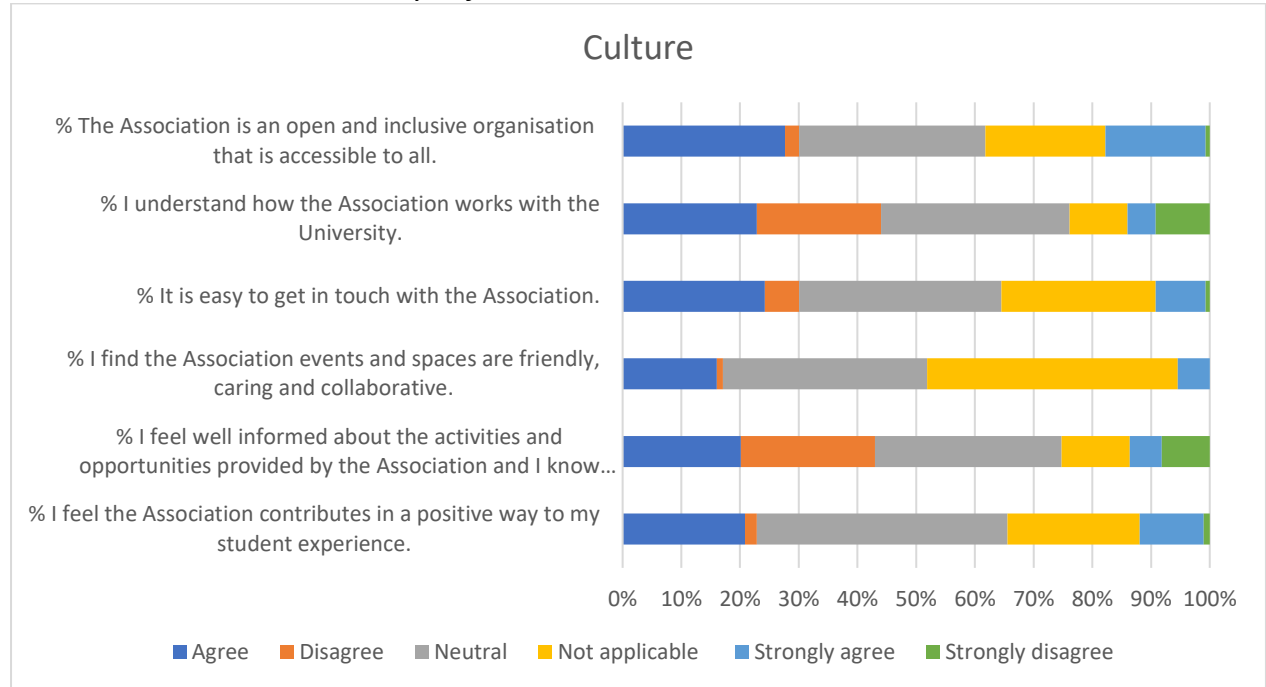


The majority of student's name add adding new skills/experience to CV and supporting the student community as top reasons to get involved with volunteering at the Association. Representation scores poorly here which coincides with the results regarding standing for election.

Adding experience to your CV has performed highly when compared to previous research. Usually the motivations weigh more on the altruistic giving-something-back side; for example, only 20% of respondents selected 'to add new experiences to my CV' during the

Volunteering Research Project (2018). That had been targeted at existing volunteers, the difference here being the high number of new students who don't currently volunteer. Interesting implications for how we might word/advertise volunteering opportunities.

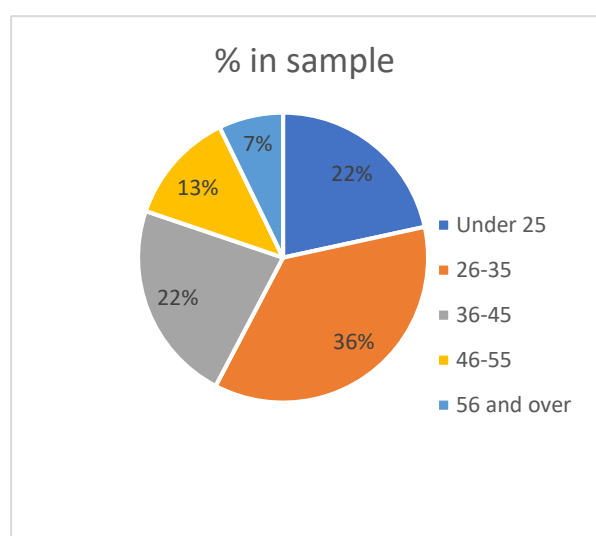
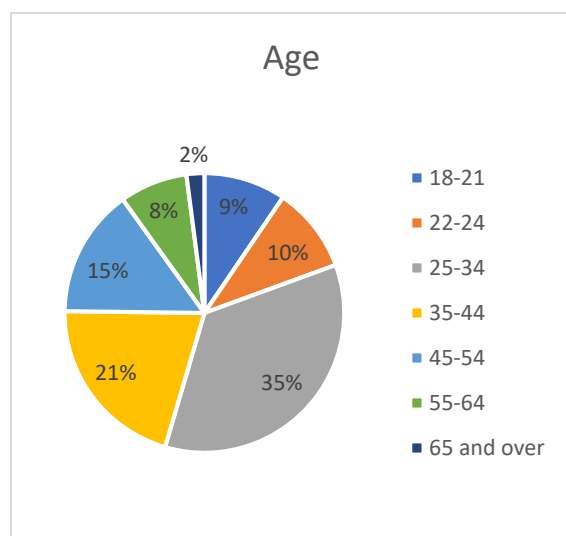
Question 20 - Let us know how you feel about the Association...



The high levels of 'neutral' selected here may be linked to the fact that only 20% of participants who said they had both awareness of the Association and an understanding of what it offered. This is supported by the high level of 'strongly disagree' recorded for how well-informed participants feel about Association and how it works with the University.

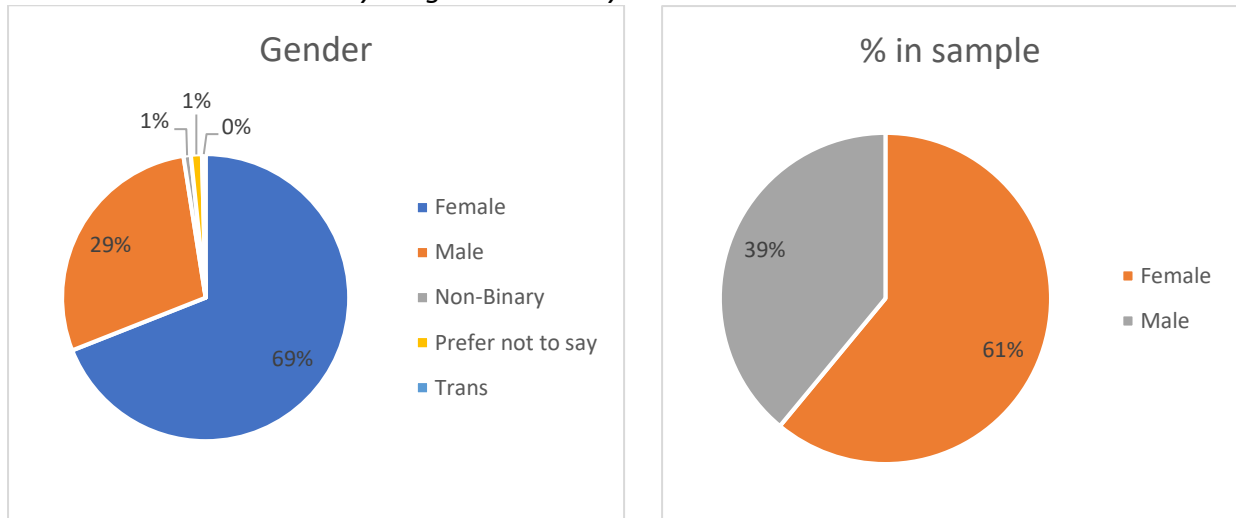
The survey then moves on to the demographic questions were 82% of participants were happy to provide this information.

Question 24 – Please select your age.



The survey age brackets differ slightly from those set out in the representative sample by SRPP. However, the survey results broadly tracks the representative sample.

Question 25 - Please select your gender identity.



The sample from SRPP only gives us the female/male split which is broadly the same as the survey results.

Question 26 - What region do you study in?

Region	Number of survey participants	% of survey participants	% in representative sample
East Midlands	21	9%	6.4%
East of England	19	8%	9%
London	16	7%	8.7%
Northern England	28	12%	16.1%
Northern Ireland	9	4%	4%
Scotland	31	14%	14.7%
South East England	19	8%	6.2%
South West England	26	12%	6.9%
Southern England	8	4%	8.5%
Wales	17	8%	7.4%
West Midlands	14	6%	6.5%
Yorkshire	15	7%	5.6%
Prefer not to say	2	1%	n/a

Outside of this chart, 7% of our 242 participants recorded locations outside of the UK;

Region	Count
US	1
Vietnam	1
Sri Lanka	1
South Africa	1
Europe	11
Israel	1
China	1

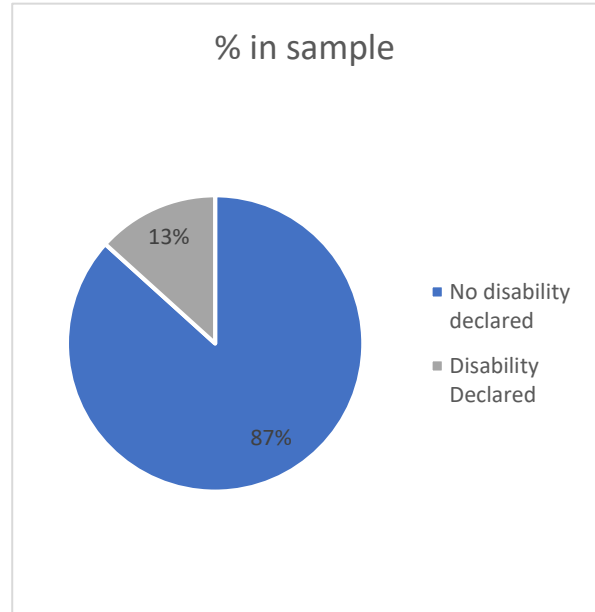
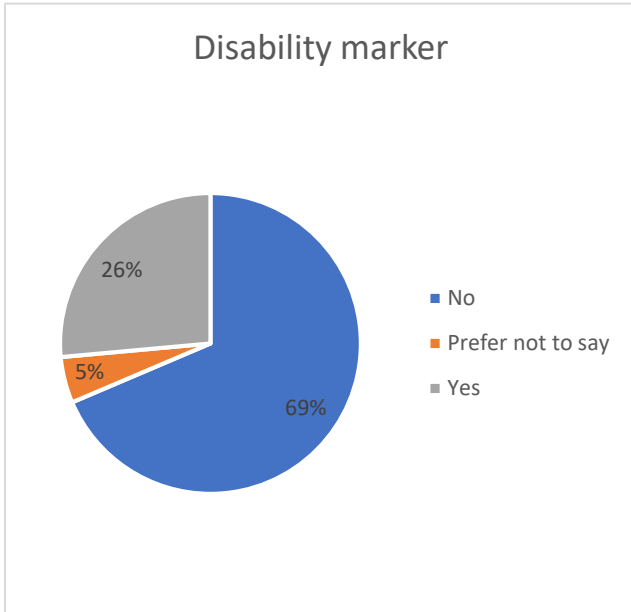
On the whole, the data collected from the survey tracks the representative sample with the exception of Northern and Southern England. Interestingly, the representative sample indicates that only students from within the UK are in the sample. However, 7% of participants are from outside of the UK.

Question 27 - What is your ethnicity?

Row Labels	What is your ethnicity?	% of survey participants	% in representative sample
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	2	0.83%	
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0.42%	
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	3	1.27%	
Asian or British Asian - Chinese	1	0.42%	
Other Asian Background	2	0.83%	
		3.77%	3.8%
Black or Black British - Caribbean	3	1.27%	
		1.27%	3.6%
Other Ethnic Background	2	0.83%	
Arab	1	0.42%	
Gypsy or Traveller	1	0.42%	
		1.67%	0.9%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	3	1.27%	
Other Mixed Background	1	0.42%	
		1.69%	2.6
White - British	135	55.6%	
White - English	27	11%	
White - Irish	7	2.82%	
White - Scottish	12	4.93%	
White - Welsh	10	4.3%	
Other White Background	23	9.45%	
		88.1%	86.8
Prefer not to say	8	3.5%	
		3.5%	2.3

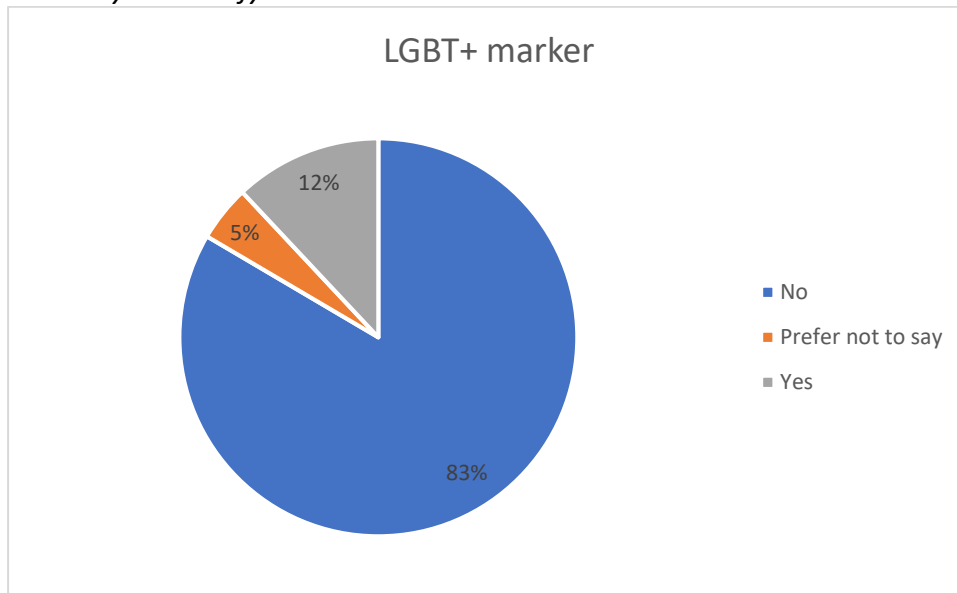
The survey asked participants to give more detail on their ethnicity than the OU would normally record. Groupings have been made to assess more clearly whether our survey tracks to the representative sample.

Question 28 - Do you consider yourself to have a disability?



The number of survey participants who consider themselves to have a disability is double that of the representative sample. This could be dependent upon the way the OU have phrased their question in order to capture this data. We used the phrase 'do you consider...' which leave it open to interpretation by the participant leading to a difference against the way the OU defined the term disability.

Question 29 - Do you identify as LGBT+?



The majority of survey participants do not identify as LGBT+.