

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON PESTICIDE USE AND UNIVERSITY ACTION

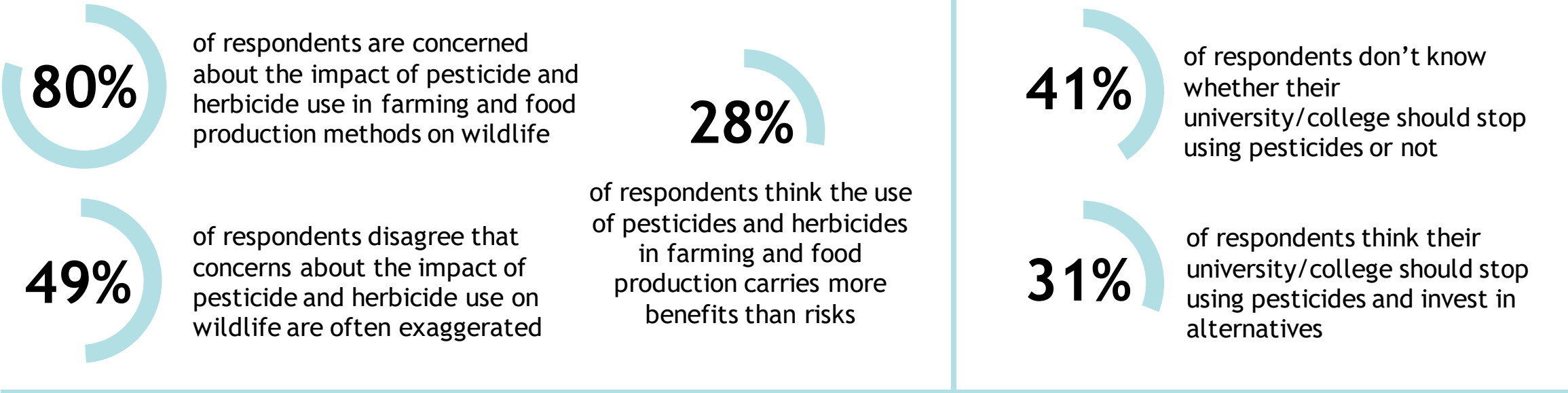
May 2024



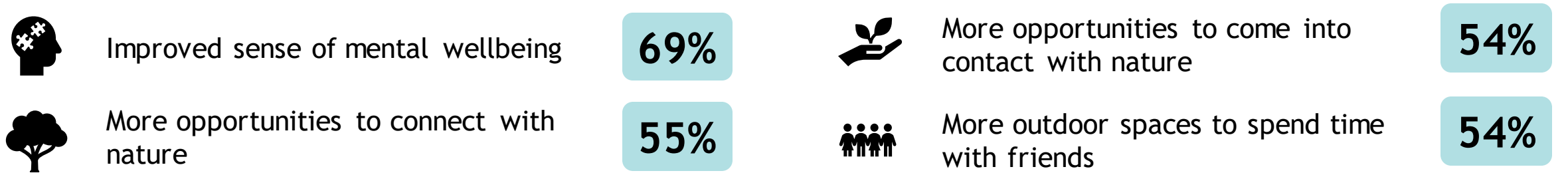
STUDENTS
ORGANISING FOR
SUSTAINABILITY
UNITED KINGDOM

SUMMARY

In April 2024 we asked students about their perspectives on pesticide usage, its impacts and university/college usage of pesticides. 1100 students participated in the survey with results weighted to be nationally representative of the UK higher education student population.

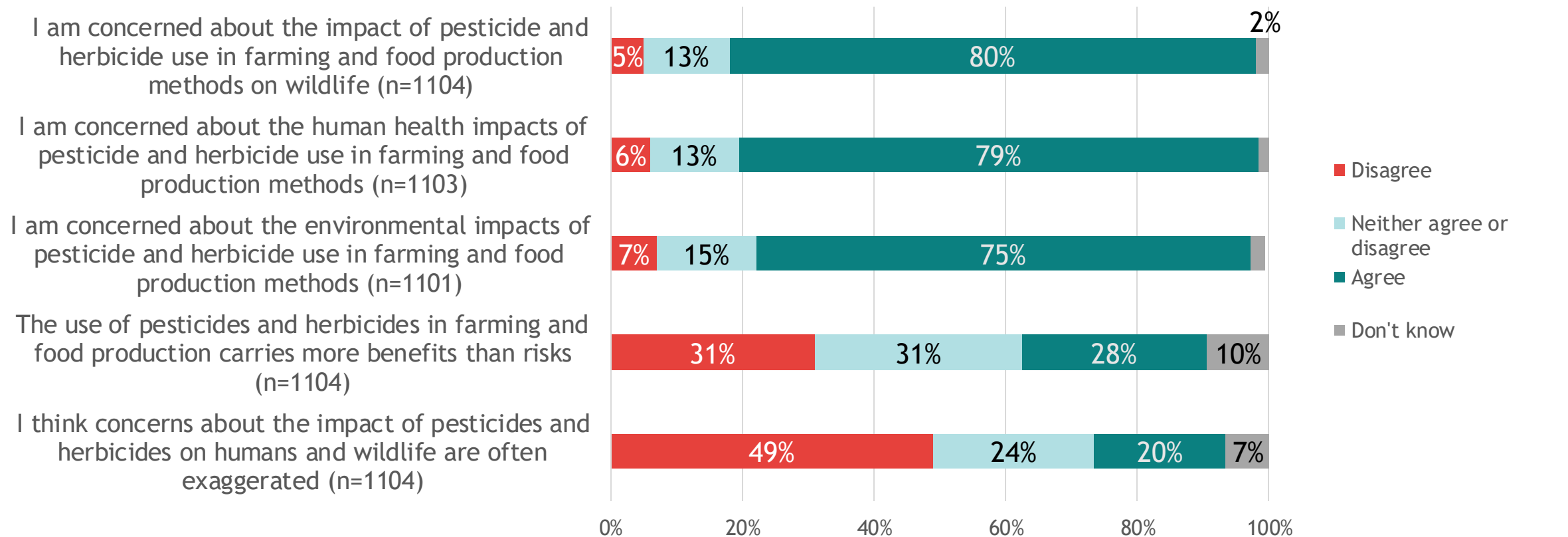


Benefits of having more wild plants and wildlife on campus



FINDINGS IN DETAIL

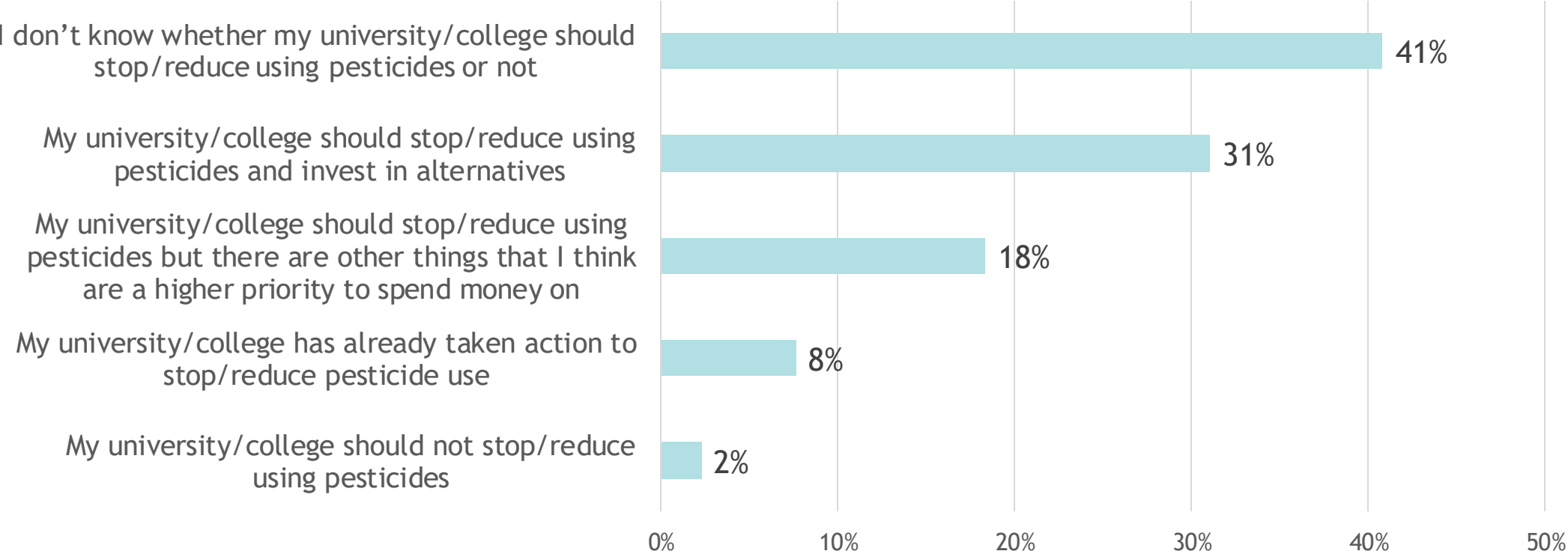
4 out of 5 students (80%) agree that they are concerned about the impact on wildlife of pesticide and herbicide use in farming and food production methods. Almost half of students (49%) say they don't think that concerns about the impact of pesticides and herbicides on humans and wildlife are often exaggerated.



Students were presented with the following definitions of pesticide and herbicide - ‘A pesticide is a chemical substance used to kill insects or other organisms that are harmful to plants or animals that are being grown, for example, for food, or in gardening.’ and ‘A herbicide is a type of pesticide which is specifically used to get rid of undesired plants, often known as a weed killer.’ - before being asked: Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Base: See graph; Balance: No response]



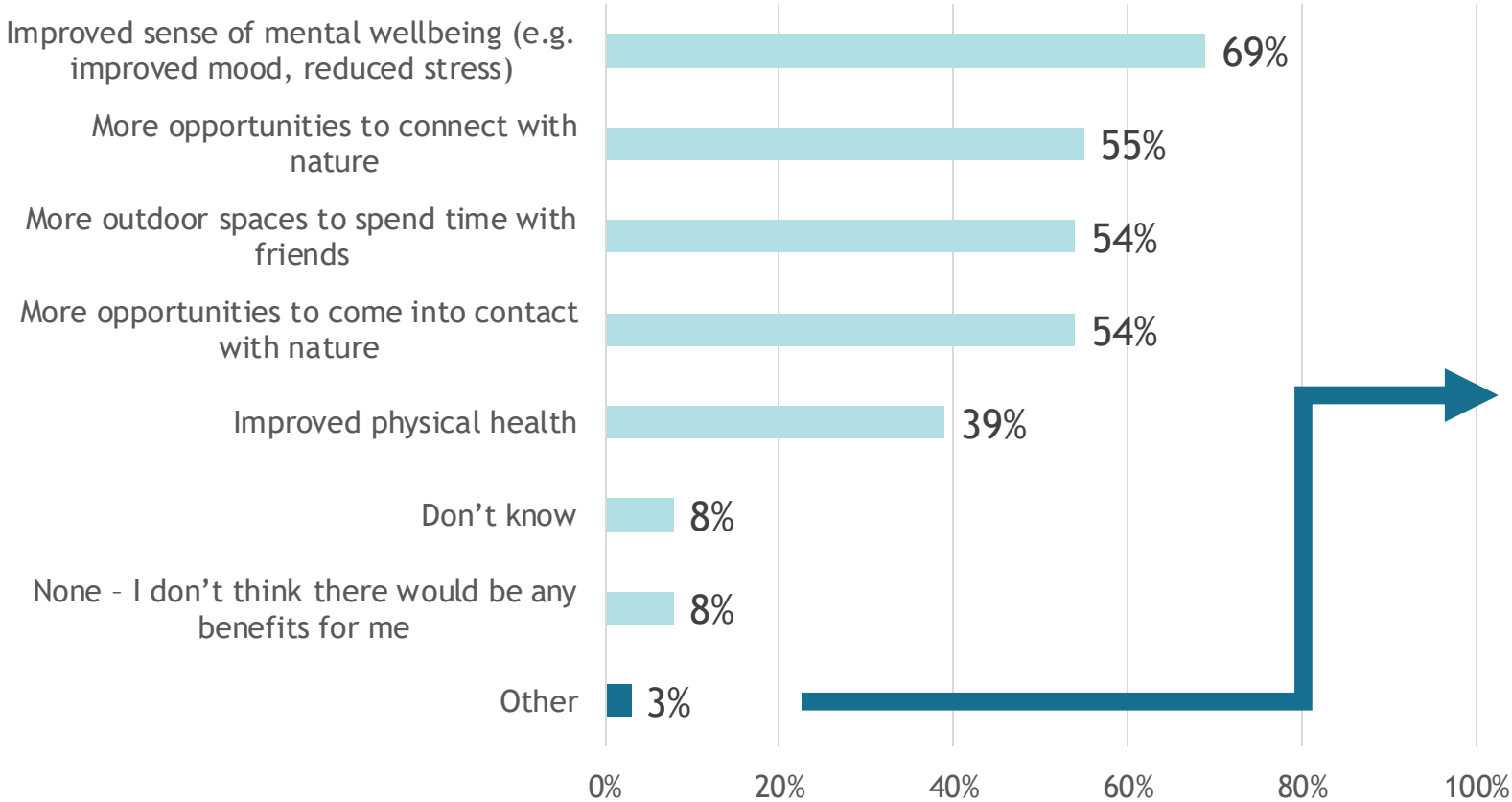
Reflecting on their place of study and their use of pesticides, 41% of students say they don't know whether their university/college should stop or reducing using pesticides. Nearly a third of students, however, think their university/college should stop or reduce using pesticides and invest in alternatives.



Q. Students were provided with the following information - ‘Pesticides and herbicides are commonly used in food and farming practices to help grow crops and are also used in cities, towns and gardens. The ingredients in pesticides can be harmful to human health when we are exposed to them. They can also be harmful to wildlife and the environment as they decrease biodiversity and they can contaminate groundwater, soil and air. Pesticide and herbicide usage can be reduced or stopped by choosing alternative ways to manage pests and invasive plants. These approaches solve pest problems while minimising the risks to human health and the environment. An example is choosing to grow plants that are more resistant to pests and disease’ before being asked: Q. Please tell us which statement most reflects your opinion. [Base: 1103; Balance: No response]



Over two thirds of students think that having more wild plants and wildlife on their university/college campus would results in an improved sense of mental wellbeing. Only 8% of students say there would be no benefit to them of having more wild plants and wildlife on their university/college campus.



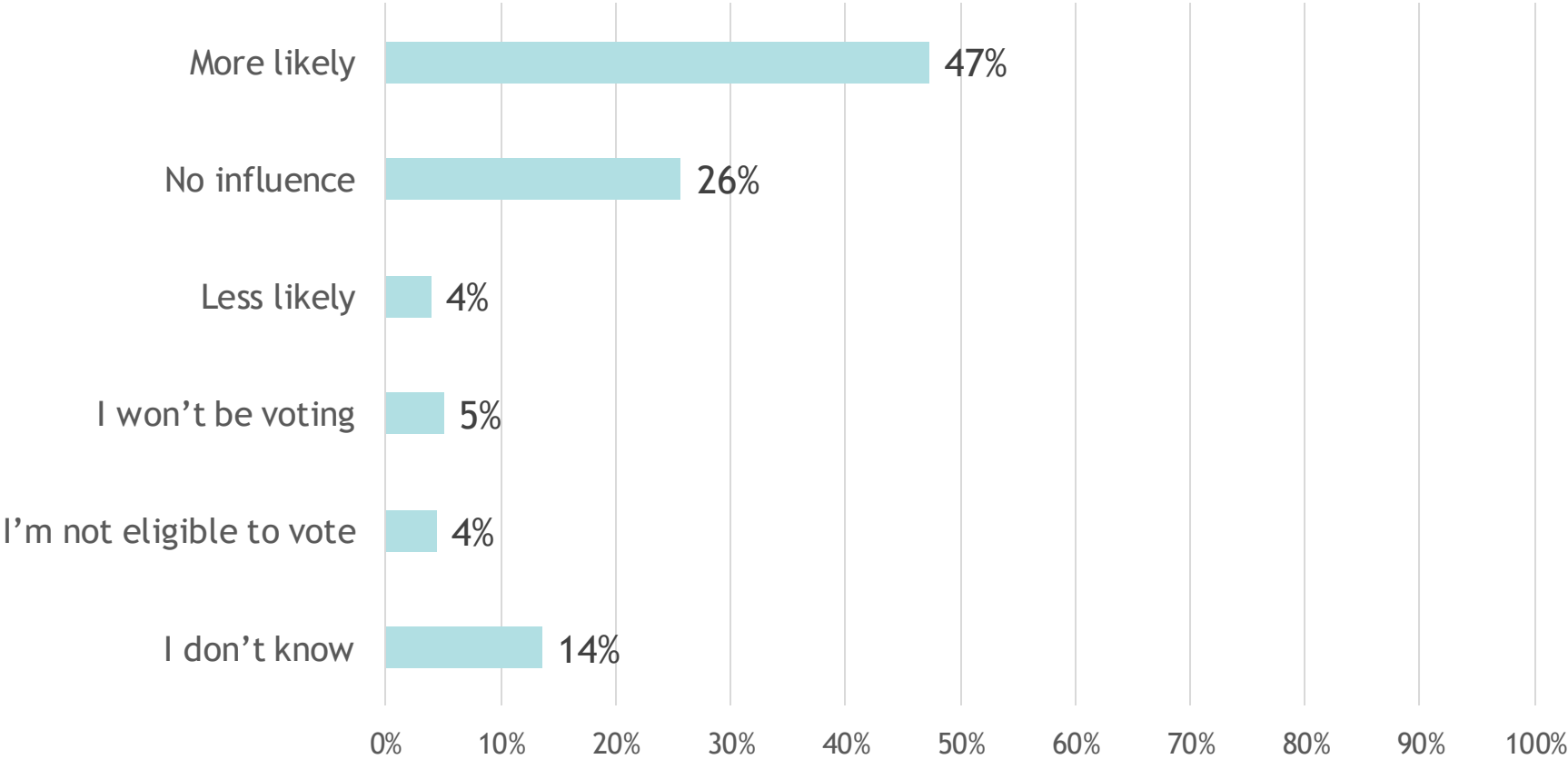
‘OTHER’ RESPONSES

- “promote mycelium growth and healthier soil, biodiversity and soil benefits”
- “observe local wildlife I am interested in and enjoy spending time with”
- “More aesthetically pleasing to be around”

Q. Do you think that having more wild plants and wildlife on your university/college campus would benefit you in any of the following ways? Please pick all that apply.
[Base: 1103; Balance: No response]



Nearly a half of students (47%) said they would be more likely to support a candidate in the general election that support the reduction of pesticide and herbicide use. However, just over a quarter of students (26%) said that a candidate supporting the reduction of pesticide and herbicide use would have no influence on their vote.

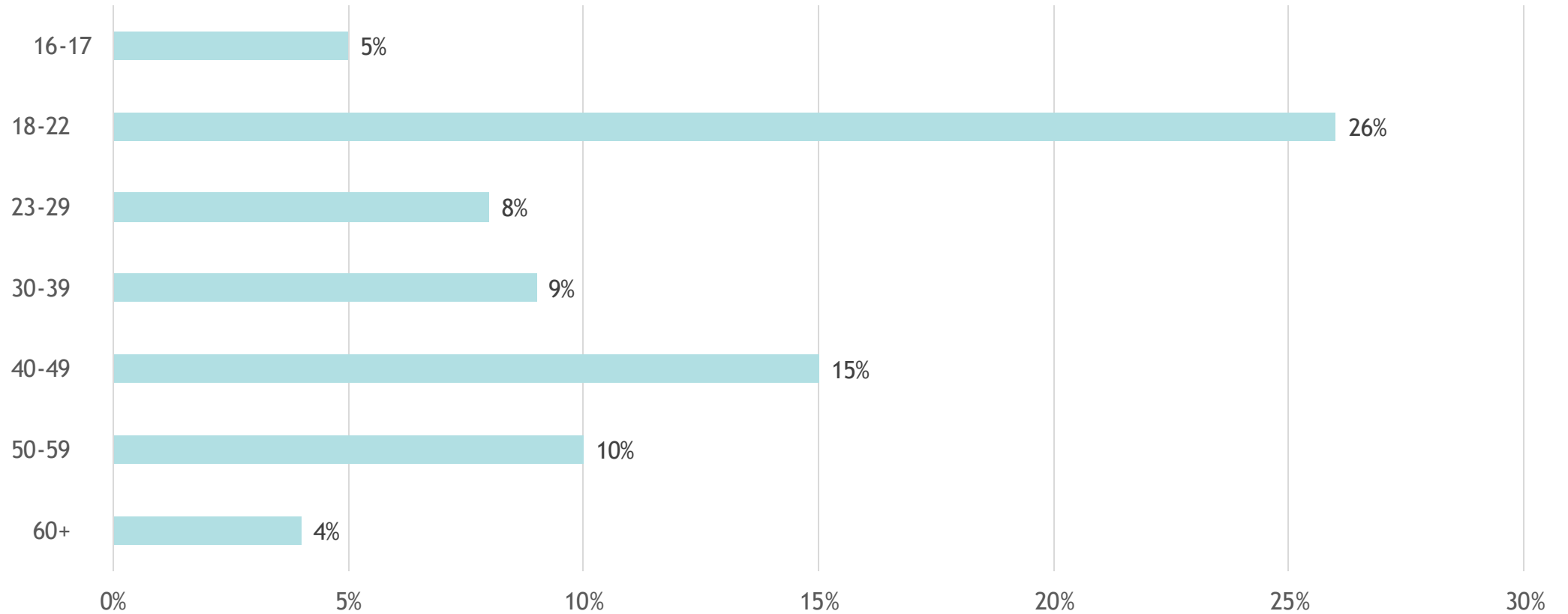


Q. Would you be more or less likely to support a candidate in the general election that supports the reduction of pesticide and herbicide use? Please pick all that apply.
[Base: 1103; Balance: No response]



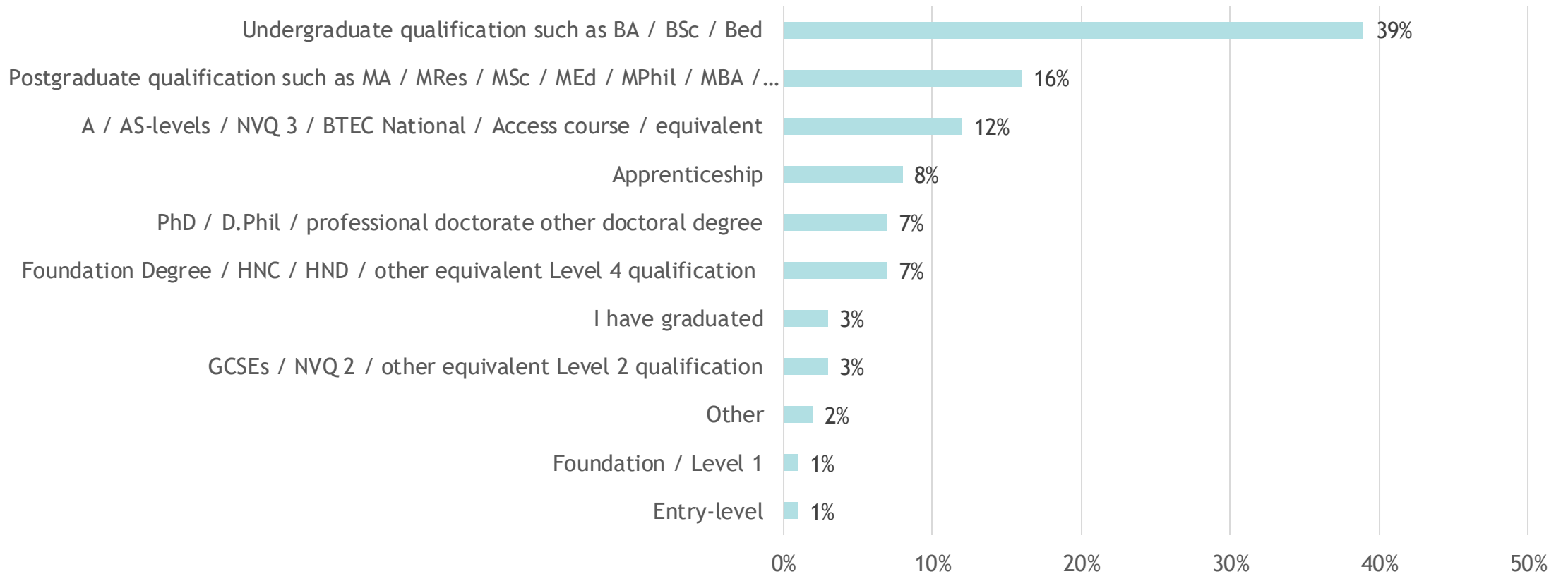
DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE



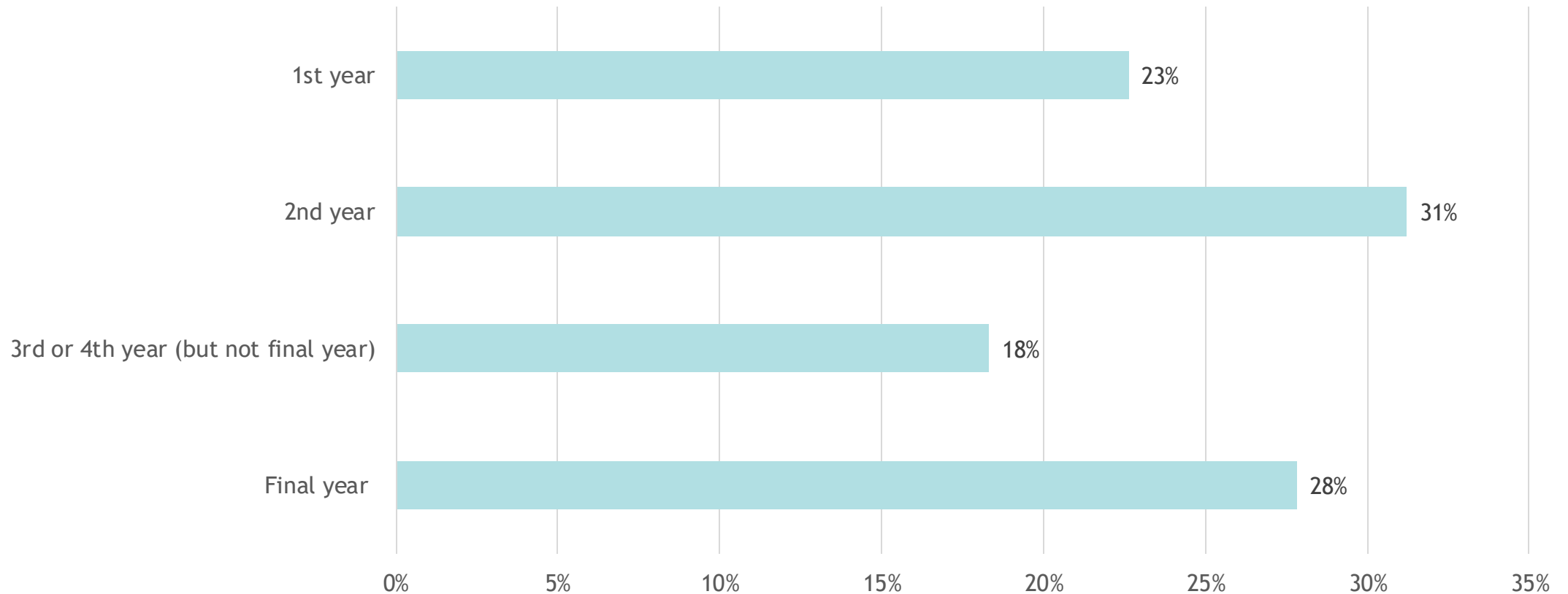
[Weighted Base: 1150; Balance: No response]

STUDY LEVEL



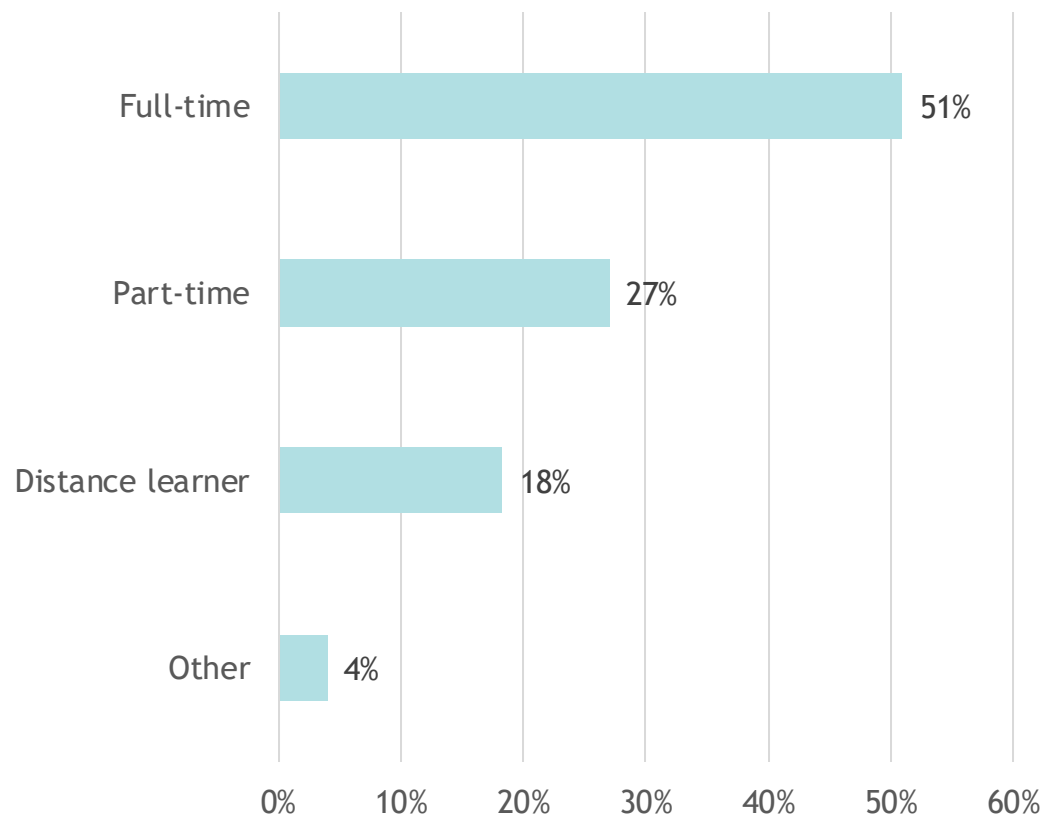
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STUDY LEVEL (UNDERGRADUATES)



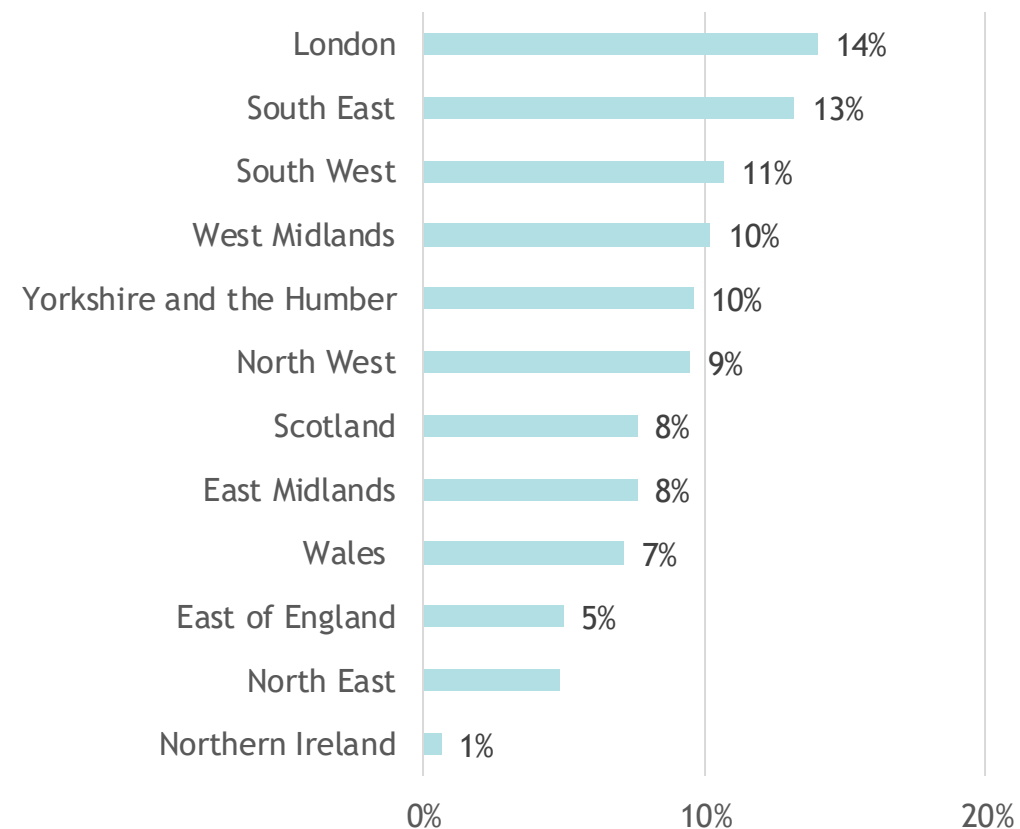
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STUDY TYPE



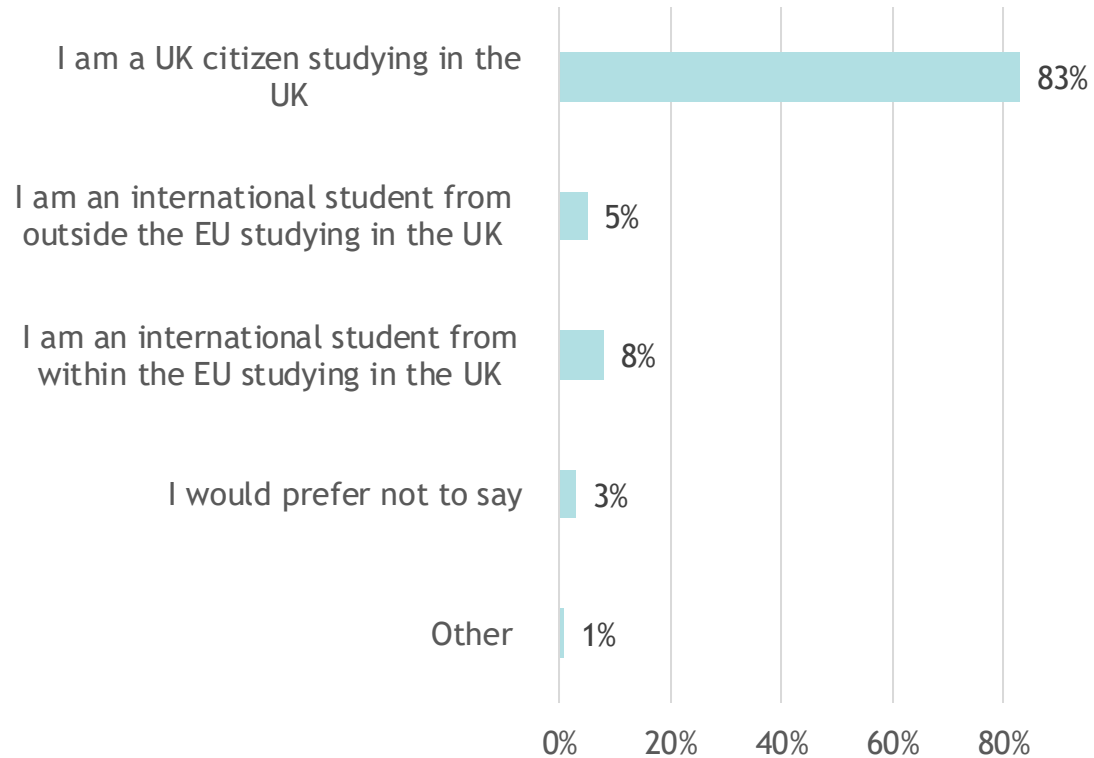
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STUDY LOCATION



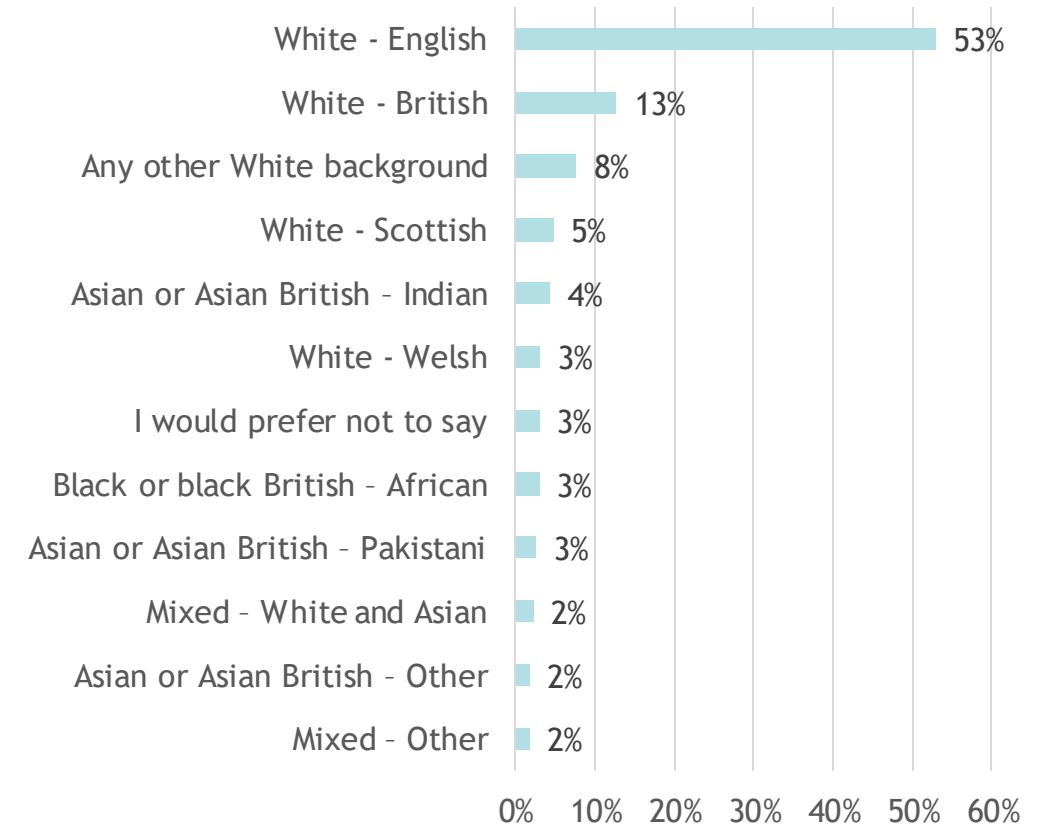
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NATIONALITY



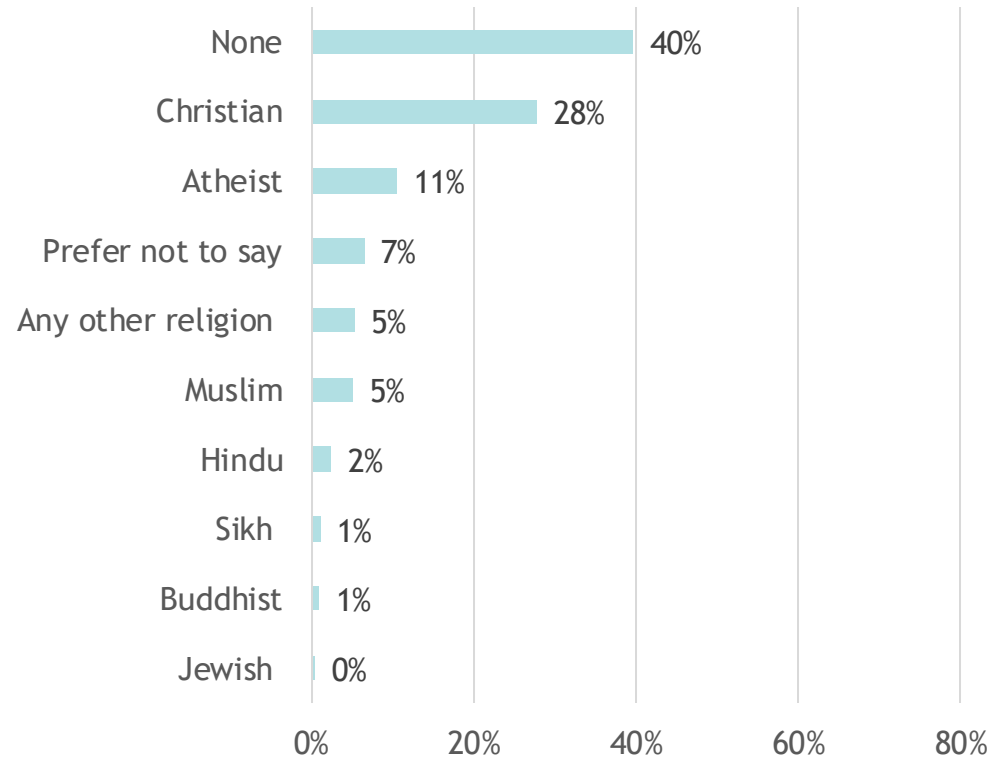
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RACE/ETHNICITY



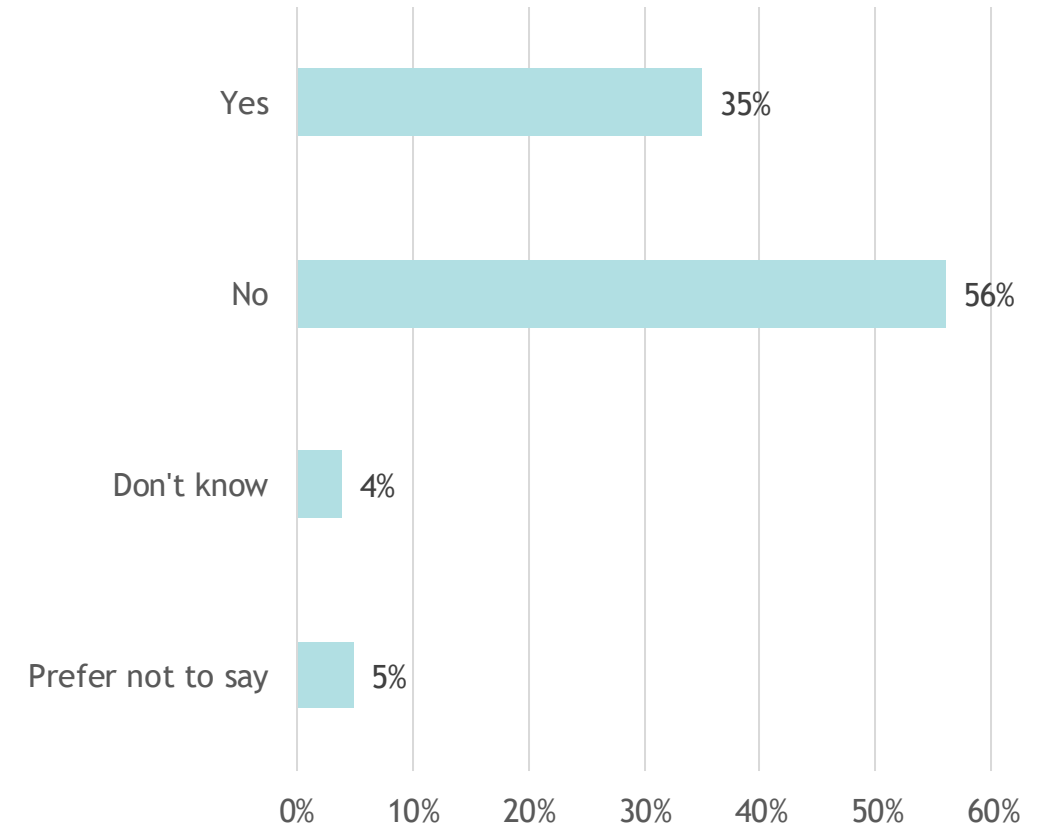
[Weighted Base: 1003 Balance: No response]

RELIGION



[Weighted Base: 1091 Balance: No response]

DISABILITY



[Weighted Base: 1097 Balance: No response]

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