



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA



2026 GETTING STARTED SURVEY

TOPLINE REPORT

MAY 2026

Introduction

The annual Getting Started Survey is open to all undergraduate and postgraduate students who began their course in Trimester 1 2026. The survey asks them about their first few weeks at university, and their experiences with enrolment and orientation. We also want to hear about their initial impressions of university life.

This information helps us monitor our performance, identify issues, and make improvements for next year. It ensures that we are properly supporting students through the application and enrolment processes and helping new students settle into student life.

- The 2026 iteration of the survey was opened on **16 March 2026** and remained open through to 29 March 2026.
- Invites to take part in the survey were emailed out to 5,124 new students and **2,099** responses were received.
- This is a **response rate of 41%** of all eligible new students invited to take part.

This Topline Report has been created as an overview of the data collected from the 2026 Getting Started Survey. Throughout this report:

- Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
- Results based on small numbers of responses should be viewed with caution.
- A few questions allowed respondents to select more than one option, leading to a sum of responses greater than 100%.

For more detailed information, the PowerBI Dashboard provides all response data for the past four years, and offers filters to explore specific sub-groups. This is only available for staff.



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Key Findings

Students choose Te Herenga Waka for fit, not prestige. Decisions are driven primarily by Wellington as a place to live and study, distinctive and flexible programmes, affordability, and a strong sense of belonging. Rankings matter less than whether the university feels like the right place.

Overall satisfaction with application and enrolment is very high, reaching 96% in 2026, continuing a three-year upward trend. Most students found information clear, timely, and helpful.

The digital enrolment journey is the biggest source of stress. Fragmented systems, unclear progress status, and inconsistent advice create anxiety, particularly around course selection, even when individual support is strong.

Choosing courses is the highest-risk moment of transition. Students struggle with understanding requirements, prerequisites, and timetables, and consistently ask for clearer degree maps, examples, and planning tools.

Orientation is highly valued and effective, with 99% overall satisfaction, especially for cohort-based programmes (Tau Mai, Māori, Pasifika, Postgraduate, International), which excel at building belonging and confidence.

Access and timing limit orientation impact for some students. Non-hall, commuter, Te Aro, international arrivals, and mature students are more likely to miss sessions, highlighting the need for flexible delivery and clearer signposting.

Human support works, but often too late. One-to-one help frequently rescues students once problems escalate, suggesting gains are possible earlier through clearer design, guidance, and coordination.

The student message is consistent: early preparation, clear guidance, social connection, and reassurance matter more to success than academic ability alone.

What this means for 2027

- **Lean into fit, not prestige:** Wellington, distinctive programmes, affordability, and belonging are the strongest drivers of choice.
- **Fix friction early:** The biggest gains lie in simplifying course selection, digital journeys, and progress clarity.
- **Design for access:** Orientation works, impact improves with flexible delivery and targeted pathways.



MAKING DECISIONS

Where else did our students apply?

We asked students to identify if they applied to any other universities for the 2026 academic year.

61% stated that they did not apply anywhere else

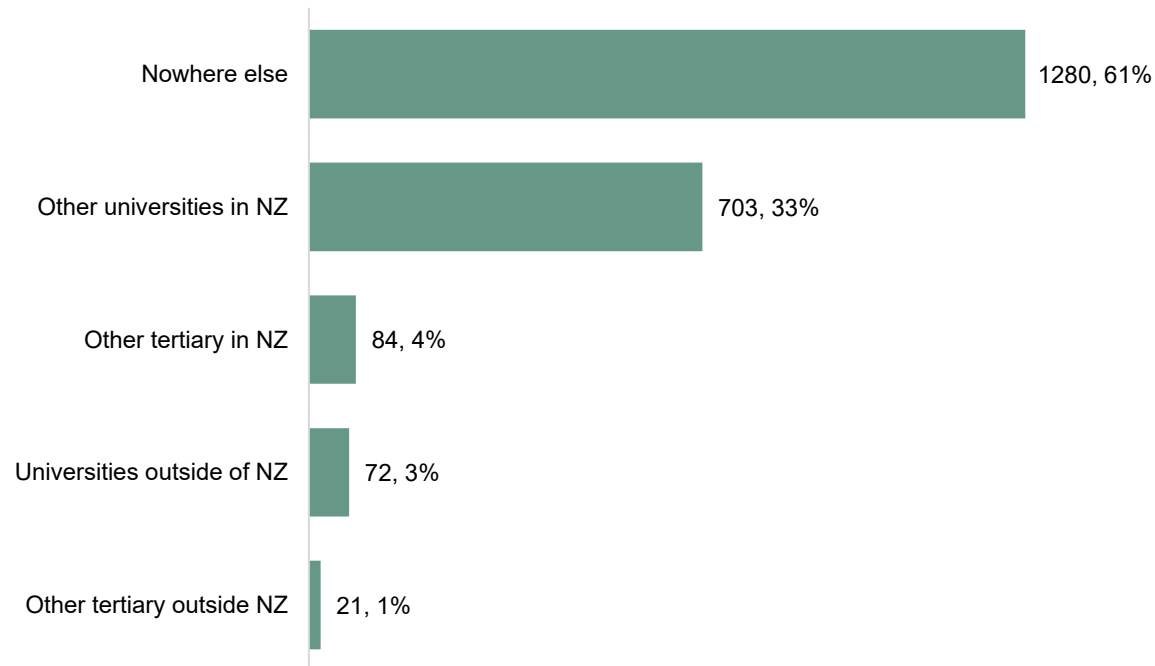
35% applied to at least one other New Zealand university. Over half of these applied to The University of Auckland.

These results are very similar to previous years.

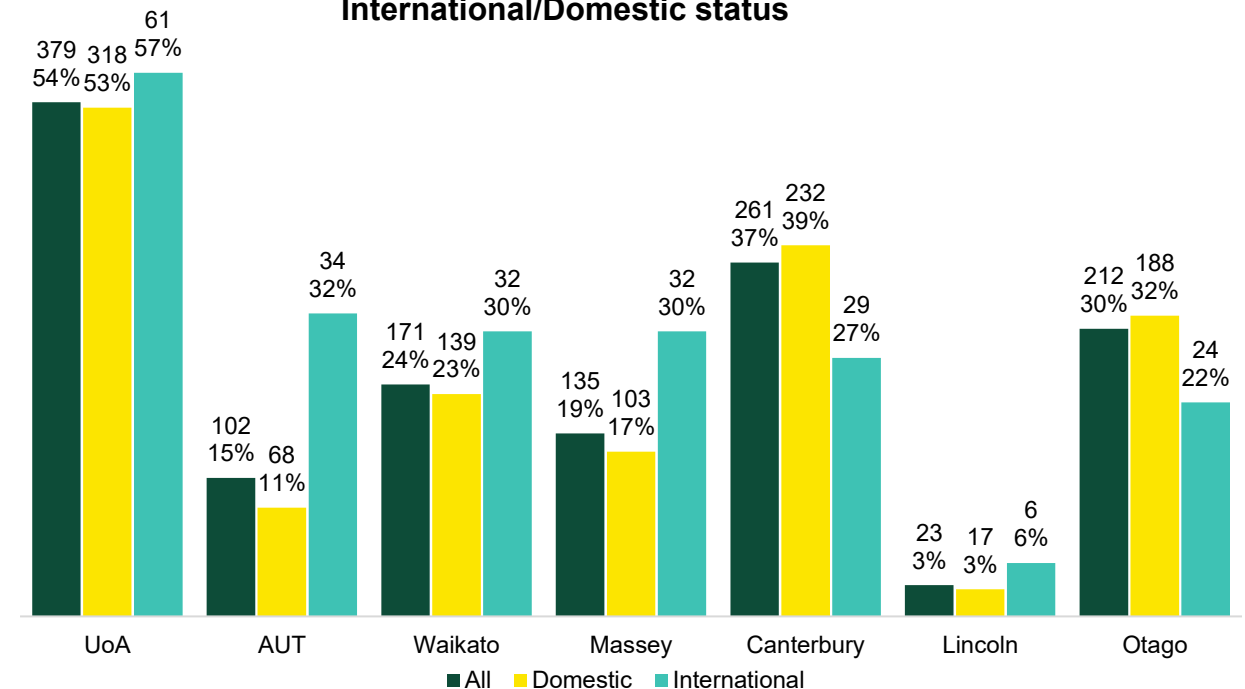
After the University of Auckland, domestic students were then most likely to apply to Canterbury or Otago.

While international students were most likely to apply to AUT, Waikato or Massey, after the University of Auckland.

Where else survey respondents applied to for 2026 entry



Other NZ universities considered by International/Domestic status



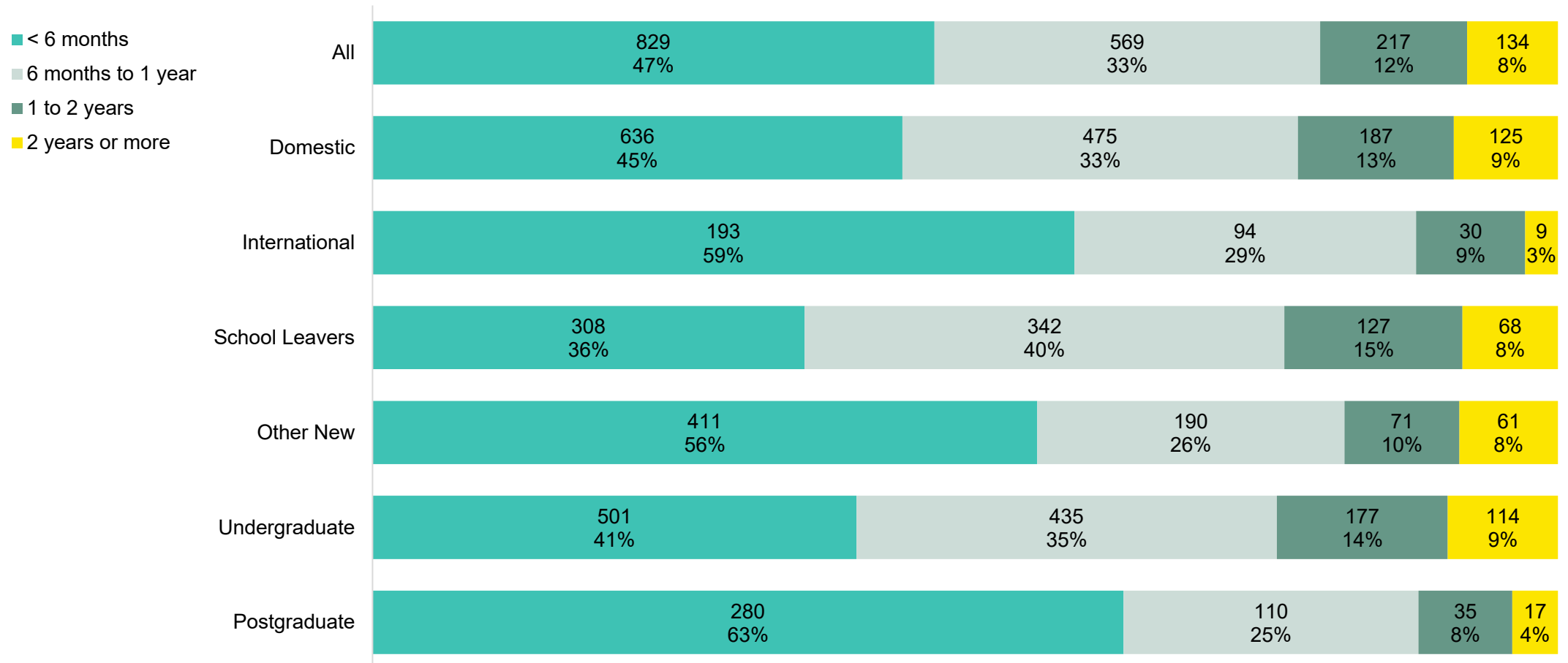
Timing of Decisions

Survey respondents were asked to identify how long their process was from considering the study options at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington to submitting their application to attend.

Overall, 80% of students had made their decision to attend Te Herenga Waka within 12 months.

These results are very similar to previous years.

Length of time it took to make a decision to apply to Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington, overall and by student sub-groups

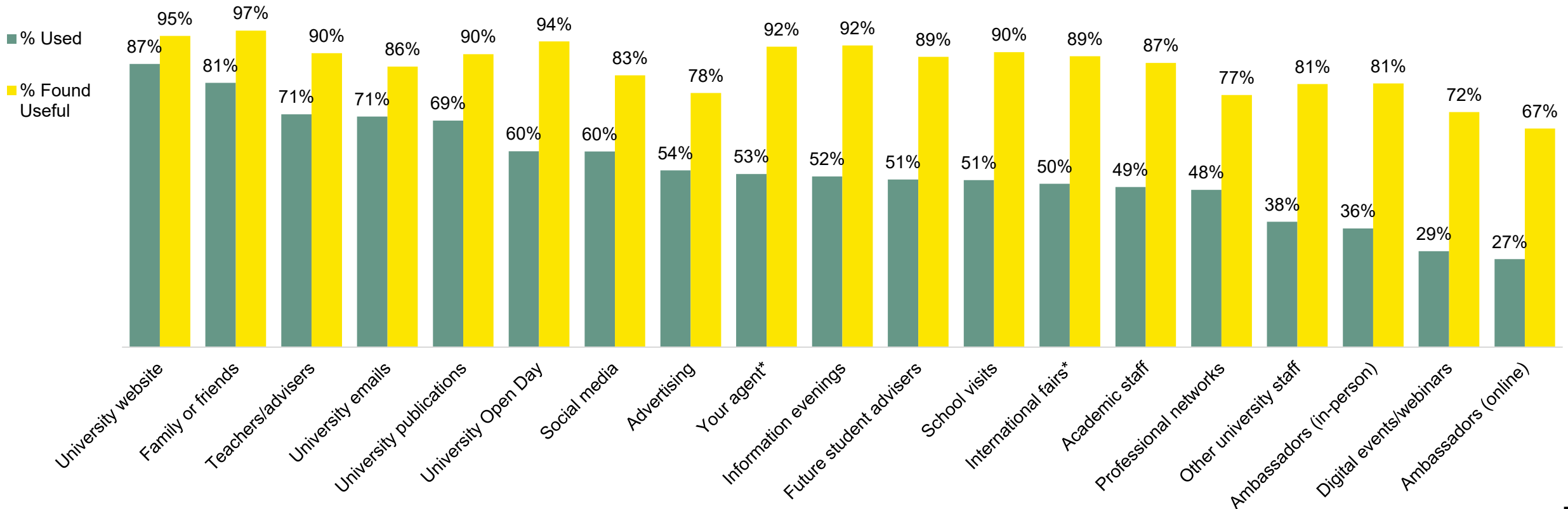


Information Sources

* Only asked of International students

Survey respondents were asked about which information sources they used to support their decision making about which university or tertiary education establishment to apply to. The two most used and most useful information sources were **university websites** (87% used, 95% rated useful) and **family and friends** (81% used, 97% rated useful). **Teachers/advisors, university emails and university publications** were also widely used (71%-69%) and were rated highly for usefulness. While only used by 60% of respondents, **Open Days** were rated as useful by 94% of attendees. Online ambassadors and digital events/webinars were the least used and also rated as the least useful.

Usage of information sources and whether they were found useful



* Only asked of International students

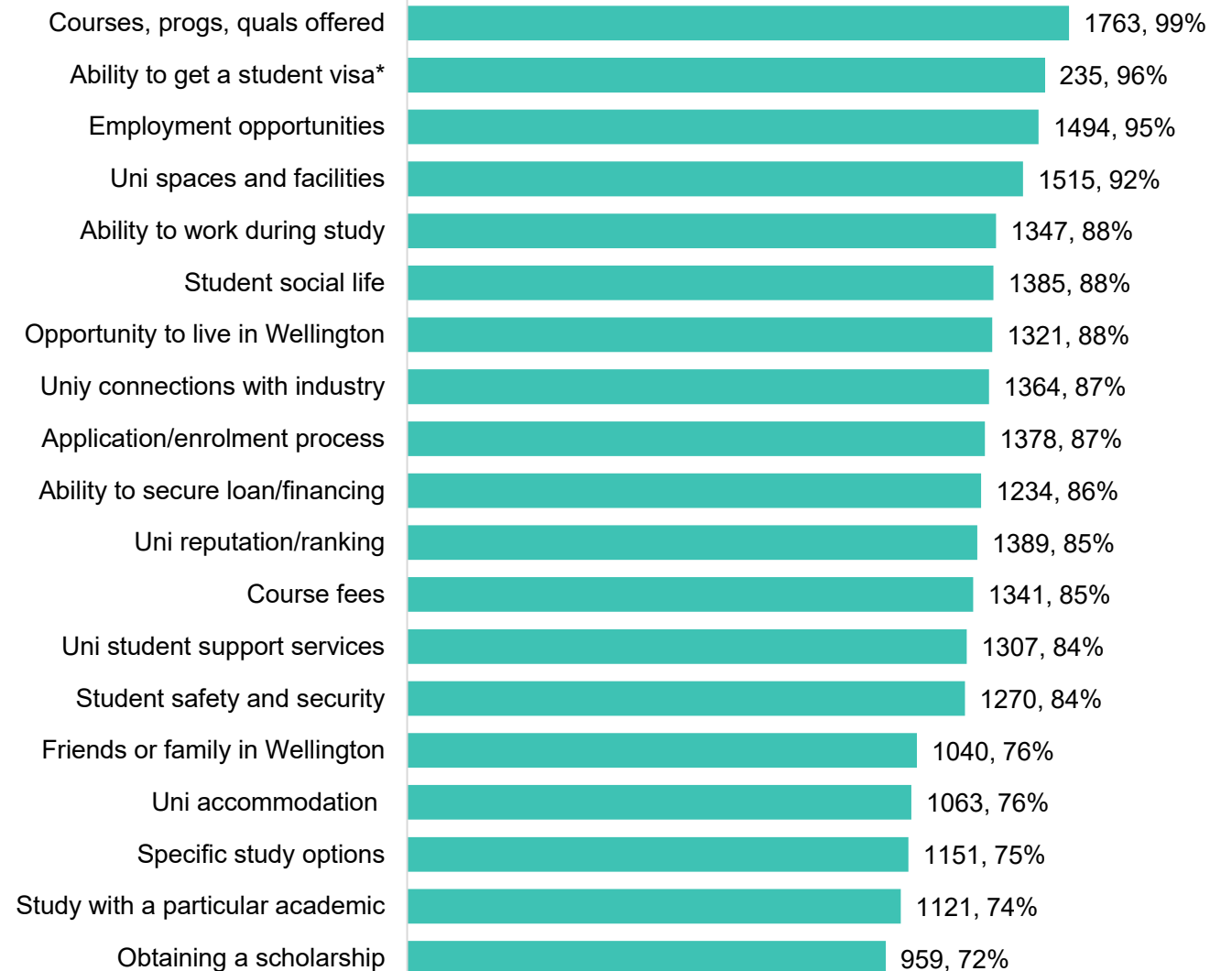
Decision Factors

Survey respondents were asked about which factors they considered as important in their decision making.

The **courses, programmes and qualifications being offered** was the factor considered important by the most respondents (99% of them). **Ability to get a student visa** was of most importance to international students (96%). **Employment opportunities after study** was considered important by 95% of respondents. The **universities spaces and facilities** was also considered important by more than 90% of respondents (92%).

While still considered important by a large number of students responding to the survey, obtaining a scholarship, studying with a particular academic, or specific study options being available were considered important by a smaller proportion of respondents (72%, 74% and 75% respectively).

Number and % of respondents considering each factor listed as important to their decision making

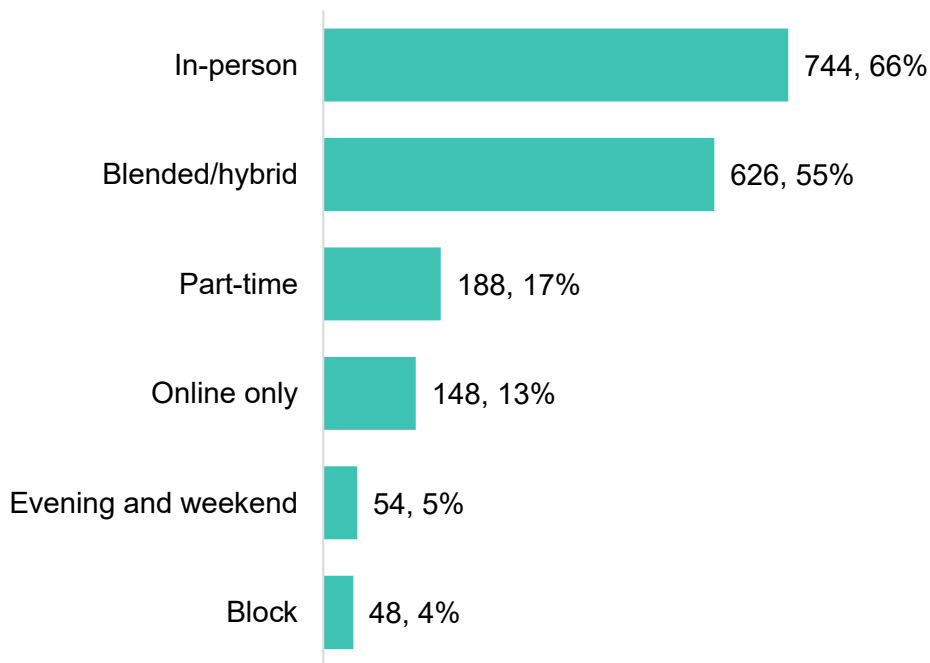


* Only asked of International students

Decision Factors

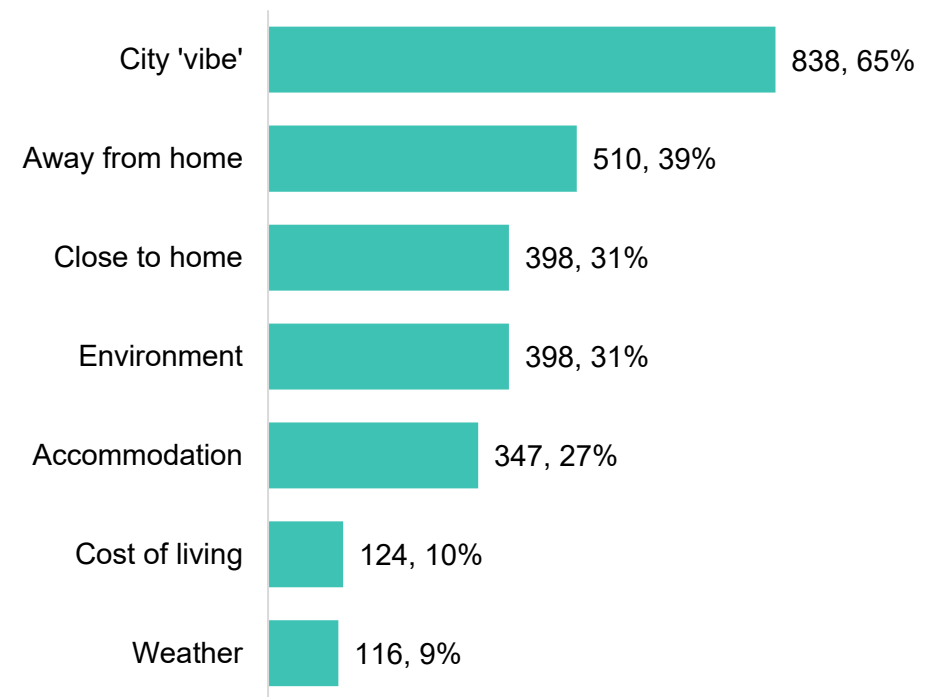
1,151 respondents (75%) indicated that **'specific study options'** were an important factor that they considered in their decision making about which university to apply to. They were then asked which specific study options were important to them.

Number and % of respondents considering each study option listed as important to their decision making



1,321 respondents (88%) indicated that **'living in Wellington'** was an important factor that they considered in their decision making about which university to apply to. They were then asked what aspects were particularly important to them.

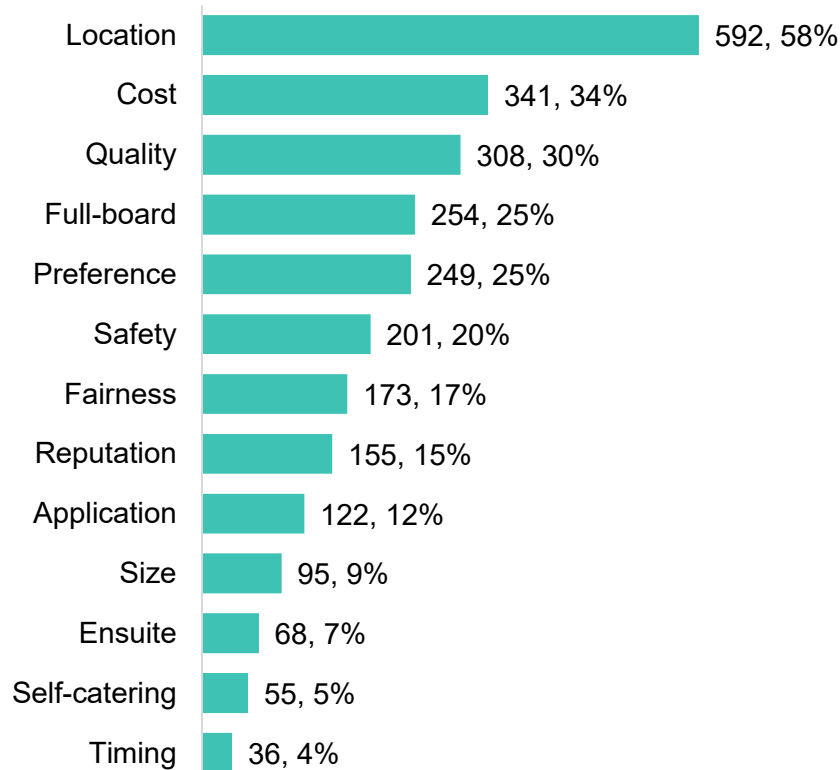
Number and % of respondents considering each aspect of living in Wellington listed as important to their decision making



Decision Factors

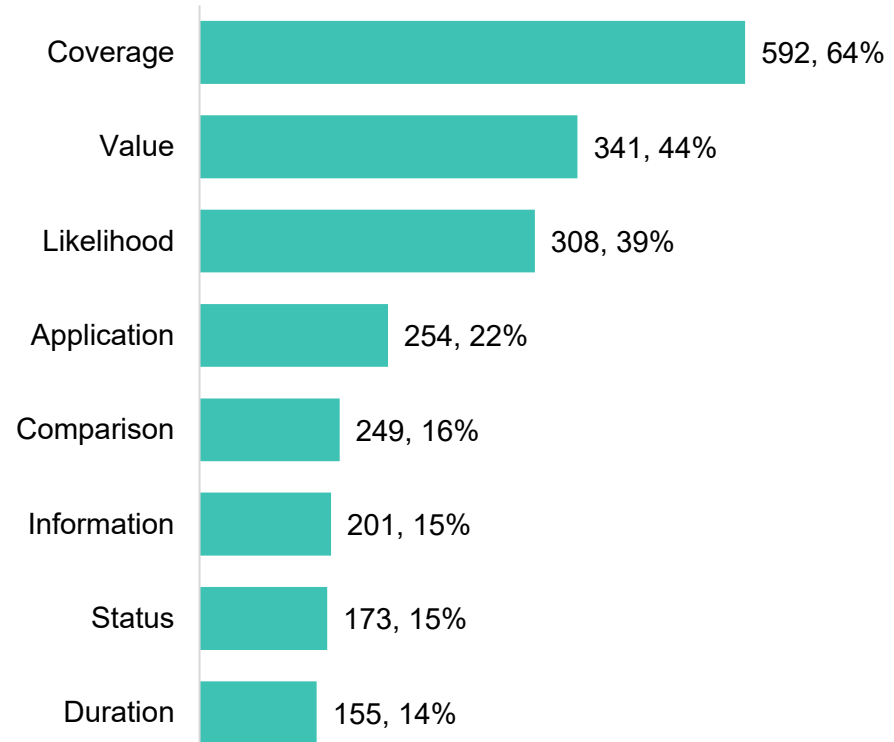
1,063 respondents (76%) indicated that **'uni accommodation'** was an important factor that they considered in their decision making about which university to apply to. They were then asked what aspects were important to them.

Number and % of respondents considering each aspect of uni accommodation listed as important to their decision making



1,151 respondents (75%) indicated that **'scholarships'** were an important factor that they considered in their decision making about which university to apply to. They were then asked which specific aspects were important to them.

Number and % of respondents considering each aspect of a scholarship listed as important to their decision making



Why Te Herenga Waka?

Students were asked why they chose Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington over other education establishments. 635 students provided comments. In summary...

Wellington itself is a big draw

- Students don't separate university from city
- Wellington seen as creative, inclusive, walkable, and the right place to live and study
- Capital-city location viewed as a major advantage

The right programme (often the only one)

- Many chose VUW because it offered:
 - A unique degree, or
 - A better-designed version than competitors
- Flexibility (conjoint, double majors) matters

Affordability made it possible

- Scholarships, cheaper halls, and living at home were decisive
- For many, VUW was the only financially viable option

Fit, belonging, and culture

- Students consistently describe feeling at home here
- Inclusion, diversity, and supportive staff influenced choice
- Especially important for Māori, Pasifika, LGBTQ+, neurodivergent, and international students

Opportunity beyond the classroom

- Strong pull of internships, networking, and careers
- Law, politics, public policy, film, arts, music, and government links frequently cited

Bottom line: Students choose VUW because it feels like the best place, not just the best institution. The competitive edge is the combination of Wellington, distinctive programmes, affordability, and belonging — not rankings alone.

"I loved the vibe of the city and everything Wellington has to offer."

"Studying politics in the capital just made sense."

"Wellington felt like the right place for me."

"It was the only university that offered my course."

"The degree structure here just fit me better."

"Vic allows flexibility without boxing you in."

"It was the only option I could afford."

"The scholarship sealed the deal."

"Cheaper accommodation than Otago or Auckland."

"The open day completely sold it for me."

"I just felt like I belonged here."

"Other open days didn't compare."

"Studying law next to Parliament is a huge advantage."

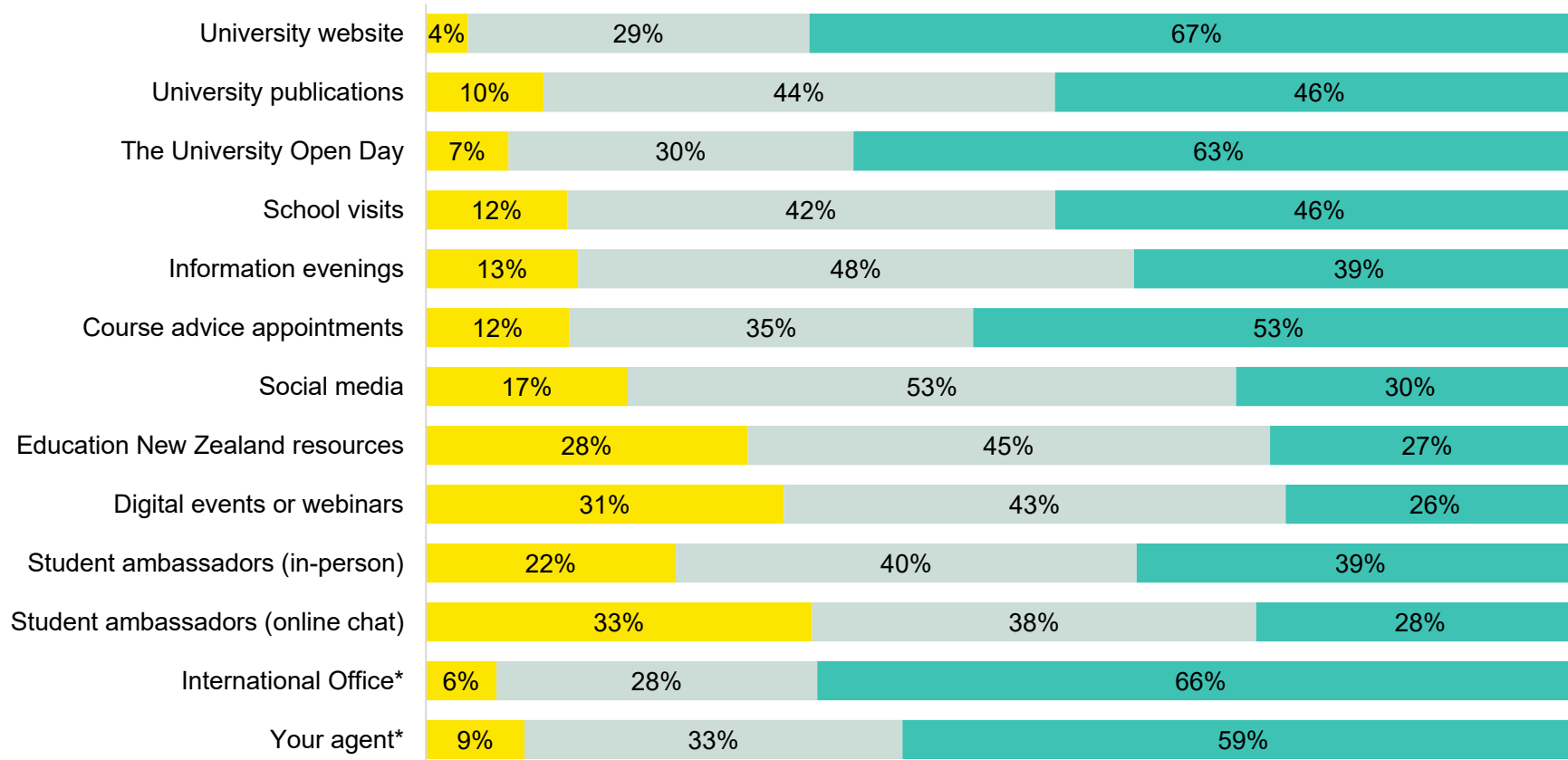
"Better career and networking opportunities."

"Strong industry connections."

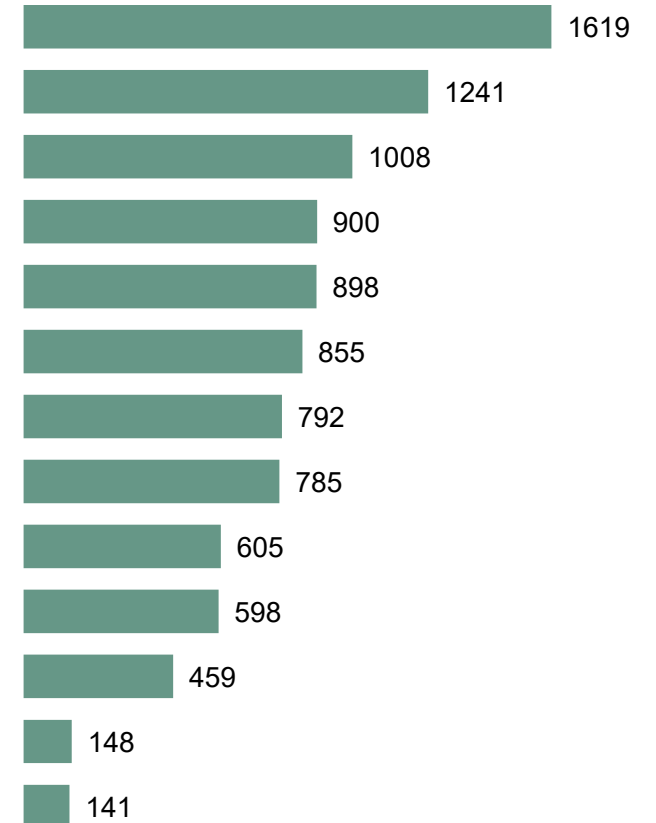
Choosing Courses

When it came to choosing courses, survey respondents were asked to rate how useful each information source they used was. The **university website** was the most used information source and it received the highest usefulness rating of all sources (67% rating it very useful). The **University Open Day** and **course advice appointments** were also seen as very useful (63% and 53% respectively). For international students, the **International Office** was rated highly, 66% rated it very useful. Online chat with student ambassadors were rated as not useful by a third of users. Digital events/webinars and Education New Zealand resources also scored poorly.

Usefulness rating for each information source in helping to choose courses



Number of respondents using each information source



* Only asked of International students

■ Not useful ■ Somewhat useful ■ Very useful

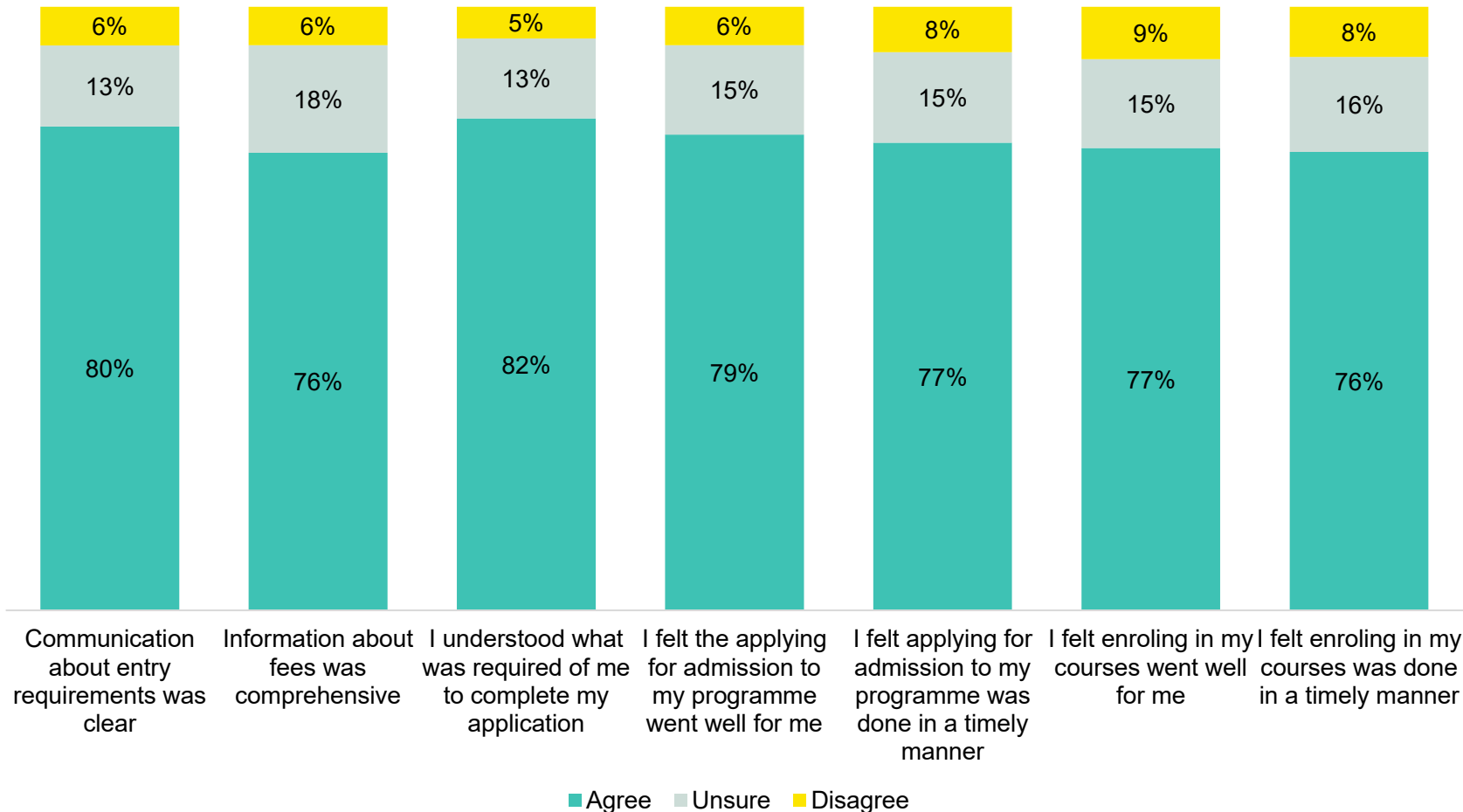


APPLICATION & ENROLMENT

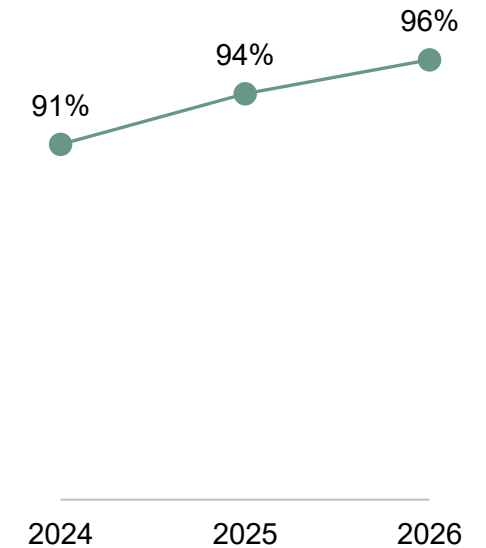
Information and Processes

Survey respondents were asked to a set of statements about application and enrolment communications, information and processes. The majority of students positively agreed with all of the statements showing high levels of satisfaction with the information and processes. The 2026 results were very similar to the 2025 results. Overall satisfaction with information/advice provided by the university has shown continual improvement over the past three years, reaching 96% satisfied in 2026.

Agreement/disagreement with the following statements about university information, communication and processes



Overall satisfaction with information/advice provided by the university, % satisfied, 2024 to 2026

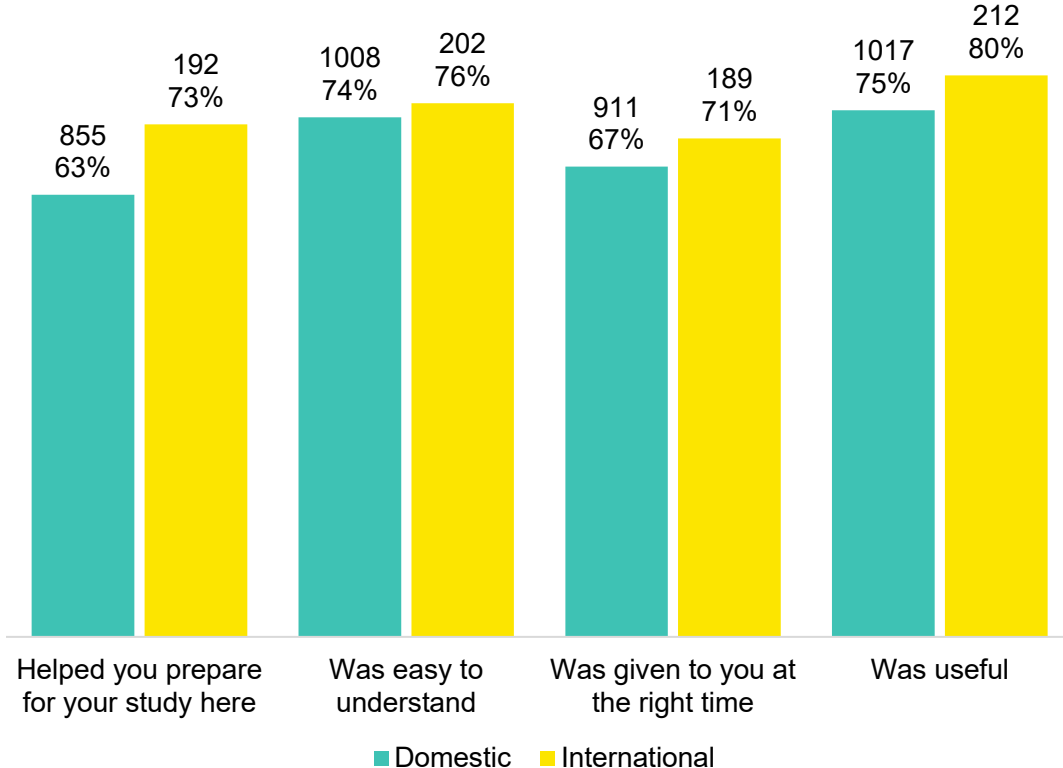


Information and Processes

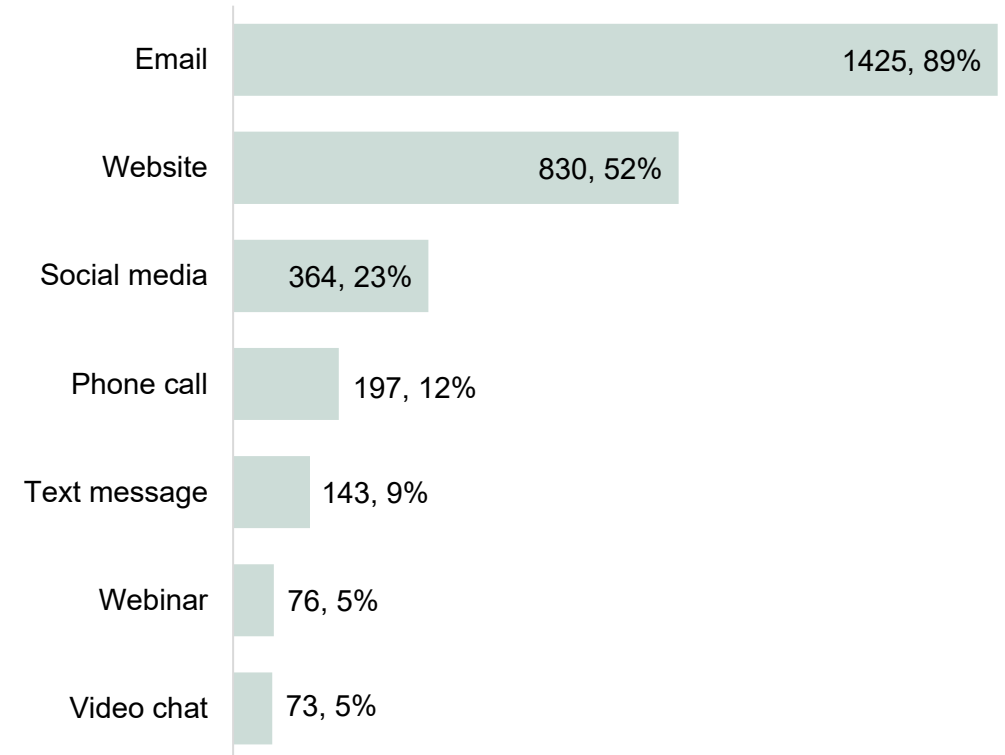
Survey respondents were asked about information provided after enrolment and again the majority responded with positive agreement. International students were consistently more likely to agree than domestic students, but not by much.

When asked about how they preferred to receive communications for the university, via **email** was the most preferred channel (89%), with 52% choosing the **website**.

Number and % agreeing with the following statements about information provided after enrolment



Number and % preferring the following communication channels to receive information from the university



Improving Processes

Students were asked to provide suggestions for improving the admission and enrolment processes. 438 students provided comments. In summary...

Digital experience is the core pain point

- Website and portals are hard to navigate, outdated, fragmented (Pūaha, Nuku, multiple pages)
- Technical issues (pages resetting, data not saving, repeated uploads) increases stress

Course selection is confusing and high-risk

- Students struggle to understand required courses, majors/minors, points, and prerequisites
- Timetables often unavailable early, clashes then discovered too late
- Strong demand for visual degree maps, examples, and planners

Lack of clarity on status, timelines, and next steps

- Long silences cause anxiety
- Students unsure if they've done everything or what they're waiting on
- Clear ask for checklists, progress trackers, timelines, and better emails

Inconsistent advice undermines confidence

- Conflicting or incorrect information from advisors and departments
- Leads to wrong enrolments, rework, and last-minute fixes

Some groups are disproportionately impacted

- International & Postgraduate students: slow offers, visa-critical delays, fee confusion, agent issues
- School leavers & mature students: jargon-heavy processes, high reliance on informal help

Human help works, but too late in the process

- One-on-one support is praised and often “rescues” students
- Problems are mainly about clarity, design, and signposting, not student capability

Bottom line: Simplify the digital journey, make course selection obvious, show progress clearly, and align advice

“Fix your website duh”

“The website is hard to navigate and full of words... I struggled quite a lot.”

“The old nature of the website shows... clunky and all over the place.”

“Choosing my courses was harder than the actual application.”

“It would help if you put in your degree and it tells you exactly what to take.”

“I wish there were sample timetables for double majors.”

“It felt like a black hole once I clicked submit.”

“I wasn't sure if my application had been received or read.”

“A progress tracker would reduce uncertainty.”

“I was told different things by different people.”

“My course advisor gave me wrong information twice.”

“I had to tell the front desk how the centre-based option worked.”

“I waited three months for my offer — extremely stressful for visas.”

“Agents prioritise their own interests over accurate information.”

“We weren't sure which rules applied to exchange vs international students.”

“Booking a meeting with an advisor made everything clear.”

“Without Māori enrolment support, I would have struggled.”

“Once I spoke to the right person, it was smooth sailing.”



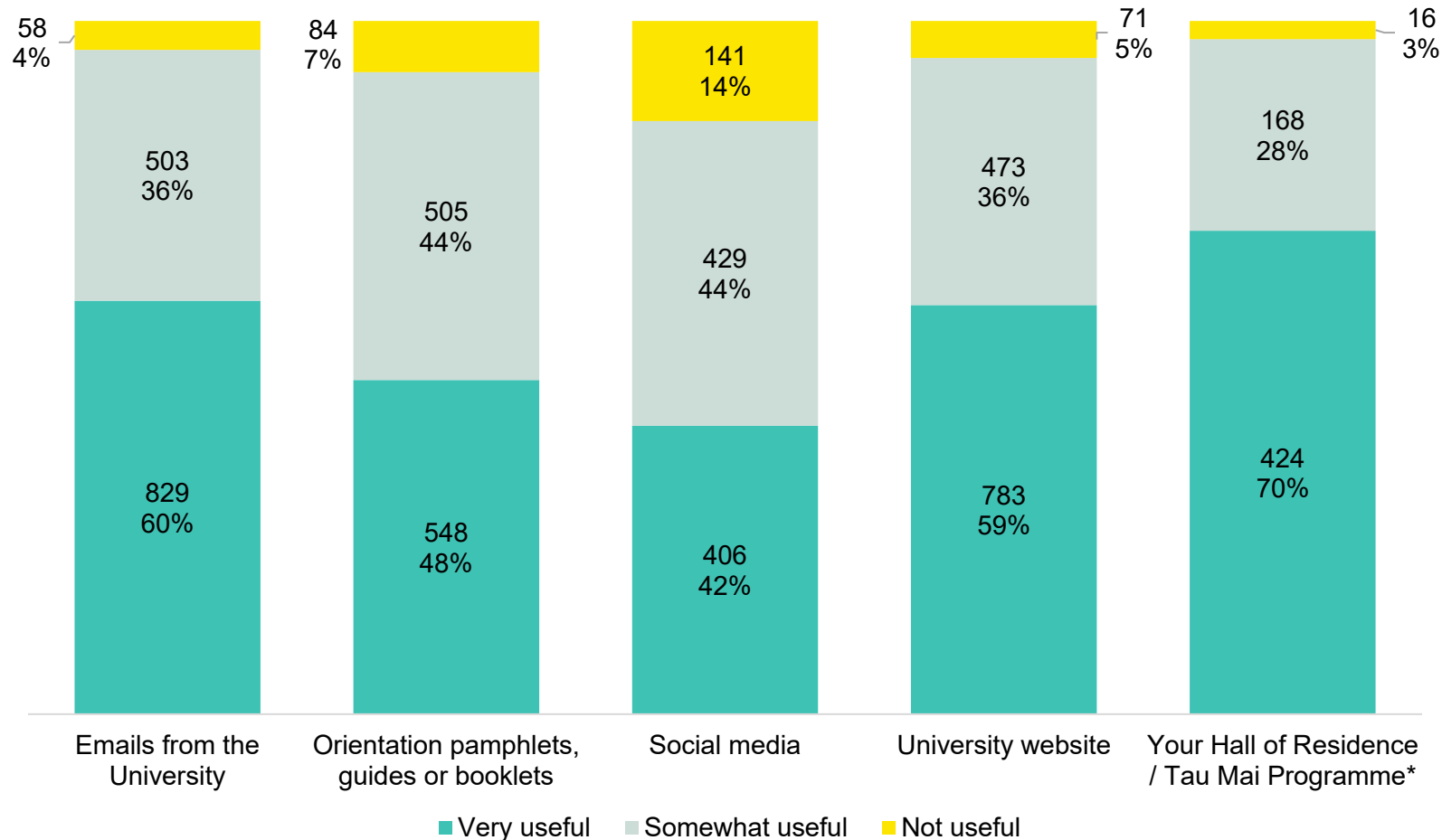
ORIENTATION

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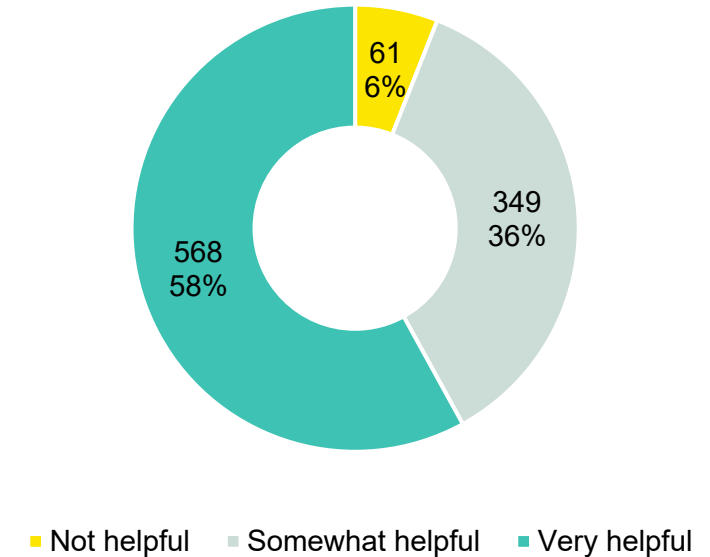
Orientation Information

Survey respondents were asked how useful they found five sources of information from the university about orientation. All scored well. The **Tau Mai (Halls) programme** scored best. **Social media** was seen as the least useful source. The Student Ambassadors helping students through orientation received a very positive rating, only 6% not finding them helpful.

How useful respondents found the following as sources for orientation information



How helpful were the Student Ambassadors?



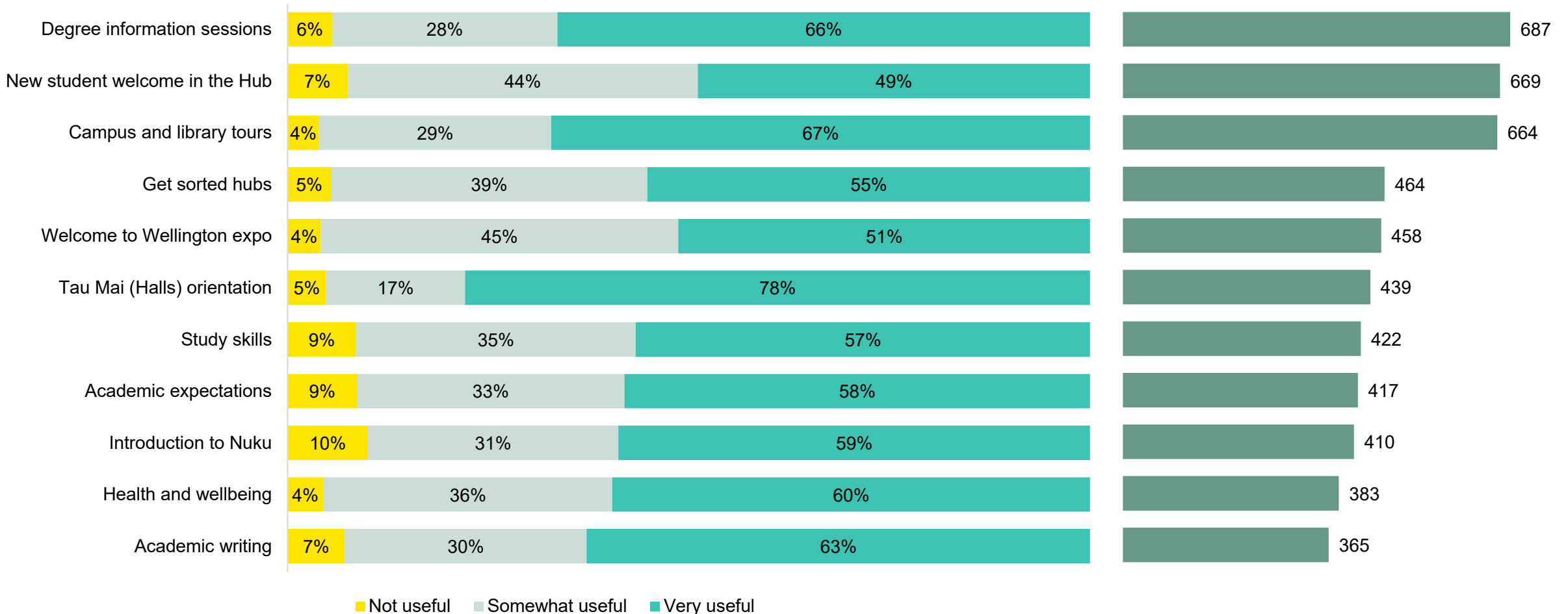
* Only asked of those in Halls

General Orientation

Of the 11 sessions with the higher attendance figures, the **degree information sessions** and the **campus and library tours** had high attendance and a high percentage of attendees rating them as 'very useful'. The **new student welcome in the hub** had high attendance but a lower percentage of 'very useful' ratings. All 11 sessions had at least 90% of attendees rating them as useful. The **Tau Mai (Halls) orientation** had the highest 'very useful' rating, at 78%.

Usefulness rating for each orientation session listed

Number of respondents attending each session

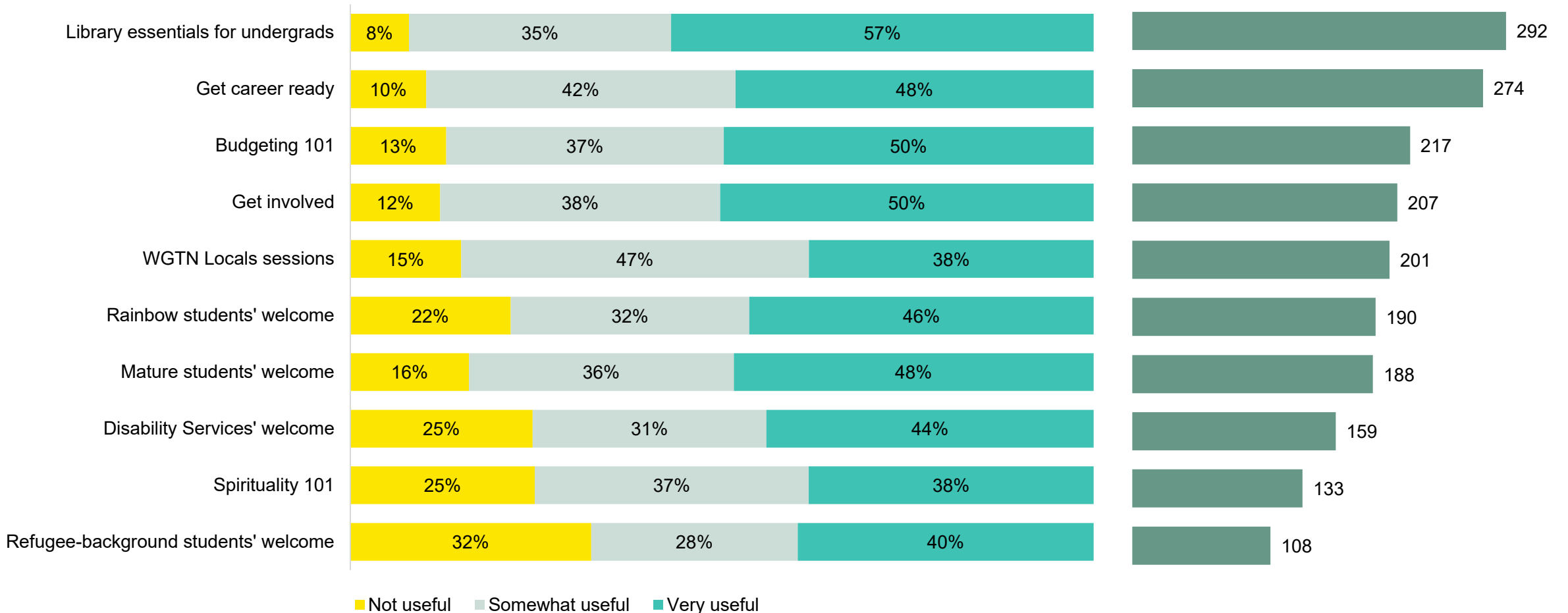


General Orientation

Of the 10 sessions with the lower attendance figures, the **WGTN Locals sessions** and **Spirituality 101** has the lowest percentage of attendees rating the sessions as 'very useful'. The 'welcome' sessions generally had higher percentages of 'not useful' ratings but these sessions are more focused on making connection rather than being 'useful' in a practical sense.

Usefulness rating for each orientation session listed

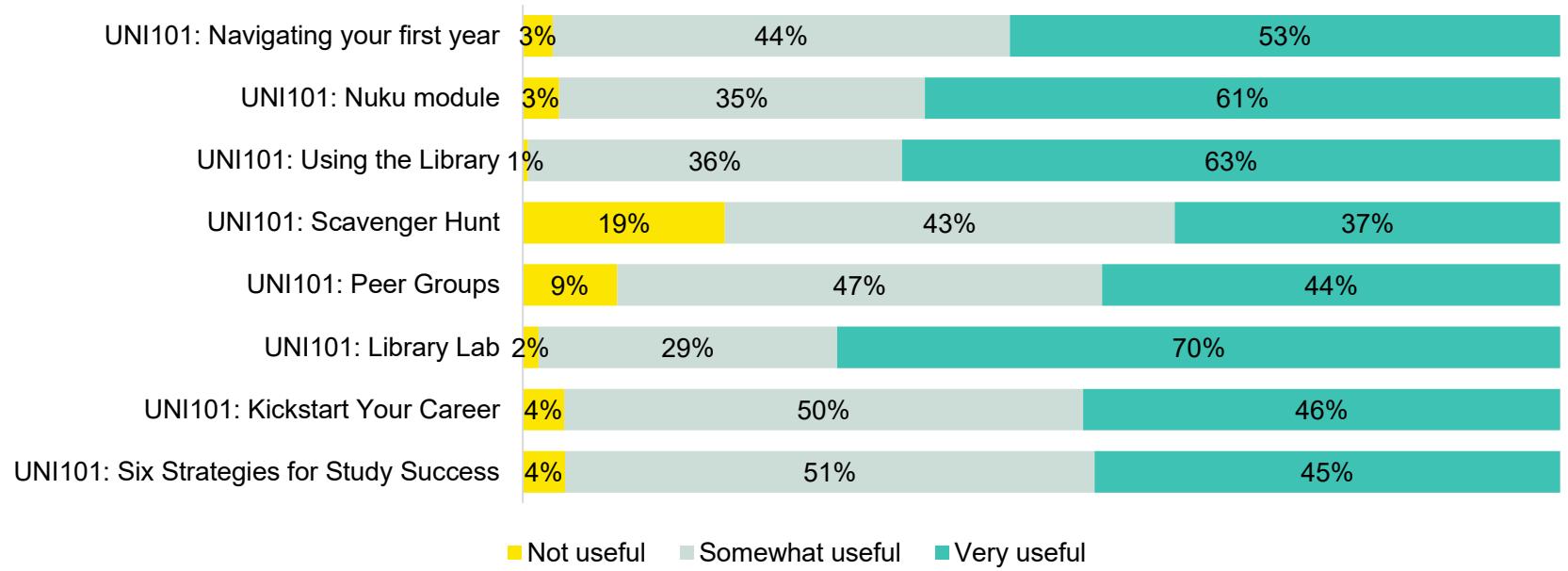
Number of respondents attending each session



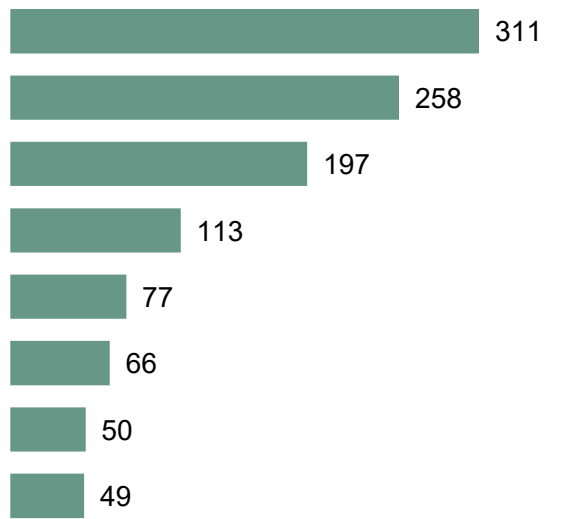
UNI101 Sessions

Survey respondents were asked about the UNI101 programme of orientation sessions. Most sessions were seen as useful. The Scavenger Hunt was rated the least useful, 19% saying it was not useful. Only 66 respondents attended the **Library Lab** but 70% rated it very useful. The **Using the Library** and the **Nuku module** sessions also scored well. Most respondents thought that the UNI101 sessions helped them connect (71%) and help get them ready for uni life (68%). Just over half (54%) felt that the UNI101 sessions increased their confidence about starting their studies.

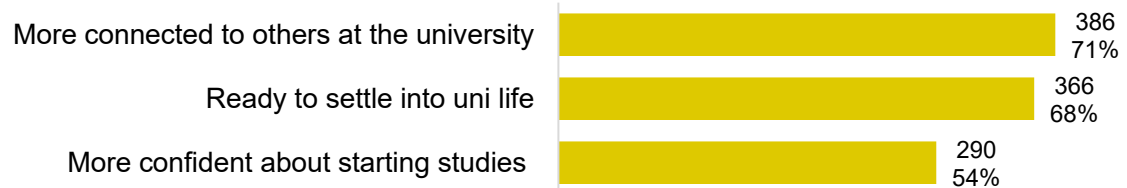
Usefulness rating for each orientation session listed



Number of respondents attending each session



Number and percentage of respondents agreeing that UNI101 had the following outcomes:



Improving UNI101 Sessions

Students were asked to provide specific feedback about the UNI101 sessions to help make improvements in the future. 68 students provided comments. In summary...

Strong and positive foundation

- Helps students feel welcomed, reassured, and oriented
- Student ambassadors widely praised

Uneven access and participation

- Many miss sessions due to sickness, timetable clashes, commuting, visa delays, or early course start dates
- Clear demand for recordings, catch-ups, and longer delivery window

More social connection wanted

- Students want more small-group, interactive activities
- Peer groups and social events felt inconsistent or poorly followed through
- Especially important for international and non-hall students

Content sometimes too broad

- Some sessions felt surface-level or assumed prior knowledge
- Students want more practical academic guidance (study expectations, systems like Nuku)

Awareness and signposting gaps

- Many only discovered UNI101 by chance
- Students want clearer explanation of what UNI101 is, earlier comms, and simple summaries of key resources

Equity of place and mode

- Te Aro, commuter, and off-campus students felt overlooked
- Strong request for online/hybrid options and campus-specific delivery

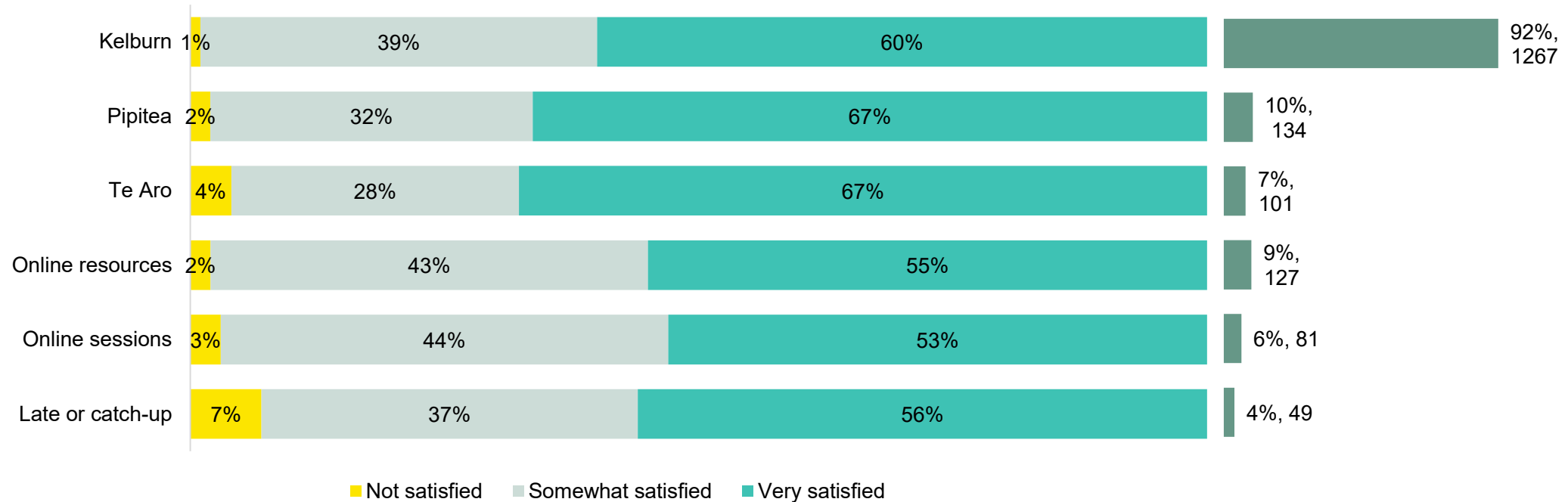
Bottom line: UNI101 is valued and welcoming, but impact is limited by access, awareness, and consistency rather than core concept.

Overall Assessment

Survey respondents were asked about their satisfaction with their orientation experience. New students could have experienced orientation as multiple locations of via different mediums. The majority of students engaged with orientation at the Kelburn campus (92%). 99% were satisfied with 60% being very satisfied with their experience.

Satisfaction ratings for each orientation location/medium

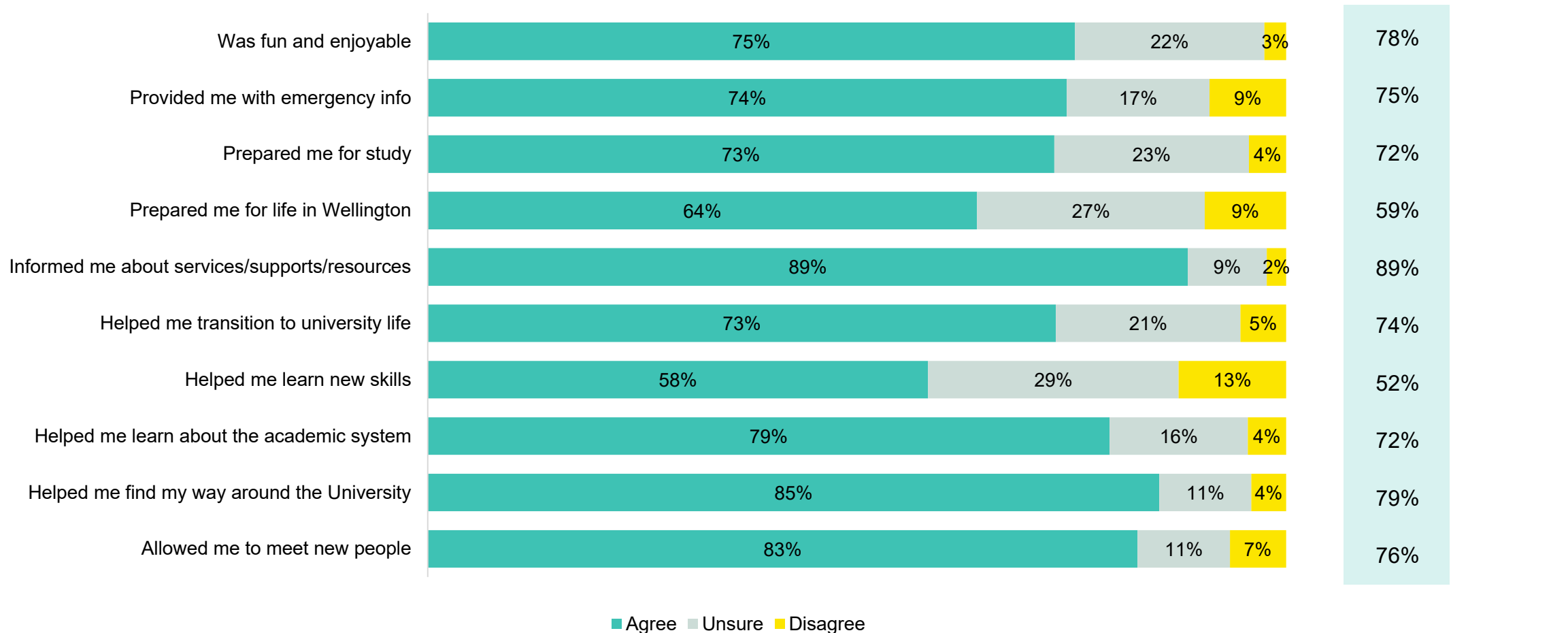
Number engaging with orientation through these locations/mediums



Overall Assessment

Survey respondents were asked whether orientation delivered a range of outcomes for them. The outcome that most respondents agreed with was that it had informed them about services, supports and resources available to them (89%). Orientation did well helping students find their way around and allowing them to meet new people (85% and 83% respectively). Orientation was less successful in helping students learn new skills or preparing them for life in Wellington (58% and 64% respectively).

Level of agreement that orientation delivered the following outcomes.



Improving Orientation

Students were given two opportunities to provide feedback about their orientation experience that could help make improvements in the future. 172 students provided comments.

In summary.....

Positive experience

- Students feel welcomed, reassured, and better prepared
- Staff, ambassadors, and Tau Mai / hall-based activities strongly praised

Uneven access & missed opportunities

- Many students missed key sessions due to visa delays, work, sickness, clashes, weather
- Strong request for repeat sessions, recordings, online options, and late-arrival support

Scheduling & coordination issues

- Frequent session clashes (international, postgrad, mandatory events)
- One-off sessions force students to choose or miss out
- Clear need for better central scheduling and duplication of core content

Social connection is critical (especially outside halls)

- Students want more structured mixers, small-group activities, degree-based sessions
- Wellington locals, non-hall, mature and international students feel less included

Information overload & unclear signposting

- Too many events, confusing calendars, reliance on social media
- Students want clear priorities, simpler schedules, earlier communication

One-size-fits-all doesn't work

- School leavers want connection and fun
- Postgrad & mature students want practical, targeted information
- Te Aro students and some equity groups felt overlooked

Bottom line: Orientation works, but not equally for all students. The biggest gains will come from better coordination, clearer signposting, flexible delivery, and more tailored pathways.

“One of the best experiences I have had at university.”

“Tau Mai week was by far the most useful and impactful.”

“Orientation made the whole experience less scary.”

“I wasn’t able to attend because I was still working full time.”

“Please make recordings and have more things online.”

“I missed the majority of orientation due to late visa arrival... I felt disadvantaged.”

“Some sessions clashed... students had to rush or miss parts.”

“Mandatory Welcome to Aotearoa clashed with postgraduate orientation.”

“Few important sessions overlapped.”

“Not very social, especially if you are not already in halls.”

“Anything that helps people mix and open up is good.”

“More degree or major specific stuff to get to know people doing the same thing.”

“The orientation calendar online was very confusing.”

“I constantly discovered events I had no idea about.”

“A calendar would be good.”

“Sessions felt like common sense, so I didn’t attend much.”

“As a mature postgrad, I need information, not fun.”

“More practical guidance about course planning and assignments.”

Advice for future students...

Students were asked to reflect on their transition to university and provide one piece of advice for a student starting in 2027. 822 students provided advice. In summary...

Get connected early

- Talk to people, go to orientation/O-Week, join clubs
- Feeling awkward or lonely at first is normal, it passes

Start everything earlier than you think

- Enrolment, StudyLink, visas, accommodation, finances
- Admin stress is the biggest avoidable problem

Manage your time from day one

- Uni workload is very different from school
- Start assignments early, use a calendar, don't procrastinate

Ask for help often and early

- Lecturers, advisors, student services are supportive
- Success is linked to help-seeking, not figuring it out alone

Don't panic and look after yourself

- Stress, confusion, homesickness are normal
- Balance study, social life, sleep, health, and money

Bottom line: Students say success at university is driven less by ability and more by early preparation, social connection, time management, and reassurance. Orientation, advice, and support services matter, but only if students use them early.

"Talk to everyone you can in the first few weeks."

"Everyone is just as scared as you, put yourself out there."

"Go to orientation events even if just to meet people."

"Apply for StudyLink way before uni starts."

"Don't do it last minute, it takes longer than expected."

"If you fall behind, it's hard to catch up."

"Do not procrastinate. Ever."

"Treat uni like a full-time job."

"Ask for help early, staff are really helpful."

"There are so many resources, use them."

"Don't be afraid to email people."

"Everyone is in the same boat."

"Don't stress, it all works out."

"You don't have to settle immediately."

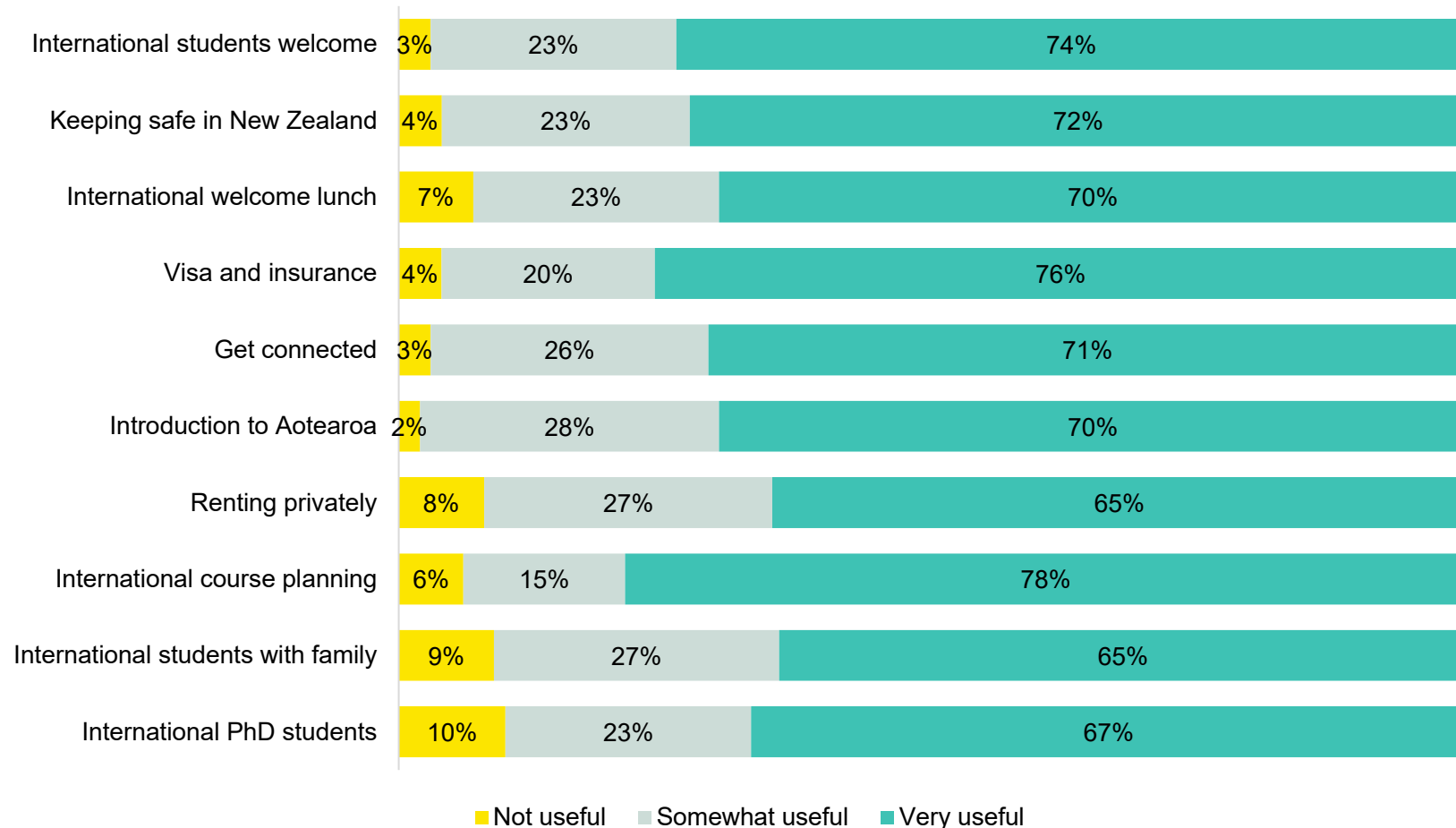


INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION

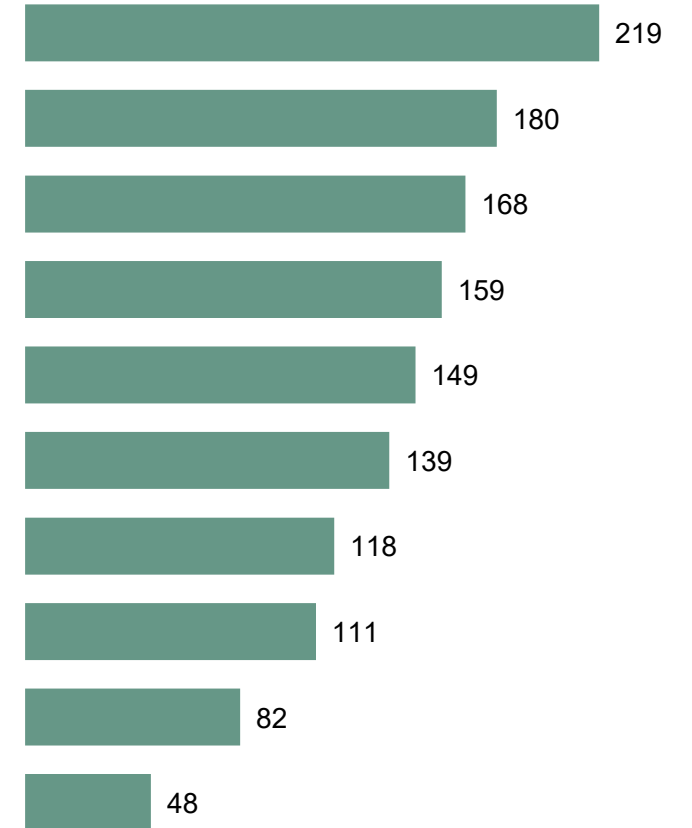
International Orientation

239 respondents engaged with International Orientation sessions. All sessions received very positive usefulness rating from respondents. **The International course planning, the visa and insurance and the international student' welcome sessions were the highest rated (78%, 76% and 74% very useful respectively).**

Usefulness rating for each orientation session listed

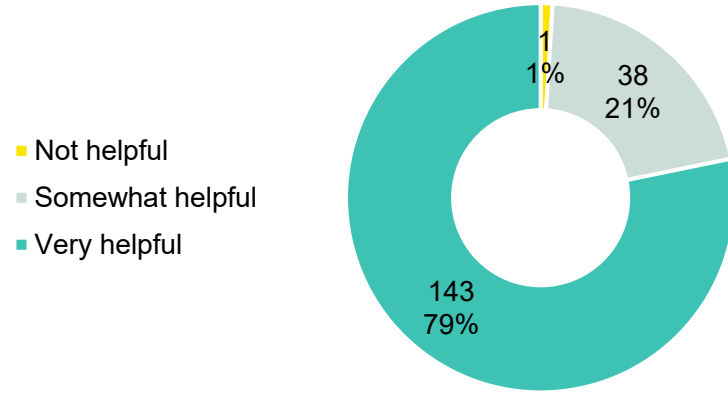


Number of respondents attending each session

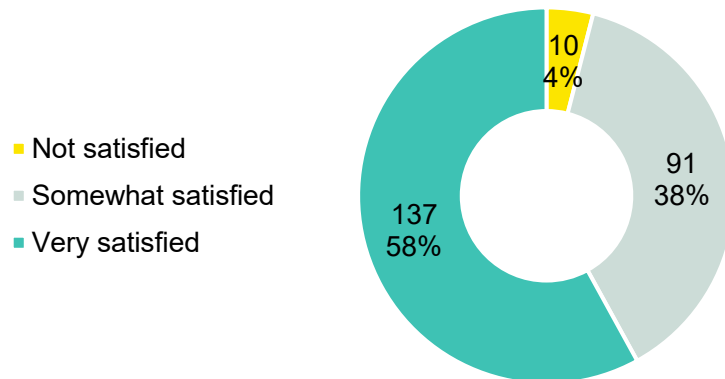


International Orientation

How helpful were the International Uni Crew throughout orientation?



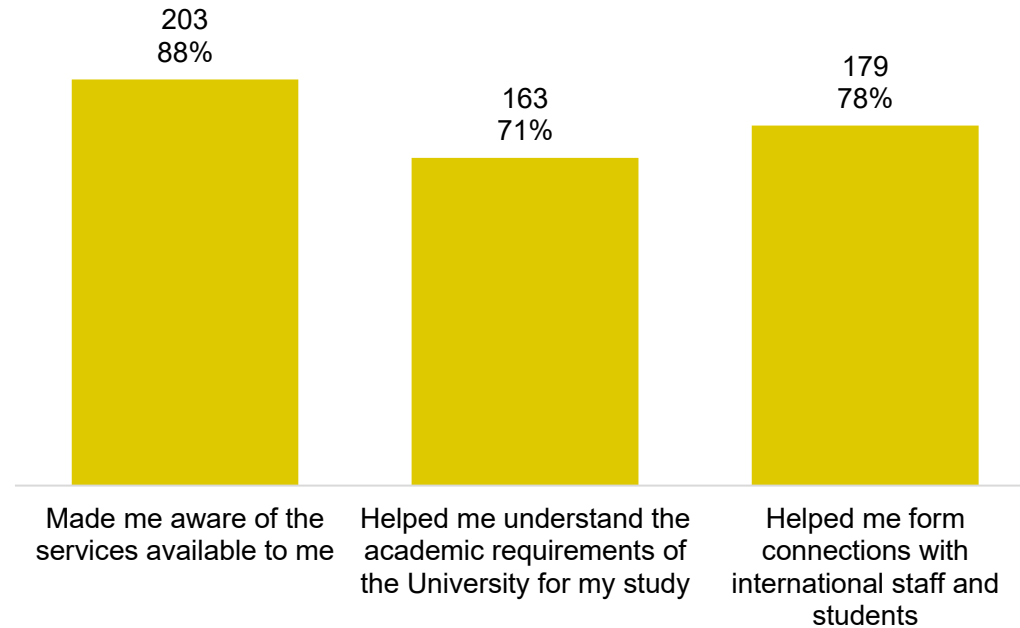
Overall, how satisfied were you with the International orientation?



The International Uni Crew helping students throughout orientation were highly rated, 99% rating them helpful (79% very helpful). The majority of respondents also agreed that the international orientation sessions made them more aware of services (88%), helped them understand academic requirements (71%) and helped them connect (78%).

Overall 96% of respondents were satisfied with international orientation (58% very satisfied).

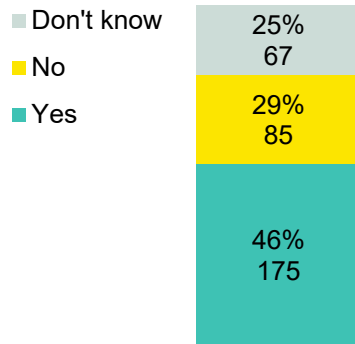
Did you achieve the following things from attending International orientation?



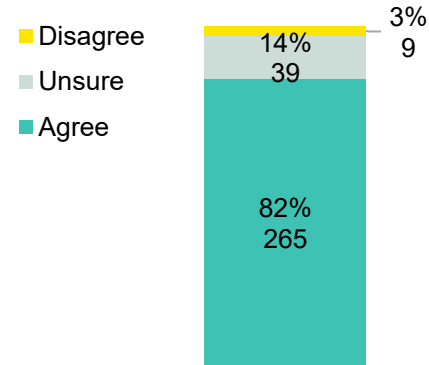
International Student Feedback

International Students were asked some additional questions. 46% wanted more flexibility with starting studies here. 82% agreed that the emails they received help them and 96% were satisfied with the information received from International Office (66% very satisfied).

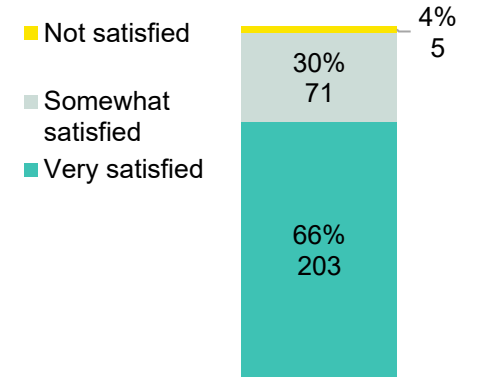
Would you have preferred to have more flexibility about when you started your studies here?



Do you agree/disagree that the emails you received as an international student helped guide you through application and enrolment?



How satisfied were you with the information you received from the International office?



International Students were also asked to provide suggestions for improving the communications from the International Office. 85 students provided feedback.

In summary...

Overall: International students value the care and support of staff, but timing, clarity, and coordination strongly shape stress during transition.

Supportive and welcoming

- International Office staff are widely praised as helpful, kind, and reassuring
- Orientation and one-to-one support are particularly valued

Response speed matters most

- Slow replies during visas, enrolment, and arrival create high stress
- Clear response-time expectations would reduce anxiety

Information overload, not information gaps

- Students receive too many emails from multiple teams
- Repeated or irrelevant messages (e.g. visa reminders after completion) frustrate students

Strong call for a single source of truth

- One central hub or landing page
- Step-by-step checklists and timelines
- Visa, enrolment, accommodation, health, work rules in one place

Earlier, more transparent guidance needed on...

- Fees and fee increases
- Living costs and expectations in Wellington
- Trimesters, course start dates, and systems (e.g. Nuku)

Coordination gaps are visible

- Conflicting advice from different teams undermines trust
- Poor hand-offs between departments delay resolution

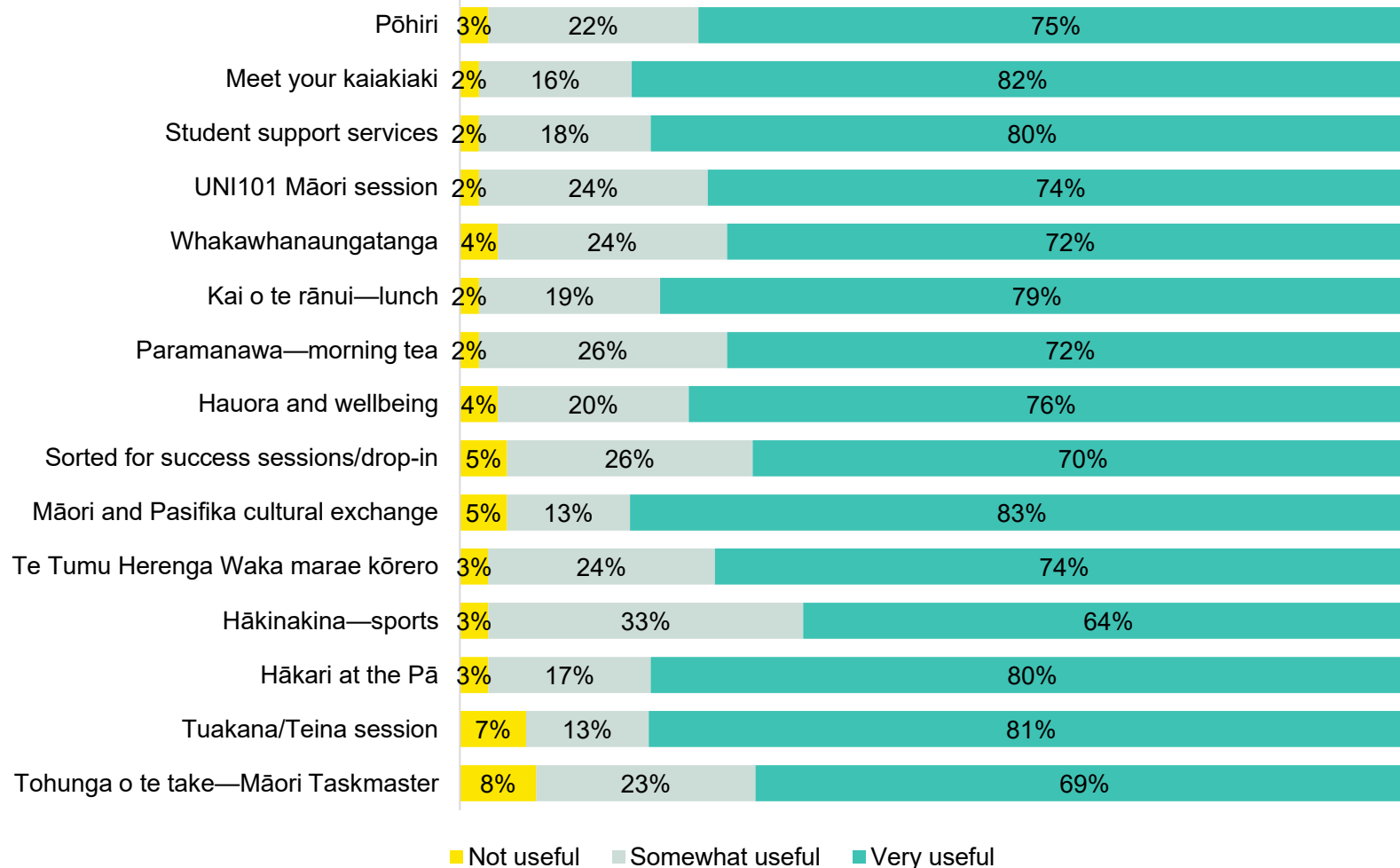


▼
MĀORI ORIENTATION

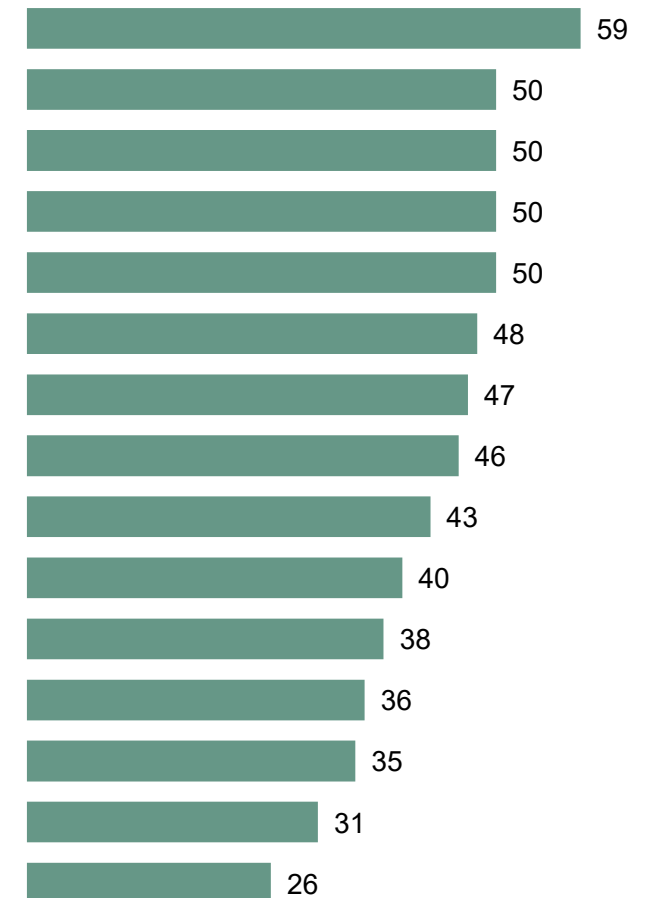
Māori Orientation

90 respondents engaged with Māori Orientation sessions. All sessions received very positive usefulness rating from respondents. The **Māori and Pasifika cultural exchange**, **Meet your kaiakiaki**, **Tuakana/Teina** sessions were the highest rated (83%, 82% and 81% very useful respectively).

Usefulness rating for each orientation session listed



Number of respondents attending each session

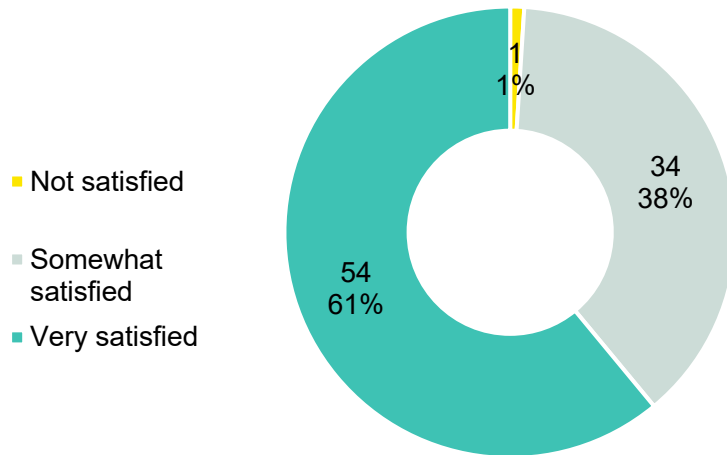


Māori Orientation

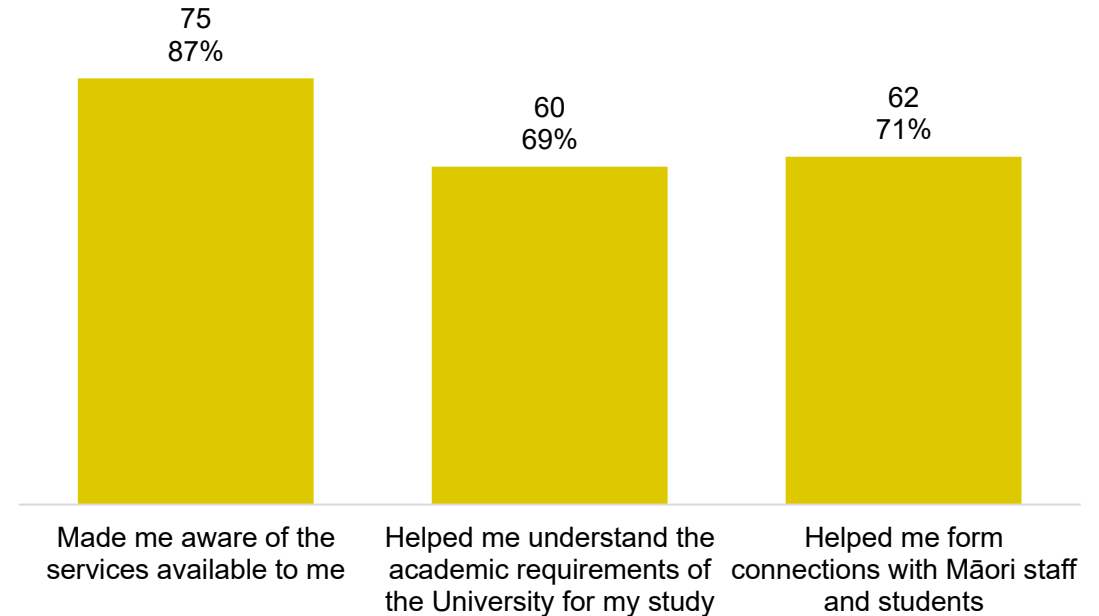
The majority of respondents agreed that the Māori orientation sessions made them more aware of services (87%), helped them understand academic requirements (69%) and helped them connect (71%).

Overall 99% of respondents were satisfied with Māori orientation (61% very satisfied).

Overall, how satisfied were you with the Māori orientation?



Did you achieve the following things from attending Māori orientation?





PASIFIKA ORIENTATION

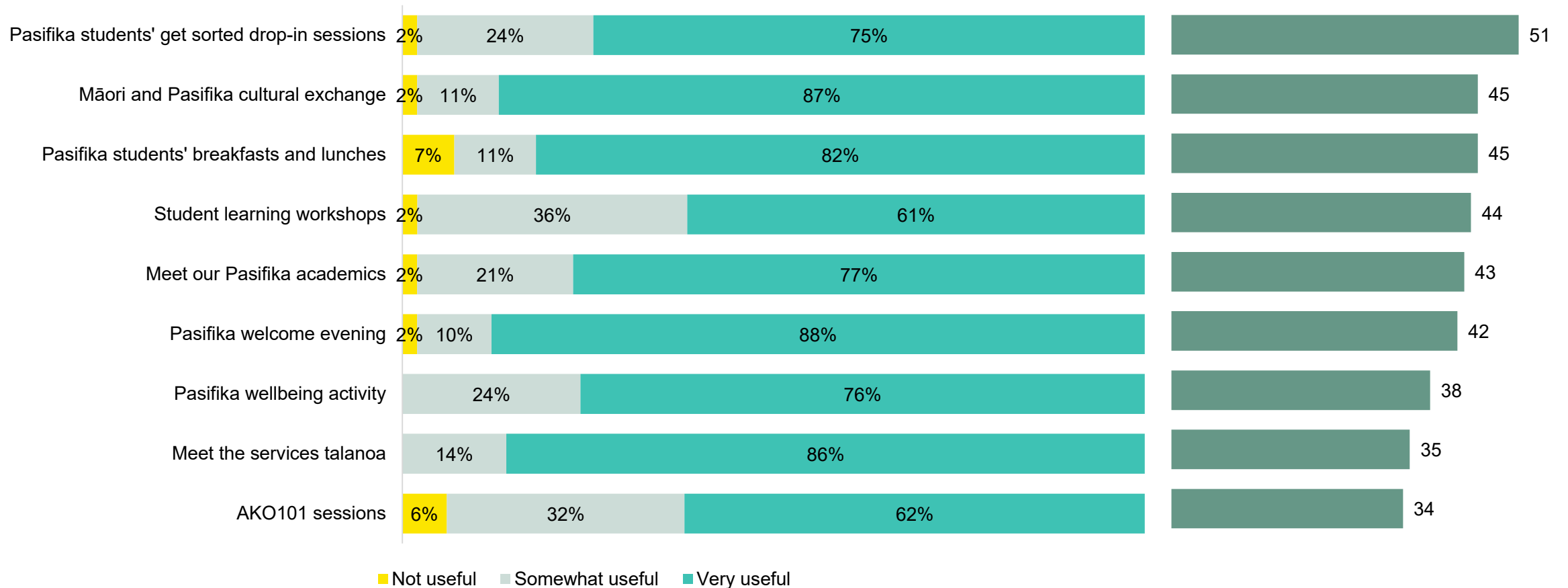


Pasifika Orientation

79 respondents engaged with Pasifika Orientation sessions. All sessions received very positive usefulness rating from respondents. The **Pasifika welcome evening**, the **Māori and Pasifika cultural exchange**, and **Meet the service talanoa** sessions were the highest rated (88%, 87% and 86% very useful respectively).

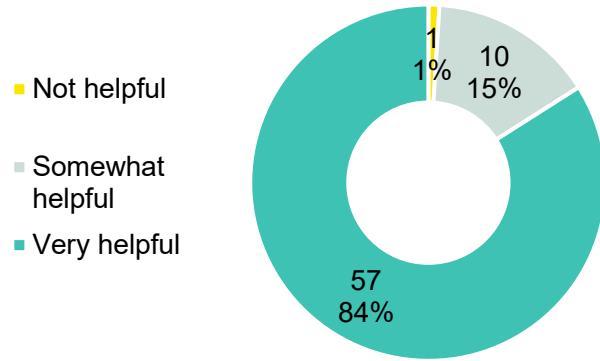
Usefulness rating for each orientation session listed

Number of respondents attending each session

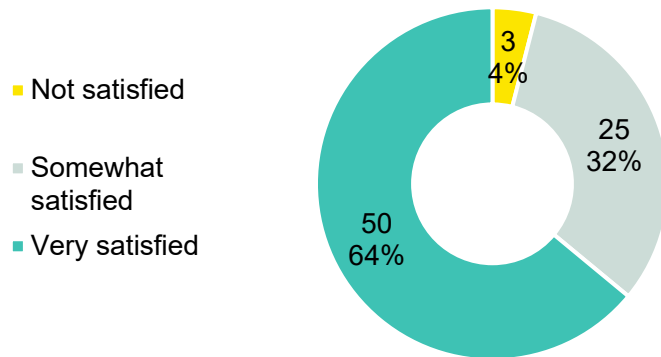


Pasifika Orientation

How helpful were the Pasifika Pillars Support Service Staff and Student Ambassadors throughout orientation?



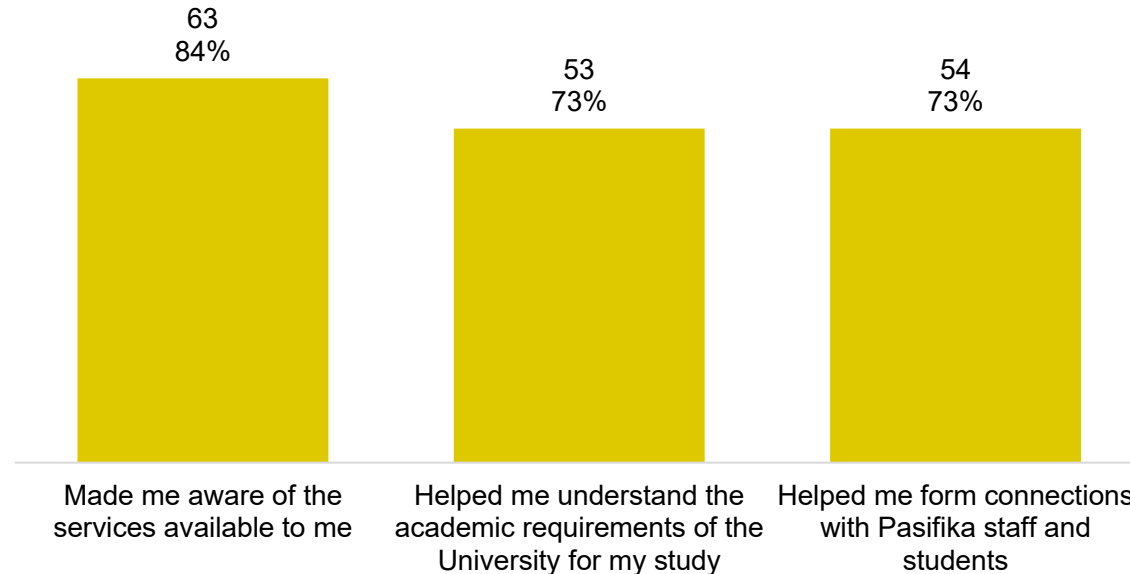
Overall, how satisfied were you with the Pasifika orientation?



The Pasifika Pillars Support Service Staff and Student Ambassadors helping students throughout orientation were highly rated, 99% rating them helpful (84% very helpful). The majority of respondents also agreed that the Pasifika orientation sessions made them more aware of services (84%), helped them understand academic requirements (73%) and helped them connect (73%).

Overall 96% of respondents were satisfied with Pasifika orientation (64% very satisfied).

Did you achieve the following things from attending Pasifika orientation?





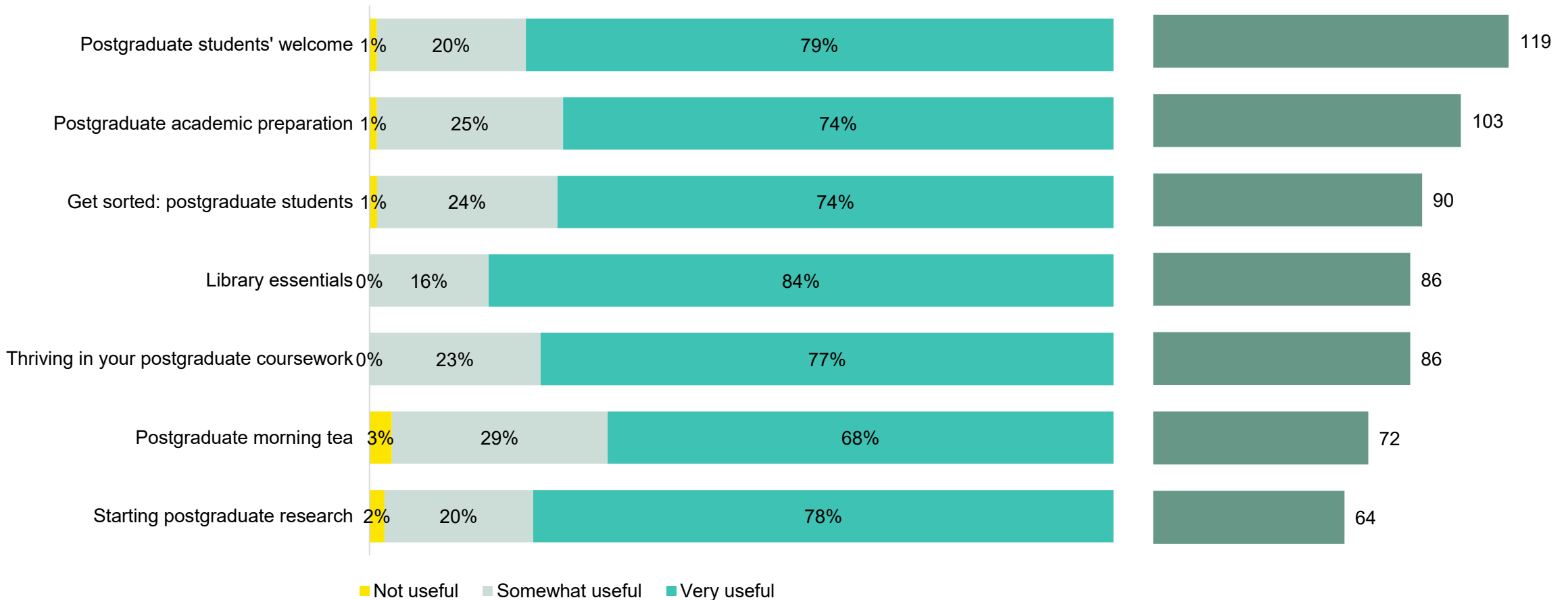
POSTGRAD ORIENTATION

Postgraduate Orientation

149 respondents engaged with Postgraduate Orientation sessions. All sessions received very positive usefulness rating from respondents. The **Library essentials**, the **postgraduate students' welcome**, and **Starting postgraduate research** sessions were the highest rated (84%, 79% and 78% very useful respectively).

Usefulness rating for each orientation session listed

Number of respondents attending each session

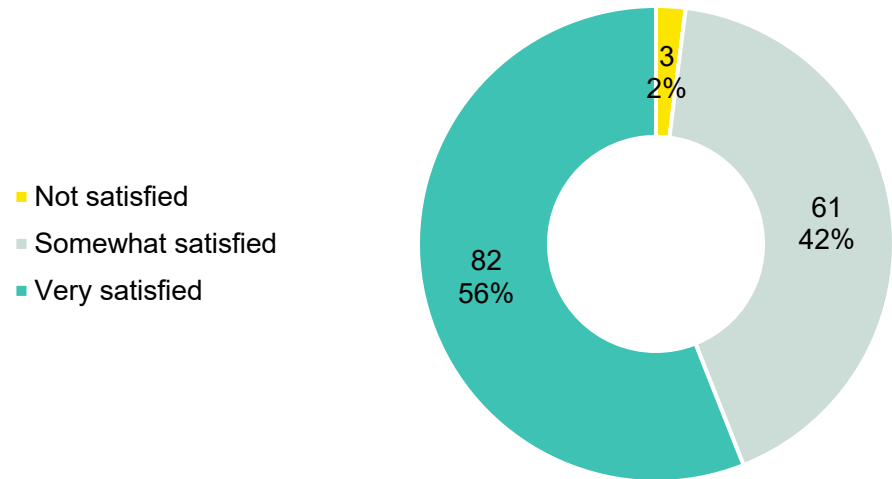


Postgraduate Orientation

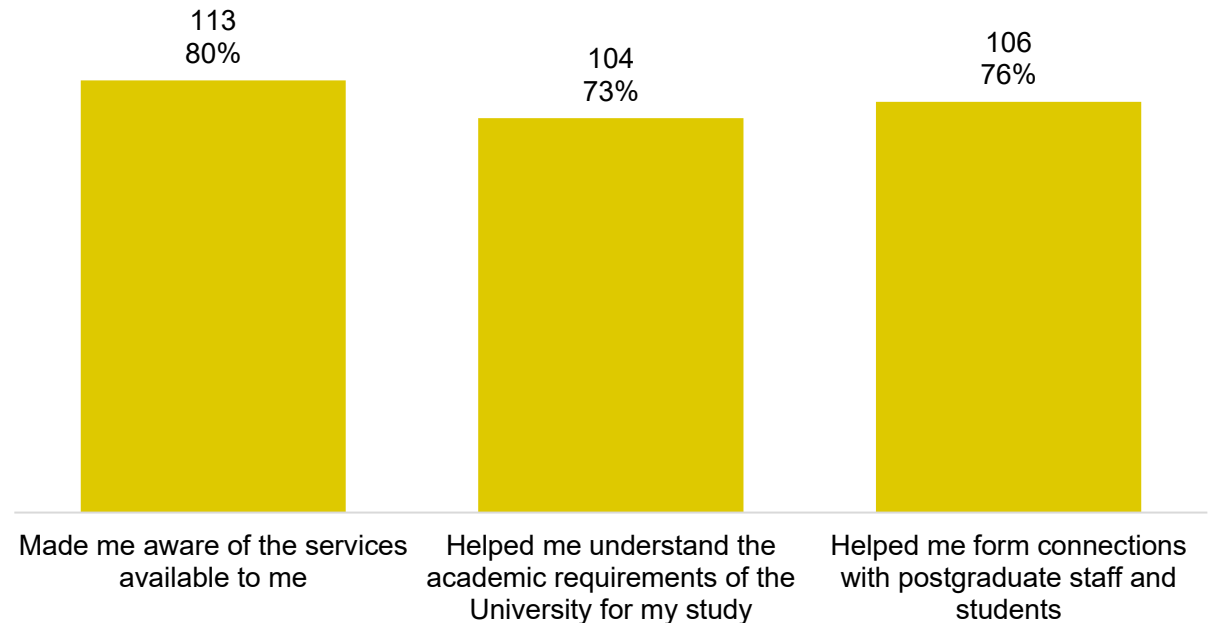
The majority of respondents agreed that the Postgraduate orientation sessions made them more aware of services (80%), helped them understand academic requirements (73%) and helped them connect (76%).

Overall 98% of respondents were satisfied with Postgraduate orientation (56% very satisfied).

Overall, how satisfied were you with the Postgraduate orientation?



Did you achieve the following things from attending Postgraduate orientation?



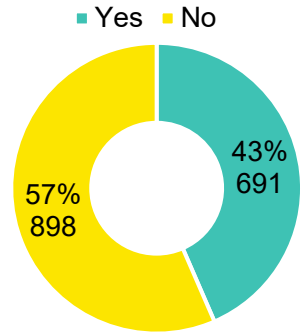



VUWSA OWEEK

VUWSA OWeek Events

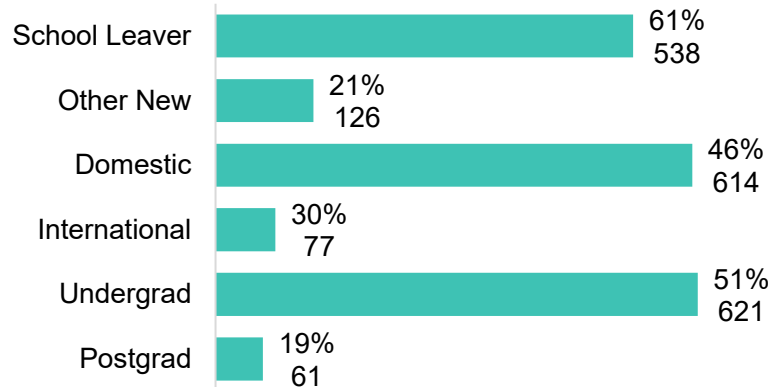
691 survey respondents (43%) had attended some of the VUWSA OWeek evening events. School leavers, domestic students and undergraduates were most likely to attend these events. The majority of respondents who attended these events, felt safe, felt welcome and had fun (97%, 97% and 91% respectively). 81% met new people through them.

Number and % of respondents attending VUWSA OWeek events

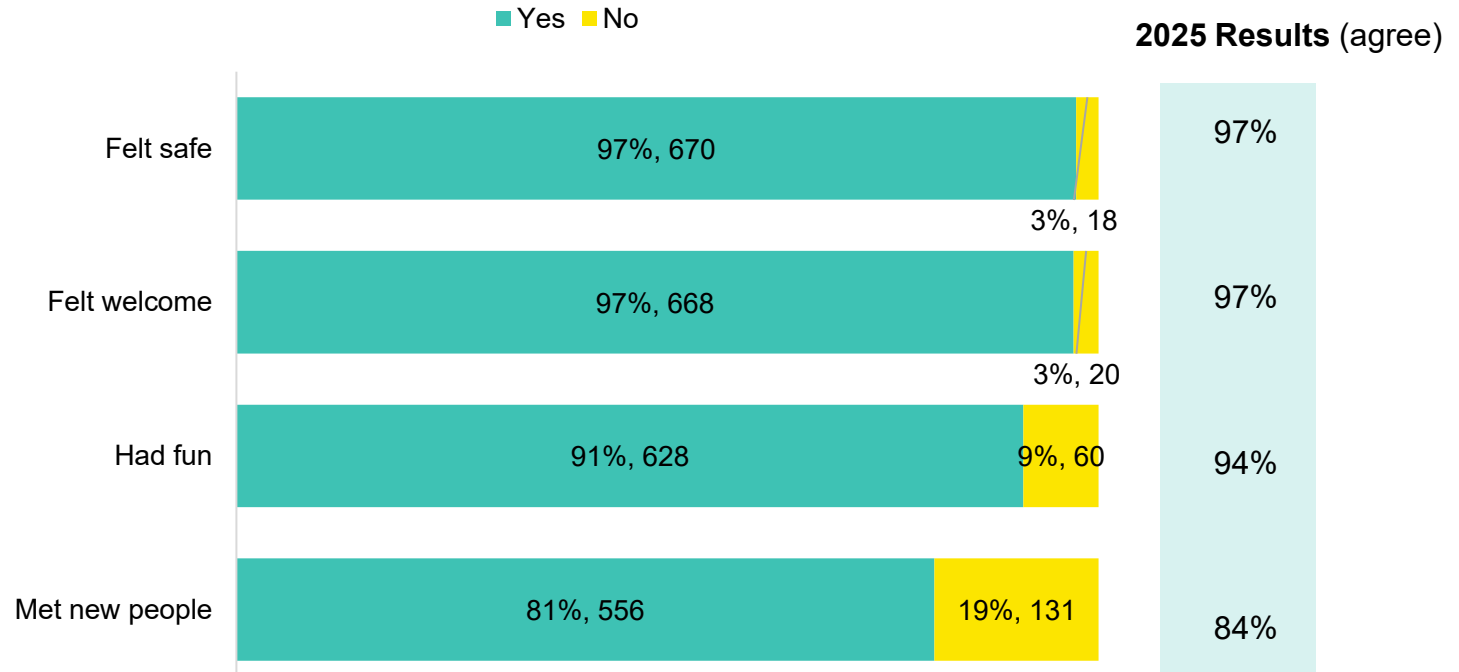


45% attended in 2025 and 49% in 2024.

Which types of students were most likely to attend VUWSA OWeek events?



Did you achieve the following things from attending VUWSA OWeek evening events?



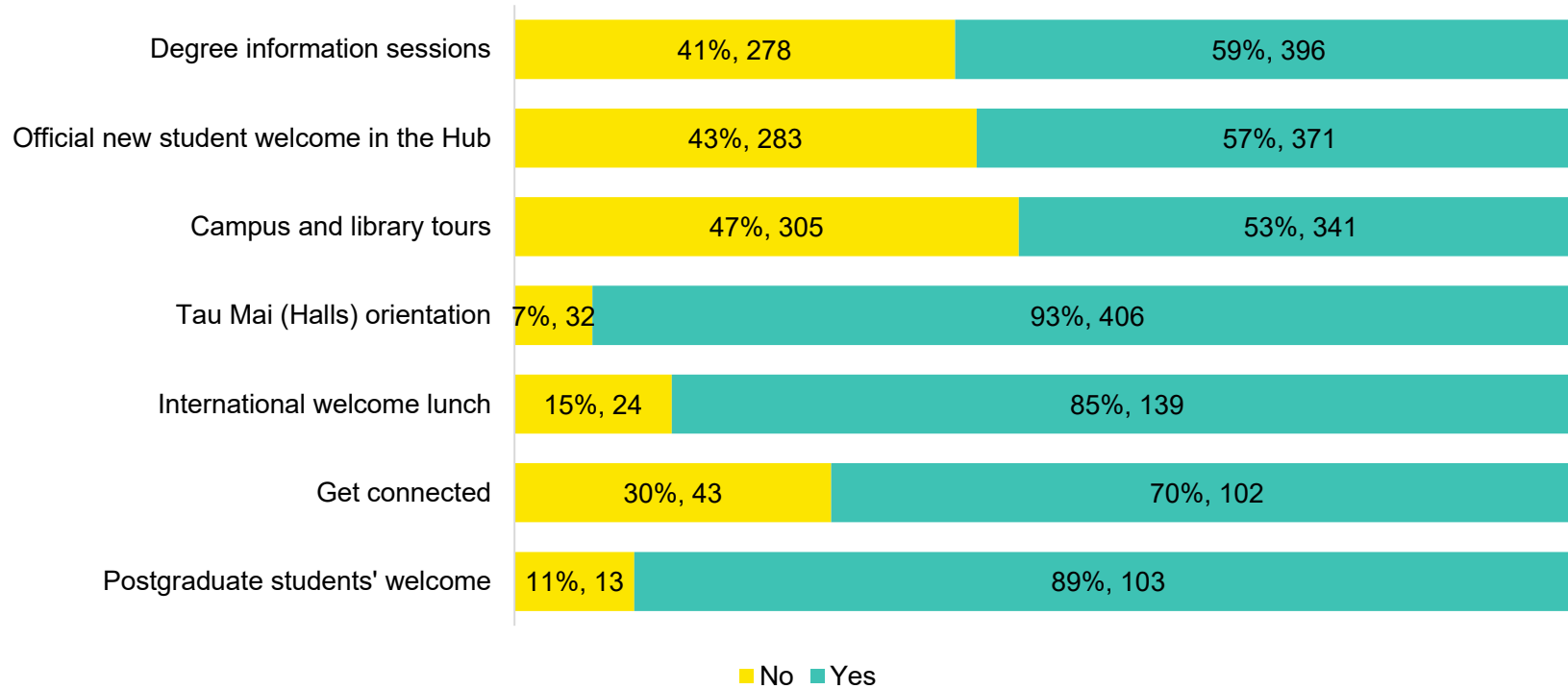


CONNECTION

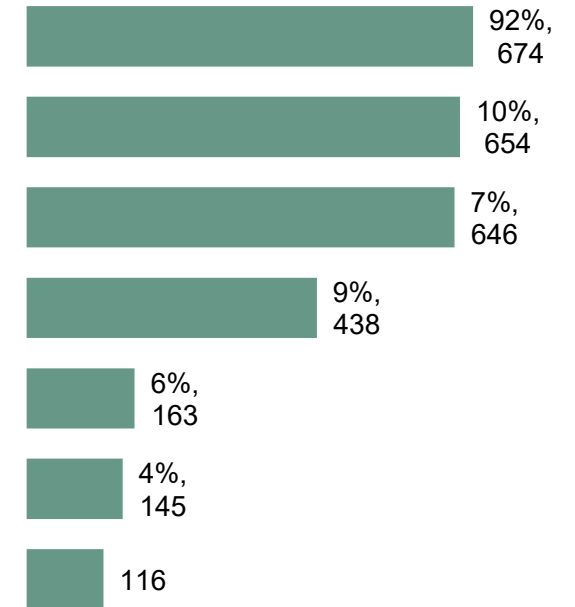
Connection

One of the aims of orientation is to help students make connections with others. Survey respondents were asked whether they had met and connected with other students at a range of orientation events. The **Tau Mai (Halls) orientation** was particularly successful in fostering connection with 93% of respondents reporting connection. The **postgraduate students' welcome** and the **International welcome lunch** both scored well too (89% and 85% respectively), but these were attended by smaller numbers. The events with the most attendees had the lowest ratings for fostering connection.

Did you meet and connect with other students at the following events?



Number of respondents attending these events



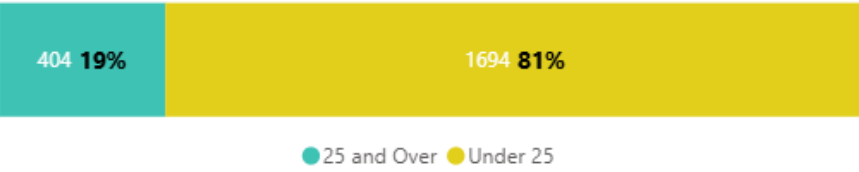


DEMOGRAPHICS



Demographics of Respondents

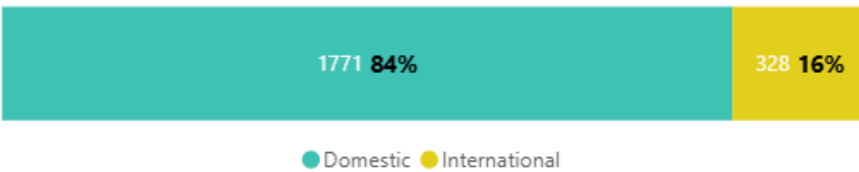
Age Group



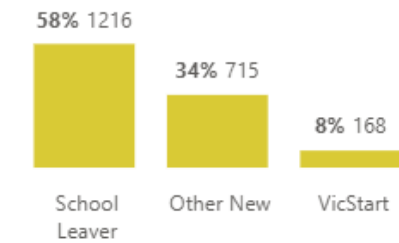
Gender



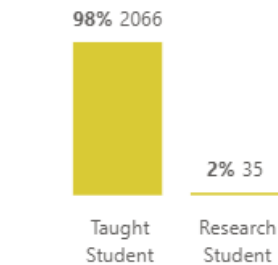
International/Domestic



Student Type



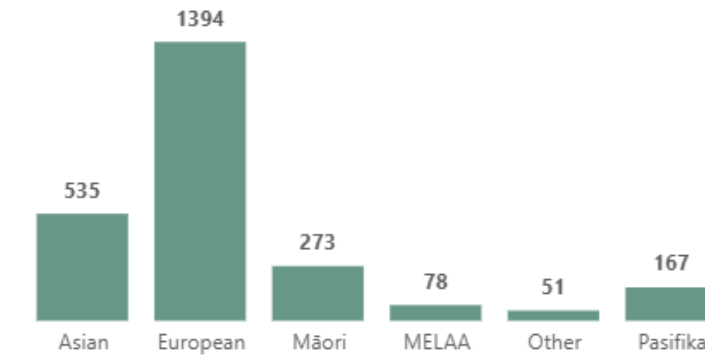
Taught/Research



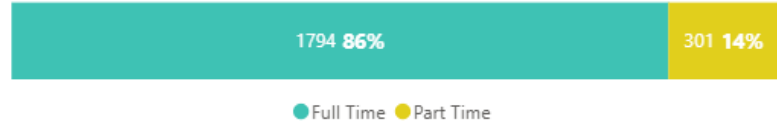
Faculty



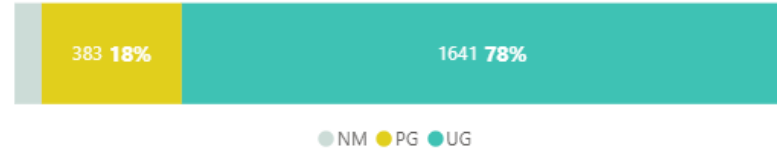
Ethnicity



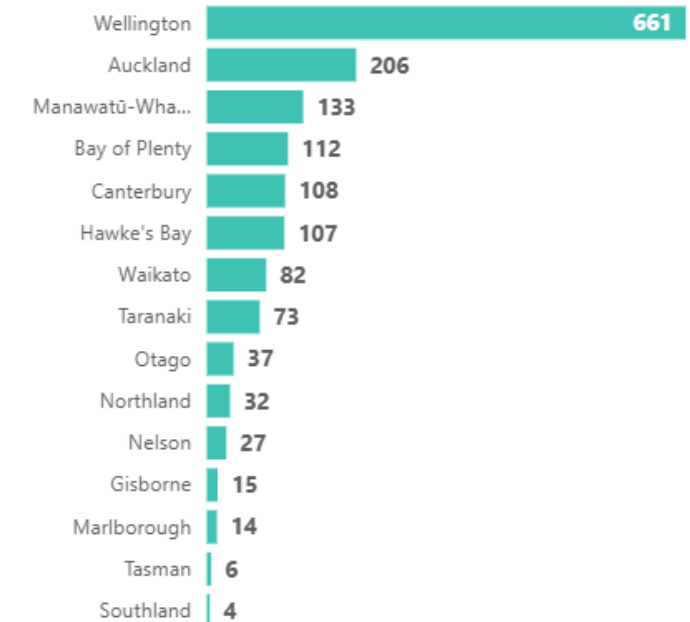
Part Time/Full Time



Undergrad/Postgrad



NZ Region





METHODOLOGY



Methodology

The survey was run using the Qualtrics online survey platform.

It was sent to all new students who started in Trimester 1, 2026. A total of 5,124 students. An email invite was sent to their preferred contact email address.

The survey was open for 2 weeks.

An incentive was used to encourage participation, this took the form of five cash prizes of \$100 and one grand prize of \$300. Various communication channels were used to promote the survey.

Survey logic was used throughout the survey. This reduces the number of questions asked of students by only displaying appropriate questions or responses for them and skipping questions that were not applicable to them. Branching questions based on survey responses and metadata helps to reduce respondent burden and improves data quality.

The open-text comments provided by respondents were analysed manually and by Copilot within the university's secure Copilot environment to pull-out the main themes and summarise the core insights.



COMPARING TO STUDY DECISIONS SURVEY

Comparing to Study Decisions Survey

How this compares with prospective students who did not enrol (Study Decisions Survey)

Students who successfully enrol at VUW describe a largely positive experience, but their journey highlights many of the same challenges faced by those who chose not to enrol. The key difference is not what students value, but whether friction points are resolved in time for them to proceed.

Both groups want clarity, affordability, and confidence in their choices. Where these needs are met, students enrol and succeed. Where they are not, students disengage earlier in the journey.

What is consistent across both groups

- **Fit is central to decision making:** Students choose VUW because it feels like the right place
- **Courses and outcomes are the top priority:** Programme fit and future opportunities drive decisions
- **Cost and financial support matter:** Affordability influences both choice and feasibility
- **Information quality is critical:** Understanding courses and pathways is essential
- **Human support is highly valued:** Staff, advisors, and peers play a key role in success.

Where enrolled students differ from non-enrollers

- **Higher confidence in information and systems:** Most enrolled students found information clear and processes effective. Non-enrollers report confusion much earlier in the journey
- **Barriers are overcome, not absent:** Course selection and enrolment remain the most difficult parts. Issues persist but are resolved (often with support)
- **Wellington is a positive driver:** Students who enrol often see the city as a major attraction. Non-enrollers are more likely to see it as a cost or distance barrier
- **International experience improves after arrival:** Strong satisfaction post-enrolment contrasts with significant pre-enrolment barriers

Bottom line

The experience of enrolled students reinforces that:

- **The VUW experience is strong**

The challenge lies in:

- **Reducing friction earlier in the journey**
- **Making pathways clearer, faster, and more transparent**

Improving early-stage clarity and process design would allow more students to reach, and benefit from, the positive experience reflected in this report.