

Coronavirus Student Survey 2020 Exam & Assessment findings

April 2020

NUS Insight

Contents

- Project Overview
- Summary
- Results on exam and assessments
- Demographics

Project Overview

Objectives

NUS Insight conducted a survey alongside TOTUM & member unions to understand more about how students feel about the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. This report details the results related to student concerns and preferences for exams and assessments. Further reports will be released as analysis is completed.

Methodology

A sample of 9695 was achieved

Respondents were given a chance to win £500 to encourage response

The survey was promoted via the NUS Student database, the TOTUM database, through social media & via NUS' member unions at the end of March 2020

The survey took 20 **minutes** to complete & was in field from Friday 27th March until Monday 6th April.

What we look for

Within this report, a number of questions have been broken down and compared with each other. Where applicable and the base size is large enough ($n > 30$), statistically significant differences between answers have been shown. A difference is significant when it is likely to have been caused by something other than random chance.

Sample weighting

Explanation of weighting

NUS achieved an original sample of 9695 students. The response rate reflected the trend that females participate more than males in completing surveys - the initial gender split was: 73% female and 25% male

While this survey sample covers both HE and FE, our practice is to reflect a student population where possible. In the absence of any national FE statistics, NUS practice is to use HESA. According to HESA statistics the gender split within Higher Education is 54% female and 46% male. In order to reflect this, 'weighting' was applied to the data in this report. In this case, we adjusted the profile of the sample by applying weights so that the over represented group, females, are down weighted and the under represented group, males, are up weighted. This resulted in a gender split in this survey of 53% female and 46% male and a sample of 9872

Other HESA statistics are highlighted in the demographic section where relevant and comparable.

Summary

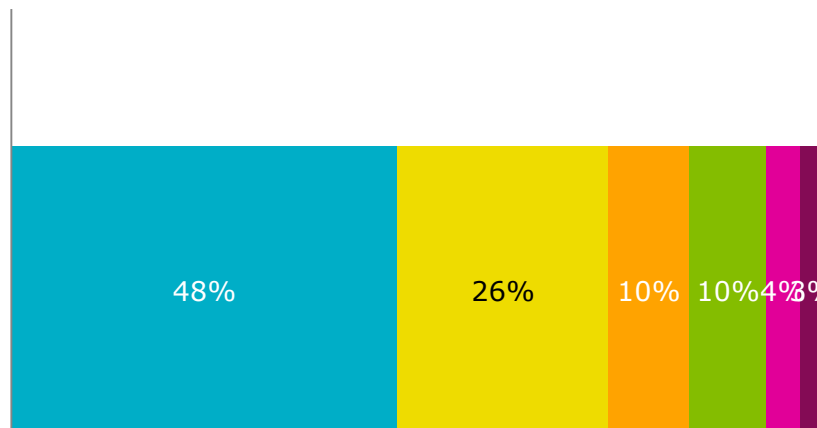
- The potential negative impact of the Coronavirus outbreak on coursework and exams is of great worry to the majority of students.
- Not knowing how they will be graded or marked is highlighted by a number of students who would appreciate greater clarity on this. There's also the worry of a lack of consistency across the different institutions when it comes to grading and marking.
- New methods and ways of working and studying are highlighted as barriers to students' ability; having to adapt to these, learning how to work and submit papers online, as well as trying to remain motivated and focused with little time, causes additional issues to already hardworking students. Stress and impact on mental health is another factor added to the mix.
- Students feel NUS could help them with regards to exams and assessments in the following ways; lobbying institutions to cancel / postpone assessments, provide more information on what's going on across the UK / working to ensure there is a standardisation, and offering support and advice on what students can do.

Three in four students are concerned about the effect of Covid-19 on their final degree/course qualification

Agreement with statements

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Not applicable

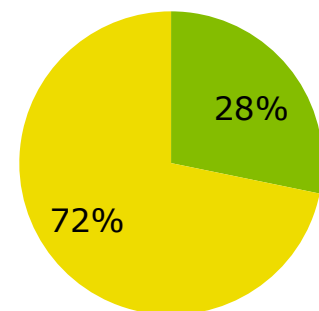
I am concerned about the effect on my final degree/course qualification (9714)



Those aged 18-22 yrs, UK nationals students, 3rd yr + & female students more likely to strongly agree

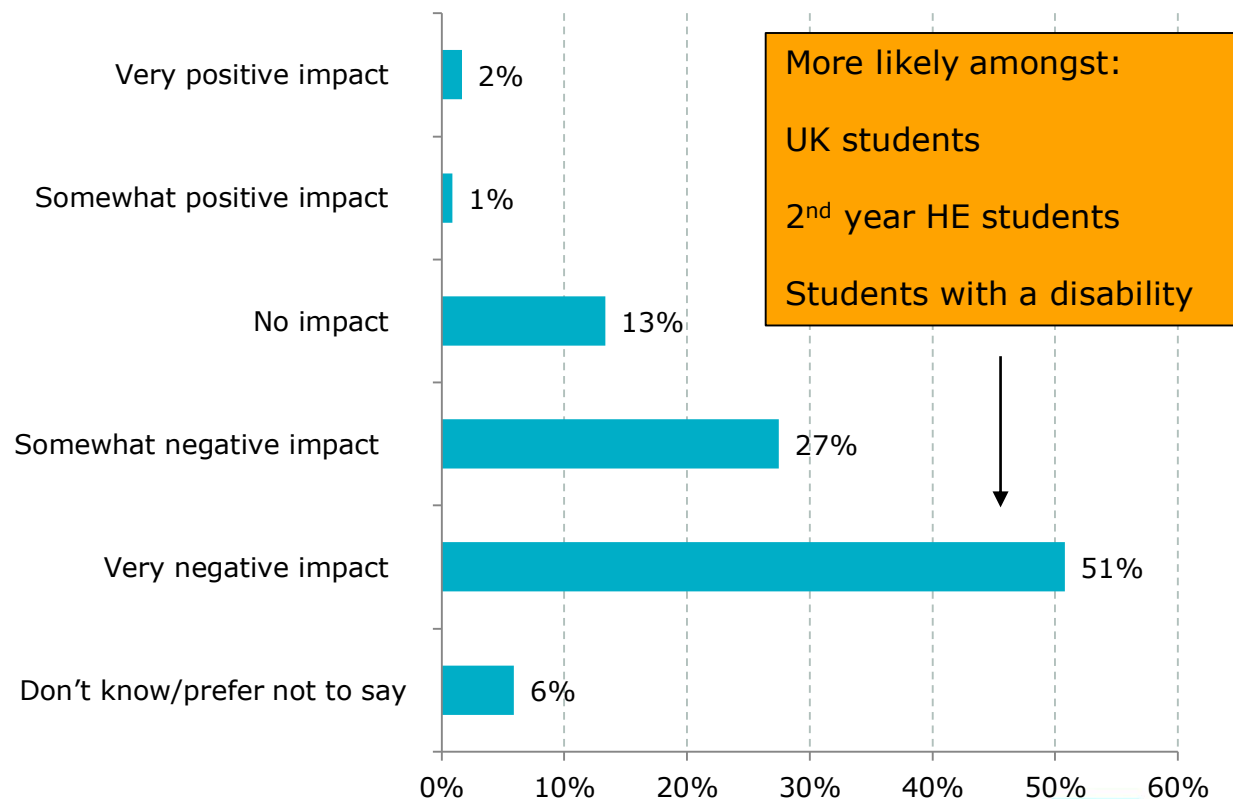
Of those who have a placement as part of their course (just over one in four), over three in four believe the current Covid-19 outbreak will have a negative impact on their ability to complete their placement, particularly UK students and those in their 2nd year in an HE setting

Placement as part of course



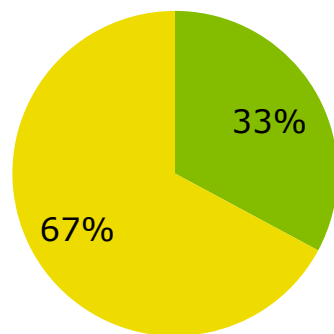
■ Yes ■ No

Impact you think Coronavirus (Covid-19) will have on your ability to complete your placement



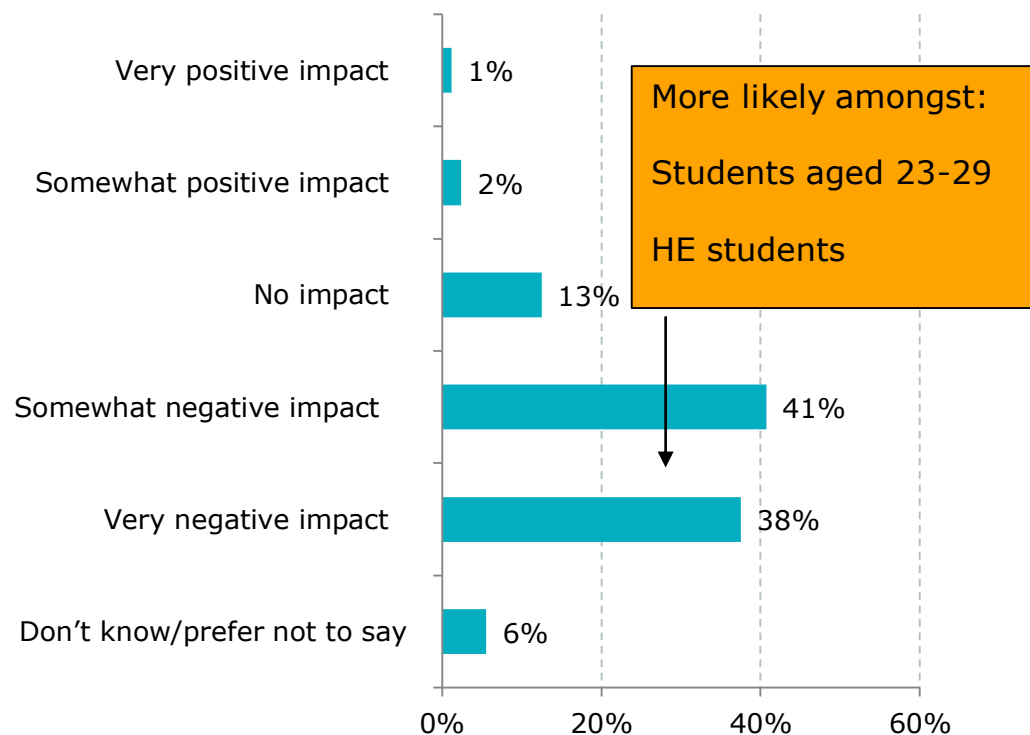
Of those who are on a vocational course (1 in 3), around four in five believe the Covid-19 outbreak will have a negative impact on the vocational element of their course, particularly students aged 23-29 and those in HE

Vocational / vocational component



■ Yes ■ No

Impact you think Coronavirus (Covid-19) will have on the vocational element of your course

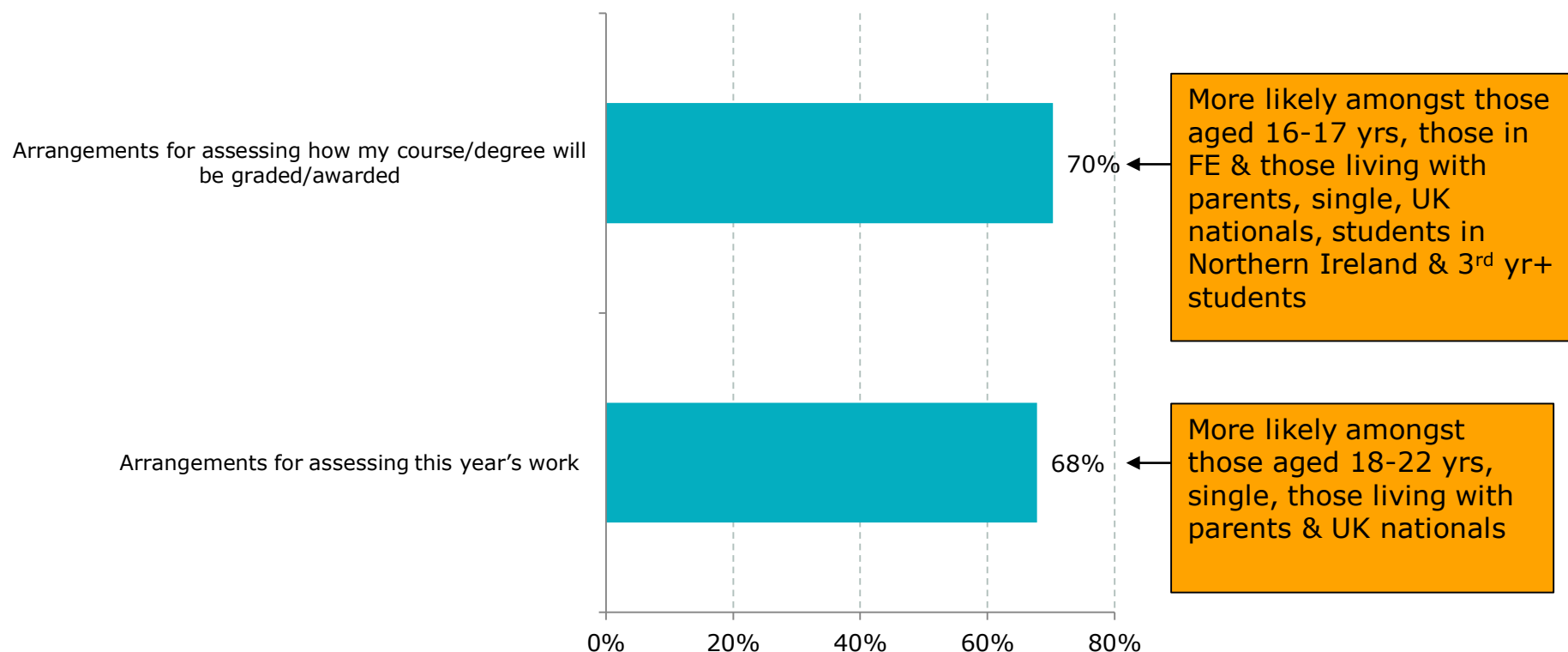


Weighted base: 3224 respondents. Balance: those who do not have a vocational element to their course

D5, D6. What impact, if any, do you think Coronavirus (Covid-19) will have on the vocational element of your course?

Over two in three would like further info/guidance from governments on how their course/degree will be graded/awarded. A similar proportion would like further info/guidance on how this year's work will be assessed

Other information/guidance would like from governments



Weighted Base: 9561 respondents. Balance: no response

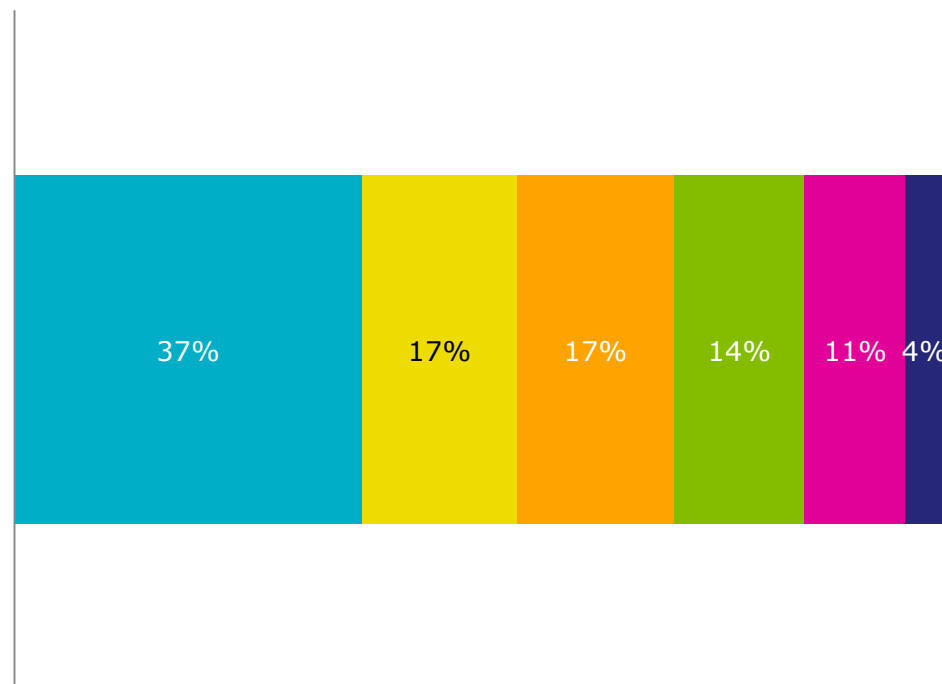
H5. What further information or guidance would you like the relevant Governments (UK, Scottish, Welsh and NI) to issue for students?

Over half of students are very / extremely concerned about the impact of Coronavirus on their exams and assessments

Levels of concern about impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19)

- Extremely concerned
- Very concerned
- Concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Not at all concerned
- Don't know/Not applicable

My exams and assessments (9737)



Those aged 18-29 yrs, those in HE, 3r yr+ students, students in Northern Ireland & those who are single are more likely to be extremely concerned

Weighted Base: (in brackets) respondents. Balance: no response

J1. How concerned are you about the impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on the following?

Students are concerned about the impact of the virus on so many aspects of their studies and student life. These are just the main areas highlighted for exams and assessment

Main concerns around impact on exams and assessments:

- **Lack of time** to prepare / meeting deadlines
- Having to **work / submit online**
- Ultimate **grades** / predicting grades
- Impact on **stress and health**
- Lack of **motivation / focus / concentration**
- **Limits on ability** to carry out work / assessment
- Accessing **resources**

"Not having full resources online. Online teaching is not the same so how can we understand the work nevermind write a 2000 word on something that is brand new to us..."
Female, 18-22, FE

"My mental ability to stay focused and calm whilst completing assessments at home in an environment I struggle to work. As normally I would spend a great deal of time in the library."
Male, 23-29, HE

"I am missing out on lectures. Group assignment work is impossible. I have no access to printing and no hard copies of handouts that would normally receive in seminars and lectures. I am unable to have face to face tutorials with subject or personal tutors. This on top of four long term chronic health problems is very difficult."
Female, 40-49, HE

Required support from NUS

Students indicated a variety of areas they believe NUS could offer support in. The main ideas were concerned with **exams and assessment**. They would appreciate NUS:

- Lobbying institutions to cancel / postpone assessments
- Providing more info on what's going on across the UK / working to ensure there is a standardisation
- Offering support and advice on what students can do

"Pressure universities to cancel examinations."
Male, 18-22, HE

"I would really like you to push the campaign for exams and assignments to be scrapped for 1st and 2nd years and giving 3rd years the choice to take their grade based on previous study OR continue with alternative assessments."
Female, 23-29, HE

"Ideally, get all universities to abide by the same rules regarding exams/assessments/dissertations so no students will be ahead or behind of others once this is over."
Female, 23-29, HE

"Push for all university responses to the exam situation to be harmonised."
Female, 18-22, HE

"Push for more information on examinations."
Male, 18-22, HE

Demographics

Key demographics (weighted base)

Gender



Women **53%**

Men **45%**

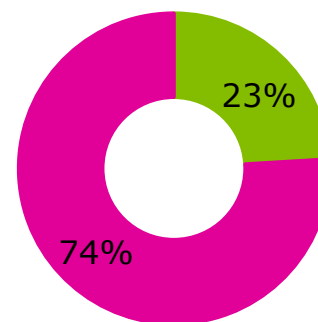
Age



Level of study

FE

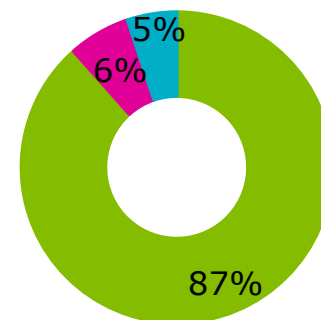
HE



UK citizen studying in the UK

International student from within the EU studying in the UK

International student from outside the EU studying in the UK



Our survey slightly oversampled on students from the UK; HESA statistics indicate that students from the UK account for 80% of the higher education population



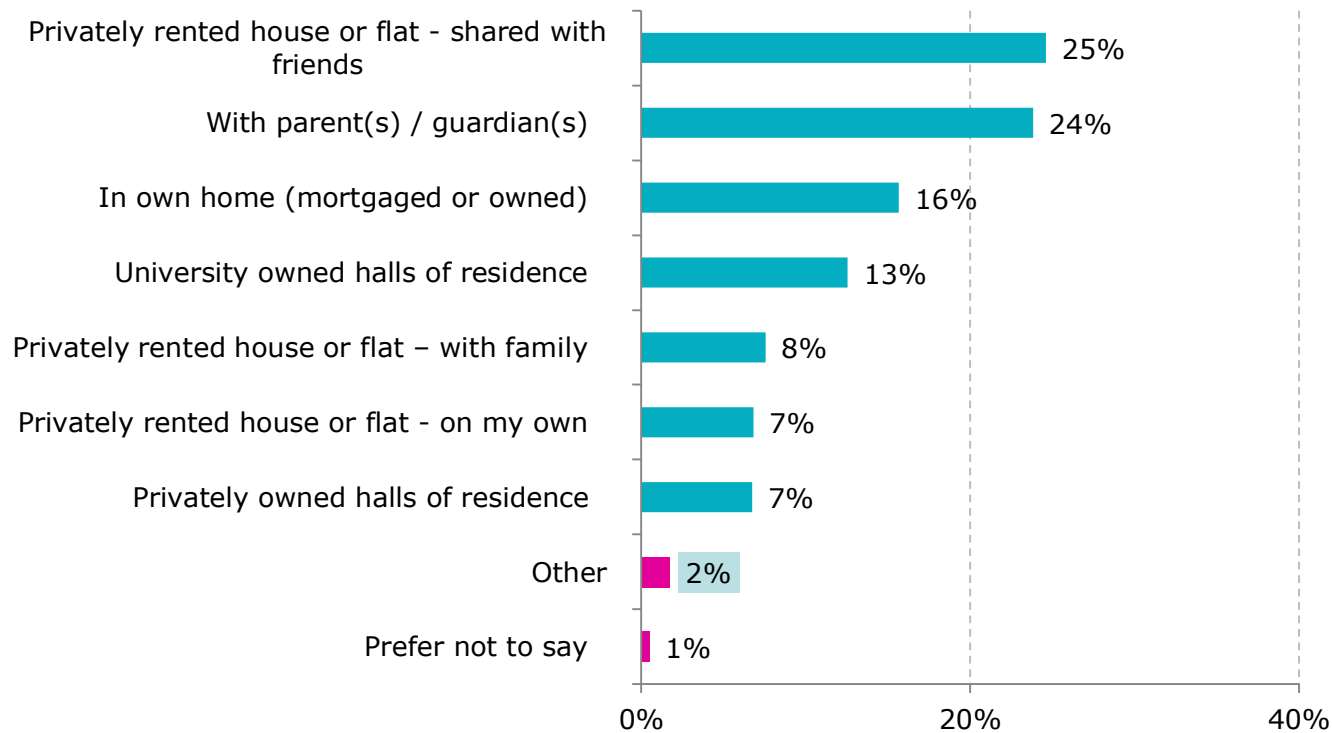
Full time: 79%

Part time: 15%

Distance learner: 8%

Demographics

Usual term time living circumstances before the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak

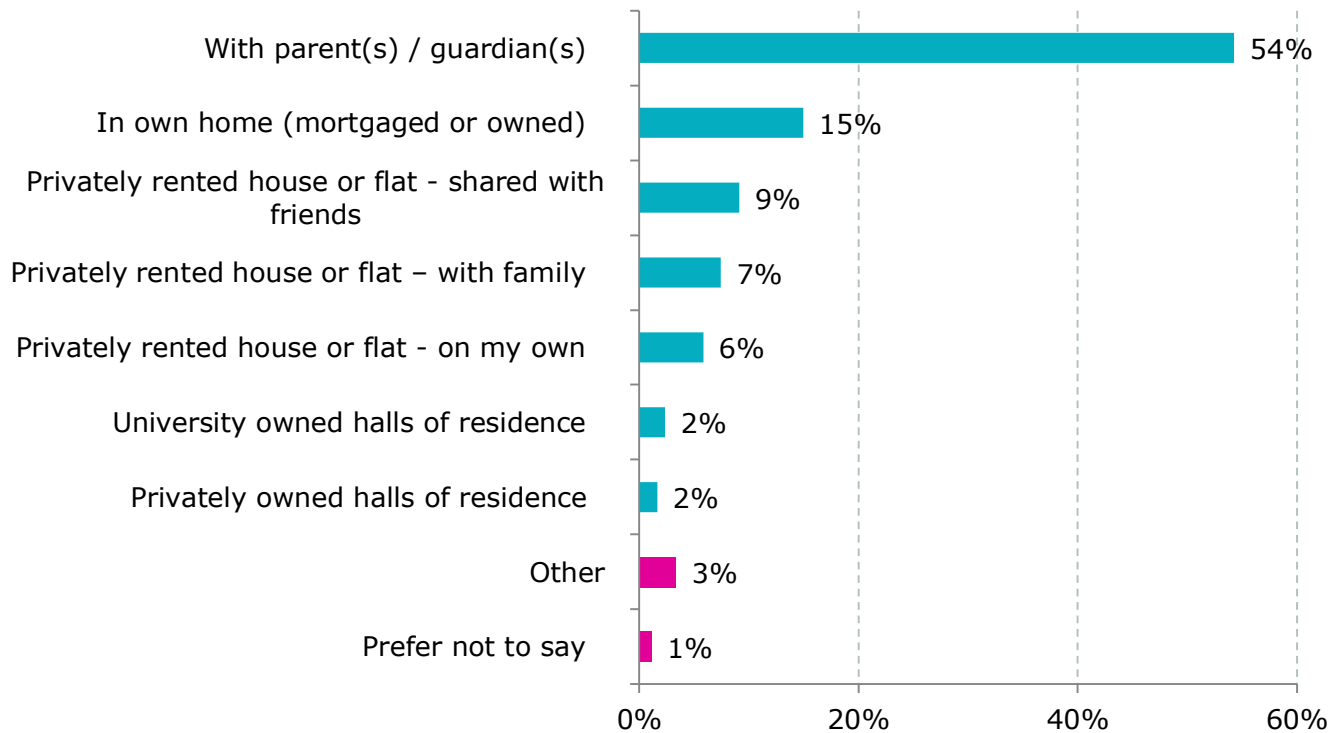


Weighted Base: 9872 respondents

A3. Which of the following statements best describes your usual term time living circumstances before the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak?

Demographics

Current living circumstances

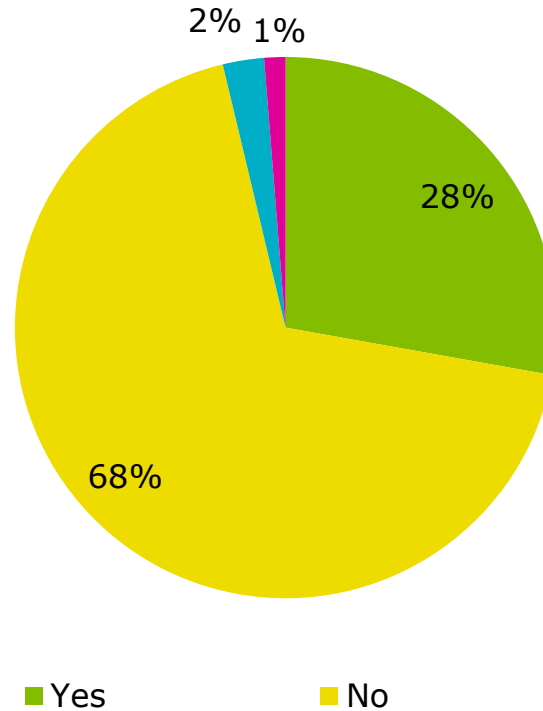


Weighted Base: 8916 respondents Balance : circumstances not changed, no response

A4. If your living circumstances have recently changed as a result of Coronavirus (Covid-19), please select the option which best reflects where you now are.

Demographics

Disability, impairment or long term health condition



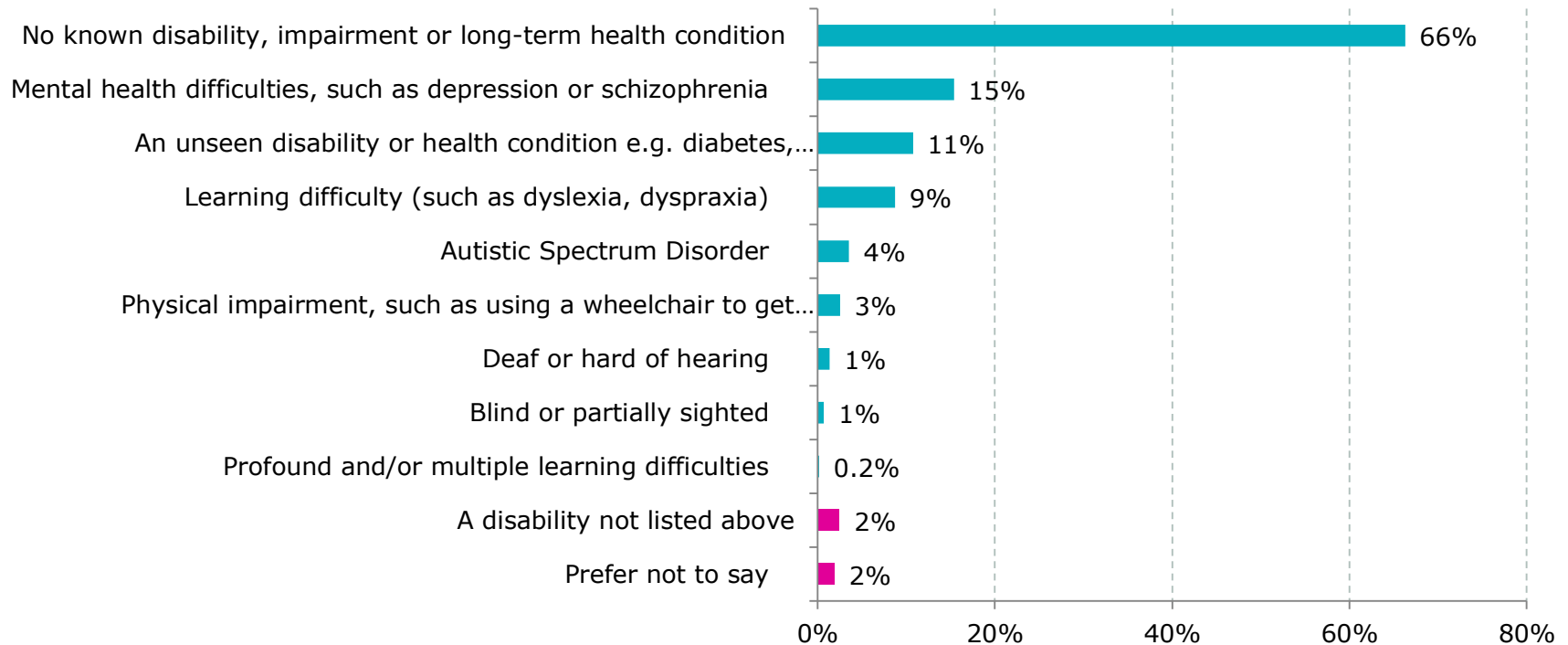
Our survey oversampled on students with a disability; HESA statistics indicate that students with a disability account for 14% of the higher education population

Weighted Base: 9872 respondents.

A6. Do you consider yourself to have a specific learning disability, other disability, impairment or long-term health condition?

Demographics

Disability, impairment or long term health condition

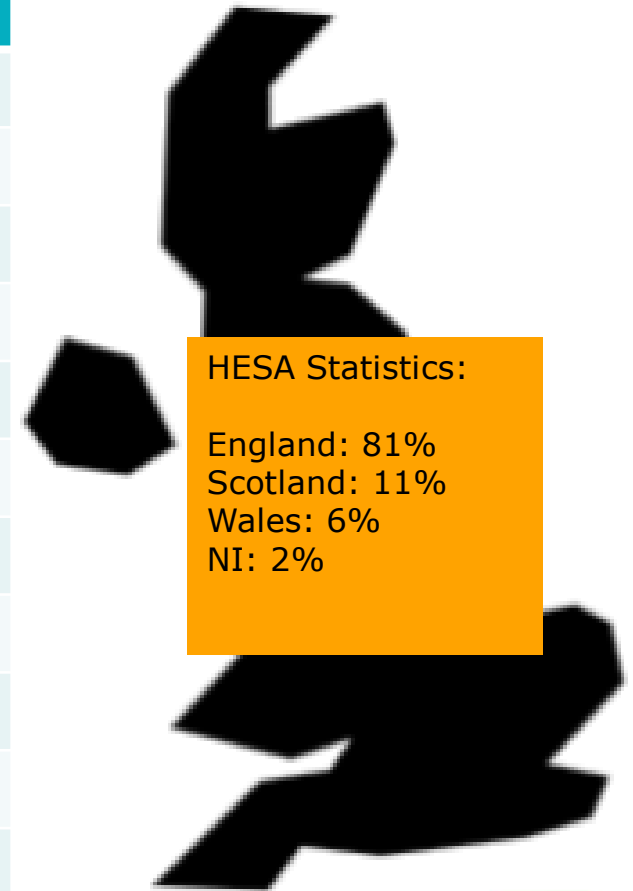


Weighted Base: 9872 respondents

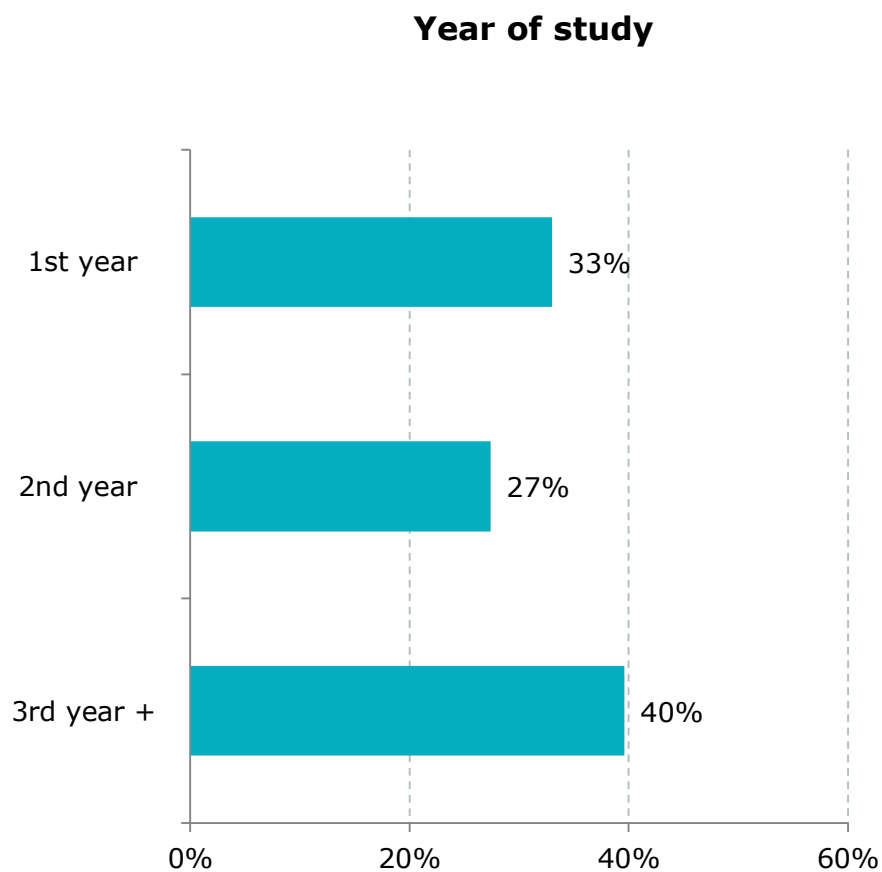
A7. Please describe your disability, impairment or long-term health condition

Demographics

Region	Percentage
North East	5%
North West	18%
Yorkshire and the Humber	6%
East Midlands	5%
West Midlands	10%
London	10%
East of England	3%
South West	18%
South East	12%
England Total	87%
Scotland	6%
Wales	3%
Northern Ireland	4%



Demographics

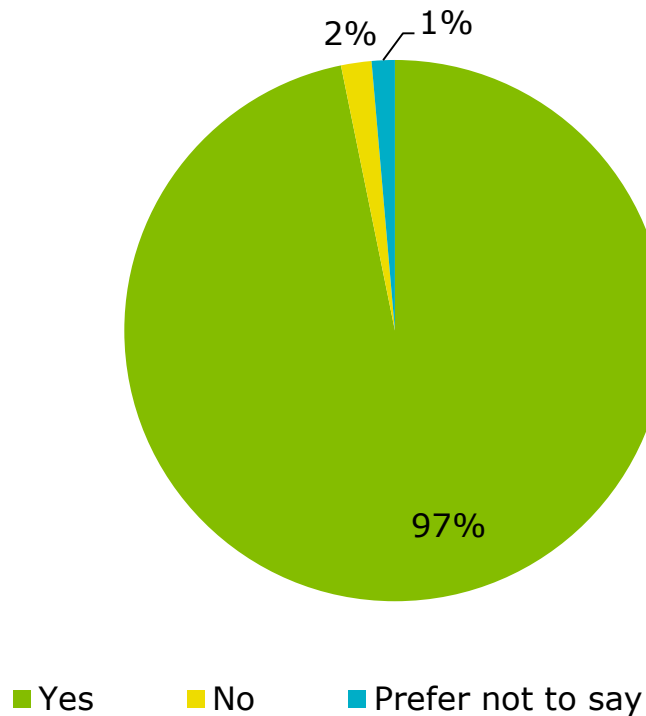


Weighted Base: 5691 respondents Balance : FE students, no response

L1. And what year of study are you in?

Demographics

Does your gender identity match the gender you were assigned at birth?

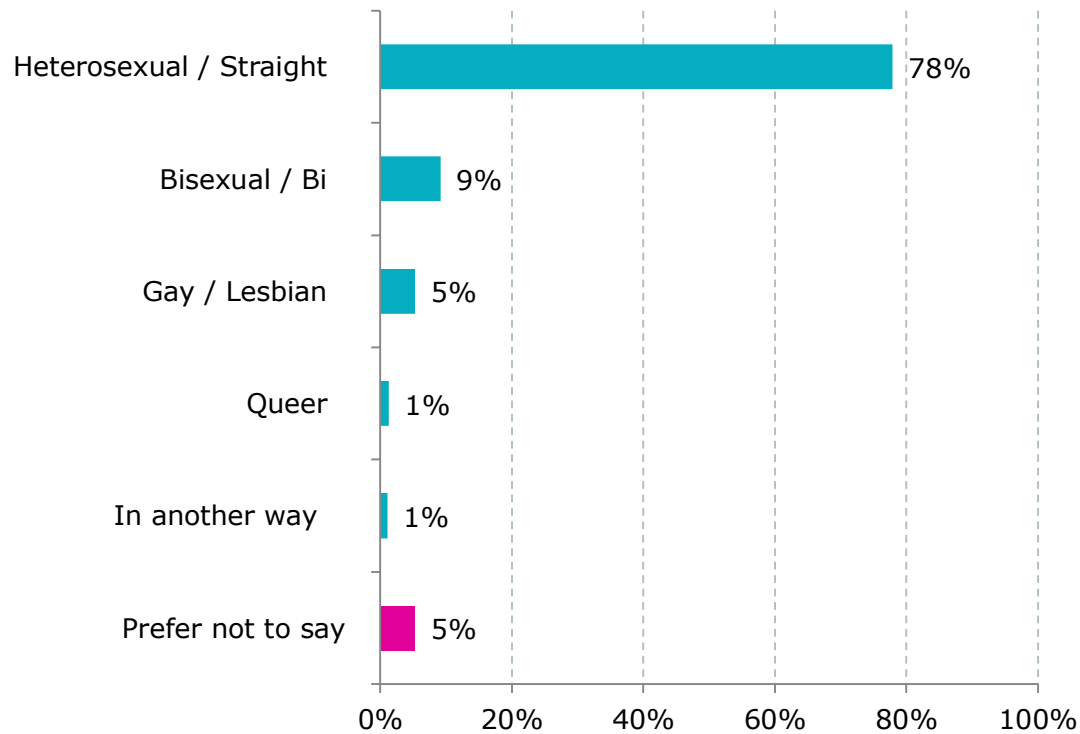


Weighted Base: 9872 respondents.

L5. Does your gender identity match the gender you were assigned at birth?

Demographics

Sexual orientation/preference

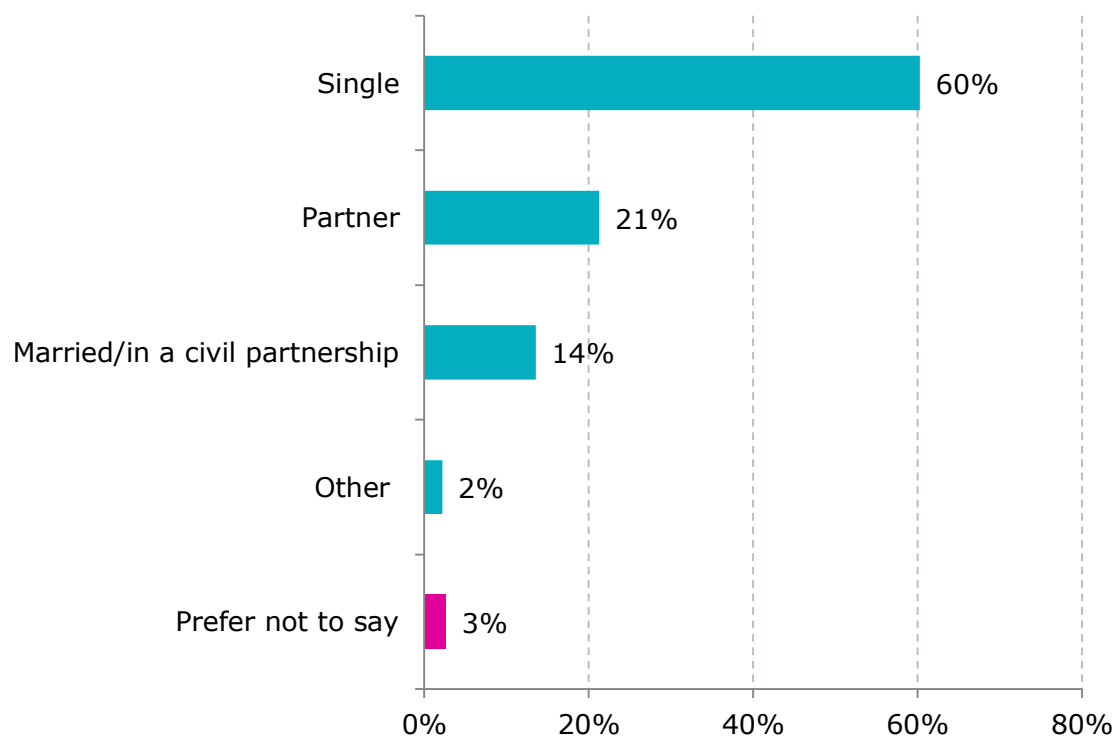


Weighted Base: 9872 respondents.

L6. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation/preference?

Demographics

Marital status

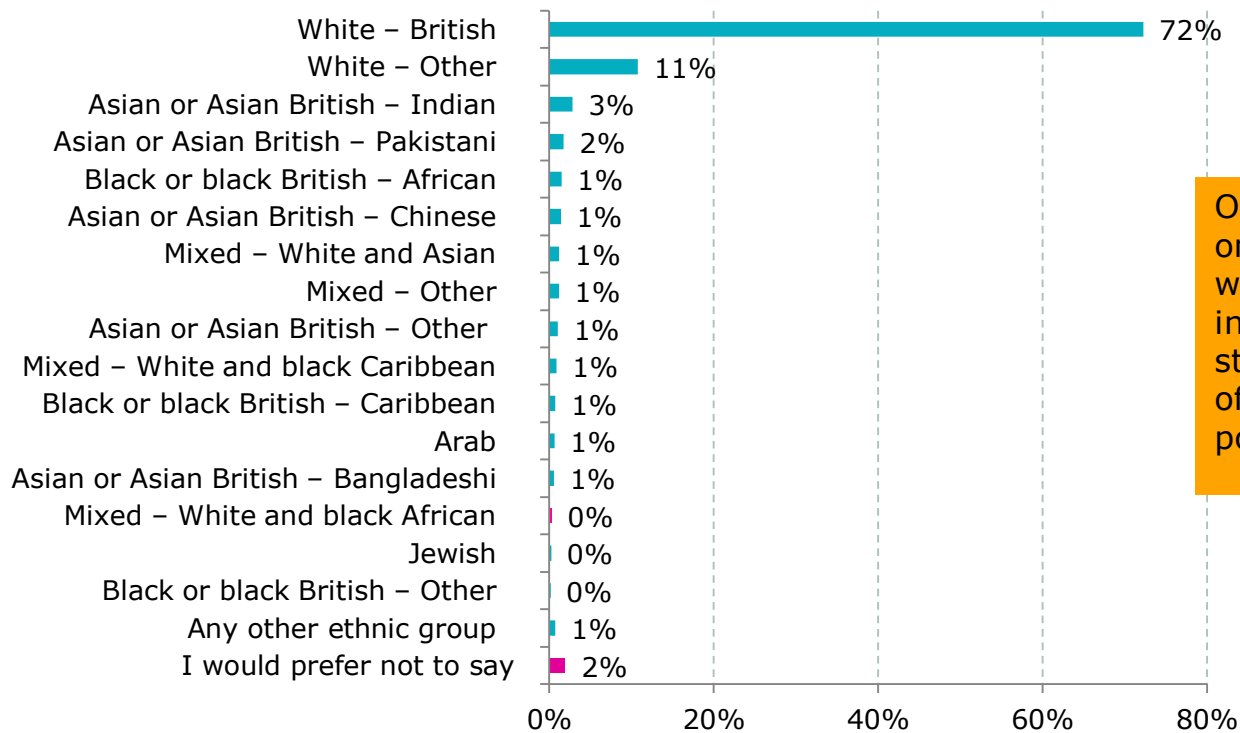


Weighted Base: 9872 respondents.

L7. Which of the following best describe your marital status?

Demographics

Ethnicity



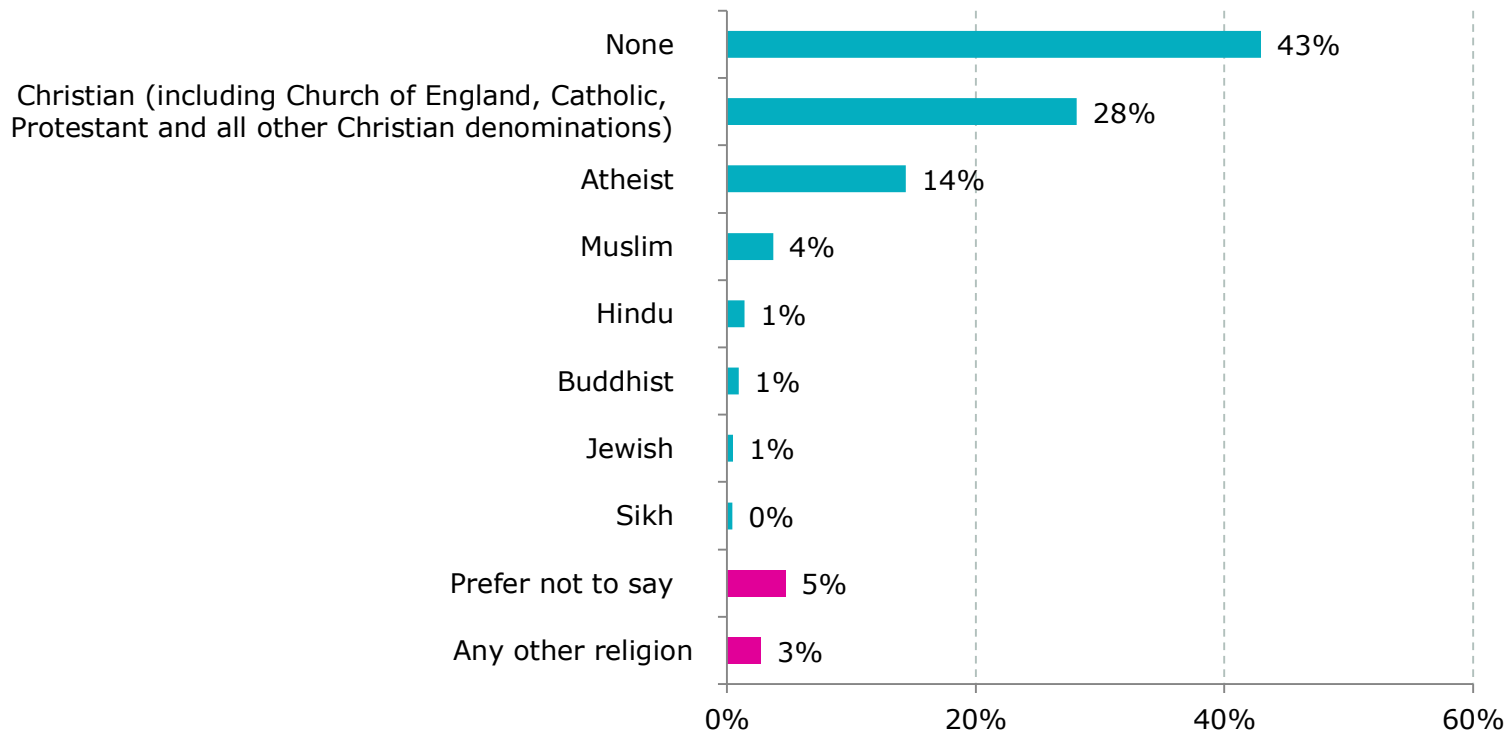
Our survey oversampled on students identifying as white; HESA statistics indicate that white students account for 76% of the higher education population

Weighted Base: 9872 respondents.

L8. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group?

Demographics

Religion, faith or belief



Weighted Base: 9872 respondents.

L9. What is your religion, faith or belief?

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