

Report on online education student survey results

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A survey of student view on their online learning and teaching was carried out by the Centre for Innovation and Development and the Centre for Technology in Education. This continues work from the previous academic year where a similar study was carried out. Both years there have been a student and a staff survey running concurrently to capture views. This report outlines the results of the survey, through quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Results show that students across St George's have lots to say about their online learning and teaching. Views range from desire for more onsite teaching that allows more opportunity for engagement and relationship building, but also students highlight the flexibility and convenience of online learning. This is evident in an overall desire for hybrid options.

Due to a low number of respondents relative to the student population, analysis has been carried out on the University-wide data, as it would be inappropriate to draw inferences at programme level due to the low number of respondents. However, the most interesting patterns can be seen when splitting the students by Statement of Support Needs (SOSN) status. There are clear differences in preference and confidence amongst students depending on their support needs. There are many opportunities to develop a Blended Education Framework based on these results. This will be done in combination with the complementary staff survey and interpretation of these results by students in a future workshop.

Key highlights are provided on the next page.

Key highlights:

General

- The online education survey was conducted in April and May 2022 with two separate surveys, one for students and one for staff. The student survey was co-created with Student Advisors.
- The number of students completing the survey was 71, with 89% UG.
- There were not responses from all programmes, however, the largest programmes at St George's are represented in the dataset, albeit in small numbers. This means that University-wide analysis and interpretations are the most appropriate (although it may be useful to examine some individual qualitative comments for programmes in the attached data).
- Results are presented for the entire respondent population, but also are split by students who have a Summary of Support Needs (SOSN) and those who do not.
- Students with SOSNs often indicated different responses to the general population.
- Overall, students prefer synchronous learning and teaching over asynchronous, and see great benefit of quizzes and other ways to periodically assess their progress, although students with SOSNs indicate a preference for engaging online or in small groups.
- There was an overall preference for the introduction of 'hybrid' learning and teaching, especially so for those students with SOSNs
- St George's students agree that online learning and teaching has worked well, but when asked for specific details there are a lot of aspects that could be improved.

Areas for improvement

- Challenges with online learning and teaching are related to lower engagement, technical difficulties, and lack of personal motivation to study.
- The recording of lectures, particularly poor audio quality was raised in a high proportion of responses, as was poor organisation of materials on Canvas (consistency in structure and layout).
- There were many responses highlighting that there was a desire for more onsite learning and teaching, and this was often paired with comments about value-for-money.
- There appears to be a need to provide greater support for students to engage well with their studies online, especially for self-guided asynchronous content.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Following an almost complete shift to online learning and teaching in the 2020-21 academic year, the delivery of learning and teaching and St George's changed due to modified government guidance around the Covid-19 pandemic. With a significant portion of teaching returning to site, the omicron variant of Covid-19 in December 2021 and January 2022 marked another period of disruption and rapid change to teaching and learning practices. Academic, clinical, professional services and support staff all worked to ensure that changes to learning and teaching this year provided the best student experience, despite challenges and uncertainty surrounding the pandemic.

All of our experiences over the last few years have led to new methods of working, learning and teaching which have become a new normal and in 2020 St George's developed an Online Education Framework. As we return to site, some of these online and virtual modes of engagement may need to be incorporated into how St George's students learn and experience our institution. This will be explored in the development of the Blended Education Framework currently taking place, but it is important to capture student and staff feedback on their experiences of the 2021-22 academic year where we adopted a blended or 'hybrid' approach. The feedback will then inform the development of the Blended Education Framework and other developments moving forward.

To capture this feedback, the Centre for Innovation and Development and the Centre for Technology in Education created two surveys, one for staff and one for students. This report focussed on the student survey which was co-designed with students through a Student Advisor project.

The survey was live in April and May 2022 and contains quantitative and qualitative questions covering aspects of the student experience of learning and teaching. This report provides results from the student survey and discusses some of the responses at a University level.

2. METHODOLOGY

The survey was run as an online survey and was communicated to students through a range of channels including through the student newsletter, via Canvas, via programme teams, Unitu and the Students' Union. A concurrent staff survey was also run at the same time to capture staff answers to similar, but not identical questions. A report of the staff results is available in separate report. The two reports will be analysed together to inform the development of the Blended Education Framework.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section will address each question in turn. Any relevant interpretations and commentary will be provided for each question. Data is provided in the appendix as a linked document which can be filtered as appropriate to view programme level data. (eg if programme teams would like to see qualitative comments for their programme under each question).

3. 1 Results by question

3.1.1 Question 1 – What is your level of study?

Out of a total of 71 respondents, 63 were undergraduates and 8 were enrolled on a postgraduate course or module.

1. What is your level of study?

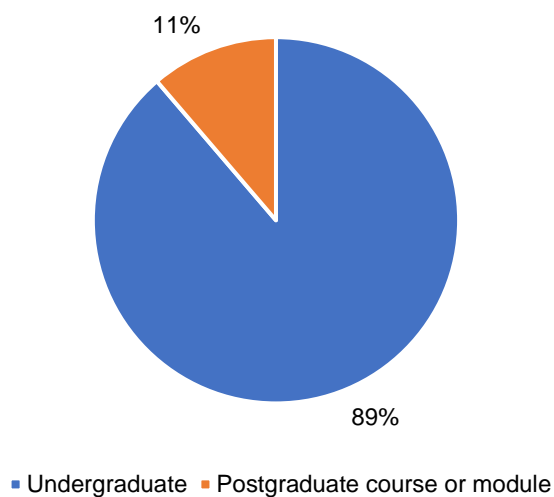


Figure 1: Pie chart showing the proportion of survey respondents who were enrolled on an undergraduate programme or postgraduate programme or module.

3.1.2 Question 2 – What is your (undergraduate) programme of study?

The figure below shows how the different St George’s undergraduate programmes are represented in the survey results.

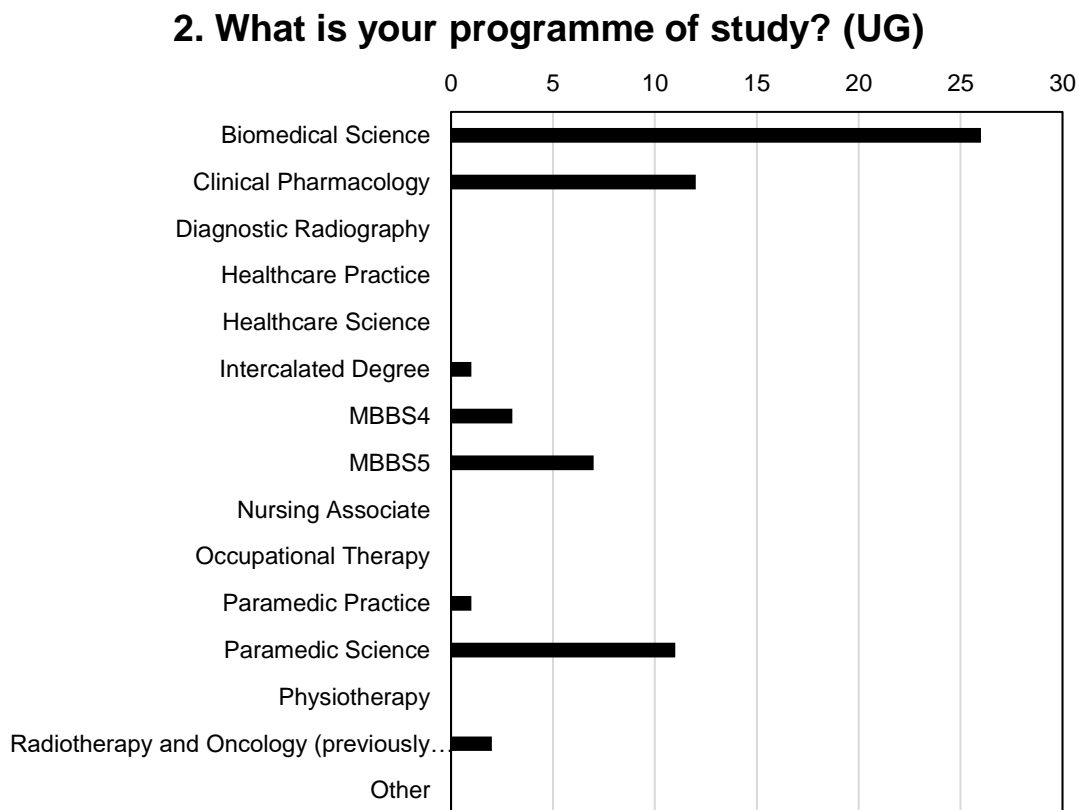


Figure 2: Bar chart showing the undergraduate programmes of study represented in the survey results. Bars represent number of respondents per programme.

The undergraduate programme of study which had the highest number of respondents was Biomedical Science (n=26), followed by Clinical Pharmacology (n=12) and Paramedic Science (n=11). MBBS4 and MBBS5 combined give a total of 10 responses.

Whilst the programmes mentioned above are our programmes with the highest number of students, the proportion of respondents does not match the proportion of current enrolments per programme.

Other programmes are less represented, or not represented at all. This is not surprising due to a very small number of students enrolled in these programmes of study.

3.1.3 Question 3 – What is your (postgraduate) programme of study?

The figure below shows how the different St George's postgraduate programmes are represented in the survey results.

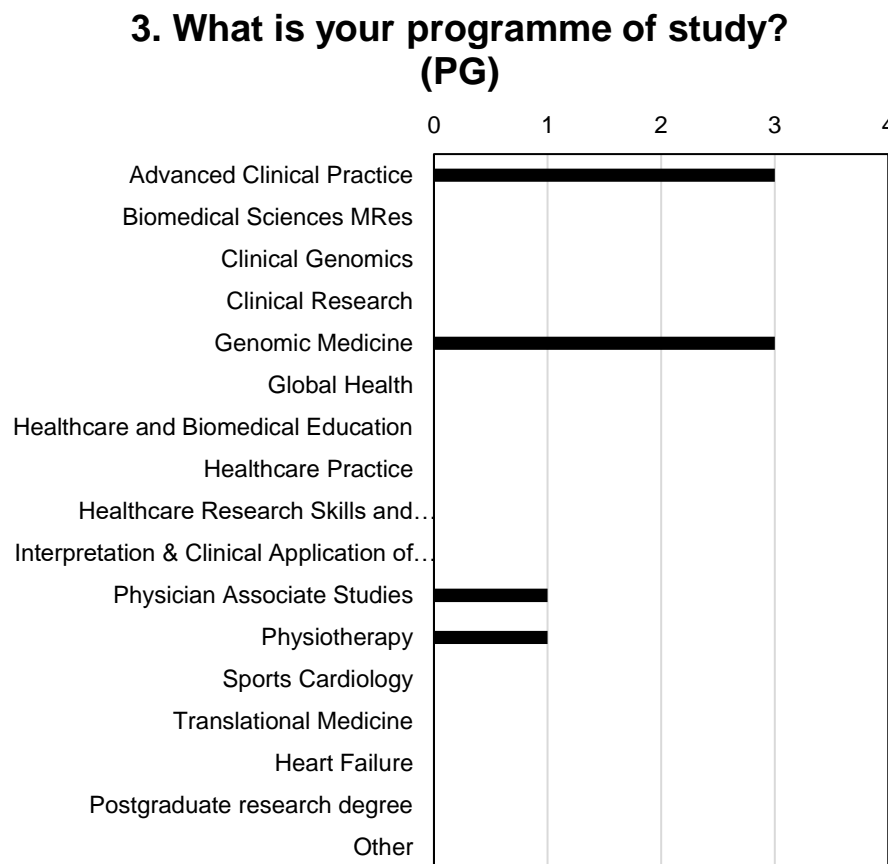


Figure 3: Bar chart showing the number of respondents from St George's postgraduate programmes.

There were few postgraduate students completing the survey, however the most commonly represented programmes were Advanced Clinical Practice and Genomic Medicine (both $n=3$). Two single students from each of Physician Associate Studies and Physiotherapy also completed the study. Other programmes were not represented. Postgraduate research students do not have a taught component to their programme so it is not surprising that there are no responses from this group.

3.1.4 Question 4 – Are you a student with a Summary of Support Needs (SOSN)?

Out of 71 respondents, 60 students do not have a Summary of Support Needs (SOSN) and 11 students do. As a percentage of respondents this is 85% and 15% respectively (see Figure 4 below). Throughout the remainder of the report, the results are provided for each of these groups as appropriate as it is expected that students with an SOSN will have different needs and therefore a different experience of online learning.

4. Are you a student with a SOSN?

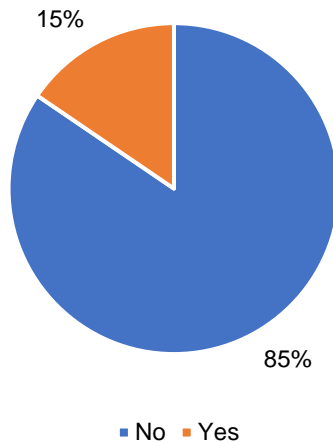


Figure 4: Pie chart showing the percentage of survey respondents who do and do not have a Statement of Support Needs (SOSN).

3.1.5 Question 5 – To what extent do you agree with the statement “Generally, the online aspects of my education this academic year have worked well for my learning”

Respondents were asked on a Likert scale whether they agreed that generally, online aspects of their education have worked well for their learning. When looking at the entire sample, the majority of respondents either strongly agree or agree that online learning has worked well for them.

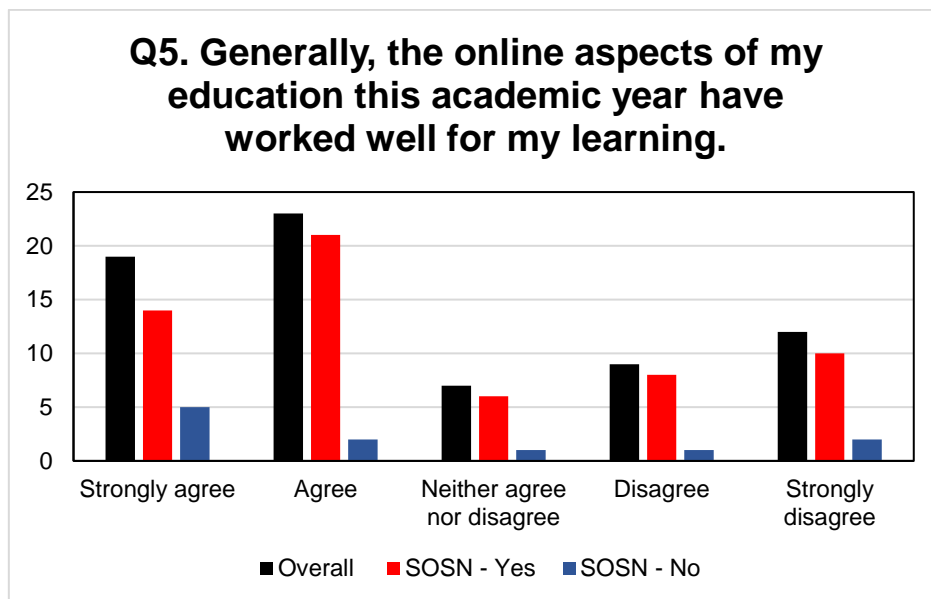


Figure 5: Bar chart showing the responses to Question 5 on a Likert scale, split by student SOSN status. Vertical axis shows frequency, not percentage.

Whilst it might be expected that students with a SOSN might respond in a different way, the patterns appear to be the same.

3.1.5.1 Question 5a – Please provide us with specific examples (if any) of challenges you have experienced when learning online

The chart below shows the percentage of responses falling under different themes. These themes were derived from thematic analysis of the free text responses for this question. When looking at all respondents, the top challenges for online learning were **lack of opportunities to ask questions online** (11.3%), **lack of motivation for self-directed learning** (11.3%), followed by **technical difficulties with Microsoft Teams** (8.5%) **not being able to focus or getting distracted** (8.5%). There were also a noteworthy percentage of responses mentioning **lecture capture or recording problems**, the lack of **organisation and management of online content** and **lower staff engagement**. This appears to be a split between technical-related challenges and challenges of a pedagogical or an organisational nature.

Q5a - Challenges of online learning - all respondents

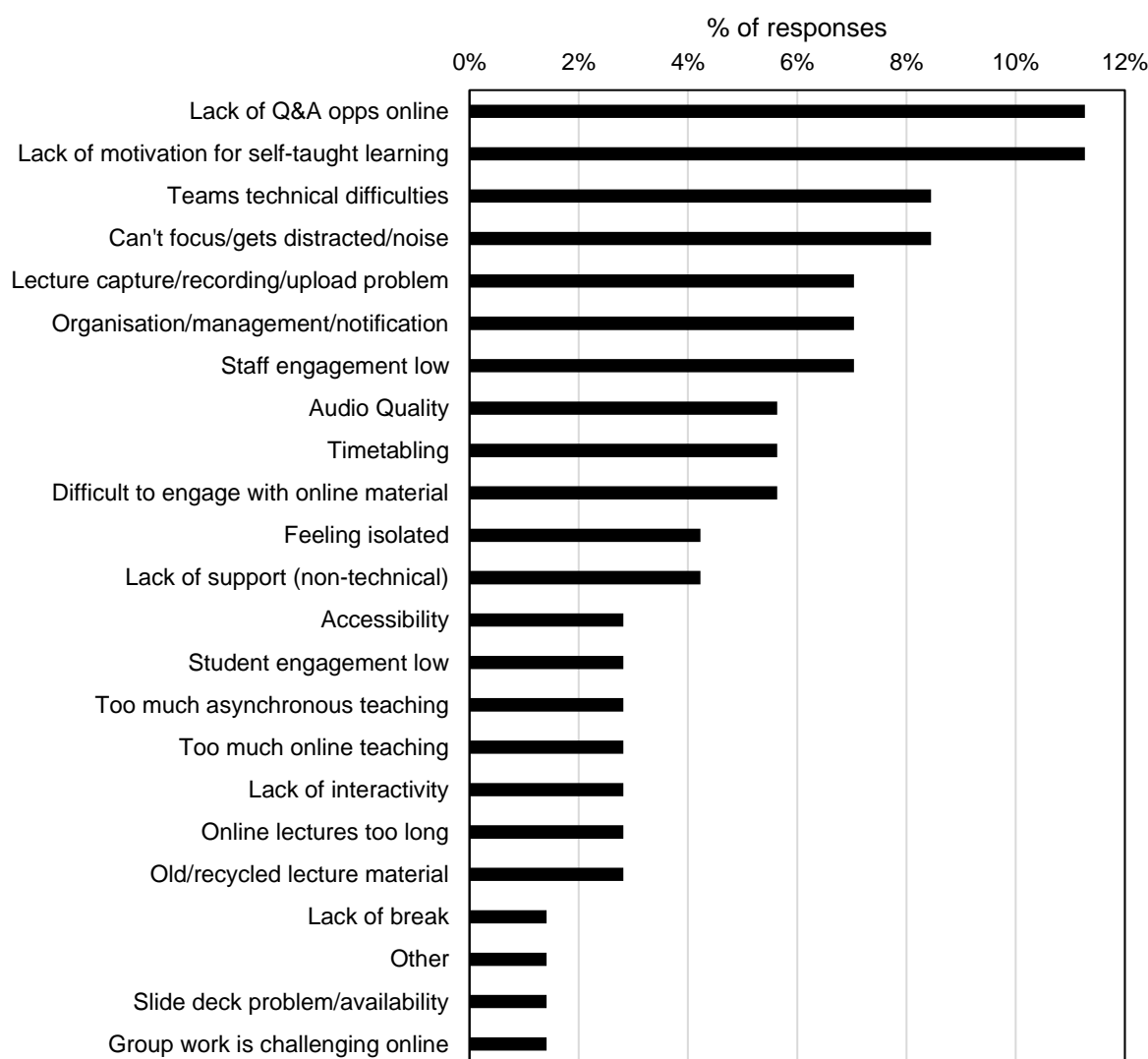


Figure 6: Bar chart showing the percentage of responses falling under each theme for Question 5a.

3.1.6 Question 6 - Which of the following activities do you feel are most valuable in terms of your learning and engagement? Please rank your top 3.

The results of question 6 are presented below for the overall number of respondents and then split by SOSN status as it is expected that students with different access needs and extra support may have different preferences.

Overall, the top first choice was **synchronous (live) large group on campus teaching**, followed by **pre-recorded lectures chunked into shorter sections**. When looking at second and third choices as part of the overall preference it is clear that students give value to both **quizzes and other forms of concept checks**, **synchronous (live) small group on campus discussions or activities** but also **pre-recorded lectures chunked into shorter sections**.

Q6 - Which of the following activities do you feel are most valuable in terms of your learning and engagement? Please rank your top 3 - Overall

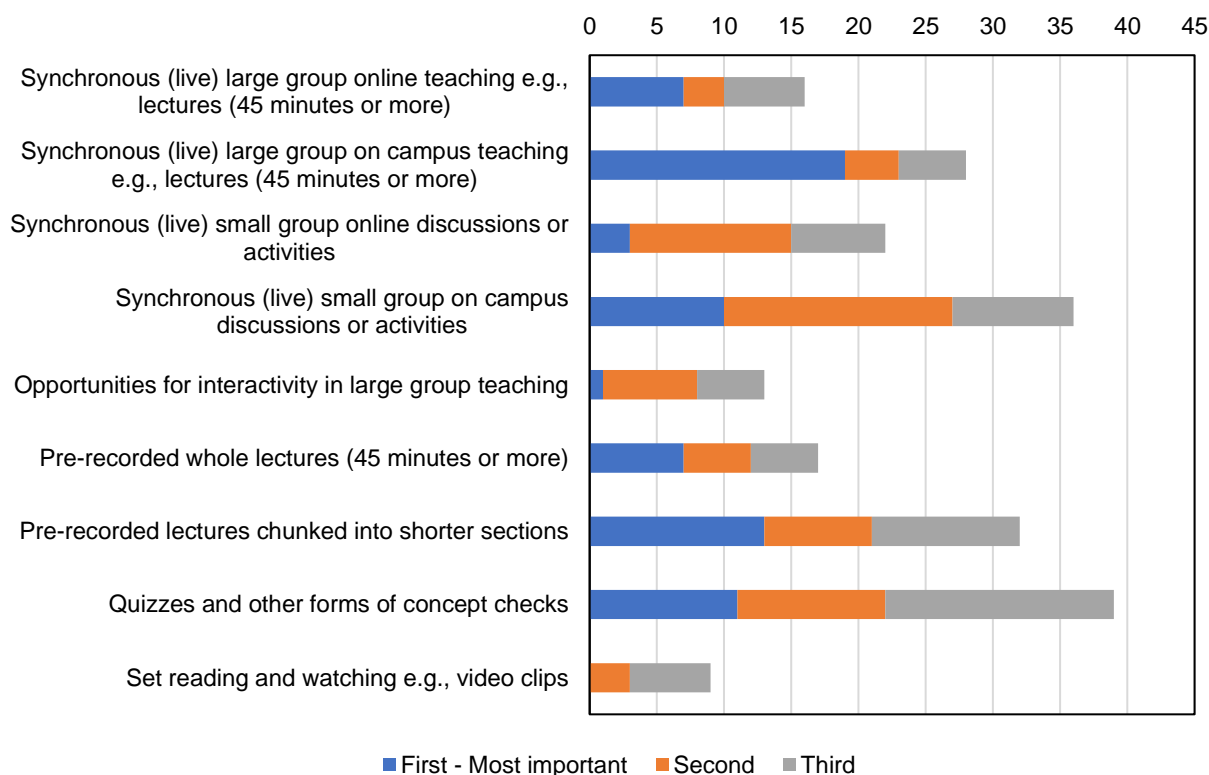


Figure 7: Bar chart showing the stacked ranking of responses to Q6 for the overall survey sample.

The chart below shows the same data but for those who have an SOSN. For these students there is far less spread in the first choice amongst the options. The top first preference is still **synchronous (live) large group on campus teaching** and when combining first, second and third choices, **quizzes and other forms of concept checks**, **synchronous (live) small group on campus discussions or activities** are still preferred. However, there seems to be no preference for **opportunities for interactivity in large**

group teaching and set reading and watching (eg video clips). Without knowing the specific needs of these students, it is not possible to suggest reasons, although large group teaching may induce anxiety in some, and set reading and watching is a form of self-directed learning during which students might not feel that they have the required support and guidance.

Q6 - Which of the following activities do you feel are most valuable in terms of your learning and engagement? Please rank your top 3 - SOSN - Yes

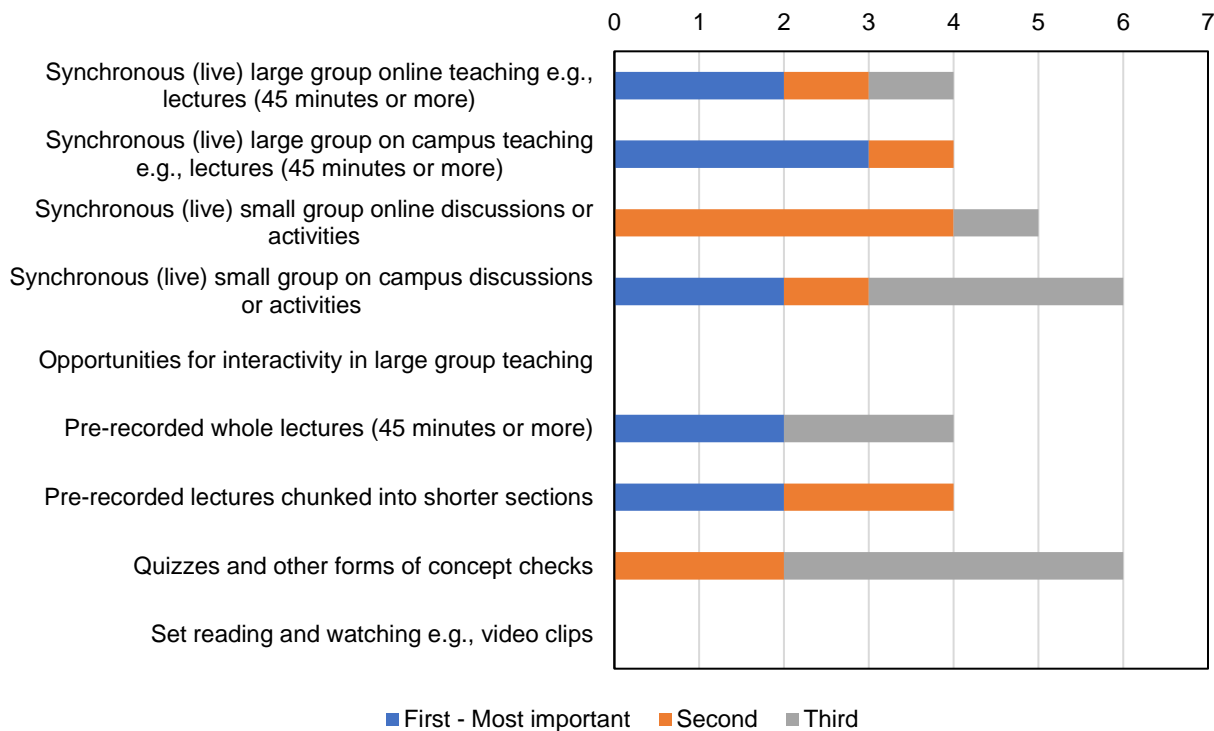


Figure 8: Bar chart showing the stacked ranking of responses to Q6 for the sample of students who have an SOSN.

For students without an SOSN the preferences mostly match the results for the overall population, but it is clear that there is some secondary preference for pre-recorded lectures, self-directed learning and interactive engagement in larger group teaching.

Q6 - Which of the following activities do you feel are most valuable in terms of your learning and engagement? Please rank your top 3 - SOSN - No

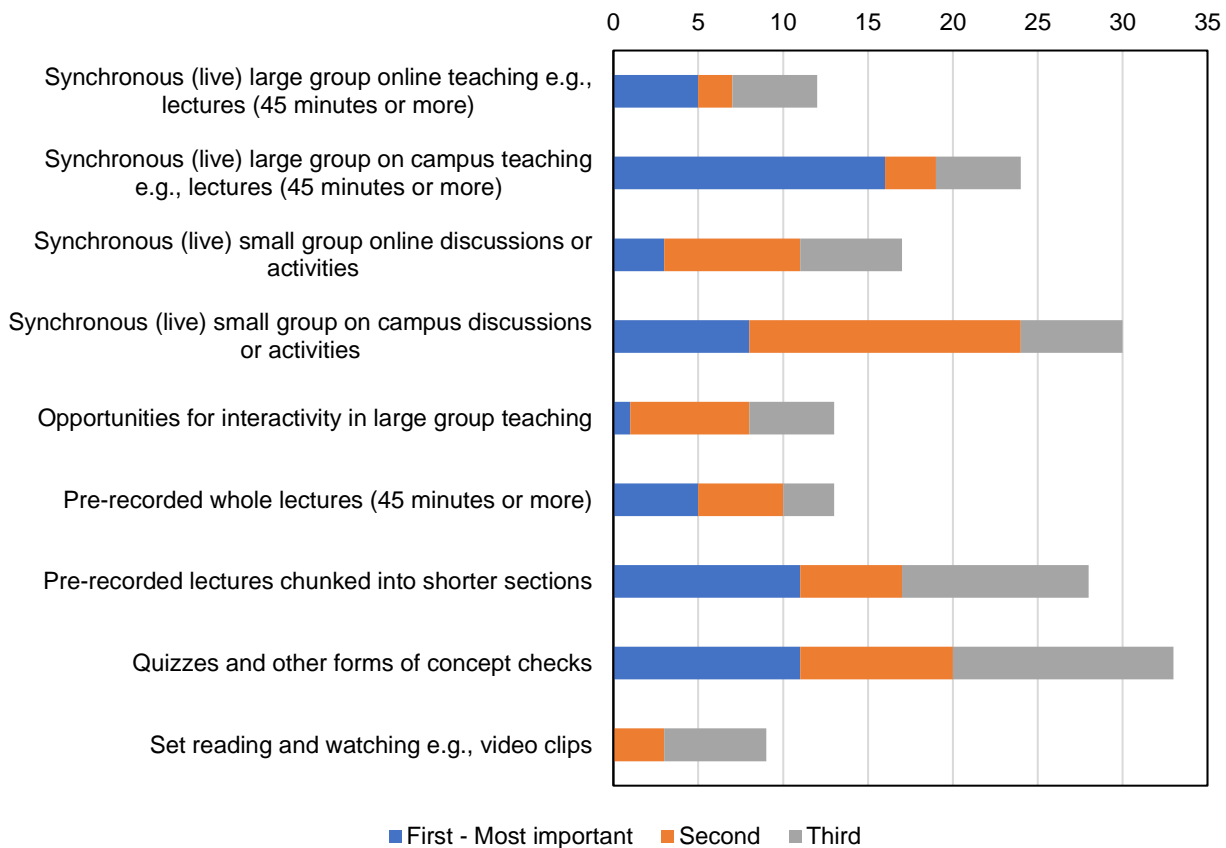


Figure 9: Bar chart showing the stacked ranking of responses to Q6 for the sample of students who do not have an SOSN.

To ensure that all students preferences are covered it will be necessary to ensure that those with SOSNs are supported to engage with their less preferred methods or are provided with an alternative that better matches their needs. More clarity is provided below in the responses to Question 6a.

3.1.6.1 Question 6a – Please provide the reasons for your response

There were a large variety of themes that students mentioned in their reasoning for the ranking of preferred learning and teaching activities.

The top theme mentioned was that **quizzes are/would be beneficial** and that students liked being able to follow content at their own pace as they have the **ability to pause/revisit recorded content**. Other themes worthy of note were that **online content is more flexible** although it was clear that students value **onsite lectures as more engaging**, they felt that learning onsite was also beneficial as in addition to being more engaging, they could build relationships with peers and had better engagement with staff.

However, it is also clear that there are responses that do not agree with the above and that there are individual preferences, mostly based on personal circumstances such as convenience or comfort related to home environment, distractions, commuting etc.

Q6a - Please provide the reasons for ranking response - all respondents

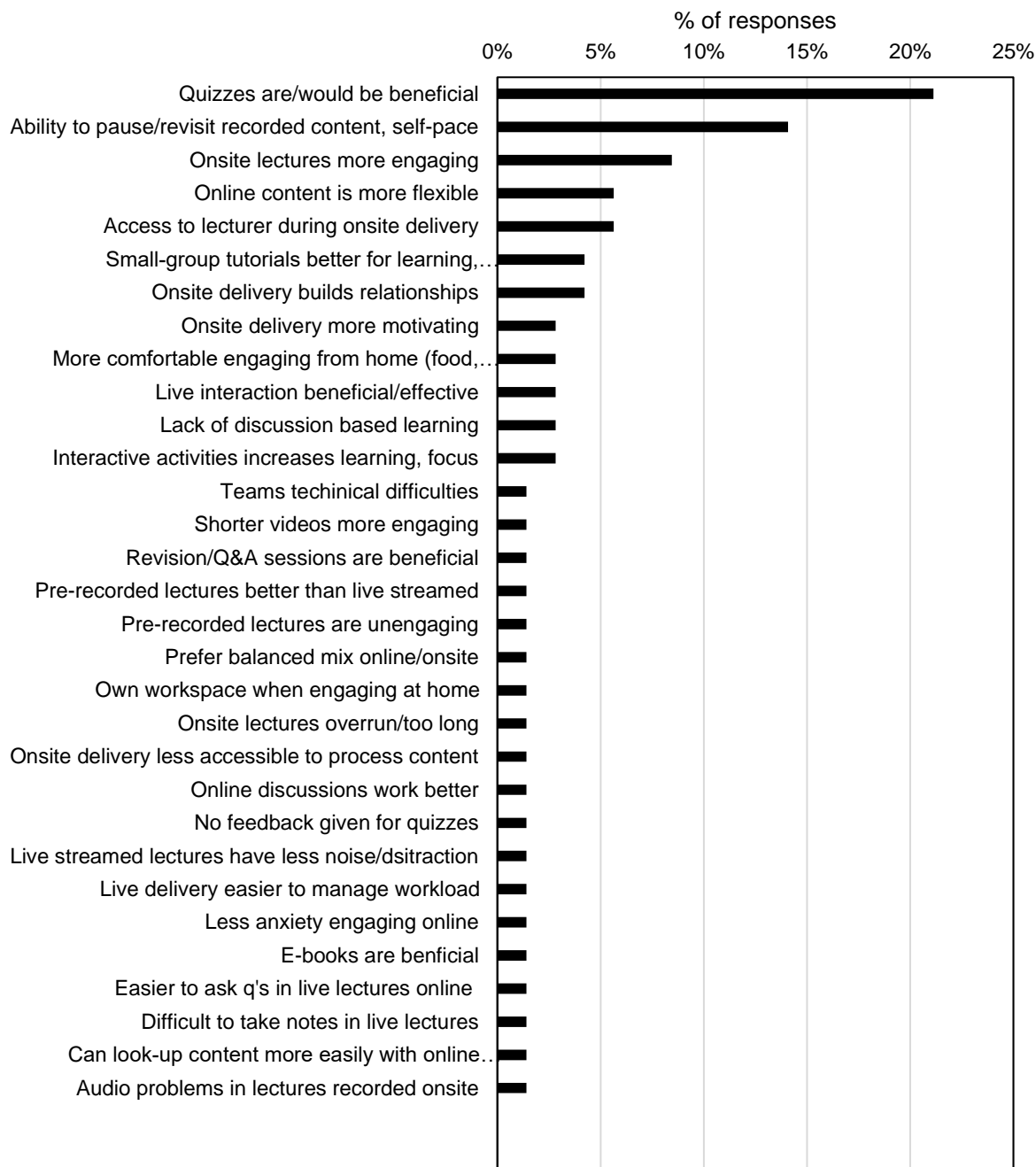


Figure 10: Bar chart showing the percentage of responses falling under each theme for Question 6a (all data).

The figure below shows the top reasons for the ranking for those who have an SOSN. Only four themes were highlighted by these students but 55% of those with an SOSN say that online lectures are more engaging and 27% of those with an SOSN mention that small-group tutorials are better for learning. Again, without specific details of their SOSN we can only draw tentative conclusions that perhaps engaging with groups of people onsite induces anxiety and engaging online for large groups is preferable and only small groups are preferred when engaging as it is better for learning and communicating.

Q6a - Please provide the reasons for ranking response - SOSN yes

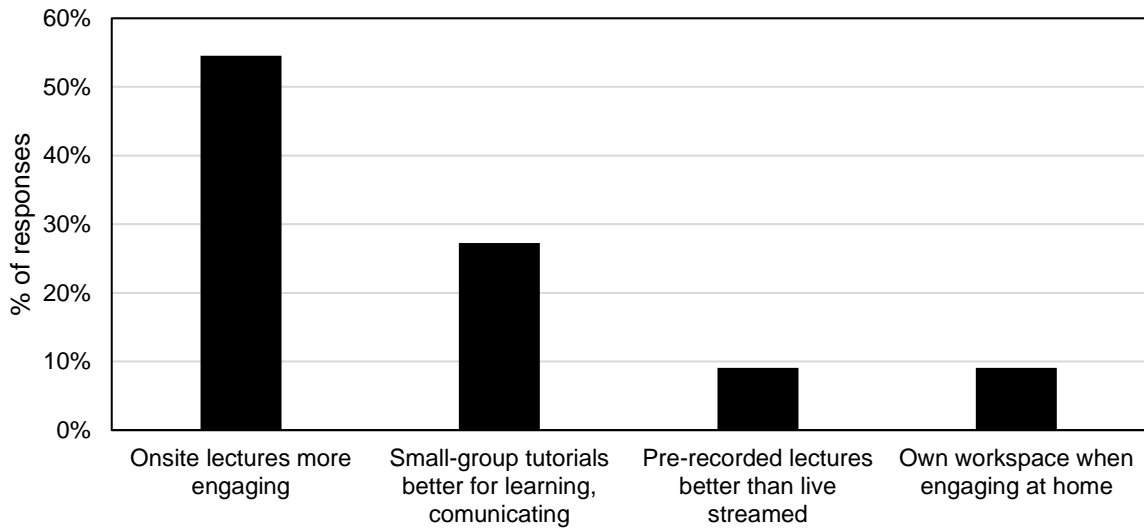


Figure 11: Bar chart showing the percentage of responses falling under each theme for Question 6a for those students who have an SOSN.

When looking at those students who do not have an SOSN, this largely matches the overall response.

Q6a - Please provide the reasons for ranking response - SOSN no

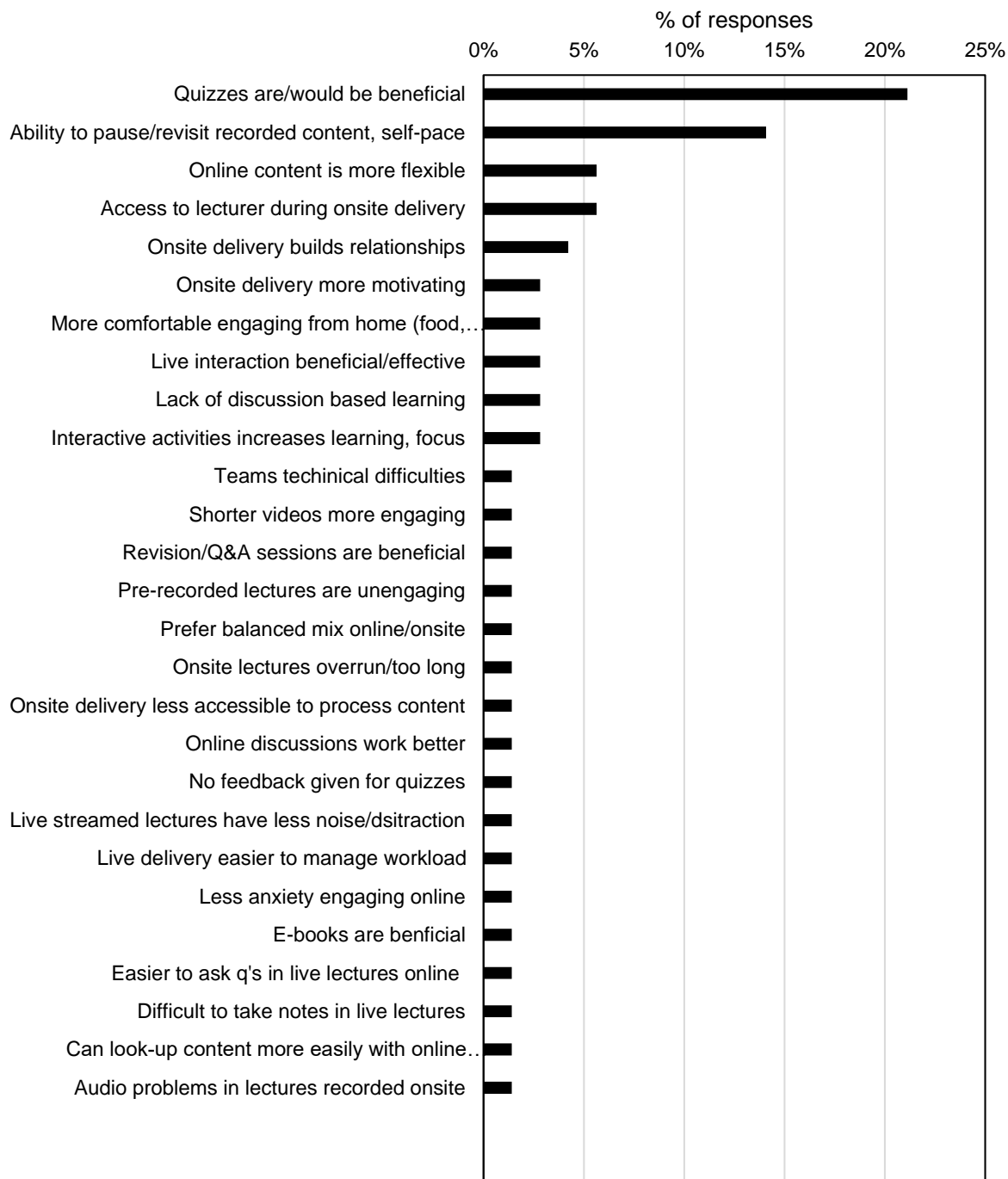


Figure 12: Bar chart showing the percentage of responses falling under each theme for Question 6a for those students who do not have an SOSN.

3.1.7 Question 7 - What has been positive about your experience of online assessments?

When looking at the whole respondent population, over 25% of responses mention that **online assessments are more comfortable**, for example, students do not have to commute and can engage from their own home environment or an environment of their choosing. Additionally, around 8 to 9% of respondents also mention both **flexibility/convenience** and that they feel less stressed or anxious when taking online assessments. There are also other positives highlighted, such as being **less distracted** and feeling like it is **easier to focus**. Other themes were mentioned by only a handful or single respondents and these can be seen in the bar chart below.

Q7 - What has been positive about your experience of online assessments?

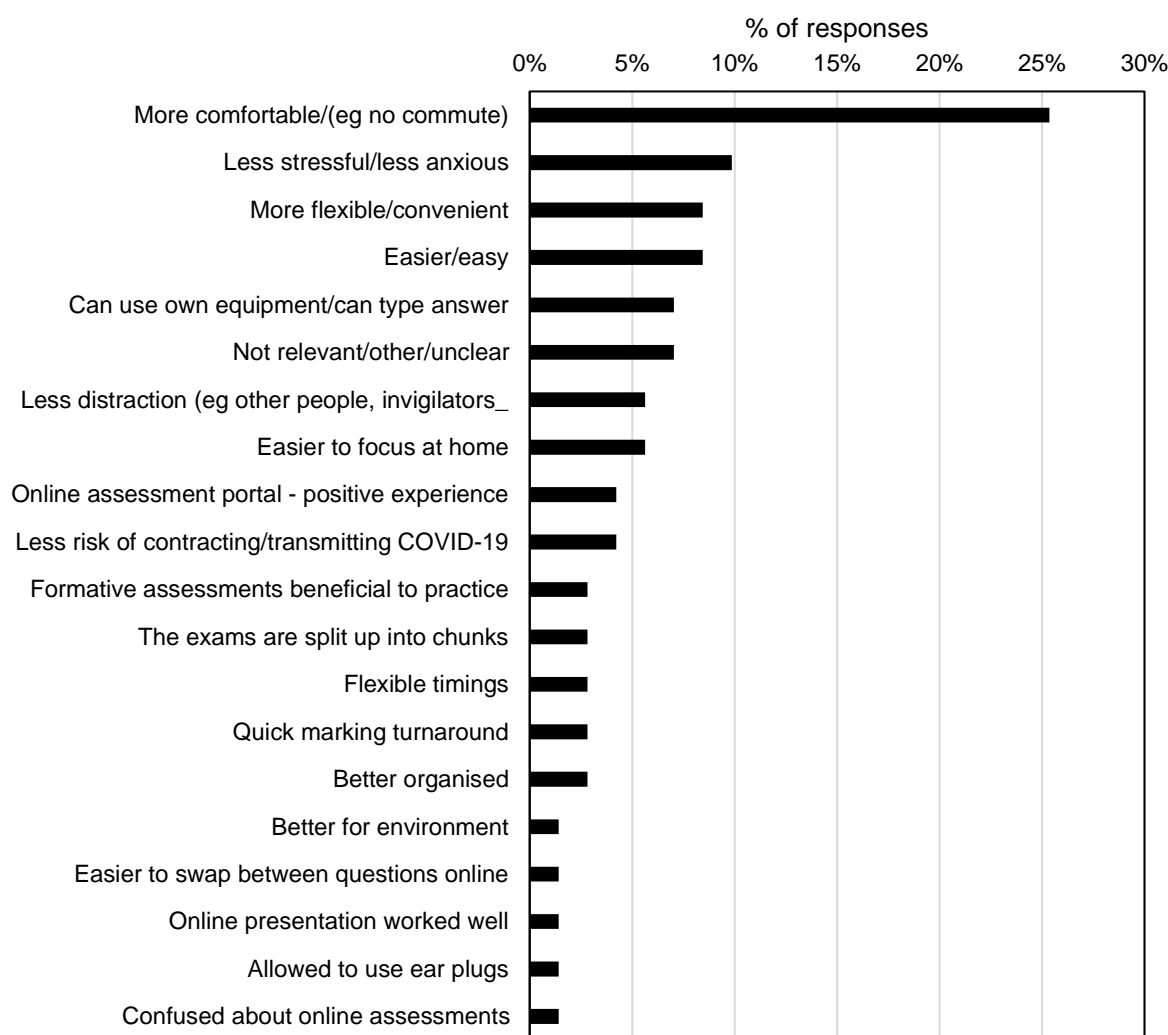


Figure 13: Bar chart showing the percentage of responses falling under each theme for Question 7- all respondents.

3.1.8 Question 8 - What has been negative about your experience of online assessments?

Looking at all responses, the top negative themes about online assessments were **technical problems with the assessment platform** and **concerns about academic integrity and cheating**. 7% of responses

also mentioned having **connection problems**. There were also several responses mentioning **stress and anxiety** and that it was **hard to concentrate** when taking online assessments. Other themes mentioned only by a handful or single respondents are listed in the bar chart below. There were also several responses that did not answer the question or provided unclear or irrelevant answer.

Q8 - What has been negative about your experience of online assessments?

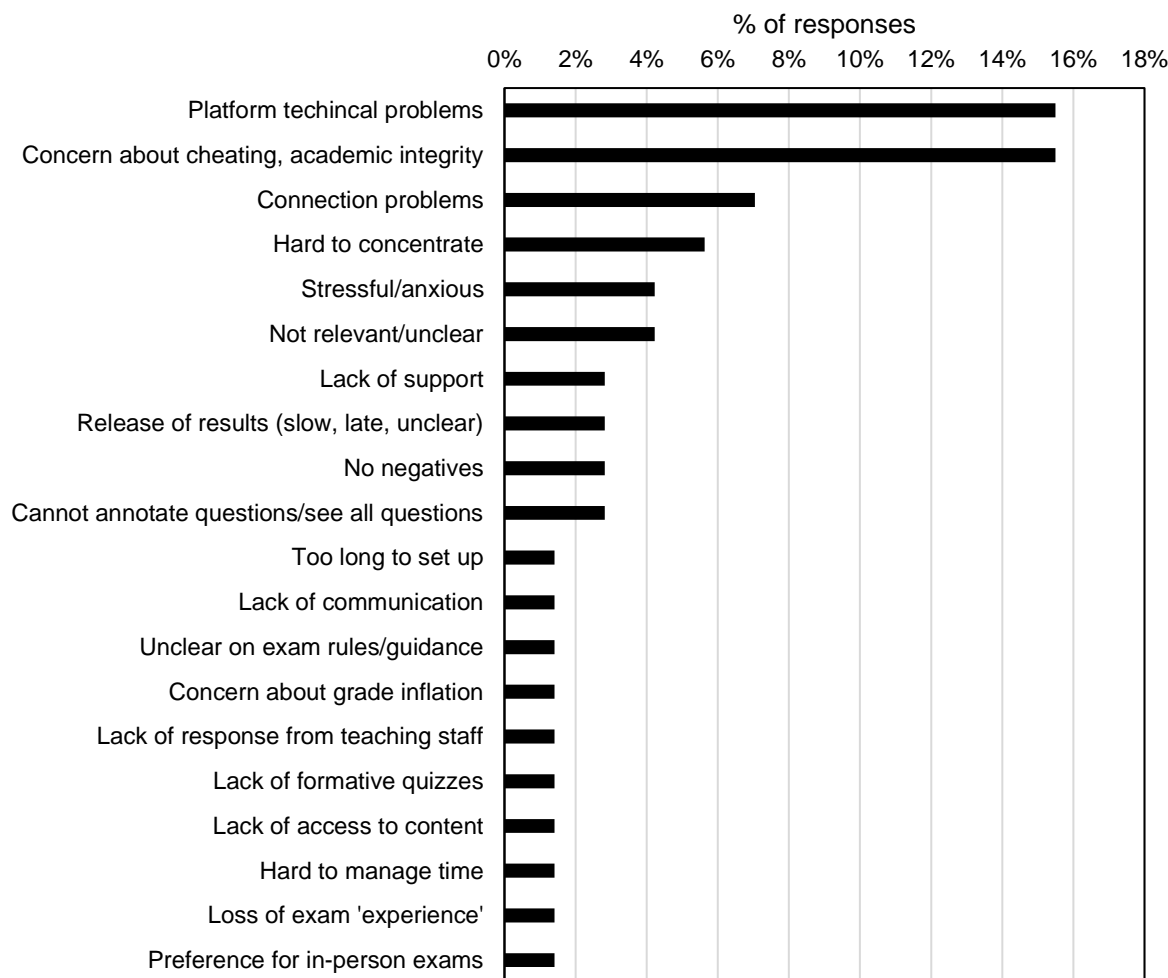


Figure 14: Bar chart showing the percentage of responses falling under each theme for Question 8 - all respondents.

1.1.1. Question 9 - What has been positive about your experience of assessment feedback online?

Question 9 moved on to assessment feedback that was provided online. The most common themes were that online feedback was **accessible** and **easy to understand and read**. Students also appreciated that you can **revisit and look back over feedback at a later time**. There were a handful of responses that mentioned that positives included **everyone receiving the feedback at the same time** and that the **feedback online is detailed**. The themes towards the bottom of the chart below were only mentioned by one or two respondents.

Q9 - What has been positive about your experience of online assessment feedback?

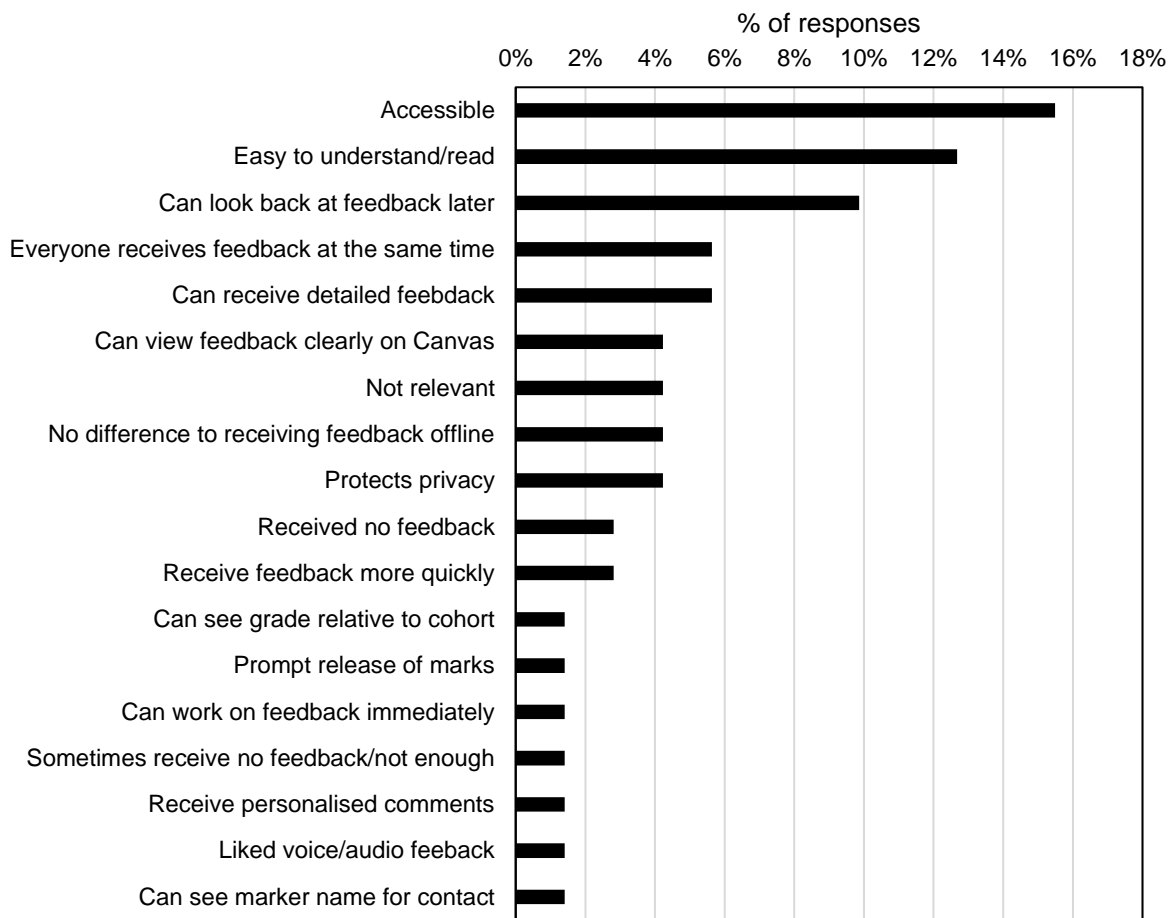


Figure 15: Bar chart showing the percentage of responses falling under each theme for Question 9 - all respondents.

1.1.2. Question 10 - What has been negative about your experience of assessment feedback online?

The most common theme for negative experiences of assessment feedback online is that 23% of respondents feel like they are **unable to ask questions about their feedback or discuss the feedback with the marker**. Following this, the other most common themes were that respondents **did not feel that there was a difference between online and 'offline' feedback** with some indicating their **feedback was not detailed enough**. Some mentioned that they **received no individual feedback** or **no feedback at all** or that their **feedback was late**.

Q10 - What has been negative about your experience of online assessment feedback?

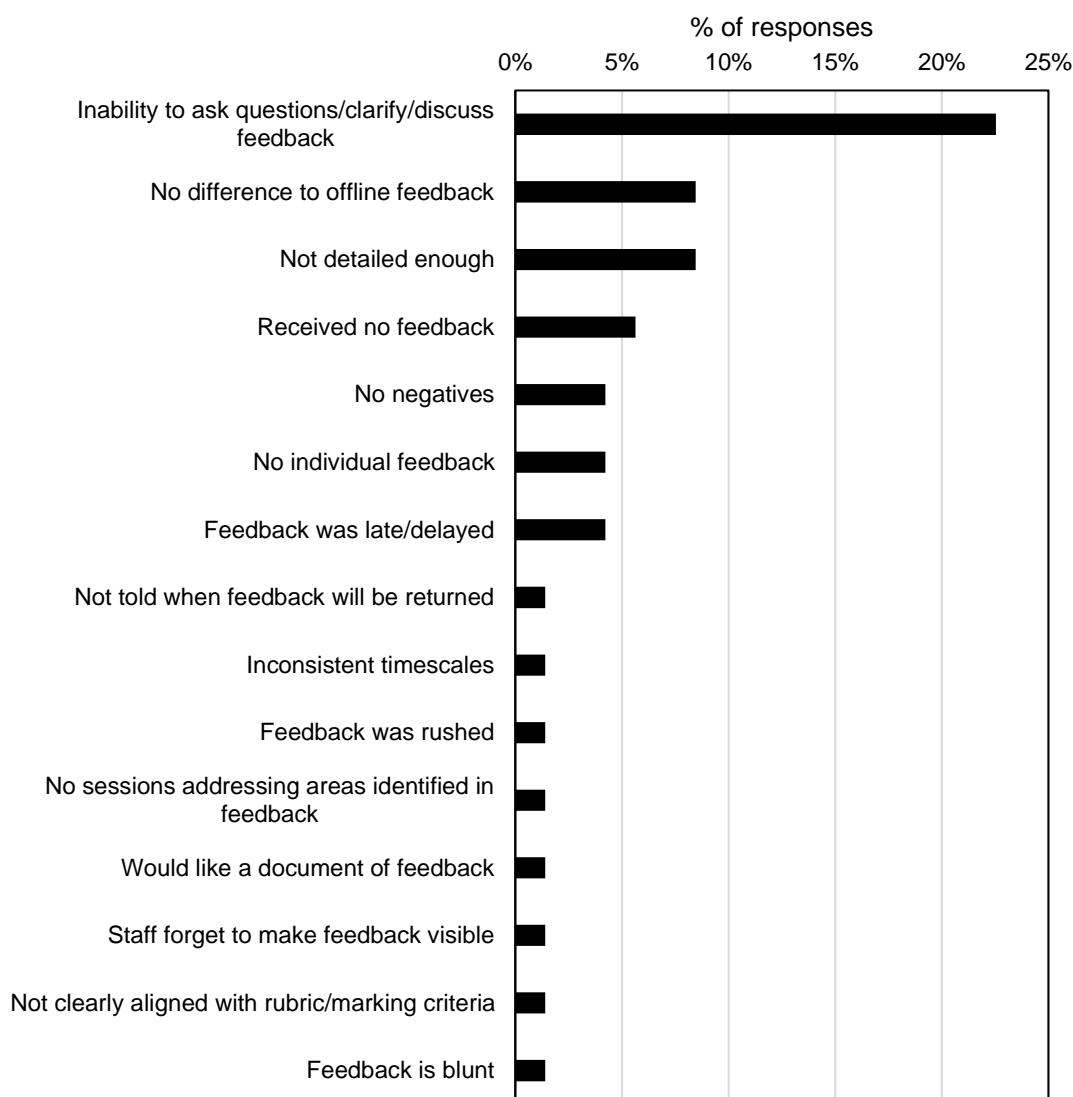


Figure 16: Bar chart showing the percentage of responses falling under each theme for Question 10 - all respondents.

1.1.3. Question 11 - To what extent do you agree with the statements below

The graph and table presented below outline how students responded to the statements in Question 11.

Q11 - To what extent do you agree with the statements below:

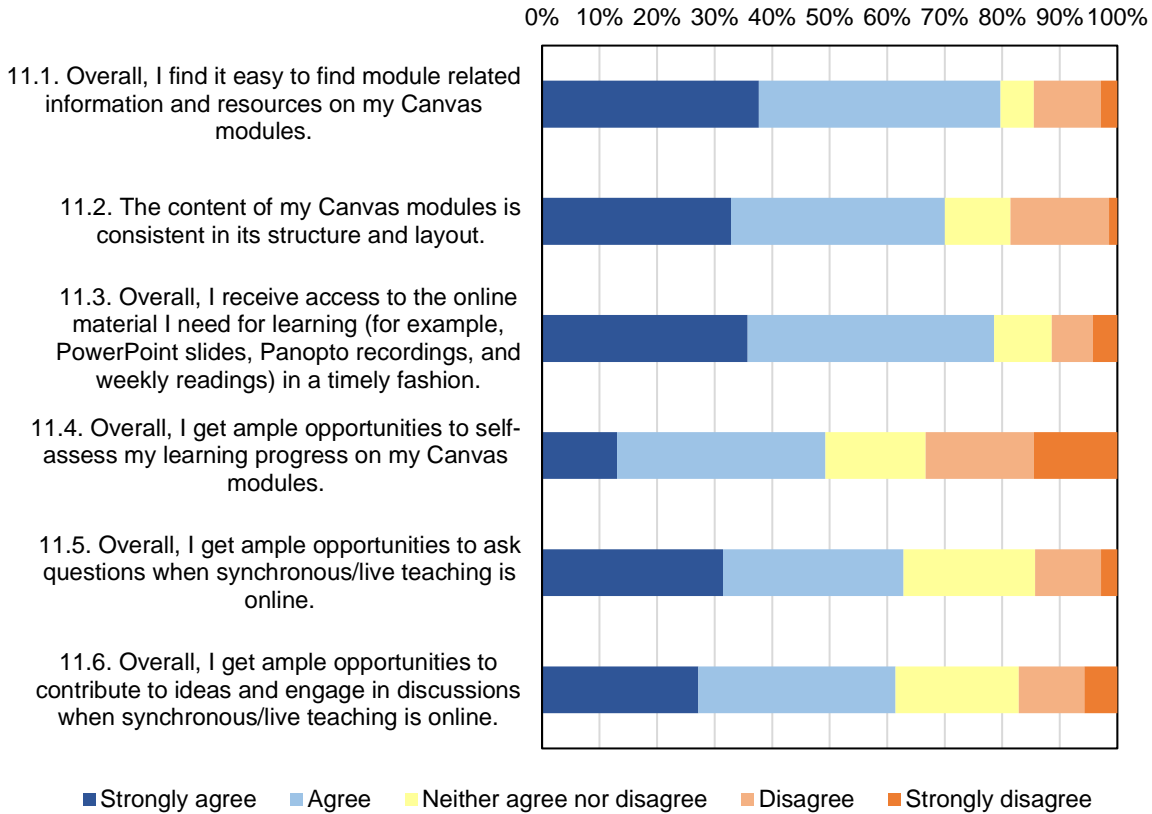


Figure 17: Graph showing the percentage agree-disagree on a Likert scale for each statement of Question 11.

For ease of discussion, we can sum the ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ percentages and present them as below. This follows the standard approach to Likert analysis in student surveys like the NSS.

Table 1: Table showing the summed percentage strongly agree and agree for the statements of question 11 for all respondents.

Question	% Strongly agree + % Agree – all respondents
11.1. Overall, I find it easy to find module related information and resources on my Canvas modules.	77.5
11.2. The content of my Canvas modules is consistent in its structure and layout.	69.0
11.3. Overall, I receive access to the online material I need for learning (for example, PowerPoint slides, Panopto recordings, and weekly readings) in a timely fashion.	77.5
11.4. Overall, I get ample opportunities to self-assess my learning progress on my Canvas modules.	47.9
11.5. Overall, I get ample opportunities to ask questions when synchronous/live teaching is online.	62.0
11.6. Overall, I get ample opportunities to contribute to ideas and engage in discussions when synchronous/live teaching is online.	60.6

From the table above, it is clear that respondents mostly find it easy to find module related information and resources on their Canvas modules and also receive access to online material in a timely fashion. This does not match with some results from other questions where respondents indicated that their Canvas was not organised, and they did not find the relevant material. Further analysis would pull out if these students were ones who disagreed with the statements here.

Only 47.9% of respondents feel that they get ample opportunities to self-assess my learning progress on Canvas modules. This matches with the high proportion of students who said they would benefit from further quizzes as highlighted in other questions in the survey.

The chart below plots the above data alongside the percentage strongly agree/agree for those with and without an SOSN to show differences between groups.



Figure 18: Chart showing summed percentage strongly agree and agree for the statements of question 11 for all respondents, SOSN students (orange) and those without SOSNs (yellow), undergraduate students (black) and postgraduates (grey).

There are differences between those with an SOSN and those without, most notably the answer to 11.4 about opportunities for self-learning on Canvas. Postgraduate students also agree more strongly that they get ample opportunities to assess their learning on Canvas, whilst undergraduate students also indicate that they agree more strongly that they get opportunities to ask questions online than postgraduates do.

Those with an SOSN also agree more strongly that they get opportunities to contribute to ideas and engage in discussions online. This may be related to anxiety when engaging in in-person onsite learning and they may be more hesitant or less comfortable to engage.

1.1.4. Question 12- Please provide feedback on the accessibility of your online learning content

There were a large number of themes emerging from the answer to this question, perhaps emphasising the breadth of needs and preferences amongst the respondents. Despite some prompts in the question, there were some students who did not only focus on accessibility.

The top theme with 13% of response was that **audio recording and quality is of generally poor quality**. However, there were a similar number of responses that indicated **satisfaction with the audio-visual content of their online learning**. There were three responses that explicitly mentioned that the **audio recording of lectures which were onsite was poor**, citing lack of proximity to the microphone and lack of use of clip-on microphones.

Another common theme in 7% of responses was that the **organisation of their learning and teaching content on Canvas was poor**, followed by 6% citing **technical difficulties with Microsoft Teams**.

An interesting point was made by several students about the **lack of an electronic, up-to-date timetable**. One student wished that they could have their timetable as a feed they could sync with their personal devices.

Captioning of lectures was also mentioned in two themes, one highlighting the inaccuracy of captions and one other theme that lecturers do not use captions or make them available.

Q12 - Feedback on accessibility of online learning

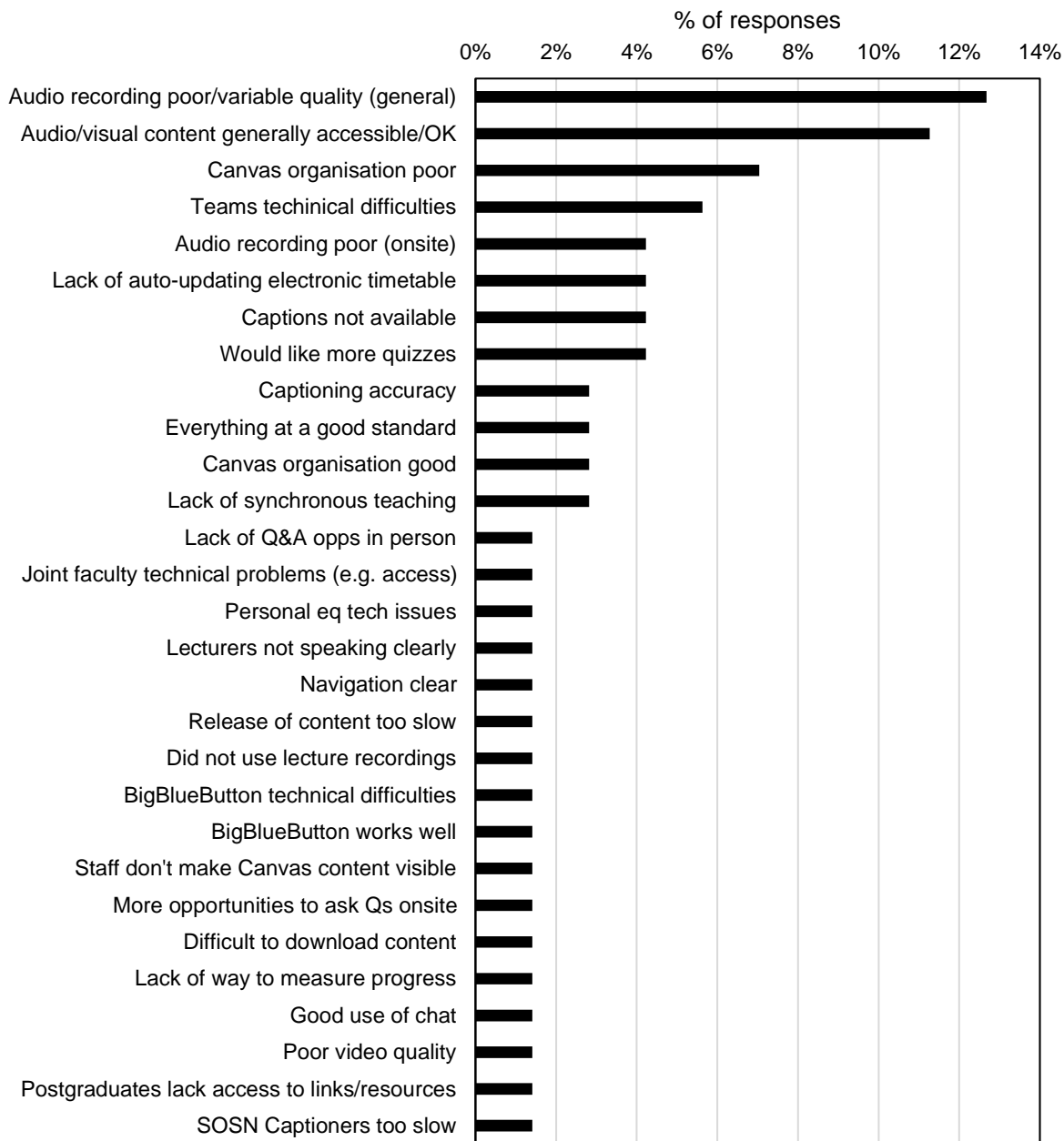


Figure 19: Bar chart showing the percentage of responses falling under each theme for Question 12 - all respondents.

1.1.5. Question 13 - How valuable would "hybrid" lectures be for you?

Question 13 asked respondent about the personal value of "hybrid" lectures (lectures where the participants can choose to join in-person or online – the lecture would be delivered onsite and simultaneously live-streamed online). Overall, the majority of respondents (53%) indicated that hybrid lectures would be highly valuable. However, when looking at students with an SOSN, this is higher at 63.6%. This shows that introducing hybrid lectures may be of significant benefit to those students.

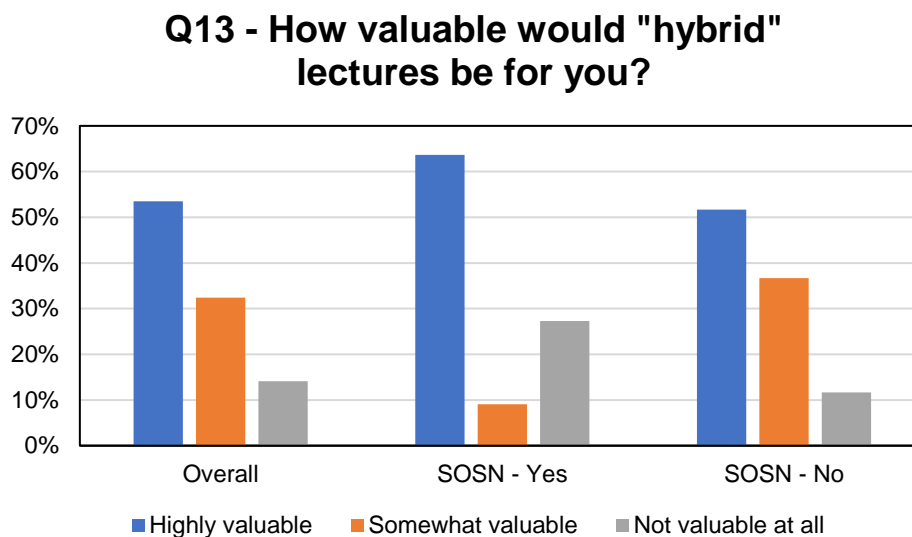


Figure 20: Chart showing the responses to Question 13 showing overall (all respondents) and then split by SOSN status.

1.1.6. Question 14 - How confident are you with the following

The chart below shows how confident students are with different activities related to online learning. The blue bar shows all respondents, the orange shows those with an SOSN and the grey shows those without an SOSN. **Interestingly those students who have an SOSN seem more confident with Canvas.** This could be because those students may have received dedicated support at some point in their time at St George's. There is low confidence overall for tools such as Miro, creating/recording a presentation for online submission and Myprogress.

Q14 - % confident + somewhat confident

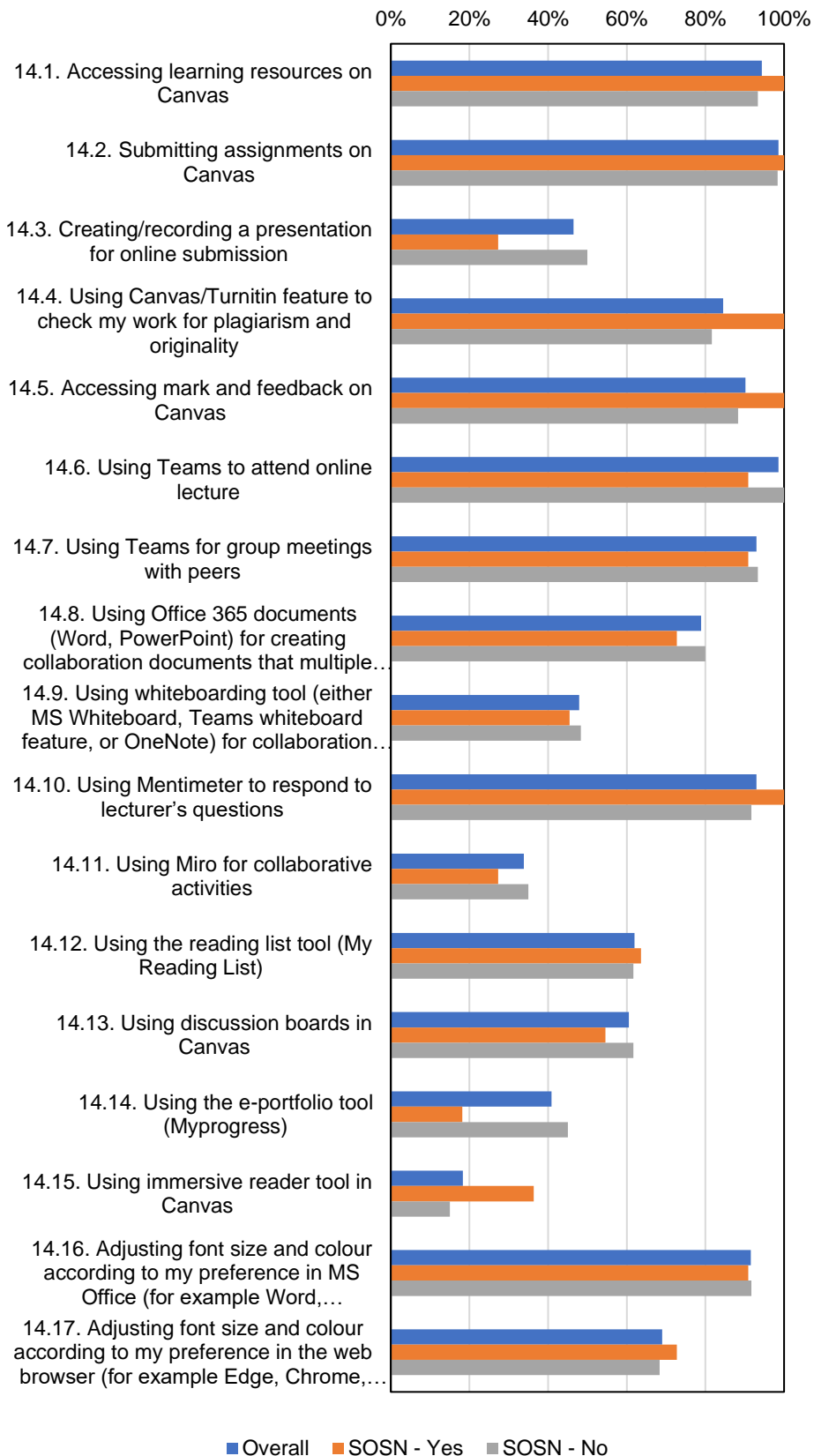


Figure 21: Chart showing the responses to Question 14 showing sum of percentage confident and somewhat confident for all respondents and then split by SOSN status.

1.1.7. Question 15 - To what extent do you agree with the statement below: I am able to effectively manage my online independent study

The chart below presents the Likert scale responses to Question 15, for the overall population of respondents and also for those with and without a SOSN.

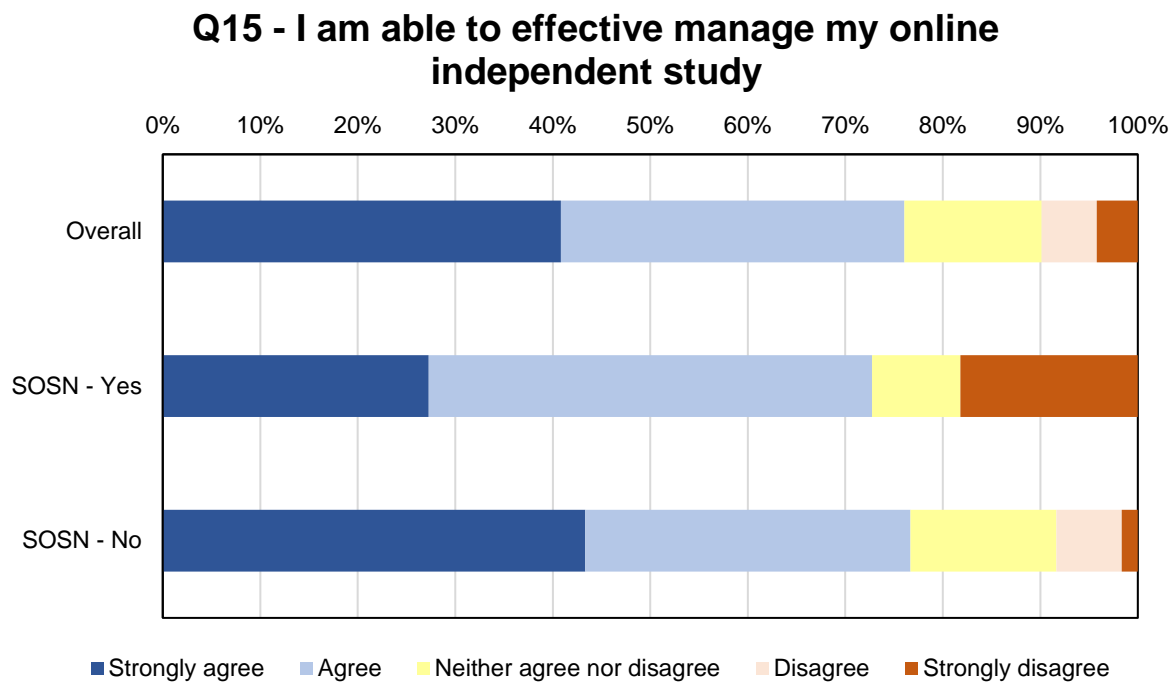


Figure 22: Graph showing the percentage agree-disagree on a Likert scale for Question 15, split by overall (all respondents), those who have an SOSN and those who do not have an SOSN.

Overall over 75% of students strongly agree or agree that they can manage their online independent study. However, almost 20% of students with an SOSN strongly disagree that they can manage their online independent study. This may indicate that these students may need some additional support or guidance on how to study independently if there was to be a continuation of the same amount/type of online content that they currently engage with.

1.1.8. Question 16 - Is there anything further about online learning and assessment that you have not been able to provide feedback on above?

Question 16 provided respondents with an option to add any additional comments not covered in other questions, although there is some repetition which may mean that some students forgot that they had mentioned their points already, or that they felt like they wanted to emphasise certain points.

The nature of this 'any other comments' free text question has resulted in a large number of themes as seen in the figure below.

The most common theme (7% of responses) is a desire for **hybrid learning** where students can choose to join a teaching session virtually or in-person.

There were a not insignificant amount of responses highlighting that **students should get more onsite learning** and this was explained in often supplementary comments around **online learning making it more difficult to learn** and that increased **onsite learning and teaching reflected better value for money**.

There were also those who wanted more asynchronous teaching, with one citing that asynchronous learning was more convenient. Although these comments were only one or two in number.

The remaining themes shown in the figure below were mentioned in only single respondents' answers and they cover a large variety of areas from **lack of support** and **feeling isolated**, to issues around **Canvas** and **timetabling**, to name but a few.

Q16 - Any other feedback

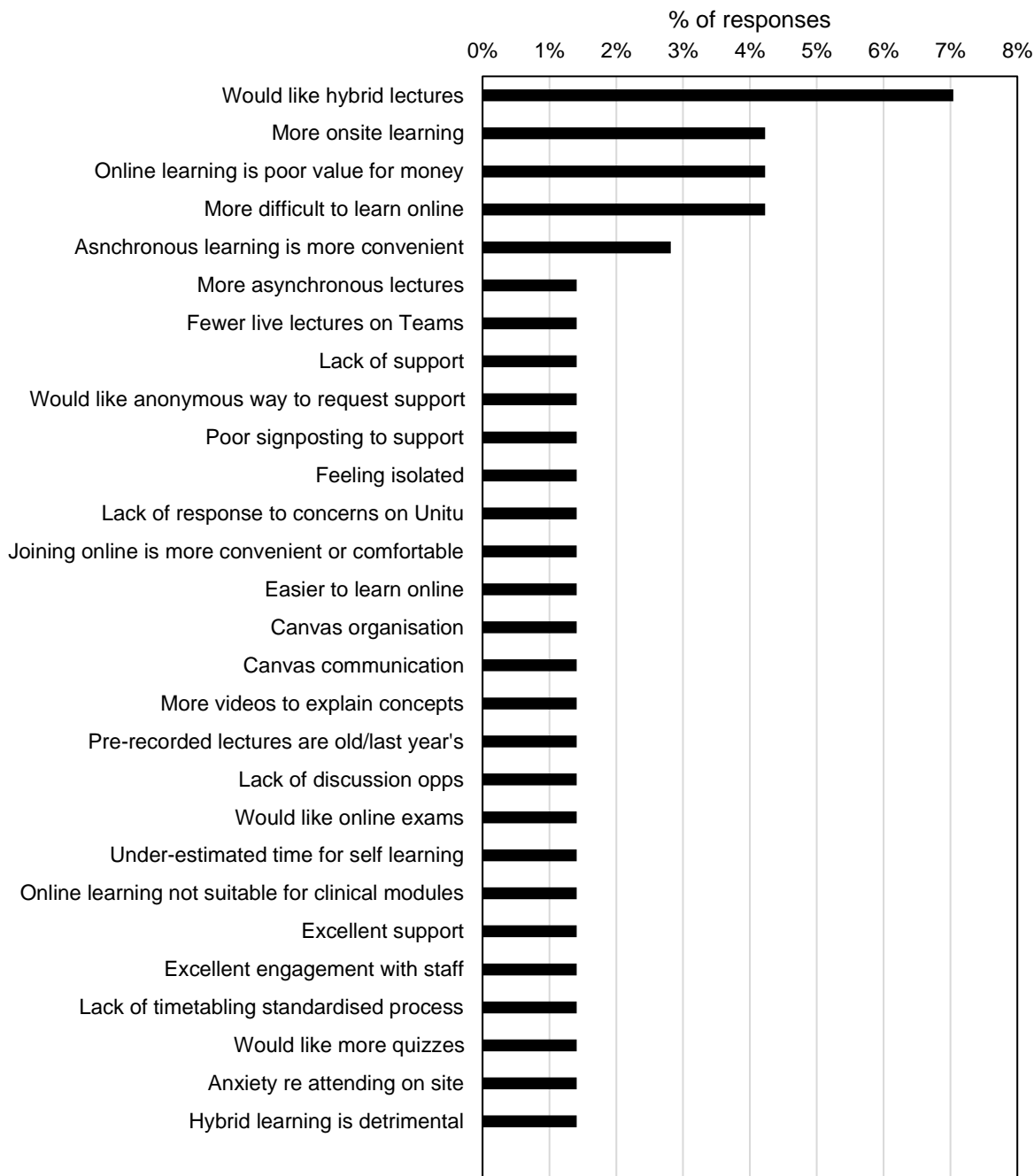


Figure 23: Bar chart showing the percentage of responses falling under each theme for Question 16 - all respondents.

2. NEXT STEPS AND REFLECTIONS

It is unfortunate that the response rate was not higher as only 71 students completed the survey. This meant that the number of responses that could be attributed to a particular programme was low, and any conclusions or inferences drawn from these results would likely be less than representative of those cohorts of students on those particular programmes. The fact that the top represented programmes are similar to those programmes with the highest number of students mean that as a whole dataset, the University-wide results can help us draw conclusions about students' views on online learning and teaching in the 2021-22 academic year.

Reflecting on the survey design, the question wording caused some confusion in student responses (terms such as 'assessment feedback online' were interpreted in two ways, either any feedback accessed online, and feedback only for assessments taken online and/or off-site) and this either mean that some respondents did not answer the questions and provided irrelevant answers. Some questions were not compulsory, and students chose not to answer. This may mean that some parts of the analysis are difficult to draw conclusions from.

This report, along with the results of the staff survey will be discussed with staff and programme teams in workshops, and there will be consultation with students in a separate workshop to help colleagues interpret the results. All of these responses and feedback will be incorporated into the development of a co-created Blended Education Framework.

3. APPENDIX

All of the data, including the qualitative comments can be seen in this Excel workbook. You can filter and sort by level of study, programme etc to extract programme specific data.