Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
2 December 2022

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE

SSAF Prioritisation Report for 2023

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1.0 Executive Summary

The SSAF Service Providers Management Framework stipulates in clause 2.5.4:

> *An annual prioritisation report will be developed by the UQ SSAF Coordinator and submitted to SSAF Advisory Group for endorsement to the DVCA. This is based on SSAF survey results and other Student Consultation.*

This report examines the 2022 SSAF Survey responses and 2021 Student Experience Survey results to identify priority areas for 2023 SSAF spending.

An analysis of these sources has identified draft 2023 spending areas in order of priority:

High priority

1) Careers
2) Health and welfare
3) Library and reading rooms
4) Food and drink

Medium priority

5) Study skills
6) Orientation

Low priority

7) Media
8) Childcare
9) Debating

Service Providers have a responsibility to align 2023 spending with the priority areas outlined in this report.

Some priority areas, such as Library and reading rooms, may be outside the scope of operation of some service providers. However, the report findings can be instructive for other capital initiatives and planning.

1.1 Recommendations

Based upon analysis of the 2022 SSAF Survey responses and 2021 Student Experience Survey results, this report makes the following draft recommendations in order of priority.

Recommendation 1

Prioritise 2023 SSAF expenditure on **Careers services** for the entire student cohort at all points during a student's program (before graduating and when commencing or during study), including assistance with finding part/time or casual employment.

This is supported by SSAF survey responses where Career services rates highest on all measures and SES data where UQ scores significantly worse than the rest of the sector for Career Advisor items (available – UQ 44% vs national 50%, helpful – UQ 46% vs national 52%).

Recommendation 2

Prioritise 2023 SSAF expenditure on **Health and welfare services** for the entire student cohort with a focus on counselling services, anxiety/stress workshops and mental health workshops.

This is supported by SSAF survey responses where Health and welfare services rate second highest on all measures and SES data where UQ is below the rest of the sector for Support Services (available – UQ 48% vs national 52%, helpful – UQ 51% vs national 53%).

Recommendation 3

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Prioritise 2023 SSAF expenditure on **Library and reading rooms** which have charging/power options and connectivity including informal learning spaces with a variety of quiet inside/outside and individual/group spaces.

This is supported by SSAF survey responses and despite being above the SES national average for Quality of teaching spaces (UQ 87% vs national 83%) and Quality of student spaces and common areas (UQ 80% vs national 78%), UQ has dropped 2% since 2019 for Quality of teaching spaces.

Recommendation 4

Prioritise 2023 SSAF expenditure on cheaper or free **Food and drink** with better quality and more options to cater for various dietary requirements.

This is supported by SSAF survey responses but food and drink services are not measured in the SES survey.

Recommendation 5

Prioritise 2023 SSAF expenditure on **Study skills** workshops, online support, individual student consultations for the entire student cohort and English language skill support.

This is supported by SSAF survey responses and SES data where UQ is on par with the rest of the sector for Academic or learning advisors (available – UQ 61% vs national 63%, helpful – UQ 66% vs national 65%). However, UQ is significantly worse than the rest of the sector for Received appropriate English language skill support (UQ 38% vs national 45%).

Recommendation 6

Prioritise 2023 SSAF expenditure on **Orientation** activities with a focus on commencing students, students under 20 and international students with a breadth of activities at faculty, university and clubs and societies levels.

This is supported by SSAF survey responses and SES data where UQ is below the rest of the sector for Induction/orientation activities relevant and helpful (UQ 50% vs national 54%) and Received support from university to settle into study (UQ 51% vs national 57%).

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2.0 Background

On 11 October 2011, the Australian Parliament passed legislation allowing universities and other higher education providers to charge a fee for student services and amenities (SSAF) of a non-academic nature. The fee may be spent by higher education providers on items such as sporting and recreational activities, employment and career advice, child care, financial advice and food services as outlined in section 19.38(4)(a)-(s) of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)*.

The University has a responsibility under the Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022 to consult with students in a timely manner and to notify students of (but not limited to) mechanisms to establish priorities for expenditure (s19(3)(c)).

The fee was first collected at UQ in 2012. Annual SSAF income is between $12.5 -$13.5M, depending upon student load.

In 2021, the governance, reporting and funding allocation of SSAF at UQ were reviewed. Following VC approval of the SSAF Review Implementation Proposal in December 2021, a SSAF Service Providers Management Framework (Framework) was developed which details the processes for SSAF funded services and activities.

The Framework stipulates in clause 2.5.4:

> *An annual prioritisation report will be developed by the UQ SSAF Coordinator and submitted to SSAF Advisory Group for endorsement to the DVCA. This is based on SSAF survey results and other Student Consultation.*

This report examines the 2022 SSAF Survey responses and 2021 Student Experience Survey results to identify priority areas of SSAF spending for 2023.

The Framework suggested a third form of consultation in the form of a 'town hall or forum with students' (clause 3.3) to provide further insights into priorities. However, as agreed by the UQU and UQ, the town hall or forum did not proceed in 2022.

3.0 SSAF Survey[1]

The SSAF Survey was conducted in 2016 (3,071 responses), 2019 (3,121 responses) and 2021 (2,968 responses). For 2022, the survey was redesigned to align with the Framework as a consultation mechanism with students to obtain input, perceptions and views on the prioritisation and distribution of SSAF.

Question 1 of the survey asked students to identify service 'priorities' measured by two self-reported importance scales for each of the 19 allowable SSAF services. The first scale asked students to indicate importance to them personally while the second scale asked students to indicate importance for the wider student community.

Question 2 provided students with example services for each of the 19 allowable services where students were asked to indicate which example services were particularly important to them.

Question 3 asked students to provide free-text comments regarding other services SSAF could provide to enhance a sense of belonging within the UQ community.

All students enrolled in semester 1, 2022 were invited via email to complete the survey. The survey opened Monday 26 April and closed 15 May 2022 with 3,098 responses.

Survey responses for Question 1 were analysed using mean, median and mode values and a count of relative importance. Question 2 responses were analysed to show the importance of specific service examples as percentages. Question 3 open-ended comments were analysed manually and grouped into themes.

[1] The SSAF Survey Report 2022 provides detailed analysis of the survey responses.

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Responses for each SSAF service were also analysed according to student demographics (e.g. instruction mode, campus program, age etc).

3.1 Key Findings

Table 1 summarises the analysis of Question 1 responses, showing the services rated most highly by students across mean, median and mode vales and number of most important responses.

Careers rates highest against all values, clearly indicating this service is a high priority for students.

Other high priority services include Health and welfare, Food and drink, Library and reading rooms.

Study skills and Orientation are the highest ranked medium priority services.

Media, Childcare and Debating are the lowest ranked services.

Although some services do not rate highly, this does not mean a service will not receive funding in 2023.

Table 1: SSAF Survey Question 1 analysis summary

Service	Personal Importance				Community Importance			
	Mean	***Median***	***Mode***	***No of 'most important' responses***	***Mean***	***Median***	***Mode***	***No of 'most important' responses***
Careers	1st	Most Important	Most Important	1st	1st	Most Important	Most Important	1st
Health and welfare	2nd	Important	Most Important	3rd	2nd	Most Important	Most Important	2nd
Library & reading rooms	3rd	Important	Most Important	2nd	5th	Important	Most Important	3rd
Food & drink	5th	Important	Most Important	4th	3rd	Important	Most Important	5th
Study skills	4th	Important	Most Important	5th	9th	Important	Most Important	9th
Orientation	6th	Important	Neutral	7th	8th	Important	Most Important	6th
Media	17	Neutral	Neutral	17	17	Neutral	Neutral	18
Childcare	19	Least Important	Least Important	19	18	Neutral	Neutral	16
Debating	18	Least Important	Least Important	18	19	Neutral	Neutral	19

Green shading = High priority

Amber shading = Medium priority

Red shading = Low priority

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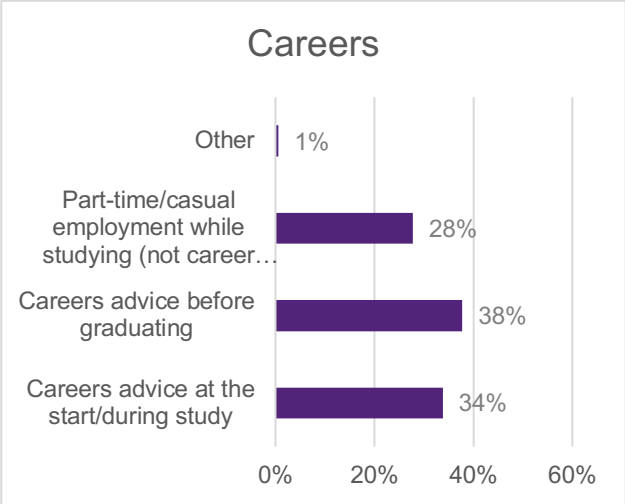
3.2 Top six services

The six services from Table 1 are analysed in more detail below where responses to Question 2 are used to suggest more specific activities that could be prioritised in 2023.

Student demographic information is analysed for the six services to suggest potential student groups that may be focussed upon in 2023.

3.2.1 Careers

The Question 2 responses for Careers are shown below. Students consider advice before graduating and when commencing or during study roughly equally important.



The demographic data for careers shown below indicates that most student groups rate Careers as important with only Herston, medicine and students aged 40 and older with a lower personal percentage than most other types. Medicine is primarily delivered at Herston which may account for the similar ratings for Medicine and Herston. The results generally suggest Careers services should be delivered for students universally without the need to deliver services for a specific student group.

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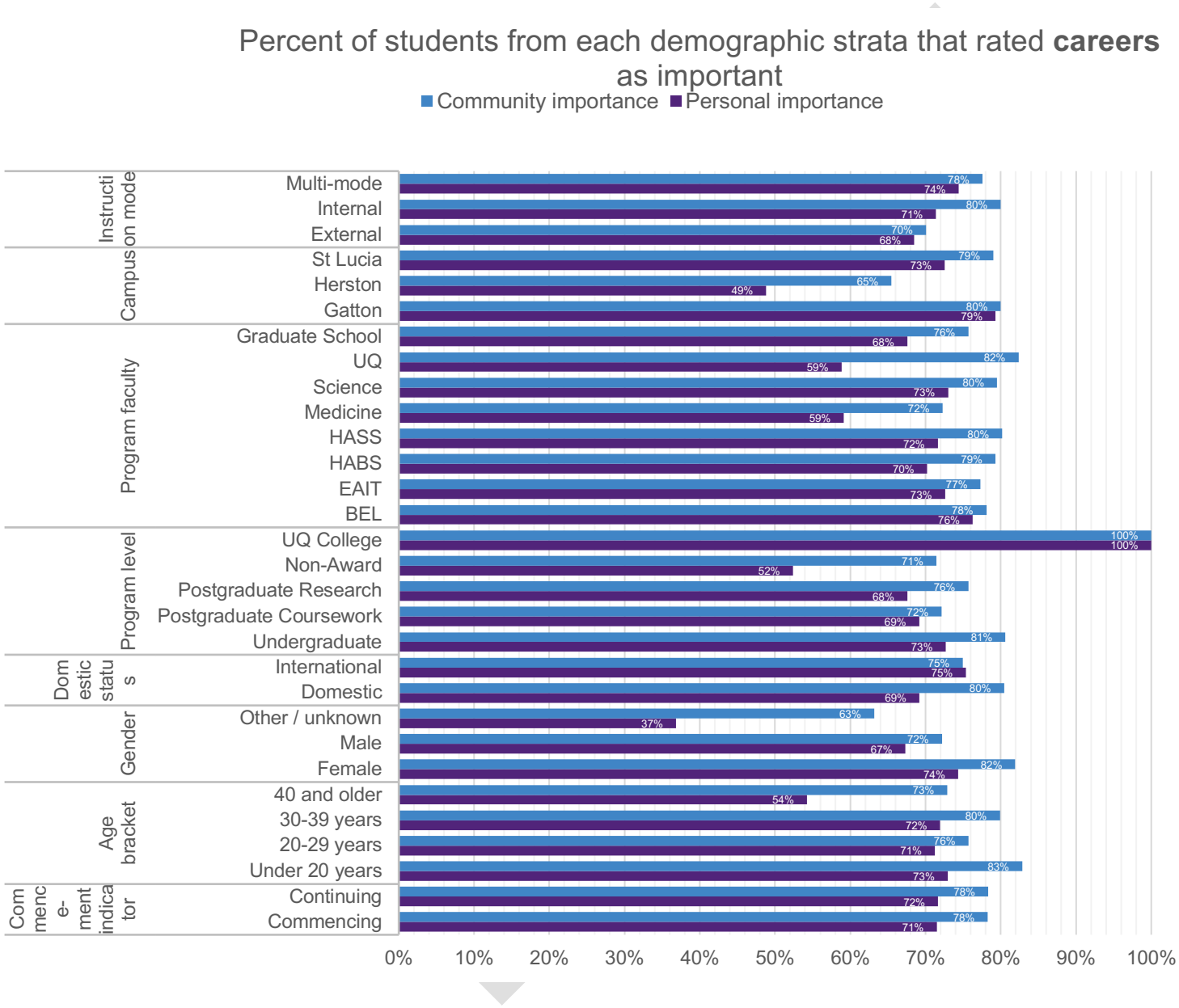
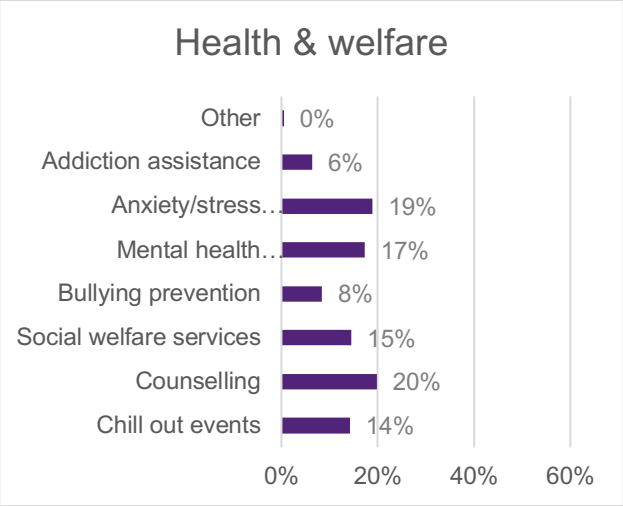

Percent of students from each demographic strata that rated **careers** as important
Community importance
Personal importance
Instruction mode
Multi-mode 78% 74%
Internal 80% 71%
External 70% 68%
Campus
St Lucia 79% 73%
Herston 65% 49%
Gatton 80% 79%
Program faculty
Graduate School 76% 68%
UQ 82% 59%
Science 80% 73%
Medicine 72% 59%
HASS 80% 72%
HABS 79% 70%
EAIT 77% 73%
BEL 78% 76%
Program level
UQ College 100% 100%
Non-Award 71% 52%
Postgraduate Research 76% 68%
Postgraduate Coursework 72% 69%
Undergraduate 81% 73%
Domestic status
International 75% 75%
Domestic 80% 69%
Gender
Other / unknown 63% 37%
Male 72% 67%
Female 82% 74%
Age bracket
40 and older 73% 54%
30-39 years 80% 72%
20-29 years 76% 71%
Under 20 years 83% 73%
Commence-ment indicator
Continuing 78% 72%
Commencing 78% 71%
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

3.2.2 Health and welfare

The Question 2 responses for Health and Welfare are shown below. Counselling services together with anxiety/stress and mental health workshops are regarded as important.



The demographic data for Health and welfare services shown below indicates, like Careers services, Health and welfare services are universally rated as important, with only minor differences for student groups. Students 40 years and older rate Health and welfare slightly lower that other student groups. Free text comments (Question 3) indicated more counselling services should be provided.

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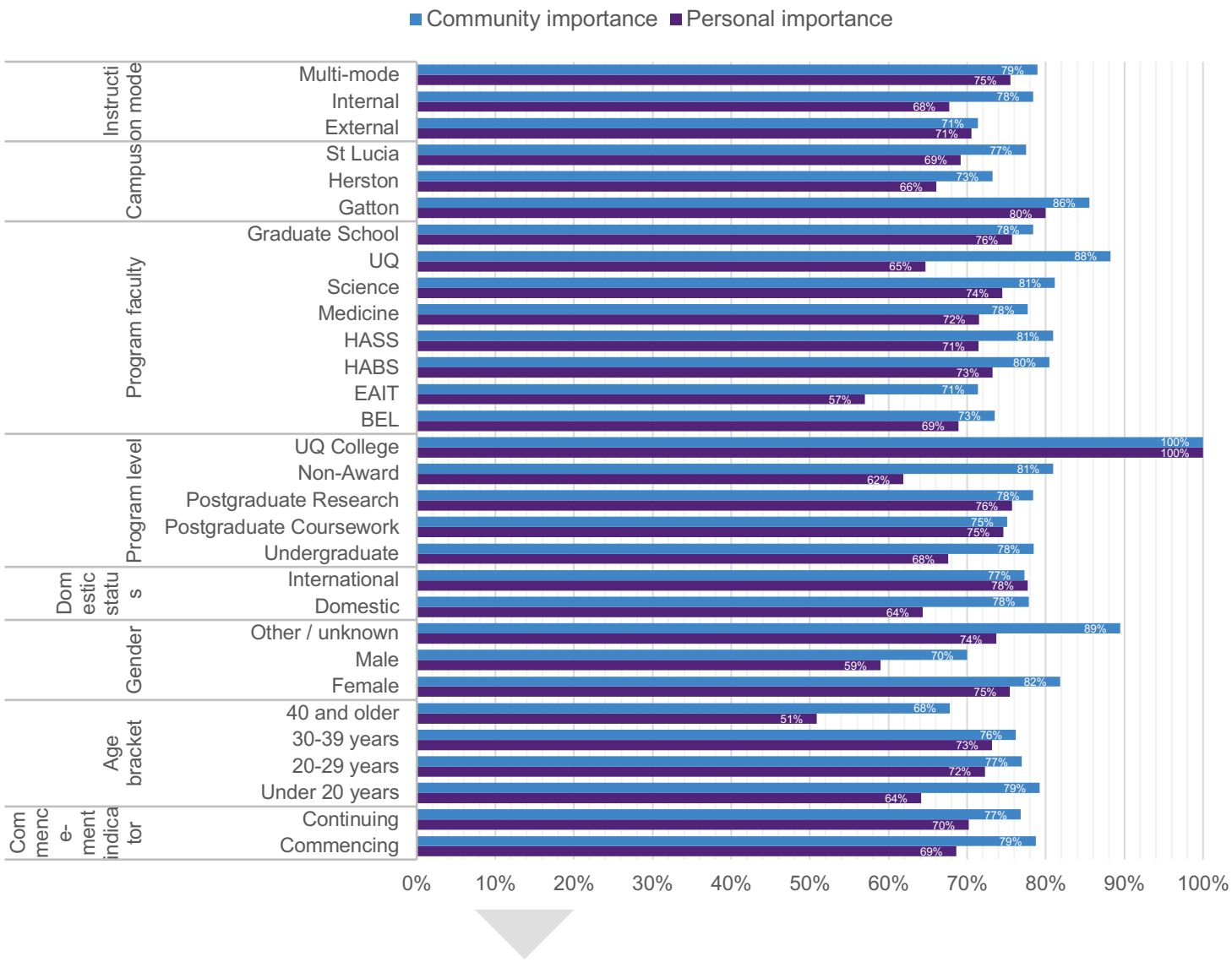
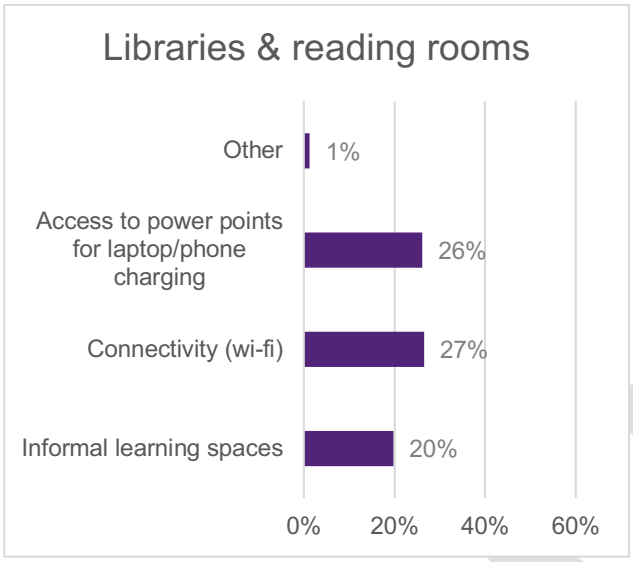
Percent of students from each demographic strata that rated **health & welfare** as important



3.2.3 Library and reading rooms

The Question 2 responses for Library and reading rooms are shown below. Access to power/charging, connectivity and informal learning spaces are important, with free text comments (Question 3) indicating learning spaces should be improved with a variety of quiet inside/outside and individual/group spaces.



The demographic data for Library and reading rooms shown below indicates reasonably strong wide-spread support for this service, with students 40 years and older again indicating lesser support.

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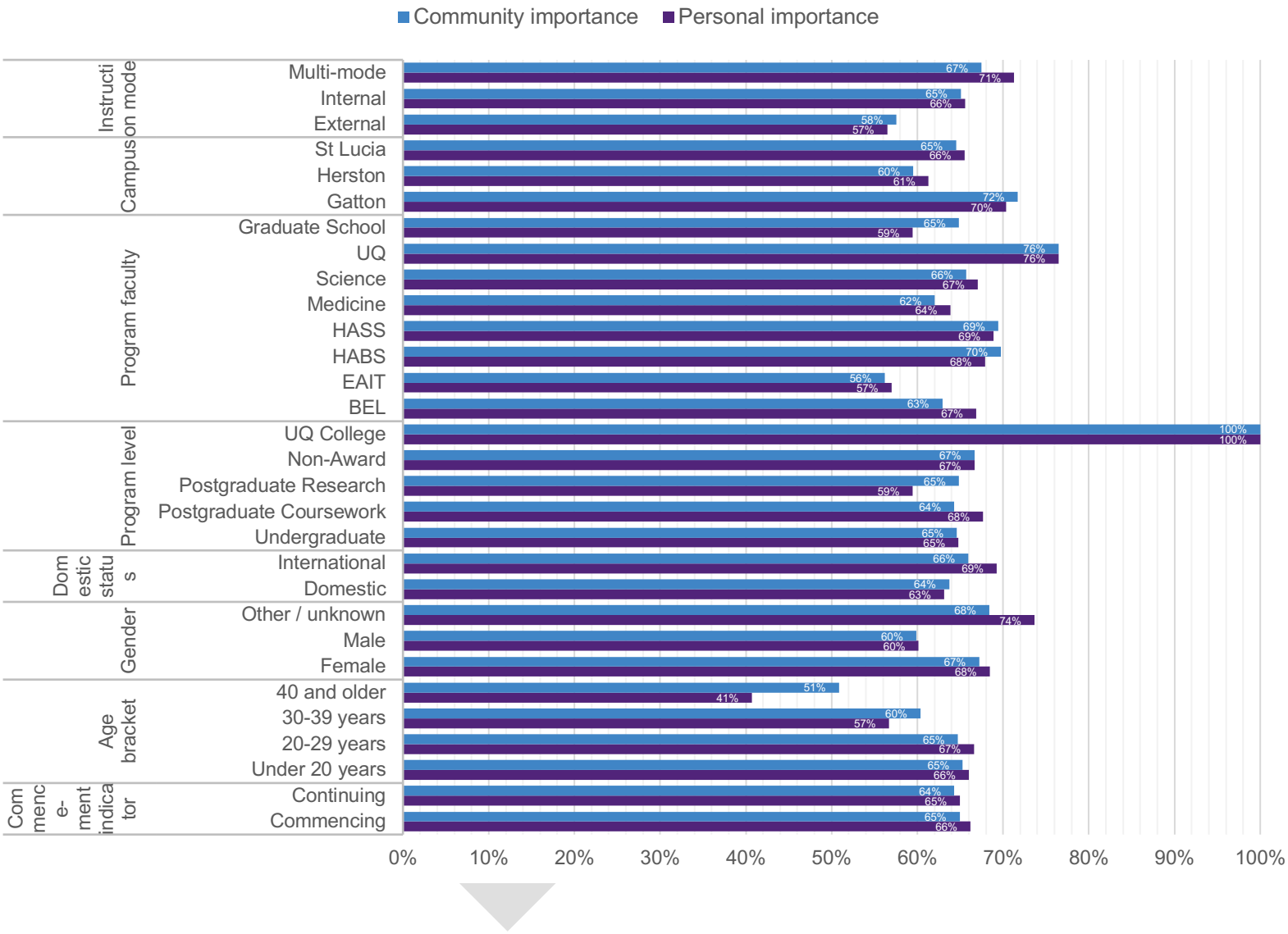
Percent of students from each demographic strata that rated **libraries & reading rooms** as important



3.2.4 Food and drink

The Question 2 responses for Food and drink are shown below. A relatively even spread of responses indicates making food more affordable by offering cheaper or free food is important.

The demographic data for Food and drink shows the service is regarded as important by most student groups, except 40 and older students who do not see food and drink as overly important. Free text comments (Question 3) indicate students want better quality and more free food, with more options to cater for various dietary requirements.

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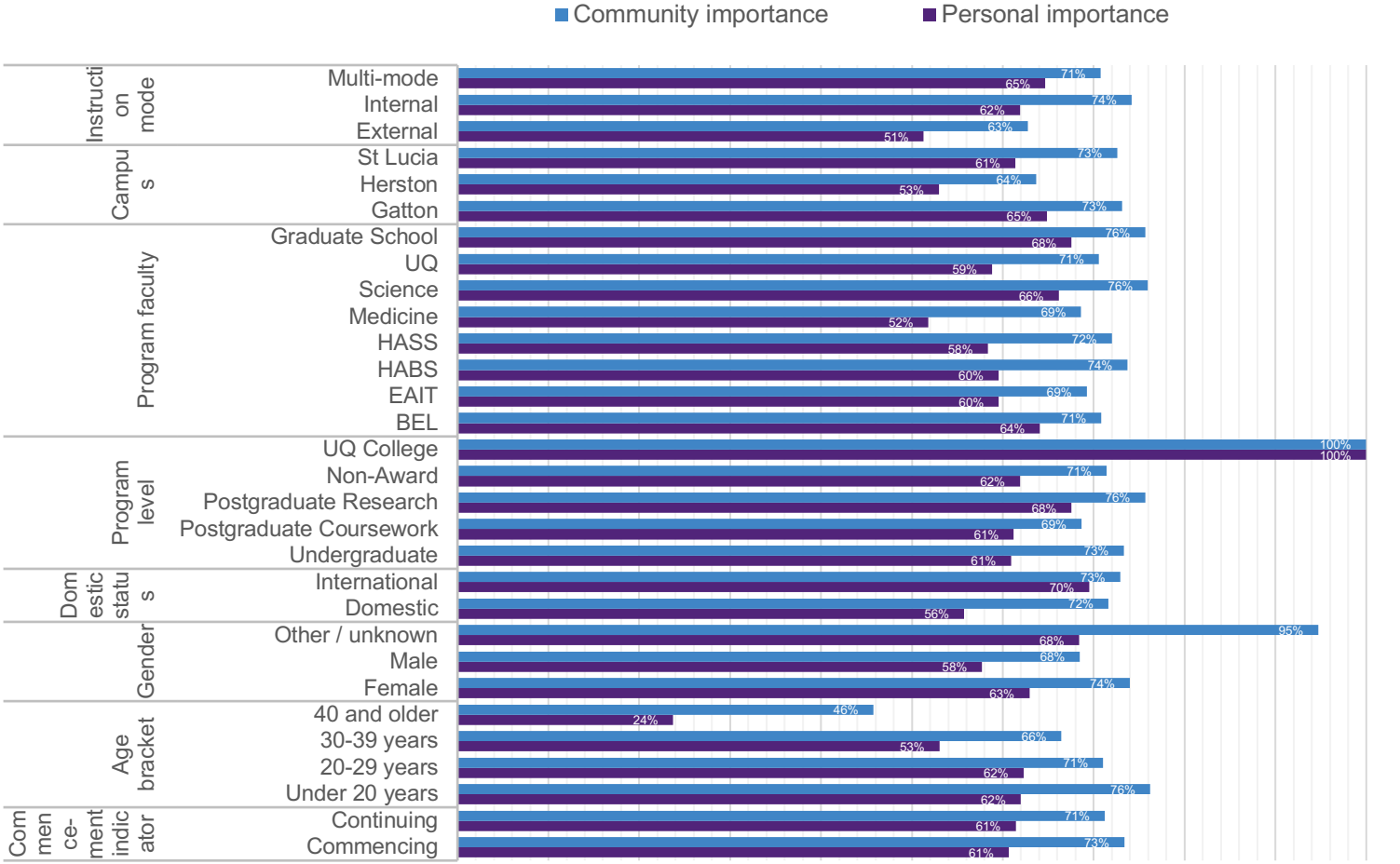
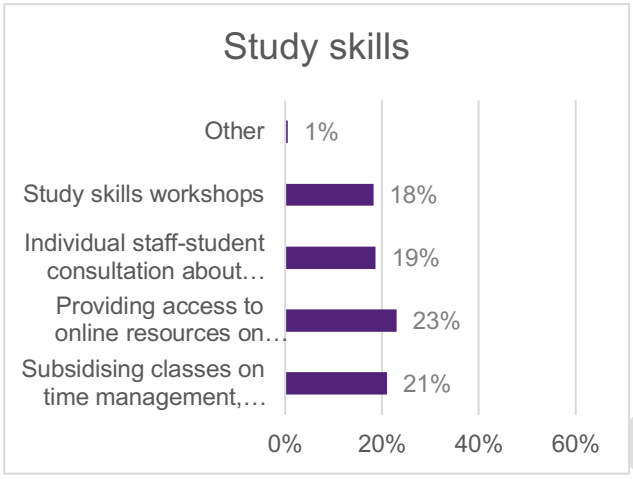
Percent of students from each demographic strata that rated **food and drink** as important



3.2.5 Study skills

The Question 2 responses for Study skills are shown below. While access to online resources is most important, other services to assist with academic success also rate highly.



The demographic data for Study skills shows the service is regarded as important by most student groups.

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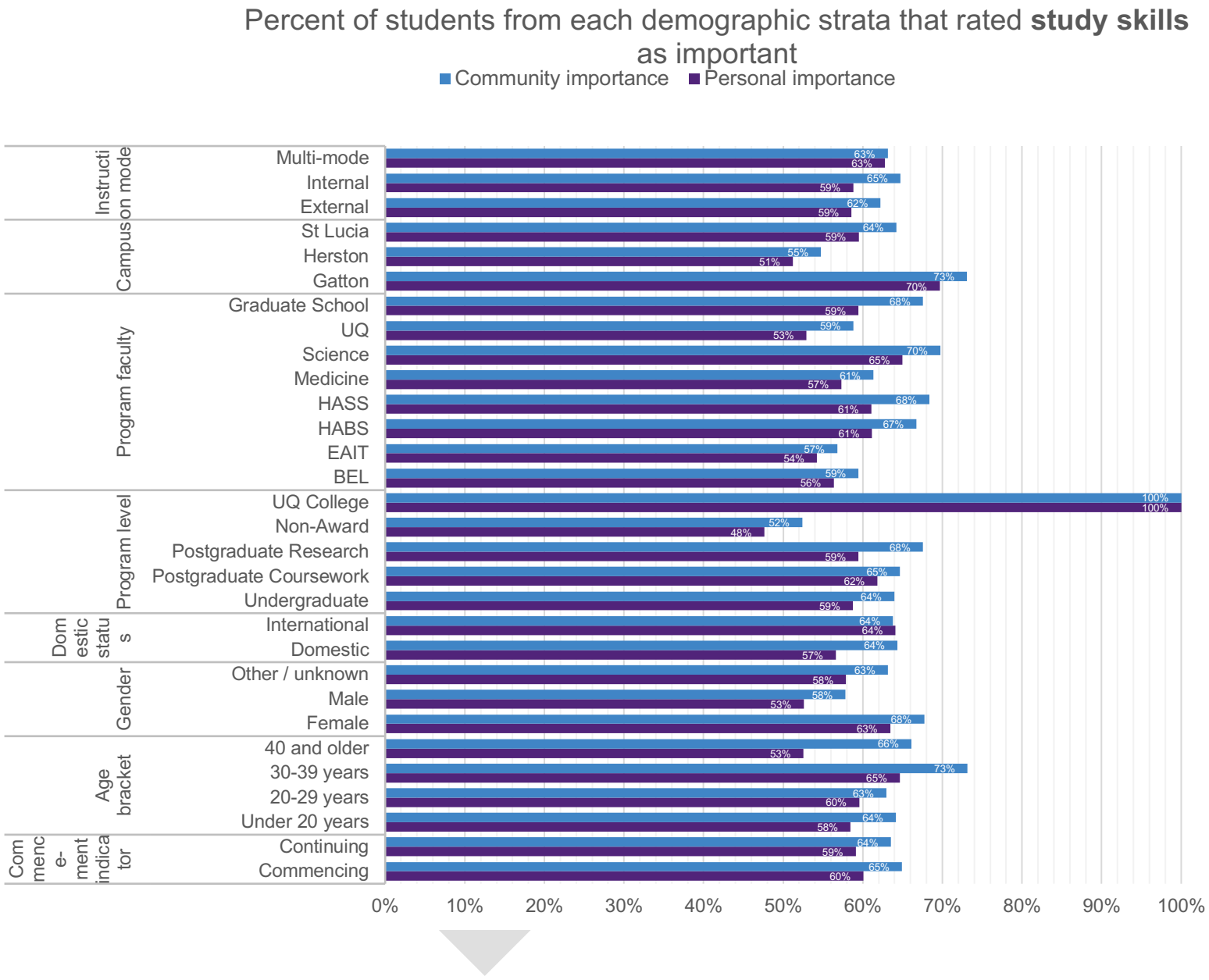
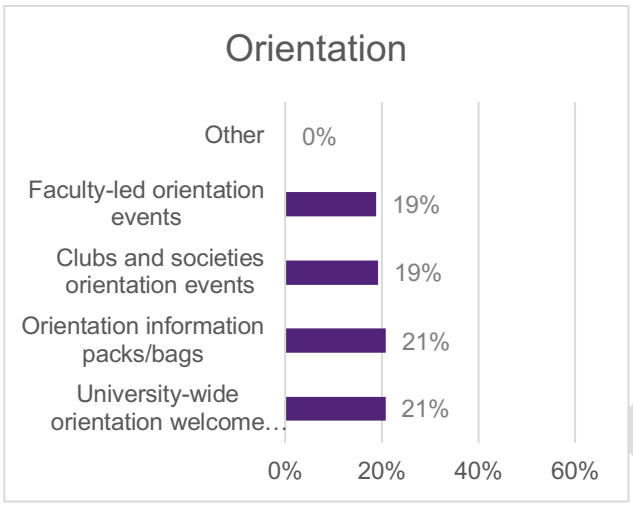

Percent of students from each demographic strata that rated **study skills** as important
Community importance
Personal importance
Instruction mode
Multi-mode 63% 63%
Internal 65% 59%
External 62% 59%
Campus
St Lucia 64% 59%
Herston 55% 51%
Gatton 73% 70%
Program faculty
Graduate School 68% 59%
UQ 59% 53%
Science 70% 65%
Medicine 61% 57%
HASS 68% 61%
HABS 67% 61%
EAIT 57% 54%
BEL 59% 56%
Program level
UQ College 100% 100%
Non-Award 52% 48%
Postgraduate Research 68% 59%
Postgraduate Coursework 65% 62%
Undergraduate 64% 59%
Domestic status
International 64% 64%
Domestic 64% 57%
Gender
Other / unknown 63% 58%
Male 58% 53%
Female 68% 63%
Age bracket
40 and older 66% 53%
30-39 years 73% 65%
20-29 years 63% 60%
Under 20 years 64% 58%
Commence-ment indicator
Continuing 64% 59%
Commencing 65% 60%
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

3.2.6 Orientation

The Question 2 responses for Study skills are shown below. Faculty-led, UQ wide and local Clubs and societies events are all seen as important. Students indicate orientation information bags and packs are important.



The demographic data for Orientation shows the service is regarded as more important for commencing students, students under 20 and international students.

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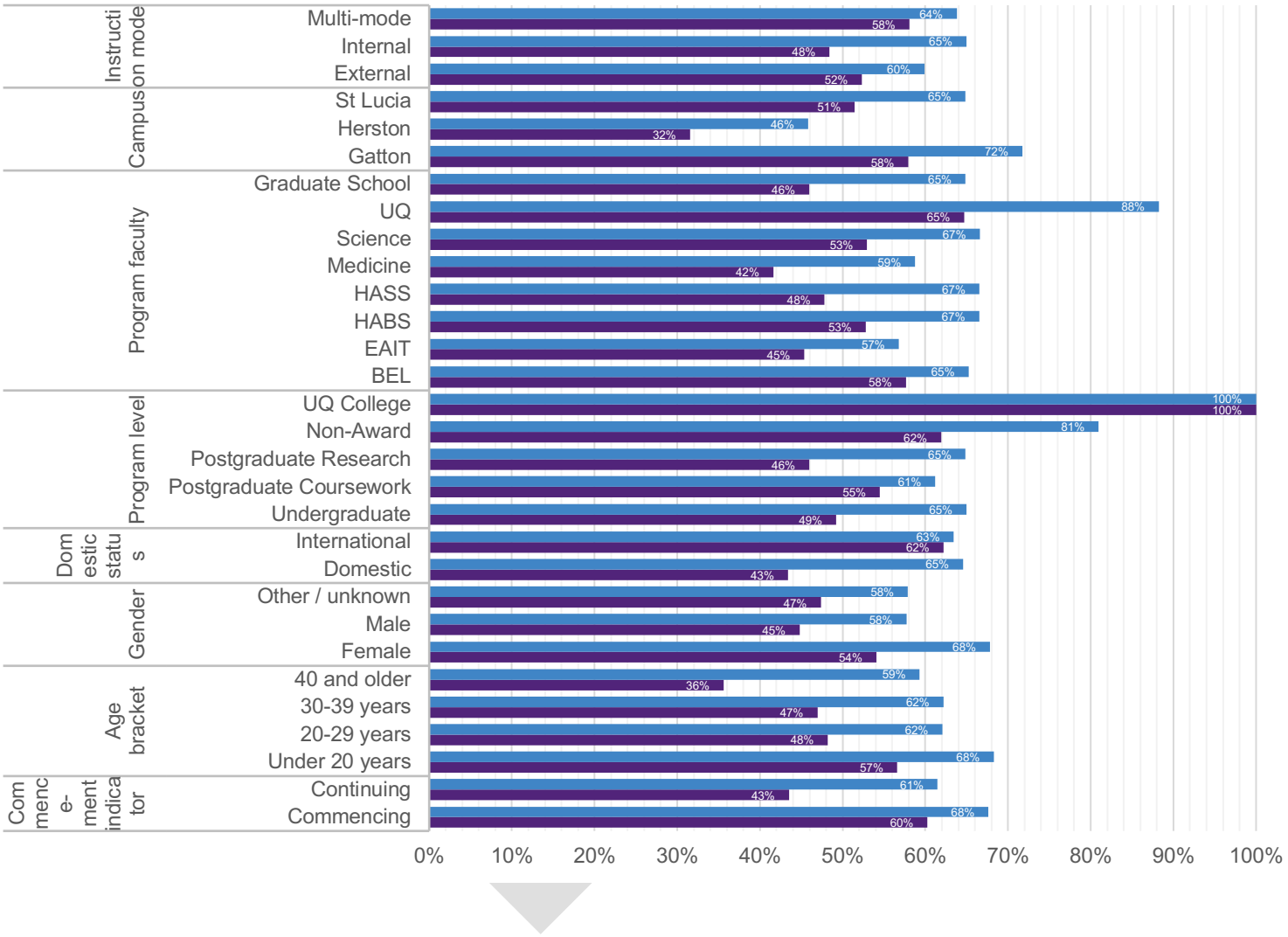
Percent of students from each demographic strata that rated **orientation** as important



4.0 Student Experience Survey 2021[2]

The Student Experience Survey (SES) is a national annual survey designed to measure the satisfaction of higher education coursework students and forms part of the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) suite of surveys. The 2021 SES survey was conducted in August-September and was open to first year and last year students enrolled in Semester 2 who had also been enrolled in Semester 1. In 2021, 7631 undergraduate UQ students completed the survey.

The SES has three single measures:

1. Overall satisfaction with entire education experience
2. Overall teaching quality satisfaction
3. Sense of belonging

and five scales:

1. Learner engagement scale[3] (based on 7 items)
2. Learning resources scale (7 items)
3. Skills development scale (8 items)
4. Student support scale (13 items)
5. Teaching quality scale (11 items)

Following a substantial decline in position in 2020 due to COVID-19, UQ's rank across all but one measure (skills development) improved in 2021. UQ's position on overall teaching quality and the teaching quality scale is back within the top ten and the University ranked 13th on overall educational experience. UQ's rank for learning resources was back to pre-pandemic levels (6th) and appears to be a relatively strong point for UQ.

4.1 Student Support Scale

The Student Support scale is particularly relevant to SSAF because many of the SSAF allowable services align with this scale. Table 1 below lists the items measured in the Student Support scale and results for 2021 and 2019.

Table 2: Student Support Summary results 2019 v 2021 Undergraduates

Student Support Scale Item	2019 UQ Result	2021 UQ Result	UQ Result % Change**	2011 National* Result	2021 National* Result	National* Result % Change**
Student Support Scale	***72%***	***68%***	***-4%***	***74%***	***72%***	***-2%***
Received appropriate English language skill support	37%	38%	+1%	44%	45%	0%
Offered support relevant to circumstances	43%	42%	-1%	50%	49%	-1%
Induction/Orientation activities relevant and helpful	51%	50%	-1%	56%	54%	-3%
Received support from university to settle into study	52%	51%	-1%	59%	57%	-2%
Administrative staff or systems: available	63%	57%	-6%	62%	59%	-3%

[2] Information in sections 4.0, 4.1 & 4.2 was supplied by Planning and Business Intelligence – Summary Benchmarking Report (Undergraduates)

Administrative staff or systems: helpful	60%	58%	-2%	61%	60%	0%
Career advisors: available	48%	44%	-4%	50%	50%	0%
Career advisors: helpful	49%	46%	-2%	51%	52%	+1%
Academic or learning advisors: available	62%	61%	-2%	63%	63%	0%
Academic or learning advisors: helpful	66%	62%	-4%	65%	65%	0%
Support services: available	53%	48%	-5%	55%	52%	-3%
Support services: helpful	56%	51%	-5%	56%	53%	-3%
Experienced efficient enrolment and admissions processes	76%	73%	-3%	73%	71%	-2%

-For column "2021 UQ Result": Green shading shows that UQ's result is statistically significantly higher (with 95% statistical confidence) than national result, while red shading shows that UQ's result is statistically significantly lower (with 95% statistical confidence) than national result.

- For column "UQ Result % Change": Green shading shows that UQ's year-on-year result change is better than national year-on-year result change, while red shading shows that UQ's year-on-year result change is worse than national year-on-year result change.

* National results exclude UQ.
** Each percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.

Despite gaining one ranking place nationally on the student support scale between 2019 and 2021, UQ still ranks 28th in 2021 (UQ Go8 rank = 4th) and this is the lowest ranked measure for The University. UQ scores significantly worse than the rest of the sector on "Received appropriate English language skill support" item (38% vs 45%), "Offered support relevant to circumstances" item (42% vs 49%), "Received support from university to settle into study" item (51% vs 57%), and Career Advisor items (available – 44% vs 50%, helpful – 46% vs 52%).

Given UQ ranks 28th nationally for the student support scale and it is the lowest ranked measure for UQ, allocating SSAF to initiatives that align with this scale would be prudent. Table 2 below aligns SSAF allowable services with SES student support measures. Four (4) services identified as important by the SSAF Survey (Careers, Health and welfare, Study Skills and Orientation) match the Student Support measures.

Table 3: SSAF allowable services and SES Student Support measures

SSAF Service	Student Support measure
Helping students obtain employment or advice on careers	Career advisors: available
	Career advisors: helpful
Helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled	Academic or learning advisors: available
	Academic or learning advisors: helpful
	Received appropriate English language skill support
Giving students information to help them in their orientation	Induction/Orientation activities relevant and helpful

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	Received support from university to settle into study
Promoting the health or welfare of students, Providing legal services to students, Helping students with their financial affairs	Support services: available
	Support services: helpful

4.2 Learning Resources Scale

The SSAF service Library and reading rooms identified as important by the SSAF Survey aligns with the SES Learning Resources scale, specifically Quality of teaching spaces and Quality of student spaces and common areas. Table 4 below lists the items measured in the Learning Resources scale and results for 2021 and 2019.

Table 4: Learning Resources Summary results 209 v 2021 Undergraduate

Learning Resources Scale Item	2019 UQ Result	2021 UQ Result	UQ Result % Change	2019 National* Result	2021 National* Result	National* Result % Change
Learning Resources Scale	***86%***	***83%***	***-2%***	***85%***	***80%***	***-4%***
Quality of teaching spaces	89%	87%	-2%	87%	83%	-3%
Quality of student spaces and common areas	74%	80%	5%	80%	78%	-2%
Quality of online learning materials	87%	83%	-4%	86%	82%	-3%
Quality of computing/IT resources	82%	79%	-3%	82%	78%	-4%
Quality of assigned books, notes and resources	79%	78%	-1%	79%	78%	-1%
Quality of laboratory or studio equipment	85%	82%	-3%	83%	78%	-5%
Quality of library resources and facilities	86%	88%	2%	87%	84%	-3%
Quality of online learning platform	-	87%	-	-	86%	-

-For column “2021 UQ Result”: Green shading shows that UQ’s result is statistically significantly higher (with 95% statistical confidence) than national result, while red shading shows that UQ’s result is statistically significantly lower (with 95% statistical confidence) than national result.

- For column “UQ Result % Change”: Green shading shows that UQ’s year-on-year result change is better than national year-on-year result change, while red shading shows that UQ’s year-on-year result change is worse than national year-on-year result change.

* National results exclude UQ.
** Each percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.

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Despite UQ being above the 2021 National result for Quality of teaching spaces (UQ 87% v 83%) and Quality of student spaces and common areas (UQ 80% v 78%), UQ has dropped 2% for Quality of teaching spaces since 2019.

5.0 2023 Priorities

Based upon analysis of the 2022 SSAF Survey responses and 2021 Student Experience Survey results, this report recommends the following areas should be SSAF spending priorities in 2023:

High priority

1) Careers
2) Health and welfare
3) Library and reading rooms
4) Food and drink

Medium priority

5) Study skills
6) Orientation

5.1 Service provider responsibilities

The University has a responsibility under the *Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022* to consult with students in a timely manner and to notify students of (but not limited to) mechanisms to establish priorities for expenditure (s19(3)(c)).

The SSAF survey is a key mechanism to establish priorities.

As per the Framework (clause 4.3), decisions on allocations of SSAF amounts must give effect to outcomes of consultation. When preparing Expenditure Proposals, Service Providers must consider how the proposed service(s) align with, and support Students' current priorities, as informed by Student Consultation, including findings from the SSAF Survey (Framework clause 4.8.2). Expenditure Proposals submitted by Service Providers and recommended by the SSAF Advisory Group will be considered by the DVCA, with specific consideration of whether all projects are aligned with annual and emerging priorities (Framework clauses 4.5 and 4.5.2).

Service Providers therefore have a responsibility to align 2023 spending with the priorities outlined in this report. Expenditure Proposals for 2023 should clearly demonstrate alignment with the priorities.

6.0 Wider Engagement

Although the primary purpose of this report is to inform the SSAF Advisory Group and the DVCA in relation to SSAF priorities, the findings and student opinions have broader utility for the wider UQ community. It is therefore suggested this report (after endorsement by the DVCA) and the SSAF Survey Report 2022 be distributed with accompanying communications as follows:

Table 5: Report distribution

Entity	SSAF Survey Report 2022	SSAF Prioritisation Report for 2023
Properties and Facilities	X	
Graduate School	X	X
Library	X	

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Faculty Executive Managers, Associate Deans (Academic), Associate Deans (Research)	X	
Marketing & Communications (CX team)	X	
Student Experience Committee (for noting)	X	

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