



# 2025 Australian Student Wellbeing Survey

Research carried  
out by YouGov

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The education sector has the greatest potential to change the world - students become future researchers, teachers, business owners, leaders, carers, and more, contributing to the rich societal fabric that the world needs. To protect and grow the education sector, listening and responding to the feedback, concerns, and recommendations of college students is a necessary challenge.

It is evident that students are navigating a changing academic terrain. Personalised support, a heightened sense of belonging, and rapid adaptation to AI supports are paramount.

This survey captures the voices of students, to support education leaders in their ongoing efforts to offer students an educational experience that aligns with both their study expectations and aspirations for the future.



# Foreword



To our partners in education:

Higher education in Australia - and across the globe - is in the midst of significant transformation, driven by technology, shifting student needs, and evolving societal expectations. This annual Student Wellbeing survey continues to provide learner-centric guidance for leaders and policymakers. It offers insights to celebrate the sector's strengths, address emerging gaps, and ensure that educational institutions remain adaptive, informed, and responsive to the diverse and evolving needs of today's students - including a positive education experience and the higher order thinking skills essential in this age of AI.

In partnership with the higher education sector, we remain steadfast in our core mission of increasing life chances for students, everywhere. We continue to prioritise student learning & wellbeing and are committed to supporting the sector in navigating the challenges and opportunities in the years ahead.

**Michael Larsen**

Chief Executive Officer, Studiosity

**Studiosity**

# Foreword



Dear colleagues in education,

In any context, effective education involves asking questions - some technical, others practical while others are about meaning and purpose. Each requires different responses to achieve positive outcomes. .

The challenge in the current context is understanding how we balance innovation with tradition? How do we ensure that AI enriches, rather than diminishes, the student experience? How do we reconcile the joy of learning with a societal responsibility for credentials? What is clear, is that our focus must remain on continual investment in quality teaching and learning. This means that all students, regardless of background or performance level, are equipped to thrive in the world that is changing at rapid speed, with increasing levels of ambiguity and uncertainty. In this year's survey we see positive signs of this happening - particularly trends around belonging and stress. We can also see a fractured student population and diverse expectations and experiences, reminding us that we have no choice but to be attentive to the experiences of all. To achieve this, more than ever before we need courageous leadership for decisive institutional change.

Whether it's enhancing accessibility, strengthening personalised learning, or improving peer connections, we are reminded that our commitment to student wellbeing must be unwavering and adaptive.

This year's report highlights key actions for driving forward our shared mission: to create an inclusive, engaging, and ethical learning environment that prepares students for success in the world ahead.

**Professor Judyth Sachs**

Chief Academic Officer, Studiosity

Former Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Provost Macquarie University and  
Former Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching at Sydney University

**Studiosity**

# Introduction



## Background

### YouGov

YouGov is a global public opinion and data company, international market research and data analytics firm headquartered in the UK with operations in Europe, North America, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific.

### Studiosity

Studiosity's AI for Learning is a critical component of the modern university, ensuring all students can engage in ethical generative AI to receive feedback, for successful, credible, graduate outcomes with visible learning outcomes for teachers. Universities around the world partner with Studiosity to grow student success at scale, via 24/7 formative writing feedback, discussion about core skills, and peer-to-peer connection.

For nine years, Studiosity has run an annual Student Wellbeing Survey with Australia's university students.

In October 2024, YouGov was commissioned by Studiosity to conduct the ninth wave of this global research.



## Objectives

The survey investigates students' own responses to key areas of their wellbeing during study.

This annual survey seeks to better understand and discuss the motivations, emotions, and demands of university students, to provide the data and findings to higher education leadership, to support initiatives and solutions. This year, the survey focused on topics such as experiences of artificial intelligence, connection to other students, stress, importance of grades, experiences of cheating, optimism for the future, and institutional belonging.



## Methodology

Data collection method	Online survey
Target population	University students 18+
Sample source	YouGov panel
Sample size	N=1,234
Fieldwork dates	12 November – 10 December 2024

### Sample & Target Group:

Studiosity produced the questions for this survey with advice from YouGov to ensure robust data collection. YouGov gathered the responses from students in Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates via an online survey.

The survey was conducted by the YouGov analysis institute. The survey ran from 23rd November to 29th



December 2024 and gained 10,224 responses, with 1,234 from students in Australia (up on the AU sample size of 1,212 in 2024).

This survey was collected on the YouGov Panels, where each member has accepted to participate in online interviews and has received an E-mail invitation with a link to the survey. The sample definition is created in order to provide a representative cross-section of the Australian population, based on the target group and the purpose of the survey.

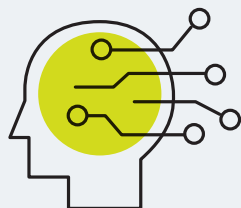
All Australian public universities were represented in the Australian sample. The students were 18 – over 50 years old and consisted of a mix of both domestic (80%) and international (20%) students.

**Weighting:**

Data was weighted according to the dimensions of gender, level of university studies finished and geography on the basis of an ideal weighting from Statistics Australia, so that the results are representative of the population in relation to the aforementioned target group.



# Key findings



## **Students use and expect AI tools, but 1 in 4 aren't confident they're learning**

A substantial majority of students (74%) are using AI tools for assignments and study, and over half (55%) expect their institutions to provide AI support. This highlights the urgent need for universities to adapt and offer ethical, university-approved AI resources, address academic integrity concerns, and ensure equitable access. Over 1 in 4 students (27%) feel only slightly or not at all confident that they are "learning as well as improving their skills" when using gen AI tools.



## **More students want a peer mentor**

Over half of students who did not have a mentor expressed a desire for one (56%). This, along with increased stress for those without mentors, and higher confidence in learning with AI for those with mentors, indicates institutions need to provide low-barrier, equitable, and accessible peer support options in 2025 and beyond.



## **Study-related stress levels a persistent issue**

While overall study-related stress frequency has decreased to post-COVID (2022) levels, stress remains a significant issue for students, particularly related to the fear of failing and time management. Institutions should provide accessible and flexible support services, address financial concerns, and consider alternative assessment methods to reduce student stress.



# DEMOGRAPHICS:

## Diversity and study-life pressures

The juggle is real – 1 in 4 students are employed full-time while studying, 17% both work and study full time. More students also have caring responsibilities (+6% from last year).

The students (n=1,234) represented a mix of males (48%) and females (51%), domestic (80%, n = 982) and international (20%, n=252) students.

Of respondents, 81% report English as their first language; of those for whom it is not (n=274), 17% record Mandarin, and 11% Australian Aboriginal languages.

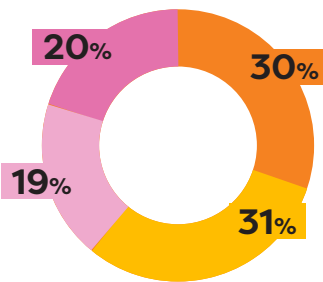
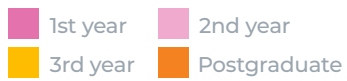
Additionally, 18% (n=174) of student respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This is an increase from last year's sample of 7% (n=65).

The 18-26 year old age group (n=679, 55%) were the largest group of respondents, and 20% of respondents had just finished their first year of study.

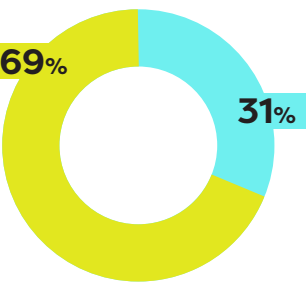
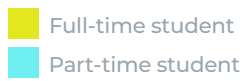
More students are living in metro locations (67%) compared to regional/rural (33%), and 69% have a full-time study load. 24% are STEM students and 17% are studying Business.

Survey respondents report a mix of average grades, 42% with a Credit or Pass, and 55% of students reporting Distinction or High Distinction.

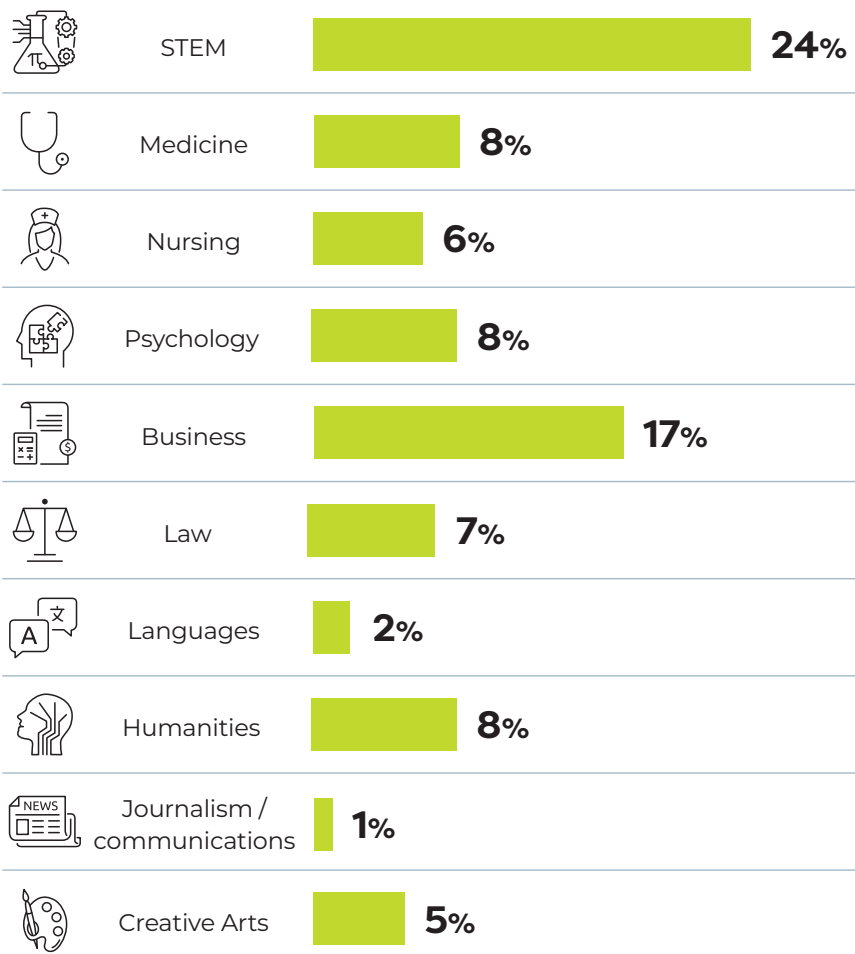
YEAR COMPLETED (2025 WAVE)



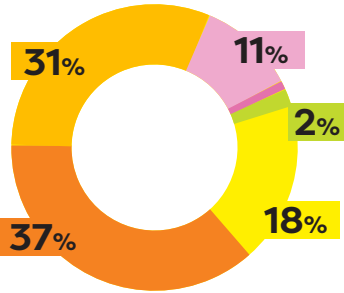
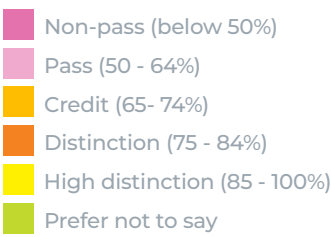
STUDENT STATUS IN 2024



STUDENT STUDY SUBJECT

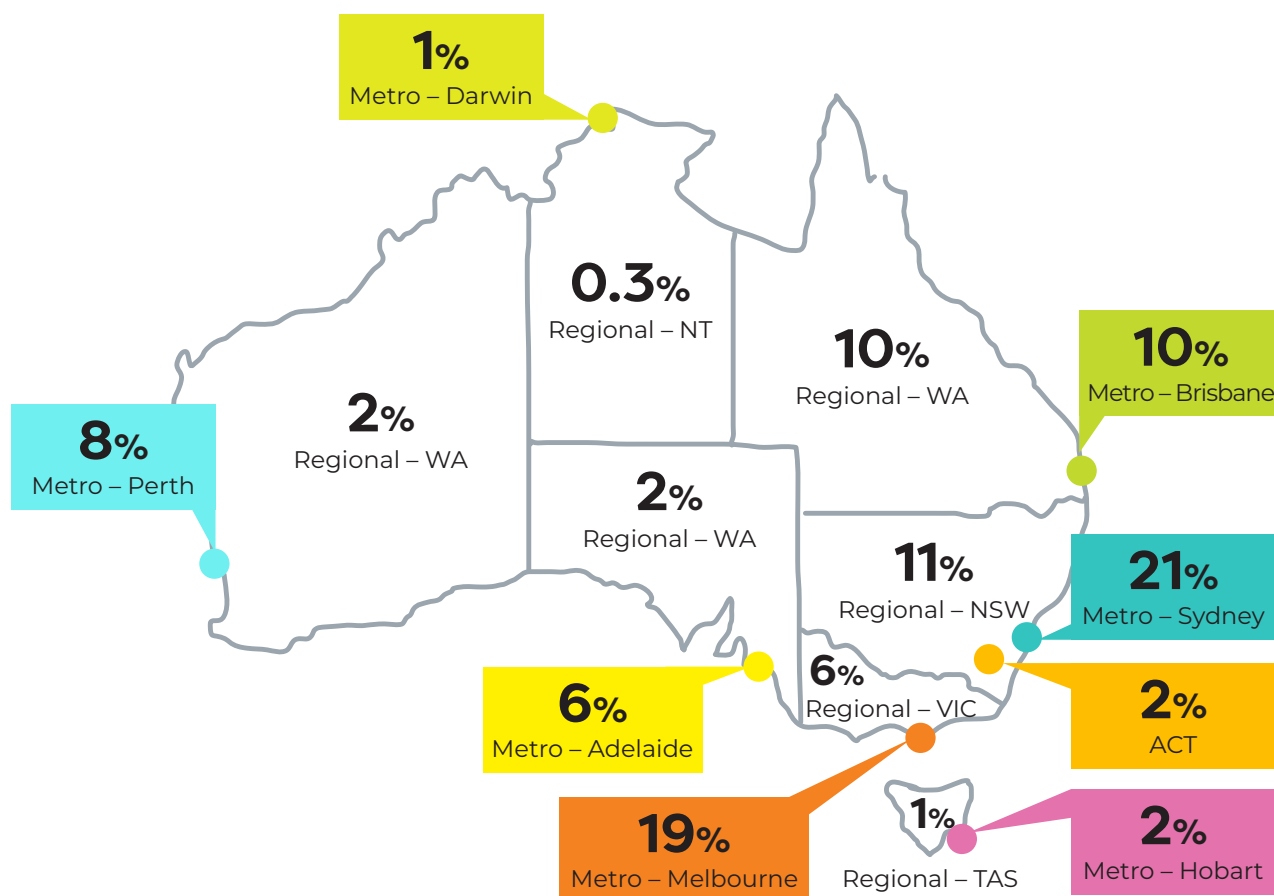


AVERAGE GRADE

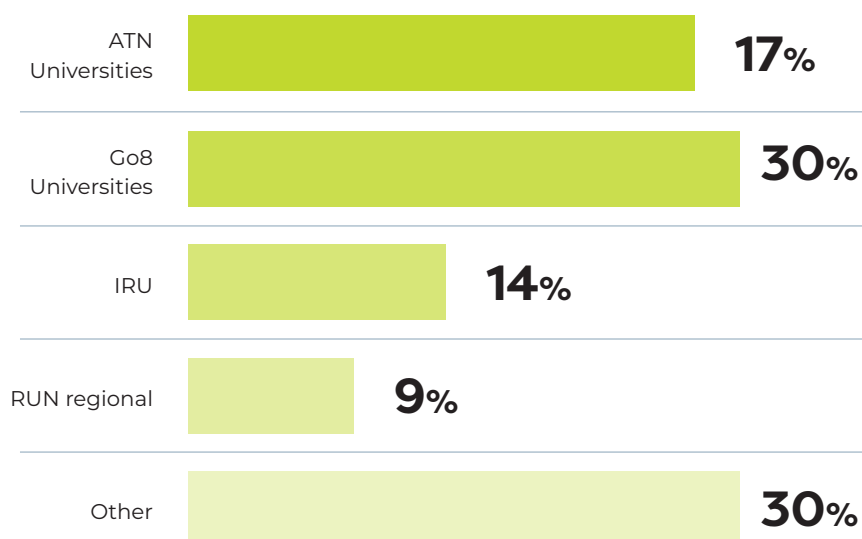


## Demographics: Diversity and study-life pressures

STUDENT LOCATIONS



AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY GROUPS



31% are carers - people who provide unpaid care or other support to family members and friends at the same time as study. This is an increase on the previous two waves, where only 25% and 14% of respondents claimed to be carers.

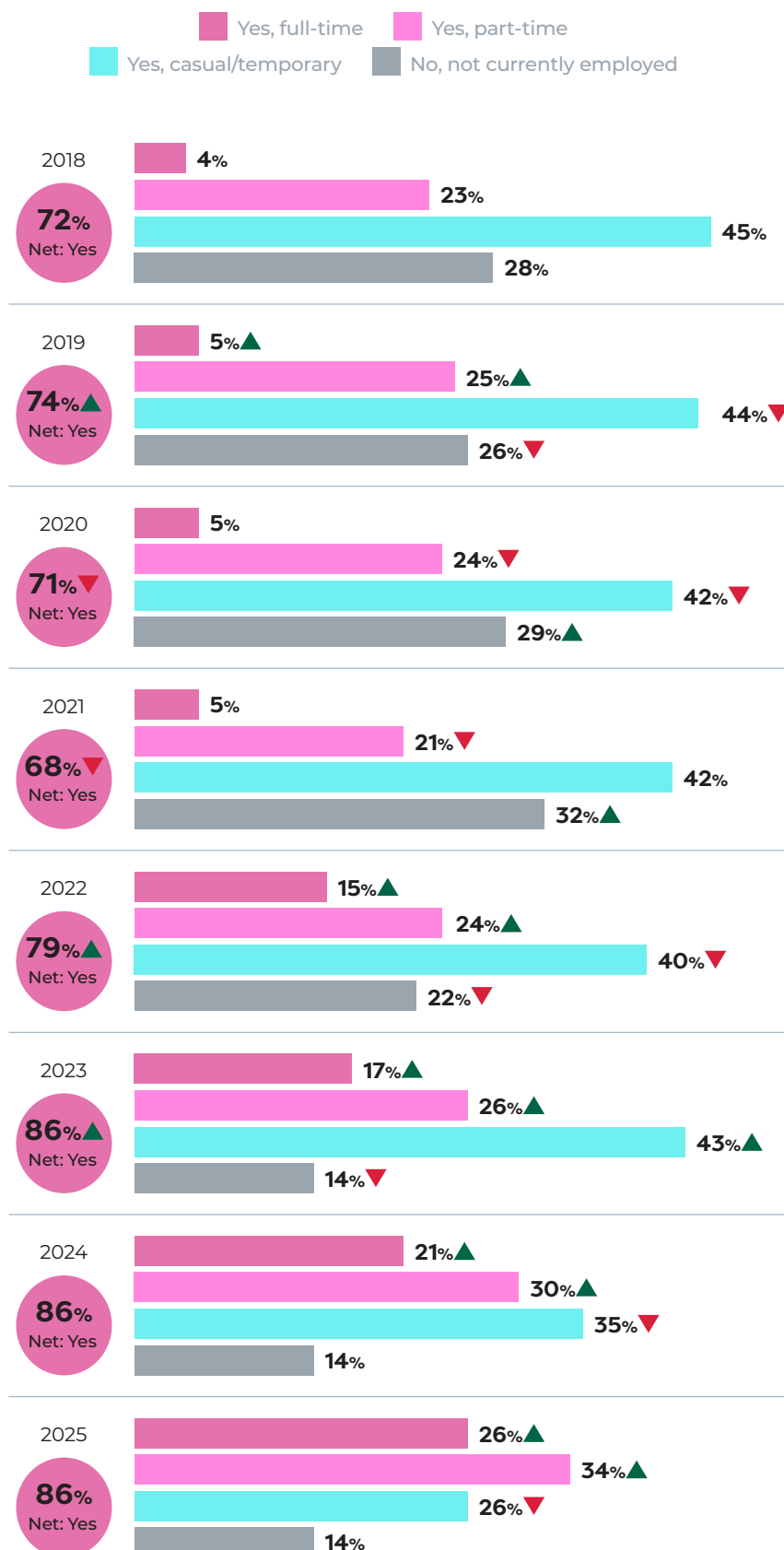
30% (n=374) of respondents attended universities in the Group of Eight (Go8), 17% (n=207) attending Australian Technology Network (ATN) Universities, 14% (n=170) at Innovative Research Universities (IRU) and 9% (n=116) attending universities in the Regional University Network (RUN), with the remainder (n=367) at other universities across Australia.

## Demographics: Diversity and study-life pressures

Compared to the prior two years, the same amount of university students in Australia are working while studying (86%), with a progressive uplift in full time work (11 pp up over 3 years), but a significant drop in casual work during study (down 17pp since 2023). Younger students (18-25 years) are more likely to be in casual employment (36%) than older students.

Compared to average global responses (81%), Australian students reported slightly higher rates of employment (86%) - similar to New Zealand university students (88%), higher than the UK (73%) and the United States (82%).

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS – EMPLOYMENT DURING STUDY



▼ shows any increase, ▲ shows any decrease.

# CHAPTER 1:

## Student wellbeing and generative artificial intelligence (AI)

### Discussion:

- As AI tools become more embedded in students' academic lives, university leaders must act to ensure provided technologies protect and enhance cognitive ability - learning. This action would also allow institutions to also address key concerns around academic integrity, stress, and equity. With 74% of students using AI for assignments and study tasks, and a strong expectation (55%) that their institutions will provide AI support, universities need to adapt early in 2025.

- Increased AI use can sometimes increase isolation, seen as less contact with peers and teachers. University leaders should ensure AI implementation includes strong referral, including systems for increasing peer engagement, teacher oversight, and other participation in the institutional student environment.

- Confidence and equitable access to ethical AI support across disciplines, study modes, locations and demographics is important for fostering balanced engagement and support, regardless of faculty or academic performance.

**As AI tools become integrated into higher education, leaders must ensure their use is effective and ethical, and prioritises students' agency, at scale.**

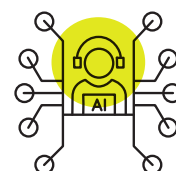
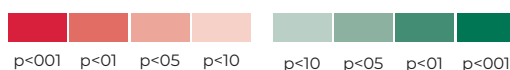
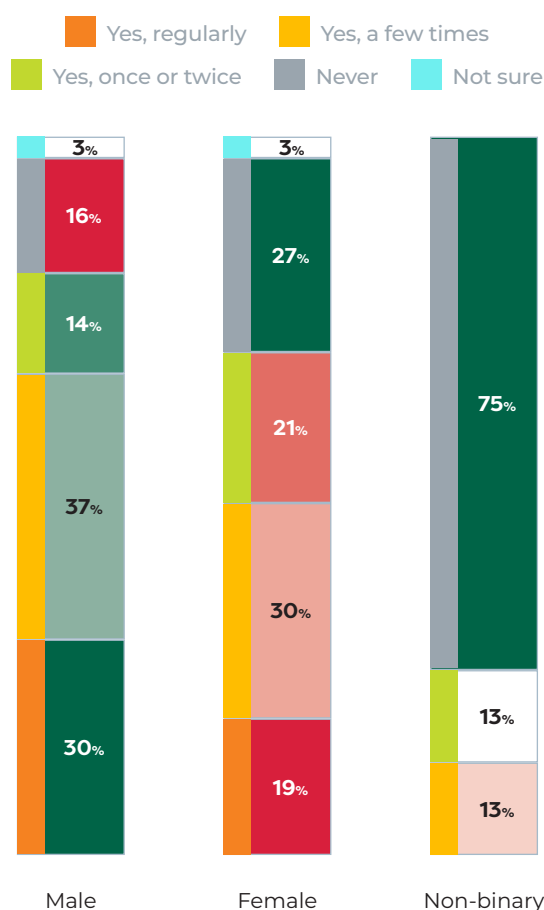
A large majority (74%) have used any AI tools to help with assignments or study tasks, with male students more likely to report more regular use.

### Q. Have you used any AI tools to help with your assignments or study tasks?

International students report more frequent use of AI to help with study tasks (36% "yes regularly") as opposed to 21% of domestic students reporting the same. Those students with caring responsibilities and those employed full time are more likely to report using AI

tools regularly compared to other groups. This could be for productivity purposes - where they have less time to juggle the additional responsibilities of work and family, however educators know that using AI for productivity carries a risk of cognitive offloading in higher education.

USED ANY AI TOOLS TO HELP WITH ASSIGNMENTS OR STUDY TASKS





Chapter 1: Student wellbeing and generative artificial intelligence (AI)

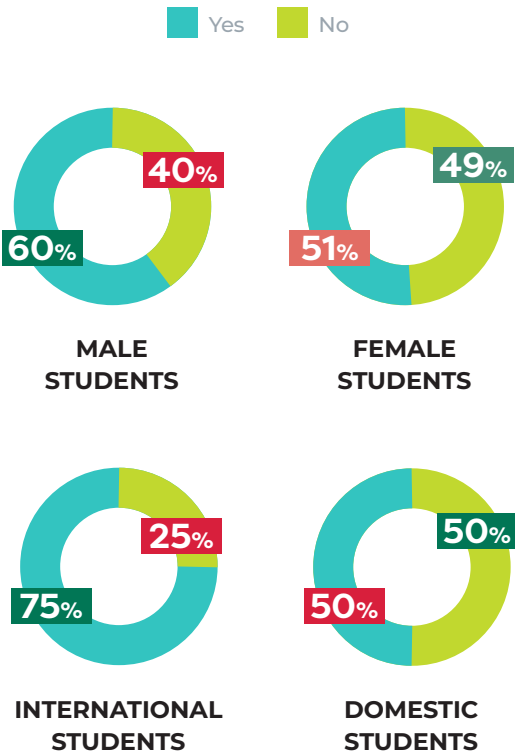
Q. Do you expect your university to offer AI (artificial intelligence) support tools to students? AI or artificial intelligence refers to a trained, digital helper that gives personal feedback and other 24/7 study help.

The majority of students (55%, n=671) expect their university to offer AI support tools in 2025. This shows no real change to the previous years' responses. More international students expect AI support (75% n=187), and men expect it more (60% compared to only 51% of women).

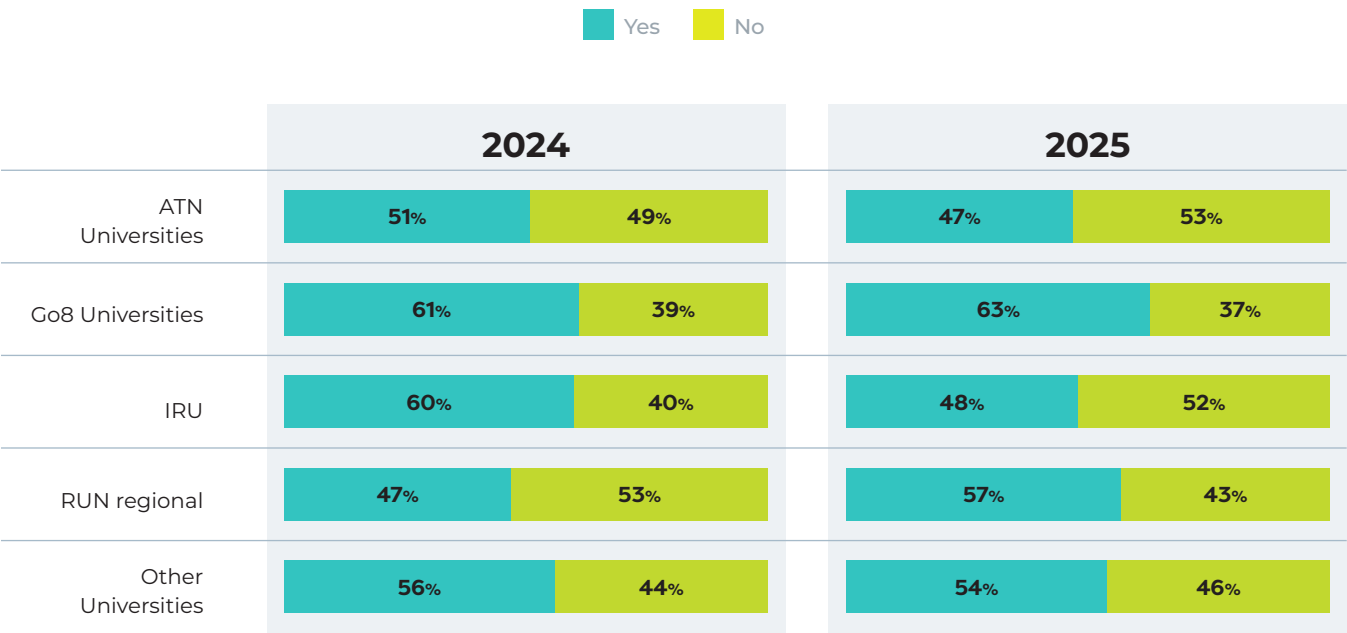
“A university approved safe option for accessing generative AI would be beneficial”

26 out of Australia's 41 universities (63%), saw a majority of students expecting AI-based study support from their institution. Students studying at universities in the Australian Technology Network of universities (ATN) had the lowest rate of expectation of AI support (47% 'yes'), down on last year's wave where they had a 51% majority expectation. Those students studying in Australia's Group of Eight (Go8) universities had the highest level of expectations for AI support at 63%.

EXPECT UNIVERSITY TO OFFER AI SUPPORT TOOLS TO STUDENTS



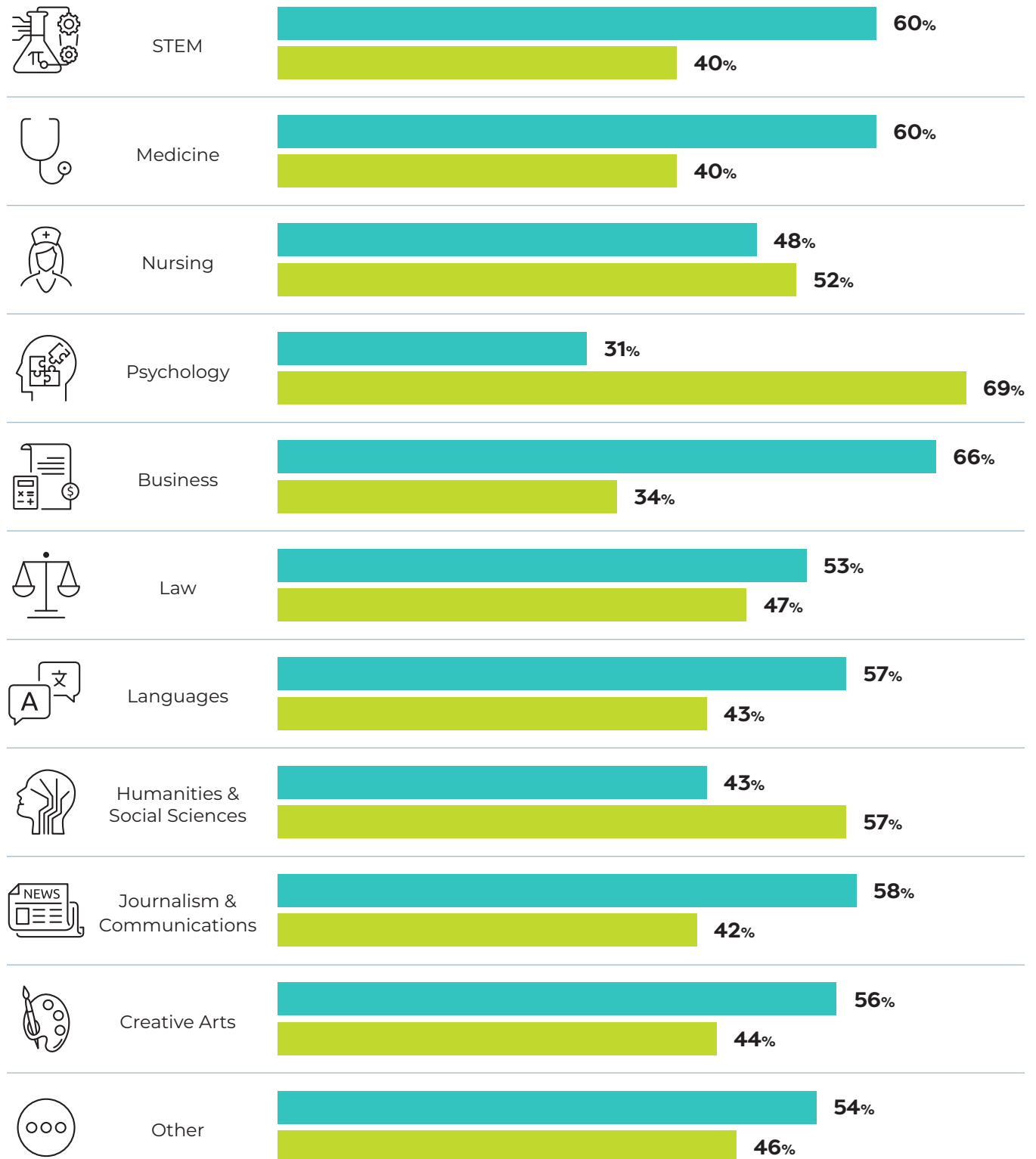
EXPECT UNIVERSITY TO OFFER AI SUPPORT TOOLS TO STUDENTS



## Chapter 1: Student wellbeing and generative artificial intelligence (AI)

### EXPECT UNIVERSITY TO OFFER AI SUPPORT TOOLS TO STUDENTS

Yes No



# Chapter 1: Student wellbeing and generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Regional Universities Network (RUN) expectations have increased from last year (37% 'yes' in 2024) up to 57% in 2025. The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) is significantly down on 2024's expectation (48% compared to last year's 60%).

All faculties reported a majority expecting AI-based support, except Nursing (48% 'Yes'), Humanities & Social Sciences (43% 'Yes'), and Psychology students (31% 'Yes'), with Business students having the highest expectations of AI support at 66%.

**“Doesn't it defeat the whole purpose of someone learning something for themselves? I think its important for humans to keep their creative functions. Not to revert them to an AI just for convenience and quickness.”**

By reported academic grade, all students expect AI support provided by their university for their use - except for the lowest-performing students, where there were more 'No' responses yet this is too small of a sample size to draw any reasonable conclusions.

**“I believe AI is a crucial part of the future and many students are already using it, so universities should embrace AI”**

**27% of students were 'Not at all' or only 'Slightly confident' that they learn and improve their own skills while using generative AI tools**

**Q. How confident are you that you are learning as well as improving your own skills while using generative AI tools?**

Cognitive offloading and erosion of graduate skillsets is not only a concern of teachers and leaders, students are also cogniscent of the repercussions on their own learning, of using AI that is not fit-for-purpose in an education setting.

Students who are struggling academically may feel less sure that they are using AI tools for their own learning gain, while higher-performing students report more confidence in this regard.

**Non-Pass (Below 50% grade):**  
A significant number of these students (40%) are only 'Slightly confident' that they are learning while using AI tools - noting a very small sample size (n=6).

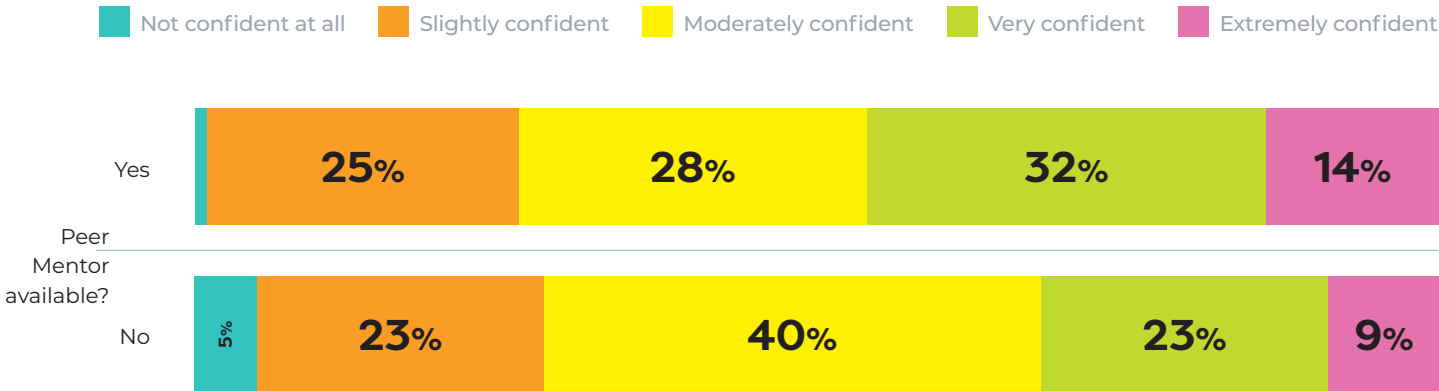
**Pass (50-64% grade):**  
While only narrowly more confident than non-pass students, one quarter (24%) are 'Slightly confident', and half (51%) just 'Moderately confident' or below that they are developing their own skills while using AI.

**Credit (65-74% grade):** Confidence appears to improve with higher grades, with more of these students expressing moderate or above confidence that they are developing their own skills (72%), leaving 28% who are less certain.

**Higher-performing students: (achieving higher than 75%):**  
36% and 46% of these top groups were 'Very' or 'Extremely' confident that they were learning autonomously while using AI, with only 53% of 'High Distinction' students just 'Moderately,' 'Slightly' or 'Not at all confident'.

**Human connection correlated with greater confidence in learning gain of AI:** The availability of a peer mentor had a positive correlation on students' believing they were learning with agency while using AI tools. Younger students (18-25 year olds) gave a higher proportion of 'Not at all confident' responses (50% of all responses for this answer).

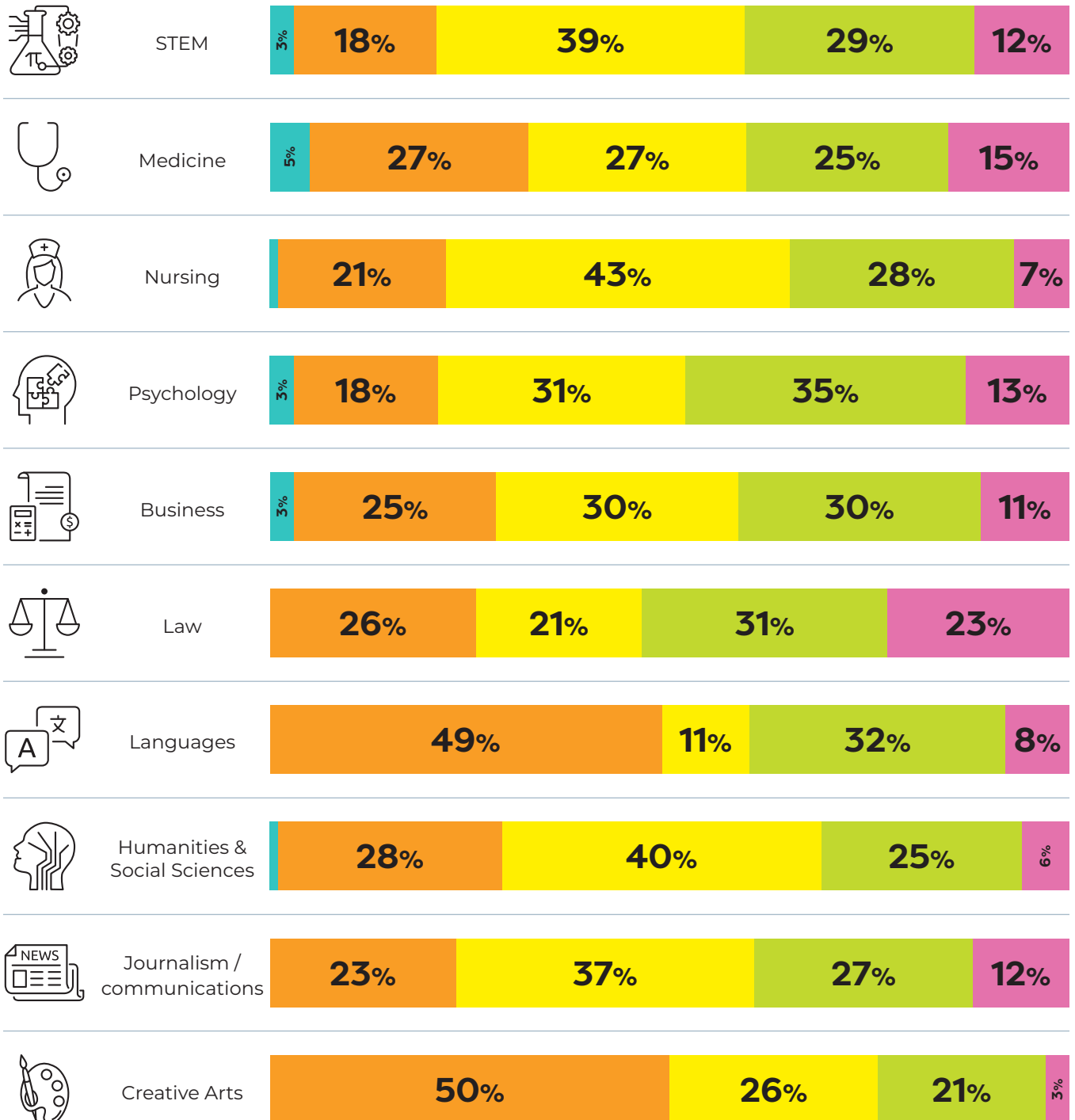
CONFIDENCE ABOUT LEARNING AS WELL AS IMPROVING SKILLS WHILE USING GENERATIVE AI TOOLS  
- BY PEER MENTOR AVAILABILITY



## Chapter 1: Student wellbeing and generative artificial intelligence (AI)

CONFIDENCE ABOUT LEARNING AS WELL AS IMPROVING SKILLS WHILE USING GENERATIVE AI TOOLS - BY STUDY AREA

■ Not confident at all
 ■ Slightly confident
 ■ Moderately confident
 ■ Very confident
 ■ Extremely confident





# Chapter 1: Student wellbeing and generative artificial intelligence (AI)

This year, “Confidence” (25%) overtook “Speed” (16%) as the main reason for wanting to use the university’s own, provided AI service for feedback.

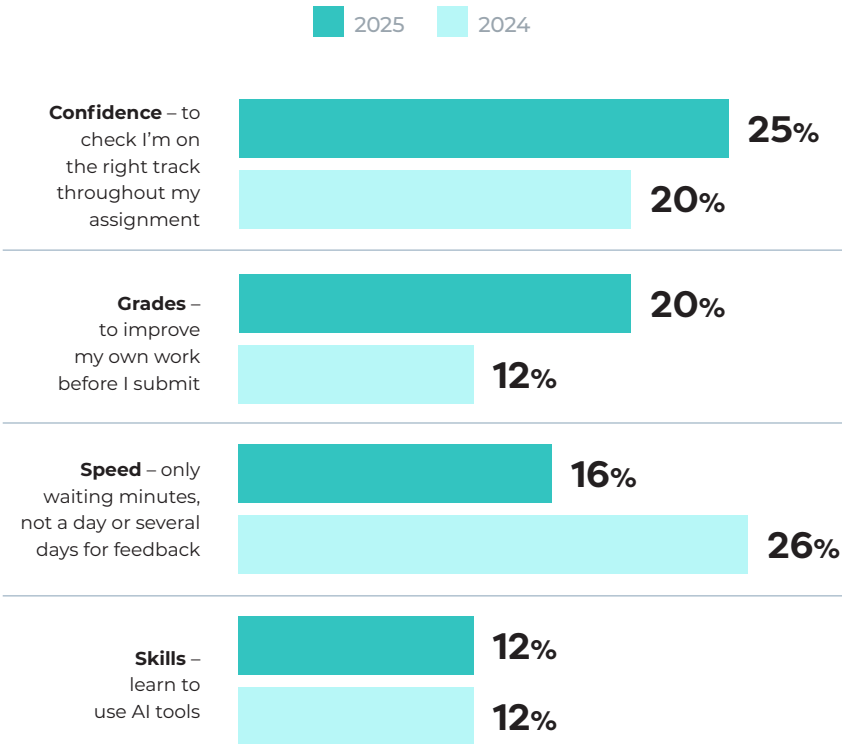
## Q. What is the main reason you would use the university’s AI (artificial intelligence) support or feedback?

Australian tertiary students prioritised ‘Confidence - to check I’m on the right track’ (25%) as the top reason for wanting to use AI support and feedback tools. This is a shift from the previous year, where ‘Speed - only waiting minutes, not a day or several days for feedback’ was the main reason students would look to AI-based support, possibly indicating the normalisation of immediate AI in the last 12 months. ‘Confidence’ is followed in Australia by ‘to improve grades’ (20%) and then ‘speed’ (16%).

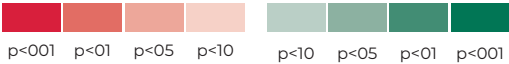
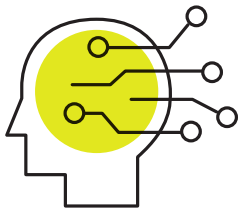
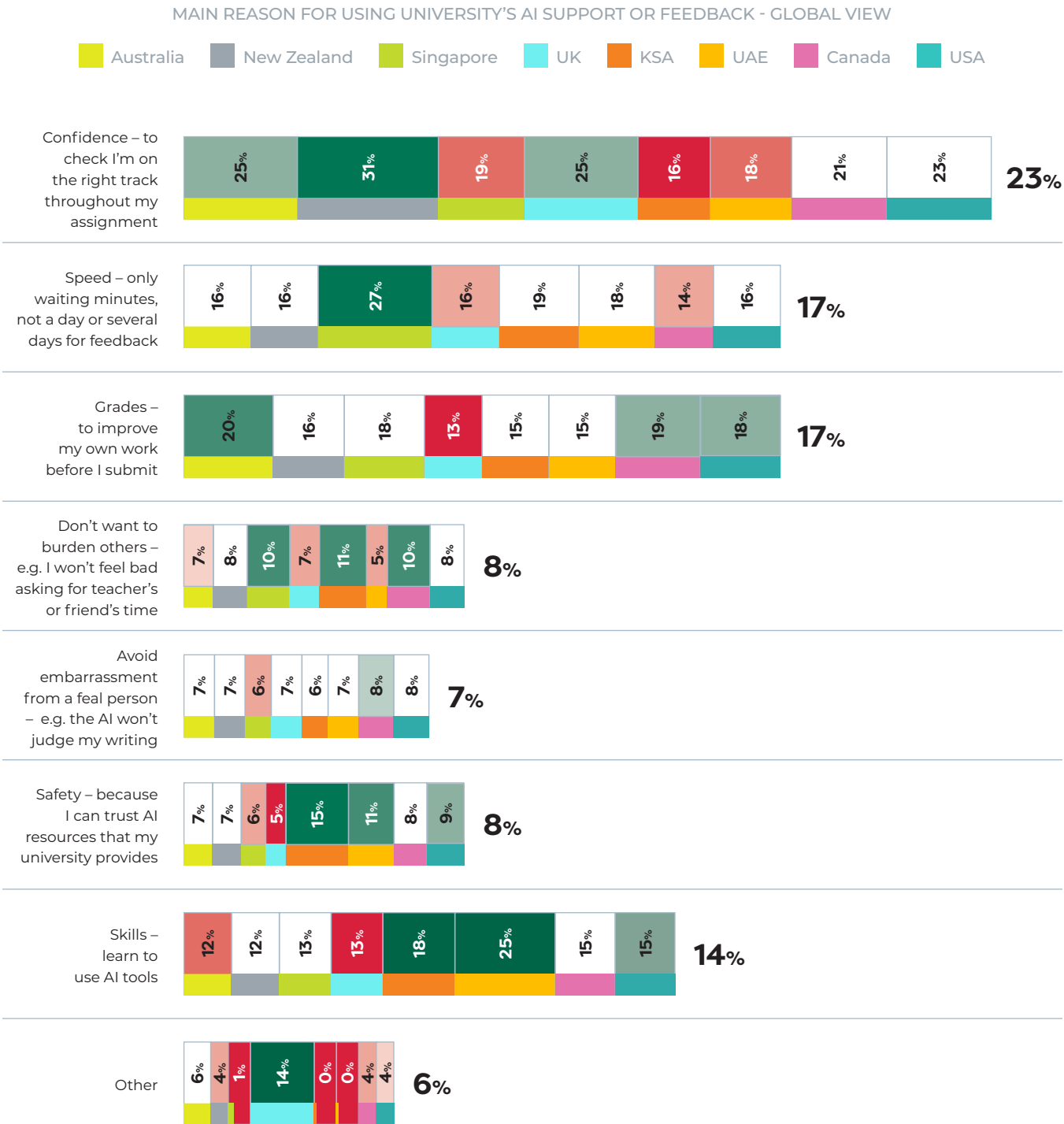
Confidence was the most popular main reason for both male and female respondents, ‘Grades’ was also valued highly (22% and 18% respectively). Male and female respondents valued ‘speed of feedback’ equally (16% for both).

The top 4 reasons for using AI feedback tools were consistent across all demographic groups: International students and domestic, metro and regional, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students all cited ‘Confidence’, ‘Grades’, ‘Speed’ of feedback and ‘improving AI skills’ as their top reasons.

TOP 4 REASONS FOR USING THE UNIVERSITY’S AI SUPPORT OR FEEDBACK



# Chapter 1: Student wellbeing and generative artificial intelligence (AI)

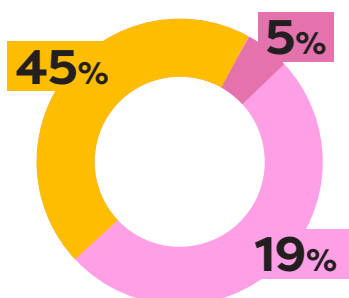
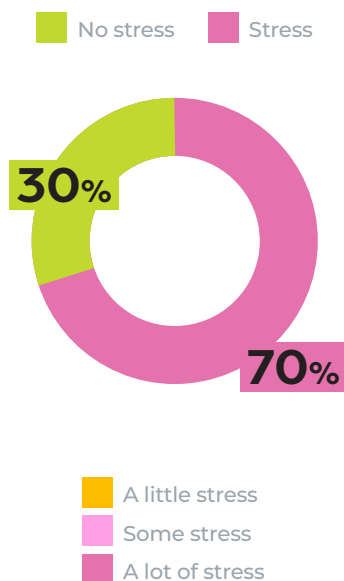


## Chapter 1: Student wellbeing and generative artificial intelligence (AI)

### 70% experience some level of stress when using AI tools as part of study

45% of students in Australia report experiencing 'a little' stress when using AI tools, and 19% report 'some'. In the survey, respondents had the opportunity to share open-text answers around the stress experienced when using AI. Students clarified, citing "accidental plagiarism", "the validity and quality of the AI", and "how to properly cite AI-generated content" as reasons for stress while using AI tools, adding weight to the need for AI policy and university-vetted and approved services.

#### Q. How much stress do you experience while using AI tools as part of your studies?



### STUDENT VOICES:

#### A little stress

"I feel stressed that the uni may detect use of AI and fail me even though my work is my own. This has happened to other students"

"It's very minimal as I like to use AI as a teaching tool so I feel confident in not plagiarising"

"I feel as though the information is not accurate sometimes"

#### Some stress

"AI is often quite inaccurate, so I worry that the results they provide are incorrect. And sometimes I wonder if the way in which I am using it is allowed or not, causing stress of not knowing if I would be academically punished or not"

"Stress about using it appropriately & not being accused of cheating. Getting incorrect answers & needing to ask in different ways to get the right advice"

"It feels unnatural and contrary to what I'm used to"

#### A lot of stress

"The first stressful part is me not knowing the content and hence asking AI. The second case is that I don't know if the information is accurate. I also might get caught for plagiarism."

"Nerves of getting caught and not feeling good enough"

"Coz I believe it's cheating and it's not part of good ethics"

Male students were slightly more likely to report 'no stress' when using AI tools (33% compared to 27% of females), and females were slightly more likely to report 'a lot of stress' (6% compared to 4% of males). International students were also more likely to report 'some' or 'a lot of' stress using AI (30%) compared to domestic students (23%).

Students studying Journalism and Communications were the most stressed overall about using AI as part of their study workload (only 11% report 'no stress' at all, noting the small sample size of n=15, compared to 39% of Nursing students).

# Chapter 1: Student wellbeing and generative artificial intelligence (AI)

## Universities have picked up the pace in 2025, yet nearly half of Australian students still think their uni could be moving faster to include AI tools

Last year 55% of students believed their university could be moving faster to adapt and include AI support tools to help them with their study. In 2025 this has dropped to 47%, showing that Australian universities have taken notice of student expectations

and acted to incorporate AI support into their learning environments. Nevertheless, there is plenty of room for more students to feel supported with immediate, ethical feedback.

### Q. Is your university adapting quickly enough to include AI (artificial intelligence) support tools to help with your study?

There is a correlation between frequency of AI use and students believing their university is moving fast enough to include AI - most likely as when tools are freely available and approved for use by an institution, students are much more likely to use and benefit from them more often.

Domestic students are more likely to think that their university is not moving quickly enough with only 48% saying yes, whereas 70% of international students agreed that universities are moving fast enough to keep up with emerging technologies.

Across all the various university network groups except the Group of Eight, the majority of students do not think their universities are moving fast enough to include AI, and this is most prominent among the ATN Universities (55%, 'No' - down from 2024's 75% 'No' response).

Male students are more likely to agree (58%) than females (48%) that their university is adapting fast enough to provide AI study support.

UNIVERSITY ADAPTING FAST ENOUGH TO INCLUDE AI SUPPORT TOOLS FOR STUDY





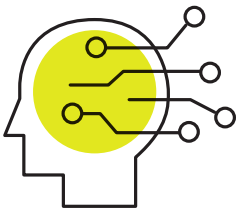
# Chapter 1: Student wellbeing and generative artificial intelligence (AI)

## Students don't feel genAI has a dramatic impact on human interaction

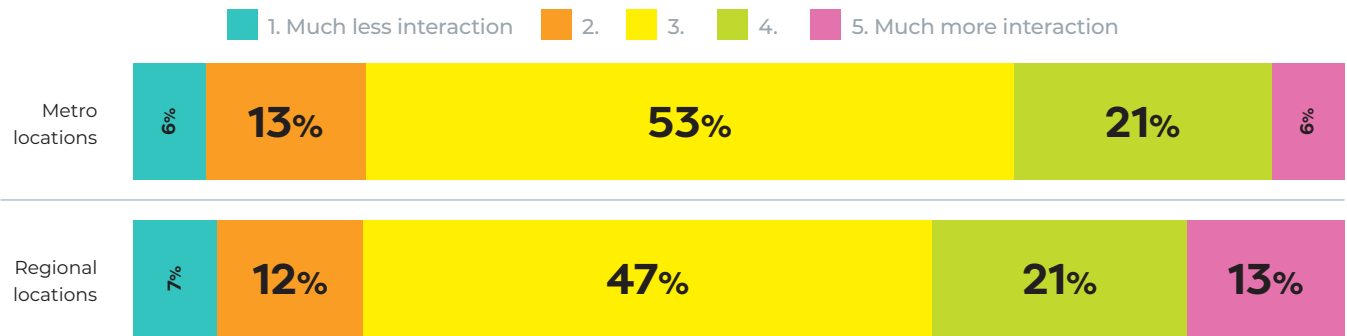
Overall students didn't report that they felt a huge impact on human interaction due to the rise of genAI, with 51% of students neutral on this question. This shifts slightly when you compare Metro-based students and regional students, who are more likely to think that using genAI has increased interaction with their peers and teachers.

### Q. Has using Generative AI resulted in less or more interaction with your peers and teachers?

Male students, Business students, international students and those with caring responsibilities were all more likely to report increased interaction with peers and teachers due to using generative AI than other groups.



GENERATIVE AI RESULTED IN LESS OR MORE INTERACTION WITH PEERS AND TEACHERS



## CHAPTER 2:

### Student wellbeing, experience and belonging

#### Discussion:

- **Better understanding belonging and student experience is vital because they directly impact student retention, academic success, and overall wellbeing.**

Leaders can ensure all students feel a stronger sense of belonging starting with students' top preferred improvements: flexibility, 24/7 study and assignment support, and connection with teachers.

- **In an increasingly globalised higher education landscape, university leaders are committed to learning about what students value and expect from their degree and making competitive and ethical changes.** Just over half of Australian students value the student experience over a university's global ranking, trending

up from last year's 40%. Investing in activities, ways to make friends, and support services will keep Australian institutions competitive.

- **First year students have a lower overall sense of belonging compared to those in second or third year and postgraduate students.** Leaders can focus on providing targeted support and an inclusive environment from the very first day. Comprehensive orientation, flexible and accessible mentoring and peer support, programs specifically tailored to address the unique challenges and needs of first-year students, and importantly, feedback mechanisms to regularly assess initiatives and gather input on how to continuously improve the university experience for all students.

**To remain competitive, leaders must ensure that institutions provide personal, scaled support solutions, to enhance students' sense of belonging and overall university experience.**

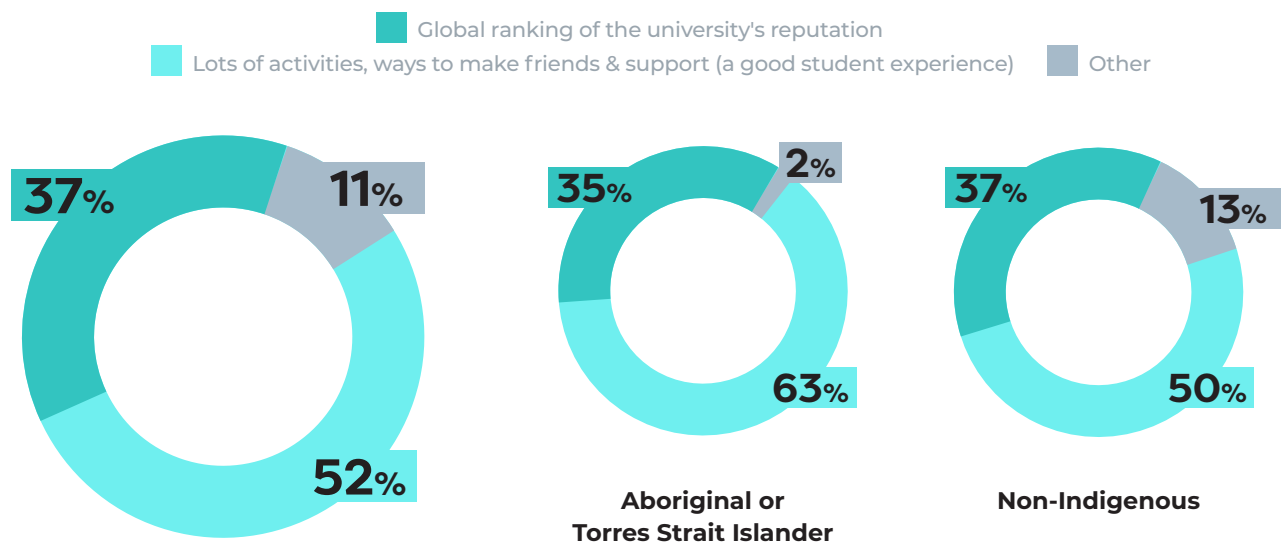
**Students prefer a 'good student experience' to university ranking or reputation, particularly Indigenous students**

#### Q. Which of the following is most important to you?

The majority of Australian students said that activities, ways to make friends and support were more important to them (52%) than the university's global ranking or reputation (37%). This is a shift from last year when 49% of students said that global ranking was more important. Full time students are more likely to value the overall student experience (57%), whereas part time students had a higher-than-average preference for the university's global ranking (43%). International students showed a similar preference level to part-time students, with 43% saying they found global ranking more important.

Students who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander also valued a 'good student experience' much higher than the university's global ranking or reputation, with 63% of these students choosing this option.

IMPORTANCE OF UNIVERSITY GLOBAL RANKING VS ACTIVITIES



## Chapter 2: Student wellbeing, experience and belonging

### No shift in sense of belonging YoY - over a third of students don't feel that they belong at university

While most students (62%) feel like they belong, 38% of students were neutral or negative about belonging to their university community. This shows no significant

change from last year when 40% of students were neutral or negative about 'belonging to their university community'.

### Q. Do you feel that you 'belong' in your university community (for example, do you feel supported and included)?

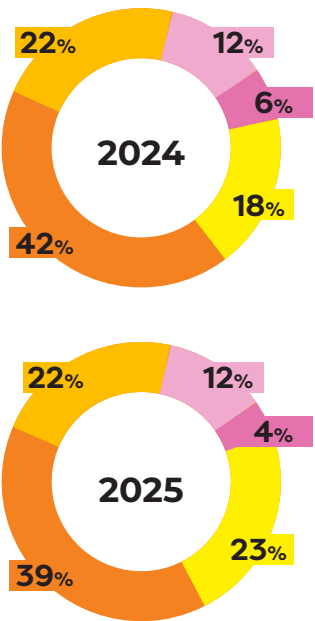
Last year, nearly two thirds (60%) of students felt that they 'belonged' in their university community. This can be compared to the previous year (2023)'s data about whether students felt a sense of community at their university (68% yes), although direct comparison isn't possible with two differing questions. Male students were more likely to feel that they belong (70%) than females (54%) in 2025.

First year students generally were slightly less likely to feel that they 'somewhat' or 'very much' belong than more experienced students, so working on that first year transition to university is important when

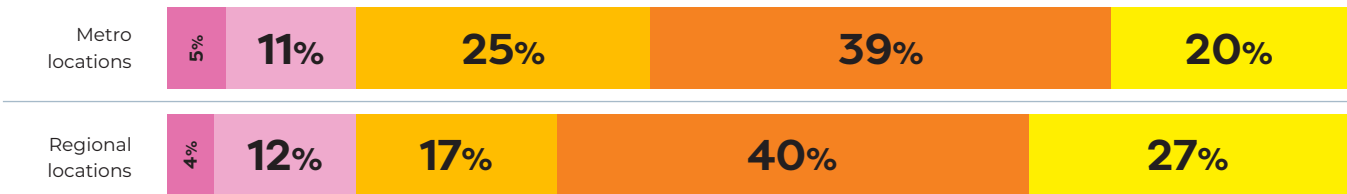
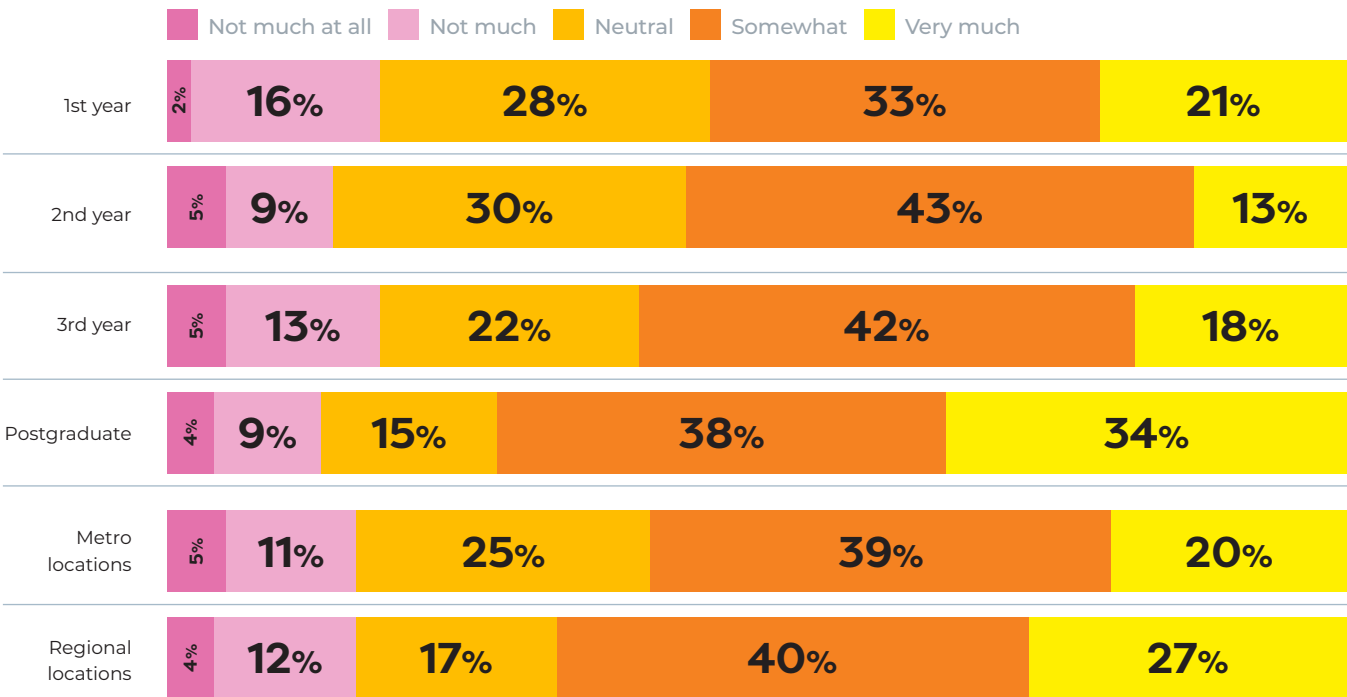
considering ways to improve overall sense of belonging.

Students enrolled in Go8 Universities and the IRU group felt a higher overall sense of belonging (69% and 64% respectively), compared to those enrolled in RUN or ATN network institutions (57% and 54% respectively). Interestingly, students who were living in rural or remote areas (non-metropolitan) reported higher levels of feeling like they 'belong' compared to those based in capital city locations. This could suggest that in more populous locations students tend to feel disconnected from peers and more 'lost' in the crowd.

DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU 'BELONG' IN YOUR UNIVERSITY



DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU 'BELONG' IN YOUR UNIVERSITY - BY YEAR OF STUDY



## Chapter 2: Student wellbeing, experience and belonging

### Flexibility, connection, and support are key to belonging

#### Q. What would make you feel like you belong at your university? Please rank your Top 3.

For those students who said they didn't feel that they belong to their university community (n=205), the top suggestion for improvement was having "a flexible schedule that lets me balance work and study" (32% ranked first, 71% ranked in top 3), followed by being "able to feel confident to reach out to my teachers" (14% ranked first, 55% ranked in top 3), and being "able to study online / remotely when I need to" (16% ranked first, 54% ranked in top 3), indicating a greater need for flexibility and connection to the university among those students.

The fourth most popular suggestion for improvement to belonging was 'giving me personal, 24/7 study and assignment support' which was ranked in the top 3 by 41% of students and ranked first by 16%.



**"Help connecting to other students in the class, through group chats/ scheduled study sessions."**

**"I'm a distance student and don't feel a sense of belonging or the need to."**

**"Need more support for women studying male dominated degrees"**

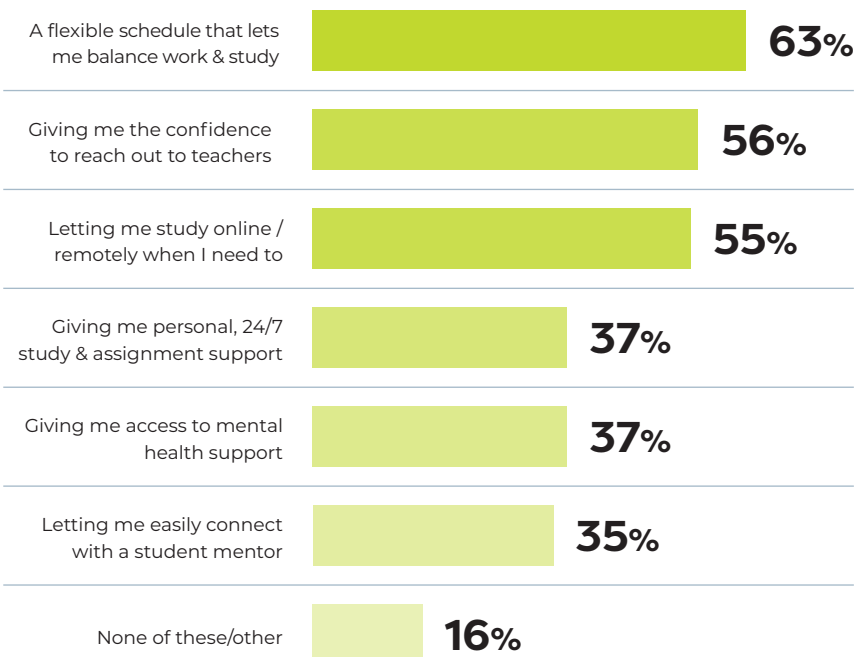
**"Personalised feedback or tailored check ins"**

#### Q. In which of the following ways, if any, has your university made you feel like you belong? Please rank your Top 3.

For those who felt that they did belong to their university (n=1,029), the top reasons given were "A flexible schedule that lets me balance work and study" (63% ranked in top 3), followed by "I feel confident to reach out to my teachers" (56% ranked in top 3), and then "I can study online/remotely when I need to" (55% ranked in top 3).

International students valued quite different reasons to domestic students when it came to reasons they felt they belonged, with 50% of them ranking 'personal, 24/7 study and assignment support' in their top 3 reasons compared to 33% of domestic students, and 47% of international students ranking 'access to mental health support' in their top 3 as well (compared to just 34% of domestic students).

#### RANKED IN TOP 3 REASONS FOR BELONGING





# Chapter 2: Student wellbeing, experience and belonging

“Asking me to be a student mentor  
[made me feel like I belong]”

“Encouraging volunteer  
work or local partnerships  
helps students feel connected  
to the broader community.”

“Incorporating and embracing my  
connection to my Aboriginal roots.  
Offering a lot of support through  
this avenue- making me feel  
connected to the community”

“They offer clubs and activities but  
most don't align with my course.  
Most of the belonging has come  
from making friends, not the uni”

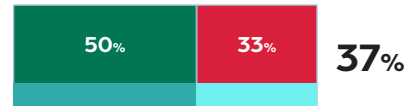
RANKED IN TOP 3 REASONS FOR BELONGING

International student Domestic student

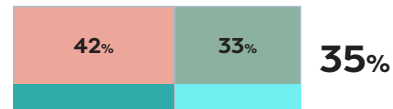
Giving me the  
confidence to reach  
out to my teachers



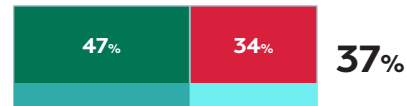
Giving me personal,  
24/7 study and assignment  
support



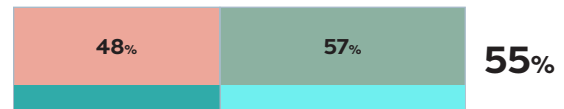
Letting me easily  
connect with  
a student mentor



Giving me access to  
mental health support



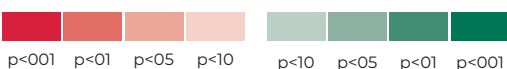
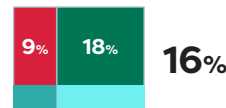
Letting me study  
online / remotely  
when I need to



A flexible schedule  
that lets me balance  
work & study



None of these/other



## CHAPTER 3:

### Student wellbeing and connection to other students

#### Discussion:

- In 2025 educators and leaders can address the “mentor gap” in practical ways, and create environments that prioritise a social student experience, to support learning and mental health benefits, and for degree satisfaction and completion.
- The survey highlights the varied nature of student experiences at their university and points to a need for meeting students ‘on their own terms’, in their own spaces and schedules. Specifically, leadership should equalise access to peer mentoring regardless of a students’ study mode or background. Even domestic and English-speaking students who are more likely to have social networks outside of university would like more chances to connect with peers.
- First year students are less likely to have a mentor and find it harder to ask peers questions. Leaders can look to provide low-barrier, equitable and accessible peer support options for first-year students, and remove the cognitive load of having to opt in to these services.

**Being able to connect with peers and be part of the academic community is a critical part of university life, and a known contributor to student success and wellbeing.**

#### A growing number of students would like a peer mentor (+5%)

The availability of peer mentoring is mixed in the Australian tertiary sector, with room to support additional cohorts. In this year’s survey, the diversity of student experiences is revealed, with large cross-sections of the cohorts both happy and

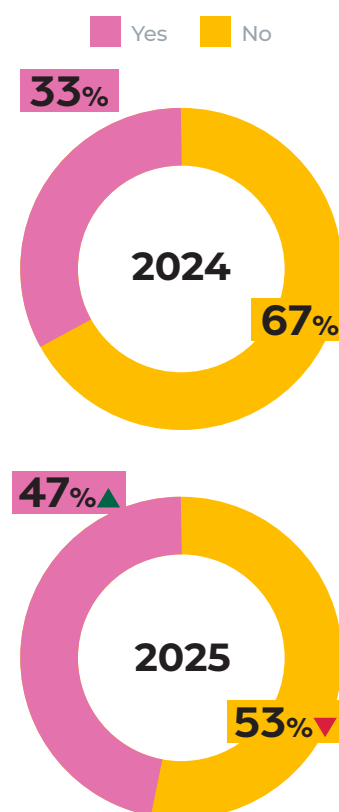
also needing more support in the form of a peer mentor. Nearly half of students had a peer mentor available, which is a big increase from last year’s one third. However, this is not reflected across all cohorts and subsections of students.

#### Q. Did you have a student mentor? (for example - a student in a senior year who could provide study advice anytime you needed it)

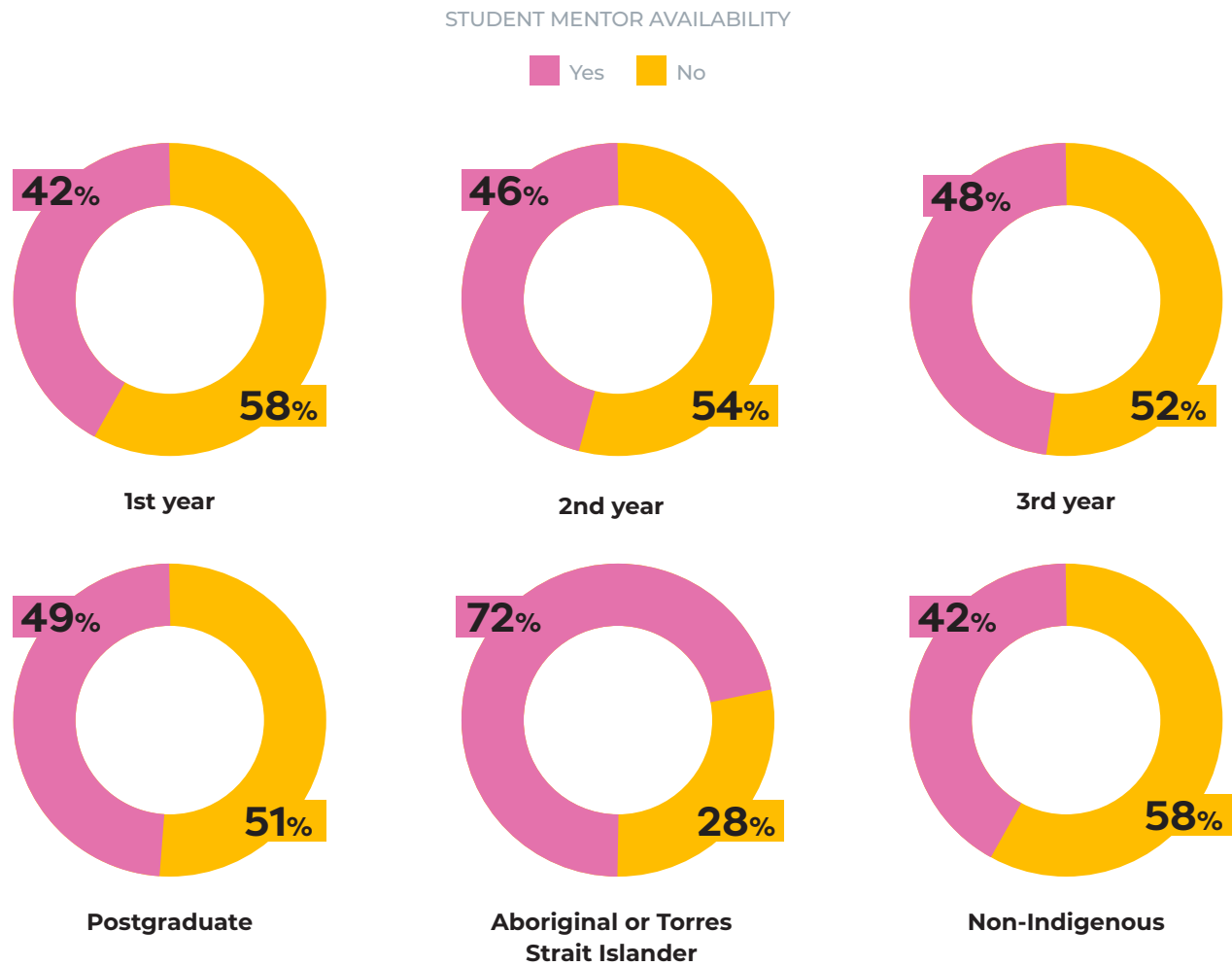
Notably, men were more likely to report having a mentor available (56%) compared to women (39%), and those in their first year were the least likely to have had access to a mentor compared to those further along in their studies. Business students were the most likely study area to have a mentor (62%) while those in Humanities and Social Sciences were the least (37%).

International students and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students had a much higher likelihood of having a peer mentor with 72% of both groups reporting that they did. This is an increase from the 55% for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students with a mentor last year.

STUDENT MENTOR AVAILABILITY



### Chapter 3: Student wellbeing and connection to other students

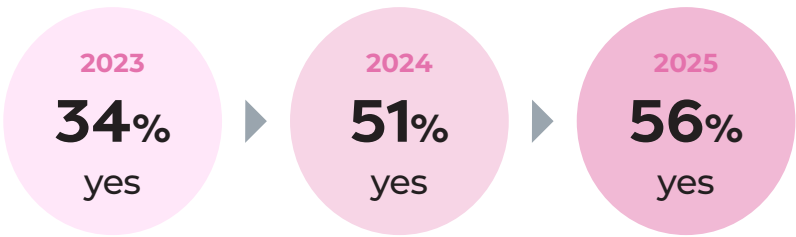


#### Q. Would you have liked to have a senior student mentor?

Over half of the students surveyed who didn't have a mentor (n=687) said they would have liked to have a peer mentor (56%). This shows an increasing trend year on year in students wanting a peer mentor.

For students from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, this desire increases to 62% (please note the small sample size of <50).

This trend is the same for young students 18-25 years old (61% wanted a mentor), and then desire for a mentor decreases as they get older. However it is significantly higher among full time students vs part time (61% vs 46%), and significantly higher among



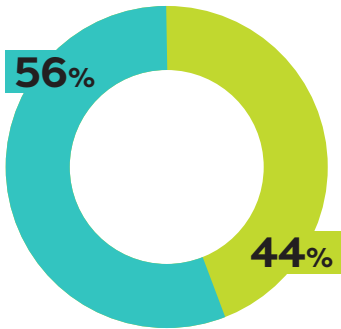
those students whose first language is not English (78%), compared to native English speakers (52%).

Desire for a student mentor also seems to correlate closely with frequency of stress - the more frequently students felt stressed, the more they wanted a mentor and vice versa.

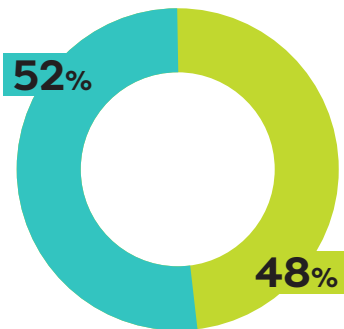
### Chapter 3: Student wellbeing and connection to other students

STUDENT MENTOR – NEED

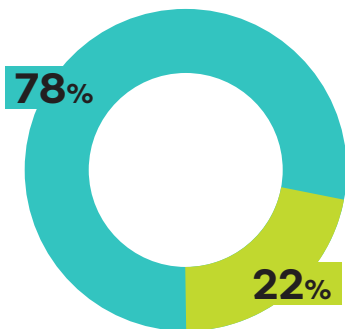
Yes No



ALL



English first language



Other first language

DESIRE FOR A PEER MENTOR COMPARED TO FREQUENCY OF STRESS

Wanted a student mentor Didn't want a student mentor



Chapter 3: Student wellbeing and connection to other students

Q. When you started your degree, how easy was it to ask other students questions, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is very easy and 1 is very hard?

1 in 2 students found it easy to ask questions to other students when they started their degree. This is not a huge deviation from last year's results, where 44% of students found it easy. Interestingly, international students overall found it easier than domestic students (65% vs 47%) to ask others questions, which was reflected in the 2024 survey as well (56% vs 42%).

Students living in regional locations found it easier to ask questions compared to those in metro locations, and those in their first year of study found it hard, compared to subsequent years (Net 'hard' = 22%).

“Being online was tricky, I was working during the day when the mentor I set up with was available and then they worked on the evenings when I was home.”

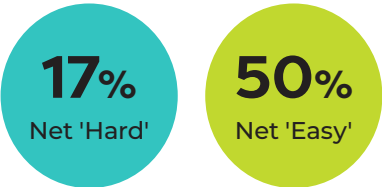
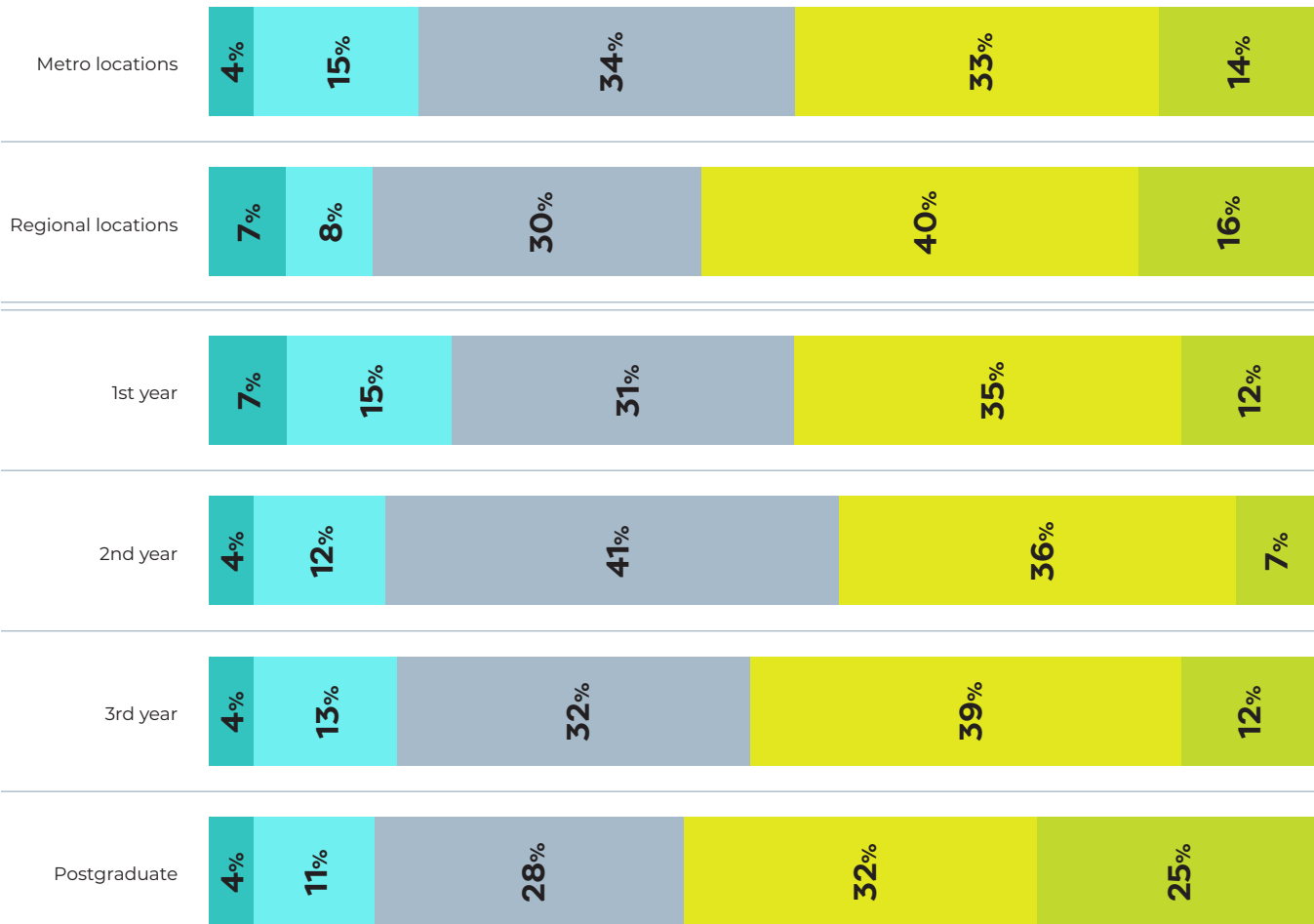
“At the start of my degree, there was a lack of clear communication about where to find peer support, what resources were available, and how to access them. While I knew there were student groups

and support services, there was no clear guidance on how to navigate them or whether they were accessible to everyone.”

“Honestly everything was just really overwhelming so I didn't even know where to start.”

EASE OF ASKING QUESTIONS TO OTHER STUDENTS

1. Very hard 2. Hard 3. 4. Easy 5. Very easy



## CHAPTER 4:

### Student wellbeing and study stress

#### Discussion:

- **Stress frequency among Australian university students is down this year to post-COVID (2022) levels.** Understanding evolving stressors, like AI uncertainty seen in Chapter 1, and addressing widespread issues like financial burden and resource access, is vital for both student wellbeing and academic success.
- **'Fear of failing' is the biggest cause of stress for students, and particularly so for females, younger students, and those in their first year of study.** With so much pressure to succeed, institutions can look for ways to support that success with evidence-based, accessible, flexible support.
- **Time management issues remain at the forefront of students' stress causes.** Students struggle with balancing other life commitments and feeling sufficiently prepared for exams and assessments. This is particularly prevalent among those who are employed and carers, indicating that flexibility and embedded support would benefit all students.



**Stress frequency is down among students, with two thirds of students feeling stressed weekly or more (▼).**

With this survey in its ninth year, we are starting to see some longer-term trends emerge in students' stress levels and frequency.

#### **Q. On average, how often do you feel stressed by studying?**

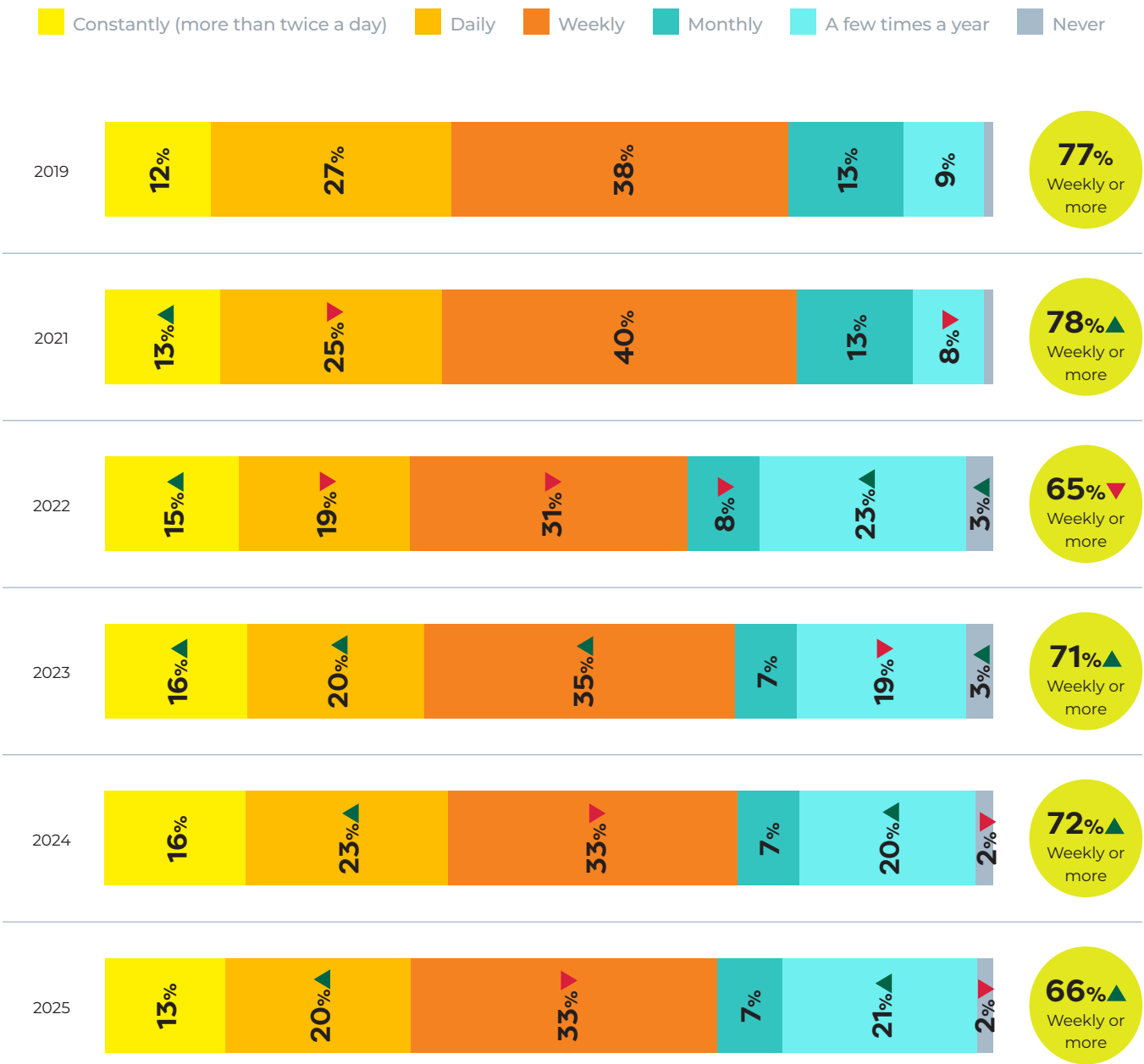
Two thirds (66%) of students report being stressed by their studies weekly or more often. This is down from the results in the 2024 survey (72%), and trending downwards over time (78% in 2021 and 77% in 2019). Women are still more likely to report feeling stressed "constantly" - 15% of women reported feeling constantly stressed compared to 9% of men who feel the same way.

Domestic students are also more likely to feel stressed more frequently, stating constantly or daily at a higher rate than international students.



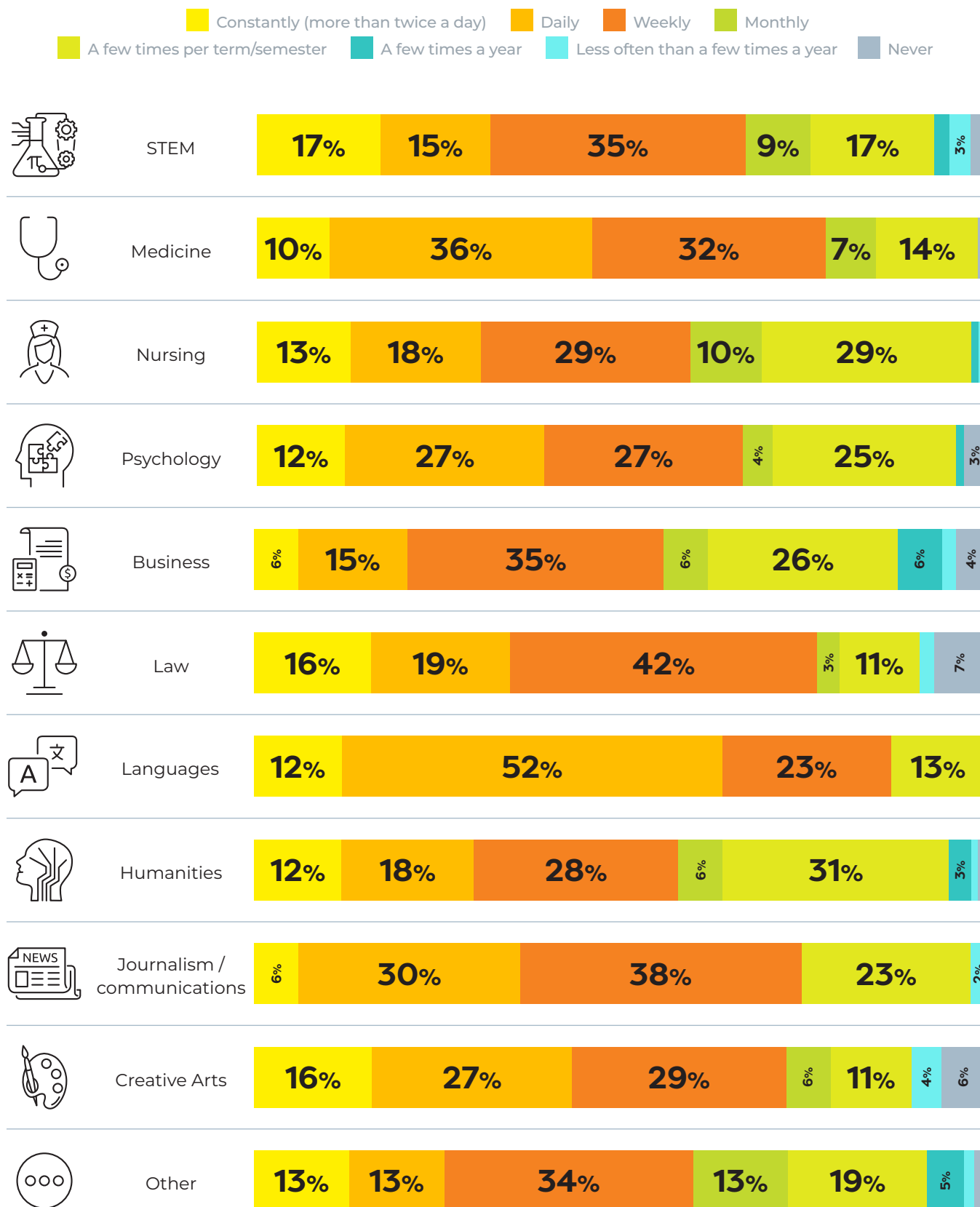
# Chapter 4: Student wellbeing and study stress

HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL STRESSED BY STUDYING?



## Chapter 4: Student wellbeing and study stress

### HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL STRESSED BY STUDYING - BY STUDY AREA



## Chapter 4: Student wellbeing and study stress

### 'Fear of failing' is number 1 cause of stress for students

#### Q. Out of the following options, what makes you feel the most stressed about studying? Please select your top 3

The top reason for study stress this year is 'fear of failing', with 23% of students putting this at number 1, and 52% of students ranking it in their top 3 reasons. This is closely followed by issues around time management - with 48% ranking 'not having enough time to balance other commitments' in their top 3, and 'not having enough time to prepare for exams' ranked in the top 3 by 42% of students.

'Fear of failing' is especially prevalent among female students (58% ranked in top 3), younger students aged 18-25 (57%), first year students (60%), and unemployed students (66%). International students are much more likely to rank 'paying for my degree' as their number one source of stress (17%) compared to domestic students (9%).

The top 3 reasons for study-related stress

differed quite starkly between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students compared to Non-Indigenous students.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, 'paying for my degree' was most often ranked as the number 1 cause of stress, with 13% of those students putting it at number one. This is followed by 'difficult course content' with 12% of students.

### Students' suggestions to reduce study-related stress

**"Reduction in costs associated with study. Acknowledgement that many students have to work full-time because they can't afford not to."**

- Melbourne based student

**"Instead of implementing heavy weighted examinations, the pressure can be distributed over multiple smaller weighted exams that can be easier to prepare for without affecting the mental health of students and allow them to enjoy what they study."**

- Sydney based student

**"I find that it would be great if I can find someone who could help me when I need. One of the main struggles that I had where not knowing who to ask for help"**

- Melbourne based student

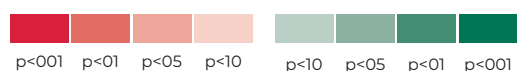
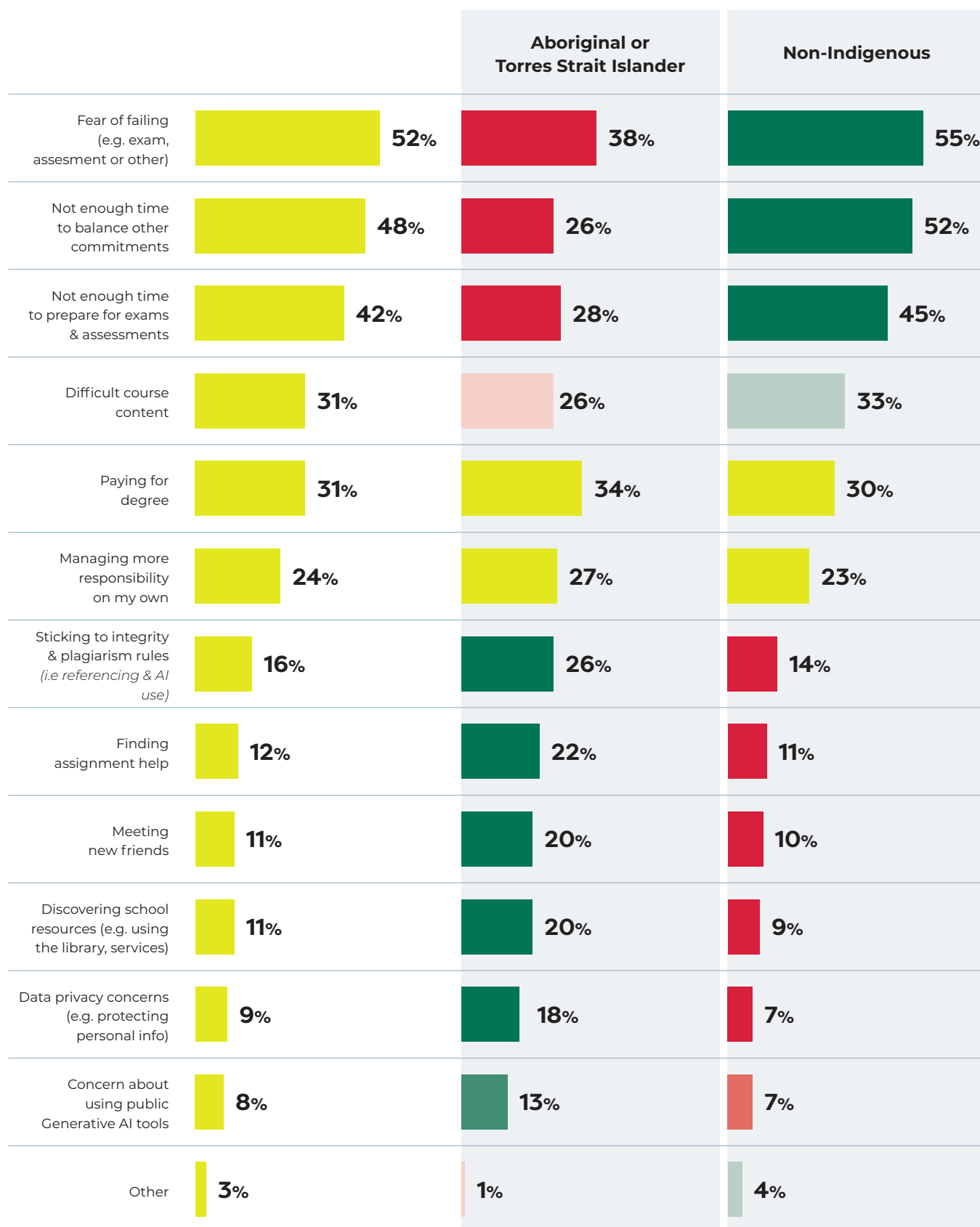
**"Affordable resources, and peer support networks would greatly reduce my study-related stress."**

- Aboriginal student



## Chapter 4: Student wellbeing and study stress

TOP 3 REASONS FELT MOST STRESSED ABOUT STUDYING



# CHAPTER 5:

## Student wellbeing and employment

### Discussion:

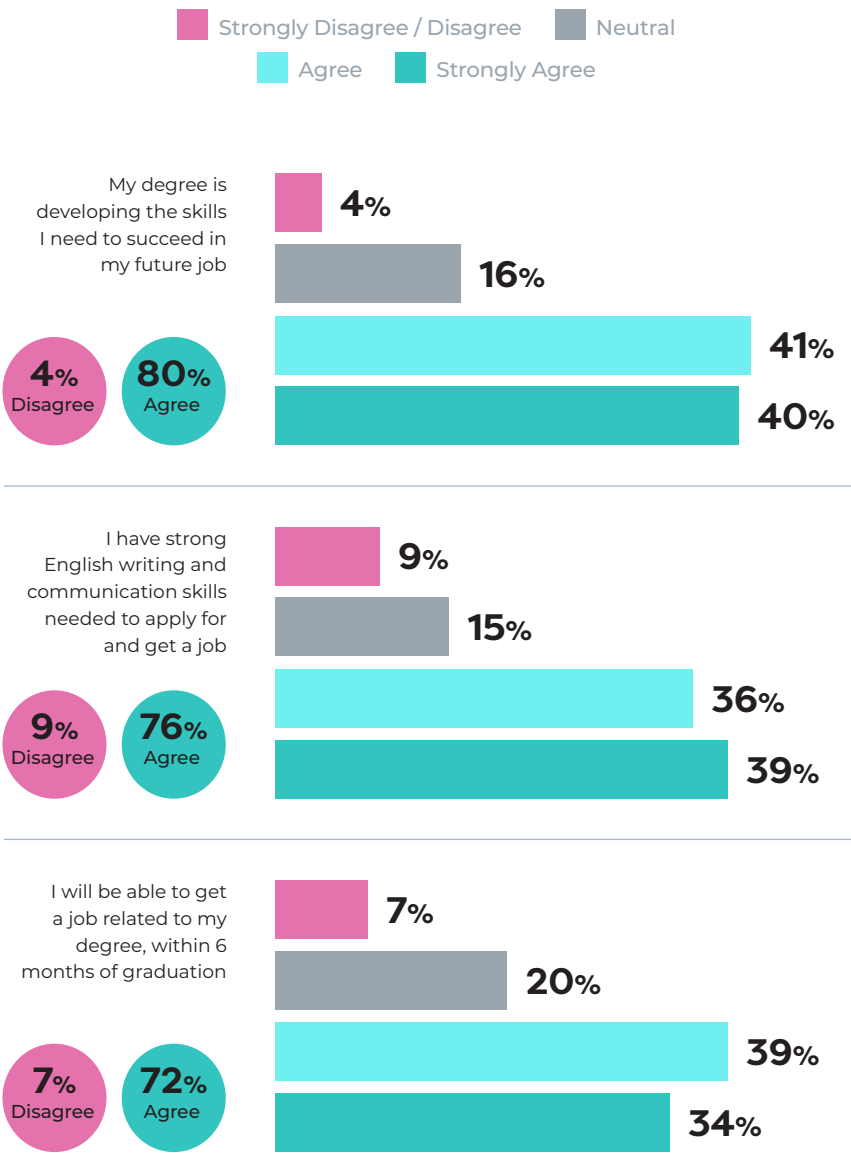
- **Younger students are less confident that they are developing skills for future employment.** Interestingly, the same age group (18-25 year olds) were the least likely group to say they would use AI tools for skills development (just 9%). This requires more investigation into why young students don't appear to feel that their university experience is developing their skills sufficiently.
- **Students' perceptions of how their degree is preparing them for the workforce are generally positive, with some areas for further research and improvement.** Less than a third of students were in strong agreement that they will be able to get a job within 6 months of graduating.

### Students split on employment prospects

Whilst confidence was generally high when it comes to degrees developing skills to succeed in their future jobs, with a net agreement of 77%, this does not appear to translate into confidence in future employment, with only 64% of students 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' that they will be able to get a job related to their degree within 6 months of

graduation. The levels of confidence were even lower in the responses from students studying Journalism, Creative Arts, Languages or Social Sciences. Students who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander had higher confidence levels around employment prospects.

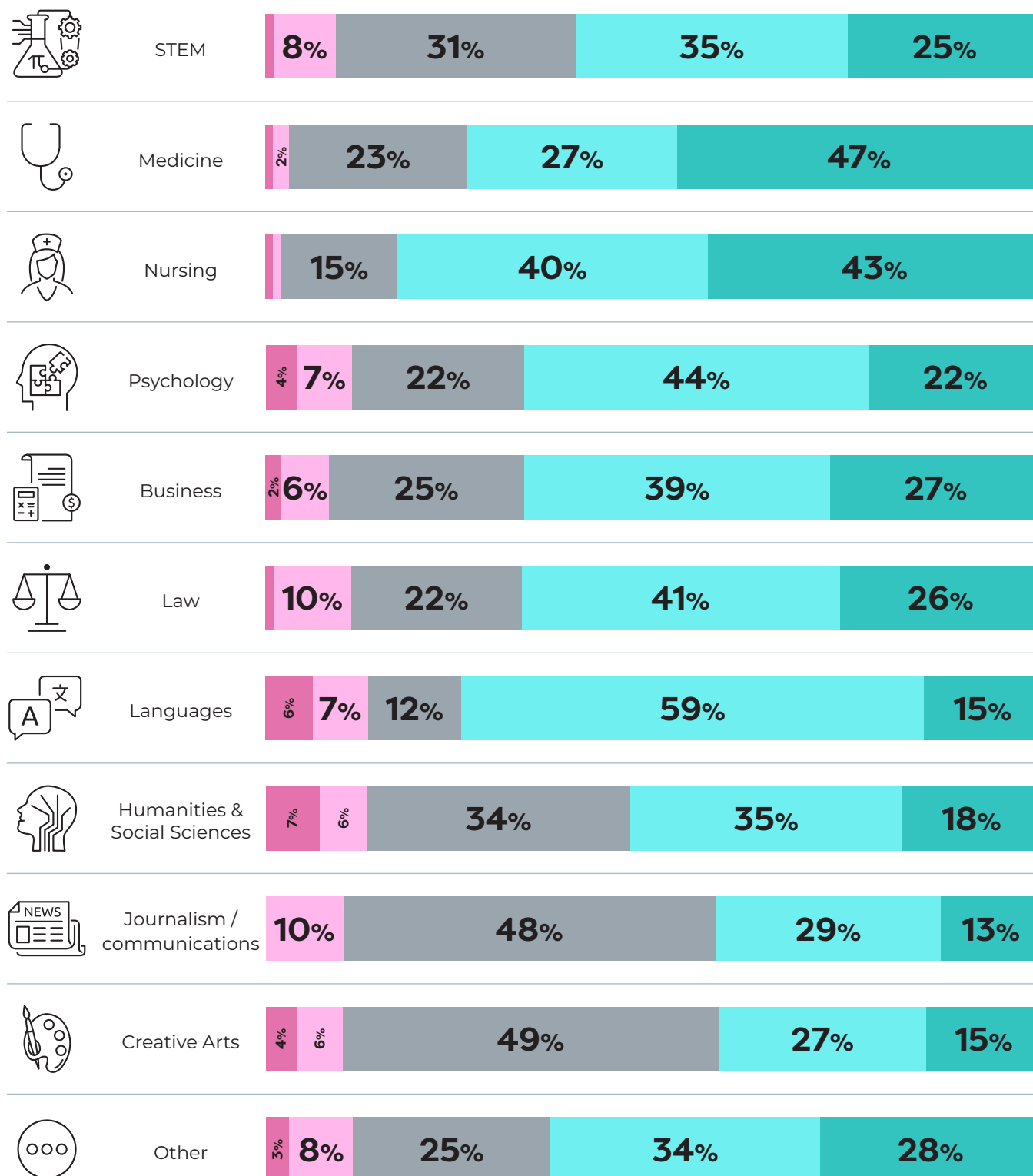
#### INDIGENOUS STUDENTS LEVELS OF AGREEMENT WITH EACH STATEMENT



## Chapter 5: Student wellbeing and employment

I WILL BE ABLE TO GET A JOB RELATED TO MY DEGREE WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF GRADUATION – AREA OF STUDY

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree





Chapter 5: Student wellbeing and employment

Q. Please rate how confident you feel about the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is very confident and 1 is not confident at all.

Just under a third of students (31%) strongly agree that 'My degree is developing the skills I need to succeed in my future job' but more (45%) said they 'Agree' with this. This is in keeping with last year's result. Students studying Humanities and Social Sciences, Journalism and Communications, and Creative Arts are less likely to feel that they are developing the right skills for future employment.

“My degree, whilst useful, it teaches me a lot of conceptual topics and ideologies, but is not useful for application in everyday life case studies”

“My writing is improving, and I am networking with various others in the industry”

Almost half (46%) of students strongly agreed that they 'have strong English writing and communication skills needed to apply for and get a job', with a net

agreement level of 83%. Females were more likely to strongly agree with this statement (50% did). International students were less likely to strongly agree (35%) compared to domestic students (48%).

“They give us access to a writing centre and tasks which are not graded, though they are specifically to get feedback on our writing”

“Doesn't feel like it's actually teaching me writing and communication skills, just expecting me to already have them/punish if you don't”

About a quarter (27%) of students 'strongly agreed' that they 'will be able to get a job related to my degree, within 6 months of graduation'; while 64% said they 'agree' or were 'neutral'. Younger students aged 18-25 were less likely to agree (60%). than those aged 26-33 (73%). Those with caring

responsibilities were much more likely to agree (71%) and those for whom English is not their first language were only 56% in agreement.

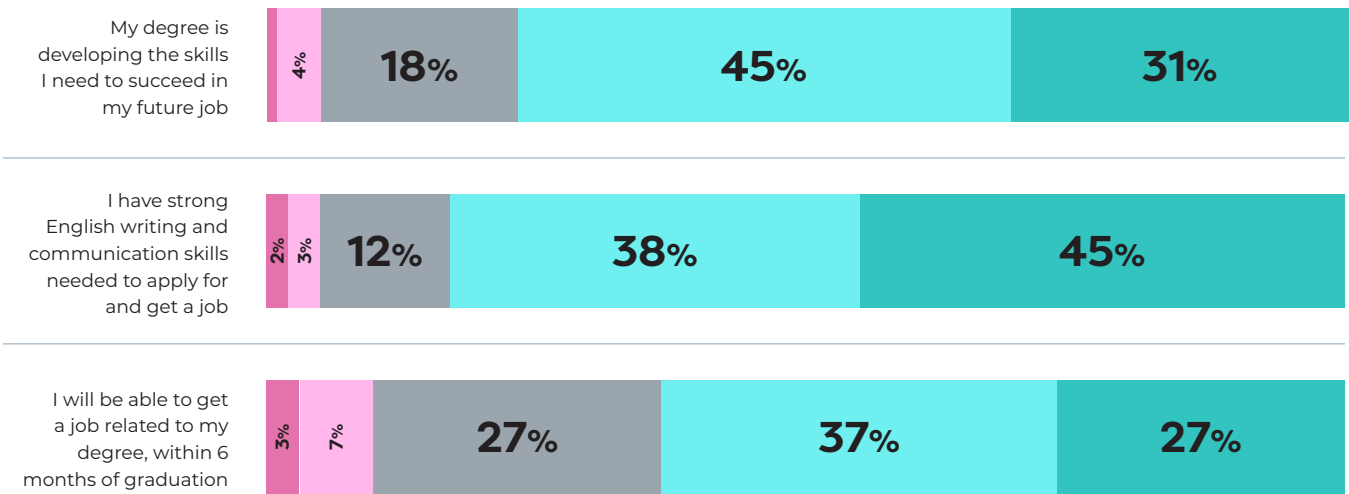
“The industry can be hard to 'break into' - there are more graduates than jobs. However, I am in a better position at a regional university than a city university in relation to this.”

“The job market , although saturated, still values skill and character, something I am sure I possess.”

Students who had a peer mentor available to them were more likely to agree that they will be able to get a job within 6 months (68% compared to 60%), possibly indicating that peer support programs have larger, longer-term benefits beyond just studies.

STUDENTS LEVELS OF AGREEMENT WITH EACH STATEMENT

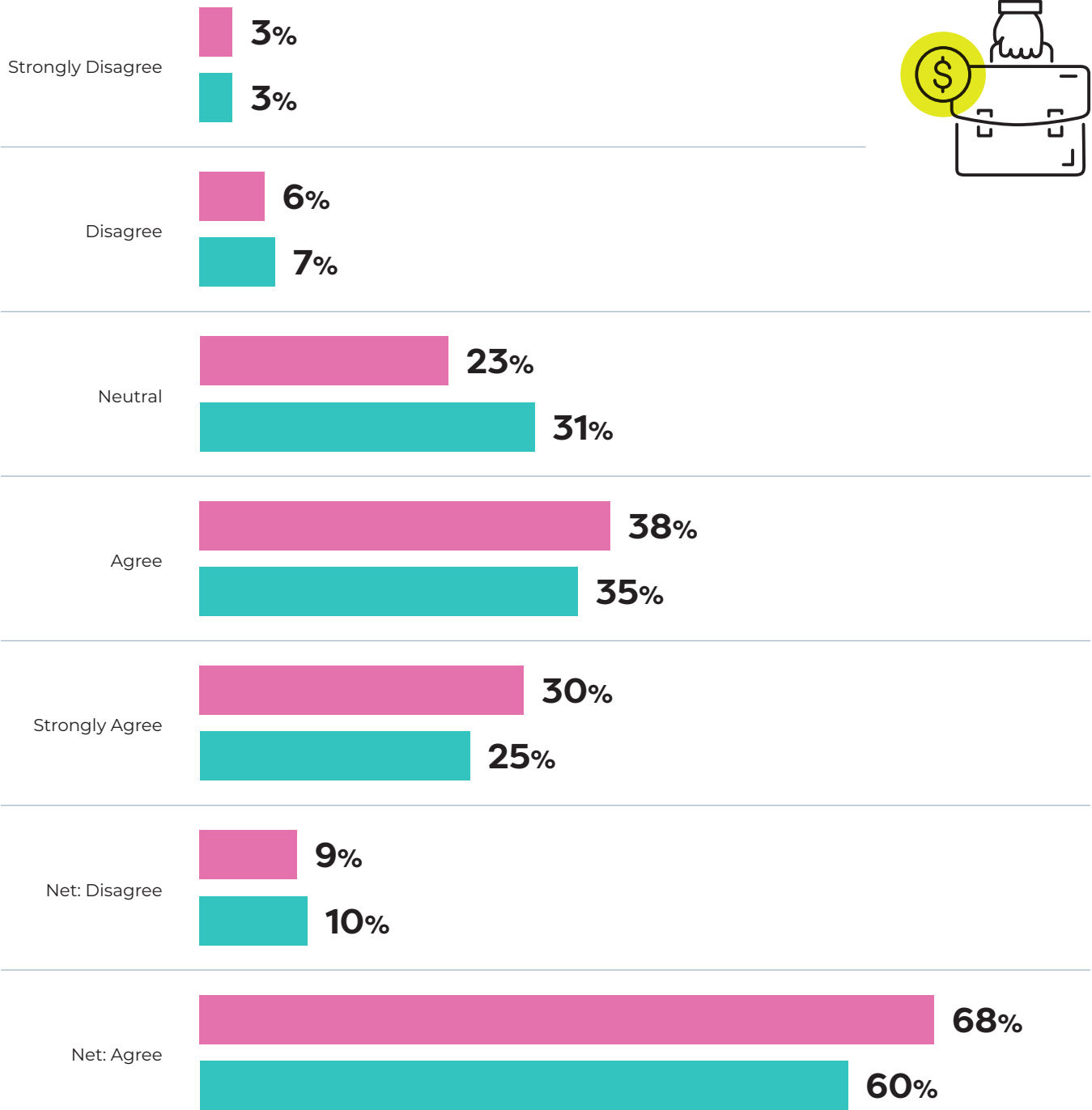
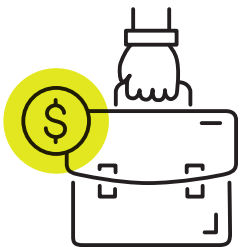
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree



# Chapter 5: Student wellbeing and employment

I WILL BE ABLE TO GET A JOB RELATED TO MY DEGREE, WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF GRADUATION - PEER MENTOR AVAILABLE

Yes, I had a peer mentor      No, I did not have a peer mentor



# Students' recommendations to their education providers:

Like last year, students were asked to offer their qualitative comment on how to improve their wellbeing, success, overall experience, and could offer an 'other' topic area of interest. Themes are grouped by frequency, and real student comments are included.

Overall, students ask their institutions to consider providing more one-to-one connection, to prioritise mental health supports, improve communication and transparency and awareness of resources, reduce financial pressure, and offer more feedback mechanisms.

## Students' recommendations for: Wellbeing

### Accessibility and Availability:

Students want more accessible and readily available support services, particularly for mental health. They want services that are easy to find, have shorter wait times, and offer flexible options (e.g., online, after-hours).

*"There are support teams, but I don't know where to access them without having to ask, and I don't want to do that."*

*"Increased Access to Mental Health Support: While many universities offer mental health services, there's often a high demand, leading to long wait times."*

*"Access to therapy 24/7 and flexible due dates."*

*"Make it more accessible. I had to wait over a month to see a counsellor."*

*"Quicker wait for therapy and counselling instead of months."*

### Proactive Support:

Students prefer proactive outreach and support rather than having to seek help themselves. They want the university to take initiative in checking on their wellbeing and providing resources.

*"If they could afford to, personalised contact to check on students' progress through subjects."*

*"Proactive Mental Health Programs: Instead of waiting for students to seek help, the university could offer proactive mental health programs throughout the year."*

*"Checking up."*

*"More mental health checks."*

*"Proactive communication from wellbeing officers rather than waiting for me to try to find people when I need it."*

### Balance and Flexibility:

Many of the recommendations revolve around achieving a better balance between academic demands and personal life. Students want more flexibility with deadlines, schedules, and learning options to manage their workload and reduce stress.

*"Give more flexible time to the student."*

*"More study breaks"*

*"StuVac in middle of semester, not 2/3 in."*

*"Better time allocation for exams/ assignments - there should not be an onerously restrictive period to do these in when the university advertises prominently the flexibility for those working and with familial commitments."*

*"Less assignments in the period prior to exams to allow students to start studying earlier."*

### Community and Connection:

There is a strong emphasis on the importance of community, social connection, and peer support for student wellbeing. Students want more opportunities to connect with others, build relationships, and feel like they belong.

*"More activities"*

*"Promoting use of therapists, community group sessions, and buddies"*

*"More socialisation"*

*"More social meet-ups for people in my degree only."*

*"More forced interactions between peers and better resources for asking for help integrated into the structure of the course."*



## Students' recommendations for: Success

### Practical Experience:

There was a significant emphasis on bridging the gap between theory and real-world application through internships, practical projects, and industry exposure.

*"More real life projects."*

*"More focus on practical on-the-job aspects."*

*"For success in academic and career preparation, the university might consider integrating more hands-on learning, such as internships, project-based courses, and industry-specific workshops, directly into the curriculum."*

*"Placements in law firms."*

*"More hands on learning, less focus on academia and more focus on industry."*

*"Expose students to real industry experiences rather than theoretical practicum."*

### Personalised Support:

Students value individualised guidance, tutoring, peer mentorship, and advice tailored to their specific needs and learning styles.

*"Personalised Academic Support: One size doesn't fit all when it comes to academic success. Offering more personalised tutoring or academic advising based on individual learning styles could improve outcomes."*

*"More tutor options."*

*"More one-on-one guidance with degree planning."*

*"Grade wise, it's up to us to succeed and little is provided by the university to help us in case we are struggling except for group TA sessions. Having access to potentially personalised tutoring could be useful."*

*"Mentor keeping abreast of my needs"*

*"Recommendation: Offer tailored academic support based on individual needs, such as one-on-one tutoring, mentorship from professors, or smaller, more focused study groups."*

### Career Preparation:

There's a strong focus on preparing for the job market, including job search skills, networking, and industry connections.

*"More job fairs."*

*"If they could explain potential pathways for specific degrees, that would be extremely useful and if they could also explain how to get there that would help."*

*"Improved Career Services: personalised career coaching, resume building, job search workshops, and interview practice could help us better prepare for the job market."*

*"To support success, it would be helpful if the university provided more career-focused workshops, internships, and networking events."*

*"Easier to find connections to potential employers, for both casual jobs during studies and for jobs after graduation."*

*"Offer tailored career advice earlier in the degree, with more focus on internships, job shadowing, and opportunities for professional development."*

### Improved Communication and Clarity:

Clearer instructions, timely feedback, and better communication from teachers and staff are important to students.

*"Give feedback on assessments back quicker so that we can have time to improve our errors."*

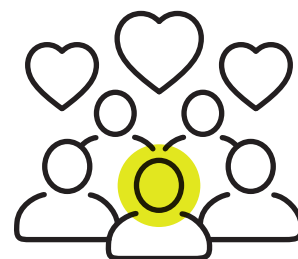
*"More help from teachers and more explanations."*

*"Have better given direction."*

*"More articulate criteria that is appropriate and adapted to the task at hand."*

*"Explaining tasks correctly and giving more time for completion."*

*"Making content easier to follow."*



## Recommendations for Improvement: Overall Experience

### More practical and hands-on learning:

Students want less theoretical courses and more workshops, simulations, projects, internships, and real-world applications.

*"More practical courses (less theoretical)."*

*"Improving access to hands-on learning opportunities, like labs, simulations, or real-world projects, could enhance the degree experience. This would allow students to apply theory in a practical context, making their learning feel more relevant and engaging."*

### Technology and AI integration:

Some students suggest integrating more digital tools and AI into courses to make learning more dynamic and relevant.

*"Using AI to improve processes"*

*"Allow students to use AI, it's a great tool to reduce redundant work spent trying to translate academic texts. It's also reflective of the real world"*

### Improved support and guidance:

Many students seek more support from teachers, tutors, and advisors, including clearer communication, feedback, and help with studying and career pathways.

*"More support and guidance in terms of pathway to med, required scores, current cohort stats, help to improve studies, discuss opportunities and the future with us regarding the pathways to medicine"*

*"Greater feedback and support."*

### Flexibility in learning:

Students want more flexible learning options, such as online options, evening classes, and hybrid formats, to accommodate their various commitments.

*"Flexible Learning Options: Many students struggle to balance their academic workload with other commitments (work, family, etc.). The university could offer more flexible learning options, such as hybrid or online courses, evening classes, or self-paced modules, which would allow students to better manage their time and commitments."*

*"So far the experience have been amazing because of how flexible the program is and the timing for studying and turning in assignments it just great."*

### Enhanced social and community aspects:

There's a desire for more activities, clubs, events, and opportunities to connect with peers and build a sense of community.

*"More avenues to have fun"*

*"More opportunities to make friends"*

### Feedback and responsiveness:

Students want their feedback to be taken into account and see changes being implemented based on their suggestions.

*"Providing you with your current average grade for each class during*

*the semester to allow you to focus on areas that need to be improved."*

*"Listening to student feedback surveys."*

### Addressing workload and stress:

Concerns about heavy workloads, pressure, and stress are raised, with suggestions for fewer assignments and more balance.

*"Less assignments, more pass/fail skill test."*

*"I have enjoyed it but pressure is a lot."*

### Better facilities and resources:

Improvements to campus facilities, technology, and access to resources are mentioned.

*"Better technology for enrollment."*

*"Some more access to facilities to study with outside exam times, undertake initiatives to encourage students to study on campus where possible."*

### Career readiness:

Students emphasize the need for more job-ready programs, career counseling, and assistance with finding internships and jobs.

*"More job ready programs."*

*"Providing frequent career counseling and more internships job training."*

## Recommendations for Improvement: Other

Lastly, students were also given the opportunity to make suggestions on any other facet of university life.

Overall, students want a university experience that is supportive, engaging, and prepares them for the future. They value academic rigor but also want practical application, social connections, and resources to help them succeed.

There is a strong emphasis on inclusivity and ensuring that all students, regardless of background or circumstance, feel supported and have access to the resources they need. The integration of technology, particularly AI, is also seen as important for modern learning and future employability.

Students repeatedly mention the desire for more social events, better support services, and clear guidelines regarding AI use in their studies. University leaders must prioritise enhancing support services, particularly for those with diverse schedules and needs, and to officially address the integration and ethical use of AI tools within the curriculum.



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