



# PGES Survey Findings

## AY 2022/2023

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### **Executive Summary**

In line with the previous few years, the 2023 survey saw low engagement compared to the levels seen in 2018, possibly due to increased postgraduate recruitment and the survey length. Just over half responded positively to questions regarding the GSA as a community building organisation and a large majority reported feeling that having a postgraduate-specific union is beneficial. Engagement in elections remains at under half of the population, with many reporting that they do not feel that the elections affect them or that they forgot to vote.

In some areas, satisfaction rates remain high and stable compared to previous years, including academic satisfaction rates regarding supervisors and departments. Similarly, students gave overall positive responses on feedback and communication, timetable efficiency and perceived value of degrees. A high number of respondents reported that they would recommend York to others and few reported regretting their decision to study at a postgraduate level, either at York or generally. The 2023 survey saw a positive rise in satisfaction rates across some key areas including: securing accommodation (although less than half agreed that their accommodation was affordable or good value for money), sense of belonging at the university, the benefits of a collegiate system, and feeling welcome and safe on campus. The most frequently reported concerns were those related to finances, mental health and career progression.

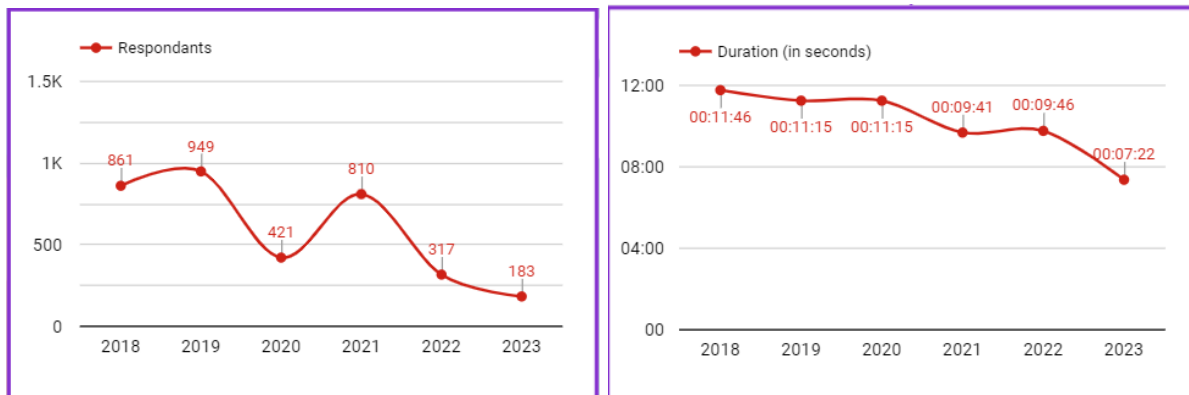
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## Survey Engagement

When compared with the number of respondents since 2018, the engagement rate has dropped significantly, with this year's PGES Survey receiving **183 complete responses**. It initially dropped during 2020 by roughly 50%, recovering in 2021 only to drop once again in 2022. We are currently receiving an **average of 25% when compared with 2018, 2019 & 2021**. This could be indicative of a sharp rise in PG student recruitment from 2018 - present, making it much more difficult to share the survey widely amongst our members. Despite the removal of many questions to shorten the survey from an average of almost **10 minutes to 7.5**, the number of responses declined once again between 2022 and 2023.

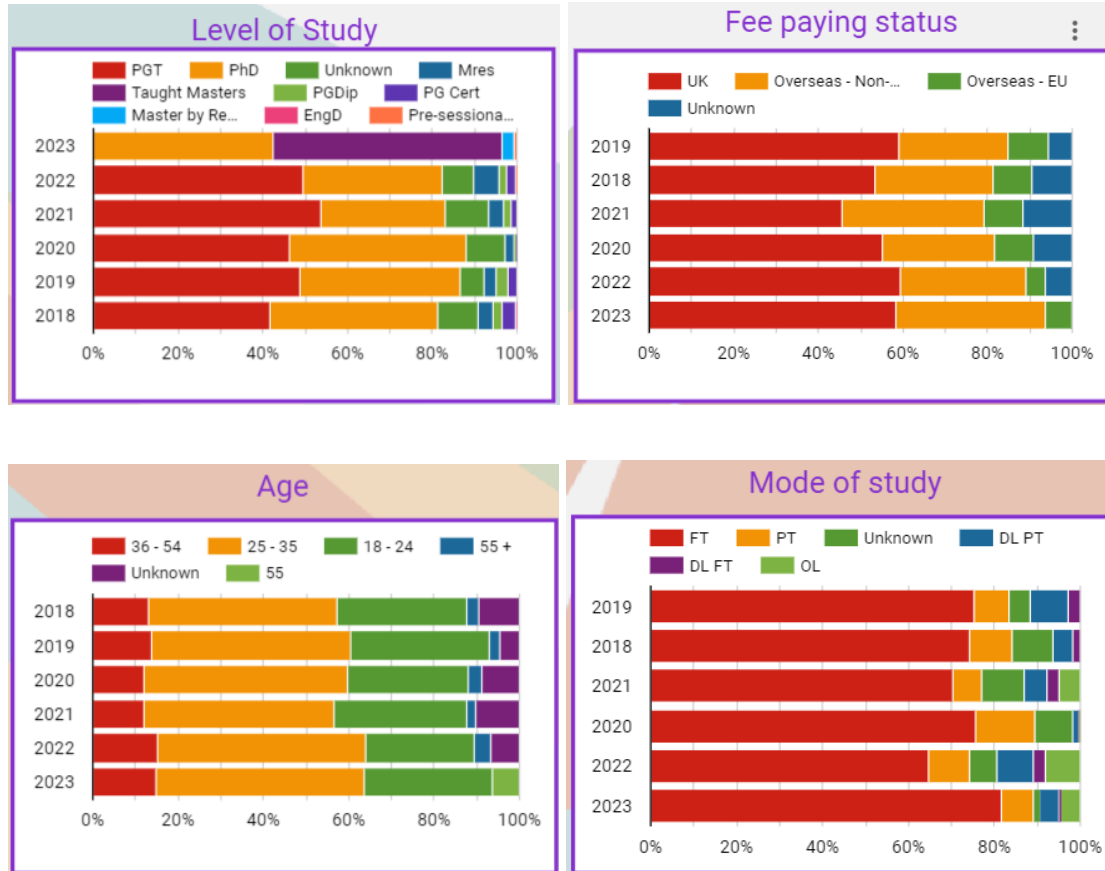
- It's worth noting that **2023 had the lowest non-completion rate**, but only marginally at near **19%** which I would suggest shows that the length of the survey is still a factor in low engagement.



## Respondent Demographics

- The vast number of respondents were in full-time study at 81.67%.
- There was a clear over representation of PGR Students within the responses with **PGR Students** making up **41.81%** of the respondents.
- **41.7%** of respondents were **International students** as categorised by fee paying status with **only 6.29%** of that number holding **European residential status**.
- The age of our respondents varied greatly with our most engaged groups sitting within the **25-35 (48.86%)** and **18-24 (30.11%)** categories.

## 2018 - 2023 Demographic Data



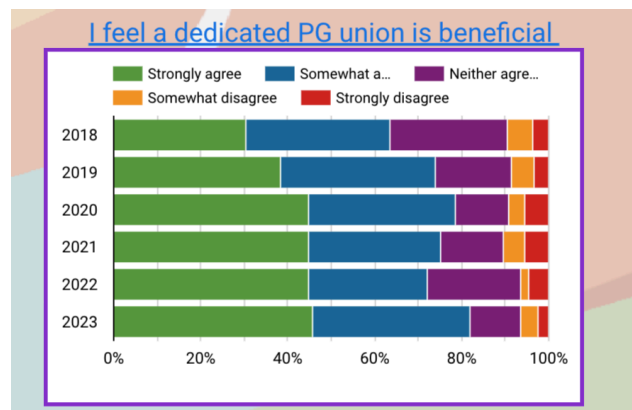
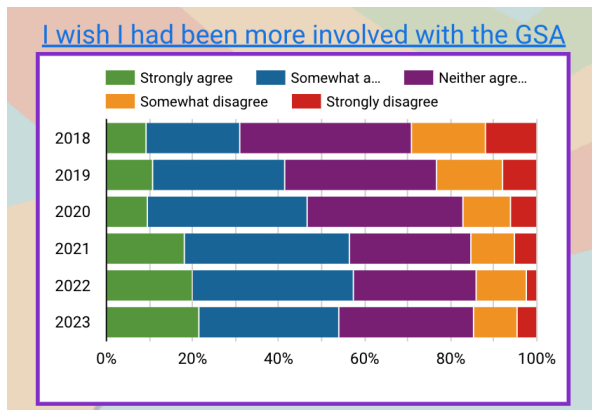
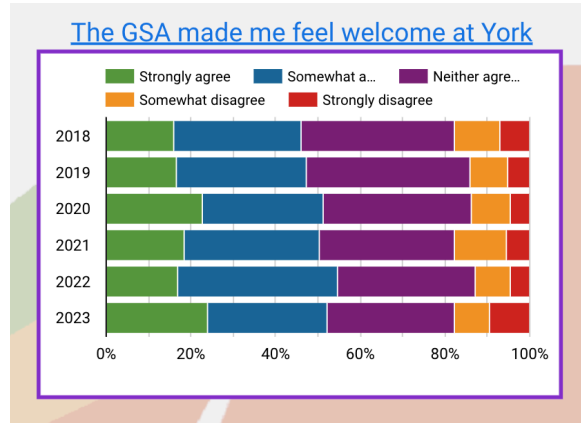
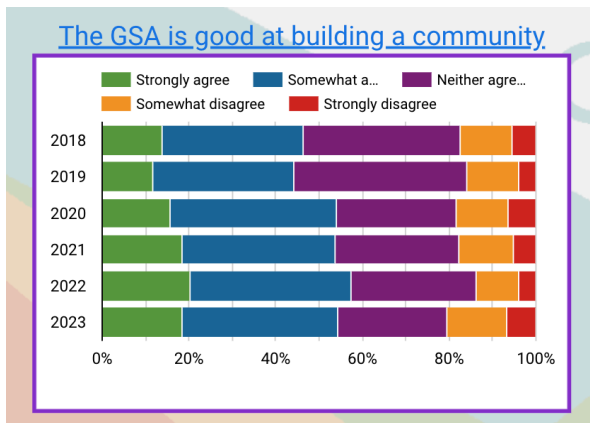
## GSA: Opinions and Elections

Respondents were asked a variety of questions about their experience with the GSA, split into two categories: Opinion and Elections. Questions about Knowledge and Engagement were retired before the 2023 survey.

### Opinions

- **54.3%** of respondents stated that they either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the GSA is good at building a community, down slightly from 2022.

- While more students strongly agreed that the GSA had made them feel welcome at York in 2023 (**24%**) than in 2022, overall agreement was down slightly and a small rise was seen in students somewhat disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement
- Over time, a steady rise can be seen in students strongly agreeing and, to a lesser degree, somewhat agreeing, that they wish they had been more involved with the GSA. In 2023, over half (**54%**) of students either somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement
- The feeling that a dedicated PG union is beneficial remains strong amongst PG students: at least two thirds of respondents have somewhat or strongly agreed with this since 2018, and **81.9%** agreed in 2023.



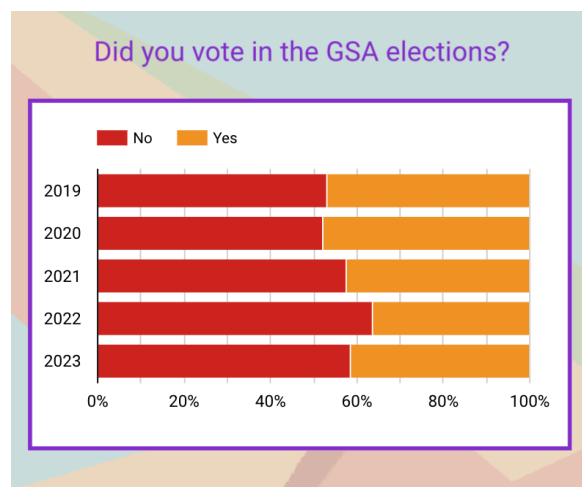
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## Elections

Respondents were asked whether they voted in the GSA elections, and if not, why they had made this decision. After a steady fall in participation in the elections from 2020 to 2022, the number rose again in 2023, with **41.7%** of students reporting that they voted.

When asked, where they had reported not participating in the elections, why they had not participated, students responded that there were various reasons:

- Over the last five years, the most common reason why students did not participate in the elections was that they didn't know they were happening. In 2023, this was the reason given by **28.6%** of students who did not vote
- The next most common reasons were that students did not feel that the elections affected them or simply that they forgot to vote; these reasons were selected by **23.4%** and **19.5%** of respondents respectively

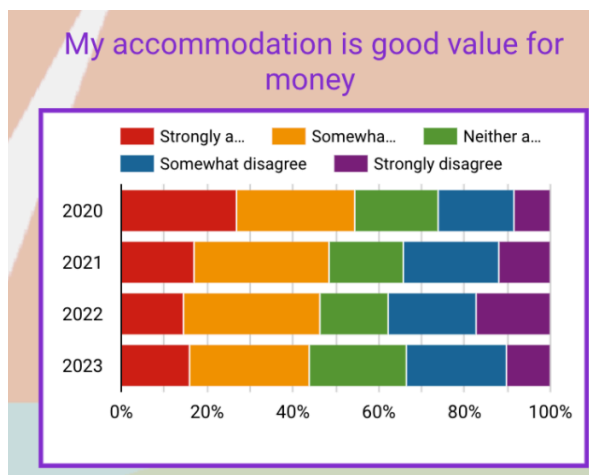
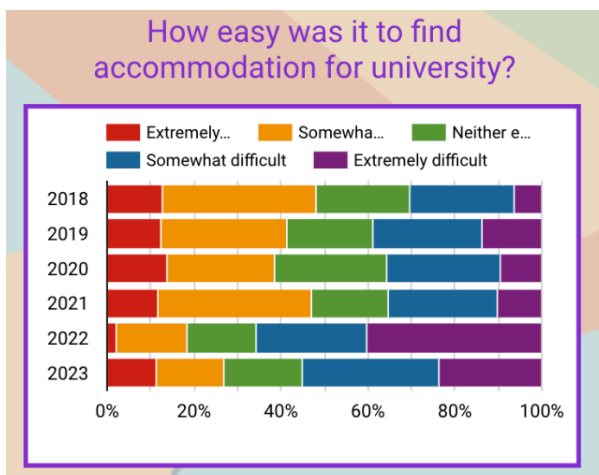
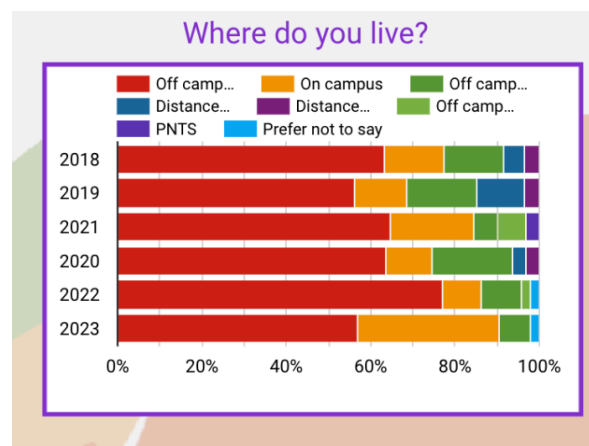
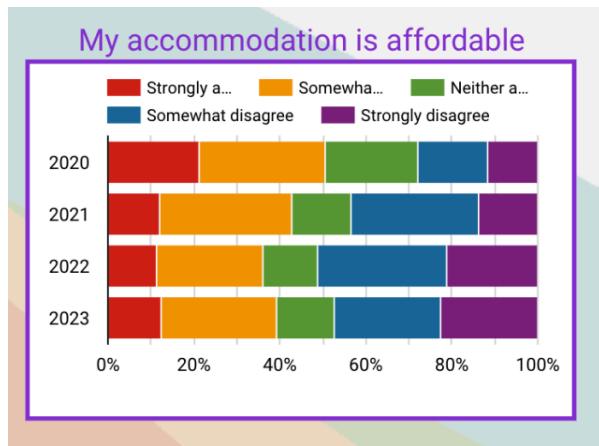


## Accommodation

Respondents were asked for feedback on finding and paying for accommodation for the duration of their studies.

- In relation to the affordability and value for money of accommodation, fewer students report feeling as though they cannot afford their accommodation in 2023 compared to 2022. Overall **39.4%** of respondents reported that they either somewhat or strongly agreed that their accommodation is affordable. A similar number to last year, **43.8%** somewhat or strongly agreed that their accommodation is good value for money.

- Similarly, students reported finding it easier to find accommodation in 2023 compared to the previous year: **26.6%** of respondents stated that they were able to find accommodation either somewhat or extremely easily
- More of the 2023 survey respondents (**33.7%**) live on campus compared to the previous five years. There has been a drop in students living off campus within the city of York but this appears to be largely due to the rise in those living on campus, as fewer also reported living outside York and commuting to campus

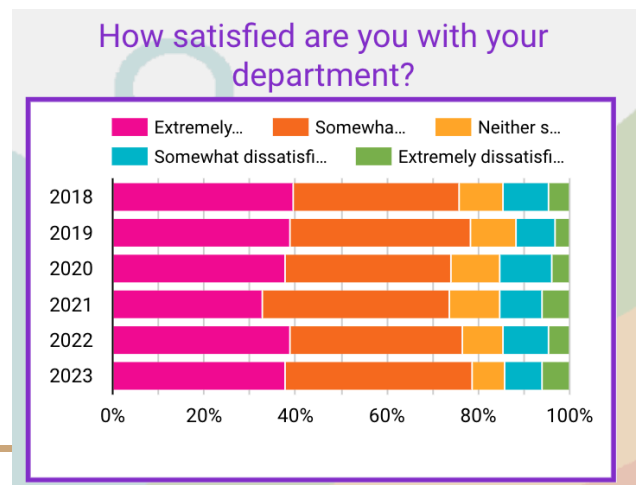
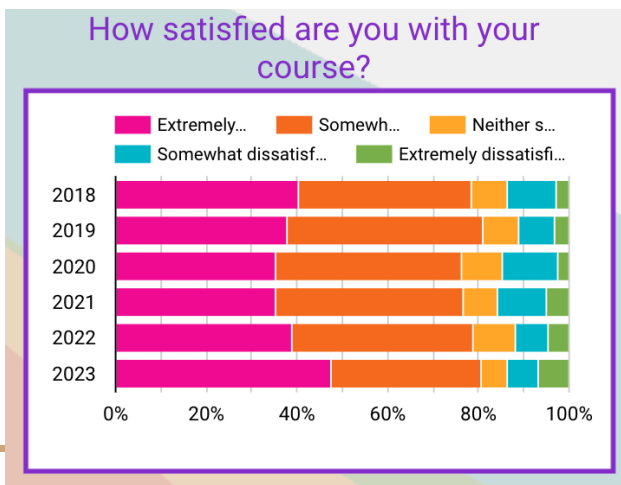


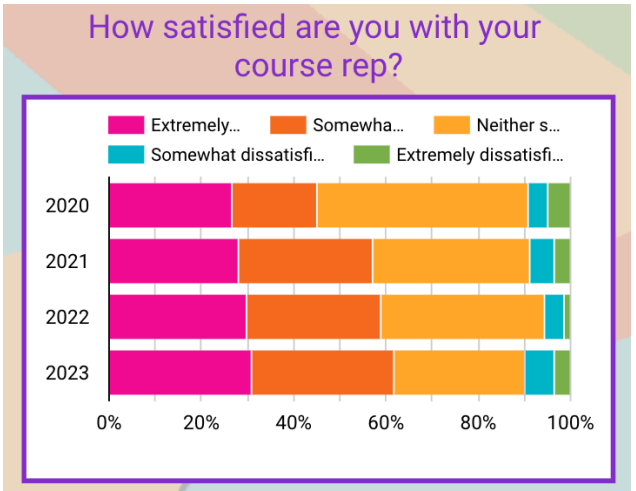
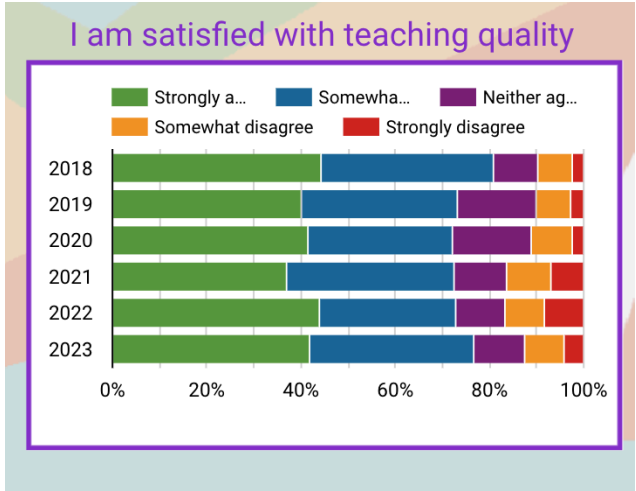
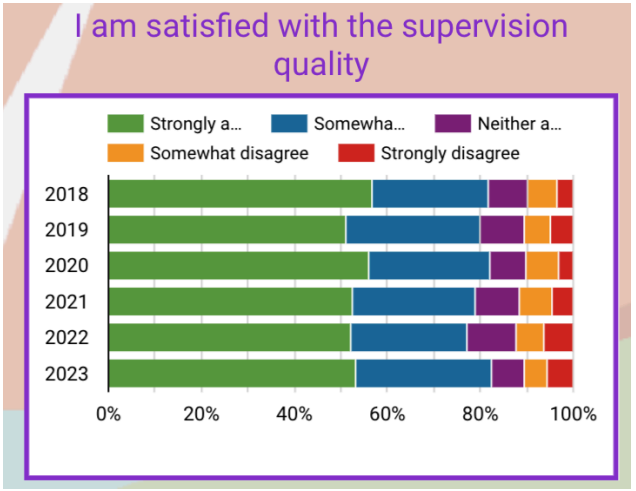
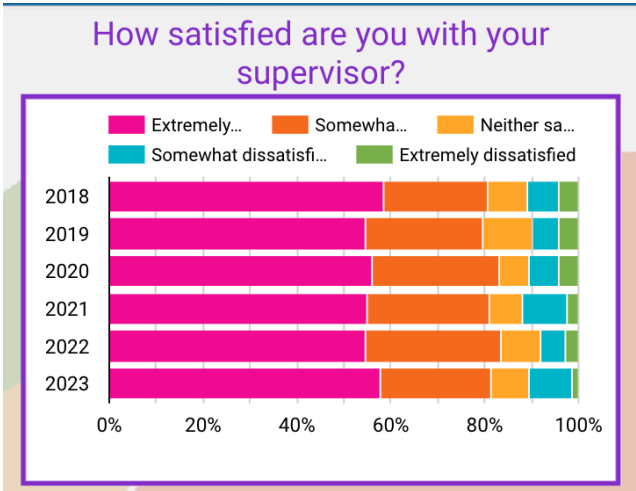
## Academic

Respondents were asked various questions related to their academic experience. These questions were split into four categories: Satisfaction, Feedback and Communication, Contact Time and Community.

### Satisfaction

- The number of students reporting feeling either somewhat or extremely satisfied has remained stable over the past six years, with the rate at **80.7%** in 2023. However, 2023 saw the highest rate of students, **47.6%**, reporting feeling extremely satisfied in the last six years.
- Department-specific satisfaction rates were similar to previous years, with **78.5%** of respondents reporting feeling somewhat or extremely satisfied
- Strong rates of supervisor satisfaction, similar to previous years, was reported in 2023: **81%** reported feeling somewhat or extremely satisfied, with most of these (**57.7%**) reporting feeling extremely satisfied
- Similarly, **82.3%** of students strongly or somewhat agreed that they were satisfied with supervision quality
- Satisfaction with course reps appears lower, with **61.8%** reporting feeling somewhat or extremely satisfied. However, dissatisfaction rates are low (**10%**). Rather, a significant number of neutral responses (**28.2%**), suggest that many students do not engage with their course reps
- Finally, **76.7%** of respondents reported feeling somewhat or extremely satisfied with teaching quality, which was a slightly higher overall satisfaction rate than last year



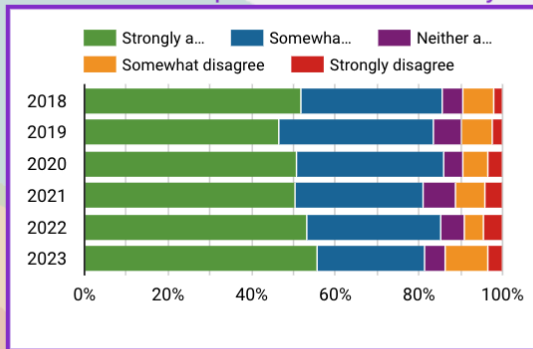


## Feedback and Communication

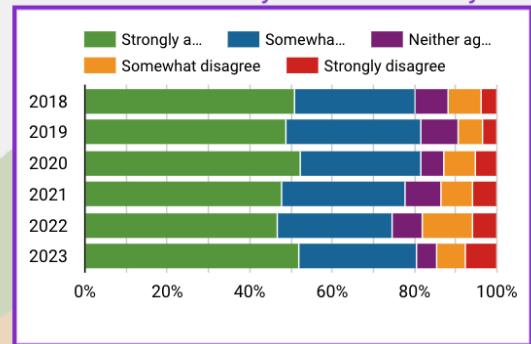
- Responses concerning the quality and timeliness of feedback on academic work were largely positive - **81.3%** somewhat or strongly agreed that they had received helpful comments on their work and **80.6%** somewhat or strongly agreed that these had been received in a timely manner
- Fewer students (**70.6%**) agreed that the criteria used in marking had been made clear to them in advance of submitting work
- In 2023 more students (**78.6%**) agreed that their departments communicated with them clearly than the previous three years



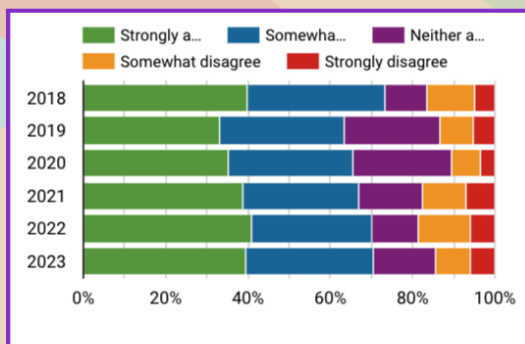
### I have received helpful comments on my work



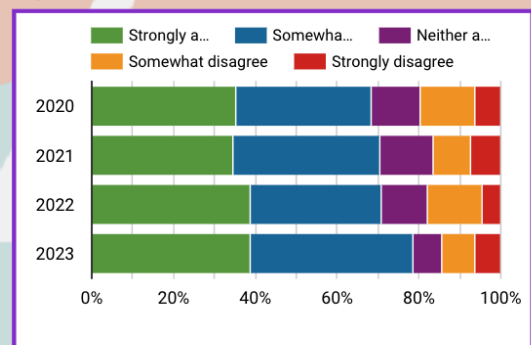
### Feedback on my work has timely



### The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance



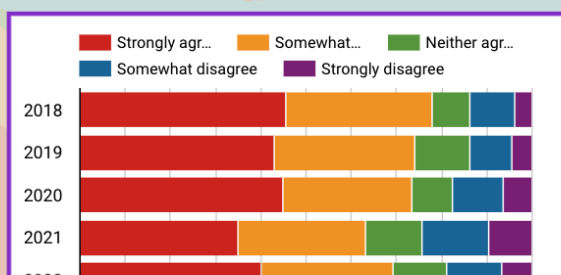
### My department has clear communication



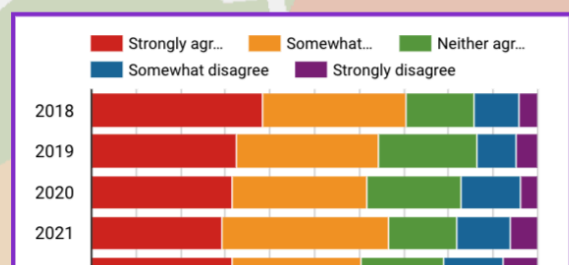
## Contact Time

- **72.6%** of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the amount of contact hours on their programme. This was a similar overall satisfaction rate as previous years, although a steady increase of those responding 'strongly agree' has been seen since 2021
- 2023 saw an improvement in positive feedback concerning the efficiency of timetables, with overall satisfaction up from **60.3%** in 2022 to **70.9%** in 2023

### I am satisfied with the amount of contact hours



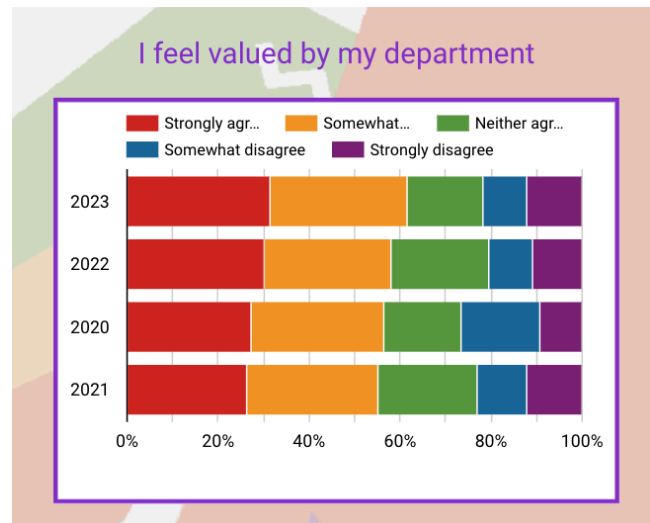
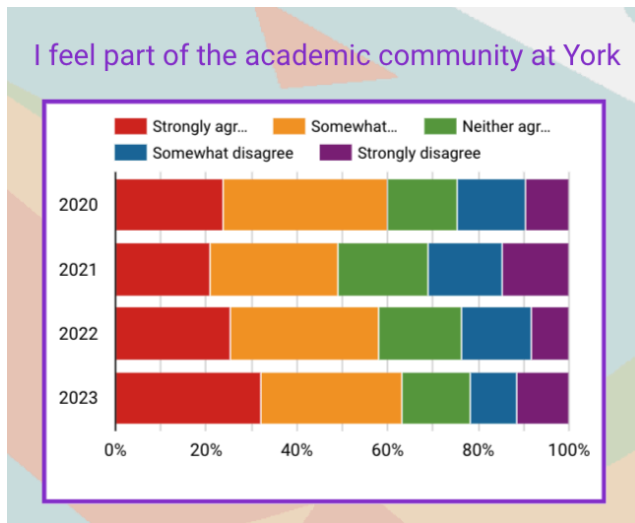
### My academic timetable has been efficient



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## Community

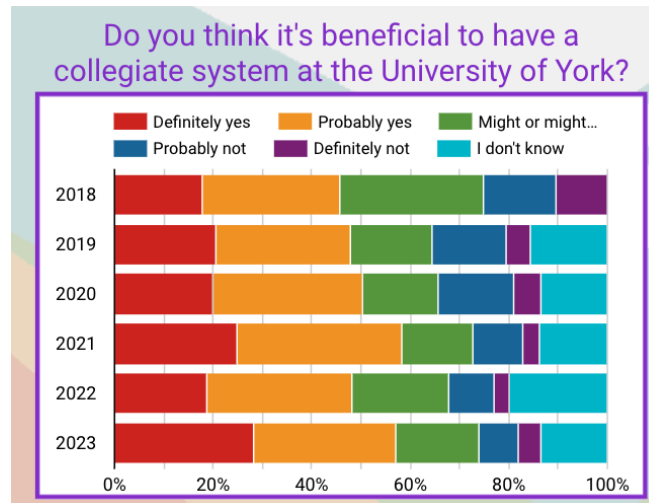
- From 2021 to 2023, the number of students reporting that they somewhat or strongly agree that they feel part of the academic community at York has increased: in 2023 the rate was **63%**
- In 2023 **61.6%** of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that they feel valued by their department



## Colleges

In 2023 the majority of questions which have been previously asked regarding students' experiences with colleges were retired. The range of questions which were previously asked were replaced with one which asked whether students think it is beneficial to have a

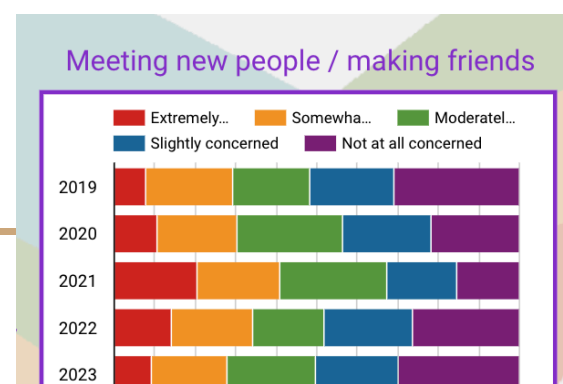
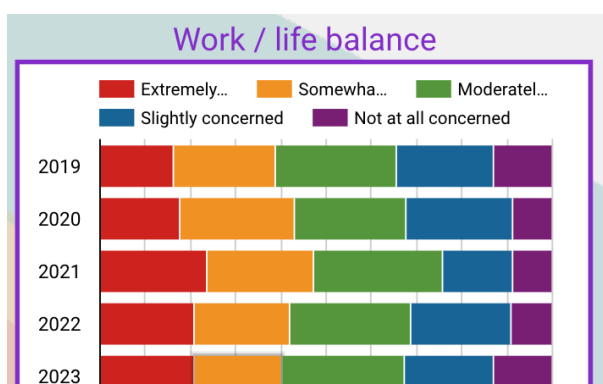
collegiate system at York. **56.9%** either somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement; **16.8%** responded neutrally; **12.7%** either somewhat or strongly disagreed; and **13.4%** stated that they didn't know.



## Student Concerns

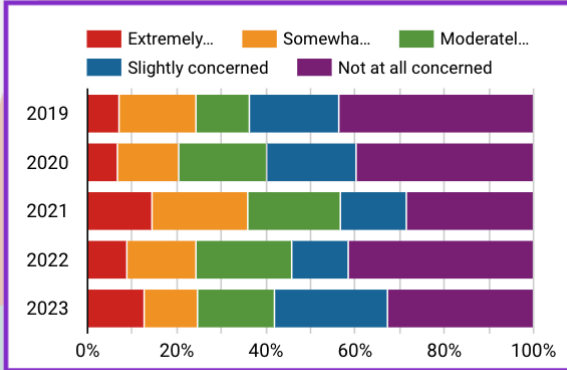
The survey asked a range of questions relating to potential concerns faced by students while studying at York.

- In 2023, the most frequently reported concerns were students' financial situations (**48.6%** either somewhat or extremely concerned), mental health including stress and anxiety (**44.9%** either somewhat or extremely concerned), and gaining the right skills for career progression (**42%** either somewhat or extremely concerned). In each of these categories, the rates of students reporting feeling concerned were up slightly from the previous year
- 2023 saw a reduction from the previous year in students reporting feeling concerned about making the most of their time at university, making friends and bullying and discrimination

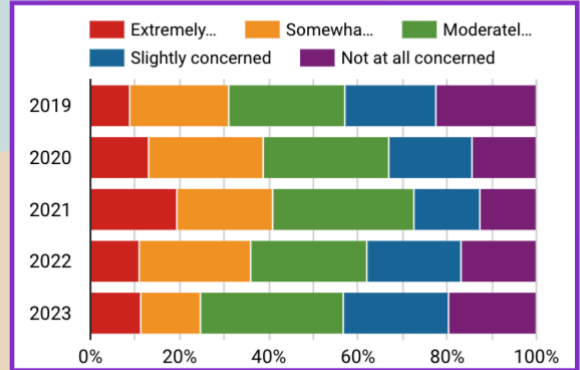




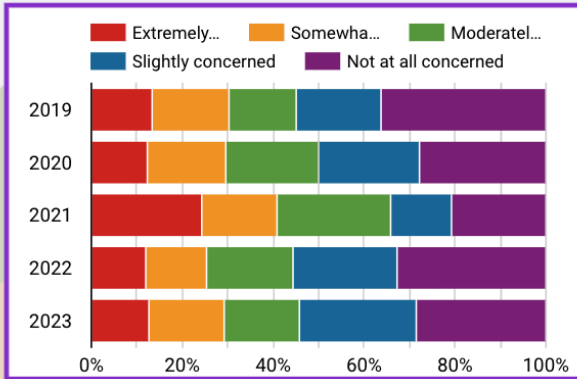
### Living environment



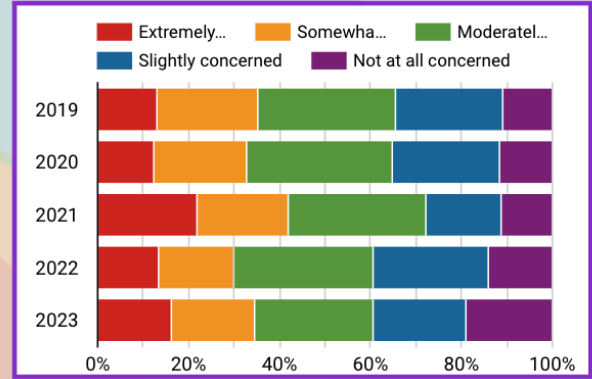
### Making the most of my time at university



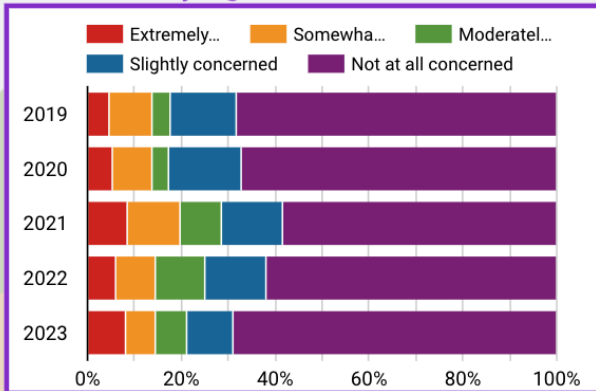
### Loneliness



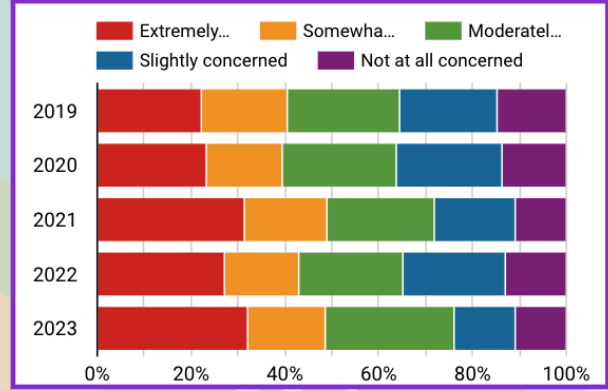
### Coping with my course



### Bullying / discrimination

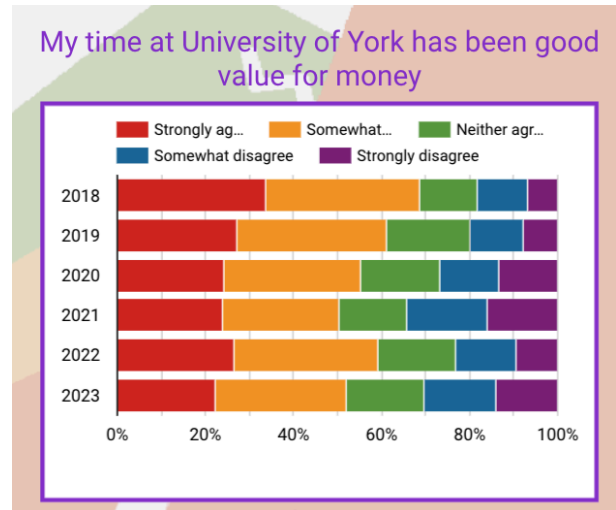


### My financial situation



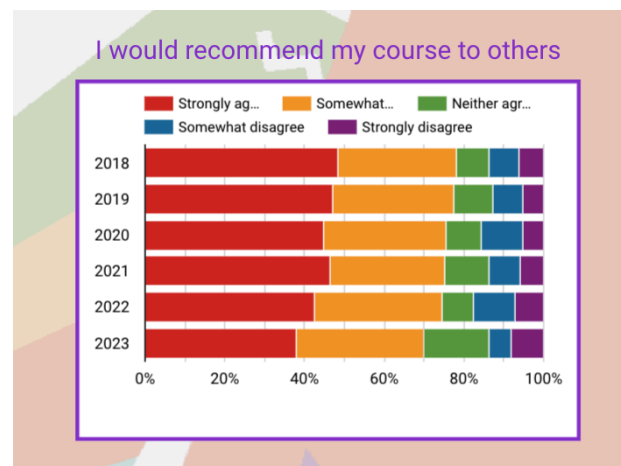
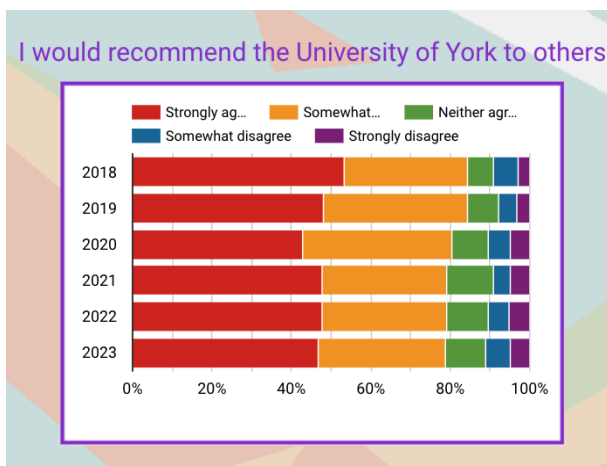
## Perceived Value of Degree

- Compared to 2022, students reported feeling slightly less confident about their career prospects and that their degrees had been good value for money. However, the rate at which students either somewhat or strongly agreed in these categories remained high, at **60.3%** and **51.8%** respectively



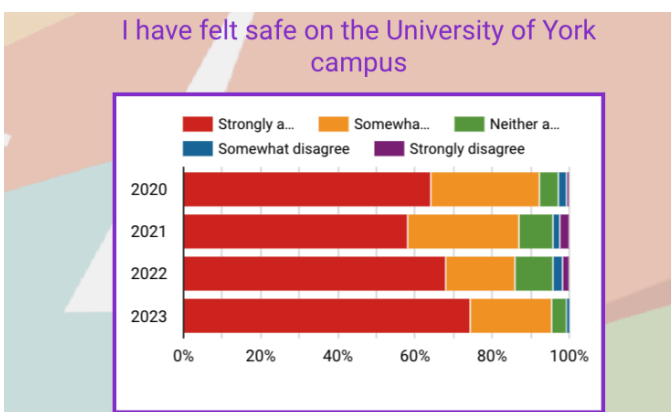
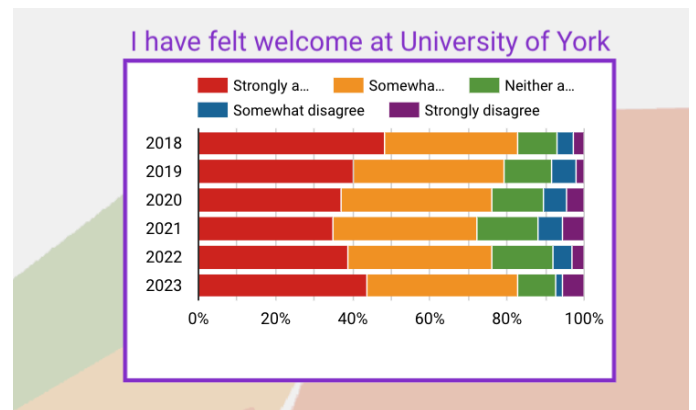
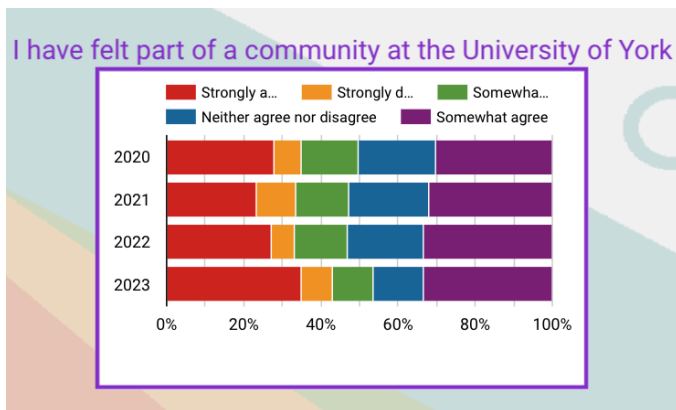
## Recommending to Others

- 78.8%** of students either somewhat or strongly agreed that they would recommend York to others, a similar rate to the previous two years
- The number of students who somewhat or strongly agreed that they would recommend their course to others was down slightly from previous years, at **70.1%**



## Overall: Campus and Community

- Of the three questions asked in this section, students disagreed most frequently that they have felt part of a community at York. Since 2020, around one third of students have strongly disagreed with this (**33.3%** in 2023). However, 2023 saw more students somewhat or strongly agreeing with this statement (**43%**)
- The number of students reporting having felt welcome at York has been steadily rising since 2021, with the number at **82.8%** in 2023
- Students overwhelmingly reported feeling safe on campus in 2023, with **95.4%** somewhat or strongly agreeing



## Overall: Experience

- The majority of students (**70.5%**) either somewhat or strongly disagreed that they wished they had not undertaken PG study
- Fewer students (**59.6%**) either somewhat or strongly disagreed that they wished they had undertaken PG study at an alternative provider
- Overall, **79.6%** of students reported that their experience so far has been either somewhat or extremely positive

