



Sustainability Survey 2024-25



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For any queries, please contact climateaction@bath.ac.uk.



Survey overview

- This is the fourth annual all-student and all-staff survey focusing on sustainability.
- Responses were gathered during a three-week period in November 2024.
- The survey was developed and analysed in collaboration with Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh and Jesse Wise in the Department of Psychology.
- Topics covered in the survey provide just a snapshot of areas that the University is or could be working on. Anything excluded in the survey is not necessarily due to a lack of priority or work.



Survey aims

1. Track University progress towards our net zero goals and sustainability commitments
2. Understand community views, opportunities and challenges to help inform decision-making
3. Increase sustainability awareness and engagement throughout our internal staff and student community



Key findings

1. There was a large consensus that the University of Bath was perceived as a sustainable community, with a noticeably weaker agreement that senior management is taking action on social issues (32% agree) and environmental issues (34% agree).
2. Regarding University action on sustainability, climate change is ranked as the second priority area for students (after cost-of-living crisis), and first for staff.
3. Staff's capability and motivation to reduce environmental impact at work is relatively high, but lack of opportunity may be hindering efforts. Only 11% of staff reported they had sufficient budget, 17% reported there was sufficient time, and 11% a clear timescale at which to implement these changes.
4. While teaching staff are showing increasing confidence to embed climate action and sustainability in their teaching, only 41% have identified that it is part of their current practice and 37% of students said sustainability was embedded in their course to some level.



Action following our last survey

Since the last survey, we've taken practical action in response to the data, such as:

- 73% of staff said that they wanted training on how to embed climate action in their job role. This year we've introduced two new staff training courses: [Introduction to Climate Action & Sustainability at Bath](#) and [Introduction to lab sustainability & LEAF](#)
- 92% of people in our community said that they were worried about climate change. We know that this can sometimes result from feeling unempowered to tackle it. We've launched [Green Impact](#), a new staff sustainability programme, to support all staff to take meaningful action on sustainability.
- 26% of students stated that the range of opportunities available for them to take action on sustainability was important to them: there are many ways students can make a difference and we've created a [new student webpage](#) and [student guide](#) to help students find a route to action that suits them.

Find out more about action across our community in our [latest annual report](#).



Survey participation

Obtaining broad opinions

Overall participation rates in the survey were good, and are comparative to previous years as well as other similar internal and external surveys.

- 41% staff took the survey
- 13% students took the survey

The survey was advertised to all staff and students through a variety of means to encourage all members of our community to complete it.

How representative is our data?

- 44% students and 60% staff who completed the survey state that climate change and sustainability are not part of their studies/role
- Qualitative data analysis demonstrated a wide range of sentiment regarding University action on sustainability

Staff

- Technical and experimental staff are **very well** represented
- Professional and operational services staff are **well** represented
- Academic staff are **less well** represented

Students

- Female students are over-represented at 56% compared to 46% in our student population

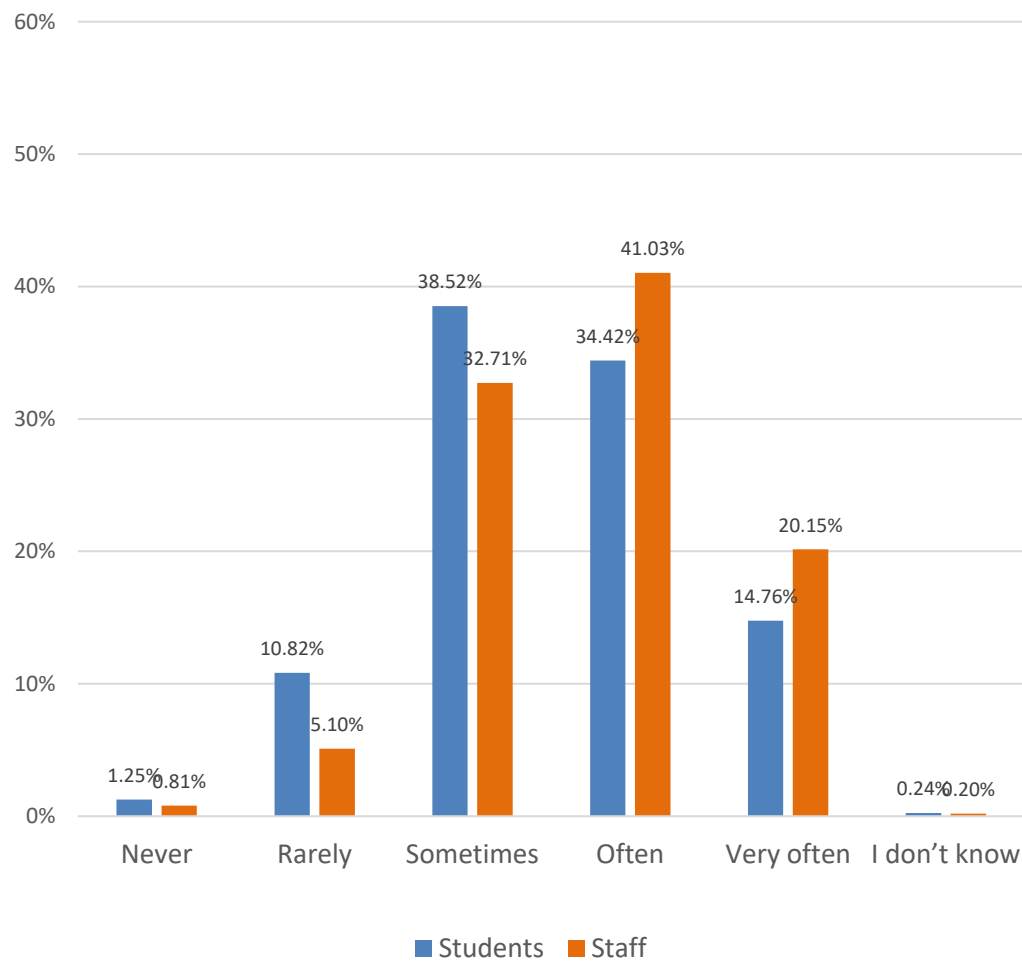


How do our community feel about climate change?

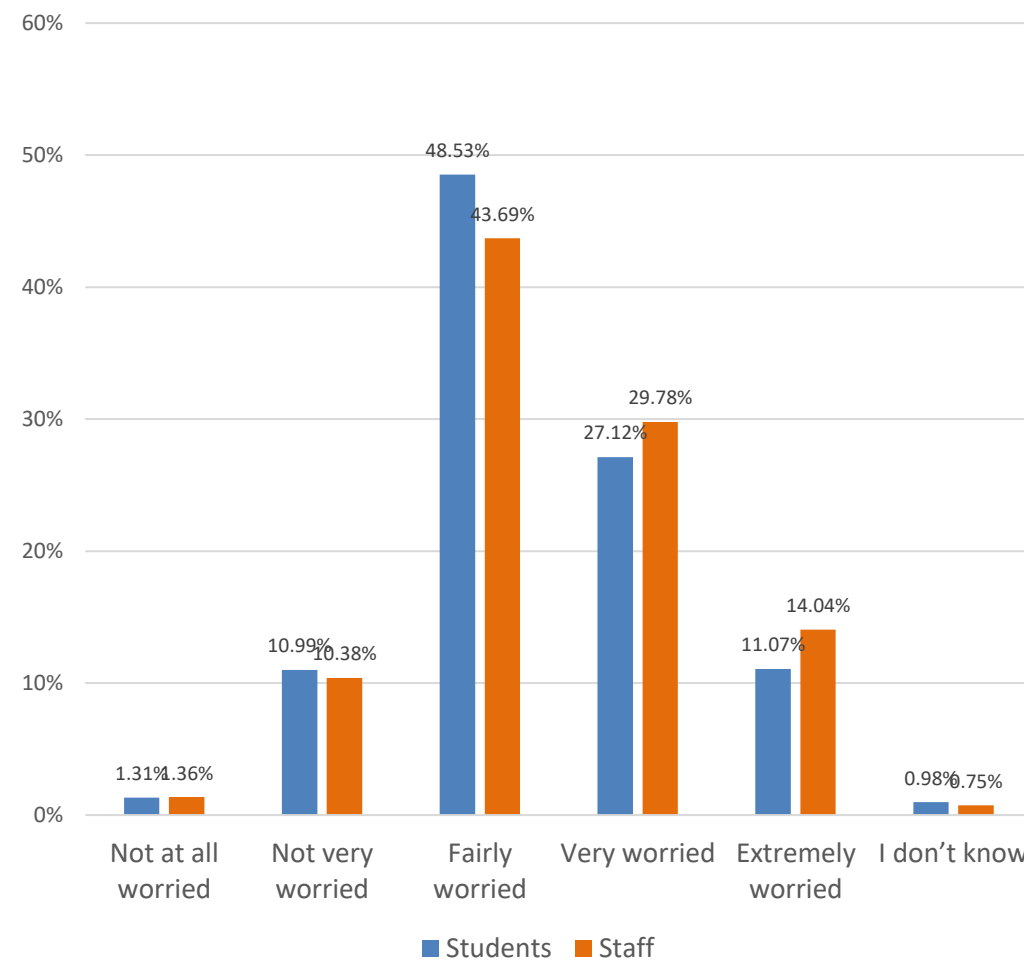
- 61% of staff and 49% students think about climate change often.
- When thinking about climate change, 88% of staff and 87% of students say that they are worried.
- While this represents a wellbeing challenge for our community, it is lower than previous years. In both 2022-23 and 2023-24, 92% of our community expressed worry related to climate change.
- 68% of students rate their personal contribution to tackling climate change positively.



How often do you think about climate change?

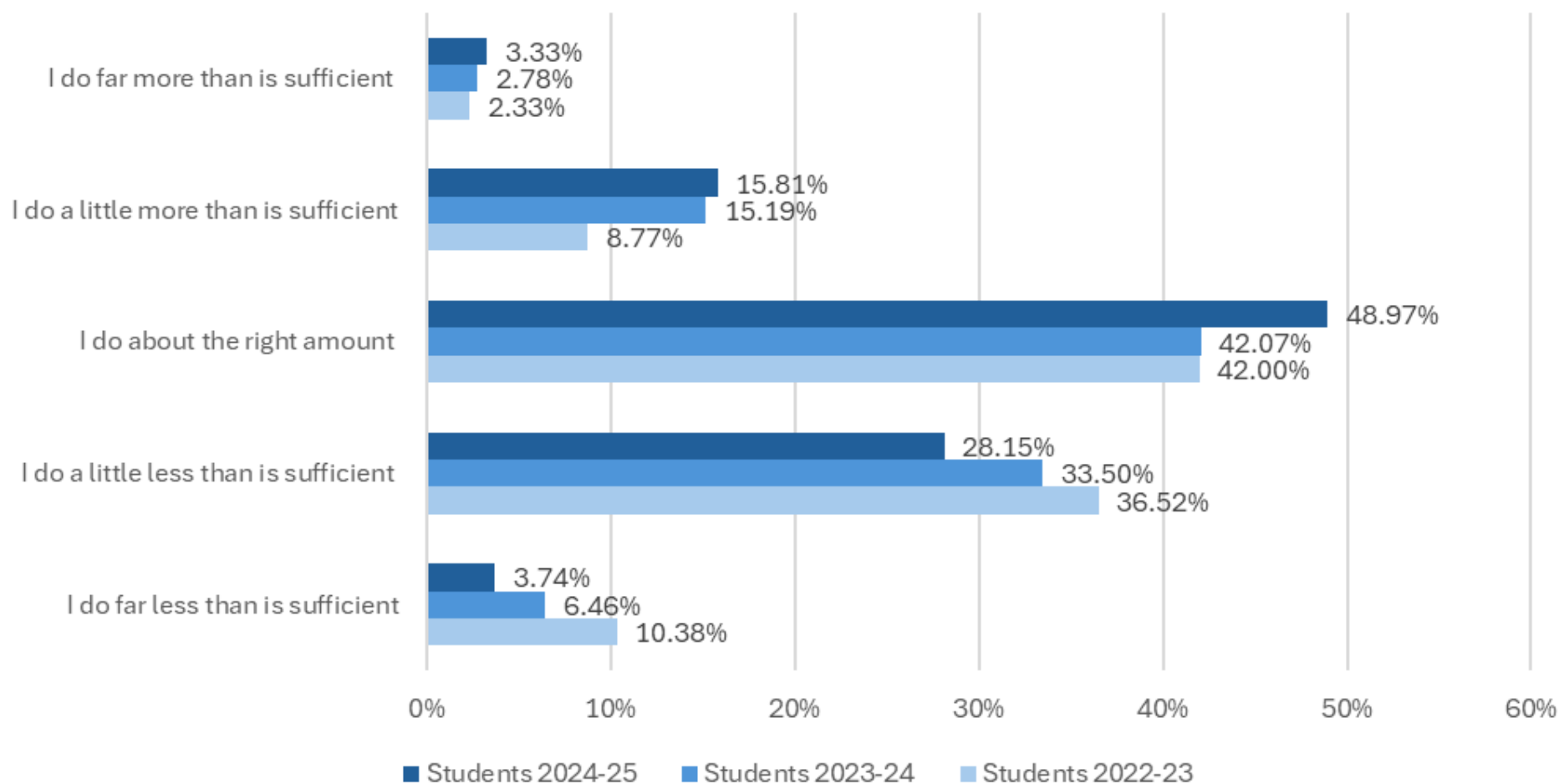


When you think about climate change, how worried do you feel?





STUDENTS: To what extent do you feel that your personal contribution to tackling climate change is sufficient?





Prioritising sustainability

- 94% of students think that the University should be taking action on climate change and sustainability
- 69% support significant action

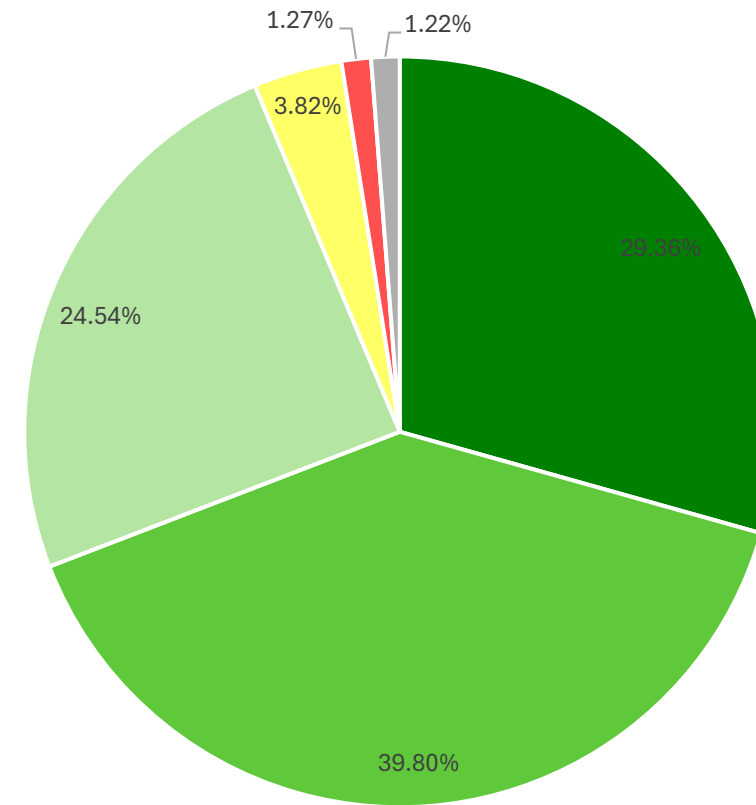




STUDENTS: To what extent would you like to see the University taking action on climate change and sustainability?

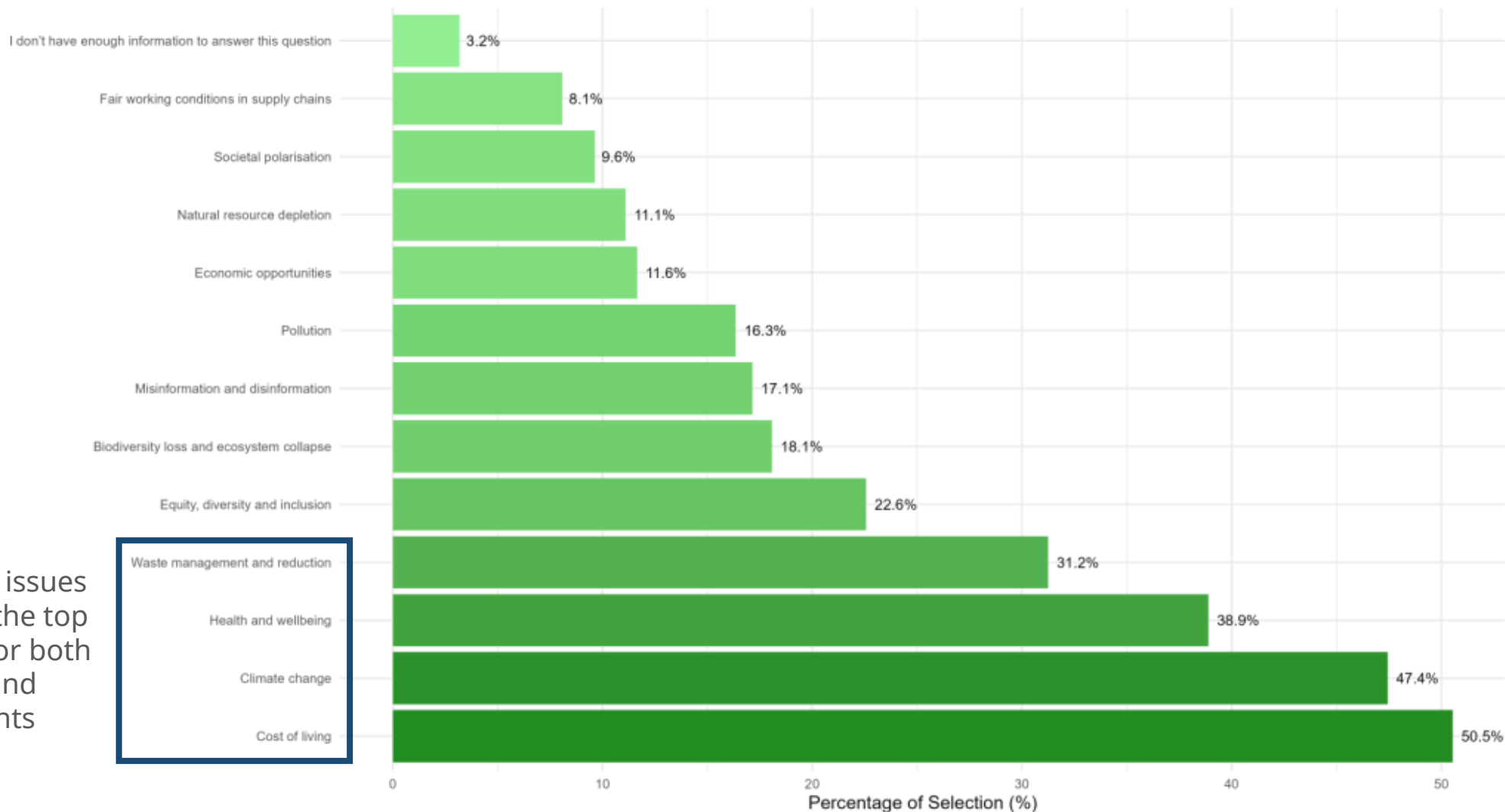
93.7% of students would like to see the University take some level of action on sustainability

- They should be leading the way
- They should be taking significant steps
- They should take some action
- I don't have an opinion either way
- They shouldn't take action
- I don't know





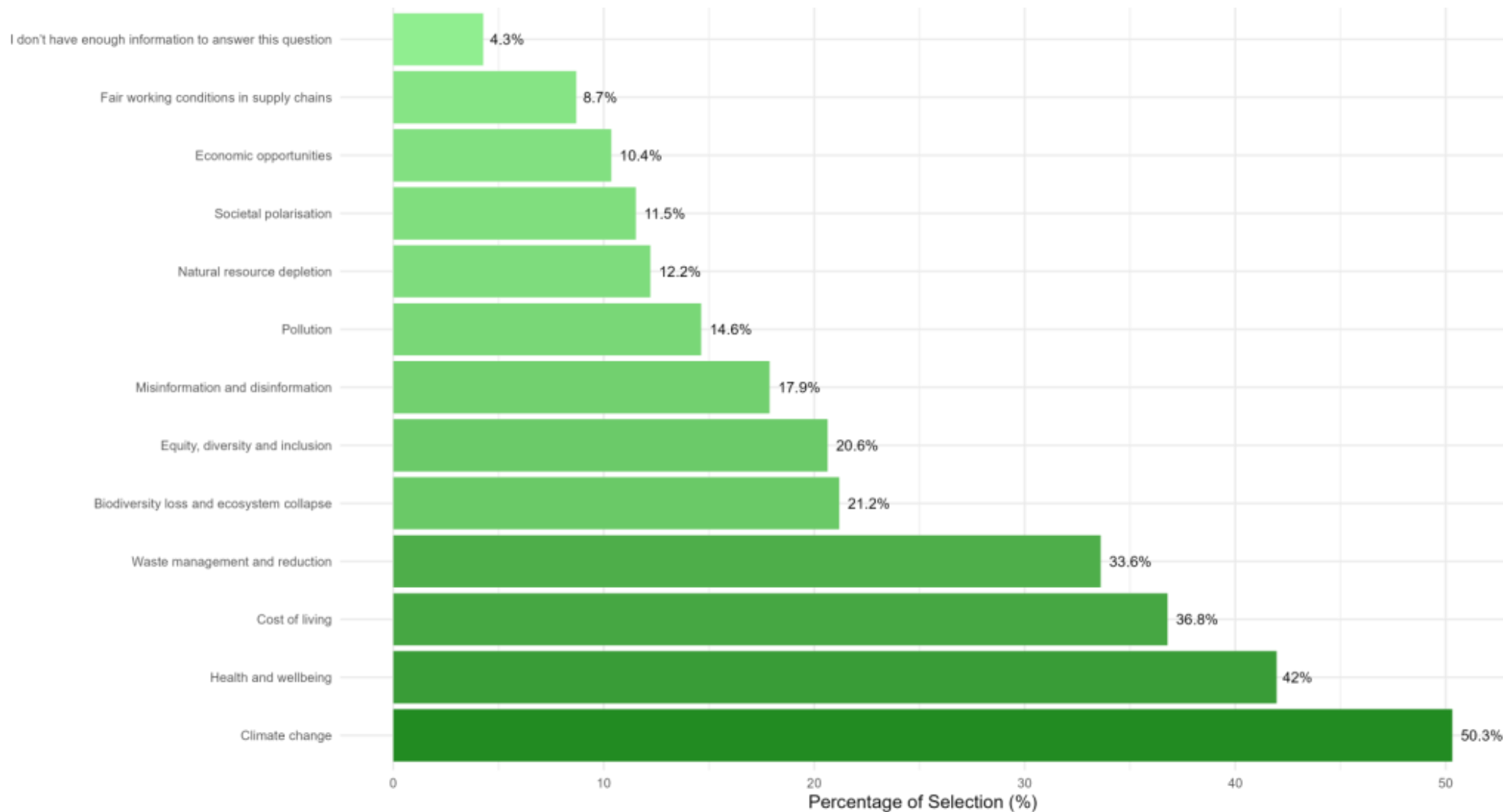
Which of the following sustainability areas should be the key priorities for the University to address at this time?



These issues were the top four for both staff and students

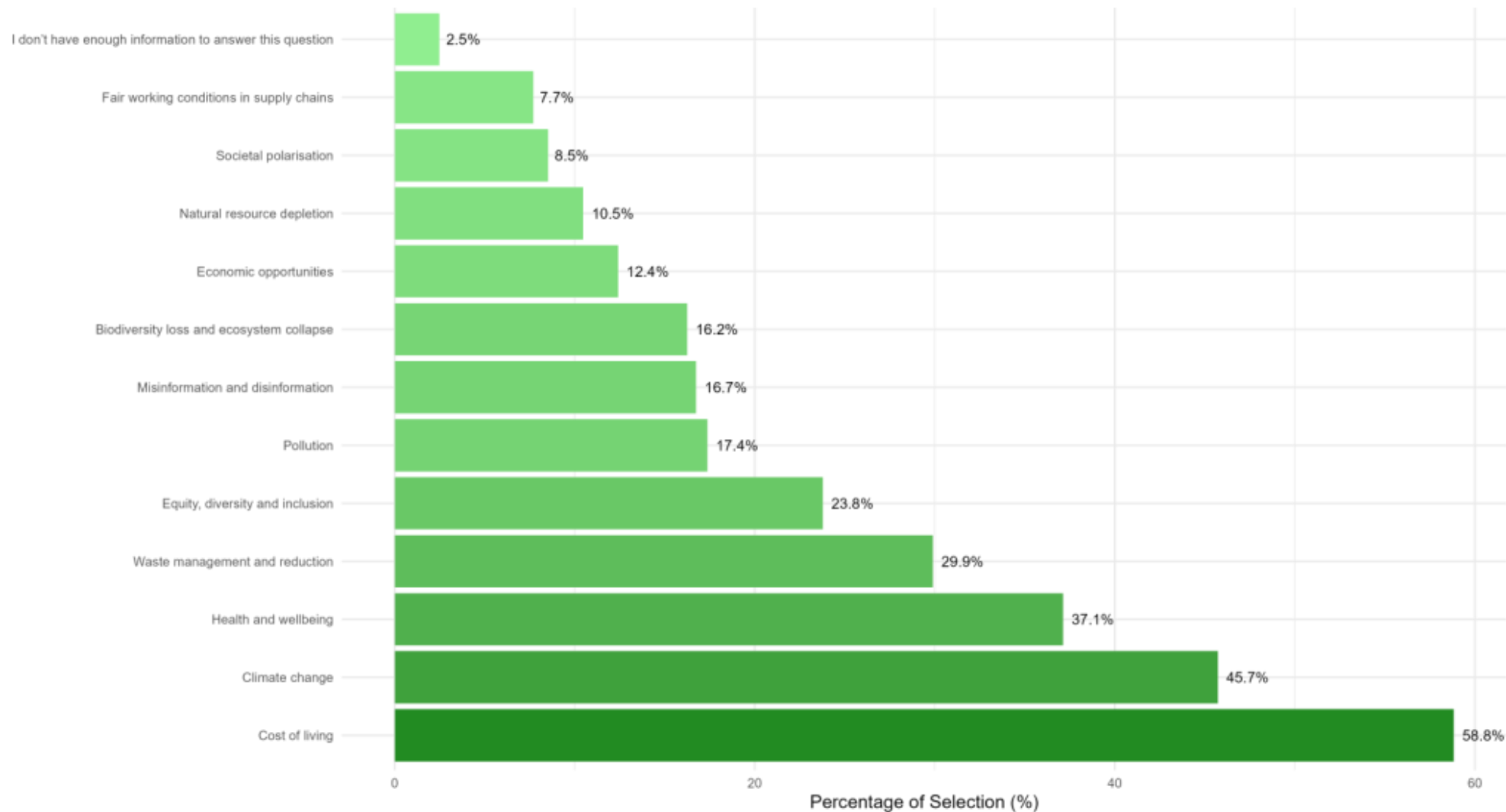


STAFF: Which of the following sustainability areas should be the key priorities for the University to address at this time?





STUDENTS: Which of the following areas should be the key priorities for the University to address at this time?





University action on sustainability

Broadly, our community think that:

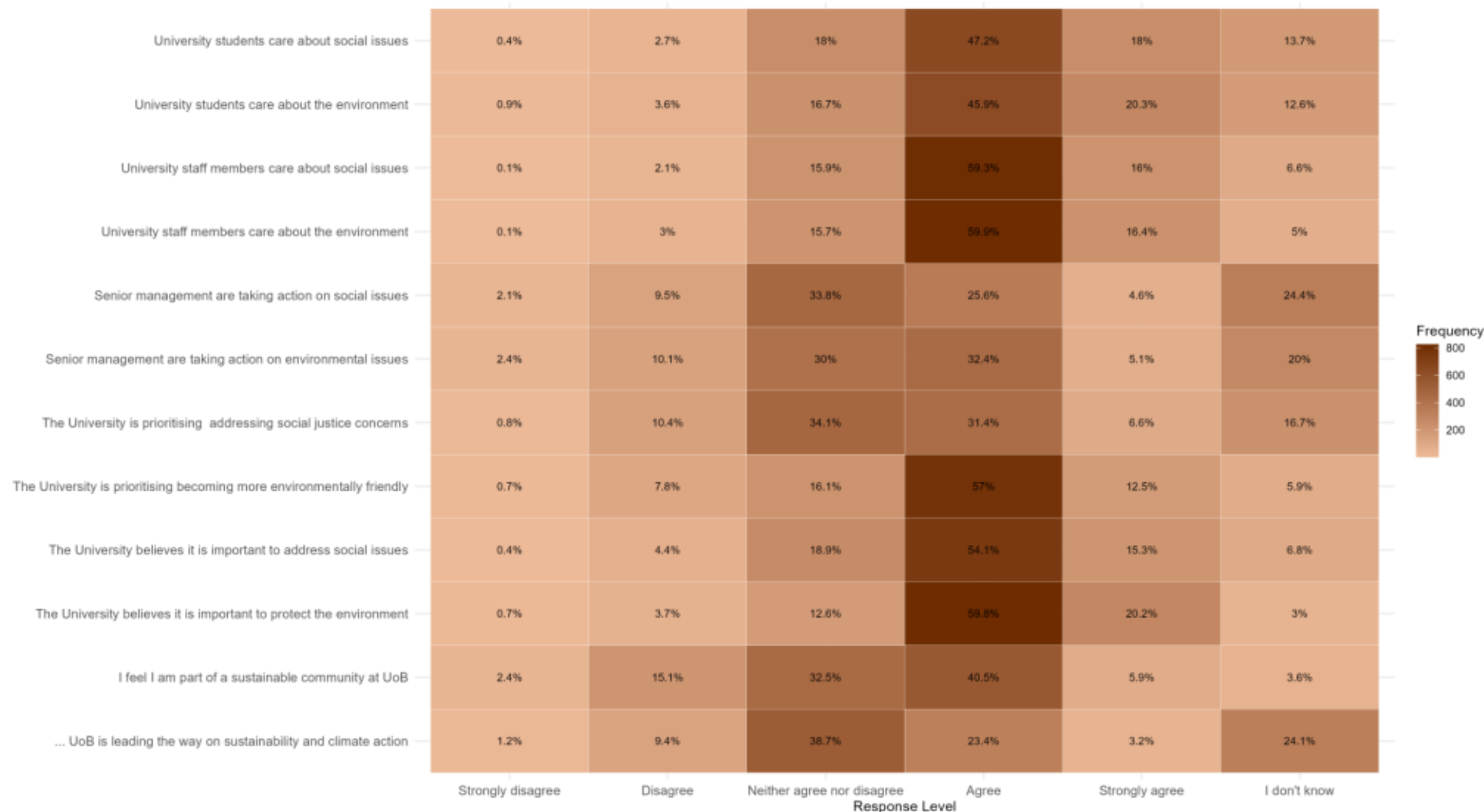
- Staff and students care about environmental and social issues
- The University believes it is important to act on environmental and social issues
- The University is prioritising becoming more environmentally friendly

Our community are less clear regarding:

- Senior management leadership on addressing environmental and social issues
- The extent to which our action is or isn't leading the way in the HE sector
- Whether the University is prioritising addressing social justice concerns

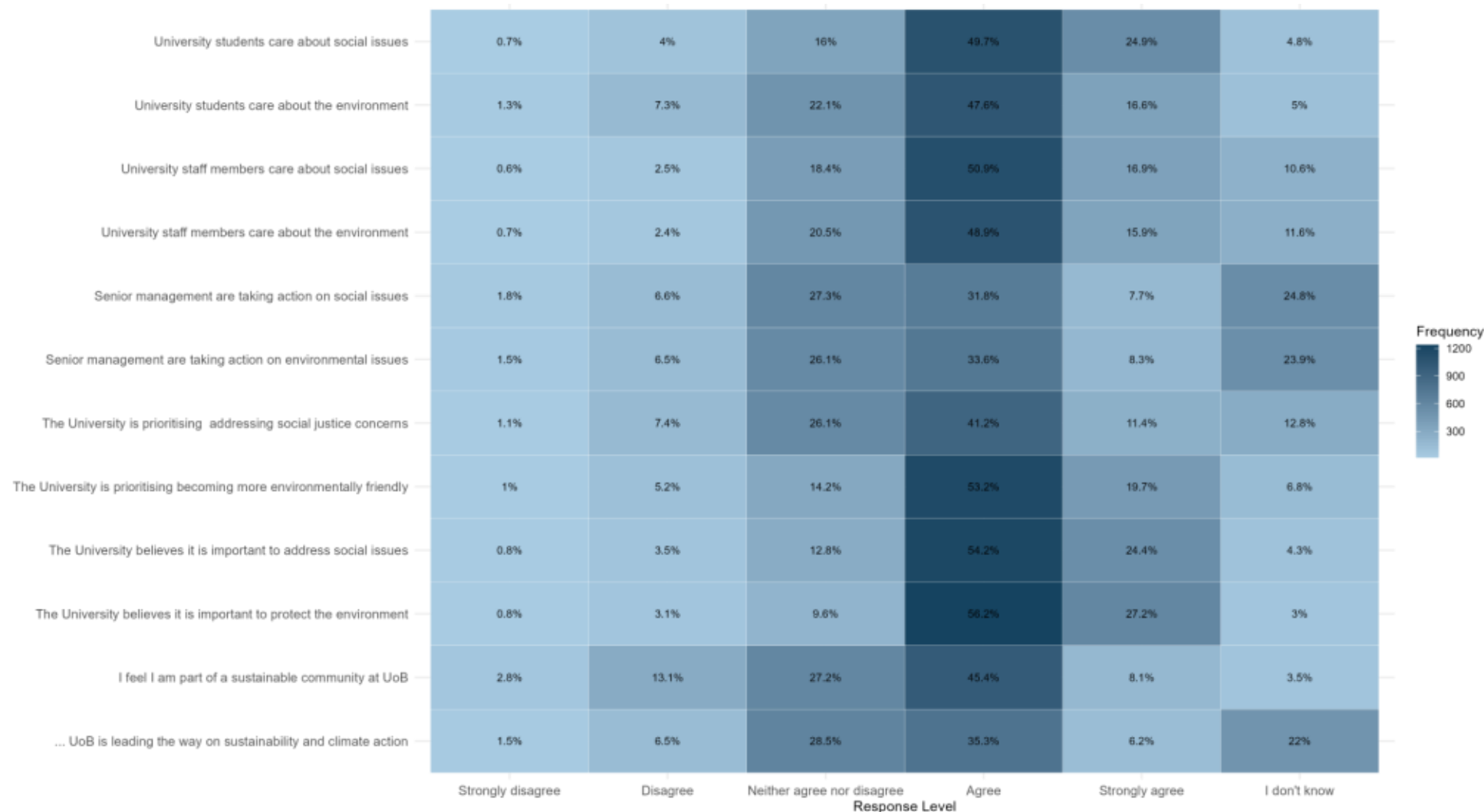


STAFF: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding University action on sustainability?





STUDENTS: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding University action on sustainability?





Education

- Students express that University support to enable them to take action on sustainability as a student and graduate is important to them.
- Teaching staff are showing increasing confidence to embed climate action and sustainability in their teaching, with some departments demonstrating particular strengths in this area.





ALL STUDENTS: How important are the following University actions to you?

- ★ Formal curriculum
- ★ Informal curriculum
- ★ Subliminal curriculum



Providing me with opportunities to influence our community



Providing information about how I can live more sustainably



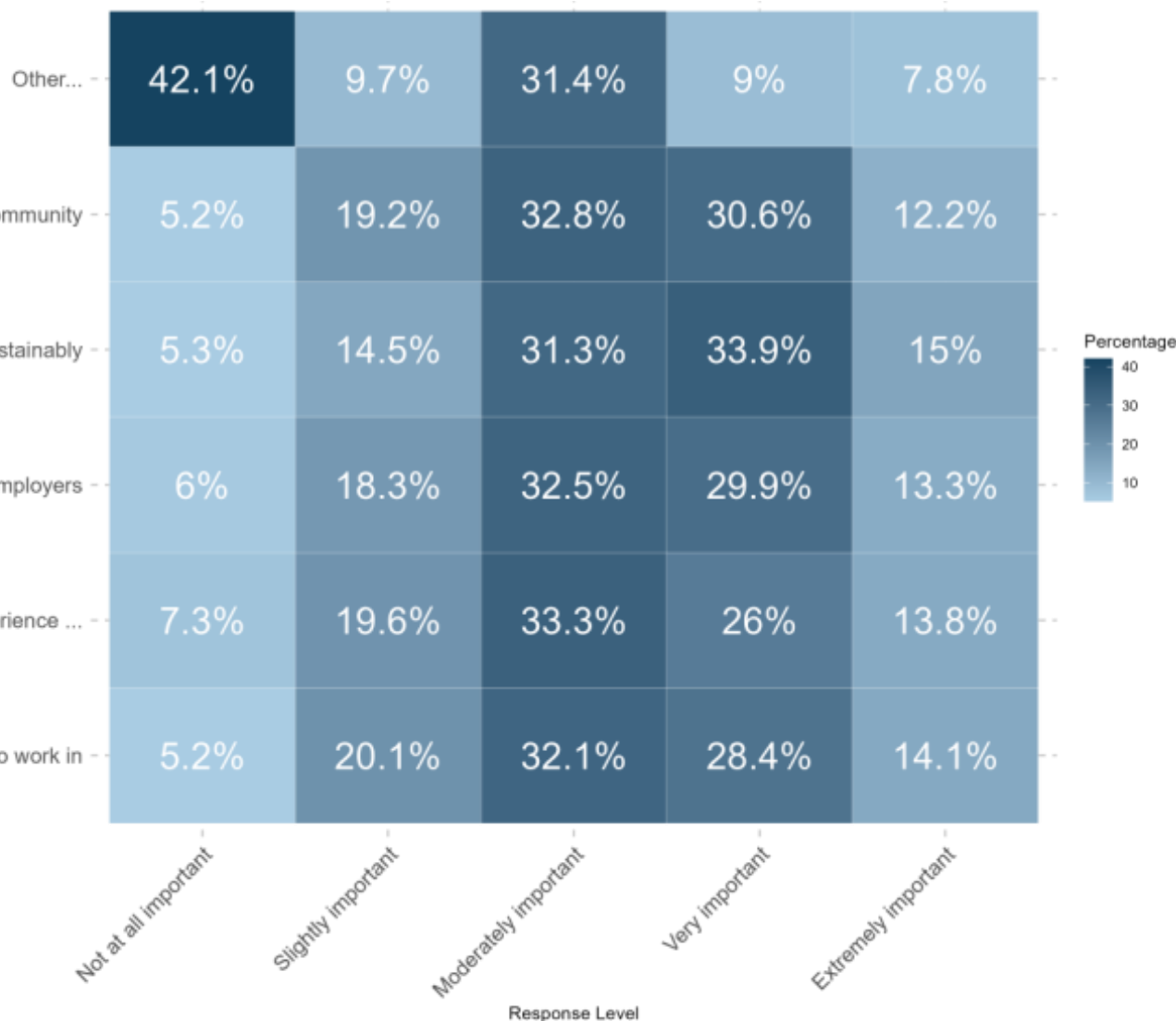
Supporting me to critically understand the sustainability ... of potential employers



Providing me with opportunities to gain real world experience ...



Developing my skills ... related to the career/industry I would like to work in





UG STUDENTS: How important are the following University actions to you?

- ★ Formal curriculum
- ★ Informal curriculum
- ★ Subliminal curriculum

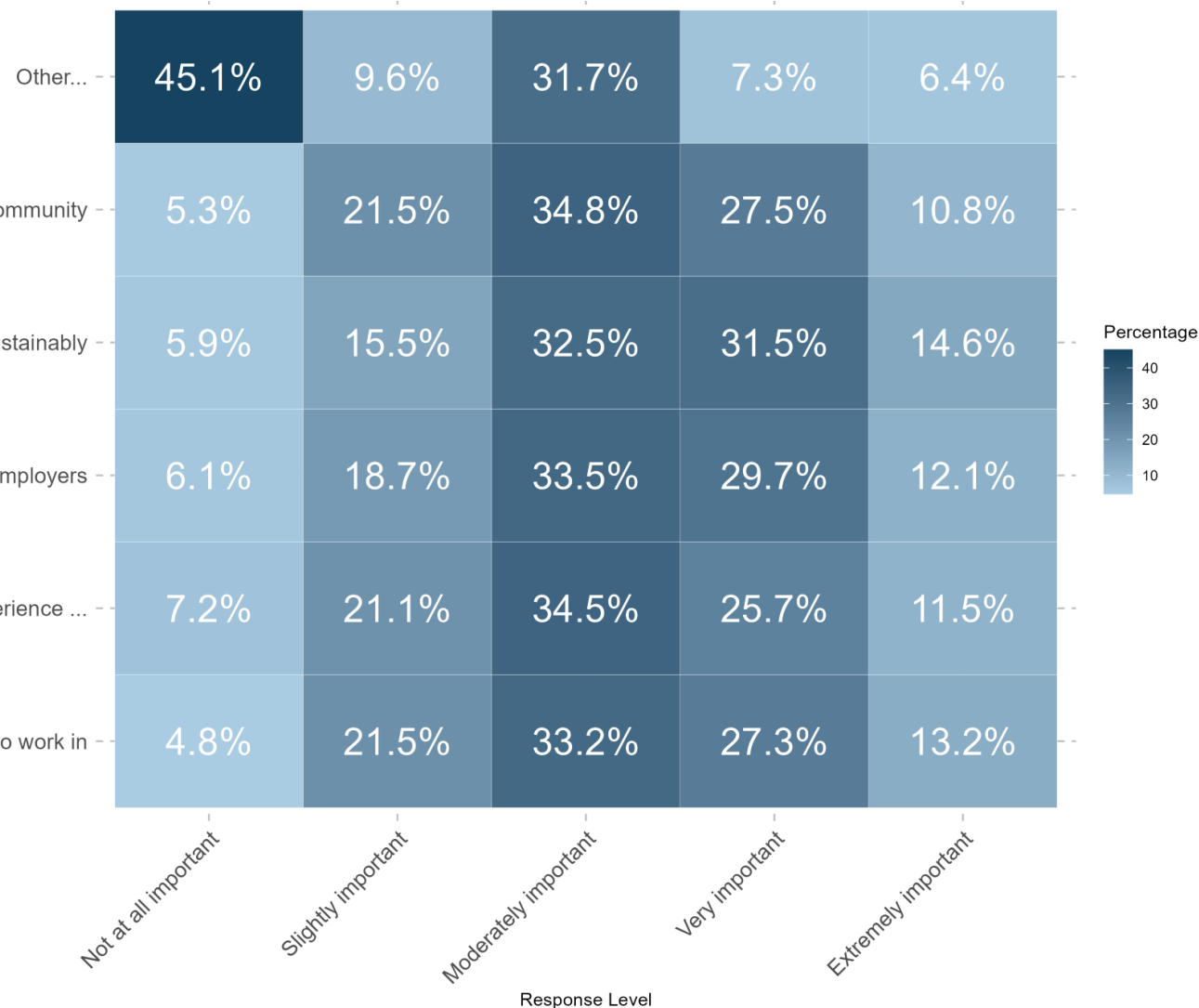
★ ★ Providing me with opportunities to influence our community

★ Providing information about how I can live more sustainably

★ ★ Supporting me to critically understand the sustainability ... of potential employers

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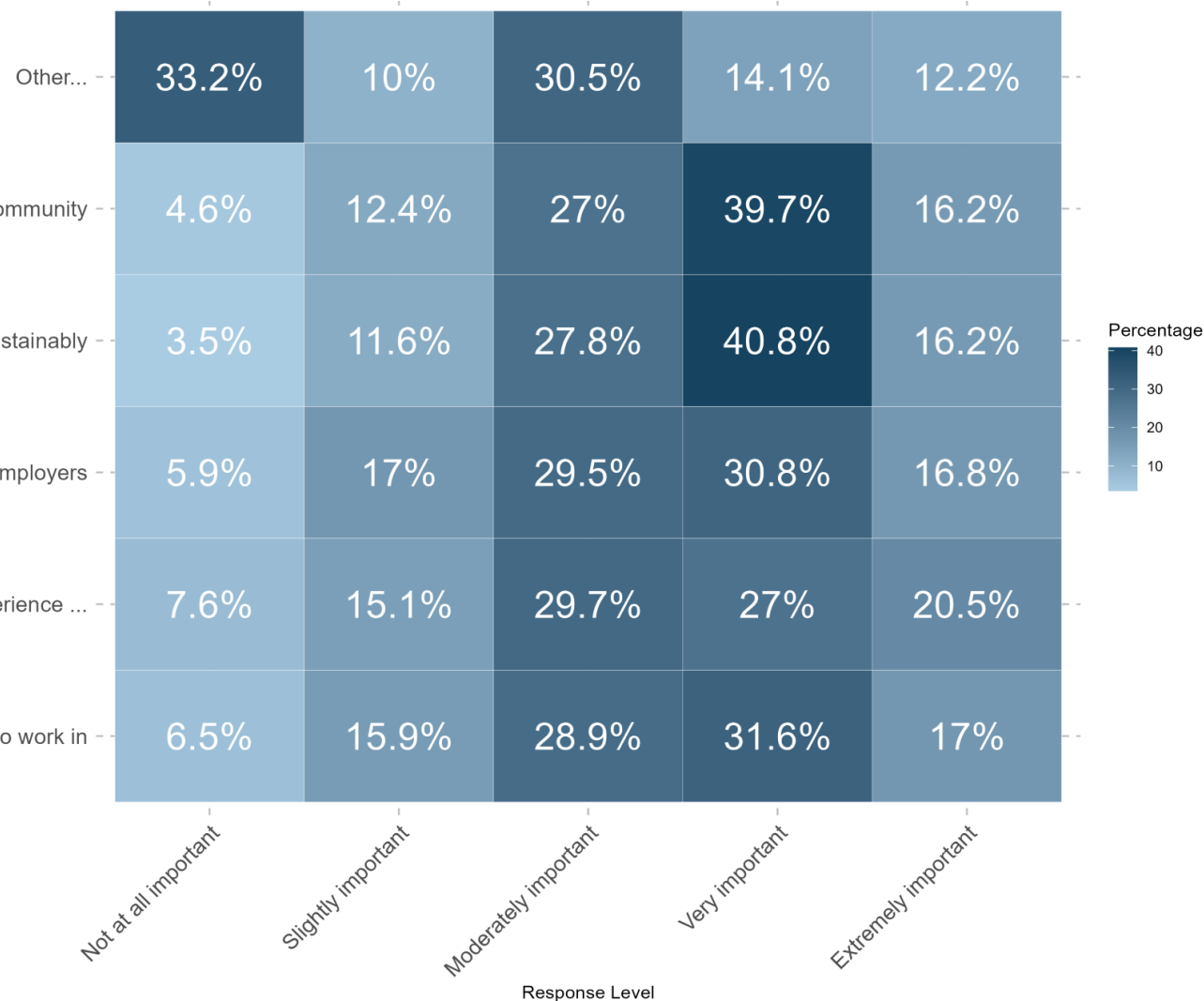
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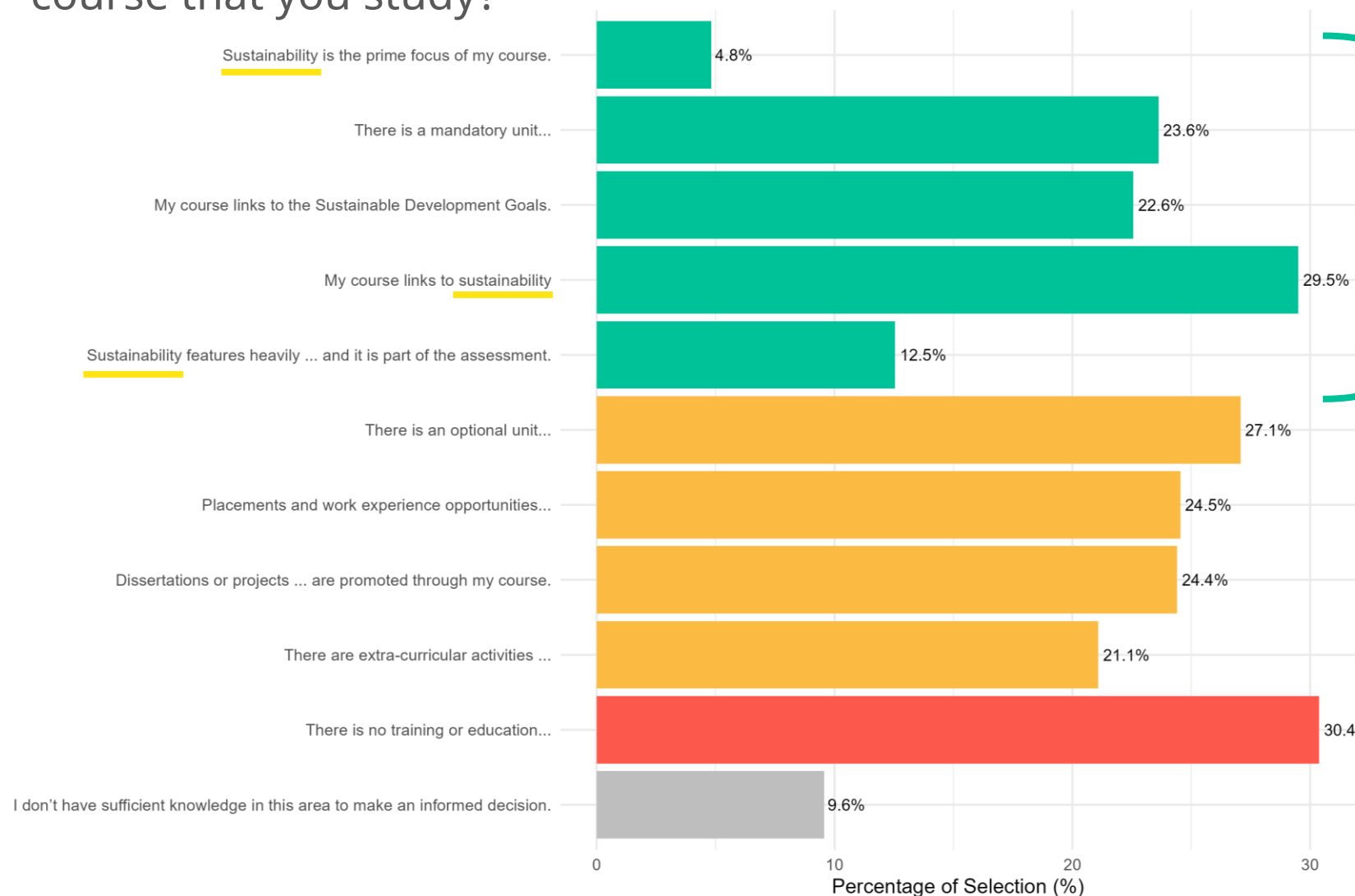


Developing my skills ... related to the career/industry I would like to work in





STUDENTS: To what extent do you think sustainability is embedded into the course that you study?



36.6% of students recognise that sustainability is part of their course, down from 48.7% in 2023-24

Embedding Level

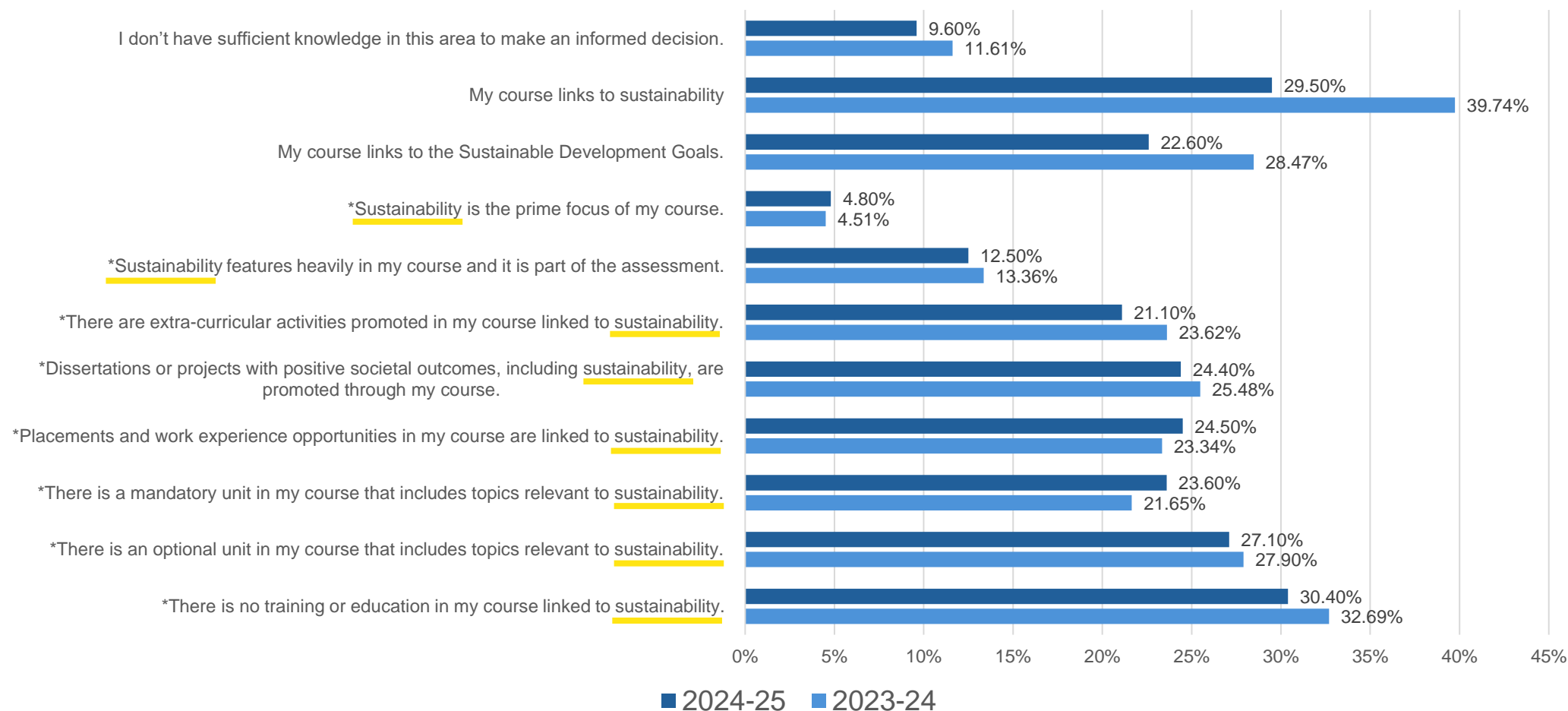
- Not embedded
- Promoted but not embedded
- Some level of embedding
- Other

Question phrasing has altered in places from climate action to sustainability – shown via yellow highlights



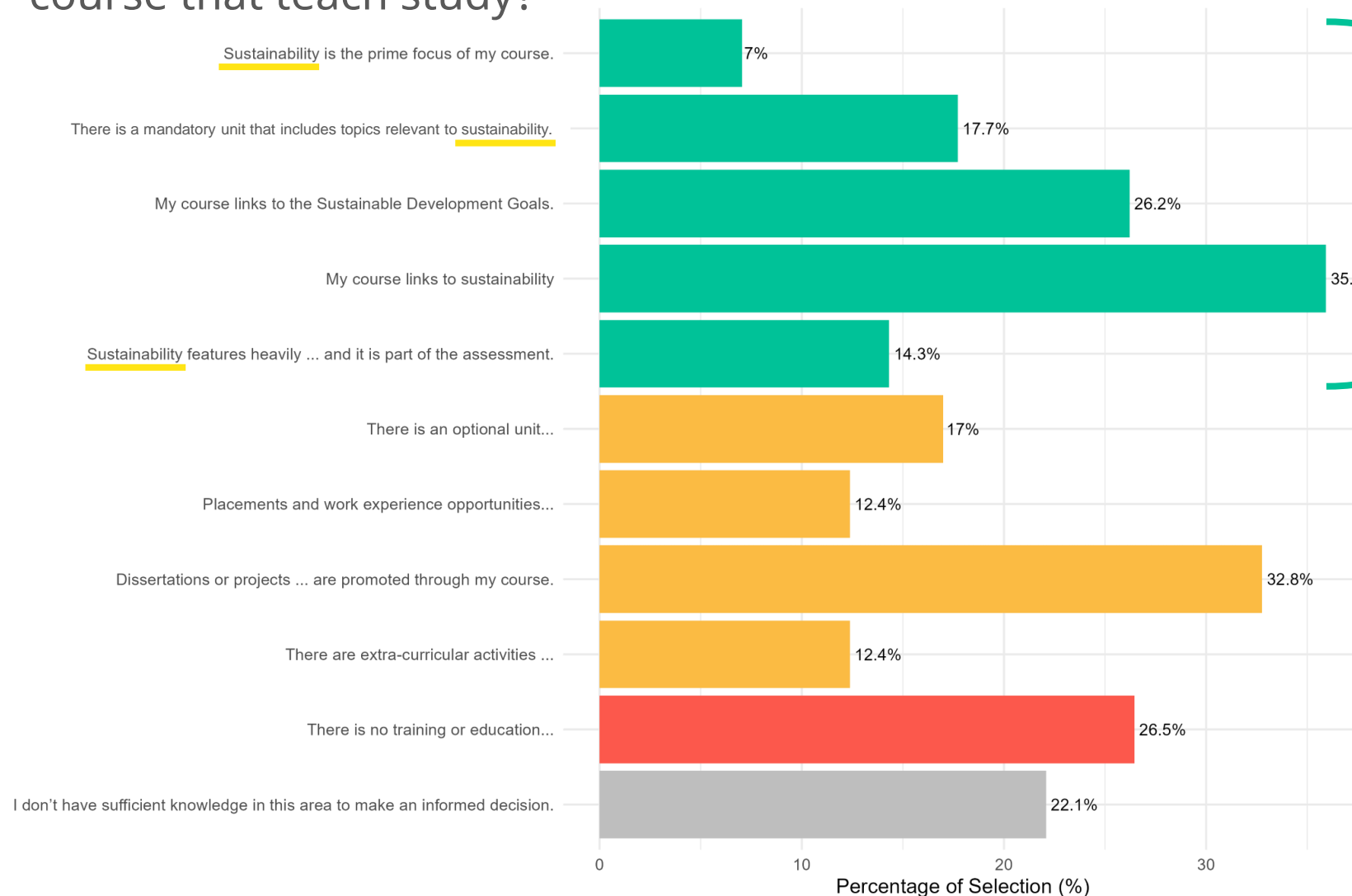
STUDENTS: To what extent do you think sustainability is embedded into the course that you study?

**Question phrasing has altered in places from climate action to sustainability – shown via yellow highlights*





STAFF: To what extent do you think sustainability is embedded into the course that teach study?



40.7% of teaching staff are embedding sustainability in their teaching, down from 47.9% in 2023-24

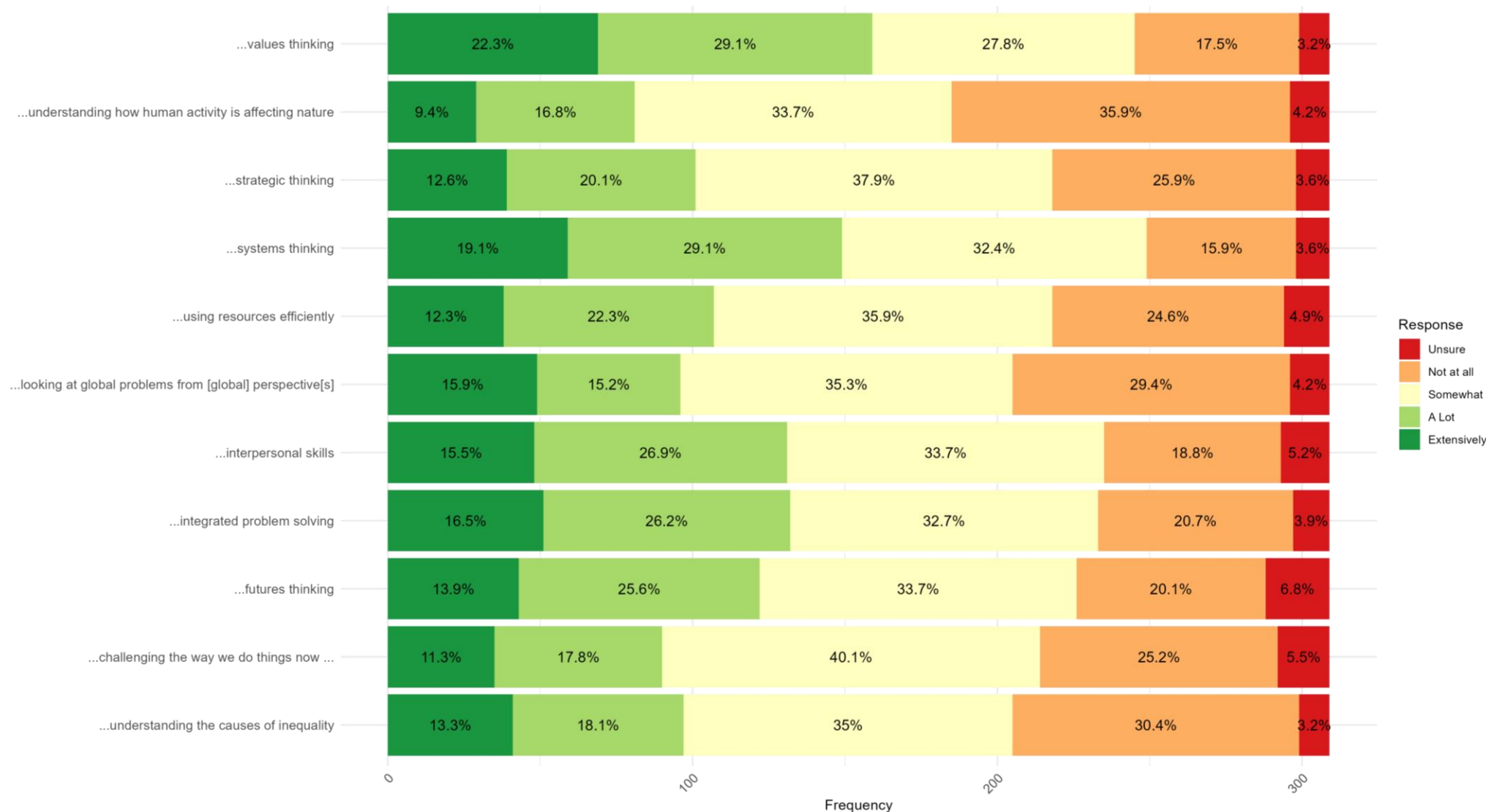
Embedding Level

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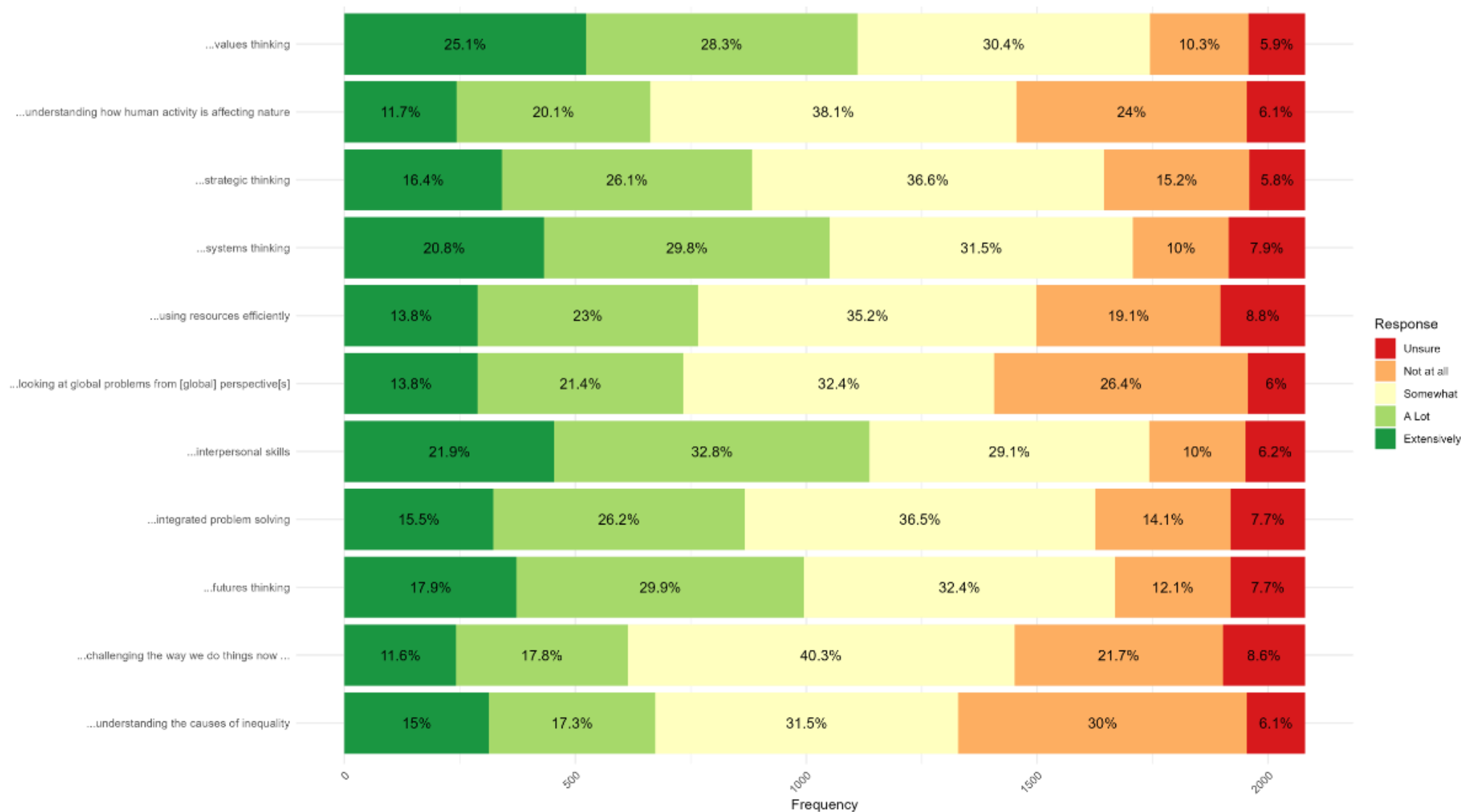


STAFF: My course teaches sustainability skills and knowledge including...



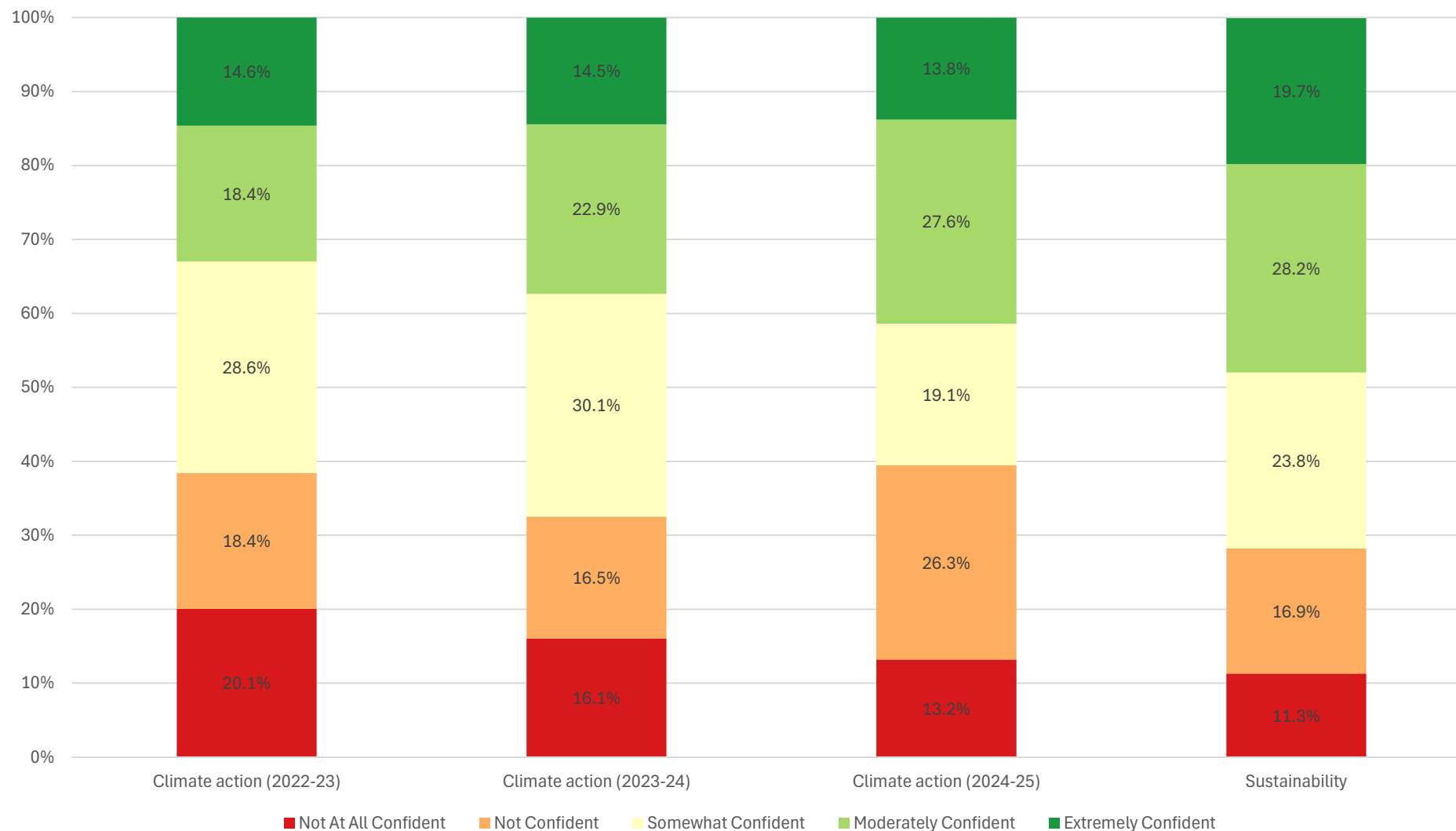


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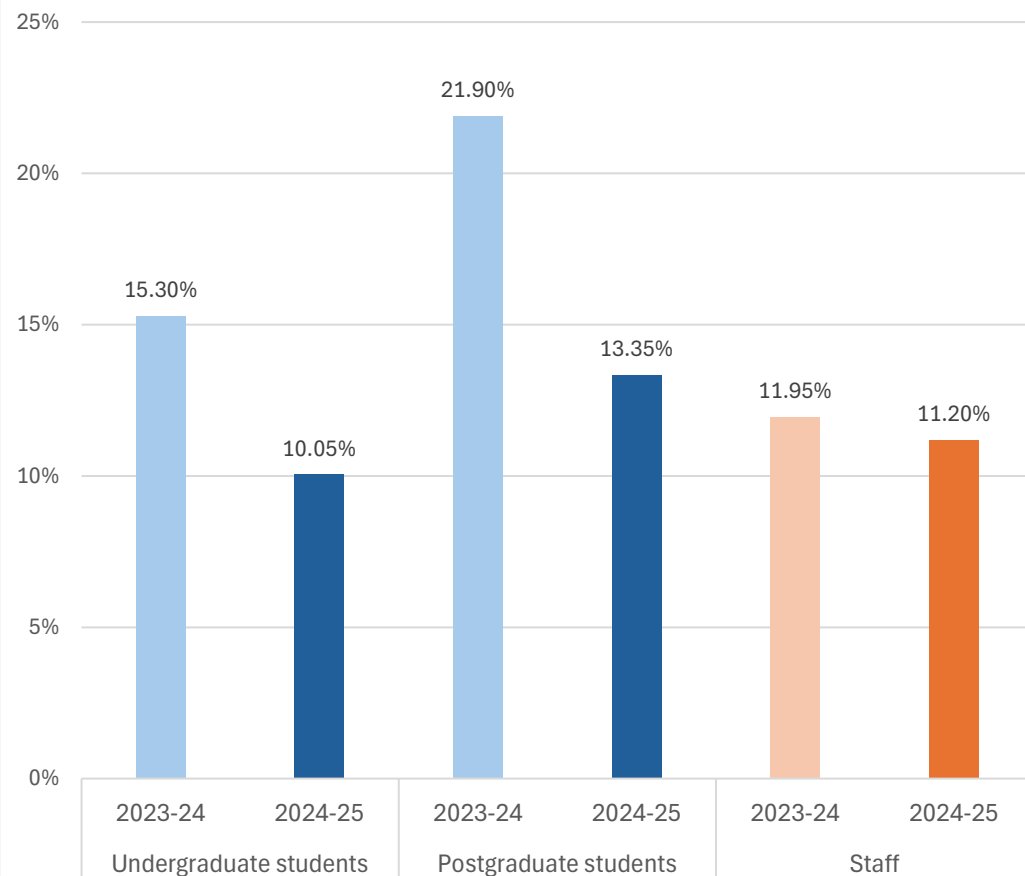


How confident are teaching staff to embed sustainability in their teaching?

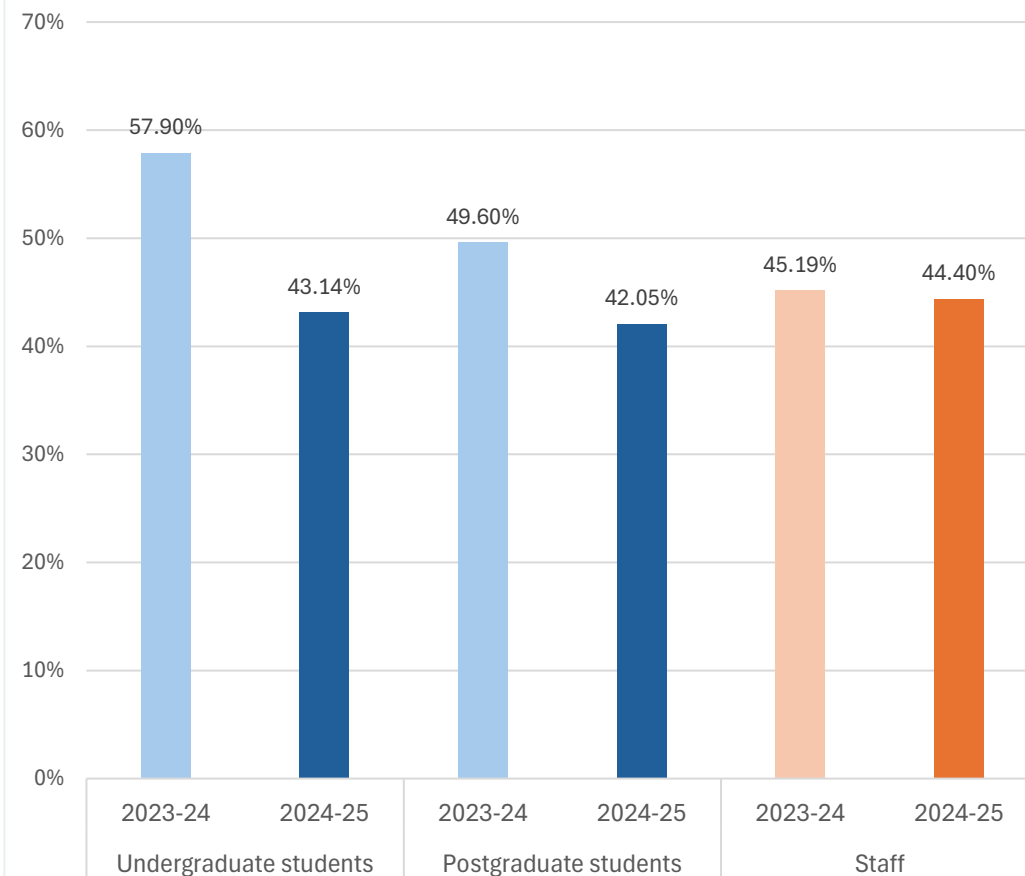




Have you attended a Climate Literacy course?



Did you complete it and achieve certification?





Research

Our research community are largely unaware of the Concordat for Environmental Sustainability of Research & Innovation Practice.

- 74% of research students were not aware prior to the survey
- 77% of early-career academics were not aware prior to the survey
- 62% of mid-career or senior academics were not aware prior to the survey





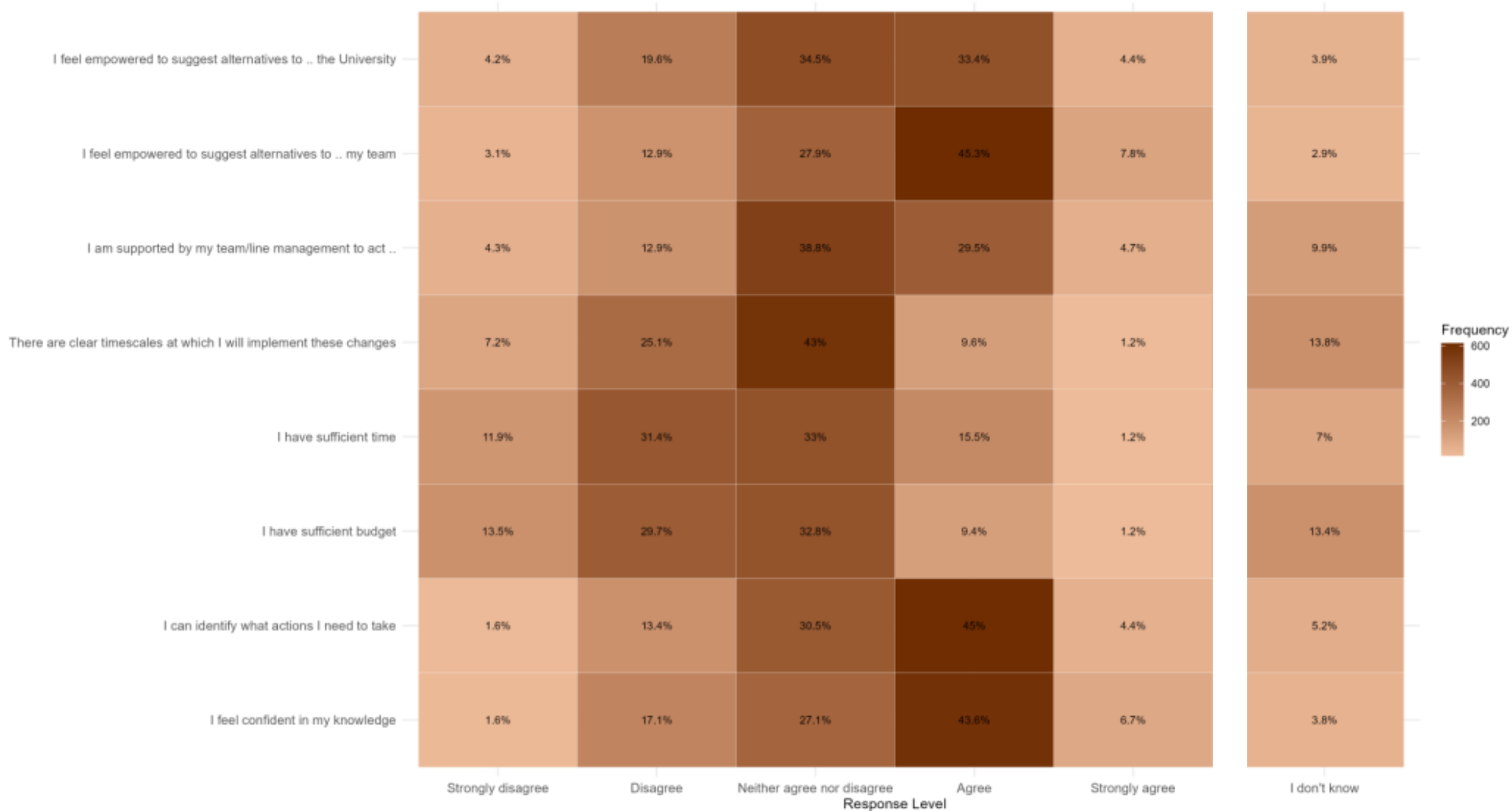
Community

- Staff display confidence in their capability to take sustainability action, coupled with a motivation to act.
- Lack of opportunity may be hindering efforts: challenges include insufficient budget, lack of time, and unclear timescales at which to implement changes.





STAFF: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?





Enabling

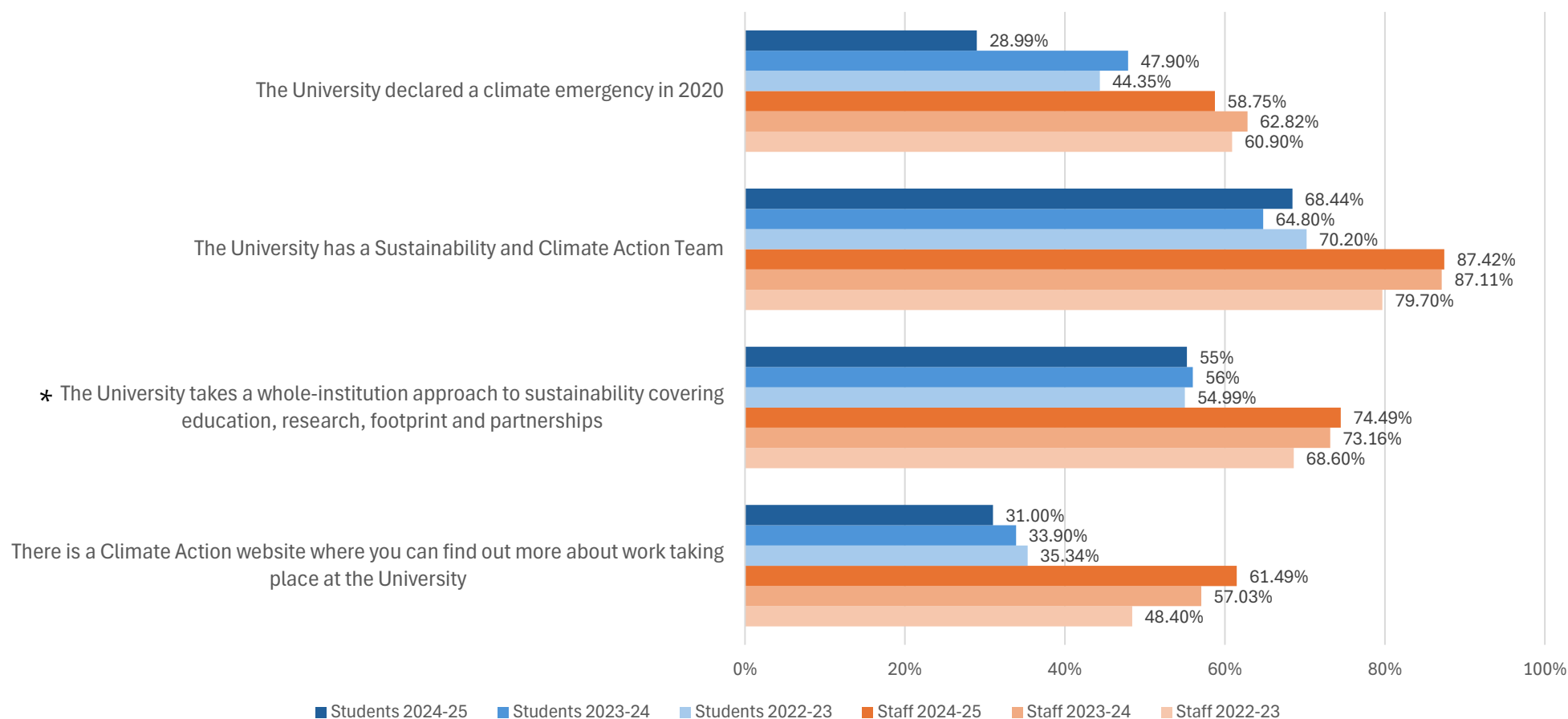
- There is growing awareness of University actions on sustainability among staff, but we observe the opposite trend for students.
- Staff and students have a very mixed understanding of what the University offers in support of low carbon commuting, and small percentages of our community are making use of them.
- Staff and students have relatively good awareness of some University actions to support sustainable food choices, with students consistently engaging with them more than staff.





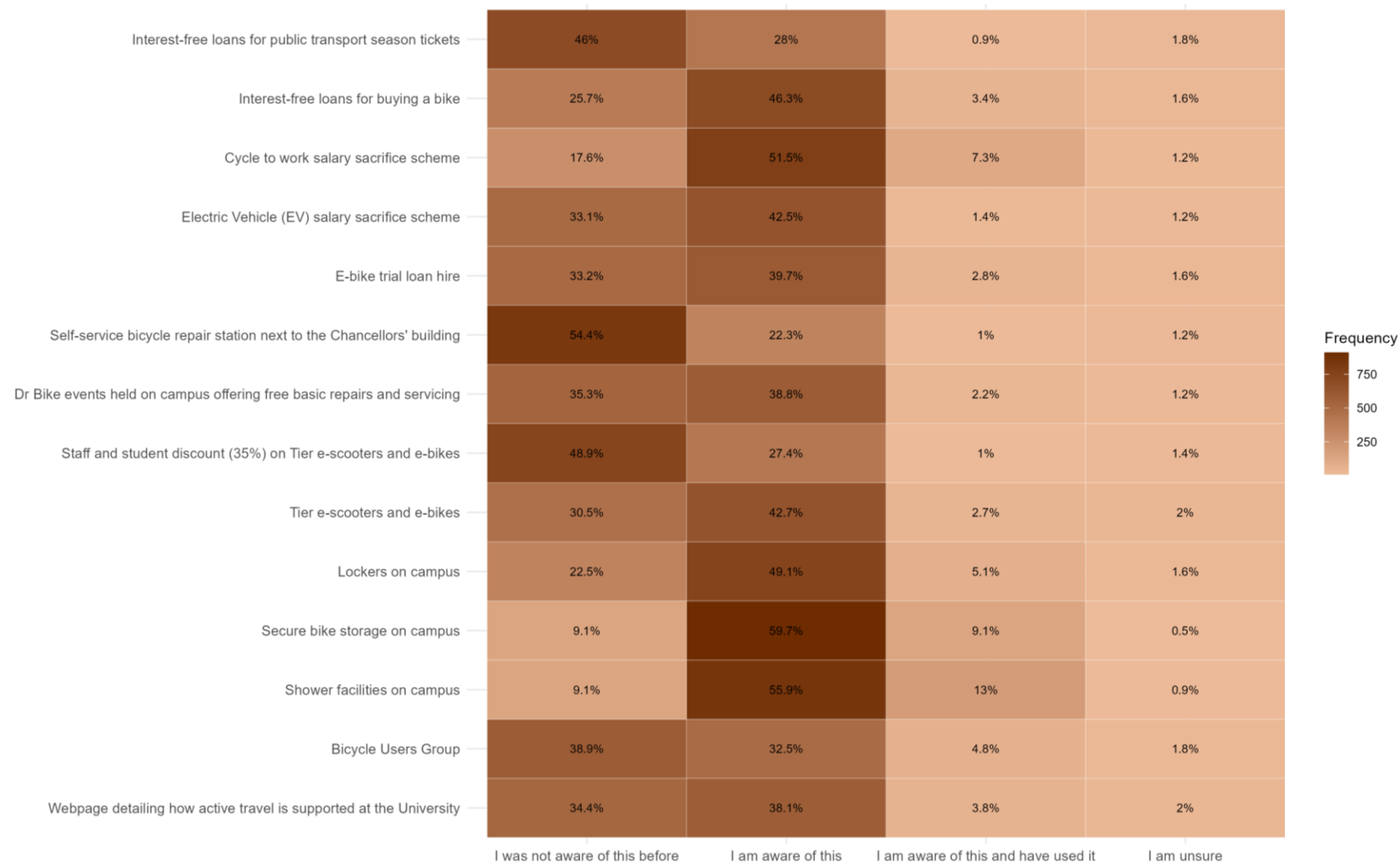
To what extent are our community aware of University action on sustainability and climate change?

**Statement adjusted slightly this year, changing climate action to sustainability*



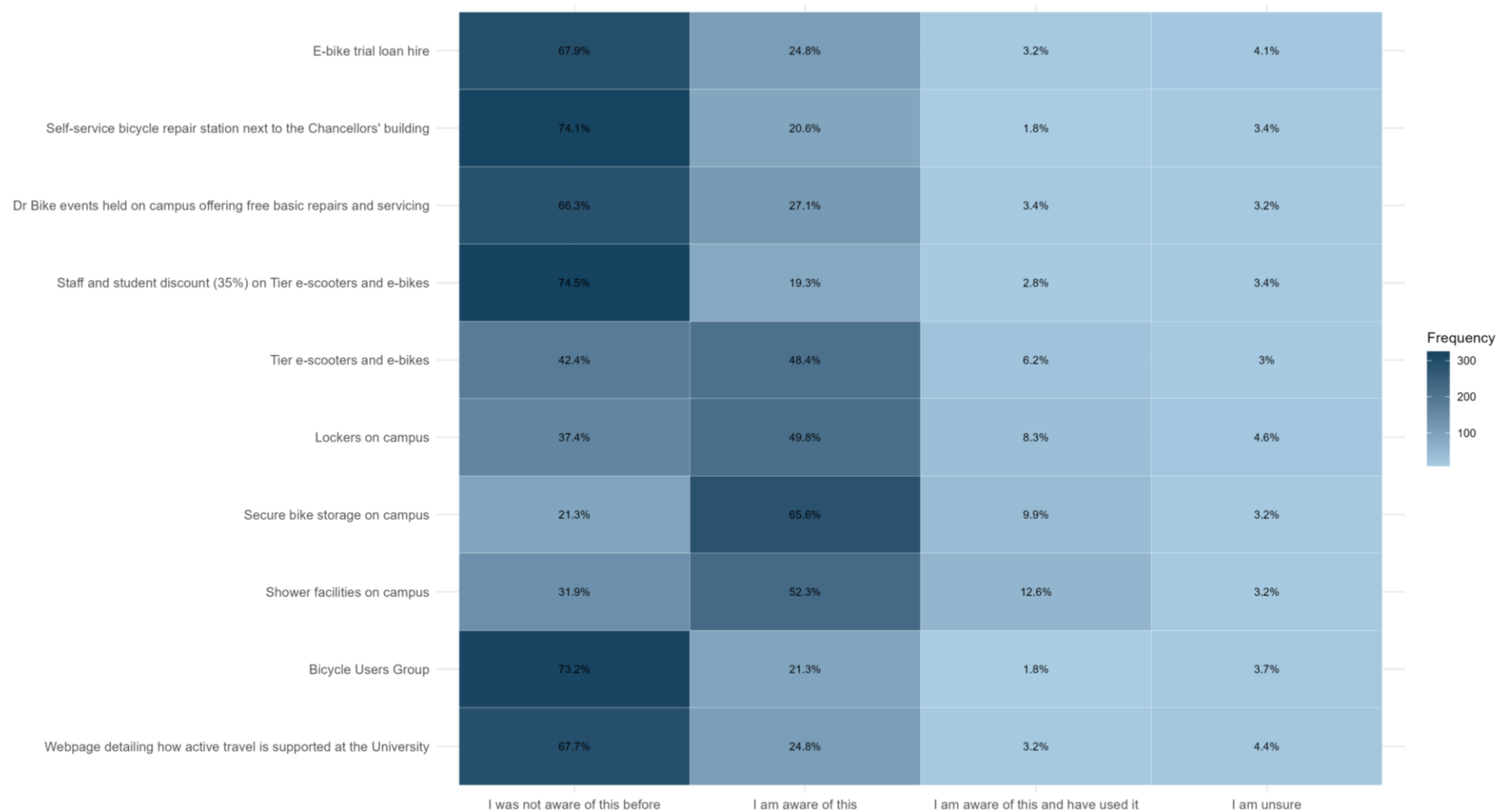


STAFF: Before today were you aware of any of the following University low-carbon travel initiatives?



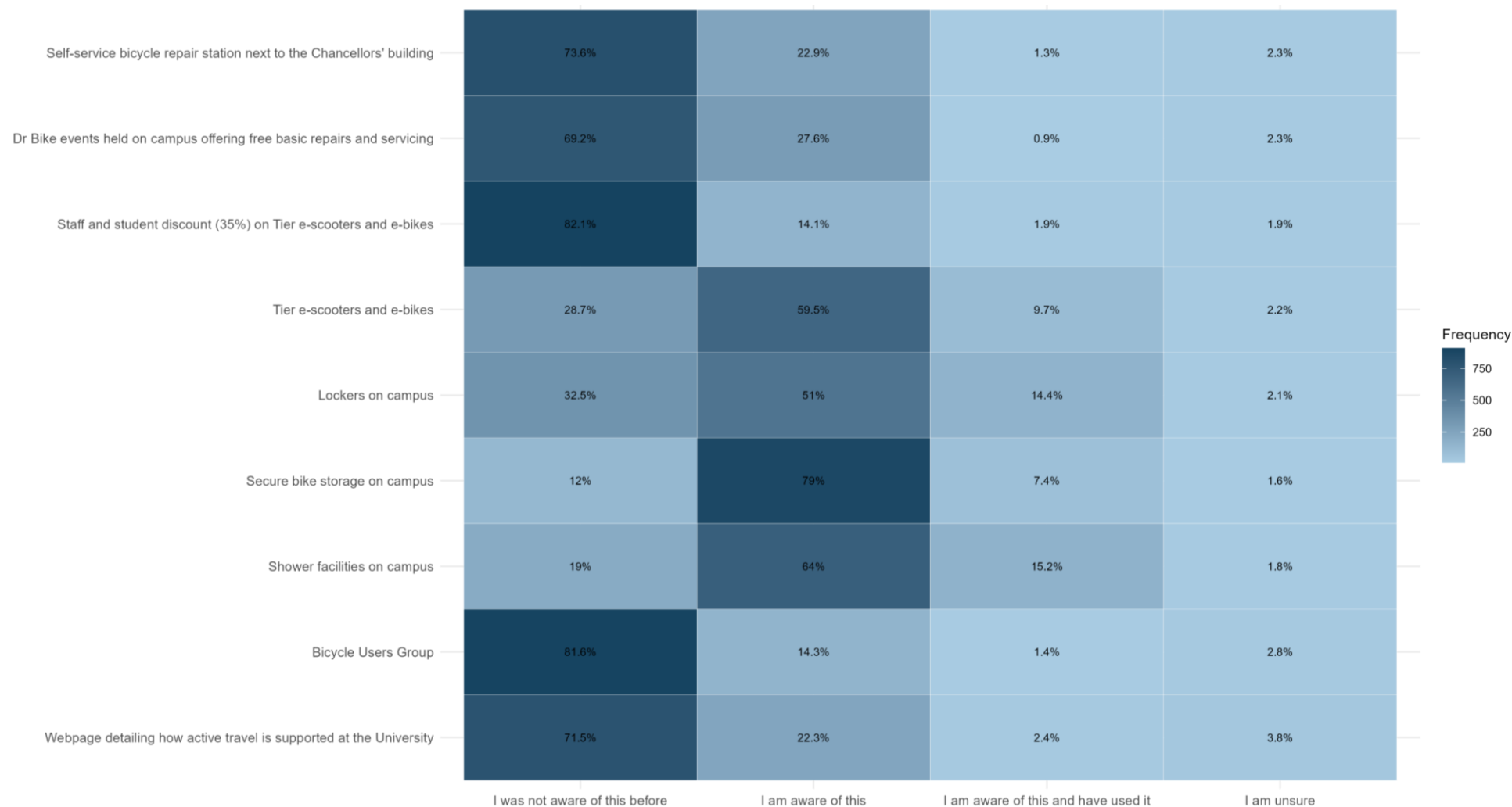


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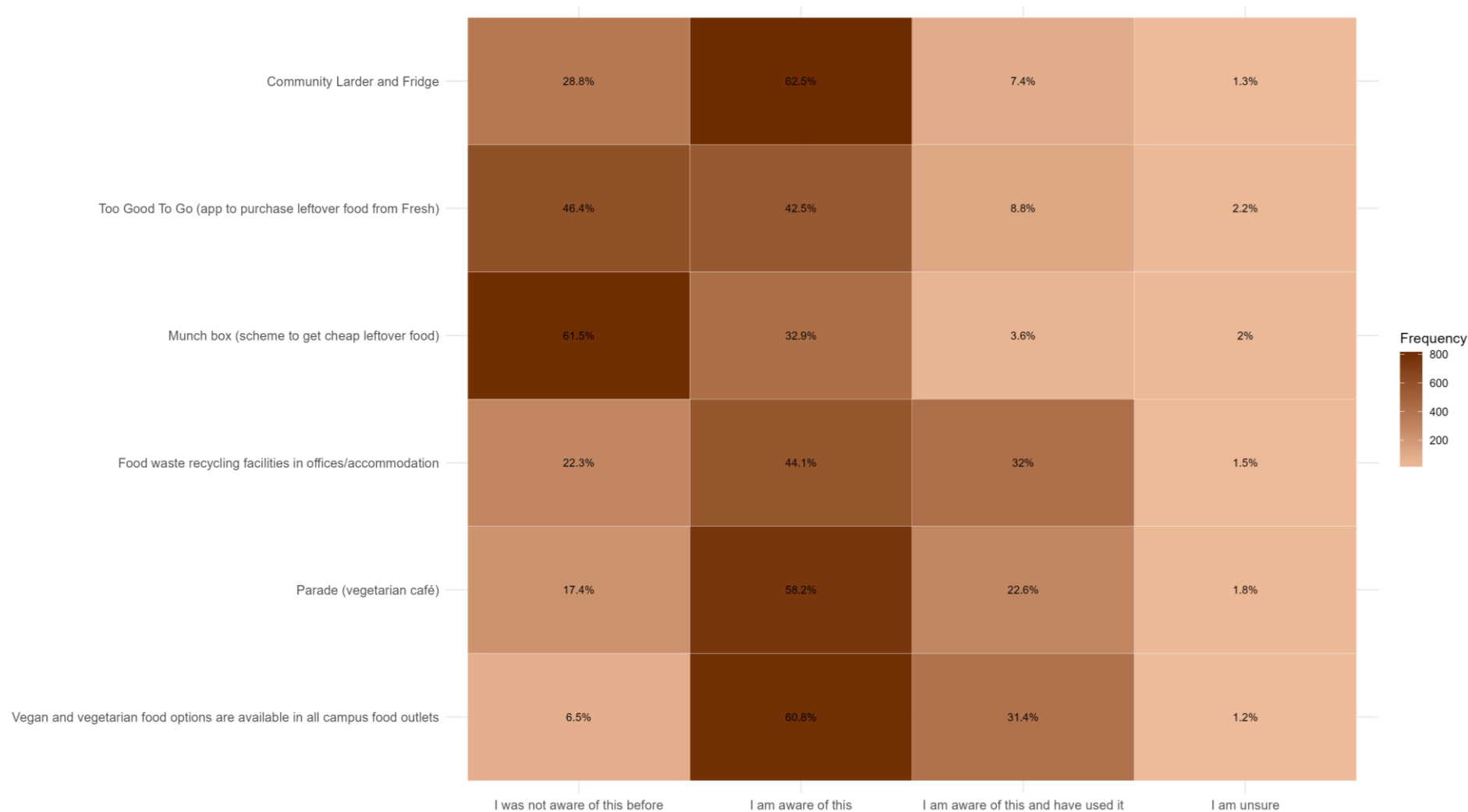


UG STUDENTS: Before today were you aware of any of the following University travel initiatives?



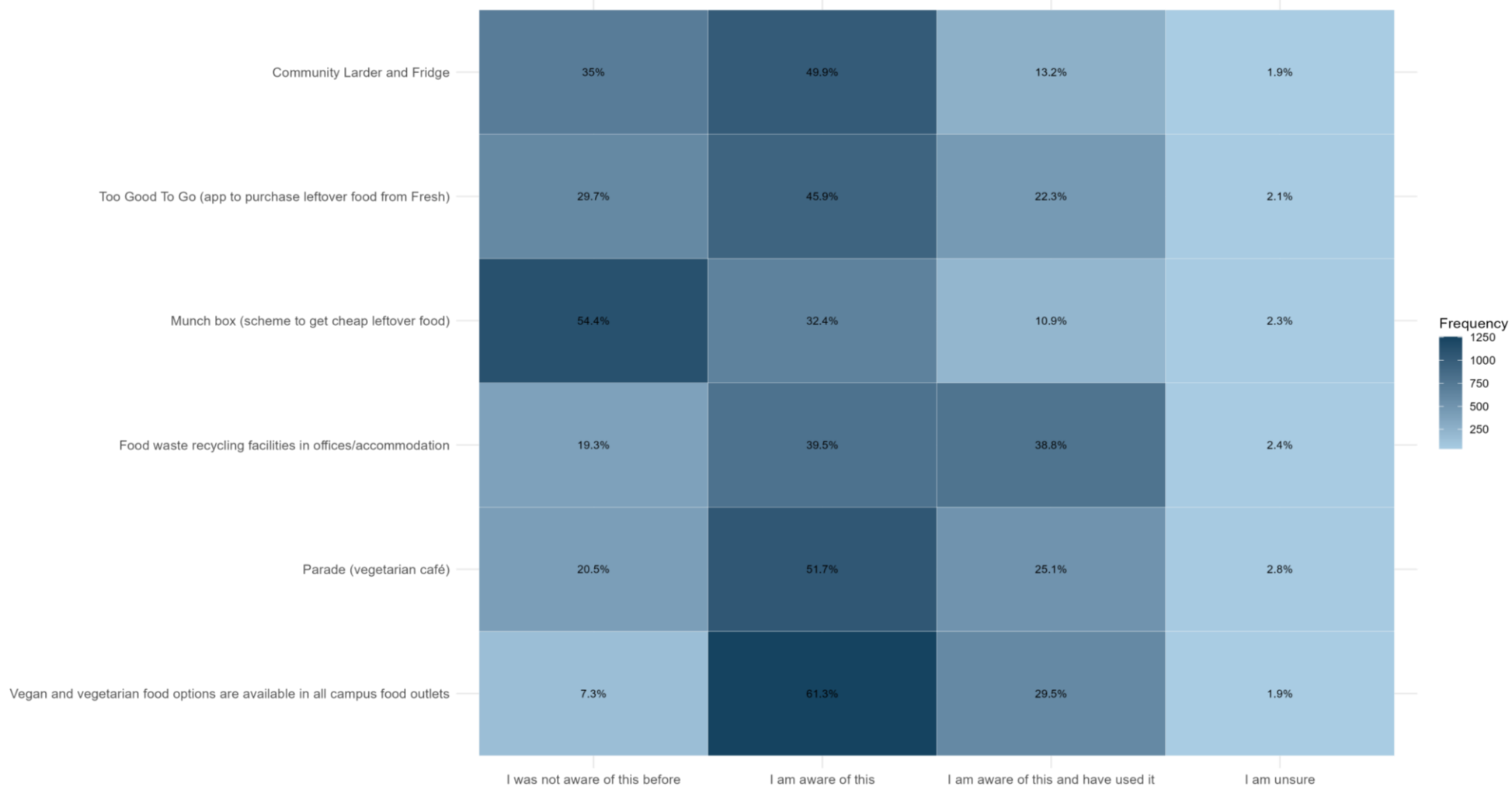


STAFF: Before today, were you aware of any of the following University sustainable food initiatives?





STUDENTS: Before today, were you aware of any of the following University sustainable food initiatives?





Summary of qualitative data insights

Positive sentiment, eg, *"The university is really quite progressive in its approach to environmental and social issues."*

Negative sentiment largely focused on food, perceptions of action and criticisms of 2040 target.

There is a desire for Bath to be a leader and influencer on sustainability, including:

- across Bath and through partnerships
- more action from senior leadership
- support/guidance for behaviour change beyond the University

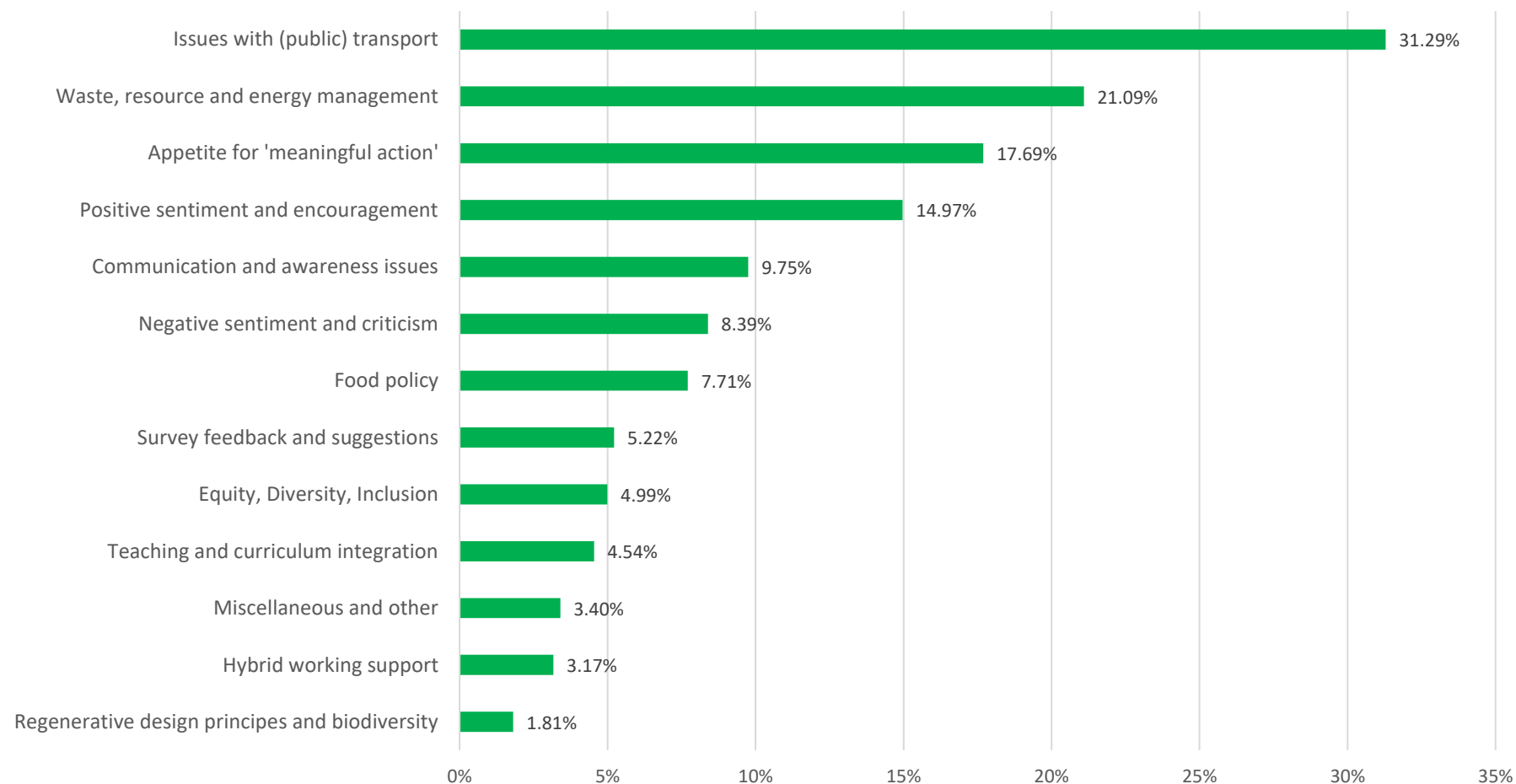
Opinion regarding our approach to food policy and provision was very mixed.

Our community expressed a desire to see more action in the following areas:

- comms and engagement
- transport accessibility, reliability and costs
- efficient space management
- increased hybrid working
- improved infrastructure
- use of green energy
- lab sustainability
- efficient and effective waste management
- departmental budget provision to support action
- regulation of staff business flying
- careers support to better align with sustainability values
- increased scrutiny of research topics and partners
- increased embedding of sustainability in education



Qualitative data insights prioritised





Next steps

Following this survey, you can expect to see action to help tackle issues raised:

1. We're increasing support for staff to take action on sustainability:
 - Rolling out Green Impact, our new staff sustainability programme
 - Expanding LEAF, our lab sustainability programme
2. We'll be bringing forward new policies and commitments to enable action in wider areas and with greater focus, including:
 - University Sustainability Policy
 - Sustainable Procurement Policy
 - Sustainable Building Standard
 - Signing the Concordat for Environmental Sustainability of Research & Innovation Practice
3. We're undertaking a significant project to improve University communication on sustainability to enable our community to better understand the actions we're taking, where we're making progress and where our remaining challenges lie
4. We're working on a new University Travel Plan, focusing on commuting



Find out more

- [University action on sustainability and climate change](#)
- [Latest Sustainability Annual Reports](#)

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