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# NEW TO UBC OKANAGAN STUDENT SURVEY 2022:

## GRADUATE STUDENTS

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## Executive Summary

The New to UBC (NUBC) Survey is an annual survey of new, incoming graduate students at UBC Okanagan. In 2022, all new UBCO graduate students (n=295) were invited via email to participate in the online survey, which was open for responses from August 8th to September 6th, 2022. Most students (207 total; 48 domestic, 159 international) fully or partially completed the survey. The overall response rate was 207/ 295 = 70% (response rate: 53% domestic, 78% international).

### Choosing a Graduate Program

Most new UBCO graduate students stated that UBC Okanagan was their first choice of school for post-secondary education. Most (50% or more) of new UBCO domestic graduate students who are enrolled in a thesis- or dissertation-based program were influenced to a great extent when choosing their supervisor by:

- Being willing to work with the student (88%)
- Having research interests that match the student's interests (81%)
- Doing interesting research (75%)
- Making sure the student will do a rigorous project/thesis/dissertation (75%)
- Having a reputation for being a good researcher (73%)
- Being knowledgeable in the techniques and methods the student will use in their research (63%)
- Having a reputation for mentoring their students through their degree in a timely manner (53%)

New UBCO international graduate students had similar influences on their choice of supervisor as their domestic counterpart. Most (50% or more) were influenced to a great extent when choosing their supervisor by:

- Having research interests that match the student's interests (92%)
- Being willing to work with the student (89%)
- Doing interesting research (87%)
- Being knowledgeable in the techniques and methods the student will use in their research (80%)
- Having a reputation for being a good researcher (76%)
- Having a research group that fosters a working environment that the student likes (74%)
- Making sure the student will do a rigorous project/thesis/dissertation (70%)
- Being able to write a good recommendation letter that will carry the student's career a long way (67%)
- Having a reputation for mentoring their students through their degree in a timely manner (66%)
- Having money to support the student (59%)

### Academic Concerns

Overall, new UBCO graduate students did not have high levels of academic concerns. Most frequently, domestic respondents were very concerned with:

- A respectful and supporting learning and research environment (15%)
- Commitments regarding the funding of their graduate studies (14%)
- Using research funds appropriately (12%)

International respondents were mostly frequently concerned with:

- Producing research publications (46%)
- Commitments regarding the funding of their graduate studies (45%)
- A respectful and supporting learning and research environment (41%)

New UBCO graduate students had higher levels of campus and community concerns. Most frequently, domestic respondents were very concerned with:

- Finding affordable housing in Kelowna (57%)
- Balancing their academics and family responsibilities (30%)
- Finding childcare (25%)

International respondents were most frequently concerned with:

- Finding affordable housing in Kelowna (71%)
- Adapting to life in a new country/province/city (48%)
- Experiencing discrimination and/or harassment off campus (37%)

### Learning Opportunities

Many learning opportunities are important to new UBCO graduate students as part of their graduate program. For new domestic graduate students, most (50% or more) are “very likely” to participate in/utilize the following:

- A graduate student handbook for their program (75%)
- An orientation for new graduate students in their program (72%)
- Internships (e.g., in industry) (52%)
- A teaching assistant training course (50%)

For new international graduate students, most (50% or more) are “very likely” to participate in/utilize the following:

- Internships (e.g., in industry) (83%)
- A workshop on career opportunities outside of academia (80%)
- A teaching assistant training course (73%)
- Programs and services for International students (72%)
- A series of workshops that lead to The Career Readiness and Professional Development Credential (72%)
- A graduate student handbook for their program (70%)
- A workshop on how to prepare scholarship applications (70%)
- An orientation for new graduate students in their program (67%)
- Workshops and services offered by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (67%)
- A mentor for their professional development who is not their supervisor (66%)
- A workshop on fostering a positive relationship with their supervisor (64%)
- A workshop on teaching in their discipline (64%)
- Student life events and activities (63%)
- Workshops and services offered by the Centre for Scholarly Communication (62%)
- An opportunity to participate in campus or department committees (59%)
- Graduate only recreation classes and programs (57%)
- A workshop on faculty roles and responsibilities (56%)
- Opportunities for non-credit credentials (55%)
- A workshop on research ethics (53%)
- Workshops of respectful work/learning environments from the Equity & Inclusion or Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Office (53%)

- Presenting at a regional or national meeting (52%)

### Career Interests

New UBCO domestic and international graduate students expressed somewhat different career interests. New domestic graduate students were most interested in:

- Becoming a teaching professor in a college or university (57% definitely interested)
- Working independently (e.g., consultant, writer) (53% definitely interested)
- Starting their own business (39% definitely interested)
- Becoming a research professor in a college or university (35% definitely interested)
- Conducting research in a non-profit organization or government agency (31% definitely interested)

New UBCO international graduate students were most interested in:

- Becoming a research professor in a college or university (48% definitely interested)
- Conducting research in business, industry, or the private sector (48% definitely interested)
- Becoming an administrator/manager in business, industry, or the private sector (45% definitely interested)
- Conducting research in a non-profit organization or government agency (42% definitely interested)
- Becoming an administrator/manager in a non-profit, public service, or government agency (39% definitely interested)

## Introduction

This report displays the findings of the 2022 New to UBC (NUBC) Graduate Student Survey for UBC's Okanagan campus. Graduate students participating in this survey were asked about why they chose to pursue their graduate studies at UBC Okanagan, their academic concerns, opportunities they may pursue, their time commitments, how they will finance their studies, and their career plans.

## Methodology

All new, incoming graduate students to UBC Okanagan were invited to participate in the NUBC Graduate Student Survey. The NUBC Survey was deployed online via e-mail invitations, and was available to students from August 8<sup>th</sup> to September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

## Sample

A total of 295 graduate students were invited to complete the survey, excluding email bounce backs. Of 295 invitees, there were 207 full or partial completes -an overall response rate of 70% (53% for domestic and 78% for international students).

The sample of survey respondents reflects a higher proportion of international students and a lower proportion of domestic students compared to the overall cohort of students (refer to Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic breakdown of cohort and sample

	Invited Cohort		Survey Respondents	
	Count (N)	%	Count (n)	%
<b>Domestic/International</b>				
Domestic	90	31%	48	23%
International	205	70%	159	77%
<b>Program</b>				
MA-O	27	9%	19	9%
MASC-O	18	6%	12	6%
MDS-O	22	8%	14	7%
MED-O	9	3%	6	3%
MENG-O	89	30%	69	33%
MFA-O	11	4%	9	4%
MSC-O	35	12%	25	12%
MSW-O	47	16%	22	11%
PHD-O	37	13%	31	15%

Note: The invited cohort data above are from the Student Information System (SIS). Data pulled August 5, 2022.

When breaking down the cohort and sample proportions by domestic/international student status, in general, the sample of respondents reflected the cohort fairly well, with slight differences in program type.

Table 2: Demographic breakdown of cohort and sample by domestic/international student status

Program	<i>Domestic</i>				<i>International</i>			
	Invited Cohort		Survey Respondents		Invited Cohort		Survey Respondents	
	Count (N)	%	Count (n)	%	Count (N)	%	Count (n)	%
MA-O	9	10%	5	10%	18	9%	14	9%
MASC-O	1	1%	0	0%	0	8%	12	8%
MDS-O	7	8%	4	8%	0	7%	10	6%
MED-O	5	6%	3	6%	0	2%	3	2%
MENG-O	3	3%	3	6%	1	42%	66	42%
MFA-O	5	6%	3	6%	0	3%	6	4%
MSC-O	9	10%	4	8%	0	13%	21	13%
MSW-O	47	52%	22	46%	0	0%	0	0%
PHD-O	4	4%	4	8%	0	16%	27	17%

Note: The invited cohort data above are from the SIS. Data pulled August 5, 2022.

### Notes

Readers should be aware that the percentages given in this report reflect the number of respondents who selected an option in terms of the total number of students who responded to a given survey item. In other words, "50%" denotes 50% of students who responded to a certain item rather than 50% of all domestic or all international students who participated in this survey.

Additionally, when applicable, students who responded to a question by selecting "Don't know", "Not applicable", or "Prefer not to answer" were not included in the analysis of that specific question, unless otherwise noted.

In total, there were 48 domestic and 159 international students who participated in the NUBC survey for graduate students. Thus, it should be noted that figures should be interpreted with a degree of caution as they can only represent a maximum of 48 domestic and 159 international new to UBC respondents.

## Demographics

### Gender

Slightly over six in ten domestic respondents (63%, 22, n=35) indicated the gender category that best represented them was “woman”, 26% (9, n=35) were best represented by the gender category “man”, and 11% (4, n=35) were best represented by the “non-binary” gender category. For international respondents 42% (47, n=112) were best represented by “woman”, 55% (62, n=112) were best represented by “man”, and 1% (1, n=112) were best represented by “non-binary”.

### Residence

Ninety-one percent (32, n=35) of domestic student respondents were born in Canada, and 98% (110, n=112) of international respondents were born outside of Canada. Twenty-nine percent of domestic respondents (10, n=35) had at least one of their parents/guardians born outside of Canada.

Fourteen percent (5) of domestic graduate student respondents have lived in the Okanagan region for at least one year, 46% (16) have lived elsewhere in BC for at least one year, 54% (19) have lived in another province/territory in Canada for at least one year, and 14% (5) have lived in another country besides Canada for at least one year (n=35). Most international respondents (93%, 99, n=106) have lived outside of Canada for at least one year.

### Languages

Respondents were asked which languages they spoke well enough to conduct an academic/technical conversation. The majority of respondents, both domestic (100%, 35, n=35) and international (95%, 106, n=112) selected English. Hindi (28%, 31, n=112), Persian (16%, 18, n=112), and Mandarin (14%, 16, n=112) were the next most common responses among international respondents, while French (14%, 5, n=35) was the next most common response among domestic respondents.

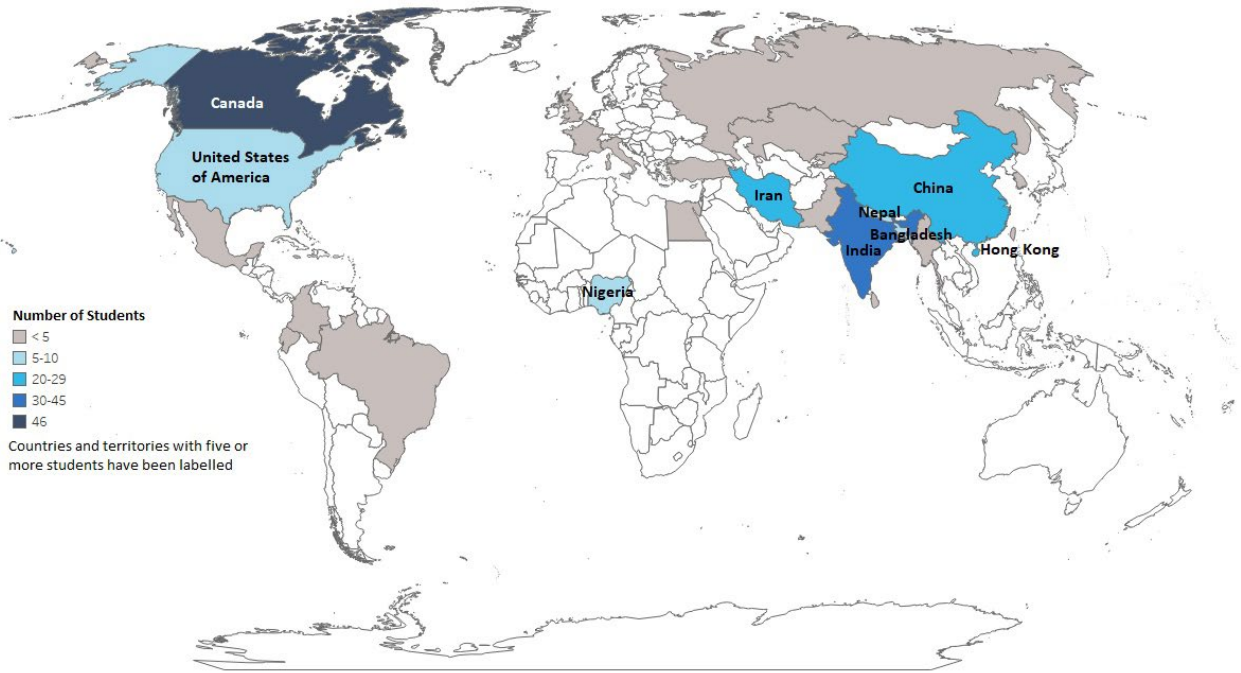
### Ethno-Demographic Distribution and Citizenship

Seventy-five percent of domestic respondents (24, n=32) indicated that “White-North American” was the category that best described their racial and/or ethnic identity. International respondents most often identified as Asian-South Asian (38%, 43, n=112) and Asian-East Asian (20%, 22, n=112)

Data on respondents’ citizenship was also taken from SIS (data pulled August 5, 2022). The majority of domestic respondents were Canadian citizens (96%, 46, n=48). The most common country or territory of citizenship for international respondents was India (39), followed by China (26), Iran (24) and Bangladesh (10) (n=159). Overall, students represented 29 countries.



Figure 1: Citizenship



### Previous Education

Most respondents (domestic: 65%, 22, n=34; international: 60%, 67, n=111) completed their bachelor's degree between 2019 and 2022. Thirty-six percent (40, n=112) of international and 9% (3, n=34) of domestic respondents indicated they had completed a graduate program previously. For all international respondents, this previous graduate degree was earned outside of Canada (n=40) and most were within the same discipline as their current program (63%, 25, n=40). All domestic respondents received their previous degree within Canada (n=3).

## Choosing a Graduate Program

### Choosing UBC's Okanagan Campus

Seventy-nine percent (38, n=48) of domestic respondents indicated that UBC's Okanagan campus was their first choice for graduate studies. Of international respondents, 75% (119, n=159) chose UBC's Okanagan campus as their first choice. Among those respondents who did not rank UBC's Okanagan campus as their first choice for graduate studies, 90% (9, n=10) of domestic and 73% (29, n=40) of international respondents indicated UBC Okanagan was their second choice institution.

Among respondents who did not rank UBC's Okanagan campus as their first choice institution, both domestic and international students most often selected UBC's Vancouver campus as their first choice institution (domestic: 33%, 3, n=9; international: 55%, 22, n=40).

Thirty-five percent (17, n=48) of domestic respondents stated that they were in a thesis- or dissertation-based graduate program, compared to 50% (79, n=159) of international respondents.

### Choosing a Supervisor

Ninety-eight percent (77, n=79) of the international respondents enrolled in a thesis- or dissertation-based graduate program specified that they have identified a faculty member to be their thesis/dissertation supervisor, while 94% (16, n=17) of domestic respondents did so.

Students choose to work with a particular faculty member as their supervisor for a variety of reasons. Respondents who indicated they were enrolled in a thesis- or dissertation-based graduate program were asked to rate the extent to which several aspects influenced their choice of supervisor.

For domestic respondents, the top two factors which influenced their decision to a great extent included that their supervisor was willing to work with them (88%, 14, n=16) and they have research interests that match the student (81%, 13, n=16). International respondents most often selected that their supervisor has research interests that match the student (92%, 67, n=73), was willing to work with them (89%, 65, n=73), and they were doing interesting research (87%, 64, n=74) as the factors that most influenced their decision.

Respondents selecting "not applicable/no opinion" were excluded in these analyses.

Figure 2a: Factors contributing to choosing a supervisor (domestic)

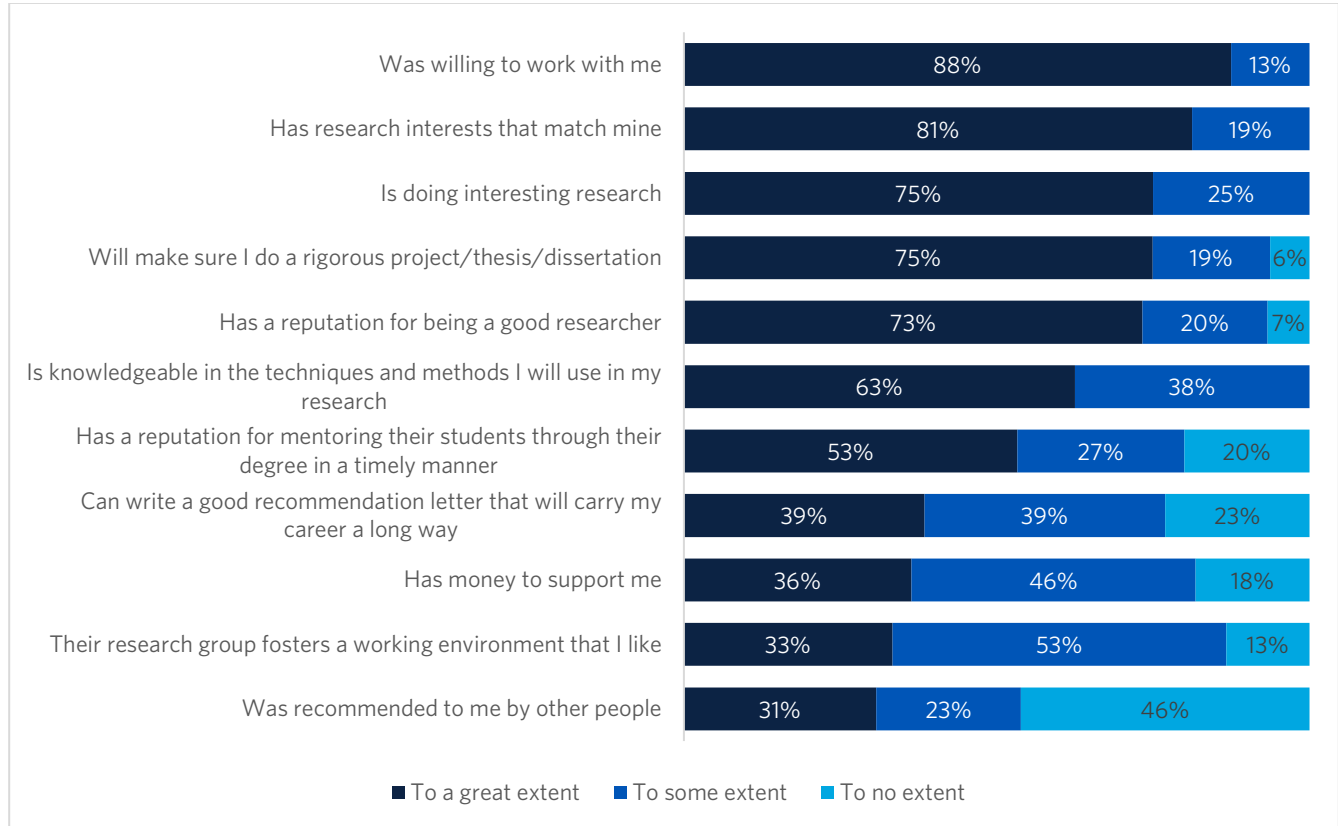
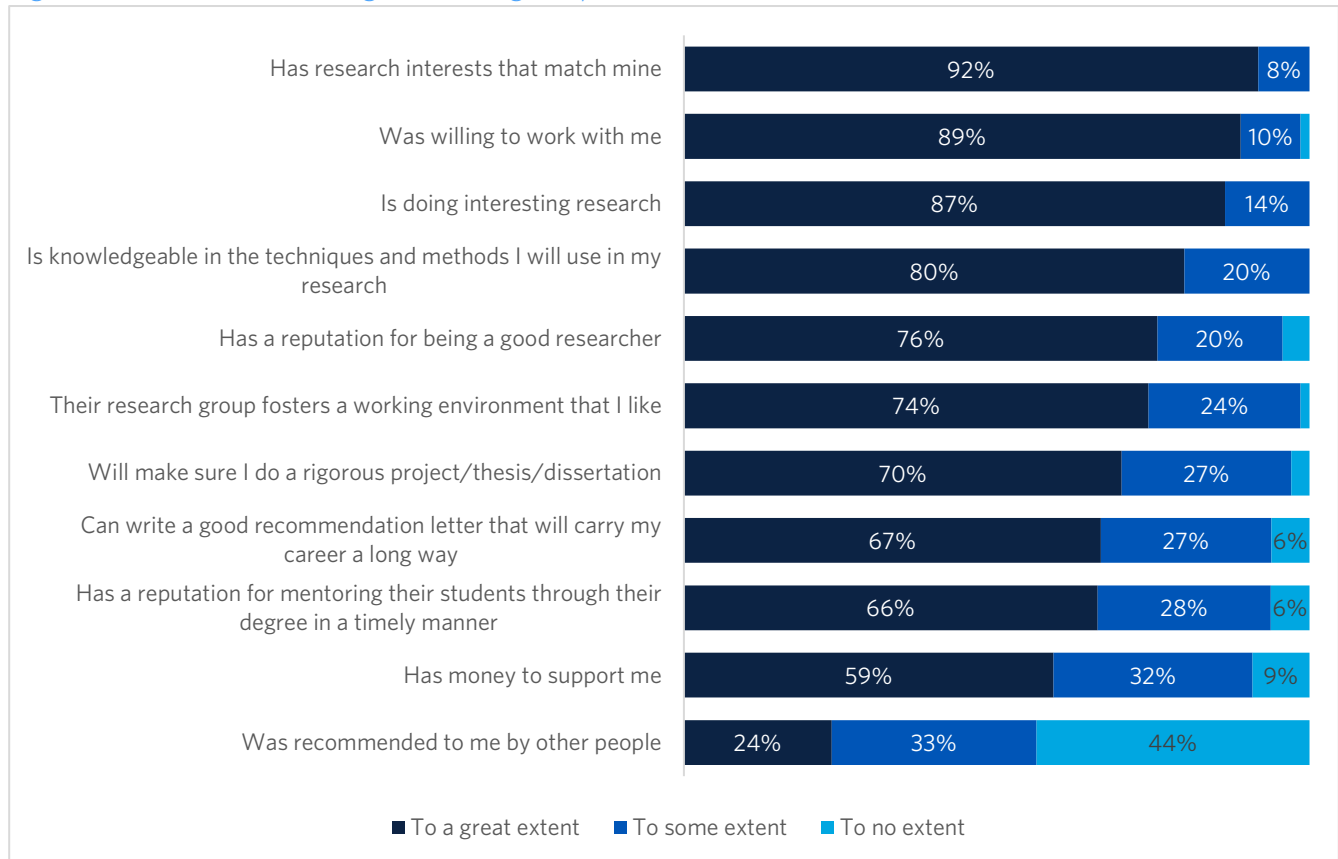


Figure 2b: Factors contributing to choosing a supervisor (international)



## Concerns

### Academic Concerns

In general, international respondents expressed higher levels of concern with commitments and customary practices related to graduate studies than domestic respondents. For domestic respondents, the top concerns included a respectful and supporting learning and research environment (15%, 5, n=37) and commitments regarding the funding of their graduate studies (14%, 5, n=34). For international respondents, the top concerns included producing research publications (46%, 51, n=111) and commitments regarding the funding of their graduate studies (45%), 58, n = 129). Respondents selecting “not applicable/no opinion” were excluded in these analyses.

Figure 3a: Level of concern with aspects related to graduate program (domestic)

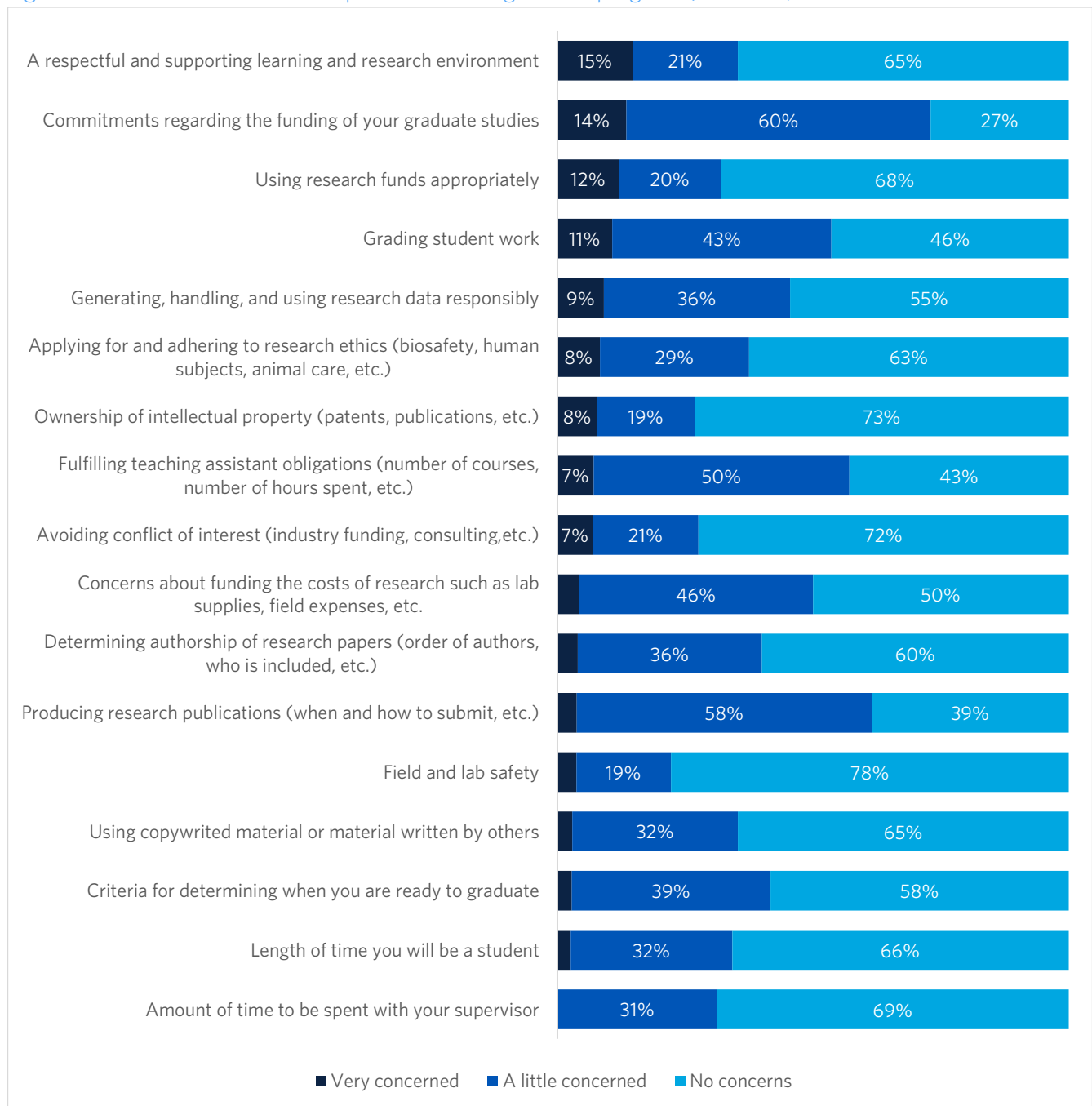
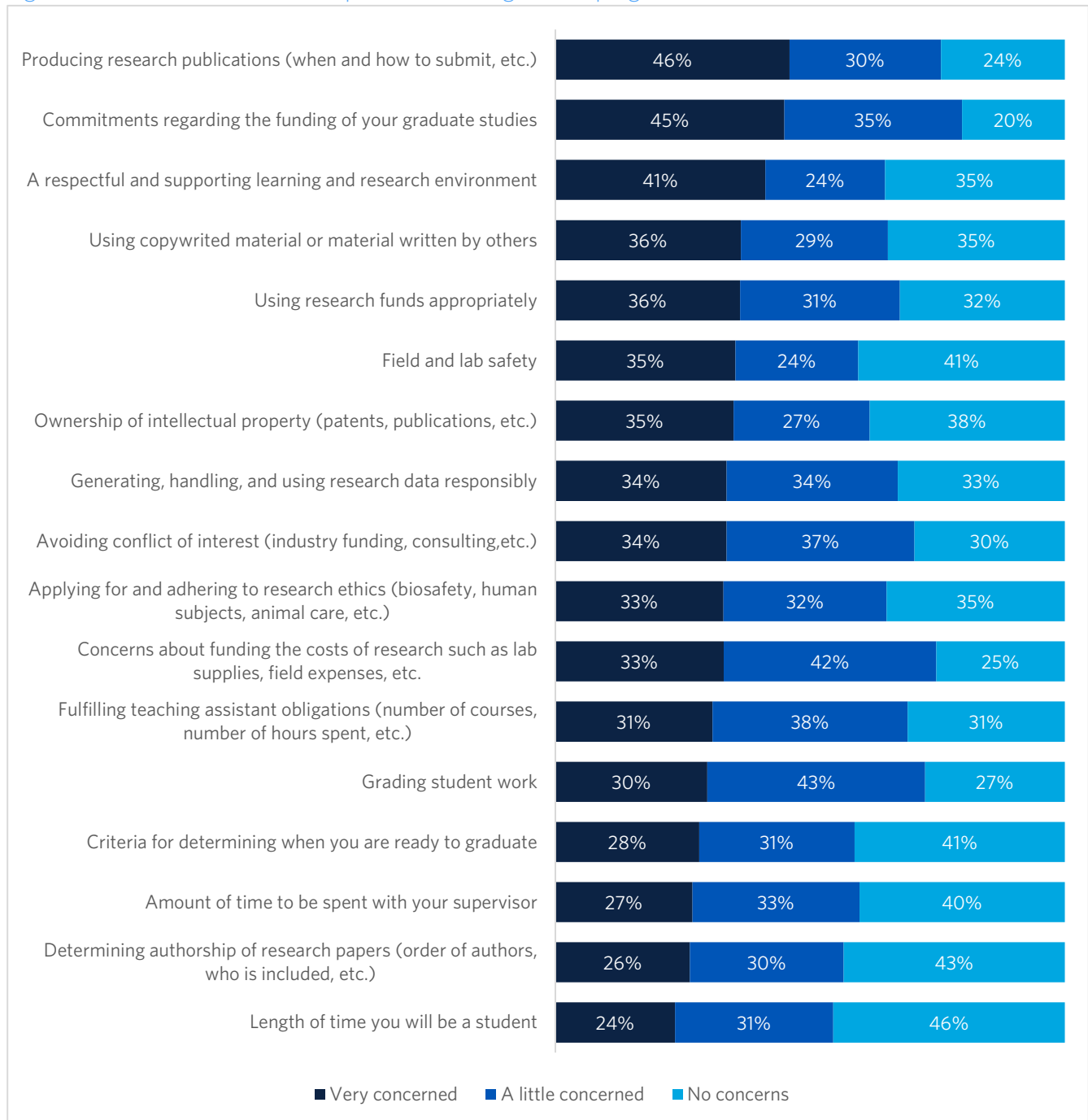


Figure 3b: Level of concern with aspects related to graduate program (international)



### Campus and Community Concerns

Respondents were asked to rate their levels of concern for a second set of items related to various aspects of campus and community life. The item that respondents were most concerned about was finding affordable housing in Kelowna (domestic: 57%, 21, n=37, international: 71%, 94, n=132). Domestic respondents were second-most concerned about balancing their academics and family responsibilities (30%, 8, n=27) while international students were second-most concerned about adapting to life in a new country/province/city (48%, 64, n=133). Respondents selecting “not applicable/no opinion” were excluded in these analyses.

Figure 4a: Level of concern with aspects related to campus and community life (domestic)

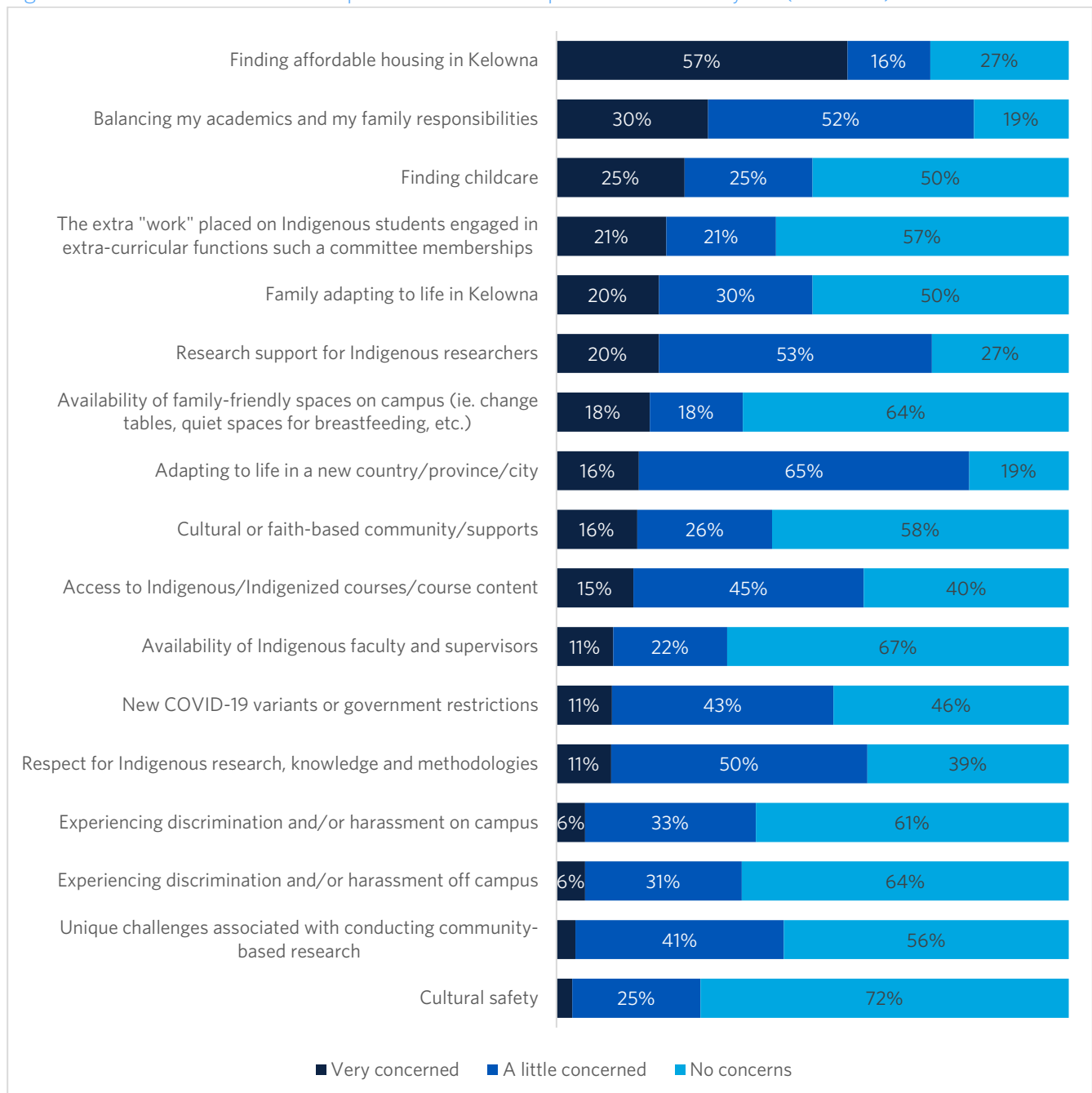
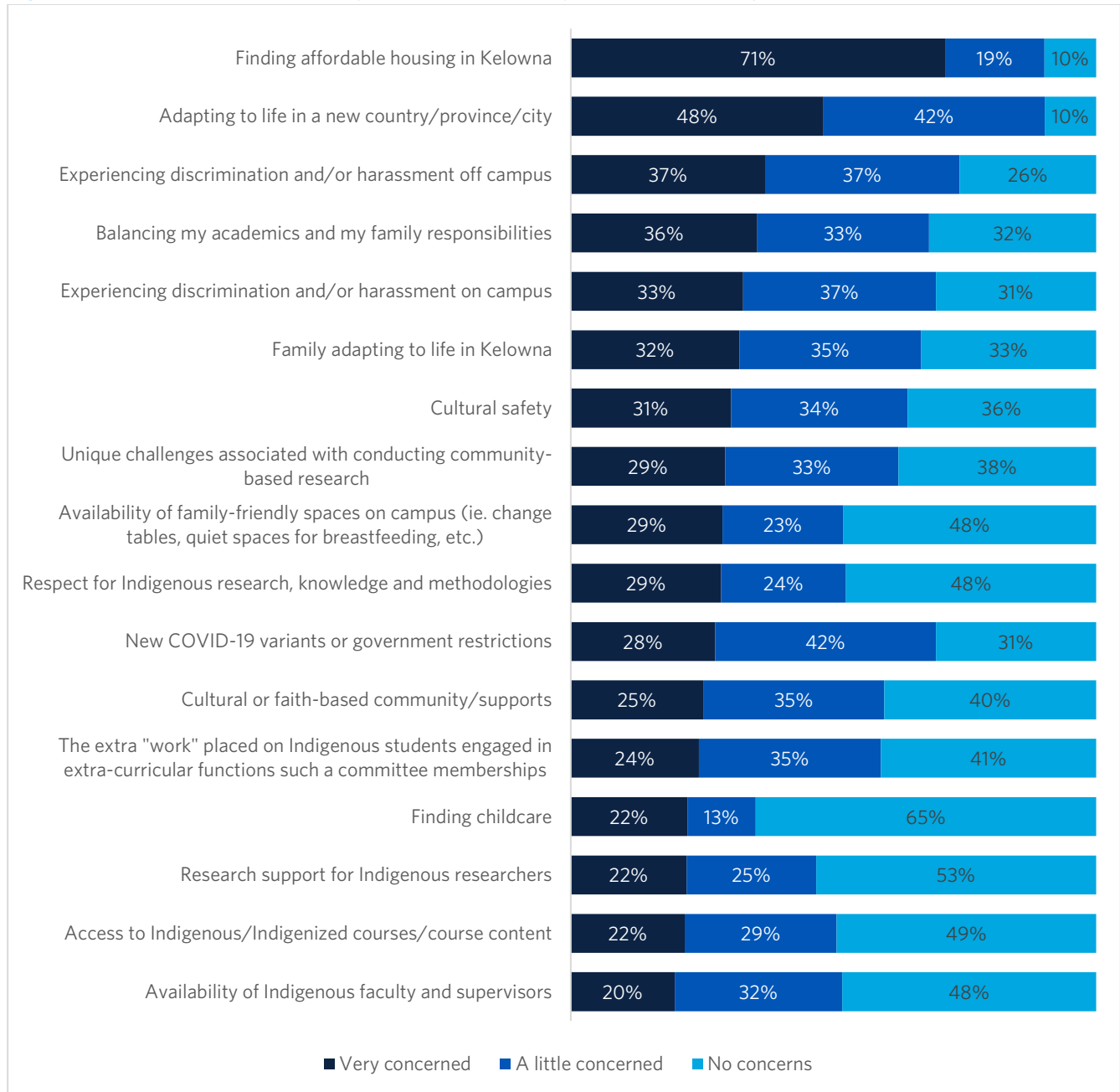


Figure 4b: Level of concern with aspects related to campus and community life (international)

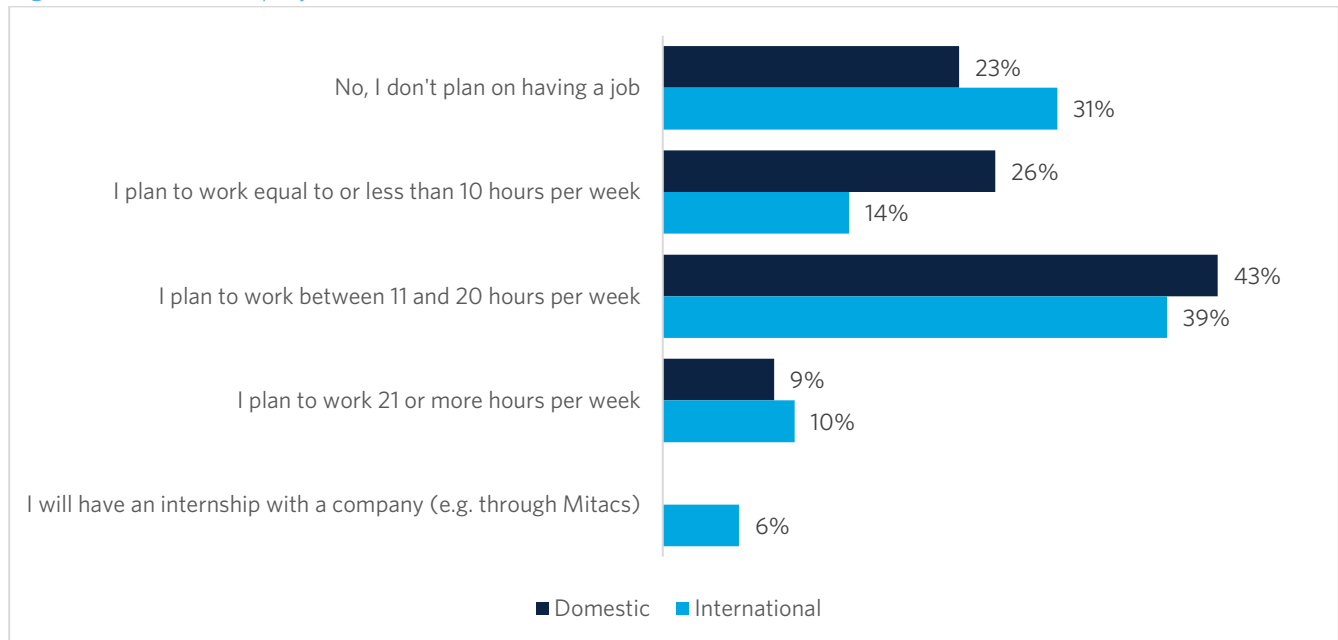


## Time Commitments

Respondents were asked if they planned to work for pay in addition to any appointments at UBC (e.g. research and teaching assistantships). Twenty-three percent (8, n=35) of domestic respondents and 31% (36, n=118) of international respondents stated that they do not plan on working outside of any appointments at UBC. Another 69% (24, n=35) of domestic respondents and 53% (63, n=118) of international respondents plan to work 20 or less hours a week.

Of those respondents planning to work, most international respondents planned to work on campus (91%, 72, n=79), while most domestic respondents planned to do so off campus (74%, 20, n=27).

Figure 5: Planned employment



## Opportunities for Graduate Students

### Participation in/Utilization of Opportunities and Resources

Overall, international respondents showed more interest in participating in the opportunities for graduate students than domestic respondents. When asked how likely they would be to participate in a variety of activities, larger proportions of international respondents said that they would be very likely to participate across all items listed.

Domestic respondents indicated that they would be most likely to utilize a graduate student handbook for their program and an orientation for new graduate students in their program, with 75% (27, n=36) and 72% (26, n=36) selecting "very likely," respectively. Internships (e.g., in industry) (83%, 97, n=117) and an orientation for new graduate students in the program (80%, 94, n=117) were the most popular resources among international respondents, with the majority saying they would be very likely to use them.



Figure 6a: Participation in/utilization of various opportunities and resources (domestic)

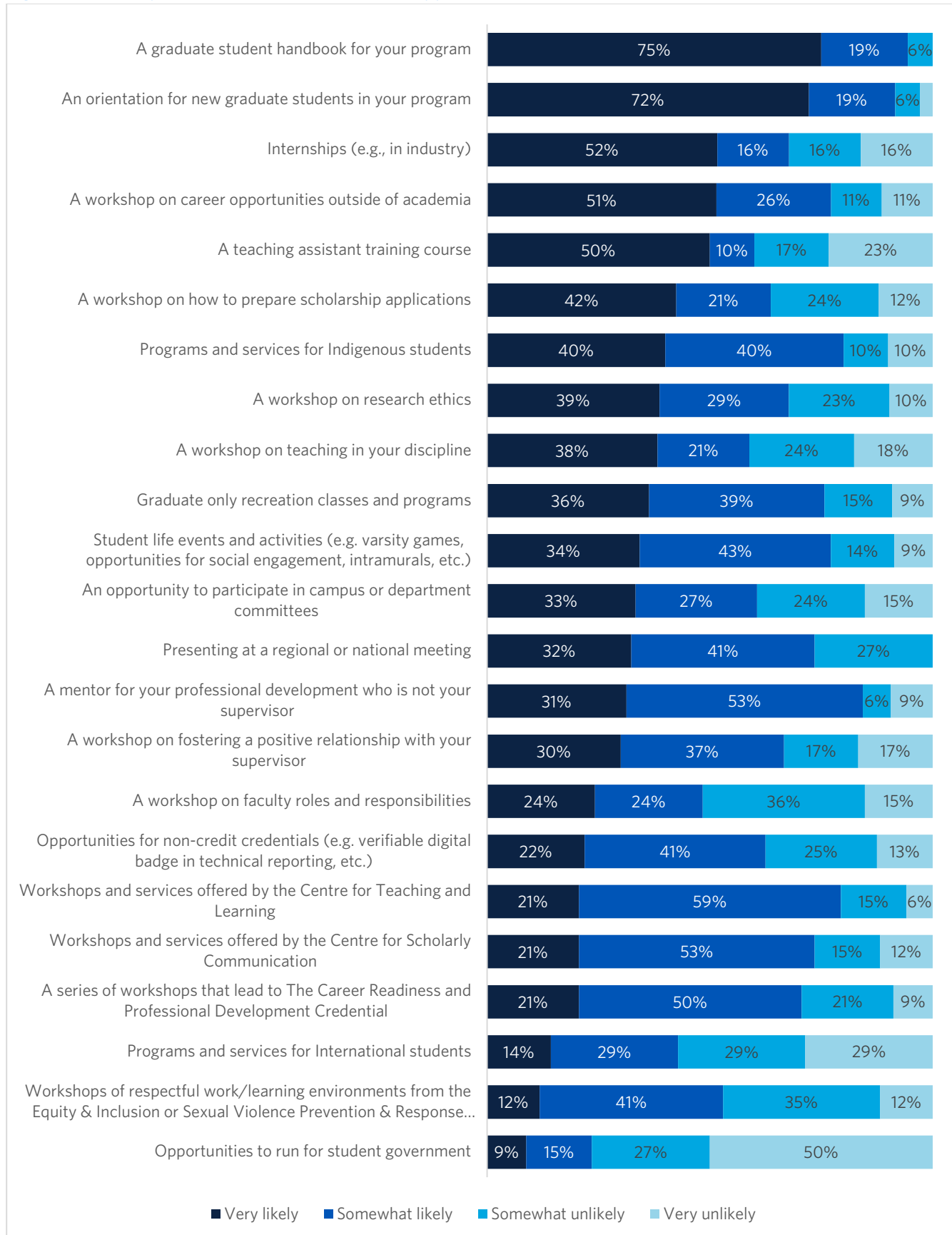
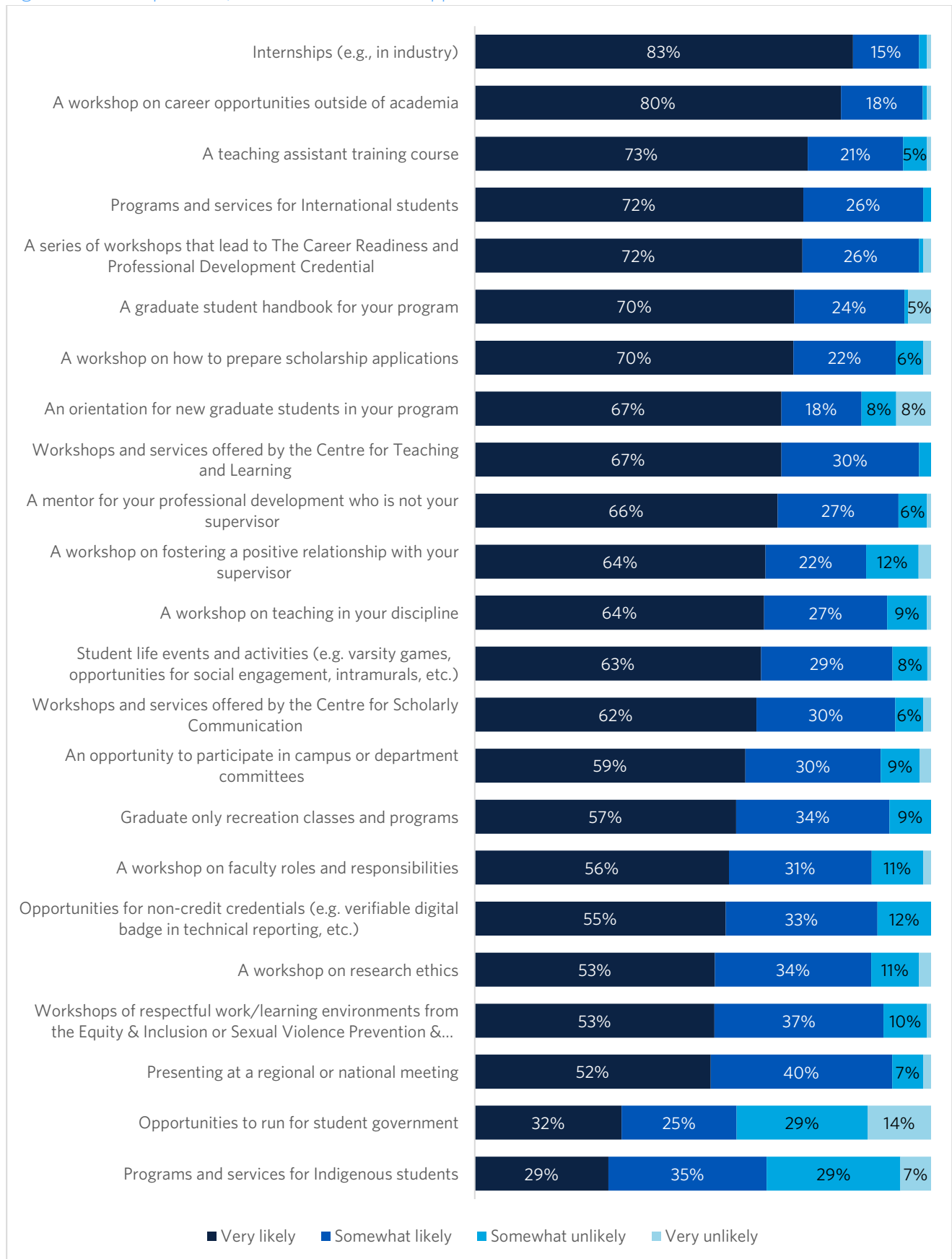


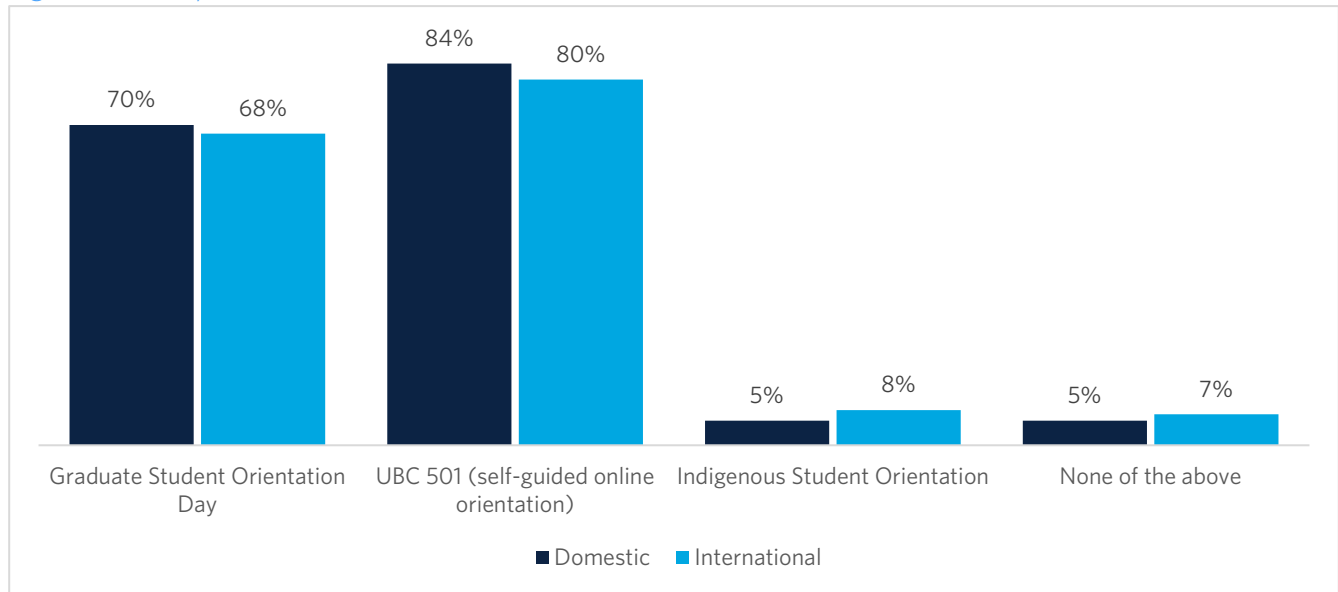
Figure 6b: Participation in/utilization of various opportunities and resources (international)



### Orientation Events

Students were asked which orientation events they see themselves participating in. The majority of respondents stated they saw themselves participating in UBC 501 (self-guided online orientation) (domestic: 84%, 31, n=37; international: 80%, 94, n=117) and/or graduate student orientation day (domestic: 70%, 26, n=37; international: 68%, 80, n=117).

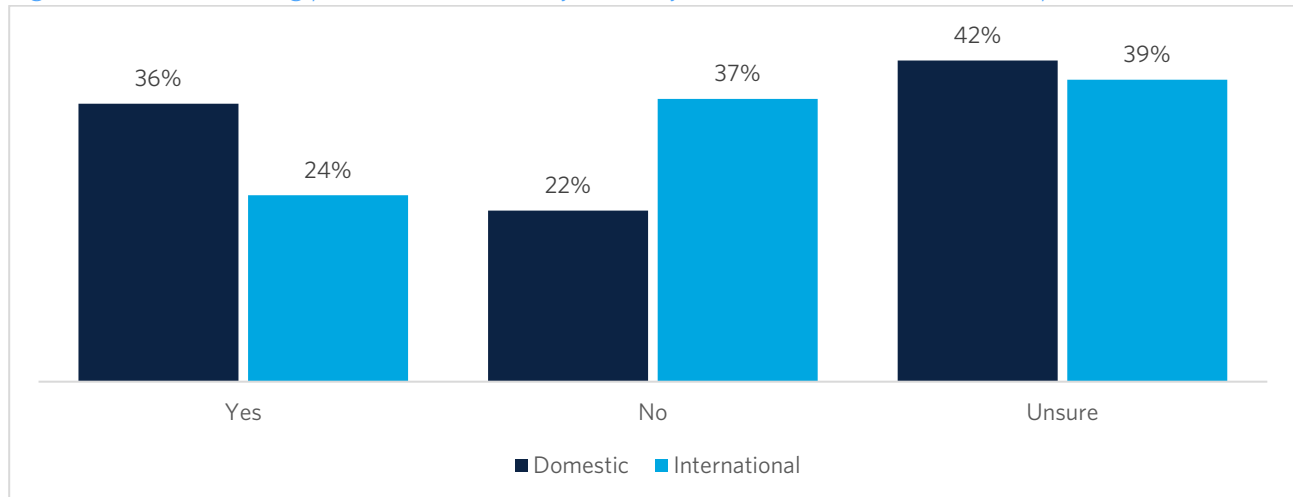
Figure 7: Participation in orientation events



### Online Learning

Survey participants were also asked if they would take their coursework online, if the option were available. There was not a strong preference for or against online learning, with 42% of domestic respondents (15, n=36) and 39% of international respondents (47, n=120) indicating they were unsure if they would take their coursework online if it were a possibility.

Figure 8: Online learning preferences - would you take your coursework online if the option were available?

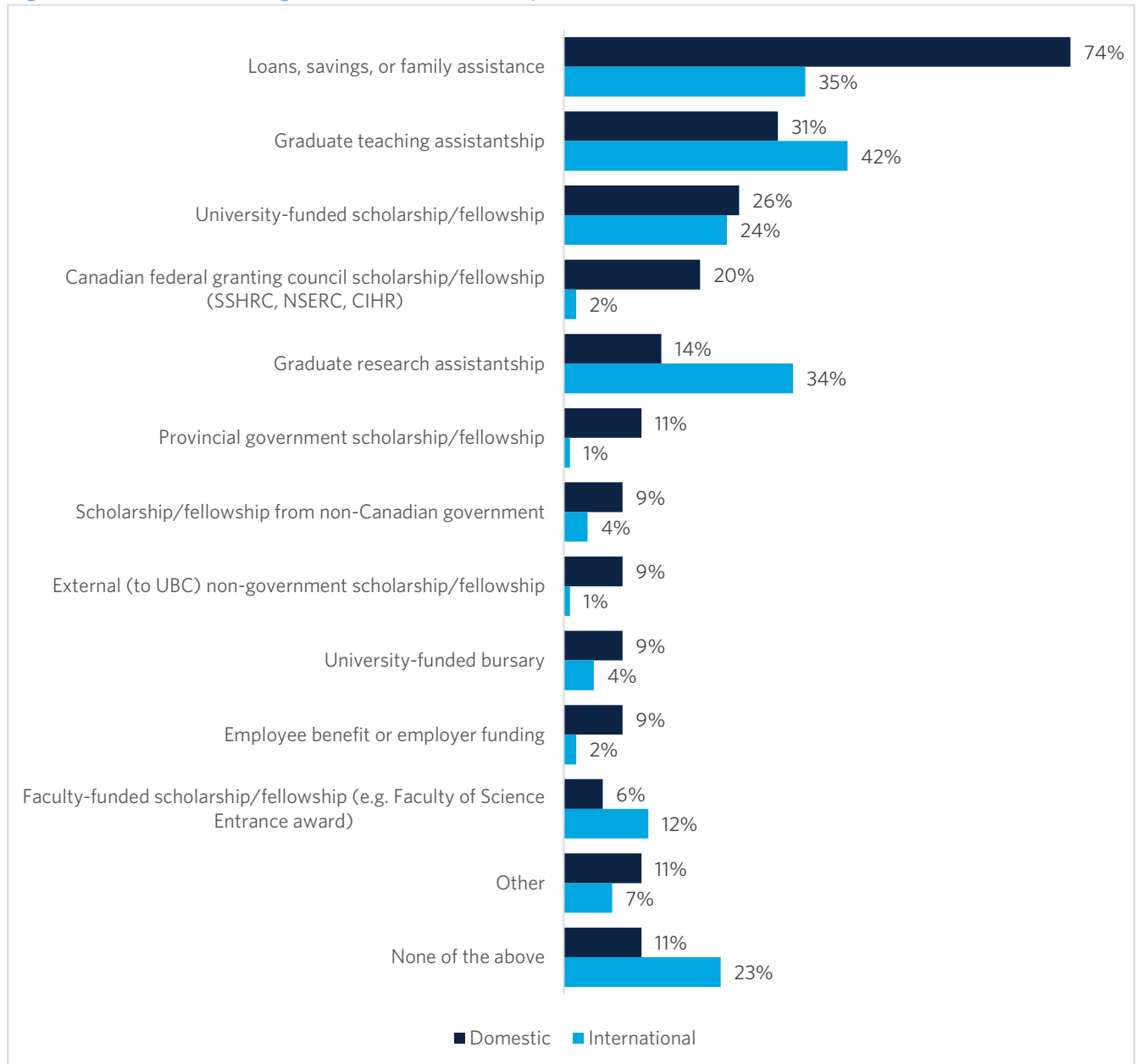


## Finances

### Financing Graduate Studies

The primary sources of income for domestic respondents were loans, savings, or family assistance (74%, 36, n=35) and graduate teaching assistantships (31%, 11, n=35). For international respondents, the primary sources of income for the duration of their studies were graduate teaching assistantships (42%, 47, n=113), loans, savings, or family assistance (35%, 40, n=113), and graduate research assistantships (34%, 38, n=113).

Figure 9: Sources of funding for tuition and other expenses



## Career Pathways

Becoming a teaching professor in a college or university and working independently (e.g. consultant, writer) were the most desired future career options for domestic respondents, with 57% (20, n=35) and 53% (18, n=34), respectively indicating that they would definitely be interested in this career path. International respondents most frequently cited they would definitely be interested in becoming a research professor in a college or university (48%, 50, n=104) and conducting research in a business, industry, or the private sector (48%, 53, n=111). Respondents selecting “not applicable/no opinion” were excluded in these analyses.

Figure 10a: Desire for various career options (domestic)

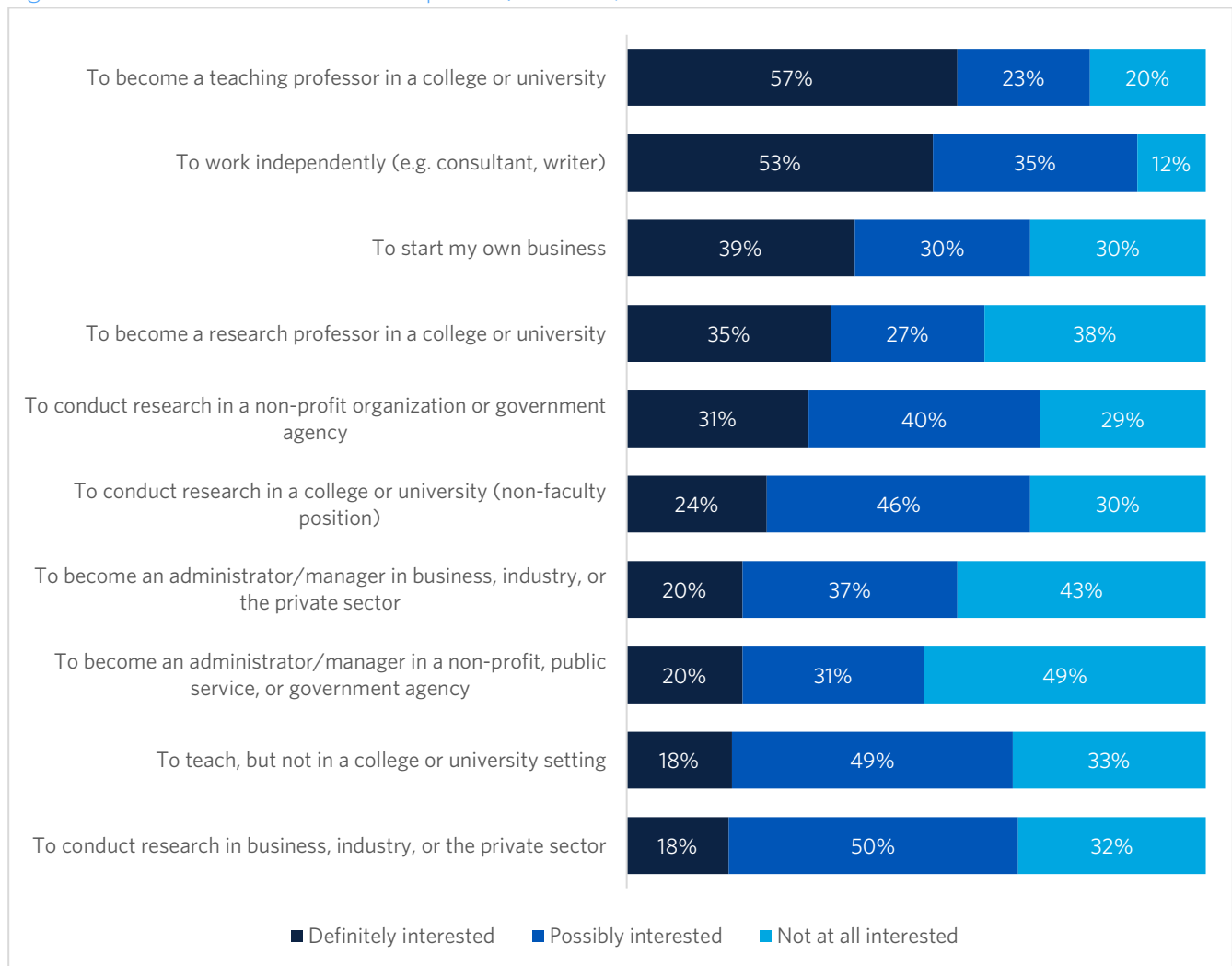
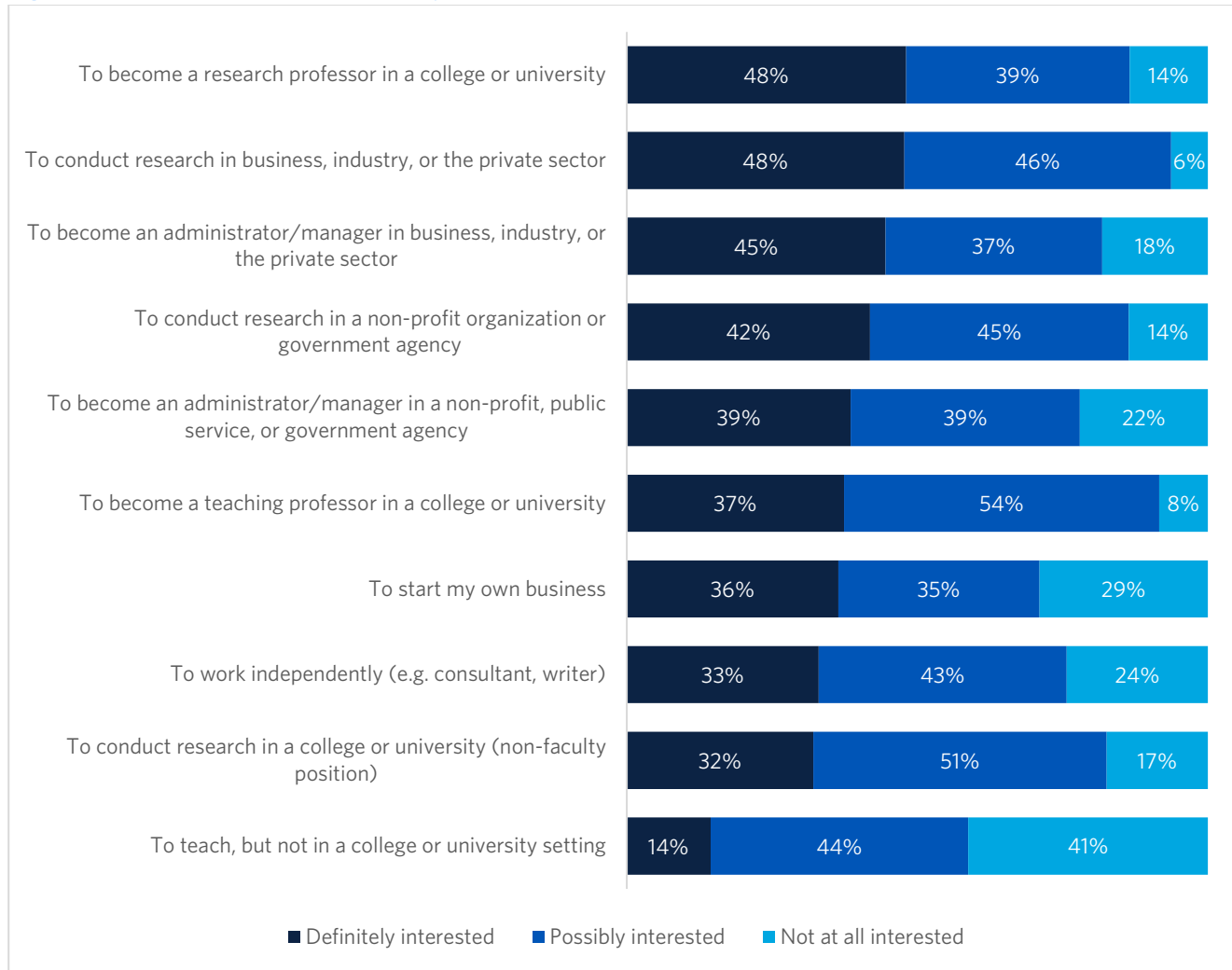


Figure 10b: Desire for various career options (international)



## Health and Wellbeing

### Mental Health, Stress, and Academic Performance

#### Mental Health and Resilience

Students rated their agreement with statements regarding mental health and resiliency. Domestic respondents most often strongly agreed or agreed with the statements “I am aware of personal signs when I experience too much stress” (94%, 33, n=35) and “I am confident that I have the ability to succeed in my courses during my degree” (91%, 32, n=35). International respondents most often strongly agreed or agreed with the statements “I am confident that I have the ability to succeed in my courses during my degree” (87%, 97, n=111) and “I am confident in my ability to cope with the demands of my life” (86%, 96, n=112).

Figure 11a: Ratings of mental health and resiliency statements (domestic)

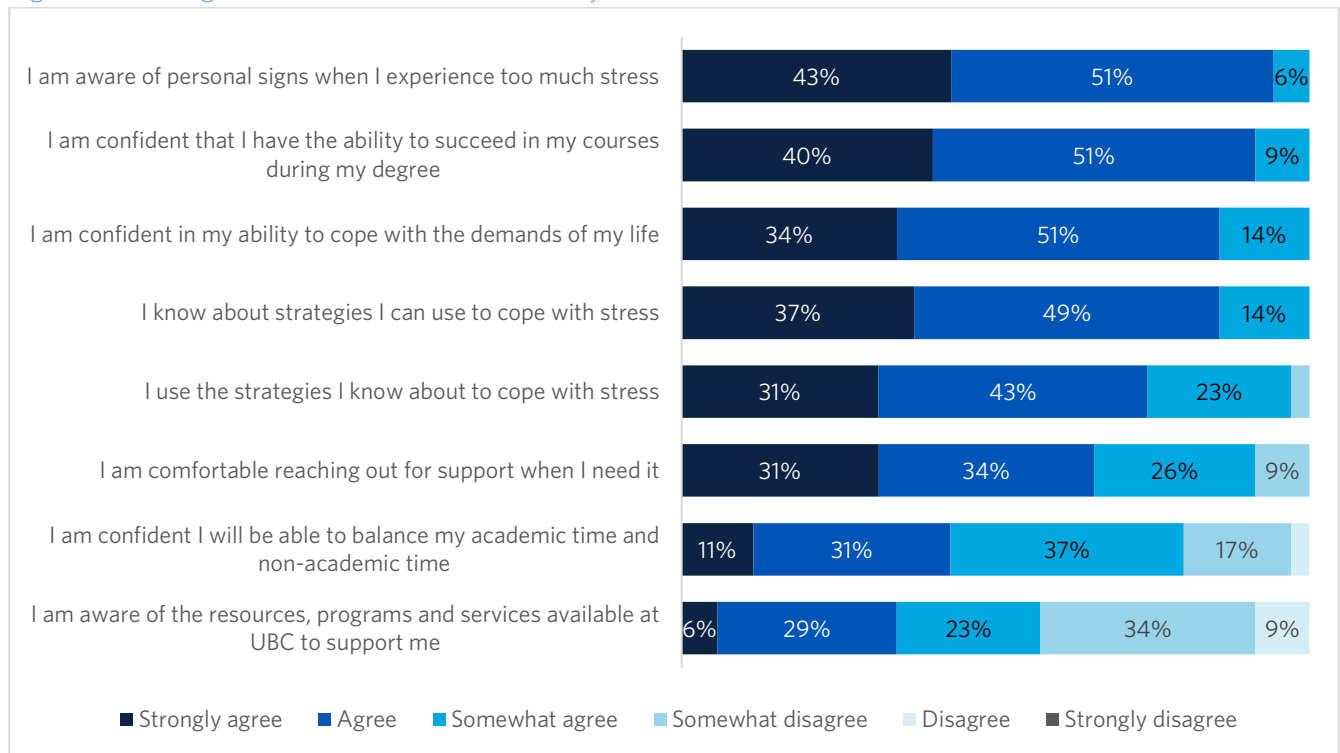
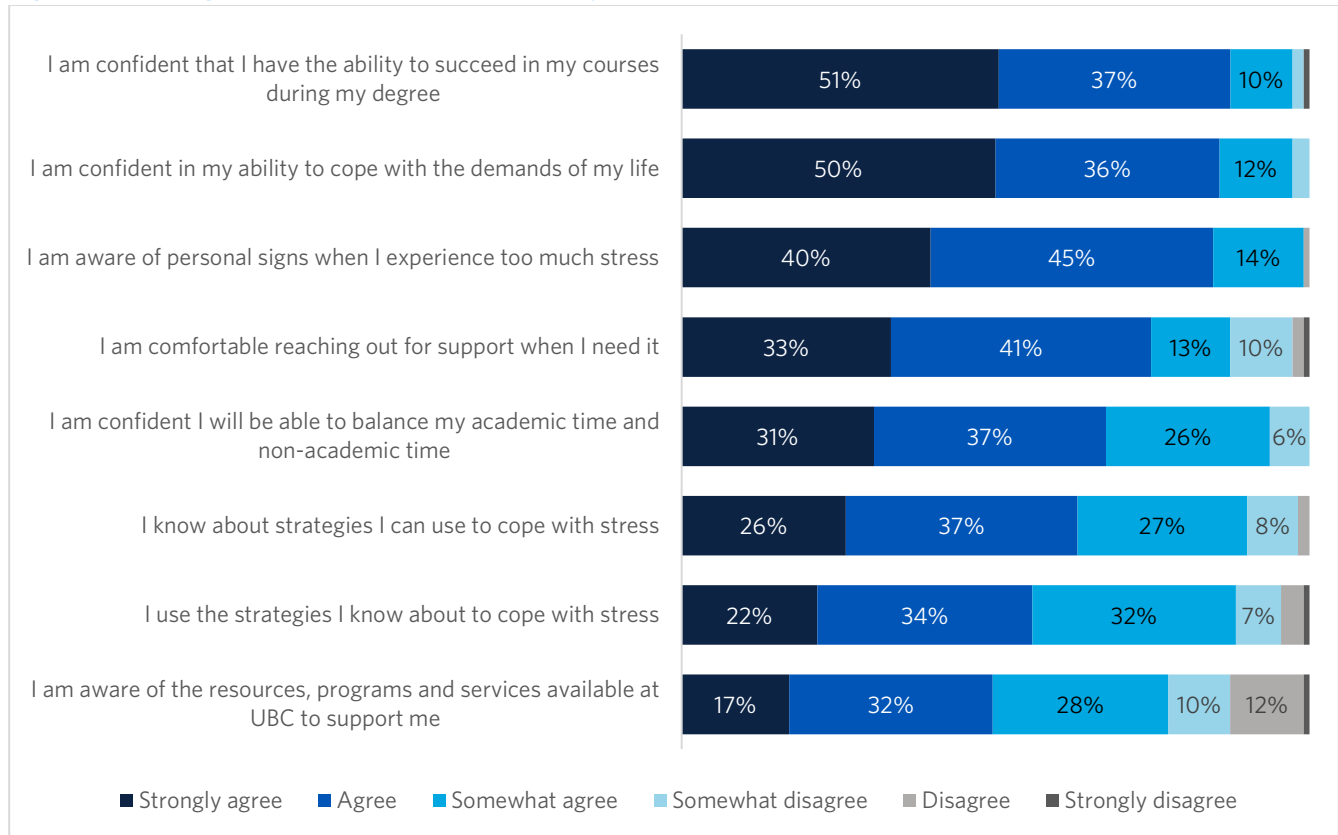


Figure 11b: Ratings of mental health and resiliency statements (international)



### Impact of Mental Health and Stressors on Academic Performance

Students reported whether they had experienced a range of issues, and whether those issues had negatively affected their academic performance over the past 12 months. Stress was the issue indicated by the largest proportion of respondents as having somewhat or significantly negatively impacted academic performance (domestic: 51%, 18, n=35; international: 38%, 42, n=110).



Figure 12a: Impact of various issues on academic performance (domestic respondents)

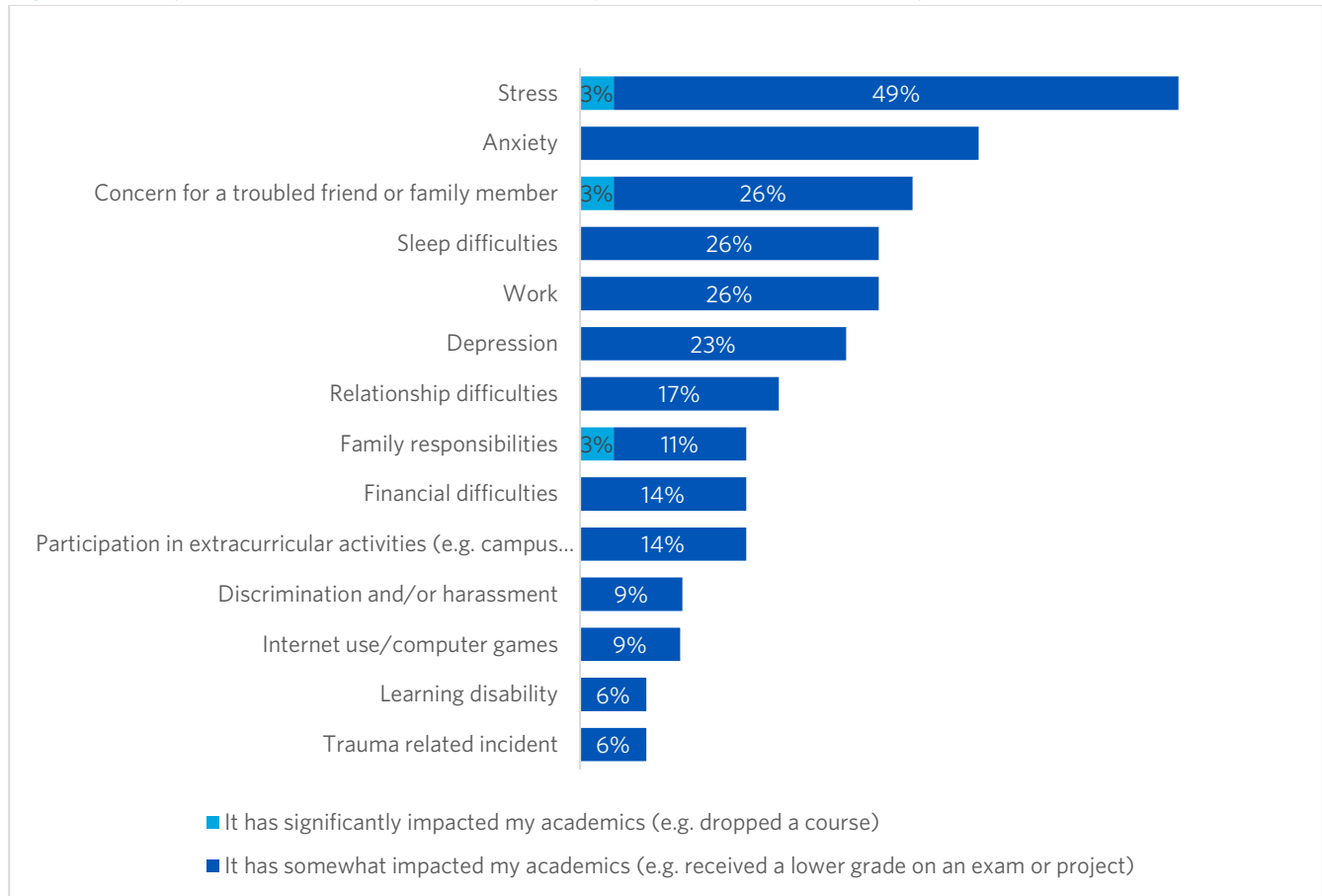
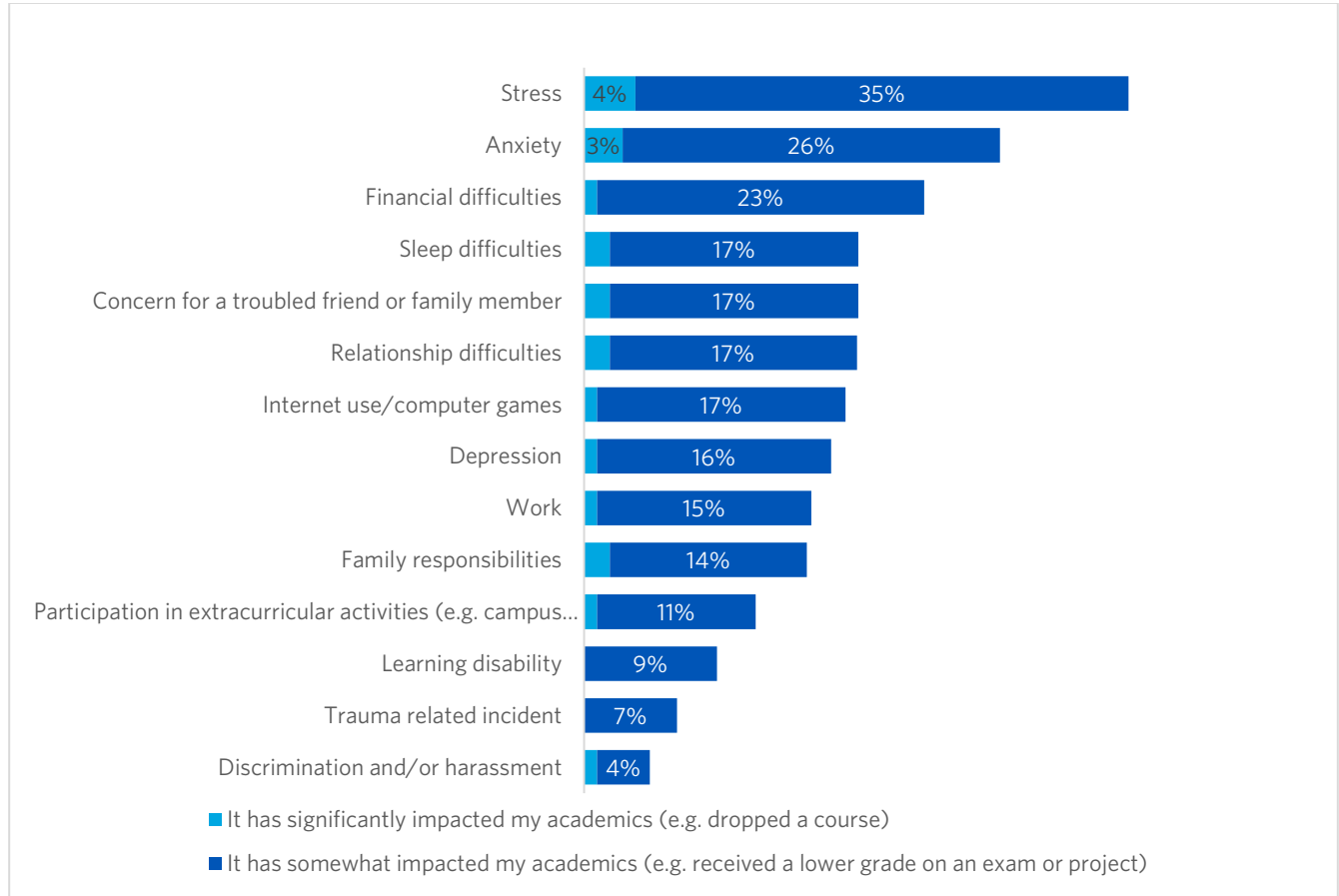


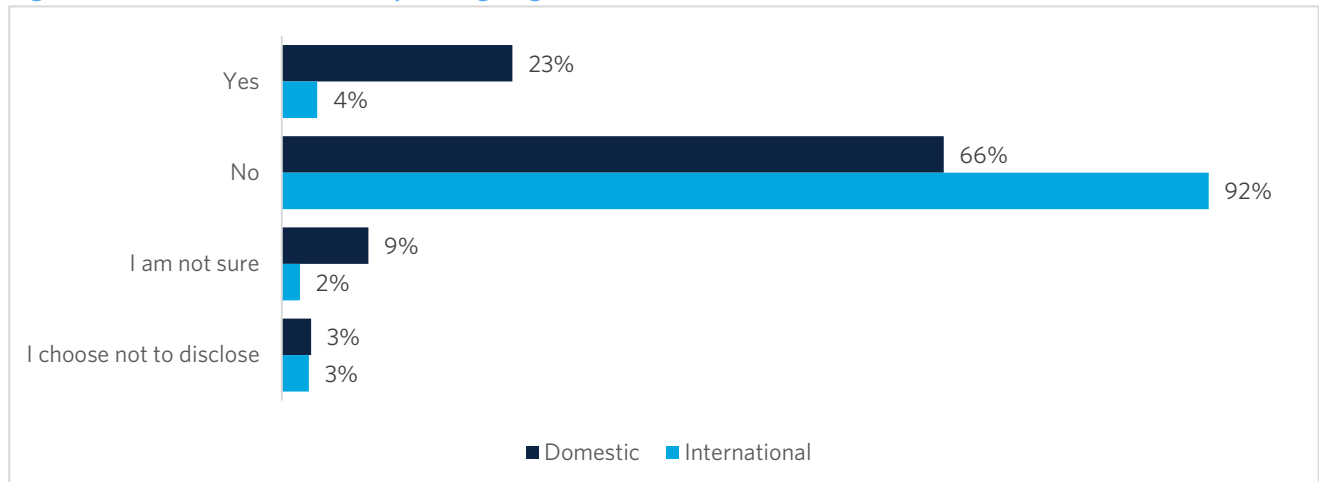
Figure 12b: Impact of various issues on academic performance (international respondents)



### Physical or Mental Health Impairments

The majority of domestic (66%, 23, n=35) and international (92%, 104, n=113) respondents indicated that they did not identify as a person with a disability or ongoing medical condition. Interestingly, nearly one-third of domestic respondents reported that they either did identify as a person with a disability or ongoing medical condition, or they were not sure (31%, 11, n=35).

Figure 13: Person with a disability or ongoing medical condition



Respondents were asked to rate their levels of concern with disclosure of disabilities and the availability of academic accommodations at UBC Okanagan. International students were more likely to report being very concerned or concerned about both the availability of academic accommodations (51%, 53, n=103) and disclosure of a disability or ongoing medical condition to university staff or faculty (26%, 22, n=85) compared to domestic students (18%, 5, n=28; 5%, 1, n=22; respectively).

Figure 14a: Concern with disclosure of disabilities and availability of academic accommodations (domestic)

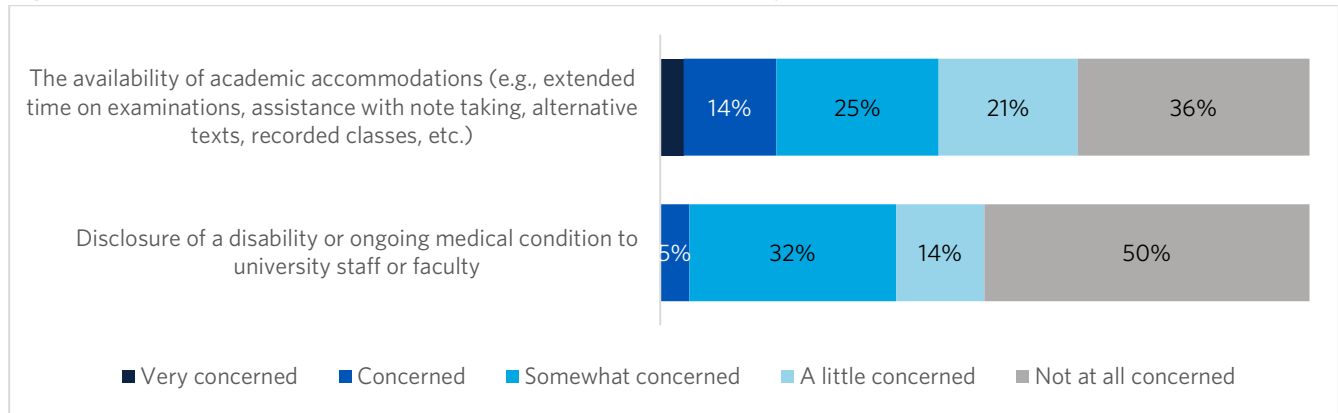
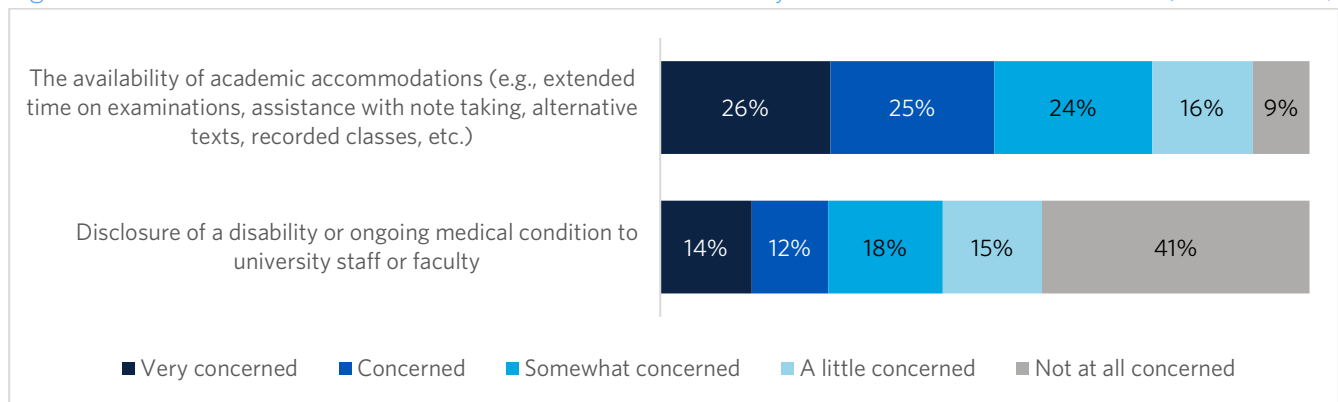


Figure 14b: Concern with disclosure of disabilities and availability of academic accommodations (international)

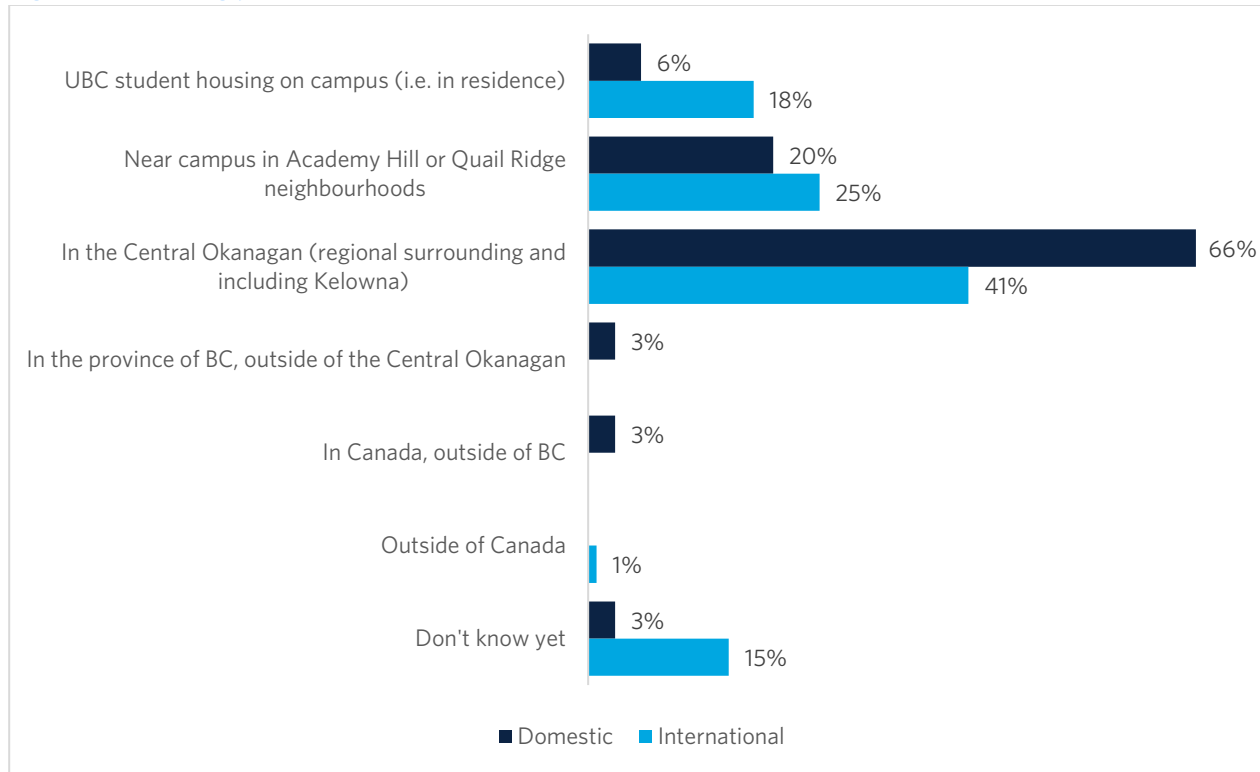


## Housing, Commute, and Residency

### Housing

The majority of student respondents intend to live in the Central Okanagan (domestic: 66%, 23, n=35; international: 41%, 46, n=112) or near campus in the Academy Hill or Quail Ridge neighbourhoods (domestic: 20%, 7, n=35; international: 25%, 28, n=112).

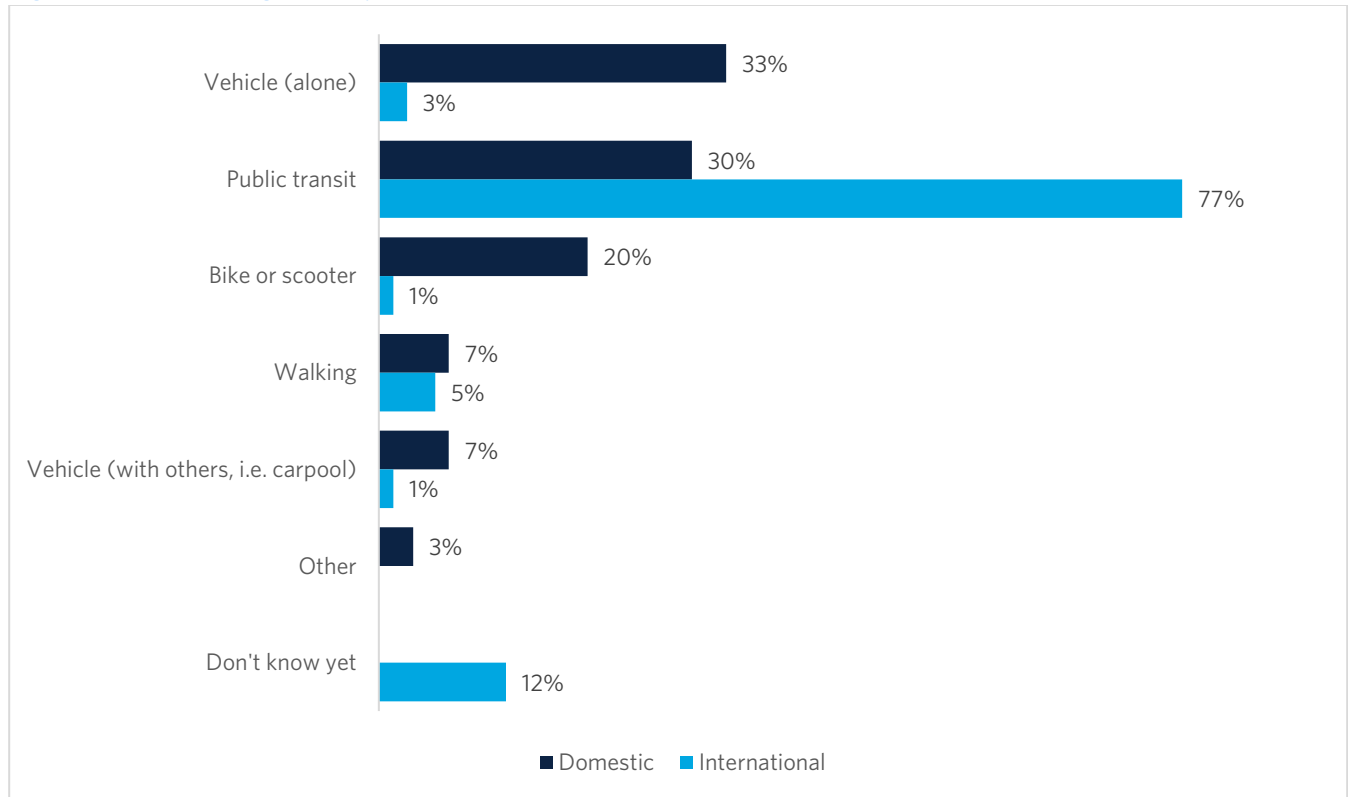
Figure 15: Housing plans



### Commute to Campus

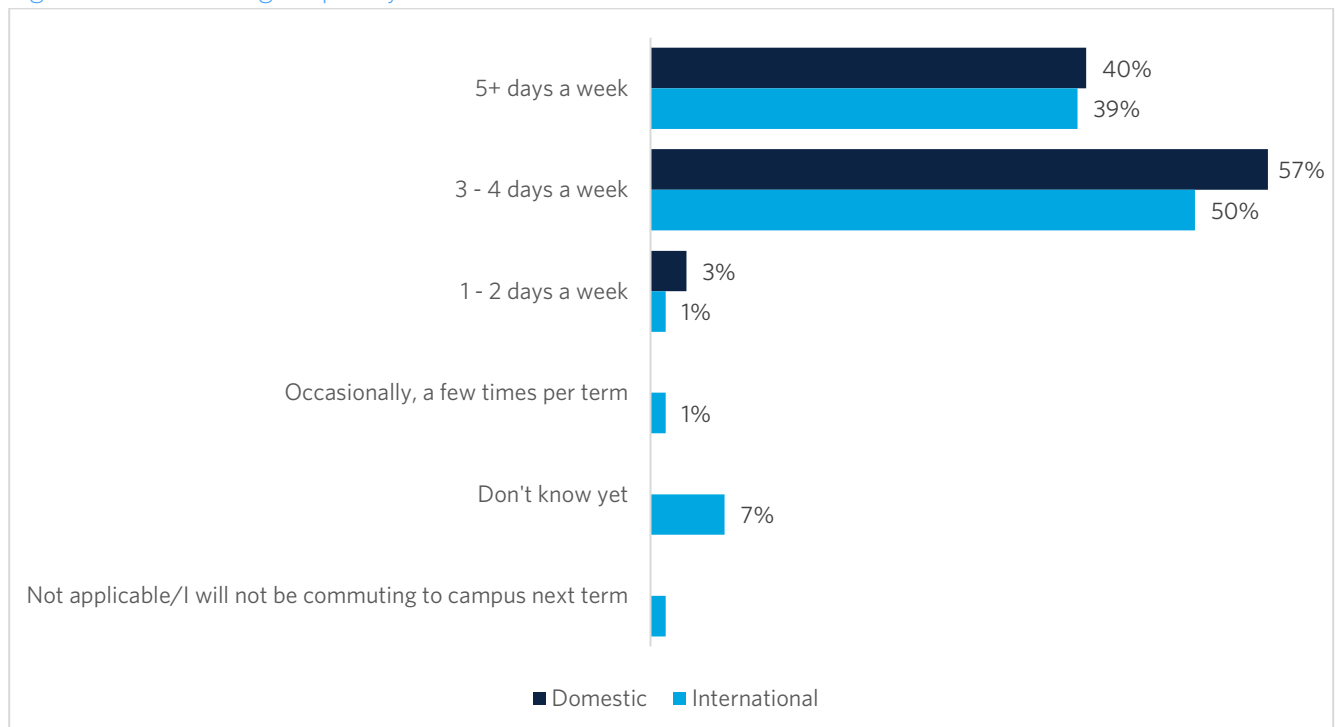
Among student respondents who plan to live near campus in the Academy Hill or Quail Ridge neighbourhoods or in the Central Okanagan, domestic students are most likely to commute to and from campus by vehicle (alone) (33%, 10, n=30) while international students are most likely to use public transit (77%, 57, n=74).

Figure 16: Commuting to campus



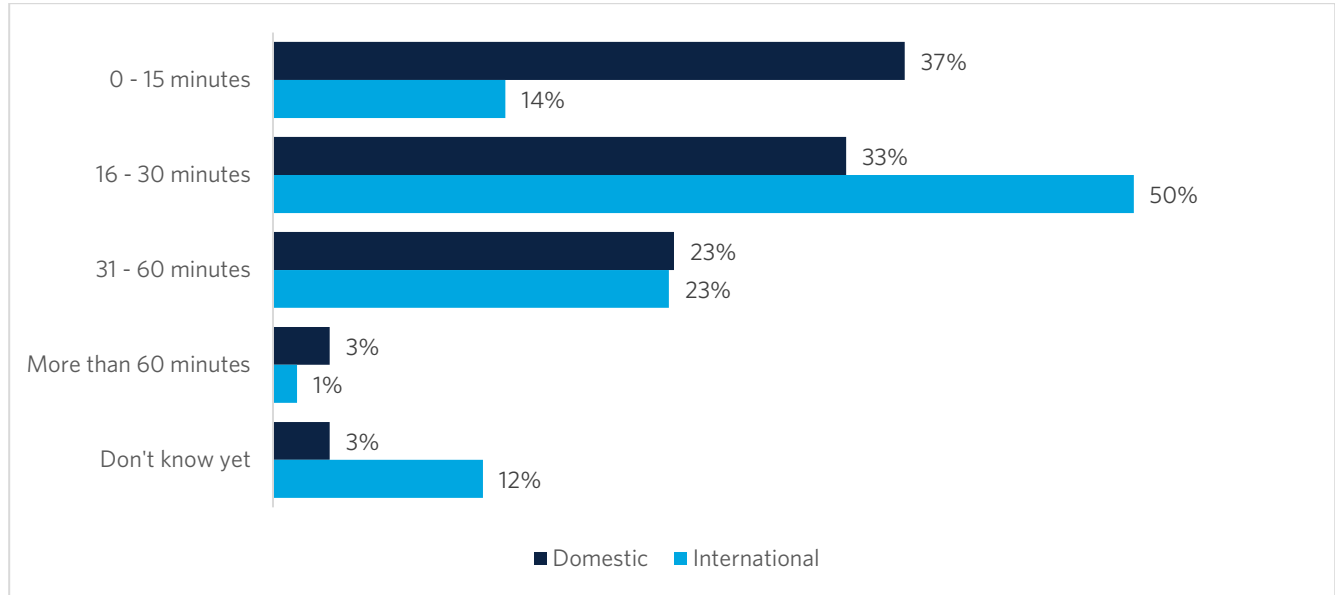
Among student respondents who plan to live near campus in the Academy Hill or Quail Ridge neighbourhoods or in the Central Okanagan, most international and domestic students plan to commute to campus 3-4 days a week (57%, 17 n=30; 50%, 37, n=74, respectively).

Figure 17: Commuting frequency



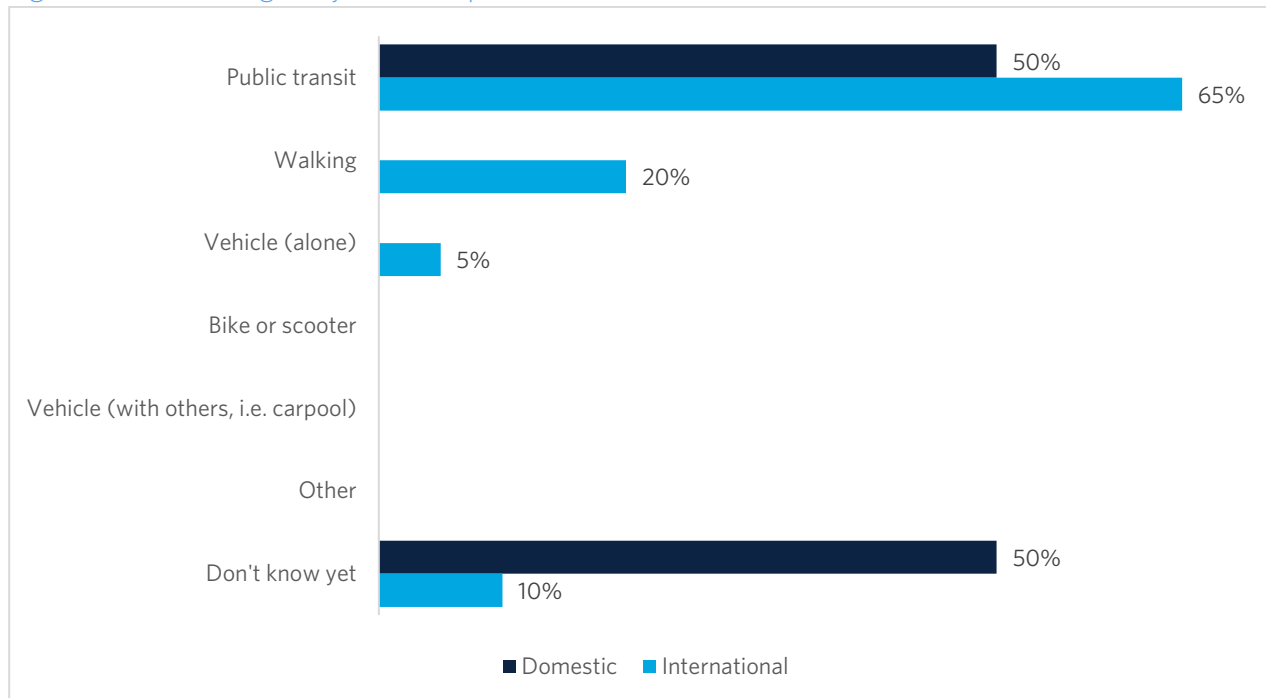
Among student respondents who plan to live near campus in the Academy Hill or Quail Ridge neighbourhoods or in the Central Okanagan, most international respondents expect their one-way commute to campus to take 16-30 minutes (50%, 37, n=74) while most domestic respondents expect their one-way commute to campus to take either 0-15 minutes (37%, 11, n=30) or 16-30 minutes (33%, 10, n=30).

Figure 18: Commuting time



Students who plan to live in UBC student housing on campus are most likely to use public transit to travel off campus (to buy groceries, run errands, go shopping, go to work, etc.) (domestic: 50%, 1, n=2; international 65%, 13, n=20).

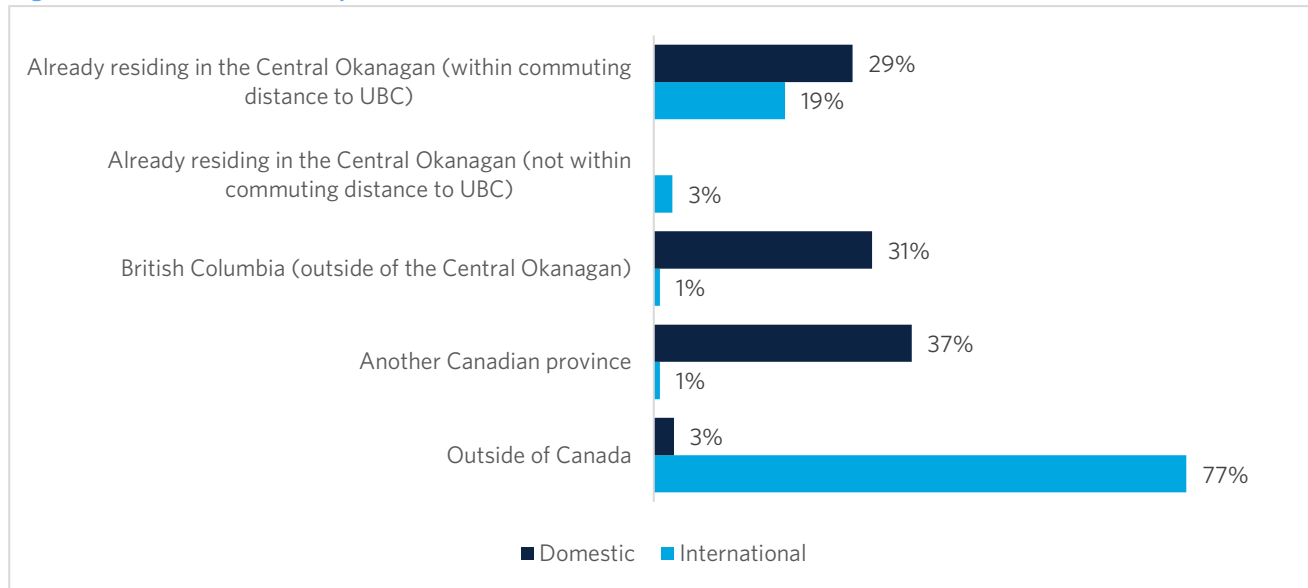
Figure 19: Commuting away from campus



## Residency Plans

Seventy-seven percent of international respondents were currently living outside of Canada (85, n=111), while domestic respondents were fairly evenly split between currently residing in another Canadian province (37%, 13, n=35), residing in British Columbia (outside of the Central Okanagan) (31%, 11, n=35), and already residing in the Central Okanagan (within commuting distance to UBC) (29%, 10, n=35).

Figure 20: Current residency



Survey respondents currently living outside of Canada were most likely to plan to move to BC for the September term start and have made travel arrangements accordingly (domestic: 100%, 1, n=1, international: 67%, 57, n=85). Similarly, respondents currently residing in another Canadian province were also most likely to plan to move to BC for the September term start and have made travel arrangements accordingly (domestic: 92%, 12, n=13; international: 100%, 1, n=1).

Figure 21a: Travel plans - currently residing outside of Canada

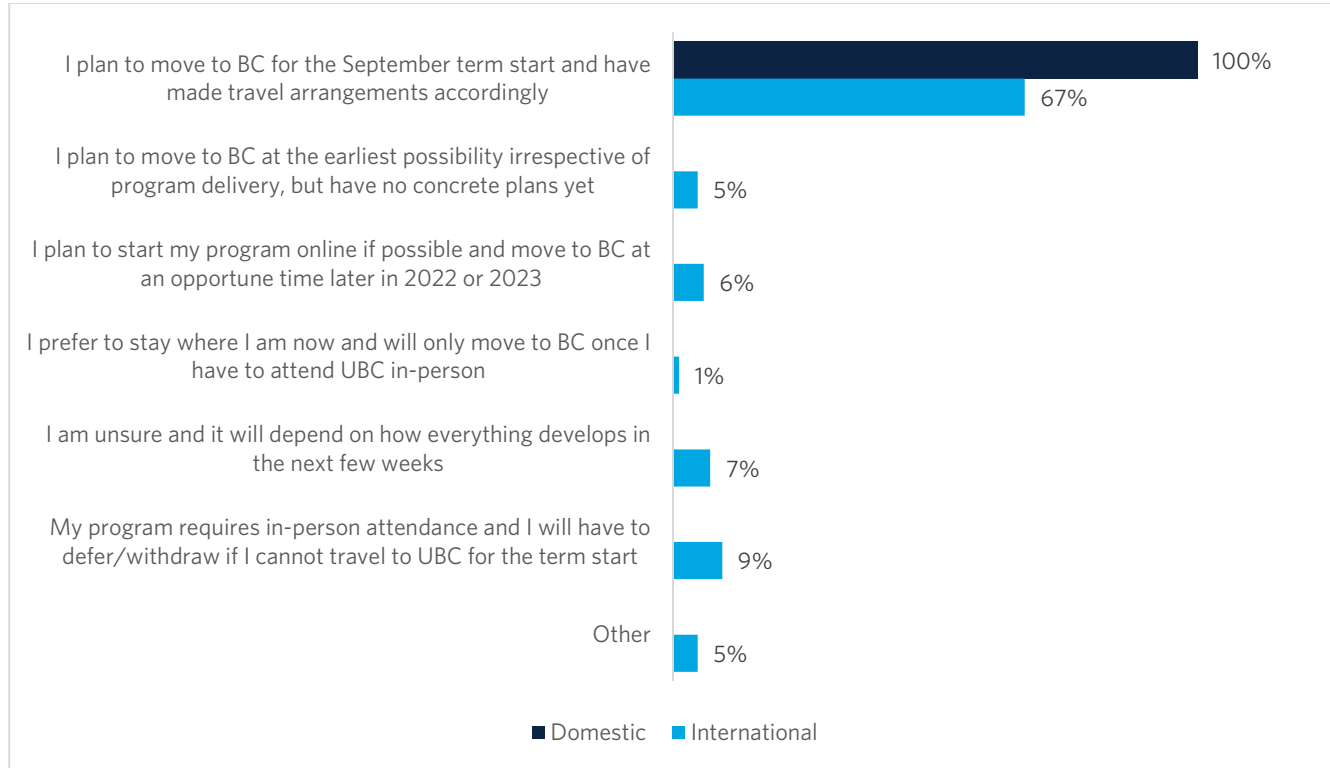
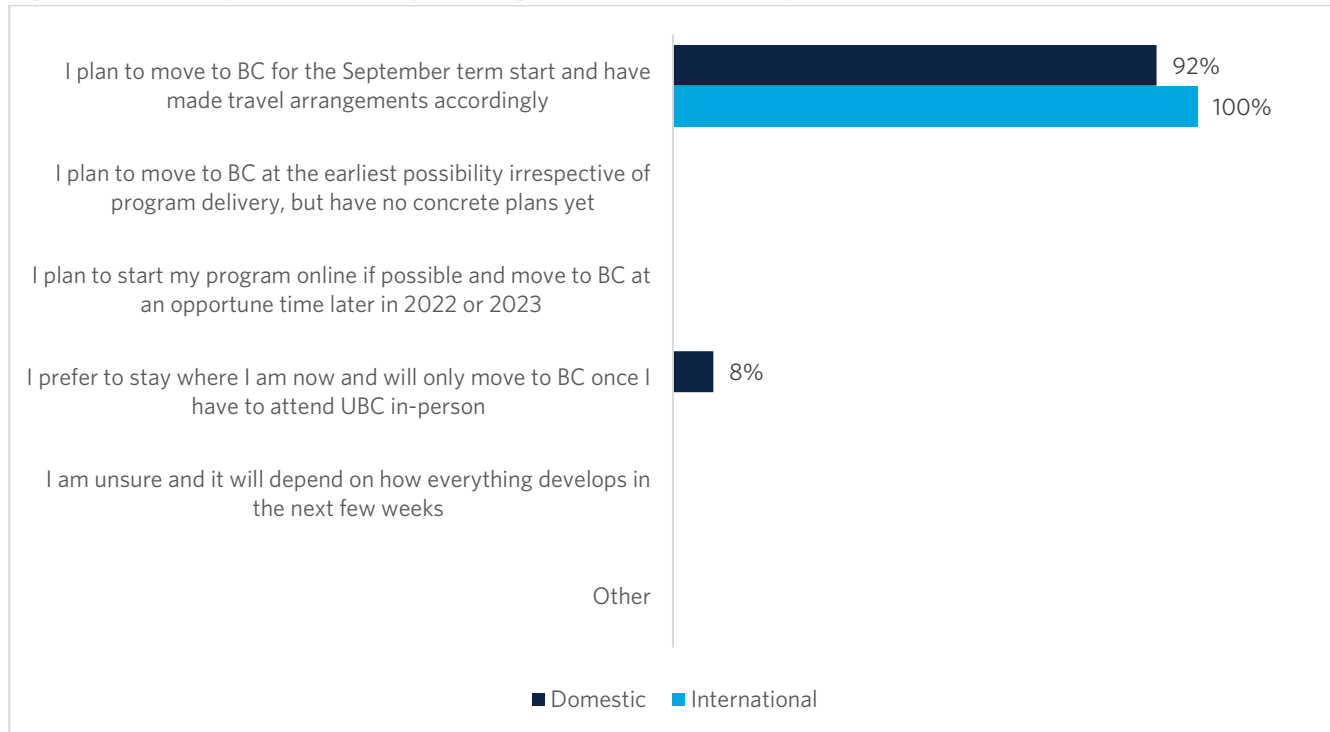


Figure 21b: Travel plans - currently residing in another Canadian province





## Conclusion

Overall, New to UBC Grad students showed a high level of engagement, with 70% (207, n=295) participating in the NUBC Survey. The survey respondents were excited to come to UBCO, with the majority indicating that UBC's Okanagan campus was their first choice institution for their graduate studies. International student respondents in particular showed high levels of interest in taking advantage of provided resources, such as internships, workshops, handbooks, etc.

The largest concern for all survey respondents was finding affordable housing in Kelowna. Other top areas of concern included funding and research publications.

When presented with various potential career opportunities, survey respondents showed high levels of interest in all of the options listed, suggesting that they are beginning their graduate studies with an open mind about what the future may hold.