

05.25.2017

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MARKET RESEARCH

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Survey of Graduate Faculty and Graduate Students

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Introduction



Objective:

Provide University of Kentucky (UK) with data to inform discussions concerning the future of graduate education at the university via direct responses from graduate faculty and graduate students.

- This study provides information and insight on the following:
 - Perceptions of the importance of innovative trends in graduate education as well as perceptions of their appropriateness and applicability at UK
 - The role of interdisciplinarity at UK, perceptions of its importance in graduate education, and assessments of its current status at UK
 - Desire for developing new graduate programs and perceptions of the current process for developing new programs at UK
 - Importance of transferrable skills for graduate students and UK's current ability to develop them in graduate students
 - Relative importance of various characteristics of graduate education and perceptions of UK's success in delivering each factor
 - Ways in which the Graduate School and various departments can more successfully recruit high-quality graduate students

Introduction



- At the outset, it was determined that it would be beneficial to survey both graduate faculty and graduate students. Thus, this report includes responses from both audiences and, when possible, juxtaposes responses from faculty and students.
- It is our hope that, through this report and the discussions to follow, the University of Kentucky will have a better understanding of the importance of various aspects of graduate education—both those that are considered innovative and those that are considered traditional—as perceived by UK’s graduate faculty and graduate students. These findings will also inform ways in which UK can improve the graduate student experience, position future graduates for success, and continue to attract high-quality graduate students.

Methodology



- Two survey instruments were developed for each audience (graduate faculty and graduate students). Whenever appropriate, questions were designed to be consistent between the two surveys in order to allow for comparisons between faculty and students. Approximately 75% of questions were identical and 25% of survey questions were audience-specific.
- The surveys were administered by email and were completed online. Surveys were administered by UK (as opposed to Stamats) so that respondents would be more likely to trust the survey source and, therefore, be more likely to complete the survey. This approach led to a higher response rate. Surveys were administered to all graduate faculty and all graduate students.
 - In order to garner sufficient response from graduate students during a particularly busy time (nearing the end of the academic year), an incentive was offered. Ten students were randomly selected to receive \$50 Amazon gift cards.

Methodology



- Fieldwork took place between April 17, 2017, and May 1, 2017. An initial invitation and two reminders were sent via email.
 - Five hundred forty-nine graduate faculty completed the survey (31.8% response rate; 3.46% margin of error).
 - Six hundred forty-nine graduate students completed the survey (14.7% response rate; 3.55% margin of error).
- Stamats designed the survey instrument in collaboration with UK, analyzed all close-ended questions, and coded responses to open-ended questions.

Report Notes



- The surveys used in this study included both open- and closed-ended questions. This is noted throughout the report by indicating in the question title whether the question was “aided” (closed-ended) or “unaided” (open-ended).
 - Example: “Unaided: what do you believe is the most important development/innovation in graduate education today?”
- When appropriate, statistical tests were run to measure the significance of response variance between graduate faculty and graduate students. We utilize a significance level of 0.95 to determine statistical significance. Statistically significant differences are noted throughout the report by highlighting significant cells in blue. Blue cells indicate that the value within the cell is significantly *greater* than the corresponding value for the other audience.
 - In the example table below, the mean importance rating among graduate students is significantly greater than the mean importance rating among graduate faculty. Additionally, the proportion of respondents that selected “very important” is significantly greater among students than among faculty.

Aided: Based on your experience and observations, how important is each of the following developments/innovations in graduate education? Scale: 1=Not at all important; 5=Very important <i>Displayed in descending order by overall mean</i>	Graduate Faculty		Graduate Students	
	Mean	% Very Important	Mean	% Very Important
Programs that connect undergraduate and graduate programs (e.g., University Scholars)	4.53	63%	4.65	74%

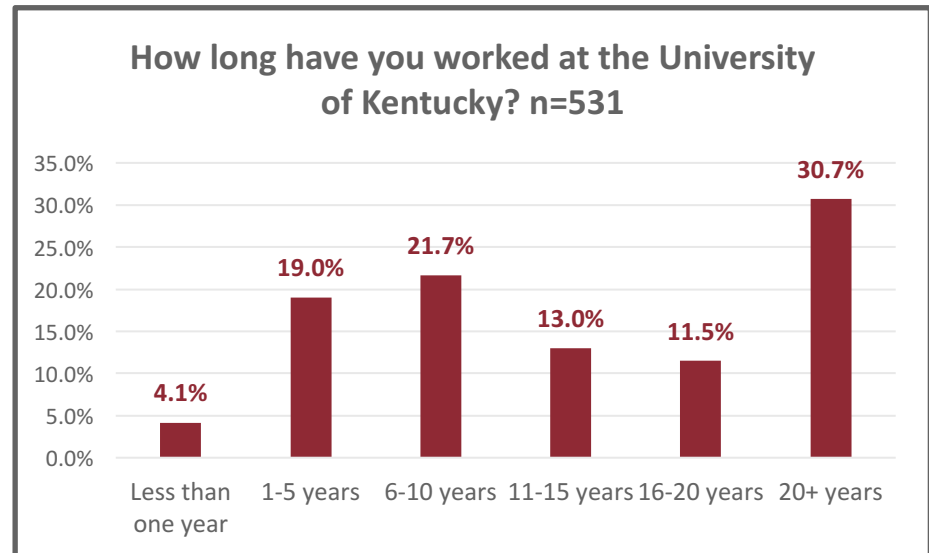
Respondent Characteristics



GRADUATE FACULTY (n=549)

- College:
 - Arts and Sciences: 191 (34.8%)
 - Medicine: 79 (14.4%)
 - Agriculture, Food, and Environment: 59 (10.7%)
 - Education: 45 (8.2%)
 - Engineering: 28 (5.1%)
 - Public Health: 24 (4.4%)
 - Fine Arts: 20 (3.6%)
 - Health Sciences: 17 (3.1%)
 - Communication and Information: 14 (2.6%)
 - Business and Economics: 12 (2.2%)
 - Pharmacy: 12 (2.2%)
 - Nursing: 8 (1.5%)
 - Social Work: 6 (1.1%)
 - Design: 4 (0.7%)
 - Dentistry: 1 (0.2%)
 - Law: 1 (0.2%)

- Length of time with UK:
 - Less than one year: 22 (4.1%)
 - 1–5 years: 101 (19.0%)
 - 6–10 years: 115 (21.7%)
 - 11–15 years: 69 (13.0%)
 - 16–20 years: 61 (11.5%)
 - More than 20 years: 163 (30.7%)



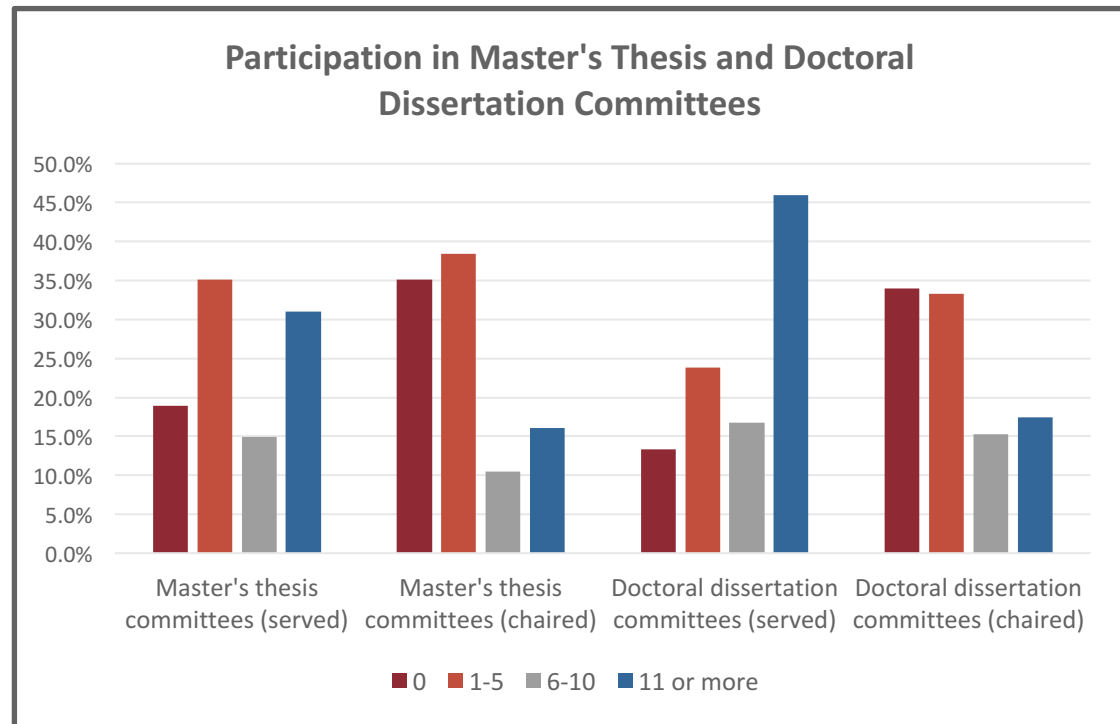
Respondent Characteristics



GRADUATE FACULTY (n=549) – *Continued*

- Master's thesis committees – served:
 - None: 99 (18.9%)
 - 1 to 5: 184 (35.2%)
 - 6 to 10: 78 (14.9%)
 - 11 or More: 162 (31.0%)
- Master's thesis committees – chaired:
 - None: 182 (35.1%)
 - 1 to 5: 199 (38.4%)
 - 6 to 10: 54 (10.4%)
 - 11 or More: 83 (16.0%)
- Doctoral dissertation committees – served:
 - None: 70 (13.4%)
 - 1 to 5: 125 (23.9%)
 - 6 to 10: 88 (16.8%)
 - 11 or More: 241 (46.0%)

- Doctoral dissertation committees – chaired:
 - None: 180 (34.0%)
 - 1 to 5: 176 (33.3%)
 - 6 to 10: 81 (15.3%)
 - 11 or More: 92 (17.4%)

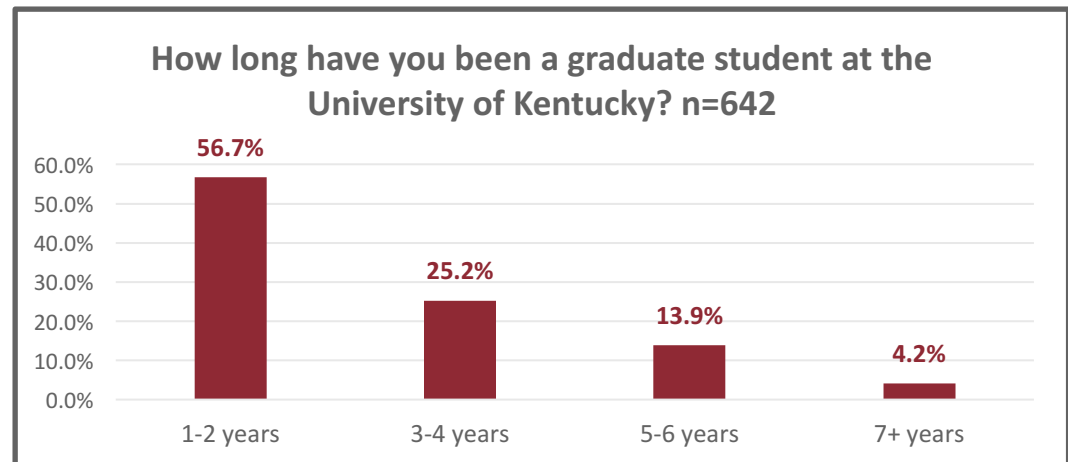


Respondent Characteristics



GRADUATE STUDENTS (n=649)

- College:
 - Arts and Sciences: 170 (26.2%)
 - Education: 75 (11.6%)
 - Agriculture, Food, and Environment: 62 (9.6%)
 - Engineering: 49 (7.6%)
 - Medicine: 44 (6.8%)
 - Health Sciences: 44 (6.8%)
 - Social Work: 44 (6.8%)
 - Communication and Information: 37 (5.7%)
 - Business and Economics: 30 (4.6%)
 - Public Health: 24 (3.7%)
 - Fine Arts: 24 (3.7%)
 - Pharmacy: 23 (3.5%)
 - Nursing: 5 (0.8%)
 - Design: 5 (0.8%)
 - Law: 1 (0.2%)
 - Dentistry: 0 (0.0%)
- Length of time as a graduate student at UK:
 - 1 to 2 Years: 364 (56.7%)
 - 3 to 4 Years: 162 (25.2%)
 - 5 to 6 Years: 89 (13.9%)
 - 7 or More Years: 27 (4.2%)
- Qualifying exam stage:
 - Pre-Qualifying Exam: 296 (48.8%)
 - Currently Taking Qualifying Exam: 53 (8.7%)
 - Post-Qualifying Exam: 257 (42.4%)





Innovations in Graduate Education

Aided: Importance of Innovations in Graduate Education



Aided: Based on your experience and observations, how important is each of the following developments/innovations in graduate education? Scale: 1=Not at all important; 5=Very important <i>Displayed in descending order by overall mean</i>	Graduate Faculty		Graduate Students	
	Mean	% Very Important	Mean	% Very Important
Programs that connect undergraduate and graduate programs (e.g., University Scholars)	4.53	63%	4.65	74%
Interdisciplinary study and research	4.49	63%	4.64	73%
Developing transferable skills in graduate students, which are especially valued beyond academia (i.e., skills that transfer from job to job regardless of the position, such as oral communication, leadership, assessing people, and team-building)	4.37	53%	4.36	51%
Efforts to embed professional development into traditional degree curricula	4.14	43%	4.47	58%
Decreasing time required for PhD	4.37	56%	4.18	51%
Efforts to enhance diversity	3.76	26%	3.58	23%
Online education	3.23	15%	3.55	24%
Preparing graduate students for careers outside of academia	2.89	11%	3.38	22%

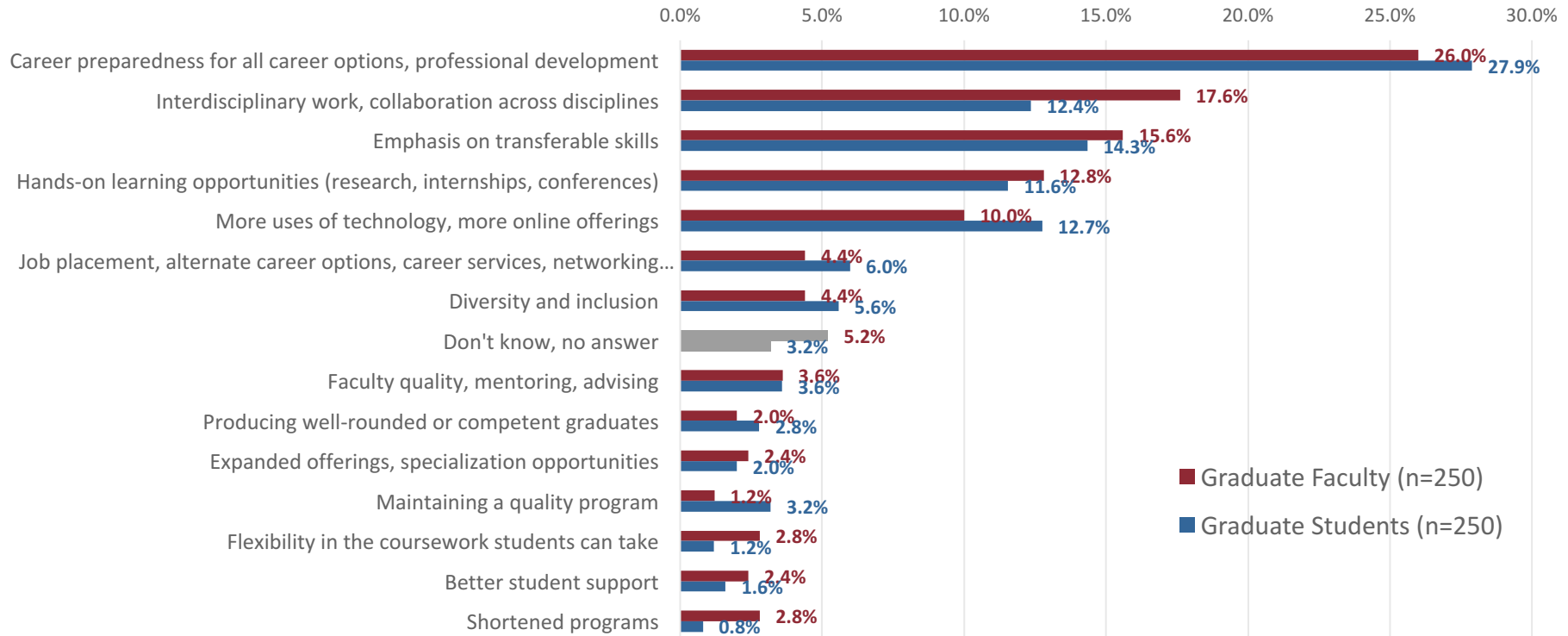
Blue highlighting indicates statistically significant differences between faculty and students.

- Faculty and students agree that the two most important developments/innovations in graduate education today are initiatives that *connect undergraduate and graduate programs* and *interdisciplinary study and research*.
- Overall, students are much more likely than faculty to believe that a given innovation in graduate education is important.
 - Specifically, students believe that *efforts to embed professional development into the curriculum, online education, and preparing graduate students for nonacademic careers* are more important than faculty perceive them to be.
 - In contrast, faculty believe that *decreasing the time required to attain a PhD* and *enhancing diversity* are more important than students believe them to be.

Unaided: Important Innovations in Graduate Education



Unaided: What do you believe is the most important development/innovation in graduate education today?



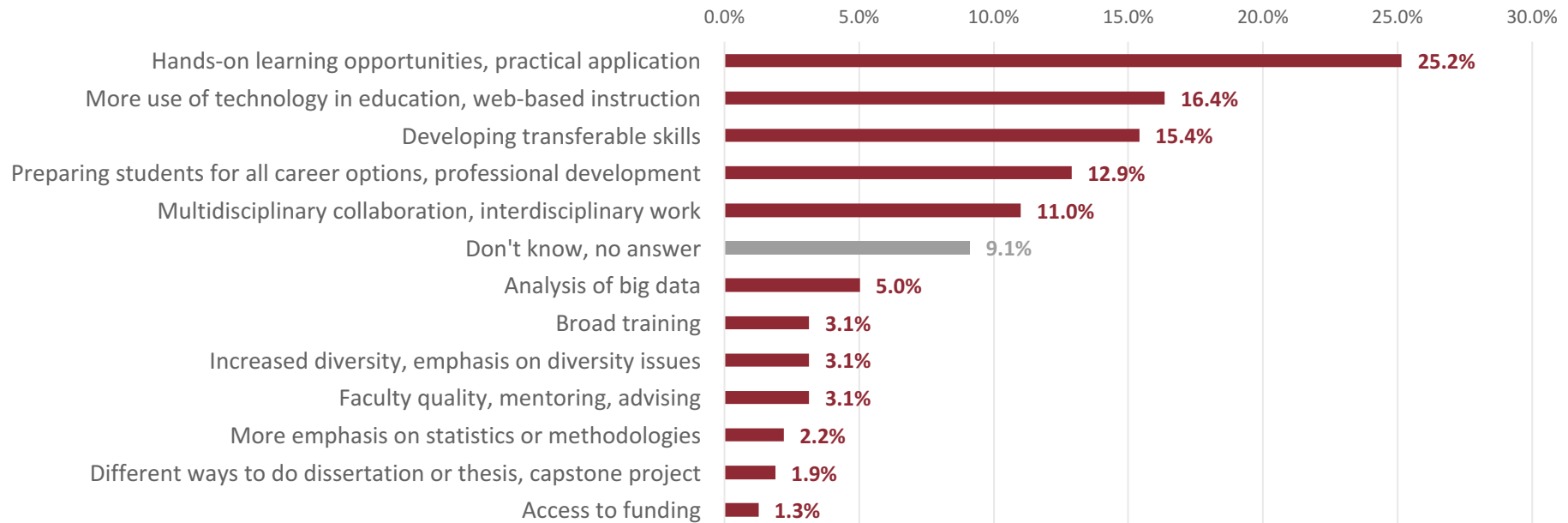
- In an open-ended/unaided format, both faculty and students agree that the most important development in graduate education today is professional development and preparing graduate students for a variety of career options. This was mentioned by more than one-quarter of all faculty and students.

Note: Chart includes only top 15 responses. A complete listing of responses is included in the appendix.

Unaided: Important Innovations, Field-Specific



Unaided: What is the most important development/innovation in teaching graduate students in your field today? Faculty only (n=318)



- Approximately one-quarter of all faculty surveyed believe that the development of hands-on/practical/applied learning in their respective fields is important.
- Technology-enabled learning was the second-most frequently cited innovation in graduate education.

Note: Chart includes only responses with at least four mentions. A complete listing of responses is included in the appendix.



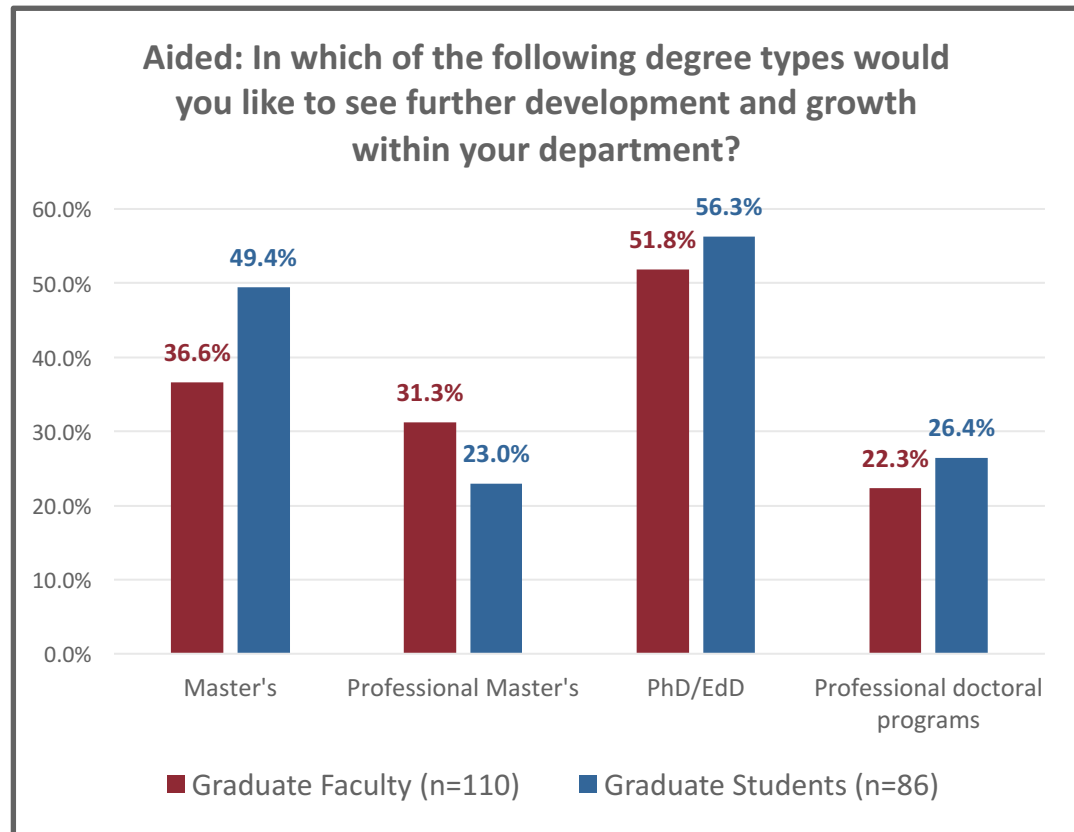
New Programs

Degree Type



Do you believe there is an adequate balance of offerings within your department by degree type (i.e. master's, professional master's, PhD, etc.)?	Graduate Faculty (n=549)	Graduate Students (n=649)
Yes	79.6%	86.6%
No	20.4%	13.4%

- The majority of graduate faculty and graduate students believe that their respective departments maintain a good balance of offerings by degree type.
 - Approximately four out of five faculty members believe that their departments have a good balance of degree offerings.
- Among those who believe that there are opportunities to grow degree offerings within their department, Master's and PhD programs were selected most frequently.
 - Students are more likely than faculty to believe that their departments should develop new master's programs.
 - Faculty are more likely than students to believe that their departments should develop professional master's programs.

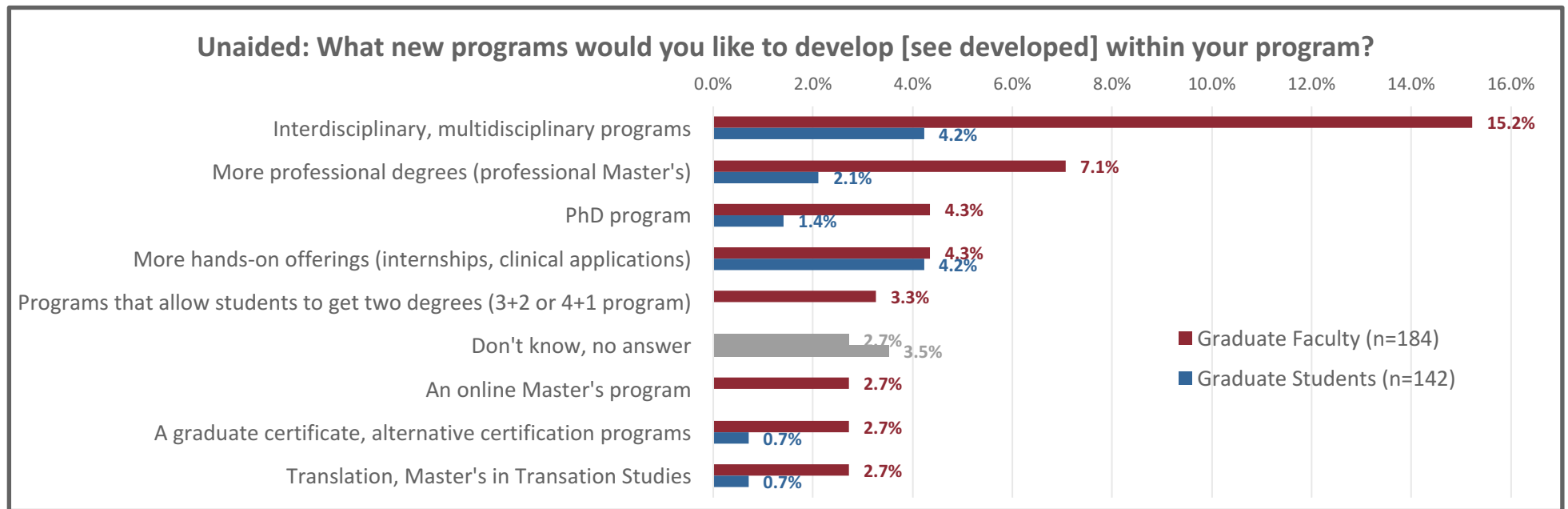


New Programs



Are there new programs that you would like to develop [see developed] within your department?	Graduate Faculty (n=549)	Graduate Students (n=649)
Yes	35.2%	24.5%
No	64.8%	75.5%

- Approximately one-third of faculty and one-quarter of students would like to see new programs developed within their respective departments. The chart below shows the top mentions for the types of new programs that faculty and students would like to see developed. The tables on the following slides show responses by college.
 - Overall, faculty and students would like to develop more interdisciplinary and/or professional offerings.



New Programs



What new programs would you like to develop [see developed] within your department?

	Top Mention #1	Top Mention #2	Top Mention #3	Top Mention #4	Top Mention #5
Agriculture, Food, and Environment	Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary programs	Marriage and Family Therapy (PhD)	Dual degree programs (3+2, 4+1)	Online master's	Agribusiness Management
Arts and Sciences	Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary programs	Translation Studies (Master's)	Professional degrees	Linguistics/Applied Linguistics	Neuroscience (Master's)
Business and Economics	Entrepreneurship or Small Business Ownership	Professional Master's	Business Analytics/Data Science	Human Resources Management (Master's)	Online Master's programs
Communication and Education	Curating, Archival Science, Data Curation	Professional Master's programs	Specialized degrees/concentrations	Hands-on learning (internships)	Professional Master's in Health Communication
Design	Urban Studies/Urban Design (Master's)	Industrial Design	User-Experience Design	Fashion Design	Design Strategy (Master's)
Education	Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary programs	Graduate Certificates for working teachers	Specialized degrees/concentrations	Sports Management/Administration	Counseling Psychology
Engineering	Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary programs	Professional degrees	Computer Engineering (Master's)	Aerospace Engineering (Master's)	Aerospace Engineering (PhD)

- Note: Dentistry was excluded for lack of responses.

New Programs



What new programs would you like to develop [see developed] within your department?					
	Top Mention #1	Top Mention #2	Top Mention #3	Top Mention #4	Top Mention #5
Fine Arts	Music Therapy (PhD)	Don't know, no answer	Graduate Certificate	Arts Administration (PhD)	Jazz Studies (Master's)
Health Sciences*	Occupational Therapy	Audiology (PhD)			
Medicine*	Master's in Teaching (MAT)	Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary programs			
Nursing	Master's in Nursing	CRNA Program			
Pharmacy	Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary programs	Global Health (Master's)	Precision medicine training program		
Public Health	PhD program	Health Behavior (PhD)	Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary programs	Biostatistics (concentration and new Master's)	Health Services Research (Master's)
Social Work	Animal-Assisted Social Work	Clinical Social Work Administration concentration	Online PhD program	Forensic Social Work	Certificates in specialized areas

- Note: Law was excluded for lack of responses.

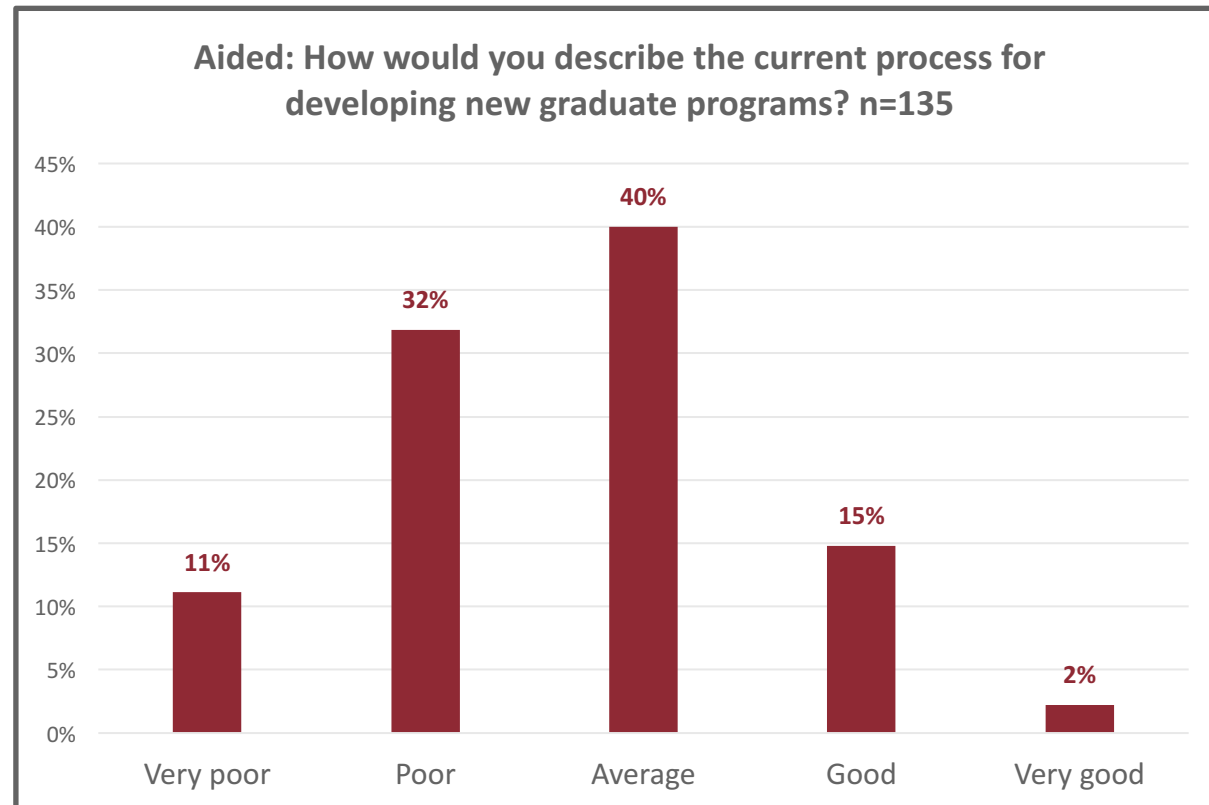
* Only two responses were mentioned by more than one respondent from the College of Health Sciences and College of Medicine. All other responses received one mention and most often related to specific new program ideas (e.g. Toxicology). Full listing is available in the Appendix.

Developing New Programs



- One-quarter of graduate faculty have developed a new program at UK.
- Among those who have developed a new program, only 22% would describe the process as good or very good.
- The plurality (40%) of faculty respondents said that their experience of developing a new program could be described as average while 43% described their experience as either poor or very poor.
 - These results are consistent with qualitative findings from on-campus interviews and discussions, during which several faculty members shared that the process for developing new programs was long, arduous, and/or confusing.

Have you developed a new program at UK?	Graduate Faculty (n=549)
Yes	24.6%
No	75.4%



Developing New Programs



- Among the faculty members who provided responses, half state that the process for developing new academic programs at UK would be improved by making the process more efficient.
 - Other responses shed light on the ways in which the process may become more efficient. For instance, 10.5% of respondents believe they would have benefitted from more direction throughout the process. Verbatim responses indicate that faculty would like more direction from the administration and/or the Graduate School when developing new programs.

- At the same time, the most frequently mentioned positive attribute of the current process is the university's support for new programs.

- From this, we can infer that faculty sense that they are encouraged and supported to develop new programs but may not feel that they have the direction and guidance necessary to put their plans in place.
 - In other words, faculty may feel that they have theoretical support but not logistical support.

What would improve the process for developing new graduate programs at UK? (n=95)			What works well about the current process for developing new graduate programs at UK? (n=17)		
Response	Count	%	Response	Count	%
Less bureaucracy, a more nimble and efficient process	48	50.5%	University support	7	41.2%
Compressed timetable	23	24.2%	Curriculog	5	29.4%
More financial support for new programs	14	14.7%	Review process	2	11.8%
More help navigating the process	10	10.5%	Collaboration between departments	1	5.9%
Proper oversight of duplication of content	7	7.4%	Curriculum design process	1	5.9%
More support for interdisciplinary efforts	6	6.3%	Don't know, no answer	1	5.9%
More openness to change	5	5.3%			
Don't know, no answer	3	3.2%			
Improve the incentive structure	3	3.2%			
Decisions should be made at department level	3	3.2%			

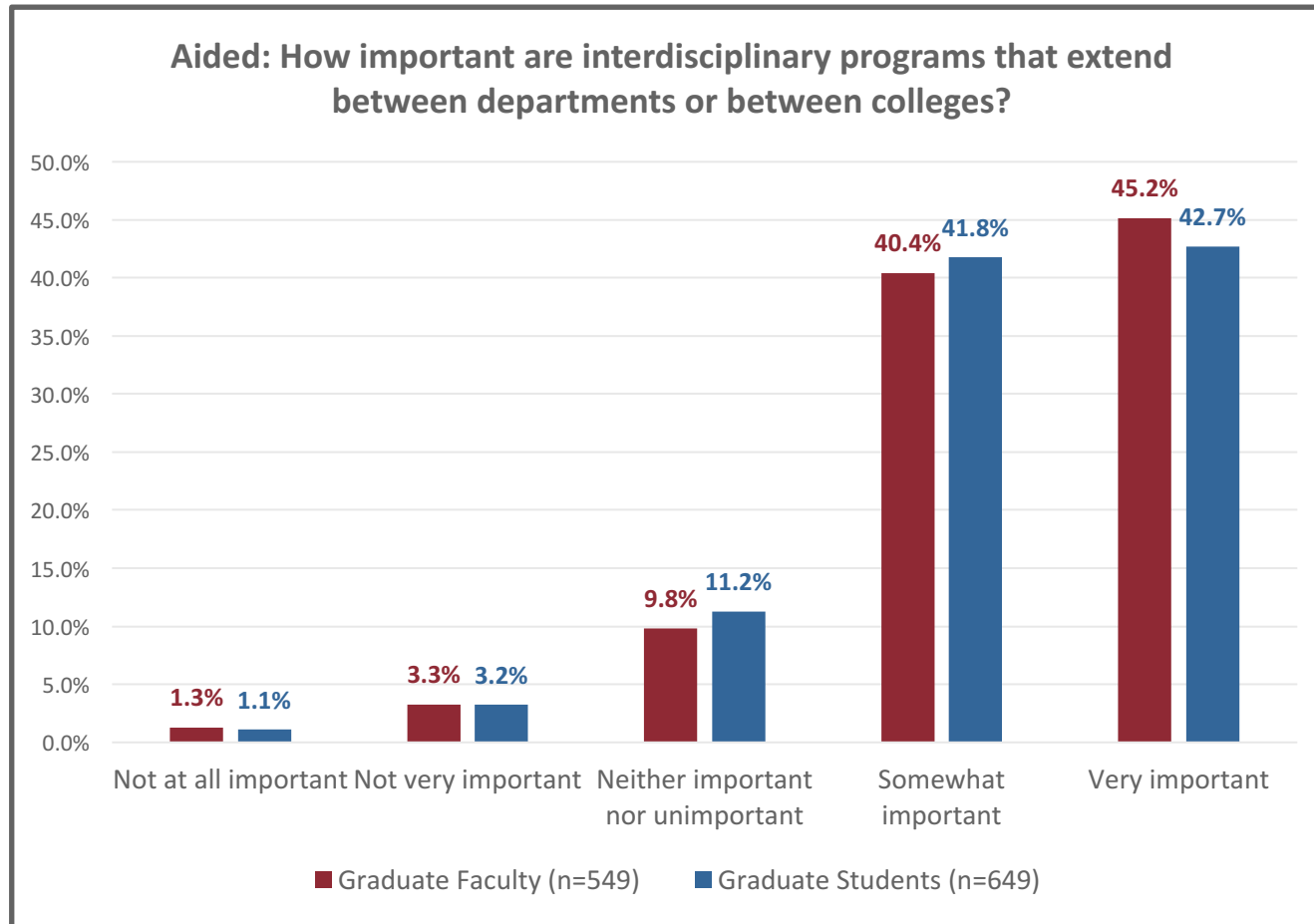


Interdisciplinary Learning

Perceived Importance of Interdisciplinary Programs



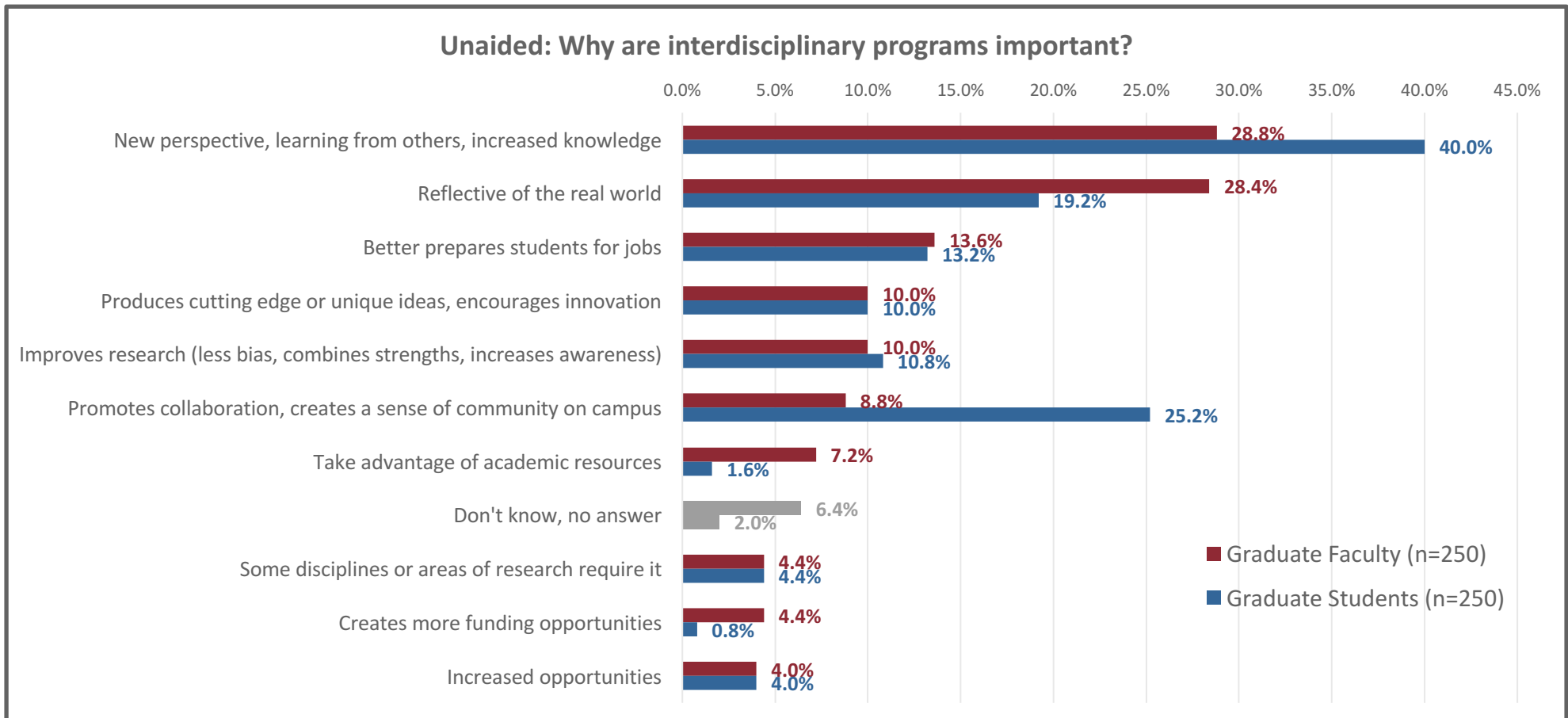
- Both faculty and students believe that interdisciplinary programs are important in graduate education.
 - Approximately 85% of both faculty and students stated that they believe that interdisciplinary programs are either somewhat important or very important.



Perceived Importance of Interdisciplinary Programs



- Faculty and students are largely in agreement on why they believe interdisciplinary programs are important.
 - Students were more likely to state that interdisciplinary programs are important because it facilitates learning from others and contributes to a sense of community, while faculty, drawing on experience, are more likely to believe interdisciplinarity is important because it is more reflective of the real world.



Desired Interdisciplinary Programs



- The table below includes top mentions, segmented by respondents' respective colleges (with the exception of dentistry and law due to low responses). Most responses mentioned the specific college with which the respondent would like to collaborate. Verbatim responses with specific interdisciplinary program titles are included in the appendix.

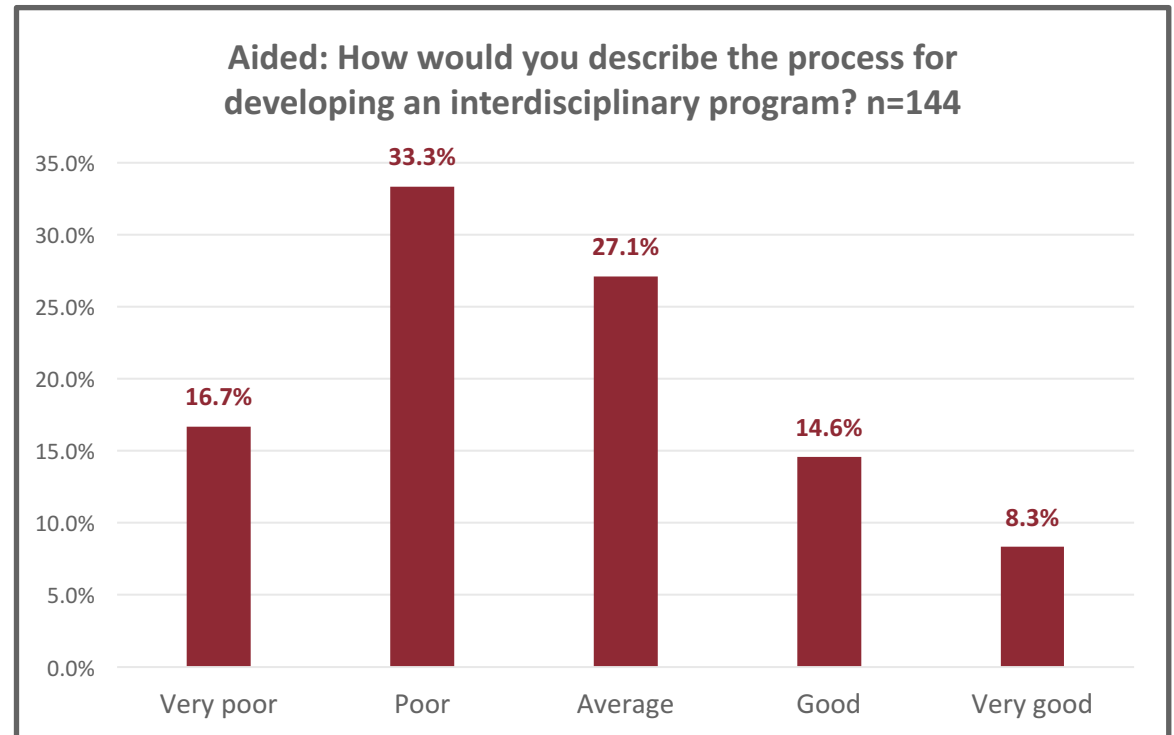
What interdisciplinary programs would you like to see offered in conjunction with your department?					
	Top Mention #1	Top Mention #2	Top Mention #3	Top Mention #4	Top Mention #5
Agriculture, Food, and Environment	Don't know, no answer	Business	Plant pathology, plant science	Biology	Psychology
Arts and Sciences	Don't know, no answer	Biology	Psychology	Computer science	Anthropology
Business and Economics	Don't know, no answer	Business	Computer science	Statistics, applied statistics	Bilingual programs
Communication and Education	Don't know, no answer	Health communication	Business	Humanities	Agriculture
Design	Don't know, no answer	Design	Product design	Planning	Interior architecture
Education	Teaching	Don't know, no answer	Business	Medical sciences	Economics
Engineering	Don't know, no answer	Computer science	Business	History	English
Fine Arts	Don't know, no answer	Regional studies	Arts leadership	Business	History
Health Sciences	Don't know, no answer	Physical therapy	Education	Medical Sciences	Computer science
Medicine	Don't know, no answer	Neuroscience	Engineering	Education	Pharmacy
Nursing	Don't know, no answer	Engineering	Clinical development	Public health	Health services
Pharmacy	Don't know, no answer	Engineering	Neuroscience	English	Data science
Public Health	Don't know, no answer	Health services	Social work	Engineering	Data science
Social Work	Don't know, no answer	Medical sciences	Law	Public health	Nursing

Developing Interdisciplinary Programs



- Slightly more than one-quarter of graduate faculty have developed, or tried to develop, an interdisciplinary program at UK.
- Among the faculty who indicated they have experience with developing an interdisciplinary program, 22.9% describe the process as good or very good.
- Half (50%) of faculty shared that their experience with developing an interdisciplinary program was either poor or very poor.

Have you developed, or tried to develop, an interdisciplinary program at UK?	Graduate Faculty (n=549)
Yes	26.2%
No	73.8%



Developing Interdisciplinary Programs



- Faculty believe that there should be a better process for developing interdisciplinary programs at UK.
 - More specifically, faculty perceive the current process as rigid and inefficient. Moreover, they believe that faculty should receive more guidance and navigation throughout the process of developing a new interdisciplinary program.
 - Further, faculty perceive ambiguity concerning which department owns the new interdisciplinary program and is therefore responsible for

its funding and future development. Associated with this topic of ownership of the new program, faculty believe that there ought to be greater clarity of how funding is allocated for new programs and question whether the incentive structure is adequate to motivate faculty to develop interdisciplinary programs.

- When it comes to what works well about the process, more than half of faculty believe that collaboration between departments is strong.

What would improve the process for developing interdisciplinary programs at UK? (n=92)			What works well about the current process for developing interdisciplinary programs at UK? (n=17)		
Response	Count	%	Response	Count	%
More institutional support, help navigating the process	20	21.7%	Collaboration between faculty	9	52.9%
More nimble process, clearer process, more efficient process	16	17.4%	Recognition of value of interdisciplinary programs	3	17.6%
Address issues of which department gets credit and is in control	16	17.4%	Administrative support	2	11.8%
Allocation of money and faculty to accommodate new programs	14	15.2%	Curriculum	1	5.9%
Improve the incentive structure	10	10.9%	Sharing responsibilities for development	1	5.9%
Don't know, no answer	7	7.6%	Using industry leaders as a guide	1	5.9%
Better communication between colleges, more collaboration	7	7.6%			
Compressed timetable	4	4.3%			
An atmosphere that isn't resistant to change, more cooperation	4	4.3%			
Remove the graduate school from the process	3	3.3%			



Transferable Skills

Importance of Transferable Skills



Aided: How important is each of the following skills as a learning outcome for graduate students? Scale: 1=Not at all important; 5=Very important <i>Displayed in descending order by overall mean</i>	Graduate Faculty		Graduate Students	
	Mean	% Very Important	Mean	% Very Important
Creative thinking	4.81	83.7%	4.64	70.3%
Attention to detail	4.71	74.9%	4.65	70.9%
Presentation skills to a range of audiences	4.71	74.1%	4.63	69.4%
Time management	4.62	70.0%	4.69	76.5%
Organizational skills	4.58	64.7%	4.61	69.5%
Building effective relationships	4.46	57.1%	4.62	69.6%
Team work/collaboration	4.49	60.6%	4.53	64.4%
Project management	4.37	52.2%	4.58	66.1%
Communication of research to novice or public audiences	4.43	53.0%	4.52	64.2%
Leadership	4.13	34.8%	4.38	52.2%
Mentoring and motivating peers	4.13	36.6%	4.31	46.9%

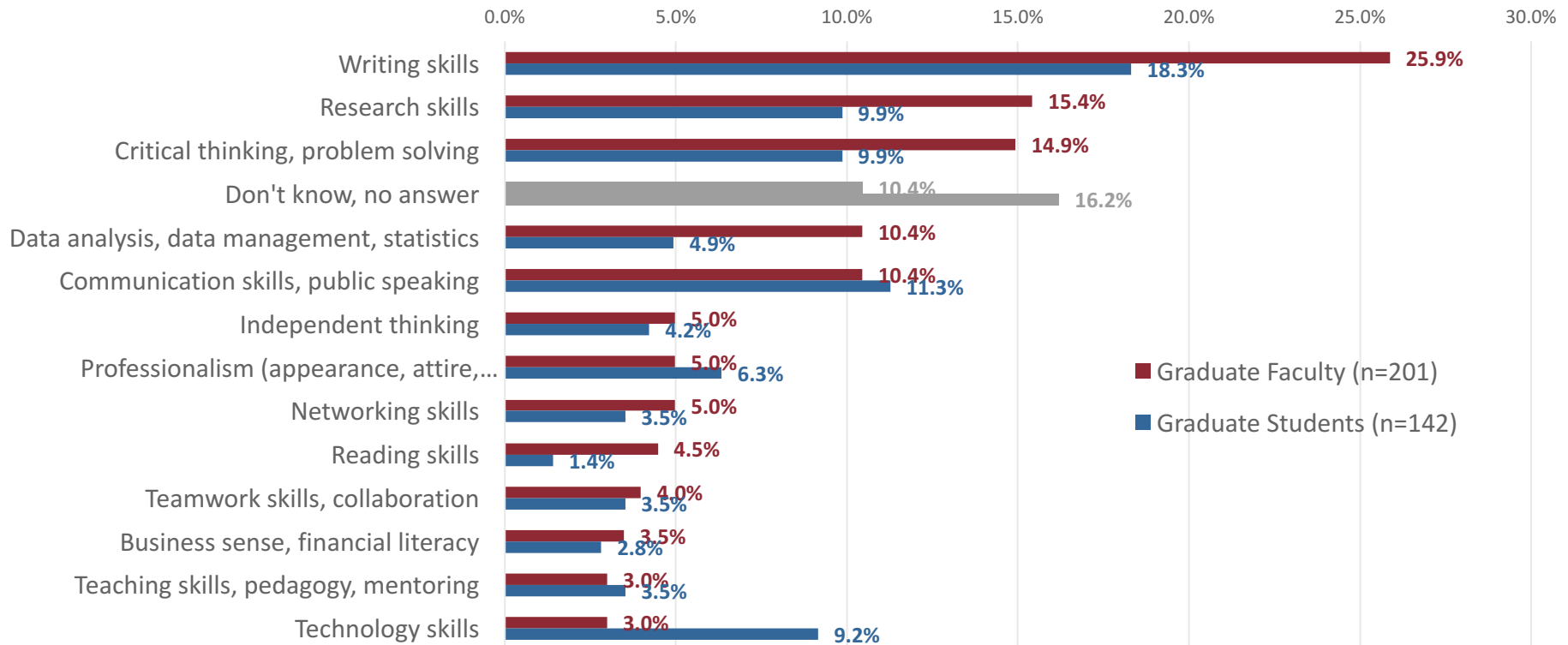
Blue highlighting indicates statistically significant differences between faculty and students, with higher values indicated in highlighting.

- Faculty and students agree that all 11 skills are important for graduate students. All options received a mean score of at least 4.0 (somewhat important).
- Graduate students are slightly more likely than graduate faculty to perceive some skills as very important. For instance, communication, leadership, and mentoring/motivating peers received higher importance ratings from students than from faculty (with differences being statistically significant at a 0.95 significance level).

Importance of Transferable Skills



Unaided: What other transferable skills are important for graduate students?



- Writing, research, and critical thinking skills were the most frequently mentioned skills that faculty believe are important for graduate students. Students themselves indicate that writing, communication, research, and critical thinking skills are important, but less so than faculty (for all except communication skills). Interestingly, students are more likely than faculty to perceive technology skills as important for graduate students.

UK's Development of Transferable Skills



Aided: How do the graduate students in your department perform on these transferable skills by the time they complete their graduate studies? Scale: 1=Not at all well; 5=Very well <i>Displayed in descending order by overall mean</i>	Graduate Faculty		Graduate Students	
	Mean	% Very Well	Mean	% Very Well
Team work/collaboration	3.70	19.5%	3.76	25.1%
Presentation skills to a range of audiences	3.76	21.8%	3.70	20.1%
Attention to detail	3.60	15.1%	3.80	22.5%
Creative thinking	3.60	18.0%	3.77	23.0%
Building effective relationships	3.63	15.2%	3.69	22.1%
Organizational skills	3.57	13.1%	3.72	18.3%
Time management	3.48	11.6%	3.64	19.3%
Communication of research to novice or public audiences	3.55	16.2%	3.57	18.6%
Project management	3.44	10.7%	3.63	17.7%
Leadership	3.43	9.5%	3.55	13.5%
Mentoring and motivating peers	3.42	10.0%	3.52	18.8%

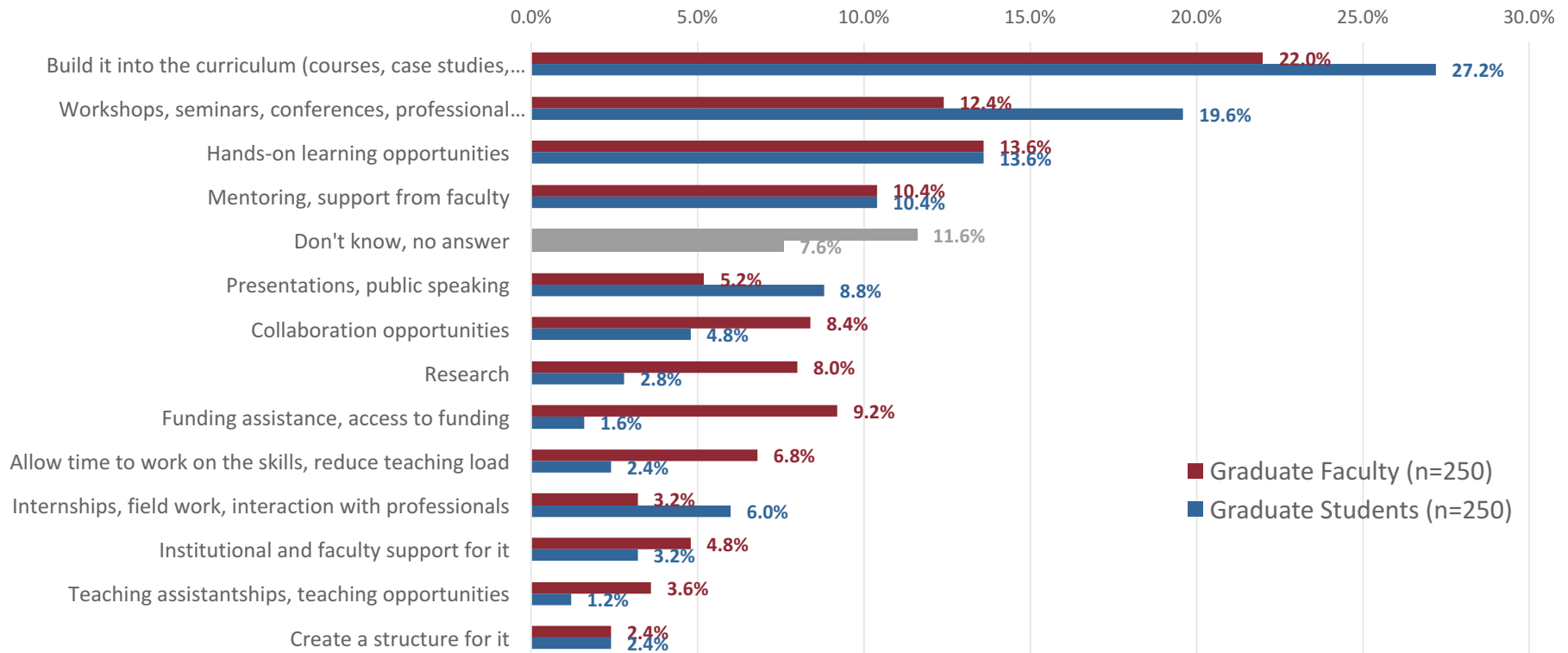
Blue highlighting indicates statistically significant differences between faculty and students, with higher values indicated in highlighting.

- Collectively, the data suggest that faculty and students believe that graduate students are prepared moderately well with these transferable skills. With a range of 0.38 across all mean ratings, the findings show that UK graduate students are prepared at similar levels on all of these skills, with no particularly deficient or superior area.
- Students are more likely than faculty to believe that graduate students at UK are prepared with these skills, as indicated by the statistically significant differences in mean ratings and the proportion of respondents selecting very well for some skills.

UK's Development of Transferable Skills

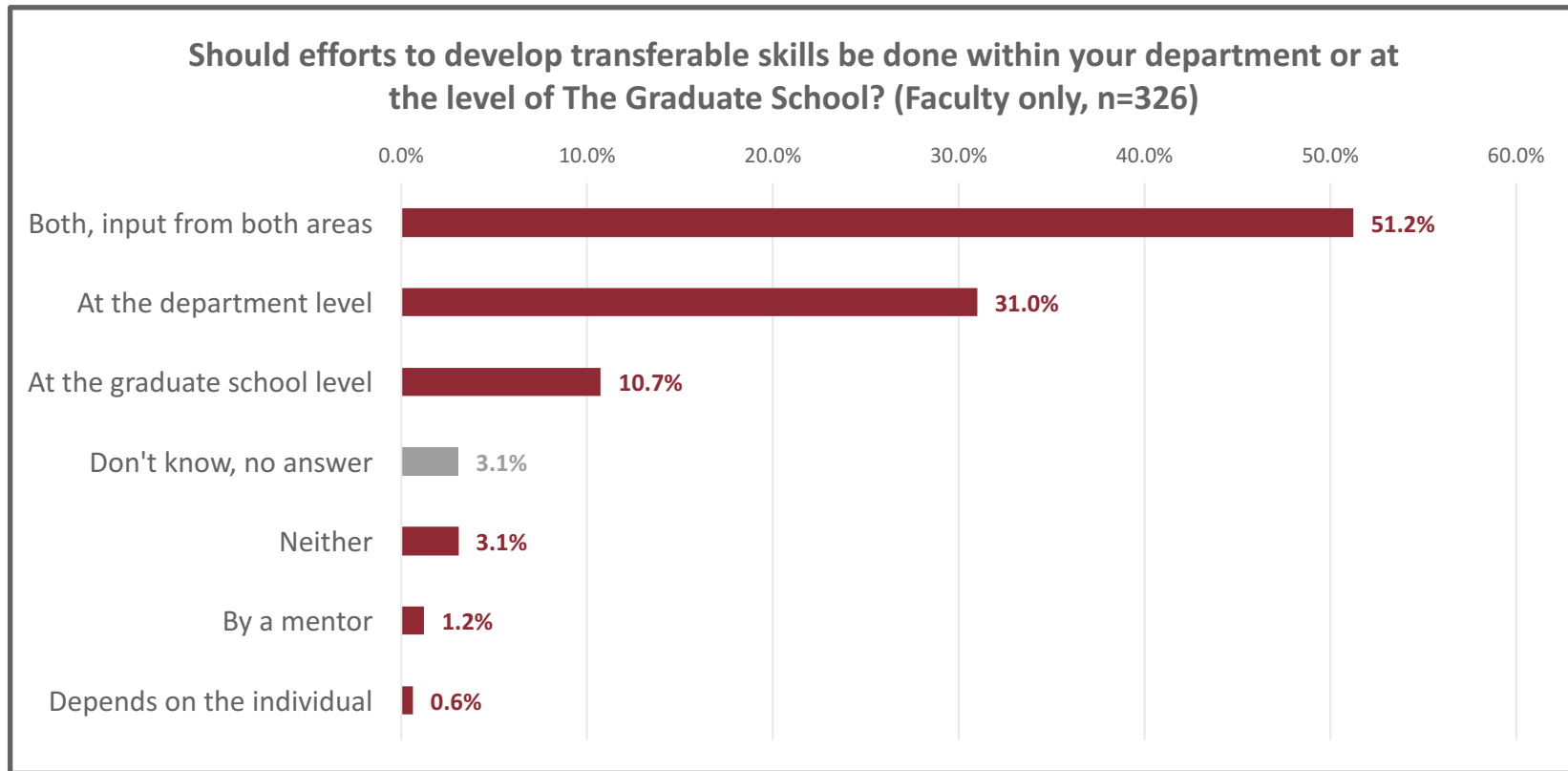


Unaided: What would help develop transferable skills for graduate students?



- Faculty and students agree that one of the most effective ways to develop transferable skills among graduate students is to weave them into the curriculum through courses, case studies, and projects that necessitate skills such as communication, teamwork, writing, etc. Additionally, more workshops, seminars, conferences, and professional-development opportunities would be helpful in building these skills and/or showing graduate students how to articulate the value of their experiences.

UK's Development of Transferable Skills

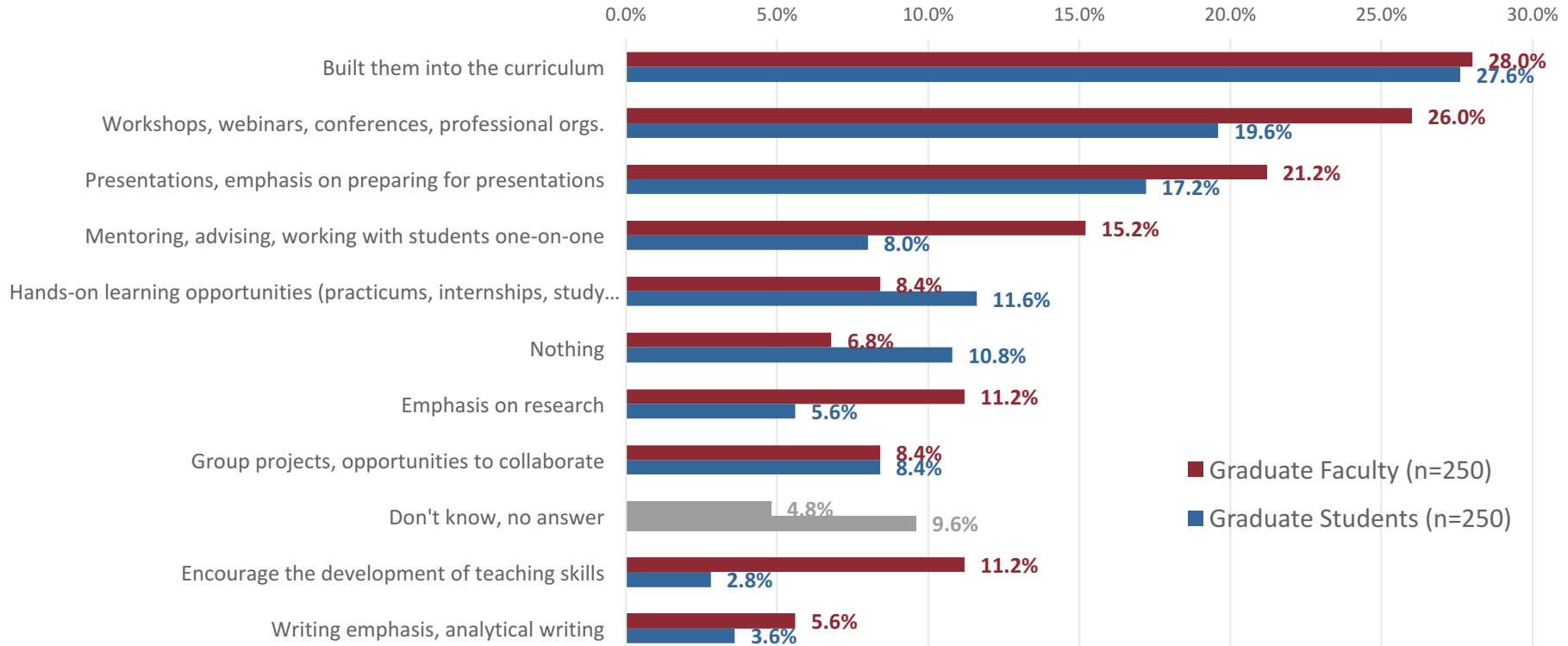


- Slightly more than half of faculty who responded to this question believe that developing transferable skills should be done by both the department and the Graduate School.
- One-third of faculty respondents believe that transferable skills should be developed within the department. This is likely due to the differences in necessary transferable skills between departments.

UK's Development of Transferable Skills



What has your department done to successfully prepare graduate students with these transferable skills?

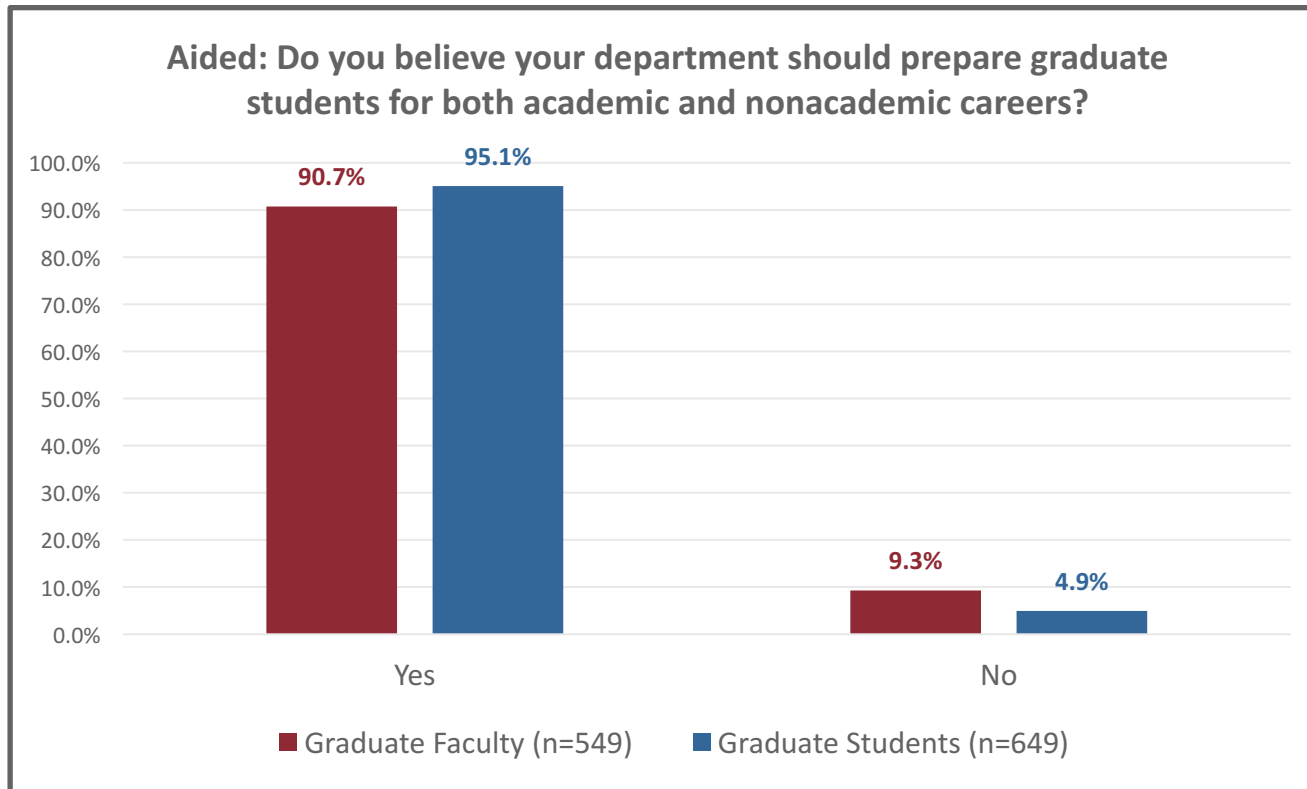


- Graduate students have been prepared with transferable skills through curricula that intentionally develop these skills, attending professional-development opportunities, and leading presentations of research findings. Additional means of preparing students with these skills include mentoring/advising and experiential learning. Faculty also believe that placing an emphasis on research and also developing graduate students as teachers have provided students with preparation in these transferable skills.



Graduate Student Outcomes

Desired Outcomes

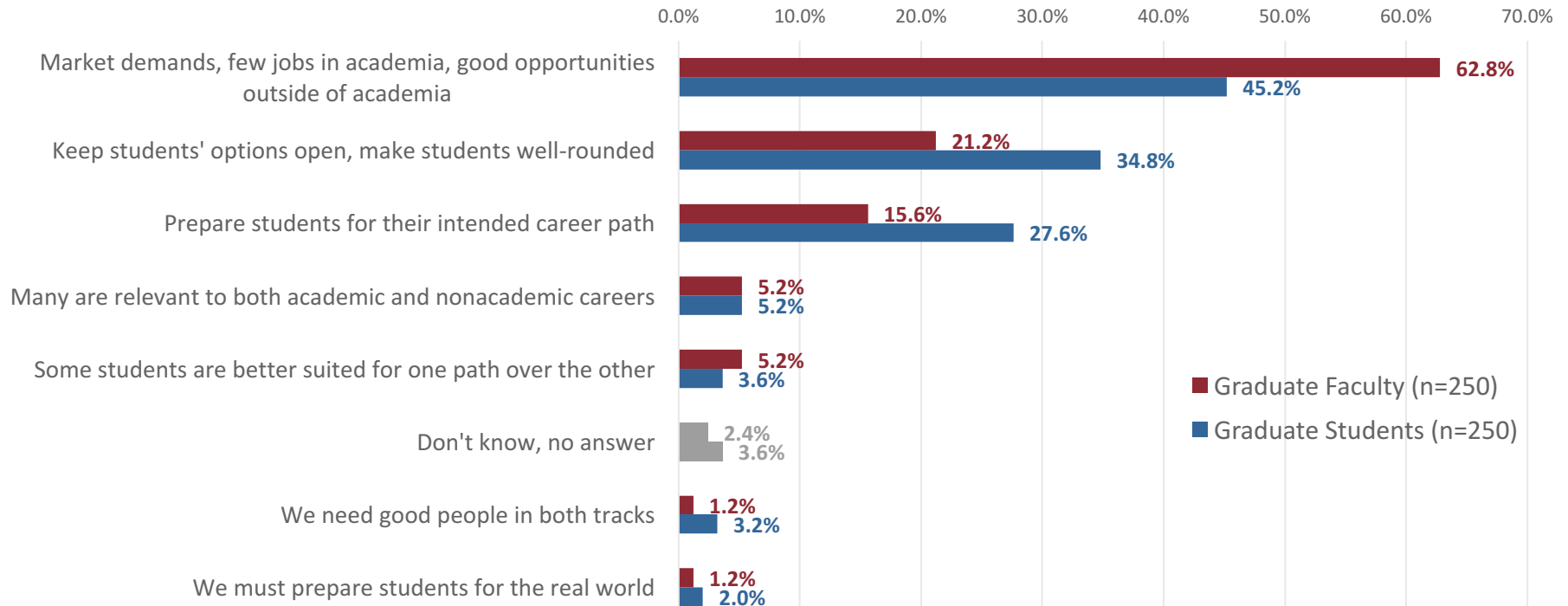


- A substantial majority of both faculty and students agree that their departments should prepare graduate students for both academic and nonacademic careers.
- As expected, graduate students are slightly more likely than faculty to believe that students should be prepared for both professional paths.

Desired Outcomes



Unaided: Why is it important to prepare graduate students for academic and nonacademic careers?

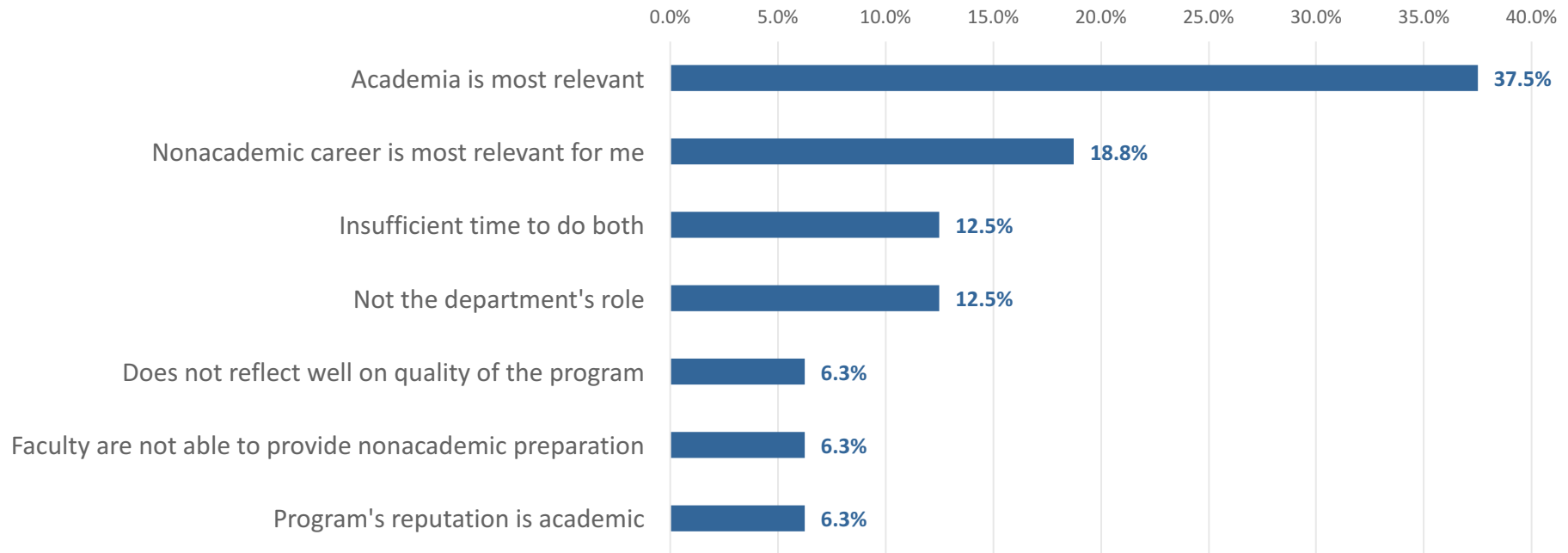


- The desire to prepare students for academic and nonacademic careers stems from ensuring that graduate students are successful upon completion of their studies at UK. Faculty and students alike recognize that preparing graduate students for nonacademic careers is a market reality based on slow job growth within academia and demand for professionals with graduate degrees in fields outside of academia.

Desired Outcomes

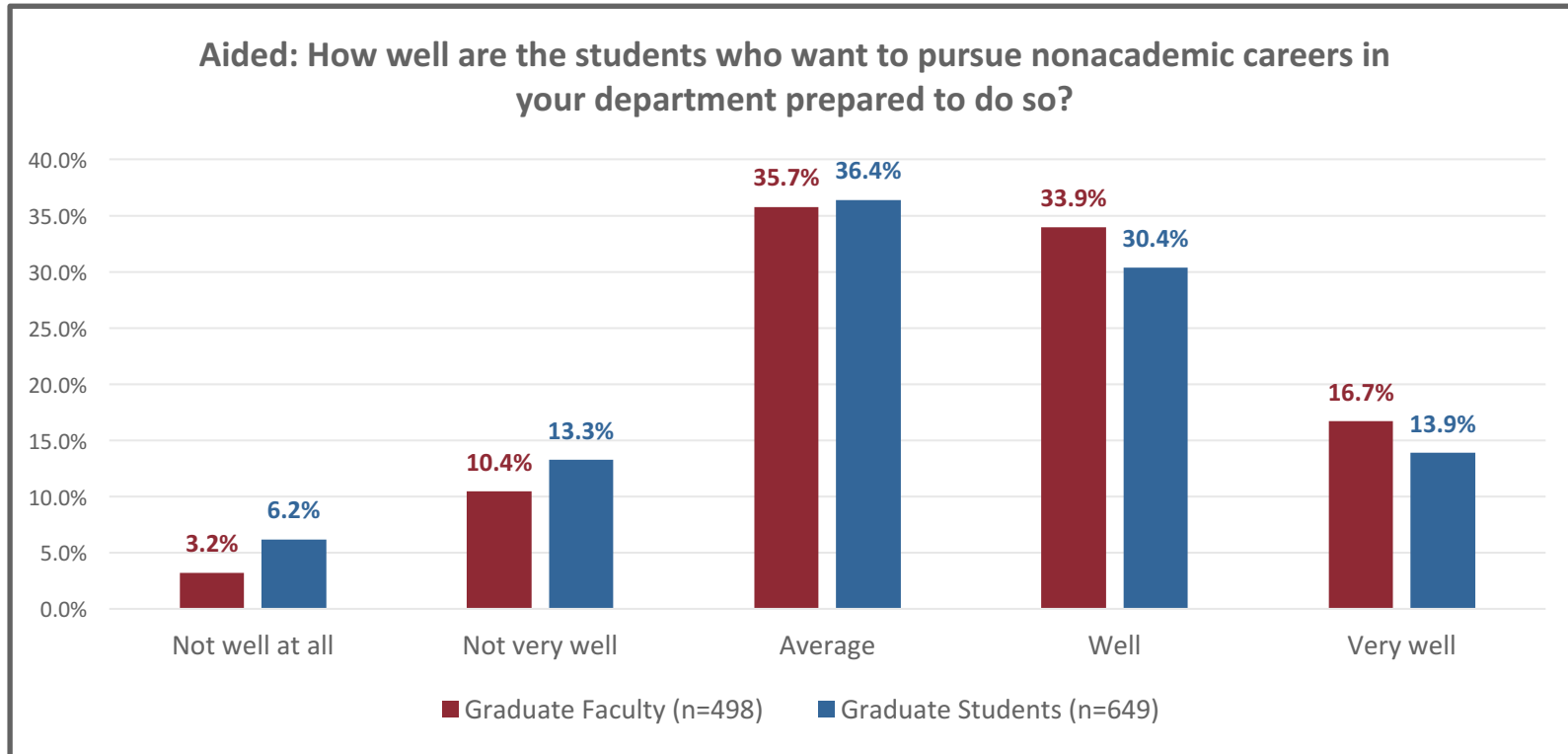


Unaided: Why should your department NOT prepare graduate students for both academic and nonacademic careers? (Students only, n=15)



- More than one-third of graduate students who do not believe it is important to prepare students both for academic and nonacademic careers believe that academia is the most likely and most preferred outcome for graduate students. An additional 18.8% of respondents stated the opposite and shared that a nonacademic career is most relevant for them and their course of study.
- Among the minority of graduate students who believe that their department should not prepare students for both academic and nonacademic careers, one's perspective is highly dependent on his or her course of study and intended career path.

Desired Outcomes

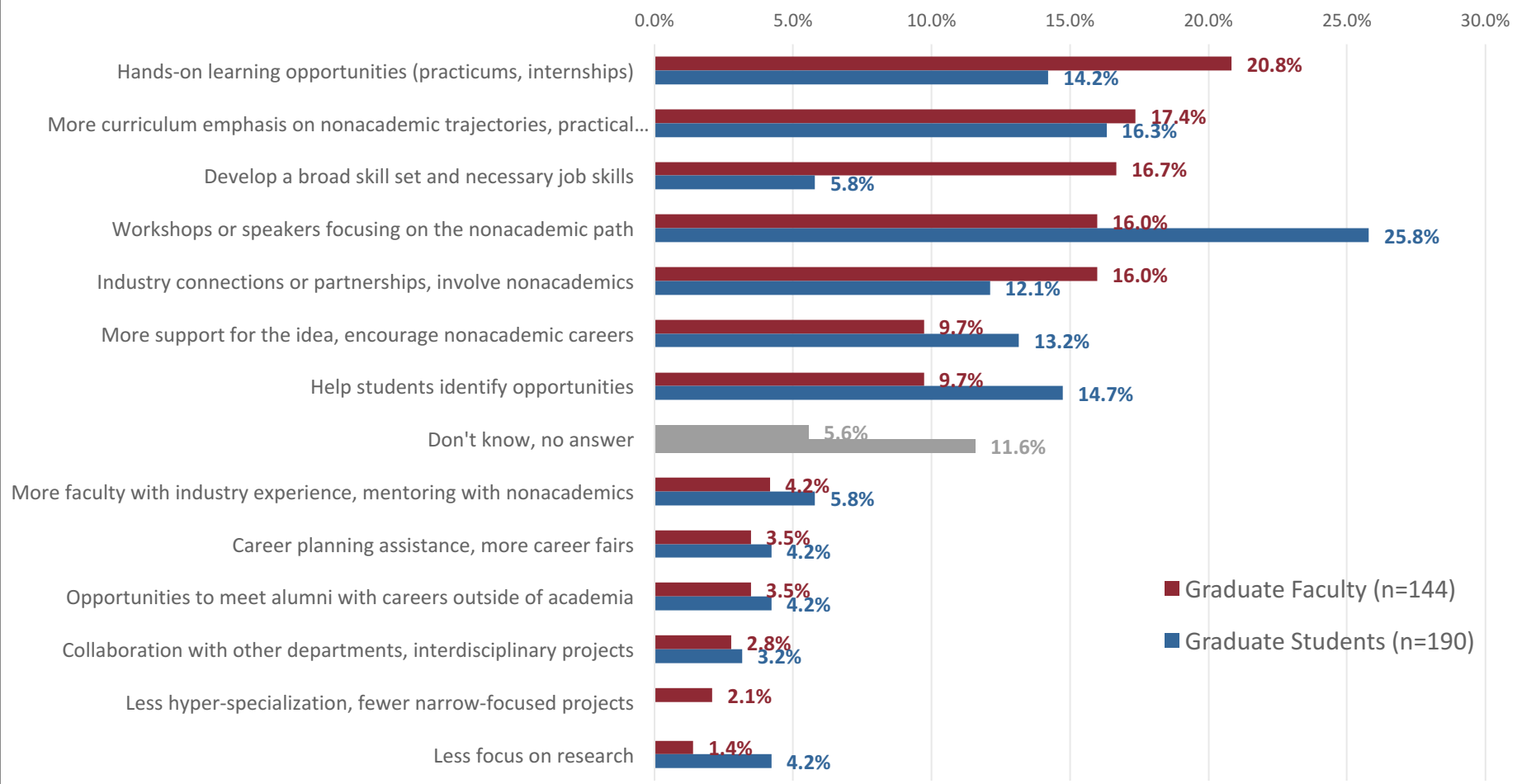


- Half of graduate faculty and 44% of graduate students believe that their departments prepare students well or very well for nonacademic careers.
 - Overall, faculty are slightly more likely than students to believe that their department prepares students well for nonacademic careers. Conversely, students are slightly more likely than faculty to believe that they are not prepared well.

Desired Outcomes



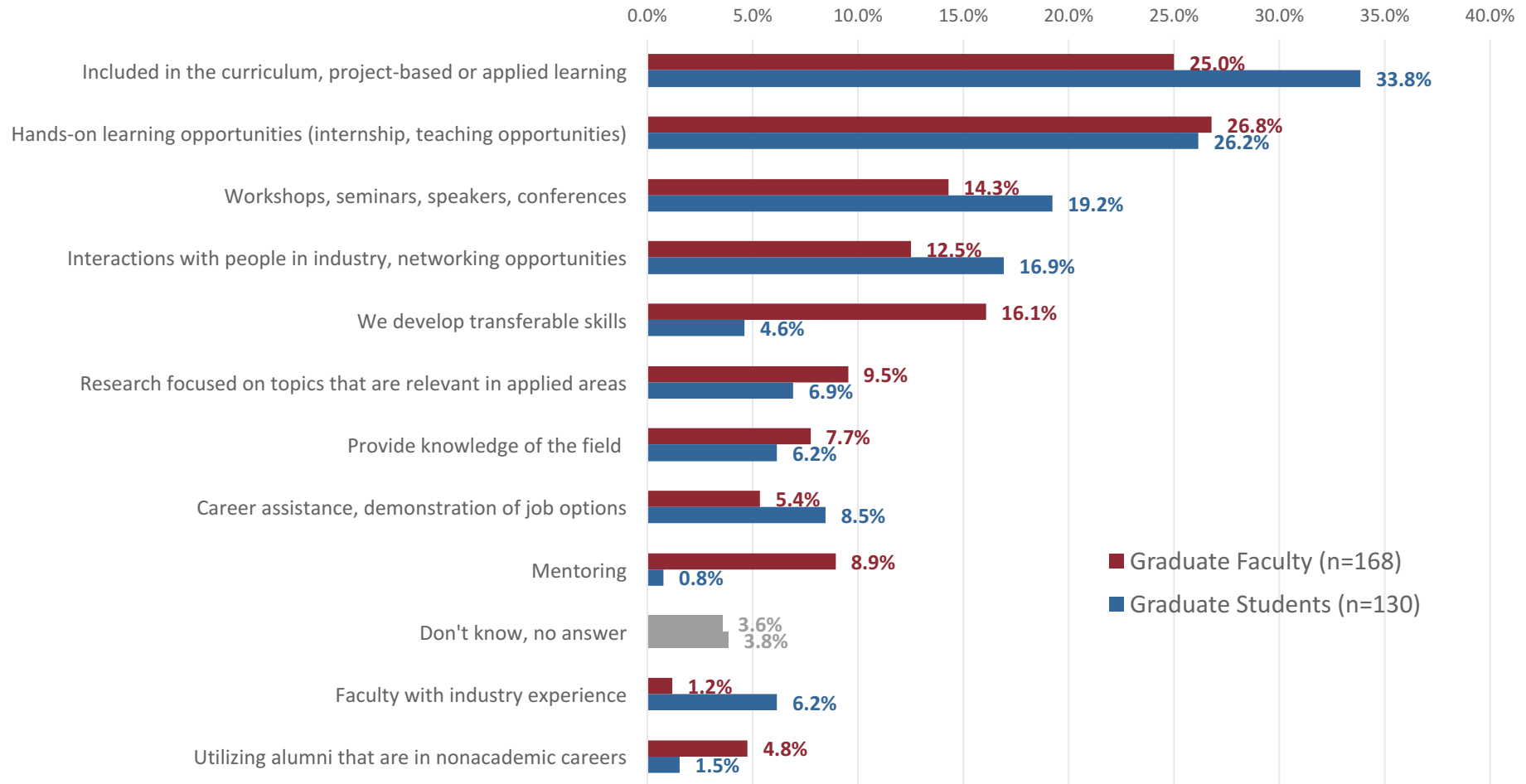
Unaided: How could your department better prepare graduate students who intend to pursue nonacademic careers?



Desired Outcomes



Unaided: What has your department done to successfully prepare graduate students for nonacademic careers?



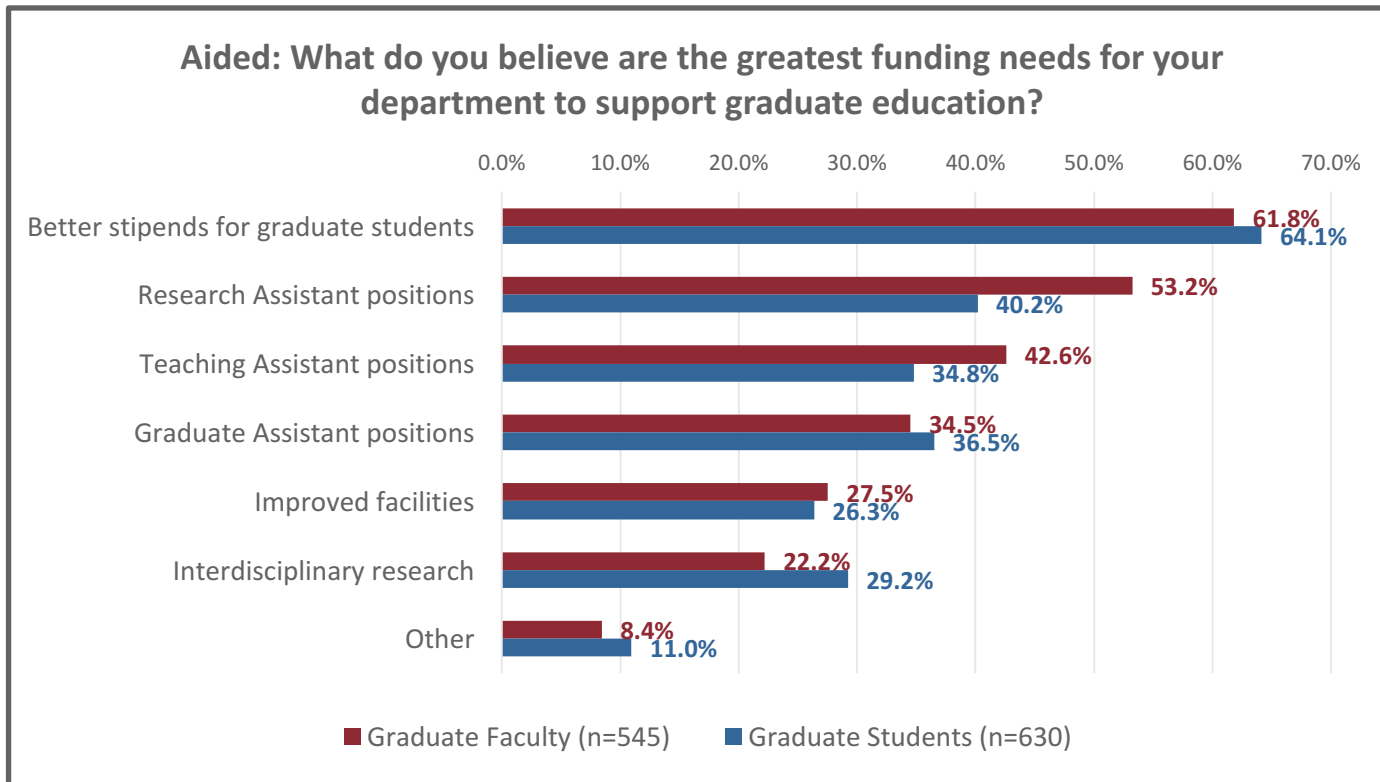
Desired Outcomes



- Faculty and students agree that one of the most successful tactics for preparing graduate students for nonacademic careers is to integrate methods of preparing students for these alternate career paths with the program's curriculum.
 - This may be accomplished via course content and discussions, practical/experiential learning, case studies, research, or other cocurricular learning opportunities.
 - Hands-on learning opportunities were frequently cited as one of the ways that students can gain exposure to non-academic career paths while also gaining some valuable professional/applied experience.
- Additionally, faculty and students have found it successful to use workshops, seminars, and guest speakers to introduce students to nonacademic careers and network with professionals outside of academia.
- As expected, some respondents specified a desire for a cultural/attitudinal shift regarding nonacademic careers. Some still feel that nonacademic careers are looked down upon or discouraged and would like to see more support for students who decide to pursue careers outside of the academic realm.



Funding Needs

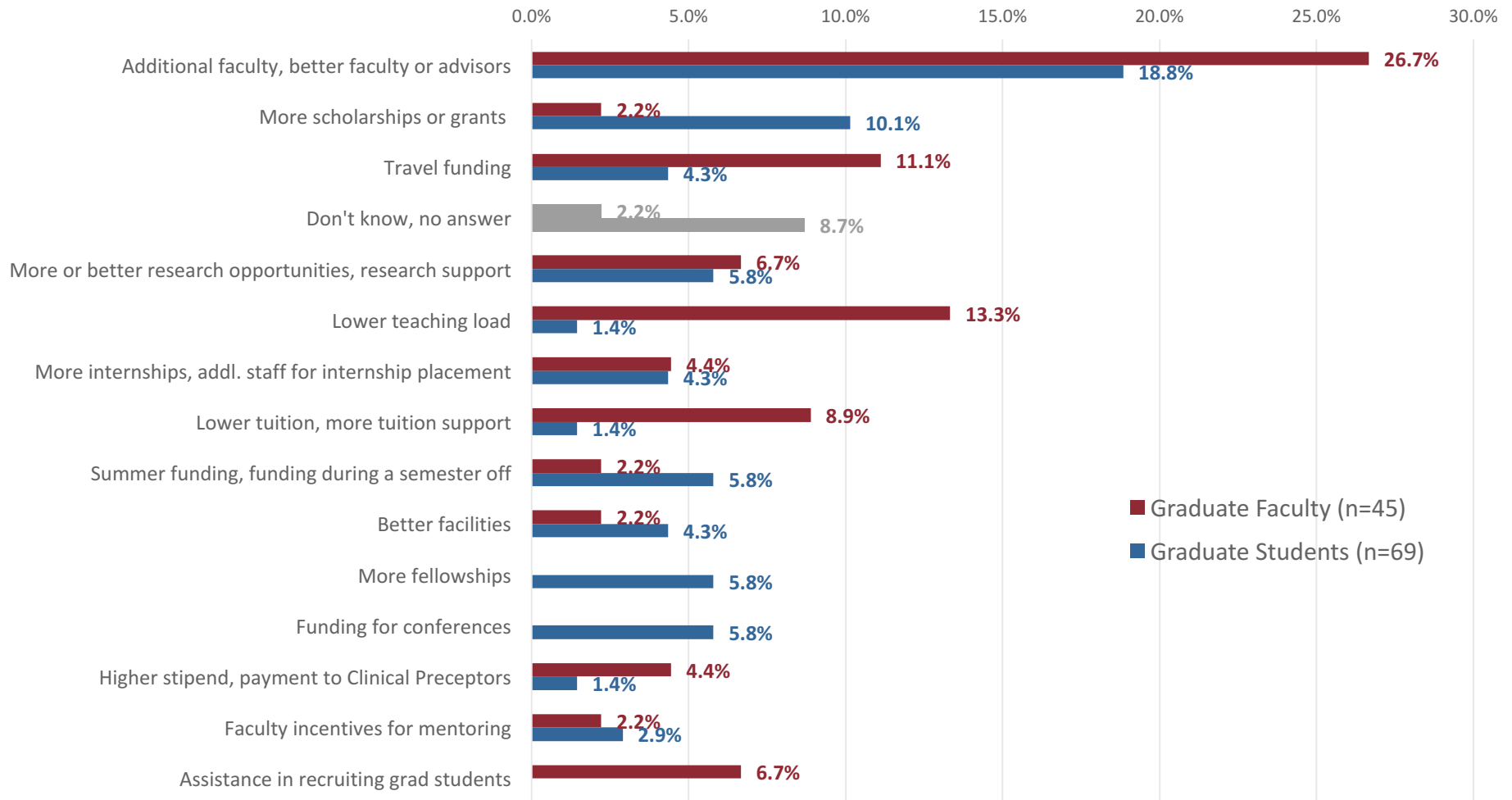


- Graduate faculty and graduate students agree that better stipends for graduate students is the greatest funding need.
- Additionally, more research, teaching, and graduate assistant positions are perceived as being important funding needs.
 - Faculty are more likely than students to believe that there is a need for more research assistant and teaching assistant positions.

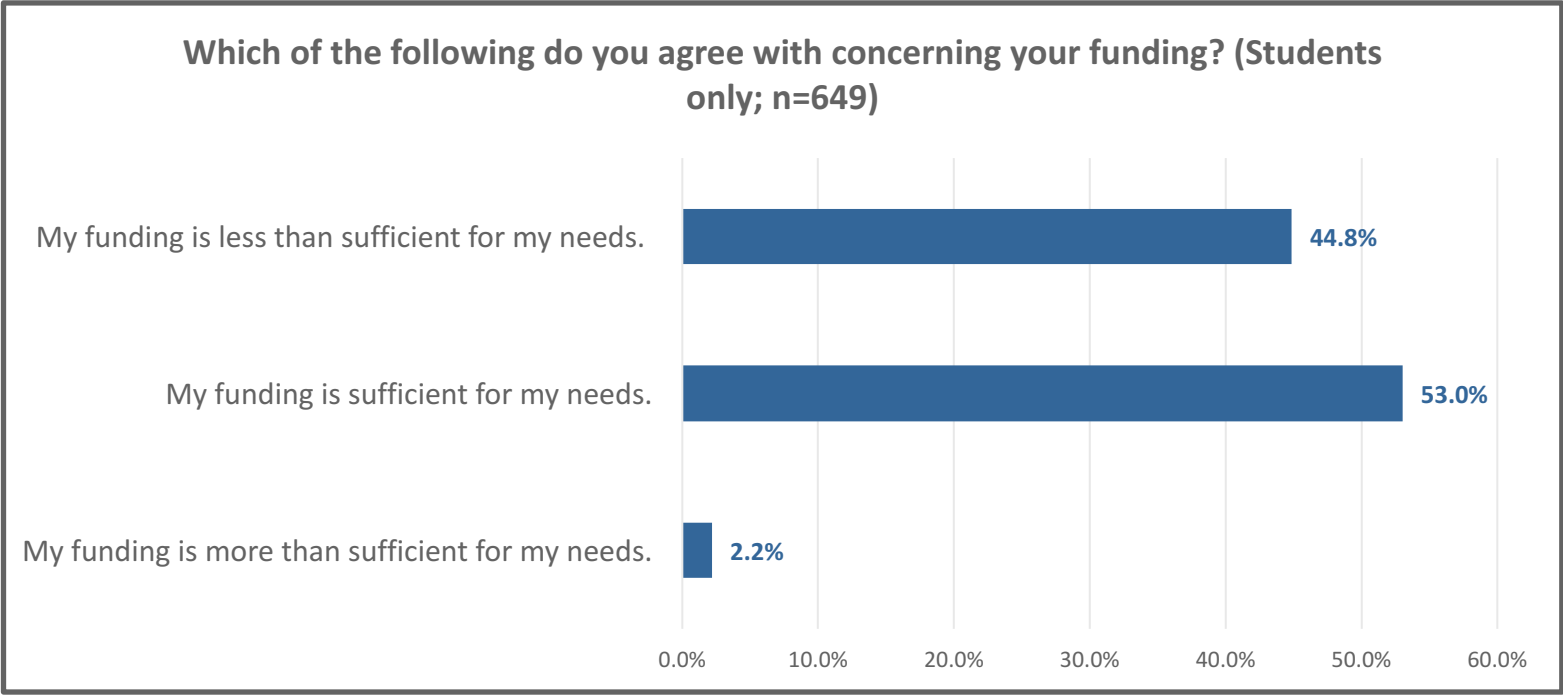
Funding Needs



Written-In Responses for "Other" Funding Needs

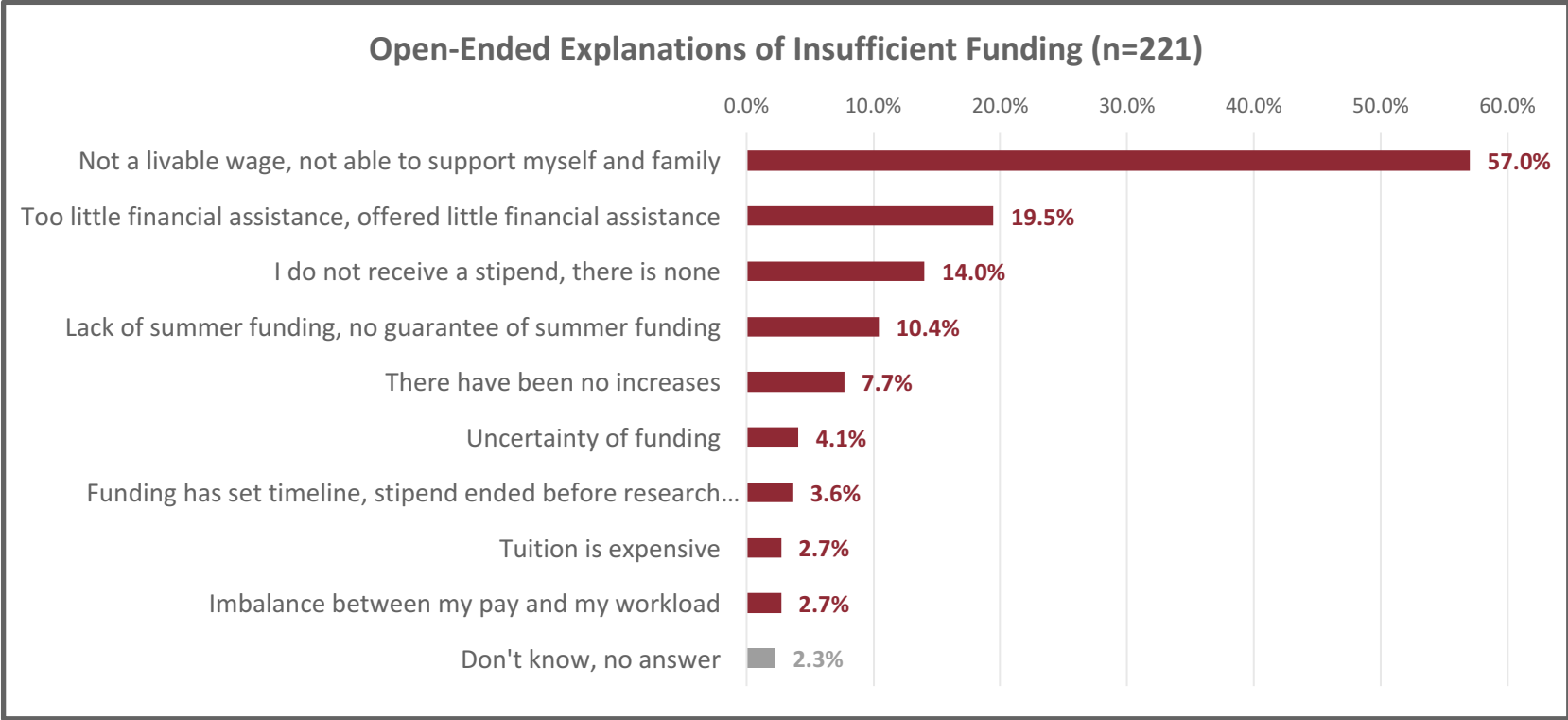


Graduate Student Funding



- A slight majority of graduate students (53%) believe that their funding is sufficient for their needs, while 44.8% believe that their funding is insufficient.
 - The College of Communication and Information has the highest proportion of students who feel their funding is insufficient for their needs (57%). The Colleges of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Engineering have the highest proportions of students who believe that their funding is sufficient for their needs (82%, 70%, and 65%, respectively). In contrast, only 41%, 42%, and 47% of students in the Colleges of Communication and Information, Arts & Sciences, and Education, respectively, believe that their funding is sufficient.

Graduate Student Funding



- More than half (57%) of respondents who indicated that their funding is insufficient for their needs explained their choice by sharing that their stipends do not provide a livable wage and that they are not able to support themselves and/or their families.
- These responses are consistent with findings throughout the report, which show that both faculty and students perceive a need for more funding for graduate students at UK.



Graduate Student Education and the Graduate Student Experience at UK

Factors of Graduate Education



Aided: Regarding <i>the entire university</i> , indicate the importance of the following characteristics in effectively delivering graduate education. Scale: 1=Not at all important; 5=Very important <i>Displayed in descending order by overall mean</i>	Graduate Faculty		Graduate Students	
	Mean	% Very Important	Mean	% Very Important
Quality of faculty as mentors	4.78	81%	4.75	80%
Ensuring sufficient financial support for students	4.76	80%	4.69	78%
Opportunities for students to conduct research	4.81	83%	4.55	66%
Training of faculty to be effective mentors for graduate students	4.29	48%	4.58	68%
Preparing students for alternative-academic or non-academic careers	4.31	50%	4.48	61%
Quality of academic facilities such as classrooms, labs, computer resources, etc.	4.32	47%	4.30	48%
Preparing students for careers in academia	4.35	48%	4.27	47%
Opportunities for interdisciplinary research	4.26	46%	4.31	47%
Development of nontechnical skills (e.g., leadership and communication)	4.16	40%	4.40	54%
Ensuring balanced student work load	4.02	34%	4.42	58%
Opportunities to develop skills in grant writing and obtaining funding			4.41	55%

Blue highlighting indicates statistically significant differences between faculty and students, with higher values indicated in highlighting.

- The table above includes the top 11 factors by overall mean importance score (the following slide includes the other 11 factors).
- Faculty believe that three factors are supremely important above others: quality of faculty as mentors, ensuring financial support for students, and opportunities for students to conduct research. Students are more likely than faculty to consider factors beyond these three to be important. Students believe that preparation for nonacademic careers, development of nontechnical skills, and balancing students' workloads are important parts of graduate education.

Factors of Graduate Education



Aided: Regarding <i>the entire university</i> , indicate the importance of the following characteristics in effectively delivering graduate education. Scale: 1=Not at all important; 5=Very important <i>Displayed in descending order by overall mean</i>	Graduate Faculty		Graduate Students	
	Mean	% Very Important	Mean	% Very Important
Availability of experiential learning opportunities aside from research (e.g., internships/externships)	3.99	35%	4.37	54%
Diversity of graduate faculty	4.25	48%	4.14	47%
Diversity of the student body	4.25	48%	4.10	45%
Opportunities for students to enroll in courses outside of their primary discipline	4.07	37%	4.25	45%
Opportunities for professional development (i.e., career fairs or resume workshops)	3.94	32%	4.33	52%
Ensuring that PhD students are able to complete their degree within five years	3.86	34%	4.23	48%
A full-service career services office for all graduate students	3.71	30%	4.21	49%
Opportunities for international study (research, courses, internship, etc.)	3.72	26%	3.95	34%
Aligning courses, cocurricular experiences, and entire programs with the needs of the local or regional community	3.43	17%	3.99	36%
Courses that can be completed online	2.76	10%	3.37	23%
Programs that can be completed online	2.59	7%	3.28	23%

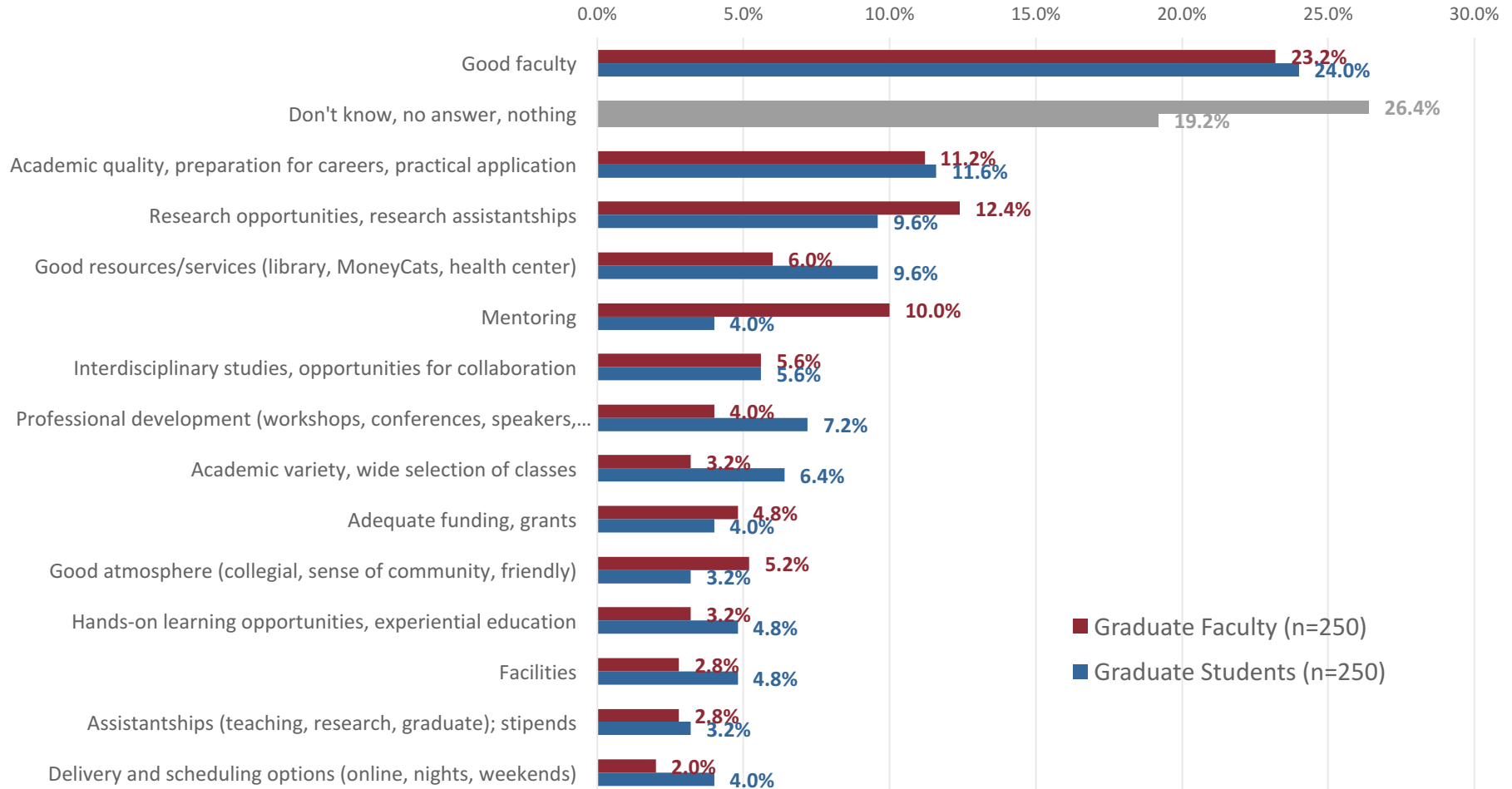
Blue highlighting indicates statistically significant differences between faculty and students, with higher values indicated in highlighting.

- Graduate students are much more likely than faculty to believe that these additional components of graduate education are important. Students believe that aspects of graduate education such as experiential learning, cross-discipline courses, professional development, and international study are important.
- To a considerably lesser extent, some students believe that online courses and online programs are important as well (nearly one-quarter believe they are very important whereas 10% or less of faculty agree).

Perceptions of UK's Strengths



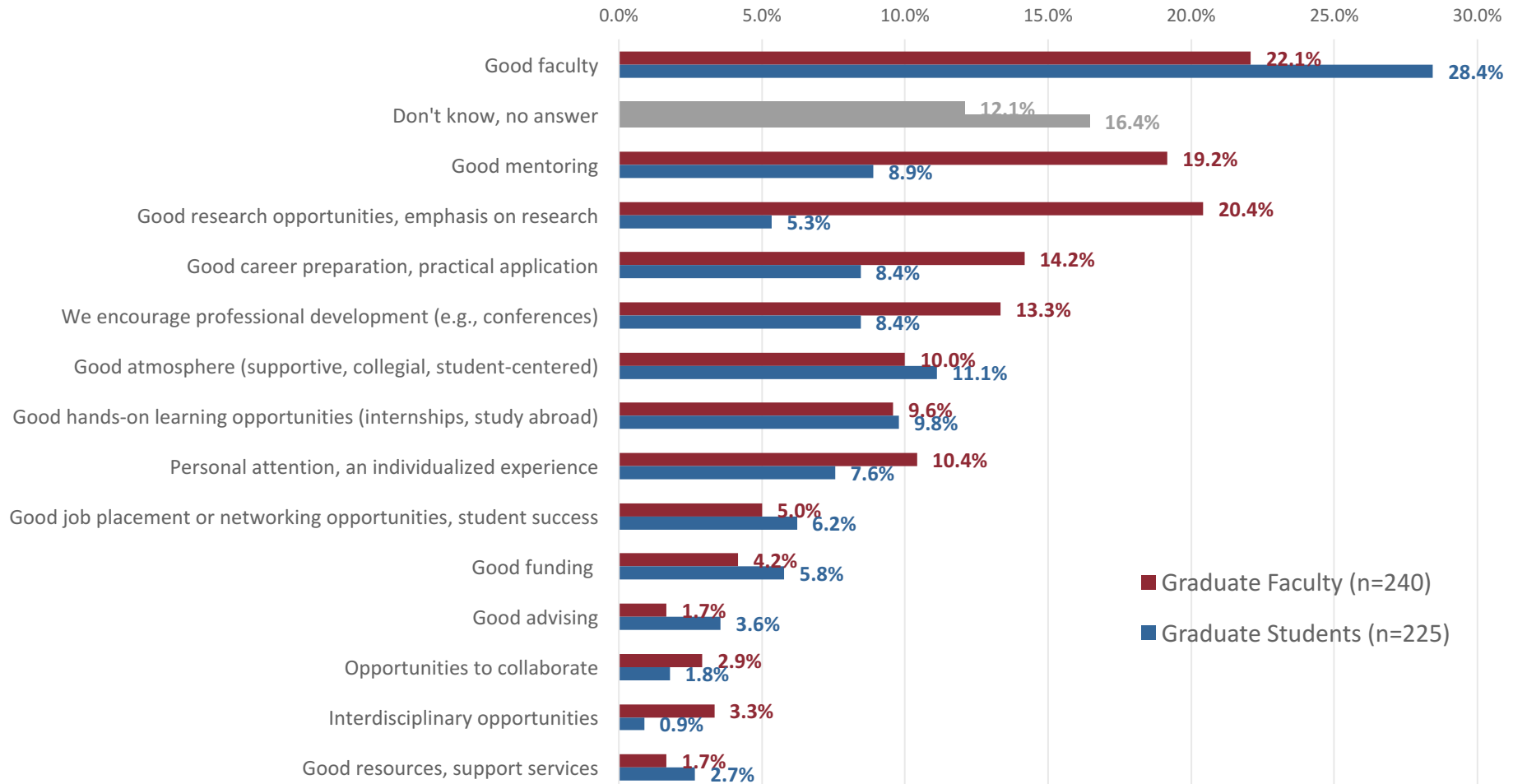
Unaided: In what ways does UK excel at providing a high-quality experience for graduate students?



Perceptions of Departmental Strengths



Unaided: If different, how does YOUR DEPARTMENT excel at providing a high-quality experience for graduate students?



Perceptions of Strengths

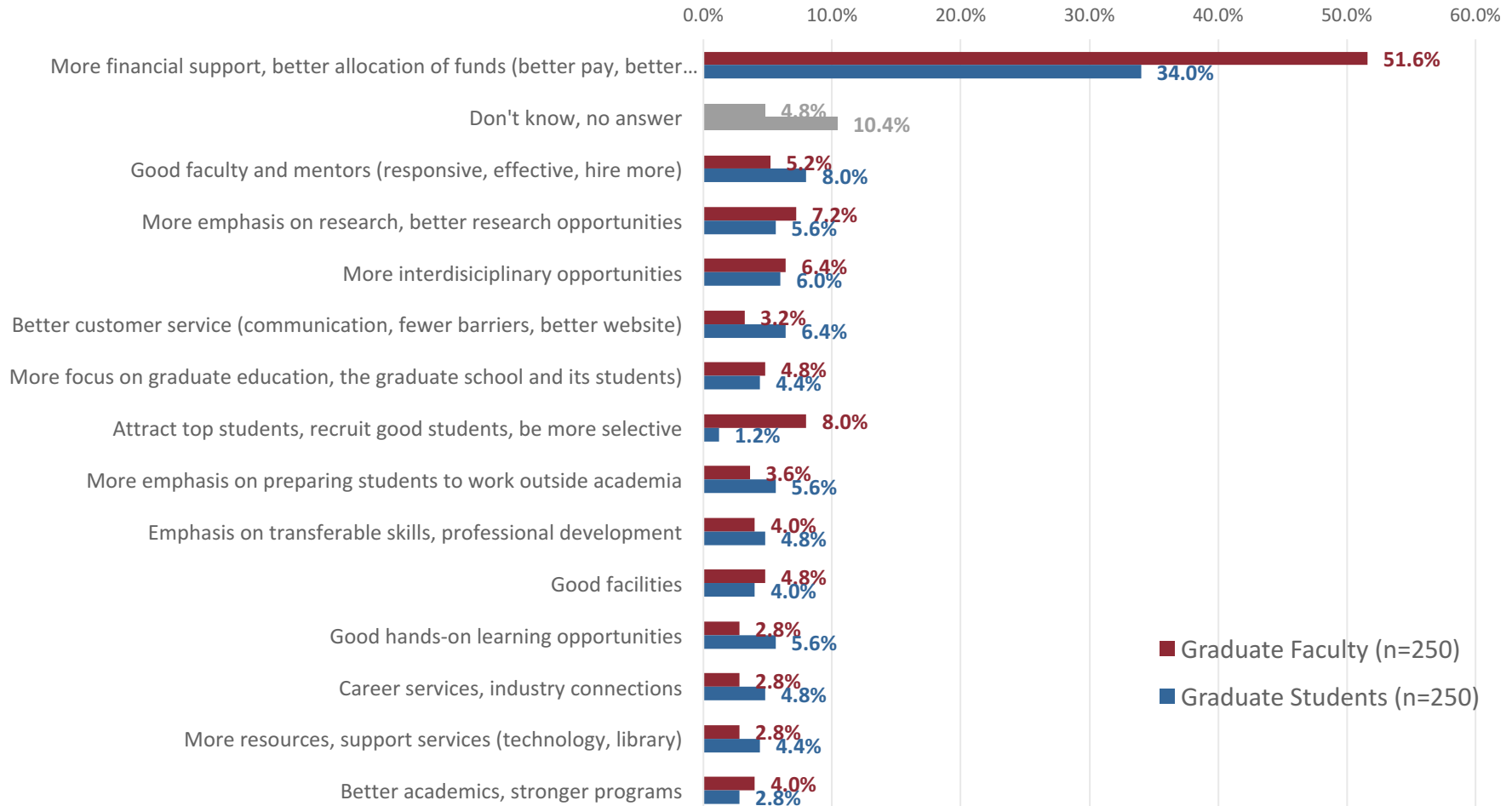


- The most frequently mentioned strength among faculty and students for both the University of Kentucky as a whole and respondents' departments is the quality of the faculty.
- Generally, graduate faculty and graduate students seem to be more confident or capable of identifying strengths for their department than identifying strengths for UK as a whole.
 - This result is expected for a respondent base that is highly specialized within their field. Graduate students, for example, are more likely to select a program based on the program's components (faculty, research, labs, etc.) than the university it is part of.
 - As a result, it follows logically that more than one-quarter (26.4%) of faculty did not provide a response for the university as a whole, but only 12.1% of faculty did not provide a response for their department.
- Regarding departmental strengths, faculty identified good mentoring, research opportunities, career placement, and professional development as additional strengths.
 - Notably, students mentioned each of these qualities to lesser extents than faculty when specifying departmental strengths. However, a higher proportion of students than faculty mentioned the quality of their department's faculty as being one of the ways in which their departments excel at providing a high-quality experience for graduate students.

Perceptions of Ways UK Could Improve



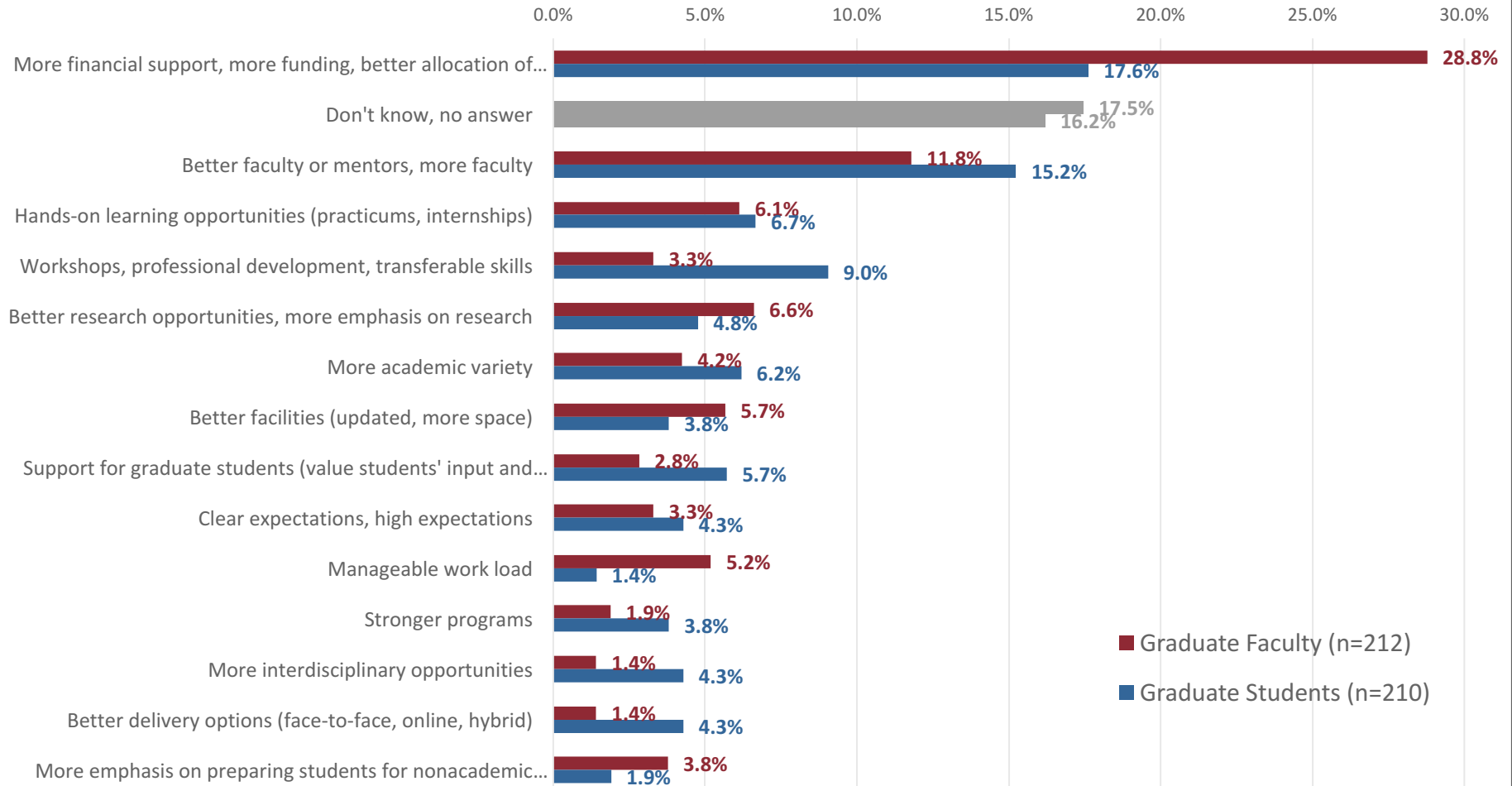
Unaided: In what ways could UK improve in delivering a high-quality graduate student experience?



Perceptions of Ways UK Could Improve



Unaided: If different, how could YOUR DEPARTMENT improve in delivering a high-quality graduate student experience?



Perceptions of Ways UK Could Improve

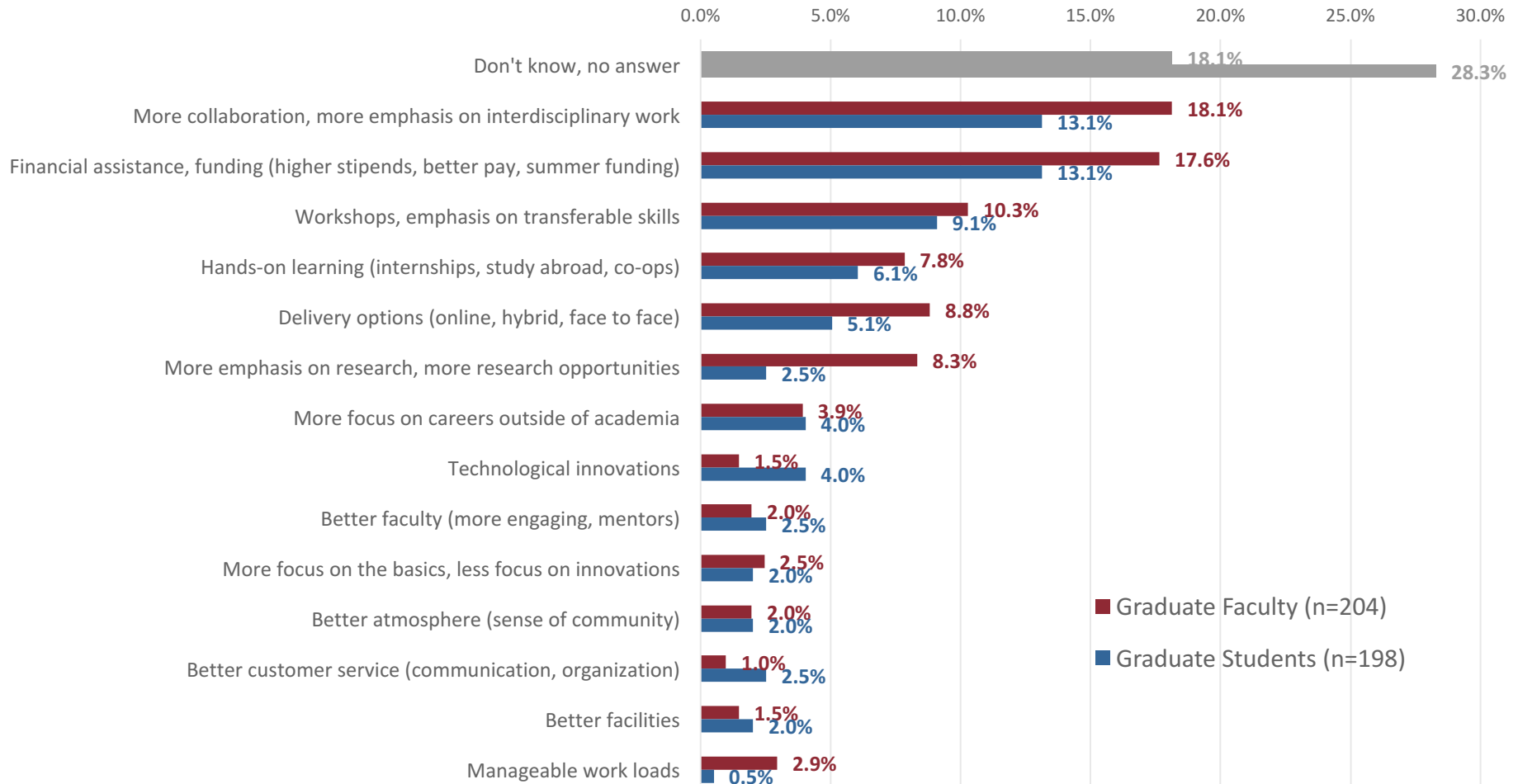


- By a wide margin, improving and increasing financial resources is the most frequently mentioned way for UK as a whole and individual departments to improve the graduate student experience.
 - Both faculty and students perceive financial resources to be more of an issue at the university level than within their individual departments, as demonstrated by the higher proportion of faculty and students who mentioned financial resources as a way for UK to improve the graduate student experience: 51.6% of faculty and 34.0% of students for university needs; 28.8% of faculty and 17.6% of students for departmental needs.
 - Faculty are more likely than students to perceive finances as an area for improvement. This is likely due to the difference in perspectives between faculty and students. Faculty likely have a more comprehensive understanding of financial needs for students, faculty, facilities, etc., while students are more likely to approach the issue from the perspective of their own situation and the extent to which they themselves need financial support.
- At the department level, faculty and students also specify faculty as an area for improvement, both in respect to better mentoring/advising and a need for more faculty positions.
- More opportunities for hands-on/experiential learning, professional development, and research are also cited by faculty and students, though students are considerably more likely than faculty to mention professional development as needing improvement.
- Faculty, in turn, are more likely than students to mention that recruiting top graduate students is a need for UK as a whole. Eight percent of faculty mentioned attracting and recruiting top students, as well as being more selective, as a need for UK.

Innovations in Graduate Education



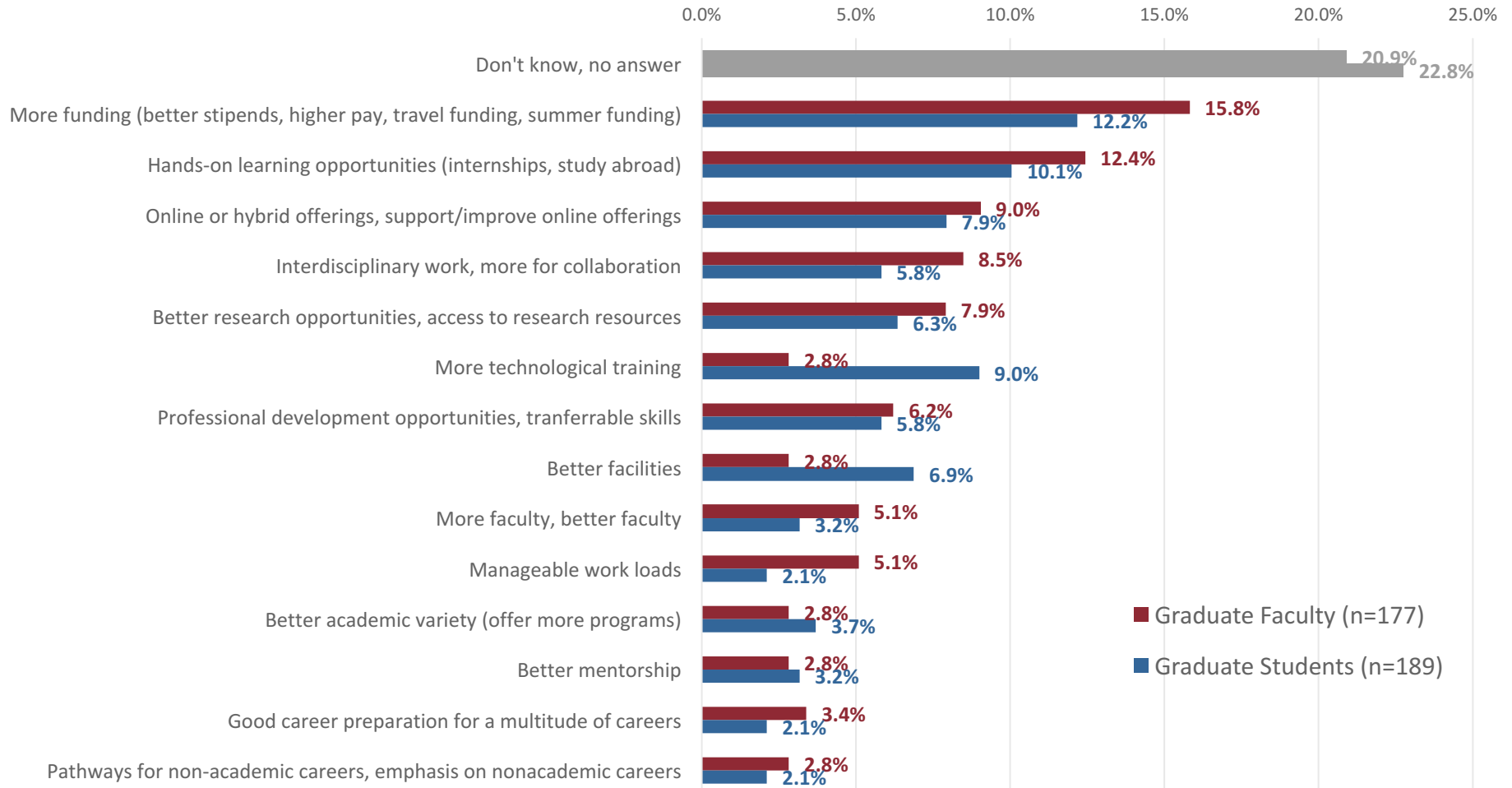
Unaided: What innovations in graduate education would enhance the graduate student experience at UK?



Innovations in Graduate Education



Unaided: What innovations in delivering graduate education within your field would enhance the graduate student experience in YOUR DEPARTMENT?



Innovations in Graduate Education



- When it comes to the entire university, one of the most frequently mentioned innovations that would improve the graduate student experience at UK is a greater focus on collaboration and interdisciplinary work between departments and between colleges.
 - This is consistent with previous findings that showed more than 85% of faculty and more than 80% of students believe that interdisciplinary learning is important for graduate students.
- Relatedly, emphases on experiential learning and building transferable skills are also mentioned by both faculty and students as innovations that would improve the graduate student experience university-wide.
- Additionally, sizable proportions of graduate faculty and graduate students mentioned improved financial resources as a way to improve the graduate student experience.
 - Although perhaps not a true innovation, there may be innovative ways of improving financial support through grants for summer research and grants for research or practicum experiences abroad.
- The third most frequently cited innovation among both faculty and students is increased online and hybrid offerings. Although online courses and online programs were not perceived to be particularly important in previous findings, it is interesting to note that an increased focus on developing online or hybrid options received several mentions from faculty and students in an unaided/open-ended question format.

Perceptions of UK on Graduate Education Factors



Aided: Please rate your perception of UK's success on each of the following characteristics. Scale: 1=Very poor; 5=Very good Displayed in descending order by overall mean	Graduate Faculty		Graduate Students	
	Mean	% Very Good	Mean	% Very Good
Opportunities for students to conduct research	3.84	29%	3.97	33%
Development of nontechnical skills (e.g., leadership and communication)	3.75	21%	3.89	33%
Opportunities for international study (research, courses, internship, etc.)	3.66	19%	3.92	29%
Ensuring sufficient financial support for students	3.28	9%	3.52	18%
Diversity of graduate faculty	3.16	5%	3.59	18%
Quality of faculty as mentors	3.28	8%	3.48	16%
Opportunities for interdisciplinary research	3.10	7%	3.62	20%
Ensuring balanced student work load	3.08	9%	3.59	22%
Preparing students for alternative-academic or nonacademic careers	3.15	7%	3.40	14%
Training of faculty to be effective mentors for graduate students	3.05	5%	3.45	16%
Programs that can be completed online	3.10	4%	3.37	14%

Blue highlighting indicates statistically significant differences between faculty and students, with higher values indicated in highlighting.

- On every factor, graduate students perceive UK's performance on these factors more positively than graduate faculty.
- Both students and faculty agree that UK performs best on providing opportunities for students to conduct research, developing nontechnical skills, and providing opportunities for international study. However, neither students nor faculty rated UK above a 4.0 on any of the factors listed above or on the following slide.

Perceptions of UK on Graduate Education Factors



Aided: Please rate your perception of UK's success on each of the following characteristics. Scale: 1=Very poor; 5=Very good <i>Displayed in descending order by overall mean</i>	Graduate Faculty		Graduate Students	
	Mean	% Very Well	Mean	% Very Well
Availability of experiential learning opportunities aside from research (e.g., internships/externships)	2.87	5%	3.53	20%
Opportunities for students to enroll in courses outside of their primary discipline	2.98	6%	3.43	19%
A full-service career services office for all graduate students	3.04	5%	3.36	17%
Aligning courses, cocurricular experiences, and entire programs with the needs of the local or regional community	2.92	5%	3.45	21%
Opportunities for professional development (i.e., career fairs or resume workshops)	2.85	6%	3.49	19%
Ensuring that PhD students are able to complete their degree within five years	2.99	4%	3.31	15%
Preparing students for careers in academia	2.88	4%	3.41	20%
Quality of academic facilities such as classrooms, labs, computer resources, etc.	2.82	4%	3.32	18%
Opportunities to develop skills in grant writing and obtaining funding			3.31	15%
Diversity of the student body	2.59	3%	3.22	15%
Courses that can be completed online	2.39	4%	3.05	12%

Blue highlighting indicates statistically significant differences between faculty and students, with higher values indicated in highlighting.

- The trends discussed on the preceding slide are also true of the bottom 11 factors: students have more positive perceptions of UK than faculty on every attribute. Overall, perceptions of UK's strengths in these areas are mild, as mean scores from both graduate faculty and graduate students range between average and good.
- For context, internal community surveys such as this typically yield more positive perceptions of the institution's strengths in core areas of delivering education and the student experience, with mean perception ratings well above 4.0.

Comparison of Importance and Performance



- The charts on the following slides summarize and visualize how graduate faculty and graduate students value these attributes of graduate education as well as how positively they perceive UK's performance on each attribute.
- The charts juxtapose data discussed previously that indicate the relative importance of each factor as well as perceptions of how well UK delivers each factor/attribute.
- We would hope to see similar values between the importance that faculty and students place on each factor and perceptions of UK's ability to provide them. This would indicate that the university is perceived as exhibiting strength in the areas of greatest importance and that the quality of the education and experience align with expectations.
- Ideally, all attributes would fall between the two parallel lines on the chart. These lines provide some room for variance by adding upper and lower bounds to a perfect 1:1 ratio between importance and perception. If each attribute fell within these bounds, it would indicate that perceptions of UK are generally in line with the importance that faculty and students place on each respective factor.
- Attributes below the lower bound indicate areas in which UK can improve.
 - Disparities between importance and perception may point to areas in which the university should make improvements or may point to areas in which UK already exhibits considerable strength but does not yet communicate the quality or availability of those attributes effectively.

Comparison of Importance and Performance



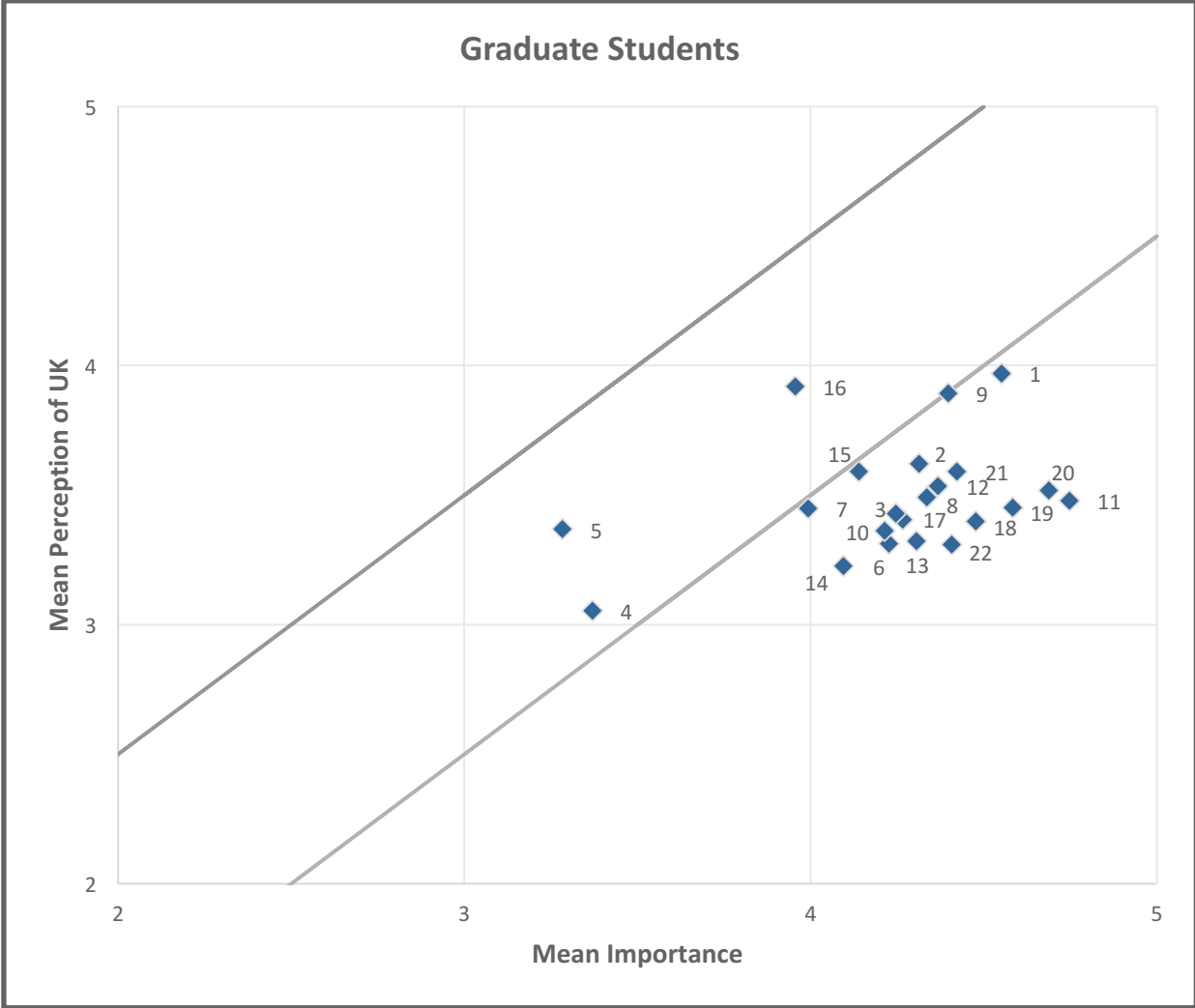
#	Factor
1	Opportunities for students to conduct research
2	Opportunities for interdisciplinary research
3	Opportunities for students to enroll in courses outside of their primary discipline
4	Courses that can be completed online
5	Programs that can be completed online
6	PhD students can complete their degree within five years
7	Aligning courses, cocurricular experiences, and entire programs with the needs of the local community
8	Opportunities for professional development
9	Development of nontechnical skills
10	Full-service career services office for all graduate students
11	Quality of faculty as mentors
12	Experiential learning opportunities aside from research
13	Quality of academic facilities
14	Diversity of the student body
15	Diversity of graduate faculty
16	Opportunities for international study (research, courses, internship, etc.)
17	Preparing students for careers in academia
18	Preparing students for alternative-academic or nonacademic careers
19	Training of faculty to be effective mentors for graduate students
20	Ensuring sufficient financial support for students
21	Ensuring balanced student work load



Comparison of Importance and Performance



#	Factor
1	Opportunities for students to conduct research
2	Opportunities for interdisciplinary research
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11	Quality of faculty as mentors
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13	Quality of academic facilities
14	Diversity of the student body
15	Diversity of graduate faculty
16	Opportunities for international study (research, courses, internship, etc.)
17	Preparing students for careers in academia
18	Preparing students for alt-academic or non-academic careers
19	Training of faculty to be effective mentors
20	Ensuring sufficient financial support for students
21	Ensuring balanced student work load
22	Opportunities to develop skills in grant writing and obtaining funding



Comparison of Importance and Performance

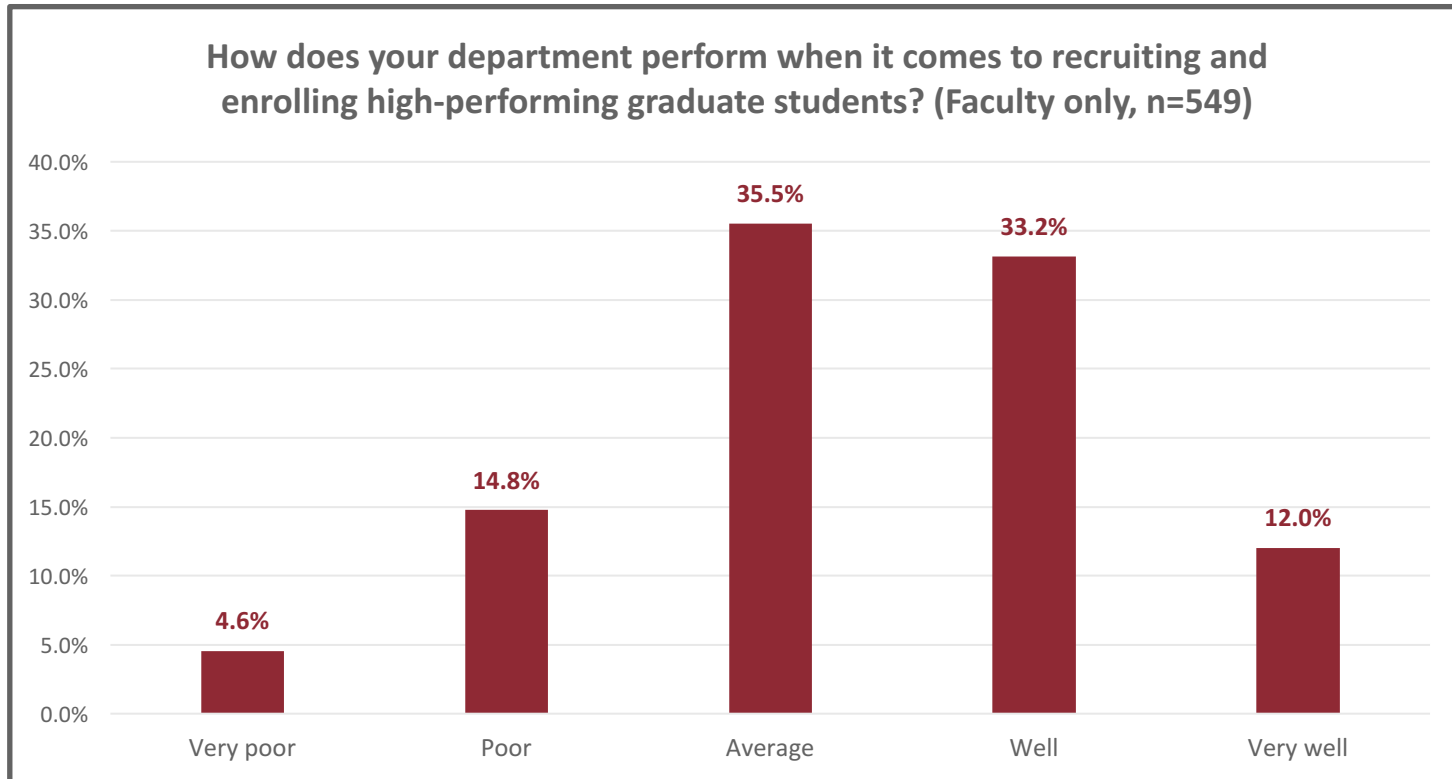


- Overall, perceptions of importance exceed perceptions of UK's strength among both graduate faculty and graduate students.
 - It is typical for a handful of factors to exhibit higher importance than perceived strength. These can be considered areas for improvement, as these are the attributes of graduate education that are most consequential to stakeholders.
 - However, to have a majority of factors fall below these lines is uncommon and indicates that both faculty and students believe that there are several ways in which UK can improve graduate education.
- As was discussed earlier, perceptions of UK's performance on these factors are not negative—in fact, they're even better than average. Among external audiences, mildly positive perceptions would be acceptable. However, internal stakeholders such as faculty and students should be the university's strongest champions and should have the most positive perceptions.
 - Additionally, graduate faculty and graduate students are key influencers in attracting future graduate students and future faculty members. Thus, their perceptions of the university have a bearing not only on the present, but also on the future.
- Improving perceptions of the university among graduate faculty and graduate students will require addressing and enhancing the factors that are most consequential to each stakeholder group.
 - While differences exist between faculty and students about the importance they attribute to each factor of graduate education, they are consistent in their beliefs in the importance of 1) opportunities to conduct research; 2) the quality of faculty as mentors; and 3) financial support for graduate students. Enhancing these qualities at UK will be most important in improving overall perceptions of the university and the quality of the graduate student experience.



Recruiting Graduate Students

Recruiting

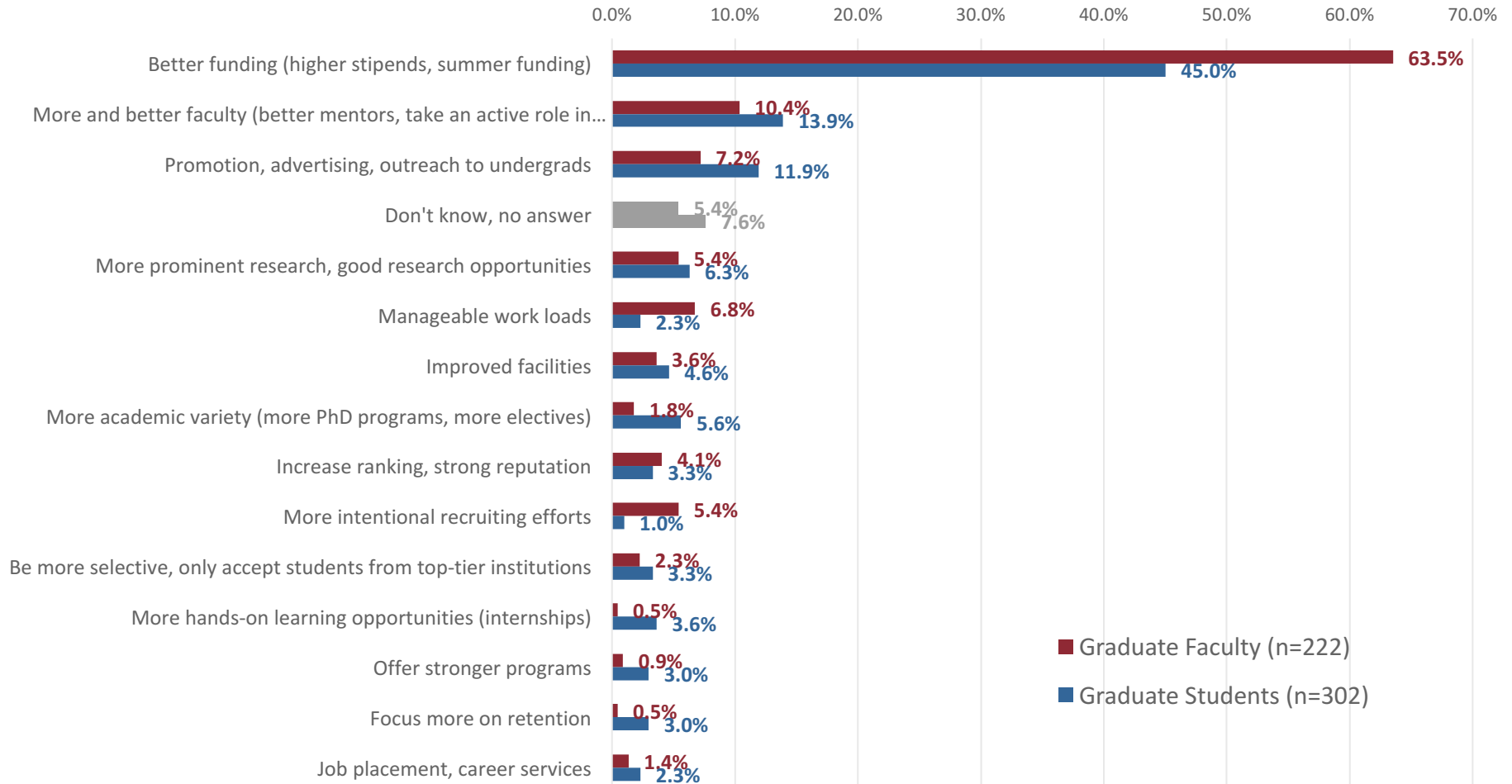


- Graduate faculty are generally positive or neutral in their perceptions of how well their departments recruit and enroll high-performing graduate students.
- Approximately, 45% of all faculty respondents believe that their departments perform well or very well in recruiting, while only 19.3% believe that their departments are poor or very poor.

Recruiting



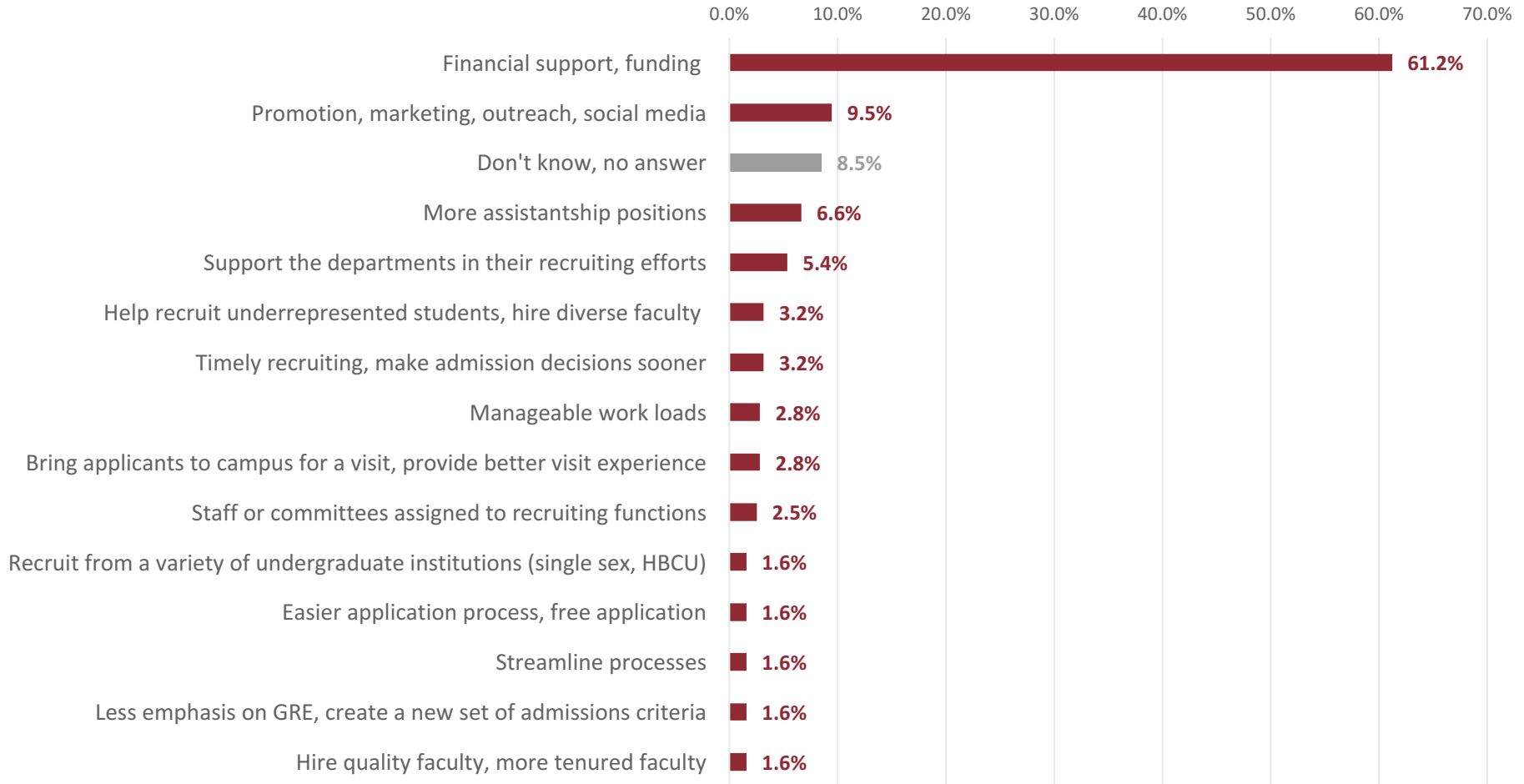
Unaided: How can your program more effectively recruit and enroll top graduate students to UK?



Recruiting



Unaided: How can the Graduate School more effectively assist in the recruitment and enrollment of graduate students to UK? (Faculty only; n=317)



Recruiting



- Overwhelmingly, both faculty and students agree that funding is one of the most effective ways to recruit and enroll top graduate students to UK.
 - Increased funding was also the most frequently mentioned way in which the Graduate School can assist departments in recruiting prospective graduate students.
- In addition to funding, graduate students were slightly more likely than faculty to identify others ways to recruit top students, such as:
 - Focusing on improving faculty as mentors
 - Better promotion and marketing to undergraduates
 - Specific mentions referenced undergraduates at UK as well as undergraduates at other institutions
 - More prominent research
- In terms of how the Graduate School can assist departments in recruiting, faculty believe that some overarching functions such as marketing can be performed by the Graduate School.
- Overall, however, the prevailing belief among faculty and students is that larger stipends, more significant grants/scholarships, and access to research funding are the most effective means of recruiting and enrolling top graduate students to UK.

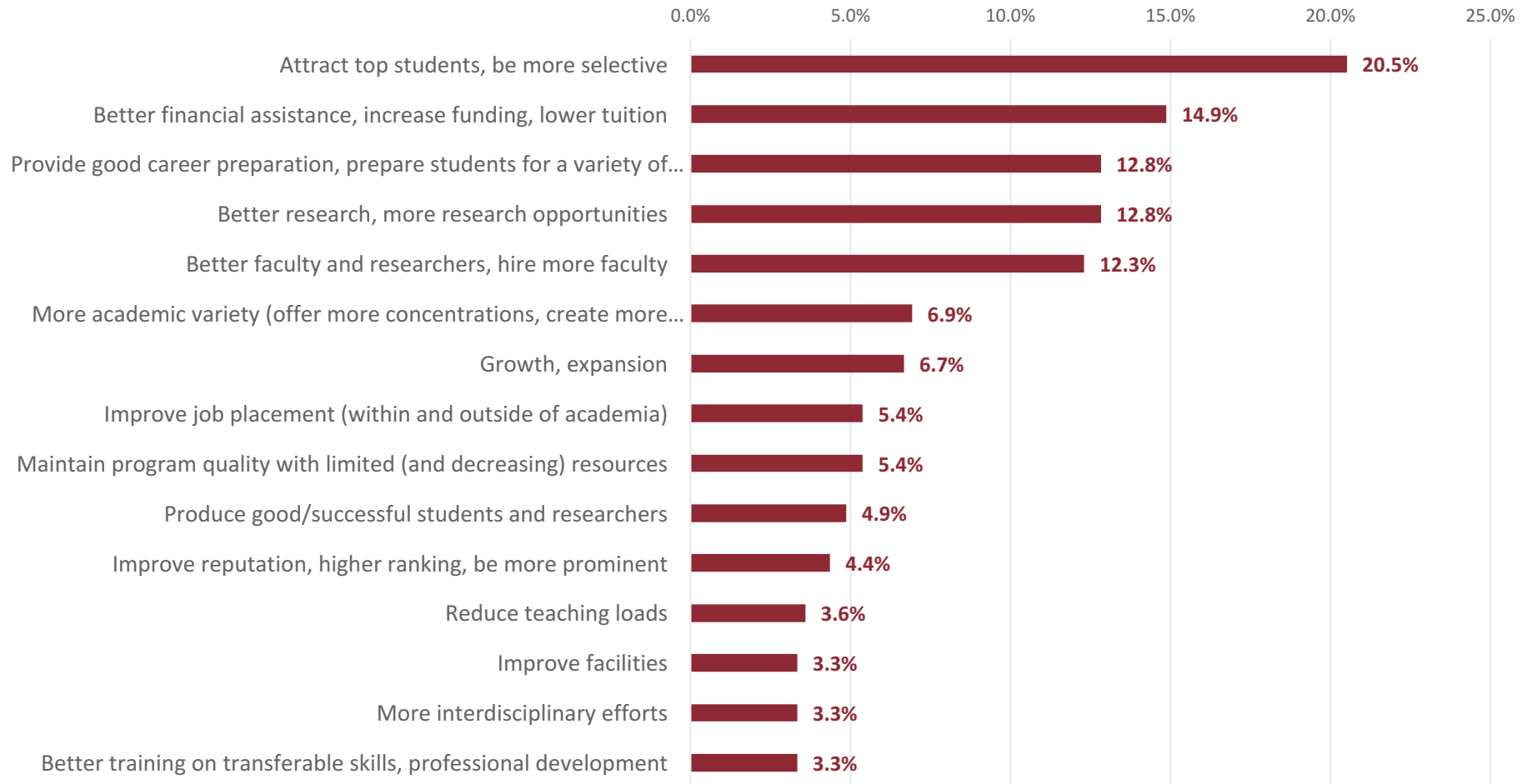


Goals for the Next 10 Years

Program Goals



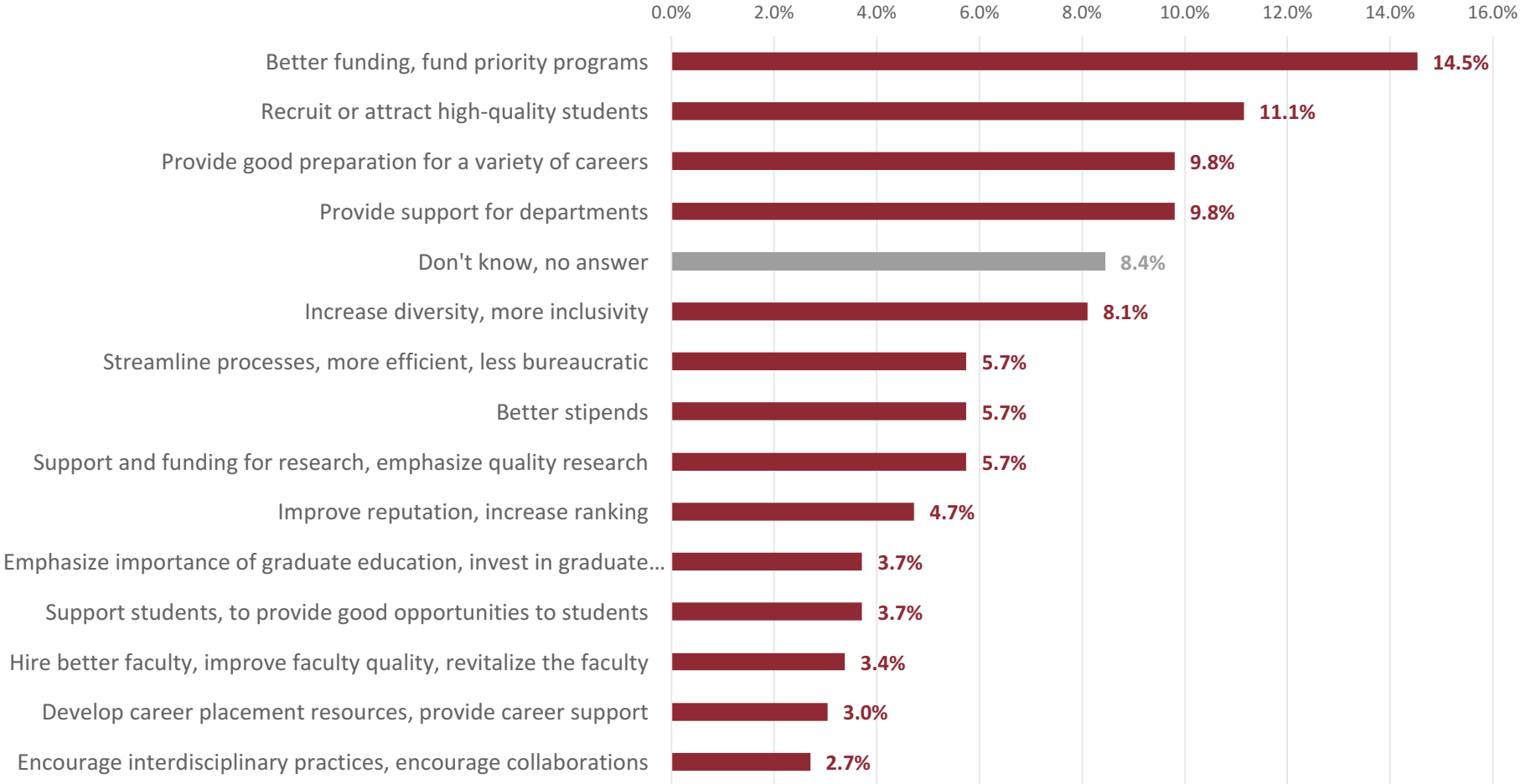
Unaided: What do you believe is the most important goal for YOUR PROGRAM in the next 10 years? (Faculty only; n=390)



Goals for the Graduate School



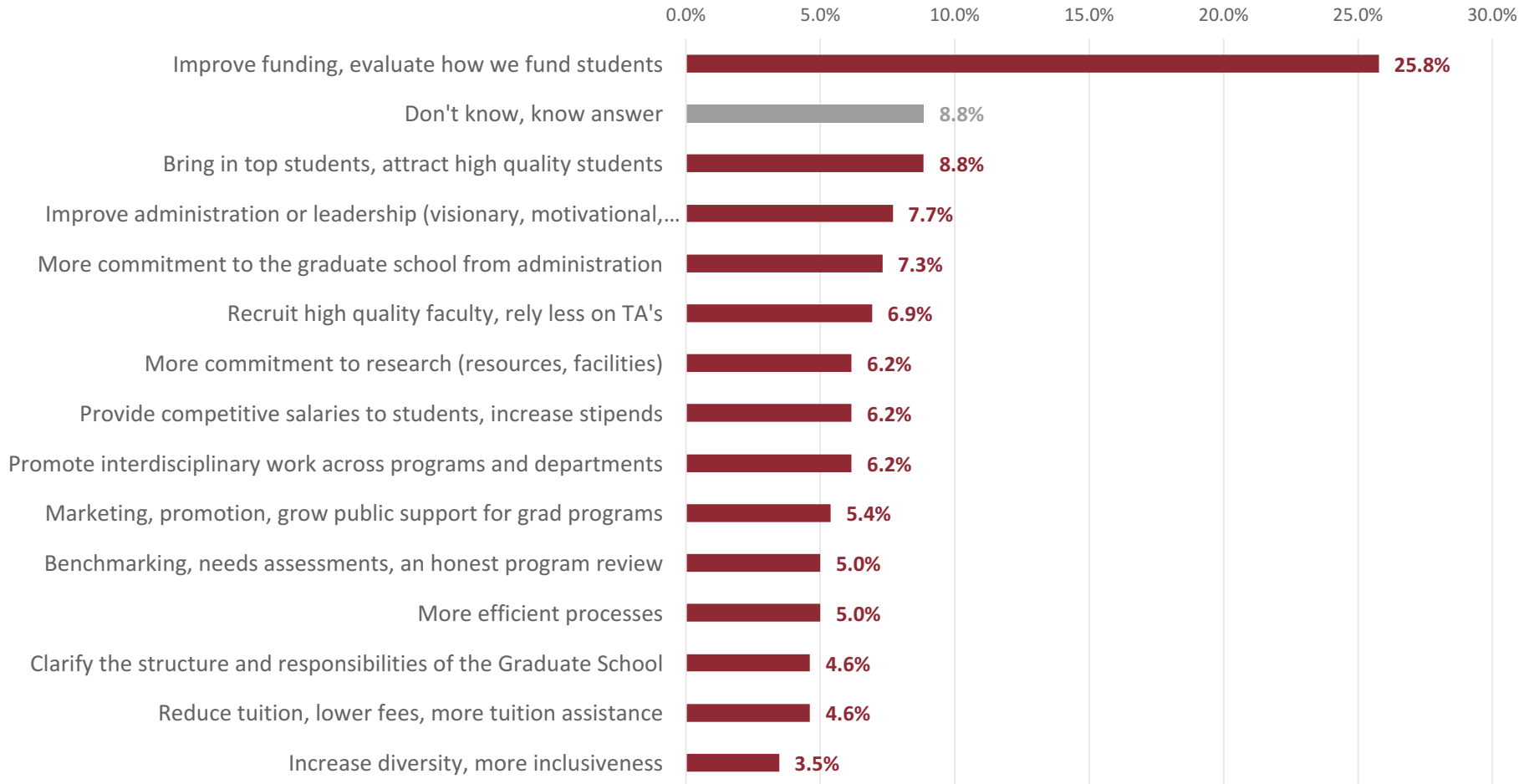
Unaided: What do you believe is the most important goal for the UK Graduate School in the next 10 years? (Faculty only; n=296)



Accomplishing These Goals



Unaided: What are the steps that need to be taken to accomplish these goals? (Faculty only; n=260)



Goals for the Next Decade



- Approximately one in five faculty members (20.5%) believe that the top goal for their program in the next 10 years is attracting top students and/or being more selective.
 - This is consistent with previous findings, which showed that faculty and students alike wish to see UK continue to enroll strong graduate students and improve the quality of future students.
- Other goals for programs include better financial assistance for graduate students, providing better career preparation for a variety of pursuits (academic and otherwise), offering better research opportunities, and securing better faculty and/or more faculty within the department.
- Top goals for the Graduate School include providing better funding, recruiting/attracting top graduate students, preparing graduate students for a variety of career paths, and offering better support for departments.
- The perceived solution for accomplishing many of these goals is increased funding.
 - More than one-quarter (25.8%) of faculty respondents mentioned increasing funding as one of the steps that would need to be taken to accomplish these goals.
 - Specifically, many faculty members specified that the funding model for supporting graduate students ought to be revisited. This is in line with findings from students themselves presented throughout the report, which show that students would like to see not only larger stipends but also more funding opportunities for summer research or experiential learning abroad.

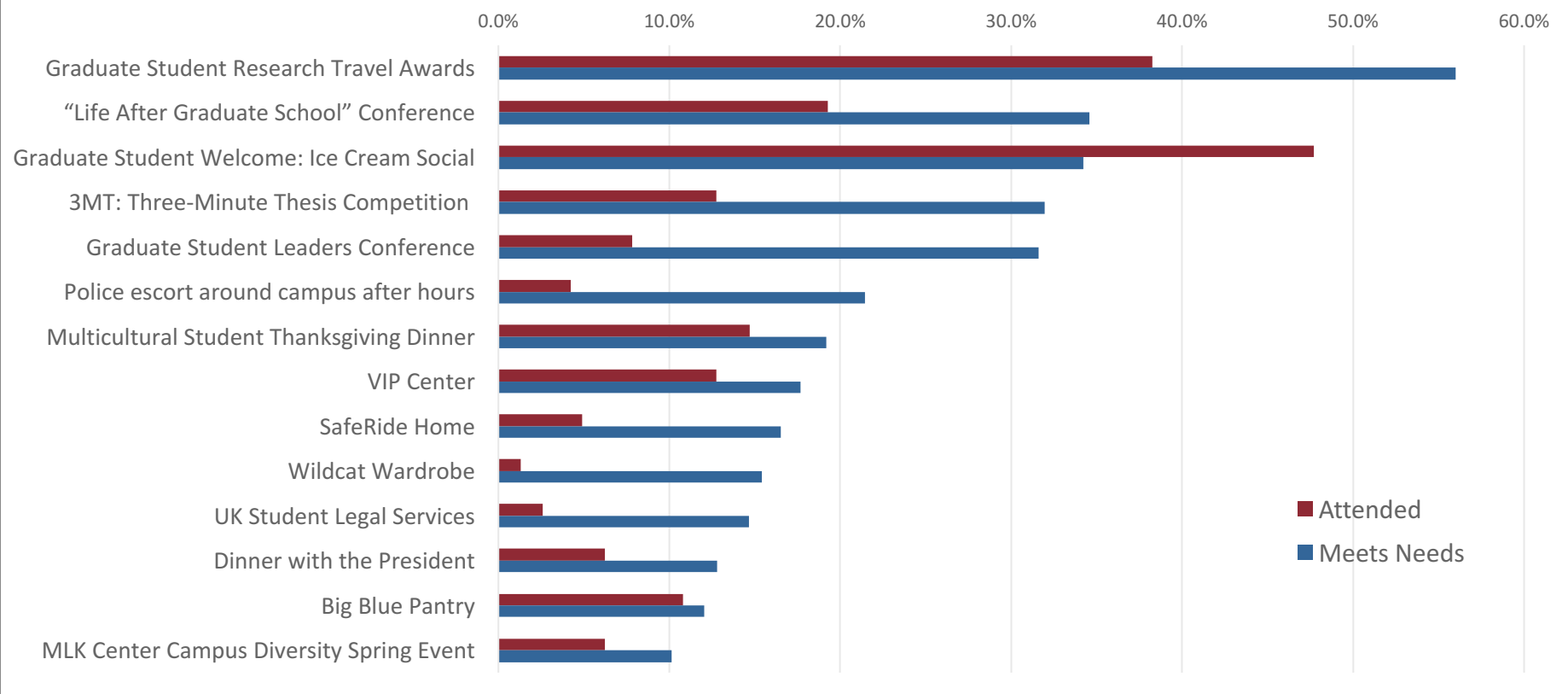


Student Life for Graduate Students

Graduate Student Events and Student Life

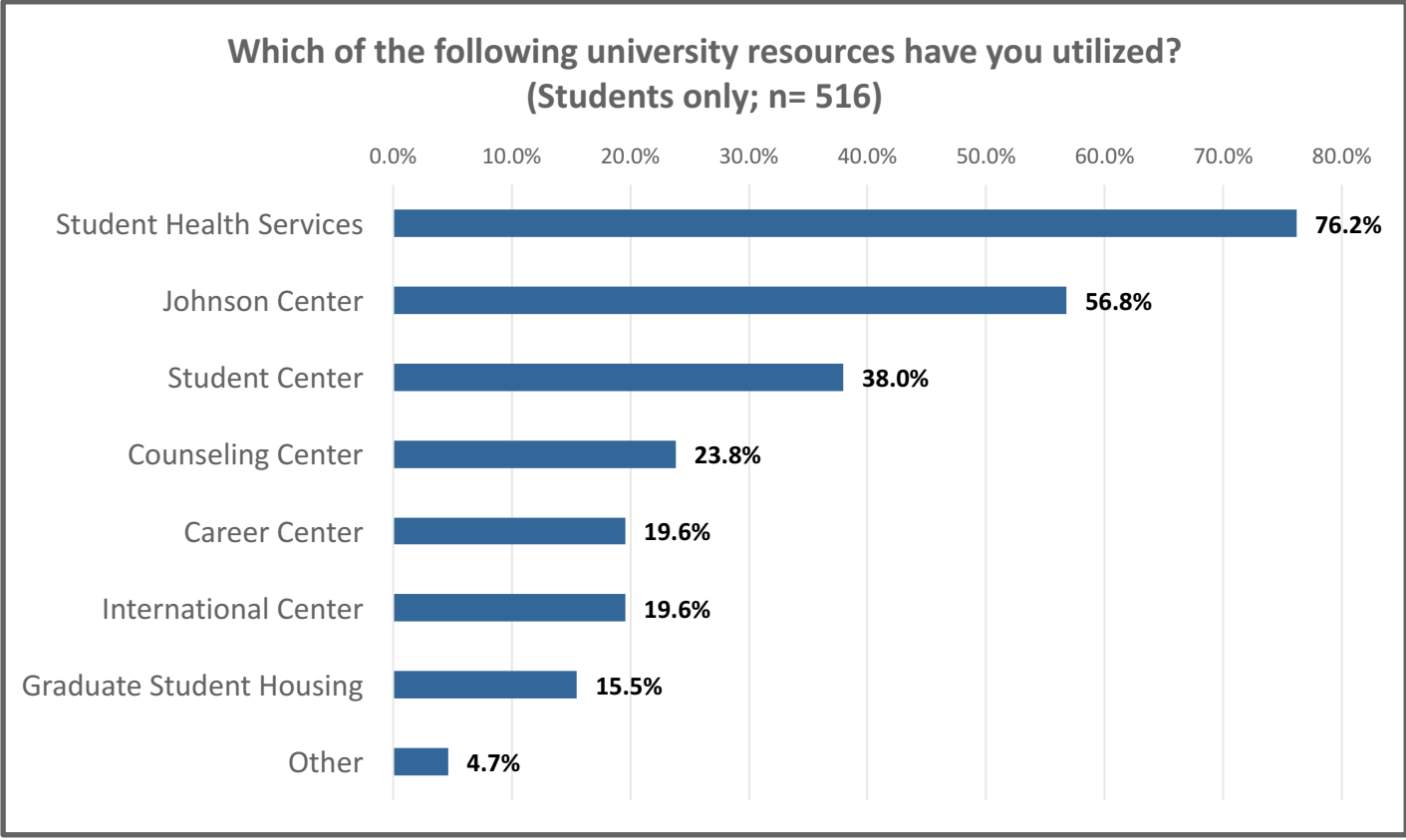


Aided: Which of the following campus programs or events have you participated in? (n=306)
Aided: Which of the following campus programs or events meet your needs as a graduate student? (n=266)



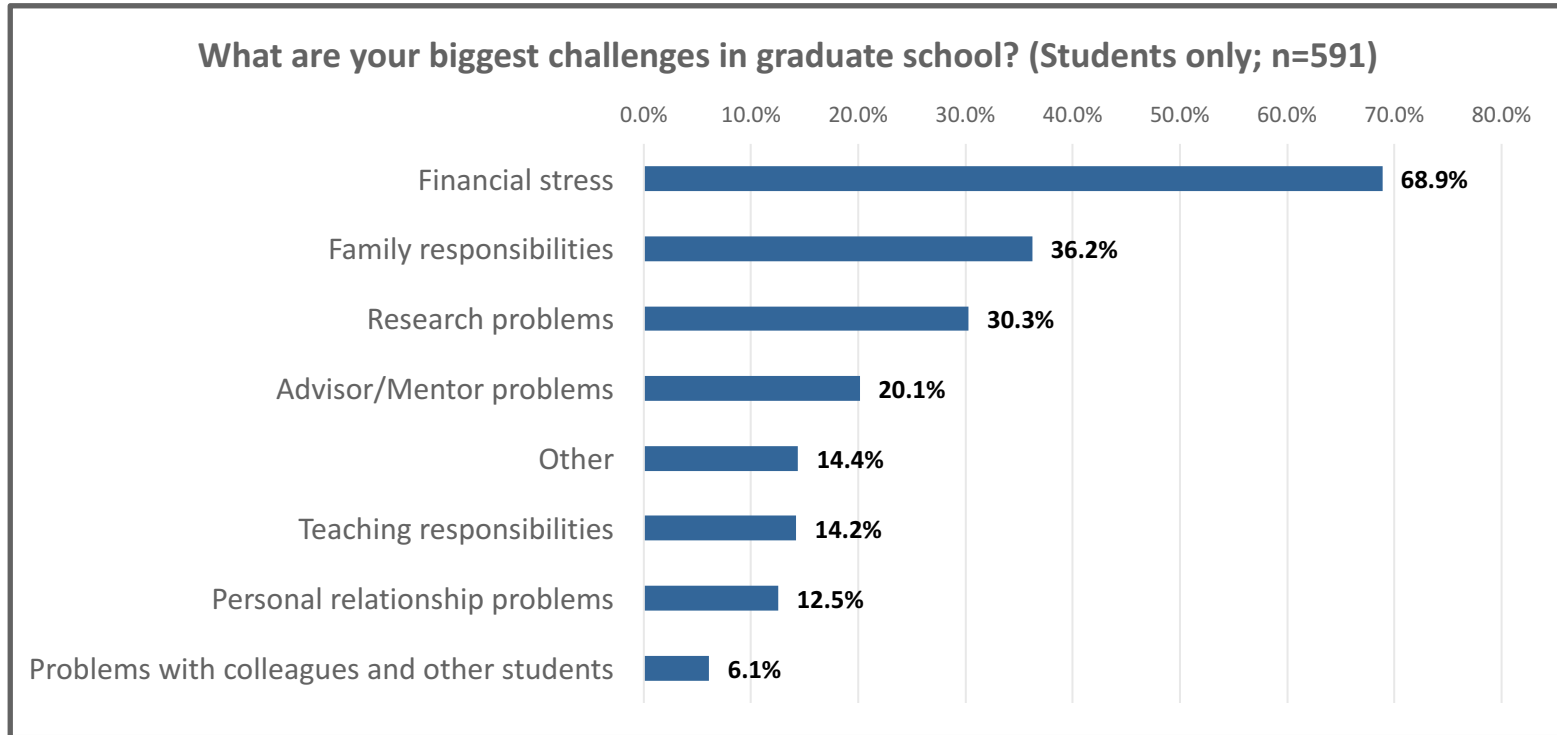
- Only one program/event meets the needs for at least half of graduate students: Graduate Student Research Travel Awards. Several other programs/events meet the needs of at least one-third of students.

Graduate Student Events and Student Life



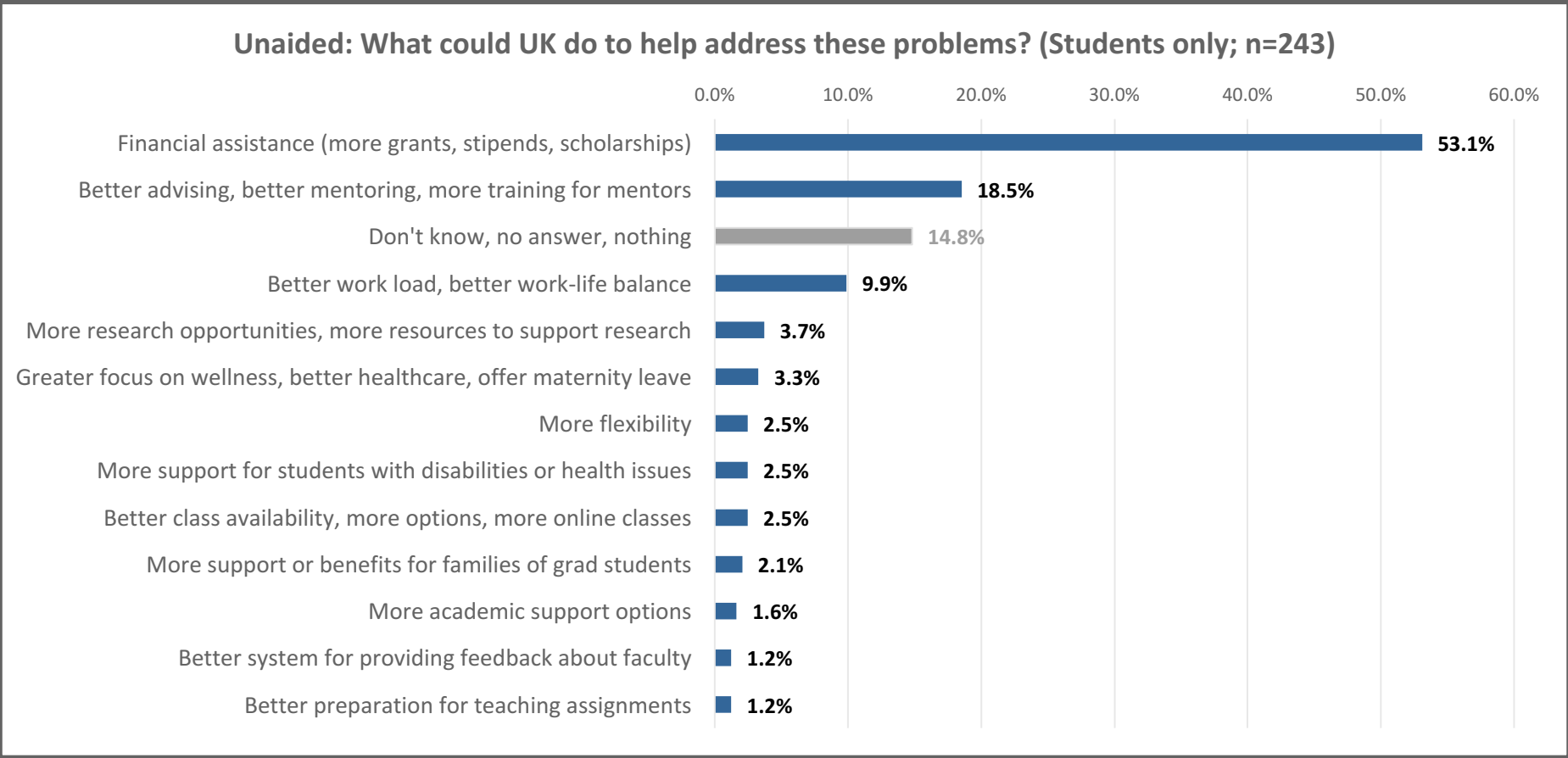
- More than three-quarters of graduate students have used Student Health Services, while 57% have used the Johnson Center and 38% have used the Student Center. Only 19.6% of respondents have used the Career Center.
- Write-in responses for other include disability resources, the William T. Young Library, and the Writing Center.

Graduate Student Events and Student Life



- The greatest challenge for graduate students at UK is financial stress. More than two-thirds (68.9%) of respondents indicate that financial stress is a challenge. Following financial stress, graduate students' biggest challenges include family responsibilities, research problems, and issues with an advisor/mentor.
- Written-in responses for other consisted primarily of two challenges: 1) balancing graduate school with a student's personal life and 2) health issues, mental health issues, and a need for dental and vision care.

Graduate Student Events and Student Life

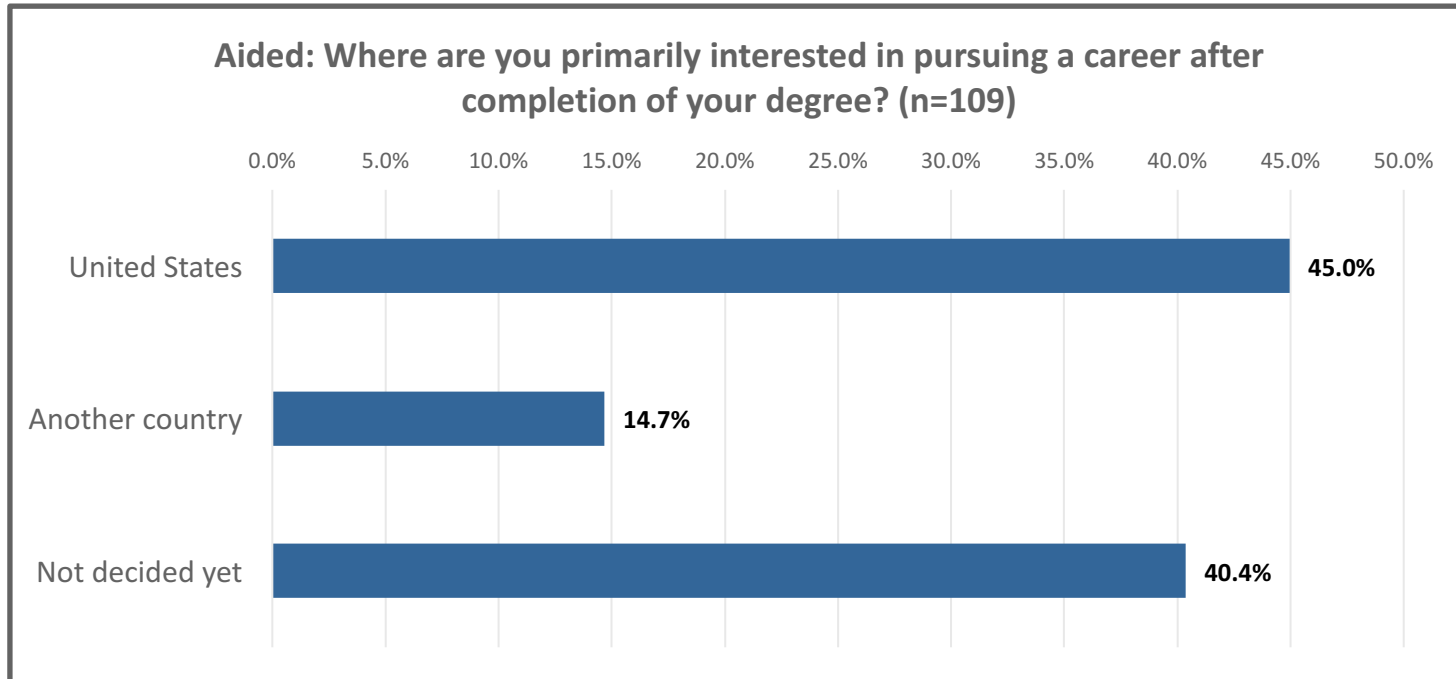


- Consistent with previous findings, the most frequently cited solution for graduate students’ challenges is greater financial assistance. Financial assistance was specified in terms of both access and award size: students not only want scholarships, grants, and stipends to be more widely available, but also request that awards be greater in size.



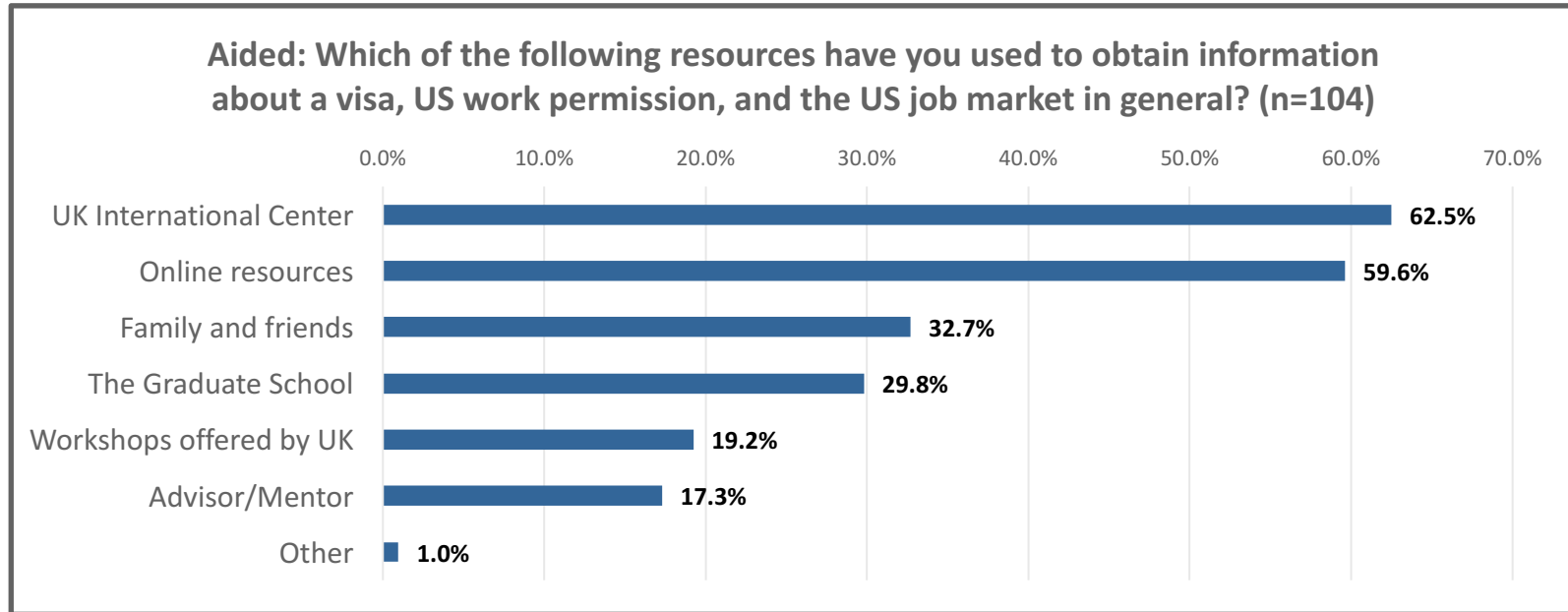
International Students

International Student Outcomes and Experience



- The plurality (45%) of international students intend to remain within the United States after completing their studies at UK.
- Nearly 15% intend to pursue a career in another country, and 40.4% have not yet decided.
- It would be worthwhile for UK to compile data from previous years to assess how students' intended destinations this year compare with historical trends. Federally mandated travel restrictions and concerns about future actions, combined with a contracting job market in US academia, may lead more international students to pursue employment in other countries.

International Student Outcomes and Experience

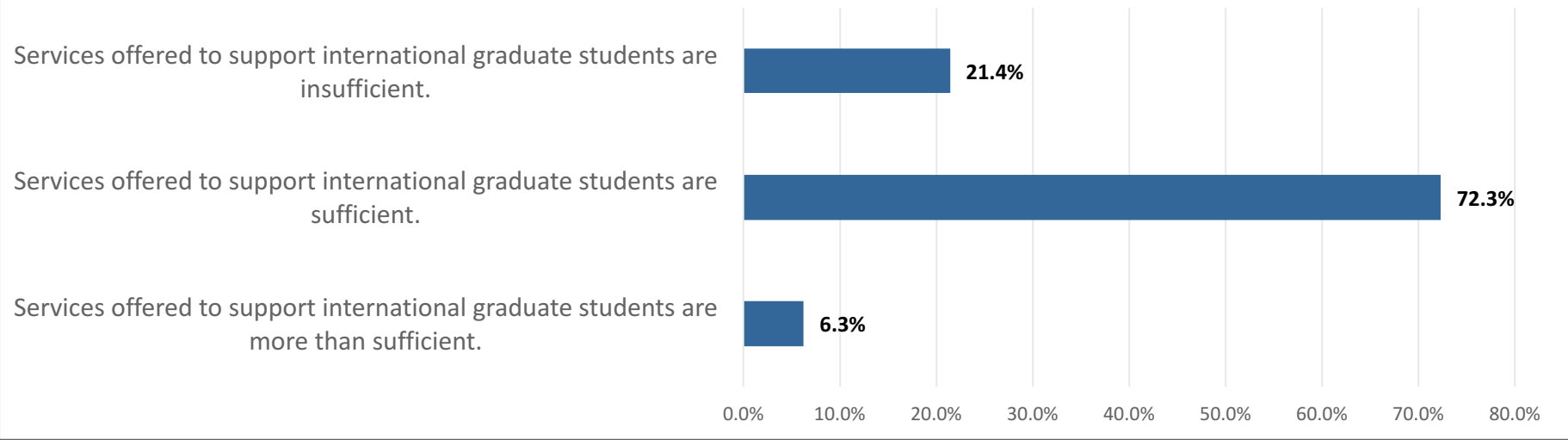


- The two most commonly used resources for international students are the UK International Center and online resources.
- Smaller proportions of international students use additional university resources such as the Graduate School (29.8%), workshops offered by UK (19.2%), and student advisors/mentors (17.3%).

International Student Outcomes and Experience



Aided: Which of the following is most applicable about UK and services it offers to international graduate students? n=112



- The majority (72.3%) of international students believe that the services offered to support international graduate students are sufficient.
- The international students who believe that these services are insufficient (21.4%) share that they would like more help with finding employment during summer terms to remain at the university and continue research. International students would also like a more comprehensive orientation for them and their families that would cover topics such as learning more about the area, navigating the healthcare system, finding daycare, etc. Additionally, while students appreciate the workshops, they request that the workshops be offered more frequently.