

# Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey

Highlights from the 2022 Survey Results

Toronto  
Metropolitan  
University



# About the Survey

- Every three years, Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) participates in the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS).
- This student survey is conducted across the country by some 50 universities. TMU has been a member of this group since 2007.
- Students are asked about their experiences in TMU's graduate programs.
- In 2022, 3,007 TMU students were contacted, and 1,404 completed the survey – a response rate of 46.7%.
  - Masters:  $1,043/2,360 = 44.2\%$
  - Doctoral:  $361/646 = 55.9\%$
- These results are posted online at <https://www.torontomu.ca/university-planning/>

# Overall assessment of experience

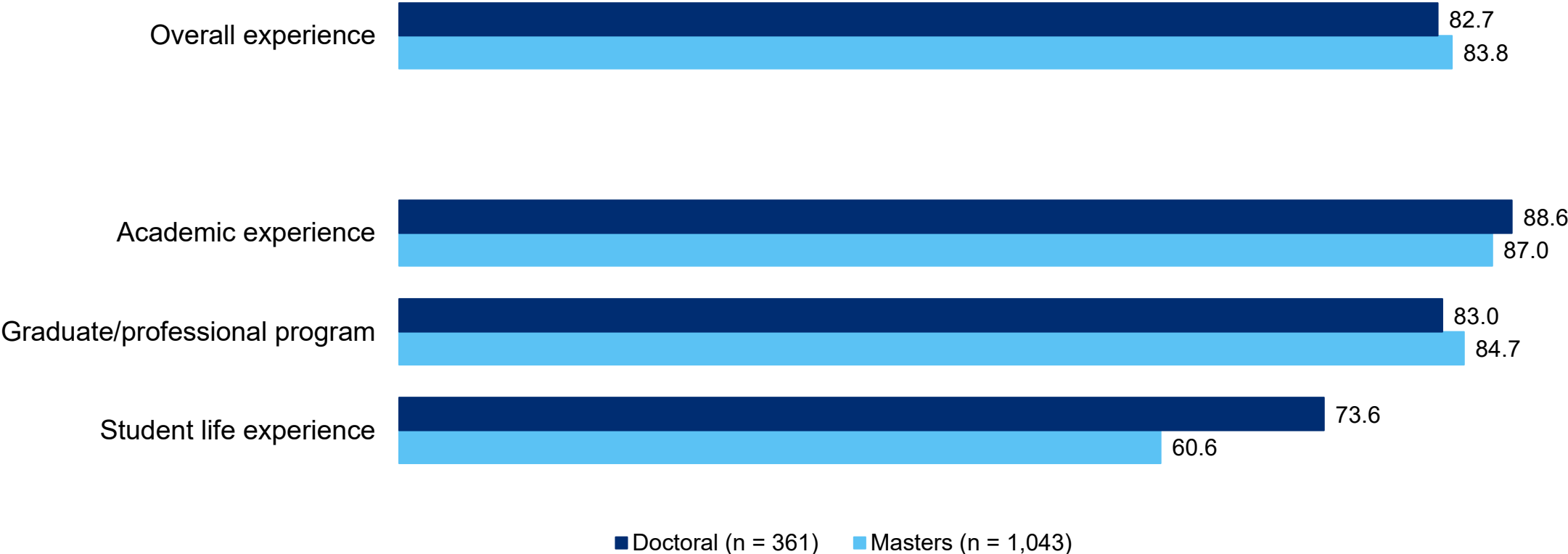
# Overall assessment of experience

- Generally, students had a positive experience at TMU.
- Questions about students' academic experiences were rated especially well.
- Results (summarized in Figures 1, 2, and 3) are comparable with overall averages across all CGPSS-participating institutions.
- Over two-thirds of students reported that they would choose the same program and university if they had to start over again, and would recommend the program to someone in their field.
- Student life experience was rated lower, especially for Masters students.
- Program-related feedback was very positive – students felt satisfied with their peers, amount of coursework, and the relationship between course content and program goals. Opportunities for interdisciplinary work were rated somewhat lower.

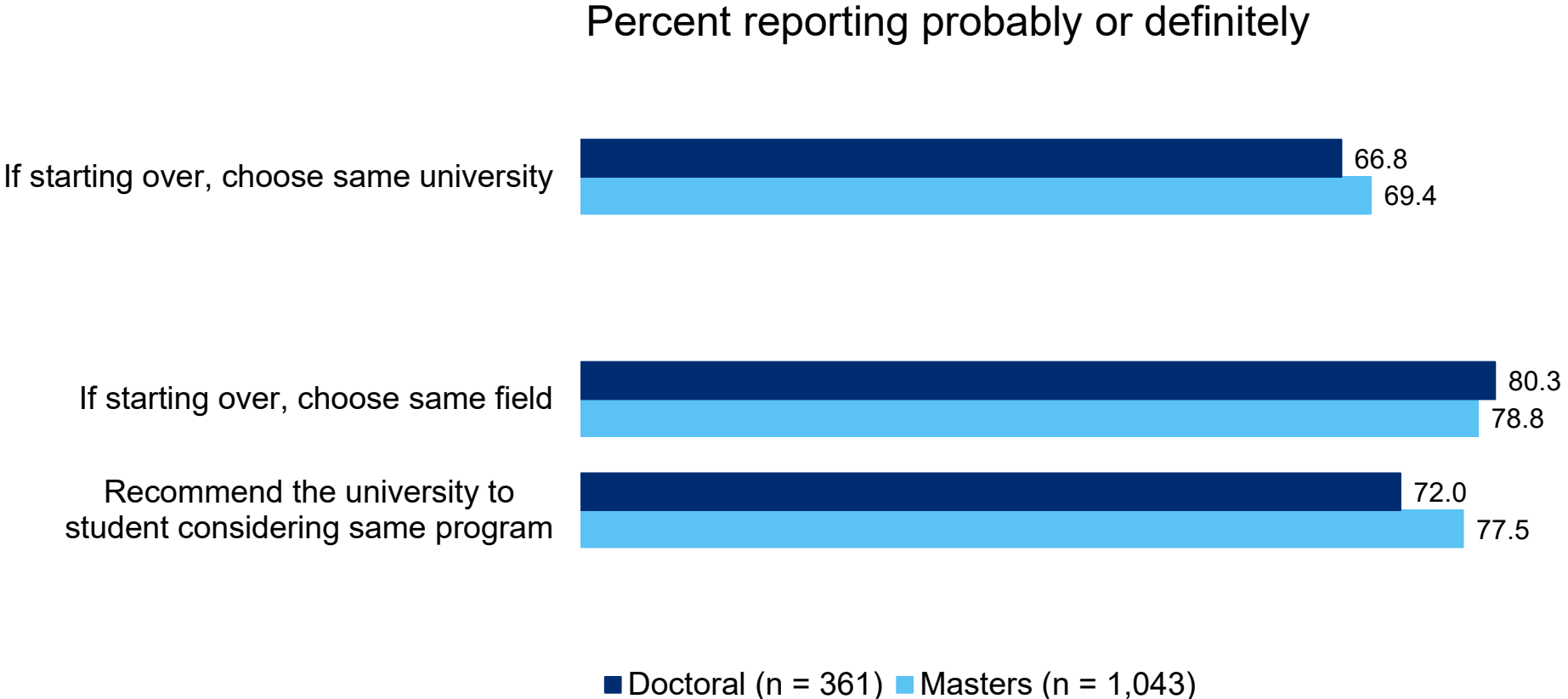


# Figure 1: Overall assessment of graduate experience

Percent reporting a good, very good, or excellent experience

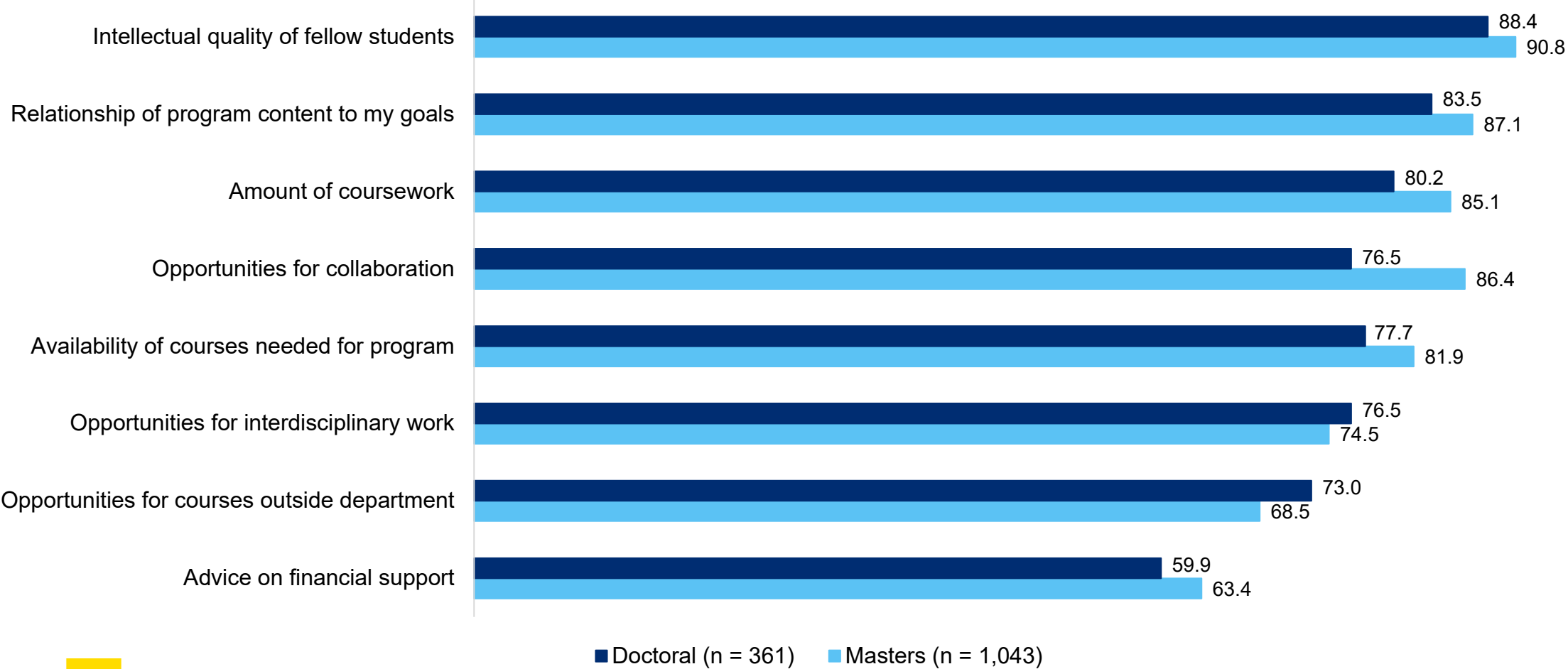


# Figure 2: General satisfaction



# Figure 3: Assessment of program

Percent rating dimension as good, very good, or excellent



# Assessment of faculty

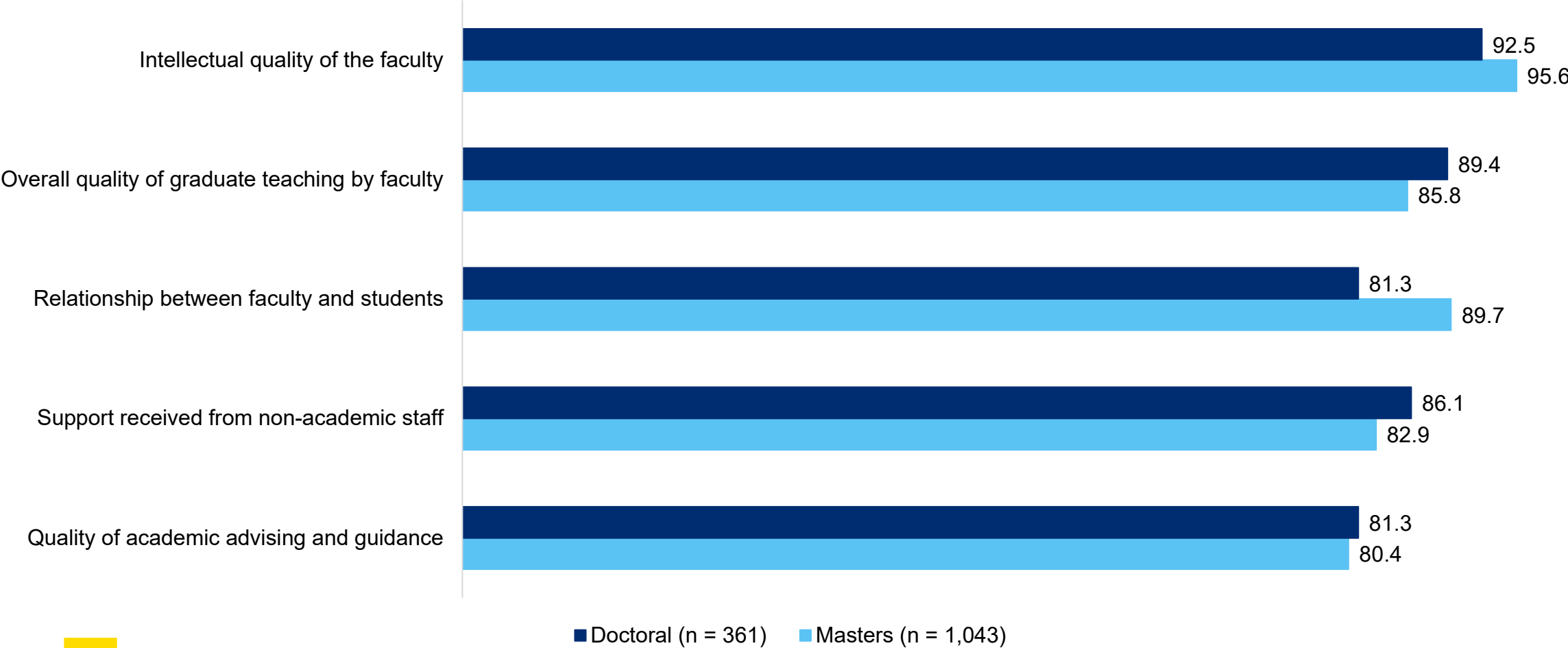


# Assessment of faculty and advisors

- Students were especially positive about their teachers and advisors – 95% of respondents rated the intellectual quality of their faculty as good, very good, or excellent (shown in Figure 4).
- These ratings were higher than those given by students at other Ontario universities.
- Ratings on advising were slightly lower than other measures, but were still fairly positive.
- Doctoral students had very positive perceptions of their advisors, often giving significantly better feedback than their Canadian peers (Figure 5).

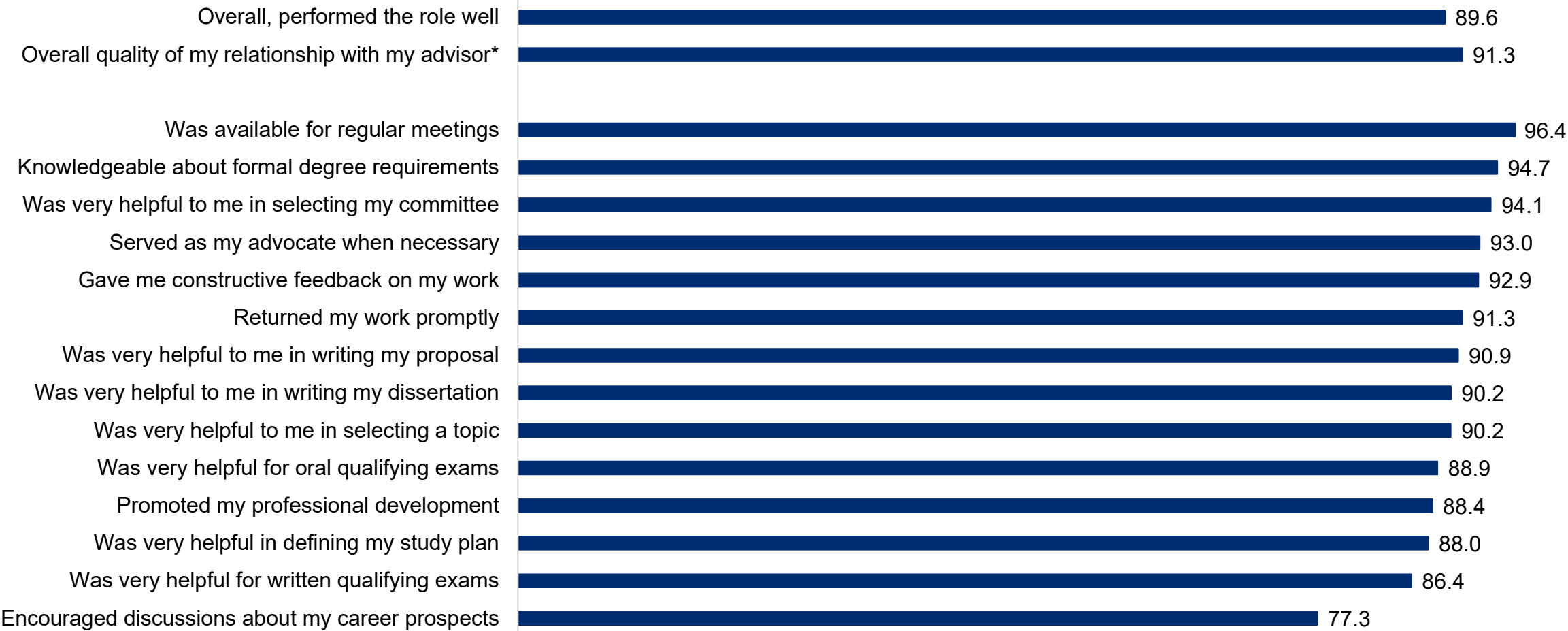
# Figure 4: Assessment of faculty and staff

Percent rating dimension as good, very good, or excellent



# Figure 5: Assessment of dissertation advisors (Doctoral students only, n = 361)

Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with statement



\* Percent rating good, very good, or excellent

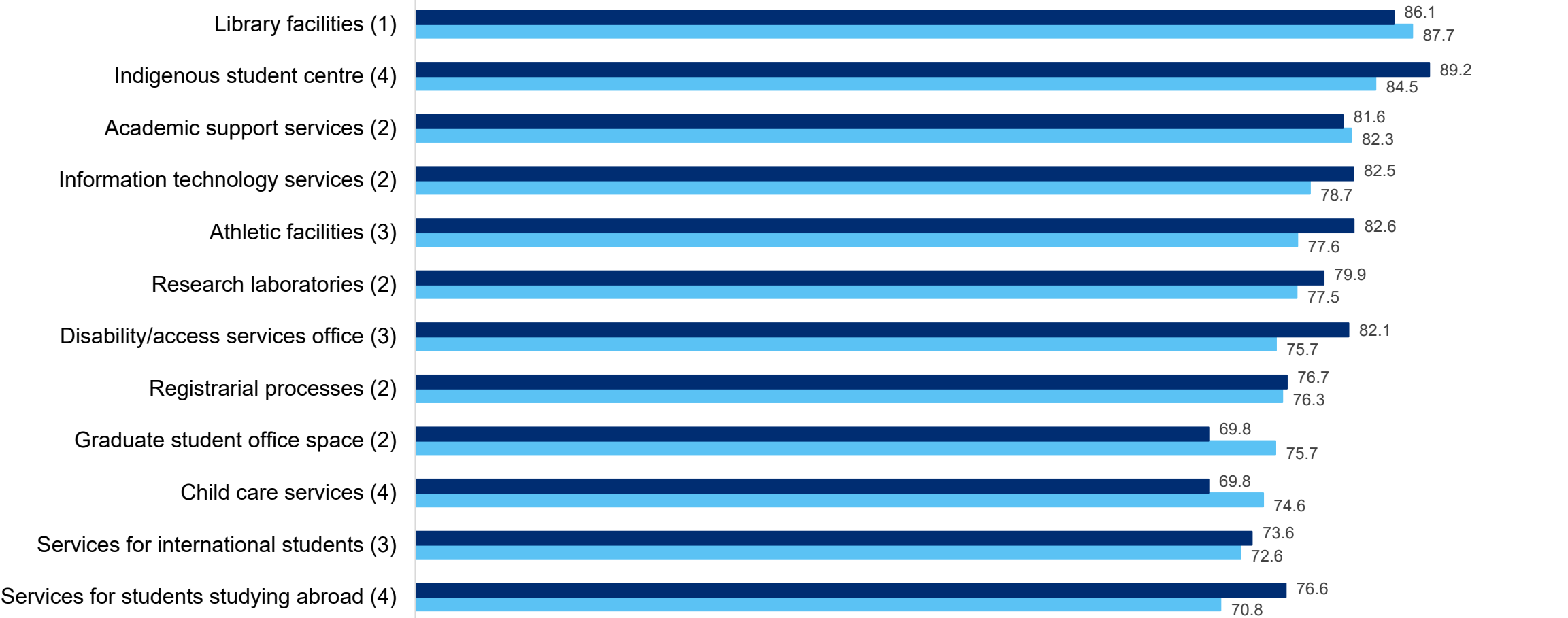
# Assessment of services and resources

# Student services

- Students were asked to rate their experience with services and resources (shown in Figures 6A and 6B).
- Only students who had reported using a service/resource were included in satisfaction ratings.
- The library was the highest ranked in terms of satisfaction (and had the highest usage rate). Indigenous student services and academic support services were also well rated.
- Generally, services showed consistent ratings with the results from the previous survey (2019).
- As with previous results, TMU's downtown location provides a challenge for services like housing, which show lower levels of satisfaction.

# Figure 6A: Assessment of services

Percent rating service as good, very good, or excellent (usage in parentheses)



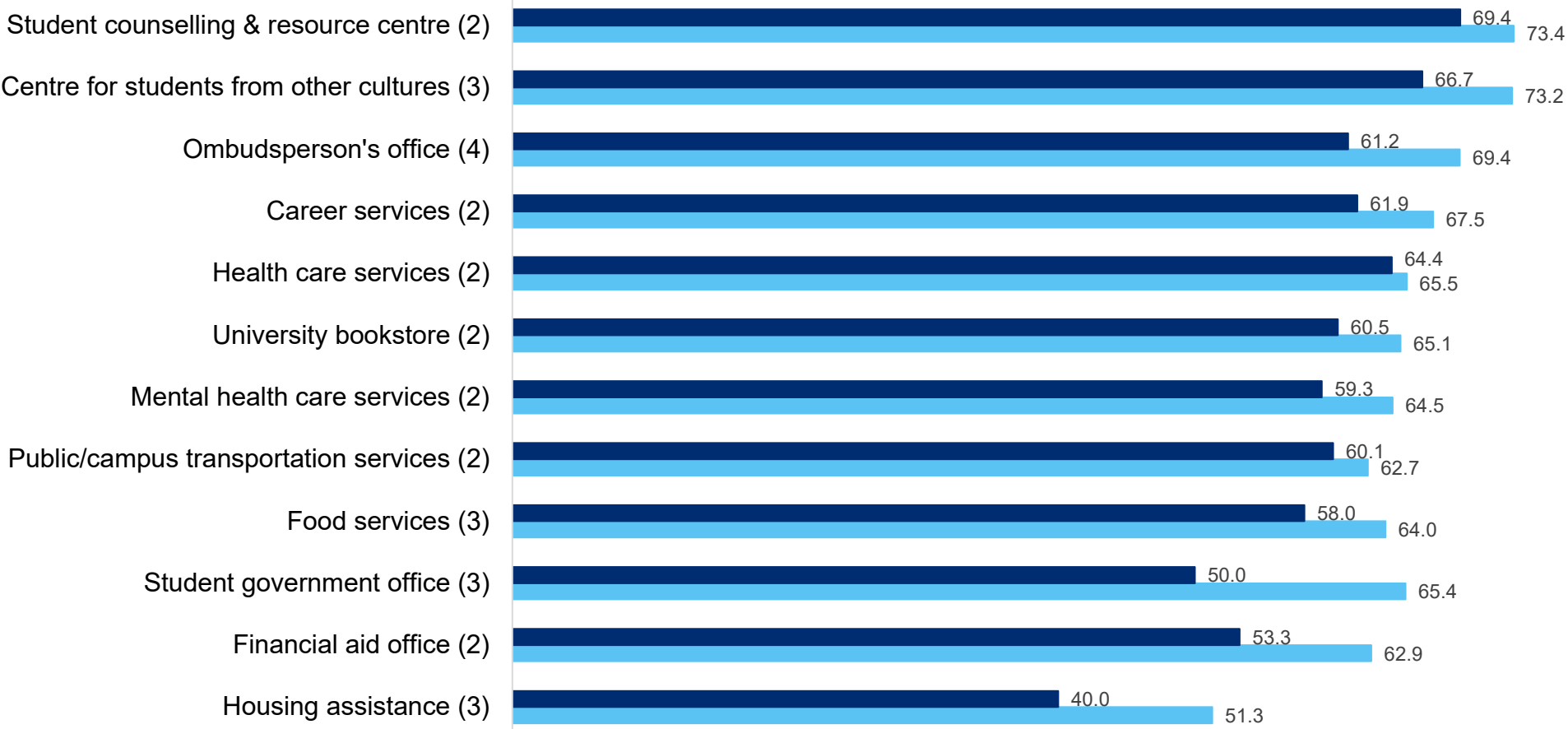
Usage reported in bands:  
 1: Over 60% to 80%  
 2: Over 40% to 60%  
 3: Over 20% to 40%  
 4: 20% and under

■ Doctoral (n = 361)   ■ Masters (n = 1,043)



# Figure 6B: Assessment of services (cont'd.)

Percent rating service as good, very good, or excellent (usage in parentheses)



Usage reported in bands:  
 1: Over 60% to 80%  
 2: Over 40% to 60%  
 3: Over 20% to 40%  
 4: 20% and under

■ Doctoral (n = 361)   ■ Masters (n = 1,043)

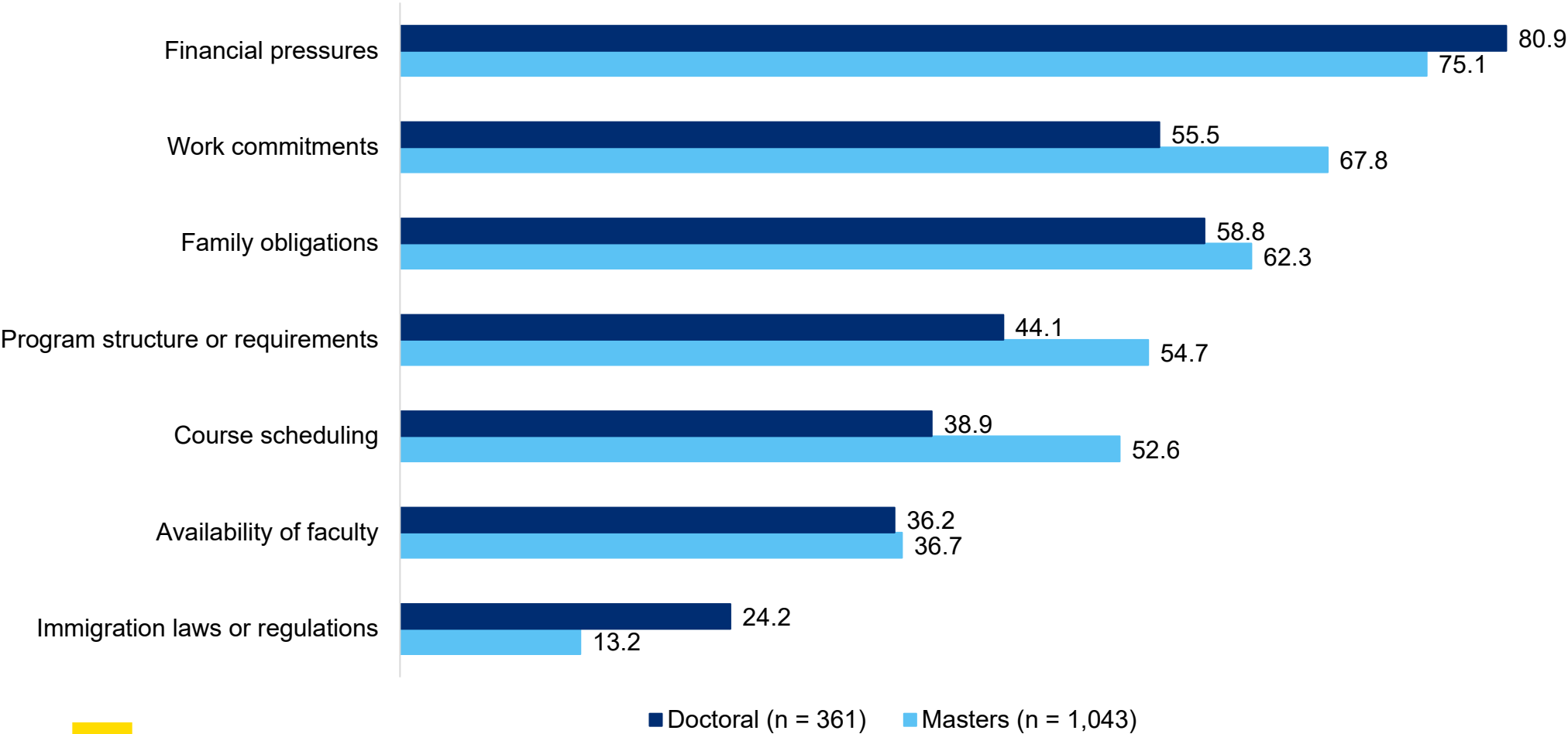


# Obstacles to academic achievement

- Students were asked whether certain factors were obstacles to their academic achievement.
- The factors mostly likely to be identified as obstacles were external to the students' programs:
  - Three-quarters of survey respondents reported financial pressures as a minor or major obstacle to academic achievement.
  - Work commitments and family obligations were other common obstacles to success in respondents' academic progress.
  - The proportion of respondents identifying these factors as obstacles was significantly higher than for peers at Ontario and Canadian universities.
    - Masters students were more likely to identify work commitments and family obligations as obstacles than their Ontario or Canadian peers.
    - Doctoral students were more likely to identify financial pressures as an obstacle than their Ontario or Canadian peers.

# Figure 7: Obstacles to academic achievement

Percent rating dimension as a minor or major obstacle



# Social life

- Students were also asked about social events on-campus. Of the activities available on campus:
  - 92% attended activities organized by their research group;
  - 81% attended department-wide social activities;
  - 80% attended social activities at their residence; and
  - 55% attended university-wide social activities.

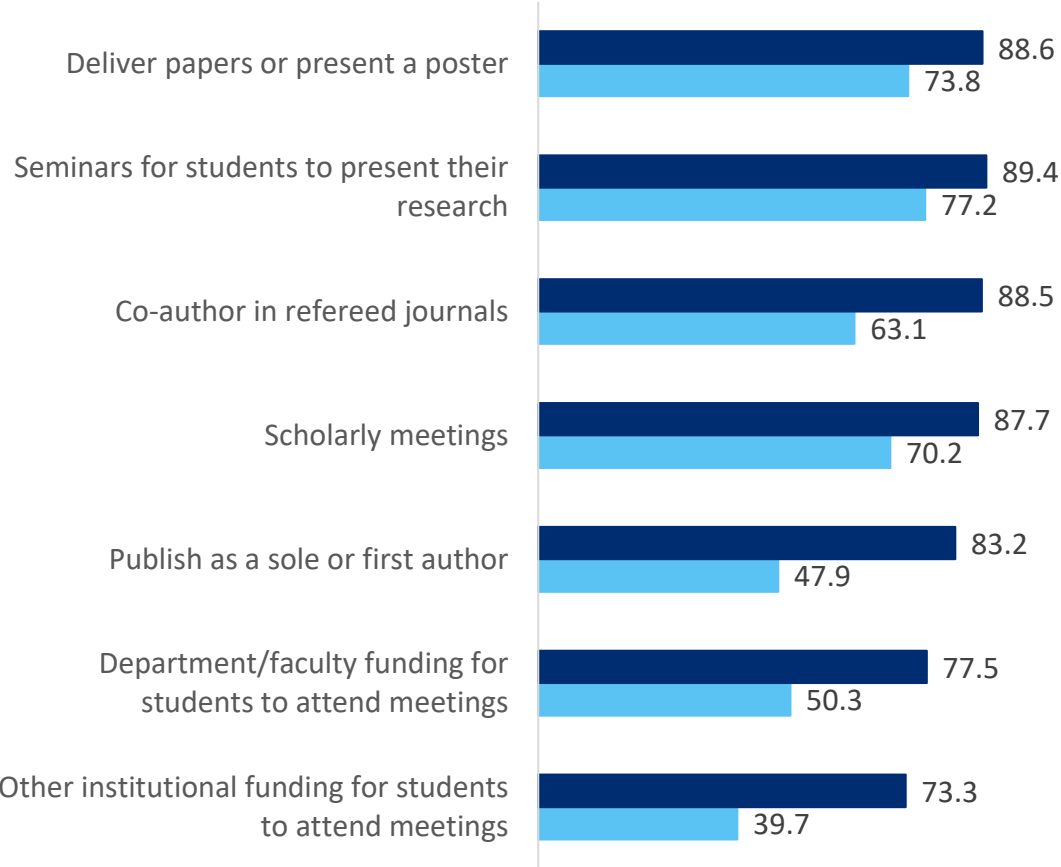
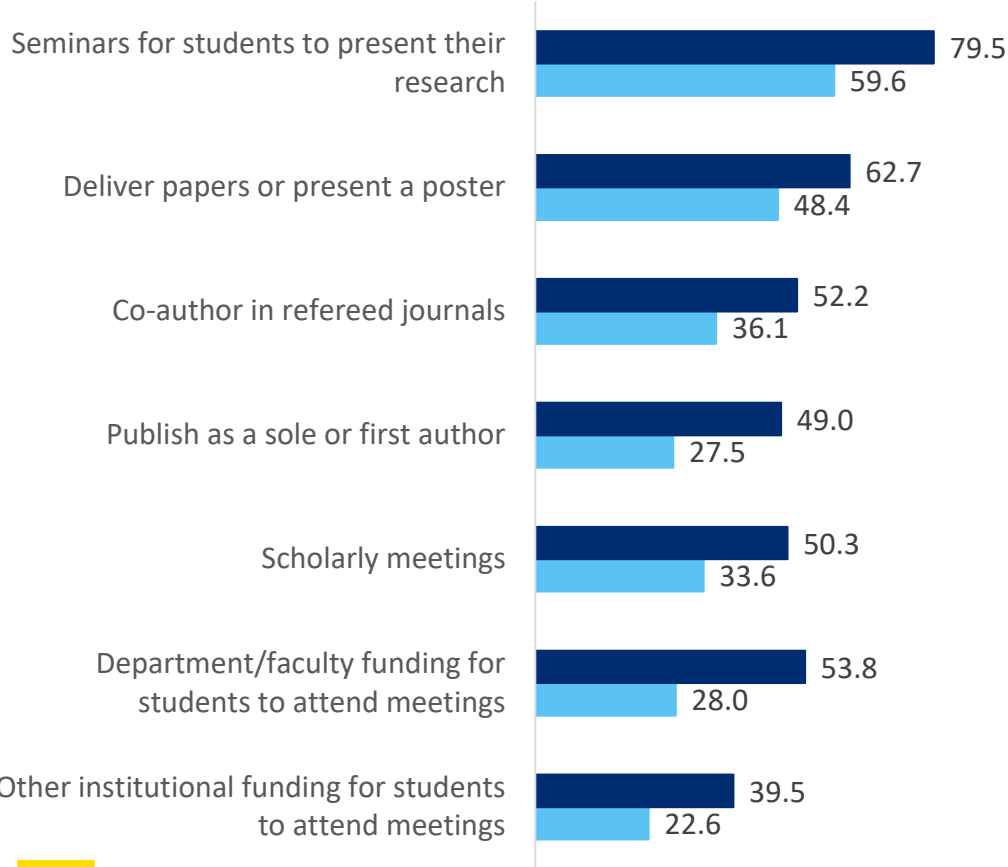
# Publications and presentation opportunities

- Respondents in Doctoral and research-focused Masters programs were asked about the prevalence of various activities related to communicating their findings, including attending scholarly meetings, publishing, and presenting their research.
- Doctoral students were more likely to identify opportunities within their department for all activities.
- A large majority of Masters and Doctoral students reported opportunities to present their work, through seminars, delivering papers, or presenting posters, and both groups reported having done so at least once.
- Both groups of students reported having fewer opportunities to obtain funding (departmental or institutional) for these experiences.
- Responses were consistent with 2019 results.

# Figure 8: Presentations and publications

Percent reporting there was an opportunity to participate

Percent reporting that they had participated at least once (of those who had an opportunity)



■ Doctoral (n = 361) ■ Masters (n = 1,043)

# Assessment of skills development

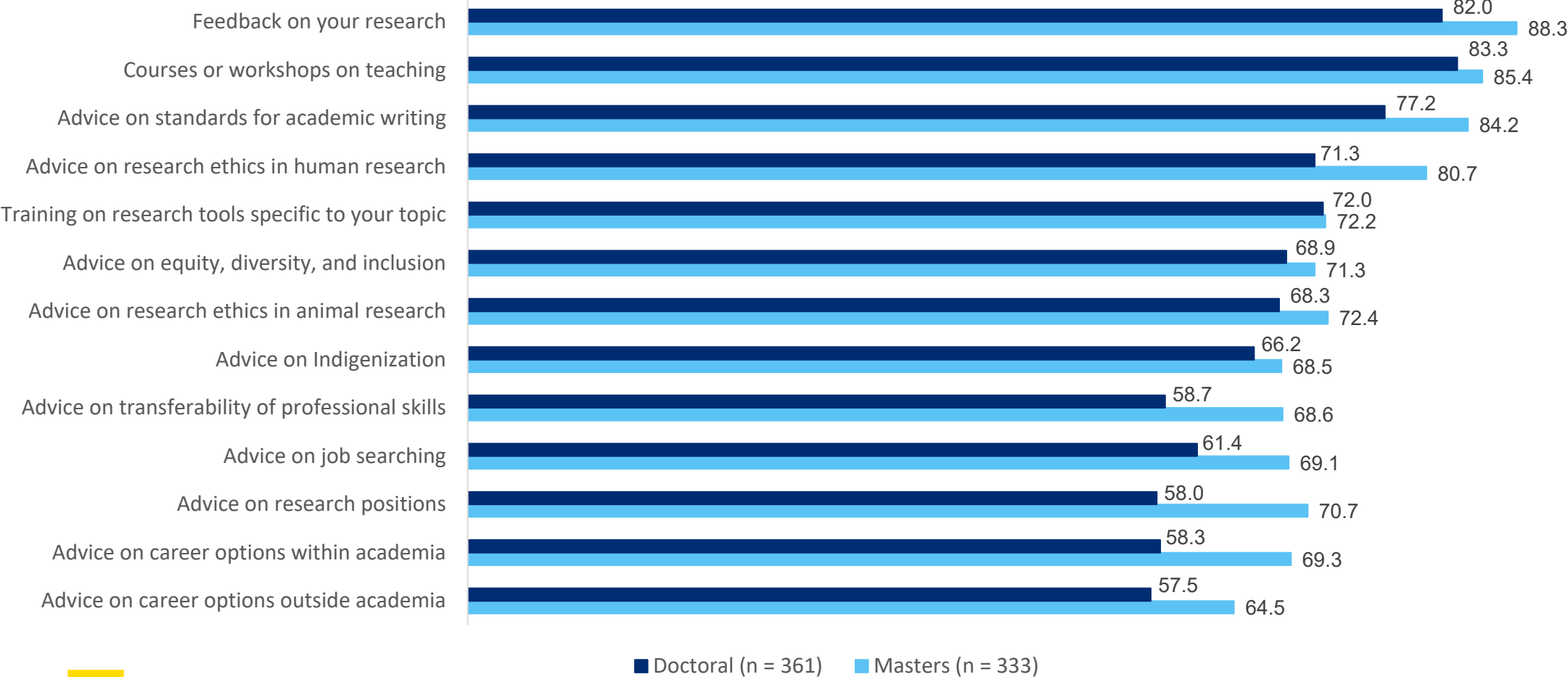
# Academic and professional skills

- The survey includes a series of questions relating to the development of academic and professional skills.
- For research-focused Masters and Doctoral programs, students were the most satisfied with feedback on their research, followed by training that focused on teaching. They were least satisfied with information on career options (shown in Figure 9).
- Doctoral students specifically were most satisfied with the support they received while conducting independent research, while they were least satisfied with information on candidacy examinations (shown in Figure 10).
- Over 83% of respondents in professionally-focused Masters programs had sufficient advice on writing standards. Opportunities for experiential learning showed lowest levels of support (shown in Figure 11).



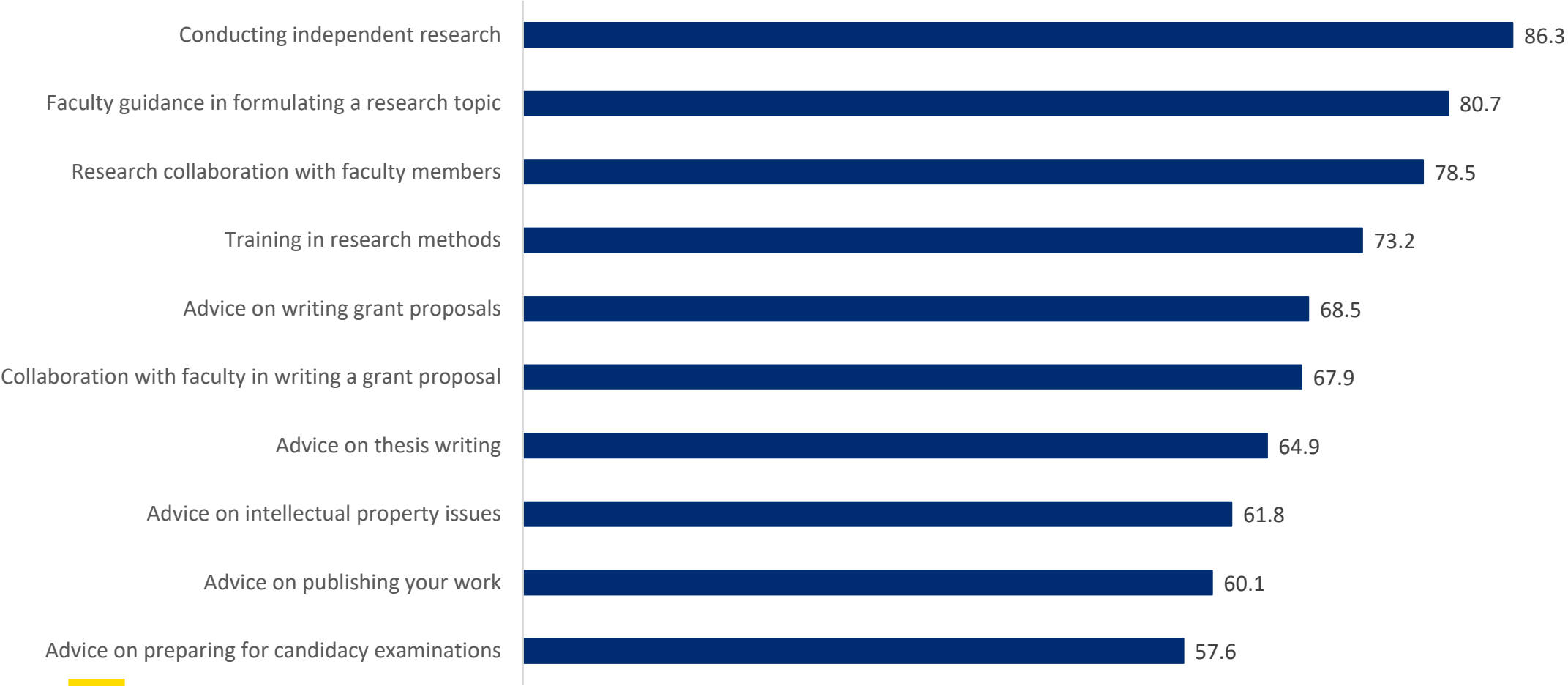
# Figure 9: Academic and transferable skills

Percent reporting good, very good, or excellent support



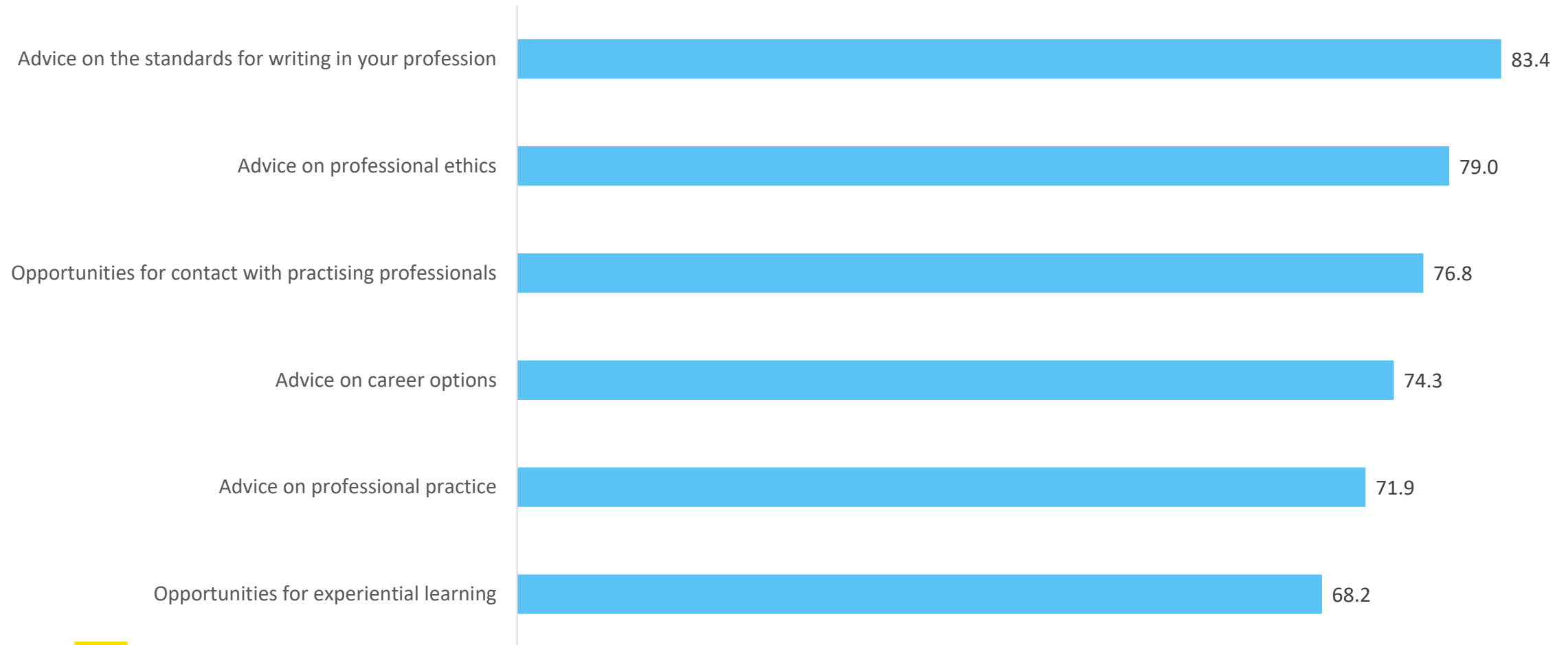
# Figure 10: Research skills for Doctoral students (n = 361)

Percent reporting good, very good, or excellent support



# Figure 11: Skills for professionally-focused Masters students (n = 710)

Percent reporting good, very good, or excellent support



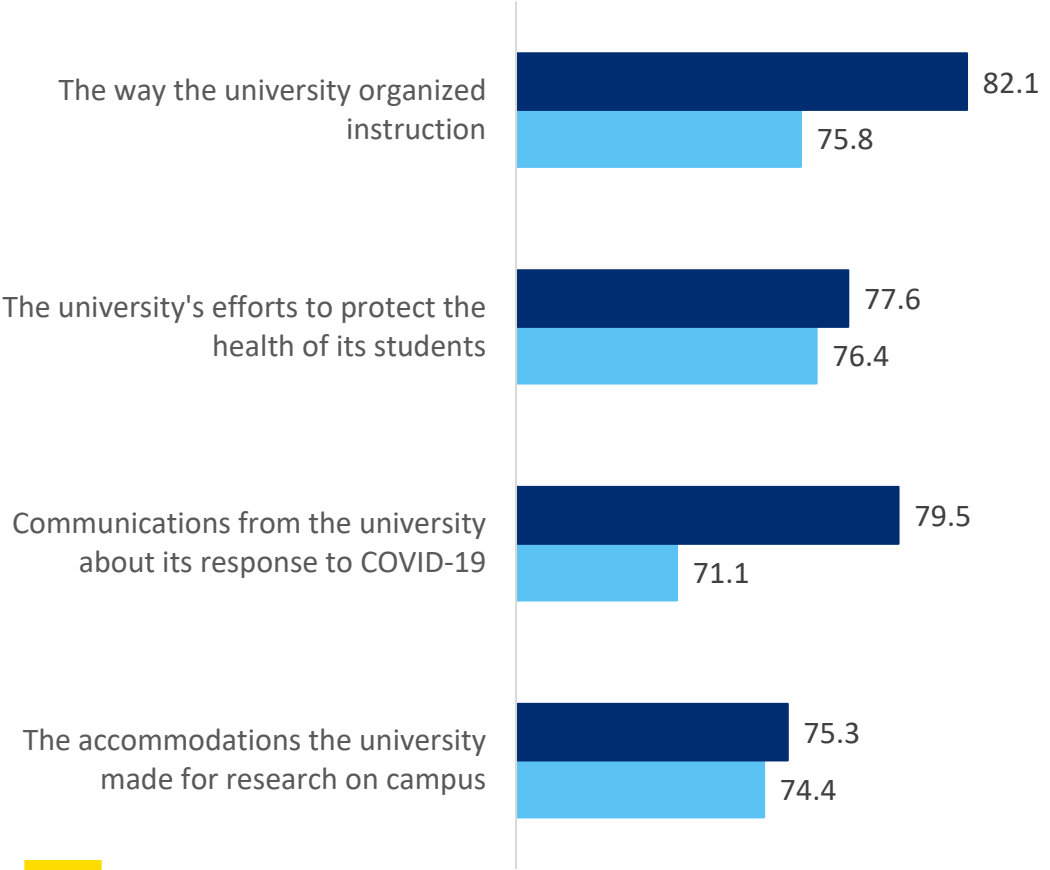
# COVID-19

# COVID-19 response

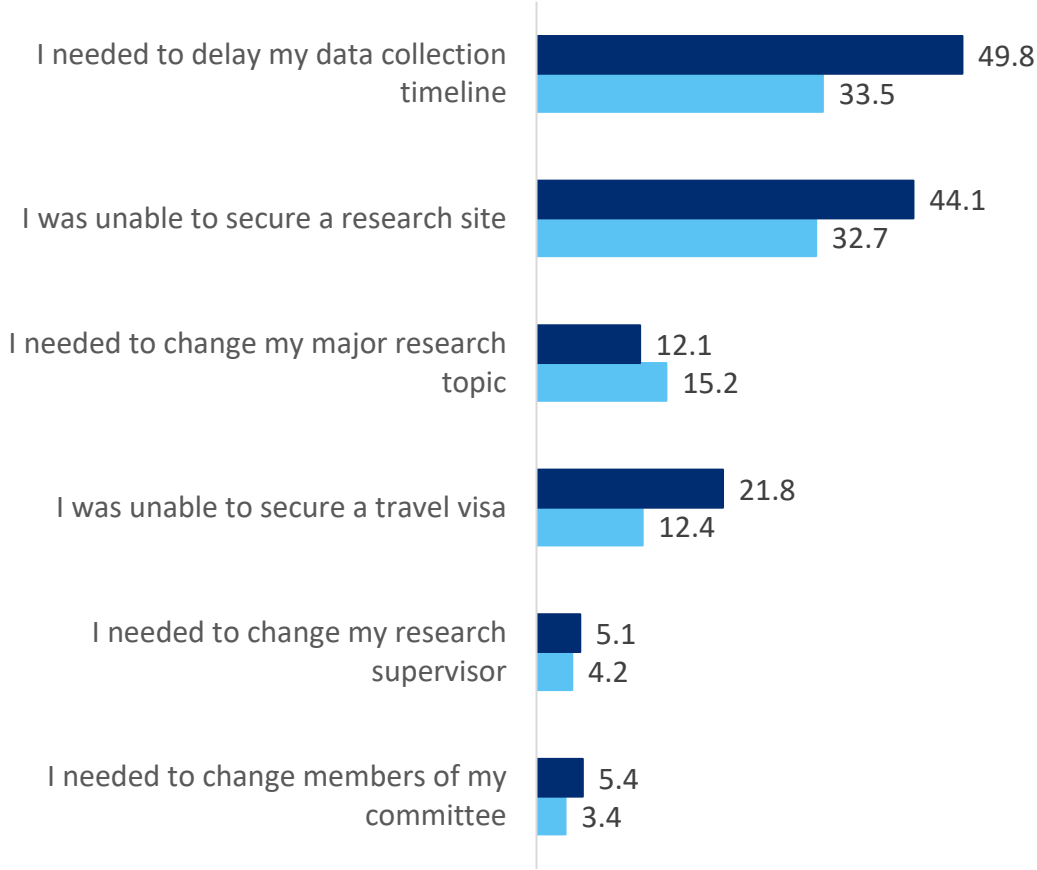
- Students were generally satisfied with the university's response to COVID-19. They were most satisfied with how the university handled changes in instruction.
- Only 20 percent reported a delay in their studies. For those reporting a delay, the majority were delayed by two terms or fewer.
- The largest effects of the pandemic were delays students faced in collecting data for their research and lack of access to research sites.

# Figure 12: Response to COVID-19

Percent reporting they were satisfied or very satisfied



Percent reporting they experienced the effect



■ Doctoral (n = 361) ■ Masters (n = 1,043)

# Respondent profile



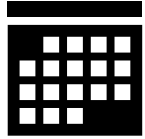
# Demographics

- Broadly, the survey respondents represented the graduate student population at TMU in terms of gender, Faculty, and academic load.
- Students in multi-disciplinary programs were overrepresented in the survey, while students in part-time programs were underrepresented.

Category	Sub-category	Survey respondents	Survey %	Graduate* population	Graduate population %
Degree	Masters	1,043	74.3	2,360	78.5
	Doctoral	361	25.7	646	21.5
Gender	Female	777	55.3	1,590	52.9
	Male	622	44.3	1,399	46.5
	Another gender identity	5	<1	17	<1
Load	Full-time	1,308	93.2	2,714	90.3
	Part-time	96	6.8	292	9.7
Faculty	Arts	164	11.7	367	12.2
	Community Services	171	12.2	426	14.2
	Engineering & Architectural Science	460	32.8	965	32.1
	Science	160	11.4	310	10.3
	The Creative School	112	8.0	280	9.3
	Ted Rogers School of Management	166	11.8	385	12.8
	Multidisciplinary	171	12.2	273	9.1

\*Data includes graduate and professional student headcounts at the Masters, Professional Masters, & Doctoral levels.

# Age, living arrangements, and family



**Age:** Graduate and professional students represent a diverse age range, with almost two-thirds below the age of 30.

21-25: 32.2% | 26-30: 32.6% | 31-35: 16.2% | 36-40: 8.9% | 41-45: 4.9% | Over 45: 5.2%



**Family:** Just under 60 percent of graduate students were single, while approximately 40 percent were married or had a domestic partner.

Divorced: 1.3% | Married: 26.1% | Never married & no domestic partner: 57.8% | Separated: 1.2% | Widowed: 0.3% | With domestic partner: 13.3%



**Children:** 84 percent of survey respondents did not have children, while 16 percent had one or more.

One child: 5.5% | Two children: 7.5% | Three children: 1.8% | Four children or more: 1.4% | No children: 83.8%



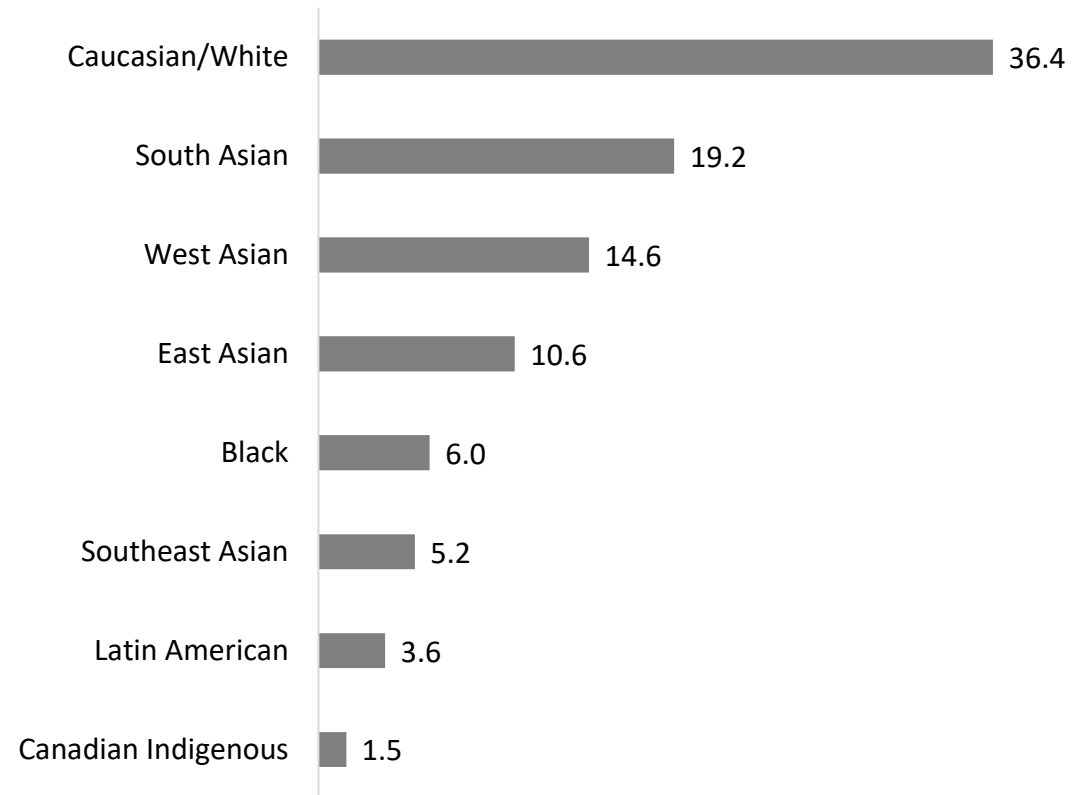
**Housing:** 93 percent of professional and graduate students lived in off-campus housing.

Off-campus housing: 93.3% | On-campus housing: 0.4% | Other: 6.4%

# Diversity at TMU

- 44 percent identified as male, 55 percent as female, and fewer than 1 percent as another gender identity.
- 15 percent of respondents self-identified as 2SLGBTQ+.
- 16 percent self-identified as international.
- Over 60 percent of students self-identified in at least one racialized group.

Ethnicity: Percent identifying as ...  
(Note that because respondents could select more than one category, percentages will not add up to totals on the left.)



# Disability and mental health

- Over one-quarter of respondents self-identified with a disability or impairment (a large increase from the previous survey in 2019).
- Of these:
  - 72% self-identified with a mental health condition;
  - 30% self-identified with a learning disability;
  - 15% self-identified with a chronic condition;
  - 12% self-identified with sensory challenges;
  - 7% self-identified with mobility challenges; and
  - 5% self-identified as being on the autism spectrum.
- Students who informed the university of their disability were generally satisfied with the supports provided (62 percent rated supports as good, very good, or excellent).

# Financial support

# Financial support

- Among graduate students, teaching assistantships and research assistantships were the two most common sources of income used to pay for studies.
- Doctoral students were more likely to use assistantships and fellowships, and less likely to use savings and loans, than Masters students.
- TMU graduate students were more likely than those at other Ontario universities to access provincial scholarships and university-funded fellowships.
- Students enrolled in research-oriented Masters programs tended to use university supports to a greater extent than those in professionally-oriented Masters programs, who were more likely to use loans, savings, or family assistance.

# Debt

- 58 percent of respondents expected to accumulate at least some debt by the conclusion of their graduate experience (48% of Doctoral students and 61% of Masters students).
- For those who did expect to accumulate debt during their graduate studies, over 80% of graduate students expected their debt to be under \$30,000 at time of graduation.

# Conclusions



# Conclusions

- Generally, graduate students at TMU were satisfied with their experiences during their time at the university:
  - Over 80 percent of graduate students reported having a good, very good, or excellent experience; would choose the same university if starting over; and rated the quality of the teaching as good, very good, or excellent.
  - Student life experience and opportunities for interactions outside their departments are areas where students reported lower levels of satisfaction.
  - Library, IT, Indigenous Office, and academic support services saw high levels of satisfaction, while housing was a service that saw lower levels of satisfaction.
  - Students generally also reported lower levels of satisfaction when it came to information about careers and job prospects (inside and outside academia).
- Questions and comments on these survey results can be directed to the University Planning Office: [upo@torontomu.ca](mailto:upo@torontomu.ca)