2025
Middle Eastern
Student Wellbeing
Survey

Research carried out by YouGov

February 2025

Studiosity

Contents

YouGov®

The education sector has the greatest potential to change the world - students become future researchers, teachers, business owners, leaders, carers, and more, contributing to the rich societal fabric that the world needs. To protect and grow the education sector, listening and responding to the feedback, concerns, and recommendations of college students is a necessary challenge.

It is evident that students are navigating a changing academic terrain. Personalised support, a heightened sense of belonging, and rapid adaptation to AI supports are paramount .

This survey captures the voices of students, to support education leaders in their ongoing efforts to offer students an educational experience that aligns with both their study expectations and aspirations for the future.

Foreword

To all our partners in education:

Higher education in the Middle East - and across the globe - is in the midst of significant transformation, driven by technology, shifting student needs, and evolving societal expectations. This annual Student Wellbeing survey continues to provide student-centric guidance for leaders and policymakers. It offers insights to celebrate the sector's strengths, address emerging gaps, and ensure our educational institutions remain adaptive, ethical, and responsive to the diverse and evolving needs of today's students - including both a positive education experience as well as evidence of skills mastery in this age of AI.

In partnership with your institution and others, we remain steadfast in our core mission of increasing life chances for students, everywhere. We continue to prioritise student wellbeing and are committed to supporting the sector in navigating the challenges and opportunities in the years ahead.

Michael Larsen
Chief Executive Officer, Studiosity

Studiosity

Foreword

Education, specifically higher education, is an essential indicator of societal progress, shaping the minds of future leaders, innovators, and policymakers. As an academic, I have witnessed the transformative power of higher education through its ability to impart knowledge and the resilience and well-being it fosters among students. As an economist, I recognise that a nation's future prosperity is tied to the success and well-being of its current students. This is particularly true for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which has undergone significant economic and social transformations. According to the World Bank, the region's combined gross domestic product (GDP) increased from US$ 3 trillion in 1970 to US$106.16 trillion in 2023. Even after considering inflation, the real GDP has grown fivefold over the same period. Adult literacy has increased from 50% in 1970 to 87% in 2023.

These and other achievements in the region have been possible due to the expansion of higher education across the MENA region. Whilst the region is home to some of the world's earliest universities, fifty years ago, it had a little over 170 universities, which by 2024 had increased to well over 500 institutions of higher education. This is a testament to the region's investment in higher education.

The growth of higher education also brings challenges, and the findings of the Middle East Student Wellbeing Survey 2025 reveal critical insights into the issues students face. Generative AI, employability, student experiences, institutional belonging, and managing stress remain significant concerns. In an ever-changing world, universities must prioritise these issues; therefore, it is hoped that the insights from this survey will translate into policies and initiatives. I am convinced that this report will ignite meaningful discussions and drive impactful change, ensuring that the next generation of graduates in the MENA region is equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of the modern world.

Dr Ashraf A. Mahate

Studiosity

Introduction

Background

YouGov

YouGov is a global public opinion and data company, international market research and data analytics firm headquartered in the UK with operations in Europe, North America, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific.

Studiosity

Studiosity's AI for Learning is a critical component of the modern university, ensuring all students can engage in ethical generative AI to receive feedback, for successful, credible, graduate outcomes with visible learning outcomes for teachers. Universities around the world partner with Studiosity to grow student success at scale, via 24/7 formative writing feedback, discussion about core skills, and peer-to-peer connection.

For nine years, Studiosity has run an annual Student Wellbeing Survey with Australia's university students. In October 2024, YouGov was commissioned by Studiosity to conduct the ninth wave of this global research.

Objectives

The survey investigates students' own responses to key areas of their wellbeing during study. This annual survey seeks to better understand and discuss the motivations, emotions, and demands of university students, to provide the data and findings to higher education leadership, to support initiatives and solutions. This year, the survey focused on topics such as experiences of artificial intelligence, connection to other students, stress, importance of grades, experiences of cheating, optimism for the future, and institutional belonging.

Methodology

Sample & Target Group:

Studiosity produced the questions for this survey with advice from YouGov to ensure robust data collection. YouGov gathered the responses from students in Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates via an online survey.

The survey was conducted by the YouGov. The survey ran from 12th November to 16th December 2024 and gained 10,224 responses, with 554 from students in the UAE and 511 from students in Saudi Arabia

This survey was collected on the YouGov Panels and partner panels, where each member has accepted to participate in online interviews and has received an E-mail invitation with a link to the survey. The sample definition is created in order to provide a representative cross-section of the UAE and KSA populations, based on the target group and the purpose of the survey.

Weighting:

Data was weighted according to the dimensions of gender, level of university studies finished and geography on the basis of an ideal weighting from The Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Centre, so that the results are representative of the population in relation to the aforementioned target group.

Key findings
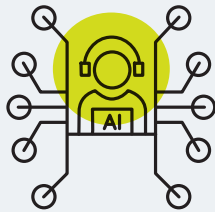
AI EXPECTATION:

Middle Eastern students still have the highest expectations of AI support in the world.

The large majority of students (69%, n=756) expect their university to offer AI support tools in 2025. UAE students expect it slightly more than KSA (70% compared to 68%). Globally, 54% of students expect AI-powered support tools.

EMPLOYABILITY:

The majority of students (63%) are optimistic about getting a job in their related field within 6 months of graduation

This drops to 56% for part-time students, 48% for unemployed students, and 49% for those studying Languages. Part-time students also recorded less agreement with the statement "I have strong English writing and communication skills needed to apply for and get a job" (68%) compared to the average (74%).
This could indicate that students studying part time require more career support.

BELONGING / STRESS:

The Middle East continues to show high levels of student 'belonging', which is an indicator for success.

Students feel that they belong to their institutions at a very high rate. However, the rate of study-related stress doesn't appear to be changing year on year, and the majority of students feel stressed by study weekly or more often. This year one of the key reasons given for stress was a 'fear of failure', particularly pronounced in certain groups (including female students in the UAE and younger students in Saudi Arabia).

Demographics: Student profiles

The students (n=1,065) represented a mix of domestic (41%, n = 437) and international (59%, n=628) students.

Of respondents, 60% were male and 40% female, with the majority (61%) being in the 18-25 year old age group.

33% had just completed their third year of study in 2024, and 30% completed a postgraduate level, 19% second year, and 18% first year.

51% report English as their first language; of those for whom it is not, 65% record Arabic, and 11% Urdu.

Most students (40%) were employed part time, with 29% full time, 14% casual and 16% not in paid employment at all. Despite this, 3 in 4 students had a full-time study load, with only 1 in 4 studying part time. Business is the most common study area (27%), followed by STEM (25%).
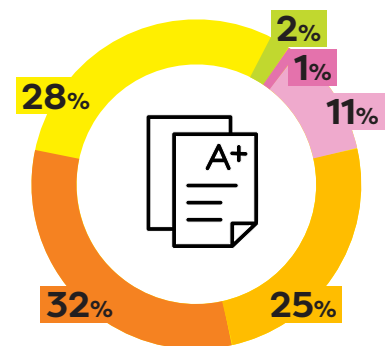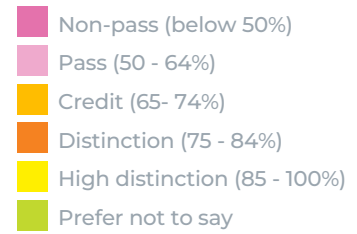
Survey respondents self-report a mix of grades, though mostly higher - 36% Credit or Pass, with 60% of students reporting Distinction or High Distinction.

42% are carers - people who provide unpaid care or other support to family members and friends at the same time as study.

Compared to the prior year, the same amount of university students in the Middle East are working while studying (84%), with a slight rise in full-time work (3% up), but a drop (2%) in casual/temporary work during study. Younger students were more likely to be unemployed (UAE 23%, KSA 20% of 18-25 year olds) during study than their older peers.

Compared to average global responses (81%), Middle Eastern students reported similar rates of employment (84%) - lower than Australian university students (86%), higher than the UK (73%) and on par with the United States (82%).

AVERAGE GRADE

- ■ Non-pass (below 50%)
- ■ Pass (50 - 64%)
- ■ Credit (65- 74%)
- ■ Distinction (75 - 84%)
- ■ High distinction (85 - 100%)
- ■ Prefer not to say

2% **1%** **11%** **28%** **32%** **25%**

n = 1065

YOY MIDDLE EASTERN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS – EMPLOYMENT DURING STUDY

■ UAE ■ KSA

	2022			2023			2024		
Yes, full-time	40%	32%	**36%**	27%	25%	**26%**	23%	35%	**29%**	
Yes, part-time	39%	44%	**42%**	36%	45%	**40%**	44%	36%	**40%**	
Yes, casual/ temporary work	11%	11%	**11%**	15%	19%	**17%**	15%	14%	**14%**	
No, not currently employed	10%	13%	**11%**	14%	19%	**16%**	17%	15%	**16%**	
NET: Yes	90%	87%	**89%**	81%	86%	**84%**	83%	85%	**84%**	

Most students have used AI tools to help with their studies, older students use it more frequently

Q. Have you used any AI tools to help with your assignments or study tasks?

A large majority of students (94%) have used AI tools to help them with assignments or study tasks, with 38% reporting 'regular' frequency, 44% using AI tools 'a few times' and 12% only 'once or twice'. Female students are more likely to 'never' have used AI tools for study, with 8% reporting 'Never' compared to 3% of male students. Interestingly, the older age group of 26-33 year olds report more frequent use of AI tools compared to the younger group (18-25 year olds), with 47% stating 'regular' use compared to 32% of the younger group. Yet overall the younger group has a lower level of 'never' having used AI tools for study.

Similarly, domestic students are also more likely to use AI tools 'frequently' but overall International students are more likely to report some use of AI tools compared to their domestic counterparts.

USED AI TOOLS TO HELP WITH ASSIGNMENTS OR STUDY TASKS

38%
12%
5%
44%

- Yes, regularly
- Yes, a few times
- Yes, once or twice
- Never
- Not sure
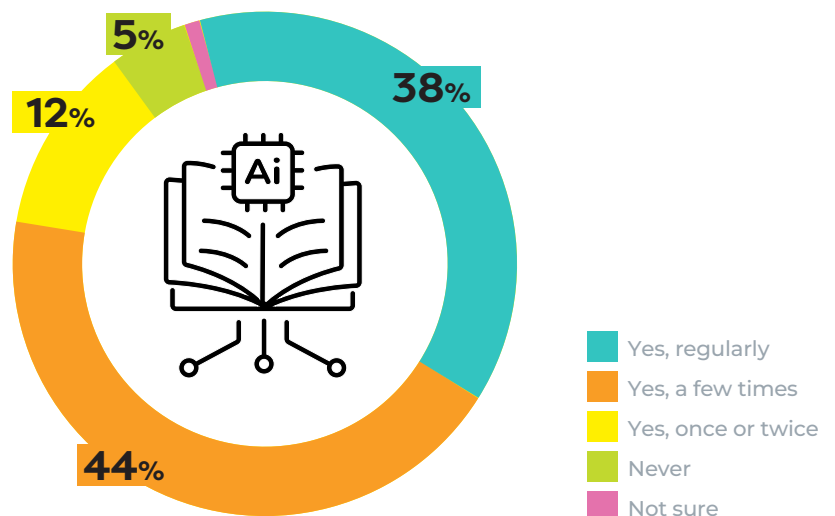
USED AI TOOLS TO HELP WITH ASSIGNMENTS OR STUDY TASKS - AGE / STATUS

- Yes, regularly
- Yes, a few times
- Yes, once or twice
- Never
- Not sure

	Yes, regularly	Yes, a few times	Yes, once or twice	Never
Age 18 - 25	32%	47%	16%	4%
Age 26 - 33	47%	39%	6%	6%
International student	36%	48%	12%	4%
Domestic student	41%	39%	13%	6%
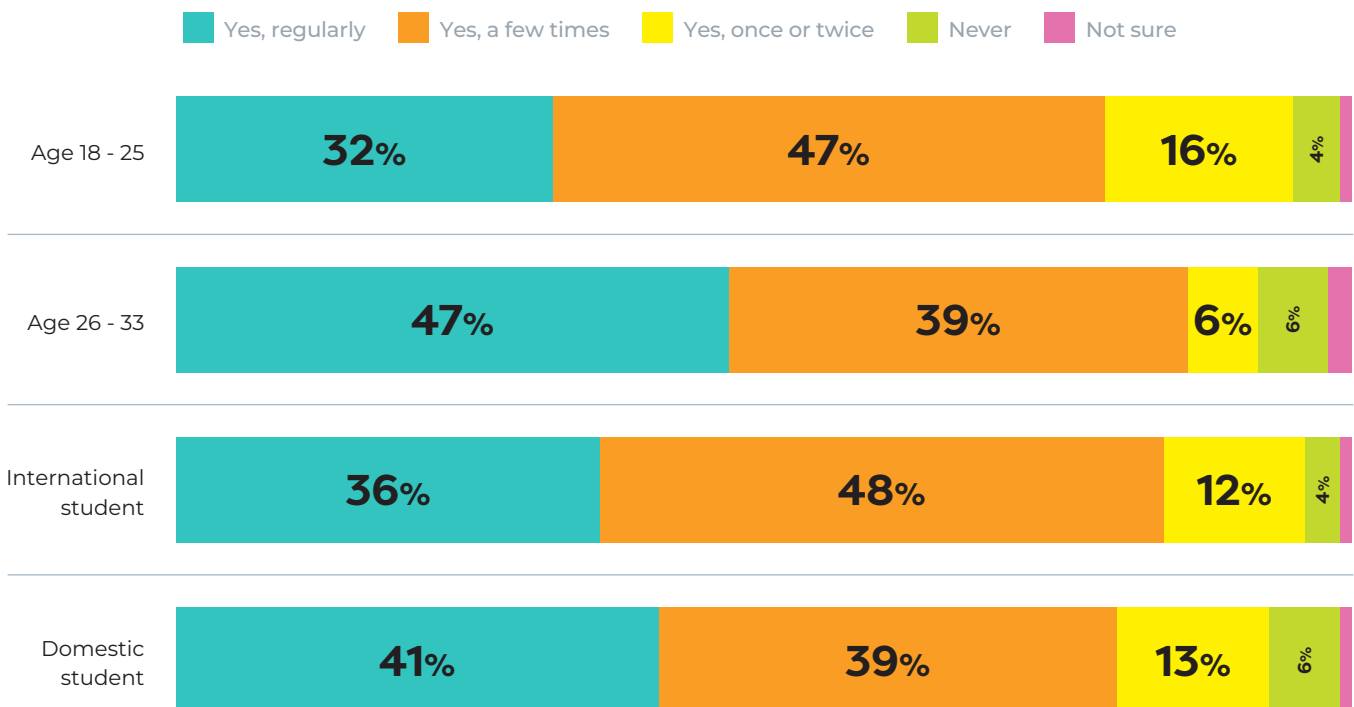
Globally, UAE students still have the highest expectation of AI

In the 2024 Middle East Student Wellbeing Survey, the UAE took out the top spot globally for expectations of AI-powered support. This year, despite a fourteen percentage point drop overall in 'Yes' responses (70% compared to 84% in 2024), they are still the leading country out of all the surveyed regions with this expectation.
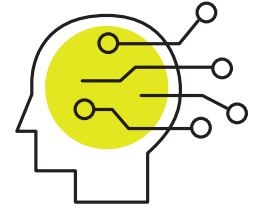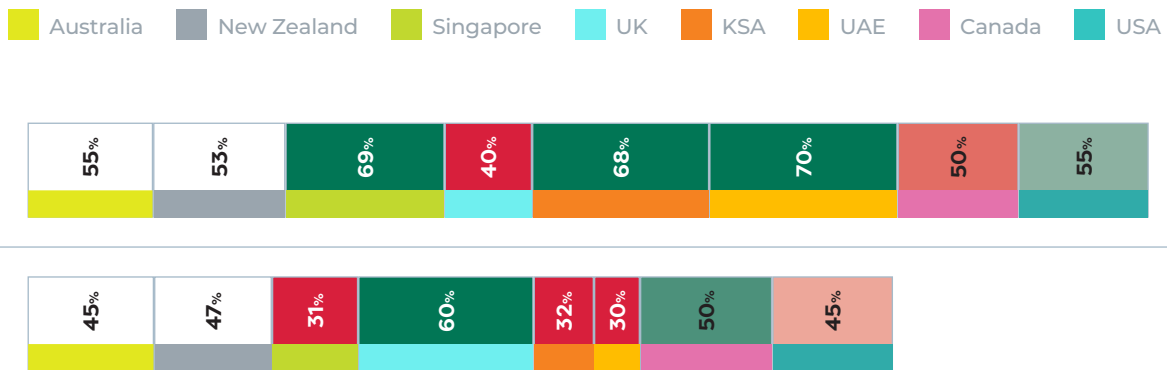
EXPECT UNIVERSITY TO OFFER AI SUPPORT TOOLS - GLOBAL

Legend: Australia | New Zealand | Singapore | UK | KSA | UAE | Canada | USA

Yes:
- Australia: 55%
- New Zealand: 53%
- Singapore: 69%
- UK: 40%
- KSA: 68%
- UAE: 70%
- Canada: 50%
- USA: 55%

No:
- Australia: 45%
- New Zealand: 47%
- Singapore: 31%
- UK: 60%
- KSA: 32%
- UAE: 30%
- Canada: 50%
- USA: 45%

Q. Do you expect your university to give you access to generative AI (artificial intelligence) tools to support your studies?

Q. Is your university adapting quickly enough to include AI (artificial intelligence) support tools to help with your study?

This overwhelming expectation that universities provide AI support is evident across all age groups, genders, and study modes. Those who attend university on campus or partly on campus appear to have a stronger expectation than those who are wholly online or rarely on campus.

International students have a higher expectation for AI support (74% 'yes') than domestic (65% 'yes'). Students whose first language is English also have a higher expectation for this type of support (77%), compared to those whose first language is not English (61%). All faculties reported a majority expecting AI-based support, however the expectation is highest among Humanities and Social Sciences students (n = 36) (88%) and lowest among Nursing

EXPECT UNIVERSITY TO OFFER AI SUPPORT TOOLS - STUDY MODE

Legend: Yes | No

- Away from campus / distance only: Yes 62%, No 38%
- On campus only: Yes 75%, No 25%
- Mix of both campus / away from campus: Yes 72%, No 28%
- Away from campus / occasional visits on campus: Yes 52%, No 48%
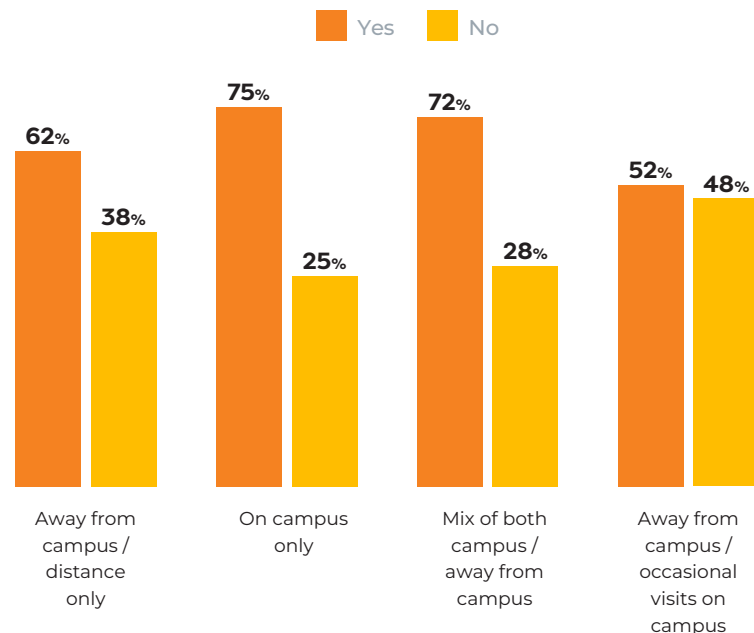
students (n = 15) (53%).

Most (72% n=399) UAE students agree that their university is moving fast enough to include AI support tools for study. Older students aged 26-33 are more likely to agree (78% 'yes'), where a third of younger students aged 18-25 think their university could be moving faster to adapt and include AI support.

EXPECT AI support provided by the uni	DO NOT EXPECT AI support provided by the uni
"AI is at a fast growing pace and it's better to adjust your self and learn"	"Because many students use AI without double checking and verifying the work before submitting it."
"Because it looks like it's going to be necessary in the future"	"I'm not too aware of the policy around using AI tools in my university nor was it ever mentioned"
"I expect my university to give me access to university in built AI support as that would also help them keep check on us so we don't overuse it."	"Students will not use there brain and will only rely on tools"
	"I don't think they can give us all the access we want"

Using AI support with agency and for skills mastery

Q. How confident are you that you are learning as well as improving your own skills while using generative AI tools?

Most students (71%) are at least 'moderately confident' that they are learning as well as improving their own skills when using genAI tools, with 13% feeling 'Extremely confident'. Male students are more likely to feel 'extremely confident' (16%) compared to females (8%).

Students who are struggling academically may feel less sure that they are using AI tools for their own learning gain, while higher-performing students report more confidence in this regard.

Non-Pass (Below 50% grade): A significant number of these students (51%) are either 'Not confident' or 'Slightly confident' that they are learning while using AI tools.

Pass (50-64% grade): While narrowly more confident than non-pass students, half (50%) are 'Not confident' or 'Slightly confident', and 80% just 'Moderately confident' or below that they are developing their own skills while using AI.

Credit (65-74% grade) and above: Confidence appears to improve with higher grades, with more of these students expressing moderate or above confidence that they are developing their own skills (70%+).

The availability of a peer Mentor had a positive correlation on students' believing they were learning with agency while using AI tools. 44% of people who had a student mentor felt 'very confident' or 'extremely confident' that they were learning and improving with AI.

"Generative AI can offer instant inspiration. When I'm stuck on an essay or project, it provides diverse ideas. It's like having a brainstorming partner available 24/7. This helps me break through creative blocks and accelerates my learning process, making complex tasks seem more approachable and less daunting."

"It makes studying too easy and hinders the student from learning"

CONFIDENCE ABOUT LEARNING AND IMPROVING SKILLS WHILE USING AI, BY GRADE

- Not at all confident
- Slightly confident
- Moderately confident
- Very confident
- Extremely confident

Grade	Not at all confident	Slightly confident	Moderately confident	Very confident	Extremely confident
Non-pass (below 50%)	16%	35%	40%	9%	
Pass (50 - 64%)	5%	45%	30%	10%	11%
Credit (65 - 74%)	5%	24%	35%	26%	10%
Distinction (75 - 84%)		22%	30%	36%	11%
High Distinction (85 - 100%)		26%	21%	30%	21%
Prefer not to say	23%	9%	30%	38%	
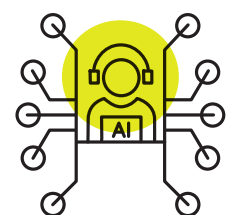
CONFIDENCE ABOUT LEARNING AND IMPROVING SKILLS WHILE USING AI, BY STUDY SUBJECT
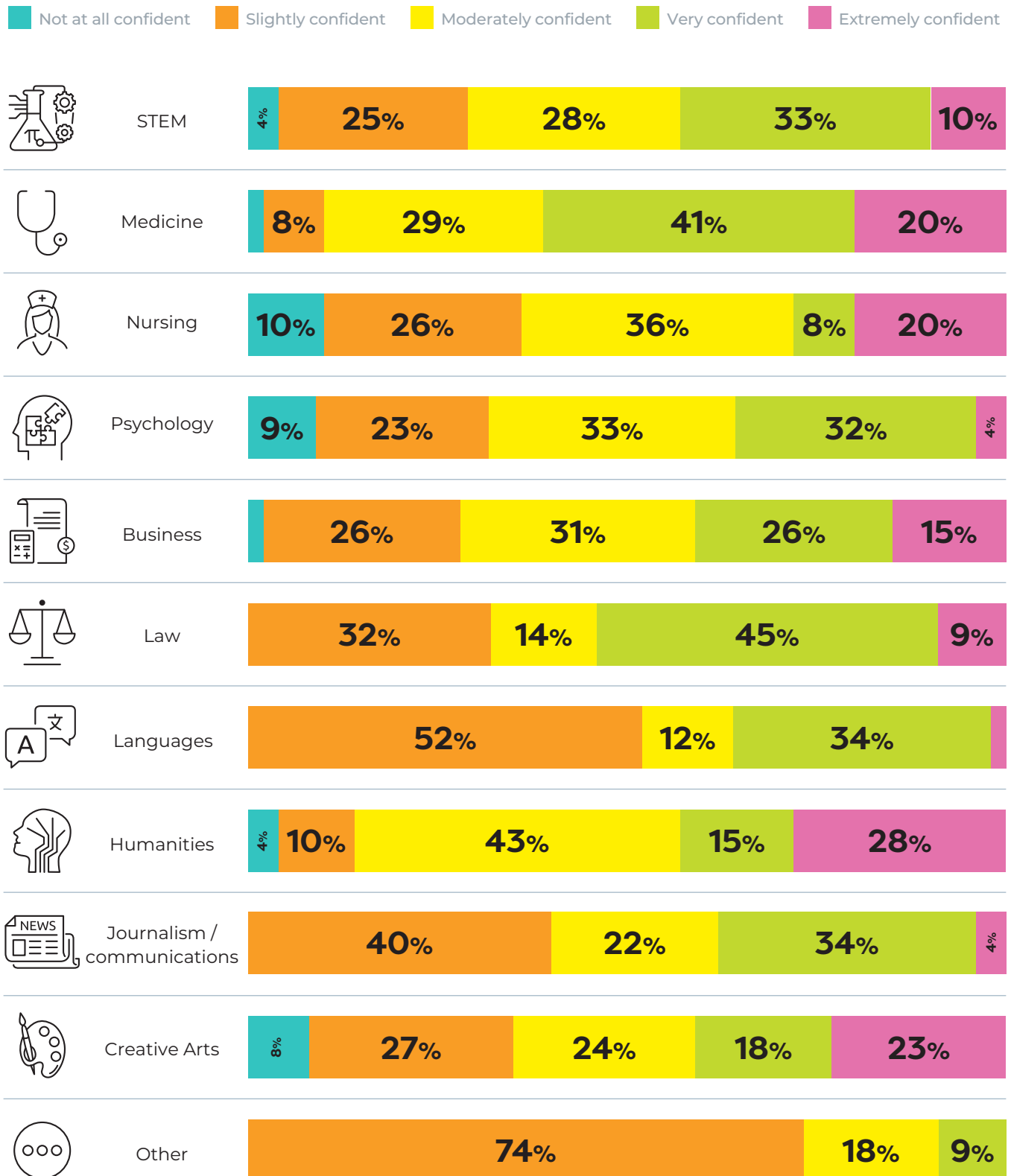
■ Not at all confident ■ Slightly confident ■ Moderately confident ■ Very confident ■ Extremely confident

Subject	Not at all confident	Slightly confident	Moderately confident	Very confident	Extremely confident
STEM	4%	25%	28%	33%	10%
Medicine		8%	29%	41%	20%
Nursing	10%	26%	36%	8%	20%
Psychology	9%	23%	33%	32%	4%
Business		26%	31%	26%	15%
Law		32%	14%	45%	9%
Languages		52%	12%	34%	
Humanities	4%	10%	43%	15%	28%
Journalism / communications		40%	22%	34%	4%
Creative Arts	8%	27%	24%	18%	23%
Other		74%	18%	9%	

Q. What is the main reason you would use the university's AI (artificial intelligence) support or feedback?

Students' top reasons for using their university's AI support tools is to 'learn how to use AI tools' (25%), closely followed by to bolster 'confidence that they're on the right track throughout their assignment' and 'Speed - only waiting minutes, not several days for feedback' (both 18%). Male respondents were more likely to choose 'AI skills' (26%) and female respondents were more likely to choose 'Speed' (21%).

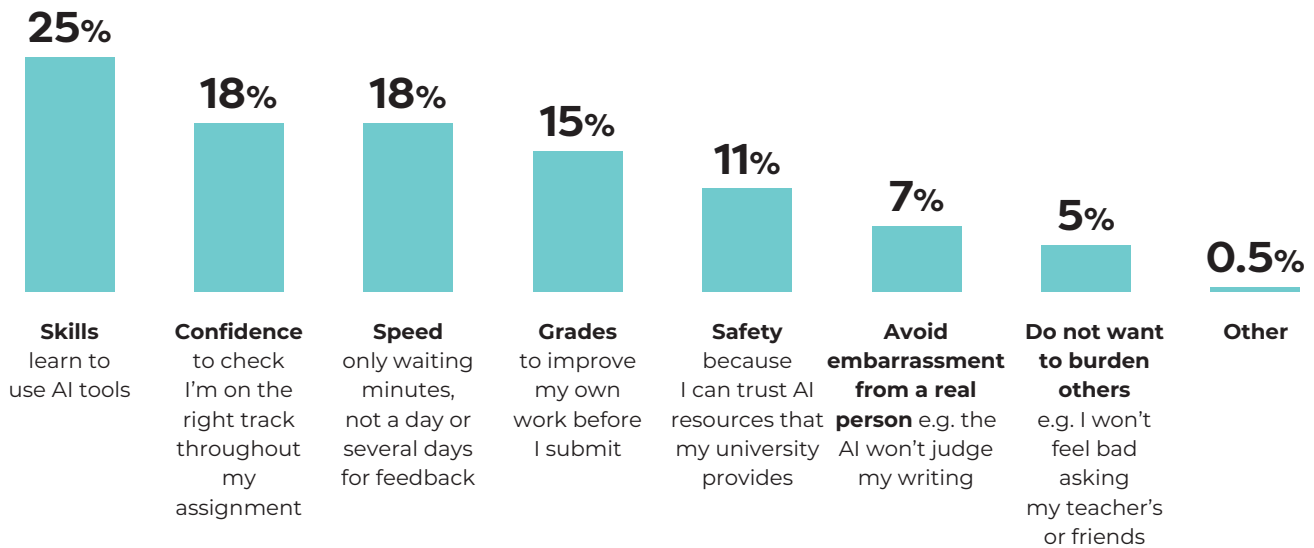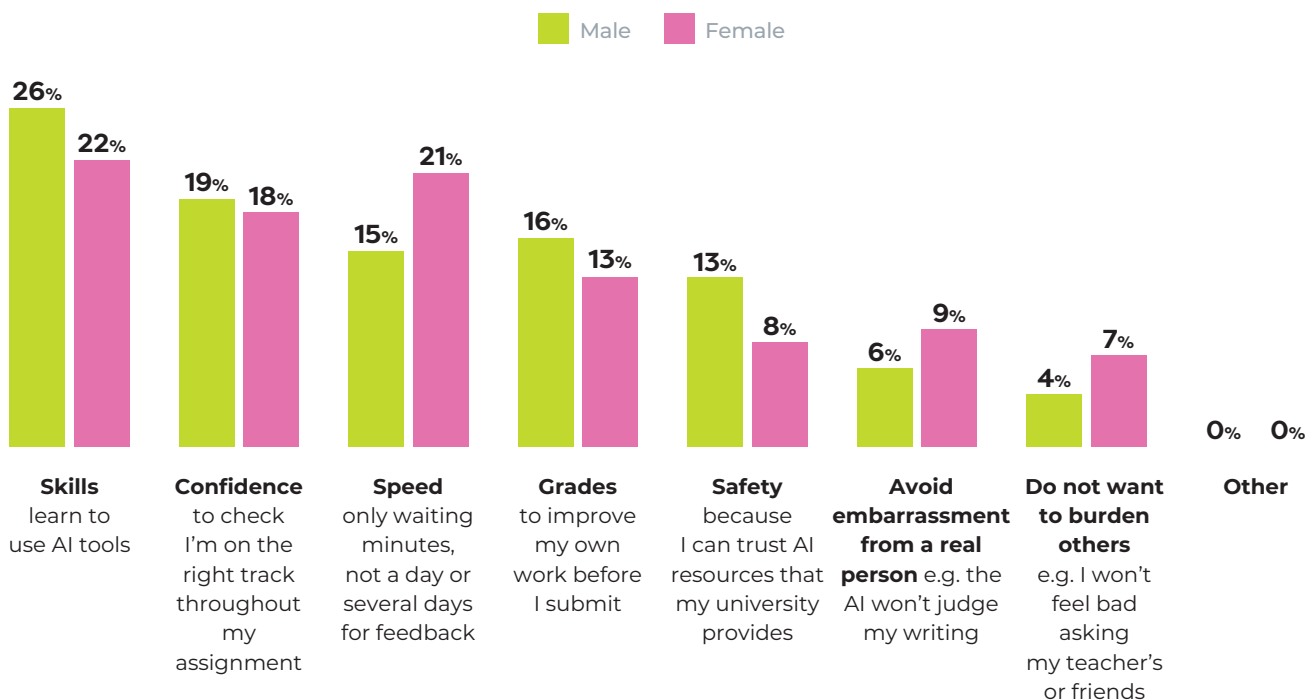This reasoning is somewhat in contrast with the rest of the world, where 'confidence - to check I'm on the right track throughout my assessment' was the main reason students would look to AI-based support (23%). The UAE respondents showed a greater interest in 'Skills' and also 'Safety' around AI, compared to the rest of the world, which is in keeping with last year's results.

MAIN REASON FOR USING UNIVERSITY'S AI SUPPORT OR FEEDBACK

Skills learn to use AI tools	Confidence to check I'm on the right track throughout my assignment	Speed only waiting minutes, not a day or several days for feedback	Grades to improve my own work before I submit	Safety because I can trust AI resources that my university provides	Avoid embarrassment from a real person e.g. the AI won't judge my writing	Do not want to burden others e.g. I won't feel bad asking my teacher's or friends	Other
25%	18%	18%	15%	11%	7%	5%	0.5%

MAIN REASON FOR USING UNIVERSITY'S AI SUPPORT OR FEEDBACK – GENDER

■ Male ■ Female

	Skills learn to use AI tools	Confidence to check I'm on the right track throughout my assignment	Speed only waiting minutes, not a day or several days for feedback	Grades to improve my own work before I submit	Safety because I can trust AI resources that my university provides	Avoid embarrassment from a real person e.g. the AI won't judge my writing	Do not want to burden others e.g. I won't feel bad asking my teacher's or friends	Other
Male	26%	19%	15%	16%	13%	6%	4%	0%
Female	22%	18%	21%	13%	8%	9%	7%	0%

MAIN REASON FOR USING UNIVERSITY'S AI SUPPORT OR FEEDBACK - GLOBAL

Legend: Australia · New Zealand · Singapore · UK · KSA · UAE · Canada · USA

Confidence – to check I'm on the right track throughout my assignment
25% · 31% · 19% · 25% · 16% · 18% · 21% · 23% — **23%**

Speed – only waiting minutes, not a day or several days for feedback
16% · 16% · 27% · 16% · 19% · 18% · 14% · 16% — **17%**

Grades – to improve my own work before I submit
20% · 16% · 18% · 13% · 15% · 15% · 19% · 18% — **17%**

Skills – learn to use AI tools
12% · 12% · 13% · 13% · 18% · 25% · 15% · 15% — **14%**

Don't want to burden others – e.g. I won't feel bad asking for teacher's or friend's time
7% · 8% · 10% · 7% · 11% · 5% · 10% · 8% — **8%**

Safety – because I can trust AI resources that my university provides
7% · 7% · 6% · 5% · 15% · 11% · 8% · 9% — **8%**

Avoid embarrassment from a real person – e.g. the AI won't judge my writing
7% · 7% · 6% · 7% · 6% · 7% · 8% · 8% — **7%**

Other
6% · 4% · 1% · 14% · 0% · 0% · 4% · 4% — **6%**

Significance legend: p<001 · p<01 · p<05 · p<10 · p<10 · p<05 · p<01 · p<001

Higher stress and greater use of AI for study help

Q. How much stress have you experienced while using AI tools as part of studies?

Students reporting 'constant' stress about study in general, also reported 'Yes, regularly' to using any AI tools to help with study. (56%, compared to 38% overall).

When it comes to stress related to using AI, the higher a student performs academically, the less likely they are to say they experience stress about using the technology. For instance, for 'Non pass / Below 50%' students, 91% of students reported feeling some level of stress related to using AI in their studies. For 'High Distinction / 85%+ students', this falls to 62% feeling any AI-related stress - while noting that this is still a high proportion in that population.

Medicine students are the least stressed about using AI technology as part of their studies. Students studying psychology were the most stressed overall (only 14% reporting 'no stress') about using AI with their studies. Similarly, only 30% of online/ distance students reported 'no stress' experienced while using AI tools (compared to 37% 'No stress' for mixed mode students).

Faculty variance may point to a need for normalisation and fair access to the technology.
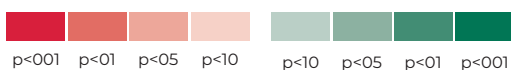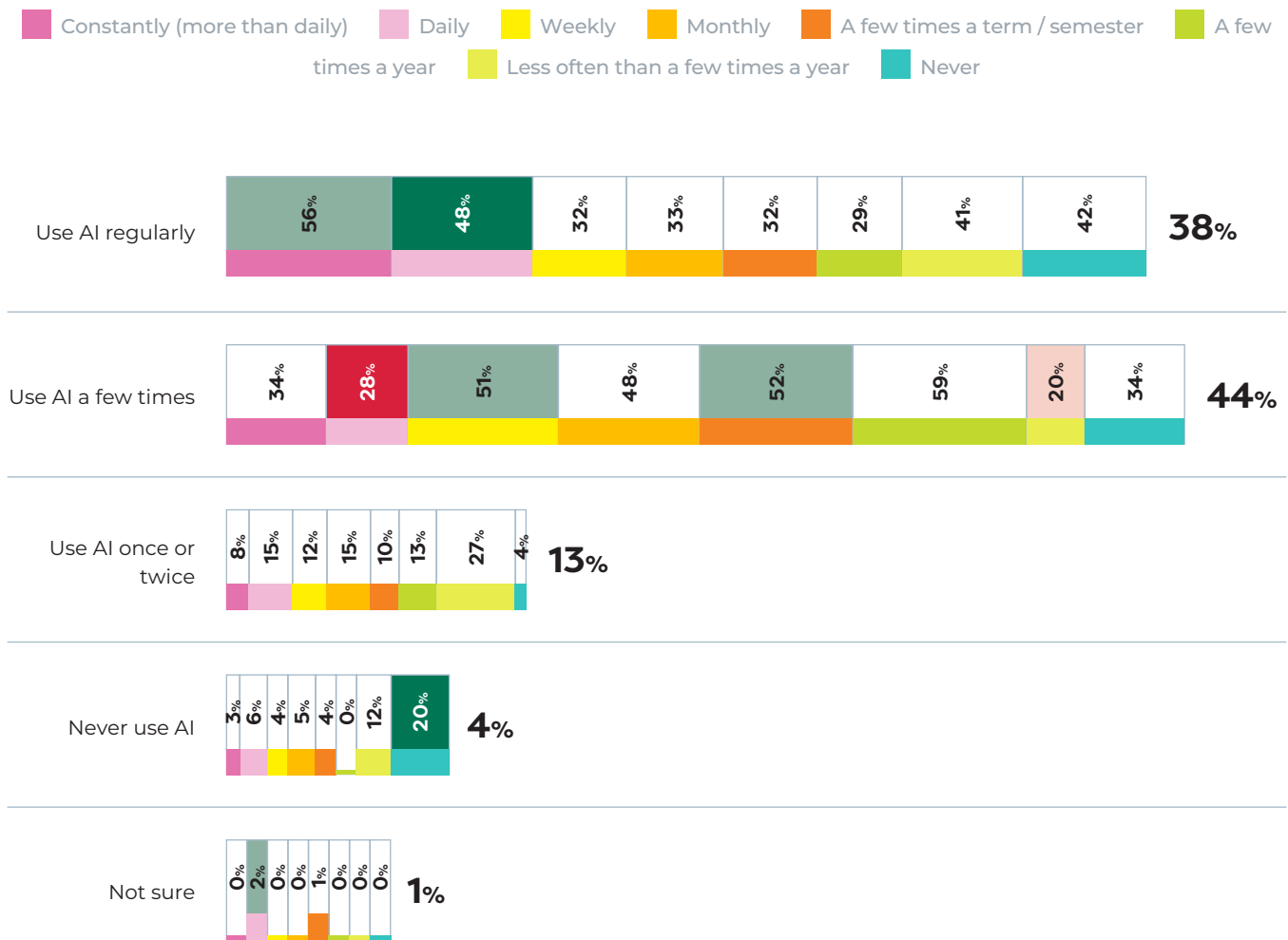
"Feel like the AI might be wrong"

"I don't feel safe using AI because it just gives summarized information and there is a risk of being accused of plagiarism if I use it often."

"I feel our data can be leaks"

"Worried about plagiarism and if the content is authentic"

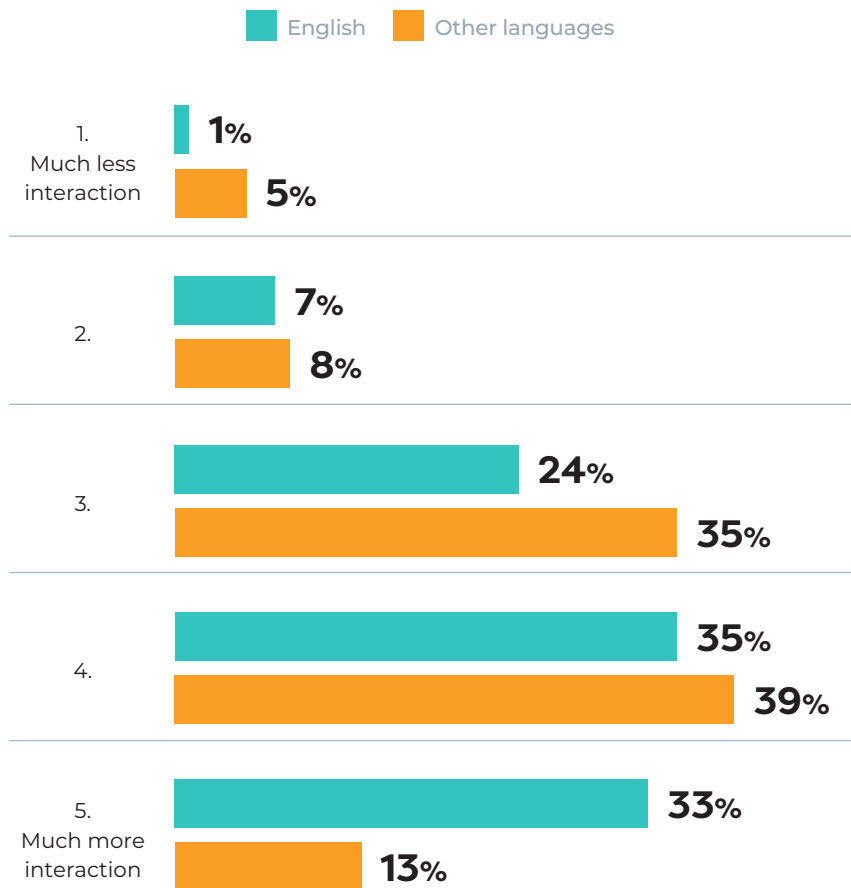STRESS FREQUENCY COMPARED WITH USE OF AI TOOLS TO HELP WITH STUDY

- Constantly (more than daily)
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- A few times a term / semester
- A few times a year
- Less often than a few times a year
- Never

Use AI regularly — 56% | 48% | 32% | 33% | 32% | 29% | 41% | 42% — **38%**

Use AI a few times — 34% | 28% | 51% | 48% | 52% | 59% | 20% | 34% — **44%**

Use AI once or twice — 8% | 15% | 12% | 15% | 10% | 13% | 27% | 4% — **13%**

Never use AI — 3% | 6% | 4% | 5% | 4% | 0% | 12% | 20% — **4%**

Not sure — 0% | 2% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% — **1%**

p<001 | p<01 | p<05 | p<10 | p<10 | p<05 | p<01 | p<001

Compared to native English speakers, students whose first language is not English reported less human interaction as a result of using more AI (13%)

Q. Has using generative AI resulted in more or less interaction with peers and teachers?

Overall, students feel that generative AI use has impacted peer and teacher interaction levels, with a large group of students reporting increased interaction levels (61% chose either more or much more interaction).

STEM and Psychology (n = 32) saw the highest impact - with more responses from students sharing that AI had decreased interaction with peers and teachers. Similarly, more students in the higher grade brackets (Distinction, High Distinction) reported that AI decreased interaction with peers.

GENERATIVE AI'S IMPACT ON INTERACTION WITH PEERS AND TEACHERS

■ English ■ Other languages

1. Much less interaction
- English: 1%
- Other languages: 5%

2.
- English: 7%
- Other languages: 8%

3.
- English: 24%
- Other languages: 35%

4.
- English: 35%
- Other languages: 39%

5. Much more interaction
- English: 33%
- Other languages: 13%

Q. Have you used any AI tools to help with your assignments or study tasks?
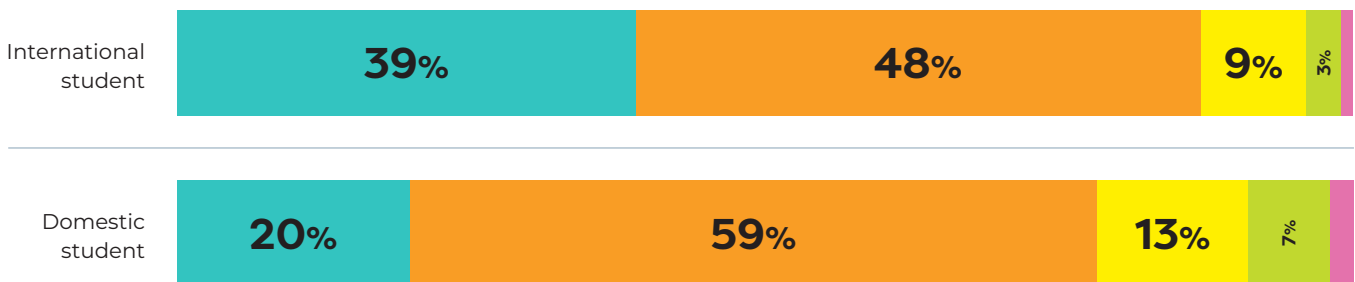
Similarly to the UAE, most students in Saudi Arabia have used AI tools to help them with study - 53% say they've used AI a few times and 31% use AI tools regularly - only 4% claim to never have used AI tools for study. Male students are more likely to have used AI regularly (over a third) compared to female students (a quarter). Nearly 2 in 5 International students report using AI tools 'regularly' compared to 1 in 5 domestic students.

USED ANY AI TOOLS TO HELP WITH ASSIGNMENTS OR STUDY TASKS
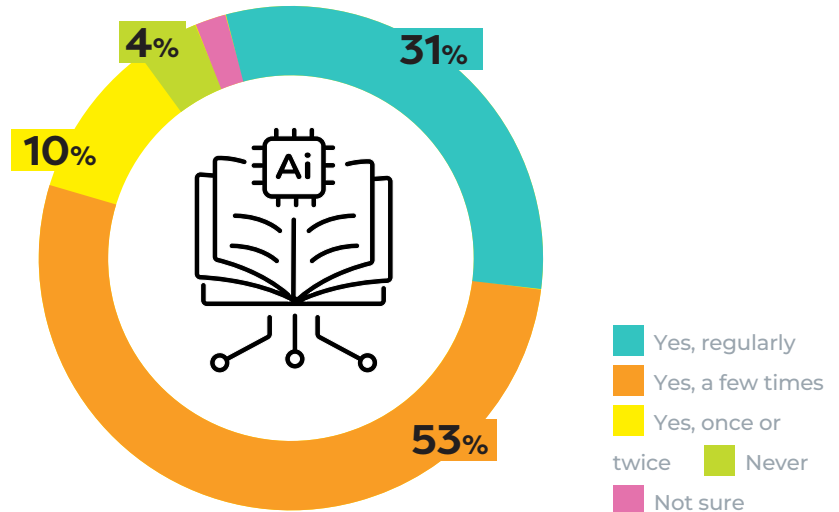
- 31%
- 4%
- 10%
- 53%

Legend:
- Yes, regularly
- Yes, a few times
- Yes, once or twice
- Never
- Not sure

USED ANY AI TOOLS TO HELP WITH ASSIGNMENTS OR STUDY TASKS

Legend: Yes, regularly · Yes, a few times · Yes, once or twice · Never · Not sure

	Yes, regularly	Yes, a few times	Yes, once or twice	Never	Not sure
International student	39%	48%	9%	3%	
Domestic student	20%	59%	13%	7%	

Q. Do you expect your university to give you access to generative AI (artificial intelligence) tools to support your studies?

Q. Is your university adapting quickly enough to include AI (artificial intelligence) support tools to help with your study?

"My university is trying to adapt to include AI tools, but it feels slow. More training and faster access to these tools would help students better."

While a sharp drop from last year's results - eleven percentage points down - students in Saudi Arabia still have some of the highest expectations of AI support from their universities in the world. Those with higher reported grades (85%+ average) expect it less - 59% expect AI support. Where those struggling and achieving an average grade of Pass or Non-Pass (n=61) have a higher expectation at 74% (noting a smaller sample size).

For students with English as a second language, the expectation is also higher (73%) compared to students for whom English is their first language (62%).

The majority of students still believe their university is adapting fast enough to include AI support tools for them - 65% of KSA students agreed (though this is a slight drop from 2024 when 69% agreed).. Domestic students are more likely to agree than international students (70% compared to 62%) and male students (69% 'yes') agree more than female students (59% 'yes').

EXPECT
AI support
provided by the uni

"It makes life easier"

"For paragraph writing ... for assignments help"

"Because artificial intelligence is everywhere and it greatly supports education."

"Because that is the future and this is what they want us to learn"

"They wouldn't want students to abuse the use of it"

DO NOT EXPECT
AI support
provided by the uni

"Because artificial intelligence teaches students laziness and not to research and put in a lot of effort"

"Most Universities think that students already have access to AI tools, so they don't care and want students to do tasks on their own."

EXPECT UNIVERSITY TO PROVIDE AI SUPPORT TOOLS - % 'YES'

Australia | New Zealand | Singapore | UK | KSA | UAE | Canada | USA

	Australia	New Zealand	Singapore	UK	KSA	UAE	Canada	USA
2025	55%	53%	69%	40%	68%	70%	50%	55%
2024	56%	59%	71%	39%	79%	84%	54%	58%
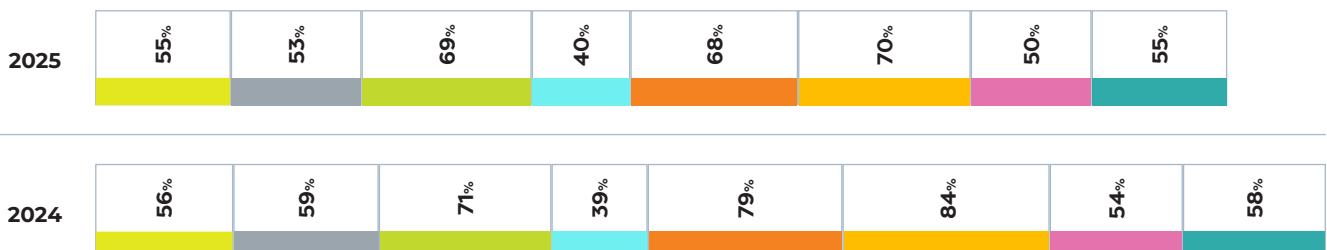
Students use AI for the speed and developing skills - but experience some stress when doing so

Q. What is the main reason you would use the university's AI (artificial intelligence) support or feedback?

In Saudi Arabia, students cited speed of feedback (19%), developing AI skills (18%), and confidence that they're on the right track (16%) as comparatively similar reasons for using AI-powered support. For students with English as their first language, the most popular reason was 'to learn AI skills' (19%), whereas for those whose first language is not English, the more common reason was 'Speed of feedback' at 22%.

For male students, the top reasons to use AI were skills, speed, and confidence, whereas for females their priorities were speed and improving grades.
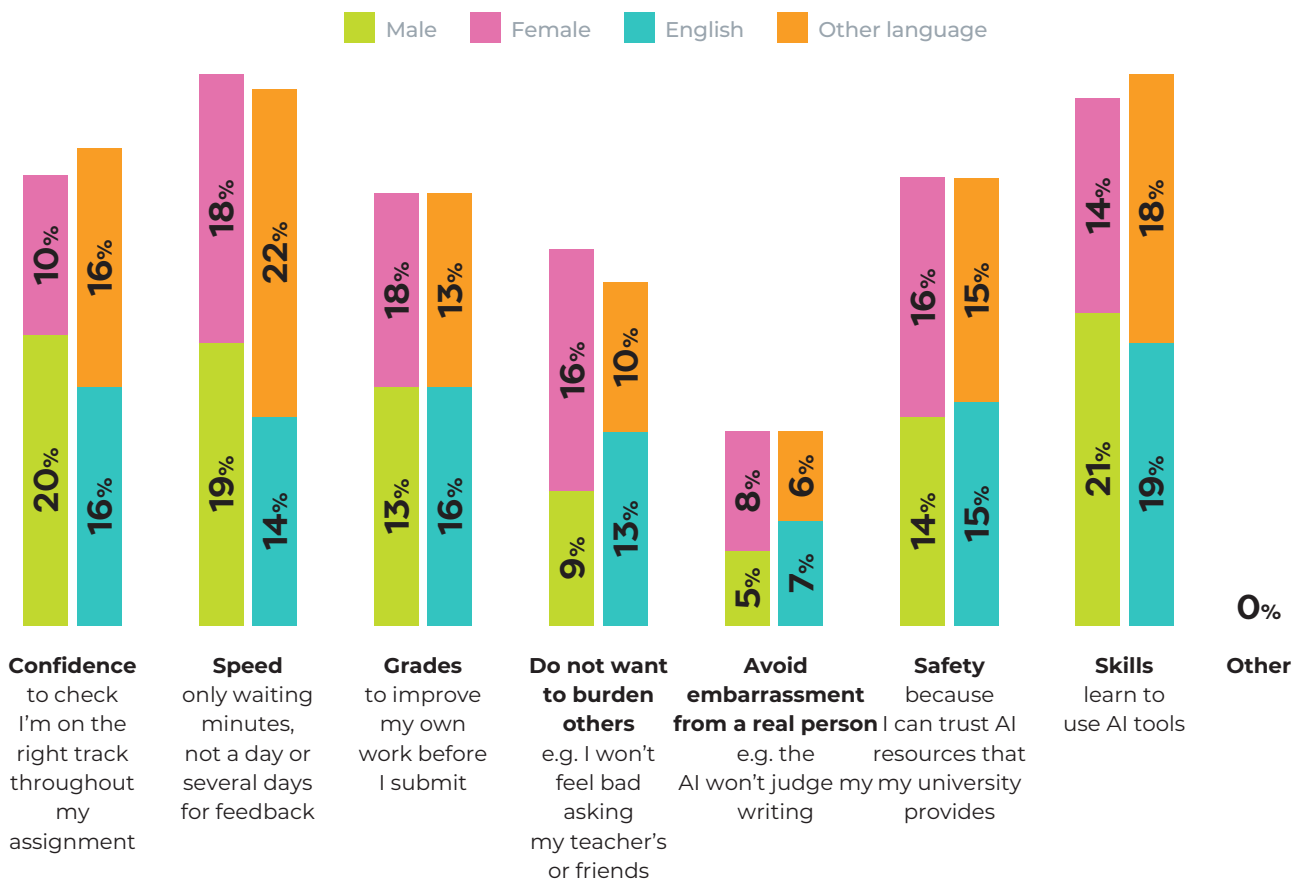
Students experience varying levels of stress while using AI tools for study. Over a quarter experience no stress, while 46% state 'a little', 23% 'some', and 4% 'a lot of stress'. Male students are more likely to experience stress when using AI, with 3 in 4 experiencing some level of stress and 5% stating 'a lot of stress'.

> "Fear of my account, personal, banking, and other data being hacked"

> "The only worry is of being found out by the teacher"

> "Whenever I use AI tools, I get slightly stressed here and there worried that my professor might see through it and fail me"

MAIN REASON FOR USING UNIVERSITY'S AI SUPPORT OR FEEDBACK – GENDER / NATIVE LANGUAGE

Legend: Male, Female, English, Other language

Reason	Male	Female	English	Other language
Confidence to check I'm on the right track throughout my assignment	20%	10%	16%	16%
Speed only waiting minutes, not a day or several days for feedback	19%	18%	14%	22%
Grades to improve my own work before I submit	13%	18%	16%	13%
Do not want to burden others e.g. I won't feel bad asking my teacher's or friends	9%	16%	13%	10%
Avoid embarrassment from a real person e.g. the AI won't judge my writing	5%	8%	7%	6%
Safety because I can trust AI resources that my university provides	14%	16%	15%	15%
Skills learn to use AI tools	21%	14%	19%	18%
Other			0%	

Q. How much stress do you experience while using AI tools as part of your studies?
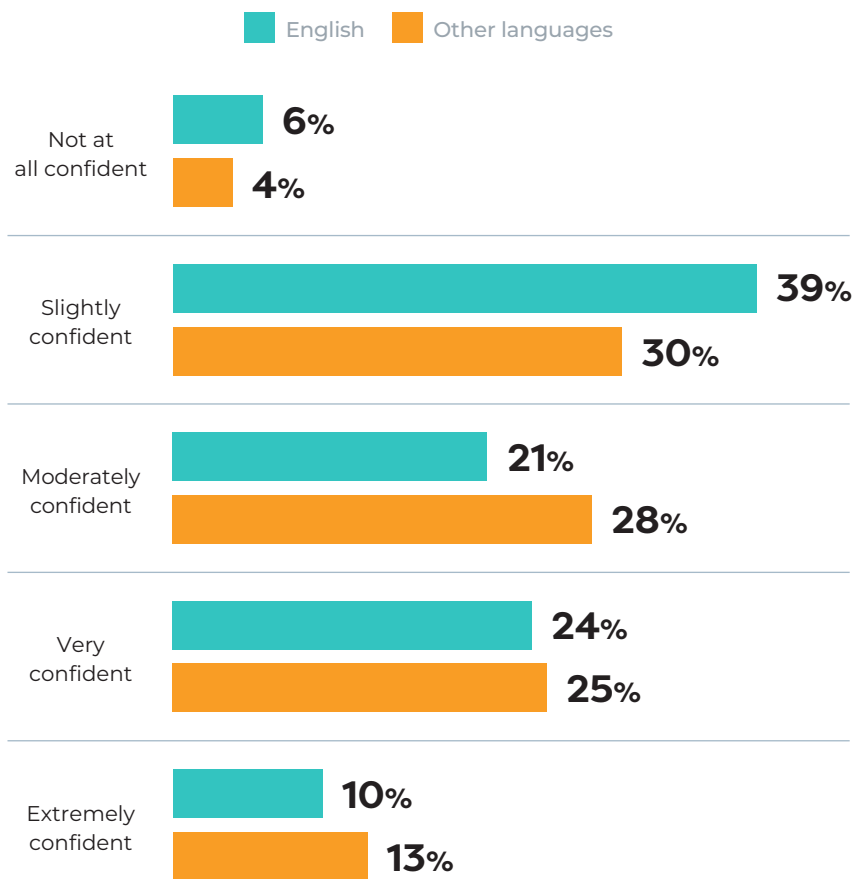
Q. How confident are you that you are learning as well as improving your own skills while using generative AI tools?

There also appears to be a correlation between average grades and levels of stress while using AI, with 38% of those students who achieve a 'High Distinction' on average reporting 'no stress'.

KSA students are generally confident that they are learning as well as improving their own skills when using generative AI tools, with 62% of students feeling at least 'Moderately confident' about this. Students with English as their first language are slightly less confident overall about learning and improving their skills with AI, as are international students compared to domestic.

Overall, KSA students feel that using generative AI has resulted in more interaction with peers and teachers, with the majority (64%) selecting more or 'much more' interaction. Online/ distance students were more likely to report that using generative AI resulted in more interaction with peers and teachers.

CONFIDENCE ABOUT LEARNING AS WELL AS IMPROVING SKILLS WHILE USING GENERATIVE AI TOOLS

Legend: English ■ | Other languages ■

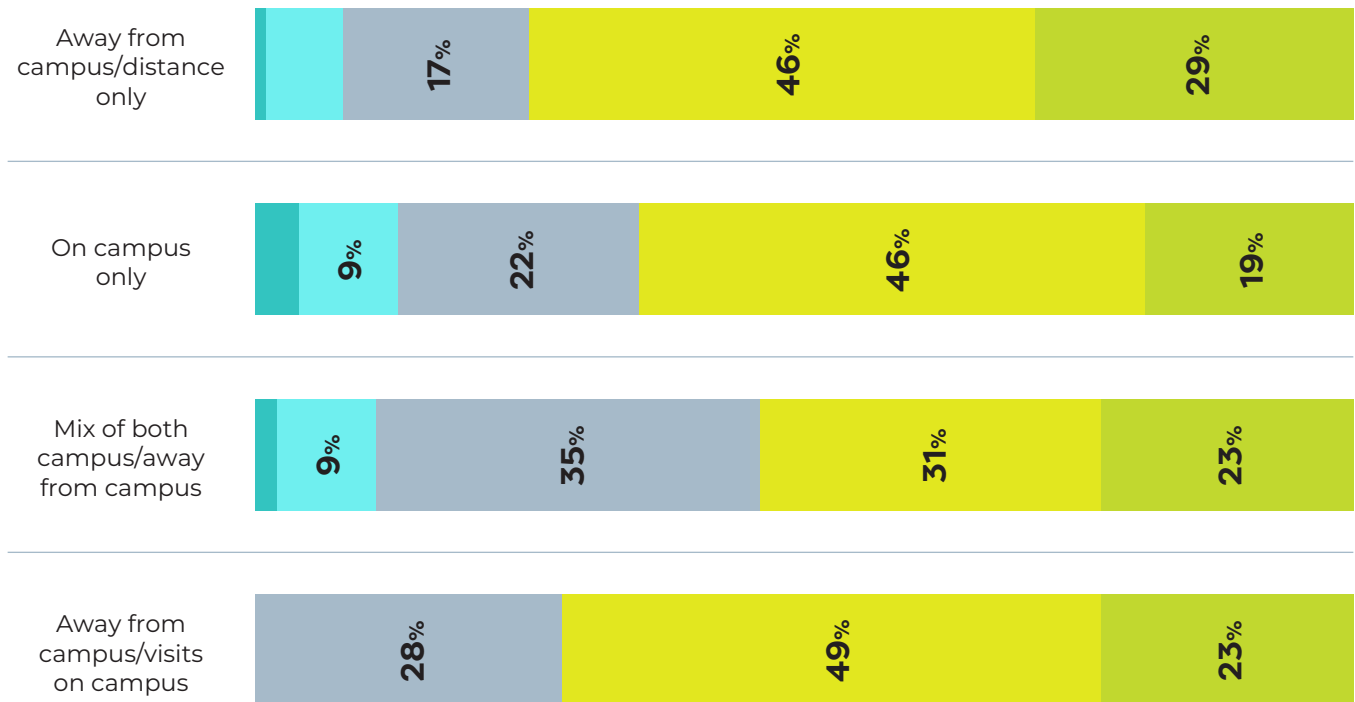| Confidence level	English	Other languages
Not at all confident	6%	4%
Slightly confident	39%	30%
Moderately confident	21%	28%
Very confident	24%	25%
Extremely confident	10%	13%

Q. *Has using Generative AI resulted in less or more interaction with your peers and teachers?*

Medicine and Nursing saw the highest impact - with more responses from students sharing that AI had decreased interaction with peers and teachers, with

Psychology and Law being the study areas where students feel that interaction has increased the most.

GENERATIVE AI'S IMPACT ON INTERACTION WITH PEERS AND TEACHERS

Legend: 1. Much LESS interaction | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. Much MORE interaction

Category	3	4	5
Away from campus/distance only	17%	46%	29%
On campus only	9% / 22%	46%	19%
Mix of both campus/away from campus	9% / 35%	31%	23%
Away from campus/visits on campus	28%	49%	23%

Chapter 1 Discussion:

As AI tools become more embedded in students' academic lives, university leaders must act to ensure provided technologies protect and enhance cognitive ability - learning. This action would also allow institutions to also address key concerns around academic integrity, stress, and equity. With 94% of students using AI for assignments and study tasks,

and a strong expectation (68%) that their institutions will provide AI support, universities need to adapt early in 2025.

Increased AI use can sometimes increase isolation, seen as less contact with peers and teachers. University leaders should ensure AI implementation includes strong referral, including systems for increasing peer engagement, teacher

oversight, and other participation in the institutional student environment.

Confidence and access to ethical AI support across disciplines is important for fostering balanced engagement and support, regardless of faculty or academic performance.

Nearly two thirds of students are confident in future employment prospects.

Q. Please rate how much you agree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5

Whilst confidence was generally high when it comes to degrees developing skills to succeed in their future jobs, with a net confidence of 74%, this is not quite as high when it comes to confidence in future employment, with 65% of students 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' that they will be able to get a job related to their degree within 6 months of graduation.

"My degree is based on computers, which is needed for most skills in today's world

Younger students aged 18-25 are less optimistic about their future job prospects than those over 25 (60% positive response compared to 71%). Full time students are also more confident about being able to get a job within 6 months of graduation at 67%, compared to part-time students at only 57%.

"I still need to improve my English skills and widen it instead of in just a limited area"

Students who studied Law (n = 23) or Nursing (n = 15) courses felt significantly more confident that their degrees were developing the skills they need to succeed (82% and 84% respectively), and 69% of Business students were confident about being able to get a job within 6 months of graduation, compared to 65% of STEM students.
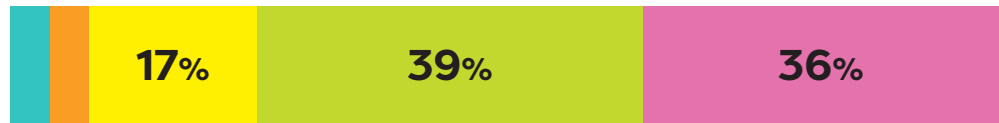
"No guarantee on the job because of market being saturated"

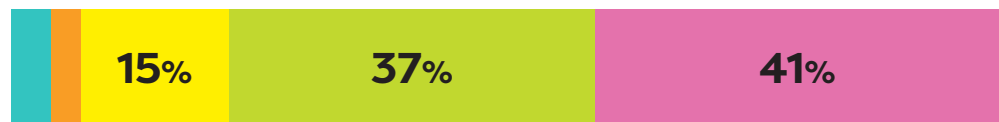**"Hopefully. I keep applying so I am hopeful for the future."**

STUDENT CONFIDENCE IN FUTURE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

Legend: 1. Strongly disagree | 2. Disagree | 3. Neutral | 4. Agree | 5. Strongly agree
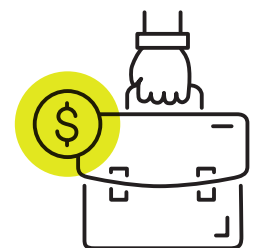
My degree is developing the skills I need to succeed in my future job: 17% | 39% | 36%

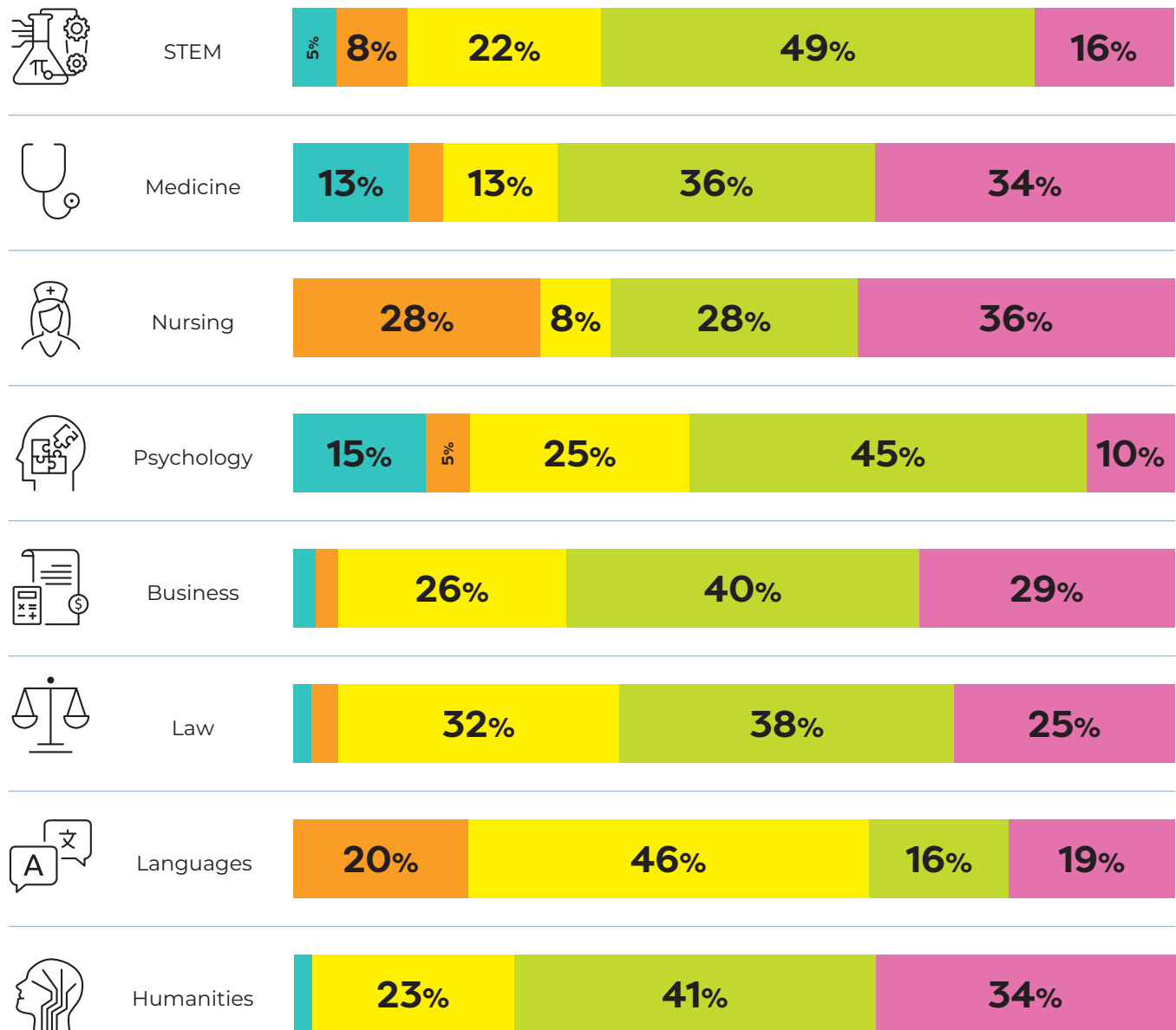I have strong English writing and communication skills needed to apply for and get a job: 15% | 37% | 41%

I will be able to get a job related to my degree, within 6 months of graduation: 6% | 25% | 40% | 25%

"I WILL BE ABLE TO GET A JOB RELATED TO MY DEGREE, WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF GRADUATION"

STUDY SUBJECT

1. Strongly disagree 　 2. Disagree 　 3. Neutral 　 4. Agree 　 5. Strongly agree

Subject	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
STEM	5%	8%	22%	49%	16%
Medicine	13%		13%	36%	34%
Nursing		28%	8%	28%	36%
Psychology	15%	5%	25%	45%	10%
Business			26%	40%	29%
Law			32%	38%	25%
Languages		20%	46%	16%	19%
Humanities			23%	41%	34%

Full time students much more confident about their skills and job prospects than part-time students

Students studying full time had an overall agreement level of 70% with the statement "I have strong English writing and communication skills needed to apply for and get a job". For part-time students, the overall agreement level was 58%. This was also true for their feelings towards future job prospects, with 64% of full time students agreeing they would be able to get a job within 6 months of graduation, and only 53% of part-time students saying the same.

"I WILL BE ABLE TO GET A JOB RELATED TO MY DEGREE, WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF GRADUATION"

- 1. Strongly disagree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Agree
- 5. Strongly agree

	1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
Full-time student	4%	6%	26%	36%	29%
Part-time student	5%	8%	34%	29%	24%
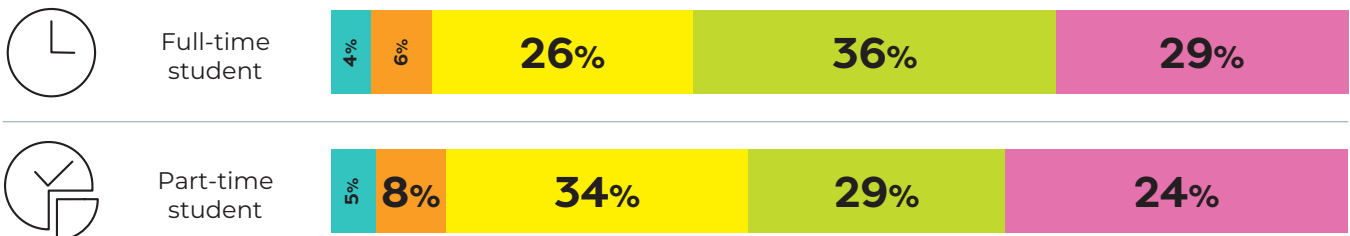
Q. Please rate how much you agree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5

Female students are less confident in their English and communication skills than male students (62% of females agreed they have strong English writing and communication skills, where 76% of males agreed).

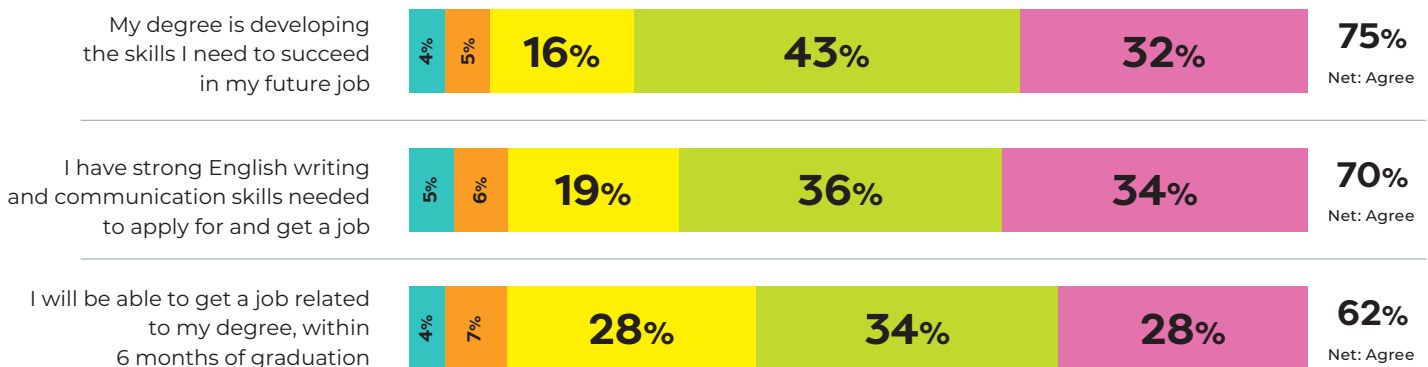"I speak and communicate well in English, I just need to build more on grammar."

"English has become a necessary requirement when

applying for jobs, and my university has added an English subject to support students."

"My English isn't that good yet I need more time for that"

STUDENT CONFIDENCE IN FUTURE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

- 1. Strongly disagree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Agree
- 5. Strongly agree

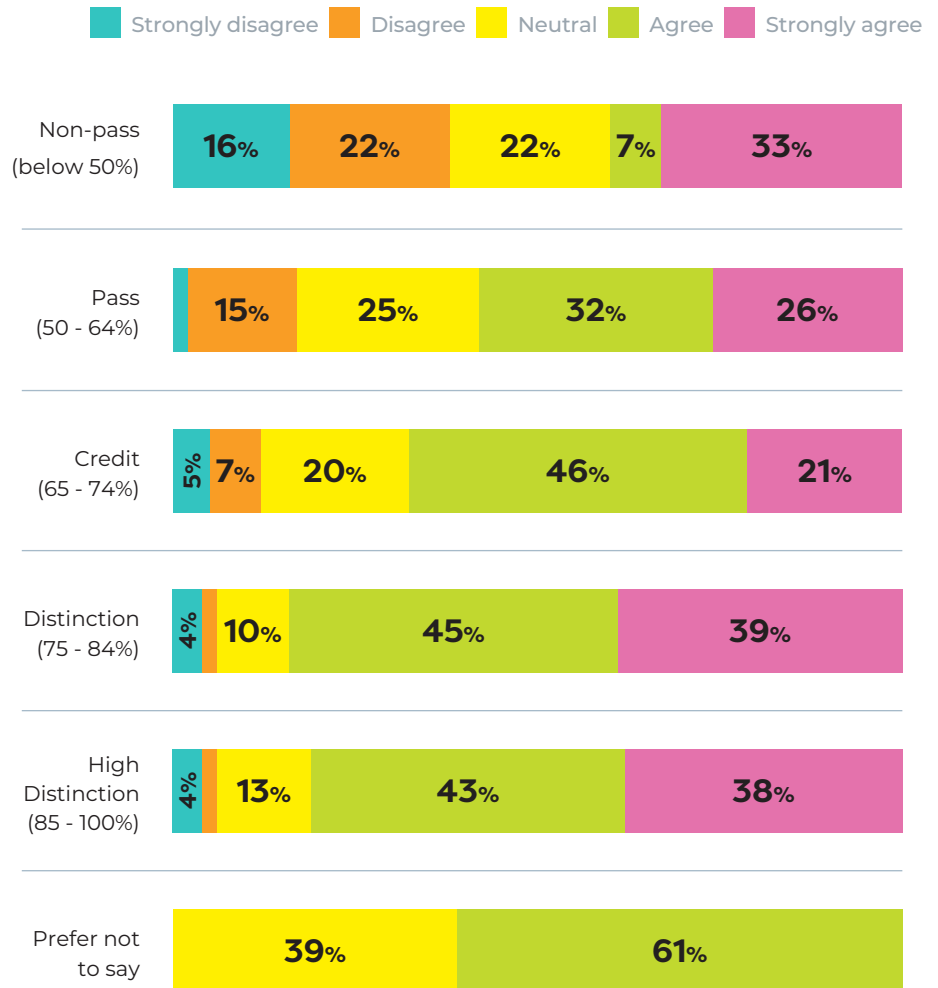|	1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree	
My degree is developing the skills I need to succeed in my future job	4%	5%	16%	43%	32%	**75%** Net: Agree
I have strong English writing and communication skills needed to apply for and get a job	5%	6%	19%	36%	34%	**70%** Net: Agree
I will be able to get a job related to my degree, within 6 months of graduation	4%	7%	28%	34%	28%	**62%** Net: Agree

Confidence in getting a job within 6 months of graduating is highest among Business and Law students (n = 23) (71% and 84% respectively), and lowest among Psychology students (n = 19) (44%).

> **"I hope to God that is the case. Applying for the job while you have a master's degree from a strong and accredited university is a good thing."**

While most students felt confident with their skills development, those with grades classed under credit felt mostly neutral or negative about their 'degree developing the skills needed to succeed in a future job", while those achieving Distinction or High Distinction grades were much more likely to agree with this statement.

> **"Because there's a lot of competition. And it's a cause of worry."**

MY DEGREE IS DEVELOPING THE SKILLS I NEED TO SUCCEED IN MY FUTURE JOB – AVERAGE GRADE

Legend: Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree

Grade	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Non-pass (below 50%)	16%	22%	22%	7%	33%
Pass (50 - 64%)		15%	25%	32%	26%
Credit (65 - 74%)	5%	7%	20%	46%	21%
Distinction (75 - 84%)	4%		10%	45%	39%
High Distinction (85 - 100%)	4%		13%	43%	38%
Prefer not to say			39%	61%	

Chapter 2 Discussion:

Equity in Career Support: Universities should ensure equitable access to career support services for all students, particularly addressing the needs of part-time students. What specific strategies can be implemented to provide additional support for part-time students to enhance their employability prospects?

Skills for the future: University leaders must continue to support students to develop the adaptable skills needed for the jobs of the future. Especially for those students for whom English is not their first language, who had a slightly higher tendency to disagree that their degree is developing the skills they need to succeed in their future job.

Enhancing English writing and communication skills: The disparity in agreement on English writing and communication skills among part-time students compared to the average highlights a potential area for improvement. What strategies can be implemented within the curriculum or through extracurricular activities to enhance students' communication skills? Regardless of what the future holds in technological advancement, strong communication skills will be desired by most employers.

Students care about their overall experience, and feel they belong

The student experience has risen for UAE students, compared to university global rankings or reputations, when it comes to selecting a university to attend. This preference was more pronounced in male students and international students (58% of each group chose 'student experience') compared to female students and domestic students, both with 49% giving that preference.

Q. Which of the following is most important to you?

IMPORTANCE OF UNIVERSITY GLOBAL RANKING VS ACTIVITIES/ EXPERIENCE

- ■ Global ranking of the university's reputation
- ■ Lots of activities, ways to make friends and support (a good student experience)
- ■ Other

2024

48%	50%

2025

46%	54%

Those who had an average grade of high distinction had a significantly higher preference of 'global rankings' (53%), whilst those who averaged a pass grade preferred 'a good student experience' over 'global rankings' (54%).

Q. Do you feel like you 'belong' in your university community? (for example, do you feel supported and included?)

Q. In which of the following ways, if any, has your university made you feel like you belong?
Please rank your Top 3.

UAE students experienced a significantly strong sense of belonging (80% 'somewhat' or 'very much', in keeping with the last two years which were both 83%), much higher compared to other countries. The survey explored what contributes to a sense of belonging for students, and key factors included 'feeling confident in reaching out to their teachers' (59% ranked in their top 3), 'having a flexible schedule allowing for a balance between work and study' (58% ranked top 3), and 'the ability to easily connect with a student mentor' (48%).

**"Easy communication with teachers and professors for any issue and doubts"**

"Peer mentorship, pairing incoming students with experienced ones for guidance and support"

"The university made me feel like I belong because I see other students facing the same challenges as me. It's reassuring to know I'm not alone in my struggles, which helps create a sense of community and understanding."
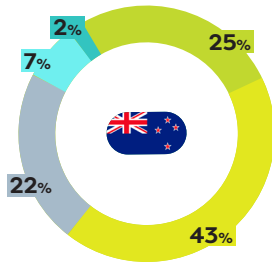
DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU 'BELONG' IN YOUR UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY?
(FOR EXAMPLE DO YOU FEEL SUPPORTED AND INCLUDED?)

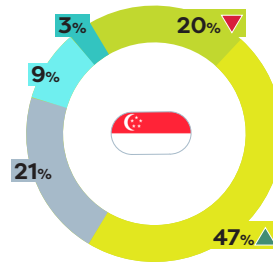Legend: Not much at all · Not much · Neutral · Somewhat · Very much
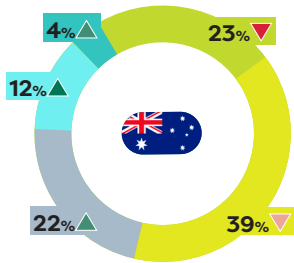
AUSTRALIA
4%▲ 12%▲ 22%▲ 39%▼ 23%▼
84%▼ likely to feel like they belong, with only **16%▲** unlikely.

NEW ZEALAND
2% 7% 22% 43% 25%
91% likely to feel like they belong, with only **9%** unlikely.

SINGAPORE
3% 9% 21% 47%▲ 20%▼
88% likely to feel like they belong, with only **12%** unlikely.
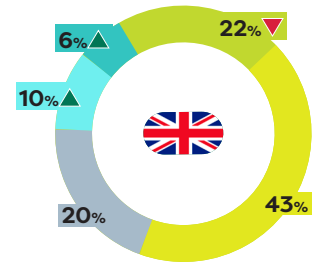
UNITED KINGDOM
6%▲ 10%▲ 20% 43% 22%▼
85%▼ likely to feel like they belong, with only **15%▲** unlikely.
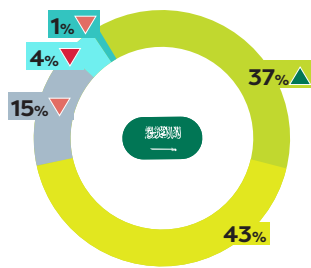
SAUDI ARABIA (KSA)
1%▼ 4%▼ 15%▼ 43% 37%▲
96%▲ likely to feel like they belong, with only **4%▼** unlikely.
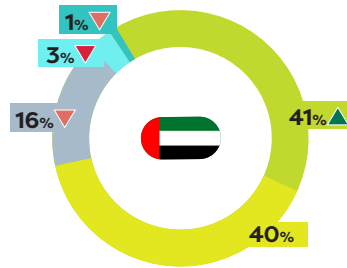
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
1%▼ 3%▼ 16%▼ 40% 41%▲
96%▲ likely to feel like they belong, with only **4%▼** unlikely.
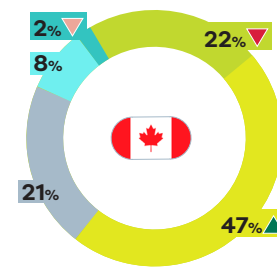
CANADA
2%▼ 8% 21% 47%▲ 22%▼
90% likely to feel like they belong, with only **10%** unlikely.
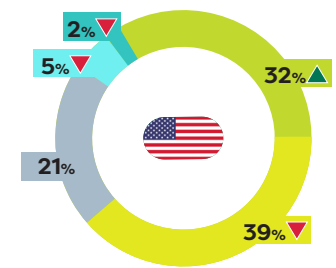
USA
2%▼ 5%▼ 21% 39%▼ 32%▲
93%▲ likely to feel like they belong, with only **7%▼** unlikely.

BELONGING REASONS

- 59% Confidence to reach out to my teachers
- 40% Personal, 24/7 study & assignment support
- 48% Easily connect with a student mentor
- 40% Access to mental health support
- 48% Can study online/remotely when I need to
- 58% Flexible schedule that lets me balance work and study
- 8% None of these/other
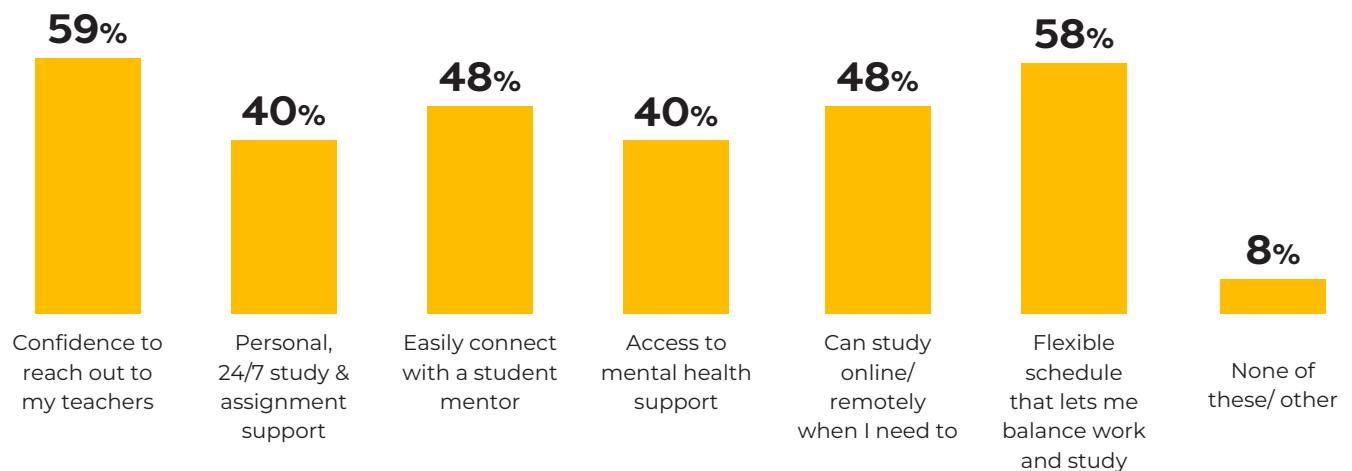
p<001 p<01 p<05 p<10 | p<10 p<05 p<01 p<001

KSA Students prioritise university experience over global ranking

When choosing their degree or university, KSA students were more influenced by the university's student experience (lots of activities, ways to make friends, and support) (53%) than global ranking or university reputation (45%). Following the trend in the UAE, this is a slight shift from last year when the two factors were more evenly split.

Q. *Which of the following is most important to you?*

IMPORTANCE OF UNIVERSITY GLOBAL RANKING VS ACTIVITIES/ EXPERIENCE

- Global ranking of the university's reputation
- Lots of activities, ways to make friends and support (a good student experience)
- Other

2024

49%	51%

2025

45%	53%

"I feel that the school has been very good to us and provided us with so much help. I am very grateful to the school for its efforts"

English-speakers feel that they belong, and use support services

Q. *Do you feel like you 'belong' in your university community? (for example, do you feel supported and included?)*

Q. *In which of the following ways, if any, has your university made you feel like you belong?*
Please rank your Top 3.

In Saudi Arabia, belonging was notably high (net likely to feel like they belong 81%, in line with the last two years at 81/80%) compared to other countries, with primary reasons: feeling 'confident to reach out to teachers' (54% ranked in top 3 reasons), having the option to 'study online/ remotely' (50%), and have access to peer mentors and mental health support (both 47% ranked in top 3).

"Probably the most I've felt like I belong is when we organized a large showcase event for one of our projects. I really felt like I represented my university well."

Male respondents are slightly more likely to feel that they belong (83%) compared to females (77%). Students with caring responsibilities are significantly more likely to feel that they belong, at 86% - where only 76% of those without caring responsibilities felt the same sense of 'belonging' to their university community.

"Allowing me to customize my own schedule each semester so I can make sure to be with my friends, and providing me with academic advising whenever needed"

"Making me feel proud of myself for being able to get accepted"

DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU 'BELONG'?

1%
4%
15%
37%
43%

- Not much at all
- Not much
- Neutral
- Somewhat
- Very much
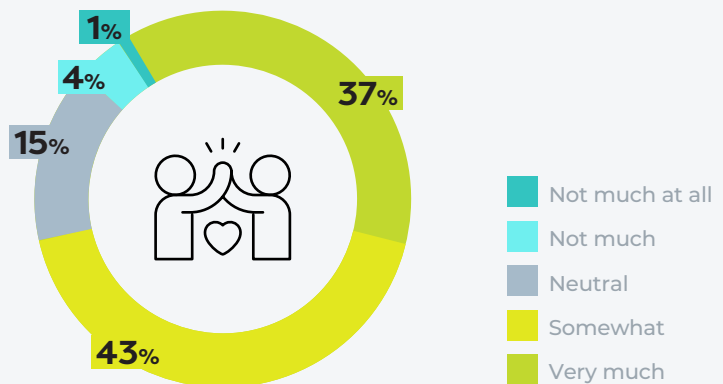
Chapter 3 Discussion:

Students are increasingly choosing universities based on 'a good student experience', so it's important to be able to clearly showcase what kind of an experience they will have when they come to your university. In particular, what kind of experience will different groups have - e.g. part-time students, international students, or those with caring responsibilities. It is clear from the demographic data that there is not one type of student attending university.

Flexibility and connection to educators - or to the institution - play an important role in students' sense of belonging. Universities can continue to offer adaptable and personalised learning options, so that students can study on their own time and at their own pace; while also driving connection back to the institution and ensuring they have a comprehensive ecosystem of support that joins up across the institution.

Middle Eastern students feel more of a sense of 'belonging' than any other country. This gives the region a competitive edge, and could be used to attract students from other parts of the world to study in the region. Much research underscores the importance of feelings of 'belonging' for student success.

Most UAE students have a peer mentor, and if not they wanted one

Being able to connect with peers and be part of the academic community is a critical part of university life, and a known contributor to student success and wellbeing.

Q. *Did you have a student mentor (for example - a student in a senior year who could provide study advice anytime you needed it)?*

Q. *Would you have liked to have a senior student mentor?*

Over three quarters of UAE students said they had access to a student mentor, showing that universities in this region still have a good coverage of students using peer support - however the remaining quarter must be considered. Of those, 63% said they would have liked one. Younger students aged 18-25 were less likely to have a peer mentor (70% 'yes') compared to those in the 26-33 age bracket (86% 'yes').
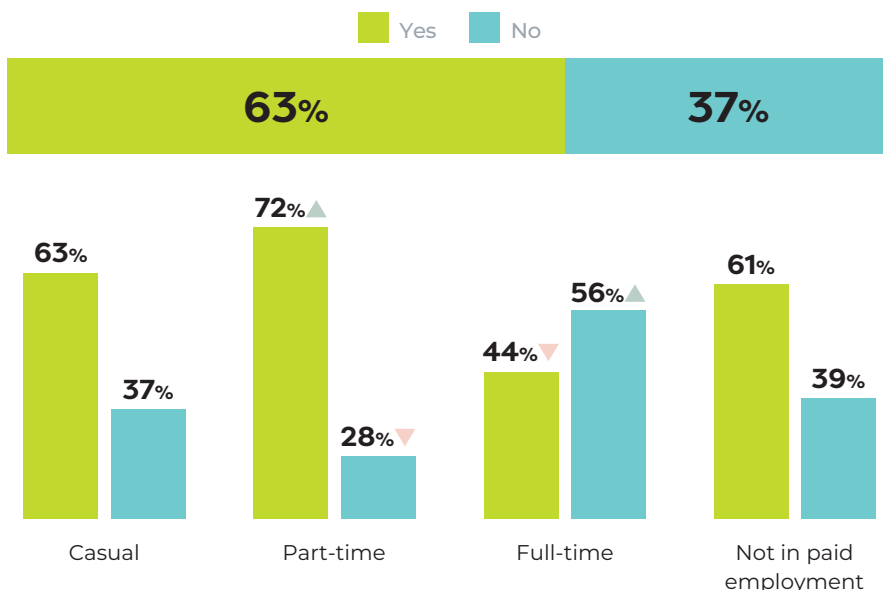
In keeping with last year's results, international students were more likely to have a mentor (79%) compared to domestic (73%), and English speakers much more (86%) compared to English as additional language speakers (64%). Of those who did not have a mentor, all

of those groups mostly would have liked to have one: International & domestic, English and Other language speakers all recording over 60% 'yes'.

Students without a mentor (n=131) who were employed part-time were more likely to want a peer mentor (72%) than those working full time (44%), perhaps reflecting the already full schedules of those students with full time employment.

> **"Culture barriers... sometimes students tend to associate with their nationalities or those who share same belief as they do, same religion and so on."**

DID YOU HAVE A STUDENT MENTOR?

Yes · No

76% **24%**

79% **21%**
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

73% **27%**
DOMESTIC STUDENTS

86%▲ **14%▼**
ENGLISH - FIRST LANGUAGE

64%▼ **36%▲**
OTHER LANGUAGE

WANTED A SENIOR STUDENT MENTOR – EMPLOYMENT STATUS
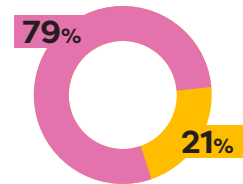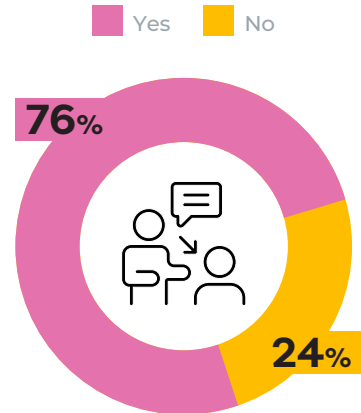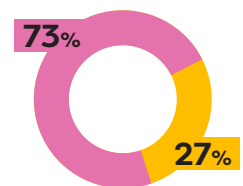
Yes · No

63% **37%**

	Yes	No
Casual	63%	37%
Part-time	72%▲	28%▼
Full-time	44%▼	56%▲
Not in paid employment	61%	39%
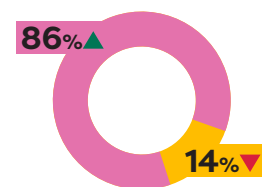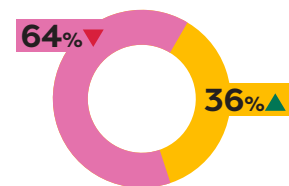
Q. When you started your degree, how easy was it to ask other students questions?
(on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is very easy and 1 is very hard)

Connecting with other students was deemed easy by most (71%), although female students found it harder to connect than male students (66% versus 74% respectively net 'easy'). Those in full time employment found it much easier to ask questions (81% overall 'easy'), compared to those students not in paid employment (66% overall 'easy'). University leaders can look to creating more opportunities to connect between students, regardless of their study modes or academic statuses.

"Everyone was too scared about plagiarism and stuff so they would not help."

"Feeling nervous about approaching classmates for help or forming study groups. For instance, if I was struggling with math, I might hesitate to ask a more confident student for explanations, fearing rejection or judgment."

EASE OF ASKING QUESTIONS TO OTHER STUDENTS

| 1. Very hard | 2. Hard | 3. | 4. Easy | 5. Very easy |

1%
5%
35%
23%
36%

MALE
1%
4%
21%
37%
37%

FEMALE
2%
6%
26%
31%
35%
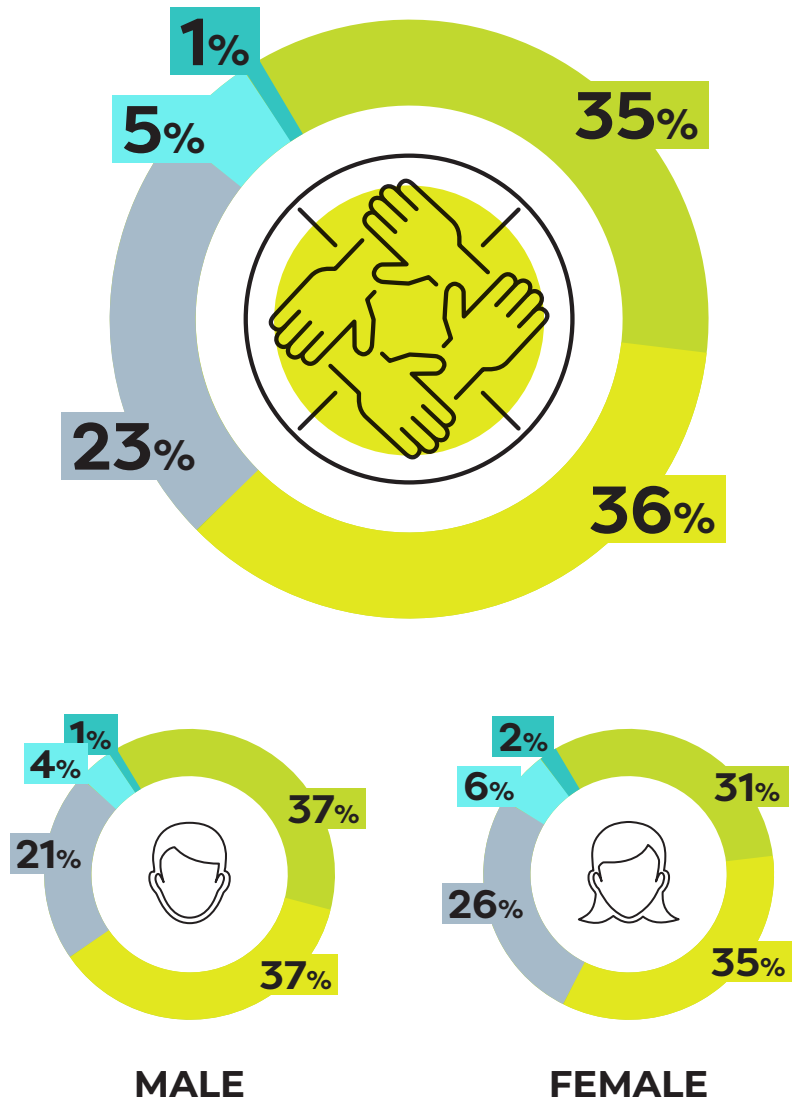
One in four students struggle to connect with others, particularly those studying part-time

Q. Did you have a student mentor (for example - a student in a senior year who could provide study advice anytime you needed it)?

Q. Would you have liked to have a senior student mentor?

81% of students had a peer mentor available, higher than the UAE result of 76%. Conversely to last year's results, full time students were much more likely to have a mentor (83% compared to 70% of part time students), as were those with English as a first language (86% compared to 76% of students with English as an additional language). Out of those who did not have a mentor available (n=102), nearly three quarters said they would have liked one (72%), though this rose to 76% for male students, and 88% for those studying in a mixed mode (both on campus and away from campus).

Q. When you started your degree, how easy was it to ask other students questions? (on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is very easy and 1 is very hard)

Three out of four students (74%) found it easy to connect with other students, with full time students finding it easier than part-time students (77% vs 65% respectively). Those for whom English is their first language found it much easier (82%) than those for whom English is an additional language (69%), which is in keeping with the trend from 2024.

Students who had a peer mentor available (n=409) found it overall much easier to connect with other students (79% net 'easy'), compared to those who did not have a peer mentor (n=102), for whom only 54% found it easy to any degree.

> **"It was hard to make social relationships in th first year, I didn't find who can help me or support"**

> **"It was a little challenging as everything is, but I got some help from my mentors and I also found good friends so it became easier to proceed."**

DID YOU HAVE A STUDENT MENTOR?

🟪 Yes 🟨 No

81% / **19%**

83%▲ / **17%▼**
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

77%▽ / **23%▲**
DOMESTIC STUDENTS

86%▲ / **14%▼**
ENGLISH - FIRST LANGUAGE
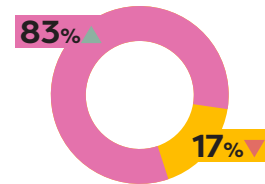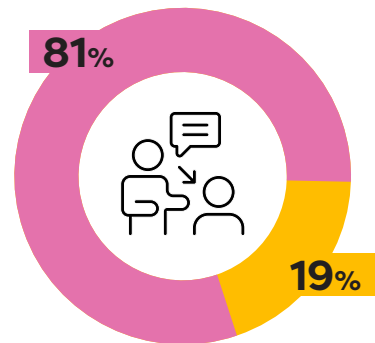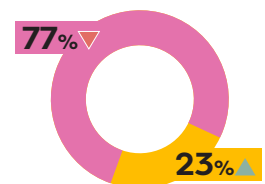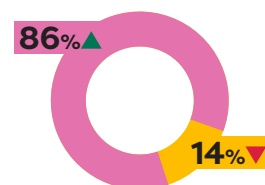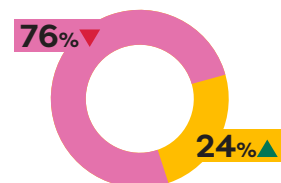
76%▼ / **24%▲**
OTHER LANGUAGE

EASE OF ASKING QUESTIONS TO OTHER STUDENTS – STUDENT MENTOR AVAILABLE

1. Very hard   2. Hard   3.   4. Easy   5. Very easy

YES
HAD A STUDENT MENTOR

1%
3% ▼
17% ▼
33%
47% ▲

4% ▼
Net: Hard

79% ▲
Net: Hard

NO
DID NOT HAVE A STUDENT MENTOR

3%
14% ▲
29% ▲
28%
26% ▼

17% ▲
Net: Hard

54% ▼
Net: Hard
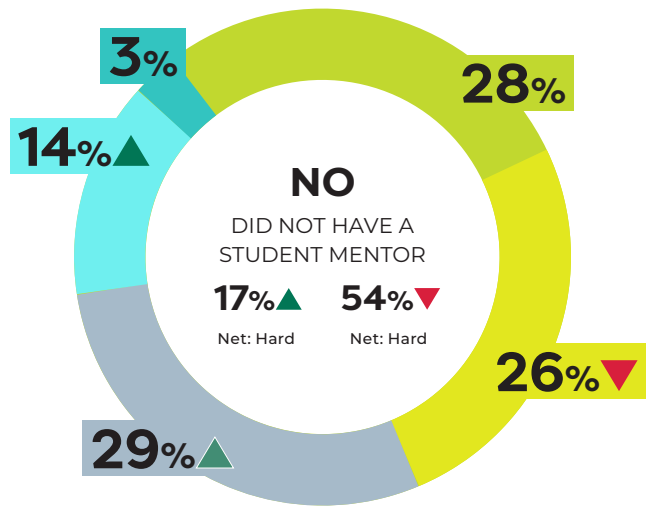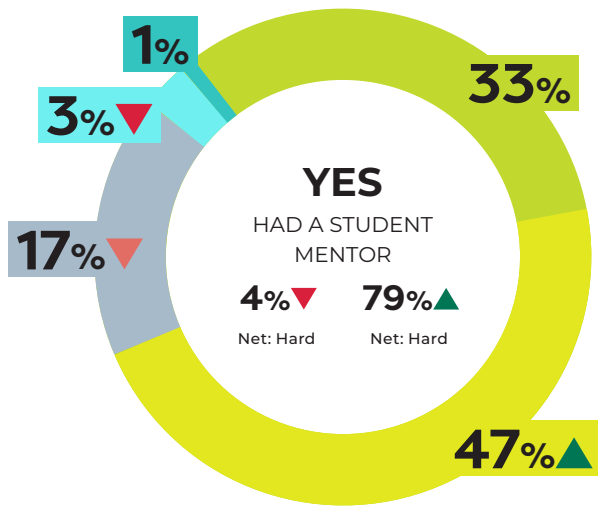
Chapter 4 Discussion:

More peer connections: University leaders can consider the impact of facilitating more and simpler connections between students who are learning English, and those who speak proficiently as well as students across all study modes.

Benefits of mentors for connectedness: There is a correlation between the availability of a peer mentor and the ease with which students feel they can ask questions to other students, indicating that peer mentors help students set up good help-seeking habits from early on in their degree. Universities could work to make peer mentors more equitably available to any student who wants one, regardless of study mode or background.

YOY UAE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, STRESS FREQUENCY DURING STUDY

■ 2022 ■ 2023 ■ 2024

Constantly (more than twice a day)
- 2022: 9%
- 2023: 11%
- 2024: 8%

Daily
- 2022: 21%
- 2023: 23%
- 2024: 21%

Weekly
- 2022: 27%
- 2023: 23%
- 2024: 24%

Monthly
- 2022: 11%
- 2023: 9%
- 2024: 10%

A few times per term / semester
- 2022: 22%
- 2023: 24%
- 2024: 28%

A few times per year
- 2022: 4%
- 2023: 4%
- 2024: 4%

Less often
- 2022: 2%
- 2023: 3%
- 2024: 2%

Never
- 2022: 4%
- 2023: 4%
- 2024: 3%
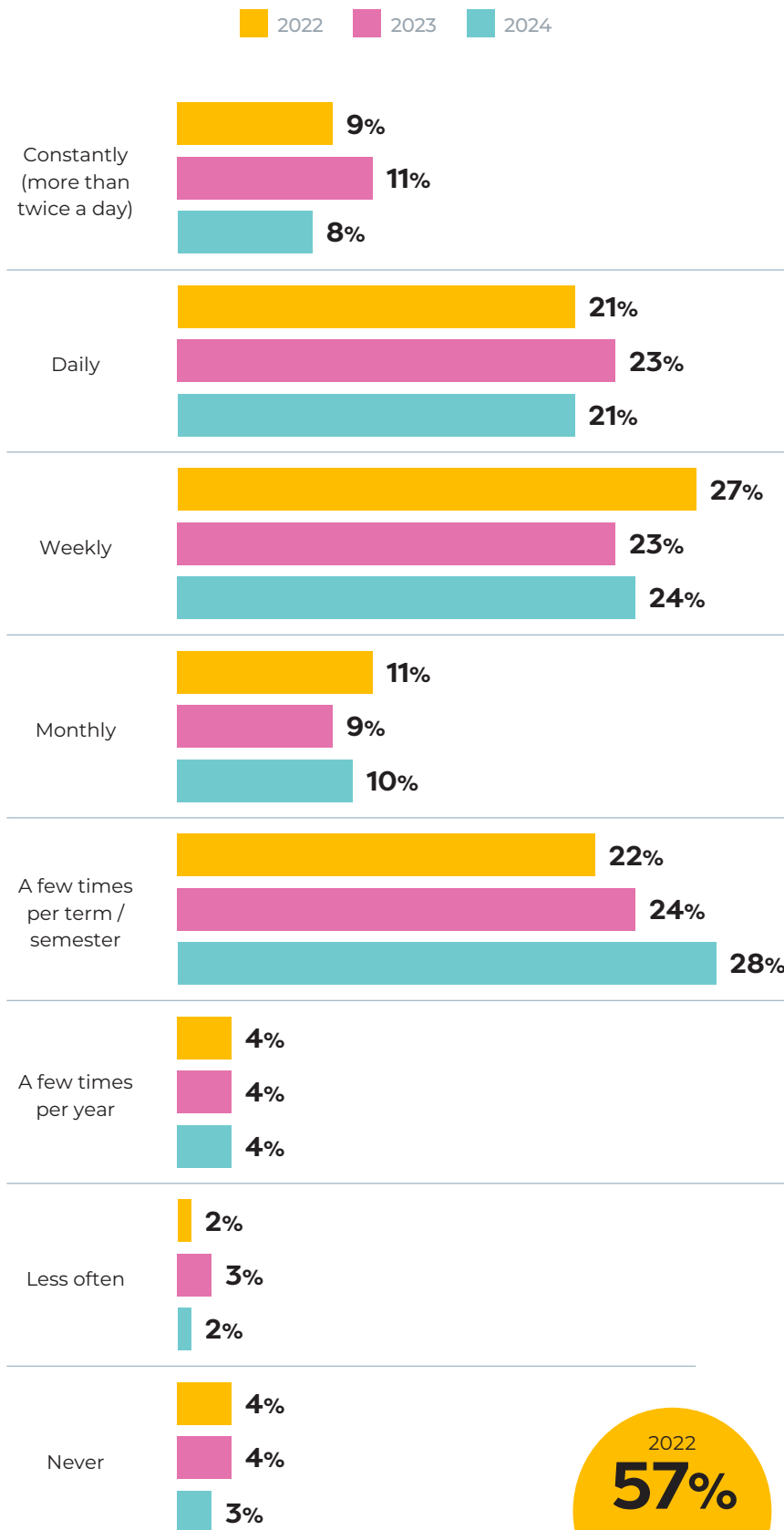
Stress levels reduce for most, but many struggle with fear of failure and time management – especially females

Students in the UAE reported lower stress levels than their counterparts in other countries, with the majority still experiencing stress a few times per term/ semester (28%). This is in keeping with last year's results, though the trend seems to show that students are less frequently stressed (with 8% stressed constantly compared to 11% last year), overall the level of students feeling study-related stress weekly or more reduced slightly year on year.

Female students are more likely to feel 'constant' stress than males, with 12% of female students reporting constant (more than twice a day) stress compared to just 5% of males.

Q. How often do you feel stressed by studying?

In the UAE, the primary cause of stress was 'fear of failing (for e.g. exam, assessment)' (40% ranked in their top 3 reasons, and 17% ranked first), which aligns with the global result where this is also the primary cause of stress for most students across all regions. This is also a more pronounced cause of stress for female students, with 23% ranking it first compared to 13% of males, and domestic students (23% ranked first compared to 12% of international students). The next most common cause of stress is 'not having enough time to balance life commitments' (34% in top 3 and 10% ranked first), and more prominent with part-time students (42% ranked in their top 3)..
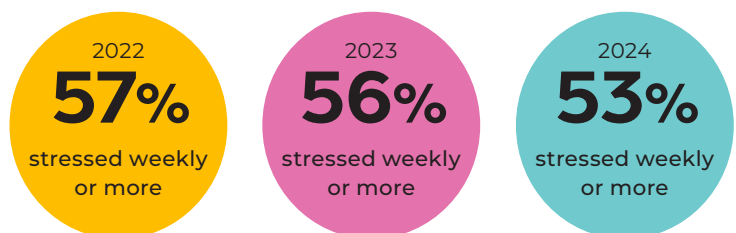
2022
57%
stressed weekly or more

2023
56%
stressed weekly or more

2024
53%
stressed weekly or more

TOP 3 REASONS FELT MOST STRESSED ABOUT STUDYING

Legend: Australia · New Zealand · Singapore · UK · KSA · UAE · Canada · USA

Reason	Australia	New Zealand	Singapore	UK	KSA	UAE	Canada	USA	UAE
Not enough time to prepare for exams & assessments	42%	40%	40%	41%	32%	29%	39%	33%	**37%**
Not enough time to balance other commitments	48%	47%	37%	52%	32%	34%	40%	45%	**44%**
Finding assignment help	12%	15%	17%	13%	21%	21%	14%	15%	**15%**
Paying for degree / study	31%	31%	22%	25%	21%	29%	35%	31%	**28%**
Sticking to integrity & plagiarism rules (i.e referencing and AI use)	16%	13%	18%	15%	22%	23%	15%	17%	**17%**
Managing more responsibility on my own	24%	26%	24%	23%	30%	29%	27%	27%	**26%**
Meeting new friends	11%	9%	14%	10%	16%	17%	13%	11%	**12%**
Difficult course content	31%	33%	38%	34%	31%	29%	33%	35%	**34%**
Fear of failing (i.e. exam, assessment or other)	52%	56%	53%	61%	38%	40%	48%	51%	**52%**
Discovering school resources (e.g. using the library, services, policies)	11%	11%	12%	9%	19%	17%	13%	12%	**12%**
Concern about using public Generative AI tools	8%	9%	11%	5%	17%	15%	11%	10%	**9%**
Data privacy concerns (e.g. protecting personal info and coursework)	9%	7%	12%	6%	21%	16%	11%	11%	
Other	3%	2%	1%	6%	1%	2%	2%	3%	**3%**

Significance legend: p<001, p<01, p<05, p<10 (red); p<10, p<05, p<01, p<001 (green)

Students with English as an additional language are more likely to struggle with 'difficult course content' (34% ranked in top 3) compared to English as a first language speakers (26%). Domestic students are more likely to be stressed about time management issues and balancing other commitments (40% ranked in top 3) than international students (29%).

TOP 3 REASONS FELT MOST STRESSED ABOUT STUDYING

Reason	%
Fear of failing (i.e. exam, assessment or other)	**40%**
Not enough time to balance other commitments	**34%**
Not enough time to prepare for exams & assessments	**29%**
Paying for degree / study	**29%**
Difficult course content	**29%**
Managing more responsibility on my own	**29%**
Sticking to integrity & plagiarism rules (i.e referencing and AI use)	**23%**
Finding assignment help	**21%**
Meeting new friends	**17%**
Discovering school resources (e.g. using the library, services, policies)	**17%**
Data privacy concerns (e.g. protecting personal info and coursework)	**16%**
Concern about using public Generative AI tools	**15%**
Other	**2%**

YOY KSA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, STRESS FREQUENCY DURING STUDY

■ 2022   ■ 2023   ■ 2024

Constantly (more than twice a day)
- 2022: 8%
- 2023: 12%
- 2024: 12%

Daily
- 2022: 23%
- 2023: 22%
- 2024: 27%

Weekly
- 2022: 30%
- 2023: 30%
- 2024: 23%

Monthly
- 2022: 16%
- 2023: 9%
- 2024: 10%

A few times per term / semester
- 2022: 14%
- 2023: 19%
- 2024: 17%

A few times per year
- 2022: 4%
- 2023: 3%
- 2024: 5%

Less often
- 2022: 2%
- 2023: 1%
- 2024: 4%

Never
- 2022: 3%
- 2023: 4%
- 2024: 3%
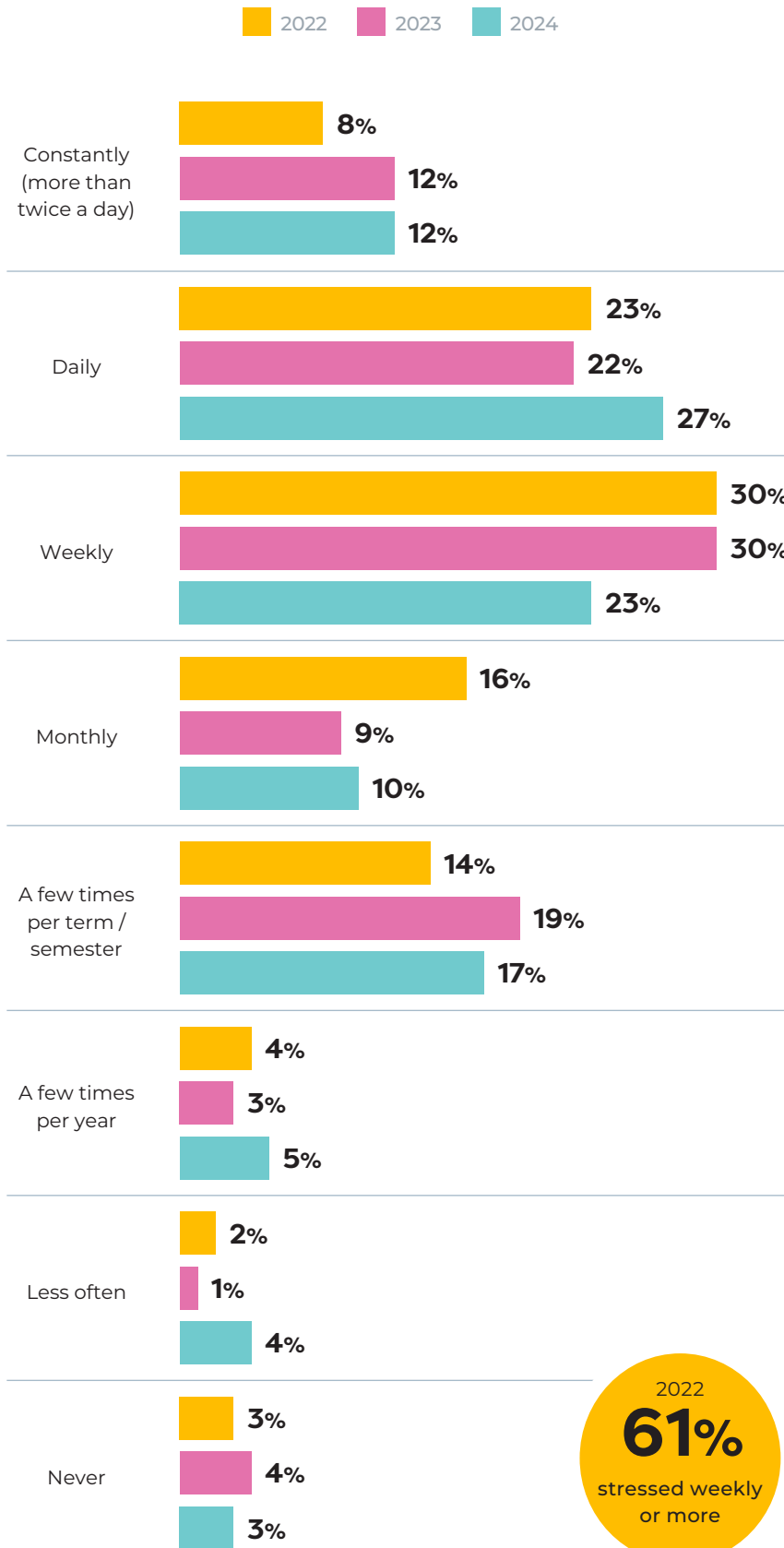
Students are more stressed, struggle with course content

Compared to UAE students, a higher proportion of students in the surveyed group reported experiencing stress regularly, with 23% facing it weekly (a drop from last year's 30%) and 27% on a daily basis (an increase from last year's 22%). Constant stress holds steady with 12% of KSA students experiencing study-related stress more than twice a day.

The primary cause of stress, cited by 38% of students, was a 'fear of failing', in keeping with the global trend.' This was notably higher in younger students aged 18-25 (44% ranked top 3), STEM students (46%), and unemployed students (56%).

"Providing mental health help by the university, which my current university does not provide."

Female students were much more likely to be stressed by 'paying for their degree' (26% ranked top 3) compared to males (17%), yet males were more likely to be stressed by 'managing more responsibility' (33% ranked top 3) than females (25%).

"Was a lot of challenges between me studying and also working"

2022 61% stressed weekly or more

2023 64% stressed weekly or more

2024 61%▼ stressed weekly or more

Chapter 5: Study stress and student wellbeing

TOP 3 REASONS FELT MOST STRESSED ABOUT STUDYING

Legend:
- Not enough time to prepare for exams & assessments
- Not enough time to balance other commitments
- Finding assignment help
- Paying for degree / study
- Sticking to integrity & plagiarism rules (i.e referencing & AI use)
- Managing more responsibility on my own
- Meeting new friends
- Difficult course content
- Fear of failing (i.e. exam, assessment or other)
- Discovering school resources (e.g. using the library, services, policies)
- Concern about using public Generative AI tools
- Data privacy concerns (e.g. protecting personal info & coursework)
- Other

Field	Exam time	Balance commitments	Assignment help	Paying for degree	Integrity/plagiarism	More responsibility	Meeting friends	Difficult content	Fear of failing	School resources	Generative AI	Data privacy	Other
STEM	31%	34%	31%	22%	23%	25%	19%	28%	32%	23%	14%	19%	24%
Medicine	15%	11%	11%	12%	8%	7%	9%	18%	15%	14%	13%	12%	22%
Nursing	2%	3%	5%	2%	1%	3%	5%	3%	4%	1%	1%	1%	
Psychology	3%	4%	2%	5%	4%	2%	6%	4%	3%	1%	2%	5%	
Business	22%	15%	17%	16%	25%	22%	18%	18%	18%	16%	13%	23%	
Law	6%	5%	2%	3%	6%	11%	5%	5%	6%	1%	15%	11%	
Languages	10%	11%	16%	15%	18%	14%	19%	10%	10%	24%	30%	16%	17%
Humanities	5%	5%	4%	5%	6%	4%	4%	7%	3%	7%	4%	5%	17%
Journalism / communications	2%	3%	1%	7%	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%	4%	2%		
Creative Arts	4%	6%	8%	9%	4%	4%	10%	4%	6%	13%	4%	5%	22%
Other	1%	2%	2%	3%	2%	5%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%		

> **"Since the Fees are extremely high I really want to perform well and get scholarships for upcoming semesters so that's how stress appears. Maybe reducing fees would reduce my stress"**

Students studying Business were more likely to rank 'sticking to the rules around integrity and plagiarism (e.g. referencing and the use of AI)' as a top 3 cause of stress (30%) compared to other study areas.

Chapter 5 Discussion:

Overall, stress frequency has shifted downward slightly, yet the longer-term trend shows no significant change. Students are feeling stressed by their studies, and for a myriad of reasons depending on their demographic and situation. Universities can ensure there is adequate mental health support available on and off campus to serve a wide population of student types.

Students' fear of failure causes stress. It's important for institutions to promote a culture of support and strength-based strategies to ensure student success, so that these fears and stresses are not exacerbated.

Students studying Business, STEM, and languages experience more stress around sticking to integrity rules, so more could be done to explore why that is, and ensure the rules and regulations are clear for those faculties in particular.

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