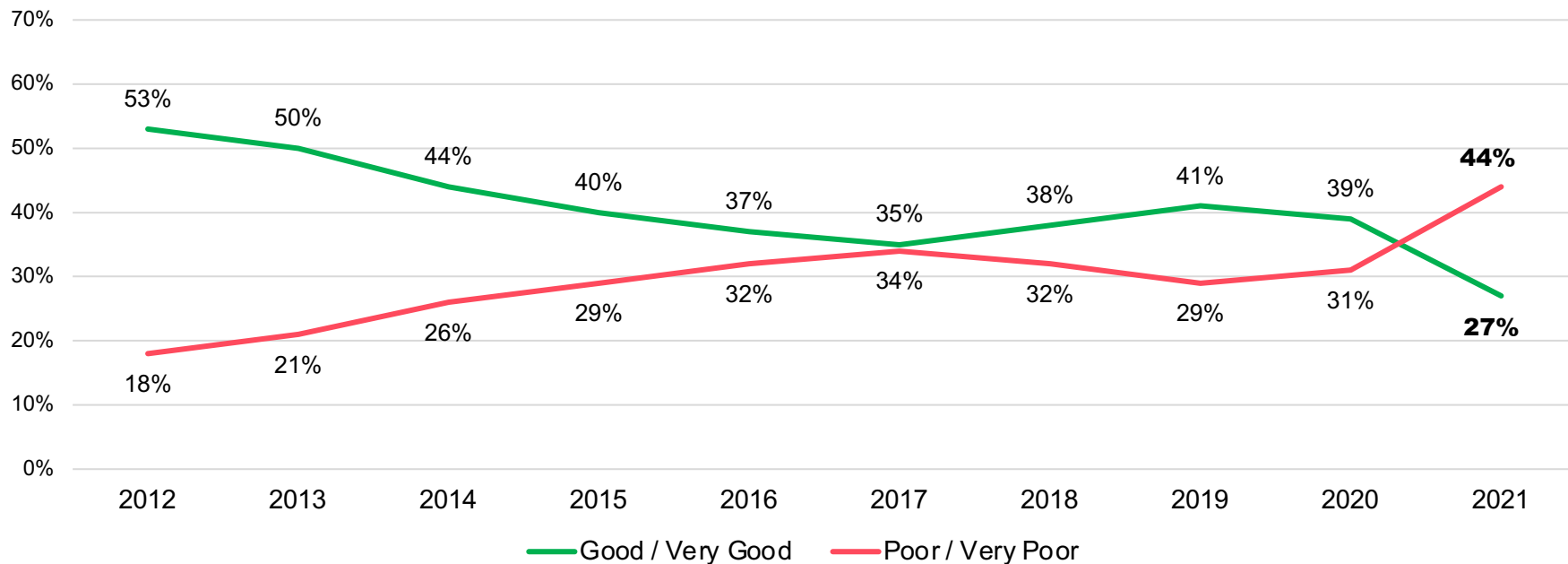


The Student Academic Experience Survey 2021

Jonathan Neves, Head of Business Intelligence & Surveys, Advance HE
Rachel Hewitt, Director of Policy & Advocacy, HEPI

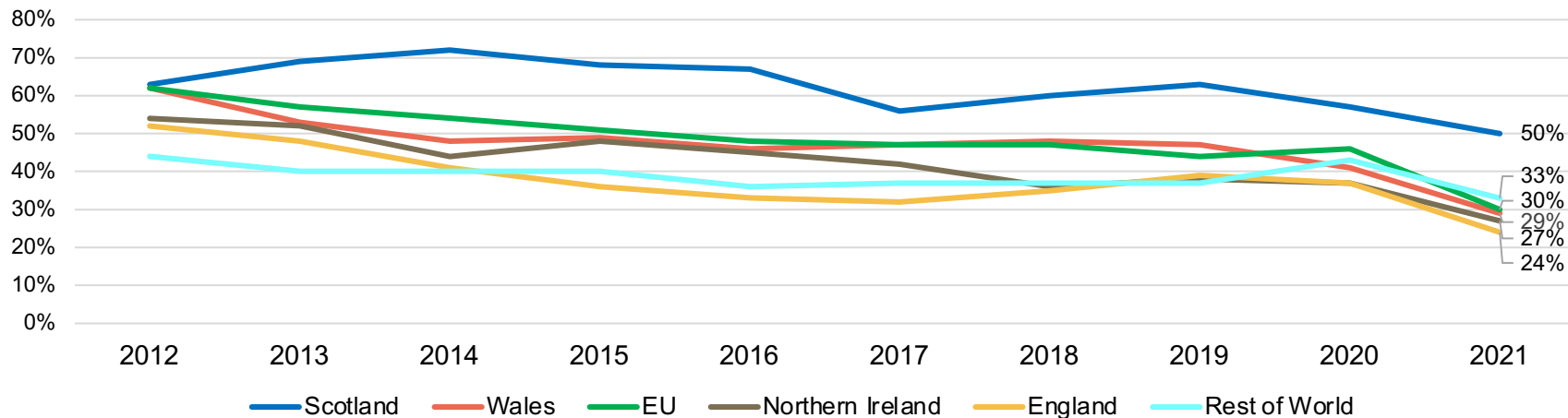
Perceptions of value-for-money have fallen to their lowest levels so far

Value-for-money of your present course



This decline has been seen across all domiciles

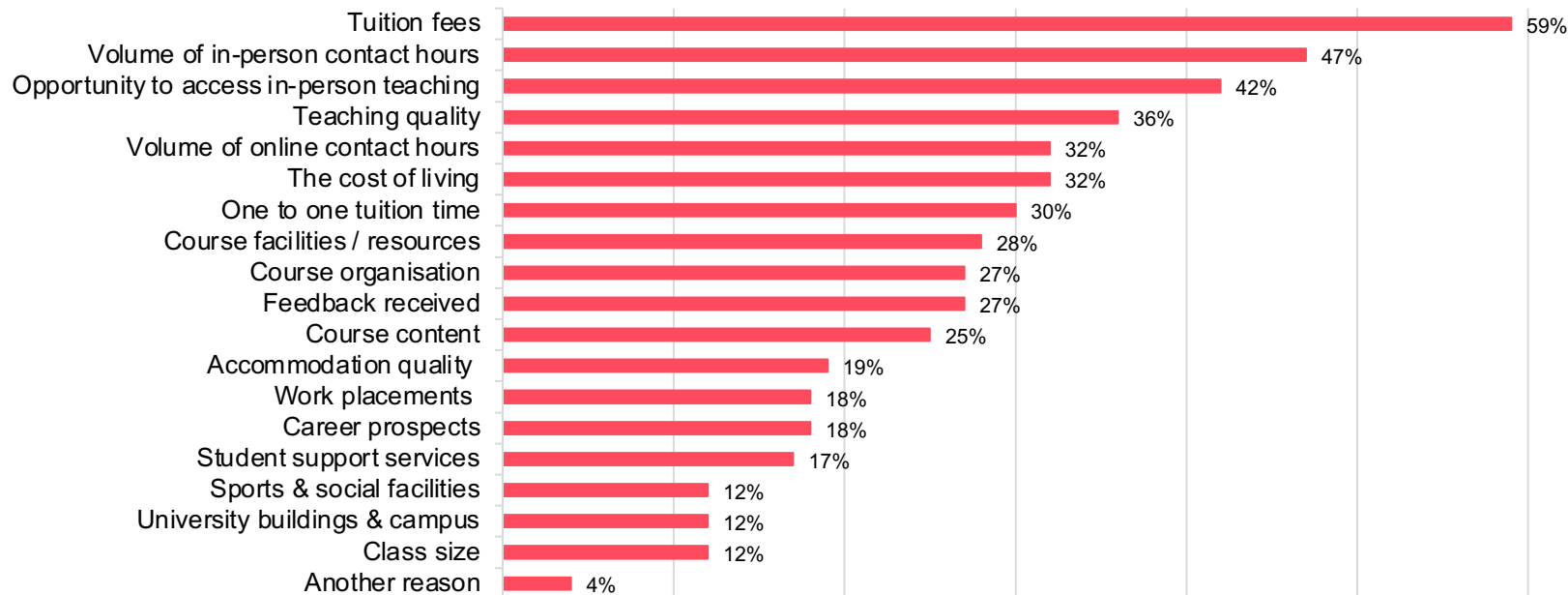
Value-for-money – by domicile (good or very good value)



| | Scotland | Wales | EU | NI | England | Rest of World |
|------|----------|-------|-----|-----|---------|---------------|
| 2019 | 63% | 47% | 44% | 38% | 39% | 37% |
| 2020 | 57% | 41% | 46% | 37% | 37% | 43% |
| 2021 | 50% | 29% | 30% | 27% | 24% | 33% |

The main reasons behind this are tuition fees, contact hours and the absence of in-person teaching – issues that are often interlinked

When saying you received poor value / very poor value, what were you thinking about?



There is a strong perception that levels of fees do not provide value in the current / recent circumstances

“Due to Corona, everything seems too high a price for what we are receiving”

“Fees have not changed even considering the changes made with Covid”

“Most courses are around the same price, so quality of teaching is well worth the value, however COVID undermines what we’re paying for because I’m sure in person it would be great, but online isn’t worth £9k+”

“Online learning is extremely different to in person learning. Uni was great up until the pandemic hit, although I do still believe the fees were overpriced regardless”

“The course is great..., but considering its all online, I think £9,250 is too much”

“Fieldwork which was meant to be included in the course but didn’t happen due to coronavirus. The ability to go to a uni with free field-trips was one reason I chose (it)”

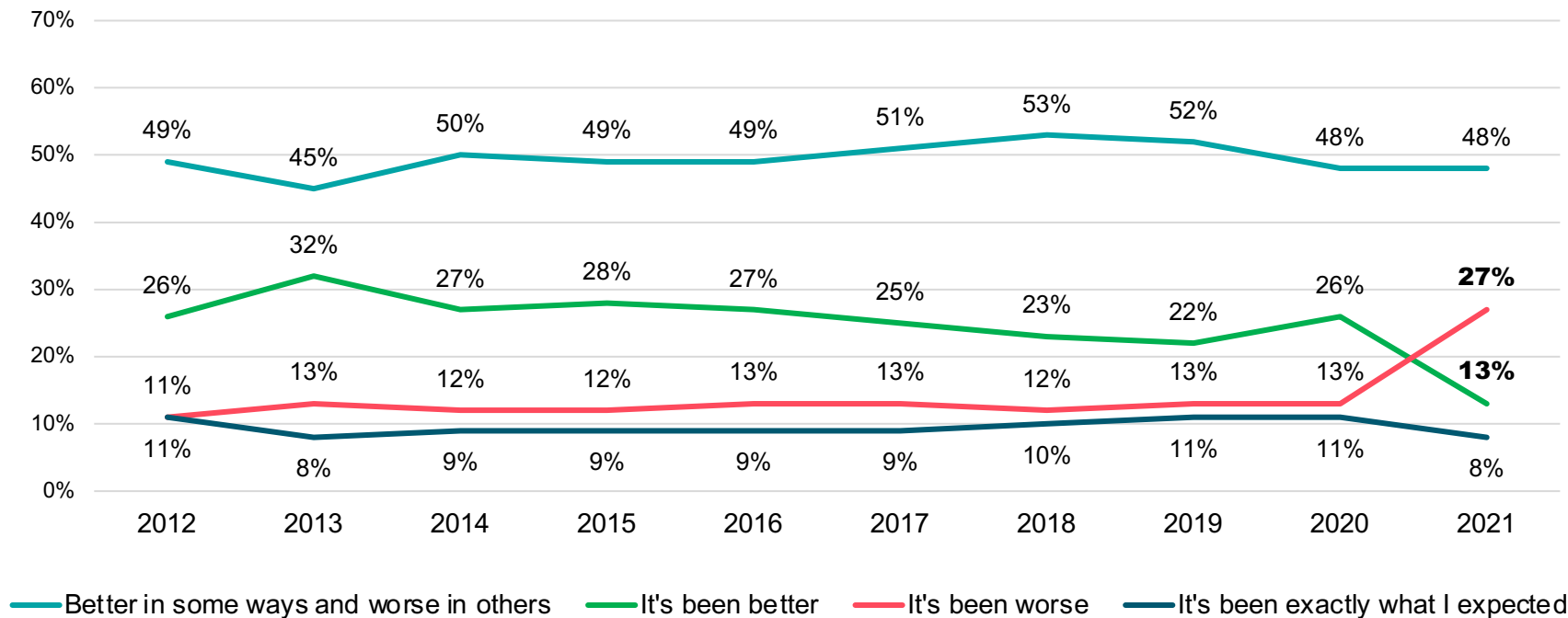
“As I am a practical course, although I understand why we cannot meet in person I believe that my quality of education cannot be what I needed. They are trying their best but there are some things you can't replace online”

“Working for free as a student nurse while also paying to go to uni, I am essentially paying to work”

“I don’t feel like I learnt what I was supposed to learn (lab skills speaking) in my third year to be prepared for graduate level jobs”

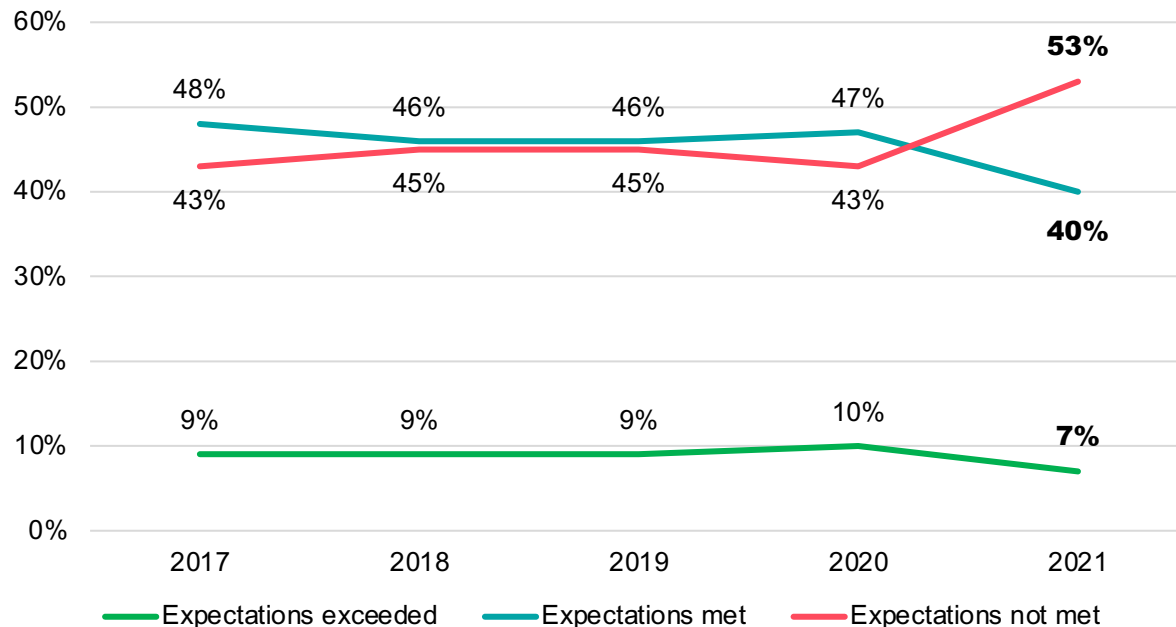
Other key measures, such as experience compared to expectations, have also fallen to their lowest levels

Experience compared to expectations



In the absence of in-person interaction, timeliness and detail of feedback has come under increased scrutiny

Returning assignments – whether expectations met



Selected open comments

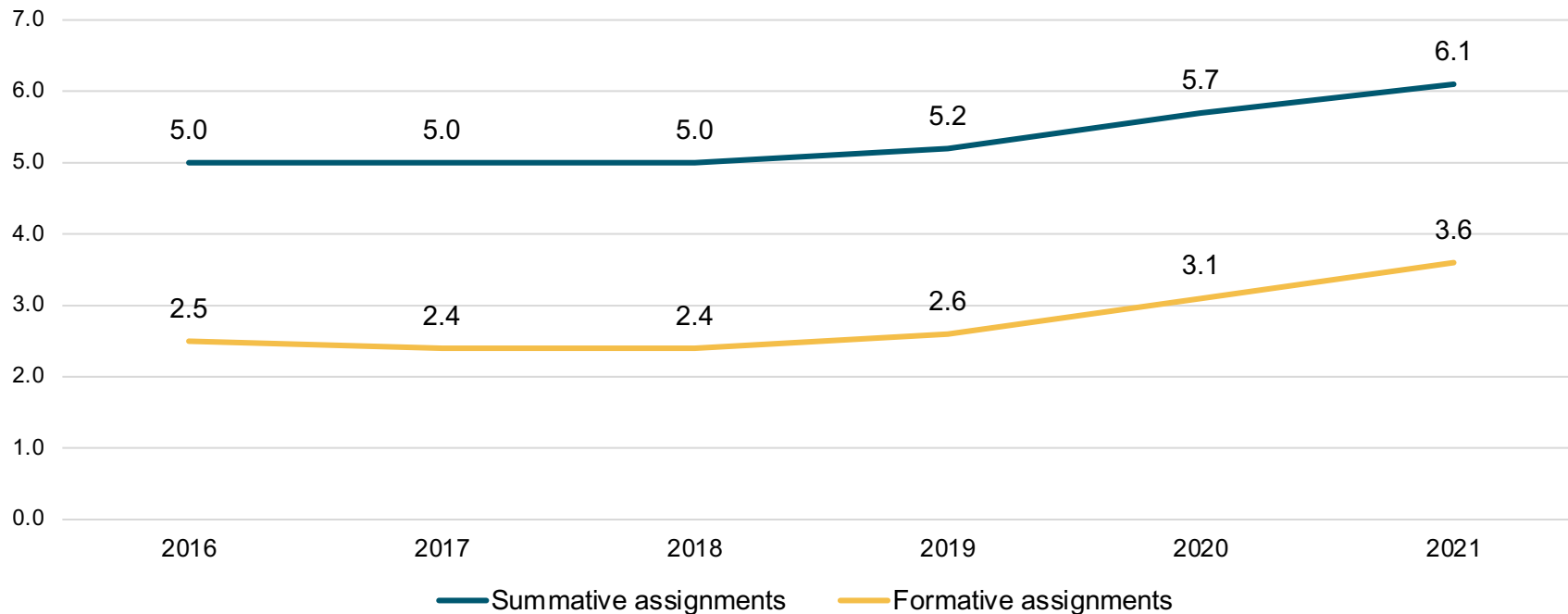
“The University should make sure to hold the staff to the same level of expectations as they do with students. For example, lecturers and tutors are allowed to take twice the time than usual marking them.”

“Give more contact hours. I was told I would get 12 a week, I get 6. Every single assignment feedback I have received has been delayed a week.”

“Give actual feedback for work instead of making us submit so many assignments that don't even have individual feedback. Staff were overwhelmed with marking out work on time, students were overwhelmed with getting the work done.”

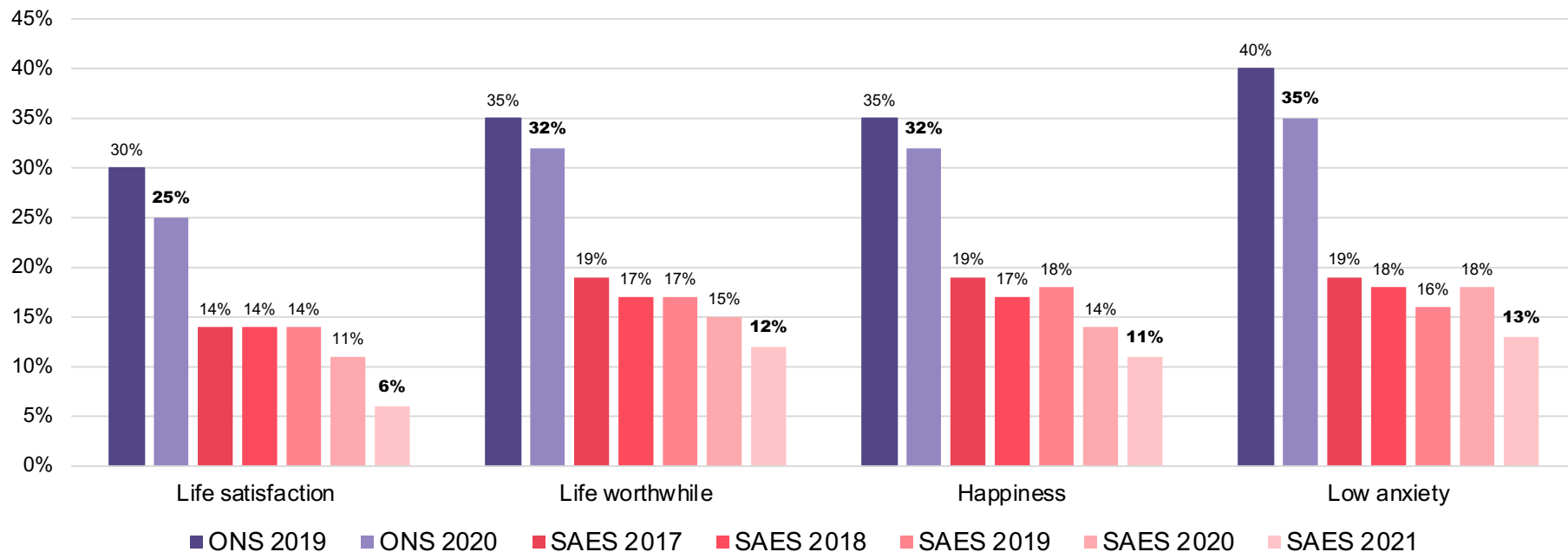
While the volume of assignments continues to increase

Average number of assignments per term / semester



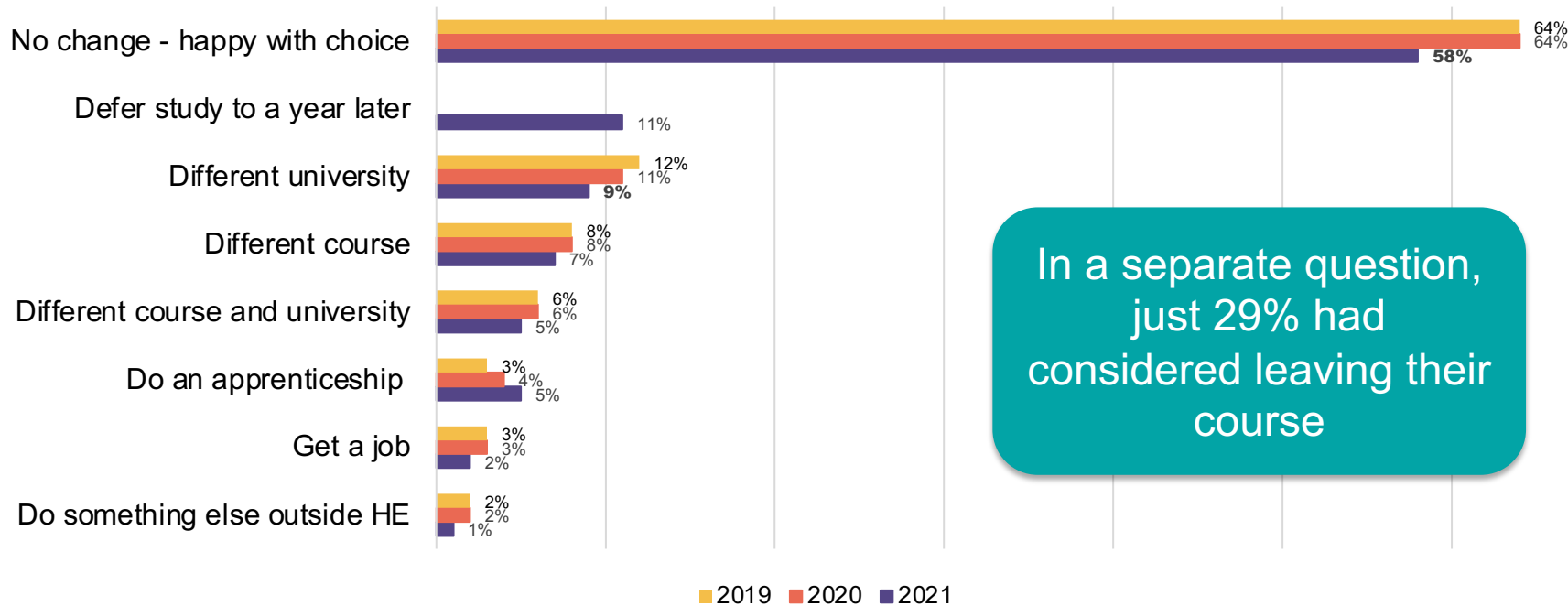
Wellbeing among students has declined again, as it has for the general population – although student wellbeing remains much lower

Comparison of wellbeing measures



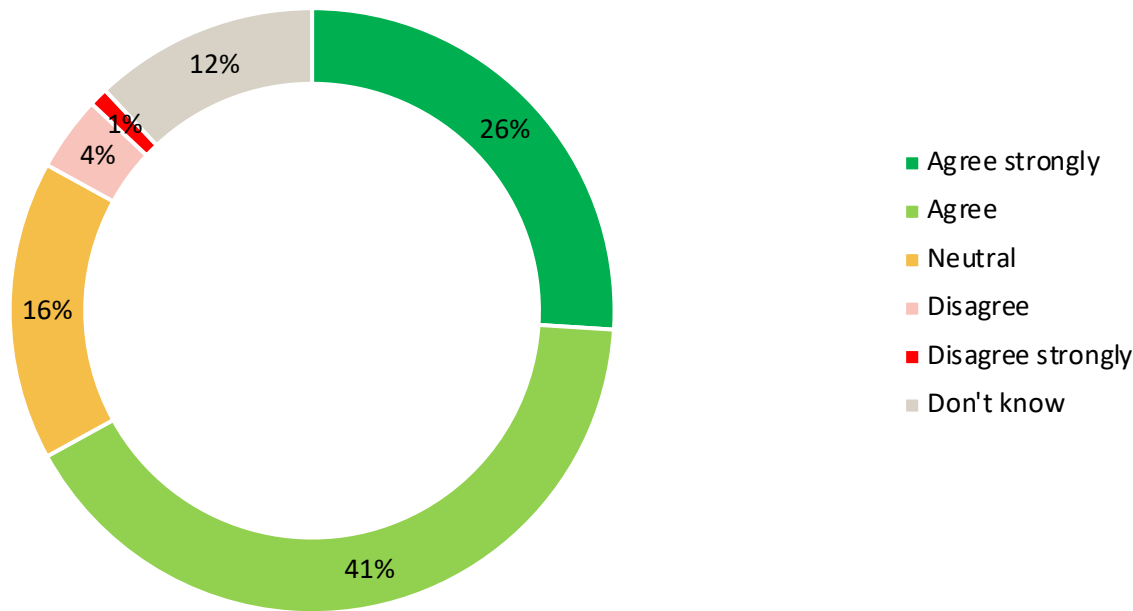
Despite this, higher education remains a popular choice, with relatively few students feeling that the choice may have been the wrong one

Whether would choose same course and university again



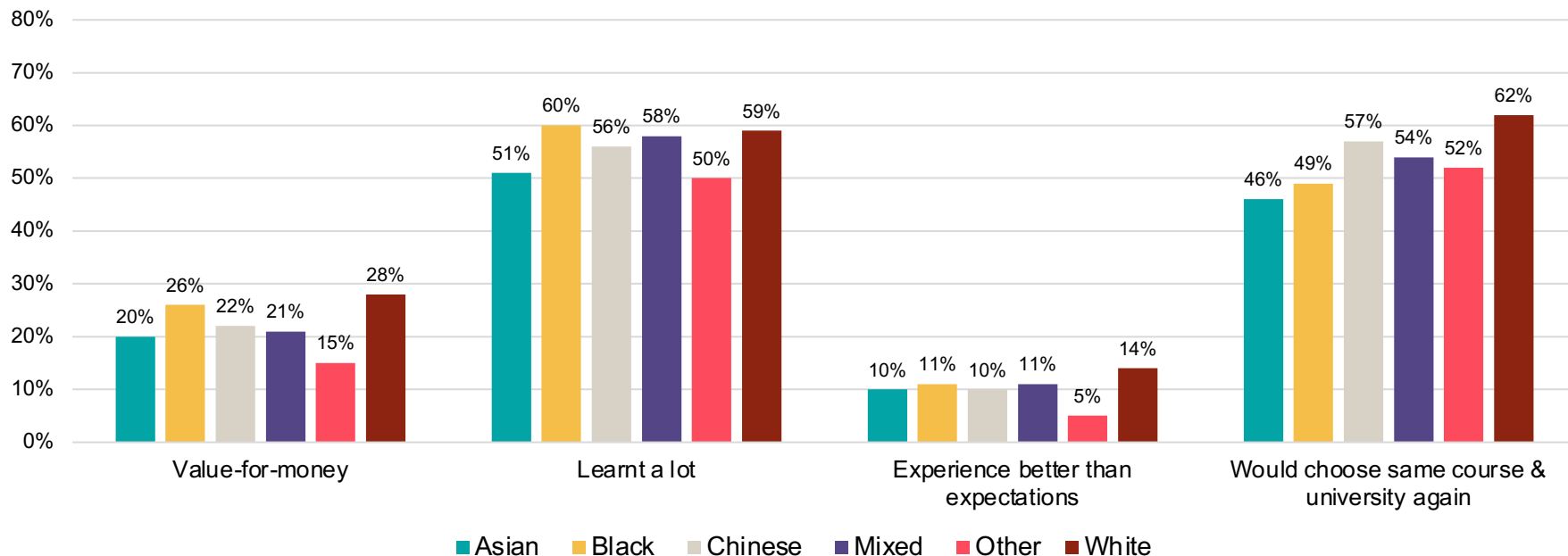
A relatively encouraging proportion (67%) agree their institution is committed to eliminating racial inequalities

My institution is committed to eliminating racial inequalities for students



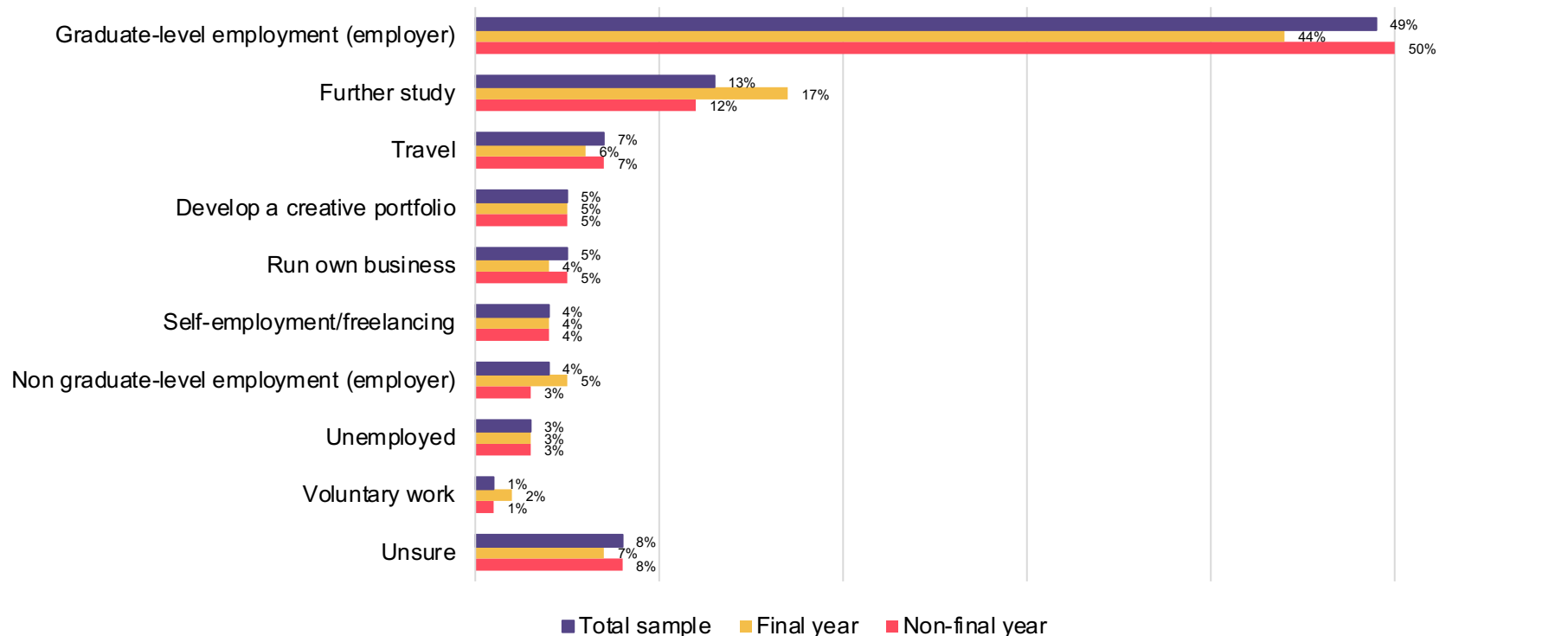
Although there remain disparities in the quality of the student experience between different ethnic groups

Key measures 2021



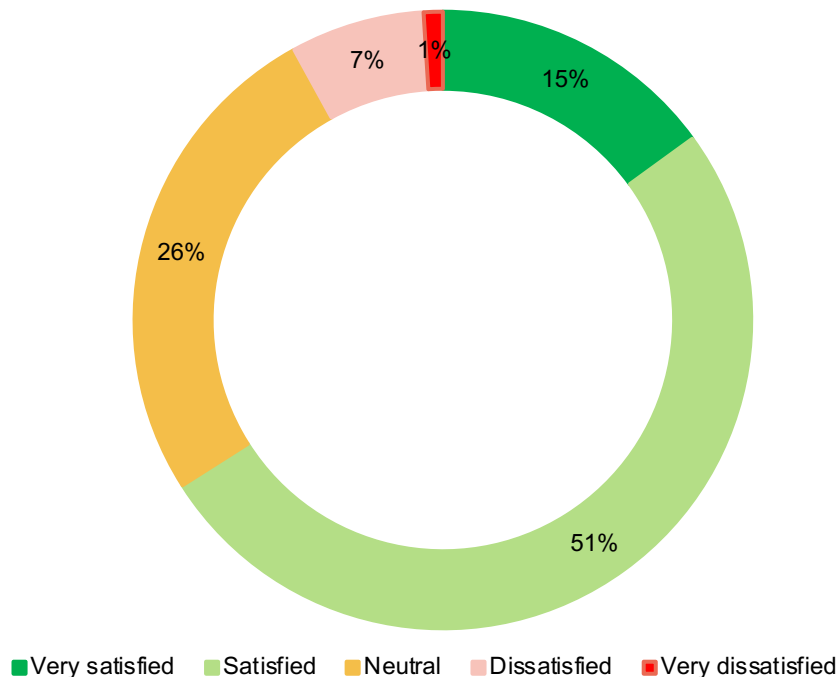
Less than half of students expect to go onto a 'graduate-level' job after university

What do you expect to do when you leave university?



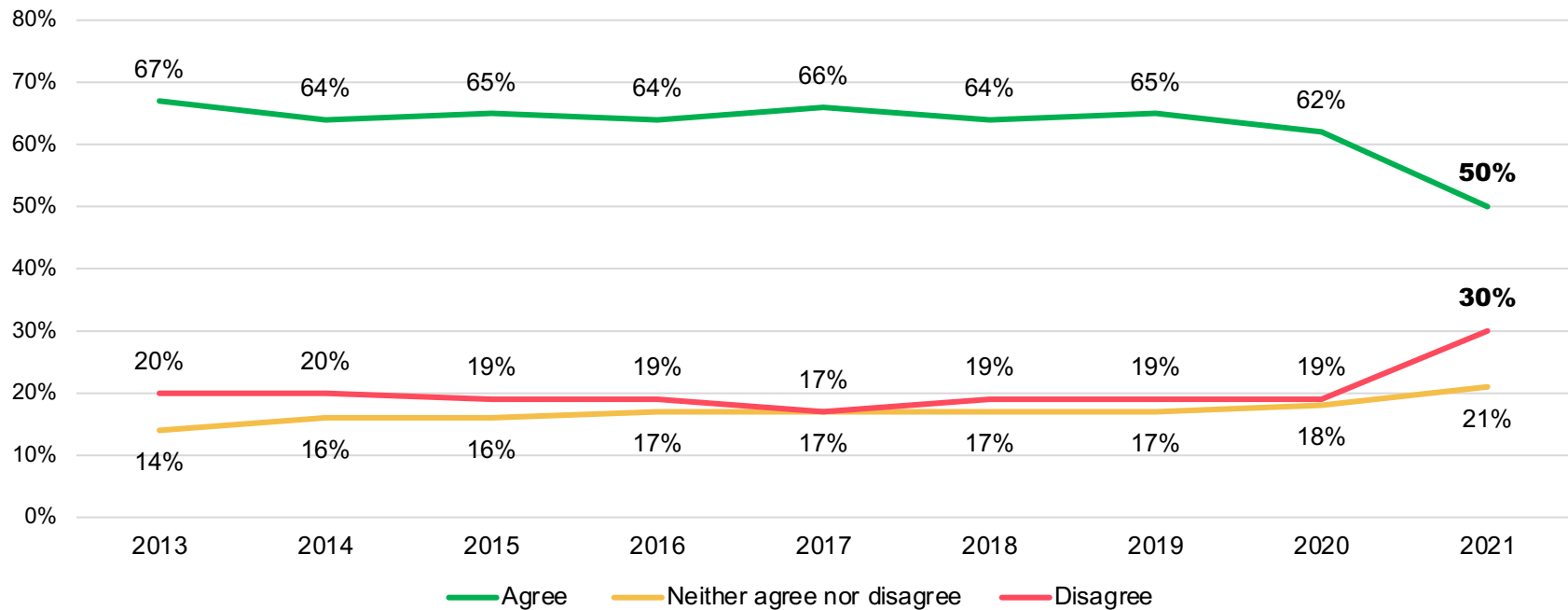
Most students feel satisfied with how their institution uses educational technology in their learning

Satisfaction with the use of educational technology



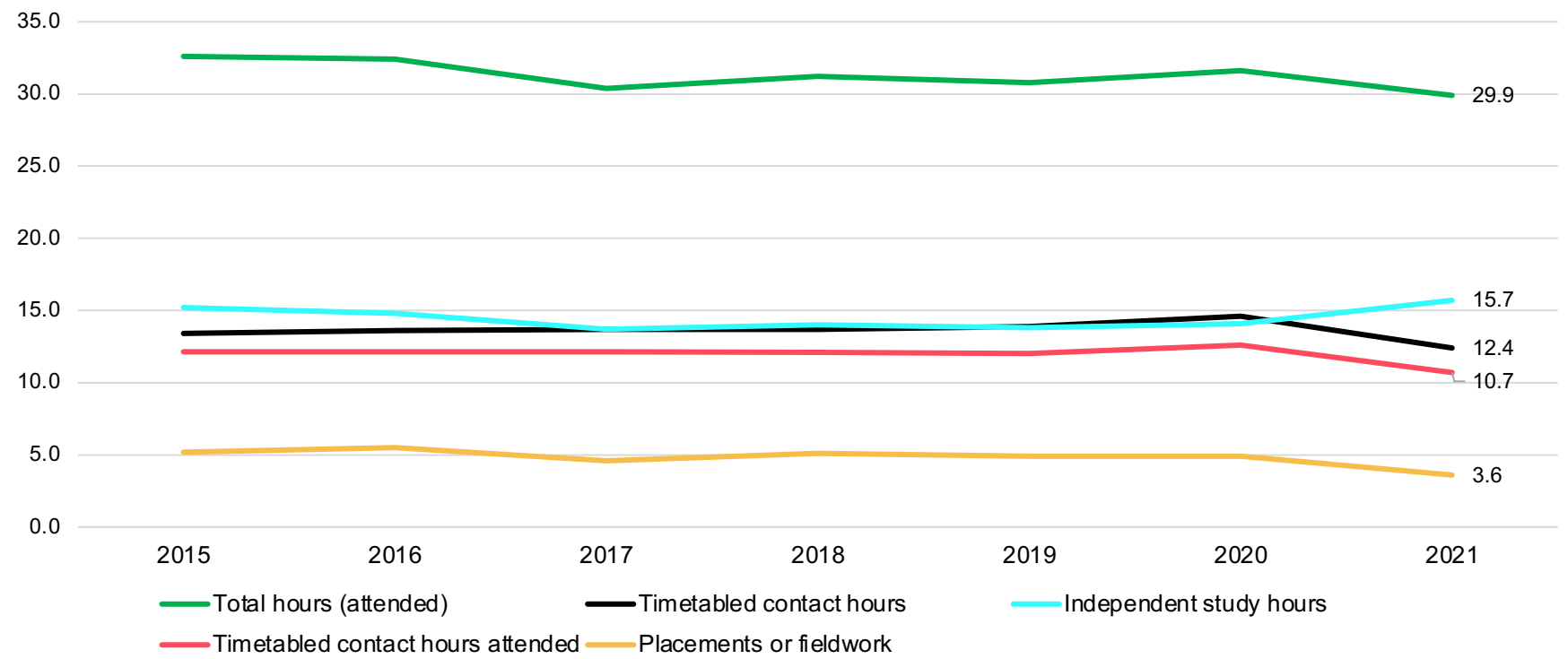
However we have seen a decline in satisfaction with timetabled contact hours

I am satisfied with my timetabled contact hours



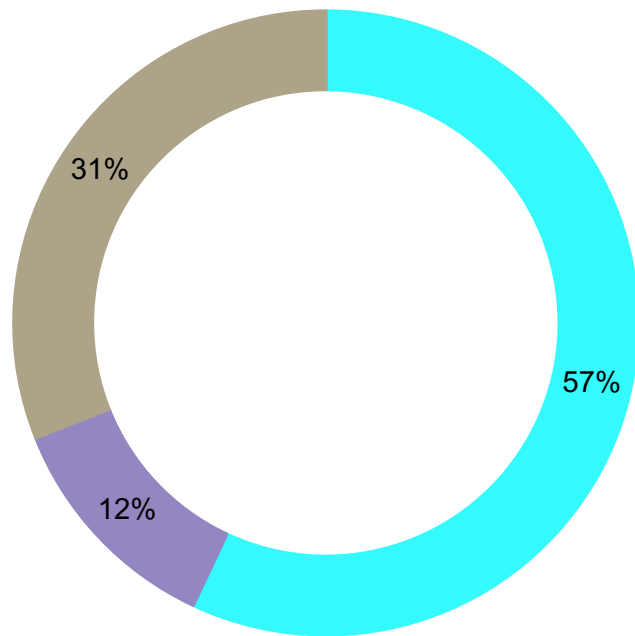
Students have balanced out a decline in contact hours and placements with increased independent study

Workload hours in average week



It is clear that students are looking forward to a return to in-person teaching, although there may be benefits to some blended learning

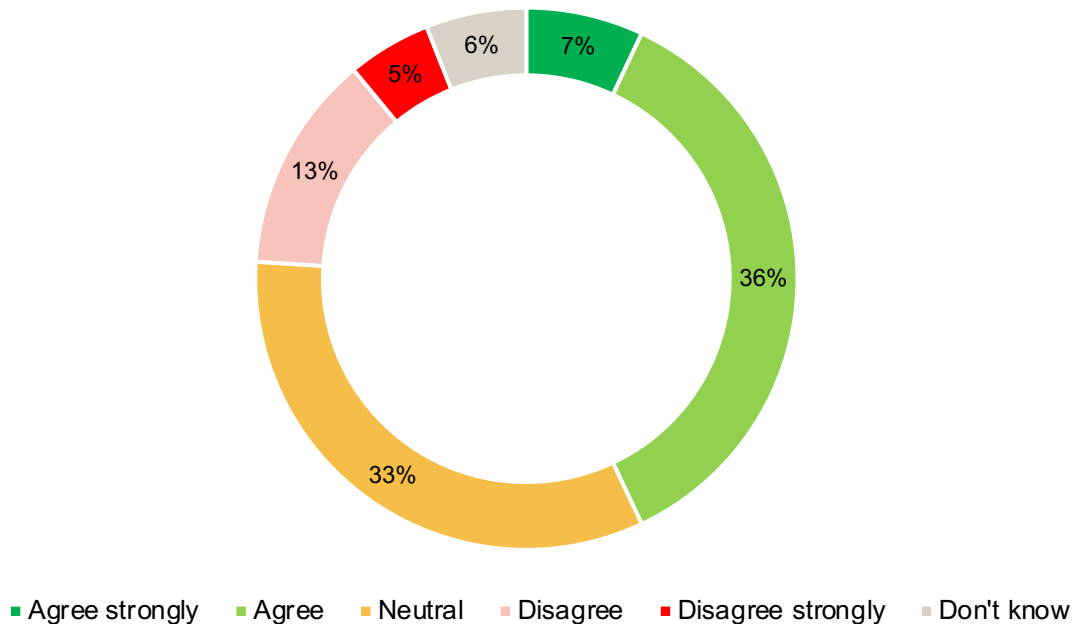
If there were no pandemic restrictions, how would you prefer to learn?



Mostly in-person Mostly online A blended approach

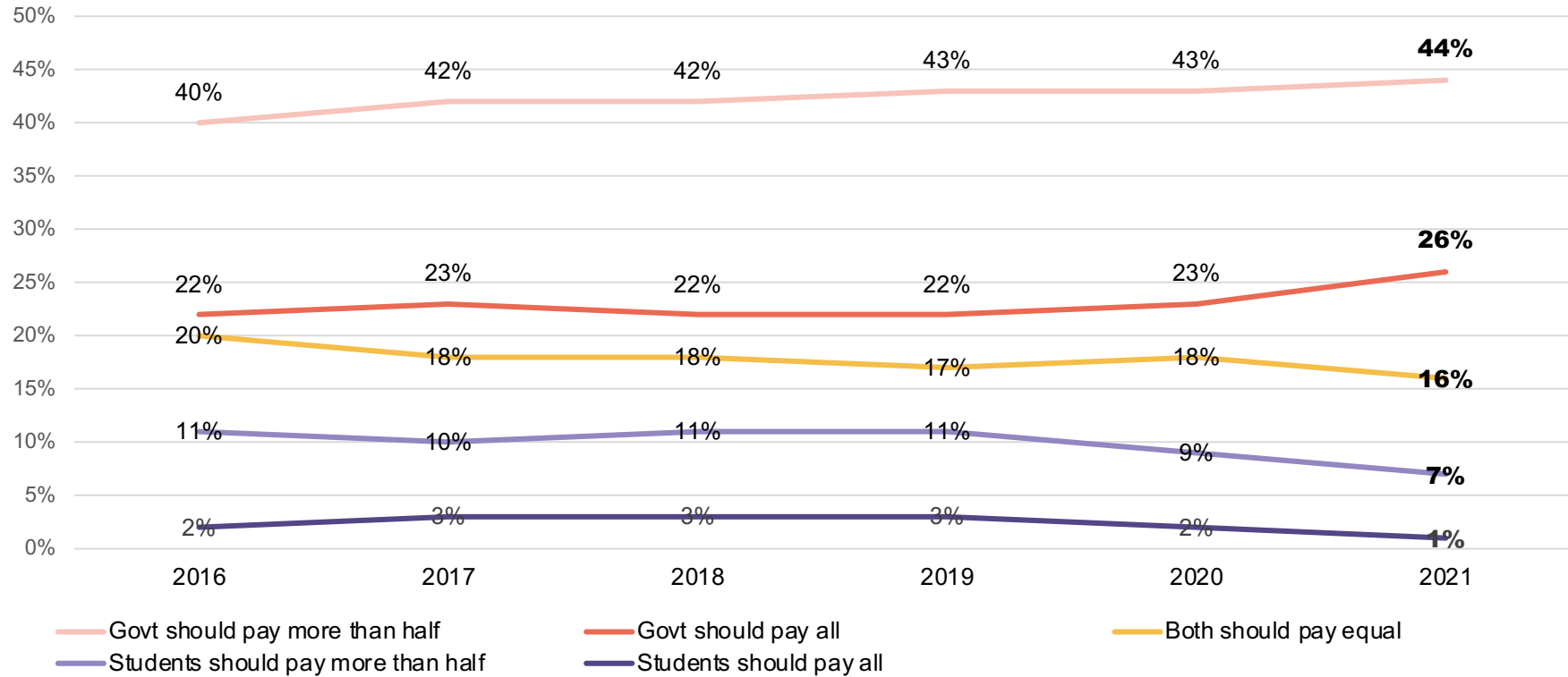
Less than half of students (42%) feel their voice is heard and represented by their institution

My voice is heard and represented by my institution



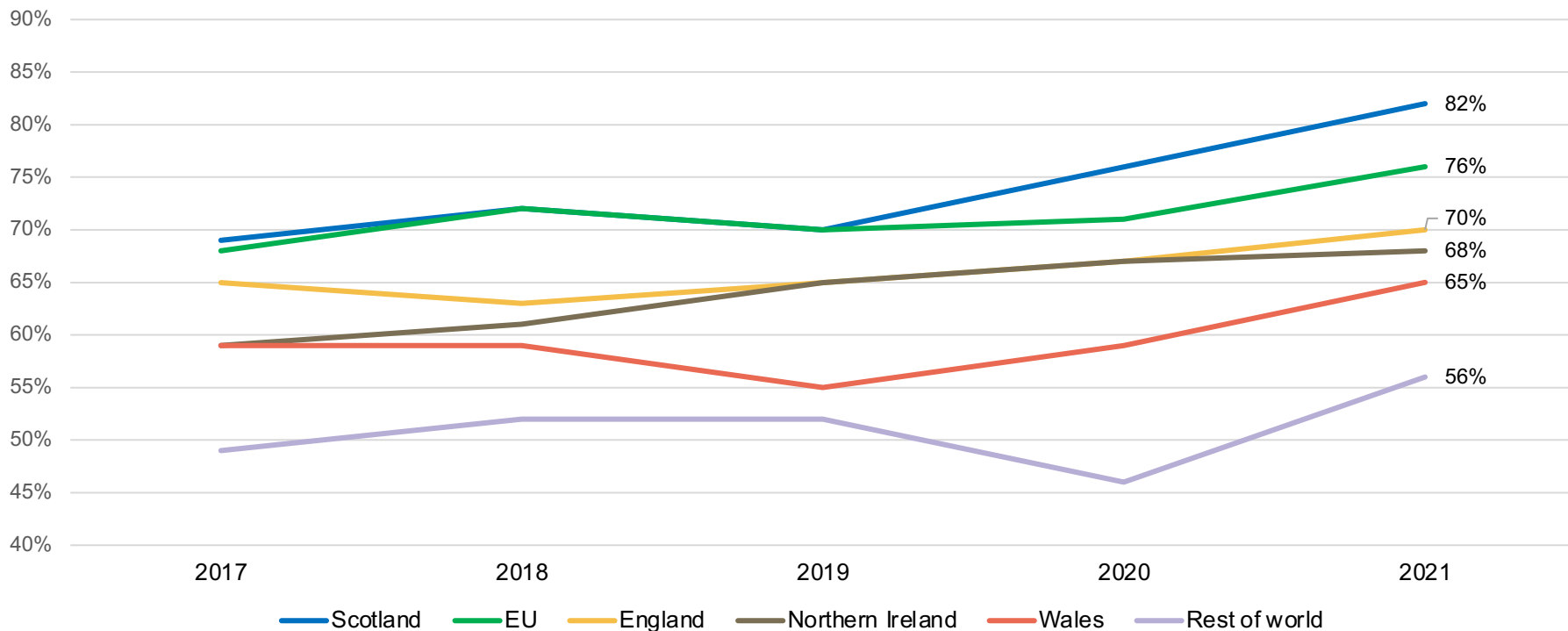
There has been a slight increase in students believing Government should cover the costs of higher education

Who should contribute to the cost of teaching undergraduates



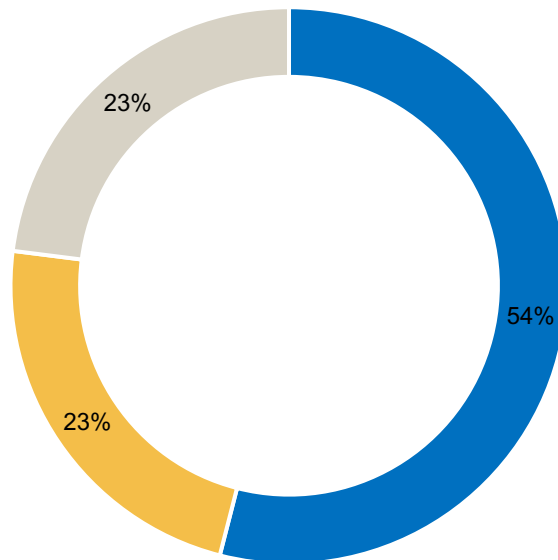
This has increased among all groups, with students from Scotland unsurprisingly being most supportive

Government should pay more than half, or all of the costs



However students say living costs are of a greater concern than tuition fees

Which of these costs is of most concern to you?



■ Living costs ■ Tuition fees ■ Both

Students from private schools are almost twice as likely to be financially supported by family as students who attended state schools

| | Paid employment | | | School attended | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|-------|
| | None | 0–9 hours | 10+ hours | Private | State |
| Maintenance loan or grant | 63% | 52% | 48% | 33% | 61% |
| Family support | 32% | 37% | 24% | 59% | 28% |
| Income from employment | 2% | 9% | 27% | 6% | 8% |

Perceptions of value
have declined due to
fees and limits on
contact time

More students feel their
experience has not
matched their
expectations

But most students would
still choose to enter HE
again

Wellbeing has declined
and remains
significantly lower than
the general population

Students feel HEIs are
committed to tackling
racial inequalities, but
racial disparities in
experience persist

Most students want to
return to mostly in-
person teaching post-
pandemic

Slightly more students
believe Government
should cover the costs
of higher education

But living costs concern
students more than
tuition fees

