

The logo for AdvanceHE, featuring a small teal circle and a purple dot to the left of the text "AdvanceHE" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**AdvanceHE**

A graphic consisting of three overlapping purple rectangular bars of varying lengths, stacked vertically. The text "POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY" is written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font across the bars.

**POSTGRADUATE  
RESEARCH EXPERIENCE  
SURVEY**

# Ulster University and the Global Benchmark

# Overall

## The research postgraduate experience at Ulster

The overall satisfaction of research postgraduates with their studies was 86%, based on 594 responses. Aspects of best practice (with most agreement relative to the benchmark), were institutional valuing of feedback and the opportunities to interact. Online library access and supervisory contact were areas for improvement.

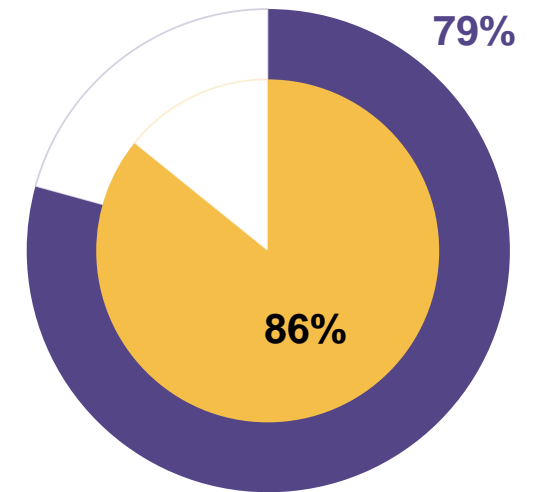
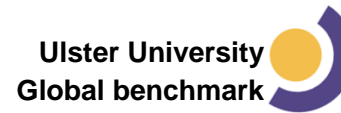


Figure 1: Overall satisfaction

## Best practice

As Figure 2 shows, the proportion of PGRs who agreed that **the institution valued their feedback** was 76% at Ulster, which was 19 percentage points above the Global benchmark (57%).

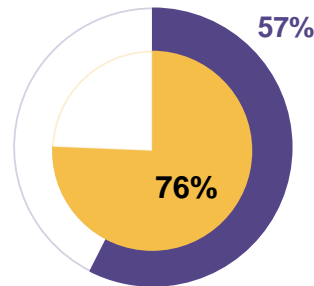


Figure 2: Institutional valuing of feedback

Figure 3 shows that 72% of PGRs at Ulster agreed that **there were sufficient opportunities to interact with other PGRs**. This was 13 percentage points above the Global benchmark (59%).

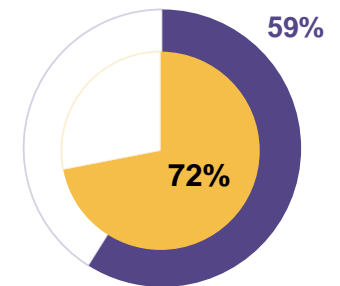


Figure 3: The opportunities to interact

## Areas for improvement

As Figure 4 shows, the proportion of PGRs who agreed that **there was appropriate access to online library resources** was 88% at Ulster, which was 1 percentage points below the Global benchmark (89%).

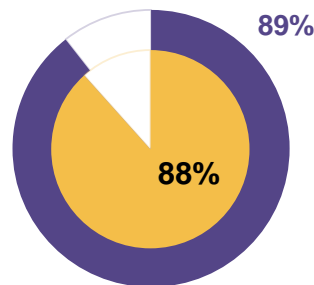


Figure 4: Online library access

Figure 5 shows that 89% of PGRs at Ulster agreed that **they had regular contact with their supervisor**. This was 1 percentage points below the Global benchmark (90%).

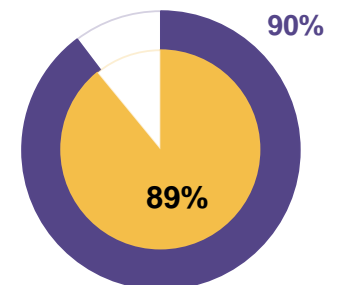
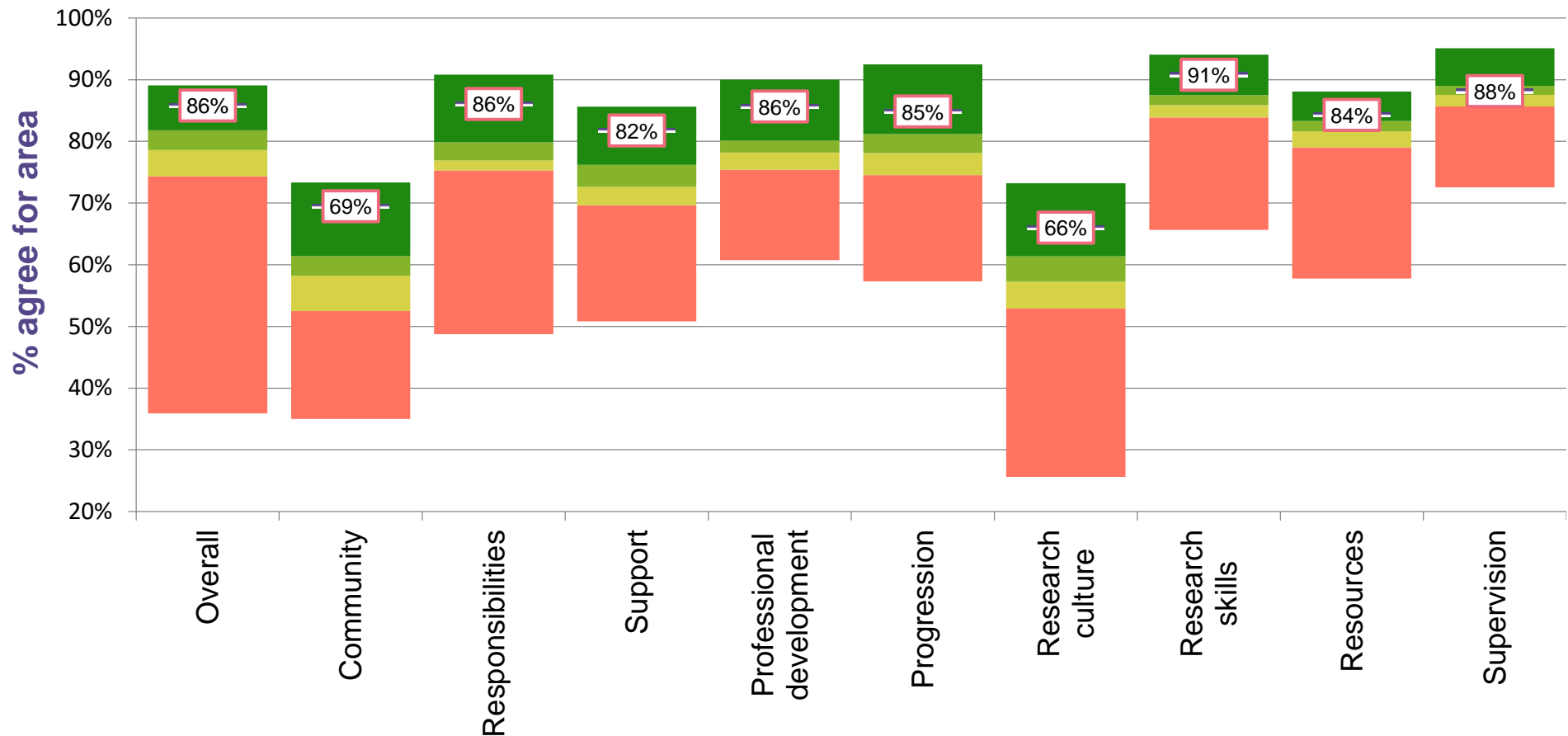


Figure 5: Supervisory contact

# Ulster and the PGR experience benchmarked

The graph below shows the position of Ulster in relation to institutions in the Global benchmark. With a score of 86%, overall satisfaction for Ulster was in the highest quarter. Across the different aspects measured by PRES, Ulster was mostly in the highest quarter.



Key:

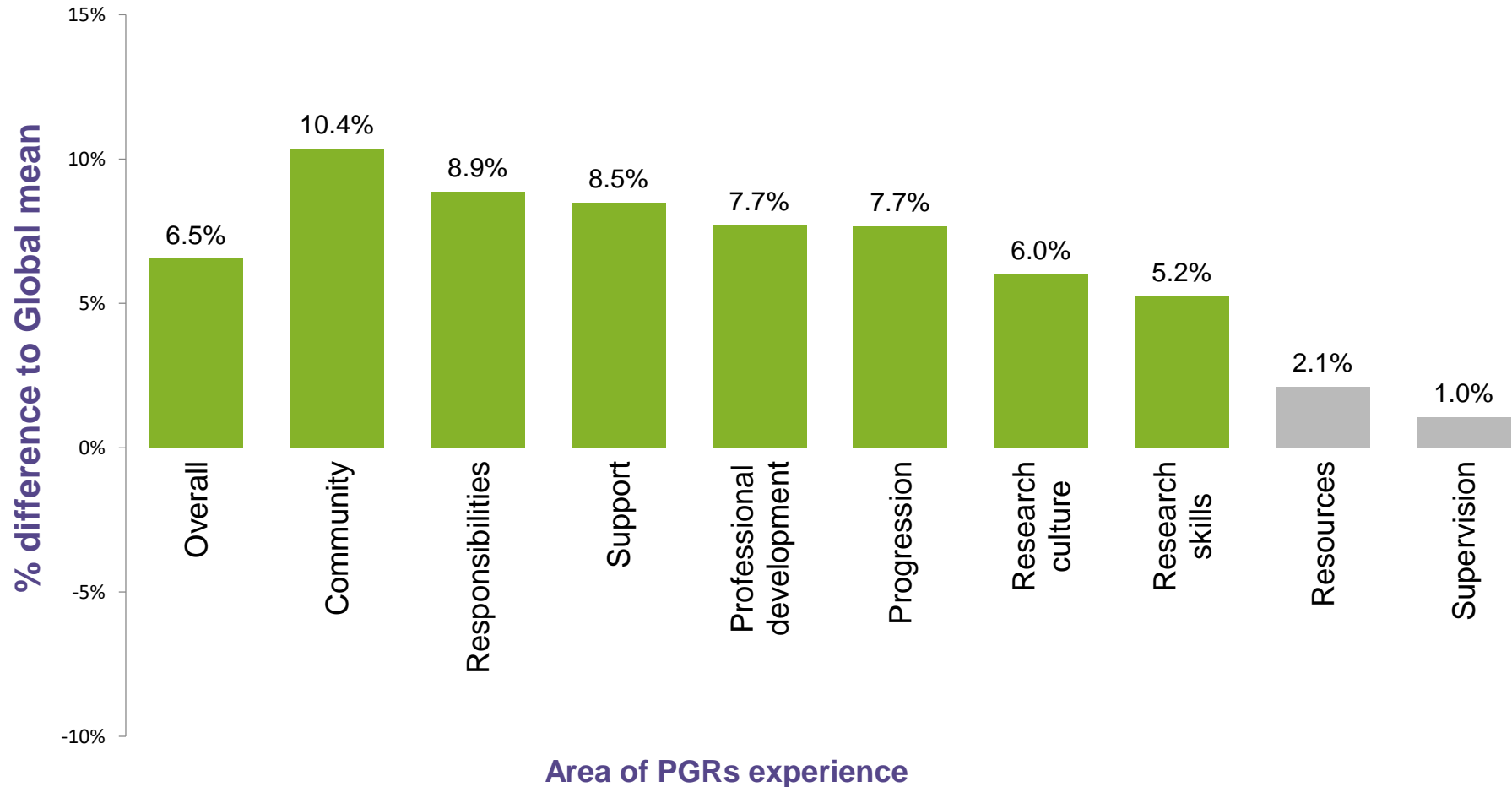


- Highest quarter: In the top 25% of institutions for this area
- Second quarter: Above average, but below the top 25%
- Third quarter: Below average, but above the bottom 25%
- Lowest quarter: In the bottom 25% of institutions for this area

(only institutions receiving 23 responses or over were included in the calculation of quarters)

# Ulster and the PGR experience benchmarked

The area research postgraduates at Ulster were most positive about was Community, with their agreement 10.4 percentage points above the Global benchmark, a significant difference. The area research postgraduates were least positive about was Supervision, which was 1.0 percentage points above the Global benchmark.



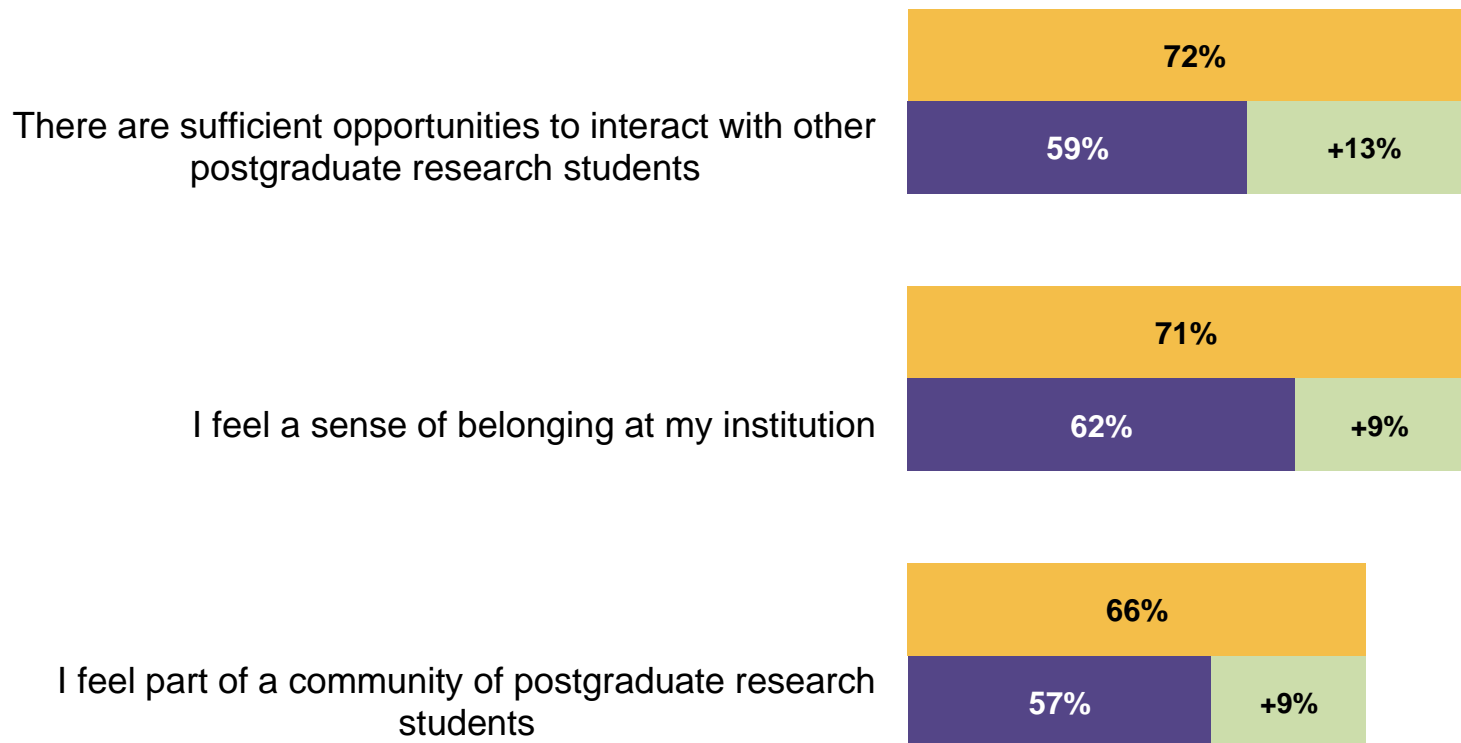
**Key:**

- Positive significant difference
- No significant difference
- Negative significant difference

# Focus on Community

Exploring further within the research postgraduate experience of Community, the statement that was most positive relative to the Global benchmark, was 'there are sufficient opportunities to interact with other postgraduate research students'. Of the 581 PGRs from Ulster who answered this statement, 72% agreed; this was significantly above the Global benchmark by 13 percentage points.

Community



Key: ■ Ulster University  
■ Global benchmark

■ Significant positive difference  
■ No significant difference  
■ Significant negative difference

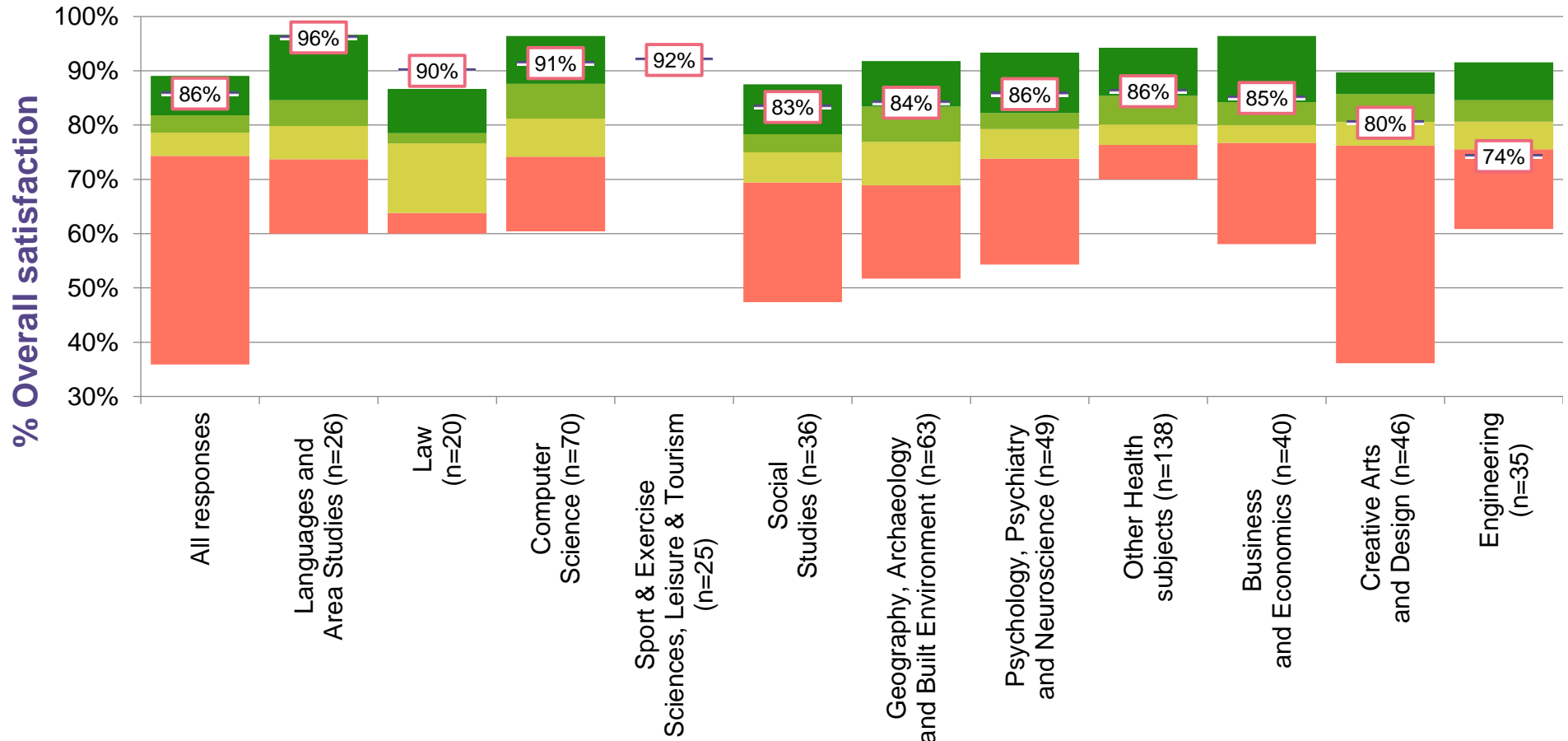
# Focus on Supervision

Exploring within Supervision, the least positive statement relative to the Global benchmark, was 'I have regular contact with my supervisor/s, appropriate for my needs'. Of the 585 PGRs from Ulster who answered this statement, 89% agreed. This was below the Global benchmark by 1 percentage points.



# Difference in PGR experience by subject

The graph below shows the position of Ulster in relation to institutions in the Global benchmark, by CAH1 subject. Ulster was mostly in the highest quarter.



Key:

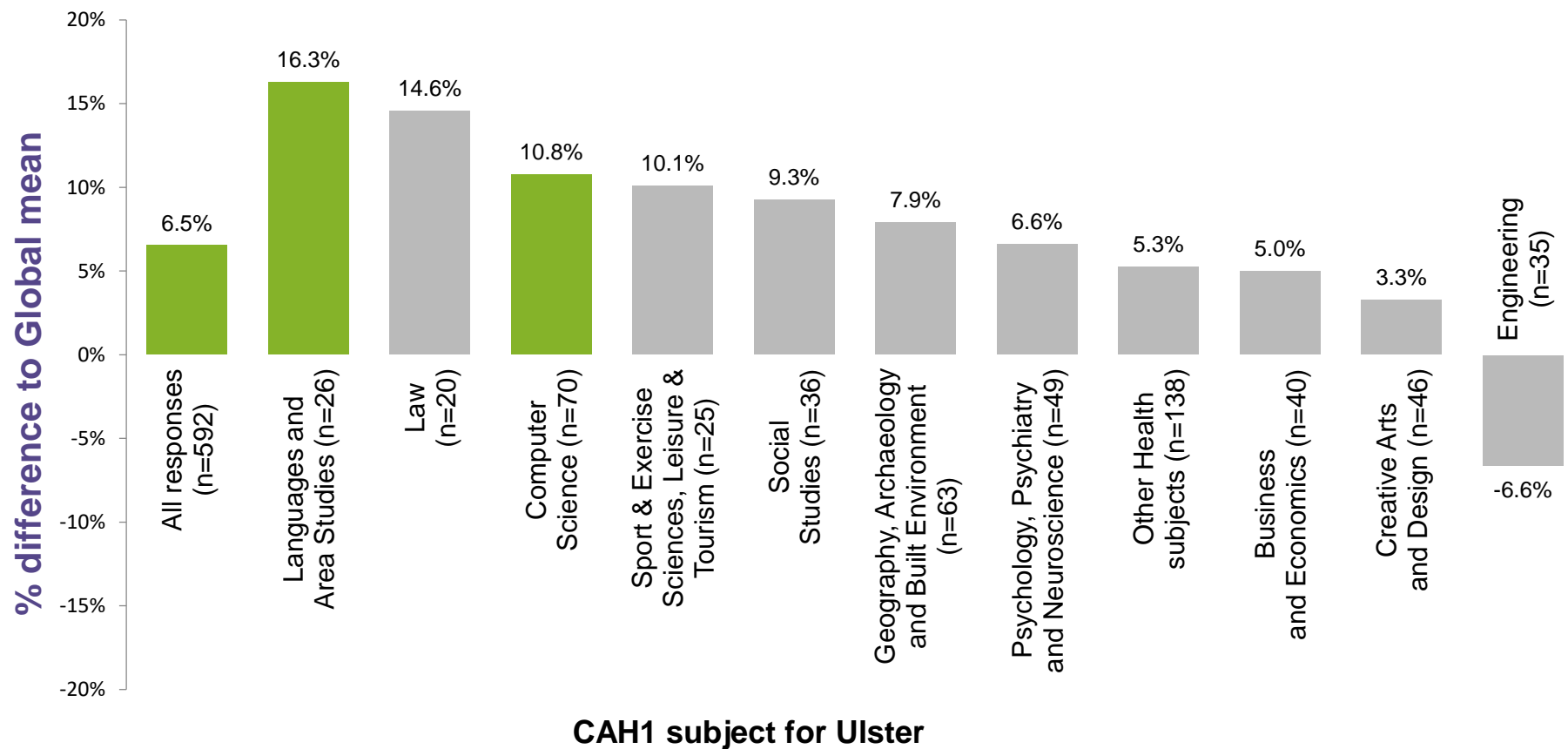


- Highest quarter: In the top 25% of institutions for this area
- Second quarter: Above average, but below the top 25%
- Third quarter: Below average, but above the bottom 25%
- Lowest quarter: In the bottom 25% of institutions for this area

(only institutions receiving 23 responses or over were included in the calculation of quarters)

# Difference in PGR experience by subject

Relative to the Global benchmark, overall satisfaction for Ulster PGRs was highest, to a significant extent, in Languages and Area Studies (n=26); being 16.3 percentage points above the benchmark. The subject within which respondents were least satisfied overall was Engineering (n=35); which was 6.6 percentage points below the Global benchmark.



**Key:**

- Positive significant difference
- No significant difference
- Negative significant difference



# Focus on Subject

## Languages and Area Studies

The overall satisfaction PGRs in Languages and Area Studies had with their studies was 96%, based on 26 responses. Aspects of best practice were institutional valuing of feedback and the opportunities to interact. Supervisory support with training and supervisory contact were areas for improvement.

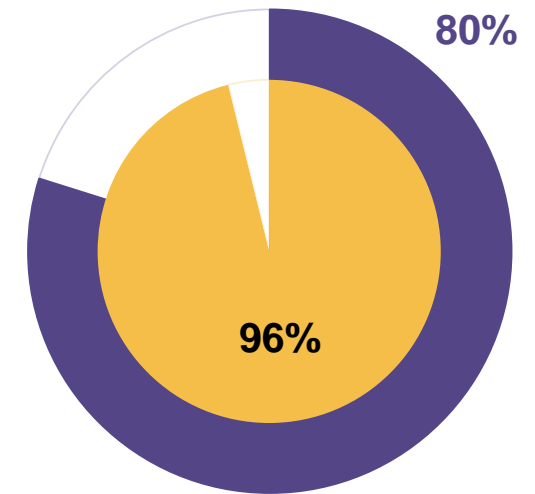


Figure 1: Overall satisfaction

### Best practice

As Figure 2 shows, the proportion of PGRs in Languages and Area Studies who agreed that **the institution valued their feedback** was 85% at Ulster, which was 31 percentage points above the Global benchmark (54%).

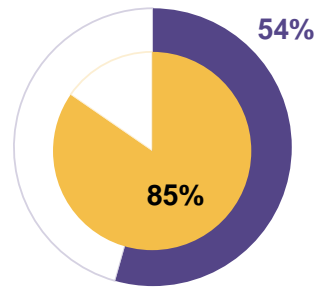


Figure 2: Institutional valuing of feedback

Figure 3 shows that 76% of PGRs in Languages and Area Studies at Ulster agreed that **there were sufficient opportunities to interact with other PGRs**. This was 23 percentage points above the Global benchmark (53%).

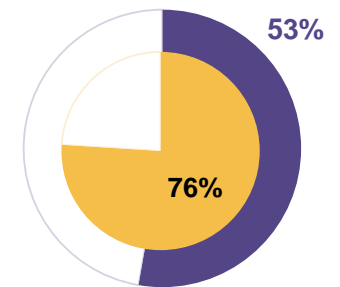


Figure 3: The opportunities to interact

### Areas for improvement

As Figure 4 shows, the proportion of PGRs in Languages and Area Studies who agreed that **their supervisor had helped them identify development needs** was 71% at Ulster, which was 10 percentage points below the Global benchmark (81%).

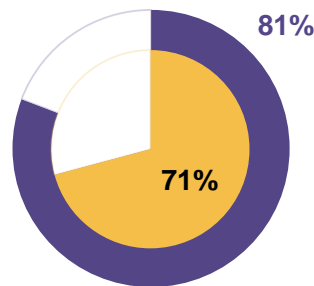


Figure 4: Supervisory support with training

Figure 5 shows that 85% of PGRs in Languages and Area Studies at Ulster agreed that **they had regular contact with their supervisor**. This was 6 percentage points below the Global benchmark (91%).

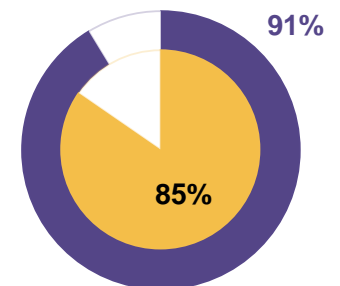


Figure 5: Supervisory contact

# Focus on Subject



## Engineering

The overall satisfaction PGRs in Engineering had with their studies was 74%, based on 35 responses. Aspects of best practice were support for health and wellbeing and the opportunities to interact. Supervisory contact and specialist resource access were areas for improvement.

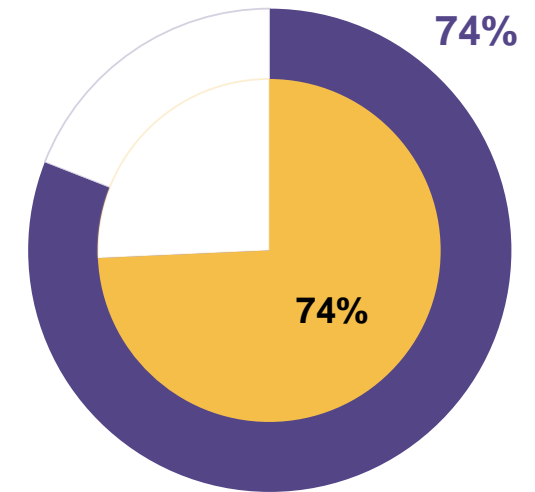


Figure 1: Overall satisfaction

## Best practice

As Figure 2 shows, the proportion of PGRs in Engineering who agreed that **the support for their health and wellbeing met their needs** was 85% at Ulster, which was 16 percentage points above the Global benchmark (69%).

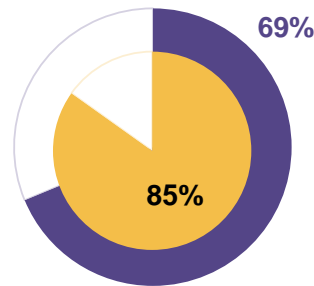


Figure 2: Support for health and wellbeing

Figure 3 shows that 80% of PGRs in Engineering at Ulster agreed that **there were sufficient opportunities to interact with other PGRs**. This was 14 percentage points above the Global benchmark (66%).

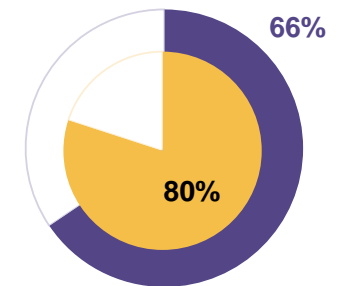


Figure 3: The opportunities to interact

## Areas for improvement

As Figure 4 shows, the proportion of PGRs in Engineering who agreed that **they had regular contact with their supervisor** was 77% at Ulster, which was 14 percentage points below the Global benchmark (91%).

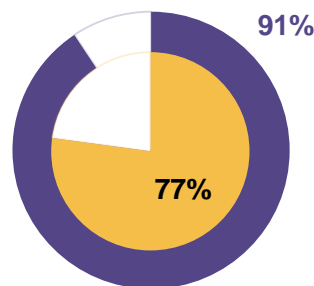


Figure 4: Supervisory contact

Figure 5 shows that 71% of PGRs in Engineering at Ulster agreed that **they had access to the specialist resources needed for their research when on campus**. This was 11 percentage points below the Global benchmark (82%).

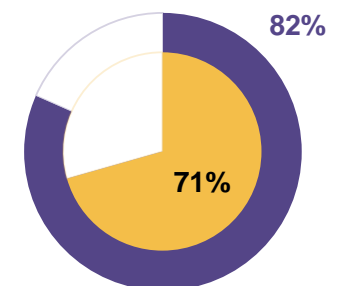
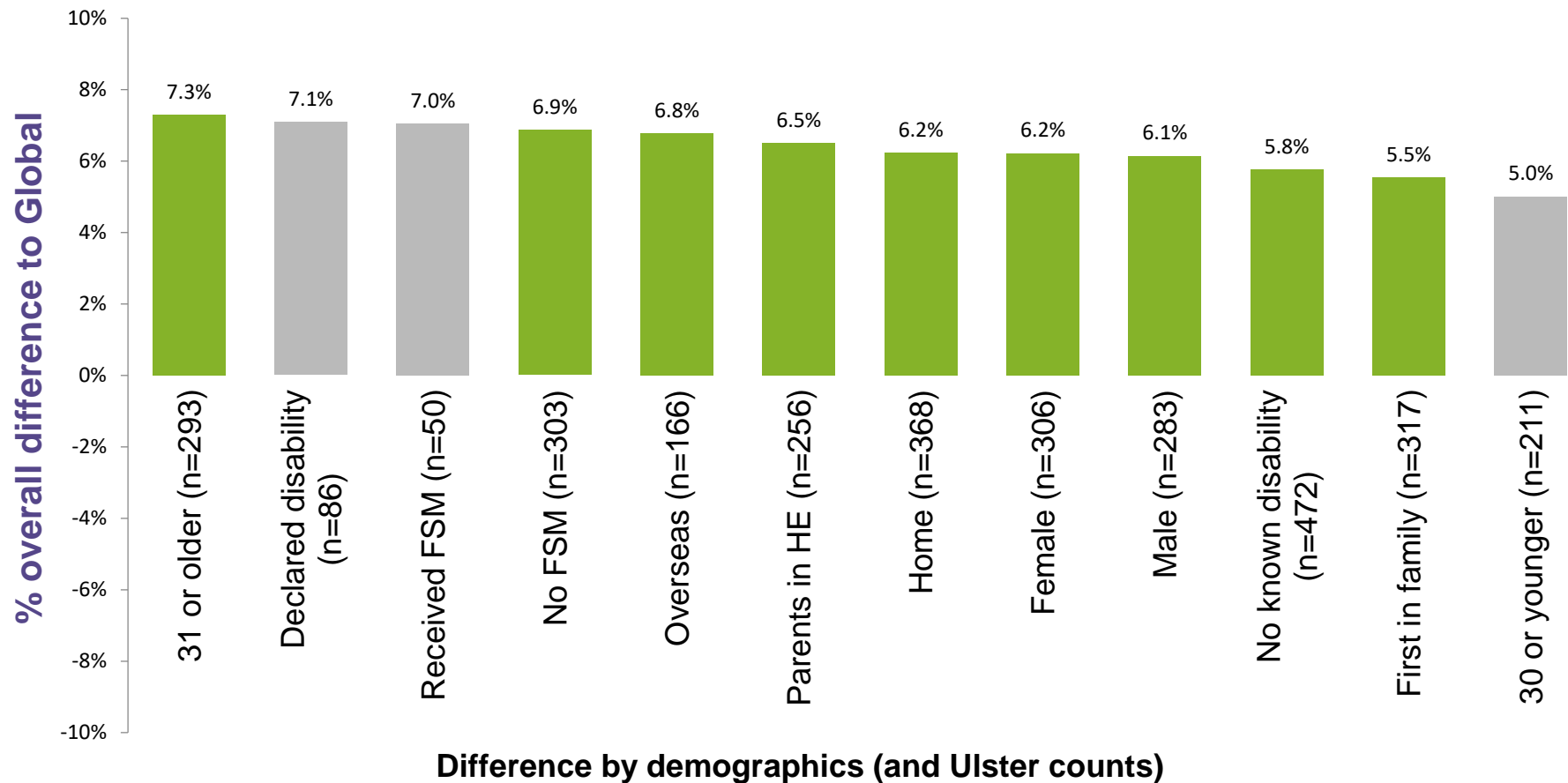


Figure 5: Specialist resource access

# Differences in student experience

The graph below shows the difference in overall satisfaction between Ulster and the Global benchmark, by background characteristics. Of research postgraduates who were 31 years old or older, those at Ulster were significantly more satisfied overall than the Global benchmark, by 7.3 percentage points. Of PGRs who were 30 years old or younger, those at Ulster were more satisfied overall than the Global benchmark, by 5.0 percentage points.



**Key:**

- Positive significant difference
- No significant difference
- Negative significant difference

# Focus on Students

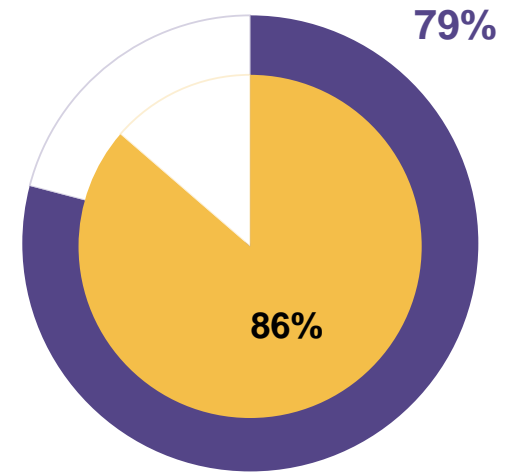


Figure 1: Overall satisfaction

## Age - 31 years old or older

For research postgraduates who were 31 years old or older, the overall satisfaction they had with their studies was 86%, based on 293 responses. Aspects of best practice were institutional valuing of feedback and the opportunities to interact. Online library access and on campus working space were areas for improvement.

### Best practice

As Figure 2 shows, the proportion of students who were 31 years old or older who agreed that **the institution valued their feedback** was 78% at Ulster, which was 19 percentage points above the Global benchmark (59%).

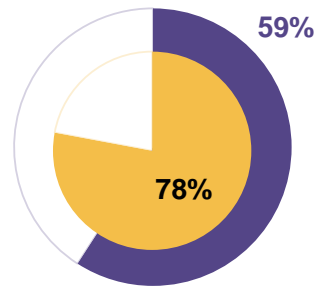


Figure 2: Institutional valuing of feedback

Figure 3 shows that 69% of students who were 31 years old or older at Ulster agreed that **there were sufficient opportunities to interact with other PGRs**. This was 13 percentage points above the Global benchmark (56%).

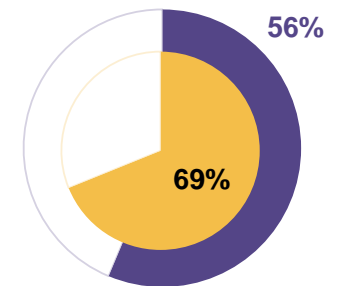


Figure 3: The opportunities to interact

### Areas for improvement

As Figure 4 shows, the proportion of students who were 31 years old or older who agreed that **there was appropriate access to online library resources** was 89% at Ulster, which was 1 percentage point below the Global benchmark (90%).

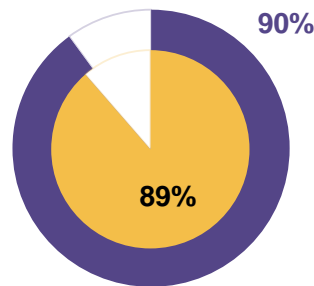


Figure 4: Online library access

Figure 5 shows that 75% of students who were 31 years old or older at Ulster agreed that **they had suitable working space when on campus**. This was around the same as the Global benchmark (75%).

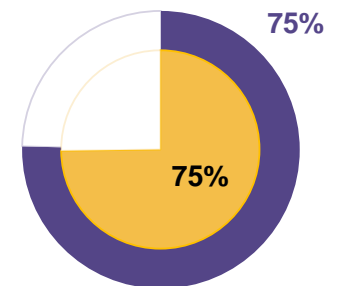


Figure 5: On campus working space

# Focus on Students

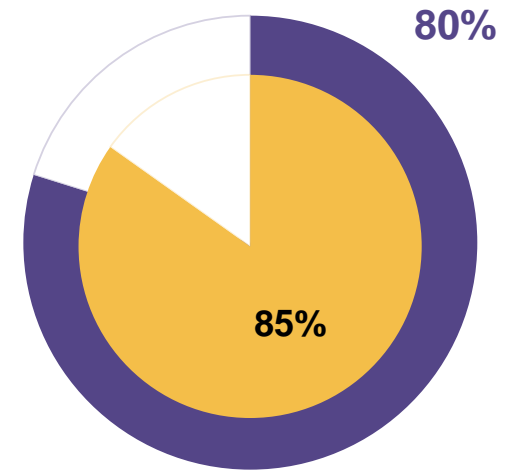


Figure 1: Overall satisfaction

## Age - 30 years old or younger

The overall satisfaction research postgraduates who were 30 years old or younger had with their studies was 85%, based on 211 responses. Aspects of best practice were institutional valuing of feedback and the programme induction. Online library access and the research seminars were areas for improvement.

### Best practice

As Figure 2 shows, the proportion of students who were 30 years old or younger who agreed that **the institution valued their feedback** was 73% at Ulster, which was 17 percentage points above the Global benchmark (56%).

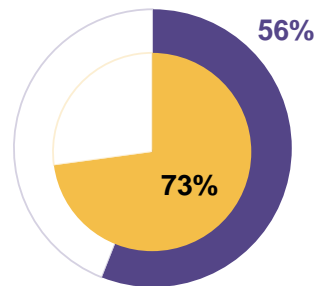


Figure 2: Institutional valuing of feedback

Figure 3 shows that 90% of students who were 30 years old or younger at Ulster agreed that **there was appropriate induction to the programme**. This was 16 percentage points above the Global benchmark (74%).

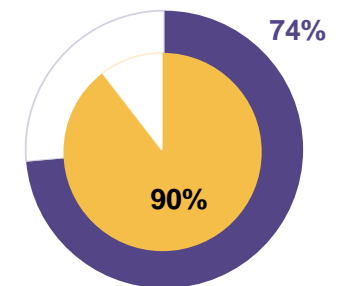


Figure 3: The programme induction

### Areas for improvement

As Figure 4 shows, the proportion of students who were 30 years old or younger who agreed that **there was appropriate access to online library resources** was 87% at Ulster, which was 2 percentage points below the Global benchmark (89%).

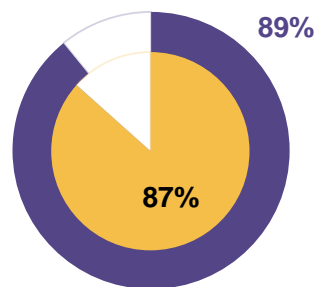


Figure 4: Online library access

Figure 5 shows that 67% of students who were 30 years old or younger at Ulster agreed that **there was a good range of seminars**. This was 1 percentage points below the Global benchmark (68%).

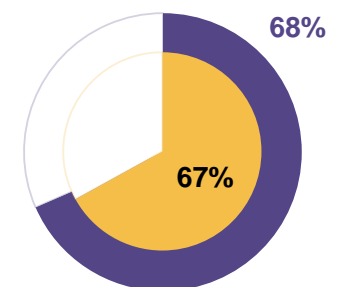


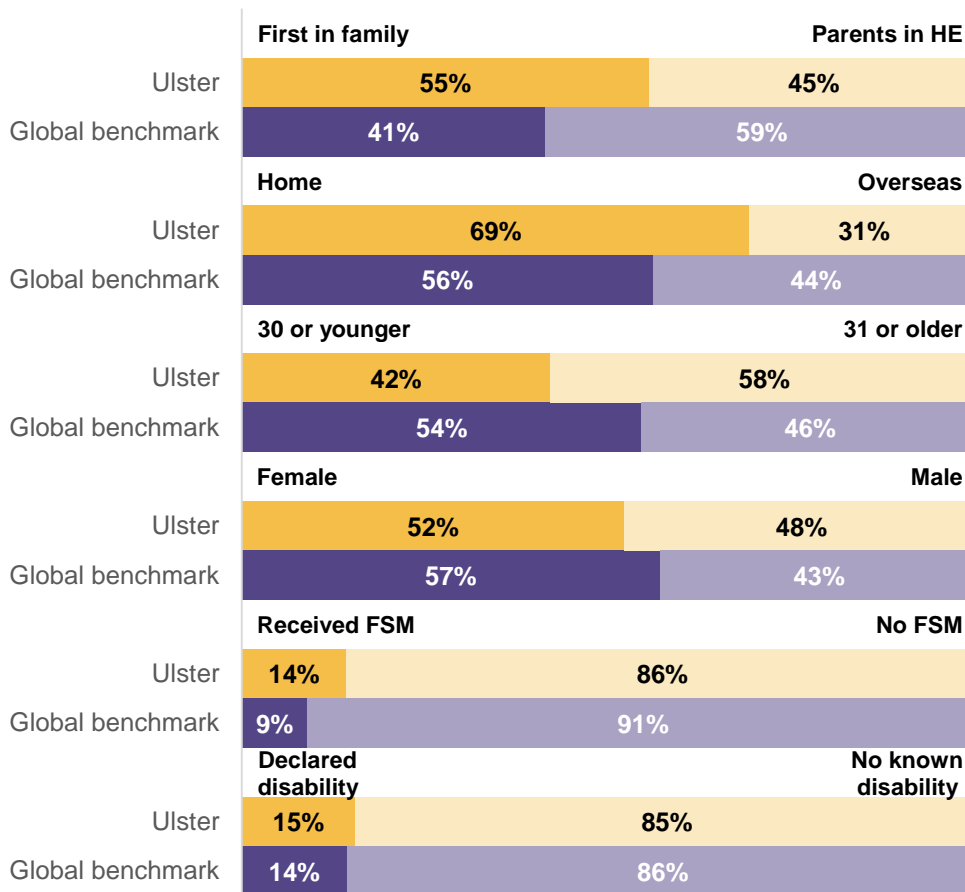
Figure 5: The research seminars

# Student profile

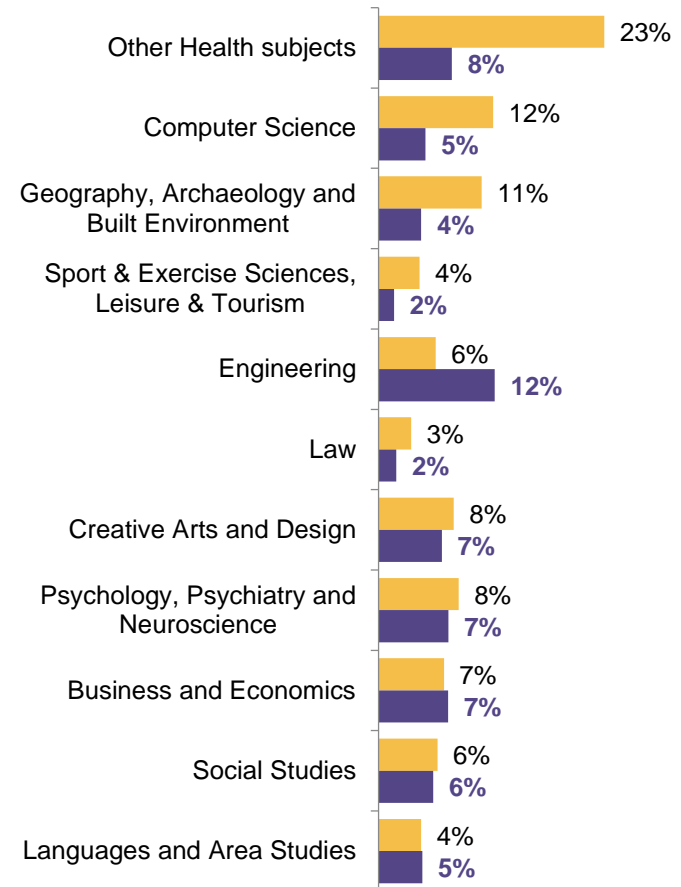
Key: ■ Ulster University ■ Global

This page shows the profile of research postgraduates at Ulster compared to the Global benchmark. In terms of demographic and delivery factors, the biggest difference was within the background. There were 55% of Ulster research postgraduates who were first in family, 14 percentage points more than the Global benchmark (see Figure 1). By subject, the greatest difference was within Other Health subjects, Ulster having 16 percentage points more PGRs studying within this subject than the Global benchmark (see Figure 2).

**Figure 1: demographic and delivery profile**



**Figure 2: Distribution of students across subject areas\***



\*only Ulster subjects benchmarked to the Global benchmark are shown.

**For more information**

[surveys@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:surveys@advance-he.ac.uk)

## The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey

PRES is the leading survey of Research Postgraduates in the UK and beyond, with 37,661 respondents in 2023 achieving a 30.2% response rate. 105 institutions were involved in the survey.

Any of your institutional results, including ranking position, may be communicated internally or published externally at any time. We ask you not to make external reference to any global or benchmarking group results until after the publication of the Advance HE sector reports in the Autumn.

### **Quarter methodology**

The quarters are based on all institutions that have, on average, 23 valid responses or over to the questions making up the survey area. Quarters are only reported when there are a minimum of 8 institutions within an area.

For more on how the differences and quarters have been calculated, please refer to the statistics guide in the 'Guides' workbook supplied alongside this report.

