

How can we Ease the Transition from Further to Higher Education?

A Pilot Study on the Use of Moodle to Welcome New Students to the Department of Chemistry

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Rationale

The literature presents many challenges that students face when moving from high school to university (Coertjens *et al.*, 2017).

- “The more individuals used social networking sites to gather information and connect with friends, the lower they reported their academic adjustment to be.” Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2015
- “[We recommend the prioritisation of] open-weeks to ensure that [freshers] are knowledgeable of the degree programmes they are enrolling for.” Mathebula, 2015
- “Pre-university effort and pre-university academic self-efficacy both positively [correlate] with academic success.” van Herpen *et al.*, 2017

- L. Coertjens *et al.* (2017). “Students’ Transition into Higher Education from an International Perspective”, *High. Educ.*, **73**, 357–369.
- N. Mathebula (2015). “Surviving First Year of University as a Student: Is it a Jungle?”, *Int. J. Educ. Sci.*, **9**, 47–54.
- J. Raacke and J. Bonds-Raacke (2015). “Are students really connected? Predicting college adjustment from social network usage”, *Educ. Psychol.*, **35**, 819–834.
- S. G. A. van Herpen *et al.* (2017). “Early predictors of first-year academic success at university: pre-university effort, pre-university self-efficacy, and pre-university reasons for attending university”, *Educ. Res. Eval.*, **23**, 52–72.

Research Questions

- Can we use a pre-university Moodle page to reduce students' anxiety about university?
- Do students in certain groups feel differently about university? (How can we help them?)
 - Pre-university qualifications
 - Nationality
 - Gender

The Moodle Page

Home > Courses > CHEM-WELCOME

Welcome! Key Information FAQ Have Your Say Your First Year Virtual Tour Pre-Reading Revision Resources Practice Assignments Laboratory Introduction
Beyond Exams Just For Fun!

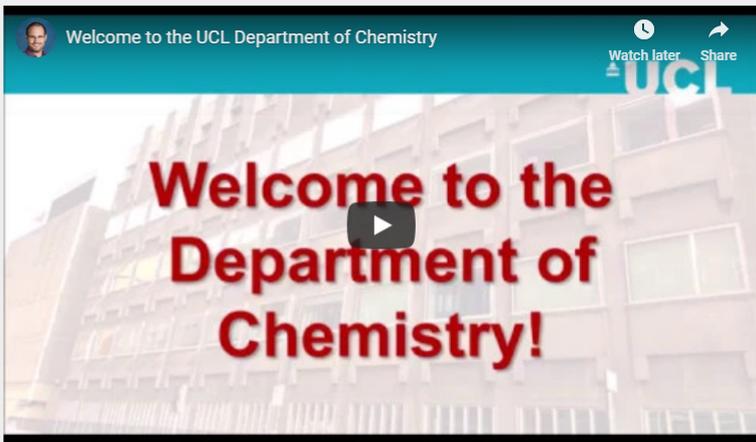
UCL Chemistry Undergraduate Welcome Page

A very warm welcome to our new prospective undergraduates. Congratulations on meeting your offer to study at UCL!

The aim of this page is to introduce you to the UCL Department of Chemistry and give you some pre-reading and revision. It is therefore aimed not only at students registered on Chemistry programmes, but also students on Natural Science, Biology, BASc, etc. programmes, who will be taking chemistry modules.

You will get the most out of this page if you register using your UCL ISD login details, as they will give you full access to all the page's resources.

First things first, have a look at the welcome video below (3 min 25 s, closed captions and transcript available on Youtube via the video below).



Contact Details

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Communication Expectations

Students are strongly encouraged to ask questions on the forum(s) in preference to emailing staff if they have a question about lecture material or module administration. This way, you might get a quicker response from others. If your query is more personal, you should contact staff directly.

If you do email staff, they will aim to respond within **three working days** of receipt. They should not be expected to answer outside normal working hours (Monday-Friday, 09:00-18:00).

You are reminded to be courteous in your communication with staff and fellow students.

Random FAQ

I WANT TO TAKE TIME OFF FOR A HOLIDAY OR BOOK FLIGHTS HOME. CAN I?

Before doing so, you should note the UCL term dates and closures.

During term-time, you are expected to be available 9 am – 6 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 9 am – 2 pm on Wednesday. You might still feel you have a lot of "free time" where teaching is not timetabled, but this is for self-study (you need discipline) and you should be aware that

The page was designed to be in line with the UCL's Moodle Baseline+.

Page Sections

Welcome! Key Information FAQ Have Your Say Your First Year Virtual Tour Pre-Reading Revision Resources Practice Assignments Laboratory Introduction

Beyond Exams Just For Fun!

Welcome video



Key Information

Below are some key links that you will find useful before and during your degree.



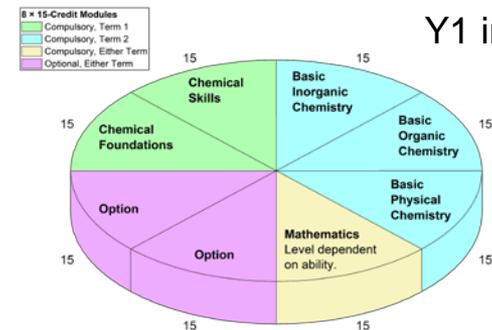
CHEMUGINFO

This is the Chemistry Undergraduate Information page (commonly referred to as CHEMUGINFO), where technical aspects of your degree programme, such as regulations, are shown. You will be automatically enrolled on this page.



Department of Chemistry Safety Moodle Page

Typical Year 1, B.Sc./M.Sc. Chemistry



1. Practice Submission

Use the Word document below to complete the assignment and then try submitting it to each of the two submission activities below. Make a note of any hurdles you come across! **Please note: these assignments are intended to give you an opportunity to see how Moodle works. Do NOT worry about the deadlines!**

1. Save your file as a PDF.
2. Submit it to the Moodle practice assignment. What do you notice?
3. Submit it to the Turnitin practice assignment. What do you notice?



Practice Assignment Form 28.1KB Word 2007 document

Download this file and fill in the questions on page 2 (you only need one or two sentences per question).



Moodle Practice Assignment

This is a standard Moodle assignment. The settings in this assignment are reasonably standard, with the exception that you may only submit files in PDF format.

Revision quizzes

Question 5
Not complete
Marked out of 8
Flag question
Edit question

3-ethyltoluene (3-ethyl-1-methylbenzene) is a component of petrol. It undergoes complete combustion according to the following equation:

$$\text{C}_9\text{H}_{12} (\quad) + \text{O}_2 (\quad) \rightarrow \text{CO}_2 (\quad) + \text{H}_2\text{O} (\quad)$$

Balance the equation and complete the symbols for the matters of state.

Check



Inorganic Chemistry

Simple Bonding Schemes

Read Chapter 1 of M. J. Winter, *Chemical Bonding*, 2nd edition, Oxford Chemistry Primers (OUP), 2016.

Use this to revise simple bonding schemes. This will help you in your CHEM0005 Chemical Foundations lectures in inorganic chemistry.

Pre-reading



Changes in confidence and anxiety?

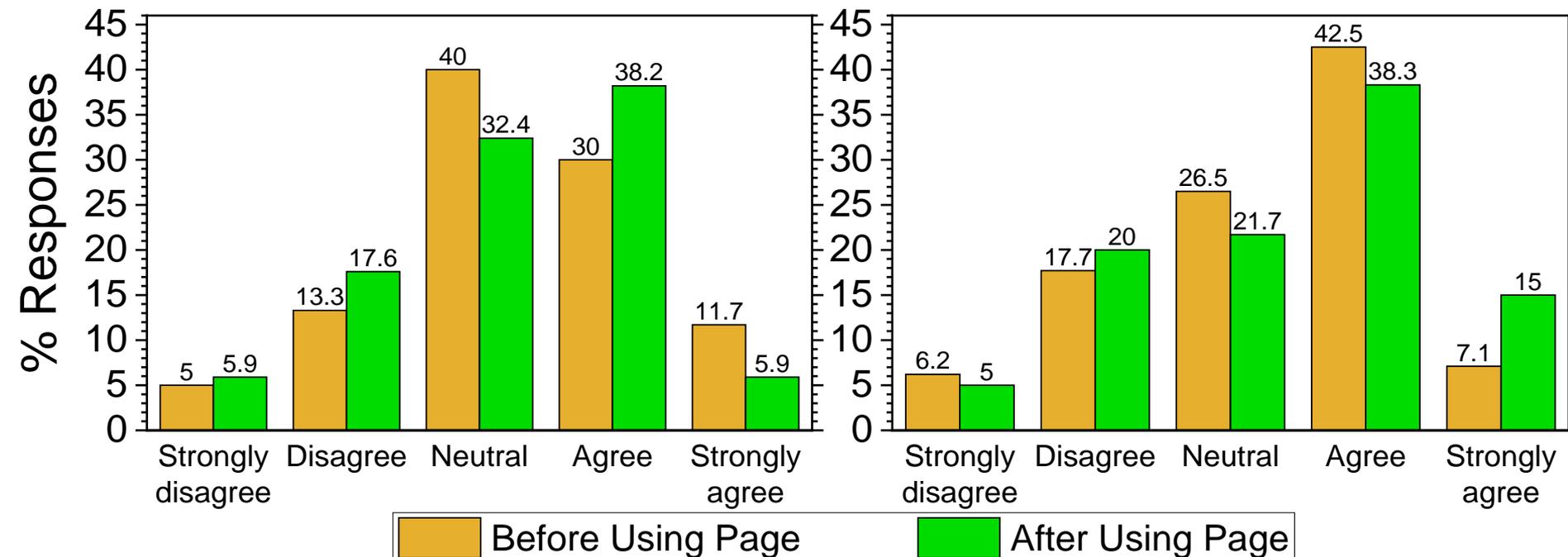
Responses to a questionnaire **before using the page** ($n = 113$) were compared to those from a questionnaire **after using the page** ($n = 60$) at the beginning of term using a Mann-Whitney U test.

“I feel confident with coping with the workload at university.”

$p = 0.472$

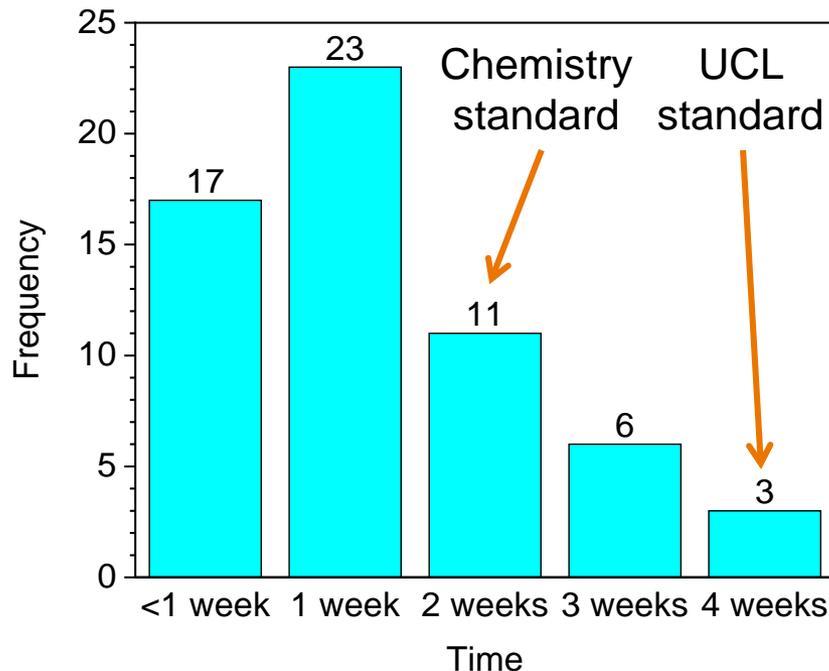
“I am anxious about my time at university.”

$p = 0.473$

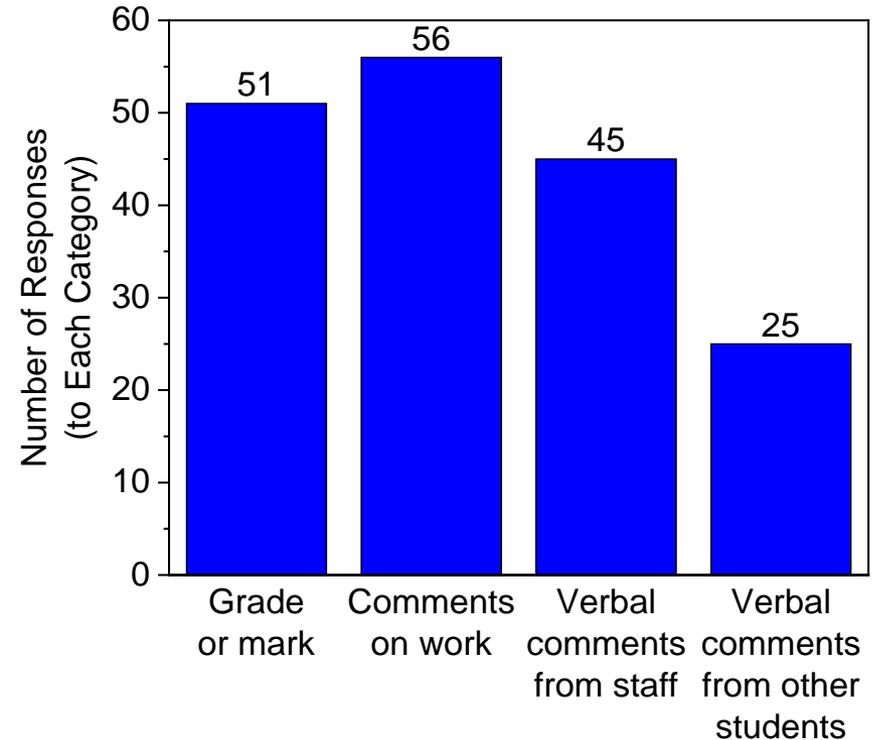


Students' Expectations of Feedback at University

“How soon do you expect feedback after submission?”
(Choose one.)

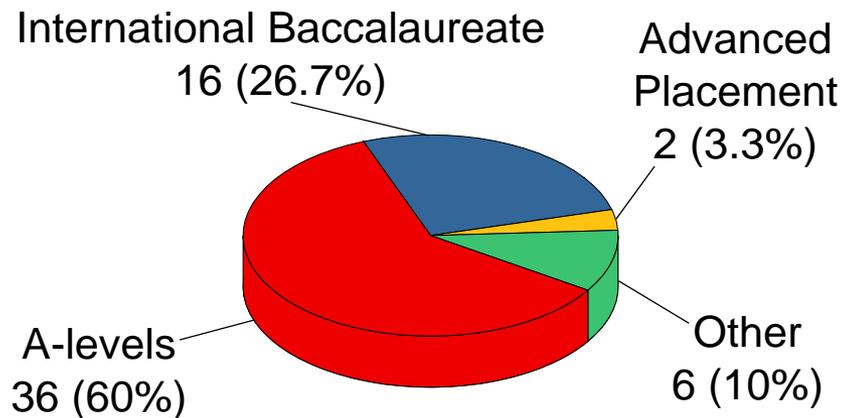


“How do you expect to receive feedback?”
(Choose all that apply.)

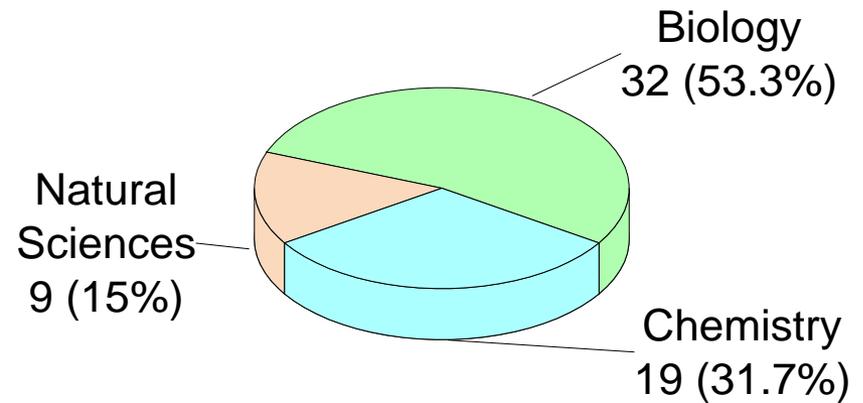


Participants ($n = 60$)

Pre-University Qualifications

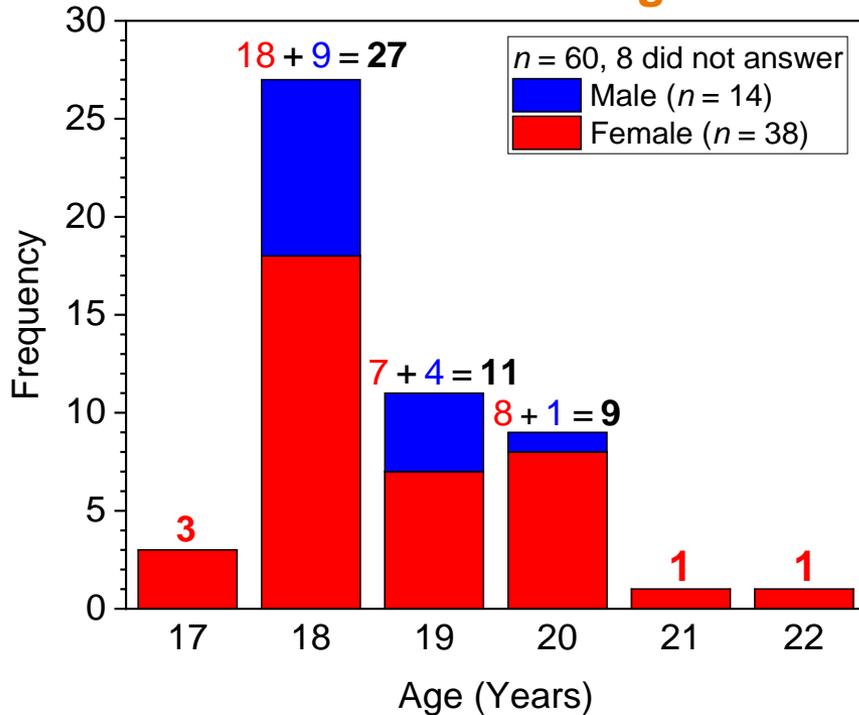


Area of Study at University

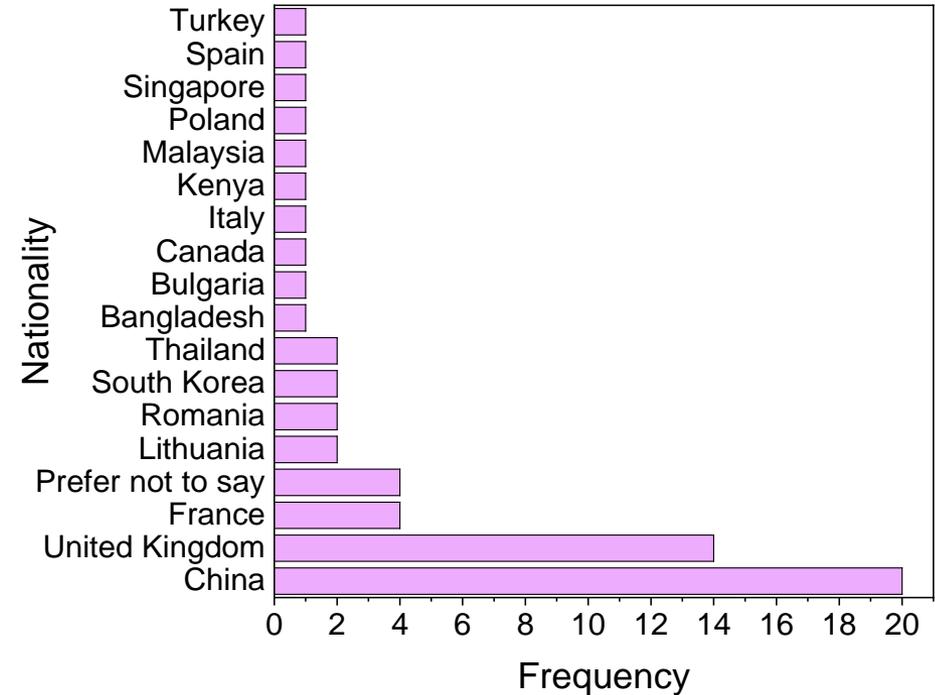


Participants ($n = 60$)

Gender and Age

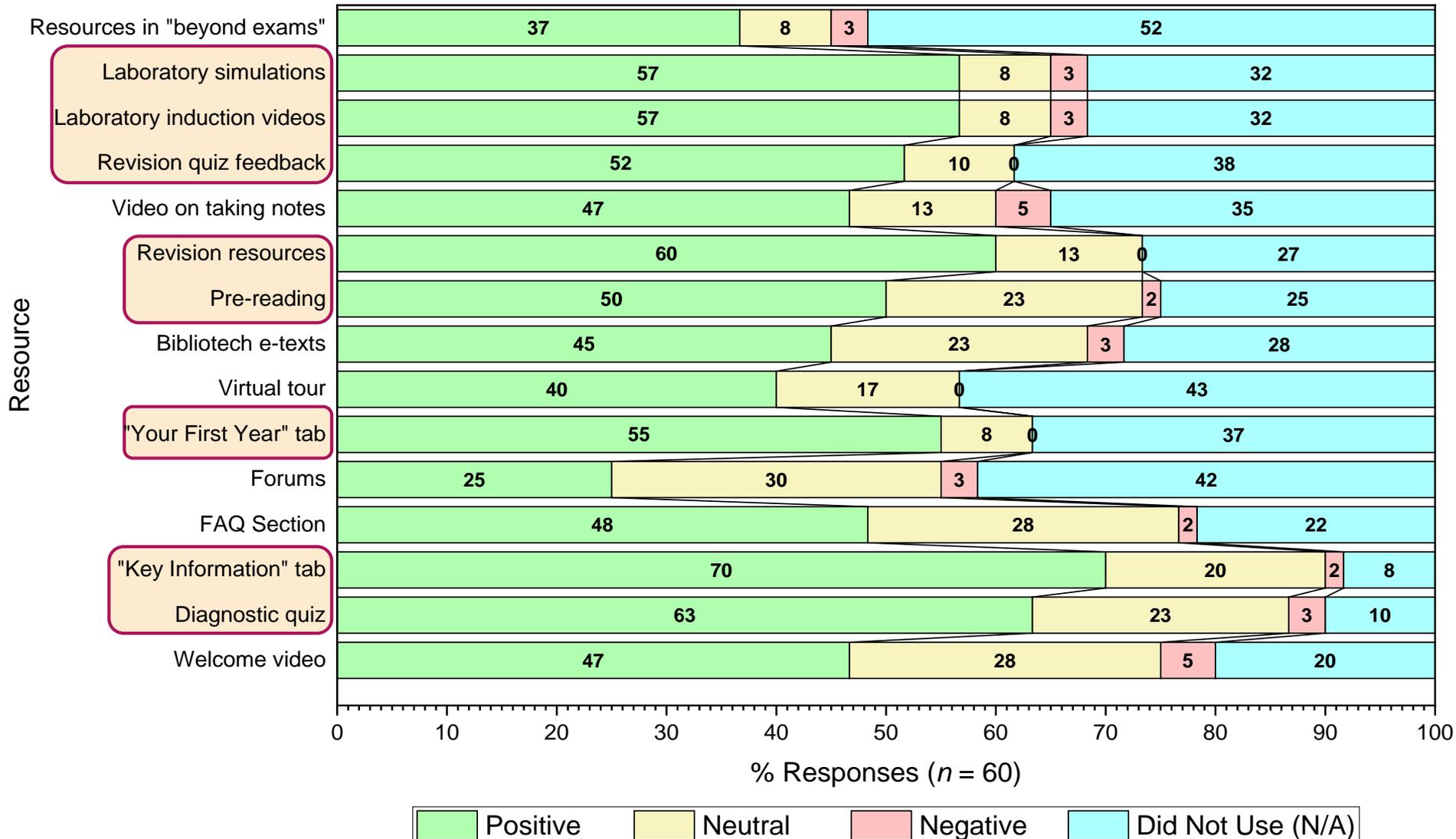


Nationality



Category	Freq.	%
UK ("home")	14	23.3
EU	12	20.0
International	30	50.0
Prefer not to say	4	6.7

“I found the following activities useful.”



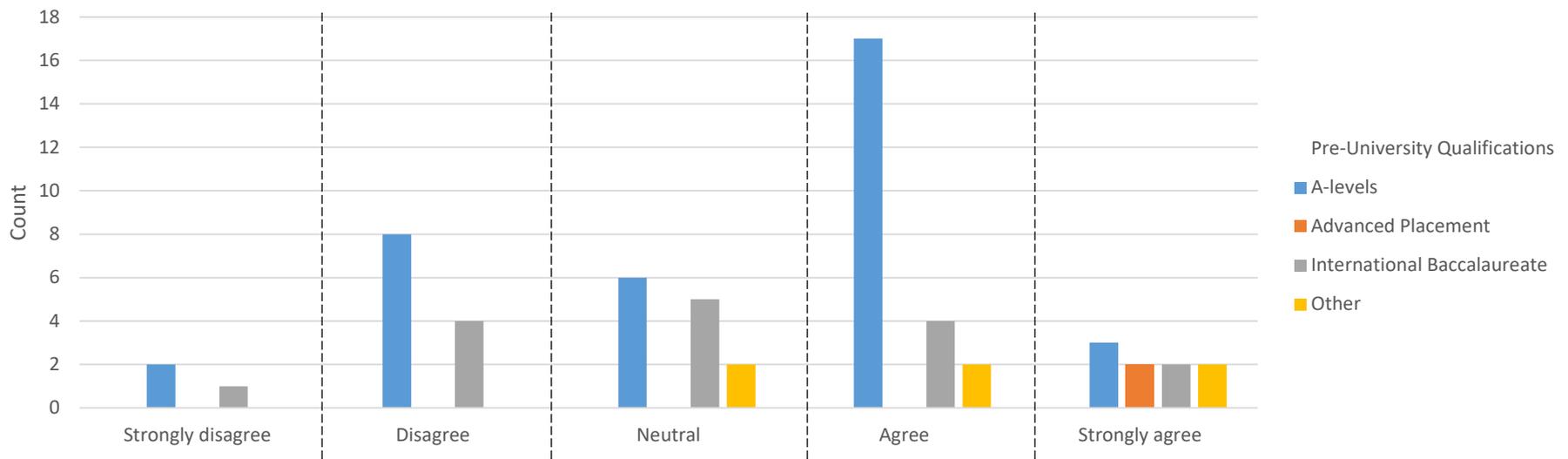
Pre-University Qualifications ($n = 60$) (1/2)

Independent-Samples Median Tests

“I am anxious about my time at university.” $p = 0.030$

- Students with A-levels and IBs were spread.
- Those with Advanced Placements and other qualifications were more anxious.

“I am anxious about my time at university.”

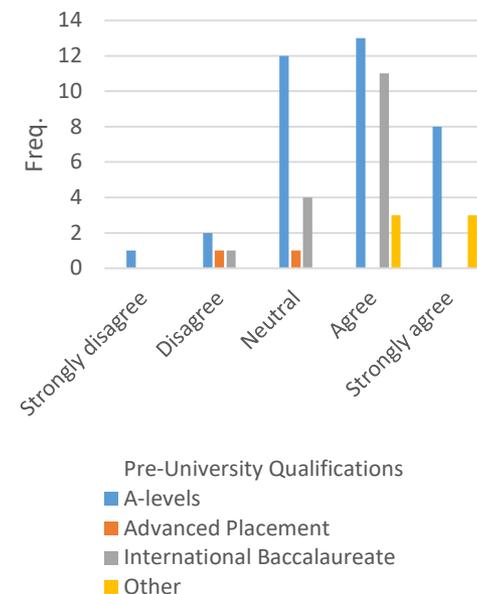


Pre-University Qualifications ($n = 60$) (2/2)

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test

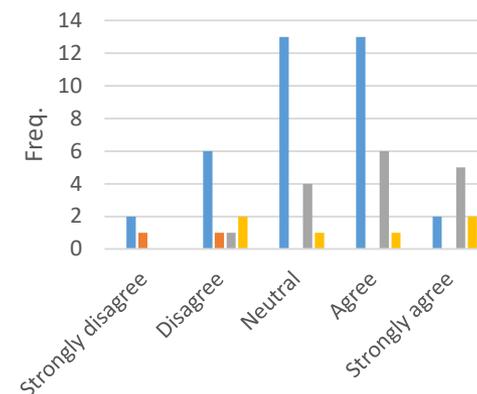
“I have enough information to start my modules in the Department of Chemistry.” $p = 0.032$

- Students with A-levels and IBs felt well-informed.
- Students with Advanced Placements were less sure.
- Others (e.g. Matura) were very sure.



“I feel confident about coping with the workload at university.” $p = 0.020$

- IBs and other the most positive.
- A-levels were mixed.
- Advanced placement were negative (sample of 2).



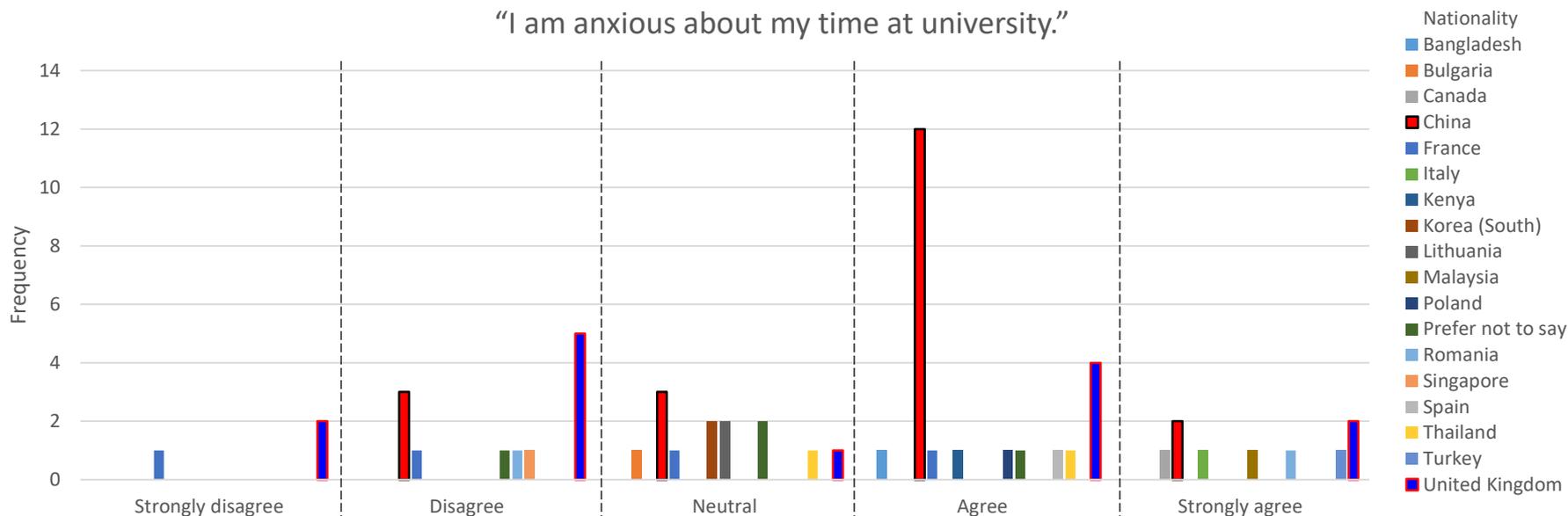
Nationality ($n = 60$)

Independent-Samples Median Tests (1/2)

“I am anxious about my time at university.”

$p = 0.039$

- Most UK students claimed not to be anxious.
- Chinese students the most anxious.
- Insufficient data for other nationalities.

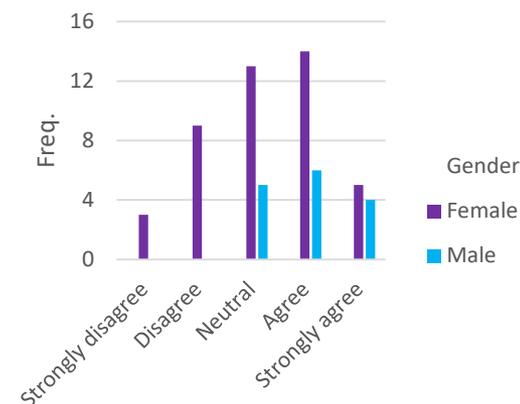


Gender ($n = 60$)

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test

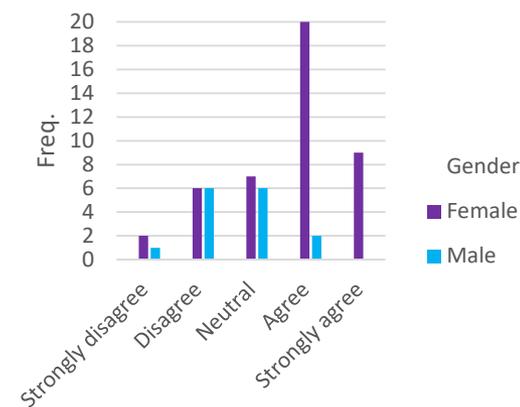
“I feel confident about coping with the workload at university.” $p = 0.029$

- Male students all (strongly) agreed or were neutral.
- Female students were more spread.
- The mode for both groups was 4 (“agree”).



“I am anxious about my time at university.” $p = 0.001$

- Females skewed to (strongly) agree.
- Males largely neutral or disagreeing.



Research Questions

- Can we use a pre-university Moodle page to reduce students' anxiety about university?
- Do students in certain groups feel differently about university? (How can we help them?)
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Outlook

- A welcome page needs to encourage students to engage with the page and invest time in it before coming to university.
 - More course-like structure to help students follow through and/or more gamification.
- Careful thought needs to be put into how we can help international students understand how university works in the UK.
 - Especially those who don't have A-levels or IBs.

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