

The New to UBC survey 2014
Okanagan campus
(Graduate students)



a place of mind

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Okanagan Planning and Institutional Research

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction, Methodology, sample distribution	5
Notes about the report	6
Demographic information	6
Choosing UBC	11
Stress and Health	13
Campus participation and involvement	18
Finances.....	22
Career Plans.....	25



Executive Summary: UBC Okanagan Campus

The New to UBC survey for graduate students at UBC's Okanagan campus was administered in August 2014, and was completed by 137 graduate students (a response rate of 54%). A slightly higher proportion of international than domestic students responded to the survey (63% of international students, compared to 58% of domestic). Furthermore, in the sample, domestic female (61% of cohort versus 52% of sample) and master's students (88% of cohort versus 84% of sample) were overrepresented. International female (16% of sample versus 40% of cohort) and master's students were underrepresented (27% in sample compared to 70% of cohort) among respondents. About six out of ten domestic and four out of ten international respondents were aged 21-25.

Approximately eighty percent of domestic and 66% of international respondents reported English as their first language. Similarly, two-thirds of domestic and slightly over half of international students self-reported as White (South Asian and Chinese were the second most commonly-reported ethnicities for domestic and international students respectively). About 20% of domestic, and 33% of international respondents reported they were married; 14% of domestic and one in five international respondents said they had a child.

About 85% of respondents (both domestic and international) indicated they would be living off campus; almost 40% of domestic and about half of international students reported they would be living with their spouse. Around half of both student groups (those who said they would be living off-campus) reported they would commute to campus by public transit. About a third of both domestic and international students reported their mother (or *guardian I*) had completed a university degree or higher, while about 4 in 10 students reported their father (or *guardian II*) had done so. Most students completed their bachelor's degree within the previous three years (i.e., 2012, 2013, 2014), but a larger proportion of domestic students had done so (domestic: 73%, international: 52%).

For students completing a thesis-based program, the two most influential factors for the graduate student when choosing a supervisor were the supervisor's willingness to work with the student, and that he/she was conducting interesting research. Commitments regarding the funding of graduate studies and criteria for determining readiness to graduate were the most concerning aspects for students (rated as very concerned by 33% of both domestic and international respondents).

Students self-reported high levels of overall health, as over 90% of both domestic and international respondents rated their health as 7 or higher out of 10 (where 1 is very poor, 10 is excellent). The largest proportion of both domestic and international respondents indicated they will access on-campus health services or visit walk-in clinics for their health care needs. Work and financial commitments were reported by both sets of students as the main (potential) obstacle to their academic progress (rated as a major obstacle by 40% of domestic, and 28% of international respondents). All respondents reported they were likely to participate in an orientation for new graduate students in their program and use a graduate student handbook for the program.

Both sets of students reported that a workshop on career opportunities outside of academia and ongoing coaching to accomplish academic goals were the most important resources for their graduate



program experience. In terms of meeting with their supervisor to discuss research, 71% of domestic and 65% of international respondents indicated they plan do so about once a week. Excluding appointments linked to their funding (TA and RA roles), one third of domestic and almost half of international respondents indicated they do not plan to have a job during the upcoming year; most of those who said they would be working said they would be employed off-campus.

Half of domestic and two-thirds of international respondents indicated they have no educational debt remaining from their undergraduate degree, while slightly more than 4 out of 10 domestic and international students said they expect to have no educational debt after completing their graduate program. Regarding the sources of financial support, 28% of both domestic and international respondents stated loans, savings, or family assistance, while about 15% of both student groups reported they would be graduate teaching assistant, and about thirteen percent of both groups of respondents said they would have a graduate research assistantship.

After completing their graduate studies, students pursue various career options. Students were asked to report whether they were definitely, possibly, or not at all likely to pursue various options listed. About half (48%) of international respondents indicated definitely to the option: To become a professor in a college or university, whereas 3 in 10 domestic and international respondents reported definitely to the option: To work independently (e.g., consultant, writer). Also, conducting research in a business industry, or private sector was an option selected as definitely by the second largest proportion of domestic respondents and the third largest proportion of international respondents. The lowest proportion of both groups reported definitely to the option: To not be employed for pay.



Executive Report: UBC Okanagan Campus

Introduction

This report displays the findings of the 2014 New to UBC (Okanagan campus) Survey for graduate students, which was administered to new incoming students to UBC's Okanagan campus between August 7th and September 1st, 2014. Participating students were asked about the reasons they chose UBC's Okanagan campus for their graduate studies and aspects about starting their graduate studies (expectations, intentions, hopes, and concerns).

Methodology

All new to UBC's Okanagan campus students entering a graduate degree program were invited to participate. Overall, 137 graduates (of 256) completed the survey for **an overall response rate of 54%**. The response rate for domestic students was 48% (76/159) and 63% for international students (61/97). In the cohort, 55% of students (76) were domestic (Canadian citizens or permanent residents) while 61 respondents were international students (attending on a Student Visa). In the sample (i.e., those who responded), 55% of respondents were domestic. Throughout the report, responses are separated by domestic and international students.

Sample Distribution

Figure 1: Demographic breakdown

	Domestic				International			
	Sample (n=76)		Cohort (n=159)		Sample (n=61)		Cohort (n=97)	
Female	61%	46	52%	82	16%	10	40%	39
Masters	88%	67	84%	130	27%	14	70%	68
Thesis-based program	63%	48	N/A	N/A	97%	59	N/A	N/A
MA	16%	12	14%	22	3%	2	9%	9
MASc	15%	11	14%	22	13%	8	1%	1
MEd	-	-	3%	5	-	-	3%	3
MEng	-	-	4%	7	3%	2	11%	11
MFA	3%	2	2%	3	-	-	-	-
MSc	17%	13	15%	24	3%	2	10%	10
MSN	3%	2	1%	2	-	-	-	-
MSW	25%	19	22%	34	-	-	13%	13
PhD	12%	9	17%	26	77%	47	30%	29

Comparing the sample with the cohort for domestic and international respondents, it is clear the sample is not an ideal representation of the cohort of new graduate students incoming to UBC's Okanagan campus. Among domestic respondents, female and master's students were overrepresented while doctoral students were underrepresented (cohort: 17%, sample: 12%). Among international respondents, female and master's students were underrepresented, while doctoral students were also overrepresented (cohort: 30%, sample: 77%).



NOTES

Readers should be aware that the percentages reported in the present report reflect the number of respondents who selected an option in terms of the total number of students who responded to a given item. In other words, 50% denotes 50% of students who responded to a certain item rather than 50% of all domestic or all international students who completed this survey.

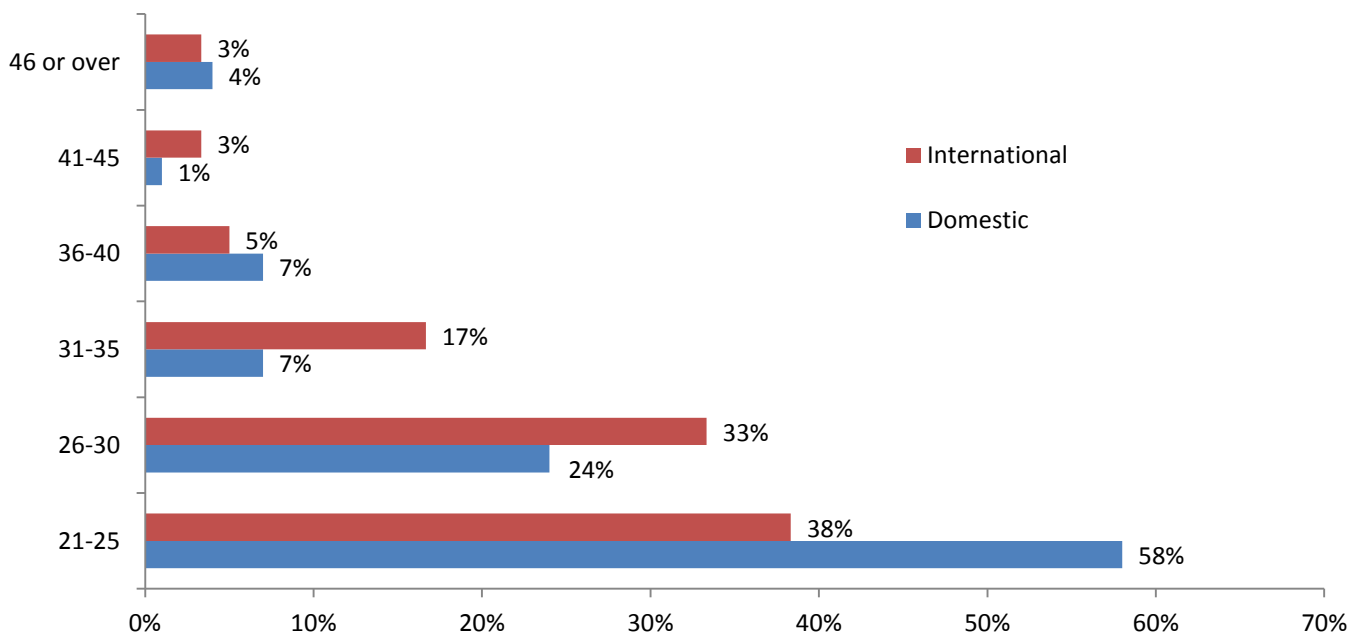
In total, there were 76 domestic and 61 international students who completed the NUBC survey. For this reason, it should be noted that figures representing student responses should be interpreted with a degree of caution since any figures in this report referring to could only represent a maximum of 76 respondents, sometimes less than this number. To encourage participation, students were informed that by completing the survey they would be entered into a draw to win a \$100 gift certificate for the UBC Bookstore.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Age

Students indicated the age-range to which they belonged; almost 60% of domestic respondents were younger than 26, compared to 38% of international respondents. Higher proportions of international respondents reported to be in the 31-35 and 26-30 age ranges compared to domestic respondents. About 70% of both domestic and international respondents were 30 or younger.

Figure 2: Age distribution



First Language Learned and Languages Spoken

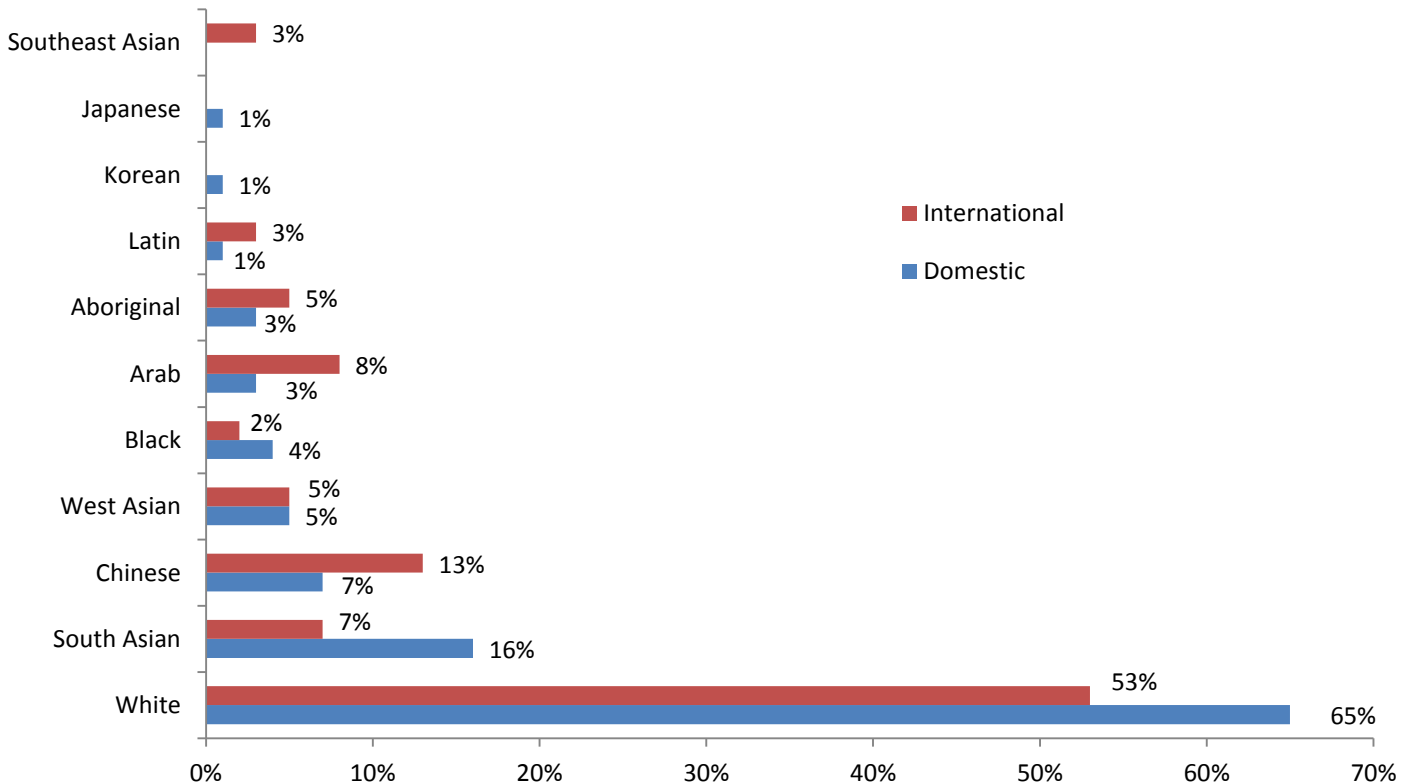
Among domestic respondents, 78% reported English as the first language they learned in childhood, 4% indicated Mandarin, and 4% indicated Punjabi. Of international respondents, 67% indicated English, 6% said Mandarin, and 6% reported Chinese (Chinese was not listed as a response option but was written in the other/free text response option).

Of those whose first language was not English, students were asked to report when they learned English. Twenty-seven percent of domestic students said before they turned six, 32% said 6-10, 18% said between 11-15, while 23% reported after turning 16. Among international respondents, 15% said before turning 6, 46% said between the ages of 6-10, 23% said 11-15, while 15% said after turning 16.

Students were also asked to report the number of languages they can speak well enough to maintain a conversation. About half (49%) of domestic respondents said one, 33% said two, and 17% said three. Thirty-eight percent of international respondents said one, while 51% said two, 10% said three.

Ethno-racial Distribution and Citizenship

Figure 3: Self-reported ethnicity



For the ethnicity item, students could select multiple options. Note that percentages were rounded up to the nearest whole number. The majority of both domestic (65%) and international (53%) respondents selected White. Chinese was the option selected by the next largest proportion of domestic respondents (13%), while 16% international respondents selected South Asian.

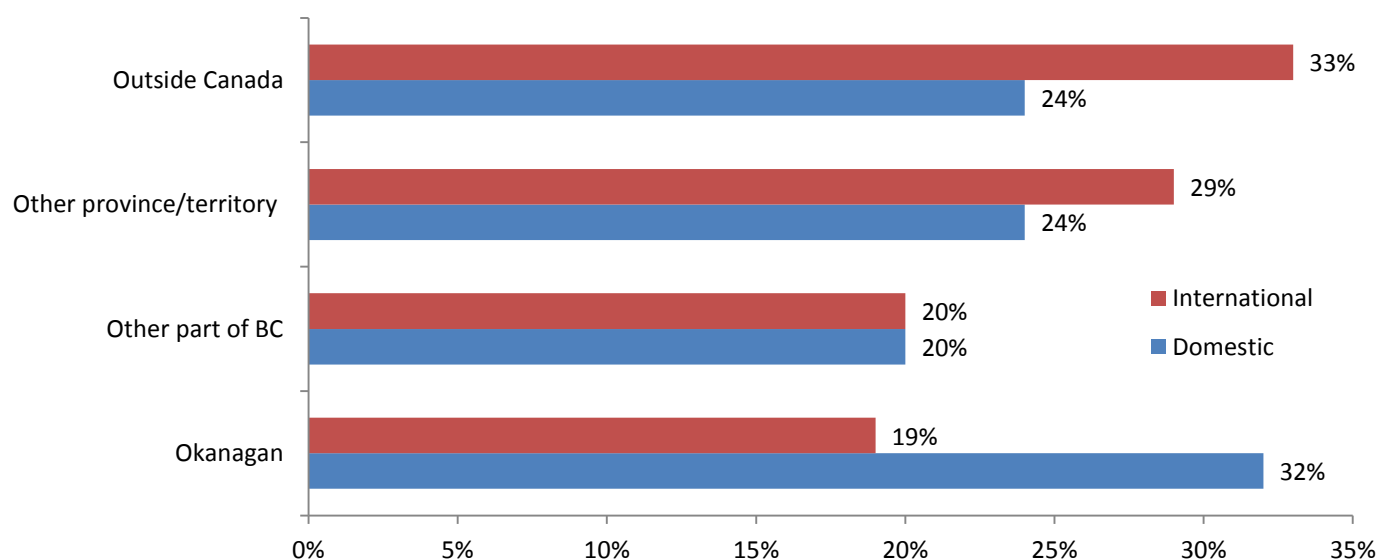


Students were asked to indicate whether they were Canadian-born; 61% of domestic and 53% of international respondents indicated they were born in Canada. Students also reported whether they had lived for at least a year in the Okanagan region, elsewhere in British Columbia, another province/territory in Canada, or in another country. Note: Students could select multiple options.

Thirty-two percent of domestic and 19% of international respondents had lived in the Okanagan, while 20% of both domestic and international respondents said they had lived elsewhere in BC for at least a year. Therefore, half of domestic and about 40% of international respondents indicated they had lived in BC for at least a year prior to attending UBC.

A quarter of domestic and 29% of international respondents reported they had lived in a province or territory other than BC for at least a year. A quarter of domestic and a third of international respondents indicated they had lived outside of Canada for at least 1 year.

Figure 4: Region in which one had lived for at least a year



Living situation

Thirteen percent of domestic and 15% of international respondents said they would be living on campus. Students were asked with whom they would be living for the upcoming year. Thirty-seven percent of domestic respondents said with a spouse/significant other, 25% said alone, 17% said with friends, while 11% said with family (parents/ siblings/relatives – excluding spouse/significant other). Among international respondents, almost half (45%) said they would be living with their spouse/significant other, 18% said with friends, 18% said with people they had not met prior to UBC, and 12% said they would be living alone.

Students were asked to report their marital status: 35% of international respondents said married, 58% not married, and 7% with domestic partner. Twenty-two percent of domestic respondents were married, 67% not married, 7% with domestic partner, and 4% were separated or divorced.

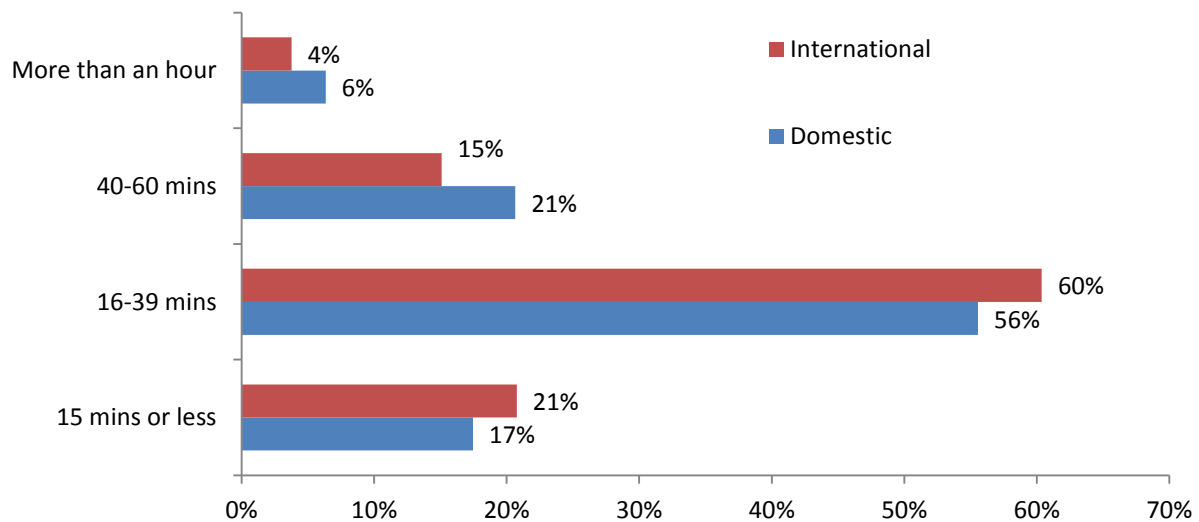


To further understand our incoming graduate students, students were asked whether they had children, and if so, how many. Fourteen percent of domestic and 20% international respondents indicated they had children. Almost all respondents indicated their children were in Canada.

Commuting to campus

Students indicated the method they planned to use to commute to campus (for those living off-campus). Public transportation was selected by the highest proportion of both domestic (45%) and international (51%) respondents while 38% of domestic and 29% of internationals responded they would drive alone. Cycling was the option selected by 11% of domestic and 16% of international respondents.

Figure 5: Estimated time taken to commute to campus (off-campus residents)



Related to commuting method, students living off campus estimated the time it would take to commute to campus. Most (60% of international and 56% of domestic) estimated 16-39 minutes, while 21% of international and 17% of domestic respondents estimated it would take 15 minutes or less.

Education of Parents/Guardians

Domestic student respondents' mothers tended to have a higher level of education than international respondents mothers since they reported higher proportions for some college/university, university degree, and graduate/ professional degree, while a larger proportion of international respondents than domestic respondents indicated their mother/guardian had high school or less.



Figure 6a: Highest education attained by mother/ guardian I)

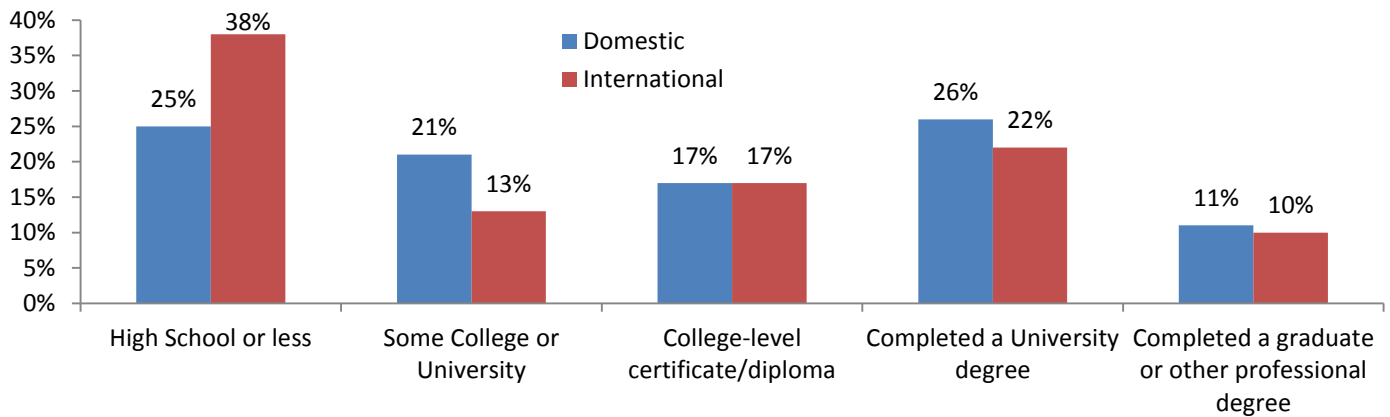
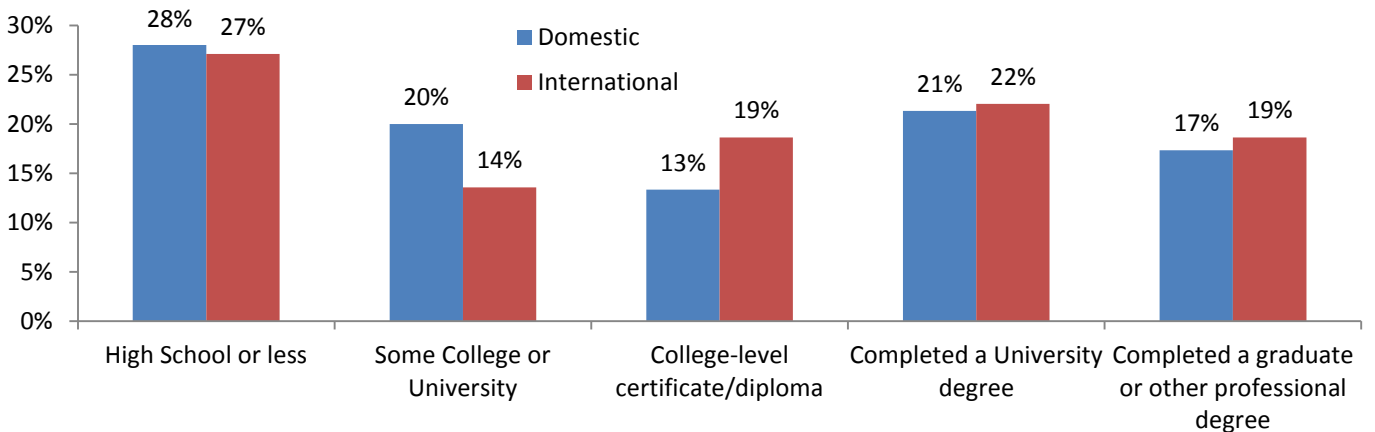


Figure 6b: Highest education attained by father/ guardian II)



In terms of the highest education attained by the father/ guardian II, compared to international students, domestic respondents’ reported a similar proportion who had achieved high school or less and a higher proportion of those reporting some college or university. International respondents, however, reported a higher proportion than domestic students for college-level certificate/diploma, completed a University degree, and completed a graduate/professional degree.

Overall, the responses suggest that both domestic and international students have similar proportions of parents/guardians with university degrees (around 22%).

Previous academic achievement

Several questions related to incoming graduate students’ previous academic experience were asked. In one item, students reported the year in which they achieved their bachelor’s degree. Note: For this item, a handful of students indicated they had completed multiple bachelor degrees.

Students reported the year they completed their bachelor’s degree. Three-quarters of domestic students and 64% of international respondents reported they had graduated within the past 5 years.



Figure 7: Year in which bachelor's degree was completed

Some graduate students may have already completed a graduate program, so students were asked to report whether they had done so. Seventeen percent of domestic and 36% of internationals indicated they had completed a graduate program already.

Of those who had completed a graduate program already, 76% of internationals and 77% of domestic respondents said they did so at an institution outside of Canada, 19% of international and 8% of domestic said within Canada (but not BC), and 5% of international (16% of domestic) respondents indicated that they had done so at a BC institution.

CHOOSING UBC

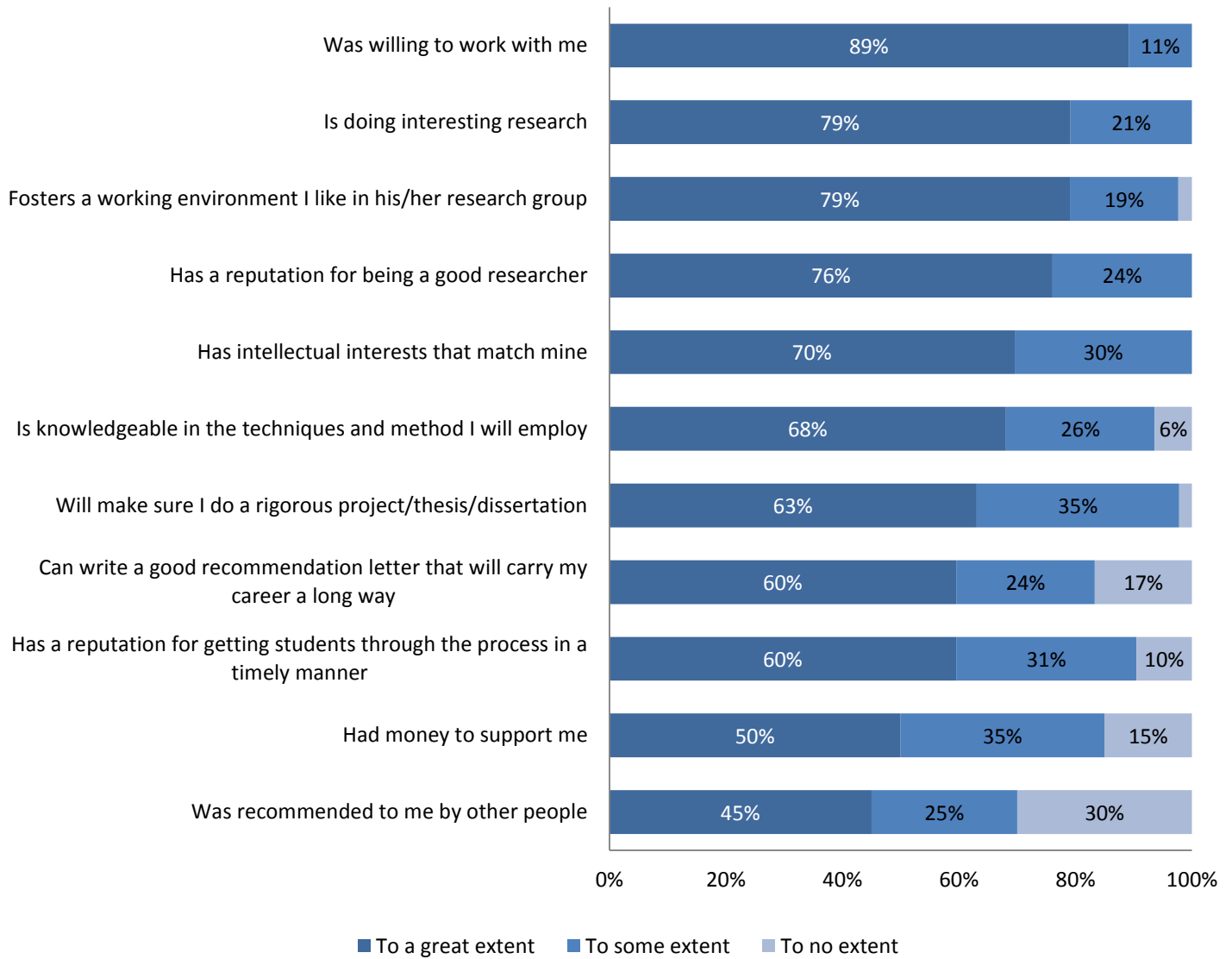
UBC's Okanagan campus was the first choice for 80% of domestic and 77% of international respondents. Of those for whom it was not their first choice, 87% of domestic and 65% of international respondents rated UBC's Okanagan campus as their second choice.

These students for whom UBC's Okanagan campus was not their first choice (domestic: 15, international: 14) were asked to indicate their first choice. UBC's Vancouver campus was the institution listed by the largest proportion of both domestic (31%) and international respondents (36%).

Students choose to work with a particular faculty member as their supervisor for a variety of reasons. Students were asked to rate the extent to which several aspects influenced their choice to select their supervisor. Note that Figures 8a and 8b exclude responses that were reported as not applicable (i.e., students who do not have a supervisor as part of their program).



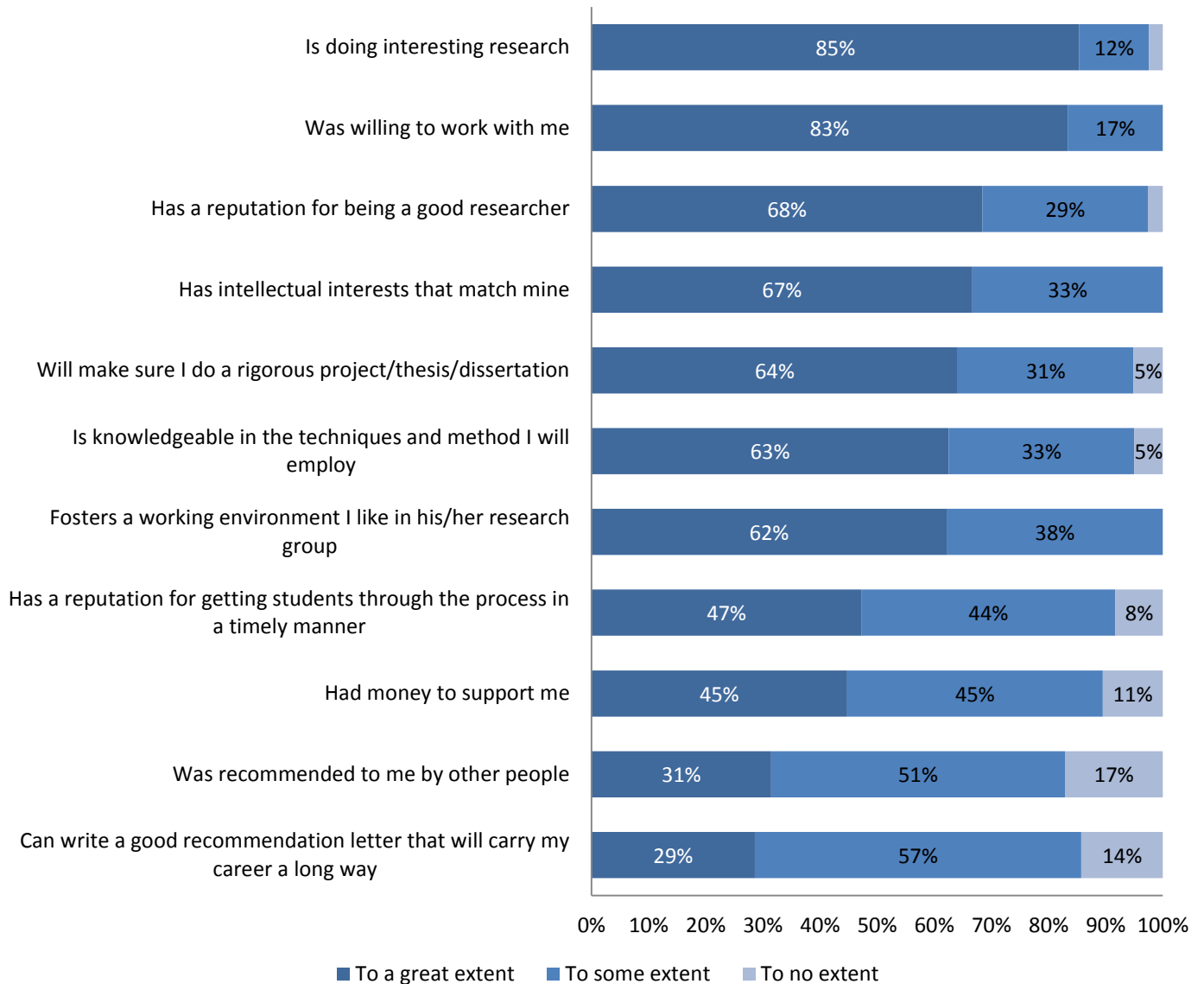
Figure 8a: Influence of factors when choosing supervisor (Domestic)



Among domestic respondents, that their supervisor was willing to work with them was the factor rated influential to a great extent by the largest proportion of respondents (89%), followed by: Is doing interesting research and that they foster a working environment I like in his/her research group (both rated as to a great extent by 79%). The least influential factor for domestic respondents was the item: Was recommended to me by other people (ranked as influential to a great extent by 45%).



Figure 8b: Influence of factors when choosing supervisor (International)



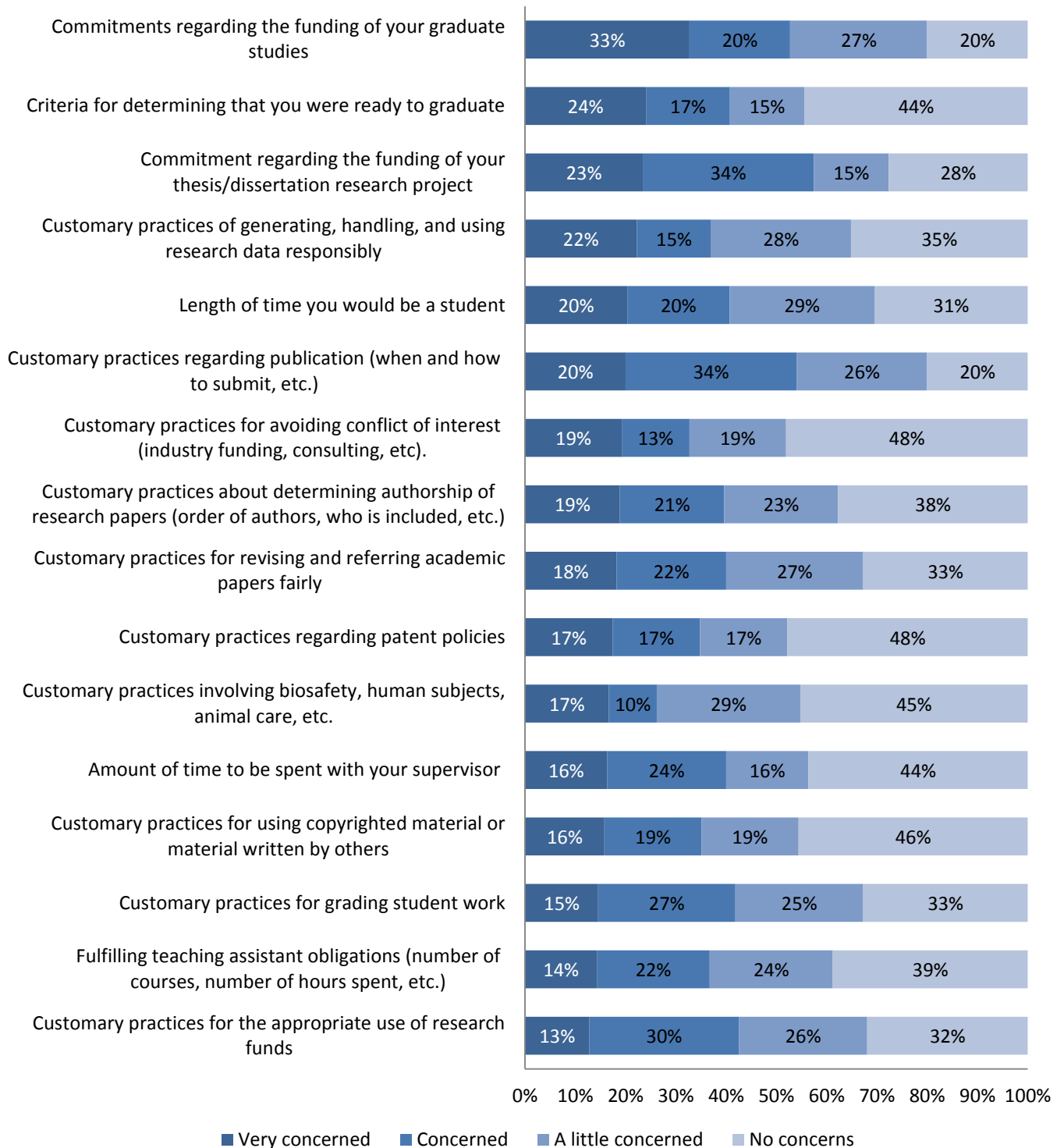
Among international respondents, is doing interesting research was the most influential factor, followed by: Was willing to work with me (to a great extent: 85% and 83% respectively). The items ranked as least influential were: Can write a good recommendation letter (To a great extent: 29%) and was recommended to me by other people (To a great extent: 31%).

STRESS AND HEALTH

Students can have concerns about several aspects about their program. Among domestic respondents, Commitments regarding the funding of graduate studies was the greatest concern, followed by criteria for determining readiness to graduate. Least concerning was the item related to customary practices for the appropriate use of research funds.



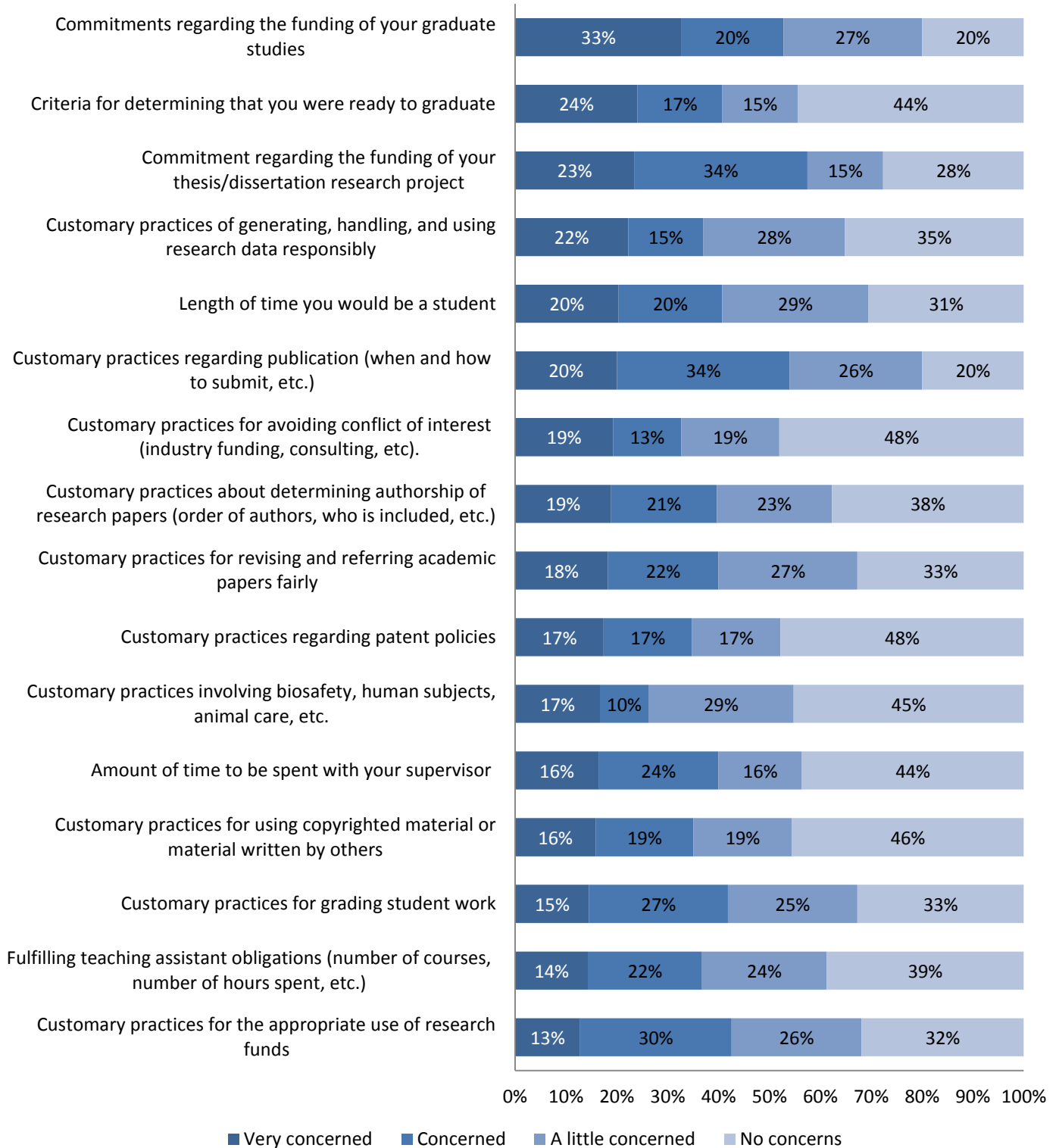
Figure 9a: Level of concern with aspects related to graduate program (Domestic)



As with their domestic counterparts, international respondents were least concerned about commitments regarding the funding of graduate studies, followed by criteria for determining readiness to graduate. Customary practices for the appropriate use of research funds was the item rated as least concerning.

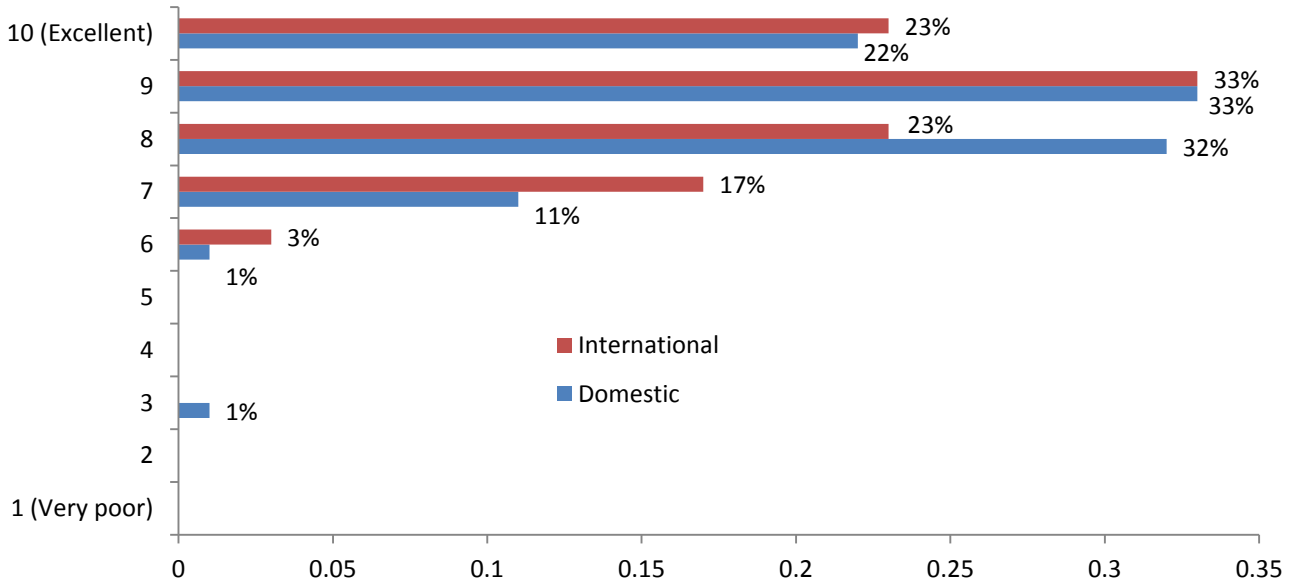


Figure 9b: Level of concern with aspects related to graduate program (International)



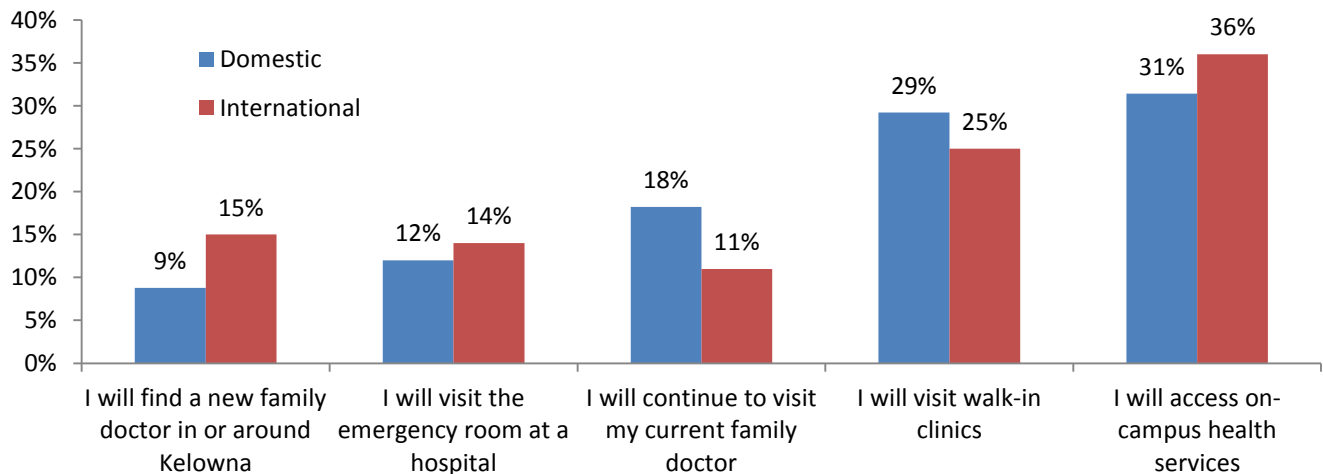
Students rated their own health on a scale of 1 (Very poor) to 10 (Excellent). Both domestic and international respondents reported good levels of health, as the vast majority of respondents (over 95%) reported 7 or higher. More than half of domestic and international respondents ranked their health as 9 or 10 out of 10.

Figure 10: Self-reported overall health



Students reported how they expect to access health care services while at UBC.

Figure 11: Expected access to health care services



Note, for figure 11 students could select multiple responses. The largest and second largest proportions of respondents said they would access on-campus health services and walk-in clinics respectively, for both domestic and international respondents. The lowest proportion of domestic respondents reported they would find a new family doctor (9%) while the lowest proportion of international respondents said they would continue to visit their current family doctor (11%).



Obstacles to academic progress

Students rated whether several issues are obstacles to their academic progress.

Figure 12a: Obstacles to academic progress (Domestic)

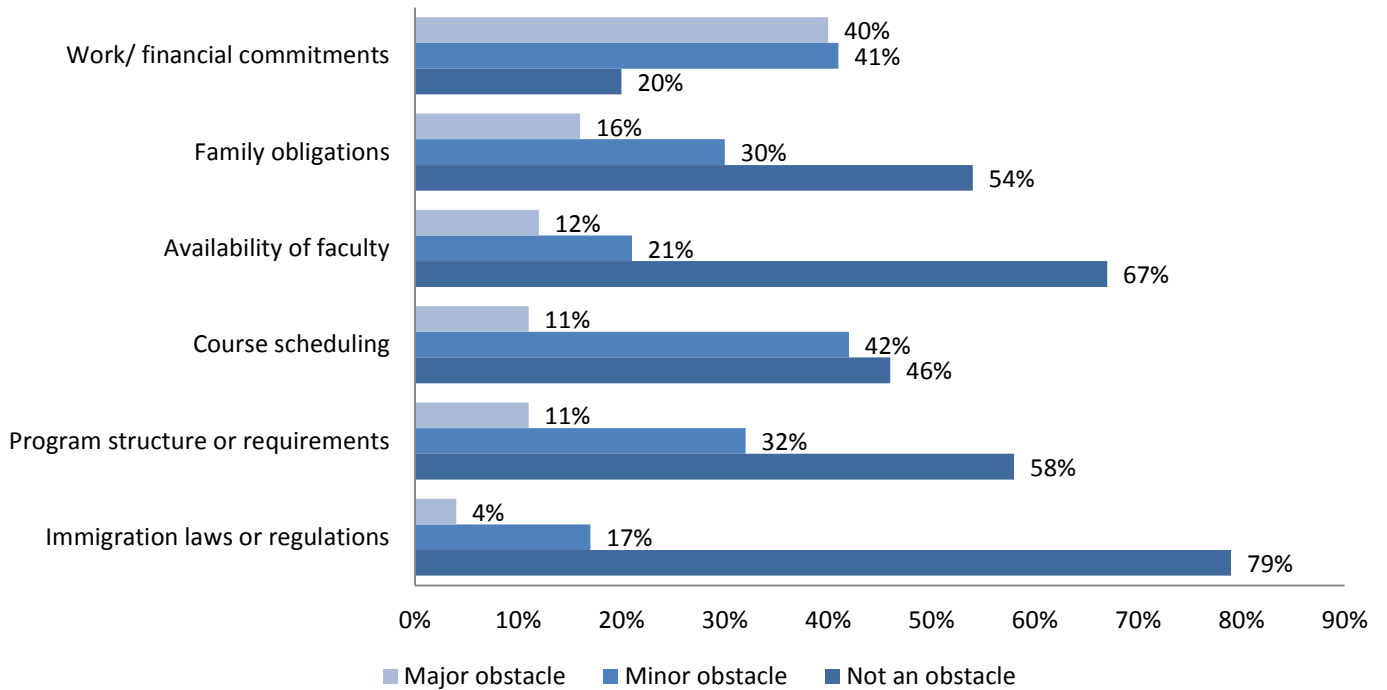
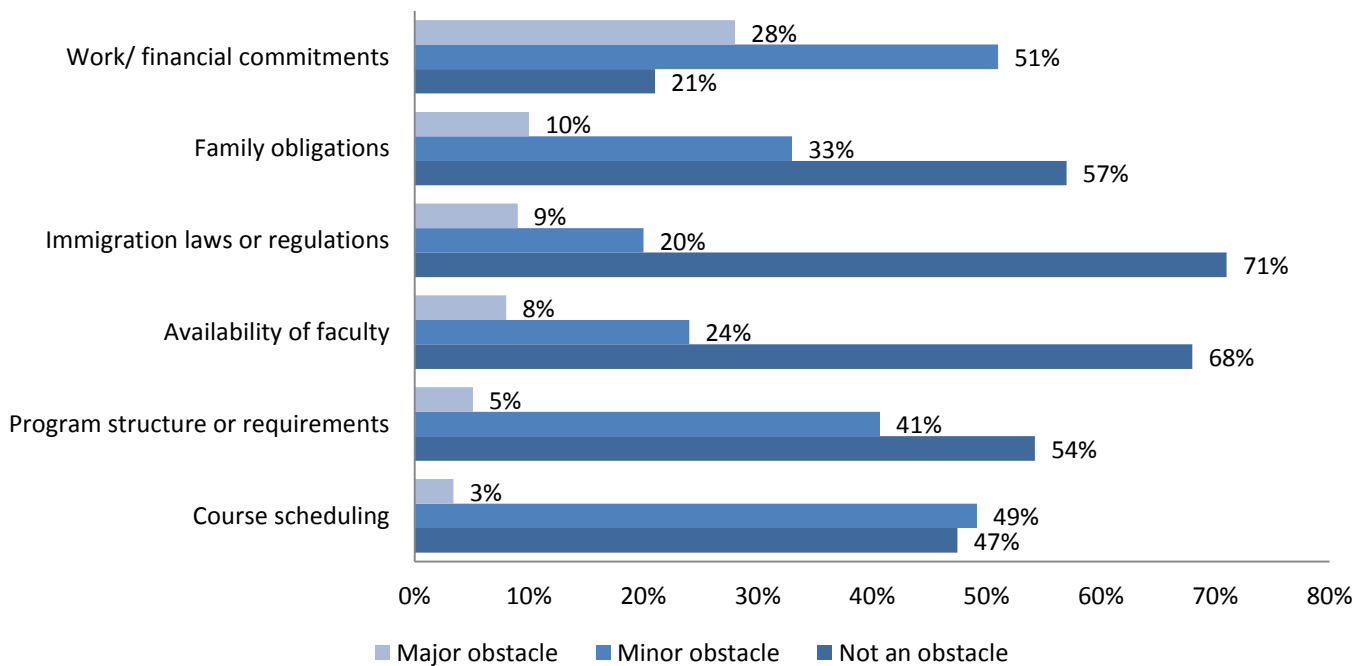


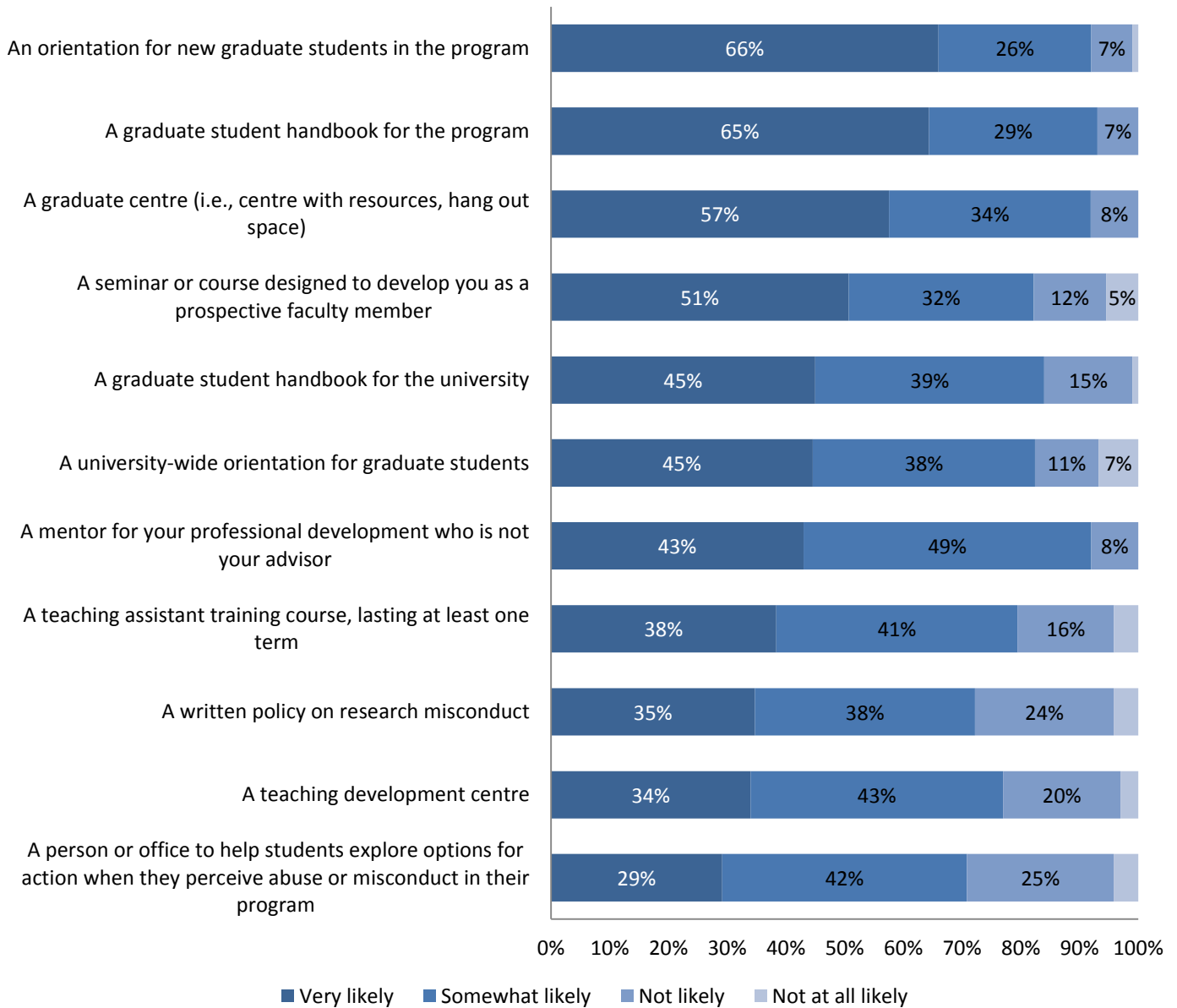
Figure 12b: Obstacles to academic progress (International)



For both domestic and international students, work/financial commitments were rated as a major obstacle by the largest proportion of respondents (40% and 28% respectively), followed by family obligations, which was rated as a major obstacle by 16% of domestic and 10% of international respondents.

CAMPUS PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Figure 13a: Likelihood to participate in/ use various resources and programs (Domestic)



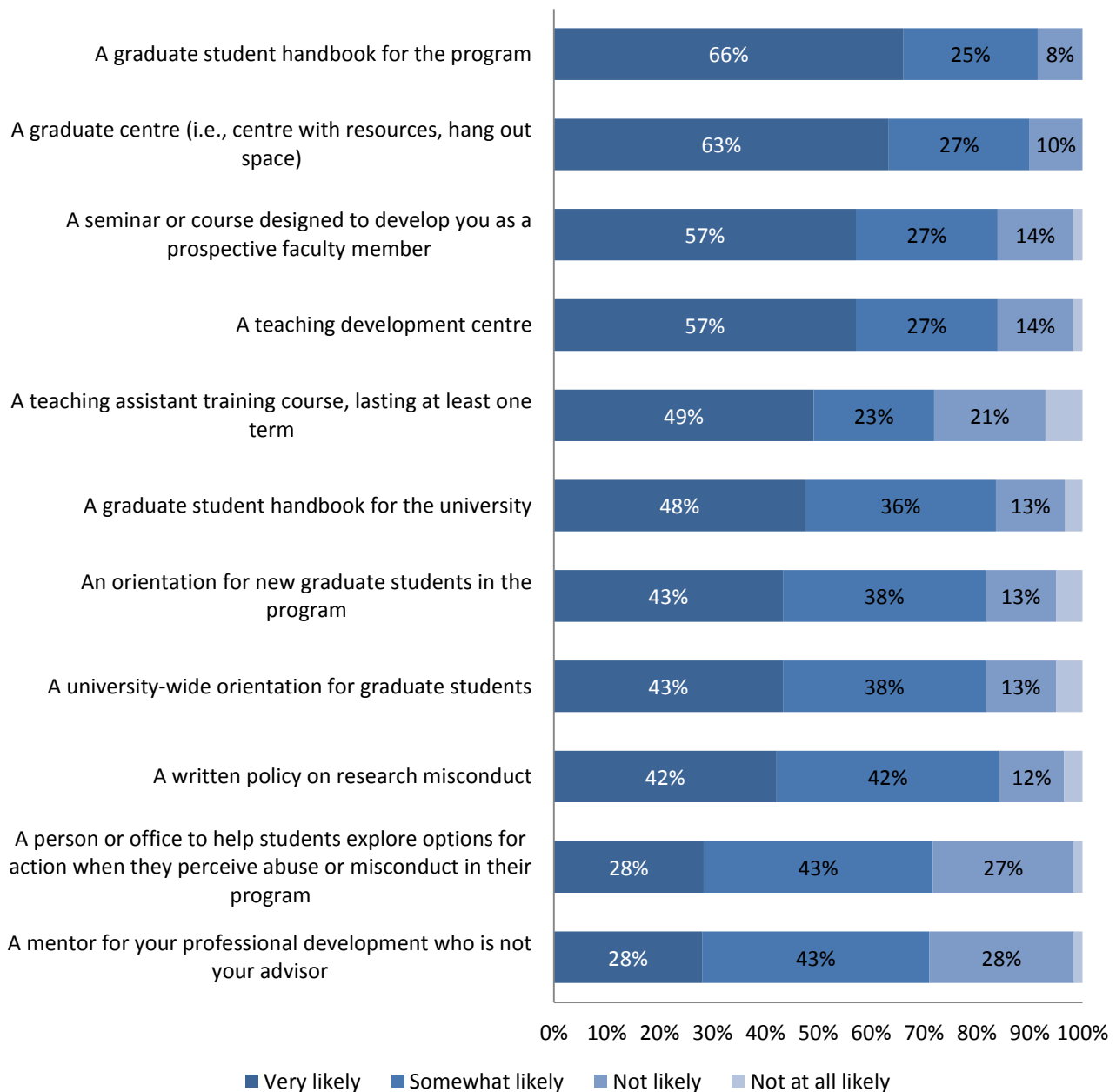
The largest section of domestic respondents reported that they were very likely to participate in an orientation for new graduate students in the program (66%). A graduate student handbook for the program and a designated graduate centre were the second and third most popular options



respectively (65% and 57%). A teaching development centre was the resource selected as “very likely” by the lowest proportion (25%).

For international respondents, as with domestic respondents the two largest proportions selected very likely to participate in/ use a graduate student handbook for the program (66%), followed by an orientation for new graduate students in the program (63%). A seminar/course designed to develop you as a prospective faculty member and a teaching development centre were the joint third most selected responses (57% each). A mentor for your professional development who is not your advisor was the response selected by the smallest proportion (very likely: 28%).

Figure 13b: Likelihood to participate in various resources and programs (International)

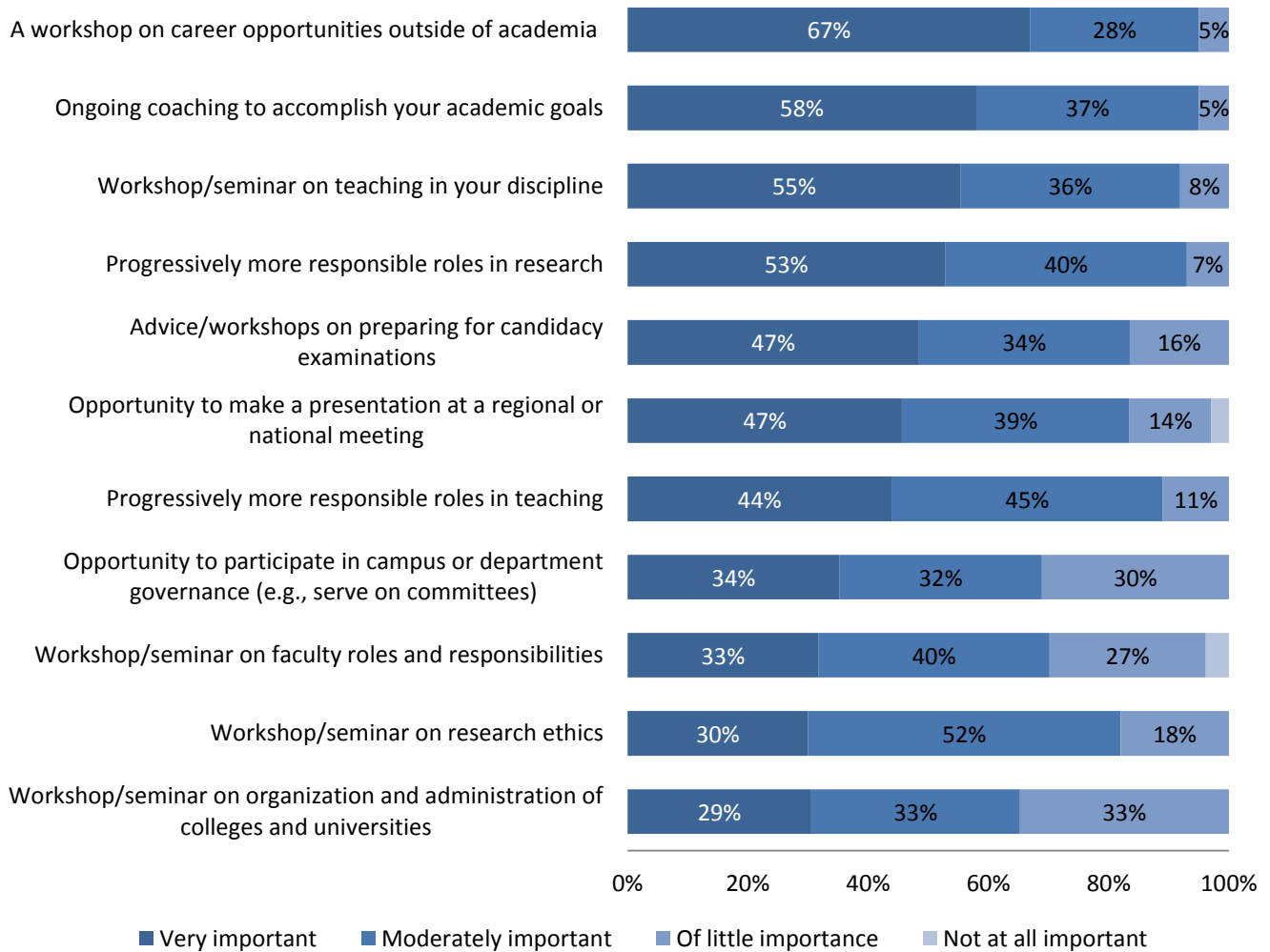


Importance of opportunities for graduate program experiences

Students reported how important they believe various opportunities and programs were to their graduate program experience. For both domestic and international students, a workshop on career opportunities outside of academia and ongoing coaching to accomplish your academic goals were the opportunities ranked as very important by the top two largest proportions of respondents.

For domestic respondents, a workshop/seminar on teaching in your discipline was rated as very important by the third largest proportion (55%), followed by: progressively more responsible roles in research (53%).

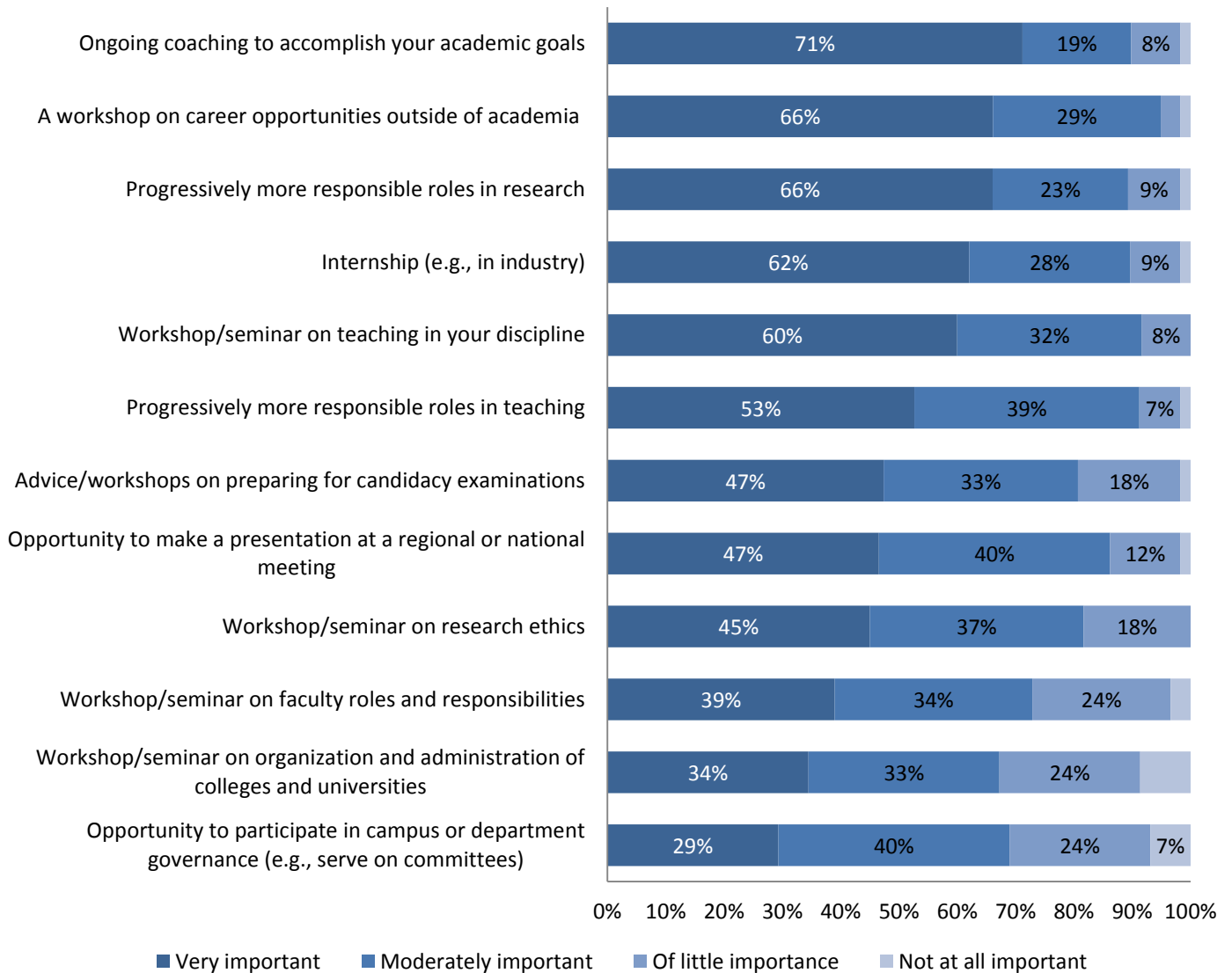
Figure 14a: Level of importance for graduate program experience (Domestic)



For international students, progressively more responsible roles in research was rated as very important by the third largest proportion of respondents (66%), followed by internship (62%). Workshop/seminar on organization and administration of colleges and universities was rated as very important by the smallest proportion of both domestic and international respondents.



Figure 14b: Level of importance for graduate program experience (Intl)



Time commitments

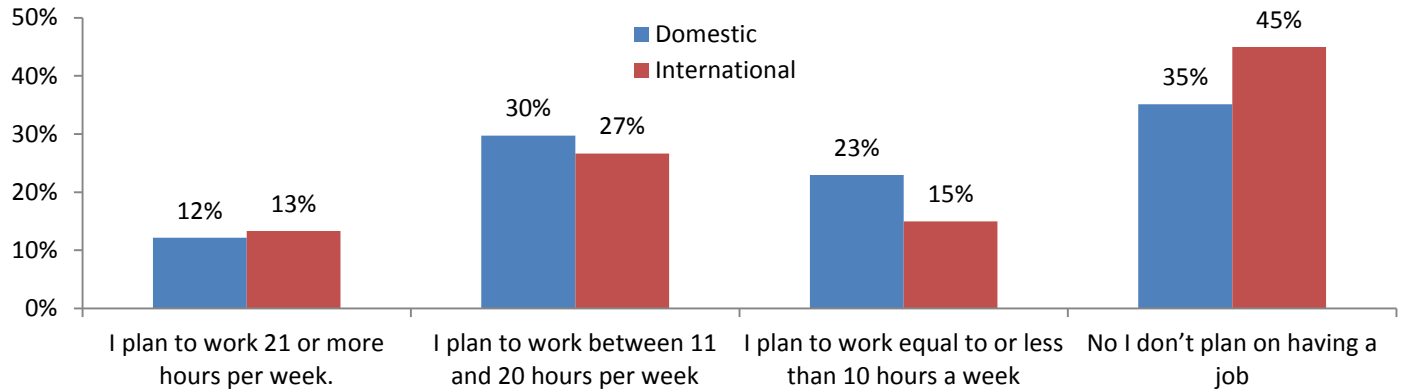
Students reported on average, how often each month they intended to meet/communicate with their supervisor about ongoing research and results as well as writing the dissertation draft. Note these results exclude those who reported “Not applicable”. For meeting about research, seventy-one percent of domestic respondents said they planned to meet 4 or more times (at least once a week), while 29% said one to three times (i.e., at least once a month). For the same item, 65% of international respondents indicated at least once a week, while 35% said at least once a month.

Regarding meeting/communication with his/her supervisor about the dissertation draft, 46% of domestic students who responded said at least once a week, 48% said at least once a month, and 2% said less than once a month. For the same item, 48% of international respondents said at least once a week, 50% said at least once a month, and 2% said less than once a month.



FINANCES

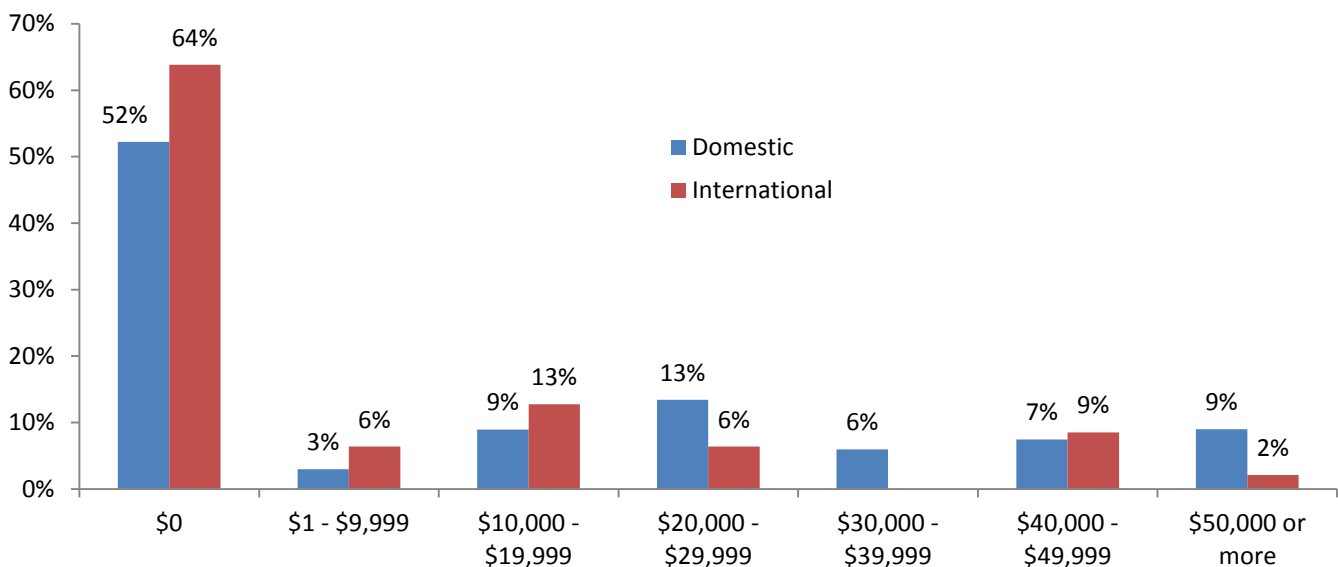
Figure 15: Employment intentions during upcoming year (outside of appointments as part of funding package [e.g., RA, TA])



Some students will also be working during their graduate studies. About a third of domestic respondents and 45% of international respondents said they wouldn't be working. Twenty-three percent of domestic and 15% of international respondents said they would be working on average 10 hours or less per week while about 1 in 3 respondents indicated they planned to work 11-20 hours per week. Among those who reported they would be working, 59% of domestic and 83% of international respondents said they would be working off campus.

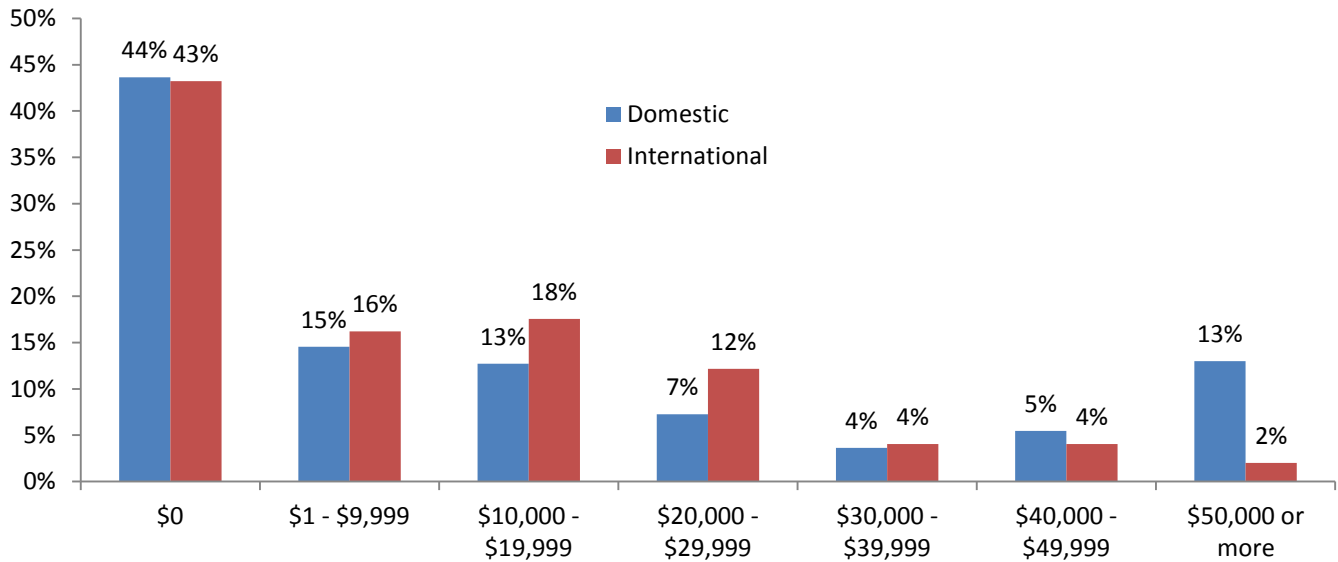
Students reported the estimated amount of educational debt from their undergraduate degree they had outstanding and the amount of educational debt they expect they will have to repay after completing their graduate degree.

Figure 16: Undergraduate student educational debt



The largest proportion of domestic and international respondents reported having no debt (domestic: 52%, international: 64%). Twelve percent of domestic and 19% of international respondents reported having between \$1 – \$19,999 of undergraduate debt. Nineteen percent of domestic students and 6% of internationals said they had \$20,000 – \$39,999 undergraduate debt.

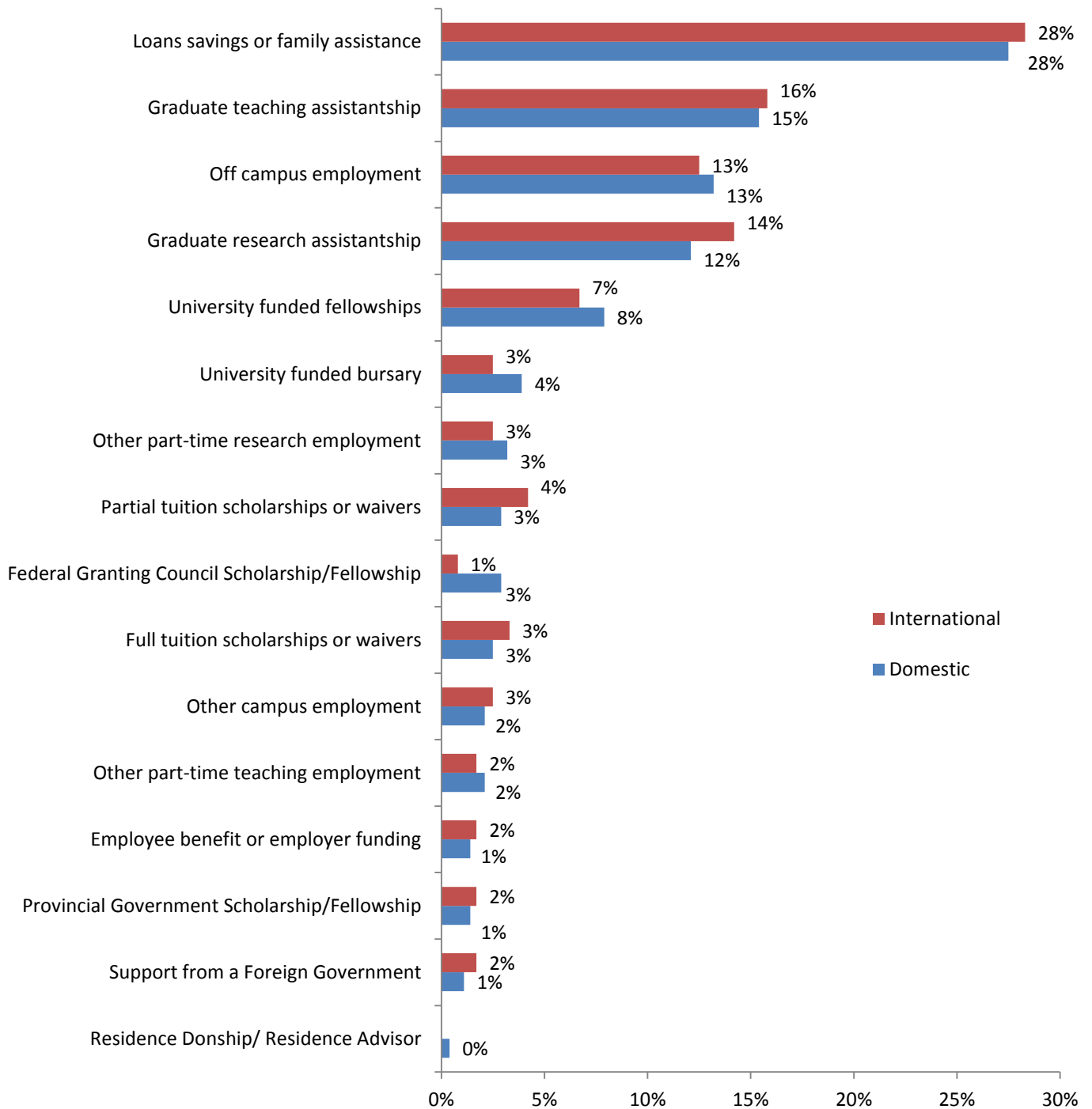
Figure 17: Graduate student educational debt (expected)



Regarding the amount of graduate debt students expected to have after completing their program, almost identical proportions of domestic and international respondents (44% and 43% respectively) indicated they expected to have no debt. Twenty-eight percent of domestic and 34% of international respondents said they expected \$1 – \$19,999 graduate debt.



Figure 18: Sources of financial support



Students were asked to indicate sources of financial support. Note that figure 18 reflects multiple responses. Loans or family assistance was the source of financial support selected by the highest proportion of domestic and international respondents (both 28%). Also, graduate teaching assistantship was the source reported by the second largest proportion of both domestic (15%) and international respondents (16%).



CAREER PLANS

Graduate students may consider a wide range of career options. We asked students to indicate whether they would definitely, possibly, or not at all like to achieve various career options.

Figure 19a: Plans following graduate program (Domestic)

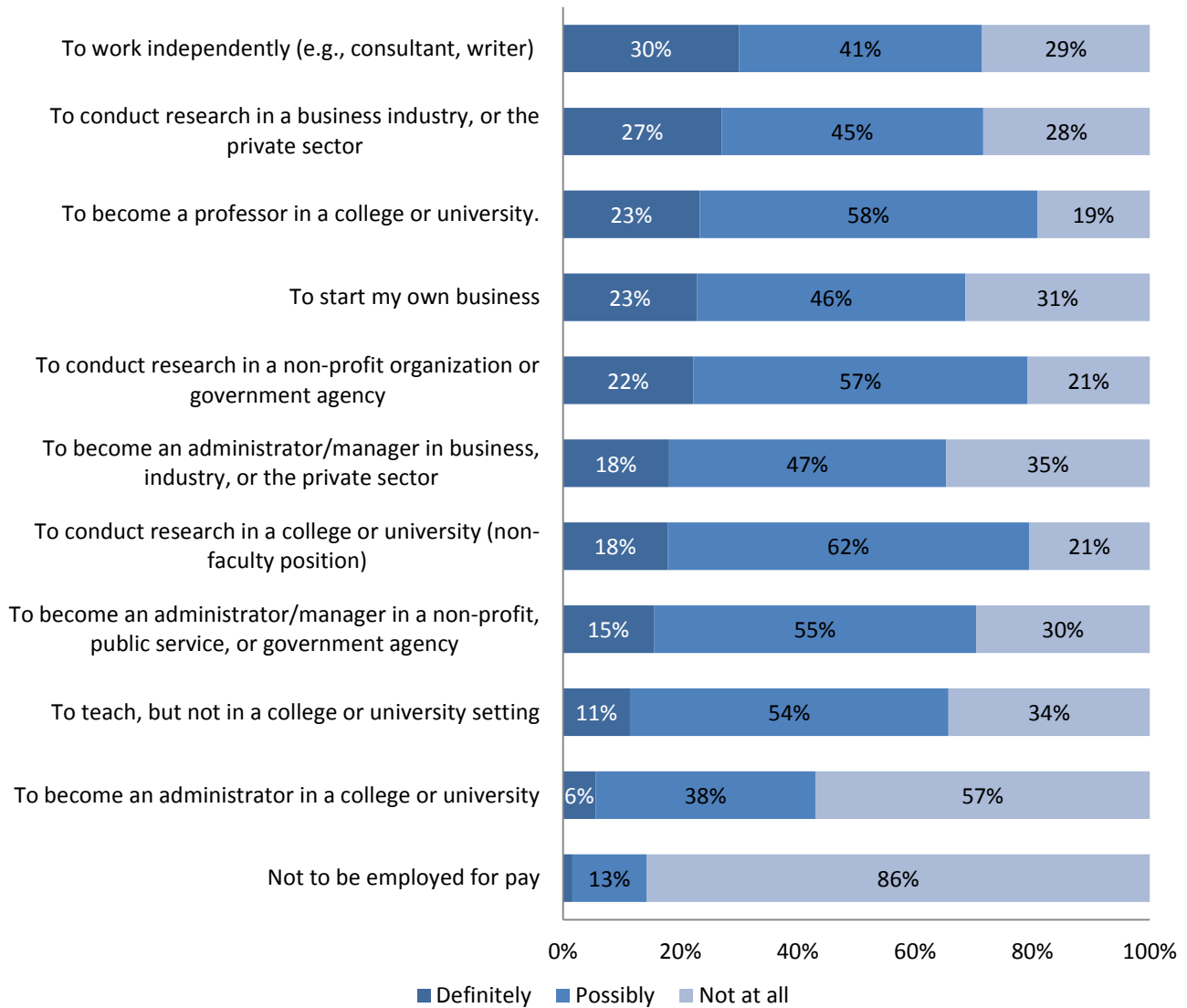
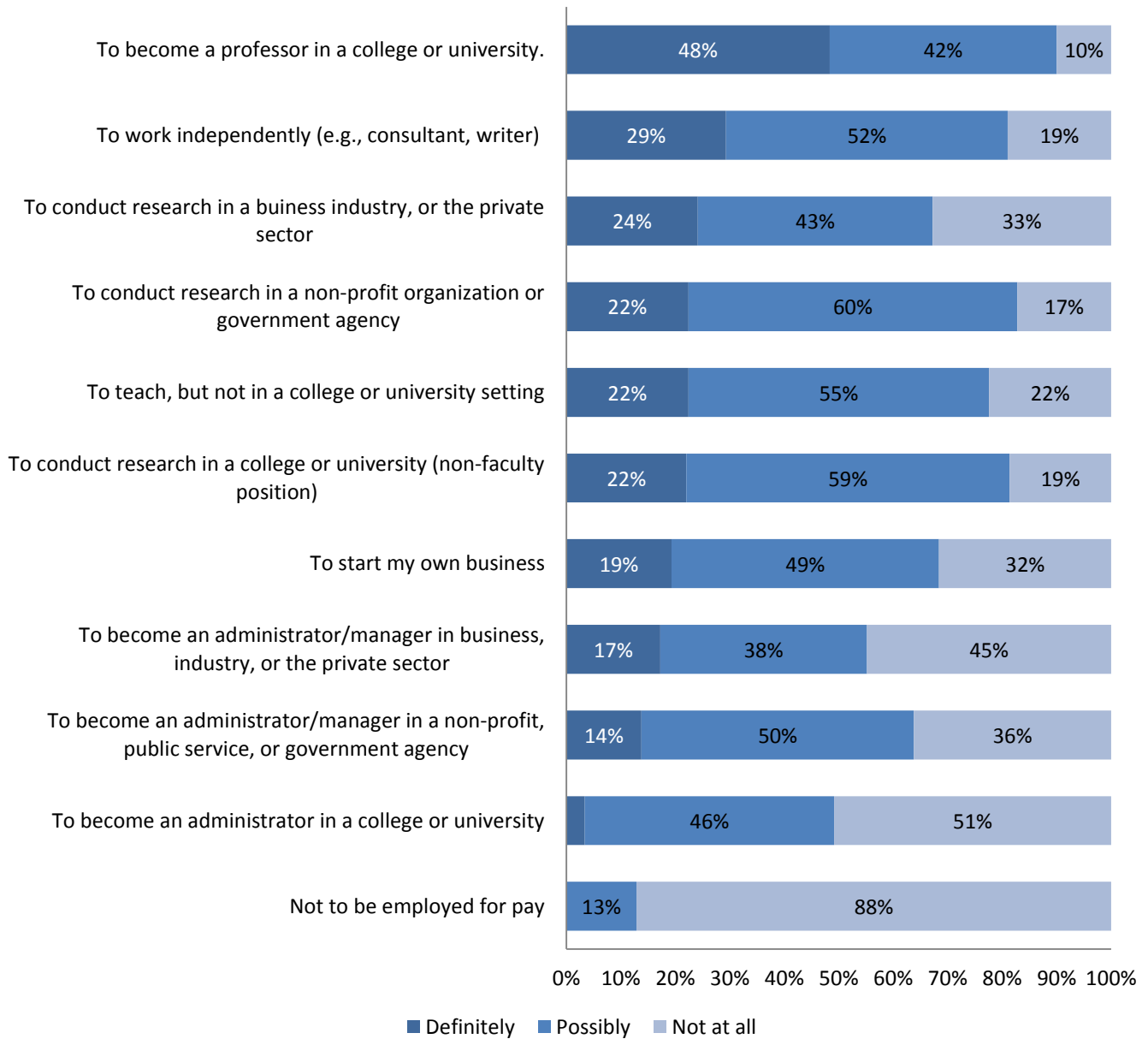


Figure 19b: Plans following graduate program (International)



Among international respondents, the option reported by the largest proportion as definitely was: To become a professor in a college or university (48%), followed by: To work independently (definitely: 29%). In the same vein as domestic students, not being employed for pay was the option to which the largest proportion of international students reported not at all (88%).

