Understanding Tasmanian School Students' Post-School Pathway Intentions

Phase Two: 2021 Student Survey

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The Peter Underwood Centre

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Glossary

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
DECYP	Department for Education, Children and Young People (Tasmania)
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
LSAY	Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth
RAAC	Research Assessment and Approval Committee (DoE)
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TASC	Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification
TCEO	Tasmanian Catholic Education Office
UTAS	University of Tasmania

Executive Summary

The University of Tasmania Future Students Division has commissioned the Peter Underwood Centre to undertake a study which seeks insights into the post-school intentions of Tasmanian Year 10, 11 and 12 students from all school sectors. This report focuses on Phase Two of the research, presenting findings from analysis of data from a survey of 1055 students from Years 10, 11 and 12 in late Term 3 and early Term 4, 2021. This adds to our report on the same survey with 1160 students from Year 10, 11 and 12 in Term 4, 2020.

Key findings

- Overall students were positive about the value of completing Year 12, especially for transitioning to university (81% agreed), developing career goals (76%), and generally opening up more opportunities (78%).
- Just under half of the surveyed students intend to go to university, either immediately after school or following a gap year. Commencing an apprenticeship was the next most popular post-school pathway, followed by employment.
- Most survey respondents intend to pursue their post-school pathway in Tasmania. Students intending to go to university after a gap year were somewhat less likely to go to the University of Tasmania (50% versus 60% of those planning university immediately after school).
- Across all pathways, Health and Social Assistance was the most popular field/industry. This was especially so for students intending to follow a university pathway. After this preference, the next most commonly selected industries/fields included Engineering, Education and Training, Creative arts, and Construction and Building industries with the latter related more to students intending to undertake an apprenticeship.
- The key considerations for students choosing to go to university (at the University of Tasmania or interstate) include their interests, strengths and personal readiness – that they are interested in the option, that they will be happy doing it, and that they feel they have 'what it takes' to be successful in the option. In addition, giving them a 'good career pathway' as well as social factors (such as a safe and enjoyable environment) were also valued by many students intending to go to university.
- For students intending to pursue an apprenticeship, reasons to do with interests, strengths and personal readiness also were important, including that they are interested in the option, that it is hands-on, that they will be happy doing it, and that they feel they have 'what it takes' to be successful in the option. In addition, giving them a 'good career pathway' and a good reputation were also valued by many students intending to go pursue an apprenticeship.
- Just over half of respondents said they knew someone close to them who had a university degree.
- The Department of Education (DoE, changed to DECYP in late 2022) *My Education Resources* were a key source of information for students. School career days and social media were also common sources of information for students. Websites were used more by students intending to go to university; and external (not at the school) career days/expos more by students aiming for an apprenticeship or work.
- Students were most knowledgeable about searching and applying for a job and writing a resume. Relatively few students knew a great deal about financial aspects (cost and assistance) for both University and TAFE/RTO pathways.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Research focus

The University of Tasmania aspires "to have a positive impact on the lives and experiences of Tasmanians."[1] A key focus is on supporting increased educational attainment for Tasmanian students, including enhancing access to university through transitional pathways. Therefore, it is important to understand the post-school pathway intentions of students in their last few years of secondary school, as well as the factors which influence their decision making.

The University's Future Students Division has commissioned the Peter Underwood Centre to undertake a study which seeks insights into the post-school intentions of Tasmanian Year 10, 11 and 12 students from all school sectors. The overarching research question is:

Why do Tasmanian students intend to pursue particular post-school pathways?

The study consists of four phases:

1. **Expert Informant Focus Groups:** Gaining insights from key experts i.e., current Tasmanian school students; parents; and school staff – reported in December 2019.[2]
2. **Student Survey:** Gaining insights from Tasmanian school students from all educational sectors. The first survey was reported in May 2022.[3]
3. **Quantitative Data Collection:** Based on UTAS and TASC data, including elements such as courses completed during Years 10-12, credentials attained, ATARs, and post-school enrolments – reported in July 2020[4], with a follow up report in May 2022.[5]
4. **Follow up interviews:** Involving key stakeholders, to provide deeper understanding of students' intentions. These are expected to be completed late 2022.

This report focuses on **Phase Two** of the research, presenting findings from analysis of data from a survey of 1055 Tasmanian school students in Year 10, 11 and 12 in late Term 3 and early Term 4, 2021. This complements our report on the same survey with 1160 students in Term 4, 2020.

The focus of the survey aligned with support already provided in schools for students to explore post-school career options. The design of the survey benefited from Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) staff in the Vocational Learning and Career Education unit, as well as from insights and learning from the 2020 survey. Participating students were able to download their completed survey answers in .pdf format to assist with career and life planning purposes.

In 2020, the Tasmanian Education Act (2016) was amended to increase the minimum school leaving requirements to age 18 ensuring that more Tasmanian young people are now staying in school for longer.[6] This study provides useful insights into students' post-school pathway intentions. Further, in the context of the Years 9-12 Project, which is working towards improving student attendance, retention and attainment in Tasmanian schools, the data may inform the work of the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP), Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO), and Tasmanian Independent schools.

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[1] See page 36 of the University of Tasmania Strategic Plan 2019-2024: https://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1255234/UTAS-Strategy-Document-2019.pdf
[2] See: https://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/1411014/Crellin,-te-Riele-and-West-2020.pdf
[3] See: https://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1591868/SPSPI-Phase2-Survey2020-OverviewReport.pdf
[4] See: https://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1413817/Final-Bakhtiar-et-al-2020-SPSPI-C3.pdf
[5] See: https://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1628616/SPSPI-Slide-report-Final.pdf
[6] See: https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2016-051

1.2 Ethics approval

Phase two of this research project received approval from the University of Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee (SSHREC) [reference number: H20003]; the Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) Research Assessment and Approval Committee (RAAC) [reference number: 2019-54]; and from the Tasmanian Catholic Education office (TCEO) [approval granted September 20, 2021]. No additional approval was required from the Tasmanian Independent Schools Association (ISA).

Amendment requests for minor changes were made to the project (such as an additional staff member and tweaks to questions) were subsequently approved by the UTAS SSHREC, RAAC and TCEO.

The survey was dispensed by school staff during class time and recommended to be administered as part of the 'Explore my Future' unit and/or 'Career and life Planning' or another appropriate class.

There were three levels of consent for the research:

1. First, **school principals** provided permission for the research to be conducted in their school and recommended a staff member to liaise with the research team to administer the survey that met both ethics requirements and school context.
2. Secondly, with support from the school, students' **parents/carers** were contacted. All three education system research and ethics committees supported a passive consent process due to the survey being both anonymous and non-sensitive. A passive consent process meant that parents/carers could opt out, rather than having to actively opt-in for their child to participate in the survey. The research team prepared a letter for each participating school to send to parents/carers via email, post, newsletter, or text (schools were encouraged to use their preferred method). This was a detailed information sheet and a user-friendly flyer that explained the project and the opt-out consent process. Parents/carers were able to contact the research team (by a certain date) and request that their child not to be included in the study. The research team passed any opt-out student names to the teachers administering the survey via the school staff liaison.
3. Third, active consent was sought from the **students** themselves. This was obtained through the information provided to participants and by the consent confirmation embedded in the preamble to the survey. In addition, teachers who were administering the survey were provided with guidelines to read out in class prior to the survey taking place to explain to students their choice about participation.

Students who did not wish to participate in the survey, or whose parents/carers had opted out, were provided with an alternative survey URL where the data was not accessed for the purposes of this research. This ensured students could still get the benefits of the survey, without having to participate in the research. Fourteen students participated in the private survey.

Students who participated in the survey used for the research were advised in the survey preamble that they could change their mind and decline to take part by simply not completing or not submitting the survey.

1.3 Overview of the data

In total, 1408 students participated in the research survey. However, only 1055 students completed the full survey: this report focuses on those complete responses.

Almost all survey questions asked students to either 'tick one or more boxes' or to respond to a Likert scale. Findings in this report are based on descriptive statistical analysis of the submitted surveys.

Twenty-five Tasmanian schools agreed to take part in the 2021 survey. Of these schools, eighteen were from the Government school sector, four from the Catholic school sector, and three schools were from the Independent school sector.

However, not all schools that agreed to participate in the survey administered the survey to their students. This may be due to conflicting time pressures during busy term times. Notwithstanding this, twelve other schools were named by a small number of students as the school they attended despite that school not agreeing to take part in the survey, and not receiving the link to the survey. It is unclear whether these schools were named in error, whether the student was dually enrolled and only named one school, or if the student misunderstood the question and wrote the name of a school they had either previously attended or intended to attend the following year.

In total, thirty-four schools were named by participants:

- 68% of participating schools were Government schools;
- 15% of participating schools were Catholic schools;
- 17% of participating schools were Independent schools.
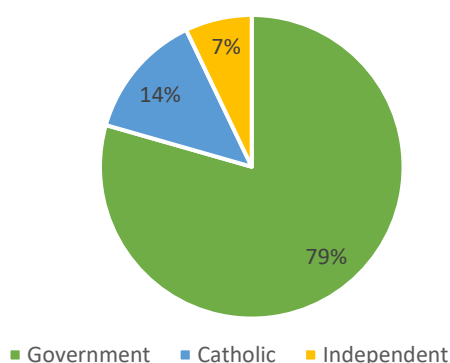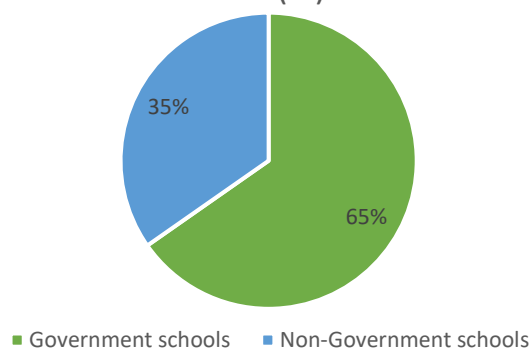
Figure 1 Distribution by school sector among survey respondents, and across Tasmanian secondary students (2021)[7]

Although the sample broadly reflects the distribution of student enrolments across the three sectors in Tasmania in 2021, there is a bias towards participation from students enrolled in government schools. The 2021 Report on Government Services shows 65% of enrolments were in the government sector, and 35% of secondary enrolments were from non-government schools.[8] In this survey, 79% of respondents were enrolled in Government schools and 21% participants were enrolled in non-government schools.

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[7] https://www.pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2021/child-care-education-and-training/school-education#downloads
[8] Ibid.

Just over half of the survey participants were students from schools in the Southern region of Tasmania (54%) (see Figure 2). This reflects both the distribution of the student population across Tasmania, and the higher concentration of schools in the Southern region.

Despite several schools on the West Coast of Tasmania agreeing to take part in the survey, no students from that region are recorded as having participated. Some students from these schools may have participated in the private survey and opted to not have their responses recorded for research purposes. Alternatively, some of these students may have submitted incomplete responses to the research survey meaning their data was not included in the analysis.

Survey participants by region (%)

Survey participants by year level (%)
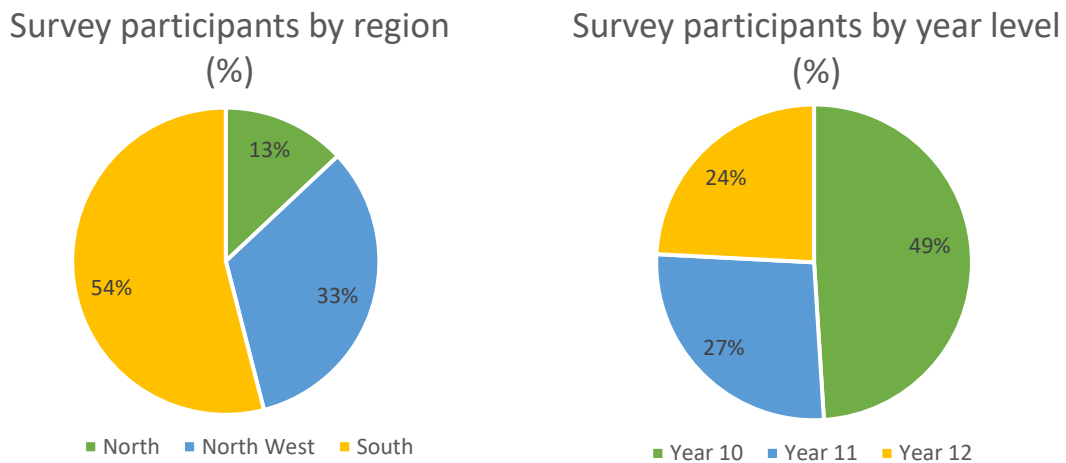
Figure 2 Distribution of survey participants by region; and by year level

The majority of survey participants were students from the Southern region of Tasmania. The second highest representation of survey respondents was by students located in the North West region of Tasmania. Few schools in the Northern region of Tasmania agreed to participate in the research, which may be why the representation of students from that region does not reflect the actual number of students and schools in the North.

Just under half of participants were in Year 10 (49%). The remainder of participants were relatively evenly divided between Year 11 (27%) and Year 12 (24%) students (see Figure 3). No participants indicated that they were in Year 13.

The survey was administered in late Term 3 and early Term 4 due to restrictions on research in government and Catholic schools in Tasmania in Term 1 and 2 imposed in response to increased COVID-19 infections in Tasmania. However, Term 3 and 4 are a busy time for pre-tertiary examination preparation - which may have impacted the number of Year 11 and 12 students who wanted to participate in the survey.

Just over half of the participants were female (52%) with 42% of respondents identifying as male. 4% of participants selected other and 2% (N=26) chose not to disclose their gender identification.
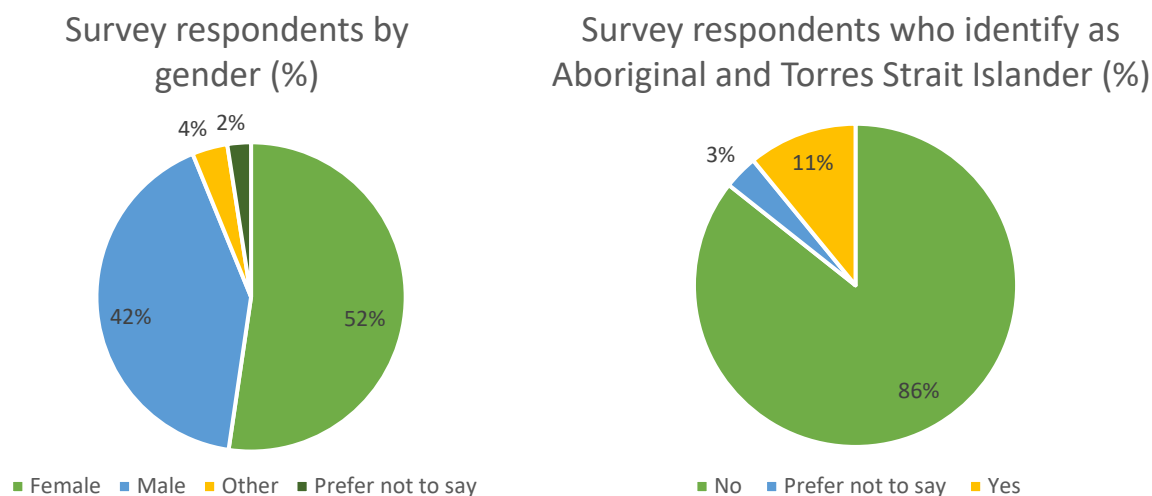
Figure 3 Distribution of survey participants by gender and who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

11% of survey participants identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This proportion of the Tasmanian school student population who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander closely matches Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data which indicates that, in 2021, 10.1% of enrolled Tasmanian students identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.[9] This is the second highest percentage of student enrolments nationally, with the highest number of students identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolled in the Northern Territory.[10]

1.4 Outline of the report

Findings from the survey are presented in three main sections.

Section 2 provides a broad overview of trends across the main three student post-school pathway preferences. This looks into student preferences for location, industry, and university pathways.

Section 3 examines the most popular pathways as reported by students: University of Tasmania, another university interstate or overseas, or apprenticeship. This section offers insights into students' reasons for selecting each pathway, and how sure students feel about pursuing their preferred post-school option. This section concludes with a comparison of students' reasons between the three selected pathways.

Section 4 investigates influences on students' post school pathway plans exploring who (schools, parents, friends) affect their decision making as well as the key sources of information that influence student knowledge about pursuing post-school pathways.

The report then concludes with a brief summary of the key findings across the four sections.

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[9] https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release
[10] Ibid.

Section 2: Broad post-school plans

This section provides a broad overview of which pathways participants intend to pursue immediately after completing school. The section then highlights students' preferred industries and locations for their selected pathway.

2.1 Value of completing Year 12

The Tasmanian Education Act (2016) has made it mandatory to stay in school or another approved learning program until students complete Year 12 or a Certificate III qualification, or until they turn 18 years of age (whichever occurs first).[11] In practice for most young people this translates to remaining in school for Year 11 and 12. In this context it is important to know the perceptions of students themselves about Year 12 completion. Overall, respondents agreed that completing Year 12 would:

- Be useful for transitioning to university (81%).
- Help to develop career goals (76%).
- Open up more opportunities for each student (78%).

How much do you agree or disagree that completing Year 12 will...

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Make my family proud	62%	31%	6%
Be a good way of staying with my friends	54%	36%	10%
Be useful to get an apprenticeship	53%	40%	8%
Help me get skills for a job	69%	26%	5%
Be useful if I want to go to university	81%	14%	5%
Help me develop my career goals	76%	21%	2%
Open up more opportunities for me	78%	20%	1%
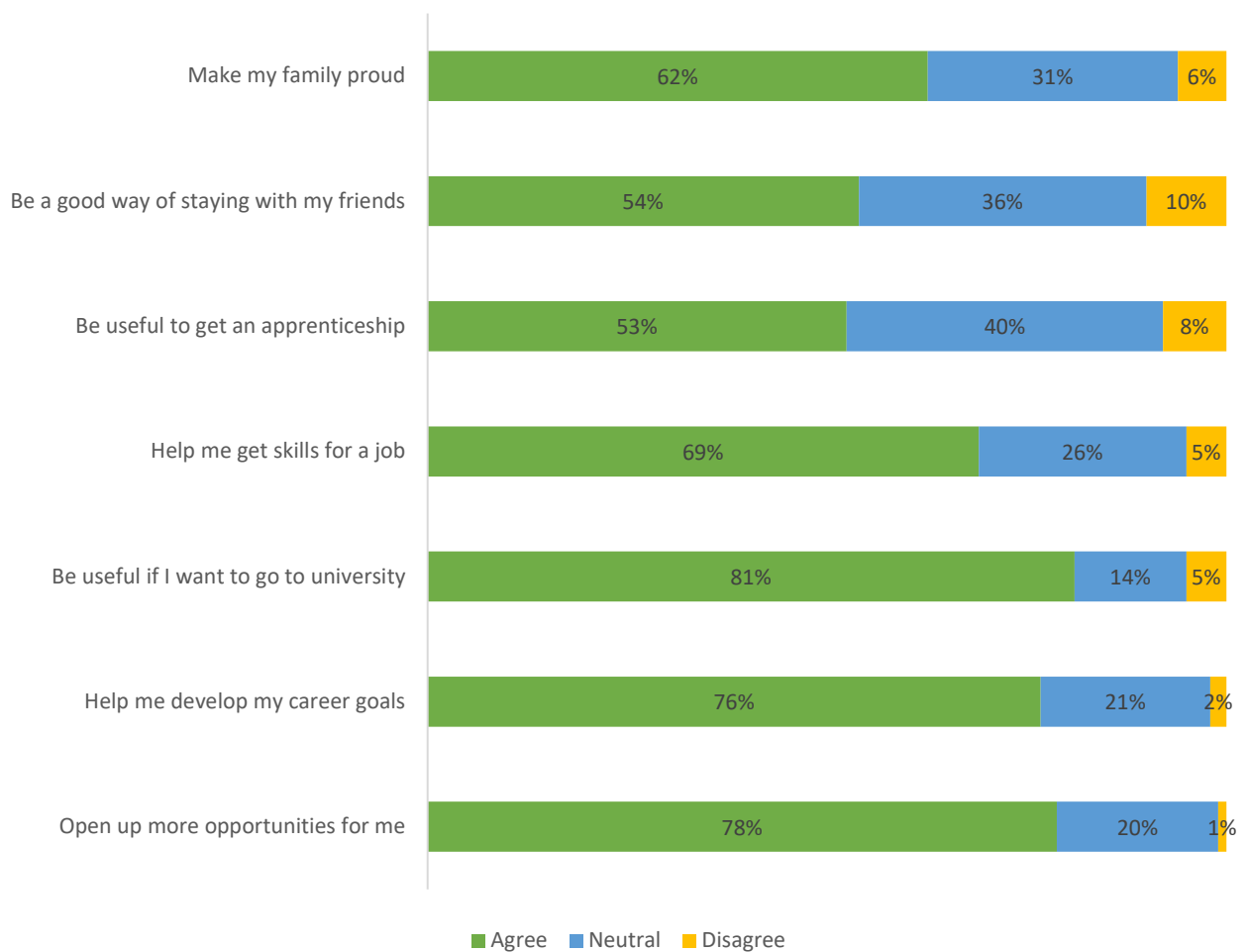
Figure 4 Student perspectives on completing Year 12

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[11] See: https://www.decyp.tas.gov.au/about-us/legislation/education-act/

2.2 Pathway intentions

Students were asked to choose which option best reflected what they planned to do immediately after finishing school. This question was formulated to reflect a questionnaire from the *Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY)* to enable comparisons between datasets in future publications (not this report).

- 38% of students intend to go straight on to tertiary education after completing school.
- 17% of participants plan to first take a gap year before transitioning to their preferred post-school pathway.
- 14% of respondents intend to pursue an apprenticeship immediately after completing school.

What do you plan to do in the year IMMEDIATELY after you leave school?
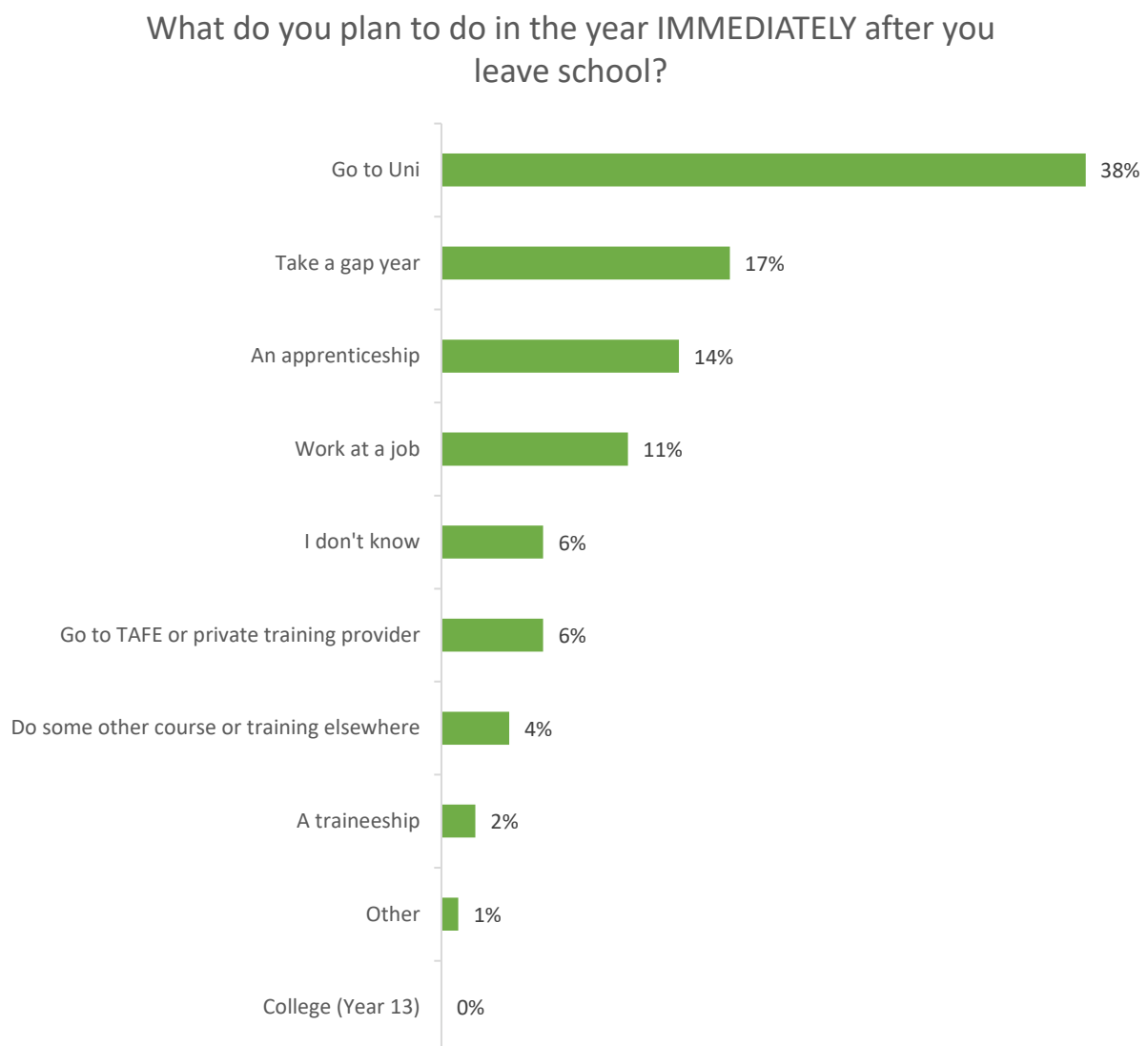
Figure 5 Post-school pathway plans immediately after school

- Going to uni straight after school is the most popular post school pathway (38%), followed by taking a gap year (17%).
- 14% of survey respondents intend to commence an apprenticeship after completing school.
- 11% of students indicated they would work at a job immediately after school.

Students who signalled they want to take a gap year immediately after school were asked what they would like to do following their gap year:

What do you plan to do AFTER your gap year?
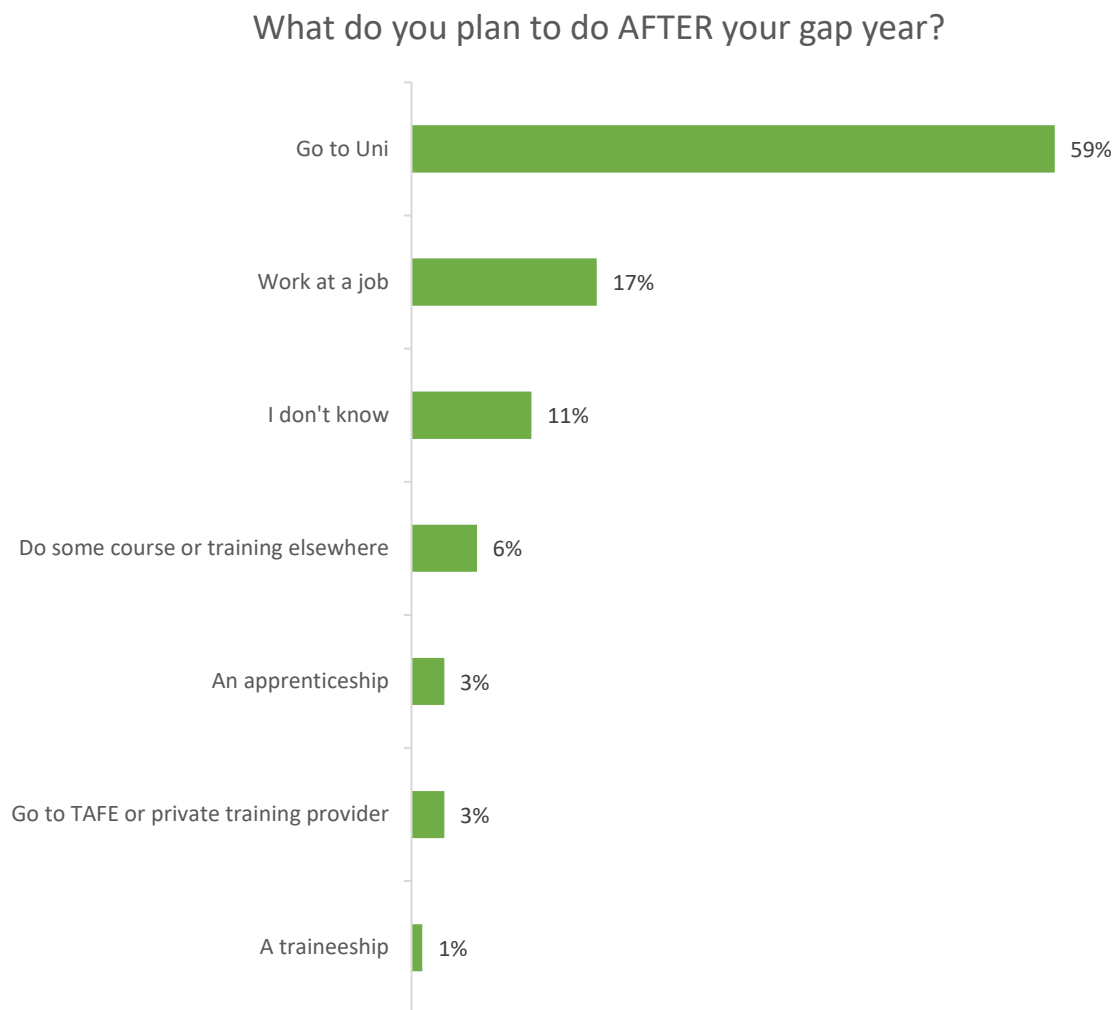
Figure 6 Post-school pathway plans after gap year

- Over half of students wanting to take a gap year intend to go to university afterwards (59%).
- 17% of respondents intend to work at a job following a gap year.
- 11% of students were unsure what they wanted to do after taking a break, suggesting they would use the gap year to work out their pathway plans.

Combining Figures 6 and 7 shows that:

- Almost half of survey participants intend to go to university either immediately after school or following a gap year (48%).
- Commencing an apprenticeship either immediately after school or after a gap year is the second most popular pathway (15%).

Investigating student post-school pathways per region offers some insights into preference patterns. It is important to remember here that the Southern region of Tasmania had the highest percentage of respondents (54%), and the Northern region had a relatively low percentage of participation (13%) despite there being many schools and students in that area. The figure below focuses on the five most popular post-school pathways.

Immediate plans after school (% by region)
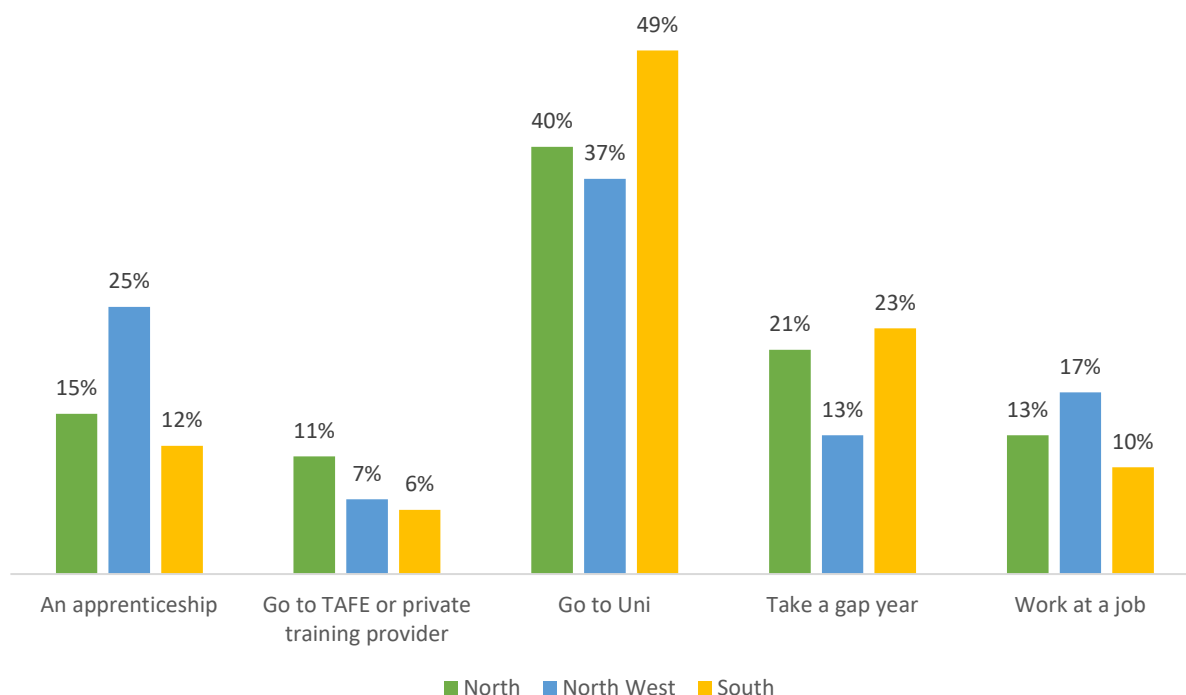
Figure 7 Immediate plans after school (by region)

- Almost half of the respondents from the South intend to go to university immediately after school (49%) with slightly fewer students from the North West region (37%) intending to do the same.
- By percentage, more student respondents from the North West (25%) area of Tasmania intend to pursue an apprenticeship immediately after school than student participants from the Northern (15%) or Southern (12%) regions of Tasmania.
- Across all regions, going to TAFE or another private training provider immediately after school was less popular than going to university or getting an apprenticeship, with more students in the North interested in this option (11%) than students in the North West (7%) or South (6%).
- With the exception of students in the North West (13%), similar percentages of students intend to take a gap year immediately after school with percentages equating to: 21% of respondents in the North, and 23% in the South.
- 13% of students in the North and 17% of respondents in the North West plan on working at a job after completing school.

Student preferences were disaggregated by year level to better understand how students at different stages of their senior secondary education plan their post school pathways. It is important to remember here that more Year 10 students completed the survey than Year 11 or 12 students.

Immediate plans after school (% by year level)
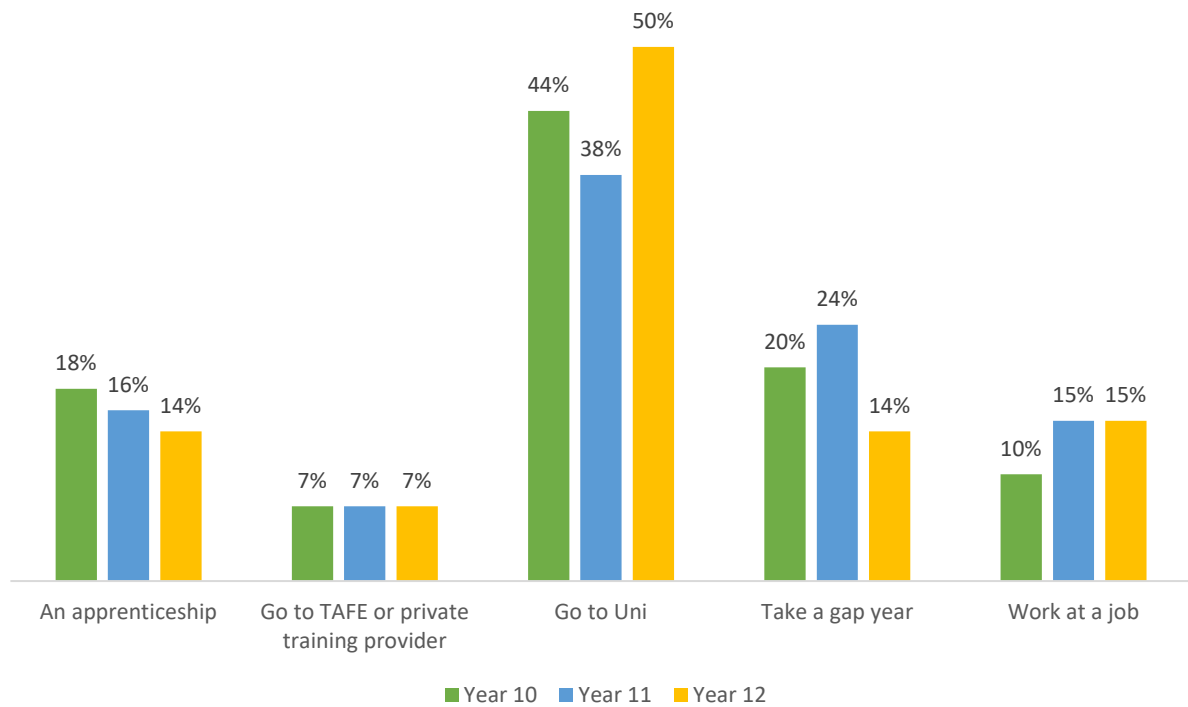
Figure 8 Immediate plans after school (by year level)

- Of the sample who intend to go immediately to university, a slightly higher percentage of Year 12 students intend to follow this pathway (50%) when compared with the Year 11 (38%) and Year 10 (44%) students who participated in the survey.
- There was some consistency across the grades for going to TAFE or another private training provider immediately after school, with 7% of respondents from each grade group intending to pursue this pathway.
- Slightly more Year 10 students were interested in pursuing an apprenticeship (18%) than Year 11 (16%) and 12 (14%) students.
- Year 11 students were most likely to indicate that they intended to take a gap year immediately after completing school (24%).

2.3 Industry preferences

Figure 10 below shows the industries or fields students were most keen to pursue after finishing school. This figure represents student preferences from across the entire sample. The industry/field examples were designed to be applicable across all pathways: university courses, vocational education and training, and employment. **Section 3** of this report provides this chart specific to students who chose one of the three most common pathways: University of Tasmania, attending another university interstate or overseas, or pursuing an apprenticeship.

Which of these fields best describes the type of course or job you plan to do after school (or after your gap year)?

Field	%
Health and Social Assistance (e.g. aged care, dentistry, medicine, nursing, nutritionist, psychologist, social work)	18%
Engineering (e.g. metal welding, drafting and technicians, mechanics, electrical engineering)	9%
Construction and Building (e.g. architecture, brick laying, carpentry, surveying)	8%
Creative Arts (e.g. fine arts, music, theatre)	8%
Education and Training (e.g. childcare, teacher's aide, teacher)	8%
Other Services (e.g. hairdresser, beautician, priest, cleaner)	6%
Sport (e.g. fitness trainer, professional athlete, sport science)	6%
Science and Maths (biology, mathematics, physics)	6%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing (e.g. agri-business, logging, cray fishing, veterinary nurse)	5%
Business and Administration (e.g. accounting, economics, office administration, receptionist, real estate)	4%
Defence Force and Police (e.g. army, navy, police force)	4%
IT & Digital Technologies (e.g. ICT support, graphic design, web development, software programming, ICT and…	4%
Tourism and Hospitality (e.g. tour guide, chef, hotel management, barista)	4%
Humanities and Social Sciences (e.g. Aboriginal Studies, language, sociology, history)	3%
Retail (e.g. shop assistant, shop manager)	3%
Law (e.g. lawyer, para-legal)	3%
Transport (e.g. taxi driver, pilot, truck driver)	1%

Figure 9 Preferred industry or field - all survey participants

- Across all post school pathways, student respondents most wanted to pursue further study or employment in the industry/field of Health and Social Assistance (18%).
- Engineering (9%), Construction and Building (8%), Creative Arts (8%) and Education and Training (8%) were the next four most popular fields/industries.
- Transport (1%) was the least popular post-school pathway field/industry.

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2.4 Location

Students were asked where they wanted to pursue their post-school pathway option and were given the choices of in Tasmania, interstate, or overseas. In this section, we present location preferences for both university and non-university pathways.

Focusing first on student location preferences for non-university pathways, we have combined the responses to the question "where will you do this option" from students who plan to undertake a non-university pathway immediately after school with responses from those students who plan to undertake a non-university pathway following a gap year, shown in Figure 12:

Where will you do this option (% all non-university pathways, both immediately after school and after gap year)

3%

11%

86%

■ In Tasmania   ■ Interstate   ■ Overseas
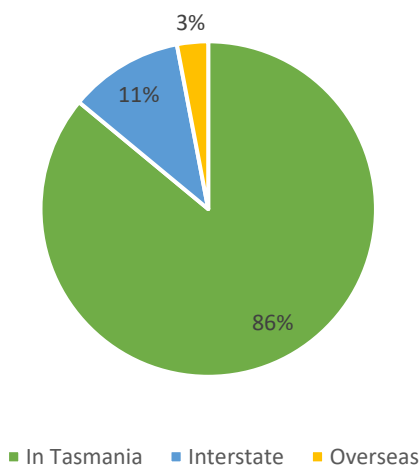
Figure 10 Preferred location for non-university pathways

- The majority of survey participants (86%) who are planning to pursue a non-university option, such as an apprenticeship or work at a job either immediately after school or following a gap year, intend to pursue this option in Tasmania.
- Following non-university pathway options overseas either immediately after school or following a gap year was the least popular location this subset of respondents (3%).

Students intending to pursue a university pathway, either immediately after school or after a gap year, were also asked their preferred location for this option. However, these students were asked which university they would like to attend rather than the generic location of their university pathway, partly because the University of Tasmania also has a campus interstate.

Where do you plan to go to Uni (% immediately after school)?
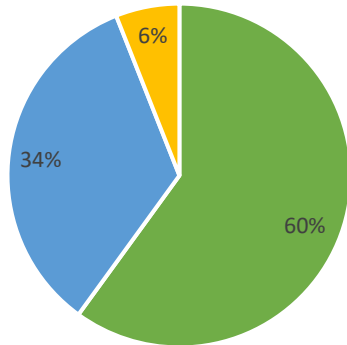
Where do you plan to go to Uni (% after a gap year)?
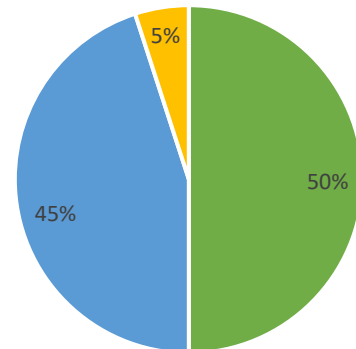
Figure 11 Preferred location for university pathway (immediately after school, or after a gap year)

- 60% of students who plan to go *straight* university following school intend to go to the University of Tasmania compared with 34% of students who plan to go to a different university interstate immediately after school.
- Students who intend to go to university straight after school were somewhat more likely to attend the University of Tasmania (60%) than those aiming for university after a gap year (50%)
- A consistent small proportion of students have their sights set on attending a university overseas (6% straight after school; 5% after a gap year).

Section 3: Insights into the most popular post-school pathways

Section 2 explored the pathways, industries, and preferred locations for Tasmanian senior secondary students in 2021. The most popular pathways were: University of Tasmania, university interstate, or an apprenticeship. In this section, we examine the three most popular pathways, for each focusing on:

- Student certainty;
- Reasons for choosing their preferred option; and
- Industry preferences within this option.

Section 3 concludes with a comparison of students' reasons between these three pathways.

3.1 Students planning to go to the University of Tasmania

3.1.1 Certainty

Students who intend to go to the University of Tasmania either immediately after school or following a gap year were asked how sure they felt about this option. Results are represented in Figure 13 below:

How sure are you about this option (% UTAS immediately after school)
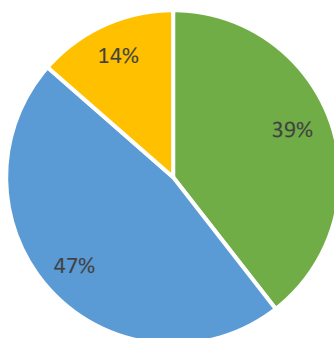
How sure are you about this option (% UTAS after gap year)
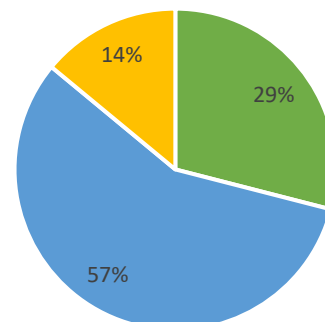
Figure 12 Certainty of pathway - UTAS (immediately after school, or after a gap year)

The above figures show that students who were *most* certain about attending the University of Tasmania were those students who indicated they would enrol immediately after school (as opposed to after a gap year).

- 39% of students planning on going to the University of Tasmania *immediately* after school were very sure about this plan. For students planning to go to the University of Tasmania following a gap year, 29% of respondents indicated they felt 'very sure' about this option.
- Almost half of students (47%) of students planning to go to the University of Tasmania immediately after school indicated they were somewhat sure about this pathway. Just over half (57%) of students intending to go to the University of Tasmania after a gap year indicated they were somewhat sure about this option.

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3.1.2 Reasons

Survey participants were presented with a list of possible reasons for choosing to go to the University of Tasmania and were asked to indicate how important these reasons were to them using a three-point Likert scale: agree [yes, important], neutral, disagree [not important].

In the figures below, responses from students wishing to go to the University of Tasmania immediately after school have been combined with responses from students wishing to attend the University of Tasmania following a gap year.

Results have been grouped into five categories represented by five diagrams:

- Practical and logistical;
- Perceived value and worth;
- Long-term and financial;
- Personal interests, strengths, and readiness; and
- Social reasons.

Across these five sets, the top reasons (80% or more agree) for the University of Tasmania include:

- I am interested in this option (90%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness]
- It will give me a good career pathway (88%) [long-term and financial]
- I will be happy doing this option (86%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness]
- It's a safe environment (85%) [social]
- I have what it takes to be successful in this option (83%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness]
- It's an enjoyable environment (85%) [social]

In contrast, least agreement (30% or less agree) was with these reasons:

- It's an easy option after the stress of Year 12 (25%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness]
- It will mean I can enjoy a 'big city' lifestyle (21%) [social]
- It will enable me to move out of home (28%) [practical and logistical]
- It won't be too hard (29%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness]

When choosing to go to the University of Tasmania it is important to me that...**practical and logistical**

	Agree (yes, important)	Neutral	Disagree (not important)
It's easy to find accommodation near this option	43%	45%	12%
It will enable me to move out of home	28%	49%	23%
It will enable me to stay in Tasmania	55%	36%	9%
It will enable me to live at home	45%	38%	17%
I can do it online	34%	48%	18%
Transport to this option is easy	78%	20%	2%
It's in a location that is easy to get to	73%	24%	3%
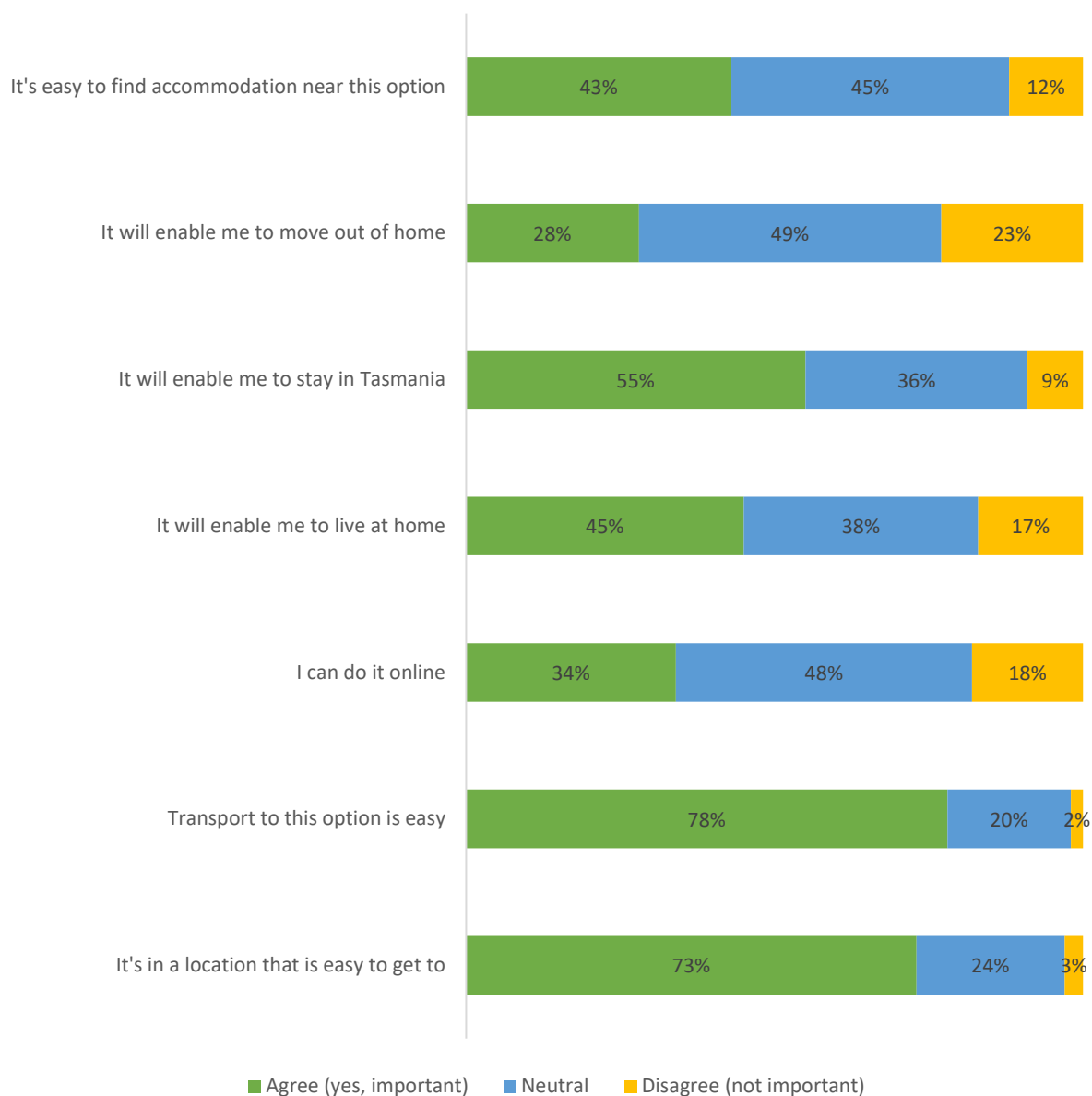
Figure 13 Reasons for choosing UTAS - practical and logistical

- Ease of access to campus (73%) including easy transport options (78%) were important logistical considerations for students choosing to study at the University of Tasmania as their preferred post-school pathway.
- Students intending to go to the University of Tasmania were also motivated to pursue this option because it enabled them to stay in Tasmania (55%).
- 45% of respondents agreed that it was important that this option enabled them to continue to live at home.
- Availability of accommodation (43%) was another influencing factor for students intending to pursue their tertiary qualification at the University of Tasmania.

When choosing the University of Tasmania it is important to me that...**value and worth**
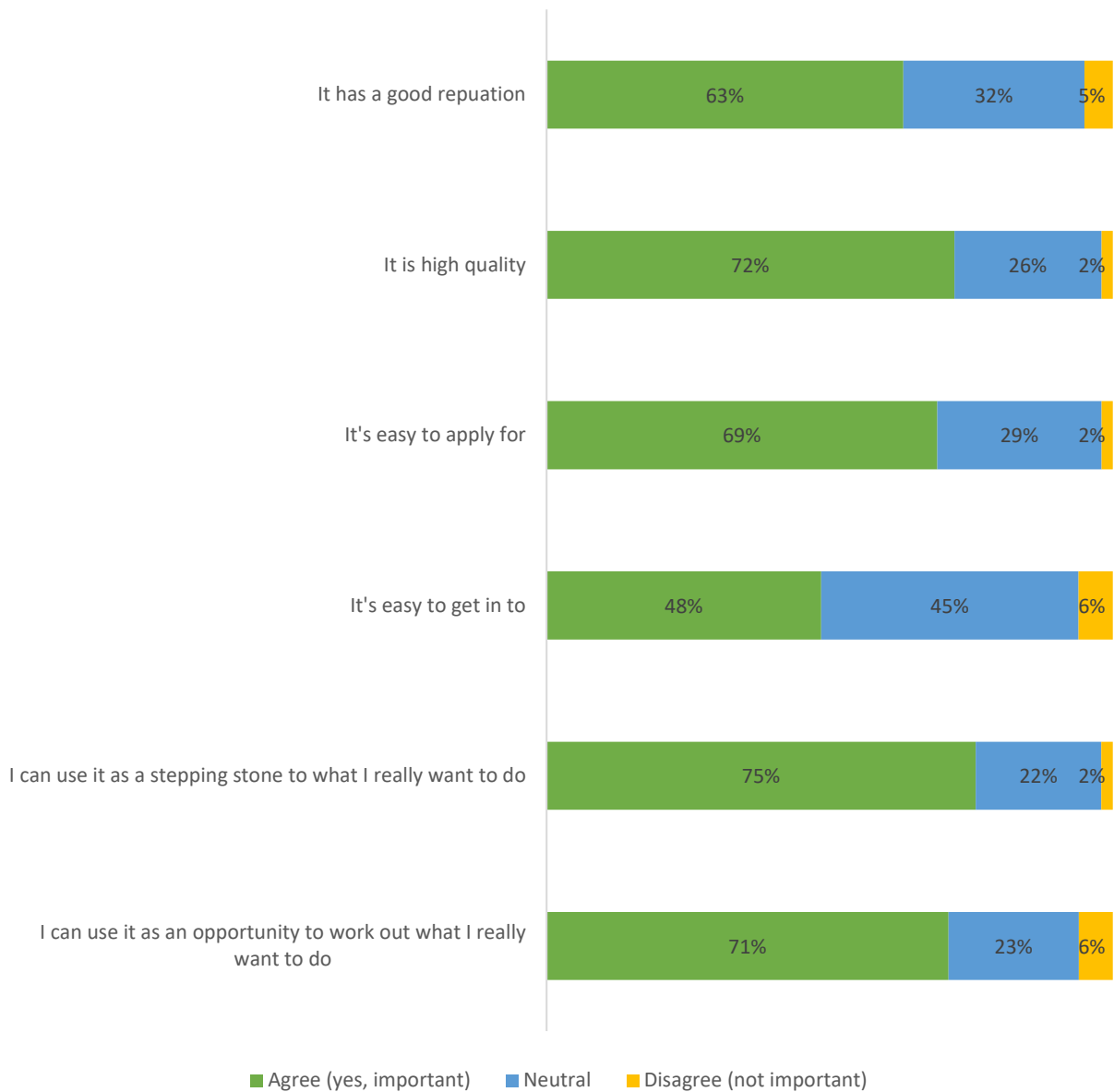
Figure 14 Reasons for choosing UTAS - value and worth

- Two important reasons why students chose the University of Tasmania for study were that they could "use it as a stepping stone" to work out what they really wanted to do (72%) and that they could "use it as an opportunity" to work out what they really want to do (72%).
- Students also indicated that important reasons for choosing the University of Tasmania included quality (67%), ease of application process (66%), and reputation (60%).
- Ease of entry (i.e., acceptance rate) was not an important reason why students intended to study at the University of Tasmania (46%).

When choosing the University of Tasmania it is important to me that....**long-term and financial**

	Agree (yes, important)	Neutral	Disagree (not important)
I can get a scholarship to do this option	44%	44%	11%
It's affordable for my parents/caregivers	58%	32%	10%
It's affordable for me	72%	22%	6%
There are lots of jobs available for this option	69%	27%	4%
It will lead to a job that has a high income	57%	37%	6%
It will give me a good career pathway	88%	11%	1%
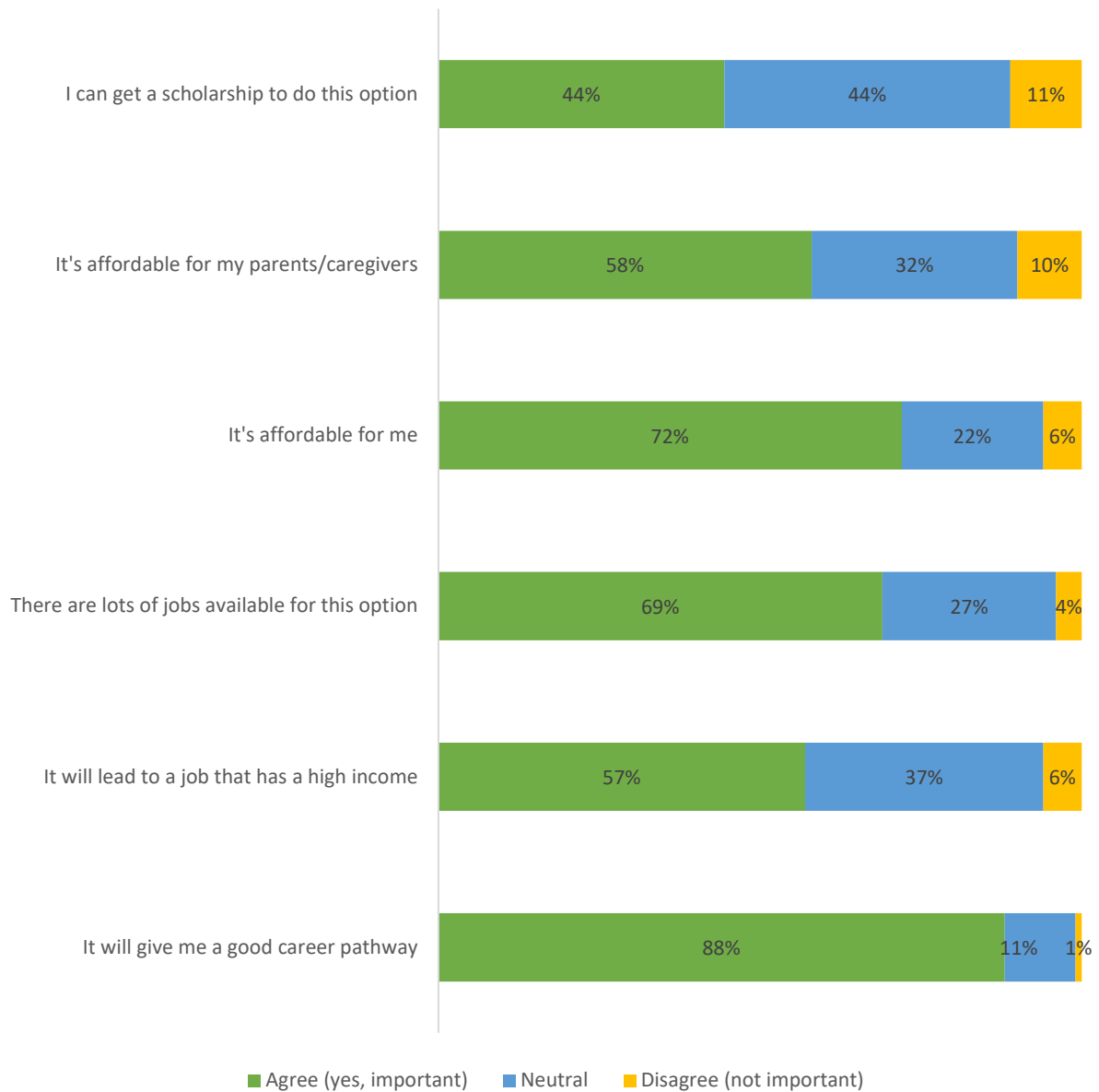
Figure 15 Reasons for choosing UTAS - long-term and financial

- The opportunity to pursue a good career pathway (88%) was a key reason why students chose the University of Tasmania as their preferred post-school pathway.
- Affordability of study was another important reason for survey respondents choosing to study at the University of Tasmania (72%).
- Students rated long term financial stability, like the potential for a good career pathway (88%) or high earning prospects (57%) as important reasons to study at the University of Tasmania.
- Long-term financial concerns tended to be more important than immediate and short-term financial concerns like scholarship opportunities (44%) or affordability of university study for parents/caregivers (58%).

When choosing the University of Tasmania it is important to me that...**interests, strengths and personal readiness**

	Agree (yes, important)	Neutral	Disagree (not important)
I will be happy doing this option	86%	13%	0%
It's an easy option after the stress of Year 12	25%	42%	33%
It won't be too hard	29%	50%	21%
It's 'hands on'	48%	45%	6%
I already have experience in this option	46%	44%	9%
I have what it takes to be successful in this option	83%	17%	0%
It's something that I am good at	78%	21%	0%
I am interested in this option	90%	10%	0%

■ Agree (yes, important)　■ Neutral　■ Disagree (not important)
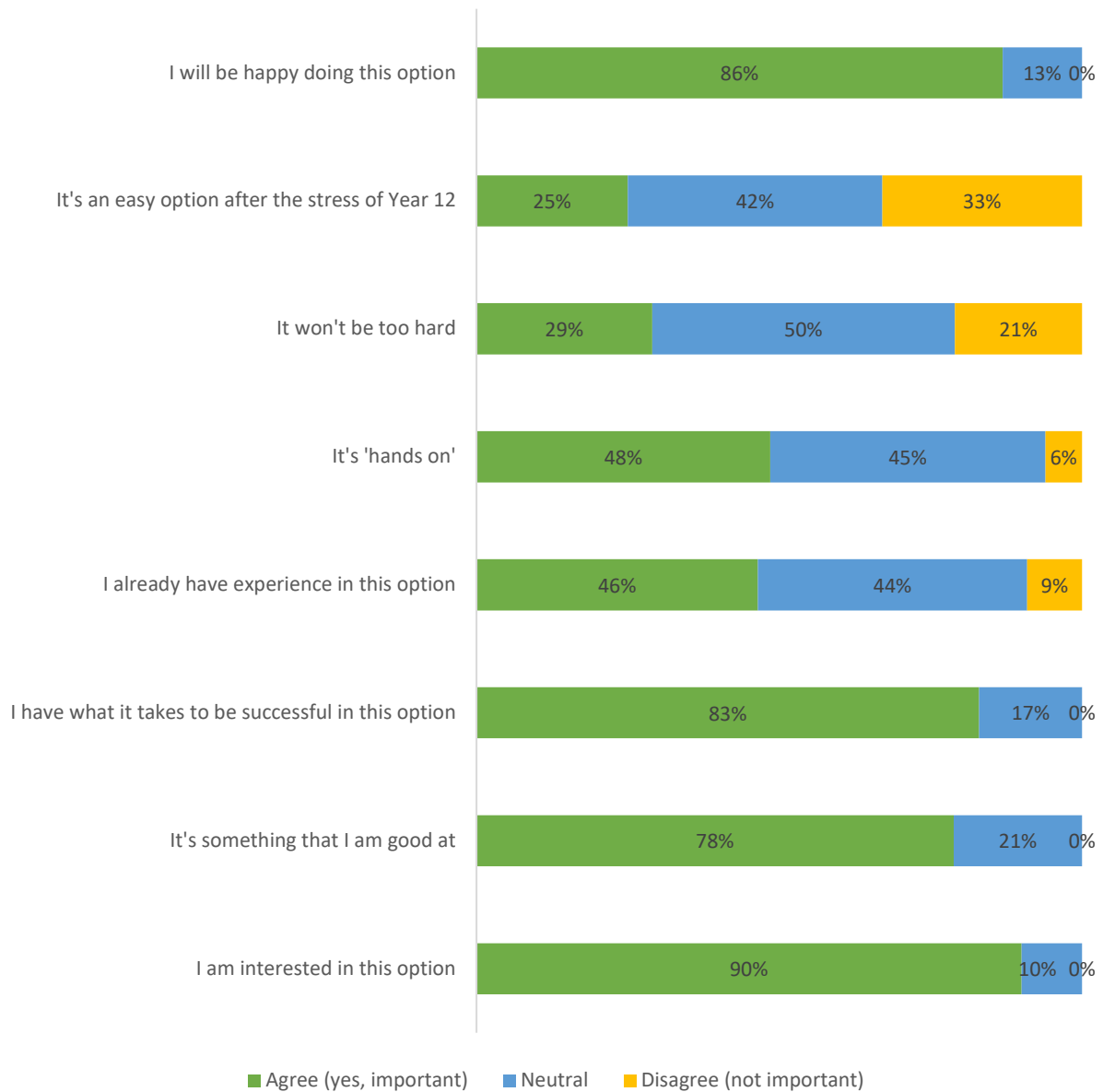
Figure 16 Reasons for choosing UTAS - interests, strengths and personal readiness

- Students choosing to study at the University of Tasmania agreed that it was important to them, in their decision-making process, that they were interested in their preferred pathway option (90%) and that doing this option would make them happy (86%).
- It was also important to students choosing the University of Tasmania that they felt like their post-school pathway was something they were good at (78%) and that they felt that they "have what it takes to be successful" in that option (83%).
- Survey respondents did not agree it was important that the University of Tasmania was an "easy option after the stress of Year 12" (25%) or that it would not "be too hard" (29%).

When choosing the University of Tasmania it is important to me that... **social reasons**
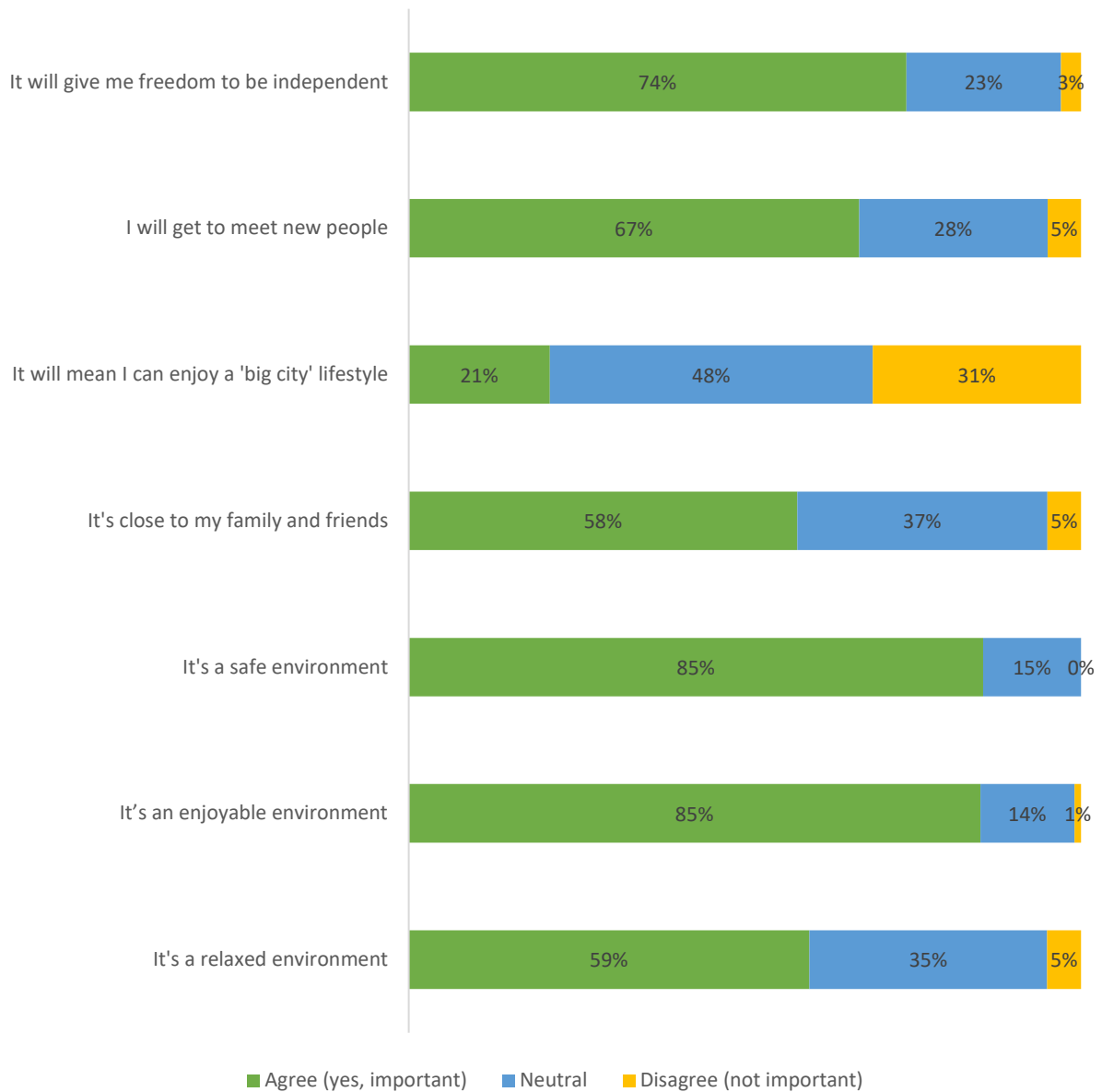
Figure 17 Reasons for choosing UTAS - social

- The opportunity to study in an enjoyable (85%) and safe (85%) environment were important reasons why students intended to study at the University of Tasmania.
- The freedom to be independent (74%) as well as the potential to meet new people (67%) were also important reasons for future students choosing this option.
- Students intending to study at the University of Tasmania disagreed that it was important that the university offered a "big city life" (31%) preferring a relaxed environment (59%).

3.1.3 Industry preferences

Overall industry preferences were shown in Section 2.2. Here, results are filtered to students planning on going to the University of Tasmania either after school or following a gap year.

Industry preferences for students planning to go to the University of Tasmania either immediately, or after a gap year

Industry	%
Health and Social Assistance (e.g. aged care, dentistry, medicine, nursing, nutritionist, psychologist, social work)	28%
Education and Training (e.g. childcare, teacher's aide, teacher)	13%
Science and Maths (biology, mathematics, physics)	9%
Engineering (e.g. metal welding, drafting and technicians, mechanics, electrical engineering)	8%
Creative Arts (e.g. fine arts, music, theatre)	7%
Humanities and Social Sciences (e.g. Aboriginal Studies, language, sociology, history)	6%
IT & Digital Technologies (e.g. ICT support, graphic design, web development, software programming, ICT and…)	6%
Sport (e.g. fitness trainer, professional athlete, sport science)	6%
Law (e.g. lawyer, para-legal)	5%
Construction and Building (e.g. architecture, brick laying, carpentry, surveying)	3%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing (e.g. agri-business, logging, cray fishing, veterinary nurse)	2%
Business and Administration (e.g. accounting, economics, office administration, receptionist, real estate)	2%
Defence Force and Police (e.g. army, navy, police force)	2%
Other Services (e.g. hairdresser, beautician, priest, cleaner)	2%
Unsure	1%
Tourism and Hospitality (e.g. tour guide, chef, hotel management, barista)	0.30%

Figure 18 Preferred industry or field - respondents planning to go to UTAS

- Consistent with results in Section 2.2, Health and Social Assistance was the most popular industry preference for students planning on the University of Tasmania (28%).
- Education and training (13%), Science and Maths (9%) and Engineering (8%) were the three next most popular industries/fields students intended to pursue with their University of Tasmania studies.

3.2 Students planning on going to a different university interstate or overseas

3.2.1 Certainty

Attending another university either interstate or overseas was the second most popular post-school pathway for survey respondents. Like in the previous section, students who indicated they planned to pursue this pathway were asked how sure they were about this option.

More students plan to attend another university interstate than another university overseas (for a breakdown of student location preferences, see section 2.3).

How sure are you about this option: a different uni interstate or overseas (% immediately after school)

How sure are you about this option: a different uni interestate or overseas (% after a gap year)
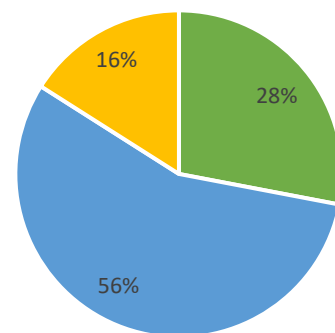
Figure 19 Certainty of pathway - interstate (immediately after school, or after a gap year)

- 37% of students intending to study at another university either interstate or overseas indicated they were very sure about this option.
- Uncertainty about studying at another university either interstate or overseas slightly increased for students intending to first take a gap year with 28% of this subset very sure about their pathway plan.
- When compared with student certainty for attending the University of Tasmania, survey participants expressed similar levels of certainty for attending a university interstate or overseas as they did for attending University of Tasmania. This was consistent for both immediately after school and following a gap year.

3.2.2 Reasons

Survey participants were presented with a list of possible reasons for preferring to go to another university either interstate or overseas. Like in section 3.1.2, participants were asked to indicate whether these reasons were important to their post-school pathway decisions. Participants responded to prompts against a three-point Likert scale: agree [yes, important], neutral, disagree [not important]. Reponses to going to another university interstate or overseas either immediately following school or after a gap year have been combined in the figures below.

Results have been grouped into five categories represented by five diagrams:

- Practical and logistical;
- Perceived value and worth;
- Long-term and financial;
- Personal interests, strengths and readiness; and
- Social reasons.

Across these five sets, the top reasons (80% or more agree) for choosing an interstate university include:

- I am interested in this option (93%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness].
- I will be happy doing this option (91%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness].
- It will give me a good career pathway (91%) [long-term and financial].
- It will give me freedom to be independent (82%) [social].
- It is high quality (87%) [value and worth].
- It's a safe environment (86%) [social].
- It's an enjoyable environment (86%) [social].
- I have what it takes to be successful in this option (86%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness].

In contrast, least agreement (20% or less agree) was with these reasons:

- It's an easy option after the stress of Year 12 (12%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness].
- It won't be too hard (13%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness]
- It's easy to get in to (20%) [value and worth].

When choosing to go to a different university interstate or overseas, it is important for me that... **practical and logistical**

	Agree (yes, important)	Neutral	Disagree (not important)
It's easy to find accommodation near this option	66%	31%	3%
It will enable me to move out of home	63%	26%	11%
It will enable me to leave Tasmania	62%	30%	8%
I can do it online	22%	43%	35%
Transport to this option is easy	67%	27%	5%
It's in a location that is easy to get to	50%	42%	8%

■ Agree (yes, important)   ■ Neutral   ■ Disagree (not important)
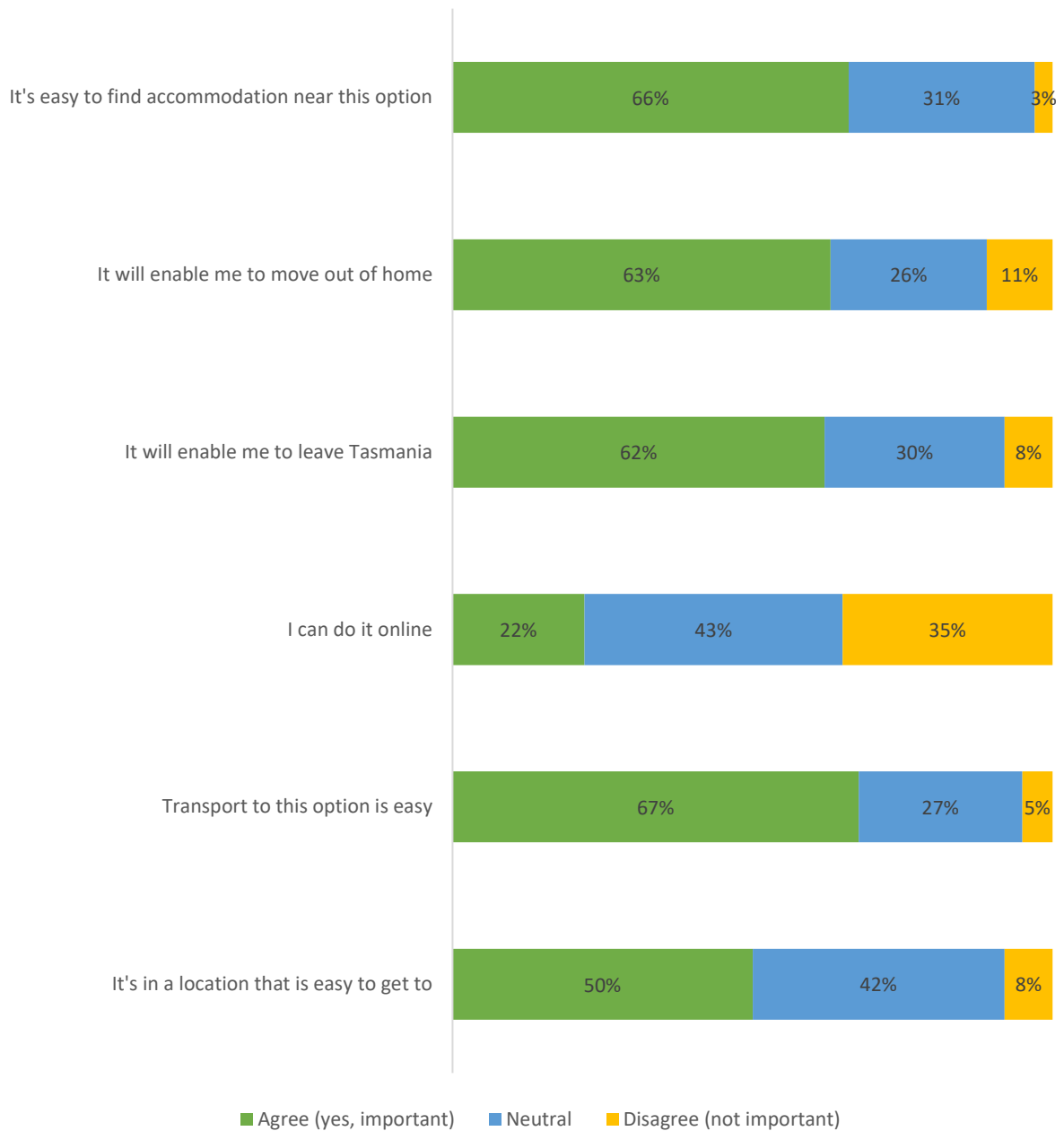
Figure 20 Reasons for choosing another university interstate or overseas - practical and logistical

- Availability of accommodation options was an important factor for students choosing to go to a different university interstate or overseas (66%).
- Transport was another important reason why this group of students chose another university interstate or overseas (67%).
- The opportunity to leave Tasmania (62%) and move out of home (63%) were important reasons why students chose to study at another university either interstate or overseas.
- Online study options were the least important factor for this group of students (35%).

When choosing to go to a different university interstate or overseas, it is important for me that... **value and worth**

	Agree (yes, important)	Neutral	Disagree (not important)
I can use it as an opportunity to work out what I really want to do	69%	26%	5%
I can use it as a stepping stone to what I really want to do	74.50%	22.50%	3%
It's easy to get in to	20%	62%	18%
It's easy to apply for	48.50%	39%	7.50%
It is high quality	87%	13%	0
It has a good reputation	75%	24%	0.50%

■ Agree (yes, important) ■ Neutral ■ Disagree (not important)
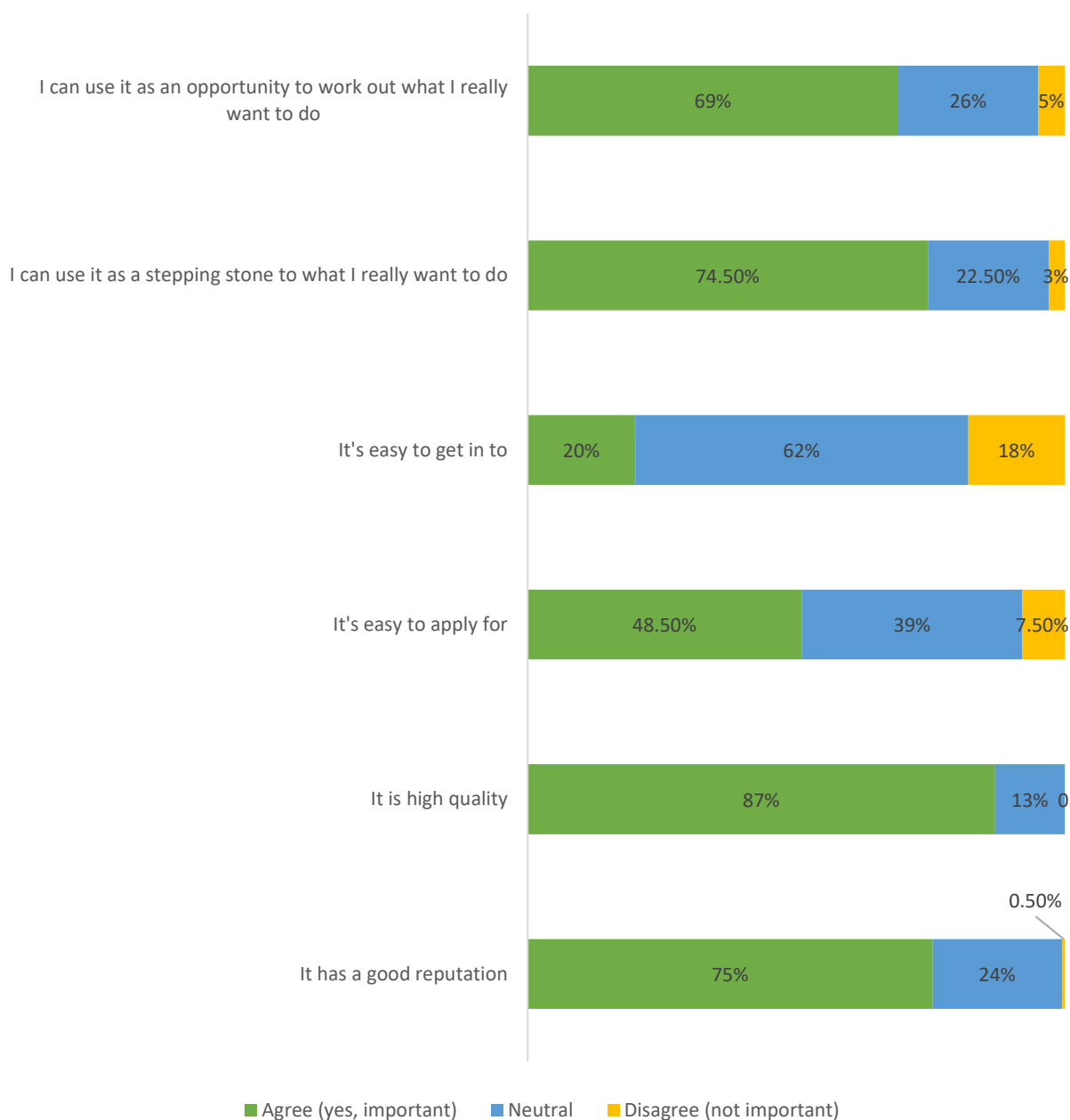
Figure 21 Reasons for choosing another university interstate or overseas - value and worth

- Institutional quality (87%) and reputation (75%) were the most important reasons why students chose to study interstate and overseas.
- Students did not agree that being "easy to get in to" was an important reason why they chose another university interstate or overseas (18% disagreed).
- Important reasons why students chose to study at another university either interstate or overseas included being able to use "it as a stepping stone" to work out what they really wanted to do (74.5%).

When choosing to go to a different university interstate or overseas, it is important for me that... **long-term and financial**
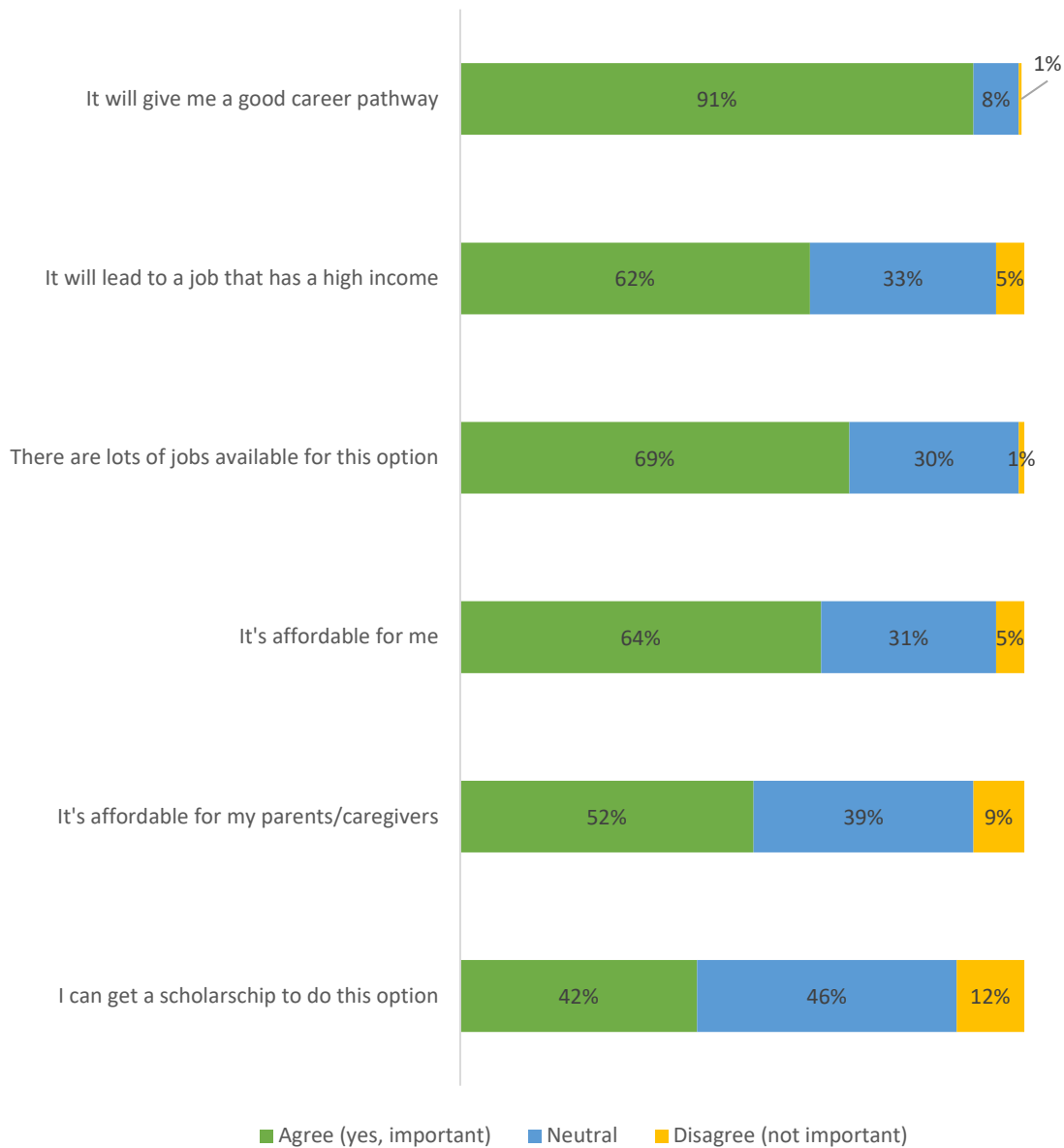
Figure 22 Reasons for choosing another university interstate or overseas - long-term and financial

- An important reason why students chose to study at another university interstate or overseas was that it would give them a "good career pathway" (91%).
- Scholarship opportunities were the least important reason why students chose another university interstate or overseas with less than half, 42%, agreeing scholarship opportunities were an important reason why they chose that university.
- Important reasons this group chose this option included affordability for themselves (64%) and for their parents/caregivers (62%).

When choosing to go to a different university interstate or overseas, it is important for me that... **interests, strengths and personal readiness**
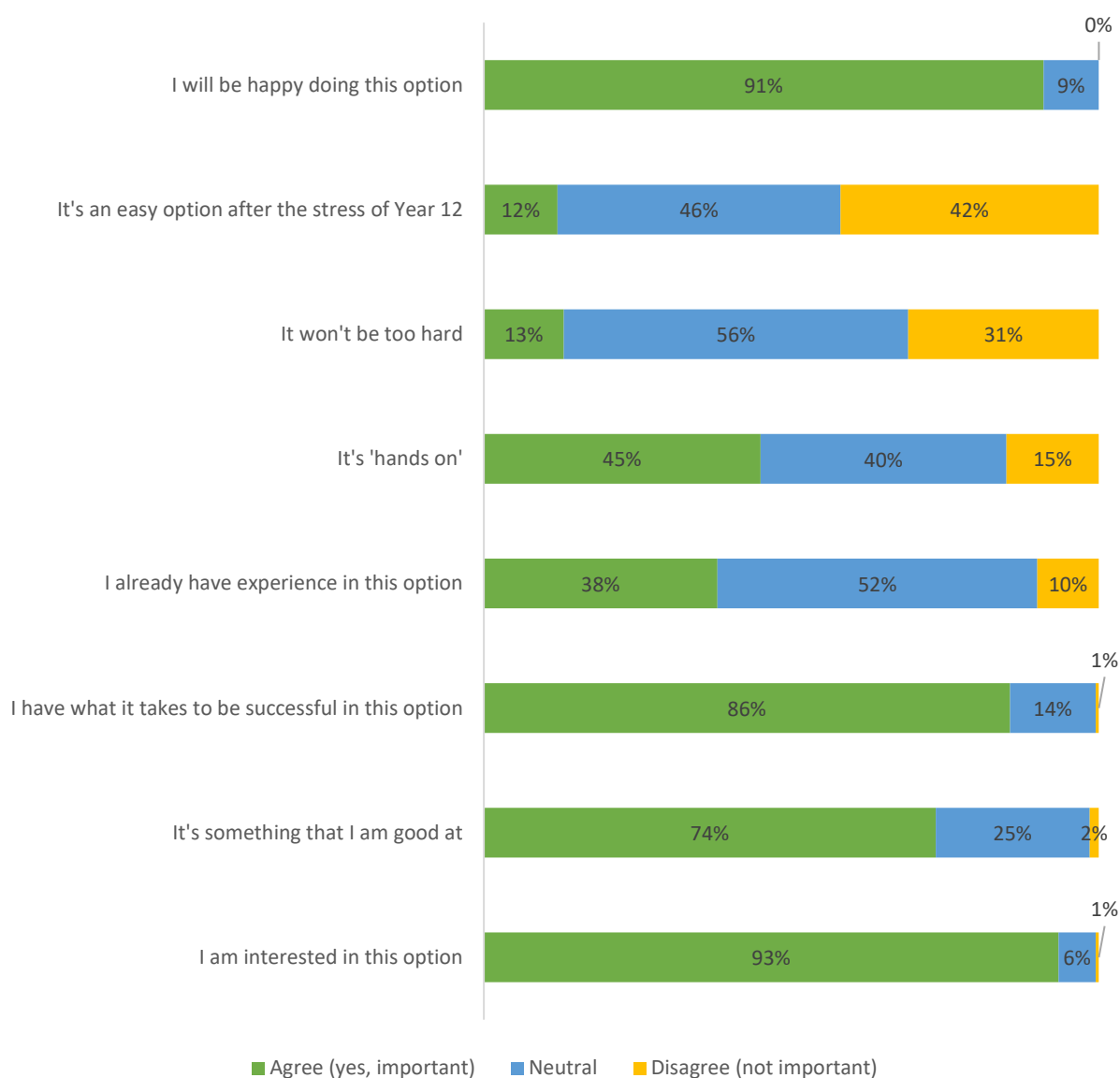
Figure 23 Reasons for choosing another university interstate or overseas - interests, strengths and personal readiness

- Two important reasons why students chose to pursue tertiary study either overseas or interstate were that they would be happy doing that option (91%) and that they were interested in that option (93%).
- Students also made their university study selection based on self-belief: it was important to survey participants that they felt like they were capable of succeeding in their preferred option (86%).

When choosing to go to a different university interstate or overseas, it is important for me that... **social reasons**

Statement	Agree (yes, important)	Neutral	Disagree (not important)
It will give me freedom to be independent	82%	15%	3%
I will get to meet new people	74%	22%	4%
It will mean I can enjoy a 'big city' lifestyle	41%	39%	20%
It's close to my family and friends	21%	55%	24%
It's a safe environment	86%	12%	2%
It's an enjoyable environment	86%	12%	2%
It's a relaxed environment	40%	49%	11%

■ Agree (yes, important)　■ Neutral　■ Disagree (not important)

Figure 24 Reasons for choosing another university interstate or overseas - social

- Important social reasons why students intended to study at another university interstate or overseas included the offer of studying in a safe (86%) and enjoyable (86%) environment.
- Freedom to be independent (82%) and the opportunity to meet new people (74%) were important reasons why students chose another university interstate or overseas.

3.2.3 Industry Preferences

Like in Section 2.2, students seeking to study at university overseas or interstate were asked what industry or field they wanted to pursue. Responses to attending another university either immediately after school or following a gap year have been combined in the following figure:

Industry preferences for students planning to go to a different university interstate or overseas

Industry/Field	Percentage
Health and Social Assistance (e.g. aged care, dentistry, medicine, nursing, nutritionist, psychologist, social work)	26%
Creative Arts (e.g. fine arts, music, theatre)	12%
Science and Maths (biology, mathematics, physics)	8%
Sport (e.g. fitness trainer, professional athlete, sport science)	8%
Business and Administration (e.g. accounting, economics, office administration, receptionist, real estate)	6%
Defence Force and Police (e.g. army, navy, police force)	6%
Engineering (e.g. metal welding, drafting and technicians, mechanics, electrical engineering)	5%
Tourism and Hospitality (e.g. tour guide, chef, hotel management, barista)	5%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing (e.g. agri-business, logging, cray fishing, veterinary nurse)	4%
Education and Training (e.g. childcare, teacher's aide, teacher)	3%
Law (e.g. lawyer, para-legal)	3%
Humanities and Social Sciences (e.g. Aboriginal Studies, language, sociology, history)	3%
IT & Digital Technologies (e.g. ICT support, graphic design, web development, software programming, ICT and…)	3%
Construction and Building (e.g. architecture, brick laying, carpentry, surveying)	3%
Other Services (e.g. hairdresser, beautician, priest, cleaner)	3%
Retail (e.g. shop assistant, shop manager)	1%
Transport (e.g. taxi driver, pilot, truck driver)	1%

Figure 25 Preferred industry or field - respondents planning to go to a university interstate or overseas

- Health and Social Assistance was the most important sector for students intending to study at another university either interstate or overseas (26%).
- The second and third most popular industries/fields respectively were Creative Arts (12%) and Science and Maths, and Sport (both 8%).

3.3 Students planning on commencing an apprenticeship

3.3.1 Certainty

The third most popular post-school pathway was commencing an apprenticeship. Respondents who indicated that they wanted to commence an apprenticeship, either immediately after school or following a gap year, were asked how sure they were about their plan.

Certainty of commencing an apprenticeship (% immediately after school)

Certainty of commencing an apprenticeship (% after a gap year)
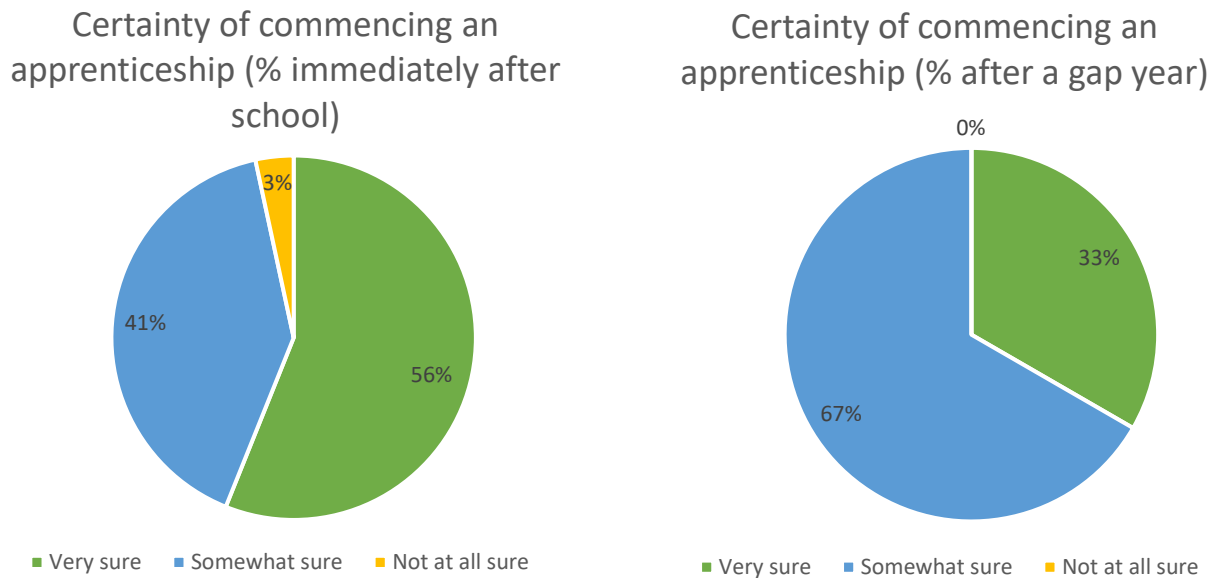
Figure 26 Certainty of pathway - apprenticeship (immediately after school or after a gap year)

- Over half of students who want to follow an apprenticeship pathway immediately after school were very sure about this option (56%).
- Most students who want to take a gap year before commencing an apprenticeship still indicated they were somewhat sure about this option (67%).

3.3.2 Reasons

Survey participants were presented with a list of possible reasons for choosing an apprenticeship and were asked to indicate whether these reasons were important to them against a three-point Likert scale: agree [yes, important], neutral, disagree [not important]. Responses from students wishing to commence an apprenticeship immediately after completing school have been combined with the responses of students planning on taking a gap year before starting an apprenticeship.

Results have been grouped into five categories represented by five diagrams:

- Practical and logistical;
- Perceived value and worth;
- Long-term and financial;
- Personal interests, strengths and readiness; and
- Social reasons.

Across these five sets, the top reasons (70% or more agree) for choosing employment include:

- It has a good reputation (70%) [value and worth].
- It will give me a good career pathway (79%) [long-term and financial].
- I will be happy doing this option (80%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness].
- It's 'hands on' (83%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness].
- I am interested in this option (87%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness].
- I have what it takes to be successful in this option (73%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness].

In contrast, least agreement (30% or less agree) was with these reasons:

- It will mean I can enjoy a 'big city' lifestyle (17%) [social].
- It will enable me to leave Tasmania (29%) [practical and logistical].
- I can do it online (9%) [practical and logistical].
- It won't be too hard (27%) [interests, strengths and personal readiness].

When choosing to do an apprenticeship, it is important for me that... **practical and logistical**
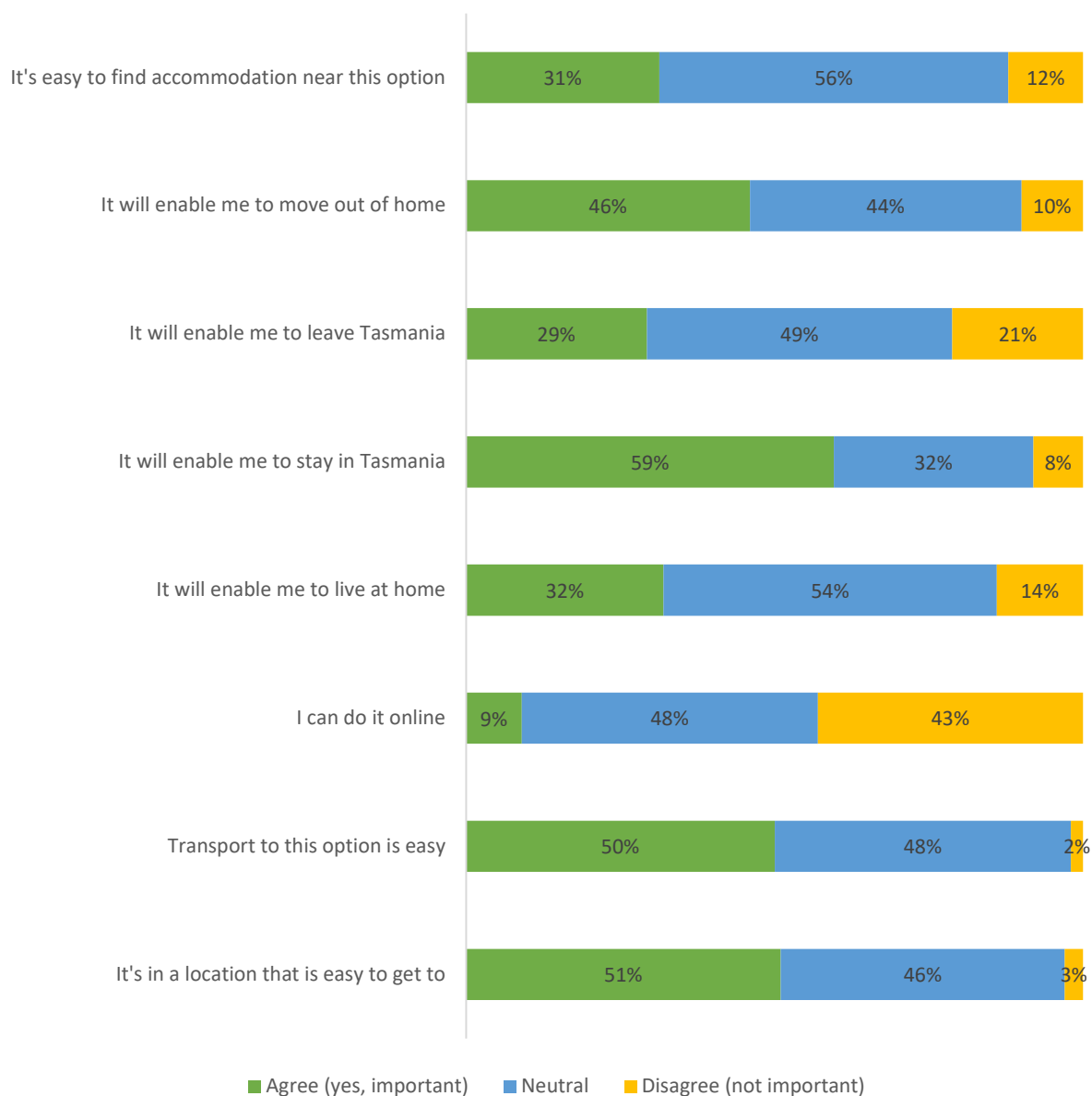
Figure 27 Reasons for choosing an apprenticeship - practical and logistical

- Staying in Tasmania was an important reason why students chose to pursue an apprenticeship (59%).
- Important reasons why students intended to do an apprenticeship included "it's in a location that is easy to get to" (51%) and "transport to this option is easy" (50%).
- Students were also motivated to do an apprenticeship because it enabled them to move out of home (46%).

When choosing to do an apprenticeship, it is important for me that...**value and worth**
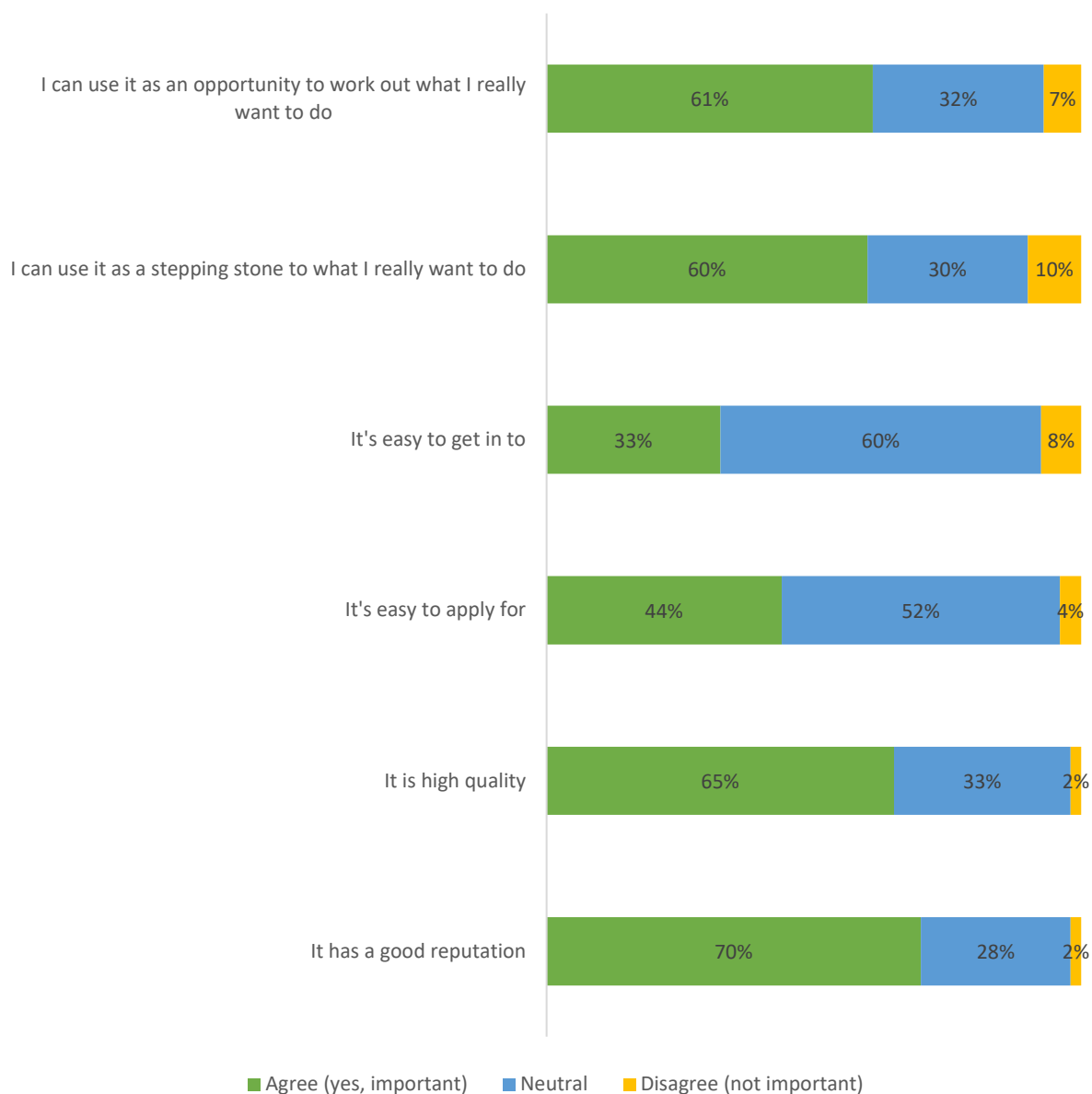
Figure 28 Reasons for choosing an apprenticeship - value and worth

- Important reasons why students chose an apprenticeship pathway included it had a good reputation (70%) and that the apprenticeship was of high quality (65%).
- Two other important reasons for students to pursue an apprenticeship were "I can use it as a stepping stone" (60%) and "I can use it as an opportunity" (61%) to work out what they really want to do.

When choosing to do an apprenticeship, it is important for me that...**long-term and financial**
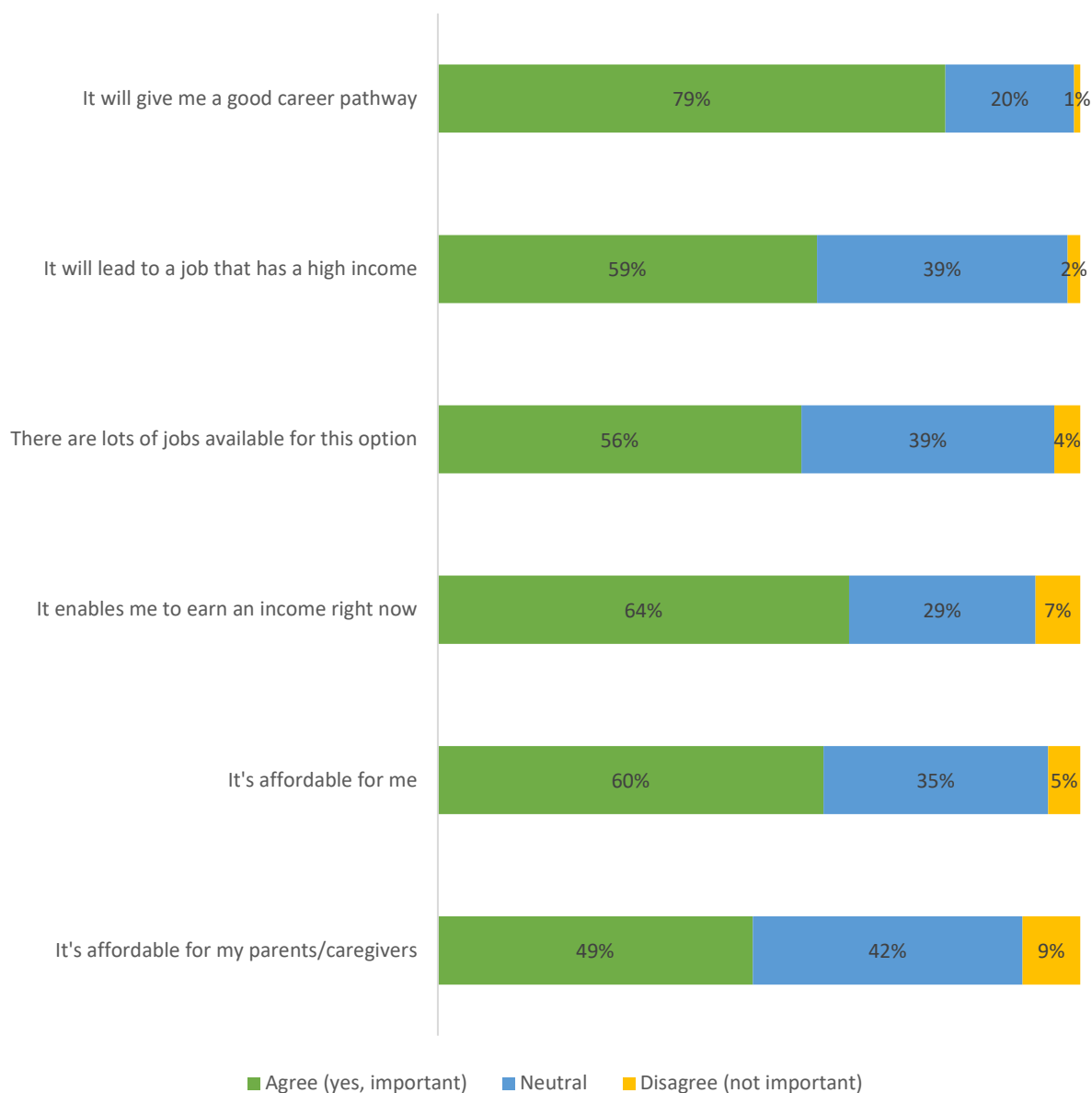
Figure 29 Reasons for choosing an apprenticeship - long-term and financial

- Long-term financial concerns were important reasons why students wanted to do an apprenticeship with 59% agreeing it was important that this option would lead to a job with a high income. Students agreed it was important that an apprenticeship offered them a good career pathway (79%).
- The opportunity to earn an income immediately was another important reason why students chose this option (64%) with 60% agreeing that it was important that the apprenticeship was an affordable option for them.

When choosing to do an apprentieship, it is important to me that...**interests, strengths and personal readiness**
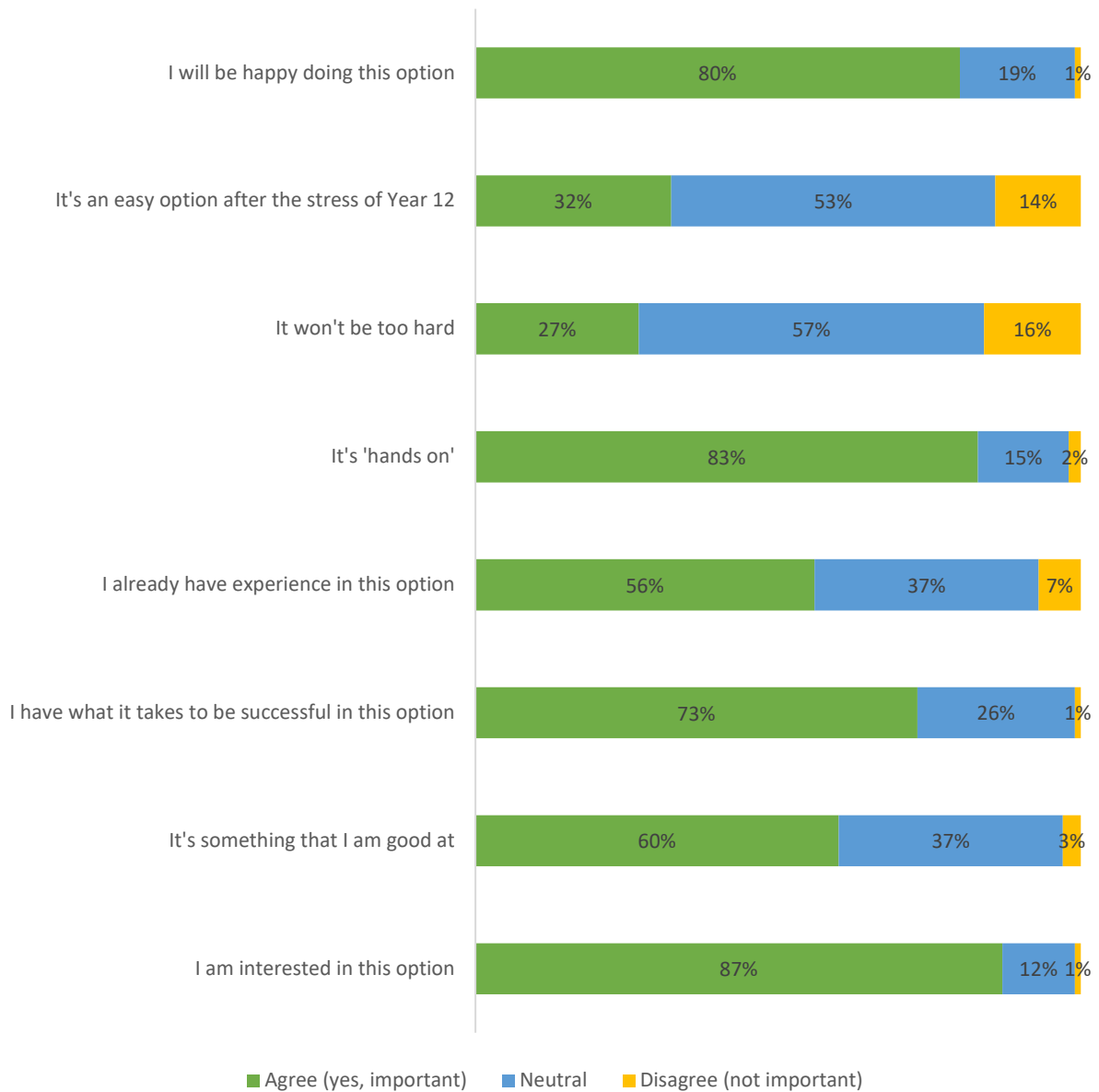
Figure 30 Reasons for choosing an apprenticeship - interests, strengths and personal readiness

- Personal interest (87%) and the opportunity to have a 'hands on' career (83%) were important reasons why students wanted to commence an apprenticeship.
- Perceived future happiness doing an apprenticeship was another important reason why students wanted to do this option (80%).

When choosing to do an apprentieship, it is important to me that...**social reasons**

	Agree (yes, important)	Neutral	Disagree (not important)
It will give me freedom to be independent	67%	30%	2%
I will get to meet new people	67%	29%	3%
It will mean I can enjoy a 'big city' lifestyle	17%	48%	35%
It's close to my family and friends	38%	50%	11%
It's a safe environment	49%	46%	5%
It's an enjoyable environment	69%	30%	1%
It's a relaxed environment	32%	61%	7%
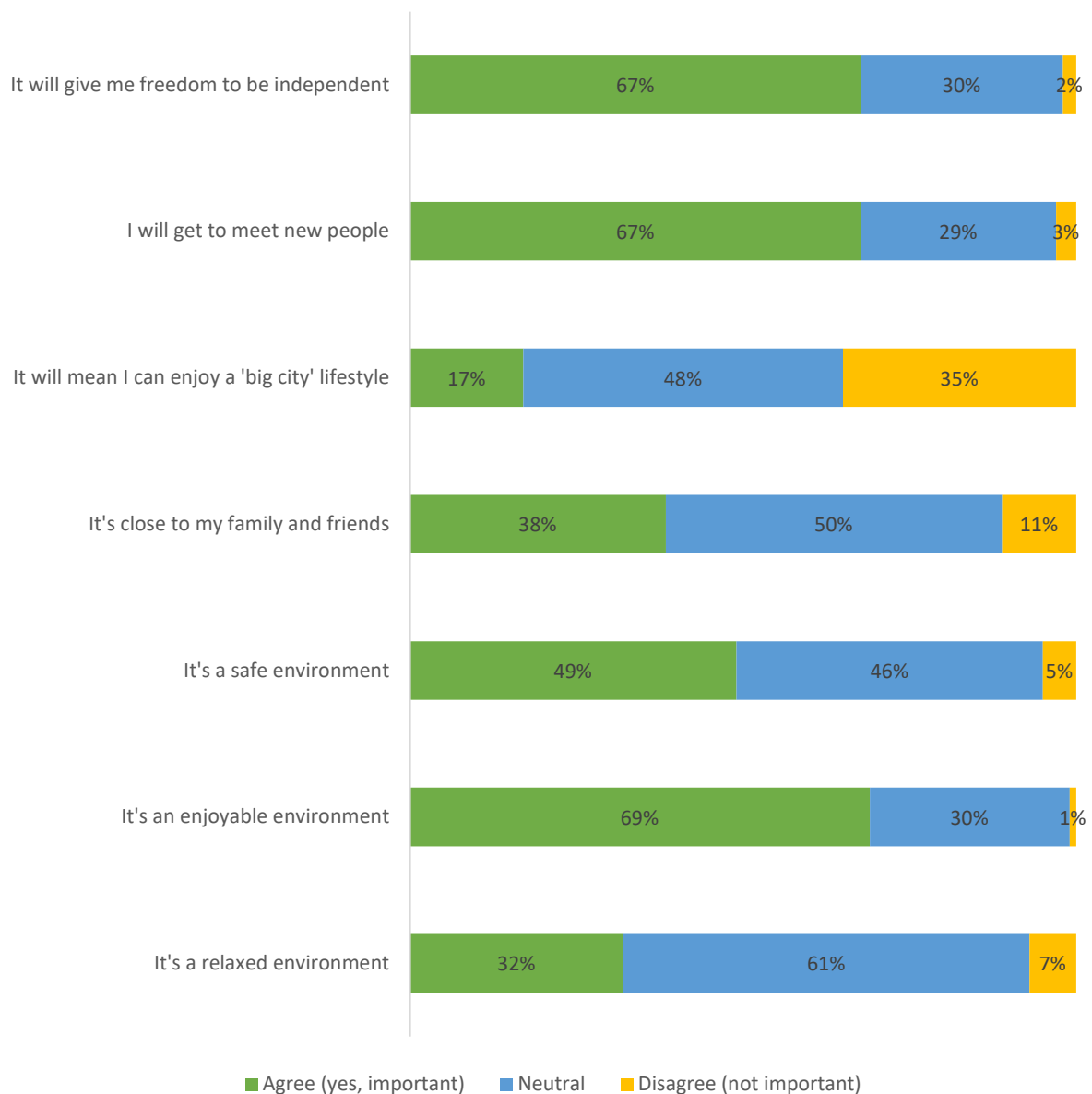
Figure 31 Reasons for choosing an apprenticeship - social

- The opportunity to work in an enjoyable environment was important to students seeking to pursue an apprenticeship (69%).
- Freedom to be independent (67%), and the opportunity meet new people (67%), were also important reasons to commence an apprenticeship.
- Students interested in an apprenticeship pathway were least interested in enjoying a 'big city' lifestyle (17% agreed a big city life was an important reason to choose an apprenticeship).

3.3.3 Industry preferences

Students who selected the apprenticeship option were asked to indicate their industry preference for this pathway. Results for commencing this either immediately after school or after a gap year have been combined. Please note that industries that received 0 have been deleted from the figure below because these are not fields where apprenticeships are typically pursued (i.e., Humanities stream).

Industry preferences for students planning to commence an apprenticeship either immediately, or after a gap year

Industry	Percentage
Construction and Building (e.g. architecture, brick laying, carpentry, surveying)	40%
Engineering (e.g. metal welding, drafting and technicians, mechanics, electrical engineering)	30%
Other Services (e.g. hairdresser, beautician, priest, cleaner)	8%
Education and Training (e.g. childcare, teacher's aide, teacher)	4%
Tourism and Hospitality (e.g. tour guide, chef, hotel management, barista)	4%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing (e.g. agri-business, logging, cray fishing, veterinary nurse)	3%
Creative Arts (e.g. fine arts, music, theatre)	3%
IT & Digital Technologies (e.g. ICT support, graphic design, web development, software programming, ICT and…	2%
Sport (e.g. fitness trainer, professional athlete, sport science)	2%
Business and Administration (e.g. accounting, economics, office administration, receptionist, real estate)	1%
Defence Force and Police (e.g. army, navy, police force)	1%
Health and Social Assistance (e.g. aged care, dentistry, medicine, nursing, nutritionist, psychologist, social work)	1%
Retail (e.g. shop assistant, shop manager)	1%
Science and Maths (biology, mathematics, physics)	1%

Figure 32 Preferred industry or field - respondents planning to commence an apprenticeship
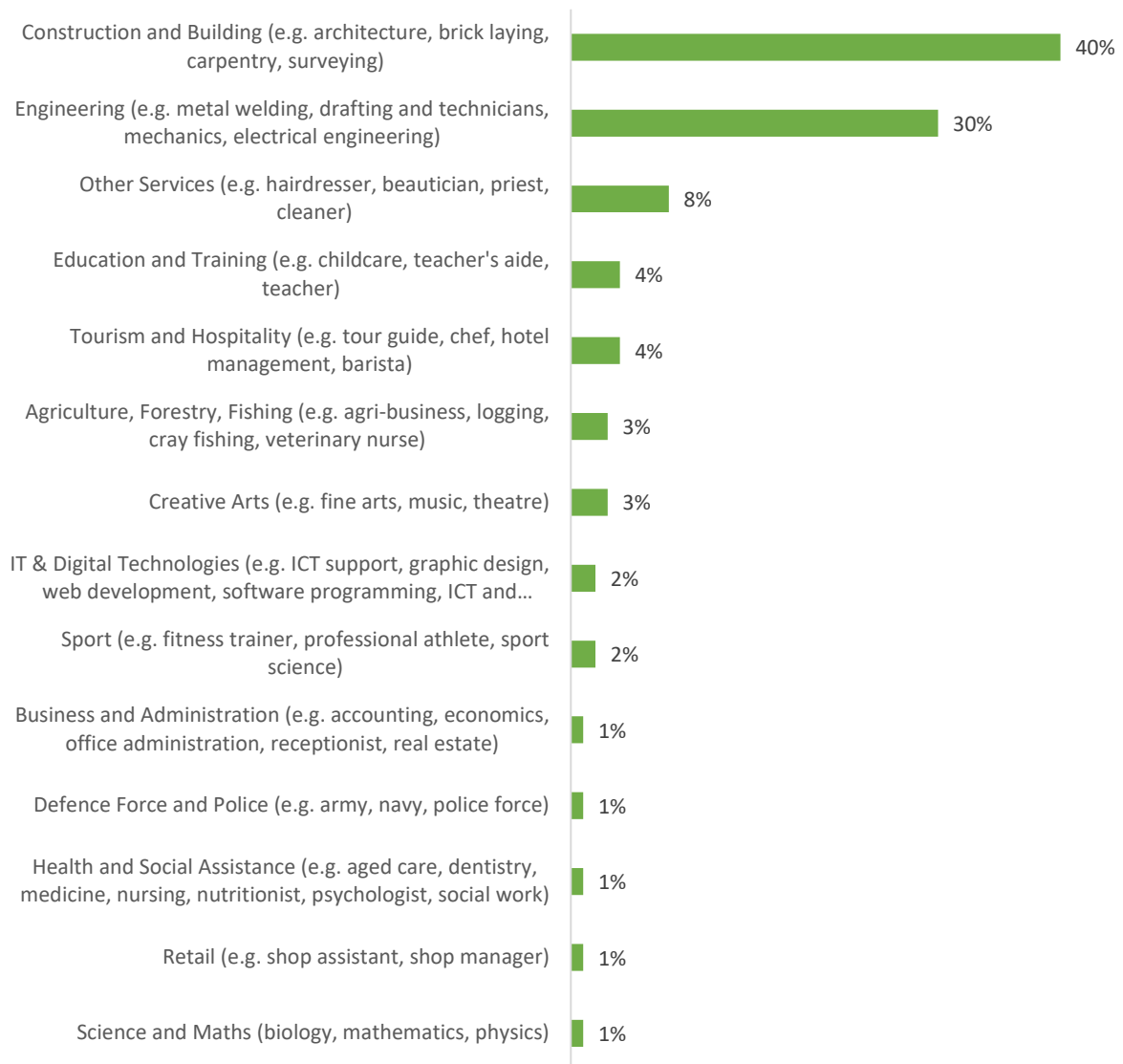
- The category of construction and building was the most popular industry preference for students interested in an apprenticeship pathway (40%).
- Engineering was the second most popular field (30%) followed by other services such as hairdressing (8%).

3.4 Comparison of reasons across the three most preferred pathways

Students' reasons for planning to pursue the three most popular pathways (the University of Tasmania, another university interstate or overseas, and apprenticeship) were varied. This section compares these three groups, based on the percentage of respondents who agreed with each reason.

It is important to note that the survey used branching logic, based on the planned pathway indicated by students at the beginning of the survey. As a result, not all respondents were presented with the survey same items: the survey directed students to the items that were most relevant to their intended pathway. For example, students intending to pursue an apprenticeship were not presented with the option "I can get a scholarship to do this option" as a possible reason. When reading Figures 36-40, when an item in the chart is missing a bar, this is representative of the group of respondents who were not presented with that option.

Like in earlier parts of Section 3, responses from students intending to pursue their selected pathway immediately after school are combined with those who intend to first take a gap year. The same five categories of reasons used in sections 3.1.2, 3.2.2, and 3.3.2 above are used to compare reasons. Overall, different categories of reasons were most important for different pathways:

Table 3.4.1 Comparison of reasons between the three most popular pathways

	University of Tasmania	Another university interstate or overseas	Commencing an apprenticeship
Practical and logistical reasons	✔	(✔)	
Reasons to do with perceived value and worth		✔	
Long-term and financial reasons	✔	✔	✔
Reasons to do with the student's interests, strengths and personal readiness	✔	✔	✔
Social reasons	✔	✔	(✔)

✔ = most prominent for this group

(✔) = also prominent for this group

Below, findings for each of the five categories across the three groups are outlined in more detail.

Proportion agreeing with importance of reasons to do with **practical and logistical** aspects

I can do it online
- 9%
- 22%
- 34%

It will enable me to move out of home
- 46%
- 63%
- 28%

It's easy to find accommodation near this option
- 31%
- 66%
- 43%

It will enable me to live at home
- 32%
- 45%

It will enable me to leave Tasmania
- 29%
- 62%

It will enable me to stay in Tasmania
- 59%
- 55%

It's in a location that is easy to get to
- 51%
- 50%
- 73%

Transport to this option is easy
- 50%
- 67%
- 78%

▮ Do an apprenticeship ▮ Go to another university interstate or overseas ▮ Go to the University of Tasmania

Figure 33 Comparison of reasons across pathways – practical and logistical

- Across the three pathways, ability to complete all or part of their pathway online was not an important reason to choose that option.
- Easy transport options to their preferred pathway were an important reason for students choosing an apprenticeship (50%), another university interstate or overseas (67%) or the University of Tasmania (78%).
- Proximity to the location of their selected pathway (university campus, or apprenticeship workplace) and accommodation availability were important reasons why students chose their preferred pathway.

Proportion agreeing with importance of reasons to do with **value and worth**
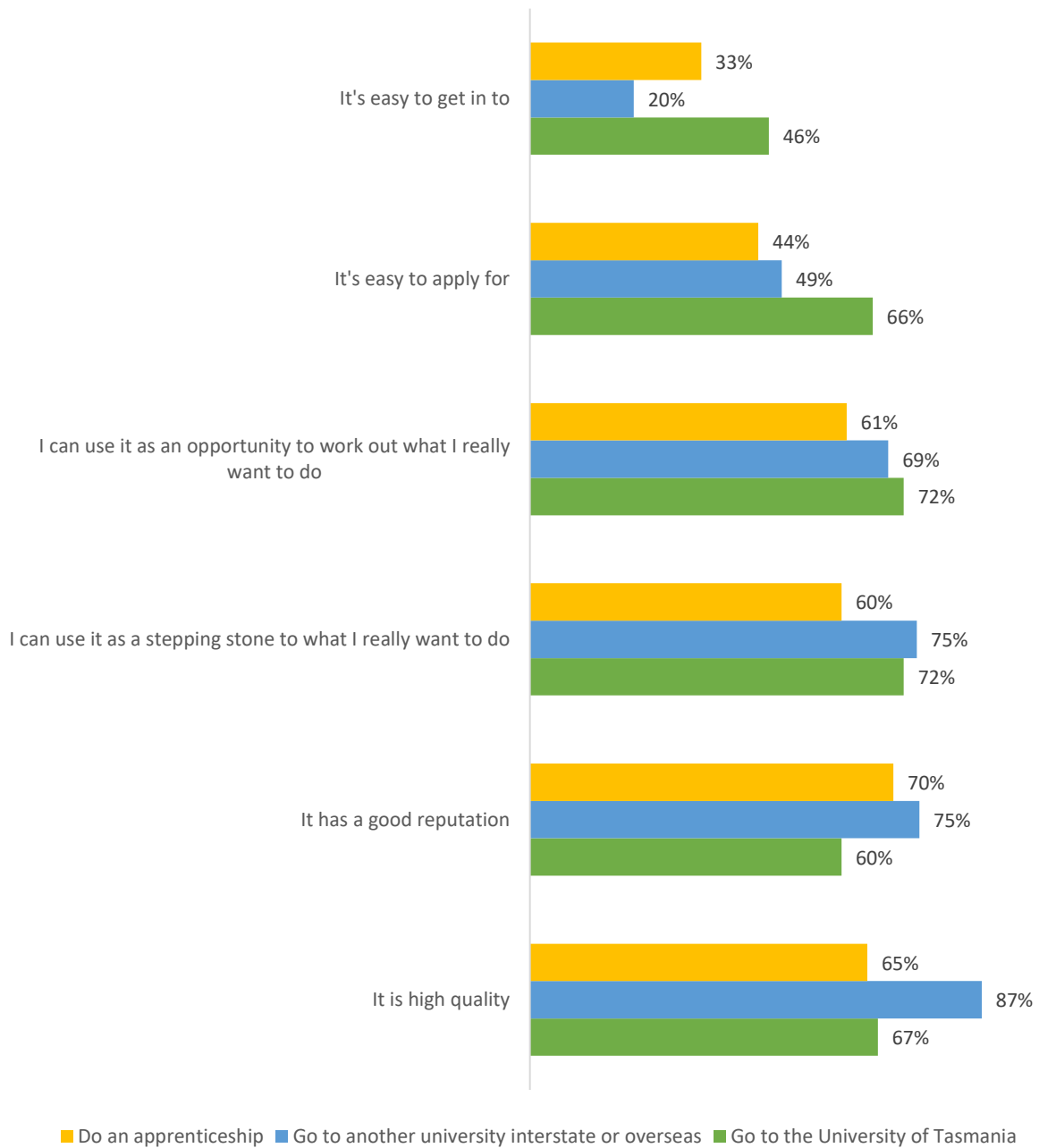
Figure 34 Comparison of reasons across pathways - value and worth

- Across the three pathway options, students did not agree that a pathway being "easy to get into" was an important reason to pursue that option.
- Students agreed important reasons to choose their preferred pathway were that it was "high quality" and that it had "a good reputation."
- It was also important to students that they could use their initial pathway plan as an opportunity to work out what they really wanted to do.

Proportion agreeing with importance of reasons to do with **long-term and financial** considerations
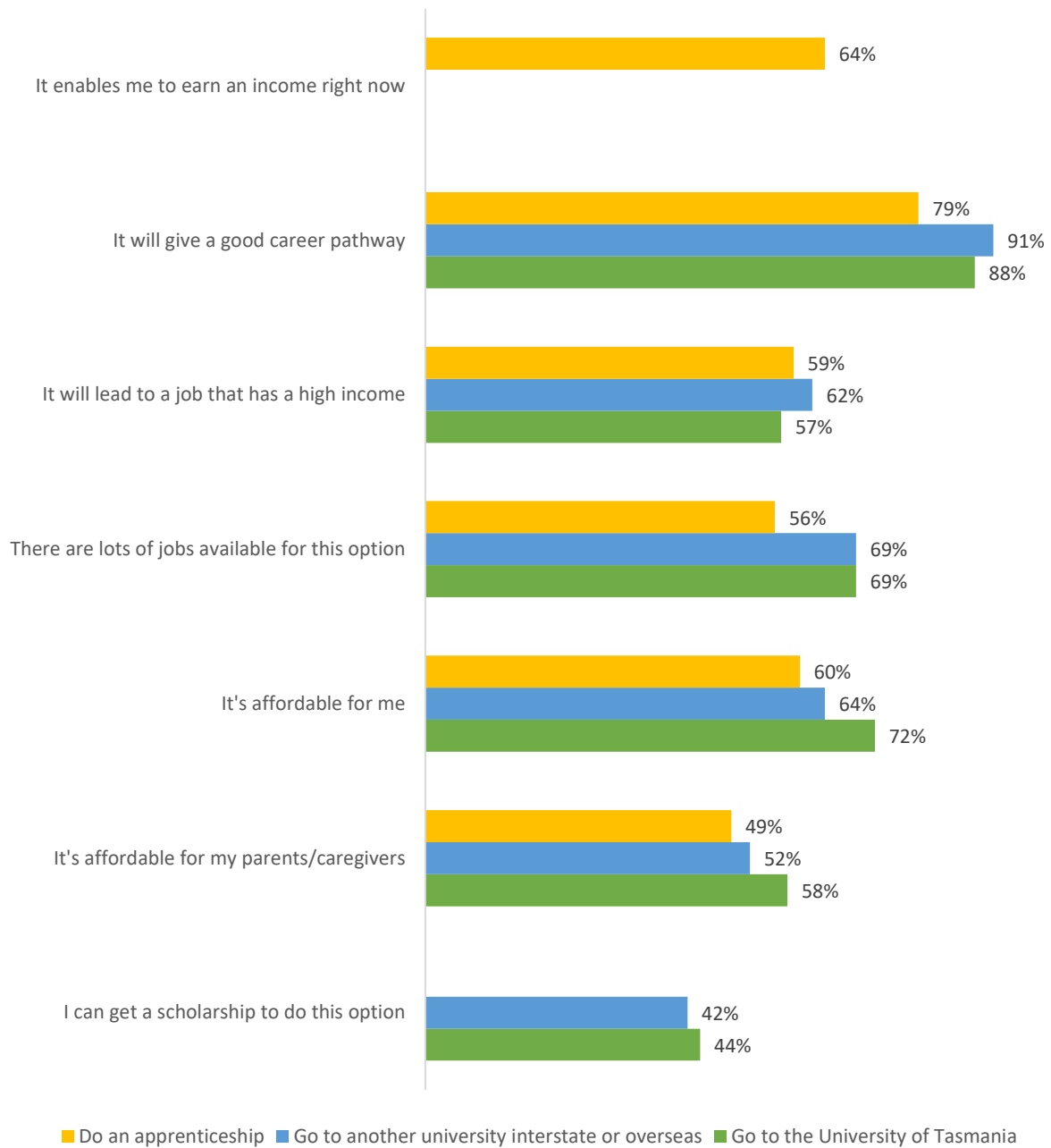
Figure 35 Comparison of reasons across pathways – long-term and financial reasons

- The opportunity to earn an income straight away was an important reason for students choosing an apprenticeship pathway.
- Across all three pathways, the opportunity that their selection would provide them with a good career pathway and a high income were important reasons why students chose their post-school option.
- Across the three pathways, affordability to themselves was another important reason influencing student decision making.

Proportion agreeing with importance of reasons to do with **interests, strengths and personal readiness**
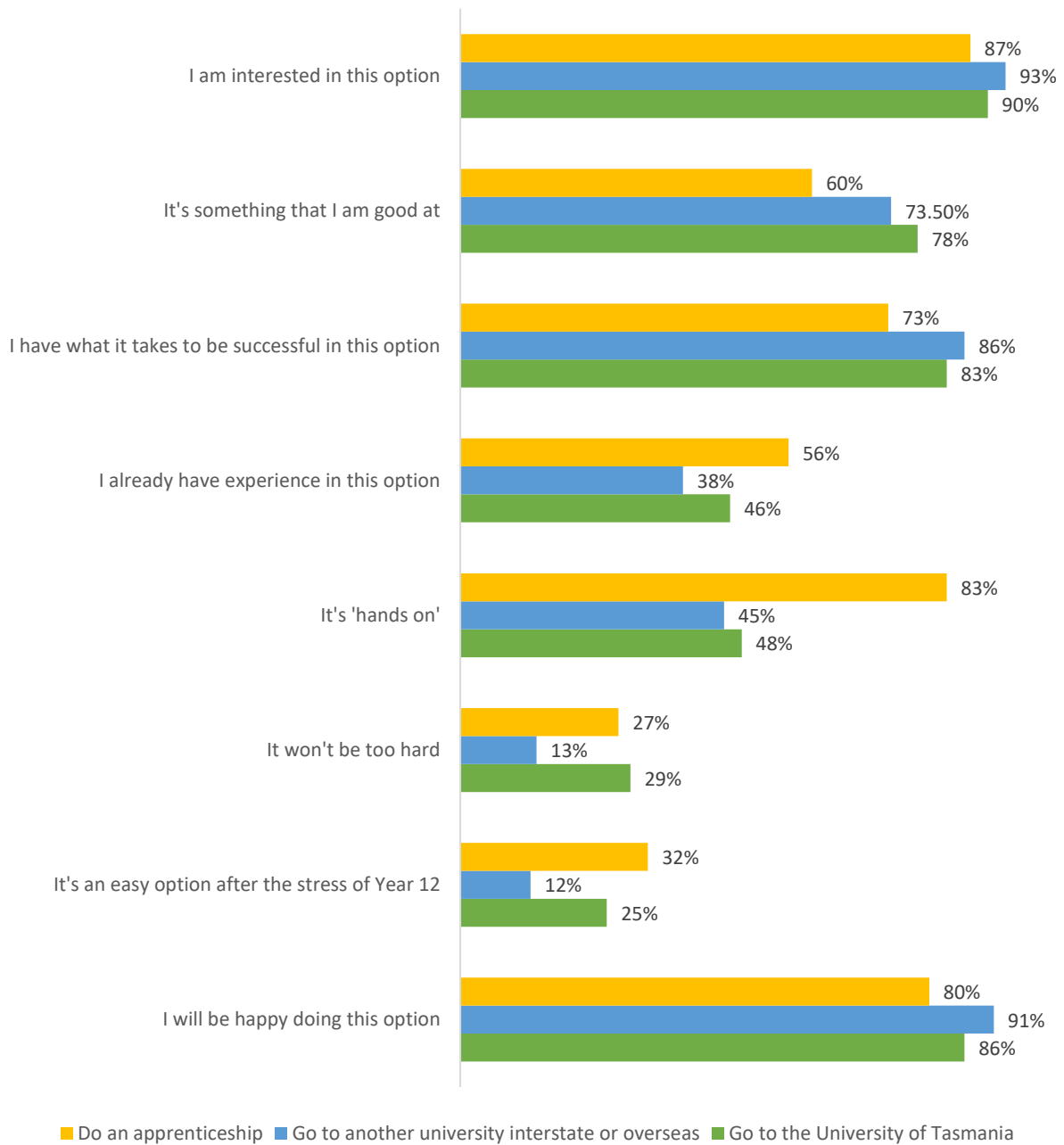
Figure 36 Comparison of reasons across pathways - interests, strengths, and personal readiness

- Students agreed it was important that they were interested in their post school pathway and that it would make them happy.
- Another important reason why students chose their preferred post-school pathway was that they felt they had "what it takes" to be successful in that option, or it was something they felt they were good at.
- Students did not agree that it was important to choose post-school pathway options because it would be easy after the stress of pre-tertiary studies or that it would not be a difficult pathway.

Proportion agreeing with importance of reasons to do with **social reasons**

It's a relaxed environment
- 32%
- 40%
- 59%

It's an enjoyable environment
- 69%
- 86%
- 85%

It's a safe environment
- 49%
- 86%
- 85%

It's close to my family and friends
- 38%
- 21%
- 56%

It will mean I can enjoy a 'big city' lifestyle
- 17%
- 41%
- 21%

I will get to meet new people
- 67%
- 74%
- 67%

It will give me freedom to be independent
- 67%
- 82%
- 74%

■ Do an apprenticeship ■ Go to another university interstate or overseas ■ Go to the University of Tasmania

Figure 37 Comparison of reasons across pathways - social reasons

- Across the three most popular pathways, important reasons for choosing their preferred post-school pathway included the opportunity to work or study in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- Students pursuing an apprenticeship or intending to study at the University of Tasmania or at another interstate or overseas university agreed it was important that their preferred pathway gave them the freedom to be independent and to meet new people.

Section 4: Influences

This section examines the factors and network connections which influence student decision-making and intentions about their post-school pathway intentions. This section uses data from the entire sample of participants. Unlike in Section 3, the figures presented in this section are not filtered to a particular pathway preference.

The survey asked participants about the types of people who may influence their decision-making, like parents or friends. The survey also inquired student knowledge of post-school pathways, like how to enter university without an ATAR score.

4.1 Influencers

The survey asked students about the different types of people in their lives who may influence their post-school pathway intentions: parents and primary caregivers, friends, and schools (i.e., teachers), and other close contacts the students know with a university degree (i.e., work colleagues or neighbours).

4.1.1 Parents and primary caregivers

Participants were asked to share what their parents/primary caregivers wanted them to do.

What do your parents or primary caregivers want you do do? (%)

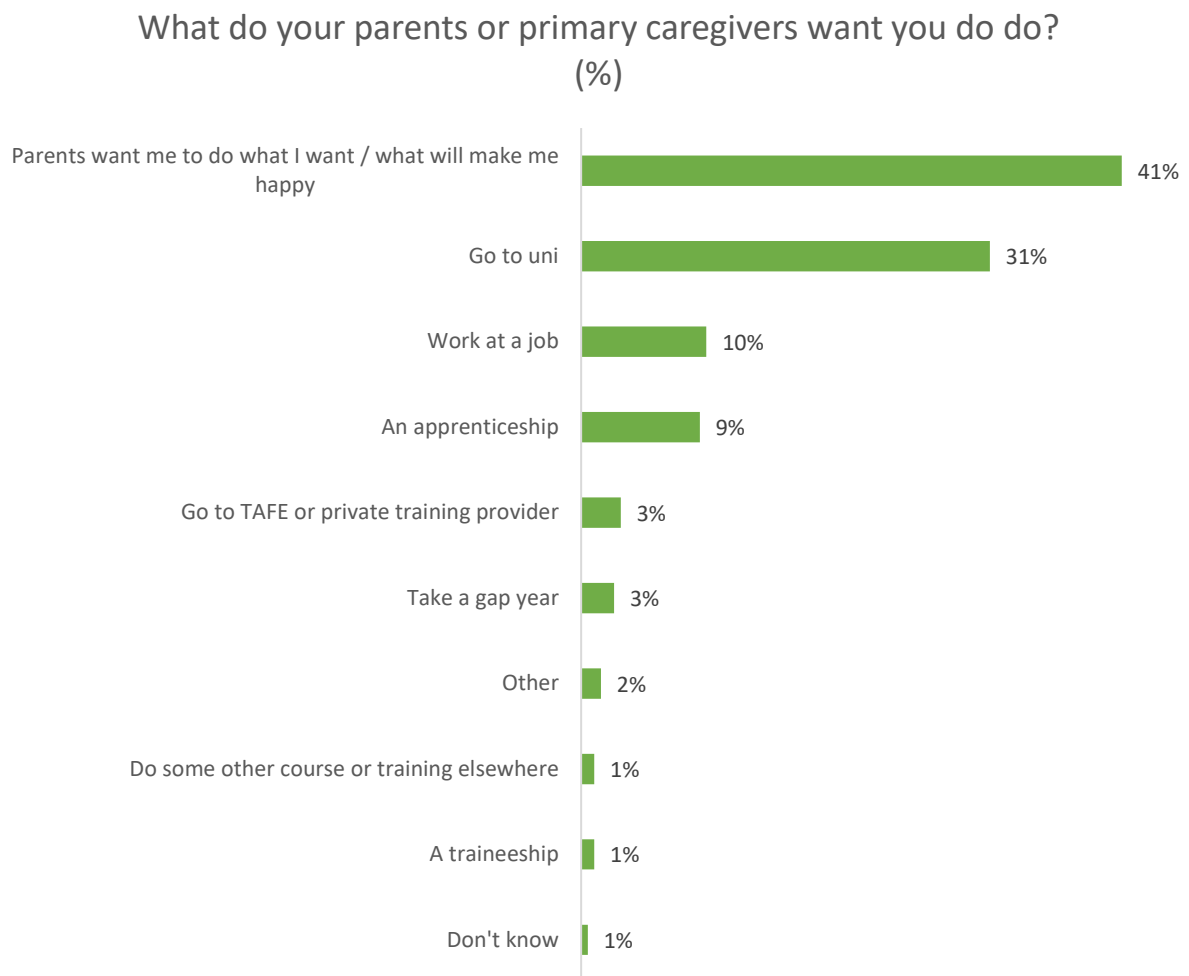| Category	%
Parents want me to do what I want / what will make me happy	41%
Go to uni	31%
Work at a job	10%
An apprenticeship	9%
Go to TAFE or private training provider	3%
Take a gap year	3%
Other	2%
Do some other course or training elsewhere	1%
A traineeship	1%
Don't know	1%

Figure 38 Post-school pathway preferences - parents/caregivers

- Most commonly, respondents indicated that their parents/primary caregivers wanted them (the student) to do what would make them (the student) happiest (41%).
- A notable percentage of respondents, 31%, responded that their parents/primary caregivers wanted them to pursue a university pathway after completing school.

Students who responded 'other' (2%) were invited to elaborate in a follow-up open ended question. Typical answers included 'prefer not to say' or that their parents/caregivers were uninterested in their post-school pathway.

4.1.2 Friends
Survey participants were asked what their friends are planning to do once they finish school.

What do most of your friends plan to do after leaving school? (%)

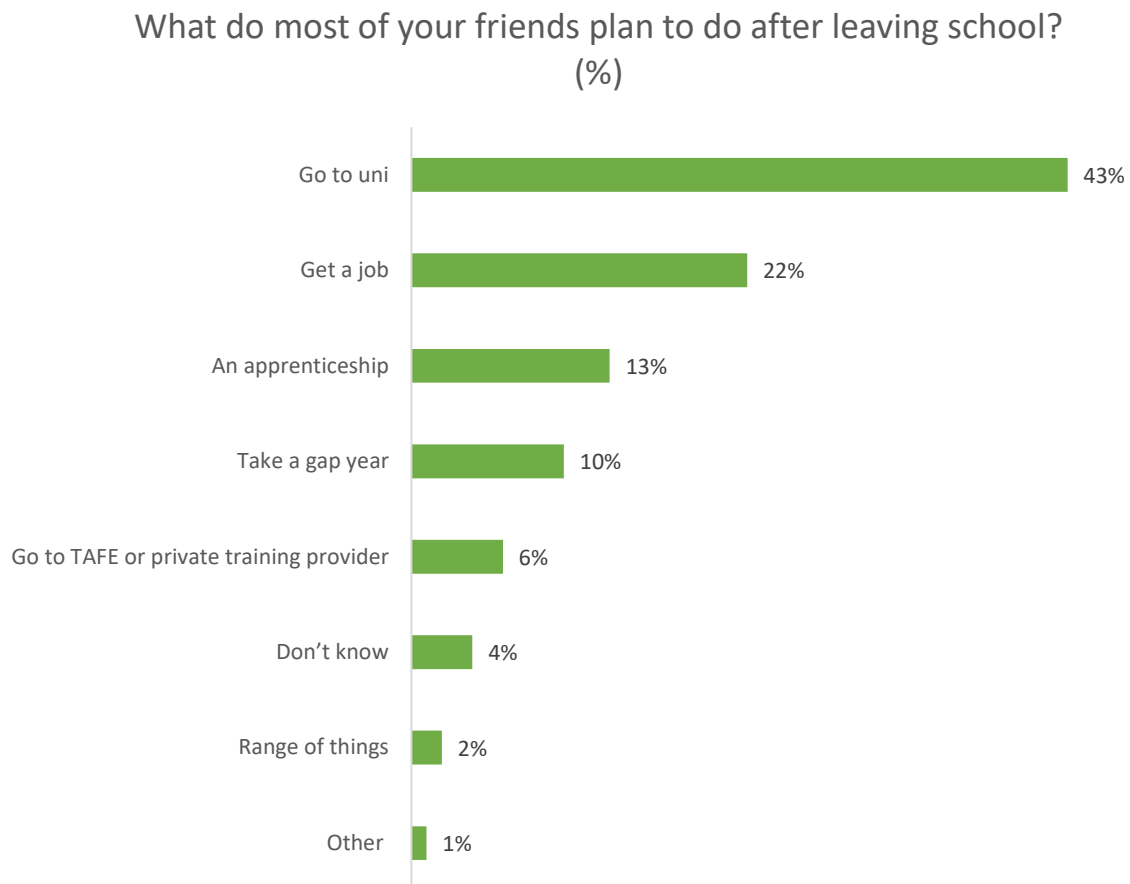| Category	Percentage
Go to uni	43%
Get a job	22%
An apprenticeship	13%
Take a gap year	10%
Go to TAFE or private training provider	6%
Don't know	4%
Range of things	2%
Other	1%

Figure 39 Post-school pathway preferences - friends

- Reflecting on what their friends intend to do after completing school, go to uni was the most common response (43%), followed by get a job (22%).
- 13% of students indicated that their friends wanted to do an apprenticeship.
- Participants who responded their friends wanted to do a 'range of things' (2%) elaborated in a follow-up open-ended question. Common responses included friends combining a gap year with university or combining a gap year with TAFE.
- 4% respondents said they did not know what their friends intended to do after school, commonly explaining in a follow-up question that they did not talk to their friends about post-school pathways.

4.1.3   School staff

Participants were asked what staff at their school, like their teachers, want them to do after completing school.

What do your teachers or adults at school encourage you to do after you finish at school? (%)
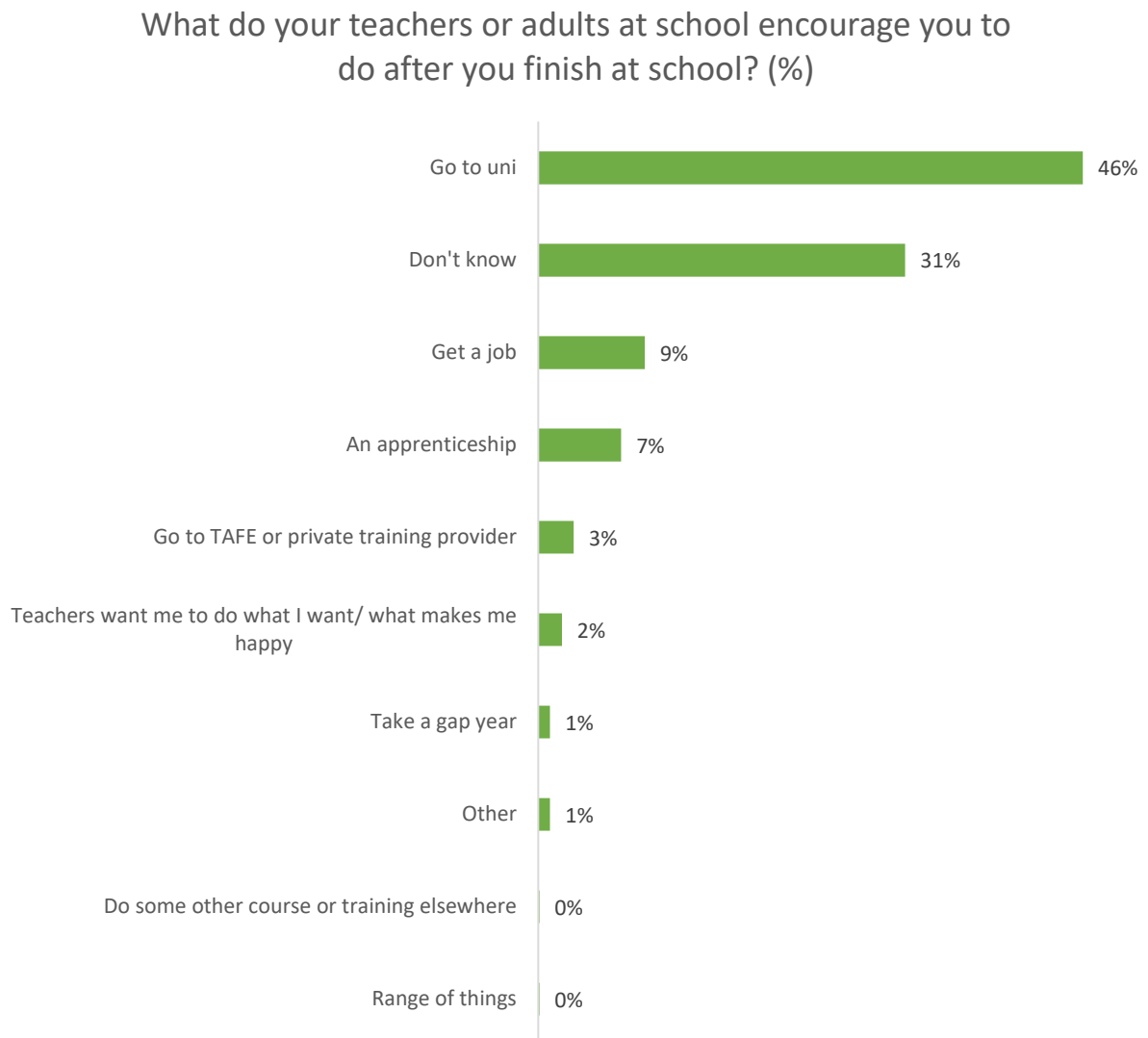

Figure 40 Post-school pathway preferences - school staff

- The most common response from survey participants was that their teachers wanted them to go to university after school (46%).
- However, 31% of respondents shared that they did not know what their teachers at school wanted them to do after completing school.
- Get a job (9%), followed by get an apprenticeship or traineeship (7%) were also common responses from survey participants.
- The 1% of students who selected 'other' elaborated on their response in a follow-up open ended question that their teachers wanted them to pursue some kind of (unspecified) further education.

4.1.4   Knowing someone with a university degree

Knowing someone who has a university degree may go some way to influence student decision making about post-school pathway options, since it may create some familiarity with tertiary studies. Students were asked if anyone in their life who they are close to has a uni degree.

Thinking about the people in your life who you are close to, do any of those people have a uni degree? (%)
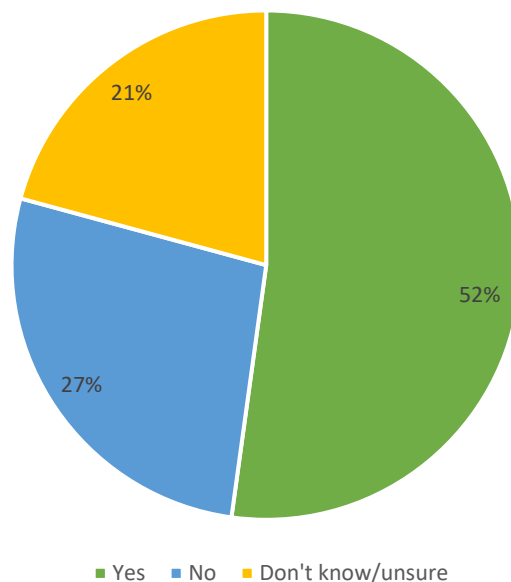

Figure 41 Family and friends' university participation

- Just over half of respondents (52%) indicated that they had someone in their life who had a university degree.
- 21% of students either did not know or were unsure whether someone they are close to has a uni degree.
- 27% of survey participants did not know someone close to them with a uni degree.

Participants who indicated that they knew someone who had a university degree were asked to specify who in their life had a university degree.

Participants could tick as many options as were relevant to them.

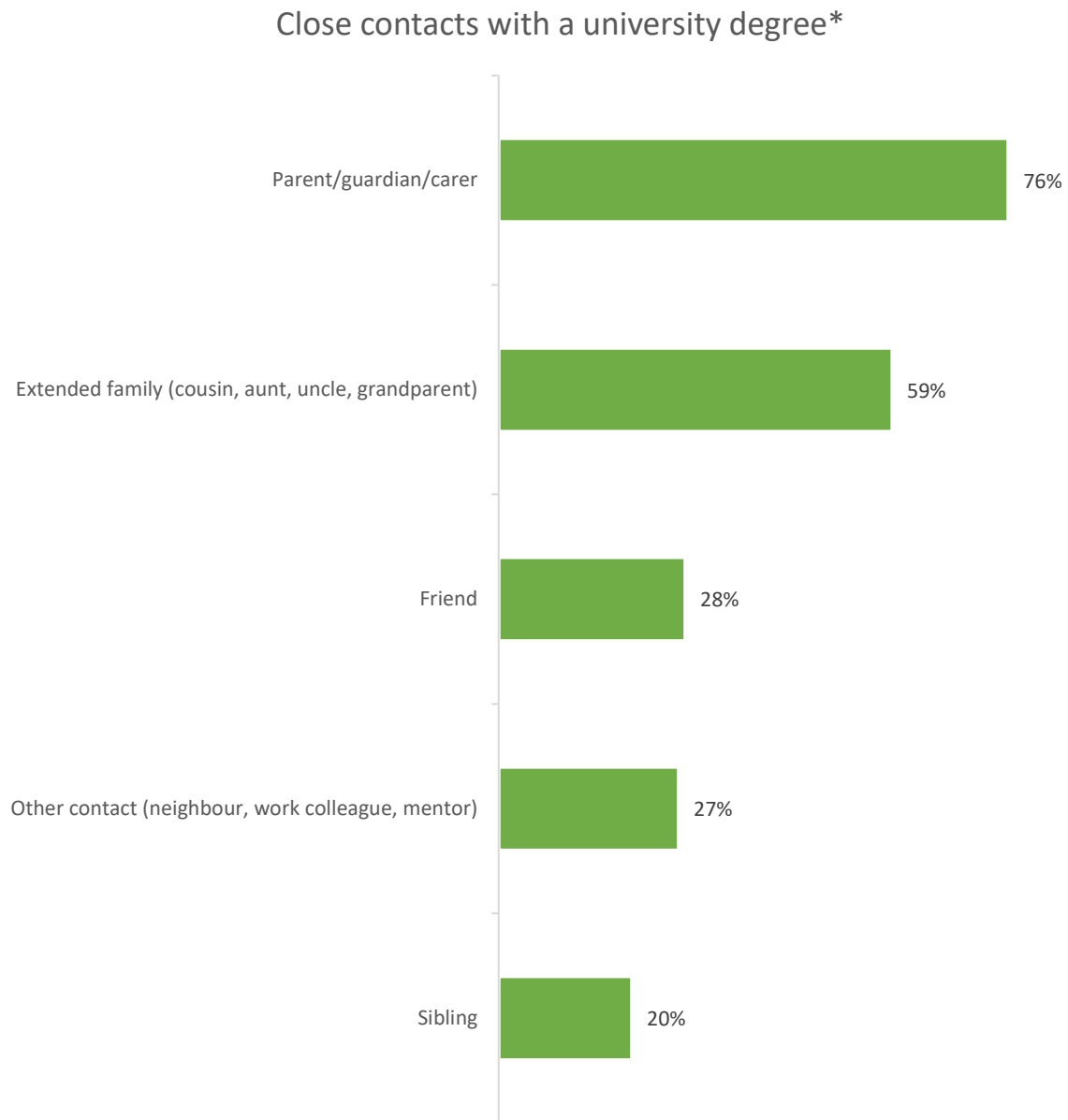## Close contacts with a university degree*

Figure 42 Close contacts with a university degree

* Figure only depicts students who indicated 'yes' in Figure 41.

- Family members, both immediate (76%) and extended (59%), were most likely to be listed by survey respondents as close contacts with a university degree.

Focusing on the 52% of students who do know someone with a tertiary degree, this subset was divided by pathway to identify links between pathway preference and likelihood of knowing someone with a university degree.

Preferred pathway of students who responded 'yes' to 'thinking about the people in your life who you are close to, do any of those people have a uni degree?' (%)
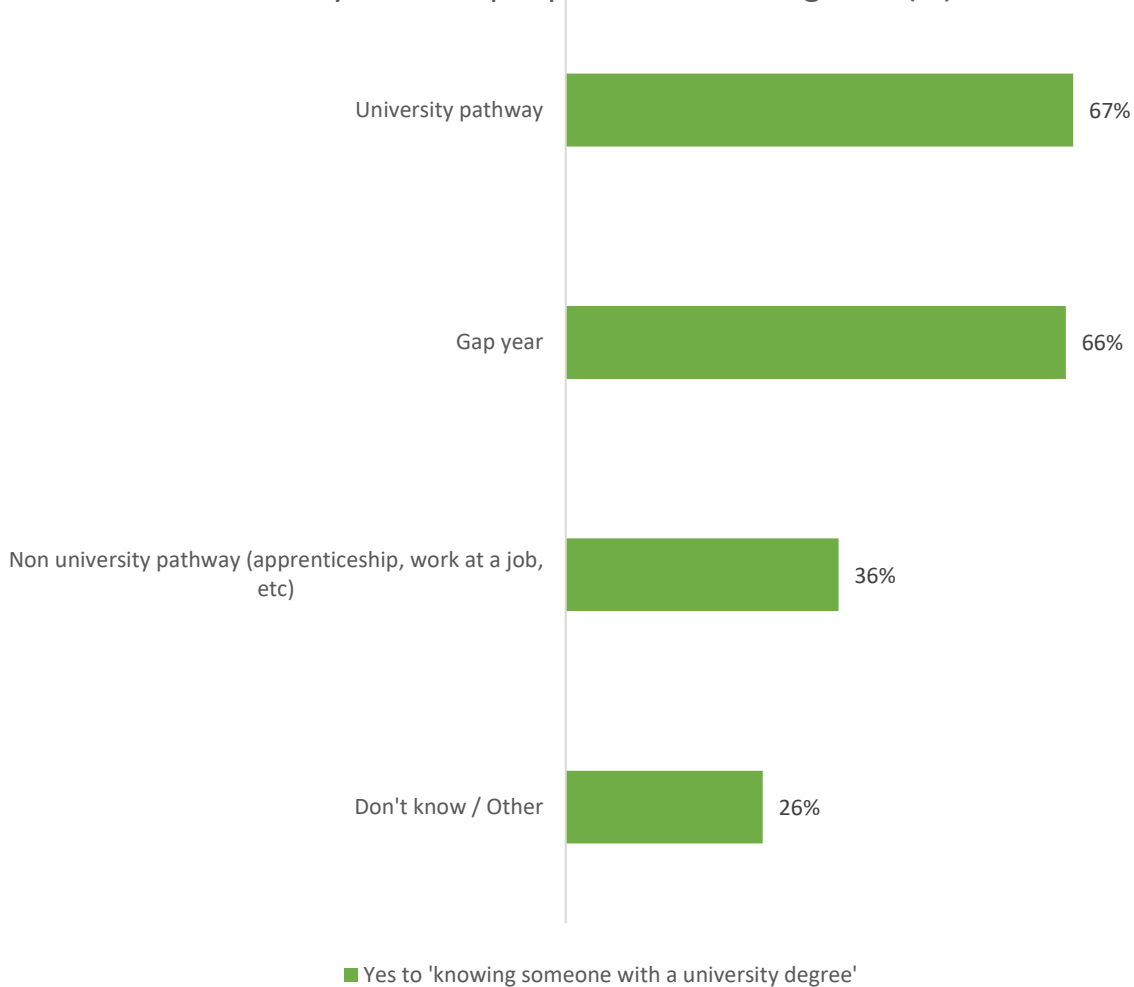
Figure 43 Knowing someone with a university degree broken down by planned pathway (immediately after school)

- Students intending to go to uni immediately after school or to take a gap year were most likely to know someone with a uni degree (67% for an immediate university pathway, and 66% of students taking a gap before going to uni, know someone close to them with a uni degree).
- Students pursuing non-university pathways and students who were unsure of their preferred pathway were much less likely to know someone close to them with a university degree.

4.2 Information and knowledge

Student preferences about their post-school pathways are also likely to be influenced by the information that they have access to. This section outlines findings from the sources of information students had access to about their options after school, and about the extent of their knowledge of how to pursue different pathways, like further education or getting a job.

Survey participants were asked to tick all the ways they have found out about post-school pathways:

Please tick all the ways you have found out about post school pathways

Source	Percentage
My Education Resources	24%
Career day at your school	15%
Social media	13%
Websites	12%
Taster day at UTAS	11%
Other	7%
Career day elsewhere	5%
Taster day at TAFE or industry provider	4%
Taster day at another University	4%
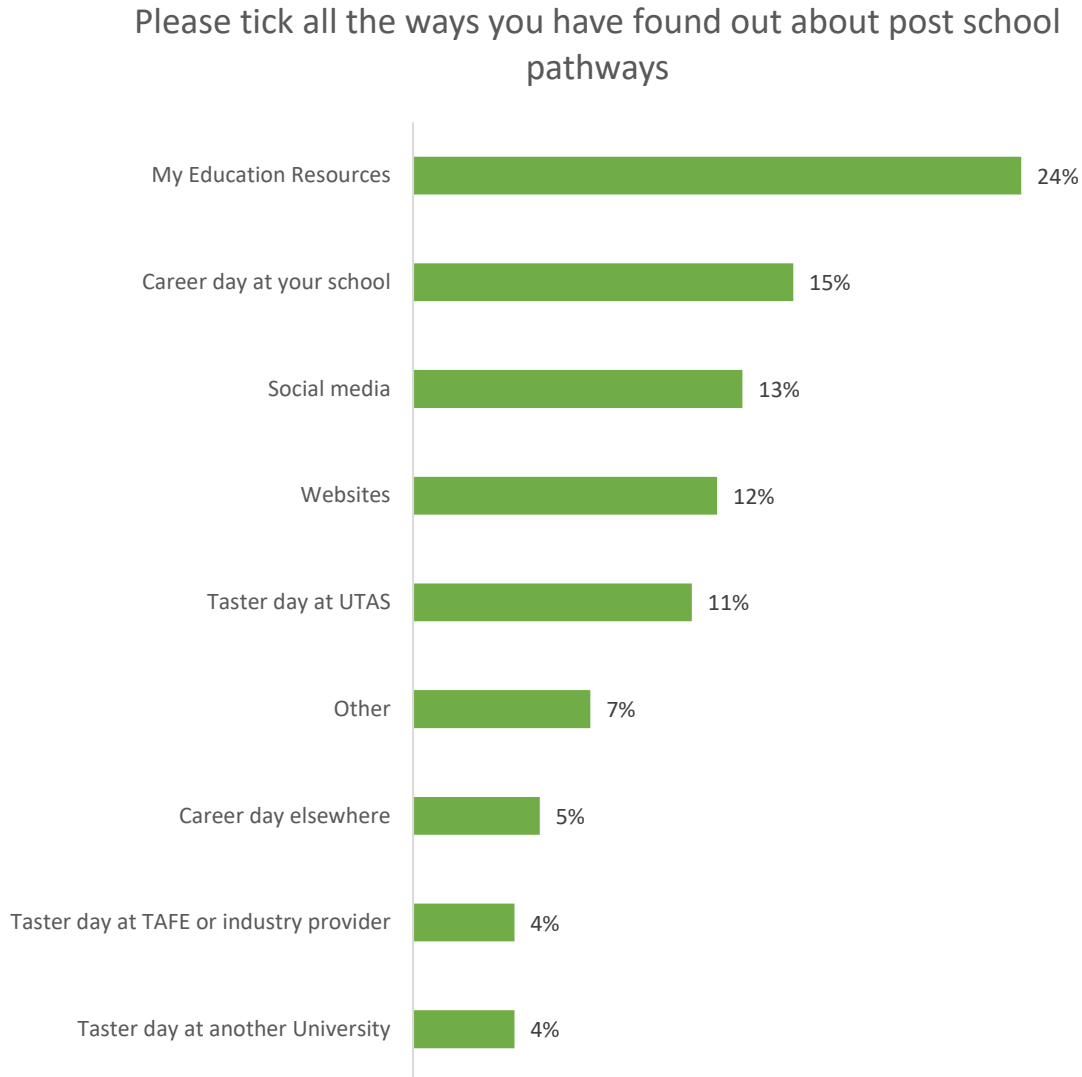
Figure 44 Sources of information

- The most used resource for post school pathways were the My Education resources (24%). This resource is provided by the Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People to assist with career guidance and education for Tasmanian school students.
- Students also gained information about post-school pathways from UTAS taster days (11%), and career days at their school (15%).
- Social media (13%) and websites (12%) were useful resources that helped students to explore their post-school pathway options.

Students were invited to list the websites and social media platforms which were most useful to them when researching post-school pathways. See Table 4.2.1 for the most common ones.

Table 4.2.1 Online and social media resources

Websites	Social media
• University of Tasmania website • Another university website • General research • School website • University review website • Job search website • TAFE website • Industry website (e.g., police force recruitment website)	• TikTok • Facebook • Reddit • YouTube • Spotify • Instagram

Students who responded 'other' to where they got their information from (7%) were encouraged to elaborate on their response in a follow-up open ended question. Focusing on this subset of data, the responses were categorised into the most common answers:

The most common categories from where students who responded 'other' sourced information about post school pathways (%)

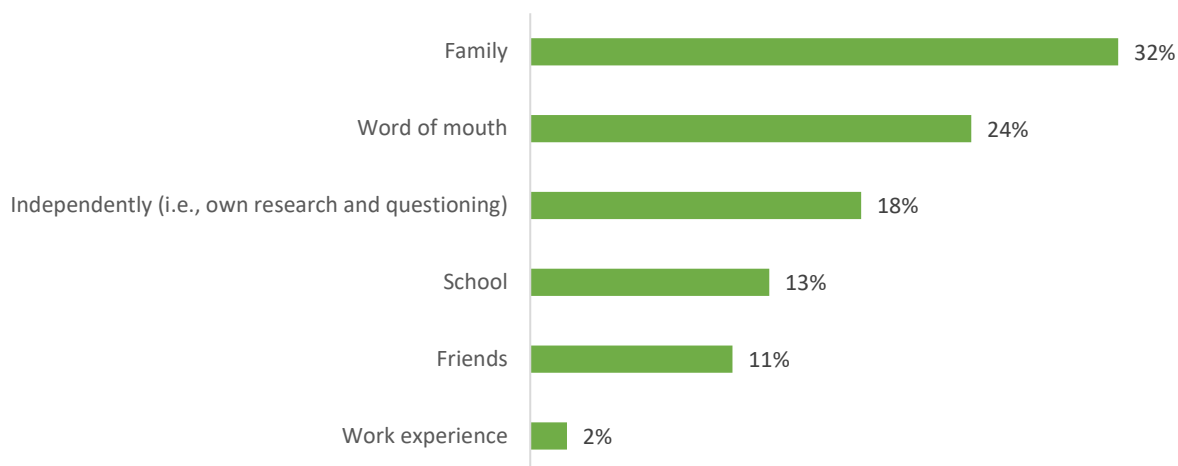| Category	Percentage
Family	32%
Word of mouth	24%
Independently (i.e., own research and questioning)	18%
School	13%
Friends	11%
Work experience	2%

Figure 45 Most common 'other' ways students got information about post-school pathways

• Students were most likely to get their information about post school pathways from personal networks: family (32%) and word of mouth (24%).

Focusing again on the full sample of survey participants, in Figure 49 below, we have disaggregated key sources of information by the most popular pathways. However, we have combined all university pathways under 'university' and have also included the fourth most popular option: work at a job. This is to show differences and commonalities in how and from where students get information about their preferred pathway. Survey participants could tick as many sources of information as were relevant to them.

Key sources of information by chosen pathway
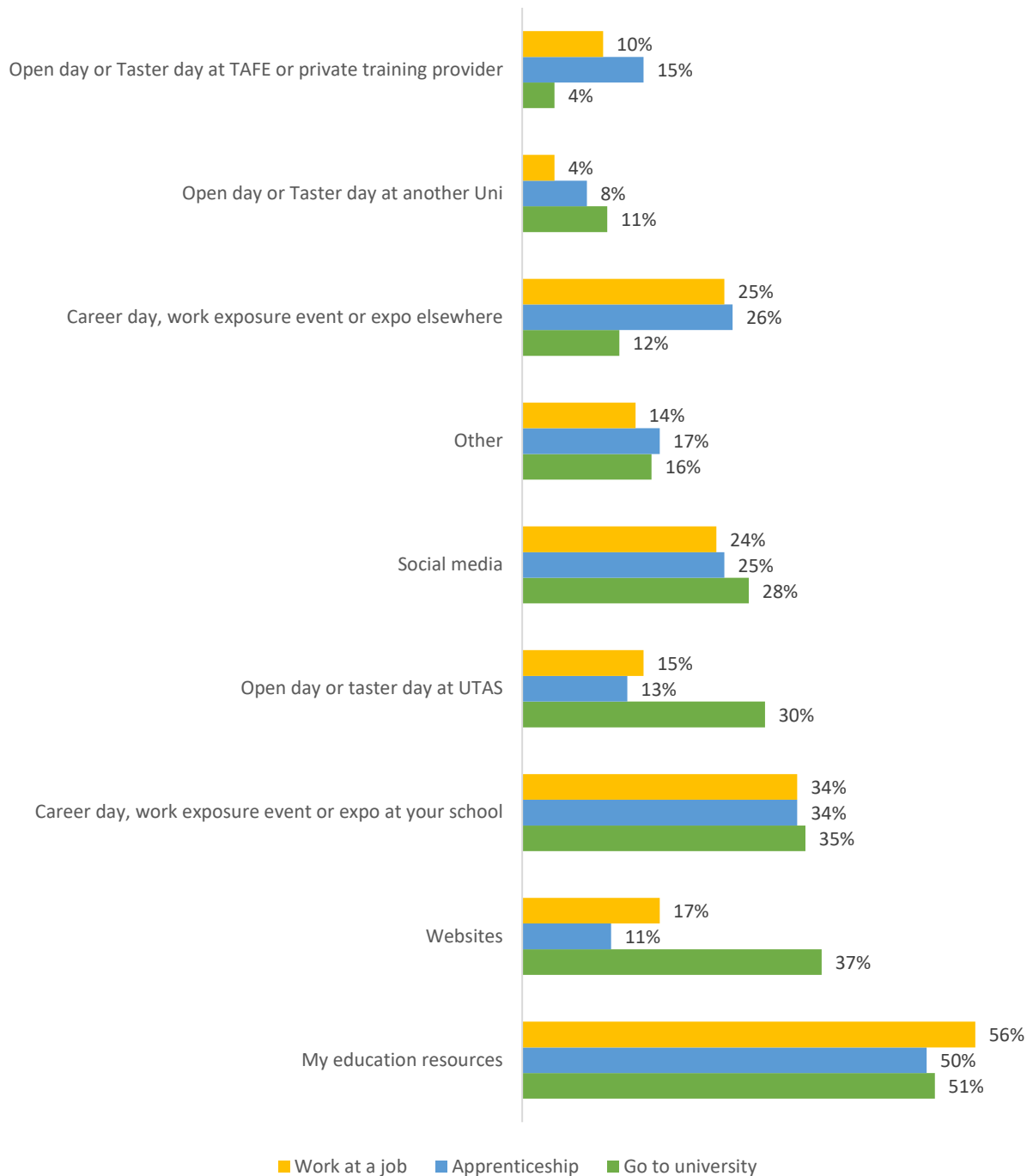
Figure 46 Key sources of information by chosen pathway

- Across the sample, *My Education Resources* was a key source of information for senior secondary students, especially students intending to work at a job.
- Career days, work exposure events, or expos were common ways students got information about their post-school pathway; external ones (i.e. not at their school) were used more by students aiming for an apprenticeship or a job.
- Websites were used more by students intending to go to university.

4.2.1 Knowledge about post-school options

Students were asked to indicate how knowledgeable they were about different post-school options like seeking employment (writing a resume, searching and applying for job vacancies), and university options (enrolling with an ATAR, searching for course options).

Students were asked to respond to a series of questions against a three-point Likert scale of how much they knew about that prompt: a great deal, a bit, nothing at all. Figure 50 below presents data on the total sample of survey respondents.
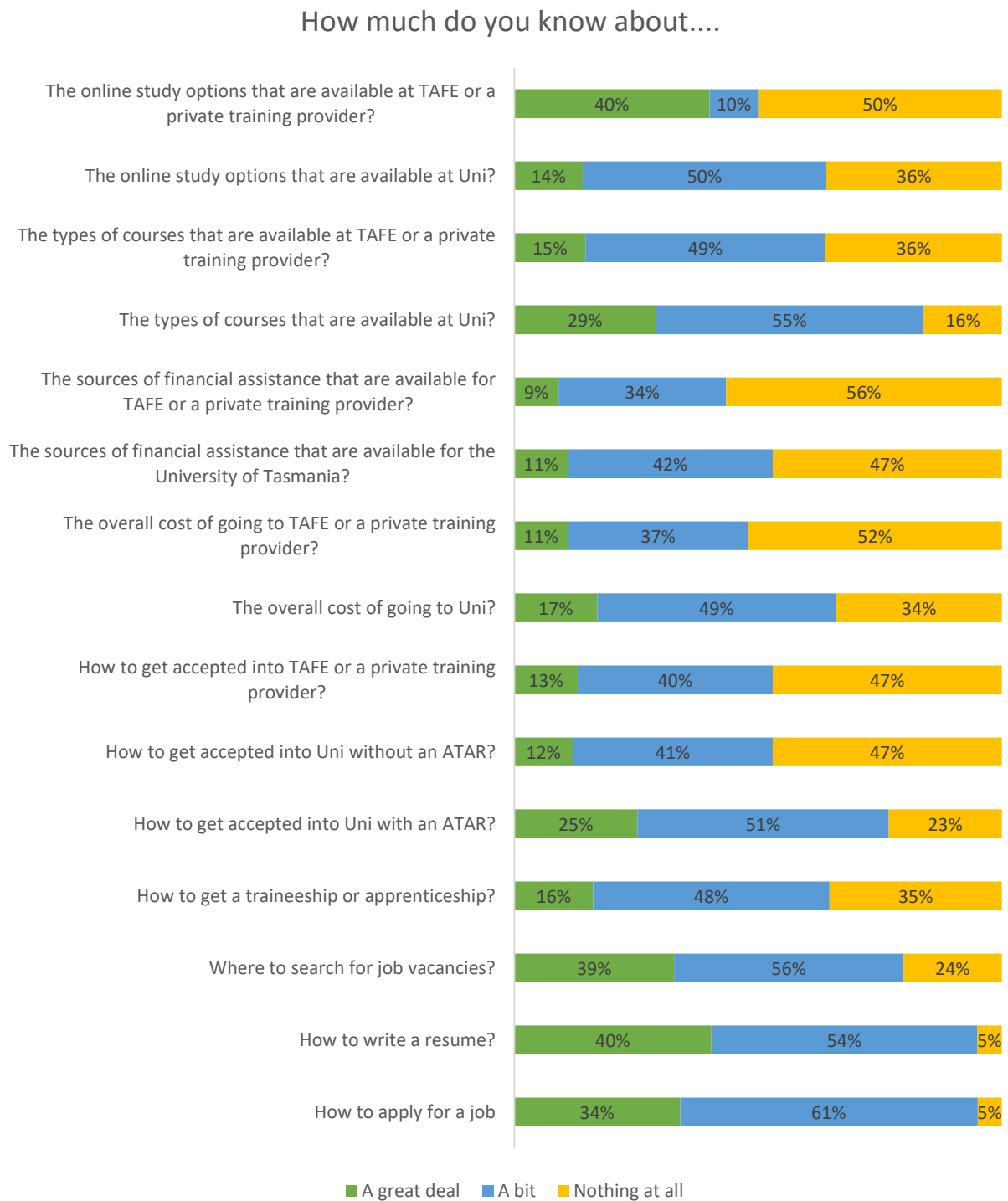

Figure 47 Knowledge about pursuing post-school pathways

- Across the sample, students were most knowledgeable about how to search and apply for a job (34%) and write a resume (40%).
- Respondents were least knowledgeable about pursuing post-school pathway options at TAFE or other private training providers (9% indicated they know a great deal about this option).
- Students were generally not knowledgeable about the types of financial assistance available to them for studying at the University of Tasmania (47% indicated they knew nothing at all).

We have disaggregated Figure 47 against pathway option in Figure 48 below, to show what percentage of students responded they knew 'a great deal' or 'a bit' from each of the most popular pathways.

Because we have combined the three university pathway streams into the one category 'university' for Figure 48, we have included responses to 'work at a job' which was the fourth most popular post-school pathway as represented in Section 2.1.

Overall:

- 95% of students intending to go immediately to university know a great deal or a bit about writing a resume and applying for a job.
- Students intending to work at a job felt knowledgeable about searching (85%) and applying for a job (96%).
- 98% of students intending to get an apprenticeship knew a great deal or a bit about writing a resume.
- This group know a great deal or a bit about the ATAR admissions and acceptance process (88%) and the types of courses available at university (95%).
- 93% of students intending to do an apprenticeship knew a great deal or a bit about how to get an apprenticeship.
- Students who want to work at a job felt least knowledgeable about available financial assistance for further education pathways with just 49% indicating they knew a great deal or a bit about the types of financial assistance available at the University of Tasmania.
- 55% of students intending to do an apprenticeship knew a great deal or a bit about financial assistance at the University of Tasmania and 56% knew about how to get accepted into uni without an ATAR.

How much do you know about...

Question	Apprenticeship	Work at a job	University
The types of courses that are available at Uni?	71%	74%	95%
How to write a resume?	98%	99%	95%
How to apply for a job?	97%	99%	95%
How to get accepted into Uni with an ATAR?	64%	66%	88%
Where to search for job vacancies?	94%	85%	84%
The overall cost of going to Uni?	57%	55%	75%
The online study options that are available at Uni?	61%	61%	69%
The sources of financial assistance that are available for the University of Tasmania?	55%	49%	57%
The types of courses that are available at TAFE or a private training provider?	78%	73%	52%
How to get accepted into Uni without an ATAR?	56%	54%	51%
How to get a traineeship or apprenticeship?	93%	70%	51%
How to get accepted into TAFE or a private training provider?	74%	58%	41%
The overall cost of going to TAFE or a private training provider?	61%	48%	36%
The online study options that are available at TAFE or a private training provider?	69%	61%	35%
The sources of financial assistance that are available for TAFE or a private training provider?	61%	45%	34%

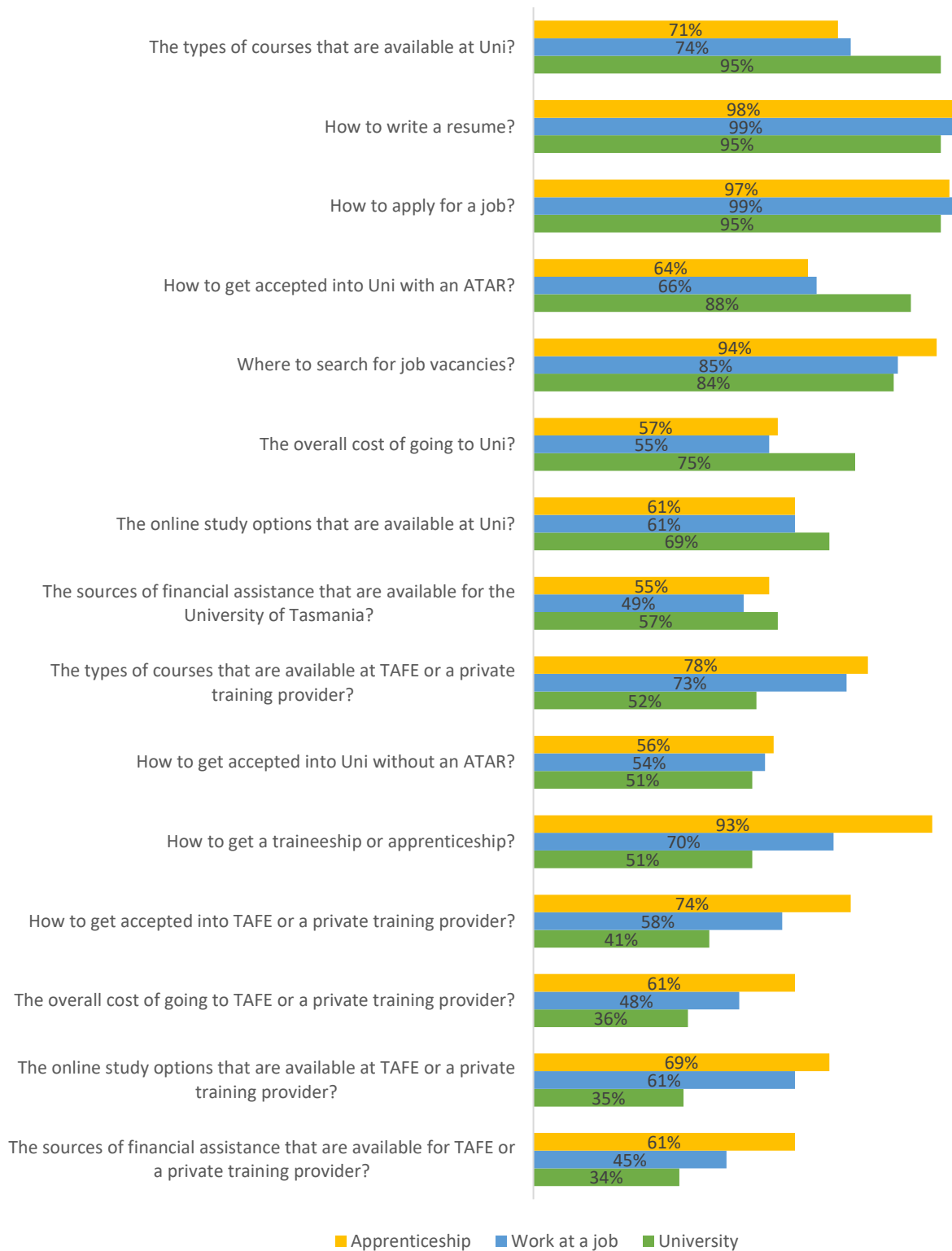■ Apprenticeship ■ Work at a job ■ University

Figure 48 Knowledge about pursuing post-school pathways by most popular pathway preferences

*Respondents who selected 'a great deal' or 'a bit' in Figure 50.

Section 5: Concluding comments

This report has provided an overview of key findings from Phase 2 of the research: a survey completed by 1055 students from Years 10, 11, and 12 in early Term 3 and late Term 4, 2021. This complements our report on the same survey with 1160 students in Term 4, 2020.

These findings have provided insights into the plans these students have for after they leave school, the reasons they consider to be important for choosing their preferred option, the industries/fields they are interested in, and influences on their decision-making.

The project has also repeated the analysis of University of Tasmania business intelligence data[12] and has engaged with further qualitative data collection from key stakeholders in 2022 and 2023 (report forthcoming).[13]

For questions or comments, feel free to contact the research team:

UnderwoodCentre.Enquiries@utas.edu.au

Attention: SPSPI team

You are welcome to share this overview report with your school community.

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[12] For findings from the first round of business intelligence data analysis, see:
https://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1413817/Final-Bakhtiar-et-al-2020-SPSPI-C3.pdf and:
https://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1628616/SPSPI-Slide-report-Final.pdf
[13] For findings from the first round of qualitative data collection, see:
https://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/1411014/Crellin,-te-Riele-and-West-2020.pdf

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