25 YEARS eua EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION

# EUA TRENDS 2027

# Mapping developments in European higher education

**Michael Gaebel and Thérèse Zhang**

**EUA 25th Anniversary conference**
**Brussels, 29 October 2026**

# EUA Trends series



- A milestone publication of EUA's since 1999
- Maps developments in the European higher education landscape
- Comparative data
- From the perspective of higher education institutions (HEIs)
- Associated with the reforms under the Bologna Process

- **Read the Trends 2024 report:** https://www.eua.eu/publications/reports/trends-2024.html
- **Download the dataset:** https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13768235

SPICE
Stakeholder Perspectives

European Students' Union

European University Association

The Institute for Advanced Studies

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

European Association for the Applied Sciences in Higher Education

Co-funded by the European Union

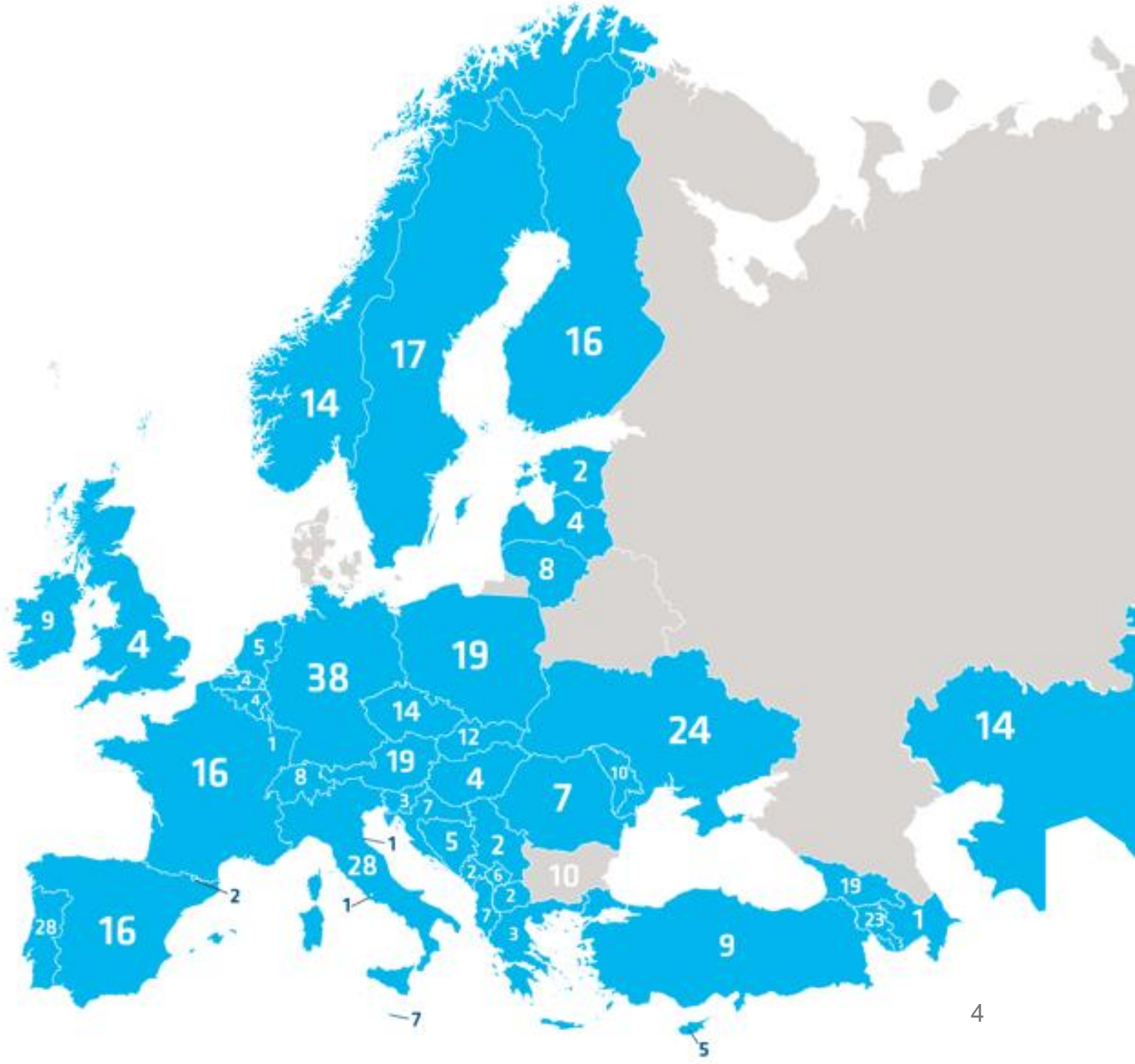
# Trends 2027

10th edition (since 1999)

464 HEIs

46 EHEA systems

(+ 100 HEI from 11 countries in Central Asia & the Southern Med)



# A few preliminary findings

1. The context
2. Transformation in education
3. Living by values



# 1. The context



# Top 5 developments impacting institutions

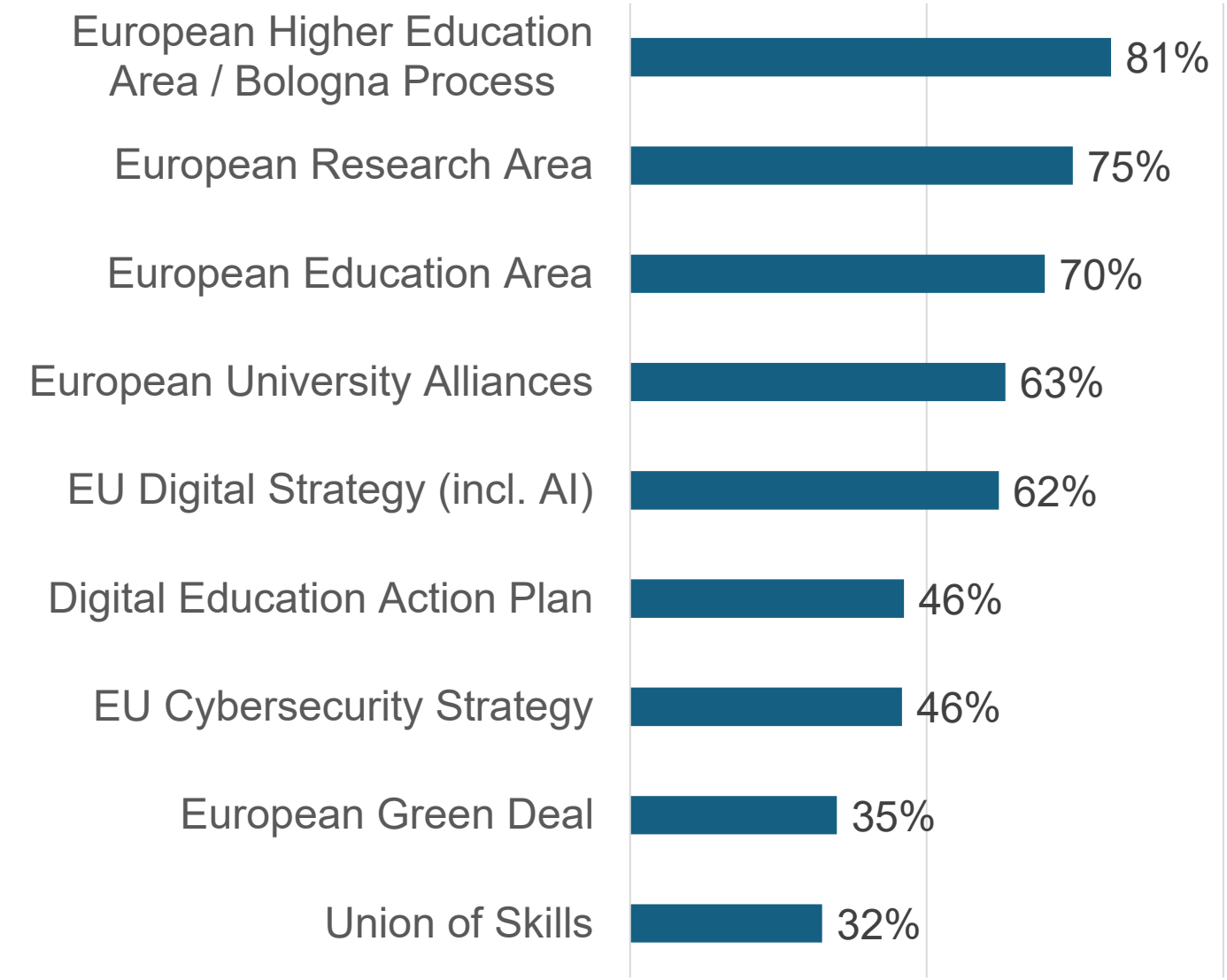
Over 80% of HEIs found it of “high importance”

| Past 3 years | Next 3 years |
|---|---|
| Generative AI | |
| Digital transformation | |
| Changes in HE funding | |
| National political developments | |
| Growing competition with other HEIs | Demographic changes |

Q.6 Which of the following developments have impacted your institution in the past three years (2024–2026)? N=455

Q.7 Which of the following developments would you expect to have impact for your institution’s overall strategy in the next three years (2027–2029)? N=455

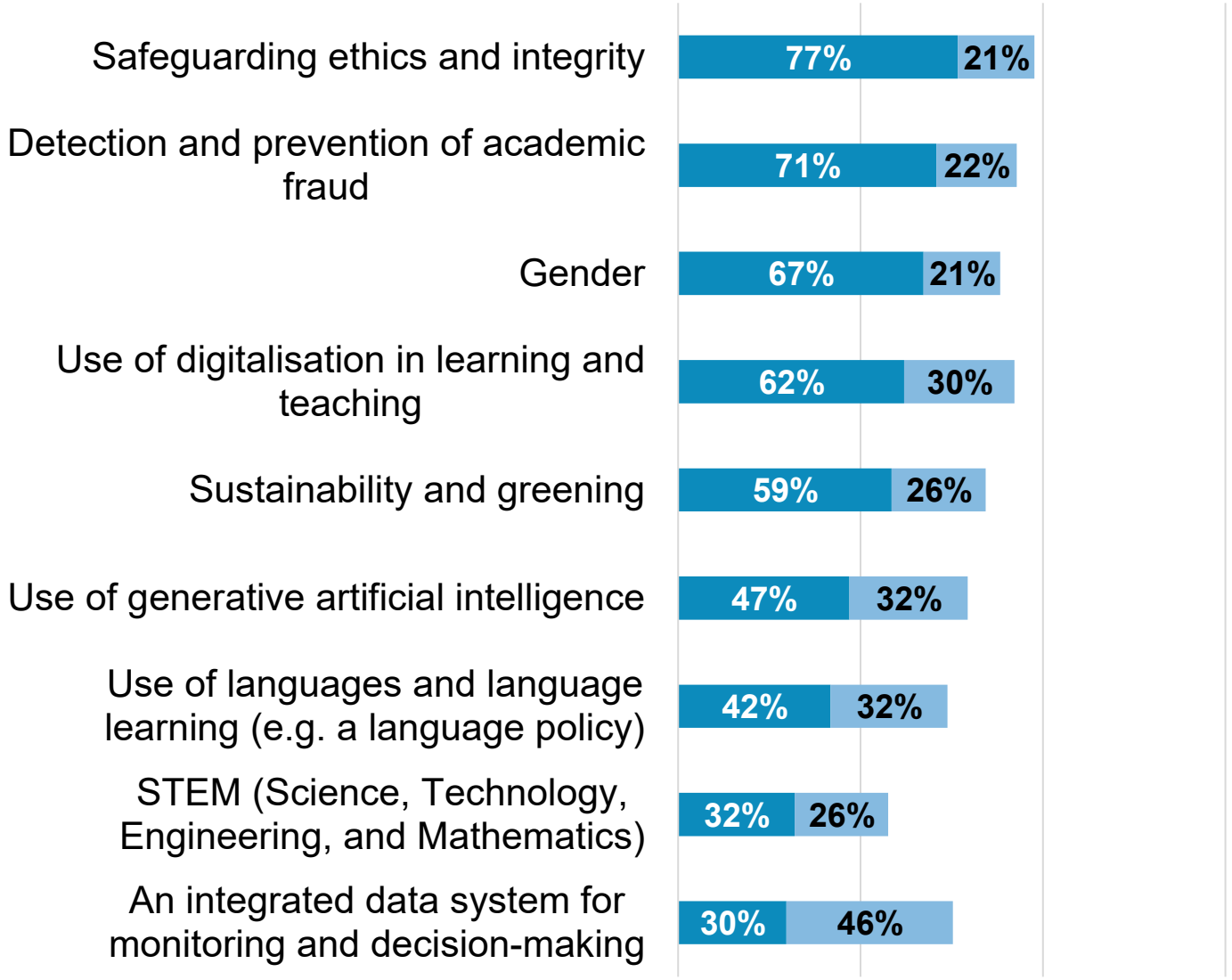
# Engagement with European policies




Q.8 How important are the following European strategies and initiatives for your institution? N=460

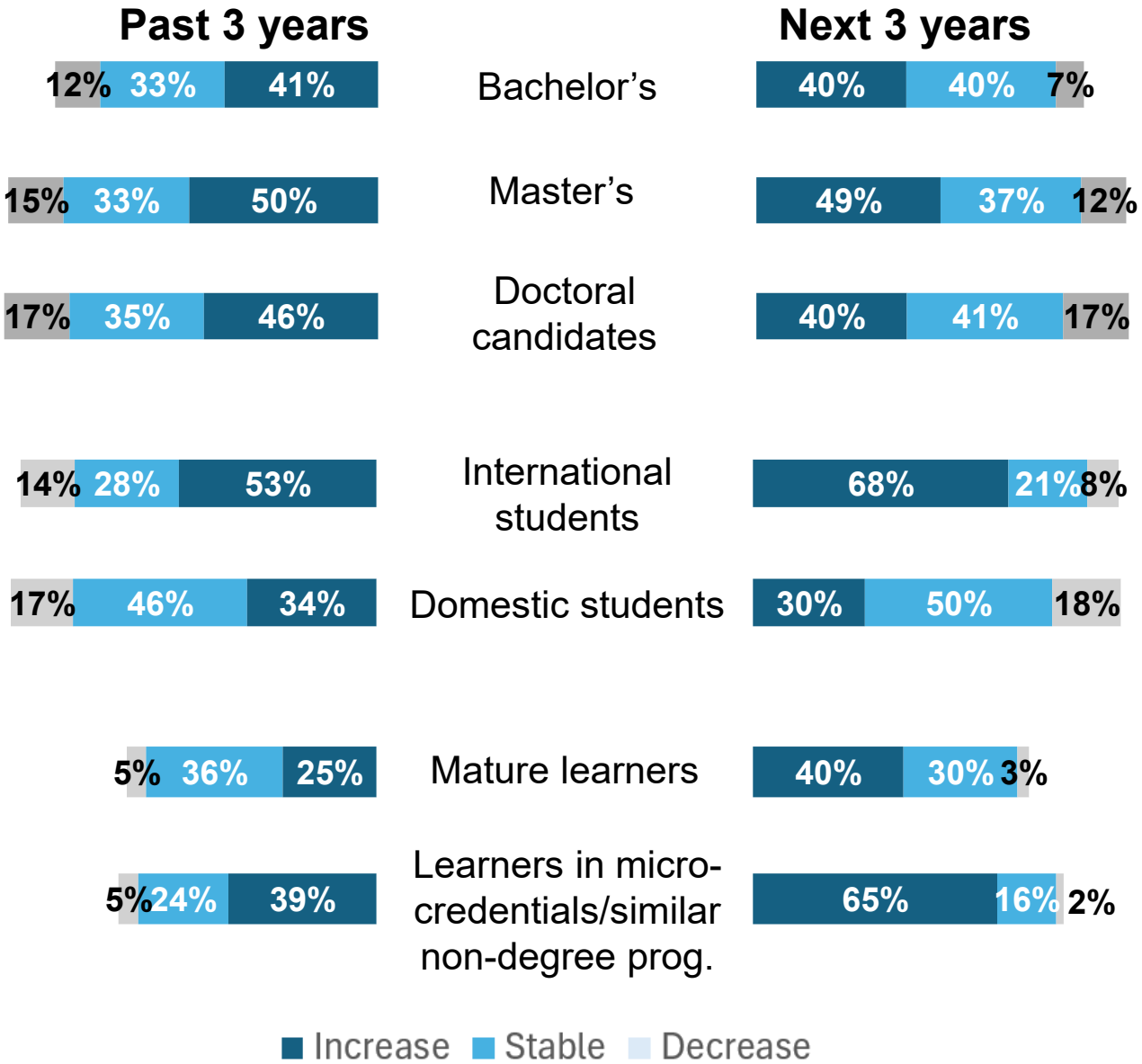
# Adapting to the context

## Dedicated policies or strategies in place




Q.13 Does your institution have dedicated policies or strategies in place in the following areas? Please select one option per line. N=462 (select options)

# Student population changes



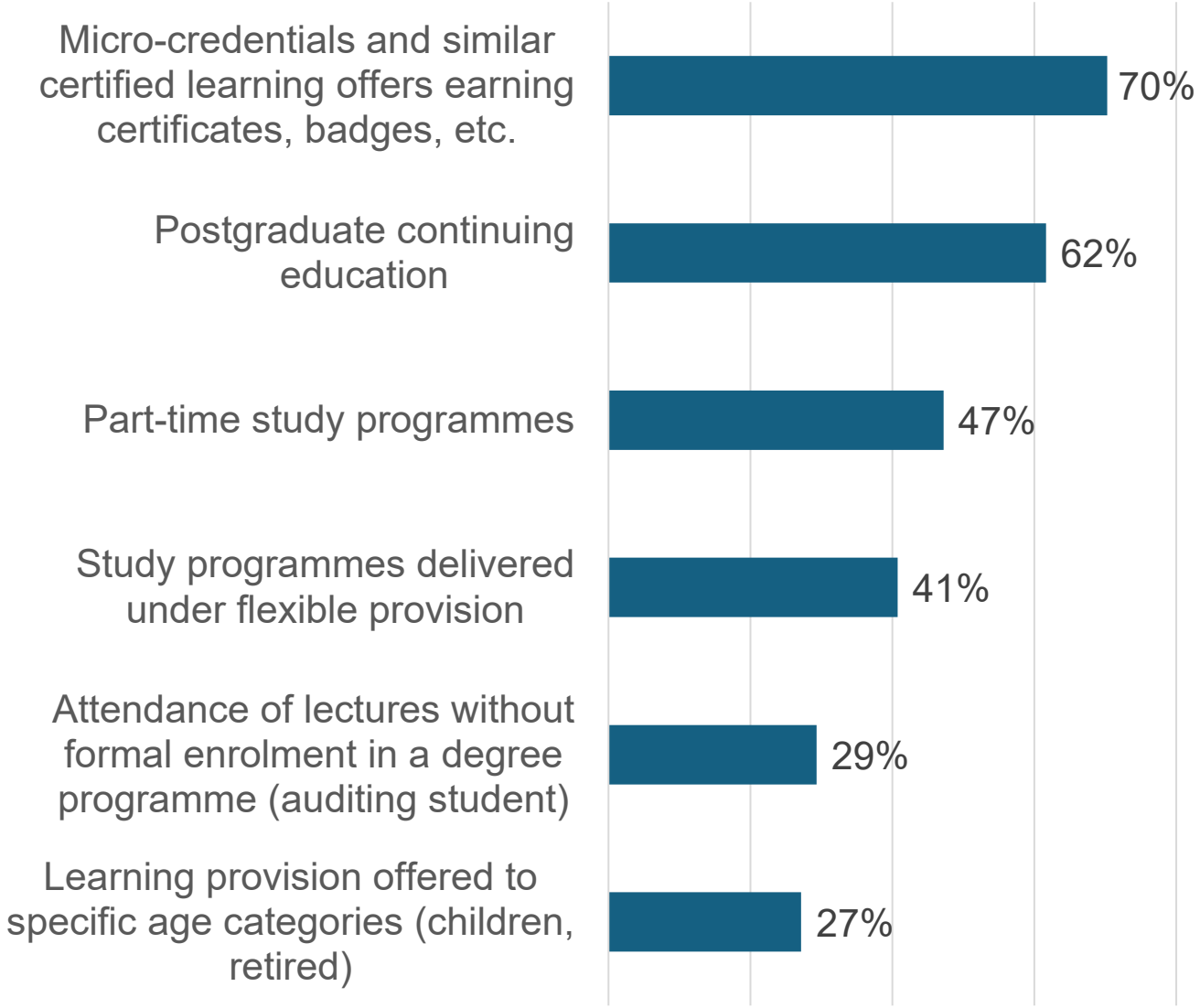

Q.16 How has the student population changed at your institution in the past three years?
Q.17 How do you expect the student population to change at your institution in the next three years?

# 2. Transformation education



# Diversified education offer, beyond degrees:

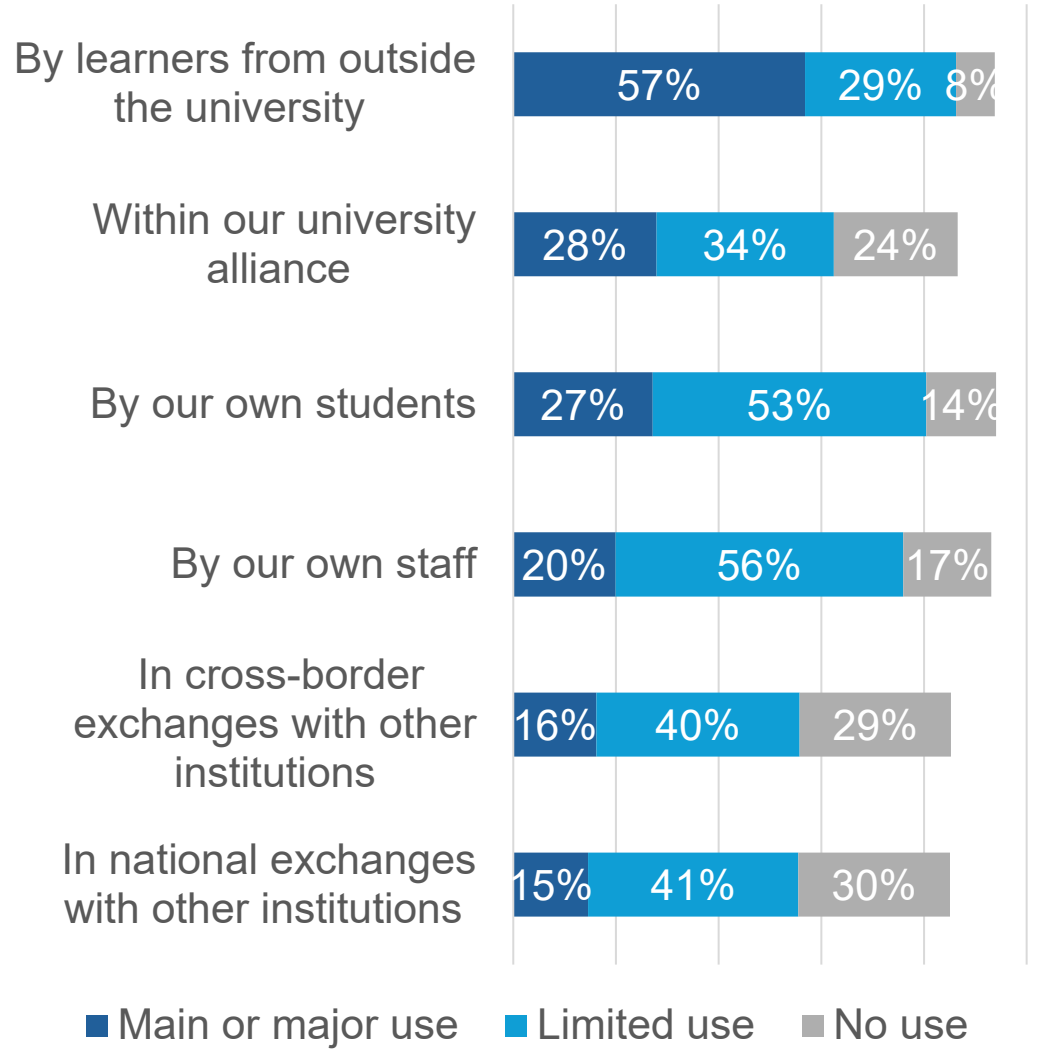
## Lifelong learning activities




Q.38 What kind of activity or area of activity does your institution include under “lifelong learning”?

# Diversified education offer, beyond degrees:

## Current use of micro-credentials



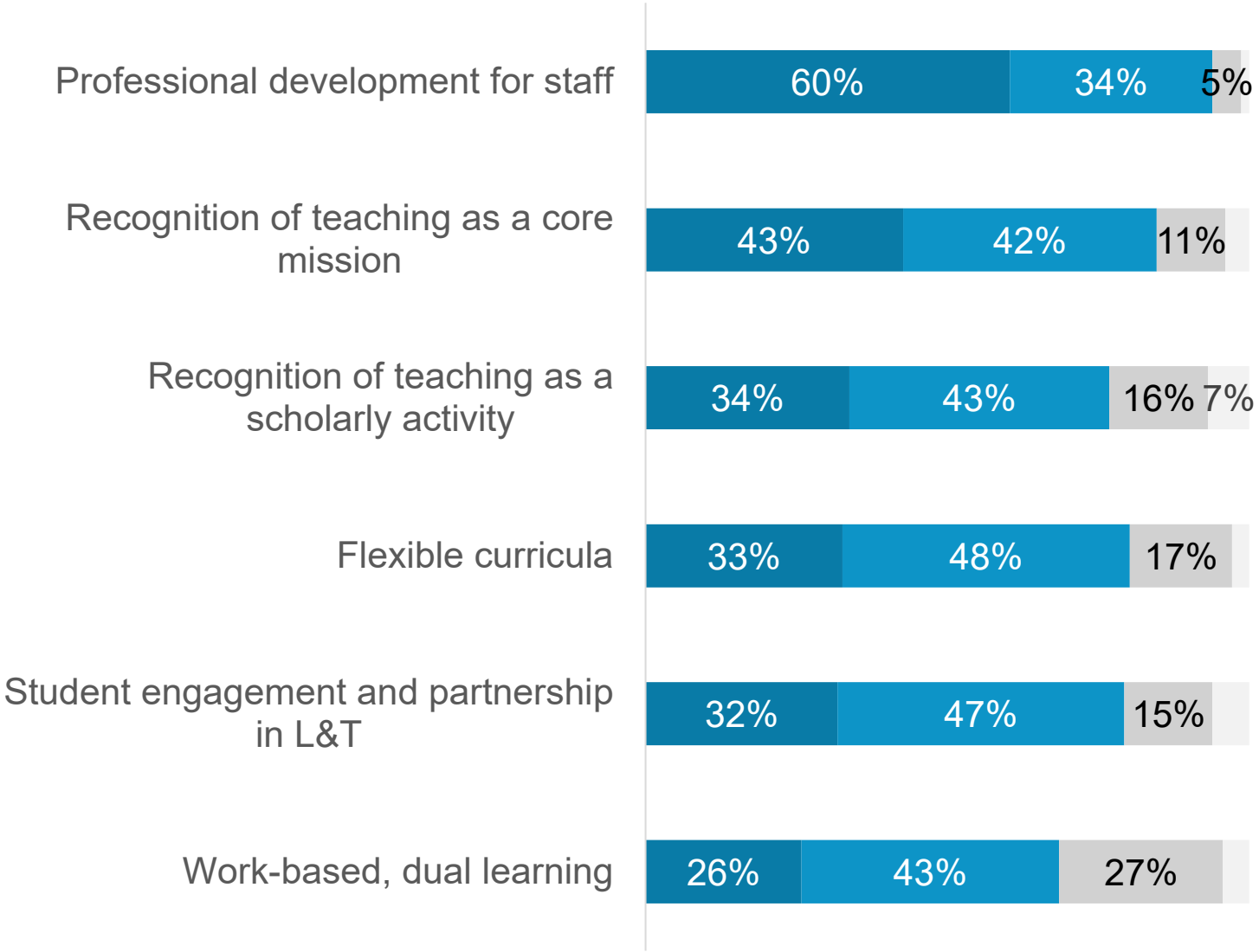

Q.38.1 How are micro-credentials currently used at your institution? Please select one option per line. N= 326

# Major L&T initiatives, past 3 years

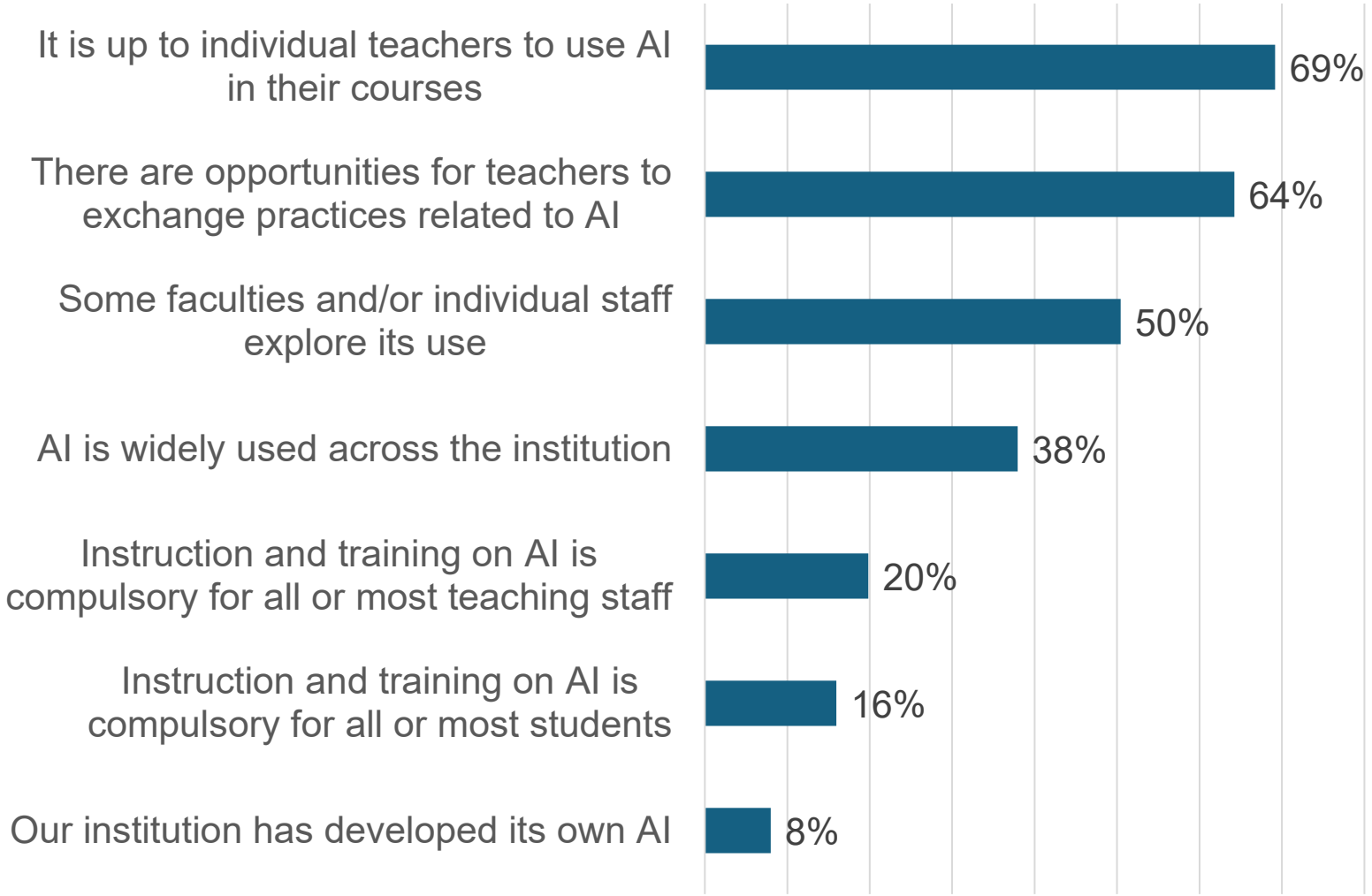
- Teaching as a recognised, professional activity
- Students with more flexible, engaged learning



Q.23 Have you seen major initiatives in the following areas of learning and teaching at your institution over the past three years (2024–2026)?



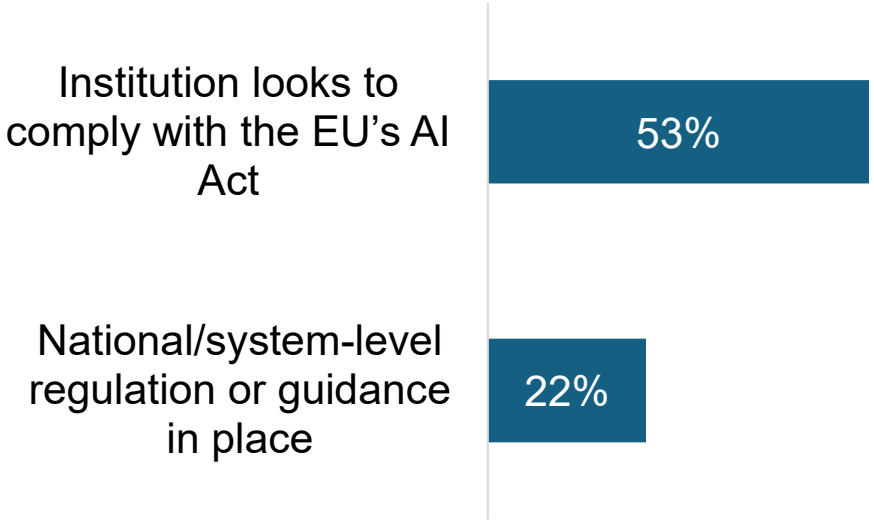
# The use of artificial intelligence in L&T

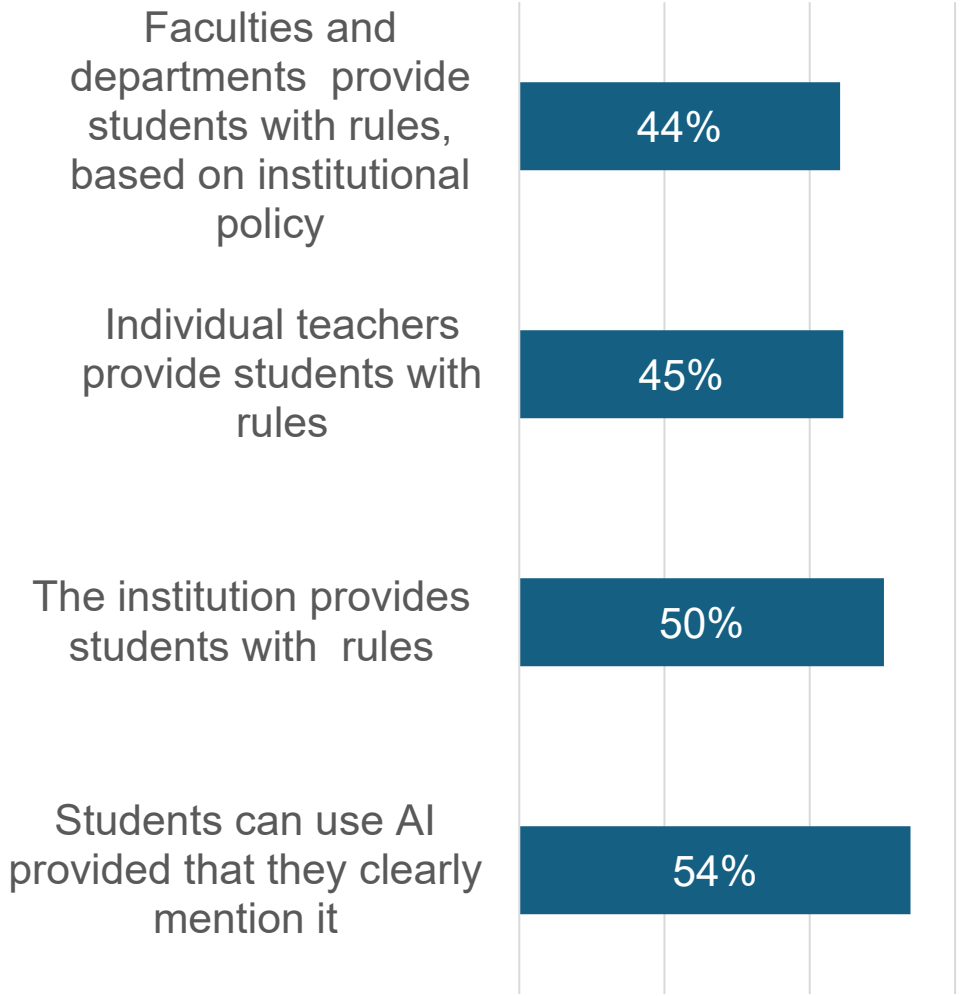



Q.30 How would you describe the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in learning and teaching at your institution? Please select all applicable options

# AI Regulation

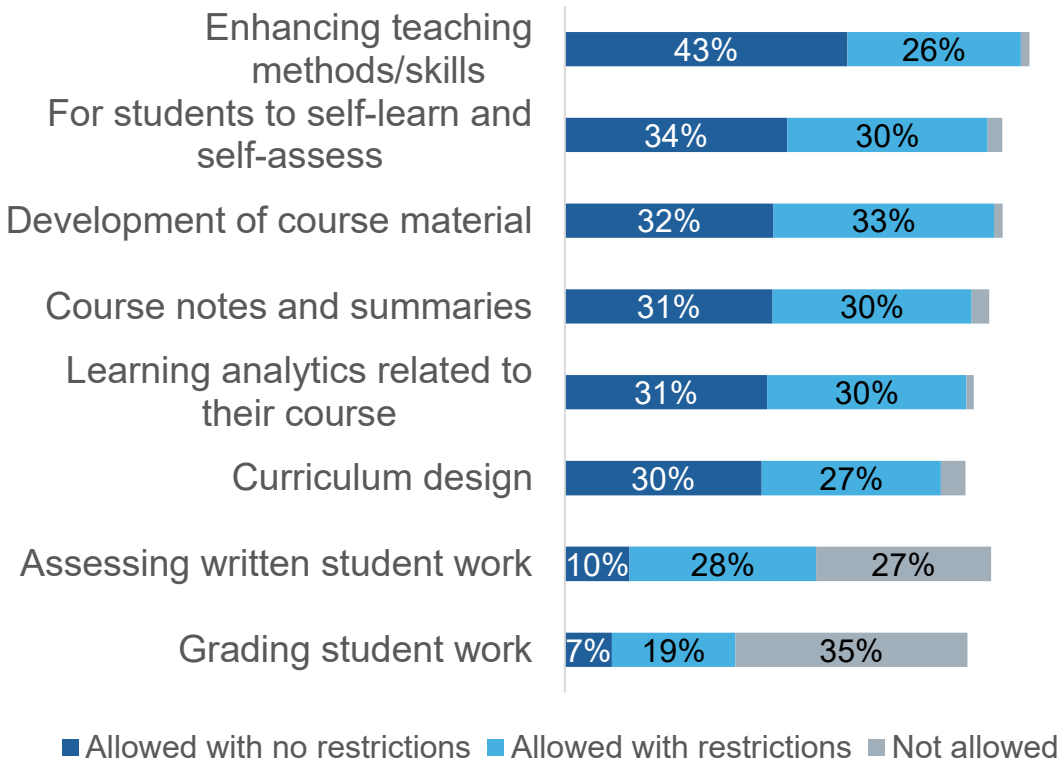
## External & students



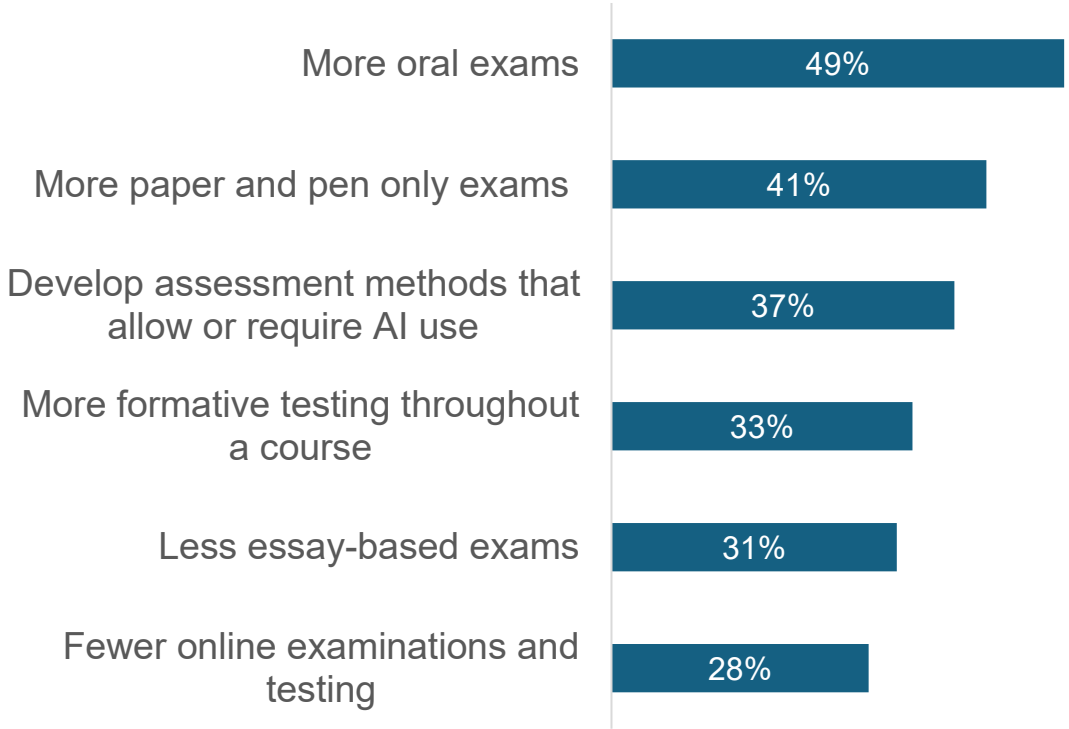




Q.31 How is AI regulated?

# AI use by teachers




# Examinations




Q.32 How does AI impact the way examinations and tests are organised at your institution?
Q.33 Are teachers at your institution allowed to use of AI as an aid for …

# 3. Living by values



# Institutions' approaches to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)

| | |
|---|---|
| High priority for our institution | 83% |
| Dedicated institutional strategy in place | 82% |
| Legal requirements on DEI at national level | 66% |
| Considered in staff recruitment. | 64% |
| Dedicated leadership portfolio | 54% |
| Considered in student recruitment | 53% |

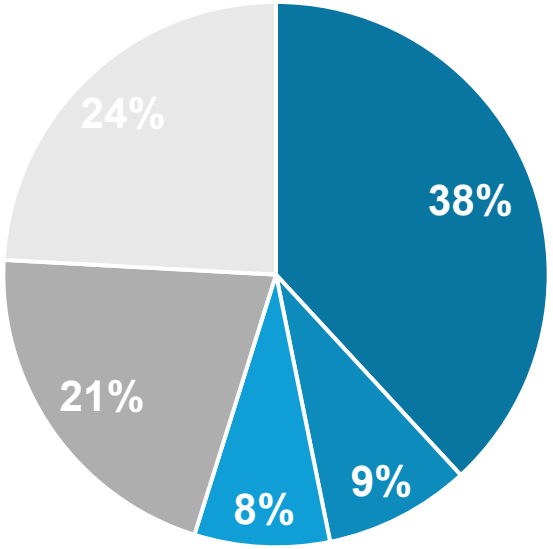
| | |
|---|---|
| Support services for students with underrepresented backgrounds increased | 56% |
| Number of students from underrepresented backgrounds increased | 38% |

Q.43 How does your institution address diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)?
Q46 In the past three years, which of the following trends have you observed regarding DEI?

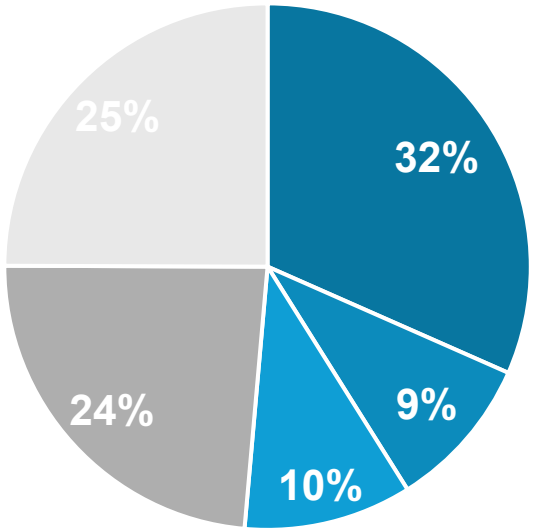
## Solidarity

International talent with an at-risk background

Students at risk




Researchers at risk

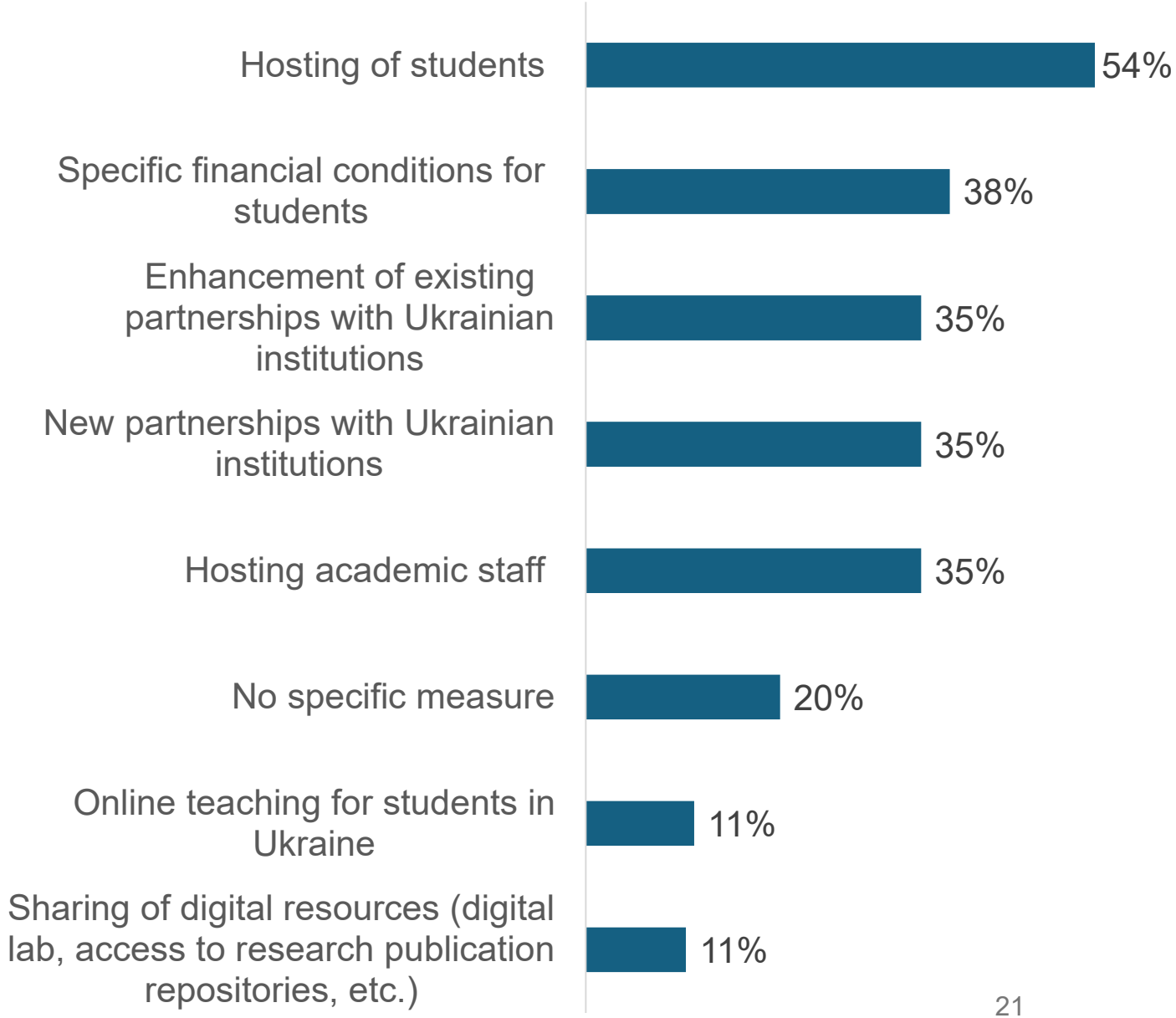



- Yes, currently
- Yes, in the past
- No, but we would like to
- No
- No information

Q.56 Does your institution host researchers or students at risk?

## Solidarity

# Measures in view of the war in Ukraine




Q.57 Does your institution engage in specific measures in view of the war in Ukraine?

# Cooperation

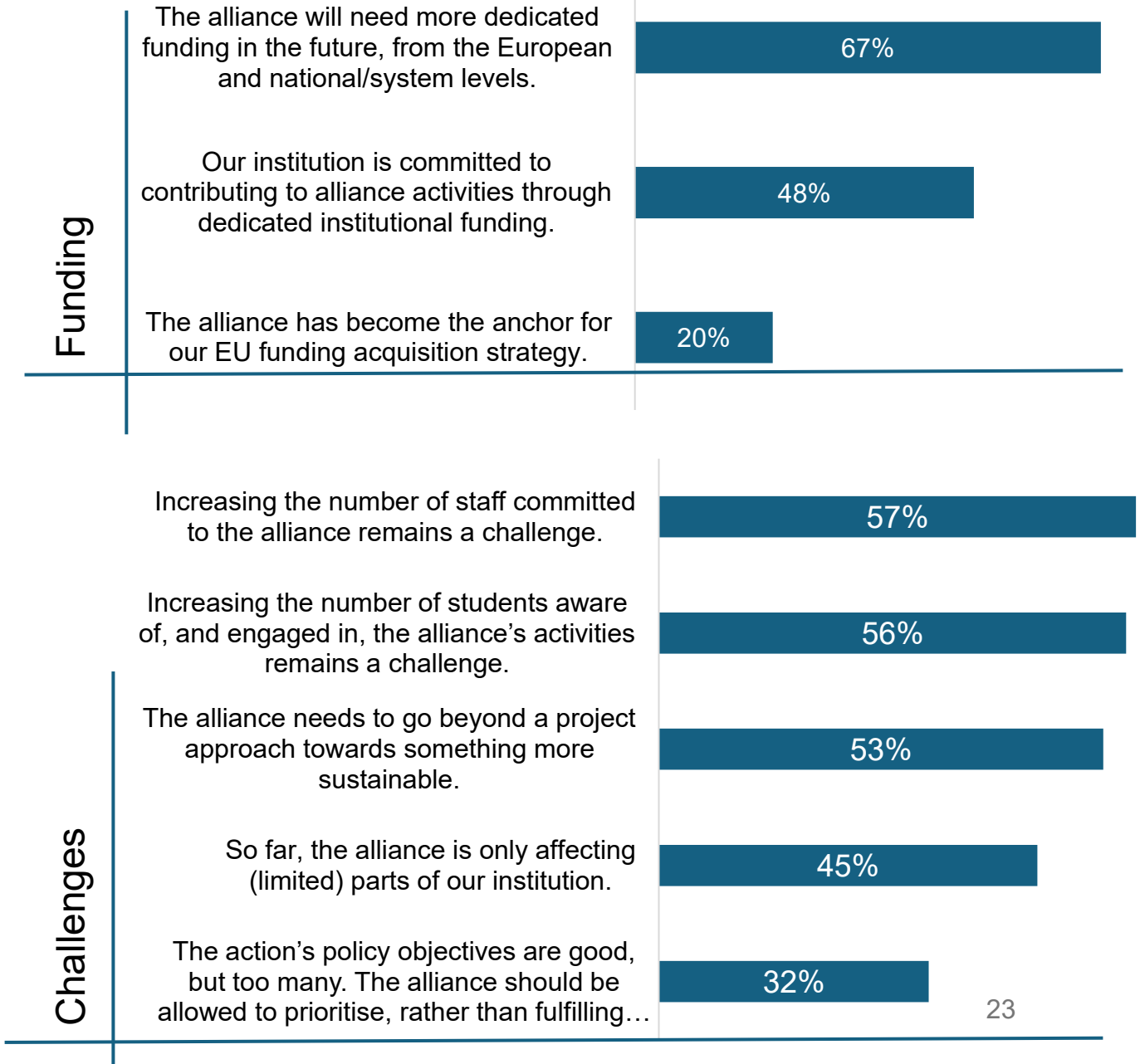
## European university alliance feedback

- Responses from HEIs in 69 of 73 active EUIs
- An average of 3.3 institutions per alliance responded




Q.53 If you are part of a European university alliance, which of the following statements would you agree with? Please select all applicable options.
N=254

# European university alliance feedback




Q.53 If you are part of a European university alliance, which of the following statements would you agree with? Please select all applicable options.
N=254

**Food for thought:**

**What universities are today, and will be tomorrow**

## Education mission of universities

- Increasing importance
- Changes in learning and teaching (digitalisation, AI, flexible offers)
- More diverse learners

## Profound changes

- Who are our students, today? Tomorrow?
- Professional identity of academics
- Impact on the universities' mission, vision and organisation?

## World of uncertainties, with some stable lighthouses

- Growing external pressures
- Trust in the European dimension
- Institutional capacity to adopt or renew internal policies (albeit still work in progress), values-based

## Universities' role in and responsibility for society?

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TRENDS 2024

# Thank you for your attention

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