HEP satisfaction survey 2014

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Executive summary – the positive headlines

- **2014 sees the end of the downward trend in satisfaction we have seen in recent years**. This year, we see a 4% increase in respondents rating their **overall experience of UCAS in the last year** as 'great' or 'good' from 54% to 58%. This turnaround brings us roughly in line with 2012 levels of satisfaction.

- In 2013, the proportion rating their overall experience of UCAS as 'bad' or 'awful' was 15% (a percentage increase of 150% on the previous year when it was 7%). However, in 2014, 0% of respondents had a 'bad' or 'awful' experience.

- The biggest increase in overall satisfaction is amongst IT staff – 47% up from 26% in 2013.

- Just over half of respondents (53%) say their **overall experience of UCAS has got better over the last 12 months**.

- Respondents are feeling more valued by UCAS – there has been a 34% uplift (47% up from 35% in 2013) in 'agree' or 'strongly agree' responses to the statement **'UCAS values its relationship with my provider'**.

- **Satisfaction with the customer service** received from the Relationship Managers is particularly high at 81%, followed by the HEP Team (71%) and the Technical Relationship Managers (66%).

- Just under two thirds of respondents (57%) are 'mostly' or 'extremely' satisfied with the **level of UCAS' engagement** with them.

- Satisfaction with **UCAS' overall communication with HEPs** sits at just over half (53%) of respondents. The weekly bulletin received the highest satisfaction rating at 55%.

- 87% of respondents are 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied that **UCAS achieves its vision**; up 6% from last year. The percentages are only slightly lower for the two parts of the mission – 82% for **'delivering admissions services that help applicants make the right choices, for the right reasons and with the right outcomes',** and 80% for **'creating value for members through shared services'.**

- There is a 40% uplift in the percentage of respondents who are 'fairly' or 'very' satisfied that UCAS is living its **'commitment'** value – 87% up from 62% in 2013. Uplifts are also seen in the **'outcomes'** and **'customer logic'** values – 17% and 19% uplifts respectively.

- Agreement to the statement **'The capitation fee represents good value for money'** has seen an uplift of 80% between 2012 and 2014 (from 15% to 27%).

Executive summary – the not so positive

- The difference between 2013 and 2014 of those who 'mostly' or 'strongly' agree with the statement '**UCAS provides an efficient service to my provider**' is just 1%, suggesting respondents are not seeing year-on-year improvements to UCAS' efficiency.

- The scores for the statement **'Overall, UCAS is easy to do business with'** are low – just 45% of respondents 'mostly' or 'strongly' agree. This increases slightly to 47% for admissions staff – but drops steeply to just 28% for IT staff.

- Almost two fifths of respondents (37%) are 'mostly' or 'very' dissatisfied with **Course Collect**. Like last year, it continues to be UCAS customers' number one frustration. In addition, the frequency of technical issues with UCAS products more generally is an area of concern to respondents and has an impact on the trust the sector has in UCAS' technical reliability .

- Respondents have experienced difficulties with conflicting advice from staff. The quality of customer support is inconsistent across the organisation and within individual teams.

- The majority of issues relate to IT infrastructure and product usability, rather than UCAS staff and the customer experience.

- In response to the question **'What is the ONE biggest thing that UCAS could do to improve your customer experience?'**, by far the most frequently mentioned is Course Collect. The quality and quantity of change that is required to make this product fit for purpose ranges from 'improve' to 'replace'.

- Other suggestions for improving satisfaction are:
    - Charges for and usefulness of current UCAS Media data provisions
    - The need for UCAS to act as well as listen to its customers
    - Improve the availability of test data
    - Refocus UCAS back to core services (i.e. reversal of the perceived diversification into non-traditional areas)
    - Increasing staff knowledge and expertise
    - Improving the relationship (specifically trust) HEPs have with UCAS.

Research objectives and methodology

Research objectives

- **To understand the main causes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst UCAS members and other HE providers, with respect to:**

  - **our products, services and HEP-facing teams**
  - **our communications and engagement with HE providers**
  - **our vision, mission and values**
  - **general perceptions of UCAS**
  - **improving satisfaction**

- To measure satisfaction against the benchmark (previous HE provider satisfaction surveys conducted in 2011, 2012 and 2013).

- To identify priority areas for HEP engagement in the year ahead.

Methodology

- The survey was conducted by the Market Intelligence Team between 1 December 2014 and 29 January 2015.

- 2,113 contacts at HE providers (excluding VCs) were emailed the survey link. The distribution list consists of 536 UCAS correspondents, 344 international office contacts, 515 IT contacts, and 717 UCAS Media sourced contacts. There were 276 survey responses.

- It was not our objective to identify individuals or HEPs as the survey could be completed anonymously. The survey comprised both closed questions and free text responses.

- The design of the HEP satisfaction survey 2014 was revised, with the intent of reducing the number of questions asked, whilst focusing on the key areas of UCAS activity. Some questions were removed and a handful of new questions added. Questions included satisfaction with specific UCAS products, services and teams, and with perceptions of UCAS' vision, mission and values. A number of questions remained unchanged, meaning we can look at trends across the last three years.

- Please note that throughout this report, unless otherwise stated, the year-on-year differences quoted are percentage uplifts and declines rather than percentage point differences. For satisfaction questions, where 'don't know/not applicable' was an answer option, the results exclude those who gave this response.

Respondent profile

# Most respondents are based at English universities

- 83% of respondents work at an English provider, but providers based in Scotland (9%), Wales (5%) and Northern Ireland (1%) are also represented.

- The profile is similar to last year, although in 2013 there was a slightly larger percentage of respondents from England (86%) and fewer from Scotland (8%).

- 2% (just six respondents) are based in further education colleges; a percentage decrease of 92% from last year.

- The respondent cohort, therefore, represents for the most part the views of English universities only.

In which country is your institution located?
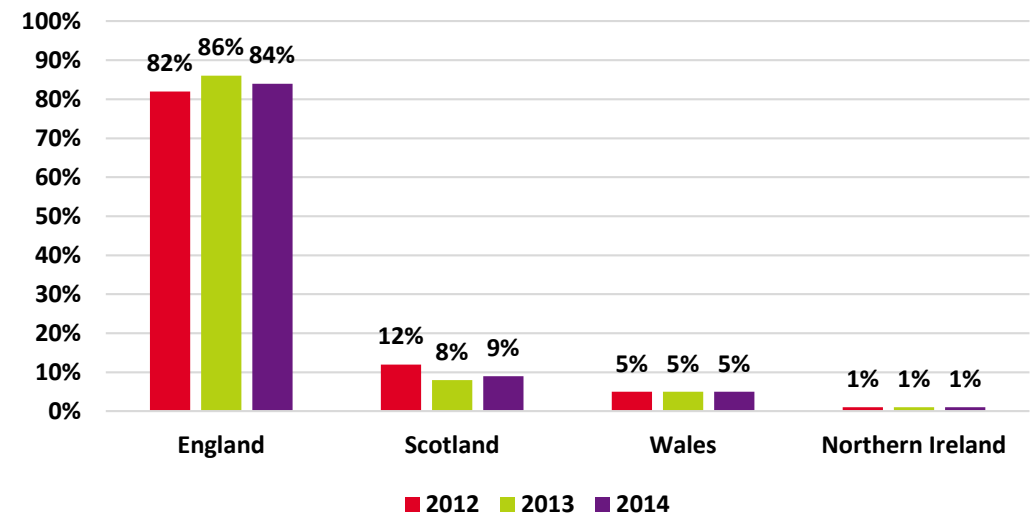
Respondent base: 2012 (192), 2013 (504), 2014 (276)

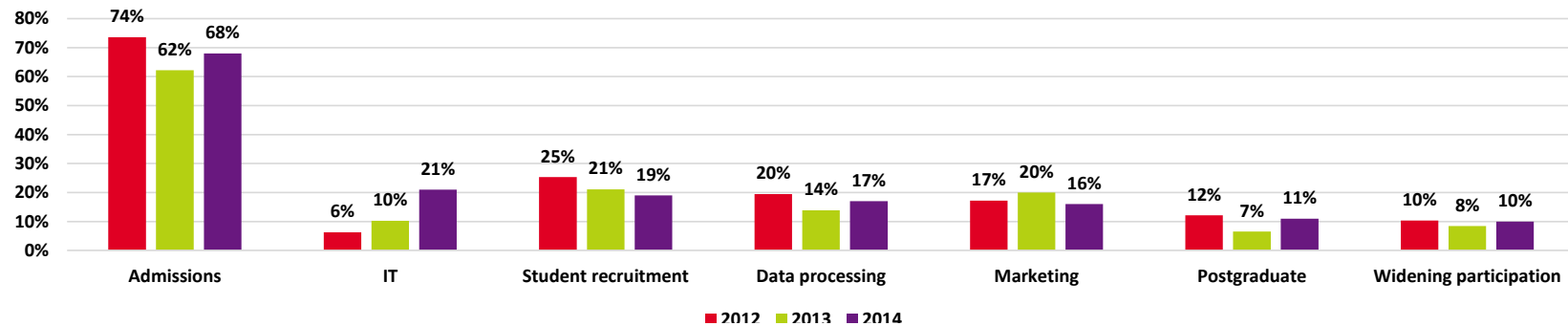**Which of these provider types do you work at?**
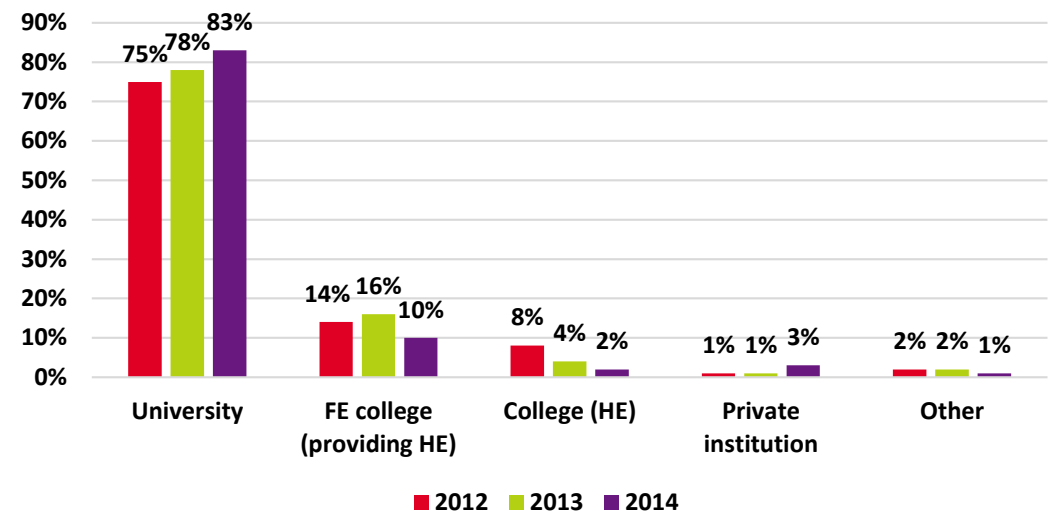
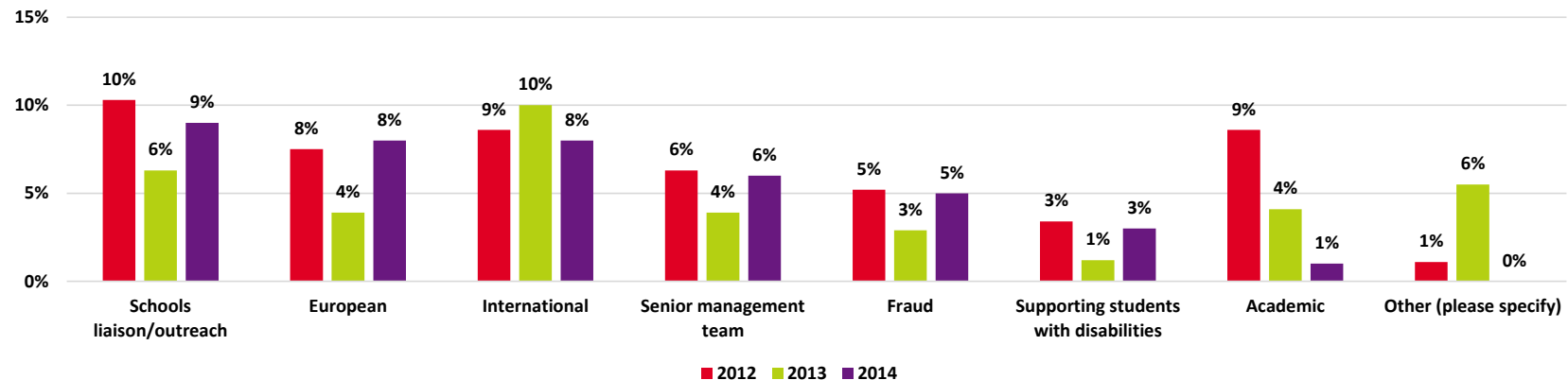Respondent base: 2012 (192), 2013 (503), 2013 (274)

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More than twice as many respondents have an IT element in their job role this year

- The proportion of respondents with an IT function in their role has more than doubled from last year, from 10% to 21%.

- There is a 6% increase in the number of respondents with an admissions function in their role.

- There is an increase of respondents with a European function to their role, whilst also a sharp decrease in academic staff.

Which of these best describes your own area of work? (Please tick all that apply.)

	Admissions	IT	Student recruitment	Data processing	Marketing	Postgraduate	Widening participation
2012	74%	6%	25%	20%	17%	12%	10%
2013	62%	10%	21%	14%	20%	7%	8%
2014	68%	21%	19%	17%	16%	11%	10%

Which of these best describes your own area of work? (Please tick all that apply.) - continued.

	Schools liaison/outreach	European	International	Senior management team	Fraud	Supporting students with disabilities	Academic	Other (please specify)
2012	10%	8%	9%	6%	5%	3%	9%	1%
2013	6%	4%	10%	4%	3%	1%	4%	6%
2014	9%	8%	8%	6%	5%	3%	1%	0%

Respondent base: 2012 (174), 2013 (489)

Fewer senior admissions and more IT staff completed the survey this year

- The proportion of respondents working in a senior admissions role has decreased sharply from 41% in 2012 to just 20% in 2014. The percentage of respondents whose job title includes IT has seen an increase from 2% in 2012 to 15% in 2014.

- The percentage of respondents occupying operational admissions roles has remained the same as 2013 at 35%.

- Fewer academic staff completed the survey this year – just 1%, compared to 7% in 2012.

- The proportion working in marketing/market research and operational admissions has also decreased slightly.

What is your job title?

Legend:
- Academic
- Student adviser / support
- School liason
- Other
- Marketing / MR
- IT
- Admissions - senior
- Admissions - operational
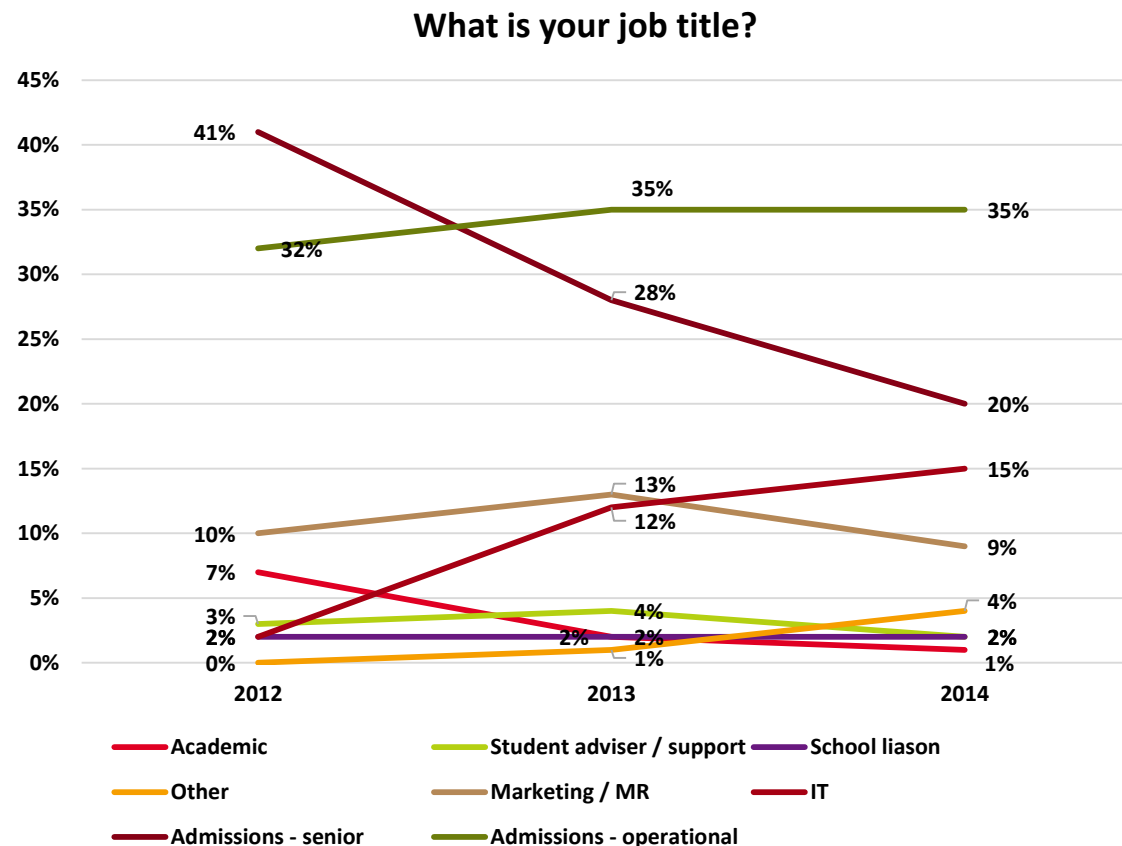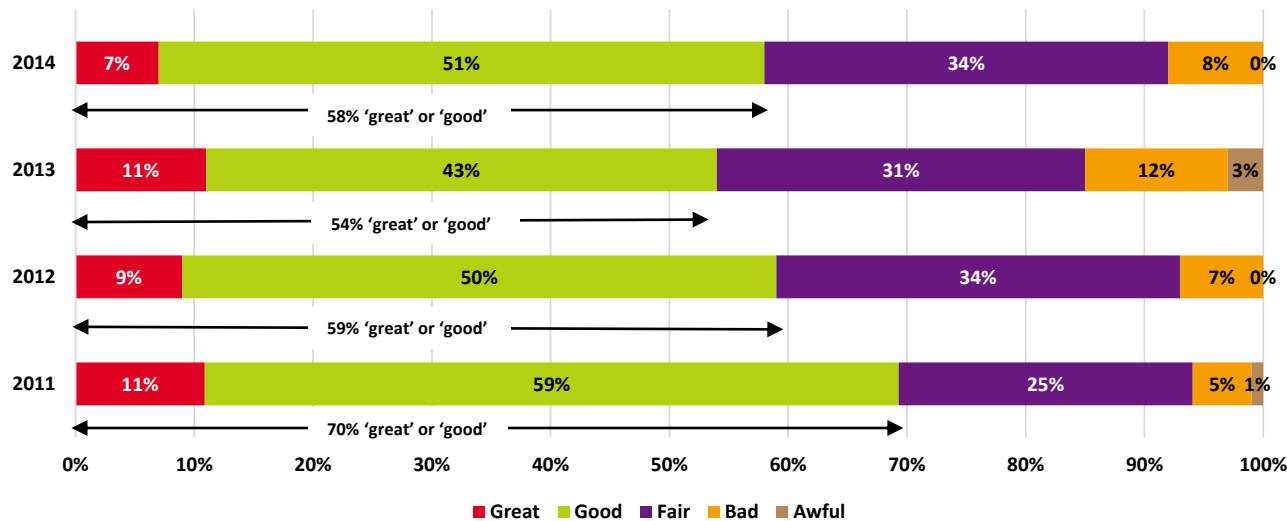
Respondent base: 2012 (149), 2013 (433), 2014 (255)

Overall satisfaction with UCAS

2014 marks the end of the downward trend in satisfaction we have seen in recent years

- In 2013, the proportion of HE provider staff rating their overall experience of UCAS as 'great' or 'good' was 54%; a decline of 9% since 2012 and a decline of 23% since 2011. This year sees an increase of 4%.

- This turnaround brings us roughly in line with 2012 levels of satisfaction.

How would you rate your overall experience of UCAS in the last year?

Respondent base: 2014 (207), 2013 (378), 2012 (139), 2011 (355)

How would you rate your overall experience of UCAS in the last year?
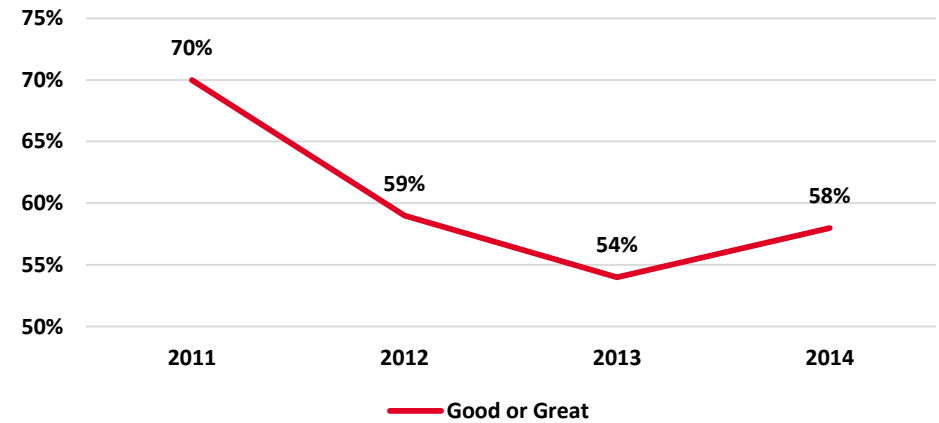

Respondent base: 2014 (207), 2013 (378), 2012 (139), 2011 (355)

- In 2013, the proportion rating their overall experience of UCAS as 'bad' or 'awful' was 15%; an uplift of 150% since 2011.

- In 2014, 0% of respondents had an 'awful' experience and 8% had a 'bad' experience.

# This year sees an 81% uplift in satisfaction amongst IT staff and 13% uplift amongst admissions staff

- We see the biggest increase in overall satisfaction amongst IT staff – 47% up from 26% in 2013.

- An increase of 7% is also seen amongst admissions staff; a 13% uplift on last year.

How would you rate your overall experience of UCAS in the last year?

	Admissions	IT
2014	60%	47%
2013	53%	26%

2014 2013
% 'Good' or 'Great'
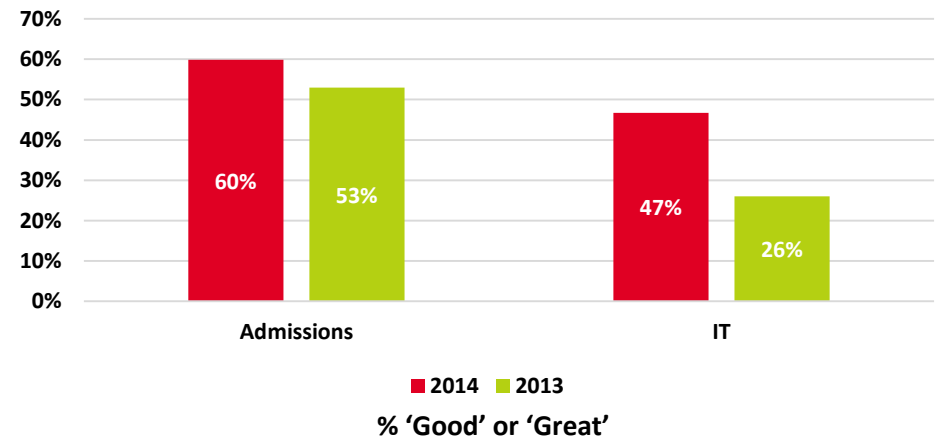
Respondent base: 2014 (277), 2013 (378)

How would you rate your overall experience of UCAS in the last year?

	Named correspondent	Not a named correspondent
2014	62%	46%
2013	56%	52%

2014 2013
% 'Good' or 'Great'
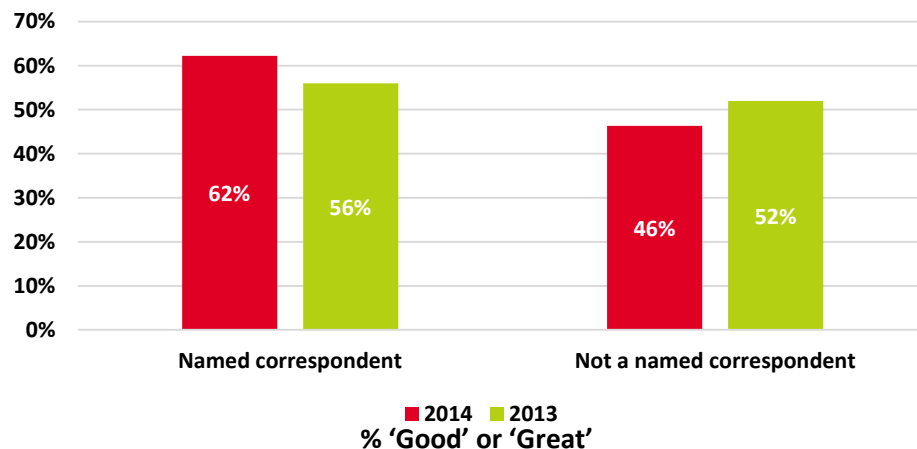
Respondent base: 2014 (277), 2013 (378)

- Whilst there is a 6% increase (an 11% uplift on last year) in overall satisfaction amongst named UCAS correspondents, the picture is reversed for respondents who are not UCAS correspondents.

- We see a drop of 6%, amounting to an 11% decrease, amongst respondents who are not named correspondents.

- This suggests perceptions of UCAS vary by role function and levels of experience.

Experience of C&C has dropped 2% from last year – but risen by 21% for IT staff (a 48% uplift)

- This year's Confirmation and Clearing overall satisfaction rating is 67%; a drop of 2% on last year.

- Whilst there is an increase in satisfaction amongst IT staff of 21% - an uplift of 48% on last year - satisfaction amongst admissions staff has dropped by 4%. This may be due to the communication issues surrounding the ABL results transfer.

How would you rate your experience of C&C this year?
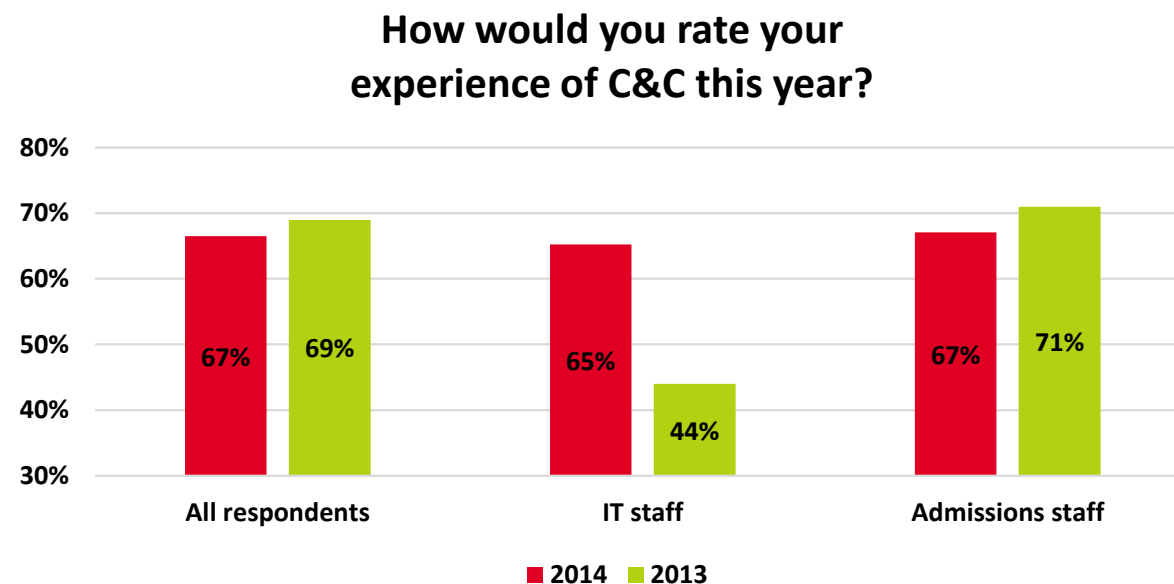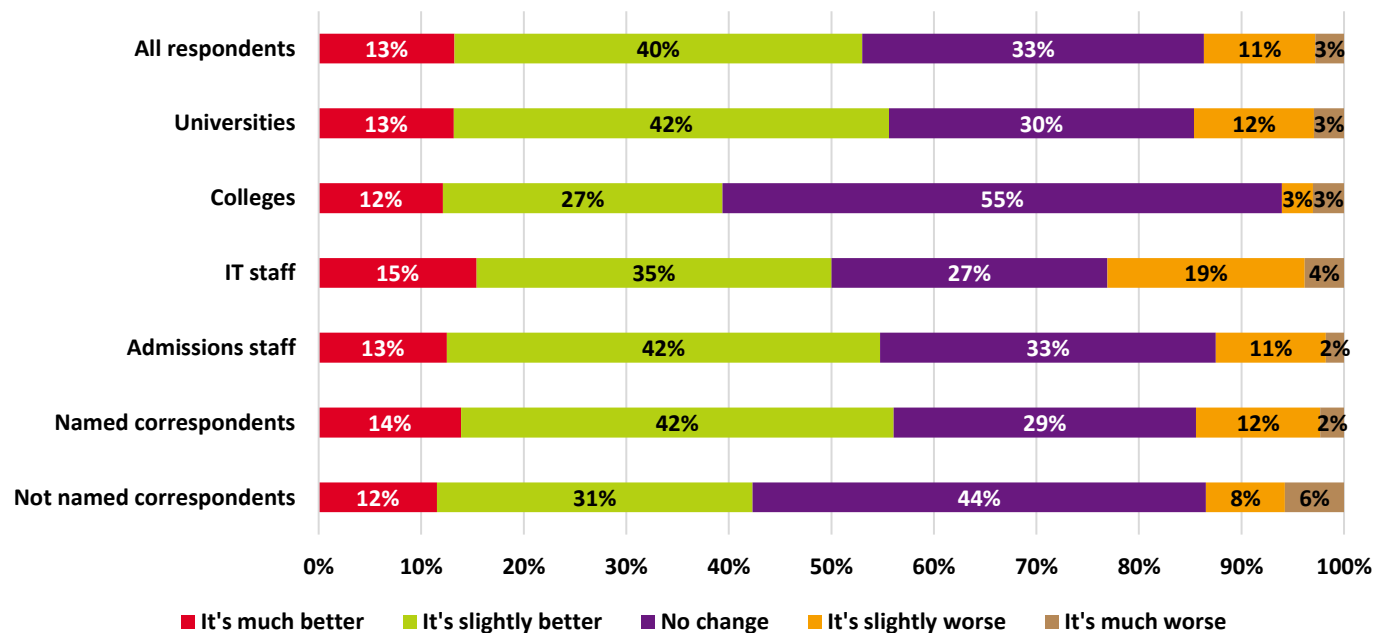

Respondent base: 2014 (234), 2013 (453)

Just over half of respondents say their experience of UCAS was better than in 2013 (53%)

- 40% of all respondents have seen a slight improvement and 13% believe their experience has substantially improved.

- A third (33%) have seen no change, whilst 14% believe their experience has worsened.

- The below breakdown is provided to give an indication only – the categories with the biggest deviation are those with the lowest response rate ('Colleges', 'IT staff' and 'Not named correspondents' all have substantially lower response rates than the other categories).

Has your overall experience of UCAS got better or worse over the last 12 months?

	It's much better	It's slightly better	No change	It's slightly worse	It's much worse
All respondents	13%	40%	33%	11%	3%
Universities	13%	42%	30%	12%	3%
Colleges	12%	27%	55%	3%	3%
IT staff	15%	35%	27%	19%	4%
Admissions staff	13%	42%	33%	11%	2%
Named correspondents	14%	42%	29%	12%	2%
Not named correspondents	12%	31%	44%	8%	6%

Legend: ■ It's much better ■ It's slightly better ■ No change ■ It's slightly worse ■ It's much worse

Respondent base: All respondents (249), Universities (205), Colleges (33), IT staff (52), Admissions staff (168), Named correspondents (173), Not named correspondents (52)

The statement 'UCAS values its relationship with my provider' sees an increase of 12% (a 34% uplift) in 'mostly/strongly agree' responses from last year

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Legend:
- My provider values its relationship with UCAS
- UCAS values its relationship with my provider
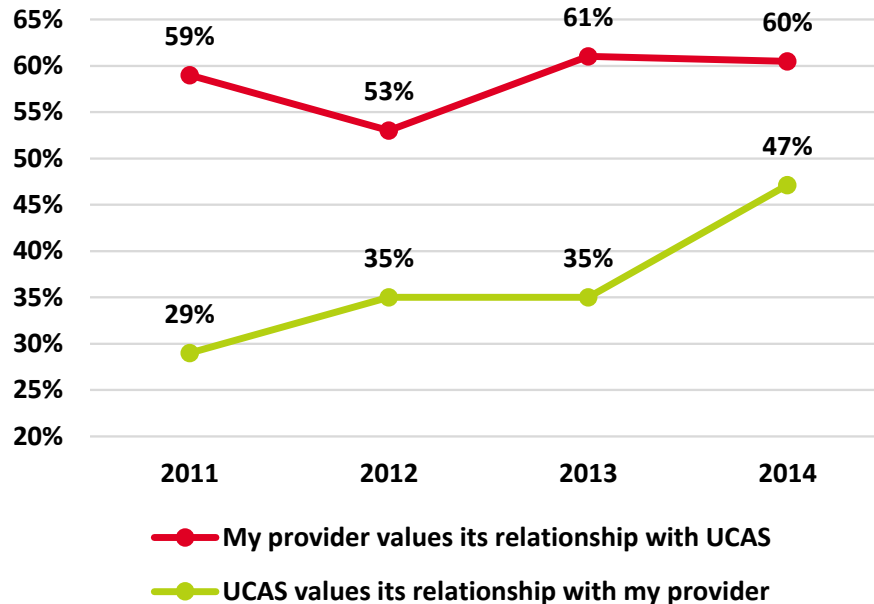
Respondent base: 247

- Possibly due to a combination of UCAS' ongoing drive to engage its customers and to listen to, and then act to resolve, their problems and issues, the increase in respondents who strongly/mostly agree that UCAS values its relationship with its providers is highly encouraging.

- Whilst we see an increase in the perception of how UCAS values its customers, it is interesting to note that the providers perception of UCAS' value remains relatively static from last year (61% to 60%) but still with a 13% difference: providers value UCAS more than UCAS values them, so HEPs appear to believe.

- Investing resource to align these two (paired) measures more closely has the potential to alter the relationship dynamic to the benefit of all.

- As in previous years, a sense that providers lack trust in UCAS' ability to provide a reliable service pervades the results of the survey.

Further effort is required to ensure UCAS provides an efficient service and is easy to do business with

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
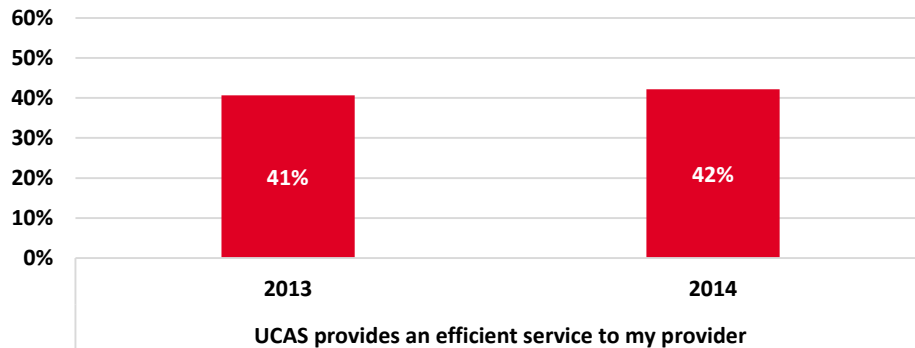
Respondent base: 2013 (135), 2014 (245)

- The difference between 2013 and 2014 for those who mostly/strongly agree with the statement 'UCAS provides an efficient service to my provider' is just 1%.

- It suggests that respondents are not aware of the improvements UCAS has made over the last year in efficiencies.

- The scores for the statement 'Overall, UCAS is easy to do business with' are also low – just 45% of respondents mostly – strongly agree with this statement.

- This increases slightly to 47% for admissions staff but drops steeply to 28% for IT staff.

- It is clear that the customer experience is very much determined by role function and, as in 2013, staff at providers with an IT role function have a far more negative view of UCAS than their admissions-based peers.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
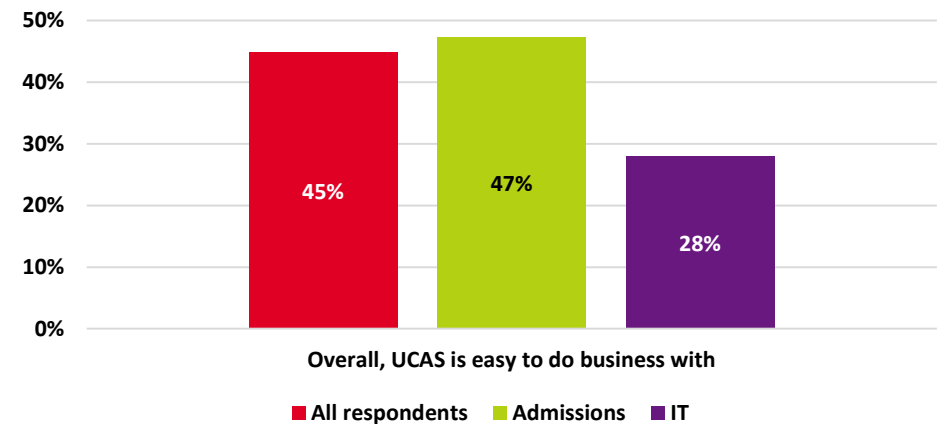
Respondent base: All respondents (247), IT (50), Admissions (167)

UCAS' people

Just under two thirds (58%) of respondents agree that UCAS staff understand the role of admissions and the HE sector

- Analysis of the free text responses highlights that:
  - respondents found this question was difficult to answer – the word 'patchy' is used on several separate occasions to describe how UCAS staff's understanding of admissions and the HE sector is perceived
  - there's a perception that there has been an intake of senior management without any HE experience in recent years, which is perceived negatively
  - staff turnover is also mentioned
  - Closely linked to the above, it is felt that to understand our customers thoroughly, staff need to have expert knowledge of a broad and disparate sector.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the staff working at UCAS have a good understanding of the role of admissions and the HE sector?

58%	27% 7% 3% 5%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Mostly - strongly agree   ■ Somewhat agree   ■ Somewhat disagree   ■ Mostly - strongly disagree   ■ Don't know

Respondent base: 237
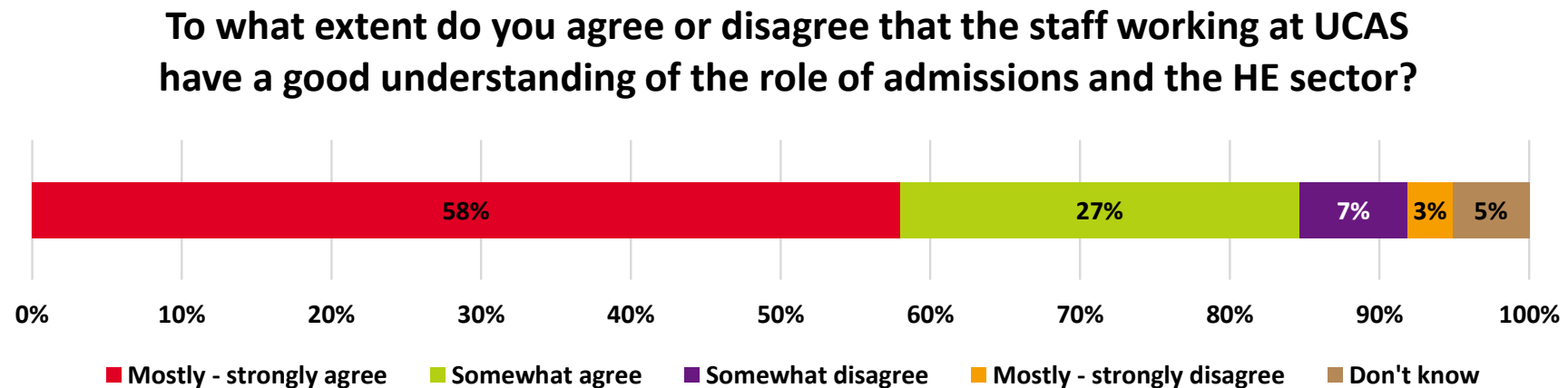
Satisfaction with Relationship Managers and the HEP Team is high

- Relationship Managers in particular are deemed highly effective at 81%, and are highly valued by UCAS' customers Whilst the HEP Team is clearly highly valued, it received mixed feedback in the free text. This is due to perceived inconsistencies in their knowledge and experience of UCAS systems and processes – due, it seems, to the recently broadened remit of the team this year.

- The TRMs are deemed effective and are now starting to fully embed into UCAS.

- The Data Collection Team received positive commentary overall, though there is some free text suggesting that Course Collect makes their job harder than it should be.

- Nobody who commented knew who the Scheme Delivery Team was.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the customer service you receive from...?

|	Mostly - very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Mostly - very dissatisfied
Your Relationship Manager	81%	6%	11%	1%	2%
The HEP Team in our Contact Centre	71%	17%	7%	4%	1%
Your Technical Relationship Manager	66%	11%	18%	1%	3%
The Data Collection Team	59%	20%	11%	7%	2%
The Professional Development Team	43%	15%	40%	1%	0%
The UCAS Media sales account managers	40%	16%	38%	4%	2%
The Scheme Delivery Team	35%	15%	46%	3%	1%
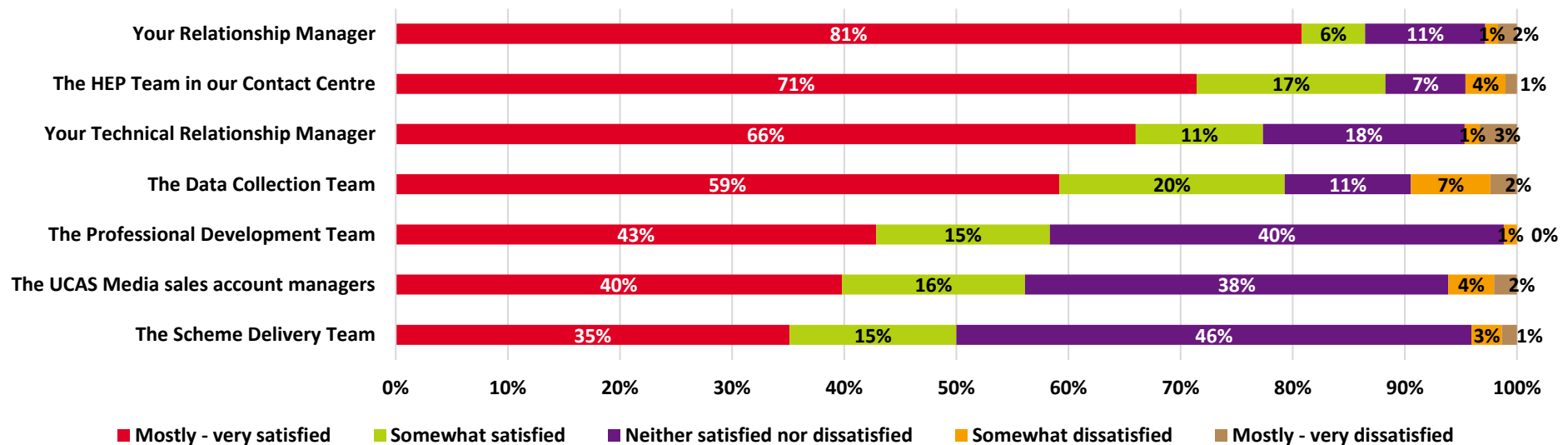
Respondent base: 236

Respondents with an IT function give UCAS customer-facing teams lower satisfaction ratings than other role functions

- Respondents report, on the whole, similar experiences of UCAS customer-facing teams regardless of their role function.

- However, this is not the case for IT staff who have very different experiences of the three teams they have regular contact with (HEP Team, TRMs and Data Collection).

- Provider staff with an IT role function gave a low satisfaction score for the HEP and Data Collection Teams in particular.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the customer service you receive from...?
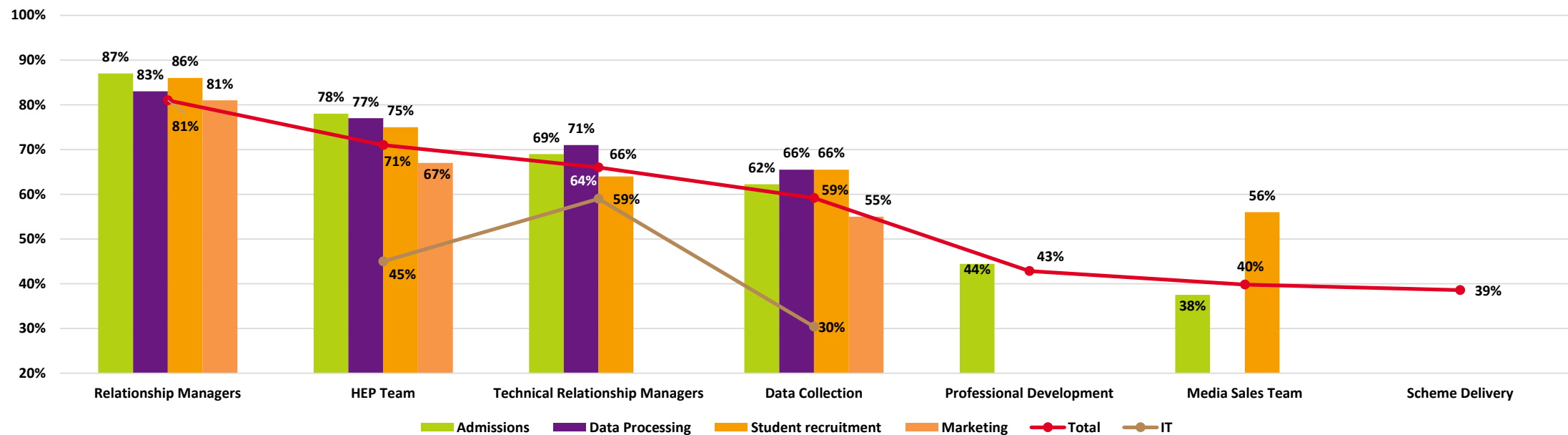
'Very satisfied' and 'Mostly satisfied', by respondent role function
Respondent base: 276
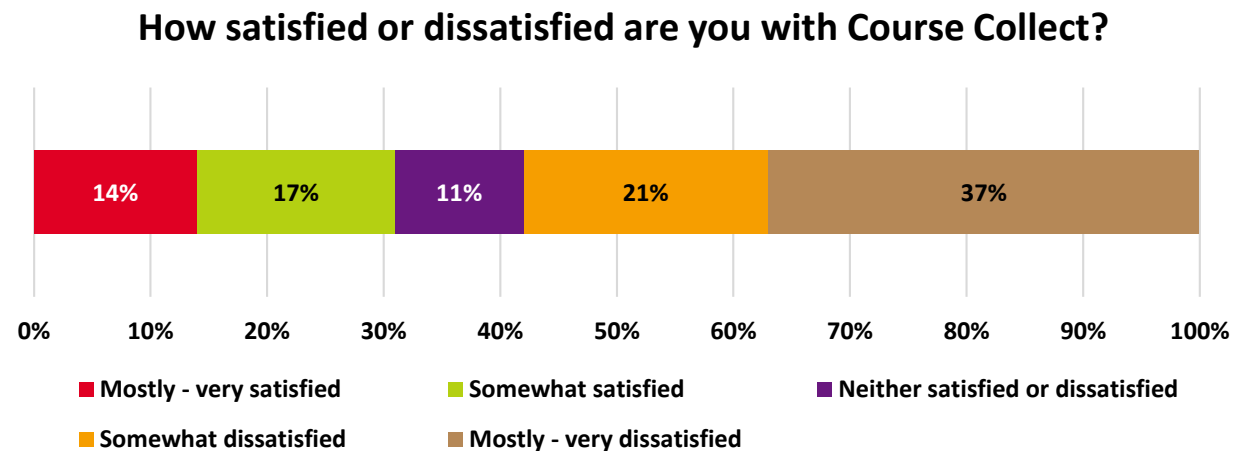
UCAS' products and services

UK Qualifications Guide receives the highest satisfaction score at 65%, whilst Course Collect receives the lowest at 14%

Rank	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with...?	Very satisfied or fairly satisfied	Fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
1	The UK Qualifications Guide	**65%**	2%
2	Fraud and Verification Services	64%	2%
3	Events	62%	1%
4	International Qualifications Guide	60%	1%
5	The Awarding Body Linkage (ABL)	56%	2%
6	Link products	52%	5%
7	The qualification information profiles (QIPs)	50%	1%
8	Commercial data and analysis	49%	4%
9	Data and Analysis Services	47%	3%
10	Training for HEPs	44%	4%
11	The UCAS website, ucas.com	43%	8%
12	The UCAS search tool	37%	15%
13	Commercial advertising	33%	9%
14	Contextual Data Service	29%	5%
15	Course Collect	14%	**37%**

Respondent base: 276

UCAS

Almost two fifths (37%) are mostly/very dissatisfied with Course Collect

- Course Collect continues to be the number one frustration among HEPs.

- Whilst providers recognise – and value – the work of Courses 2B and other relevant streams, they do not feel it is enough to make the product fit for purpose.

- Throughout the survey, it receives by far the most criticism.

- When asked what one thing UCAS could do to improve HEP satisfaction, the vast majority of respondents stated that Course Collect should be vastly improved or replaced altogether.

- Themes from the free text analysis include:
  - Despite recent improvements, it is still 'not right'
  - 'Clunky' and 'cumbersome'
  - Time consuming and resource heavy

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Course Collect?

14%	17%	11%	21%	37%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

- Mostly - very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
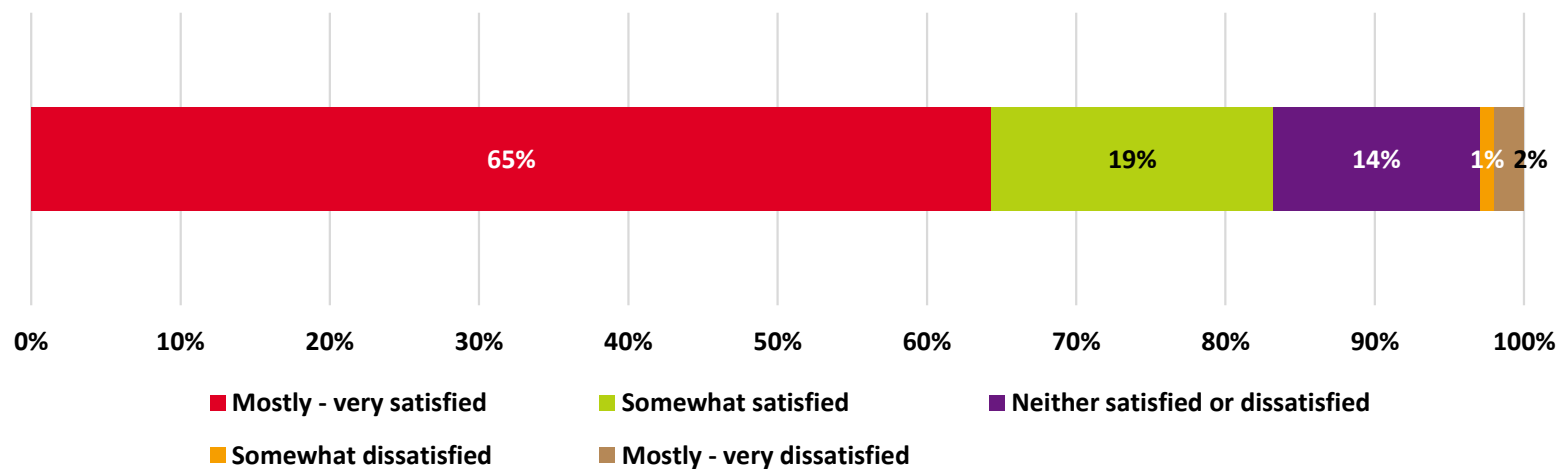- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Mostly - very dissatisfied

Respondent base: 276

The UK Qualifications Guide received the highest satisfaction score at 65%

- The launch of the UK Qualifications Guide has been on the whole a success.

- There is very little free text on the guide to inform exactly what they like and dislike about the product (which is not unusual when a new product launch has gone well).

- The only criticisms that were made are that it needs to cover more qualifications and further work should be undertaken to improve the search facility.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the UK Qualification Guide?

65%	19% 14% 1% 2%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

- Mostly - very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Mostly - very dissatisfied

Respondent base: 276

UCAS

Additional insight on UCAS' suite of products and services

- As is the case every year, respondents provide a range of insight into their experiences of UCAS' products and services. Often the themes are repeated year on year

- Highlights of the analysis of the qualitative data include:
  - Data analysis tools
    - Data charges are deemed too high
    - The changes to analytical provision have received mixed responses
  - Link products
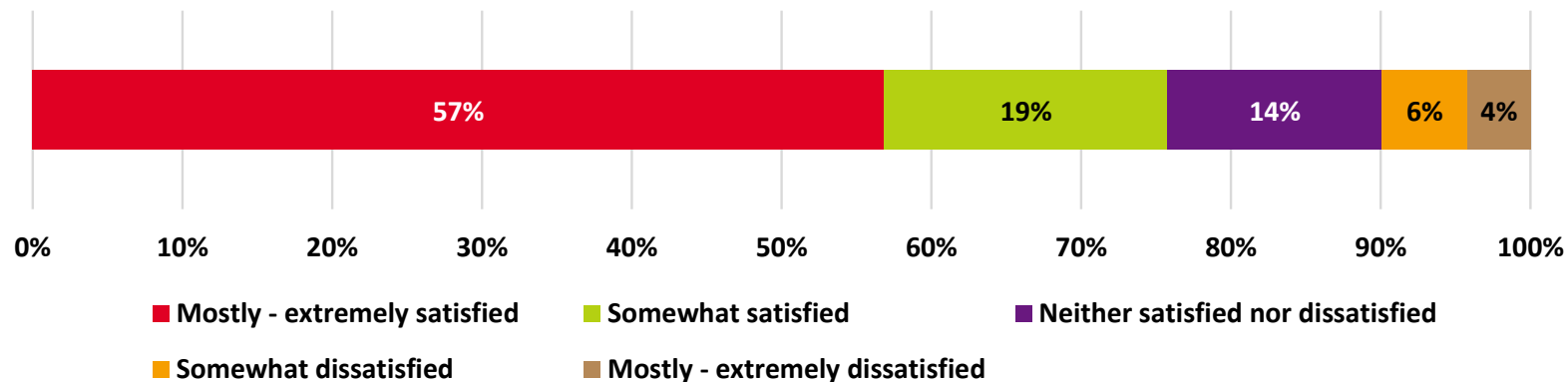   - Better testing of odbc and xml products

UCAS' engagement with your HEP

Just under two thirds of respondents (57%) are 'mostly' or 'extremely' satisfied with the level of UCAS' engagement with them

- This is compared to 4% who are 'mostly' to 'extremely' dissatisfied
- Key themes around engagement surfacing from the free text analysis are:
    - the groups are working well and are valued by the sector.
    - UCAS is focussing more on the customer than it has previously, and it is working to improve incrementally wherever it can
    - However, some respondents are critical of the additional engagement opportunities, commenting that they do not represent the sector.
    - It is also commented on that group representatives do not consistently share the content of the meetings with their provider. Thus the work of these groups remains unknown to a high proportion of survey respondents.
    - It would be worthwhile for UCAS to ensure that the sector is aware of how the groups and forums represent the sector, and also to effectively cascade their purposes, functions and outcomes.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level of UCAS' engagement with you?

57%	19%	14%	6%	4%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

- **■ Mostly - extremely satisfied**
- **■ Somewhat satisfied**
- **■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**
- **■ Somewhat dissatisfied**
- **■ Mostly - extremely dissatisfied**

Respondent base: 212

However, a high proportion of respondents are not aware of UCAS' groups and forums

- The results of the survey clearly demonstrate that the work of UCAS' groups and forums is not being effectively publicised at provider level.

- It should be noted that the satisfaction survey is distributed amongst all provider contacts. Its response base is a very broad mix of staff – it is not specific to attendees at UCAS' groups and forums.

Average % of respondents who answered 'Don't know' to questions on satisfaction with UCAS' groups and forums

Category	Value
Standing Groups	67%
Regional Forums	42%
Working Groups	40%
Advisory Groups	34%
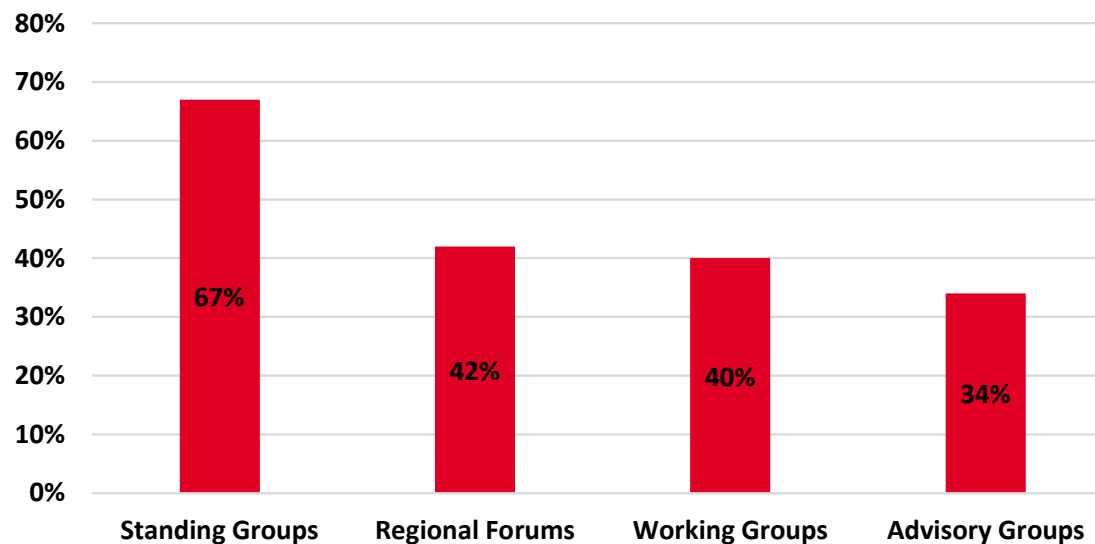
Respondent base (averages): advisory groups (71), regional forums (87), standing groups (132), working groups (83)

UCAS working groups have the most impact (27%) on UCAS' products and services whilst the standing groups have the least (8%)

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the UCAS groups have an impact on UCAS' products and services?

% Mostly – Strongly Agree

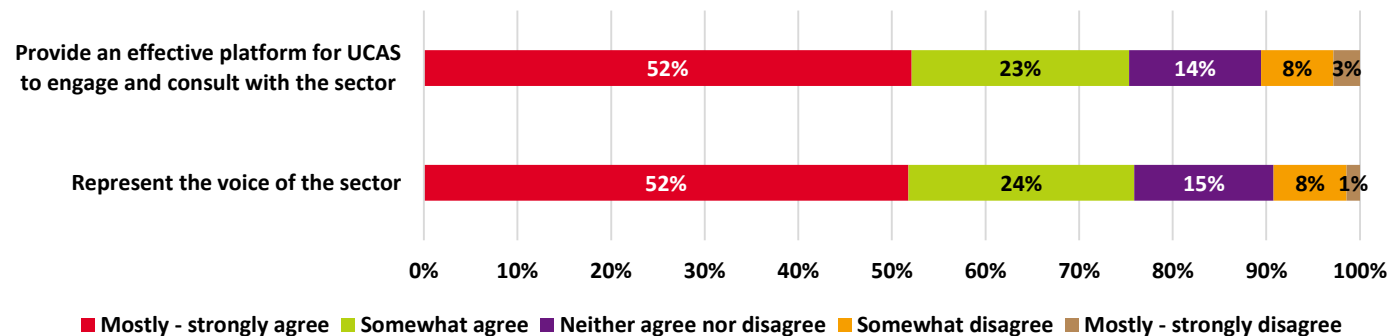Respondent base: advisory groups (78), regional forums (48), standing groups (32), working groups (84)
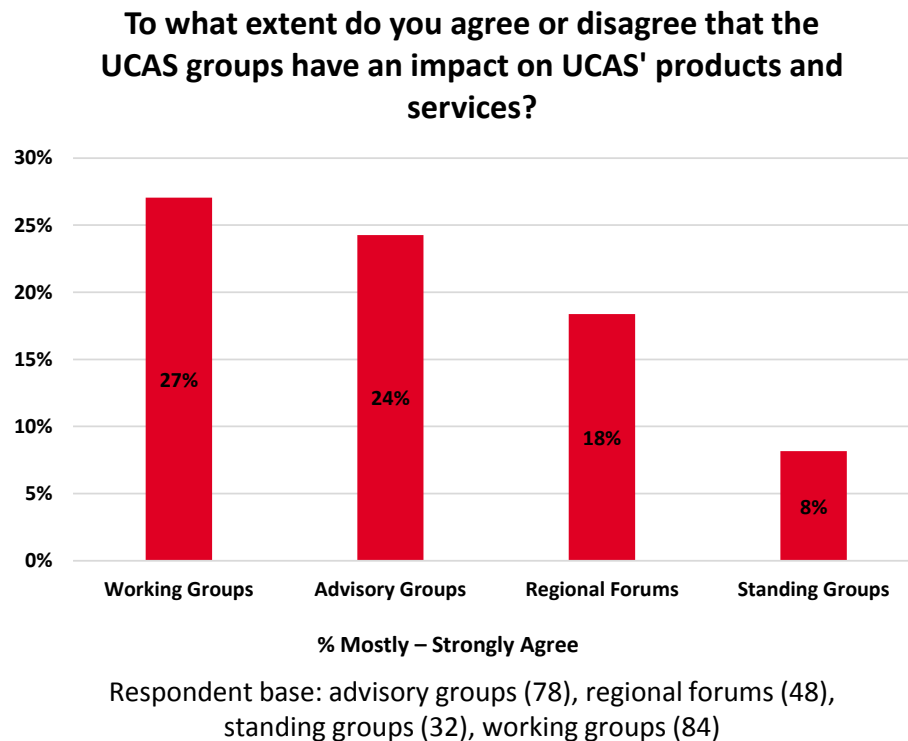
- Of those respondents who are aware of these groups, just over a quarter feel the working groups have an impact on UCAS' products and services, whilst just under one tenth (8%) feel the same about the standing groups.

- The primary reason given for the low scores is that respondents feel their feedback goes into a 'UCAS black hole' – there seems to be a lack of trust in UCAS' ability to effectively deliver changes and improvements to its products and services.

- The key 'take home' message is that respondents appreciate the work UCAS is doing to improve engagement and communication with UCAS as well as across the sector but there is still much more work to do.

- Given this is the groups and forums first year of existence, the results of this and the following survey questions may be used for benchmarking purposes.

Over half of respondents feel that the advisory groups are effective and representative, dropping to a third for the working groups
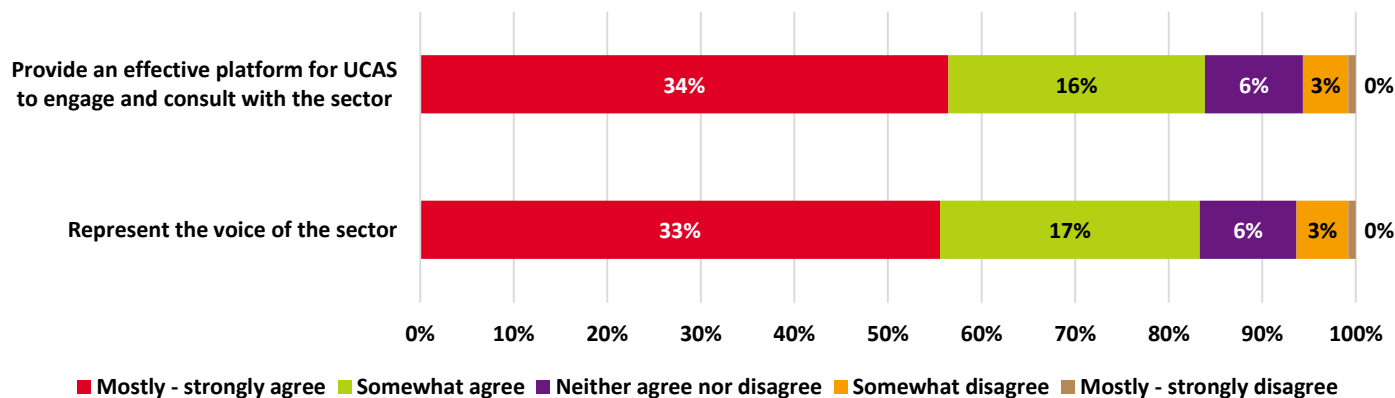
- Of those respondents who are aware of the advisory groups, just over half (52%) rate them as effective and representative of the sector

- This drops to a third (33% and 34% respectively) for the working groups.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Advisory Groups...?

	Mostly - strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Mostly - strongly disagree
Provide an effective platform for UCAS to engage and consult with the sector	52%	23%	14%	8%	3%
Represent the voice of the sector	52%	24%	15%	8%	1%

■ Mostly - strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Mostly - strongly disagree
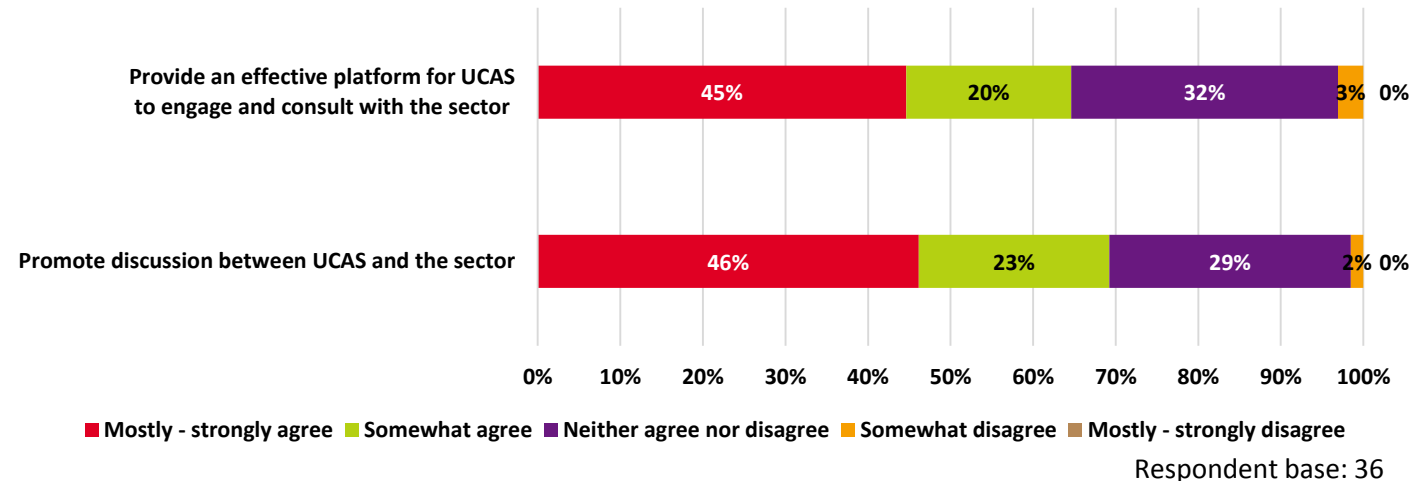
Respondent base: 92

- Insight from the free text suggests that respondents question the overall effectiveness of the working groups – they are awaiting tangible outcomes.

- In particular, the Repair and Resolve Project, whilst a fantastic forum for airing issues and prioritising changes, was closed too soon – leaving tasks outstanding with no owners or timeframes attached to them.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Working Groups...?

	Mostly - strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Mostly - strongly disagree
Provide an effective platform for UCAS to engage and consult with the sector	34%	16%	6%	3%	0%
Represent the voice of the sector	33%	17%	6%	3%	0%

■ Mostly - strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Mostly - strongly disagree
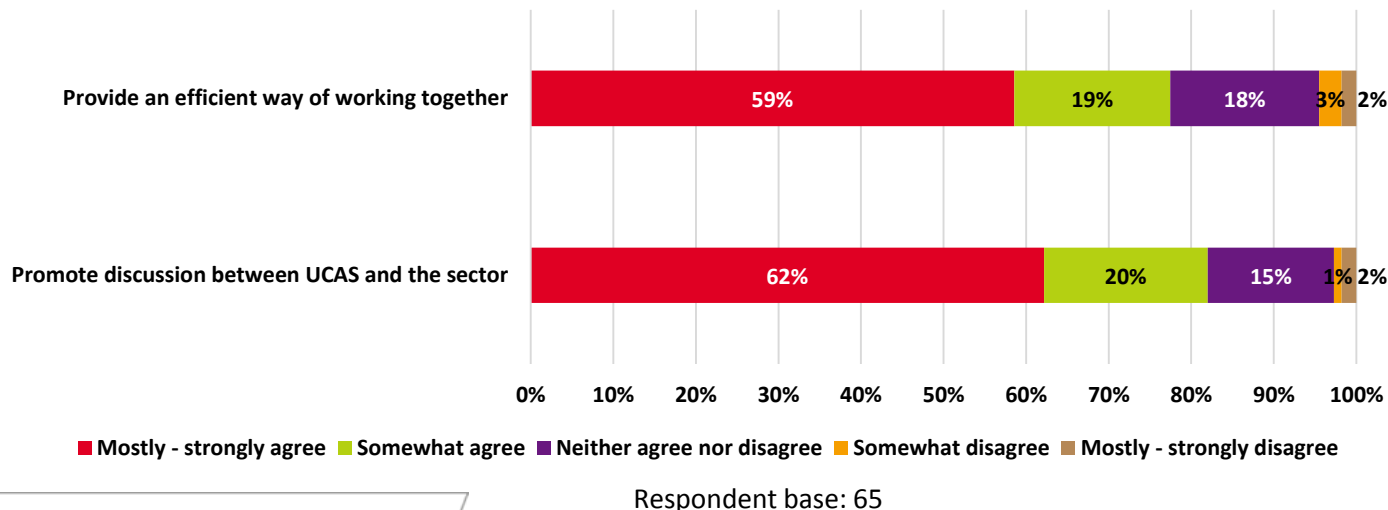
Respondent base: 90

UCAS

The regional forums are better at promoting discussion between UCAS and the sector than the standing groups

- Less than half of those respondents who knew of the standing groups mostly/strongly agreed that they were an effective platform and promoted discussion between UCAS and the sector (45% and 46% respectively).

- An unusually high percentage of respondents – 32% and 29% - stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Standing Groups...?

Provide an effective platform for UCAS to engage and consult with the sector	45% / 20% / 32% / 3% / 0%
Promote discussion between UCAS and the sector	46% / 23% / 29% / 2% / 0%

■ Mostly - strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Mostly - strongly disagree

Respondent base: 36

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Regional Forums...?

Provide an efficient way of working together	59% / 19% / 18% / 3% / 2%
Promote discussion between UCAS and the sector	62% / 20% / 15% / 1% / 2%

■ Mostly - strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Mostly - strongly disagree

Respondent base: 65

- However, the picture is more positive with the regional forums with circa two fifths of respondents mostly/strongly in agreement that the forums provide an efficient way to work together and promote discussion between UCAS and the sector.
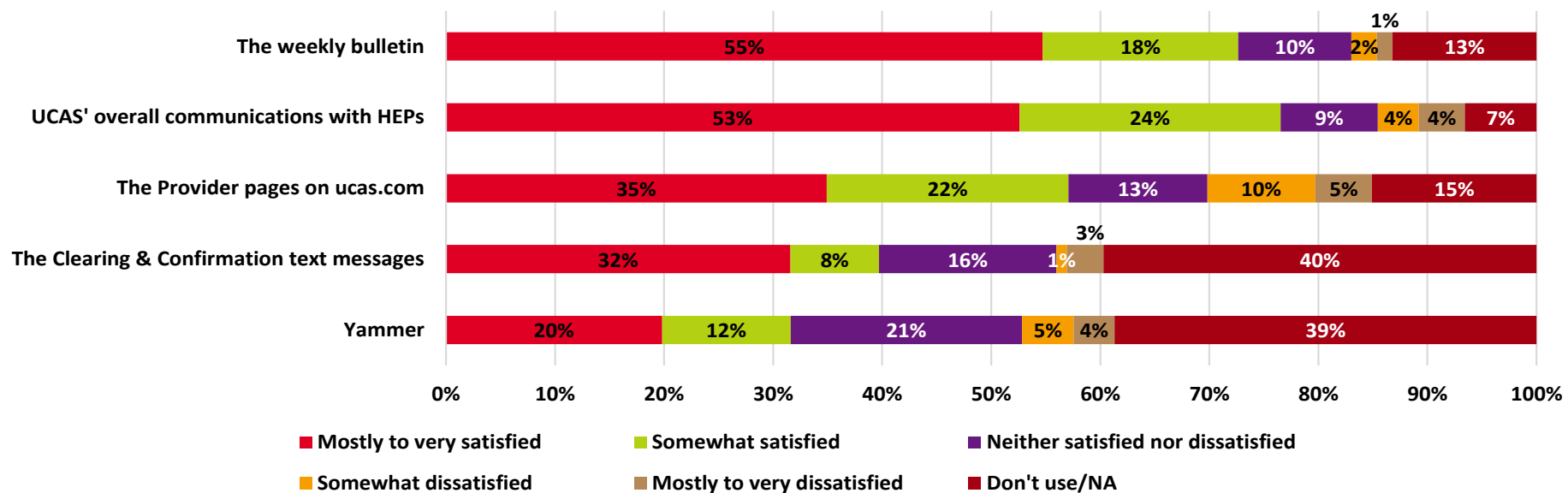
UCAS' communications

Just over half (53%) of respondents are 'mostly' to 'very' satisfied with UCAS' overall communication with HEPs

- This is the first year this question has been included in the research.
- The weekly bulletin receives the highest satisfaction rating at 55%. Yammer receives just 20% with a further 39% stating that they are unable to rate their satisfaction as they do not know about Yammer or do not use it.
- The weekly bulletin and the Provider pages on ucas.com are the most used communication channels of those asked about
- Free text responses highlight the following key themes:
    - Respondents find it difficult to find information on the provider pages.
    - Some are unsure whether they should be receiving SMS alerts or not.
    - Yammer is not fully embedded as a communications channel
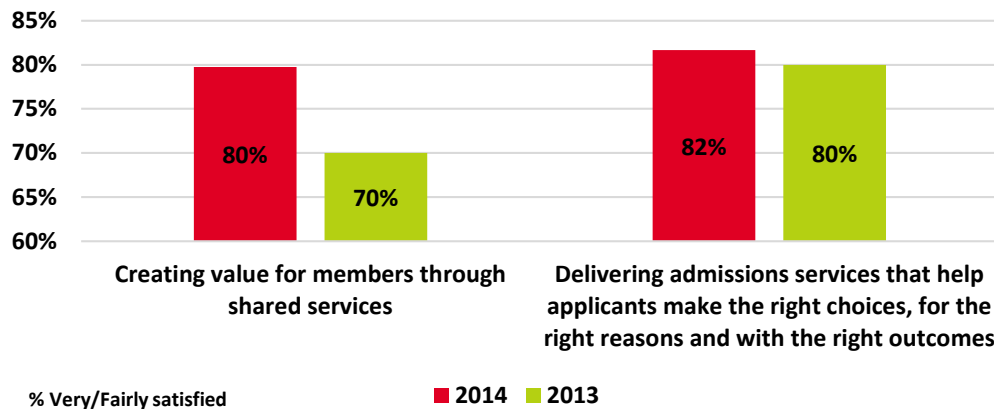
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with...?

Channel	Mostly to very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Mostly to very dissatisfied	Don't use/NA
The weekly bulletin	55%	18%	10%	2%	1%	13%
UCAS' overall communications with HEPs	53%	24%	9%	4%	4%	7%
The Provider pages on ucas.com	35%	22%	13%	10%	5%	15%
The Clearing & Confirmation text messages	32%	8%	16%	1%	3%	40%
Yammer	20%	12%	21%	5%	4%	39%

Legend: Mostly to very satisfied · Somewhat satisfied · Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied · Somewhat dissatisfied · Mostly to very dissatisfied · Don't use/NA

Respondent base: 213

UCAS' vision and mission

The majority of respondents are satisfied that UCAS achieves its vision and the two parts of our mission
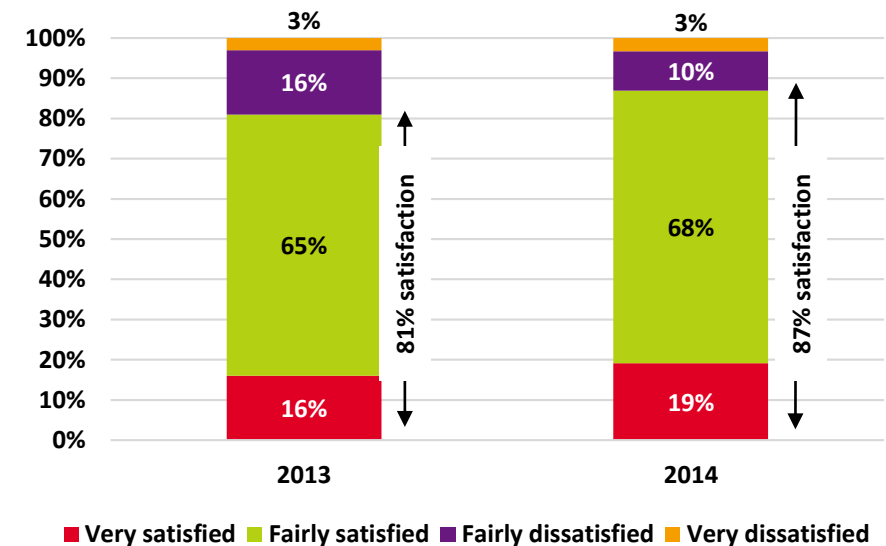
- 87% of respondents are 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied that UCAS achieves its vision, up 6% from last year.

- The numbers are only slightly lower for the two parts of the mission – 82% for 'delivering admissions services that help applicants make the right choices, for the right reasons and with the right outcomes' and 80% for 'creating value for members through shared services'.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that UCAS achieves its vision?

Respondent base: 2013 (327), 2014 (208)

The two parts of UCAS' mission are shown below. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that UCAS achieves each of them?

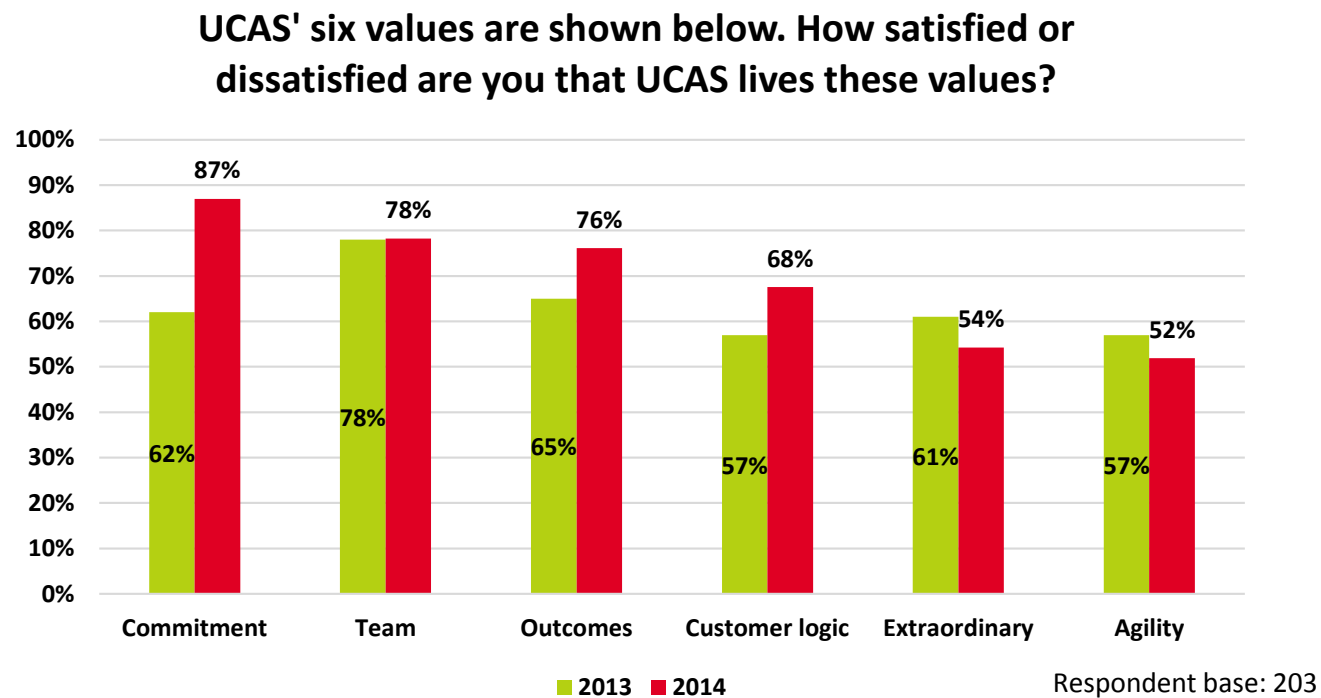% Very/Fairly satisfied   ■ 2014 ■ 2013

Respondent base: 2013 (298), 2014 (210)

- Since 2013, there has been a 10% increase in the percentage of recipients who are 'fairly' to' very' satisfied that UCAS creates value for members through shared services.

- However, there is evidence within the free text to suggest that some respondents worry UCAS is stretching its resources too thinly by diversifying into different areas.

This year sees a dramatic increase in the perception that UCAS is living its commitment value

- There is a 40% uplift in the percentage of respondents who are fairly/very satisfied that UCAS is living its commitment value – 87% up from 62% in 2013.
- Uplifts are also seen in the outcomes and customer logic values – 17% and 19% uplifts respectively

- However, we see a drop in how well UCAS is living its extraordinary and agility values – a 13% and 10% percentage decrease respectively.
- Despite the positivity inherent in some of these results, responses in the free text are, for the most part, fairly critical of UCAS' ability to live the values.
- Repeated comments include:
    - UCAS cannot be extraordinary with Course Collect in its current condition
    - UCAS needs to focus on core services; it should not seek to move into non-traditional markets.

UCAS' six values are shown below. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that UCAS lives these values?

Value	2013	2014
Commitment	62%	87%
Team	78%	78%
Outcomes	65%	76%
Customer logic	57%	68%
Extraordinary	61%	54%
Agility	57%	52%

Respondent base: 203

Agreement of the statement 'The capitation fee represents good value for money' has seen an uplift of 80% between 2012 and 2014

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
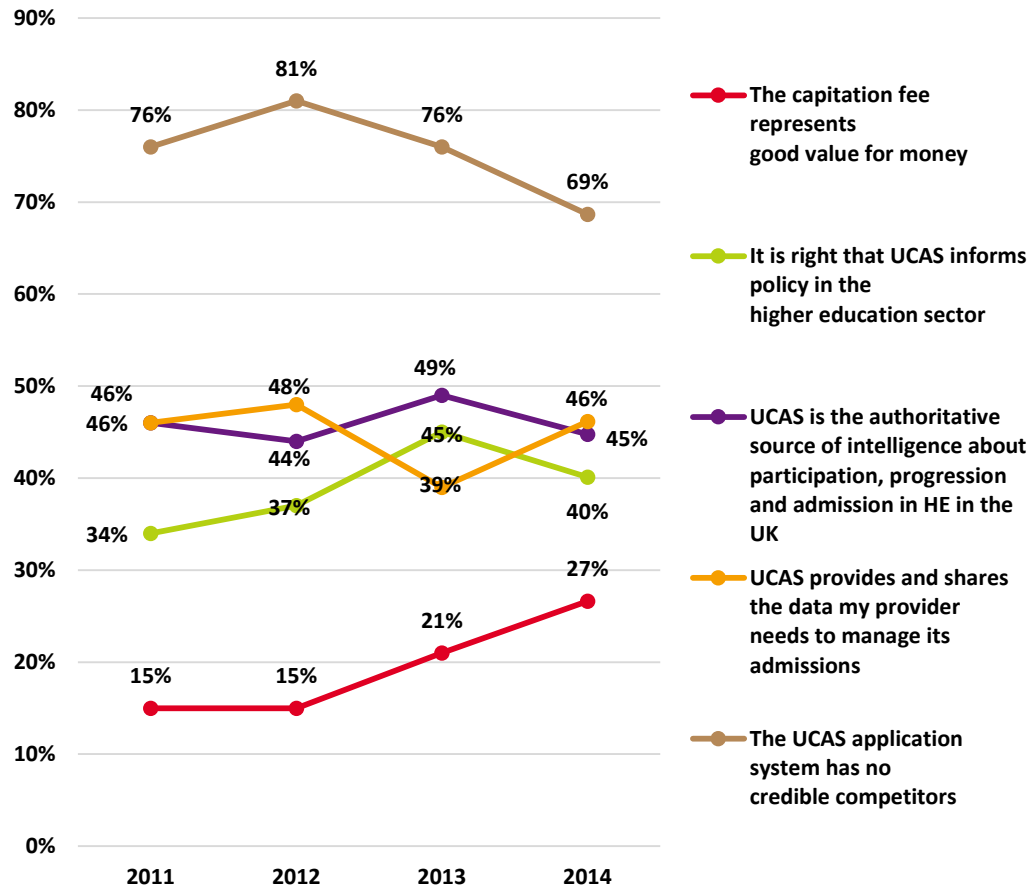
Respondent base: 204

- There also appears to be a relationship between the statement ' The capitation fee represents good value for money' and 'The UCAS application system has no credible competitors' – with the latter decreasing by 12% since 2012.

- 2014 has seen an uplift of 18% on satisfaction with the use UCAS makes of the data it collects.

- The responses to the statements relating specifically to UCAS' relationship with the HE policy landscape have followed a similar pattern since 2011.

- We have seen a drop of between 4% and 5% from last year for the statements 'UCAS is the authoritative source of intelligence about participation, progression and admissions in HE in the UK' and ' It is right that UCAS informs policy in the higher education sector'. This equates to an 8% and 11% decrease respectively.

- The statement 'The UCAS application system has no credible competitors' appears to be fairly contentious amongst respondents.

- Whether this statement is inherently positive is questioned by several respondents. Some respondents also qualify their answer to refer specifically to UK applicants to UG courses.

Improving satisfaction

Key areas to improve satisfaction

- In response to the question 'What is the ONE biggest thing that UCAS could do to improve your customer experience?', by far the most frequently mentioned is Course Collect. The quality and quantity of change that is required to make this product fit for purpose ranges from 'improve' to 'replace'. Nobody said anything positive about it

- Other suggestions that received repeated mentions (but in far less frequency than Course Collect) are:

  - communication. These comments fall into two camps – more timely and transparent communication of issues and clearer, more consolidated communication generally

  - charges for and usefulness of current data provisions. These comments are primarily directed to Media products

  - the requirement for UCAS to act as well as listen to HEP issues and complaints

  - lack of test data

  - diversification by UCAS into non-traditional areas (at the expense of core services)

- These are all suggestions that have been made in previous years

- In response to the question 'What else, if anything, could UCAS do to improve your customer experience?', again the most commented on was Course Collect, followed by communication. Thereafter, some of the areas of repeated mention are:

  - increasing flexibility of core services and, closely linked to this, more focus on core services. There is concern that UCAS is ignoring issues with core services in order to focus on breaking into new markets.

  - staff knowledge and expertise. Commentary suggests that some respondents feel that UCAS staff do not understand how admissions offices nor, in some instances, UCAS works

  - UCAS/HEP relationships and trust. Whilst not overtly mentioned, it is clear from some of the comments that the relationship between UCAS and some of its customers is at times imbalanced. As in previous years, we heard that some respondents feel that UCAS favours certains types of providers over others, is too focused on its commercial aims and perceives itself as having more autonomy over its direction than some providers feel comfortable with.

Next steps

Last year's HEP satisfaction – you said, we did

You said	We did
Course Collect and Search – dissatisfaction with user experience and functionality	Courses Repair and Recovery project
Insufficient engagement and consultation	Introduced new structure of groups and forums – to inform our business
UCAS staff knowledge of HE is limited	Improvements to staff induction and development programme and introduction of study visit scheme
Put HEPs at the heart of decisions relating to services for them	Introduction of customer experience teams

Addressing the themes of dissatisfaction

Theme	Action to be taken
Course Collect	Development of a new collection system
Technical experience	Technical Support Experience Working Group formed and working on: • Outsourcing of IT support desk from HEP Team to Infosys • Improvement plan focusing on reducing the number of IT incidents • Development of a self-service portal enabling HEPs to log and track status with IT issues • Monthly reporting of IT incidents for transparency and clarity • Launched a new major IT incident communication process The survey results revealed an 81% uplift in satisfaction amongst IT staff of their experience of working with UCAS
Trust	• Continue to build on honest and transparent engagement • Customer Experience Team – the conscience of the customer in UCAS

UCAS