

WHY STUDENTS WITHDRAW FROM EXCHANGE

An examination of student responses

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SNAPSHOT: OUTGOING EXCHANGE AT UQ

- 187 partner universities
- 40 countries
- Top destinations:
 1. USA
 2. UK
 3. Canada
- Increase in applications received
 - 2010 – 2015: +26.5%
 - Most received for 2014: 1013
- Sending 640-680 p/year
- Conversion rate steady
 - Average 2010 – 2015: 65.7%
- Withdrawal rate steady
 - Average 2010 – 2015: 29.4%

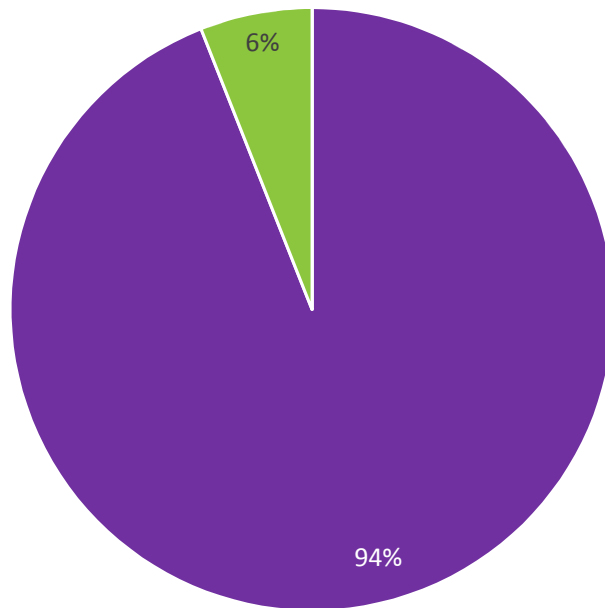
STUDY: WHY DO STUDENTS WITHDRAW?

- Closed & Open ended questions:
 - Program/level of study
 - Host university/country
 - Stage of application
 - Reasons for withdrawal
 - “What would have helped you to participate in the exchange program?”
- Survey administered from semester 1, 2013 to present
- Since semester 1, 2013 to present:
 - 3,216 students have applied
 - 754 students withdrew application*
 - 200 survey responses
 - Response rate 26.5%

Ethical approval received from BSSERC –
University of Queensland

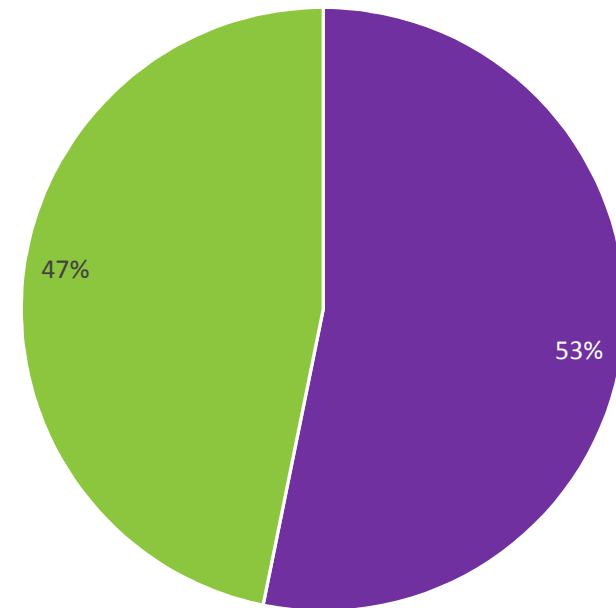
FINDINGS

Level of Study



■ Undergraduate ■ Postgraduate

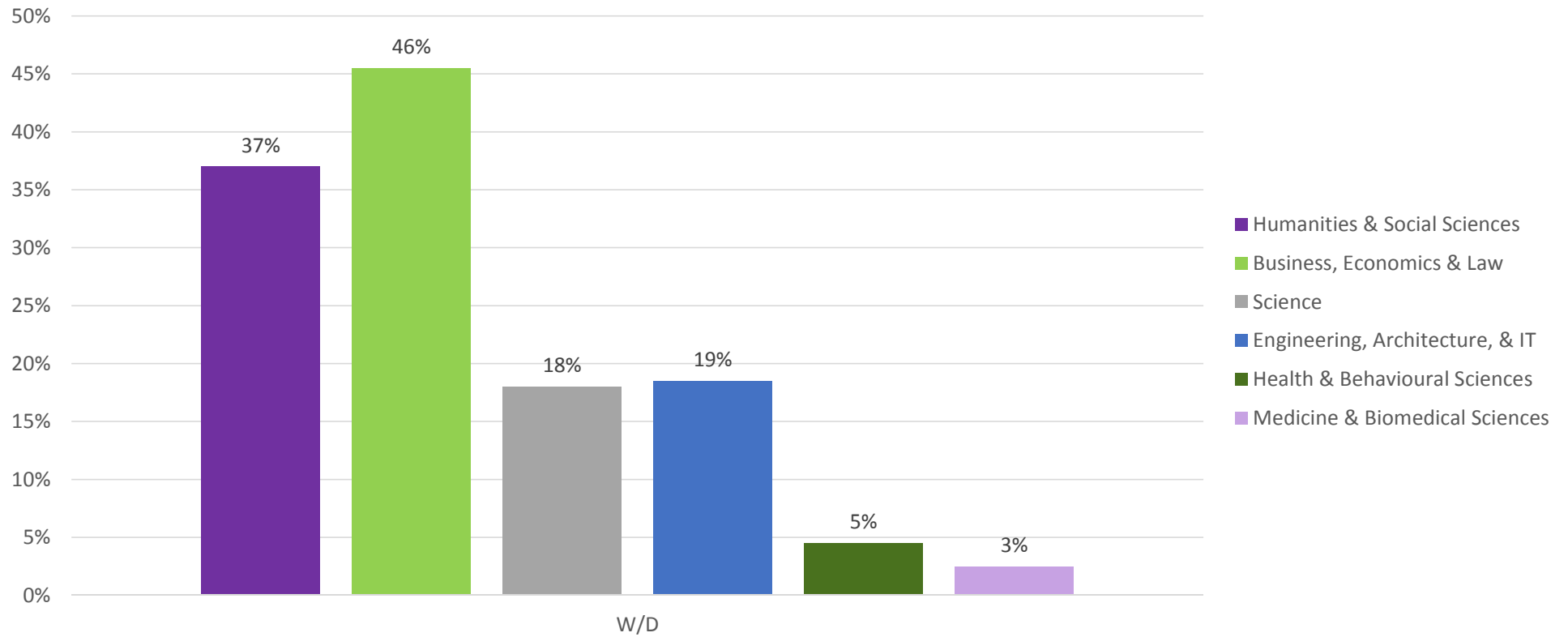
Undergraduate: Single/Dual Degree



■ Single ■ Dual

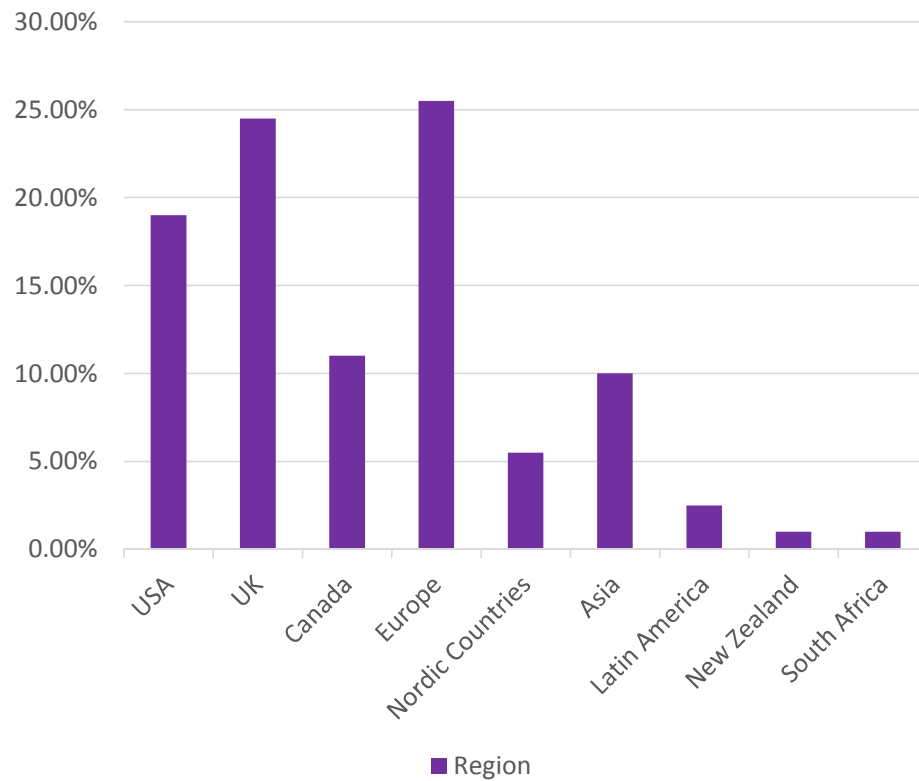
FINDINGS

Faculties – Survey Results

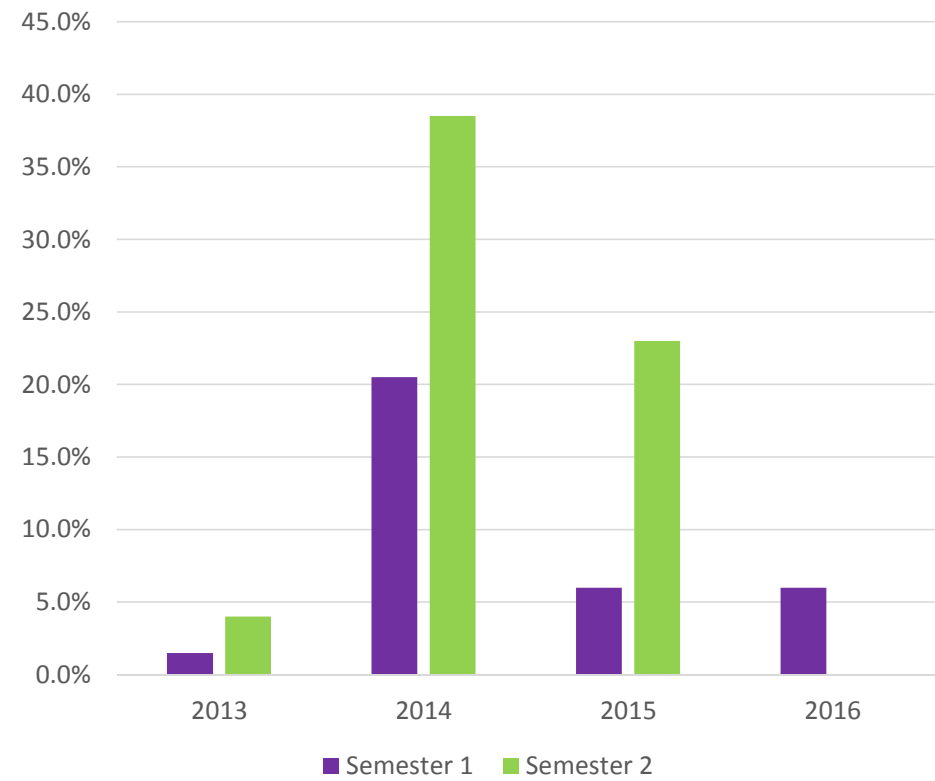


FINDINGS

Region

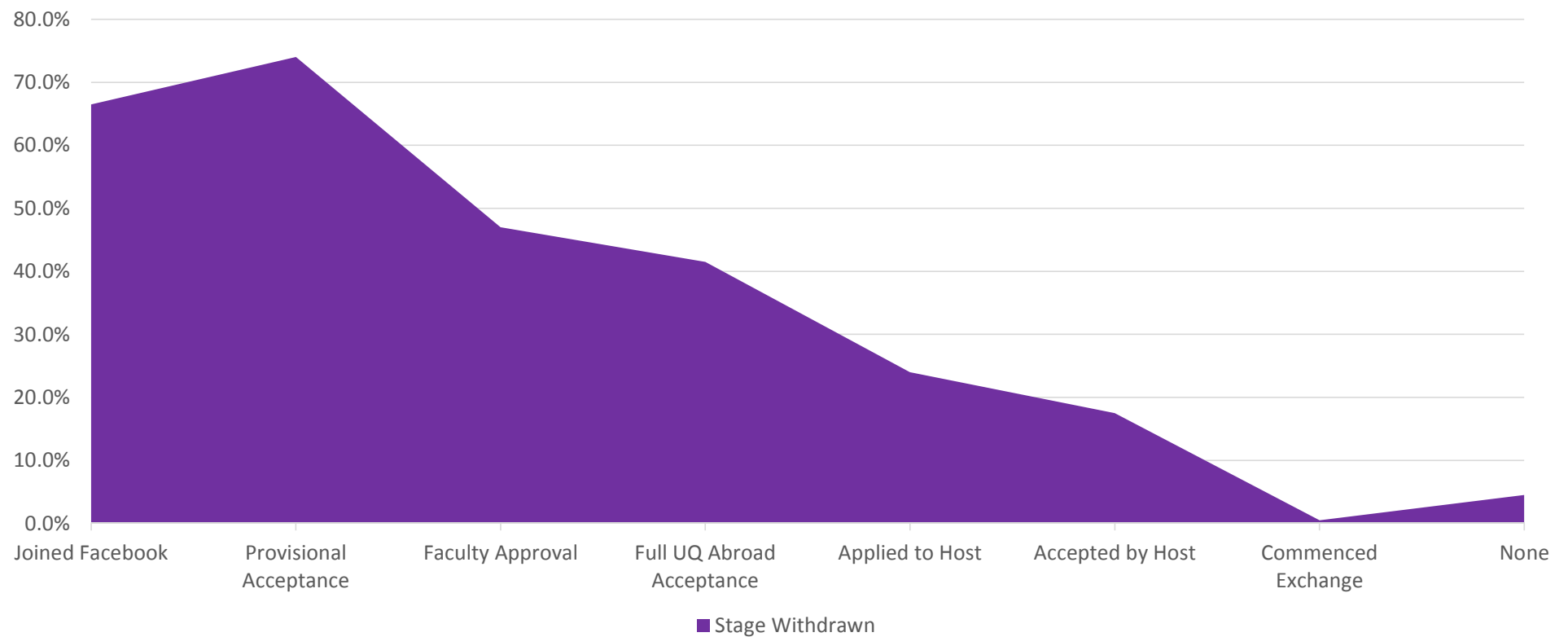


Semester Applied



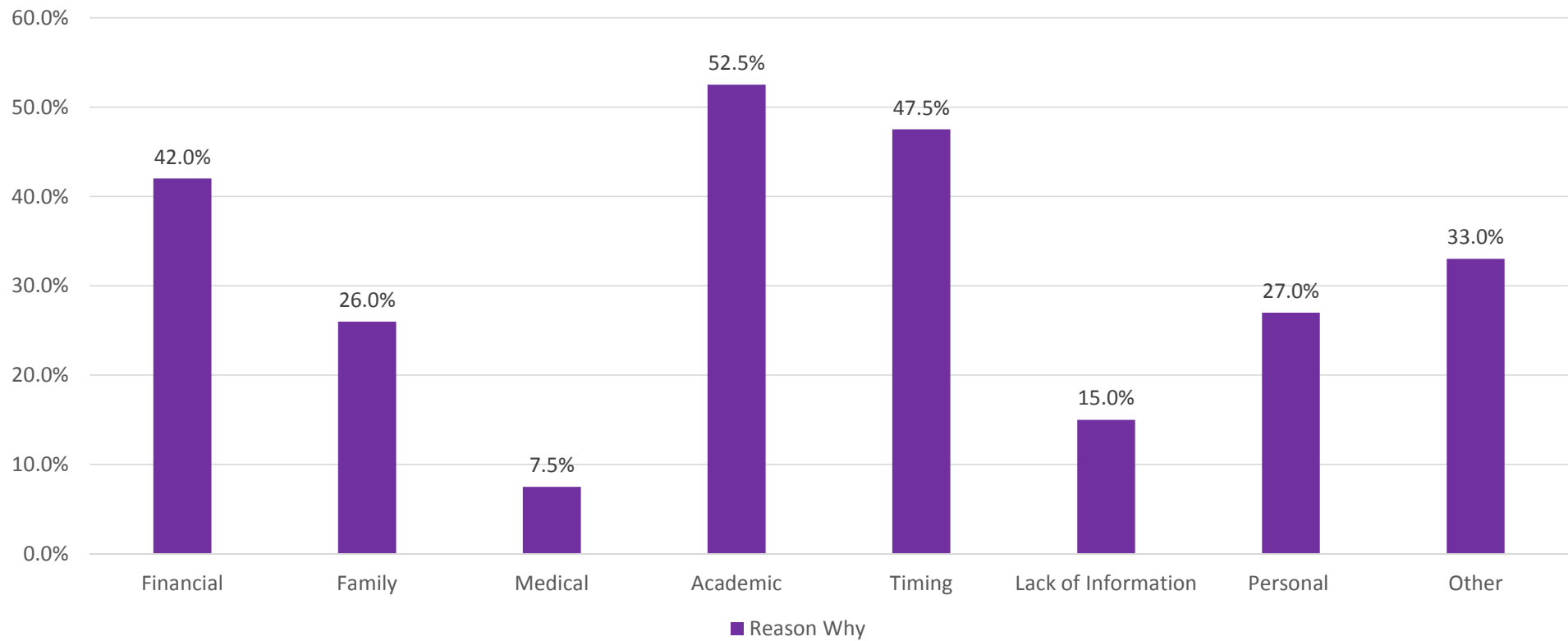
FINDINGS

Stage Withdrawn

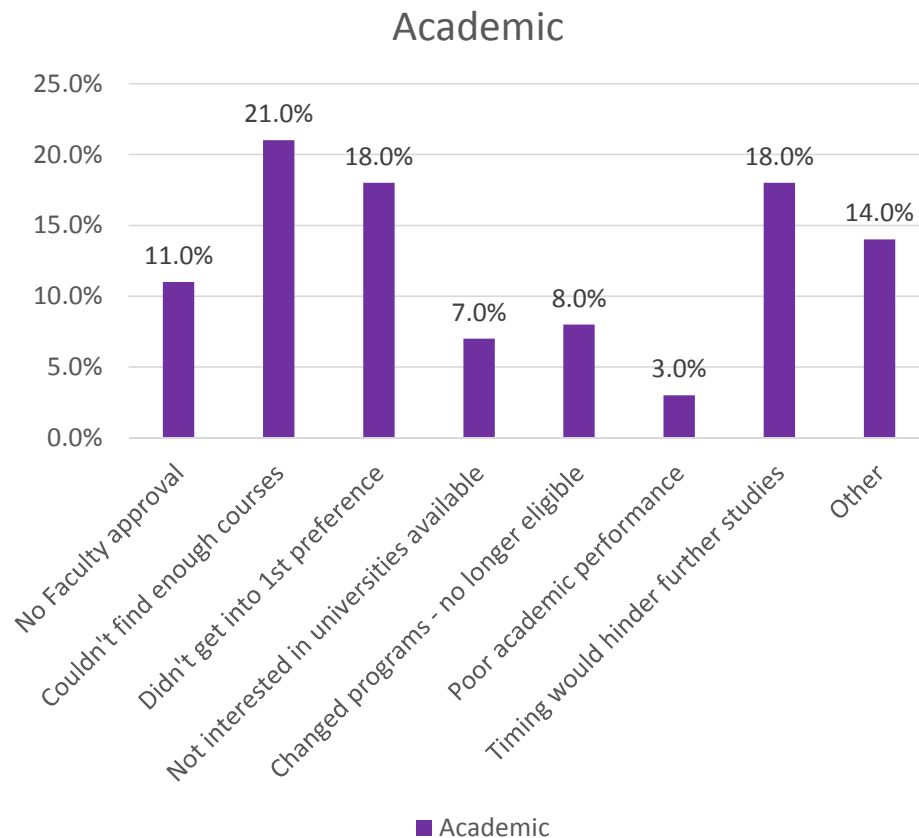


FINDINGS

Reason Why



FINDINGS



Academic Reasons

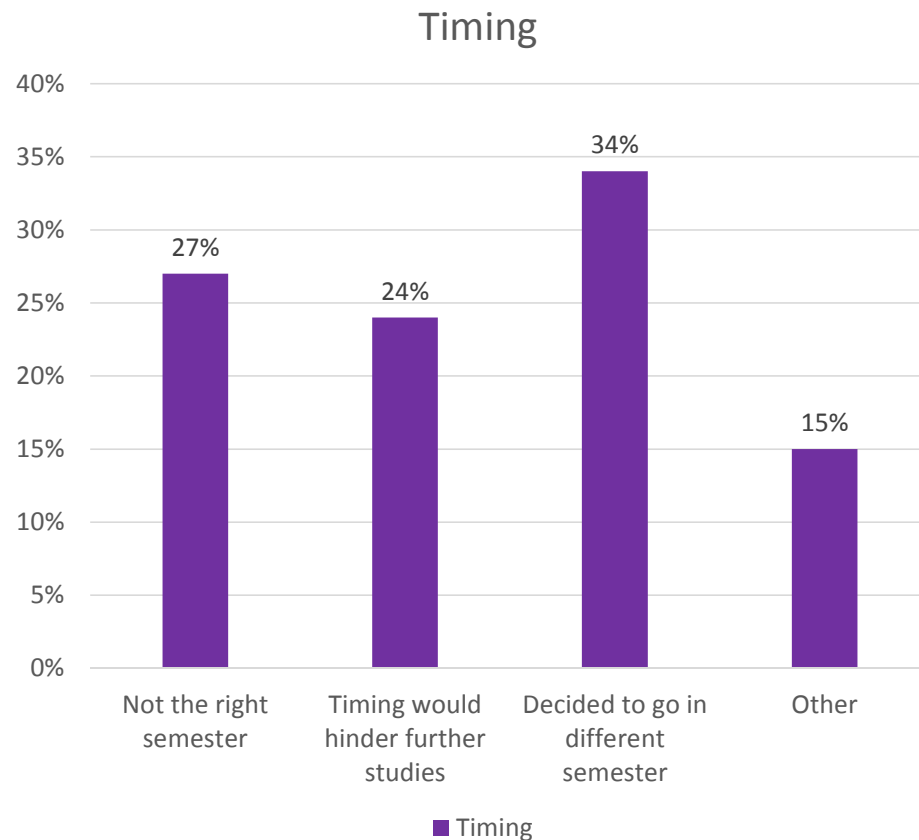
- Overall 52.5%

“With my dual degree (and lack of electives) combined with the fact that I'm in my 5th year of study, made it very hard for me to obtain equivalent subjects.”

“One of my core courses I had to do wouldn't allow me to go. Timing was wrong.”

“Found another uni that suits me better, after I had applied.”

FINDINGS



Timing Reasons

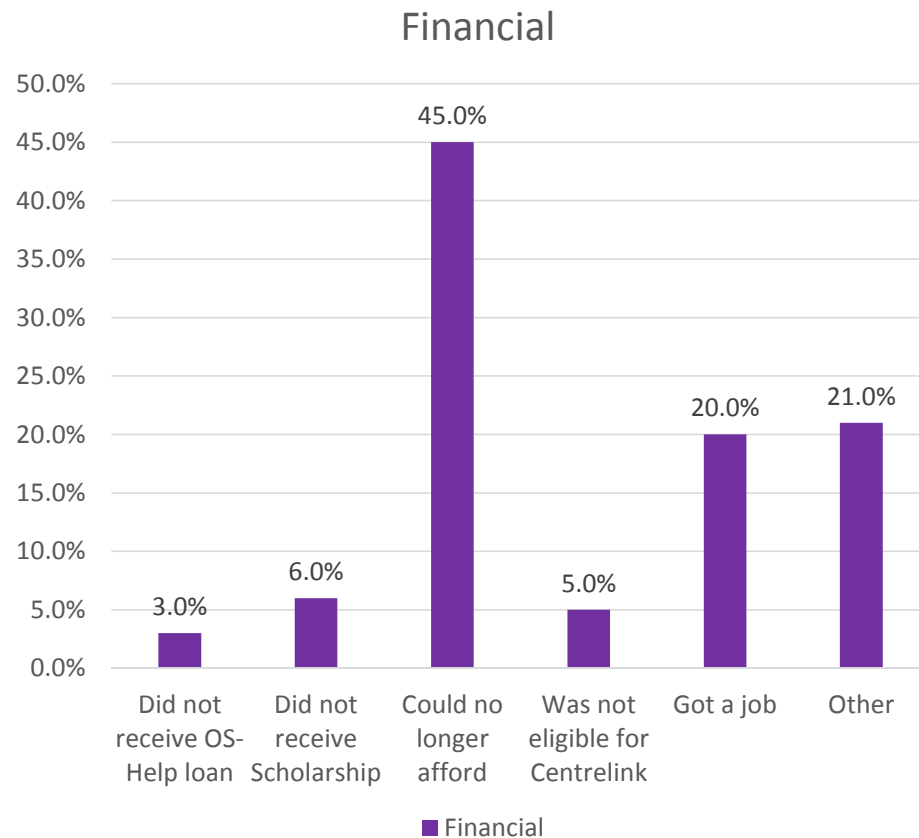
- Overall 47.5%

“Given my career opportunities, the timing is not right for me to go on exchange, however it may be more convenient to go in future.”

“Could not guarantee that it wouldn't delay graduation.”

“Just couldn't get the funds together in time.”

FINDINGS



Financial Reasons

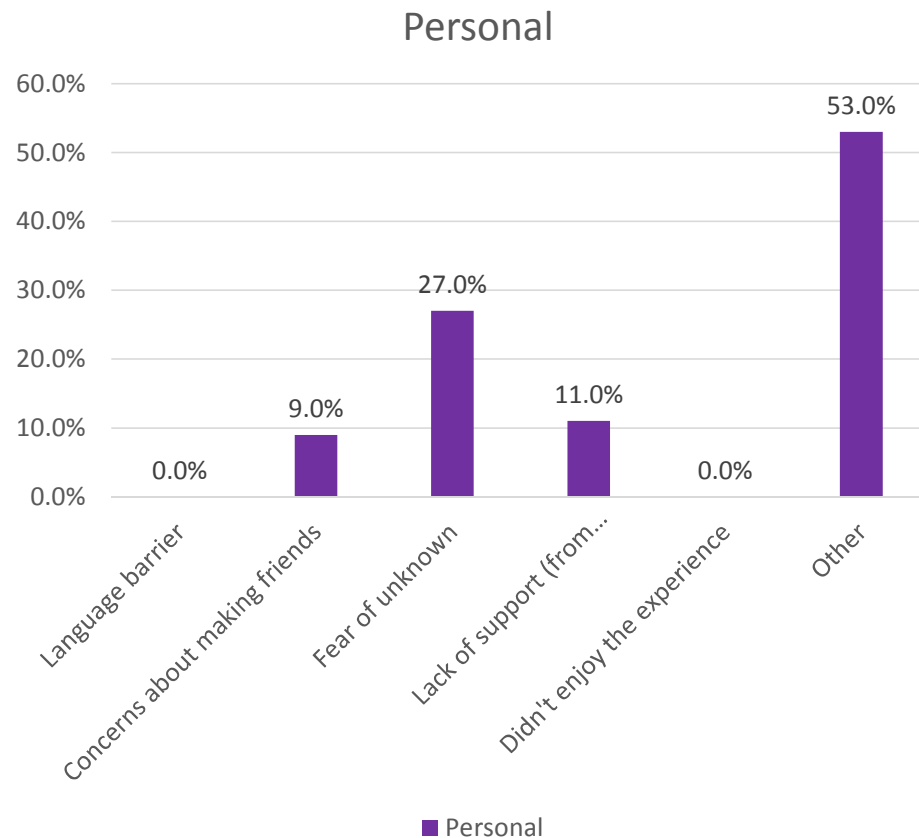
- Overall 42%
- “Other” responses
 - Needing more time to save: 7%
 - Financial uncertainty: 2%

“Acceptance letter took a long time, so I gave up saving.”

“I want to have more money to have a better time overseas.”

“The dollar dropped significantly and is expected to keep going.”

FINDINGS



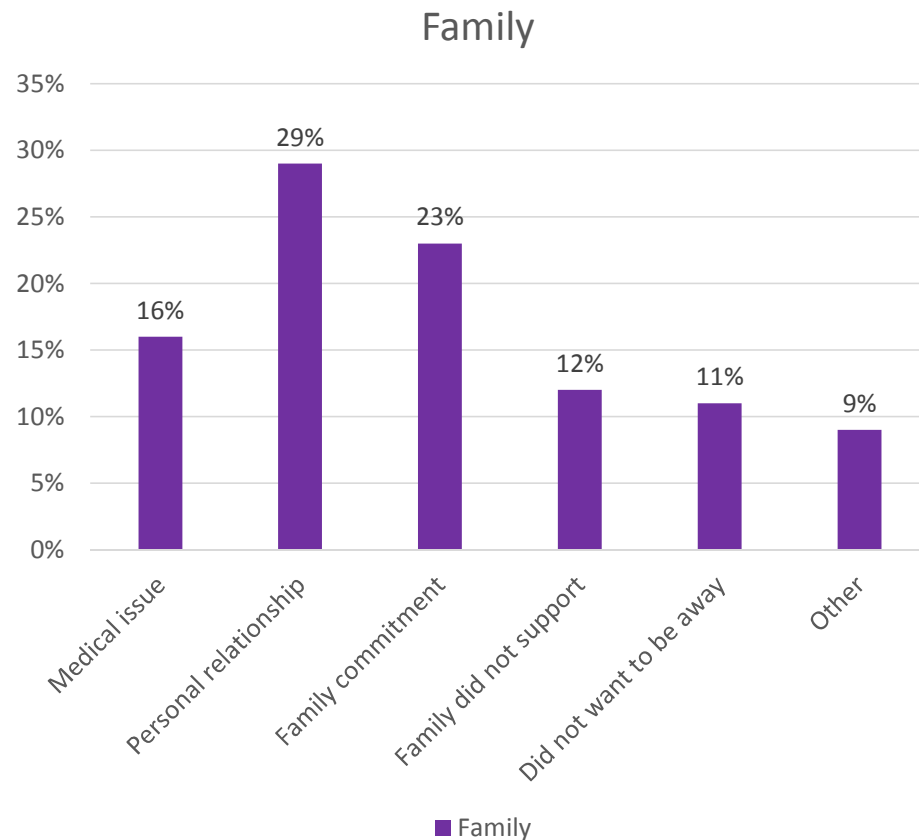
Personal Reasons

- Overall 27%
- “Other” responses
 - Chose alt intn’l experience: 13%
 - Changed mind: 13%
 - Anxiety/Stress: 9%
 - Frustration: 4%

“I started getting anxious and thought that this wasn't how it was supposed to be.”

“I feel happy here and have commitments”

FINDINGS

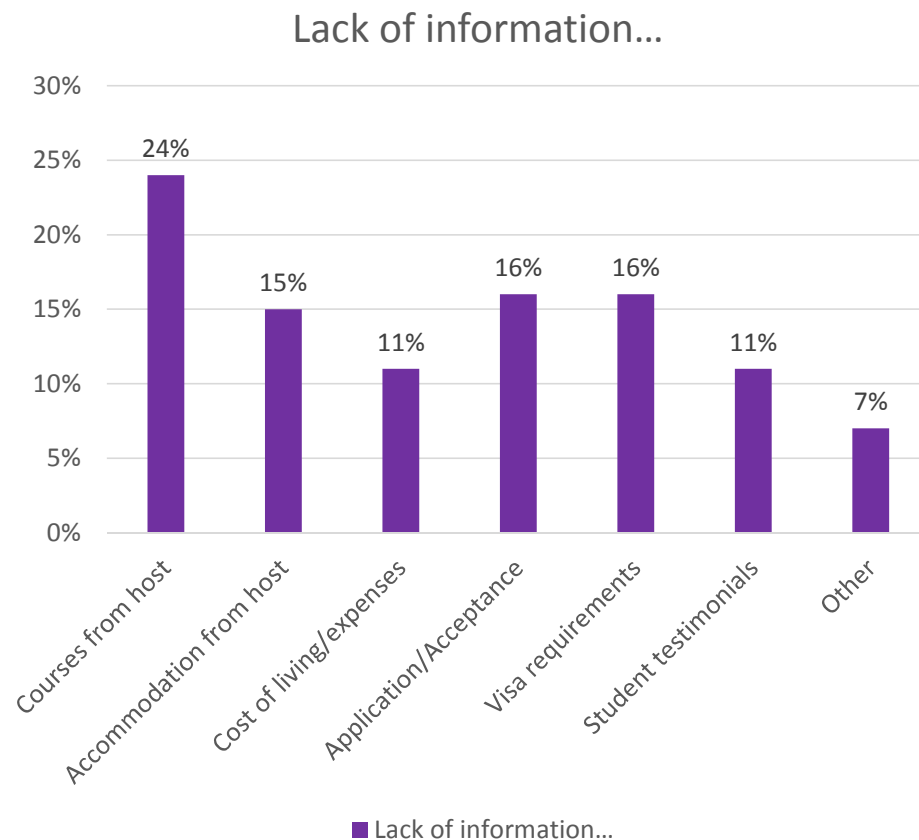


Family Reasons

- Overall 26%

“My parents were supportive, but I didn't want to pass them an additional burden of financially supporting me on exchange.”

FINDINGS



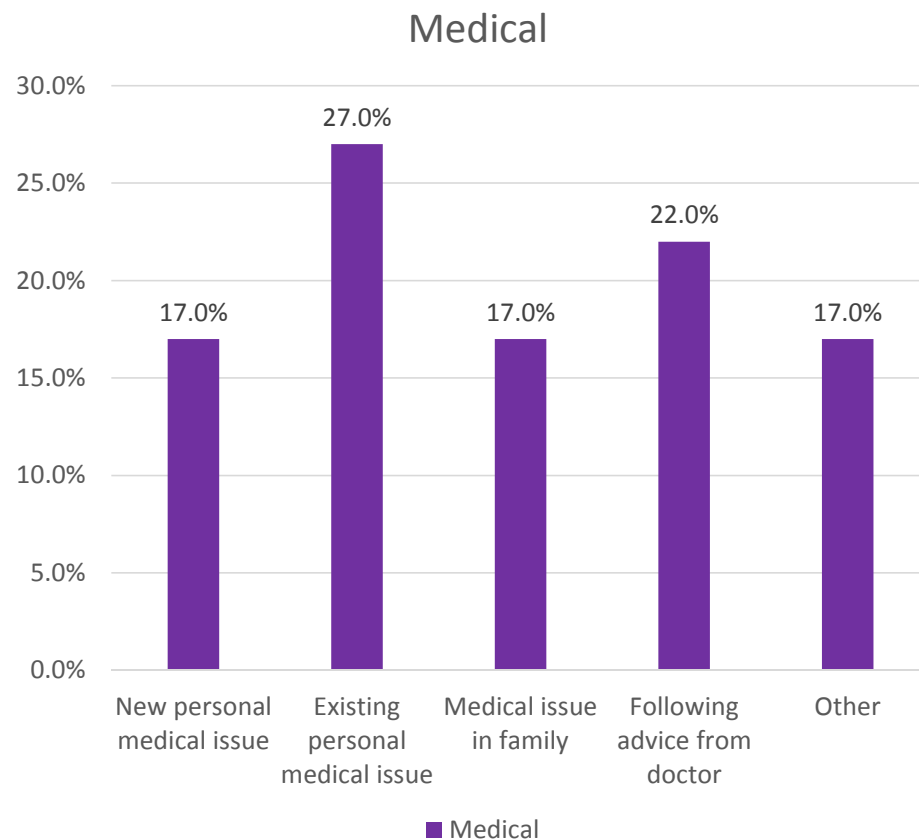
Lack of Information Reasons

- Overall 15%

“These weren't the main reasons, but I found these 'lack of information' issues as really big problems and very stressful.”

“All were factors but not final reason.”

FINDINGS

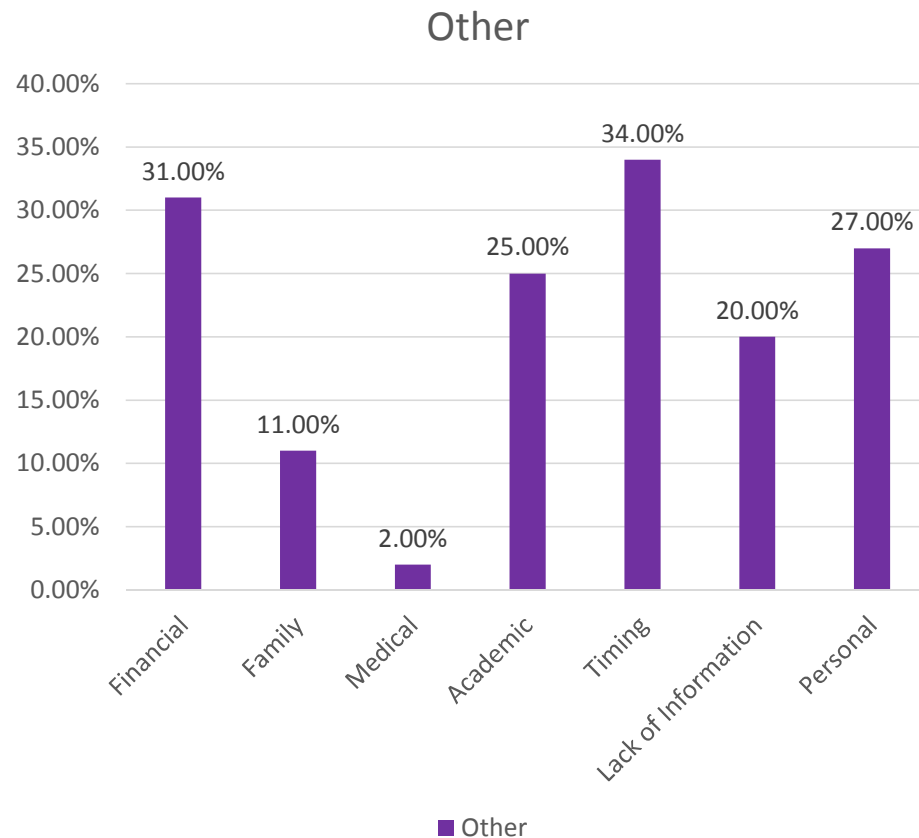


Medical Reasons

- Overall 7.5%

“I was constantly questioning my decision – anxiety.”

FINDINGS



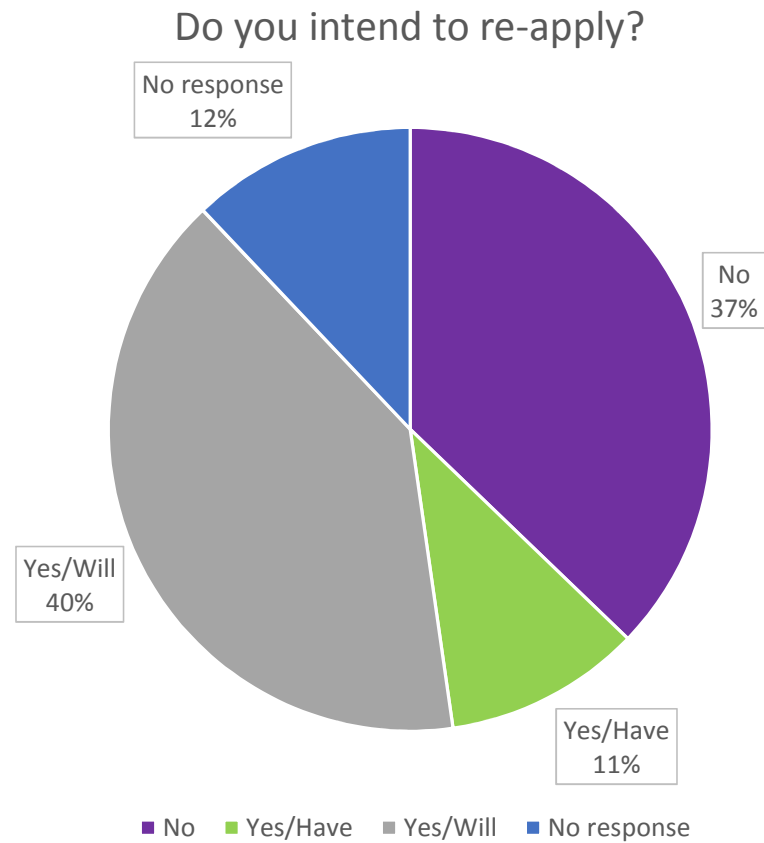
Other responses

- 44 open-ended responses

“Going one semester later allows me to save enough money to have complete financial security to do everything I wish to do whilst over there, so that I can take full advantage of the opportunity.”

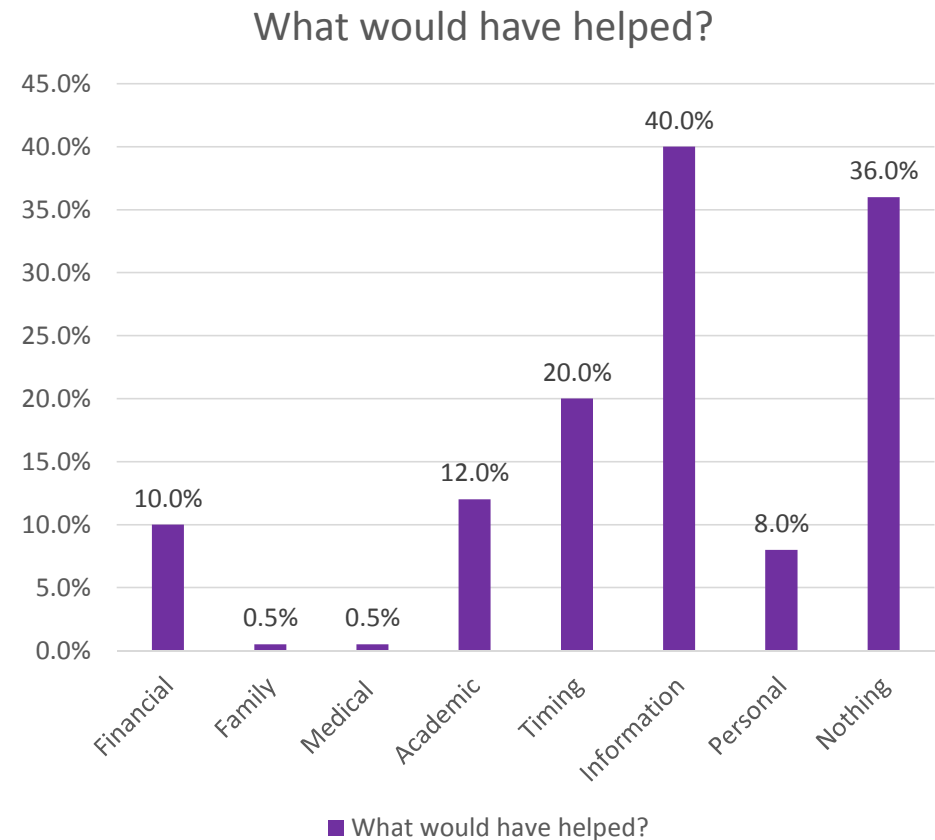
“Left it a bit late in my degree and did not want to delay my graduation. I could not be assured enrolment in specific courses. Due to the limited range of subjects I had left in my dual degree and the amount of effort I went to get a faculty approved study plan, I needed to be guaranteed a place in these specific courses. I was also accepted into a more convenient overseas program for credit.”

FINDINGS



FINDINGS

- What would have helped you to participate in the exchange program?
- 173 responses



FINDINGS

Academics: 12%

- Course matching/approval
- More degree flexibility
- Guaranteed courses
- More course options
- Short term programs

Timing: 20%

- Earlier...
 - Planning/Advice
 - Course approvals
 - Acceptance
 - Confirmation of funding
 - Visa application

Information: 40%

- More...
 - Support from faculties/course approval advice
 - Information online
 - Support from UQ Abroad
 - Course information
 - Advice on availability of hosts
 - Advice from past students

WHAT IS NEXT?

- Academics
 - Working with Schools/Faculties
 - Online advice on availability of hosts
- Timing
 - Encourage more forward planning
 - Fitting exchange into whole degree/career path
 - Withdrawal policy
- Finances
 - Availability of scholarships and additional funding
 - More advice on budgeting, how to save on exchange

QUESTIONS?