

DEMOS

**PUTTING PEOPLE
AT THE HEART OF
A TRUE CIVIC
UNIVERSITY: THE
CASE OF UEA**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2019 The Civic University Commission asked what it means to be a civic university in the 21st century, one that puts its economic, social, environmental and cultural role in the community at the centre of its strategy.

It found great examples of civic activity, but rarely was the approach strategic and based on the real needs of their local communities. It described universities' attempts at civic activity as too often "superficial and complacent". It highlighted an "insufficient connection" with the public and their views.

The Commission made the case to develop Civic University Partnerships putting the needs of their localities front and centre.¹

Universities have responded to this call and are taking their role as civic institutions increasingly seriously, but too often they fall short in how they engage communities; they seek out conversations that they have already deemed to be worth listening to, rather than creating open listening channels.

The University of East Anglia set out to do this differently.

Demos worked with UEA to use the digital dialogue tool, Polis, to understand what local people really want from the university. Polis is a cutting-edge online engagement tool that is used to identify areas of consensus in a community, and to prompt people to offer fresh ideas. It has been used globally to introduce a nuance and subtlety to democratic processes. Taiwan, Kentucky and Singapore, for example, have integrated Polis into their democratic landscapes.

Demos deployed Polis within three in-person public engagement events in partnership with the UEA.

Two of these were run as 'Open Space' events, a participant-driven technique whereby the agenda for an event is largely set and overseen by its attendees. The third was as part of a public UEA-run programme at the Royal Norfolk Show.

Over the three events, these digital dialogues engaged 534 people, who cast 15,352 votes and submitted 275 statements that in turn shaped the conversations. This report analyses what people said, drawing out the following insights for what it would mean - in the eyes of local people - for the UEA to be a true civic university.

People want more from a civic UEA: service provision, lifelong learning, economic development and physical presence.

Those who took part felt the notion of civic connections between the university and the region could and should manifest in a range of areas. Most of all, however, people saw promise in the following

¹ UPP Foundation. *Truly Civic: Strengthening the connection between universities and their places*. UPP Foundations, February 2019. P.36. Available at: <https://upp-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Civic-University-Commission-Final-Report.pdf> [Accessed 19 July 2022]

four:

- The UEA as a provider of local services.
- The UEA as an institution to improve young people's aspirations and provide lifelong learning opportunities for adults.
- The UEA as an institution driving and supporting the region's economy.
- The UEA as an institution physically embedded across the region but in a way that local people feel they have had a say in.

Most people feel that the UEA could be more of a civic institution, though there is recognition of its existing strengths

A common thread throughout was recognition that the UEA has an obligation to balance its attention on both local and regional demands. Very few participants rejected the view that UEA should be building more links with local people, and in some cases there was agreement that it has existing strengths as a civic institution. The nuance here often comes from people's varying degrees of optimism or pessimism about what is required to develop these links further.

People want a say in the university's approach to its civic role

Participants' responses suggested the following strategies to improve civic connectedness with the university:

- When a topic relating to the UEA's links to the region is framed in terms of how the university can help address a local problem, people tend to respond with more unity.
- Action is important. Even where people disagree about what the actual state of the relationship between the UEA and the region currently is, consensus can be built on what can be done to improve it.
- There is a desire for continued, democratic, inclusive and open engagement on what the UEA will do going forward to become an even more civic university.
- There is a consensus around the idea of the UEA being a university that strives to be connected to the region and beyond.
- Areas of uncertainty often seem founded in perceptions of the UEA rather than lived experience. This speaks to the value of continued, broadened engagement as part of the civic university project.

METHODOLOGY

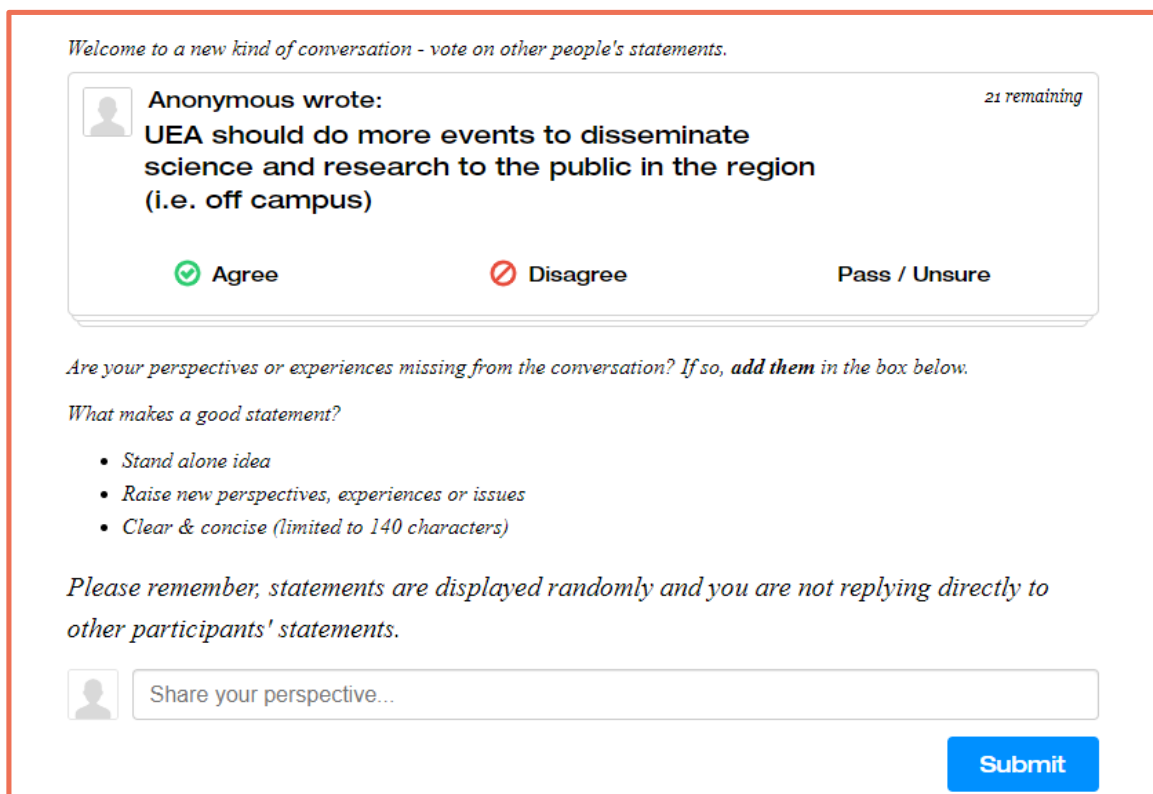
HOW DOES POLIS WORK?

This research used the online tool Polis to identify where people share consensus, and where they diverge. Polis is a deliberation platform which encourages people to participate in discussions rather than simply responding. It differs from a traditional polling platform in two crucial ways. It is an established tool that is used around the world to support and build democratic participation and engagement.


Participants in a Polis debate are shown a 'stack' of statements, and asked whether they agree, disagree or want to 'pass' on each. They are then able to add their own statements, which, after moderation, may be added to the stack.

In this case, moderation was performed by Demos staff, and involved reviewing submitted suggestions before including them in the list of statements presented to participants (see Appendix 1).

This changes the passive process of surveying into a participatory one, allowing people to draw on their own lived experiences to add missing dimensions into the debate, and allowing new ideas and solutions to be sourced from those taking part. This is a departure from traditional polling where the questions are simply put forward by researchers.



Welcome to a new kind of conversation - vote on other people's statements.

 **Anonymous wrote:** 21 remaining
UEA should do more events to disseminate science and research to the public in the region (i.e. off campus)

Agree Disagree Pass / Unsure

Are your perspectives or experiences missing from the conversation? If so, **add them** in the box below.

What makes a good statement?

- Stand alone idea
- Raise new perspectives, experiences or issues
- Clear & concise (limited to 140 characters)

Please remember, statements are displayed randomly and you are not replying directly to other participants' statements.




Fig.1: The Polis interface - voting and submission

Throughout the poll, Polis employs a technique called 'Principal Component Analysis' to place users who vote similarly into groups. A visualisation showing these groups is shown to participants, alongside a circle which identifies in real time where they themselves sit in relation to others. This view also shows which opinions are shared amongst all participants, and which are characteristic of a given group. This approach gives users a sense of where they stand on issues, but also shows them what unites them with those from other groups. After the Polis is complete, each group is analysed and given a unique descriptive name by a researcher, to categorise users within each group. Therefore each time the method is run, and for each of the different events discussed in this report, the group names are different.

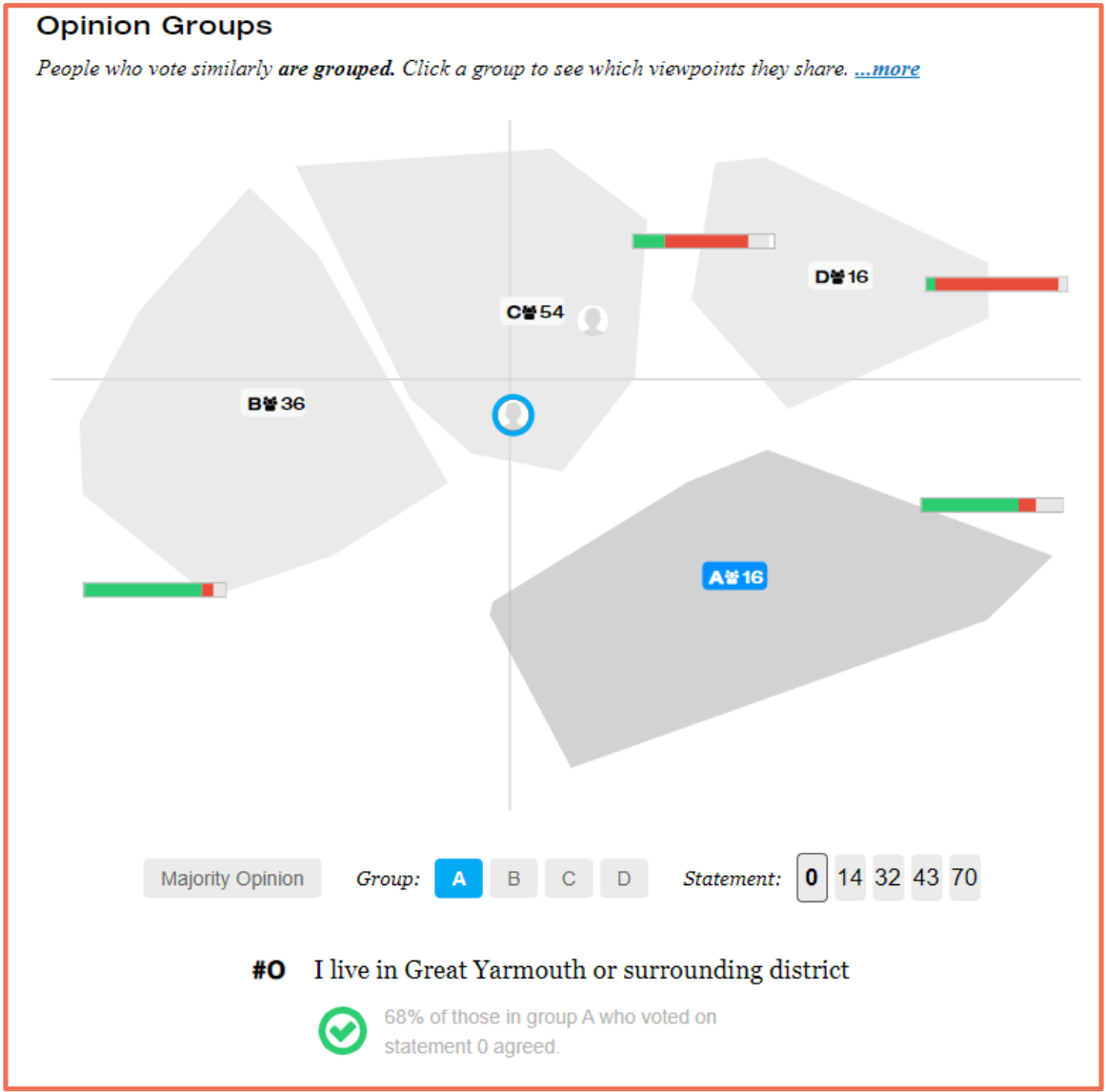


Fig. 2: The Polis interface - groups

INTEGRATION OF POLIS IN THE UEA'S ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Great Yarmouth

For the Great Yarmouth public engagement, Demos ran a Polis alongside the day's Open Space format. Polis results were projected onto a screen, allowing participants to watch the conversation developing in real-time, and were invited to take part using their smartphones. Alongside this, UEA students, acting as facilitators and note takers from the table deliberations of the Open Space Events, were able to add statements from members of the public. We also drove local residents to the Polis through the main UEA Facebook and Twitter accounts targeting Great Yarmouth for the week

preceding the event and for 24 hours afterwards.

UEA Campus

For the UEA campus public engagement, Demos supported UEA students to set-up and run a Polis alongside their in-person event. The event featured the previous in-person integrations used in Great Yarmouth, though a different set of questions was developed to suit the content of an on-campus event. Full details of these statements are included in a technical annex to this document. We also drove young people and those with relevant interest profiles from Norwich to the poll through UEA social media accounts.

Royal Norfolk Show

For the Royal Norfolk Show public engagement, Demos set up a stall as part of the UEA's marquee during the show. Researchers ran a Polis alongside the Civic University team's stall for show attendees to express their views. Attendees were also able to give feedback on the civic university project via written notes and in a physical poll using counters.

Similar to the previous engagements, attendees were able to see the Polis results in real-time on a display, and were invited to take part in it using their smartphones, tablets or the Demos researchers' laptops. Alongside this, Demos researchers took the tablets 'into the field', walking the grounds of the show to invite people to take part.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF POLIS IN THE ENGAGEMENTS

The key strengths to the use of Polis as part of these events were its ability to widen participation and encourage agenda-setting for the Civic University's outputs more broadly.

As an asynchronous participation tool, Polis offers a level of convenience that other forms of live public engagement cannot, allowing those who could not take part physically on the day or at that time to be part of the conversation. The possibility to take part at a later time also meant that those who were physically present at the engagements could follow-up the discussions at a later time as well, deepening their participation and affording additional time for reflection and potential discussion with others in their lives on the topics.

As a means of polling which allows participants to add their own views, Polis is also extremely good at allowing people to set an agenda. In this way - much like the Open Space format used in-person at Great Yarmouth - it means the UEA's Civic University charter can be further guided by the public themselves. This is particularly pertinent to the driving question at the heart of this research: what does it mean for the UEA to be a civic university?

Limitations to the use of Polis as part of these events stemmed from this being a pioneering use of the tool with in-person events. Though Demos has used Polis extensively in social research, this is still a nascent field and as such hurdles were encountered during the events. In particular, people are not familiar with the Polis format, meaning that the process - such as being able to add your own statements - required additional time for people to understand. Nonetheless, this did not diminish the number of people who ultimately took part.

A further limitation follows from the sampling format used. Across the events, the online outreach to encourage participants was done in an opt-in fashion, though this included targeted advertising. The in-person participants were exclusively self-selecting at the Great Yarmouth event, and were a mixture of self-selected participants and those approached by the UEA students or Demos researchers at the campus and Royal Norfolk Show events, respectively.

Finally, it is both a strength and a limitation that the use of Polis in these engagements was, for the most part, anonymous. The discussions included statements which could reveal personal information, such as whether someone had visited the UEA, but these were few and were limited in their ability to identify participants. Demos researchers also spoke to participants who were taking part in person but did not record anything from these interactions. As such, people's Polis participation told us little about

who they were, limiting our ability to provide detailed demographic breakdowns or data on how many participants returned to a Polis, for example. A key strength of this, however, was that it lowered the bar to participation, and may have encouraged greater honesty than an engagement in which people were visible to the researchers and to other participants.

FINDINGS

KEY FIGURES

Event 1 – Great Yarmouth (30 April 2022)

- 145 participants took part in the poll, collectively voting 3,497 times – an average of 25 votes per participant.
- 84 statements were submitted. Following moderation, the total number of statements in this analysis was 42.

Event 2 – UEA Campus (7 May 2022)

- 278 participants took part in the poll, collectively voting 9,243 times – an average of 34 votes per participant.
- 138 statements were submitted. Following moderation, the total number of statements in this analysis was 112.

Event 3 – Royal Norfolk Show (29-30 June 2022)

- 111 participants took part in the poll, collectively voting 2,612 times – an average of 24 votes per participant.
- 53 statements were submitted. Following moderation, the total number of statements in this analysis was 36.

FINDINGS GREAT YARMOUTH

SUMMARY

On 30 April the first engagement event was held at The Drill House venue in Great Yarmouth. Polling showed that the vast majority of those who took part on the day had visited the UEA campus at some point previously, with participants including a mixture of those from Great Yarmouth and those who lived elsewhere. Statements contributed to the discussion by participants focused especially on local services and education. Opinion groups within participants were divided along the lines of whether UEA should be more attentive to local interests, but there was nuance here, with varying levels of optimism or pessimism about the state of the university's existing links to the region and differences in either support or opposition for extending these.

Key insights from this discussion were:

- Even where there is division, when a topic is framed in terms of addressing a local problem, people are more unified.
- Young people's aspirations were a top unifier, something that came through elsewhere in these Polis engagements.

THEMES

The initial statements, which we will describe as the 'seeded statements', for the Great Yarmouth Polis were created by Demos in combination with the UEA Civic University team. From these and the statements moderated into the discussion, we coded the following themes, displayed in order of the number of submitted statements.

As the ordering suggests, there were a range of approaches that participants were interested in exploring when it came to the links between the UEA and the region, with a particular focus on local services and education. For the purposes of analysis, some of these themes are collated in subsequent sections. A full list of statements, with voting records, is provided in Appendix 2.

| THEME | SEEDED STATEMENTS | SUBMITTED STATEMENTS | EXAMPLE |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|--|
| Local services | 2 | 9 | UEA should have a role in celebrating the culture of our region. |

| THEME | SEEDED STATEMENTS | SUBMITTED STATEMENTS | EXAMPLE |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|
| Education | 0 | 6 | UEA should provide transportation for those in surrounding areas to attend lectures. |
| Business | 0 | 3 | UEA should provide more courses in engineering and the sciences to support local offshore industries and technology companies. |
| Local research | 0 | 3 | UEA could sponsor/organise/help local groups improve the natural environment, biodiversity etc. with their expertise. |
| Measurements of success | 5 | 2 | UEA's short-term goal should be to achieve financial stability and avoid mass redundancies that would negatively impact the region. |
| Miscellaneous | 0 | 2 | I think the UEA should host regular community gatherings in localities across the region as part of its ongoing civic engagement. |
| General perceptions of the UEA | 4 | 2 | UEA is invisible in Great Yarmouth. |
| Demographics | 2 | 0 | I live in Great Yarmouth or surrounding district. |
| Local versus international | 1 | 0 | Universities should focus on the local area over international reputation. |

GROUPS

Four opinion groups emerged from this Polis, along with a null group of 23 participants who did not fit neatly into any of the other groups (16% of the total):

- **Group 1: Civic Opposers**
 - 16 participants (11% of the total)
 - Submitted 6 statements: general perceptions of the UEA (1), business (1), education (2), local services (2).
 - Characterised by: more guided in their voting patterns by a general opposition to the UEA growing its connections to the region and the interests of local people. A majority have visited

the UEA campus and live in Great Yarmouth or the surrounding district.

- **Group 2: Civic Supporters**
 - 36 participants (25% of the total)
 - Submitted 9 statements: education (3), local services (3), measurements of success (1), general perceptions of the UEA (1), business (1).
 - Characterised by: more guided in their voting patterns by a general support for the UEA growing its connections to the region and the interests of local people. A majority have visited the UEA campus and live in Great Yarmouth or the surrounding district.
- **Group 3: Civic Undecided**
 - 54 participants (37% of the total)
 - Submitted 8 statements: miscellaneous (2), local research (2), local services (3), measurements of success (1).
 - Characterised by: somewhat guided in their voting patterns by general support for the UEA growing its connections to the region and the interests of local people, however their degree of indecision is strong. A majority have visited the UEA campus and do not live in Great Yarmouth or the surrounding district.
- **Group 4: Civic Mixed**
 - 16 participants (11% of the total)
 - Submitted 2 statements: local services (1), measurements of success (1).
 - Characterised by: somewhat guided in their voting patterns by general opposition to the UEA growing its connections to the region and the interests of local people, however their positions here are mixed. A majority have visited the UEA campus and do not live in Great Yarmouth or the surrounding district. This group may be more inclined to support the status quo, seeing the UEA as a regional university which does not necessarily need to radically change to support the local area differently. However, there are key areas in which this group does see the UEA as needing to do more (see Figures 7-10).

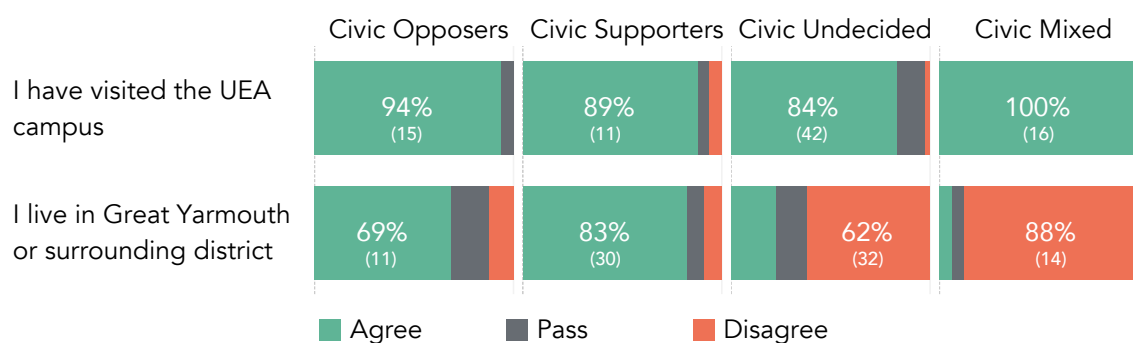


Fig. 4 – Statements showing demographic splits between groups

DIVISIONS

Divisions between the groups fell under a range of themes, with the majority of these related in some way to local interests.

PERCEPTION OF THE UEA

From a broad standpoint, division emerged among respondents when it came to perceptions about the scope of the UEA's local connection. What Figure 5 suggests is that the Civic Opposer group is generally more sceptical of this connection as it stands. Both they and the Civic Supporters agree that the connection could be improved, but as subsequent statements will suggest, this is for different reasons: the former are generally opposed to a more civic UEA and the latter generally supportive of it.

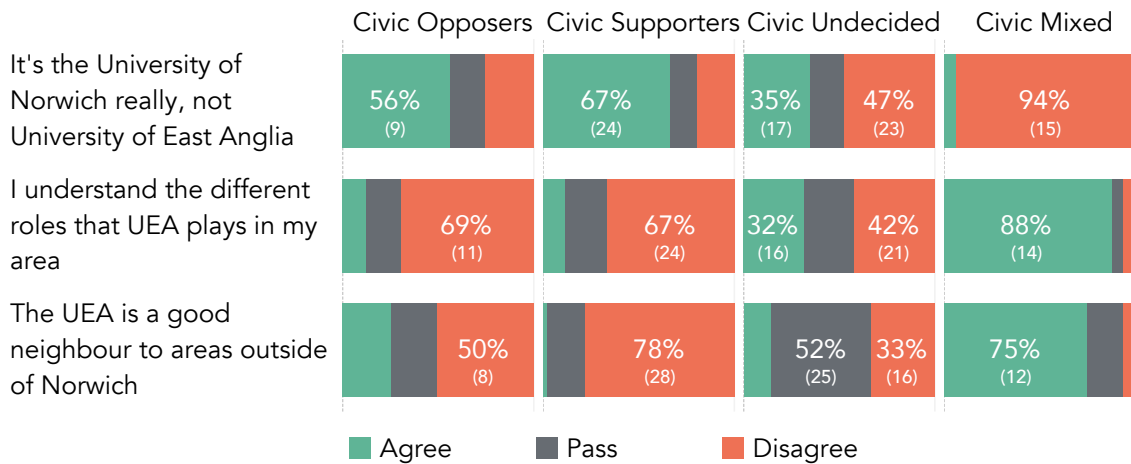
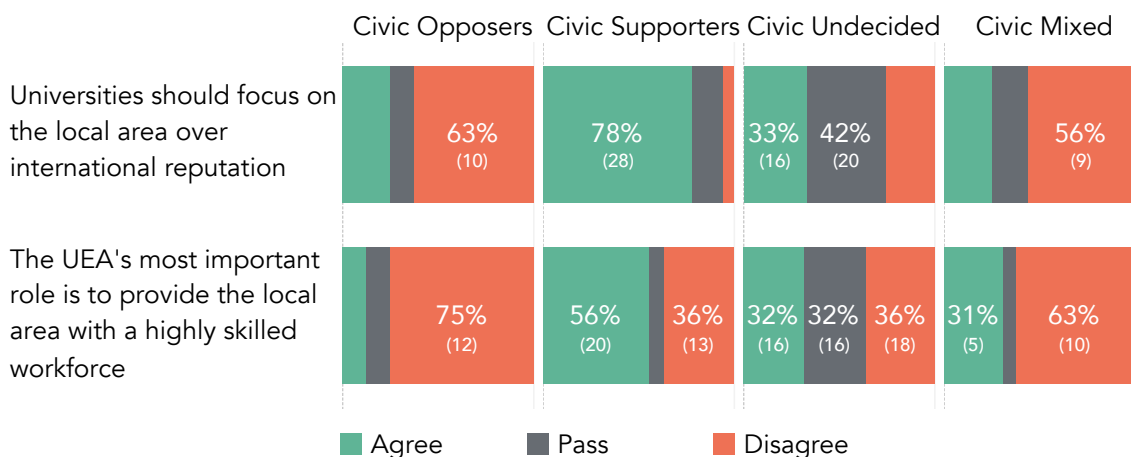


Fig. 5 – Statements showing division between groups around broad perceptions of the UEA

The Civic Undecided, similarly, display an uncertainty that pervades their responses, coupled with tentative support for stronger links between the UEA and the region. The Civic Mixed are more optimistic about this link, but do not always support deepening it.

LOCAL INTERESTS

Remaining areas of division, though diverse (see Figure 6), shared a recurring focus on the place of local interests for the UEA. Some of this was addressed through comparison, stating what the balance between local and extra-local interests should be for the university in relation to measuring its success. For example, while 63% of Civic Opposers disagreed with the statement “Universities should focus on the local area over international reputation”, 78% of Civic Supporters agreed with this statement (it is worth noting that the supporters are a larger group).



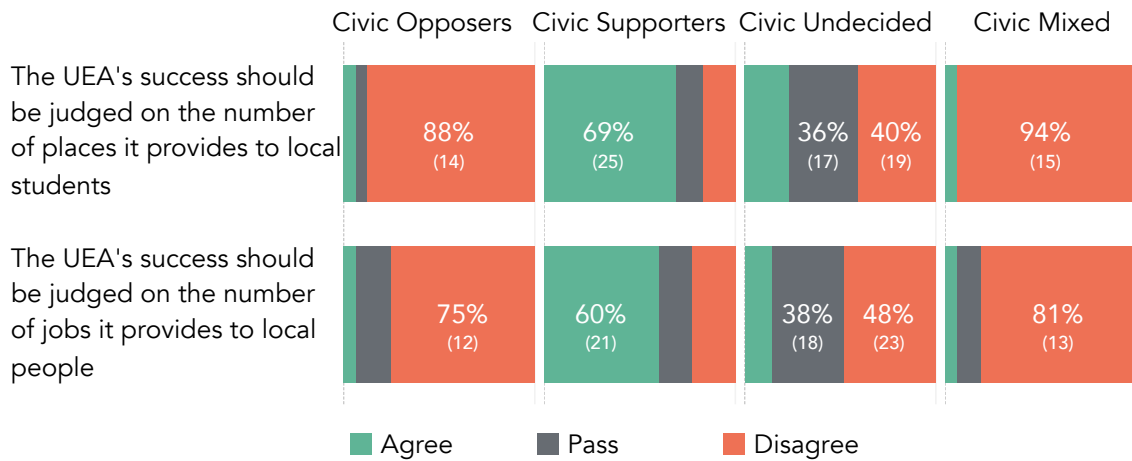


Fig. 6 - Four statements on the abstract local impact of the university of the UEA

The statements in Figure 6 show that neither the Civic Mixed nor the Civic Opposers tend to prioritise the benefits the university has on the local area, though local influence is a priority for Civic Supporters. The Civic Undecided are tentative, though here they are closer to the Opposers and Mixed.

What is striking, however, is that when the same consideration is framed as addressing a specific rather than an abstract challenge, such as reaching out to younger students, all groups pivot (to varying degrees still) to prioritising local needs. This is shown in Figure 7.

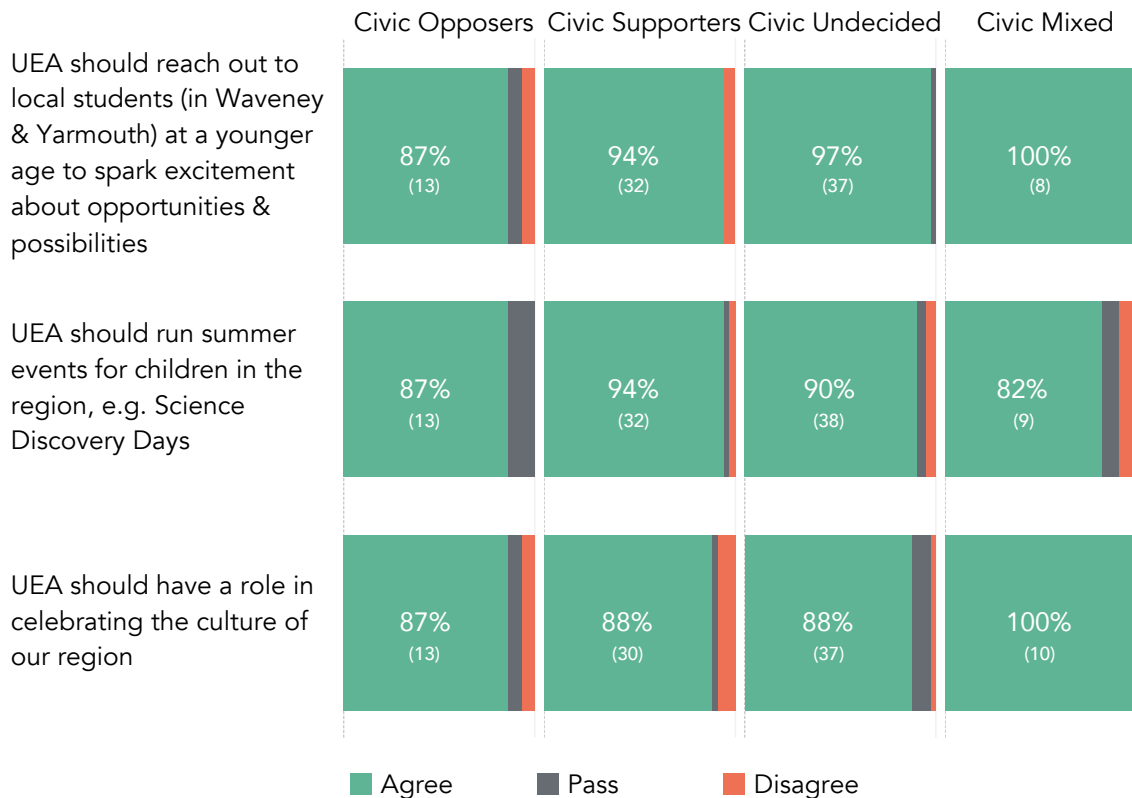


Fig. 7 - Three statements on specific local impacts of the university, showing consensus between groups.

A different area where division is evident revolves around whether the UEA should provide services which directly benefit the local workforce. The Civic Opposers' disagreement in Figure 8 may indicate not just a perception that the UEA does not provide such services but also that it ought not. In

contrast, the Civic Mixed are very confident that the university does provide these, even if their votes elsewhere suggest disagreement with the extension of this role for the UEA.

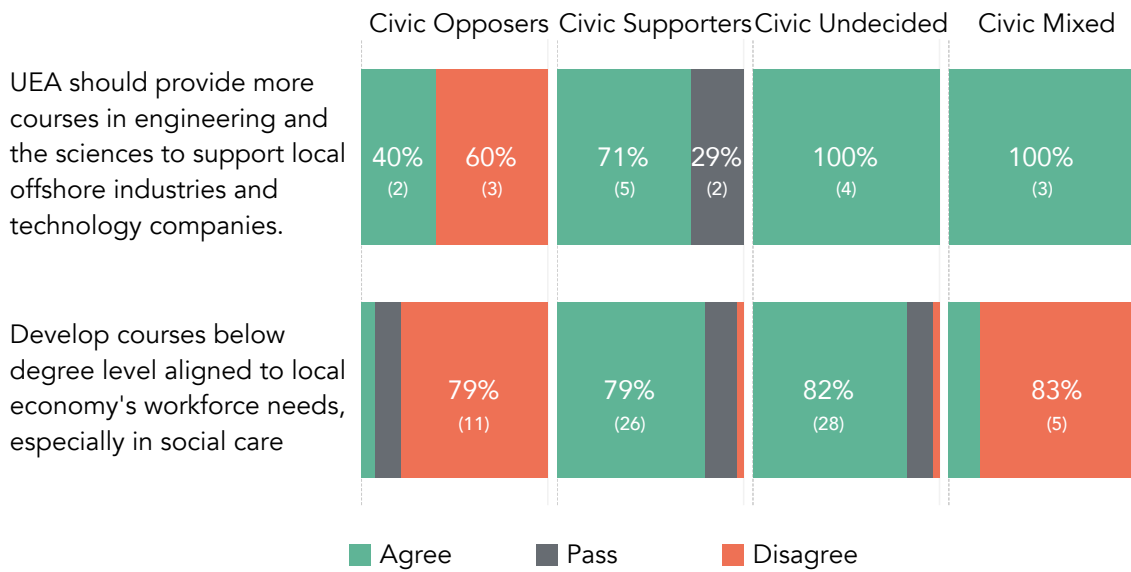
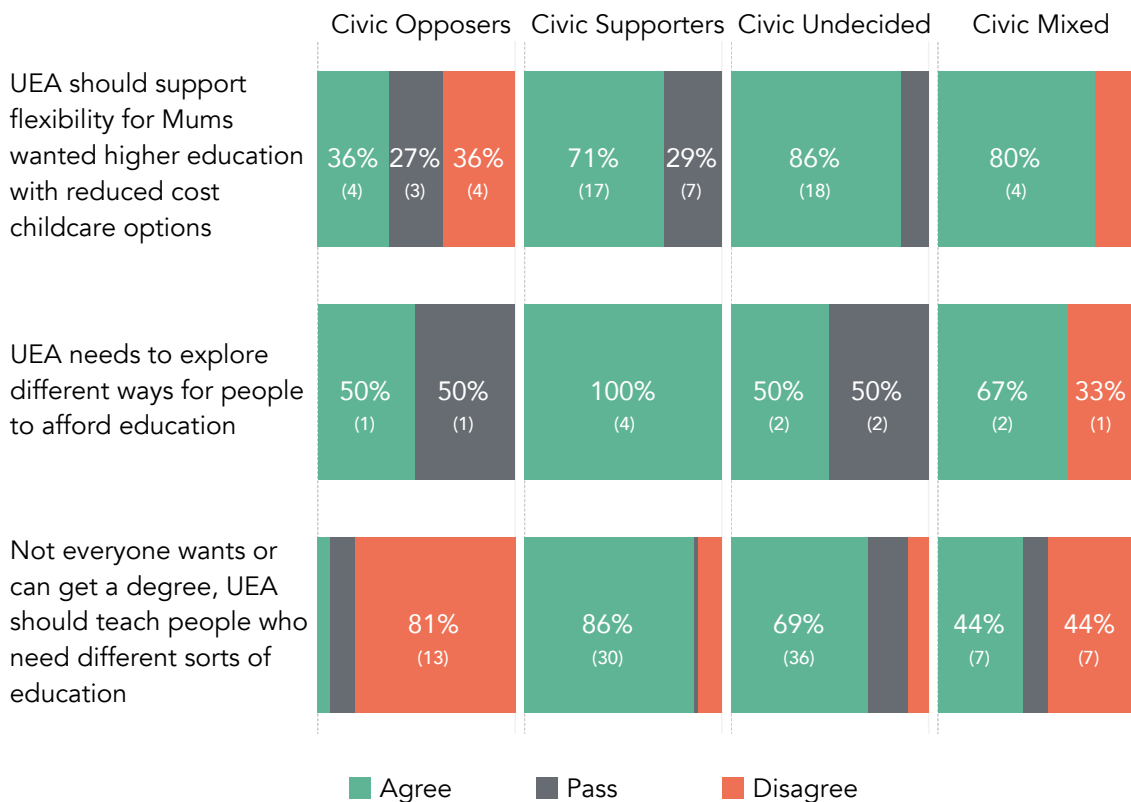


Fig. 8 - Two statements on specific local impacts of the university, showing consensus between groups.

Another set of statements, shown in Figure 9 below, were concerned specifically with the university's efforts to provide routes into education more widely. This saw a similar dynamic to the divisions around impacts on the local workforce, with the Civic Opposers generally uncertain or opposed to improving accessibility, the Civic Mixed varying in their support, and the Civic Supporters and Civic Undecided generally in strong agreement that expanding access to UEA is a good approach.



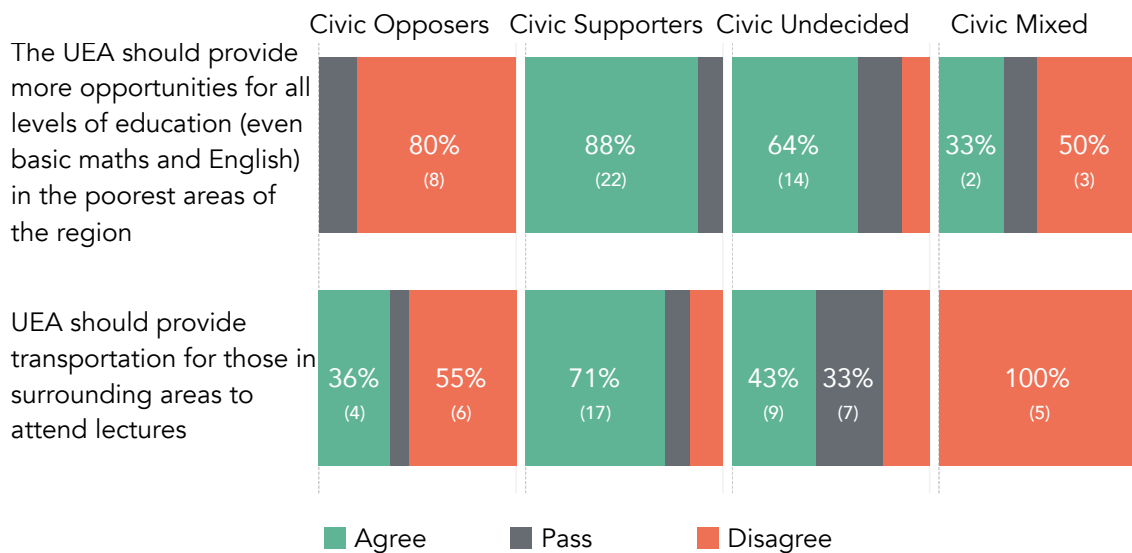


Figure 9 – Statements discussing various routes into education, showing disagreement between groups.

As Figure 9 shows, the Civic Mixed holds diverging views concerning the university’s support for different employment sectors. This might reflect that this group recognises a role for the UEA in supporting local employability interests, but disagrees with the extension of UEA’s influence into new local services or sectors, which could include social care.

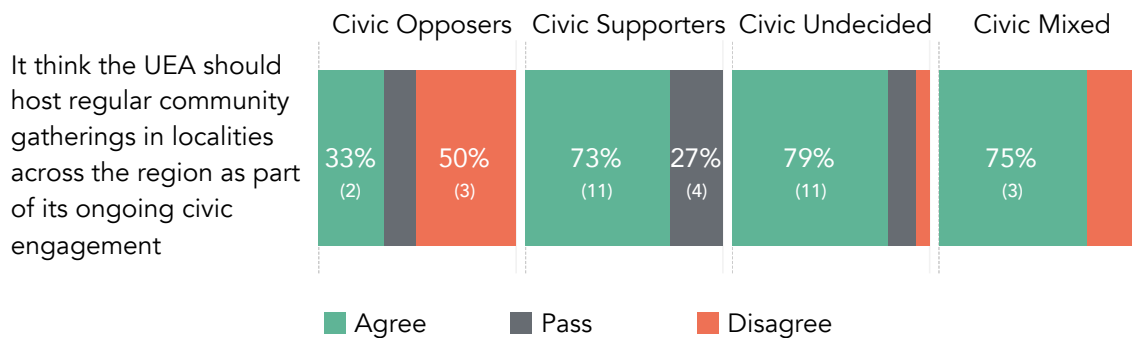


Figure 10 – A divisive statement suggesting the UEA continue to hold events to engage local communities.

Finally, a single statement turned the mirror and focused on the Civic University project itself, asking whether the university should continue to hold these gatherings. The Civic Opposers group, as expected, were more likely to reject the project: while there was also a degree of opposition within the Civic Mixed group (although this was a minority within this group) (see Figure 10).

FINDING CONSENSUS

Some 15/42 of the statements submitted to this poll had a shared majority vote across all groups. Of these, four statements had strong agreement of 75% or more, and no statements had a consensus disagreement. What is striking is the inclusion of two statements about young people, shown in Figure 11, both of which have the highest shared agreement. This speaks to a theme that arose in the other Polis engagements for the Civic University project (and in statements that were moderated out of the Polis in this one), around how vital it is to address a perceived lack of aspirations among young people in the region.

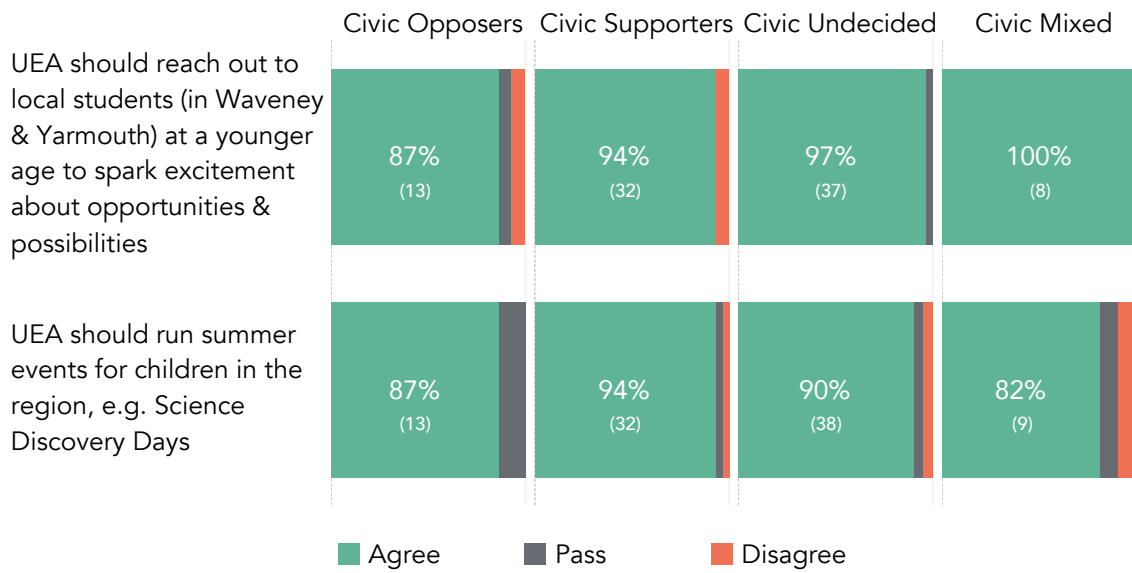


Figure 11 – Statements with high overall agreement and high agreement across groups

FINDINGS UEA CAMPUS

SUMMARY

On 7 May the second engagement event was held at the UEA campus in Norwich. Those who took part were a mixture of students, staff and other visitors to the campus. Statements submitted by participants focused especially on education accessibility and economic connections between the UEA and the region.

As we explore below, several divisive topics arose from this conversation. People tended to differ in the levels of optimism and pessimism about the university's approach to becoming a stronger civic institution, and their assessment of how much work there is to be done.

Key insights from this discussion were:

- There is consensus on what can be done to build the relationship with the local area, even if people disagree about what the state of the relationship between the UEA and the region is.
- UEA was seen as an asset to local people, and the local area was seen as a beneficial resource for the students of the UEA.
- As in the Great Yarmouth poll, participants found consensus around the importance of and need for accessibility to education for a variety of people in the region.
- Another clear point of consensus was that the physical relationship between the UEA and the region matters: local people are not against the university's impact on local spaces but they want the use and impact to be addressed in an open and democratic way with local people.
- Uncertainty prevailed around what the impact of a civic university on the community could be; speaking, perhaps, to the desire for continual, open, democratic interaction to understand what this means for UEA and the community going forward.

THEMES

Unlike the other two meetings, the seeded statements for the campus Polis were created by students in the Civic University programme. From this and the statements provided by participants and moderated into the discussion, students coded the following themes, displayed in order of the number of submitted statements (see Table 12). A full list of statements, with voting records, is provided in Appendix 3.

As statements were submitted by students and the public, they were sorted into themes by student facilitators. Table 12, below, shows the number of statements seeded (by the student facilitators) or submitted (by all participants) to the poll. As seen below, many statements addressed links between the UEA and the region, with a particular focus on the accessibility of education and economic connections. For the purposes of analysis, some of these themes are collated in subsequent sections.

| THEME | SEEDED STATEMENTS | SUBMITTED STATEMENTS | EXAMPLE |
|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|
| Accessibility needs | 2 | 15 | Learning is largely inaccessible at UEA - both physically and financially. |
| UEA economic role | 1 | 13 | I believe that the UEA contributes significantly to Norfolk's economy. |
| Local consideration | 2 | 12 | I live close to the UEA and would like to see an end to houses being used for student accommodation. |
| UEA role | 2 | 10 | UEA can do more to its campus to benefit students and local communities. |
| Student safety | 0 | 10 | UEA should be teaching students how to manage emotions, spot signs of unwell thoughts and feelings. |
| Environmental concern | 2 | 7 | UEA needs to stop the land-grab and stop building all over historic parkland that was left to the people of Norwich. |
| UEA capability | 2 | 5 | UEA should ensure staff in the HUB are supported more to deal with the number of requests/enquiries (online and in person on campus). |
| UEA representation | 1 | 5 | UEA does not do enough to protect marginalised groups on campus and in Norwich. |
| Student opportunities | 1 | 4 | UEA should help organising more volunteering for students in the Greater Norwich local communities as part of their degrees. |
| Building recommendations | 0 | 3 | The UEA should offer more toilets on the grounds for walkers. |
| Ideological belief | 2 | 2 | Clamp down on woke/left-wing extremists that threaten freedom of thought on campus. |
| Miscellaneous | 0 | 1 | Stop destroying the Yare valley. UEA is already far too big. |
| Civic understanding | 2 | 0 | I understand what a 'civic university' means. |

| THEME | SEEDED STATEMENTS | SUBMITTED STATEMENTS | EXAMPLE |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--|
| UEA image | 2 | 0 | I think that UEA provides a positive portrayal of Norwich and greater Norfolk. |
| Age grouping | 1 | 0 | I am under 30 years old. |
| Norwich economy | 1 | 0 | UEA has caused house prices in Norwich to rise. |
| Rural/urban divide | 1 | 0 | I grew up living in a city. |
| Socio-economic status | 1 | 0 | I own and drive a car. |
| Student status | 1 | 0 | I am a student at UEA. |
| Ties to Norwich | 1 | 0 | I grew up in Norwich. |

Figure 11 – Statements with high overall agreement and high agreement across groups

GROUPS

Three opinion groups emerged from this Polis, with 9 participants not being assigned to a group (14% of the total). Common to these three groups was a difference in optimism or pessimism about the UEA's relationship to the local region. These three distinct groups are described below.

- **Group 1: Pessimists**
 - 134 participants (48% of the total)
 - Submitted 52 statements: accessibility needs (11), local consideration (4), UEA role (5), UEA economic role (10), student safety (7), environmental concern (6), UEA capability (4), UEA representation (2), student opportunities (1), building recommendations (2).
 - Characterised by: more guided in their voting patterns by a pessimism about the UEA's current relationship to the region, and believe more can be done to improve this. 58% of this group said they were students at UEA.
- **Group 2: Uncertain**
 - 24 participants (9% of the total)
 - Submitted 10 statements: local consideration (3), UEA economic role (2), environmental concern (1), UEA capability (1), ideological belief (2), miscellaneous (1).
 - Characterised by: very uncertain in their responses and often did not respond at all - where they did it was a mixture of optimism and pessimism about the relationship between UEA and the region. This group contains the largest proportion of declared non-students (58%).
- **Group 3: Optimists**
 - 81 participants (29% of the total)
 - Submitted 22 statements: accessibility needs (3), local consideration (4), UEA role (5), student safety (3), UEA representation (3), student opportunities (3), building recommendations (1).

- Characterised by: more guided in their voting patterns by an optimism about the UEA's current relationship to the region, though still believe more can be done to improve this. 58% of this group said they were students at UEA.

GROUP DEMOGRAPHICS (COMBINING: RURAL/URBAN DIVIDE, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, STUDENT STATUS, TIES TO NORWICH, CIVIC UNDERSTANDING)

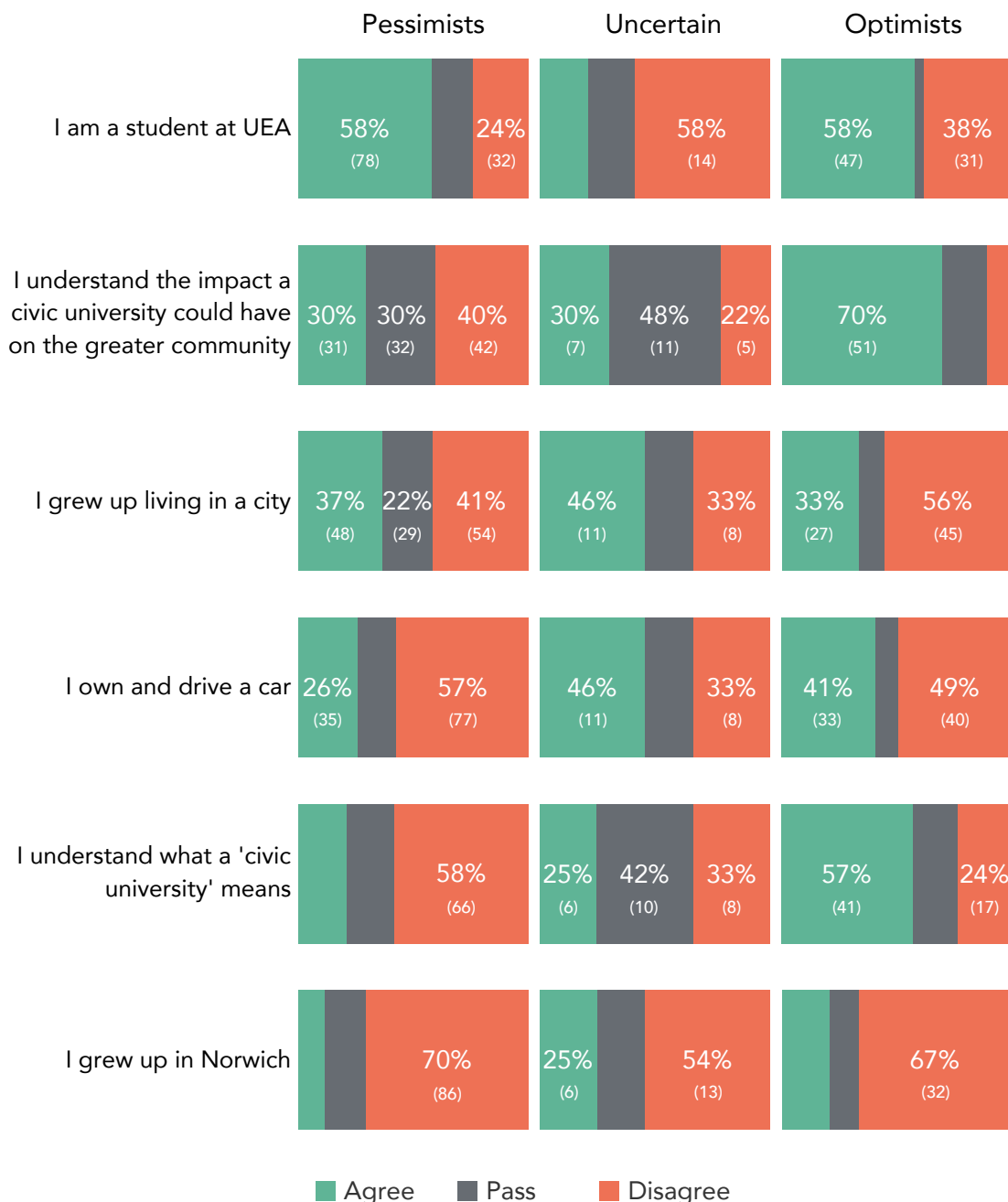


Fig. 13 – Statements showing the demographics of each group

DIVISIONS

The divisions between the groups are varied, cutting across issues from the local economy, the use of space and much else.

PERCEPTION OF UEA

A set of themes focused on how the UEA is perceived, offering great insight into participants' sense of both the UEA's present degree of civic connection and what its trajectory here ought to be going forward.

There was a baseline perception that the UEA has existing strengths as a civic institution, with the Pessimists and Optimists giving a majority or relative majority agreement response to the statements in Figure 14, for example. Even the Uncertain group demonstrates some degree of support for the idea that the UEA provides a positive portrayal of Norwich and greater Norfolk.

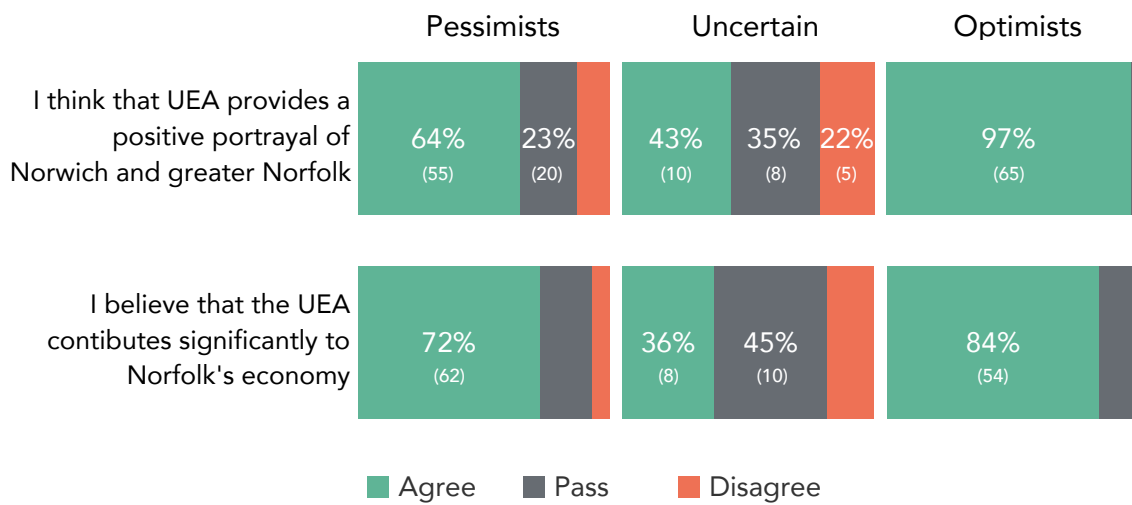
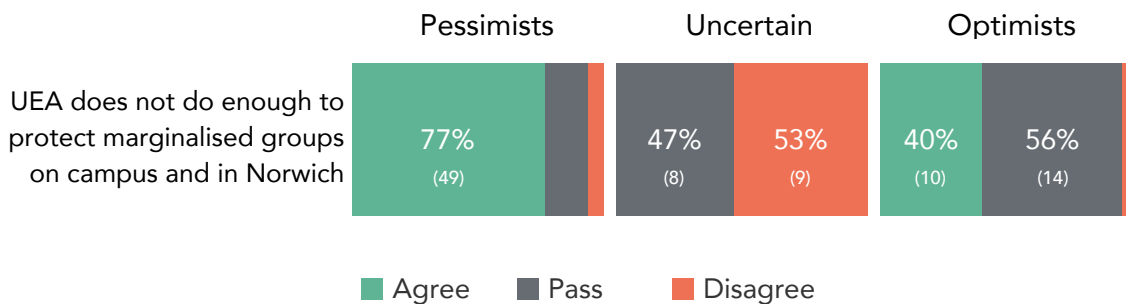


Fig. 14 – Two statements showing perception of the UEA's impact on the local area

Given their difference in level of agreement to the statements in Figure 14, however, where these groups diverge is in the degree to which they believe there is still work to be done to strengthen local ties. As the divisions in Figures 15 and 16 illustrate, the Optimists at least tentatively disagree with suggestions that the relationship between the UEA and local people is fraught.

This same dynamic plays out elsewhere. The Pessimists do not believe the UEA does enough to protect marginalised groups, do not feel represented by the UEA and do not trust the UEA to prioritise the needs and views of the local community.



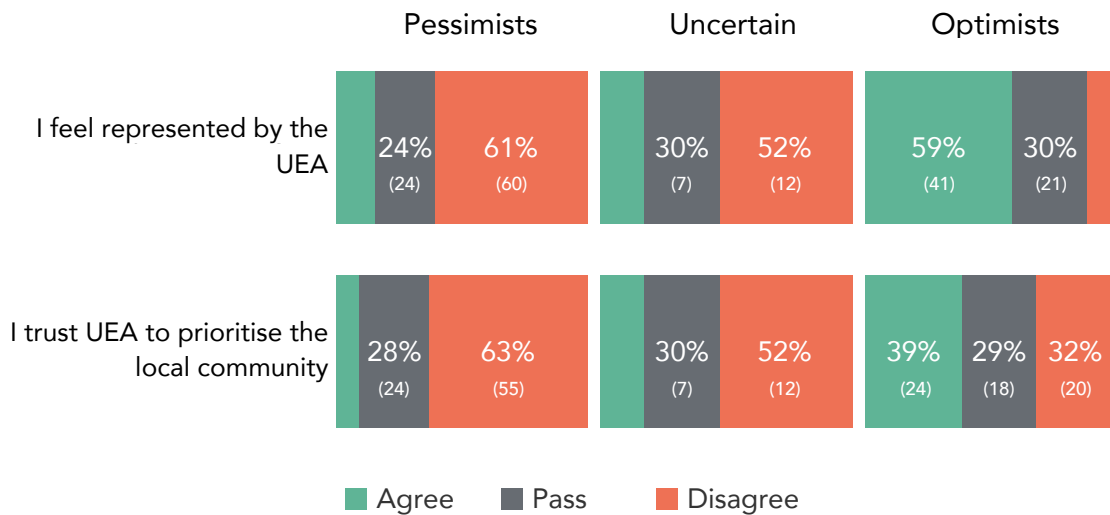


Fig. 15 – Statements showing pessimism about the UEA's place in the community

Tellingly perhaps, these statements are an area where the Uncertain group are more forthright. Given that a majority of them do not feel represented by the UEA or trusted it to prioritise the local community, this could imply that their uncertainty is driven in part at least by a despondent perception about the capacity for UEA to change its connection to the region.

Further insight into these diverging perceptions explicitly address sites of tension between the UEA and local people, around anti-social behaviour and applications for limited pots of funding. Again, the Optimists' group responses suggest a weaker - and in one case opposing - perception about these tensions.

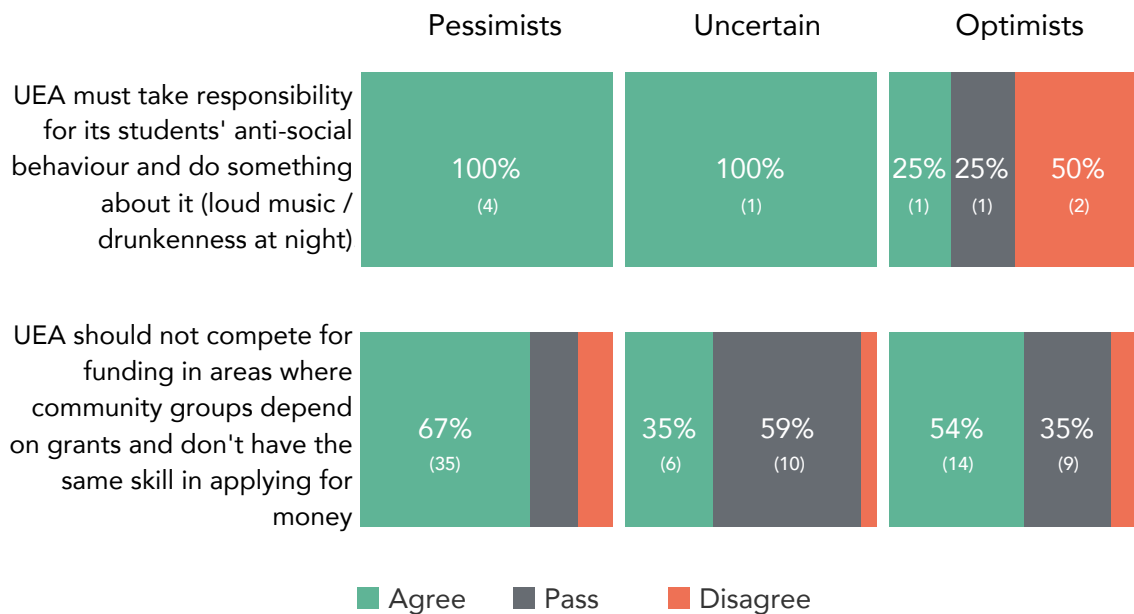


Fig. 16 – Statements around local tensions

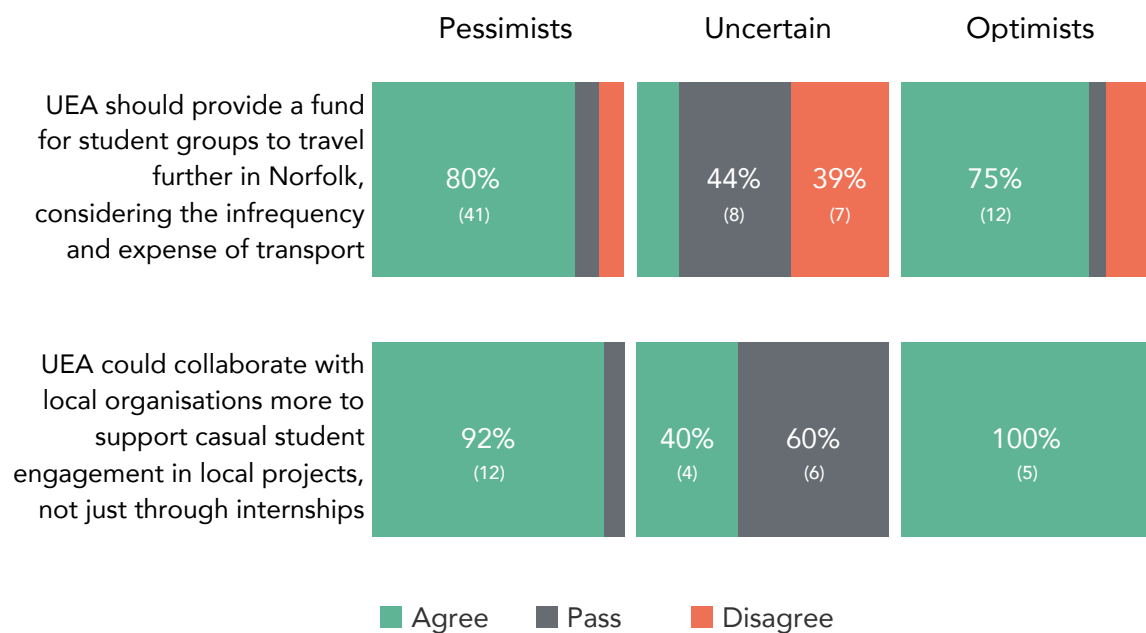


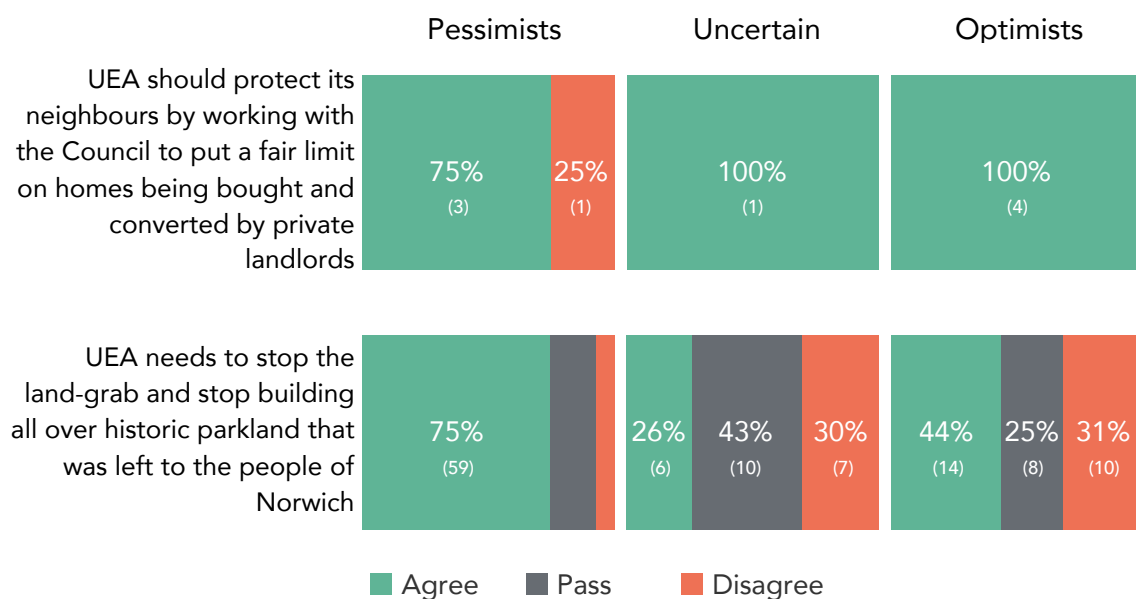
Fig. 17 – Statements suggesting how UEA students might benefit from better ties to the local area

Despite these divisions, there is a degree of consensus when it comes to discussions about how the UEA could improve its civic connections and become more of an asset to the region. At the same time, the perception is not simply that the region should be able to ‘use’ the UEA without reciprocation. Both Pessimists and Optimists felt that students should be encouraged and supported to be present across the region, including for their own activities both as part of their studies and in their extracurricular activities.

THE UEA’S WIDER RELATIONSHIPS

A third set of statements were also concerned with how the UEA relates to the region, but focused on specific ways in which this could be accomplished rather than people’s perceptions of the university.

A prominent theme among these statements was the physical relationship UEA has to the region: its impact on the use of land and buildings. Here again, the Pessimists and Optimists broadly agree. In each statement shown in Figure 18, the largest proportion of each groups’ votes are in consensus.



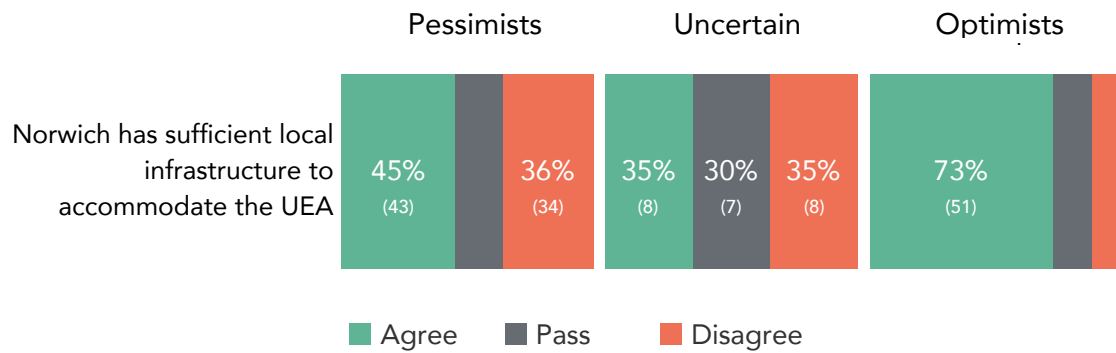


Fig. 18 – Statements addressing the UEA’s physical relationship to its environs

What comes through from the remaining statements around the UEA’s wider relationship to its local area is that participants wanted to see the UEA address tensions with the local area, and take opportunities in partnership with local people and in a transparent fashion.

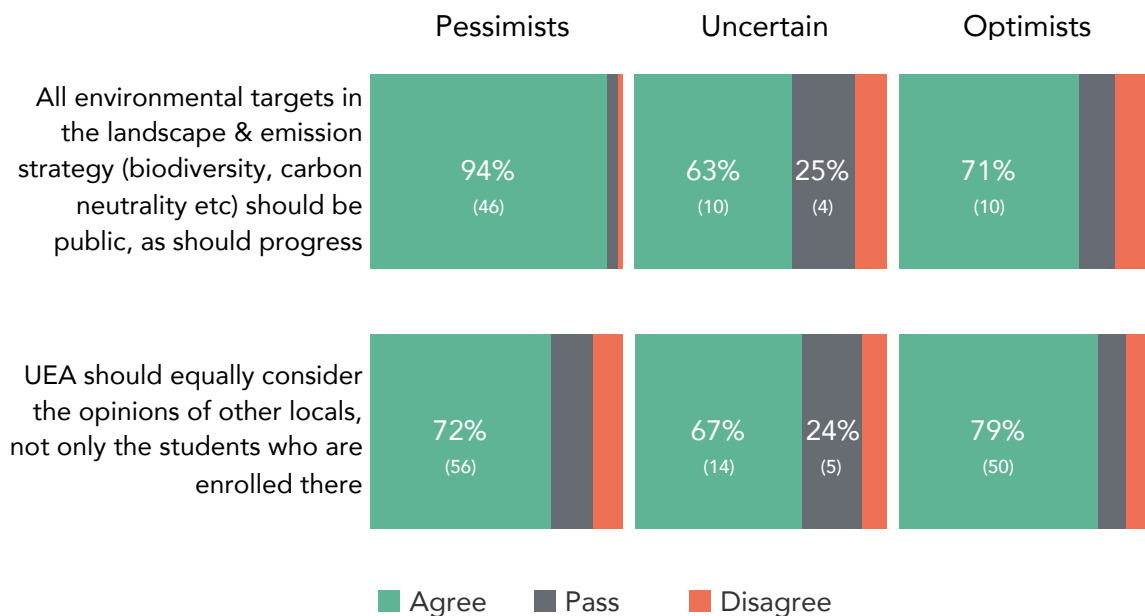


Fig. 19 – Statements suggesting greater consideration and transparency

CONSENSUS

Many statements in this Polis generated consensus between groups. Overall, 83/112 statements had no shared majority agreement or disagreement from all three groups, but this was heavily influenced by a frequent lack of participation and/or frequency of majority uncertainty from the Uncertain group. In contrast, between the Optimists and Pessimists, there are only 37 statements without consensus, confirming the differences between these three distinct respondent groups.

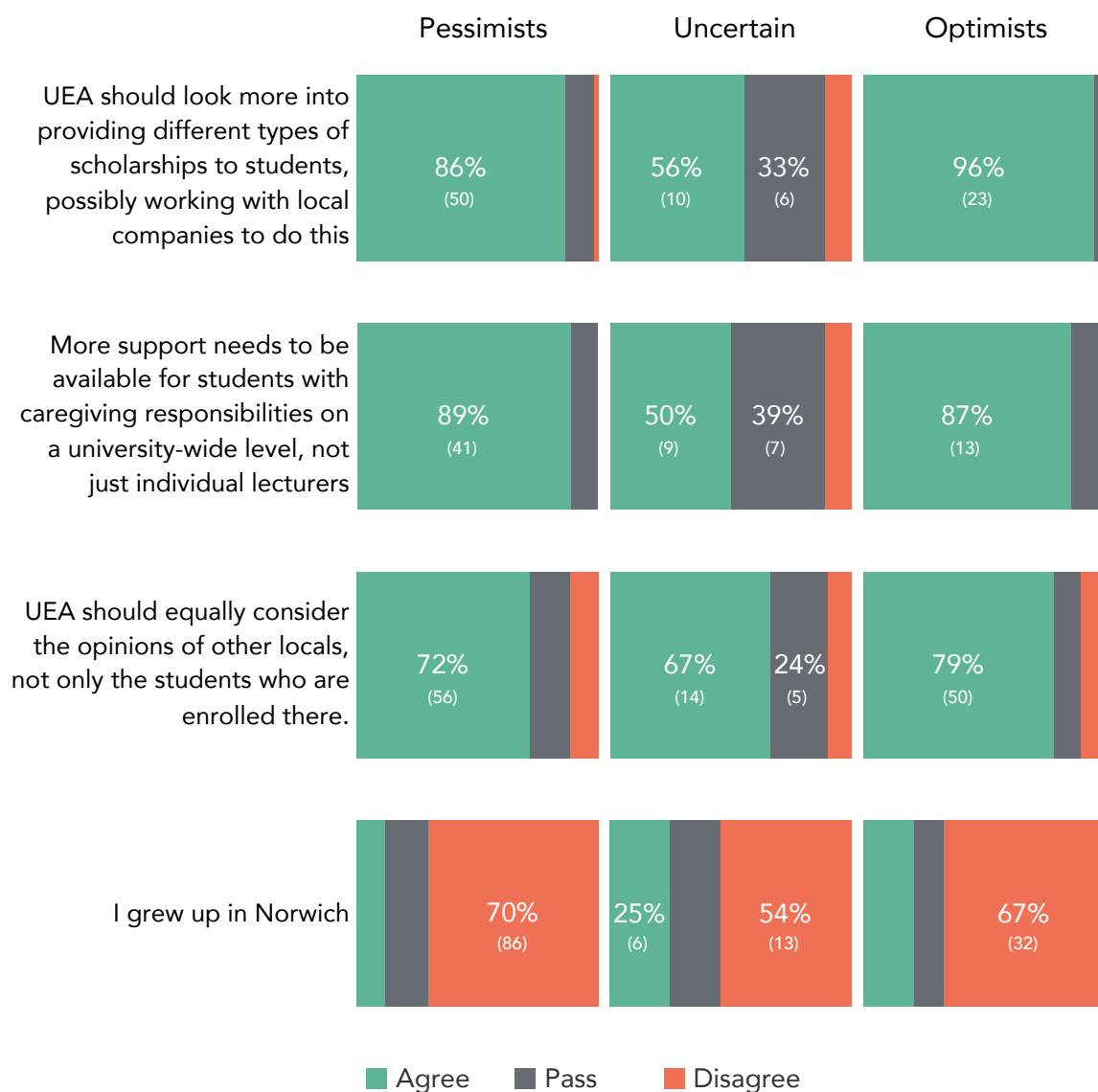


Fig. 20 – Examples of statements showing consensus between groups

Ten statements achieved consensus from all three respondent groups, some of which are shown in Figure 20. What is clear from these areas of consensus is that, despite participants mainly coming from outside of Norwich and having some concerns that are internal to the UEA (for example, 'UEA cleaners should be fairly treated and well paid with work spread more fairly between more cleaners') the participants are keen to see the university develop its connections to the region, be that around the local economy, accessibility or decision-making procedures.

Again, statements with a consensus from the Pessimists and Optimists indicate a desire to develop UEA as a civic university. A recurring theme within these statements was around accessibility, with strong agreement around improving access for students commuting from rural areas, students who learn in different ways, students from disadvantaged backgrounds, mature students and adults already in employment.

UNCERTAINTIES

Despite these areas of strong consensus and a background of subtle division, there remained topics which participants were more uncertain about. The Uncertain group frequently opted to 'pass' on statements, whereas the Pessimists and Optimists were more confident in their answers and passed much less frequently.

One significant statement for this part of the report saw majority agreement from only one group: 'I understand the impact a civic university could have on the greater community'. Only the Optimists displayed a majority agreement with this statement, with 70% agreeing.

FINDINGS ROYAL NORFOLK SHOW

SUMMARY

On 29-30 June the third engagement event was held at the Royal Norfolk Show in Norwich. Polling found that those who took part were mainly from Norfolk and had visited the UEA. Their submissions were focused on general perceptions and measurements of the university's success as well as how effectively it was connected to the local area. Two distinct groups of participants arose from the discussion: a 'Beyond Regional' group was more comfortable about the UEA's effect on Norfolk, and a 'Regional Focus' more tentative about the university's position in the local area. These stances, however, were not always clear cut.

Key insights to emerge were:

- There was consensus amongst participants that the UEA should strive to be both connected to the region and beyond.
- Participants do not feel there needs to be a trade-off between a local and extra-local focus for the UEA.
- People who had uncertainty around the remoteness of the UEA from rural people across the region seemed to be basing this on perceptions rather than detailed knowledge.

THEMES

In developing a set of initial 'seeded' statements for the Royal Norfolk Show (RNS) Polis, researchers built on those submitted in Great Yarmouth, altered where relevant to reflect the location. Statements were also included which focused on the UEA's relationship with the local agricultural sector. A full list of statements, with voting records, is provided in Appendix 4.

Table 21 shows the number of statements belonging to each theme which arose during the Norfolk Show.

| THEME | SEEDED STATEMENTS | SUBMITTED STATEMENTS | EXAMPLE |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|
| Measurements of success | 5 | 5 | The UEA's success should be judged on the number of jobs it provides to local people. |

| THEME | SEEDED STATEMENTS | SUBMITTED STATEMENTS | EXAMPLE |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|
| General perceptions of the UEA | 5 | 4 | The UEA is a good neighbour to areas outside of Norwich. |
| Local services | 2 | 2 | The university provides services which people living in local towns need. |
| Business | 1 | 2 | The UEA doesn't work closely enough with the region's agricultural sector. |
| Local research | 1 | 2 | The UEA should do more research that is relevant to a rural county like Norfolk. |
| Miscellaneous | 0 | 1 | Very real need to increase aspiration across Norfolk particularly amongst deprived families with very low expectations limiting life chances. |
| Education | 3 | 0 | Not everyone wants or can get a degree, UEA should teach people who need different sorts of education. |
| Demographics | 2 | 0 | I live in Norfolk. |
| Local versus international | 1 | 0 | Universities should focus on the local area over international reputation. |

Table 21 – Themes within seeded and submitted statements

As shown in the two dominant themes in Table 21, the perceived nature and success of the UEA is people's main concern, with a recurring interest across the remaining themes on whether and how the UEA should have a local or non-local focus.

GROUPS

Two opinion groups emerged from this Polis, with 6 participants not placed in a group (5% of the total):

- **Group 1: Regional Focus**
 - 54 participants (49% of the total)
 - Submitted five statements: measurements of success (1), general perceptions (1), local services (2), local research (2).
 - Characterised by: a focus on local concerns and interests, and a generally lower opinion of the UEA. More likely than those from the Beyond Regional group to live in Norfolk, and less likely to have visited the UEA.

- **Group 2: Beyond Regional**

- 51 participants (46% of the total)
- Submitted ten statements: measurements of success (4), general perceptions (3), business (2), local research (1).
- Characterised by: less focused on local concerns and interests, and more likely to feel positively towards the UEA. Less likely than the Regional Focus group to live in Norfolk, and more likely to have visited the UEA.

DEMOGRAPHICS

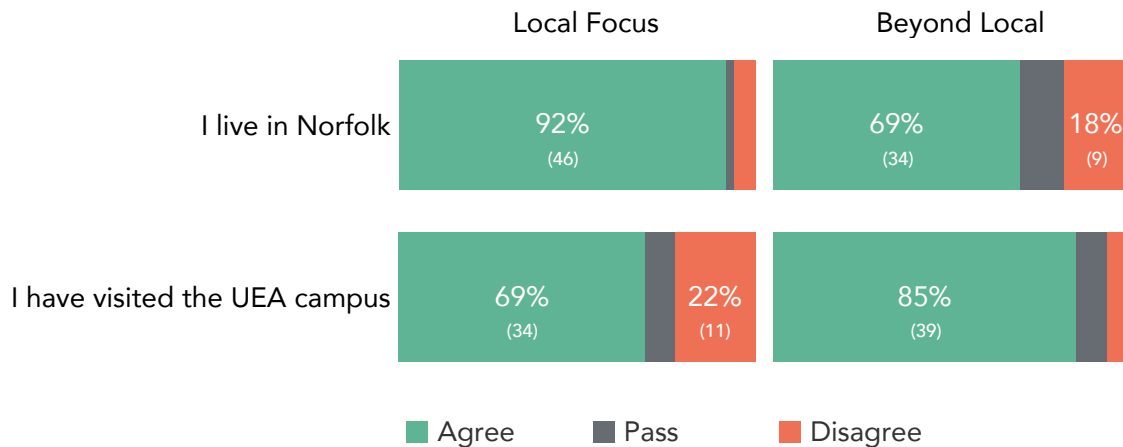


Fig 22 – Demographic statements from Norfolk Country show

DIVISIONS

The primary area of division between the two groups lay in their general perceptions of UEA, alongside differing views on the level of importance of a local versus an extra-local focus.

GENERAL PERCEPTIONS:

On statements reflecting participants’ general reflections on the UEA’s local impact, groups tended not to hold strong views, though the Regional Focus comes across as more tentative in their responses than the Beyond Regional group. The only broad statement on the local area which the Regional Focus group holds more firmly than the Beyond Regional group is a stronger sense that ‘The UEA is a good neighbour to areas outside of Norwich’, as shown in Figure 23.

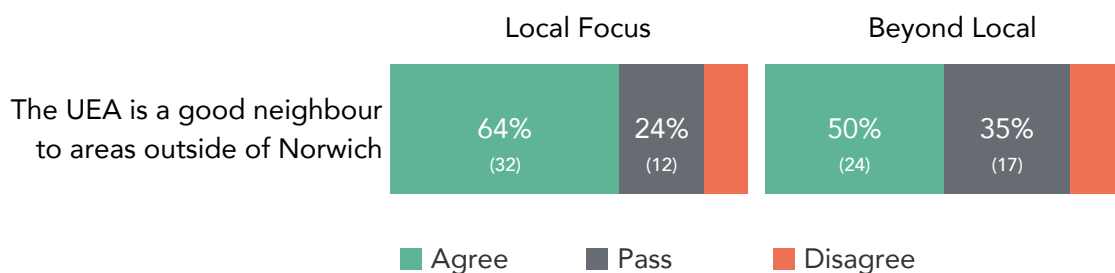


Fig. 23 – Statement on the UEA being a good neighbour in the broader local area

In contrast, the Beyond Regional group were more positive about the UEA's connection to the region, and more likely to resist challenges to its current identity – 64% disagreed with the statement “It’s the University of Norwich really, not the University of East Anglia” (21% agreed) compared to 33% disagreeing from the Regional Focus group (46% agreed.) As the examples in Figure 24 demonstrate, they consistently have majorities or relative majorities where the Regional Focus group do not.

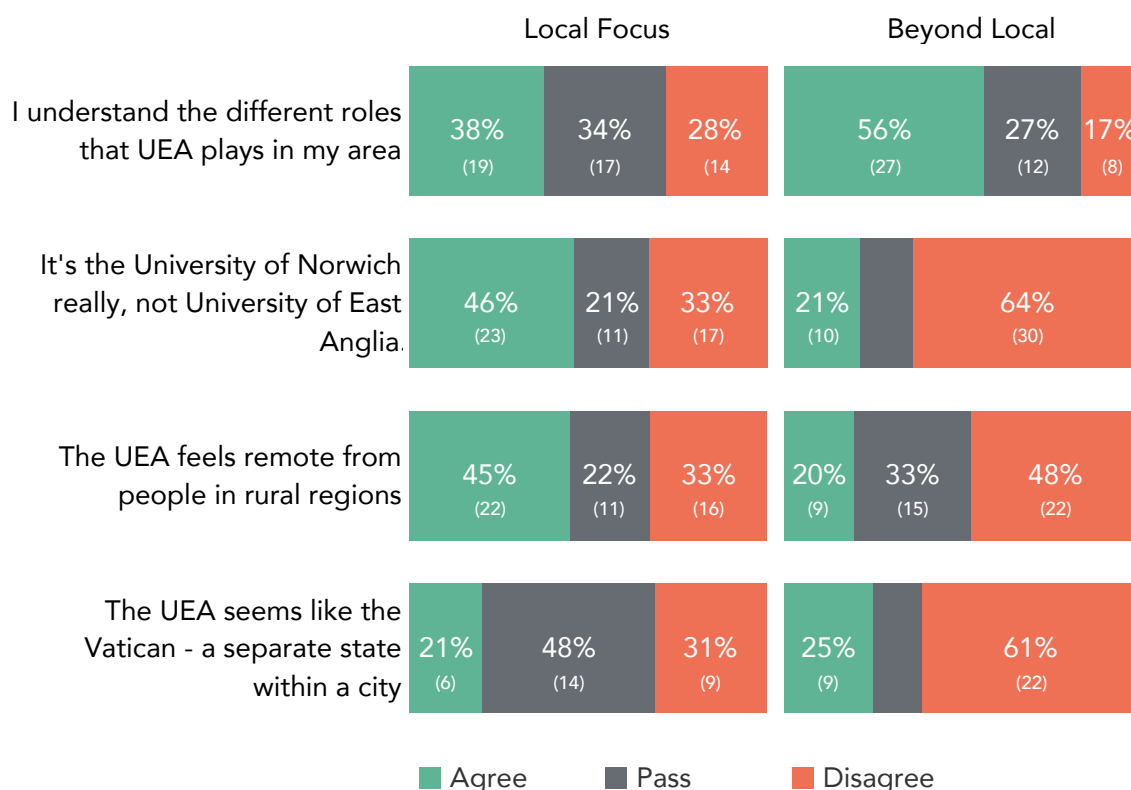


Fig 24 – Statements around the UEA's local identity, showing differing stances between groups.

LOCAL AND BEYOND

A further key characterisation comes from the two groups' views of the importance of the UEA having a regional focus, something expressed through a range of themes. This comes through most clearly in response to a statement that explicitly addresses the theme of what the university should focus on in helping the region – for example the provision of jobs or contributions to agriculture.

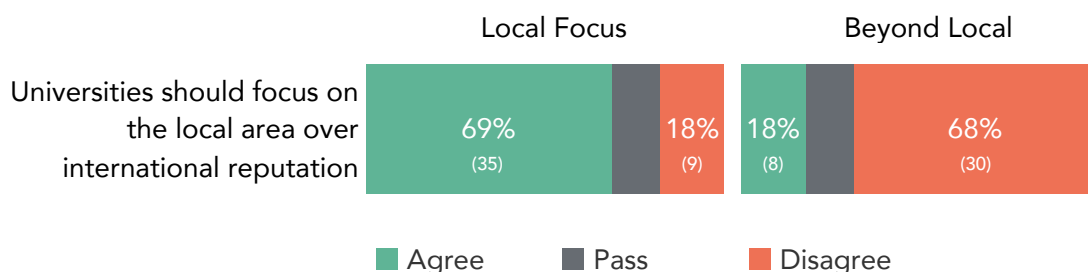


Fig. 25 – The importance of a regional focus vs international reputation

Similarly, when statements offer clear positions on which metrics the UEA's success should be measured by, the priorities of the two groups are clear. For example, the Beyond Regional group

strongly rejected the proposition that the UEA should judge success on "The number of places it provides to local students" (83% disagreed) whereas the majority of the Regional Focus group (52%) agreed.

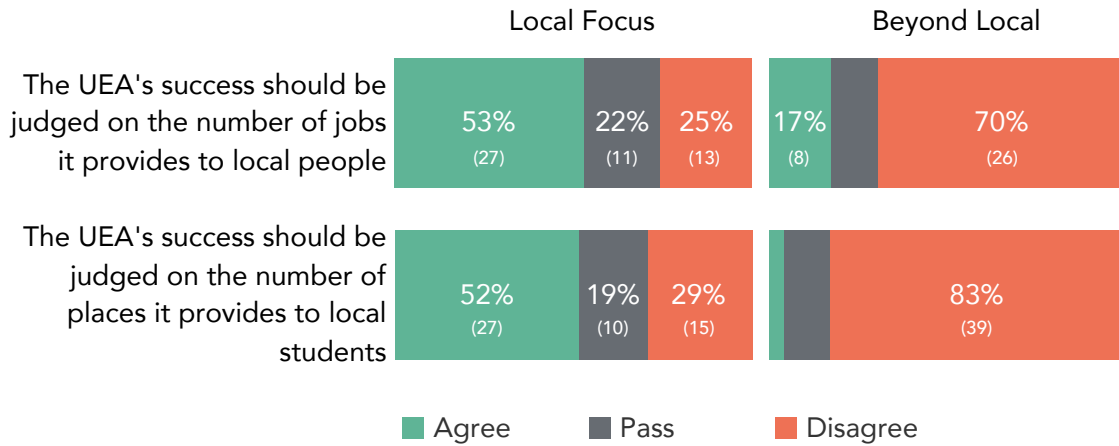


Fig. 26 – The importance of the UEA's provision of jobs and places to local people

The dynamic of the groups' key divisions are more nuanced than one simply accepting and the other simply rejecting the concept that UEA is connected to the region. This can be seen in the themes of business and education. For example, the Beyond Regional group endorses the university expanding its efforts to support local business creation, yet at the same time it expresses scepticism that it is not already doing enough for existing local businesses.

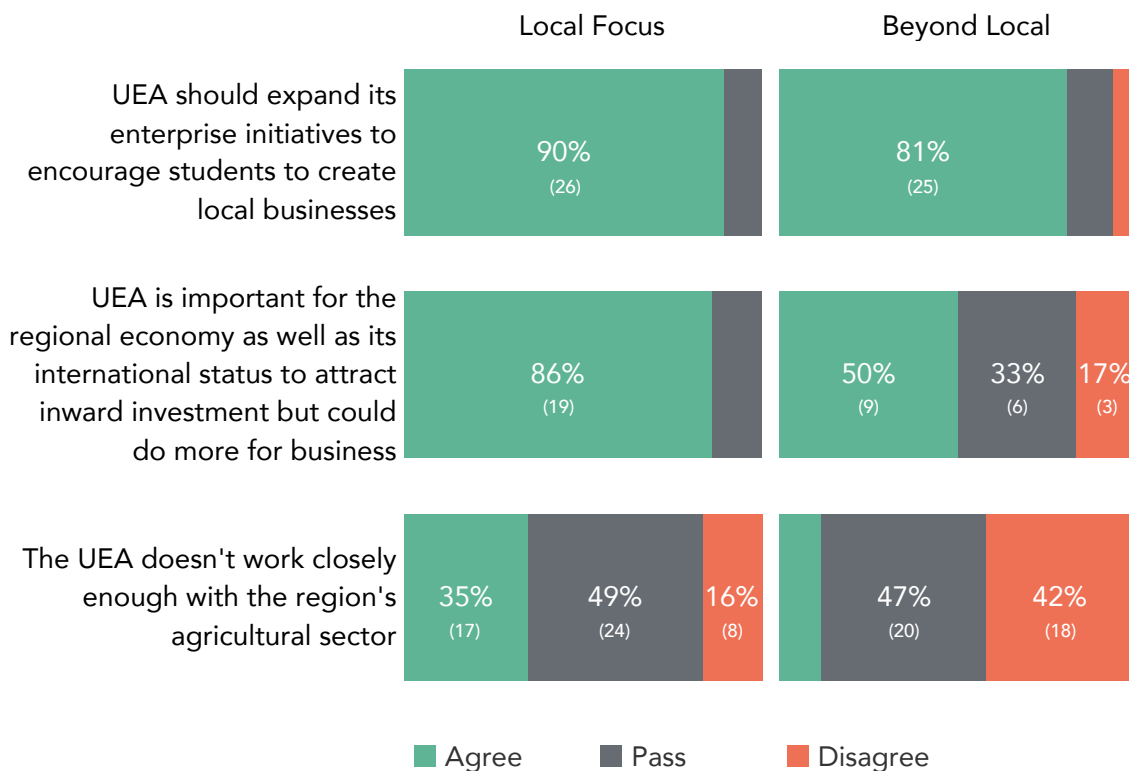


Fig. 27 – Statements views of the Regional Focus group on the local economy and agriculture.

Similarly, when it comes to the value of the UEA connecting its research to interests that have a local connection, such as on sustainable agriculture, the Beyond Regional group is neither strongly opposed nor strongly in agreement. This contrasts with the more forthright views from the Regional Focus group, 86% of whom agree that 'The UEA should do more research that is relevant to a rural county like Norfolk.'

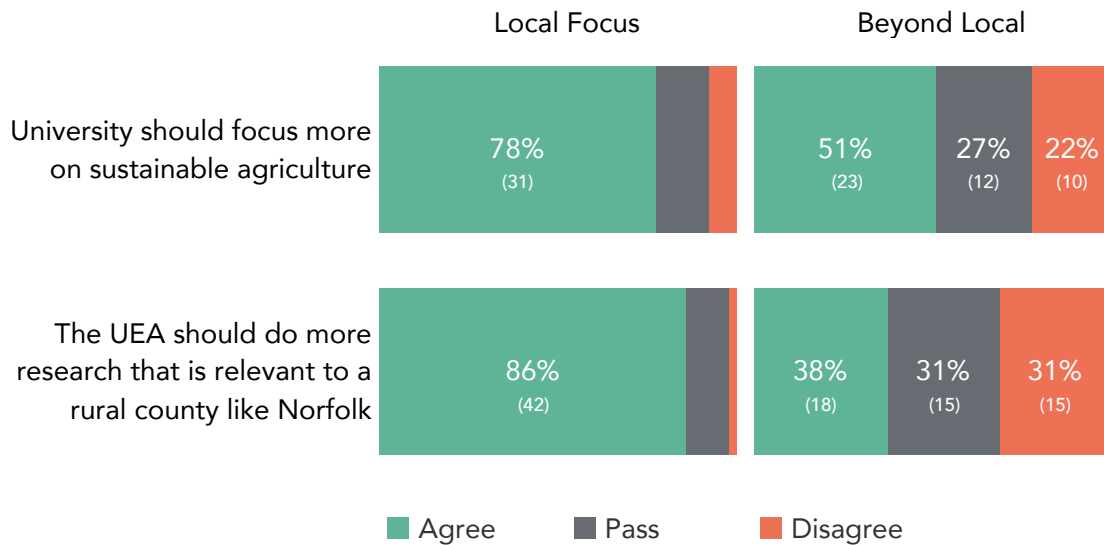
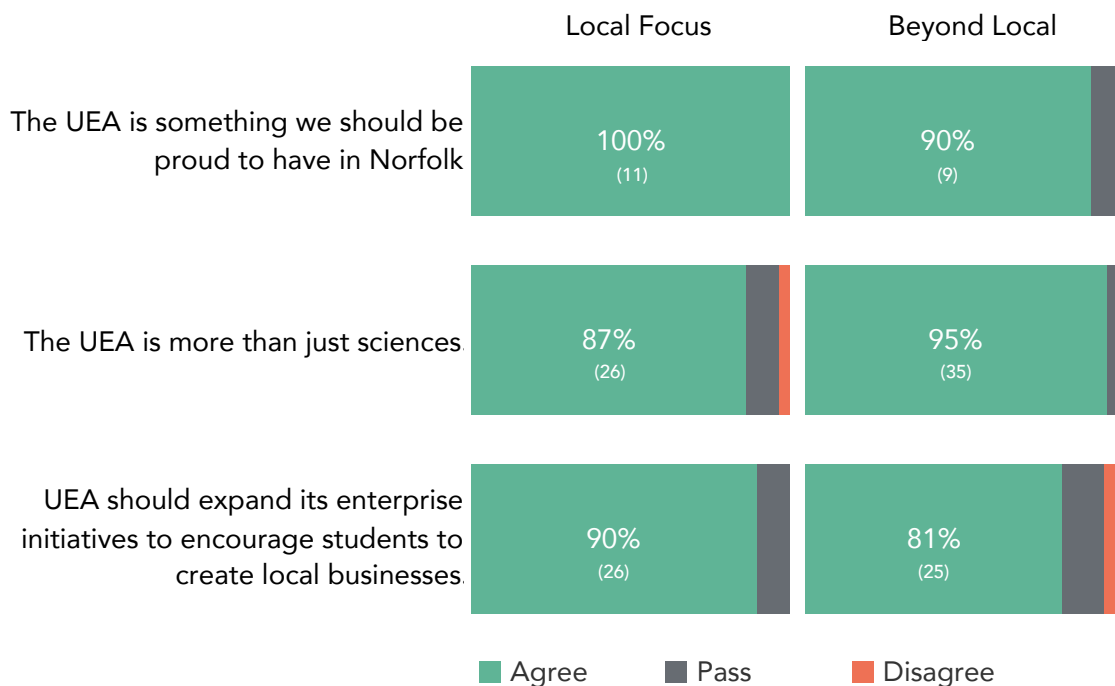


Fig. 28 – The importance of locally relevant research.

CONSENSUS

While they disagreed on some issues, the two groups in this poll found that more united than divided them: 20/36 statements had shared agreement of 50% or more from both groups (no statement had a consensus disagreement). Eight statements had strong agreement of over 75% or more from both groups, as indicated in Figure 29.



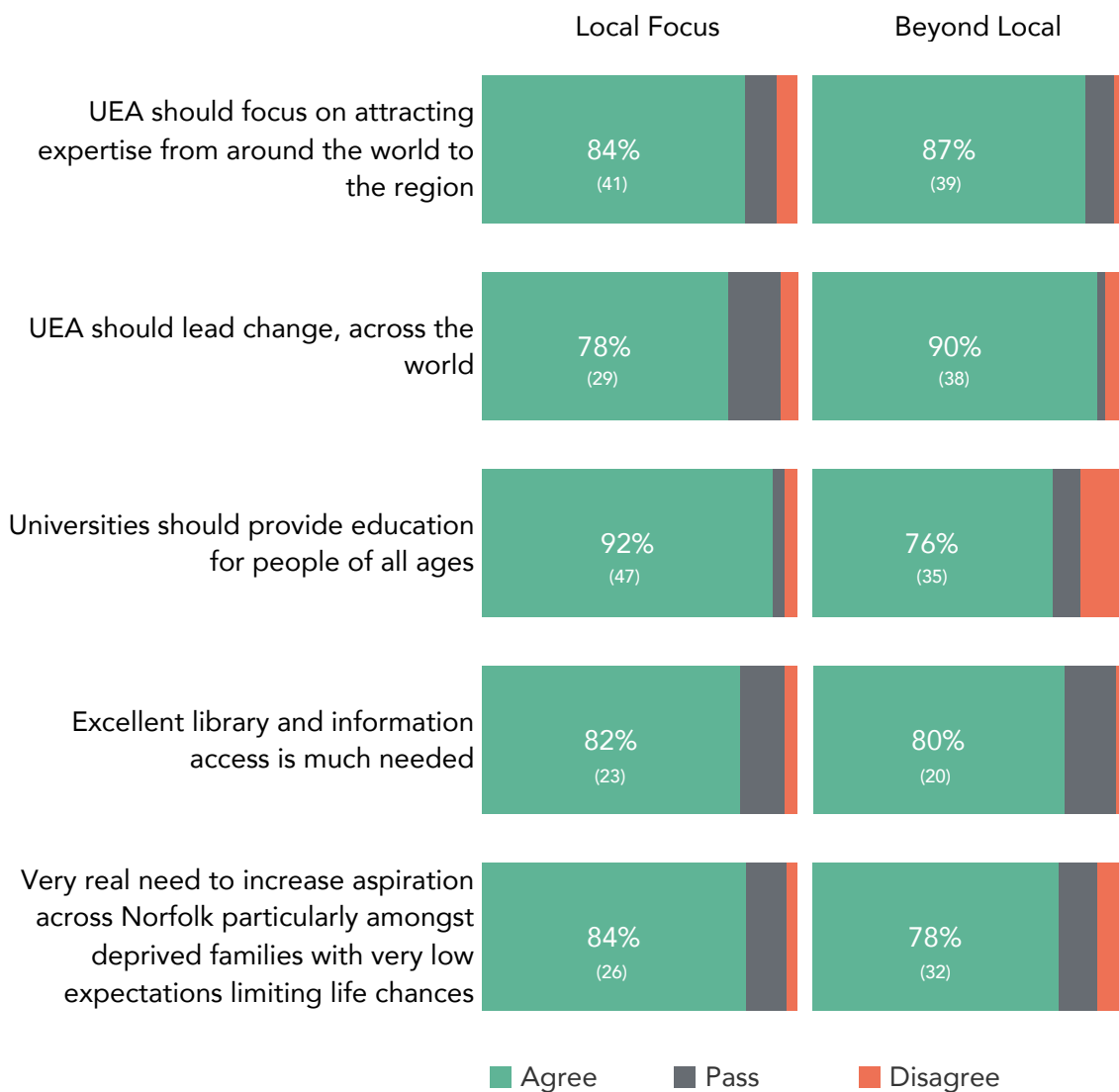


Fig 29 – Statements showing consensus between groups

These areas of consensus show where the two groups share a preferred goal: for the UEA to be a university that strives to be both connected to the region and beyond. This is clear from the mix of desires indicated in the statements above, for example, arguing that the UEA should further encourage students to create local businesses, at the same time as attracting expertise from around the world. What these areas of consensus suggest is participants do not feel there needs to be a trade-off between a local and extra-local focus for the UEA.

UNCERTAINTY

Most statements in the poll drew majority views one way or another. However, the three statements shown in Figure 30 had no overall majority agreeing or disagreeing.

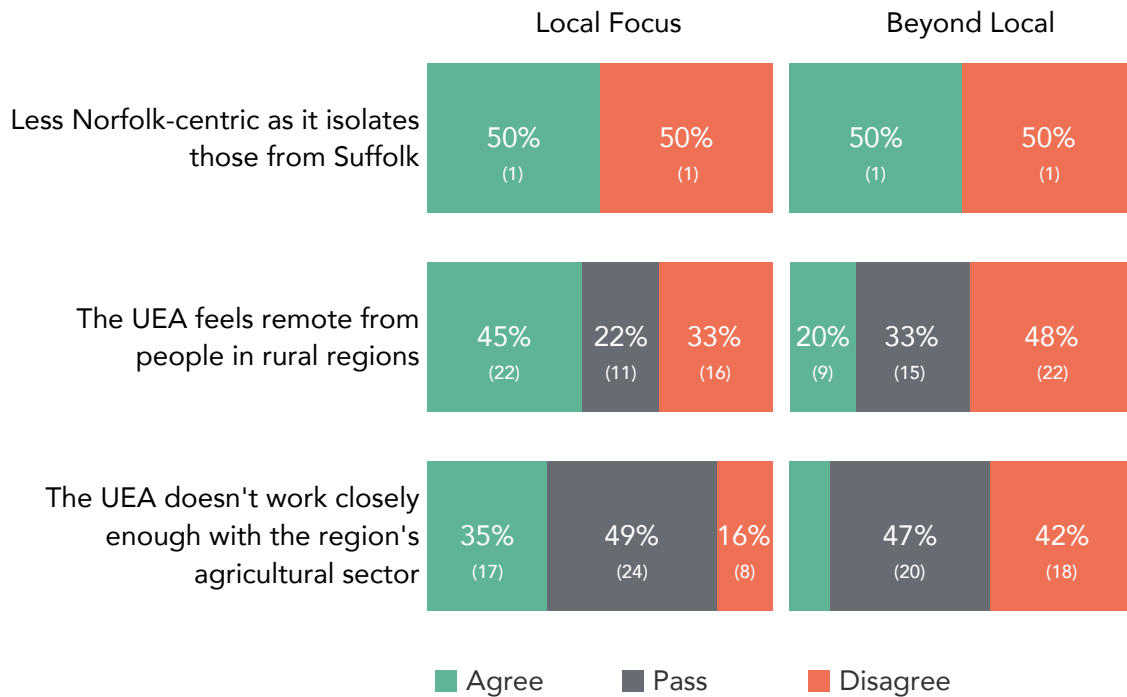


Fig. 30 – Statements without an overall majority.

Some of the uncertainty seen here may stem from a lack of expertise. The third statement, for example, could have had a higher pass rate due to a relative majority of participants feeling uninformed about the actual nature of the UEA's engagements with the region's agricultural sector. Then again, given that participants were attendees at the Royal Norfolk Show, an event which includes those working in this sector, there was a greater chance of participants being familiar with this compared with the general public.

Another possible reading of Figure 30 is that participants interpreted the second and third statements as a matter of perception. Given that the Beyond Regional group were more assured generally about the UEA's connection to the region, and the Regional Focus group less so, the relative majorities within their respective votes on this statement could indicate that their responses were driven by perceptions rather than actual knowledge of the UEA's remoteness from people in rural regions, or in the agricultural sector.

CONCLUSIONS

Together, these Polis engagements offer several insights for thinking about what it would mean for the UEA to be a civic university.

Those who took part felt the notion of civic connections between the university and the region could and should manifest in a range of areas. Most of all, however, people saw promise in the following:

- *The UEA as a provider of local services.*
- *The UEA as an institution to improve young people's aspirations and provide lifelong learning opportunities for adults.*
- *The UEA as an institution driving and supporting the region's economy.*
- *The UEA as an institution physically embedded across the region but in a way that local people feel they have had a say in.*

A common thread throughout was recognition that the UEA has an obligation to balance its attention on both local and regional demands. Moreover, few participants rejected the view that UEA should be building more links with local people, and in some cases there is agreement that it has existing strengths as a civic institution. The nuance here often comes from people's varying degrees of optimism or pessimism about what is required to develop these links further.

Alongside significant areas of consensus, we found participants divided around the importance of various approaches. However, in addressing these disagreements, a number of strategies emerged from participants responses as to how these divisions can be overcome:

- *When a topic relating to the UEA's links to the region is framed in terms of how the university can help the latter address a local problem, people tend to respond with more unity.*
- *Action is important. Even where people disagree about what the actual state of the relationship between the UEA and the region currently is, consensus can be built on what can be done to improve it.*
- *There is a desire for continued, democratic, inclusive and open engagement on what the UEA will do going forward to become a (more) civic university.*
- *There is a backdrop of consensus around the idea of the UEA being a university that strives to be both connected to the region and beyond. Many feel there doesn't need to be a trade-off here.*
- *Areas of uncertainty often seem founded in perceptions of the UEA rather than lived experience. This speaks to the value of continued, broadened engagement as part of the civic university project.*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: MODERATION

We use the following general guidelines for rejecting submitted statements (the below examples are all taken from this conversation):

- Because they are nonsensical (e.g. "jgfhfghfgh").
- Because they make sense but have no meaning in isolation (e.g. "love it excelent").
- Because they are not relevant to the discussion (e.g. "drones should be banned").
- Because they closely repeat an existing statement's point.
- Because their generality would make interpretation of people's agree/disagree/pass responses difficult (e.g. "We should try to prioritize human preservation").
- Because their grouping together of multiple points would make interpretation of people's agree/disagree/pass responses difficult (e.g. "It could help disabled people but could also be abused by people. If it is too expensive and will only be for the well off people who get it").

APPENDIX 2: STATEMENTS: GREAT YARMOUTH

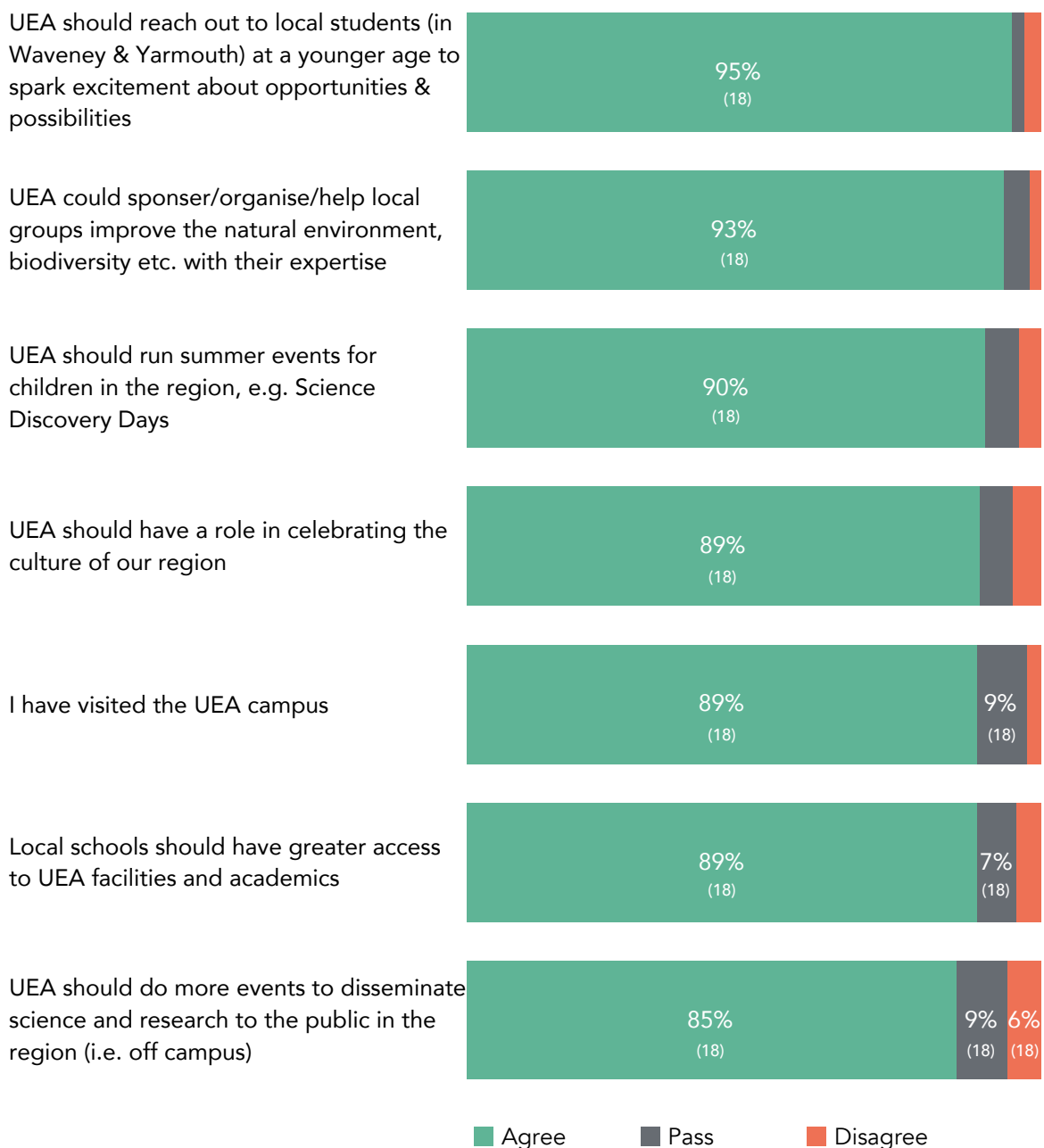
Seeded statements

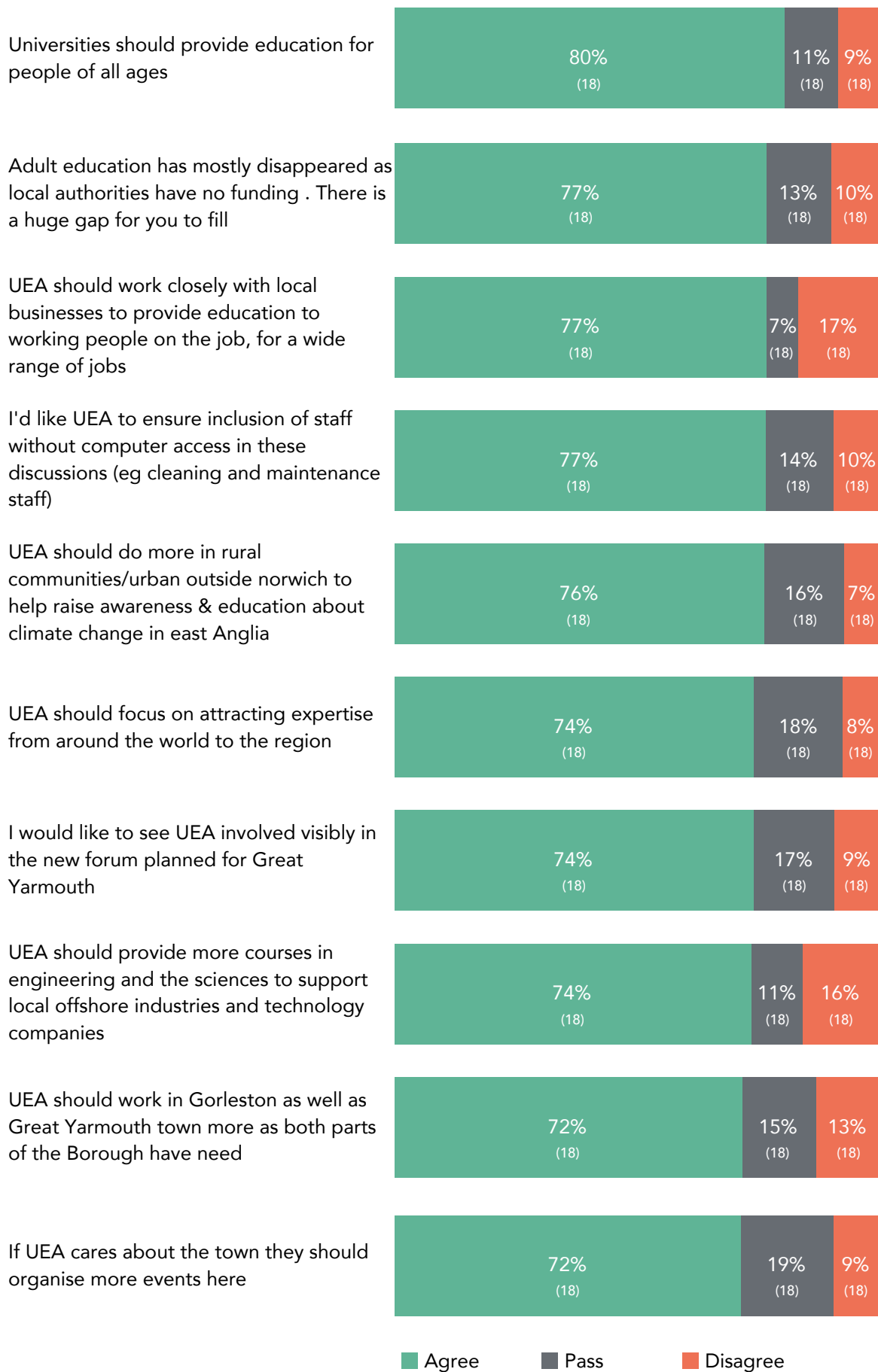
Set by the research team prior to the poll:

| |
|---|
| I live in Great Yarmouth or surrounding district |
| Universities should provide education for people of all ages |
| The university provides services which people living in local towns need |
| Universities should focus on the local area over international reputation |
| The UEA is a good neighbour to areas outside of Norwich |
| I understand the different roles that UEA plays in my area |
| The UEA's success should be judged on the number of places it provides to local students |
| The UEA's success should be judged on the number of jobs it provides to local people |
| The UEA's most important role is to provide the local area with a highly skilled workforce |
| UEA's primary role is to provide world class education and research (i.e. helping to tackle climate change) |

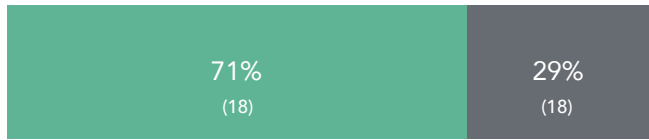
| |
|---|
| UEA should focus on attracting expertise from around the world to the region |
| If UEA cares about the town they should organise more events here |
| UEA should care less about league tables and more about the people on their doorstep |
| I have visited the UEA campus |
| Not everyone wants or can get a degree, UEA should teach people who need different sorts of education |
| It's the University of Norwich really, not University of East Anglia. |

FULL STATEMENTS WITH OVERALL VOTING RESULTS: GREAT YARMOUTH





UEA spends £1m per year on outreach in the district's schools, it's better this goes where it's needed than where it's seen.



UEA should support flexibility for Mums wanted higher education with reduced cost childcare options



I think the UEA should host regular community gatherings in localities across the region as part of its ongoing civic engagement



UEA needs to explore different ways for people to afford education



UEA's primary role is to provide world class education and research (i.e. helping to tackle climate change)



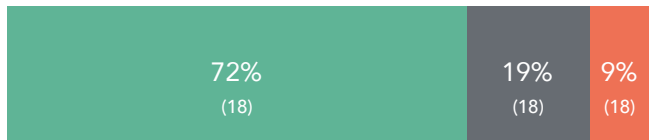
Develop courses below degree level aligned to local economy's workforce needs, especially in social care



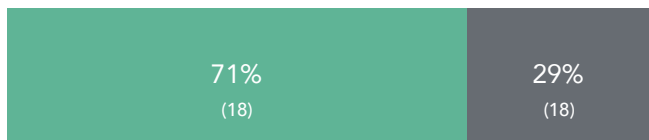
Not everyone wants or can get a degree, UEA should teach people who need different sorts of education



If UEA cares about the town they should organise more events here



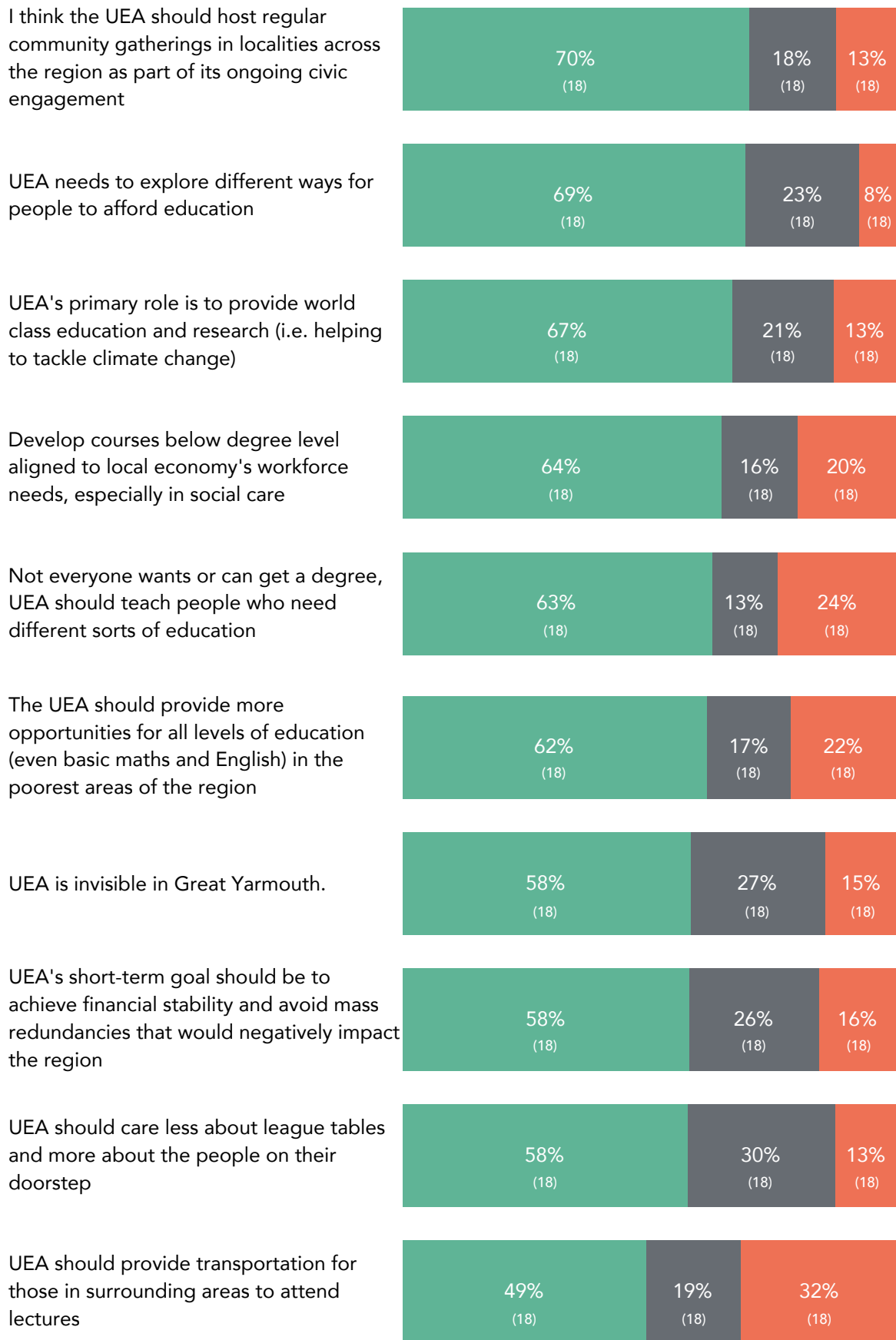
UEA spends £1m per year on outreach in the district's schools, it's better this goes where it's needed than where it's seen.



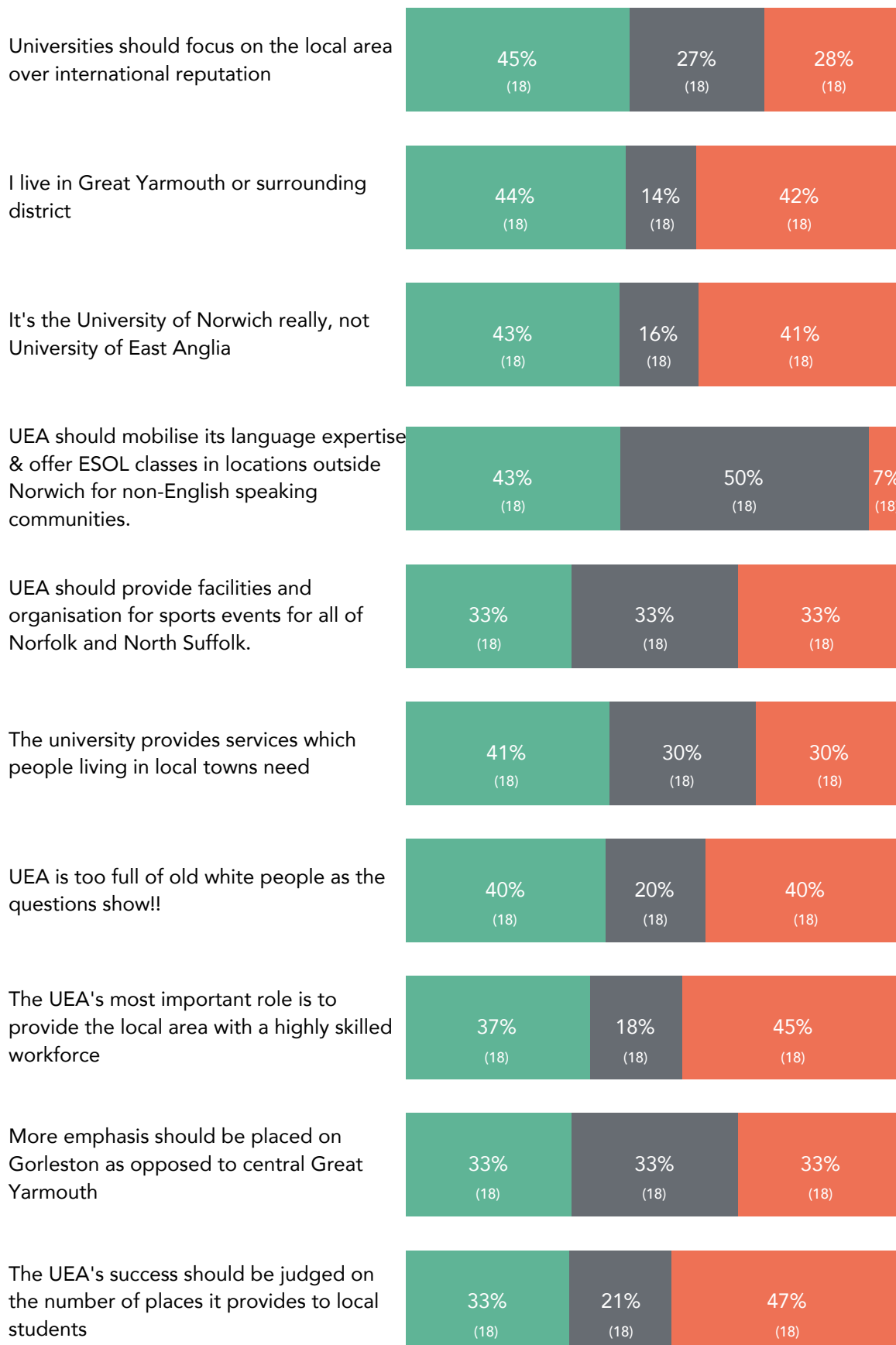
UEA should support flexibility for Mums wanted higher education with reduced cost childcare options



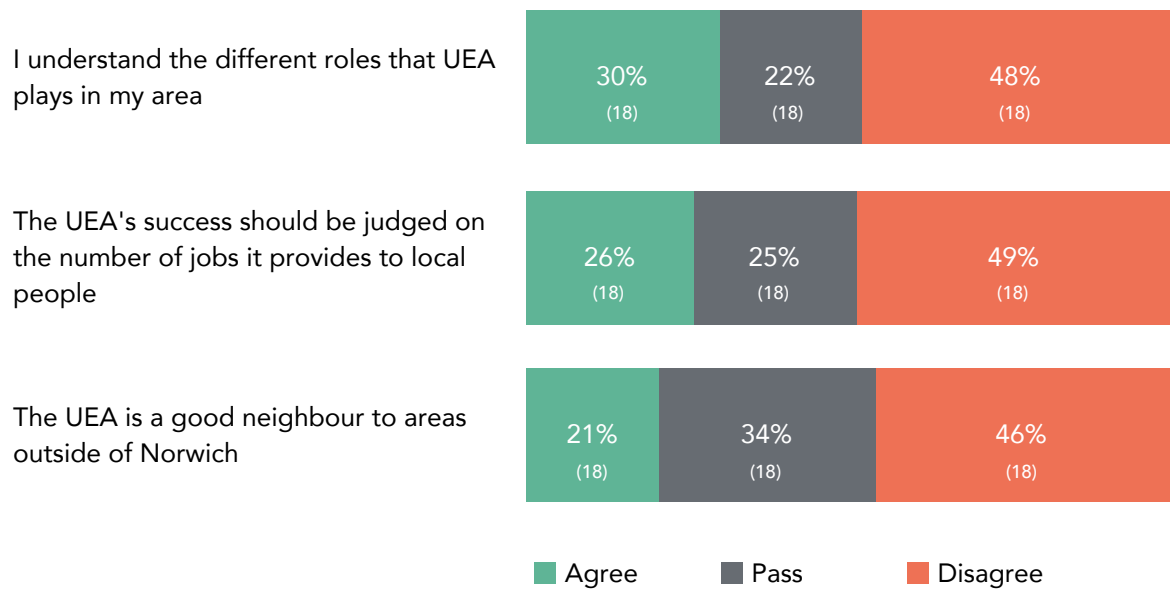
Agree Pass Disagree



■ Agree
 ■ Pass
 ■ Disagree



■ Agree
 ■ Pass
 ■ Disagree



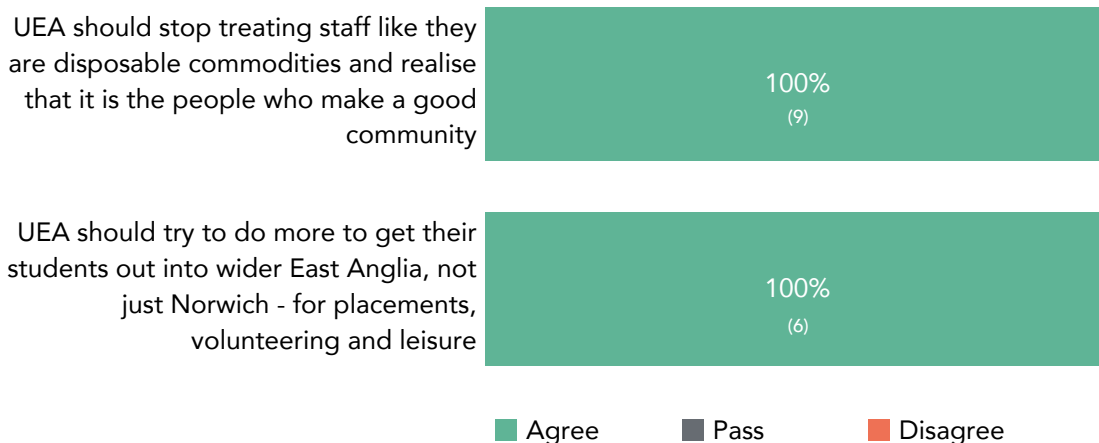
APPENDIX 3: STATEMENTS: UEA CAMPUS

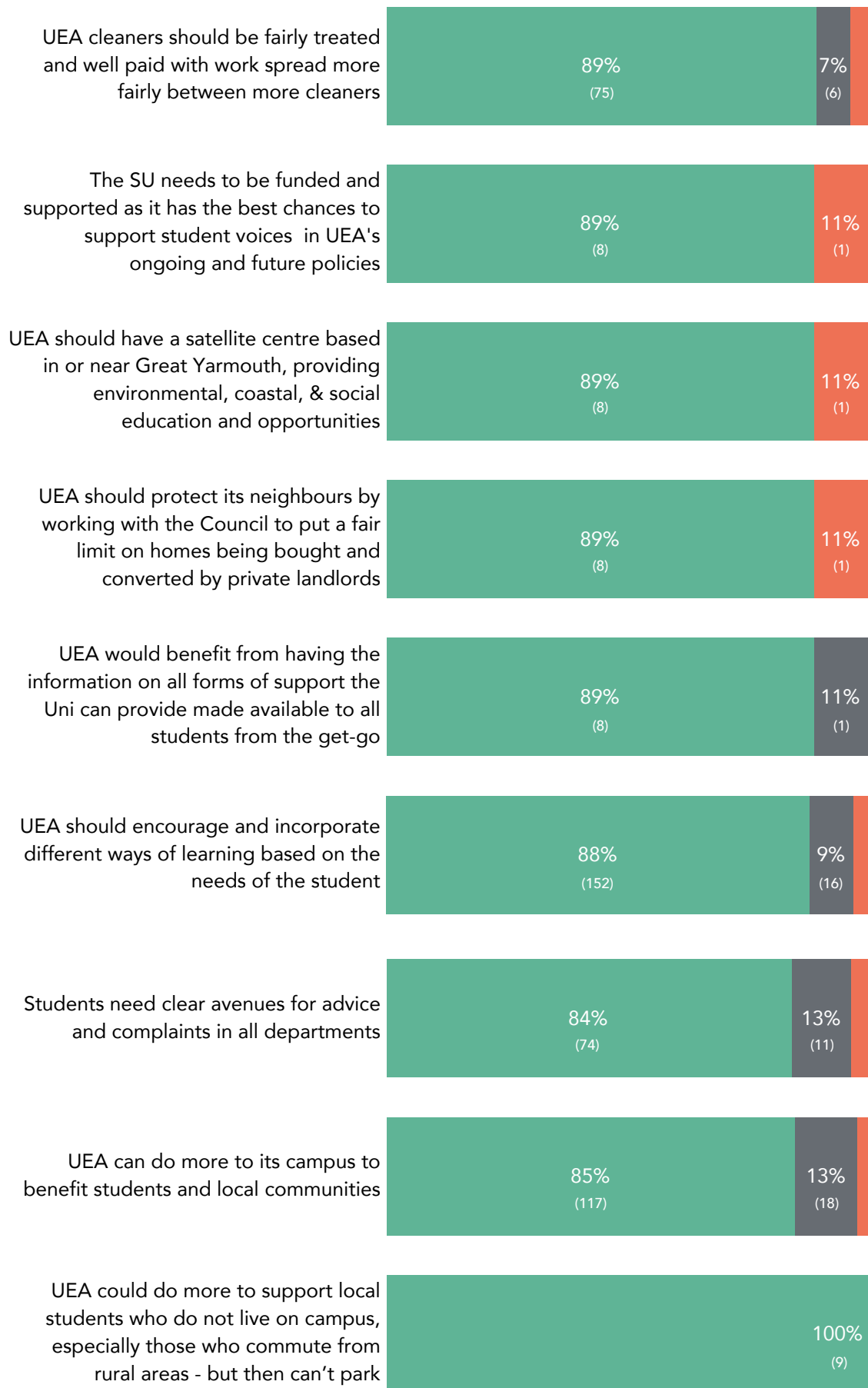
Seeded statements:

Set by the research team prior to the poll:

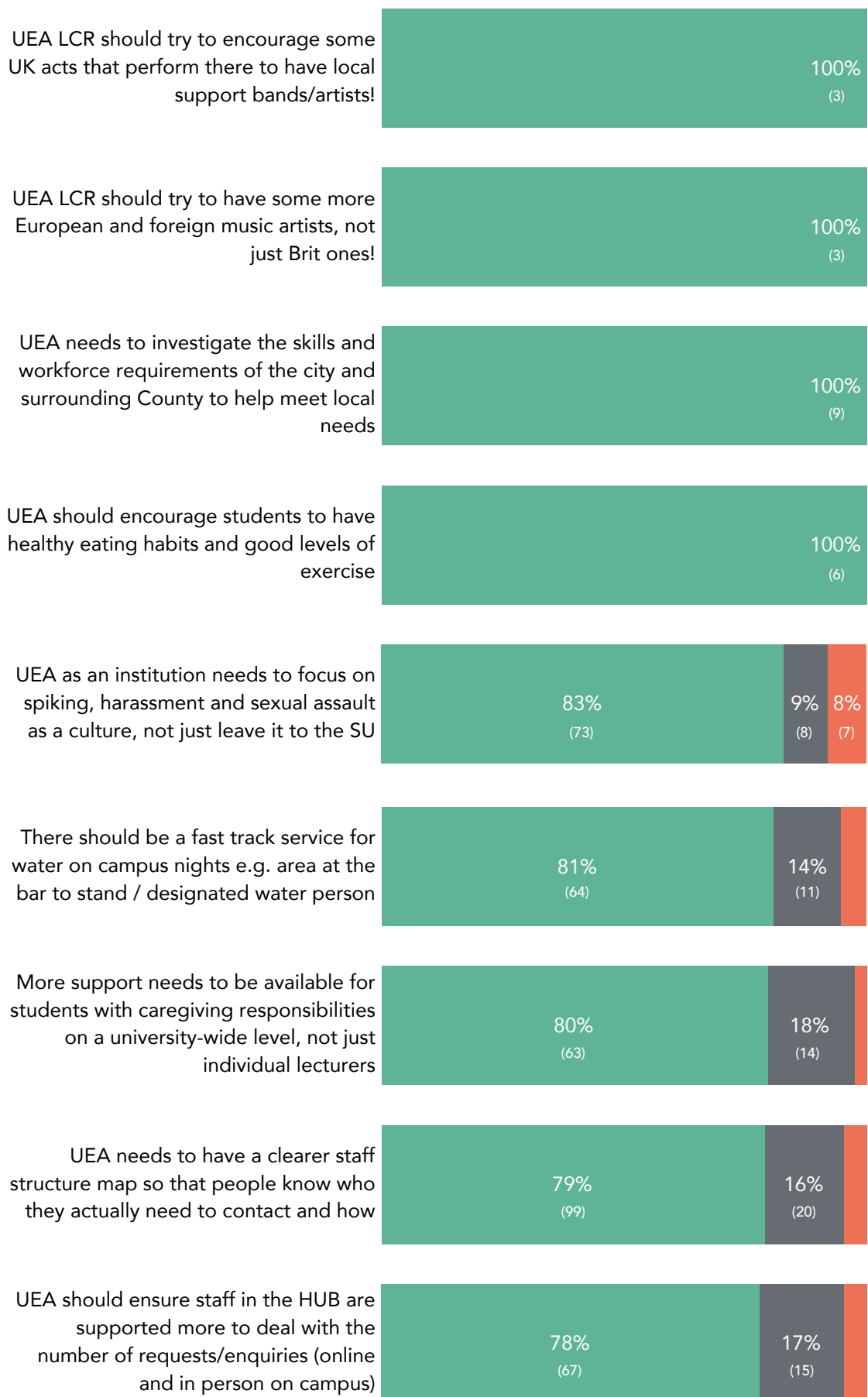
| |
|---|
| I own and drive a car. |
| I am a student at UEA. |
| I grew up living in a city. |
| I am under 30 years old. |
| I think that UEA provides a positive portrayal of Norwich and greater Norfolk. |
| I trust UEA to prioritise the local community. |
| I believe that the UEA contributes significantly to Norfolk's economy. |
| I feel represented by the UEA. |
| UEA should encourage and incorporate different ways of learning based on the needs of the student |
| I understand what a 'civic university' means |
| I understand the impact a civic university could have on the greater community. |
| The UEA cares about the local environment. |
| UEA should equally consider the opinions of other locals, not only the students who are enrolled there. |
| Norwich revolves around students too much. |
| Norwich has sufficient local infrastructure to accommodate the UEA. |
| Locals generally tend to have a negative opinion about UEA and its students |
| UEA can do more to its campus to benefit students and local communities. |
| UEA could promote diversity inside and outside its inner community and East Anglia region more creatively |

Full statements with overall voting results: UEA Campus

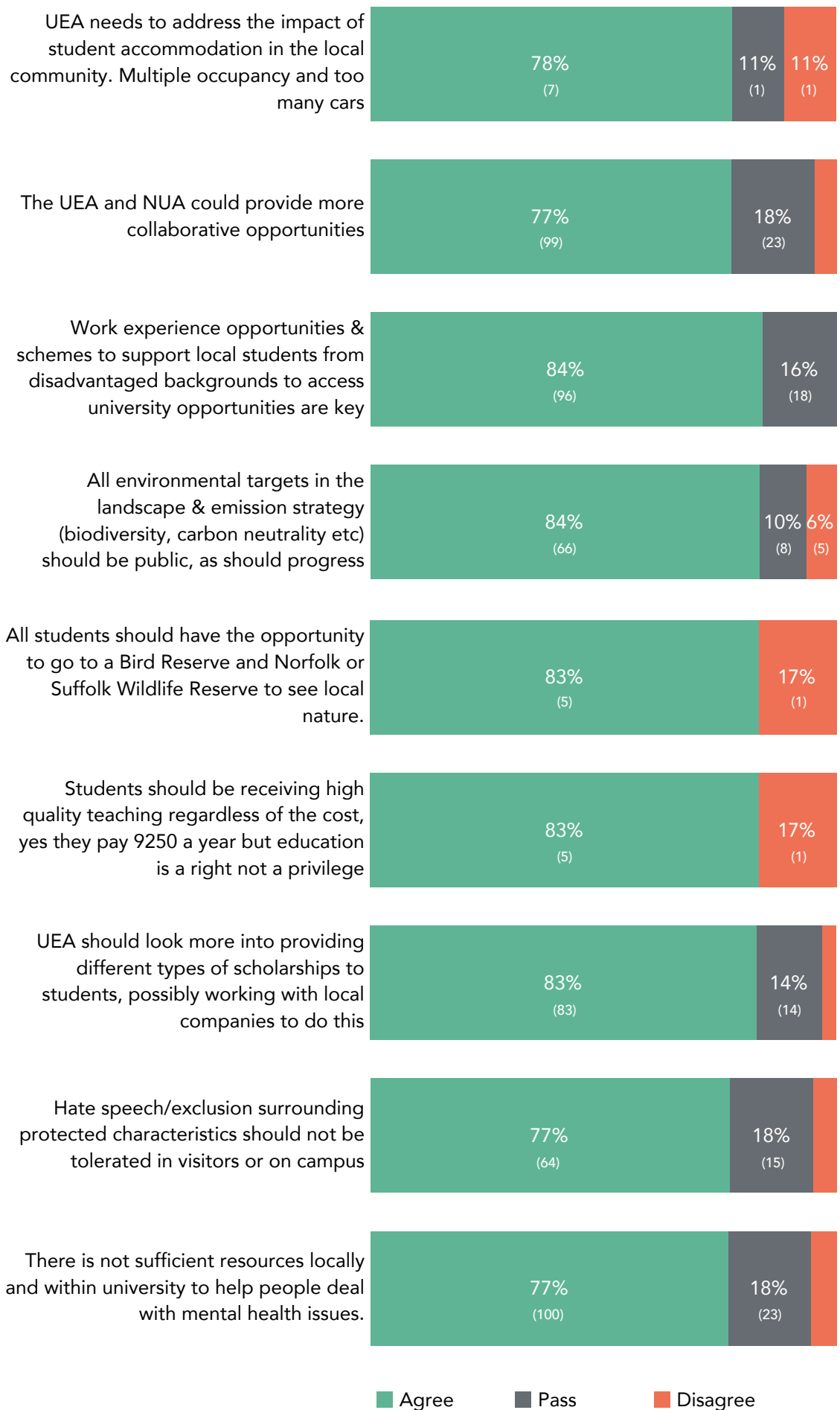


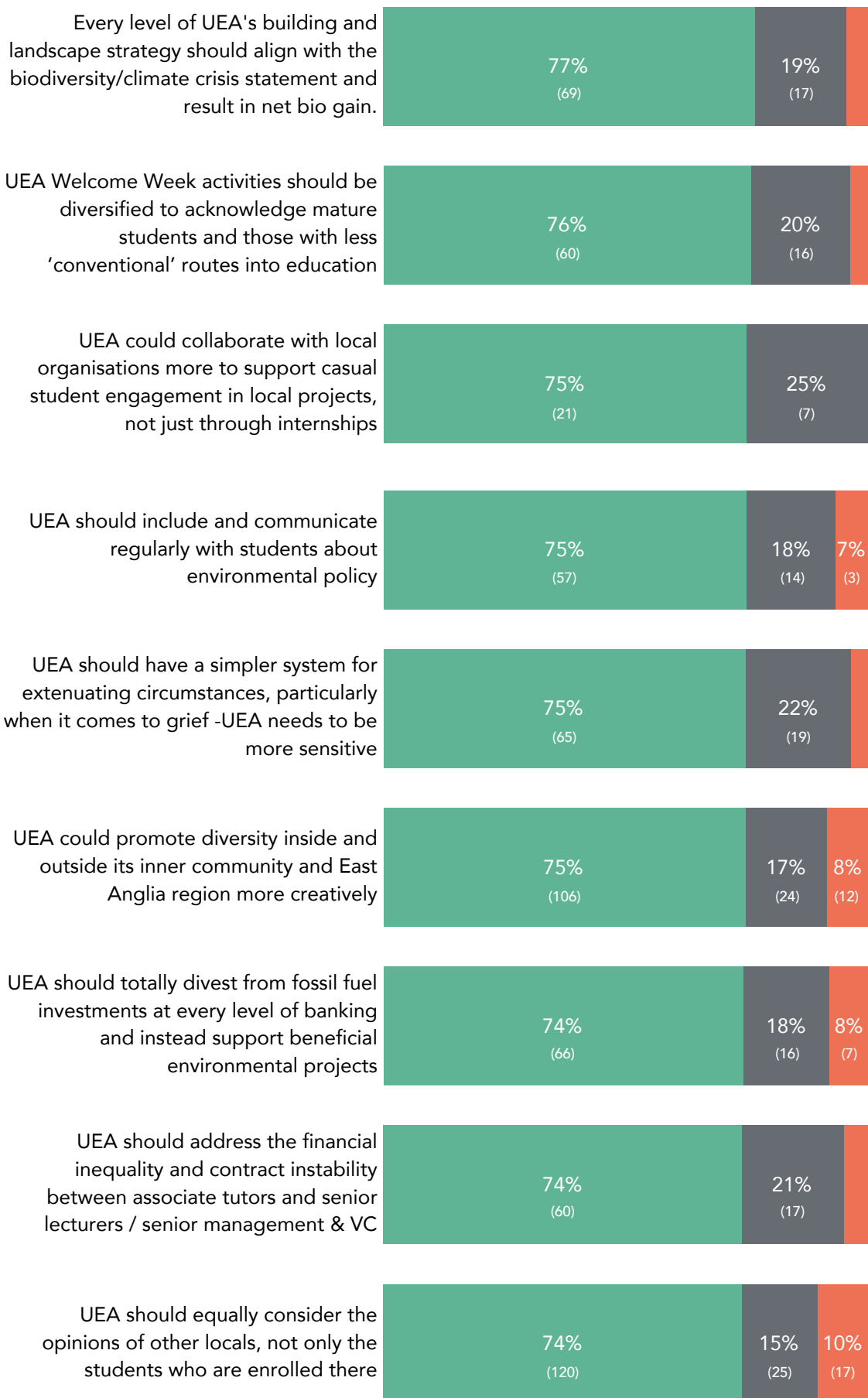


■ Agree
 ■ Pass
 ■ Disagree

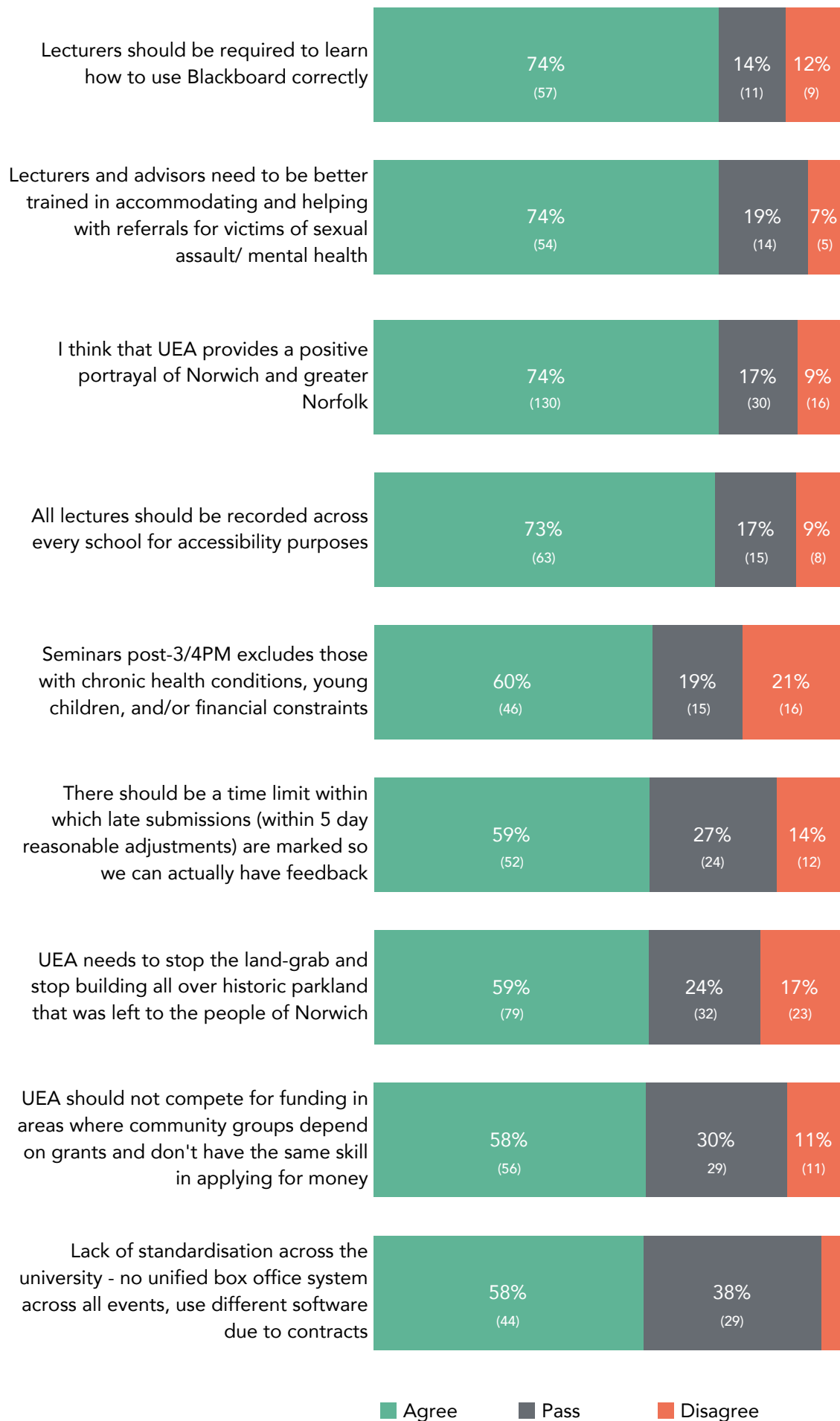


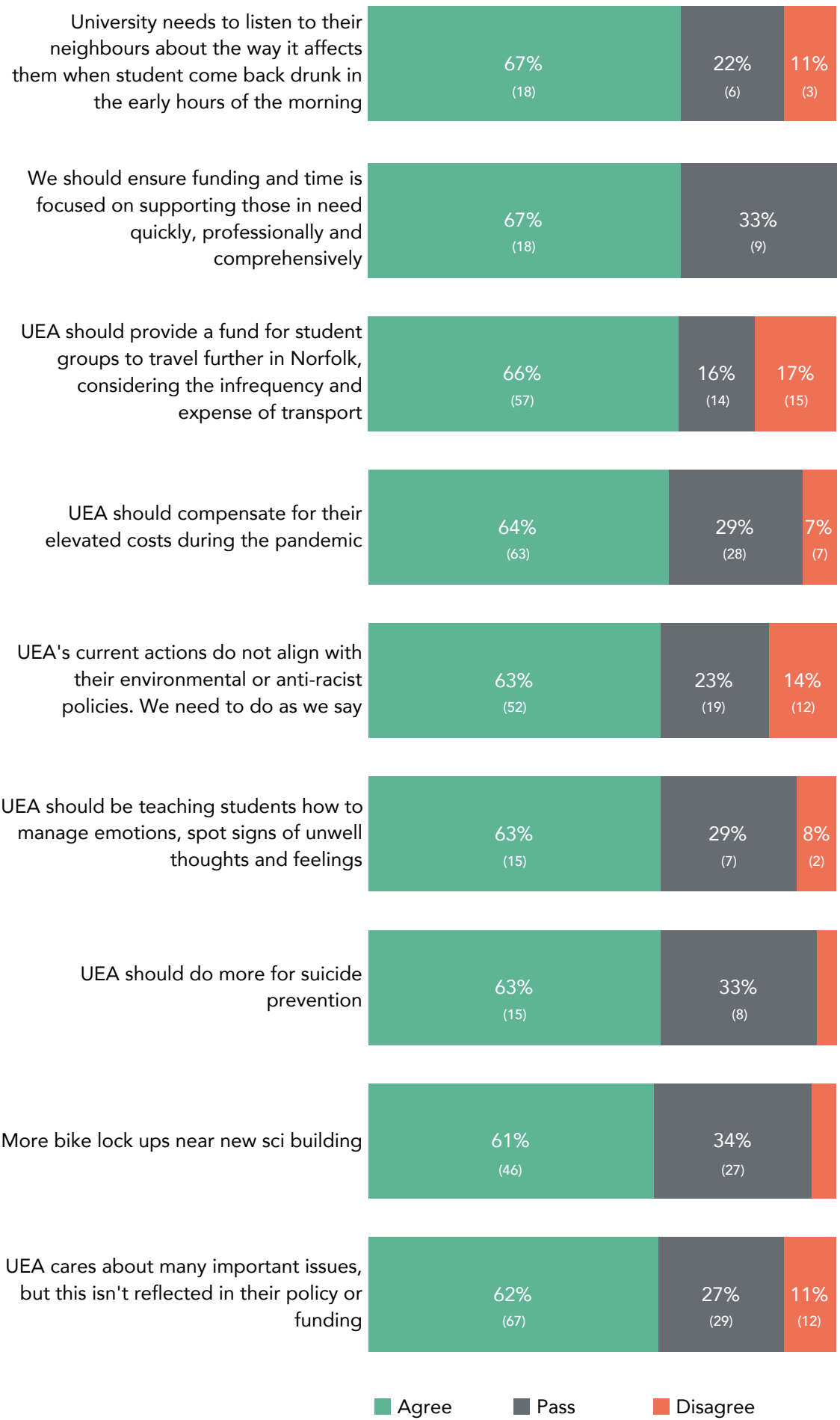
■ Agree
 ■ Pass
 ■ Disagree

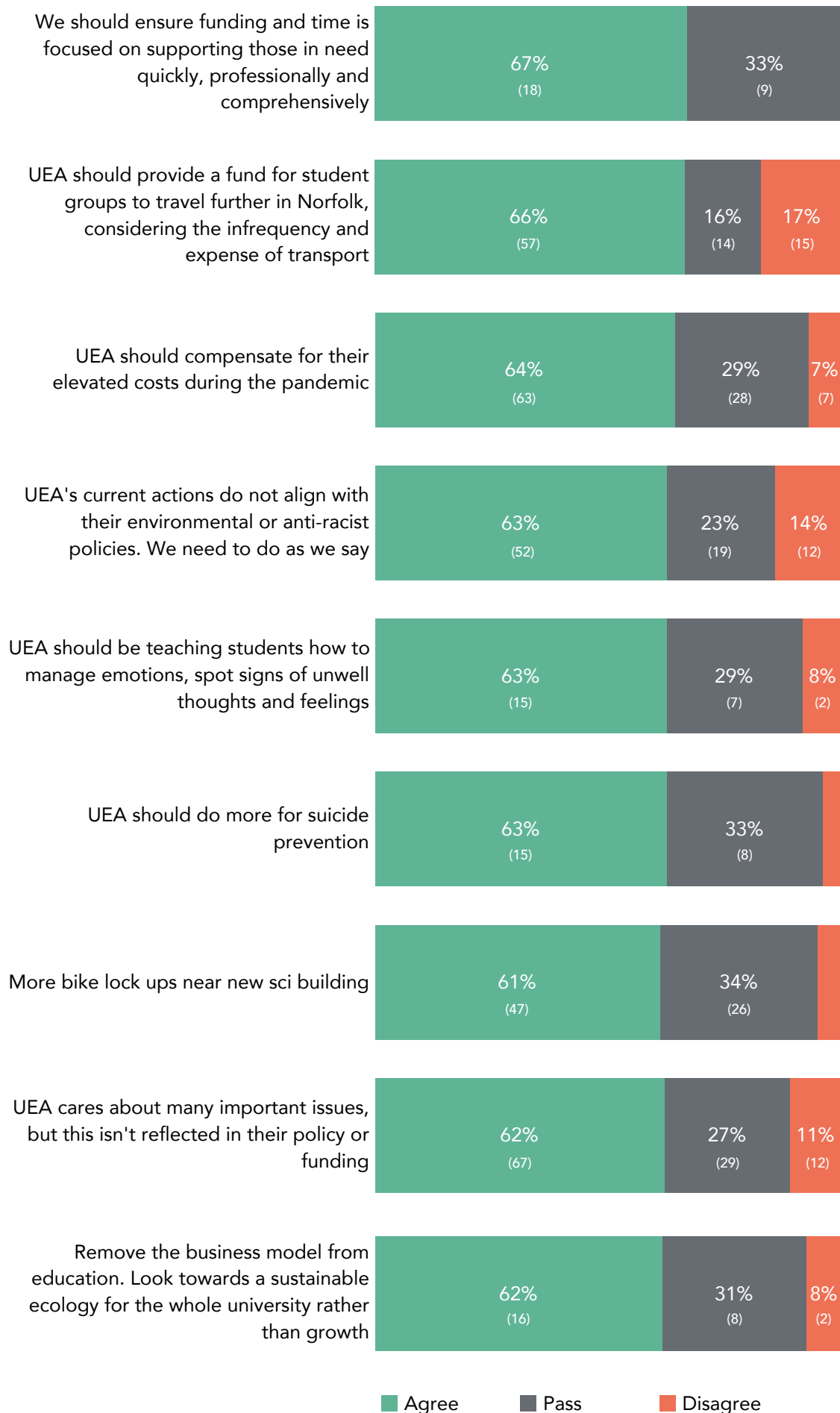


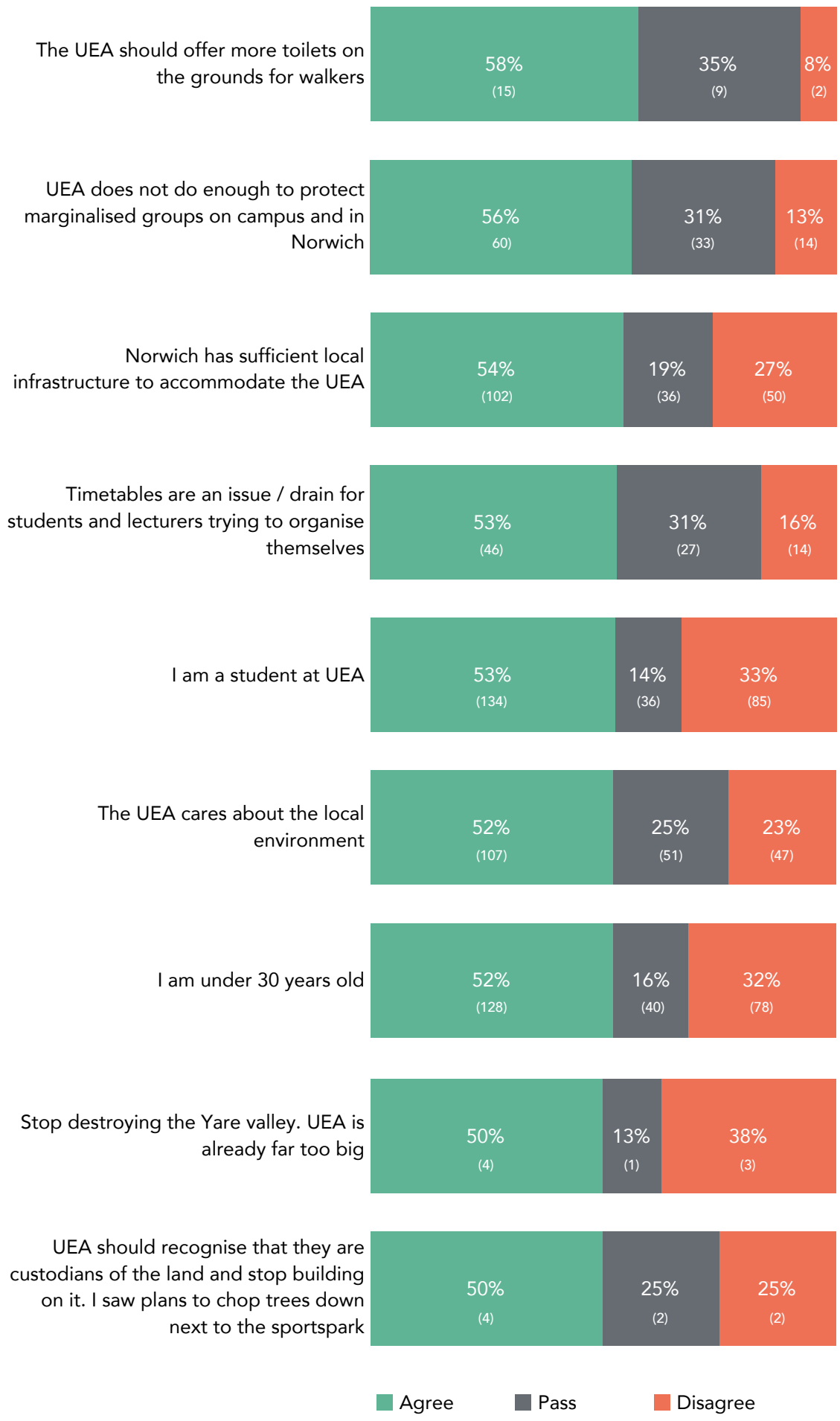


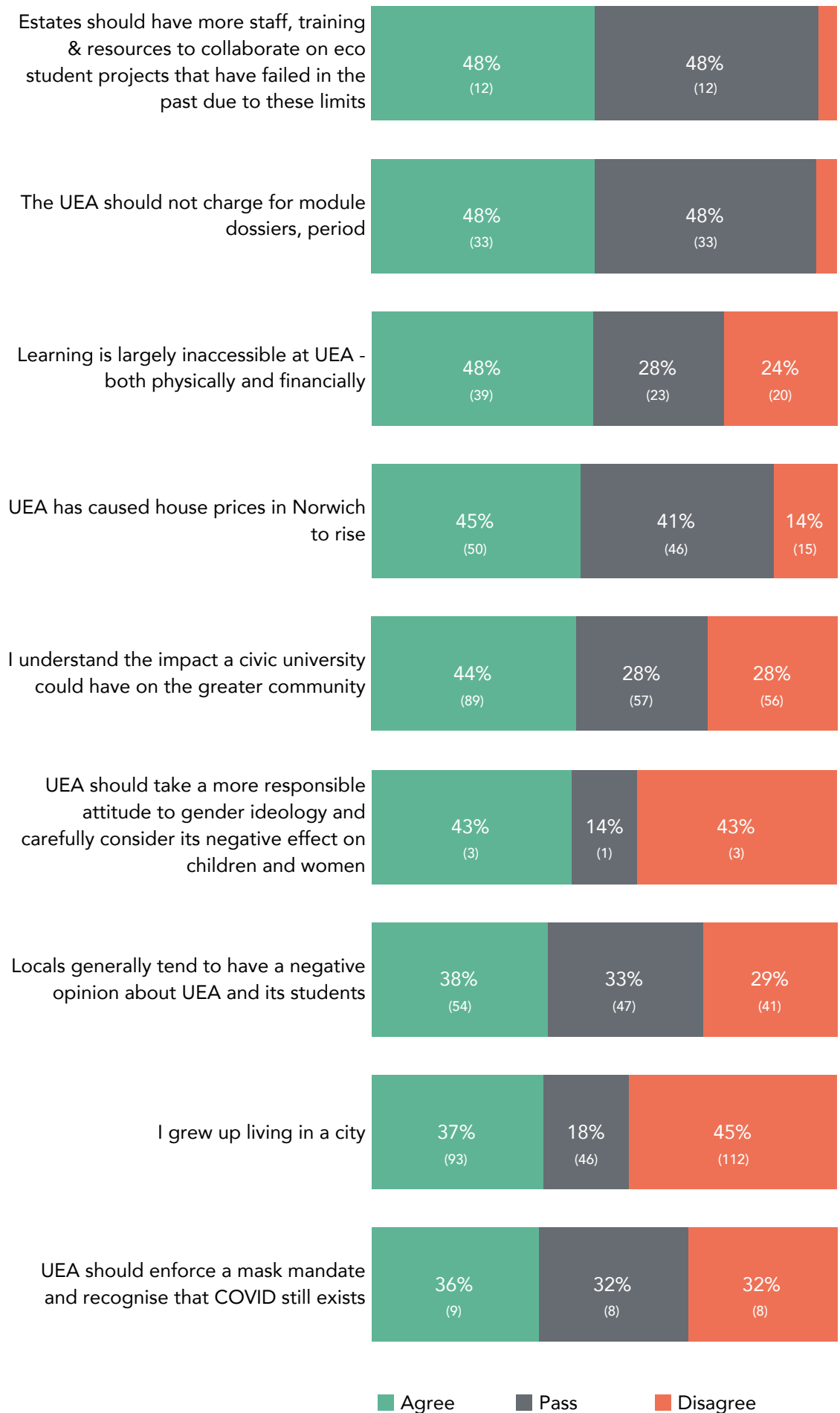
■ Agree
 ■ Pass
 ■ Disagree

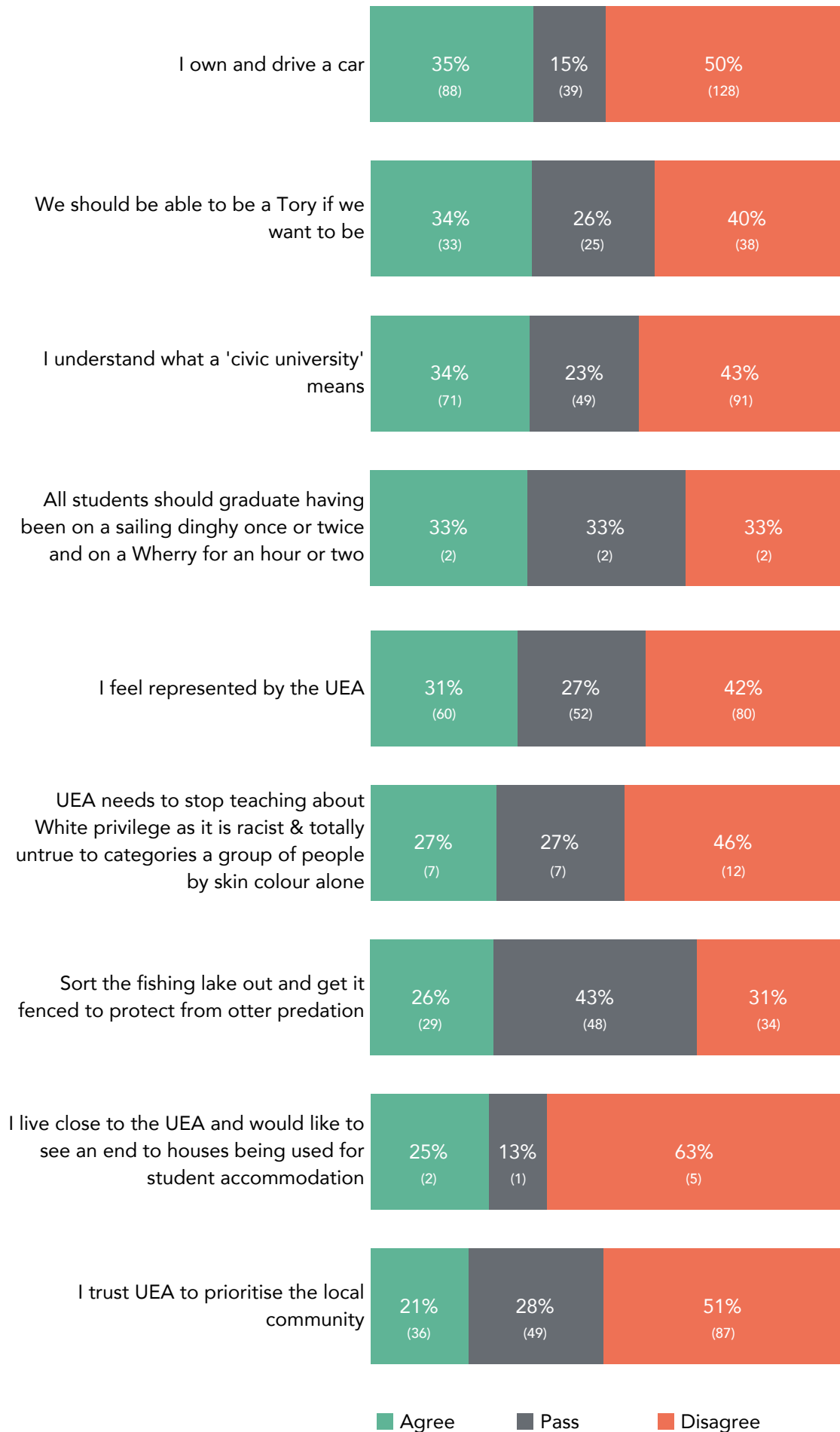


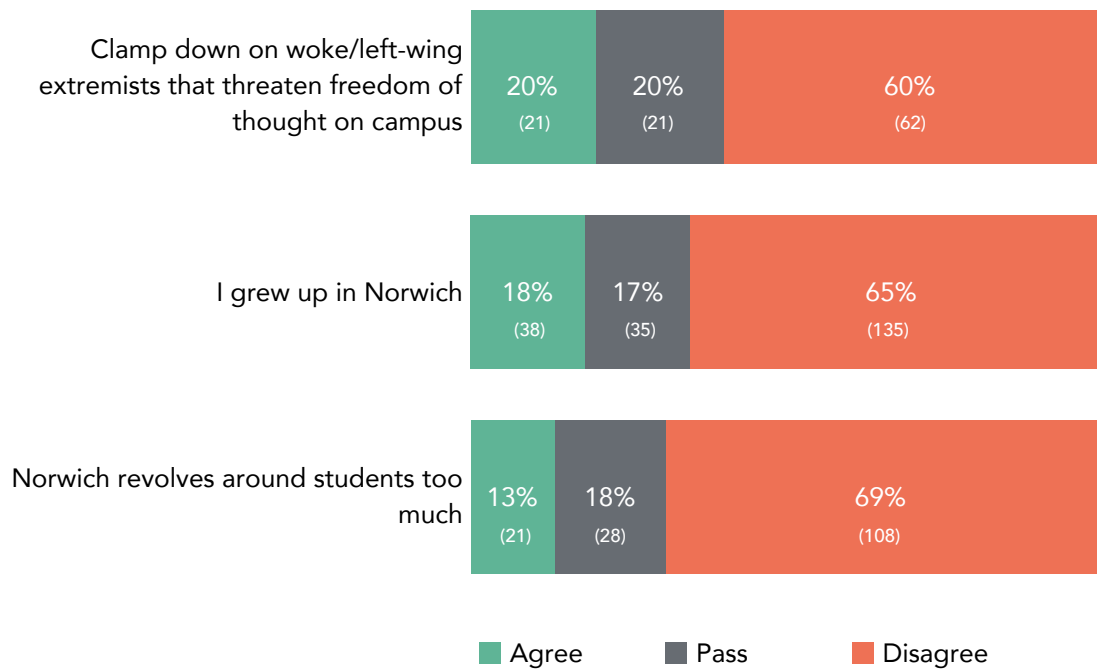










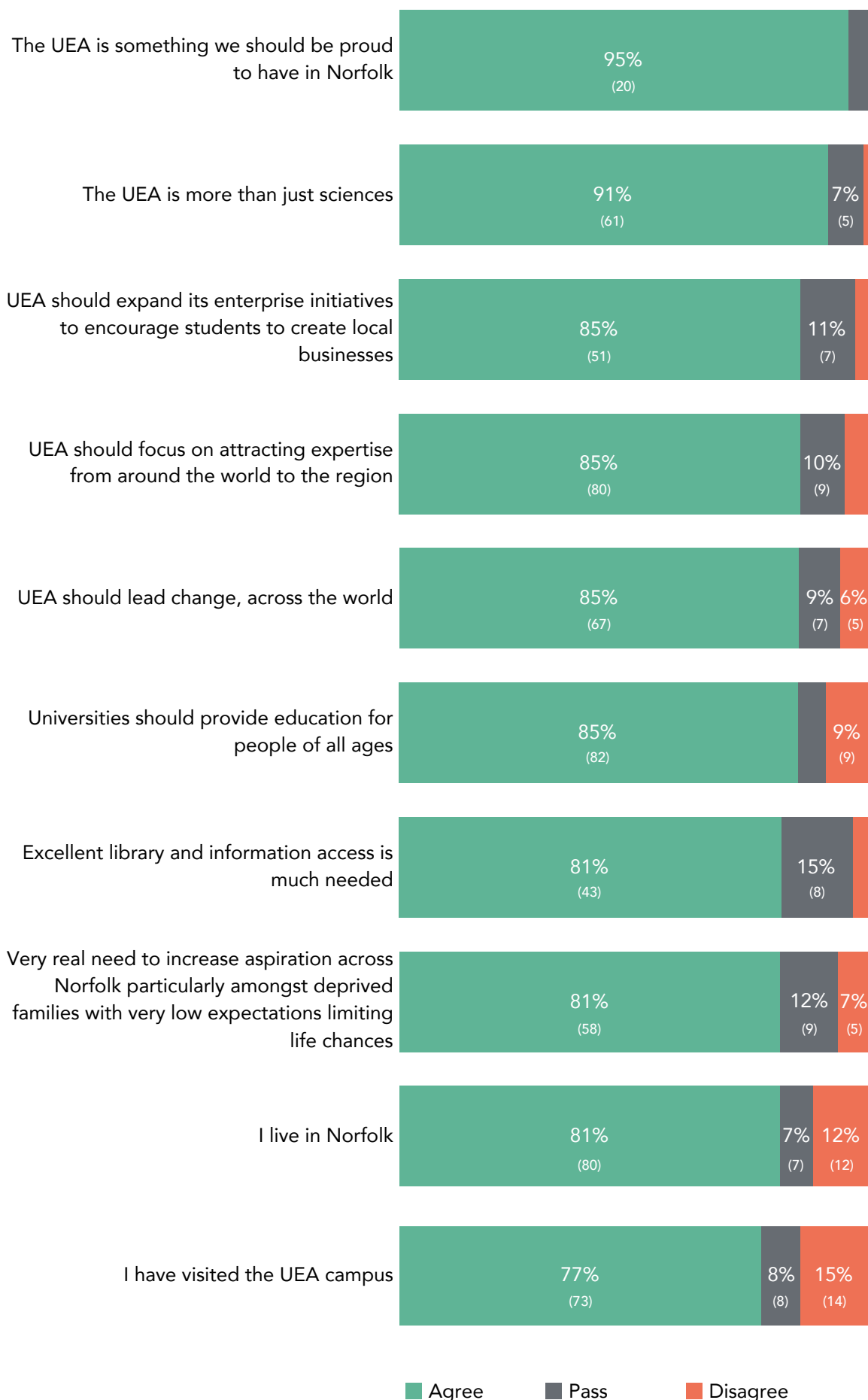


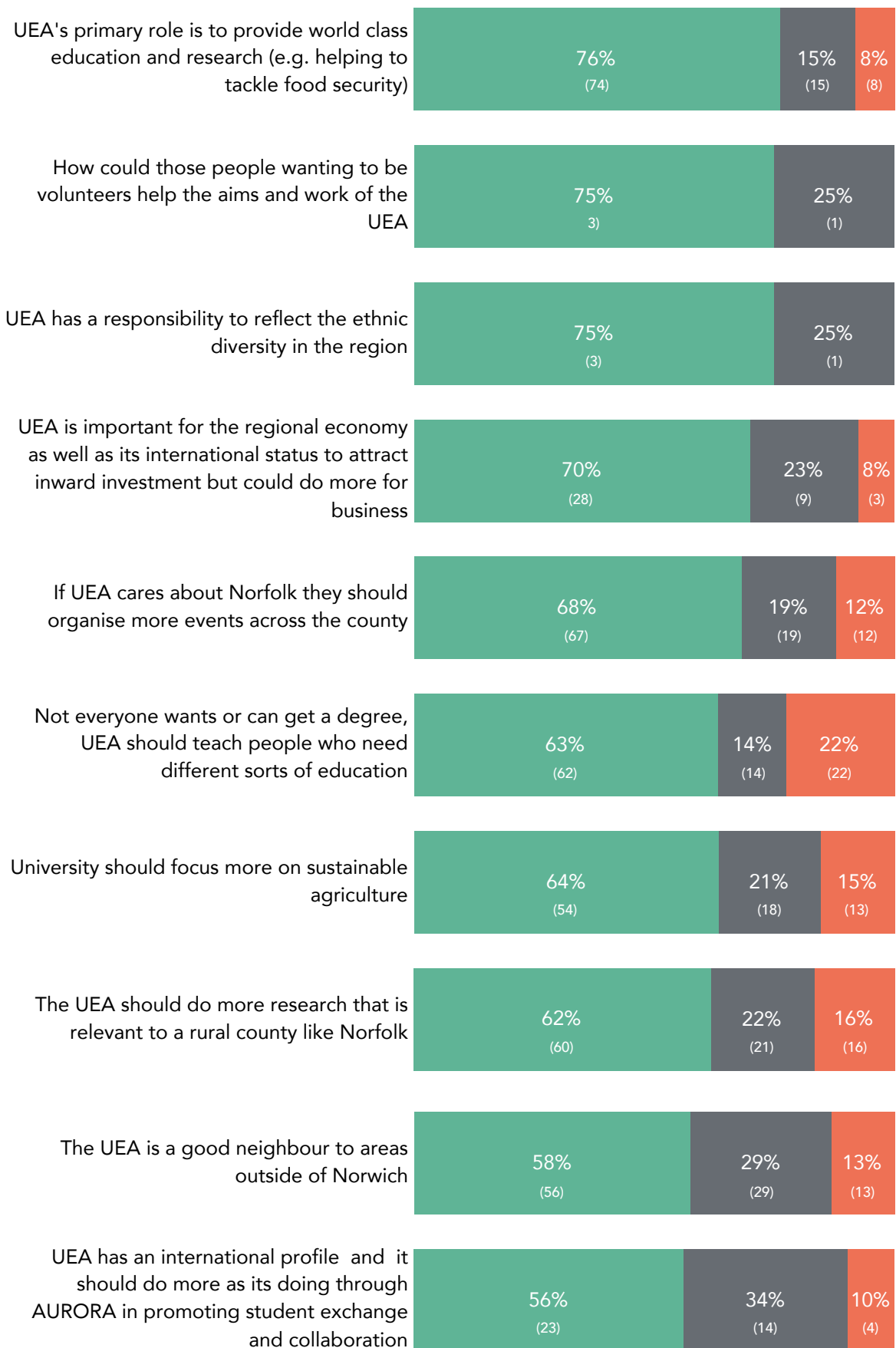
APPENDIX 4: STATEMENTS: ROYAL NORFOLK SHOW

Seeded statements:

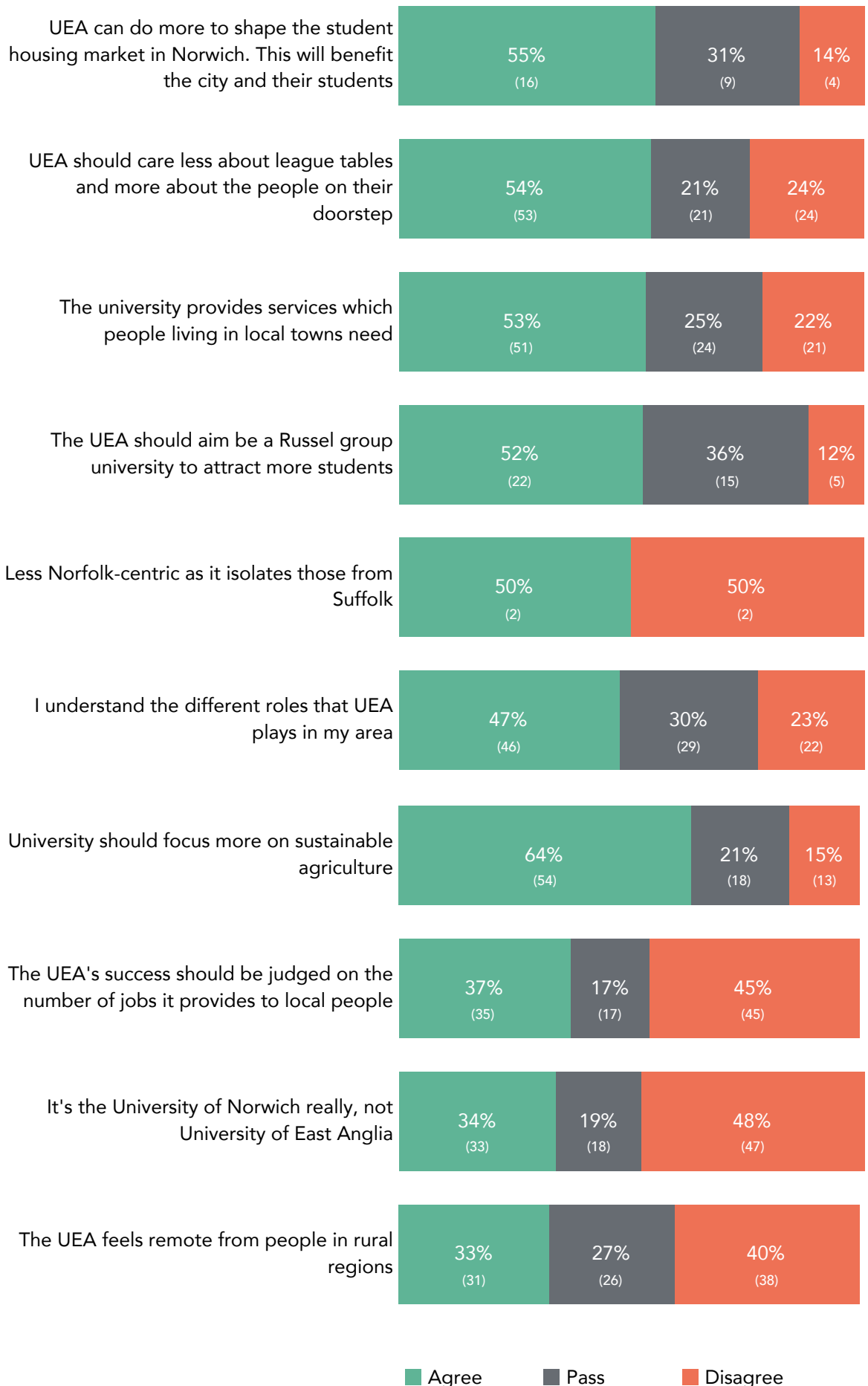
Set by the research team prior to the poll:

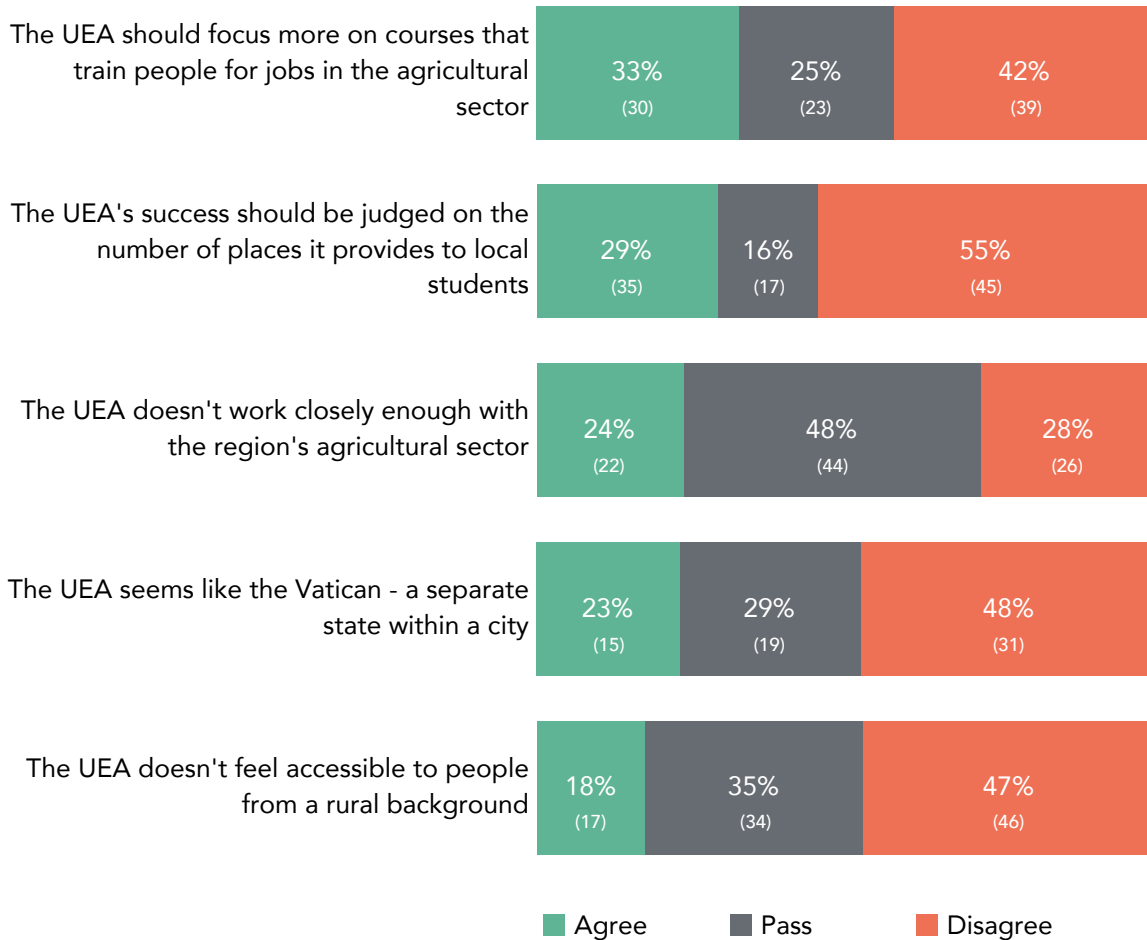
| |
|--|
| I live in Norfolk |
| Universities should provide education for people of all ages |
| The university provides services which people living in local towns need |
| Universities should focus on the local area over international reputation |
| The UEA is a good neighbour to areas outside of Norwich |
| I understand the different roles that UEA plays in my area |
| The UEA's success should be judged on the number of places it provides to local students |
| The UEA's success should be judged on the number of jobs it provides to local people |
| UEA's primary role is to provide world class education and research (e.g. helping to tackle food security) |
| UEA should focus on attracting expertise from around the world to the region |
| If UEA cares about Norfolk they should organise more events across the county |
| UEA should care less about league tables and more about the people on their doorstep |
| I have visited the UEA campus |
| Not everyone wants or can get a degree, UEA should teach people who need different sorts of education |





■ Agree
 ■ Pass
 ■ Disagree





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