

Authors

Tracy Lowe



Academic Skills
Tutor

Vandana Sharma



Learning and Teaching
Consultant

Colin Rogers



Maths and Stats
Tutor

Members of the Library Academic Engagement Team: Learning and Teaching

Introduction

Brackenhurst is a beautiful campus in rural in Nottinghamshire which houses the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences (ARES). The school of ARES has large numbers of students from Success for All categories.

- 36% of ARES students are from Widening Participation Groups
- 49% of ARES students declare a disability compared with 37% across the university



The same dissertation module was introduced to all level 6 students. In response, the library ran weekly in-person drop-ins; however, very few students attended.

Research Aims

To explore new methods of increasing student engagement with library-led dissertation support offered by the Library Academic Engagement Team (AET), in line with the NTU Widening Participation strategy.

What we did

Year 1

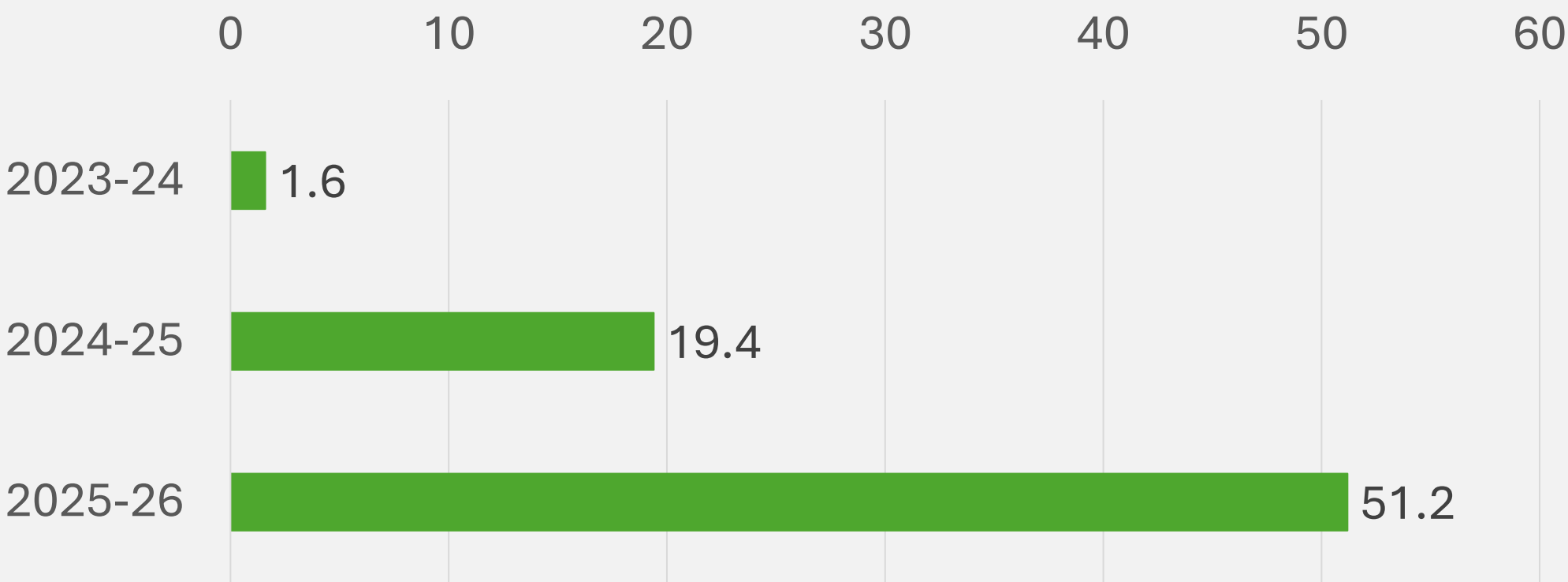
- Optional Q&A sessions were placed on student timetables
- Online delivery to maximise inclusivity
- Taught content introduced half-way through project time frame
- Student feedback gathered at end of each term

Year 2

- A programme of session titles was provided in advance
- 60-minute sessions: 30mins taught content, 30mins Q&A
- Asynchronous resources and session recordings available to students
- Attendance and engagement with asynchronous resources tracked and recorded
- Three confidence checks carried out at strategic time points

Outcomes

Average session attendance



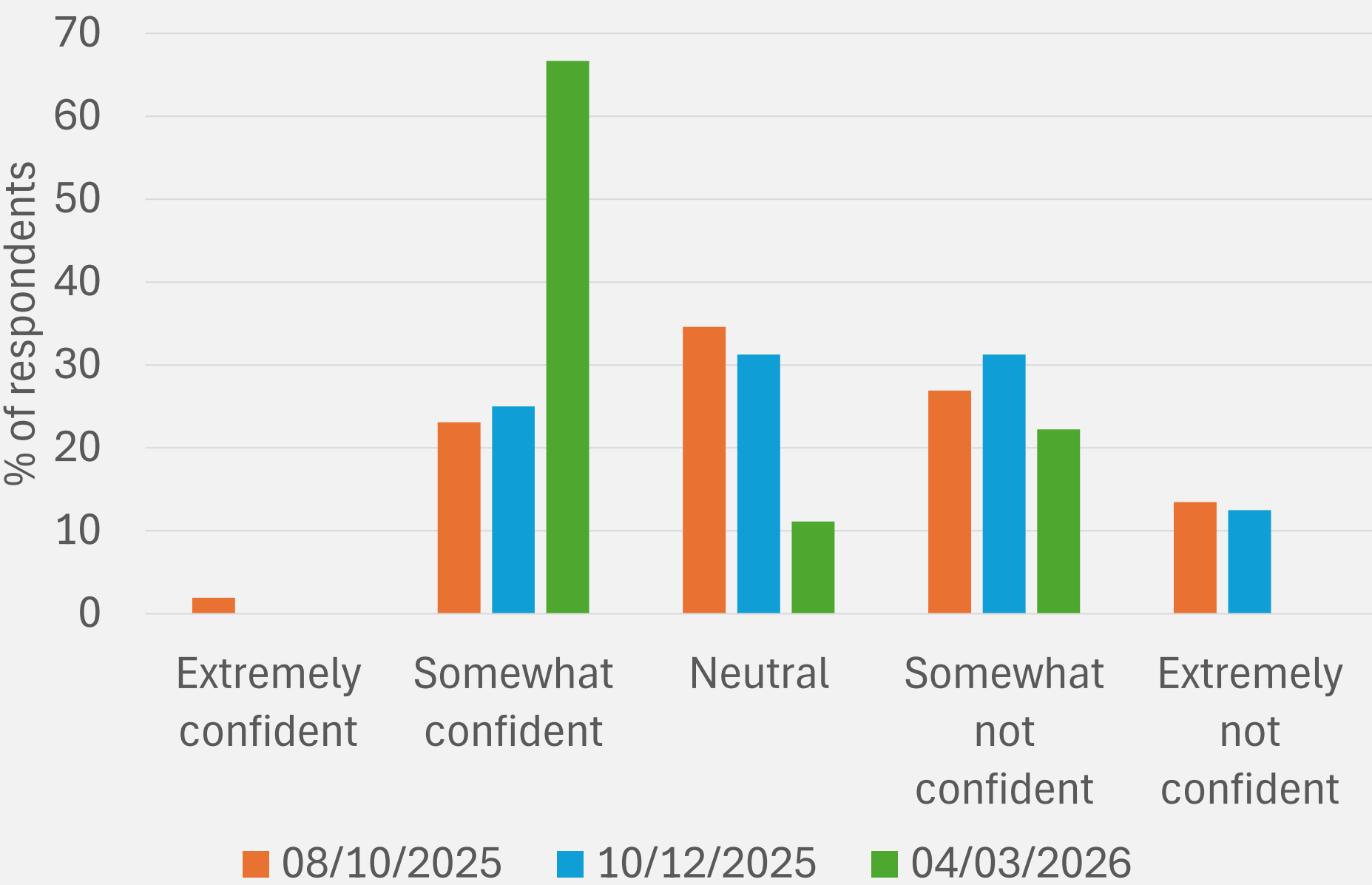
- 2023-24 (pre-intervention): 1.6 students
- 2024-25 (year 1 of intervention): 19.4 students
- 2025-26 (year 2 of intervention): 51.2 students

Engagement with asynchronous resources in 2025-26 was also positive:

- Session recordings were watched 66 times
- Asynchronous worksheets had 35-51 viewers each

Confidence checks

- Students were asked to rate their confidence from 1 (extremely not confident) to 5 (extremely confident)
- The proportion responding “somewhat confident” more than doubled to 67% by the end of the project time frame
- No students responded “extremely not confident” at the end of the project time frame
- Conclusion: Dissertation support sessions appear to have played a key role in increasing student confidence



There was a 3% increase in the proportion of dissertations awarded grades of 1st or 2:1 between the 2025 and 2026 submissions

Conclusion

- Adding optional Academic Skills support to the timetable is a successful strategy
- Collaboration with schools and course teams ensures that library support remains focused and relevant
- Listening and responding to student feedback ensures that library services are a trusted and valued source of support

One small change made a big difference!